Blood, guts, and fancy haircuts

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**Theatre Preview**

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

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim
Book by Hugh Wheeler
Directed by Bob Baker
Starring Julian Cordero, Jeremy Bamford, John Ullyatt, Andrew Sheenick, Nicole Ridler, Rhyan Proh, Douglas Macdonald, Jeff Living, Kaylee Harwood, and Elizabeth Beerer

February 20 – March 7 (showtimes vary)

**Citadel Theatre (MacLaid)**

1022 104A Ave.

560-95 at citadeltheatre.com

**Kirsten Gorek**

Arts & Entertainment Staff

The tragic tale of Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street is splattered with blood, raised by Murder, drenched in revenge, and for actor John Ullyatt, it even has a touch of hip.

After 16 years, Ullyatt is revisiting his portrayal of Beadle, Judge Turpin’s sidekick in Stephen Sondheim’s Tony Award winning musical. With a natural foreshadowing for the show, he was instantly drawn to the opportunity of being involved in the production, keen to find out how this experience would differ from his first encounter.

“I wasn’t going to try and come to a scratch; I don’t think I can erase my memory that much, or erase what I’d done in the first time,” Ullyatt explains. “I feel a little bit different and it’s got to be more serious, it’s different cast, scenarios, designers, directors, everything. But it’s just not stopping fun. I love this play; it’s so good.”

Not only he is excited for the chance to once again face the wrath of Sweeney Todd, but Ullyatt, still a freelance artist, is grateful for his continued involvement with the Citadel Theatre.

“If you’re lucky, Beadle is, without a doubt, a question-able human being. I was the guy who held down Sweeney’s wife while she was raped [...] He’s a man who will do anything to get ahead in life [...] It’s taken years and years, and I don’t think he’ll ever get in good with the judge, but hope springs eternal. His scruples are pretty low, and I think he’ll do pretty much anything to anybody, for any reason whatsoever,” he says of his diabolical other half.

For known for his protagonistic portrayal, Ullyatt was surprised at how simple the mannerisms were.

“This is probably the most nefarious character I’ve played, I think there’s a little bit of a devious person living inside all of us. So I find it easy to access it [...] I don’t go a lot of opportunities to play really greasy guys,” he recalls.

Aside from exercising his untidied side, for Ullyatt, the show also showcases the best of what theatre has to offer to audiences.

“I feel that the show is so operatic in its scope [...] [It’s] melodramatic in the best sense of the term in that it’s intense and large, but it’s full of heart and reality. I think theatre can, in its size, be huge, but still be realistic,” he said.

Blood, guts, and cache tunes aside, audience members are invited to join the cast as they continue to work through the deeper meaning behind the barber’s campaign.

“This guy is doing the only thing he could possibly do and then I think we’re all screaming what exactly it means,” he explains.

“Sweeney could be any one of us; it could be anyone beside you. Anyone of us could sway and become a serial killer. It’s all in us. I think that’s what we’re saying. And you have to be careful of that and respectful of your revenge fantasies. At the end of the day, in this story, Sweeney gets the worst of it.”

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