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BOOK BY
RUPERT HOLMES

MUSIC BY
JOHN KANDER

LYRICS BY
FRED EBB

ORIGINAL BOOK AND CONCEPT BY
PETER STONE

ADDITIONAL LYRICS BY
**JOHN KANDER and
RUPERT HOLMES**

BY ARRANGEMENT WITH ORIGIN™ THEATRICAL
ON BEHALF OF THEATRICAL RIGHTS WORLDWIDE, NEW YORK

THE PRODUCTION COMPANY CURTAINS

SIMON GLEESON

MELISSA LANGTON • LUCY MAUNDER

ALEX RATHGEBER • ALINTA CHIDZEY • COLIN LANE

ZOE COPPINGER • STEPHEN WHEAT • JARED BRYAN

SIMON MAIDEN • TONY RICKARDS • NICKI WENDT

AND JOHN WOOD

**Daniel Assetta • Alicia Attwood • Amy Berrisford • Matt Douglass • Brett Fisher
David Hammond • Ashleigh Hauschild • Jane Kingsford • Joe Meldrum
Anthony Pepe • Madeline Perrone • Justine Puy • Emma Russell • Darren Tyler**

Director **Roger Hodgman**

Musical Director **John Foreman**

Choreographer **Dana Jolly**

Costume Designer **Esther Marie Hayes**

Set Designer **Christina Smith**

Lighting Designer **Matthew Scott**

Sound Design **System Sound**

Sound Design Associates **Mark Benson, Kelvin Gedye, David Greasley**

Assistant Choreographer **Darren Tyler**

Repetiteurs **Alistair Smith and Richard Montgomery**

Technical Director **David Miller**

Production Manager **Mel Robertson**

Stage Manager **Meg Deyell**

Company Manager **Andrea Corish**

Wardrobe Supervisor **Kim Bishop** Head Mechanist **Jeremy Fowlie**

Hair and Makeup **Gay Gallacher, Silvana Mitkovski**

Wig Supervisor **Trent Whitmore** Assistant Stage Manager **Lyndie Li Wan Po**

Sound Equipment supplied by **System Sound Pty Ltd** Sound Mix Engineer **Chris Pratt**

Stage Sound Technicians **Melissa Panettiere, Jackson Scandrett**

Radio Mic Engineer **Cameron Herbert** Set Construction **Malthouse**

THE PRODUCTION COMPANY ORCHESTRA

STATE THEATRE, ARTS CENTRE MELBOURNE • 20 - 28 AUGUST 2016

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THERE'S A SPECIAL KIND OF PEOPLE KNOWN AS **SHOW PEOPLE**

Curtains was the last show from the Broadway legends John Kander and Fred Ebb. I have been longing to present one of their masterpieces and am delighted that we are starting with this sparkling comedy. When we asked our superb leading man Simon Gleeson to star in *Curtains* he joked that he would do the show as long as no one died in it. Simon was touring Australia and Asia in *Les Misérables* at the time. I think you will enjoy the irony of his request within the first few minutes of the show. What a thrill to invite him back with other dear friends of the company, Melissa Langton, Alinta Chidzey, Alex Rathgeber, Zoe Coppinger, Jared Bryan, Stephen Wheat, Nicki Wendt, Tony Rickards and John Wood. And welcome, to what I hope will be the first of many roles with us, to Lucy Maunder, Colin Lane and Simon Maiden.

This is the twelfth show Roger Hodgman has directed for The Production Company. He has brought us some of our greatest successes, along with his favourite choreographer Dana Jolly and maestro extraordinaire John Foreman. You have seen beautiful sets and lighting design in our shows before from Christina Smith and Matt Scott and, having already admired the colourful costumes from Esther Marie Hayes, I hope these are the first of many that she designs for us. Some of our ensemble are making their professional theatre debuts, some have come straight from our wonderful production of *Funny Girl* and some are back again to share the experience of our ever-increasing Production Company family. So many from our ensemble have gone on to great things so I wonder which of you tonight we will soon see in leading roles.

It is wonderful too, having our own orchestra playing John Kander's score. Thank you to everyone at System Sound for the clarity and care you take with every note.

I hope you all appreciate the wit of asking Warwick Fabrics to sponsor *Curtains*.

*That hop in our hearts
When the overture starts
Helps us know how lucky we are!*

Jeanne Pratt

Jeanne Pratt AC
Chairman
The Production Company

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Years
1966-2016

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- The company reserves the right to add, withdraw or substitute artists and to vary the program as necessary.
- The management reserves the right of refusing admission.
- Recording devices, cameras and mobile telephones must not be operated during the performance.

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THE PRODUCTION COMPANY ORCHESTRA

Orchestra Services Manager: JAMES KEMPSTER

Orchestra Manager: LUCIEN FISCHER
Orchestra Assistant: ROSE SEJEAN

Principal Reed TONY HICKS
Reed 2 MELISSA EDWARDS
Reed 3 TIM WILSON
Reed 4 CARLO BARBARO

Principal Trumpet MATTHEW TUBMAN
Trumpet 2 MICK FRASER

Principal Trombone DAVE PALMER
Trombone 2 SIMON 'ROCK' SCERRI

Principal Horn DEBORAH HART
Horn 2 ROMAN PONOMARIOV

Principal Guitar JOHN PAINE
Principal Double Bass BEN ROBERTSON

Principal Drums DARRYN FARRUGIA
Principal Percussion JOHN CLARK

Keyboards ALISTAIR SMITH

A new orchestra – THE PRODUCTION COMPANY ORCHESTRA

It is with great pride and excitement that The Production Company has recently established its own orchestra – The Production Company Orchestra. We are delighted that the dynamic James Kempster is helming this new addition to Melbourne's musical life.

For the past fifteen years, Orchestra Victoria has been a major part of every performance at The Production Company. They held pride of place, always being featured on stage and very much part of every performance. The Production Company's unique association with Orchestra Victoria has now come to an end. Two years ago, Orchestra Victoria was absorbed into The Australian Ballet. This has meant that they are no longer available to The Production Company.

The Production Company has met this challenge full on.

James has secured the services of the best musicians working in musical theatre in Melbourne. I know The Production Company Orchestra, under the musical direction of Australia's leading conductors, will provide you with outstanding and thrilling musical performances.

CURTAINS IS SET IN THE COLONIAL THEATRE IN BOSTON, 1959,
DURING THE OUT-OF-TOWN TRYOUT OF THE NEW MUSICAL,
ROBBIN' HOOD OF THE WILD WEST.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

- IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE -

Jessica Cranshaw	NICKI WENDT
Randy Dexter	DARREN TYLER
Niki Harris	ALINTA CHIDZEY
Bambi Bernét	ZOE COPPINGER
Bobby Pepper	JARED BRYAN
Johnny Harmon	SIMON MAIDEN
Georgia Hendricks	LUCY MAUNDER
Aaron Fox	ALEX RATHGEBER
Carmen Bernstein	MELISSA LANGTON
Oscar Shapiro	TONY RICKARDS
Christopher Belling	COLIN LANE
Lieutenant Frank Cioffi	SIMON GLEESON
Mona Page	MADELINE PERRONE
Harv Fremont	ANTHONY PEPE
Roberta Wooster	ASHLEIGH HAUSCHILD
Sidney Bernstein	JOHN WOOD
Detective O'Farrell	ANTHONY PEPE
Daryl Grady	STEPHEN WHEAT
Sasha Iljinsky	JOHN FOREMAN

• ACT 1 •

Overture	Orchestra
Wide Open Spaces	Randy, Niki, Jessica, Bobby, Ensemble
What Kind of Man?	Carmen, Oscar, Aaron, Georgia
Thinking of Him	Georgia, Aaron, Bobby
The Woman's Dead	Entire Company
Show People	Carmen, Cioffi, Entire Company
Coffee Shop Nights	Cioffi
In the Same Boat 1	Georgia, Niki, Bambi
I Miss the Music	Aaron
Thataway!	Georgia, Bobby, Ensemble

• ACT 2 •

He Did It	Entire Company
In the Same Boat 2	Bobby, Randy, Harv
It's a Business	Carmen, Stagehands
Kansasland	Randy, Niki, Harv, Bobby, Bambi, Ensemble
Thinking of Missing the Music	Aaron, Georgia
A Tough Act to Follow	Cioffi, Niki, Ensemble
In the Same Boat 3	Entire Company
A Tough Act to Follow (Reprise)	Entire Company

THERE WILL BE ONE 20-MINUTE INTERVAL.

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Curtains is part of a long tradition of “backstage” musicals – *Kiss Me Kate* and *42nd Street* are others. But I’m not sure any has depicted with such detail and witty accuracy the topsy-turvy backstage life of a company trying out a new musical out of town, as was the practice for Broadway musicals until recently. In many cases of course the production never made it to Broadway and *Robbin Hood*, the show being performed and rehearsed in *Curtains*, is in danger of suffering that fate. Kander and Ebb and the book writer Rupert Holmes, lovingly riff on the ups and downs of this exercise, along with the conflicts and emotional trials, both on and off the stage.

But, that is only part of the story. In this case a murder occurs and the whole company is under suspicion. Enter Lieutenant Cioffi, a stage struck, slightly shambolic Boston detective who eventually solves the mystery but at the same time falls in love and tries to solve the problem of the show. The character is a brilliant comic creation, originally played by very funny David Hyde Pierce - who was not really a singer. In Simon Gleeson, straight from his triumph as Valjean in *Les Misérables* we have a wonderful comic actor, but also a fine singer. I’m certain Kander and Ebb would be delighted to hear their beautiful songs so well sung (in new arrangements especially provided for this production).

In fact the whole cast is remarkable – an array of many of the country’s finest musical theatre and comedy performers, as well as a couple of talented young performers getting their first major role. It’s a cast that I’m certain would be impossible to put together for a long running commercial production. This is one of the advantages of The Production Company model, along with the fact that the emphasis has to be firmly on the material and performance, rather than the spectacle.

That said, of the many Production Company shows I have directed, this one has made the largest practical demands. The designers, Christina, Esther and Matt have risen to the challenge of making the modest production budgets go a long way...

I am writing half way through the two week rehearsal period. We are having enormous fun with its silliness and moments of great emotional charm, as well as finding many enjoyable sly references to the world we know and love. And the music, as you would expect from Kander and Ebb, is wonderful.

I hope you enjoy it as much!

Roger Hodgman

SIMON GLEESON

• Lieutenant Frank Cioffi •



Simon has performed in many major musicals including *Les Misérables* (Australasian 10th Anniversary Production), *Jolson, Shout, Mamma Mia!* (Helpmann Award nomination) and as Sean Flynn in *Eureka* under the direction of Gale Edwards. He was also a part of the Sydney Theatre’s opening productions of *Harbour* and *The Republic of Myopia* for the Sydney Theatre Company.

Simon headed to London and continued his professional association with Gale Edwards appearing as Walter in the world premiere of *The Far Pavilions* in the West End (Whatsonstage nomination). His other UK theatre credits include the world premiere of *Imagine This* in the West End, *Three Sides*, *The Silver Lake*, the Edinburgh Festival season of *Certified Male* and *Shoes* for Sadler’s Wells. The highlight of this time was starring as Angus in *Southwark Fair* for the Royal National Theatre, working with director, Sir Nicholas Hytner.

Simon’s film and television credits in Australia include *City Homicide*, *Neighbours*, *Blue Heelers* and *SeaChange*. In London he played the regular role of Sid in *EastEnders* (BBC 1) and was a member of the principal cast of *Kombat Opera* (BBC 2) directed by Monty Python member, Terry Jones. Simon played the role of Ken in the feature film *My Life In Ruins* opposite Richard Dreyfuss and Nia Vardalos.

Other theatre credits include the MTC’s *Rupert*, which also included a season at The Kennedy Centre in Washington DC. Simon played Anatoly in The Production Company’s *Chess*, for which he was nominated for a Green Room award - Leading Actor in a Musical. He played Raoul in the original Australian production of Andrew Lloyd Webber’s *Love Never Dies*, for which he received a Helpmann Award nomination and a Sydney Theatre Award Nomination.

In 2014 Simon was cast as Jean Valjean in the new Australian production of Cameron Mackintosh’s *Les Misérables* and has been touring nationally and internationally for the past two years. For his performance in this role he has received a Helpmann Award for Best Male Actor in a Musical.

Simon’s debut album, *Elements* was released in 2015.



MELISSA LANGTON

• 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 Misérables*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, *Marry Me A Little*, *Eurobeat*, *We Will Rock You* (Killer Queen) in Japan, *The Threepenny Opera* and *Into the Woods*. Melissa has appeared in two world premieres of Australian musical theatre productions: *Strange Bedfellows* and *How To Kill Your Husband*, for which she received a Green Room Award nomination for Best Female in an Opera.

Roles for The Production Company comprise Nettie Fowler in *Carousel*, Maggie Jones in *42nd Street*, Gloria Thorpe in *Damn Yankees*, Stella Deems in *Follies*, Patricia Fodor in *Crazy for You* and Sweet Sue in *Sugar*.

Last year Melissa performed as a member of the Angel City Quartet in *City of Angels*.

Her cabaret show has been performed in New York, Dublin, Auckland and throughout Australia. 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 received the 2002 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, *When the Rain Falls Up*, was released in 2002.



LUCY MAUNDER

• Georgia Hendricks •

Since graduating from WAAPA in 2006, Lucy has cemented a reputation as one of Australia's leading ladies of musical theatre.

Lucy has just finished a return season of the critically acclaimed *Heathers: the Musical*, playing Heather Chandler. Prior to this she originated the role of Patty in the new Australian musical *Ladies in Black*, (QTC/MTC). She played Rizzo in *Grease* (GFO), earning Helpmann, Glug and Sydney Theatre Award nominations for the show's Australian and Asian tour. Lucy created the role of Lara in the world première of *Doctor Zhivago* (GFO; Helpmann and Sydney Theatre Award nominations for Best Actress in a Musical). Other career highlights 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; 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 & Hyde* (TML Enterprises); Anne Eggerman in *A Little Night Music* (Opera Australia); Carly in Neil LaBute's *Reasons to be Pretty* (Darlinghurst Theatre); 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 receiving rave reviews. Her album is available at www.lucymaunder.com.



ALEX RATHGEBER

Aaron Fox

Alex has established himself internationally as a 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*, Alex returned home to play the role of Robert Martin in Melbourne Theatre Company's production of *The Drowsy Chaperone* with Geoffrey Rush. Since then, 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*, Sid Worley in *An Officer and A Gentleman*, Billy in *Sideshow Alley the Musical*, Fiddler on the Roof, Leaf Honeybear in *The 25th Annual Putnum County Spelling Bee*; Dr Fine and Dr Madden in *Next to Normal* and more recently, Carl Bruner in *Ghost the Musical*.

For The Production Company, Alex's roles comprise 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*.

In early 2015, Alex released his debut album, *Easy to Love*. alexrathgeber.com



ALINTA CHIDZEY

Niki Harris

Alinta has become a welcome fixture on The Production Company stage, playing Magnolia in *Show Boat*, Kathy Selden in *Singin' In the Rain* and Svetlana in *Chess* (Green Room Award). Other roles include Anita in *West Side Story*, receiving several nominations (Helpmann and Green Room Award) and won the Australian Dance Award.

Earlier credits include *Mamma Mia!*, Mickey in *Leader of the Pack* (Green Room Award), *Dusty: The Original Pop Diva*, Demeter in *Cats*, Mary in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Dirty Dancing*, *The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber* and Alice in *Closer*.

Most recently Alinta performed along side Hugh Jackman in the *Broadway to Oz* arena tour, played the title role in *Mary Poppins* for Free Rain Theatre, frequently sings with *Rock Rhapsody* and most recently premiered the new Australian musical *CROSSxROADS* directed by Tyrann Parke. Television credits include *Dr Blake Mysteries*, the US pilot of *The Frontier*, *Winners and Losers* and *Neighbours*. She performs regularly with her jazz/soul band *Alinta and the Jazz Emperors* - www.jazzemperors.com and later this year will be starring as Carla in *Nine* at The Melbourne Recital Centre.

COLIN LANE

Christopher Belling

Colin is an actor, comedian and professional show-off, best known as the Lano from *Lano & Woodley*, Australia's best loved comedy duo.

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.

Since they said *Goodbye* in 2006, Colin has appeared in *Don's Party* for the MTC and the STC, been a regular guest co-host on Network Ten's *The Circle* and hosted *Ready Steady Cook*. He made numerous appearances on *Spicks and Specks* for the ABC, and acted in guest roles in the very popular ABC series *Utopia* and *The Dr Blake Mysteries*.

He has also been an occasional guest panelist on the UK favourite *QI* – most recently on the new-look Sandi Toksvig-hosted version of the hugely popular show.

In 2016, Colin reunited with Frank Woodley as part of the 30th Birthday Bash for the MICF. He recently worked with Red Stitch under director Nadia Tass and teamed up with his friend of twenty five years, opera singer David Hobson, for *In Tails* - a unique and hilarious showbiz experiment that entertains and beguiles in a whole new way.



JOHN WOOD

Sidney Bernstein

John's career launched in 1976, playing Sugar Renfrey in the ABC television Production of *Power Without Glory*, for which he won his first Logie as Best Supporting Actor. In the 1980's he starred in *Rafferty's Rules* as Magistrate Michael Rafferty for which he was awarded the Most Outstanding Actor Logies two years running.

From 1994 and for the next twelve years, he played the role of Tom Croydon in *Blue Heelers*. This culminated in John winning the prestigious Gold Logie in 2006.

His more recent television role is as Patrick Tyneman, the baddie everybody loves to hate, in ABC's *The Doctor Blake Mysteries*.

On stage, his career has included everything from Shakespeare to Williamson and a few Musicals in between. Memorable roles for The Production Company include J B Biggley in *How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying* and Senator Max Evergreen in *Nice Work If You Can Get It*.





ZOE COPPINGER

Bambi Bernét

Zoe trained and studied all facets of dance at Michelle Slater Coyne Performing Arts. She made her professional musical theatre debut at age of eighteen in The Production Company's *Gypsy*. Since then she has toured in Dubai with the production of *Thomas and the Hidden Treasure* (Gary Young), performed in *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* (James Anthony Productions) and *Guys and Dolls* and *Nice Work If You Can Get It* for The Production Company.

Most recently she toured Australia in *Fiddler On The Roof*, where she understudied the roles of Chava and Tzeitel. She also appeared in Storeyboard Entertainment's all-star production of *Follies In Concert* at the Melbourne Recital Centre.

Zoe would like to thank all her teachers, especially Michelle and Kevin, her mum, dad, sisters and Nan for their unconditional love and Helen Pandos Management for their ongoing support. She is delighted to be joining the talented cast and creative team of *Curtains* and thrilled to be back with The Production Company.



STEPHEN WHEAT

Daryl Grady

Stephen has enjoyed a diverse career as an actor, director and teacher. Shortly after graduating from WAAPA with a B.A. in Music Theatre, he began his professional career in *The Music Man* for The Production Company. Other credits for the company include *South Pacific*, *Carousel*, *Oklahoma!*, *Sugar*, *Follies*, *42nd Street*, *The Boy Friend* (Marcel), *Little Me* (Yulnick), *Bye Bye Birdie* (Hugo) and *The Boy From Oz* (Chris Bell). He has toured both Australia and

Asia in productions of *Shout!*, *Dusty: The Original Pop Diva*, *The Hobbit*, *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Legally Blonde*. Independent theatre productions include *Pippin*, *Carrie* (Mr Stephens) and *Merrily We Roll Along* (Charlie).

For television, Stephen has appeared on *Winners and Losers*, *Blue Heelers*, *Dancing With The Stars* and *Mornings with Kerri-Anne*. In 2011 he was awarded the Mike Walsh Fellowship and subsequently relocated to New York to study at HB Studios. His directorial credits include *Hello, Dolly!*, *Pippin*, *Avenue Q*, *Elegies*, *Doubt: A Parable* and *Sing on Through Tomorrow*. He recently completed the national tour of *Georgy Girl: The Seekers Musical* in the role of Eddie Jarrett.



JARED BRYAN

Bobby Pepper

Originally from Hobart, Jared started dancing at the age of three. At the age of sixteen he moved to Melbourne to further his training at the full-time course at Dance World Studios.

Jared's recent professional theatre credits include The Production Company's *Funny Girl*, the Australian tour of *Fiddler on the Roof* (TML Enterprises), the role of Action in Gale Edwards' *West Side Story* (The Production Company), *Grease -The Musical* (GFO) understudying Kenickie and Sonny for the Australian/Asian tour, *Carmen* and *Madame Butterfly* (Opera Australia), *Anyone Can Whistle*, *Flinders St – The Musical* and *Hello Dolly! – A Jerry Herman Triptych* (Magnormos) which he co-choreographed.

Commercially, Jared has performed with a huge array of Australian and international artists including Guy Sebastian, Ricki-Lee, Anthony Callea, Jessica Mauboy, Tim Campbell, Todd McKenney and Brian McFadden. Television credits include *Dancing With The Stars*, *The AFL Footy Show*, *Australia's Got Talent*, *The Nickelodeon Kids Choice Awards*, *Melbourne International Comedy Festival Gala*, *TV Turns 50* and *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* along with numerous music videos, television commercials and corporate events.



SIMON MAIDEN

Johnny Harmon

Simon has an extensive list of credits in film, television and the stage since graduating from WAAPA. He has featured in films such as *Romulus*, *My Father* directed by Richard Roxburgh, the Miramax World War II drama *The Great Raid*, *The Killer Elite* and Jocelyn Morehouse's critically acclaimed *The Dressmaker*.

On television he has been seen in the dramas *Wentworth* (Series 4), *Jack Irish*, *Fat Tony & Co*, *The Doctor Blake Mysteries*, *Mr & Mrs Murder*, *Winners and Losers*, *City Homicide*, *Rush*, *Satisfaction*, *Tangle*, the tele-movies *Hawke*, *Dangerous Remedy*, *Underground: The Julian Assange Story* and the mini-series *Deadline: Gallipoli* in the role of Winston Churchill.

Simon's numerous theatre credits include the world premiere of *Last Man Standing* for the Melbourne Theatre Company, *Robots Vs Art* with Tamarama Rock Surfers, *Ruben Guthrie* for Red Stitch, *Criminology* and *Love* for the Malthouse Theatre.

TONY RICKARDS

Oscar Shapiro

Tony's career spans almost forty years working in television, film, radio and stage. Recent television credits include *Wentworth*, *Childhood's End*, *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*, *Winners and Losers*, *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*, *The Tangled Series* and *Kath and Kim*. His feature film credits include *The Cup*, *Summer Coda*, *The Craic*, *Castaway* and *Squizzy Taylor* and more recently, in 2015, the critically acclaimed *Pawno*, *Holding The Man*, *Truth* and *The Menkoff Method*.

Tony's recent theatre credits include *Cock* for the MTC in 2014 and *Every Night Every Night* for the Frank Theatre Company in 2013. He is also a highly regarded comedian and was the co-founder of the infamous radio show *Punter to Punter*, playing the pivotal role of Con Marasco. Tony also performed in his own shows at the Last Laugh and at the Flying Trapeze and all around Australia. *Curtains* sees Tony making his second appearance with the Production Company after playing Doc in 2015's hit *West Side Story*. He is delighted to be back with the company and working with Roger and his creative team.

NICKI WENDT

Jessica Cranshaw

Nicki grew up in Perth, trained at WAAPA and on graduating, moved to Melbourne where she has worked continuously in all aspects of the industry. Nicki is delighted to return to The Production Company for the seventh time, her previous shows being *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, *Gypsy*, *Mame*, *42nd Street*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie* and *Annie Get Your Gun*.

Nicki's theatre credits are extensive, having just toured in *Fiddler On The Roof* and the theatre adaptation of the smash hit, *Mother And Son*. She has appeared in dozens of productions for the MTC, including leads in *The Last Man Standing*, *Rockabye*, *Three Days of Rain*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Company*, *Our Country's Good*, *The Recruiting Officer*, *Measure For Measure*, *As You Like It*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* and *Private Lives*. She has also worked with Playbox, Sydney Theatre Company and Black Swan.

Most recently Nicki appeared as series regular in Shaun Micallef's *The Ex-PM* for the ABC. Other screen work includes *Society Murders*, *Neighbours*, *Acropolis Now* and *SeaChange*.

Nicki has directed works for Victorian Opera, including the hugely successful *Midnight Son*, for which she won the 2013 Green Room Award for best direction in opera.

HEY, MRS PRODUCER!

AN INTERVIEW WITH JANE BERGÈRE
- Broadway Producer of *Curtains* -

Curtains was the last show created by the great Broadway duo of Kander and Ebb. It enjoyed a run of more than 500 performances on Broadway and one of its leading producers was Jane Bergère. Jane has a close association with both Jeanne Pratt and The Production Company and I was curious to know how these two dynamic women met. On the telephone from her home in New York, Jane explained:

"A mutual friend arranged for us to meet for lunch. It was love at first sight. I was absolutely bowled over by her. She was so warm and inclusive. I told her I was producing *Doctor Zhivago* in Sydney before it toured to Melbourne and she asked me down to stay in Melbourne with her. Jeanne and I became fast friends at that point."

Jane came to see The Production Company's *The Boy From Oz* and got to meet everyone in the company. She has since been a producer of *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum* here in Melbourne, starring Geoffrey Rush and a producer of the smash hit *Kinky Boots*, which will open its Australian season at Her Majesty's Theatre on October 22.

On her first Australian visit, Jane was about to become involved in the Broadway production of *War Horse* and asked Jeanne what she thought of it. Unfortunately, Jeanne's appreciation of the show was more than slightly diminished because some little boy had thrown up on her during a London performance.

Jane commented wryly, "Had it not been for this incident, I like to think she might have invested in it!" There haven't been any further theatrical mishaps, as Jeanne has been involved with Jane's Broadway productions of *Twelfth Night* and *Richard III*, *Kinky Boots*, *Annie* and *Rocky*.

Jane produced *Curtains* with four other producers, Roger Berlind, Roger Horshow, Daryl Roth, Ted Hartley and the Centre Theatre Group. The Centre Theatre Group had produced the out of town try-out in Los Angeles, staging its world premiere there on July 25, 2006 at the Ahmanson Theatre – as I pointed



JOHN KANDER AND FRED EBB



JANE BERGÈRE

out to Jane, a very similar scenario, to the out-of-town tryout plot in *Curtains* itself.

The show went so well in LA that the producers decided to bring the show to New York. As Jane elaborated:

“When you play comedy you need an audience to tell you what is and isn’t funny and what does and doesn’t work. You can’t get the sense in a rehearsal studio of whether it will or won’t land. So we took *Curtains* out to Centre Stage, to the beautiful Ahmanson Theatre. The audiences loved it, and they are a sophisticated group out there. This was a great chance to work through the show, iron out the kinks and fix it before we brought it onto Broadway.”

Curtains opened in New York on March 22, 2007 at the Al Hirschfeld Theatre to very good reviews. Once again directed by Scott Ellis, it starred David Hyde Pierce, best known here to Australian television audiences for *Frasier*. Pierce won a Tony Award for Best Actor in a Musical. Ben

Brantley wrote in The New York Times, *David Hyde Pierce ... steps into fully-fledged Broadway stardom with his performance here*. He also referred to Pierce’s character of Lieutenant Cioffi as *the best damn musical theatre character since Mama Rose in Gypsy and the best role of David Hyde Pierce’s career*. The show was nominated for eight Tony Awards. It was also nominated for ten Drama Desk awards and won two best book of a musical to Rupert Holmes and Peter Stone and outstanding featured actress in a musical to Debra Monk.

Before her career as a Broadway producer, Jane performed as an actress on Broadway and on television. This has given her a wonderful insight into the job in which she is so now so successful. She explained,

“When you create a new musical so much centres around the talent of the actors you have hired to play the parts. We were so lucky to have David Hyde Pierce, who is, and continues to be, extraordinary. He is so versatile.”

The whole Broadway cast for *Curtains* were, indeed, wonderful. Debra Monk was hilarious as Carmen Bernstein. Jill Pace was terrific as Niki Harris. Karen Ziemba played Georgia Hendricks and Jason Daniele was Aaron Fox. The choreography by Rob Ashford was marvellous. Megan Sikora, as Bambi, had a wonderful star turn, with upside down cartwheels and acrobatics fashioned around her enormous talent.

So here they were, the five producers on Broadway, with an audience pleaser on their hands.



DEBRA MONK AS CARMEN BERNSTEIN WITH HER BOYS

This must have been so exciting. But it was also tinged with sadness. Kander and Ebb had, over a period of four decades, created many Broadway standards and contemporary classics together. Their entire careers had been as a total team and then, sadly, at this time, Fred died.

“John and Fred really wrote as one so it was terrible when Fred passed away. Fred was the love of John’s life and this terrible tragedy was obviously devastating for John and horrible for us all.”

Kander and Ebb’s collaborations had included *Cabaret*, *The Kiss of the Spider Woman* and *Chicago*. Their work also transferred itself to movies and television, as they wrote original material for the Academy Awards, *Liza With a Z* and HBO’s *Liza Minnelli’s Steppin’ Out* (both Emmy winners), *Baryshnikov on Broadway*, *Goldie and Liza Together*, *Funny Lady*, *Lucky Lady*, *New York New York*, which became a signature song for Frank Sinatra and an anthem for the city itself, *Steppin’ Out* and *Chicago*, the movie.



DAVID HYDE PIERCE AS LIEUTENANT FRANK CIOFFI

Jane told me the song the character of Aaron sings in *Curtains*, *I Miss the Music*, was written as a love letter from John to Fred: a beautiful tribute, of sweetness and humour, pathos and beautifully judged sentimentality.

The original book and concept for the show had been written by Peter Stone, best known for his screenplay for *Charade* starring Cary Grant and Audrey Hepburn. Stone died in 2003, leaving the book unfinished. Fortunately John Kander got on very well with Rupert Holmes, the British-American composer, singer-songwriter and author of plays, novels and stories, who completed the script with him. Rupert is probably best known on Broadway for his musical *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.

“Rupert is a talented and delightful person and very sensitive to the fact that he was stepping into shoes that were very difficult to fill. Kander and Holmes worked beautifully together and Rupert made it possible for John’s dream to come to fruition.”

Curtains has been seen all over the world since its New York season. This staging is its professional Australian premiere, although there have been amateur productions on the Gold Coast and Adelaide in 2010 and in Warrnambool in 2011. It has toured widely through the United States and has had seasons in Scotland, Ireland,

London, Germany, Sweden, the Czech Republic, New Zealand and Canada. Jane gets royalty cheques from all over the world and will, I am sure be looking forward to receiving one soon from The Production Company.

Jane's extensive Broadway credits include *Clybourne Park*, *War Horse*, *Driving Miss Daisy* starring James Earl Jones and Vanessa Redgrave; *A Little Night Music* starring Catherine Zeta-Jones and Angela Lansbury; *La Cage aux Folles* starring Kelsey Grammer and Douglas Hodge; *All My Sons* starring John Lithgow and Katie Holmes; Mark Twain's *Is He Dead?* starring Norbert Leo Butz; *Glengarry Glen Ross* starring Alan Alda, Liev Schreiber, Frederick Weller, Gordon Clapp, Jeffrey Tambor, Tom Wopat and Jordan Lage; *Caroline, or Change* by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Tony Kushner; Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses* and *It Shoulda Been You*, starring Tyne Daly and directed by David Hyde Pierce.

I asked this most accomplished woman about John Kander and Fred Ebb and their Broadway legacy.

"Fred and John only did very interesting pieces. They started out way back with *Flora the Red Menace*, which introduced a rising new star Liza Minnelli. I remember it well as I was performing in the theatre next door with Bette Midler in one of the many productions I did of *Fiddler on the Roof*. *Cabaret* soon followed and then *Zorba*, which was different but more or less in the same line. Then there was show called *Happy Time*, which wasn't the blockbuster that the others had been. *Woman of the Year* was very successful and they both loved Chita Rivera and wrote *The Kiss of the Spider Woman* as a tour de force for her. Their *Steel Pier* has been staged several times in London. They created television shows like *Liza with a Z*, (who, along with Chita, they described as the other woman in our lives). *The Visit*, again starring Chita, was their last show on Broadway (it had had an earlier Chicago season). This is a really difficult and gruesome piece to musicalize. It's so raw. What this woman goes through for revenge! This is probably their darkest work."

In the comedic sunlight of *Curtains* there are two moments for Jane that

are touching, serious, thoughtful and introspective - Aaron's *I Miss the Music* and Cioffi's song *Coffee Shop Nights* about his lonely life and his marriage to his job. Jane marvels that this is the one Kander and Ebb musical that is so much fun, even though the creative process was so tinged with sadness. It is remarkable that the genius of Kander and Ebb plus Holmes burst forth at the time they did with *Curtains*, a work of celebration of life and joy, and described by one of the critics as having plenty of laugh-out loud one-liners and some great tunes.

"You are going to have such fun with this show. I wish I could be there to see it. Of all the shows and all the different things I have done, this is definitely one of my favourites."

JOHN HAY-MACKENZIE

John edits and compiles The Production Company programs.

The brilliant theatrical archivist and author, Frank van Straten, who has written all our program notes for the last seventeen years, has now retired to write another book.



ERIN DAVIE AS NIKI HARRIS WITH DAVID HYDE PIERCE





DANIEL ASSETTA

Daniel trained at the Glenda Yee School of Dance and graduated from ED5 International with a Diploma of Performing Arts. He made his musical theatre debut in the 10th Anniversary Australasian tour of *Wicked* (GFO). Most notably, he performed the re-imagined role of the Rum Tum Tugger in the Australian/New Zealand tour of *Cats* (RUG). Other credits include *Follies In Concert* (StoreyBoard Productions), *Carmen*, *The Magic Flute* and *Tosca* (Opera Australia).

In 2015 Daniel was the winner of the ANZ Trustees Rob Guest Endowment.

After most recently appearing in *Funny Girl*, Daniel is thrilled to be performing again this year with The Production Company.



ALICIA ATTWOOD

Alicia is a graduate of the VCA in Music Theatre. Her theatre credits include *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (TML), *Worlds Apart* (Echelon Productions), cabaret performances at The Butterfly Club as well as various children's entertainments.

Television and film credits include *Neighbours* (Sascha Bracks), *The Hollowmen* and feature films *Face to Face* and *Salaam Namaste*. She has also been involved in a number of commercials, web series, corporate events, film clips and fashion parades.

Alicia would like to thank her family, friends and teachers for their constant love and support.



AMY BERRISFORD

Amy graduated from Dance World Studios in 2004 and has worked consistently in musical theatre, television and film. Amy's theatre credits include *We Will Rock You Asia Tour*, Rosie in *Sweet Charity* (The Production Company), the ensemble and Havana Girl cover in *Guys and Dolls* Melbourne season, June and Velma cover in *Chicago* Australasian Tour, *Promises, Promises* (The Production Company) and the world premiere cast of *King Kong Live on Stage* (Global Creatures).

She played the role of Demeter in the 2014/15 tours of *Cats* for which she received a 2016 Green Room nomination. Most recently she played the role of Kathy in *Company* (Watch This). Her screen credits include Australian film

Boytown (assistant choreographer), Channel 7's *TV Turns 50* and Foxtel's *The Singing Office* (Lead Singer).

Amy just appeared in The Production Company's season of *Funny Girl*. She would like to thank her family and friends for their ongoing love and support.

MATT DOUGLASS



Matt began his training at the age of five at the Helen Clark School of Dancing and graduated from Australian Dance Performance Institute. His professional performing credits include numerous Raw Metal Tours (Raw Dance Company), Carnival Cruise Lines (U.S.A) Universal Studios Singapore and performing alongside Jessica Mauboy at the Commonwealth Games Closing Ceremony in Glasgow (David Atkins Enterprises).

Matt made his professional musical theatre debut in *Fiddler On The Roof* (TML) and is excited to be joining The Production Company for *Curtains*.

Matt is proudly represented by Jeep Management.

He would like to extend his gratitude to his mother for her constant love and support.



BRETT FISHER

Brett is a graduate of Patrick Studios Australia. In 2013, he was Associate Choreographer for *Godspell* (Magnormos Productions) and directed *Namaste The Cabaret* written by Adam Porter.

In 2014, he performed in *Peppa Pig Live: Treasure Hunt* (Lifelike Touring). In 2015 he directed *The Gathering* (MUDfest), performed in *Avenue Q* (Trifle Theatre Company), wrote and starred in his own cabaret *What's He Building In There?* and most recently performed as The Fiddler in *Fiddler On The Roof* (TML Enterprises).

This is Brett's first show with The Production Company and he is very excited to be part of this hilarious show!



DAVID HAMMOND

David began training at the Miranda Kalgovas Ballet School. At twelve he commenced dance study at The Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School. After graduating he moved to London to further his studies at both The Central School of Ballet and London Studio Centre.

David's performing and theatre credits include Royal Caribbean International Productions, Universal Studios (Singapore and Japan), *The Mikado* (Opera Australia), *The Grumpiest Boy In The World* (Victorian Opera), *Nice Work If You Can Get It* (The Production Company) and *Fiddler On The Roof* (TML).

David is thrilled to be again working with The Production Company and this wonderful creative team and talented cast.



ASHLEIGH HAUSCHILD

Originally from Adelaide, Ashleigh studied all facets of the performing arts with Rachel Symons Dance Studio and Pauline Jamieson. In 2011, she moved to Melbourne where she graduated from APO Arts Academy, studying Musical Theatre and Dance.

Ashleigh has appeared in various productions including *Spring Awakening* (Wendla) for Gin and Vodka Productions, *Hansel and Gretel* for The State Opera of South Australia, *Hello, Dolly!* with Magnormous, played the role of Lilly in *Cinderella* with Victorian Opera, toured Australia with *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* with TML Enterprises and Australia and New Zealand in *Cats*, *Follies In Concert* with Storeyboard Productions and *Funny Girl* for The Production Company.

Ashleigh was a lead vocalist at the Port Adelaide Fundraiser Gala Dinner at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre, sang at the Victorian Cancer Council's Tuxedo Junction's *Raise The Roof* and was also a Rob Guest Endowment semi-finalist. Ashleigh is thrilled to be working with The Production Company once again in *Curtains*.



JANE KINGSFORD

Jane fell in love with theatre at a young age and completed her full time musical theatre training at Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance. She has performed in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* – presented by ANZ/Adam Lowe for the Rob Guest Endowment, and performs regularly around Melbourne in corporate and commercial events.

Jane studies voice with Deb Mitchelmore and Pip Grummet, and recently trained at the Howard Fine Acting Studio with Marilyn McIntyre. Jane is delighted to be making her professional musical theatre debut with The Production Company.



JOE MELDRUM

Joe is thrilled to be making his professional music theatre debut with The Production Company in *Curtains*. After graduating from WAAPA in 2015, Joe toured regional Australia paying homage to the legendary Fred Astaire as the leading man in JTM Productions' *A Fine Romance: The Magic of Fred Astaire*, which will have a return season in 2017.

Other credits include touring as a Hollywood Dancer in association with LJ Hooker and Ding Productions, the 2015 BBC's *Dr Who Symphonic Spectacular* and a featured dancer for Televised T20 Cricket Matches. Joe dedicates this performance to his family.



ANTHONY PEPE

Anthony is a 2009 WAAPA graduate. He was most recently seen playing the role of Mendel in the new Australian tour of *Fiddler on the Roof* (TML Enterprises). *Curtains* marks Anthony's seventh appearance with The Production Company, after appearing in *Show Boat*, *Chess*, *The Producers*, *Anything Goes*, *Sugar* and *The Boy From Oz*.

Other credits include the role of Will Parker in *Oklahoma!* (IAJ International), the Australian tour of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (TML Enterprises), performing alongside stage and screen legend Debbie Reynolds in *Irene in Concert* (Peach Productions) and *Neighbours* (Channel 10).

Anthony is thrilled to be working with The Production Company once again.



MADELINE PERRONE

Madeline graduated in 2014 from The American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York. Her first role out of college was Bonnie Parker in *Bonnie and Clyde*, winning a 2015 Broadway World Award of Best Actress in a Musical (regional, national and touring).

In 2015/16, Madeline toured with TML Enterprises in *Fiddler on the Roof* as Shprintze, one of the five daughters, and covered the role of Hodel. She recently returned from the USA, where she appeared as Wendy in Disney's *Peter Pan* and as Alice in *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*.

Curtains is Madeline's first appearance with The Production Company and she could not be more excited to be working with a phenomenal cast and crew on this comedic whodunnit.



JUSTINE PUY

Justine graduated from WAAPA where she majored in dance.

Justine was Dance Captain and played the role of Rumpleteaser in *Cats* (RUG) and Assistant Dance Captain on *South Pacific* (Opera Australia and GFO). Other roles include *The Addams Family*, covering and performing the role of Wednesday Addams (New Theatricals), *Wicked*, covering and performing the role of Glinda (GFO), *Ultimate Broadway – Shanghai*, (GWB Entertainment) and *Ghost* (ATG).

Justine's credits for The Production Company are *Thoroughly Modern Millie* and *Nice Work If You Can Get It* and she is thrilled to be back in the cast of *Curtains*. She would like to thank her family for their love and support.



EMMA RUSSELL

Emma spent five years training at the Australian Ballet School, furthered her training at Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance and completed a NIDA screen acting techniques course. She has worked with some of Australia's most renowned choreographers, performing alongside artists such as Guy Sebastian and Justice Crew.

In 2013 Emma appeared in the Australian tour of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (TML) and most recently featured as Linda in *Saturday Night Fever* at Chapel off Chapel (StageArt). Other theatre and performance credits include Tokyo Disneyland in *One Man's Dream*, The Melbourne Ballet Company with their season of *Infinite Space*, *Chuggington* (Life Like Touring) and multiple comedy festivals with comedian Dave Callan. Emma's screen credits include *Before the Game*, *Neighbours* and most recently *The Saturday Night Crack Up*, hosted by Eddie Perfect (ABC).

Emma is thrilled to be joining the talented cast and creative team of *Curtains* and thanks her beautiful family and friends for their constant love and support



THE
PRODUCTION
COMPANY

A NOTE FOR YOUR 2017 DIARY

In 2017, The Production Company's
seasons will be presented
on the following dates:

SEASON 1
27 MAY to 11 JUNE

SEASON 2
29 JULY to 6 AUGUST

SEASON 3
28 OCTOBER to 5 NOVEMBER

Full details of the 2017 Season will be
announced in February.



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 musicals, plays and operas, numerous episodes of *A Secret Life of Us* (AFI best director nomination), *Stepfather of the Bride* (Chicago Film Festival Award for Best Telemovie) and long running seasons of *She Loves Me* and *Wonderful Town* at the prestigious Shaw Festival in Canada.

In the last few years he has directed *Grey Gardens* (Helpmann award for Best Director) *Show Boat* and *Nice Work If You Can Get It* for The Production Company; several episodes of *Packed to the Rafters* and the first episode of *A Place To Call Home* for Channel Seven; *Don Pasquale* (Tokyo, Sydney, Melbourne) and *Rigoletto* (Sydney, Melbourne) for Opera Australia; *Nixon in China* (Green Room Award for Best Production and Helpmann nomination for Best Director), *The Flying Dutchman* (Green Room Award for Best Director) and *Banquet of Secrets* for Victorian Opera; *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* (Sydney Critics Award for Best Musical, Broadway Australia Award for Best Director) for James Anthony Productions; *As You Like It* (Black Swan Theatre Company); the national tour of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and the recent Melbourne/Sydney production of *Fiddler on The Roof* (Helpmann nomination for Best Director) for Tim Lawson Productions.



JOHN FOREMAN OAM

• MUSICAL DIRECTOR •

John Foreman is a pianist, musical director and composer.

John wrote *The Flame*, performed by Tina Arena at the Sydney Olympics Opening Ceremony, *Light The Way*, performed by José Carreras at the 2006 Asian Games in Doha, and has produced singles and albums for artists such as Anthony Callea, Silvie Paladino, Guy Sebastian and Marcia Hines. John has performed at music festivals in the USA, Canada and the UK. He has been musical director for many TV shows including *Good Morning Australia with Bert Newton*, *Australian Idol*, *Logies*, *Carols by Candlelight* and *Oprah's Australian Adventure* at the Sydney Opera House. John hosts the annual *Schools Spectacular* and is Creative Director for Australia Day for The Australia Day Council of NSW and was Executive Producer of *Australia Day 2016 Live at the Opera House* for Network Ten.

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



DANA JOLLY

• CHOREOGRAPHER •

For The Production Company, Dana has choreographed *Anything Goes*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Little Me*, *Follies*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *Grey Gardens*, *Show Boat* and *Nice Work If You Can Get It*.

Her career began at the age of nine in *Gypsy* at Her Majesty's Theatre here in Melbourne. She then studied at the VCA before performing with Victoria State Opera and the Australian Contemporary Dance Company. Dana then moved to London, performing and choreographing for over a decade in the UK, Europe, Scandinavia and Japan.

Some of Dana's credits include Andrew Lloyd Webbers' *Song and Dance*, The Royal Variety Performance, the British Music Awards, the National Music Express Awards, the Winter Olympics in Norway, Hollywood and Broadway and the Miss World competition.

After working with several international directors and choreographers, Dana returned to Australia as resident choreographer for the Australian productions of *Show Boat*, receiving a Green Room nomination, *We Will Rock You* and *The Producers*. She choreographed two thousand dancers and puppeteers in *Citrawarna Colours of Malaysia Festival* in Kuala Lumpur.

Dana's musical theatre credits include *Respect*, starring Rhonda Burchmore, the Australian tour of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and the Sydney premiere of *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*. In 2015 she choreographed the new Australian musical *Sexercise* followed by two productions from the MTC, *Jumpy* starring Marina Prior and the new Australian work *Last Man Standing*.

Most recently Dana has choreographed *You're A Good Man Charlie Brown* for Vass Productions. She would like to thank her family, students and Emma Raciti Management for their ongoing support and belief.



ESTHER MARIE HAYES

• COSTUME DESIGNER •

Esther Marie Hayes graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts in 2006 with a BA of Dramatic Art and was awarded the Orloff Family Charitable trust scholarship that year.

For MTC, Esther has designed the costumes for *Double Indemnity*, *North by Northwest* (MTC and Kay + McLean Productions), *The Beast*, *Other Desert Cities*, *The Heretic*, *Hamlet*, *All About My Mother*, *Richard III* and *Rockabye*. Other costume credits include *Nixon in China*, *Midnight Son*, and *The Baroque Triple Bill* for the Victorian Opera and *Delectable Shelter* for the Hayloft Project, for which she was nominated for a Green Room Award. In 2015, Esther designed costumes for the feature film *Scare Campaign*, the up-coming horror film from the Cairns Brothers.

Esther is also one third of *The Sisters Hayes*, a sibling artist group working across theatre and the visual arts. Recently, they provided art direction and production artwork for Malthouse Theatre's 2015 Season, for whom they have designed set and costumes for *Antigone*, *Walking into the Bigness* and *Blood Wedding*. In 2010, *The Sisters Hayes* were nominated for a Green Room Award for their production design of Finucane & Smith's *Carnival of Mysteries*, in its premiere at the Melbourne International Arts Festival.



CHRISTINA SMITH

• SET DESIGNER •

Christina trained at WAAPA, and has worked extensively as a set and costume designer for the stage for the last twenty years. Designs for The Production Company include *Show Boat* and *Nice Work If You Can Get It*.

Career highlights include *La Traviata*, *Madame Butterfly* (NZ Opera), *Elling*, *Clybourne Park*, *A Behanding In Spokane*, *Boston Marriage*, *Blackbird*, *Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf*, and *Clean House* (MTC), *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *As You Like It*, *Other Desert Cities*, *Rising Water* and *The Year Of Magical Thinking* (Black Swan State Theatre Company), *Porn Cake*, *Black Medea* (Malthouse), *Troupers* (STC), *Mother Courage and her Children* (QTC), *The Flying Dutchman* (set), *Marriage of Figaro* (costumes), *The Magic Flute* (costumes), *The Turn of the Screw* and *Così fan tutte* (Victorian Opera), *Personal Best* (costumes) (Australian Ballet), *Ruby Moon*, *Inside 01* (Playbox).

In 2005 Christina won the Green Room Award for Theatre Design for *Honour*, *Daylight Atheist* (MTC) and *Julia 3* (Playbox), having been nominated for the same award several times in preceding and following years.

Other design projects include the scenic elements for the Tim Burton exhibition at ACMI and the 2006 Commonwealth Games Opening and Closing Ceremonies as part of the design team.



MATTHEW SCOTT

• LIGHTING DESIGNER •

For the past 22 years Matt has lit over 200 productions for theatre, opera and dance. He returns to the Production Company this year having previously lit *Jerry's Girls*, *La Cage Aux Folles*, *Showboat*, *Grey Gardens*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *42nd Street*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Oklahoma*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Kiss Me Kate* and *They're Playing Our Song*. Other Companies he has worked with include Opera Australia, Melbourne Theatre Company, Sydney Theatre Company, Queensland Theatre Company, Malthouse Theatre, Company B Belvoir, Bell Shakespeare, Black Swan State Theatre Company, Victorian Opera, Expressions Dance Company, Queensland Ballet and New Zealand Opera.

His most recent credits include: *Jasper Jones*, *Skylight*, *Last Man Standing*, *The Weir* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *The Riders* (WA Opera); *Pearlfishers*, *The Marriage of Figaro* (Opera Australia); *Aida* (Handa Opera on the Harbor/OA); *Anything Goes* (OA/GFO); *Banquet of Secrets*, *Voyage to the Moon* (Victorian Opera); *Angels in America* (Black Swan) and *Jasper Jones* (Belvoir).

He has been nominated for and received numerous awards most recently receiving a 2005 Helpmann Award for his lighting on *Urinetown* for Melbourne Theatre Company which followed his 2003 Helpmann Award win for *The Blue Room*, also for the Melbourne Theatre Company.



DARREN TYLER

• ASSISTANT CHOREOGRAPHER
AND ENSEMBLE •

For The Production Company, Darren has performed in *Anything Goes*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Show Boat* and *Nice Work If You Can Get It*.

His other theatre credits include *Show Boat*, *Happy Days the Arena Mega Musical*, *PAN*, *Oliver*, *Miss Saigon*, *Annie*, *Legally Blonde*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Cats* playing Skimbleshanks in the 2009/10 Australasian tour and the role of Booby C in *Saturday Night Fever*.

Darren was the associate choreographer for *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*.

He is looking forward to being a part of this production of *Curtains*.

Darren is a proud member of Equity.

SYSTEM SOUND

• MARK BENSON •

Responsible for the orchestral sound reinforcement and stage sound, Mark joined System Sound in 1996, after twelve years as Deputy Sound Master of the Victorian Arts Centre.

He has worked on many musicals such as *The Pirates of Penzance*, *My Fair Lady*, *Iolanthe*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and The Production Company's *Hair*, *Kiss Me Kate* and *Oklahoma!*

With System Sound for twenty years, Mark has engineered the sound for the Hong Kong and Macau Handover Concerts, Mahler's 8th for the SSO and MSO, many concerts for the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, and recently Roberto Alagna and the QSO.



• KELVIN GEDYE •

Kelvin's first engagements with System Sound started in 1982, mixing *Candide*, *Oliver!*, *Oklahoma*, *Cats*, *Les Misérables* and *The Phantom Of The Opera* before joining System Sound in 1991, supervising and designing for touring productions of *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Cats* and *Wicked*.

His sound design credits include *West Side Story*, *Fiddler On The Roof*, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, *Mother and Son* and this year, *Violet* and *Songs For A New World*.

Kelvin has co-designed over fifteen shows for The Production Company including *Show Boat*, *Nice Work If You Can Get It* and *Funny Girl*.



• DAVID GREASLEY •

David, System Sound Supervisor, engineered King Kong, *Love Never Dies* and *Wicked* tours of Australia and Asia, *War Horse* and *Billy Elliott*. He also designed the sound for *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* in Sydney, and *Dream Girls* in Kuala Lumpur and was Assistant Designer for *The Phantom of the Opera* World Tour through South Africa, Asia and Australia. He is currently Associate Designer for *Georgy Girl*, *Matilda* and The Production Company's recent production of *Funny Girl*.



A BACKGROUND NOTE ON THE PRODUCTION COMPANY

The Production Company's ambitions centre on two key policies.

The first is to provide employment to artists living and working in Melbourne. When Jeanne Pratt started The Production Company in 1998, there were few professional opportunities for young performers in musical theatre. In the 18 years since then, the situation has vastly improved.

The company's second ambition is to bring quality entertainment at the best prices to Melbourne musical-theatre goers. In 2016, anybody under the age of 18 can enjoy one of our performances for just \$24, and an adult subscriber can pay as little as \$42 to see a performance.

The Production Company has always employed artists at above Equity Award pay rates and provided them with first-rate directors, choreographers and musical directors working with a full orchestra. The bulk of our budget goes towards realising these crucial goals. Financing sets and costumes is of more minimal concern, as they have limited direct benefit in developing the skills of our musical-theatre artists.

This year, The Production Company is engaging more than 90 artists on four-week minimum contracts. This amounts to close to 400 weeks of full-time employment for artists in Melbourne. From the 2016 season, and after many years with Orchestra Victoria, we have formed our own orchestra, for which we pay full commercial rates.

The Production Company is fully subsidised with private funding, for which we thank our legion of generous supporters and private patrons. We have never sought Government arts funding.

In terms of repertoire, a great deal of research goes into selecting the best works to suit available talent. We take great care in ensuring that our artists are cast in roles that display their talents to the finest level. Our success rate can be judged by the many performers who have gone on to star in major commercial musicals.

Our repertoire is balanced between the great classic shows that audiences know and love, such as *West Side Story* and this year's *Funny Girl*, as well as lesser-known works that we hope audiences will come to love – among them, the multi-award-winning Australian premiere of *Grey Gardens*, *Nice Work If You Can Get It* and now *Curtains*.

The shows of the future are also a vital part of The Production Company's life. To assist with the creative development of new musicals, the company has made many awards to professional composers and writers through Pratt Foundation Commissions and Awards. We have been able to provide some of the best and brightest with professional workshops to help realise their creative dreams.

THE PRODUCTION COMPANY IS MOST GRATEFUL FOR THE GENEROUS SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE OF THESE PATRONS

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