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Damaschke '85 Accepts Tony Award for Best Musical

Oct. 8, 2021

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — *Moulin Rouge!*, executive produced by Illinois Wesleyan University alumnus Bill Damaschke '85, earned 10 Tony Awards, including Best Musical, at the 74th Annual Tony Awards ceremony on Sept. 26.

After the annual ceremony which recognizes excellence in live Broadway theatre was postponed for a year and a half due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Damaschke accepted the award for Best Musical in person alongside producer Carmen Pavlovic. In his [acceptance speech](#) he thanked the entire company of *Moulin Rouge!* for their hard work and passion for performance.

This year's Tony Awards ceremony marks Damaschke's second year of nominations. In 2019, [The Prom](#), produced by Damaschke, received seven Tony nominations.

Damaschke graduated from Illinois Wesleyan with a degree in [musical theatre](#) (BFA) in 1985. He earned the University's Distinguished Alumni Award in 2011 and spoke at Commencement in 2016.

Previously Damaschke served as President of Animation and Family Entertainment at Skydance Media following his two decades with DreamWorks Animation, where he rose from an entry-level production assistant to the company's chief creative officer. Damaschke currently runs StoryKey Entertainment which is responsible for the production of musicals such as *The Prom* and *Moulin Rouge!*.

Moulin Rouge! centers around the story of a young composer and a cabaret actress as they navigate through their love affair. *The Hollywood Reporter* praised the production's "eye-popping spectacle and off-the-charts energy," and *Time Out New York* described it as "the jukebox musical to end all jukebox musicals."

Moulin Rouge! took home 10 awards, the most out of any show. Along with the award for Best Musical, *Moulin Rouge!* also accepted awards for Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role of a Musical: Aaron Tveit; Best Performance by an Actor in a Featured Role in a Musical: Danny Burstein; Best Scenic Design of a Musical: Derek McLane; Best Costume Design of a Musical: Catherine Zuber; Best Lighting Design of a Musical: Justin Townsend; Best Sound Design of a Musical: Peter Hylenski; Best Direction of a Musical: Alex Timbers; Best Choreography: Sonya Tayeh; and, Best Orchestrations: Justin Levine, with Katie Kresek, Charlie Rosen and Matt Stine.



Bill Damaschke '85

By Kailee Galloway '23