



**PRIME STAGE
THEATRE**

“Where Literature Comes to Life”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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- **Prime Stage Theatre presents August Wilson’s “How I Learned What I Learned”**
 - **Wali Jamal stars in 1-man stage show at New Hazlett Theater Jan. 20**
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PITTSBURGH — One of Pittsburgh’s finest actors will portray one of Pittsburgh’s greatest playwrights when Prime Stage Theatre presents **Wali Jamal** performing **August Wilson’s** *How I Learned What I Learned*.

The acclaimed one-man show takes place Monday, Jan. 20, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at New Hazlett Theater, 6 Allegheny Square East, on Pittsburgh’s Northside. Admission is pay-what-you-can; tickets are available by calling (412) 320-4610 ext. 10 or reserving online at <https://tinyurl.com/5n8byv3b>.

First performed by Wilson himself two years before his death at age 60, *How I Learned What I Learned* is a riveting and poignant memoir of his early days as a developing writer in Pittsburgh. A precocious youth with an outsider’s keen social perspective, Wilson dropped out of high school to become a full-time student of the human condition. He worked odd jobs while reading books from the library, taking notes on colorful characters he met and integrating their experiences into the epic sweep of African American history.

In 2018 [Wali Jamal](#) was named *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* Performer of the Year and is the only actor in the world to have appeared in all 11 of August Wilson’s plays — the 10-play Pittsburgh cycle and the autobiographical solo show *How I Learned What I Learned*.

Jamal performs throughout the year at theatres and universities across the U.S. He is also a playwright and heads up [History's Flipside Productions](#), focusing on important achievements by Pittsburgh African Americans such as 19th-century abolitionist, physician, author and Civil War officer Dr. Martin Delany.

“*How I Learned What I Learned* is a rare introspective glimpse into the creative process of one of America’s greatest playwrights,” says Prime Stage Theatre artistic director **Dr. Wayne Brinda**. “Wali Jamal first performed for Prime Stage in 2000 as Tom Robinson in *To Kill A Mockingbird*, and we are thrilled to be hosting him again as August Wilson looking back on an extraordinary career in American theatre.”

A one-night-only performance, *How I Learned What I Learned* is presented during Prime Stage Theatre’s Jan. 17-26 mainstage production of Natalia Temesgen’s [Look Forward: The Ruby Bridges Story](#) directed by **Linda Haston** and featuring **Saniya Lavelle** as civil rights trailblazer Ruby Bridges, the first African American student to attend an all-white grade school in New Orleans.

How I Learned What I Learned is part of Prime Stage Theatre's Monday Specials Series that continues with ***Freedom House: Giving Life a Second Chance*** (Mar. 3), a staged reading of a new play by L.E. McCullough on the birth of America's first EMS units in 1960s Pittsburgh, and ***Speak*** (May 5), a staged reading of a new Prime Stage Theatre adaptation by Tammy Ryan of Laurie Halse Anderson's powerful young adult novel presented in partnership with Pittsburgh Action Against Rape.

Since its founding in 1996, Prime Stage Theatre has presented over 100 plays that introduce student and family audiences to classic and contemporary works of world literature.

The theatre's current 2024-25 Season of Strength, Voices and Hope includes ***Great Expectations; Looking Forward: The Ruby Bridges Story; I Never Saw Another Butterfly*** and ***The Terezin Promise; Twelve Angry Men***.

Prime Stage Theatre has also made a special commitment to promoting accessibility for [special needs audiences](#). In 2022, Prime Stage Theatre audio describer Nathan Ruggles won a national Achievement Award in Audio Description from the American Council of the Blind.

* For more information on Prime Stage Theatre's current season, contact Connie Brinda, Prime Stage Theatre General Manager at (724) 773-0700 or cbrinda@primestage.com.

Upcoming at Prime Stage Theatre in 2025

Jan. 11, 2025 – 5th Annual High School Drama Awards

Prime Stage Theatre's annual Drama Awards honor excellence by student actors from 15 area high schools performing in non-musical plays. Emceed by Monteze Freeland, co-artistic director of City Theatre, with special guest Ben King, a 2018 Carnegie Mellon University drama school graduate now working as production manager for Hudson Scenic Studios in New York.

Jan. 17-26, 2025 – *Look Forward: The Ruby Bridges Story*

By Natalia Temesgen; directed by Linda Haston

The year is 1960. An extraordinary 6-year-old named Ruby Bridges becomes the first African American student to attend an all-white grade school in New Orleans. Experience her remarkable journey as she discovers the true promise of America while blazing a trail for generations to come. On Opening Night, Louisiana storyteller Robin Kitson shares her own life-changing childhood encounter with Ruby Bridges.

Feb. 28-Mar. 9, 2025 – *I Never Saw Another Butterfly and The Terezin Promise*

By Celeste Raspanti; directed by Wayne Brinda

In the Terezin concentration camp, Austrian artist Friedl Dicker-Brandeis teaches Jewish children to make poems and drawings in secret art classes. Witness her passion, the children's creativity and the irrepressible power of Art to bring hope and healing into the darkest hours of the Holocaust. These two plays honor the 80th anniversary of the Terezin Camp Liberation and are produced as part of the enGAGE genocide education program in partnership with Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh.

May 2-11, 2025 – *Twelve Angry Men*

Adapted by Sherman L. Sergel; directed by Shane Valenzi

A jury of twelve ordinary men are charged with deciding the fate of a teenager on trial for murdering his father. Can they overcome their own backgrounds and biases as they struggle to render a fair life-or-death verdict? A new take on an American theatre classic, based on the Emmy award-winning 1954 television movie by Reginald Rose. Directed by attorney Shane Valenzi, a post-show discussion looks at our judicial system and its challenges.

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MONDAY
prime stage THEATRE **SPECIALS**

August Wilson's
HOW I Learned
WHAT I Learned

Featuring Wali Jamal

January 20, 2025 at 7:00 PM - Pay What You Can
www.primestage/events

Located at the New Hazlett Center for Performing Arts, 6 Allegheny Square, Pittsburgh, PA 15212

new Hazlett theater

The poster features a circular portrait of Wali Jamal, a Black man with a goatee, wearing a black cap and a dark suit, resting his chin on his hand. The background is a dark brick wall. A red brushstroke underline is present below the main title and above the event details.

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(724) 773-0700 • www.primestage.com