njpac
arts education



j.d. williams

the david g. berger master class series

about j.d. williams

Darnell "J.D." Williams is an actor, writer, producer and director known for his starring roles in series such as *The Wire* and *Oz.* Williams's journey began right in the city of Newark, New Jersey, where he was born and raised. From an early age, he showed a natural gift for performance. He attended Newark Arts High School, where he began developing the acting skills that would launch his professional career.

Williams got his start by taking small roles and building his reputation one performance at a time. He made guest appearances on major television shows like *The Sopranos* and *Homicide: Life on the Streets.* These opportunities helped him gain experience on professional sets and learn the craft of acting. His big break came when he was cast as Kenny Wangler on the HBO prison drama *Oz,* where he appeared in the first four seasons. He later landed the role as Bodie Broadus on HBO's critically acclaimed series *The Wire.* His performance in this role left a lasting impression, and he committed to the character by spending time in Baltimore's neighborhoods at night so that the performance would feel authentic. Williams cemented his reputation as a dedicated and process-based actor.

Williams continues to make meaningful career choices. He has taken on a wide range of roles that show his versatility as an actor. His roles have included a wounded Iraq War veteran dealing with PTSD in the indie film *Surviving Family,* to a recurring role on the long-running drama *The Good Wife,* and a starring role in the television series *Saints & Sinners.* He has also appeared in music videos for R&B and hip hop artists, where he brings his energy and prescence to the screen in short-form visual storytelling.



accolades

- Series regular as Kenny Wangler in HBO's *Oz* (seasons 1 – 4)
- Starring role as Bodie Broadus in HBO's *The Wire*; widely regarded as one of the greatest TV dramas ever made
- Featured performer in the films *Pootie Tang* (2001) and *Blood Brother* (2018)
- Recurring role as Dexter in CBS's *The Good Wife* (2011 – 2015)
- Series cast member in *Saints & Sinners*
- Over 20-year professional and acting career across television, film and stage
- Alumnus of Newark Arts High School

vocabulary

Acting Techniques

- **Stanislavsky**
  Developed the idea of "emotional memory," encouraging actors to draw on real personal experiences to fuel their performance

- **Chekhov**
  Built on Stanislavsky's work by adding imagination and physical expression as tools for finding a character

- **Meisner**
  Focused on listening and reacting truthfully in the moment, often summarized as "living truthfully under imaginary circumstances"

- **Practical Aesthetics**: A modern technique developed by playwright David Mamet and actor William H. Macy that focuses on the actor's specific, playable action in every scene and asks the question: What are you actually doing to get what you want?

Clarity
The ability to communicate your character's thoughts and feelings in a way that is easy for an audience to understand

Comedic Acting
A style of performing focused on humor, timing and lightness

Dramatic Acting
A style of performing focused on dealing with serious, emotional and high-stakes subject matter

Intention
The reason behind what a character says or does in a scene. Every line an actor delivers should have a clear intention: What does this character want? Why do they want it?

Medium
The platform or format in which acting takes place, including the stage (theater), film (movies), television and commercials. Different mediums require different skills

Melodramatic Acting
A heightened, exaggerated style of performance where emotions are expressed very intensely. This is often seen in older films and theatrical traditions

Monologue
A solo speech performed by one actor. In a monologue, the actor speaks directly to the audience or to another character (who remains silent) and reveals something important about who their character is



seed questions to consider

1. When someone asks you "tell me about yourself as a performer," what would you say? What words would you use to describe your strengths, your style and what you love about performing?

2. What do you think separates a good performer from a great one? What are you currently doing to grow your own skills?

3. If you had to choose a monologue to perform right now, what character would you choose and why? What is that character's intention? What do they want, and how would you make that truth feel real for your audience?

resources

About J.D. Williams
Wikipedia | J. D. Williams
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._D._Williams

IMDB | J. D. Williams
imdb.com/name/nm0412907

Monologues
Backstage | "The Actor's Guide to Performing a Monologue"
backstage.com/magazine/article/how-to-perform-a-monologue-5067

Backstage | "5 Tips to Help Young Performers Execute the Perfect Monologue"
backstage.com/magazine/article/tips-help-young-performers-execute-perfect-monologue-12306

New York Film Academy | "5 Tips For Choosing An Audition Monologue"
nyfa.edu/student-resources/5-tips-for-choosing-an-audition-monologue

Dramatics | "A Monologue Should Serve You"
dramatics.org/a-monologue-should-serve-you

The Monologue Database
Free library of film and theater monologues
monologuedatabase.com

Interviewing and Marketing Yourself with Confidence
Spotlight | "Confidence in Auditions"
spotlight.com/news-and-advice/the-essentials/how-to-audition-with-confidence

Backstage | "5 Tips for Confidence in Auditions"
backstage.com/magazine/article/tips-confidence-auditions-9394

Chicago Academy for the Arts
"6 Tips for a Successful Acting Audition"
chicagoacademyforthearts.org/news/6-tips-for-a-successful-acting-audition

Impact Arts
"Believing in Yourself as an Actor: 6 Tips for Success"
impactarts.org/blog/believing-in-yourself-as-an-actor-6-tips-for-success

Acting Techniques
Backstage | "The Stanislavsky Method of Acting"
backstage.com/magazine/article/the-definitive-guide-to-the-stanislavsky-acting-technique-65716

Backstage | "8 Acting Techniques (And the Stars Who Swear by Them)"
backstage.com/magazine/article/acting-techniques-stars-swear-11321

Acting Coach Scotland
"The Major Acting Techniques of the World"
actingcoachscotland.co.uk/blog/major-acting-techniques-world

Theatrefolk | "9 Techniques for Students to Memorize Their Lines"
theatrefolk.com/blog/9-techniques-for-students-to-memorize-their-lines

NYFA | "6 Simple Tips for Memorizing Lines"
nyfa.edu/student-resources/6-simple-tips-for-memorizing-lines

Backstage | "How Do Actors Memorize Lines?"
backstage.com/magazine/article/backstage-experts-answer-ways-quickly-memorize-lines-6719

Types of Acting
Film Connection | "The Main Types of Acting Explained"
filmconnection.com/blog/2019/11/11/types-of-acting-explained

Backstage | "13 Types of Acting Techniques"
backstage.com/magazine/article/acting-techniques-mean-1534

bring the arts to your school

In-School Residencies
NJPAC teaching artists come right to your school to teach the performing arts to your students. Our super-flexible in-person residencies are designed to meet your needs and you'll have a dedicated program manager to help you every step of the way. It's the perfect program to keep your students creating, connecting and expressing themselves through the magic of the arts.

Professional Development
Calling all educators! Expand your teaching skills, deepen your curriculum and give yourself a creative boost in NJPAC's forward-thinking professional development workshops. Our virtual PD programs are for teachers all the way from pre-K to high school and include hip hop, dance, storytelling, theater, music and more. Not only will you learn something... you'll also have fun and be inspired.

arts training for students

Saturday Programs
NJPAC's Saturday programs are geared towards students at every level — from those who dream of starring on Broadway to those who are still learning their scales. Students work with professional artists to build technique and develop their own creative style in hip hop, jazz, theater, musical theater and symphonic band.

Summer Programs
Want to begin to explore the arts? Or immerse yourself in the study of one genre? Then join us at NJPAC next summer in our immersive programs that spark the creativity in every child through the study of music, dance and theater.

NJPAC Arts Education Berger Masterclass Series team

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contact us!

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please email our team at **artseducation@njpac.org**.
Or visit **njpac.org/education**

Major support for the David G. Berger Master Class Series is provided by the Berger Family Foundation

Additional support provided by:

MERCK FOUNDATION · Prudential Foundation · VICTORIAFOUNDATION · women@njpac · discover jersey arts

Leadership support for NJPAC Arts Education programs is provided by the David G. Berger Family Foundation, The Berson Family, Judy and Stewart Colton, Toby and Leon Cooperman, Edmund A. Hajim, The Izzo Family, New Jersey State Council on the Arts, Pershing Square Philanthropies, Jon and Lizzie Tisch, P. Roy and Diana Vagelos, Joyce and George Wein Foundation, and The Josh Weston Family.

NJPAC Arts Education programs are made possible through the generosity of our endowment donors: The Arts Education Endowment Fund in honor of Raymond C. Chambers, The Joan and Allen Bildner Family Fund, Toby and Leon Cooperman, Albert+ and Katharine Merck+, The Sagner Companies/The Sagner Family Foundation and Wells Fargo.

Additional annual support for NJPAC Arts Education programs is provided by Judith Bernhaut, The Blanchette Hooker Rockefeller Fund, Broadridge Financial Solutions, Inc., Jennifer A. Chalsty, Devils Youth Foundation, The Hearst Foundations, Don Katz & Leslie Larson+, F.M. Kirby Foundation, M&T Bank, McCrane Foundation, Inc., care of Margrit McCrane, NJ Advance Media, PNC Foundation, David & Marian Rocker, Steven and Beverly Rubenstein Charitable Foundation, Tracy and Theodore Spencer, Turrell Fund and additional generous donors.