

Education Pack

SWEENEY TODD The Demon Barber of Fleet Street

A musical thriller with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and book by Hugh Wheeler. Based on the 1973 play Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street by Christopher Bond.

SYNOPSIS

The story of an East End of London barber with revenge in his heart and murder on his mind is an old one. Benjamin Barker, a skilled barber, was happily married to Lucy and they had one child, a daughter, Johanna. A cruel and evil judge called Turpin took a liking towards Lucy and contrived to send her husband to the Australian penal colonies for life. After 15 years of what he called 'a living hell', Barker escaped and returned to London on a ship where he met up with a sailor, Anthony, who only knew him as Sweeney Todd. This was his new, adopted name and he is described as 'a heavy-set, saturnine man in his forties.' Almost at once he is accosted by a beggar woman who is also a prostitute. This character appears throughout the play and has an ironic and tragic role to play at the end.

He revisits his old premises now owned by a Mrs Nellie Lovett, a pie maker who remembers Barker and was sweet on him in the past and happily kept his shaving blades when he was arrested. Nobody has rented the old barber's shop since he left it, so it is available for him to set up business again. Mrs Lovett realises he is, in fact, Barker and tells him that Lucy, having been raped by Turpin, poisoned herself and that Johanna is now his ward, living under Turpin's roof. Todd's sole purpose in life now is to be avenged on Turpin.

Sitting at a window in the judge's house, Johanna sings to some birds and is spotted by Anthony who falls instantly in love with her; this produces threats from Turpin and his sidekick Beadle Bamford. To establish himself in business and to set a credible trap for both men, Todd challenges an apparently Italian barber Adolfo Pirelli to a public shaving and tooth-pulling contest in which Pirelli is humiliated and Todd shows himself as a cool, efficient shaver and tooth puller. Barbers would shave men, pull rotten teeth from all ages and in the 17th Century carry out minor operations.

While he waits for Bamford to come for a shave, Todd is visited by Pirelli who reveals he is Irish and, because he has recognised Todd as Barker, he demands half Todd's earnings for silence. Todd strangles him and shoves him in a trunk, with hand sticking out, which is almost discovered by the apprentice lad, Tobias. As Pirelli struggles back to life, Todd slits his throat.

Meanwhile Turpin realises as Johanna is getting older he'll be unable to control her, so decides to marry her. Anthony plans to run off with her before that can happen.

The judge is persuaded to smarten himself to appeal to Johanna so arrives at Todd's shop, and presents a perfect throat as he lies back to be shaved. Todd delays a fraction too long and is disturbed by Anthony. Realising they must dispose of Pirelli's body (and realising too that Todd will go on killing till he can go at the judge again), Mrs Lovett comes up with the ingenious idea of baking the bodies into pies, partly inspired by her business rival Mrs Mooney who she believes puts dead cats in her pies.

Into the second Act, we see that business is good. The pie shop has a garden full of customers and Todd's barber shop has been improved; he acquires a particular, personally designed barbers' chair. Tobias is now working for Todd and Lovett. Johanna has disappeared, which sets Anthony off on a frantic search as Todd embarks on a feast of slaughter of people that nobody would miss. Only the smoke from the oven chimneys all night causes anybody to wonder what is going on.

We see tangible evidence of Mrs Lovett's prosperity and there's an attempt by her to make Todd join her away from the city in a better lifestyle. This falls on deaf ears as Todd's murderous obsession takes hold of him fully. Johanna is located at Fogg's Asylum where Turpin has incarcerated her. Anthony pretends to be a wigmaker on a suggestion from Todd, and as she is rescued, shoots Fogg with Anthony's gun. Todd now has bait in the form of Johanna to trap Turpin so writes to tell him she'll be at his shop.

Tobias is very fond of Mrs Lovett and suspicious of Todd but is locked in the cookhouse where, eating pies, he discovers human parts. Beadle arrives unexpectedly to investigate complaints from neighbours of foul stench from the pie shop and is soon dispatched by Todd – his bloody body landing from the room above as a horrified Tobias watches.

The final sections of the play are full of murder, mayhem and madness. The inmates of the asylum arrive having escaped; the beggar woman is trying to report suspicions to Beadle and faces Todd with the first light of recognition. Once the judge is in the chair he too recognises Todd, but this time has his throat slit. The climax of the play is melodramatic with deaths and revelations. The beggar woman is Lucy, Todd's wife, but before he realises it he has slashed her throat. Tobias, driven mad by the horrors he has witnessed slaughters Todd, which brings a satisfactory ending.

AUTHORS

STEPHEN SONDHEIM

Stephen Sondheim, (22 March 1930) is an American composer and lyricist whose brilliance in matching words and music broke new ground for Broadway musical theatre. He has received an Academy Award, eight Tony Awards, eight Grammy Awards, a Pulitzer Prize, six Laurence Olivier Awards, and a 2015 Presidential Medal of Freedom.

He wrote the music and lyrics for **Saturday Night** (1954), **A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum** (1962), **Anyone Can Whistle** (1964), **Company** (1970), **Follies** (1971), **A Little Night Music** (1973), **The Frogs** (1974), **Pacific Overtures** (1976), **Sweeney Todd** (1979), **Merrily We Roll Along** (1981), **Sunday in the Park with George** (1984), **Into the Woods** (1987), **Assassins** (1991), **Passion** (1994) and **Road Show** (2008) as well as lyrics for **West Side Story** (1957), **Gypsy** (1959) and **Do I Hear a Waltz?** (1965) and additional lyrics for **Candide** (1973). Anthologies of his work include **Side by Side by Sondheim** (1976), **Marry me a Little** (1981), **You're Gonna Love Tomorrow** (1983), **Putting It Together** (1993/99) and **Sondheim on Sondheim** (2010). He composed the scores of the films **Stavisky** (1974) and **Reds** (1981) and songs for **Dick Tracy** (1990) and the television production **Evening Primrose** (1966). His collected lyrics with attendant essays have been published in two volumes: **Finishing the Hat** (2010) and **Look, I Made a Hat** (2011). In 2010 the Broadway theater formerly known as Henry Miller's Theatre was renamed in his honour.

HUGH WHEELER

Hugh Wheeler (19 March 1912 – 26 July 1987) was a British novelist, screenwriter, librettist, poet and translator. He resided in the United States from 1934 until his death and became a naturalized citizen in 1942. He had attended London University. Under the pseudonym Patrick Quentin, Q. Patrick and Jonathan Stagge, Wheeler was the author or co-author of many mystery novels and short stories. In 1963 his 1961 collection **The Ordeal of Mrs. Snow** was given a Special Edgar Award by the Mystery Writers of America. He won the Tony Award and the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Book of a Musical in 1973 and 1974 for his books for the musicals **A Little Night Music** and **Candide**, and won both again in 1979 for his book for **Sweeney Todd**. Wheeler is credited as research consultant for the film **Cabaret**, though numerous sources list him as co-writer of the screenplay.

THE AUTHOR AND HIS INFLUENCES

It was the Christopher Bond play that inspired Sondheim and the show's book by Hugh Wheeler, but we tend, understandably, to credit Sondheim with the lion's share of creating **Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street** and bringing it to the stage.

Stephen Sondheim's long and distinguished career is marked by many signs of success, including the fact that he is both a composer and a lyricist. That is a rare ability and his life has been spent working in the theatre, writing and composing and creating unique dramas with stunning musical arrangements. People sometimes dismiss the genre of musical theatre as being less than 'pure drama'. There is no greater drama present on stage, for example, than in the collaborative reworking of Shakespeare's **Romeo and Juliet** into **West Side Story** (1957), where he was the lyricist.

Later to make Sondheim his protégé and remaining close friends with him, Oscar Hammerstein II, the man behind the lyrics of such classic musicals as **Oklahoma, Carousel, South Pacific, The King and I** and **The Sound of Music**, helped change the face of musical theatre with material no longer built solely around plot. Sondheim took it further with his grasp of music, themes, characters and presentation to integrate into what became concept musicals. For Sondheim these became treatments of loners and non-conformist outsiders.

In his chapter on Sondheim in the **Cambridge Companion to the Musical** (2002), Jim Lovensheimer states that after **Carousel** (1945), the outsider became increasingly the principle figure in a musical, particularly a musical by Sondheim.

Lovensheimer points out that as a Jew and a gay man, Sondheim has felt the non-conformity of the outsider. It is the outsider's ability to escape reality through dreams or dreamlike fantasy that marks him/her out as he considers Sondheim's scores as representations of the outsider. He argues that Sweeney Todd is filled with outsiders and they are all dispossessed persons, outsiders in 19th century London. He points out that the cannibalistic fantasy of **A Little Priest** with its grotesque lyrics describes how the professions would taste when eaten as a light-hearted waltz.

This together with his undeniable influence from the stage of the entire musical theatre genre explains the principle influences on Stephen Sondheim. In his autobiography **Finishing the Hat: The Collected Lyrics of Stephen Sondheim (Volume 1)** with attendant comments, principles, heresies, grudges, whines and anecdotes (2010), Sondheim describes his collaborations with Richard Rogers, Leonard Bernstein and the actress Angela Lansbury among others.

However, it may also be argued that there was some Brechtian influence on him, too, albeit indirectly. The fact that Todd directly addresses the audience in the prologue to say it is a play and that the characters who have been killed rise up to complete the piece, indicate some elements of Brecht's distancing techniques in which actors demonstrated their roles rather than got deeply into them.

Brecht's **The Threepenny Opera** (1928) has certain stylistic similarity and a hint of common themes with **Sweeney Todd**.

HISTORY

The beats of Sweeney Todd story were born in the pages of **The String of Pearls: A Romance**, serialised from 1846 to 1847 in one of the macabre „penny dreadful“ newspapers that offered up cheap thrills in the age of velvet-curtained gothic horror. If the likes of **Dracula** (1897), **Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde** (1886), **Carmilla** (1872) and **The Turn of the Screw** (1898) were the genre's high culture, reflecting the drawing-room fears of its monied middle-class readers, than **The String of Pearls** was its sensationalism for the streets, pandering simple – yet visceral – fears of the horrors next door, often with a dollop of innuendo. No allegory, no ennui, just a maniac with a razor and pies filled with human flesh.

In 1847 George Dibdin-Pitt penned the first play version of the Todd story that held the wide-eyed audiences at Hoxton's Britannia Theatre enraptured. Also called **The String of Pearls**, the melodrama claimed to be founded on fact. Other stage versions of the Todd legend were written and performed all through the 19th century. The first confirmed film version, a silent movie based on Dibdin-Pitt's play, opened in British theatres in 1928. Another movie adaptation, **Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street**, hit the British screens in 1936. In 1973, English playwright Christopher Bond wrote his version of the Sweeney Todd legend, also titled **Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street**. Bond's version fully embraced the melodramatic aspects of the story, while making Todd a somewhat sympathetic character.

After seeing Bond's play in London, playwright-composer Stephen Sondheim decided to turn it into a musical. Sondheim, who as a young man had worked with such renowned composers as Leonard Bernstein and Oscar Hammerstein II, collaborated with Hugh Wheeler, who wrote the musical's book, and director Hal Prince. The resulting show won a pile of Tony Awards and opened to rave reviews in London. The musical has been revived twice on Broadway, filmed for television and has even been performed by opera companies. And it found an even broader audience through the film version, directed by Tim Burton and starring Johnny Depp. The demon barber of Fleet Street lives on.

MAIN CHARACTERS

SWEENEY TODD - Morose and brooding, a barber by profession, newly arrived in London after 15 years' unjust incarceration in a penal colony.

MRS. LOVETT - A cheery, chatty but wholly amoral shopkeeper whose premises and pies are coated in dust and plagued by flies. She would like to be more than merely a landlady to Mr. Todd.

ANTHONY HOPE - A young man, befriended by Todd on the voyage home.

JOHANNA - A beautiful girl, Todd's daughter but now claimed by Judge Turpin as his own.

JUDGE TURPIN - A corrupt and depraved official, an upholder of justice who twists the system to serve his own ends.

BEADLE BAMFORD - Turpin's accomplice in his crimes.

BEGGAR WOMAN - A mad old crone with a filthy tongue, whose cries go unheeded.

PIRELLI - An Italian barber, though of unauthenticated provenance.

TOBIAS RAGG - A simple, kind-hearted lad. He works first for Pirelli, then for Mrs. Lovett, but never trusts Todd.

Sweeney Todd

We naturally apply a 21st century approach to an 18th century serial killer, the central character and focus of the play. We understand from Freud that people have suppressed desires and fears that channel our behaviour and that our subconscious minds may contain secrets, dreams and emotions in an often damaging way.

The dark bitterness, anger and hatred caused by the backstory about his wife and daughter and the corrupt and immoral Judge Turpin and the long period of banishment and imprisonment are the creative forces that drive the man. Therefore it is a small step to accepting that Todd is at least a case for psychoanalysis. Whether such a depth is required in a character in a strong play is debateable and would form a discussion between any actor and director.

Todd's ego is driven by the primitive motivations of sex, food and aggression:

Sex – he wants Lucy back to sleep with her alone; food – he provides the meat for the pies that Mrs Lovett cooks and aggression – his passion for violent dispatching of people and pushing some into ovens.

It is possible to analyse Todd in the light of many different theories, but the degree of his madness and obsession is, in the end, a dramatic judgement between actor and director.

Mrs Lovett

In the same way we could apply a psychological approach to Mrs Lovett. Is it love alone that drives her to become Todd's willing accomplice? Or are there dark shades in her subconscious that Todd releases?

We know she is a widow of 17 years since her Albert passed on. We know she has a romantic streak and seems genuinely excited to contemplate a life of blissful retirement by the sea with a serial killer.

We also know that she kept Barker's silver razor blades hidden and safe all the years of his banishment and that she has a quick eye for turning a profit.

So, her motivation is as complex as his. She's fond of the boy Tobias, but only up to the point where he threatens the Todd relationship. She clearly loves money and never loses an opportunity to acquire more of it. She is not a Scrooge-like miserly gatherer of cash, as she's happy to spend on a nice back parlour with new wallpaper and a second-hand harmonium.

Judge Turpin

Is the judge a stereotypical baddie with no heart, the pantomime villain? Or is there a tender undercurrent in his remorse at sending Barker to prison and raping Lucy before she took poison leading to his caring for Johanna?

If there is, it is clearly all undone when we see his locking her in his house, abusing her sexually albeit from a distance and putting her in the asylum.

VICTORIAN LONDON

- At the end of the 19th century, London was the world's most populated city.
- Many of London's most famous buildings and landmarks were built during the 19th century, including Trafalgar Square, the Houses of Parliament, Tower Bridge and Victoria Station.
- For most of the 19th century, the British Empire was the world's most significant colonial force.
- The industrial revolution changed Britain's economy and landscape fundamentally. Cities expanded rapidly.
- Victorian morality embraced female purity, order, politeness. As historian Harold Pinter described it: "Between 1780 and 1850 the English ceased to be one of the most aggressive, brutal, rowdy, outspoken, riotous, cruel and bloodthirsty nations in the world and became one of the most inhibited, polite, orderly, tender-minded, prudish and hypocritical."
- Social inequality resulted in high crime rates, as well as homelessness, poverty, disease and prostitution as major social issues.
- Many thousand citizens lives in slums.
- Especially the working classes, as well as unemployed, and illegally employed citizens suffered from insufficient health care and poor hygiene standards.
- London's East End was particularly known for its social problems. Most of its inhabitants were people in working class occupations.
- In 1851, the population density in the capital was at 7.72 people in a house.
- The famous serial killer Jack the Ripper "operated" in the East End in the late 19th century.

A FEW REFERENCES TO VICTORIAN LONDON IN SWEENEY TODD

- Poor women were often driven into prostitution. Their clients were drawn from the ranks of working, middle, and upper classes, while the suppliers were exclusively working class women and girls. Sweeney Todd comments on this in the character of the beggar woman (Lucy).
- Fleet Street in the West of London had been established as the centre of London's journalism and print district since the 18th century. Several interpretations of the Sweeney Todd story locate his barber shop on Fleet Street.
- Music halls offered popular entertainment for the lower middle classes. Stephen Sondheim pays tribute to the genre in the song "By the Sea", sung by Mrs Lovett.
- After 1815, Irish immigration has increased significantly. By 1851, 500.000 Irish had settled in England and Wales. The London Irish lived in some of the worst conditions of all London's inhabitants. Sondheim and Wheeler create the character of Pirelli posing as an Italian tenor.

A SELECT SWEENEY TODD CHRONOLOGY

- 1846 – 1847: The characters of the barber Sweeney Todd, and his pie-baking accomplice Mrs Lovett are introduced in *The String of Pearls: A Romance*, attributed to Edward P. Hignston, George MacFarren, and James Malcolm Rymer amongst others, and published in a series of fictitious short stories.
- 1847: The play *The String of Pearls*, written by George Dibdin Pitt, is performed at the Britannia Theatre, Hoxton. It was the first version to use the catchphrase now most associated with Sweeney: "I'll polish him off".
- 1848 - 1850: An updated version of *The String of Pearls: The Barber of Fleet Street* appears as a "penny dreadful" serial; cheap printed horror stories about notorious criminals.
- 1865: A new dramatic adaptation by Frederick Hazleton is performed under the title *Sweeney Todd, the Barber of Fleet Street, or, the String of Pearls* at The Old Bowler Saloon in Lambeth.
- 1928: The first surviving film version of *Sweeney Todd* stars Moore Marriott in the role of the murderous barber.
- 1936: The first sound film version sees British horror actor Tod Slaughter (!) in the title role of *Sweeney Todd, The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*.
- 1956: Actor Stanley Holloway releases a recording of the popular music-hall song "Sweeney Todd the Barber" by R.P. Weston.
- 1959: A one-act ballet adaptation with music by Malcolm Arnold (op.68) and choreography by John Cranko celebrates its world premiere at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford.
- 1970: Andy Milligan's *Bloodthirsty Butchers* is a violent film adaptation with graphic murder scenes. Its tagline was: "Their prime cuts were curiously erotic...but thoroughly brutal!"
- 1973: Christopher Bond's play *Sweeney Todd, The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* opens at the Theatre Royal in Stratford East (London). It served as the primary source for Sondheim's musical.
- 1979: *Sweeney Todd, The Demon Barber of Fleet Street. A Musical Thriller*, with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and a book by Hugh Wheeler, premieres at the Uris Theatre in New York, directed by Hal Prince. The musical subsequently wins eight Tony Awards, including Best Musical, Best Book, and Best Performance by a Leading Actress (Angela Lansbury).
- 1980: Sondheim and Wheeler's "musical thriller" is staged at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane in London, where the reception is initially less enthusiastic as on Broadway.
- 2008: Tim Burton's film adaptation of the Sondheim/Wheeler musical is released as *Sweeney Todd, The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*. The film stars Johnny Depp as Sweeney Todd, Helen Bonham Carter as Mrs Lovett, Alan Rickman as Judge Turpin and Northern Irish actress Jayne Wisener as Johanna. The production wins an Oscar for Best Art Direction and two Golden Globes.

THE VICTORIAN SERIAL KILLER

For a serial killer living in 19th century London, life was probably much easier than it is for a modern-day murderer. Law, in addition to individual morals, was driven by personal gain and desperate poverty, as opposed to black and white regulations. Petty crime was common, and corruption of the law was expected by most citizens, so large-scale criminals were able to blend in with the regular pick-pockets. In fact, the criminal class of Victorian London is difficult to define, because forgers and burglars pervaded the so-called professional class. The increased crime and poverty of London was largely a result of industrialization, and thus rapid urbanization during the mid-1800's. Although many people moved to London in search of work, the Industrial Revolution also brought congested slums.

Urban life for the lawful working class was no doubt brutal, but the punishment for convicts proved to be even more harsh. In 1800, more than 160 crimes warranted the death penalty, and public hangings were a form of free entertainment. With brutality being promoted by the authorities, it is no mystery that the public had a thirst for blood in literature and fiction; they could probably relate to the fear and villainy that was illustrated in „penny dreadfuls“. Furthermore, despite the Bloody Code that encouraged harsh punishments, Britain had no detective force until 1842, when the Detective Police in Scotland Yard was established. Prior to that, many citizens feared police corruption in investigations, and thus resisted such a specialized force. The weakness and irrationality of the British justice system would explain how Sweeney Todd's murder rampage could be so believable for the contemporary audience.

DISTURBING VICTORIAN MURDERERS

Jack the Ripper Unidentified killer who stabbed at least five prostitutes in the Whitechapel district of London in 1888. Several suspects have been named over the years. Attacks ascribed to Jack the Ripper typically involved female prostitutes who lived and worked in the slums of the East End of London whose throats were cut prior to abdominal mutilations. The removal of internal organs from at least three of the victims led to proposals that their killer had some anatomical or surgical knowledge.

Catherine Wilson (1822 – 1862) was a nurse who poisoned her husband and patients with colchicum. She had over 30 patients die under her care. Last woman publicly hanged in London. She worked as a nurse and poisoned her victims after encouraging them to leave her money in their wills.

Amelia Dyer (1837 – 1896) was one of the most prolific serial killers in history, murdering infants in her care over a 30-year period. Trained as a nurse, and widowed in 1869, she turned to baby farming – the practice of adopting unwanted infants in exchange for money – in order to support herself. At the time of her death, a handful of murders were attributed to her, but there is little doubt she was responsible for possibly 400 deaths or more.

Mary Ann Cotton (1832 – 1873) was an English serial killer who murdered three of her four husbands in order to collect on their insurance policies, and many others. She murdered as many as 21 people, including 11 of her 13 children. She used arsenic poisoning, causing rapid decline of health. Her story soon inspired a fairly dark nursery rhyme: “Mary Ann Cotton, she's dead and she's rotten“. Hanged in 1873.

Frederick Bailey Deeming (1853 – 1892) killed his wife and four children (cutting their throats, except one daughter that was strangled) and buried their bodies in concrete under a rented house in England. He then fled with his mistress to Windsor, Victoria, where he bludgeoned her and cut her throat, and also buried the body in concrete in another rented house. International press considered him the possible identity of Jack the Ripper. Hanged in 1892.

William Palmer (1824 – 1856), also known as the Prince of Poisoners, was a gambling-addicted physician who poisoned friends and relatives with strychnine and ammonia, usually to collect life insurances or to keep money that the victims lent him; also suspected in the death of four of his newborns. Tried for murder and hanged.

George Chapman (1865 – 1903) poisoned three of his mistresses. Suspected at the time of his execution by hanging in 1903 to be the real identity of Jack the Ripper.

THE FLEET STREET

The street originally emerged from the western edge of the City of London, crossed the River Fleet via a small island at present-day Ludgate Circus and led to Westminster via the Strand. The river was later covered over after it became an open sewer.

Fleet Street's association with printing began in 1500 with the pioneer Wynkyn de Worde, who produced nearly 800 books. The printing industry flourished here over the next 200 years but it was not until the beginning of 18th century that the first daily newspapers were published. Fleet Street at this time was a frantically busy part of the connecting route between the twin centres of London. It has been called 'a double street' because there was as much going on in its alleys as on Fleet Street itself.

By the early 19th century Fleet Street's newspapers had achieved massive circulations among both the working and middle classes. Publications ranged from scandal sheets like John Bull, through William Cobbett's polemical Political Register to The Times, which increased its size to eight pages in 1827. The Daily Telegraph arrived late on the scene in 1855 but soon outsold The Times. The Evening Standard evolved out of its daily counterpart in 1860.

The press drove out most of Fleet Street's other businesses, especially after regional newspapers began to open London offices here. In the first half of the 20th century the number of national newspapers halved from its peak of around two dozen, while several of the survivors built imposing printing works. All the major newspapers relocated their offices and printing works during the 1980s. Now the street mixes management consultants and investment specialists with shops and takeaways. Fleet Street still refers to the British National Press, in the same way that Wall Street is used to refer to the Financial Industry in the United States.

EXPLORING THE PLAY

There are extensive sections of introduction which reveal much background and other thinking about this play. There is a simple summary of the plot on page xxxiii of the introduction, but a full read through allows for exploration and understanding of the play's subtleties and plot structure. Much of the play is not spoken but sung, with words frequently underscored by music that adds a sweeping grand design to the whole construct.

The prologue is a key event as an organist plays funeral music against a front drop curtain showing a beehive design of the English class system, which sets the scene for the show. This is a simple Brechtian technique of displaying a visual representation of a theme that is to help the audience understand the class system that underpins the play.

As the play starts, the music contains the opening notes of the Roman Catholic Church's Mass for the Dead, 'Dies Irae'. Todd is described as a machine, meaning a killing machine, which parallels the industrial machinery around. This repeated musical motif structure is typical of much of Sondheim's work, but also of musical theatre in general. It is often the same in film music, where a theme is interpreted and reinterpreted as the story unfolds.

In Act 1 Todd and the young Anthony step off the ship, the younger man with his optimism in the song **No Place Like London** and the older man with his realistic pessimism. The first Londoner they encounter is the Beggar Woman asking for 'Alms! Alms!' Anthony gives her a few coins, which he will do again later, and is offered 'a little jig jig' with her for a price. He is embarrassed so she turns to Todd and asks, 'Hey, don't I know you, mister?' She is the first to think she knows him; the irony is that she should know him best of all. She will reappear at several key moments throughout the play culminating in her tragic murder at Todd's hand, the wife he lost, the mother of Johanna. This is a dramatist's device to keep the main story developing, that present revenge is driven by the tragic past.

When we meet Mrs Lovett in her pie shop, we are presented with macabre comedy amongst the grim death and harsh lives. She is a vigorous, slatternly woman and is at once in action helping him eat one of what are in her own words, **The Worst Pies in London** with much flicking dust off the materials, crawling insects crushed and some of what we would regard as disgusting, unhygienic cooking practices. Most productions play up the inherent humour in the song.

Sondheim uses grotesque masks of animals and demons, mime and music to show (rather than tell) the critical past moment when Lucy was raped by Turpin. The story, **Poor Thing**, is enacted by characters of 15 years ago with Turpin and his assistant Bamford leching while Lucy remains demure.

When Todd swears revenge on Turpin and Bamford, despite having no money or way of earning a living, Lovett produces the case containing his silver-handled razors. She hadn't sold them, but kept them in case he ever came back. This is an act of foresight and love that also begins to interlock them into their criminal life to come.

It is an act of fortuitous coincidence, yet essential in the dramatic narrative that Todd has his blades back. In **My Friends**, Todd pours out his heart to them, as a man to his lover. He is a man again – ‘my right arm is complete again’ – a killing machine, a parallel to the industrial machinery of the location.

Like the good playwright that he is besides being a superb composer, Sondheim changes mood to the sound of songbirds with a bird-seller carrying a bizarre construction of birdcages below Johanna’s window with her long mane of shining blonde hair. The caged birds are a reflection of her own caged life in Turpin’s house felt through her song, **Green Finch and Linnet Bird**. This is the lyrical backdrop to the naive Anthony falling for the girl immediately, an appearance of the beggar woman/Lucy and for Sondheim to bring us back to the violent realities of the piece with Beadle wringing the neck of the bird Anthony bought Johanna.

The scene in St Dunstan’s marketplace where a crowd is gathered round a caravan, painted like a Sicilian donkey cart and bearing the name Adolfo Pirelli, barber and tooth-puller is classic musical theatre full of colour, dramatic action and stage heavy with characters. It also sets up Beadle Bamford for his desire to be pampered by Todd, which will lead finally in his death.

The first murder we see on stage is that of Pirelli, come to blackmail Todd, and he ends up in a trunk, one hand hanging out which is almost seen by the lad, Tobias. This is very much in the melodrama, horror film (and comedy) genres. One of the features of musical theatre is seen in the moment when Turpin is inches from Todd’s razor slitting his throat, but the song **Pretty Woman** goes on too long and Todd is disturbed and Turpin lives. The device adds to the tension at the end when he finally meets his death.

The first half ends with Mrs Lovett’s brainwave - ideas just pop into me head – of solving their need to dispose of what may be several dead bodies by baking and eating them in pies. It shows desperation combined with entrepreneurial spirit, which has come to fruition in a busy, happy customer-filled pie shop as Act Two opens.

The sequence of Anthony looking for the abducted Johanna is set against Todd’s slashing throats and Lovett’s processing humans into pies and counting her money in a dark paralleling of life and death, love and murder, hope and greed, which Sondheim deploys as a contrasting device. The second visit to Fogg’s Private Asylum for the Mentally Deranged shows that Anthony, the young idealist, is unable to shoot Fogg, even to save Johanna, but she herself does it. Neither Johanna nor Lovett are weak ineffectual women in this drama, yet are subject to the control of men, as society and convention demanded.

The final scenes of the play are filled with discovery and mistake, as is often the case in thrillers and mysteries; Tobias is locked into a ghastly room of gruesome carnage; the truth is revealed and the increasing madness of Todd leads to the unexpected murder of his wife and the expected death of his partner, Mrs Lovett. These are typical of the murder genre where the truth will out and there is drawing together of the loose ends, if not redemption.

DESCRIBING THE PLAY

It is helpful to try to categorise this play. Sondheim called it a musical thriller and Grand Guignol. The term Grand Guignol, established in Paris in the late 1890s, describes any dramatic entertainment that deals with macabre subject matter and features “over-the-top” graphic violence.

They say that a Grand Guignol evening might comprise a few short plays including crime dramas and bawdy sex farces with a horror play featuring eye-gouging, throat-slashing, acid-throwing, or some other equally grisly climax.

Sweeney Todd meets that description. It is also undoubtedly melodramatic during much of it, so it may be partially a melodrama. It has also elements of Shakespearean and Jacobean tragedy – think of Shakespeare’s revenge drama *Titus Andronicus* with its high body count and two victims being baked in pies and served to their father.

Sweeney Todd could be styled a real tragedy, a moral warning that to hold such deep seated revenge can only lead to harm, death, twisted lives and damaged relationships.

It may be viewed as a farce, or even by some as ‘the other side of farce.’ Its over-the-top exaggeration leaves any sense of reality behind to present gruesome events that can only be handled if treated in a humorous way.

Certainly it is black comedy or dark humour. It is also perhaps high comedy, a comic musical, a romantic musical, a send-up or parody or operetta if not pure opera. Mrs Lovett, particularly in ‘The Worst Pies in London’, is making fun of her situation. The false Italian Pirelli is also a comic character who can and should be camped up with extravagant excess.

It may be some of all those things; but that adds to the significance of it as a major contribution to musical theatre, albeit a show without any dancing beyond the masked ball rape scene and Todd and Lovett’s dance to the oven.

KEY THEMES

Revenge

This lies at the heart of the whole story driving Todd throughout. It is directed at one man primarily, Judge Turpin, with an ancillary need for vengeance against Beadle Bamford. That the power of this consuming revenge causes the death of several others along the way is unfortunate; that it causes the death of Lucy (the beggar woman) is a tragedy.

Impotence

Hal Prince thought that the ensemble (chorus and cast) offered a unifying emotion (page xi in Introduction) that was impotence. Turpin is not impotent or at least wasn't when he was younger and raped Lucy. His scene secretly observing Johanna in her room could represent impotence now he is older. Todd is impotent and fulfils his desires that have all been subjugated to his obsessions through his killing others. Mrs Lovett suggests a marriage but he shows no interest.

Rage

The extreme violence of the murders, particularly the two attempts to extinguish both Pirelli and Turpin, are recurring themes. This is violence in a violent age when life was often both brutally hard and horrifically short.

Death

Everybody dies but in this play all go savagely from the casual assassination of strangers in the barber's chair to the little boy on the gallows; the shooting of Fogg to the vengeful deaths of Pirelli, Bamford, Lucy, Lovett to Todd himself.

Contradictions and contrasts

The often romantic lyricism of the music juxtaposed with the brutality set up a series of contrasts throughout. The more violent the action, the more appealing the music, perhaps?

Some have felt that there is a contradiction in an American composer dealing with an essentially British story, but it is instead a happy melding of cultures to produce the gripping story and music. The desire for revenge becomes an all-consuming obsession. At every moment Todd is waiting (for Bamford and/or Turpin to arrive) and is constantly working things to achieve his purpose of murdering them. Nothing else matters. The Pirelli story is solely to enable Todd to establish a reputation as a barber which in turn is only to entice Bamford and Turpin to him. The vulnerability of shaving a man's throat with his head back is part of the obsession. Additionally, Todd is obsessed with Johanna, his daughter. Once he knows who and where she is, he dreams, thinks of her as he does his other business.

Class structure

With the beehive diagram of the English class system at the outset, there is a clear understanding that it plays a part in the play. Turpin represents authority and upper class; Todd represents the working class; the Beggar Woman is the lowest of all, a beggar and a prostitute. Lovett is also of the working class but has entrepreneurial skills that might make her middle class today. In the terms of this play, it is a more straightforward struggle between the upper and lower classes.

Power

This works in the same way as class. Turpin and Bamford possess and exercise (abuse) supreme authority – the literal power of life and death over all others, as shown by the scene where Turpin condemns a child to death and his adoption of the baby Johanna on his own law. Todd has power with his razors in his hand and exercises it ruthlessly when he chooses. Fogg represents authority too, but is shot. The Beggar Woman has no power at all and is only known as Lucy when it is too late. Anthony is relatively powerless but as a man has some over Johanna, his wife to be.

Loneliness

Todd is a solitary man who usually gives away little, as we see at the beginning with Anthony. When anyone hints they might know or recognise him, they are a threat to him, although Mrs Lovett is the exception. He lovingly calls his knives his friends and the new chair another friend. He seems to look people in the eye only when he loves them or is about to kill them.

Blood

There is a lot of blood, some spurting, all soaking into clothes. It represents the vulnerability of human beings, the visible sign that he/she has been hurt and/or killed and recurs throughout in a realistic and intrusive visual way.

Music

Music is a theme in the sense that it is the scenery of the play underpinning words and action, whether songs are sung or spoken. It serves the same purpose on stage as film music does, to create an atmosphere which is integral to the message and enjoyment of the art form.

Love

Is it a love story? Clearly Todd loved Lucy and Johanna and now loves their memories. Mrs Lovett appears to love Todd, to a point, while loving money.

Does Turpin love Lucy? Do he and Bamford love anybody but themselves? No.

Do Anthony and Johanna truly love each other so quickly and deeply – yes, they do.

Does the Beggar Woman/Lucy love anybody now? She is probably too far gone with her appalling life to love anyone - she merely survives.

Does Tobias love anyone? He is fond of Mrs Lovett and he may well love her as a substitute mother, hence his protection of her and willingness to kill Todd at the end.

Good versus evil

On one level it is a morality tale, where not only does revenge create more revenge in a vicious spiral, evil does not triumph in the end. Only Lucy is the innocent victim, apart from the customers who die with lives we don't know about.

ACTIVITIES

Exploring the minor characters

1. Beadle Bamford

1. a) In groups create three tableaux that show Beadle in the short scene after he and Turpin have noticed Anthony getting close to Johanna (p26–27) adopting different stances and attitudes.

2. b) Create captions without using lines from the play.

Extension: Hotseat the Beadle to find out why he behaves as he does and what he feels about Johanna, Turpin, Anthony and the bird in the cage.

2. Anthony and Johanna

1. a) In groups create a speed-dating scene in which they meet for the first time and in 4 minutes share their life experiences.

2. b) In groups stage an imaginary conversation if Anthony had actually been able to ask Turpin for Johanna's hand in marriage.

Extension: Devise a scene after the play is over, Anthony and Johanna are married and they are remembering the horrific events of the final scene.

3) The Beggar Woman

1. a) Solo, improvise a monologue with actions spoken by the Beggar Woman after she has seen Todd on his return to London.

2. b) In pairs improvise a scene where the Beggar Woman tries to convince a sceptical bystander who has enjoyed the pies of the horrors of the pie shop.

Extension: Devise a sympathetic police report into the tragic life and death of Lucy from when Judge Turpin first saw her up to her death.

4) Adolfo Pirelli

a) In pairs, improvise a scene where Tobias is being trained by Pirelli to be his assistant in all that is required of him.

b) In pairs, interpret the scene between Pirelli and Todd (p55–57) as if between two Mafioso or gangsters.

Extension: Take the scene from Pirelli's entrance (p37) up to end of p44 and using the actual lines present it as clowning type comedy and again as with a different foreign accent to make the most of the comedy.

Exploring the major characters

5) Todd and Lovett

1. a) In pairs imagine they had been married and retired to the seaside and improvise an evening after dinner.
2. b) In pairs, from p115 top to top of p120, play the script as if Todd is genuinely taken with Mrs Lovett and his distraction/obsession is less important than it is.
3. c) Repeat with Todd's distractions very overpowering and he is aggressive towards her.

Extension: Whole class discussion of the nature of the Todd-Lovett relationship from the point of each in turn and citing evidence from the play.

Staging the play

6) Stage designs

1. a) In pairs make a list of the staging requirements in a venue you are familiar with and sketch out a rough design for a set.
2. b) Consider the entrance/exit requirements, props and music of any scene of your choice and block it showing how it fits the action, paying attention to groupings, proxemics and relationships and status between the various characters.

Extension: Make a list of the transitions between each scene and note what lights, effects, props movements and actors are needed to affect each one in turn.

7) The crowd scenes

1. a) Whole class take the asylum scene and decides on one character for each so there is minimal overlap – backstory, why in asylum, what happened, what went wrong, how long there, how damaged are you?
2. b) Improvise an asylum scene in which the characters are given free reign when a visitor comes in and rescues one of them.

Extension: Perform the Fogg in the Asylum scene or when they have escaped and are running after Anthony and Johanna and see how far defined characters in the crowd have helped develop the scene from an acting, director's and audience perspective. Pay particular attention to blocking each character and to the vocal performance of each. Are some lines and movements in unison or canon? Are some fragments actually solos?

8) Focused moments

In small groups choose a focussed moment and take it in turns to direct each other in a rendition of it. How do the characters come across? How do they move, sit and stand? What vocal constraints do they have? What are their proxemics to each other and audience? What gestures might they employ? What effect should they leave on the audience?

Scenes could include:

- a) Beadle during the shaving contest when he is not central but is in full view throughout.
- b) Tobias and Mrs Lovett where the boy professes he will look after her and he fears Mr Todd.
- c) When Todd has Turpin in the chair for the first time.
- d) When Todd has killed Lucy and before he dies.

REHEARSAL EXERCISE

A person's "status" denotes their relative social or professional position. In a social network, status is related to authority, power and reputation and often determines a person's rights and responsibilities. Status is flexible and depends on the social and political environment as well as changing material circumstances. A person can inhabit various types of status, depending on the social context: at his workplace an employee might have little influence, while being the manager of his local football club. In this rehearsal exercise, you can explore nuances of high and low social statuses using the Sweeney Todd characters.

A character with extreme high status

- - Is calm and focused
- - Claims a lot of space
- - Walks upright, with confidence
- - Moves slowly and with a sense of purpose
- - Makes direct eye contact
- - Breathes calmly and regularly
- - Speaks in a lower register
- - Takes time to speak
- - Does not respect personal boundaries of others
- - Interrupts others
- - Gives orders
- - Acts with great confidence and self-composure

A character with extreme low status

- - Is nervous and fidgety
- - Fumbles with clothes and hands
- - Tries to attract as little attention as possible
- - Claims very little space
- - Has a stooped posture and walk
- - Lowers his/her eyes
- - Moves insecurely, with nervous, irregular movements
- - Moves out of the way of others
- - Avoids direct eye contact
- - Speaks in a high register, speaks quickly and quietly
- - Apologises a lot

In this exercise, divide your class into two groups, with one group performing and one watching. The members of one group will silently walk in character, staying true to his/her status when interacting with the other characters in the room. The members of the other group have to find out who is who by observing and discussing their impressions.

Preparation:

Group 1: Assign characters from Sweeney Todd (without Group 2 being able to overhear). Each performer makes decisions about the way to depict their character's status.

Group 2: Collect expectations about the characterisation.

Action:

Group 1: Silently walking in character, with as much detail included on status as possible.

Group 2: Take individual notes, then discuss in the group who might be whom.

Reflection:

Group 2: Present the outcome of their analysis. Present evidence that has led to their conclusions.

Group 1: Explain the choices they made AFTER Group 2 has presented. In a second step, switch groups.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS/ GROUP ACTIVITIES

1. Can you identify with Benjamin Barker's desire for revenge? Do you think that any of his violence is justified by his past?
2. Do you find the violence in the show disturbing? How is your reaction to the show affected by the element of music?
3. Do you feel that the corruption of Judge Turpin's character speaks to the British justice system during the Victorian era? Why or why not?
4. If you could set this show in another time period, when would it be, and how would does the setting change the effect of the show?
5. Is Ms. Lovett and Todd's relationship sincere? Which characters appear to have the most genuine bond?

ACTIVITY II: SYNOPSIS REVIEW

Beginner Activity: Synopsis Slips

Provided at the end of this curriculum is a sheet of plot points from Sweeney Todd. The plot points are listed as to be cut with a paper cutter. The instructors will put all slips in a "hat" and pass the "hat" distributing one slip of paper to each student. The students are then asked to find the student holding the corresponding half of their plot point. To make this exercise smoother, all plot points have been given a number. Staying together as partners, all students will form a circle in the order of their numbers. Starting with the number "1", students will then read their plot points in order, to each other. For larger groups, feel free to use each fact multiple times, grouping the students in fours instead of twos.

Advanced Activity: Synopsis Slideshow

Provided at the end of this curriculum is a sheet of plot points from Sweeney Todd. The plot points are listed as to be cut with a paper cutter into four sections. The instructors will split the workshop students into four roughly equal groups assigning each group one of the four synopsis sections. Taking approximately 10 minutes, each group will create a tableau, or "frozen picture" for each item on their sheet of paper. It is encouraged that the instructor rotate through the groups to provide guidance, and even to have each group assign a "director" from within their group lead in the creation of each tableau. At the end of the 10 minutes, the groups will present their series of frozen pictures with the "director" reading through the synopsis point describing each tableau.

Connections and Classroom Questions

Are there plot devices in Sweeney Todd that you recognize in other plays? Movies?

Are there other stories with themes of injustice or revenge?

Which plot points are you most interested or excited to see?

SYNOPSIS SLIPS FOR BEGINNERS

1. Fifteen years ago, a barber named Benjamin Barker is living a happy life with his beautiful wife Lucy and daughter Johanna.
 1. The evil and corrupt Judge Turpin wants Lucy for his own, so he wrongly arrests the barber, sends him away to jail in Australia, and takes Lucy.
 2. Lucy poisons herself to escape the horrible situation and Judge Turpin takes the young daughter Johanna as his ward.
 2. The barber returns on a ship fifteen years later in disguise as Sweeney Todd, with his young friend Anthony.
 3. The two friends part ways and Sweeney Todd goes to look for an apartment.
 3. He finds one above a failing pie shop owned by Mrs. Lovett.

4. Mrs. Lovett tells Sweeney Todd that Lucy is dead and Johanna lives with Judge Turpin.
4. Sweeney Todd, mad with rage, swears revenge on the Judge.

5. With the razors that Mrs. Lovett kept while he was away, Sweeney opens a barbershop above her pie shop.
5. There he hopes to attract Judge Turpin and the Judge's friend Beadle Bamford to his business.

6. Todd's plans go wrong when a rival barber named Pirelli figures out Todd's true identity.
6. Pirelli uses this information to try and blackmail Sweeney Todd.

7. Todd kills Pirelli with his razors.
7. Mrs. Lovett suggests they dispose of his body by grinding it up and baking it into her pies.

8. Soon after Mrs. Lovett's "corpse" pies become very popular on Fleet Street.
8. Todd starts killing his customers to keep up with the demand.

9. Meanwhile, Todd's friend Anthony has met and fallen in love with the teenaged Johanna.
9. However, Johanna is guarded closely by Judge Turpin.

10. Judge Turpin announces that he plans to marry Johanna.
10. Disgusted by this idea, Johanna and Anthony decide to elope.

11. Anthony visits Sweeney and tells him of his sudden romance with Johanna.
11. He asks Sweeney if he can use the barbershop to hide Johanna from the Judge.

12. Judge Turpin learns of the the young couple's plans and sends Johanna to an insane asylum to keep them apart.
12. Sweeney then conspires with Anthony to free Johanna and use her to lure Turpin to the barber-shop.

13. Anthony arrives at the asylum to rescue Johanna.
13. During their escape, Johanna shoots the asylum's caretaker Mr. Fogg.

14. The asylum's inmates pour out onto the streets.
- 14 –Johanna runs to Sweeney's barbershop to hide while Anthony finds a coach on the street.

15. When the Judge arrives at Todd's barber shop to reclaim Johanna, he asks for a quick face mas-sage and some cologne.
15. Once Todd has the Judge in his chair, he reveals his true identity before quickly slashing Turpin's throat.

GLOSSARY

- abominable** – very bad; terrible
- alms** – (*in historical contexts*) money or food given to poor people
- aquiver** – trembling
- ardent** – very enthusiastic or passionate
- ashcans** – a dustbin
- assuage** – satisfy (an appetite or desire)
- beadle** – a ceremonial officer of a church, college or similar institution
- Bedlam** – *archaic* an institution for the care of mentally ill people; Bethlem Royal Hospital, also known as Bedlam, is a psychiatric hospital in London
- beery** – smelling or tasting of beer
- bleary** – looking or feeling dull and unfocused from tiredness; blurred
- blighter** – a person who is regarded with contempt, irritation, or pity
- to blot out** – to cover something so that you can no longer see it
- bounce around the bush** – *vulgar slang* sexual intercourse
- brooding** – showing deep thought about something that makes one sad or worried
- cadougan** – *has literally no definition at all...*
- candor** – the quality of being open and honest; frankness
- chopper** – a butcher's cleaver
- clod** – *informal* a stupid person
- coarse** – rough or harsh in texture
- to commend** – praise formally or officially
- compact** – small, strong, and well proportioned
- to concoct** – create or devise; to brew
- to concur** – to be of the same opinion; agree
- consign** – put someone or something in order to be rid of them
- contrite** – feeling or expressing guilt
- crimps** – a bend or crease formed in something
- curate** – a member of the clergy engaged as assistant to a vicar or priest
- to defer** – to postpone
- deft** – neatly skilful and quick in one's movements
- delectable** – (of food or drink) delicious
- to devour** – to eat (food or prey) hungrily or quickly
- doily** – a small ornamental mat made of lace
- droll** – unusual in a way that provokes dry amusement
- dropsy** – old-fashioned term for oedema, an excess of watery fluid in the body
- eerie** – strange and frightening
- embankment** – a wall or bank of stone built to prevent a river flooding an area
- esplanade** – a long, open, level area, typically beside the sea
- fancy airs** – snobbish behaviour
- fish me squiff** – *vulgar slang* sexual intercourse
- flaxen** – (especially of hair) the pale yellow colour; the colour of straw
- fop** – a man who is concerned with his appearance in an affected, excessive way
- gillyflowers** – any of a number of fragrant flowers
- glisten** – shine with a sparkling light
- green finch, linnet, nightingale, blackbird, lark, ringdove, robin, turtledove** – birds
- to harp** – to talk or write persistently and tediously on
- incarcerated** – imprisoned or confined
- inkling** – a slight knowledge or suspicion; a hint
- jig jig** – *vulgar slang* sexual intercourse
- kipper** – fish that has been split open, salted or pickled, and smoked
- larder** – a room or large cupboard for storing food
- leery** – cautious or wary due to realistic suspicions

- loony** – *informal* a mad or silly person
- lush** – very rich and providing great sensory pleasure
- lye** – a strongly alkaline solution used for washing or cleansing.
- molting** – (of an animal) shed old feathers, hair, or skin to make way for a new growth
- mountebank** – *historical* a person who sold patent medicines in public places
- muff** – *vulgar slang* a woman's genitals
- muffler** – a wrap or scarf worn around the neck and face for warmth
- Old Bailey** – the Central Criminal Court in London
- pail** – a bucket
- pious** – making a hypocritical display of virtue
- prepossessing** – attractive or appealing in appearance
- proclivity** – a tendency to choose or do something regularly
- prod** – *informal* offensive a Protestant
- to propagates** – to reproduce by natural processes
- pumice stone** – a stone used as an abrasive, especially for removing hard skin.
- push me parsley** – *vulgar slang* sexual intercourse
- quivering** – trembling or shaking with a slight rapid motion
- reticule** – *historical* a woman's small handbag, typically decorated with embroidery
- noggin** – *informal* a person's head; a wooden jug
- rook** – a gregarious Eurasian crow
- rump** – *humorous* a person's buttocks
- rumpled bedding** – wrinkled sheets; *informal* sexual intercourse
- scalawag** – *informal* a person who behaves badly but in an amusingly mischievous way; a rascal
- slip of a thing** – small skinny person
- snug** – comfortable, warm, and cosy
- snugly harbored** – *vulgar slang* sexual intercourse
- sod** – an unpleasant or obnoxious person
- split me muff** – *vulgar slang* sexual intercourse
- spuds** – *informal* a potato
- squire** – a man of high social standing
- strop** – a device, typically a strip of leather, for sharpening razors
- stubble** – short hairs growing on a man's face when he has not shaved for a while
- succulent** – (of food) tender, juicy, and tasty
- suds** – froth made from soap and water
- tawny** – of an orange-brown or yellowish-brown colour
- the fat's in the fire** – *informal* there's trouble ahead
- thrift** – the quality of using money and other resources carefully and not wastefully
- to be shorn** – cut the wool off (a sheep or other animal)
- to ponder** – to think about (something) carefully before making a decision
- to scuttle** – to run hurriedly or furtively with short quick steps
- Tonsorial Parlor** – Barber shop
- trippers** – a person who goes on a pleasure trip or excursion
- unbeknownst** – without the knowledge of (someone)
- unruly** – disorderly and disruptive and not amenable to discipline or control
- urchins** – a young child who is poorly or raggedly dressed
- vermin** – (from: parasitic insects or animals e.g. rodents) people perceived as despicable and as causing problems for the rest of society
- vespers bell** – the bell that summons worshipers to vespers; evening prayer
- to wheedle** – to use flattery to persuade someone to do something or give one something
- to whirr** – make a low, continuous, regular sound
- Whitsun** – the weekend or week including Whit Sunday
- wick** – a bundle of fibers up which liquid fuel is drawn to the flame in a candle or lamp

FUN, FUN, FUN QUIZ

1. What is the name of Mr. Todd's 'lost' love?

- A Nellie
- B Milli
- C Vanilli
- D Lucy

2. What is the name of the song Mrs. Lovett sings to tell Mr. Todd about her dreams?

- A Satan gave me a Tacko
- B Touch my Tooter
- C You're The Reason Our Kids Are Ugly
- D By the Sea

3. Who is the beggar woman?

- A Theresa May
- B Lucy
- C The Duches of York
- D Thomas Cook travel agent

4. Sweeney Todd's real name is?

- A Benjamin Barker
- B Ben Becker
- C Benjamin Beckenbauer
- D Ben Burton

5. Toby's drink of choice is?

- A Molotov Cocktail
- B Pan-Galactic Gargle Blaster
- C Butterbeer
- D Gin

6. Who saved Sweeney on the ocean?

- A Moby Dick
- B Anthony Hopkins
- C Anthony Hope
- D Jack Dawson (the guy from Titanic)

7. What are names of Sweeney's wife and child?

- A Lucy, Johanna
- B Lucy, Ethel
- C Lucy, Nellie
- D Lucy, Desi

8. Who is Sweeney's archenemy?

- A Boris Johnson
- B Judge Turpin
- C John Wick
- D Sheldon Cooper

9. Who is considered as the barber of kings in London?

- A Benedict Cumberbatch
- B Adolfo Pirelli
- C Ben Kingsly
- D Conan the Barbarian

10. What is the profession of Sweeney's landlady?

- A Snake milker
- B Reindeer Walker
- C Baker
- D Pornography Historian

11. What's the name of the street where is Sweeney's shop situated?

- A Crotch Crescent Street
- B Fleet Street
- C Tickle Cock Street
- D North Piddle Street

12. What happened to Benjamin Barker's wife?

- A She was raped
- B She died after being struck by a pear
- C She joined the crew of the starship Enterprise
- D She was sawn in half in Persia

13. Who did Toby work for?

- A Adolfo Pirelli
- B Giorgio Armani
- C Mario Prada
- D Adolfo Pissolini

14. What does the Elixir smell like?

- A Piss
- B Fish
- C Glue
- D Armpits

15. How does Mrs. Lovett die?

- A She tried to prove her immortality by leaping into an active volcano
- B She is burned
- C She is stabbed by Saruman
- D She chokes during a cockroach-eating contest

16. Who killed Lucy?

- A She committed suicide by drowning herself in a barrel of wine
- B She was rolled up in a rug by Mrs. Lovett and then trampled by horses
- C Turpin stabbed her 64 times with a poisoned toothpick
- D Her throat was slit by Sweeney

17. Our musical takes place in what metropolitan city?

- A Gotham City
- B London
- C Riverdale
- D Emerald city

18. According to Mrs. Lovett, why was Sweeney sent to prison?

- A He failed to predict an Eartquake
- B He opened his Christmas present to early
- C He was shouting at trees. Naked.
- D Foolishness

19. Who is Mrs. Lovett's main competitor for meat pies in the Fleet Street area?

- A Dr. Oetker
- B Martha Stewart
- C Swedish Chef
- D Mrs. Mooney

20. To establish Mr. Todd's reputation as a barber, who does he challenge to a tonsorial contest?

- A Vidal Sassoon
- B Signor Pirelli
- C Paul Mitchell
- D The Great Zamboni

21. After Mr. Todd murdered O'Higgins, what happens to his simple minded assistant, Tobias.

- A He becomes first Transgender barber in Aberdeen
- B He colours his hair orange and goes to America to become a horsetief
- C Nothing...Tobias never really existed
- D He gets a job with Mrs. Lovett

22. To rescue Johanna, Sweeney sends Anthony disguised as what?

- A Pet food tester
- B Teen exorcist
- C A wigmaker
- D Teddy bear surgeon

23. What are Mrs. Lovett's pies made of ,and nothing more'?

- A Vegan Eco Bio carrots from Yorkshire
- B Cat chitlins from Scotland
- C Lard
- D Welsh three legged chickens

24. Why does Sweeney kill Mrs. Lovett?

- A She was an android made by Silvan Elves
- B She didn't recyikled his victims properly
- C She lied about his wife being dead
- D She stole his dreams with her empty words

25. How does Sweeney die?

- A Toby slit his throat
- B He decapitated himself with a razorblade
- C He bled to death after being bitten by a beaver
- D He was killed by a tortoise dropped by an eagle

- | | | |
|------|------|------|
| 1 D | 12 A | 23 C |
| 2 D | 13 A | 24 C |
| 3 B | 14 A | 25 A |
| 4 A | 15 B | |
| 5 D | 16 D | |
| 6 C | 17 B | |
| 7 A | 18 D | |
| 8 B | 19 D | |
| 9 B | 20 B | |
| 10 C | 21 D | |
| 11 B | 22 C | |