

Creatives

DAVID SIDWELL – Director



Director...musical director...composer...orchestrator/arranger...pianist...David has 35 years of comprehensive involvement in music and theatre under his belt.

As Musical Director, some of David's many credits include *Godspell*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Chicago*, *Evita*, *Annie*, *Hello Dolly!*, *Nunsense I & II*, *Juke Box*, *A Chorus Line*, *Les Misérables*, *Gypsy* and *Caught in the Act* (with Tina Cross) to name but a few.

David has also directed countless productions; among them, *HAIR*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Mack and Mabel*, *Best Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, *Fame*, *Seussical the Musical*, *Blood Brothers*, *Godspell*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, the 'audience participation' version of *The Sound of Music*, a 'new experience' *Grease* and the sensational Hamilton season of *The Rocky Horror Show*.

Working professionally with theatre groups in both New Zealand and Australia, David has had successful seasons of *Andrew Lloyd Webber & Friends* (Gold Coast & New Zealand), *Westend to Broadway* with Wellington Musical Theatre and the Wellington Sinfonia, *Tell Me On A Sunday* (Circa Theatre), the critically acclaimed Wellington productions of *West Side Story* and *Phantasmic*, the New Zealand premieres of *The Secret Garden*, *Big - the Musical*, *The Full Monty* and *Disney's High School Musical*.

David is an accomplished pianist and has worked with many New Zealand recording artists. He has been the pianist for the New Zealand Film Archive touring roadshows and works extensively throughout New Zealand and Australia as an arranger and orchestrator. He lectures in music and manages the Music Department of the School of Media Arts at Wintec. Having recently travelled to Russia to extend his research into Synaesthesia, during this visit David's composition *Recuerde el Pasado* had its world premiere in Kazan, at the festival *Muz-Tranzit* performed by the Kazan Ensemble of New Music.

2008 is proving to be a busy year for David who has directed productions of *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Crazy For You*, *HAIR* and now *CATS*. He feels extremely privileged to have had this opportunity to work on *CATS* alongside Choreographer Sonja McGirr-Garrett. Her extreme in-depth knowledge of the show and its many hidden dramatic and choreographic challenges has been immeasurable. There is much choreographic magic which would have been lost to audiences but for her passion for, and obsession with, *CATS*.

Humans portraying cats, or cats portraying humans? You decide!

David and the creative team have had a blast bringing this effable, ineffable and effanineffably purrrfect theatre treat to the stage.

SONJA MCGIRR-GARRETT – Choreographer



Sonja originally came from Canada where she began her career at a very young age. She first discovered the pleasure of performance and team achievement as a member of the Canadian Gymnastics team, competing around the globe on behalf of her country. The decision to follow her dreams in pursuit of a career in musical theatre came at the age of 12 when she captured her first leading role as Anne in *Anne of Green Gables*. She continued her studies gaining honours in a three-year diploma in musical theatre and dance and has since enjoyed success in many styles of shows ranging from Broadway to Vegas. Some of Sonja's favourites include *42nd Street*, *Dames at Sea*, *A Chorus Line*, *Grease*, *Pyjama Game*, *Winslow Boy*, *Bells are Ringing* and, of course, *CATS* where she was in the original Canadian company and has recently completed the 20th anniversary gala performance tour. Sonja is thrilled to be working on *CATS* again with such a talented team and cast.

After travelling around the world for four years, when she met her best friend and husband Simon, Sonja opened her own musical theatre and dance studio on their farm and she derives much pleasure from her wonderful rural students. Sonja still claims that her most prized role of all is playing mummy to her two beautiful girls Cassidy and Remy.

CAMPBELL DOUGLAS – Musical Director



Campbell graduated from The University of Auckland in 1995 with a Bachelor of Music in composition and conducting. During this time he conducted the Auckland Youth Orchestra, the Auckland University Singers and his own choir, The O'Rorke singers. He was also accompanist for L'Academie de Danse.

Campbell's involvement with the Hamilton Operatic Society began in 1996 when he appeared on stage in *HAIR*, was a backing vocalist for *A Chorus Line* and keyboard player for *Gypsy*. After moving to Auckland, Campbell became involved with Centrestage Theatre in Orewa where he was Musical Director for *The Wizard of Oz* and *Scrooge*, and keyboard player for *Jesus Christ Superstar*. More recently Campbell has been involved as a keyboard player for the Society's productions of *Les Misérables* and *Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story*, as Assistant Musical Director for *West End to Broadway* and Musical Director for the New Zealand premiere of *The Full Monty*. Campbell also had the privilege of being Musical Director for the Society's hugely successful productions of *The Rocky Horror Show* and *Blood Brothers*.

Campbell is currently Deputy Principal at Hamilton's Fraser High School where he has been the Musical Director for their successful productions of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Footloose*, *Joseph* the New Zealand premiere of *Disney's High School Musical* and *Little Shop of Horrors*. It has been a great pleasure to see the progression of some of the talent from these shows coming through in the cast you see tonight.