

About

The Ballad of Johnny Longstaff is the story of one man's adventure from begging on the streets in the north of England to fighting against fascism in the Spanish Civil War, taking in the Hunger Marches and the Battle of Cable Street. It's a timely, touching and often hilarious musical adventure following the footsteps of a working-class hero who witnessed some of the momentous events of the 1930s.

With their trademark harmony, honesty and humour Teesside folk trio

The Young'uns bring together newly composed music, spoken word, striking imagery and the authentic recorded voice of Johnny Longstaff himself to share a remarkable human story brimming with modern relevance.

Directed by Lorne Campbell and co-produced by the Young'uns, Northern Stage and Harbourfront Centre.

Biographies

SAM CARTER

Midlands-born guitarist and songwriter Sam Carter has earned a reputation for vivid, narrative-driven songwriting and captivating live performances. He is a highly-regarded instrumentalist, renowned by many as his generation's finest English-style fingerpicking guitarist. Over the past fifteen years, Carter has toured the world, won a BBC Folk Award and made appearances on national TV, including a spellbinding performance on *Later... with Jools Holland*. He has recorded and performed with some of folk's leading lights, including Richard Thompson, Eliza Carthy, Martin Simpson and Nancy Kerr.

In the fall of 2021, Carter embarked on the first leg of the long-awaited *Home Waterstour*, performing to enthralled audiences accompanied by the specially-assembled *Home Waters String Quartet*. The quartet was also featured in the streamed show *Home Waters in Concert*, which was picked as a highlight of the month by Bandcamp's Editorial Director J. Edward Keyes' when it premiered on the platform as part of the tour in September 2021.

SEAN COONEY

Sean Cooney is an award-winning songwriter and folk singer. He is a winner of three BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards with his band, The Young'uns (Best Group 2016, 2015 and Best Album 2018).

As a member of The Young'uns, Cooney has performed at hundreds of theatres and festivals in the UK, Europe, Australia, the United States and Canada since 2007. He is the author of *The Ballad of Johnny Longstaff*, and his songwriting commissions have included the BBC Radio Ballads *The Ballad of the Great War*, *Rising Up! Peterloo* and *The Transports*. He has written and presented documentaries for BBC Radio 4, and TV appearances have included BBC 2 *Springwatch Unsprung* and BBC *Inside Out*. Cooney's songs have been recorded by artists, including the Ivor Novello award-winning Martin Green and the Mercury-nominated The Unthanks. He has worked extensively in education, writing and sharing songs and stories with children from more than one hundred schools across the UK.

LORNE CAMPBELL

Lorne Campbell is the Artistic Director of National Theatre Wales. He began his career at the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh. Before joining the National Theatre Wales, he was the Artistic Director of Northern Stage. Highlights include *The Bloody Great Border Ballad* (2015), *Get Carter* (2016), *The Last Ship* (2018) and the Northern Stage's multi-award-winning showcasing work at the Edinburgh Fringe.

Following the smash-hit success of *The Last Ship* starring Sting, Campbell directs *The Ballad of Johnny Longstaff*.

Before Northern Stage, Campbell worked as a freelance theatre director, creating productions for Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse Theatres, Birmingham Rep, Theatre Royal Bath, Traverse Theatre, The Almeida and Hull Truck. He was Associate Director at the Traverse Theatre between 2004

and 2008. He worked as a Course Director at Drama Centre, a Creative Fellow of the RSC between 2011 and 2013 and as founding Co-Artistic Director of Greyscale between 2009 and 2013.

DAVID EAGLE

David Eagle is a member of the three-time BBC Radio 2 Folk Award winning band The Young'uns. In 2018, Eagle began performing stand-up comedy. He was awarded New Act of the Year at the 2018 Nottingham Comedy Festival. In 2019 he won Bath Comedy Festival's New Comedian of the Year and the Leicester Square Theatre New Comedian of the Year. In 2022 he performed stand-up on BBC Radio 4's topical comedy program, *The Now Show*. Eagle frequently supports Boothby Graffoe, and he also starred in

Tony Law and Phil Nichol's improvised 2019 Edinburgh Fringe show.

THE YOUNG'UNS

The Young'uns' live shows are renowned for their heart-on-the-sleeve storytelling, beautiful lyrics, warm harmonies and relentless repartee. Sean Cooney, Michael Hughes and David Eagle (the award-winning stand-up comedian) write and sing folk songs for today.

Born from empathy, crafted with care, fired by hope and shared with joy, The Young'uns' songs are described as "a heartfelt secular hymnary for these troubled times and a rallying call for humanity." (*The Scotsman*). They have led the band to three BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards (including Best Album in 2018 for *Strangers*), and the creation of the acclaimed international theatre show *The Ballad of Johnny Longstaff* (based upon their 2019 album of the same name).

NORTHERN STAGE

Northern Stage is a registered charity theatre that stretches from Tweed to Tyne to Tees, UK.

Northern Stage is the largest producing theatre in northeast England, with a regional and national sector support role. Backed up by industry-leading facilities and a dash of Geordie genius, we reach beyond the ordinary every time. A theatre where ideas meet and futures change, thousands come to create and share unique live experiences every year. Northern Stage believes in theatre's social, emotional and political power to challenge the status quo.

In partnership with The Young'uns and Harbourfront Centre, Northern Stage presented the first theatrical version of *The Ballad of Johnny Longstaff* in 2020.

Credits

BJL

director

Lorne Campbell

writers & composers

The Young'uns

set, costume, av & lighting designer Kai Fischer

animation designer

Scott Turnbull

animator

Aaron Brady

sound designer

Mariam Rezaei

sound engineer

Andy Bell

cast

Sam Carter Sean Cooney David Eagle

multimedia operator &

stage manager

Martin Curtis

HARBOURFRONT CENTRE

chief executive officer

Marah Braye

chief programming officer

Iris Nemani

cultural engagement

director

Laura McLeod

associate producer

Pam Briz

company manager

Rosie Driscoll

production

director

Jamie Rodriguez

production manager, theatres

Bill Zeilstra

visitor experience

manager, visitor services

Christopher Hackett

assistant manager, visitor services

Ian McNulty

Stage Technicians at Harbourfront Centre are represented by Local 58 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts of the United States, its territories, and Canada.

Volunteers are part of the team at Harbourfront Centre and we are grateful for their continued support. To learn more email volunteers@harbourfrontcentre.com

Harbourfront Centre is a charitable cultural organization supported by arts and culture lovers like you, and we need your support more than ever before. Donate now

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