Award-winning musical about love in the shadow of death

Harold Prince, the multi Tony Award-winning producer and director of such musicals as Cabaret, Sweeney Todd and Phantom of the Opera, relishes going against accepted wisdom when choosing the subject material for his musicals.

“I feel so much more comfortable when I’m working on material which makes other people scratch their heads and ask, ‘You’re going to make a musical out of that?’” Prince has said.

And so it was when playwright Alfred Uhry approached Prince with the idea of turning a notorious American miscarriage of justice into a musical. The true story of Leo Frank, a Jewish man hanged by a mob after being wrongfully accused of a girl’s death in 1913 Atlanta, immediately piqued Prince’s interest.

“It was right up my alley,” said Prince after Parade, the Tony award-winning musical based on this tragic tale, made its opening on Broadway in 1998.

Now Parade, with book by Alfred Uhry – best known for his Pulitzer Prize winning play and Academy Award winning screenplay, Driving Miss Daisy – and music and lyrics by Jason Robert Brown, makes its way to the main stage of the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts.

Parade, presented by WAAPA’s 3rd Year Music Theatre students under the direction of Crispin Taylor, with music direction by David King, opens on Saturday 22 August for a week-long run in the Geoff Gibbs Theatre.

Parade follows the tale of Leo Frank, an educated Jew from New York, who is accused of the rape and murder of a 13-year-old girl on the day of Atlanta’s Confederate Memorial Day Parade.

Although there were major doubts about Frank’s guilt, with charges that false testimony helped convict him, he quickly became a convenient scapegoat in a South still reeling from Civil War losses and rife with anti-Semitism.

Frank’s subsequent trial and conviction, with its bloody aftermath, were such a shocking miscarriage of justice that they spurred the formation of America’s Anti-Defamation League, to fight anti-Semitism and other injustices.

Yet although Parade is a powerful tale of racism and false patriotism, at its centre is the love story of Frank and his wife, Lucille, who discover that their love can grow stronger in the shadow of death.

Performance Information: Parade

Saturday 22 – Saturday 29 August at 7.30pm, Matinee Saturday 29 August at 2pm.

The Geoff Gibbs Theatre, WAAPA, Edith Cowan University, 2 Bradford St, Mt Lawley.

Tickets are $39 full/$34 concession. Bookings through WAAPA Box Office on 9370 6636.

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For complimentary tickets to this production or for further information, interviews or photo opportunities, please contact:
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