

Wednesday 25 May 2022

MARY POPPINS COMPANY IN FULL FLIGHT AHEAD OF OPENING NIGHT

Following a triumphant run of preview performances, the Australian company of **MARY POPPINS** are perfectly poised to fly into opening night at the Sydney Lyric Theatre on Thursday 26 May.

Playing to packed houses since May 15, everyone from couples on date nights to intergenerational families have flocked to this new production from Cameron Mackintosh and Disney, which is even more magical than before.

Stefanie Jones, who leads the all-Australian cast as Mary Poppins, has been overwhelmed by the response of the audiences so far.

“Performing to such generous audiences is always an honour, and we are all loving their reactions to this special show. The emotional heart of the story really connects to the adults in the audience, and hearing children giggling in the comedic moments lifts us all on stage. And I hope that everyone is as enchanted by the stage magic as I am every night!”

NSW Minister for Tourism **Stuart Ayres** has also shared his excitement about what it means to be bringing the timeless tale of Mary Poppins to Sydney once again.

“I am delighted the Australian company of Mary Poppins are about to sprinkle some magic in the Sydney Lyric Theatre tomorrow night. I wish the cast and crew every success and strongly encourage Sydneysiders to go and experience the magic of Mary. This world-class production is a further demonstration that the Harbour City is open for business and welcoming visitors to enjoy our vast cultural offerings and hospitality. The NSW Government is committed to investing in premium productions like Mary Poppins to showcase Sydney as the nation’s culture and lifestyle capital and deliver on our goal of making NSW the premier visitor economy of the Asia Pacific.”

Several members of the original creative team for **MARY POPPINS** have made the trip from the UK to celebrate the opening night in Sydney.

Co-creator and producer **Cameron Mackintosh**, who wrote the original treatment for **MARY POPPINS** in the shadow of the Opera House 22 years ago, is thrilled to be back in the Harbour City with his new production.

“Australia is one of my favourite places in the world to work, so it is just wonderful to be back in Sydney. I was incredibly proud of the last production of Mary Poppins here over a decade ago, and I can pay no greater compliment to this cast that I didn’t think of the first production once. They are simply soaring. This cast have made it totally new and the reaction from preview audiences is even better than last time. So I can only echo PL Travers’ words and say they are ‘practically perfect in every way’.”

Also in Sydney for the opening night is **George Stiles**, writer of the musical’s new music including *Practically Perfect*. Stiles has been delighted by the Australian company, who are in fine form.

“Hearing Stefanie breathe new life into our songs is a truly beautiful experience – I love watching and hearing her perform with such grace. She truly is practically perfect!”

Seen by tens of millions of people worldwide, the original Tony and Olivier award-winning production was hugely successful in Australia, breaking box office records and winning a record-breaking eight Helpmann Awards. Now, a whole new generation of theatregoers have the chance to experience this magical stage adaptation of the wonderful stories by Australian author PL Travers.

The original music and lyrics by Richard M. Sherman and Robert B. Sherman include the classic songs *Jolly Holiday*, *Step in Time*, *Feed the Birds* and *Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious*. New songs and additional music are by the Olivier award-winning British team of George Stiles and Anthony Drewe. Book is by Academy Award®-winning screenwriter and *Downton*

Abbey creator Julian Fellowes, and this production is co-created by Cameron Mackintosh. The producer for Disney Theatrical Productions is Thomas Schumacher.

This production of **MARY POPPINS** has orchestrations by William David Brohn with dance and vocal arrangements by George Stiles. It has a new sound design by Paul Gatehouse and new lighting by Hugh Vanstone and Natasha Katz. Co-choreography is by Stephen Mear. The reimaged set and costume designs are by Bob Crowley. Co-direction and choreography is by Matthew Bourne and direction by Richard Eyre.

MARY POPPINS is produced in Australia by Cameron Mackintosh, The Walt Disney Company Australia and New Zealand, and Michael Cassel Group.

The Australian premiere of **MARY POPPINS** is supported by the NSW Government through its tourism and major events agency Destination NSW.

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MARY POPPINS

Now playing at the Sydney Lyric Theatre

Tickets are currently available for performances to 31 July 2022.

For more ticketing information including a schedule of performances, please visit
marypoppinsmusical.com.au/tickets-venue-info

Website: MaryPoppinsMusical.com.au

Instagram: @MaryPoppinsMusicalAU

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ABOUT CAMERON MACKINTOSH

With *LES MISÉRABLES*, *HAMILTON*, *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* and *MARY POPPINS* now open in London, *OLIVER!* open in Japan, *MISS SAIGON* open in Austria, and *MARY POPPINS* opening in Tokyo and Sydney this year, Cameron remains the world's most prolific producer of musicals, with over 50 shows either on or in pre-production internationally.

Cameron's Original productions include *LES MISÉRABLES*, *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* and *CATS* - the three longest running musicals of all time, now in their 4th decades - *MISS SAIGON*, *MARY POPPINS* (co-produced with Disney), *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS*, *SONG AND DANCE*, *TOMFOOLERY*, *MARTIN GUERRE*, *THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK*, *FIVE GUYS NAMED MOE* and *SIDE BY SIDE BY SONDHEIM*. He also reinvented modern versions of *OLIVER!*, *FOLLIES*, *HALF A SIXPENCE*, *BARNUM*, and *MY FAIR LADY*. His new versions of *LES MISÉRABLES*, *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA*, *MISS SAIGON*, and *OLIVER!* are now proving as successful as the original productions.

In 2013, alongside Working Title Films and Universal, Cameron produced the hugely successful Oscar, Golden Globe, and BAFTA award-winning film adaptation of *LES MISÉRABLES* which is the most successful movie ever of an original stage musical.

The sold-out staged concert of *LES MISÉRABLES* at the Gielgud Theatre in 2019 was also broadcast live to over 600 cinemas and is now the highest grossing one-night live event performance of all time - a unique achievement in the history of Musical Theatre and recently enjoyed another successful five-month season at the Sondheim, despite having a five-month hiatus due to Covid.

Cameron owns and operates eight historic London theatres which have all been spectacularly rebuilt and refurbished for the 21st century. They house many of London's successful hits. The Sondheim, formerly known as the Queen's, has been rebuilt and renamed in honour of Cameron's great friend, theatrical legend Stephen Sondheim.

Music Theatre International, the world's largest owner of secondary rights of many of the greatest musicals ever written, is now one of Cameron's companies.

Cameron was knighted in the 1996 New Year's Honours for his services to British theatre and he is the first British producer to be elected to Broadway's Theater Hall of Fame. In 1990, Cameron inaugurated the Chair of Contemporary Theatre at St. Catherine's College in Oxford University, with Stephen Sondheim as his visiting professor. He is also the president of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

ABOUT DISNEY THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS

DISNEY THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS, a division of The Walt Disney Studios, was formed in 1994 and operates under the direction of Thomas Schumacher. Worldwide, its 10 Broadway titles have been seen by more than 200 million theatergoers and have been nominated for 62 Tony® Awards, winning Broadway's highest honor 20 times. With 24 productions currently produced or licensed, a Disney musical is being performed professionally somewhere on the planet virtually every hour of the day.

The company's inaugural production, *Beauty and the Beast*, opened in 1994. It played a remarkable 13-year run on Broadway and has been produced in 37 countries worldwide. A brand-new production of *Beauty and the Beast*, reimaged by members of the original Broadway creative team – led by Matt West – is currently on tour throughout the UK and Ireland.

In November 1997, Disney opened *The Lion King*, which received six 1998 Tony Awards including Best Musical and Best Director, Julie Taymor, who became the first woman in Broadway history to win the award. Approaching 25 landmark years on Broadway, it has welcomed 110 million visitors worldwide to date and has 10 productions currently running worldwide. *The Lion King* has played over 100 cities in 21 countries on every continent except Antarctica. Its worldwide gross exceeds that of any film, Broadway show or other entertainment title in box office history.

Elton John and Tim Rice's *Aida* opened on Broadway next, winning four 2000 Tony Awards.

It was followed by *Mary Poppins*, a co-production with Cameron Mackintosh, which opened in London in 2004 and went on to enjoy a six-year Tony-winning Broadway run. The show continues its Olivier award-winning London return at its original home, the Prince Edward Theatre.

Tarzan®, which opened on Broadway in 2006, went on to become an international hit with an award-winning production enjoying a 10-year run in Germany.

In January 2008, *The Little Mermaid* opened on Broadway and was the best-selling new musical of that year.

DTP opened two critically acclaimed productions on Broadway in 2012, receiving seven Tony Awards between them: *Peter and the Starcatcher* and *Newsies*, each of which enjoyed a two-year run and launched North American tours, with *Newsies* playing a record-breaking Fathom Events in-cinema release.

Aladdin, Disney Theatrical's 2014 hit, continues its smash Broadway run. It has launched eight productions around the globe and been seen by more than 14 million guests.

Its newest hit, the 2018 Tony-nominated Best Musical *Frozen*, completed its record-breaking Broadway run in March 2020, and currently has five productions around the world: the North American tour, Australia, Japan, London, and Hamburg.

Other successful stage ventures have included the Olivier-nominated London hit *Shakespeare in Love*, stage productions of *Disney's High School Musical*, *Der Glöckner Von Notre Dame* in Berlin, and *King David* in concert.

DTP has collaborated with the nation's preeminent theaters to develop new stage musicals including *The Jungle Book*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Freaky Friday* and *Hercules*.

As a part of the recent acquisition of 21st Century Fox, DTP also heads the Buena Vista Theatrical banner, which licenses Fox titles for stage adaptations including *Anastasia*, *Moulin Rouge! The Musical*, *Mrs. Doubtfire*, and *The Devil Wears Prada*.

ABOUT MICHAEL CASSEL GROUP

Michael Cassel Group is a leading live entertainment company formed to produce and create the world's greatest musical and theatrical productions and live entertainment. Productions include the first international tour of the world's #1 musical, *The Lion King*, the Australian premieres of the award-winning productions *Hamilton*, *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* and *Juliet*, and new productions of *Mary Poppins* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

Previous productions include *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, *Les Misérables*, *Kinky Boots*, *Singin' In The Rain* and *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*. Concert tours and major events include *The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo*, *Celeste Barber*, *Tina Arena*, *Darren Criss* and *Lea Salonga*, along with the opening celebration of the *ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2020* which was televised internationally. In addition to the group's expanding theatrical interests, the company represents former Australian Prime Minister, The Hon. Julia Gillard AC, journalist and broadcaster Liz Hayes, former Olympian and global sporting administrator Lord Sebastian Coe CH, KBE, *Strictly You* by Sonia Kruger & Better Homes and Gardens personality Charlie Albone. TixTrack Australasia, a partnership between TixTrack Inc and Michael Cassel Group, provides ticketing for live entertainment and cultural organisations in Australia and New Zealand including the Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC). Michael Cassel Group is headquartered in Sydney, with offices in New York, Singapore, and Melbourne.

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