



MEDIA RELEASE

3 JUNE 2016

FUNNY GIRL

THE CLASSIC BROADWAY MUSICAL

ARTS CENTRE MELBOURNE
23 to 31 July 2016

FUNNY GIRL CAST ANNOUNCED

Fanny Brice is back!

Ken Mackenzie-Forbes, Artistic Director today announced the full cast for *Funny Girl*. Opening The Production Company's 2016 Season on 23 July in the State Theatre at Arts Centre Melbourne, *Funny Girl* features a cast of thirty and an orchestra of twenty-seven.

With a new production on London's West End and a planned Broadway season, this is the perfect time for Melbourne to enjoy a new staging of this classic Broadway musical. Caroline O'Connor plays Fanny Brice, one of the great stars of Broadway's Ziegfeld Follies. A hundred years on from that golden era, musical theatre is enjoying unprecedented popularity both on Broadway and here in Melbourne.

Last week in the United States, Caroline opened in the new Broadway-bound musical, *Anastasia* (her third Broadway show) with *Variety* describing her performance in the role of Lily as 'marvelous'. Sensational Australian tenor, David Hobson, makes his debut with The Production Company as the handsome and debonair gambler, Nick Arnstein. Australian theatre legend, Nancye Hayes, is Mrs. Brice. Returning from Los Angeles is David Ross Paterson to play the role of the great Florenz Ziegfeld. Joining this stellar lineup are Greg Stone, Susan-ann Walker, Luke Alleva and Judith Roberts.

Award winning Director, Gale Edwards leads the outstanding creative team. Musical Director, Anthony Gabriele returns from London's West End following seasons of *The Phantom of the Opera*, *The Lion King* and *Cats*. The Choreographer is Kelley Abbey and designs are by Tim Chapel (costumes), Shaun Gurton (sets) and System Sound.

With music by Jule Styne and lyrics by Bob Merrill, the incredible score includes the unforgettable hits *Don't Rain On My Parade*, *People* and *I'm The Greatest Star*.

All performances will feature The Production Company Orchestra.
The production is sponsored by ANZ.

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

Full details of the cast including biographies on Caroline O'Connor, David Hobson, Nancye Hayes, Gale Edwards, Kelley Abbey and Anthony Gabriele follow.

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



**THE
PRODUCTION
COMPANY**

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FUNNY GIRL

THE CLASSIC BROADWAY MUSICAL

FULL COMPANY

Fanny Brice	Caroline O'Connor
Nick Arnstein	David Hobson
Mrs Brice	Nancye Hayes
Florenz Ziegfeld	David Ross Paterson
Eddie Ryan	Luke Alleva
Mrs Strakosh	Susan-ann Walker
Tom Keeney	Greg Stone
Mrs Meeker	Judith Roberts

ENSEMBLE

Blake Appelqvist	Andrea Arena
Daniel Assetta	Amy Berrisford
Jared Bryan	Sage Douglas
Danielle Evrat	Ashleigh Hauschild
Sam Hooper	Laura Inglesi
Sophia Katos	Kiara Kieser
Adam Noviello	Cassie O'Brien
Max Patterson	John Reed
Callum Sandercock	Priscilla Stavrou
Suzanne Steele	Brooke Synnott

CREATIVE TEAM

Director	Gale Edwards
Musical Director	Anthony Gabriele
Choreographer	Kelley Abbey
Costume Co-Designers	Tim Chappel and Owen Phillips
Set Designer	Shaun Gurton
Lighting Designer	Trudy Dalglish
Sound Design	System Sound

PRINCIPAL CAST



CAROLINE O'CONNOR

Caroline O'Connor is a multi award-winning singer/dancer/actress who continues to grace stages on Broadway, the West End, Europe and Australia. Some of her signature roles include Edith Piaf, Judy Garland, Velma Kelly in *Chicago*, Anita in *West Side Story* and Mabel in *Mack & Mabel*. Caroline appeared in Baz Luhrmann's *Moulin Rouge* as Nini.

Caroline is currently in the United States starring in the world premiere of *Anastasia*, a new musical created by Tony-winning team behind the Broadway musical *Ragtime*: book writer Terrence McNally and songwriters Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty. Caroline plays Countess Lily to rave reviews. Based on the 1997 Disney animated film, *Anastasia* is directed by Tony winner Darko Tresnjak (*A Gentleman's*

Guide to Love and Murder). The musical is headed for Broadway in 2017.

Recent credits include Reno Sweeney in *Anything Goes* (Sydney Opera House/ Helpmann Award); Rose in *Gypsy* (The Production Company, Melbourne); Phyllis in *Follies* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre/Jeff Award); Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd* (Chatelet Theatre, Paris); Sarah Jane Moore in *Assassins* (Milwaukee Rep); *Life of the Party* (Menier Chocolate Factory, London). Broadway: Velma Kelly in *Chicago*, Miss Shields in *A Christmas Story the Musical*. West End: Mabel Normand in *Mack and Mabel* (Piccadilly Theatre/Olivier nomination); *Bombshells* (Arts Theatre/Olivier nomination); Hildy Esterhazy in *On The Town* (English National Opera & Chatelet Theatre, Paris); *Romance/Romance, Street Scene* (English National Opera); *Matador, The Rink, Cabaret, Me and My Girl*. Regional: Ellie-May Chiplely in *Show Boat* (Royal Shakespeare Company & Opera North); Lola in *Damn Yankees*, Lizzie in *Baby*, The Witch in *Into the Woods*, Cassie in *A Chorus Line* (UK National Tour). In Australia: Velma Kelly in *Chicago*, Anita in *West Side Story*, Aldonza in *Man of La Mancha*, Fanny Brice in *Funny Girl*, Edith Piaf in *PIAF, Bombshells* and Judy Garland in the world premiere of *End of The Rainbow*. Film: Nini Legs in the Air in Baz Luhrmann's *Moulin Rouge*, Ethel Merman in the Cole Porter biopic *De-Lovely*, and Georgia in *Surviving Georgia*. Solo CD's: What I Did for Love, Stage to Screen, A Tribute to Piaf and A Tribute To Garland.



DAVID HOBSON

Australian tenor and composer David Hobson is one of Australia's best known operatic and recording artists. He has sung many roles for Opera Australia and both state and international opera companies, including his award winning performances of Rodolfo (*La Boheme*) and the title role in *Orpheus*.

Other roles include Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*), Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*), Count Almaviva (*The Barber of Seville*), Nadir (*The Pearl Fishers*), Lindoro (*L'Italiana in Algeri*), Frederic (*The Pirates of Penzance*), The Architect in the world premiere of *The Eighth Wonder*, Eisenstein (*Die Fledermaus*), the title role in *Candide*, Danilo (*The Merry Widow*) and Aristaeus/ Pluto (*Orpheus in the Underworld*).

In 2014, David performed the role of Caractacus Potts in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*.

Special engagements include appearing with the San Francisco Opera in the world premiere of *Dangerous Liaisons*, a performance in the Great Hall, Canberra for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, Schubert's Winterreise for the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and singing the national anthem at the AFL Grand Final. He has performed his own show at the Sydney Opera House and at the Adelaide Cabaret Festival.

He is also well known from his appearances on Carols in the Domain, Carols by Candlelight, Spicks and Specks, It Takes Two, Dancing with the Stars and as a presenter on the Foxtel arts channel, STUDIO. He has recorded numerous albums with many reaching No 1 chart status. The most recent recording – Endless Days – is a collection of Celtic favourites.

David has won awards including Operatic Performer of the Year, the Sydney Critics Circle Award, The Age Performing Arts Award for Best Performer in Opera and an Australian Record Industry Association (ARIA) Award.

More recently, David toured in concert with Lisa McCune, Greta Bradman and Teddy Tahu Rhodes and performed the role of Buddy Plummer in *Follies*.



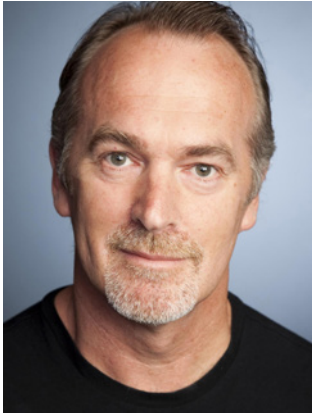
NANCYE HAYES

Nancye Hayes AM is one of Australia's favourite theatrical actresses. She is an accomplished actor, dancer, singer, choreographer and director. She began her career with J.C. Williamson Theatres Ltd as a chorus member in *My Fair Lady*. She went on to star in many major musical productions including *Sweet Charity*, *Chicago*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Guys & Dolls* and *42nd Street*.

Most recently she has performed in *Sondheim on Sondheim* (Manilla Street Productions), Ruth in *The Pirates of Penzance* (Harvest Rain), Lady Bracknell in *The Importance of Being Earnest* (State Theatre Company SA), and *Beyond Desire* (Neil Rutherford Productions/Hayes Theatre Co), Miss Hannigan in the Australian Tour of *Annie* (The Gordon Frost Organisation), *Grey Gardens*, *Follies*, *Oklahoma!*, *Music Man*, *Funny Girl* (The Production Co.), *Murderers* and *Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks* (Ensemble), *A Little Night Music* and *My Fair Lady* (Opera Australia).

Nancye Hayes has made a significant contribution as a theatre director. Her credits include *The Boy from Oz*, *Sweet Charity*, *Gypsy* (The Production Co.), *Crazy for You* and *The World Goes Round* (Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts), *Australia's Leading Ladies Concert* (Brisbane Festival), *The Wizard of Oz* (GFO/SEL/Macks Entertainment), *Noel & Gertie* (Christine Dunstan Productions).

Nancye has received Lifetime Achievement Awards from The Green Room, The Sydney Theatre and The Helpmanns.



GREG STONE

Greg Stone is considered one of Australia's finest stage actors and has appeared in over 70 productions for a variety of companies since graduating from the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) in 1983.

Recent theatre credits include *Ladies in Black* (Queensland Theatre Company/ Melbourne Theatre Company), *Once* (GFO Attractions), *The Weir*, *The Waiting Room*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *The Crucible* (Melbourne Theatre Company), *Hamlet*, *Babyteeth* (Belvoir), *Pompeii LA*, *A Golem Story*, *Eldorado* (Malthouse) and *The Government Inspector* (Malthouse/Belvoir).

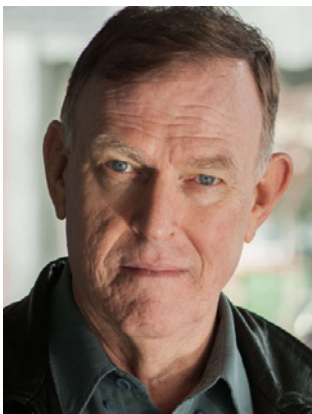
Other theatre credits include: *Clybourne Park*, *Life Without Me*, *Poor Boy*, *Blackbird*, *Love Song*, *Assassins*, *The Pillowman*, *Cloud Nine*, *The Seagull*, *A Little Night Music*, *Angels in America* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *Stones in His Pockets*, *Summer Rain*, *Merrily We Roll Along* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Don's Party*, *Twelfth Night* (State Theatre of South Australia); *Wars of the Roses* (Bell Shakespeare); *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *Life x 3* (Black Swan State Theatre Company) and many other productions for Griffin, Playbox, Hothouse. He is a founding member of the highly acclaimed Keene/Taylor Theatre Project.

Greg's film credits include *The Waterfall*, *Is This the Real World*, *Sunset Six*, *Swerve*, *Oranges and Sunshine*, *Van Diemen's Land* and *The Bank*.

Recent TV credits include *Secret City*, *Neighbours*, *The Ex-PM*, *Glitch*, *Offspring*, *Devil's Dust*, *Winners & Losers* and *Underbelly*.

Greg has been nominated for Helpmann and Green Room Awards for various shows and won both The Helpmann and Green Room Award for Best Male Performer in *Stuff Happens*.

He is the lead singer of the Glam Rock band *The Melody Lords*.



DAVID ROSS PATERSON

David Ross Paterson works as an actor in Theatre, Film and TV in Australia and the US. Film/TV includes *Hold On*, *Saving Mr Banks*, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, *Frost/Nixon*, *Lost*, *The Unit*, *The Dr Blake Mysteries*, *Neighbours*, *Blue Heelers*.

David's Los Angeles theatre credits (multiple Stage Scene LA, LA Weekly and Ovation Awards and nominations) include *Ruben Guthrie* for Australian Theatre Co, George Hay in Open Fist's *Moon Over Buffalo*, Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for LCF Shakespeare, Niels Bohr in *Copenhagen*, Dilwyn Knox in *Breaking The Code*, Bob King in the US premiere of David Williamson's *Sanctuary* and his critically acclaimed Danforth in the 60th Anniversary production of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*.

Later this year David appears in Melbourne Theatre Company's *The Odd Couple* directed by Peter Houghton.

Writing credits include adapting and developing *Reserved Seating Only* (2x Australian National Tours) in addition to numerous short film and web comedy projects. David continues to teach Acting/ Acting for the Camera, most recently at La Sierra University and USC.

www.DavidRossPaterson.com



SUSAN-ANN WALKER

Susan-ann is one of Australia's most established entertainers. With a successful career that began with Jenny-Any-Dots in *CATS*, she went on to feature in *Les Misérables*, *Godspell*, Elizabeth in Gale Edwards' *Aspects of Love*, *The Secret Garden* (Martha), *Grease* and *Grease – The Arena Spectacular* (Jan), *Possum Magic* (Grandma Poss), *Mame* (Agnes Gooch), *Funny Girl* (Mrs Strakosh), *Pinocchio* (Catchup), *The Sound of Music* (Sister Margaretta), *The Ishmael Club* (Mrs Maggia) and *Menopause the Musical* (Earth Mother).

More recent credits include *Xanadu* (Calliope/Aphrodite), *Hello Dolly* (Dolly Levi), *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Gymnasia & understudy Domina), and the Helpmann nominated, Green Room Award winning Australian premiere of *Once*, playing Baruska.

Susan-ann's other great love is cabaret and her one-woman shows include *Desperately Singing Susan* and *Confessions of a Sex Kitten*. She co-produced and starred in the critically acclaimed *Jacques Brel* (2000 Green Room Award), wrote and performed the hit show *Yummy and the Yummy Burlesque Hour* (nominated for Best Cabaret Writing, Green Room Awards 2013).

TV credits include *Blue Heelers*, *MDA*, *Winners & Losers*, *The Dr Blake Mysteries* and the ABC Pilot *Moonman*, along with several commercials and voice-overs.

Susan-ann also runs her own business The Voice Place.



GALE EDWARDS -DIRECTOR

Gale has been directing all genres of theatre and opera nationally and internationally for over thirty years, her great love being the Classics and Musical Theatre. She has directed for all Australia's State Theatre Companies, Opera Australia, Victoria State Opera, South Australian Opera Company, New Zealand International Festival of the Arts, English National Opera, Royal Shakespeare Company and the Chichester Festival.

Gale has won multiple awards for her directing, including a Sydney Theatre Award for *Festen*, Helpmann Awards for *The Boy From Oz* and *Sweeney Todd*, Green Room Awards for *The Boy From Oz* and *Manon Lescaut*, *Salome* and Sydney Theatre Critics Awards for *Coriolanus*, *The Rover*, *The Glass Menagerie* and *Les Misérables*.

Gale directed a new production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, which had seasons on the West End and on Broadway, receiving a Tony Award nomination and an International Emmy Award for Best Filmed Video Production. Other international work includes *Romeo and Juliet* for Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, *Macbeth* for Oregon Shakespeare Company, *Hamlet*, *Edward II*, *Titus Andronicus* and *Richard III* for Washington Shakespeare Company, *Far Pavillions* at the Shaftsbury Theatre London, *Don Carlos* for Royal Shakespeare Company London transferring to BAM in New York, *The Taming of The Shrew* and *The White Devil* for the Royal Shakespeare Company, both transferring to the Barbican Theatre in London, *St Joan* for The Strand Theatre London and *Aspects of Love* for the Really Useful Company London.

Gale has directed many theatre productions in Australia, some highlights are, *Coriolanus*, *The White Devil*, *The God of Carnage*, *Woman in Mind*, *Festen* and *The Way of the World*, for the Sydney Theatre Company and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Hitchcock Blonde*, *M Butterfly*, *Ghosts* and *Uncle Vanya* for the Melbourne Theatre Company. Gale directed the original production of *The Boy From Oz*, *Jerry Springer the Opera* for the Sydney Opera House and a new production of *The Rocky Horror Show*. Her operas include *La Boheme*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Manon Lescaut*, *The Magic Flute*, *Maria Stuarda*, *Salome* and *Katya Kabanova* and most recently, *Aida* on Sydney Harbour and the world premiere season of the opera, *Cloudstreet* for the State Opera of SA.



KELLEY ABBEY - CHOREOGRAPHER

Kelley Abbey is one of Australia's most accomplished creative directors, choreographers and performers in Film, TV and Musical Theatre. For 25 years Kelley has worked both nationally and internationally. Kelley began her career in lead musical theatre roles with Australia's most prestigious production companies, winning Green Room, Mo, Variety Heart and Helpmann Awards. Kelley's Creative Director & Choreographer credits include: the critically acclaimed Opera Australia's *Salome*, *Fame - The Musical*, *Footloose*, *Grease the Arena Spectacular*, *Hedwig and The Angry Inch*, *Xanadu*, *2012 Victorian State Schools Spectacular* and *The Boy from Oz*, which earned her a Helpmann award for Best Choreography. As Choreographer & Guest Judge: *So You Think You Can Dance* (Australia and USA), *Superstars of Dance* (USA) working

alongside Nigel Lythgoe, *Ultimate High School Musical*, *Packed to the Rafters*, and *Dance Academy 3*. Kelley's film choreography credits include; *In Her Skin* with Guy Pearce and Miranda Otto, *Goddess*, and choreographer, lead performer and creative motion capture consultant on the OSCAR winning, feature film *Happy Feet*. In 2015, Kelley choreographed John Farnham and Olivia Newton John's *Two Strong Hearts* tour, which received rave reviews. Currently, Kelley is the resident director in Baz Lurhman's stage production of *Strictly Ballroom*. Most recently Kelley has choreographed for ABC's *Saturday Night Crack Up* and in 2016 she is set to choreograph Opera Australia's *Carmen*.



ANTHONY GABRIELE - MUSICAL DIRECTOR / CONDUCTOR

Anthony works extensively as a freelance musical director, conductor, pianist, orchestrator, arranger and vocal coach. He has conducted the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the British Philharmonic Orchestra, the Guernsey Camerata Orchestra and the Britten Sinfonia. In January 2014 Anthony was appointed Principal Conductor of the British Sinfonietta after making his debut with the orchestra in concerts featuring the internationally-renowned percussionist Dame Evelyn Glennie. Since then, in association with IMG Artists London, he has, on numerous occasions, presented *Psycho Live!* - screenings of Alfred Hitchcock's 1960 film *Psycho* accompanied by a live performance of Bernard Herrmann's score with various orchestras in venues across the UK.

Between 2009 and 2013 Anthony orchestrated, arranged, conducted and accompanied concert tours of *Three Phantoms* throughout the UK, Ireland and Scandinavia. Anthony's musical theatre credits include *South Pacific*, *Blood Brothers*, *Ken Hill's Phantom of the Opera*, *A Grand Night For Singing*, *Chess*, *Dear World*, *CATS* (Australian Tour), *Grease*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, *The Lion King* (London's West End, Sydney, Melbourne and Shanghai); and a tenure of almost 3 years as Musical Director/Conductor on the West End production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera* - during which time he conducted the record-breaking 10,000th performance of the show. Anthony returned to the West End production for a brief stint as Guest Musical Director/Conductor in January 2012 before taking up the position of Musical Director/Conductor for Cameron Mackintosh's 25th Anniversary UK Touring Production. Anthony was Musical Director for the UK/International Tour & the 2014/2015 West End Revival Production of *CATS* at the London Palladium. This was followed by workshop/showcase productions of two new musicals, *This Is Also England* and *Just A Man*. Most recently, Anthony was Musical Supervisor/Arranger for *Seasons of Larson* at the Lyric Theatre, a celebration of the music and life of composer Jonathan Larson, marking the 20th anniversary of his death.

Anthony's operatic credits include *Don Carlo*, *La Traviata*, *La Bohème*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Cenerentola*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Magic Flute*, *Orpheus in the Underworld*, *The Little Mermaid*, *The Moonrakers Opera*, *The Happy Prince* plus numerous gala concerts.

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