

## ***What the Fandango?!***

### **Company Biographies.**

#### **TOURING:**

##### **Robert Hofmann, performer and creator.**

Robert has sung many roles with the West Australian Opera including Koko in *The Mikado*, Dulcamara in *The Elixir of Love*, Falke in *Die Fledermaus*, Hobson in *Peter Grimes* as well as concert performances in regional Western Australia. He performed with the WA Opera in Education program from 2010 to 2015 at schools in Perth metro area as well as several regional schools tours.

Robert burst onto the cabaret scene with *Desperately Young at Heart* winning the Cabaret Award (WA) at Perth Fringe World 2014 in its world-premiere season which later performed at Edinburgh Fringe, Downstairs at the Maj and Beverly (regional WA.) Robert's new cabaret, *What the Fandango?!* received several 5 star reviews at Perth Fringe World 2018 and 2019 and was critically acclaimed in two performances in New York City in June 2019. Robert regularly performs with Perth's *Freeze Frame Opera*. Since 2011 Robert has performed with comic soprano duo *DivaLicious* in Perth, WA Regions, Adelaide Fringe and Sydney Opera House. Robert is also an experienced concert soloist and has performed often with the St Georges Cathedral Choir under the direction of Joseph Nolan.

##### **Cathie Travers, music director and piano accordionist.**

Playing the piano accordion is the brilliant Cathie Travers whose evocative playing inspired the South American theme of *What the Fandango?!* Cathie is one of the finest accordionists in Australia and has collaborated with many artists including Meow Meow, the Australian Chamber Orchestra and Barry Humphries. Her performance and creative work has appeared in all the major cities of Australia – and internationally in Canada, the USA, the UK, Malaysia, & Japan.

#### **NON-TOURING:**

##### **Stuart Maunder, director**

Stuart has been directing musical theatre and opera in Australia for the last thirty years. He joined The Australian Opera as Stage Manager in 1978, becoming a Resident Director in 1981. In 1992 he joined The Royal Opera (UK) as a Staff Director whilst continuing to direct in Australia, regional UK, France and the USA. In 1999 Stuart was appointed as Artistic Administrator of Opera Australia, and later

its Executive Producer (04-08). His OA productions include Tales of Hoffmann, Manon, Gypsy Princess, Don Pasquale, My Fair Lady and A Little Night Music. His Trial by Jury, HMS Pinafore and Pirates of Penzance have been televised nationally on ABC TV.

Music Theatre productions include Australian tours of Dusty – The Original Pop Diva, Shout! and Little Women; the Australasian tour of The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber and the first concert version of Phantom of the Opera.

Recent Australian productions include Cunning Little Vixen, Carmen (State Opera), Into the Woods, Sunday in the Park with George, Sweeney Todd and Cunning Little Vixen (Victorian Opera), Tosca, Rigoletto, The Pearl Fishers, La Boheme (West Australian Opera).

Stuart was General Director of New Zealand Opera (2014-18) where he directed Candide, Tosca, Sweeney Todd and The Mikado. In July 2018 he commenced as Artistic Director of State Opera South Australia.

### **Penny Shaw, assistant director and co-writer**

Penny is one half of successful soprano duo *DivaLicious* who have made several appearances national television; been broadcast to millions across the globe whilst opening The Ashes, have taken three shows to the Sydney Opera House where they received standing ovations and are regular guest artists on luxury cruise ships. Other career highlights include singing the role of Violetta in Paris; reaching the semi-finals of *Australia's Got Talent*. Penny sings with WA Opera, both in the chorus and as soloist, and is an active part of the community and education programs for the company. Recent performances include her latest show, *Divalicious - Defying Gravity!* at Perth FRINGE WORLD 2019.

### **Cherie Hewson, designer**

Adelaide born theatre designer, Cherie Hewson studied fine art painting at Adelaide school of Art and RMIT Melbourne. "A picture is worth a thousand words" so please see her Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/Great-Pretender-329633900396564/>