

# THE HAMILCAST

## EPISODE 254 TRANSCRIPT ASHLEY DE LA ROSA PART 1

Lin-Manuel Miranda 0:00

Hi, I'm stage and stages Lin Manuel Miranda and you're listening to the

Gillian Pensavalle 0:18

Hello everyone. Welcome back to the Hamilcast. I'm Gillian and today I am here with Ashley De La Rosa. Hi, Ashley.

Ashley De La Rosa 0:27

Hi, finally. Hi.

Gillian Pensavalle 0:30

Before we get started, can you please tell the listeners your pronouns?

Ashley De La Rosa 0:33

Yes, my pronouns are she her.

Gillian Pensavalle 0:35

So you play Peggy/Maria on the And Peggy tour. We are, we're both in New York, but of course we're not together. So I'm really excited. I feel like we're both really nervous. This is weird and usually I don't really like talk about this. I mean, I you know, True Crime Obsessed comes up on the Hamilcast a lot but you know me more from True Crime Obsessed than you do the Hamilcast... Is that true?

Ashley De La Rosa 0:56

Yes. I was actually listening to the Lester Eubanks one. I almost done with that one. I usually listen right as they come out. Like I'm really just like, in it and around it all over it.

Gillian Pensavalle 1:14

Thank you so much.

Ashley De La Rosa 1:15

I love True crime Obsessed

Gillian Pensavalle 1:16

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So yeah, so I there's so much I would love to talk to you about but like just a little I'm just gonna run read off your resume the tiniest bit you. You are the 20th anniversary national tour of Rent, the national tour of Beautiful you made your Broadway debut with Mean Girls you in the Broadway closing company of Beautiful and you were on The Voice which is incredible. Like you were born in Washington Heights. You did voiceover for Dora the Explorer. Like there's a lot to discuss. So thank you so much for finally after all of these DMs finally hanging out with me.

Ashley De La Rosa 1:49

I'm like so lit for this. I'm Thank you. Thank you, Ryan. Thank you.

Gillian Pensavalle 1:55

Yeah, so Ryan Vasquez is involved in this. Should we just tell them now?

Ashley De La Rosa 1:58

Yeah, yeah, he's, um, well, he was a guest on the handle cast. And he's also my boyfriend. And I like, of course loved TCO take a drink for every time I say that. And so I was talking about TCO. And I also use like, give it a goog, often, and he thinks it's like something. I guess he thought it was something that that was for me because he started saying it. And I was like, Oh my gosh, like Gillian, and he's like, oh, Gillian from Hamilcast, and I was like, Yeah, but also from true crime obsessed, because I'm like, I was listening to a TCO episode. And he was like, Who are these people? And I was like, you know, these people? Like, I just don't know that you know, these people. Yeah. So then he, we were talking about how you and I were trying to get together and like record an episode even before COVID.

Gillian Pensavalle 2:51

Yes.

Ashley De La Rosa 2:51

And yeah. And then like, I think he, like either texted you or dm you and was just like, Oh, hey, like, by the way, here's this other like, weird small world connection. And then I got a DM from you. Like literally Continuing from our last conversation and just like, oh, by the way, we never set a date for this. I was like, AHHHHH

Gillian Pensavalle 3:12

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Yeah, it was so crazy. Because it's so funny that Ryan Vasquez will hear my voice on a different podcast and not know that it's me like that just shows you how different the vibe is. But let me find cuz he DM me on Instagram. And wait, what did he say? He was like, Gillian, I'm listening. I'm listening to your dannemora Prison Break episode of true crime obsessed. I can't believe it's you. My girlfriend Ashley and I are obsessed. hope you're well, and I was like, Oh, that's so funny. And then I was like, wait, Ashley, like Ashley De La Rosa. Like it all came together for me too. And he had DM me on a day where it was just like, it was a day like I was just having a shitty day. And so I told him that I was like, I was kind of having not the best day like this message. turned it around. Thank you so much. And then he was like, Did you see the dannemora series on Showtime? And then we were just like talking about true crime? Which is kind of how it goes. You know? It was just one of those. I was like, Wait, how did it just all it was a perfect, crazy weird Bizarro time and like war, like worlds colliding kind of thing.

Gillian Pensavalle 4:12

So thank you, Ryan. For like, just a reminder, like, Oh, shit, we got to get this done.

Ashley De La Rosa 4:17

Yeah, cuz he loves like documentaries and true crime stuff. And he would always say like, have you seen.. like, have you seen this documentary? I was like, actually, I haven't. But my favorite podcast covers it. And then like I would Oh, and then I just started saying like, yeah, TCO covers that TCO covers it and I think he just kind of like, didn't put two and two together. And then and I would be like, Oh my gosh, like Chrissy Teagan's favorite podcast is also like True Crime Obsessed because I love Chrissy and

Gillian Pensavalle 4:45

That was like, that. I don't want to like I want to talk about you and Hamilton right away.

Ashley De La Rosa 4:49

But thats,

Gillian Pensavalle 4:50

Chrissy. Again, just for context. The like last week we're recording this in early December. You won't come out until 2021. But yeah,

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Chrissy Teagan posted on her Instagram. She was in the taking a bubble bath. And she was like, Here I am in a bubble bath listening to my favorite podcast true crime obsessed and it was like the most wild 48 hours of my life. It was crazy.

Ashley De La Rosa 5:09  
Honestly, mine too.

Gillian Pensavalle 5:12  
I'm so glad we were able to go through it together because I needed a friend. Yeah, because yeah, it was just so funny because you and then you messaged me that Ryan was like, Ryan, you said and I quote you were like Ryan literally asked me yesterday. Did you get give it a go for Gillian? Because you were like, you've been saying it for as long as Ryan has known you. Yeah. And then you're like watching him make that connection will be one of the hallmarks of our relationship.

Ashley De La Rosa 5:36  
Yeah.

Gillian Pensavalle 5:36  
So let's talk about you. I just want to have like an afternoon, hang out with you and learn your entire entire story.

Ashley De La Rosa 5:42  
Cool. Yes. All right. Let's start from the very beginning. It's a very good place to start. Yeah, so I was born in Washington Heights. And my father was or is still a nurse, but he was working at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital. That's where I was born.

Gillian Pensavalle 6:01  
Wow.

Ashley De La Rosa 6:01  
Yeah. On 160. Ninth, and my mom worked for the Miss Universe pageant. When it was like, still, you know, run by the Cheeto. The worst time of her life. Honestly, she was like,

Gillian Pensavalle 6:13  
Really?

Ashley De La Rosa 6:14

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Ye s, she was like, he was so just, like, mean and awful. And, and she was just, I mean, you could you could just imagine, like, how he was how he was treating the women that he worked with, right, like my mom's this like, young woman like, and just like, anyway, but they had a really cool, like, loves, they met. And he was he went and served in the army and, and they came back and I had my sister. And then four years later, they had me. So we lived in Yonkers, actually, for for about six years. I think I moved to Florida when I was like six. And before that, like while I was living here, that was when I was doing Dora the Explorer. And just like basically doing things for hot dogs, like for street meat, like my parents would take me to auditions and like, they would get me a hot dog after so I was like, Ye s, I would go on all these auditions. So I was just like this little baby model like doing Cheerios commercials and like doing all this fun stuff, which was great. But like, I truly don't remember any of it. I remember the food

Gillian Pensavalle 7:16  
Really?

Ashley De La Rosa 7:17  
Yeah.

Gillian Pensavalle 7:18  
Like you don't remember? Because that's such a wild experience for a little kid to have being on a set or doing anything. That's so funny.

Ashley De La Rosa 7:23  
I remember how the studio where we recorded Dora the Explorer looked. I remember what Dora looked like, at that time. I'm sure she's different now or a different person, but she kind of looked like Dora. Which I thought was like, so cool. Because I did watch the show. And then I remember that the recording booth smelled like butterscotch candies.

Gillian Pensavalle 7:49  
Gross.

Ashley De La Rosa 7:49  
And yeah, like the kid that things that you remember as a kid? Yeah. And that was it. Like that's, and I remember my Cheerios commercial because I had to sit on like, this guy's lap who was supposed to be

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my dad. And he was this like white guy with long hair. It's like... Dad? Like trying to like, deliver the lines and like looking at my Dad that the corner of my eye and he was just like, do it. Like, I don't know. You act?

Ashley De La Rosa 8:18

Yeah. But then we moved to Florida and I spent pretty much the majority of my life there. Did middle school and high school and did The Voice while I was a senior in high school. And that was super fun.

Gillian Pensavalle 8:34

Yeah, we need to talk about this for like a second because you on the voice you are singing for like six seconds before Christina Aguilera slams that button and turns that chair around.

Ashley De La Rosa 9:07

It is the most Christina thing. And it's so weird for me to say that. But like knowing her now, and I don't know. I don't think this was filmed. This was like at her house. But she was like, yeah, you just remind me so much of myself. Like I hear myself in your voice. And I was like, that's what you did.

Ashley De La Rosa 9:28

Like I love her. She's

Ashley De La Rosa 9:30

incredible. But like she heard of younger, younger her and and that I think is what compelled her to push her buttons so quickly because honestly, like we there was a performance that we did have fighter. It was us and it was her and like her team like her top four on her team. And we all had like our in ear monitors on and we were like below the stage like it like lifts us up and so on. I was just kind of like practicing, like, we each got a little line to do. And I was like, trying to practice my riff like to make sure it sounded good. And I was like, and I had the mic, you know, kind of near my mouth. I didn't notice.

Ashley De La Rosa 10:12

But you can hear yourself in your ears if you're like holding your mic, and I was just like, Oh, my God, like, just like trying to do a little run and chin. I was like, No, and she's like, no, that sounds

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really good. Like I heard she's spoken to her mic, and it was in my ears. And I was like

Gillian Pensavalle 10:27

Oh, my God. I also can't believe you said like, I don't think they aired this. But I think I was at Christina Aguilera's house when like, that's a sentence you can say.

Ashley De La Rosa 10:37

Yeah, that's wild. It's so wild. It actually even more wild. It was Ozzy Osborne's house, it was the Osborne house. It's where they filmed the show.

Gillian Pensavalle 10:46

Oh, my God.

Ashley De La Rosa 10:46

And she just like, bought it. They all just like bought houses there to film The Voice like it wasn't even her like you walk in. And it's like, all of these like, custom made stained glass windows with these crazy images. Like, like very Ozzie style, where it's just like, and my dad because my dad and I, we were all going there for dinner. And he was like, This is her house. Wow, she's got a really interesting sense of style.

Gillian Pensavalle 10:46

Not what I would think Christina Aguilar is home would be

Ashley De La Rosa 11:15

Yeah. And it was like all these like Gothic like pillars and stuff. And she was like, Oh, no, I'm just here temporarily from the show like not renting, bought a house temporarily. Her and Blake did to Blake bought this empty house. And I remember this is a tangent, but like, I moved out to California after the voice and for two weeks, didn't have anywhere to live. And he was living in his real house in Oklahoma with Miranda at the time. And he was like, just take the house. Here's the code. It was like 0000

Gillian Pensavalle 11:43

his password is 1234. He's literally,

Ashley De La Rosa 11:46

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it was either all zeros or 1234. And it was in the hills. And I just like stayed in this empty house. And it was so creepy. I was like, I actually have to go like I can't stay in this house.

Gillian Pensavalle 11:56

Oh, my God, that is

Ashley De La Rosa 11:59

Bizarre, right? So cool. But like,

Gillian Pensavalle 12:02

So cool. And such a testament to you how like, this comes up a lot on the podcast, where it's like, you can have all the talent in the world. But if you're not someone that people actually want to, like, be around or trust or, you know, you exude that kind of vibe. So like for someone to be like your stay at my empty mansion. Here's my code like that, like that level.

Ashley De La Rosa 12:20

Just kind of like sort of furnished sort of not furnished, and then a box of open Cheerios on the counter,

Gillian Pensavalle 12:27

But also your version of foolish games. I have to say, that like used to be a karaoke song. Not Me too, after I heard. That's Ashley song now. I mean, it's Jewel's. But it's also like it's you share that? Because there's absolutely no way.

Ashley De La Rosa 12:41

Thank you.

Ashley De La Rosa 12:42

[song clip] Excuse me / Think I've mistaken you for somebody else / Somebody who gave a damn / Somebody more like myself / These foolish games are tearing me apart / And your thoughtless words are breaking my heart / You're breaking my heart

Ashley De La Rosa 13:30

Thank you so much. I really and the funny thing is is that like, because it was season two, as contestants we had a little bit more of a say in what songs we got to do. And I really Jewel was like the guest judge that or the guest mentor that week or something. So I

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remember meeting her. And I think I was the only person that week that did a Jewel song but I wanted to already do it. Like before I even knew she was going to be on the show. And I think Christina like saw that as a really good opportunity is like, Oh, well, my friend is here and you already like had a Jewel song on your list from like weeks ago that we didn't do. Because I definitely had I had Jewel on there. I had Atlantis Morissette, which I did get to do which is great. But like somebody's like no air that battle round song I didn't you know, we didn't choose that. But that had someone else involved. So like, we didn't really get to choose the battle rounds.

Gillian Pensavalle 14:21  
yeah

Ashley De La Rosa 14:22  
Yeah, she was really good about like, kind of trying to pick stuff that was on our list. So that was and that was the night of my senior prom, which is why I was wearing that long prom dress.

Gillian Pensavalle 14:35  
Oh my god.

Ashley De La Rosa 14:36  
It was a Sherri Hill prom dress, which is something I mean growing up in Florida like Sherri Hill like prom dresses were like a big deal and Okay, and went to a private school like scholarship kid, but like it was just like everyone and their frickin expensive like these pageant dresses. And I just knew like, I would never ever get to wear one and I told them it was my prom and they taught me a Sherri Hill dress. It was so sweet.

Gillian Pensavalle 14:36  
What?

Ashley De La Rosa 14:36  
It was incredible. It was like my prom. It was the day either after my birthday or of my birthday, they like celebrated my birthday at the same time. Like it was just, they were really, really sweet to all of us, and especially to Raylin and I. And I because we were both under age, and I turned 18 on the show. Oh my gosh. And so we were both I mean, I was going to school, she had already, like, did a thing where she could finish early, or she was homeschooled or

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something. So she didn't have to go to school on set, but like they were so I mean, it was just so sweet. Like, I don't know if it's like this anymore, just because there are so many seasons of it. But they really like I remember every one of the people on the crew every like all their names. I still there was someone in casting who is one of my best friends. I went to her wedding like two years ago. I love her so much. Just it really kind of just changed my life in the in the way that in the fact that I the people that I got to meet, not just Christina like of course, yeah, everyone that worked on that show. So great.

Gillian Pensavalle 16:04

Oh, that's amazing. I love that they were kind and nice. I always that helps, you know, yeah, it's a good thing to know.

Ashley De La Rosa 16:11

Yeah. And it was nice to have because I was a minor, I always had to have a parent with me. And my mom, so she works in hospitality, or she she's retired now, but she used to. And she always made it a point to like, make sure to know everyone's names. And I mean, when we left we wrote thank you cards I wrote, she may write thank you cards made me but like it was it still sticks with me to this day. And that's how I treat people like backstage at Mean Girls or at the you know, the Sondheim theatre, like knowing everyone's names, or making sure that like, you actually like, say hi to everyone, and that you leave with a little give them a little thank you card when you leave the show. And just like they all loved her. She's friends with all of them on Facebook. Like she taught me that how important it is to see everyone like as you were equal, no matter what. And I was really lucky to go through that experience with one of my parents. Because it taught me a lot

Gillian Pensavalle 17:13

Totally being nice to the people who helped make the show happen. Even though it's not the most like, you know, stereotypical, like glamorous part of it, like, do you want to be lit or not? Do you want your mic to work or not? Be nice to these people. It's so like, to me, it just makes no sense that like, that needs to be said, but it does. So...

Ashley De La Rosa 17:31

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Yeah. And it's just it's not a hard thing. Like, the hardest part about it is like when you know that you have learned someone's name, but you forgot it. And then that it's like getting over your own ego to sit to ask them like, it's been three months and then to be like, I'm so sorry. Like, what's... I struggle with that immensely. Like, I'm just like, I'll just be nice and not but I need to get better at that because it's it's so nice when other people use your name and conversation like it's a little kind of boost of serotonin for me at least like I'm like who you really, you know, we don't normally say each other's names and conversation. So it's nice to get that and to know that someone's like really like listening to you.

Gillian Pensavalle 18:18

Hey, it's me just jumping in real quick to let you know, we had some technical difficulties, the connection got dropped and we got disconnected. And then when we reconnected we just started an entirely different conversation. So just wanted to give you a little bit of context there. All right, here we go.

Ashley De La Rosa 18:34

I stay consuming content, like especially now during quarantine. I mean, you are and like getting into old episodes of Hamilcast. I listened to Jenny's episodes and Bob's Burgers references and everything is just like...

Gillian Pensavalle 18:49

Isn't she so great?

Ashley De La Rosa 18:50

I love Jenny. I love Jenny Harney.

Gillian Pensavalle 18:52

Yes, she's absolutely incredible. She was just you. If you don't know who we're talking about. Go listen to her episodes. I'll link them but she was also on the Thanksgiving performance that Hamilton just gave at the Thanksgiving parade. Jenny Harney Fleming is yeah unbelievable Do you know her personally?

Ashley De La Rosa 19:07

Yes, we actually so she funnily enough graduated from amda years, you know, before I did, but I knew her name because of amda when I went there, and then one of my so I originally started going in for

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Hamilton, and I guess it kind of loops back into my story, but I was auditioning for Hamilton for three years. I started auditioning my last semester of college and originally going in for a woman five and I met Jenny Harney Fleming and Rebecca Webber at the same call. And we were all going in for a woman five and I just remember like looking over at them and being like it was a dance call with Steph Klemons and we were just like, ok. My Shot like she do all this stuff like okay, like you learn this part I learned this part will like... And then Jenny, got it. And Rebecca eventually became a woman five at some point to like, we're in the same company now.

Gillian Pensavalle 20:10

I saw Rebecca, and she was in Puerto Rico when I saw the show. Yes, yeah. Married to Donald Weber ever. Yeah.

Ashley De La Rosa 20:17

I love them so much. And they have a little baby on the way.

Gillian Pensavalle 20:20

Oh yay! Congratulations, everyone. And Rebecca you owe me a recording. We got to this. Yeah, get on top of this.

Ashley De La Rosa 20:26

She's hilarious. But yeah, so like, I that's how I met Jenny. And then we started doing some stuff over quarantine some zoom like talkbacks for AMDA. And I messaged her privately and I was like, I just want to say like, I'm such a huge fan of yours. And she was like, Girl, like, Oh my gosh, like, I'll follow you on Instagram. Like let's connect, just so chill. And so now we we we talk and here and there. But yeah, she's a cool cool lady.

Gillian Pensavalle 20:57

Her entire outlook on life and, and the the acting world and and auditioning. Yeah, booking stuff like after her recording and she left I turned to Mike and I was like, I feel like rejuvenated. Around Jenny Harney Fleming was like a wake up call. She's unedited, but what she says is like, Yes, great. I'm gambling now. But she's incredible. I agree. So tell me your Hamilton story. So you go in. This is three years ago now. Right? Yes. So then it's you and Jenny hardy Fleming and Rebecca and I love that you are all the three of you in the waiting room, just like teaming up. And of course, the three of you are like, wonderful people.

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Ashley De La Rosa 21:38

Yeah, it was it was like a co-ed dance call. We were learning My Shot. This was one of my, you know, probably probably like my third callback. So I was really just like, Whoa, okay, I'm going to be in Hamilton, I guess.

Ashley De La Rosa 21:59

At that point, I was just like, all right, like they're gonna do this dance. I .... And one of my friends David was actually in the dance call as well. And so it was I think it was a woman five and man five just group dance call. And I had I knew Treco at the time Gregory Treco. And he came and taught me the my shot choreo beforehand, just because he was like, everyone does this. You should at least kind of know what you're doing so that you don't freak out.

Gillian Pensavalle 22:31

Another sweetheart. Another Angel on earth, Greg Treco.

Ashley De La Rosa 22:33

Yeah, he really just like came through. And so I kind of knew like already what was going on, but we go we do the dance. And, you know, so I like didn't hear back and then I started going in every like, I would say like six to eight months for the next three years. As woman five and then eventually as Peggy. Peggy/Maria, and that just was kind of just like chugging along. I mean, I through that time I did Rent and then moved on to Beautiful as a swing and Mean Girls and Beautiful again on Broadway. And I knew once I was leaving, or before I was leaving Beautiful. I knew I'd already booked Hamilton. So I got that call. Like, I mean we close Beautiful in October. I got that call, I would say maybe early October of 2019 because I left November 17 2019 to join the San Francisco company and debuted January like third January 6 2020. And we closed March 11 2020

Gillian Pensavalle 22:42

Oh my god

Ashley De La Rosa 23:48

But I did all the shows!

Gillian Pensavalle 23:50

Of course you did.

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Ashley De La Rosa 23:51

Yeah, so it was a really it was a long process but at the towards the end Honestly, I remember Lac and I became like friends like I had recorded when I was still in college I got an email and from like Universal Music Group and they're like, Hey, you were on the short , on Lac's shortlist of like 20 people to record this, the these group vocals for Fosse for Fosse/Verdon (my water bottle plug)

Gillian Pensavalle 24:25

Are you kidding me? I'm obsessed with Fosse/Verdon.

Ashley De La Rosa 24:28

I haven't even seen it yet because I don't have I didn't have like the FX or whenever

Gillian Pensavalle 24:33

It's on Hulu, girl. Yes. Are you kidding me? Oh my god.

Ashley De La Rosa 24:38

Well now I can watch it

Gillian Pensavalle 24:39

Tonight. Oh my god. Okay, go Okay, sorry. I know I like hijack the story.

Ashley De La Rosa 24:46

Oh, no, no worries. So we like recorded All That Jazz. And then They Both Reached For The Gun. And but it was funny cuz I hadn't booked Hamilton I hadn't gone in for a while. Because the Puerto Rico company Oh The last time I went in was for the Puerto Rico company. And I was in finals for that this sort of backtracking. But I had my first Mean Girls audition on January, July 2 2018. And it was for Casey Nichola Casey hushan. Just an initial call. And I was like, Okay, cool. Well, see ya, you know, and they'd recorded it for Oh, no, they hadn't recorded it yet. And I was like see ya... And because it was Telsey they were like, yeah, you have a callback on the 16th or whatever, like, next week, you know, call back next week. And I was like, all right, well,

Ashley De La Rosa 25:42

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can we move it because that actually coincides with my Hamilton final? And they're like, oh, you're in finals for Hamilton? I was like, Yeah, for the Puerto Rico company. And they're like, Okay, well, we're actually just going to tape everything right now, if you can just do it again. And we're gonna send it to Tina and Lauren today.

Gillian Pensavalle 25:56

What?

Ashley De La Rosa 25:57

And I was like, okay, so I never I hadn't The only time I met Tina. And Lauren was like, after I got the job. So I did one audition for Mean Girls, and they called me the next day, and they're like, you booked to the show. Yeah. And so they're like, do you want to make your Broadway debut? And I was like, okay, so I didn't actually because it was Telsey, they, they actually made the Bernie was Bernie had called, I think the creatives of Hamilton. And they were like, this is now kind of a conflict of interest. We're going to offer a contract for this. And like, we talked to Hamilton, and they were like, honestly, we have a couple of other people in the mix already. And we did want to see you again. But the odds of you like booking this are not as high like we were already thinking they were really honest with me. And I was like, Okay, great. Thank you

Gillian Pensavalle 26:41

worked out.

Ashley De La Rosa 26:41

Yeah, I didn't go to the final for that. And they were just, I mean, really, really great, like communication and great team. But that's kind of like a funny thing. I forgot about that.

Gillian Pensavalle 26:53

Exact Yeah, I'm just like, I'm thinking about Jenny hardy again how she was just saying like, a lot in our episodes. Like everyone is like where they're kind of supposed to be so yeah, because she went in and also like, didn't book Hamilton or didn't book something and then someone else did. And then it landed to that and like, she loves that her friend. But

Ashley De La Rosa 27:09

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yeah, yeah, exactly.

Gillian Pensavalle 27:11

And so it's just it all kind of like, Okay, well, like you get to make your Broadway debut and Mean Girls. Hamilton isn't going anywhere. Right? They know you they like you. You're on your I always say like you're in that pile.

Ashley De La Rosa 27:21

Truly.

Gillian Pensavalle 27:21

Even if because like to audition every six to eight months for three years, could be really emotionally and mentally taxing on a person. Yeah, it's the nature of the business. But it's hard. It doesn't take away from the fact that it's difficult. Yeah,

Ashley De La Rosa 27:34

yeah, definitely. And like, it's something that you want so badly. And I really, really, I really, really wanted to be in Hamilton, I think I got because I had my very first audition while I was still in college, it was like, but if you look at that audition, and then my very last audition, like I was a complete mess. And the voice was just not there. Like I just didn't have the confidence. Because I was so nervous, like, yeah, you know, all those years ago and I think they really just kind of wait until it's more than just about the talent. It's about like whether or not you're ready and they do a really good job at kind of putting you in a company that that has similar like that the personalities mesh well together. Because I ended up joining the And Peggy tour and replacing Darilyn Castillo, who, who got the booked the part for Puerto Rico, and she moved on to a different tour. And just like being able to already kind of knew some people in that company and their personalities and like, that is totally where I belong. Like, I love the And Peggy company. And even like my last audition was with Patrick Vassel was there. Lac was of course there. Tommy was there. And it was at, you know, 11am and I truly was just like, I was with one of my exes at the time, who was visiting from Ireland, and we had like, a full day planned and I was like, I just have to pop into this and do this really quickly.

Gillian Pensavalle 29:09

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Ashley Stop it. Stop. I had a full day Let me just like pop in with...

Ashley De La Rosa 29:14

But that point I was kind of just like, exasperated by the process. Like you know, you were saying and it is taxing and I was like nothing's gonna come of this. Like, I'm you know, and I was also closing a show at the time. So I was really sort of just tired too. And I was like, I'm just gonna go in I'm gonna sing. Part of Schuyler Sisters. Peggy's little part and then Say No To This. And I'm wearing the same exact to the point where I wore the same exact outfit that I wore, like the last few times because I was like, you know, you already know what's the word you're gonna get. And so I like to hook him up to tell Telsey like we just have to go in here. You can use the bathrooms. They're really great.

Gillian Pensavalle 29:21

Those famous Telsey bathrooms

Ashley De La Rosa 29:57

Yes, like they're a little loud. The toilet flush in the Telsey bathroom is so just offensive.

Gillian Pensavalle 30:04

Yeah, I think it's because it's it's a bigger space, there's a lot of tile for it to the sound to jump around.

Ashley De La Rosa 30:10

Oh my gosh, every time I'm like, Okay, I'm awake.

Gillian Pensavalle 30:13

It's got to be big enough to fit all of those rolling suitcases that people...

Ashley De La Rosa 30:20

But I like popped in I had him sit like right there and I was just like, Alright, I'm gonna go open this heavy door.

Gillian Pensavalle 30:27

They are so big too, so tall.

Ashley De La Rosa 30:29

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Yeah. And I walked in and I was like, Hey, guys, and we sang the song. And it was also to the point like the last few times by year two, that when I was auditioning, they had really no notes. So I would go in literally go in sing the song, and they would say, cool. Thank you, like, good to see you again. And it's so that's why I was like, Ah, so the last time I came, I went in, didn't have any notes. We just like started hanging out at that point, I had worked with Lac professionally for Fosse

Gillian Pensavalle 31:00

I was gonna say, Wait, so you did Fosse/Verdon. And then this is like yet another?

Ashley De La Rosa 31:04

Yeah, I graduated college. And this was like, way after Fosse. And so at that point, I was like, I know, I'm going to work with you, I'm going to be in the show or something else that you're in like, it kind of took that whole the pressure off, because Lac is like, I mean, his he the way that he hears things that he can pick out any little note, and he's really, really particular, which is amazing, but it's super intimidating.

Ashley De La Rosa 31:31

Yeah, so getting to work with him on that soundtrack, when we're he's hearing our vocals isolated in headphones, and, and he can say, like, hey, Ash, like your flat here. And doing that for, you know, a whole day really kind of took the pressure off. So when I went back, we were just kind of talking and hanging out and he was like, do you want to sing something else? And I was like, yeah, I'll sing Roxanne. And one of his, like, favorite songs, apparently.

Ashley De La Rosa 32:00

So he was like, yeah, I'm gonna get all the piano and play it!

Ashley De La Rosa 32:04

And so we just like jammed out and then you sang Roxanne. Because that's the song. Like, my go to song that I've been singing I mean, for years. And now probably gonna stop because of Moulin Rouge, because they're gonna be like, oh, okay, like..

Ashley De La Rosa 32:19

Right... becaue they're doing Moulin Rouge. Yeah.

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Ashley De La Rosa 32:22

But we just like, had a cool little jam session. And then he was like, Alright, great. Like, we'll see you later. And I was like, see ya,

Gillian Pensavalle 32:29

I'll see you in six to eight months. Yeah, totally. Right.

Ashley De La Rosa 32:32

Yeah, but not that time

Gillian Pensavalle 32:34

Not that time. So then you get the call. So are you are? Do you have an agent at this point? are they calling you directly? Or? Like, what was that phone call? Like, finally, after three years, like, the call.

Ashley De La Rosa 32:45

It was, honestly, I am trying to even remember when it was.

Ashley De La Rosa 32:51

Because I know that my manager called me. And he told me that like, I was in really, like, strong contention. And all it took was all all everyone had approved. They just were waiting on Lin to watch it. And he was going to get watch it over the weekend and kind of get back to us. And but my manager was like, he's probably he's gonna say, yeah, I mean, everyone else approved you. And like, he's seen your video so many times. So you have I'm pretty sure like you have this job. And I was like, Okay, cool. So it was kind of a verbal thing. And then they didn't get back to us for the for like, a week.

Gillian Pensavalle 33:33

I also can't believe you knew that. You were quote, waiting on Lin. Yeah, I can't believe you knew that much detail like that. Like, how do you sleep for that week?

Ashley De La Rosa 33:42

Yeah, I was like, Okay, I mean, this is definitely the most information I've ever had up to this point. So this is good. But also, this is the first time where I know I will not have a job. Like I've been fortunate enough to ever since my first job with Rent to go

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from one job to the next. And this was the first I mean, the show was closing Beautiful was closing. So I was like, Okay, I'm gonna not have a job and that's okay. Like, I'm gonna do the thing. And but that did put a little bit more pressure on and so I think it was like, almost a week had gone by and then they were like, Oh, yeah, you got it. He said, Yes. Like we finally got

Gillian Pensavalle 34:31

oh by the way

Ashley De La Rosa 34:32

we heard from him like you got it. And I was like, cool, cool, cool, cool, cool. contract, not a contract in sight. Like we waited again, like long long it felt like for probably was not that long, but a very long time in my mind for a contract. So I was like, do I have it or not like

Gillian Pensavalle 34:48

That plus the three years prior, so yeah, like it even if it was only a couple days or a week or whatever to you? Yeah, it felt like you'd been waiting for three years because in a way you had

Ashley De La Rosa 34:59

Yeah, and I was just like, I don't know, I don't know, you could always just say Never mind. Like, because it's happened so many times, and I'm gonna be I was already kind of working on being okay with that. But also, like, at the same time, I think working on being okay with that takes some like, stifling of that excitement and that hope. And I also didn't want to, to do that to myself, I wanted to give myself like to kind of feel that hope and like revel in that joy of what could be instead of because then after that, I mean, and because then what's the point, you know, like, you just become so pessimistic. And like, jaded about things, like, I want to be excited about something. And if I don't get it, then like, that sucks. But that feeling of like, kind of just waiting on pins and needles is also just such a really, it's stressful, but it's a really good feeling to kind of reminds you like, why you do this, you know?

Gillian Pensavalle 35:04

Right. So on top of those three years of the auditioning, what was your Hamilton experience as a viewer as a fan? Like, had you seen the show? Were you listening to it? Were you one of those people who were

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like, I'm an audition for it, so I'm not gonna pay attention to it. And what was that journey for you?

Ashley De La Rosa 36:17

Yeah, I saw it. So my my aunt is a spot operator in the Broadway show.

Gillian Pensavalle 36:25

What?!

Ashley De La Rosa 36:25

So yeah, so she's the spot op. So I saw it standing room. And I would go, as I've seen, I saw it a couple times, but mostly to see Treco in different roles.

Gillian Pensavalle 36:37

I mean, yeah, that's it. Yes. Oh, my God. Wait, Before we continue, can you explain to the listeners what a spot op is? In case they don't know?

Ashley De La Rosa 36:43

Yes. I hope so. A spot operator a spot up is a spot operator, they so she mans the spotlight. So she makes sure that you're lit. And in Hamilton, that's super important, especially like, you know, when Burr comes out at the very beginning, like that's her with the light on so yeah, so I was fortunate enough to get some really cheap standing room tickets.

Gillian Pensavalle 37:08

The only way to go, I'm telling ya, I never have to sit at the Rogers or anywhere else. And I'll say it 100 times standing room, is it?

Ashley De La Rosa 37:15

Yes. And especially because like, the only parts that you really miss are any like the surround, I had no idea what the surround was for like a long time, which is where Peggy spends most of her time. So I'd seen it a few times just as like a viewer and really loved it. And then I didn't I actually didn't get to see it when I was really like auditioning. Like when I got it the last time because I was my show my schedule conflicted. So I saw it again, once I got it. And I saw the San Francisco company. And it's just really nice. It's different. Like I've been able to see so many people. I haven't seen

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Jenny yet, but I have heard that her helpless is just like incredible. I've seen I got to see Donald Weber as Hamilton, which is funny that he's our Burr. So yeah, it's just nice to see all these people like and then get to work with them. And, and I remember the first time actually the very first time I saw the show, I was in college and my because of my aunt. She took me backstage it was um, I got to see Mandy and Lexi. And I think Jevan was my Hamilton and then Brandon Victor Dixon. And so I was backstage, you know, couldn't speak like, thank God, she took the phone from my hand so that she could take pictures of us, because I was too scared to ask for a photo. And Mandy, like, so sweet and pulled me aside. She's like, I can't wait to one day work with you. And your aunt tells me that you are auditioning for your auditioning for the show. Like because this was literally in college. I was like, yeah, I'm auditioning, but am I you know, and she's like, so good luck and all these you know, and I was it was just like

Gillian Pensavalle 39:04  
Come on, Mandy

Ashley De La Rosa 39:05  
Tears like welling in my eyes.

Gillian Pensavalle 39:08  
Unbelievable.

Ashley De La Rosa 39:08  
She's so sweet. And just like a little sneaky sneak.

Ashley De La Rosa 39:14  
So we were backstage and there's the Reynolds the letter from James Reynolds. And I was as I was leaving my aunt, like shove something in my pocket. I was like, What is this? And she's like, just take It's okay. It's okay. And I was like, really? She's like, it'll be fine, I think. And it was fine. Like now for the show.

Gillian Pensavalle 39:36  
They have so many of them and they get rcecyclod every couple of shows.

Ashley De La Rosa 39:39

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Yeah, exactly. So it's but at that moment, I was like, well, gosh, no, I don't know.

Ashley De La Rosa 39:44

But I have that letter to this day. And it's actually still hanging on my dressing room station in Barron, San Francisco Orpheum theatre but like the fact that I have a letter from James Reynolds and I play Maria Reynolds is playing I just see it on my mirror every day like you.

Gillian Pensavalle 40:03

She knew. Your aunt knew.

Ashley De La Rosa 40:06

Yeah she really really did.

Gillian Pensavalle 40:06

That was some kind of universe at work. Yeah, here, you know, like, Yeah,

Ashley De La Rosa 40:10

She would tell everyone she's like, my daughter's gonna be my daughter....? my niece is gonna be in the show and my niece's gonna be in the show and like, not even just like joking around, like fully telling everyone in that theater and people knew who I was before they even met me like and the fact that like, Ryan knows my aunt and it's like, you're on to Sandy. Like, what?

Gillian Pensavalle 40:29

Wait, Sandy Paradise?

Ashley De La Rosa 40:30

Yeah.

Gillian Pensavalle 40:32

That's who you're?

Ashley De La Rosa 40:34

Yes. See, everyone knows her. I don't know. How do you know her?

Gillian Pensavalle 40:37

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Because we've had cocktails together. She's also she's Sorry, just made you do spit tsake... She is like we've been trying to get together too.

Ashley De La Rosa 40:49  
This is amazing.

Gillian Pensavalle 40:50  
Timing just never worked out. Paradise is your aunt?

Ashley De La Rosa 40:53  
Yeah. Yeah.

Gillian Pensavalle 40:56  
Ashley, what?

Ashley De La Rosa 40:57  
She's like, spot op royalty.

Gillian Pensavalle 41:00  
Yeah, legit and coolest name of all time.

Ashley De La Rosa 41:04  
I was like, oh, Sandy minosa. Cuz that's my, my uncle like by blood. So she's my aunt by marriage. And they were like Sandy minosa. Like, we don't have that name. I was like, I'm here, you know, backstage, Sandy minosa. And they're like, we don't have that. And someone was like, do you mean Sandy paradise? And I was like,

Ashley De La Rosa 41:21  
I don't know. I don't know.

Gillian Pensavalle 41:25  
You don't know her Sandy paradise?

Ashley De La Rosa 41:27  
No, I well, that it's funny because she doesn't even go by Sandy Minosa. So I just like assumed I mean, you know, the patriarchy. But I was just like, Oh, she's, you know, she's married to my uncle. So like, because we didn't really know each other. Like, you know, I had moved away. And they stayed here. And they got married when I was like, fairly young. So I didn't, you know, I didn't know her. And it

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wasn't until I moved back that like we actually, like really started to get to know each other. And it actually brought me closer to my uncle, because they're just in Queens. So they're around.

Gillian Pensavalle 42:05  
Oh, my God.

Ashley De La Rosa 42:07  
Yeah.

Gillian Pensavalle 42:07  
So you get that tell me about the call. So you... So you get the call, then there's no contract.

Ashley De La Rosa 42:09  
And so yeah, I was just like, waiting it out. I had a trip to Europe planned in December, I was going to go for three weeks and visit my ex boyfriend. And I was like, Alright, well, I have a great year of trips, look forward to if this doesn't work out like this is gonna be it's gonna be fine. And I'll figure out what I want to do in the new year. And then the contract came in and we started negotiating, and I was like, oh, gosh, okay. And of course, like one of the big things they were like, you can't go to Europe for that long. Like, you're gonna be in rehearsals. And I was like, okay, so I like alright, okay. So I just, like got my money back from that and booked a 10 day trip in between. So we closed beautiful. I flew to Paris The next day, was there for 10 days by myself had never been to Europe before. And was and at that time, my friend Ashley Park was filming Emily in Paris. So she was like, you can hang out with me. And I was like, okay, like, I really don't want to bug you. I'm here to just like, do it on my own. Like I speak French. So I was just like, this is I'm going to just like,

Gillian Pensavalle 43:19  
You speak French?

Ashley De La Rosa 43:21  
I do. Yes. Not like incredibly well, I took it in college, but enough to just like be a person in Paris by myself. Which is, which was great. Yeah, first of all, so it was so fun. It was an Ashley, the Ashley's in Paris moment.

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Gillian Pensavalle 43:36

Where's that Netflix show? That's the show.

Ashley De La Rosa 43:39

Like, it was just incredible. So like I knew as I was leaving, like that I had a contract that was worked out and that I was going to start in November. So I came back like November 8, and I flew out November 17. Two to San Francisco and like started the next day and now we're here.

Gillian Pensavalle 44:03

Now we're here. Yeah, just cut to now, you get to dive in to the rehearsals of it and you had been working on the material for so many years. So because I remember talking to Kurt Crowley about this where it's like people and it's it's the human condition, right? Where we would listen to we I say like, I'm one of you. I'm not, but you know, listen to the album as much as possible, and then you think you're doing it but then when you're in front of Lac, or Ian or Crowley or the music director, they're like, oh, the note is actually it's not what you think it is

Ashley De La Rosa 44:36

That is definitely like one of the biggest traps that you could fall into I because in college, I was never really one to I mean, I got into musical theater super late like in college. I went to school originally for chemistry, and then I dropped out after two years and moved to New York because I was still teaching a science summer camp at Pace University. So I taught that science summer camp, it was like enough to get me to live here. I like lived with my family. And then I started working at a restaurant and started singing in a band. That's how I met my manager. And, and we kind of like came up together in that way. So I really didn't. I mean, I was working at the restaurant. And when someone a bartender at the restaurant was like, Oh, I went to AMDA. And I was like, I really can't afford four years of school. And they're like, the New York program is two.

Gillian Pensavalle 45:31

Yeah, no. Yeah, its AMDA

Ashley De La Rosa 45:33

They're like, it's two. It's two years, like, you should audition. And I did and got it. So like, Really? I started AMDA when I was 21,

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or 22. So like, kind of late ish for musical theater when like things like the Jimmy's exist, right. And there are young minors like winning the jimmies and, and going on to dislike be in Broadway shows, which is incredible. But like, yeah, I never listened to soundtracks, really, because of that. And when I was started learning, Hamilton, like, for the beginning auditions, it was a bunch of material because it's woman five, so it's all the sisters. And so I would like listen to the, like, the versions that they would send me like the piano versions. And then I would go and start listening to the soundtrack. And I was like, Oh, this is different. So I'm not, I can't listen to this. So I just like would have to learn what's on the page. And I think that really helped. Because even even to this day, okay, cool. But to this day, like, Lac, he'll say it all the time. And it just like is the best compliment that I could ever receive. But he's like, your pitch and your accuracy. It's just so incredible. Like, whenever we have work sessions, he literally is just like, he uses my work sessions to like, eat his lunch sometimes. Like, he's just like, Can I just like eat my salad? And I'm like, yeah, you can do whatever you want, like

Gillian Pensavalle 46:58

Alex Lacamoire, and oh, yeah, thank you.

Ashley De La Rosa 47:00

Oh, thank you. Yeah, just like the trust that he has. Because I, and I do it, you know, I'm I it's not just like, oh, Lac is here, let me look at my music and tighten up and make sure I'm not adding these grace notes. It's, it's, I don't do that just because he's coming around, like, I make sure that I am singing what's on the page. And then if I get something approved by him, then I do it. And I think he's more inclined to approve things because I don't ever suggest like crazy rifts. Like, I make sure that everything is super intentional. And, and it makes sense with the score. Usually, for the most part, you do get, you can get some stuff approved that isn't on the page. And the reason I think the reason why it does sound so authentic, or so like in the moment is because it is authentic to the actor, because it is something that they've created. Even though they you know, they might be doing that same riff in every performance, it's their, it's their riff, it's their moment. So I think that that's just really cool that we do have some freedom in something that is really like a machine.

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Gillian Pensavalle 48:05

Oh, 100% it is totally.

Gillian Pensavalle 48:14

Alright, friends, Ashley and I will be back next week to talk about the differences in her Peggy/Maria, what she's been up to during the pandemic, her work along social justice organizations, and yep, she's taking questions from the Patreon peeps. And there's a special guest question, but that's all I'm gonna say right now. So until then, stay safe. Stay healthy. Please wear that mask. I love you. Talk to you next week. I'm G dot Pen.

Gillian Pensavalle 49:11

The Hamilcast is brought to you by my love of the thing (TM) My complete lack of chill Please join me in raising all the glasses to Sir Alex Lacamoire for generously making my intro music and this custom Yorktown arrangement that I will never ever get over. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. To become a Patreon Peep and join the best, kindness, and most welcoming corner of the internet go to [patreon.com/thehamilcast](https://patreon.com/thehamilcast). You can submit questions to guests, join Zoom hangouts, get behind the scenes access and of course my unending gratitude. I'm @thehamilcast on all social media and you can listen wherever you get your podcasts. Visit [thehamilcast.com](https://thehamilcast.com) for transcripts, episodes and more. You can see what's going on with Mike, you know Mike, at [MichaelPaulSmith.net](https://MichaelPaulSmith.net). True Crime Obsessed is my true crime comedy podcast with my podcast soulmate Patrick Hinds of Theater People and Broadway Backstory fame. Thank you so much for listening. It means the world to me [with clip] To the Revolution!