

BILLY PORTER

b. September 21, 1969

AWARD-WINNING BROADWAY ACTOR

“Pride is a protest. It’s a march, not a parade.”

**He is an Emmy,
Grammy and Tony
Award-winning
actor and singer.**

Billy Porter is an Emmy, Grammy and Tony Award-winning actor and singer whose roles are frequently LGBT-themed. He was the first openly gay black man to win a Primetime Emmy Award in a lead acting category.

Porter was born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His father abandoned the family, and his stepfather sexually abused him. His mother suffered from a neurological disorder. A flamboyant child, Porter was suspected of being mentally ill and frequently bullied.

Porter found his escape in performing. He graduated from the Musical Theater Program at the Pittsburgh Creative and Performing Arts School. He earned a BFA in drama from Carnegie Mellon University School of Drama in 1991 and completed a professional certificate in screenwriting from UCLA.

Porter received his first major national award 1992, winning Male Vocalist Grand Champion on the television program “Star Search.” In the following decade, he established himself as a rising star, performing on Broadway in the revival of “Grease” (1994), Off Broadway in “Myths and Hymns and Songs for a New World” (1995), and at Pittsburgh Civic Light

Opera in “Dreamgirls” (2004). He also starred in several films, including the gay-themed “Twisted” (1996) and in “The Broken Hearts Club” (2000), which portrayed stories of gay-romance.

In 2005 Porter performed a one-man autobiographical show, “Ghetto Superstar: The Man That I Am,” at Joe’s Pub, a noted Manhattan performance space. “Ghetto Superstar” earned Porter an Outstanding New York Theater nomination at the 2006 GLAAD Media Awards.

In 2013 Porter originated the principal role of Lola, the cabaret drag queen, in the hit Broadway musical “Kinky Boots.” The same year, he captured both the Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Awards for Outstanding Actor in a Musical and the Tony Award for Best Actor in a Musical. In 2014, as part of the cast performance of “Kinky Boots,” he won a Grammy Award for Best Musical Theater Album.

In 2018 Porter began starring as the character Pray Tell in the television series “Pose” about 1980s New York ballroom culture. In 2019 the role earned him a Golden Globe nomination and a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama Series. The Emmy made him the first gay black man to be nominated and to win in a lead acting category. On the red carpet, Porter’s often wild, gender-bending fashion statements have added to the media attention he attracts.

Porter lives in Manhattan with his spouse, Adam Smith.

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