

## SHOW INTEL

Season 2023–2024 | Issue 4: *Hairspray*

YOU  
CAN'T  
STOP  
THE  
BEAT!



Watch the trailer for  
***Hairspray***

Photo Credit: Norma Jean Roy

# hairspray

## SYNOPSIS

In 1962 Baltimore, teenager Tracy Turnblad dreams of dancing on the *Corny Collins Show*, a local television music and dance show. As she gains popularity among the show's fan base, she uses her newfound influence to advocate for racial integration on the show — despite the opposition of the show's producer and sponsor. **This vibrant and energetic show brings its messages of acceptance and equal rights to life through dynamic music and dance numbers, and a full cast of memorable characters.**

## FUN FACTS

- In the first two seasons of touring, *Hairspray* played in 118 cities, across 44 states and the District of Columbia to more than 886,000 audience members.
- Film director John Waters often calls Baltimore as the “Hairdo Capital of the World.”
- A “Hair Hopper” is a Baltimore term for someone who spends too much time on their oversized hairdos.
- *Hairspray* (the musical) won eight Tony Awards in 2003 (including Best Musical, Direction, Costumes, and Leading Actor & Actress Awards).
- The 2007 London production won four Laurence Olivier Awards, including Best New Musical.
- A musical film adaptation was made in 2007, starring John Travolta, Christopher Walken, Queen Latifah, & Michelle Pfeiffer.
- NBC's *Hairspray Live!* aired in 2016.
- The show is sprinkled with cultural references from the 1950s & 1960s, from Gidget to the Mouseketeers, Khrushchev to Castro, *Candid Camera* to *Peyton Place*.



Photo Credit: Jeremy Daniel

# FROM SCREEN TO STAGE

John Waters (right) was a huge fan of the *Buddy Deane Show* in Baltimore (see below). **He wrote and directed the 1988 film *Hairspray* partly as an homage to the show, but also as a backdrop for a story about segregation and racism in 1960s America.** Moderately successful at the time of its release, it became a cult hit once it was released as a home movie in the 1990s. The film starred actors who were or would become icons of popular culture, including Divine, Jerry Stiller, Debbie Harry, Ruth Brown, and Sonny Bono. It was newcomer Ricki Lake's debut performance.

After theater producer Margo Lion successfully acquired the rights to *Hairspray*, composer Mark Shaiman (*Some Like it Hot*), lyricist Scott Wittman (*Mary Poppins Returns*), and book writers Mark O'Donnell (*Cry-Baby*, *SNL*) & Thomas Meehan (*Annie*, *The Producers*) were brought in to create the script and libretto. The writers kept the film's main plot framework, but fleshed out certain characters, including Velma, Link, and Seaweed. John Waters consulted on the script, to keep the period and geographical references accurate.

Jack O'Brien (*The Full Monty*, *Shucked*) directed the production, with frequent collaborator Jerry Mitchell (*Pretty Woman: The Musical*, *On Your Feet!*, *Boop!*) as choreographer. The production opened in 2002 and ran for more than six years, generating subsequent successful productions, revivals and international tours.

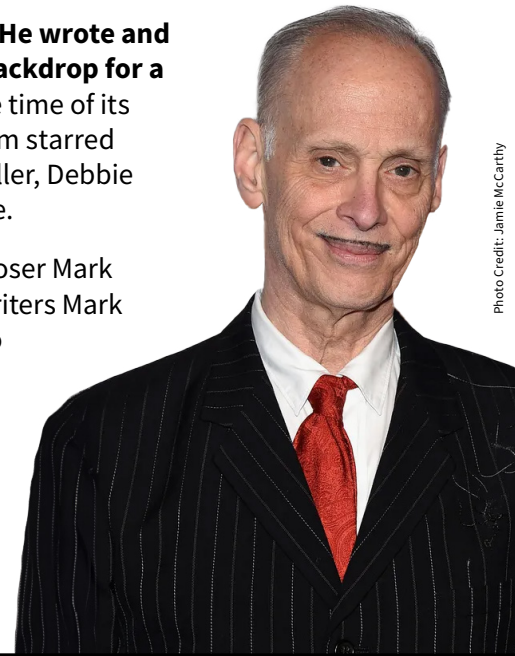


Photo Credit: Jamie McCarthy

## THE BUDDY DEANE SHOW, AMERICAN BANDSTAND, AND DICK CLARK

*The Corny Collins Show* is based on the *Buddy Deane Show*, which aired in Baltimore in the 1950s & 1960's. Like most regional dance show of its time, it was a segregated program. Under considerable pressure from the local TV network that carried it to integrate the Buddy Deane dancers, and fearing controversy, producers canceled the show in 1963.

A similar regional show in Philadelphia, *Bandstand*, became a national hit once its new host, Dick Clark, expanded the show's reach and renamed it *American Bandstand* in 1957. Clark, known as "America's Oldest Teenager," began integrating the show's dancers by featuring both black and white dancers — though they would not be seen dancing together until the show moved to Los Angeles in 1964. Dick Clark remained host of the show through its final season in 1989.



*The Bobby Deane Show*  
Photo Credit: Baltimore Magazine



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