



Writing About Live Production

Preparing to see Tina

Education material by
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Research

- Explore Nutbush online. What do you notice about its geographical location? What challenges might this pose to designers?
- Watch this clip of The Ike and Tina Turner Revue on The Ed Sullivan Show <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-AzcJMkbjA>. Once you've seen Tina, where can you see influences of this source material in the design, choreography and performance style?
- Listen to this fascinating recording of the making of River Deep Mountain High. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yz3d5g3Xkl>
- Create mood or research boards for American fashion in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Include hair and make up in these collages.
- Watch this video of Tina Turner singing with David Bowie https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4WG_y7owmM. After the production, compare what you see her in terms of costume and movement, to this footage. What do you notice?
- Watch this video of Tina Turner singing with Mick Jagger <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XbN5OtbLXo>
- Watch this video of Tina performing in Rio, Brazil, in 1988 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJZp2oQ9vJs> What do you notice?

Act One

	Key moments and questions to consider	Your notes
1	As you are seated in the auditorium, look around you. What technical equipment can you see? Look in front of you, to the sides AND behind you. (Don't forget to look up!)	
2	As the curtain rises, this is the first view we have of Tina. Having researched Tina Turner before seeing the show, what iconic elements of costume and wigs does the designer use to create a strong sense of character, even though we can't see her face?	
3	Still thinking about this opening scene, how is lighting and projection/video used to create mood and atmosphere?	
4	Watch carefully for the transition between the backstage area of a stadium in Brazil to the world of Nutbush Tennessee? Think about how actors enter the stage, how lighting, sound and video are used. What about the use of the rim revolve? How does the ensemble also contribute to creating the set?	
5	How does the young actress playing Anna Mae create a sense of character through movement, voice and facial expression?	
6	How do the actors' movements help the lighting and use of projection create the sense of heat?	
7	Describe the costumes worn by the Nutbush congregation. Consider colour, fit, texture, shape, state of age/wear.	
8	How do we make a transition from outside to the interior of the Bullock household? What changes, and how?	
9	How is sound used to create tension before and during the physical conflict between Zelma and Richard?	
10	Watch the cotton picking sequence carefully. What do we see on the LED screen, and what do we see the characters doing (including Anna Mae). How does the design aid our understanding of the passing of time?	

11	Watch how the actors playing Anna Mae and GG perform the song <i>I Don't Want To Leave</i> . How do they use voice, physicality and facial expression to express emotion?	
12	How is lighting, sound and projection used to create the journey to St. Louis? What sound effects do you hear that suggest Anna Mae has arrived via streetcar \ at Zelma's house?	
13	Create a rough sketch of the set design Zelma's house and note how the location changes ready for Anna Mae's makeover and <i>Shake A Tail Feather</i> .	
14	Describe Ike Turner's costume in his first appearance at Club Manhattan	
15	How has the set design been utilised to create a new location – a studio?	
16	Ike's style of dress is sharp and stylish. What is he wearing in the scene in the recording studio? How is it different to Raymond's?	
17	How do lighting, set and projection combine to create the tension of the motel car park at night?	
18	What have you noticed about the wigs worn by Anna Mae/Tina Turner and the lkettes up to this stage? How many changes have you noticed? What does this communicate to the audience?	
19	What is the effect of combining the downstage area of Tina singing <i>Higher</i> whilst Ike cavorts on the bed centre stage? How does this affect the audience's emotional and intellectual response to Tina and Ike?	
20	How do the psychedelic projections aid our understanding of the era and the passage of time?	
21	Describe how Phil Spector's studio is created, from the transition from the previous scene in a dressing room, to the singing of <i>River Deep, Mountain High</i> . What can you HEAR? What do you SEE? What do the actors do to suggest that their characters are overwhelmed and impressed by what they find at the studio?	
22	How does the actor playing Ike suggest his upset and internal conflict when Spector tells him that his services are not required in the recording. Do you feel any sympathy for Ike at this stage?	
23	The set design of Spector's studio is then mirrored in the projection in the second half of <i>River Deep, Mountain High</i> . How is this achieved?	
24	How does the set design of Tina and Ike's house reflect their increased wealth from earlier in the story? How is the space defined by lighting, furniture and set? How is colour used to define period? How has the designer ensured actor safety for the fight element of this scene?	
25	The set and lighting appears to be very simple for <i>Be Tender With Me</i> . How is emotional intensity created through projection, lighting and sound in this scene?	

26	<p>Watch the sequence from Tina's overdose until she is given a room at a motel. Allocate several people to note down how tension and chaos are created through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound • Video • Lighting • Stage fighting • Change of costume for Tina • How Tina creates the sense of creating a busy highway • The contrast of stillness and quiet once Tina arrives at the motel. <p>Note down your own thoughts and feelings about this sequence. Where does our sympathy lie/not lie in terms of Tina, Zelma and Ike?</p>	
27	<p>Act One finishes with <i>I Don't Wanna Fight</i>. How is the ensemble used to create a sense of emotion in the scene? What does Tina do? How does Ike's appearance, and his costume, help you consolidate your attitude towards his character?</p>	

Act Two

	Key moments and questions to consider	Your notes
A	<p>How does the choreography of <i>Private Dancer</i> emphasise Tina's isolation and loneliness? How does the set design help create smaller spaces on stage in which dialogue can take place?</p>	
B	<p>How is the drama created through lighting after the moment where Ike shoots at Tina?</p>	
C	<p>How is the transition created between this location the Capitol Records building?</p>	
D	<p>How has Rhonda's costume changed from Act One? Why might it be significant that she wears trousers now, rather than skirts?</p>	
E	<p>Rhonda and Tina's duet <i>Open Arms</i> uses song, facial expression, vocal skills and movement to communicate their relationship. Describe what you see.</p>	
F	<p>How is the audience 'transported' to London? (Consider sound and video here)</p>	
G	<p>London is a very different place to those US locations we have seen so far. How does the design for both internal and external scenes differ in these scenes? Consider colour, scale, texture, video and use of ensemble here.</p>	
H	<p>How has the stage design utilised previous design elements in the creation of Tina's hotel bedroom? How does the design help create a sense of isolation, loneliness and anonymity here?</p>	

I	How do the actors playing Tina and Erwin communicate their growing attraction?	
J	Tina's showcase for Capitol is an emotionally charged event. How do the following elements combine to create a growing tension? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting • Sound • Characterisation of Tina, Erwin, Roger • Use of space and set dressing • Creation of memory through the entrance of GG and the younger Anna Mae 	
K	The growing trust and friendship between Tina and Roger is shown towards the end of Tonight. How do the two actors use their acting skills to create this bond? It's important it's a different bond to that shown between Tina and Erwin – how is this achieved?	
L	Sketch the set design of The Ritz club – include use of musicians, the truss (the lightweight metal frame on which lights are hung)	
M	The after-show celebration is interrupted by Alline's arrival. How do the actors work together to change the atmosphere from celebration to tension and worry?	
N	Sketch what you see (colour, shape, texture, set dressing) for Zelma's hospital room	
O	What do you notice about Ike's costume (including wig) in the hospital scene? What does this communicate to the audience about how Ike's character has changed and developed?	
P	The scattering of Zelma's ashes is a key moment for Tina – she finally begins to feel free. How does design integrate with performance skills to create this sense of liberation? Consider the use of light (and flame), video, lighting, costume and performance skills during the singing of <i>We Don't Need Another Hero</i> .	
Q	How do we transition from this moment of liberation back to the backstage area of the Brazil stadium?	
R	How is the emotion of the reunion of Tina and Erwin created by the actors playing them?	
S	As Tina prepares to make her triumphant entrance on stage in Brazil, how is the audience transported from a musical to a concert? Look at 'the big reveal' – how do the lighting, set, sound and projection designs combine to create the spirit of a stadium scale performance within a traditional theatre building?	

After the concert finishes, write down your thoughts and feelings after that final montage and finale. What emotions are you feeling? What were your favourite moments? How do you feel about Tina's journey? Which scenes made you feel strong emotions? Why? How were those responses created?