



Editorial

OMG!!! It is only two days until February 2016. Where has the year gone? Time flies when you're having fun.

2016 is going to be a bumper year for Abbey Musical Theatre. In less than five weeks' time, "Sweeney Todd" will be on stage at The Auditorium; rehearsals for "HAIR" have started; auditions for "CATS" will be held soon; and our Costume Hire facility will open in its new 'home' this week. For those of you who have been hidden under a rock for the last wee while, the Abbey has been sold and as part of this sale, our Costume Hire facility is moving into the auditorium part of the Abbey complex. You should check it out – the team that have been involved with facilitating this change/move, have done a FANTASTIC job with limited resources (including people).

Have you booked for "Sweeney Todd"? There is a promotional video that you should check out – you can find it on the AMT Facebook page. Also included in this newsletter is an article that was in The Tribune about Glen Nesbit who plays the role of *Sweeney Todd*. This show promises to be stupendous and you should not miss seeing it. Bookings can be made by ringing the Abbey Booking Office on (06) 355 0499 or by going to the link below (remember – there are NO booking fees).

<http://sa2.seatadvisor.com/sabo/servlets/EventSearch?presenter=NZABBEY>

Talking about websites ...

Apologies to our website visitors – our site is being hacked by those with nothing better to do. We are, therefore, currently rebuilding the website which should be back up and running in about a week – same address and minus the undesirables!!!



Thank You – “British Invasion”



What a fantastic show this was!!! We thank everyone who assisted with this production which, according to the critics, opened in the key of happy and revealed a new generation of local talent! Anyone who saw this show could not help but rave about it, especially the finale – and if you don't know what the finale was, you missed a goodie! It was something that will be talked about in theatre circles in Palmerston North for quite some time.



AMT Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Abbey Musical Theatre will be held on Tuesday, **26 April 2016** at The Auditorium. Information regarding the AGM and positions available on the Board will be sent to members prior to this date.



AMT Membership

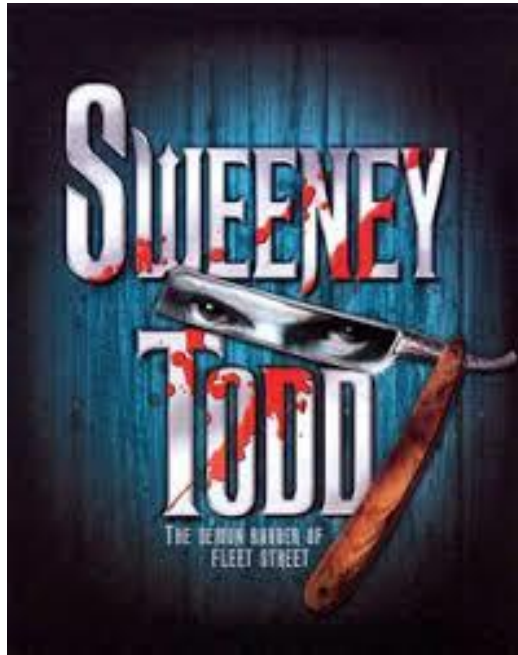
It's that time again – your current membership will expire on 31 January 2016. We have kept the fees at a very low \$30.00 per annum for adults – where else can you get the fun and enjoyment of participating in live theatre at this price? Please forward your payment to the Abbey Office, noting it is for 'Membership'. If you wish to make payment direct to the Abbey's bank account, the account number is **06-0729-0024947-00**. Don't forget to put your name in the 'Reference' field.



I'm your stage manager;
not your mother,
personal assistant,
or therapist. Get on
stage, take notes,
and stop whining.



som^{ee}cards
user card



On stage at The Auditorium,
Centennial Drive, Palmerston North

3 – 19 March 2016



Set in 19th century England, this musical tells the story of Benjamin Barker, alias Sweeney Todd, who returns to London after 15 years and uses his new alias to resume work in his barber shop above Mrs Lovett's struggling pie shop, after being wrongfully sentenced to imprisonment by the corrupt Judge Turpin. After swearing vengeance on Judge Turpin, Todd and Mrs Lovett plot a unique plan that helps them both and leads them down a dangerous, thrilling path with deadly consequences.

Director – Scott Andrew
Musical Director – Graham Johnston



“Sweeney Todd” – Cast List

Principals

SWEENEY TODD – Glen Nesbit
MRS LOVETT – Tracey-Lynne Cody
PIRELLI – Michael Doody
ANTHONY – Chris Thompson
JOHANNA – Madison Horman
JUDGE TURPIN – Samuel Gordon
TOBIAS – Read Wheeler
THE BEADLE – Andrew Hodgson
LUCY/BEGGAR WOMAN – Erica Ward
FOGG – Dave Chisholm
BIRD SELLER – Trent Pedley

Ensemble

Dianne Smith	Logan Burrell
Jess Linsley	Ollie Dunn
Katherine Lyons	Trent Pedley
Rebecca Palmer	Tyrell Beck
Sarah Payne	Solomon Gray
Stacey Manning	Dave Chisholm



Ex-pat's dream role

Celebrated Palmerston North actor Glen Nesbit has come home to perform the role he's always wanted to do.

Glen, who's been based in Sydney for 19 years, is the leading character in *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, Abbey Musical Theatre's first production for 2016.

Glen, who learned his craft in Palmerston North, says *Sweeney Todd* is his dream role.

"It's the King Lear of musical theatre. It runs the emotions like no other principal role."

Sweeney Todd is a musical thriller, written in 1979 by America's foremost musical theatre composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim.

It tells the 19th century story of Sweeney Todd, who returns from exile after 15 years to take revenge on a corrupt judge who banished him, then seduced his wife and made his daughter a ward of state.

Sweeney conspires with Mrs Lovett, a pie maker, to lure Judge Turpin to his premises so he can punish him. A complex and intriguing set of events follows during which Sweeney puts his barber's blade to good use and Mrs Lovett gets enough filling to become the most sought after pie maker in London.

Glen loves the character of *Sweeney Todd*.

"He starts off as a good man but,



Sweeney Todd shows Mrs Lovett, the pie maker, how he disposes of bodies.

when something bad happens to him, he's obsessed with revenge and becomes unaware of the harm his actions are causing," Glen says.

"*Sweeney Todd* is a majestic piece of theatre. It's one of the greatest shows Sondheim has ever written."

Glen explains that the audience will be taken on a journey of a flawed but honest man and how his desire for retribution endangers the lives of those around him, especially his wife and daughter who survived the judge's vile behaviour.

While the story is dark and scary in places, Glen says the audience will, in turn, be amused and

entertained, sympathetic to Sweeney's plight but disturbed by what he does.

"On stage I'll give everything. By the time the show's over and I've portrayed Sweeney's highs and lows, I'll be exhausted," he says. "I'll be a wreck in my dressing room, it's that powerful."

To play such a role Glen owes his skill to the grounding he received in Palmerston North. His mum, Gillian, loved the stage and encouraged a young Glen to act, first of all in repertory productions, and then in musicals for Abbey Musical Theatre and Manawatu Theatre Society.

In the 1980s and '90s he was in such productions *La Cage Aux Folles*, *Les Miserables* and *Chess* and he then toured New Zealand in shows such as *The Secret Garden*, *Tales of Hoffman* and Ken Hill's *Phantom of the Opera*.

The opportunity to join the professional ensemble of *Chess* took him to Australia and he's been there ever since. However, Glen's never forgotten his theatrical roots and when AMT confirmed *Sweeney Todd* as its first production for 2016, he just had to be involved.

■ AMT's *Sweeney Todd* runs at The Auditorium from March 3-19. Visit AMT's website to purchase tickets.

CONTACT: Production Manager, Jeremy Matthews (027-278-1344) or Glen Nesbit at glennesbit@yahoo.com.au



Congratulations!!!

- Congratulations to an ex-member of Abbey Musical Theatre, Carrie Green, who was nominated for and won the award for **Most Promising Female Newcomer** in the recent Wellington Theatre Awards 2015 – for her role in *Conversations With My Penis*.
- Another winner of the Wellington Theatre Awards 2015 was Ian Harman who won awards for **Costume Designer of the Year** for *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, and also **Set Designer of the Year** for *Ache*.

This goes to show that theatre talent from Palmerston North is thriving and continues to enthrall audience members locally, nationally and internationally.



MTNZ AGM/Volunteer Training Weekend 2016

The Musical Theatre NZ 56th AGM & Volunteer Training Weekend is being held in Rotorua from 18-20 March 2016. Registrations are now \$270.

AMT members are able to attend a forum or seminar only if they wish (cost \$20 for MTNZ/EVANZ & DANZ & ETNZ members each – or \$30 for non members) or may attend the Saturday night function only if they wish (cost = \$125 per single ticket).

Forums & Seminars to be held are;

MTNZ Training Session One – Friday Night Forums and Discussion (4pm – 5pm)

- Forum 1F: Next Gen Forum
- Forum 2F: Health & Safety
- Forum 3F: Small Society Forum

MTNZ Training Session Two – Saturday Afternoon Forums and Discussion (1.15pm – 2.15pm)

- Forum 4F: Copyright Holders' Forum
- Forum 5F: General American – American Accents for Kiwis
- Forum 6F: Insurance – What you need to know to keep your people safe
- Forum 7F: Musical Theatre in 2015 – Social Media
- Forum 8F: Understanding what makes people tick
- Forum 9F: Broadway Babes: Staging musicals with children and youth

MTNZ Training Session Three – Second Part Saturday Afternoon (2.30pm – 4.30pm/5pm)

- Seminar 1: Junior Theatre in your Society or School
- Seminar 2: Financial and other reporting updates
- Seminar 3: Getting the most out of your team and organisation
- Seminar 4: Stage Management
- Seminar 5: Wigs on a budget
- Seminar 6: Budgeting and Funding a show

If you are interested in attending the AGM & Volunteer Training Weekend, or just a forum/seminar, or just the Saturday night function, please contact Kate Ghent (MTNZ General Manager) through the MTNZ website – www.mtnz.co.nz



On stage at The Auditorium,
Centennial Drive, Palmerston North

19 May – 4 June 2016



Director – Damian Thorne
Musical Director – Roger Buchanan
Choreographer – Nicola Morrison



“HAIR” – Cast List

SHEILA – Ashleigh Blummont
JEANIE – Kate Petherick
CHRISSEY – Bex Palmer
DIONNE – Tia Rongokea
CLAUDE – Tyrell Beck
BERGER – TBC
HUD – Nikora Lewis
WOOF – Drew Pouniu

Ensemble

Ashleigh Bond, Candace McGrath, Jess Linsley,
Leila Ennia, Laura Signal, Paula Fredericks,
Robyn Chamberlain, Sarah Leishman, Nick Ross,
Solomon Gray, Jason Ngarimu

Wanted ...

We are looking for another two males – one for the role of Berger and one for Ensemble, along with two older gentlemen to play the roles of **Margaret Mead** and **Hubert**.

We are also wanting people to help out with this production backstage or front of house.

If you are interested in any of these roles, please contact Linda Warren on 021 216 5170.



“HAIR” is a rock musical – a product of the hippie counterculture and sexual revolution of the 1960s. Several of its songs became anthems of the anti-Vietnam War peace movement. The musical's profanity, its depiction of the use of drugs, its treatment of sexuality and its irreverence for the American flag caused much comment and controversy. The musical broke new ground in musical theatre by defining the genre of "rock musical". “HAIR” tells the story of the "tribe", a group of politically active hippies of the "Age of Aquarius" living a bohemian life in New York City and fighting against conscription into the Vietnam War. Claude, his good friend Berger, their roommate Sheila and their friends struggle to balance their young lives, loves and the sexual revolution with their rebellion against the war and their conservative parents and society. Ultimately, Claude must decide whether to resist the draft as his friends have done, or to succumb to the pressures of his parents (and conservative America) to serve in Vietnam, compromising his pacifistic principles and risking his life. *(Please note that in AMT's production of “HAIR”, there will not be a nude scene.)*



We are very proud to announce the following production team for “CATS” which will be staged in the Regent on Broadway, Palmerston North, from 12-27 August 2016.

CO-DIRECTORS – Barry Jones & Gillian Collett
MUSICAL DIRECTOR – Barry Jones
CHOREOGRAPHER – Teesh Szabo

Auditions for “CATS” will be held on 4-6 March 2016 and audition information will be uploaded to AMT's website once it has been rebuilt – hopefully within a week or so. For further information regarding auditions for this production, please contact Kay Nagy via e-mail on aknagy@inspire.net.nz

Please note that anyone who may be concerned about not being able to audition for “CATS” as they are in another production, please do not worry – this will be taken into consideration.



How to Warm Up and Prepare Before Singing

(by Felicia Ricci)

Whenever a student contacts me about a “problem spot” in a song they’re preparing, I remind them, “It’s not the actual note, line, or phrase that’s tripping you up; it’s the moment directly *before it*.” In other words, it’s how you approach the three notes *leading up* to the high A (or whatever) that makes the high A possible.

I call this the “runway” effect. The simple principle is that any “money moment” takes anticipation and planning — clear *preparation* — before you bust it out. The moment *before* is key not just on a micro-level (in the case of individual notes and lines) but also on a grander scale, day to day, audition to audition.

I’m talking about vocal warm-ups and mental prep., my friends!

“Spectacular achievement is always preceded by unspectacular preparation.” – Robert H. Schuller

Warming up effectively before singing will give your voice an unshakeable foundation and your performance wings. The weeks, days, and moments *before a singing audition* are just as important as the audition!

The problem is, few singers have a clear idea of what to do when they warm up (and I don’t blame them; it’s freaking confusing). So I’m here to offer four tips on how to develop a Singer Ritual* that works for you, not just for daily practice, but for audition days, as well.

*(*I call warming up a “Ritual,” and encourage you to do so, too. It adds a sanctity and weight that makes it difficult to ignore.)*

TIP #1

It’s better to have frequent, bite-sized practice sessions (i.e. 5 to 15 minutes every day) than one marathon session, once per week. “Five minutes per day? You’re crazy!” is a common reaction to this statement. But this principle has been tested and proven time and again with my students. Daily reinforcement, no matter how brief, is better than taking long breaks from singing. Many days off in a row compromises muscle memory and can often undo or reverse any progress you’ve made with your technique. So if you don’t have the time to practice for a half hour to an hour, so what! Get cracking for five minutes and you’ll be doing yourself a huge favour.

TIP #2

Every warm-up session has a beginning, middle, and (optional) ending. I encourage my students to think of their Singer Ritual as having three parts. The first part is mandatory, the second builds on the first and the third is a nice bonus if you have the time.

Part One: Always start with Breath Activation. All warm-up sessions should begin with breath-specific warm-ups. I’m a nut when it comes to reinforcing breathing, because it is the foundation of singing and relaxation, two essential ingredients to a good performance. Good examples might be; steady hissing for 30-45 seconds; simple lip trills, yogic “Breath of Fire” for 60 seconds. Always, always, always start with breath!

Part Two: Next, it’s time to “Open Up Shop”. Opening Up Shop basically means; dusting off the cobwebs and greasing up the gears. In this category reside your favourite go-to warm-ups that aren’t challenging or demanding. They’re just fun, soothing and allow you to take a relaxing tour of your range. Good examples of these are; AH exercises, on a 1-2-3-2-1 pattern, up and down your comfortable range; singing on an NG (as in, the closed part of “HUNG”) while performing a vocal siren.

Part Three: If you have time and are feeling good, move onto Skills Growth. Skills Growth basically means; touch on sensations or techniques that you’re not 100% comfortable with. Some examples might be; experimenting with supported belting, focusing head voice so it’s more “pingy,” or developing a chest voice that resonates more in the mouth. Think of this as the capstone of your warm-up session. If you don’t have time for it, skip it. But if you do, it’s time to get experimental!

Part Three is where you can work on Song Preparation. In the days before an audition, Skills Growth is your time to deconstruct a song, mark any tricky spots, and strategise about how those tricky spots can be approached, vocally. Then, on the day of the audition, follow the exact same process; Breath Activation, Open Up Shop, and, during Skills Growth, rehearse your song full out.

TIP #3

Direct your thoughts to memorise physical sensations.

I'm a nut about breathing, but I'm an even bigger nut about something I call "mental eyesight" – which means; practicing while being *engaged mentally*, versus singing on autopilot just to pass the time. Why? Because the way we learn a new sensation or habit is to observe and internalise the sensation consciously (via mental eyesight) which links your mind to your body. Then eventually the sensation becomes second-nature, or subconscious. Which leads to awesome singing.

I'm obsessed with offering Visualisations and Cues that give your brain words, phrases and images to latch on to. These are designed to;

- (1) Literally get your body to do certain things (if you tell your body to do something, it will listen).
- (2) Get you to relax and stop tensing.

The cool part? The Visualisations start to work like magic. The even cooler part; if Visualisations work well while you're warming up, they'll work equally well during an audition or performance. My favourite personal example is a Visualisation I used when I stood by for Elphaba in *Wicked*; I always thought "BUTT CLENCH!" when it was time to sing the high parts of "Defying Gravity". This got my butt to clench, me to relax, my larynx to neutralise and gave me awesome breath support.

For you, it might be something like; "Breath DOWN," or "Smile with your eyes" or any other triggers that you and your vocal coach or voice teacher come up with.

Bottom Line; use your Singer Ritual as an opportunity to get to know your favorite Visualisations and Cues. They'll be your best friends at your audition, especially during stressful or challenging moments.

TIP #4

Rehearse with (then recall) a positive frame of mind.

A crucial thing to remember during your Singer Ritual is that you're not just rehearsing physical sensations, you're rehearsing a frame of mind and outlook. Many of my students are astounded by how an optimistic mood makes their singing feel way more effortless and free. So, in response, I ask them to isolate the empowering thoughts, phrases, or images that help them get to that mental groove of positivity. The more you reinforce this mental groove, the easier it will be to recall that thought and associated feeling before an audition. Ask yourself; what gets you psyched? What positive image or phrase makes you feel real joy when it's time to sing?

Focus on the positive, cut out the negative self talk and revisit these positive mental triggers in the waiting room before an audition. You'll be armed with happiness and your singing will flow much more freely. If you do, the audition panel won't just want to cast you, they'll want to know what it is you're smoking.

"I'm high on singing, baby." —Felicia Ricci



Globe Theatre Awards

Awards Night at The Globe

Friday – 26 February 2016

7.30 p.m.

Celebrate the richness of talent of non-professional community theatre in our region and farewell long time Globe Theatre Manager, Bruce Warwick.

Tickets are \$35.00 per person

Obtainable from www.globetheatre.co.nz or from 10 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. week days at the Globe Theatre.



Globe Theatre Awards – Nominees

CONCEPT DESIGN & COSTUME

- *King Lear* – Summer Shakespeare The Production Team
- *Dirty Dusting* – Feilding Little Theatre Players Peter Doherty & Lois Blair
- *Antony & Cleopatra* – Proper Job Productions Nic Green & Lee Matthews
- *Disney Peter Pan* – Pahiatua Repertory Society Michael Moran, Vanessa Coogan & Graeme Vial
- *We Made This* – Massey University Drama Society Ashleigh Matheson
- *Lashings of Whipped Cream* – Proper Job Productions Nic Green
- *Borscht* – Manawatu Theatre Society Damian Thorne
- *The Addams Family Musical* – Pahiatua Repertory Society Vanessa Coogan

TECHNICAL

- *The Grunch* – Levin Little Theatre Kenneth Ireland
- *King Lear* – Summer Shakespeare Pierce Barber
- *BITES* – Skin Theatre Pierce Barber
- *Beauty & the Beast* – Levin Little Theatre Stephen Knight
- *Disney Peter Pan* – Pahiatua Repertory Society Gordon Alve
- *The Addams Family Musical* – Pahiatua Repertory Society Gordon Alve
- *Anybody Home?* – Foxton Little Theatre Samuel Taylor

CHOREOGRAPHY

- Linda Buckley – *Beauty & the Beast* (Levin Little Theatre)
- Ian Harman – *British Invasion* (Abbey Musical Theatre)
- Vanessa Coogan – *The Addams Family Musical* (Pahiatua Repertory Society)
- Margaret & Caitlin Sanson – *Aotearoa: A NZ Rock Musical* (Levin Performing Arts Society)

ENSEMBLE

- *The Fool* – *King Lear* (Ashleigh Matheson, Kate Sowerby & Chloe McCarten)
- *Disney Peter Pan* (Pahiatua Repertory Society)
- *Beauty & the Beast* (Levin Little Theatre)
- *We Made This* (Massey University Drama Society)
- *British Invasion* (Abbey Musical Theatre)
- *Aotearoa: A NZ Rock Musical* (Levin Performing Arts Society)

EMERGING PERFORMER

- Astin Kauri as 'Rodney' in *In At The Deep End* (Foxton Little Theatre)
- Monique Marchant as 'Badjelly' in *Badjelly the Witch* (Manawatu Theatre Society)
- Cileme Venkateswar as 'Grandma' in *Eating the Wolf* (The Production Co.)
- Rohan Hunter as 'Henry V' in *Henry V* (Iris Theatre Productions)
- Hayley Tinning as 'Wednesday Addams' in *The Addams Family Musical* (Pahiatua Repertory Society)
- Mystique Olsen as 'Principal Augustus' in *The Grunch* (Levin Little Theatre)
- Asaria Saili as 'Dan Jacobs' in *Aotearoa: A NZ Rock Musical* (Levin Performing Arts Society)

MALE SUPPORTING ACTOR

- Richard Mays as 'Duke of Albany' in *King Lear* (Summer Shakespeare)
- Bruce Sinclair as 'Duke of Gloucester' in *King Lear* (Summer Shakespeare)
- Jacob Dale as 'Edmund' in *King Lear* (Summer Shakespeare)
- Matthew Kilsby-Halliday as 'Captain Bertollini' in *Allo 'Allo* (Levin Little Theatre)
- Jon Hogan as 'Dulboot' in *Badjelly the Witch* (Manawatu Theatre Society)
- Paul Lyons as 'Enobarbus' in *Antony & Cleopatra* (Proper Job Productions)

FEMALE SUPPORTING ACTOR

- Jess Hong as 'Cordelia' in *King Lear* (Summer Shakespeare)
- Amy Hunt as 'Tanya' in *MAMMA MIA!* (Abbey Musical Theatre)
- Katte Johnson as 'Rosie' in *MAMMA MIA!* (Abbey Musical Theatre)
- Sophie Belcher as 'Alice' in *The Vicar of Dibley* (Manawatu Theatre Society)
- Stephanie Greenslade as 'Justice Bennings' in *Aotearoa: A NZ Rock Musical* (Levin Performing Arts Society)

MALE ACTOR

- Bradford Meurk as 'Che' in *EVITA* (Abbey Musical Theatre)
- Ethan Burmeister as 'Brian' in *12 in a Box* (Massey University Drama Society)
- Carl Terry as 'Darren Danforth' in *Anybody Home?* (Foxton Little Theatre)
- Michael Doody as 'Sky' in *MAMMA MIA!* (Abbey Musical Theatre)
- Michael Moran as 'Gomez Addams' in *The Addams Family Musical* (Pahiatua Repertory Society)
- Mark Kilsby as 'Forget Me Not' in *BITES* (Skin Theatre)
- Michael Doody in *British Invasion* (Abbey Musical Theatre)

FEMALE ACTOR

- Hannah Pratt as 'Goneril' in *King Lear* (Summer Shakespeare)
- Joanne Sale as 'Eva' in *EVITA* (Abbey Musical Theatre)
- Joan Ford as 'Gladys' in *Dirty Dusting* (Feilding Little Theatre Players)
- Marie Gibson as 'Forget Me Not' in *BITES* (Skin Theatre)
- Val Andrew as 'Donna Sheridan' in *MAMMA MIA!* (Abbey Musical Theatre)
- Christine Taylor-Hausman as 'The Vicar' in *The Vicar of Dibley* (Manawatu Theatre Society)
- Erica Ward in *British Invasion* (Abbey Musical Theatre)

NZ PREMIERE

- *12 in a Box* (Massey University Drama Society)
- *BITES* (Skin Theatre)
- *Muppet Mayhem* (Manawatu Theatre Society)
- *We Made This* (Massey University Drama Society)
- *The Grunch* (Levin Little Theatre)
- *Borscht* (Manawatu Theatre Society)
- *Aotearoa: A NZ Rock Musical* (Levin Performing Arts Society)

MUSICAL DIRECTION

- Suzie Hawes for *King Lear* (Summer Shakespeare)
- Barry Jones for *EVITA* (Abbey Musical Theatre)
- Colin Taylor for *Beauty & the Beast* (Levin Little Theatre)
- Barry Jones for *MAMMA MIA!* (Abbey Musical Theatre)
- Erna Ferry for *British Invasion* (Abbey Musical Theatre)
- Ramon Oza for *Aotearoa: A NZ Rock Musical* (Levin Performing Arts Society)

DIRECTION

- Scott Andrew for *EVITA* (Abbey Musical Theatre)
- Peter Doherty for *Dirty Dusting* (Feilding Little Theatre Players)
- Carl Terry for *In At the Deep End* (Foxton Little Theatre)
- Ian Harman for *British Invasion* (Abbey Musical Theatre)

Wild Card awards will also be announced and presented at the ceremony.

