



JIMIN MOON PUCKS AROUND AND FINDS OUT IN ‘HEATED RIVALRY’ PARODY

Ilya (Jay Armstrong Johnson) and Shane (Jimin Moon) pose for the iconic rivalry picture

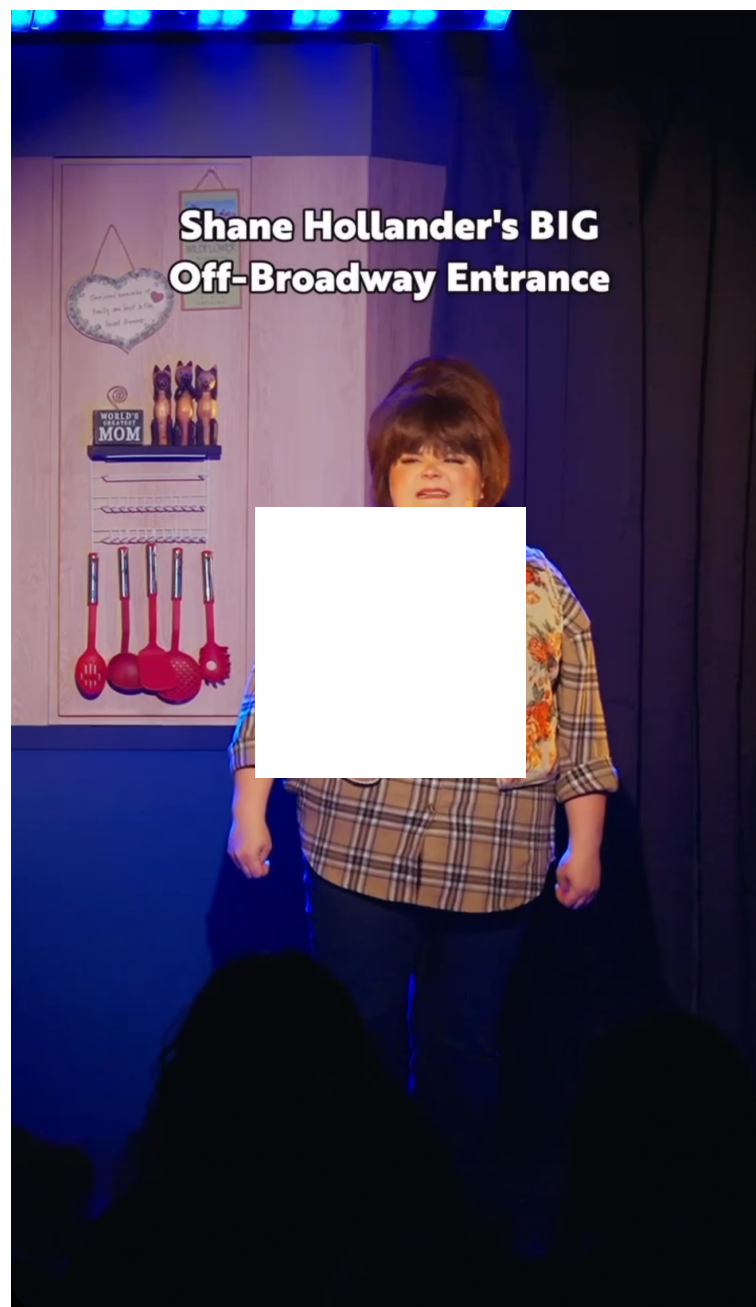
Courtesy of DKC O&M



WORDS BY **CAROLINE CAO**

How do you make [Heated Rivalry](#) even gayer? Make it a musical. Well, sort of—it’s actually a parody musical unaffiliated with the IP.

It was only a matter of time that the Crave/HBO Max sports romance show about two [hockey](#) rivals, Canadian golden boy Shane Hollander (Hudson Williams) and stoney Russian Ilya Rozanov (Connor Storrie), got the stage treatment. [Heated Rivalry: The Unauthorized Musical Parody](#), penned, composed, and orchestrated by Dylan Marcaurele, opened on May 26 at the Culture Club in East Manhattan, New York, with a run scheduled through Sept. 7. The show will also host its [Pride Nights](#) Friday through Sunday, followed by the cast sailing along the Pride March on their own float on June 28.



5,343 likes

Add a comment...

Enter Jimin Moon.

They danced on the short-lived Broadway lesbian musical *Lempicka*. And as an understudy to actor Tom Francis in Jaime Lloyd's *Sunset Boulevard*, they performed the [Shubert Alley walk](#), a publicized daily-and-nightly stunt in which the lead actor [steps outside](#) the St. James Theatre onto the potentially chaotic New York outdoors to sing the signature song in front of a camera operator while a simulcast of said performance plays inside the 1,700-audience-capacity theater (easy peasy for them, they admit to JoySauce, "You walk! I've sung while I walk. It's not a big deal!"). Now, Moon is exhilarated to be leading their first off-Broadway production. On the sun-soaked backyard rooftop of the Culture Club hotel, I recently sat down to listen to Moon spill the tea on capturing the parody iteration of Shane Hollander, their childhood obsession with Draco-Harry fanfics, and stage pucking around with longtime friend Jay Armstrong Johnson, who plays Ilya Rozanov in the parody.



Ilya (Jay Armstrong Johnson) and Shane (Jimin Moon) tenderly steal a hand caress.

Courtesy of DKC O&M

This interview has been edited for clarity and length.

Caroline Cao: What was the turning point when you decided “I’m gonna do theater?”

Jimin Moon: I was pretty locked in from a young age. I saw my first play when I was 6. It was a kindergarten field trip to see a local community theater production, *Alice in Wonderland*. My mom was like, “Oh my god, it was the most boring thing I’ve ever seen in my entire life.” But I was so entranced. I said, “Can I please?” The second I turned 7, I auditioned for a show, *Pinocchio*, and then I literally didn’t stop doing theater since.

CC: You were *Pinocchio*? Or tree in the background?

JM: Tree-in-background vibes. I was a townspeople—but I really loved it.

CC: Any romance, steamy books, or media that are a big influence on you?

JM: I was a fan fiction kid, so Draco and Harry (pairing fanfics). But back when I was a kid, I was on AO3 and Wattpad and just finding Draco/Harry.

CC: Ohh, Harry Potter is now problematic. (Coming from me, a former Harry Potter fan.)

JM: Now it’s like, yes, I don’t support J.K. Rowling. But I was obsessed when Harry got his *ss licked down.

CC: How did the Shane role come to you? Zachary Noah Piser did the stage reading before the musical.

JM: I’m such a fan of (Piser). He then booked [Maybe Happy Ending](#) on Broadway (after the reading). I was in LA and the production wasn’t even really on my radar. And then my agents got a call. I didn’t even know what was happening until I got the offer. They needed someone to take over the role. They had a lot of good press about me from different friends and people I’ve worked with in the industry and trusted that I’d do a good job. I feel really grateful with how much they’ve trusted me, and how well it’s worked out.



Jimin Moon as Shane Hollander.

Courtesy of DKC O&M

CC: How did you react to getting the role of Shane in particular?

JM: Great. I was like, "Hell yeah, let's do it." Jay, who plays Ilya, and I have been friends for years, and so I texted him, "Did you get me this role?" He was like, "Nope, but I'm thrilled too." I was like, "Werk, I get to do a Club musical with my friend for the summer." And I love comedy. I was really excited to lead a show off Broadway. That was something that I hadn't yet done. And I think comedy is so fun and so healing.

CC: What was your connection to Heated Rivalry by the time you got the role?

JM: I had never read the books. When I booked the show, I was like, "Let me get on board with this TV show." I'm really bad at watching TV, and I'm such a contrarian when it comes to popular media. I can't watch it because everyone's watching it, and so then I finally watched it, and was like, "Oh, well, this is great!" Anytime there's queer Asian representation, that's thrilling. I felt I lacked queer Asian representation in movies and TV shows growing up. I remember the Netflix indie movie called [Eat with Me](#), about a Chinese guy in England who had to take over his mom's dumpling shop. It was the only queer Asian representation I saw then. I was 15 watching an indie movie at night, and so I am thrilled that (queer Asian representation in *Heated Rivalry*) is happening on such a mainstream scale.

CC: Did you have any connection to hockey?

JM: No! I've never been to a game. I should go.

CC: I often see discourse on Twitter about Shane, the canonical aspect of his [autism](#). When Hudson Williams approached the role, he was [inspired by his father](#). How have you approached this part of parody Shane when you got the role?

JM: I think our goal with the show is really to look at performances that Hudson and Connor were doing and then find the parts that we could really latch onto and keep a hold for our very truncated version of the story.

I'm trying to play the version of Shane that goes through the entire six-episode show in 80 minutes straight, and I'm trying to do it by paying so much love and homage to the Shane that people know and love from the screen—and that's Hudson's recreation of that. I think that was my thought process on handling that part of him.

CC: In the show, Shane felt the pressure to "represent" for (the Asian diaspora), and you were a board member of the School of Theater Student Diversity Committee in high school. Do you feel similar pressure?

JM: One of the first Asian Broadway actors that I really looked up to was Jason Tam. I watched him in the *Every Little Step* documentary. He was the first Asian American theater actor I ever saw. I got obsessed with him and waited outside the *If/Then* stage door for an hour and a half when I was 13 years old. Obviously, there're so many incredible Asian American actors on Broadway right now, but I still feel a little bit of that weight. I want to do the best so whatever other little Asian kid sees a Broadway show and feels that they can be up there—just as Jason Tam made me feel.



Spoilers: Shane and Ilya at the cottage in the parody musical.

Courtesy of DKC O&M

CC: There's a lot of pucking in this musical. How did the intimacy coordinator/sensitivity specialist [Ann James](#) work with you and Jay for the steamy scenes?

JM: I'm obsessed! I love Ann James. I've been lucky enough to work with her on *Lempicka* and *Sunset Boulevard*. She's really, really great at creating a space that is so easy to discuss all the intimacy. She's really good at asking, "This is the kiss here, how do you guys feel about it?" Jay and I, being friends already for a long time, said, "We've kissed before. We feel completely comfortable kissing each other every day. I love that boy." Ann was great at (suggesting), "Oh, (the kiss) can shift and change throughout the show, depending on how you guys are feeling. It doesn't need to be so cut and dry as long as you two are feeling comfortable with one another." She's really great at creating a space that is consent focused and consent forward, and also understanding (that) when the two actors are consenting with one another, then it can change and grow just like any other part of an actor's performance. I appreciated that.

CC: What do you hope is the takeaway of *Heated Rivalry: The Unauthorized Musical Parody*?

I hope that people get to spend 80 minutes laughing and having a good time. The beauty of comedy is that it gives us a chance to unwind. It's your chance to relax and decompress the shit from the world, and I feel life is so stressful and busy.

CC: I've heard season two will be about [mental health](#). Where do you hope the canonical Shane and Ilya's story will go in season two?

JM: I hope that they stay together. I hate when in romance media we spend all the whole time waiting for the couple to get together, and then season two starts, and they're breaking up and fighting. Can't we just let people be happy? They can deal with other problems and other people can break up.

Published on June 18, 2026



WORDS BY **CAROLINE CAO**

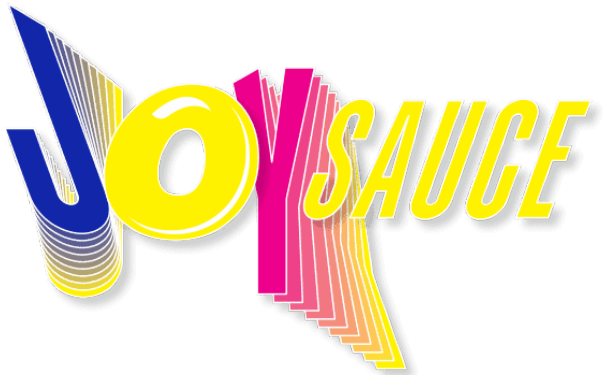
Caroline Cao is an NYC-based writer. A queer Vietnamese American woman, she also won't shut up about animation and theatre. She likes ramen, pasta, and fanfic writing. Follow her on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) @Maximalist.

MORE GREAT STORIES

[STEPHANIE HSU AND THE UPSIDE OF BEING A 'ROCKY HORROR SHOW' VIRGIN](#)

[QUEER ROMANCE 'EPHEMERA' HARKENS BACK TO OLDER, BETTER FILMS](#)

[WHY THE RECASTING FOR 'MAYBE HAPPY ENDING' MATTERS](#)



YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS

SUBSCRIBE