

A Raisin in the Sun: 2014 Broadway Revival

By Jack Schneider

Though *A Raisin in the Sun* has been performed multiple times in multiple different fashions, the 2014 Broadway revival starring Denzel Washington really shines on its own. One of the most impressive aspects of this specific revival is how well Washington can play Walter even though he was a good 15-20 years older than the character he's portraying. Ben Brantley, writing in the *New York Times*, notes that despite the age gap Washington plays Hansberry's Walter, described as a lean, intense man, easily through his commanding voice and incredible acting.

But just because Washington can expertly play the role of Walter, doesn't mean he outshines the rest of the cast: instead his work shines a light on other cast members' excellent performances. With many performances varying in depth, the cast of this play brings these characters alive to the point where the play's protagonist is no longer just Walter, but rather the whole family. Tom Sellar's review in *The Guardian* explains how Sophie Okonedo's Ruth acts as a foundation for sorrow and Anika Noni Rose's Beneatha encapsulates both youthfulness and the future of rebellion. In all cases, the casting is perfect.

The cast wasn't the only feature that made this revival of the play incredible. Kenny Leon, who directed the 2004 revival starring Sean Combs, also helped turn this play into the modern-day masterpiece that it is. He uses his previous directorial experience in combination with the new, incredible cast, to make a revival that feels as if it was a brand-new play, yet at the same time it's like it never left. Leon gives all the actors in this play, whether they're world renowned or unheard of, a place to shine and be seen, not as them but who they play. According to Wilson Morales, Leon was the perfect choice for bringing the play to new audiences with experience, open-mindedness, and creativity.

Sources:

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