



BROADWAY AT MUSIC CIRCUS

2022 SEASON
**PERFORMANCE
GUIDE**

**THE COLOR
PURPLE**
THE MUSICAL

WELCOME TO THE BROADWAY AT MUSIC CIRCUS 2022 SEASON

It has been two long years since we have been able to gather like today to watch musical magic unfold on the stage of the UC Davis Health Pavilion. Thank you for being here to share in this moment in our 70+ year history in Sacramento.

For those of you that are new to this place and/or this art form, here are the ingredients that go into what you're about to experience:

It begins with Broadway's most popular stories, told in spoken word, song, and dance. Each and every one of them – from the silliest to the most serious – was written to help us better understand ourselves and one another, and celebrate our common humanity.

Our storytellers are our actors and musicians, all of whom have trained for years to become the best that Broadway has to offer. Some are our neighbors, but many have traveled from far and wide to perform for you today.

Those on stage will be visually transformed thanks to the efforts of our costume, hair & makeup, and wardrobe teams. Every piece of clothing and wig worn has been skillfully sewn and styled to both compliment the player and articulate the essence of their character.

This theatre will also be transformed with scenery, properties, lights, projections, automation, and sound, all expertly designed to transport you from a hot summer's day in Midtown Sacramento to another (and hopefully cooler!) place and time.

Most importantly: All of the above elements have been carefully crafted and combined to be shared IN PERSON and TOGETHER. You – your laughter, tears, and applause - are the final ingredient that will make today's performance one I hope you remember and cherish for years to come.

SCOTT KLIER

PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/COO

BROADWAY AT MUSIC CIRCUS THROUGH THE YEARS

- 1949** Actor St. John Terrell sets up a summer stock theatre under a giant round tent in Lambertville, New Jersey. Drawing inspiration from the layout of Greek amphitheaters and the summer fun of the circus, Terrell's idea is a success and more than 40 others pop up across the country in the next decade.
- 1951** With the support of arts patron and newspaper owner Eleanor McClatchy, producers Russell Lewis and Howard Young establish the Sacramento Music Circus by setting up a tent in the parking lot of the Sacramento Civic Repertory Theatre. It is the first professional theatre-in-the-round to the west of the Mississippi River, and the fourth in the country.
- 1953** Lewis and Young found the Sacramento Light Opera Association to continue producing shows in the area. Sacramento Music Circus continues to be a successful summer tradition, gaining a notable reputation in the theatre community.
- 1989** The Broadway Series is introduced as a winter companion to the summer shows, bringing national tours of Broadway musicals and plays to Sacramento every year.
- 2003** The Wells Fargo Pavilion opens on the site of the original Sacramento Music Circus tent, providing a state-of-the-art, permanent, fully air-conditioned facility for all future shows.
- 2018** The company name changes to Broadway Sacramento, with the respective touring and summer seasons being named Broadway On Tour and Broadway At Music Circus.
- 2020** As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, The Broadway At Music Circus stage is dark all summer long for the first time.
- 2022** Broadway At Music Circus returns to Sacramento for its 70th season in the newly named UC Davis Health Pavilion!

BEFORE THE SHOW BEGINS, A FEW QUICK REMINDERS:

- Make sure you find your seat before the show starts! Actors will enter using the aisles, so it is important to be seated when the lights go down to keep everyone safe. If you need to leave for any reason, the ushers in the hallway will let you know when it's okay to enter again.
- Please keep your cell phone silenced and put away during the show. You are welcome to use it before or after, but the bright screens and noises can be distracting for everyone else at the theatre. Using your phone to take pictures or video is also not allowed.
- Please refrain from talking during the show, as it can be a distraction to the actors and the people around you.
- Feel free to laugh, cheer and applaud! The actors love hearing that you're enjoying the show.

THE COLOR PURPLE

AUGUST 23 - 28

BOOK by

Marsha Norman

MUSIC & LYRICS by

Brenda Russell, Allee Willis,
& Stephen Bray

THE STORY

Young Celie is separated from her sister and children when her abusive father forces her into a marriage with a man named Mister. Mister's son Harpo brings home a strong-willed woman named Sofia, who inspires Celie to begin standing up for herself. Harpo decides to open up a juke joint, where Celie meets and falls in love with jazz singer Shug Avery. Empowered by her new relationships, Celie embarks on a decades-long journey to reunite with her family and uncover the strength and confidence she carries inside her.

THE CHARACTERS

CELIE: a downtrodden but resilient young woman

NETTIE: Celie's intelligent, dependable younger sister

PA: Celie and Nettie's abusive, bitter father figure

SHUG AVERY: an attractive, powerful blues singer in need of compassion

MISTER: a troubled man who marries Celie and tries to change his ways

HARPO: Mister's son, a well-meaning but misguided young man

SOFIA: a bold, independent woman who marries Harpo

SQUEAK: Harpo's compassionate girlfriend who aspires to be a singer

MAKING THE SHOW

FROM THE HISTORY BOOKS TO BROADWAY



In 1982 author Alice Walker published her fourth book, a novel titled *The Color Purple*. Written as a series of letters, *The Color Purple* tells the story of a young Black woman named Celie as she experiences hardships, finds love, and discovers her worth while living in the South in the early 1900s. While the heavy content of the novel has been the subject of several controversies, Walker's work has also had an enormous cultural impact. The book has sold over five million copies, is often taught in high school English classes, and provides a powerful perspective on the experiences of Black women. Perhaps most notably, *The Color Purple* was awarded the 1983 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, making Walker the first Black woman to receive this honor.



Alice Walker, Oprah Winfrey, and LaChanze at **THE COLOR PURPLE** Opening Night, 2005, by Peter Kramer

In 1997, theatre producer Scott Sanders came to Walker with an idea to bring *The Color Purple* to the stage. Walker was initially reluctant to revisit her novel, having already worked on the 1985 film adaptation. Still, she eventually warmed to the idea after hearing Sanders' enthusiasm for the project and dedication to the original story. Over the next three years, Sanders sought out candidates for the creative team, but he struggled to find the right fit for the project until he connected with Grammy-winning songwriter Allee Willis, who was an old friend. Willis proposed a collaboration with songwriters Stephen Bray and Brenda Russell, and the songs they developed convinced Sanders that they were the right team to compose the score.

The book writer was the last component to fall into place before the show began its developmental phase. It was essential to everyone involved that the script would stay true to Walker's original novel, while also breathing new life into the story for the new format. Sanders and Walker found their ideal candidate in Marsha Norman, a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright

who had previously written the book to the musical adaptation of *The Secret Garden*. After several years of workshops with the creative team, the world premiere of the musical adaptation of *The Color Purple* was held at the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta, Georgia during the fall of 2004. It was a sold-out success.



The Color Purple Original Broadway Production, 2006, Paul Konik

Encouraged by the show's reception, Sanders and his team of producers, which had grown to include music legend Quincy Jones and TV icon Oprah Winfrey, developed plans to bring the show to Broadway in late 2005. The creative team took nine months to revisit their work, revising lyrics and adding or cutting scenes as they saw fit. The majority of the cast from the Atlanta production was coming to Broadway with them, which allowed the writers to work with the performers and craft new layers of depth into the show as they wrote. On December 1, 2005, **THE COLOR PURPLE** opened at the Broadway Theatre in New York to positive reviews. The production received 11 Tony Award nominations and ran for 910 performances.

In the following years, *The Color Purple*'s lively music and the empowering message continued to spread across the globe. There were three different North American tours of the original production between 2007–2012, and the show has been produced internationally in South Africa, the Netherlands, and Brazil. One notable production in 2013 in London was so successful that it was brought to New York, winning another two Tony Awards. This production is the first time **THE COLOR PURPLE** has been seen at Broadway At Music Circus, presenting another opportunity for Alice Walker's powerful story of love, hope, and triumph over hardship to inspire audience members to find the light inside each of them.

THE MUSIC



THE COLOR PURPLE covers a broad span of time, beginning in the early 1900s and following Celie's journey for about 30 years. Appropriately, the show's music incorporates several different genres to reflect the eras that Celie lives through. Follow along to learn about the various musical styles used in the show, how they influenced each other, and who some influential performers were.

WORK SONGS

Work songs were a tradition carried on by African people enslaved by Americans and brought to the U.S. Workers would sing rhythmic songs that matched their movements, such as swinging tools or picking fruit, sometimes using a call-and-response pattern to communicate with other workers as they sang.

SPIRITUALS

Spirituals are powerful, emotion-filled songs sung by enslaved African-Americans in the mid-1800s that expressed the pain of their struggles and provided hope for the future. Some famous spirituals like "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" and "Go Down, Moses" were also used as secret messages for folks escaping to freedom along the Underground Railroad.

GOSPEL

Gospel music is a more lively, uplifting style that developed out of work songs and spirituals in the early 1900s, often using call-and-response lyrics so that songs were accessible to those who couldn't read hymnals. Composer Thomas Dorsey expanded these soulful songs by incorporating elements of blues and jazz to create choral arrangements. Famous gospel singers include Sister Rosetta Tharpe, The Golden Gate Quartet, and Mahalia Jackson.



Ma Rainey and her band (1924)

BLUES

Building on the storytelling of work songs, blues songs were less narrative-driven and usually performed by a soloist. Lyrics often expressed feelings of sadness, heartbreak, and hardship over a repeating 12-bar pattern using the I-IV-V chord progression. The genre takes its name from both the melancholy nature of the music and the use of "blue notes," which are bent or flattened musical notes that add a wail-like quality. Early blues pioneers include Bessie Smith, Ida Cox, and Ma Rainey.

JAZZ

Jazz music further developed the features of blues, utilizing more complex chord structures and more extensive arrangements with more musicians. Both genres were heavily reliant on improvisation, with jazz taking on a looser format that would soon give way to swing music. Eubie Blake, Jelly Roll Morton, and Louis Armstrong are among the most well-known jazz artists of the early 1900s.



Louis Armstrong (1953)

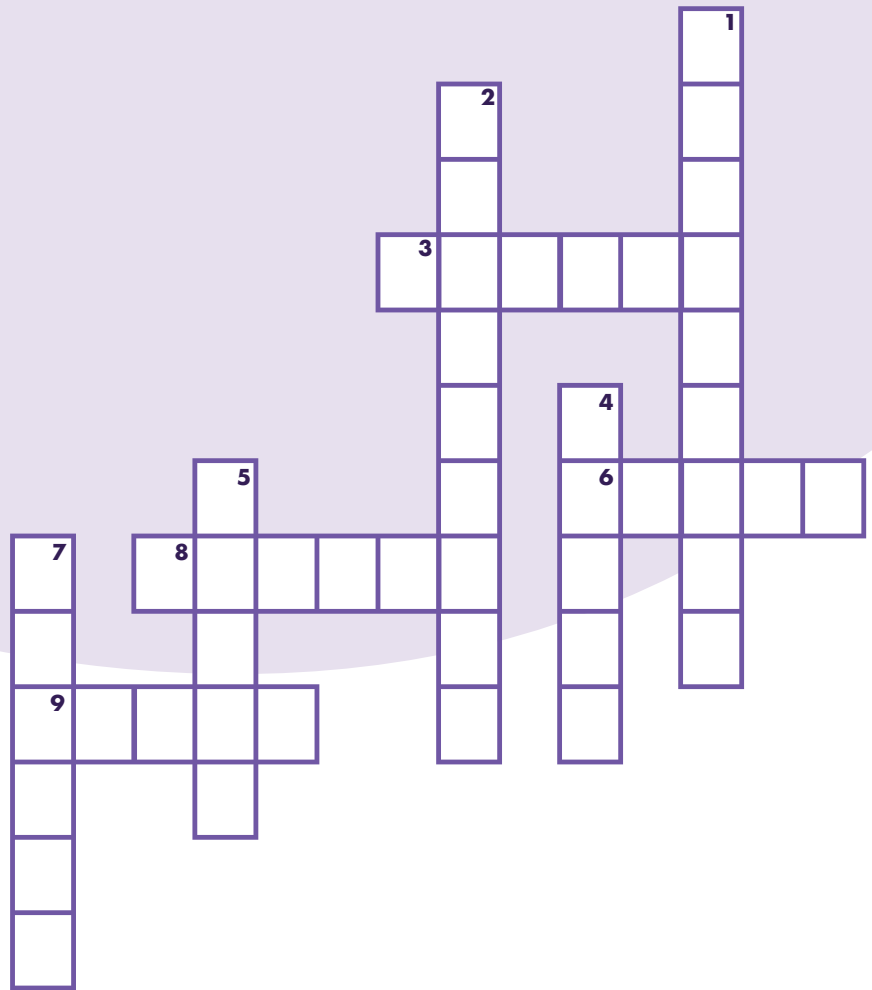
CROSSWORD

ACROSS

3. The color that signifies a miracle
6. Walker, who wrote the original novel
8. A sister who moves to Africa as a missionary
9. A strong woman who works as the mayor's maid

DOWN

1. Harpo's music venue
2. The famous blues singer
4. Sofia's conflicted husband
5. The central character who begins selling pants
7. A man is otherwise known as Albert



THINK ABOUT IT

- Alice Walker's original novel is written as a collection of letters, often between Celie and God. How does the music reflect that, and how is it changed? Do you think the musical would have the same kind of impact if it were all narrated by Celie?
- The music of **THE COLOR PURPLE** draws from several different genres and periods. How do the different styles of songs illuminate the passage of time and distinguish the different personalities of the characters?
- The women portrayed in **THE COLOR PURPLE** are all shown to be intense and complex, but they are also very different. Which character(s) did you connect with the most, and why? What does this story teach us about how we can learn from people who are different from us?
- As Celie grows and meets different people, her view changes significantly. What events and characters do you think impacted her the most? How have you been shaped by the people and experiences in your life?



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SPECIAL THANKS TO



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