

## 'Sweeney Todd' begins production with Johnny Depp, Tim Burton

by *Bend\_Weekly\_News\_Sources*

Principal photography has begun in London on "Sweeney Todd"; starring Johnny Depp in the Tim Burton directed screen adaptation of Stephen Sondheim's award-winning musical thriller.

The DreamWorks Pictures and Warner Bros. co-production presents Depp as Sweeney Todd, a man unjustly sent to prison, who vows revenge not only for that cruel punishment but for the devastating consequences of what happened to his wife and daughter. When he returns to reopen his barber shop, he becomes the Demon Barber of Fleet Street who "shaved the heads of gentleman who never thereafter were heard from again."\*

"I've always wanted to do a musical and 'Sweeney Todd' is my favorite," said Tim Burton. "Stephen's blend of humor, horror and emotion is something that has always connected with me."

"Sometimes a story or stage production has to wait a long time until the right people come together to turn it into a motion picture," said Stephen Sondheim. "That's what has happened with 'Sweeney Todd' and I'm excited as well as confident that it will be a first-rate and startling movie."

This will be the sixth collaboration between Depp and Burton who worked previously together on *Corpse Bride*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Ed Wood*, *Edward Scissorhands* and *Sleepy Hollow*. Depp comes fresh from completing the third *Pirates of the Caribbean* film in the Academy Award nominated role of Captain Jack Sparrow.\*\*

Also starring in the Parkes/MacDonald and Zanuck Company production is Helena Bonham Carter as Mrs. Lovett who creates her diabolical meat pies while becoming Sweeney's amorous accomplice. Alan Rickman is the evil Judge Turpin who sent him unfairly to prison, thereby sowing the seeds of Sweeney's vengeance. Timothy Spall plays the Judge's wicked associate Beadle Bamford. Sacha Baron Cohen is a rival barber, the flamboyant Signor Adolfo Pirelli, and Christopher Lee takes on the role of the gentleman ghost.

Rounding out the cast are Jamie Campbell Bowen as the young sailor Anthony, Jayne Wisener as Johanna, Laura Michelle Kelly as the beggar woman, and newcomer Ed Sanders plays Toby.

All the stars will do their own singing from Stephen Sondheim's music and lyrics.

The film is produced by Richard D. Zanuck, Walter Parkes, Laurie MacDonald, and John Logan from a screenplay by Logan. The original Broadway production had Sondheim's music and lyrics and a book by

Hugh Wheeler based on a play by Christopher Bond. It won eight Tony Awards including Best Musical.

Its mix of the shockingly macabre, comic and dramatic, supported by Sondheim's movie-like score has had hundreds of productions through the world, most recently a highly acclaimed production on Broadway. What once might have been taboo and ghoulish became deliciously entertaining.

Joining Burton at Pinewood to create his vision is director of photography Dariusz Wolski (Pirates of the Caribbean I, II, III), production designer Academy Award winner Dante Ferrati (The Aviator), costume designer two time Academy Award winner Colleen Atwood (Memoirs of a Geisha, Chicago), hair and make up designer Academy Award winner Peter Owen (The Lord of the Rings), and editor Chris Lebenzon.

The film will be distributed domestically by Paramount for a late 2007 release and distributed internationally by Warner Bros.

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