**BHM 2024 Theme: Arts & Entertainment (A&E)**

**Leslie Odom Jr.: American actor, singer and songwriter**

**Leslie Lloyd Odom Jr.** ([/ˈoʊdəm/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3AIPA/English); born August 6, 1981) is an American actor, singer and songwriter. He made his acting debut on [Broadway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broadway_theatre) in 1998 and first gained recognition for his portrayal of [Aaron Burr](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aaron_Burr) in the musical [*Hamilton*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamilton_%28musical%29), which earned him a [Tony Award for Best Actor in a Musical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tony_Award_for_Best_Actor_in_a_Musical) and a [Grammy Award for Best Musical Theater Album](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammy_Award_for_Best_Musical_Theater_Album) in the [same year](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/58th_Annual_Grammy_Awards).[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leslie_Odom_Jr.#cite_note-2) His performance was captured in the [Disney+](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disney%2B) [live stage recording](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamilton_%282020_film%29) of *Hamilton* which earned him a [Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Actor in a Leading Role in a Limited Series or Movie](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primetime_Emmy_Award_for_Outstanding_Lead_Actor_in_a_Limited_or_Anthology_Series_or_Movie) nomination.

Odom is also known for his roles in the television series [*Smash*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smash_%28TV_series%29) (2012–2013) and [*Person of Interest*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Person_of_Interest_%28TV_series%29) (2013–2014), as well as the films [*Red Tails*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Tails) (2012), [*Murder on the Orient Express*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder_on_the_Orient_Express_%282017_film%29) (2017), [*Harriet*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harriet_%28film%29) (2019), [*The Many Saints of Newark*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Many_Saints_of_Newark) (2021), [*Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glass_Onion%3A_A_Knives_Out_Mystery) (2022), and [*The Exorcist: Believer*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Exorcist%3A_Believer) (2023).[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leslie_Odom_Jr.#cite_note-3) For his role as singer [Sam Cooke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sam_Cooke) in [*One Night in Miami...*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_Night_in_Miami...) (2020) he earned nominations for the [Academy Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Supporting_Actor), [BAFTA Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BAFTA_Award_for_Best_Actor_in_a_Supporting_Role), [Screen Actors Guild Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Screen_Actors_Guild_Award_for_Outstanding_Performance_by_a_Male_Actor_in_a_Supporting_Role), and [Golden Globe Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Globe_Award_for_Best_Supporting_Actor_%E2%80%93_Motion_Picture) for Best Supporting Actor. He was also nominated for the [Oscar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Original_Song) and [Golden Globe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Globe_Award_for_Best_Original_Song) for writing the film's original song "[Speak Now](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speak_Now_%28Leslie_Odom_Jr._and_Sam_Ashworth_song%29)".[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leslie_Odom_Jr.#cite_note-4)

Odom currently voices the character of Owen Tillerman in the [Apple TV+](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apple_TV%2B) animated musical-comedy series [*Central Park*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Park_%28TV_series%29)*,* for which he was nominated for an [Primetime Emmy Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primetime_Emmy_Award_for_Outstanding_Character_Voice-Over_Performance) in 2020. Odom has released four albums, [*Leslie Odom Jr.*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leslie_Odom_Jr._%28album%29) (2014), [*Simply Christmas*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simply_Christmas) (2016), *Mr.* (2019), and [*The Christmas Album*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Christmas_Album_%28Leslie_Odom_Jr._album%29) (2020). He released his autobiography *Failing Up* in 2018.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leslie_Odom_Jr.#cite_note-USNews-5) Odom returned to Broadway in 2023, playing the title role in *[Purlie Victorious](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purlie_Victorious%22%20%5Co%20%22Purlie%20Victorious)*.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leslie_Odom_Jr.#cite_note-6)

**Early life and education**

Odom was born in [Queens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queens), New York City.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leslie_Odom_Jr.#cite_note-Playbill-bio-7) His father Leslie Lloyd Odom worked in sales.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leslie_Odom_Jr.#cite_note-fdr1-8) One of his maternal great-grandfathers was from [South Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Africa), and a maternal great-great-grandfather was from [Bridgetown](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bridgetown), [Barbados](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbados).[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leslie_Odom_Jr.#cite_note-fdr1-8) Odom's family moved to the [East Oak Lane](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Oak_Lane%2C_Philadelphia) section of [Philadelphia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philadelphia), where he grew up. He attended [Julia R. Masterman School](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julia_R._Masterman_School) for middle school and [Philadelphia High School for Creative and Performing Arts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philadelphia_High_School_for_Creative_and_Performing_Arts) for high school.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leslie_Odom_Jr.#cite_note-Whelan2015-9)[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leslie_Odom_Jr.#cite_note-Gray2013-10) Odom and his family attended Canaan Baptist Church in the [Germantown](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germantown%2C_Philadelphia) section of Philadelphia, where he sang solos in the church choir.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leslie_Odom_Jr.#cite_note-Whelan2015-9)

He earned a degree with honors at [Carnegie Mellon University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carnegie_Mellon_University) in [Pittsburgh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pittsburgh), Pennsylvania, and then moved to Los Angeles in the summer of 2003. **(read more):**

[**https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leslie\_Odom\_Jr**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leslie_Odom_Jr)**.**