

TCU Opera Studio

2024-2025 Season

Sondheim & Wheeler

Sweeney Todd

The Demon Barber of Fleet Street

Secretst-Wible
Black Box Theatre

NOV
1 - 2
7:00 PM

\$10 General Admission
Free with Current TCU ID

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TCUOpera

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SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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Sweeney Todd

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Cast:

Sweeney Todd	Trenton Hall*
Mrs. Lovett	Mary Grace Abney
Johanna	Kaylynn Langham/Sarah Squires
Anthony Hope	Jae Medlin/Owen Harvey
Judge Turpin	David McDaniel
Beadle Bamford	J. J. Ruiz*
Tobias Ragg	Adam Arntson*
Beggar Woman	Alicia Cruz/Ruby Warren
Adolfo Pirelli	David Mejia
Jonas Fogg	Kayden Burns
Bird Seller	Mayson Clarke*/Telvin Culberson*

Ensemble:

Sara Lwin*	Cassie Westlund	Anna Borges
Julia Rose Arduino*	Hailey Gallegos*	Anna Morgan
Emmy Irvin*	Kimy Coe*	Isabella Lopez
Courtney Parnitke	Beth Fultz*	Brooke Perez***
Gloria Christin*	Lacey Beagle***	Faith Lee*
Trinity Robinson*	Michelle Pearce*	Omar Martinez***
Louise Martin*	Kaylyn Davis*	Danna Melendez*
Sophie Gwaldo*	Sofia Dahm	Casey Caldwell*
Mary Jane Harbison	Miguel Pesce*	Alek Gonzalez
Jennifer Meza	Adrian Martinez	Kai Diamond
Qizheng Wu*	Mayson Clarke*	Telvin Culberson*
Andy Stellar**	Tony Martinez***	Omar Macias***
Omar Martinez***		

*TCU Opera Debut

**TCU Alum

***DFW High Schooler

Production Team:

Stage Director & Producer:

Dr. Corey Trahan

Conductor:

Mitchell Manlapig

Music Direction/Pianists:

Igor Parshin, Sara Steele

Stage Manager:

Sophia Yang

Set Design and Construction:

Robin Owhonda, Robert Fultz III

Lighting Design:

Allison Pope

Costuming:

Prof. Twyla Robinson
Julia Rose Arduino
Jordan Riek
Janice Marut, Silver Frog

Props:

Kaylyn Davis
Isabella Lopez
Jae Medlin

Social Media:

Catherine DiGrazia
Cassie Westlund

Hair and Make-up:

David Mejia
Kai Diamond
Julia Rose Arduino

Poster Design:

Eric Laine

Synopsis

Courtesy of Music Theatre International website

Prologue

The production opens in the insane asylum which houses the town's lunatics. A shrill factory whistle is heard. A man steps forward and invites the audience to attend the tale of Sweeney Todd. As the company begins to outline Sweeney's dark tale, coordinated stage elements support the storytelling, hinting at the gruesome deeds yet to come ("The Ballad of Sweeney Todd").

Act One

We find ourselves on the London docks. Anthony Hope, a young sailor, and Sweeney Todd enter. They both express their feelings about being back in London. Anthony is genuinely happy to be back in the city, but Todd's response is full of grim irony ("No Place Like London"). Anthony inquires about Sweeney's circumstances, worried that he has no place to go now that they are in London.

Sweeney travels to find Mrs. Lovett's Pie Shop and stands outside the building, gazing at it. He enters and sees Mrs. Lovett chopping suet and flicking flies off the trays of pies with a dirty rag. Excited to have a customer, she offers him a pie, but she recognizes that they are disgusting. She apologizes and explains that times have been hard and meat is hard to come by ("The Worst Pies in London"). Sweeney asks why she doesn't rent the room above her shop if times are so tough. She replies that no one wants it because of the awful thing that happened there. Mrs. Lovett then recounts the fate of Benjamin Barker, a foolish young barber who was shipped to Australia by an evil judge. The Judge coveted the Barber's pretty young wife, Lucy. Once the Judge and his Beadle had Barker removed, Lucy was left alone to care for her one-year-old daughter, Johanna. The Judge and Beadle invited her to a party at the Judge's mansion, got her drunk and then raped her in the midst of a masked ball ("Poor Thing"). When Sweeney Todd shouts in anguish, Mrs. Lovett realizes that he is Benjamin Barker.

Demanding to learn the fate of his family, Barker hears that his wife Lucy took arsenic and that Judge Turpin adopted his daughter. Todd swears to take revenge on the Judge and the Beadle. Mrs. Lovett then brings him his razors, which she has kept hidden away for all these years; Todd is thrilled to be reunited with his razors, and Mrs. Lovett is thrilled to be reunited with Todd ("My Friends").

The scene shifts to Judge Turpin's mansion, where Johanna is imprisoned. She calls out to the caged birds of a passing bird seller, imploring them to share their secret for singing so sweetly when they, too, are kept captive ("Green Finch and Linnet Bird"). Anthony appears on the street, sees Johanna and instantly falls in love with her ("Ah, Miss"). Suddenly, the Beggar Woman appears and tells Anthony that he is standing in front of Judge Turpin's house and should beware of trespassing. Anthony buys a bird for Johanna. He calls to her and presents the bird ("Johanna"). They stand, absorbed with each other, not noticing the approach of Judge Turpin and the Beadle. The Judge orders Johanna into the house. The Beadle cautions Anthony to stay away and kills the bird as a warning.

Meanwhile, in St. Dunstan's Marketplace, a painted caravan announces the presence of Signor Adolfo Pirelli and his baldness-banishing miracle elixir. Tobias, Pirelli's simple-minded assistant, attracts a crowd ("Pirelli's Miracle Elixir"). Todd and Mrs. Lovett are among them. Although the crowd responds to Tobias' pitch, Todd and Mrs. Lovett begin a slander campaign against the elixir, and people demand their money back. Tobias tries to distract them, but to no avail. Pirelli arrives and silences the crowd, demanding to know who denies his excellence as a barber. Todd steps forward and challenges Pirelli to a shaving contest. Todd gets the Beadle to judge the match and, being of superior skill, wins easily ("The Contest"). The Beadle is very impressed and gets the address of Todd's shop, promising to appear soon. When the Beadle thinks that he recognizes Todd, Mrs. Lovett assures him that this is not possible. The company explains how Sweeney methodically plotted his revenge ("The Ballad of Sweeney Todd").

Judge Turpin visits Johanna and announces that he plans to marry her to keep her safe from the venal young men of the street. After an encounter with the Beggar Woman, Mrs. Lovett climbs the stairs to Todd's quarters, where he is waiting eagerly for the Beadle to appear. Mrs. Lovett tells him to be patient as she plans the redecoration of his drab quarters with daisies and other homey touches ("Wait"). Despite her entreaties, Todd is also impatient for the Judge to visit. Anthony appears at Todd's door and tells him of his encounter with Johanna, unaware that she is Sweeney's daughter. He plans to steal Johanna and asks if he can bring her to Sweeney's for safekeeping. Having secured Todd's assistance, he leaves. Mrs. Lovett suggests that Sweeney kill Anthony and keep Johanna with him. She promises that she will be a splendid mother to Johanna. Pirelli and Tobias appear. Mrs. Lovett takes Tobias downstairs for a meat pie. Pirelli reveals his real identity as Benjamin Barker's former apprentice. He tries to blackmail Todd by threatening to reveal that Todd is really Barker. Todd forces him in a chest, when Tobias appears. Todd persuades the boy to go to the kitchen for more meat pies and some gin. Once Tobias has gone, Todd pulls Pirelli out of the chest and slashes his throat ("Pirelli's Death").

The company transitions to the next scene, remarking on Sweeney's treatment of hypocrites ("The Ballad of Sweeney Todd"). Leaving court, the Judge announces to the Beadle his intention to marry Johanna. At the same time, Anthony proposes to Johanna ("Kiss Me"). Recalling Sweeney's excellent work, the Beadle suggests to the judge that he visit to Sweeney's shop.

At the pie shop, Mrs. Lovett discovers Pirelli's fate. When Todd wants to kill Tobias, too, she protests. The Judge appears. Mrs. Lovett goes downstairs to distract Tobias. The Judge confides his marriage plans. Todd prepares to slit the judge's throat, but he takes his time, savoring the moment before his anticipated revenge; meanwhile, the Judge

anticipates his future with Johanna ("Pretty Women"). Just as Sweeney is about to kill the Judge, Anthony rushes in, blurring out the news of his planned elopement. The Judge leaves in a fury, announcing his intention to lock Johanna away and telling Todd that he will not be back. Enraged at losing the chance to kill the Judge, Sweeney throws Anthony out of the shop and announces his intention to kill everyone he can to get ready for the inevitable destruction of the Judge ("Epiphany"). Mrs. Lovett reminds him that they have to dispose of Pirelli's body. She has an inspiration; they can recycle his victims into meat pies. Sweeney sees the genius of this plan and they celebrate ("A Little Priest").

Act Two

Thanks to her newfound prosperity, Mrs. Lovett has expanded her shop to include an outdoor eating garden. She now wears a fancy gown, and Tobias wears a waiter's apron. Her shop is mobbed with customers who crave the new pies ("God, That's Good!"). The Beggar Woman lurks around. An elaborate new barber chair is moved into Todd's quarters. Todd and Mrs. Lovett set up a complicated system by which Todd sends his victims down a chute, directly into the bake house, where there is a grinding machine. Anthony searches the streets for Johanna. At the same time, Todd dreams of his daughter and systematically kills the customers who sit in his chair. The Beggar Woman tries to warn passersby about the strange odors and smoke coming from Mrs. Lovett's bake house. In the lunatic asylum where the Judge has placed her, Johanna dreams of the moment when Anthony will free her ("Johanna Act II Sequence").

Anthony hears Johanna's voice and discovers that she is in the asylum. He tries to rescue her, but the Beadle stops him and tells the police to bash his head. Anthony escapes. Mrs. Lovett sits in the parlor, playing the harmonium ("I Am a Lass"). She fantasizes about a married life with Todd on the seashore, but he is too fixated on his revenge plot to notice her ("By the Sea"). Anthony appears, asking Todd to help him free Johanna. Todd makes Anthony over as a wigmaker, knowing that the asylum will sell inmates' hair to the highest bidder. He gives Anthony a gun and tells him to bring Johanna to the barbershop after the escape ("Wigmaker Sequence"). Todd then writes to Judge Turpin, telling him that he can find Johanna and Anthony at the barbershop that evening ("The Letter"). Mrs. Lovett sits with Tobias. As she knits him a muffler, they exchange words about their warm feelings for each other. He is devoted to her and promises that no one will harm her ("Not While I'm Around"). He then suggests that something about Sweeney Todd is suspicious. When Mrs. Lovett pulls out Pirelli's purse, he recognizes it. She says that Todd gave it to her, which only further feeds Tobias' doubts. She invites Tobias into the bake house, where he is usually forbidden to go. He is delighted. Once there, she allows him to grind the meat for pies, and he forgets his concerns. She leaves him grinding and locks the door to the bake house. The Beadle has come in response to complaints about a foul smell from her chimney. She says that she can't take him into the bake house until Mr. Todd comes home. Todd arrives and takes the Beadle upstairs for a free shave before his inspection of the ovens.

In the bake house, Tobias begins to suspect that the remains of humans are used for the pies just as the Beadle's body comes down the chute. He realizes that he is locked in and, whimpering, disappears down the cellar steps. Mrs. Lovett tells Todd that Tobias suspects them. She wants Todd to dispense with Tobias at once, but Todd is focused on extracting his revenge from the Judge.

Anthony comes to save Johanna at the asylum, but, when the owner tries to stop him, he cannot bring himself to shoot. Johanna grabs the gun and kills the owner ("Fogg's

Asylum"). They escape. The lunatics are freed from the asylum and spill with euphoric excitement into the street ("City on Fire"). Mrs. Lovett and Todd look for Tobias. The Beggar Woman, suspicious of Mrs. Lovett, searches for the Beadle ("Searching I"). Anthony and Johanna arrive at the barbershop. She wears a sailor suit. At Anthony's insistence, Johanna stays behind as he leaves to hire a coach for their escape to Plymouth. Johanna hides in a trunk. The Beggar Woman surveys the room; being there stimulates something within her. Todd discovers her. She tries to warn him about Mrs. Lovett and again wonders if she knows him. He turns on her, slits her throat and releases her down the chute. The Judge enters. Sweeney pretends that Johanna is safely with Mrs. Lovett and is longing to be reunited with him. Todd convinces the Judge to have a shave to prepare for his meeting with Johanna. Sweeney reveals himself as Benjamin Barker and slits the Judge's throat ("The Judge's Return").

Todd starts out of the room to deal with Tobias as Johanna emerges from the trunk. Mistaking her for a sailor because of her disguise, Todd tries to attack her, but she escapes. He runs to the bake house. Mrs. Lovett tries to kill the Judge, who is still clinging to life. She then notices the Beggar Woman. She frantically tries to drag the Beggar Woman to the oven. Todd sees the woman in the light and realizes that she is his wife, Lucy. He accuses Mrs. Lovett of deceiving him; she claims that she never told him that Lucy died, only that she took poison ("Final Scene Part I"). She tries to stem his anger, and he feigns forgiveness by waltzing with her... over to the oven, shoving her inside. He then cradles the Beggar Woman in his arms ("Final Scene Part II"). Tobias appears, his hair now completely white from shock. He kills Sweeney with the razor, which has fallen on the floor. Constables, Anthony and Johanna appear. Tobias has lost his mind; he cannot stop turning the handle on the grinder.

Epilogue

The company reenters and claim to see the Sweeney in each of us. ("The Ballad of Sweeney Todd").

SPECIAL THANKS

Professor Twyla Robison
 Dr. Marc Reed, Director of TCU SOM
 Julie Lovett and TCU Silver Frogs
 Beth Fultz
 Karen Minatra, Nita Ferrell, Lori Stowe

Dean Amy Hardison Tully, CoFA.
 Robin Owhonda & Robby Fultz.
 Janice Maru
 Mary Jane Harbison.
 TCU Vocal Arts Faculty

