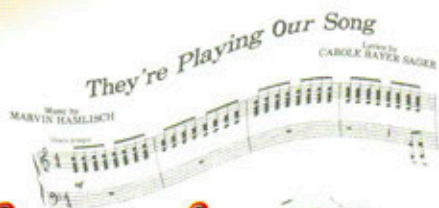




The Production Company  
together with Gary Penny & John Rogers  
presents



*They're  
Playing  
Our Song*





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*The Production Company  
together with Gary Penny & John Rogers*

presents



# *They're Playing Our Song*

Book by

*Neil Simon*

Music by

*Marvin Hamlisch*

Lyrics by

*Carole Bayer Sager*

*Sharon Millerchip     Ian Stenlake*  
*Jeremy Brenman     Emma Langridge     Amanda Levy*  
*Adam Murphy     Monique Chanel Pitsikas     Tod Strike*

*Orchestra Victoria*

Set and Costume Designer

*Richard Jeziorny*

Lighting Designer

*Matt Scott*

Sound Design

*Peter Grubb for System Sound*

Technical Director

*David Miller*

Choreographer

*Alana Scanlan*

Musical Director

*Guy Simpson*

Directed by

*Terence O'Connell*

Slate Theatre, Victorian Arts Centre 1 - 4 October 2003

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# Chairman's Welcome



## Oscars, Tonys and Grammys - Neil, Marvin and Carole

The award winning team who brought this wonderful show to Broadway in the late 1970's - Neil Simon, Marvin Hamlisch and Carole Bayer Sager - have given us some of the happiest love songs, most romantic music and funniest scripts ever heard on a stage or recording. *They're Playing Our Song* is a musical celebration of love and romance with a large dose of humour and warmth to bring the audience into the world of its two song-writing protagonists Sonia and Vernon.

We are thrilled to bring this witty musical back to Melbourne after an absence of 23 years. *They're Playing our Song* had its first post-Broadway season in Australia and became one of our favourite musicals in the hands of Jacki Weaver and John Waters. Tonight we welcome to the Company two very bright young stars in Sharon Millerchip and Ian Stenlake. We also welcome Director Terence O'Connell and Choreographer Alana Scanlan who join us for the first time and our wonderful 'permanent' conductor Guy Simpson.

2003 has been a terrific year for The Production Company and we take this opportunity to thank you - our audience - and all our artists, musicians, designers, crews and creatives for sharing our vision to bring the best of Broadway to Melbourne.

Now settle in to the rush hour in New York City with Sonia and Vernon. It's true - absence does make the heart grow fonder!

See you in 2004!

Warm regards,

Jeanne Pratt AC  
Chairman

# Directors Foreword



## "If Broadway ever erects a monument to the patron saint of laughter, Neil Simon would have to be it." - Time

When I think through Neil Simon's extraordinary body of work, the most enduring theme is the fireworks between a series of mismatched but starcrossed New York couples. Think Charity and Oscar (*Sweet Charity*), Chuck and Fran (*Promises, Promises*), Willie and Al (*The Sunshine Boys*), Paul and Corrie (*Barefoot In The Park*), Elliott and Paula (*The Goodbye Girl*), George and Gwen (*The Out Of Towners*) and that ultimate *Odd Couple*, Oscar and Felix. It has been great to find out in rehearsal that Vernon and Sonia in *They're Playing Our Song* are up there with the best of these eccentric and endearing duos, especially as played by the magical Sharon Millerchip and Ian Stenlake. And their alter egos - our ensemble - every one of them a star.

It's said that Neil Simon based Vernon and Sonia on the romance between his collaborators, the composer Marvin Hamlisch and the lyricist Carole Bayer Sager. As a 'back story' when we watch the characters battle to create their hit songs, one can't help but think of the real life Vernon composing *A Chorus Line*, *The Way We Were* (Vernon: 'well we should get started soon. I promised Barbra we'd have five songs by the 18th.') and *The Sting*. And the real life Sonia's beautiful lyrics for *I'd Rather Leave While I'm In Love* (Sonia: 'Hey! Hold it! Save your la la la's. You can't come that fast at me. I'm a lyricist. Not an IBM computer!) and *Don't Wish Too Hard*. Who, from the 1970's, doesn't remember Carole Bayer Sager's quirky words for *You're Moving Out Today - pack up your rubber duck, I'd like to wish you luck, your funny cigarettes, your sixty one cassettes, pack all your clothes away, your rubber hose away, your old day-gloows away, you're movin' out today...* (Vernon: 'Some of these lyrics are very clever. Very Dorothy Parker. Personally, I don't go for things like "let's play two sets in Massachusetts", but I admire the skill!')...

Thanks to Gary Penny, John Rogers and all at The Production Company for their support, encouragement and good humour and especially for surrounding me with such a brilliant creative team to bring this Manhattan romantic comedy to the stage. I hope you have as much fun with Vernon and Sonia tonight as we've had over the past few weeks bringing them to life.

Terence O'Connell  
Director







# Sharon Millerchip

Sonia Walsk

Having played the starry eyed ingénue, cold blooded killer and just about everything in between, Sharon Millerchip has earned her reputation for versatility.

In 2001, Sharon received the highly prestigious inaugural Helpmann Award for Best Female Actor in a Musical for her performance as Velma Kelly in *Chicago* which toured Australia, Singapore and Hong Kong.

Other roles include Meg Giry in the premiere Australian production of *The Phantom of the Opera* (Mo Award nomination), Demeter in the original Melbourne/Australian Tour of *Cats*, and she danced up a storm as Anita in *West Side Story*.

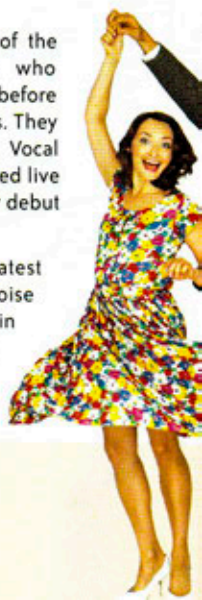
For the Sydney Theatre Company, Sharon played Cordelia in *Falsettos* (Green Room Award nomination) and Little Red Riding Hood in *Into the Woods* for which she was nominated for a Critic's Choice Award and two Mo Awards, winning the latter.

Sharon played the starring role of Belle in the lavish production of *Beauty and the Beast* in Sydney and Melbourne and won another Mo Award for this performance. Sharon also starred in *The Hunting of the Snark*, *Rags* for Opera Australia and *Oscar's Turn to Sing*.

Away from the music theatre stage Sharon has been a regular on the *Midday Show*, *Good Morning Australia*, *IMT*, *Hey Hey It's Saturday*, *Club Buggery* and *Carols by Candlelight* (Sydney and Melbourne).

For ten years Sharon comprised one third of the successful cabaret trio Combo Fiasco, who performed extensively throughout Australia before heading to New York for two sold out seasons. They were nominated for a MAC Award for Best Vocal Comedy Group in New York City and performed live across America on the NBC Today Show. Their debut CD is titled *Here*.

Sharon received rave reviews for her latest production - the birth of her daughter Eloise and is thrilled to be playing Sonia Walsk in *They're Playing Our Song* for The Production Company.



# Ian Stenlake

Vernon Gersch

NIDA graduate Ian Stenlake is one of Australia's most promising actors, working constantly in film, television and theatre since 1990. Ian is widely recognised by Australian audiences for his long running role as Oscar Stone in the popular and critically acclaimed Nine Network drama *Stingers*.

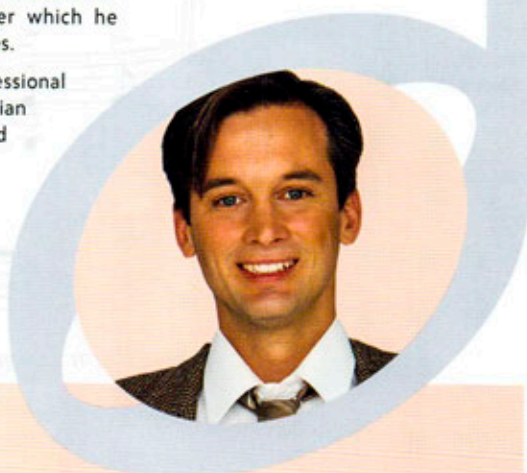
In 1990, Ian Stenlake finished year 12 and decided to take a year off to see the world before studying Commerce/Law. A chance encounter in Rome with Franc D'Ambrosio (who played Al Pacino's son in *The Godfather 3*) led to his first on camera role with twelve days of work on set.

Returning to Australia, he started the Commerce/Law degree but the pull to act was too strong. After a year doing amateur plays he joined The Grin & Tonic Theatre Troupe with whom he toured Queensland for two years performing Shakespeare. Convinced that acting was what he wanted to do with his life, Ian decided to apply to NIDA and graduated in 1996.

Ian's first acting job in Australia was in a pro-am production of a large-scale musical called *Phantoad of the Opera* for Toadshow Productions in Queensland. In 1994, at the end of his first year at NIDA he also sang a series of Queensland folksongs in a one-off vaudeville performance for the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon in England having flown over there as Bille Brown's assistant director on a production of *A Christmas Carole*.

Ian landed his first regular role on the ABC-TV series *Children's Hospital*. He also appeared in the English film *Dingles Down Under*, which was a big hit in Britain. Following a guest lead in *Murder Call*, Ian landed the lead role of Constable Oscar Stone in *Stingers* in 1998, a character which he developed and evolved over five series.

Ian recently completed his first professional musical role in the national Australian tour of *Cabaret*, starring as Clifford Bradshaw.





# “WORKIN’ IT OUT



## THE STORY OF A ‘TELL-ALL’ MUSICAL”

b

by Frank Van Straten OAM

Welcome to *The Gingerbread Lady*.

To what? Well, if fate hadn't intervened, that could have been the musical you're about to see!

It was 1977 and composer Marvin Hamlisch and writer Neil Simon were hard at work on their first collaboration, a musical version of Simon's 1970 play *The Gingerbread Lady*.

Neil Simon was fifty. He'd already provided the books for the musicals *Little Me*, *Sweet Charity* and *Promises, Promises* and he'd written a string of phenomenally successful comedies including *Come Blow Your Horn*, *Barefoot in the Park*, *The Odd Couple*, *The Star-Spangled Girl*, *There's a Girl in My Soup*, *Plaza Suite*, *The Last of the Red Hot Lovers*, *The Prisoner of Second Avenue*, *The Sunshine Boys* and *California Suite* - all bursting with classic one-liners and all based to some

extent on his own experiences. He explained, "The way I see things, life is both sad and funny. I can't imagine a comical situation that isn't at the same time also painful. I used to ask myself: What is a humorous situation? Now I ask: What is a sad situation and how can I tell it humorously?"

Marvin Hamlisch was thirty-three. His composer credits already included the hit song 'Sunshine, Lollipops and Roses', which he'd written when he was only nineteen, plus his Oscar-winning music for the films *The Way We Were* and *The Sting*, and the brilliant Broadway musical *A Chorus Line*.

But try as they might, Simon and Hamlisch couldn't make *The Gingerbread Lady* work. Simon sensed that part of the problem was the constant diversion caused by Hamlisch's tempestuous relationship with lyricist Carole Bayer Sager. Sager's

first hit had come in 1966 with 'A Groovy Kind of Love'. She'd provided the score for a 1970 four-



Neil Simon, Carole Bayer Sager and Marvin Hamlisch preparing for the original Broadway production, 1979





performance Broadway disaster called *Georgy*, based on the British film *Georgy Girl*, but she'd redeemed herself with the many songs she'd written for Frank Sinatra, Melissa Manchester and Liza Minnelli. Her first collaboration with Hamlich had been on the Oscar-nominated song 'Nobody Does It Better', which they created for the 1977 James Bond movie *The Spy Who Loved Me*. Following this Sager's liaison with Hamlich's became personal as well as professional.

Inevitably Simon became interested in Hamlich's stories of his roller coaster life with Sager. The canny playwright soon sensed that this real-life affair could provide the plot for a great musical, and he nervously suggested the idea to the couple. To his amazement, they agreed.

Hamlich and Sager worked quickly. Hamlich claimed that they wrote the entire score over nine consecutive weekends, and that the title song took him just forty seconds. Simon's book picked up many aspects of the couple's relationship, though he altered their real life characters to enhance the piece's theatricality. Simon was also conscious of the costs of staging a full Broadway musical, so he conceived the piece for just two central characters, each supported by three 'alter egos'. It was a minimalist approach first tackled in 1966 by *I Do, I Do*, which had a cast of only two.

The new show's casting was similarly innovative - two virtual Broadway 'virgins'. Lucie Arnaz played Sonia. Though she had been a regular on *I Love Lucy*, her mother's much loved TV show, this was her Broadway debut. Robert Klein had considerable experience on film and TV, but Vernon was his first major stage role. Director Robert Moore's previous credits included several



**Lucie Arnaz and Robert Klein with the original Broadway production, 1979**



of Simon's earlier shows, including *Promises, Promises*, *The Last of the Red Hot Lovers* and the aforementioned *The Gingerbread Lady*. Stage manager Philip Cusack had previously worked on no fewer than eight of Simon's hits, including *The Last of the Red Hot Lovers* and *California Suite*; in the new show he also provided the voice of Phil the Engineer.

The producers decided to 'try out' *They're Playing Our Song* at the Ahmanson Theatre in Los Angeles. Simon was a Los Angeles resident, and the Ahmanson had premiered his earlier plays *California Suite* and *Chapter Two*. The show premiered on 1 December 1978 to a great reception, but subsequent fine tuning included the dropping of two scenes in Act I and two songs, 'If We Give It Time' and 'I've Got Those One Foot Blues'; the former was replaced with 'Just For Tonight'.

The show then transferred to the Imperial Theatre on Broadway. After eleven previews it opened on 11 February 1979. The reviews were rapturous. This summing up in *The New York Post* was typical: 'It is fun and it is funny, full of blithe good humour, hilarious jokes, and witty pointed characterisations that are credible and lovable.'

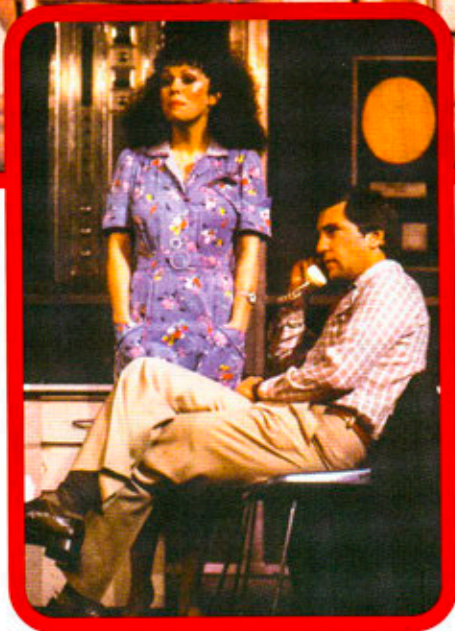




The concept of the musical is absolutely beguiling. Simon has got himself another odd couple even odder than his first, and is at his most sprightly and acidly comic.'

The show romped on through 1,082 performances. It was nominated for Tonys in four categories: Best Musical, Best Book, Best Direction of a Musical, and Best Male Performer in a Musical, but sadly missed out to the all-conquering *Sweeney Todd*. A London season, at the Shaftesbury, opened on 1 October 1980, with Tom Conti and Gemma Craven in the leading roles. It scored a creditable 667 performances.

Before this, though, *They're Playing Our Song* came to Australia. It was produced by J.C. Williamson Productions Ltd, the company headed by Kenn Brodziak, in association with Royce Foster's International Attractions Pty Ltd. The leading roles went to Jacki Weaver and John Waters.



**Jacki Weaver and John Waters, with the original Australian company of *They're Playing Our Song*, 1980**

Jacki Weaver had been on stage, screen and television since 1962, when she had the title role in *Cinderella* at Sydney's Phillip Theatre, but she was hardly a household name. *They're Playing*

*Our Song* was her big break. London-born Waters had come to Australia in 1968 and had worked as a station hand in Queensland before joining the original cast of *Hair* the following year. His subsequent theatre credits included *Godspell*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Dracula*, but his screen roles, including Sergeant McKellar in the television series *Rush*, had made him a box office star.

The Australian production was directed by Philip Cusack, who had by then been promoted from stage manager to production supervisor on the





New York and US national companies. Later he returned to Australia to direct *Lost in Yonkers*, *Anything Goes* and *The Wizard of Oz* and a 1994 workshop presentation of the Australian musical *Always*. In spring 2004 he will be directing *A Little Night Music* for Canterbury Opera in New Zealand.

Australia's love affair with *They're Playing Our Song* started at the Theatre Royal in Sydney on 23 August 1980. It was an instant hit. In *The Sydney Morning Herald* H.G. Kippax enthused: 'This one surely can't fail. It's a big Broadway musical, visually spectacular, which - to dazzle us with virtuosity - is played by two performers only, backed intermittently by a chorus of six. It melds play and music as suavely as coffee and cream.'

Kippax then shifted into top gear: 'It is infectious, tuneful, charming entertainment, custom-designed for pleasure. Hamlisch's score can be as urgent and strident as rush hour in the garment district on Seventh Avenue. Or it can be intimate, whispery, melancholy - as insidious as a New York autumn night creeping down the Hudson to block out the skyscraper outlines and leave the lights dancing alone. Strident, it matches the exuberance and relish of Simon's comedy of character; insidious, it complements his unerring discrimination between sentiment and sentimentality. It should be very popular.' It was.

The Melbourne season opened at the Comedy on 9 January 1981 and ran until May, after which the show took off on a national tour, which included a return season at Her Majesty's in Melbourne in October. In Adelaide, at the Festival Theatre, Barry Quinn succeeded John Waters. Over the long run many 'voices' came and went, among them 'youngsters' like Rhonda Burchmore, Linda Nagle and Donna Lee. Queensland Theatre Company remounted the show in 1984 with Gaye MacFarlane and Peter Noble.

So let's welcome a brand new Sonia and Vernon, ready to seduce us with Simon and Hamlisch's magic all over again. Coffee with cream? Certainly! Enjoy!

©Frank Van Straten OAM

Frank is a theatre historian, author, radio presenter and former director of the Performing Arts Museum, Victorian Arts Centre. *Tivoli*, his colourful history of the much loved Australian variety and vaudeville circuit, will be published by Lothian Books in November 2003.

## *Cast of Characters*

(in order of appearance)

Vernon Gersch Sonia Walsk	IAN STENLAKE SHARON MILLERCHIP
The Voices of Vernon Gersch	JEREMY BRENNAN ADAM MURPHY TOD STRIKE
The Voices of Sonia Walsk	EMMA LANGRIDGE AMANDA LEVY MONIQUE CHANEL PITSIKAS

## *Production Credits*

Technical Director	DAVID MILLER
Company Administrator	ADAM LOWE
Stage Manager	ANNIE REID
Assistant Stage Manager	KIRSTEN MARR
Wardrobe Supervisor	KIM BISHOP
Wigs, Hair and Make up	CORRINE DAY
Sound Engineering and Production	SYSTEM SOUND
Mix Engineer and Sound Effects	NICK REICH
Radio Mic Technicians	CAMERON HERBERT MELISSA PANETTIERE
Rehearsal Repetiteur	GREG ROBERTS
Marketing and Design	RACHEL PAGE, JENNIFER KUMAR for BLAKE ADVERTISING
Publicity	SUZIE HOWIE, PAUL TAYLOR, LUCY ROWE ANDREA MCGOUGH for HOWIE & TAYLOR PUBLICITY
Set Construction	SHOW WORKS

## *Orchestra*

Concertmaster	MARA MILLER
Violins	JOHN NOBLE ELIZABETH DUFFY MATTHEW GILLET STEPHEN TOOKE LEIGH RAYMOND
Viola	NADINE DELBRIDGE
Cello	ROHAN DE KORTE JOSEPHINE VAINS DELYTH STAFFORD
Harp	TONY HICKS
Reeds	STUART BYRNE IAN GODFREY
Trumpets	GREG MAUNDRELL MARK SKILLINGTON
Trombones	SIMON MYERS PETER BROSNAN
Percussion	TIM HOOK
Drums	DEAN COOPER
Guitar	GARY NORMAN
Bass Guitar	CRAIG NEWMAN
Piano	GREG ROBERTS
Keyboard	PETER MCKAY

*E*  
*P*



# Scenes and Musical Numbers

## ACT 1

Overture - Orchestra

**Scene 1** Vernon's Apartment - Central Park West, New York City

*Fallin'* Vernon

**Scene 2** Vernon's Studio - Five Days Later

*Workin' It Out* Vernon, Sonia, Girls and Boys

*If He Really Knew Me* Sonia

*If She Really Knew Me* Vernon

**Scene 3** Le Club

*They're Playing Our Song* Vernon, Sonia

**Scene 4** Sonia's Apartment - an Hour and a Half Later

*If He Really Knew Me* (Reprise) Sonia

*If She Really Knew Me* (Reprise) Vernon

*Right* Sonia, Girls

**Scene 5** On The Street

**Scene 6** On The Road

**Scene 7** A Beach House in Quogue, Long Island

*Just For Tonight* Sonia

## ACT 2

Entr'acte - Orchestra

**Scene 1** Vernon's Apartment - A Few Days Later  
*When You're In My Arms* Vernon, Sonia

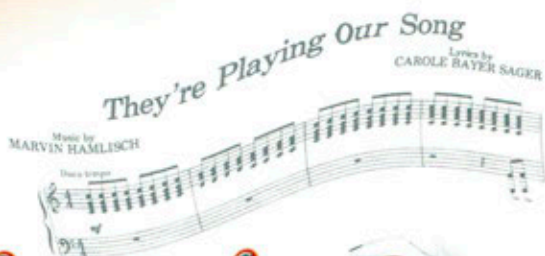
**Scene 2** Vernon's Bedroom - Three Weeks Later

**Scene 3** Vernon's Bedroom - The Middle of the Night

**Scene 4** A Recording Studio - 11.00am The Next Morning  
*I Still Believe in Love* Sonia

**Scene 5** A Hospital Room - Los Angeles, A Few Months Later  
*Fill In The Words* Vernon, Boys

**Scene 6** Sonia's Apartment - A few Months Later  
*They're Playing Our Song* (Reprise) Girls, Boys



*They're  
Playing  
Our Song*





## Jeremy Brennan

Jeremy's professional debut aged 17 was as Romeo in Michael Hurst's popular and critically acclaimed New Zealand production of *Romeo and Juliet*. Then followed a guest role in the hospital drama *Shortland Street* and the Australian/New Zealand tour of *Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story*.

Jeremy moved to Sydney where he undertook a Bachelor of Dramatic Art at NIDA. Since graduating in 1998 he has written, produced and musically directed a number of shows including Sam Shepherd's *A Lie of the Mind* and Mark Kilmurry's *One Shot*. Other credits include a self-devised show *Welcome to My Shoebox*, *Favourite Names for Boys* for Railway St, and *Actors at Work 2001* for the Bell Shakespeare Company. Most recently he performed the role of Hans/Rudy in *Cabaret* for IMG/Barry & Fran Weissler.

Jeremy also works as a voice artist, session musician and singer and can be heard on Sydney's 2RPH reading for the print handicapped.



## Emma Langridge

Emma's professional debut was as Texas in the recent Australian tour of *Cabaret* (IMG), in which she also understudied and performed the role of Fraulein Kost. Other credits include: the role of Gussie in *Merrily We Roll Along* (Devanesen Productions), Roxie Hart - *Chicago*, Anita - *West Side Story*, Marta - *Company* (CLOC), Reno - *Anything Goes* (Catchment Players), Diana Morales - *A Chorus Line*, Louise - *Gypsy* and Sheila - *HAIR* (Hamilton, New Zealand).

She will next be seen as Joanie in the upcoming Australian tour of *The Full Monty* (David Atkins Enterprises & IMG).

Emma is thrilled to be working with The Production Company and the very talented *They're Playing Our Song* team.

## Amanda Levy

A graduate of W.A.A.P.A., Amanda most recently appeared as Cathie in the Australian Premiere of *The Last Five Years* by Jason Robert Brown. Amanda has twice been nominated for a Green Room Award, being for *The Journey Girl* (Best Female Artist in a Leading Role in a Musical) and *Prodigal Son* (Best Female Artist in a Featured Role in a Musical).



Other credits include *Annie* (SEL/GFO/Macks), *Fiddler On the Roof* with Topol, the Australian Premiere of *Sunset Boulevard* (Really Useful Company), *Crusade* (Melbourne and Edinburgh Festival), *Virgin Wars* (Frank/Bryant), *The Effie Fellows Story* (Effie Crump Theatre Perth), Eliza in *My Fair Lady* and Leisl in *The Sound of Music* (MTC of WA).

Theatre highlights include Jessica in the Melbourne and Perth seasons of *This Is Our Youth* (Black Swan), Smith in *The Shrinking Ledge* by Nicholas Flanagan and Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Glen Elston). Television credits include *Blue Heelers*, *Stingers*, *Neighbours* and *Denise*.



## Adam Murphy

Adam has lived a large portion of his life in New Zealand but now calls Melbourne home. He studied Drama and Film Studies at the University of South Australia and trained at the Bay of Plenty Academy of Performing Arts in New Zealand.

He was an original cast member of *Mamma Mia*, played the roles of Grantaire and Bamatabois in *Les Miserables*, Pemberton Maxwell in The Production Company's *Call Me Madam* as well as the role of Alec in *Side Show Alley*, winner of the inaugural Pratt Prize for Music Theatre, directed by Gale Edwards.

Theatre credits in N.Z. include Don Everly in *Blue Sky Boys*, Eben Cabot in *Desire Under the Elms*, Adam Canning in *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me*, Apollodorus in *Caesar and Cleopatra*, Eilif in *Mother Courage And Her Children*, Prince Charles in *The Queen and I*, Richard Stockwell in *This Other Eden*, Chief Weasel in *The Wind in the Willows*, Georg Nowack in *She Loves Me*, Bill Calhoun in *Kiss Me Kate* and various characters in *Travels With My Aunt*, Sordido in *The Revenger's Tragedy* and Elwood Blues in *The Official Tribute to the Blues Brothers*.

Television credits include *The Trivia Company*(N.Z.), *Shortland Street*(N.Z.), *Eugenie Sandler*, *Halifax f.p.*, *Neighbours*, *Blue Heelers* and *The Forest*, a short feature film.



## Monique Chanel Pitsikas

A graduate of WAAPA (2002) and the National Theatre Drama School (1999), Monique has worked in theatre, television, film and corporate events as an actor, singer and dancer. At age six, Monique saw *Cats* and the theatrical flame within her was kindled. She later appeared in The Really Useful Company's *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*.

Roles at WAAPA included *The Pyjama Game* (Gladys), *Into The Woods* (Cinderella), directed by Jo-Anne Robinson, *Berlin to Broadway*, directed by Rhys McConnochie, *The Good Fight* (workshop and world premiere with Nick Enright and David King), *The Rinse Cycle* (Spare Parts Puppet Theatre), *Bye Bye Birdie* (Gloria Rasputin) and *The Comedy Of Errors*. Recently, Monique appeared in The Production Company's *South Pacific* and *An Evening Of Music Theatre*, directed by Mark Jones. She dedicates this performance to her best friend SHAKA, who died recently.



## Tod Strike

Tod gained his Bachelor of Arts in Music from Queensland University of Technology, completed a year in the preparatory course at the prestigious Queensland Conservatorium of Music and studied singing with Raymond Connell. Tod has appeared in *Cats* and *Grease*, both under the 'Big Top' and recently in *Footloose* at Sydney's Capitol Theatre. He has also appeared in *The Merry Widow* and *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum*.

Other appearances include *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Into the Woods*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *Calamity Jane*, *Chess*, *Little Shop Of Horrors*, *Les Misérables*, *Sweet Charity* and *Cabaret*. Opera credits include *Turandot* and *Otello* for Opera Queensland and *Madama Butterfly*. Tod regularly performs with the Ten Tenors, including on their CD, *Tenorissimo*.

Most recently he appeared in *South Pacific* for The Production Company. He would like to dedicate his performance to the ever present strength and support of his loved ones and to the loving memory of his mother, Eva, who was, and always will be, his source of inspiration.





# Neil Simon

## Book

Marvin Neil Simon was born in the Bronx on July 4, 1927, and grew up in Washington Heights at the northern tip of Manhattan. He attended New York University briefly (1944-45) and the University of Denver (1945-46) before joining the United States Army where he began his writing career working for the Army camp newspaper.

After being discharged from the army, Simon returned to New York and took a job as a mailroom clerk for Warner Brother's East Coast office. He and his brother Danny began writing comedy revues and eventually found their way into radio, then television where they toiled alongside the likes of

Woody Allen, Mel Brooks and Larry Gelbart writing for *The Phil Silvers Show* and Sid Caesar's *Your Show of Shows*.

Simon received several Emmy Award nominations for his television writing, then moved on to the stage where he quickly established himself as America's most successful commercial playwright by creating an unparalleled string of Broadway hits beginning with *Come Blow Your Horn*. During the 1966-67 season, *Barefoot in the Park*, *The Odd Couple*, *Sweet Charity* and *The Star Spangled Girl* were all running simultaneously. During the 1970-71 season, Broadway theatregoers had their choice of *Plaza Suite*, *Last of the Red Hot Lovers*, and *Promises, Promises*. Still, critical acclaim came slowly for Simon. In spite of the fact that he had had more smash hits than any other American playwright, critics continued to take pleasure in dismissing him as a mere "writer of gags".

In 1973, following the death of his wife, Simon reached a low point in his career with two failures - *The Good Doctor* (1973) and *God's Favorite* (1976). A move to California, however, reinvigorated him and he produced a much more successful play later that year in *California Suite*. After marrying actress Marsha Mason, Simon went on to write *Chapter Two* (1977) which was considered by many critics to be his finest play to that date. His fourth musical, *They're Playing Our Song*, proved successful in 1979, but his next three plays (*I Ought to Be in Pictures*, *Fools* and a revised version of *Little Me*) all proved unsuccessful at the box office.

Then, in 1983, Simon began to win over many of his critics with the introduction of his autobiographical trilogy - *Brighton Beach Memoirs* (1983), *Biloxi Blues* (1985) and *Broadway Bound* (1986) - which chronicled his stormy childhood, his brief Army time, and the beginning of his career in television. Suddenly the critics began taking him seriously. He followed up in 1991 with *Lost in Yonkers* for which he won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

During the course of his career, Simon has won three Tony Awards for Best Play (*The Odd Couple*, *Biloxi Blues* and *Lost in Yonkers*.) He has had more plays adapted to film than any other American playwright and, in addition, has written nearly a dozen original screenplays himself. He received Academy Award nominations for his screenplays *The Odd Couple* (1968), *The Sunshine Boys* (1975) and *California Suite* (1978). He has also been the recipient of the Antoinette Perry Award, the Writers Guild Award, the Evening Standard Award, the New York Drama Critics Circle Award, the Shubert Award, the Outer Circle Award, and a 1978 Golden Globe Award for his screenplay, *The Goodbye Girl*.



# Marvin Hamlisch

## Music

Marvin Hamlisch is a pianist, arranger and conductor, who has made an indelible mark as a composer for Broadway musical shows and films. Born 2 June 1944, in New York City, Hamlisch began as a child prodigy, and played the piano by ear at the age of five. When he was seven, he became the youngest student ever to be enrolled at the Juilliard School of Music.

In April 1974, he collected an impressive total of three Oscars - two for *The Way We Were* and the third was for his adaptation of Scott Joplin's music for *The Sting*; Hamlisch's piano recording of one of the film's main themes, "The Entertainer", sold over a million copies.

In July 1975, his first Broadway musical, the revolutionary *A Chorus Line*, opened. The production was showered with honours, including New York Drama Critics and Drama Desk Awards, nine Tony Awards, and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. *A Chorus Line* closed in March 1990 after an incredible run of 6,137 performances, and held the record as Broadway's longest-running show until overtaken by Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats* in 1997.

Hamlisch was back on Broadway in 1979 with *They're Playing Our Song*. The show played over 1,000 performances on Broadway as well as at London's Shaftesbury Theatre. Film music collaborations between Hamlisch and Bayer Sager during the 70s included the Oscar-nominated "Nobody Does It Better", "Better Than Ever", "Through The Eyes Of Love" and "If You Remember Me". Hamlisch also wrote the scores for three Neil Simon film comedies, *Chapter Two*, *Seems Like Old Times* and *I Ought To Be In Pictures*; the 1981 US film version of *Pennies From Heaven* (in collaboration with veteran bandleader Billy May); and *Ordinary People*, an Academy Award-winning film in 1980.

Hamlisch collaborated on the score for Neil Simon's *The Goodbye Girl* in 1993. In the same year, he conducted the London Symphony Orchestra in the European premiere of his 25-minute work, *The Anatomy Of Peace*. He served as Barbra Streisand's musical director on her 1994 comeback tour and as musical director of the Pittsburg Symphony Pops and the Baltimore Symphony Pops, for whom he regularly conducts concerts. He created a Pops series for the National Symphony in the Kennedy Center, Washington D.C.

Constantly on the lookout for another hit stage musical, Hamlisch rewrote most of the score of his 1993 flop, *The Goodbye Girl* (with lyricist Don Black), for a (brief) West End run in 1997.



# Carole Bayer Sager

## Lyrics

Carole Bayer Sager's songs - expressing the universal messages of hope, love and friendship - include some of the most popular and successful songs over a period of more than 25 years. Honours for her work include an Academy Award (six nominations), a Grammy (nine nominations), two Golden Globe Awards (seven nominations), a Tony award (2 nominations), and induction into the Songwriter's Hall Of Fame.

Born in New York City, Ms. Sager began writing poems as a child and began songwriting while still a student at the High School of Music and Art. In 1966, still in her teens, she co-wrote her first #1 hit, "A Groovy Kind Of Love" for the English group The Mindbenders, popularizing a new word in the process.

In the early '70s, Ms. Sager began writing with Peter Allen who was to become a close personal friend whose songwriting talents, Ms. Sager believes, contributed to some of her finest songs and whose death in 1992 was a great personal loss. Ten of her songs will be featured in the upcoming Broadway musical *The Boy From Oz*, songs she co-wrote with Peter Allen throughout their long years of collaboration and friendship. She also wrote songs for Bob Fosse's Broadway musicals, *All That Jazz* and *Dancin'*.

Her collaborations with Marvin Hamlisch resulted in two Oscar nominations, "Looking Through The Eyes Of Love" from *Ice Castles* and "Nobody Does It Better" from *The Spy Who Loved Me*.

"That's What Friends Are For" recorded by Stevie Wonder, Elton John, Dionne Warwick and Gladys Knight, co-written with Burt Bacharach, Ms. Sager's former writing partner/husband, was the #1 song of 1986 and won the Grammy Award for "Song Of The Year".

Ms. Sager lives in Los Angeles with her husband, chairman and CEO of the Los Angeles Dodgers and former chairman of Warner Bros., Robert Daly, and her son, Christopher Bacharach.





## Terence O'Connell

Director

Terence paid his way through NIDA's Directors Course by moonlighting as Reg Livermore's dresser on the legendary *Betty Blokkbuster Follies*. Since then, for over twenty years, his work has entertained audiences in theatres, concert halls, circus tents, cabaret venues and comedy clubs across Australia and internationally. Terence's productions have often incorporated new writing, illusion, dance, 'physical theatre' and pop music.

Favourite shows include *Bouncers*, *Circus Oz* (Los Angeles Olympic Arts Festival), Steven Berkoff's *Decadence*, Glynn Nicholas' *Crossing the Line*, Tracy Bartram's *Rawhide*, *Crystal Clear* and *When I Was a Girl I Used to Scream and Shout* at Sydney's Wharf Theatre, his three record breaking shows at the iconic, much missed *Last Laugh - Fairground Snapz*, *Dizzy Spells* and *Paradise Taxi*, *Circus Senso* (Albany Empire, London) and his illusionistic *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

His work in musical theatre includes productions of *Cabaret*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *John Paul George Ringo and Bert*, *Life on Mars - the Words and Music of David Bowie*, *Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story*, Sydney Theatre Company's *Darlinghurst Nights* and *I Only Want to be With You - The Dusty Springfield Story*.

Terence's production of the hit comedy *Certified Male* has just completed its third national tour at Her Majesty's Theatre. After directing some twenty great 'blokes' into the show in Australia, New Zealand and Ireland, he is now looking forward to working with the all female cast of *Minefields and Miniskirts - Australian Women* and *The Vietnam War*. Other upcoming projects include *Lotte Lenya - The Legend* and the revolutionary mime show *SHOOSH*. With illusionist Doug Tremlett and choreographer Alana Scanlan, he is developing the adult theatre/dance show *Eroticom*.

## Guy Simpson

Musical Director

Musical Director Guy Simpson was born in England, educated at the Sydney Conservatorium and now lives in Sydney. He has been working professionally as a Musical Director for over 20 years in Australia and Asia working on an extensive variety of shows, concerts & recordings with Australia's finest singers and musicians in all musical styles.

*They're Playing Our Song* is Guy's 5th show for The Production Company. Previous shows were *Funny Girl*, *Call Me Madam*, *Mack & Mabel* and *The Music Man*.

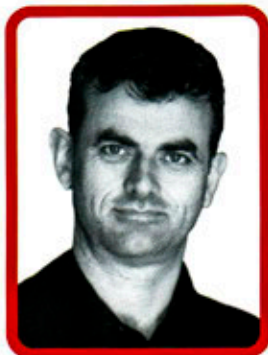
Guy is currently Musical Director of *We Will Rock You* at the Regent Theatre, Melbourne.

Guy was Musical Director of the recent IMG productions of *Cabaret* and *Chicago* in Australia and *Miss Saigon* in Singapore & Hong Kong.

He was also Musical Director of the Cameron Mackintosh productions of *Miss Saigon* in Sydney and Manila. For Cameron Mackintosh and RUG, Guy has been Musical Supervisor or Musical Director of *Cats* in Australia and New Zealand and *The Phantom of the Opera* in Australia, New Zealand and Korea where he produced the cast recording.

Other musical direction credits include *Seesaw*, *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, *My Fair Lady* and *Zorba*.

He has worked closely with writers and composers on new works, most notably the new Australian musical *Crusade*, which enjoyed a successful season at the 2000 Edinburgh Festival.





# Alana Scanlan

## Choreographer

Alana turned from big haired *Don Lane Show* dancer into one of Australia's most in-demand choreographers in theatre, fashion, commercials, music clips and corporate events. She has choreographed *Style Aid*, the award winning clip 'Don't Call Me Baby', theatrical spectacles for Jupiter's Casino, parades for Alannah Hill and Poppy King, *Centenary of Federation – The Peoplescape Concert* and events with her own experimental company Moving Pictures.

Her theatre work includes *Bouncers*, *I Only Want To Be With You - The Dusty Springfield Story*, *Kissing Frogs* and *Certified Male*. She is currently developing *SHOOSH* and the adult theatre spectacle *Eroticom* with Terence O'Connell and illusionist Doug Tremlett and has just choreographed Paul Hogan, Michael Caton and Glynn Nicholas in the upcoming movie *Strange Bedfellows*. Earlier this year, in China, Alana choreographed a group of non-English speaking performers in The Great Moscow Circus.



# Richard Jeziorny

## Set and Costume Designer

Richard Jeziorny is a Melbourne based designer whose previous musical credits include *The Threepenny Opera*, *Oliver!*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Vincent*, *Follies* and numerous schools' tour projects for OzOpera. The 2003 production of *The Sound Garden* is currently touring schools in Victoria.

He has designed for drama, dance and puppetry throughout Australia. *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Fish*, based on the books of Eric Carle, had a successful season as part of the Sydney Festival and performed to packed houses this year at the New Victory Theatre on Broadway, with further tours planned for South East Asia. Richard also designed nine Urban Dream Capsules throughout the world, providing a practical, vibrant and colourful environment as a living space in department store windows for the four participating actors in Ghent, London, Montreal, Chicago, Galway, Sao Paulo, Melbourne, Perth and Wellington.

In 2001, he was granted an Asialink residency in Ho Chi Minh City and returned there in 2002 to design, direct and teach, as well as conducting workshops with, the Saigon Water Puppet Troupe.

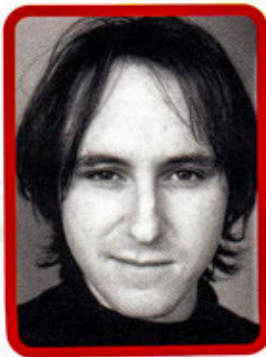
Richard is the Set and Costume Designer for all three presentations in The Production Company's 2003 Season.



# Matt Scott

## Lighting Designer

Over the last ten years Matt has worked almost exclusively as a lighting designer for many of Australia's performing arts companies. His lighting has been regularly acclaimed both within the industry and by the media. Matt has won and been nominated for several awards, most recently receiving a 2003 Helpmann Award nomination for *The Blue Room*. Matt's work as a lighting designer includes: for the Queensland Theatre Company: *Phedra*, *The Lonesome West*, *We Were Dancing*, *The Conversation*, *The Messiah*, *The Fortunes Of Richard Mahony*, *Bill & Mary*, *Cooking With Elvis*, *Richard III* (in collaboration with Bell Shakespeare Co.) *Bag O' Marbles*, *Richard II*, *Buried Child*, *Dirt*, *The Forest Fred*, *Top Dogs*, *Fountains Beyond*, *Shopping & Fucking*, *Mrs Warren's Profession*, *The Sunshine Club*, *Sweet Panic* and *Radiance*, for Sydney Theatre Company: *The Glass Menagerie*, *Morning Sacrifice*, *The Sunshine Club*, for Melbourne Theatre Company: *The Blue Room* (Melbourne, Perth & Sydney seasons), *The Woman in the Window*, for Playbox: *The Sick Room*, *Stolen*, *Thieving Boy/Like Stars in My Hands*, Opera Queensland : *La Cenrentola*, *Così fan tutte*, for Queensland Ballet: *Don Quixote*, *The Fold/Burning*. As well productions for La Boite including *Milo's Wake* (currently on tour nationally).





## Peter Grubb

### Sound Designer for System Sound

Peter Grubb first joined System Sound In 1981, as Sound Mix Engineer for *They're Playing Our Song*. Peter went on to mix the productions of *Barnum*, *Oklahoma!*, *Guys & Dolls*, *Pirates of Penzance*, *Nine* and *Cats*.

System Sound, founded by John Scandrett, has since engineered such productions as *The Phantom of The Opera*, *Lés Miserables*, *Joseph*, *Rent*, *Cats*, *Aspects of Love*, *Show Boat*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *Miss Saigon*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Man of La Mancha*, *Witches of Eastwick*, *Cabaret* and currently *Mamma Mia!* and *We Will Rock You*.

Co-Director of System Sound, Peter has been closely involved in all of the Australian stagings of *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Starlight Express*, *Aspects Of Love*, *Joseph*, the Australasian tours of *Cats* and *Lés Miserables*, *Miss Saigon*, and *Sunset Boulevard*.

He is currently Sound Supervisor for the Australian productions of *Mamma Mia!* and *We Will Rock You*, and designed the sound for the Australian productions of *Oliver!*, *The Witches Of Eastwick*, *Cats* in Korea, and he is now designing for the US tour of *Oliver!*. Other Australian sound design credits include *Into The Woods*, *A Little Night Music*, *Sweet Charity*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *She Loves Me* and *Call Me Madam*.

Mix Engineering and Sound Effects for *They're Playing Our Song* are by Nick Reich, who joined System Sound in 1988 as Sound Operator on *Lés Miserables*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *High Society*, *Five Guys Named Moe*, *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Korea), and MTC's *Into the Woods* among others. Nick was Assistant Sound Designer for the recent Australia & NZ tours of *Cats*, and Sound Designer for *The Wizard of Oz*, The Production Company's *Guys & Dolls*, *Hello Dolly!* and *How to Succeed...* and produced the mix and sound effects for *South Pacific*, *Music Man* and *Mack & Mabel*.



## David Miller

### Technical Director

Commencing his career as a stage manager with Melbourne Theatre Company in 1979, David spent the next 14 years as a stage manager, tour manager and production manager working for many of the state theatre companies, commercial producers and festivals throughout Australia. Included in this time were productions of *The Wizard of Oz*, *Jerry's Girls*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Are You Lonesome Tonight?*, *A Man for All Seasons*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *The Hunting of the Snark*, several tours with Pam Ayres as well as numerous Melbourne Festivals.

David has been the Production Manager for Victoria State Opera and International Management Group on projects including *West Side Story*, *The Puccini Spectacular*, *My Fair Lady*, two tours with Shirley Bassey, the Werribee Park Festival, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and the Australian and Asian tours of the award winning *Chicago*.

David now runs his own production company, David's Company, specialising in theatre and concert management. Projects have included *Buddy - The Musical*, *Always ... Patsy Cline*, *Oh, What a Night!*, *Spirit of the Dance* and *The Man From Snowy River*.



David is currently Production Manager for Playbox as well as being Technical Director for all of The Production Company seasons including the recent tour of *HAIR*.





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Orchestra Victoria performs for two thirds of the year with Opera Australia and The Australian Ballet. In addition to this major commitment to arts in Melbourne, Orchestra Victoria regularly produces concerts in partnership with charitable and community based partners throughout metropolitan and regional Victoria. Orchestra Victoria also partners with other leading arts organisations, including The Production Company, Melbourne Festival, International Management Group and Edgley International. In recent years, Orchestra Victoria has performed with many internationally acclaimed artists, including Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli, soprano Sumi Jo, The Royal Ballet and James Morrison. Orchestra Victoria has been the music behind The Production Company since the year 2000, for musicals including *Call Me Madam*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Anything Goes* and *Mack & Mabel*.

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## The Production Company

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- In the interests of public health, the Victorian Arts Centre is a smoke free area.



## Gary Penny

Over the past 25 years, Gary has produced nearly 40 plays, as well as presentations, in Australia and New Zealand as well as the UK; working with fine creative talent and actors in productions including *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Salome*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *Biloxi Blues*, *Speed-the-Plow*,

*The Cocktail Hour*, *The Gin Game*, *Crown Matrimonial*, *Agnes of God*, *Orphans*, *Travels with My Aunt*, *Rough Crossing*, *I'm Not Rappaport* and *bash*.

Many of these productions were mounted when he was the major hirer of The Playhouse of the Sydney Opera House for 5 years during the 80's.

Boards to which he had been appointed include Sydney Dance Company, and currently he is on the Board of Kim Carpenter's Theatre of Image as well as Advisory Board of Parramatta Riverside Theatres.

## John Rogers



John has over 30 years experience in film production, and has worked with international directors the likes of Ridley Scott, Harold Becker, Alan Parker and Adrian Lyne. In his years in the industry he has produced and directed television commercials for major companies such as AMP, Arnotts, Cathay Pacific, Commonwealth Bank, General Motors Holden, Optus, Pan Am, Super League, Telstra, Toyota and Qantas.

John has been awarded two New York Advertising Festival 'Clips' and a Bronze Lion at the Cannes Film Festival.





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*Season 2003*

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