



THE
NATIONAL THEATRE
FOUNDATION

STUDY GUIDE



shucked

THE TONY AWARD®-WINNING MUSICAL COMEDY

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THE TONY AWARD-WINNING MUSICAL COMEDY

The National Theatre
February 25–March 2, 2025

Book by Robert Horn
Music and Lyrics by Brandy Clark
Music and Lyrics by Shane McAnally
Directed by Jack O'Brien
Choreographed by Sarah O'Gleby
Packet prepared by Dramaturg Lindsey R. Barr

Shucked is the Tony Award®–winning musical comedy *The Wall Street Journal* calls “flat out hilarious!” And nobody knows funny like economists. Featuring a book by Tony Award winner Robert Horn (*Tootsie*), a score by the Grammy® Award–winning songwriting team of Brandy Clark and Shane McAnally (Kacey Musgraves’ “Follow Your Arrow”), and directed by Tony Award winner Jack O'Brien (*Hairspray*), this corn-fed, corn-bred American musical is sure to satisfy your appetite for great musical theater.

Run time: 2 hours and 15 minutes including intermission.

Shucked is recommended for ages 10+. *Shucked* contains adult themes, moments of adult language and a harvest of corny innuendo.



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 Lindsey R. Barr, Dramaturg
Designed by Carolyn Donarski

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KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

We are excited to welcome you to The National Theatre through The National Theatre Foundation's 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?

The National Theatre has hosted many memorable productions. These days, the shows you are most likely to see here are national tours, many of which are derived from current or recent Broadway productions. In those cases, the touring version uses the same script, musical score, choreography, and direction as the Broadway original, while the production elements, such as the set and costumes, have been adapted so they can be transported across the country. The actors onstage are also traveling all over the country, often for a year at a time. In other words, the show you see in Washington, DC is the same show that folks in places like Seattle, Dallas, and Chicago will see, too. In addition to national 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 to see how it plays in front of a paying audience, before making the jump to Broadway.

HOW CAN I MAXIMIZE MY EXPERIENCE?

Thankfully, going to the theatre is a much more relaxed and inclusive experience than it used to be. However, there are still expectations for what makes a good theatre-going experience for everyone. Here are some tips for getting the most out of your experience.

- **Arrive early and let the staff help you get settled.** 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. Keep an eye out for the ushers: they are to help you.
- **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. If you must talk during a performance, 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, or better yet, turn them off. An exception is a closed captioning app like GalaPro, which you can use on your device.
- **Show your appreciation.** Performers can tell if you are tuned into the show, so if you enjoyed the big musical number, applaud and cheer! If something shocks or surprises you, 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.

Know that downright disruptive behavior, such as excessive talking, prolonged use of phones and devices, or any form of abuse, will not be tolerated. When in doubt, consult with members of the house staff and heed their instructions: they are in charge during the show.

More than anything, we want you to know that we're glad you're here. Enjoy your experience at The National Theatre!

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 NOTE FROM THE DRAMATURG

Growing up in rural America is a unique experience. I should know: I spent much of my teenage years driving past endless cornfields and vast expanses of open water on my way to school each day. When I was old enough to drive myself, I spent 30 minutes of my commute each way listening to my chosen soundtrack: musical theatre.

While *Shucked* didn't exist when I was going to school, it resonates with me in ways I wasn't expecting when I first encountered it. Unless you've lived in a small, rural area, it can be hard to make sense of what life is truly like in these parts of the country. Even though I lived in what I deemed "the middle of nowhere" for decades, it's still hard for me to really fathom just how insulated these communities can be, given that I've spent the last 15 years living in major metropolitan areas. If there's one thing the creators of *Shucked* get, it's that small-town life permeates the people who live there, no matter how far away their travels in life might take them.

When I go back home, I'm struck by how close everyone is: the community is small, and even the slightest changes or scandals can impact a significant portion of the population, not unlike what happens in *Shucked*. In "small town America," people's lives are often more interconnected than those in higher-populated areas. So, it came as no surprise to me when I encountered this musical for the first time that our protagonist, Maizy, spends much of her energy trying to find a cure for the town's corn-induced woes. She's connected to this community in more ways than one, and knows that a disease for the group's prized crop means far-reaching and potentially devastating impacts for everyone. It might not be *her* livelihood that's going to be changed, but because everything and everyone is linked, it means she will experience those changes indirectly.

Rural towns like the ones at the heart of *Shucked* can get a bad rap: they can be insulated, lack resources that more populated cities might have, and feel as though they are "out of touch" with mainstream happenings. But the musical takes on these stereotypical notions, showing that small towns are so much more than they appear to be on the surface. So while it's perhaps no surprise that Maizy, who is unfamiliar with the ills that exist beyond her bucolic small-town world, falls for a con man's scheme, it's also no surprise that she is able to overcome that scheme through the power of community and collaboration.

I know that I'm not alone in coming from a small town: after all, almost one fifth of the country lives in an area that could be defined as "rural". And I'm sure I'm not the only person who grew up in a small town yearning to be closer to theatrical hubs so I might be able to see more musicals. But what draws me to *Shucked*, in the end, is that the small community and plucky band of characters that run through this story are as American as musical theatre itself.

Lindsey R. Barr, Dramaturg



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