



Founding Father Alexander Hamilton's Life Is Now a Hip-Hop Musical

You've never found history *this* cool.

By Rachel Mosely And Sergio Kletnoy Jul 13, 2015

23.8k



For a founding father, Alexander Hamilton was a bit of a badass: Dude is born into poverty, becomes fabled revolutionary, dies by duel. Lin-Manuel Miranda, Tony-winning writer and star of Broadway smash hit *In the Heights*, thought so too. So he did what anyone — wait, make that no one — would think to do: bring the story to the stage via a hip-hop/R&B musical that has Hamilton (Miranda) spitting verses like, "We are meant to be a colony that runs independently / Meanwhile, Britain keeps on shitting on us endlessly," and rap battling Thomas Jefferson. Cue the rave reviews and sold-out crowds. Fast-forward six months: The show has moved from NYC's Public Theater to Broadway's big leagues. Here, Hamilton's cast members hit the streets and share their own stories.

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(From left)

CHRISTOPHER JACKSON

Plays: George Washington



Dream role: "It's always the one I'm playing. It's hard for me to look at shows out there and see myself in them. I'm an R&B singer — I'm not going to get cast in *Les Miz*. What's great about this show is it's an amalgamation of all these awesome and important genres of music in a voice that I like to perform with."

Go-to Karaoke Song: "Probably 'Livin' On a Prayer.' Jon Bon Jovi actually came to the show with his wife, so getting to meet him was pretty dope."

JASMINE CEPHAS JONES

Plays: Peggy Schuyler/Maria Reynolds

Hometown: Brooklyn, NY

You might know her from: 2013 indie *Titus*

First role: "My first professional role was a Noah Baumbach film called *Mistress America* — it's actually premiering this summer, around the same time *Hamilton* opens [on Broadway]."

Typical day off: "I'm in bed for half the day. I'm not even gonna lie. I'm sleeping, and if I'm not sleeping, I'm trying to finally finish *Breaking Bad*."

RENÉE ELISE GOLDSBERRY

Plays: Angelica Schuyler

Hometown: San Jose, CA

You might know her from: *The Good Wife*

If I weren't an actor I'd be... "I used to think that I'd be a lawyer, but I'm married to a lawyer. The Lord knew what he was doing when he just let me play one on TV."

Post-show ritual: "We're all still singing and jamming to the songs all the way downstairs to the dressing rooms. No matter how tired we are when we start the show, there's such a high after it's over."

PHILLIPA SOO

Plays: Eliza Hamilton

Hometown: Libertyville, IL

You might know her from: NBC's *Smash*

Post-show ritual: "I go home and I'm usually starving, so I have to try not to eat a whole bag of chips ... because I really could. But popcorn is my jam. I really season it up and make it fancy."

Typical day off: "Lately, I've been watching *Game of Thrones*. I just started it, and I was like, *How did I not get on this train? Oh, right — it's because I never have time off.*"

LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA



Plays: Alexander Hamilton

Hometown: New York, NY

You might know him from: Broadway's *In the Heights*

On how this crazy idea came to him: "I wasn't a history buff — not even a little — but I was always an English nerd. I picked up Ron Chernow's biography of Hamilton randomly at Borders. I knew he died in a duel, so it'd have a cool ending. And I just fell in love with his story."

Confession: "Hillary Clinton came to see *In the Heights* in 2009. I used to walk around in my underwear backstage between shows, and I come out of my dressing room and there's Hillary with three Secret Service guys because she needed to use the bathroom. She said, 'Show's great!' and I ran inside to put some clothes on."

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From the first
to the last

LESLIE ODOM JR.

Plays: Aaron Burr

Hometown: Philadelphia, PA

You might know him from: NBC's *Smash*

Post-show ritual: "Lin and I made up a stupid song that we sing at the top of our lungs as we leave the stage. Then we have a shot of rum in the dressing room, and I'll grab a dollar slice on my way home."

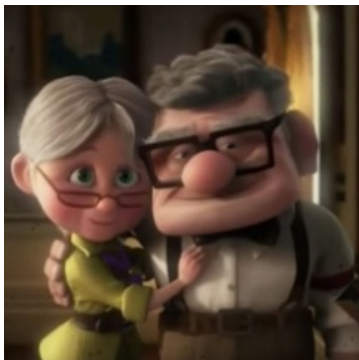
If I weren't an actor I'd be... "I wish I could say that I would be feeding the hungry or something. But I've always liked to throw parties, so I'd be a world- renowned DJ who gets flown all over the place for parties on yachts and in underground clubs."





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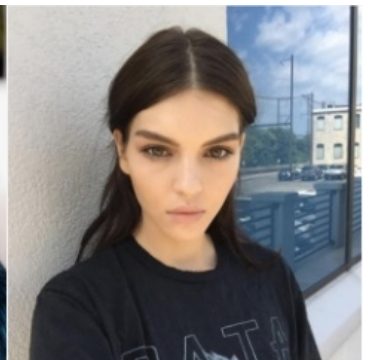
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JONATHAN GROFF



Plays: King George

Hometown: Lancaster, PA

You might know him from: *Glee*, *Frozen* (voice of Kristoff)

First role: "I was Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* in my dad's barn. I was a drag Dorothy."

Dream costar: "I'd love to do a play with Cate Blanchett. I saw her in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and it's my favorite performance ever."

Confession: "I was on a first date, maybe a year and a half ago. We ate dinner, then he came back to my apartment, and I don't smoke, but he smoked a cigarette. We were making out, and he's smoking. So I took a cigarette and also smoked it, and then five minutes later, I projectile vomited because I got so nauseous from smoking. That's probably the most embarrassing thing that's ever happened."





MARTIN SCHOELLER

(From left)

DAVEED DIGGS

Plays: Thomas Jefferson/Marquis de Lafayette

Hometown: Oakland, CA

You might know him from: His hip-hop album, *Small Things to a Giant*



On his biggest fan: "My mom sends me the reviews before I've seen them. She texted me congratulating me about the show going to Broadway while we were still waiting for the announcement. She found out before I did! I don't know how she does it."

OKIERIETE ONAODOWAN

Plays: Hercules Mulligan/James Madison

Hometown: Newark, NJ

You might know him from: Broadway's *Rocky*

First role: "In seventh grade, I played one of the bodyguards in *Bye Bye Birdie*. We didn't have any lines — we just stood there, and whenever someone would say something, we'd give them dirty looks. But I was just excited to have a leather jacket."

Perfect day off: "As crazy as it sounds, sitting on my couch, playing Xbox, and eating ice cream... ideally with the windows closed."

ANTHONY RAMOS

Plays: John Laurens/Phillip Hamilton

Hometown: Brooklyn, NY

You might know him from: This American Life's *21 Chump Street: The Musical*

Post-show ritual: "Dude, I eat way too much McDonald's after shows. I mean, I've been getting better. Now I'll try to get a sandwich."

Go-to Karaoke song: "Journey's 'Don't Stop Believin'.' It's for when you're obliteratedly wasted and you're like, I'm just going to try the highest note I can possibly sing in my life."





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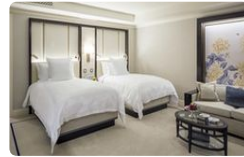
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