

March 8th is International Women's Day, and March itself is Women's History Month! During this month, We celebrate the invaluable contributions and achievements of women throughout history, honoring their resilience, leadership, and significant impact on society. Broadway theater, of course is no exception! In this month's one-sheeter, we offer a brief history of trailblazing women in the industry, fun facts, and perspectives and insights from leaders in the Broadway sphere about what it is like to be a woman working on Broadway.

## WOMEN IN THE THEATRE

Though powerful female roles for the stage date back to ancient Greece (think Medea, Electra and Antigone), women's roles were played by men and boys until as late as the 17th century. It wasn't until the 20th century however when women began to play increasingly significant roles on Broadway, both on and off the stage.

Actresses like Ethel Barrymore, Sarah Bernhardt, and Maude Adams gained fame and acclaim for their performances. Behind the scenes, women also made strides as playwrights, directors, and producers, although they faced significant challenges and gender-based discrimination in the male-dominated industry. Still, women have continued to make their mark in the theatre, from Lillian Trimble Bradley, who in 1918 became the first female director on Broadway, to Jean Rosenthal, who single handedly turned stage lighting into an artistic medium, revolutionizing the industry. We have seen trailblazers like Lorraine Hansberry and Vinnette Carroll, the first Black female artists to write and direct work on Broadway. In more recent years, we have seen women like Peppermint, Angelica Ross and L Morgan Lee become the first Trans women to originate, star, and get nominated for their works on Broadway. This month, we celebrate the women that have contributed their talents, creativity, and passion to the vibrant tapestry of American theatre.

## AUDIENCES

According to the Broadway League's Demographics of the Broadway Audience 2022-2023, 65% of the Broadway audiences identified as female.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Out of the 41 Broadway theaters in New York City, there are only 5 named after women? They are Ethel Barrymore, Vivian Beaumont Allen, Lynn Fontanne, Helen Hayes, and recently, Lena Horne.



## TONY!

The Tony Awards derive their name from a pioneering woman in history - Antoinette Perry. She was an actress, director, producer, and a dynamic leader during wartime for the American Theatre Wing. Perry broke barriers by becoming a stage director when women in theater were typically limited to costume or dressing roles.



## RESOURCES

### Broadway Women's Alliance

The Broadway Women's Alliance is a peer-to-peer networking and programming organization for female professionals on the business side of Broadway.  
<https://thebroadwaywomensalliance.com/>

### Women of Color in the Arts (WOCA)

Dedicated to creating racial and cultural equity in the performing arts field, by promoting professional opportunities for arts administrators and providing a platform to give voice and visibility to women of color.  
<https://www.womenofcolorinthearts.org/>

### Maestra

A directory for the women and nonbinary people who make the music in the musical theatre industry.  
<https://maestramusic.org/>

### Women of Color on Broadway (WOCOB)

Committed to uplifting and empowering women of African, Latin, Asian, and Indigenous descent who are pursuing careers in the vibrant world of musical theater.  
<https://www.womenofcoloronbroadway.org/>

### The Kilroys

The Kilroys are a collective of playwrights, directors and producers in LA and NYC who are done talking about gender parity and are taking action. We mobilize others in the field and leverage our own power to support one another.  
<https://thekilroys.org/current-members/>

## PERSPECTIVES

"Get rid of those notions that you're here to make people happy and be what they want you to be." - Daryl Roth, Producer

"What I love about theater is that there is always an opportunity to break something open the way it's never been before." - Diane Paulus, Director

"When we have the pen, we are not the wife or the sister - we are the center of the story." - Renée Elise Goldsberry, Performer

"We cannot keep women in the hamster wheel of apprenticeship or assistantship. [...] How do we not become men - how do we become more powerful women?" - Jeanine Tesori, Composer/Writer

"You can't be strong in a vacuum" - Lea Salonga, Performer

"When women open their own businesses, there is no glass ceiling" - Nancy Coyne, Broadway Marketing

"Listening becomes the most important thing you do" - Chita Rivera, on being a leading lady

"There are so many women who are ready to go. There are so many artists of color who are ready to go. And we need to see that racial diversity and gender diversity reflected in our critical establishment, too. This is not a pipeline issue. It is a failure of imagination by a field whose job is to imagine the way the world could be. So let's do it." - Rachel Chavkin, Director, during her 2019 Tony Acceptance

"I was repeatedly told that there isn't an African American woman who can open a show on Broadway. I said, 'Well, how do we know? How do we know if we don't do it?' I said, 'I think you're wrong.'" - Lynn Nottage, Playwright

"I'm a director. Not a female director. A director. But I'm also female." - Tina Landau, Director

"I've spent my whole career trying to stay out of any box that anyone could put me in. 'I'm going to do a play now.' 'Now I'll do a musical.' That was my instinct. So I don't feel boxed in. But 'African-American woman' is part of my identity. I don't want to relinquish that - especially as a mother, helping my daughter find her identity." - Audra McDonald, Performer

"I have found I can't be powerful without someone accusing me of being at 'that time of the month,' being hysterical, or being called a bitch." - Sonia Friedman, Producer

"Mentorship has always been important to me, because just being a black woman and doing what I do, I know how hard it is to be good at your job, and to have the opportunities. So I want to give back." - Carin Ford, Sound Designer