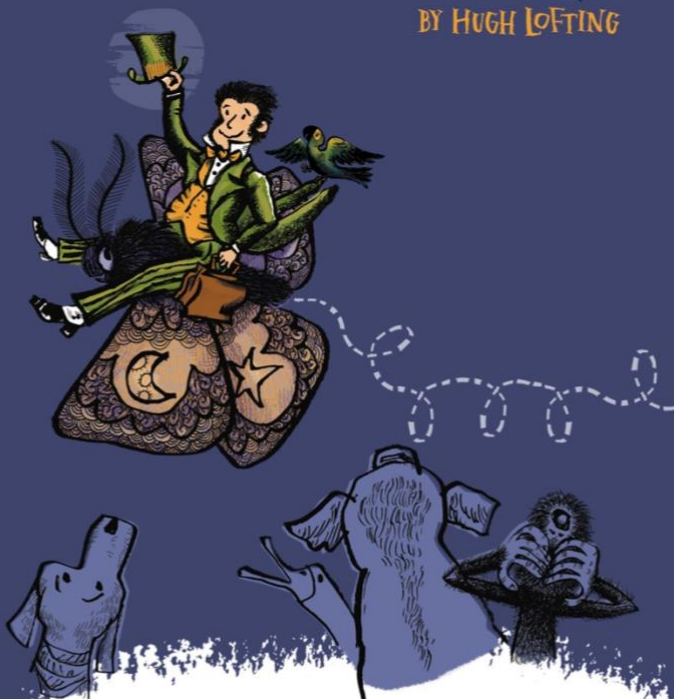


ILLYRIA

THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF DOCTOR DOLLITTLE

BY HUGH LOFTING



2021 Open Air Season

A LETTER FROM THE ILLYRIANS

Summer 2021 is Illyria's 30th consecutive season. Of those 30 crazy, irreverent, glorious years, by far the toughest was the 29th.

On 13 March 2020, Illyria's producer Stephen Badham and artistic director Oliver Gray took the decision to cancel our 2020 season. We were the first company in the outdoor touring sector to do so. Covid deaths were rising on a daily basis, the UK government was ill-prepared, and it was clear that scenes in Italy we saw nightly on our TVs would shortly be playing out in our own country. Lockdown was finally introduced on 23 March.

Illyria was facing an economic abyss. Tens of thousands of pounds had already been spent on the season: admin, auditions, print etc. And every penny went down the proverbial toilet, without hope of recouping any of it in ticket sales. We started a GoFundMe to which hundreds of diehard Illyria fans so generously contributed. But we seriously began to doubt we'd reach our 30th birthday.

Our 29th birthday, on 8 July, was a sombre affair. But, on 9 July, culture secretary Oliver Dowden announced that outdoor performances could now go ahead from 11 July - a whopping 48 hours' notice for an industry that requires a minimum of 4 weeks to cast, rehearse and open a show.

Illyria has always been a lean, efficiently run organisation. That afternoon we leapt into action and started planning a short tour of a perennial favourite: The Wind in the Willows. We wanted a title that steered as far away as possible from the tragedy of a pandemic and the stress of lockdown; we wanted the show to be a warm, happy, nostalgic hug.

As it turned out we were shortly contacted by the Barn Theatre in Cirencester and asked to do a repertory season of open-air performances in their garden space. So in addition to Willows we also mounted productions of The Emperor's New Clothes and The Adventures of Doctor Dolittle!

What we found most overwhelming was the unprecedented public response to these tours. Without exception, every correspondent mentioned the emotional relief they felt at being able to see live theatre once more. We can say in all humility that no-one at Illyria had quite understood the place live theatre, and Illyria itself, held in people's hearts.

So then, another winter passed, the pandemic raged again, and here we all are. Sadder? Perhaps. Older? Definitely. Wiser? Probably not in our case, I mean look at us, shouting in the rain - but determined to enjoy the great outdoors, the wonderful spaces this country has to offer, the great literary wealth of our language and the joy of live theatre. Please come and share it with us, again and again. For the next 30 years, why not? You will always be welcome.

THE ILLYRIANS

Book tickets for Illyria's two other shows for 2021 at:

illyria.co.uk



Contact us:

illyriahq2@gmail.com

[@illyriatheatre](https://www.facebook.com/illyriatheatre)

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Characters in the Play

Doctor Dolittle	ED
Polynesia, the parrot	PAULA
Too Too, the owl	NISHA
Gub Gub, the pig	CALLUM
Dab Dab, the duck	PAULA
Jip, the dog	JORA
Beppo, the retired circus horse	PAULA
Toggle, Beppo's retired friend	CALLUM
Sarah, the Doctor's sister (estranged)	PAULA
Revered Dingle	JORA
Matthew Mugg	CALLUM
Pippinella	NISHA
Jamara Bumblelily	CALLUM & NISHA
Moon Cat	NISHA
PC Singh	JORA
One-line Jim	PAULA
Lady Beamish	NISHA
Mrs Hogg & Miss Hatt	PAULA & CALLUM
Window Cleaner	JORA

Other roles are played by members of the cast

FOR THIS PRODUCTION

Words & Music	OLIVER GRAY
Arrangement & Orchestration	BEN WILES
Set design	JILL "WIGS" WILSON, JAKE RAWLINGS
Puppets	NICK ASH
Costume	PAT FARMER
Poster Design	FRAZER MARR
Producer	STEPHEN BADHAM
Director	OLIVER GRAY

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Dean Horner
Anna & Jamie Hamilton
Staff & volunteers at all our venues

And finally...To YOU, for supporting Illyria for 30 (Thirty...THIRTY!?!?) years

PLEASE DO NOT USE VIDEO RECORDING CAMERAS (INCLUDING PHONES), AUDIO RECORDING EQUIPMENT OR FLASH-PHOTOGRAPHY DURING THE PERFORMANCE. ALL OTHER PHOTOGRAPHY IS WELCOME - PLEASE SHARE ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS!

FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF US ALL PLEASE TURN YOUR MOBILE PHONE TO SILENT.



We are thrilled to have received funding from the government's Culture Recovery Fund so that we can continue to be here for you and Here For Culture.

Illyria's existence is under threat. Many open-air touring theatre companies adopt immoral employment practices, such as paying less than national living wage, ignoring statutory holiday-pay and flouting working-time regulations in order to undercut legitimate companies. You have the power to help: please do so by choosing to see performances given by Equity-compliant companies only, identified by this logo. Thank you for your support.





Callum Stewart

Callum is returning for his fourth tour with Illyria - he clearly has a thing for pain. You may have seen him in previous years in 'The Emperor's New Clothes' (where he genuinely burned his hands on a pair of very hot cymbals), or as Toad in 'The Wind In The Willows' (where he got heat rash because his bow tie was too tight). This year he looks forward to introducing you all to the grape sized callous that he grew on his index finger during the first Dolittle tour, that inevitably will again. He can also be found helping Father Christmas at the Eden Project and hosting Zoom quizzes for accounting firms. One is far more fulfilling than the other, but both help keep the lights on and stop the ice cream melting. During lockdown he started a podcast about Nic Cage's filmography, but then everyone's done that, haven't they? HAVEN'T THEY??



Edward Simpson

Edward was born at an early age and took to acting when he realised he had no chance of ever becoming Queen. This is Edward's tenth (count them, TEN) season with Illyria, having joined way back in 2011 to play Major General Stanley in the first outing of 'The Pirates of Penzance', followed by Sir Joseph Porter in 'HMS Pinafore', Ko-Ko in 'The Mikado', Lord Chancellor in 'Iolanthe' and Robin Oakapple in 'Ruddigore'. He broke out of the world of Gilbert & Sullivan to play John Dolittle in 'The Adventures of Doctor Dolittle' in 2018 and again (briefly) in 2020, as well as the deliciously camp Henry Cervel in 2019's 'Frankenstein'. Edward trained at The Actors' Company in Hoxton a number of years ago (never mind how long ago, cheeky-face). Previous roles include Albany in 'King Lear', Arvide Abernathy in 'Guys and Dolls' and Dame Trott in 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. Previous rolls include sausage, bacon and meoverintheclover.



Jora Singh

Jora is excited to be making his Illyria debut. He was raised in Derby and trained at Guildford School of Acting. He then went onto roles such as Mowgli in 'The Jungle Book' and Oberon in Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Nights dream'. Jora loves to swim and beat down any expectations set with his Martial Arts background. Jora didn't actually join Illyria...they just saw him by the road one day and tried throwing some rocks to make him go away but he was sure they wanted to play fetch, so he kinda just stuck around. After living with a bunch of animals most his life, he is thrilled to be leaving his natural habitat and rightfully owning his role as Jip. To keep updated on Jora's latest adventures and see what he does when he's not chasing his own tail check out his Instagram page @Jorasingh_official. Jora would like to say a special thanks to all his family and friends who have supported him whilst on tour.



Nisha Anil

Nisha took her first step, in a school play, re-enacting the moment Neil Armstrong stepped down onto the moon and was hooked on performing. Revelling in dressing-up delights, travelling from the world of CBeebies, realms of super-serious experimental theatre to popping up as a puppeteer on various shows either rotating a gigantic shipping crate and creatures on 'The Gift'; 'Rat Choc Chip', 'Octopot' and 'Fizzlebert Stump: The Boy Who Ran Away from the Circus (and Joined the Library)'. She loves sticking her hands up puppets and is looking forward to being released from being a caged bird in lockdown, to warble jubilantly and to flit - like an enticed moth to a flickering flame - on her first outing with Illyria, making her one beaming lady. She also enjoys playing the guitar and getting her hands dirty growing her own marrows at her allotment. Find her on social media or at nishaanil.com



Paula Brett

This is Paula's third stint as an Illyrian, having found they prefer the company of puppets to other actors, and can communicate more effectively via a parrot on a stick. Other ridiculous things they have done for cash include washing Iggle Piggle's face eight times a week in 'In the Night Garden Live', having a custard pie in the face every night for 'Comic Potential', showing off their Bottom in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and teaching a pair of clowns to tap dance in 'Zirkus Lilliput'. They won the inaugural "Shakespeare Sonnet award" whilst training at London School of Musical Theatre, which isn't relevant, but they are proud nonetheless. Frequent travellers may recognise Paula's dulcet tones from the airwaves as they deliver traffic news bulletins (don't shoot the messenger) for LBC, Absolute, and Greatest Hits Radio stations. Paula lovingly dedicates their performance to Sarah Dolittle-Dingle, who taught them it's okay to kick off once in a while.

Oliver Gray - Director

This is the 64th production Oliver has directed for Illyria. He suspects that he is still helping to run the company he founded 30 years ago, simply because everyone is too kind to suggest that he stops. Oliver trained as an actor before most of the audience at this performance (children and parents) were born. His first professional role was as a dalek in Dr Who The Ultimate Adventure. He appeared in the West End as an evil giant in The BFG, and also regularly appeared in The Bill as a police dog-handler. His favourite role to date involved spending four days in a bed at the bottom of the underwater studio in Pinewood for a TV commercial. He now also directs for Wizard Theatre in London and The Eden Project in Cornwall, and can be seen every panto season as one half of the outrageous award-winning ugly-sister act Lav & Lou (@LavandLou). This September he is directing one of The Ordinalia plays, the oldest mystery cycle, in the oldest working theatre in the country in St Just in Cornwall.

Tippi Horner-Gray - Animal Consultant

Tippi joined Illyria from Battersea Dog and Cats Home in 2009. Her genuine passion for theatre-that-depicts-animals was first noticed when she was present during rehearsals for The Mowgli Stories. She went on to make noisy and forthright contributions to Fantastic Mr Fox, The Twits, Babe the Sheep-Pig, George's Marvellous Medicine, and Danny The Champion Of The World.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

In 2018, together with Ben Wiles, our arranger/orchestrator, I adapted sequences from 3 of Hugh Lofting's Doctor Dolittle books into a musical show for children. I wrote the words and the tunes, and Ben then took my manuscript pages and made proper music out of them. He skilfully made each track sound as though it was played by the resident orchestra of the circus where the show is set. The show enjoyed a highly successful tour; and I continue to receive emails from people telling me their children refuse to listen to anything other than their Doctor Dolittle CD.

Then for 2020 Illyria commissioned a sequel. Obviously 2020 itself had other ideas. But when the 2021 Illyria season was announced as a rollover of 2020, I knew I had the luxury of time to write the new show.

Writing a sequel to a popular original presents two substantial challenges: firstly to include all the elements from the original that people enjoyed without the show becoming too formulaic; secondly to cope with the pressure of having to create something better than the original.

The new show was sourced from a total of 7 of the Doctor Dolittle books. (Indeed, there is one song that covers a whole book itself!) Why so many? Various reasons: mainly because the author's style in the later books became a bit unstructured, which doesn't work well theatrically; but also because many of the stories feature human characters only, and I wanted to concentrate on those featuring animals instead. A character who can talk to animals is wasted if animals play no useful role in the story.

Those who saw the first show will recognise one big difference: Money is no longer the over-riding problem for the Doctor. Indeed the show starts with his having earned enough to retire on. But now he is relatively wealthy, he faces a shortage of an entirely different commodity: Time. Once money slipped through his fingers, now Time does exactly the same thing - causing arguably even bigger problems.

The end result is a show featuring 20 brand new songs, built from sequences direct from the wonderful imagination of Hugh Lofting. All your favourite animal characters have returned, along with a few unforgettable new ones. And, in pursuit of improving the lot of all animals everywhere the intrepid Doctor voyages further afield than ever before!

Those who saw the first show will undoubtedly recognise some features: Gub Gub has another food song; the Rats sing about current affairs, the doctor's sister Sarah keeps catching him in compromising situations, and some elderly horses might make you cry. Those who didn't see the first show will find that this one stands alone perfectly well.

This show is for children but I have made every effort to keep adults entertained also. And for every adult still wincing from the memory of Robert Downey Jnr sticking his arm up a dragon's bottom, rest assured you won't be subjected to anything like that today.

OLIVER GRAY

