

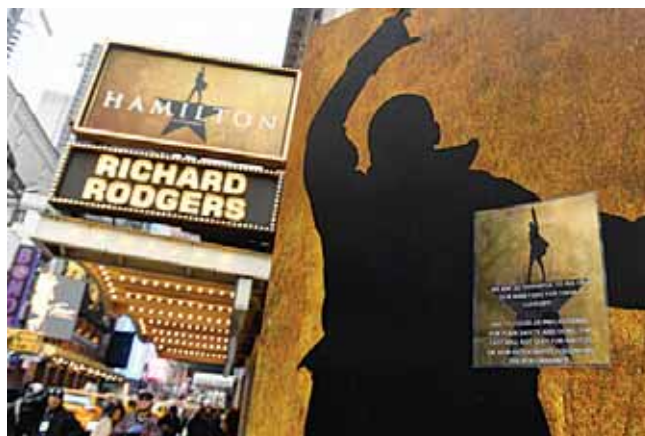
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BROADWAY SMASH 'HAMILTON' COMES TO DISNEY+ AMID US RECKONING ON RACISM

"Hamilton" is bringing its groundbreaking blend of hip-hop musical numbers, color-blind casting and political revolution to Disney+ at a poignant moment in US racial history, its creator and original cast said. A filmed version of the Broadway stage phenomenon about the US founding fathers told through the lens of modern, multi-ethnic America lands on Disney's streaming platform on July 3. With theatres closed due to the pandemic and the initial cast having long ago moved on to other endeavors, the movie offers a rare chance to see the original run of a show that won 11 Tonys and has grossed \$1 billion worldwide. Creator Lin-Manuel Miranda said his excitement had been piqued by witnessing the musical's influence on nationwide anti-racism protests that followed George Floyd's death in police custody last month.

"I know that when I see a sign at a protest out in the street that says 'History Has Its Eyes On You,' or 'Tomorrow There'll Be More Of Us,' I know that the language of the show is connecting in a way that makes me incredibly proud," Miranda said, referring to popular lyrics from the show. "I can't even wrap my mind around (that)," he told an online press conference.

The musical tells the story of Alexander Hamilton and fellow founding fathers with rap and hip-hop numbers mixed in with traditional show tunes. Since its first Broadway run, the musical has been performed across the country and abroad, casted with mostly non-white actors. That diversity, and its message of risk-



In this file photo a sign for at Hamilton, an American musical on Broadway is viewed on March 12, 2020 in New York City.—AFP

musical, Hamilton berates a pro-British Loyalist who called the Revolution a "rabble," telling the crowd that "the revolution is comin'" and "I'd rather be divisive / Than indecisive / Drop the niceties!" "Young kids who are out there, who are upset and angry... can watch this and realize that they can put their ener-

gies through writing, through challenging the people who are telling you things that you don't like to hear, like Hamilton did," said Onaodowan, who played Hercules Mulligan and James Madison.

'Best piece of art'

From its 2015 Broadway debut, "Hamilton" soared in popularity, driven by social media buzz, its catchy score, and celebrity fans including the Obamas. Then-first lady Michelle Obama famously called it "the best piece of art in any form that I have ever seen in my life." But its immense success drove ticket prices into the stratosphere, with resales fetching thousands of dollars each. "We always said we wanted to democratize the world seeing this company doing this show," said Miranda of the film. "Folks just could not afford the ticket," added Daveed Diggs, who played the Marquis de Lafayette and Thomas Jefferson.

"We were—as a company and an entity—in constant battle with the resale market," he added. Director Thomas Kail shot footage for the movie over three days in June 2016. The film melds two live performances—in which cameras sat among and above Broadway audiences—with closed-door renditions, in which "we were able to get on stage with a steady cam, or have a camera on a crane" for a greater sense of proximity. "This is not trying to be the show," Kiel said. "This is its own experience."—AFP

Never mind the skyscrapers, grab a deckchair on Milan's 'beach'



People sunbathe in a kind of green beach amid the skyscrapers called "Il Lido Bam" located in the "Library trees" park in the Porta Nuova district, center Milan.—AFP

Milan sun-worshippers, finally emerging from months of coronavirus lockdown, do not have to travel far to find a deckchair and a parasol: a "beach" beckons right in the middle of one of the city's main business districts. It's not the seaside, concedes 22-year-old student Mauro Manara Rossino. "But we're nearly there, with some imagination!" Lido Bam, or Bam Beach, appeared at the weekend in a park in Milan's Porta Nuova district, home to Italy's tallest skyscraper, the Unicredit Tower.

Around 80 parasols are scattered across the park, with deckchairs spaced to respect the social distancing rules still in force since the virus lockdown began easing last month. "It's a beautiful way of escaping the city routine," says Francesca Gatti, a 21-year-old economics student sunbathing with a friend. The urban treat, an initiative of the park's owner, the Riccardo Catella Foundation, is free for the time being—but next week punters will pay up to eight euros (about \$9) for their place in the sun. Rosalia Scarcella, a 45-year-old nurse, praised the sandless urban beach. After difficult months working through the pandemic crisis—which hit Italy far harder than most countries, claiming more than 34,000 lives — "I needed to take a break," she said. "For those who can't get away, it's a great alternative," she added.—AFP

Bollywood to resume shoots but virus rules dull its shine

Bollywood will resume film shoots immediately, industry representatives said yesterday, but strict virus rules banning "elaborate or extravagant" scenes threaten to strip the world's biggest movie-making machine of its trademark dazzle. The decision by three major industry bodies ends a months-long hiatus following the imposition of a nationwide coronavirus lockdown in India in late March. Although the government allowed shoots to resume earlier this month, producers, actors and crew have been embroiled in negotiations about the health risks involved.

Yesterday, industry representatives said they had "amicably resolved the outstanding issues (and) paved the way for the immediate resumption of shootings", including the provision of medical and life insurance to all crew members. But tough restrictions to fight the spread of the virus pose a major challenge to filmmakers, who will not be allowed to film wedding scenes or fight sequences that have long been Bollywood staples.

Furthermore, actors over the age of 65 are banned from being on set—a rule that would see some of India's most revered stars, such as 77-year-old Amitabh Bachchan, forced to stay home instead. Social distancing norms will



put a stop to scenes showing actors kissing or embracing, spelling a return to the more conservative 1980s, when Bollywood songs often cut to images of flowers brushing against each other—then a shorthand for romance. Producers will also be required to have a doctor, nurse and an ambulance on set—a punishing requirement at a time when Mumbai is already struggling with a shortage of health workers and ambulances. The 16-page set of guidelines, framed by the Producers Guild of India, also includes a request for actors to do their hair and makeup at home and urges casting directors to locate real-life relatives for family sequences to limit interactions between strangers.—AFP

Paris fashion week to go ahead in September

Paris fashion week is to go ahead in September, the organisers said Wednesday. The French Haute Couture and Fashion Federation said it will be held between September 28 and October 6 and "comply with the recommendations of the authorities" on the coronavirus. Paris fashion week is by far the world's biggest and most

important. With fashionistas deprived of runway shows since March, thousands are expected to descend on the French capital to see the spring summer 2021 collections. The pandemic has turned the fashion calendar upsidedown, with Paris men's and haute couture fashion shows next month being held online.—AFP