

Ensemble Theatre Photos

The cast of "The Ballad of Emmett Till."

# The Ballad of Emmett Till

The tragedy of Emmett Till still resonates with many, although it has been nearly 60 years since the 14-year-old was brutally murdered by a white lynch mob in Mississippi for allegedly whistling at a white woman.

The Houston, Texas-based Ensemble Theatre tells Emmett's story in a way that is both touching and tragic, heart-wrenching and heart-warming.

The Theatre staged Ifa Bayeza's "The Ballad of Emmett Till" during its 2011-2012 season, leaving fans moved and impressed.

The Ensemble's original cast – Kendrick "Kay" Brown, Rachel H. Dickson, Broderick Jones, Joseph "Joe P" Palmore and Lee Waddell – is traveling to Winston-Salem to perform the play for National Black Theatre Festival audiences. Critics praised all of the actors – many of whom play multiple characters – for their performances.

Houston Chronicle critic Buzz Belmont especially gushed over Joe P, who plays Till.

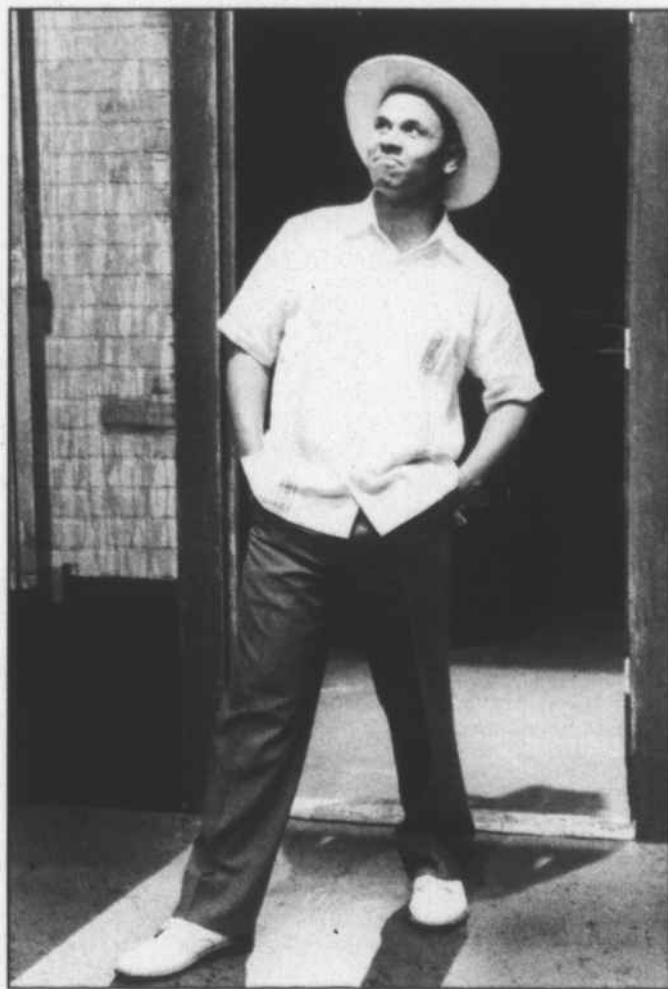
"(He) creates a remarkably unforgettable, perceptive and stunning portrayal of Emmett Till, an amazing tour de force performance," wrote Belmont, who went on to proclaim the production as, "truly some of the most remarkable ensemble work of the Spring season."

The production is directed by veteran Elizabeth Van Dyke, who also earned Belmont's praise: "(She) skillfully directs and exquisitely stages this gorgeous symphony of love as a final tribute and requiem of the life and death of Emmett Till."

The Ensemble Theatre is a familiar name to NBTF-goers. The company has brought a bevy of popular shows to the Festival over the years, including "The Waiting Room" in 2011.

"It is imperative that black theatre companies continue to grow professionally, explore new perspectives, and find innovative ways to tell our stories," said Eileen J. Morris, the Ensemble Theatre's artistic director. "We are excited about this being our fourth opportunity to commune with our brothers and sisters (at the National Black Theatre Festival)."

The Ensemble Theatre was founded in 1976 by the late George Hawkins to preserve African American artistic expression and to enlighten, entertain and enrich a diverse community. In addition to being the oldest and largest professional African American theatre in the Southwest, it also holds the distinction of being one of the nation's largest African American-owned and operated facilities with an in-house production team.



Joseph "Joe P" Palmore as Emmett Till.

**\$38**  
**ARTS COUNCIL**  
**THEATRE**  
**FRIDAY, AUG. 2**  
**AT 3 P.M. AND**  
**8 P.M.**  
**SATURDAY, AUG. 3**  
**AT 3 P.M.**  
**AND 8 P.M.**