

**"HILARIOUS, SPLASHY  
AND UNMISTAKABLY BY TINA FEY!"**

*NEW YORK*

# MEAN GIRLS

**STUDY GUIDE**



THE  
**NATIONAL THEATRE**  
FOUNDATION

# Mean Girls

The National Theatre  
October 15 – 20, 2024

Book by Tina Fey  
Music by Jeff Richmond  
Lyrics by Nell Benjamin  
Original Direction and Choreography by Casey Nicholaw  
Tour Directed by Casey Hushion  
Tour Choreographed by John MacInnis  
Packet prepared by Dramaturg Lindsey R. Barr

*MEAN GIRLS* makes its triumphant return to The National where it held its world premiere.

Direct from Broadway, *MEAN GIRLS* is the hilarious hit musical from an award-winning creative team, including book writer TINA FEY (“30 Rock”), composer JEFF RICHMOND (“Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt”), lyricist NELL BENJAMIN (*Legally Blonde*) and original director and choreographer CASEY NICHOLAW (*The Book of Mormon*).

Cady Heron may have grown up on an African savanna, but nothing prepared her for the vicious ways of her strange new home: suburban Illinois. Soon, this naive newbie falls prey to a trio of lionized frenemies led by the charming but ruthless Regina George. But when Cady devises a plan to end Regina’s reign, she learns the hard way that you can’t cross a Queen Bee without getting stung.

*New York Magazine* cheers, “*MEAN GIRLS* delivers with immense energy, a wicked sense of humor and joyful inside-jokery.” *USA Today* says, “We’ll let you in on a little secret, because we’re such good friends: GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!”



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.

THE NATIONAL THEATRE FOUNDATION  
Beryl Jolly, Chief Executive Officer  
Jared Strange, Director of Education & Community Programs  
Carey Lavallee, Director of Administration  
Paul Reagan, Director of Operations  
Madeline Meszaros, Development Operations & Special Events Manager

Written and Curated by Lindsey R. Barr, Dramaturg  
Designed by Carolyn Donarski

1321 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, DC 20004  
[www.nationaltheatre.org](http://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!



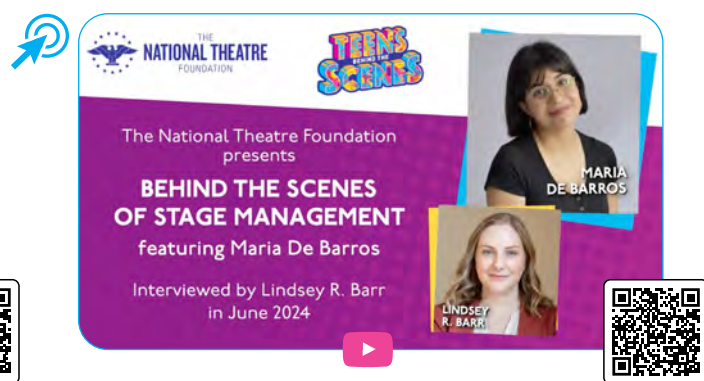
The National Theatre Foundation presents

**BEHIND THE SCENES OF MUSIC DIRECTION**  
featuring Kristin Stowell

Interviewed by Lindsey R. Barr  
in June 2024

KRISTIN STOWELL

LINDSEY R. BARR



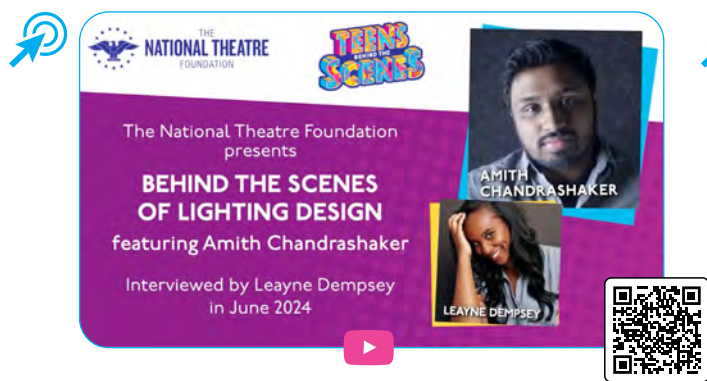

The National Theatre Foundation presents

**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



# A LETTER FROM THE DRAMATURG

It's rare for me to recall vivid memories from my teenage years. Yet, I can still tell you when and where I watched the movies that were most impactful to me as I aged into young womanhood. There are a few moments where such staunch representations of femininity in all of its rich existence changed how I viewed my own life. With movies, it first happened in 2001 when I saw *Legally Blonde* in theaters and witnessed Elle Woods boldly retaking her own career path. Then it happened again when I and a group of friends from my middle school were dropped off at our local movie theater to see *Mean Girls* in 2004. That's when we really saw versions of our own lives cathartically play out in front of us on the big screen.

Watching young women go through bullying, transition from self-doubt into self-acceptance, and navigate the still largely uncharted-to-us waters of teenagedom, was revolutionary. Here was a group of girls trying to fit in, find their niche, and maybe become popular in the process—not unlike what we were hoping to do ourselves as we graduated from middle school and found ourselves as freshman in high school. *Mean Girls* showed us that, no matter the societal pressures, we can carve out our own spaces in the world and that, more than likely, there will be others who are interested in being in that space, too.

What I couldn't predict then, and still find impressive even today, is the impact that movie had on an entire generation of millennial women who experienced the same thing as me: bold and unapologetic representation of what being a teenage girl can look like. And if you told me in 2004 that one of the most impactful movies of my teenage years would be made into a musical (a genre I've obsessed over since well before I was a teenager), I would have been overwhelmed with glee. A great story told in the spectacular format that is musical theatre? Sign me up! I don't think I'm unique in appreciating the enduring legacy of *Mean Girls*, and the fact that it's found a home on the stage brings me joy because it truly speaks to just how cross-generational these experiences can be.

Not everyone resonated with the original movie in the way that I did, but now, new generations of theatre-goers get to witness the story live and in-person. In a time when social media and technology drive so much of our everyday lives, I appreciate how the musical folds this in by having some of the gossip spread via Facebook and Instagram posts, building from the original source material. Plus, how rich is it that we get to think about our connection to community, technology, and social media, while engaging in theatre, an art form that requires us to come together away from our devices even if for a brief time?

So, take a second and take stock of this moment. Who knows, it might just be one of those that you'll recall vividly 20 years from now.



Kristen Segolo (Mrs. George) and Natalie Shaw (Cady Heron), Photo by Jenny Anderson, 2023

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