

Long Beach Times

50,000 estimated READERS WEEKLY • LONG BEACH, CARSON, COMPTON, & Surrounding Areas

Email: lbtimes@aol.com • Website: LongBeachTimes.org

50-Cents

Feb. 14, 2019

Two Trains Running

By Wilfred M. Phillips Jr.

August Wilson's famed play, *Two Trains Running*, is currently appearing at the Matrix Theater in time for Black History Month. The highly acclaimed play, under the direction of Michele Shay, provides a glimpse into African American life during the civil rights movement in the late sixties. The setting takes place in a soul food diner in a rundown section of Pittsburgh. All cast members meet and dine at Memphis Lee's Soul Food Restaurant. Because of city redevelopment, Memphis (Montae Russell) must sell his establishment. A host of regular customers frequent Memphis's restaurant which include waitress Risa (Nija Okoro), the only female cast member, disfigures her legs to prevent men's attraction to her; Hambone (Ellis E. Williams), a distraught man who continuously chases a promised ham; Sterling (Dorian Missick), a recently released convict; Wolf (Terrell Tilford), a numbers man; Holloway (Adolphus Ward), a wise old man; West, (Alex Morris), the neighborhood mortician.

Sterling and Risa are searching to find themselves. Memphis has given up trying to save his business, but he is determined to get a fair market price for the sale of his establishment. Throughout the play, old man Holloway provides incredible wisdom and laughter. The neighborhood mortician spurs laughter when he talks about some of the people he has buried, especially those who died with jewelry and money. The play provides several important messages about the African American experience for all to learn. There is a sad and happy ending to this powerful play.

Please be aware that there is an extensive use of the N word. I give this play high marks for the acting skills of all characters and highly recommend it for all to see.

Two Trains Running ends March 3, at the Matrix Theatre, 7657 Melrose Avenue, (west of Stanley Ave, between Fairfax and La Brea), Los Angeles, CA 90046. For show times and ticket prices, call (855) 326-9945 or visit augustwilsonstwotrainsrunning.eventbrite.com.