



MEDIA RELEASE

JEANNE PRATT'S THE PRODUCTION COMPANY CELEBRATES ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY WITH A STELLAR LINE-UP OF SHOWS AND STARS

In 1999, Jeanne Pratt launched The Production Company with an annual season of three Broadway musicals and she and The Production Company haven't looked back. Flash-forward to 2008 and 27 shows later, The Production Company has become the leading producer of short season musicals in Australia and is proud to announce its three Broadway musicals for this year: **Follies**, **Damn Yankees** and **Mame**.

The season opens in the State Theatre of the Arts Centre on July 16 with a production of Stephen Sondheim's legendary show, **Follies**. More than three decades after its Broadway premiere, **Follies** remains a landmark musical filled with songs that are now classics of the musical-theatre repertoire. And who better to direct The Production Company's first musical by Stephen Sondheim, than Roger Hodgman who is considered the leading interpreter of his work in Australia. The cast Roger has assembled are themselves legends of Australian musical theatre and includes such renowned performers as John Diedrich, Anne Wood, Debra Byrne, Philip Gould, Nancye Hayes, Judi Connelli, Melissa Langton, Judith Roberts, Kenneth Collins, Monique Brynnel and Patti Newton. The iconic Bud Tingwell will play the role of **Follies'** impresario, Dimitri Weismann.

The Broadway team of Richard Adler and Jerry Ross are at the core of our second show for 2008 – **Damn Yankees**. This duo was also responsible for **The Pajama Game**, which was a major hit with Production Company audiences in 2006. **Damn Yankees** is a delightful musical fantasy will bedevil audiences with its charm and it commences on August 20. Director Terence O'Connell, who has been at the helm of several hit Production Company shows since 2003, will oversee a cast that includes David Harris as Joe, fresh from his leading role in **Miss Saigon**, Pia Morley as the vixen Lola and Matt Hetherington as the devilish Mr. Applegate.

The final show of our 10th anniversary season is a revival of the very first show staged by The Production Company in 1999 and features two of the original stars, Rhonda Burchmore and Alan Fletcher, in Jerry Herman's effervescent and much-loved classic – **Mame**. Opening on October 1st, with direction by Gary Young, the cast will also include a Production Company audience favourite in the form of Nicki Wendt as Mame's closest friend, Vera Charles. **Mame** is a timeless musical considered by many critics to be the perfect musical. London's musical director of **The Lion King**, Anthony Gabriele is returning to Melbourne specifically to take musical charge of this production.

The Production Company is a not-for-profit company, specifically established to promote and showcase new and well-known theatre talent. In maintaining its long-standing policy of inexpensive ticket prices, Chairman Jeanne Pratt stated: "Our subscription rate has steadily increased since 1999 and subscriptions now account for over 50% of all ticket sales. If this rate keeps up we could be close to selling out our seasons just to subscribers, so please waste no time in sending in your forms." The 2008 subscription price for three shows is \$198 (A Reserve), \$138 (B Reserve) and \$84 (C Reserve) which is far cheaper than a full priced ticket to any major musical in town. "You can say that we give excellent value for your entertainment dollars."



Rhonda Burchmore
and Alan Fletcher

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SEASON
2008
CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

Follies	16-20 July
Director	Roger Hodgman
Musical Director	Guy Simpson
Choreographer	Dana Jolly
Costumes	Vicki Rowell
Scenery	Richard Jeziorny

FOLLIES

Follies is a musical drama about a group of former Follies stars who return to the site of their former glory, the Weismann Theatre. The theatre is about to be demolished. Old wounds resurface as two Follies stars (Phyllis and Sally) and their husbands (Benjamin and Buddy) reassess their lives and what could have been.

With songs by Stephen Sondheim and book by James Goldman, **Follies** was originally directed by Harold Prince on Broadway in 1971. Songs titles include *Beautiful Girls*, *Don't Look at Me*, *Waiting for the Girls Upstairs*, *Rain on the Roof*, *Ah, Paris!*, *Broadway Baby*, *The Road You Didn't Take*, *Bolero d'Amour*, *In Buddy's Eyes*, *Who's That Woman?*, *I'm Still Here*, *Too Many Mornings*, *The Right Girl*, *One More Kiss*, *Could I Leave You?*, *Loveland*, *You're Gonna Love Tomorrow*, *Love Will See Us Through*, *The God-Why-Don't-You-Love-Me Blues*, *Losing My Mind*, *The Story of Lucie and Jessie* and *Live, Laugh, Love*.

CAST

Dimitri Weismann	Bud Tingwell
Sally Durant Plummer	Debra Byrne
Phyllis Rogers Stone	Anne Wood
Benjamin Stone	John Diedrich
Buddy Plummer	Philip Gould
Roscoe	Kenneth Collins
Deedee West	Judith Roberts
Hattie Walker	Nancye Hayes
Solange Lafitte	Monique Brynnel
Emily Whitman	Patti Newton
Stella Deems	Melissa Langton
Carlotta Campion	Judi Connelli



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THE PRODUCTION COMPANY SEASON 2008
CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

Damn Yankees 20-24 August
Director Terence O'Connell
Musical Director Vanessa Scammell
Choreographer Alana Scanlan
Costumes Kim Bishop
Scenery Kathryn Sproul
Magic Consultant Doug Tremlett

DAMN YANKEES

DamnYankees tells the story of Joe, a middle aged man who is endlessly frustrated that his beloved baseball team The Dodgers, are constantly thwarted by those ... well, damn Yankees. Desperate, Joe makes a deal with the devil, aka Mr. Applegate, to exchange his soul and become a youthful baseball star leading his team towards the pennant. **Damn Yankees** has a score by Richard Adler and Jerry Ross, a book by George Abbott and Douglass Wallop and is based on Wallop's novel "The Year The Yankees Lost the Pennant."

The original Broadway production of **Damn Yankees** opened at the 46th Street Theatre May 5, 1955, playing 1,019 performances before closing at the Adelphi Theatre, where it later transferred, on Oct. 12, 1957. Directed by George Abbott with musical numbers staged by Bob Fosse, the original cast included Gwen Verdon, Stephen Douglass and Ray Walston. The most recent Broadway revival, which opened in March 1994 at the Marquis Theatre, co-starred Bebe Neuwirth, Victor Garber and Jarrod Emick.

CAST

Applegate Matt Hetherington
Joe Hardy David Harris
Lola Pia Morley
Gloria Thorpe Melissa Langton
Meg Boyd Anne Wood
Sister Wendy Stapleton

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SEASON
2008
CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

Mame	1-5 October
Director	Gary Young
Choreographer	Andrew Hallsworth
Musical Director	Anthony Gabriele
Costumes	Kim Bishop
Scenery	Richard Jeziorny

MIAMIIE

Mame tells the hilarious story of an eccentric socialite in the Roaring '20s who finds her madcap Manhattan lifestyle turned upside down when she is appointed guardian of her orphaned nephew, Patrick. Auntie Mame takes him on one whirlwind adventure after another. The classic Herman score includes such tunes as *If He Walked Into My Life*, *It's Today*, *Open a New Window*, *Mame*, *Bosom Buddies* and *We Need a Little Christmas*.

Mame is based on Patrick Dennis' novel "Auntie Mame," and features a score by Jerry Herman and a book by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee. The original Broadway production opened in May 1966 at the Winter Garden Theatre with Angela Lansbury as Mame and Bea Arthur as her best friend Vera Charles. Both Lansbury and Arthur won Tony Awards for their work. A subsequent film version cast Lucille Ball as the vivacious Mame.

CAST

Mame Dennis	Rhonda Burchmore
Vera Charles	Nicki Wendt
Beauregard	Alan Fletcher



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