

SIX



THE MUSICAL



STUDY GUIDE



THE
NATIONAL THEATRE
FOUNDATION

SIX the Musical

The National Theatre
November 12–December 1, 2024

Music, Book, and Lyrics by
Toby Marlow and Lucy Moss
Directed by Lucy Moss and Jamie Armitage
Choreographed by Carrie-Anne Ingrouille
Packet prepared by Dramaturg Leayne C. Dempsey

Divorced, beheaded, died, divorced, beheaded, survived.

From Tudor Queens to Pop Icons, the *SIX* wives of Henry VIII take the microphone to remix five hundred years of historical heartbreak into a Euphoric Celebration of 21st century girl power! This new original musical is the global sensation that everyone is losing their head over!

SIX won 23 awards in the 2021/2022 Broadway season, including the TonyAward® for Best Original Score (Music and Lyrics) and the Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Musical. *The New York Times* says *SIX* “TOTALLY RULES!” (Critic’s Pick) and *The Washington Post* hails *SIX* as “Exactly the kind of energizing, inspirational illumination this town aches for!” The *SIX: LIVE ON OPENING NIGHT* Broadway album debuted at Number 1 on the Billboard cast album charts and surpassed 6 Million streams in its first month.

SIX includes flashing lights, strobe effects, theatrical haze and loud music throughout.

SHOW RUN TIME: *SIX* is 80 minutes with no intermission.

The show is recommended for ages 10 & up but Don’t Lose Ur Head, we love our Queens of all ages!



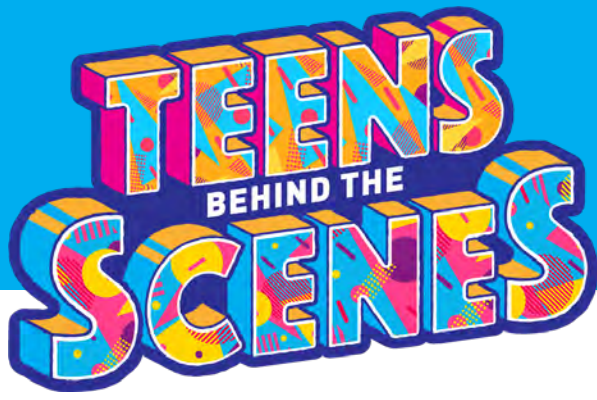
For almost 200 years, The National Theatre has occupied a prominent position on Pennsylvania Avenue—“America’s Main Street”—and played a central role in the cultural and civic life of Washington, DC. Located a stone’s throw from the White House and having the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site 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! At The National*, *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
Damian Sinclair, Director of Development
Madeline Meszaros, Development Operations & Special Events Manager

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



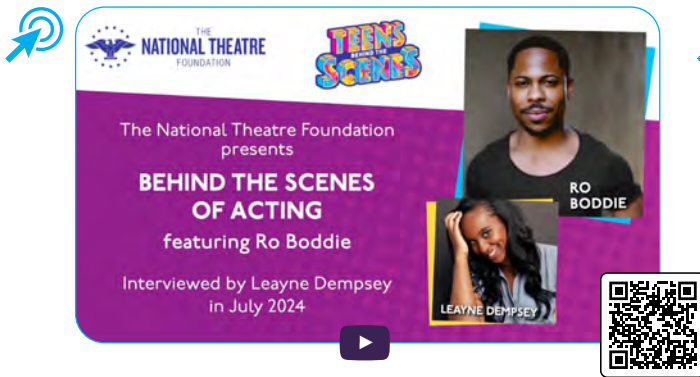
The National Theatre Foundation presents

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



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The North American Tour Boleyn Company of SIX. Photo by Joan Marcus

A LETTER FROM THE DRAMATURG

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO BE QUEEN?

Often, we envision a queen's life as all about ruling over a kingdom, surrounded by royal subjects, attending grand balls, and donning elaborate, expensive clothing. We tend to envy the whole experience as something only the fortunate get to have. However, when we examine the lives of the six wives of Henry VIII, a different narrative emerges. These queens navigated their reigns amidst significant societal restrictions imposed on women. They experienced love, lust, and animosity toward their husband. They faced divorce and even beheading for reasons that now seem absurd. Tragically, they have often been reduced to mere labels: "ex-wives of the king." Frankly, this is not quite what I imagined a queen's life to be like.

Sixteenth-century Tudor England was a male-dominated society. The term "Tudor" refers to the English royal family that ruled from 1485 to 1603, originating from the Welsh Tudor family. In the Tudor era, the primary responsibility of noblewomen was to manage their households. They oversaw servants and ensured their family's reputation was upheld while the king attended Parliament or court. While queens held royal status and significant responsibilities, love was often secondary, if it was considered at all. Noble marriages involved dowries, contracts, and political alliances, with many women betrothed at a very young age. Surprisingly, peasants had more freedom to marry for love than noblewomen did.

Given these constraints, the lives of Henry VIII's six wives become a captivating topic of discussion. Not only is it unusual for one man to have six wives, but the fact that Henry VIII banished and executed them raises many questions. We are left wondering about the accuracy of their stories and how they might recount their own experiences if given the chance. The six wives—Catherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, Anna of Cleves, Katherine Howard, and Catherine Parr—each have unique tales that deserve to be told.

Enter *SIX the Musical*.

SIX offers a modern perspective on the lives of these six wives, particularly their relationships with King Henry VIII. Creators Toby Marlow and Lucy Moss did not aim to produce a fact-for-fact retelling of the queens' lives. Instead, they sought to imagine what it would be like if these queens could narrate their stories in their own voices, utilizing today's diverse musical genres. The show initially debuted at the Edinburgh Festival in Scotland before moving to the West End and Broadway, where it won over 23 awards, including the 2022 Tony Award for Best Original Score.

The musical beautifully, and at times humorously, highlights the age-old issue of women's lives and histories being told through a male lens, often resulting in their stories being overlooked. It empowers the six queens married to Henry VIII to share their narratives and compete to determine who will be the lead singer of their girl group. The rules are simple: *whoever was dealt the worse hand, gets to lead the band*.

So, a queen's life was not solely about jewels, servants, and extravagant clothing. Much more lay beneath the surface. Although love often proved difficult to retain, it did exist for a queen, yet her longings and heartbreaks were frequently ignored in historical accounts. *SIX the Musical* finally allows us to hear each queen's *HER-story*.

Leayne Dempsey, Dramaturg