TINA – THE TINA TURNER MUSICAL

The National Theatre
October 4–23, 2022
Broadway, November 2019

Music & Lyrics by Eddie Perfect
Book by Katori Hall, Frank Ketelaar, & Kees Prins
Directed by Phyllida Lloyd
Packet prepared by Dramaturg Leayne C. Dempsey

HER VOICE IS UNDENIABLE. HER FIRE IS UNSTOPPABLE. HER TRIUMPH IS UNLIKE ANY OTHER.
An uplifting comeback story like no other, TINA – The Tina Turner Musical is the inspiring journey of a woman who broke barriers and became the Queen of Rock ‘N’ Roll.

One of the world’s best-selling artists of all time, Tina Turner has won 12 Grammy Awards and her live shows have been seen by millions, with more concert tickets sold than any other solo performer in music history.

Featuring her much loved songs, TINA – The Tina Turner Musical is written by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Katori Hall and directed by the internationally acclaimed Phyllida Lloyd.

THE TINA TURNER MUSICAL begins October 4, 2022 and is recommended for ages 14 and up.
The show runs 2 hours and 40 minutes, including one intermission.
Tina Turner means love to me. 
Tina Turner means resilience. 
Tina Turner means the sky is the limit.”

Katori Hall, #MYTINA

As a young Black girl who was raised by African-American parents that grew up in the 1950s and 1960s, I had heard of the name Tina Turner. I knew of her big blonde hair, and her gold beaded and sequined costume, and her lightning fast head jerking choreography. I'd make believe I was one of her dancers, and I’d perform the infamous “doo, doo, doo, doo” choreography of “Proud Mary” hoping that I could master Tina’s precision without getting dizzy. I never did. For me, “Proud Mary” was fun, and fast, and an open invitation to master the movement of the Queen of Rock ‘N’ Roll. Her records were right next to Diana Ross and Michael Jackson in my living room. She was an icon; and I knew it.

Yet, I didn’t know the woman. I didn’t know her journey, and the story of her triumph. This is what TINA – The Tina Turner Musical does so well. It bears witness to the personhood, and wholeness of Tina Turner. In addition to serving up Tina’s all time greatest hits like, “Simply the Best,” “What’s Love Got to Do With It,” and “Private Dancer,” the musical is brutally honest about what she had to overcome to become the woman she is today.

The musical first opened in London on the West End in 2018 with actress Adrienne Warren playing the lead role. In 2019, the show made its Broadway debut. Frank Ketalaar and Kees Prins wrote the early draft of the musical’s book, and playwright Katori Hall transitioned to writing the book during the development process. On Broadway, the show received 12 Tony Award nominations and it won the Tony for Best Musical Performance for Adrienne’s portrayal of Tina Turner.

TINA – The Tina Turner Musical spans four decades of Tina Turner’s life, and four decades of American history. At the top of the show, we meet Anna Mae, who will later be known as Tina Turner, and her parents who are sharecroppers. Almost immediately, we are confronted with these characters who are haunted by the effects of slavery and the Jim Crow laws. Domestic violence is introduced in the early moments of the play, and continues to be a cyclical conflict that Tina Turner encounters throughout her relationship with Ike Turner.

As the musical continues on, the blonde haired, sequined, fast dancing icon becomes incredibly human, and incredibly real. We realize that the story of Tina Turner is a story about freedom. Freedom to love oneself, freedom to believe in oneself, and freedom to express oneself. It’s a story we all can relate to, and I believe it’s why so many of us find Tina Turner so captivating. Even if you didn’t grow up practicing her choreography, or listening to her music, this show will introduce you to Tina. The whole Tina. And by the final guitar riff, you too, will have witnessed the majesty that is the Queen of Rock ‘N’ Roll.

Leayne C. Dempsey, Dramaturg
TINA TURNER

With a career that has spanned more than half a century, the legendary rock performer Tina Turner is one of the world’s best-selling artists of all time. She first rose to fame in the 1960s partnering with her then-husband Ike Turner, achieving great acclaim for their live performances and catalog of hits. Later, Turner enjoyed an international solo career with her 1984 album Private Dancer earning her widespread recognition and numerous awards including three Grammys. She went on to deliver more chart-topping albums and hits, receiving a further eight Grammy Awards and reportedly selling more concert tickets than any other solo performer in history. The revered singer was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1991 and again as a solo artist in 2021. She is often voted as one of the most successful female rock ‘n’ roll artists of all time.

KATORI HALL (Book)

Memphis native Katori Hall is a Pulitzer Prize and Olivier Award-winning playwright. Her works include The Mountaintop, Hurt Village, Our Lady of Kibeho and The Hot Wing King, which premiered in spring of 2020 at the Signature Theatre, rounding out her three-play residency. She is also the creator and EP of the hit TV drama “P-VALLEY,” which will return in 2022. Hall is a proud member of the Ron Brown Scholar Program and the Coca-Cola Scholar Program.

WHO’S WHO?

MORE OF THE CREATIVE TEAM

Frank Ketalaar and Kees Prins Book
Phyllida Lloyd Director
Anthony Van Laast Choreographer
Mark Thompson Set & Costume Designer
Nicholas Skillbeck Music Supervision, Arrangements & Incidental Music
Bruno Poet Lighting Designer
Nevin Steinberg Sound Designer
Jeff Sugg Projection Designer
Campbell Young Associates Hair, Wigs & Make Up Designer
Alvin Hough Jr. Music Director
Anne Shuttlesworth Music Director
Ethan Popp Orchestrator
The Telsey Office Casting
James L. Nederlander Producer
Stage Entertainment Producer
Tali Pelman Producer

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

Anna Mae Bullock The artist who later becomes known as Tina Turner
Richard Bullock Anna Mae’s father
Zelma Bullock Anna Mae’s mother
Alline Bullock Anna Mae’s sister
Gran Georgeanna (GG) Anna mae’s grandmother
Ike Turner Musician, Song Writer, Tina Turner’s husband between 1962–1978
Craig Turner Son of Turner and Raymond Hill
Ronnie Turner Son of Tina Turner and Ike Turner
The Ikettes Backing singers and dancers for Ike and Tina Turner
Raymond Saxophone player with Ike Turner’s Kings of Rhythm
Nicholas Skillbeck Music Supervisor
Rhonda Graam Manager of IKE & TINA TURNER Revue, and later TINA TURNER
Phil Spector Record Producer
Roger Davies Manager of Olivia Newton-John, and later Tina Turner
John Carpenter Record Executive at Capitol Records
Martyn Ware Member of the band Heaven 17, who worked with Tina’s early solo recordings
Terry Record Producer
Erwyn Bach Marketing Executive at Capitol Records, later Tina Turner’s partner, they married in 2013.

The word book refers to the narrative portion of the musical. It includes the un-sung lines and the stage directions. It can also be known as the libretto.
**THE BACKDROP: “NICE AND ROUGH”**

In theatre, the backdrop is a word used to refer to the setting and the historical context of a show. Quite literally, a large painted piece of muslin was used to establish the setting of earlier shows.

In this musical, the backdrop and historical context is constantly shifting and changing. There are many people and places that Tina Turner encounters that are pivotal to her rise as the Queen of Rock ‘N’ Roll. Each moment seems to propel Tina Turner toward her destiny.

1. **NUTBUSH, TENNESSEE**
   a. “Up there, acting like you ‘catching the spirit’.”
      i. The phrase “catching the spirit” is a phrase often used in the Black charismatic Pentecostal Church tradition. It refers to the moment when a person is inspired by the Holy Spirit. Oftentimes, this inspiration manifests through rapid movement of the body during praise and worship. It may include running in place or around the room, clapping, stomping, singing, shouting, etc. It is a movement of praise.
   b. “Don’t blame me for wanting a job for coloured folk that ain’t pickin’ cotton.”
      i. Sharecropping
         1. Sharecropping is a type of farming in which families are permitted to rent a portion of a landowner’s land in exchange for a portion of their crop at the end of the year. After slaves were freed, and the Civil War ended, many freed Black people remained on their slaveowner’s land as sharecroppers.
   c. “Oh, the preacher man wanna beat on his wife.”
      i. The 1950s and Domestic Violence
         1. At the time, domestic violence was not considered a crime. It was considered private family matters. The idea that the man of the household had the right to keep his wife and children in order was a norm. Check out The Good House Wife Guide from 1955.
   d. “You know they say the boy sang this song white.”
      i. Elvis Presley was known as the King of Rock ‘N’ Roll. Born in Tennessee, like Tina, Elvis’s career began in 1954. His music was called rockabilly music, and it was a combination of country and blues music. Elvis’s music became very popular. He was known for many hits like, “Heartbreak Hotel.” Although Elvis did not steal music from Black artists, he did record songs written by Black artists. Some argue that Elvis’s success in the music industry was due to his cultural appropriation of the Black musicians of his time.

2. **CLUB MANHATTAN**
   a. The Kings of Rhythm with Ike Turner
      i. An American music group led by Ike Turner. Although the Kings of Rhythm with Ike Turner recorded the song Rocket ‘88, Turner’s band was not credited for the song, and instead his saxophonist was credited for the song and its success.

3. **STUDIO—IKE AND TINA TURNER REVUE**
   a. The Ike and Tina Turner Revue
      i. After joining Ike’s band, and Ike suggesting a new name for her, Tina and Ike became known as the Ike and Tina Turner Revue.
4. **Motel Mississippi—Night**  
a. “Oh, they got rooms, they just ain’t got no rooms for us.”  
i. **The Jim Crow South**  
   1. The Jim Crow laws enforced racial segregation in the American South for 75 years, beginning in the 1890s. The laws segregated almost every aspect of life including “Whites Only” and “Colored” only buses, trains, schools, hotels, restrooms, and restaurants. The phrase “Jim Crow” comes from a blackface performer known as “Jump Jim Crow”. “Jump Jim Crow” was performed by a White performer, Thomas Dartmouth “Daddy” Rice, who painted his face Black as a caricature of an African-American person.  
   2. Lynching was execution by a mob, often through hanging. It was a gruesome method used to terrorize the African-American community.

5. **Somewhere & Everywhere**  
a. Cocaine and drug use increased through the late 1960s and 70s. At the time, cocaine was not labeled as an addictive drug. Many significant Rock ‘N’ Roll artists passed away due to drug use.

6. **Another Hotel—Another Night**  
a. Buddhists believe each person has a Buddha nature. This nature refers to their ability to overcome any obstacle with wisdom and tenacity. The chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo is used to remind, to encourage, and to affirm this ability within oneself, especially in times when it feels hard to do so.

7. **Phil Spector Studio**  
a. “They’re calling you James Brown in a skirt.”  
i. James Brown, was known as the “Godfather of Soul.” He was a singer, songwriter and bandleader. James Brown was known for his artistry in funk and soul music.

8. **Capitol Records**  
a. “The comeback I bet on is hers.”  
i. Capitol Records was, and is, one of the most successful record labels for recording artists. At the time, it was the North American subsidiary of its British label known as EMI.

9. **Abbey Road Studios**  
a. Abbey Road Studios is known as the world’s first recording studio. Historically, many African-American recording artists fled the segregation and racism of the U.S. in search for artistic freedom in Europe. Although they could not fully escape those issues overseas, many African-American artists recorded at Abbey Road Studios.
   
b. **Listen to this playlist that celebrates the Black artists who recorded at Abbey Road Studios.**

10. **Private Dancer Tour (1985)**  
a. The Private Dancer Tour was considered Tina Turner’s big comeback as a solo artist. Due to the success of her album, *Private Dancer*, Tina played to sold out arenas.
There are four occurrences of the use of the N-word in this show. It is important to understand the context in order to grasp the nuances that surround its use.

The N-word is used in the following moments of the show when:

- Richard uses it to refer to Zelma
- Ike uses it to refer to Raymond when Tina’s pregnancy is revealed
- A police officer uses it to refer to, and threaten, Ike and the band in a parking lot
- A studio executive refers to Tina after her Abbey Road Studios showcase

The N-word has both evolved and remained the same. Some members of the African-American community have reclaimed the word, and have used it to take back its oppressive power over them. And yet, the word still stings and pains the ears of many it falls on. There is a historical “blood at the root” of the word that remains stained.

Nicholai La Barrie, Resident Director of the London production of Tina explains:

It’s extremely important to understand the context for both the characters in the scene(s) AND for the place and time. We need to understand the power dynamic between the characters.

The historical context of the Jim Crow laws, slavery, and the American South (including the sheer vastness of the geographical area) is all at play: there were areas where black people were allowed to live. They were considered by many whites as sub-human—something to be controlled, maintained and kept in their place. A good analogy would be a roof which kept threatening to come off or break loose, and so it would be hammered back with nails to keep it from doing so. Those who were scared of black people claiming the rights to which they were entitled would therefore be keen to oppress them further to prevent what they saw as attacks on their own rights or superiority.

In rehearsals we spent a lot of time talking about the use of the N word. Many of the cast felt uncomfortable with the word, but as storytellers, it’s our responsibility to communicate the fullness of the horror and the triumph of Tina, and her peers, in this atmosphere and in this environment. You should feel uncomfortable, but as actors we know we are not those people—we are communicating the fullness of the whole scene.

In the scene in the parking lot, (between Ike and the police) the dramatic tension comes from the completely opposing views of each other’s world. The oppressor and the oppressed operate on entirely different planets.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read the poem and the essay below. After reading, reflect on the following questions.

- How does the tone change in the last stanza of the poem? Is there a character in the musical that you think may share the same sentiment?
- The author of the essay, Allen Francis, was 18 years old when he wrote this essay. Do you think this essay still resonates with teens in 2022? How would you rewrite this essay if you were the person writing it?

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Incident
BY COUNTEE CULLEN
(For Eric Walrond)

Once riding in old Baltimore, Heart-filled, head-filled with glee,
I saw a Baltimorean
Keep looking straight at me.

Now I was eight and very small,
And he was no whit bigger,
And so I smiled, but he poked out
His tongue, and called me, “Nigger.”

I saw the whole of Baltimore
From May until December;
Of all the things that happened there
That’s all that I remember.
"What's up, nigga?"
"You crazy nigga, you buggin'!"
"See you later, nigga!"

It was a word used to make Blacks feel inhuman and worthless. That's the way my older brother and his friends used to talk to each other. I think I was around 7 when my older brother became my center of attention. He and his friends sounded so cool, and that strange, interesting word “nigger” would come up in their conversations so much. So, to be like my older brother and his friends, the word “nigger” or today’s preferable spelling “nigga” became a part of my vocabulary. It was how my family and friends addressed each other—seriously, humorously, and otherwise. My brothers, sisters, and I used it freely and I never thought twice about it.

Even though I used it all the time, the word had no real meaning for me. I just substituted it for phrases such as “What’s up?” and “Hey you.”

The Real Meaning of the Word
It wasn’t until fourth grade that I learned the racist meaning of the word. A chubby, naive kid named Al asked his teacher, “Is there still prejudice in the South?” My teacher looked at me, perplexed, and said, “Prejudice is everywhere.” That’s when I started to take Black History Month seriously and learned about the struggles of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and all those other prominent figures in the civil rights movement. I saw all those movies and documentaries that showed Blacks being whipped, beaten, attacked by dogs and having fire hoses opened on them during sit-ins and demonstrations.

It shocked me so, so much that it would take me too long to go into how. And then, in the midst of all that racist violence, I heard that word uttered. It was a White racist speaking down to a Black, or talking about Blacks, I don’t even remember exactly.

But I remember how it sounded. “You nigger.” or “those niggers.” Even though it was on TV and not directed at me personally, it sounded horrible. I could hear the evil in the word. That’s when I understood what it meant. It was a word used to make Blacks feel inhuman and worthless. Still, it wasn’t until I was in my mid-teens that I tried to make myself stop saying it. I decided it was wrong for me to use it when it meant such a terrible thing. I didn’t try to stop others, I just stopped myself. No one even noticed.

For Blacks Only
Once, when I was a freshman in high school, we discussed the word in class. The only conclusion we came to was that it was OK for Blacks to call other Blacks “niggas” but if a White person was unfortunate enough to utter this word to a Black person, that White person would be very sorry.

By this point I was very confused about the whole matter. I talked to family and some friends about the situation, but it always came back to the same thing. Black on Black was OK, but White on Black was a no-no. Gradually, I started using it again.
Maybe peer pressure or everyone else using the word is what brought me back, but I feel that is just an excuse. On some level, I had accepted the word. It was part of me. For better or for worse using the word “nigga” has become a part of Black culture, or at least some segments of it. Now that I don’t actively try to stop using the word, it just comes out naturally.

My Own Set of Rules
I do still watch who I use it around. I think everyone has a set of rules on when to use the word and when not to, the way many people do with curse words. I use it in my neighborhood and around people I know. I don’t use it around people I don’t know or who I think may take offense at it, and I try not to use it in professional places. Like I wouldn’t come up to my editor at New Youth Connections and say, “You know, a funny thing happened to me on the train over here, me and my niggas...”

At least that’s what I thought. But then one day at the NYC office, I was talking to my friend Frank. Frank is heavily into hip-hop music like me, and wears the latest hip-hop clothing. I was talking to him about my neighborhood and I let the N-word slip out. Right away, I looked around to see if anyone had heard because I did not want to offend anyone.

What really shocked me was the realization that Frank is White. I had used that Blacks-only term in conversation with a White person. I don’t know if Frank noticed; if he did he didn’t say so. But I sure felt funny about it.

Am I a Hypocrite?
I had gotten so relaxed talking with a friend about our favorite music that I didn’t see his color. Maybe because I didn’t want to or maybe because it just wasn’t important to me at the time. I was talking with my friend, not my White friend. Did that make me a sellout to the race? What the hell was wrong with me?

After that, I was more confused than ever.

It’s funny to me that a White calling a Black “nigga” is a crime, but sometimes the reverse is accepted. On the single “Award Tour” by A Tribe Called Quest there is a bonus track called “The Chase Part II” featuring a rapper named Consequence who says in a verse that he’s “been through more Growing Pains than that nigga Michael Seaver.”

I’ve also heard some Puerto Ricans at my school use the term—I remember distinctly a Puerto Rican girl referring to her man as “my nigga.” And at least some Puerto Ricans I know don’t seem to get offended when they are called niggas. Still, part of me continues to think it isn’t proper for someone outside the race to use the word. But then I think I may be a hypocrite since I used it so casually when talking to a White person.

Still Monitoring My Mouth
And there’s still the question of why Black people use it to begin with. I wish I knew. Maybe we have decided to take control of this otherwise bad word to use for our own purposes. Maybe we want to give it a new meaning. Or maybe we cling to the word so as to never forget what the Black race went through. Maybe it makes us feel good to have become the users of the word and not the victims of it.

As for me I still go on, monitoring my mouth, hoping for an end to my mixed feelings towards the word, wishing I could either feel completely comfortable using it or totally banish it from my vocabulary. I feel like the rapper Q-tip in the song “Sucka Nigga”: “Yo, I start to flinch as I try not to say it, but my lips is like the ooh-wap as I start to spray it.”
The moment when Tina is saying a Buddhist chant occurs multiple times in the show. More specifically, there are three moments that are almost identical. One moment occurs at the top of the show, at the end of Act One, and toward the end of the show.

**Directions:** Compare and contrast the three moments. **Highlight** the dialogue in each scene. **Circle** the lyrics in each scene. **Underline** the lines or stage directions that ARE NOT repeated in the other moments.

- What is the significance of this scene occurring three times in the show?
- How is each moment different?
- What do we discover about Tina's journey through the show after examining these scenes?

Note: Wondering what this Buddhist chant means? Take a look at the The Backdrop section earlier in this guide.
“SIMPLY THE BEST”

Tina Turner paved the way for many artists that we enjoy today. Take a look at how Tina Turner has influenced the lives of the artists below.

**Beyoncé**
As one of the top vocal artists of our day, Beyoncé takes much inspiration from Tina Turner. From her high energy performances, to her flawless stage costumes, the Queen Bey channels her inner Queen of Rock ‘N’ Roll.

**Jennifer Lopez**
Jennifer grew up listening to Tina Turner’s music. Jennifer has shared that Tina Turner has been her inspiration. She even posted on Instagram about being in the #TinaZone during one of her performances.

**Rihanna**
Rihanna is also a survivor of domestic abuse. Like Tina Turner, Rihanna is known for her resilience, her mesmerizing performances, and her ability to redefine her career into something greater than it was before.

**Fantasia Barrino**
Fantasia has recreated popular Tina Turner songs such as “Proud Mary.” It is no doubt when she sings that, Fantasia is inspired by Tina Turner. Fantasia’s raspy tone is a direct nod to the rasp that all of Tina Turner’s fans have come to love.


