

WELCOME FROM THE DIRECTOR

When I first read Matthew Lopez' play, *The Legend of Georgia McBride*, I found myself laughing out loud. It entertained me and I immediately saw why this is currently one of the most-produced plays around the country. But I was also struck by its heart, its...sweetness. As in all good plays, our central character needs to go through something dramatic in order to come out on the other end transformed in some way. In this case, it's a mostly comic journey, but the transformation comes nonetheless. And it comes by way of "drag."



Drag performing is nothing new in our culture. In fact, it has been around for a very long time. It has gone through many permutations; early decades of being relegated underground as gay men expressed themselves in mostly gay clubs and played to their clientele, to being mainstream entertainment in clubs with very mixed crowds, stage plays and films like *The Birdcage*, and all the way to popular TV entertainment like "RuPaul's Drag Race" becoming water-cooler conversations the next day at work (or more likely on social media).

Doing drag, among many reasons, often includes being a form of self-expression, making a pointed social or political statement or just aiming to get a laugh. The three characters in our show who transform themselves through drag do it for very different reasons. The older, more experienced Miss Tracy uses it to have playful, exaggerated fun impersonating iconic female stars. The younger, volatile Remy uses drag, in her own words, as a "protest, a raised fist inside a sequined glove" that validates "her" place in the world as someone who was born to do this and gives her life purpose. And Casey? He finds in Georgia not only a way to make a quick buck, but an unexpected means of self-expression that allows him to be a successful, better performer. And a better man.

I guess that is what draws me to this play. It celebrates finding your own voice and singing your own song, even when that means lip-synching. A perfect message for the world in which we live.

In closing, I would like to dedicate this production to Tommy Derrah. Tommy was a beloved member of our theatre community sharing his vast acting talent on many stages in Boston and around the world including Greater Boston Stage Company. He was also a friend. Tommy was originally slated to direct *Georgia McBride* and I was looking forward to collaborating on it with him, helping with the musical sequences. But Tommy was taken from us far too soon and I am honored to be here in his stead. I hope we've made him proud.

Enjoy the show.

Russell Garrett