



THE  
PRODUCTION  
COMPANY

MEDIA RELEASE

10 OCTOBER 2016



DUSTY

THE LOOK. THE LEGEND. THE MUSICAL.

It's time to fall in love with **DUSTY** all over again!

**ARTS CENTRE MELBOURNE  
PLAYHOUSE**  
12 NOVEMBER TO  
4 DECEMBER

and

**ADELAIDE FESTIVAL  
THEATRE**  
31 DECEMBER TO  
22 JANUARY

Today The Production Company has announced full details of the cast for their new production of *DUSTY the musical*. *DUSTY* opens at Arts Centre Melbourne on 12 November to be followed by an Adelaide season opening on 31 December at the Adelaide Festival Centre.

Amy Lehpamer (***The Sound of Music***), stars as Dusty in this new production and Todd McKenney (***The Boy From Oz***) plays the role of Rodney, her loyal hairdresser and long time confidant. Elenoa Rokobaro makes her Production Company debut in the role of Reno. Virginia Gay (***Winners and Losers***) is Peg, Anne Wood and Tyler Coppin are Kay and Gerard O'Brien. In the role of the young Dusty (Mary O'Brien) is Baylie Carson, who makes her professional debut in this role.

This new production is directed by award winning director, Jason Langley, conducted by Michael Tyack and choreographed by Michael Ralph.

*DUSTY the musical* is the creation of the Australian writers John-Michael Howson, David Mitchell and Melvyn Morrow. Ten years since its Australia debut it's time to fall in love with *DUSTY* all over again. *DUSTY the musical* is the extraordinary story of the life and music of Dusty Springfield, one of pop music's greatest female stars. For more than fifty years, Dusty's music has reached out to all ages. Her legendary life is a riveting story of highs and lows and triumph and tragedy.

In the 1960's, Dusty Springfield took the world by storm with her unique, sensual soul singing and a score of hits including *I Only Want To Be With You*, *Wishin' And Hopin'*, *The Look Of Love*, *You Don't Have To Say You Love Me*, *I Just Don't Know What To Do With Myself* and *Son Of A Preacher Man*.

*DUSTY the musical* features these hits and many more! It's the story of the shy, young Londoner, Mary O'Brien who transforms herself into the pop-icon Dusty Springfield, the legend who, as the blonde with the beehive in the shimmering gowns, came to symbolise the swinging 60's.

Sir Elton John said that '*To me she was as good as Aretha Franklin... and completely timeless... she was the greatest*'. Sir Cliff Richard said she was the best female singer to come out of Britain – a white woman who had this amazing black influence. Elvis Costello called her voice unique and precious with a sense of longing that demanded your attention. Bette Midler said her voice was haunting, husky, full of secrets and promises .. she never sang a false note. Rolling Stone magazine described her as '*Britain's best ever pop-singer....whose voice simultaneously embodied Sixties pop elegance and seemed luminously timeless*'.

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## **FULL COMPANY**

Dusty Springfield	<b>Amy Lehpamer</b>
Rodney	<b>Todd McKenney</b>
Rodney (18&19 Nov, 2&3 Dec)	<b>John O'Hara</b>
Reno	<b>Elenoa Rokobaro</b>
Peg	<b>Virginia Gay</b>
Mary O'Brien	<b>Baylie Carson</b>
Kay O'Brien	<b>Anne Wood</b>
Gerard O'Brien	<b>Tyler Coppin</b>
Lynn (Lana Sister)	<b>Ella Burns</b>
Riss (Lana Sister)	<b>Nicole Melloy</b>
Al Saxon	<b>Luke Alleva</b>
Tom Springfield	<b>Joshua Mulheran</b>
Nevada Backing Vocalist	<b>Chidi Mbakwe</b>
Nevada Backing Vocalist	<b>Ruvarashe Ngwenya</b>
Schoolgirl / Backing Singer	<b>Emma Hawthorne</b>
Schoolgirl / Backing Singer	<b>Loren Hunter</b>
Mike	<b>Nicholas Kyriacou</b>
Eden Kane	<b>Rubin Matters</b>

## **CREATIVE TEAM**

Director	<b>JASON LANGLEY</b>
Musical Director	<b>MICHAEL TYACK</b>
Choreographer	<b>MICHAEL RALPH</b>
Costume Designer	<b>ISAAC LUMMIS</b>
Set Designer	<b>ANNA CORDINGLEY</b>
Lighting Designer	<b>TRENT SUIDGEEST</b>
Sound Design	<b>SYSTEM SOUND</b>



**AMY LEHPAMER is Dusty Springfield**

Amy Lehpamer has enjoyed a career of diverse roles across the spectrum of musical theatre. Amy has most recently performed the iconic role Maria in *The Sound of Music* national tour. In 2015 Amy was Janet in the Sydney and Melbourne encore seasons of *The Rocky Horror Show*. Her skill as a violinist and performer were highlighted in her role of Reza in the much lauded, multiple award-winning production of *Once*.

Amy's portrayal of the con artist par excellence Christine Colgate in The Production Company's, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* saw her nominated for a Sydney Theatre Award in 2014. As Sherrie in *Rock of Ages*, Amy received both Helpmann and Green Room Award nominations, winning the theatrepeople.com.au Best Female

Actor in a Musical Award in 2011.

In 2012 Amy created the title role of **Margaret Fulton** in the new Australian musical *Margaret Fulton: Queen of the Dessert* (Theatreworks) that received widespread critical acclaim. Her other theatre credits include Young Phyllis in *Follies* (The Production Company).

Amy graduated from the University of Melbourne with a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in English Literature and Japanese, she also holds an Associate Diploma in Music (AMusA) for violin.



**TODD MCKENNEY is Rodney**

Inspiring, provocative, compelling and generous are just a few words that describe the critically acclaimed and award winning performer, actor and host – Todd McKenney.

A household name in Australia, Todd's versatile career has spanned three decades and shows no sign of slowing down. Already known as Australia's leading man of song and dance musicals, since 1994 he's also been the 'colourful' and often controversial judge on the Channel 7 hit series *Dancing With the Stars*.

Todd began dancing at the age of three at his mother's dancing school in Perth, training in jazz, tap, acrobatics and ballroom dancing. He has represented Australia in ballroom and Latin American dancing, winning many international dance titles. Amongst his Australian awards for performance in musical theatre are two 'Mo Awards', the 'Variety Club Heart Award', the 'Glug Award', the 'Green Room Award', two 'Australian Dance Awards' and a 'Helpmann Award'.

He was cast in his first professional musical, Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Song and Dance*, in 1983. From here Todd's career has followed a very neat trajectory with lead roles in *Cats*, *42nd Street*, *West Side Story*, *Crazy For You*, *Born Yesterday*, *Camelot*, *Pirates of Penzance*, *Cabaret*, *Strictly Ballroom*, *La Cage aux Folles*, *Singin' In the Rain*, *Anything Goes*, *The Boy From Oz*, *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*, *Orpheus In the Underworld*, *Annie the Musical* and more recently a return to The Production Company in *La Cage Aux Folles* in the lead role of Albin.

It was landing the prized role of Peter Allen in the Australian hit production *The Boy From Oz* that confirmed his star status on stage.

For the past eight years Todd has been studying 'Auslan' sign language and has worked within the deaf community all around Australia. He also works with The Children's Tumour Foundation to raise awareness and much needed financial support for people living with Neurofibromatosis. <http://www.ctf.org.au>  
Todd had the delight of becoming a father in 2007 and his daughter Charlotte is the light of his life.



**ELENOA ROKOBARO is Reno**

Elenoa's career began in 2007 playing a young jazz singer Grace Kelly with Rhonda Burchmore in *Respect* after being discovered at her Performing Arts High at the age of sixteen.

Her list of credits includes a 2009 sellout Cabaret Show *Chanteuse* at the Adelaide Cabaret Festival and the role of Taylor McKessie in *Disney's High School Musical The Musical*. Following this were her roles in *Fame*, Dynamite Judine in *Hairspray* and The Judge/Sales Girl in *Legally Blonde*.

Elenoa has also ventured into the movie arena as a featured Speak Easy dancer in *The Great Gatsby* directed by Baz Luhrmann 2013. She also adds the 2015 Sydney run of *Violet*, the national tour of *Ghost The Musical* and most recently *Side Show*.

In her first appearance with The Production Company in *Dusty*, Elenoa is excited to work with the cast, creative team and dedicates this performance to her supportive family.



**VIRGINIA GAY is Peg**

Virginia graduated from WAAPA in 2005. She was immediately cast in the role of Gabrielle Jaeger in the Seven Network Production *All Saints* which she played until the series came to an end in 2009.

She is an original cast member of *Winners and Losers* which recently completed production of Series 5.

Between television commitments, her theatre productions include *The Beast* for the MTC and the original production of *Gaybies* for Midsumma Festival Inc. and *High Society* for the Hayes Theatre Group.

For The Production Company Virginia has appeared in *The Producers* and *Jerry's Girls*.

Early in 2015, Virginia appeared in *Cautionary Tales For Children* for Arena Theatre Company. Cabaret and Musical productions have included her one woman shows *Dirty Pretty Songs* which she also took to the Edinburgh Comedy Festival in 2012, and *Sing For Your Suffer*.



**TYLER COPPIN is Gerard O'Brien**

Tyler Coppin attended Rio Americano High School and California State University, Sacramento before migrating to Australia aged nineteen where he graduated from the National Institute of Dramatic Art. He now divides his time between the United States and Australia. He became an Australian citizen in 1993.

His many stage appearances include The Child Catcher in the Australian national production of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, Robert Helpmann in his one-man play *Lyrebird: Tales of Helpmann*, and Puck in Opera Australia production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* directed by Baz Luhrmann. Most recently Tyler has been seen as Mr Mushkin in the touring production of *Little Shop of Horrors*.

His television appearances include *Nightmares and Dreamscapes: From the Stories of Stephen King*. His film appearances include the *Spierig Brothers*, *Predestination* starring Ethan Hawke, *The Tender Hook*, *Emulsion*, *One Night Stand*, *Lorca and the Outlaws*, and *Mad Max 2*.

He has also narrated several audiobooks of the American children's TV series *Bear in the Big Blue House* released by ABC For Kids.



**ANNE WOOD is Kay O'Brien**

After studying at the Victorian College of Arts Opera Studio, Anne's career began with the original Melbourne production of *CATS*, then the first national tour before joining the German company in Hamburg.

Anne's international credits include *Aspects of Love* (Rose Vibert), *Barnum* (Charity Barnum), *Crazy for You* (Irene Roth), *Romance Romance, Into the Woods* (the Baker's Wife), and *Closer Than Ever*.

On returning to Australia, Anne appeared in *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris* (Green Room Award for Best Cabaret), *Crazy for You* (Irene Roth) and *The Sound of Music* (Elsa Schraeder); the latter two roles earning her Green

Room Award nominations.

Anne spent three years playing the lead role of Donna Sheridan in the original smash hit production *Mamma Mia!*, earning her another Green Room Award and an invitation to play the role on London's West End. She also recreated the role for the 10th Anniversary Australian national tour.

For the Production Company in Melbourne, Anne has appeared as Phyllis Stone in *Follies*, Mrs Mullin in *Carousel*, Meg Boyd in *Damn Yankees*, Evangeline Harcourt in *Anything Goes* and Electra the Stripper in *Gypsy*.



**BAYLIE CARSON is Mary O'Brien**

Baylie graduated from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) with a Bachelor of Music Theatre in 2015. She also has a Diploma of Dance and an Advanced Diploma in Music Theatre from APO Arts Academy and Dance World Studios. During this year she completed Rob Sturrock's Dance Intensive.

While at WAAPA she had the opportunity to play the roles of Eve in *Children of Eden*, Josephine Strong in *Urinetown*, Enid Hoops in *Legally Blonde* and Lead Priestess in Matthew Lee Robinson's workshop of *Atlantis*.

Baylie was a finalist for the Julie Michael Award for *Cabaret* and received the Hal Leonard Award while at WAAPA .

This year Baylie has performed the role of Holly in the first Australian tour of *Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom* (Life Like Touring), Female Swing in the Melbourne tour of *Connected* (Origin Theatrical) and Tilley in *Fair Dinkum* (Echelon Productions).

**JASON LANGLEY – DIRECTOR**

A freelance director and actor for twenty-six years, Jason this year was the recipient of the Green Room Award for Direction of *Loving Repeating* (Vic Theatre Company).

In the past two years Jason has directed: Bernstein's *Wonderful Town* at the Sydney Opera House, *Jingle Bell Jazz* also at the Sydney Opera House, the play *Here Lies Henry* in London, *Almost Home* for the Mardi Gras Festival, *Say Hello First* for Cupboard Love Productions, *Playing Rock Hudson* for Left Bauer Productions and *Go Your Own Way* for the Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Noosa and Hong Kong Cabaret Festivals, workshop presentations of *A Promised Land* and *Cocktales, Chekhov In Hell* for AIM Dramatic Arts, *Carousel* and *Brigadoon* for the CQU Conservatorium, *Legally Blonde* at Perth's Regal Theatre and for WAAPA, *Merrily We Roll Along*. He has also been acting as dramaturg and director for the new Australian musical *Between Worlds*.

In recent years he directed the World premiere and National tour of *Breast Wishes, As You Like It* for the Shakespeare Centre, *The Double Bass* starring Chloe Dallimore, two seasons of the Australian comedy *Boyband, The Windows Project* for the Darlinghurst Theatre Company, *Elegies* at The Sydney Theatre, *Batboy, Once On This Island, A Chorus Line, Ragtime, How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying* and Noel Coward's *Easy Virtue* at WAAPA, *Yesterday An Incident Occurred, The Skriker and The Rimers Of Eldritch* at AIM Dramatic Arts, and *Take Two* for Christine Dunstan Productions.

Jason's recent acting credits include *Mothers And Sons* for The Ensemble Theatre, *Under Ice* at the Griffin Theatre Company, *Lady Macbeth Of Mtsensk* at Belvoir, *Piranha Heights* for Shedding Skin and he was nominated for a Sydney Theatre Award for his performance in *No Way To Treat A Lady* for the Darlinghurst Theatre Company. He also played Brave Sir Robin in the Australian premiere of *Monty Python's Spamalot* at Her Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne.

### MICHAEL TYACK - MUSICAL DIRECTOR

Michael began working as a professional musician in 1974 for J.C. Williamsons in Melbourne. He moved to Sydney to conduct the STC's production of **Chicago** then was MD for their productions of **The Stripper, Four Lady Bowlers In A Golden Holden, Jonah, Company, Merrily We Roll Along, Falsettos, Miracle City** and **Summer Rain** as well as providing music for several of their plays.

He has been Musical Director of **The 20's And All That Jazz, Gershwin, Side By Side By Sondheim, Seven Little Australians, Nunsense, Chess, The Wizard of Oz, Jerry's Girls, Joseph and His Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, High School Musical, Eureka, The Boy From Oz, Tivoli** and **The Witches of Eastwick** for which he received a Green Room Award. Michael was the musical director for the Hugh Jackman tour of **The Boy From Oz**.

He was also awarded a Green Room Award and a Helpmann Award for the musical direction of the Disney/Cameron Mackintosh production of **Mary Poppins**.

Recently Michael was musical director for **Blood Brothers, The Detective's Handbook** and **You're A Good Man Charlie Brown** at the Hayes theatre.

Michael's cabaret and concert credits are extensive, having worked with Australian and overseas artists including Sutton Foster, Betty Buckley, Aaron Tveit, Conchita Wurst, Toni Lamond, Philip Quast, David Campbell, Caroline O'Connor, Tim Draxl and Judi Connelli both here and abroad. Michael has played on many Australian cast albums, musically directed an album of Sondheim songs with Geraldine Turner, Judi Connelli's last two CDs and the debut CDs of David Campbell, Chelsea Plumley, Rhonda Burchmore, Margi de Ferranti and Delia Hannah. He has also musically directed productions at NIDA and WAAPA.

### MICHAEL RALPH - CHOREOGRAPHER

Michael Ralph is one of Australia's rising young choreographers who is sought after for his dynamic, unique style and fresh take on Musical Theatre story telling.

Michael's choreographic credits include, Musical Theatre: **Georgy Girl** Australian Tour (Green Room Nominee), **Spring Awakening** (VCA), **Bring it On** (WAAPA), **CrossXRoads, Company, West Side Story** (The Production Company and featuring Jerome Robbins restaging), **NED – A New Australian Musical, Avenue Q, Loving Repeating** (Green Room Award), **Our House** (Workshop), **Georgy Girl** (Workshop), **Pacific Overtures** (Green Room Nominee), **My Fair Lady**, and concert versions of **Pippin, Milk and Honey, Flinders Street**, and **Happy People**.

Television: **So You Think You Can Dance?** (Channel Ten).

Cabaret: **The Petticoat Soiree, Yummy** and **Triage** (The Butterfly Club).

Dance: **Mood Swing** (People's Choice award 2011) and **Project Elvis** (Best Choreographer 2012) for Short & Sweet Dance. His two self-devised dance shows **Now & Then** (2013) and **Hollywood Honky Tonk** (2014) both played sell out seasons at Melbourne's Gasworks Theatre.

His performing stage credits include roles in **Cats** (RUG), **Fame The Musical** (GFO), and the world premiere production of **Moonshadow** (Yusuf Islam / Cat Stevens). Also **Singin' in the Rain** and **Pirates of Penzance** for The Production Company.

As a teacher he is in high demand working and choreographing for many institutions all over Melbourne.