

Hamilton

How much do you really know about the man on the ten-dollar bill? You might know that his name was Alexander Hamilton, that he was one of America's founding fathers, you might even know that he was the first secretary of the treasury and founded America's financial system. But what do you know about his life, his story?

In February of 2015 a musical premiered in New York's Public Theatre by the name of "Hamilton" written by Lin Manuel Miranda. It was met with universal acclaim and in August of the same year transferred to Broadway. Since then the show has exploded in popularity, winning many awards including 11 Tony Awards, a Grammy Award for Best Musical Theater Album and a Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

"Hamilton" tells the story of Alexander Hamilton, a "young, scrappy and hungry" orphan from a tiny island in the Caribbean, who at the age of 17 immigrated to America, fought alongside George Washington in the revolution, worked for the new American government and wrote over a thousand pages in letters, essays, speeches and reports. Through Lin Manuel Miranda's emotional narrative, we get a closer and more personal look at Hamilton's life and his death.

The idea for "Hamilton" was born in 2009, when, while on vacation, Lin Manuel Miranda picked up a 700-page biography of Alexander Hamilton by Ron Chernow. After reading only a few chapters Miranda was on the Internet, sure that someone had already made Hamilton's story into a musical. As it turned out, no one had, and so Miranda began his project. A year later Miranda preformed a rough version of the opening number at the White House.

Due to its revolutionary use of different styles of music, critics claim that "Hamilton" is making musical history. Hamilton's story is told primarily through hip-hop music, but also includes some elements of pop, soul, blues and traditional show tunes. In interviews Miranda says that he had always taken it as a given that hip-hop is the music of the revolution. Because of its energy, its empowering narrative, it seemed like the perfect pick for "Hamilton".

But Lin Manuel Miranda took the idea of using music as a plot device to a whole new level. Each character has their own music style. King George III, for example, has a distinctly British pop sound, the Schuyler sisters sound a lot like the popular R'n'B group "Destiny's Child", and Hamilton's lifelong rival Aaron Burr sings a few classic "showstoppers".

In March of 2016 Lin Manuel Miranda was interviewed by British actress Emma Watson who played the role of Hermione Granger in the Harry Potter films. Miranda confessed that a lot of the structure of the play was inspired by Harry Potter, and the "Hamilton" cast was sorted into their Hogwarts houses. Lin and Emma discussed the importance of the play in current times and how Miranda's personal history influenced his writing. Lin Manuel also shared a few interesting stories behind the creation of some of the beloved songs.

In less than 2 years, "Hamilton" has become a cultural phenomenon. Not only did it introduce many teenagers to the world of theatre, it also gave the world a history lesson. The show humanizes the founding fathers, shows us that they were actual people with emotions and personal relationships. But the show did more than just touch the hearts of thousands of its listeners, it actually made an impact. In 2015 the US Department of the Treasury announced that they were redesigning the 10-dollar bill, replacing Hamilton, but thanks to the show's popularity the plans were reversed.

Which of the following statements is NOT true?

1. Hamilton tells us the history of the American Revolution.
2. Hip-hop takes its roots from the American Revolution.
3. Out of all musical styles hip-hop fits Hamilton best.
4. There is a mixture of different musical styles in Hamilton.