

# SWEENEY TODD: THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET

EDUCATION RESOURCE

ORIGINALLY PREPARED BY DEBORAH VANDERWERP, UPDATED BY TIM RYAN

**Victorian Opera respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the unceded land on which we work and live: the people of the Eastern Kulin Nation. We acknowledge these original owners and custodians of the lands and waterways and their enduring cultural practices of caring for Country. We pay respect to their Elders past and present.**

# ABOUT US

Victorian Opera is the state opera company of Victoria. Your state company. We make creative, accessible and relevant work for everyone while acknowledging the traditions and evolving our artform.

Recognised for our unique contribution to the country's operatic landscape, Victorian Opera joined the National Performing Arts Partnership Framework in 2021. Alongside other companies, Victorian Opera holds its rightful position in the national performing arts arena.

Commitment to the development and presentation of new Australian opera and musical theatre is forefront to our mission. We identify relative and topical material, commission and workshop new scores and librettos, and ultimately produce new productions. Victorian Opera premieres at least one new Australian opera or music theatre work each year, and have commissioned 36 new works since the company's formation.

The next generation of talent is developed from the ground up through our Emerging Artists Programs – The Victorian Opera Youth Chorus Ensemble (VOYCE), our VO Emerges project and our Emerging Artists Opera Prize scholarship. Creating future pathways for artists, artisans and technicians has become a driving focus for our organisation. We employ hundreds of people across the creative industries, recruit some of the finest local and national singers, and collaborate with Australia's leading companies, venues and learning institutions.

We embrace the new normal and continue to perform in exceptional theatres and concert halls to give you the best and safest experience. Join us to experience the human voice, the indefinable power of music and storytelling at its finest.

**And please, come as you are.**

**“A man that studieth revenge,  
keeps his own wounds green”**

FRANCIS BACON

**“When you begin a journey of revenge, start  
by digging two graves; one for your enemy  
and one for yourself”**

JODI PICOULT

**“The Best Revenge is massive success”**

FRANK SINATRA

**“If you prick us do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not  
laugh? If you poison us do we not die? And if you wrong us  
shall we not revenge?”**

SHYLOCK, THE MERCHANT OF VENICE BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

**“Weak people revenge, strong people forgive,  
intelligent people ignore”**

ALBERT EINSTEIN

**“I will have vengeance, I will have salvation”**

SWEENEY TODD, SWEENEY TODD: THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET BY HUGH WHEELER AND STEPHEN SONDHEIM

**“Man must evolve for all human conflict a method  
which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The  
foundation of such a method is love”**

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

**“Revenge is a powerful motivator”**

MARCUS LUTTRELL

**“In moments of pain, we seek revenge”**

AMI AYALON

**“Revenge is like politics, one thing always leads to another until  
bad has become worse, and worse has become worst”**

JONAS JONASSON

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# SYNOPSIS

*Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* is a musical thriller set in 19th Century England. It tells the story of a barber – Sweeney Todd / Benjamin Barker, who returns to London after being wrongfully charged and shipped off to a penal colony in Australia for 15 years. He returns to wreak vengeance upon Judge Turpin, who had originally sentenced him to exile, and the Judge's accomplice, Beadle Bamford.

Sweeney Todd discovers that his wife is missing, presumed dead, and his now coming-of-age daughter, Johanna, has been raised all this time by the evil Judge Turpin. The Judge intends to now make his 'ward' Johanna, his wife. On the boat back to London, Sweeney Todd befriends a young man, Anthony Hope, who inadvertently falls in love with Johanna and sets about attempting to rescue her from the clutches of Judge Turpin.

Upon his return to London, Sweeney Todd rents a room above Mrs Lovett's dismal pie shop, the same room Benjamin Barker had used to conduct his barber shop business. Sweeney Todd's desire for revenge turns to murderous psychopathology which he and Mrs Lovett conveniently conceal by converting the bodies of the victims into meat for the increasingly popular pies.

After the murder of Signor Pirelli, Mrs Lovett takes his helper, Tobias, under her wing. Tobias is afraid of Sweeney Todd and swears to protect Mrs Lovett. In the end, Tobias brings about the death of Sweeney Todd.

Although *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* is a thriller, it is at times humorous and is also a tragic love story.



Production Photography by Daniel Boud from the 2023 Sydney Opera House Season.

# BACKGROUND

The story of Sweeney Todd began as a Penny Dreadful in the 1830's in a story called *The String of Pearls* by Thomas Peckett Prest. It was turned into a number of plays during the next 40 years in England and the USA, and thereby Sweeney Todd became a popular character for those living in the Victorian era. There is evidence that suggests some people from this era thought Sweeney Todd was a real person.

There have been many adaptations of the story since the 1900's, including a 1926 silent film, a 1936 film – *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, a 1959 musical and a 1960 ballet.

Sondheim based his musical on a 1973 play by Christopher Bond. Bond, borrowing from *The Count of Monte Christo*, Shakespeare, and *The Revenger's Tragedy*, recreates a character in Sweeney Todd that is a tragedy of circumstance, and is more sympathetic. Sondheim saw the play that year and realised the potential of the story as a horror musical.

*Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* was first performed on Broadway in 1979 and in London in 1980. It won seven Tony Awards for the production and starred Len Cariou as Sweeney Todd and Angela Lansbury as Mrs Lovett.

## STEPHEN SONDHEIM (1930 - 2021)

Stephen Sondheim (pictured) was born in New York but after his parents divorced, he moved with his mother to Pennsylvania. By chance his neighbour was Oscar Hammerstein II, the legendary composer of *Oklahoma*, *The King and I*, *The Sound of Music* and many other musicals.

Hammerstein became Sondheim's teacher and mentor. Sondheim is quoted as saying,

*"I hear the word teacher and I start to get teary...the word teacher is to me that thing that to religious people God and saints are."*

He has composed many musical works including *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962), *A Little Night Music* (1973), *Sunday in the Park with George* (1984), *Into the Woods* (1987), and was a lyricist for *West Side Story* and other musical theatre works. He is considered the most important composer and lyricist in modern Broadway history.

## HUGH WHEELER (1912 - 1987)

Hugh Wheeler was a playwright, screenwriter, and novelist – writing over thirty mystery novels in his lifetime. He collaborated with Sondheim, writing the book for *A Little Night Music*, *Pacific Overtures* and *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* and contributing on *Candide*. He also wrote the screenplay for *A Little Night Music*.



Stephen Sondheim

# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

**"The terror still thrills".**

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 musical 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 SweeneyTodd' – we know this is a period piece, an allegory, a 'tale' that has of 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.



## DIRECTOR'S NOTE CONTINUED...

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**  
Director



# CREATIVE TEAM



**PHOEBE BRIGGS**

Conductor

BMus (University of Melbourne). Opera Australia music staff 2002 – 2012, Head of Music at Victorian Opera since October 2012.

For Victorian Opera, Phoebe has conducted *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Play of Herod*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Cendrillon*, *Four Saints in Three Acts* (Green Room nomination), *The Sleeping Beauty* (Green Room nomination), *Lorelei*, *Black Rider* (Helpmann nomination, VO/ Malthouse), *A Little Night Music*, *Happy End*, *A Christmas Carol*.

Other companies: Opera Australia, OzOpera, Stonnington Opera in the Park, Opera Northwest, IFAC, Ambassador Group, Chamber Made Opera, Melbourne Theatre Company.

Phoebe has appeared in concert in Australia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Japan.



**STUART MAUNDER AM**

Director

Beginning his career in stage management at the then Australian Opera, Maunder has a long history in opera, as a director and arts administrator. He served in senior management roles at Opera Australia from 1999 to 2008 before being appointed General Director of New Zealand Opera in 2014. He was appointed Artistic Director of State Opera South Australia in 2018.

In his time at State Opera, Maunder has proved a passionate advocate for finding a distinctive Australian voice, championing Australian repertoire, developing the next generation of Australian artists while still pursuing a balanced repertoire designed to reach the widest possible audience.

His acclaimed work as a director has ensured Maunder has remained a consistent presence on Australian stages for over three decades. A frequent collaborator with Victorian Opera, Maunder has directed several popular productions including four musicals by Stephen Sondheim (*Sunday in the Park with George*, *Into the Woods*, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, *A Little Night Music*), *Janacek's Cunning Little Vixen* and a co-production of Richard Meale's *Voss* with State Opera South Australia.

Maunder's production of *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, was co-produced with New Zealand Opera and toured New Zealand and Australia following its debut in 2015. In October 2023, Stuart Maunder AM took on the role of Artistic Director for Victorian Opera.



**ROGER KIRK**

Set & Costume Designer

Roger Kirk is a Tony Award-winning set and costume designer for 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*. Roger was the costume designer for the film *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

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*, *Silver Rose*, *Le Corsaire* for Munich Opera House, *Dusty—The Original Pop Diva*, and *Shout!*. His Broadway credits include *The King & I* (Tony Award), *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and *42nd Street* (Tony Award Nomination).

Roger's most recent credits include *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* for Victorian Opera, *Miracle City* for Luckiest Productions, *King Kong on Broadway*, *42nd Street* in London and the sell-out Australian tour of *Hugh Jackman's Broadway to Oz: Hugh Jackman Live in Concert World Tour 2019*.



**PHILIP LETHLEAN**

Lighting Designer

Philip Lethlean designs lighting for projects across Australia, Asia, Europe and America including, theatre, opera, dance, circus, puppetry, large cultural events and architecture.

Commissions include the *Melbourne International Comedy Festival*, the opening ceremony of the Pacific Games in PNG(2015), *Clusters of Light* in Sharjah UAE (2014), *How to Train Your Dragon* for Dreamworks/Global Creatures (2012), *White Night Melbourne* (2013/2014), the Australian Pavilion at Expo Shanghai and the opening of Hamer Hall.

Theatre works include the English National Ballet, The Australian Opera, MTC, Circus Oz and *Into the Woods*, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* and *The Sleeping Beauty* for Victorian Opera.



**JIM ATKINS**

Sound Designer

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

Recent highlights include *La Bohème on the Beach* (State Opera South Australia); *The Pearl Fishers*, *Elektra* and *Butterfly Lovers* (Victorian Opera); *Four Winds Festival* (Bermagui); *Acoustic Life of Sheds* in Lavender Bay (Sydney Festival); *One Infinity* (Melbourne, Sydney and Perth Festivals); *Pleasure Garden* (Sydney Festival, Norfolk and Norwich Festival, City of London Culture Mile), *24 reasons to Party* (Kate Ceberano /Adelaide Symphony Orchestra); *Setan Jawa* (AsiaTOPA/Humboldt Forum Kultur, Berlin); *Between 8 & 9* (Chamber Made, Castlemaine Festival, Chengdu China); *National Geographic, Symphony for our World* (Adelaide Festival).

# LEAD ROLES



**BEN MINGAY**  
Sweeney Todd

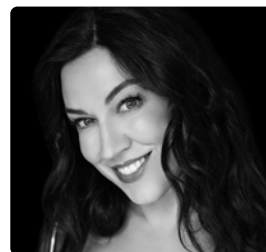
**Sweeney Todd** A vengeful barber who returns to London after fifteen years of unjust servitude in an Australian penal colony. He seeks revenge first on the corrupt judge who sent him there, and then on all of his clients.

An actor, musician and international musical theatre performer, Ben was originally a construction worker from Newcastle who fell into classical music when he was dared to audition for the Conservatorium of Music by his mates. He subsequently won a scholarship and went on to train in Opera Voice for several years – a twist of fate that changed the trajectory of his life forever.

Recently delighting screen viewers around the world in the acclaimed ABC/Sky UK/HBO Max series *Frayed* with Sarah Kendall, Ben's screen credits include Mel Gibson's *Hacksaw Ridge* playing the role of Grease Nolan and on the small screen playing Alan Bond in Nine Network's *House of Bond*, Jim Delaney in *Amazing Grace*, Trystan Powell in *Home and Away*, Buzz in *Packed to the Rafters* for the Seven Network and prior to that Ben starred for three seasons as Rob Duffy in the Network 10 series *Wonderland*.

Ben's stage credits include Shrek in *Shrek The Musical* (GFO), Sweeney Todd in *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (WAO & SOSA), the Pirate King in *Pirates of Penzance* (SOSA) Evan in *Vivid White* (MTC), Jud Fry in *Oklahoma* (TPC), Achilles in *Paris - A Rock Odyssey* (MTM) and numerous concerts around Australia with the hit singing group Swing on This. Other stage credits include Thomas in *Rolling Thunder Vietnam*, The Phantom in *The Phantom of the Opera*, Zack Mayo in the World Premiere production of *An Officer and a Gentleman*.

In 2011 Ben received rave reviews for his portrayal of Tommy DeVito in the award-winning musical *Jersey Boys*, which was his first Australian performance since he originated the role of Billy Kosteck in the World Premiere of *Dirty Dancing* in 2004. In *Dirty Dancing*, Ben's unique vocal ability won him the same role in every English-speaking production worldwide for almost 6 years, including the West End, Canada, Chicago, Boston and Los Angeles.



**ANTOINETTE HALLORAN**  
Mrs Lovett

**Mrs Lovett** A cheerful, talkative, amoral pie shop owner, Todd's landlady, and (arguably) in love with him. She hides the fact that Sweeney Todd's wife is still alive.

One of Australia's most accomplished and best-loved sopranos, Antoinette Halloran performs regularly with all the major Australasian opera companies and symphony orchestras and appears frequently on national television and radio. In 2021/2022, she sang Mrs Lovett in *Sweeney Todd* and Olive in *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* for State Opera South Australia, *Lorelei* for Opera Queensland and Victorian Opera, Brunnhilde in *Die Walküre* and Jenny in *Mahagonny* for Melbourne Opera and *A Christmas Carol* for Victorian Opera. In 2023, she sang the first two cycles of Melbourne Opera's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* – as Brunnhilde and starred in State Opera South Australia's *Gilbert & Sullivan Festival*.

Other recent appearances include the title roles in *Tosca* for West Australian Opera and *The Merry Widow* for State Opera South Australia, The Fox in *The Cunning Little Vixen* in Melbourne and Adelaide and Lady Macbeth (*Macbeth*) in Perth; she was also associate artist for José Carreras' National Tour. For Opera Australia, Antoinette has performed the title roles in *Madama Butterfly* and *Rusalka*, Mimi in *La bohème*, Stella in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Green Room Award); for Opera Queensland – the title role in *The Merry Widow*; for New Zealand Opera – Mimi, Cio-Cio-San and Mrs Lovett; for Victorian Opera – Fiordiligi in *Così fan Tutte*, Adina in *L'elisir d'amore* and Mrs Lovett.

In concert, she has sung with Elvis Costello and the Brodsky Quartet for the Sydney Festival, Mozart's *Requiem* with the Hong Kong Philharmonic and Nick Cave with the Melbourne Symphony.

Antoinette featured as a guest judge and panellist on the ABC television series *Operatunity Oz* and has appeared regularly on the hit show *Spicks and Specks*; she was a presenter for ABC's *Art Nation* – covering stories on opera and music theatre.

Antoinette is also been a regular visitor to Japan, China and Indonesia where she is much in demand as a guest artist. She recorded *Puccini Romance* for ABC Classics with tenor Rosario La Spina and the Queensland Symphony Orchestra.



## LACHLANN LAWTON

Anthony Hope

**Anthony Hope** A young, naïve sailor who rescues Todd at sea. He falls in love with Johanna Barker, Todd's daughter.

Australian/British Lyric Baritone Lachlann Lawton was a 2022 Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonyngel Bel Canto Award Finalist and John Wegner Award recipient. He is a 2024 Young Artist with Opera Queensland, and is a former Wesfarmers Arts Young Artist, Bendat Scholarship winner, and proud recipient of the Roberts Emerging Artist Fund at West Australian Opera.

He is a recent graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music's Master's program as a Waverly Scholarship recipient and studied with Quentin Hayes. He was a 2019 finalist in the Joan and Michael Kennedy Award for the Singing of Strauss.

Recent engagements include Anthony Hope (*Sweeney Todd*) for Victorian Opera. Jupiter (*Semele*) for HIP Company. The title role in Dido and Aeneas (*Purcell*), Station Master in Jonathan Mill's new opera *Eucalyptus*, A staged production of Mendelssohn's Elijah (*Elijah*), Schaunard (*La Boheme*), Marchese d'Obiney (*La Traviata*), Morales (*Carmen*), The Wolf/Cinderella's Prince (*Into The Woods*), Duke Robert (*Iolanta*), Sciarrone (*Tosca*) for West Australian Opera. Sonora (*La Fanciulla del West*) for Freeze Frame Opera.

Lachlann is a regular soloist and member of the St Georges Cathedral Consort directed by Dr Joseph Nolan.



## ALESSIA PINTABONA

Johanna

**Johanna** Todd's beautiful young daughter, claimed by the corrupt Judge Turpin as his 'ward'.

Alessia holds a Master of Music (Opera Performance) from the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, and a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from the Western Australian Academy of the Performing Arts (WAAPA).

Roles performed during studies include Jo March in Mark Adamo's *Little Women*, Ottavia (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*) and Papagena (*Die Zauberflöte*). She has participated in public masterclasses with Yvonne Kenny, Lynne Dawson and Mary King, and with Graham Johnson as part of the Melbourne International Festival of Lieder and Art Song.

Alessia has been a finalist in Melbourne Welsh Male Choir's Singer of the Year competition and a member of Opera Scholars Australia. She has also been the grateful recipient of The Graff Family Scholarship, Barbara MacLeod Scholarship, Haselhurst Scholarship, and the Royal Overseas League Western Australia Art Song Prize.



## MAT VEREVIS

Tobias Ragg

**Tobias Ragg** A simple soul who works firstly for Pirelli and then for Mrs Lovett in her pie shop. He is suspicious of Todd.

Mat is a Helpmann Award winning singer/actor and songwriter best known for his performance as Barry Mann in *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* (MCG). This is the third time he has played Tobias in Stuart Maunder's production of *Sweeney Todd* and does so while portraying Roger Davies in Australian tour of *Tina: The Tina Turner Musical* (TEG/Dainty).

Other credits include Tommy in *The Who's Tommy* (Vic Op), Mark Cohen in *RENT* (SOH/Sugary Rum prod), *A Little Night Music* (Victorian Opera), Lea Salonga's Australian Tour, *Down Under* (RIOT/Netflix), *Lazarus* (The Production Company), *There's Something About Music* (Little Red Company). His debut original EP is available on all streaming platforms.



## ADRIAN TAMBURINI

Judge Turpin

**Judge Turpin** A corrupt judiciary official who becomes infatuated with Lucy Barker, and later with her daughter, Johanna.

Adrian has enjoyed a long and varied career as an opera singer, concert performer, music educator, director and producer. Most recently, he won his second Green Room Award for his performance of Hagen in Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*. In 2017, Adrian was the winner of Australia's prestigious singing award, the Australian Opera Awards (YMF, MOST). His singing has featured on cinema releases of opera, DVD, international recordings, motion picture soundtracks, radio, and television.

He is proud to have worked with companies such as Opera Australia, Pinchgut Opera, West Australian Opera, Melbourne Opera, Lost and Found Opera, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Zelman Symphony Orchestra, Sydney University Graduate Choir, Melbourne Bach Choir, West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Canberra Symphony Orchestra and the Inventa Ensemble.

Over the past few years, he has focused on sharing his passion for music by teaching the next generation of musicians at *Pure Harmony Music Studio* in Melbourne. Over the years, Adrian has championed new Australian works and world premieres including Jane Hammond's *The Spare Room*, Nicholas Buc's *Origins*, Christopher Bowen's *Redfern Oratorio* and Luke Styles' *No Friend but the Mountains*, which is based on the award-winning book of the same name by Behrouz Boochani which has been made into a documentary screened on ABC Television. Adrian has worked with renowned conductors and directors such as Asher Fisch, Andrea Molino, Andrea Battistoni, Jonathan Darlington, Pietari Inkinen, Carlo Montanaro, Renato Palumbo, Guillaume Tourniaire, David McVicar, and Francesca Zambello, as well as Australians Jessica Cottis, Erin Helyard, Barry Kosky, Bruce Beresford, and John Bell.



### KANEN BREEN

The Beadle (Bamford)

**The Beadle (Bamford)** Judge Turpin's right-hand man and accomplice. He considers himself responsible for the moral compliance of the social classes below him.

Kanen's past engagements for Victorian Opera include the premiere seasons of *'Tis Pity*, *Banquet Of Secrets* and *Through The Looking Glass*, Uncle Ernie in *The Who's Tommy* and The Beadle in previous Melbourne seasons of *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*.

Roles for Opera Australia include Camille in *The Merry Widow*, Nanki Poo in *The Mikado*, Ralph Rackstraw in *HMS Pinafore*, Marco Palmieri in *The Gondoliers*, Caius in *Falstaff*, Alfred in *Die Fledermaus*, Monostatos in *The Magic Flute*, Sellem in *The Rakes Progress*, Pong in *Turandot*, Andres/Cochennille/Pittichinaccio/Frantz/Nathanael in *The Tales Of Hoffmann*, Pirelli in *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, *Albert Herring*, and Johnny in *Bliss* at the Edinburgh Festival.

Other engagements include Andy Warhol in the Brisbane Festival season of *The Perfect American*, a Helpmann Award winning performance as The Witch Of Endor in the Glyndebourne production of Handel's *Saul* for the Adelaide Festival. Other roles include Rodolfo in Baz Luhrman's *La Boheme* on Broadway and Willy Wonka in the national season of *Charlie & The Chocolate Factory*.

**Beggar Woman** A mad crone whose interruptions go unheeded. She is eventually identified as Todd's wife, Lucy, who was attacked by Judge Turpin.

Hailed as 'stunning' by the New York Times, American mezzo-soprano Margaret Trubiano graduated with Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from Manhattan School of Music. She played to sold out crowds in her *'NY Girl'* cabaret at Claire's Kitchen & Kurt Weill's *Sins & Mahagonny* at the Old Fitzroy Theatre. On the operatic stage, she's performed Mercedes *Carmen*, Princess Clarissa *Love For Three Oranges* (Opera Australia), Maddalena *Rigoletto* (DiCapo Opera NYC), Kate *The Pirates of Penzance* & 3rd Lady *The Magic Flute* (New Jersey Opera), Second Fairy *Midsummer Night's Dream* (NYC Ballet), Second Witch *Dido & Aeneas* (Macau Opera). Carnegie Hall debut: Gonzales' *Missa Azteca*.

Concert appearances include Zurich Opernhause's Opera Gala, Durufle's *Requiem* for New Jersey Symphony and Mahler's *Symphony No. 2*, Vivaldi's *Gloria* for the Phoenicia International Festival of the Voice and Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* for The Australian Ballet. Equally at home in musical theatre, she covered Madame Giry in *The Phantom of the Opera* World Tour, title role in *The Mystery of Edwin Droid*, Baker's Wife *Into the Woods* & performed Off-Broadway in *Beautiful Girls*.



### EUAN FISTROVIC DOIDGE

Signor Pirelli

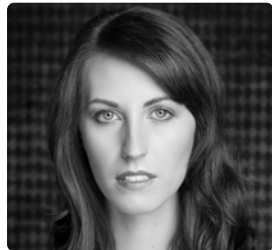
**Signor Pirelli** An Irish trickster and former employee of Benjamin Barker. He adopts the persona of a flashy Italian barber and attempts to blackmail Todd.

Following his recent comic turn as Maximilian in *Candide* for Victorian Opera and playing Lola in *Kinky Boots* in Christchurch NZ, Euan is delighted to be playing Pirelli in *Sweeney Todd*. Performing as Joseph in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* in Sydney and Melbourne last year capped off a busy few years for Euan. This included performing as Blaine in the *Cruel Intentions* National Tour, for the Melbourne Theatre Company in *Fun Home* as well as the Victorian Opera playing Sam Wurlitzer in *Happy End*. In 2021 he performed in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* in Brisbane and Perth and played Lewis in the production of *Pippen The Musical* in Sydney. Euan took centre stage in 2019 playing Tony Manero in GFO's *Saturday Night Fever*. This role followed his reprisal as Felicia in the 2018 Australian tour of *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*.

Musical Theatre has been an intrinsic part of Euan's background starting as a graduate of Patrick Studios Australia under the direction of Andrew Hallsworth. During this year of study, he was cast in his first musical *Anything Goes* (The Production Company). In 2012 Euan appeared in *The Producers* (The Production Company), then went on to play Paul San Marco in the Australian cast of *A Chorus Line* (TML Enterprises) for which he was the youngest ever nominee for the Helpmann Award for Best Actor in a Supporting Role in a Musical.

From 2012 – 2014 Euan appeared as Nikos/Padamadan in the Australian tour of *Legally Blonde* (ATG/GFO/Farrelly Prods) and *Grease* (GFO) in which he understudied the roles of Kenickie and Vince Fontaine, as well as understudying and performing the role of Teen Angel. He was then cast in the dream role of Marius in the Australian tour of *Les Miserables* (Cameron Mackintosh/Michael Cassel) 2014 – 2016.

During that time he also released his debut Album 'Let It Sing' and in 2016 Euan had the great pleasure of playing the role of Felicia/Adam in *Priscilla Queen of the Desert* and was Lead Singer in *Burn The Floor* (Norwegian Cruise Lines). On returning to Australia he starred in the Australian tour of *Kinky Boots* (Michael Cassel) as one of the Angels and covered the role of Lola.



### MARGARET TRUBIANO

Beggar Woman

# ENSEMBLE



**CARRIE BARR**

Carrie is one of Australia's most versatile performers in Opera and Music Theatre with a career spanning over the last 35 years.

She has played many leading roles in Australian productions including *Les Miserables* (Cosette), *Cats* (Jellylorum), *Mary Poppins* (Annie/Bird Woman/Mrs Brill cover) *Hair* (Sheila), *Return to the Forbidden Planet* (Gloria), *The Dusty Springfield Story* (Dusty's Alter Ego), *Ain't Necessarily Rowe*, *Hey Hey It's Cinderella*, *Nine*, *Crusade The Concert* (Catherine), *The King of Country* (Vicki), *Metro Street* (Sue Barnes), *Nostradamus* (Marie Nostradamus), *Sideshow Alley* (Cleo-Snake Charmer), *Jerry Springer the Opera* (Baby Jane cover) and *Carousel* (Carrie), where she won a Green Room award for Best Supporting Actress in a Musical for her role as Carrie.

Carrie's Victoria Opera credits include *Sweeney Todd*, *Sunday in the Park with George* (Celeste 2/Elaine) and *Pirates of Penzance* (Isabel). She is delighted to be performing with VO once again in her most loved musical.

Carrie's Opera Australia credits include performing in *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, *Turandot*, *King Roger*, *Cav/Pag*, *Carmen*, *Gotterdammerung*, *La Boheme*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *The Pearl Fishers*, *Elixir of Love*, *Don Pasquale* (Tokyo), *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Aida*, *Otello*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Marriage of Figaro*, *Tosca*, *Don Carlo*, *Faust*, *Un Ballo*, *The Merry Widow*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Lakme*, *Mozart's Requiem*, *The Gondolier's*, *HMAS Pinafore/Trial by Jury*, *Mikado*, *Pirates of Penzance* (VO & OA) *Die Fledermaus* and *Software & The Sound Garden* for Oz Opera School's Co.

S.A. Opera credits include *Orpheus and Euridice*, *Sweeney Todd* and *The Magic Flute* (Co Opera Adelaide).

Carrie was musical director and pianist for Shaun McCalle's show "The Pleasure of Their Co. which also won Best Comedy Show for the Adelaide Theatre Guide Awards.

Her TV credits include the character of Jenny McKenna in *Neighbour's* from 2005 - 2006. Carrie was also a regular singer on *Good Morning Australia* with Bert Newton and sang on *The Ray Martin Midday Show*. Her voice was heard every Sunday for 2 years on the opening and closing credits of *The Sunday Arts Programme*.



**PAUL BATEY**

After graduating from the Victorian College of the Arts, Paul began his career as a contemporary dancer, joining Tasdance, 2 Dance Plus and Danceworks.

He has been in the ensemble for numerous musicals including; *The Boy from Oz* (original cast), *the Mikado* (Esgee Melodies) and *Les Miserables* (Cameron Mackintosh). Paul's roles in musicals include Frank-n-Furter (*Rocky Horror Show*), Valentine (*Kiss of the Spider Woman*), Bill Cahoun (*Kiss me Kate*) and Captian Smith (*Titanic*).

On the concert stage, Paul has sung San Giovanni in *La Resurrezione* (Independent Classics), the Swan in *Carmina Burana* (Nordharzer Städtebundtheater), and the Tenor soloist in *The Messiah* (Queensland Symphony Orchestra).

Paul has been a regular chorister for Victorian Opera and Opera Australia for many years, with the most recent productions including, *Galileo*, *Capriccio*, *La Cenerentola*, *Tannhäuser*, *Idomeneo* and *Candide*.



**PAUL BIENCOURT**

Roles for Victorian Opera include Erste Jude in *Salome*, Mr Erlanson in *A Little Night Music*, Rodolfe in *William Tell*, Brighella in *Ariadne Auf Naxos*, Tmolus in *Phoebus & Pan*, the Englishman in *Angelique* and six tenor roles in *Rembrandt's Wife*.

For Melbourne Opera, Rodolfo in *La Boheme*, Basilio in *Marriage Of Figaro*, St Brioche in *Merry Widow*, Remendado in *Carmen*, Ferrando in *Così Fan Tutte*, Goro in *Madam Butterfly*, Pedrillo in *Abduction From Seraglio*, Lucio in *Otello*, Ralf in *HMS Pinafore* and roles in *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Parsifal* and *Lohengrin*.

Music theatre credits include Noel Weiderberg in the national production of *Shout-The Musical* for Jacobsen Entertainment and eight seasons for The Production Company.



**MICHAELA CADWGAN\***

Michaela Cadwgan graduated in 2020 with First Class Honours in BMus from The New Zealand School of Music—Te Kōkī, Victoria University of Wellington (NZSM). She holds a BA in German and Italian and is an alumna of the New Zealand Opera School, where she received the Dame Sister Mary Leo Foundation Award. Her notable performances include *Suor Angelica* in the NZSM Puccini Double Bill, and collaborations with the NZ Symphony Orchestra, Opera Australia Orchestra, Auckland Philharmonia, and Orchestra Wellington. Michaela's accolades include first place in the Wellington Regional Aria Competition, runner-up at The Lockwood New Zealand Aria Finals. She also received the Saluzzo Opera Academy Scholarship, along with the Merenda Travel Prize and the MOST Audience Prize at the 2023 IFAC Handa ASC Finals.

In 2024, she is performing Julia Betram in the New Zealand premiere of Jonathan Dove's *Mansfield Park* with New Zealand Opera.



**DANIELLE CALDER**

Danielle is a graduate of The Victorian College of the Arts and enjoys a varied performing career in opera and music theatre. She was a member of the Victorian Opera Developing Artists' Programme in 2008–2009 and has performed for VO in roles including the Governess in *The Turn of the Screw*, Giannetta in *The Elixir of Love*, Tyrenka in *The Cunning Little Vixen* and as part of the ensemble in *Sweeney Todd*.

Danielle is the recipient of a number of awards, including the Sleath Lowrey Rotary Scholarship, several Greenroom Award nominations and the 2005 Dame Joan Hammond Greenroom Award. She has performed for theatre companies including Opera Australia, Melbourne Opera Company, The Gordon Frost Organisation and Opera North UK. Role highlights include Margeurite in *Faust*, Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, the title role in *Tosca*, Mimi in *La Bohème*, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, Fiordiligi and Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Micaela in *Carmen*, Mabel and Edith in *The Pirates of Penzance* and Sylvia in *The Merry Widow*.

Danielle is thrilled to be returning to this production of *Sweeney Todd*.

\* The appearance of Michaela Cadwgan is generously supported by Mary Davidson and the family of the late Frederick R Davidson AM.

\*\* The appearance of Douglas Kelly is generously supported by the Dr Michael Stubbs & Malcolm Roberts Opera Prize.



**OLIVIA FEDEROW-YEMM**

Mezzo-soprano Olivia Federow-Yemm has performed as a soloist and ensemble member with Victorian Opera, Opera Australia, Melbourne Opera, BK Opera and the Opernakademie Henfenfeld.

Her performed roles include Nerone in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Third Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, Zita in *Gianni Schicchi*, Proserpina in *L'Orfeo*, Suzanne in Offenbach's *Un mari à la porte*, and Oberon in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Her cover roles include Madame de Croissy in *Dialogues des Carmélites*, and Flosshilde in Melbourne Opera's 2023 production of Wagner's *Ring Cycle*. In 2019, she debuted the role of Winter in Victorian Youth Opera's *The Selfish Giant*. Notable ensemble performances include Opera Australia's 2021 production of *Aida* and Victorian Opera's 2023–2024 productions of *Idomeneo* and *Candide*.

Olivia was the 2023 recipient of the Rotary International/Melbourne Opera NGSE scholarship to Germany, where she was a featured performer at the Bayreuth Young Artists Festival.



**DOUGLAS KELLY\*\***

Jonas Fogg & Ensemble

Douglas Kelly is an internationally performing tenor who has extensive experience in opera, oratorio and as a recitalist. He has been a prize-winner at the Australian Herald Sun Aria (2018) and National Liederfest (2018, 2019), and is a current Emerging Artist with Victorian Opera. His performances in the operas Ulmann's *Kaiser von Atlantis* as well as Kats-Chernin's *Iphis* garnered Green Room Award nominations for Best Supporting Performance and Best Lead Performance in opera respectively.

His operatic credits include: Verdi's *Nabucco* (Ismaele), Puccini's *La Rondine* (Prunier), Williamsons *English Eccentrics* (Beau Brommel), Cesti's *Oronhea* (Corindo), Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno D'Ulisse In Patria* (Anfinomo and Eurimaco), Mozart's *Le Nozze Di Figaro* (Basilio), Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* (Sellem), Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* (Gherardo), Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* (Aeneas) Jonathon Dove's *Mansfield Park* (Henry Crawford). He's been praised and described as 'charismatic in voice' and 'powerfully convincing' (Arts Hub), and 'A splendid Tenor' and 'suitably fresh and ardent of voice' (Limelight). His concert engagements include Berlioz' *L'Enfance Du Christ*, Britten's *War Requiem*, Haydn's *Creation* and Monteverdi's *Vespro Della Beata Vergine*.

As a recitalist he has presented Schubert's *Die Schöne Mullerin* and *Winterreise* at the Melbourne Recital Centre, as well as presenting recitals of Wolf and Schumann cycles at fortyfivedownstairs, Tempo Rubato and in Baden Bei Wien, Austria, with the Schubert Institute. In masterclass and on stage, Douglas has worked with such musicians as Roger Vignoles, Helmut Deustch, Wolfram Rieger, Graham Johnson, Robert Holl, Elly Ameling and Andreas Schmidt.



**JERZY KOZLOWSKI**

Jerzy worked regularly with the Victoria State Opera and Opera Australia since 1981. He has also worked with Ozopera, Melbourne Opera Company, Operalive, Melbourne City Opera and Victorian Opera in roles such as Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*, the title role in Nyman's *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, Grandpa Moss in Copland's *The Tender Land*, Dr Bartolo in *Barber of Seville* and Arthur in Iain Grandage's *The Riders*, for which he received a Green Room Award nomination.

Jerzy has sung solo with all major Melbourne choral groups in repertoire ranging from Handel's *Messiah* to Verdi's *Requiem* and solo recitals include performances of Shostakovich's *Suite on Verses by Michelangelo* and *Four Verses of Captain Lebyadkin*. He has performed in many premieres of works by Australian composers such as Richard Mills, Johanna Selleck and Helen Gifford, including two song cycles written especially for him by Michael Bertram and Lawrence Whiffin.



**KIRAN RAJASINGAM**

Kiran graduated from the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music and has become a regular on Australian stages. In 2022, Kiran made his principal Opera Australia debut as Yamadori (*Madama Butterfly*) at the Sydney Opera House. Other notable credits include Mr Waa (*Parrwang Lifts the Sky*), Ein Cappadocier (*Salome*), Herod (*The Play of Herod*), The King (*Cendrillon*) and Servant (*Capriccio*) for Victorian Opera. Kiran has performed numerous chorus roles for Opera Australia and Victorian Opera.

Kiran is passionate about new Australian music, originating roles in works by Deborah Cheetham Fraillon, Richard Mills, Gordon Kerry and Joseph Twist. In 2023 Kiran was awarded first place in the 41st National Liederfest.



**REBECCA RASHLEIGH**

A graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts, Rebecca has performed many various roles with several opera companies within Australia and Asia such as Adina (*L'Elisir d'Amore*), Clorinda (*Cenerentola*), Woglinde and the Woodbird (*Ring Cycle*), Parrwang (*Parrwang lifts the sky*), Marzelline (*Fidelio*), Blonde (*The Abduction from the Seraglio*), Susanna (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflote*), Liu (*Turandot*), Lauretta (*Gianni Schicchi*), Gretel (*Hansel and Gretel*) and Poppea (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*).

Rebecca has also received several awards one being the much prestigious Herald Sun Aria in 2018 and was nominated for a Greenroom Award in her portrayal of Marzelline in *Fidelio* (2020).



**HENRY SHAW**

Henry Shaw is a writer, director podcaster and singer, who is a graduate of the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music and completed his Masters in Writing for Performance at NIDA.

In 2024 he took his podcast "We'll Get There Together - A Neighbours Retrospective" to the Melbourne International Comedy Festival to sell out audiences.

As a performer, Henry is a highly lauded performer in Melbourne's opera and musical communities with a Green Room Nominated performance in The Forest Collective's 2023 premiere of *The Sea* and an award-winning performance as Caiaphas in CLOC's *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Other roles include Colline (*Boheme*), Arthur (*The Lighthouse*), La Podestat (*Le docteur Miracle*), Jitter (*Musical of Musicals: The Musical*), Superintendent (*The Drowsy Chaperone*), has covered the roles of Cecil (*Maria Stuarda*) and Raimondo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) with Melbourne Opera and was one of Hagen's Vassals in Melbourne Opera's *Ring Cycle*.



**SOPHIE VISKICH**

Since studying classical singing at the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne, Sophie has worked regularly with Opera Australia, Victorian Opera and in professional music theatre.

Classical roles include: Despina (*Cosi Fan Tutte*) Susanna (*Marriage of Figaro*) Pat Nixon (*Nixon in China*) and Queen of the Night (*The Magic Flute*). Music Theatre credits include: Australian tour of *The Sound of Music*; soloist in the Chinese tour of *The Music of Andrew Lloyd Weber*; multiple Regional Australian tours and she was the alternate Carlotta in the Asian, Australian and World tours of *The Phantom of the Opera*.

Sophie also worked with Dame Julie Andrews in the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Australian Tour of *My Fair Lady*. She performs regularly in concert and corporate work and teaches singing.



# ORCHESTRA

Victorian Opera Chamber  
Orchestra



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

Production Photography by Daniel Boud from the 2023 Sydney Opera House Season.

# SUPPORT YOUR EXPERIENCE

## BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

Take some time to get familiar with the opera by reading through all of the supplementary information in this resource.

Copies of the programme will be available on the night, but save some trees and access a digital copy through our production page.

## DON'T BE LATE

It's best to get to the theatre around 15 minutes early so you can find your seat and get settled into the atmosphere.

Being early also gives you time to get to the candy bar and the toilet.

If you've got bags or large coats that you don't want to wear in the theatre, allow time to attend the cloak room.

If you're late, you'll miss the orchestra playing the Organ Prelude and our Ensemble performing the spine tingling *The Ballad of Sweeney Todd*!

There is no middle aisle, so if you have seats in the middle try to get in first.

## DO YOU REALLY NEED YOUR PHONE?

By all means take selfies in the foyer and of course the mandatory pre-show social media post of the set. Don't forget to tag us [#victorianopera](#) [@victorianopera](#) [#voeducation](#) [@voeducation](#)

Allow yourself, and those around you, to be immersed into the magical world of theatre by turning off your phones, and notifications to your digital watches.

## SHOW YOUR RESPECT

Be aisle kind and show appreciation to the people who make room for you as you find your seats.

Eat before you attend the theatre, that includes those noisy lolly and chip wrappers.

Save your thoughts about the show for the foyer, no talking or calling-out during the show please.

Feel free to express your feelings as the performers display their talents and be sure to clap loudly when you are impressed.

## CONTENT WARNING

Please be aware that this production contains violence, cannibalism, depictions of sexual acts and abuse, predatory themes and coarse language which may be triggering for some people.

Age Recommendation: suitable for ages 12+, **parental guidance is highly recommended.**



# CONTEXTUALISATION

## VICTORIAN ERA LONDON

The Victorian Era corresponds with the reign of Queen Victoria who ruled the British Empire from 1837 - 1901, the second longest ruling British Monarch. It was a period of moral conservatism but also one of financial, political and social development.

Britain was a powerful nation on the world stage with a far reaching empire and healthy economy fueled by the Industrial Revolution and a population that was three quarters working class. The Industrial Revolution was propelled by advances in science that led to cities like London being densely populated. The East End of London became the centre of the working class as prevailing winds made the air quality in this area undesirable to the aristocracy and wealthy middle class.

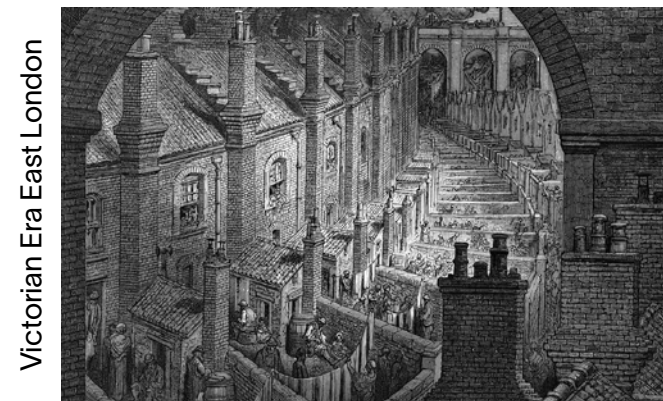
Whilst there were significant advances in science during this period, the living conditions in the East End were little improved from medieval London. Homes were small and cramped and often experienced infestations of lice and rats. The average diet consisted of bread, cheese and potatoes and this lack of a balanced diet combined with poor sanitation and filthy air led to many dying young from treatable diseases. Universal health care was not in place at this time and this lack of public health care led to many questionable techniques being employed often from traveling sales people.

The wealthier classes believed the poor deserved their fate due to a lack of motivation and laziness and transportation to Australia was still used as a punishment up until 1857. The use of a salaried law enforcement was a relatively new concept in London in 1840 and officials were often corrupt and serving their own interest. The introduction of a paid police force in 1829 saw a reduction in police patrolling streets and patrols were concentrated in the wealthier suburbs, leaving the poorer eastern suburbs to fend for themselves.

This is the world of *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*.



Victorian Era West London



Victorian Era East London

## OPERA OR MUSICAL THEATRE?

The features that distinguish musicals and operas are complex. This is largely due to the evolution of both of these forms over several centuries, and due to the interpretation of those styles in the contemporary context.

Opera is a musical form that has existed in Europe since the late sixteenth century. Over many years it has undergone a number of transformations. Many great operatic composers have developed the art form including Mozart, Verdi, Wagner and Puccini. The most significant stylistic conventions include a narrative almost entirely sung, the use of an orchestra, grand scenic art and a singing technique that does not require the singer to need amplification. The form has evolved to include a wide variety of styles ranging from comic opera to tragedies and was popular until the Twentieth Century, when the modern musical became the presiding popular music/drama form.

Musical Theatre is a genre that emerged from the operetta in the late Eighteenth Century through which content is conveyed through song, dialogue, dance, acting, and scenic arts. In Musical Theatre dialogue becomes prominent as do dancing sequences, this style of theatre also requires its performers to be highly skilled in all areas, especially those playing lead roles. Musical Theatre responded to the emerging sound technology of amplification which allows singers to sing more softly, allowing for a greater range of dynamics whilst dancing which required adjustments to the vocal technique. Amplification also led to smaller orchestras, use of different instruments and sounds as well as the ability to place musicians in other locations rather than directly in front of the stage.

Some of the discussions around the differences and similarities of musicals and opera include features like actor or singer, the style of singing used, the use of through-composition or dialogue, popular (lowbrow) or classical (highbrow), commercial or art. A feature of opera is that the words are almost always all sung, whereas in Musical Theatre, the story is told through dialogue interspersed with songs. *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* is one of only two of Sondheim's works to be listed in *The New Kobbe's Opera Book*, edited by The Earle of Harewood and Anthony Peattie, however it utilises stylistic conventions from both genres.



# THE MUSIC

## THE SCORE

Sondheim creates the particular mood and atmosphere of *Sweeney Todd* using a variety of musical devices including dissonance, repetition, ostinato, and leitmotifs. Leitmotifs are a common operatic device that Sondheim has used in previous theatrical compositions. These leitmotifs are heard in both the orchestration and vocal parts. This technique is often used by other composers to identify a character or emotion. In the case of *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, Sondheim assigns a motif to specific characters.

Opera uses devices such as love duets and revenge arias. In *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* there is an example of each of these, "Green Finch and Linnet Bird" and "Epiphany". He also brings in elements of the popular in songs such as "By the Sea". Sondheim uses the sound of the organ in the Prelude to create a familiar gothic horror mood. Sondheim's leitmotifs are introduced in the prelude. He also references the "Dies Irae", from The Sequence - Mass for the Dead, a Gregorian Chant.

Sondheim rapidly changes pace and rhythm throughout the score which emphasises the changeability of *Sweeney Todd*'s nature. This also underscores the diverse nature of the characters, their personalities and the complex nature of the situation they are all in. Sondheim uses repetition as a device in his scores which is also played out in the lyrics. Repetition is demonstrated in the ostinato that he uses in the opening ballad which returns later in the work.

Sondheim was aware of the power of music and sound in the traditional horror film. He scores sounds and percussive actions to be acted out by the cast as part of the score rather than acting direction, for example in "Worst Pies in London". The sound of the screaming factory whistle almost as a Foley Music device, is used to both shock the audience and later to accompany the murders. He writes sensual and romantic music to underscore the violent and uncomfortable dramatic action, this also plays out the complexity of *Sweeney Todd*'s emotional state and foreshadows impending dramatic action. He used the through-composed form to maintain tension and drama.

## SONG LIST

### ACT 1

#### **Prologue - The Ballad of Sweeney Todd (Company)**

This summarises the story of *Sweeney Todd*, the man who owned a barber shop where men were shaved but whose souls weren't saved. He served a dark and vengeful God.

#### **No Place Like London (Anthony, Sweeney Todd, Beggar Woman)**

The story begins with the arrival of *Sweeney Todd* and Anthony in London. We learn of Anthony having saved *Sweeney Todd*'s life and of *Sweeney Todd*'s gratitude. The Beggar Woman appears. Eventually *Sweeney Todd* tells the story; there was a barber and his wife and she was beautiful but a vulture of the law... removed the barber from his plate.

**The Worst Pies in London (Mrs Lovett)**

Sweeney Todd enters Mrs Lovett's pie shop, a filthy business producing terrible pies.

**Poor Thing (Mrs Lovett)**

Mrs Lovett tells the tale of the barber Benjamin Barker, and realises that Sweeney Todd is in fact him. When he was exiled she saved his razor blades and now presents them to him. He rents the room above the shop once more.

**My Friends (Sweeney Todd, Mrs Lovett)**

Sweeney Todd sings of the glory of his tools, the razor blades.

**Green Finch and Linnet Bird (Johanna)**

Johanna implores the birds to teach her to sing as a relief from her caged existence.

**Ah, Miss (Anthony, Beggar Woman)**

Anthony sees Johanna and falls for her instantly, but Johanna is spooked by the appearance of the Beggar Woman and leaves them. Anthony discovers the identity of the beautiful Johanna and buys her a bird.

**Johanna (Anthony)**

The Judge and Beadle destroy Anthony's moment with Johanna.

**Pirelli's Miracle Elixir (Tobias, Sweeney Todd, Mrs Lovett, Company)**

In a marketplace, the 'Italian' barber Pirelli's wares are touted by his assistant Tobias. Sweeney Todd sees a chance to re-establish his own reputation as a barber and challenges Pirelli to prove who the better barber is.

**The Contest (Pirelli)**

A contest ensues with Beadle Bamford as adjudicator. Sweeney Todd wins the contest and Beadle's trust.

**Johanna - Mea Culpa (Judge Turpin)**

Whilst spying on Johanna, Judge Turpin punishes himself for lusting after his young ward. He then decides to marry her to get rid of his guilt.

**Wait (Mrs Lovett)**

Mrs Lovett calms Sweeney Todd as he anxiously awaits the arrival of his intended victims and his chance for revenge.

**Pirelli's Death**

Todd's first customer/victim is Pirelli. Mrs Lovett meets Tobias and to distract him she takes him under her wing.

**Kiss Me/Ladies in Their Sensitivities (Johanna, Anthony, The Beadle, Judge Turpin)**

Johanna reveals to Anthony that the Judge is intending to marry her and a plan is hatched for Johanna to marry Anthony instead. Beadle soothes the Judge and encourages him to consider his appearance to attract his future bride.

**Pretty Women (Sweeney Todd, Judge Turpin)**

Sweeney Todd savours the fact that he has the judge in his barber's chair. They both sing of pretty women.

**Epiphany (Sweeney Todd, Mrs Lovett)**

Sweeney Todd rages about the loss of the opportunity to kill the Judge.

**A Little Priest (Sweeney Todd, Mrs Lovett)**

Mrs Lovett comes up with a unique way to dispose of Pirelli's body. Sweeney Todd enjoys the mad idea she presents, and they sing of future victims.

## ACT 2

### **God, That's Good (Tobias, Mrs Lovett, Sweeney Todd, Beggar Woman, Company)**

The 'new' version of Mrs Lovett's pies have created a great deal of prosperity for her, and Tobias who now works for her, enthusiastically spruiks her wares.

### **Johanna (Anthony, Sweeney Todd, Johanna, Beggar Woman)**

Sweeney Todd and Anthony sing of their love and despair.

### **By the Sea (Mrs Lovett)**

Mrs Lovett fantasises about her future with Sweeney Todd.

### **Wigmaker Sequence (Sweeney Todd, Anthony, Company)**

After the Judge confines Johanna to the asylum, Anthony devises a plan to rescue her. He pretends to be a wigmaker and seeks hair from the inmates of the asylum.

### **The Letter (Sweeney Todd, Company)**

Sweeney Todd writes a letter to the Judge to draw him to the barber's chair.

### **Not While I'm Around (Tobias, Mrs Lovett)**

Tobias sings of his devotion to Mrs Lovett and implies his suspicions about Sweeney Todd.

### **Parlour Songs (The Beadle, Mrs Lovett, Tobias)**

Beadle Bamford comes to the bakehouse to investigate the complaints of the foul smells that have been reported. Sweeney returns and gets his revenge on Beadle Bamford. Tobias discovers the foundation for his fears.

### **Fogg's Asylum (Company)**

Anthony manages to release Johanna from the asylum, along with all of the inmates.

### **City on Fire (Lunatics, Johanna, Anthony)**

The inmates run through the streets of London

### **Searching (Mrs Lovett, Sweeney Todd, Beggar Woman, Anthony, Judge Turpin)**

Sweeney Todd and Mrs Lovett go searching for Tobias. Anthony and Johanna (dressed as a sailor) arrive at the bakehouse and await Sweeney Todd.

### **The Judge's Return (Sweeney Todd, Beggar Woman, Anthony, Johanna)**

Sweeney Todd finally gets his revenge on the Judge.

### **Final Scene (Mrs Lovett, Sweeney Todd, Tobias)**

The Beggar Woman is killed, and Sweeney Todd nearly kills Johanna, not recognising her in her disguise. He then discovers that his precious Lucy was the Beggar Woman and that Mrs Lovett knew all along. He kills her. Tobias then kills Sweeney Todd.

### **Epilogue: The Ballad of Sweeney Todd (Company)**

# THEATRE VOCABULARY

**Alienation:** A theatrical convention used to alienate the audience from the emotions of a narrative and remind them that they are watching a piece of theatre.

**Beadle:** An appointment by the Church of England to oversee charitable works and make reports on public order.

**Foley Sound:** The reproduction of everyday sound effects added to a film in post production.

**Fourth Wall:** The invisible wall between the audience and the performers on the stage.

**Jacobean Tragedy:** A style of theatre where the dominant narrative arc is centered on revenge.

**Melodrama:** A style of theatre that has exaggerated characters that explore heightened emotions rather than refined or realistic characterisation.

**Metaphor:** A figure of speech or symbol that identifies hidden similarities between two different things.

**String of Pearls:** A Victorian Era fictional story upon which Sweeney Todd's story is based on.

**The Count of Monte Cristo:** A novel written by French author Alexandre Dumas, believed to have influenced the story of Sweeney Todd. It follows the lead character, Edmund Dantes, through his imprisonment, freedom, and revenge spanning nearly his entire life.

**Ward:** A child or someone who is incapable of self care, appointed to the protection of a guardian or government agency.

# MUSIC VOCABULARY

**Andante:** translates to at a walking pace, tempo off 73 - 77 BPM.

**Aria:** A song for one person, or solo. The character gets to sing about their inner emotions and turmoils.

**Dissonance:** Sounds played together that are not pleasing and clash making the listening uncomfortable.

**Gregorian Chant:** A style of religious music from the medieval period sung in unison and without accompaniment.

**Leitmotif:** A melodic phrase that is attached to a character. When this is played, we know that character is either on stage or being thought of.

**L'istesso tempo:** A direction in music to keep the tempo at the same pace when the meter, or time signature changes.

**Misterioso:** Play the music in a mysterious way.

**Moderato:** Meaning to play the music at a moderate tempo of 86 - 97 BPM.

**Ostinato:** A repeated rhythmic pattern.

**Piu Mosso:** A direction to a performer that the music should move more quickly.

**Prelude:** An introductory piece of music to a larger piece, often played on a keyboard instrument. Preludes include motifs and ideas from the larger piece. Similar to an overture.

**Rubato:** An expressive tempo marking giving the performer license to slightly speed-up and/or slow-down to bring further meaning to lyrics.

**Through Composition:** A continuous piece of music that has no repetition. No material is reused and new ideas are constantly introduced.



# LEARNING ACTIVITIES

## IDENTIFYING STYLISTIC CONVENTIONS: WORKSHEET ACTIVITY

Read the Theatre Style descriptions and identify the conventions of each style by listing these in dot points in the third column. Once you have done this, identify which conventions apply to *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* and list these, in dot points, in the fourth column. Which style does this production belong to, or does it cross all the three styles?

THEATRE STYLE	DESCRIPTION	STYLISTIC CONVENTIONS OF THE THEATRE STYLE	WHICH STYLISTIC CONVENTIONS APPLY TO SWEENEY TODD: THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET
<b>OPERA</b>	Opera is a significant art form that has its origins in Asia from approximately the third century CE and began to appear in European Music in the late sixteenth century CE. It combines music and dramatic elements for storytelling requiring writers, composers, librettists, and designers to elevate their skills to successfully engage an audience. This style of theatre is completely sung with minimal to no dialogue and generally covers stories of high emotion and serious themes. In the European tradition it has an orchestra playing the music in a pit in front of the stage with the conductor at the centre. Singers would not use microphones to amplify their voices, requiring great skill in projection to get their sound over the orchestra and also meaning minimal movement as they sing. Grand opera's would generally be three to four acts long.		
<b>OPERETTA</b>	This style of theatre began to emerge in the nineteenth century CE as people became more mobile and financially independent. It combined music and dialogue in the art of telling stories and the subject matter is generally light and humorous and this is reflected in the style of music that was composed. In operettas we see the length of the performance shortened, the size of the orchestra reduced and the introduction of dancing. This style is closely related to Opera Buffa, a style of opera that was funny and looked at the everyday life of ordinary people.		
<b>MUSICAL THEATRE</b>	Operetta and Musical Theatre are very similar styles of theatre; both contain music, singing, spoken dialogue and dancing. In Musical Theatre the dialogue becomes more prominent as do the dancing sequences, this style of theatre also requires its performers to be highly skilled in all areas, especially those playing lead roles. Musical Theatre responded to the emerging sound technology of amplification which allows singers to sing more softly, allowing for a greater range of dynamics and adjustments to the vocal technique required. Amplification also led to smaller orchestras, use of different instruments and sounds as well as the ability to place musicians in other locations rather than directly in front of the stage.		
<b>WHICH STYLE DOES SWEENEY TODD: THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET BELONG TOO?</b>			

## LEARNING THE MUSIC OF *SWEENEY TODD: THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET*: ELEMENTS OF MUSIC

Listen to the links in the table below and use up to 5 descriptive words to explain how you feel the Elements of Music have been manipulated by Sondheim in his writing for this piece. Using this analysis of Music Elements, in the final column describe the mood created in each piece. These recordings come from the original 1979 Broadway cast recording.

	MELODY	RHYTHM	HARMONY	TEXTURE	MOOD
<b>ACT 1, PRELUDE</b> <a href="https://open.spotify.com/track/1cLlmK3FxeKC1T-fbkwSWtM">https://open.spotify.com/track/1cLlmK3FxeKC1T-fbkwSWtM</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	
<b>ACT 1, PIRELLI'S MIRACLE ELIXIR</b> <a href="https://open.spotify.com/track/6RL40sdT4qBhXX-oILZbquR">https://open.spotify.com/track/6RL40sdT4qBhXX-oILZbquR</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	
<b>ACT 2, BY THE SEA</b> <a href="https://open.spotify.com/track/7lcyT1nlu52HuhoX-KnF00f">https://open.spotify.com/track/7lcyT1nlu52HuhoX-KnF00f</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	
<b>ACT 2, FINAL SEQUENCE</b> <a href="https://open.spotify.com/track/7vsxzjwinuqzM9lx-1Sx6TQ">https://open.spotify.com/track/7vsxzjwinuqzM9lx-1Sx6TQ</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	

## LEARNING THE CHARACTERS OF *SWEENEY TODD: THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET*: CHARACTER PROFILES

Follow the process below to create a profile for one of the characters from *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*. When you have completed the character analysis, record yourself being the character you have chosen in the form of a meme or social media introduction.

1. Choose one of the following characters: Sweeney Todd, Mrs Lovett, Anthony, Johanna, Judge Turpin, Lucy/Beggar Woman, Beadle, Pirelli or Toby.
2. Using the character descriptions found in the cast section of this resource on pages 11 to 14 as a guide, but also using your own ideas, complete the character analysis in the table opposite.
3. Explore the physicality of your chosen character through body language, gesture, facial expression and walking.
4. Explore the voice of your chosen character to ensure the accent reflects the time period and the relevant social class, as well as the key emotion they experience in this story.
5. Develop a 20 second introduction for the character. Be sure to include their name and what the audience needs to know about them.
6. Film yourself performing this character introduction, feel free to use stagecraft elements of costume, props, hair and make-up.
7. As a class, play all the Character Profiles as a way of meeting and understanding the characters of *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*.

Character name:	
Gender:	Age:
Social class:	
Accent:	
Pitch of voice:	
Career:	
Gestures:	
Facial Expressions:	
Emotions experienced:	
Outlook on life:	
Relationship to other characters:	
Motivation:	

## CHARACTER IN COMPOSITION: MUSIC ANALYSIS

Manipulating music elements in different ways allows a composer to draw out a character's motivation, which aids the audience in understanding character and character relationships. Consider the examples below from Judge Turpin and Anthony when they sing about Johanna.

### EXAMPLE 1: ANTHONY

Tenor

♩ = 120

Jo - han - - na

Piano

*f*

I V

[https://soundcloud.com/victorianopera/anthonys-johanna?si=e9e46d58836e4f5490537edc-70deef3d&utm\\_source=clipboard&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=social\\_sharing](https://soundcloud.com/victorianopera/anthonys-johanna?si=e9e46d58836e4f5490537edc-70deef3d&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing)

1. What is the full musical term for the time signature?

2. What is the key signature?

3. What is the tonality?

4. What is the dynamic level?

5. What is the tempo?

6. Describe the rhythm of the melody?

7. What articulation is used?

8. Is the accompaniment simple or complex?

9. With these manipulations in mind, what do you think the relationship between Anthony and Johanna is like and what is motivating Anthony at this time?

### EXAMPLE 2: JUDGE TURPIN

Baritone

♩ = 160

*p* Jo - han - na Jo - han - na

Piano

*pp*

V I IV I V I

[https://soundcloud.com/victorianopera/turpins-johanna?si=e9e46d58836e4f5490537edc-70deef3d&utm\\_source=clipboard&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=social\\_sharing](https://soundcloud.com/victorianopera/turpins-johanna?si=e9e46d58836e4f5490537edc-70deef3d&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing)

1. What is the full musical term for the time signature?

2. What is the key signature?

3. What is the tonality?

4. What dynamic levels are being applied?

5. What is the tempo?

6. Describe the rhythm of the melody?

7. What articulation is used?

8. Is the accompaniment simple or complex?

9. With these manipulations in mind, what do you think the relationship between Judge Turpin and Johanna is like and what is motivating Judge Turpin at this time?

## MELODRAMA AND STOCK CHARACTERS: EXPLORING CHARACTER


The Victorian Era shone a light on the distinct differences between the social classes of British society. In *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, we are exposed to the destitution and poverty of the lower classes compared to the social affluence of the upper middle class. An emerging theatre style in this era was Melodrama which used exaggerated characters or caricatures called Stock Characters of which the six main types are found below.

STOCK CHARACTER	DESCRIPTION	APPLIES TO WHICH CHARACTER IN SWEENEY TODD: THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET
The Hero	Always saves the day, has moral authority is courageous and good looking.	
The Hero's Faithful Servant	Assists the hero to save the day, but is often clumsy and thoughtless. Provides some comic relief.	
The Villain	Is powerful but morally corrupt and evil. Competes for the heroines attention but always fails.	
The Villain's Accomplice	They assist the Villain and similar to the Faithful Servant, they are clumsy and often thoughtless thereby providing comic relief.	
The Persecuted Heroine	Is often depicted as beautiful and young but always in peril at the hands of the villain.	
The Aged Parent	Often the parent of the heroine, they are old, frail and sick.	

1. As a class read through the descriptions of the Stock Characters and then refer to the character description for *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* found on pages 11 to 14 of this resource. Discuss how the Stock Characters of Melodrama can be applied to the characters in this production and then list these in the third column of the above table.

2. As a class, discuss Sweeney Todd's motivations and action, and debate whether he is a Hero or a Villain?

3. In groups of six create a tableau displaying the Stock Characters found in *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*. Be sure to use levels, body language, gesture and facial expression in an exaggerated way to bring out the character traits as well as what social class they belong to.



**“There's a hole in the world like a great black pit  
and the vermin of the world inhabit it  
and its morals aren't worth what a pig could spit  
and it goes by the name of London.  
At the top of the hole sit the privileged few  
Making mock of the vermin in the lonely zoo  
turning beauty to filth and greed...  
I too have sailed the world and seen its wonders,  
for the cruelty of men is as wonderous as Peru  
but there's no place like London!”**

SWEENEY TODD

SWEENEY TODD: THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET BY HUGH WHEELER AND STEPHEN SONDHEIM

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**From an Adaptation by**  
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