

VICTORIAN  
OPERA

TOMMY  
THE WHO'S

TOMMY  
THE WHO'S  
EVER SINCE  
I WAS A  
YOUNG BOY  
I PLAYED THE SILVER BALL  
SEE ME  
FEEL  
ME  
TOUCH  
ME  
HEAL  
ME

TOMMY  
THE WHO'S

TOMMY  
THE WHO'S



Victorian Opera presents

# The Who's Tommy

Music and Lyrics by  
**PETE TOWNSHEND**

Book by  
**PETE TOWNSHEND & DES MCANUFF**

Additional Music and Lyrics by  
**JOHN ENTWISTLE and KEITH MOON**

Originally Produced on Broadway by  
**Pace Theatrical Group and Dodger Productions**  
with  
**Kardana Productions**

Licensed exclusively by Music Theatre International (Australasia)

## CREATIVES

Director **Roger Hodgman**  
Musical Director **Jack Earle**  
Choreographer **Dana Jolly**  
Set Designer **Christina Smith**  
Costume Designer **Isaac Lummis**

Lighting Designer **Matt Scott**  
Sound Designer **Peter Grubb**  
Video Designer **Jamie Clennett**  
Associate Musical Director **Phoebe Briggs**

## CAST

**Narrator / Tommy** Mat Verevis  
**Captain Walker** Matt Hetherington  
**Mrs. Walker** Amy Lehpamer  
**Cousin Kevin** Vincent Hooper  
**Uncle Ernie** Kanen Breen  
**The Gypsy (Acid Queen)** Paul Capsis  
**Four-Year-Old Tommy** Olivia Annetta,  
Hamilton Binnie Garcia  
**Ten-Year-Old Tommy** Elijah Slavinskis,  
Will Wiseman

### FEATURED ENSEMBLE

Mark Doggett, Mark Hill, Nicole  
Melloy, John O'Hara

### ENSEMBLE

Darcey Eagle, Joshua Gordon, David  
Hammond, Shaelyn Hughes, Jane Kingsford,  
Savannah Lind, Anna Mallows, Adam  
Noviello, John Reed, Jack Saunders,  
Dean Schultz, Darren Tyler, Stephanie Wall,  
Jun Woodfield

**22 February - 1 March**  
**Palais Theatre, St Kilda**

Running time is approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes, plus interval

The Rock Opera TOMMY, which was first performed by The Who in 1969, was originally conceived by Pete Townshend and Kit Lambert with contributions to the development by John Entwistle, Keith Moon and Roger Daltrey.

# Production

## PRODUCTION TEAM

Stage Manager **Meg Deyell**  
Deputy Stage Manager **Marina Milankovic**  
Assistant Stage Manager **Claudia Howarth**  
Head Electrician **Robert Harewood**  
Costume Supervisor **Mel Serjeant**  
Wig Design **Drew Elizabeth Johnstone**  
Head of Wigs **Kate McLeod**

## Band

Keyboard 1 **Jack Earle**  
Keyboard 2 **Andrew Patterson**  
Keyboard 3 **Michelle Nguyen**  
Drums **Kieran Rafferty**  
Electric Bass **Patrick Schmidli**  
Guitar 1 **Doug de Vries**  
Guitar 2 **Ash Griffin**  
Horn **Deborah Hart**

## Season Staff

Front of House Engineer **David Tonion**  
Stage Technician **Tiernan Maclaren**  
Props Sourcer/Buyer **Lucie Sutherland**  
Child Chaperone **Emma Mosley**

## Costumiers

**David Anderson**  
**Melinda Brodie**  
**Janice Chalmers**  
**Justine Coultham**  
**Ellen Figgis**  
**Maureen Fitzgerald (Knitwear)**  
**Jo Foley**  
**Debra Hallum**  
**Emma Ikin**  
**Mary Murphy**  
**Madeline Nibali (Intern)**  
**Carla Noto**  
**Amelia Peace**  
**Tirion Rodwell**  
**Tristan Seebohm**  
**Nicole Serjeant (Art Finishing)**  
**Susan Skinner**

## Wardrobe Maintenance

**Timothy Corne**  
**Catherine Kirby**

## Dressers

**Kim Bishop**  
**Jade D'Angelo**  
**Matt Dunne**  
**Peri Jenkins**  
**Carla Noto**  
**Ayla Sheather**

## Wig Assistants

**Julz Mayberry**  
**Kym McConville**

# Artistic Director's Message

The Who were a defining presence in Twentieth Century popular music. The classic line up of Roger Daltrey (lead singer), Pete Townshend (guitarist and singer), John Entwistle (bass guitar and singer) and drummer Keith Moon formed one of the most influential bands of the age. The Who pioneered the use of synthesisers, large PA systems and performance theatrics, as well as concept albums such as *Quadrophenia* (1973). I think it is reasonable to claim that the idea of Rock Opera was substantially their invention.

In part, The Who's aesthetic grew out of the 'mod' subculture: high camp fashion, riding scooters and shaggy hairstyles, which manifested in parallel with the emerging pirate radio stations broadcasting from ships at sea to circumvent the monopolies established by major record companies and licensed mainland broadcasters such as the BBC. But *Tommy* has a depth that belies these superficial appearances.

Tonight's rock musical began life as a concept album, which sold 200,000 copies in its first two weeks. The subsequent *Tommy* tour included concerts at European opera houses. The Who were the first rock band to play on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera in New York, so there were already subliminal links between The Who and the operatic art form from the beginning of the concept of *Tommy* as a genre-defining rock opera.

Pete Townshend's fascination with the subject matter of *Tommy* was profoundly influenced by the teachings of the Indian

mystic Meyer Baba, who kept silent from 10 July 1925 until his death on 31 January 1969. Baba communicated via an alphabet board and later stylised hand gestures. His teachings focus on the divine uniqueness and potential of every human soul. The story of *Tommy's* growing awareness via a series of encounters with bizarre evil became a kind of contemporary 'pilgrim's progress' – a quest for spiritual awareness and peace in a fragmented, violent, hostile and incomprehensibly existential world.

This subject matter seems increasingly relevant to the darkness and difficulty of our lives at the moment. The themes of isolation, game addiction, substance dependence and child abuse live with us still. The perception of the emptiness of celebrity and the final importance of family are perhaps made more acute by our current circumstances.

We are proud to deliver this production of the iconic rock musical in an iconic Melbourne rock venue. We are proud to have been able to sustain a marvellous and committed cast through a practically difficult rehearsal period, in which their individual talents have shone like lights to show us a way forward working together in cooperation.

We are proud to present the Australian premiere of *The Who's Tommy* in this vibrant new production by one of our greatest directors. Welcome and enjoy.

**RICHARD MILLS**  
Artistic Director

# Director's Note

I remember the impact the *Tommy* LP had on its release in 1969. Performed by The Who, but very much the creation of its guitarist and songwriter Pete Townshend, it was that rare beast – ‘a rock opera’. The narrative drive and wonderful music were unmistakable. *Life Magazine* wrote ‘rock music may have found its all-time peak with *Tommy*’, and *The New York Times* wrote that it was ‘rock’s first formal masterpiece’.

Shortly afterwards, Ken Russell directed an idiosyncratic film version that was a huge hit.

Over the years there have been many manifestations. The Who themselves performed it at the Metropolitan Opera in 1970. There was a famous recording with the London Symphony Orchestra, a ballet and many concert revivals. Several semi-authorised attempts were made to put it on stage.

Finally, in 1992, Townshend collaborated with director Des McAnuff to develop a musical, *The Who's Tommy*, which ran for eighteen months on Broadway and won five Tony Awards including best score. This is its Australian premiere.

Townshend and McAnuff wrangled the story into something narratively and thematically clearer, and used all the great music (with one new song). Over time, Townshend has come to realise that *Tommy* has an extreme form of autism, less well understood in the sixties. There are many parallels with his own life – the Walkers live near where

Townshend grew up. Like him, *Tommy* is abused by an older relative, and bullied, but eventually finds salvation and then fame. In *Tommy's* case it is by playing pinball; in Townshend's, by finding his talent as a songwriter and guitarist. I think pinball is a kind of metaphor for the guitar, and there are echoes of the excitement and eventual disillusionment brought about by the extraordinary fame that The Who and Townshend achieved.

Working on it with a talented creative team and a wonderful cast – some of the country's finest performers alongside several young artists making their professional debut – has been exciting. There have been glitches brought about by Covid. In 2020, it was deferred when the first lockdown happened. We started rehearsals last year, and then the next lockdown occurred. But everyone kept working, with character discussions, music coaching, and especially choreography, on Zoom. I'll always remember watching Dana Jolly teaching dances to fourteen performers in their own rooms. After two weeks we were allowed back, but with reduced numbers in the room, and we managed to have it nearly ready for the opening at the Palais. Then a third lockdown closed it again.

Thanks to Victorian Opera for giving us a third chance!

## ROGER HODGMAN

Director

# Musical Director's Note

Seven years ago I sat in Horti Hall as a bright-eyed, over-confident teenager observing the Victorian Opera in rehearsal. I was eyeing off the conductor's score with envy, hoping desperately that I would one day musically direct a production like this. Now I'm a little older, and perhaps still a bit over-confident, but utterly humbled and completely ecstatic to be musically directing this production of *The Who's Tommy*.

Journeying the creative process with masters Roger Hodgman and Dana Jolly has been an incredibly inspiring and educational experience, as well as a career highlight. My wholehearted gratitude to Phoebe Briggs who has welcomed and supported me from that first rehearsal I observed, and to Elizabeth Hill-Cooper for giving me a chance and making my dream come true.

Researching this production has been quite a journey in itself. I felt it important to listen to The Who's performances first – rather than the many theatre, film, or concert adaptations – to stay true

to the original material. It was most striking to me how much the music of *Tommy* has developed and grown throughout its life, beginning with the dark, bare-boned tones of the original 1969 concept album, and expanding to the grand, maximalist orchestral versions of the mid 70s. The film soundtrack in 1975 saw the integration of synthesisers and psychedelic sounds, evolving into the glam-rock stadium tours of the 80s, and updating again for the Broadway musical adaptation of the 90s. *Tommy* continues to be a living breathing organism that welcomes innovation and interpretation from any brave enough to tackle the risky material.

Kudos to Victorian Opera for taking this risk and assembling a world-class creative team, cast and crew to put on a harrowing, thoughtful, and most importantly original production that will act as an important marker in *Tommy's* life now and as it continues to evolve.

## JACK EARLE

Musical Director

# Synopsis

## Act One

London 1940. World War II. Captain Walker, a handsome English officer in his mid-twenties, meets and marries a young attractive welder before being deployed to Germany and immediately captured ('Overture'). At home, two officers arrive to tell Mrs. Walker and Uncle Ernie that Captain Walker is missing in action ('It's a Boy').

1941. A German guard pushes a group of Allied prisoners, including Walker. A Nurse enters and hands Mrs. Walker her baby boy ('It's a Boy – Part 2'). In 1945, Allied soldiers arrive at the prison camp with news they've won.

Captain Walker arrives home to discover Mrs. Walker celebrating her 21st birthday with her Lover and Four-Year-Old Tommy ('Twenty-One'). A fight breaks out between the two men, ending with Walker shooting the Lover. As the dust settles, the Walkers notice Tommy has witnessed the whole thing.

As Tommy withdraws into himself, the Narrator appears – the image of Tommy as an adult ('Amazing Journey').

Captain Walker is acquitted but Tommy doesn't respond to his parents' anxious questioning. A barrage of medical tests leave doctors with no explanation ('Sparks').

1950. The Walker family attend church at Christmas, regretting that Ten-Year-Old Tommy isn't able to appreciate the season ('Christmas'). The Narrator, only visible to young Tommy, sings to him ('See Me, Feel Me').

Later, the Walkers worry about whether to leave Tommy with his alcoholic Uncle Ernie ('Do You Think It's Alright?'). Alone with Tommy, Ernie decides to molest him ('Fiddle About').

Tommy's next babysitter, Cousin Kevin, bullies and abuses Tommy mercilessly ('Cousin Kevin'). Cousin Kevin and his friends then take Tommy to a youth club where, to everyone's astonishment, he plays pinball brilliantly ('Sensation'). Encouraged, the Walkers try yet another doctor, without success ('Sparks – Reprise'). Encouraged by a mysterious hawker ('Eyesight to the Blind'), the desperate Captain Walker tries to find a miracle cure for Tommy

by taking him to see The Gypsy ('Acid Queen'). The act ends in 1958 as Cousin Kevin and other teenagers await 17-year-old Tommy's appearance at the amusement arcade ('Pinball Wizard').

## Act Two

1960. Tommy has become the pinball hero of the neighbourhood ('Underture'). Captain Walker convinces his wife to try one more cure ('There's a Doctor I've Found'). The doctors discover that Tommy's senses work fine, and no one can free Tommy from his catatonic state but himself ('Go to the Mirror, Boy'). Outside, a group of local louts surround Tommy and carry him home ('Tommy, Can You Hear Me?').

The Walkers, at their wits' end, confront one another ('I Believe My Own Eyes'). Tommy stares into the mirror as his mother tries desperately to reach him ('Smash the Mirror'). With the mirror in pieces, Tommy regains awareness and leaves home ('I'm Free').

1961. Tommy's cure hits the news ('Miracle Cure'). He is idolised by the

public and press ('Sensation – Reprise'). He begins appearing in stadiums, playing pinball with a helmet that temporarily blinds and deafens him ('I'm Free / Pinball Wizard – Reprise'). Uncle Ernie tries to capitalise on Tommy's newfound stardom ('Tommy's Holiday Camp').

1963. A teenage fan is injured in a commotion during a stadium appearance ('Sally Simpson'). Tommy, horrified, stops the show. Disillusioned with celebrity, Tommy reaches out to his fans and invites them all back to his house ('Welcome'). There, Sally asks Tommy how she can be more like him ('Sally Simpson's Question'). Tommy insists the opposite, that he is finally more like them. Disenchanted with their hero, the crowd turns on him and leaves ('We're Not Gonna Take It').

Tommy turns to his family, whom he has ignored during his stardom, accepting them and reuniting with his younger self. The entire Company joins him onstage in celebration ('Finale').



# Creative Team



**Roger Hodgman**  
Director

Roger has directed theatre, opera, musical theatre and television drama in Australia and internationally for many years. He was Artistic Director of MTC for twelve years. Operas include *Lakmé*, *Don Pasquale*, *Rigoletto* (Opera Australia), *Xerxes*, *Nixon in China* (Green Room Award for Best Production), *Flying Dutchman* (Green Room Award for Best Director), *Banquet of Secrets* and *Parsifal* (Victorian Opera). Musicals include *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* (Sydney Critics Award for Best Musical), *Fiddler on The Roof*, *A Little Night Music* (Green Room award for Best Director), *Grey Gardens* (Helpmann Award for Best Director), *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* and *Ragtime*. Television includes *Wentworth*, *Secret Life of Us* (AFI Best Director nomination) and *Stepfather of the Bride* (Chicago Film Festival Award for Best Telemovie).



**Jack Earle**  
Musical Director

Jack Earle is a pianist, trumpet player, vocalist, conductor and composer. After studying at Berklee College of Music, he became well established in musical theatre circles as a pit musician, orchestrator, and musical director for shows including *Dream Lover*, *Evita* and *Kiss of The Spider Woman*. Jack regularly records and performs with Rhonda Burchmore, David Campbell, Kate Ceberano, and Tina Arena. Jack is also an in-demand jazz musician, leading his premier ensembles The Jack Earle Big Band and The Jack Earle Trio. His extensive composition credits include two albums of original music, dance and theatre works, and jingles for television and radio. Jack will be releasing a Christmas Album with Rhonda Burchmore in 2022.



**Dana Jolly**  
Choreographer

Dana's career began at 9, playing baby Louise in *Gypsy*, at Her Majesty's Theatre Melbourne. She then trained at the Victorian College of Arts for 8 years before moving to London, where she spent 10 successful years performing and choreographing in the UK, Europe, and Scandinavia before returning to Australia. Dana's choreography credits include 12 musicals for The Production Company, Australian tours of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, *Fiddler On The Roof* and *Respect*, the opening of the Adelaide Cabaret Festival with Rhonda Burchmore, the Royal Variety Performance and Miss World Competition London, international festivals, television and a vast array of corporate work. Dana is delighted to be making her choreographic debut with Victorian Opera.



**Christina Smith**  
Set Designer

Christina has worked extensively as a set and costume designer over the last 20 years, designing for companies including Victorian Opera, New Zealand Opera, Seattle Opera, State Opera of South Australia, Opera Queensland, Melbourne Theatre Company, Malthouse Theatre, Playbox, Black Swan State Theatre Company, Queensland Theatre Company, The Production Company, Belvoir, Sydney Theatre Company, Bell Shakespeare, WA Ballet and Australian Ballet. Recent productions for VO include *Salome* (set), *Parsifal* (costumes), *Voyage to the Moon*, *Banquet of Secrets* and *The Flying Dutchman* (set). Christina is also currently a lecturer in Design for Live Performance at the Victorian College of the Arts.



**Isaac Lummis**  
Costume Designer

Isaac is a Melbourne based costume designer & maker. Isaac's design credits include *Ragtime*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Green Room Nomination 2020), *A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder*, *Oklahoma!*, *Brigadoon*, *Hello, Dolly!* (Green Room Nomination 2018), *Dusty*, *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, *Showboat* and *Promises, Promises* for The Production Company. Isaac's other design credits include *Georgy Girl - The Seekers Musical*, *Alice Through the Opera Glass*, *Alice's Adventures in Operaland* and *Rush Hour* for Victorian Opera, *La Cage Aux Folles* for Quirky Productions, *My Life in the Nude* for Maude Davey, *Waltzing the Wilarra* for Yirra Yaakin, *As You Like It* and *Memmie LeBlanc* for Deckchair Theatre, plus 12 Victorian State Schools Spectaculars. Isaac has created costumes for Barry Humphreys, Meow Meow, Rhonda Burchmore and, most recently, Karen from Finance for *RuPaul's Drag Race Down Under*.



**Matt Scott**  
Lighting Designer

Matt is one of Australia's leading lighting designers, with 27 years' experience in the industry designing more than 200 productions for theatre, opera, dance and musical theatre. His work has been seen and, well-received both nationally and internationally. He returns to Victorian Opera having previously lit *Parsifal*, *Banquet of Secrets*, *Voyage to the Moon*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *Nixon in China*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Baroque Triple Bill*, *Turn of the Screw*, *Xerxes* and *Orphée et Eurydice* for the Company. Other more recent work includes *Fun Home* (Sydney Theatre Company) *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *Storm Boy*, *The Lady in the Van*, *The Architect* (Melbourne Theatre Company), *The Dance of Death* (Belvoir), *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* (The Production Company), *Madama Butterfly* and *The Pearlfishers* (SOSA). Matt has received two Helpmann Awards for Best Lighting Design and one Green Room Award for Best Design for an Opera. He is currently a Lecturer in Design (Lighting) at the University of Melbourne (Victorian College of the Arts).



**Peter Grubb**  
Sound Designer

As Sound Supervisor, Peter's credits include *We Will Rock You*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Starlight Express*, *Aspects of Love*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Five Guys Named Mo*, *Cats*, *Les Miserables*, *Miss Saigon*, *Sunset Boulevard* and *Rent!*. Peter was Associate Designer for the productions of *Les Miserables* in Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo and Mexico City, *Spamalot*, *MAMMA MIA! The Musical* Australia and *Matilda the Musical* in Australia, New Zealand and Korea. Peter designed the sound for *Cats* South Africa, Beirut, Seoul, Shanghai and Taipei, *Cats Tent Tour* Australia and Korea, *The Witches of Eastwick*, *Oliver* Australian and US tours, *Avenue Q* Australia and New Zealand, *Miss Saigon* Manila, Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea, Brazil and Australia, *Mary Poppins*, *A Little Night Music*, *Into the Woods*, *Company*, *Moonshadow*, *Strictly Ballroom the Musical* and *Sweeney Todd*.

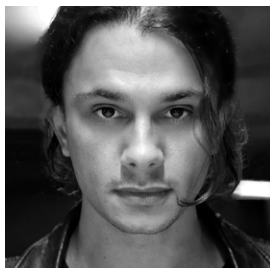


**Jamie Clennett**  
Video Designer

Tasmanian designer, animator, and author/illustrator Jamie Clennett graduated from NIDA (Design) in 2002. Initially a production designer (theatre and film), Jamie then moved into video design. Apart from creating award-winning short animations Jamie has worked internationally and at home for clients as diverse as Queensland Government, SBS, CSIRO, BBC, Picasso London, Passion Pictures, the Red Cross, and Norwegian Cruise Lines, amongst others. In 2008 Jamie created video for *Priscilla*, *Queen of the Desert – The Musical*. Jamie has also created video for several other theatrical productions such as *Shoes: The Musical* (Sadler's Wells, London), *Sleeping Horses Lie* (Terrapin Puppet Theatre, Hobart), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Tinderbox, Melbourne), *Wild*, *Astroman*, and *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (MTC). Jamie's first graphic-novel, *The Diemenois* (2015), was shortlisted for the Aurealis Awards, won a silver Comic Arts Award, and was in competition for the Tasmanian Premier's Literary Prize in 2017.



# Cast



**Mat Verevis**

Narrator/Tommy

Mat is a Helpmann Award winning singer/actor and songwriter best known for his performance as Barry Mann in *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*. Most recently he played 'Tobias' in *Sweeney Todd* (State Opera South Australia) and Mark Cohen in *RENT* (SOH/Sugary Rum prod). Last year he released his debut self-titled EP, which reached No. 1 on the iTunes singer/songwriter charts. Other credit(s) include *A Little Night Music* (Victorian Opera), Lea Salonga's Australian tour, *Down Under* (RIOT/Netflix), *Lazarus* (The Production Company), *There's Something About Music* (Little Red Company), *The Voice Australia S3* (Channel 9) and *Torch Song Trilogy* (Darlinghurst Theatre Co).

Instagram: @mjverevis

Spotify: Mat Verevis

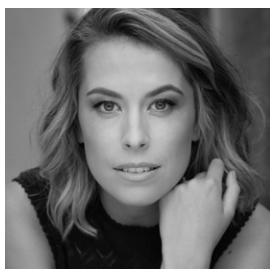


**Matt Hetherington**

Captain Walker

Matt is thrilled to be making his debut with Victorian Opera. Theatre credits; *Becoming Nancy* (Alliance Theatre, Atlanta, USA), *North by Northwest* (MTC), *Next to Normal* (MTC) (Green Room,), *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* (Green Room Award, Sydney Theatre Award), *The Full Monty* (Helpmann Award), *Gypsy*, *Sweet Charity*, *Hair*, *Damn Yankees*, *The Last 5 Years*, *South Pacific*, *I Love You, You're Perfect Now Change*. TV/Film; *The Detour* (PBS, USA), *The Voice* (finalist), *Dr Blake Mysteries*, *City Homicide*, *Stingers*, *Marshall Law*, *10 Terrorists*. Proud member of AEA. Thanks to Sue Barnett & Assoc. Love to my sweeties Melissa, Oscar & Madeline.

Instagram @mattyheth

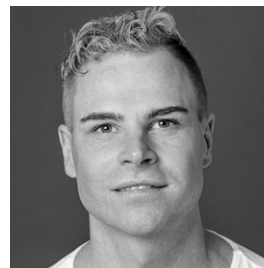


**Amy Lehpamer**

Mrs. Walker

A Helpmann and Sydney Theatre Award winner, Amy has received acclaim as one of Australia's most versatile leading ladies of musical theatre. Notable roles include Principal Rosalie Mullins in *School of Rock*, Maria in *The Sound of Music*, Cynthia Weil in *Beautiful: the Carole King Musical*, Dusty Springfield in *Dusty*, Christine Colgate in *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, Sherrie in *Rock of Ages* and the violinist Reza in *Once: the Musical*.

In 2021, Amy featured as part of a stellar ensemble cast in *Our Town* for Queensland Theatre, and performed in concert with both the West Australian and Adelaide Symphony Orchestras. Amy can be soon seen on screen in *Stories from Oz*, an original musical docuseries premiering on the ABC.



**Vincent Hooper**

Cousin Kevin

A WAAPA grad (BA Music Theatre), Vincent recently played Rocky in *The Rocky Horror Show* in Tasmania and the Lion in *The Wizard of Oz* at the Crown Theatre in Perth. Other credits include *Avenue Q* (Nicky/Trekkie), *Heathers - The Musical* (Ram/Rams Dad), *The Rocky Horror Show* (Australia, Singapore, Korea, New Zealand), *Legally Blonde* (UPS guy), *Thrill Me* (Nathan), *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *The Tempest* (Ariel), *The Almost Eurovision Experience*, *Calendar Girls*, *Loving Repeating*, *Hello Again*, *Putting it Together*, *Antarctica*, *Milli Jack and the Dancing Cat* and *The Twink and the Showgirl*.

His album 'Here Today, Gone Tomorrow' is on iTunes and Spotify.



**Kanen Breen**

Uncle Ernie

Kanen's past engagements for Victorian Opera include the premiere seasons of *'Tis Pity*, *Banquet Of Secrets* and *Through The Looking Glass*, The Beadle in *Sweeney Todd* and The War Correspondant in *Remembrance*. Roles for Opera Australia include Camille in *The Merry Widow*, Nanki Poo in *The Mikado*, Ralph Rackstraw in *HMS Pinafore*, Marco Palmieri in *The Gondoliers*, Caius in *Falstaff*, Alfred in *Die Fledermaus*, Monostatos in *The Magic Flute*, Sellem in *The Rakes Progress*, Pong in *Turandot*, Andres/Cochennille/Pittichinaccio/Frantz/Nathanael in *The Tales Of Hoffmann*, Pirelli in *Sweeney Todd*, Albert Herring, and Johnny in *Bliss at the Edinburgh Festival*. Other engagements include critically appearances in the title role of *Rameau's Platée* for Pinchgut Opera, a Helpmann Award winning performance as the Witch of Endor in the Glyndebourne production of *Handel's Saul* for the Adelaide Festival and Rodolfo in Baz Luhrman's *La Boheme* on Broadway. He appeared as Willy Wonka in the national season of *Charlie & The Chocolate Factory*.



**Paul Capsis**

The Gypsy (Acid Queen)

Paul Capsis is one of Australia's most extraordinary and versatile performers. His extensive career spans decades where he has appeared in theatres, live concerts, cabaret shows, film, and television. Paul has worked with many leading Australian theatre companies as well as in Vienna, Hong Kong, London, Edinburgh and New York. A snapshot of Paul's theatre credits include *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* (Brink Productions); *The Last Season* (Force Majeure); *The Deep Blue Sea*, *The Threepenny Opera* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Calpurnia Descending* (STC/Malthouse); *All About My Mother* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *The Black Rider*, *Die Winterreise*, *Boulevard Delirium* (Malthouse Theatre); *The Wizard of Oz*, *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Frogs* (Company B Belvoir); *Lady Tabouli*, *Angela's Kitchen* (Griffin Theatre); *Resident Alien* (45 Downstairs); *Cabaret* (Hayes Theatre and Athenaeum); *Rumpelstiltskin* (Windmill Theatre and Southbank Theatre London); *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (Newtheatricals).

# Featured Ensemble



**Mark Doggett**

## Minister, Officer, Barrister, Hawker, DJ

Mark studied Musical Theatre at WAAPA, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts. Theatre credits include *Aladdin* (Disney), *My Fair Lady & South Pacific* (OA), *Fiddler on The Roof* (TML), *Ragtime*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *Sweet Charity*, *Hello, Dolly!*, *Hair*, *The Music Man* and *How to Succeed in Business* (TPC), *Batboy* (MTC), *The Threepenny Opera* (WA Opera), *The Merry Widow* (RUG), *Songs for a New World* (Tipoki Productions), *Les Miserables* (Drum Theatre) and *Sweeney Todd* (CLK Theatre). Screen credits include feature films *Upgrade*, *Purge* and *The Forest*. Television credits include *Glitch* (ABC), *Neighbours* (Ch10), *Blue Heelers* (Ch7), *Prank Patrol* (ABC) and *Underbelly – Squizzy* (Ch9).



**Mark Hill**

## Lover, Psychiatrist, Specialist

Mark graduated from NIDA in 2016 (BFA Acting). He is best known for playing Riff in Opera Australia's *West Side Story*, for which he was nominated for both a Helpmann Award and Sydney Theatre Award, and originating the role of Bjorn in Sydney Theatre Company's *Muriel's Wedding the Musical*. Theatre credits: Leo Bloom in *The Producers* (Altitude Theatre), Timothy Price in *American Psycho* (Sydney Opera House), Tulsa in *Gypsy* (Hayes Theatre Company), u/s Bert in *Mary Poppins* (Disney Theatricals/Cameron Mackintosh), *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (TML), *South Pacific* (Opera Australia), *The Boyfriend* and *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* (The Production Company). Screen credits: Rod in *Wakefield* (ABC/BBC/Jungle Entertainment), Eli Harris in *Wanted* (Matchbox/Seven Network), Patrick in *The Wayne Manifesto* (ABC) and Brad in *Cyber Girl* (Network 10).



**Nicole Melloy**

## Minister's Wife, Doctor, Psychiatrist's Assistant, Mrs Simpson

Nicole has a long and varied list of credits to her name, most recently Mary in *Merrily We Roll Along*, Alice B Toklas in critically acclaimed *Loving Repeating* and Sam in *Sexercise the Musical*. Other credits include Ellie May in *Showboat*, Magenta in *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Jersey Boys*, *Company*, *Legally Blonde*, *Dame Edna's Back with a Vengeance*, *Monty Python's Spamalot*, *Hurly Burly*, *Dolores*, *Spike Heels*, and *Dusty*, *42nd Street*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Little Me*, *Damn Yankees*, *Anything Goes* and *The Producers*, all for The Production Company. Screen credits include *Winners and Losers*, *Trip for Biscuits* and *The Doctor Blake Mysteries*.

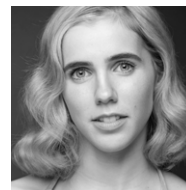


**John O'Hara**

## Officer, Judge, Harmonica Player, Vendor, Mr Simpson

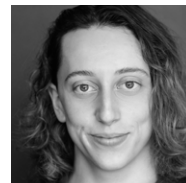
John's professional highlights include playing Dr. Frank N. Furter in *The Rocky Horror Show*, Ned Schneebly in *School of Rock*, Bernadette in *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*, Rodney in *Dusty*, Rum Tum Tugger in *Cats*, Roscoe Dexter in *Singin' In The Rain*, Peter in *Jesus Christ Superstar* and The Father in *Wicked*. Others include *Hair*, *Shout!*, *Eureka*, *Leader Of The Pack*, *High Society*, *Oklahoma!*, *The Boy From Oz*, *Rock of Ages*, *Company*, *Elegies*, *Songs For A New World*, *Songs from an Unmade Bed* and as a featured vocalist for *Rock Rhapsody*. John's solo shows include *#VAL - A Campfire Kiki With Mother*, *Dedications* and *That's Not Your Light, John!*.

# Ensemble



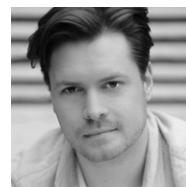
## Darcey Eagle - Sally Simpson

Darcey is a Melbourne-based performer whose stage credits include *Billy Elliot*, *the Musical*, The Production Company's *Lazarus* and *Morning Melodies* at Arts Centre Melbourne, where she appeared as a featured soloist. She graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts with a BFA in Music Theatre in 2019, and was the proud recipient of the Ron and Margaret Dobell Foundation Award that year. She feels incredibly lucky to be back on stage with Victorian Opera for *The Who's Tommy*.



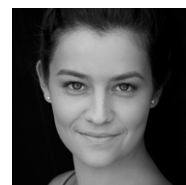
## Joshua Gordon

Joshua (he/him) is a 2021 graduate of the VCA (Music Theatre) where he was the honoured recipient of the Dr. Andrew McAliece & Dr Richard Simmie Award, and the Ron & Margaret Dobell Foundation Industry Award. Joshua is thrilled to be working with Victorian Opera once again in *The Who's Tommy*. Joshua is proudly represented by Ian White Management.



## David Hammond - 1st Local Lad

David trained at the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, Central School of Ballet and the London Studio Centre. Credits include *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (GFO), *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, *Curtains* (TPC), *Fiddler On The Roof* (TML), *Universal Studios Japan* and *Singapore, Royal Caribbean INTL*.



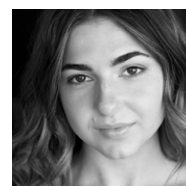
## Shaelyn Hughes

Shaelyn made her professional debut in *Billy Elliot the Musical* (2012). She went on to complete her Diploma of Musical Theatre on a full scholarship at Kelly Aykers Full Time Dance. Some of her credits include: John Foreman's *Aussie Pops Orchestras NYE concert*, *ACMI Stairs on Screen*, Melbourne Symphony Orchestras *Classic Hits* concert, ICC Cricket World Cup and multiple TVCs. Shaelyn is thrilled to join the cast and thanks her family, friends and mentors always.



## Jane Kingsford

Training: Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance, The Howard Fine Acting Studio, Estill Voice Training (London), House of Jazz Company (London). Theatre credits: *Curtains* (The Production Company), *Beauty and the Beast* (ANZ/Rob Guest Endowment). Dance credits: Boss Dance Company, the Australian Open, WDSF World Ballroom Championships and appearing alongside artists Missy Higgins, Tina Area and Birdz.



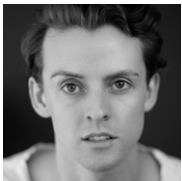
## Savannah Lind

Savannah completed the Diploma of Music Theatre at NIDA, before a further 3 years of study at the VCA. During this time, she performed in *Morning Melodies* as a featured soloist, *Flora the Red Menace* and *On The Town* and was the proud recipient of the Nancye Hayes Scholarship, which she used to further her study in New York. Savannah is very excited to be making her professional debut in *The Who's Tommy* with Victorian Opera.



### Anna Mallows

Anna is an accomplished all-round performer. In 2021, Anna graduated with a Bachelor Fine Arts (Music Theatre) from Victorian College of the Arts (VCA). Anna also completed VCA's Foundation Music Theatre program. VCA Credits include *Sweet Charity*, *Mongrel*, *The Hello Girls*. Anna is thrilled to be making her professional musical theatre debut in *The Who's Tommy*.



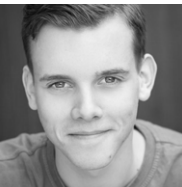
### Adam Noviello - 2nd Local Lad

Adam's theatre credits include *La Cage Aux Folles*, *Funny Girl*, *Matilda The Musical*, *Priscilla*, *Queen of the Desert*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *The Muse-A Song Cycle* and *Chess: The Musical*. Adam co-wrote, co-produced, and starred in the Award Winning Australian feature film *Spencer*. Adam's debut single *Heretic* is available on all streaming platforms.



### John Reed

Since graduating from Federation University Arts Academy with a Bachelor of Arts (Music Theatre), John's credits include *West Side Story* (Opera Australia), *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Funny Girl* (The Production Company), as well as *King Lear*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Much Ado About Nothing* (Melbourne Shakespeare Company).



### Jack Saunders

Jack is thrilled to be returning to Melbourne to join the cast of *The Who's Tommy* at the Palais Theatre. Previous professional credits include: Bob Gaudio in *Jersey Boys* (Legend House Intl.), Adam/Felicia in *Priscilla*, *Queen of the Desert* (NCL), Poseidon/Hell Dog in *Sylvia* (The Australian Ballet) and Imp in *Burn the Floor* (NCL).



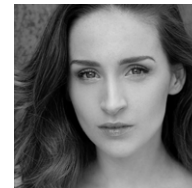
### Dean Schultz

Dean's theatre credits include Dance Captain in *The Rocky Horror Show* (John X Presents), *The Wizard of Oz* (GFO), *Paw Patrol LIVE!* (LifeLike Touring), *Dirty Dancing Immersive Theatre* (Secret Squirrel Prod), *LaTonga: A Cabaret Spectacular* (Robert Sturrock), *Hippo! Hippo!* (Garry Ginivan Attractions) and *Saturday Night Fever* (StageArt).



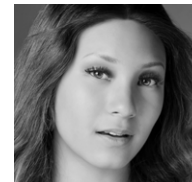
### Darren Tyler - Onstage Swing/Dance Captain

Darren has been involved with over 20 musicals in Australia and overseas, including *CATS*, *Saturday Night Fever*, *Miss Saigon*, *Oliver* and most recently the 10 year anniversary tour of *Billy Elliot*. He has also acted in various television commercials. Darren is very excited to be a part of this production of *The Who's Tommy*.



### Stephanie Wall - Onstage Swing

A 2016 WAAPA graduate, Stephanie's professional debut was understudying Dorothy Gale in the 2017 Australian tour of *The Wizard Of Oz*. Stephanie's recent credits include Mary in the 2019 Australian premiere of *The Beautiful Game*, *Amazing Grace-New York New York*, and Rachael in *Jack Frost-A New Musical*.



### Jun Woodfield

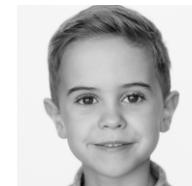
Jun is excited to be performing in her first professional musical as a Lass in Victorian Opera's production of *The Who's Tommy*. She is currently a dancer on the NBL South East Melbourne Phoenix basketball team. From Cairns training with Centre Stage Dance Studios for 11 years, she has made her way to Melbourne and trained full-time at Patrick School of the Arts. She has trained in various dance styles, singing, acting and 5 years of Aerial Silks.

## Young Tommy



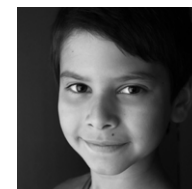
### Olivia Annetta

Olivia is making her professional theatre debut in *The Who's Tommy* and studies dance at Centrestage in Brunswick. Her credits include Short Films: *The Harry Complex Fringe Dweller*, TVCs: BUPA, ANZ Athlete's Foot, TV series: *Bad Behaviour* and NBC's *La Brea*. Olivia wishes to thank her family and Centrestage Agency for their support.



### Hamilton Binnie Garcia

*The Who's Tommy* marks Hamilton's professional debut! Despite this, he has gained a great deal of experience starring in several home shows produced by his beloved sister Candela, dating right back to his years as a toddler. Always the performer, he is currently honing his melodramatic flair in Musical Theatre classes at Jason Coleman's Ministry of Dance, and Drama at CentreStage Performing Arts School.



### Elijah Slavinskis

Elijah made his professional debut on his 8th birthday as Young Lola in *Kinky Boots* (Michael Cassel Group). Further credits include: Benji in *Priscilla*, *Queen of the Desert* (MCG), Mason in *School of Rock* (GWB) and Charlie in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (GFO). Elijah voices Davey in ABC's *Big Words Small Stories*. He trains at May Downs School of Dance, studies voice under Peter Rutherford and plays the double bass.



### Will Wiseman

Will is thrilled to be making his professional theatre debut in Victorian Opera's *The Who's Tommy*. His previous credits include campaigns for Visit Victoria, Riverview Farms and Fire Awareness. Will would like to thank his family, VCASS, Anthony Pepe, Crazy Feet Dance Studio and his agent Triple Talent Management.



# About Us



## Reimagining the potential of opera and musical theatre, for everyone

Victorian Opera is the state opera company of Victoria. We make creative, accessible and affordable work for everyone while adventurously evolving our art form.

Since the company was founded in October 2005, Victorian Opera has entertained hundreds of thousands of people with our imaginative approach to opera and musical theatre. Each year we premiere at least one new Australian opera, and have commissioned 32 new works since our formation.

We employ hundreds of people across the creative industries, recruit some of the finest local singers, and collaborate with Australia's leading companies, venues and learning institutions.

The next generation of talent is developed from the ground up through the Victorian Opera Youth Chorus Ensemble (VOYCE) and our innovative Access All Areas: Livestream Program.

We also stage opera in Tasmania biennially to share the joy of our art form even further.

Recognised for our unique contribution to the country's operatic landscape, Victorian Opera proudly became an Australian Major Performing Arts company in 2019. In 2021 we transitioned to the newly formed National Performing Arts Partnership Program.

As the world went into lockdown, we got to work, sharing our passion far and wide with a range of web series and online performances. Returning home to the stage, we embrace the new normal and will continue to perform in Victoria's finest theatres and concert halls to give our audiences the best possible and safest experience.

Be it live or online, Victorian Opera is here to inspire you.



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The late Richard Gill AO

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