

# ANDRÉ DE SHIELDS

b. January 12, 1946

ACTOR &  
SINGER

*“The top of the mountain is the bottom of the next, so keep climbing.”*

**He is a Broadway legend and the winner of every major award for his craft.**

André De Shields is a queer award-winning actor, singer, and dancer, and an acclaimed choreographer and director. A Broadway legend whose career spans a half century, De Shields has won every major honor and award.

One of 11 children, De Shields was raised in Baltimore, Maryland. He received his high school diploma from Baltimore City College in 1964. De Shields attended Wilmington College, where he began stage acting. He transferred to the University of Wisconsin-Madison, earning a degree in English literature in 1970. Twenty years later, he received his master’s degree in African American studies from New York University.

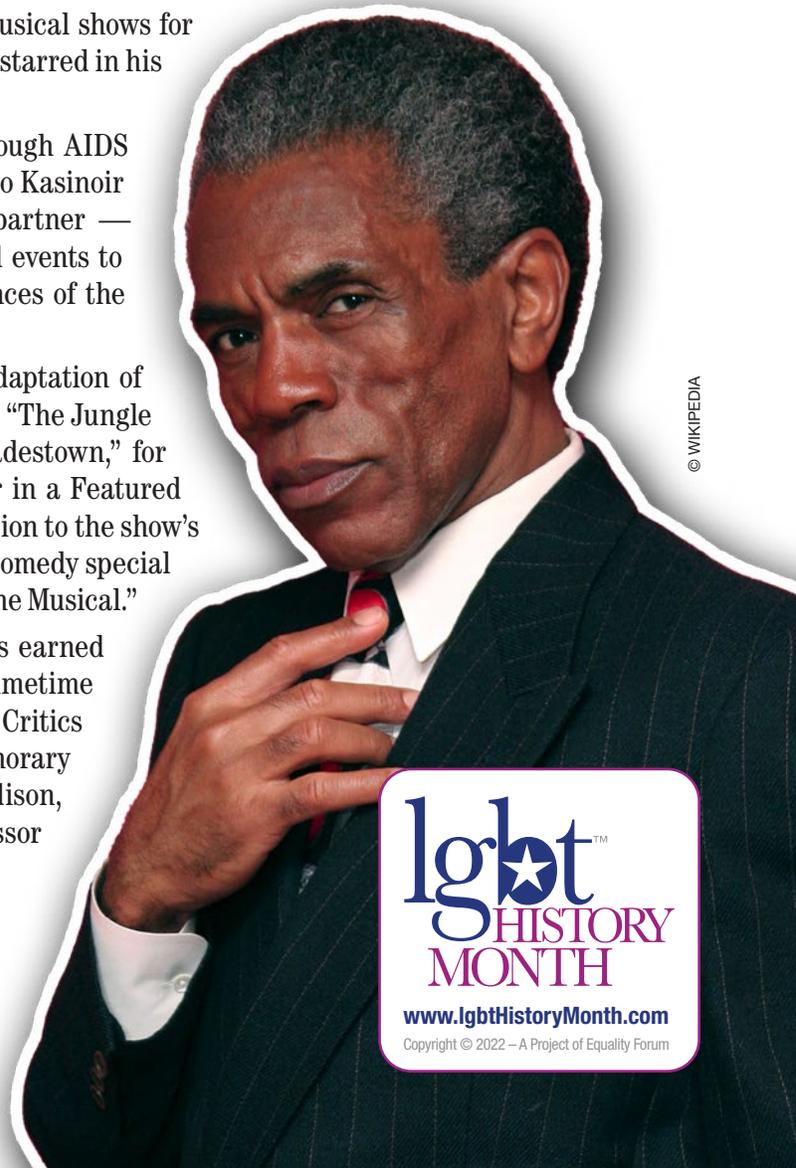
De Shields’s career took off almost immediately. In 1969 he joined the cast of “Hair” in Chicago. He made his Broadway debut in 1973 as Xander in “Warp!” In 1974 he secured the title role in “The Wiz,” which moved to Broadway the following year, winning seven Tony Awards.

In addition to performing, De Shields choreographed two musical shows for Bette Midler. In 1984 he wrote, directed, choreographed and starred in his own musical revue, “André De Shields’ Harlem Nocturne.”

In 1991 De Shields was formally diagnosed with HIV. Although AIDS robbed him of his life partner, mentor and collaborator, Chico Kasinoir — along with countless other loved ones and a second partner — De Shields is a longtime survivor. He participates in annual events to raise money for people living with HIV and reminds audiences of the support he and Kasinoir received when Kasinoir was dying.

De Shields’s many theatrical credits include the musical adaptation of “The Full Monty,” “Ain’t Misbehavin,” “Black Impressionism,” “The Jungle Book,” “The Fortress of Solitude” and the hit musical “Hadestown,” for which he earned both the 2019 Tony Award for Best Actor in a Featured Role in a Musical and a 2020 Grammy Award for his contribution to the show’s album. While cast in “Hadestown,” he also appeared in the comedy special “John Mulaney & the Sack Lunch Bunch” and in “Ratatouille the Musical.”

In addition to his Tony and Grammy Awards, DeShields has earned countless other nominations and honors, including a Primetime Emmy, a National Black Theatre Festival Award, an Outer Critics Circle Award, an Obie and an Audie. He received an honorary doctorate in fine arts from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and has served as an adjunct and distinguished visiting professor at NYU’s Gallatin School of Individualized Study.



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