

## Hamilton • Unbound: A Timeless Fusion of History and Modernity on Stage

### Description

**SALT LAKE CITY, UT** I've been waiting to watch a live showing of *Hamilton* for a long time. I've listened to the soundtrack (more times than I care to admit) and watched the show on Disney+, and after all of that, I can confidently tell you that it does not disappoint.

**Broadway Across America's** *Hamilton* at the **George S. and Dolores Doris Eccles Theater** is more than just a show—it's a transformative and immersive experience. Under the visionary direction of [Thomas Kail](#), who utilized [David Korins](#)' groundbreaking set design to its full potential, this production retells history in a way that fuses the past and present, creating a powerful experience.

[Lin-Manuel Miranda](#)'s (Pulitzer Prize, Grammy, Emmy, and Tony award-winning) book, music, and lyrics bring an electrifying energy to the stage, making *Hamilton* an enduring and beloved phenomenon. That fusion of past and present is felt most immediately in the score itself.



Photo Credit: Andy Jones (Baseline Theatrical)

Rap is at the heart of *Hamilton*, seamlessly blending with various genres to create a rich and dynamic musical experience. It's hard to imagine anyone other than Miranda being able to craft *Hamilton* with such precision. Miranda's mastery of rap is undeniable, but what truly sets his work apart is his deep understanding of different rapping styles and the diverse subgenres of R&B, jazz, and musical theatre, which makes the music captivating and uniquely vibrant.

[Alex Lacamoire](#)'s orchestrations and co-arrangements add another layer of brilliance to the performance, ensuring that *Hamilton* will be remembered as a groundbreaking work in musical theatre for years to come. Just as the music propels the show forward, the choreography builds on that momentum.



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*Hamilton* features dance choreography by three-time Tony Award winner [Andy Blankenbuehler](#). Utilizing [Howell Binkley](#)'s lighting designs and Korin's innovative stage designs (stairs, balconies, and, of course, most importantly, the revolving stage), Blankenbuehler elevates the choreography, bringing us to new heights in every song.

Further, Tony Award-winner [Paul Tazewell](#)'s costumes and Charles G. LaPointe's Hair and Wig design are both historically accurate with modern flair and visually stunning, grounding the characters in their era while elevating them to iconic status.

Taken together, these artistic elements create a show that is as visually and musically inventive as it is thematically ambitious. And it's in this thematic ambition—Miranda's retelling of Hamilton's life through a contemporary, racially diverse lens—where the production opens itself to deeper questions about history, identity, and nationhood.

**Miranda**'s ambitious retelling of **Alexander Hamilton**'s life and legacy, seen through the lens of contemporary music and a racially diverse cast, is both captivating and thought-provoking. The show has rightfully earned praise for its innovative blend of hip-hop, R&B, and traditional musical theatre while offering commentary on the American Dream, identity, and democracy. Yet, when viewed through the lens of today's political climate, *Hamilton* offers both valuable insights and notable limitations in its engagement with contemporary issues.



Photo Credit: Andy Jones (Baseline Theatrical)

## The American Dream

One of the most compelling aspects of *Hamilton* is its portrayal of the American Dream—a theme that resonates powerfully in today's socio-political context. The narrative follows the life of founding father Alexander Hamilton and his journey from immigrant orphan to influential statesman, embodying the idea that ambition and hard work can lead to success in America. This theme is especially relevant in current discussions about immigration and the "self-made" individual.

However, this framing also invites critique. In glorifying Alexander Hamilton's story, the musical sometimes oversimplifies the complexities of the American Dream, particularly regarding the systemic barriers that marginalized groups continue to face. Casting Black, Pacific Island, Asian, or Latino actors in the roles of the Founding Fathers is a bold statement on inclusivity. It reclaims the narrative for people of color. Yet, it risks glossing over the historical realities of slavery, colonization, and the exclusion of non-white voices in the founding of the United States. This is particularly significant in the context of ongoing discussions about systemic racism and the legacies of slavery in American institutions.



Photo Credit: Andy Jones (Baseline Theatrical)

*Hamilton* also offers a timely reflection on leadership and governance relevant to today's political landscape. The musical presents the Founding Fathers as flawed but visionary leaders grappling with the challenges of creating a new nation. The debates over federalism, state sovereignty, and the role of the executive branch depicted in the show echo ongoing political debates in the United States. This tension underscores a central point about the show's political project.

However, the portrayal of these figures as charismatic and relatable leaders may be seen as problematic in our current era of political polarization and widespread disillusionment with leadership. With trust in government at an all-time low and leaders under intense scrutiny, *Hamilton*'s somewhat romanticized portrayal of the Founding Fathers might feel out of step with the more critical lens through which we now view historical figures and political power. However, I believe the point of *Hamilton* is two-fold: Miranda is genuinely seeking to offer a counter-narrative of the Founding Fathers that non-

white Americans can see themselves in while also presenting a less glorified version of U.S. history. While the show's political resonances invite substantial reflection, its success also hinges on the exceptional performers who bring this world to life each night.

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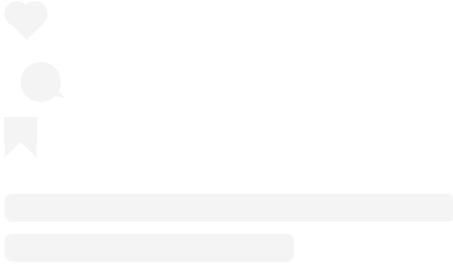
Photo Credit: Andy Jones (Baseline Theatrical)

## Performance Highlights

As a well-established musical that opened back in 2015, the National Tour of *Hamilton* travels with two large casts. The night I attended, Standby [Alex Nicholson](#) stepped in for Alexander Hamilton, and Ensemble member [Josh Marin](#) filled the role of Aaron Burr. Nicholson and Marin were fantastic, which tells me the level of talent in the cast is phenomenal. Nicholson is an incredible actor and singer with a great voice. He is particularly powerful in "My Shot" as he masterfully blends intense emotion and vulnerability.



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[Josh Marin](#), as Aaron Burr, had moments of brilliance in “The Room Where It Happened” and “Wait For It.” Marin’s notes were explosive as the company echoed the lyrics. Marin finally breaks out of his dignified and straight-laced exterior. I turned to my guest, who whispered, “That was powerful; I was not expecting that.”

[Simon Longnight](#), as Marquis de Lafayette/Thomas Jefferson, knows how to work a crowd. The transition from Jazz to R&B is seamless in “What’d I Miss,” which features [Longnight](#) as Jefferson and [Eddie Ortega](#) as James Madison.

A performer portraying King George III in a vibrant red costume and crown, striking a theatrical pose  
Jonathon Groff singing “I Know Him”

[Paul Louis Lessard](#), as King George III, is delightful, adding much-needed comic relief at just the right moments, especially in “You’ll Be Back,” played on Broadway by [Jonathon Groff](#), who just received his first Tony for his role in [Merrily We Roll Along](#). Like Groff, Lessard has an impressive belt and personality in spades.

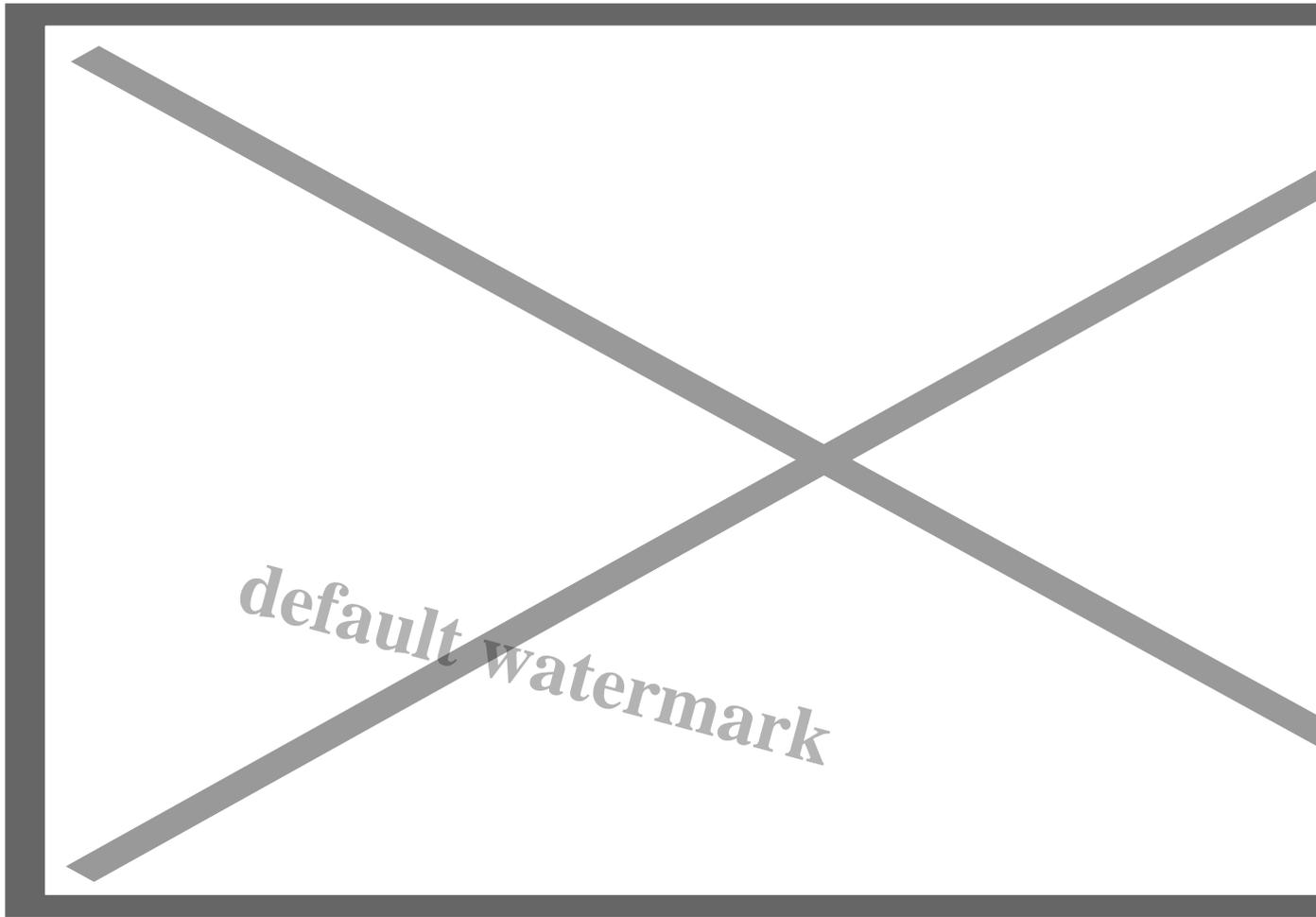
[Kendyl Sayuri Yokoyama](#)’s portrayal of Eliza Hamilton is moving, particularly during her heart-wrenching performance of “Burn” and “Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story.” [Lencia Kebede](#), as Angelica Schuyler shines with her incredible rapping and stage presence.

## Satisfied/Rewind Sequence

Among the show’s many intricately staged moments, few demonstrate its technical and emotional precision better than “Satisfied.” Angelica describes herself [rapping] in “Satisfied”:

I’m a girl in a world in which  
My only job is to marry rich  
My father has no sons so I’m the one who has to social climb for one  
So I’m the oldest and the wittiest and the gossip in New York City is insidious.

“Satisfied” Written by Lin-Manuel Miranda



Lencia Kebede as Angelica Schuyler

“Satisfied” is one of the musical’s standout moments, thanks to Thomas [Kail](#)’s masterful execution of Lin-Manuel [Miranda](#)’s concept and Andy [Blankenbuehler](#)’s stunning experimental choreography. This combination effectively allows the audience to visualize a moment frozen in time as we relive Angelica’s first encounter with Alexander Hamilton, filled with flirtation and possibility. As Angelica reflects on that moment, she realizes Eliza’s love for Alexander and, being the eldest, understands she can’t pursue him herself. The scene then fast-forwards to the present day, bringing us back to Eliza and Alexander’s wedding. This manipulation of time is echoed in the production’s physical design, especially the revolving stage that has become synonymous with *Hamilton*.

David Korins’ set design establishes a kinetic world that moves effortlessly through scenes, spaces, and temporal shifts. This flexibility is anchored by the revolving stage, a technical centerpiece of the production. Korins notes that “the Broadway show uses a winch-driven turntable and ring with encoders to allow it to have precision programming of position.



[Image of the Turntable base beneath the stage](#)

[Professor Amanda Padilla \(2023\) says:](#)

“The aesthetics of the revolving stage in *Hamilton* combined with the story itself is profound. Even though the usage of this mechanism has been around since 1729 (Even before the actual story of the show took place), what makes it profound is how the stage helps move the story along with the inner and outer rings of the turntable. The American Revolution, which serves as a central theme of the musical, is an era defined by tumultuous change and revolutionary ideas. By providing a platform for seamless scene transitions, it emphasizes each character’s arc with a setup of a main turntable and the outer ring. Through this mechanism, *Hamilton* manages to intertwine historical accuracy with modern storytelling.”

Beyond facilitating seamless scene changes, the revolving stage reinforces *Hamilton*’s core meditation on movement, leadership, and succession. These ideas resonate most powerfully when embodied by the performers.



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One of the clearest examples of this embodiment comes through [Kameron Richardson](#)'s portrayal of George Washington. Richardson brings an authoritative grace to the role, particularly in the pivotal solo "One Last Time," where Washington announces his decision to step down after two terms as President of the United States.

In Richardson's solo, Washington announces his decision to step down as the first President of the United States after two terms. The song captures a pivotal moment in American history where Washington voluntarily relinquishes power, setting a precedent for the peaceful transfer of authority. Washington's decision is portrayed as an act of selflessness and wisdom, emphasizing his desire to preserve the young nation's democratic ideals rather than cling to power. By stepping down, Washington ensures that the presidency remains an institution greater than any one individual.

The lyrics of the song, particularly the lines "If I say goodbye, the nation learns to move on / It outlives me when I'm gone," highlight Washington's foresight in understanding that the strength of the country lies in its ability to evolve beyond any single leader. His decision is framed as an act of patriotism, with a focus on the long-term health of the nation.



Photo Credit: Andy Jones (Baseline Theatrical)

It was difficult not to connect Washington's farewell to the current political moment in the United States. President Joe Biden's recent decision to withdraw from the presidential campaign echoes some of the same themes articulated in "One Last Time," though under markedly different historical and political conditions. While Biden's presidency unfolds within a deeply polarized and contentious landscape, both moments are shaped by an awareness of the consequences of remaining in power amid a divided nation.

In a letter to the nation dated July 24, 2024, Biden wrote, "I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down and to focus solely on fulfilling my duties as President." Like Washington, Biden's decision can be read as prioritizing the stability of the nation over personal ambition—a recognition that leadership sometimes requires restraint rather than endurance. Both moments gesture toward the importance of continuity, capable governance, and the preservation of democratic institutions during periods of uncertainty.

Yet the contexts differ significantly. Washington stepped aside at the dawn of the American experiment, establishing a precedent for peaceful transfer of power in a fragile new republic. Biden's withdrawal, by contrast, occurs within a mature but strained democracy confronting entrenched polarization, economic inequality, and ongoing struggles over social justice. As a result, the political ramifications of Biden's decision are more immediate and contested, inviting interpretations that range from principled selflessness to strategic calculation or perceived vulnerability. This tension between foresight and fracture underscores why Washington's decision, and the song that dramatizes it,

continues to resonate so powerfully today.

In both cases, stepping aside acknowledges that the office of the President of the United States carries a weight greater than any single individual. The connection between the two moments lies in the shared understanding that effective leadership sometimes requires relinquishing power in order to safeguard the nation's stability and continuity.

Overall, the level of talent displayed by the entire cast left a lasting impression; the ensemble remains in near-constant motion from the opening moments through the final bows. I have not been this impressed by an ensemble since *MJ the Musical*, which features one of the most technically accomplished groups of dancers I have seen on a Broadway stage. In *Hamilton*, however, the choreography asks more than technical precision. Its experimental movement vocabulary—inflected with modern and contemporary influences—functions as a narrative engine, deepening the storytelling and propelling the emotional and historical arc of the production. While the show's political resonances invite substantial reflection, its success also hinges on the exceptional performers who bring this world to life each night. All of these elements—the music, the design, the political resonances, and the performances—culminate in a production that feels both timely and timeless.



Photo Credit: Andy Jones (Baseline Theatrical)

**I haven't been this impressed by an ensemble as a whole since MJ the Musical! The choreography in this show is much more experimental for the ensemble and includes modern and contemporary flair to add to the story-telling aspect of the narrative.**

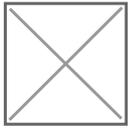


Photo Credit: Andy Jones (Baseline Theatrical)

*Hamilton* is more than a musical—it is a cultural event that challenges, inspires, and brings audiences into collective reflection. Through its bold storytelling, the production demonstrates how theater can illuminate the human experience, ignite passion, and invite change. As the final notes of "Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story" echo through the theater, the lasting impact of the work is unmistakable. I rarely cry at plays or musicals, but this one left me undone. With only thirty performances scheduled, tickets are likely to sell out quickly. I strongly encourage audiences to secure seats while they can.



[Philip Cast](#)



[Philip Cast](#)



[Angelica Cast](#)



[Angelica Cast](#)

**Details:**

- *Hamilton* at the George S. and Dolores Doris Eccles Theater in Salt Lake City, Utah
- Dates: July 31st – September 1st, 2024
- Showtimes: Tuesday-Thursday evenings at 7:30 PM, Friday-Saturday evenings at 8:00 PM, Sunday evenings at 7:00 PM, Saturday matinees at 2:00 PM, and Sunday matinees at 1:00 PM
- Ticket prices range from \$76 to \$349
- Enter the \$10 *Hamilton* Ticket Lottery [Here](#)
- Visit [Broadway-at-the-Eccles.com](http://Broadway-at-the-Eccles.com) or call 801.355.2787 (ARTS) for more information
- Run time: 2 hours and 45 minutes with a 15-minute intermission
- Recommended for ages ten and up (no babies-in-arms)

**Accessibility Information:**

- Open captioned performances on Saturday, August 3rd, 2024, at 2:00 PM, and Thursday, August 29th, 2024, at 7:30 PM
- Audio description available on Friday, August 2nd, 2024, at 8:00 PM
- ASL interpreted performance on Saturday, August 24th, 2024, at 8:00 PM

HAMILTON features book, music, and lyrics by Lin-Manuel Miranda, direction by Thomas Kail, choreography by Andy Blankenbuehler, and musical supervision and orchestrations by Alex Lacamoire.

HAMILTON features scenic design by David Korins, costume design by Paul Tazewell, lighting design by Howell Binkley, sound design by Nevin Steinberg, hair and wig design by Charles G. LaPointe, and casting by Telsey + Company, Bethany Knox, CSA.

The musical is produced by Jeffrey Seller, Sander Jacobs, Jill Furman and The Public Theater.

The HAMILTON Original Broadway Cast Recording is available everywhere nationwide. For information on HAMILTON, visit [HamiltonMusical.com](https://HamiltonMusical.com). Follow HAMILTON on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter & TikTok @HamiltonMusical.

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### References:

*Hamilton's* turntable and ring stage: a revolving stage isn't new to theatre. However, *Hamilton's* innovative use makes it a critical storytelling device to bring the characters' tumultuous world to life.. (n.d.) >*The Free Library*. (2014). Retrieved Aug 03 2024 from <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Hamilton%27s+turntable+and+ring+stage%3a+a+revolving+stage+isn%27+a0497053721>

Padilla, A. L. (2023). Revolutionizing the stage: The impact of the revolving stage in *Hamilton*. [https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2104&context=ny\\_pubs](https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2104&context=ny_pubs)

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