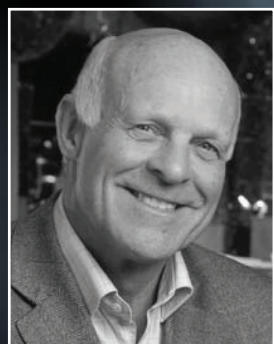




THE CREATIVE TEAM



John Cushing Director and Producer

Born less than a mile away from the village of Thursford, John has created, produced, and directed the Thursford Christmas Spectacular since its humble beginnings in 1977. Alongside the show the hugely successful Christmas Fantasyland, which opened in 2007, was another of his initiatives. He is the CEO of the Thursford Collection, running the whole complex throughout the year. He was recently presented with a lifetime achievement award for his continued contribution to the arts and was delighted and overwhelmed to receive an Order of the British Empire in the January 2020 Honours List.



George Cushing Associate Producer

George is delighted to be part of Thursford's amazing creative team again. Like his brother, George is the 3rd generation of the Cushing family to be involved with Thursford. He studied international hospitality management in Oxford for three years and later worked in marketing for a London firm. 2020 saw George spearhead the new Enchanted Journey of Light event as a replacement to the show and is delighted to welcome the event back this year running alongside the Spectacular.



Charlie Cushing General Manager

31 year old Charlie is the 3rd generation of the Cushing Family to be involved with the Thursford Collection, a venture originally started by his grandfather. Having grown up here and with a natural passion and enthusiasm for live entertainment, coming home was an ultimate natural progression! After being educated at Greshams, Holt, Charlie went on to study Business and Tourism at Northumbria University before bringing the unique skills (and first class Honors degree!) acquired there back to the Thursford Family.



James Smith Lighting Designer

Lighting Thursford's Christmas Spectacular is the highlight of James' theatrical year. James lives in Poole in Dorset and studied Lighting Design at Rose Bruford College. It's a pleasure to work with such a talented and wonderful creative team for the 10th consecutive year. 2021 has seen James light productions for CBeebies and the BBC while lighting Pantomime in his hometown and designing a light immersive Christmas experience at Cowdray Ruins in Sussex.



Martin McLachlan LX/AV Programmer & Operator

After 2020's Journey of Light, Martin is pleased to be back at Thursford for his ninth consecutive season, working alongside a talented team of creatives and performers. Through the year he works on a diverse range of lighting projects including programming, re-lighting and assisting for theatre, musicals, opera and dance. He is also Head of Lighting for Assembly at the Edinburgh Festival, and this year in Coventry designing the Festival Garden for City of Culture 2021.



Natalie Davis Swing and Dance Captain

Natalie is honoured to be Dance Captain in her eleventh season at Thursford. Trained in London, her career highlights include dancing in Ant and Dec's Takeaway on Tour, Sir Paul McCartney's Ever Present Past and featured on BBC's Tonight at the Palladium. She also had the privilege to film for Disney's Feature Film Beauty and the Beast, Mamma Mia 2: Here We Go Again, and Sarah Brightman's cinema special of HYMN.



Benjamin Ellin Musical Director and Conductor

Award-winning conductor and composer, Benjamin Ellin is currently Music Director of the Thirsk Hall Festival, Slaithwaite Philharmonic, Tafahum, President of Pembroke Academy alongside being Music Director here at Thursford. In addition to Thursford, his 2021/22 season includes world premieres of his bass trombone concerto with Opera North, his Symphony No. 1 with the Evgeny Svetlanov Symphony Orchestra in Moscow, concerts throughout the UK and new commissioned works for the concert hall, stage and screen.



Tracey Iliffe Choreographer

Tracey trained at Laine Theatre Arts and appeared in musicals including Anything Goes and 42nd Street before moving to Paris for 5 years dancing at the Moulin Rouge and Lido de Paris. Choreographic credits include the Thursford Christmas Spectacular, Sweeney Todd, Checkmate, Celebrity Cruise Line, P&O, Sensatori, Timeless Theatre, San Remo Casino, Rios Productions, Haven, Wicksteed Park, Back to Broadway, UK Productions, Butlins and Carnival. Tracey has founded her own dance company eXalt.



Stephen Adnitt Costume Designer

Stephen Studied at the Royal College Of Art and worked in fashion before a career in entertainment including numerous Royal Variety Performances, Torvill and Dean on Fire and Ice, Gladiators and Dancing On Ice for which he was given a Royal Television Society award. He designed costumes for Cilla Black and Dame Edna Everage including shows on Broadway. A Dame Edna costume is in the permanent collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Peter Savidge Casting Director & Vocal Consultant

Studied at Cambridge and GSMD and in a long career has performed on opera stages and concert halls worldwide in a wide variety of works ranging from Showboat (The Palladium) to The Ring Cycle (Scottish Opera). Particularly associated with Opera North in Leeds, and with the baritone roles of Britten, Mozart, and Puccini in Europe, Canada, Japan and New Zealand. Peter is a vocal professor at the Royal College of Music.



Kieran Lowe Head of Sound

Kieran has worked in the audio industry his entire career which has taken him all over the globe, but living here in Norfolk means that Thursford is a very local gig for him. Managing the complex and ever evolving sound system at Thursford keeps him and his team of sound engineers very busy during the Christmas show. Being a keen musician and performing in various live projects gives Kieran a very musical approach to live sound engineering.

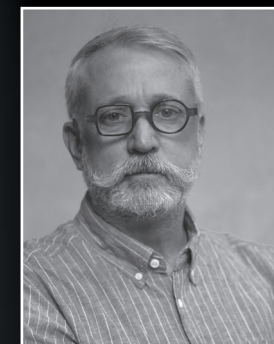


Benjamin Newhouse-Smith Singers Choral Captain

Ben trained in musical theatre at the Royal Academy of Music. The past year saw him in the chorus of The Pirates of Penzance and La Traviata for Opera Holland Park, also working as assistant to the choreographic team on the latter. Other previous singing work includes Carousel (Opera North) and HMS Pinafore (D'Oyly Carte Opera). He is also an aspiring director of opera, recently directing Count Ory (Opera Alegria) and assisting on Il segreto di Suzanna (Opera Holland Park).



THE CREATIVE TEAM



Colin Window Cast Manager

Australian born, Colin completed his studies at LAMDA. Having worked extensively in theatre and opera, he expanded his career to include university lecturing, cast, orchestral, company and international tour management, bringing the tally of countries visited professionally to over 60. During the complete lockdown of the Pandemic, Colin found himself to be the online face for mental health and wellness, for the European Union Youth Orchestra, self-publishing from his living room, garden or roof a daily one-minute pep-talk, seen across Europe.



Daniel Donaldson Todd Associate Choreographer

Daniel is an international award winning choreographer, this includes the prestigious Carl Alan award and two time winner of the Classique de Danse award for Theatre choreography. After many years of performing across the globe, Daniel now works internationally in all aspects of the industry. Choreographing many high profile shows across the world. In 2021 Daniel has been appointed as a Ballet and Theatre examiner for the Scottish dance teacher's alliance.



Laura Ergis Associate Costume Designer

Laura started her career at the Royal Opera House, from there she moved to the BBC and worked on many drama and light entertainment productions which include Keeping up Appearances, Eastenders, Hetty Wainthrop, and Dancin Through the Dark. Her film credits include The Golden Compass, Tarzan, Stan and Ollie, The Crown, Mamma Mia 'Here We Go Again' and Cats.



Jonathan Smith Music Orchestrator

Jonathan celebrates over 30 years on the show writing all the musical arrangements and orchestrations. A Norfolk lad from Gunthorpe, he completed 24 years service with the Coldstream Guards as a Band Sergeant Major before going on to prepare music for Andrew Lloyd Webber, Cameron Mackintosh and the John William's Star Wars Saga. Now based in the French Alps he publishes music, undertakes commissions, conducts and continues as an active soloist.



Mark Rogers Sound Designer and Engineer

Delighted to return to Thursford for the fourth time, Mark is a sound designer and engineer who enjoyed his early career at Abbey Road Studios. Current clients include the Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Dubai Expo, Nevill Holt Opera, Anything Goes (Barbican), Len Phillips Swing Orchestra, and Sheku and Isata Kanneh-Mason. Mark teaches sound engineering at Surrey University, and his recent book on classical recording techniques has won global recognition as the definitive guide.



Amy Southwick Singers Superswing and Choral Captain

Amy was born in Bradford. After completing 3 years on the Musical Theatre course at The Urdang Academy, Amy went on to study at the Royal Academy of Music. Since graduating Amy has had a varied career. Amy is part of the Vintage trio The Hoochie Toots. This is Amy's 12th season at Thursford, having spent the last Christmas season pulling pints in a local pub! Merry Christmas!



Karen Cull Production Manager

Following her training at the Guildhall, Karen has worked in the music industry for over 30 years as a professional singer performing throughout the world, including several wonderful seasons on the Thursford stage. She has also worked in film and television on several music projects as well as running events for The Jockey Club. Karen is absolutely delighted to be here for the 2021 season and wishes everyone a very Happy Christmas.



Angela Sheppard Associate Choreographer

Angela is thrilled to be joining Thursford this year as part of the creative team. Angela has been fortunate to have worked in all aspects of the Performing Arts as a dancer and choreographer. She has created works for numerous companies and events including Nintendo, Eurostar, Eristoff Vodka, TUI and Marella cruises. During the pandemic she joined the main casting team at BGT ITV and is looking forward to being assistant choreographer for the upcoming UK Tour of Footloose.



Phoebe Chambers Costume Supervisor

Phoebe studied at Rose Bruford College of Speech and Drama. Since graduating, Phoebe has supervised a number of regional theatre productions and tours, as well as making for the West End's Lion King. She has worked in the Thursford Wardrobe department for a number of years, and is pleased to return this year in a new role.



Elliot Launn AMD/Assistant Conductor

Born in Bournemouth, Elliot is an Accompanist and Tuba player based in London. Since graduating with a Joint Honours degree from the Royal College of Music in 2014, Elliot has spent his time flitting between the 2 instruments, and has performed with a number of Britain's leading orchestras. Having been involved at Thursford since 2017, Elliot is so excited to be back this season for his second year as AMD.



Craig Lemon Head Lighting Technician

Craig was brought up in Roughon just 19 miles from Thursford. He studied electrical engineering at Norwich City college before working in Holt for nearly twenty years. He joined the Thursford family three years ago and is responsible for all of the electrics onsite. Amongst other duties he and his team also rig and derig the millions of lights every festive season. Craig would like to thank emma his wife and his two boys for their love patience and support.



Dale Page Singers Superswing

Dale graduated from Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts with a First Class Honours Degree in Musical Theatre. Theatre Credits Include: Sweeney Todd, The Laramie Project, Spring Awakening, Lilies, Aladdin, West Side Story, HMS Pinafore and The Pirates of Penzance. Other Credits Include: BBC Proms, Volkswagen Tiguan, CONFUSED.COM and Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban. After lockdown, Dale is particularly thrilled and grateful to be returning to Thursford for his eighth year!

