

STREET RAGE HITS BROADWAY STAGE

-- Daphne A. Young

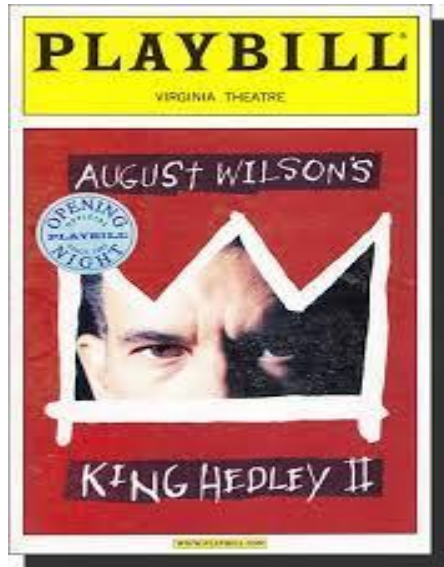


Photo by: www.TalkinBroadway.org

A crowd of more than 200 people gathered in the Langston Hughes Auditorium in Harlem's Schomburg Center this week to hear Pulitzer Prize winning playwright August Wilson read from his newest play, the story of an ex-con trying to cope with life on the outside.

Set in the projects in the mid-'80s, *King Hedley II*, follows the trials and tribulations of a family facing issues like unemployment and crime. The main character, King, played by Tony Award winner Brian Stokes Mitchell, deals with the struggles of his daily life and the drama between his wife, mother, her ex-lover, friends and neighbors.

A native of Pittsburgh's Hill District, where *King Hedley II* takes place, Wilson explores the backlash of the Reagan-era on poverty, racism, and violence. The play features several rap songs of the period, including Public Enemy's, *Welcome to the Terror Dome*, and *Fight the Power*, as well as tracks by Ice Cube.

Wilson, whose impressive body of work includes *Fences*, *The Piano Lesson*, and *Jitney*, called *King Hedley II*, "the most eagerly awaited play of my career."

King Hedley II begins preview performances at Broadway's Virginia Theatre on Tuesday, April 10, 2001, and opens on Sunday, April 29, 2001.

It's a performance that's worth the ticket!