



## **We had it coming... *CHICAGO* to tour Australia in 2009 with a stellar cast**

Australia, prepare yourself for the razzle-dazzle of the hit musical ***Chicago***, set to tour nationally throughout 2009 following a Gala Opening at Brisbane's Lyric Theatre, QPAC. Winner of six Tony Awards®, two Olivier Awards, a Grammy® and thousands of standing ovations, ***Chicago*** is Broadway's longest-running Musical Revival and the longest running American Musical every to play the West End.

It is nearly a decade since the "story of murder, greed, corruption, violence, exploitation, adultery and treachery" played in Australia. Known for its sizzling score and sensational choreography, ***Chicago*** is the story of a nightclub dancer, a smooth talking lawyer and a cell block of sin and merry murderesses.

Producer John Frost today announced his stellar cast: **Caroline O'Connor** as Velma Kelly, **Sharon Millerchip** as Roxie Hart, **Craig McLachlan** as Billy Flynn, and **Gina Riley** as Matron "Mama" Morton.

"I'm thrilled to bring back to the Australian stage this wonderful musical, especially with the extraordinary cast we have assembled. Velma Kelly is the role which took Caroline O'Connor to Broadway for the first time, and her legion of fans will, I'm sure, be overjoyed to see her perform it once again. Sharon Millerchip has previously played Velma in ***Chicago*** ten years ago, and since has won awards for her many musical theatre roles. She will be an astonishing Roxie. Craig McLachlan blew us all away with his incredible audition, and he's going to astound people with his talent as a musical theatre performer. And I am very excited to welcome Gina Riley back to the stage. Her strength, her presence and her powerhouse voice will make her a staggering Mama Morton. This truly is the perfect cast.

"Sassy, sinful and seductive, ***Chicago*** is a musical that thrills and chills which is why it continues to tour the world after so many years and has been seen by more than 15 million people. And there's a whole new audience who loved the Oscar® winning film, and now will have the chance to experience ***Chicago*** live."

The multi-award winning musical will be the first production to take centre stage in QPAC's newly refurbished Lyric Theatre when it begins on 19 March 2009. Following the Brisbane season, ***Chicago*** will tour to the Lyric Theatre, Star City in Sydney, from 14 May, with other cities to follow. Tickets are already on sale for the Brisbane season, and tickets for the Sydney season go on sale on Monday 17 November 2008.

### ***For Media Enquiries:***

*National and Sydney Publicist: Ian Phipps, IPpublicity – 0419 977 649 or [ian@ippublicity.com.au](mailto:ian@ippublicity.com.au)*

*Brisbane Publicist: QPAC Publicity - 07 3840 7589/7984 or [publicity@qpac.com.au](mailto:publicity@qpac.com.au)*



## BOOKING DETAILS

### BRISBANE

**Venue:** Lyric Theatre, QPAC  
Cnr Grey & Melbourne Streets, South Bank

**Season:** From 19 March 2009

**Performance Times:** Tuesday – Saturday 7.30pm  
Wednesday and Saturday matinees 1.30pm  
Sunday 3pm

**Price:** Previews A Reserve Adults \$99.90, Concession \$89.90  
Previews B Reserve \$79.90, C Reserve \$69.90  
A Reserve Adults \$109.90, Concession \$99.90  
B Reserve \$89.90  
C Reserve \$79.90

**Bookings:** 136 246 or [qtix.com.au](http://qtix.com.au)  
Groups of 12 or more (07) 3840 7466  
VIP, Stay and See® and Dining Packages 1300 4 SHOWS

### SYDNEY

**Venue:** Lyric Theatre, Star City  
80 Pyrmont Street, Pyrmont

**Season:** From 14 May 2009

**Performance Times:** Wednesday – Saturday 8pm  
Wednesday matinee 1pm  
Saturday matinee 2pm  
Sunday 1pm and 6pm

**Price:** Wed/Thurs Eve A Reserve Adults \$99.90, Concessions and Groups \$89.90  
Wed/Thurs Eve B Reserve Adults \$79.90, C Reserve \$69.90, Schools \$50.90  
Fri/Sat Eve A Reserve Adults \$109.90, B Reserve Adults \$89.90, C Reserve \$79.90  
Sat Mat/Sun A Reserve Adults \$109.90, Concessions and Groups \$99.90  
Sat Mat/Sun B Reserve Adults \$89.90, C Reserve \$79.90  
Wed Mat A Reserve Adults \$89.90, Conc and Groups \$79.90, Pensioner Groups \$60.90  
Wed Mat B Reserve Adults \$79.90, C Reserve \$69.90, Schools \$50.90

**Bookings:** 1300 795 267 or [ticketmaster.com.au](http://ticketmaster.com.au)  
Groups of 12 or more (02) 8512 9020  
Premium Tickets, Stay & See® and Dining Packages 1300 650 300



## THE PLOT

As the overture ends, we're introduced to Velma Kelly, a vaudevillian who shot the other half of her sister act when she caught her husband with her sister. Velma invites us to sample ALL THAT JAZZ while showing us the story of chorus girl Roxie Hart's cold-blooded murder of nightclub regular Fred Casely. Roxie convinces her husband Amos that the victim was a burglar, and he cheerfully takes the rap.

Roxie expresses her appreciation in song (FUNNY HONEY) until the police reveal to Amos that Roxie knew the burglar, shall we say, intimately and Amos decides to let her swing for herself. Roxie's first taste of the criminal justice system is the women's block in Cook County Jail, inhabited by Velma and other merry murderesses (CELL BLOCK TANGO). The women's jail is presided over by Matron "Mama" Morton whose system of mutual aid (WHEN YOU'RE GOOD TO MOMMA) perfectly suits her clientele. She has helped Velma become the media's top murderer-of-the-week and is acting as booking agent for Velma's big return to vaudeville (after her acquittal, naturally).

Velma is not happy to see Roxie, who is stealing not only the limelight but her lawyer, Billy Flynn. Eagerly awaited by his all-girl clientele, Billy sings his anthem, complete with a chorus of fan-dancers to prove that ALL I CARE ABOUT IT IS LOVE. Billy takes Roxie's case and re-arranges her story for consumption by sympathetic tabloid columnist Mary Sunshine, who always tries to find A LITTLE BIT OF GOOD in everyone. Roxie's press conference turns into a ventriloquist act with Billy dictating a new version of the truth (WE BOTH REACHED FOR THE GUN) while Roxie mouths the words. Roxie becomes the new toast of Chicago and Velma's headlines, trial date and career are left in the dust. Velma tries to talk Roxie into recreating the sister act (I CAN'T DO IT ALONE) but Roxie turns her down, only to find her own headlines replaced by the latest sordid crime of passion. Separately, Roxie and Velma realize there's no one they can count on but themselves (MY OWN BEST FRIEND), and the ever-resourceful Roxie decides that being pregnant in prison would put her back on the front page.

Back after the ENTR'ACTE, Velma cannot believe Roxie's continual run of luck (I KNOW A GIRL) despite Roxie's obvious falsehoods (ME AND MY BABY). A little shy on the arithmetic, Amos proudly claims the paternity, and still nobody notices him, MR CELLOPHANE. Velma desperately tries to show Billy all the tricks she's got planned for her trial (WHEN VELMA TAKES THE STAND). Billy's forte may be showmanship (RAZZLE DAZZLE), but when he passes all Velma's ideas on to Roxie, down to the rhinestone shoe buckles, Mama and Velma lament the demise of CLASS. As promised, Billy gets Roxie her acquittal but, just as the verdict is given, some even more sensational crime pulls the pack of press bloodhounds away, and Roxie's fleeting celebrity is over. Left in the dust, she pulls herself up and extols the joys of life NOWADAYS. She teams up with Velma in that sister act (NOWADAYS), in which they dance their little hearts out (HOT HONEY RAG) 'til they are joined by the entire company for the grand FINALE.



## AROUND THE WORLD SINCE 1996

- November 14, 1996** **CHICAGO** opens at the Richard Rodgers Theatre on Broadway
- February 4, 1997** **CHICAGO** moves to The Shubert Theatre on Broadway
- April 16, 1997** First National American Touring Company opens at Washington D.C.'s National Theatre
- June 1, 1997** **CHICAGO** wins six Tony Awards including Best Musical Revival, Best Direction & Best Choreography
- November 18, 1997** London Company opens at The Adelphi Theatre, The Strand
- December 12, 1997** Second National American Touring Company opens at Barbara B. Mann Theatre in Ft. Myers, Florida
- February 15, 1998** **CHICAGO** in London wins two Laurence Olivier Awards including Outstanding Musical Production
- February 25, 1998** **CHICAGO** wins the Grammy Award for Best Musical Show Album
- July 4, 1998** Australian Company opens at Her Majesty's Theatre in Melbourne
- September 23, 1998** First German Language Company opens at Theatre An Der Wien in Vienna, Austria
- February 17, 1999** First Swedish Language Company opens at Eriksberg Hall in Gothenberg, Sweden
- March 1999** **CHICAGO** Touring Company plays Tokyo, Japan
- May 9, 1999** First Dutch Language Company opens at The Beatrix Theatre in Utrecht, Holland
- November, 2000** **CHICAGO** Touring Company plays in Lisbon, Portugal
- January 23, 2001** First Spanish Language Company opens at The Teatro Opera in Buenos Aires, Argentina
- September 14, 2001** First United Kingdom Tour opens at The Opera House in Manchester, UK
- October 17, 2001** Second Spanish Language Company opens at The Centro Cultural Telmex in Mexico City, Mexico

- October 4, 2002** First Russian Language Company opens at The Estrada Theatre in Moscow, Russia
- December 27, 2002** Miramax film version of **CHICAGO** released
- January 29, 2003** **CHICAGO** moves to the Ambassador Theatre on Broadway
- June 2003** **CHICAGO** Touring Company plays Tokyo, Japan
- June 10, 2003** Third National American Touring Company opens at Washington D.C.'s National Theatre
- July 2003** **CHICAGO** Touring Company plays in Seoul and Dae Gu, South Korea
- July 17, 2003** First French Language Company opens at Theatre Maisonneuve Place des Arts in Montreal, Quebec
- January 26, 2004** First Italian Language Company opens at the Teatro Nazionale in Milan
- March 3, 2004** Second French Language Company opens at Au Casino de Paris in Paris
- April 28, 2004** First Portuguese Language Company opens at the Teatro Abril in Sao Paulo, Brazil
- December, 2004** **CHICAGO** Touring Company plays in Beijing, China
- April 28, 2005** South African Company opens at The Nelson Mandela Theatre in Johannesburg, South Africa
- July 20, 2005** South African Company opens at Artscape Opera House in Cape Town, South Africa
- August 2005** **CHICAGO** Touring Company plays in Osaka and Tokyo, Japan
- October 17, 2005** London production becomes the longest running production at the Adelphi Theatre, and also the longest running Broadway musical in West End Theatre history
- April 28, 2006** London production transfers to the Cambridge Theatre, where original production of **CHICAGO** ran for 603 performances in 1979
- May 4, 2006** **CHICAGO** Touring Company plays at Madinat Jumeirah Arena in Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- September 14, 2006** **CHICAGO** surpasses MISS SAIGON to become the 8th longest running show in Broadway history
- October 3, 2006** Masterworks Broadway release a 10th Anniversary Box Set edition of the **CHICAGO** cast album recording
- November 14, 2006** **CHICAGO** celebrates its 10th Anniversary with a star-studded benefit performance featuring the original cast members and celebrity alums
- February 8, 2007** **CHICAGO** Touring Company plays in Tokyo, Japan
- May 17, 2007** **CHICAGO** Touring Company plays The Emirates Palace Hotel in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
- September 14, 2007** First Danish Language Company opens in Denmark

- September 18, 2007** First Korean Language Company opens in South Korea
- November 18, 2007** **CHICAGO** London Company celebrates 10 years in the West End
- March 18, 2008** South African Company reopens in Cape Town, South Africa
- July 11, 2008** Second Korean Language Company opens in South Korea
- September 10, 2008** Second Danish Language Company opens in Denmark
- October 8, 2008** First Japanese Language Company opens in Japan
- November 11, 2008** 10th US National Touring Company opens in Charlotte, NC
- November 14, 2008** The Broadway production of **CHICAGO** celebrates its 5,000th performance
- March 19, 2009** Second Australian Company opens in Brisbane
- May 14, 2009** Australian Company open in Sydney
- May 2009** Second Spanish Language Company will open in Argentina
- September 2009** Spanish Language Company will re-open in Spain
- November 2009** Second Dutch Language Company will open in Holland





## DID YOU KNOW...

*DID YOU KNOW* that **CHICAGO** has been performed in English, Danish, Dutch, German, Swedish, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Italian and French, and debuted in Japanese this year?

*DID YOU KNOW* that there are cast recordings of **CHICAGO** in English (US and UK), German and Dutch?

*DID YOU KNOW* that the many stars that have starred in the Broadway Company of **CHICAGO** have included Bebe Neuwirth, Ann Reinking, James Naughton, Joel Grey, Marcia Lewis, Jasmine Guy, Charlotte d'Amboise, Sharon Lawrence, Marilu Henner, Sandy Duncan, Michael C. Hall, Wayne Brady, Melanie Griffith, Paige Davis, Jennifer Holliday, Robert Urich, Alan Thicke, Angie Stone, Louis Gossett, Jr., Taye Diggs, Vicki Lewis, Nana Visitor, Brent Barrett, Tom Wopat, Brooke Shields, Kevin Richardson, Huey Lewis, Robin Givens, John O'Hurley, Usher, Lisa Rinna, Harry Hamlin, Aida Turturro, Vincent Pastore, Brian McKnight and John Schneider?

*DID YOU KNOW* that **CHICAGO** has given the opportunity for the stars of foreign productions to make their Broadway debuts including Bianca Marroquin (Mexico), Denise Van Outen (UK), Terra C. Macleod (France and Canada), Petra Nielson (Sweden), Ute Lemper (UK and Germany), Ruthie Henshall (UK), Anna Montanaro (Germany and Austria), Pia Doves (Holland), Marti Pellow (UK) and Caroline O'Connor (Australia)?

*DID YOU KNOW* that **CHICAGO** received 6 Tony Awards (including Best Musical Revival), 5 Drama Desk Awards, 5 Outer Critics' Circle Awards, 1 1998 Critics Circle Award, 1 Grammy Award (for Original Cast Recording), 2 Astaire Awards, 1 Drama League Award, 2 Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards, 2 L.A. Drama Critics Circle Awards, 2 L.A. Ovation Awards, 1 Helen Hayes Award, 1 Black Theatre Alliance Award, 7 E.W. Awards, 2 Joseph Jefferson Awards and 1 Elliott Norton Award for the Broadway and National Touring Companies?

*DID YOU KNOW* that **CHICAGO** received 1 Olivier Award (Best Musical Production), 3 ACE Awards, 3 El Heraldo Awards, 3 Asociacion Mexicana de Criticos de Teatro Awards, 2 Helpmann Awards, 2 Reumert Awards, 4 Guldmasken Awards, and 2 Premio Qualidade Brasil Awards for its international productions?

*DID YOU KNOW* that **CHICAGO** has played worldwide since its opening in 1996 in the following countries: England, Belgium, The Netherlands, Austria, Germany, Ireland, Scotland, Switzerland, Italy, France, Portugal, Greece, Russia, South Africa, China, Japan, South Korea, Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Australia, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates?

*DID YOU KNOW* that **CHICAGO** has grossed over \$300 million on Broadway since it opened in 1996, and grossed over \$850 million worldwide?

*DID YOU KNOW* that **CHICAGO** has played over 17,000 performances worldwide?

*DID YOU KNOW* that an estimated 18 million people around the world have seen **CHICAGO**?

And now Broadway's longest-running musical revival celebrates its 12th record-breaking, razzle-dazzle year!



## WHAT THE CRITICS SAY

“STILL THE BEST DAMN SHOW IN TOWN!”

- Liz Smith, Syndicated Columnist, USA, 2007

“EXHILARATING. A MUSICAL FOR ALL AGES. WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THERE COULD BE SUCH BLISS? IF THERE’S ANY JUSTICE IN THE WORLD, AUDIENCES WILL BE EXULTING IN THE PARADE FOR MANY, MANY PERFORMANCES TO COME.”

- The New York Times, Feb 2007

“JOHN KANDER & FRED EBB’S SCORE SIZZLES WITH TIMELESS CLASS.”

- Time Out, UK, 2007

“THE MOST ENTERTAINING MUSICAL OF THE DECADE”

- Associated Press, USA, Feb 2007

“INSANELY ENTERTAINING”

- People Magazine, USA, 2007

“MORE THAN 10 YEARS INTO ITS RUN AND GIVING NO SIGNS OF COOLING DOWN, CHICAGO REMAINS A SIZZLER – ONE EXTREME SEX-SEE EXPERIENCE.”

- Star Ledger, USA, Feb 2007

“CHICAGO STILL GLITTERS HYPNOTICALLY! IT REMAINS THE BEST ADULT ENTERTAINMENT IN TOWN... AND STILL BUBBLES WITH THE JOY OF PERFORMING!”

- The New York Times, Feb 2007

“RACY, DARK AND BRUTALLY FUNNY”

- The Sunday Times, UK, 2006





## BIOGRAPHIES – LEAD CAST

### CAROLINE O’CONNOR (VELMA KELLY)

*Chicago* is a show very dear to Caroline O’Connor. She is one of few performers around the world who have starred as both Velma Kelly and Roxie Hart in professional stage productions. Caroline first performed the role of Velma Kelly in 1998 in Melbourne and then in Sydney in 1999, for which she was awarded the Green Room Award (Best Female Artist in a Leading Role) and Mo Award (Best Female Musical Theatre Performer) respectively. In November 2002 Caroline proudly made her Broadway debut in the role of Velma Kelly at the Shubert Theatre. Her acclaimed Broadway season was extended until March 2003, and she moved with the production to the Ambassador Theatre. In 2003 Caroline performed the role of Roxie Hart with the London cast at The Baalbeck International Festival in Lebanon.

The musical theatre career of Caroline O’Connor is both extensive and acclaimed. In Australia Caroline has played the role of Anita in *West Side Story* (Mo and Green Room Awards), Aldonza in *Man of La Mancha*, and for the Production Company, Fanny Brice in *Funny Girl* and Mabel in *Mack and Mabel*. Her West End productions include *Cabaret*, *Me and My Girl*, *The Rink*, *Romance Romance* and *Mack & Mabel* in which she played Mabel (Olivier nomination for Best Actress in a Musical). She starred in UK national productions of *A Chorus Line*, *Baby, Into the Woods*, *Damn Yankees*, *Showboat* and *Talent* by Victoria Wood. For English National Opera, she played Mae Jones in *Street Scene* and Hildy Esterhazy in *On the Town*.

Her Australian productions include the one woman play *Bombshells* written especially for Caroline by acclaimed playwright Joanna Murray-Smith. She has since filmed *Bombshells* for ABC Television and toured the play to sell out performances at the Edinburgh Festival (where she won the coveted Fringe First Award), London’s West End at the Arts Theatre (for which she received her second Laurence Olivier Award nomination), and at the World Stage Festival in Toronto, Canada. Caroline played Judy Garland in *End of the Rainbow* (Best Actress Edinburgh Festival, Sydney Theatre Awards, Helpmann Award®), the title role in *Piaf* (Mo, Helpmann® and Green Room Awards), and the title role in *Scarlett O’Hara at the Crimson Parrot*, a role especially written for her by David Williamson. Caroline has performed with the Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide Symphony Orchestras, and in 1995 performed for Her Majesty The Queen in a Royal Variety Performance.

Her own show *From Stage to Screen* has been presented at the Sydney Opera House and was filmed for Australian television. Caroline has recorded four solo CDs and has featured on numerous cast recordings and compilations. Caroline’s film work includes the featured role of Nini Legs in the Air in Baz Luhrmann’s film *Moulin Rouge*, and as Ethel Merman in the Cole Porter biopic *De-Lovely*.

### SHARON MILLERCHIP (ROXIE HART)

Sharon Millerchip is a multi award winning triple-threat performer whose reputation for versatility is certainly well earned. At 18 Sharon began her musical theatre apprenticeship, understudying multiple roles in the mega musical *Cats* before winning the role of Demeter on the show’s original tour. She then was cast as ballerina Meg Giry in the hugely successful original Australian production of *The Phantom of the Opera* and received a Mo Award nomination for her performance. *Into the Woods* for the Sydney Theatre Company followed, and for her performance as Little Red Riding Hood Sharon won a Mo Award for Best Supporting Actress in a Musical and was nominated for a Sydney Critics Award and a Mo Awards for Performer of the Year. Also for STC Sharon played Cordelia in *Falsettos* (Green Room Award) and danced up a storm as Anita in *West Side Story* for IMG. Sharon received her second Mo Award for Best Leading Actress in a Musical for her portrayal of Belle in Disney’s *Beauty and the Beast* in Melbourne and Sydney. Other performances include Sofia in *Satango* (Australian Dance

Award nomination), Mae in *The Wild Party*, Bella in *Rags*, and Sonia Walsk in *They're Playing Our Song* (Green Room Award nomination)

In 2001 Sharon was honoured with the inaugural Helpmann Award® for Best Leading Actress in a Musical for her performance as Velma Kelly in *Chicago*, which played throughout Australia, Hong Kong and Singapore. Sharon comprised one third of the popular cabaret trio Combo Fiasco which performed extensively throughout Australia and the USA, where they received a MAC Award nomination for Best Vocal Comedy Group in New York City and performed live across America on the NBC Today Show. In 2007 Sharon played Katherine in Kookaburra's inaugural production *Pippin*, and starred as Charity Hope Valentine in *Sweet Charity* for The Production Company. Sharon was nominated for a Helpmann® for both these roles. Most recently Sharon played Columbia in the hit new production of *The Rocky Horror Show* and was awarded the 2008 Helpmann Award® for her performance.

## **CRAIG MCLACHLAN (BILLY FLYNN)**

Craig McLachlan is one of Australia's best-known and most versatile actors, whether on stage, television, film or music. He became well known in 1987 when he landed the role of Henry Ramsay, brother of Kylie Minogue's character Charlene in *Neighbours*. Two years later, he defected to rival show *Home and Away*, playing schoolteacher Grant Mitchell. His other television roles have included Stuart Diver in *Heroes Mountain*, Michael Chamberlain in *Through My Eyes*, a freelance agent and electronics expert in *Bugs* (UK), Warren Elkins in *My Husband, My Killer* and guest roles in *Packed to the Rafters*, *City Homicide*, *McLeod's Daughters* and *Always Greener*. Craig has been awarded three Silver Logies for Most Popular Actor on Australian television, and the coveted Gold Logie.

In 1992 Craig took to the stage for the first time, as Frank N Furter in an Australian revival of *The Rocky Horror Show*, where he starred with Gina Riley, then was asked to take on the role of Danny Zuko in the popular West End revival of the musical *Grease*. Craig has since played Danny in *Grease: The Arena Spectacular* across Australia, The Fonz in *Happy Days: The Arena Spectacular*, and Caractacus Potts in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* in the UK. For the past couple of years at Christmas time, Craig has performed across the UK in the stage re-make of *White Christmas*, the record-breaking 1954 film with Bing Crosby and Danny Kaye, in which he starred with Ken Kercheval and Lorna Luft. Craig has also had success as a singer, with Australian and UK hit singles including *Mona*, *Amanda* and *On My Own*.

Craig's Australian film roles have included *Hating Alison Ashley* opposite Delta Goodrem and *Let's Get Skase*, while his international film credits include *The Great Raid* (Miramax), *Catherine the Great* (BBC) and *Absent Without Leave* (New Zealand). For his most recent film role, *Savage Crossing*, Craig also composed the film score.

## **GINA RILEY (MATRON "MAMA" MORTON)**

Gina Riley is a woman of many talents, a writer, producer and performer. Gina became known across Australia as a performer in the sketch show *Fast Forward*. Subsequent series included *Big Girl's Blouse* and *Something Stupid*, for which she was also a producer and writer. On these programs, Gina performed standout parodies of singers such as Cher, Paula Abdul and Bette Midler, and Australian television personalities including Kerri-Anne Kennerley, showcasing her extraordinary voice.

Gina also appeared in the iconic series *The Games*, with John Clarke a spoof behind-the-scenes look at the Organizing Committee of the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

Most recently she has enjoyed huge success with *Kath & Kim*, created, written and produced by Gina and her long-time writing partner Jane Turner. Gina performs the opening song to *Kath & Kim*, "The Joker".

*Kath & Kim* has won multiple Logies & AFI awards and has become a worldwide success, being shown on BBC Television in Britain and nominated for Best Comedy at the British Comedy awards. The series was recently commissioned for a re-make and a full season of 22 episodes by NBC television in the US with Gina and Jane executive producing.

Gina has enjoyed a successful stage career as well, playing the Baker's Wife in Stephen Sondheim's *Into the Woods*, in *Merrily We Roll Along*, *The New Rocky Horror Show* and *Falsettos* for which she won a Green Room Award.



## BIOGRAPHIES – CREATIVE TEAM

### JOHN FROST OAM (PRODUCER)

John Frost is the Managing Director of The Gordon Frost Organisation.

Born in Adelaide, he began in show business at the age of 16 as a dresser for J.C. Williamson on their production of *Mame*. Since then he has worked his way up the showbiz ladder: Wardrobe Master, Stage Manager, Company Manager and now Producer. In 1983 he teamed up with the late Ashley Gordon to form The Gordon/Frost Organisation. Together they negotiated the lease for Sydney's Footbridge Theatre, where they successfully produced a range of shows including *Jerry's Girls*, *Night Mother*, *The Venetian Twins* and *Women Behind Bars*. The company then moved into large scale musicals such as *Big River*, *The King and I*, *South Pacific*, *Hello Dolly!*, *The Secret Garden*, *Smokey Joe's Café*, *Cabaret* and *Crazy for You*.

He co-produced Sir Peter Hall's acclaimed productions of Oscar Wilde's *An Ideal Husband* starring Googie Withers and John McCallum, and *Lady Windermere's Fan* starring Vanessa Redgrave and Joely Richardson at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in London.

In 1998 John Frost joined forces with Sports and Entertainment Limited (SEL) to produce *Grease – The Arena Spectacular!* The production broke all box office records for an arena event in Australia. His production of *The King and I* on Broadway won the coveted Tony Award® for 'Best Revival of a Musical' as well as the Drama Desk and New York Outer Critics Circle Award. John has also been the recipient of two Mo Awards and a Sydney Critics' Circle Award and a Lifetime Achievement Award in 1999 from GLUGS.

In 1999 John Frost and SEL presented *The Main Event*, which toured to critical acclaim and huge box office success. This was followed by a production of the Tony Award®-winning play *Art* starring Tom Conti. A hugely successful production of *The Sound of Music* starring Lisa McCune was followed by *Annie* with Anthony Warlow, *Man of La Mancha*, *The Wizard of Oz* and *Footloose*.

In 2004/2005 John co-produced around Australia *The Producers*. This highly acclaimed production garnered five Helpmann Awards® including Best Musical for 2005. In the same year John also co-presented an arena production of *Grease* starring John Farnham.

John is currently represented on Broadway with the smash hit musical *Hairspray* for which he won his second Tony Award®.

Since January 2006 he has produced the national tours of the National Theatre of Great Britain's celebrated production of *An Inspector Calls*, the Broadway theatre icon Mandy Patinkin and Hollywood and cabaret legend Debbie Reynolds.

John Frost is currently one of the producers of *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert – The Musical* and is currently in partnership with The Really Useful Company Asia Pacific and is presenting *The Phantom of the Opera* in Australia starring Anthony Warlow.

In July 2008, John Frost with US Producers Marc Platt, Universal Pictures, The Araca Group, Jon B. Platt and David Stone produced the Australian Premiere Production of the musical phenomenon *Wicked*.

In the 1999 Australia Day Honours, John was awarded an OAM for his contribution to the Arts.

## **JOHN KANDER and FRED EBB (MUSIC, BOOK/LYRICS)**

Broadway: *Flora, the Red Menace*; *Cabaret* (Tony Award); *The Happy Time*; *Zorba*; *70, Girls, 70*; *Chicago*; *The Act*; *Woman of the Year* (Tony Award, Best Score); *The Rink*; *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (Tony Award, Best Score); *Steel Pier*; and *Curtains*. Their collaboration also transferred itself to movies and television as they wrote original material for the Academy Awards; *Liza With a Z* (Emmy Award); HBO's *Liza Minnelli's Stepping Out* (Emmy Award); *Funny Lady* (Oscar nominated for "How Lucky Can You Get"); *Lucky Lady*; *New York, New York*; *Stepping Out*; and *Chicago* (Oscar nominated for Best Song). In the mid '80s their song "New York, New York" became the official anthem of New York City. Life goes on.

## **BOB FOSSE (BOOK)**

First director in history to win Oscar, Tony and Emmy awards in one year (1973) for the film *Cabaret*, the musical *Pippin* and the TV special *Liza with a Z*. He won the first of eight Tonys as choreographer for *The Pajama Game* followed by directing and choreographing *Redhead*, *Little Me*, *Sweet Charity* (stage and film), *Chicago*, *Dancin'*. Other choreography: *Damn Yankees*, *New Girl in Town*, *How to Succeed...*, *Big Deal*. Film: *My Sister Eileen*, *The Pajama Game*, *Damn Yankees*. Director: *Lenny* (Oscar nom.), *All That Jazz* (Oscar nom.), *Star 80*.

## **WALTER BOBBIE (DIRECTOR, ORIGINAL NEW YORK PRODUCTION)**

Recently directed Christopher Durang's *The Marriage of Bette and Boo* at the Roundabout, David Ives's *New Jerusalem* at Classic Stage, and *No No Nannette* at City Center's Encores. His international hit *CHICAGO* won him the Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Award and has become the longest-running revival in Broadway history. Other Broadway credits include *High Fidelity*, *Sweet Charity*, *Twentieth Century*, *Footloose* and *A Grand Night for Singing*. Mr Bobbie has also directed for the New York Shakespeare Festival, Manhattan Theatre Club, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Philadelphia Theatre Company, Sundance, the O'Neill Center, and Goodspeed Opera House. His production of Irving Berlin's *White Christmas* has become a holiday favourite in the US and England. Mr Bobbie served as Artistic Director of City Center's Encores and continues as an Artistic Associate. He is on the Executive Board of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers.

## **ANN REINKING (CHOREOGRAPHER, ORIGINAL NEW YORK PRODUCTION)**

1997 Tony Award, Best Choreography for *Chicago*, as well as Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, Astaire and NY Drama Critics awards. Other credits include director, co-choreographer for *Fosse* (1998 Tony Award for Best Musical); Tony nominations for her leading performances in *Dancin'* and *Goodtime Charlie*; recipient of Theatre World, Clarence Derwent and Outer Critics Circle awards for her work as Maggie in *Over Here!*

Film credits: *Movie, Movie*; *All That Jazz*; *Annie*; *Micki and Maude*. Recent choreography: *Suite Kander* for Missouri State Ballet, *Ritmo & Ruido* for Ballet Hispanico, *Legends* for Joffrey Ballet of Chicago, *The Threepenny Opera* for Williamstown Theatre Festival, *Nilsson/Schmillson* for Seattle's Spectrum Dance Theatre, "Bye Bye Birdie" for ABC-TV, national tour of the revival of *Applause*.

Ms Reinking is founder and artistic director of the Broadway Theatre Project. She is the recipient of the Drama League Award for Distinguished Achievement in Musical Theatre 1999, Musical Hall of Fame Award 1999, Dance Library of Israel Award 1998, Distinguished Artist Award 1998, School of American Ballet Artistic Achievement Award 1997, National Art Club Award for Service to the Arts 1995, Governor's Award-Ambassador of the Arts for the State of Florida 1994.

## **NIGEL WEST (RECREATION OF ORIGINAL PRODUCTION DIRECTION)**

Nigel West joined the Bristol Old Vic company at the Theatre Royal where he stayed for three years working on 29 productions ranging from *Richard II* to the musical *Judy* which he also worked on when it transferred to London's Strand Theatre in 1986. After a season on the Theatre Of Comedy production of *Rookery Nook* at London's Shaftesbury Theatre he joined the Olivier award winning musical *Me And My Girl* at the Adelphi Theatre and became Associate Director in March 1988, going on to direct the first sell out British national tour. He has also acted as Artistic Consultant on several foreign productions, and has directed the show in Stockholm (in Swedish), Canada, Australia and New Zealand, receiving Best Director nominations for the Canadian and Australian productions.

Nigel then became Associate Director of the Tony and Olivier award winning *Crazy For You* at the Prince Edward

Theatre, London and directed the UK tour and Australian Production of the show. He also acted as artistic supervisor for the South African production. Then followed the musical *Closer Than Ever* for Bergen Film, Stage and Television, Holland, and a sell-out season of *She Loves Me* for the Drayton Festival Theatre, Canada. He was UK Associate Director of the Olivier award winning Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* at London's Dominion Theatre and resident Director of the Tony and Olivier Award winning musical revival of Kander and Ebb's *Chicago* at the Adelphi Theatre, which he also directed in Buenos Aires, Mexico City and Dusseldorf.

His own recent productions include a national tour of Stephen King's *Misery, Just For Joe* at the Edinburgh Festival and subsequent Scottish tour, various pantomimes at Glasgow Kings Theatre, Birmingham Hippodrome and Coventry, and Dennis Potter's *Blue Remembered Hills* for the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry. Most recently he directed a US tour of *The Producers* for Susan Stroman including a season at Harrah's Casino, Atlantic City, *Chicago* at the Cambridge Theatre, London, *The Wizard of Oz* for the Mayflower Theatre, Southampton, the first German speaking production of *The Producers* reopening the newly renovated Ronacher Theatre in Vienna Austria, and a US National tour of his production of *The Wizard of Oz* including a season at Madison Square Gardens, New York.

## **GARY CHRYST (RECREATION OF ORIGINAL PRODUCTION CHOREOGRAPHY)**

Gary Chryst has staged the *Chicago* choreography on every continent except Antarctica. Mr Chryst staged Michel Fokine's *Petrouchka* for the National Ballet of Canada and American Ballet Theatre, performing as the Charlatan in the latter production at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. In January 2008, he co-choreographed a new production of *West Side Story* in Brazil. Other choreographic credits include a new American production of *South Pacific*, *Nijinsky* in Japan and numerous MTV videos. Mr Chryst's Broadway performing credits include *Guys and Dolls*, *Bob Fosse's Dancin'* and *A Chorus Line*. He appeared on international tours of *Chorus Line* and *West Side Story*. He had a notable career as a classical dancer with the Joffrey Ballet and Nederlands Dans Theatre 3. He returned to the Joffrey in October 2006 as one of the Ugly Stepsisters in the Company premiere of Frederick Ashton's *Cinderella*. He performed as a guest with the companies of Twyla Tharp, David Parsons, Lar Lubovitch, Eliot Feld, Jose Limon, Nureyev and Friends among others.

## **ROB FISHER (MUSICAL DIRECTOR)**

Rob Fisher is a recognized authority on American music of all kinds and has conducted many major US orchestras including those in Philadelphia, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, Seattle, Atlanta, Baltimore and Washington, DC.

Recently, Mr Fisher made his New York Philharmonic debut, conducting *My Fair Lady*. In addition, he has worked regularly in New York with the Orchestra of St. Luke's and The New York Pops. In 2001, he conducted Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd* with Patti LuPone, George Hearn and the San Francisco Symphony, broadcast on PBS and available on DVD.

Mr Fisher's specialty is classic musical theatre. He was music director and conductor of the Tony Award-winning Encores! series at New York's City Center from its inception in 1994 through 2005. The series has spawned many recordings for which he has served as the conductor and associate producer, including the Broadway hits *Chicago*, *Wonderful Town* and the more recent *Apple Tree*, all of which began at the Encores! series.

Mr Fisher was instrumental in their successful transfers and remains supervising music director of companies of *Chicago* around the world. He conducted the Grammy-winning *Chicago* cast recording and the recently released *Wonderful Town* recording. In the summer of 2008 he supervised the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Hair* in Central Park.

## **JOHN LEE BEATTY (SCENIC DESIGNER)**

Broadway: *A Delicate Balance*, *The Heiress*, *The Sisters Rosensweig*, *The Most Happy Fella*, *Burn This*, *Penn & Teller*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Tally's Folly*, *Fifth of July*, *Crimes of the Heart*, *Baby* and *Anna Christie*, among many others. Off-Broadway: *Sylvia*; *The Cryptogram*; *The Destiny of Me*; *The Substance of Fire*; *The Road to Mecca*; *Song of Singapore*; *Lips Together*, *Teeth Apart*; *A Life in the Theatre*; 20 seasons at MTC and Circle Rep. Major regional theatres, film, opera and TV. Recipient of Tony, Obie, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle awards. Graduate: Brown and Yale.



## **WILLIAM IVEY LONG (COSTUME DESIGNER)**

His other Broadway show is *Hairspray* (Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle awards) NY, 1st national tour. Other credits: *The Producers* (Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics awards); *The Boy From Oz*; *Little Shop of Horrors*; *Contact* NY (Hewes Award); *Thou Shalt Not*; *45 Seconds From Broadway*; *Big*; *The Music Man*; *Annie Get Your Gun*; *The Man Who Came to Dinner*; *Swing*; *The Mystery of Irma Vep*; *Steel Pier*; *1776*; *Smokey Joe's Cafe*; *Crazy for You* NY (Tony, Outer Critics awards); *Guys and Dolls* (Drama Desk Award); MSG's annual *A Christmas Carol*; *Six Degrees of Separation*; *Assassins* (Obie Award); *Lend Me a Tenor* (Drama Desk, Outer Critics awards); *Nine* (Tony, Drama Desk, Maharam awards); Robert Wilson's *Hamletmachine*; Bernstein's *A Quiet Place* and *Trouble in Tahiti*; Vienna State Opera, LaScala, Houston Grand Opera and the Kennedy Center; *The Lost Colony*; Mick Jagger for the Rolling Stones' "Steel Wheels" tour; Siegfried and Roy; Paul Taylor; Twyla Tharp; Peter Martins; David Parsons; Susan Stroman.

## **KEN BILLINGTON (LIGHTING DESIGNER)**

Ken has more than 80 Broadway and 50 Off-Broadway productions to his credit. He has been honored with six Tony nominations and received 1997 Tony Award and Drama Desk awards for *Chicago*. Tony nominations: *End of the World* (1984), *Foxfire* (1982), *Sweeney Todd* (1979), *Working* (1978), and *The Visit* (1973). Other projects: supervising the North American productions of *Riverdance*, 23 seasons lighting *Radio City Music Hall's Christmas Spectacular*, the Olympic figure skating spectacular *Stars on Ice* and Disneyland's extravaganza *Fantasmic!*

## **RALPH BURNS (ORCHESTRATOR)**

Ralph was Woody Herman's arranger, Bob Fosse's film composer (Oscars for *Cabaret* and *All That Jazz*) and Broadway's leading orchestrator. Broadway credits include *Funny Girl*, *Chicago*, *Sweet Charity*, *Dancin'*, *Little Me*, *Pippin* and *Fosse* (Tony Award), among others. Ralph died in 2001, leaving *Thoroughly Modern Millie* as his final work.

## **PETER HOWARD (DANCE MUSIC ARRANGER)**

Composing, conducting, arranging or pianist credits include *My Fair Lady*, *The Sound Of Music*, *Carnival*, *Hello, Dolly!*, *1776*, *Chicago*, *Annie*, *Barnum*, *Baby*, *My One and Only*, *Crazy For You* and *Swingin' on a Star*. Film: *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, *Zelig*, *1776*, *Mame*, *Annie*, and *Stepping Out*. He performs his one-man show throughout the United States.

## **DAVID THOMPSON (SCRIPT ADAPTATION)**

Projects include the libretto for *Steel Pier* (1997 Tony Award nom.), co-conceiving *And the World Goes 'Round* (Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle awards), new librettos for the Off-Broadway and London revivals of *Flora, the Red Menace*, and *70, Girls, 70*. Co-created PBS Great Performances "Sondheim: A Celebration at Carnegie Hall" and wrote the documentary *Razzle Dazzle*.

## **BARRY AND FRAN WEISSLER (PRODUCERS)**

Barry and Fran Weissler have had a producing career that spans 40 years. They are the recipients of five Tony Awards: *Othello*, their Broadway debut, starring James Earl Jones and Christopher Plummer, *Fiddler on the Roof* with Topol, *Gypsy* with Tyne Daly, *Annie Get Your Gun* with Bernadette Peters and Reba McEntire, and the worldwide hit, *Chicago*, which also won the Olivier Award for its London production. *Chicago*, the longest running musical revival on both Broadway and the West End, has had global success, has reaching over 23 countries and translated into 11 languages performing from Arkansas to Dubai.

Other notable Broadway credits include *Cabaret* with Joel Grey, *Macbeth* with Christopher Plummer, *Medea* with Zoe Caldwell, *Your Arms Too Short to Box With God* with Patti LaBelle and Al Green, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* with Kathleen Turner, *Zorba* with Anthony Quinn, *My One & Only* with Tommy Tune, *Falsettos*, *My Fair Lady* with Richard Chamberlin, *Grease* with Rosie O'Donnell and Megan Mullally, *Seussical*, *Wonderful Town* with Donna Murphy and Brooke Shields, and *Sweet Charity* with Christina Applegate. Most recently, they produced the West End premiere of Neil LaBute's *Fat Pig* at the Trafalgar Studios in London.

## **City Center's Encores! Great American Musicals in Concert**

City Center, a not-for-profit theatre founded in 1943 as Manhattan's first performing arts centre, is home to many of America's leading dance companies, education programs and popular engagements. The award-winning series Encores! was created in 1994 to revisit rarely heard scores, of which *Chicago* is one.