Questions for August Wilson’s *Seven Guitars*

1. What does this play say about the beginning of the music industry and how black products were used but black people were not compensated?

2. Critics have argued that *Seven Guitars* includes Wilson’s most complete depiction of female characters and women’s issues. What is Wilson saying about male and female issues?

3. *Seven Guitars* is told through a series of flashbacks chronicling the last week of Floyd “Schoolboy” Barton’s life. What are the affects of this technique?

4. Each character sings sort of a life-song about his/her aspirations, the desire for a better life and the idea of what kind of life a person should want to live. What are some of those aspirations? What is that ideal life like?

5. How is music woven throughout the play?

6. What is post-World War II Pittsburgh like? What do we learn about the Hill District in the late 1940s?

7. How does Wilson’s depiction of Pittsburgh’s Hill District help shape our understanding of Pittsburgh and the black community of Pittsburgh today?

8. Critics have argued that “Wilson gives voice to disenfranchised and marginalized African Americans who have been promised a place and a stake in the American dream but find their access blocked to the rights and freedoms promised to all Americans.” How does Wilson use the tradition of American drama in order to expose the distinct differences between the white American and black American experience?

9. How does Wilson harken to the African oral tradition in his play? What kind of stories does he tell?