

JUSTIN BUTCHER - professional biography

Justin read Classics at Oxford, trained subsequently at Drama Studio London, and has worked all over the world as playwright, actor, director, musician and producer in theatre, film, TV and radio, and as creative consultant to the business, government and voluntary sectors across the UK, Europe, Middle East and East Africa.

Writing credits include the multi-award winning play *Scaramouche Jones*, originally starring Pete Postlethwaite and directed by Rupert Goold, the 2003 West End hit satire *The Madness of George Dubya* and its sequels *A Weapons Inspector Calls* and *Guantanamo Baywatch*, the acclaimed *Go To Gaza*, *Drink The Sea* and six plays for BBC radio. His critically renowned satirical reworking of the Easter story, *The Devil's Passion* - broadcast in 2017 on BBC Radio 3, starring David Suchet in the title role - has been touring the UK, Europe and Australia since 2015. His recent adaptation of Stanislav Stratiev's Cold War satire *The Roman Bath* for the Arcola Theatre was praised by Michael Billington in *The Guardian* and Michael Coveney in *The Independent* for introducing UK audiences to the work of a major Eastern European satirical writer. His music drama, *Freedom Song*, co-written with composer Harvey Brough, telling the amazing story of the Fisk Jubilee Singers and the birth of gospel music, premiered at the Hackney Empire in 2019. Other music collaborations with Harvey Brough include *Music on the Mind* (Shoreditch Town Hall) and *The Sun Does Shine* (premiered at Hackney Empire in 2024). His other plays for BBC Radio include *The Man on the Pillar*, *Chukwudebelu - Preserved of God* (co-written with Ben Okafor), *The Patience of Mr Job* and *Escape from Gaza* (co-written with Ahmed Masoud).

As actor, he has worked all over the world in theatre, film, TV and radio, with credits including *Electric Dreams: Impossible Planet* (Channel 4/Amazon US, directed by David Farr), *Walking Back To Jerusalem* (film for Amos Trust with New Theatre, Dublin) *Let Me Go* (award-winning new feature film, starring Juliet Stevenson, directed by Polly Steele), *Mary Barton* (BBC Radio 4), *Fritters, Blinis & Bristin: comedies by Chekhov & Dario Fo* (Teatro Filodrammatici, Milan, & Teatro Technis, London) *Shakespeare in Italy* (Volterra International Festival Teatro Romano) *Dream School* (The Space, London), *Walking to Jerusalem* (Dublin Theatre Festival & UK tour), *Zindabad* (Yvonne Arnaud, Guildford), *The Taming of the Shrew* (Nottingham Playhouse), *The End of the Affair* (Salisbury Playhouse), *Buddy* (Victoria Palace & Strand Theatres) and his own ongoing touring productions of *Scaramouche Jones* and *The Devil's Passion*, which have toured across the UK, Australia, Italy, Malta and Mexico since 2008. He won the 2022 Off West End Best Actors' Award for his performance in *Scaramouche Jones* at the Wilton's Music Hall, London.

He has collaborated with some of the UK's most celebrated creative practitioners, including Lucy Bailey, David Farr, Rupert Goold, Tamsin Grieg, Jeremy Hardy, Nigel Kennedy, Warren Mitchell, Pete Postlethwaite and David Suchet. In partnership with J.Productions, Milan, he produced and directed the acclaimed *Speaking Dante* performance in Florence, September 2021, a dramatised reading of the whole of Dante's *Divine Comedy* on the 700th anniversary of the poet's death, with an international cast led by Ralph Fiennes, Helen Mirren, Jessie Buckley and Adjoa Andoh, in support of Italian refugee charity, La Comunità di Sant'Egidio.

His creative work in human rights advocacy includes producing and directing the *Trade Justice Vigil* at Westminster Abbey, for the 2005 Make Poverty History campaign, featuring Adjoa Andoh, Jools Holland & Beverley Knight, Ronan Keating, Damian Lewis, Pete Postlethwaite and Vanessa Redgrave, the hugely successful *Bethlehem Unwrapped* festival, built around a full-scale replica of the Separation Wall in central London at Christmas 2013, with a star line-up including Nigel Kennedy, the Tallis Scholars, Yotam Ottolenghi and Sami Tamimi, Jeremy Hardy, Mark Steel, Rafeef Ziadah and Dizraeli; his acclaimed book, *WALKING TO JERUSALEM: Blisters, hope and other facts on the ground* (Hodder & Stoughton, UK, 2018, Pegasus, USA, 2019), telling the story of his 2017 walk from London to Jerusalem, in partnership with Amos Trust, calling for equal rights in the Holy Land, described as 'So impressive ...' (Brian Eno), 'an incredibly moving and fascinating book, a powerful pilgrim's tale of love, humour and solidarity' (Rosalind Nashashibi), 'a remarkable work of humanity and humility, beautifully drawn, very moving and often very funny' (John McCarthy) and 'a must-read for everyone who yearns for peace in Palestine' (David Suchet); the spoof documentary *Walking Back To Jerusalem*, with Ahmed Masoud, for Amos Trust's 2020 Step Up & Stop the Annexation Festival and New Theatre, Dublin, and, most recently, *Voices from Gaza*, London, December 2023, a live event for the Emergency Appeal for Gaza, featuring Brian Eno, Will Keen, Amaka Okafor, Ahmed Masoud, Saied Silbak, Iyad Sughayer and Rosalind Nashashibi.

He has worked extensively as creative consultant in the business, government and voluntary sectors, across the UK and Europe, Russia, the Middle East and Africa, with clients including Arup, the British Army, Barclays, BMW, British & Foreign Bible Society, British Television Advertising Awards, CAFOD, Cancer Research UK, Centrica, Christian Aid, Firehouse, General Electric, Make Poverty History coalition, Mercer, Nissan, PricewaterhouseCoopers (UK, Central & Eastern Europe, Russia and Turkey), Prudential, Ruffino, Shell, Trade Justice Campaign, Trevisan & Cuonzo (Italy) and the UK Government Office of Fair Trading. He has written several highly successful training films for John Cleese and Anthony (Yes, Minister) Jay's company, Video Arts, starring John Cleese, Miranda Hart, Chris Searle and Tim Vine. He is an Associate of leadership development consultancy Waverley Learning, with whom he worked for over 20 years.

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