



## Musical Director - Orchestral

### Victoria Brown

Victoria is Director of Music & Performing Arts at St Peter's School. Her love of all things musical began with violin lessons at age 7, and led her to be involved in orchestras and choirs throughout her schooling. Her musical theatre experiences began at age 12 with the Hamilton Operatic Society and this love of theatre continues today. Other key musical experiences that have shaped her love and enjoyment of music include a 5 year stint as the fiddle player for Hamilton Celtic Band "Reelmen".

Victoria has enjoyed the dedication, enthusiasm and talent amongst the staff and students in the Performing Arts Department. Conducting the orchestra for *Jekyll & Hyde* was a highlight of 2005 and it is with much pleasure and excitement that she takes the baton (and the violin!) this year to conduct and play in *FAME The Musical*.

*FAME* is a great show to stage at St Peter's, with "real life" issues and events within it being applicable to the everyday lives of all students. The songs will have your toes tapping, and you reminiscing about leg warmers and other experiences that etched the 80's into the minds of many. Finally, Victoria would like to extend huge thanks to the students and staff who have worked tirelessly, and given up hours and hours to make this a great show.



## Musical Director - Vocal

### David Hall

Normally David can be found in the French classroom, but he also enjoys being part of the Performing Arts scene at St Peter's. *FAME* is his seventh show at the school – the magic of starting with a blank stage and building a performance which can entertain and delight an audience doesn't ever seem to wear off.

David has been in some 25 shows since he began as a rehearsal pianist with Hamilton Operatic Society in the 1980s. Usually he is tucked away at the piano, though on occasions he does appear on stage or wave the conductor's baton. Highlights have been being musical director for a French musical *La Révolution Française*, and the St Peter's productions of *Les Misérables* and *Oliver!*

The *FAME* team, students and teachers, has been a great team to be part of. David is repeatedly amazed by the individual and collective talent within the St Peter's community and congratulates everyone on their hard work and commitment.



## Producer

### Julie Earl

Julie is Head of the Social Science Faculty at St Peter's School and Producer of *FAME The Musical*. She thoroughly enjoys being involved with students and watching them develop their potential in the performing arts arena.

Julie's experience is mostly with amateur theatre productions, and over the past three years, has been producer of Stage Challenge, a national performing arts competition for students. Julie's role includes overseeing the production, liaising with the key personnel to ensure every aspect runs smoothly. She is very much looking forward to the staging of *FAME* and the opportunity to showcase St Peter's talent.



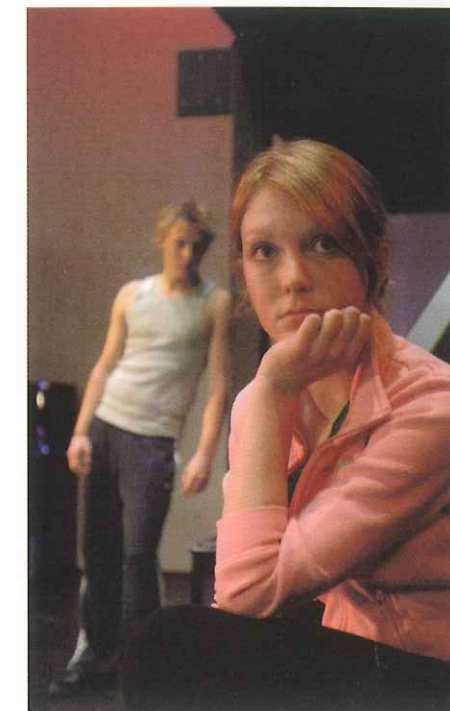
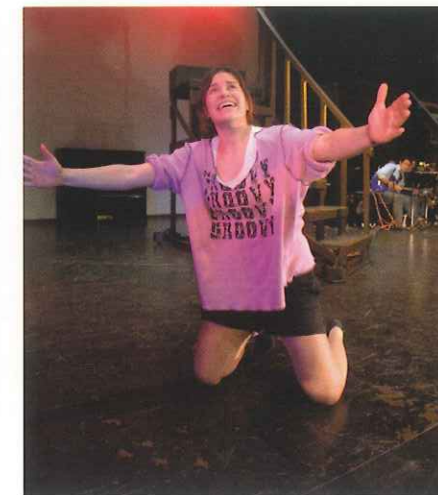
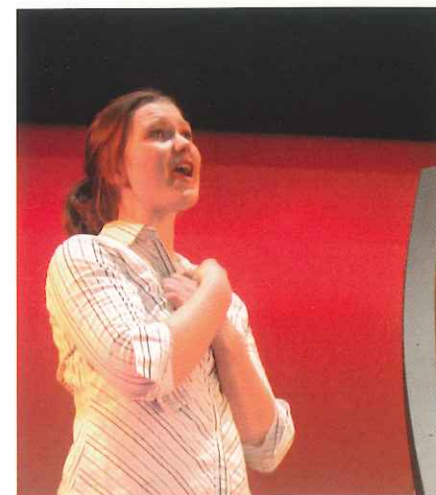
## Choreographer

### Sean Archer

Sean began dancing at the age of nine years, studying ballet with Judith Ward and then Jazz and Contemporary Ballet with Kerry Davis at the Drury Lane School of Dance. From there, Sean progressed to show work with the Hamilton Operatic Society and Drury Lane Theatre and Dance Company, performing in numerous shows including *Westside Story* and *A Chorus Line*, and also doing some back stage work.

After spending time working in Sydney with Dance Encore Productions, Sean moved to Japan where he very much enjoyed his work as a cabaret dancer. Since his return to Hamilton, Sean has choreographed Hillcrest High School's production of *FAME* and the very successful season of *Seussical – The Musical!* His choreography for *Grease* and *The Full Monty*, for Hamilton Operatic, received critical acclaim. Sean has particularly enjoyed choreographing this exciting production of *FAME* at St Peter's.

# The Power of Music, Dance and Passion



## The names have changed but the story is the same...

A group of students audition and gain entrance to the High School of Performing Arts and commence four years of hard work to reach graduation. It's the Fame school with the famous motto: Fame costs and right here is where you start paying. But this time the students are aware of the movie and television show and their expectations are high, and in some cases too high.

But it seems that the expectations David de Silva had for the musical were not too high. De Silva is known as Father Fame. The basic story line is his baby and, although he sold the movie rights to MGM, he made a point of retaining the stage rights. "I always knew I would do it on the stage", says De Silva and it took ten years to bring the musical to fruition.

As a native New Yorker and with a background in education (he studied to become a history teacher), De Silva developed the idea for *FAME*. His interest stemmed from his belief in "magnet" schools like the High School of Performing Arts (now the Fiorello La Guardia High School of Music and Art and Performing Arts).

"I always believed that in an ideal democratic society, having the opportunity to get out of your neighbourhood or ghetto and go to a specialized school to study something you're good at, be it computer science or the performing arts, offers the greatest preparation for the competitive world we live in," says De Silva.

The basic idea of De Silva's was to follow a handful of students through four years

of high school (3 actors, 4 dancers and a couple of musicians). He felt that mixing up strongly motivated rich and poor, black and white teenagers would give the story its dramatic tension...its spice.

"Also" he adds, "doing this concept musical with this age group (14 – 18) is very special, because it's such an emotional time for these kids. Their hormones are flowing and they can sing and dance and convey their feelings with a purity and an innocence that you would never get say from the sophistication of a Sondheim character."

The musical, while offering pure entertainment on one level, is also making a social statement about literacy, hard work, perseverance, and the importance of staying off drugs. "We mean to have relevance for today's audiences. We're not *Grease*!" De Silva says.

And while the emphasis of the show is on youth, De Silva says the show is not geared to a young audience alone. "In Miami, one of our biggest responses came from the matinee ladies in their 70's and 80's," De Silva explains. "They would save their energy until the final curtain and then in unison stand and cheer for ten minutes. Normally, they make their way up the aisles before a show ends to avoid the stampede."

The show was developed in not-for-profit theatres in Miami and Philadelphia, but the real break came when Music Theatre International published *Fame – The Musical*. This resulted in the China Theatre in Stockholm putting on a major million dollar production and having a

record breaking run in two seasons, in Swedish, of course. "What came across the floodlights was music, dance, energy, and passion," says De Silva.

Not only did this first European production draw the attention of Stoll Moss theatres and Michael White Productions, but it also caught the interest of producers from around the world. A tour of North America is in its third year, an Australian production showed in Melbourne, and there have been huge arena productions playing to 12,000 people at a time in both Norway and Sweden. De Silva dreams of *FAME* being done in every language.

"I've seen versions in Danish and Dutch. The Japanese have done it, and the Koreans, Poland, Hungary, you name it. Every time is different. Having the work in both film and TV is fine but the creative process is over once it is committed to celluloid. In the theatre once you have created the blueprint, it continues to evolve. It's a living breathing thing.

"But the sentiment is universal in every production. While it celebrates individuality, it is about uniting and coming together at the end. When the graduating class sings the anthem 'Bring On Tomorrow' audiences are truly stirred, leaving the theatre with the message 'we can make a difference'."