

# THE HAMILCAST

## EPISODE 316 DEEJAY YOUNG 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, and today I am joined by the Angelica Tours DeeJay Young. Hi DeeJay.

**DeeJay Young** [00:00:27] Hey, hey, how's it going?

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:00:28] It's going wonderful now that you're here. How are you?

**DeeJay Young** [00:00:31] I'm glad to be here. I actually want to just start off and say, congratulations on all that you're doing. It's really incredible to see your start and where you are now, and just to see all the people that you've brought on and just carrying the torch. It's so beautiful to see, and I'm just proud of your accomplishments thus far. I just wanted to start off saying that

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:00:51] that's really nice. Usually, I don't get teary eyed this early in the road.

**DeeJay Young** [00:00:56] I'm sorry.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:00:56] thank you so much. I appreciate that it's been an amazing ride. It's a passion project. I love it. It's, you know, it's more it's more love than labor, but it is a labor of love. So thank you so much for saying that.

**DeeJay Young** [00:01:10] Of course, of course.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:01:11] Now, before we turn the focus back on to you, can you please tell the people your pronouns before we get started?

**DeeJay Young** [00:01:17] He him.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:01:17] Great. Thank you.

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**Deejay Young** [00:01:18] Mm-Hmm.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:01:19] So tell the people you're a principal standby on the Angelica tour, right? Let's go down all the roles you cover.

**Deejay Young** [00:01:26] This is fun. OK. So I cover the

**Deejay Young** [00:01:29] Sons of Liberty. I guess that makes it a little shorter.

**Deejay Young** [00:01:33] I cover the Sons of Liberty.

**Deejay Young** [00:01:35] Lawrence, Philip, Hercules, Mulligan, James Madison, Lafayette, Jefferson. I also cover Hamilton and newly. I cover Burr.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:01:45] Oh, wow.

**Deejay Young** [00:01:46] Yes, they added. They added Burr onto my coverage. So now I'm up to five.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:01:53] Congrats. That's a full plate.

**Deejay Young** [00:01:55] It is a full plate. I was like, I don't want any more, but

**Deejay Young** [00:02:00] Burr is a role that I've always wanted to play. I remember before the shut down, a lot of my classmates were asking, You know what? I want to learn it or, you know, is, is it a possibility? And I was like, I don't know. And they knew that there was a dream role of mine. So when it came about this time around, I was literally like leaping off the floor like, you know, and yeah, it's really surreal to go from something you've always wanted to portray or be a part of. And then it's in your lap and you're like, Did I take on more than I could chew?

**Deejay Young** [00:02:37] But it was.

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**Deejay Young** [00:02:38] It was a great challenge. So yeah, I'm excited about, you know, continuing the journey with all of these crazy roles that I play.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:02:47] I'm excited to hear all about it, which we're going to dive into all of that.

**Deejay Young** [00:02:52] No, cool.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:02:53] But you are. I mean, you first got your start in showbiz when you were five. So you've been doing this for a long time. You're a professional recording artist. You're an independent artist. Your music is amazing. I've been listening to you all day, so congratulations.

**Deejay Young** [00:03:05] Thank you. Thank you so much. Yeah.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:03:08] So let's dove in like you've performed all over the world. Like, I want to hear your full the Deejay Young story, your life story. Like, how did you start performing at five years old? Tell me everything.

**Deejay Young** [00:03:18] Well, I actually started singing in church. That's when I really began to just explore my voice and my passion for singing. I was very, very shy as a kid, so I guess being in church was a safe haven for me. My mom was a choir director, and you know, she would, you know, be in the choir stand. And I would probably, yeah, I would say that I would not sing if she was not there, like

**Deejay Young** [00:03:50] if she was, you know, doing her thing, I probably would not have had the courage to sing. So she'd be there. And, you know, they give me the mic and I'd sing away. And I guess one day I just decided, like, Mom, I got this.

**Deejay Young** [00:04:09] And I just I began to just sing from from my heart. And that's kind of how my passion for singing was born. And from there on, there was someone at my church who developed this gospel theatrical play, and they took it on the circuit during the summer. So I got cast in it. I didn't even I don't even think I auditioned for it because they went to my church and they knew what I could do. I just had never performed

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professionally. I just was always singing in church. So that was my introduction to the theatrical aspect of performing in this gospel theatrical play. And it was before a lot of people are familiar mainstream with Tyler Perry now and those type of plays. But what I was doing was even before that. Yeah. So it was it was super brand new for me. My parents would go on the road with me during the summers. We'd be out of school, obviously, so that, you know, I could travel and they would travel on the road with me and I would do all these radio tours and perform the show every night. And I did this tour until, you know, until I was too old to play a young boy.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:05:22] Right, right. Yeah

**Deejay Young** [00:05:24] was. It was an experience, but that was my introduction to performing professionally at such a young age.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:05:30] Do you think that that's laid any groundwork for what you've moved on to do?

**Deejay Young** [00:05:34] Absolutely. It did. Absolutely did. I would credit that and attending a fine arts high school to, you know, my growth and just being knowledgeable of, you know, that being a profession, even when I was that young doing the tour. I guess I didn't really realize like, Yo, I'm getting paid for this. You know, my parents were like, Take my money and like,

**Deejay Young** [00:05:59] you know, they will make sure it's being spent wisely. And you know, I had, you know,

**Deejay Young** [00:06:05] clothes and shoes and you know, they would save it up for for future education and stuff like that. But I it didn't really register like I can get. I can make a living off of this. It didn't really register until high school and I got older and I was like, OK, what's next? What is what is the big boy, you know, role there? What is the big boy aspect of this, this tour life for this acting thing? What can I do next? But it definitely helped shape, I guess, my endurance and just my knowledge and just my stamina. I definitely would credit all of that to it.

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**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:06:46] Yeah. Tell me about this performing arts high school. Yeah.

**Deejay Young** [00:06:49] So it is probably one of the pivotal moments in my life that. Just I never expected it to be such a wonderful, unforgettable experience. Funny thing is, so I went to Blake High School in Tampa. I'm born and raised in Tampa, so I'm a Florida boy. When I auditioned, you know, you have to audition to to get into the schools, and I didn't know what program I wanted to be a part of. Can you guess what program I chose?

**Deejay Young** [00:07:27] No, I can't guess

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:07:28] this like the singing of the singing program, like the music, singing dance.

**Deejay Young** [00:07:32] No, I was a creative writing major.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:07:35] That makes sense, though, because your music that I get that

**Deejay Young** [00:07:38] yeah, I was creative. Writing major in a lot of people are shocked when I say that,

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:07:43] but your lyrics to me say creative writing major like that connects to me.

**Deejay Young** [00:07:47] Thank you. That means a lot. Yeah, I've always had a passion for writing. My my mom would get mad at me as a kid in the restaurants because we would go to

**Deejay Young** [00:07:57] like Red Lobster or something, and I would pick up the napkins and just start writing on stuff.

**Deejay Young** [00:08:04] My mom would be like, D.J., you can not. You cannot just write on stuff at the table. But I would write what came to my mind. And I just had a vivid imagination. I wrote about everything. I wrote songs, and I just always had a passion for writing. And in high end, excuse me, in middle school, I said I wanted to audition for the creative writing program at High School, and I had to submit a portfolio of all

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my works. Here's about, you know, here's some more fun facts about

**Deejay Young** [00:08:38] that that people don't know.

**Deejay Young** [00:08:40] In middle school, I actually had probably about two to three publications that were published. My first publication was actually a horror novel that I wrote. I wrote a an anthology about Michael Myers. I wrote like a Halloween prequel, basically just talking about what led Michael Myers to be how he was in the psychology of him.

**Deejay Young** [00:09:06] This is crazy, but as a kid, I really like the Halloween movies.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:09:10] It's one of my favorite Halloween like for me, too. It is so good. It really is like and watching it again. After not seeing it for so long, you see how many things were taken from it for other or what it inspired for so many things. So yeah, it's a fascinating story, even on its face. So that makes sense. How very Hamilton of you pick up a head start writing at the restaurant like,

**Deejay Young** [00:09:32] Oh my gosh.

**Deejay Young** [00:09:33] Yeah, it was really bad. Like, I would pick up a crayon and I would pick up a pair,

**Deejay Young** [00:09:37] whatever it is that I could write

**Deejay Young** [00:09:38] with and write on, I would

**Deejay Young** [00:09:40] do that.

**Deejay Young** [00:09:41] But yeah, that was my first thing that does.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:09:44] Tell me more about this. This is Michael Myers. And like Hellboy, what was his origin story for you?

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**Deejay Young** [00:09:49] as a kid watching it. I don't know why. As a kid, I was fascinated with

**Deejay Young** [00:09:54] it, with that character. I really loved

**Deejay Young** [00:09:58] the music like the theme. That theme was just

**Deejay Young** [00:10:00] so yeah, it was so good

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:10:03] thinking of it. Look at chills. Just even thinking about.

**Deejay Young** [00:10:20] Yeah, I used to watch it by myself, my mom would be like, What is going on? Do we need to have a discussion? Do we need to have an eviction? Do we need to go back to church and figure out what's going on with you?

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:10:30] You're like watching The Exorcist and watching Halloween.

**Deejay Young** [00:10:34] But yeah, I was fascinated by like, what?

**Deejay Young** [00:10:37] What makes a person do this? What makes a person, you know, want to do this? Such horrible things to people? And I wrote about, you know, his upbringing and what I felt happened and what led him to be who who he was. And yeah, that that story got published. I won like this national writing competition and I got a bunch of money for it. And yeah, I think another thing I did was an anthology of poetry. We're like the top scholars in the District of Florida, basically submit all these entries, and I had a bunch of like poems and stories that got published. So I got to use those works as my anthology for my audition for the creative writing program into blank.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:11:27] Wow.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:11:29] That also must help you as an actor to this curiosity of what makes people do what they do. I mean, that's it, right?

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**Deejay Young** [00:11:37] Oh my gosh. Little did I know, like I didn't even realize what I was doing. It's so crazy how life can prepare you for things and you not even realize, you know, at the time. But you know, when the moment is there, you realize, Wow, I was being prepared the whole time. Even at high in high school at Blake, even though I was in the creative writing program I, I engulfed myself in everything like I was. I think the first musical I did was ragtime changed my life forever. I got a part in guys and dolls. I literally was in everything. I was in the drum line in high school.

**Deejay Young** [00:12:22] So cool. I was just I was a part of everything, but I just didn't know that like being around like minded people and people who enjoyed the craft as much as I did, what helped shape me and helped me want to just be in this crazy world. I never thought that it would bring me here. Another fun fact I actually went to high school with Blaine Krauss, who is in the Philip company. I just spoke to blame.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:12:51] It's just fine.

**Deejay Young** [00:12:52] Yeah, we went. That's how I met him. He went to my high school. I don't I want to say he didn't go to the full four years, but we did go a year together and we were in ragtime together. The first musical I'd ever done.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:13:05] No way.

**Deejay Young** [00:13:08] Also, Alexis Guy, Lexi Okello, and she went to high school with me as well. That's how we met.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:13:13] What's you all that? You stayed in touch with both of them throughout your life?

**Deejay Young** [00:13:18] we keep in touch. I keep in touch with Blake. I haven't talked to Alexia in a long time, but we definitely, you know, we're friends on Facebook and I try to keep up with with Blaine as much as I can to. We have some friends on on the Philip tour and it's just crazy to see, you know, pass always cross paths, always cross again when you're when you're in this business and when you are just, you know, when you're just honing your craft, you just see the same people



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along the way. And it's really cool to see how we started and then where where we went. So, yeah, those are two people that went to high school with me. Yeah.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:13:58] And how the middle of your store, I mean, everyone's still in the middle of their story, but your paths to Hamilton were all so different. And now. Yeah, yeah. You're still, you know, and your journey with Hamilton currently still is so different. You're on different tours. I mean, figuratively and literally, the paths are just, yeah, it's interesting how people meander in and out of each other's lives.

**Deejay Young** [00:14:20] And yes, I really I really credit high school for for paving the way for me. I. I get so happy just thinking about my time there and the people that I got to meet and the things that I got to experience in high school was a joy.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:14:42] That's so nice. High school can be so hard and it's so nice that. All of the craziness of being a teenager and being a creative teenager that you still look back on it so fondly. That's really amazing.

**Deejay Young** [00:14:54] I really do. And I had the best teachers. I really did

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:14:57] I mean, that's half the battle, right? Having good teachers

**Deejay Young** [00:15:00] I had the best teachers who really challenged me and really wanted me to succeed. I really got to study film and study art on a deeper level. One of my favorite classes was I had an AP lit teacher, and she was just just phenomenal. My creative writing teacher was phenomenal. Miss Russo and Mr. Fairweather, they were my creative writing teachers, and they let me be me. Oh yeah. And that was a beautiful thing. At the end of the nine weeks, our assignment was to perform our poetry. We had to take an oral interpretation quarter of the creative writing class. And at the end of the nine weeks, we had to perform our works like an oratory style, and I decided that I wanted to like rap and sing my poems, which was very unheard of.

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**Deejay Young** [00:15:59] It was cool.

**Deejay Young** [00:16:00] It was very nontraditional to do that, and my teacher was like, What are you doing? This is not what we do here. But it became something that they embraced and expected it. They expected that to be the thing that I did. So every poem that I wrote in every work that I contributed to the program, I performed them in that manner, which is insane because now look where I am, where I have to rap and sing every day.

**Deejay Young** [00:16:29] It's it's like, like I said

**Deejay Young** [00:16:31] to you before I was preparing myself and had no clue. Like, I had to memorize all these pages and pages of poems and and do a hip hop slash sing style of the works. And yeah, it ended up being just my style of of writing, right?

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:16:50] Because that was your idea to do it that way. So that's something that you've always been drawn to do, of course, with your music as well, you know?

**Deejay Young** [00:16:58] Yeah, yeah. Just being inspired by so many. I listen to so many different types of music, and I love writing and poetry, so fuzing them together was such a natural thing for me. But I wish you could have seen their faces when I first.

**Deejay Young** [00:17:15] When I first brought it to the table, they were like, Oh, this is, this is really different.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:17:21] That was that's like your Lin at the White House moment.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:18:07] OK, like sure Jan.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:18:09] And, you know, now look.

**Deejay Young** [00:18:10] Change the world.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:18:11] It feels very similar to me in that moment saying like, no, it's going to make sense.

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**Deejay Young** [00:18:16] Yes, it was cool to be embraced.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:18:18] Yeah, of course. You know what music were you listening to in high school? I'm just

**Deejay Young** [00:18:22] curious. Oh my gosh. I I listen to so much Paramore. It's not even funny. I LED Zeppelin, Lauryn Hill, a lot of jazz. Billie Holiday was very much into my like jazz phase. Then that's kind of when I started experimenting with like riffs and runs and stuff like that. And a lot of gospel. A lot of gospel, too. I listen to everything. So they're like nothing was was off limits.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:18:56] I love that. Yeah, yeah. Paramore is like, they're so great, but they're I don't want to say a comeback. I'm actually not going to call it a comeback. But there's this been a little resurgence because of Olivia Rodrigo. So everyone. Oh yeah, because she they're actually credited on. I think it's good for you because it's so similar to misery business.

**Deejay Young** [00:19:14] The melody. The chord structure, probably.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:20:08] And she says, like, they're my inspiration, so they pop up in my music, you know? Yeah. So there have been a lot of like mash ups, and everyone is kind of like remembering how great Paramore is.

**Deejay Young** [00:20:20] I never forgot. I am a huge Paramore fan.

**Deejay Young** [00:20:23] Like for sure. I have all the albums, physical copies I've been to, like two or three shows. Hayley is such an inspiration. She's such a great writer and I've taken a lot of like just writing inspiration from her and from the group. They're so good in life are they're incredible. Incredible.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:20:45] What about her? Inspires you?

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**Deejay Young** [00:20:47] I just I love her tenacity. I love her. Her stage presence. I think she's so fearless and not just fearless. As a performer, she's fearless. Vocally, she'll go for any note. She'll, you know, she'll reach. She can reach any doubt and she thinks she can hit. Yeah, she she's not afraid to to try different styles. I love that about an artist. When they don't just stick to, OK, this is this is what works. We're going to stick to this and we know the formula and we know, you know, is going to be a catchy tune now. She really understands the musicianship and artistry. And I just I love that and that's all I can strive to do as a musician. So she's definitely one of my top inspirations.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:21:33] So I remember Cyndi Lauper said of Girls just want to have fun that people would sort of just, you know, give her. Critics would say that that's just like a stupid song, and it doesn't really have a message, and everyone knows that that's bullshit, but that it's sort of like that. She wasn't a talented singer, and she I remember saying, like, you try singing that song. It's not an easy song to sing at all.

**Deejay Young** [00:21:55] It's a hard song. Yeah, yeah.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:22:35] And I remember loving Paramore, but not realizing the strength of her voice. Yeah, until rock band came out. That's what you get was a rock band. And I remember like it was always my remember when rock band had like, you could do the vocals too, and that was all part of it.

**Deejay Young** [00:22:53] Oh my god, I suck at that.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:22:55] Oh yeah. And I remember like, No, no, I'm going to do Paramore like that. So my speed, I love them. I'm going to do that's what you get and thinking like, Oh shit.

**Deejay Young** [00:23:47] That goes to show she is one of a kind, she's no joke. You just got on my mind like spiraling thinking about rock band and is it what's the other one? What was the first game? Was it rock band?

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**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:24:00] Wait, maybe it was there another one?

**Deejay Young** [00:24:01] Because I feel like there's more than one. I feel like there's Guitar Hero

**Deejay Young** [00:24:05] Haha! That was the first one. And then rock band is like that. Yes. Yeah.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:24:11] Yeah, it was Guitar Hero.

[00:24:13] Yeah, I guess

**Deejay Young** [00:24:14] I was the first thing. Rock band is the one where you can have someone on drums, someone or guitar.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:24:18] Someone's vocals. Yes. Yes. Yes.

**Deejay Young** [00:24:20] Oh my

**Deejay Young** [00:24:20] gosh. I literally remember

**Deejay Young** [00:24:23] a couple of years ago, so my friend

**Deejay Young** [00:24:26] Jordan. Jordan Fisher, he was actually in the Broadway company for a little while. Yes.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:24:32] Laurens/Phillip, I was going to ask you about this. So perfect segue.

**Deejay Young** [00:24:35] Yeah, that's that's my bro. What am I? Good, good friends. I actually. So funny I. I ended up singing background with them. That's a crazy long story we can get into later. But I love it. I remember us playing. We were at

**Deejay Young** [00:24:49] a gig and he loves. He loves rock bands, and he's so serious about how to show you a video. Yeah, but we were

**Deejay Young** [00:24:58] backstage at this gig and I forget what song we were playing. But he is so serious about rock band.

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**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:25:07] Rock Band was the new version of people who get really mad at Monopoly and flip tables and whatever rock band became because there would be like rock band parties. Of course, it's so it's like something to do at a party. And I know people would be like, Take it shoes or like, you're not doing the hardest level and you're not doing this. They take it's like the World Series.

**Deejay Young** [00:25:25] I guess that was my first time playing it.

**Deejay Young** [00:25:27] Oh, he's he's he's serious about it. He's very serious about it. So that that's what rock band made me think of because that was my first time playing it.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:25:36] Yeah, but tell me about that experience.

**Deejay Young** [00:25:38] Yeah, I was. So I have performed at Disney for for several years. Disney was actually aside from me touring when I was younger. Disney was like the first professional contract that I had. I think, yeah, aside from, you know, performing younger. And then I was signed for a little while to Universal right before I went to Disney. And then, you know, the group that I was in disbanded, and then I moved to Orlando, and that's when I auditioned for Disney and it was my first contract. I was in a show called Disney Channel Rocks. We sang all of these songs from, you know, Disney Channel movies, Camp Rock and High School Musical, all that stuff,

**Deejay Young** [00:26:28] which I really liked it. Yeah, I didn't

**Deejay Young** [00:26:30] know about all of them at the time, so I really had to kind of research some of them. But yeah, that is how I started working in all the parks, and I've done a lot of shows there. I was the first African-American crush in Finding Nemo, the musical there. I've gotten to just open so many doors and break barriers for people that look like me there, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to even be seen to do such. But I was doing a show called American Music Machine. And the director or the music director, his name is Tim Davis, and he actually did the music for Glee. So all the stuff you hear on Glee, he is

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the mastermind behind it. He's insane. Wow. He asked me to do the Disney Parks Christmas parade, which comes on ABC every year. And he's like, Hey, there's this kid. His name is Jordan Fisher. He's a new artist, and I think he's really dope, and I think you'll hit it off for a while. You should do the Christmas filming with him. Learn this song. And I was like, OK, OK. The funny thing is, is that I I had

**Deejay Young** [00:27:49] just downloaded his album like maybe three weeks or a month like before this happened. I have a habit of like just buying people's albums, and I don't know who the artist is. I just I think it's I don't know that's how I discovered Adele. That's how I discovered Amy Winehouse. I just looked at the cover and I just downloaded it. So I saw Jordan's. I saw an ad for Jordan come up on my Apple Music. I downloaded it. And that was three weeks before he, like, asked me to do this gig with him. So I, I meet him backstage. The moment that I meet him, we're like singing and acting off complete fool

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:28:29] Oh my god. Isn't that the best when you're like, Oh, this is this is.

**Deejay Young** [00:28:32] Yeah, yeah, yeah. It was very much that sort of connection. And, you know, goofing around before the gig, he goes, Hey, I really want to take you on the road with me. And I was like. You're funny, like I hear stuff like this all the time. Let's do the gig, let's do the gig cool. But he's he seriously was like, Hey, I'm changing up some singers in my band and I want to bring you and one of my other good friends, Omar Cardona. He's a singer in Orlando. Great, great talent. He says, Hey, I want to. I want to bring you guys on. And yeah, so maybe a month after that, our first gig was this festival called Pop Spring in Japan with Fifth Harmony and DMC and Shawn Mendes. That was the first time I'd even heard his name. And now look where all these people are. So, yeah, that's how I met. Yeah, that's how I met Jordan. And we've been I've been singing with him ever since, and we've been friends ever since. Great. Great, great guy. Yeah, somebody who just works all the time.

**Deejay Young** [00:29:42] He always has a job and he is so talented and I just love when good things happen to good people. He's one of those people. He will give you the shirt off his

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back. He has an incredible family. I'm just so honored to. Just know him and just be a part of all the great things that he's done.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:30:03] Yeah, I met him at Broadway Con, I think the last Broadway con before everything shut down. And he was so nice and he was so kind and he was being so nice talking to people and he knew about the podcast, and he was sort of like, Oh, would you? I mean, I would love to have you. I mean, this was in January and everything shut down in March.

**Deejay Young** [00:30:26] He loves Hamilton. He loves, loves Hamilton.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:30:29] Yeah, I he's gigantically famous. And then the pandemic happened. And I sort of like, it's always been in the back of my mind. Like, maybe I'll think I'm going to reach back out to Jordan Fisher.

**Deejay Young** [00:30:40] He should or I should put a little bug in his ear.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:30:43] Hey, because we were like, there, you know, like he was so kind and so nice and and also watching him interact with fans because Broadway kind of like us, they are the ultimate Broadway fans, truly. And they're also like and Jordan Fisher also was way famous before Broadway. So it was this combination of people just adoring him. People love him. Everything you said about him, I saw in real time when, yeah, kind of no one was looking, Yeah,

**Deejay Young** [00:31:12] and that's what matters.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:31:13] And and it might sound weird to say that no one was looking because it was in at a convention, but now I

**Deejay Young** [00:31:20] know exactly what you mean. Yeah, that's how he is. Everywhere we go to the park and we've been to the parks a few times because he he's the singing voice of the the show that was there, the fireworks show, happily ever after. He was the main vocalist of that show. And I was on that recording



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in the choir. That's in the finale, and we were both a part of the recording sessions and didn't know.

**Deejay Young** [00:31:46] We didn't know that each other was involved.

**Deejay Young** [00:31:48] So it's it's so crazy how our relationship is just a full circle thing. So we've gone to the parks a bunch of times to watch the show and people would spot him and he would literally he would not leave until he sees every person and takes a picture like that. That's just how genuine he is. He's just good people.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:32:04] Can you tell me about what it was like to go to Japan because Japan is in my top five places I want to visit? Was it awesome?

**Deejay Young** [00:32:13] It's literally my favorite place. It is my favorite place in the world. I oh my gosh, yes. So I got to when I went with Jordan on the on that that festival that we did, that was my return time there. I did a contract there at Universal Japan for a year. I opened an R&B show that was there in 20 Oh God, in 2013. So I was there for a year and it changed my life forever. It literally just it was something about the piece and in the zen there and the people, I feel like I found myself there. I know that sounds just crazy, but I really honestly believe that.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:32:59] Yeah, it doesn't sound crazy at all. From the city to the countryside and the gardens and the quality of the architecture, the stuff, there's something that like speaks to me about the architecture of Japan. I don't know why.

**Deejay Young** [00:33:14] It's it's great. It's clean,

**Deejay Young** [00:33:17] it's so clean there.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:33:18] And it's also so, so old and so true to what it is. But also like the city is cool. The street style is cool. The fashion is cool.

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**Deejay Young** [00:33:28] Oh yeah, the clothes. I bought so many clothes

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:33:31] I don't know. I just want to experience. And it's just like the freshest sushi and the like. The actual, not the Americanized. I don't know. I just I'm so drawn to. It's a really a place I want to visit, so I must. Yeah, I love that you just said it was like your favorite.

**Deejay Young** [00:33:45] Yeah, I lived there for a year and going back when we did the festival, we went and, you know, went to the neighborhood that I used to stay in, and I actually headlined my own show there. My first show that I ever headlined internationally. We sold it out when we were there, and it was just beautiful to go back and just relive that time in my favorite place. And the fans are still like checking in, see what I'm doing, and they support like it's one of my top cities on my music sites and everything. Japan is just a great, great place.

**Deejay Young** [00:34:21] I love it so much.

**Deejay Young** [00:34:22] The first time I saw cherry blossom, I just was like, You know, it was, yeah, it struck me.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:34:29] Did you find the language barrier to be a challenge? Is that a thing there?

**Deejay Young** [00:34:32] I was nervous about that initially. Someone bought me like a book like, you know, a Japanese learning book, and I never really got the chance to really dive into it just because of all the stuff that I was doing, trying to launch the show that I was opening. But I would say that the way that you learn is just talking to people like you have to talk to go to, you know, a restaurant and you just learn. From interacting with people, so I learned naturally from just going out and being places that I didn't find the language barrier too crazy because I just picked up on it. Yeah, they're very nice people, at least where I was. I lived in Osaka, which is a more, I guess it's a little more traditional, I would maybe think. But there are Americans, there are a lot of Americans teach English there, which I learned. I met a few English teachers and they

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seemed the Japanese people there seemed very patient with people that were not, you know, Japanese. And they they understood that there may be a language barrier, but they, I don't know. It's just very different from from Americans. I remember this one instance where I was riding my bike to my apartment and these kids stopped me and I thought they were like hurt or in trouble or something. But he goes, The kid went your skin, and I was like, Oh no, it's like something on me. And he was like, No, your skin's so beautiful. And I was like, Oh my gosh, like, I'm different than him. And he thinks that that's beautiful to him.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:36:14] DeeJay, when I tell you, I didn't know where that story was going

**DeeJay Young** [00:36:19] I know I.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:36:20] I'm so glad it went that way. Yeah. What a gorgeous interaction.

**DeeJay Young** [00:36:24] Yeah, he seemed like something was wrong. So I thought something was on me and he goes, No, your skin's so beautiful. Like, it was like he never saw it before, like he appreciated that, you know? So that's that was my experience there, just like people that are different from me and they appreciated it. And they love my culture and they love people that are different from them and they wanted it. They wanted me to enjoy my time there, and I thought that I was so just refreshing. So I'll always have a place in my heart for Japan.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:37:03] I can't wait to go whenever it is. Yeah. Oh, you just renewed my. Yeah, yeah,

**DeeJay Young** [00:37:09] it's something else is something else. Yeah, I can't wait to go back.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:37:13] Maybe we'll go together. Maybe the universe. Maybe this isn't. Oh, we don't know. Maybe that is going to be in Japan for something and you'll be in Japan for something. And I'll just say, Oh, see you here.

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**Deejay Young** [00:37:22] Then while I'm here, let's ride the ferry. Let's go.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:37:25] Yeah, yeah. Show me all the good spots.

**Deejay Young** [00:37:28] Oh my gosh.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:37:29] Before we get into your Hamilton story and the Patreon Peeps. Let's talk about your music because your album Primitive came out pretty recently.

**Deejay Young** [00:37:37] Yeah. 2020.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:37:39] Yeah, I love the song hashtag. I know. I'm sure you hear that all the time.

**Deejay Young** [00:37:43] Thank you.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:38:40] you have a short film, you have a lot of videos, you have an unplugged Christmas album, which is absolutely gorgeous. I love Christmas music so much.

**Deejay Young** [00:38:49] Thank you. Me too.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:38:50] Blane and I were talking about Christmas music.

**Deejay Young** [00:38:52] Actually, I love Christmas music. Love, love, love.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:38:56] So tell me all about your music and tell the listeners if they don't know. Like, you make a lot of videos and you have a short film and just tell me about the all the amazing content you're creating.

**Deejay Young** [00:39:06] Sure. So my first album I made when I was actually before I went to Japan, I released it when I was in Japan. So that was 2013. And now here we are in 2022 and I oh my gosh, how many albums do I have? I don't even know. I don't want to be wrong,

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**Deejay Young** [00:39:25] yeah, it's like four or five, and I just never thought that I would be. I never thought that that's where I would be right now. Creating music and people actually like it, and they listen to it and it's worldwide like, that's just what I dreamed of when I was in high school and during the shutdown, I was able to go back and kind of finish the stuff that I was creating before I booked Hamilton. And that's when the primitive album was born, and I was just in a place where. I really wanted to let people know who may not feel validated and may not feel like their lives, no matter what it may be, are not as beautiful as they think that they should. And I just want people to just feel that and just know that they're beautiful in their own way, no matter who or what they are. And that's what primitive it is. My love letter to to myself, I really realized a lot of things about me and a lot of my flaws and all of that in the pandemic because we couldn't go anywhere. We were literally stuck with ourselves and our thoughts, and I wanted to just write a love letter to me and hopefully that would open up the doors of love to other people's hearts within themselves, too. And that's why I wrote songs like Hashtag to let people know like, Hey, you're everything you were meant to be. And the album debuted at, I think, number three on the iTunes charts. I was like, next to Brandy like it was, it was just an insane.

**Deejay Young** [00:41:07] You say what?

**Deejay Young** [00:41:08] Yeah, I was. I was floored. I almost didn't even release the album because I was like, It's a pandemic. I don't want to be selfish, but I feel like I need to get this message out. I don't know. I just felt really weird about releasing music, and then I woke up and I was the third album in the country and I was like, Well, what is what is happening?

**Deejay Young** [00:41:26] Like, like, what is actually going on? I never thought that, you know, I would be creating music and it being heard all around the world and one of the top R&B albums in the country. That's insane to me. We were on the Grammy ballot like things like that. I just never, never thought that I would. I would reach these milestones right now. So, yeah, from then on, I wanted to create a visual album based on primitive. So in the pandemic, I created a film based on all of the songs,

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and we premiered it at AMC in Orlando. And now I have a partnership with AMC, where I'm able to distribute the film in different states and cities across the U.S. So I'm working on that and hopefully I'll be doing screenings in different cities that I'm in while on tour. But yeah, I'm just super excited about all the doors that my music has opened to go from the primitive album than we did the Primitive Sessions album, which is a live album we did once the shutdown was over. I did that in Orlando, and the show came out so well that we turned it into an album. So those are my two, my two latest albums, and I'm super proud of them. And we may be bringing back the film online very, very soon. So yeah, I'll have to keep you posted about that, but it'll be on [deejayyoung.com](http://deejayyoung.com). That's how you'll see, like all the updates about everything. But yeah, my music is is everywhere. Music can be purchased and streamed, so I'm super happy that you've heard it and people love it. And it's just an honor. It's a complete honor for me.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:43:15] Well, congratulations on everything. Thank you. It's just it's wild to hear that you were at the top of the charts, but it's not surprising to me because the album it's so good you just really like, Thank you. I'm I really mean it. I was. I loved it. I love it. I love that it's a love letter to yourself. So congratulations on everything and definitely keep me posted because I'll tell everyone where they can see the film, whether whether in person I'll link where people can support you and buy your album.

**Deejay Young** [00:43:44] Thank you so much. I really appreciate that I really wanted to make a body of work because that's how we were talking about Paramore and artists that we liked. They were making full albums. I feel like nowadays that's very rare where people make an album where, like every song is connected and you have to listen to the whole thing to understand sonically what's happening now. It's like there's a single that's hot in, you know, none of the music relates to the previous. I wanted to make an album where, like every song, is related to the same theme and it just flows. And then by the time it's over, you're like, Oh, shoot, I just listen to a story. And so that's why I was so easy to make the film. I'm a huge movie buff like I predict the Oscars and Oscar winners and stuff. I'm very big on that, so I've always wanted to be in a

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film. So to be the star of a film about my experience, you know, going from a young boy to a man and what experiences I've had and just was just so special to me. So, yeah, primitiveness is probably the most special album to me. Out of all the ones that that I've done, it's very special, so I'm glad that it's being received that way.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:45:05] Yeah, that was my experience. It was very cohesive. It was a story. It felt everything you wanted. I had that experience. So you should know that.

**Deejay Young** [00:45:14] I love that. Thank you.

**Deejay Young** [00:45:16] Thank you. Thank you.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:45:17] Can we also talk real quick? Then we'll get into your entire Hamilton story just about your Christmas album. Because I love Christmas music and it's so good your voice is like, so beautiful and thank you. It's just made me feel like warm and cozy listening to it.

**Deejay Young** [00:45:31] My parents and I joke and my best friend, she she jokes with me too. I tell her when I look at the stats of my music every, every so often I can see like, who's listening and from where? And my Christmas album is in rotation

**Deejay Young** [00:45:47] all year long, all year long. I laugh so hard and I'm like,

**Deejay Young** [00:45:52] OK, so there are people like me who just love Christmas music. I adore Christmas music. It's my favorite holiday. Christmas music. Just it makes me just feel I don't know what it is, but it just gives me a certain feeling. So I have always wanted to make a Christmas album, but I didn't want to mess it up.

**Deejay Young** [00:46:13] So that's what took me so long. I was like,

**Deejay Young** [00:46:16] What songs do I do? I know I can't do all of them. And I don't want to mess up Christmas. I don't want to ruin people's presents.

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**Deejay Young** [00:46:23] So I was like, It has

**Deejay Young** [00:46:25] to be something where like, I do my rendition, but it still feels classic. And that was that was the goal. I did an EP called Unplugged, and then the same year, I wanted to do Christmas music in the same vein of the Unplugged. And that was the unplugged Christmas album. I did just a bunch of my favorite Christmas tunes, and I'm very proud of it. I I listen to it this past Christmas and I was like, Oh wow, it still feels classic and people are still listening to it. So I'm super glad about that. And we won an independent music award for Christmas. Time is here from from somewhere else?

**Deejay Young** [00:47:10] Yeah. Mm-Hmm.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:47:53] All right, let's. Another thing that makes people as happy as Christmas, Hamilton was, you're Hamilton story. When did you first start hearing about it? Were you listening to it? Did you see it first? Was it a goal for you to be in it? Did you not care all that much like what? What is your whole experience with the show?

**Deejay Young** [00:48:11] So I remember people talking about this show. People listening to this show that they downloaded, and I feel like that's when the craze started happening is when it became available to download. I didn't really hear about it when I was at the Public Theater. I know a lot of people found out about it that way, but most of those people live in New York. I'm based in Florida, so I really didn't get on the train then. But a lot of people started talking when it became available on like iTunes and stuff. And everyone was listening to it. Everyone was saying, Have you heard about Hamilton? Have you heard Hamilton? Have you heard the show? And when people do that, my first reaction is not to like, jump on the bandwagon. So I was very skeptical because I don't like to. I don't like to get let down. I don't like to. Have people's experience of something, and then I have my experience and then I'm very much like, OK, maybe that was not all that was hyped up to be. So for a while I did not listen to it. I did not listen to it. I really didn't research it. And then I downloaded it on Apple Music one day and I was like, Whoa, this is really incredible. And I found



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out that Lin was the person who wrote and directed it or, excuse me, did all the music. And I was like, Oh, this makes sense. I love In The Heights. This totally makes sense. I get those same vibes from it. And I actually first saw it. Oh man, I missed. I missed. This year I I missed up this year. Every time I want to say 2017, I saw the Chicago cast for the first time and then I understood because you listen to it and it's it's one experience, but watching it and seeing it changes the game like immensely. I'll never forget listening to who lives, who dies, who tells her story for the first time, just the music by itself. And I was like. This is I've never heard a show in a long time where like you just get chills in your, you know, just completely move like almost sobbing on a car ride, I haven't experienced that. Yeah. So when I when I saw the show, it just everything clicked and I said to myself, I'm going to be in this show. I don't know when. I don't know how, but I have to be in this show. And that was in 2017. I got cast. July 2019.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:50:56] Wow.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:50:57] Yeah. So what were you doing around that time? Were you focused on music or were you auditioning to be in theater?

**Deejay Young** [00:51:04] I was honestly at Disney. I was contracted at Disney. Now I was doing regional theater outside of my Disney obligation. I got the opportunity to do lots of regional theater, and I started to do shows that, like I've always wanted to do, but was never being seen. For I specifically two roles I play Collins in rent space right before my Hamilton call, and I played Andre de Shields role in Ain't Misbehavin. Oh wow, yeah. Two major roles. Two big roles that I just always admired but never saw myself doing, and I finally got the chance to do it, and something in me just felt like I was being stretched for a specific purpose. Now, when I moved to Orlando. I was. In college before that actually left college to pursue my career in entertainment, it was it was a tough decision and I was going to major in English and minor in theater. I was the most depressed I've ever been in my entire life. I didn't know what depression really was because I never experienced it, but I knew that I was not in a place that was healthy. I wasn't myself, and I felt like I needed to get out

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because I felt like I wasn't doing what I wanted to do and needed to be doing at the time. So, yeah, I ended up leaving my college. I was there for about a year and I left, and that was probably the hardest thing I ever had to do. So, no, I did not get like a degree in acting or anything like that, but I just felt like I needed to be elsewhere. And I feel like if I didn't do that, I wouldn't be here. So long story short, I was in. I was in Orlando. When when that happened? Yeah.

**Gillian Pensavalle** [00:53:25] All right. Love in that honesty, DeeJay. DeeJay's back next week, and he's talking about his audition process for Hamilton, how coming back after the shutdown has helped him hone the roles he takes on, how he finds individuality in each of the roles, how the show has changed and so much more as DeeJay answers questions from the Patreon Peeps. So until then, stay safe. Stay healthy. Thanks so much for listening. I love you. Talk to you next week. I'm G. Pen

[00:54:16]

**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 media at the pod is @TheHamilcast and I'm @gillianwithag G-I-L-L-I-A-N-W-I-T-H-A-G. Visit [THEHAMILCAST.COM](https://THEHAMILCAST.COM) for episodes, transcripts and more. You can see what's going on with Mike, you know Mike, at [MichaelPaulSmith.Net](https://MichaelPaulSmith.Net) True Crime Obsessed is my true crime comedy podcast with my podcast soulmate, Patrick Hinds, and we were the first podcast to ever play Broadway. Ever. Thank you so much for listening. It means the world to me. To the revolution!

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