

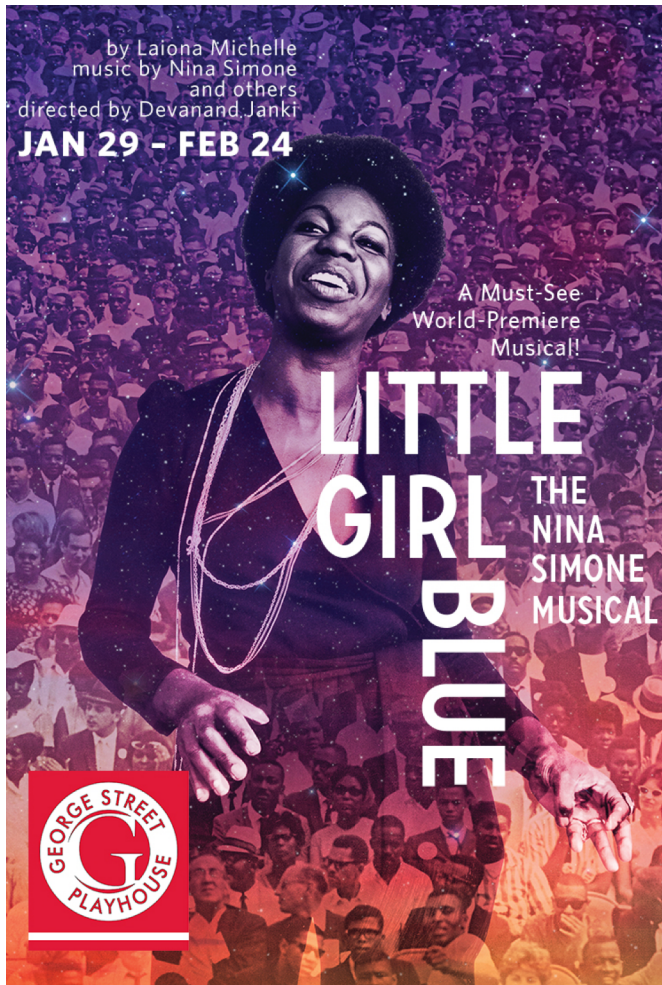


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“LITTLE GIRL BLUE: THE NINA SIMONE MUSICAL”
WRITTEN BY AND STARRING LAIONA MICHELLE
OPENS TRIUMPHANTLY AT THE GEORGE STREET PLAYHOUSE
*A musical celebration of the legendary High Priestess of Soul,
and part of George Street Playhouse’s 2018-2019 mainstage season*

New York, New York – February 7, 2019...“**Little Girl Blue: The Nina Simone Musical**”, written by, and starring award-winning actor, Laiona Michelle, will premiere as part of The George Street Playhouse 2018 – 2019 mainstage season. Performances began on January 29 and run through February 24.



Laiona Michelle returns to George Street Playhouse following her critically acclaimed performance in **American Hero**, with a new musical project, which has been in development for over five years. “I fell in love with Nina Simone a very long time ago, but only really understood her importance in the world of music, and as an activist, once I began researching this project,” says Ms. Michelle.

This exuberant musical reveals Nina Simone’s life, lived in between the black and white keys. It charts her passionate journey from classical piano child prodigy to High Priestess of Soul. This one-woman performance is inspired by, and told through Nina’s very own words and the music she helped make famous, and which has come to define her. The story taps into



Nina's fiery personality and vulnerabilities to paint as accurate a picture of a woman often misunderstood by the media and her fans, and yet adored by millions, then and now.

The legendary singer was born Eunice Kathleen Waymon on February 21, 1933 in Tryon, North Carolina at the height of the Jim Crow era. From an early age, she exhibited an extraordinary gift for music and was blessed with a masterful ability to play the piano and "*play virtually anything by ear...*". Her love of the classics – Bach, Chopin Beethoven and Schubert, was a connection that remained with her throughout her life. Above all else, Nina wanted to be a concert pianist. She was denied that opportunity, when her application to study at the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, was rejected. That slight, which she called out as racist, charted the course of the rest of her life.

Laiona Michelle along with her collaborative partners on this project, have drawn from Nina's rich life to create a portrait that is honest and powerful. Audiences who have seen Ms. Michelle's early readings of "Little Girl Blue..." have walked out profoundly moved by her vocal prowess and tour de force abilities to go beyond playing a role, to inhabiting and capturing the very essence of the artist, and the complexity of the woman.

Ms. Michelle is no stranger to playing legendary figures. She played Dinah Washington in the Obie-Award winning musical biography, **Dinah Was** (2007), based on the life of the iconic jazz legend, and received dazzling reviews for her performance. In 2015, she was once again applauded for her role, this time on Broadway in the musical **Amazing Grace**, an original production based on the awe-inspiring true story behind the world's most beloved song.

In addition to "Little Girl Blue: The Nina Simone Musical", Laiona Michelle, who is the recipient of an NAACP Award and a Barrymore Award for Excellence in Theatre, is currently working as writer on a new theatrical work based on the life of Nelson Mandela, which recently had its first reading in New York City.

Tickets for "Little Girl Blue: The Nina Simone Musical" are now on sale. For more information on Laiona Michelle and to purchase tickets, visit – <http://www.laionamichelle.com>.

Directed by Da "Little Girl Blue: The Nina Simone Musical" begin on January 29 – February 24, 2019, George Street Playhouse, 103 College Farm Road, New Brunswick, NJ 08901.

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