

The Hamilcast: A Hamilton Podcast

**Episode #9: Down for the count and I'm drownin' in 'em**

Hosts: Gillian Pensavalle and Bianca Soto

Guest: Scott Wasserman

Description: Cue all the memes, all the gifs, and all the references because this week we are joined by none other than Scott Wasserman. Oh ya know, just the guy who programs all of the beats in a little show called HAMILTON! Yup, we are still floating after this awesome conversation with the Hamilton Beatmaster. And you guys! It's perfect because we're up to Chernow's "The Lovesick Colonel" chapter where Ham meets Eliza and Scott told us all about the badass rewiiiiind in "Satisfied."

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The Hamilcast's Transcribing Army

Ok, so we are doing this . . .

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GILLIAN PENSAVALLE: Hey everybody, welcome back to the Hamilcast!

BIANCA SOTO: Hi, hi!

G. PEN: I'm Gillian.

B. SO: I'm Bianca.

G. PEN: I'm super excited because we have someone from Hamilton today.

B. SO: This is really exciting, it's our first official Ham-related guest, and it's pretty awesome, and a job that I never knew existed! So it's really exciting!

G. PEN: Bianca is holding her face right now and I feel very warm. [Laughter] I'm smiling a lot and there's a lot of—

B. SO: Probably also because we turned the air conditioner off.

G. PEN: It feels like the Caribbean in here. Everything is Ham, it all comes back to Ham. It is incredibly hot and muggy in New York today in March. But anyway, we are joined by the amazing Scott Wasserman. Hi, Scott!

SCOTT WASSERMAN: Hi! How are you?

B. SO: We're great!

G. PEN: I'm wonderful, how are you?

S. WASS: Very good, thanks for having me.

G. PEN: Thanks for joining us. Scott, is this right? The "Beatmaster," is that your official title?

S. WASS: That's not the official title, that was the title I had when we were off-Broadway at the Public, but now that we're all fancy on Broadway, I'm the Ableton programmer.

B. SO: Whoa.

G. PEN: Okay. Can we call you the Beatmaster?

S. WASS: Sure.

[Laughter]

G. PEN: It's a pretty badass title.

S. WASS: [Laughing] Thanks!

G. PEN: Can you tell everyone what you do and how you joined the show? You do basically everything that the orchestra cannot, is that right?

S. WASS: In a nutshell, yeah, basically the orchestra for Hamilton, it's a ten-piece band and they're playing along with a click track that they hear in their ear for a lot of the show that keeps everyone in time and everyone together, and along with that click track, I've programmed any of the extra sounds that can't be played by a live musician, like record scratches or triggers for cannon blasts and sound effects like that, or extra electronic percussion that's happening that the live percussionists can't play themselves. So, yeah, a job that I also did not know existed before I started doing it.

G. PEN: Wow.

B. SO: So, I'm really curious, what is your background? Are you a musician and then you sort of fell into beat-making? I don't even know if that's the right word.

S. WASS: I am a musician, I'm a pianist and a composer/orchestrator, I went to college for classical music and moved to New York and started working in musical theater, basically doing the whole music director, transcriber, orchestrator thing, trying to find jobs and work my way up. I met Alex Lacamoire, the amazing conductor, orchestrator, music supervisor of Hamilton in 2012 working together on the Annie revival, and at that time he came up to me at a

rehearsal for Annie and said, “Hey, I’m going to be doing this reading on a new show Lin-Manuel Miranda’s writing, do you want to work on it with me?” and I was like, “Sure, why not?” I had no idea what it was. And it turned out to be one of the early workshops of Hamilton.

G. PEN: He didn’t tell you anything about it? He just said “a show”?

B. SO: This random show?

S. WASS: He said “a show by Lin-Manuel Miranda”—

G. PEN: And you’re like, “I’m in”

S. WASS: —and that was enough to convince me.

G. PEN: I got it.

B. SO: Who would say no? That’s crazy.

S. WASS: Yeah, and at that time it was still called, “The Hamilton Mixtape,” and it was still mostly in consideration as a concept album, and I know Lin’s talked about this in interviews too, but like Jesus Christ Superstar started out as an album before a stage show, that was what Lin kind of had in mind for Hamilton. But the early workshops that I was a part of were kind of exploring the idea of what would it look like if it were on stage and at various times in those early workshops, we even had a separate book writer with a script for the show and then that got scrapped, and it became the just the composed piece that it is today, but, anyway, I digress, the early workshops with Alex, I was acting as the transcriber and music assistant, basically, so Lin would send me his demos and I would write down the songs and Lac would then arrange them and we would work with the actors putting the songs on their feet. And then as we got more involved with the workshops, we realized that just playing the songs on piano wasn’t really going to give anyone in the room a sense of what the show was actually going to sound like—presenting it to then potential investors and producers and all that, so Alex gave me the job of playing drum beats along with him playing piano in those early workshops and I just kind of sat there with an electronic drum pad and played along and that turned into the job that I have now.

G. PEN: Um, are we allowed to call him Lac? What is the, how far into the friendship do you have to be to call him that?

[Laughter]

S. WASS: He’s a really great, easy-going guy, and I’m sure he’d be totally fine if you called him Lac, for me, it was just an intimidation thing that I had to get over

when I first met him, you know, I felt like I had to keep respecting him and not calling him by a nickname.

G. PEN: Kind of like how we feel about you right now?

B. SO: This seems to be a running theme in other people that we've spoken to, everybody involved, they just seem like the nicest people, and just the chilliest group of people ever, which is, I mean, obviously, you know Gillian and I are both actors so we know what it's like to work with difficult people and what it's like to work with great people, and when you work with such wonderful people, everything just turns out better

S. WASS: Exactly

G. PEN: Yeah, and we were just talking to Hollis, you know Hamilton Squad? The Instagram? Yeah, we were just talking to her and she was saying that she was lucky enough to be backstage and to meet all these people and every single person she said, "Nicest person ever, nicest person ever," and everyone we've spoken to that has ever met anyone, cast, creative, whatever, says the same exact thing. So it's kind of wonderful to, I would assume, I apologize to speak for you, but to be a part of something where—like, Scott, you're lovely, and everyone's lovely, and it must be so incredible to just do the work. And you don't have to worry about the drama, I mean, I'm sure, I'm not saying everyone's perfect, but it's just—

B. SO: There's always going to be drama

G. PEN: There's always going to be something, but it's just everyone that we have on the show that, you know, we had Lizzie who does the HamWing, the Hamilton-West Wing mashup, and she's had some interaction with Lin and it's just like everyone involved—

B. SO: Everyone is just so cool and that's so nice and refreshing for something that's so huge, and people are still really nice.

G. PEN: Yeah. Do you think you guys are just so psyched to be doing what you're doing?

S. WASS: I think that's a big part of it, yeah, and you guys are exactly right, it's the complete dream team, every single person involved, and that really does contribute to the success of the show in a major way. I think because people are excited to be there and excited to be working with each other, that helps feed the creativity, so through all of the development of the show, it was all about, "How can we continually make this better?" and "How can we work with each other to make that happen?" It's a really great group of people, it's a lot of fun.

G. PEN: So what was your first...beat? [Laughter] I don't know why that's funny but I guess you're...how did you...Yeah, I guess, what was your first beat? I don't know. Scott, you're making me nervous a little and you're not even here, I'm so excited that you're here, virtually.

S. WASS: Well, so obviously I'm not the only person involved in the beat-making process. It starts with Lin's demos, first and foremost, and he does pretty fully-realized demos of the songs that have a lot of the elements in place already that he knows he wants fully-orchestrated down the line, so we took elements from Lin's demos, from Alex's orchestrations and orchestration demos, there was another guy that worked on the show named Will Wells who did a lot of the music editing, and all four of us combined worked together to make what's the final beats in the show. So I can't really take credit for a single beat but—

G. PEN: Okay, that's fair

S. WASS: I think one of the ones that I had the most contribution to that took the longest to fully realize was the "rewind" section of "Satisfied".

B. SO: We were just talking about that! This is so great!

G. PEN: And people who listened to the last episode, because the last episode we recorded, Hollis said something, and we legit just were talking about it, so -

B. SO: It's like some sort of magic

G. PEN: It is some sort of magic! We were actually hoping that we would be able to talk to you about it because also, and we'll get into it in a little bit, the chapter that we are talking about tonight is when Hamilton meets Eliza.

S. WASS: Ah-ha.

B. SO: So it ties in perfectly

G. PEN: It ties in perfectly! Okay, back to the "rewind", sorry. And also, I haven't seen it. And Bianca has, twice. I'm not mad, at all.

B. SO: We're still friends.

G. PEN: I mean, it's a business relationship at this point but...[Laughter] but my best friend saw it recently and she has been on the show because she's a history teacher who uses the show to get her students excited about it, and she was blown away by the "rewind" and she said she was thinking about how it could possibly work, and then when she saw it, she was like, "I don't know how, it just all made sense." So if you could walk us through how that even came to be, that

would be incredible. Everyone, get your popcorn out, because this is going to be good.

S. WASS: Well, one thing that's really fascinating about the development of this show is moment when the choreography was added in the process, and before there was Andy Blankenbuehler and before there was choreography, the rewind really didn't exist in the way that it does now. And, I have to be completely honest, when I was working on the show before there was any movement involved, I had a really hard time picturing how it would look with dancing, and I was wondering if dancing would hurt the piece ultimately

B. SO: Oh, interesting

S. WASS: But then when Andy came in and started putting his magic touch on it, I was completely, 100% wrong and—

G. PEN: Can I ask why you thought that? I'm just curious

S. WASS: I guess, I was thinking of it like Lin was thinking of it in the beginning, as an album. I was thinking of it just from a musical standpoint, and I was thinking if there's a lot of stopping and starting of the story for dance numbers, as is traditionally done in musical theater, then it would hurt the momentum of the piece. The way that Andy wove the choreography in without stopping the momentum and used the choreography to tell the story, it just really blew me away.

G. PEN: Scott, I just have to say, every time you mention Andy's name, Bianca and I are doing the bow down emoji with our hands. Bianca's a dancer—

B. SO: Yeah, I mean, this is totally now briefly off-topic, but many years ago Andy used to teach at Broadway Dance Center pretty regularly, and I took his class very often and I just remember he was, and again, the nicest person—I see a running theme here—I remember he was in Fosse at the time so it was way back—and I just remember it was my favorite class and I loved it so much and I was like, "This man is amazing!" So now, seeing all his success, I'm just the happiest person for him because he's fantastic.

G. PEN: Fantastic.

B. SO: Anywho, back to the rewind

S. WASS: Back to the rewind! But basically, before he came on board, "Satisfied" cut from when everyone goes, "Rewind," into, "I remember that night, I just might," you know that whole -

G. PEN: Yeah.

B. SO: We're familiar.

G. PEN: Oh, yeah, we know it.

[Laughter]

S. WASS: Yeah! So when Andy came on board and we wanted to decide how to physicalize and stage the rewind, we needed to add that music bed in there to fill the number of counts he thought it would take for the turn tables to revolve in the way they were going to and for the dancers to represent the time reversing like it does in the show. So it started out with Lin creating a demo, that was him sort of singing over himself and singing all of these themes from Eliza and Angelica's point of views and the whole ensemble interjections, and he had the basic melody and drum beat underneath it. So then Lac took that, and rearranged and more fully orchestrated it and made a demo of it, and in rehearsals we worked with Andy with all the material on its feet to sort of expand and rearrange and reorder little moments of it to make it the most effective. So my job became to take the theme of "Satisfied" that plays on the harp, and record that with different harp and pizzicato strings and celeste sounds, and then manipulate it so that it plays backwards, and the figure plays backwards into the start of that rewind section, and then you hear the harp play it live coming out of the rewind section before Angelica starts singing, so it's kind of book ended by the sounds.

B. SO: Is that as complicated to do as it just sounded on my end?

G. PEN: I was going to say, we are also now the dead guy emoji, we're both with the X's over the eyes.

B. SO: That sounded like a very difficult thing to undertake, I mean, maybe for a professional it's not, but it sounds very labor intensive.

S. WASS: Well, once you get a grasp on what exactly the task is, it's not too difficult to achieve it, but it just took the understanding of what they wanted it to sound like and what we wanted to achieve, and we went from there. But it's a really cool section if you dissect all the little elements of it because there's a lot in there that's on the track that's being played backwards and is a theme from earlier in the show.

G. PEN: Well the thing about one of the—give or take the eight billion great things about the show—is that you hear something new every time, I really do think in some little way, and especially for me because I have a show series with my husband—I mean, we're actors first but I taught myself how to edit for the show so that we can create something ourselves, but because of that, because I had to focus on audio and sound and things like that, I do pick up on things, the awesomeness that you guys put together, so as you're saying it, I'm hearing it in

my mind and then, like a total nerd, seeing the timeline in the program that you use, what that must look like. So can you explain to people who have no idea, myself included because I do not use the program that you use, I use Final Cut when I edit, but what that means to or how you create those beats or where the sound even comes from when you're doing something that the orchestra can't create.

S. WASS: Sure. So the program I use is called Ableton Live and it's sort of laid out like a grid, and you have the horizontal parts of the grid that when you hit play on them, it plays anything that's loaded into that horizontal section of the grid. So if you wanted to hear a violin sound and a drum sound and a guitar sound happening all at once, you would put them next to each other horizontally on the grid, and when you hit play, they'd play all at once. So then if you want to separate out the elements and play just the violin or just play the drums, you could then isolate out each of those and move those bits and pieces around. So you sort of take a whole electronic orchestration and throw it in there in each of its individual elements, and then you have the ability to play around and manipulate each element as you see fit. And as the band is playing, the percussionist, a guy named Benny Reiner, he has a little foot pedal, and at different spots in the score it's marked for him to hit that foot pedal and that triggers new sections on my software program that I set up.

B. SO: Wow.

S. WASS: So at the top of the song "Satisfied", for instance, he hits the foot pedal, the band hears in their ear a little count off of Alex's voice going, "Three, four," and then they start playing the top of the song along with a metronome they hear in their ear and then when they get to measure twenty-five or whatever it is, then the rewind sound comes in, the elements of the rewind that are being played electronically start playing on the track, and there's also a capability that Ableton has where it sends information to sound and lighting, and at the exact moment that a certain sound happens in the orchestra, sound and lighting can respond too in the house and different effects will happen automatically on stage.

B. SO: That is incredible. It also sounds like a stage manager's nightmare. I don't know, calling those cues!

S. WASS: It's a nightmare if something goes wrong, but when something goes right, then the stage manager doesn't even have to call that cue, it just happens automatically.

B. SO: True, oh my gosh.

G. PEN: It's interesting that you mention that because I was just thinking as, Scott, you were describing that, the Ham for Ham when they did the "Ten Duel Commandments" as the stage manager was calling all the cues. So now I'm



going to rewatch that Ham for Ham on YouTube and everyone else should too, now knowing what goes into it.

B. SO: So is there any track in the show that doesn't have any beat manipulation?

S. WASS: Not really. I think anything that's being played in the show is just sort of an extra element to the orchestration or an enhancement to the orchestration, that's all manipulated in a way to make it more electronic and—we really wanted to not take any musicians out of work with this too. So anything that's playing on the track is something that really couldn't be replicated live each night, so it had to be put on the tracks.

G. PEN: So just going—so everyone's awesome all the time, sticking with the fact that you didn't want to put anyone out of work, you're nice to people you meet from social media, you guys are just the best. It feels kind of fake. Can you admit that it feels kind of fake, that you guys are too good to be true? A little bit?

S. WASS: [Laughing] Right, exactly.

B. SO: It's just wonderful. Like we said before, when you're working on something that's so fulfilling and wonderful, it's hard not to—it's hard to be a jerk, I guess, I don't know

G. PEN: Yeah, I would think!

S. WASS: Yeah, I mean everyone's really grateful and recognizes what a big impact this show is having on people and on the community and we're just really appreciative that it's been accepted and more, so, you know?

G. PEN: The people that we've spoken to so far have been really, really popular on social media, and the reason they are is because—we spoke to Kathleen Cameron, who did the dubsmaashes, Lizzie, who did HamWing, Hollis, who did the Hamilton Squad, and every time we spoke to them, they were talking about how the show spoke to them in completely different ways, and what this creative thing that they did that was noticed by Lin or the show or just the Internet, it started as something really fun for them and it became something much bigger because of what the show brings out in people and inspires people to want to do.

S. WASS: For sure. I mean, even Lin, he's always been that wannabe rapper, and he turned himself into a rapper.

[Laughter]

G. PEN: Scott, can I ask you something, as someone who knows him? Does he sleep? How does he have the time? I'm convinced, because I'm a Harry Potter

person, I was talking to Hollis in the last episode, I think he has a time turner, like a legit—how is he doing—? He's married with a toddler, he wrote Hamilton, he is Hamilton on Broadway, now he's going to the White House—uh, so this episode might air afterwards—but he's a busy guy.

B. SO: You know, writing a Disney movie, NBD.

G. PEN: Yeah, all the things. So either he has a time turner, or there are seven Lins around. I don't think the dude sleeps.

S. WASS: He does not get much sleep, no.

G. PEN: He can't!

S. WASS: He also, he does have an area in his dressing room where he can take naps, so I think he takes advantage of sleeping during the day sometimes so that he can stay up at night and work.

B. SO: And also he's just a workhorse, I think, too, he's just very dedicated to his work and he just churns it out because he's freaking magical. I don't know.

S. WASS: Well also, really early on, Lin wanted to play Burr.

G. PEN: [Gasps]

B. SO: Really?

S. WASS: And director Tommy Kail was like, "No, you're definitely a Hamilton."

[Laughter]

B. SO: I mean, obviously!

G. PEN: Why, because he writes like he's running out of time or something?

S. WASS: It's the same exact personality!

B. SO: That's so funny.

G. PEN: Oh, they're so similar. One of our first interviews that Bianca and I did, they asked us who we would want to play in the show, and I said Burr, no question. No question, I would want to play Burr.

B. SO: I think that's funny—why?

G. PEN: Oh wow, okay.

B. SO: [Laughing] I didn't mean to put you on the spot!

G. PEN: Well, Bianca said anyone in the ensemble so you can dance—

B. SO: Yeah, and my favorite ensemble member apparently just left, so now I'm super sad, so there's that.

G. PEN: I said Burr because I like the journey of it. And also I just want to do "Wait For It" and "Room Where It Happens."

[Laughter]

B. SO: These are all valid reasons.

G. PEN: And I apologize, I'm a big karaoke person, my husband and I are big karaoke people, Planet Rose Karaoke is our go-to place. We had our wedding after party there, I used to work there—God help everyone when Hamilton gets in the karaoke books, because Bianca and I are going to be there daily, and everyone is invited to join us because we're all doing it. We're all singing any time we can in our apartments, in the shower, whatever, so God help everybody. But no, I would think Burr, and just because I like the—

B. SO: Well I like his journey, actually I sympathize with Burr very much as a character.

G. PEN: And I think it's a challenge for me because I'm usually the sarcastic or funny person.

B. SO: It's such a great role, it's wonderful.

G. PEN: It's incredible, and it's something that I would never probably be cast in and—

B. SO: [Laughing] Yeah, I'm going to say no.

G. PEN: —ideally, I would just love to do it. Sorry, Leslie, if I ever do it and ruin it after all the hard work you put in.

[Laughter]

B. SO: All the awful karaokes that are coming his way.

G. PEN: No, they're going to be great karaokes!

B. SO: Mmm, okay...

G. PEN: They're going to be awesome.

B. SO: I'm sure they will be.

G. PEN: They're going to be great.

B. SO: So, Scott, I have a question: now that all the music, obviously, is pretty—is set in stone, do you have some sort of day to day involvement with the show still, or do you just check in to see how everything's going?

S. WASS: Right, it's not day to day, it is more checking in and making sure that nothing's going wrong, but also in rehearsals, whenever there's a put-in rehearsal when there's a new cast member and they run the whole show, they run it with piano and what we call the rehearsal beats, which is all the beats that I put together that sort of fills in the place of the drums and percussion and electronic sounds whenever we don't have the band available, so I'll play rehearsals with the rehearsal beats, and I'm also training a couple other people to play them when I'm not available. And I'll also be working on setting up any of the future productions, like the Chicago production or any national tours that are going to be going on, making sure that all of the beats are ready for those. And I'm going to the White House on Monday, too!

B. SO: Oh! That's amazing! Are you all freaking out? Oh my gosh, that's wonderful.

S. WASS: Yeah, it's going to be really cool.

G. PEN: And now, it might be a little late, but, so how did you, what? What? All of it, Scott, let's hear it.

S. WASS: Well, I got an email from Alex Lacamoire saying, "Hey, I think we might be going to the White House," and that was about two weeks ago. [Laughs]

G. PEN: And you said okay? "You *\*think\** we *\*might\** be going?" Could you give me a little more information, Lac? I'm doing it.

S. WASS: Exactly. [Laughs]

B. SO: Wow, that is super exciting!

S. WASS: The schedules of the first lady and the president, you know, whoever they wanted to bring into the performance, and because of the schedule of the cast and all the logistics of bringing down sound equipment and the band's instruments and all that, it was sort of a "let's see if we can make this happen" situation for a while.

B. SO: So the entire show is being performed, correct?

S. WASS: No, not the entire show.

B. SO: Just a core, a couple numbers?

S. WASS: Yeah, just select numbers, and it's still going to be a big thing.

B. SO: Yeah, but like full production value.

G. PEN: And, Scott, by the time this is on the internet, you guys will have been back already.

S. WASS: I guess so, yeah.

B. SO: But it hasn't happened yet, so we're excited.

G. PEN: I was going to say, so you can say things, we won't tweet anything.

B. SO: So sorry to everybody who already knows about all of this.

G. PEN: And the fact that Obama has been there TWICE?

S. WASS: Mm-hmm

G. PEN: I know, we're all speechless, I mean, what is there to say, you guys?

B. SO: I don't even know. Did you get to meet him?

S. WASS: I didn't get to meet him, I did get to be in the big group picture with him, but I was way up in the back and he was down in the front, so I didn't get to say hi.

B. SO: Well, I guess you'll get to meet him on Monday, so that's pretty, pretty awesome.

S. WASS: I guess so! Looking forward to it!

G. PEN: Yeah. You should just say, "Hey, Obamz, I'm the beat master [laughter] Do you even—"

B. SO: "Obamz"?

G. PEN: Yeah! Obamz, with a "z"

[Laughter]

S. WASS: Then I'll get kicked out by secret service.

B. SO: "I'm sorry sir, we have to remove you from the premises."

G. PEN: Do you guys have Ham badges? You know how the secret service is like, "Sir, sir, excuse me, I'm with the secret service," you should say like, "Excuse me, sir, I'm with Ham." Was there anything you collaborated on to say like, "I think a beat should be here, I think we can do something really, really cool here," or...

S. WASS: There are little things here and there, I mean, I obviously didn't want to step on any toes of the people that were my bosses on the show, like Alex and Lin, and they had their own vision from the beginning of exactly what it should be, so there wasn't a lot of room for that. But there are a couple of little things here, like, oh, I think there should be a little more reverb on this sound or I think we can put a filter on this to make it sound more distant or cool or—just small things like that as the process went on, but nothing big that you would be able to recognize by listening to it.

G. PEN: Yeah, but then they got into the final recording—I'm sorry, the Grammy-winning cast recording.

[Laughter]

S. WASS: Yes, exactly! So yeah, there are little things of mine, my small touches that are on the Grammy-winning recording.

G. PEN: Where were you watching the Grammys?

S. WASS: Oh, I was on stage, partying.

B. SO: Amazing!

G. PEN: Right, of course, duh, I think that's the worst question that's ever been asked. But yeah, I'm asking because Bianca and I were not together and we have a group text with my friend Ashley, who I mentioned before, and we talked about it in another episode where we were just waiting and waiting, and I was like, "I haven't watched the Grammys, maybe ever, but now I am for this," and then we all freaked out. And my favorite part about the Grammys was not only that you guys won and that Lin rapped his acceptance speech—because of course—Andrew Chappelle's response to the fact that he was trying to get the Grammy feed and it was failing—did you know anything about that?

S. WASS: No, I didn't see anything about that.

G. PEN: He was trying to stream it because he doesn't have cable and all of these people came to his aid and helped him and they were like, "I'll give you my FaceTime! I'll FaceTime with you! I'll do—" and he finally got it and then afterwards he just demanded to be known as Grammy-award-winning recording artist Andrew Chappelle, which we call him now.

S. WASS: [Laughing] That's so funny.

B. SO: Oh my gosh, it's great.

G. PEN: So what was it like, being there with Stephen Colbert and the whole...

S. WASS: It was really nuts, I was standing in the orchestra pit for the actual performance, basically standing by in case anything on the tracks stopped working in the middle of it so I could run in and fix it. So it was very nerve wracking standing there being like, "It's only one song, people do this eight times a week and it doesn't break, so please don't break now." But I was just still, completely still, the whole time the performance was actually happening and then when it ended and it went, I thought it went amazingly smoothly, it sounded fantastic

B. SO: It sounded fantastic

G. PEN: Yeah, the entire world agrees.

B. SO: Yeah, pretty much. It was great, and it was so exciting to see it happening again, I was like, "Oh my God, this is it!"

G. PEN: And it was also, I think, probably, you knew, even if you know something about it, you can't say, it was a little glimpse of like, oh, if they do a recording like they did with Le Mis or a live taping or something—but as someone who has not seen it, the way they did the camera work, following the characters and just—it was—of course, and even my mom texted me, she was like, "Are you alright? This is amazing!" and I was like, "I know, Mom!" She was like, "This is so good, I get it!" I'm like, "Mom, I love it SO much!"

S. WASS: Yeah, I thought it was really, really well done, and I also heard a lot of people afterwards saying they overheard people saying, "That couldn't have been live, it sounded too good for it to be live—"

G. PEN: What?! Oh no, I didn't hear that!

B. SO: Wow. I want to be like, "Hello, world, let me introduce you to professional Broadway performers," I mean, they do this all the—I'm always amazed at people who are like, "That can't be live!"

G. PEN: Everyone, watch the Tonys! Watch the Tonys. Or also, Scott, as Bianca and I are calling them, the Hamiltonys.

B. SO: Yeah, we've just already decided that's happening.

G. PEN: Yeah that's a thing.

B. SO: Do you have a favorite—or maybe it changes all the time since you've been involved for such a long time—do you have a favorite song that you just love?

S. WASS: I really love “Helpless” actually.

B. SO: O-oh!

S. WASS: I just think it's the perfect song for the mood that's being expressed at that moment. It's like Lin just created the space inside Eliza's head so perfectly for that song.

G. PEN: And it's actually funny that you say that, like we mentioned earlier, because now this is where they meet, the chapter that we're up to.

S. WASS: Hey, I'm good at segues!

G. PEN: You know what, I'm always really excited to do a really great segue to Chernow, but, Scott, you just did it for us.

B. SO: You just did it for us, so thanks for that.

S. WASS: I'm sorry I took that moment from you.

B. SO and G. PEN: No! Oh my God—

B. SO: It's perfect!

G. PEN: We're happy to have you take it, I'm still super hot and blushing because you're on our podcast. It's chapter seven, it's called “The Lovesick Colonel”.

B. SO: Mmm-hmm. It's super emo.

G. PEN: It's super emo, and it's basically “A Winter's Ball” slash “Helpless”

B. SO: Right



G. PEN: But not “Satisfied” because of course they had to do—I feel like we say this every episode—but they had to do different timing stuff

B. SO: Creative license.

G. PEN: Angelica didn’t actually say like, “Hey, stop the wedding real quick, I just want to say some stuff.”

S. WASS: Exactly.

B. SO: “I just want everyone to know how I’m feeling.”

G. PEN: So emo, so emo. But my two things that I love about this chapter—and Scott, if you’d join us, that’d be wonderful.

S. WASS: Sure, I actually have my book here in front of me

G. PEN: [Gasps]

B. SO: Amazing! That’s so sweet!

G: What?! Amazing. So, two things—

S. WASS: I did read it a while ago though, so I may not be as up on the information

G. PEN: Oh, that’s okay.

B. SO: No worries. Interject wherever you feel.

G. PEN: I love two things, and then we’ll get into the specifics. One: That when Eliza met some Indian chiefs when she was thirteen, their name for her was “one of us” because that’s how cool she was. And also—fast forward—can you do a fast forward?

G. PEN and B. SO: [Sing the “rewind” melody from “Satisfied” with the words “fast forward”]

[Laughter]

G. PEN: Sorry. But then, when Ham was so in love with her, he forgot the password to his barracks or whatever it was, which is—they were in love.

B. SO: I think that people sometimes just assume that it’s—it was the status and the money and everything, and obviously I’m sure that played a role, but he really was also just taken with her.

G. PEN: The thing about the Schuyler sisters—they were awesome, you guys. There's a whole song about it in this show called "Hamilton", I don't know if you guys have heard about it, but that's the deal.

B. SO: I also think it's funny because—well, we've talked about the creative license that's been taken for the purposes of the narrative of the show—but that there were not just sisters. There were brothers. And I knew that about that, but then when I read it again, I was like, "Oh shit."

S. WASS: And also the age of Peggy was changed for the show, a little bit.

B. SO: Right!

G. PEN: And we're going to get into that in the next chapter

B. SO: Peggy's name is Margarita!

G. PEN: Margarita! Um, but the next episode is one of my favorite—or, the next chapter that we'll talk about in the next episode is one of my favorite Peggy stories that we ended up talking about in the second episode, about how she is super badass and saved a baby from a tomahawk, and we'll get into that next time, you guys, stay tuned.

B. SO: I'm actually really looking forward to that.

G. PEN: There were so many Schuyler kids. And, we're not saying this, again, I feel like every time, I'm like, "Lin, it's fine, we're not upset about it," but there were four or five sons. So when Angelica is like—

B. SO: "My father has no sons," yeah, I know. But, whatever, it's fine.

G. PEN: But it works and I'm singing it at karaoke, so...

[Laughter]

B. SO: There will be no footnotes.

G. PEN: And Chernow even says that the affection that Eliza and Ham, or Hammie, as some people called him, and Angelica had, it would be a little different if Angelica and Eliza weren't so insanely close to each other. It was just totally different, because he called them "my dear brunettes." He would write letters to them and say, "My dear brunettes..." And it's like mmmm... [makes more unsure noises]

B. SO: Probably not something you should do with your sister-in-law

G. PEN: But it sounds really great on a Broadway stage.

B. SO: It sure does! Is this the chapter that also has my favorite Benedict Arnold story?

G. PEN: Yeah. You have more than one Benedict Arnold story that you like talking about?

B. SO: [Laughing] No, I just remember really enjoying that story! So Benedict Arnold, I guess as most people probably know, is probably one of the most famous traitors in American history—that's why we call traitors "Benedict Arnolds"—and he was selling secrets and information to the British. And he was making plans to join them aboard a ship and to get off New York, and when this was found out, they went to his home where they were encountered by his wife.

G. PEN: It was Hamilton, Washington, and Lafayette.

B. SO: Right. And they didn't realize this at first, but she was basically playing along with his plot, and she put on this crazy, wackadoo act, going insane, clutching herself, and saying they were trying to kill her baby.

G. PEN: Yeah, like, "You're the ones that are coming to kill my baby!" and they're like, "Wait, what?!"

B. SO: What, lady?! Relax! And they all fell for it, all likely because they were just like, "Lady in danger!"

G. PEN: Ham, especially.

B. SO: They all fell for it, and by the time they realized what was actually happening, Benedict had already boarded that ship and was on his merry way, at which point, Benedict Arnold's wife sought refuge at the home of one Theodosia.

G. PEN: Yeah, like Burr's Theodosia.

B. SO: Whaaat?!

S. WASS: It was a very small world back then.

B. SO: This is like reality show shit.

G. PEN: And that's the thing, Scott, that's a very good point, because New York now feels like a small world, I think especially because Bianca and—I mean, maybe in the acting world at least, you kind of see the same people at auditions—but then, it was a legit small world.

S. WASS: My favorite small world story from back then from the Hamilton-related topics is that the divorce lawyer for James and Maria Reynolds was Aaron Burr.

B. SO: Yes!

G. PEN: Yes!

B. SO: That's, like, what?!

G. PEN: I know!

B. SO: [Sarcastically] Thanks a lot!

G. PEN: We haven't, we didn't get there yet but I texted Bianca that pre-podcast and I was like, "Wait, what the—?"

B. SO: Was there no one else? Okay!

S. WASS: Isn't that crazy?

G. PEN: And the fact that, how many times Ham met Burr's dad, like with the Princeton thing.

S. WASS: Mmm-hmm. Also on the Benedict Arnold story, do you guys watch Drunk History?

G. PEN: Yes!

S. WASS: There's a great episode about that exact moment with Benedict Arnold and his wife.

B. SO: Is there? I want to see that! Oh, I'm going to have to look that one up, I haven't seen that one.

G. PEN: Lin did a Drunk History, didn't he?

S. WASS: I'm not sure, did he?

G. PEN: I mean, if Twitter lies—which it does, all the time—

B. SO: [Sarcastically] Twitter would never lie!

G. PEN: Which, by definition, Twitter is full of shit, but he said something about how he's like, "I'm not going to remember anything about tonight, you guys."

B. SO: Oh, right! I forgot about that.

G. PEN: And then he tweeted a picture of him and Derek from Drunk History, which is interesting and another tie-in, because the first Drunk History was about the Hamilton-Burr duel.

S. WASS: Exactly.

G. PEN: And I also did like that Phil—I call him Phil—

B. SO: Phil?!

G. PEN: So sometimes I call Alexander “Alex,”—but Phil Schuyler and Ham really got along so, so well, and so Hamilton kind of was married into this amazing New York high-class family, and he never took any money from them. His pride was too—I mean, we’ve met Ham.

B. SO: Yeah, we know all his motives.

G. PEN: But I definitely like that Chernow was like, um, Mrs. Schuyler, on the other hand, she wasn’t the nicest, and Phil Schuyler was nicer when she wasn’t around, which I think is very telling. And then she’s in and out, it’s like two sentences where Chernow is like, “Eh, yeah, and also about Mrs. Schuyler, eh, I don’t know, Phil Schuyler is nicer when she’s not here and uh...”

B. SO: “Ehh, we’re just not going to talk about her right now.”

G. PEN: Yeah, so I don’t think she was the nicest lady.

B. SO: Anyway...

G. PEN: Anyway! But the sad thing about it is that this chapter ends with Ham and Washington, they had a very, very tumultuous relationship. Ham really kept saying, “Put me in, Coach! Let’s go, let’s do this!” and he said, “No,” so many times and Ham was nominated for so many different seats and things and jobs and every single time, he got passed over. Laurens would nominate him and—

B. SO: To be the minister of Russia?

G. PEN: Of Russia, which I don’t think he wanted, anyway.

B. SO: Uh, no.

G. PEN: Lafayette was saying, “You guys, my friend Hamilton is really great at this,” but it was a theme in his life that he was passed over and I think that added to his feeling of not feeling good enough.

B. SO: Yeah, and his arrogance of needing to prove himself, possibly, and shoot off at the mouth, if you will.

G. PEN: He does that sometimes

B. SO: He does.

S. WASS: [Laughs]

G. PEN: Let's get this guy in front of a crowd. But he just sort of had this complex, but the thing is, he was so right about so many things. Like things that he wrote in his journals about what Congress should be doing, they ended up doing and did not credit him about it. At all. So that would piss me off too.

B. SO: I think if anything, not only just the show, but just people getting more interested in the history of our founding fathers and of the country and the Revolutionary War, etcetera, is just realizing how much we don't know, I guess unless you're a history scholar, in which, I'm not.

G. PEN: I'm not either.

B. SO: But it is incredibly interesting what everybody went through and what it took to form this great nation.

S. WASS: There's a really great organization called AHA, which stands for the Alexander Hamilton Awareness Society.

B. PEN: Wow!

S. WASS: And they got involved with the show pretty early on when we did a reading at Vassar College in the summer of 2013, I guess that was, and representatives from that group came and saw the reading back then and got really interested and were psyched that we were telling the story of the man that their group is about.

B. PEN: That is incredible, I had no idea about that!

S. WASS: Oh, neither did I! But they have all this amazing information and records of letters and personal effects from Hamilton and his whole family. They took a trip this year to celebrate Hamilton's birthday, and went to his birthplace in Nevis [gasps from G.PEN] and took the same route that he took to get back to the—

G. PEN: Wait, what?!

S. WASS: Yeah, it was really, they're an amazing group if anyone out there listening, you must look them up, they're called AHA.

B. PEN: I've already made a note, we're already writing it down, it's happening, that's incredible.

S. WASS: Their website is [www.allthingshamilton.com](http://www.allthingshamilton.com) Check it out!

G. PEN: Do they have a date in mind about his birthday? Because I know there's some conversation about if it's—there are two years?

S. WASS: Let's see...I have a little pamphlet here conveniently that they gave me last time that I saw them—

G. PEN: Oh, what is it, like two pages? Not like an eighty page Reynolds pamphlet or anything?

S. WASS: No, it's only four pages.

G. PEN: Aw, it's like a cute, little pamphlet.

S. WASS: So the events for his birthday they celebrated between January 8 and 13<sup>th</sup>, so somewhere in there.

G. PEN: But what year? Because the year—

B. SO: I think Chernow goes with 1757

G. PEN: Yeah

S. WASS: Yeah, and Chernow was definitely involved with this organization too.

G. PEN: And you know, I think it's cool too, because a lot of people—I mean, I am a New Yorker, I have yet to see it, I'm trying every day, digital lottery, I know, I know, alright. Okay, someone who's seen it twice, Bianca, stop it. But I think it's cool that there are so many resources. That's the thing about the show, it's real. Yes, there are some creative licenses that happen and then end up with songs like, "Helpless" and "Satisfied" and it's amazing, but you can look this up! I read the Reynolds Pamphlet—he is paranoid in every paragraph, you guys! [Laughter] It takes pages for him to actually get to what happened. He goes on and on, and, again, it's Ashley—thank you, Ashley—she just had a book of every thing that Hamilton ever wrote, and he goes on and on and on, but when you read it, you're like, "What the hell am I doing with my life?" [Laughter] That this person at this age and what was happening, like I'm not starting a country, I'm just trying to do my thing. What?

B. SO: I know. It's unfathomable, I can't even wrap my head around it. It's remarkable.

G. PEN: I know.

S. WASS: The show did make me look at New York in a different way, too, before I started studying the Revolution and the center that New York was during the Revolution, I never walked around the city, thinking about, oh, there was a battle here, you know?

B. SO: I know! And I don't know where you're from, Scott, but Gillian and I are also both from New York, but I love the city so much just because of all that history, I've always loved downtown Manhattan because of that and all the history there.

S. WASS: Right. Yeah, we went to Fraunce's Tavern with the cast once, which is, they say that on the second floor of Fraunce's Tavern there used to be meetings to plan strategy for the Revolution.

B. SO: I've been dying to go there!

G. PEN: Did you go up to the—okay, so here's the thing—God, all of our listeners are going to be like, "Shut up, Gillian," because we do this every time, but my husband is such a history buff, and he's excited to listen to it but he won't because he wants to experience it. But we went to Fraunce's Tavern and to see the rooms where it happened—I'm sorry, I can't, there's no other way to say it! And to be there, and to sit in those tables and to see all of that is just...

S. WASS: It's amazing.

G. PEN: It's amazing.

S. WASS: And the whole scene before "My Shot" with the rap cypher that Lafayette, Laurens, and Mulligan are doing? That's intended to take place in Fraunce's Tavern.

B. SO: Whoa! I like that!

S. WASS: And also the Morris-Jumel mansion up in Washington Heights is really amazing too.

B. SO: I know, we're planning our springtime walking tour.

G. PEN: Okay, we were going to save this for another podcast, and we will eventually, but Mike and I went there on Valentine's Day. We went to Fraunce's



Tavern because there was a whole Lafayette exhibit. There is a sash of Lafayette's with his blood still on it.

B. SO: Whaaaaat.

G. PEN: And letters that he wrote to people, and just like how he signed it, "Lafayette," it's like, Lafayette, your flair.

B. SO: So much flair.

G. PEN: Daveed gets you.

B. SO: Oh, it's so great.

G. PEN: But just to be there, and just to see, I mean, the letters, and the envelopes, and the stuff that they were writing, like, "Oh, hey, this person is wounded and I'm coming home," but the sash with the blood on it, I know it sounds super morbid and weird, but it was amazing to see—I'm like, "That's him! Oh my God!"

B. SO: "There he is!"

G. PEN: That's the thing! And yeah, it's just awesome.

B. SO: Well, Scott, is there anything else you're dying to tell us, or tell the world about?

S. WASS: Oh, I don't know!

G. PEN: Are you working on anything else?

S. WASS: I am, yeah

G. PEN: Let's talk about it!

S. WASS: I'm working with Lac again, we're doing Dear Evan Hansen at Second Stage Theater.

B. SO: Oh nice!

S. WASS: It's a new Pasek and Paul show and it starts previews March 26<sup>th</sup> and opens May 1<sup>st</sup>, it's very, very good, I highly recommend it. I also just recently started a podcast.

B. SO: Oh! Well, what is that?

G. PEN: What?

S. WASS: If you don't mind me plugging it in.

G. PEN: No!

B. SO: No, go for it!

S. WASS: My writing partner and I, my writing partner, Shannon Deep, and I started a podcast called Song Salad, and we use the random article button on Wikipedia and a random music genre generator online, and using the random topic and random genre, we have to write a song in twenty minutes.

B. SO: Holy cow, really?

S. WASS: Yep! We're on iTunes, Sound Cloud, and all that, so find us, Song Salad, and on Twitter we're @songsaladcast

B. SO: That's so cool, how interesting! So do you do the song on the podcast? Like it's a process?

S. WASS: Yes. Yeah, we talk about the process of writing the music and lyrics, and at the end of each podcast is the song in its entirety.

B. SO: That is unreal and I cannot wait to listen to that.

G. PEN: Also, do you take requests?

[Laughter]

S. WASS: We do want to eventually have experts come on and suggest genres or topics that they feel like they are experts in.

B. SO: That's awesome! How many episodes have you done?

S. WASS: Seven, and we release on Mondays, so our eighth episode will be coming out Monday.

G. PEN: Oh my God, us too!

S. WASS: Oh, cool!

B. SO: Wow, podcast twinsies!

G. PEN: That's fun!

B. SO: So fantastic, well, Scott, we can't thank you enough for talking to us and being so kind and generous and putting up with our massive fandom.

S. WASS: Of course! Thanks for having me! This is fun!

G. PEN: Yeah, Scott, we are like—I'm sorry, I feel like I'm going to apologize to you—you'll probably get a direct message apology for the rest of your life

B. SO: [Laughing] Thank you and sorry.

G. PEN: Yeah, thank you, and sorry, I'm just so sorry, thank you so much, and I'm just so sorry?

B. SO: This has been really awesome and really exciting for us, and wow. I don't know what else to say.

S. WASS: Thanks! It's exciting for me too, and like I said, everyone involved in the show is amazing, and it's just incredible that I got the opportunity to work on it with all those people so. It's very, very cool, very fun.

G. PEN: Will you do our sign off with us?

S. WASS: Oh yeah!

G. PEN:...Really?

B. SO: [Laughing] Really?

G. PEN: Really?

B. SO: Wow. Okay, so you can find us all on the hamilcast on all the social medias, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etcetera, you can email us at [thehamilcast@gmail.com](mailto:thehamilcast@gmail.com) if you want to just say hi, we love that.

G. PEN: And please do.

B. SO: Please do! If you want to follow me personally, I am [\\_biancajean\\_](#) on Facebook—nope, not Facebook, that's a lie—on Twitter and Instagram! Not on Facebook. You don't want Facebook, it's boring.

G. PEN: It's all about our show.

B. SO: [Laughing] Pretty much!

G. PEN: On all the medias, I am [@gillianwithag](#), my show is [@theresiduals](#) on everything, we are [thehamilcast@gmail](mailto:thehamilcast@gmail.com), but I think you said that already.

B. SO: I did, but it's okay

G. PEN: Scott, where are you? Where can we find you?

S. WASS: I am @scottwasserman1 on Twitter, my website is [www.scott-wasserman.com](http://www.scott-wasserman.com), and my podcast is @songsaladcast on Twitter, and it's called Song Salad.

B. SO: Amazing.

G. PEN: Amazing.

B. SO: Thank you so much, again.

G. PEN: Alright, thank you, Scott, so much, this was amazing, I can't even—I hate saying that phrase, "I can't even," but honestly I can't, I'm speechless. Alright, thank you guys for joining us, please tune in next week, I am G. Pen.

B. SO: I am B. So.

S. WASS: And I'm S. Wass.

B. SO: Whaaaat? Yeah! See you next time, guys!

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[Music: Hamilton – The World turned upside down – Instrumentals play]

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