



SWEENEY TODD

THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET

A MUSICAL THRILLER



BEN MINGAY & ANTOINETTE HALLORAN, WA OPERA (PHOTO: JAMES ROGERS)

STATE OPERA SOUTH AUSTRALIA PRESENTS

SWEENEY TODD

THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET

A MUSICAL THRILLER

**MUSIC & LYRICS BY
STEPHEN SONDHEIM**

**BOOK BY
HUGH WHEELER**

FROM AN ADAPTATION BY
CHRISTOPHER BOND

ORIGINALLY DIRECTED ON BROADWAY BY
HAROLD PRINCE

ORCHESTRATIONS BY
JONATHAN TUNICK

Originally produced on Broadway by Richard Barr, Charles Woodward, Robert Fryer, Mary Lea Johnson, Martin Richards in Association with Dean and Judy Manos

SWEENEY TODD	Ben Mingay
MRS LOVETT	Antoinette Halloran
ANTHONY HOPE	Nicholas Cannon
JOHANNA	Desiree Frahn
JUDGE TURPIN	Douglas McNicol
TOBIAS RAGG	Mat Verevis
BEADLE BAMFORD	Mark Oates
SIGNOR PIRELLI	Adam Goodburn
BEGGAR WOMAN	Joanna McWaters

CONDUCTOR	Anthony Hunt
DIRECTOR	Stuart Maunder
LIGHTING DESIGNER	Philip Lethlean
SET & COSTUME DESIGNER	Roger Kirk
SOUND DESIGNER	Jim Atkins

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8-15 May 2021
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WELCOME

Dear Opera Lover

You are so much more than a lover of opera! Please know how treasured you are because of your appetite for music, your passion for drama, and your support of our artists, musicians, and indeed our Company as a whole. Opera is a broad church, both in content and the unique personalities it attracts, and I hope you will feel utterly complimented when I tell you that you are in the very best company here this evening.

I wish you had a chance to peek backstage and into the rehearsal rooms over these last few busy months. I know Stuart will agree with me when I say it has been food for the soul to see such a hive of activity taking place, and I personally have been deeply gratified and relieved that we have been able to return to delivering on our vision – *more opera for more people* (okay, we've begun the year with a couple of meaty musicals instead... but watch this space)! A key part of the 'more people' in this vision includes *more artists*. Stuart and I want to see as many Australian singers as possible working with State Opera over the coming years, and while last year put a dent in our bold aspirations we have thankfully started to once again leap towards this goal.

You play an important part in driving this large arts employment goal. Your attendance, your donations, your advocacy and your willingness to share in our success has a multiplying effect. Thank you. As we begin our Annual Appeal for 2021 I hope you will consider deepening the value of your attendance here at *Sweeney Todd* with a donation to State Opera. I hope it is plainly evident that we funnel as much of our income as we can directly into productions and performances; that is where your financial support will make every bit of difference. Donating is easy: stateopera.com.au/donate

My special thanks to those who have already donated, sponsored and contributed in so many ways. Thanks also to our partners, Board of Directors, and the ever hard-working and talented team at State Opera both behind the scenes and on stage. So many talented people have contributed to the production you see before you now, and I have no doubt you will join me in relishing the dark brilliance of *Sweeney Todd*.

Yarmila Alfonzetti
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
State Opera South Australia



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In 1978 as a young stage manager and recently converted Sondheim 'tragic' (a friend had given me the double LP *Side by Side by Sondheim* – addicted), I had devoured the then extraordinary output of this giant of music theatre, from *West Side Story* to *Pacific Overtures*. *Sweeney Todd* was my first opportunity to discover a new Sondheim. Knowing not a word of it, with no performance history to guide me, no YouTube, no videos, no libretto – just vinyl and photos on the sleeve – I listened, and listened loud. Nothing prepared me for the visceral feeling of terror I experienced: the Gothic organ voluntary, the piercing factory whistle, the power of the chorus interjections, the painful and horrific storytelling, the tunes, the black humour. My response has not diminished in the 30-odd years since that 'road to Damascus' experience. The terror still thrills.

From the first words – 'Attend the tale of Sweeney Todd' – we know this is a period piece, an allegory, a 'tale' that has oft been told across the generations, an urban myth, a cautionary tale... And it's deliciously scary; dark, sinister... and thrilling.

The grizzly story of a homicidal barber appears as early as 1825 in a pamphlet entitled *The Tell Tale*, based on an earlier account in Joseph Fouché's *Archives de la Police*. In these early versions the details of the crimes are the same: a Parisian barber cuts the throats of his clientele, steals their worldly goods, and then has a pastry chef mince their bodies into pies. In 1846 he turns up as Sweeney Todd in a serialised novel *The String of Pearls, A Romance*, capturing the popular Victorian imagination. Even Charles Dickens mentions the tale in *Pickwick Papers*, warning his readers to only buy pies from cooks they know.

The theatrical ancestor to our *Sweeney* was a 1847 melodrama by George Dibdin-Pitt titled *The String of Pearls, or the Fiend of Fleet Street*. For today's audiences the term 'melodrama' has judgmental connotations and is associated with mawkish sentiment, delicious villainy and a high-minded

moral. The cast are stock standard: the sweet heroine, a black-hearted villain, the buff hero and, of course, goodness triumphs in the end.

Stephen Sondheim and his librettist Hugh Wheeler used as their starting point a 1973 reworking of the melodrama by Christopher Bond. Here Sweeney Todd has a cause: just revenge. This Sweeney murders for reasons other than monetary gain, a man at the mercy of a brutal society and forced to seek out an existence in the underbelly of human suffering that was Victorian London. Only after his just pursuit for vengeance is foiled, and he realises his impotence against the Victorian social system, does he crack and transform into a charismatic homicidal maniac, aided and abetted by a totally charming accomplice who is prompted by two of those great deadly sins: lust and greed.

Although officially subtitled a 'Musical Thriller', *Sweeney Todd* has been categorised as an opera, a musical, a musical play, an operetta and almost every other musical or dramatic form. Sondheim himself describes his *Sweeney* as 'a musical horror'. Does it matter? Perhaps not. The piece is without doubt one of the most powerful, dramatic and theatrical horror tales ever set to music. And all the more thrilling in that for all its melodrama, blood and gore, it tells a very universal human story – revenge, obsession and lust, yes, but also pain, yearning, even love. In a society where the weak get weaker and the powerful more powerful, how easy is it for a man to revert to his base instincts? Violence and brutality are often the result. Not all turn into homicidal maniacs of course, but we still 'get' this tale. The language is archaic, the musical is operatic in scale, the setting is Victorian England but in this most thrilling of musical treatments we can make the leap – this is a tale for our times.

Stuart Maunder AM
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
State Opera South Australia

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SWEENEY TODD

■ FROM BARBER'S CHAIR TO THEATRE SEAT ■

STEPHEN SONDHEIM'S THEATRICAL WORLD is not easy to define – dedicated opera lovers can be a bit miffed when he invades the sacred portals of the opera theatres, and audiences for music theatre in Australia can find his work more confronting than they expect from something called a musical.

Sondheim has set his shows in many different locations and at many different times – feudal Japan (*Pacific Overtures*), fin-de-siècle Sweden (*A Little Night Music*), the Paris of the impressionists (*Sunday in the Park with George*) and across more than a century of US history (*Assassins*) – but they all examine behaviour and neuroses with which contemporary audiences may identify. Even when his musical language is not always purely operatic, the results are more complex and poetic than the term 'Broadway show' usually evokes.

His mentor, a man who Sondheim has confessed was very much a father figure to him, was lyricist and librettist Oscar Hammerstein II, whose Broadway pedigree included *Show Boat*, with composer Jerome Kern, and among his shows featuring music by Richard Rodgers, *Oklahoma!*, *Carousel* and *South Pacific*. His lyrical imagery may not have been as witty or as bitter-sweet as that of Cole Porter or Lorenz Hart, but in his librettos he worked to stretch the form of the theatrical musical to make it accommodate a broad range of emotional possibilities.

The operatic scale of *Show Boat* was a first on the Broadway stage, as was its inclusion of such 'uncommercial' themes as miscegenation. The close integration of words and music in Hammerstein's shows with Rodgers also took the concept of a musical show further than 'a nice evening's entertainment'. The stories may not always have been complicated but the characters were more flesh-and-blood, less cardboard, than was usually the case, and the songs bore a closer relationship to the story than Broadway audiences would have experienced in many other shows of the day.

It is against the background of Hammerstein's aesthetic that Sondheim's was born. You could say that his musical language and verbal imagery evolved from the music theatre language in which he became immersed as an adolescent. In the words of *The New York Times* music critic Anthony Tommasini: 'No matter how musically complex and linguistically ingenious his lyrics, no matter how psychologically rich his storytelling, all his scores are based in the words-and-music heritage of the musical. On

some level, every Sondheim score pays homage to older genres and styles of musical theatre.' One obvious example is his refinement of the monologue, which Rodgers and Hammerstein had used to such powerful, and, at the time, original effect in *Carousel*'s 'Soliloquy'.



Let's look at how this refinement plays out in the musicals Sondheim composed in the years leading up to *Sweeney Todd*. *Follies* (1971), for example, is a show overtly about the idealism of young love and young ambition, and its destruction in uncertainty, compromise and selfishness. Ageing showgirls and their husbands, once stage-door Johnnies, gather for a reunion at a dilapidated theatre, but despite the glittering recreations of past showbiz triumphs, it is the monologues that stand out, in which the characters ask themselves questions like: 'The lives I'll never lead couldn't make me sing/Could they?'

Sondheim's next show, *A Little Night Music* (1973), might be called his Franz Lehár piece, a kind of upside-down operetta in which emotional wounds are opened, gently and in waltz time, and all the couples re-couple at the final curtain.

Follies includes much affectionate pastiche of earlier popular song forms and *A Little Night Music* has operetta gestures rustling through its score, including the waltz-song *Send in the Clowns*. Sondheim's genius is to show the ground moving from beneath the feet of these musical worlds. 'How can we live this way now?' he seems to ask us. How can we live up to the notions this music presents: that all is supposed to end well, that love will triumph in the end, that we can all be heroes and heroines

in our own stories? For here you are, you dwellers of the urban jungle, with your broken marriages, your ungrateful children, your illicit affairs, your private sense of failure – are there any dreams left worth dreaming? Is there any moral imperative against which we may judge ourselves?

The questions were posed even more pointedly in *Pacific Overtures* (1976), in which personal relationships are completely absent. The musical forms and textures become even more ambitious, as Sondheim dissects the

ethics of Imperialism. Based on the economic invasion of Japan by the USA in the 1850s, it is a Kabuki piece, with all the characters, Eastern and Western, played by an all-male (originally all-Japanese) cast, and sets Sondheim's existing achievements in motion in a way that might not have been expected at the time: towards a meditation on a larger morality. Again, the monologues leave a strong impression. In 'A Bowler Hat' one Japanese man charts his course towards quasi-Western behaviour and manners and his gradual alienation from both his original and adopted cultures.

Alienation from one's ambitions, from one's partner, from one's country. In these musicals Sondheim explored some of the ironies of modern life with tremendous musical and dramatic sophistication. But *Sweeney Todd* combines and develops these achievements further. To start with, it is overtly operatic, in its vocal and orchestral writing, in its structure, in its sensibility. It also has the acerbic musical language and cool regard for its characters' obsessions and follies that suggest the world of what might be called the 'Weimar' operas, in particular *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*. Like that Bertolt Brecht–Kurt Weill collaboration, *Sweeney Todd* is about its characters relationships with money, food, justice and politics, and like *Mahagonny*, *Todd* does not offer us any comfortable answers.

The figure of the homicidal barber Sweeney Todd and his victims' gruesome fate was brought into the world in 1846, in the penny-dreadful newspaper *The People's Periodical and Family Library*. It held thousands of readers enthralled through 18 issues. Not long after, Sweeney made his London stage debut in the melodrama *The String of Pearls or The Fiend of Fleet Street*. It was an enormous hit.

Sondheim, who had long been fascinated by melodrama, came to the story by way of Christopher Bond's play *Sweeney Todd*, which he saw in London in 1973 during

Eliza Acton's Meat Pie Recipe

Lay a half-paste of short or of puff crust round a buttered dish; take the whole or part of a loin of mutton, strip off the fat entirely, and raise the flesh clear from the bones without dividing it, then slice it into cutlets of equal thickness, season them well with salt and pepper, or cayenne, and strew between layers some finely mixed herbs mixed with two or three eschalots, when the flavour of these last is liked; or omit them, and roll quite thin some good forcemeat (which can be flavoured with a little minced eschalot at pleasure), and lay it between the cutlets: two or three mutton kidneys intermingled with the meat will greatly enrich the gravy; pour in a little cold water, roll the cover half an inch thick, or more should the crust be short, as it will not rise like puff paste, close the pie very securely, trim the edges even with the dish, ornament the pie according to the taste, make a hole in the centre, and bake it from an hour and a half to a couple of hours. Gravy made with part of the bones, quite cleared from fat, and left to become cold, may be used to fill the pie instead of water.

Modern Cookery for Private Families (1845)

rehearsals for the first production there of his earlier musical *Gypsy*. *Sweeney Todd* seemed to suggest to him the possibility of fulfilling one of his long-held ambitions – to write something largely through-composed in which dialogue plays only a small part in advancing the action.

Bond had broadened the traditional story considerably, giving Sweeney a ‘past’ that puts his murderous actions into quite a different context: Sweeney is transported to Australia on a trumped-up charge. Fifteen years later he returns, seeking his revenge on the judge who sentenced him. He meets an old acquaintance, Mrs Lovett, who, self-confessedly, makes ‘the worst pies in London’. She tells him that his wife took poison after being raped and that his daughter is now the ward of Judge Turpin, the man who made Sweeney a convict 15 years earlier. Todd now lives only for revenge. When he misses an opportunity to kill the Judge, he swears vengeance on all humanity (‘Epiphany’) and soon murders prolifically. At Mrs Lovett’s helpful suggestion – ‘seems an awful waste / Such a nice plump frame... / What with the price of meat it is’ – his victims find

their way into her pies. Business booms for them both, but ultimately Todd’s single-minded sense of vengeance leads to tragedy and disaster.

There are no characters in *Sweeney* who are not either prisoners of their past or their follies, or both. In ‘A Little Priest’, Todd and Mrs Lovett’s celebration of their idea to ‘people’ their pies, they also reveal how their life experiences have led them to this commodified view of their fellow human beings. As Todd sings: ‘The history of the world, my sweet/Is who gets eaten and who gets to eat.’ Any kind of customer is potentially an ingredient. What kind of a universe can this be? Not one for innocents, that’s certain. The slow-witted Tobias’s protective hymn to Mrs Lovett, ‘Not While I’m Around’, is both pathetic and grotesque, like a fly singing to a spider in a web.

It’s too simple to call *Sweeney Todd* a Marxist musical, as some commentators did when it was new, in 1979.

Sondheim and his librettist Hugh Wheeler do not offer solutions. But they do ask questions that have come to haunt the world with ever-increasing power, particularly since the fall of the Berlin wall, the rise of China and the consequences of 9/11. In other words, *Sweeney Todd* has never stopped being relevant.



SWEENEY TODD has two crucial centrepieces: first, at the end of Act I, during which Todd and Mrs Lovett discover their missions in life –

he to revenge himself on humanity (‘The lives of the wicked should be made brief’), she to make a commercial success of her floundering pie shop by baking Todd’s numerous victims into her culinary creations. Then at the beginning of Act II we see how successful they have become by giving the people what they want, in an intricate ensemble piece called ‘God, That’s Good’. The rest of the show builds up to and away from these set-pieces including, in Act I, Sweeney’s cooing song of devotion to his barber’s razors, ‘My Friends’, and the twin renditions of ‘Pretty Women’ in both halves of the piece. Mozart’s *Magic Flute* is often described as a journey

from darkness to light, but of *Sweeney Todd* it might be said that it is a journey from darkness to illuminated darkness, and thence to darkness again.

For, as Act II progresses, Sondheim’s theatrical genius – there is no other word for it – makes us feel the sense of escalating destruction, of a series of evils that must culminate in catastrophe. The best that happens to the ‘good’ characters – Todd’s daughter Johanna and her lover Anthony – is that they escape the catastrophe of the work’s final tableaux, but the morality of *Sweeney Todd*’s universe is the same at the end as it was in the beginning, when Todd says – in his first ‘aria’ – ‘There’s a hole in the world/Like a great black pit/And it’s filled with people/Who are filled with shit’.

Phillip Sametz © 2001/2021

Phillip Sametz is a writer, editor, tutor and tour leader based in Melbourne.

Sweeney Todd in the Antipodes

Australians tend to chuckle when Mrs Lovett exclaims: “What did they do to you down there in bloody Australia?!” The *Sweeney Todd* Australian connection was baked into the script when Christopher Bond’s 1973 play gave him a backstory. But the connections go further: in 1925 the first radio play produced and broadcast in Australia (out of Melbourne) was a melodrama entitled *Sweeney Todd, the Barbarous Barber*.

Closer to home, Adelaide – and State Opera South Australia – can lay claim to the first professional Australian production of Stephen Sondheim’s *Sweeney Todd*. Directed by Gale Edwards in 1987, it starred Lyndon Terracini and Nancye Hayes, with Douglas McNicol (who plays Judge Turpin in this performance) appearing in the ensemble.

SWEENEY TODD IN REHEARSAL



PHOTOS: SODA STREET PRODUCTIONS



CLOCKWISE FROM CENTRE TOP: Antoinette Halloran (Mrs Lovett) and Adam Goodburn (Signor Pirelli); Nicholas Cannon (Anthony Hope) and Desiree Frahn (Johanna); Nicholas Cannon and Mark Oates (Beadle Bamford); Mat Verevis (Tobias Ragg); Joanna McWaters (Beggar Woman); Antoinette Halloran and Ben Mingay (Sweeney Todd); the Ensemble with members of the cast.

ATTEND THE TALE...

ACT ONE

Victorian London – a city of imperial wealth and terrible poverty. The year is 1846, or so they say. Fifteen years earlier, one Benjamin Barker, a barber by trade, was transported to Australia on a trumped-up charge concocted by Judge Turpin and Beadle Bamford. His crime? 'Foolishness.'

Escaping the colony, he was rescued from the sea by Anthony, a young sailor. Now calling himself Sweeney Todd, he arrives at the London docks to the ominous sounds of pipe organ and factory whistle. And so our awful tale unfolds.

*Attend the tale of Sweeney Todd
His skin was pale and his eye was odd*

Sweeney returns to his old haunt on Fleet Street, above Mrs Lovett's pie shop. The hopes that had sustained him through years of penal servitude are quickly dashed (his wife poisoned herself, he's told, and his daughter Johanna is the ward of the judge who'd removed him) but he finds solace in his 'friends' – the razors Mrs Lovett had fondly preserved – and in his dream of vengeance.

Meanwhile, Anthony has fallen in love with Johanna and is determined to elope with her.

Setting up business anew, Sweeney gains some early publicity when he wins a street 'shave-off' against Signor





Pirelli, a mountebank barber. Pirelli recognises him, however, and foolishly tries a spot of blackmail. This does not end well for Pirelli and the pragmatic Mrs Lovett sees a solution to the present meat shortage...

ACT TWO

*He kept a shop in London Town
Of fancy clients and good renown*

Business is booming, upstairs and down. Mrs Lovett has hired the slow-witted but loyal Tobias to help out and begins to fantasise about a life by the sea with Mr Todd. But the foul smoke from her ovens has caught the attention of both Beadle Bamford and the deranged local beggar woman. Arriving to inspect the premises, the Beadle learns, first-hand, what is going on and Sweeney chalks up the first score in his scheme of revenge. Judge Turpin will be next; Anthony will rescue Johanna; the beggar woman will discomfit Sweeney one last time...

**Attend the tale of Sweeney Todd
He served a dark and a vengeful god
What happened then, well, that's the play
And he wouldn't want us to give it away**



ANTOINETTE HALLORAN & BEN MINGAY; MAT VEREVIS, ANTOINETTE HALLORAN & THE ENSEMBLE (PHOTOS: SODA STREET PRODUCTIONS)

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THE CREATIVE TEAM



Anthony Hunt
CONDUCTOR

Conductor, pianist and organist Anthony Hunt was the chorus master at Opera Australia from 2013 to 2019, and since 2020 he has been based in Adelaide as Head of Music and Chorus Master at State Opera South Australia and as Director of Music at St Peter's Cathedral.

After completing an honours degree in both Piano and Organ performance at the Elder Conservatorium, he moved to London to study as a répétiteur in the Royal Academy of Music's specialist opera course.

Moving to Sydney in 2009 as Assistant Chorus Master for Opera Australia, and then as Chorus Master in 2013, he has prepared the Opera Australia Chorus for more than 60 productions and concert appearances. His work with the company has been frequently broadcast on ABC Classic, and the many DVD releases and international cinema broadcasts include *La Traviata*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Aida*, *Turandot*, *Carmen* and *La Bohème* for Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour.

Anthony Hunt has been a participant in the Symphony Australia Conductor Development Program, a guest chorus master for the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, and is an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music.



Stuart Maunder
DIRECTOR

Stuart Maunder is Artistic Director of State Opera South Australia and has directed *Carmen*, *The Cunning Little Vixen* and *The Mikado* for the company.

For 40 years he has been directing musical theatre and opera in Australia. He joined the Australian Opera (now Opera Australia) as Stage Manager in 1978, becoming a Resident Director in 1981. In 1992 he joined the Royal Opera (UK) as a Staff Director while continuing to direct in Australia, regional UK, France and the USA.

In 1999 he was appointed Artistic Administrator of Opera Australia, becoming Executive Producer in 2004–2008. His Opera Australia productions include *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *Manon*, *Gypsy Princess*, *Don Pasquale*, *My Fair Lady* and *A Little Night Music*, and his productions of *Trial by Jury*, *Pirates of Penzance* and *HMS Pinafore* have been televised nationally on ABC TV.

Recent Australian productions have included *Into the Woods*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Sweeney Todd*, *A Little Night Music* and *Cunning Little Vixen* (all for Victorian Opera), and *Vixen*, *Tosca*, *Rigoletto*, *Pearl Fishers*, *La Bohème*, *Sweeney Todd* and *Macbeth* (WA Opera).

From 2014 to 2018 Stuart Maunder was General Director of New Zealand Opera where he directed *Candide*, *Tosca*, *Sweeney Todd* and *The Mikado*.



Philip Lethlean
LIGHTING DESIGNER

Philip Lethlean is a Melbourne-based designer with more than 30 years' experience lighting projects across Australia, Asia, Europe and America, including theatre, opera, dance, circus, puppetry, large cultural events and architectural assignments.

His commissions include the Melbourne International Comedy Festival's televised events for the past seven festivals; Victorian Opera's productions of *Into the Woods*, *Master Peter's Puppet Show/What Next* and *The Sleeping Beauty*; the opening ceremony of the Pacific Games in Papua New Guinea, *Clusters of Light* in Sharjah UAE, *How to Train Your Dragon* for Dreamworks/Global Creatures, White Night Melbourne and the Australian Pavilions at Expo Shanghai China and Aichi Japan.

His theatre work includes productions for the English National Ballet, Opera Australia, Melbourne Theatre Company, Circus Oz, Handspan Theatre and major Australian theatre festivals. He has enjoyed lighting the productions of *Sweeney Todd*, directed by Stuart Maunder, for Victorian Opera, the New Zealand tour, West Australian Opera and now for State Opera South Australia.



Roger Kirk
SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

Roger Kirk is a Tony Award-winning set and costume designer working in theatre, film and television. He has designed costumes for productions such as *The Boy From Oz* with Hugh Jackman, *The King and I* and *King Kong the Musical*, and worked extensively on set and costume design for Opera Australia, including *Manon Lescaut*, Graeme Murphy's production of *Aida*, *Manon*, *A Little Night Music*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Gypsy Princess* and several Gilbert & Sullivan operettas.

He was the costume designer for the film *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and other credits include Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Whistle Down the Wind* (London), *The King and I* (London Palladium), Hugh Jackman's *The Boy from Oz Arena Spectacular*, *The Silver Rose* (The Australian Ballet), *Le Corsaire* (Munich Opera House), *Dusty – The Original Pop Diva*, and *Shout!*. His Broadway credits include *The King and I* (Tony Award for Best Costume Design), *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *42nd Street* (Tony Award nomination).

His most recent credits include *Sweeney Todd* for Victorian Opera, *Miracle City* for Luckiest Productions, *King Kong* on Broadway, *42nd Street* in London and the sold-out Australian tour of *Broadway to Oz: Hugh Jackman Live in Concert*.



Jim Atkins
SOUND DESIGNER

Jim Atkins designs and mixes sound for a host of live, installed and recorded situations nationally and internationally.

His opera credits include sound design and operation for *Nixon in China* (Auckland Festival), Opera Australia's *Ring* cycle (2013, and 2016) and Victorian Opera's Sondheim trilogy: *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Into the Woods* and *Sweeney Todd*. In 2019 he designed the sound for State Opera South Australia's *Carmen in the Square*.

Other recent highlights have included *The Black Rider* and *Lorelei* (Victorian Opera at the Malthouse); *Summertime at the Ballet* (The Australian Ballet at Margaret Court Arena); *One Infinity* (Melbourne, Sydney and Perth festivals); *Pleasure Garden* (Sydney Festival, Norfolk and Norwich Festival, City of London Culture Mile), *54 Reasons to Party* (Kate Ceberano and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra); *Setan Jawa* (AsiaTOPA at the Humboldt Forum Kultur, Berlin); *Between 8 and 9 – Chengdu Teahouse Project* (Chamber Made, Castlemaine State Festival, Chengdu China); *National Geographic: Symphony for Our World* (Adelaide Festival); and *Absolute Bird, Sounds of the Outback* (City of London Sinfonia).

In addition to his live performance work, he has audio production credits on more than a hundred major-label CDs, including several ARIA Award-winning recordings.



COSTUME SKETCHES: ROGER KIRK

THE SWEENEY TODD CAST



Ben Mingay
SWEENEY TODD

Ben Mingay is an actor, musician and musical theatre performer. Currently appearing in *Amazing Grace*, he most recently delighted screen viewers worldwide in *Frayed*, and wowed Australian audiences in the title role of *Shrek The Musical*. Other screen roles include 'Grease' Nolan in Mel Gibson's *Hacksaw Ridge*, Alan Bond in *House of Bond*, Trystan Powell in *Home and Away*, Rob Duffy in *Wonderland*, and Buzz in *Packed to the Rafters*.

His stage credits include Billy Bigelow in *Carousel* (State Opera South Australia), the title role in *Sweeney Todd* (WA Opera), Evan in *Vivid White* (Melbourne Theatre Company), Jud Fry in *Oklahoma!*, Achilles in *Paris – A Rock Odyssey* (Music Theatre Melbourne) and, since 2013, concerts with the hit singing group Swing on This.

Other stage credits include Thomas in *Rolling Thunder Vietnam*, the title role in *The Phantom of the Opera*, Zack Mayo in *An Officer and a Gentleman*, and Tommy DeVito in the 2011 Sydney production of *Jersey Boys*, his first Australian appearance since 2004, when he originated the role of Billy Kostecki in *Dirty Dancing*. He went on to perform the role of Billy in every English-speaking production worldwide for almost six years, including the West End, Canada, Chicago, Boston and Los Angeles.

Ben Mingay was originally a Newcastle construction worker who fell into classical music when his mates dared him to audition for the Conservatorium of Music. He subsequently won a scholarship and went on to train in opera for several years – changing the trajectory of his life forever.



Antoinette Halloran
MRS LOVETT

Soprano Antoinette Halloran performs with all the Australasian opera companies and symphony orchestras and appears frequently on television and radio. Her engagements with State Opera South Australia have included Olive in *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, the title role in *The Merry Widow*, the Fox in *The Cunning Little Vixen* and Micaëla in *Carmen*, and she has sung Mrs Lovett for Victorian Opera (Helpmann Award nomination), WA Opera and New Zealand Opera. Other recent highlights include Tosca and Lady Macbeth (WA Opera), as well as concerts with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. This season she also appears in *Lorelei* for Victorian Opera and Opera Queensland.

For Opera Australia she has sung the title roles in *Madama Butterfly* and *Rusalka*, Mimì in *La Bohème*, Stella in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (for which she received a Green Room Award), Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, Fata Morgana in *The Love for Three Oranges* and Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*. For New Zealand Opera she has sung Mimì and Cio-Cio-San, and for Opera Queensland the title role in *The Merry Widow*.

In concert she has sung Mozart's Requiem (Hong Kong Philharmonic), *El Niño* (Sydney Philharmonia); collaborated with Nick Cave and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and with Elvis Costello and the Brodsky Quartet (Sydney Festival); and appeared as associate artist for José Carreras' National Tour. Her ABC TV appearances include *Operatunity Oz*, *Spicks and Specks* and *Arts Nation*, and she recorded *Puccini Romance* with Rosario La Spina and the Queensland Symphony Orchestra (ABC Classics).



Nicholas Cannon
ANTHONY HOPE

Nicholas Cannon is a versatile director, performer and teacher who holds a Music Theatre degree from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts and trained in the Lecoq Technique in Barcelona and Paris.

His roles with State Opera South Australia have included Johnny Dowd (*Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*), Pish-Tush (*The Mikado*), the Lieutenant (*Madeline Lee*), Kromov (*The Merry Widow*), Papageno (*The Magic Flute*), Quick Lamb (*Cloudstreet!*) and most recently Jigger Craigin in *Carousel*. He has also appeared in operetta roles for Coburg Landestheater in Germany; as a Tritone in *Marilyn Forever* (Adelaide Festival); as Chris Barnes (*Metro Street*) in the Adelaide Cabaret Festival; and as Dr Falke (*Die Fledermaus*), Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*), Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*), Marcello (*La Bohème*) and the title roles in *Eugene Onegin* and *The Marriage of Figaro* with Co-Opera, touring regional Australia.

He has undertaken director internships in the UK, France and Germany, and with Opera Australia, and his numerous directing credits include *Christina's World*, *Dido and Aeneas* and *La Vida Breve* for State Opera; *Acis and Galatea* in the Adelaide Botanic Gardens; *Price Check* (Loaded Productions, Adelaide); *A Little Night Music* for Watch This Company, Melbourne; and five productions for Co-Opera.



Desiree Frahn
JOHANNA

Desiree Frahn is a South Australian soprano and principal artist of State Opera South Australia. She is a graduate of the Elder Conservatorium of Music and a former James and Diana Ramsay Foundation Young Artist with State Opera South Australia.

For State Opera she has appeared as Valencienne (*The Merry Widow*), Leila (*The Pearl Fishers*), Lauretta (*Gianni Schicchi*), Rose Pickles (premiere production of *Cloudstreet!*), Pamina (*The Magic Flute*), Rosalinde (*Die Fledermaus*), Bastienne (*Bastien und Bastienne*) and Kate Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*), as well as appearing as a soloist for regional tours, concerts and broadcasts. In 2019 she sang the title role in State Opera's production of *The Cunning Little Vixen* and earlier this year Julie Jordan in *Carousel*.

Roles with other companies include Stephanie in the 2018 Australian premiere of Jake Heggie's *To Hell and Back* for the Melbourne contemporary opera company Gertrude Opera, as well as leading roles throughout South Australia with Co-Opera, the Gilbert & Sullivan Society of SA and the Therry Dramatic Society. She has also appeared as a soloist with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Elder Conservatorium Orchestra and the Adelaide University Choral Association.



Douglas McNicol
JUDGE TURPIN

Dramatic bass-baritone Douglas McNicol has received high praise for roles including Jack Rance (*La fanciulla del West*); Scarpia (*Tosca*) for Opera Australia, Opera Queensland, West Australian Opera and in New Zealand; Jokanaan (*Salome*); Amonasro (*Aida*); Giorgio Germont (*La Traviata*) for State Opera South Australia; and Iago (*Otello*) for State Opera and Opera Queensland.

A multiple award winner, he has worked with all the major opera companies and orchestras in Australia and New Zealand and appeared in concerts in Italy and the UK. Notable engagements have included directorial roles for John Haddock's *Madeline Lee* and *Gianni Schicchi* (in which he also performed the title role), Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*), Tonio (*Pagliacci*), Pizarro (*Fidelio*), Leporello and the title role in *Don Giovanni*, Verdi's Requiem, Owen Hart (*Dead Man Walking*), Horatio in Brett Dean's *Hamlet* for Adelaide Festival, Bartolo (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) and Scarpia for Perth Festival, and Roy Disney in *The Perfect American* by Philip Glass (Opera Queensland/Brisbane Festival).

His concert repertoire includes Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, Mass in B Minor, *St John Passion* and *St Matthew Passion*; Purcell's *Tempest*; Berlioz's *Childhood of Christ*; Beethoven's Ninth Symphony; the Fauré, Brahms and Mozart requiems; Handel's *Acis and Galatea* and *Messiah*; Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and *The Bells* by Rachmaninoff.

Earlier this year he appeared as the Starkeeper and Dr Seldon in State Opera's production of *Carousel*.



Mat Verevis
TOBIAS RAGG

Mat Verevis is a singer, actor and songwriter, best known for his performance as Barry Mann in *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, which earned him the 2018 Helpmann Award for Best Male Actor in a Supporting Role in a Musical.

In August he will appear in Victorian Opera's production of *The Who's Tommy*, playing the title role. Most recently he played Mark in *Rent* at the Sydney Opera House and Henrik Eggerman in Victorian Opera's production of *A Little Night Music*.

Other performance credits include Zach in the Australian premiere of *Lazarus* by David Bowie (The Production Company), touring as a featured vocalist with Lea Salonga in 2019, *Torch Song Trilogy* (Darlinghurst Theatre Company), Season 3 of *The Voice Australia*, the *Boys in the Band* concert tour (SMA Productions) and Abe Forsythe's feature film *Down Under*. He has sung backing vocals for Hugh Jackman's *The Man. The Music. The Show.* concert tour and Lea Salonga's *Dream Again* single. This year he will be releasing his self-titled debut EP.

Mat Verevis grew up in Cairns and is a graduate of the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts.

THE SWEENEY TODD CAST



Mark Oates
BEADLE BAMFORD

Mark Oates is an award-winning South Australian performer whose credits include the Adelaide and Brisbane festivals, State Opera South Australia, SINGular Productions, Ding! Productions, Six Foot Something Productions, Aerial Artists Australia and MOatesArt Productions.

His most recent appearance for State Opera was in the ensemble for *Carousel* and later this year he will sing Jack in *Love Burns*. Other roles for the company include Caterpillar (*Boojum!*), Njegus (*The Merry Widow*), Freddy Norton (*In the Dome Room (at 2 o'clock)*), Arjuna (*Satyagraha*), John Styx (*Orpheus in the Underworld*), The Cantor (*Maria de Buenos Aires*), Joe (*The Station*) and the Guide and Lillas Pastia (*Carmen*). He is also a long-standing member of the State Opera Chorus.

He has appeared for the Adelaide Festival in Mozart's *Requiem* (2020), as a featured Street Singer in Bernstein's *Mass* (2012) and Ruffiak in *Le Grand Macabre* (2010). For Co-Opera, he recently created the roles of Clyde, Bernie and the Salesman in their primary education program opera, *Listen To My Story*. His concert and music theatre credits also include three seasons as Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables* for the Gilbert and Sullivan Society, multiple seasons in the Adelaide Fringe with his self-produced show *Mark Oates and the Daniel Brunner Pretty Big Band* and for Out of the Square with *Love in the Key of B(acharach)!*



Adam Goodburn
SIGNOR PIRELLI

Adam Goodburn graduated from the Elder Conservatorium in 2003, and subsequently studied with vocal coaches at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

He made his opera debut singing Amon in the State Opera South Australia and Leigh Warren & Dancers production of Philip Glass's *Akhnaten* (2002 and 2003). Since then, his roles with the company have included Goro (*Madama Butterfly*), Pang (*Turandot*), Don Basilio (*The Marriage of Figaro*), the comic roles Nathanael, Cochenille, Pittichinaccio and Franz (*The Tales of Hoffmann*), Orpheus (*Orpheus in the Underworld*) and Raoul St Brioche in *The Merry Widow*. He has also been involved with the State Opera Chorus for eight years.

In 2007 he sang Mahatma Gandhi in Glass's opera *Satyagraha* (State Opera, Adelaide Vocal Project and Leigh Warren & Dancers), receiving a Helpmann Award nomination for best male performer in an opera. Other performance highlights include Nanki-Poo (*The Mikado*) for Opera Australia and Giorgio (*Ode to Nonsense*) for Slingsby. He appeared in the children's television series *The Fairies*, and he recently sang the Phantom in *The Phantom of the Opera* (Gilbert & Sullivan Society of SA).

He is the co-founder of SINGular Productions and has also directed musicals for Pelican Productions and Scotch College. He is currently developing two new operas with State Opera: Anne Cawse's *Innocence* and a new chamber opera, *The Unknown*.



Joanna McWaters
BEGGAR WOMAN

Joanna McWaters has been singing with State Opera South Australia for more than 25 years. Her roles with the company include the title role in *Madama Butterfly*, Queen of the Night (*The Magic Flute*), Mrs Hargreaves (*Boojum!*), Lily Brayton (*At the Dome Room (at 2 o'clock)*), Rose (*At the Statue of Venus*), Cupid (*Orpheus in the Underworld*), Nedda (*I Pagliacci*), Owl/Forester's Wife (*The Cunning Little Vixen*) and Dolly Pickles in the premiere season of *Cloudstreet*.

In the 2019 Adelaide Fringe Festival, she performed the title role in *Tosca* for Mopoke Productions. She has toured regionally and nationally with Co-Opera, singing roles such as Adele and Rosalinde (*Die Fledermaus*), Nedda, Rosina (*The Barber of Seville*), Mabel (*The Pirates of Penzance*), Gianetta (*The Gondoliers*) and Mimi (*La Bohème*). Other roles have included Eileen o da Freya (*Daughter of the Sea*), Alma (*Stari Most*), Mother/Witch (*Hansel and Gretel*) and Maria (*West Side Story*).

Joanna McWaters is a graduate of the Elder Conservatorium and has received scholarships to undertake postgraduate studies in both Taiwan and Luxembourg. She was an inaugural James & Diana Ramsay Foundation Emerging Artist (State Opera South Australia) and is also an inaugural graduate of the Lisa Gasteen National Opera Program. She has performed as a soloist with most of Adelaide's leading choirs and regularly performs at corporate functions and dinners.

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Sami Butler

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The organ prelude in this performance was recorded on the Melbourne Town Hall Grand Organ, performed by Calvin Bowman.

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