Janet Wide Awake: The Hedgepeth-Williams Dream

Written by David Lee White, Richard Bradford, and students at Hedgepeth-Williams Middle School of the Arts

Directed by Andrew Binger

March 31 - April 3 2022
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Group!

Mainstage Production
May 5 - May 22

Lyrics by Eloise Govedare
Music by Aleksandra M. Weil
Book by Julia B. Rosenblatt
Directed by Maria Patrice Amon

Illustration by Ebony H. Flag

In Group!, a world premier musical, six women from vastly different worlds come together to battle the great equalizer: addiction.

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Passage Theatre Company was established in 1985 by a group of theatre artists led by Founding Artistic Director Veronica Brady. These artists had one mission: to bring new, theatrical works to Trenton’s community through the production of high-quality, professional productions. Following a stint as Passage’s Education Director, June Ballinger took on the role of Artistic Director in 1995, and expanded Passage’s mission to include socially relevant work. During her 22-year tenure with Passage, Ballinger had an enormous impact in the company’s growth. In addition to growing the company’s budget, she founded Passage’s education program and sought out opportunities that would employ a more diverse and inclusive staff and artist pool.

In 2014, Damion Parran joined as Passage’s first Managing Director. Ballinger retired from her position in 2017, and C. Ryanne Domingues became Passage’s current Artistic Director. In 2021, Brishen Miller was promoted to be Passage’s new Managing Director, building on the foundation laid by Damion. The current Board and Staff of Passage is incredibly grateful to those who came before us for their outstanding work, care, and vision. We thank them for their enormous dedication to the Trenton community, and look forward to helping the company grow well into the future.

History of Hedgepeth-Williams Middle School of the Arts

In the 1940s, Gladys Hedgepeth and Berline Williams challenged the Trenton school formerly known as Junior High No. 2 and its policy of segregation after their children were not admitted due to their race. After a historic legal battle, the New Jersey Supreme Court struck down the widespread practice of segregation in New Jersey public schools.

From left to right_ Berline Williams, Attorney Robert Queen, Leon Williams, Gladys Hedgepeth, Janet Hedgepeth
Share Your Thoughts!

Stages Festival 2022 Audience Survey

This event is part of the New Jersey Theatre Alliance 2022 Stages Festival, a state-wide celebration of theatre. This year they are celebrating 25 years of free and discounted theatre programming in communities across New Jersey!

Please take this 4-minute survey for a chance to win 1 of 4 $50 VISA GIFT CARDS!

Only adults 18+ are eligible to win a VISA GIFT CARD.

Responses to this survey help us evaluate our program to ensure we are providing the best theatre experiences possible.

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Special Thanks


Thank you to the Princeton University Program for Community-Engaged Scholarship for supporting Passage Theatre’s education programming for the 2021-2022 season.

The Program for Community-Engaged Scholarship (ProCES) is an academic program that connects the curriculum with Princeton’s signature commitment to service. It fosters collaborative, change-oriented projects of an intellectual nature that benefit students, faculty members, and community partners.
Upcoming Community Events!

Passage Community Dialogue

Addiction & Recovery in Mercer County
Wednesday April 27th 6:30pm-8:00pm
at the Trenton Public Library

For each Mainstage Production, Passage holds a Community Dialogue session: an open discussion, taking place in a community space, where we collectively unpack and discuss a pressing issue related to the production. Passage Partners have the opportunity to sit on a moderated panel as an expert with other local leaders, to share information about how your organization intersects with these issues and how we can work together to tackle these issues with unity and equity. These events are proudly Co-Sponsored with the Trenton Free Public Library and The Princeton University Program for Community-Engaged Scholarship.

To view past Community Dialogues visit Passage Theatre Company on YouTube! @passagetheatrevideos

First Friday’s in Trenton
Director's Note

It's safe to say that the journey to this moment; a full production of *Janet Wide Awake*, was not easy. Mounting this play required tremendous effort from so many individuals, from the dedicated folk at Passage to conscientious staff members and leaders at Hedgepeth Williams school, Trenton Public Schools/Trenton Board of Education and of course the young people who have been engaged in this process for the past few months. To be entrusted to lead this creative process, was/is an honor and I am grateful to everyone who helped move this process along in one way or another. Many times during this process I questioned whether the task was entirely too much to pull off!

*Janet Wide Awake* serves as an affirmation of one of the most important elements of theatre, the ability to capture and present key moments of our collective history, oftentimes to a greater extent than our ‘traditional’ means. As a former middle school history teacher I often leaned on my own theatrical interests to engage young people. What better way to expose young people to these vital historical moments, like school desegregation, than a story like *Janet Wide Awake*? This brings the story to life, while providing a variety of entry points into further exploration and research. And most important, this story allows us all to feel a great sense of pride in our local history and stories. These stories need to be captured and preserved, for this and future generations to explore.

The very fact that this process felt too large a task to completed but is happening despite those many challenges, shows that the magic of theatre is still alive and well. Collaboration and collective power is unmatched. There's far too many people that have given of themselves to make this production a reality. Thank you. I’m most excited to watch this production and see so many of our young people shine. Bravo to each and every youth; your efforts and energy has truly enriched this experience!

Andrew Binger

*Director of Janet Wide Awake*
Passage Theatre Company
presents
Janet Wide Awake: The Hedgepeth-Williams Dream

Written by David Lee White, Richard Bradford and students at Hedgepeth-Williams Middle School of the Arts

Directed by Andrew Binger

Featuring
Richard Bradford*, Johanna Tolentino*, Monah Yancy, Renai Morgan, Cristal Castillo, Chris Werner, and students from Hedgepeth-Williams Middle School of the Arts

Scenic/Props Design Marie Laster
Lighting Design Victoria Davidjohn
Lighting Consultant Angela Myers
Dramaturgs Alison Isenberg, Robert McGreevey, Sabina Jafri
Costume Design Tiffany Bacon
Sound Design Anthony Martinez-Briggs
Production Stage Manager Melody Wong*
Assistant Stage Manager Ragan Hoffman
Technical Director Scott Hoskins

Thank You To Our Sponsors
This list acknowledges donations as of January 1, 2021. If your name has been omitted or misprinted, please accept our apologies and contact Brishen Miller at (609) 392-0766 x104.

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Passage Theatre's programming is made possible in part by the N.J. State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the NEA; the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation; The City of Trenton; The MAP Fund; Mary Owens Borden Foundation; NJ Arts and Culture Recovery Fund Grant; The Curtis McGraw Foundation; Covid-19 Relief Grant; PNC Bank; Virginia Brown Martin Fund of the Philadelphia Foundation; Janssen Pharmaceuticals; PACF; Trenton Arts Endowment Fund; The New Jersey Historic Commission; Otsuka Pharmaceutical; Mathematica Policy Research; The Bunbury Fund of Princeton Area Community Foundation; The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey; The Shubert Foundation; NJM Insurance Group; The James Kerney Foundation; Mary G. Roebling Foundation; Roma Bank, Church & Dwight; IAM Trenton Foundation; Educational Testing Service; Jacob Walton; and Eric Schultz.
Cast

Rich Bradford’ ................................................................................................................................................................................. Mr. Gilbert
Johanna Tolentino’ ........................................................................................................................................................................ Ms. Tolentino/Barbara
Renai Morgan.................................................................................................................................................................................... Janet
Cristal Castillo..................................................................................................................................................................................... Past Janet
Yanisha Pujols............................................................................................................................................................................................................. Cheryl
Monah Yancy.................................................................................................................................................................................... Mom/Mrs. Hedgepeth/Mrs. Williams
Chris Werner................................................................................................................................................................................... Dr. Loser
Josh Seigle...................................................................................................................................................................................... Leon
Randall Hernandez Romero................................................................................................................................................................ Eddie
Emily Rodriguez.............................................................................................................................................................................. April
Jonathan Taylor ........................................................................................................................................................................ Brady
Yans Martinez Gomez.................................................................................................................................................................. Alex/Detective
Brandon Taveras Fidel................................................................................................................................................................ Morgan/Conductor
Uri Gonzalez................................................................................................................................................................................ Angel
Justin Rivera................................................................................................................................................................................... Jessie
Justin Gudiel.................................................................................................................................................................................. Frankie
Troy Phillips ................................................................................................................................................................................ Past Leon
Kevin Thadal ................................................................................................................................................................................ Past Janitor
Nehemiah Gilbert........................................................................................................................................................................... Homer
AJ Crawford................................................................................................................................................................................ Run Crew/Janitor

Janet Wide Awake runs approximately 60 minutes with no intermission.

Production Team

Marie Laster................................................................................................................................................................................. Scenic & Prop Design
Victoria Davidjohn ........................................................................................................................................................................... Lighting Design
Angela Myers............................................................................................................................................................................... Lighting Consultant
Tiffany Bacon.................................................................................................................................................................................. Costume Design
Anthony Martinez-Briggs .......................................................................................................................................................... Sound Design
Melody Wong’ .............................................................................................................................................................................. Production Stage Manager
Alison Isenberg .......................................................................................................................................................................... Dramaturg
Robert McGreevey................................................................................................................................................................ Dramaturg
Sabina Jafri ................................................................................................................................................................................ Dramaturg
Ragan Hoffman............................................................................................................................................................................ Assistant Stage Manager
Scott Hoskins .......................................................................................................................................................................... Technical Director

This production operates under agreement with Actors’ Equity Association.
*Denotes members of the Actor’s Equity Association
Biographies

**Tiffany Bacon** (Costume Designer) began her career in radio in 1990 while attending Temple University. The university radio station WRTI sparked a lifelong love for radio and broadcasting in general. In addition to her dedication to the field of broadcasting, Ms. Bacon has served as a high school Drama/Dance/Broadcasting teacher, theater company founder, casting director, dancer, choreographer, costume designer, director, TV producer and actress. Tiffany is also dedicated to public health; she is a certified HIV Educator who worked with a STD/HIV prevention education project for African American teen girls called SIHLE (see-lay) and a STE and pregnancy prevention program for teens called Plain Talk. She is currently the Program Director at 96.1 FM/900AM (WURD). Ms. Bacon landed lead and/or supporting roles in August Wilson’s *Fences & The Piano Lesson*, *Ruined* by Lynn Nottage, *For Colored Girls* by Ntozake Shange and *Purlie Victorious* by Ozzie Davis just to name a few.

**Andrew Binger** (Director) is a dynamic educator, actor, director, consultant and arts administrator from Newark, NJ where he serves as the Producing Artistic Director of Yendor Theatre Company (YTC). YTC is dedicated to developing, producing and celebrating works by Black and Brown writers. Under his leadership YTC has staged presentations and productions all throughout the City of Newark, including the Newark Public Library, the Newark Museum, Rutgers Newark as well as public outdoor spaces in city neighborhoods. YTC is the theatre in residence at Newark Symphony Hall (NSH) and is currently partnering with them and WACO Theater Center in LA on a film adaptation of Richard Wesley's play *Black Terror*, directed by Richard Lawson. An accomplished educator, Andrew spent seven years as a history teacher in the City of Newark. Building on his experience working closely with young Black and Brown men, Andrew has delivered workshops on the impact of mentorship, curriculum diversification, creating inclusive classrooms as well as culturally relevant teaching practices for educators throughout the country. Through dedication to his work in the arts and education, Andrew strives to amplify the voices of those that have historically been denied opportunity and access, in turn, creating a more equitable, inclusive and vibrant society.

**Richard Bradford** (Gilbert/Playwright/Teaching Artist) is a playwright/actor based in Philadelphia. He is also a Company Member of Theatre In The X. For about a decade, he has performed in various theatre venues along the East Coast. He is also the playwright and performer of *To My Unborn Child, A Love Letter From Fred Hampton* a one man show about the revolutionary Fred Hampton.

**Victoria Davidjohn** (Lighting Designer) is a writer, director, and designer based in New York City. A recipient of the Martin A. Dale Fellowship and the New York Women’s Foundation Directing Apprenticeship, she is the Director of Trenton Youth Theater, a co-curricular program at Princeton University for Trenton Central High School students, and the Catalog Coordinator for CLASSIX, where she is working to digitize and centralize the work of Black playwrights pre-1990. Her upcoming roles include Associate Director for *Into the Woods* at NY City Center.

**C. Ryanne Domingues** (Artistic Director) joined Passage as its Artistic Director in 2017. Prior to that, she worked at a variety of theatres on both coasts, with most of her work being for Simpatico Theatre (which she co-founded in 2004) and the Wilma Theatre in Philadelphia. She received her MFA in Directing from the University of California, Irvine, and has been an adjunct professor at Rider University since 2018. Ryanne lives in Trenton with her husband, toddler, and dog.
Biographies

Scott Hoskins (Technical Director) has been working in the role of Technical Director for Passage Theatre for this season. He has worked as a union stagehand, and has recently retired from a 34 year career teaching Scenic and Lighting Design, as well as Film Production. Passage's mission is what has called him back to work, though. He has loved the challenges of troubleshooting systems in this school auditorium, and of facilitating the mounting of this important production.

Marie Laster (Scenic/Props Designer) is a set designer born and raised in Philly. Scenic design credits include Wrong River (Flint Repertory Theatre), TJ Loves Sally 4 Ever (Theatre Horizon), Untitled (Inis Nua Theatre), A Boy and His Soul (Kitchen Theatre), Cry it Out (Simpatico Theatre), Donna Orbits the Moon (Tiny Dynamite), Rachel (Quintessence Theatre). Marie received a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Philadelphia University and enjoys channeling her creative energy through the scenic design process. www.marielasterdesign.com

David Lee White (Playwright) is a playwright/performer/educator based in New Jersey. Through his years of training as a playwright and comedian, David has become a lifelong devotee of using the arts to build and celebrate. His collaborative work with theatres and educational institutions includes farce, musicals and verbatim theatre, all created in concert with local artists, young people and community members. For 14 years, he served alongside June Ballinger as Associate Artistic Director of Passage Theatre, where his Trenton-influenced work included If I Could, In My Hood, I Would..., Trenton Lights and Profiles. His most recent play at Passage was Fixed – a commission from the New Jersey Performing Arts Center’s Stage Exchange Program. Other plays produced at Passage include Blood: a Comedy and Slippery as Sin. His work with composer Kate Brennan on The Infinity Trilogy, a series of YA musicals, was the recent recipient of a MAP Fund award. The first musical in the series, ALiEN8, is now available through YouthPlays and can be seen this summer at Bucks County Playhouse and DreamWrights Arts Center. The next show in the series, Clean Slate, will be seen at Passage in 2023. David also teaches Advanced Improvisation, Theatre History and Dramatic Analysis at Drexel University, where he co-created the web-series Essential with director Bill Fennelly.

Anthony Martinez-Briggs (Sound Designer) (they/he) has a crush on fashionable sneakers, well cultivated herbs, and science fiction novels written by black femme authors. They are a Wilma HotHouse company member, Bearded Ladies Associate Artist, curator, teaching artist, performer, writer, and sound designer. They have been acknowledged by a few accolades and nominations here and there. They are also known as “Us”: emcee and original member of the band ILL DOOTS, seen on theater stages throughout the Philly area as well as music venues across the country. Their recent double album “The Mess/age” is available everywhere; follow @ILLDOOTS because there is more to come! Love to my family, ancestors, creator and my constant support, my wife, Tess.

Ranai Morgan (Performer) is a sophomore at Rider University currently studying political science. She has performed in numerous theater productions in her highschool career. She was also featured in many short films in cooperation with the James Halsey Foundation. Ranai was also part of a group called Trenton P.E.E.R.S in high school that went to different schools and performed different acts that focused on the topics that many youth are struggling with.
Biographies

**Angela Myers** (Lighting Consultant) is a Philadelphia-based lighting designer and educator who maintains a passion for new and experimental work. She has previously designed for other companies such as Simpatico Theater Company, InterAct Theatre Company, Theatre Horizon, Inis Nua, and Brown University.

**Johanna Tolentino** (Performer/Teaching Artist) got her first big break at the age of 16 on the feature film *Lean On Me* with Morgan Freeman. She’s booked Television co-starring and guest star roles on the Comedy Central pilot *Alternatino*, hit tv shows as *Orange is the New Black* (Netflix), *Do No Harm* (NBC), *Law and Order SVU*, and *The Blacklist*. Supporting roles in the short films, *Taking East New York* directed by Exile Ramirez and *El Pasaje* directed by Noel Nunez, as well as features *Keep in Touch* directed by Sam Kretchmar, and Sylvester Stallone's *Rocky* sequels, *Creed* directed by Ryan Coogler and *Creed 2*. She trained at the Puerto Rican Traveling Theater in New York, in audition technique, voice and acting before booking roles in regional theaters, regional commercials and industrial films in Atlanta, Philadelphia and New York City. Theatre credits include, Azuka Theatre, Gardenia in *Young Money*, Passage Theatre Paloma in *Morir Soñando* Rosa in *The Buddy Holly Story* at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, *Elliot: A Soldiers Fugue*, *The Conduct of Life* at Villanova University, *Latinolougues* at The Wilma Theatre, and various roles on off-off Broadway shows in New York.


**Monah Yancy** (Performer/Teaching Artist) is an actress from Trenton, New Jersey. She graduated from Texas Woman’s University with her B.A. in Performing Arts. This is her second time being on Passage Theatre stage as she played (Chimene) in the production of *Caged* in 2018. She is so proud to return for such an important piece that pertains to the history of Trenton and the necessary work that was done to fight segregation and make education equal for all! Currently Monah is working on *The Monahlogues*, a monologue book for black and brown artists and their daily living. Monah wants to thank family and friends for their continuous support of her in the arts. Thank you and continue to support the arts as it impacts every portion of our society.
Who We Are

Our Mission
Passage Theatre Company is committed to creating and producing socially relevant new plays and arts programming that deeply resonate with and reflect our community. Through professional productions, educational programs, and community engagement, we present diverse perspectives and new voices that inspire audiences and invigorate the art of live theatre.

Passage Staff Members and Consultants

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Victoria Davidjohn Artistic Assistant
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