TuSalud

Broadway's New Hamilton Is Living With HIV

Javier Muñoz, the lead in the megahit musical, is also a cancer survivor.

July 12, 2016

Javier Muñoz officially replaced Lin-Manuel Miranda last night as the lead in Hamilton, this year's Tony Award winner for best musical and the hottest show on Broadway in years. In addition to playing Alexander Hamilton, Muñoz is living with HIV—he was diagnosed in 2002 and is undetectable—and he recently beat cancer, he tells The New York Times.

In the Q&A, Muñoz says he is very public about his HIV, especially on social media, in hopes of eliminating some of the stigma.

"I have this joke—if it's funny or not funny, I don't know—but the joke is that I have died several times already, and that's how it feels," he told the Times. "My life completely and drastically changed in 2002 when I was diagnosed with HIV, and then again last year with cancer. And you can't unknow what you know. Life is not the same after that. But I'm alive, and I'm for all intents and purposes healthy and well. And I'm grateful for that."

Muñoz, who is 40 and gay, grew up in New York City, the child of Puerto Rican parents.

Up until this point, Muñoz has been Miranda's understudy, typically performing one show per week as Hamilton, the United States' first Treasury secretary. He took a few weeks off for surgery and radiation in the fall, after discovering a cancerous lump.

"I've had a healthy fear about my health since I tested positive, and I asked how to test myself for lumps, because both my parents had cancer. And very early on in my learning how to do a self-examination, I found the lump. I wasn't immediately worried because of where it was—and I do want to keep that private because that's the only thing that's mine in this. But I brought it up to my doc, and that's what led to further testing and discovery," he told the Times.

Cancer-free and undetectable, Muñoz will perform seven shows per week as the U.S. Founding Father. The rap musical is currently sold out through January 2017. For more info, including promo clips, visit HamiltonBroadway.com.

Below is a recent tweet from Muñoz:

My new address; moved in.

“Let’s go”????@HamiltonMusical #Javilton

pic.twitter.com/1oi18DrS9K

— Javier Muñoz (@JMunozActor) July 11, 2016

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