



MEDIA RELEASE

KANDER & EBB'S

15 JUNE 2016

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WARWICK
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CURTAINS

THE MUSICAL COMEDY WHODUNNIT

ARTS CENTRE MELBOURNE
20 to 28 August 2016

CURTAINS CAST ANNOUNCED

The cast for The Production Company's new staging of the Broadway whodunnit, ***Curtains*** was announced today. Ken Mackenzie-Forbes, Artistic Director said '**Colin Lane, John Wood and Nicki Wendt** are joining **Simon Gleeson, Alex Rathgeber, Lucy Maunder, Melissa Langton and Alinta Chidzey** in this **Kander & Ebb** murder mystery musical comedy. For this hilarious detective thriller we have cast artists with the personality and skill to create **Rupert Holmes**' colourful backstage characters. This cast reflects the depth of artistic excellence we have here in Melbourne.'

Curtains opens in the State Theatre, Arts Centre Melbourne on August 20 for a season of 10 performances. This is the Australian professional premiere season of ***Curtains***, which first opened on Broadway in 2007. It played more than 500 performances and was nominated for eight Tony Awards.

The outstanding company engaged for ***Curtains*** is: **Simon Gleeson, Melissa Langton, Colin Lane, Lucy Maunder, Alex Rathgeber, Alinta Chidzey, Zoe Coppinger, Jared Bryan, Stephen Wheat, Simon Maiden, Nicki Wendt, Tony Rickards and John Wood.**

With music and lyrics by Broadway legends **John Kander & Fred Ebb** – creators of ***Cabaret*** and ***Chicago*** - ***Curtains*** is based on the original book and concept by **Peter Stone**. A parody of backstage murder mystery plots, ***Curtains*** is set in Boston 1959 at the opening night of the cowboy musical ***Robbin Hood of The Old West***. The talentless leading lady is murdered onstage during the curtain call and the whole cast are suspects. A grand tribute to Broadway, it features a hilarious company of characters including a very camp director, a bitter critic, clueless investors and ambitious actresses. It is up to Lt. Frank Cioffi, a police detective who moonlights as a musical theatre fan, to save the show, solve the case, and maybe even find love.

Award winning Director, **Roger Hodgman** leads the outstanding creative team. Musical Director is **John Foreman** and the Choreographer is **Dana Jolly**. Designs are by **Esther Marie Hayes** (costumes), **Christina Smith** (sets), **Matt Scott** (lighting) and **System Sound** (sound).

All performances will feature The Production Company Orchestra.

Rehearsals for ***Curtains*** start on Monday 1 August at Ministry of Dance, 64 Sutton Street, North Melbourne.

All tickets for ***Curtains*** are on sale at Arts Centre Melbourne and Ticketmaster. Adult Tickets start at just \$42, Under 18's at \$21.

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THE MUSICAL COMEDY WHODUNNIT

FULL COMPANY

Lieutenant Frank Cioffi	Simon Gleeson
Niki Harris	Alinta Chidzey
Georgia Hendricks	Lucy Maunder
Carmen Bernstein	Melissa Langton
Aaron Fox	Alex Rathgeber
Sidney Bernstein	John Wood
Christopher Belling	Colin Lane
Bambi Bernet	Zoe Coppinger
Daryl Grady	Stephen Wheat
Johnny Harmon	Simon Maiden
Oscar Shapiro	Tony Rickards
Bobby Pepper	Jared Bryan
Jessica Cranshaw	Nicki Wendt

ENSEMBLE

Daniel Assetta	Alicia Attwood
Amy Berrisford	Matt Douglas
Brett Fisher	David Hammond
Ashleigh Hauschild	Jess Lindon
Joe Meldrum	Anthony Pepe
Madeline Perrone	Justine Puy
Emma Russell	Darren Tyler

CREATIVE TEAM

Director	Roger Hodgman
Musical Director	John Foreman
Choreographer	Dana Jolly
Costume Designer	Esther Marie Hayes
Set Designer	Christina Smith
Lighting Designer	Matt Scott
Sound Design	System Sound

ALL PERFORMANCES WILL FEATURE THE PRODUCTION COMPANY ORCHESTRA.

PRINCIPAL CAST



SIMON GLEESON is Lieutenant Frank Cioffi

Simon is best known for his acclaimed interpretation of Jean Valjean in Cameron Mackintosh's new production of *Les Misérables* for which he received the 2015 Helpmann award for Best Male Actor in a Musical.

His stage credits include *Jolson*, *Shout*, *Mamma Mia* (Helpmann Award nomination), *Eureka*, *Chess* (Green Room Award nomination) for The Production Company, *Love Never Dies* (Helpmann and Sydney Theatre Award nominations) and *Hipbone Sticking Out* (BighART). He appeared for the Sydney Theatre Company in *Harbour* and *The Republic of Myopia* and was a member of the original cast of *Rupert* for the Melbourne Theatre Company, which he also toured to the Kennedy Center in Washington. Simon's UK credits include *The Far Pavilions*

(West End; for which he received a Whatsonstage Award nomination), *Imagine This* (West End), *Three Sides*, *The Silver Lake*, *Certified Male* (Edinburgh Festival), *Shoes* (Sadler's Wells) and *Southwark Fair* (Royal National Theatre) directed by Sir Nicholas Hytner.

Simon's film and television credits in Australia include *City Homicide*, *Blue Heelers* and *SeaChange*. In the UK, he played a regular role in *EastEnders* and was a member of the principal cast of *Kombat* (BBC2) directed by Monty Python member Terry Jones. Simon also appeared in the feature film *My Life In Ruins*.



MELISSA LANGTON is Carmen Bernstein

Melissa's versatility as an entertainer is highlighted by her unique performances in cabaret, music theatre and on the concert platform.

Her theatre appearances include *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Les Miserables*, *The Pirates Of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, *Marry Me A Little*, *Eurobeat*, *We Will Rock You* (Killer Queen) in Japan and *The Threepenny Opera* (Malthouse Theatre and Victoria Opera). Melissa has appeared in two world premieres of Australian musical theatre productions; in Albury, *Strange Bedfellows*, in the role of Vonny, Angel in *How To Kill Your Husband* (Victorian Opera) – for which she received a Green Room Award nomination for Best Female in an Opera, and the role of Jack's Mother in Stephen Sondheim's *Into The Woods*.

For The Production Company; *Carousel* (Nettie Fowler), *42nd Street* (Maggie Jones), *Damn Yankees* (Gloria Thorpe), *Follies* (Stella Deems), *Crazy For You* (Patricia Fodor) and *Sugar* (Sweet Sue).

Her cabaret shows have been performed in New York and Dublin and at The Adelaide Cabaret Festival, Sydney Cabaret Convention, The Auckland Festival, His Majesty's in Perth and The Famous Spiegeltent at the Melbourne Festival. Melissa is also a member of the popular girl group The Fabulous Singlettes, and has performed with the group regularly since 1998 throughout Australia, Asia and Europe.

Melissa has received Green Room Awards for Best Cabaret Artist and Best Cabaret Ensemble (with Mark Jones) and was the winner of The 2001 Sydney Cabaret Convention. Her solo album is *When the Rain Falls Up*.



COLIN LANE is Christopher Belling

Colin Lane is best known as the Lano from Lano and Woodley, Australia's best loved comedy duo.

In almost 20 years together Lano & Woodley won the coveted Perrier Award for best show at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, starred in their own television series and toured sold-out shows across the country. They said 'Goodbye' in 2006 with a national tour that took in 34 markets and sold more than 125,000 tickets.

Since the farewell tour, Colin has appeared in *Don's Party* for the Melbourne Theatre Company and Sydney Theatre Company. He presented *Wine Me, Dine Me* and *Kings of Comedy* for the Nine Network and has made numerous appearances on *Spicks and Specks* for the ABC and Network Ten's *Good News Week*.

He has also appeared at the Adelaide Cabaret Festival in *Two For The Road*, *The Music of Movie Maestro Henri Mancini* and performed in *The Mikado* as Pooh Bah at QPAC.

In 2009, Colin returned to the stage with a part cabaret/part stand-up show at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival. *I'm Not Sure About The Music* sold out fast and, coupled with the rave reviews he received, prompted a return season in 2010 at the same festival, delighting Melbourne audiences with his charming stage presence, rich singing voice and natural comedic timing. He returned again to the Melbourne International Comedy Festival with his live show *Colin Lane Presents* and *Colin Lane & Friends*.

In 2010 Colin became a regular guest co-host on Network Ten's *The Circle*, until its finale a few years later. In 2011 he won the role of new host of Network Ten's *Ready Steady Cook*. More recently, Colin has appeared in a guest role in the very popular ABC series, *The Dr Blake Mysteries*, Channel 7's *Slideshow* and has been a regular guest panellist on *Studio 10* and *The Project*.

In 2013, he was a guest panellist on the UK favourite *QI*, alongside Stephen Fry and Alan Davies, and has returned a number of times since – most recently on the new-look Sandi Toksvig version of the hugely popular show.

2015 saw Colin return to the Melbourne International Comedy Festival – this time, teaming up with the hilarious David Collins from The Umbilical Brothers – to tackle Gilbert and Sullivan, playing at the Spiegeltent outside Arts Centre Melbourne in *The 3 Mikados*.

In 2016, Colin reunited with Frank Woodley as part of the 30th Birthday Bash for the MICF. He's also teamed up with his friend of 25 years, opera singer David Hobson, to sing, dance and even tell some jokes in a unique and hilarious experiment called *In Tails* at the Adelaide Cabaret Festival, the Festival of Voices and beyond.



LUCY MAUNDER is Georgia Hendricks

Lucy Maunder graduated from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) in 2006, and the Talent Development Project in 2004 and has since cemented a reputation as one of Australia's leading ladies of musical theatre.

Most recently, she played the role of Heather Chandler in the critically acclaimed sell out season of *Heathers: The Musical* (Showqueen Productions, Australian Premiere) at the Hayes Theatre. Prior to this Lucy was seen as Rizzo in *Grease* (GFO), earning Helpmann, Glugs and Sydney Theatre Award nominations for her performance in the show's Australian/Asian tour.

Lucy created the role of Lara opposite Anthony Warlow in the world première of *Doctor Zhivago* for GFO, receiving Helpmann and Sydney Theatre Award nominations for Best Actress in a Musical. Her other credits include Cinderella in *Into the Woods* (Victorian Opera; Helpmann and Green Room Award Nominations for Best Supporting Actress in a Musical), Gertrude Lawrence in *Noël and Gertie* (CDP Theatre Producers; Glugs Award for Best Actress in a Musical), Polly Peachum in *The Threepenny Opera* (STC/Malthouse/Victorian Opera), Janet in *The Rocky Horror Show* (TML Enterprises), Emma Carew in *Jekyll and Hyde* (TML Enterprises), Anne Eggerman in *A Little Night Music* (Opera Australia), Carly in Neil LaBute's *Reasons to be Pretty* (Darlinghurst Theatre), Lois Lane in *It's a Bird, It's a Plane, It's Superman* and Annabel Glick in *Lucky Stiff* (Neglected Musicals), Young Mary O'Hara in *The Harp on the Willow* (Malcolm Cooke & Associates) and Gale Edwards' *New Rocky Horror Show* (Newtheatricals/Dainty).

Lucy's one-woman show *Irving Berlin: Songs in the Key of Black* toured Australia to critical acclaim in venues such as The Hayes Theatre in Sydney, Adelaide Cabaret Festival and The Famous Spiegeltent in Melbourne. She has since released her debut album of the same name. Lucy was the recipient of the ASCAP/TDP Bound for Broadway scholarship and subsequently performed in her own cabaret *Give Me Gold* at Don't Tell Mama in New York City. Her other cabaret/concert credits include *Opera In The Park 2015* (Broadbeach, Gold Coast); *Sondheim on Sondheim* (Melbourne Recital Centre); *Love, War, Death, Brel* (Adelaide Cabaret Festival); *Side by Side by Sondheim* (Enda Markey/GPAC); and *The Sound of Rogers* (City Recital Hall, Sydney).

Lucy's screen credits include *Identical*, the feature film *The Eternity Man* (ABC/Channel 4 UK) and numerous television appearances.



ALEX RATHGEBER is Aaron Fox

Born and raised in Horsham, country Victoria, and a graduate of The Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), Alex has established himself internationally as a genuine leading man, performing in Australia, Asia and on London's West End.

After a year starring as Raoul in the London production of *The Phantom of the Opera* (Cameron Mackintosh), Alex returned home to play the role of Robert Martin in Melbourne Theatre Company's production of *The Drowsy Chaperone*.

In 2015 Alex starred opposite Caroline O'Connor as Billy Crocker in the national

tour of *Anything Goes*, for which he won a Helpmann Award and a Green Room Award nomination.

Other notable roles include: Brad Majors in *The Rocky Horror Show* (TML); Sid Worley in *An Officer And A Gentleman* (Gordon Frost Organisation), for which he was nominated for a Sydney Theatre Award; Billy in *Sideshow Alley the Musical* (QPAC); *Fiddler on the Roof* (TML); Leaf Conebear in *The 25th Annual Putnum County Spelling Bee*; Dr Fine and Dr Madden in *Next To Normal* (both for Doorstep Arts) and, more recently, as Carl Bruner in *Ghost the Musical*.

For The Production Company Older Patrick in *Mame*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *The Pajama Game*; Greg Connell in *The Boy From Oz*; Tony in *The Boy Friend*; Lancelot in *Camelot*; Gremio in *Kiss Me, Kate*; Billy Crocker in *Anything Goes*; and Joe Kennedy Jr and Jerry in *Grey Gardens*.

On television he has appeared in Channel Ten's *Rush*, the ABC's *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* and Channel Seven's *Winners & Losers*.

Alex's first solo show, *A Momentary Act*, received critical acclaim. Following this, The Adelaide Cabaret Festival presented Alex in *Experiment*, showcasing the music of Cole Porter.

He is a proud ambassador for the new Horsham Town Hall performing arts precinct. In early 2015, Alex released his debut album, *Easy To Love*.



ALINTA CHIDZEY is Niki Harris

Alinta Chidzey won a scholarship to the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, from where she graduated in 2001.

Her roles for The Production Company include Magnolia in *Show Boat*, Kathy Selden in *Singin' In the Rain* and Svetlana in *Chess* (Green Room Award).

Alinta played Anita in the national tour of *West Side Story*, for which she received nominations for a Helpmann Award, Green Room Award, Sydney Theatre Award, two GLUGS Award nominations and won the Australian Dance Award for Most Outstanding Performance.

Earlier stage credits include the Australasian Tour of *Mamma Mia!*, Mickey in *Leader of the Pack* (winner Green Room Award for 'Best Featured Ensemble in a Musical'), Reno understudy in *Dusty: The Original Pop Diva*, Demeter in *Cats*, Mary understudy in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, the Holland season of *Dirty Dancing*, a tour of *The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber, Closer* and *Cross Roads* at Chapel off Chapel.

Alinta's screen credits include *Winners & Losers*, the U.S. Telemovie *The Frontier* for Sony, the ABC series *The Dr Blake Mysteries* and *Neighbours*.



JOHN WOOD is Sidney Bernstein

John Wood has been a part of the Australian entertainment industry for over 40 years, earning him a long list of credits for varied roles on stage and screen.

For The Production Company John has performed in *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* and *Nice Work If You Can Get It*.

His TV career was launched in 1976, playing Sugar Renfrey in the ABCTV Production of *Power Without Glory*, for which he won his first Logie as Best Supporting Actor. In the 1980's he went on to star in the hit drama, *Rafferty's Rules* as Magistrate Michael Rafferty; which saw him become a well know and much admired television actor, taking out the Most Outstanding Actor Logie two years running.

From 1994 and for the next 12 years, he played the role of Tom Croydon in *Blue Heelers*, culminating in John winning the prestigious Gold Logie in 2006, after 10 consecutive nominations as most popular person on Australian Television.

Away from acting, John showed his personality as one of the very first contestants on the popular *Dancing with the Stars* and shared his passion for food and wine as host of *Wine Me-Dine Me*. We travelled with him as he researched his family history on the SBS Series *Who Do You Think You Are?* And laughed with him on Peter Helliar's comedy program, *It's a Date* alongside Denise Scott. As a regular face on Australian television, John has become a national favourite among all age groups.

His more recent television role is as the semi-regular Patrick Tyneman, in ABC's *The Doctor Blake Mysteries*. His stage career has included everything from Shakespeare to Williamson and a few Musicals in between, again winning a number of Best Actor awards along the way.

He has a fondness for vintage cars, and he currently owns a 1948 Jaguar Mk iv, and a 1955 MG tf, and is a member of the ABCCC (All British Classics Car Club) and the patron of the "Jindera Pop-The-Top" Festival.



ROGER HODGMAN - DIRECTOR

This is the twelfth musical Roger has directed for The Production Company. He has directed well over a hundred plays, musicals and operas in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and England as well as many hours of television drama.

He was Artistic Director of MTC for twelve years until 1999 (Green Room Awards for best director for *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* and *A Little Night Music*). Before that he was Dean of Drama at the VCA and Artistic Director of the Vancouver Playhouse, where he collaborated with Tennessee Williams on premieres of two plays.

Highlights of his busy freelance career since leaving MTC include many episodes of *A Secret Life of Us* (AFI best director nomination) and *Stepfather of the Bride* (Telemovie by Geoffrey Atherden, Chicago Film Festival Award for Best Telemovie). In the last few years he has directed *Grey Gardens* (Helpmann Award for Best Director) and *Show Boat* for The Production Company, several episodes

of *Packed to the Rafters*, the first episode of *A Place To Call Home*, *Don Pasquale* (Opera Australia, Tokyo, Sydney), *Rigoletto* (OA, Sydney, Melbourne), the National tour of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, *Nixon in China* (Green Room Award for Best Production) and *The Flying Dutchman* for Victorian Opera, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* (Sydney Critics Award for Best Musical) and *As You Like It* (Black Swan Theatre Company). Most recently Roger has directed *Fiddler on the Roof* for seasons in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth.



JOHN FOREMAN OAM - MUSICAL DIRECTOR

John joined *Good Morning Australia* with Bert Newton in 1992, where he tickled Bert's GMA ivories for more than twelve years. He became Musical Director of *Australian Idol* in 2003, producing many recordings for Idol artists including Anthony Callea's multi-platinum single, *The Prayer*. He has also produced recordings for Marcia Hines, Ricki-Lee, Silvie Paladino and others.

John is Musical Director for Vision Australia's *Carols by Candlelight®* and the *TV Week Logie Awards*, hosts the annual *Schools Spectacular* and in 2011 was Musical Director for the Oprah Winfrey Show Australian finale.

For The Production Company, John has been Musical Director for *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, *Singin' In The Rain*, *The Boy From Oz*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *Hello, Dolly!*, *Sweet Charity* and the company's first production of *Anything Goes*.

John wrote *The Flame*, which was performed by Tina Arena at the Sydney 2000 Olympic Opening Ceremony, and *Light The Way* for the Asian Games in Doha, performed by José Carreras. He performed at the 1995 Montreal Jazz Festival (Canada) and the 1998 and 1999 Santa Barbara International Jazz Festivals (USA). John is ambassador for *Music: Count Us In*, for the Australian Music Council, is on the Board of the Talent Development Project Foundation and was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the performing arts in 2015.



DANA JOLLY - CHOREOGRAPHER

Dana's career began at age of nine in the musical *Gypsy* at Her Majesty's Theatre Melbourne. She then studied at the VCA before performing with Victoria State Opera and the Australian Contemporary Dance Company.

She then moved to London, performing and choreographing in the UK, Europe, Scandinavia and Japan, for over a decade. Some of her credits include Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Song and Dance*, *The Royal Variety Performance*, the *British Music Awards*, *National Music Express Awards*, *Winter Olympics Norway*, *Hollywood* and *Broadway* and the *Miss World Competition*.

She has worked with such artists as Ray Charles, Madonna, Prince, East 17, Cliff Richards, The Kinks, Ewan McGregor, Michael Ball and Michael Crawford. International choreographers and directors she has assisted include Hal Prince, Mel Brooks and Susan Stroman in New York and Ben Elton, Arlene Phillips, and Anthony Van Laast.

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Dana returned to Australia as Resident Choreographer for the Australian productions of *Show Boat*, (Green Room Nomination), *We Will Rock You* and *The Producers*, before choreographing 2,000 dancers and puppeteers in *Citrawarna Colours Of Malaysia Festival* in Kuala Lumpur. She then choreographed two productions for Victorian Opera and *Everybody Loves Rhonda* for the opening of The Adelaide Cabaret Festival.

Dana's musical theatre credits include *Respect* starring Rhonda Burchmore and for The Production Company *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, *Anything Goes*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Little Me*, *Follies*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *Grey Gardens* and *Show Boat*. In 2012 Dana choreographed the Australian premiere of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, followed by the Sydney premiere of *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*. In 2015 she choreographed Marina Prior in the play *Jumpy* for MTC, the new Australian musical, *Sexercise* and most recently the national tour of *Fiddler on the Roof*.

Dana runs her own entertainment company Voltage International Productions.



MEDIA ENQUIRIES : Julie Cavanagh - CAVANAGH PR
9836 5785 or 0419 306 540 - Email: Julie@cavpr.com.au