



For Immediate Release, Please Contact
Frances White, Director of Media Relations, fwhite@milwaukeeeep.com
www.MilwaukeeRep.com | @MilwRep | [#WeRepMilwaukee](https://www.instagram.com/WeRepMilwaukee)

Milwaukee Repertory Theater Selects Two High School Finalists to Participate in the August Wilson Monologue Competition National Final on May 3, 2021

Milwaukee, Wis – March 31, 2021 –On Monday, March 29, ten high school students competed virtually in [Milwaukee Rep's August Wilson Monologue Competition](#) (AWMC) Regional Final. Each student performed a monologue via Zoom from August Wilson's American Century Cycle, a 10-play cycle that details the complexity of the African American experience in the 20th century in front of an invited audience and a panel of judges. Two winners, **Yexuanj Rivera Melendez** from Milwaukee High School of the Arts and **Fardowso Shidad** from Rufus King High School, with alternate **Kamani Graham** from Pius XI High School, were selected to represent Milwaukee in the National competition on May 3, 2021. The winners each received a cash prize of \$400 with the opportunity to win further scholarships at the National competition. 2021 is the first year Milwaukee Rep is an official AWMC partner, which makes these students the very first to represent Milwaukee in the National finals.

To hear directly from students on what the AWMC meant to them and the Milwaukee community [click HERE.](#)

Milwaukee Rep's AWMC kicked off this season with in-school and after school offerings including free virtual workshops every Wednesday afternoon in January and February where Milwaukee Rep teaching artists helped students prep for the initial audition on February 27, 2021. Milwaukee Rep teaching artists served schools including Bay View High School, Milwaukee High School of the Arts, Cristo Rey Jesuit High School, and multiple Boys and Girls Clubs locations across the city. Auditions included students from 14 schools from around the Milwaukee metro area.

The **National August Wilson Monologue Competition** is a free arts education program celebrating the words of playwright August Wilson, inspiring high school students to express themselves through theater. Founded in 2007 by Kenny Leon and Todd Kreidler at Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre Company in Atlanta, the program is produced in collaboration with the national presenting partners True Colors Theater Company and Jujamcyn Theaters.

Milwaukee Rep honors the legacy of August Wilson as a new host of the AWMC as well as its continued productions of Wilson's work. Milwaukee Rep has presented 7 of the 10 plays in Wilson's Century Cycle, most recently *Two Trains Running* in 2019.

Milwaukee Rep's August Wilson Monologue Competition participation is sponsored in part by **MKE REC Partnership for the Arts and Humanities** and **Milwaukee Rep's Spotlight Members.**

For more information, please visit www.MilwaukeeRep.com.

###

About Milwaukee Repertory Theater

Milwaukee Rep is the largest performing arts organization in Wisconsin with three unique performance venues in the Patty & Jay Baker Theater Complex– the Quadracci Powerhouse, Stiemke Studio and Stackner Cabaret. For over six decades, Milwaukee Rep has been a centerpiece of Milwaukee’s vibrant arts and cultural scene with productions ranging from Broadway musicals to Shakespeare to American Classics and New Works that are entertaining, inclusive and impactful. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Mark Clements and Executive Director Chad Bauman, Milwaukee Repertory Theater ignites positive change in the cultural, social, and economic vitality of its community by creating world-class theater experiences that entertain, provoke, and inspire meaningful dialogue among an audience representative of Milwaukee’s rich diversity.