

[MFA grad returns to Broadway in 'My Fair Lady'](#)

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MFA grad Justin Lee Miller, seated at left in top hat, on stage in 'My Fair Lady.' (Photo by Joan Marcus)

Tulane University School of Liberal Arts alumnus Justin Lee Miller admires the live oaks of Audubon Park. But today, he spends most of his time among the oft-mentioned lilac trees of Lincoln Center Theater's opulent production of *My Fair Lady* in New York City.

Miller is a featured ensemble member in the current Broadway production of Lerner and Loewe's *My Fair Lady*, a musical based on the 1913 George Bernard Shaw play *Pygmalion*. Both the play and the musical tell the story of Eliza Doolittle, a pitiable

flower girl, who is metaphorically “brought to life” by a brilliant but arrogant phonetics professor Henry Higgins.

[Miller earned an MFA in musical theatre](#) from the [Newcomb Department of Music](#) in 2017. He believes that New Orleans and Tulane are a perfect match.

“I would take the streetcar up to Tulane and think to myself, ‘Wow, this is where I go to school,’” said Miller, who relocated from the fast-paced living of New York City to the easygoing atmosphere of New Orleans in academic pursuit.

Having worked as a professional performer based in New York City for 15 years before deciding to move to New Orleans, the transition from college back into performing several shows per week was relatively smooth, said Miller.

“I’ve been doing eight shows a week my whole life, so I don’t think anything about it,” said Miller. “When you’re onstage you’re going in and out of pretending, but your body is still experiencing the play. In some ways you’re compartmentalizing. But everybody compartmentalizes, even in real life.”

Miller’s credits include Broadway productions of *The Phantom of the Opera* and *On the Town*, an off-Broadway production of *Kismet*, *Sweeney Todd* at the New York Philharmonic, and *Porgy and Bess* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Although *Pygmalion* is over a century old, its theme resonates with modern audiences.

“The thing with plays in 1913 was: fall in love and get married,” Miller explained, “In Shaw’s mind, love doesn’t have to be that. It could be all kinds of things.”

“Life and theater are not so different,” he added. “You’re all wearing costumes and it’s real as much as you believe the story.”

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Justin Lee Miller, MFA 2017