

THE HAMILCAST

EPISODE 260 TRANSCRIPT: JONATHAN GROFF PART 3

Lin-Manuel Miranda 0:00

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

Gillian Pensavalle 0:18

Hello friends. I'm Gillian, welcome back to the Hamilcast. This week, I wrap up my time with the one and only Jonathan Groff, this conversation was an absolute dream come true. And I'm so grateful that he took the kind of time that you get to spend three episodes with him. Jonathan, if you're listening, I'm overwhelmed. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. So if you missed the first two those are episodes 258 and 259. There, you can hear all about how we met Lin, his time with Hamilton from the public to Broadway, his experience with the Hamilmovie, Mindhunter, all the things but if you're all caught up, I'll leave you to it. Here's Part Three with Jonathan Groff. And we're picking up with more questions submitted by Lin-Manuel Miranda.

Gillian Pensavalle 1:00

All right, are you ready for question two from Lin?

Jonathan Groff 1:02

Oh my god. Yeah, of course.

Gillian Pensavalle 1:03

Also, when he is in the parchment dress on the surrounding the last moments of the musical How is he playing that? Is he still King George is he Groff? These are the important questions. I have the same question about the parchment.

Jonathan Groff 1:19

Let me go back,

Gillian Pensavalle 1:20

Rewind,

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Jonathan Groff 1:21

Rewind

Jonathan Groff 1:26

I am myself.

Gillian Pensavalle 1:28

You're you?

Jonathan Groff 1:28

Yep. Because I remember looking at, well, trying to make Renee laugh from across. She was at number four, we were doing that across from each other. So we would always like be interacting with I imagine like from the audience. I am a color of white costume on a stage. So I am not like an entity that is playing anything. So I'm just basically a prop. I feel a little bit like a prop at the end. Because a lot of the times I'm just standing there, I'm not even dancing. So it's almost like a piece of scenery. So exterior wise, I'm not really playing anything except standing where I'm supposed to stand and then being like Eliza, and in which case when I would look at the other people on stage, I would feel like I was myself looking at them.

Gillian Pensavalle 2:20

Here's why I love your relationship with Lin is because you're not just in love. You're actually soulmates because his next question is tell him he killed the choreography in the finale, I would stand behind him just before I went on stage to re meet Eliza. Are you kidding me? This was not

Jonathan Groff 2:46

Oh my god, what is the like...

Gillian Pensavalle 2:46

Like, the just the stars aligned? Like I can't believe you just said that.

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Jonathan Groff 2:50

I know, it's crazy. so crazy. That's crazy. I love looking at him to like, because he would do this like circle around like his he would look at Pippa because Pippa was sort of like seeing him. He was sort of like sneak around her or whatever that sort of staging is

Gillian Pensavalle 3:09

He would go behind her

Jonathan Groff 3:10

And it was like, so beautiful.

Gillian Pensavalle 3:15

Yeah. Well, you kill the choreo.

Jonathan Groff 3:17

Oh, thanks, Lin.

Jonathan Groff 3:20

You wrote the show. You killed it with the writing and the acting.

Gillian Pensavalle 3:25

Yeah. So Andy, get back to me on how grafted about the

Jonathan Groff 3:31

I'm sure he'll definitely have feelings about that.

Gillian Pensavalle 3:34

He'd say he did a great. So Amanda, she and James, her son who's 12 wants to know what it was like to wear the king costume and how you learn to keep the crown on your head. And also, how you learn how you find the voices for your characters. So we talked about the crown a little bit.

Jonathan Groff 3:52

Yes

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Gillian Pensavalle 3:54

But yeah, just how you find the voices for your characters.

Jonathan Groff 3:57

This was very particular because I, I couldn't sing the song when I first got it. It was not in my range. And so I don't really have a technique of singing. So basically, I just beat it out until it comes out. I don't I just like sing it over and over again until it comes out. Just try and work it like a muscle and not do anything that hurts. And then, and then I and then I mentioned earlier that I didn't know that I was supposed to have a British accent until I saw Brian D'Arcy James do it. And so the accent ended up becoming a huge way in for the character in it unlocked a side of my personality that I just hadn't really unlocked before which was this kind of self involved pompous. aristocratic, you know, I'm from like farm country in Pennsylvania. We just don't, people don't act like that around here. And certainly don't speak in a British accent so that the voice learning the accent, and then pairing the accent with the song. And then thinking about Barbra Streisand, enjoyment of her own voice was how I found the voice for this particular character. Kristoff is just myself basically, I didn't change your think about anything with Kristoff The voice of Sven which "is like kinda

Jonathan Groff 5:26

like this" I found with Chris Buck, the director. At the time of that movie, Jennifer Lee hadn't come on yet as the director, as the co-director, and Bobby Lopez, I remember we were Oh, no, no, Jen was there. He was Jen and Bobby and Chris and I talking about voice weird voices you do for your pets. Like we're, it's like it's like this already, you know, where people do voices for their cats or dogs or whatever. So we were just sort of going through a Rolodex of pet voices. And that's how we found that one.

Gillian Pensavalle 6:02

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It's the best answer. Bree says I was at a performance where Rick Negron's kg three crown fell off. And he's saying the whole song with it in his hand. Do you have any mishaps playing the role of the king or any role?

Jonathan Groff 6:16

First off, what was he doing that the that it fell off? I'm so interested to know

Gillian Pensavalle 6:20

When Euan Morton came over. He said he walked out without the crown on.

Jonathan Groff 6:24

Isn't the microphone in the crown?

Gillian Pensavalle 6:27

But it was in the hair? It was a whole I don't know. It was a whole thing.

Jonathan Groff 6:30

They must they must be doing it different over there now because the mic, the mic pack, and the mic is in the crown, when at least originally it was so maybe they've got a new system over there. Wait so many mishaps,

Gillian Pensavalle 6:43

Or are you just like Mary Poppins just practically perfect in every way?

Jonathan Groff 6:47

No. I'm that just as you said it that the memory came back. I had laryngitis the last week that I was in the show, but I didn't want to miss a performance. And I came out for the Wednesday matinee. And the entrance applause was louder than the applause at the end of the song. Because I sounded so bad. And I remember standing at the lip of the stage. And just because I would have to like flip things into

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falsetto or where I was just sort of like kind of, you know, all over the place.

Gillian Pensavalle 7:27

With you With no training as you told me with laryngitis could just flip into falsetto

Jonathan Groff 7:32

And it didn't sound good. It sounded horrible. And I we me and some of the cast members during intermission would read Pema Chödrön. I don't know if that's how you pronounce her name. Who is this Buddhist monk, Fred Wagoner who's the wig guy who you should definitely have on this podcast at some point. Yes, he had this little yellow book of Pema Chödrön's like it's called, like the little book or something. It's this little yellow book. And we were reading it every day during intermission one page a day. We had read it for months at this point. And she talks a lot in the book about, you know, reacting the same way to wonderful things and horrible things. And I remember standing at the lip of the stage, truly sounding horrible. And this is not I'm not trying to be this just was really bad. And thinking oh my god, I sound so bad. Right now. I'm downstage center in the biggest Broadway show happening right now. And I'm just like sucking. And I had flop sweats. I was a covered in sweat. And then it was over. And Rory O'Malley was actually trailing me that day, because he was about to go in the next week. It was my last week. And I remember thinking that just happened and I'm just gonna own that that happened. And be okay with it and try better than next time. That was the biggest mishap I had.

Gillian Pensavalle 8:59

Paul is asking how have you handled the fact that your role is kg three will forever connect with students studying the revolution in US history classes. He says I teach AP US history. Yes, I play the song and the video and sing it in front of my classes. And inevitably when the song hits everybody, the students join in.

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Jonathan Groff 9:17
Oh my... What is his name?

Gillian Pensavalle 9:18
His name is Paul

Jonathan Groff 9:18
Paul. I like want to kiss your feet and worship you that is that is so your sound like such an amazing teacher. Right? So that that like is to me this question is way more about my my impression of you than that. That makes me feel I guess it makes me feel so excited and impressed by you, Paul, and grateful to Lin and like I didn't even know who Alexander Hamilton was before I joined the show. I just didn't know anything about him, or many of the historical events that happened in the show. So it's taught me personally a lot about American history, which is great and and That's so exciting that that that Paul is using it in his class and that it people are singing and i that is like, I don't know what that that's just to me so cool and all the credit to goes to Lin and to Paul for that, that connectivity.

Gillian Pensavalle 10:16
It wasn't our fault Groff

Jonathan Groff 10:19
Was it?

Gillian Pensavalle 10:19
It wasnt really

Jonathan Groff 10:20
This is also the The great thing about these teachers that are incorporating it is that I remember the things I remember from elementary school, middle school, high school, where the event things that the teachers would do to make it interesting. So the fact that all these teachers

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that are listening to this podcast or doing stuff like that to make it memorable, it you know, whether or not it was being taught before I want to give the benefit of the doubt to my teachers and and sort of maybe take ownership of the fact that I was more interested in Stephen Sondheim than like government at that time when I was 15. But the but I but it would wake us up I remember being woken up by certain teachers, by by the fact that they could do creative things like sing the king from Hamilton. I mean, I'm sure that's very memorable for the students, right?

Gillian Pensavalle 11:07

Or at least they were just like, Hey, hey, listen to the song. Yeah, they're there. I had bad teachers and I had great teachers and the great teachers did like, pulled moves like that. Totally.

Jonathan Groff 11:18

Yes.

Gillian Pensavalle 11:20

Um, Wesley is asking, Hey, with kg three, obviously has a lot of backstage time. What did you do during your downtime,

Jonathan Groff 11:27

When in the beginning, when I wasn't watching the show, I was reading every book that was on my list that I always wanted to read. Oftentimes, I was reading it out loud to myself in a British accent. So I read like the agony and the ecstasy. That book about Michelangelo, I read that book out loud in a British accent I read between the World and Me. Leslie Odom Jr. recommended A Little Life. And I remember getting to the end of that book and weeping and going down into his dressing room and embracing him and crying into his neck after reading that. And then I would say the last six months that I was there, it was it had turned into it. It evolved into a revolving door of cast members coming into my dressing room at like clockwork at

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specific time and then running to make the stage before their next entrance. Oak was Yeah, in there all the time. Jasmine would come in at the same time Emmy... Pippa would come in at the same time... Daveed would come in at the same time. It was Yeah, it was great. It was like a revolving door of friends by the end.

Gillian Pensavalle 12:36

So nice. Casey says, awesome. Wow, my 12 year old daughter's question for Groff is how do you not blink? Because in the Hamilmfilm, you you blink, I watched I watched your numbers specifically. But you're very I think it's just the KG3 thing where you're focused. You're laser focus, so you don't blink a lot. But you do blink.

Jonathan Groff 12:58

I wasn't thinking that was one of those things. I feel like some things you're conscious of when you're doing them when you're acting and other things or you're in it, you're not thinking about it. It's just happening. Weirdly, David Fincher has a thing about blinking, he thinks that people blink when they're finishing a thought, or lying. And other than that, there, when you're communicating something, you're not blinking. This is his take. And there was an article in The New York Times a couple of weeks ago, about birds. They've put these cameras on these birds to to like clock, movement and blinking. And it's this really funny picture of this bird with this camera on its head. And I sent it to David to answer was like no blinking. And in the article, it mentions that birds don't blink while they're landing at all. And David's response brilliantly was, I'm just looking for actors who are landing.

Gillian Pensavalle 13:56

Ah, perfect.

Jonathan Groff 13:57

You know what I mean?

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Gillian Pensavalle 13:58

Oh, god, that's perfect. I also got that comment. I used to do like, I don't know, I don't even know what to call it. I used to be like an on camera host. And people also thought like, why doesn't she fucking blink? And I was like, maybe because I'm focused on telling you a story. I don't know. It just made sense. I don't know. It makes sense to me that maybe you would just be focused.

Jonathan Groff 14:17

Yeah, he's a sociopath.

Gillian Pensavalle 14:24

Well thanks

Jonathan Groff 14:24

Slash focus.

Gillian Pensavalle 14:25

I've been called a lot worse for a lot less. Gilboa is asking what is the process for the coronation of a new king. This has been on YouTube, but I would love to hear it from you.

Jonathan Groff 14:36

This Brian D'Arcy James started. Because no one else could start this but Brian D'Arcy James, and it was he decided that I think he and you know, I think he was sad to be leaving the show, to be honest to think he was like, Oh, my God, I just got here. It's this huge sensation and I'm out. And I still have his voicemail saved when he called to tell to say like, I'm so happy. You're coming. You're gonna have such a good time. These people are so nice. Um, I grew up a huge fan of Brian D'Arcy James, particularly from the Off Broadway, wild party recording. I've always loved him.

Gillian Pensavalle 15:10

Yes.

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Jonathan Groff 15:54

He decided that he wanted to do this sort of coronation. And it has to do with like the garter. It's like it's called like the passing of the gardener, where it's this. It's this like, garter that. I can't even really remember right now what it is, but it's like George Eker is a part of it. It was like the jewel that everyone that was named George in the show is a part of it.

AUDIO CLIP 16:19

Today is a glorious day. To celebrate the coordination of our new king, steeped in history, the great tradition of the most noble Order of the Garter has been passed down from King to King, to King on FaceTime. Today, we continue this most noble tradition. We begin this Saturday with our 28th of February speaker, George Eker Please approach and be seated.

Jonathan Groff 17:26

And then Carlee would hand King George, a cup of tea in the off Broadway production after you'll be back. It was like instead of the thing where it's like ... with the scepter and the person gets hung, it was like something with that. And then he would sip tea. And so it was like George Washington, George Eker and Carlee because part of his intention was for the new king me to know the people he was sharing the stage with and Carlee was the person that was going to hand me the tea. So he put her into the coronation. And it's basically just a very silly passing of the torch essentially.

Jonathan Groff 18:54

It was sort of like beautifully circular. Because he did it to me. I did it to Reynolds. I did it to Rory and then Rory did it back to Brian D'Arcy James. And that was the end of the coronation. We were like hey, now that Brian is back now. You know what every king every company? Yeah, we can do this every time. And when Brian came back to me, it was like the most logical ending of the coronation.

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Gillian Pensavalle 19:21

Kelly's asking. She says I absolutely loved mine. Hunter. I was blown away by your performance. I wondered how you. I wonder how you would feel if there were to be more episodes would Holden find himself at a karaoke bar perhaps.

Jonathan Groff 19:37

Oh, God, I hope not. Or maybe I hope so. Because it would be so bad. Inevitably. I feel like yeah, it'd be really awkward.

Gillian Pensavalle 19:43

You're just trying to work through whoever you suppose.

Jonathan Groff 19:48

Oh, wow.

Gillian Pensavalle 19:49

Yeah. What would Holden song be?

Jonathan Groff 19:50

I wonder? Well, in the earlier scripts, he was obsessed with Billy Joel.

Gillian Pensavalle 19:56

Oh, somewhere. Lac is like okay, it's Second, wait a second.

Jonathan Groff 20:01

Yeah, he was like that straight dude in the early 80s that was like really living for Billy Joel were like young Billy Joel. So it was I guess it would probably be that but I can't imagine there would be any singing in the show. No, I feel like Holt would be more game for that.

Gillian Pensavalle 20:19

He'd like pull you up. He'd be like, come on.

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Jonathan Groff 20:22

Yeah, exactly.

Jonathan Groff 20:24

Exactly.

Gillian Pensavalle 20:29

Come on. Totally. We got to deal with capper tomorrow.
Yeah.

Jonathan Groff 20:34

Kemper that's who I'd be interested in seeing sing karaoke.

Gillian Pensavalle 20:37

Oh god he would do like he would do that horrible song that
Buffalo Bill does in

Jonathan Groff 20:44

Silence of the Lambs Yeah.

Gillian Pensavalle 20:45

Oh, I fuck me.

Jonathan Groff 20:46

Yes.

Gillian Pensavalle 20:49

Christina and her son Jacob. They're saying we are huge
fans of course but I think our favorite aside from kg three
is your Seymore. We've only listened to the cast recording
but what was it like to play opposite a giant man eating
plants and in parentheses, Jacob will be performing grow
for me for his middle school Broadway showcase in a few
weeks.

Jonathan Groff 21:08

Oh my god, break a leg. Jacob have fun. I love that song.

Jonathan Groff 21:36

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It was out of body.

Gillian Pensavalle 21:39

Yeah?

Jonathan Groff 21:40

it was insanely great. I started to in the in the course of the run of that show. When I say out of body, I started to feel like I was leaving my body. I started to think about when I would play pretend as a child when I was 7 8 9 10. And I remember coming out of playing pretend I was playing Robin Hood with my friend Chris and Andy in the woods, and coming out of the woods and feeling like wow, what just happened? I was so in the in the play state that coming out of it felt like I just come out of something. And there was something about the amount of focus that it takes the the the puppeteer, which was Eric or Teddy in our production were in the plant, listening to Kingsley, they had in ears listening to Kingsley's voice of the plant. And then I'm in.... So it's like your inner it's like a three scene. But the one person is a puppet, but because it is a puppet matching alive voice. Things change organically. And so there's this extra heightened reality that is unlike doing a normal scene or a normal song with the human being because just the information is is coming so fast, through different people. And some days not every day, but some days I would, I would I felt like I was leaving my body. It felt so surreal and amazing. And that song is like that song is can change your life. It was it was it was that song is so good. That show is so good.

Gillian Pensavalle 23:27

It's so good. And especially when you sing it, it just sits right there Groff. It's just like, so.

Jonathan Groff 23:32

Thanks

Jonathan Groff 23:33

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And not to bring her up again. But she's my best friend the world but Ashley I went

Jonathan Groff 23:37

Ashley!

Gillian Pensavalle 23:39

Ashley and she she likes it was pouring rain when I spoke to you after a little shop and she had to go home to Queens and I was like I'm gonna stay

Jonathan Groff 24:17

And the great thing about that show is it one of the great things as a performer in the show is you get to you get to experience what what is while you're performing it an actual tragedy and actual Shakespearean tragedy people die. Greed you know all the it's like it's like Macbeth with the it's like doing it's like doing a Shakespeare play. So at the end you I had that catharsis feeling that you do doing a drama, but the audience has had an entertainment catharsis. And so the audience is not crying. They're like that was so much fun. And so you get to have fun with people after the show and you've exercised all of your demons in the process, which is unquie to that show.

Gillian Pensavalle 25:00

Yeah, totally. Alexia says, I love Groffsauce. My kids absolutely love frozen, and Kristoff and they have never stopped. What is it like being part of projects like that where kids grow up with you? And then you stay with them forever? And then you you will be part of their kids lives?

Jonathan Groff 25:17

Oh my God, that's deep.

Gillian Pensavalle 25:19

Right?

Jonathan Groff 25:19

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I think like, it's cool.

Gillian Pensavalle 25:23

Yeah

Jonathan Groff 25:23

it's really cool. Because, you know, you sort of in a, in a, in a way that has absolutely nothing to do with you get roped into a project that people love. And then you become loved by proxy. And so it's like, extra love for doing nothing. And, and it's with Spring Awakening. That is one where a lot of like you, for example, a lot of really creative, intelligent, artful, passionate, teenagers came to see Spring Awakening. And now I all the time, they're their executives and writers and costume designers and composers. And it's exciting to be connecting with people like that, because Spring Awakening was such It was such a, it's such a deep show. And I feel like that's the first thing I've that that's like, was 15 years ago now. So I feel like that's the that's the project. I've actually seen people go from teenagers to professionals. And I've seen that kind of like arc and been really moved by that. And how that when a show is is takes kids seriously like that. And the material is that complex. You end up seeing those people do really interesting things with their lives. It's like sort of like being a fan of that show sort of signaled an interest in creative, deep things in their lives. And now it's been cool to see them kind of blossom in that way.

Gillian Pensavalle 26:58

Yeah. Oh, wow. That was thanks. That was amazing. Scott says, looking was very important to me. I loved it so much. What was it like for you to play that character and tell that story, especially for the LGBTQ+ community, knowing that it would resonate with so many. He says, Thank you for everything you do. I love you so much.

Jonathan Groff 27:20

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Thanks, Scott. That means a lot. I think when I came out, I came out of the closet when I was 23. And I came out and I felt like I'm gay. You know, but I didn't feel like I'm gay. And I'm so proud to be gay. I knew that it was who I was. But I wasn't excited about it. If I could have snapped my fingers and changed it, I would have. Looking change that for me. Because by being in that show, it forced me to be in dialogue about what it meant to be gay. And it forced me to have conversations and ask myself questions, and, and invited all these all this dialogue with the creators of the show and my friends that were in the show and a bunch of gay people were in the show and we I started to figure out my own personal identity and it's the most personal thing I've ever experienced I've ever had creatively and it completely changed my life. And when I came out the other end of it, I felt proud to be gay and I felt like it like it's the so grateful to be gay. down to my to my core. And I credit Looking with that.

Gillian Pensavalle 28:44

Wow, thank you so much for sharing that. That was really gorgeous. Okay, shifting gears a little bit here. Lin not Manuel Miranda. Okay. And look, I called her that before Lin is now asking questions. Because she was Lynn with a Y and so I would always say good while Miranda but now this is Lynn with a Y

Jonathan Groff 29:04

Okay, got it.

Gillian Pensavalle 29:04

She says when I was a kid I wanted to be Julie Andrews. I would go to slumber parties and terrify everyone by singing simple joys of maiden hood while other people were singing Beatle songs I read you were also obsessed. Can you talk about your love for two down to earth? divas Dame Julie and the fabulous Sutton Foster your miscast performance was one of my favorite things ever and Anna is jumping in saying

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Can we talk about your miscast anything goes number it might be my favorite thing ever. It brings me so much joy.

Jonathan Groff 29:30

Oh my god. That's so funny too because they both played Millie Dillmount I wonder if there's some like, like humble diva connectivity there that through line. Yeah, that makes them both right for that role because they are so different. And yet, that quality is very similar. Yeah, I was Mary Poppins when I was three for Halloween.

Gillian Pensavalle 29:50

My first crush was Dick Van Dyke. Yeah. And Mary Poppins stick Van Dyck.

Jonathan Groff 29:53

Oh my god understandably. Right. He's so good.

Gillian Pensavalle 30:00

Like that's a good, ugh, you guys couldn't see it. But we did the same like,

Jonathan Groff 30:07

oh my god in the Sound of Music I just re watched the sound of music a couple of months ago and I was like, Oh my god, she's just she's just amazing. Um, and Sutton Yeah, the same day. They're very different though. Like I think of when I think of the singing voice of Julie Andrews and the singing voice of Sutton. It's two completely different things. But my love for Julie Andrews, I think is related to is related to Mary Poppins mostly. And then Teh Sound Of Music was a big one. And then with Sutton it was Millie, which I saw six times. And then Anything Goes tap dance. I had seen anything goes. I was blown away by that performance. And then I was doing a play for MCC. And they told me about this gala they do where you can be whoever you want to be. And I was sort of like, I want to do that tap dance. And they were like, Okay, and then I and then I learned it and it was my It was my 27th birthday to myself

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that that event happened on my 27th birthday. And it was so it was so much fun to do.

Gillian Pensavalle 31:20

I understand that of just being in that moment of like, I want to do this thing I want to live it's like I'm like in Chicago like to be Roxy and just go boys. I just have like a bunch of handsome boys come out. You could just say yes to Roxy perfectly.

Unknown Speaker 31:35

Jonathan Groff 32:14

Yeah, it was a time when I when I was not working. And I was in my I think like mid 20s. And it was almost like therapy, learning that number. Because sometimes when you're unemployed as an actor, it really feels like it's not you're never not that you're never gonna I never felt the thing like I'll never work again. But I but it feels pretty quiet. Your day to day is pretty quiet. And the quietness is unchanging. I'm sure a lot of people feel this way during Corona. And the tap dance gave me an opportunity to challenge myself and I didn't know that they were videotaping it. I didn't know that it was going to be on YouTube. Yeah, that they think they were doing that then or if they were I wasn't aware of it. So I wasn't thinking like, this will live forever on the internet. I wasn't thinking about, you know, I didn't even think I'd ever see it. And then playbill.com put it online or something. But for me it was more just about like, having something therapeutic to work on while I was unemployed and sort of like a little goal for myself. A couple years before that I had done a mini triathlon, a sprint triathlon of short distances, which felt like a similar thing where it's like a physical challenge that you can just give some purpose and meaning to your life but then it Yeah,

Gillian Pensavalle 33:41

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what like Double Dare like a physical challenge.

Jonathan Groff 33:44

Oh my god, great reference. Yes, exactly like Double Dare

Gillian Pensavalle 33:46

Green slime at the end of it.

Jonathan Groff 33:49

That's what it felt like, in some ways. Yeah, totally.

Slide where you go down? Yeah.

Gillian Pensavalle 33:55

They're like, go go go there, like 10 seconds left. And then it was so stressful. Like, watching it in the comfort of your own home, like in your pajamas, not in the slide, but it's like get the flag

Jonathan Groff 34:06

ice cream sundae or turn that nose. Remember the nose?

Gillian Pensavalle 34:12

goggles on? It is so stressful for everybody. Why did we put ourselves through? but really to your point where you're saying Ali's asking I want to ask if he feels that his choice to not have social media enables him to be more present in his physical life. And if he feels it impacts his opportunities at all since so much networking and marketing takes place digitally.

Jonathan Groff 34:33

I think that's an interesting question. I don't know if it I don't know if it allows me to focus on more. I guess it does because I don't have it but I never had it so I can't say speak to what it provides me to not have it because I've never had it so I don't know what it feels like to have it and how much time it consumes the opportunities and the money potentially, that Instagram can provide. Because I have friends that, you know, sell whatever, they hold a

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product and you get money for things on Instagram. So like that, that kind of thing I just have never been interested in, even Yeah, like, I just it's not my, I feel like maybe as an actor, it's it's better if people don't really know who you are. Because if I was embarrassed, when Emmy came into my dressing room, it took me real focus to be like I'm trying to be Holden Ford. And I know if Emmy comes in and sees me dressed as King George, reading for this FBI agent, it's gonna feel so ridiculous, that even that personal reaction in me who's completely non judgmental, and we love each other, she's a dear friend, that if that level of the eye role would inhibit me from trying something new, or trying on a different version of myself, I'm deciding to not declare this is who I am based on my social media presence, I feel like does help me for my own brain believe myself as different entities because I'm not thinking about what I'm projecting as myself at that really at all. I'm just when I'm getting a job thinking about that particular job. I'm not thinking about it in the context as my, in the context of my personal self.

Gillian Pensavalle 36:35

Yeah. Well, I don't know, this is maybe a couple years ago, but there used to be, like, on the size card where you sign into an audition, you know, height, weight, whatever, they would ask how many followers you had?

Jonathan Groff 36:48

Wow, that makes you feel a little sad.

Gillian Pensavalle 36:51

Isn't that horrible?

Jonathan Groff 36:53

There's, I guess, like, hypothetically, I don't know really that much about it. But if you're selling a product, then it is kind of all related, isn't it? Because then they're like, Okay, if this person has 2 million followers, and they're gonna sell toothpaste,

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Gillian Pensavalle 37:10

But you know what, they're not gonna do pay you more for your followers, they're gonna give you the day rate, and they're gonna give you the residual rate for your followers.

Jonathan Groff 37:18

I didn't even think about that. You know what I mean? Yeah. So interesting. Wow,

Gillian Pensavalle 37:24

Stay off social media, Groff. You have the right idea.

Jonathan Groff 37:27

That's the other thing. That's what everybody always says. So I feel like, it is frustrating, like when my friend just sent me the Instagram of this guy that she's dating. And I'm like, Okay, and then I go through to look at it. And then it like, prevents me now from seeing the pictures

Gillian Pensavalle 37:42

Oh well get like a fake secret account that you don't tell anybody about.

Jonathan Groff 37:45

I just I'm afraid if I do that, then it's the beginning of the end where like, you'll just never get me off. Stalking people online.

Gillian Pensavalle 37:52

Do you want to stalk the guy or not? Do you want to be a good friend or not?

Jonathan Groff 37:58

They've ended up taking screenshots and just sending them to me that way.

Gillian Pensavalle 38:01

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Fair. Raquel says I read or heard on an interview at some point that your mom brought a busload of hometown folks to one of your Spring Awakening shows, and some may not have known the premise and in parentheses, I'm paraphrasing. Did you ever circle back with them? What was the feedback?

Jonathan Groff 38:15

Yes, my mom brought a busload of people to see spring she brought and ended up bringing multiple bus loads. So it actually did go well. But she brought a busload of people from Lancaster to see Spring Awakening Off Broadway, which is a small, maybe it's 300 people. And so they were over 50 people, so a huge portion of the audience. And I remember our producers, Tom and Ira and Michael Mayer being nervous about the fact that they had so many people from Lancaster, Pennsylvania and the audience. Would they be horrified would they walk out? And it was the loudest audience that we had. And when I sang totally fucked they like they went crazy.

Unknown Speaker 39:00

Jonathan Groff 39:54

My dad didn't know anything about the show. And I did and he was on that bus trip. And at the end of Act One after I get my butt out and, and penetrate Leah Michelle,

Jonathan Groff 40:08

stage penetrate, penetrate stage penetrate

Gillian Pensavalle 40:10

again I was in the first row for that so I can

Jonathan Groff 40:12

Yes, you were there. They said he was like he couldn't speak it was like he'd seen a ghost he looked completely pale and was like, just it was shocked to his core. But then ended up seeing the show like 10 times.

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Gillian Pensavalle 40:27
Okay, so he's spoken again.

Jonathan Groff 40:29
Yeah, yeah. No, they all loved it. They all it was it was kind of amazing. And it was a testament to that show that it was so artfully done. I think that all of the and and the controversial elements of the show, were the point of the show, right? Where you have to talk about these things. Your friend went with their dad, you have to we have to be with to open up this dialogue.

Gillian Pensavalle 40:51
Yeah. And her dad was very cool. She's, uh, she got the biggest fights you have where their dad was with her dad. So Hamilton at the public thought she was too busy to go. Yeah, it's a whole thing. Wow. It's a whole thing. Wow. Susan Murray is asking how does he deal with the weird pressures and presumptions of intimacy connected with being such a well known and beloved figure? I mean, it must be something to have your body of work be something that causes such intense reactions in fans. And that could feel like a lot of pressure. How do you balance it keeping your overall perspective? and jumping in on that sub question, Jen is asking having been in more than one thing that must lead to people recognizing you. Can you tell by the initial reaction if they're a member of a specific fandom?

Jonathan Groff 41:28
Yes. A lot of times I can. Yes. I would say to the first question, I grew up waiting at stage doors, and I still get weak in the knees when I talk to Sutton Foster. So I understand, I understand that it is about me, and it is not about me at the same time. So that like because with Sutton, it's like I I it's it's wrapped up in my emotion, how I felt when I discovered her what she represents, it's like a representational feeling. And it takes no effort for me at all, to understand the difference between like, what

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somebody represents to you, and then actually talking to you, and how those things can flip back and forth from one another. I totally get it. So it doesn't make me feel weird. It doesn't make me feel any pressure when it's happening, because I completely understand it. And that one of my dearest friends have slept out on the street for me and Leah's last performance of Spring Awakening. And we've gone on vacations together, and she'll have like, moments where she's like, Oh, my God, and then and then not, you know, and then it's just people. It's like, sort of also, too, when you work with a famous actor, like, like, when I was working on the matrix this year, and I'm doing a scene with Keanu Reeves. And there's a part of you that's like, Oh my god, this is Keanu Reeves. And then 10 seconds later you're actually just having a normal conversation and then another time you're like, Oh my god, this is and then it you sort of like deal with your own projection of that person while having the experience with them. So I relate to it. And then it was interesting. Because with a Mindhunter, it was the first time straight dudes had come up to me like like NYU like dudes like the the or like the Wall Street guys that are out for a nice dinner with those like downtown New York guys that are in like that that are like in their button down shirts or the kind of like, my my brother lives here, but like, kinda like business like young business guys

Gillian Pensavalle 43:39

Dude bros

Jonathan Groff 43:40

Dude bros would be like, Oh, no way. Are you the guy from Mindhunter like, what was it like to be with Ed Kemper? I was like, Whoa, I've never had this before. This is crazy. had like girls and teenagers and during Looking with gay guys and living in Chelsea, I would have a lot of great conversations with people on the street. But that was a that was a Mindhunter was like a whole other situation.

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Gillian Pensavalle 44:04

Yeah. Well, it's cool to know that you are because on this podcast we say we are team no chill. I also like to say like have a little chill. I love the idea of you saying like, sometimes I look at Sutton Foster and I'm like, oh my god.

Jonathan Groff 44:16

Yes.

Gillian Pensavalle 44:17

I feel that all the time on this podcast, like a text they'll come in or I'll be able to say a certain sentence and I'm like, Oh my god, like it's never lost on me at all. And I love that you you feel that way too.

Jonathan Groff 44:31

Totally. And I don't I also like, they'd say like, don't meet your heroes or don't but don't. But I guess maybe I never have abnormal expectations for my heroes. I I expect people to be human. I expect people to be people and interestingly enough, like the disappointing aspects of someone's personality, or the weird Quirk, that someone has that to me, I find even more fascinating because I also I do separate the projection of who somebody is from the actual relationship that you have with them. It is it's like, it's two different things in both things are very powerful and both things are very real

Gillian Pensavalle 45:13

Ann says, here's a goofy question. My husband brought me a T shirt with an image called the groffle. cone. So it's you as KG3 in an ice cream cone. And she's asking, have you seen it?

Jonathan Groff 45:27

Yes.

Gillian Pensavalle 45:28

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You have? Yes, she isn't. She's not expecting you to see it. And she says, if you haven't you make for such interesting swag. I love that you actually have seen this somebody sent me.

Jonathan Groff 45:40

Yes. I can't remember who it was right now. Was it my eighth grade drama teacher?

Gillian Pensavalle 45:45

Please say it was it

Jonathan Groff 45:46

It might have been Mrs. Fisher. Yeah. I think Mrs. Fisher saw it somewhere and sent it to me. Yeah, I was like, What does this mean? I didn't I did. I didn't understand that. The cone. I don't understand why I was King George on a cone.

Gillian Pensavalle 46:02

Yeah, I think it's like waffle cone. So Groff groffle waffle,

Jonathan Groff 46:05

like a waffle cone, like a waffle cone.

Gillian Pensavalle 46:07

So like, you can hear like sweet and the whole I think it's just supposed to be like, just lean into it

Jonathan Groff 46:13

yeah, no, please. I'm thrilled about it. I just didn't. I didn't know if I was missing the joke. Like, I didn't know if I was missing something. Okay, you're good. Got it.

Gillian Pensavalle 46:20

Amanda says, Hey, did you ever go to Dutch Wonderland when you're a kid? And if you did, what was your favorite ride?

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Jonathan Groff 46:27

I was a ride operator at Dutch Wonderland.

Gillian Pensavalle 46:32

Hey, Amanda. Buckle up.

Jonathan Groff 46:32

Yeah, buckle up. My favorite ride to operate and it's not really a ride. But there was a period of time during one summer when I was the voice of the wishing well at Dutch Wonderland.

Gillian Pensavalle 46:47

So Dutch Wonderland is like a little like amusement park. Right?

Jonathan Groff 46:48

It's an amusement park. Yeah, there's roller coasters and the swing. Yeah. And like a flume. And it's pretty big. And this wishing was just a random thing that when all the rides were being operated, they would stick someone as the voice of the wishing well. And it was my favorite thing. And I would go up with my sour Skittles. And my soda because I was 14. And I would sing like Britney Spears songs. Kids would throw in coins. And I would sing pop songs in like a genie voice.

Jonathan Groff 47:37

That was my favorite ride to operate. My favorite to be on. There's so many to choose from. There was a spaceship that had a kind Oh, no, I remember what it was. It was the house that went upside down. You would like sit in this house and it would go around you it was like a room and a house. I can't remember what it was called. And it looked like in The Wizard of Oz when the house is sort of yeah, that was my favorite ride.

Gillian Pensavalle 48:27

Wait, do you sit in it and the house was just like flip?

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Jonathan Groff 48:29

Yeah.

Gillian Pensavalle 48:31

That's horrifying

Jonathan Groff 48:32

When you get older, it does make you a little sick. But as a child, it was thrilling.

Jonathan Groff 48:36

Jen says because I'm from New Zealand. The only question we Kiwis have for anyone who's been to New Zealand is how do you like New Zealand?

Jonathan Groff 48:45

Kia ora, Jen. Kia ora. I Love New Zealand. What's not to love? I would say like next January because it's so great to go there and in our winter and it's their summer. I would say I would say go for a couple months

Gillian Pensavalle 49:00

And for someone who doesn't love flying?

Jonathan Groff 49:01

If you go for a couple months. Yeah. I mean, if you go for a week, probably not

Gillian Pensavalle 49:06

Not going for like a cool long weekend in New Zealand?

Jonathan Groff 49:09

I mean, maybe you go for two like even two weeks. I feel like we'd be way too short. Like maybe three weeks. Because it's like the jet actually. I didn't have jet lag going there. I had jet lag really bad coming back. But, um I think you should go for it. I think that yeah, I think you should do it.

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Gillian Pensavalle 49:29

Yeah, I'm gonna go regardless. I mean, I'm gonna see Hamilton Australia. I know Australia, New Zealand are not the same thing. Please. I know. There's a whole thing. I'm just saying like the flight.

Jonathan Groff 49:37

Yeah, we'll see ya while you're over there. Might as well go to New Zealand. Right and then just check them both off your list.

Gillian Pensavalle 49:43

Yeah, I'll say hi to Jen.

Jonathan Groff 49:44

Say Jen. Say kia ora to Jen. Kia ora. to Jen that's the Maori greeting the like oh my god, New Zealand greeting

Gillian Pensavalle 49:51

So Lizett says that my question is are there any future projects with you and Lin Manuel Miranda. I love the friendship you have just crossing my fingers that you will get to work together again.

Jonathan Groff 50:01

I hope so. There's nothing in the books or no plans to do anything. But I feel like life is long and we get along so well, I can't imagine. I'd be surprised if we didn't work together again. At some point, that would be a surprise to me.

Gillian Pensavalle 50:18

So last question. Joanne is asking, look, what's it for all our reindeer better than people? And she adds, I'm embarrassed to admit how many times I go to sleep with his voice in my head singing I'm not gonna sing it. But good night. Don't let the frostbite bite.

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Jonathan Groff 50:32

Cute. I mean, I feel like that works for reindeers. And people that that phrase.

Unknown Speaker 50:43

Kristoff: Reindeers are better than people Sven, don't you think that's true? Kristoff (As Sven): "Yeah, people will beat you And curse you and cheat you Every one of 'em's bad except you." Kristoff: Aww, thanks buddy But people smell better than reindeers Sven, don't you think I'm right? Kristoff (As Sven): "That's once again true For all except you." Kristoff: You got me. Let's call it a night. Kristoff (As Sven): "Good night." Kristoff: Don't let the frostbite bite.

Jonathan Groff 51:17

I think that when Kristoff sang that song, what's interesting about the arc of Kristoff is that he hadn't fallen in love yet. And he was living alone in the woods with his reindeer. And I think that we can all relate to if we didn't have close personal relationships. Why would we? Why would we like other people generally. I mean, it's like sort of like, kids are great. But once you have a relationship with a kid that you know whether you're related to them, or it's your own kid, or it's a friend's kid, when you have that personal bond, suddenly kids open up to you, you don't like cats, then you form a relationship with cat suddenly, like all cats, you don't like dogs, but then you kind of fall in love with the dog. And then you're sort of like, feelings toward dogs soften a little bit. And I think that with Kristoff, it was just him and his reindeer for so long that he had decided that because he had no human relationships, that reindeers were indeed better than people. And then princess ana came into his life literally after singing that song.

Gillian Pensavalle 52:30

Princess Ana walked into my life said

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Jonathan Groff 52:33

Yes. Right. Yes, exactly. And I think that it changed everything. and i and i don't think i think that he now thinks of reindeers and people as on par. Because he loves Sven, and will always love Sven. But he's also engaged to be married to Princess Ana. And I think he loves Elsa like a sister. And I think he now would say, reindeers are great, just like people are. I don't think that he would say that one is better than the next.

Gillian Pensavalle 53:10

I love that.

Jonathan Groff 53:11

It's actually a lesson in the it's a it's a really important lesson in the other you know, when when when you don't know people, you think they're strange, and you think perhaps your pet is better than them. But then once you start actually engaging with someone that is unknown to you, you start to have less rigid preferences towards certain kinds of people, or animals, as it were

Gillian Pensavalle 53:40

Well, look, I hope that's not 100% true. This has been the best three hours ever. Jonathan Groff I can't believe we were here and hanging out for this long. This is like, I want to do this again. Like I already want to like FaceTime you tomorrow and just say like, Hi, hi.

Jonathan Groff 53:59

I don't know if I'll be able to have an external mic on my FaceTime.

Gillian Pensavalle 54:02

Oh, well, no, it will just be between me and you.

Jonathan Groff 54:04

Okay.

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Jonathan Groff 54:05

Okay, great.

Gillian Pensavalle 54:06

This was really, really great. Thank you so much. for being here and hanging out. And it just it means it means everything to me. So

Jonathan Groff 54:15

Thank you for having me. Thanks for the great questions. And thanks for I do feel like especially with Hamilton, it's such an important show. And it's such a revolutionary show. And it's such a groundbreaking show and the fact that you're in this very kind of like low key but pretty profound way capturing the history of the show through an oral history is actually important.

Gillian Pensavalle 54:39

Well, thank you

Jonathan Groff 54:39

And it's a big deal. So thank you for what you're doing. Even though you say it's like your fun, not your day job, but your fun sort of passion project. I think it's really amazing what you're doing.

Gillian Pensavalle 54:50

Thank you for saying that. It means a lot and it's just like, doing this is the most fun, but I do think it's important. I think it's an important show and I just want people to know hear everyone's stories and, and if we get to talk about true crime Groff, then we get to do that too.

Jonathan Groff 55:05

And let it be you know, it's

Gillian Pensavalle 55:08

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been in my head all day, if I may, your because I was sent this by one of the Patreon peeps, when you told the story of your All Things

Jonathan Groff 55:20

Oh god, I don't remember what I said. But I remember what happened.

Gillian Pensavalle 58:22

And even just in the in the storytelling of it, which shows your comedic timing where you were like I'm just gonna do this for

Jonathan Groff 58:30

Yes. Oh, now I remember because I thought that like it was gonna cycle back the song would cycle back. I thought I had jumped that's what it was. I thought I had jumped to all thought I had jumped to all things too soon. And so I was like, Oh, I'm just gonna keep saying all things until until it gets to the part where I'm like, he never did.

Jonathan Groff 58:53

But then I was like Oh, all things all things just like waiting for it to come back. But it but it was as though it never did. And Skyler was trying to like he was like the toxin ever had.

Gillian Pensavalle 59:04

Well, they were they were trying to like

Jonathan Groff 59:07

Que me, yes, Skyler was was like, the truck she never knew. Like what he was the only one that tried to cue me everyone else was either horrified or trying not to laugh. And Remy was hysterically crying. I can't believe I never forgot the words to You'll Be Back. And I can say it now because I'm, you know, my run is done. But I was...

Gillian Pensavalle 59:29

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So when you said you say you did it right every time.

Jonathan Groff 59:32

Yep. The price of my loves that a price that you're willing to pay. You say, Oh, I don't remember the other ones.

Gillian Pensavalle 59:39

This has been the greatest pleasure. I would ask you your social media, but you have not have

Jonathan Groff 59:44

Oh, never gonna do the sign off where we say that. Yeah.

Gillian Pensavalle 59:48

Okay, so I'm gonna say thank you, everyone so much for listening. Thank you, Jonathan. Again, this has been the thrill of my life. I will talk to you very soon though. I know. Thank you so much, everyone for listening. I'll talk to you next week. I am G Pen.

Jonathan Groff 1:00:03

I am j dot groffy? J dot Groffy. That's what I'm going with. Great. That's what I am. J dot Groffy I remember you saying people get nervous. I didn't feel nervous that

Gillian Pensavalle 1:00:15

you nailed it

Gillian Pensavalle 1:00:54

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. 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 for transcripts, episodes and

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