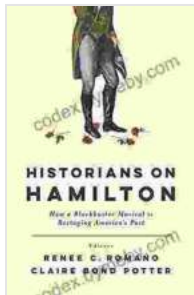


# How Musicals Are Restaging America's Past

Musicals have always been a way to tell stories about America's past. From the patriotic pageants of the early 20th century to the historical epics of the golden age of Hollywood, musicals have used song and dance to bring the nation's history to life.



## Historians on Hamilton: How a Blockbuster Musical Is Restaging America's Past by Claire Bond Potter

★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 23166 KB  
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Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 409 pages  
Screen Reader : Supported



But in recent years, there has been a surge of musicals that are explicitly about restaging that past, from the Tony Award-winning "Hamilton" to the Pulitzer Prize-winning "Between the Lines." These musicals are not just retelling stories from the past, but are also using music and performance to explore the ways that we remember and interpret that past.

"Hamilton," for example, tells the story of Alexander Hamilton, one of the founding fathers of the United States. But the musical does not simply recount Hamilton's life and accomplishments. It also uses hip-hop and R&B to explore the complex and often contradictory nature of Hamilton's legacy.

The musical asks us to consider how we can reconcile Hamilton's brilliance with his flaws, his patriotism with his ambition.

"Between the Lines" tells the story of two young women who fall in love in a Mississippi boarding school in the 1960s. The musical is set against the backdrop of the civil rights movement, and it explores the ways that race, gender, and sexuality shape the characters' lives. The musical asks us to consider how we can overcome the divisions that have plagued our nation for centuries.

These are just two examples of the many musicals that are restaging America's past. These musicals are not just entertainment; they are also important works of art that can help us to understand our nation's history and to imagine a better future.

## **The Power of Music**

Music has a powerful ability to evoke emotions and to create a sense of connection. This is why musicals have always been so effective at telling stories about the past. Music can transport us to another time and place, and it can help us to understand the experiences of people who are different from us.

The music in "Hamilton" is a perfect example of this power. The hip-hop and R&B beats give the musical a contemporary feel, but the lyrics are full of historical references. The music helps to create a sense of immediacy and urgency, and it makes the characters' struggles feel relevant to our own lives.

The music in "Between the Lines" is also powerful, but in a different way. The musical features a mix of gospel, folk, and R&B songs that reflect the characters' experiences of racism, sexism, and homophobia. The music helps to create a sense of authenticity and intimacy, and it allows the characters to express their emotions in a way that is both personal and universal.

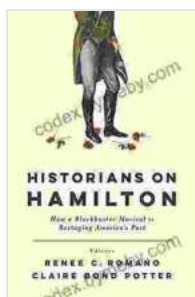
## **The Importance of Performance**

Performance is another important element of musicals that restage America's past. Live theater has the ability to create a unique and immersive experience for the audience. When we watch a musical, we are not just watching a story unfold; we are also participating in it. We are transported to another time and place, and we are given the opportunity to see the world through the eyes of the characters.

The performance in "Hamilton" is particularly noteworthy. The cast is incredibly talented, and they bring the characters to life with energy and passion. The choreography is also brilliant, and it helps to create a sense of spectacle and excitement. The performance of "Hamilton" is a truly immersive experience, and it leaves the audience with a sense of awe and inspiration.

The performance in "Between the Lines" is also powerful, but in a different way. The cast is small, but they are all incredibly talented. The acting is understated and naturalistic, and it allows the characters' emotions to come through. The performance of "Between the Lines" is a deeply moving experience, and it leaves the audience with a sense of hope and possibility.

Musicals have always been a way to tell stories about America's past. But in recent years, there has been a surge of musicals that are explicitly about restaging that past. These musicals are not just retelling stories from the past, but are also using music and performance to explore the ways that we remember and interpret that past. These musicals are not just entertainment; they are also important works of art that can help us to understand our nation's history and to imagine a better future.



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