

**THE 99-SEAT BEAT**

BY F. KATHLEEN FOLEY

## Wilson has 'Two Trains Running'

**The essentials:** Once the proprietor of a bustling diner, Memphis is barely holding on in Pittsburgh's blighted Hill District, where the funeral parlor across the way is booming, buoyed by the rocketing murder rate. It's 1969 and transformation is in the wind, with an urban renewal project underway and black power protests erupting on the sidewalks right outside Memphis' sleepy establishment. For the few struggling regulars who make up Memphis' offbeat family, loss and disappointment seem inevitable — until some unexpected hopefulness.

**Why this?** Producer Sophina Brown intends to produce all 10 plays in August Wilson's American Century Cycle, a magnificent outpouring that charts the African American experience throughout the 1900s. Brown launched her ambitious project last season with a critically lauded "King Hedley II." Director Michele Shay, who helmed "Hedley," played Louise in the 1996 Broadway premiere of Wilson's "Seven Guitars," a performance that earned her a Tony nomination.

**Details:** Matrix Theatre, 7657 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles. 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays; ends March 3. \$35. (855) 326-9945, *August Wilsons TwoTrainsRunning.event* *brite.com*