

Avant Bard Theatre
presents

AUGUST WILSON'S How I Learned What I Learned

Co-Conceived by Todd Kreidler

Directed by
DeMone Seraphin

Starring
William T. Newman Jr.*



Gunston Arts Center
December 1–19, 2021

How I Learned What I Learned™ is presented by
arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of
Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com

*Member of Actors' Equity Association



AvantBard.org

New York Premiere originally produced by Signature Theatre, New York City James Houghton, Founding Artistic Director Erika Mallin, Executive Director.

The world premiere of "How I Learned What I Learned" was presented by Seattle Repertory Theatre in 2003, performed by August Wilson.

This production was made possible through the support of Arlington Cultural Affairs, a division of Arlington Economic Development, that delivers public activities and programs as Arlington Arts.

arlington arts

December 1-19, 2021, Gunston Performing Arts Center Theatre Two, Arlington, VA

Cast

Actor..... William T. Newman, Jr.*

Production Team

Director..... DeMone Seraphin
Set Designer..... Megan Holden
Lighting and Projections Designer..... John D. Alexander
Costume Designer..... Paris Francesca
Props Designer..... Liz Long
Sound Designer/Composer David Lamont Wilson
Stage Manager Laura Schlachtmeyer

Technical Team

Technical Director..... Jarrod DiGiorgi
Master Electrician, Projections Assistant..... Christian Jones
Carpenter..... Greg Bodine
Carpenter..... Jeff Campbell
Rigger..... Holden Gunster
Electrician..... Kat Darnell

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Avant Bard Producing Partners

Sara Barker, Megan Behm, Alyssa Sanders, DeMone Seraphin, Dina Soltan

2021-22 Season, Gunston Arts Center Theatre Two

How I Learned What I Learned

Dec 1 - Dec 19, 2021

Ada and The Engine

Mar 2 - Mar 26, 2022

Suddenly Last Summer

May 25 - June 18, 2022

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August Wilson

August Wilson (April 27, 1945 – October 2, 2005) authored ***Gem of the Ocean, Joe Turner's Come and Gone, Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, The Piano Lesson, Seven Guitars, Fences, Two Trains Running, Jitney, King Hedley II, and Radio Golf***. These works explore the heritage and experience of African-Americans, decade-by-decade, over the course of the twentieth century. His plays have been produced at regional theaters across the country and all over the world, as well as on Broadway. In 2003, Mr. Wilson made his professional stage debut in his one-man show, ***How I Learned What I Learned***. Mr. Wilson's works garnered many awards including Pulitzer Prizes for ***Fences*** (1987); and for ***The Piano Lesson*** (1990); a Tony Award for ***Fences***; Great Britain's Olivier Award for ***Jitney***; as well as eight New York Drama Critics Circle Awards for ***Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, Fences, Joe Turner's Come and Gone, The Piano Lesson, Two Trains Running, Seven Guitars, Jitney, and Radio Golf***. Additionally, the cast recording of ***Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*** received a 1985 Grammy Award, and Mr. Wilson received a 1995 Emmy Award nomination for his screenplay adaptation of ***The Piano Lesson***. Mr. Wilson's early works included the one-act plays ***The Janitor, Recycle, The Coldest Day of the Year, Malcolm X, The Homecoming*** and the musical satire ***Black Bart and the Sacred Hills***.

Mr. Wilson received many fellowships and awards, including Rockefeller and Guggenheim Fellowships in Playwriting, the Whiting Writers Award, 2003 Heinz Award, was awarded a 1999 National Humanities Medal by the President of the United States, and received numerous honorary degrees from colleges and universities, as well as the only high school diploma ever issued by the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. He was an alumnus of New Dramatists, a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a 1995 inductee into the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and on October 16, 2005, Broadway renamed the theater located at 245 West 52nd Street - The August Wilson Theatre. Additionally, Mr. Wilson was posthumously inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame in 2007.

Mr. Wilson was born and raised in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and lived in Seattle, Washington at the time of his death. He is immediately survived by his two daughters, Sakina Ansari and Azula Carmen Wilson, and his wife, costume designer Constanza Romero.

Cast

William T. Newman, Jr. (Actor) (he/his) is a busy and familiar stage, screen, TV, and voiceover performer. He received his BFA in Acting from Ohio University and his JD from Catholic University. His credits include the critically acclaimed role of Jack Jefferson in ***The Great White Hope*** at Ohio Valley Summer Theatre, Preacher Oedipus in ***The Gospel at Colonus*** at Avant Bard Theatre (nominated for a Helen Hayes award for Best Musical Ensemble), and Cutler in ***Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*** at 1st Stage (nominated for a Helen Hayes award for Outstanding Best Dramatic Ensemble). Washington audiences will remember his appearances at Arena Stage in ***Julius Caesar*** and ***The Winter's Tale*** and at Mosaic Theater Company DC in ***Fabulation***. His theatre credits also include starring roles in ***Plaza Suite***, ***Ceremonies in Dark Old Men***, and ***Let's Get Sanctified***. On network TV, he had a recurring role as Hal Johnson on the daytime soap opera ***Somerset***. Motion picture credits include ***Suspect*** and Lee Daniel's ***The Butler***.

Director

DeMone Seraphin (Director) (he/his) is a Helen Hayes Award nominee for his direction of ***Topdog/Underdog*** (Avant Bard Theatre). Other directing credits include the Off-Broadway revivals of ***Split Second*** and ***The Exonerated***, the world premiere musical ***Once Uponzi Time: A Tale of An American Scheme*** at the McCarter Theatre, Off-Broadway premieres of ***Yours Truly***, ***Ella! A Celebration of The Ella Fitzgerald Songbook*** and ***The King***, and ***The Final Hours***, an Elvis Presley musical. International productions include the German premiere of August Wilson's ***Jitney***, ***Barnum***, and the musical ***Runaways***. As an actor, DeMone has appeared on Broadway, nationally, and internationally in ***Miss Saigon***, ***Rent***, ***Ragtime***, ***Jesus Christ Superstar***, ***Ain't Misbehavin'***, and ***Man of La Mancha***. DeMone is an Avant Bard Producing Partner and the Founding Artistic Director of The New American Theatre Co. NY.

Production Team

John D. Alexander (Lighting Design) (he/his) is a Helen Hayes Award nominee for his lighting design of **Topdog/Underdog** (Avant Bard Theatre). Other lighting design credits include OFF-BROADWAY: **The Migration: Reflections on Jacob Lawrence** (National Tour). DC AREA: **This Bitter Earth; Fabulation, or the Re-Education of Undine; Marie and Rosetta; Ma Rainey's Black Bottom; Airness; Darius and Twig; Black Nativity; Disgraced; HERstory; Blackberry Winter; The Gospel at Colonus; Happiness (and Other Reasons to Die); King Lear; Broke-ology; American Moor; Anne and Emmett** (National and European Tour). REGIONAL: **Paradise Blue, Skeleton Crew, Royale, The Snowy Day and Other Stories**. TV: PBS: **No Child**. UPCOMING: **Crying on Television, Marys Seacole, Quamino's Map, Sheepdog, House of the Negro Insane, and Haint Blu**.

Paris Francesca (Costume Designer) (she/her) is a Costume Designer, Wig Designer, and Stylist in the Washington, DC area. Paris has had unique opportunities to combine her passion for theatre with her love for education as a Teaching Artist and Costume Designer at Adventure Theatre MTC and at City at Peace at the Atlas Performing Arts Center. Some of her favorite Costume Design credits include: **N** (Keegan Theatre), **An Act of God** (NextStop Theatre), **Technicolor** (ArtsCentric), **Step Afrika! Juneteenth** (Virtual), **Step Afrika! Step Xplosion** (Music Center at Strathmore, Virtual), **Step Afrika!'s Magical Musical Holiday Show** (Hylton Performing Arts Center, Virtual Premiere), **The Snowy Day** (Adventure Theatre MTC), **The Mountaintop** (NextStop Theatre), **Step Afrika! Magical Musical Holiday Show** (Atlas Performing Arts Center), **Matilda** (NextStop Theatre), **Seussical The Musical** (Adventure Theatre MTC), **Les Miserables** (Adventure Theatre MTC), **Honk! Jr.** (Adventure Theatre MTC), **The World Premiere of Sheila & Moby** (Flying V Theatre), **Hair** (ARTSCENTRIC, Wig Design), **Crazy For You** (Signature Theatre, Wardrobe). Upcoming: **Step Afrika! Magical Musical Holiday Show** (Atlas Performing Arts Center). Paris is a graduate of Hampton University with a BA in Technical Theatre Arts with a concentration in Costume Design. She has also earned a MPS in the Business of Fashion from LIM College. ParisFrancesca.com

Production Team (cont.)

Megan Holden (Set Designer) (she/her) is a local scenic designer and scenic painter, marking her second Avant Bard Theatre production after scenic designing ***A Misanthrope*** (Helen Hayes nominee for Outstanding Original Adaptation). Megan received her BA in scenic design and film production from James Madison University. Since 2019, Megan has worked as a scenic designer and painter at companies across the DMV. She currently is working on a production of ***A Snowy Night at the Dew Drop Inn*** at Anacostia Playhouse. Other credits include lead painter on ***White Pearl*** (Studio Theater), scenic designing ***Fame, Pippin,*** and ***Chicago*** (The Free Theatre), scenic designing ***Rainbow Fish the Musical*** and ***The Dew Drop Inn*** (Anacostia Playhouse), scenic designing Brave Spirits Theatre's repertory season of 8 of Shakespeare's Histories, and board oping/ assisting with production needs for ***Becoming Dr. Ruth*** (Theater J).

Liz Long (Properties Designer) (she/her) returns to Avant Bard Theatre having previously worked her magic for ***Ada and the Engine, Suddenly Last Summer, A Misanthrope, Topdog/Underdog,*** and ***Illyria, or What You Will.*** Other designs include ***Puffs, Coraline,*** and ***1776*** (Landless Theatre Company); ***The Man Who, The River,*** and ***Happy Hour*** (Spooky Action Theater); and ***Five Lesbians Eating a Quiche*** (Monumental Theatre).

Laura Schlachtmeyer (Stage Manager) (she/her) is pleased to return to Avant Bard Theatre, where her previous productions include ***Nero/ Pseudo, TAME., The Tempest,*** and ***Scripts in Play.*** She's stage managed from coast to coast, translated plays for off-off-Broadway productions, and produced a dozen or so sci-fi feature films distributed around the world. You can download her sci-fi audio drama, ***Earthkiller.*** She is currently producing a film about the actress Kristina Söderbaum, called ***The Drowned Girl.***

David Lamont Wilson (Sound Designer/Composer) (he/his) is thrilled to be making his Avant Bard Theatre debut, and even more excited to be working with this talented cast and production team. His most recent sound design was ***Birds of North America*** at Mosaic Theater and Everyman Theatre's critically acclaimed productions of ***The Queens Girl Trilogies*** by Caleen Sinnette Jennings. Next up is ***White Noise*** for Studio Theatre. Favorite sound designs include the Atlanta Alliance Theatre's ***The C.A. Lyons Project*** (Suzi Bass Award nominated), Studio Theatre's ***Wig Out,*** The Welders' ***Not Enuf Lifetimes,*** Charter Theatre's ***Am I Black Enough Yet?,*** and American University's ***Dead Man Walking.*** David has designed for the Kennedy Center, Signature Theatre, Arena Stage, Imagination Stage, the National Conservatory of Dramatic Arts, Catholic University, and Georgetown University.

Avant Bard Producing Partners

Sara Barker (she/her) is a DC-area stage actor whose Avant Bard credits include ***Suddenly Last Summer***, ***King Lear***, ***Emilie***, ***Orlando***, ***Othello***, ***A Misanthrope***, ***Mary Stuart***. Other DC-area credits: ***A Maze***, ***This Storm is What We Call Progress*** (Rorschach), ***4.48 Psychosis*** (Factory 449), ***The Importance of Being Earnest***, ***A Woman of No Importance*** (Scena), and ***The Cherry Orchard*** (Faction of Fools). New York credits include Lear DeBessonnet's ***Death Might Be Your Santa Claus***. In addition to her work with Avant Bard, Sara is a company member with Rorschach Theatre and Factory 449. www.sarabarker.com

Megan Behm (she/her) is a DC-area director whose Avant Bard credits include the first iteration of ***Ada and the Engine*** and ***A Misanthrope***. Other recent directing credits include ***Pride and Prejudice*** and ***45 Plays for 45 Presidents*** at NextStop Theatre Company; ***Cymbeline*** at the Virginia Shakespeare Festival; ***To Tell My Story*** and ***Switch*** with The Welders; ***A Midsummer Night's Dream*** and ***According to Shakespeare*** at InterAct Story Theater; ***The Head that Wears the Crown*** at Ally Theatre Company. Before holding this position at Avant Bard, Megan was the Deputy Managing Director at NextStop Theatre. Megan is a proud graduate of The College of William and Mary. www.megan-behm.com @mmbehm

DeMone Seraphin (See bio above.)

Alyssa Sanders (she/her) is a DC-area stage actor whose Avant Bard credits include ***King Lear***, ***The Tempest***, and ***Othello***. Other DC-area credits include NextStop Theatre Company's production of ***Pride and Prejudice*** (Kate Hamill Adaptation). In addition to Avant Bard, Alyssa has worked with various DC-area theatres including Quotidian Theatre Company (Company Member), Peter's Alley, Lean & Hungry Theater (Company Member), Venus Theatre, Studio Theatre, Adventure Theatre. www.alyssasanders.com

Dina Soltan (she/her) is a British Egyptian native who has worked in DC-area theatre—in both acting and fundraising capacities—since 2014. Her Avant Bard acting credits include ***Ada and the Engine***. Dina is a graduate of The Theatre Lab Honors Conservatory program (2016). She currently works at Mosaic Theater Company DC helping to raise over \$2 million in donations per year. In addition to Avant Bard, Dina has worked with various DC-area theatres including Rorschach, Mosaic, Ally Theatre, The Wheel Theatre, Theatre Prometheus, and Scena Theatre.