

CASTING BRIEF – *THE WHO'S TOMMY*

Victorian Opera is calling for submissions from performers who wish to audition for its production of *The Who's Tommy*. Rehearsals commence in Melbourne on 6 July 2020 and the production performs at the Palais Theatre from 14 to 22 August. Auditions will be conducted in Melbourne on Monday 2 and Tuesday 3 December and in Sydney on Friday 6 and Saturday 7 December. Please note the Ensemble roles will be cast with Melbourne based performers.

Creative Team:

Director: Roger Hodgman

Musical Director: Laura Tipoki

Choreographer: Dana Jolly

Designers: Christina Smith (set), Isaac Lummis (costumes), Matt Scott (lighting).

Background: Generally regarded as the first “rock opera”, *Tommy* was originally released by The Who in 1969 and sold over 20 million copies. It was subsequently filmed by Ken Russell in 1975. In 1992 the composer Pete Townshend and director Des McAnuff developed it into a stage musical. Apart from one new song, the music remained very much the same, but the story had many departures from the original album and the film. Performers wanting to get a sense of the tone of the material might find listening to the Broadway Cast album (which is on Spotify) more useful than listening to the original album (brilliant though it is) or watching the film, which is different in many ways.

Requirements: This is a sung through piece with little dialogue. Although good acting is essential, all the cast must be good singers. Iconic classic British rock meets musical theatre. Please bring an appropriate cut of a rock/music theatre song of your own choice.

The “Local Lads and Lasses” must be good dancers (in a variety of styles) and the rest of the cast must be able to move well and learn simple choreography.

Submissions: Please send through a CV (no longer than 2 pages) and a colour headshot to auditions@victorianopera.com.au stating which role/s you wish to be considered for.

The cut off for submissions is **5:00pm Friday 25 October 2019**. No submissions will be accepted after this date. Notification of audition date and time will be sent approx. 2 weeks prior to audition dates.

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ROLES TO BE CAST

Please note as the principal characters are depicted over a number of years, the age range of the principals is flexible.

PRINCIPALS

Tommy/narrator

20+. An embittered young genius stricken deaf, dumb, and blind after a childhood trauma. Tommy discovers that he is a natural master of pinball, and later becomes a cult-like hero figure to masses enthralled by his story. Captain Walker and Mrs. Walker's son.

Vocal range top: B4

Vocal range bottom: Db3

Mrs. Walker

25-40. A weary middle-class woman. Mrs. Walker is tired and frustrated from trying to care for and cure Tommy. Tommy's mother and Captain Walker's wife.

Vocal range top: D6

Vocal range bottom: G3

Captain Walker

30-40+. A former soldier with lingering guilt. He murders his wife's lover after coming back from a POW camp, resulting in Tommy's trauma-induced blindness, deafness, and dumbness. Father to Tommy and husband to Mrs. Walker.

Vocal range top: C#5

Vocal range bottom: F3

Uncle Ernie

30-45+. A lecherous, drunken bachelor. Ernie molests a young Tommy and later runs a children's camp seeking to profit from Tommy's popularity. Mrs. Walker's brother and Tommy's uncle.

Vocal range top: Bb4

Vocal range bottom: G2

Cousin Kevin

20-30. A bully with sadistic tendencies. Tortures his cousin, Tommy, when they're young and later seizes the opportunity to profit from Tommy's success.

Vocal range top: B4

Vocal range bottom: Ab2

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ROLES TO BE CAST continued

Gypsy

Any age. A brazen drug dealer and prostitute. Tommy's parents bring him to the Gypsy to experiment with unusual cures. **NB.** For this role, important and memorable though it is, it may be possible to have a reduced rehearsal time.

Vocal range top: F5

Vocal range bottom: G3

The Specialist (*also part of the Ensemble)

30+. A doctor with modern ideas about how to cure Tommy. Tommy's parents hire him in their desperation to find any cure for their son.

Vocal range top: F4

Vocal range bottom: G#3

Sally Simpson (*also part of the Local Lads and Lasses ensemble)

16-25. A bold, sensitive, and excitable teenybopper. Sally develops a fan crush on Tommy and rushes the stage to be close to him.

Vocal range top: D5

Vocal range bottom: F

Tommy Aged 4 and 10. To be cast later

“Lads and Lasses” ensemble.

20s. Appear and dance as a group in various scenes from the 1940s to 1960s and play a variety of small roles including “Sally” (see above). Two of the lads sing “Pinball Wizard” one of the key songs. Good dance skills required and a range of voice types

Ensemble. Various ages 20-50. Range of voice types. Play a range of small and middle size roles. (Soldiers, relatives, priest, judge, doctors, nurses, reporters etc)