

**LOS MUSICAL THEATRE PRESENTS**

# **SWEENEY TODD**

## **THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET A MUSICAL THRILLER**

**Music and lyrics by  
STEPHEN  
SONDHEIM**

**Book by  
HUGH  
WHEELER**

### **SHOW PACK**

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**LOS Musical Theatre presents**

## **Sweeney Todd, The Demon Barber of Fleet Street**

*'The history of the world, my sweet, is who gets eaten and who gets to eat?'*

In a corrupt, industrial London, while the entitled abuse their power, desperate workers and opportunists resort to whatever means necessary to survive. Quietly, in Fleet Street, one man - broken by grief and injustice at the hands of the 'privileged few' - executes his juicy revenge on a society that has failed him.

LOS Musical Theatre is excited to bring the iconic, enraged barber to Lewes Town Hall, along with his legendary accomplice Mrs Lovett and her deliciously questionable pies. Our production will be brutal, honest, playful and provocative.

When it opened in 1979 Sweeney Todd scooped no fewer than eight Tony awards. This was followed a year later in London with the Olivier for Best New Musical and every revival since has enjoyed enormous success.

Stephen Sondheim's mesmerising music and thought-provoking lyrics underscore this frighteningly resonant, relevant masterpiece. We can't wait to bring it to life, with your help.

### **Show dates**

Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March – Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2020  
at Lewes Town Hall

### **Production team**

Director: Michelle Dennis

Musical Director: Rob Cousins

Assistant Choreographer: Nicola Scott

Production Managers: Amy Reynolds and Nick Hazle

### **Audition process: key dates**

Workshops and auditions will take place at Market Tower, Market Street, Lewes BN7 1PL.

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> October, 7.30pm, Market Tower: Launch meeting and first audition workshop.

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October, 7.30pm, Market Tower: Audition workshop (music & choreography).

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October, 7.30pm at Market Tower: Audition workshop (music & choreography).

Applicants should take part in at least one workshop to learn the music and choreography for their audition. We are unable to provide audio tracks of the accompaniment or video of the choreography, but you can make your own recordings during the workshops.

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October by 9.00pm: Application deadline. Please complete and return your audition form by this time.

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2019: AUDITIONS at Market Tower. These will be held throughout the day, with specific time slots to be advised on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October.

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> October, from 7.30pm, Market Tower: Recalls if required.

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October: CAST ANNOUNCEMENT.

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> October, 7.30pm, Market Tower: FIRST REHEARSAL with full cast.

### **Venues and rehearsals**

Most rehearsals will take place at Market Tower, Market Street, Lewes BN7 1PL.

The rehearsal period runs from Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2019 up to show week, with a short break over Christmas. Rehearsals will be held on Monday evenings and Thursday evenings, 7.30pm – 10pm.

While you will not be required at every rehearsal, your availability during this time is important. Please use your audition form to let us know if there are any Mondays or Thursdays during the rehearsal period when you would not be able to attend.

Additional compulsory rehearsals will be held on four Sundays in March: Sunday 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> March 10.00am – 5.00pm. All cast must be available for these dates. These rehearsals will be held at St Mary's Social Centre, Christie Road, Lewes BN7 1PL.

### **Show week: key dates**

Full cast must be available for all of the following, at Lewes Town Hall:

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March: Technical Rehearsal and Piano Dress Rehearsal

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March: Band Call (we will have a nine-piece orchestra)

Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March: Full Dress Rehearsal with the band, 7.30pm start

Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March until Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April: Performances start at 7.30pm

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April: Performance starts at 7.00pm

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April: Get Out

## **Casting requirements**

### **Men**

#### **Sweeney Todd (Benjamin Barker)**

Playing age 40-50

Vocal range: Baritone / top: Gb4 - bottom: F2

Grief-stricken, emotionally broken, bitter, disempowered, wild with rage, obsessive, introspective, tormented

#### **Judge Turpin**

Playing age 50-65

Vocal range: Bass - Baritone / top: Gb4 - bottom: E2

Upper-class accent

Controlling, privileged, entitled, manipulative, misogynistic, lecherous, predatory, conflicted, sanctimonious

Must be comfortable being dropped from the barber's chair, through a trapdoor

#### **Beadle Bamford**

Playing age 50-60

Vocal range: Tenor / top: D5 - bottom: D3

Pompous, sycophantic, patronising, eager, unscrupulous, corrupt, greasy, violently wields power, brutish

Must be comfortable being dropped from the barber's chair, through a trapdoor

#### **Adolfo Pirelli (Daniel O'Higgins)**

Playing age 30-40

Vocal range: Tenor / C5 - bottom: B2

Two accents: exaggerated faux Italian and convincing Irish

A con-man, fraudster and charlatan, bold, flamboyant, charismatic, calculating, imaginative

#### **Anthony Hope**

Playing age 20-30

Vocal range: Tenor / top: F4 - bottom: Bb2

Hopeful, idealistic, naive, trusting, romantic, principled, wears his heart on his sleeve, straightforward, determined, stubborn, brave, attractive

#### **Tobias Ragg**

Playing age 14-18 (actor may be older than this)

Vocal range: Tenor / top: Ab4 - bottom: Bb2

Gentle, vulnerable, neglected, victimised, simple, desperate to be cared for, obedient, loyal, innocent – until the end of the show!

#### **Male Ensemble**

8-10 men, various ages

All need to be strong singers: will require a mix of all vocal ranges

Three men must be comfortable being dropped from the barber's chair, through a trapdoor

## **Women**

### **Mrs. Nellie Lovett**

Playing age 45-55

Vocal range: Mezzo-Soprano / top: E5 - bottom: G3

Desperate, lonely, lives on her wits, a survivor with a cheerful façade, deluded, entrepreneurial, energetic

### **Beggar Woman (Lucy Barker)**

Playing age 40-50 (would consider a younger actress, heavily made up)

Vocal range: Mezzo-Soprano / top: F5 - bottom: Ab3

Traumatized, scarred, heartbroken, lost, mentally shattered, deranged, confused, schizophrenic; extremely physical and wildly expressive

Must be comfortable being dropped from the barber's chair, through a trapdoor

### **Johanna**

Playing age 16-20 (actress may be older than this)

Vocal range: High Soprano / top: A5 - bottom: Bb3

Nervous, skittish, highly strung, high spirited, intelligent, resourceful, longs for freedom, flirtatious, an opportunist

### **Female Ensemble**

8-10 women, various ages

All strong singers: will require a mix of all vocal ranges including at least three strong high soprano voices

One competent female dancer/actress, playing age 20-30 to perform as 'Young Lucy'

### **Male or female: smaller roles**

The parts of Fogg and the Bird Seller will be cast from the male or female ensemble

## **Audition requirements**

All auditionees will be required to perform the simple audition choreography and at least one excerpt of music from the show, with piano accompaniment. If you are auditioning for a principal character, there will also be a dialogue audition. Choreography will be auditioned in small groups. Music will be solo. Dialogue will be in pairs or small groups, where we will also be looking at the fit and chemistry between actors.

You may choose to audition for more than one role. If you are happy to be considered for alternative parts we may decide to recall you for a character that you do not initially read for. If you are unsuccessful in being cast in a principal role, please indicate on your form if you would be happy to participate in the ensemble. Your clarity and honesty in this will be appreciated as it will help with fully casting the show.

Importantly, please note the very specific cuts in the vocal auditions - in most cases we are not asking for a whole song. Sheet music will be provided with these cuts clearly marked.

Please contact Amy at [amyelrey@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:amyelrey@yahoo.co.uk) to request an audition form, and music and script for the character(s) you wish to be considered for. She will then email these to you.

## Audition pieces

Choreography		
All	Poor Thing, Bar 121 - 160	Please attend one of the workshops to learn the choreography.
Character	Vocal audition	Dialogue audition
Sweeney Todd	#17 Epiphany, Bar 17 - end	1. With Lovett: p.14-16 from 'So it is you, Benjamin Barker' to 'Silver, yes.'
		2. With Pirelli, Lovett & Tobias: p52-54 from 'Oh that sailor!...' to '...for me pal Beadle Bamford'
		3. With Judge: p138-141 dialogue only < cut song > from 'Where is she, where is the girl?' to Todd: 'Benjamin Barker!'
Judge Turpin	#11 Johanna (Mea Culpa), Bar 111 - end	1. With Johanna: p46-47 from 'Father' to 'You?!!!'
		2. With Todd: P138-141 dialogue only < cut song > from 'Where is she, where is the girl?' to Todd: 'Benjamin Barker!'
Beadle Bamford	#14 Ladies In Their Sensitivities, cut version: bar 22 – 25, Bar 30-31 and bar 36-37 AND Ensemble vocal audition (see below)	Scene with Anthony: P105-106 from 'Johanna, Johanna' up to '...that gets this neighbourhood into disrepute.'
Adolfo Pirelli	#10 The Contest (Part 1), Bar 1-23 and Bar 61 - end	Scene with Todd, Lovett & Tobias: p52-54 from 'Oh that sailor!...' to '...for me pal Beadle Bamford'
Anthony Hope	#8A Johanna Part 2	1. With Beadle: p105-106 from 'Johanna, Johanna' up to '...that gets this neighbourhood into disrepute.'
		2. With Johanna: p135-136 from 'Mr. Todd?' – < cut song > , up to '...before those lips have time to lose that smile.'
Tobias Ragg	#9 Pirelli's Miracle Elixir, Bar 39 – 79 AND #23 Not While I'm Around, Bar 1 - 54	1. With Pirelli, Lovett & Todd: p52-54 from 'Oh that sailor!...' to '...for me pal Beadle Bamford'
		2. With Lovett: p117-120 from 'I put the sold-out sign up ma'am' into song <i>Not While I'm Around</i> (sung up to 'Not to worry, Mum.')
Mrs Lovett	#3 The Worst Pies in London, Bar 1- 26 AND Bar 55 – end AND # 12 Wait, Bar 68 - end	1. With Todd: p.14-16 From 'Would no one have mercy on her?' to 'Silver, yes.'
		2. With Pirelli, Todd & Tobias: p52-54 from 'Oh that sailor!...' to '...for me pal Beadle Bamford'
		3. With Tobias: p117-120 from 'I put the sold-out sign up ma'am' into song <i>Not While I'm Around</i> (sung up to 'Not to worry, Mum.')
Beggar Woman	#2 No Place Like London, Bar 28 - 55	1. With Anthony: p21-22 from 'One moment mother.' to 'Take it and off with you. Off!'
		2. With Todd: P137-138 from 'You! What are you doing here?' to 'Hey, don't I know you mister?'
Johanna	#6 Green Finch and Linnet Bird (whole song)	1. With Judge: p46-47 from 'Father' to 'You?!!!'
		2. With Anthony: p135-136 from 'Mr. Todd?' – < cut song > , up to '...before those lips have time to lose that smile.'
Ensemble	#1 The Ballad of Sweeney Todd. Men: Bar 1-25 AND Bar 114 - 135 Women: Bar 102 - 135	None

## Director's approach

Overall, we are approaching the show as a tragedy as much as a thriller, with strong emphasis on love and grief as the driving forces of the plot. We will also celebrate and relish the humour which, for the audience, provides welcome relief from the underlying tension.

We'll focus on making the story relatable, truthful, not exaggerated and not 'signposting' ('Sweeney was smooth, Sweeney was subtle'). The drama will carry more weight if we and our audience believe it *could* happen. Frighteningly, Sweeney will remind us that serial killers like this do exist. We want it to be very accessible, only one small shift away from our own reality.

We'll demonstrate empathy for the human condition, in a way that helps our audience emotionally connect with the characters. Sweeney shows us how a chain of events and circumstances can tip even a normal person over the edge. In nearly all the principal characters we can see and understand the triggers and reasons for their collapse into desperation, obsession or extreme behaviour.

The musical is full of juxtapositions. The score is beautiful, captivating and exquisite, while the characters are deeply flawed, vulgar or grotesque. Every principal character (except sincere Anthony) has a façade, disguising their real self. While they are 'keeping up appearances' to the outside world, their insides are crippled and agonising. All of them (especially Sweeney) are hiding in plain sight, behaving appallingly right under our noses. So, perhaps counter-intuitively, lighting will be bright, blue skies, fresh early mornings; never dark until we enter the bakehouse. Sweeney - and others - are getting away with the darkest of deeds in broad daylight.

We'll seek to draw out the savagely political judgement that the show passes on a corrupt, unequal society - its manipulation, hypocrisy, deceit and the abuse of power. We want the audience to be swept up by this, to feel rebellious and anti-establishment. Despite his violence, the audience needs to be on our protagonist's side as the wronged under-dog.

The lyrics and script can also prompt many modern-day parallels with contemporary society and news stories (a modern-day Judge Turpin would probably Tweet incessantly and accuse the world of 'fake news' while covering his sordid tracks - remind you of anyone?). These are connections that we would like the audience to make and reflect upon.

We'll take the Industrial Revolution as our backdrop, with the dehumanizing effect of machinery, monotonous repetition and the disconnection that capitalism creates. A significant contributor to the story is the overwhelming Victorian rat-race within which our characters are fighting for survival.

We have designed one, multi-functional set, with very few scene changes or blackouts required. The design and minimal furniture will allow action to flow seamlessly and quickly, so the fast, turbulent pace of the production can reflect Sweeney's increasing impatience and urgency.

## **The importance of the ensemble**

Sweeney Todd is a fantastic show for the ensemble. There are many solo vocal lines, scope for interesting characterisation and plenty of on-stage time.

We will divide our ensemble into these smaller groups to permit a larger overall cast while avoiding stage crowding.

### **1. Storytellers (Ballad of Sweeney Todd)**

Fleet Street's link to journalism will be used to establish this group of timeless narrators, removed from the action, reporting on it. But they are not dispassionate observers. They are engaged in the social commentary. They are like Sweeney, members of the perpetual working class exploited at the hands of the entitled. He represents them. He looks a bit like them (similar costume). They understand him and are rooting for him, cheering him on.

### **2. Participants (Pirelli's Miracle Elixir, The Contest, God That's Good and City on Fire)**

We will witness the descent of this ensemble through three key numbers:

- They are easily tricked but still sufficiently empowered to challenge and demand fairness (Pirelli's Miracle Elixir/ The Contest)
- They are deluded and in denial or turning a blind eye through an almost feral need for survival. The meat in the pies is never questioned! People are quite literally eating each other in a 'dog eat dog' battle for self-preservation. (God That's Good)
- And finally they fall into insanity and utter oblivion - driven mad by society and their part in it, they have become like rats, literally the vermin in the 'great black pit' (City on Fire)

### **3. Fantasy sequences (Poor Thing and By The Sea)**

We will conjure up events of the past (Poor Thing) and Mrs. Lovett's fantasy for the future (By The Sea) with stylized, choreographed, dream-like sequences.

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## **Production team contact details**

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