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LINDENWOOD ALUM PERFORMS IN TWO NETFLIX ORIGINAL FILMS

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By Zane Bell

Starting on December 11, 2020, anyone with a Netflix subscription will be able to watch Lindenwood alum Brandon Hudson dance in a new feature film titled *The Prom*. The upcoming release comes in quick succession to another Netflix original release, Dolly Parton's *Christmas on the Square*, which also includes a performance by Hudson and is available now.

For both movies, Hudson (who graduated from Lindenwood's Dance program in 2013) dances in various segments, and in *Christmas on the Square*, the Lindenwood alum also plays the role of Randy, an assistant to Jenifer Lewis' character.

"I dance a lot, and I'm kind of sassy here and there," Hudson said. "I felt more pressure from being around the people I was working with rather than from actually doing the role."

In this regard, Hudson's involvement with the two original projects coincides with that of several other actors from Hollywood. "The first scene [of *Christmas on the Square*] that I

shot was with Christine Baransky, Jenifer Lewis, and Dolly Parton,” said Hudson. “I definitely spent a lot of time with them.”

In getting to this point, Hudson stated that it had been “quite a ride.” These two newest film performances come after years of hard work in the entertainment industry, including time spent on Broadway and in television programs such as *Saturday Night Live* and *The Voice*.

Particularly, his performances on Broadway include the shows *Head Over Heels* and *Hamilton*. For the latter, Hudson was hired as a replacement swing (a part that can cover various roles should the need arise) partway through the show’s original run, which required him to be “ready for anything.”

In fact, he described his first appearance in the show as sudden: “I had a two hour notice. I had never been on stage with people. I had never partnered. I had never been on the moving turntable.” Naturally, Hudson explained that his time performing in an award-winning Broadway show was intense: “I was 25 at the time... and I covered Sam Seabury, so I sang a whole solo to myself on a Broadway stage with Lin [-Manuel Miranda]. It was a lot of pressure.”

Even before he first took to the stage in *Hamilton*, Hudson’s work on the show was intense, as he “learned the show in a week and a half, learned all 50 songs real quick [sic] , and then started rehearsals on stage.”

Yet throughout this process in *Hamilton* and in his various other performances, Hudson has repeatedly risen to the occasion, and he credits a personal principle as one of the keys to his professional success thus far. “It’s just one of those things: If you want it, you can get it. You just have to do the work. That’s it,” said Hudson. “Stay focused. That’s the motto I live by.”

Not only has his belief in hard work moved him forward in the entertainment industry, but it also helped him greatly in his time studying for his degree at Lindenwood.

“When I was still at Lindenwood, I did my first tour: the *West Side Story* International Tour. It went on for about eight or nine months while I was still... taking three or four classes,” he described the experience of balancing school and what was essentially considered an internship. “There was so much that happened, but then also doing school at the same time, it was just crazy.”

In reflecting on these memories of touring throughout Europe while working on his Bachelor of Arts in Dance, Hudson expressed gratitude: “I’m lucky, and I am blessed more than anything.”

Similarly, Hudson credits the Dance faculty at Lindenwood for their impactful mentorship: “They did an amazing job.... I didn’t start dancing until I got to Lindenwood. That’s the thing: They taught me everything I know, but it was my responsibility to take

what they taught me and transform it with my body.... The way those teachers teach there is that they give you the goods, but they don't make you do it.... So you really have to want to do it, and honestly that has carried me through this whole career.”

Congratulations to Brandon Hudson on his performances in *Christmas on the Square* and *The Prom*!