

**BRITISH
YOUTH
MUSIC
THEATRE**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME

NEW MUSIC THEATRE

ANIMAL FARM

A TWISTED MUSICAL TAIL

WRITER & DIRECTOR
ELLIE JONES

COMPOSER
REBECCA LEVY

LYRICIST
TOM LING



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

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**5 - 7
APR**

WELCOME

Welcome to the first show of BYMT's 20th Anniversary Season. We are delighted to be starting the year with a relevant and timely adaptation of a well loved tale. Our Young Company Panel proposed that BYMT should only create adaptations of novels if there is something new to be said and a unique angle is found to approach the chosen book. When Ellie Jones suggested a remake of *Animal Farm* through a folk-pop score with a contemporary political take, our Panel were convinced! Following a witty and dramatic version explored in a Summer Camp in 2023, Writer and Director Ellie Jones has led this team of artists to make a thrilling new interpretation, along with the wonderful young people who have joined us in Birmingham over the past two weeks.

BYMT couldn't make the work it does without our brilliant Pastoral and Technical staff supporting the Creative team and young people. We rely on our venue partners to host our shows, and Birmingham Hippodrome, with their New Musicals Department, are the best around; then of course we have to thank the parents, carers, schools and supporters of the Young Company, who enable these wonderful performers and musicians to learn and grow their creative flair, theatrical understanding and social development through BYMT projects. Thank you to everyone who has helped to make this show possible, and to those who have supported the Company through its 20 years. We hope to be making new musicals for many more decades and to continue seeing our young people inspiring the theatre of the future.

Emily Gray and BYMT Staff Team

A NOTE FROM ELLIE JONES, REBECCA LEVY & TOM LING

Welcome to our production!

Orwell's novella of *Animal Farm* reads like a fairytale but is so much more than that. It is about human nature, social systems and more. Originally conceived as an allegory for communism in the Soviet Union, the pigs' manipulation of the other animals, the distortion of truth, and the erosion of equality resonate with our contemporary issues of authoritarianism, misinformation, and social inequality.

The manipulation of media and information, the rise of populist leaders, and the erosion of democratic principles are rife in today's society, so we were really interested in adapting the story to take a look at capitalism and contemporary life in the UK while maintaining the fable quality of Orwell's original to create a folk-inspired musical. It seemed like a perfect fit for a BYMT show, with its commitment to telling stories that matter to young people, the large cast of characters and the chance to collaborate with a group of extraordinarily talented young people who have the opportunity to shape the future of our world.

At the heart of this production lies the boundless creativity and commitment of our young company. For us creatives, the BYMT process is a dream because it is a rare thing to be able to work with such talented young people on new work and develop it alongside them. Over the past two weeks, scenes have shifted, songs been rewritten and characters created. It is a truly collaborative process.

To be an original cast member of any show requires more than just performance ability. It requires curiosity, creativity and the confidence to take risks and try new things. This cast have provided that in abundance. Through their fresh perspectives and unique choices each individual has allowed us to breathe life into a whole new theatrical world. What they've achieved individually and as a company throughout the ten-day rehearsal period is remarkable and this production is a testament to their dedication, passion and commitment to the creative process.

Thank you to BYMT for their unwavering support and thank you for joining us. We hope you enjoy the show.

Ellie, Rebecca and Tom

ABOUT BRITISH YOUTH MUSIC THEATRE

British Youth Music Theatre (BYMT) is a national performing arts education charity and the largest commissioner of new musicals in the UK. Every year we engage around 2000 11-21 year olds in our auditions, workshops, Young Company and projects; BYMT helps young people and developing artists to navigate and further their training and careers in the arts. As an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation and National Youth Music Organisation, we ensure that youth voice is at the heart of everything we do. 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.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

PUBLIC GRANTS

Supported using public funding by



PRINCIPAL SPONSOR

NASUWT
The Teachers' Union

A long-time sponsor of BYMT, the union supports our work to engage young people in schools and give them opportunities beyond the classroom, with both funding and use of their fantastic Hillscourt conference centre in Birmingham. BYMT and NASUWT share a passion for supporting teachers and ensuring creativity in the curriculum.

TRUST & FOUNDATIONS

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FRIENDS

Alastair Roberts
Barry Anns
Emma Shaw
Helen Dayananda
Kate Suh
Francesca Stuckey Howard
Jeff Stratford
Simon Millson
Tim Sawers
Sarah Double
Fern Stoner
Rebecca Nice

ADVISORS TO THE TRUSTEES

Bridget Kalloushi (Finance)
Rachel Victor-Sampson (Inclusivity)

BOARD

Jimmy Jewell
Alastair Roberts
Aniela Shuckburgh
Lucy Stocks
Phillip Siddle
Francesca Unsworth
Roger Jones
Simon Millson (Chair)

We would like to thank the following for their contribution to our work:

Birmingham Hippodrome Staff
Flavia Fraser-Cannon
ArtTouchesArt
Artwork by Rhiannon Dunn
Photographer Simon Hadley
Our Creative Work Placements: Lou
Newton, Sneha Bansal & Shawn Lu
Cup of Ambition
Matthew Jackson
Annabel Mutale Reed and the MA Musical
Theatre students at LAMDA
Stephen Crane
Alice Hoult
Adam Maskell
Vikki West
Lucy Hollingworth
Andy Brady
The staff at Hillscourt Education Centre and
NASUWT
Caroline and the staff at Malvern College

ENJOYED THE SHOW? BECOME A FRIEND OF BYMT

For just £25 per month, your contribution will help support enthusiastic and underrepresented young performers and musicians through our bursary scheme, the commissioning of new music theatre and the training of emerging theatre artists. Plus, all our FRIENDS receive free admission* to one of our shows every year! To sign up please scan the QR code provided on the right or visit our website for more information: britishyouthmusictheatre.org/support-us

*free admission for up to 4 people



CREATIVES

ELLIE JONES - WRITER & DIRECTOR

Ellie is a freelance director based in Margate who likes to make impossible things possible. Ellie 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*, Community and Education Director at the Orange Tree theatre and spent 2 years as resident director at the Royal Shakespeare Company. Other theatre productions include: *Art* (National tour), *Macbeth* (RSC); *The Elephant Man* (national tour) *Invincible* (Orange Tree Theatre and West End – Best Ensemble and Best Director nominations - Off West End Awards); *God of Carnage* (National tour); shows at Greenwich Theatre, Stephen Joseph, Sherman Cardiff, New Wolsey Ipswich, Derby Live; for BYMT *Babies*, *Educating Yorkshire*, *Fight Like a Girl* and *According to Brian Haw*. Writing credits include the musicals: *Miss Interpreted*, *Dirty Stop Outs*, *Hot Wheels*, *Vanishing Point* (BYMT), 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 changing the world one theatrical step at a time.

REBECCA LEVY - COMPOSER

Rebecca Levy is a Singer/Songwriter, Musical Theatre performer and Musician. Her debut album, *How To Keep Your Girlfriend 101*, has amassed over 5 million streams and attracts a worldwide Spotify audience of 40,000 rolling monthly listeners; it has been performed live in a variety of West End Venues, including at The Other Palace for the sold-out album

launch show and it charted at 21 in the iTunes pop charts. Her debut single *Tell Your Girlfriend* garnered attention with BBC Introducing, becoming a favourite for 'Track of the Day' and landing her as a Featured Artist, as well as performing in their Live Lounge. Currently, Rebecca performs in *Mamma Mia! The Party* at the O2, and recently has acted at Liverpool's Royal Court and Everyman theatres in a variety of plays and musicals. *Animal Farm* is Rebecca's first new musical composition, although her albums are heavily influenced by Musical Theatre.

TOM LING - LYRICIST

Tom Ling is an actor, writer, and producer. His work includes: *The Little Big Things*, @Soho Place, nominated for four WhatsOnStage Awards and three Olivier Awards, including Best New Musical; *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; *The Terrific Treevils: Musical in a Book*, Watford Palace Theatre; *Animal Farm*, British Youth Music Theatre. Tom was a recipient of the 2024 and 2019 Goodspeed Writers Grove and the 2020 Johnny Mercer Songwriters Project. He was recently named in The Stage 100 2024 Rising Stars.

GEDDY STRINGER - MUSICAL DIRECTOR

Geddy Stringer is an actor, musician, and writer based in London. He graduated from the Royal Academy of Music with an MA in Musical Theatre in 2021, after studying Music at the University of Birmingham. His acting credits include: Osmond in *What's Wrong With Me?* (A New Musical); Head Porter in *Don't Stop* (Short Film – Lammas Park). Credits whilst training include: Deb/Dwayne in *Midwestern Gothic*; Various in *Hal Prince – A Life in The Theatre*; Gavin in *Fugitive Songs*; Gradgrind in *Hard Times*. As musical director, credits include: Musical Director, *Beauty & The Beast* (The

Radlett Centre); Assistant Musical Director, *A Christmas Carol* (LMTO - Lyceum Theatre); Rehearsal Pianist, *21 Chump St* (UK Premiere – The Courtyard Theatre); Assistant Musical Director, *9 to 5: The Musical* (Upstairs at The Gatehouse). Geddy has also worked as Vocal Director on European productions of *Into the Woods*, *Fame*, and *Elvis: King of Rock* (Erasmus Theatre). His first short film, *Go Well*, is currently in development. Geddy is also a Vocal Balance accredited Vocal Coach, and currently works with performers in Central London and has worked at drama schools including GSA, LAMDA, and ArtsEd.

BRADLEY CHARLES - CHOREOGRAPHER

Bradley "Bradz" Charles is a Choreographer, performer, Actor, DJ and coach/mentor. He has performed with and choreographed for some of the UK's leading dance companies, including; ZooNation *Into The Woods* (West End), *Sylvia* (Olivier nominated production); Boy Blue Entertainment *Pied Piper* (Olivier Award winning, Theatre Royal Stratford East), as well as *FLAWLESS UK* (World Tour). He was previously Artistic Director for ZooNation Youth Company and is currently a ZooNation Associate Artist. Recent performance credits include; *Mojisola Adebayo's STARS* (UK Tour) and *Sylvia* (Old Vic). As Director and Choreographer and performer; *Black Tea* (Commission by Studio 3 Arts). As Movement Director and Choreographer; *Peter Pan* (Rose Theatre), *Four Walls* (Derby Theatre). As Associate Choreographer; *Hex* (National Theatre, Director: Rufus Norris). As Associate Choreographer and Dance Captain; *Peter Andre Arena Tour* (Choreographer: Gary Lloyd and Kenrick Sandy), *NDubs Arena tour* (Choreographer: Michelle MDV). As Assistant Choreographer; *Opening Ceremony 2012 Olympic Games*, *StreetDance 3D* (First UK cinema released dance film). Fun, energetic and dynamic, Bradley's dance style is hard to miss.

ELLEN CAIRNS - DESIGNER

Trained at Glasgow School of Art and The Slade, Ellen has enjoyed an extensive

career in theatre design in this country and abroad including Scandinavia, Europe, China and America. From fringe theatre to international Opera Houses, she revels in the challenges of every type of live performance! She and director Ellie Jones have collaborated on many site specific projects including *New World Order* and *Erpingham Camp* for Brighton Festival and a *doorstep pantomime* during Covid lockdown. Other productions with Ellie are *Elephant Man*, *Jane Eyre* and *Into Battle*. Ellen has also designed a lot of the major musical theatre repertoire in Europe - *Les Miserables*, *Sweeney Todd*, *West Side Story*, *Miss Saigon*, *Hairspray*, *Cabaret*, *Oliver*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Rent*, *Into the Woods* etc.

JACK HATHAWAY - LIGHTING DESIGNER

Jack Studied Production Electrics at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. After graduating, Jack worked as a freelance Production Electrician, during which he started to work as an Associate Lighting Designer and Re-lighter for companies such as The Royal Court, Northern Stage and Isango Ensemble. Jack now works in a range of fields from dance to Site Specific events in the UK and beyond and relishes working deeply and collaboratively with other creatives on projects. Design credits include: *Romeo & Juliet* (New Wolsey) *Sometimes* (Sadlers Wells & Touring) *The Freshwater Five* (UK Tour) *Hot in Here* (Gate Theatre) *ADA* (NYT) *WeeverFish* (Webber Douglas, RCCSD) *#50Days* (BYMT, Birmingham Hippodrome) For Guildford School of Acting: *Treasure Island* and *Beasts and Beauties*. *The Wizard of Oz* (Cockpit Theatre). As Associate: *Macbeth LD: Azusa Ono* (English Touring Theatre) *Aurora LD: Azusa Ono* (Invisible Flock, Toxteth Reservoir) *The Magic Flute LD: Mannie Manim* (Isango Ensemble, Boston Cutler Majestic Theater). As Relighter: *Macbeth* (ETT) For Isango Ensemble: *A Man of Good Hope*, *The Magic Flute* and *Aesop's' Fables*. (USA Tour) *Cuttin It* (Royal Court) *Cloud* (Harlow Playhouse) *White Card* (Northern Stage).

CAST

Amy Bennett	NAPOLEON
Summer Bindley-Carr	MOLLY
Maya Booth-Lyons	PHOENIX THE PIGEON
Jonathan Chant-Stevens	BOXER
Jacob Clayton-Doyle	CAMILLA THE COW
Nina Crowe	HENRIETTA THE HEN
Caitin Daly	BARBAR
Libby Downie	HUNTER THE PIGEON
Lee Freemantle	BOBBIE THE SHEEP
Aydan Gargett	MOSES
Maya Goswami	MRS JONES
Megan Griffiths	CAROL THE COW
Jade Guo	BELLA THE SHEEP
Tess Harper	CLOVER
Lexie Hinchliffe	BENJAMIN
Maisy Hocking	ACE THE PIGEON
Jessica Hughes	BODEN
Megan Hunting	CHLOE THE CALF
Nel Jenkins	CAT
Ezra Jones	SNOWBALL
Liam Keary	BRIAN THE SHEEP
Jacob Knight	ED WOODPECKER
Tara Law	FLASH THE PIGEON
Charlotte McDonald	SQUEALER
Erin Mellish	MURIEL
Rhianna Melton	TWEETY THE PIGEON
Will O'Brien	MINIMUS
Pixie Pakenham	HARRIET THE HEN
Shania Prentice-Huwa	HANNAH THE HEN
Freya Topping	PILKINGTON
Charlie Valentine	OLD MAJOR
Alfie Van Hagen	FREDERICK
Freddie Vokes	COOPER THE PIGEON
Mackenzie Winnall	MR JONES

All other roles played by members of company

CREATIVE TEAM

Writer & Director	Ellie Jones
Composer	Rebecca Levy
Lyricist	Tom Ling
Musical Director	Geddy Stringer
Choreographer	Bradley Charles
Set & Costume Designer	Ellen Cairns
Lighting Designer	Jack Hathaway
Sound Designer	Rob Brennan/A&M Sound
Production Manager	Rose Oldershaw
Stage Manager	Brent Tan
Deputy Stage Manager	Katherine Verberne
Assistant Musical Director	Lou Newton
Assistant Designer	Sneha Bansal
Assistant Stage Manager	Shawn Lu
Professional Musician	Lisa Martin
Professional Musician	Louisa Bradbury

INSTRUMENTALISTS

Lucas Granger	Guitar
Taran McNeil	Flute, Clarinet & Tenor Sax

PASTORAL TEAM

Pastoral Lead	Max Harris
Pastoral Team Member	Emmeline Taylor
Pastoral Team Member	Sarah Dare
Pastoral Team Member	David Leo Stewart

OFFICE STAFF

Chief Executive & Creative Director	Emily Gray
Development Director	Alex Mastihi
Producer	Milly Summer
Finance Director	Clare Russell
Casting & Young Company Manager	Cerys Jones
Schools & Pastoral Manager	Rosa Higgs
Marketing Manager	Rosie Blackadder
Marketing Assistant	Rhiannon Dunn
Production Assistant	Samarie Harvey
Office Assistant	Savannah-Rae Gordon
Music Coordinator	Anna Wood

PATRONS

**James Bourne, Jean Diamond, Peter Duncan,
Ed Sheeran MBE, Zoë Wanamaker CBE**





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