

PRE-BROADWAY  
WORLD PREMIERE

# BEE TLE JUICE

*The Musical. The Musical. The Musical.*

## AN IN-DEPTH STUDY GUIDE



The National Theatre  
Washington D.C.

## ***Beetlejuice: The Musical***

Pre-Broadway World Premiere

The National Theatre

October 14–November 18, 2018

Broadway, March 2019

Music & Lyrics by Eddie Perfect

Book by Scott Brown & Anthony King

Directed by Alex Timbers

Based on the Geffen Company Picture, with a story by Michael McDowell and Larry Wilson

Packet prepared by Dramaturg Linda Lombardi

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### **DON'T SAY THE B WORD.**

It's showtime, folks! Meet Lydia Deetz, a strange and unusual teenager obsessed with the whole "being dead thing." Lucky for Lydia, her new house is haunted by a recently deceased couple and a degenerate demon who happens to have a thing for stripes. When Lydia calls on this ghost-with-the-most to scare away her insufferable parents, Beetlejuice comes up with the perfect plan, which involves exorcism, arranged marriages and an adorable girl scout who gets scared out of her wits.

PARENTAL DISCRETION IS ADVISED. Contains strong language, mature references, and a lot of the crazy, inappropriate stuff you would expect from a deranged demon.



For almost 200 years, The National Theatre has occupied a prominent position on Pennsylvania Avenue – “America’s Main Street” – and played a central role in the cultural and civic life of Washington, DC. Located a stone’s throw from the White House and having the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site as its “front yard”, The National Theatre is a historic, cultural presence in our Nation’s Capital and the oldest continuously operating enterprise on Pennsylvania Avenue.

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**“Beetlejuice made ‘weird’ look cool. It bridged the cultural gap between the cult movie and the studio movie, making a genre-movie quirkiness acceptable to the mainstream.”**

— *New York Times* film critic Glenn Kenny

## DRAMATURGICAL ESSAY

Thirty years ago, when the film *Beetlejuice* was first released, the horror film genre was at its peak. Classics like *The Shining*, *Gremlins*, and *Poltergeist* were all released in the 1980s. Franchises still in existence today, like *Friday the 13th*, *Halloween*, *Living Dead*, and *Nightmare on Elm Street* films, kept audiences scared to death and loving every minute of it. Out of that love for a good scare, came a new style—the horror-comedy—and *Beetlejuice* tops the list.

On the surface, Tim Burton’s cult classic looks like a simple, formulaic ghost story. But look closer. For the first time in a horror movie, the ghosts are haunted by the living; death isn’t something to be feared, but laughed at; and the family you choose understands you better than the family you were born into. Thematically, *Beetlejuice* explores the significance of home, family, death, and the meaning of life; all under the deceptively simple guise of the disconnect between parents and teenagers.

So, how do you re-envision a cult classic for 2018, and still give fans what they crave?

The touchstones that solidified *Beetlejuice* into pop culture remain: sandworms, shrunk heads, a possessed dinner party singing “Day-O.” The Maitlands are still too nice for their own good, Delia is still a perverted deviant, and the afterlife is just as bureaucratic as ever. Under the direction of Alex Timbers, however, the writers of the musical have made the outsiders—Lydia and Beetlejuice—their primary focus, fleshed out their characters, and expanded their relationship.

In the film, Beetlejuice is on screen for all of 17 minutes. Not so on stage. While Lydia was once simply a misfit teenager (self-proclaimed “strange and unusual”) who liked to wear black, she is now haunted by the death of her mother. By opening with the funeral of Lydia’s mother, we immediately connect with this sad, lonely girl. Simultaneously, we feel how hard it is for her and her father to communicate. When Lydia sings about being invisible, it is impossible to dismiss her suffering, anger, and isolation. The Maitlands may serve as surrogate parents, and Lydia as the daughter they never had, but it’s not enough to ease the pain. Over the course of the show, we watch Lydia make some bad choices and learn from them, face her grief rather than run from it, find her way back to her family, and discover a very powerful voice.

The musical may still be called *Beetlejuice*; but, this time around, Lydia’s the star.



# SYNOPSIS

## The Movie

After a car crash, Adam and Barbara Maitland return home unable to remember how they got there. As they try to retrace their steps, they discover they didn't survive the crash and are, in fact, dead.

When the Deetz family—Charles, his wife Delia, and their daughter Lydia—move into the house and begin redecorating, Adam and Barbara embrace their ghost status and try to scare the new family away. Armed with only a copy of *The Handbook for the Recently Deceased*, however, they are pathetically unsuccessful. They seek advice in the afterlife and are told about a demon named Beetlejuice, who they can summon by saying his name three times. But they're warned that he's more trouble than he's worth. When all else fails, the Maitlands summon Beetlejuice, and quickly regret their decision. After Lydia finds the Handbook, she is able to see and talk with Adam and Barbara and they become friends. Together, they are able to rid themselves of Beetlejuice.

Charles is convinced he can make a fortune promoting the town as a haunted tourist attraction, however, his boss wants proof there's something supernatural happening. Encouraged by their interior decorator, Otho, Charles and Delia host a seance one night; but accidentally perform an exorcism. With Adam and Barbara in danger of disappearing forever, Lydia summons Beetlejuice to save them. The price for his help this time...Lydia has to marry him.

Beetlejuice saves Adam and Barbara who, in turn, save Lydia from Beetlejuice, and expel him to the afterlife's tedious waiting room. The Deetz's can now see Adam and Barbara and the two families live in harmony.

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## The Musical

Barbara and Adam Maitland are the happiest, most loving, perfect couple. The only thing missing from their marriage is children—but maybe someday. Unfortunately, a fatal accident makes that dream impossible. Barbara and Adam are ghosts trapped in their own house.

After the funeral for Lydia's mother, her father, Charles, a real-estate agent, moves the family to Connecticut for a change of scenery. They are accompanied by a life coach Delia, whose job is to cheer Lydia up and get her to see life as a glass half-full. Her unofficial role, however, is as Charles' mistress.

Soon after moving into their new home, Lydia discovers the house is haunted. But Barbara and Adam Maitland are the friendliest, least scary ghosts one could hope to meet. In fact, when she first approaches, Lydia tells them not to be scared of her!

The Maitlands and Lydia want the same thing—for the Deetzes to go back where they came from. They join forces in the hopes of scaring Charles into leaving. There's only one problem—Barbara and Adam are so likable and nice, that they couldn't scare a fly. Charles becomes inspired to turn the entire town into one big haunted house amusement park.

Beetlejuice to the rescue!

If Lydia says his name three times, he'll be released and will wreak havoc on the house, guaranteed to scare Charles off. The Maitlands try to keep her from him, but Lydia is too intrigued. Distraught and about to do something drastic, Lydia summons Beetlejuice and all hell breaks loose—literally.

Will the Maitlands ever get their peaceful home back? Will Lydia and her father find a way to reconnect, or has he lost her forever? Will anyone be able to contain Beetlejuice before he destroys them all?

## Production/Development History

The musical is based on the 1988 film, *Beetlejuice*, directed by Tim Burton and starring Winona Ryder, Geena Davis, Alec Baldwin, and Michael Keaton in the title role.

*Beetlejuice* was inspired by Michael McDowell's and Laurence Senelick's annoying neighbors from the mid-1980s. Rather than write a ghost story about a family haunted by ghosts and trying to get rid of them, McDowell flipped the script and wrote about ghosts wanting to rid their home of the living family that had moved in after their death. McDowell met Larry Wilson, who was fresh off of working at Paramount, and together they started working on what would become *Beetlejuice*.

Originally, the story was much darker, and the character of Beetlejuice was more of a homicidal maniac than enjoyable trickster and sleaze. When the script was done, Wilson gave it to an executive and friend at Universal who called him a few days later and asked, "What are you doing with your career?" Next, Wilson gave it to an executive at the Geffen Film Company, who purchased the rights to the script that same week.

Director Tim Burton was finishing filming *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* for Warner Bros, Geffen's parent company. He read the script and signed on immediately. The studio hired Warren Skaaren to help polish the script, and he fleshed out Beetlejuice's powers, helped humanize the characters, and lightened up the ending (originally Lydia dies in a fire and lives out eternity with the Maitlands).

When they finally got around to casting, Burton wanted Sammy Davis, Jr. to play Beetlejuice. David Geffen insisted on Michael Keaton, who initially turned them down but was won over by Geffen and the dark comedy of the script. During shooting, Burton encouraged improvisation and Keaton found the quirks, voice, and mannerisms that became famous.

The success of the film inspired a cartoon television show, video games, amusement park rides, and a comic book series. The film has grown to cult classic status in the past 30 years. A movie sequel still comes up in the Hollywood grapevine. Ryder, Keaton, and Burton have all said they'd return—if the script was right and they were all together.

In a revamped narrative, the musical version of *Beetlejuice* fleshes out Beetlejuice as well as the young, goth character of Lydia Deetz, and focuses on the relationship between the two outsiders.

## SETTING

A house in the fictitious town of Winter River, Connecticut. And the Netherworld!

## MAIN CHARACTERS

**BEETLEJUICE** — demon of the Netherworld, bio-exorcist, the ghost with the most

**LYDIA DEETZ** — teenage daughter of Charles, mourning her dead mother, obsessed with death, feels alone, misunderstood, unwanted

**ADAM MAITLAND** — ghost, married to Barbara, all-around nice guy

**BARBARA MAITLAND** — ghost, married to Adam, a kind woman, regrets never being a mother

**CHARLES DEETZ** — father of Lydia, real estate developer, a widower

**DELIA** — a life coach hired by Charles to help Lydia through her mourning

## ARTISTIC TEAM

Tony Award nominee Alex Brightman as 'Beetlejuice,' two-time Lortel Award nominee Sophia Anne Caruso as 'Lydia,' Tony Award nominee Kerry Butler as 'Barbara,' Tony Award nominee Rob McClure as 'Adam,' Obie Award winner Adam Dannheisser as 'Charles,' two-time Drama Desk Award nominee Leslie Kritzer as 'Delia,' Jill Abramovitz as 'Maxine Dean' and 'Mrs. Shoggoth,' Danny Rutigliano as 'Maxie Dean' and Kelvin Moon Loh as 'Otho'.

The ensemble includes Tessa Alves, Johnny Brantley III, Ryan Breslin, Brooke Engen, Abe Goldfarb, Eric Anthony Johnson, Elliott Mattox, Mateo Melendez, George Merrick, Ramone Owens, Devin Roberts, Presley Ryan, Kim Sava, and Dana Steingold.

BEETLEJUICE is directed by two-time Tony Award nominee Alex Timbers with choreography by Connor Gallagher, an original score by Eddie Perfect and a book by Scott Brown and Emmy Award nominee Anthony King.

# She's 17, sardonic and Ready to Sing in 'Beetlejuice'

New York Times | Oct. 12, 2018 • [www.nytimes.com/2018/10/12/theater/sophia-ann-caruso-beetlejuice.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/12/theater/sophia-ann-caruso-beetlejuice.html)



Like it or not, [Sophia Anne Caruso](#) has a type. “Dead girls. Sad girls. Raped girls,” she said mordantly. “Seems kind of like my thing.”

Ms. Caruso is just 17. Sweet? Not exactly. In Jennifer Haley’s “The Nether” she played an online avatar who invites her own rape and murder. In Enda Walsh and David Bowie’s “Lazarus” she was the otherworldly innocent singing “Life on

Mars.” In David Harrower’s “Blackbird,” her Broadway debut, she appeared in the final scene as the stepdaughter of a convicted sex offender. Need a creepy ingénue and an all-out triple threat? Get in line.

In “Beetlejuice,” a musical adaptation of the 1988 Tim Burton horror comedy which begins previews on Oct. 14 at Washington’s National Theater and will transfer to Broadway in March, Ms. Caruso will originate the role of Lydia, the goth-struck, ultra-haunted, black-is-how-I-feel-on-the-inside teenage girl. (It’s the part that made a star of a permafrown Winona Ryder.) It requires, the show’s director Alex Timbers said, “someone who inhabits darkness and hope and wit and humor and vulnerability. She can do all that.”

Lydia is the role Ms. Caruso has been waiting to play her whole not especially long life. It’s her first Broadway lead. Her first almost adult part. Then again, she’s been almost adult from the get-go.

“I never really had a childhood,” Ms. Caruso said, on a recent afternoon just before the company left for Washington. Slender, soft-spoken, guarded, Ms. Caruso has the look of a small and very serious bird. A bird with a passion for platform boots.

She grew up in Spokane, Wash., the daughter of Deena Caruso, who owned several clothing and jewelry stores, and Steve Caruso, a former professional golfer who now works for a senior living company. The youngest of three, Ms. Caruso would vie for attention, singing, dancing, ordering her parents to the couch and saying, “Watch me! Watch me! Watch me!”

She began to audition for children’s theater when she turned 7. At 10, she was cast in a local production of “Ruthless! The Musical” — a parody version of the tyke chiller “The Bad Seed,” the only role she could find “that was crazy and wild,” she said.

During a technical rehearsal her adult co-star apparently had a heart attack and died on the other side of her entrance door. When she learned that the show would be revived in New York she wrote to the producers with kid sang-froid, acknowledging the tragedy and assuring them that she knew all the songs.

Around that time Ms. Caruso arrived in Manhattan to audition for an “Annie” revival — a New York Times photographer captured her rehearsing on the sidewalk. She asked to move to New York. Her mother agreed, even though it meant “giving up everything I had worked my entire life for,” said Deena Caruso, speaking from her home in New Jersey a few days later. “We have a saying in our family,” she added. “It’s called, ‘Roll the dice.’” The family rolled.

Ms. Caruso landed a television role on “Smash” and then a part in the live “The Sound of Music.” She was cast in Susan Stroman’s “Little Dancer” at the Kennedy Center, playing the younger sister to Tiler Peck’s ballerina.

She was grateful for these roles. But they weren’t necessarily the roles she wanted. “Even from a young age I had very finicky taste,” she said. “A lot of kid roles are not authentic,” she added.

During “Little Dancer,” she took the train to New York to audition for “The Nether,” a difficult, often harrowing play in which characters visit a virtual reality where they rape and kill. Ms. Caruso, dressed in high-necked Victoriana, was their victim. Not that she played it that way.



Winona Ryder and Michael Keaton in the “Beetlejuice” film, directed by Tim Burton.  
Credit: Warner Brothers Pictures, via Photofest

**It requires, the show's director Alex Timbers said, "someone who inhabits darkness and hope and wit and humor and vulnerability. She can do all that."**

"There was a rigor that she had," Anne Kauffman, the play's director, recalled. "She's ambitious and not just professionally. She's ambitious for life. She is hungry for depth and understanding and exploration." That hunger led her to "Lazarus," to "Blackbird."

Ms. Caruso talks every script over with her parents and her mother researches "every single person that's involved to make sure that she is safe," Deena Caruso said. Ms. Caruso's parents know that their daughter is drawn to what Deena Caruso calls, "things that are just edgy." They go to the edge with her, walking her home from the stage door after.

"Beetlejuice" is the first show she has rehearsed away from her parents. "Last night was the first night that she's ever been alone," Deena Caruso said. "She's in D.C. on her own." She sounded as though she were crying.

I had worried, maybe unfairly, about that never-had-a-childhood stuff. But Ms. Caruso said that childhood never interested her. "I just never got along with kids my age," she said. "I just didn't relate."

Her colleagues and family describe a preternaturally poised and diligent performer. Both Ms. Kauffman, "The Nether" director, and Alex Brightman, who stars with her in "Beetlejuice" and who'd supplied the temporary tattoo she wore that morning ("a watercolor of a flower situation," Ms. Caruso said), used the exact same phrase to describe her: "more mature than any of us." Condescend at your own risk.

Every so often Ms. Caruso wonders if she'll wake up at 98 with regrets, but she doesn't think so. I asked her, mostly joking, if she'd miss never having gone to prom — I guess I was thinking of "Pretty in Pink" — and she looked at me with high disdain and said, "That kind of thing — I just — no."

Does she go out with friends? Not really. What does she do for fun? She reads. She watches old movies. She plays with her dog. She bakes. She'd prepared treats for the cast that morning, vegan and gluten free. (At this point, her personal press representative, who had been hovering in a corner, broke in to assure me that Ms. Caruso did have age-appropriate friends, that she did have fun.)

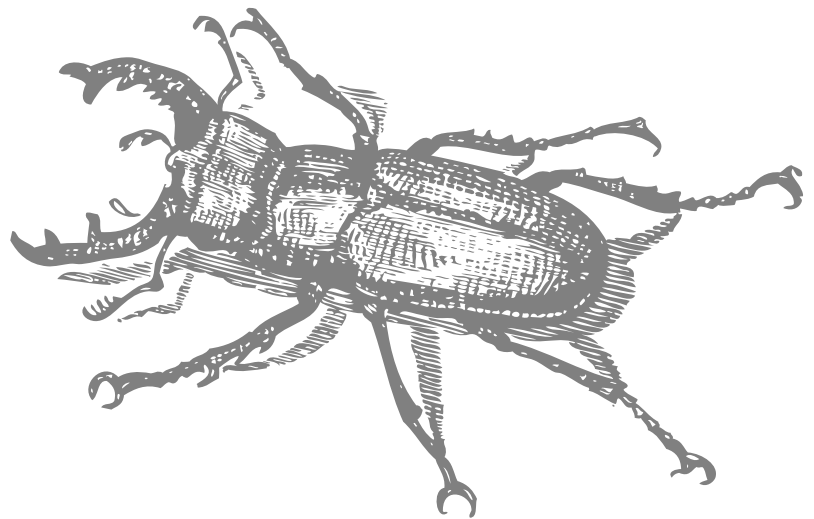
But if Ms. Caruso is preternaturally mature, she is also very much a teenager with a teenager's sarcasm and sensitivity to phoniness. (Several colleagues noted her eye rolling, affectionately.) She teases Mr. Brightman about his age, he's an ancient 31. He teases her about her seriousness. If something in a script feels forced or — her word — "cheesy," she makes it known.

She rolled her eyes when she received the casting breakdown for "Beetlejuice." Movies made into musicals? Cheesy. And an all-male creative team? Ugh. "It's hard when you have men writing young women or women in general," she said. But the script won her over. She thought it did right by Lydia, by her struggles. "I look at her and my heart just wrenches," she said.

What's in that script? I can't really tell you. The production team would only share three quotations; at least one was from the movie. But here's how Lydia announces herself: "Greetings, ghosts. My name is Lydia Deetz. Do not be afraid."

So yes, this Lydia is brave, sardonic, soulful, honest, resilient, wise beyond her years. And in one scene, Ms. Caruso revealed delightedly, she gets to handle a chain saw.

"Lydia and I have a lot in common," she said. "That's unusual. I don't normally have a lot in common with my characters. Normally they're dead."



# You don't have to say 'Beetlejuice' three times to meet the star of the Broadway-bound musical

Washington Post | October 10, 2018

[www.washingtonpost.com/express/2018/10/10/you-dont-have-say-beetlejuice-three-times-meet-star-new-musical](http://www.washingtonpost.com/express/2018/10/10/you-dont-have-say-beetlejuice-three-times-meet-star-new-musical)

Alex Brightman is an actor aware of his budding reputation — and slightly bemused by it.

The 31-year-old's Broadway breakthrough came in 2016, when he received a Tony nomination for filling Jack Black's shoes in the kinetic "School of Rock" musical based on the film. Now he's taking on a role made iconic by Michael Keaton, in a musical adaptation of the 1988 hit movie "Beetlejuice."

Brightman doesn't need to hear the question before he interjects and asks it himself: "Are you that guy now? Are you just going to be the guy that does all of the movie roles?" The irony, in Brightman's mind, is that he's not particularly well suited to channeling Black, Keaton or anyone else, really.

"I love to create from scratch, so when I can, I do," Brightman says. "I'm not a good impersonator, so I'm not worried that I'll be too good at being the guy that can mimic."

"Beetlejuice" kicks off a world-premiere five-week run at The National Theatre on Sunday, with the show slated for a March opening on Broadway. While the title character famously has just 17 minutes of screen time in Tim Burton's twisted fantasy-comedy, which focuses on a recently deceased couple who ask the demon for help haunting their former home, Brightman's Beetlejuice is the driving force of the musical.

In a revamped narrative, this "Beetlejuice" focuses on the relationship between the meddlesome, manic fiend and Lydia, the goth teenager whose family moves into the haunted house. The character of Beetlejuice walks a tightrope as a villain the audience can't help but find endearing in his quest to wreak havoc on the mortal world, with Brightman's obvious amiability embedded in the role.

"He's always got a really good attitude," "Beetlejuice" director Alex Timbers says of his star. "When everyone is exhausted, he's the first one leaping up onstage to get something done. I find him very inspiring, and I think the company does too."

Brightman, who didn't meet Black until "School of Rock" had been on Broadway for months, hasn't spoken to Keaton about his new part. ("I'm not good at reaching out," he says, "mainly because of my past of reaching out to girls I thought liked me and getting shot down every time.") But Brightman thinks Keaton would appreciate his take, which has been colored by moments he improvised throughout various readings, workshops and rehearsals over the past two years.

"It's very different, extremely different than Michael Keaton," Brightman says. "It could be like Beetlejuice's younger brother. There's still a voice, there's still a thing, but it is actively not the one in the movie."

Brightman's creative instincts have extended from the stage to the page, as he currently is co-writing musical adaptations of the 2010 film "It's Kind of a Funny Story" and the 1986 children's novel "The Whipping Boy." Reflecting on how the "Beetlejuice" team shaped the character around Brightman, Timbers says: "For somebody like Alex to be such a funny writer, it helps so much. He gets what the authors are going for, he's able to collaborate with them, with me, with such sophistication of understanding all angles of the craft."

Brightman has stretched his ambition to television as well, having sold a family sitcom to NBC last fall. The show didn't get made, but Brightman was undeterred: He's now sitting on four "fully fleshed out" pitches for comedy series, plus an idea for a horror anthology in which each episode focuses on a common recurring nightmare.

"I have the type of anxiety that wakes you up and says you're not doing enough, even when I'm in a show like this," Brightman says. "Anxiety is a serious condition that I have my ups and downs with, but anxiety and depression have led me to finding ways to combat it — and what combats it is work."

After seeing the way "School of Rock" opened doors for him, as an actor and as a writer, Brightman hopes "Beetlejuice" can be the springboard that gets some of his projects off the ground. If that means being seen by some as "the guy that does all of the movie roles," that's fine by him.

"When I started in New York 15 years ago, it was like, 'I don't care if they like me or not — I just want them to notice me,'" Brightman says. "If you just keep your head down and work, you will have zero time to go, 'Is what I'm doing worth it?' And you'll just have a product at the end of it. Good or bad, you'll have done something."

"That's been my whole career. No one has to like anything that I do, but you can't deny that I've done it."





# Forget the clichés. The director behind the new 'Beetlejuice' musical is known for breaking the rules.

Washington Post | September 5, 2018

[www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/theater\\_dance/alex-timbers-brings-his-sly-vision-to-tim-burtons-beetlejuice/2018/09/04/85c7e542-a86b-11e8-b76b-d513a40042f6](http://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/theater_dance/alex-timbers-brings-his-sly-vision-to-tim-burtons-beetlejuice/2018/09/04/85c7e542-a86b-11e8-b76b-d513a40042f6)



What advanced form of *Homo sapiens* directs one massive new musical with their right hand and another with their left? For a better understanding of this rarest of theatrical breeds, please gather around for a closer inspection of the artistically ambidextrous specimen known as Alex Timbers.

There Timbers was in Boston earlier this summer, assembling the immense (and as things turned out, critically acclaimed) Broadway tryout of the stage version of “Moulin Rouge!,” reported to cost an eye-popping \$28 million. And now, barely three weeks after that behemoth had its official opening, here Timbers was, shuttling between rehearsal rooms in midtown Manhattan, overseeing the initial stages of the multimillion-dollar musical adaptation of a second potential giant, “Beetlejuice,” which begins a world-premiere run at Washington’s National Theatre on Oct. 14.

It wasn’t so much the timing chosen by Timbers — who turned 40 last month and previously shepherded offbeat hit plays and musicals such as “Peter and the Starcatcher,” “Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson” and “Here Lies Love” — as the timing choosing him. “Moulin Rouge” took five years to go from drawing board to the stage of the refurbished Colonial Theatre in Boston. “Beetlejuice,” based on the 1988 Tim Burton film that starred Michael Keaton and Winona Ryder, has been in the works with Timbers in charge for eight years. And it so happened the two projects, with two sets of producers, gelled at the same time.

That’s showbiz, at least as it is experienced by a man with an extremely fast metabolism. Although he admits to having been “super fried” by the end of “Moulin Rouge!” — which is expected to move to Broadway during the 2019-2020 season — Timbers seemed freshly recharged on this weekday in late August. Alex Brightman, who starred in Andrew Lloyd Webber’s “School of Rock” on Broadway and has been cast as the spectral trickster Beetlejuice, had just walked out of the studio on Eighth Avenue as Timbers excitedly pulled out renderings of David Korins’s set designs for the show.

“Everything I work on becomes a passion project,” Timbers said as he described the vision for the adaptation, with music by Eddie Perfect and a book by Anthony King, erstwhile artistic director of the comedy collective Upright Citizens Brigade, and former New York magazine drama

critic Scott Brown. Passion was easy to come by in the case of “Beetlejuice,” a movie Timbers long loved, about a haunted house and the yearnings of its inhabitants from two dimensions: the netherworld and the mortal one. “I felt everything in its DNA was right for this medium,” he said.

The test of that notion places Timbers back on a perch to which he’s now growing familiar, as the point person of a big-deal show with lots of hope and money riding on it. Born in New York and raised in the suburbs of Chicago, Timbers went to Yale, where he majored in theater studies and film, and developed a gift for irreverent inventiveness: On graduation weekend, he staged a “Brechtian” version of “How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying” that winked at some of its more sexist aspects. After college, he and two fellow Yalies, Aaron Lemon-Strauss and Jennifer Rogien, founded the giddily modernist theater troupe Les Freres Corbusier, which created the hilarious “A Very Merry Unauthorized Children’s Scientology Pageant.” Later came “Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson,” which was directed by Timbers and went on to a Broadway run.

With a burgeoning reputation for exploding the clichés of musical theater, he made another career leap at off-Broadway’s Public Theater in 2013 with the exhilarating “Here Lies Love,” with a story set to David Byrne and Fatboy Slim’s music, about Imelda Marcos, wife of Philippines dictator Ferdinand Marcos. Because of its kinetic format — the audience moves around a disco-like space with the musical’s events — it has yet to find a suitable space on Broadway. The only major disappointment on his résumé is the lumbering Broadway musical version of “Rocky,” which closed after six months in 2014.

He’s since come back strong, directing Nick Kroll and John Mulaney’s comedy hit “Oh, Hello” on Broadway and riding a new wave of expectation with the Boston reviews of “Moulin Rouge!” Will “Beetlejuice” scare up more excitement? It was his notion, he said, to build the nexus of the “Beetlejuice” musical more strongly around Beetlejuice and Lydia, the emo teenager (played here by Sophia Anne Caruso) who moves into the house that he haunts. “They carry each other and carry the audience,” Timbers said. “You’ve got a girl who wishes she was dead and a demon who wishes he was alive.”

Timbers glanced again at the images by Korins of the set for the house, which will metamorphose throughout the musical, and pronounced himself pleased to be enmeshed in yet another big lift.

“‘Beetlejuice’ feels like a completely different challenge than anything I’ve done before,” he said. “And I am always thinking, ‘What do I want to see on a stage in this version that would delight me?’”

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM 1988

- George H. W. Bush was elected the 41st President of the United States.
- The Iran-Iraq war is officially declared over, with an estimated one million lives lost.
- Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North and Vice Admiral John Poindexter are indicted on charges of conspiracy to defraud the United States in the Iran-Contra Affair.
- The U.S. Surgeon General states that nicotine is as addictive as heroin and cocaine.
- Other popular movies that year: *Die Hard*, *The Accused*, *Big*, *Coming to America*
- The Washington Redskins won Super Bowl XXII.
- Students at Gallaudet went on strike when the Board selected a hearing person as university president. All demands were met and Dr. I. King Jordan became the first deaf president of Gallaudet.

## TRIVIA

- *Beetlejuice* was Tim Burton's second film. He has gone on to be considered one of the most innovative, creative directors working today.
- Burton was a Disney animator before directing his first film, *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* (which saw its own TV spin-off). His next film would be *Batman*, starring Michael Keaton in the title role.
- Screenwriter Michael McDowell was a horror novelist before breaking into film.
- Burton originally wanted Sammy Davis, Jr. to play Beetlejuice, but producer David Geffen insisted on Michael Keaton.
- The film won the 1989 Oscar for Best Makeup.
- Alternative titles included *House Ghosts* and *Scared Sheetless*.
- Betelgeuse (aka Beetlejuice) is the ninth brightest star in the night sky and can be found in the Orion constellation.
- Beetlejuice himself actually only appears in 17.5 minutes of the film.
- The sequel was originally *Beetlejuice Goes Hawaiian*. Over the years, that setting has faded, but *Beetlejuice 2* is still a rumor that continues to surface.
- The musical has been in the works for eight years.



## High School Ticket Program

The *High School Ticket Program* is The National Theatre's newest community program, aimed at enhancing the education of high school students by providing invaluable access to Broadway productions. In the program's initial year, The National Theatre partnered with Young Playwrights' Theatre and Duke Ellington School of the Arts to bring their most dedicated students to the theatre to engage with the shows in our "Broadway at The National" Season. A key component of this program is the opportunity for the students to talk with theatre professionals, who give insight into the industry. In the 2017 – 2018 Season, the students spoke with the creatives of *Mean Girls*, production management for *Les Misérables*, an arts management professional for *Something Rotten*, and a dramaturg for *Waitress*.

For the 2018 – 2019 season, The National Theatre welcomes Young Playwrights' Theatre and Duke Ellington students back to our historic theatre for *Beetlejuice*, *A Bronx Tale*, and *Bat Out of Hell*.

## THE ORIGINAL DAY-O



<https://youtu.be/nN5IIEcbXpM>

## MODERN VERSION



<https://video.vogue.com/watch/best-looks-new-york-fashion-week-spring-2019-ready-to-wear-gigi-hadid-bella-hadid-video?fbclid=IwAR3tqkkVbG6hQdKyb-v-GHLPYizLkeJmMOCJ273XEZEWMKsR5OOLjf3CYo>

### DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- 1) Why do you think the writing team changed the focus of the script to be more about Lydia and Beetlejuice? How did that change effect you?
- 2) What scenes, lines, or moments were most memorable for you and why?
- 3) Change is a theme throughout the play, both for the characters and for the house. What were three significant changes you noticed a character/ characters go through?
- 4) For students who know the film, what major differences in the plot of the story did you notice between the movie and the musical?
- 5) Recreate the "Day-O" dinner song/dance with a song of your choice. Who are the dinner guests? Who are the ghosts? If you were in control of someone, what movement and choreography would you come up with?



**The National Theatre**  
Washington D.C.