

[Home](#) / [Theatre News](#) / [News](#) / **Everything you need to know about 'Suffs' on Broadway**

Everything you need to know about 'Suffs' on Broadway

In her show about trailblazing yet flawed suffragists, creator and star Shaina Taub recalls a fraught and still resonant slice of American women's history.



Joe Dziemianowicz

February 28, 2024, 21:00

Rock the vote! There was a time when American women couldn't do that, not until suffragists got the 19th Amendment passed in 1920. A century-plus later, the Tony Award-winning musical *Suffs* celebrates the courageous and steadfast women who fought for gender equality at the polls. They faced blowback, but they persisted.

The show revolves around unsung suffragists – aka suffs – who courageously took to the streets to protest inequity. These women crossed age, race, and social divides, though they often fought among each other about the "right" way to advance the movement and who should do so.

With *Suffs*, Shaina Taub — who wrote the book, music, and lyrics and plays a lead role — becomes the second woman to ever solely create and star in her own Broadway show. Directed by Leigh Silverman (*Violet*), the show's producers include Hillary Rodham Clinton and Malala Yousafzai. Learn more about *Suffs* below, and march on over to the the Music Box Theatre.

What is *Suffs* about?

The suffrage movement was a late 19th- to early 20th-century political and social campaign advocating for women's right to vote. Activists, known as suffragists, promoted gender equality through protests, marches, and civil disobedience.

The *Suffs* musical focuses on the largely unknown social pioneers who emerged in the seven-year run-up to the passage of the 19th Amendment. These were feisty and strategic women who chafed at the previous generation of suffragists unwilling to use disruptive forms of activism. The show centers around this generational tension, and it also addresses the tension between suffragists of color who were long sidelined from the fight for white women's suffrage.

Where is *Suffs* playing?

Suffs begins performances March 26 at the [Music Box Theatre](#), located at 239 W. 45th St. between Broadway and 8th Avenue. Plays and musicals that have recently run at 1,009-seat theatre include *Purlie Victorious*, *Bob Fosse's Dancin'*, *Walking with Ghosts*, and *Dear Evan Hansen*.

How long is *Suffs*?

Suffs runs approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes, including one 15-minute intermission. This is a typical running time for a Broadway musical.

What days is *Suffs* playing?

Suffs plays Tuesday through Sunday, with two performances on Wednesdays and Saturdays and no performances on Mondays. For the most up-to-date weekly performance schedule, please visit the [Suffs page](#).

When did *Suffs* premiere?

The *Suffs* musical premiered in March 2022 off Broadway at the Public Theater, 102 years after the passage of the 19th Amendment that granted American women the right to vote. Check out a full timeline of the show and its history below.

- 1890: The National American Woman Suffrage Association formed by merging two existing organizations: the National Woman Suffrage Association and the American Woman Suffrage Association.
- 1910s: The women's suffrage movement gains steam due to work led by suffs determined to achieve voter equality.

- 1920: Passed by Congress on June 4, 1919 and ratified on August 18, 1920, the 19th Amendment officially became law and granted women the right to vote in the United States. Most Black women would wait nearly five decades more to actually exercise their right to vote.
- 2022: *Suffs* premieres at the Public Theater in New York. The limited-run production extended several times due to demand.
- 2024: *Suffs* begins its Broadway run on March 26 at the Music Box Theatre. The musical has been reworked for Broadway with a shorter run time, multiple new songs, and a new script; the musical was previously almost all sung through.

Who wrote the *Suffs* musical?

The *Suffs* musical features a book, music and lyrics by [Shaina Taub](#), a versatile singer, songwriter, and playwright making her Broadway debut. She is known for her innovative, genre-blending musical compositions and socially conscious storytelling.

Taub is best known for her adaptations of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*, presented at the [Delacorte Theater](#) in Central Park. In addition to appearing in her own shows, she has acted in [Hadestown](#), [Old Hats](#), and [Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812](#) off Broadway.



Suffs musical characters

The show's all-female and non-binary cast portrays various suffragists, politicians, and others. Here are the principal characters in *Suffs*, all of whom are actual historical figures.

- Alice Paul: A leader of the National Woman's Party who was instrumental in the U.S. women's suffrage movement.
- Carrie Chapman Catt: Head of the National American Woman Suffrage Association in the 1910s.

- **Ida B. Wells:** An African American investigative journalist, educator, and civil rights leader who fought for racial and gender equality.
- **Inez Milholland:** An American suffragist and lawyer who led suffrage parades in the 1910s.
- **Ruza Wenclawska:** A Polish American suffragist and labor activist.
- **Mary Church Terrell:** A prominent African American activist, educator, and suffragist.
- **Lucy Burns:** A militant activist for women's votes.
- **Dudley Malone:** An American lawyer, diplomat, politician, and advocate for civil liberties.
- **Doris Stevens:** An American suffragist, feminist, and writer.
- **Alva Belmont:** A prominent American socialite.
- **Phoebe Burn:** The mother of Tennessee legislator Harry Burn.
- **Mollie Hay:** An American community organizer and suffragist.

Who is in the cast of *Suffs* musical?

The principal cast of the Broadway premiere of *Suffs* features actors who are Broadway newcomers, Tony nominees, as well as a Tony Award winner. Many reprise their roles from the Off Broadway run.

Suffs creator [Shaina Taub](#) portrays Alice Paul, Tony Award winner [Nikki M. James](#) (*The Book of Mormon*) plays Ida B. Wells, Tony Award nominee [Jenn Colella](#) (*Come From Away*) is Carrie Chapman Catt, and Tony nominee Emily Skinner (*Side Show*) doubles as Alva Belmont and Phoebe Burn.

In other key roles are Grace McLean as President Woodrow Wilson, Hannah Cruz as Inez Milholland, Kim Blanck as Ruza Wenclawska, Anastacia McCleskey as Mary Church Terrell, Ally Bonino as Lucy Burns, Tsilala Brock as Dudley Malone, and Nadia Dandashi as Doris Stevens.



Suffs songs

The songs in the *Suffs* musical are still to be determined, but three standout songs from the Off-Broadway run expected to be in the Broadway version include the protest anthem "The Young Are at

the Gates," Wells's solo "Wait My Turn," and Catt's solo "This Girl."

New songs that have been revealed thus far include "Great American Bitch," "We Demand," and the finale "Keep Marching," a title that speaks for itself. This article will be updated with the full Broadway song list once it is finalized.

Major productions of *Suffs*

The 2022 Off-Broadway premiere at the Public Theater and the 2024 Broadway production are the only major productions of *Suffs* so far. If the show is a success, this production could lead to more across the country and the world.

Which awards has *Suffs* won?

The new Broadway adaptation of *Suffs* won Taub the Tony Awards for Best Book of a Musical and Best Original Score out of six nominations. The Off-Broadway and Broadway productions were also up for a number of theatre honors. Major awards and nominations include:

- 2024 Outer Critics Circle Awards: *Suffs* won Outstanding Musical, Outstanding Book of a Musical, and Outstanding Score out of five nominations.
- 2024 Drama Desk Awards: Taub won Outstanding Music, and Paul Tazewell won Outstanding Costume Design of a Musical out of eight nominations.
- 2023 Lucille Lortel Awards: Leigh Silverman was nominated for Best Director and Nikki M. James for Outstanding Featured Performer in a Musical.
- 2022 Drama Desk Awards: Shaina Taub was nominated for Outstanding Lyrics.
- 2022 Drama League Awards: *Suffs* was nominated for Outstanding Musical, Outstanding Direction, and Outstanding Featured Performance for Nikki M. James.
- 2022 Outer Critics Circle Awards: Jenn Colella was nominated for Outstanding Featured Actress.



Fun facts about *Suffs*

March on! Learn even more about *Suffs* on Broadway and its characters with these fun facts.

- Taub is the second woman in Broadway history to write the book, music, lyrics and star in her own musical. The first was the late Micki Grant, whose *Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope* ran in 1972.
- Ida B. Wells has a signature Barbie doll that comes with a miniature replica of the Memphis Free Speech, the newspaper where Wells became editor and co-owner in 1889.
- Taub's show is one of multiple musical slices of American history, including *Hamilton* and *1776*.
- The lead Broadway creative team – writer, director, choreographer, and producers – is entirely composed of women.
- Taub was inspired to write *Suffs* after reading *Jailed for Freedom*, a memoir about the suffrage movement by Doris Stevens, a character in the show.
- Showbiz and suffragists pair naturally: Two figures in *Suffs*, Ruza Wenclawska and Dudley Malone, became actors after the events of the musical.

Get tickets to *Suffs* on Broadway

The *Suffs* musical vibrates with urgency, doubly so in an election year. It took a relentless pursuit for women to win the vote, but getting tickets to *Suffs* is a breeze.

Photo credit: Suff's at The Public Theater off Broadway. (Photos by Joan Marcus)

Originally published on **Feb 29, 2024** • 13:53



Suffs

Mar 26, 2024 - Jan 5, 2025

See a historical, history-making original musical as it marches onto Broadway. *Suffs* details the lives and legacies of the pioneers of the women's suffrage movement, taking a celebratory but honest look at their triumphs and imperfections alike.

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