

ARMIDALE DRAMA AND MUSICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS:

# COMPANY

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY  
STEPHEN SONDHEIM  
BOOK BY GEORGE FURTH

MUSICAL DIRECTOR  
BRUCE MENZIES

DIRECTOR & DESIGNER  
ANDREW O'CONNELL

## STARRING

TAHNEE DENTON, KATE FRAZIER, ZOE GEORGE, LANA HOWLETT,  
CAL HUNTER, RICHIE KIEHNE, JORDAN LANE, JONO MCATEER,  
JAMES MEYER, SARAH MEYER, EMILY STOCKER,  
GENEVA STOCKER, NICK TROON, EMILY WALDRON

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ORIGINALLY PRODUCED AND DIRECTED ON BROADWAY BY HAROLD PRINCE  
LICENSED EXCLUSIVELY BY MUSIC THEATRE INTERNATIONAL (AUSTRALASIA)  
ALL PERFORMANCE MATERIALS SUPPLIED BY HAL LEONARD

# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

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From the very outset I want it to be known that Bruce was the one who approached me to do *Company* – me, the (then) thirty-five unmarried man who spent his life surrounded by married couples nattering at his bachelorhood – and *he* finally talked *me* around to joining him on this, *his* passion project. Let it never be thought for a second that this musical is extravagant, indulgent, personal Arts therapy.

However, as seems always to be the case with Sondheim, it is hard not to find truths in the lyrics and the dialogue and the very music itself. Part of the joy of staging this work was reflecting on the nature of partnerships with the cast and crew, interrogating the words and songs in rehearsal, and reflecting on each of our experiences with love and relationships and the dimensions to be found in all these characters and situations. It has been my absolute joy to sit in the rehearsal room or the theatre and constantly find something new to be discovered in this story, something moving me to reflect on my own life and choices. I am always drawn to the paradox Harry and the others identify in 'Sorry, Grateful' – your relationships will fundamentally define you, yet you remain the absolute truest self in spite of them. Everything, and nothing.

*Company* is an intimate, personal exploration of life, love, and how our relationships – romantic or otherwise – shape us. I felt that the newly-refurbished Armidale Playhouse would be the perfect place for this story, bringing such a human show into such a small space, allowing a unique exchange between actors and audience granted by the little theatre. It's a grand experiment, a proof of concept, to unsettle the view that musical theatre is only thought of as blockbuster spectacles on large stages – that has its place, but musicals can also be rich and nuanced and challenging and subtle. At least, Sondheim's can.

Bruce is a powerhouse with such a love for *Company*, and his passion to see this work staged in Armidale has endured many years to finally resolve into the production before you. The show you are going to watch exists because of him. Robyn, Stuart, Carolyn, Pat, and Greg have been amazing to work with, giving of their time and driven by no more than a sincere will to see this show be all it can be. And it has been the greatest honour to work with the incredible cast from the very first session. They are generous and kind and dedicated and honest and wickedly funny, and have been the best of company these last couple of months. They are a truly special group of people and I will be always grateful, and never sorry, to have had the impossibly brilliant fortune to work with each and every one of them.

Andrew O'Connell, Director

# PRODUCTION TEAM

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## BRUCE MENZIES - MUSICAL DIRECTOR



Bruce Menzies has lived and worked in Armidale for more than thirty years and has been closely involved in community performing arts over this time. He has directed the music for over 20 shows with the Armidale Drama and Musical Society and also conducts and performs regularly with Fiori Musicali and the Armidale Symphony Orchestra. He feels privileged to have helped prepare Stephen Sondheim's ground-breaking musical *Company* with Andrew O'Connell, Robyn Bradley and this outstanding cast, crew and instrumentalists for the first fully staged music theatre performance in the newly restored Playhouse. Having conducted *Sweeney Todd* and *Into the Woods* for the Armidale Playhouse, Bruce has become fascinated by the Sondheim clash between high art and popular appeal. Somehow his unique genius is simultaneously driven by the profound and the accessible. *Company* meets its apotheosis when the show's prevaricating bachelor Robert sings "Being Alive," a declaration that commitment, however flawed, is better than loneliness. Only Sondheim could have conceived and written this.

## ANDREW O'CONNELL - DIRECTOR, DESIGNER



After many years working with ADMS the Hoskins Centre Manager, Andrew is finally taking an active creative role as the Director and Designer of *Company*. He completed a Bachelor Arts/Bachelor Teaching through the University of New England and has completed various professional development and theatre training around the globe, including the Summer Intensive Program at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts (AADA) in New York during his radical theatrical sabbatical in 2017. He first encountered Sondheim at college, performing in *West Side Story* in 2005 and directing *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* in 2008, and more recently directed *Sweeney Todd* at The Armidale School in 2021. Locally, he has worked with Felt Tip Theatre and Veracity Theatre and has devised works as part of GrimeyStrike that have toured the region and Sydney Fringe Festival. Amy may claim she has "never seen one good marriage" but Andrew is thankful to have grown up with the loving, generous, and often-hilarious partnership between his parents Kerrie and Richard, and will forever be indebted to them for encouraging his love of the Arts.

# PRODUCTION TEAM

## ROBYN BRADLEY - ACCOMPANIST



Robyn Bradley has been an accompanist in Armidale for many years and has been repetiteur for rather a lot of ADMS and Playhouse productions. *Company* is her fourth Sondheim musical, after *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Sweeney Todd* and *Into the Woods*, and she has really enjoyed the intricacies and challenges of the *Company* score. Robyn is delighted to be working with Andrew O'Connell for the first time and with the wonderful production team - Bruce, Carolyn, Stuart, Greg and Pat. She feels very privileged to be playing with such a talented group of musicians and really admires how they are dealing with the challenges of working in a very small space.

## STUART PAVIL - STAGE MANAGER



Stuart has been involved in theatre and music since kindergarten. Over many years he has been a performer and musical director, and whilst having been stage manager for numerous concerts and performances, this is his first foray into stage management for a musical. While the task can be daunting, it has been made much easier and pleasurable by working with such a fantastic cast and crew, and being ably assisted by Greg Quast, who can reach things Stuart can't.

## CAROLYN SHEPHERD - PRODUCER



Carolyn Shepherd has been associated with ADMS productions since 2009 and began as a stagehand with Sondheim's *Into The Woods*. Further involvement has been principally with managing the sound on many ADMS productions. This is her first time as Producer of a production and she has found it to be a wonderful opportunity to see a show, particularly one as intricate and insightful as Sondheim's *Company*, develop from beginning to end under very clever direction with a talented, hard-working and delightful production team and cast.

## PAT BRADLEY - TECHNICAL DESIGN



Pat has enjoyed assisting ADMS productions technically with set, sound and lighting over the past 20 years. He is particularly delighted to be asked to light *Company* as we all learn what wonderful new experiences the newly refurbished Playhouse venue is capable of providing for Armidale audiences.

## GREG QUAST - ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER



Greg honed the pragmatic talents now finding use in ADMS and The Playhouse projects as a farmer, thrill-seeking impact investor and small business operator. He is first cousin to the more famous Phillip, and has always possessed a keen appreciation of music, dance and theatrical experiences. Greg is thrilled to use his practical skills to further exciting projects like *Company*, and has enjoyed working with the talented cast and crew of *Company*, and learning stagecraft from his friend and mentor Stuart. From his lofty viewpoint, the future looks bright for Armidale theatre!





# CAST



## **TAHNEE DENTON - AMY**

Tahnee graduated with a BA Communications- Theatre/ Media at CSU in Bathurst. She has trained in a range of areas including devised, physical, modern, Australian and classic theatre. During her study a love of children's theatre sparked and she joined a traveling theatre company. Tahnee has performed with the Tamworth Musical Society, playing the role of Amy in their production of *Company*, Gertrude in *Seussical* and Little Red in *Into the Woods*. Film credits include the role of Flossy in *Just Fine* for G.Fletcher Cinema and an extra in Angelina Jolie's *Unbroken*. Her Armidale appearances have included playing Cherry in Veracity Theatre's production of *Cosi*, Lina Lamont in ADMS's production of *Singin' in the Rain* and Sophie in *Mamma Mia*. In her working life, Tahnee uses her creativity as a Communications & Marketing Coordinator. Tahnee is stoked to be playing Amy alongside such a talented bunch performers, musicians and creators. She hopes you enjoy the show!



## **KATE FRAZIER - MARTA**

Kate is so excited to join the wonderful cast of Armidale Drama and Musical Society's *Company* in the role of Marta. Performing as a singer for as long as she can remember, Kate has been involved in a handful of Armidale based productions including playing Constable Susan in *To Hunt A Killer* (Dark Stories), Ali in *Mamma Mia* (ADMS), and Zelda Zanders in *Singin' In The Rain* (ADMS). When not on stage, Kate is an English Literature student at UNE and works at the Catholic Schools Office. A Sondheim fanatic, she is so grateful for the opportunity to work with this amazing cast and crew on such a complex and stunning production. Kate hopes you enjoy the experience that is *Company*!



## **ZOE GEORGE - APRIL**

Stephen Sondheim is one of Zoe's favourite musical theatre composers, and so is very excited to play the character of April in Armidale Drama and Musical Society's *Company*! Some of Zoe's other theatre credits include: The Who's *TOMMY* (ADMS, 2016), *The Little Mermaid* (Aquata - RMS, 2018), *Heathers: The Musical* (UTS Backstage, 2018), and *Les Misérables* (Eponine - ADMS, 2022). Zoe has a Bachelor of Music (Performance) and is currently in her third year of studying a Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) at Macquarie University, Sydney. She is working towards combining her passions for the arts and psychology to help highlight the unique circumstances that affect the mental health of performing artists. Helping bring this musical to life with such a talented cast and crew has deepened Zoe's appreciation for the layers of meaning that Sondheim embeds in his musicals, and hopes you ponder each scene's meaning as much as she has.



## **LANA HOWLETT - JENNY**

Lana is excited to be playing Jenny in *Company*, and to see Andrew and Bruce's vision come to life. This is her first encounter with Sondheim's work, and she has loved the challenge it brings. Lana has always had a strong passion for the performing arts. She was an active member of Astrid Blake's Stage One School of Drama during her school years and joined ADMS in 1994, when she played Louisa Von Trapp in *The Sound of Music*. Since returning to Armidale in 2015, she has performed in many ADMS productions, including playing Pilar in *Legally Blonde*, Heather Chandler in *Heathers: The Musical*, Kathy Seldon in *Singin' in the Rain* and Fantine in this year's production of *Les Misérables*. She is thrilled to be working with the talented *Company* team on this complex and exhilarating project and would like to thank all involved, including her family, for continuing to support and enable her creative endeavours.



## **CAL HUNTER - PETER**

Calliden has been involved in theatre since a young age, recently achieving a first class honours in Theatre and Performance at UNE. You may recognise them from some of their previous musical theatre roles such as J.D. in *Heathers* (ADMS, 2018), Moritz in *Spring Awakening* (Little Fish, 2019) and most recently Marius in *Les Misérables* (ADMS, 2022). They are very excited to be a part of this fantastic team and to help bring *Company* to life!



## **RICHIE KIEHNE - LARRY**

Richie is looking forward to showing off this fantastic production alongside this wonderful cast. He has been involved in a number of productions, most recently being cast as a drunk in ADMS' *Les Misérables*, proving once again type casting is a thing. Much more comfortable building the set than being in front of it, Richie is extremely happy to show off what this cast and crew have been working on and hopes you thoroughly enjoy the experience.



# CAST



## JORDAN LANE - DAVID

Company is Jordan's debut performance with ADMS, and his first time on stage since 2014. He has previously been involved in the ensemble of Orange Theatre Company's *The Wizard of Oz* and *Chicago* and is looking forward to his first role where his character actually has a name! While Jordan has not acted on stage in a while, his job as an English and History teacher ensures his performance skills are up to scratch, as his captive (and sometimes critical) audiences in class keep him on his toes. If you're left wondering what you've just seen, don't ask Jordan - he's not really sure how to follow the plot either!



## JONO MCATEER - ROBERT

An Armidale local, Jono is utterly thrilled to be playing Robert in ADMS' production of *Company*. From an early age, Jono has always enjoyed pretending to be things he was not - and over the course of a couple of decades, he's gotten fairly good at it, even if he says so himself. Since departing the misty peaks of tropical Queensland to study theatre and performance at the University of New England, Jono has portrayed such roles as Antony in EPC's production of *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, alternating roles of Nick Bottom/Demetrius in UNE Theatre Departments production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Tin Man in Port Macquarie Players' *The Wizard of Oz*, and most recently understudied for Enjolras in ADMS' production of *Les Misérables*. Jono sincerely hopes you have a fantastic time watching this beautiful show of life, love, and companionship, and hopes you see a little bit of your own relationships within - because that's what it's really about, isn't it?



## JAMES MEYER - HARRY

James is absolutely thrilled to be returning to musical theatre after a 25-yr hiatus, first fulfilling a life-long dream as a cast member of ADMS' recent (and wildly successful!) production of *Les Misérables*, and now happily resuming his love-hate relationship with Steven Sondheim in *Company*. Contrary to what may be suggested in the show itself, he is absolutely loving sharing this experience with Sarah, his wife of nearly 20 years. Lots of love and thanks to our two long-suffering daughters Maddie and Belle for their support and patience, and apologies to them for the songs getting stuck in thief heads for weeks to come!



## SARAH MEYER - SARAH

Sarah Meyer is new to Armidale, having come from America earlier this year. It has been decades since her last performance and she's happy to be debuting in *Company* alongside her husband. Outside of ADMS, she keeps busy with her 2 daughters and all of their activities, and enjoying all of the new and different things Australia has to offer.



## EMILY STOCKER - JOANNE

Emily's mum says she was a talented kid who began working professionally at Phillip St Theatre, Sydney as an enthusiastic 10-year-old. She went on to roles in film and television working with directors Gillian Armstrong and Jane Campion; performing alongside actors including Judy Davis, Justine Clarke, Noah Taylor and Claudia Karvan. But Emily says this a bit too much name dropping for one bio. After a tragic but somewhat cliché crash and burn from childhood stardom, Emily stumbled her way into performing in local productions including *Hatpin* (ADMS), soloist in *Missa Criolla* (Fiori Musicali) and Mama Morton in *Chicago* (Little Fish). Better known locally as a bolshie frontwoman in bands including The Gravy and Hey Charger, she was also co-director of The Armidale PUBCHOIR and has a Masters Degree in Clinical Psychology. Emily is excited to work with theatre boffin, Andrew O'Connell, and this talented and vibrant young ensemble in the ADMS production of *Company*!



## GENEVA STOCKER - KATHY

Geneva has been performing with ADMS since 2014 and has enjoyed every minute of it. Musicals, plays, backstage, and front of house, she loves to be involved, from minor roles in shows like *Jesus Christ Superstar* (ADMS) and *Les Misérables* (ADMS) to supporting lead roles in *Heathers* (ADMS) and *Spring Awakening* (Little Fish) This year she is thrilled to be playing the part of Kathy in Stephen Sondheim's *Company*, a show that is equal parts challenging and exciting. She is even more thrilled to be working with an incredible cast that includes some of Armidale's best performers and some of the best *Company*! around.

# CAST



## NICK TROON - PAUL

Nick is a third year UNE Student studying a Bachelor of Arts (Theatre & Performance). He has been performing in Armidale since 2013 with *Company* being his 31st local production and his 8th production with ADMS. Nick enjoys all things theatre and is excited to wrap his vocal chords around Sondheim's musical insanity.



## EMILY WALDRON - SUSAN

*Company* is Emily's fifth musical with ADMS, having previously performed in *Legally Blonde* (Enid Hoopes), *Singin' in The Rain* (Ensemble), *Mamma Mia* (Lisa) and earlier this year, *Les Misérables* (Ensemble). Emily has also performed in various concerts and gala nights for ADMS, as well as a number of plays for UNE, Felt Tip Theatre and Veracity Theatre. Off stage, Emily has a Bachelor of Theatre and Performance from UNE and is currently completing a Masters of Teaching. This is Emily's first Sondheim and she is ecstatic to be amongst such talented people. Emily will continue her Sondheim journey next year as she directs ADMS' major musical for 2023, *Into the Woods*.





# BAND

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## **BRUCE MENZIES - CONDUCTOR**

## **ROBYN BRADLEY - KEYBOARD**

## **TOBY ARMSTRONG - WOODWINDS**

Toby Armstrong is a clarinetist and saxophonist who moved to Armidale this year to work as a Kindergarten teacher. He has enjoyed the rich musical opportunities on offer in the New England, playing musicals, orchestral programs and chamber music. His qualifications include a BMusStudies on clarinet as well as LMusA and AMusA on both clarinet and saxophone. In addition to playing reed instruments, he is active in the Irish music scene, playing flute and whistle.

## **CARY BENNETT - PERCUSSION**

Cary Bennett is a drummer/vocalist and graduate of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music's Jazz Studies program. He has been involved in a number of ADMS productions including *Singin' In the Rain*; *Grand Opening*; *Another Opening, Another Show*; and various Favourite Shorts productions (as actor/director). Having the opportunity to work with Bruce and Robyn again, as well as Andrew O'Connell, the talented cast, crew, and musicians assembled for *Company* was an offer Cary could not refuse.

## **DAVE BROWN - TROMBONE**

Dave's time spent playing trombone almost predates the history of the trombone itself and for the past 22 years he has been a regular performer with ADMS. These 22 years have seen many highlights but none more exciting than seeing ADMS musicals return to The Armidale Playhouse. It was well worth the wait.

## **DAVE CARR - WOODWINDS**

David Carr started playing clarinet 50 years ago and has been accumulating (hoarding) instruments ever since. Many of these instruments were acquired to be able to play musical scores, first with Tamworth Musical Society and Youth Orchestra, then with many school and amateur theatre companies and ADMS. In *Company*, he is enjoying tackling Sondheim's challenging score on five different woodwinds.

## **WENDY GRIFFITHS - BASS**

Wendy is an Armidale local whose first involvement with the ADMS was in 1995 where she played double bass in the ensemble for *Oliver!* Since then, Wendy has been involved in a number of ADMS performances, with the highlight being the 2002 production of *Les Misérables*. Wendy is thrilled with the recently rejuvenated Armidale Playhouse, and has loved the opportunity to perform in the space whilst working with an exceptional bunch of actors and musicians.

## **BRUCE MYERS - TRUMPET**

Bruce has been playing trumpet for 39 years and has been playing various brass instruments with ADMS for 18 of those years. As one of Sondheim's best musicals, playing the score for *Company* has been a real challenge and a delight. Thank you to ADMS for continuing to produce such amazing shows. Keep it up!





# A LITTLE BIT ABOUT STEPHEN SONDHEIM

An intellectually rigorous artist who perpetually sought new creative paths, Stephen Sondheim was the theatre's most revered and influential composer-lyricist of the last half of the 20th century, if not its most popular. His work melded words and music in a way that enhanced them both. He had early successes in the late 1950s when he wrote the lyrics for *West Side Story* and *Gypsy*, but the first Broadway show for which Sondheim wrote both the words and music was the farcical 1962 comedy *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. It won a Tony Award for best musical and went on to run for more than two years. In the 1970s and 1980s, his most productive period, he turned out a series of strikingly original and varied works, including *Company* (1970), *Follies* (1971), *A Little Night Music* (1973), *Pacific Overtures* (1976), *Sweeney Todd* (1979), *Merrily We Roll Along* (1981), *Sunday in the Park With George* (1984), and *Into the Woods* (1987).

In the history of the theatre, only a handful could call Sondheim peer. The list of major theater composers who wrote words to accompany their own scores (and vice versa) is a short one — it includes Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Frank Loesser, Jerry Herman and Noël Coward. Though Sondheim spent long hours in solitary labor, usually late at night, when he was composing or writing, he often spoke lovingly of the collaborative nature of the theatre. After the first decade of his career, he was never again a writer for hire, and his contribution to a show was always integral to its conception and execution.

Sondheim's music was always recognizable as his own, and yet he was dazzlingly versatile. His melodies could be deceptively, disarmingly simple — like the title song of the unsuccessful 1964 musical *Anyone Can Whistle*, "Our Time," from *Merrily*, and the most famous of his individual songs, "Send In the Clowns," from *Night Music* — or jaunty and whimsical, like "Everybody Ought to Have a Maid," from *Forum*. They could also be brassy and bitter, like "The Ladies Who Lunch," from *Company*, or sweeping, like the grandly macabre waltz "A Little Priest," from *Sweeney Todd*.

He wrote speechifying soliloquies, conversational duets and chattering trios and quartets. He exploited time signatures and forms; for *Night Music*, he wrote a waltz, two sarabandes, two mazurkas, a polonaise, an étude and a gigue — nearly an entire score written in permutations of triple time. Over all, he wrote both the music and the lyrics for a dozen Broadway shows — not including compendium revues like *Side by Side by Sondheim*, *Putting It Together* and the autobiographical *Sondheim on Sondheim*. Five of them won Tony Awards for best musical, and six won for best original score. A show that won neither of those, *Sunday in the Park With George*, took the 1985 Pulitzer Prize for drama. Of the many revivals of his shows, three won Tonys, including *Assassins* in 2004, even though it had not previously been on Broadway. (It was presented Off Broadway in 1990.)

Sondheim liked to think of himself less as a songwriter than as a playwright, albeit one who wrote very short plays and set them to music. His lyrics, scrupulously literate and resonant with complex ideas or emotional ambivalence, were often impossibly clever but rarely only clever; his language was sometimes erudite but seldom purple. He was a world-class rhyming gymnast, not just at the ends of lines but within them — one of the baked dishes on the ghoulish menu in *Sweeney Todd* was "shepherd's pie peppered with actual shepherd" — and he upheld the highest standards for acceptable wordplay, or at least tried to.

What most distinguished Sondheim's lyrics, however, was that they were largely character-driven, often probing explorations into a psyche that expressed emotional ambivalence, anguish or deeply felt conflict. Is there a better description of *Company*?

*From the Stephen Sondheim obituary in the New York Times, 2021*



# A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE SHOW

*Company*, Sondheim's sixth Broadway musical, was his breakthrough to serious credibility as it received 14 Tony Award nominations (a record at the time). A conceptual show more than a narrative experience, it was Sondheim's first collaboration with book writer George Furth, but it took producer/director Hal Prince to turn the material into a musical, in his first collaboration with Sondheim. *Company* earned Sondheim his first Tony Awards – for score and lyrics – marking his arrival as a distinctive central figure in the world of musical theatre. At age forty-one, he was acknowledged as a master of words and music.

In 2018 a West End revival of *Company* was staged as revival/remake, featuring changes to the genders of several characters. The character of Bobby was changed to Bobbie, a female role, and was played by Rosalie Craig. Additionally, the production featured a same-sex couple for the first time. Sondheim approved both changes and worked on revisions of the script with director Elliott. COVID-19 delayed its transfer to Broadway, but eventually in 2021 it found its way home to Manhattan, becoming the most nominated musical revival of the season, receiving nine Tony Award nominations and winning five including Best Revival of a Musical.

Five days before he died, Sondheim discussed the revival's change of the lead character's gender from male (Bobby) to female (Bobbie). He expressed how theater is distinguished from film and video because "you can do it in different ways from generation to generation... What keeps theater alive is the chance always to do it differently, with not only fresh casts, but fresh viewpoints. It's not just a matter of changing pronouns, but attitudes."





# SYNOPSIS

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## ACT I

Robert returns home on his thirty-fifth birthday to well-wishes left on his voicemail by friends – friends who have thrown him a surprise party ('Overture'). As he sings about his married friends ('Company') we begin to see them in their everyday settings and him as the ever-reliable third wheel.

Having just dined with Sarah and Harry at their home, their playful bickering turns competitive, and Robert becomes and observer to a wrestling match. Joanne explains to him the dynamics of marriage ('The Little Things You Do Together'). Taken aback by the situation, he asks Harry as he leaves if he ever regrets being married. Harry and the other husbands attempt to explain the complicated, often-paradoxical, nature of marriage ('Sorry-Grateful').

Visiting Peter and Susan, Robert jokingly says he wants to be the first to know if the happily married couple ever breaks up. They startle him by announcing their divorce. At Jenny and David's apartment they get high. Jenny asks Robert when he plans to get married, to which he claims he's not rejecting married and tells them about the women in his life – Marta, Kathy, and April. They appear and sing about their frustrations in dating Robert ('You Could Drive a Person Crazy'). Several of the married men tell Robert about women they could set him up with ('Have I Got a Girl for You'). They ask, "Whaddaya wanna get married for?" to which Robert aspires to find a woman who combines the best qualities of all the married women ('Someone Is Waiting').

Marta romanticises New York as a city full of strangers ('Another Hundred People') and Robert has brief moments with the women in his life: April, a sweetly naïve airline stewardess; Kathy, an ex-girlfriend who has just got engaged and is leaving the city; Marta, who finishes her song and shares her eccentric views about life in New York.

It's the morning of Paul and Amy's wedding day with Robert as Best Man. A Celebrant sings about the blessings of weddings, but Amy is frantic and announces that she's not 'Getting Married Today.' She tearfully tells Paul she simply can't; visibly upset, he leaves. Robert abruptly asks Amy to marry him, but she turns him down, suddenly realizing what she has with Paul. Robert yearns for connection, but he's not ready for a full commitment ('Marry Me a Little'). Back in his apartment, the guests are again present, and he remains trapped in the moment.

## ACT 2

It's still Robert's thirty-fifth birthday, still surrounded by his married friends, still unable to blow out his candles and make a wish. He reflects on being the odd man out, and the couples sing about togetherness ('Side by Side by Side') and celebrate their friendship with him ('What Would We Do Without You?').

In Robert's apartment, he has just brought April home. Eventually he gets her into the bedroom, with the wives sharing their unreserved opinions on his dating life ('Poor Baby'). The next morning April prepares to leave as she has a flight to catch ('Barcelona') and Robert urges her to stay – regretting his decision immediately when she agrees to.

Returning to Peter and Susan, he is struck by how improved their relationship is – and again shocked when he discovers they went through with the divorce and are so successfully cohabitating. At a nightclub, Robert and Joanne drink while Larry dances. She proposes a sardonic toast to herself and 'The Ladies Who Lunch.' She propositions Robert, but he turns her down, in that moment finally admitting that he wants a meaningful relationship ('Being Alive').

Back in his apartment his friends wait to surprise him for his thirty-fifth birthday. But this time he fails to appear. They take the hint and leave, shouting a final "Happy Birthday, Robert!" Alone onstage, he is finally ready to move forward and blows out the candles with a smile.

# SPECIAL THANKS

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The Armidale School provided a rehearsal venue, many of the set and props, and an ample amount of time from some key staff to make this show come together.

Terry Cooke and Michael Hull are responsible for the fantastic show photos in this program, with band and rehearsal photos by Tahnee Denton.

And to all the husbands, wives, partners, family, and friends of the entire team who have put up with absences and distractions and endlessly repeated lines and lyrics, we salute you.

ADMS PRESENTS

# 2023 Show Program

FEBRUARY - *THERE'S NO  
BUSINESS LIKE SHOW BUSINESS*  
DIR. NEIL HORTON & BRUCE  
MENZIES

MAY - *TRANSPARENCY*  
DIR. MEL RUMBLE

JUNE/JULY - *INTO THE WOODS*  
DIR. EMILY WALDRON

SEPT/OCT - *BLACK COMEDY*  
DIR. JONO MCATEER

NOV - *BROKENVILLE*  
DIR. CAL HUNTER



## PLAYHOUSE DONATIONS

The Armidale Playhouse ADMS would like to thank everyone for their generous support towards the renovation of The Armidale Playhouse. But there is still much to do to develop and maintain Armidale's only community theatre. If you would like to donate, APH now has Tax Deductible status and donations of \$25, \$50, or more are very welcome. Donations of \$100 or more are acknowledged on the Donor Recognition Page: [adms.org.au/playhouse-donors](https://adms.org.au/playhouse-donors)