

Lead Performances drive this “Parade”

Review

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Love it or hate it, any theater company takes a risk when producing the Alfred Uhry/Jason Robert Brown musical “Parade” — it is a hard sell to get an audience to empathize with a Jewish factory manager who may or may not have committed the murder and rape of a 13-year old factory worker in 1912 Atlanta, Georgia. You might be familiar with the story from the 1987 movie “The Murder of Mary Phagan” or the 2009 *The People v Leo Frank*. It's a challenging and

complicated musical to be sure, but one that has Peppermint Creek fortunately sold out throughout its run.

What really makes this particular production soar is the outstanding lead performances by Adam Woolsey as Leo, and Mary Maurer as his wife Lucille. Individually and together, their vocals and acting soar, and make this a compelling piece of musical theater. I've seen Adam in several productions now, and the work here surpasses anything he has done previously, and comes unexpectedly — that the show works here is in large part due to his subdued and empathic performance. There is also very solid vocal work from up-and-comer Ben Cassidy as Frankie Epps (among other small roles).

If you don't already have a ticket, you won't be able to see this remarkable singing performance — but look for other works by Peppermint Creek in Lansing — I'm particularly looking forward to seeing the local premier of the off-Broadway Pasek and Paul musical “Dogfight” this spring.

Kudos to a theater company willing to take risks — and not perform the “same old stuff” — and what better way to see that rewarded but sold-out houses.