Kitchener Waterloo Musical Productions presents Titanic The Musical February 7 to 16

By Carrie Debrone

In the final hours of April 14, 1912, the RMS Titanic, on her maiden voyage from Southampton, England to New York, collided with an iceberg. The 'unsinkable ship' slowly sank and 1,517 men, women and children lost their lives.

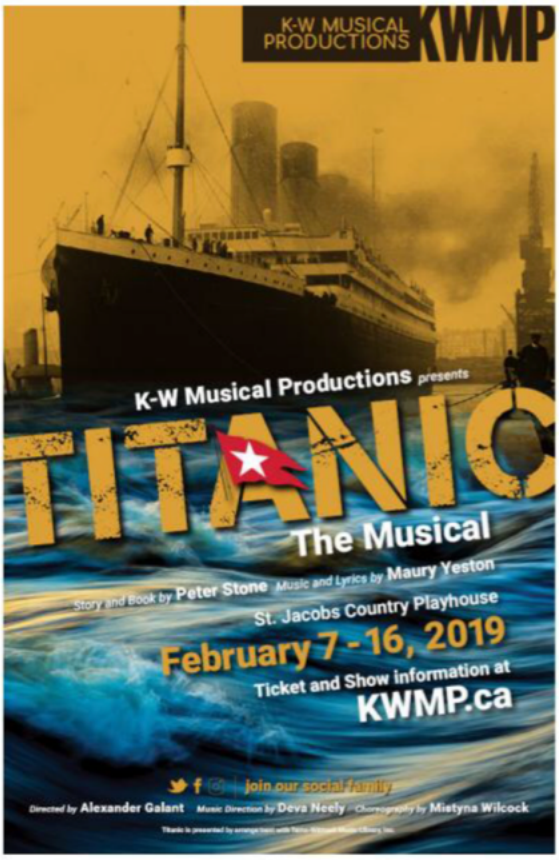
Since then, the characters and personal histories of the people aboard, the ship itself, and the circumstances that lead to this tragedy have fascinated people. The event has sparked numerous books, a Broadway musical and, of course, the 1997 Oscar winning James Cameron film, Titanic.

As a child, it also stirred the imagination of Alexander Galant, who is now directing the Kitchener Waterloo Musical Productions offering of Titanic, The Musical, which is coming to the St. Jacobs Country Playhouse February 7 – 16.

He knows the tragedy intimately. Galant said he was first attracted to the story by the image of the huge ship sinking, and then later by wondering how something so huge could have been brought down by ice. His interest in history and the Titanic later lead him to write the novel Depth of Deception, published in 2012 on the centennial anniversary of the sinking. He listened to the Titanic Broadway musical's soundtrack while he wrote the novel.

"I think I'm fascinated by how things happened that night. There were so many mishaps, and if any little thing had happened differently it might have changed the outcome. I often think about what might have been," he said.

"When I heard that KWMP was looking for directors, I applied," he said, adding that it is the first time he's worked with KWMP, now celebrating its 71st year.



From left: Sebastian Mateus plays Jim Farrell and Amie Debrone is Kate McGowan, two third class passengers.
Photo by Hilary Gauld Camilleri of One For The Wall Photography

"There's no Rose or Jack here," Galant said of the musical.

"This show is based on or inspired by the real people who were aboard the most legendary ship in the world" -- people like Isidor and Ida Straus, who owned Macy's department store and who died when the ship sank, and, the captain Edward Smith, who also went down with his ship.

The KWMP cast of 46 actors, some who play multiple characters, represent the thousands of Titanic passengers.

"There's no 'lead' character in this show. It's very much an ensemble production and you have all these great characters featured throughout. In this show we want to bring the production to life without copying whatever has been done before."

"This is a very grand and spectacular production with music either being sung or underscoring every scene, and some unique staging," Galant said.

"We chose Titanic the Musical because it is a large ensemble production, with a lot of opportunity to highlight the amazing talent in our community," said KWMP President Brenden Sherratt. "K-W Musical Productions is dedicated to giving members of our community a chance to shine both on and off stage."

"The show features Tony award winning music, and a story that is timeless. The issues that the passengers of the Titanic were dealing with in 1914 are the same ones we are dealing with today," said Sherratt.

Focusing on the hopes, dreams and aspirations of her passengers, who each boarded with stories and personal ambitions of their own, Titanic, The Musical tells the story of those aboard – all innocently unaware of the fate awaiting them. The third class immigrants dream of a better life in America, the second class imagine they too can join the lifestyles of the rich and famous, while the millionaire Barons of the first class anticipate legacies lasting forever.

The winner of three Tony Awards including Best Musical, Best Original Score, and Best Book of a Musical and an outstanding ensemble production, the production is based on the book by Peter Stone, with music and lyrics by Maury Yeston, music direction by Deva Neely and choreography by Mistyna Wilcock.

The main characters include Fred Brandenburg as Captain E.J. Smith, Phil Shuh as Thomas Andrews, Wes Errey as J. Bruce Ismay, Armaan Webb as Stoker Frederick Barrett, Jesse Katersberg as wireless operator Harold Bride, Trevor Middleton as 1st Officer William Murdoch, Amie Debrone and Sebastian Mateus as 3rd class passengers Kate McGowan and Jim Farrell, Alison Enns and William Brezden as 2nd class passengers Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Beane, and Wendy Parker Wagler and Mike Vanderloo as Mr. and Mrs. Isidor Straus.

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The show runs February 7 – 16 at the St. Jacobs Country Playhouse, 40 Benjamin Rd. E. Waterloo. Tickets are $36 for adult plus HST and $31 for youth under 15 plus HST. To purchase tickets call the Drayton Entertainment box office at 1-855-372-9866 or visit draytonentertainment.com and click on Events by Other Presenters.

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