



Adrienne Warren, acclaimed for her work in *Tina*.

It's curtain up on the lives of Cher, Tina Turner and Donna Summer... with mixed results.

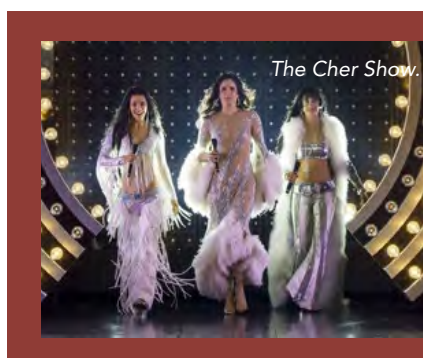
MUSICALS NEED a great plot in which our lead character must overcome adversity while delivering a catalogue of great songs. Staging the lives of great pop divas, then, must have seemed like a no-brainer to producers.

Cher's life can now be experienced as a Broadway musical, *The Cher Show*. Written by Rick Elice (*Jersey Boys*), the story follows Cherilyn Sarkisian through three stages of her life, with a different actress as Cher in each chapter. Micaela Diamond (*Jesus Christ Superstar*) is Babe, Teal Wicks (*Wicked*) plays Lady, and Stephanie J Block (*Falsettos*) is Star.

Directed by Jason Moore, the set has a variety show vibe and puts Cher's famous Bob Mackie costumes front and center. Reviews have been mixed, but Cher attended an early preview and said that while she thought some parts needed work, she didn't feel like "gouging her eyes out". She told *The Chicago Tribune*, "I'm pushing them to be more truthful about me. I've already said so much about my life. It would be silly for them to come up with a Mother Teresa."

Also on Broadway is *Summer: The Donna Summer Musical*, which also uses three actresses to portray the pop star at different points in her career. Ariana DeBose, who graduated from *So You Think You Can Dance* to earn her Broadway stripes in *Les Miserables* and *Hamilton* plays "disco" Donna and tends to carry the show.

The 23 Summer songs featured include *Hot Stuff*, *Bad Girls*, *MacArthur Park* and the Streisand duet *No More Tears*, but don't expect to see a characterisation of Streisand. Instead,



The Cher Show.



Summer: The Donna Summer Musical.

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we get two Donna's singing together. Euro-disco production wizard, Giorgio Moroder, who worked with Summer, is played by Mackenzie Bell (*Sunset Boulevard*), adding complexity to the show with female cast members playing male roles.

Summer has not had great reviews. A major criticism is the lack of drama. Summer's issues with the gay community, suicide attempt and becoming a born-again Christian are glossed over and would've added the missing grit. *Variety* called it "narrow minded" while *The New York Times* said it was a "blight" on Broadway!

On London's West End, *Tina: The Musical* unfolds with unique depth and gusto. First developed back in 2016, Tina Turner herself has

been onboard from the beginning and, after opening this year in London, a Broadway debut is set for 2019.

Adrienne Warren (*Orange Is The New Black*) plays the lead, with Kobna Holdbrook-Smith as the formidable Ike Turner. Ryan O'Donnell plays Turner's Australian manager Roger Davies, who masterminded her legendary comeback.

Tina: The Musical has the ability to engage the audience with real roof-raising enthusiasm. Think of Turner's catalogue - *Proud Mary*, *Nubush City Limits*, *What's Love Got To Do With It?* *Private Dancer*, *We Don't Need Another Hero...* and on.

Reviews for *Tina* have been positive, with particular praise for Warren. *The Guardian* declared, "As bio-musicals go, this is as good as it gets."

How long until *Virgin! The Madonna Story*, *Lucky! The Kylie Story* or *Wig! The Sia Story* hit our stages?

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