

# Entertainment

Ethel Simmons editor/644-1100

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## Growing up on stage

### Tyne Turner is home again, at Meadow Brook

By Ethel Simmons  
staff writer

**T**YNE TURNER doesn't have a big part in Meadow Brook Theatre's current production of "The Rose Tattoo." "I play a 35-year-old Italian mother, Giuseppina, one of the four neighbor women," said the young actress.

"The biggest thing I do in this play is sing backstage. I sing eight times. For this play I sing very subtly, two Italian songs. The voice has an Italian, sexy sound."

Turner has packed a lot of drama training and experience into her 23 years. One of four children of Cella Merrill Turner, the artistic director of Will-O-Way Playhouse, Tyne first appeared behind the footlights at the age of 6 months when she was carried onstage by her mother in the closing scene of a Will-O-Way production.

Raised in Bloomfield Hills, where the popular repertory theater and acting school had its home for many years (Will-O-Way has since moved to Birmingham), Tyne made her second stage appearance at the family's theater when she was about 1 1/2 years old. "I remember being awakened, sleeping in a pink tutu, coming on at the end of 'Carnival,'" she said.

AS A 2-YEAR-OLD, she played her next stage role at Bloomfield Country Day School. "My two sisters went there for free," she recalled. "My mother directed a Christmas pageant, and I was an angel. I walked up to members of the choir and pulled on their beards and returned to the crib. There are pictures of this in the 1968 school yearbook."

Tyne Aida Turner was named after her great-grandmother, Christine (pronounced Chris "line," rhyming with "fine").

"She was small and they called her Tiny, for short," said great-grandmother's namesake. "They called me Tiny when I was little. When I was about 7, I weighed about 130 pounds. I used to get teased, so they called me Tine instead." She changed the spelling to Tyne, when her name was confused with Tina Turner instead of Tyne Turner.

Because she has grown up with so many people knowing her family, Turner affectionately thinks of lots of these folks almost as if they were relatives. To her, Terry Kilburn, Meadow Brook Theatre's artistic director, is "like my uncle. He's known me since I was very young."

When she was 11, Kilburn wanted her to play young Helen Keller in "The Miracle Worker" at Meadow Brook, but she declined because her father was ill, Turner said.



Tyne Turner dyed her long, auburn hair black for her role in Meadow Brook Theatre's production of "The Rose Tattoo." For the next

show, "A Flea in Her Ear," artistic director Terry Kilburn "wants to cut it into a '20s bob," Turner said.

DAN DEAN/staff photographer

"I didn't come here (to Meadow Brook) until I was 16," she recalled. She played Bea Bates, a neighbor girl, in director-playwright Charles Nolte's "A Summer Remembered," which was having its world premiere. "I celebrated my 17th birthday in the green room," she said.

A LOT OF schooling and stage performances have happened between then and her return this season to Meadow Brook, on the Oakland University campus in Rochester Hills. She briefly returned to Detroit, then got a call to work for her second season with a dance-theater troupe going to Europe.

While she was in Detroit, Turner left a message for Kilburn with his secretary, saying she was available for work. Kilburn called her in Vermont, where the troupe had gone before leaving for overseas. He offered her two, maybe three roles. In the next three shows at Meadow Brook.

He invited her to be in "The Rose Tattoo," "A Flea in Her Ear," and possibly "A Pack of Lies," she said. "He was really incredibly sweet. He gave me my (Equity) card."

She will play Antoinette, a French maid, in "A Flea in Her Ear." "Rehearsals start tomorrow," she said Monday, during an interview on the set of "The Rose Tattoo," which runs through Sunday, Jan. 25. Turner isn't perturbed about rehearsing one show

while appearing in another. "I've done that a lot," she said. Of the third show, "Terry is considering using me as a policewoman in 'Pack of Lies.'"

Turner was a senior at Roper School in Bloomfield Hills when Kilburn called her mother to ask for

some students to appear in "A Summer Remembered." Turner and another student, also from Roper and Will-O-Way, were chosen.

"I'D RATHER work here than anywhere else in Detroit," Turner said, in her strong, clear voice with

firm enunciation. "I'm not trained so much in modern plays. I really do much in modern plays. That's what I enjoy doing. This (Meadow Brook) seems to be the forum for American classics."

Seated in a comfortable chair on the living-room set for "The Rose Tattoo," Turner detailed her life up to now, laughing as she answered questions and told her story with verve.

She first returned to Detroit after living two years in New York. She worked professionally with opera companies in musicals, with the Jennifer Muller and the Works dance company in Europe and on the cruise ship Norway.

Turner came back, she said, because, "My father (Ken Turner) has been seriously ill. He was in a nursing home. I came home to take care of Daddy, and I was unemployed again." A friend of a friend was hired to produce a show for the Fraser Parks and Recreation Department and hired her to direct the production.

The producer was Michael Warren, who also lives in Warren. "I stayed there while I was directing,

and six weeks later we were engaged," Turner said. "I got my father into a house and got a man to take care of him."

TURNER SAID her fiancé is "kind of like my manager." She continued, "We're Amway distributors." The couple plans to be wed on Feb. 13, 1988, waiting until they have some money and also because, "It's four days after my birthday. I will have turned 25." She said she didn't want to marry until she was at least 25.

Turner plans to have a traditional wedding. "I'd like to give my parents a big froufrou," she said. One of the actress' responsibilities on the cruise ship Norway was putting on shows with celebrities, such as the Smothers Brothers, the Fifth Dimension, Payllis Diller and Sergio Franchi.

"I ran their show and hosted them for a week," she said. Some good friendships were formed. "Sergio Franchi and the Fifth Dimension are probably coming to my wedding."

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