

"Don't go chasing waterfalls. Please stick to the rivers and the lakes that you're used to."

— TLC



CRAZYSEXYCOOL

THE TLC MUSICAL

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY
**KWAME
KWEI-ARMAH**

BASED ON THE MUSIC
PERFORMED AND RECORDED BY
TLC

CHOREOGRAPHED BY
**CHLOE O.
DAVIS**

MUSIC SUPERVISION AND
ARRANGEMENTS BY
DAVID HOLCENBERG

MUSIC DIRECTION, ASSOCIATE MUSIC
SUPERVISION, VOCAL AND ADDITIONAL
ARRANGEMENTS BY
JARET LANDON

ORCHESTRATIONS BY
**DAVID HOLCENBERG AND
JARET LANDON**

BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH BILL DIGGINS

IN THE KREEGER THEATER
JUNE 12 - AUGUST 9, 2026



THE PLAY

With their baggy fits and fresh sound, **Tionne “T-Boz” Watkins**, **Lisa “Left Eye” Lopes**, and **Rozonda “Chilli” Thomas** enter the ‘90s music scene as the music group TLC. As young Black women starting

out in the music industry, they are faced with challenges. From male music producers and the nosy media to lying boyfriends and health scares, T-Boz, Left Eye, and Chilli must navigate their lives on and off stage. Defying expectations, TLC captivates audiences with hits such as “Waterfalls,” “Creep,” “Unpretty,” and “No Scrubs.” *CrazySexyCool* tells the (mostly true) story of how TLC stormed the ‘90s

music scene with their bold originality and unshakable sisterhood. Beneath the dramatic scandals and unspeakable tragedies is a story of sisterhood, love, and defiance.

GET TO KNOW THE PLAYWRIGHT & DIRECTOR



When he was around eighteen, Kwame Kwei-Armah got his first acting gig in the play *Clash Point* at the Westminster Theater in London. However, it was not the play itself but the post-show discussion that drew him to the art form. The discussion helped him realize that theater is not only a form of entertainment but also a space to grapple with complex issues about the world. After experimenting with different art forms, including music and acting, Kwei-Armah found his voice through writing. In 2003, he made history as the first African-Caribbean playwright to have a play produced in London’s West End when *Elmina’s Kitchen* premiered at the National Theatre.

Kwei-Armah has also held many artistic leadership roles in theater. From 2011 to 2018, he served as the Artistic Director of Baltimore Center Stage. He then went on to be the Artistic Director of the Young Vic Theatre in London from 2018 to 2024, making history once again as the first African-Caribbean to lead a major British theater.

Kwei-Armah returns to the DC region as the playwright and director of *CrazySexyCool - The TLC Musical* at Arena Stage.

“TLC’s music was the soundtrack to a very meaningful part of my life. The cast we have assembled is FIRE, and the creative team is out of this world. I haven’t been this excited in a long time.” – Kwame Kwei-Armah

TLC:

**T-BOZ,
LEFT EYE,
& CHILLI**

Known for their socially conscious lyrics, hip dance moves, and tomboyish look, TLC is an American girl group from Atlanta, Georgia. Formed in 1990, TLC helped redefine what it means to be women in the music industry. With a sound that blended hip-hop, R&B, pop, and soul, the group led the '90s music scene with #1 *Billboard* hits such as "Waterfalls," "Creep," "Unpretty," and "No Scrubs." A pioneer of '90s girl groups, TLC empowered and paved the way for future girl groups such as the Spice Girls and Destiny's Child.

T-BOZ
THE "SEXY" ONE

CHILLI
THE "COOL" ONE

**LEFT
EYE**
THE "CRAZY" ONE



STATEMENT PIECES

TLC's iconic fashion style was as bold as their music. In a culture where femininity was mainly associated with heels and tight dresses, TLC challenged norms by opting for oversized, baggy fits. From overalls and pantsuits to men's boxers and sweatpants, TLC embodied how fashion is

about self-expression and being comfortable in your own skin rather than wearing what you're told to wear. As you watch the musical, take note of how Costume Designer Dede Ayite drew inspiration from TLC's iconic looks.

THE VOICE OF A GENERATION.

TLC.

TLC forms in Atlanta, Georgia

1990



Photo by Brett Weinstein for Wikimedia Commons

TLC releases debut album, *Ooooooohhh... On the TLC Tip*

1992

USA.



Bill Clinton is sworn in as 42nd President of the United States

1993

1994

AIDS becomes the leading cause of death for Americans aged 25-44

Congress passes the "Crime Bill," the largest federal crime bill in U.S. history which invested billions of dollars into crime and law enforcement



TLC releases second album, *CrazySexyCool*, including "Waterfalls," which cautions against illegal drug trading and unsafe sex practices leading to HIV/AIDS

1995



TLC releases third album, *FanMail*, including "No Scrubs" and "Unpretty," and wins three Grammys

1999



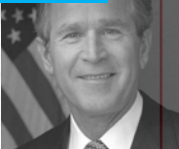
2001

George W. Bush is sworn in as 43rd President of the United States

2002

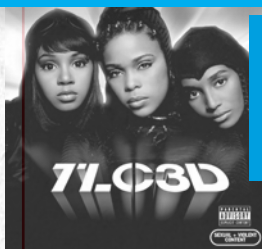
Left Eye is involved in a fatal car crash while filming a documentary in Honduras

TLC releases fourth album, *3D*, featuring several songs in memory of Left Eye



2003

U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) initiative launches to address the global HIV/AIDS crisis



'90s SLANG GLOSSARY

buggin' - acting crazy

busta - someone who is unreliable

da bomb - cool

fly - stylish, attractive, cool

scrub - a lazy and unsuccessful man

wack - bad, weird, poor quality

LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX, BABY

TLC used their music to normalize conversations around sexual health and empower individuals to take charge of their health. For example, TLC used their platform to advocate for HIV/AIDS awareness. **HIV (human immunodeficiency virus)** is a virus that attacks the body's immune system and can fatally progress into **AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome)** if left untreated. The AIDS epidemic plagued the United States beginning in the early 1980s, and by 1994, it became the leading cause of death for Americans aged 24-44. One of the ways HIV can spread is through sexual contact, which has led to shame surrounding the virus. In TLC's hit song, "Waterfalls," the second verse warns against unsafe sex practices, a direct reference to the AIDS epidemic: "His health is fading, and he doesn't know why. Three letters took him to his final resting place." In the spirit of sex positivity, the group also pinned or taped condoms to their clothes as fashion statements. Left Eye famously wore a condom over the left eye lens of her glasses.

MEDICAL MENTIONS: TERMS TO KNOW

BRAIN TUMOR:

a growth of cells in the brain. Brain tumors appear in various sizes, types, and locations in the brain. Some brain tumors are benign, or harmless, while others are cancerous. Common treatment options include removing the tumor through surgery or radiation therapy.

IN VITRO FERTILIZATION (IVF):

a series of procedures where an egg and sperm are fertilized in a laboratory and then implanted into the uterus. IVF is used to induce pregnancy when someone is infertile or when natural conception is not possible.

SICKLE CELL ANEMIA:

a form of sickle cell disease, sickle cell anemia is a genetic blood disorder that affects the shape of red blood cells. It is caused by a change in the gene responsible for making **hemoglobin**, the protein that allows red blood cells to carry oxygen throughout the body. As a result, individuals with sickle cell anemia have some red blood cells that are sticky and shaped like crescent moons, often blocking or slowing blood flow. In the United States, over 90 percent of individuals with sickle cell disease are Black or African-American and often experience unequal access to the extensive care needed to treat their condition.

THREE BIG QUESTIONS

1

What does success look like?

2

How can music be used as a tool for social change?

3

What does it mean to be unapologetically yourself?

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HELPFUL HINTS FOR THEATER AUDIENCES

As an audience member at the theater, YOU are part of the show! Just as you see and hear the actors onstage, they can see and hear you in the audience.

To help the performers do their best, please remember the following:

- Arrive early.
- Visit the restroom before the show starts.
- Sit in the seat indicated on your ticket.
- Ushers are there to help you!
- Before the show begins, turn off your phone, watch alarms, and any other electronic devices. If anything rings by accident, turn it off immediately.
- Do not use your phone for texts, calls, games, pictures, or recording.
- Respond to the show! You can laugh, cry, and gasp. However, don't distract the performers onstage.
- There is no food allowed in the theater.
- Intermission is the best time to discuss the show and visit the restroom.
- If you must leave during the show, wait for a scene change and exit quietly and quickly.
- Be sure to applaud at the end! During a musical, audiences sometimes clap after a song or dance.
- If you love the show or a performer, you can give a standing ovation. The actors bow to thank you.

CREDITS

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(Cover) Jade Milan, Stoney B. Woods, and Holli' Gabrielle Conway in *CrazySexyCool*. Photos by Julieta Cervantes.

(Page 2) Holli' Gabrielle Conway, Jade Milan, Stoney B. Woods, and company in *CrazySexyCool*. Photos by Julieta Cervantes.

(Page 3) Jade Milan, Holli' Gabrielle Conway, and Stoney B. Woods for *CrazySexyCool*. Photo by Ambe J. Williams.



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