



# ON STAGE...

DONNA SUMMER, TINA TURNER AND CHER ARE ALL THE SUBJECTS OF BIO-MUSICALS, MORE FILMS ARE LEAPING FROM SCREEN TO STAGE, AND A FEW ORIGINAL AUSTRALIAN STORIES WILL BE MAKING THEIR DEBUT. **MATT MYERS** GIVES THE RUNDOWN.

## ON BROADWAY

*The Cher Show* will tell her life story with, not one, but, three actresses playing the star in a retrospect of her career. Cher herself is behind the production. Broadway will also premiere *Summer: The Donna Summer Musical* directed by Tony Award winner Des McAnuff. Featuring over 20 hits from the Queen Of Disco including *I Feel Love*, *MacArthur Park*, *Hot Stuff* and *Enough Is Enough* they won't be short of showstoppers.

The celluloid world continues to migrate to the stage with the 1984 coming-of-age *The Flamingo Kid* getting the musical treatment. The original film was directed by the late Garry Marshall, who also happened to direct *Pretty Woman*, also making its Broadway debut this year. Samantha Barks will take on the Julia Roberts role. The London production of *Dreamgirls* will transfer across the Atlantic.

Audacious Australian writer and performer Eddie Perfect, one of DNA's Straight Mates, has written the stage version of the kooky 1988 film *Beetlejuice*. Perfect is also re-writing *King Kong*, which originally premiered in Melbourne four years ago, and will get its Broadway debut in November.

Perhaps the biggest news of all is that there will be a stage adaptation of the Meryl Streep 2006 comedy *The Devil Wears Prada*. Given that Elton John and Paul Rudnick will be responsible for the score, this has hit written all over it. Elton previously provided music for *The Lion King*, *Aida*, *Lestat* and *Billy Elliot*.



Donna Summer.



*The Devil Wears Prada.*



The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night-Time.

## AUSTRALIA

One much-anticipated play from the Sydney Theatre Company is the biographical *Still Point Turning: The Catherine McGregor Story*, by writer/director Priscilla Jackman. Based on interviews with McGregor, it follows her life through many identities including husband, athlete and soldier to her transformation as a woman. Heather Mitchell (*Cloud Nine*) plays McGregor in a revealing story of strength and honesty. Also presented by the STC is the classic *The Harp In The South, Parts I and II* from the novel by Ruth Park, adapted for the stage by Kate Mulvany. This will be an epic theatrical experience as Mulvany has cleverly taken Park's trilogy (*The Harp In The South, Missus and Poor Man's Orange*) into two stand-alone plays.

Meanwhile, Perth's Black Swan Theatre will present another Australian classic, Ray Lawler's *Summer Of The Seventeenth Doll*.

At the Melbourne Theatre Company, Geoffrey Rush will star in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Simon Gleeson and Gina Riley will head Oscar Wilde's *An Ideal Husband*, and if you're a fan of *Kath And Kim* or *Don's Party*, get ready for *Abigail's Party* with Zoe Boesen and Daniel Frederiksen. But the headline act Down Under in 2018 must be the UK's touring production of *The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night-Time*. This play has won several Tony, Drama Desk, Drama League and Laurence Olivier Awards and earned global critical acclaim.

*Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, *Aladdin*, *The Book Of Mormon*, *Mamma Mia!* *The Wizard Of Oz* and *American Idiot* will continue to tour, while *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Jersey Boys* and *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* will return.

Missy Higgins will make her musical theatre debut in the satirical *Miracle City*, and Tina Arena will be taking to the stage at the Sydney Opera House as Eva Peron in the 40th anniversary of *Evita*.

There's no doubt that theatre has entered an era where big stars, big movies and big songs are make big bucks. There's little room for any other theatrical forms in this environment but at least 2018 will keep bums on seats, and have audiences dancing in the aisles.

## THE WEST END

Similar film adaptations continue on London's West End with a reworking of 1988's *Big*, in which a 12-year-old boy is granted his wish of becoming an adult. It was one of the first screen-to-stage musicals in 1996, and this new production stars Gary Wilmot.

It's been 30 years since *Back To The Future* made its mark and the new stage version is written by original screenwriter Bob Gale and director Robert Zemeckis. As well as the Huey Lewis hit, *The Power Of Love* new music will be written by Glen Ballard (*Ghost*).

Fasten your seatbelts as Cate Blanchett stars as Margo Channing in an adaptation of the 1950 Bette Davis film *All About Eve*, to be directed by Ivo van Hove (*Lazarus*). Tickets for this will be gold.

While Australia recently saw *Dusty: The Musical*, *Son Of A Preacher Man* is the story of three broken-hearted strangers in a 1960's club in Soho. Featuring the hits of Dusty Springfield, it stars Diana Vickers, Debra Stephenson and Ian Reddington.

Also drawn from the '60s comes *Sammy: The Sammy Davis Jr Musical*, telling the story of the American entertainer who rose to fame with hits such as *The Candy Man*, *Mr Bojangles*, *That's Entertainment* and *Singin' In The Rain*. Of course, you can't tell Sammy's story without including the great characters he knew, like friends Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra and Liza Minnelli, who are all portrayed in the production. Leslie Bricusse, who provided many of the star's hits, has penned the production.

And in a similar vein, *Tina: The Tina Turner Musical* will tell the rags-to-riches story of the girl from Nutbush who became rock royalty. Like Cher, Turner herself is behind the production. Adrienne Warren (*Dreamgirls*) will play Tina and Kobna Holdbrook-Smith is the formidable Ike. Phyllida Lloyd (*Mamma Mia!*) will direct, with choreography by Anthony van Laast.



The Tina Turner Story.



All About Eve.