

# THE HAMILCAST

## EPISODE 302 BLAINE ALDEN KRAUSS 2 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] Hello, everyone. Welcome back to the Hamilcast, I'm Gillian. And this is my second episode with the Philip tour's Blaine Alden Krauss. If you missed episode 301, go check that out! Blaine talks about finding his love for performance at a young age, his journey to the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, and the importance of therapy and mindfulness in his life and work. But hey, if you're all caught up, let's dive back in. Here's Part two with Blaine.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:00:45] Tell me about theater under the stars and in the heights and playing Benny with our good friend Anthony Lee Medina

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:00:57] So my best, best friend who I mentioned, Anthony Murphy, he is a huge In The Heights fan and a huge Lin fan and had done the show a couple times. Actually, I think he was like the guy once, and I think he choreographed a production of it somewhere. And we actually did see In The Heights on Broadway. One of my earliest Broadway shows I saw, actually, we saw it with his dad. We came to New York to do a Boys and Girls Club event in high school, and I remember being below at Corbin Blue was playing Usnavi. And yes, yes. And I remember, of course, like the music I could hit the orchestra. That's honestly what stuck with me the most was the sound of just the orchestra. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. It was. I think that orchestra had two or three huge percussionists, Latin music that sounds lots of percussion. And, you know, it was like nothing I've ever seen before. Again, another moment of like, Oh wow, that sounds like stuff that I know and familiar with that I've seen on a Broadway stage, but I don't think I ever clocked Benny as a character. I would play just didn't hit me then. And of course, everyone else in the show is, you know, of Latin heritage. So I did Lion King move to the city in 2015 and was here for a couple of months, and my first New York City show was with the Rockettes. The Radio City Rockettes, I did the New York City, New York Spring Spectacular.

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**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:02:41] Oh, the spring spectacular

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:02:43] summer spectacular that they moved to the spring. So I did that show Mia Michaels was the director, and to this really cool, just like, really amazing choreography. And I did that. And then then I did in the Heights, and I had just in the heights and books that the touches are an amazing regional theater and Houston. And I mean, honestly, regional theater. At that age, it just feels like an adult camp. It's just a bunch of adults for three weeks or four weeks, or however long it is just going at it. You know what I mean, having the best time and we actually did the original choreography and original blocking for that production. I think like half of our cast, yeah. Yeah, half of our cast had done the Broadway production or the first national tour. Our, you know, our choreographer had done the production and was graffiti pete.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:03:41] And wait, so Seth Stewart,

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:03:43] not Seth, who we say, yes, Seth. Oh yeah, yeah. But Jose Luis Lopez, yeah, we had a great time and I that I that's of course, when I fell in love with Lin. And before I did that show, everyone who had done it before to me had said, Don't drink the juice as like, what do you mean? They were just like every time you do In The Heights, they're like, I'm telling you something happens and you get obsessed with it. And like, you get obsessed with the people you such. And it's the absolute truth. And the reason is not because of the show, but it is because of the people and the relationships and the atmosphere that that show calls for you to make a show like In the Heights. the show is about community. It's about a set of people who are just live together, breathe together, are surviving together, are enjoying life together. And so you naturally start to do that with the people. That's the show. And so the relationships like the fun, the amount of fun that I had in that show. So I was the only I was the only non Latin person in the whole show. So I was steeped in culture and and tradition. And I like, food I eat so well. The best thing was when people's parents and families came and see the show because they cooked,

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**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:05:16] Oh, really? Oh, that sounds amazing.

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:05:18] Oh my gosh, it was. Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. So yeah, it was it honestly. And I know Anthony will attest to this. It was like the most fun. It was the most fun I've had on stage of the most definitely at the top. Amazing, amazing role. The vocals, like you said, the vocals are like, That's a dream for me. Singing, singing, music like that. Singing? Yeah, yeah, yeah. That like the way Lin, right? For Chris, that's dream music for me, for sure, especially in a theater atmosphere. So I love it. Yeah, I love doing it. And it was like a first class production and really, really amazing.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:05:58] Yeah. And also, Anthony brings the party too. So even if it wasn't fun already and there's Usnavi, I mean, come on.

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:06:06] Yes, the aries and for keeping track on our astrology for those who follow seriously. Yeah, that's an aries baby.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:06:14] So now you said 2015, right?

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:06:16] Yeah, 2015, 2016. It falls and it's somewhere in there

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:06:20] because that's when Hamilton started exploding.

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:06:23] Correct

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:06:24] Chris, so were you hearing yes about Hamilton? Like that was in your ear?

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:06:28] And yeah, and you know this and I remember a group of kids in Houston singing to us outside of the show afterwards is very sweet. And one of them did something in the heights. I remember one of them doing something. Hamilton. I know, right? Yeah. So it definitely was exploding. But it was. It was true rumblings, though. But it was true. Like, true, like when, you know, first of all, you know how theater kids are.

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They will find the music before it's been printed. OK? You know how it goes. So exactly you're like, how does that even commute?

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:07:05] And they've been doing it since before the internet was today. Like, They're right, theater kids growing up when rent was a thing, like on a message board and camping out. I mean, rent the kids who are camping out on 14th Street and seventh to get into the night or later for rent like they changed the lottery rules, they changed that Broadway and the city had to say, You can't your 14, you cannot. You can't just be

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:07:28] sitting

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:07:30] in 1996. You can't do that. So sorry, it's for your own well-being. You cannot camp out 14 year old kid from like Long Island or Jersey Shore or Kansas.

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:07:40] I got this. I got this.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:07:43] But what you're saying is so true and they've been doing it since before they had the resources they do today is what I'm saying.

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:07:48] Yeah, people. Yes. Yeah, I mean, I was searching, like I said, I going to have in the back just like every website, just anything we could find anything, anything. This is y'all don't understand. This is that when YouTube just went to rot, maybe like that early form, it is just being able to get all that access was insane. So, so yeah. So, so and it's so funny to thinking about Hamilton and what happened. How everyone says it grew is exactly true. Like it was the show the public, but you knew it was sold out. You heard there's this next to popular sold out show the public and it was about Hamilton and the public had this interesting. It was like just it was like Hamilton's like Alexander Hamilton's like face just kind of like puts it over and over. And you just knew, of course, all you knew was, Oh, with this amazing show and rumblings just like like rumblings, rumblings, rumblings, and then you heard like up there transferring to Broadway, like a year like blue. And I had a friend of mine who is an Alicia

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DeNiro she was at CCM when I was at CCM. I love you and talk about talent.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:08:57] I mean, he's been like a dream guest for.

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:09:01] We'll get her, get her. I'll talk to her. I mean, it's like you don't get better than that. If you want to talk about stalking again, just tying it all together, she used to have this. And if you ever have her on, she used to have this version of her singing raven from Brooklyn. Like, I think she sang it at some high school event and it was on Facebook. Like, or again, y'all, early Facebook when you would actually message people on their wall publicly. Oh, sections like there was no private. For everyone to see and comment on or like at the time, she. I would stop. I mean, I would I just before I get it, I was like, Oh my God, I'm got to go to see this girl performs there. She's unreal. You know, I it all. Yeah, she's amazing. Yes, she's amazing. So, so she was in it. We knew that was happening, you know, and then it just like blew up and I saw I saw I won the lottery. I don't remember why I won it with, but I won the lottery, so I sat front row, front row. And honestly, from that performance, I everything was a blur. It happened so fast right now and there was an album out quite yet, so everyone didn't really know. You know what I mean so early if it wasn't out yet, it had. It was a time period where everyone knew the show and was familiar with the songs and knew. So it was a but in front row to something like this. And popped up, you know, like. It was visually stunning. like just a simple set, right? Just a huge open playing space, an ensemble that is creating the entire atmosphere that is literally dancing out lyrics and thoughts and expression. And it's just like going back until music, the rapping. And I was like, I remember jaw dropped at real satisfied because no one had ever seen that before. Everyone

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:11:10] the rewind kills you. Ever. I mean,

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:11:11] like the first time seeing that was like, what? And then sobbing during it's quiet uptown. And that was about it. Like, I ended and then just the general

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feeling of like, Oh my God, that was amazing. But for some reason, even though I knew it was something I was like, that would be great to do. It would be amazing to sing Burr material. What I let dominate for a long time was like, Oh, this isn't really my type of show. I don't know why, but I think at the time when I saw it, it felt so authentic, like it felt so authentic. The rapping and the stylization. And it just it really did feel like something you saw on the corner of a street. But glorify like what? I really I really felt that core like, this is where I come from. This is something you would hear on the block. And you know, and I, you know, I don't know, I just kind of was like, Oh, that's it's not that I couldn't do it, but I think there's probably much better people who maybe have never even heard of musical theater and gone to scream and is going to get cast in that right. Like there they didn't. I mean, like,

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:12:36] yeah, that's just it's so it's so interesting because you are so authentic. And I know what you're saying, but like that authenticity that what you bring to they, I can see it on the screen right now.

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:12:49] Yeah. Yes. Thank you. And it. Yeah, and I am there and I am perfect for the show. And, you know, but just when you see something so awesome, you know it shines a light back on you, right? Of course of like, I'm not that awesome. You know? Yeah. You know, I try because

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:13:06] it feels superhuman. It feels supernatural.

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:13:09] And that's how it was when the show first came out. You were like, This is other worldly, and I am just an observer. It's no way I could be a participant in this. This is like, who could be? You know, and I think to give myself a little credit, you know, there's very few shows and theater pieces where who is playing. The part is so as important as the piece to, you know, like our culture got obsessed with these characters and much to the original cast's credit, like those were fully authentically characters created on their bodies. That show is such a physical show. You know what I mean? Like I said, it's a simple set. Everything is worn and given

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from the first and foremost the ensemble. And then those leads, you know, so that's when I. I could I could see like, I'm like, Oh, this is casting. You just go like, Oh yeah, you are this and you're going to create it even more, you're really going to bring to life. You know this this this so. So yeah, we are just blown away by that, right? Like, it was like we fell in love. I always say this like, I feel like we fell in love with the silhouettes of the show. Like, think about those of all those characters. Do you know what I'm saying? Like, Yes, yes, absolutely. Just like, you know, so I guess I did have an audition, I think, said Stuart. I think he was one of the first male ensemble members to leave. I think I'm pretty sure because, yeah, that's what I had an audition, too. Yeah, that's when I had to audition for the show and I went in and at that time, I don't know if they still do this, but at that time you had to bring in your own rap to start with like you did your own rap. And I brought them on and they asked you to prepare the Jefferson Washington on your side rap. I think that was just standard for all of the males, period. Just if you're a guy and touring Hamilton, auditioning for any role. Right?

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:15:17] Because it's arguably I know this is all subjective, but arguably the hardest rap in the entire show, for sure.

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:15:22] Totally, totally. And like and he's also fully saying something so specific, so badly to.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:15:27] But you can't lose it. You can't have. This thing is so important. I just did the Italian hands. I'm turning into Sophia now.

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:15:34] I don't know that that little bit of... Sicily. So I did an audition and it went really well. And I I remember at the end of it, I think I got a call back. I remember the end of that journey. It was like, You know, you're not quite right for the ensemble and you're a little young for the parts right now, like the roles and stuff, you know, so give it time. So then again, to what inside was like, Oh, well, you know, I was like, Oh yeah, we'll see. Like, you're not. It's just not like, you're. You know what I mean? But maybe you're just not. It's just not it. So I let her go. I mean, I didn't

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even I honestly didn't learn the show. I didn't. I listen to it, but I I didn't obsess over it where I learned the material in the music, like every single person around me, knew those lyrics, like every single person, knew the lyrics. I knew the show I didn't like. I listen, I worked up to. It's a great album for the gentleman will tell you it and my, you know, waking up in the morning and walking down the street to the subway. My shot right in New York City. Oh, come on. Good vibes, guys. Come on. But I didn't know it lyrically. And then fast forward to 2018, and the Cher Show had closed on Broadway in like September, August or September. And I had an audition for Hamilton in November and I had a week to prepare the material and it was an audition for, you know, the standby for for Hamilton and Burr. And they gave me five Hamilton cuts and five Burr cuts. And I couldn't believe that after all those years, I still didn't know the songs like like, if my best friend had gotten that audition, he wouldn't have had to spend any time learning the material. I knew nothing like I, and that was the first thing. I was like, Oh my God, I you this. And it took it. It was all I worked on. It was I drilled and drilled and drilled and had a moment. I was like, I'm not going to be able to do this because it's a lot of material. So I drilled and I drilled and I drilled, and it was a lot of material and I showed up and I remember going in and doing running through pretty much all of the songs and fumbling like I had to start over on one of the tracks and I had my lyric even though and that's like one of the worst auditions to have to have papers in your hand because, oh yeah,

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:18:25] they go by so fast. Like, what's the point of even having

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:18:28] Yeah, L.O.L. But I had my papers and I might try to look at it. I fumble then and I got done and me thinking like they were going to be like, Oh, do it again. Or, you know, it was like, OK, great, you're gonna get a callback. You know, it's going to be in two weeks. You know, that'll give you plenty of time to learn the material. You have to be fully off book. You know that. And yes, you know, two weeks ago, it was like, it's like almost like kind of like, yeah, we're not going to get, you know, this was just to make sure you're not really going to embarrass yourself because

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obviously, I'd been around for a lot of my audition. And Telsey office knew me, and so it wasn't like, you know, so I did the audition for our associate team and they put you on tape because I think the creative Lin and Alex and all of them still see, see the, you know, see who's coming in and out the show. And it was a great audition. I was very prepared for the final and in and I had also been manifesting and asking at that time that the show showed up for deep, rich, intellectual, challenging material. I had was ready to start taking more principal leading roles, and the standby position was perfect. And so I definitely knew like, OK, like a you call forth this. So that's very cool and be like, you know, this is your moment. So it was like really great and a great great audition. And I'll tell you another funny story. I left that the audition and I went to use the bathroom and at the Telsey office, and I'm in the bathroom and my phone rings and I pick it up like, hello. And it was Beth from Telsey, like, right where I was like, Hey, where are you? And I was like, I'm in the bathroom.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:20:25] Where are you about?

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:20:26] Yeah. And she was like, Can you come back? We want to see you come back when you give get the seconds. So I could get done and wash my hands and I go back to the bar and I go back. I just I wanted to put that in there because yes, I'm just going to leave that there. Put that out there because I think that people think that's a good reminder for folks.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:20:46] Sure, let's keep reminding people

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:20:48] lets keep reminding people this so much. Go back in and they're like, Hey, do you know King George? And I was like, Oh, I yeah, I was like, I do know the song, you know, I don't have it memorized, but I definitely knew the melody of the song. By that point, I definitely had been listening to the album for its life. So I guess that great. I just, you know, we're going to give you will go the piano. Go over really quickly. And then we just want you to stand here. We're going to tell you you can have the words, you know, don't no pressure. Just want to hear you sing it. So I did that and five minutes later walked out and then I got the job that night.

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I think later that day it was like, Yeah, you're definitely you got it. And they're just deciding on. There were a couple of positions opening open throughout the various companies, and they were just kind of waiting to see what puzzle pieces and where. But yeah, but I got it in November and I flew out to the Philip company. I met every person and every single person in the company at the New Year's Eve party.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:21:45] Oh my god,

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:21:46] if ever you want to meet people for the first time, meet them at a new years eve party, let me tell you

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:21:51] and look. I've heard from so many members of this company that walking into a Philip Company party, walking into a Philip company rehearsal was for them. And you tell me your experience, but a very welcoming. welcome home. Just sort of like like, where have you been this whole time? Like, like they were expecting you?

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:22:14] Oh, yes, yes. Yes, everyone here is so, so sweet and so open and there. And then the Philip Tour kind of had that reputation actually before I joined people, but nobody thought talked about that such a great tour. Everyone's so kind there and generous, and we love to have a good time. So again and New Year's Eve party, they're like years one. Yeah, I'm like, You're not going to remember my name tomorrow, but I love this. Yes. Will always get to share this moment

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:22:43] rambunctious Philip tour. I'll say every time.

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:22:46] So, yeah, yeah. And I was with them for a couple of months. And then, you know, the pandemic happened right in March of that following year, we were in Toronto. I just climb the mountain. I had done Hamilton twice and I had done Burr twice. I actually the week prior to the pandemic, I just had just done my first. I learned Burr, my first track and then Hamilton and Toronto, and I had done my first two Hamilton performances. And then, like a couple days later, they're like, You're out, we're we're going home. I was

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like, what? I think, you know, I still breathing like, I just got up here. So, yeah, so and then and then, you know, we I think we all know what happened after that, you know, went back to New York and and kicked it with, I'd given up my apartment. I was subletting my apartment. I had so. I have moved into an apartment in October, but that was the month before that audition for Hamilton in November. So had this new apartment got the gig, I got a sublet. And of course, in my mind, the apartment was for a year. So I essentially was like, You know, you're subletting this, but like, you're it's it's yours. I'm not going to be coming back. I'm not going to. I didn't set up much in my room. You know, we're going to see what's going to happen in a year. So when I came back from the pandemic, I kind of had given up my rent, you know, like the guy who had sublet, it was now a really great friend. He moved in and my best friend was there and there was a third roommate and I also had a dog and a dog. And yes, he's a cutie.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:24:25] What's your dog's name?

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:24:28] PHALCON, with a PH, gotta set him apart.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:24:33] Fiona with an F

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:24:34] and we just the four of us crowded up in that, you know, and no one's going to ask me to move. Right. And and also at that time, we all thought, you know, I mean, I was not like a three weaker. I thought at least a month or two, you know, so we were, but we were everyone was in like this will pass soon face those early weeks and it didn't. And just so for, you know, in New York, you know, anyone who lives in New York like we were are truly on lockdown like lockdown because we're so crowded and everything is residential, even if it's on top of something commercial. You know, we were inside, there was no, you know, going back home to Florida. There's all this space, right? So you kind of know we were in the apartment and a three bedroom, four grown men and a dog, you know, experiencing a pandemic, experiencing a social, you know, social and I say reckoning. But I guess reckoning, I guess, is true, right?

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**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:25:42] I think for sure. Reckoning.

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:25:44] So yeah, so it was a crazy, crazy, crazy year after after my my three month set in here. But now we're back.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:25:52] We're back. Now you're back. All right. So you caught your climbing the mountain. But we made a joke about Hamilton and Burr and KG3 what their daddy issues. But can we just like dove into those characters and your approach to them? Because I'm sort of fascinated by all of that by just like your process?

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:26:11] Yeah. So, so first. So first and foremost, I think I see, you know, as someone who plays Hamilton and Burr, which is. A humbling task and very, very humbling task and thrilling and challenging and exciting and frightful. I took a lot of pride that I'm able to do that, and I think the two of them, you know, are the are the two sides of the same coin. I think I think Burr, I'll talk in terms of him looking at Hamilton, because Hamilton, right, is the central figure, if at all. You know, I think Burr is just as funny and charming and intellectual and. You know, courageous, but also young and not quite sure how it'll all play out, and I think he's just as stupid when it comes to women and and just as excited and in awe of his kid and passionate about the country. I mean, I really do think that the two of them are the same guys, you know, except literally right. One of them is on the front foot and does not quote unquote throw away his shot and will go for it, right? And then one of them is, you know, this will wait for it will take more time to to to see and observe. And that's only because of the product of their childhood, right? Hamilton was like kind of almost forced to make things happen for himself, and Burr came from a place of privilege and comes from, you know, a more cushioned life, so he can spend more time and afford to observe how life works, right? And so for me, when it comes to playing the characters, you know how they approach life is just a product of where they come from. Right? Hamilton having to make things happen on his own family, they send him off. He has to be on the front foot and Burr being in this place of privilege, he's able to observe life more. And that's why he sits back. So when it comes to like playing the characters, I played them when

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Burr is allowed to show the zest and fire and and his charm and wit the way Hamilton kind of always gets to do from the top of the show to the end. You know, I inject injected into the same way that I do with Hamilton, right? It's just in their mute, and now you need to zip it right and then I have to go back and zip it. Whereas Hamilton can just he never get zipped until they get zipped, you know the few moments where he's caught, you know, without words. So and I I definitely, you know again, now that you're in the I'm in the show and doing the actor work of, you know, how do I relate and where do I fit in and how you know, I I'm I, I. Like I said, when I was younger, I was a young kid, I very much knew that there was something pulling me and driving me and bigger. And I had a strong passion to make my life better and to do better. And and Hamilton definitely has that. And you know, I, you know, I told you my high school journey and I've always lived an independent life and have always kind of had to make things happen for myself. And I'm a loud, passionate type guy, so it's easy to slip into Hamilton's coats, right? You know, where I had to do more actor work is maybe on the scrappy side of things, right? Playing that like feisty, he's definitely much more hotheaded and feistier and kind of ready to pop off than I naturally am. And that's where the Burr stuff comes easily for me on that since I. I have because I've been fortunate to have had some great early successes and have been on this journey for a while. I have seen a lot and have experienced a lot. So I am much more. I am much more likely to take a pause and to think and reflect. I'm going to win. Once I get going, I'm going, I'm going to go. But I am more mindful. I am more mindful right now. I do see the importance of that and I have been incredibly jealous of people who are where I want them to be or who may have gotten a part that when I was younger, I thought was my or, you know, because I am a passionate, ambitious guy, I, you know, that's something I'm constantly working on, right staying, keeping my eyes on my lane and not comparing myself. So with Burr that I get that easily, I totally get watching someone be downstage center with the spotlight on them and me being like, I should be there, like I am meant to be there, you know? So that's the next. That's real and human to me. So I bring that in, right? And and and they both have had interesting family journeys, and I mentioned earlier my background and I will another podcast for another day. You know,

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being a black and white gay man in America right now is such an interesting, some interesting skin to be.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:32:05] Why not podcast for today? Let's get into that.

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:32:08] Yeah, yeah. Yeah, well, yeah, just I love it. Yeah, it just it. I've always felt, you know, the the societal issues that we deal with as a country that we've been dealing with for, you know, race is that race is the crux of it all here in America. That's our source of our problems, right? And it has always been at its core, been a black and white problem. We have a lot of other racial issues here, but they stem from our inability to reckon with this original issue of black and white and that we didn't handle it and some people think we did handle it. And so then by us, quote unquote handling it, all these other issues that we have racially aren't really a thing either, because this country is great and has given lots of opportunity, which is true, but not in the way and in the effect that people have been told and or want to believe for lots of reasons, right? So I have always, always felt a sense of. Being I feeling like an not an outsider, but not, you know, I didn't even have a stake in that conversation, like I didn't even really have, you know? I was I yeah, I just I'm not fully black and I'm not fully white, and I'm actually the product of the middle, actually. And what life could be like when you don't think about racial lines and boundaries and how people are just people right? And and so historically, when we think about Hamilton and America and the country and the slavery conversations, you know, then the non slavery conversations we have right there, the device of black and brown people, playing white people, for me, going a step further. Being a biracial person playing, you know, these characters right even further down the line they thought they would never see. So all of that is for sure, mixed up in there and swarmed in there and guilt from that, whether it's real or perceived as in there. And pride of who I am and where I come from is in there and and it's actually exciting and and I'm I'm probably seeing this for the first time. You know, I'm very thankful for all of that because it really allows me to sit into these characters like all very authentically and and yeah, and and bring a depth to it. That's the other thing that I love

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about Hamilton is other than it being like musically, just penultimate and just in just the best of the best of creativity and artistic quality, it is so deep and like it's the show at its core is about, you know, the pursuit of life and the pursuit of, you know, legacy and which in turn you see the press. Do you see someone's life right and the pursuit of their life? And so you fully are getting all of it, you know, you're getting love and loss and betrayal and great brilliance decisions and embarrassing decisions. And and it's it's so fun and thrilling to get to really tap into all of those and to not just, you know, when I go on, you know, I really am excited because I'm like, I know you all know this album. I even know you may know the show, but this show is special. We get to the second act. You know, it's like, buckle up, because we're really going to get to truth and we're really going to explore parts of people that are for better and for worse, you know, and I love being able to access that and be a vessel for that. So and as far as control is concerned, it is such a blessing. It is such a battle like an amount and a feat dealing with Ham and Burr that I actually just did King George, maybe a month, three weeks or a month ago and and did my first like two shows with him. I've only turned on him twice and literally will probably do him like, like maybe six times, like maybe six times total in the course of my contract. I told my friends and I meant this. I was like, I am so tapped in, tuned in to him. Remember, like, King has to be opposite, like I am giving him. I am just letting him just be so for my King George. Like, in my opinion, she loves the theater. Yep. From the top line, I'm drawing on texts, right? Like, I just go to the text. We start the show. I'm delivering the announcement. I'm letting people know what's going on. Welcome to my show. I'm popping in an out. He's very much with the audience, so I really take to heart like, you know, the and they loved entertainment back in this time and and kings were incredibly flamboyant, artistic. You know, so I'm letting a lot more blame trickle into King George. Like the Blaine that I have to the parts of Blaine that I have to like shut her out because they're not ever going to serve Burr and ham. Oh, king gets it all. King gets it all

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:37:52] I was hoping you'd say

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**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:37:53] she's she's big. That's I keep saying she and I hope it's not insulting, but she's she's OK. She's she's she's because she goes at King George, who's going to be the president. She's into the drama. What's the tea, what's going on?

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:38:05] It's funny because it's so true, because King George at first is so angry and you know, he descends into this madness. But then you're so right. When he's sort of out of it, he's like, Wait, wait, who? Who hate to wait? Why do we hate them? He's so into the gossip. So funny that you say that

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:38:23] Yeah, and and I'm glad you pointed out the top part of it, which is true, which is like. Which I think is fun because I have my pendulum swing, so a friend of mine in the show, he told someone that I was. They were like, how's Blaine's King George. They're like, They're like, It's basically Blaine playing Lola, playing Blaine playing King George.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:38:46] That's perfect.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:38:47] I know exactly what that means.

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:38:51] But what I think is fun is, you know, the first, in all seriousness with King George. The first thing that's important to him and who he was and to how he serves in the story is he has to be. You have to fear him. You know, you have to think he literally will chop your head off. And because he's the comedic outlet, it is easy to play the fluff of it all. But if you can at first established like, you know, but I'm dead serious, I will end this all for you right now. And the only reason why I'm not ending this is because I'm choosing not to. And now let's sing a song about it, you know, and if you really have that good, you know, I think you can earn, you know, my, you know, my my play

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:39:39] because that's later in the, you know, when he's dancing. And that's good luck. And that's like later on after he's already.

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**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:39:46] Yeah, and that's and that's that's what privilege is. That's what it is. It's like I can act. However I want to act. You know, when you're a normal person or in a lower status, you have to act. But when you're that way, I could be whatever crazy one moment and then he just is crazy, went mad, right?

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:40:02] And like by the Reynolds pamphlet, he doesn't care so much anymore about that thing in the first act. Like What? What? Like, he's over it.

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:40:08] I care. Oh, yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So it's fine. It was good doing those two shows. Definitely a diva track. You're in and out there, you know, no one's on stage. It just you. Two minutes go back, chill. But yeah, the three it's I am. I am humbled and honored and in and. And thrilled to be said to do this, this part, and it's it's it's it's great, it's great, really, it's great.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:40:40] So two more things. Before we get to the Patreon Peep, I would love to talk about some of your music and recordings you did. The Sondheim Unplugged album that I would love about you have House of Love, which is your original song on Spotify. And then in addition to those two things I would love to just total left heart. Just new topic. Your activism, too, because I know you're an activist as well. So just like you're just everything you're doing, like non Hamilton related, and then we'll get into the Patreon Peep.

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:41:09] Yeah, thank you for asking. Yeah. All right. Like I said, I have a strong I started off music, just just music, right? Just just just music was the original core passion and outlets and more recently, actually going back to that story I was telling about once I started therapy, you know, in my pursuit of musical theater, which takes a lot of focus and a lot of drive, you know, I kind of put that side of me and worked on a pause. So recently, I was like, You know, I want to get more active into recording. I want to get more active into my music and singing other music and doing, like you said, non musical theater related stuff. So I've done a lot of concerts and a lot of solo shows. And that allowed me to meet Phil Jeffrey Bond, who does a running show he's been doing it

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for. Oh gosh, I don't even know. I want to say, I want to say, mean, maybe 2010 to us at eight, they've been doing Sondheim unplugged across all cabaret venues across New York City, and he he just invites singers and performers to come do only a piano. Know there's no band with this and it's a do you know their versions and or just versions of Sondheim music? And I've done a couple of the shows and he wanted to put together this epic volume of recordings of all these songs and of people. And I can't even believe I actors like other double of the song and there aren't. Sondheim just has so much material, so I'm on the first volume of the album. I sang the glamorous life and I sang, and no one is alone.

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:44:02] And I actually have my own version and arrangement of the glamorous life that I have in my show that I got from learning and performing the original Sondheim version at the Sondheim Unplugged. He asked me to sing it, and then I fell in love with the song. And even though I sang it the original way, when I started developing my own show, I did an interpretation of it that has kind of come to be like a staple of mine that a lot of people ask or when I do sing.

[00:45:57] So I'll that one day, but we wanted to honor, at least I did sometimes original music, so I do that and no one is alone. And I think Phil Jeffrey had posted the day that Sondheim died. That morning, Phil had gotten a letter from Sondheim that morning, and Sondheim had received, yep, he had received the mailed the CD and he had seen it and was very gracious and said, Thank you so much for this. I can't wait to listen. I can't wait to listen to this and the others and crazy. I know this morning of. Can you imagine I can? So like if someone I know someone right now is writing a show about those letters and if they aren't they are foolish

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:46:51] yes, get it together. Write that show.

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:46:54] Yeah, yeah. Yeah, that's another great kind of review for his. So, so yeah. So I've done that and and I wanted to dabble into my own recording. I don't have anything like professional and official out there. And so this past pandemic, you know, all of us, I think, were flexing those

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muscles and testing out the other hobbies and interests and. And I got together with a friend of mine from him and another friend to I just met, who produces a lot of queer artists in New York City. He does a lot of like a lot of drag artists like Laguna Blue and these other talented queer performers who do music, you know, so he has an I love house music. I love EDM and I actually love like the mixture of soul and house and EDM and like I'm I'm right now trying to find that voice that kind of mixes really mixes the two and the way I hear it. So Haus of Love is actually a song written by Jeremy Schoenfeld, who is a theater composer and writer, and I first heard the song in college at ccm, my freshman year, our acting teacher. We walked in the class one day, he said, Lay on the floor, close your eyes. I'm I Play You a song by Shoshana Bean, who was a graduate of the program, and I want you to listen to these lyrics, and the lyrics are about breaking into this House of love. And it says, break down the door, climb through the window, climb down a chimney, whatever you have to do, you know, do that. Take a beautiful mantra. And it stuck with me forever. Ever, ever, ever. So it popped into my head. I was like, Oh, this would be a great song. It's a ballad and has this like at the choir and the Broadway inspirational voices, the choir. And I was like, I should do like a cover of this and try to bring in that house EDM dance vibe. Sound to it. Maybe.

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:49:34] So we did it and recorded it, and it was my first time, like I said, really being in the driver's seat and experimenting and I really dangerously realized it was a super comfortable place like I really, really enjoy it. I mean, really enjoyed just being in that room all day and being super detailed. And and Jeremy, the writer, found out about it and loved it and we actually performed it. He came to my concert at 54 below and we performed it as an encore special. it was amazing. It was amazing. And so it was I. I consider it like a dip in the toe, a dip in the toe

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:50:18] to toe to toe, in the water, in

**Blaine Alden Krauss** [00:50:19] the water. Yeah, it's what I'm trying, you know, to get me into that because it was fun. And there's there's more coming. Yeah, so so yeah.

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**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:50:37] Next week, Blaine and I are wrapping up our conversation. He's talking about working with the Ham4Progress Task Force, how art changes with time. His pre-show routine. The differences in his Burr and Hamilton. And much more with questions from the Patreon Peeps. So until next week, stay safe. Stay healthy. Thanks so much for listening. I love you. I'm G.Pen.

[00:51:32] 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