

[June 3, 2016]

Here's an idea for a musical about George Washington:

George is loved and admired by all for his honesty, decency, bravery, and integrity. Adults and children literally sing his praises as he leads a rag-tag band of misfits against all odds, against the mightiest army the world has ever known. But George has secrets -- LOTS of secrets. He trolls out-of-the-way pubs dressed as a woman he calls "Georgina". He sleeps with his stepdaughter, Patsy, a selfish slut, but lusts after his stepson, John, a selfish snot, who sleeps with Patsy when either aren't sleeping with God Knows Who. When Patsy announces that she is pregnant and the father is God Knows Who, George and John kill her, frame two of her slaves for her death, then have them shot.

Then there is Hugh, the hunky British Army officer who carries on with "Georgina" and John, unbeknownst to either. Hugh is a vicious hedonist who would make de Sade beg for mercy, but "Georgina" and John, each of whom Hugh abuses mercilessly, just can't stay away. John falls ill with a mysterious virus as George learns that Hugh has been executed after being caught poking Cornwallis's pony. George flies into a blind rage, turning certain defeat at Yorktown into glorious victory. He returns to Mount Vernon to find John dead. As Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin ask him to be King of the United States, George, cradling John's body in his arms, demands that he be made Queen. His clueless wife, mother of the now-dead selfish snot and selfish slut, suggests "President" instead. The cast then belts out a rousing rendition of "*I Gotta Be Me*" as the curtain falls.

Of course, none of that is even remotely-close to being historically-accurate. But no doubt, some no-talent twit is out there just itching to do to Washington what Lin-Manuel Miranda has done to fellow Founding Father Alexander Hamilton.

Miranda's magnum opus "*Hamilton: An American Musical*" is poised to slay the competition at the Tony Awards. It is a one-trick pony with two gimmicks: a) the roles are played by non-whites, save for King George III, a not-so-subtle insinuation that whites are evil; and b) the characters hip-hop and rap. "Our cast looks like America looks now", Miranda said, shitting on the old, dead white men who are making him shit-loads of money ("*Hamilton*" raked in \$30 million in ticket sales BEFORE it opened), insisting that only "actors of color" can make "the story more immediate and more accessible to a contemporary audience". Indeed, a casting call for the Broadway and tour companies went out in March seeking specifically "NON-WHITE men and women". Imagine a casting call for WHITE men and women ONLY! And isn't race-based discrimination illegal? But, I digress...

What Miranda is schlepping is called "non-traditional casting", and it's been done to death! An all-female revival of "*The Odd Couple*" ran on Broadway in 1985. A 1994 Broadway revival of "*Carousel*" featured a mixed-race cast. The American Century Theater staged an all-black revival of "*That Championship Season*" in 2007, shifting the play's setting to Alabama. Hell, Shakespeare had his female roles played by men!

Naturally, Miranda's revisionist hogwash has white critics jerking themselves a soda:

* Billboard: "... should be required viewing for every American citizen..."

* Chicago Tribune: "... audaciously ambitious... supremely executed... the most entertaining, provocative and moving civics lesson in Broadway history".

* Entertainment Weekly: "... one of the most joyful, kinetic, and extravagantly original musicals ever imagined for the stage".

* New York Daily News: "... Broadway is officially the coolest place on the planet. And the smartest. And most exhilarating".

* New York Times: "... proof that the American musical is not only surviving but also evolving in ways that should allow it to thrive and transmogrify in years to come".

* Time Out New York: "... the greatest American musical in decades... jubilant, overflowing rich... language-drunk, rhyme-crazy dynamo".

* USA Today: "... riveting, exhilarating and haunting".

* Vulture: "... let's not call '*Hamilton*' groundbreaking. Let's call it, with hope for the future, historic".

* Washington Post: "... blazingly original, restlessly innovative, magnetic from start to finish".

I'd LOVE to score the crack these "critics" were smoking when they saw this "language-drunk" Lipstick-on-a-Pig Routine:

* Hamilton is described as "The 10-dollar founding father without a father / Got a lot farther by working a lot harder / By being a lot smarter / By being a self-starter".

* Fresh off the boat, Hamilton announces: "Hey, yo, I'm just like my country / I'm young, scrappy and hungry / and I am not throwing away my shot".

* Aaron Burr trying to woo Hamilton's sister-in-law: "I'm a trust fund baby / You can trust me".

* King George III (played as an effeminate snot): "You're on your own / Awesome! Wow! / Do you have a clue what happens now?"

All Hail Tin Pan Alley Miranda and his tin ear!

That this country was created for everyone - regardless of race, creed, faith, gender, national origin or social status - is lost completely on Miranda and his cast-mates (Angelica Schuyler: "We have the opportunity to reclaim a history that some of us don't necessarily think is our own"); that the Founders were white men offends them. Would Schuyler have no problem with a white man staging a musical about Martin Luther King, and playing Martin Luther King? Yeah, didn't think so!

Re-imagining the Founding Fathers as a bunch of 50 Cent wannabes in the high-unholy name of "diversity" insults the very people Miranda claims that he wants to reach, namely, the disadvantaged kids he expects to cough up \$70 for a ticket (\$10 a pop if you're lucky enough to beat out the 49,979 other people who enter the daily online drawing for the 21 available front-row seats). The Trust Fund Babies will also have to break into their piggy banks (standard tickets start at \$139; premium tickets start at \$549) for the "joy" of experiencing a night of sore eardrums to go with their empty wallets!

I find the kudos which have been lavished on this Lipstick-on-a-Pig utterly patronizing. Were Miranda white, heading an all-white cast, would the guardians of The Great White Way be killing each other to suck wee wanker? Yeah, didn't think so!

UPDATE: "*Hamilton*" won 11 Tony Awards, winning in every category it was up for except Scenic Design. [June 12, 2016]

