

# Don't Miss Your Shot: Hamilton makes a triumphant return to PPAC

Okee dokee folks... I was fortunate to attend a performance of Hamilton for the second time tonight. I first saw the musical when it came to the Providence Performing Arts Center a couple of years ago and I was very moved by the experience. Not being a fan of hip-hop or rap, I was very skeptical that I would enjoy the show. While I still do not like regular rap or hip-hop I do LOVE the music and dance of Hamilton. It is intelligent, clever, inspirational and very entertaining. Yes, some would say that if I like Hamilton, I like hip-hop. Then so be it I guess.

Tonight I got goosebumps as the lights went down and I heard King George make announcements over the PA and then bid the audience to "Enjoy MY show!" The first few minutes of Hamilton really rush over you. It's like an amusement park ride that just jumps right into the thrill. The energy of the performance draws you in and locks your attention on every word and movement. It takes your breath away and you physically feel like you are trying to keep up with every move they make. The crowd tends to express their excitement at moments of motivation like they do at a sermon. At points in the second act, such as one of Eliza's final numbers, there is a longer pause in the song and the audience is so transfixed by the emotions of this that the theatre is dead silent: it is amazing. There is so much to this show, so much going on that it truly is an EXPERIENCE like no other.

The current engagement of Hamilton at PPAC is similar to the last run but this time there appears to be MORE energy in the show, a little more "hip-hop-ish-ness" and it seems as though they pushed the characters and interpretations a bit more. As with last time, King George has the show stealing moments and songs that always bring laughter to the audience. George hangs out a bit longer in this production and pops up a little more often to punctuate a scene with his presence.

The star performers of this show are Jared Dixon as Aaron Burr, Eliza Hamilton played by Stephanie Jae Park and Warren Jackson who handles the dual roles of Thomas Jefferson and Lafayette. Honestly, the entire cast is marvelous and versatile. Their constant, spectacular movement and coordination certainly needs to be commended.

If you have not had a Hamilton experience yet you should really do some pre-show warm ups. Do a little research of the story. Listen to some of the songs. Check out some of the lyrics online. Trust me, you will be glad you did. Just like a Shakespeare play, your ears need to adjust a little to the pattering lyrics so your brain can absorb it all. The musical accompaniment runs the gamut from harpsichord to scratch/hip-hop beats and is heart-pumping at times. It AMAZES me that the performers have the capacity to store and recite the vast amount of words that are in every song. There are a LOT of words in this show. There are two debates that are brilliantly presented as rap battles complete with a (soft) mic drop. At my first Hamilton show I caught a few great lines in the flurry of verse and this time was no different. "Your perfume smells like your daddy has money," "You married an Icarus who has flown too close to the sun," "We signed a treaty with a King whose head is now in a basket, would you like to take it out and ask it?" and "We almost died in a trench, while you were off getting high with the French." My favorite line from Hamilton will always be "Immigrants, we get the job done." Word!

If you are heading to PPAC you MUST bring a VAX CARD and a MASK. Plan ahead and have them ready

but leave extra time to enter the theatre as screening makes entry a little longer. You will be required to wear the mask for the duration of the show. The performance runs two hours and forty five minutes with about twenty for an intermission. Buckle up, it's a very moving ride but it goes by faster than you think. This is a musical that you can see again and again and never tire of. You pick up more and more with every viewing. Hamilton is history and the show is historic. Lin-Manuel Miranda truly created something, and though I hate to use this word, it is EPIC! There has never been anything like this and it is something that everyone NEEDS to experience live at least once. Rise up. Don't miss your shot. Get to PPAC and be inspired.