

BYMT presents the first show of its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary season

## ***Animal Farm***

**Writer and Director: Ellie Jones**

**Writer, Composer & Lyricist: Josh Kemp Lyricist: Tom Ling**

**Choreographer: Bradley Charles**

**From 5 – 7 April 2024, 2.15pm and 7.15pm at Birmingham Hippodrome**

**Reviewers are welcome at all performances**

BYMT presents a reimagined musical theatre of George Orwell's classic ***Animal Farm***. A twisted musical tale set in a world of fake news, party-gate, cancel culture and the curtailing of free speech, this fresh new show maintains the disarming folk tone of the original story mashed up with contemporary musical theatre.

*Animal Farm* is written and directed by **Ellie Jones** (*Macbeth*, RSC) with writer, composer and Lyricist **Josh Kemp** (*Educating Yorkshire*, Square Chapel) and Olivier-nominated lyricist **Tom Ling** (*The Little Big Things*, Soho Place) and features a cast of 34 young people including local talent.

**Writer and Director Ellie Jones says** *"By replacing Communism with Capitalism we watch the animals play out our world's current ideology to what seems to be its inevitable divisive and destructive conclusion. Who better to ask the question, 'what role in this do we want to play?' than the next generation? A generation that don't have to be sheep or bow down to the notion that the only way to win is to put the self before the herd. A generation with the opportunity to make change."*

**British Youth Music Theatre (BYMT)** is the leading new musical theatre company for young people, working across the UK and Ireland with West End professionals to offer unique opportunities and high-quality training. Since 2003 they have trained over 15,000 young people, with alumni including Ed Sheeran, Sam Smith, Lauren Samuels, Charlotte Ritchie, Dean Johnson, Grace Mouat, Lucy Griffiths, Luke McCall, and Bradley Jaden. BYMT's mission is to create opportunities for young people and early career creatives from all backgrounds to develop theatre skills and enhance wellbeing, through the collaborative and inclusive process of making original music theatre. Their vision is to transform perceptions of musical theatre, be the leading voice in youth music theatre and be internationally recognised as the UK's most prolific creator of new musicals.

**[britishyouthmusictheatre.org](http://britishyouthmusictheatre.org) Twitter/Insta: @britymt**

### **LISTINGS DETAILS:**

**Venue:** Birmingham Hippodrome, Hurst St, Southside, Birmingham B5 4TB Friday 5th April, 7:15pm  
Saturday 6th April, 2:15 & 7:15pm Sunday 7th April, 2:15pm

**Tickets:** £18 (£14 conc)

**Ages:** 7+

**Duration:** 80mins, no interval <https://www.birminghamhippodrome.com/calendar/bymt-animal-farm/>

**PRESS CONTACT:** Nancy Poole / 07957 342 850 / [nancy@nancypoolepr.com](mailto:nancy@nancypoolepr.com)

### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

#### **BIOGS**

##### **Ellie Jones – writer and director**

Ellie is a freelance director based in Margate who likes to make impossible things possible. She has combined theatre-based work with a wide range of site-specific productions including *The New World Order* (Brighton Festival and Barbican Bite); *The Erpingham Camp* (Brighton Festival on

Brighton Pier); *As You Like It* (Arundel Festival) and *A Christmas Carol*, under the arches at Southwark Playhouse where she was Artistic Director. Ellie was Associate Director at Sheffield Theatres, where she directed the world premiere of the award-winning *How to Disappear Completely and Never Be Found* and Community and Education Director at the Orange Tree theatre. Other theatre productions include: *Art* (National tour), *Macbeth* (Royal Shakespeare Company); *The Elephant Man* (national tour) *Invincible* (Orange Tree and West End - nominated for Best Ensemble and Best Director - Off West End Awards); *God of Carnage* (National tour); *Once We Were Mothers*, *Strange Orchestra* and *Man of Letters* (Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond); *Amaretti Angels* (Stephen Joseph Theatre), *Made in Dagenham*, *Jane Eyre the Musical* (both Bernie Grant Theatre), *Into Battle* (Greenwich Theatre) *Tanzi Libre* (Southwark Playhouse); *Daisy Pulls It Off* (Sherman, Cardiff); *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest* and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich); *The BFG* (Derby Live) *Babies*, *Educating Yorkshire*, *Fight Like a Girl* and *According to Brian Haw* (all British Youth Music Theatre). Writing credits include the musicals: *Miss Interpreted*, *Dirty Stop Outs*, *Hot Wheels*, *Vanishing Point* (British Youth Music Theatre), and family shows *Adventure in Space*, *Almost Alice*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Ellie is Creative Director of Looping the Loop CIC and Artistic Director of street theatre company We Are Nearly Normal. Both companies are based in Thanet and committed to creating live performance in the local area.

### **Josh Kemp - writer, composer and lyricist**

Josh is a composer/lyricist, writer, filmmaker & musical director from Nottingham, UK. His recent writing credits include: 'GRIMM', a 3-hander about the lives of the Brothers Grimm and Henriette Wilde performed for 'Musical Bites' at the Other Palace in 2023, *Educating Yorkshire* for BYMT's 2022 summer season, *Des Fantômes*, a musical short film for the Skaraborgs Musical & Film Academy in 2021 and tv pilot *Hood*, which was a semi-finalist in the Final Draft worldwide writing competition in 2020. 2024 will see Josh fly to the U.S. to work on *The Cereal Cafe* for the Goodspeed Writers Grove in January before having the honour to open BYMT's 20th birthday season with *Animal Farm*, *A Musical Tail* at the Birmingham Hippodrome. His first outing as musical director was for New Street Theatre's production of *Sweeney Todd* at just 17 years old. He went on to helm *Into The Woods*, *Parade*, *Whistle Down The Wind*, *The Sound Of Music*, *Out There* (regional youth premiere) and *Mod Crop* at the Nottingham Theatre Royal, written by 'Quadrophenia' novelist Alan Fletcher. More recent credits however include Kander and Ebb's *Curtains*, *Educating Yorkshire & Let It Snow 2022* for BYMT and *An Evening In*, a Christmas concert at the Albert Hall. Elsewhere, Josh is Head of Music at Attic Performing Arts School and Co-founder of Chatterbox Films based in the East Midlands. CF have recently produced Josh's musical series *Crysylys* & feature 'Breaking The Habit' which were both released as concept albums in Feb '20 and Nov 21 respectively. Josh has written/arranged music for BBC, Musical writing team Howell and Hurt, Framework and HBO, had five top #10 EPs (iTunes charts) and several projects for screen including *Runaway* for Dementia UK.

### **Tom Ling - lyricist**

Tom Ling is an actor, writer, and producer. His work includes: *The Little Big Things*, currently playing @Soho Place; *Techies: The Musical*, which sold-out at the 2016 Edinburgh Fringe and featured in Broadway World's Pick of the Programme; *The Cereal Cafe*, The Other Palace - finalist of the 2021 Stiles and Drewe Award and *The Terrific Treevils: Musical In A Book*, Watford Palace Theatre. Tom was a recipient of the 2019 Goodspeed Writers Grove and the 2020 Johnny Mercer Songwriters Project. In summer 2021, he produced *Upbeat* Virtual Festival, featuring hundreds of artists' work including the Nottingham Playhouse and Gradfest UK.