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Rodgers & Hammerstein's

Oklahoma!

Music By **RICHARD RODGERS**

Book & Lyrics by **OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II**

Based on the play "Green Grow the Lilacs" by Lynn Riggs
Original Dances by Agnes de Mille

Starring **Ian Stenlake & Nancye Hayes**

Gary **Lucy** **Amanda**
Down **Durack** **Harrison**

James **Christopher** **Mitchell**
Millar **Parker** **Butel**

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Terence O'Connell

State Theatre, The Arts Centre 28 September – 1 October 2005

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CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

"There's a bright, golden haze on the meadow..." so begins one of the most popular musicals of all time, Rodgers and Hammerstein's **Oklahoma!** It gives us great pleasure to bring this musical back to Melbourne after 23 years.

The brilliant team that brought us **They're Playing Our Song** in 2003 have reunited to stage this glorious celebration of the American spirit- Director Terence O'Connell, Musical Director Guy Simpson, Choreographer Alana Scanlan, Designer Richard Jeziorny, Lighting Designer Matt Scott and Mark Benson and Nick Reich at System Sound. Guy is our founding musical director and conducts his 7th musical for us with **Oklahoma!** We're thrilled to welcome them all back to the company.

Our principal cast is a world class line up of Australia's brightest stars - Ian Stenlake and the legendary Nancye Hayes are joined by Lucy Durack, Amanda Harrison, James Millar, Christopher Parker, Mitchell Butel and Gary Down. The cast of thirty is made up by a highly talented ensemble, and accompanied by our musical partners, Orchestra Victoria.

We welcome DRAKE Executive for the first time to our wonderful line up of sponsors and patrons. We thank our loyal subscribers for joining us again in 2005.

We are very proud of this company and hope you enjoy the fruits of their labours tonight.

Jeanne Pratt AC
Chairman



DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

The flamboyant producer Mike Todd, famous for his 'laffs and legs' shows, went to New Haven to check out a new musical called **Away We Go!** and famously commented, after leaving at interval, 'No gags, no gals, no chance!' How wrong he was...

Because, on March 31, 1943, the curtain rose on a new musical that not only captivated Broadway audiences, but became a world wide hit. It was now called **Oklahoma!**, the show that ushered in a new era of musical theatre. Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein had written a show in which every element - music, lyrics, narrative and dance - contributed to telling the story, each part woven seamlessly into the whole.

More than sixty years after that premiere, we are still able to identify with the themes of **Oklahoma!** individuality within citizenship, the love of 'the land', the aspirations of migrants and the desire of us all to find our partner and to live in 'our place'. Thanks to The Production Company, I have been gifted with the powerhouse talents of Amanda Harrison and Christopher Parker, the perfect 'Laurey' and 'Jud' of Lucy Durack and James Millar, the experience and wit of Gary Down, the unique talent of Mitchell Butel and my favourite 'leading man', the totally terrific Ian Stenlake. And our superb ensemble e8very one a star. I would be remiss not to mention my great artistic mate, the choreographer Alana Scanlan, and our masterly musical director Guy Simpson, who both have made the adventure so rewarding.

And, personally, my greatest thrill is to be directing the legendary Nancye Hayes, who I first met when I was a dresser on **Sweet Charity** at the old Her Majesty's Theatre in Sydney. I would stand in the wings every night watching her luminous performance in the title role. Now I get to sit in house seats and watch her play Aunt Eller!

Oklahoma's OK!

Terence O'Connell
Director



IAN STENLAKE

Curly McLain

Ian Stenlake has developed a reputation as one of Australia's most diverse actors, working consistently in film, television and theatre since graduating from NIDA in 1996. Ian's decision to pursue a career in acting came after a chance encounter with several actors in Rome led to him appearing in Francis Ford Coppola's film **The Godfather Part 3**.

Since then Ian has toured with Grin & Tonic Theatre Troupe performing Shakespeare, appeared in EHJ's production of **Romeo and Juliet** in Sydney's Botanic Gardens and performed with the Royal Shakespeare Company in a one-off Vaudeville production of **Music Hall**. Ian's television credits include the ABC-TV series **Children's Hospital**, **Murder Call** and most recently in the Nine Network Drama series **Stingers** as the popular lead role of Constable Oscar Stone. He has also appeared in the hit English film **The Dingles Down Under** and worked as assistant to director Bille Brown on an adaptation of **A Christmas Carol** which was later staged by the Royal Shakespeare Company.

In 2003, Ian completed a national tour of IMG's musical production of **Cabaret** in the role of Clifford Bradshaw, for which he was nominated for a Green Room Award. It was his performance as Vernon Gersch in **They're Playing Our Song** for The Production Company, however, which saw him win the Green Room Award for Best Male Artist in a Leading Role.

The year 2004 saw the 150th anniversary of the Eureka Stockade in Australia and the world premiere of the musical **Eureka**, in which Ian created the principal role of Peter Lalor. He has just been nominated for another Green Room Award for Best Male Artist in a Leading Role for **Eureka**, and performed in **Charters Towers - The Musical** for the QLD Music Festival.



NANCYE HAYES OAM

Aunt Eller Murphy

Actor, dancer, singer, choreographer and director Nancye Hayes OAM began her career in JC Williamson's production of **My Fair Lady** in 1961. However it was the title role in **Sweet Charity** in 1967 that established her name. Since then she has sung and danced her way through a cavalcade of musical successes including **Pippin, Irene, Annie, Chicago, Sweeney Todd** and **Nine**. She won a Victorian Green Room Award, the Norman Kessell Memorial Award and the Sydney Theatre Critics' Circle Award for Best Actress for her performance in **Guys and Dolls** and a MO Award for **42nd Street**. Her other stage credits include **Broadway Bound, Showboat, Same Time Next Year, The Glass Menagerie, Steel Magnolias, Stepping Out, Follies in Concert, The Music Man, The Snow Queen** and **Eureka**. She has just starred in Sydney Theatre Company's production of **Summer Rain**.

On television, Nancye has made guest appearances in **Home & Away, Blue Heelers, The Dismissal, The Last Bastion, The Sullivans, Carson's Law, Rafferty's Rules** and **GP**. She hosted ABC TV's **Once in a Blue Moon** special featuring songs from Australian musicals.

As a director, Nancye's credits include **Crazy for You** and **And The World Goes Round** (Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts), **Australia's Leading Ladies Concert** (Brisbane Festival), **The Wizard of Oz** (GFO/SEL/Macks Entertainment), **The 3 Divas** (Christine Dunstan Productions), **Annie** (SEL/GFO/Macks Entertainment) and **Gypsy** starring Judi Connelli (The Production Company). Nancye also worked as associate director alongside Judy Davis on **Barrymore** for Sydney Theatre Company.

Nancye's choreographic credits include **My Fair Lady** for Victoria State Opera (Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane seasons), **Falsettos** for Sydney Theatre Company and **Guys and Dolls** for NIDA.

Nancye's first cabaret show **Nancye with An E**, written and directed by Tony Sheldon, has played throughout Australia and is available on CD.

Nancye is honoured to have received two Lifetime Achievement awards – from the Variety Club in 1997 and from the Green Room Awards Association in 2003.





LUCY DURACK

Laurey Williams

Hailing from Perth, Lucy Durack graduated from the WA Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) in 2002 with a Bachelor of Arts (Music Theatre).

While at WAAPA, highlights included **The Pajama Game** (Babe Williams) and creating the role of Lisette in the 2001 workshop and 2002 world premiere of Nick Enright and David King's musical **The Good Fight**.

Prior to graduating, Lucy was cast in the Brisbane and Sydney seasons of **Mamma Mia!** She won the Judges Award at the 2003 Sydney Cabaret Convention for her work with Matthew Robinson, has been involved in casting Disney's **The Lion King**, workshopped and performed the role of Sophie in **Rainbow's End** and appeared on the subsequent SBS recording under the direction of Tony Sheldon and Max Lambert. She has appeared in **Carousel** for The Production Company, **All Star Cabaret** for the Sydney Theatre Company, **Cavalcade** for His Majesty's Theatre, Perth and as Emma Christian on Channel 7's **All Saints**.

Most recently, Lucy created the role of Amy in the 2005 workshop of the Pratt Prize winning musical **Metro Street**, toured to Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and the Adelaide Cabaret Festival in **Immaculate Confection**, played Vicki Myers on Channel 7's **Headlands** (to be aired later this year) and played Bianca/Lois in **Kiss Me, Kate** for The Production Company.



AMANDA HARRISON

Ado Annie Carnes

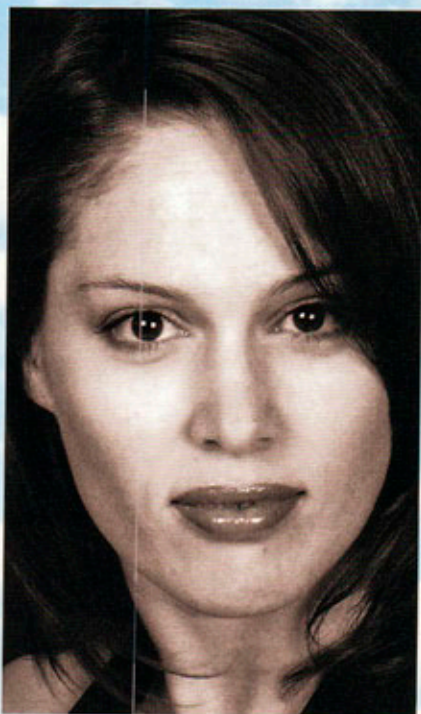
Making her professional debut at 18, Amanda played the role of Jenny in Andrew Lloyd Webber's **Aspects of Love**. Her other Australian theatrical credits include Betty Schaefer in **Sunset Boulevard** opposite Hugh Jackman; **Les Miserables** (10th Anniversary Production); **Annie** in Anthony Crowley's **The Journey Girl** and Liza Minnelli in **The Boy From Oz** with Todd McKenney. For The Production Company, Amanda has appeared in the seasons of **Mame**, **She Loves Me** and as Sarah Brown in **Guys And Dolls**.

In 2000 Amanda performed in Cardiff, Wales as a finalist at the inaugural **Voice of Musical Theatre** for BBC Radio 2. She was subsequently featured in the BBC documentary about the competition **Broadway Babies**, which aired throughout the UK and Australia. Amanda then made her debut in London's West End as Ali in **Mamma Mia!**

Amanda was also an original cast member of the London production of **We Will Rock You**. Highlights of her year in London's WWRV include rocking the 100'000 strong crowd at **Party in the Park at Hyde Park**, and again at Buckingham Palace with Queen members Brian May and Roger Taylor for Queen Elizabeth II's Jubilee Celebration, **Party at the Palace**. Amanda's TV appearances in the UK include **Parkinson**, **Children In Need** and guest roles in **Oscar Charlie**, **Grange Hill** and **Casualty**, all for the BBC.

Amanda returned to Australia in 2003 for the Australian Tour of **We Will Rock You** for which she was awarded the 2004 Helpmann Award for Best Supporting Actress in a Musical for her portrayal of Oz.

Amanda most recently appeared in Melbourne in the title role of Ellie in **Leader Of The Pack - The Ellie Greenwich Musical** based on the inspirational songwriter of the 1960's.





JAMES MILLAR

Jud Fry

James graduated from WAAPA in 2003. Productions for WAAPA include **Up** by Eddie Perfect, **Susannah the Opera**, **Spurboard**, **The Pajama Game**, **Pacific Overtures** (The Reciter), **Perfectly Frank**, **The Crucible**, **Fiddler on the Roof** (Tevye) and **The Wild Party** (Sam).

Additional performance credits include **Stirfry Cabaret** in Fremantle, **Morning Melodies** at His Majesty's Theatre in Perth as well as **Assassins** and **Piangere**. For television, James has appeared in **The Investigators**, **A Country Practice**, **The Leaving of Liverpool**, **Police Rescue**, **Home and Away**, **Water Rats**, appeared on **Mornings with Kerrie-Ann** and played Jake Blainey in Neil Armfield's **Naked: Coral Island** for the ABC, written by Nick Enright and starring Hugo Weaving. Radio credits include **The Memoirs of Young Mozart** (Wolfgang) and **Shiver in the River** for ABC radio. James trained in writing at The University of Technology, Sydney, and penned his own cabaret show **Moments of Breathtaking Stupidity** for Sydney and Melbourne.

James was the winner of the 2004 Premiere Cabaret Showcase in Sydney. He then wrote **Love 4 Sale**, a one woman cabaret show that toured both Sydney and Melbourne.

James created the principal role of Frederic Vern in the premiere production of **Eureka** at Her Majesty's Theatre. He has appeared as Rachael Beck's guest in **Thursday Memories** at Star City, played the role of Richard Face in **BoyBand, 2005** and created and performed a two man show for the Star City Showroom with Ian Stenlake in July.



CHRISTOPHER PARKER

Will Parker

A 2000 graduate of the Musical Theatre course at WAAPA. Christopher was most recently seen as Johnny in the Australian premiere of Nick Enright's **Summer Rain** at STC. Prior to that he performed the lead role of Sky in **Mamma Mia!** for 20 months. He has also played the role of Tommy Albright in **Brigadoon** (Arts Events), D'Artagnan in **The Three Musketeers** (Australian Shakespeare Company), **Batboy** (MTC), Jason in **Daylight Saving** (HIT Productions) and Simon in **Godspell** (Paragon United Artists) Christopher last appeared for The Production Company in **Hello, Dolly!**

Christopher's directing credits include **Songs for A New World** (Treehouse Production) and Lisa Marie Charalambous' one woman show **It's All About Me**. Christopher has appeared on the ABC TV's **Love Letter from a War**; and **Marshall Law** on the Seven Network.



MITCHELL BUTEL

Ali Hakim

Mitchell's theatre credits include **Hair** (The Production Company/Macks Entertainment), **Urinetown**, **Piaf** (MTC), **Summer Rain**, **Harbour**, **The Republic of Myopia**, **Holy Day**, **Mourning Becomes Electra**, **Tartuffe**, **Two Weeks with the Queen**, **Dead White Males**, **The Café Latte Kid**, **Summer of the Aliens**, **Six Degrees of Separation** (STC), **The Venetian Twins** (QTC), **The Laramie Project**, **A View from the Bridge**, **Dead Heart** (Company B Belvoir), **Unidentified Human Remains and the True Nature of Love** (STCSA), **Laughter on the 23rd Floor** (Ensemble), **A Hard God** (New England Theatre Co), **The Fantasticks** (Newtown Actors Group), **Blue Remembered Hills** (O'Punksky's Theatre Co), **Mad, Bad and Spooky** (Theatre of Image/Syd Fest), **Grease**, **Man of La Mancha** (Gordon Frost/SEL), **Little Shop of Horrors** (David Atkins Enterprises), **Saturday Night Fever** (DAE in co-production with ICA) and **Follies and Bernadette Peters in Concert** (Sydney Opera House). Mitchell has written and performed in two solo cabaret shows, **Mitchell Butel's Excellent Adventure** and **And Now For The Weather**. On television, he has appeared in **MDA**, **Grass Roots**, **In the Swim**, **All Saints**, **Wildside**, **Murder Call**, **Close Ups**, **Twisted Tales**, **Bordertown** and **GP**. His film credits include **Gettin' Square**, **The Bank**, **Strange Fits of Passion**, **Virtual Nightmare**, **Two Hands** and **Dark City**. Mitchell received the 2005 Helpmann Award for Best Actor in a Musical for **The Venetian Twins**, a 2004 Helpmann Award nomination for Best Supporting Actor in a Musical for **The Republic of Myopia**, 1999 and 2003 AFI nominations for Best Supporting Actor in a Feature Film for **Strange Fits of Passion** and **Gettin' Square**, a 2003 Mo Award nomination for Male Musical Performer of the Year for **Hair** and 2000 and 2002 Green Room Awards for Best Featured Actor in a Musical for **Piaf** and **Hair**.



GARY DOWN

Andrew Carnes

Gary Down has appeared with The Production Company in **Kiss Me, Kate**, **Guys and Dolls**, **High Society** and **Annie Get Your Gun**. He played the role of Negus in Opera Australia's production of **The Merry Widow**.

His most recent work with The Melbourne Theatre Company includes **The Visit** and **Urinetown**. In 2004 he directed **Talking Heads** and **My Brilliant Divorce** for hit productions and appeared in the film **Strange Bedfellows**.

His association with the Melbourne Theatre Company goes back almost forty years. His appearances include **Measure for Measure**, **Company**, **Rough Crossing**, **Breaking the Silence**, **Cyrano de Bergerac**, **Einstein**, (which also toured to America) and many more.

Other credits include **Venetian Twins** (State Theatre Company) **Aladdin** (IMG) **As Is** (Gordon Frost) **Sweet Charity**, **Pirates of Penzance**, **Noises Off** (Mercury Theatre) and **Down an Alley Full of Cats** (New England Theatre Company).

Listed among his film credits are **I've Come About the Suicide**, **Alvin Purple** **Ground Zero** and **Duet for Four**. On Television he has been seen in **Blue Heelers**, **The Secret Life of Us**, **MDA**, **Home and Away**, **G.P.**, **Rafferty's Rules** and all the Major Crawford series.



A Beautiful Feeling

How Rodgers and Hammerstein created Broadway history.

by Frank Van Straten OAM

What became one of the great landmarks in the history of the American musical had a strangely inauspicious start.

On 26 January 1931 the Theatre Guild's presentation of Lynn Riggs bucolic drama **Green Grow the Lilacs** opened on Broadway. The author, a part Cherokee, drew on his childhood memories of Oklahoma's transformation into statehood. It was not what Depression audiences wanted and it closed after 64 performances. If it's remembered today it's only because Lee Strasberg made one of his first stage appearances in it.

Lyricist Oscar Hammerstein, however, thought it might be adaptable into a musical. He discussed it with composer Jerome Kern but, dispirited after the failure of their collaboration **Three Sisters**, Kern declined. Then the Guild's Theresa Helburn offered it to Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, who had scored an enormous success with **Pal Joey** in 1940. 'Bothered and bewildered', Hart equivocated. Perhaps, Helburn suggested, he and Hammerstein could work together on the lyrics. On 23 July 1942 the New York Times announced that 'Richard Rodgers, Lorenz Hart and Oscar Hammerstein II will soon begin work on a musical version of Lynn Riggs' folk-play **Green Grow the Lilacs**.' Soon Hart dropped out altogether, making way for the first of the legendary Rodgers and Hammerstein creations.

Previously, Hart had crafted his witty lyrics to fit Rodgers' music. Now, however, Hammerstein wrote the lyrics and sent them to Rodgers for setting. For inspiration, Hammerstein mined Lynn Riggs' original text. It took him three weeks to transform 'The kind of morning which, enveloping the shapes of earth – men, cattle in

the meadow, blades of the young corn – makes them seem to exist now for the first time, their images giving off a golden emanation...' into the simple cowboy vernacular of 'Oh, What a Beautiful Morning' – including seven days agonising over whether he should begin the first two lines with the word 'Oh'. In contrast, Rodgers knocked off the melody in ten minutes. He later described the composition process as 'A lead-pipe cinch. I put Oscar's lyrics on the piano and the music wrote itself.' The result was the first Broadway show in which every song had a direct relation to the plot. It created, in effect, a new genre, the 'musical play'.

The Theatre Guild put together a brilliant production team. Their director was the experienced Rouben Mamoulian, but the rest were largely untested. The choreographer was a then unknown Agnes de Mille; Lemuel Ayers and Miles White created the sets and costumes, and Robert Russell Bennett did the orchestrations. When it came to casting, Shirley Temple was to be the original Laurey. Rodgers, however, wanted Mary Martin. In the end the cast were mostly newcomers: Joan Roberts as Laurey, Celeste Holm as Ado Annie, and a dashing handsome Alfred Drake as Curly. In the small role of Sam was Hayes Gordon, later, of course, to have a notable career in Australia – including a short stint in **Oklahoma!**

Not surprisingly, the Guild had trouble raising money for the show, and Walter Winchell's dire prophecy 'No legs, no jokes, no chance' didn't help. Eventually 28 backers contributed the \$83,000 needed to get the production up and running.

How Rodgers and Hammerstein created Broadway history.

by Frank Van Straten OAM

Uninspiringly titled **Away We Go!**, it premiered in New Haven in March 1943 to a polite but encouraging reception. During its second try-out, in Boston, two songs were dropped, 'When I Go Out Walking With My Baby' and the appealing 'Boys and Girls Like You and Me' – which had the dubious distinction of later being dropped from the films **Take Me Out to the Ball Game** and **Meet Me In St Louis** as well. More significantly, a duet about the land for Laurey and Curly was transformed into a show-stopping Act II chorale called **Oklahoma!** It was so successful that by the time the company headed for Broadway it became the show's title – with a cheeky exclamation mark added for good luck. The presale was poor but **Oklahoma!** opened at the St James Theatre on 31 March 1943 to an ecstatic audience and enthusiastic reviews. The New York Times said, 'Wonderful is the nearest adjective' and the Herald Tribune called it, 'A jubilant and enchanting musical.' The 'House Full' sign went up at the box office – and stayed there. It was the right show at the right time. Its sunny optimism and inherent nostalgia for a simpler time appealed to a war-worried nation, and its score resonated with the burgeoning interest in American folk music. It was awarded a special Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

Oklahoma! notched up 2212 performances on Broadway, establishing a record that stood until **My Fair Lady** beat it 1961. More than four and a half million people saw it during its five-year run. A national tour set off in October 1943 and criss-crossed the country for an unprecedented 10 and a half years, visiting 250 cities and playing to more than 10,000,000 people. In 1945 Reginald and Ted Hammerstein (Oscar's brother and cousin) toured a special production for US armed forces in the Pacific.

Next it was London's turn. On 29 April 1947 **Oklahoma!** opened at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. The leads were again unknowns: Harold (later Howard) Keel and Betty Jane Watson. Again it broke records: its 1548-performance run was the longest in the theatre's 267-year history. And again it was eventually surpassed by **My Fair Lady**.

Oklahoma! came to Australia under the auspices of J.C. Williamson Theatres Ltd, the theatrical entrepreneurs still basking in the success of their production of **Annie Get Your Gun**. After Williamson's director E.J. Tait checked out the show in New York, he was asked what he thought of the innovative low-key opening, with Aunt Eller alone on the stage. He said, 'A clever idea,' then added, 'It's always worked for us in The Yeomen of the Guard.'

Williamson's brought no fewer than nine principals from the United States. Though they were talented and personable, none had a meaningful Broadway pedigree. Other imports were Gemze de Lappe who recreated Agnes de Mille's choreography, and Ted Hammerstein, who directed. Among the local recruits were Frank Wilson, Irene Bevans, Richard Bradshaw and Borovansky Ballet dancers Strela Heckelman Vassilie Trunoff and Edna Busse.

Oklahoma! opened to a rapturous reception at His Majesty's Theatre in Melbourne on 19 February 1949. It went on to tour Australia and New Zealand for many months, including second visits to the larger capitals. After the tour the American principals returned home, mostly to theatrical obscurity, although our Laurey, Carolyn Adair, did get to play the role for a few months with the US touring company, and our 'balletic' Curly, Matt Mattox, had some success in Hollywood musicals. That original Australian production of **Oklahoma!** had a final fling at His Majesty's in Perth in June 1953, with Hayes Gordon as Curly and Evie Hayes as Ado Annie.

Resplendent in the glories of wide screen and colour, the film version of **Oklahoma!** was directed by Fred Zinnemann in 1955. James Dean and Paul Newman were considered for the role of Curly, as was Joanne Woodward for Laurey. Eventually the leads went to Gordon MacRae and Shirley Jones, with Charlotte Greenwood, Gene Nelson and James Whitmore. Rod Steiger was a chilling Jud Fry. Gloria Grahame played Ado Annie, a role foolishly turned down by a fading Betty Hutton. Because Oklahoma was heavily farmed and developed, the exteriors were shot at Nogales in Arizona. Two songs were cut and some of the saucy lyrics of 'Kansas City' were rewritten to avoid offending sensitive moviegoers. **Oklahoma!** garnered 2 Academy Awards and is now one of the all-time favourite Hollywood musicals.

The first major revival of **Oklahoma!** was mounted by New York's Lincoln Centre in 1969 with Bruce Yarnell as Curly and Lee Berry as Laurey. William Hammerstein, one of Oscar's sons, directed a major revival that opened in Los Angeles, played across the United States, and reached Broadway in December 1979. Laurence Guittard and Christine Andreas had the leads. London saw a new Cameron Mackintosh production in September 1980. John Diedrich was brought from Australia to play Curly, and another notable Australian, Madge Ryan, was featured as Aunt Eller. Another of Oscar Hammerstein's sons, James, directed, and Gemze de Lappe reproduced the de Mille choreography, as she had in Australia more than 30 years earlier. The pair came to Australia to restage the London production for the MLC Theatre Royal Company, Michael Edgley International and the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust.

The national tour opened at the Festival Theatre in Adelaide on 30 April 1982. John Diedrich was again Curly, with Sally Butterfield as Laurey, Donna Lee as Ado Annie, Peter Bishop as Will Parker and Henry Szeps as Ali Hakim.



The most recent major revival of **Oklahoma!** was presented by Cameron Mackintosh and mounted by Britain's Royal National Theatre. With direction by Trevor Nunn and choreography by Susan Stroman, it opened at the National's Olivier Theatre in July 1998. Hugh Jackman and Josefina Gabrielle won praise as Curly and Laurey, and Maureen Lipman made a memorable Aunt Eller. The production was filmed for international television and DVD release. Patrick Wilson replaced Hugh Jackman when the production reached Broadway in February 2002.



The **Oklahoma!** phenomenon continues. The show has been translated into French, German, Greek, Italian, Russian, Japanese, Hebrew, Icelandic, Norwegian, Hungarian, Dutch and Polish. Over 30,000 productions have been licensed worldwide; in the USA and Canada there are usually more than 600 every year. In 1990 the Rodgers & Hammerstein organization agreed to allow the title song to become the official anthem of the State of Oklahoma – for an annual royalty of just \$1! The show's 50th anniversary was honoured with a commemorative US postage stamp. In 1993 **Oklahoma!** received a special Tony Award. And to cap it all, the New York Drama League voted it 'Best Musical of the Century'.



Oklahoma! set the stage for a new type of Broadway musical. It also inaugurated the potent partnership that went on to create **Carousel**, **South Pacific**, **The King and I** and **The Sound of Music**. Years later James Hammerstein wrote: 'I don't know for sure why **Oklahoma!** holds up so well. I think it is its apparent effortlessness that keeps it evergreen. It tries to capture a time and place in American history where hope and innocence were actualities – and it succeeds with total unpretention. But how deceptive that apparent effortless is! The lyrics may forgo cleverness for simplicity and the music takes its cue from an untutored folk idiom, but every word and every note is obviously well chosen with painstaking care and, yes, sophistication – theatrical sophistication.'



Oh, and what of those 28 brave backers who risked \$83,000 to get the curtain up? Well, to date, they have enjoyed a 2500% return on their investment. A beautiful feeling indeed!



©Frank Van Straten OAM

Frank is a theatre historian, author, broadcaster and former director of the Arts Centre's Performing Arts Museum. His recent books include *Tivoli*, a colourful history of the much loved Australian variety circuit, and *Huge Deal*, a biography of controversial entrepreneur Hugh D. McIntosh, both published by Lothian Books.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

CURLY MCLAIN
AUNT ELLER MURPHY
LAUREY WILLIAMS
WILL PARKER
JUD FRY
ADO ANNIE CARNES
ALI HAKIM
ANDREW CARNES

IAN STENLAKE
NANCYE HAYES
LUCY DURACK
CHRISTOPHER PARKER
JAMES MILLAR
AMANDA HARRISON
MITCHELL BUTEL
GARY DOWN

GERTIE CUMMINGS
'DREAM LAUREY'/ROSIE
LUCY
'POST CARD GIRL'/EMILY
'POST CARD GIRL'/KATE
'POST CARD GIRL'/SYLVIE
JOE
MIKE
CORD ELAM
SAM
'DREAM CHILD'/AGGIE
RUFUS
CHALMERS
SLIM
JESSE
'POST CARD GIRL'/VIRGINIA
SUSIE
'DREAM JUD'/JAKE
VIVIAN
ELLEN
FRED
IKE SKIDMORE
'DREAM CURLY'

LOUISE BELL
NATALYA BOBENKO
GEMMA BROMLEY
REBECCA COLAFELLA
KATIE COOPER
BECK CORLEY
KENT GREEN
MATT GREEN
PETER HOSKING
AARON JACKSON
MENDOZA
DALLAS JAYS
THOMAS LACEY
MICHAEL LINDER
JOHN O'HARA
KURT PHELAN
ASHLEA PYKE
MELLE STEWART
ROBERT STURROCK
KATRINA TALBOT
SOPHIE VISKICH
STEPHEN WHEAT
MATTHEW WITHERS
DALE GRAHAM

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Technical Director DAVID MILLER
Production Manager MATTHEW PECKHAM
Company Administrator KEVIN DE ZILVA
Stage Manager KIRSTEN MARR
Assistant Stage Manager BONNIE WALSH
Wardrobe Supervisor KIM BISHOP
Wigs, Hair and Make up CORRINE DAY
Fight Choreographer MICHELLE BUTLER
Sound Engineering and Production CHRIS KEMP
Sound Designer SYSTEM SOUND PTY LTD
MARK BENSON
NICK REICH
NICK REICH
CAMERON HERBERT
NICOLAS HAMMOND
JULIE LACEY
DAVID PIPER
BRAD MARTIN
AMY CORNELL
for MOLLISON
COMMUNICATIONS
MICHAEL J WILKIE for
MAD (Make A Difference) PR
SHOWWORKS

Chaperone
Rehearsal Repetiteur
Marketing and Design

Publicity

Set Construction



ACT 1

Overture

Oh, What A Beautiful Mornin'
CURLY

The Surrey With The Fringe On Top
CURLY, LAUREY, AUNT ELLER

Kansas City
WILL, AUNT ELLER, SLIM, IKE,
FRED, SAM, RUFUS

The Surrey With The Fringe On Top
(Reprise) CURLY

I Cain't Say No
ADO ANNIE

Entrance Of Ensemble
WILL, ADO ANNIE & COMPANY

Many A New Day
LAUREY, LUCY, EMILY, KATE,
SYLVIE, VIRGINIA, SUSIE, VIVIAN,
ELLEN

It's A Scandal! It's An Outrage!
ALI HAKIM, JOE, MIKE, CORD
ELAM, SAM, CHALMERS, SLIM,
FRED, IKE

People Will Say We're In Love
CURLY, LAUREY

Pore Jud Is Daid
CURLY, JUD

Lonely Room
JUD

Out Of My Dreams
LAUREY, KATE, ELLEN, VIRGINIA,
VIVIAN, LUCY, EMILY, SYLVIE,
SUSIE

Dream Ballet
DREAM LAUREY, DREAM CURLY,
DREAM JUD & COMPANY

KLAHOMA!

ACT 2

Entr'acte

The Farmer & The Cowman
ANDREW CARNES, AUNT
ELLER, WILL, CHALMERS,
SLIM, FRED, CURLY,
ADO ANNIE & COMPANY

All Er Nuthin'
ADO ANNIE, WILL

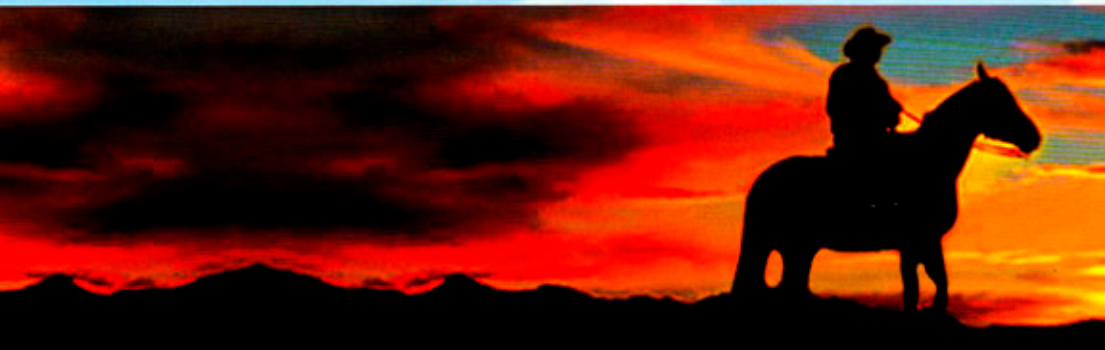
People Will Say We're In Love
(reprise) CURLY, LAUREY

Oklahoma!
CURLY, LAUREY, AUNT ELLER,
IKE, FRED & THE COMPANY

Finale Ultimo
THE COMPANY

ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN	SUSAN PIEROTTI PHILIP NIXON MARTIN REDDINGTON LUBINO FERNANDES
2ND VIOLIN	SEUNG BAIK ELIZABETH AMBROSE ANNA MCALISTER CHRISTINE RUITER
VIOLA	CATHERINE BISHOP RAY HOPE
CELO	DIANE FROOMES TANIA HARDY-SMITH
BASS	MATTHEW THORNE
FLUTE	LORRAINE BRADBURY
HORNS	DEBORAH HART LINDA HEWETT SCOTT EVANS
TROMBONE	STEPHEN ROBINSON
OBOE	CONRAD NILSSON
KIT/PERCUSSION	RICHARD DOUMANI
CLARINETS	ANDREW MITCHELL ROB SMITHIES MARK SKILLINGTON
TRUMPETS	MARY ANDERSON
HARP	TAHNEE VAN HERK
BASSOON	BILL TOMASINI
GUITAR	



LOUISE BELL

Louise was trained in all facets of dance from the age of three at the May Downs School of Dancing, she also currently studies singing with Carrie Barr. For The Production Company, Louise has appeared in several productions, most recently in **Sunset Boulevard** and **Kiss Me, Kate**. Other theatre credits include **The Merry Widow** for Opera Australia, **The Wizard of Oz** for SEL+GFO Macks Entertainment, **A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum** for Simon Gallagher **The Boy From Oz** for Ben Gannon, **My Fair Lady** for the V.S.O and **Sesame Street** for Michael Edgley. Louise often performs at the Lido Cabaret Restaurant and freelance teaches at many dance schools in Melbourne as well as running her own dance School, **Dolly's School of Dance**.



GEMMA BROMLEY

Oklahoma! is Gemma's debut with The Production Company and she is proud to be involved. Previous professional musicals include Young Cosette in **Les Miserables** (CamMack), the lead role of Annie (SEL/GFO/MACKS) and understudied and performed the role of Dorothy in **The Wizard of Oz** (SEL/GFO/MACKS). This year she played Dorothy in **The Wizard of Oz** for BLOC Theatre in Ballarat. Her television appearances include **Stingers**, **Blue Heelers**, **Sensing Murder**, opening Channel 9's **Carols By Candlelight** and Channel 7's **Royal Children's Hospital Appeal Gala Concert**. Gemma does an enormous amount of charity work and has been awarded **The National Australia Day 'Young Citizen of the Year'** for Ballarat, the **Tattersalls National Award for Enterprise and Achievement**, among others. Gemma is a student at Ballarat Grammar School and learns singing with Susan Ann Walker.



NATALYA BOBENKO

Natalya commenced her dance training at Karen Stephens Academy of Dance studying RAD classical ballet and then furthered her studies at the VCA. Natalya left the classical world to continue her career in commercial dance and has worked with leading choreographers such as Alana Scanlan, Kelley Abbey, Robert Sturrock, Leanne Cherny, Kelly Aykers and Ashley Wallen. On television she has appeared on **IMT**, **Full Frontal**, **Pepsi Chart**, **The Logies**, **AFI Awards** and also in various TV commercials. Film credits include **Journey to the Centre of the Earth** and **Josh Jarmin**. Natalya toured the USA with Madison Avenue and entered the musical theatre arena in Paul Dainty's **Happy Days**. Following a successful run in David Atkins **Singin' in the Rain**, Natalya was cast in the role of Maria for the Australasian tour of **Saturday Night Fever**. She would like to thank her family for their love and support.



REBECCA COLAFELLA

Rebecca Colafella graduated from The Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts in 2001. In 2002 she joined the cast of **Mamma Mia!** for the Sydney Season and the Australasian tour. Being back in Melbourne she has been able to venture into the world of cabaret, devising her own show at Capers Restaurant under the direction of Melissa Langton and the musical direction of Mark Jones. An accomplished dancer, singer, actor Rebecca is currently working on her professional television presenting skills. She is very excited to be part of **Oklahoma!** and working with The Production Company. She would like to thank her family for their valued support, love and guidance.



KATIE COOPER

Katie recently graduated from the Central Queensland Conservatorium of Music completing a Bachelor of Music Theatre with Distinction. Her theatre credits during her time at the conservatorium include Rose Vibert **Aspects of Love**, Wendy-Jo **Footloose** and Roxie Hart in **Chicago**. Having only moved to Melbourne in February of this year, **Oklahoma!** marks Katie's professional debut and she is delighted to be sharing the stage with such an amazing cast. Katie hopes to complete a film and television course by December and multiply her music theatre credits over the next few years! Katie would like to send lots of love to her family and friends for their constant love and support.



KENT GREEN

Born and raised on a farm near coastal S.A., Kent, as in Oklahoma, counts both farmers and cowmen as friends! After appearing as a presenter on **Here's Humphrey**, Kent was Sheriff of Wild West World in **LeoFoo Village World Adventure**, Taiwan in 97/98. Upon graduating from WAAPA in 2001 with a B.A. in Music Theatre, Kent received the Leslie Anderson Fellowship Award for his graduating showcase performance. WAAPA credits include **Lysistrata**, **My Favourite Year**, **Working**, **The Boys from Syracuse**, **Bye Bye Birdie**, and **The World Goes Round** (Dir: Nancye Hayes). Recent professional credits include Japanese musical film **Koi Ni Utaeba** (When you sing of love), **You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown** as Snoopy (Blackbird), **The Sign of the Seahorse** (Windmill, S.A.), **Bat Boy** (Loudmouth Prods.), and both **Sweeney Todd** (State Opera of S.A.), and premiere aussie musical **Eureka** with Gale Edwards.



BECK CORLEY

Beck started performing at the age of 7 and hasn't looked back! In 2001, she was accepted into the NIDA Singer, Actor, Dancer Program. From 2002 - 2004, Beck attended the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. Whilst there, Beck performed in **Merrily We Roll Along** (Meg), **Jacques Brel is Alive and Well** and **Living in Paris, A Streetcar Named Desire** (Blanche), **The Witches of Eastwick** (Jane Smart) and also received the prestigious **Bill Warnock Award** for Most Promising Student. Since graduating Beck has played the role of Roberta in **Debbie Does Dallas - The Musical** and toured Sydney with the children's show **Stars in Your Eyes**.



MATT GREEN

Matt's theatre credits are many and varied, from playing the role of Nick in the acclaimed play **Friday Night Drinks** to performing in the Gale Edwards musical **Eureka**. Other theatre credits include **Eurobeat** for the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, **Broadway Fever** and **Back to Broadway** for Jason Parker, Gregory in the Australian play **Bayonet's and Bullybeef**, **Ozmade Musicals** for Magnormus Productions and **South Pacific** for The Production Company. Matt has trained extensively with many of Melbourne's leading drama teachers, including Bruce Alexander, Richard Sarell, Philip Quast and Tony McGill. He is currently involved with Red Stitch Theatre Company, whilst in rehearsals for Anthony Crowley's Australian play **The Wild Blue**. Matt is thrilled to be back with The Production Company, as a part of this classic musical.



PETER HOSKING

This is Peter's first production with The Production Company, but his third with Terence O'Connell, having done the Australian/NZ tour of **Buddy-the Buddy Holly Story**, and Glynn Nicholas' hugely successful show, **Certified**

Male. Having worked in theatre, film, TV, and radio for almost 30 years, Peter has developed a good head for radio, leading to a career predominantly in voiceovers, book narration (over 100 titles), and more recently, revoicing Hong Kong action movies. Peter has performed the one man play **A Stretch of the Imagination** in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide to great acclaim (read the reviews at www.hosking.net) and has been producing (sometimes hosting) the music show **Nu Country TV** for C31 for the last two years. His most recent television appearance was on **Last Man Standing**.



DALLAS JAYS

Dallas has just turned 12, and has been singing and dancing from the age of 3, studying R.A.D. Tap, jazz, funk, acrobatics and voice, with The Bev Palmer Dancers. Dallas has professionally performed in **The Wizard of Oz-SEL/MACKS** - Melbourne,

Oliver - IMG Melbourne/Singapore, **Annie** - Catchment Kids Go Pop. She is a regular face in catalogues, posters and fashion parades for Myer, Target, K Mart & Designer Kidz. Dallas has appeared in numerous TV Commercial/films both here and overseas. Dallas also loves to read, swim and ride horses. This is Dallas debut with The Production Company and is very excited to be a part of **Oklahoma!** A special thanks to Miss Palmer and Miss Karen for all their love and support.



AARON JACKSON MENDOZA

Aarons theatre credits include **The King & I**, **South Pacific** and **Madame Butterfly** - Australian Ballet Company. Graduating from the VCA in 2001, Aaron then performed in **Oh! What a Night** as Geno - u/s Sal. He then joined the ADT, performing - **The Age of Unbeauty** and the Singapore /USA tour of **Birdbrain**. Aaron became a tribe member of the **Hair** Aussie tour, the role of Pepper in the Australasian tour of **Mamma Mia!** and recently performed in **Kiss Me, Kate**. Aaron is a musician at heart. Having studied classical piano from a young age, he has been highly influenced by names like Stevie Wonder, Donny Hathaway, Oscar Peterson & Noel Mendoza to name a few. He performs for his beautiful family and will always.



THOMAS LACEY

Thomas is 12 years old and has been performing since he was two, studying all facets of dance at the May Downs School of Dance with Miss Renie Ann Martini. His professional theatre credits include; Jo in Garry Ginivans **The Magic Far Away Tree**;

Young Cosmo in IMG/David Atkins' **Singin in the Rain**; Winthrop Paroo in The Production Company's **The Music Man**; Lollipop Kid in SEL/GFO/Mack's Entertainment's **The Wizard of Oz**; Kipper in IMG/Cameron Mackintosh's **Oliver!** for both the Melbourne and Singapore seasons; and Randolph MacAfee in The Production Company's **Bye Bye Birdie**. Thomas' screen credits include **Blue Heelers** and various TVC's as well as film work. Thomas is in Grade 6 at Southwood Boys Grammar School. He is thrilled to be working for The Production Company again!





MICHAEL LINDNER

In between theatre engagements, Michael runs his own business providing entertainment for corporate and private functions with his company 'Let's Do It Entertainment'. The business features, among other things, the new cabaret ensemble 'S'wonderful' and can be seen at www.swonderful.biz. Michael's toured nationally and internationally in productions including **The Hobbit**, **Annie Get Your Gun**, **High Society**, **1975**, **Grease: the Mega Musical**, **Forbidden Broadway**, **Miss Saigon**, **The Merry Widow**, **Hair** and **Scrooge**. He has also won wide acclaim for his performances in children's theatre, having played 'Pooh' in **Winnie the Pooh**, the musical, toured with **Pinocchio**, **Noddy**, **Possum Magic** and **The Magic Faraway Tree**, all for Garry Ginivan. Michael also lent his talents to X-Systems playing 'The Fat Controller' in **Thomas the Tank Engine** touring Singapore.



KURT PHELAN

Raised in Townsville, North Queensland Kurt's first musical theatre appearance was in **Singin' in the Rain** for David Atkins/IMG. He then played Curtis Halleybred in **The Witches of Eastwick** and has most recently completed the Australasian tour of **Saturday Night Fever** playing to role of Gus for the Brisbane season. In between theatre contracts Kurt has performed in various live events including the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games Opening and Closing Ceremonies, the Helpmann Awards and the Australian Dance Awards. Opera Australia appearances include **The Merry Widow** starring Yvonne Kenny and **Orpheus in the Underworld** for which he was also Dance Captain. Acting Credits include lead roles in the Newtown Short and Sweet Festival and North Queensland One Act Play Festival. Kurt played the lead role in the short film **All He Needs**, which was the award winning entry of the 2005 International Insight 300 Second Film Festival. Kurt's versatility as a performer has extended his career internationally including the 1998 Aberdeen International Youth Festival and a Principal Artist position with Disney Worldwide Inc throughout America and Canada. Kurt is delighted to be appearing in his first season with The Production Company.



JOHN O'HARA

Born and raised in Perth, John attended John Curtin College of the Arts before graduating from WAAPA in 2000. John's credits include **Oklahoma!**; **Leader Of The Pack**; **Shout!**, where he played a Delltone and cover to the role of Johnny O'Keefe; both the 2002/03 concert and touring productions of **Hair**; **High Society** and, most recently, the world premier of **Eureka** as Captain Pasley. John has also performed as Whizzer in **Falsettos** and as Charlie in **You're a Good Man Charlie Brown** for Blackbird Productions. John sings regularly with acclaimed corporate group **The Three Waiters** and performed his first solo cabaret; **John O'HarAUSTRALIANA Presents All True Blue...** in 2004. In November this year John will begin rehearsing for the new musical **Dusty**.



ASHLEA PYKE

Ashlea was born in Ballarat and has been performing since the age of 3. She has studied dance with Lisa and Trudy Harris, and later on with Barbara Lynch. Ashlea's vocal training is under the guidance of Constance Coward-Lemke. As well as training, Ashlea loves to teach dance and has been doing so for the past two years at BBC Studios. Last year she made her professional theatre debut as a cast member of **We Will Rock You** and is very excited to be returning to the stage again in **Oklahoma!** Ashlea would like to thank her mum and dad, Lisa and Trevor, for their constant love and support.



ROBERT STURROCK

Robert trained at the Victorian College of the Arts. His television credits include **Simon Gallagher Series**, **The Saturday Show** and **Countdown** with the ABC, **The Don Lane Show**, **Hey Hey it's Saturday** and the **Logies**. Robert worked at the Swagman Theatre Restaurant before moving on to theatre in such shows as **Dynamite** and **Dancing Dynamite** with David Atkins, **A Chorus Line**, and **Aida** with The Victoria State Opera to name a few. After working in the corporate, commercial and fashion world for the past 20 years he has now turned his hand to teaching and choreography.



MELLE STEWART

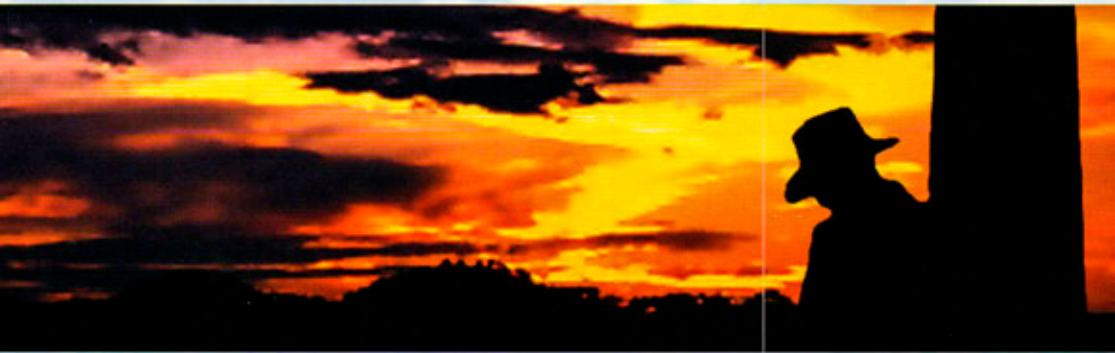
Heralding from Redcliffe, QLD, Melle has recently played Patti and covered the leading role of Ellie in **Leader of the Pack - The Ellie Greenwich Musical**. Melle was in the Australasian touring cast of **Mamma Mia!**, understudying the leading role of Sophie and also the roles of Ali and Lisa. She has appeared on **Home and Away** and worked for ABC Radio National. As a graduate of WAAPA, highlights there included the workshop of the new David King/Nick Enright musical **The Good Fight** and shows as diverse as **Berlin to Broadway** and **Into The Woods**. Prior to WAAPA, Melle trained at Sharon A'back Dance Centre, with whom she performed nationally and internationally.



KATRINA TALBOT

This is Katrina's second show with The Production Company, her first being **Kiss Me, Kate** earlier this year. Prior to this Katrina has spent four years touring with **Mamma Mia!** as well as performing cabarets in Sydney, Melbourne and Auckland. Before Moving to Australia Katrina toured with a New Zealand children's Theatre Company. Her original compositions won her runner up in a New Zealand television show Showcase. Katrina has played Eponine in **Les Miserables**, Sally Smith in **Me and My Girl**, Erma in **Anything Goes**, Miranda in **The Tempest**. Her favourite role to date was as a Specialist Performer for Peter Jackson's **Lord of the Rings** - as the Horses arse (Stunt double for Bill the pony!)





SOPHIE VISKICH

After studying classical singing at the Victorian College of the Arts Sophie spent several years working with both the Victoria State Opera and Opera Australia. She has performed leading roles in **Kismet**, **Marriage of Figaro**, **Così Fan Tutti**, **Albert Herring** and **The Mikado** for companies such as Opera Alive!, F.A.M.P.A.C. and the Eastern Metropolitan Opera. Sophie has toured Australia with Gordon Frost's **The Sound of Music**. She was part of the Chinese tour of **The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber** for the Really Useful Group with shows in Beijing and Shanghai. Other shows include **The Music Man**, **Carousel** and **Annie Get Your Gun** for The Production Company. Sophie is currently on a break from the Asian tour of **The Phantom of the Opera**.



MATTHEW WITHERS

Matthew began performing at age 7, where he entertained audiences in his hometown of Corowa, NSW. After he studied singing, drama and dance intensively he moved to Perth to complete a BA Music Theatre at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. Whilst at WAAPA, he appeared in **The King Stag** (Tartaglia), **A Streetcar Named Desire** (Mitch), **Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris** directed by Tony Sheldon, **Fiddler on the Roof**, **Jonah** (Chook), **The Witches of Eastwick** (Ed) and **Merrily We Roll Along** (Tyler) under the direction of Ross Coleman. After appearing at the 2005 Helpmann Awards, **Oklahoma!** marks Matthew's professional debut. He would like to thank his friends and family for their continued love and support.



STEPHEN WHEAT

Stephen studied Bachelor of Musical Theatre at The Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts graduating 2001. His professional credits include **The Music Man**, **And The World Goes Round**, **Carousel**, and **South Pacific**. As a member of the touring company of **Shout! The Legend of the Wild One** he had the opportunity to understudy and play the role of Lee Gordon. Stephen played Ray in **Saturday Night** and Hugo Peabody in **Bye Bye Birdie** for The Production Company. On television he has appeared in **Blue Heelers**. Earlier this year he performed his own cabaret **Son of a Preacherman** and most recently Stephen was a an original cast member of J.R.R. Tolkien's **The Hobbit**.



DALE GRAHAM

Dale has trained under Brian Nolan and Leanne Rutherford of Ballet Theatre Victoria, and has performed for two years in their touring productions featuring original works and shows such as **Carnival in Venice**, **Balanchine's Stars and Stripes** and **Don Quixote**. Currently training with fellow cast member Robert Sturrock at the Industry School of Dance, Dale has also performed in many functions for the private and corporate sectors. This is Dale's first professional production, and at 17 years of age, he is extremely proud to be playing 'Dream Curly' as part of The Production Company's final show of 2005, **Oklahoma!**

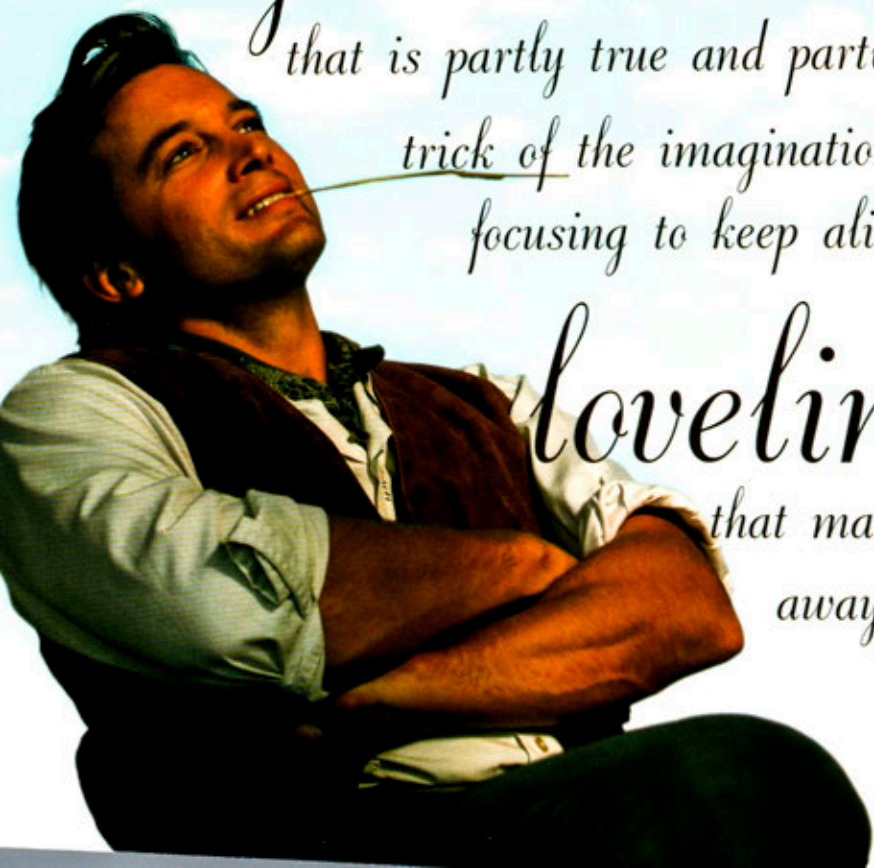


It is a *radiant*
summer morning, the kind of morning
which, enveloping the shapes of earth,

men, cattle in a *meadow*, blades
of young corn, streams, makes them seem to
exist now for the first time, their
images giving off a

golden emanation
that is partly true and partly a
trick of the imagination,
focusing to keep alive a

loveliness
that may pass
away...



RICHARD RODGERS & OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II

Music, Book & Lyrics



After long and highly distinguished careers with other collaborators, Richard Rodgers (composer) and Oscar Hammerstein II (librettist/lyricist) joined forces to create the most consistently fruitful and successful partnership in the American musical theatre.

Prior to his work with Hammerstein, Richard Rodgers (1902-1979) collaborated with lyricist Lorenz Hart on a series of musical comedies that epitomized the wit and sophistication of Broadway in its heyday. Prolific on Broadway, in London and in Hollywood from the '20s into the early '40s, Rodgers & Hart wrote more than 40 shows and film scores. Among their greatest were **On Your Toes**, **Babes In Arms**, **The Boys From Syracuse**, **I Married An Angel** and **Pal Joey**.

Throughout the same era Oscar Hammerstein II (1895-1960) brought new life to a moribund artform: the operetta. His collaborations with such preeminent composers as Rudolf Friml, Sigmund Romberg and Vincent Youmans resulted in such operetta classics as **The Desert Song**, **Rose-Marie**, and **The New Moon**. With Jerome Kern he wrote **Show Boat**, the 1927 operetta that changed the course of modern musical theatre. His last musical before embarking on an exclusive partnership with Richard Rodgers was **Carmen Jones**, the highly-acclaimed 1943 all-black revision of Georges Bizet's tragic opera **Carmen**.

Oklahoma!, the first Rodgers & Hammerstein musical, was also the first of a new genre, the musical play, representing a unique fusion of Rodgers' musical comedy and Hammerstein's operetta. A milestone in the development of the American musical, it also marked the beginning of the most successful partnership in Broadway musical history, and was followed by **Carousel**, **Allegro**, **South Pacific**, **The King and I**, **Me and Juliet**, **Pipe Dream**, **Flower Drum Song** and **The Sound Of Music**. Rodgers & Hammerstein wrote one musical specifically for the big screen, **State Fair**, and one for television, **Cinderella**. Collectively, the Rodgers & Hammerstein musicals earned 35 Tony Awards, 15 Academy Awards, two Pulitzer Prizes, two Grammy Awards and 2 Emmy Awards. In 1998 Rodgers & Hammerstein were cited by Time Magazine and CBS News as among the 20 most influential artists of the 20th century and in 1999 they were jointly commemorated on a U.S. postage stamp.

Despite Hammerstein's death in 1960, Rodgers continued to write for the Broadway stage. His first solo entry, **No Strings**, earned him two Tony Awards for music and lyrics, and was followed by **Do I Hear A Waltz?**, **Two By Two**, **Rex** and **I Remember Mama**. Richard Rodgers died on December 30, 1979, less than eight months after his last musical opened on Broadway.

TERENCE O'CONNELL

Director



Terence is a graduate of NIDA's Directors Course. He continued his early training by creating Riverina Trucking Company in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, where he spent four years as director, writer and actor, staging seasons of Shakespeare, new music theatre and plays from the world repertoire.

He was one of the first directors to stage circus (**Circus Oz**, **Flying Fruit Fly Circus**, **Circus Senso**), to create theatre around the work of a 'pop' icon (**Life On Mars-The Words And Music Of David Bowie**) and to direct cabaret (three record breaking shows at Melbourne's legendary **Last Laugh-Fairground Snapz**, **Paradise Taxi** and **Dizzy Spells**).

Other work includes **Bouncers**, Steven Berkoff's **Decadence**, **Certified Male**, Glynn Nicholas-**Crossing The Line**, **Kissing Frogs**, **Steaming**, **The Secret Diary Of Adrian Mole**, Sam Shepard's **Fool For Love**, **In The Family** for Positive Women/World AIDS Day 2004, and **Crystal Clear** and **When I Was A Girl I Used To Scream And Shout** at Sydney's Wharf Theatre. For singer Wendy Stapleton he created the long running hit **I Only Want To Be With You - The Dusty Springfield Story**.

His productions of musicals include **Diamond Studs** and **John Paul George Ringo and Bert** (Riverina Trucking Company), **Ned Kelly and Cabaret** (New Moon Theatre), **Darlinghurst Nights** (Sydney Theatre Company), **Jesus Christ Superstar** (Canberra Theatre Centre), **The Rocky Horror Show** and **Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story** (Australia/New Zealand National Tours) and **They're Playing Our Song** (The Production Company).

Terence's acclaimed **Minefields And Miniskirts-Australian Women And The Vietnam War** continues to play to nightly standing ovations on it's National Tour. The show will play further Australian seasons in 2006, several international productions are planned and it is currently being developed as a feature film.

He is writing two new shows for the 2007 theatre season, **The Soldier's Tale - From Gallipoli To Iraq** and, with collaborators Robyn Arthur and Ken Moffat, **Turn Turn Turn - The Baby Boomer Panorama**.

GUY SIMPSON

Musical Director

Guy Simpson has worked in Australia and internationally as a Conductor / Musical Director and Musical Supervisor for 25 years.



International Productions -

The Phantom Of The Opera (Australia, New Zealand, Sth Africa, China, Korea, Brazil, Taipei in 2006); **Miss Saigon** (Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore, The Philippines, Korea in 2006); **Cats** (Australia, New Zealand); **We Will Rock You** (Australia, Japan)

Australian Productions - **Cabaret; Chicago; Les Miserables; My Fair Lady; Company; Little Shop Of Horrors; Best Little Whorehouse In Texas; West Side Story; Pirates Of Penzance; Snoopy; Seesaw; Crusade; Into The Woods; Zorba.**

The Production Company - **Funny Girl; Call Me Madam; Mack And Mabel; The Music Man; They're Playing Our Song; Carousel.**

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 and the Reef Casino (Cairns). She has created parades for **Alannah Hill, Kylie Minogue, Jenny Bannister** and numerous others at fashion weeks in Sydney and Melbourne.

For the Centenary of Federation, she choreographed finale event, **The Peoplescape Concert** and she has her own experimental dance company Moving Pictures.

Her theatre work including **Bouncers, I Only Want To Be With You-The Dusty Springfield Story, Kissing Frogs, Certified Male and Minefields and Miniskirts**. She is currently developing a theatre spectacle **Eroticom** with Terence O'Connell and illusionist Doug Tremlett.

She has choreographed Paul Hogan, Michael Caton and Glynn Nicholas in **Strange Bedfellows**. In China, for Edgley's, choreographed **The Great Moscow Circus**.

Most recently she has consulted to the Commonwealth Games Closing Ceremony, choreographed the Media Launch performances for the M2006 Games Cultural Festival and provided choreography for the new movie **Macbeth**. She is also choreographer for the new **Kath+Kim** telemovie, currently in production.

This is the second time Alana has worked with The Production Company, her first show was **They're Playing Our Song**, also directed by Terence O'Connell and musical direction by Guy Simpson.

Alana is pleased to be working again with Nancye Hayes, as her musical theatre debut was alongside Nancye in the musical **Nine**.

RICHARD JEZIorny

Set & 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.

Richard also designed all of The Production Company musicals in the last two years. He has designed for drama, dance and puppetry throughout Australia. Richard also designed ten 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, Wellington and last year, in Singapore.

Recently Richard has been busy running workshops and lecturing at the VCA, St Martins Youth Art Centre and at the National Institute of Circus Arts in Prahran. He has designed **Picasso's Children** for St Martins, **MacBeth** for the Ballarat Arts Academy and **Don Giovanni** for the Melbourne Opera Company.

The Lost Thing, based on Shaun Tan's Book is currently being toured by the Jigsaw company in venues throughout Australia.

His design for **The Red Tree** (QPAC's Out of the Box Festival of Early Childhood) received a Helpmann Award nomination for Best Scenic Designer.



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: **The Goat, Mano Nera, The Venetian Twins, Proof, Eating Ice Cream With Your Eyes Closed, 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 & F***ing, Mrs Warren's Profession, The Sunshine Club, Sweet Panic And Radiance**, for The Production Company: **Kiss Me Kate, Annie Get Your Gun** for Sydney Theatre Company: **The Glass Menagerie, Morning Sacrifice, The Sunshine Club**, for Melbourne Theatre Company: **King Lear, The Sapphires, Urinetown, Blithe Spirit, Les Liaisons Dangereuses, The Blue Room** (Melbourne, Perth, Sydney & Brisbane Seasons), **The Woman In The Window**, For Playbox: **The Sick Room, Stolen, Thieving Boy/Like Stars In My Hands**, Opera Queensland: **La Boheme, La Cenrentola, Cosi Fan Tutte**, for Queensland Ballet: **Cloudland, Don Quixote, The Fold/Burning**, for Qpat/Qbfm: **A Soldiers Tale**, for La Boite: **Cosi, Salt, A Paper House, Milo's Wake** (currently on tour nationally), **Georgia, Romeo & Juliet, Speaking In Tongues, Blackrock, Supermarket Pavane, Low, Long Gone Lonesome Cowgirls and Taming Of The Shrew**, for Matrix/La Boite: **A Beautiful Life**, for Rock'nroll Circus: **Sweet Meats and The Dark**, for Kooemba Jdarra: **The 7 Stages Of Grieving, The Dreamers, Murri Love**.



SYSTEM SOUND

Sound Design

Designers

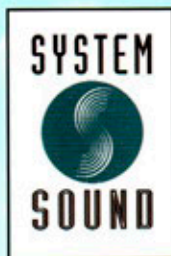
Mark Benson

Nick Reich

System Sound has engineered such productions as **The Phantom of The Opera**, **Les Miserables**, **Joseph, RENT**, **CATS**, **Aspects of Love**, **Show Boat**, **Sunset Boulevard**, **Miss Saigon**, **Wizard of Oz**, **Man of La Mancha**, **Witches of Eastwick**, **Cabaret**, **Mamma Mia!** and currently **The Producers** and **We Will Rock You**.

Mix Engineering for **Oklahoma!** is by Nick Reich, who joined System Sound in 1988, as Sound Operator on **Les Miserables**, **The Phantom of the Opera**, **High Society**, **Five Guys Named Moe**, **Jesus Christ Superstar** (Korea), and MTC's **Into the Woods** among many others. He was Assistant Sound Designer for the Australia tent tour of **CATS**, Sound Designer for The Production Company's **Guys & Dolls** and is Sound Designer with John Scandrett on **The Producers**.

Orchestral Sound is by Mark Benson, who joined System Sound in 1996, prior to which he was the Deputy Sound Master for the Victorian Arts Centre. With System Sound, Mark has designed, supervised and mixed many concerts and special events, including all the **Spray Farm Festivals**, **Concerts for the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra**, **The Australian Philharmonic Orchestra** and **The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra**. Mark was also the Orchestral Sound designer for The Production Company's **South Pacific** in 2004, and the recent production of **Sunset Boulevard**.



DAVID MILLER

Technical Director

Commencing his career as a stage manager with Melbourne Theatre Company in 1979, David has spent the past 26 years as a stage manager, tour manager and production manager working for many of the state theatre companies, commercial producers and festivals throughout Australia.

David is currently Production Manager for Malthouse Theatre and has been the Technical Director for The Production Company since its inception in 1999.



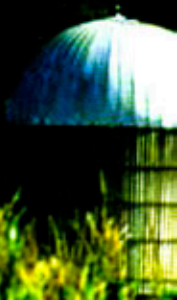
MICHAEL J WILKIE

Publicist

Melbourne publicist, Michael J Wilkie, started his own public relations company Make a Difference (MAD) PR in 2003 after working with some of entertainment's biggest names that included **Patricia Routledge**, **Diana Rigg**, **Derek Jacobi**, **Bea Arthur** and **Joan Rivers**.

MAD PR has already handled the publicity for **Marcel Marceau** (2003 tour), **Mum's the Word**, **The St Petersburg Puppet Theatre**, **Ivan Rebroff**, **Michael Ball** (national tour), **Sleeping Beauty on Ice**, **2004 Helpmann Awards** (Melb), **The Von Trapp Children**, **David Williamson's Flatfoot**, **Tracy Bartram**, and **The Production Company** (2004 & 2005 seasons).

Other MAD public relation's credits include **Via Dolorosa** (David Hare), **An Evening With Queen Victoria** (Prunella Scales), **Shakespeare's Villains** (Steven Berkoff), **Tango Fire**, **Debbie Does Dallas - The Musical**, Broadway: **The Golden Age** (film), **Paco Pena**, **Grand** (Sydney Dance Company) and **Grease - The Arena Spectacular** (national tour).





ORCHESTRA
VICTORIA

ORCHESTRA VICTORIA

Orchestra Victoria is one of Australia's busiest and most versatile orchestras, bringing passion and vitality to each performance. Employing 69 permanent, full time musicians, Orchestra Victoria performs to over 300,000 people each year and is one of a select group of Australian arts companies to reach such a vast audience.

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.

MANAGEMENT

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Jason Ronald
Emmanuel (Manny) Spiteri
Ross & Daphne Turnbull



Orchestra Victoria is assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

For information about the Orchestra Victoria donation and sponsorship program, please call 03 9694 3633 or email peter.garnick@orchestravictoria.com.au



the Arts Centre

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The Victorian Arts Centre gratefully acknowledges the support of its donors through the Arts Angels Programme.

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Publicity	Make A Difference (MAD) PR, Michael J Wilkie
Corporate and Community Relations	Annette Allison

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- The management reserves the right to add, withdraw or substitute artists and to vary the programme as necessary. The Trust reserves the right of refusing admission.
- Cameras, tape recorders, paging machines, video recorders and mobile telephones must not be operated in the venue.
- In the interests of public health, the Victorian Arts Centre is a smoke free area.

SPECIAL THANKS / ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Programme Notes

"A beautiful feeling... - Frank Van Straten OAM

Photos Page Credits

Ian Stenlake - Colin Page

A Beautiful Feeling

- Production Shot - History of Rodgers & Hammerstein - Ethan Mordden

- Hugh Jackman - RNH.com

- Production Shot of the 1955 movie
20th Century Fox

- 2002 Broadway Revival Production Image

- First Production Image On Broadway

Rehearsal Studios

Melbourne Theatre Company

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Tiffany Bahen, Rachael Griffith
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Thanks

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