

Lin-Manuel Miranda



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From teacher to award-winning songwriter, Lin-Manuel Miranda is an important figure in the arts and education.



Lin-Manuel Miranda is famous for creating incredible music and musical theater productions. But did you know that he was once a teacher? Read on to discover how Miranda got his start as a teacher, and how he's still active in education today!

Early Years

You might know Lin-Manuel Miranda for his work in theater and music. After all, he has composed songs for hit Disney movies, created award-winning musicals, and much more. But Miranda also has experience as a teacher.

Miranda was born in 1980 in Manhattan, New York. His parents were from Puerto Rico. Miranda grew up in a Latino neighborhood and was influenced by both Latin music and hip-hop. From a young age, he also loved musical theater. In high school, Miranda went on to act and sing in his school's theater program. He even studied theater at college. While studying, he began working on what would later become his first musical: "In the Heights." The show combined hip-hop and salsa. It told the story of a New York neighborhood similar to the one where Miranda grew up.

FUN FACT

The first Broadway musical opened in 1866.



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After graduating, Miranda worked as an English teacher at a high school in Manhattan. At first glance, teaching might seem very different from creating musicals and songs. According to Miranda, however, teaching gave him many skills he uses in his career. “Like great actors, great teachers know how to listen,” he says. He also says that working as a teacher helped him avoid stage fright!



A poster advertising the musical “Hamilton” is on display in city street.

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Making His Mark

In 2007, the project Miranda had long worked on, “In the Heights,” had its debut in Manhattan. The show was a revolutionary look at the different cultures and peoples that make up New York City. It gave voices to communities that were not often represented in theater. In 2008, the show opened on Broadway, one of the most famous theater districts in the world. That same year, it won five major music awards!

In 2015, Miranda shot to worldwide fame with the creation of the musical “Hamilton.” The musical broke barriers. It told the historical tale of American statesman Alexander Hamilton, but with modern music and diverse representation. It also broke records for the amount of award nominations it received.

Since then, Miranda has composed original songs and music for famous films, such as Disney’s “Moana” and “Encanto.” He has also continued to act, appearing in both films and television series. And he has even directed films, too.



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Lin-Manuel Miranda raps during a performance with singer Jennifer Lopez.
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A Legacy of Education

While Miranda has focused his career on the arts, he has also been a champion of education—and especially education through the arts. Miranda and his family created organizations that provide opportunities in and access to the arts for all people. With the Miranda Foundation, Miranda and his family create opportunities for people in Puerto Rico by awarding scholarships in the arts. In 2016, Miranda also founded the Flamboyant Arts Fund for the same purpose.

DID YOU KNOW?

One of the songs Miranda wrote for “Encanto,” called “We Don’t Talk About Bruno,” became the first Disney song to reach the number-one spot on Billboard’s Hot 100 chart.

Miranda and his family support other organizations, too. They provide opportunities for people of color and Puerto Ricans to become involved in political and government issues. According to Miranda, teaching is an important part of theater—and the arts are just as important to teaching!