



THE
NATIONAL THEATRE
FOUNDATION



Tina

THE TINA TURNER MUSICAL

STUDY GUIDE

TINA – THE TINA TURNER MUSICAL

The National Theatre
January 24–26, 2025

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

Back by Popular Demand! 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. Set to the pulse-pounding soundtrack of her most beloved hits, this electrifying sensation will send you soaring to the rafters.

One of the world’s best-selling artists of all time, Tina Turner won 12 Grammy Awards and her live shows were 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.

TINA – The Tina Turner Musical is recommended for ages 14+. The production includes loud music, strobe lighting, haze, gun shots, scenes depicting domestic violence and strong language.



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. The non-profit National Theatre Foundation oversees the historic theatre and serves the DC community through three free outreach programs, *Saturday Morning Live!*, *Community Stage Connections*, and *Teens Behind the Scenes*. These programs provide the greater Washington area with access to high quality performing arts experiences while promoting and employing local and regional artists.

This guide was created for the Teens Behind the Scenes program. *Teens Behind the Scenes* is made possible thanks to the generosity of the Jacqueline Badger Mars Next Generation Fund at The National Theatre. Established by Jacqueline Badger Mars in 2022, the fund provides leadership support for The National Theatre Foundation’s signature community programs and seeks to inspire future theatre artists and appreciators onstage, behind the scenes, and in the audience.

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Written and Curated by Leayne C. Dempsey, Dramaturg
Designed by Carolyn Donarski

1321 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, DC 20004

www.nationaltheatre.org



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

We are excited to welcome you to The National Theatre through our *Teens Behind the Scenes* program! Whether you're a new theatre-goer or a seasoned veteran, here are a few things to bear in mind.

WHAT WILL I BE SEEING?

Over the course of its long history, The National Theatre has hosted many memorable productions. These days, the shows you are most likely to see here are Broadway tours. A Broadway tour grows out of a production that is currently running or recently ran on Broadway in New York City. The touring version uses the same script, musical score, choreography, and direction. The production elements, such as the sets and costumes, are largely the same, too, though many have been adapted so they can be transported across the country. The actors you see onstage are also traveling all over the country, often for a year or more at a time. In other words, the show you see in Washington, DC is the same show that folks in Baltimore, Philadelphia, or Atlanta might have just seen, too.

In addition to Broadway tours, you may also see the occasional pre-Broadway tryout. This is when producers debut a show in a major city outside of New York in order to test new or revised material in front of a paying audience. Oftentimes, the creative team adjusts the show based on audience reactions before moving on to New York, usually with much of the same cast and crew in tow.

HOW CAN I MAXIMIZE MY EXPERIENCE?

Historically, audience members' behavior at the theatre has been guided, and sometimes constrained, by unspoken norms or "rules." Over time, certain norms like formal dress codes have gradually relaxed, allowing for a more inclusive environment. Rather than list other "rules," we want to share some considerations that will help you enjoy your time at The National..

- **Arrive early and look for the ushers.** This gives you time to grab refreshments and use the restroom. If you are late and the show has already started, you may have to wait to be seated. The ushers can direct you to your seat and answer any questions you have.
- **Respect the space and your fellow audience members.** Consume any food and drink you bring into the auditorium carefully. Keep the aisles and rows clear by putting your belongings under your seat. Be mindful of your neighbor's personal bubble and stand to let them pass if need be. Generally, avoid talking during a performance; if you must, keep it to a whisper or briefly share your thoughts during laughter or applause.
- **Take a break from your screen.** Cellphones and tablets shine brightly in the dark and their noises can distract from the experience. Be sure to silence your devices and put them away. An exception is a closed captioning app like GalaPro, which you can use on your device; you can also request a special device from the theatre.
- **Show your appreciation.** If you enjoyed that big musical number, applaud and cheer! If something shocks or surprises you, feel free to gasp! Laugh if the moment calls for it; nothing kills a comedy like a quiet auditorium. While courtesy is important, it shouldn't stop you from having a good time.

GO BEHIND THE SCENES WITH OUR TBTS WEBINAR SERIES

The TBTS Webinar series is a collection of interviews with emerging and leading theatre professionals, each conducted by one of our TBTS Dramaturgs. The artists share their pathways into the profession, what their creative process entails, and what young artists like yourself can learn from their experience. Check out this summer's offerings, featuring the artistic director of one of America's leading regional theatres, a prolific actor and teacher, a Tony-nominated lighting designer, a New York-based stage manager, a composer and music director, and a professor and leading access specialist!



The National Theatre Foundation presents

BEHIND THE SCENES OF MUSIC DIRECTION
featuring Kristin Stowell

Interviewed by Lindsey R. Barr
in June 2024

KRISTIN STOWELL

LINDSEY R. BARR



The National Theatre Foundation presents

BEHIND THE SCENES OF STAGE MANAGEMENT
featuring Maria De Barros

Interviewed by Lindsey R. Barr
in June 2024

MARIA DE BARROS

LINDSEY R. BARR



The National Theatre Foundation presents

BEHIND THE SCENES OF LIGHTING DESIGN
featuring Amith Chandrashaker

Interviewed by Leayne Dempsey
in June 2024

AMITH CHANDRASHAKER

LEAYNE DEMPSEY



The National Theatre Foundation presents

BEHIND THE SCENES OF DRAMATURGY
featuring Samuel Yates

Interviewed by Leayne Dempsey
in July 2024

SAMUEL YATES

LEAYNE DEMPSEY



The National Theatre Foundation presents

BEHIND THE SCENES OF ACTING
featuring Ro Boddie

Interviewed by Leayne Dempsey
in July 2024

RO BODDIE

LEAYNE DEMPSEY



The National Theatre Foundation presents

BEHIND THE SCENES OF ARTISTIC DIRECTION
featuring Hana S. Sharif

Interviewed by Lindsey R. Barr
in August 2024

HANA S. SHARIF

LINDSEY R. BARR



DRAMATURGICAL ESSAY



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 Ketelaar 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



Do you think you could do the “Proud Mary” choreography?



Official London Theatre Cast, YouTube, Sep 21, 2022

LEARN IT HERE!



#MYTINA

How has Tina Turner inspired you?
What does she mean to you? Join in on the conversation and use the hashtag #MYTINA.