

Musical Review: Hamilton Chicago

Hamilton is a Broadway musical created by Lin Manuel Miranda about founding father Alexander Hamilton. This show made its Broadway debut in August 2015 in New York City with massive success. Critics loved the combination of history and rap music as a way to bring together various types of audiences. The show continued to perform in packed audiences and tickets were sold 6 months in advance. As a result of its massive popularity, the show extended their operations to the CIBC theater in Chicago, Illinois. I had the pleasure of traveling to Chicago and watching the show live.

Ever since I discovered the soundtrack of *Hamilton* in 2015, I was immediately hooked. This was a completely different type of rap than the mainstream. Each paragraph has meaning to the overall story. An avid listener has no choice but to listen to the entire soundtrack and simply marvel in its glory. Sadly, it seemed that all of the U.S. had jumped on the *Hamilton* train. Tickets to the show in New York rose to expensive heights and were never available. Two years later, my Mom told me how she knew the chief of operations at the new site of *Hamilton* in Chicago. It seemed like a no-brainer to jump on this opportunity.

On November 22, I was finally on my way to see *Hamilton* in Chicago. When we arrived to the CIBC theater, I was extremely excited. The only thing that made me apprehensive for the show was whether or not this new cast could live up to the fabulousness of the original cast in New York.

As soon as the curtain came up and the first song started, it was made clear that this show would most definitely exceed my expectations. At the final song, I sat there with my mind blown thinking this was the greatest show I have ever seen. I

don't cry during shows or movies, but everyone else in my family does. Let's just say, my mom was gushing tears by the end of the first act.

Throughout the show, every single scene is followed by another musical number that works in one fluid motion. Rapping serves as the dialogue to the story, engaging the audience with lyrics that are both powerful yet simple. After the first act, my mom told me how she hated rap music, but "absolutely loved this." That is a testament to the show's ability to break age barriers and give everyone an impactful history lesson.

That is essentially the purpose of the show, to provide a history lesson about Alexander Hamilton, a founding father whose impact often goes forgotten. Simply listening to the soundtrack gave me an introduction, explaining his contribution to forming a national bank and why he's on the five dollar bill. My dad had no clue who Alexander Hamilton was, thinking he was a president. A main criticism of the show is that you need to know history to be able to enjoy it. Quite the contrary, a spectator simply needs to express an interest in learning about it. One could know very little about American history, and *Hamilton* could be the show that provides a framework to spark that interest.

Hamilton features a small cast of established actors who make the show come alive. Many actors play multiple parts, which adds to the impressiveness of the ability to cast dynamic actors. It is quite surreal to watch Chris De Sean Lee rap at insane speeds as French revolutionist Lafayette and then rap battle with Hamilton as Thomas Jefferson. This is a show that requires a well-versed ensemble. They are the glue that add background and context to the play's overall plot.

Overall, watching *Hamilton* live was a surreal experience that had me mesmerized throughout. Although tickets are expensive, the show is well worth it. *Hamilton* is a once in a lifetime experience, a marvel of a show that makes history quite

enjoyable.

Student Profile: Alec Thomas



Alec Thomas is well known for his talent in the swimming pool. Since freshman year, he has competed in various swim meets for Prep's varsity team. His ability has brought in Division I offers from various schools all over the country. With all this recognition, many people are astounded to learn that Alec also competes and excels at another sport, tennis.

Alec has been playing tennis since he was three years old. His mom, a former division one tennis player for Duquesne University, introduced him to the sport. "One of my earliest memories is my Mom tying a tennis ball from our garage, then handing me a kick-start tennis racquet." As a result, tennis has always been a big part of his life.

Throughout his years, Alec approached tennis as a break from swimming year round. "It's something that I really enjoy, and it gives me a mental break to get my hunger back for swimming." By being a two-sport athlete, tennis has been a huge contribution to Alec's mindset as an overall competitor. "The biggest thing I have learned



from tennis is that you're never out of it." This mentality has allowed him to win D-10 tennis matches and also break countless swimming records. "There have been moments where I've had to dig deep and find a completely new level."

As someone whose main sport is not tennis, Alec's game-plan is specialized just for him. "I approach a tennis match different from swimming. My main goal is to make my opponent as uncomfortable as possible." This gives him a strategic mental edge over his opponents.



Currently, Alec's biggest influence has been Prep tennis coach Pat Grab. Grab was the person who influenced him to go to Prep. "Going to Prep was not very enticing for my family. I was supposed to swim for Mercyhurst," he recalled. Grab introduced Alec to what it meant

to be surrounded by people who wanted to win just as much as he did. Prep enticed Alec to be part of something greater than himself, being able to represent an established sports program but also forge his own path. "Pat has helped me in all facets of my life. He's fully involved in my development as an athlete."

Being on the tennis team has given Alec long lasting relationships throughout his four years at Prep. He remarked, "I'm great friends with everyone on the tennis team." The way he looks at it is through two sides of being a good teammate, being a supporter and a leader. As a supporter, Alec will be the loudest guy in the stands when cheering on his teammates. As a leader, he's responsible for holding everyone accountable. "If someone messes up, I'll let them know."

Although tennis is an individual sport, Alec cherishes its team aspect. "It feels good to play for a school that I've

grown to love, knowing that my teammates have my back is a great feeling.” For the younger guys, “I want them to know that failure is going to happen. It’s all about what you make of it. Going through failure only makes winning that much better.”

This year, Alec already has his sights set on a state championship for both doubles and singles. “I’m trying to work hard on being a good doubles partner.” This is his last year, and he expects to make the best of it. Expect big things from Alec Thomas not only in the pool but also on the court.

Prep’s 2nd Annual Shark Tank allows students to pitch products to local area business leaders

The idea of starting your own business is quite an anomaly for the average high school student. Mr Bhatti’s entrepreneurship class gives students an introduction to the intricacies of owning a businesses. One of the class’s main aspects is creating a product and presenting it to a panel of successful investors and entrepreneurs in the Erie area. This idea was derived from the mainstream TV show *Shark Tank*.

“I wanted to add a real life aspect to the class. This model gives students the ability to make a business with the potential of becoming invested,” Mr Bhatti said. These investment possibilities gives students even more incentive to provide an excellent product. Presentation skills are put to the test in order to add credibility to one’s business model.

Groups presented various products to the particular investing panel in the Prep library. Panelists included Bill Scholz, Owen McCormick, Adam Williams, Brian Slawin, Alex Brychowoski and Carl Nicolia. They listened intently to all of the proposals and gave feedback on ways to improve. Many were genuinely interested in the products, asking further questions about their capabilities in the market place.

The products included XoTic Cloting Line, GoFitness App, Porto-Poddy Charger, Dripless Coffee Mug, Lacrosse Solutions Redesigned Lacrosse Stick, and Kicker Pro. Each team used their personal knowledge and experiences when it came to making a product. Nate Fisher, a Prep lacrosse player, redesigned a lacrosse stick to help with passing and catching. His design was a more adapted version of the original sticks Native Americans used. It was clear that many of the panelists were intrigued with his creative design. Fisher commented, "It was a fun time putting my idea into action and presenting it to people who could help and give me advice." He encourages more people to take the class and try *Shark Tank* out.

Another stand out product was Kicker Pro, a redesigned football with sensors that monitor kicking ability. This was made by seniors Adam Upperman, Anthony Lupo, and Alex Douds. Anthony Lupo used his knowledge of being a kicker on Prep's football team to make an innovative product. Upperman stated, "This presentation went really well. It gave me a lot of knowledge and encouragement for any exhibition I give in the future."

Overall, Prep's second annual *Shark Tank* was a great success. Each presentation was professionally done, and impressive to each panelist. This rendition has more people excited for what the future of Prep's "Shark Tank" holds.

Cavaliers in a slump while the Celtics keep rolling

The NBA off-season has thrown every fan for a whirlwind by the various and almost outlandish trades made by many teams. Specifically in the east, Cavaliers fans were shocked when star point guard Kyrie Irving requested to be traded. Many people thought Kyrie was crazy, leaving a team that made it to the NBA Finals for the past three years. However, the organization accepted his request, trading him to the Boston Celtics for their star point guard Isaiah Thomas, forward Jae Crowder, and a first round pick. For a fantastic player like Irving, fans from both sides argued about who “won” the trade. After the trade was finalized, Irving stated in his Boston Celtics press debut that he wanted to get away from the shadow created by arguably the best NBA player in the world, LeBron James.

As soon as the trade happened, each team made respective moves to attempt to be the best team in the East. Almost like something out of a movie, James’ Cavaliers and Irving’s Celtics faced off against each other in their home opener. However, this game was no longer about the duel about these two great players, instead focusing on the tragedy of another. Six minutes into the game, another key Celtic’s acquisition, Gordan Hayward, went down with a terrifying leg injury. This injury was a complete shock to anyone watching the game, whether at home or in the arena. Many basketball fans around the world thought the Celtics season ended six minutes into their beginning. Despite the injury, the Celtics continued to fight. The game ended with the Cavaliers winning 117-104.

The current NBA season is now 14 games in; and there is a

surprising discrepancy between the Cavaliers' record and Celtics' record. According to NBA standings, the Celtics are number one in the east with a 12-2 record. The Cavaliers have had a slow start to the season, and currently sit at number 9 in the east with a 7-7 record. What surprises most fans is the Cavaliers' disastrous slow start and the Celtics' fantastic winning streak. The break down of these two teams play is important to understand their difference in record.

First is defense, the Cavaliers defense has been terrible whereas the Celtics have really stepped it up. According to ESPN, the Celtics have improved their defensive rating by 9.6 points from last season, the best improvement in the NBA. In contrast, the Cavaliers are dead last in the league for points allowed per possession. CBS specifically outlined how the worst defense has been with the perimeter players, that independently collapses defenses on the outside and interior. Various news sites have remarked on Irving's newfound defensive ability; his length makes him a tough match up against other point guards.

Second is simply team play, the Celtics have dispersed their talent throughout the entire team, even with the loss of Gordon Hayward. Specifically, the Celtics' young players, Jaylen Brown and Jayson Tatum, have stepped up to a more dominant role on the team. Jaylen Brown, an already great perimeter defender, has stepped up his offensive capabilities. Jayson Tatum has also stepped up wherever his team needs every single game. Brad Stevens commented on team's ability, "We're in a situation right now where we're going to expect a lot out of those guys and we need them to be great, we need them to be able to respond to adversity, and we need to be able to respond to pats on the back just the same." The Cavaliers new additions have not been as exciting. While they acquired LeBron's best friend and former heat teammate Dwayne Wade, they are not able to re-spark the chemistry they had back in Miami. The Celtics spread their offense really well, each

player may take over depending on the game. Whereas, the Cavaliers continue to become increasingly reliant on solely LeBron.

The NBA season is still a long way from ending. If the Celtics continue to keep the streak alive, they will have a very successful season. However, when playoff time comes, the Cavaliers might change their ways and be back to the successful team that everybody knows. This rivalry for best team in the east will be very fun to watch.

2017 Prep Open House recap

Cathedral Prep's Open House is an opportunity for prospective students to visit the school and visit all its interesting qualities. Each component of Prep's defining qualities were showcased in various areas throughout the school. The building was in tip top shape, looking its best for the families that were touring.

Teachers talked about their classes and essential curriculum they provide. All classes ranging from the science wing to the English rooms put on their best presentation for these parents. Volunteers in the science wing showed off the various labs that they do in class. One big component for all classrooms was to talk about how the iPads are integrated within the curriculum.

Additionally, Prep's sports teams and various clubs/activities presented themselves to the families. All of Prep's sports teams were in the gym: coaches and players from each respective team had kids sign up to receive notifications and updates. Complementary gifts were an enticing bonus. The various clubs and activities had presentations in the library.

Student representatives explained the various things that those clubs do and the service they provide to the school.

Prep takes pride in providing a fantastic open house to leave students with a lasting impression. Many student volunteers are required to be at the forefront of this operation. Each area had students doing their best to make Prep an enticing opportunity. Prep senior Alex Welz stated, "Open House is an exciting time for Prep's students to step up and keep Prep's enrollment going."

For many families, open house is a defining event for undecided students. The intention is to provide an introduction to what Prep is all about. This year's open house should be looked back as a moment that sparked a student's decision to become a member of Prep's brotherhood.

NFL players' protests during national anthem spark outrage and support, debate and discussion

Although the specific tradition of NFL players standing for the anthem dates back to only 2009, it has been a longstanding tradition in the United States to play the "Star Spangled Banner" (the national anthem) before sporting events. It is customary for anyone present at the game, including players, coaches, and spectators, to at least stand. In 2016, then-San Francisco 49ers quarterback player Colin Kaepernick sat and later knelt during the playing of the national anthem to protest against police brutality and structural racism. This

quiet symbolic action generated a loud discussion discrediting Kaepernick's behavior, with some calling it "disrespectful."

Among this animosity, some other players throughout the National Football League chose to follow suit. Although more athletes were doing it, the action was not described as a "movement." It was more the act of individual players who believed in what Kaepernick's message. However, these actions caught the attention of President Donald Trump, who took to Twitter to display his disapproval.

On September 23, Donald Trump tweeted "If a player wants the privilege of making millions of dollars in the NFL, or other leagues, he or she should not be allowed to disrespect to our Great American Flag (or Country) and should stand for the National Anthem. If not, YOU'RE FIRED. Find something else to do!"

President Trump's tweet sparked strong reactions from various players and teams throughout the NFL. Teams used their own methods to protest the anthem, almost as a form of resistance towards Donald Trump. A day after the tweet, Pittsburgh Steelers head coach Mike Tomlin had his team skip the anthem altogether, choosing to remain in the locker room until the game actually started. The Chicago Bears chose to remain standing but locked arms while the anthem played. Players on the Dolphins wore Kaepernick T-shirts during their pregame warm-up. Before Trump's tweet, protesting the anthem was only done by individual players scattered throughout the league. After the tweet, entire teams made it their prerogative to express their resistance.

These different types of protests along with President Trump's reaction have garnered nationwide discussion. Media outlets have blown this story up to its fullest extent, and the controversy has been a topic of discussion across the country, even making its way into the halls of Cathedral Prep.

Mr. Pituch, a social studies teacher at Prep, weighed in on the issue. "This has become a very polarizing issue. Both sides present a clear argument on its relevance today."

Jack Matthews, senior at Cathedral Prep, stated his opinion, "I feel that kneeling in protest of the flag is un-American. Our first amendment right is not only the freedom of speech but the freedom to not say anything at all." Matthews' opinion is against the players' actions; however, there is always another side to the issue.

Mr. Hubert, an English and journalism teacher at Prep, used the issue as a teachable moment in his sports journalism class. "What I was reading on social media and what I was hearing in conversation was a lot of divisive, polarizing rhetoric," he said. "I try to teach my students that it is important to be willing to engage in respectful dialogue and to listen to different perspectives on tough issues."

Mr. Hubert assigned his sports journalism students to read a variety of articles analyzing and reporting on the protests. The articles, which came from a variety of sources, spanned the political spectrum and included columns with low-to-high levels of bias as well as objective news reports. "I was pleased with how well my students handled the follow-up conversation in a civilized manner. "Too many people resort to name-calling, seeking their mic-drop moment to shut down and 'win' the debate," he said. "I challenged my students to be open-minded and empathetic—to push themselves to try to understand how the other side feels, and as a result we had a very productive, healthy classroom discussion."

Clearly, this is an issue that ignites passion both from those people who support the protesters and those people who oppose them. The debate also leaves room for both sides to make well-reasoned points supporting their arguments. The beautiful part of this nation is that the first amendment allows them to disagree and voice their respective opinions.

Prep senior retreat recap

Prep provides their students with the unique benefit of class retreats, which serve as a way to connect with the people in one's class on a deeper, spiritual level. For seniors, it is their last time to come together as a class and experience unity. This final retreat ended on a powerful note, led by Justin Fatica and his Hard of Nails Ministry.

Justin Fatica is a Prep alum who specially takes time out of his nationwide tour to motivate his alma mater. Fatica's passion and adrenaline is noted in his speeches, sharing his own personal life and stories with the audience.

Senior class member Dominic Montefiori stated, "Fatica's really interesting and fun to watch. He really engages the audience."

Each speech is formed around the message of following God and the responsibilities it requires. Through this, one progresses as a spiritual and moral individual throughout their lifetime.

Justin's Hard of Nails ministry is a group comprised of young adults who use their personal stories as a form of inspiration. They are examples of people who have devoted their lives to spreading the gospel in order to help others. This is especially impressive, since they have chosen to make this commitment at fairly young age. When commenting on the ministry's member's, senior Alec Thomas said, "It's amazing to be able to connect with people fairly close to our age. I admire their commitment and overall positivity."

This retreat focused heavily on individual introspection. People in the class were given the opportunity to speak about

their lives. These stories told by members of the senior class strengthened many bonds among classmates.

Senior Alex Welz commented on the senior class speakers, "The stories told by members of our class were all extremely meaningful. Everyone who spoke was fantastic because it came from the heart."

Each speaker was impactful in their own way, serving as compliments to the overall message of following and trusting in God. Overall, retreats serve the primary goal of strengthening bonds between classmates. While they teach important individual lessons, this benefit is a collective gain for everyone. Therefore, Justin and his Hard of Nails ministry increased the unity of an already tight senior class.

Club Profile: Debate

One activity that often goes overlooked in a student's four years at Prep is the Debate Club. This is disappointing, as participation in this club could be enticing to many Prep students. It is developed around persuasion and argumentation, two fundamental skills to being successful in the future. Debate is also highly competitive, leading to self-rewarding results. Through this, the debate team leads to many benefits both inside and outside of school.

Debate is a combination of two fundamental skills: argumentation and persuasion. Argumentation produces critical thinking skills, leading to a greater understanding and appreciation of the world. All arguments are backed by credible sources. Therefore, debaters become excellent researchers and readers. At the same time, debate requires the

ability to effectively persuade. This is a practice that occurs in everyday life when interviewing for a job, convincing a parent to do something, or writing essays for college applications.

“Debate can be cross-applied to my role as a student and leader, both inside and outside of the classroom,” said Prep junior and debate team member Justin Czerwinski.

A debater receives these benefits without even knowing it. They have too much fun competing.

Debate is an intense and competitive activity. Like any sport, there is a sort of excitement centered around competition that increases its enjoyment. Prep junior and debate team member Owen Jacobsen said, “When i’m debating, I get in the zone.”

This game requires an ultra-level of focus that must be tapped into during a round. There is an incentive to use strategy for the purposes of beating one’s opponent.

“At the end of the day, the goal is to win,” said Prep debater Timmothy Soucash.

If someone is an inherently competitive person, they should consider doing debate. If someone is looking to gain an intro level to debate, they should take the debate class. Students learn what it means to be an independent thinker and approach the world from a critical point of view. The class is a great way to boost confidence and leadership capabilities, breeding excellent public speakers. Finally, colleges love seeing debate on a prospective student’s resume; admissions officers understand the value this activity brings to a student.

Former Prep debater Will Lewis ('17) said, “taking the class was very beneficial and sparked my interest in debate.”

Overall, the class is a great way to become acclimated into the team. Being a member of the debate team at Prep reaps

unique benefits that no other club or activity has. The first benefit is travel. Debaters get the ability to go to national tournaments all around the country, which allows for a great way to see new places and explore places outside of Erie, Pennsylvania. National tournaments opens up opportunities to make and meet new friends all across the country. The debate community is a diverse network full of like-minded people.

The debate team at Prep has a lot of upside that often goes unnoticed by the students at Cathedral Prep. Students at Prep are always reminded that they are individually vital and unique to the school. Being on the debate team could be a great opportunity to uncover that masked potential.

Prep soccer beats McDowell

Prep soccer had a fantastic 5-0 win over McDowell, adding to their 8-0 undefeated record. This win adds on to an overall impressive yet grueling week, where the Ramblers played six matches in ten days.

Prep's offense came to play, staying dominant throughout the entire game. Goals were scored by Jack Hilbrich, Matt Szparaga, Tyler Vandemerwe, and Jack Peterson. Ten minutes into the game, Hilbrich had a fantastic goal from 25 yards away, going straight through the hands of the McDowell goalie. James Kilgallon remarked of the goal, "[It was a] fantastic way to start, [and it] made our presence known on the field."

Before halftime, Szparaga was able to add in another goal from the right wing. That intensity transitioned even after the break, where just three minutes in Vandemerwe scored. This was a rebound off of Zach Hein's initial shot. Then, Peterson finished the game off with two goals, solidifying a dominant

Prep win.

Prep defended its home field very well, not allowing the Trojans to score a single goal. Although the defense often goes unrecognized, they were integral to allowing the offense to flourish. Goalie Nate Ferrick saved all shot attempts that came his way. When asked about his performance, Nate credited the defense, saying, "The Trojans forwards were always met with great resistance by our back line, making my job a lot easier."

This was the last Prep-McDowell game for many of the Prep seniors that are on the team. To capitalize on this infamous rivalry, the game was called "Kicking It For Cancer." Annalise Denning was the honored guest, a young girl diagnosed with medulloblastoma. Proceeds from the game, were given to offset her family's medical costs. Patrick Reim commented on the game, "[It was a] great win for the boys. It was really great to play for something meaningful. I'm glad I was a part of it."

North Korea's nuclear hostility

It starts again. North Korea is sending out another "warning" to the United States that nuclear missiles are headed their way. For what seems like years, North Korea has been threatening that they not only have nuclear capabilities, but will use them for the intent of destruction. In the United States, these feeble warnings have become the source of jokes for many people. Apps like Twitter and ifunny were filled with memes, ridiculing North Korea's threats. North Korea has once

again issued a threat against the United States. In the age of the Trump presidency and his unpredictability, policy analysts seem to be taking this threat much more seriously.

First, North Korea is unique, seen as a global anomaly. They are the only Communist hereditary dynasty, currently run by the dictator Kim Jong Un. The country remains relatively secret, isolating themselves from the rest of the world. This has occurred for decades, becoming a state-centered system with an almost cultish personality. Interestingly, their country went through a great famine then turned into an industrialized-urbanized machine. According to the Foreign Policy's website, they divert most of their spending and government resources to their military.

Since North Korea remains fairly secret and isolated; Kim Jong Un's aggression towards the United States is largely unknown. The New York Times isolated two main reasons: defense and recognition. Kim Jong Un may be looking to build up his military capabilities to defend against the United States in case he is ever overthrown. North Korea has also expressed desire to rejoin with South Korea, which will require forces to be revamped. The second reason is recognition; North Korea will be recognized as a global power if the United States chooses to not recognize the issue.

According to the Huffington Post, North Korea's new weapon of choice is a high energy nuclear bomb that will deliver an electromagnetic pulse at high altitudes in the air. The use of an EMP serves the possibility of destroying the U.S. power grid using overpowering energy to go through the wiring. They essentially "burn out," rendering them useless.

This type of bomb reinforces how truly unconventional North Korea is. Many people had never heard of using EMP as a strategic weapon until this threat was made. It particularly serves detrimental to the United States gridding systems, especially old ones that have not been remade. It has been

outlined by CNN that the Eastern seaboard would be the most vulnerable and susceptible to the bombs deployment.

The current political climate only exacerbates the threat of a bomb even more. Multiple sources state that Trump's antics only increase tensions between these two countries. It is apparent that North Korea is increasing their hostility towards the United States and Trump. The timeframe of an impending United States and North Korea war could be sooner than the people of the United States may imagine. 