

# CHICAGO

THE MUSICAL



## GINA RILEY (MATRON "MAMA" MORTON)

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.

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 *The Joker*, the opening song to *Kath & Kim*.

*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.

## 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

*"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

## THE PLOT

Velma Kelly, a vaudevillian, came out shooting when she caught her husband with her sister. Velma shows us the story of chorus girl Roxie Hart's murder of Fred Casely. Roxie convinces her husband Amos that was a burglar, and he takes the rap. Then police tell Amos that Roxie knew the burglar, 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. The women's jail is presided over by Matron "Mama" Morton whose system of mutual aid 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.

Velma is not happy to see Roxie, who is stealing not only the limelight but also her lawyer, Billy Flynn. Billy takes Roxie's case and re-arranges her story for sympathetic tabloid columnist Mary Sunshine.

Roxie's press conference turns into a ventriloquist act with Billy dictating a new version of the truth. Roxie becomes the new toast of Chicago and Velma's headlines, trial date and career are left in the dust. All seems lost for Velma, but fate has one more card to play...

## BACK. WITH A KILLER CAST!

Hot. Brutally funny, Broadway's longest-running musical revival and the longest running American musical ever on the West End, *Chicago* opens at Her Majesty's Theatre from August 15.

Caroline O'Connor is Velma Kelly, one half of the dancing sister act – she shot the other half when she found her dancing horizontally with her lover; Sharon Millerchip is Roxie Hart, the chorus girl who shoots her lover; Craig McLachlan is Billy Flynn, the egregious lawyer; and Gina Riley is Matron "Mama" Morton, the keeper of the keys at the women's cell block at Cook County Jail.

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Velma and Roxie: the toast of Chicago.



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# A STORY OF MURDER, GREED, CORRUPTION, VIOLENCE, EXPLOITATION, ADULTERY AND TREACHERY. ALL THOSE THINGS WE HOLD NEAR AND DEAR TO OUR HEARTS.

**Chicago**, the winner of six Tony Awards®, two Olivier Awards, and a Grammy® is a musical to die for. Kander and Ebb's sophisticated score, Bob Fosse's book, and Anne Reinking's sizzling choreography together tell the 1920's story of two merry murderesses, Velma and Roxie, in the Cook County Jail, their so-slick lawyer Billy Flynn and the tabloids feeding salivating readers a daily diet of sin and sensation.

"I'm thrilled with the cast," Producer John Frost says. Australia's foremost theatrical producer, John Frost has five productions running internationally. **Chicago** and *Wicked* in Australia; *Phantom of the Opera* in New Zealand; *Exit the King* with Geoffrey Rush and Susan Sarandon on Broadway; and *Priscilla Queen of the Dessert - The Musical* on the West End.

'**Chicago** is one of my favourite musicals', he says, 'And this production is the best I've seen. Velma Kelly is the role Caroline O'Connor took to Broadway and the West End. Enough said. Sharon Millerchip played Velma in **Chicago** ten years ago and she is a terrific Roxie. Craig McLachlan has had wonderful reviews after our Australian premiere in Brisbane in April and Gina Riley as Mama Morton, reaffirms her reputation as one of the elite comedic performers.

'What a cast!'

## CAROLINE O'CONNOR (VELMA KELLY)

As Velma Kelly Caroline won the Green Room Award in 1999. In 2002 she made her Broadway debut in the role and the next year moved with the production to London. In 2003 Caroline performed the role of Roxie Hart with the London cast at The Baalbeck International Festival.

In Australia Caroline's credits include the title role in *Scarlett O'Hara at the Crimson Parrot*, a role written for her by David Williamson and the one woman play *Bombshells*, also written for her, by playwright Joanna Murray-Smith.



Caroline O'Connor

*Come on Babe why don't we paint the town?*

Velma



Sharon Millerchip

*The name on everybody's lips.*

Roxie



Gina Riley

*When you're good to Mama, Mama's good to you.*

Mama Morton



Craig McLachlan (Billy) and Sharon Millerchip (Roxie), *We Both Reached for the Gun.*

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. 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).

## SHARON MILLERCHIP (ROXIE HART)

Sharon was Meg Giry in the original Australian production of *The Phantom of the Opera* and won 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.

For STC Sharon played Cordelia in *Falsettos* (Green Room Award) and for IMG Anita in *West Side Story*. 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 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 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 has been awarded three Silver Logies for Most Popular Actor on Australian television, and the coveted Gold Logie. He made his name in the TV's *Neighbours* and *Home and Away*. Later roles included Stuart Diver in

*Heroes Mountain*, Michael Chamberlain in *Through My Eyes*, and guest roles in *Packed to the Rafters*, *City Homicide*, *McLeod's Daughters* and *Always Greener*.

In 1992 Craig starred with Gina Riley, as Frank N Furter in an Australian revival of *The Rocky Horror Show*. He played Danny Zuko in the popular West End revival of the musical *Grease* and 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. 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*. For his most recent film role, *Savage Crossing*, Craig also composed the film score.



*All I Care About is Love.*



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