

# THE HAMILCAST

## EPISODE 314 MEECAH 1 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. Today I am joined by the one and only Meecah. Hi, Meecah.

**Meecah** [00:00:27] Hi.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:00:28] Before we get started, can you please tell me your pronouns?

**Meecah** [00:00:31] Yeah, I am she her.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:00:33] Wonderful.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:00:33] So you are on the Philip Tour film company we know and love so much. You are correct me if I'm wrong, you are the principal standby for Angelica Eliza And Peggy Maria for all three Schuyler sisters, right?

**Meecah** [00:00:43] Mm hmm.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:00:43] Cool. How are you doing?

**Meecah** [00:00:45] I'm good. I'm really good. Thank you. I had an amazing energy session about an hour ago and I feel very, very, very relieved and happy and healed.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:00:55] What was it, reiki or what kind of?

**Meecah** [00:00:57] it's Christian based? And it is one of my friends. I don't know if they want to be revealed. I think they're a little bit anonymous, but they are super powerful and we just really worked on like healing and I feel very great about it. So I'll ask her. I'll ask her if she wants to be announced and then I'll leave her in the chat.

# THE HAMILCAST

## EPISODE 314 MEECAH 1 TRANSCRIPT

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:01:17] Yeah, that would be great. Yeah, I'll put her in the put them, you know, in the show notes whatever. Yeah, I love. Let's just dive in because yes, you're on the Philip tour, but you are a content creator and in a way that maybe I've never seen. You're an incredible singer. You're making films, you're making videos, you're making so much like a high quality, well produced, like, all of that stuff takes a lot. My husband and I made two seasons of a web series. I know what it takes to make something that has like credits. You know what I mean? Like, I totally get it, so I want to dove into all of that. Your life story, your Hamilton story. But I also love that you mentioned your energy session because your Instagram bio says that you're a singer and actress and a water bender. And I wanted to ask you what you meant by that, exactly. Are you a water sign like?

**Meecah** [00:02:05] I absolutely. I mean, I'm obsessed with Avatar. But I do. I'm a Christian first and foremost, and I do believe that, you know, God created us to be aligned with the Earth and with his spirit and avatar, the cartoon. It's just like the closest thing I could find to like the ... I'm like secretly obsessed with it. And if I could bend any object through God, it would be water. So I and I'm an Aquarius, which is an air sign, but like super flowing.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:02:37] Yeah, that makes sense. Aquarius, you guys might as well be water signs, right?

**Meecah** [00:02:41] Right, right, right. Right. I was going with the flow, right?

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:02:45] So where are you right now on tour?

**Meecah** [00:02:46] We're in Grand Rapids, Michigan. My debut city. It's crazy is crazy.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:02:51] Debut pre-pandemic and now you're back after after in the middle.

# THE HAMILCAST

## EPISODE 314 MEECAH 1 TRANSCRIPT

**Meecah** [00:02:55] Yeah, there was a video that went viral on Twitter of me as Angelica at the end of Satisfy. And it was in this theater now, so that was two years ago.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:03:05] Yeah. Like someone filmed you when they shouldn't have been filming you?

**Meecah** [00:03:08] I mean, yeah, no, don't do that.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:03:09] Guys don't do that. So, yeah, I won't play it, unfortunately. But that's amazing that like you're back in and home home a little bit full circle away, right?

**Meecah** [00:03:19] Circle. First time my parents saw Hamilton. For some, my mother saw snow. She was like old enough to have seen snow before in her life. But she has it. And it was great. It's a great city. I love the city.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:03:31] All right, let's start at the beginning, Meecah, where are you from? That snow is what novelty it is.

**Meecah** [00:03:38] It has not snowed in Florida since, like the seventies. I'm from West Palm Beach, Florida.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:03:44] Do you can you consider yourself like a singer and songwriter first? Is that right?

**Meecah** [00:03:47] I'm a singer first, for sure.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:03:49] So tell me how you got into that whole, the whole creative world.

**Meecah** [00:03:53] Yeah, I'm a pastor's kid. I grew up in the church and my father started a mission like we have a church, but he just started like a mission branch. And so we went from this huge church to just the five of us. Everybody in my house going doing missions and things of that nature. And so I would be in charge of leading devotions, and I would have to be the one to go up there and sing all the the prayers and and all that. And so I just kind of saw at home doing that. And it's

# THE HAMILCAST

## EPISODE 314 MEECAH 1 TRANSCRIPT

just something that I think I was just blessed and born with, and my father saw that at a very early age and decided to, like, really, really put into that. So I've always been singing. But then once I got a little older, I realized that as much as I love gospel music, that's not where my calling is. My calling is inspirational R&B soul. And so that's where I started to develop like music, and I started putting on my own concerts and then I just kind of developed.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:04:51] You're so prolific and what you do, and I love that you have an idea and then you just make it happen. And it's never that easy, right?

**Meecah** [00:05:00] not easy,

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:05:01] but I mean, you, you realize at a young age that's what you want to do. And so you're just like putting on concerts and you have such a drive.

**Meecah** [00:05:09] Yeah, I don't know where I think I know where it comes from. I mean, we can go down a whole rabbit hole of like my ancestry, but my grandmother. They're left. Georgia at 16 and decided to build an entire empire in West Palm Beach like a real estate, and she owns so much of it. And as a black woman in the 40s, 50s, 60s, that's almost impossible. But her mother built a brick house in the middle of the depression. So like I have, which is unheard of right, the black woman building a brick house in the middle of a depression in Perry, Georgia, like that is unheard of. So I have I get it honest, but I'm also extremely blessed. God has given me such a gift of knowing what I've always wanted to do, and I just kind of walk into that direction.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:05:56] Yeah, that knowledge is kind of invaluable when you don't have to search for what feeds you. It just is there. You find it so young. I would love to take a deep dive into your ancestry. Are you kidding? That's fascinating. Yeah. Tell me more.

**Meecah** [00:06:13] Yeah, yeah, yeah. So I was just actually talking about this with my energy coach. We we I come from a super, spiritually enhanced family, people who have just lived a

# THE HAMILCAST

## EPISODE 314 MEECAH 1 TRANSCRIPT

life of sacrificing and really just dedicated their time to God. And we really have seen that manifest in abundance. So like I told you what happened, like on my mom's side, but my dad's side, like in like 1903, I think my great great grandmother decided that she wanted to be a preacher and that is like women didn't preach back then. Especially Black women did not preach back then. It was strictly patriarchal, and she decided to leave her husband with her two kids and decided to create this entire empire, which now has been split into like five different demands we call them. And there's a book about it. It's called Vision, written by her. Great. Written by her grandson, which is my uncle, and we're actually trying to push it for adaptation, for a movie because it's such a powerful, powerful story and just how she built this entire like entity with just her two hands and her two kids that she found in 1903

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:07:29] Send me the link for that.

**Meecah** [00:07:30] Oh yeah, for sure.

**Meecah** [00:07:31] So, yeah, get the book Amazon. It's called Vision. Wow. So determination is like fully there. That's one thing I've never had to search for. It's always been there. Get up and go get it, is what we call it. Yeah.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:07:46] And to be surrounded by people in your family who who get it, who understand what that's like. Sometimes that's hard, especially in a creative field. If your family doesn't really get it or understand, like why do you want to put on this concert? You want to do this? Why don't you go into something that's more stable and that's not where you came from, right?

**Meecah** [00:08:01] No, I'm also Caribbean. I'm bohemian and my grandfather, I'm only a quarter, but my grandfather. His influence in our family is like peyote is so tangible. Like, he left the Bahamas and became the first black sheriff in West Palm Beach, Florida. And if you know anything about Palm Beach, like Trump has this island here like it's it's not the most favorable places for black people, especially immigrants. But he became the first sheriff and everything that he did for his children and everything that his children's children do have to be

# THE HAMILCAST

## EPISODE 314 MEECAH 1 TRANSCRIPT

excellent. It's only excellence, and that is what has been bred it from both sides of my family. So its there

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:08:47] Oh my gosh. Yeah. OK, so tell me your life story. Tell me how. Tell me. I mean, that's I ask everybody the same question. Tell me your life story. And then up to Hamilton and then, well, then tell me your Hamilton story.

**Meecah** [00:09:01] OK, I'll try to make it short because I like to talk. I love to talk.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:09:05] Look, I want this to be. I want you to have several episodes like this is your time. You have the mic. Let's go like, I have nothing. This is the last thing on my calendar today, so I'm here with you hanging on your every word

**Meecah** [00:09:18] OK. And so, yeah, I mean, you know, I grew up in the church when I was in middle school, I was a vocal major about going to school of the arts, and I realized fairly quickly that they were trying to tailor my voice and nothing against them. But I was not meant to be a choral singer. I was meant to be a singer of R&B. But I also had a dramatic flair. So I realized when I went to eighth grade, I told myself, I'm not going to the high school of the Arts unless I get accepted into the musical theater program. I'm not even auditioning for the vocal, and thankfully I did. I got into it and that there began my journey with theater. I never had a successful time with that because theater is so much more than music. It's acting is literally storytelling. And I struggled with that really up until my senior year of college of telling the story because I rely so much on my boys because that's who I am, is my identity and adapting adapting a love for theater. Was it hard? But it was hard in the eyes of consumers or like theatergoers to look past my voice and feel the story. So I spent four years doing that. I never did a show. The only show that I did was a play called A Raisin in the Sun, in which I got cast as the lead. But because there were so few black people in my school because of where it was based Palm Beach, they decided to cast all the black people in a raisin in the Sun. And so we had to split the track. So it was a two week right. And then for the first week I

# THE HAMILCAST

## EPISODE 314 MEECAH 1 TRANSCRIPT

was Ruth, and then for the second week, another black girl played Ruth.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:10:56] Wow. Wow.

**Meecah** [00:10:57] Yeah.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:10:59] Wait, I've never heard of, would you say, middle school or elementary school with majors or concentrations like that? I've never heard of kids so young being so focused and what they're studying. I've never heard that before.

**Meecah** [00:11:12] So in Palm Beach is actually really lucrative for the arts is a very arts based community. I would say they love the arts there. So there was the Black School of the Arts, which is ... It was founded by ... . And he was. It was dedicated towards people of color. I didn't go to that because my parents really know about it. I went, I started my training with theater and music and music in middle school. It was called BAK Middle School of the Arts. And then there was a high school of the arts called Dreyfus, and all three of those schools were not connected. US auditioned for every single one and get accepted. But yeah, I've been training since I was like, little.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:11:51] OK, so yeah, tell me about this. I don't want to use the word disconnect, but you said that it was musical theater, but the the dramatics and then you weren't in a musical like, tell me more about your experience in high school and college when it came to the arts.

**Meecah** [00:12:07] Yeah, I mean, high school and college were very similar because I was always focused on my. Music always putting on concerts, the costumes that she saw on my page, like with my retribution release that was like my 12th concert, I have been putting on my own concert since I was at least 12, and it was just because of a lack of like, not visibility, but that too, but like a lack of I didn't have any opportunity to do that. People were not looking for me to be the next big Beyonce or whatever, so I had to do it myself. So in high school, when it came to theater, in college as well, I did not focus on theater as much or acting as much because I knew I wanted to be

# THE H★MILCAST

## EPISODE 314 MEECAH 1 TRANSCRIPT

like an R&B singer. I wanted to be Beyonce or Whitney Houston. And so that kind of took away from my learning of the storytelling. So it wasn't actually until really my senior year second semester of college when I actually booked my first role in case it was Memphis, it was Felicia and Robert Hartwell. I don't know if you know him. He's like, huge now. He was our director, and he really pushed me further even further into the stratosphere in terms of like my acting. But it really, really, really started in high school with Gary Lewis, who was a Broadway guy, and he came down to Florida and he he worked. When I say he worked for me, he worked me in a raisin in the Sun. He worked me in a raisin in the Sun. And that developed my tools so that when I got to Memphis in college, I could kind of go back to that. But I think the struggle was right. I'm talking so much. There's no periods in this instance.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:13:50] This is my favorite.

**Meecah** [00:13:51] but I think the struggle was that from the time of a raisin in the Sun to Memphis, those are both my senior year of high school and college. The time in between was working on acting, but I never had time to put it into actual physical practice. So there was a disconnect and there was like a learning curve that I needed to adjust to. And then it really didn't come into manifest until probably three months ago when I just debuted Eliza, which was my last track. That's when I decided to become. I think I fulfilled my self realization as an actor.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:14:25] OK, we're going to get to that. Definitely. What do you mean when you said he worked? You like, what did you learn? What was that process like for you?

**Meecah** [00:14:34] Gary Q Louis, he just there's a lot of self-doubt in me as an actor because people will always tell me that I couldn't act. I could only say so. When I got the role, I was like, What? And then when I got there, just the nature of how the theater industry works. Rehearsals is so confusing. It is so confusing like numbers and turning over your left shoulder and blocking. Like, That's when I'm singing. I do whatever I want. And that was that was a really like turned my world upside down in terms of like, Oh, there's a structure I have to follow.



# THE H★MILCAST

## EPISODE 314 MEECAH 1 TRANSCRIPT

And if I don't, I'm not only messing up myself, I'm messing up a lighting, cue a staging. Cue my other actors like, Oh, I can't just improvise if I forget a lyric like, I have to actually learn the script. Like things of that. Learning how to become an actor on the technical side, it was so hard, and Gary Q knew that I was struggling, but he did not let up. He didn't let up because he knew that I needed to be like the best. And he said I was I know my other cast mates were like. But like, I was the best because he pushed me. He put me through the fire.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:15:43] When did you finally feel like that was something you wanted to do? You wanted to do the acting side of it? That was at one point so scary for you.

**Meecah** [00:15:53] I think my eighth grade year when I was a vocal major, I was like, This is for the birds. I cannot do this. I am not a vocal major. I am a theater person by nature. Everybody that I aligned with was in the theater major. I will have lunch with theater majors and I was like, Oh, I just chose vocal because that's all we knew. We didn't know that there was a whole thing. My peers didn't know that. So when I decided to not audition for the vocal department at Dryphis, I was like, That's probably where I'm headed, acting and singing.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:16:24] What comes next after college.

**Meecah** [00:16:26] So my junior year of high school, I was singing on a cruise ship. I was singing a celebration cruise line and I got off the ship one weekend at like 5:30 in the morning. And we're straight to Saturdays, and I obviously failed my sats like tremendously. Like I had a 4.0 3.7 GPA and cities were like thirteen hundred. I just got to twenty. So very stupidly, colleges look at S.A.T. scores. No, look at your whole career as a high school student.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:16:55] Yeah, sats are nonsense.

**Meecah** [00:16:56] Mm. And so my father was very adamant they're educators, superintendents, principals, things of that nature about me going to school. And I said, Daddy, I'm not going to school in Florida. He was like, Well, I can't afford New York. And I said, Well, then I'm not going to school. So I took the

# THE H★MILCAST

## EPISODE 314 MEECAH 1 TRANSCRIPT

SATs, and my taste was the only school that accepted me based off of my career in high school and not my SAT scores. And so my dad was like, We can't afford this letter. And I was like, Well, I got a \$20000 scholarship for four years and four years is all you need for school. So I thought. And so I was like, Cool, I'm going to PACE for musical theater. Here we go. I didn't know that I had to audition for the musical theater program at pace. I got accepted into PACE and I thought I just chose musical theater when I get there. So I spent an entire year, not a musical theater major. I spent an entire year recording and meeting connections I needed to find. I knew I needed to find what I had in Florida, in New York, ASAP. So I took my sister's I.D. and I went to clubs, open mike nights and went to the musicians. And I was like, Hey, I'm 18, I know, but like, can you be my drummer? And I just want to start a band like, I need to get up here . And I met like people I met, like drummers who have managers in the managers introduce me to like a label head. And it was just like over that year, I just was developing my sound as an artist and like really running into a lot of not good people, but understanding how New York worked in the music world. So I mean, that is how you're doing that. So much so that when I auditioned for the musical theater program after I left the audition, I didn't think twice about it. I was like, Whatever got accepted? OK, cool. And when they sent out the acceptance letter, everybody in my class already knew each other like they were all like doing research over the summer and talking and connecting and getting lunch and all of that. And when I walked in on the first day of class, they were like, Who are you? I was like, I'm Meecah. I'm accepted into the program, but they were like, We have not heard from you all summer. What do you do? Who are you? I was like.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:19:05] What?

**Meecah** [00:19:05] It's Oh yeah, I guess I should have connected over the summer with y'all. But I just wasn't adamant about musical theater. I was adamant about being Beyonce. That's what I wanted to do,

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:19:15] right, which I think is totally valid, and I think it's ridiculous. I'm sorry. Like, maybe that's just not my experience, but I think it's ridiculous to

# THE HAMILCAST

## EPISODE 314 MEECAH 1 TRANSCRIPT

expect something like, you'll get there. Yeah, there. Why do you have to do research and like, be friends with everyone that you're going to be friends with in two months? What does it matter

**Meecah** [00:19:32] That was my mindset. I think PACE at the time is not that much so anymore, I don't think. But at the time, pace was like all about family, all about building love and relationships. And I was not a part of that equation because I was just not opting into it because I was like in the studio or like singing at our Arlene's Grocery at 11 o'clock at night. Or, you know

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:19:50] Oh my God, Arlenes Grocery

**Meecah** [00:19:53] Like literally trying to find any way because I knew that I wasn't graduating college and I knew that I was going to be at the Grammys and the Grammys were in New York the next year. That was a year J-Lo had hosted it for the Bronx because she was like the artist of the year, and she was like, We're doing the Grammys at the Bronx. So I was like, Oh great, I'm going to be there. Cool. So I was trying to network as much as possible to get there. I wasn't even worried about musical theater, so I didn't know anybody

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:20:19] isn't that so much more of an education, not saying that everyone listening who's thinking about going to pace, you have to be seeking out our arlenes grocery at 11 o'clock at night. But what I'm saying is you learned a lot more. Good, bad and ugly. Because, like you said, like there are parts of that industry that are not pretty, especially for a young woman. And I'm sure a young black woman like I cannot imagine some of the horrible people and things that you like just encountered in that time trying to take advantage of you. empty promises and like, it's like the power dynamic can be so scary.

**Meecah** [00:20:55] Fully, fully, fully. And they learn things that I didn't learn. Right, right. Like, they learn things like, you know, headshots. They learned, you know, stuff that I had to learn later on once I actually got acclimated. But I knew that over the summer, I wasn't going to do anything other than music.

# THE HAMILCAST

## EPISODE 314 MEECAH 1 TRANSCRIPT

My mom said that I could stay in New York over the summer. I would come home for like two weeks, then go back to New York and just grind, grind, grind. So I I didn't I didn't care about it, honestly, and I know everybody in my class knows that I did not care about musical theater. I was there to get an education for connections and things of that nature. But I didn't care about the I wasn't a musical theater nerd. I didn't have a lexicon, you know? Yeah.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:21:38] So then what was that like being in that program was sort of like one eye on this other dream of yours?

**Meecah** [00:21:44] Very difficult in terms of like, there were times that I got accused of not being fully invested into like program or we did Jesus Christ Superstar, and I didn't even audition for it, mainly because they changed the date last minute. But when they did change the day, it was on a day that I had a show and I was like, I'm not doing an audition for this number that you're probably not going to cast me in any way. So I I said, my focus is this and I learned. And great things like this, but that was very hard because I was not a dancer first, and the idea of dancing in fours and learning a combination in two minutes is crazy. So like I just it was a it was a learning curve and it was adjusting very hard. But thankfully for the most part, for the most part, I had a loving introduction, if not from my class, from the people above me, from the class of 2018 which was my actual class. Because remember, I was a year late, but the class of twenty seventeen, sixteen, all of them, they were just so loving to me and my class went back to my senior year. I really did feel a sense of family with them when we showcase.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:22:53] Yeah. So then what happens after, like, tell me about the showcase and then

**Meecah** [00:22:58] you want to know something funny? Everybody was stressed out about their showcase. I was not. I was just not at all. I was like, OK, we're singing for 30 minutes. Cool. People were like buying their outfits, and it was just like creating such a frenzy. And I was I was chill on the day of my showcase. My boyfriend broke up with me in between showcases. So

# THE H★MILCAST

## EPISODE 314 MEECAH 1 TRANSCRIPT

you had, you know, you have to showcase is a and b one in the morning when an evening from your agents to come

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:23:24] Explain to the listeners like exactly what a showcase is and what you were preparing and why people were free? Right? Yeah.

**Meecah** [00:23:29] So showcases your basically your introduction into society as an actor, you have fully realized you got your degree and now you're saying I have completed X amount of years of training. I'm ready for representation. I'm ready to be booked in the show. This is the best that I have right now at this moment. And from your agents, you know, that's where you get your jobs, for the most part. So you want to be on your P's and Q's, you want to make sure everything is right. You don't want a sore throat or anything like that, and you definitely don't want to be emotionally distressed that day. So you pick out your outfit, you do everything right. And I was the least freaked out about it because I was the only black girl in my class. So I was like, there's zero competition. And to like, I just know what I bring to the table respectfully and humbly. So I wasn't worried about it. But God showed me, my boyfriend, my boyfriend. Yeah, I was like, the first showcase happened and I was like, Where are you at? Like, Why are you not here? You said you would come. He worked on Wall Street and I was very close. I was like, Why are you not here? So he just said, I'm not coming. I'm not coming. And then I got the message like towards the end of our last number, and then I caught him on our lunch break and I was like, Where are you going? What are you not coming? He's like, I just don't feel like this is working out. Like, I said, Are you breaking up with me? And I remember my friend at the time was walking with me, and I just remember walking past Chick-Fil-A and everybody on the street thinking that I was a psycho crazy person because I was screaming in the phone. I was crying like my eyes are red, like my eyelashes were falling off like it was, it was. So I was like, Please, please, please only be like, Please come on, just come to the showcase. It's like we can work it out. We've been together for two years, the longest relationship I've ever been in. I was like, Please, please, please. Screaming. And he didn't come. And by the time we finished our conversation and I realized that it was really over. It hit me so hard, but I only had like 20 minutes before

# THE HAMILCAST

## EPISODE 314 MEECAH 1 TRANSCRIPT

it was my turn to go on stage. My my teachers came back there. My best friend's mom came back there and she was like, It's fine, it's fine. So I went from being this like, very confident person to being like. Act like girl. Just pull it together for five minutes. Right, right.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:25:41] Oh, gosh, yeah, he's trash.

**Meecah** [00:25:44] Yeah, yeah.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:25:46] If you don't mind.

**Meecah** [00:25:46] No, I know. Yeah, that was a very tragic thing to do. He could have waited two hours.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:25:53] I mean, oddly, at the very least, he knew or I mean, maybe even just don't answer until he knows you're right. Something like, I mean, honestly, do any of this. But like,

**Meecah** [00:26:04] right? Yeah. So that is good, though, because I ended up getting, I think the most offers that night from my agents and stuff.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:26:13] You used it channeled into something.

**Meecah** [00:26:15] Especially because I was singing Ain't No Party from Dreamgirls. Like, Heck yeah, I was. Oh yeah.

**Meecah** [00:26:53] And we got videotape, too. We say the morning in the night, and I ended up using the night one because it was so invested in so powerful. But when I tell you it took me like from from like 10 seconds before I step on stage to like four seconds after I left, I was like, I had to go into like a black hole or something because I couldn't I couldn't be present and my emotions and do the show at the same time. It was very, very hard for me, but it's a lesson and I know I can do that. I can. I can put my emotions aside for the time being and do the job

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:27:28] That comes up a lot sometimes. And Hamilton, especially talking about Eliza, which we'll get to

# THE HAMILCAST

## EPISODE 314 MEECAH 1 TRANSCRIPT

when we. Because I definitely want to dove into what you said about like feeling coming into who you are as an actor with Eliza. But I've spoken to a lot of Eliza is about like separating what's happening with her on stage and in your psyche and then being able to actually live your life as Meecah or whoever because your son didn't just die and your husband didn't just, you know, like that separation, but then using those emotions when they're needed, you know? Yeah.

**Meecah** [00:27:59] Well, when I play Eliza, the only time that really comes up is during burn and during him dying, Philip's death. But Elijah, he's our main guy. He's got me so that he looks exactly like my father. So it's not hard at all to to be emotionally invested. I made it to talk about it and got a lot of. I put a side by side of Eli and my dad, and they're like, Oh my God, they're like, How do you get so emotional? I'm like, It's not hard. And then on top of that, Eli is an incredible actor, so it's not hard at all. But yeah, just practicing like strength and release. And like, you know, going through the exercise is boring actor stuff that really helps me get there.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:28:40] It's not boring, but OK.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:28:43] OK, so you kicked ass at the showcase, right? And then what

**Meecah** [00:28:47] I got an agent and we started. I got an agent and a manager, and we started. Hitting head, hitting the pavement. I started doing this, this I feel like my life is crazy. I so going back to my junior year, I at an open mic night. Remember I told you I was going around just trying to find things. And one of the creators of the show called Mandela was there, and his name is Greg. And I just sing in front of him and he was like, I want you to be my Zizi. And literally over an Instagram, I was like, cool. So I got this day in like four workshops with it, and I think I'm still with the cast. I don't know, you know, things change. But like, you know, every time they do a workshop, I told them I was like, I'm Mandela for life. I will leave my job to go do a workshop. I will be there for Mandela, and I just was able to do that. So thankfully I had that to sustain me after I graduated because it was bleak out there, especially for black women. This is before the Floyd, the

# THE HAMILCAST

## EPISODE 314 MEECAH 1 TRANSCRIPT

George Floyd like. We're in the sense of like, Oh, maybe we should include diversity in our things and everybody doesn't have to be light skinned. So I was really happy with that job and then I was working at Westville, was my first like waitress job. Oh, my grilled chicken salad, salmon Caesar salads were everything. Everything. I had so much fun... Westville.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:30:16] Oh man, you're like name dropping. So many locations that are just bringing me right back ?

**Meecah** [00:30:21] Right, right? Love Westville will love it. And it was funny because a girl who worked at Pace was like the hiring director. So we were working with our friends like all of us, were working with our taste people. It was great and the food is amazing. I love Westville. It's like Whole Foods on steroids. So then I had I had been auditioning for Hamiltons as my sophomore year of college and I had now been a junior. And I was like, at this point, Hamilton is playing games with me since this point. What are we doing? I remember the audition that I had that I booked. I had a sore throat and I was missing Angelica lyrics left or right, and I had known that I had been doing it in front of Matt and Patrick since I was quite literally 19. And they knew me and I knew them, and I was like, Yeah, yeah, I know what it is. And they're like, Yeah, and I remember I booked it like two weeks later and I left Westville and I went to Hamilton.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:31:15] My God. All right, we have to no pun intended. I'm sorry to say this word. We have to rewind, though, because let me ask you, like, what was your first experience with Hamilton? Were people listening to it? I mean, I guess in pace, everyone that was like the thing everyone wanted to be in. I mean, did you fall in love with the music? Did you see it as an opportunity? Like, what was your relationship to the show before you started auditioning?

**Meecah** [00:31:35] I was like, eh.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:31:38] That's fair.

**Meecah** [00:31:39] We're going in so much trouble. I just naturally gravitate towards the thing that nobody else is



# THE HAMILCAST

## EPISODE 314 MEECAH 1 TRANSCRIPT

gravitating to. And if people gravitate like we get, I love Wicked. When I saw it, I loved it, but I didn't see it until like the latest possible point because everybody was fangirling over it, and I naturally gravitate to the opposite thing. If I see that as a hype, I don't like it. So when I saw Hamilton, one of my friends who actually got cast in it before I did, she was in the Chicago cast. I was like, she was doing my hair and I don't know if you know, but. Well, I'm not sure you do. But like when black women do each other's hair, it's very like intimate thing. It's not, especially if your friends like we are sharing a bond. And she was being so vulnerable with me about like Hamilton and things of that nature. And I remember being so reflective like, so this man is in love with three women and they're all sisters work. And she was like, No, but it's just about this and the passion. And then I was like, more than that girl braid my hair. I do not care about this show. So it was like very funny because she booked like three months later and then a year and six months after that, I booked it. But yeah, so she was doing my hair. And then we I was in her apartment when I got the call and I was like. Oh, I just came back from my first solo tour. And what I got back in to St Lucia when I got back it, they were like, You have four auditions. And then I had it all for auditions, and she had come into town for a fitting for him. And I went to her hotel room and I was like, I'm exhausted. And then my agent texted me, he was like, We need to get on the three way ASAP. And that was like a three way. We've never done that before. It sounds just like you just booked something. I was like, It can't be one of the four auditions that I just did that takes forever. And so they called me and they were like, Meecah, you booked Hamilton. And I remember she started crying. I was like, on Broadway. They were like, No, you put the tour and I was like, I don't want to leave New York. Just go like, I don't want to leave New York. They were like Meecah. Go think about it. I was like, I don't want to tour scary. I don't know anybody. Well, darling, I'm a Florida girl, and all these days are when I don't like it and they're like, No, Meecah, you should go. You should go, you should go. And but they were like, Ultimately, it's up to you. So I called everybody and they mama. I was like, Should I take this or not? All my like celebrity mentors. I called them all. They were like, Take this tour. You are 22 years old. Twenty three years old. Take it. Use that money. Fund your music career and call it a day. I was like,

# THE H★MILCAST

## EPISODE 314 MEECAH 1 TRANSCRIPT

Work. I was like, I was going to be on stage every night. I just thought, What do you mean? You don't want to be doing that show eight shows a week for your first time. Like you need to build up stamina like this that in the air, there's just so much advice. As a kid, I took the job and it ended up being the best decision I have done in my entire adult career. Was the best.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:34:51] Did you come around at all where you were like, All right, I kind of want to be in this thing?

**Meecah** [00:34:54] I didn't see it until I got hired. So, yeah, it was so expensive. And actually, no, that's not true. I got in one of my friends let me in the back and I had standing room and I saw it. But I I saw it and I was like, That's really cool. But there was nothing about it that said to me as what I wanted to do because I wanted to be Beyonce. And I knew that, and I keep saying that. But like, I wanted to be a pop R&B artist. But I knew that that's about as close as musical theater was going to get at the time. But that wasn't my dream. So it was like, This is cool. I'll do this when I get older, like 40 50, I'll be right for the roles. And then two years later, I but then I decided to take it. Yeah.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:35:38] So tell me, I mean, how are you liking being on tour?

**Meecah** [00:35:42] Tour life is not ideal, but everything else is the best thing I could have ever imagined. I love. I love my cars. I it was between me and going to fill up in Angelica tour, and I really want to Angelica tour because they were going to Florida. They're going to Palm Beach. I wouldn't have been ready to perform at that point anyway, but it very nice to be home and the possibility to have been ready would have been great. But it didn't work out, and I am glad because I met my life long like more than friends like soul connections here on this tour, like Blaine, Stephanie, like everybody is down like all the people that I have met have changed my life, no pun intended for good and for the better, and they will be here forever. There is no bad energy animosity, anything for my cast to me, and I don't think I would have gotten that anywhere else. So I'm grateful to be here. And also, I love this. I love what I do. Don't get it twisted. I know pop R&B is like my dream and my goal, and I'm

# THE HAMILCAST

## EPISODE 314 MEECAH 1 TRANSCRIPT

going there, but I love love this. So, yeah, it worked out. God knows what he's doing always.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:36:56] And I hear that all the time about the Philip company. I mean, like people say that that even walking in the first day, the first day of rehearsals ever of the Philip tour in New York, people say that they say it when they joined universal swings. When they're coming through, like there's something about that company that is really close and like a family and welcoming and open. And I say family. I mean, I'm not saying that everything is puppies and rainbows all the time, and everyone equally loves everyone like a family is a family and there's like, you know, it's real. But there is that closeness and that connection. And for you to say to actively like, be rooting for another tour and then feeling so in love with where you are. I love that. I think that's very telling.

**Meecah** [00:37:38] Yes. Yes, they're beautiful people.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:37:48] All right. Next week, I'm finishing up my conversation with Meecah. She walks us through what it's like to learn all three roles for the Schuyler sisters, what it was like to return to Hamilton post-COVID shutdown and make the changes that came with it. Why the message behind the music she makes is so important to her. And of course, Meecah takes questions from the Patreon Peeps. You don't want to miss it. So until next week. Stay safe. Stay healthy. I love you. I'm G. Pen

[00:38:39]

**Gillian Pensavalle:** 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. A big thank you to Jenson Parker Neal, my dear friend and right hand man who helps me make the thing about the thing. To become a Patreon Peep and join the best, kindest and most welcoming corner of the internet. Go to [patreon.com/TheHamilcast](https://patreon.com/TheHamilcast). You can submit questions to guests, join Zoom Hangouts, get behind the scenes access and of course, my endless gratitude. On social

# THE H★MILCAST

## EPISODE 314 MEECAH 1 TRANSCRIPT

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To the revolution!