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# *Writer's Statement for "Writing Processes of Musical Theater Writers"*

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The idea for this paper surged from a comment mentioned in class by Professor Lambert. She was talking about unconventional ways to gather information about writing processes from primary sources. Among many others, she mentioned Lin-Manuel Miranda's Twitter, and how he tweets about his musical theater writing all of the time. At the mere mention of Miranda's name, my head immediately looked up and I almost jumped out of my seat in joy. This was because for the past couple of months or so, I had been completely obsessed with Miranda's new musical theater play, *Hamilton: An All American Musical*, in which he tells the story of the first Secretary of Treasury of the United States. That day after class, I drafted two separate proposals for my essay topic, one of them being about how musical theater writers, well, write. After presenting both to professor Lambert, it was clear that the musical theater piece concept outdid the original one significantly.

Being so passionate about the main topic of my research paper transformed a long, high-stakes assignment into a pleasant getaway from schoolwork to concentrate in listening to Lin-Manuel Miranda speak about his masterpiece, as well as playing the entire musical score each time I would sit down and write something. Soon enough I discovered that Miranda's testimony was not necessarily enough information for a credible paper. The reason why I discovered this to be the case was that *Hamilton* is not a very traditional play; in fact, it is rather groundbreaking! It incorporates elements from many musical genres, the most common being rap and hip-hop, and blends them into a theater piece. This is something that had never been done before at such a large scale. Because of this, I decided to include more successful authors of musical theater plays, such as Stephen Sondheim, Lisa Lambert, and Jonathan Larson.

The first draft of my essay was easy to write. I became aware that musical theater has an immense amount of intertextuality between styles, ideas, and inspirations. After reading some interviews, videos, and even listening to the soundtracks of the musicals, I noticed how every author that I decided on studying borrowed ideas from another. Most authors even directly referenced other composers' styles when writing for their own musical theater plays. Because of this, I was able to connect the writing processes of every composer to each other as well as to the key concepts learned in class.

I faced a totally different challenge as I faced writing the finished piece to turn in. A particular difficulty that I found was that my case study included four different authors, which meant that the amount of information available for each of their writing processes was tremendous. I could not feasibly include their entire processes in the essay that I was writing because it would have felt like an overload of information. I then spoke to Professor Lambert, who helped me find a way that I could include my case study without adding too many long details. The solution was to spread out the information, and include only some aspects of each author's writing process in a way

that, as a whole, the paper would have a sort of timeline for the writing processes of musical theater writers. Also, during peer review, my friend Sabrina Warren helped me pinpoint places where I needed to include more examples from different authors that I had collected in the case study. This made the essay a much richer piece in evidence that supported the musical theater writing process for different authors.

The assignment of this essay succeeded in changing the way that I see and think about writing, as I was able to immerse myself into the world of narrative and music put together. In the end, this paper was able to give an insight into the writing processes of musical theater writers, from the time they come up with an idea all the way to revising the piece to fit a specific Broadway stage and audience.