

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Media Alert for Theatre Editors, Reviewers, and Calendar Listings

**Chance Theater presents...**

***Sweeney Todd,***  
***The Demon Barber of Fleet Street***

**The 9-actor ensemble invites you to attend the tale.....**

**ANAHEIM, CA:** Chance Theater, Anaheim's official resident theater company, is proud to announce its highly anticipated production of "Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street," directed by Chance Theater Literary Manager, James Michael Mchale. This thrilling musical masterpiece by Stephen Sondheim and Hugh Wheeler will bring the dark, gripping tale of vengeance and intrigue to the Bette Aitken Theater Arts Center on the Cripe Stage, opening on July 20, 2024, and running through August 11, 2024.

Join us as we delve into the sinister world of Sweeney Todd, where the lines between justice and revenge blur in a hauntingly compelling story. With its chilling score, razor-sharp wit, and unforgettable characters, this production promises to be a theatrical experience unlike any other.

"Sweeney Todd" has received widespread acclaim for its intense and emotionally charged narrative:

"One of the greatest American musicals." – The New York Times

"Sweeney Todd" is the artistic triumph of composer Sondheim's career. " – Los Angeles Times

In this macabre musical, we follow Sweeney Todd, a barber wrongfully imprisoned and exiled, who returns to London seeking vengeance against the corrupt judge who ruined his life. With the help of the resourceful and morally ambiguous Mrs. Lovett, who turns his victims into delicious meat pies, Todd's quest for retribution takes a horrifyingly delicious turn.

Chance Theater's production of "Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street" will feature an ambitious concept: a cast of only 9 actors. This minimalist approach not only intensifies the storytelling but also highlights the versatility and talent of each performer. The challenge of maintaining intricate harmonies and delivering a powerful, complex score with a smaller ensemble demands exceptional precision and skill from the cast. Additionally, larger ensemble scenes will be put to the test, requiring creative staging and dynamic performances to ensure they feel as full and impactful as a larger cast would deliver. This creative decision underscores the raw emotion and tension inherent in Sondheim's masterpiece, making every moment on stage resonate. The production also aims to highlight the injustice of the wealth gap, creating a resonant parallel between the story's themes and contemporary societal issues. With a focus on intimacy and fostering a connected community dialogue, the theater will host post-show talkbacks after every performance, encouraging audiences to engage deeply with the material and its relevance today.

In speaking with the Director, McHale, he expresses his excitement: "I'm thrilled to help tell a tale that feels as timely as ever. As the wealth gap continues to grow year after year, as homelessness and the mental health crisis continue to be mostly ignored, and as charismatic figures appear obsessed with revenge, this cautionary story seems all the more relevant."

Don't miss your chance to see "Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street" at Chance Theater. Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased online at [www.chancetheater.com](http://www.chancetheater.com) or by calling the box office at (888) 455-4212. Due to high demand, early booking is recommended.

Joining James Michael McHale (OC Theatre Guild Award for direction of "American Idiot") on the design team for "Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street" are music director Lex Leigh (OC Theatre Guild Award for music direction of "Striking 12"), choreographer Mo Goodfellow ("Rent"), scenic designers Fred Kinney ("The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity") and Mio Okada (Chance Debut), costume designer Gwen Sloan ("Tiny Beautiful Things"), lighting designer Jacqueline Malenke (Chance Debut), sound designer Lia Weed ("Rent"), projection designer Nick Santiago (OC Theatre Guild Award for projections of "Ride the Cyclone"), dramaturg

Sophie Cripe (“The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time”), dialect coach Glenda Morgan Brown (“Hedwig and the Angry Inch”), and stage manager Cynthia Espinoza (“Alma”).

The ambitious 9-person cast of “Sweeney Todd” is led by Winston Peacock as Sweeney Todd and the Chance’s Associate Artistic Director Jocelyn Brown (OC Theatre Guild Award for Lead in Musical of “Next to Normal”) stars as Mrs. Lovett, with the rest of the cast featuring a mix of newcomers and returning actors – Naya Ramsey-Clarke as Johanna Barker (Chance Debut), Dylan August as Anthony Hope (Chance Debut), Justin Ryan as Judge Turpin (Chance Debut), Adam Leiva as Tobias Ragg (“Rent”), Abel Miramontes as Beadle Bamford (“The Secret Garden, the Musical”), Emmanuel Madera as Adolfo Pirelli (Chance Debut), and Laura Hathaway as Beggar Woman (“The Secret Garden, the Musical”).

Our 2024 executive season producers are Bette & Wylie Aitken, and our associate season sponsors the Family of Mary Kay Fyda-Mar.

Our executive production producers are Rachele Menaker & Eddie Schuller, and associate production producers Sophie & Larry Cripe.

Our Community Partner is the Muzeo

To schedule press interviews, arrange for press comps, request press photos, or for any additional information regarding this production, please contact Shinshin Tsai, Chance’s Marketing Manager, at (909) 684 - 0202 or [Shinshin@chancetheater.com](mailto:Shinshin@chancetheater.com).

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## **ABOUT CHANCE THEATER**

Proud to be one of the leading ensemble-driven theatre companies in Southern California, CHANCE THEATER has received the National Theatre Company grant from American Theatre Wing for “nurturing a community of artists in ways that strengthen and demonstrate the quality, diversity, and dynamism of American theatre.” The Chance won 31 OCTG Theatre Awards, including two for Outstanding Production of a Musical (“Next to Normal” and “Fun Home”) and one for Outstanding Production of a Play (“Cry It Out”). Previously, Chance Theater won eight Ovation Awards, including four for Best Production of a Musical (Intimate Theatre), and four

LADCC Awards, including the Polly Warfield Award for Outstanding Season. The Anaheim City Council named Chance Theater “the Official Resident Theater Company of Anaheim” in 2014, and Arts Orange County has twice named the Chance as “Outstanding Arts Organization.” Known for using bold and personal storytelling to promote dialogue and connection within the Southern California theatrical landscape, the Chance is committed to contributing to a more compassionate, connected, and creative community. As a constituent member of Theatre Communications Group, The Theatrical Producers League of Los Angeles, and OC Theatre Guild, Chance Theater continues to bring national attention to the Southern California and Orange County theater scenes.

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## **CALENDAR LISTING**

### **WHAT: Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street**

In a barber shop above Mrs. Lovett’s struggling pie shop, Sweeney Todd plots revenge on the lecherous judge who wronged him and his family. In the seedy underbelly of 19th-century London, desperate times lead to diabolical schemes — and strange alliances. With razor-sharp wit and extraordinary songs like “Pretty Women” and “Not While I’m Around,” this Tony Award-winning masterpiece was proclaimed “more fun than a graveyard on the night of the annual skeleton’s ball” by The New York Daily News.

### **WHEN:**

**Previews:** July 12, 13, and 19 at 8:00 pm, and July 14 at 7:00 pm.

**Performances:** July 12 - August 11, 2024

Thursdays 7:30pm, Fridays 8 pm, Saturdays at 3 and 8 pm, & Sundays at 3 pm and 7 pm only for July 14)

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**REVIEWERS AND OTHER PRESS are encouraged to come to Opening Night on Saturday, July 20 at 8 pm.**

**RUNNING TIME:** 2 hour, 45 minutes

**WHERE:** Chance Theater @ Bette Aitken theater arts Center on the Cripe Stage

5522 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, CA 92807

**TICKETS:** \$55-59

**MORE INFO:** [www.ChanceTheater.com](http://www.ChanceTheater.com) or call (888) 455-4212

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