

Tony and Grammy Award-winning 'Hamilton' star Leslie Odom, Jr. to address Tulane graduates

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Tony and Grammy Award winner Leslie Odom, Jr., will address graduates as the keynote speaker at Tulane University's Unified Commencement Saturday, May 20, at 6:30 p.m. in Yulman Stadium.

Tony and Grammy Award winner Leslie Odom, Jr., best known for his breakout role as the original Aaron Burr in the hit musical *Hamilton*, will address graduates as the keynote speaker at Tulane University's [Unified Commencement](#) Saturday, May 20, at 6:30 p.m. in Yulman Stadium.

A multifaceted vocalist, songwriter, author and actor, Odom has received recognition, including Emmy and Academy Award nominations, for achievements in Broadway, television, film and music. His nuanced, Tony Award-winning portrayal of Aaron Burr helped *Hamilton* become a cultural juggernaut that changed the landscape of modern musical theater.

A former headliner at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, Odom most recently starred in and performed the songs of legendary singer Sam Cooke in the film *One Night in Miami...*, which earned him nominations for an Academy Award, BAFTA Award, Golden Globe Awards and Screen Actors Guild Awards. He also wrote and performed the film's Oscar-nominated original song, which garnered a Critics' Choice Award for Best Song.

Odom recently appeared in *Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery* and starred in the *Sopranos* prequel *The Many Saints of Newark*. He will also star in the upcoming *Exorcist* trilogy and has received an Emmy nomination for voice acting on the animated musical-comedy series *Central Park*. He is a passionate advocate for arts education, citing its influence on his own life and its capacity for inspiring empathy and connection.

As a musician, Odom has released four albums, with two, *S-Curve* and *Simply Christmas*, climbing to No. 1 on the Billboard Jazz charts. He has performed at the White House, Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, Lincoln Center, Rockefeller Center and the Super Bowl. He is also the author of *Failing Up: How to Take Risks, Aim Higher, and Never Stop Learning*.

"Through their years at Tulane, our graduates engage in multi-disciplined learning, research, problem-solving and service, combining various fields of knowledge to attain expertise that can change the world," Tulane President Michael A. Fitts said. "Who better to salute their achievements than Leslie Odom, Jr., whose remarkable career reflects the inspiration found in crossing genres and boundaries."

Tulane commencements are known nationwide for their acclaimed speakers, as well as their unique New Orleans flavor that includes live jazz performances, second-lining graduates, Mardi Gras beads, a Gonfalon-led academic procession, fireworks and more Crescent City magic.