

John Douglas Thompson



Mr. Thompson was bitten by the acting bug in 1986 when he left his job in computer sales to study at Trinity Repertory Company in Providence, R.I. and subsequently at Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, Mass., becoming one of the major players in both those companies. He then became a member of the American Repertory Theater from 1999 to 2002. He played Othello for all three companies.

Mr. Thompson has been based in New York since then. His breakout year was 2009, when he played the title roles in “Othello” and Eugene O’Neill’s “The Emperor Jones” in New York. He won a Lucille Lortel Award and an Obie Award for “Othello” and a Drama Desk Award nomination for “The Emperor Jones.” The 57-year-old actor has continually returned to New England. He played Louis Armstrong in “Satchmo at the Waldorf” at Shakespeare & Company and the Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven, Connecticut before taking the play to New York where he won a Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle award.

He may be best known to local audiences for portraying the boxer Emile Griffith in “Man in the Ring” for the Huntington Theatre Company, for which he won the 2019 Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Performance by an Actor in a Large Theater. This past summer he starred as Prospero in the Commonwealth Shakespeare Company’s production of “The Tempest,” for which he is again nominated for a Norton Award. He recently wrapped up his acclaimed portrayal of Shylock in “The Merchant of Venice” by Theatre for a New Audience in New York and at the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Thompson has also won plaudits for his work in television and movies, most recently for “Mare of Easttown” with Kate Winslet and Julian Fellowes’ “The Gilded Age,” both for HBO.