

## **Sweeney Todd Pre-Show Note for Audio Description.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to this introduction of Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street. This musical was written by Stephen Sondheim and Hugh Wheeler, and opened on Broadway in 1979, after which it won the Tony Award for Best Musical and Olivier Award for Best New Musical. It is presented in Singapore for the first time by The Singapore Repertory Theatre.

The Audio Described Performance is on Saturday the 8th of December at 6pm. There will be a touch tour from 4:30pm to 5pm at the venue. The performance itself lasts approximately 2 hours and 45 minutes including a 20-minute interval. Your audio describers are Seren Chen and Rebekah Sangeetha Dorai. Note the venue for this performance is at MBS Sands Theatre. 4 Bayfront Ave, B1, Singapore 018973.

### **SYNOPSIS**

Sweeney Todd, an unjustly exiled barber, returns to London seeking vengeance for himself and his wife and daughter. There he finds Mrs. Lovett, the resourceful proprietress of a failing meat pie shop. He opens a new barber practice above her store, and together, they devise a horrifyingly efficient business model to supply Mrs. Lovett's shop with meat and provide Sweeney ample opportunity for revenge...

### **PRODUCTION CREDITS**

The Director of this show is Bobby Garcia.

The Musical Director, Gerard Salonga.

The Musical Staging is by Cecile Martinez.

The Set Design, David Gallo.

Lighting Design, Aaron Porter.

Sound Design, Justin Stasiw.

Costume Design, Rajo Laurel.

Vocal Director, Manman Angsico.

Hair and Makeup Design, Leslie Espinosa.

## CAST, CHARACTERS, AND COSTUMES

Let me tell you a little bit more about the cast, characters, and costumes. There are 10 primary characters accompanied by 6 ensemble members, and each of them have their eyes rimmed with dark makeup - some more heavily than others - emphasising a sense of hauntedness. Their clothing palettes are also generally drab, in muted shades of brown, grey, and blue, with notable exceptions.

The titular character **Sweeney Todd** is played by **Jett Pangan** in a deep, sonorous baritone. He is tall, with short, dark hair gone grey at the temples, sometimes covered by a grey fedora. He is pale, with eyes purple and sunken. He is constantly draped in layers - a black button-down, followed by a dark denim unbuttoned overshirt, and a coat. He wears dark jeans and a brown belt, paired with brown shoes, and a silver chain running from a belt loop into his left pocket. He sometimes wears a charcoal scarf, shot through with stripes of brown.

**Mrs. Lovett** is played by **Lea Salonga** in her penetrating mezzo-soprano. Spurred by the unexpected reunion with her object of infatuation, she conceals a secret from Sweeney to keep him by her side. With her untamed, jaw-length wavy dark hair and copper, black-patterned smock, she's unmistakeable. The wide v-neck reveals black bra straps, matching her black fingerless gloves. Her dark green, form-fitting pants come up to mid-calf, revealing two strips of fishnet-clad leg that disappear into boots – sometimes burgundy, sometimes a muddy, metallic mustard. Often, she wears a grubby olive-green apron over her dress, and when business begins to boom, she affixes a flamboyant, bright red feather hairpiece to her head.

**Adolfo Pirelli**, the so-called Italian barber with an ostensibly magic elixir to restore hair growth, is played by **Nyoy Volante**. His black hair is coiffed, with shaved sides and thick sideburns, paired with equally thick eyebrows and a dense moustache and goatee. He wears a slate-blue and burgundy tartan jacket and kilt, with a small, silvery, glittering pouch hanging around his neck. Most striking, however, is

the royal blue cape draped over his shoulders, which he frequently swishes about to dramatic effect.

His young charge, **Tobias Ragg**, more often referred to as **Toby**, is played by **Luigi Quesada** in his clear, soaring tenor - used to great effect in hawking wares. When we first see him, he sports an olive beanie concealing a full head of glossy, brown, shoulder-length locks, and a threadbare, long-sleeved shirt in muted multicolour. His shorts are teal, paired with knee-high socks thickly striped in green, black, and cream, tucked into black ankle-high boots.

**Judge Turpin**, who unjustly sentenced **Sweeney Todd** to a life in exile and adopted his daughter Johanna, is played by **Andrew Fernando** in a plummy baritone. He stands slightly shorter than Sweeney, with a plump frame all wrapped up in a black three-piece suit. Outside, he wears a black fedora and a long black coat that comes to mid-calf and covers most of his hulking frame.

His sidekick, a church officer named **Beadle Bamford**, is played by **Arman Ferrer**. He sports shaved sides, greasy, centre-parted hair, and an unexpected proclivity for music. He wears a blue-green checked shirt with a pair of black-and-white checked pants, accessorised with black leather harnesses strapped across his torso and left thigh and a black, studded leather belt. His coat is black, adorned with multiple skull motifs all around.

Sweeney Todd's daughter, **Johanna Barker**, is played by **Mikkie Bradshaw-Volante**. Taken under Judge Turpin's wing as a child, her freedom is heavily restricted under his household. Throughout the play, she wears a knee-length ivory dress with a plunging neckline and an empire waist, matched with a burgundy cardigan, brown tights, and black boots. With long, blonde hair, pink cheeks, and a sweet, soaring soprano, she immediately attracts the attention of Anthony Hope.

**Anthony Hope**, a young sailor who rescued Sweeney at sea and helped him to London, is played by **Gerald Santos**. Upon reaching London, he is swiftly

captivated by Johanna, whom he hears singing from her window. He is young and clean-shaven, with hair cut short and neat. He wears a sunshine yellow sweater and navy suit, with the yellow peeking out past his coat sleeves. His suit pants are cropped above the ankle, revealing his blue and green diamond-patterned socks and a pair of black oxfords. His trench coat, when he wears it, is camel brown.

The **beggar woman**, who first appears upon Anthony and Sweeney's arrival in London and remains a mainstay throughout the play, is played by **Ima Castro** in a versatile soprano – sometimes sweet, and sometimes shrill and shrieky. Her hunched frame and wild hair is draped in an old, raggedy purple-red hooded shawl, with loose yarn hanging from every edge. She carries an old, rusty can to beg coins from strangers. Sometimes, her entire demeanor shifts, and she loudly and crudely invites sex instead. She appears insane.

**Jonas Fogg**, the owner of Fogg's Asylum, is played by **Dean Rosen**. He has long, black hair pulled back into braids as well as a thick moustache and goatee. He wears a dark denim jacket with studs across his upper torso, sparkling in the lights. His pants are dark denim and heavily ripped, with multiple iron-on patches adorning it.

## SET AND SETTING

Although the original Sweeney Todd musical was set to be in the 1800s in London, this iteration presents a fresh, modern spin where the story takes place in an abandoned hospital's asylum which is now filled with abandoned cars. The production has chosen to use clapped out automobiles in the setting, backdrop and stage furniture. A single car takes centre stage, and the look is gritty, gloomy and industrial – a departure from the traditional Victorian setting. And there is more than meets the eye here. A modern take on the stage, it has eye-catching scenes that depart from the usual rotating centre stage and shifting pathways.

When the set is revealed, it is shown to be partitioned into 6 main sections:

### **First, the backdrop**

The backdrop consists of a massive white sailcloth panning the entirety of the height and width of the stage. It features a print of 1880's style Victorian windows, some cracked and some broken. Sandwiched between two floors of windows is a large signage spelling out the words "Fogg's asylum" in large, thick, capital letters. The entire backdrop is printed in light, tinted grey ink to signify a faded, utilitarian and desolate asylum. There are, in total, 4 floors of windows depicted, with the topmost level fading off into the rafters, the third floor rows clear and visible, the second floor hidden from view by the Gangway, and the first floor (which is level with the stage floor) is barely visible behind the set and cast who use the stage as a level playing field.

### **Second, the gangway or alleyway creating a second level where actors can traverse.**

The gangway is fashioned as the top of an old neo-gothic style bridge. The walking path of the bridge is level, with no bends or turns. The underside of the bridge, however, features Victorian-gothic architectural elements. It is divided into three sections - each bearing a curved arched entryway for actors to roam free under the bridge. Halogen glass bulbs hang from various points on the underside of the bridge, illuminating the walkway beneath. Almost all the bulbs are housed within either wired pendant fixtures, or circular lamp shades with colours mirroring the dusty and rusted state of its vehicular counterparts. The bridge is flanked and secured by two rectangular pillars on both stage right, and left.

### **Third, the far right of the stage**

The far right of the stage features a rotary spiral staircase. The staircase has a total of 13 metal steps that end on a larger, clunky stair that is slightly tilted to the left by an estimated 20°, before landing squarely on the gangway. The staircases themselves are flanked by steel bannisters that rise up to a height of 1m; the bannister curves from the bottom of the stairs all the way to the top. Behind the stairs stands a large aforementioned rectangular pillar, fashioned out of masking and made to look like brick. It is painted liberally with black and grey paint to

make it look like it was left untouched for many years, and filled with grime, dirt, and oils.

There is also rubble aplenty strewn at the bottom foreground of stage right, situated near the front and around the vicinity of the staircase and pillar. The rubble consists of two large empty metal barrels (both brown and rusted), neglected car parts such as an old corroborator, exhaust pipe, one old rusted tire, and a discarded and rusty car bonnet.

Two more metal barrels sit behind the staircase, flanked by rubble fashioned from Styrofoam and masking but made to look like broken stones and bits of concrete have come apart from the walls.

#### **Fourth, the far left of the stage**

The far left features a pillar identical to size and design to the one described on stage right. This side however, does not have a staircase. It instead features a giant oven that is situated to the left of the pillar. It is a metal box resembling a cage constructed with bars on all 4 sides approximately 2.5m in height. Only the top is covered with an opaque piece of plywood that does not let light shine through. One of the sides of the cage is fashioned into a makeshift door that opens outwards. Rubble also sit on the right of the pillar; consisting of about 5-6 metal barrels varying in heights of approximately 1m-1.5m, and varying in colours ranging from dark grey, dirty beige, to burnt orange. There are also two tires stacked one on top the other next to the barrels, which the cast use from time to time to stand on and sing.

#### **Fifth, the centre foreground**

The centre foreground is relatively forlorn and empty, save for a single, rusty, siren-red car. Its front is modelled after a vintage 1950s Chevrolet Bel-air, while its rear serves ample space in its pickup bed. This car houses the majority of the story's central scenes. The front hood of the car, for instance, becomes the counter for Mrs Lovett's pie shop, while its pick-up bed at its rear houses Sweeney's barber shop. To demarcate the changes in location and scene changes, the car is shifted often in its spot during the course of the play - either

horizontally and parallel to the stage, or vertically and driven out from under the centre archway of the aforementioned bridge.

### **Sixth, suspended sets**

Besides the main car, four other cars are suspended in space above the pillars on both stage left, and right. On each side, one car is suspended at level with the bridge, and the other is suspended directly 2m above it. They are all 4 door sedans varying in age, model, make and colour. In clockwise order starting from the top right car, they are a Black vintage Chevy, Burnt orange sedan, Dark grey 80s SUV, Pale blue 70s four door sedan.

## **ACCESS INFORMATION**

SRT aims to provide an excellent experience and service for all patrons who may require additional support to access our venue and enjoy our events.

For accessible booking options please contact us at 6733 8166 from 10am to 6pm Monday to Friday.

Sands Theatre is located at Galleria Level B1 within The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands, a 10-minute walk from the Bayfront MRT station. Regular bus services stop directly outside the entrance to Sands Theatre on Bayfront Avenue. The closest car and taxi pick-up and drop-off point is outside The Shoppes entrance on Bayfront Avenue, a 3-minute walk from Sands Theatre, and the closest car park is North Car Park, entry via Bayfront Avenue.

For public transport options, the nearest bus stop is located on Bayfront Avenue, Bus Stop Number, 03501, Marina Bay Sands Theatre, which is outside the Sands Theatre, opposite the Hotel Lobby Tower 3.

Marina Bay Sands is serviced by the following bus routes:

Every day by 97, 106, 518, 133, 502.

Every day except Saturday, Sunday, and public holidays by 97E, 502A, 518A.

Late nights Friday, Saturday, and the eve of public holidays by NR1, NR6.

Marina Bay Sands is linked directly to the CE1/DT16 Bayfront Station on the Circle Line and Downtown Line of Singapore's Mass Rapid Transit train system.

MRT services to or from Bayfront Station operate daily from approximately 6:00am to 12:00am midnight. Visit the TransitLink Journey Planner to learn today's MRT service schedules to Bayfront Station.

Exits C & D connect to The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands to then access Sands Theatre, approximately a 10 minute walk.

The touch tour will commence 90 minutes before the show at 4:30pm. Please meet at the Box Office at the main entrance of Sands Theatre.

Please bring your own mobile phone and earphones and download the Sennheiser Mobile Connect App prior to your visit. The Box Office team have two spare handsets available for use if necessary and can be collected from the Box Office. Please set aside ample time to check your application and connectivity.

The Box Office is located at the entrance of the Sands Theatre, Galleria Level B1. The friendly Box Office team will gladly assist you.

Accessible toilets can be found on all levels of the theatre. Please approach a member of staff for directions.

Sands Theatre has a variety of wheelchair seats, both for sitting in your wheelchair and transferring options. If you require a wheelchair space, or would like to understand more about transferring options, please contact our venue team at [boxoffice@srt.com.sg](mailto:boxoffice@srt.com.sg) or 6733 8166.

We look forward to welcoming you and hope you have a wonderful time with us.

**END**