



Author Suzanne Leal.

Photo: Adam Yip

ing at a man in the foreground, “but I cannot be completely sure.” Her voice was soft as we peered through a magnifying glass.

I had not known Fred as a young man, and although there was something about him that seemed familiar, I could not help her.

He was simply an emaciated inmate who, like those around him, was wearing a striped uniform. There was nothing to help us identify him.

Or was there?

“Wait,” I said, a distant memory finding its way back to me. Scrolling through my documents on my laptop, I found what I needed: my transcription of the interviews I had conducted with Fred so many years earlier.

In answer to a question about Dachau, Fred had told me: “After having been captured after my escape from Kaufering, I had on my chest and back a large red circle, a so-called Fluchtpunkt, escape dot, signifying an individual who already tried to escape. In Dachau it disintegrated, so I tore it away and nobody noticed – it was really the last stages [of the war].”

My heart pounding, I looked back at the photograph – we both did – each of us again peering through the magnifying glass. I looked closely, just in case I was wrong. But I was not.

Unlike the men around him who had stars or circles or triangles sewn onto their pockets, this man – who would soon become Eva’s husband, then Helena and Renata’s father – had no pocket at all.

The Deceptions by Suzanne Leal is published by Allen & Unwin, \$29.99 (rrp).

IRAQ WAR SATIRE

Streaming theatre live at home

DANNY GOCS

THE satirical musical comedy *Who’s Your Baghdaddy?* will have its Australian premiere next week when the show is performed live and streamed into homes around Australia.

For five nights from June 24, Jewish actor Troy Sussman (who recently performed in the musical *Aladdin*) teams up with Blake Erickson (*Shrek*), Phillip Lowe (*Georgy Girl*), Laura Murphy (*Muriel’s Wedding*), Matthew Predny (*Kinky Boots*), Adam Rennie (*The Rocky Horror Show*), Katrina Retallick (*Come From Away*) and Justin Smith (*Billy Elliot*) to perform from a large rented house in Sydney.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, each actor is in a separate room in full costume with camera and microphone. Under the direction of Neil Gooding, feeds from each room are sent to a central computer and streamed live to the viewing audience who have pre-booked tickets.

“This project is so exciting – it’s a new way of performing on the stage until audiences can get back into theatres,” Sussman told *The*



Singer-actor Troy Sussman.

AJN during a break in rehearsals.

“Apart from *The Phantom of the Opera* in Korea, it will be the only live show being performed in the world.

“Unlike all the concerts that have been going online, we are not on Zoom but performing to a camera that transmits to an editing suite and is live to air, just like a TV variety show.

“Fans will be able to enjoy full-scale musical theatre live in the comfort of their home.”

Who’s Your Baghdaddy? premiered off-Broadway in 2005 and

Troy Sussman (right) stars in *Aladdin*.

was staged again in 2017. It is set around a group of mid-level spies who believed that their actions led to the American involvement in the Iraq War in 2003.

Sussman plays an Iraqi defector known as Curveball who was recruited by the CIA. Despite providing false intelligence on Iraqi mobile weapons laboratories, it was used to justify the invasion of Iraq and overthrow Saddam Hussein.

“I perform six songs in the show and after spending most of my career in musical comedy, I get to play the dead-serious Iraqi

defector who is so earnest in what he is saying,” said Sussman.

“He took information from a CIA compendium and fed it back to the spy organisation as if it was new information.”

Sussman, 50, who lives in Melbourne, recently celebrated his 30-year anniversary in the entertainment business.

“Many people in the industry don’t get to do 10 years, let alone 30 years of consistent performing in music theatre.”

He has performed in musicals including *Les Miserables*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Mary Poppins* and a three-year run in *Aladdin* touring Australia, New Zealand and Singapore.

In recognition of the impact of COVID-19 on the arts industry, the producers of *Who’s Your Baghdaddy?* are offering multiple ticket pricing options ranging from \$22 to \$99 to encourage fans to support cast and crew, and are also asking theatre-lovers to donate to the Actors Benevolent Fund.

***Who’s Your Baghdaddy?* is being performed live nightly from June 24-28 at 7.30pm. Bookings: baghdaddymusical.com.au**

ARTS BEAT

DANNY GOCS

Mirka’s lifetime of art

A MAJOR exhibition of works by artist Mirka Mora, who died in 2018 after a career spanning 70 years, will open at the Jewish Museum of Australia (JMA) in December.

Presented in collaboration with William Mora Galleries, *Mirka* will feature artworks from the private collections of the Mora family and from her archives that have never been previously exhibited, alongside works from the 2018-19 exhibition at Heide Museum of Modern Art.

The *Mirka* exhibition will reveal her life and artistry through letters, sketchbooks and diaries, along with recorded interviews from the Jewish Holocaust Centre archives.

JMA director Jessica Bram said: “Beloved and remembered as much for her extraordinary career and contribution to cosmopolitan Melbourne as for her remarkable *joie de vivre*, Mirka Mora gifts each of us

Mirka Mora’s *In the Garden of Dreams* (1975-81).

the magic of hope and resilience. We’re privileged to tell her story in this expanded and deeply personal way.”

The museum is currently closed due to COVID-19 restrictions and will reopen on Sundays only from July 26, with free entry and social distancing measures in place.

The *Mirka* exhibition will open at the Jewish Museum of Australia, 26 Alma Road, St Kilda in December.

Cinemas open doors to movie lovers

THE Classic, Lido and Cameo cinemas will reopen on Monday, June 22 following the easing of Victorian government coronavirus restrictions, with screenings of new films including *Resistance*, the World War II drama starring Jesse Eisenberg as Marcel Marceau; *The Assistant*, a drama directed by

Melbourne filmmaker Kitty Green; and Australian-made drama *Hearts and Bones* starring Hugo Weaving.

The bigger cinemas will have a maximum capacity of 50 patrons, but each cinema will have to meet the four-square-metres-per-person requirement.

When seated, patrons will be required to have sufficient social distancing between themselves and others seated nearby.

Other health measures include hand sanitiser stations in the cinema foyer, staggered session start times, longer turnover between sessions, and heightened cleaning regimes.

Among the films returning to the cinemas were those screening when lockdowns were introduced and include actor-writer-director Taika Waititi’s *Jojo Rabbit*.

To welcome movie lovers back, Classic, Lido and Cameo cinemas have reduced regular ticket prices to \$10 from June 22-28.



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