

MEDIA PACK

*Tales from a*  
**THOUSAND  
AND ONE NIGHTS**



# JOIN US FOR A FEAST OF STORYTELLING!

We are delighted to present a brand-new adaptation of some of the best and most entertaining folk tales found in ***The Arabian Nights***



## CAST

Chris Agha

Verity Bajoria

Maeva Feitelson

Talal Karkouti

## ARTISTIC TEAM

Adaptor/Director      Eliot Giuralarocca

Set Design              Victoria Spearing

Lighting Design        Claire Childs

Technical CSM         Luke Wallace

Props/Masks           Christine Warner

Administrator         Samantha Warner

# SHOW COPY

*Scheherazade tells stories...exhilarating stories full of fun, danger, wonder and passion...but will it be enough...Can her stories save her life?*

With their stylish brand of ensemble storytelling, mask and live music, Dragonboy Productions breathe new life into some of the funniest and most entertaining folk tales found in *The Arabian Nights*, including *The Seven Voyages of Sindbad*, *The Little Hunchback*, *Faisal and the Barber*, *Behind the Door*, *Sultan Haroun Laughs* and *The Tale of Sage Duban*.

Newly adapted and directed by Eliot Giuralarocca, this is a feast of storytelling, suitable for the whole family and woven into a production that simply cannot be missed!

## REVIEWS FOR PAST SHOWS

### **The Tempest** ★★★★★

*(Dragonboy Productions / Le Tendre Amour)*

*Toured internationally and was nominated for the Gran Premio de Espana de Artes Escenicas*

### **In and Out of Chekhov's Shorts** ★★★★★

*(Dragonboy Productions)*

*Compelling, original...funny...it flows along like a well oiled machine...Unusual artistic cohesion...complex and very skilfully thought out.*

*(Susan Elkin, Sardines Magazine)*

*A beautifully interweaving set of fleeting tales. Heartwarming...humorous...delightful...lyrical... A Celebration of life's unpredictability (Always Time for Theatre)*

### **Frankenstein** ★★★★★

*Truly electrifying theatre...Beautifully crafted...A masterpiece.... Fantastically talented and versatile cast!...A masterful re-telling...Unique and captivating!*

### **Dracula** ★★★★★

*Thrilling...totally mesmerising...wickedly innovative...a triumph! One of the most innovative and gripping theatre performances I've seen...Extremely inventive...this is great theatre...stunning...the sheer theatricality was a joy to watch...intensely thrilling...A remarkable evening that ended with a standing ovation.*

# Tour Dates Spring 2023

<b>3 APRIL</b>	<u>Greenwich Theatre, 2pm</u>
<b>6 APRIL</b>	<u>Barnfield Theatre, Exeter, 6.30pm</u>
<b>7 APRIL</b>	<u>Barnfield Theatre, Exeter, 6.30pm</u>
<b>8 APRIL</b>	<u>Barnfield Theatre, Exeter, 1.45pm / 6.30pm</u>
<b>10 APRIL</b>	<u>Malvern Theatres, 3pm</u>
<b>11 APRIL</b>	<u>Theatre Royal Winchester, 7pm</u>
<b>12 APRIL</b>	<u>Dorchester Arts, 7pm</u>
<b>13 APRIL</b>	<u>Bridport Arts Centre, 7pm</u>
<b>14 APRIL</b>	<u>The Gateway Theatre Seaton, 7pm</u>
<b>15 APRIL</b>	<u>The Old Town Hall, Hemel Hempstead, 8pm</u>
<b>18 APRIL</b>	<u>Queen's Hall Arts Centre, Hexham, 7.30pm</u>
<b>20 APRIL</b>	<u>Lancaster Grand Theatre, 7.30pm</u>
<b>22 APRIL</b>	<u>Trinity Theatre, Tunbridge Wells, 7.30pm</u>
<b>23 APRIL</b>	<u>The Woodville, Gravesend, 2.30pm</u>
<b>25 APRIL</b>	<u>Alnwick Playhouse, 6pm</u>
<b>26 APRIL</b>	<u>Middlesbrough Theatre, 7.30pm</u>
<b>27 APRIL</b>	<u>The Exchange Theatre, North Shields, 7pm</u>
<b>28 APRIL</b>	<u>Waterside Arts, Sale, 7.30pm</u>
<b>29 APRIL</b>	<u>Chelmsford Theatre Studio, 7.30pm</u>
<b>30 APRIL</b>	<u>The Hawth, Crawley, 3pm</u>
<b>1 MAY</b>	<u>Taunton Brewhouse, 7.30pm</u>

RECOMMENDED FOR AGE 10+

Running time 1 hour 45 minutes plus interval

For enquiries contact:

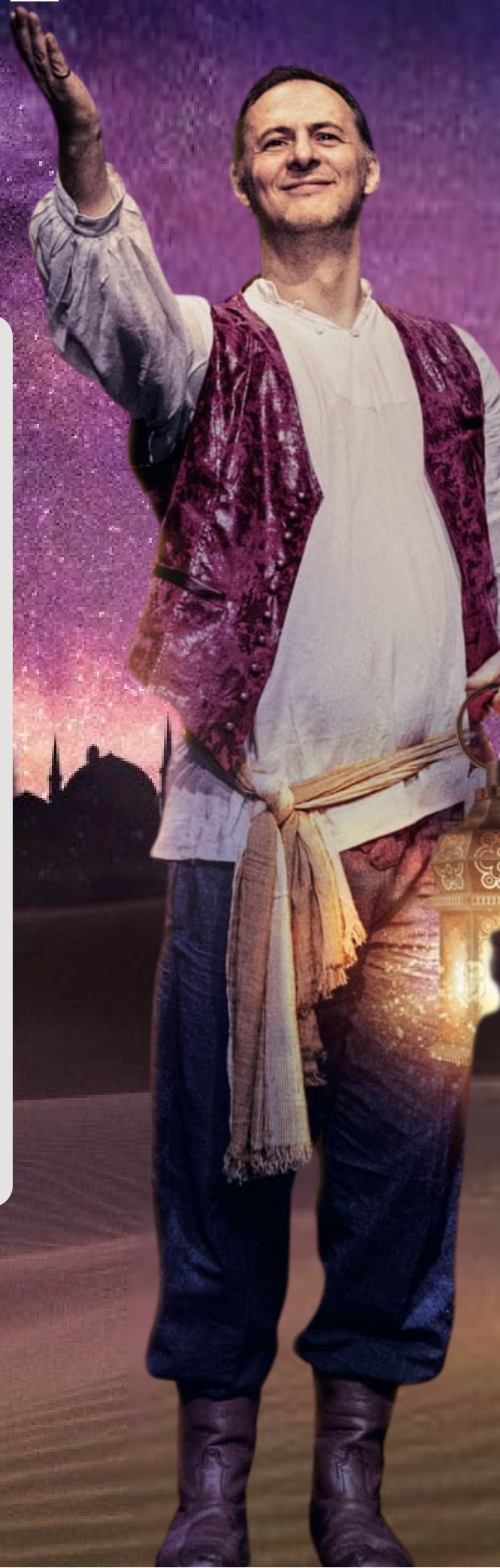
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Eliot Giuralarocca - Director - 07961141315 [eliot@dragonboyproductions.com](mailto:eliot@dragonboyproductions.com)

# PRESS RELEASE

**DIRECTOR ELIOT GIURALAROCCA,**

“ We love stories...and no collection of stories are more beloved than these wonderful Middle-Eastern folk tales...they are hymns and fables to the inventiveness of the human spirit, by turns hilarious, poignant, odd and memorable. With four actor-musicians, live music, mask and song we hope to create a feast of physical story-telling in an evening that simply cannot be missed! ”



# DIRECTOR'S PROGRAMME NOTE

I first read these stories as a child, and they have always stayed with me. They are wonderful material just crying out to be performed in front of an audience. It was during the first Covid lockdown – now thankfully receding into the realms of a distant memory – that I picked up my old, battered copy of Richard Burton's Arabian Nights and started reading the tales again. I know, I thought, I'll adapt them into a play. I didn't have anything better to do! Working from a long list of favourites I eventually choose the stories that you will see this evening.

I've really enjoyed the process of adapting them for the stage. I have chosen to keep the 'story-telling' form of characters talking to the audience directly allowing them to share their thoughts, feelings, and attitude to what is unfolding and to comment on the action. I have tried to stay close to the original material while at the same time being quite bold in adding and editing, in taking what we needed and discarding what we didn't. It felt important to make things work dramatically, and in the rehearsal room whenever we found moments that the story could be better told musically or visually, we cut the text accordingly. We've added music, underscore and songs to the evening and the material has been shaped very much with a cast of four in mind and the amazing talents and strengths that they possess.



The challenge with this piece, as with any adaptation, was to try and bring the stories to life, to animate the tales and drag them off the page and into drama. They are after all folk tales, coming alive when read aloud as if around a campfire on a winter's night. They are tales that were told through centuries to listeners in hot dusty markets or as moral fables chronicling dreams and desires. They remind us of childhood. They help to tell us who we are and shape how we see the world. They link us to other people; Long before humans could read there were folk tales, stories that were spoken, passed on, handed down from father to son and mother to daughter, from one generation to the next. Some of the tales date back to the 8th Century and have been passed on and reimagined with the passing of time. Stories influence the way we think and feel about our own lives.

The very best stories can shape how we see the world and offer us a glimpse of our own reflections. They encapsulate a particular moment in time that is at once personal and universal. I've always believed in the enduring power and importance of storytelling; theatre that happens in real time and unfolds in front of you; a group of actors and an audience sharing and experiencing together in an

an act of communal imagination, It is theatre at its purest form, offering us the potential to transcend the moment we chance to live in and to imagine what it's like to be in someone else's time and space, providing a window to see how other people live, how they react in different situations and maybe in turn helping us to imagine how we would feel and what we would do.

I hope we have created a dynamic, funny and exhilarating piece of theatre, with original live music and presented in a style that celebrates and relishes the theatricality of storytelling itself - an ensemble of four actor-musicians who arrive in front of you with everything they need to tell the stories, - all the costumes, props, musical instruments, chairs, crates and so on, - contained within their carts or hung up on the washing line.



Creating a piece of theatre never happens in isolation and I have had the great good fortune to work with some wonderfully patient and creative collaborators. My thanks to Victoria Spearing and Samantha Warner who have designed our market inspired storytelling playground, Claire Childs for lighting everything so beautifully and to a wonderfully talented cast who have made creating this show such a pleasure and who have thrown themselves into the project with such commitment, passion, and generosity of spirit. I really hope that you will enjoy watching it as much as we have enjoyed making it!



# SYNDICATED INTERVIEW: DIRECTOR ELIOT GIURALARocca

**Can you tell us about your background and how you got into theatre?**

I was born and brought up in Maidstone, Kent and I've always loved being involved in theatre ever since my acting debut as the Arch-angel Gabriel in the Primary school nativity play aged 5. Apparently, I got the part due to shouting loudly and bringing in a nice set of wings, a fact that my mother never ceases to mention whenever she comes to see a show!

After this career highlight, I continued to act in plays throughout my school years at Maidstone Grammar school as well as in National Youth Theatre productions before going on to university to study for a degree in English Language and Literature at Oxford where I spent more time acting, producing and directing theatre than I did working! Three years of putting on shows on a shoestring and a wing and a prayer was fantastic fun and a great grounding in how theatre works from the ground up. After University I trained on the postgraduate diploma course at the Guildford School of Acting graduating in 1992 and I've been acting, making work and directing ever since.



**Tell us about your professional work as a director?**

For the last 30 years I've worked extensively as an actor in TV, Film and Theatre alongside my career as a freelance Director and theatre-maker. As Artistic Director of Dragonboy Productions, I bring this experience together to focus on creating and developing new work for the theatre. Recent productions include the National tour of In and Out of Chekhov's Shorts, a show that I adapted from the short stories of Anton Chekhov and a production of The Tempest for the British Council's Shakespeare Lives programme which toured throughout Europe and was subsequently nominated for the Spanish Grand Prize for the Performing Arts.

I directed productions of Frankenstein, The Great Gatsby, Dracula and Not About Heroes for Blackeyed Theatre all of which toured nationally and Baroque Around the Block and Monteverdi's Flying Circus for Armonico Consort as well as a production of West Side Story that played at the Belgrade Theatre Coventry. Other directing credits include The Imperfect Pearl for Latimer Productions about the life of the Baroque composer Domenico Zipoli, the World Premier of Knackerman by Rosanna Negrotti at the White Bear Theatre and Stephen Sharkey's miniaturist piece Retrospective at the Arcola Theatre.





## Why did you decide to adapt these stories for the stage?

I first read these stories as a child, and they have always stayed with me. I used to sit watching the Banana Splits every Saturday morning waiting in excited anticipation for the Arabian Knights cartoon segment to start! I recall with fondness the shape-shifter Bez who would announce "Size of an elephant" (or whatever creature would best serve his purpose) before clapping his hands and magically transforming as well as the crazy donkey Zazuum who would turn into a whirlwind every time someone was foolish enough to pull his tail, which of course seemed to happen every episode! These stories were such fun, so full of life, laughter and adventure and they coloured my childhood imagination with fables of potions and magic, flying carpets and princesses, giants and genies.

When I read the tales again as an adult, I realised that as well as being fun, they were also wonderful hymns to the inventiveness and resourcefulness of the human spirit. During Covid – now thankfully receding into the realms of memory – I picked up my old, battered copy of Richard Burton's Arabian Nights and started re-reading them. The folk tales reminded me of childhood, and they seemed to be crying out to be performed in front of an audience. Theatres were closed and like most of the country during that first lockdown, I found myself stuck indoors with plenty of time on my hands. Well, it's now or never, I thought and so I rolled up my sleeves and got stuck in to adapting them for the stage. Intrinsicly dramatic, there were so many tales that I enjoyed that it was like choosing which fine dish to serve from a banquet of possibilities. But working from a long list of favourites I eventually whittled them down to go for a mix of stories that I hope are both funny and poignant in equal measure.

## How did you go about adapting them?

I've really enjoyed the process of adaptation. I have chosen to keep the 'story-telling' form of characters talking to the audience directly which I think honours the oral tradition that they spring from and allows characters to share their thoughts, feelings, and

attitude to what is unfolding and to comment on the action.

The 'Russian doll' like structure, which forms the overarching framing device for the Tales demonstrates on a broader level that stories – and in a sense theatre - really can delight, entertain, educate and transform the people that experience it.

Scheherazade marries a Sultan who has sworn to kill each bride he marries after a single night. But she confounds him by entertaining him, by telling stories; exhilarating stories full of fun, danger, wonder and passion...and crucially, stories that never seem to end but instead constantly weave into other stories to become stories within stories with stories. And every sunrise there is a cliff hanger, like an early version of the 'duf-duf' at the end of an episode of Eastenders! Scheherazade wins her life by playing on that very human trait...the Sultan's...and of course the audiences...need to know what happens next!



But more than anything, the framing device serves as a wonderful excuse to revel in the fun and excitement of the stories themselves. I have tried to stay close to the original material while at the same time being quite bold in adding and editing, in taking what we need and discarding what we don't. It's important to make things work dramatically, and I've no doubt that in rehearsals we will find moments where the story can be better told musically or visually, and we will cut the text accordingly. We'll add music, underscore and songs to the evening and the material will be shaped very much by the amazing talents and strengths that they our cast of four possess. I'm a firm believer that the best theatre is always the result of a particular group of people working together at a particular time.

## **What sort of show do you hope to create?**

I'm very keen to create a real ensemble piece of storytelling with the performers on stage all the time, acting, singing, playing music live and creating the sights and sounds of stories right there in front of you as you watch. I hope this piece will be a celebration of storytelling itself. For me, part of the beauty and excitement of theatre is that it is a shared experience with the audience; it's happening now, there, right in front of your eyes. As a medium, it's the 'nowness' that is the vital ingredient that makes going to a theatre a different experience from going to a film or watching TV.

To that end we have cast a fantastically talented team of versatile performers, brilliant actors who all sing, move and play numerous instruments between them. While Scheherazade tells the Sultan stories, the audience will be watching our group of actor-musicians telling those stories. I hope they'll delight in the way the actors present multiple characters, marvel at their inventiveness and also enjoy how the tales are told as well as, hopefully, getting lost in the story itself.

## **What are the challenges that you envisage?**

Part of the challenge for me is to work out what theatrical language we are going to use to bring these tales alive and how to integrate and fuse music, songs and movement together in the action. Getting that balance right artistically will be challenging and will probably only reveal itself in the rehearsal room. It will be challenging to create a Giant bird or to give a sense of flying and there will also be the practical challenges of working out who will be available to play an instrument at a particular moment or narrate or change costumes or a combination of all of the above! It will be a busy show for the actors who will always be on stage so I'm sure they'll be times when it will feel like directing traffic in Piccadilly Circus!

The story also throws up the challenge of presenting many different locations, indoor and outdoor spaces and a whole variety of different journeys by land and sea that characters go on. I'm a great believer that theatre is often most potent when it is most simple and I think one of my main tasks will be to try and find an economical but theatrically inventive language with which to move the action from one location to the next

and to try and create a fluid yet dynamic environment aided by Claire Child's lighting that helps shape the audiences' imagination and captures the rhythms and changes of mood and pace in the script. And last, but not least, there is always the challenge to have fun, to make the rehearsal room a space where the actors can really play, discover, be bold, create and ultimately take ownership of the material themselves. All the music and sound will be created live by the company, whenever we need it and with whatever is to hand. As well as traditional instruments like violins, piano, guitar, timpani, harmonicas, accordion, cymbals, and drums, we'll hit bits of set to create sound and rhythm and we also use all sorts of weird and wonderful instruments including a water-phone, a saw, bells, whistles, a thunder drum, Glocks and a singing bowl to create the soundscape of the show.

Likewise, any props and costume that we need will be found lying in the carts or hanging on the washing line. I want the sense of four people in an Arabian marketplace who start telling stories and entertaining a crowd using whatever happens to be to hand to help them.



## **Lastly, what do you hope audiences take away from seeing your production of Tales from a Thousand and One Nights?**

A show that celebrates the excitement of live theatre using inventive, bold ensemble storytelling, live music and sound and utilising all the skills and abilities that our company of 4 performers possess. If audiences leave the theatre excited and entertained by what they've seen and inspired to pick up a copy of the Arabian Nights to read them for themselves, I'd be delighted!

# MEET THE TEAM:

## CAST





## CHRIS AGHA - ACTOR

Chris graduated from The Court Theatre Training Company. Last year he performed in three highly acclaimed productions at The Royal Opera House: in March Deborah Warner's production of *Peter Grimes*, in the summer David Alden's production of *Lohengrin* and in October Robert Carsen's production of *Aida*. He recently performed with the Olive & Stavros Theatre Company in the comedy *The Play with Speeches* at the Jack Studio Theatre in London.

### **If you weren't an actor what job would you like to do?**

I think it would still be doing something creative, perhaps a singer? have a huge love of music. Painting is another huge passion of mine. Both my parents are artists, and I still love to paint when I find the time.

### **Do you have any links to Theatres on tour?**

I went to University in Lancaster and I'm excited to be touring back to the area and to be visiting the Lancaster Grand. I saw many plays at the theatre and one of my favourite actors Andy Serkis also started his career there. My family home is in Brighton and as a child I often visited The Hawth in Crawley. Performing there on tour will be great!

### **What or Who inspired you to want to become an actor?**

My schoolteachers encouraged me to perform when I was 10/11 years old, as I had a booming voice for my age. I then fell in love with being on stage and was lucky to attend a great school where the arts were actively encouraged.

### **What was your first experience of acting and what shows/performance/s have you most enjoyed?**

My first proper acting performance was in *Mojo* by Jez Butterworth, and still, to this day, I think it's one of my favourite plays. It's just so gritty. I played Potts, who funnily enough was originally played at the Royal court theatre in 1995, by Andy Serkis - who is one of my favourite actors.

### **What has been the biggest challenge in your career to date?**

My biggest challenge to date was probably having my final year of drama school affected by Covid. We had to perform three of our final year shows over zoom. It was a huge struggle, and we all felt so restricted. However, since Covid, I've been very lucky to have had a great year in the industry and I hope to be performing on stage and screen throughout 2023 and beyond. I've got a lot to prove and can't wait to get stuck into a variety of projects.



### **What do you enjoy most about your job?**

I love the excitement of what's to come, the endless plays and characters that I can get stuck into and just making an impression on people's lives and seeing them come out of a theatre, laughing or crying or just having been transported to a different world of the character or play. And it's endlessly fun, meeting friends along the way!



## VERITY BAJORIA - ACTRESS

Verity is an Actor-Musician originally from the North-East. She trained at Guildford School of Acting, where she also started her folk band *That's All Folk*. Previous productions include *Atrocities at Arkham*, *The Light Burns Blue*, and *The Break of Day*. Verity is very excited to be joining the cast of *Tales from a Thousand and One Nights*.

### Do you have any links to Theatres on tour?

I was born and grew up in Hexham so I'm really looking forward to performing at the Queen's Hall Arts Centre. I think there will be lots of people booking tickets and coming along to support me so that will be lovely!

### What or Who inspired you to want to become an actress?

I have always loved performing. School productions helped me see that and the chance to combine music and drama has always excited me and spurred me forwards.

### What was your first experience of acting?

My first experience of acting was at school probably playing Camel no.2 in the school nativity. The costume was very flattering, I'm sure...

### What show have you most enjoyed?

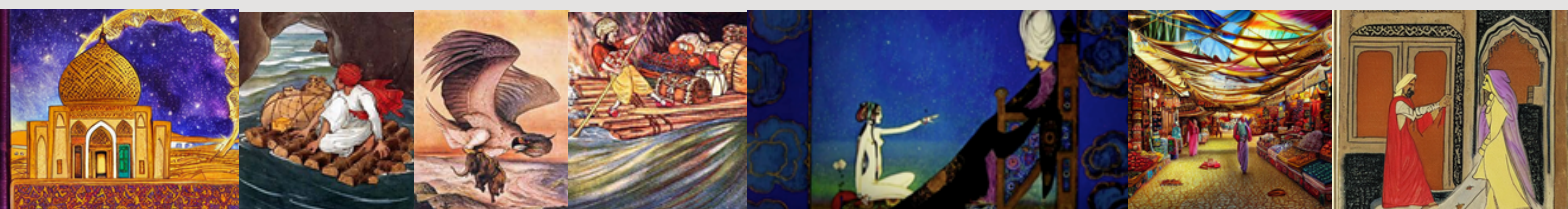
The show that I have most enjoyed is *Rabbit Hole* by David Lindsay Abair - an amazing script!

### What do you enjoy most about your job?

There're so many things to enjoy about my job. But getting to meet amazing people all doing things they love has to be at the top of that list.

### If you weren't an actress, what job would you like to do?

If I wasn't an actress, I'd be a violin teacher. But apparently at age 4 I wanted to be a professional unicorn jockey, so there's always that!





## MAEVA FEITELSON – ACTRESS

French and British with Iranian heritage, Maëva Feitelson trained at the International College of Musical Theatre in London (ICMT) where she graduated with the Kenneth Avery-Clark award of excellence.

She made her West-End debut in the ensemble of the original cast of *Rumi*, The musical which played at the Coliseum and starred Ramin Karimloo and Nadim Naaman. More recently, she took part in a workshop with Emma Rice's *Wise Children Summer Camp* where she combined her musician and acting skills for the first time. Maëva can be found hosting and singing in different cabarets across London; she is also a songwriter. She is very excited to be a part of the *Tales from of a Thousand and One Nights* and to be able to tell another Persian story!

### **What or Who inspired you to want to become an actor?**

My mother and grandmother who were both actors. I spent lots of time watching my mother acting and my grandmother directing. I guess it was impossible not to fall in love with theatre when being surrounded by it from a young age.

### **What was your first experience of acting and what shows/performance/s have you most enjoyed?**

I first performed when I was 10 years old in a Swiss touring production of *Woyzeck*. And I would say that performing in *Rumi, The Musical* at The Coliseum was the most mesmeric experience so far.

### **What's been the biggest challenge in your career & what ambitions do you have?**

The biggest challenge was without a doubt graduating in 2020...One of my deepest desires would be to act for The Jamie Lloyd Company.



### **What do you enjoy most about your job?**

Getting to live out all the experiences one could go through without ever really living them. You become someone else for a while, yet feel like you've learnt from them, and you keep that lesson without having to carry them within you once the show is over. I guess what I mean is that it teaches true empathy, understanding and a love for human beings.

### **If you weren't an actress, what job would you like to do?**

I'd probably be working on the other side of the table. Director, Casting Director, Agent or Stage Manager.



## TALAL KARKOUTI – ACTOR

Talal Karkouti is an actor and comedian from West London, with roots in musical theatre and improvised comedy. He also works and performs as a voice-over artist and provides ADR for major motion pictures and TV series. Talal is a seasoned stand-up comedian, recently winning 2nd place in the Musical Comedy Awards. You can currently find him co-hosting and producing *The Alexei Sayle Podcast*.

### **What or Who inspired you to want to become an actor?**

As the youngest child in a house full of show-offs, I was almost always involved in some kind of battle for attention. This definitely helped fuel my desire for performance. However, seeing my older sister performing as Adelaide in her high school production of *Guys and Dolls*, watching her and her friends disappear into the distant, romantic and hilarious world of 1950s New York, the audience all in stitches... this was a game changer.

### **What was your first experience of acting and what shows have you most enjoyed?**

I was always first in line to audition for the school plays, but at 12 years old I was lucky enough to get my first job - providing ADR for the Stephen Sommers 1999 film *The Mummy*. It felt incredible to have even such a small part - voicing kids in the background - to play in this massive production. I've regularly been doing ADR ever since, which keeps my improv bones well-trained!



### **What do you enjoy most about your job?**

Nothing quite beats the feeling of getting on stage and making people laugh, which is why I love performing stand-up comedy. Just me, my guitar and an audience. No safety barrier, no retakes, just pure spontaneous energy. It all excites me - the laughter, the shared experience and even the danger. Touring with this show, I'll get to have a little bit of that every night... can't wait!

### **If you weren't a performer what job would you do?**

If I wasn't a performer I think I would have worked with animals. Perhaps a zoologist or a park warden. Something hands-on and unpredictable, with an equally tough audience!

## LUKE WALLACE - TECHNICAL CSM



### **Do you have any links to Theatres on tour?**

I'm from Hartlepool which is only a stone's throw from Middlesbrough so I'm looking forward to bringing the show there and seeing family and friends.

### **What inspired you to want to become a Stage Manager?**

Ever since I saw *Bombay Dreams* in the West End I've wanted to work in all areas of technical theatre and have focused on learning about every capacity of the job.

### **What was your first experience of the profession and what shows have you most enjoyed?**

My first experience was on *Matilda* in the West End, I was a follow spot operator and at the time I didn't have a clue! I loved working on *Into The Woods* which I programmed; I loved the music.

### **What has been the biggest challenge of your career to date and what ambitions do you have?**

I think the hardest challenge was deciding what aspect of theatre I should focus on. In the end, I didn't decide but learned all aspects in depth! My ambition is to enjoy my work and enjoy what I put out into the world.

### **What do you enjoy most about your job?**

I constantly get to meet new people and to visit some of the most obscure places in the world, - from Jordon to Texas, - my career has taken me on a journey second to none.

### **If you weren't a Stage Manager what job would you like to do?**

My main job is actually Lighting Design and Projection and I work in this capacity throughout the globe, designing festivals, theatre and live events.





# CREATIVES



## ELIOT GIURALARocca : ADAPTOR AND DIRECTOR

After studying for a degree in English Language and Literature at Christ Church, Oxford, Eliot trained as an actor at the Guildford School of Acting. Over the past 30 years he has worked extensively in Theatre, Film, T.V. and Opera while also creating his own work, devising and developing projects as a Theatre-maker and working as a freelance Theatre Director.

As Artistic Director of Dragonboy Productions, he brings this experience together to focus on creating and developing new work for the theatre.

He directed and performed in the company's last show, *In and Out of Chekhov's Shorts*, which he adapted from some of the best of Anton Chekhov's short stories. The production toured to 27 theatres across the country and was warmly received by critics and audiences alike. *The Tempest*, which he adapted and created for the British Council's Shakespeare Lives programme, toured throughout Europe and was subsequently nominated for the Spanish Grand Prize for the Performing Arts.

He directed Blackeyed Theatre's acclaimed national tours of *Frankenstein*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Dracula* and *Not About Heroes* while for Armonico Consort he directed *Baroque around the Block*, *Monteverdi's Flying Circus* and *The Imperfect Pearl* an Arts Council funded production about the life of the Baroque composer Domenico Zipoli. He also directed the world premiere of *Knackerman* by Rosanna Negrotti and Stephen Sharkey's minaturist piece *Retrospective* at the Arcola Theatre.





## VICTORIA SPEARING - SET DESIGN

Victoria trained at Bretton Hall where she received a first class honours in Theatre design and technology. She designed *In and Out of Chekhov's Shorts* for Dragonboy Productions. For South Hill Park: *Oh What a Lovely War!*, *Just So*, *Calendar Girls*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *Noughts and Crosses*, *Brassed Off*, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, *Oliver!*, *Henry V*, *House and Garden*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Adventures of Mr Toad*, *Summer Holiday*, and *Aladdin*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Peter Pan*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Dick Whittington*, *Cinderella* and *Snow White*.

For Original Theatre, national tours of *Birdsong*, *Three Men in a Boat*, *Our Country's Good*, *Twelfth Night*, *See How They Run*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *The Madness of George III*, *The Importance of Being Oscar*, *Journey's End* and *Shakespeare's R&J*.

For Blackeyed Theatre, national tours of *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, *Frankenstein*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Not about Heroes*, *Dracula*, *Teechers*, *Mother Courage*, *The Beekeeper* (nominated for Best Set Design, in the Off West End Awards), *The Trial*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Alfie*, *Oh What a Lovely War!*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Oedipus*, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *Misery*, *Art*, *Blue Remembered Hills* and *The Caretaker*.

For Reading Rep: *The Nativity that went Wrong*, *Proof*, *Miss Julie*, *Look Back in Anger*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *The Dumb Waiter*. Other credits include *Baroque Around the Block* (Armonico Consort) *101 Dalmations* (The Castle, Wellingborough), *The Go! Go! Go! Show for Shows4Kids*; *Mort the Musical* and *Loserville the Musical* (2009 workshop production) for Youth Music Theatre UK; *From Up Here for Perfect Pitch* (premiere)

She has designed and made props for use in educational productions in most of the major London Museums, the National Youth Theatre and the award winning one man show *Tom Crean*. Other projects have included installation art at festivals, model making and craft workshops. In 2018 Victoria was nominated for a prestigious Best Staging /Set award at the Great British Pantomime Awards for her design of *Beauty and the Beast* and in 2019, she won it for her design of *Dick Whittington and his Cat*. Both shows played at South Hill Park.





## CLAIRE CHILDS : LIGHTING DESIGNER

Claire studied Mathematics at Oxford before starting her career as a lighting designer. Her credits include the UK and international tours of *Sherlock Holmes: The Sign of Four* and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Blackeyed Theatre), and the UK tours of *I Am Beast*, *Killing Roger* and *The Girl With No Heart* (Sparkle and Dark), *The Snowsmith*, *Boulder* and *Under the Frozen Moon* (Half a String), *The Tempest* (Thick as Thieves), *Revenge* (Crime and Comedy Theatre Company), *The Shipwrecked House* (Penned in the Margins) and *The Just So Stories* (Red Table Theatre).

Other lighting designs include *100 Years and Push* (Popelei Theatre), *Humane* (True Name Productions), *Kaj Nazar* (London Armenian Opera), *Invisible Me* (House of Stray Cats), *As One and Imoinda* (Lontano), *Zaryab* (Toos Foundation), *Mozart vs Machine* (Mahogany Opera Group), *Robin Hood* (The Opera Story), *Rudolf* (Pins and Needles), *Iolanthe* (Charles Court Opera), *The Barrier* (Earwig Arts), *1000 Songs* (Pinch Punch), *Venus/Mars* (act up) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Cornucopia).

Lighting designs for dance productions include *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Alice - Wonderland Through the Looking Glass* and *Dracula - Welcome to D's* (Chantry Dance Company) and *NowHere* and *Forgot Your Password?* (Divya Kasturi).



## CHRISTINE WARNER : PROPS/MASKS

Christine has always had a drive and passion for making 'something' from 'nothing'; as a child creating Ferris wheels, fairy furniture and puppet shows from discarded items such as cotton reels, cheese boxes, cardboard, and elastic bands

In recent times this creativity has found expression through sculpture. Having spent time with Kim Beaton, the sculpting director of Weta Workshop in New Zealand - made famous through its work on *Lord of the Rings* – Christine started small by

creating a 6-inch fairy door which was followed by a slightly more ambitious project which turned out to be the creation of a six-foot dragon called Derek, made using cardboard, tinfoil and concrete clay! She has gone on to create life like busts with input and guidance from Sir Richard Taylor the co-founder of Weta Workshop. Christine is also a fine artist whose oil paintings are sought after from around the world with commissions ranging from copies of Henry VIII and his wives to people and their pets.

Making props and masks for theatre finds her back doing something she loves while repurposing waste and keeping rubbish out of landfill. Bubble wrap, wire and papier-mache has been turned into a huge bird claw; while tin foil, old tights, cushion and scraps of fabric have been mixed with a homemade clay of flour, glue and poly filler to create a Sinbad puppet. Made from reused rubbish, these show items are light, durable and green and show how with a dash of imagination - and no little skill, - something really can be made from nothing!



## **SAMANTHA WARNER : ADMINISTRATOR**

Samantha read law at Cambridge and completed her masters degree in law at Victoria University of Wellington. She also has a Postgraduate Certificate in History from Oxford.

Qualifying as a barrister and solicitor in New Zealand, she worked for an international accounting firm as a tax consultant and then practiced corporate law, specialising in all aspects of business law and advice. She also founded a company, specialising in international trademark registration and advice and has worked as a director and advisor to a number of start-up businesses in industries as diverse as technology and cosmetic manufacturing.

Samantha was also a trustee and legal advisor to the Kokomai Arts Festival in New Zealand, a ten-day biannual festival that sources world-class touring performances from around the world.



## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

[www.dragonboyproductions.com](http://www.dragonboyproductions.com)

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**Additional Materials :** Marketing materials, production photographs and education pack will be available at [www.dragonboyproductions.com](http://www.dragonboyproductions.com).

**Interviews :** Please contact the company to arrange press and radio interviews with the cast.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

