

THE HAMILCAST

EPISODE 287 STEPHENSON ARDERN-SODJE 3 TRANSCRIPT

[00:00:00] Hi, I'm stage and stage's Lin-Manuel Miranda and you're listening to the Hamilcast.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:00:18] Hey, everyone, I'm Gillian. Welcome back to the Hamilcast. This week, I'm wrapping up my conversation with Hamilton West End's Stephenson Ardern-Sodje. If you missed episodes 285 and 286, definitely make sure you catch up before you dive into this one. They're full of great stories about Stevenson's journey to Hamilton, including working with Idris Elba at his production company to playing Hamilton on stage at the Victoria Palace Theater with Idris Elba in the audience. It is crazy, and of course, there are lots of stories about all the fun and games that goes on behind the scenes with the hamfam. But if you're all caught up, I'll leave you to it. Here's part three of my conversation with Stephenson Ardern-Sodje.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:01:01] I asked Leslie this question because it was something I used to ask a lot of ensemble members on Broadway or from the tour of the States. You know, what, you know and like the company screams in chaos in Room.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:01:19] I always heard like Toronto. So I wanted to hear what you would shout during Room.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:01:24] Oh my god, I. I had something. And so Steven Whitson, who I was our resident director quite early on, he brought out to have a list of names of places that could like that historically would be accurate. And what was mine? It was it was a three syllable Obi actually looked me dead in the eyes. One night, Lac quite early on and just went down. I was like, amazing. I'd never thought about, yeah, but I did have something I, especially when I first started in Hamilton, I was a goody two shoes. I'm very like, I you know, I really like to do the show as the show. I didn't like riff if I was ever run as a lead and if I was in the ensemble, I would just try. And especially because you're swinging on in that first year. So, you know, I'm on as man five and woman one to four, man one's for have this incredible chemistry and they're so well, well connected. I'm just like, Let me just let me just make sure that the show happens. As the show happens and as my confidence built, I was like, OK, maybe I can play within these parameters now a little bit more. But initially I was. I was I was very much like, You're not catch me saying a fake face, you know, on stage. Now, if I went back in, I still wouldn't do it. I definitely would say totally. But now at the time, I can't remember where I said it was somewhere. I remember having a look at this map and being like, Oh, there are all

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these places all over that it could be. And I also kind of thinking that was really interesting that like the historic, you know, historically speaking, the capital could have been anywhere in the U.S. and like the fact that you're kind of like just deciding where it's like, Oh, this, it's like, I mean, this is my very, very basic knowledge of American history. But I was learning things through the show being like, Oh, it's fascinating.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:02:57] Same, yeah, it's still, I don't know as much as I should still to this day. So

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:03:02] what's the biggest piece of American history that Hamilton has taught you?

Gillian Pensavalle [00:03:05] I mean, early on I was like, Wait, Washington, stepped down. Just things that I didn't think about or wasn't really taught to think about. I mean, Hamilton was a footnote. It was like he was, Yeah. You know, I always think of it like visually, I remember in history books like and, you know, like certain names would be bolded or dates would be bolded. And it was just a quick little, just quick little paragraph. Yeah. But yeah, there were things that I didn't know. I mean, and also like that, it's just like, Oh, wow, like taxes suck, especially as a freelancer like I've never had, like I've never had a read.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:03:40] So that was such a good face as he was like, Yeah, you're right, that is exactly the feeling.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:03:44] As a freelancer, I whatever I earn, I have to make sure that I set aside. I've never I have never gotten a tax return. I never will. My whole life is just owing taxes to the government. Yeah, yeah. It's just, you know, Lin's, Lin's telling of this story. Let a lot of people to do a lot of research, and I'm one of them. And there were, you know, I did the thing that I the things that I didn't know was like that Jefferson sucked and that he was like a rapist and a slaveholder and a super shitty guy. Like, I knew all the bad things. I knew that we, like, you know, took this land from indigenous people. And, yeah, like that stuff. I I do like fun stuff that, you know, the real stuff and how horrible it all was. But there were definitely say things about the inner workings of like what the cabinet actually did like. I didn't know or like

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:04:41] I find that so interestingly empowering. I think to the Hamilton, like the show creates this world in which you understand the flawed and kind of back and forth nature of individuals and the fact that you know, Hamilton, when he was when he was working alongside Washington, was so young and was this revolutionary who really changed the course of history and then moved

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on to, you know, make these decisions. And actually, you know, like room obviously is the most is the most obvious version of it. But the fact that like so many of the things that happen that shape nations, that creates create concepts that are so totally ingrained in our psyche that we see them as absolutes are actually three or four people at a certain point in time making a decision. And those people have inherent biases. They have prejudices, they have agendas, they have all of these other things. And and it's like simultaneously a bit kind of dispiriting because you're like, Oh my God, can we trust our politicians? But also, I hope that it makes people realize it's like you can be like a 21 year old and you can change the world like you can actually get out there and make a decision and and drive for something and campaign for something. And it will happen. It will change. And I find it fascinating that Hamilton kind of is a story where you really do see the inner workings and the machinations of like politics in a way that makes it both interesting and feel reachable.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:05:56] Yeah. And also it's just like, oh, just like for white dudes gatekeeping. Once again, like that's what it is, really, it's just

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:06:04] how do we want things to be?

Gillian Pensavalle [00:06:06] And no one knows. Yeah. Then we have to fight from the outside to dismantle it.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:06:11] Absolutely. And it takes much longer

Gillian Pensavalle [00:06:13] not fully knowing the agreements and the arrangements and who promised to what. But we're like outraged by it because we didn't know anything about it. And yeah

Gillian Pensavalle [00:07:15] Stephenson, are you ready to take some questions from the Patreon peeps?

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:07:19] Well, as much as I would love to be the record breaking first person to say No, I'm I definitely am ready. I'm definitely I'm ready to take some questions. Let's do it.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:07:28] Did you see my face? You had me. I was like, Where's he going with us? What's going to happen? Yeah.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:07:33] Yes.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:08:02] My husband, Mike, had a question, but you said you're not really a sports person, I'm going to ask it

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anyway. I'll ask you and then we'll see. He's asking. He asked the same thing to Leslie. He says, What's your favorite song or chants from your favorite FC? National teams are included. He says mine is when England plays Germany. The chant is two World Wars one World Cup.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:08:24] OK, that's a good one. So I I am not a big sports fan, but I have lived with sports fans and I have friends who are sports fans and there's one which I love. I love the ingenuity of a football chants. I feel like there's such a there's such a disparity between like the vocal ability, but the mental acuity. And you're sometimes like, Where does that song come from? Like, I mean, a big one over here, I left to the guy who's a Liverpool fan and a big one over here as they sing, You'll never walk alone. That's like then-National thats the big chant, and I love the fact that it comes from Carousel and it's like this beautiful, like, you know, epic song. But then when you hear it sung by like 60000 drunk men, and it's just like when

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:09:03] you walk through a storm hold your head up high, and you're like, Yeah, it's because the

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:09:10] emotion is still the same. You know, it's such a beautiful day. I really like that, and I also like this is another one from that same friend. A few years ago, they had a keeper that had a keeper called Simon Mineola, who was about he was from Belgium and they had this, this this chant, which I'm just like, what galaxy brain man like invented this chant? It's so good and it is he's our keeper our Belgium keeper and keep them on Manila and Manila. Manila, Manila, I'm just like,

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:10:18] That is fantastic

Gillian Pensavalle [00:10:21] Its fantastic.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:10:22] Like, I think there's I think you could, and I would love to see that musical a football chant musical. I think there's like there's something there. Andrew Lloyd Webber did a musical about football ages ago, I feel, and I've never listened to it. But but it's time for

Gillian Pensavalle [00:10:35] all the songs would be just stealing from other musicals.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:10:37] It's a jukebox. Let's be let be generous and call it a jukebox musical rather than fact.

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Gillian Pensavalle [00:10:41] Yes. Yes, yes, of course. Valerie is asking, What is your biggest pet peeve?

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:10:46] Ooh, I think

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:10:48] I'm someone who's very I like to be very polite. I'm quite conflict averse. And so I really don't like it when people, when people make people do things through politeness and you know, like, you know, when you see someone pushing something and it's like, Oh, like, like I, I'm trying to think of a specific example, but without also putting someone in it. But like if you if you have two people who are discussing sort of what what they want to do and they know I'm one of them, knows the other one doesn't want to do the thing that they want to do, but they know that that person is too polite to say outright. So they're like, I'll just say, we're doing that and you won't say no, and then we'll do the thing I want to do.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:11:22] You know, I mean, be passive aggressive.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:11:24] Yeah, exactly. Passive aggressive. And yeah, just just making sure that you get your way because that other person won't speak up, even though you know that's not what they're looking for. I think like, I don't like that.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:11:34] I don't either

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:11:36] of if you like, that's that's how I do most of my

Gillian Pensavalle [00:11:38] Well, it's been a real great. Thanks so much for coming. Liz's is asking, what does your pre-show routine look like? And again, this can be for any show. But if it was different for Hamilton, we can dove into that too.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:11:51] Yeha thats a good question. My pre-show routine was different for different tracks, I guess. I think that was kind of the interesting thing about being because the show is very for me, it's very that was something else. I realized watching the Disney Plus thing again is that the ensemble ensemble show and the live show is quite separate. And a lot of ways I think, you know, things are happening around you, but you you as an ensemble member, your show is very physical and your show is very especially as my five, Belle the the woman who runs Hamilfans London.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:12:23] Yes. Yes, yes.

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Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:12:24] She got me this gift, which I keep on my fireplace in my bedroom. Not a real fight because I live in a minute. No, it's, you know, it closed a fireplace, but she got me this and it's a man. Five Room Furniture Removals van because man five does so much furniture

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:12:41] move that is adorable.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:12:44] I love so thought so too. I love that. Yeah.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:12:48] And I think like so I think ... it's really nice. So I think as Man five and man six, it's it's it's like, you know, a vocal warm up and then you do a physical up. And then by the time I was man five in the second year, I was so comfortable with it that you could kind of just get you could just walk onstage and kind of do the track. But so my warm up would definitely be kind of catching the vibe of the boys ensemble room because you're in the ensemble room, there's there's 12 of us. That's kind of the that's the the six men. And then there's like swings in this covers and we're all in there. And it would be really it's really interesting to kind of read the vibe of the room and kind of get to grips with what the show is going to be today, I think. And so it would be kind of just chatting with the boys, seeing what people you know, watching what women getting up to, what I mean, listen to how you're feeling, you know, and and kind of building that ensemble vibe before you go out on stage. And also often like you pick up little jokes or something that someone says in the dressing room, you're like, I'm going to say that to him in like, you know, in room, what happens? And he's going to like, it's going to really throw him off and things like that. And then when you're playing a lead, I think it's very it's very different. You know, you go into your solo dressing room. So I would take all my stuff in the box and I'd walk across the building and I go into Hamilton's dressing room, which would have been cleared out for me. And I'd sit there and it's this massive room and you're by yourself and you're without your boys. All of sudden you're like, OK, I've got to still find a way to kind of get myself in the headspace. So I would. I have a book, I had a book. I don't think I still got it of like my of all the of all the pressure points in terms of lyrics and harmonies for Laurens/Phillip and for Hamilton. And because as a swing or stand by, you always, you know, you have certain dates that you given, but you'd also just be called on a Tuesday and you're on for Hamilton tonight and you're. And so you then have to go, OK. Most of the show is probably my muscle memory, but we know is never my muscle memory, so we're always going to be running that before, you know, so I'd run through, I'd run. We know I'd run my show. I'd run like a few other little key pieces, and I check my harmonies and I'd make sure that I could hit

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the I play the opening. I played Alexander Ham. And I'd go back do the big note that he does and be like, it's that today, OK, that's OK, because because if not, I'm I'm not going up. No, and I but it was always that. And then and then I had there's actually a song of the Creed soundtrack. The first the first Creed movie, which is the, you know, the Michael B. Jordan boxing film. Sure. And it's like a it's just a real hype song, and I would listen to that just before I went out to do the show and it would just get me in the zone

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:16:10] I don't listen to boxing rap songs before I do Shakespeare, but when I was doing Hamilton, I was like, That's the that's the one to go to.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:16:16] I'd be very psyched if you were listening to boxing rap songs before Shakespeare.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:16:21] I do listen to music, which I was really surprised going from a MT background into a doing a straight like a straight fair, more straightforward to show the exact image music. We play a little bit of guitar and we do bits and bobs, but they don't do like a group physical warm-up and everybody comes and it's like kind of thought that you just know your body. So it's like you do the warm up you need to do you have you still have time? And I know that you guys on Broadway, you just have the half, but we still have to get there early and you have a time that you're supposed to be on stage to do a physical. But I got that and I was like, Who's leading the Warm-Up? And everyone was like, Now we just do our own thing. And I was like, Oh, no, I really enjoyed it. I enjoyed that. And getting into that kind of, you know, that's that company feeling.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:16:58] I understand that. James is asking if you could go back and give your younger self one piece of advice what would it be?

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:17:06] Yeah, that's I think I think it's just, you know, actually, this is a piece of advice that I give that I think is really important in general, and it's don't let the first no come from you.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:17:17] Oh, that's good

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:17:18] I think so often we, we and you and kind of like I was saying at the beginning, I saw, you know, when I was younger, I'd see these shows and I would go, I can't do that because they are, you know, so polished and so professional. And so therefore, I switch that off in my brain as a as an avenue. But no one told me I couldn't do it, really. You know, I had supportive parents. I had a support of teachers and people. You know, when I was

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doing so many things at school, people would be like, Oh, you're very good at that. And no one was like, You should definitely go and do it as a career. But people were like, You know, clearly you can sing, clearly you can act. But I just didn't. I suppose I was in the 90s and early noughties. You didn't see as many people who looked like me on TV or on stage, and I didn't see myself there. And so I just kind of closed that off. And that first, no, didn't come from any external force. It came from me. But actually, you can say, you know, if you're saying no, then it's never going to happen. But you have to say to yourself, like, yeah, I want to do that. Yes, let's go and try it. And maybe someone will say no, and maybe the door will be closed. But at least it wasn't you that closed that door.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:18:19] That's amazing. And I wonder if it's different then. So Peter's asking, what is one piece of advice you'd give to someone starting out? It could very well be that same exact thing.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:18:28] Same thing. Definitely. Because especially for me, I think, you know, like you said, my journey is very specific and it's very only happened because every time something happened, I was just like, Yeah, let's give it a go. I'll move to London. I'll start working for this company. I'll, you know, I'll go back into training, you know? And I still to this day, I I don't think you should ever say no to an audition, you know, to to because you never know who's going to see that. Even if you think I'm probably not right for that role right now, that person could be casting something else or that person could be, you know, the casting team could see you or, you know, you never know you're going to meet there. I think obviously people can take can make their own decisions with regards to that. But I do think that there's like I think, just say to say yes to yourself more and trust your gut more. You know, if you think that you want to try something, go and try it. Don't don't say, I know I shouldn't do that because there's plenty of other people will say that to you.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:19:18] Yeah, oh my god. Carrie's asking, what's inspiring you right now? And if Carrie were asking me that question, I'd say Stephenson. But Stephenson, what is inspiring you right now.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:19:30] I got a good question. Am I OK? Well, actually, we've just started recording the second season of our podcast. Shameless plug, though, which hopefully will be will be maybe done by by the time this episode comes out. But it's so I've started re-interview or interviewing authors and started talking to people about their journeys. And I just spoke to an author called Sarah Jeffery, who wrote a book called The Mismatch, and she's a

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British Iranian novelist. She's about she's about my age. And she wrote this amazing romcom, which stars a British Iranian protagonist, and she goes to university. She meets this guy who's he's white and she's like, falls in love with him. And it's about her kind of struggle to unify feeling of being a good Muslim, being Iranian, being British, and like honoring what her family might want, honoring what she wants and fighting with her kind of her faith that what she feels is right vs. what she kind of feels she wants to do. And Sara was such an interesting person to interview because again, she kind of had this conversation where she loved rom coms growing up. She loved, you know, the idea of kind of romance and and never saw herself represented. And so she was like, I'm going to write a book with a protagonist who is like me, he's not me, but is, you know, has a similar background to me and who represents things that I think people who are like me need to see themselves in, you know, need to see themselves being loved unconditionally, need to see themselves being challenged and not being stereotypical. And that is a book that I would highly recommend if you're into that kind of thing. So, yeah, that's that's inspiring me at the moment.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:21:04] Well, related, I think a little bit Kelly is asking, what are your thoughts on the conversations we've been having about inclusion and equity in the arts and everywhere

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:21:14] I am, pro those things. Yeah, I think it's long overdue. I think it's really tricky, but I think essentially, I think it's really important that we are pushing for inclusion and that I suppose the big thing is that we we simultaneously start like lifting voices of people who are telling stories that are not the stories you've always heard. And also on the other side that we're looking reexamining roles, especially, I suppose I should talk from theater and musical theater reexamining like long existing roles that have always been perceived a certain way, seen a certain way or performed or portrayed in a certain way and asking Is that the only way they can be portrayed, you know, are those the only people that get to tell that story? Something that I find in insane to me is that we've only ever had over here in the U.K., we've had one nonwhite Elphaba. And I just find that such a crazy concept because she's literally a woman of color.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:22:11] I know, you know, yes, I know.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:22:13] But her and her story is so specifically about being a visible outsider. It's about being somebody who is who is bullied and, you know, misjudged and mistreated because of her looks I went to see and I bloody love Wicked. I think it's such a good show, and I went to see it for the third time, not too long before lockdown. And every time I see it,

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I'm always so surprised that a show so that so politically subversive has run for as long as it has and is like allowed to be one of the biggest shows on Broadway in the West End. Because, like, in no uncertain terms does it kind of challenge? You know, I wouldn't say it while Trump was still in office, and it really felt like, Oh my God, like, did they write this last year? Like, you know, it really feels like you're like. But you know, clearly that just means the things that are happening in that show have been going on for as long as, you know, for at least 15, 16 years and probably much longer, you know, and I think I think shows like that shows like LES MIS, you know, which is a show about people who are an oppressed minority rising up. And it's like, actually, especially nowadays when you look at what's happening in the news with with BLM and with, you know, the protests that are happening both here and in the U.S., you know, who are the people who those stories actually represent? Would it not be more interesting? Would it not keep your show more relevant? So it's not for me. It's not about like, Oh, it's we're filling a quota or we're doing something because we feel like we have to actually like in order to make this show still feel as fresh as it did 30 years ago. You have to move with the times you have to be representing what's happening in the real world.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:23:41] Yeah, it's also a little disheartening that, for example, a show like Wicked cannot see how relevant it is that that feels where it's like, No, it's different because she's green and it's like, No, no.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:23:55] Yeah. Like, you're you're so close, guys.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:23:57] So close to getting it. Oh my god, OK. Just take a step, just a little step back and just look at a little bit of the bigger picture. How, yeah, it just feels like you're just not getting it. And I just it's this could be so much bigger, you know, like it could. You're using it. You're you're kind of.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:24:13] Yeah, exactly. Yeah. And I think for me, maybe that also a big part of that is making sure that the diversity of thought and the diversity of skin color and, you know, of gender and sexual orientation doesn't just stop on stage and something that happens from a creative perspective. So we need to see more people who are nonwhite casting directors, you know, who are casting directors who have different points of view from that, from all of those perspectives. So that you see, I'm different producers who who have those points of view so that when they take over, you know, casting a show like Wicked or when they take over producing a show like that, they go, well, of course, the connection is it's not just, Oh, I've felt like an outsider wants so she can be any woman.

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It's like we could enhance that further if we realize that outside and this is directly linked to the color of our skin.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:25:00] Yeah. And just again, like taking that little step back like I, I remember one of my second Andy Blankenbuehler was my last in-person recording before lockdown. Before that was Alex Brightman, who's fantastic. But he, you know, Beetlejuice on Broadway, and he really, really wanted to make it clear like, Beetlejuice is an entity. When I'm in the wrong, Beetlejuice has he pronouns, right? But like interesting shoes could be anybody. Beetlejuice is a demon

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:25:30] a shapeshifting demon as well, so it's like there's no specificity that

Gillian Pensavalle [00:25:34] And what do you think about it like he always was, even when Michael Keaton was, it was just like Michael Keaton played the role, so he was him. But it was just like, Beetlejuice can literally be anybody. Yeah.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:25:45] And I mean, how how many incredible kind of character comedy actresses are there out there or that people from from wherever, whoever who identifies whatever who could step into that role and bring a completely different feeling to it?

Gillian Pensavalle [00:25:59] One thing I've been saying, I mean, just for a trans person to be Beetlejuice on Broadway would I mean, what that could do is is unbelievable. So my dear friend Aneesa Folds, like a black woman with this phenomenal, the set of pipes that are that are just, I mean, she showcases them and freestyle love supreme. But she's also hilarious and she can sing. And it's like, why Anessa could Anessa could be Angelica and Anessa could be beatable and be. I imagine there's that Broadway, you know? All right. Where's that theater world, I should say.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:26:34] That's such a good example of what ultimately it comes down to. Like, imagine how much more exciting the CVs and the experiences of people would be if we just broadened by a fraction and we start to broaden those, broaden their horizons. And it is it's not about I think it's about shifting the mindset from people being like, Oh, it's social justice warriors or it's people who are trying to kind of like trying to, like, inhibit everyone having a good time. No, we're like, we're inviting more people to have the best time, right? That's what we want to be doing.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:27:02] Like, like, what do you hear in that that like we can't. The whole point is that exactly like you said,

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like, we're all here trying to have, we're all trying to be a part of it. Like, like, I don't know why people see here something like that and feel like, well, I'm not allowed like, you've been allowed this whole time. We're just trying to invite more people to the party. What's the problem?

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:27:21] There's a there's a quote which I don't know where it's from, but it's something along the lines of when you've when you've had, you know, complete control for the longest time, then equity feels like oppression, you know, and it's that, isn't it? It's you feel like you're losing something when actually other people are gaining something and you don't have to be losing as long as you can switch your mindset to to join us.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:27:41] I mean, it feels so simple. Yeah.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:27:42] Who? Who do we need to talk to?

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:27:44] I don't know.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:27:45] I feel like between the two of us, we can, I don't know, make some calls. We can work it out or something. Jenny's asking, What's it been like working at the globe? But we touched on this a little bit. But any other things you want to say about this amazing experience?

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:27:57] Yeah, I suppose something that I will say that is fascinating is so the globe is very, very old school. I mean, you know, it's it's one of the most kind of traditional theater experiences you can have. There's no lighting, really does they have stage lights that just as it gets darker, they just simulate a flat kind of, you know, unified lights on the stage that you can see everything. There's no mics. So everything you do is projected from light and you have to kind of you have to really find a way to do an eight show week without microphones where you're projecting your voice and you know, it's just coming out and you're delivering to the back of the stalls. And also, I suppose there's the added kind of feeling that I don't think any of us really felt like we were match fit coming back out of the lockdown and going straight into rehearsal. So we got thrown in. We had six weeks to read, rehearse three plays, so it was two weeks per play and we multi rolling in the plays and the songs. And it was like, and then and then we really had this very fixed deadline of like, you're going to be on stage in, you know, on Week seven. So it was quite well and it really kind of pulled me out. And I was I was very fortunate I had. I had a very fortunate lockdown period where I, you know, I was OK financially and I was I was okay, kind of like session. I was with four of my friends who we, you know, we got on really well together.

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So I came out in a in a way in a very good, very good place to kind of come back. And still, I was like, my good. I have not been I've not been at work for some time. So it was it was a lot, but I think I think it's so joyous. One thing I will say, and I think maybe this is not a controversial statement, but Shakespeare is very good at writing. And he writes really good stuff. And it was it was really, really good. I think it was kind of similar to working in Hamilton, where you go, when, when you're not feeling it or if you've got it. If you're having a day feeling that off, you just surrenders the material and you honor the material and you do the material as it's intended to be done. And with Shakespeare, that's a lot of the verses. You know, when things are written in verse and you kind of honor the end of the line and you take a breath in and because what he does is he'll write and write sentences so that the last word is kind of like the most important thing. And if you just serve that up, the audience will get it. And I've never done Shakespeare before. And so it was quite it was quite a kind of crazy thing to go out and do. And then you're doing it and you're like, the audience is laughing and you're going, OK, they're connecting with us. They're getting it, they're understanding it. And, you know, the audience is gasping. And it's it's also this really strange experience because there are no there's no lighting on you. So you can see everybody in the audience and you're directed specifically to connect with audience members. So it's not about it's not about necessarily connecting with someone, even if I was speaking to another character. You, you, you place them in the audience and you tell you, tell them the thing that you're saying to a person out there. And when you make a very personal specific connection with one person, everyone in that sort of orbit around 20 or 30 seats around them feels that connection and thinks that you're looking at them or thinks that you are like, they get what you're saying.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:30:57] Mm-Hmm.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:30:58] So that's quite a that was that was a lot to learn.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:31:01] Wow.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:31:01] And the kind of looking every now and again, you look out and someone will look very pointedly away from you and you're like, Oh, you do not want this audience interaction, OK? That's fine. But you get used to that as well, and you get used to people kind of fanning themselves with programs and it's hard and you get used to people pulling their hoods over when it's raining because the rain is coming in. So it's it's a battle, but it's it's a really welcome challenge.

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Gillian Pensavalle [00:31:22] Yeah, especially when you're like, I wonder what I'm doing today based on audience reaction. Yeah, that's phenomenal. Jacob is asking about accents. He's asking to. The productions you've worked on often require different accents. If yes, which accent have you found the easiest and or most difficult

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:31:45] American, Obviously, Hamilton was American. We've had people. We had people come and see the show who thought that the show was going to be in British. Like is going to be in an English accent, which I guess, I suppose, you know, I think that speaks to speaks to the breadth of people who come and see the show, people who don't go to the theater very often and don't realize that, you know, in productions that are American transfers, we'll do an American accent. If you know, if you're doing a show set in a specific place in America, you're likely to hear British people doing American accents. And we had people in the audience going, I didn't, you know, either either they come and they go, So are you all American? And you're like, No, no, none of us are American. And they go, Oh well, or they go. I thought that you were going to do it in an English accent, but the American accent was is something that I feel like just through TV and through culture. I've I've I have a reasonable American accent and I kind of worked on that. And actually, Alex the first time and Alex before I knew who he was, he was like, Your New York accent is really good. And I was like, Thanks, I guess.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:32:41] All right, let me hear it.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:32:42] Well, it was. It was not speaking accent, though. It was my it was my, my show, you know, I was doing. So it was just kind of

Gillian Pensavalle [00:32:47] Oh, you don't have to sing for me. I just didn't know if you were. I wouldn't ask you that

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:32:51] You know, it was when I was when I was doing the rap, he was just like, Oh, you like, you're doing a New York accent? I was like, I did not realize, but I'm just doing what I had heard on the on the recording. Yeah. And then so far, I mean, I've only done that and the globe. So the globe, actually, they have this thing at the moment, which is really nice actually, where they push people to do their own accents and they say not push, but they suggest in that and they don't say kind of like, you're doing Shakespeare. So you have to sound like a Shakespearean actor.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:33:15] That's cool.

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Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:33:16] I have quite a kind of AP accent anyway. It's a it's a it's received pronunciation, which is something that it's like a type of accent in the UK, which I suppose initially was kind of Queen's English. And it's it's, you know, pronouncing words, quote unquote properly in a time that was it was initially, I think it's what the BBC news reporters would would be required to sound like. So it was almost like what? You know, what you want to export as as as classic Britishness. And over the years, it's something that now as we're getting a bit more kind of inclusive of people from other parts of England, you're like, Oh, you can be on, you can be on the news and you can have a Liverpoollian accent. You can have, you know, your own voice. But my my mum's a speech therapist. And so she was when I was younger, she was very, you know, you pronounce your ts and you pronounce your words was sharply. But so we have people in the globe who do all different kinds of characters with all different voices. As a girl who's like a real Londoner, she's got real kind of almost like a cockney accent, and she plays a duke in one of our shows and. And it's amazing seeing someone who's in a position of power but has this accent that you wouldn't necessarily associate with that. But then you got like, No, no, I completely buy it, and I can see how that voice

Gillian Pensavalle [00:34:28] That is so cool. oh my god, that's awesome.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:34:32] So that's really exciting. And as an Irish guy who does, you know, he he plays like similar characters. And so all of these and yeah, so I haven't yet been in a role that's forced me or asked me to do an accent. And it's good because my accent work is is fine. It's something that I need to get on board.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:34:48] But I'm sure growing up with a speech therapist, mom and also having this training now, I mean, the resources are there, if you ever need to, you know, dive in

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:34:57] For sure Yeah, my mum would. Definitely she's she's a woman of many accents so I can always go to her for help.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:35:02] She'd be like, Oh, well, when you were the second part of the plant, you didn't need an accent. I will help you.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:35:08] But here we go now.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:35:09] Ania says I wondered if or under which circumstances you would consider auditioning for Broadway or a U.S. tour.

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Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:35:15] Is that doing this for Hamilton or for anything? It's like

Gillian Pensavalle [00:35:17] anything. Yeah.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:35:18] I mean, the circumstance is the the option is there and I will do it. You know, I'm I am very up for it. I think in a more realistic fashion, I think it is tricky because of our equity and the, you know, American American stage actors unions. I think you have to. So I know you've had Greg on, haven't you?

Gillian Pensavalle [00:35:39] Haney Yeah. Years ago, he's due back. I mean, I'm very, very I mean, well, before he came, he came to you.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:35:45] Oh, really? Oh, cool. Because he because he is, he obviously is over here and he's working over here and was brought over. But in order to get in order to get a British performer to work in the US or, I think, to get a performer from anywhere else to work in the US, you need a visa and you're working visa and specifically in our industry and a lot of other industries. I think you you get what's called an exceptional talent visa and that. Which is really bull. Imagine you come over and you're like, I'm exceptionally talented

Gillian Pensavalle [00:36:13] Quite the name.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:36:15] Yeah. But I think the I think the justification that you need is that we we did a legitimate amount of searching in the U.S. and we couldn't find somebody who ticked the boxes that this person ticks. And I think it can be quite vague as to what that is specifically, but like for Greg to come over here. I think he needed a talent visa. But obviously, what it was is we needed somebody who knew Hamilton inside and out and there wasn't anybody here because the show didn't exist. So. So Greg was allowed to come over and work on a working visa over here. I believe that's I believe that's how it works. And so I would if I were to be auditioning for something on Broadway or in the in the U.S. on a tour, I think there would have to be. It would basically be that like you couldn't find or you tried to find the person who could play that role in America and they didn't exist or you couldn't find them

Gillian Pensavalle [00:37:03] Because jam is in L.A. now. Yeah. Yes. I mean, can it be as simple as we know him? He knows the show. He knows how it works. I mean, does that count?

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Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:37:12] I think and I'm like, Don't quote me on this because I don't know if this is maybe like. Yeah, I think I think the Olivier nomination helps because I think it's like, I think it's like he's he's essentially like a Tony nominated Hamilton. Right? Yeah. And so and so he's not just like any like you said, like Joe Schlub off the street. He's a guy who performs this show to such an exceptional standard that he he almost won like the highest award he could win for in his home country. Therefore, we can justifiably bring him over to play over here.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:37:39] That's interesting to me that there are so many hoops.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:37:42] Yeah, I mean, I think also if you're, you know, if you produce, if you produce your work and you're like, you have the influence, I think you can kind of circumnavigate some of those hoops. But I'm pretty sure that for like your average person, if I just if I came out for like a holiday to New York, I couldn't just go rock up for an ensemble audition and get the job and start working. I'd have they would have to be papers that would need to be signed and I probably wouldn't be allowed to.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:38:04] And I do understand there are plenty of actors here in the country. I'm not. I'm not like this. I just that's, you know, it's it's interesting.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:38:10] It's an interesting. Yeah. However, if there is any Broadway producer who's looking for someone who can do a half decent American accent, I am here. I'm ready

Gillian Pensavalle [00:38:19] You're here and ready to hear.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:38:22] Yeah, wherever you need me to be

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:38:24] Hear, hear.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:38:26] I said when Leslie got that question, I was like, he was like, Yeah, I think I do a pretty good American accent. I was like, Does it skew southern? Because I feel like he was like the like general American accent? I was like, I feel like people just assume that it's a little like southern. But that's not

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:38:40] why I do declare something like

Gillian Pensavalle [00:38:42] I do, declare. Kyra saying, having been away from the theater for such a long 16 months, what have you missed the most and why?

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Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:38:50] You know what? I think one of the things that I've missed the most, which I which we haven't got back yet is is kind of the audience is the is the audience participation and then going to see people afterwards. I love doing stage door. I love meeting people. I love seeing people and being like, just just having, I think Jonathan Groff actually said on his on his episode that theater is the only thing that is the only medium where you can see someone do the thing that they do to the best of their ability. And then they just walk out in a coat at the end of it and you're like, Oh, that's just a person. And I think I love both being on like both sides of that. I love going to see my friends in shows are going to see people in shows and then coming stage drafted and being like, You just did that. And now we're just going to go for a drink and just chat about it. And you just you just did that, you know? And I also love being able to be that person where someone goes, Oh my God, like, how do you remember all those words? And you get to kind of like, share that moment with them? And which now because because of COVID, we are still not doing stage door and we're still kind of people. It's a bit it's a bit kind of like, do you go and talk to people or not? Which is a shame. And you know, people by and large, I think audiences are being very respectful of that, but it is a sad thing to be missing from that. And I think the other thing that I've missed is it's kind of having that purpose being part of a company where you go in every day and you just check in with people and you go, we're going to put something together that doesn't exist until it does. It's like theater is so fleeting and and I think like being able to get on stage, build something, see a story through from beginning to end. And then you just go, Oh, that was that story told that way. And we'll never tell it exactly that way again. Is there something very kind of fulfilling about that? You don't really need to do anything else with your day and you feel like you've really accomplished something?

Gillian Pensavalle [00:40:31] Kathy Is asking what was your favorite part of being in Hamilton and what are your dream roles?

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:40:37] Oh, Kathy, what a great question. My favorite part of being in Hamilton, my favorite, my favorite moments on stage and being in Hamilton were my shot as Hamilton. I think there's that. There's a moment, there's a moment where you're doing the step, step together, step, you know, everybody's doing it together, and that is the most powerful. I think you can ever feel as a as a performer, you're just like, because you are leading that revolution, you've rallied all these people and then you're standing in the center of this group and you're going, Guys, I do what I do and we will be OK. And that? Like this physical manifestation, it's such great choreography, it's such a simple move, but you just see exactly what it supposed to be. And then the flip side of that is the

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the lyrical proficiency of we know. I find that so satisfying, so deeply, deeply satisfying.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:41:26] They are so good. Oh yes.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:41:30] Just is very good. Yeah. And and it's it's like it's peak Hamilton, because he's just he's like that. His rhythm is so different from the other three. You know, like it's a he's like, I'm thinking on a different plane to you. Three, You've come in here. You think, you know one thing, I know so much more. But in doing so and in that arrogance, you know, which I think links back to his insecurity and needing to prove himself to people, he overshadows his hand. And, you know, and he's ultimately the architect of his own demise in a lot of ways. But it's like, it's so that song for me. I'm just like, God, this is such a beautiful piece of work to be able to perform.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:42:38] It's peak Hamilton and what he's expressing, but to me, it's also like peak Lin songwriting. Yeah.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:42:45] You know, Lin wrote, and then looked at the page and went, Oh God, I'm good

Gillian Pensavalle [00:42:48] so good. It's so good.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:42:51] And he's right. He's really right, right?

Gillian Pensavalle [00:42:53] Yeah. To me, it's like it's a perfect hybrid of of Lin and Hamilton, you know?

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:42:59] Yeah, yeah. And then out of character, one of the best one of the most crazy things of being in the first year cast was Harry and Meghan came to see the show. Mm hmm. And so we met. I've got to meet Harry and Meghan, and that was crazy. That was, you know, they were. It was actually fascinating the day, the week before, I think we got emailed this thing from the palace got into like a PDF that was like, This is how it's going to work. And it's very, very official and you have to be. So we're going to be grouping you on stage in groups of five groups of seven and you'll stand in a semicircle and His Royal Highness and Her Royal Highness will come round these groups. You have to refer to them. The first thing you have to call them is His Royal Highness and Her Royal Highness. Then you have to call them sir and ma'am. And you and you like you will not get to ask them questions. They will talk to you and then they'll move along. And we were like, How this is going to be crazy? They organized a charity, a charity showing off the show, so they booked all the seats for one day, and then they'd auction

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those seats off for charity. So people were paying like crazy amounts of money for the seats, and all of the access goes to charity. And and then they and so they watched the show and we knew that this was happening. We knew everyone out in the audience was was here for this amazing charity. And then at the end we were organized on stage, was standing in a semicircle and we're like, God, it's going to be really strange. And what do we do? And then Harry just walks out on stage and goes, Guys. I mean, well done everybody, and just immediately runs up to like runs up to Mike Gibson's The King, and he's like, You just absolutely incredible.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:44:27] And how did you do that? We were all just like, Oh, this is fun. Like, it's absolutely fine

Gillian Pensavalle [00:44:31] put a memo out the window. They are not. They don't care.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:44:34] Yeah, exactly. They don't care. Like, you know, he he was so lovely and she obviously is a performer as well and was so able to kind of go in, you know, I saw you do this and I saw you do this, and it was just like it was. And we knew at the same time that everybody in the audience was had like bought tickets to support that charity. And it was just like, This is amazing. Oh, and then another another moment, which we had a few of them, which was just stunning where the EduHam that we organized. Yeah, and and those are the best performances I have done and probably will ever do in terms of audience participation. You know, they so many kids who had never been to the theater before, you know, theater was not their place. They felt that they were most welcome. And suddenly they're there watching people who look just like them doing this show. They were like cheering and booing. I think it's like the closest we came to a New York audience in terms of, you know, our audiences are a bit more polite. They're a bit more on the back foot. And they and I all I hear about so Broadway audience is that they, you know, they get involved and they feel like they are more kind of willing to share and willing to kind of engage. Maybe, am I?

Gillian Pensavalle [00:45:36] Yeah. Yes. And no. I mean, the Broadway theaters are not filled with locals most of the time they're filled with, tourists.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:45:43] Oh, interesting.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:45:44] But with the eduhamms are the New York, eduhamms are. I mean, say no to this. Is there a favorite track. They scream and freak out.

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Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:45:52] They love it.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:45:53] They absolutely love it. The cabinet battles they love. And I just love again. It's like just young kids having a space and a stage to be creative and see themselves on in this really important show. But for the most part, like I have been in shows where I'm like, Oh my God, like, why is everyone quiet today? Like what? Yeah, it's not. I love that we have that reputation, but it's yeah, it's mostly filled with like tourists, for the most part. So. Nicola says, Oh, Gillian, you're going to have so much fun watching them both several times as Charles Lee and Philip Schuyler slash James Reynolds also saw Lawrence fill it from Stephenson. But sadly missing seeing him as a ham. Her question is which other roles and Hamilton would you like to have tried?

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:46:43] Oh, that's a great question. That's a great question. I it's funny. I feel like such a Hamilton in my end, as in in my kind of being, I'm going in with Sam, who is he's he's very much a Burr. I'm very much a ham. We both went in with the he was like, he has this, this opinion, which I think a lot of people have actually that he's like, Burr is the protagonist. Burr is the real, meaty character, you know, and wait for. It is like, is that classic male song that you can sing out of context and and you know, Burr is really the main character, and it's so funny because I'm just like, You're wrong, you are incorrect, Hamilton. His name is on the building and he is the guy and I and I. And we had we had such kind of back and forth about it where I like. I really I do think that those two characters you, you can you just kind of fall into one category together. And that's why I find it so fascinating when you see people who cover both and I'm like, But you must have a preference, how do you do that? Because I and I would love to play Burr, I don't think Burr is my wheelhouse, but I would love, I would love to give it a go because it is such a it is such a challenging role and I think in many ways vocally more challenging than Hamilton and very differently challenging. I think I'd quite like to come back when I'm a bit older and give give Washington a go. I feel like that's I feel like that's a role that I've got in me in my later years. Not right now because I am a little baby faced boy, but but eventually I think there would be a Washington in me somewhere. Hey. Yeah, who else? I love Eliza. I absolutely adore Eliza. I think she's such a such an important. I mean, obviously she's such an important character, but I think she's such a such a challenging role to play. And when you see someone play her well and you see her story and you empathize with that because because she could fade into the background of surrounded by all these powerful men, but so often you see her and you go like, Oh my god, like, well done for like wrestling this character for forward and making me care about the way that you do and the songs do so much for like the actresses do so

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much, I'm like, I mean, I'd love to give Eliza a go in, you know, the eventual the eventual gender fluid version of Hamilton.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:48:48] Look, I mean, Burr is my dream role of all time, except that I can't do the Yorktown dance break. So I would have to either be like an ensemble

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:48:57] the yorktown, the Yorktown. That's oh, it's not now. Yeah, that's fine. So you'd have to just be lead Burr.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:49:01] That's what I would. I would want to magically be able to do this.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:49:04] Oh I see what you mean if you go Burr you wouldnt get to do it

Gillian Pensavalle [00:49:07] ZDownfall to playing Burr for me and this like parallel universe is I wouldn't be able to do my favorite thing in the world, which is Yorktown,

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:49:14] if it if it helps Sofiso when he was Burr across the year he was playing Burr, he set himself the task of learning the Yorktown dance break.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:49:21] All right, we got to talk

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:49:23] Leslie Actually, Leslie Leslie taught him most of it. I think it was, you know, it was a group, a group dynamic. But like, he would come every day and be like, OK, so I'm like, I'm here and I've got this bit. And then he was like, What do I do now? And they'd be like, Right, you do this, but now you do this bit. And then one day at Warmup, he was like, I'm ready, I can do this. And so I can't remember who was on keys. But whoever you have with MD, that was on keys, he was like, Play Yorktown. And he stepped into the light and everyone was in the diagonal and he just he just did the dance break and it was incredible. We were all just like, you have done. You have done

Gillian Pensavalle [00:49:58] Oh my God, what an amazing story. Oh my God. Also what you were talking about Eliza. That's a good game to play, too. Instead of where's Burr? Follow Eliza because she's always around in the surround. She's always looking. She is. She's around more than than you think.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:50:14] Yeah, absolutely, absolutely.

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Gillian Pensavalle [00:50:15] Go back to Disney Plus and follow Eliza. She's around.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:50:18] That's one of my that was one of my favorite things is being on the surround jury like being around others as Man five or as as Laurens Phillip and interacting with the people who do this surround choreo. Because you're right, they I think often they they get to a place where they're like, I don't think anyone's looking up here. I'll do. I'll do something that I'm like and I'll catch them, and then I'll be like, Yes, of course you can see me. I should probably be doing what happened, you know, and it's you're right, there's there's a lot of stuff that happens on this around that because of the lights and because of the way the choreo is like focuses the eye you don't see on your first visit, but you maybe will start seeing it when you're a little bit deeper into your Hamilton journey.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:50:53] Totally. Ashley's asking What's one lesson Hamilton has taught you that you think everyone should learn. So it's not like Hamilton the show, but maybe your Hamilton experience. Just take that, as you know, as general as you want to take it.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:51:05] Yeah, I think that you can always surprise yourself with what you can learn, what you can do. I think someone who was a big part of actually for me was Carrie Ann, who's the choreographer, and I joined the show absolutely bemoaning my abilities don't. So, you know, I'm not somebody trained. I'm not somebody who's who's able to who would view themselves as someone who is a dancer in any way. And Carrie Ann was so persistently positive and patient with me in terms of working out the way that I learned to movement and the way that my body and my mind retain things. I'm very I'm very much not a physical like like she. So we started off and she would show us a routine and make a longer sort of Burr. I'm trying to think of like the gun, like the gun choreography man five in in the lineup. And oh, she would say, shows. You know what it was. It was. It was the Lawrence Phillip choreo. It was the Phillip- meet the latest graduate at King's College- and like. And so when you're doing that bit down the front, she like, showed me that cardio. And I was like, Cool. Yeah, and I was I filmed all the choreo that she showed me, so I could I look at and film it? And she was like, Cool, have you got it? I was like, Yeah, I've got it. And she was like, Okay, show me, Oh no, no, I, I don't have it. I will go away and I work on it and I will keep working and I'll get it. And when we first started working together, she was like, she'd be like, No, no, like, we've got we've got from, you know, from one to four, show me and we'll get there and I'll be like, No, no, you don't understand that that will not happen. And then we we kept moving and she was patient. She was

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helping me through and eventually she kind of got my way of where. To the point where she would show me a piece of choreo, she's like every film that I've got. Yeah, and she's like, Right, I know how you work and I know the next time we come to rehearsal room, you will be able to do that. And I'm like, every time I was, I'm like, I'm sorry. I know I'm not a dancer. She'll be like, Stop it, you're in the show. I, you know, I proved that I know that you can get these moves and really kind of, I don't know, like like neuro linguistic programming. You know, she she like, beats it out of me in a very positive way. And I've kind of carried that through with me. I've had auditions since then where a dance school has come up and I'm like, Yeah, I'll go in there, and I know that I learned the Harmon Hamilton choreography, so I must be a dancer in some capacity. And, you know, it has paid off. So it's, I think, always always like just be in awe of how much your brain can do because it can do more than you think it can.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:53:28] That's amazing. That's a really it's really good advice, but it's also a beautiful way to express it.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:53:34] Yeah. Yeah, it's I think it's important. It's it's very important. There's lots of things in life that, you know, there's that very few like that. There are very few times in life where I think people will sort of just outright tell you, like, you're an amazing person and you kind of have to be telling yourself that in order to get through, you have to. You have to really believe it.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:53:50] Well, Stephenson, I think you're an amazing person.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:53:52] Thank you.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:53:53] I do truly. It sounds like a bit, but I really I really mean it. This has been a wonderful three hours. It flew by. Thank you so much for being here. Do you have tell the people like websites and social media and all of that?

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:54:09] I'm on Twitter and Instagram at Stephenson_ltd. I'm really gunning to just get Stevenson, and I can't get it any. Like there's people who have it. The two people that have it don't ever use their accounts. And I'm like, Guys, give give me. Just give this

Gillian Pensavalle [00:54:22] . All right. If you ever get it, update, the show notes.

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Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:54:25] So that's at. I'm on Twitter, on Instagram. Please follow me and say, hi. I don't bite. And I I also do a podcast of my own Generation veX, which hopefully the second season will be out and about by now, which is at Gen X Pod. And you can find that around that amount. And I am currently at the globe if you want to come and see me. Although, yeah, I'll still be there when this podcast comes out. I think

Gillian Pensavalle [00:54:51] mid to late September,

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:54:53] I'll be there till the end of October.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:54:54] Oh, great. OK, perfect.

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:54:55] So come and see some Shakespeare.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:54:57] Yes, thank you. I can't believe two recordings in one day. My brain feels like I was going to this. Oh no, please. I'm thrilled to do it. I spent time with two of the most fantastic people I've met. So thank you so much for being here, Stephenson, and thank you listeners for hanging out with me for all this time and Patreon Peeps. Thank you for your fantastic questions. I will talk to you next week. I love you. I am G.Pen

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:55:22] I am Stephenson Ardern-Sodje.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:55:25] So you went with the staright forward

Stephenson Ardern-Sodje [00:55:26] pressure, the pressure got to me.

Gillian Pensavalle [00:56:06]

The Hamilcast is brought to you by my love of the thing TM and 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, kindest and most welcoming corner of the Internet, go to Patreon dot com, slash the Hamilcast. You can submit questions to guests, join Zoom Hangouts, get behind the scenes access and of course, my unending gratitude. I'm at the Hamilcast on all social media and you can listen wherever you get your podcasts. Visit the Hamilcast dot com for transcripts, episodes and more. You can see what's going on with Mike. You know Mike at Michael Paul Smith dot net. True Crime Obsessed is my true crime comedy podcast with my podcast soul mate Patrick Hinds of Theater People and Broadway BackStory fame. Thank you so much for listening. It means the world to me, to the revolution



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