

Title: *Hamilton's* Effect: How a Single Musical Changed the Trajectory of Broadway
Presenter: Jade Bolton, Irvine Valley College
Mentor: Professor Andrew Sclafani

When *Hamilton* debuted, few could have anticipated how this musical about the American revolution would revolutionize Broadway's landscape. Powerhouse show-tunes and a majority white cast were swapped out for R&B/hip-hop songs and an all minority cast shifting traditions of the Broadway scene (Kasinitz 69). The US population predominantly favors R&B/hip-hop music. *Hamilton's* successful implementation of these genres allows it to reach beyond the typical Broadway audience. *LA Times* entertainment writer Steven Zeitchik notes that "Barely once each Broadway generation a juggernaut so powerful comes along that it causes competitors a brief moment of despair" putting into context *Hamilton's* wide-spread appeal.

Creator and lead actor Lin-Manuel Miranda believes in "history being up for grabs, and the teller being just as important as the subject" (Nereson 1046). By using non-white actors to portray the story of the founding fathers the story is more accessible to audiences today (Whitfield 217). The benefits go beyond the audience; Broadway's landscape is diversified through *Hamilton's* decision to utilize color blind casting. The product of this is a greater desire from audience members to explore Alexander Hamilton's history since its "a musical that has transcended Broadway and passed into the broader public consciousness" (Owen 509).

Through a literary research investigation, scholarly perspectives confirm it is evident that *Hamilton's* impact has been integral in changing Broadway's landscape for future productions. If more productions follow *Hamilton's* lead, Broadway will continue becoming a more inclusive art form willing to diversify.

Works Cited

- Kasinitz, Philip. "Hamilton's Immigrant America: Understanding People in their Social Worlds
Understanding People in their Social Worlds." *Contexts*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2016, pp. 69-71.
ProQuest,
<https://ezproxy.ivc.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/1876740370?accountid=39837>
- Nerenson, Ariel. "Hamilton's America: An Unfinished Symphony with a Stutter (Beat)."
American Quarterly, vol. 68, no. 4, 2016, pp. 1045-1059,1112. *ProQuest*,
<https://ezproxy.ivc.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/1858057279?accountid=39837>.
- Owen, Kenneth. "Can Great Art also be Great History?" *The Independent Review*, vol. 21, no. 4,
2017, pp. 509-517. *ProQuest*,
<https://ezproxy.ivc.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/1938826621?accountid=39837>.
- Whitfield, Sarah. *Reframing the Musical: Race, Culture and Identity*. Red Globe Press, 2019.
- Zeitchik, Steven. "Undisputed Leader; the Dominating Success of the Musical 'Hamilton' is
Causing a Huge Ripple Effect on Broadway during Tony Awards Season." *Los Angeles
Times*, Apr 30, 2016. *ProQuest*,
<https://ezproxy.ivc.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/1785448438?accountid=39837>.