



## COLLEEN HEWETT IS MAMA

### AS CHICAGO EXTENDS

**CHICAGO THE MUSICAL** is extending its run. The musical opened in Melbourne's Her Majesty's Theatre on August 15 and was to have finished its Melbourne season in November. But Producer John Frost has announced a further six week extension until December 13.

'We're delighted that the success of **CHICAGO** has meant that we are able to extend our stay at Her Majesty's,' he said, 'but this means that Gina Riley will be leaving on Sunday, November 8.

'Colleen Hewett will be taking over Gina's role as Matron 'Mama' Morton, the keeper of the keys to the cell block of merry murderesses.

'We are delighted that we have managed to obtain Colleen for the role,' he said. 'Colleen is a terrific talent, of course, as she showed when she played two other Mamas,' he said. 'In *The Boy From Oz* and *Shout!* she played the roles of the mothers of, respectively, Peter Allen and Johnny O'Keefe. That has to be, and surely always will be, a first.

'She's got one of the great voices and she's an excellent actress. She won a Helpmann for *The Boy From Oz*, and after playing Mum to two of the wild ones of Australian entertainment she'll find "Mama" Morton a breeze.'

Colleen says the role of Mama is 'a really dynamic part and being a warden and in charge really appeals to me!'

**CHICAGO** will end its Australian season in Perth and will then go on an Asian tour to Singapore and Hong Kong.

#### COLLEEN HEWETT

A performer from the age of 12, when she sang on stage in her home town, Bendigo, Colleen Hewett was taken to Australia's heart in 1970 when she recorded Day by Day, from *Godspell*, in which she played Mary Magdalen. Top of the hit parade, the song went Gold and led to her being voted Queen of Pop for two successive years. She went on to co-star, with Johnny Farnham, in *Pippin*, and then had a leading role in *Tommy*.

At the same time she was busy acting in such Seventies TV classics as *Homicide*, *Matlock* *Police*, *Carson's Law*, *Division 4*, *Cop Shop*, *Prisoner* and *Flying Doctors*. More Gold recordings came with *Dreaming My Dreams With You* and *Wind Beneath My Wings*.

Her 2006 *Boy From Oz* Helpmann Award, for Best Supporting Female Role in a Musical, meant a lot to Colleen. 'I knew Peter Allen in the early days and have fond memories of him from my first Bandstand appearance. The producer was rushing me through rehearsal and Peter went to him and said: "Give her a fair go mate. Plenty of time." I never forgot that.'

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