OUT OF THE FOREST THEATRE
in association with
SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND
presents

THE BRIEF LIFE & MYSTERIOUS DEATH OF BORIS III, KING OF BULGARIA

BY **SASHA WILSON** & **JOSEPH CULLEN**

DIRECTED BY
HANNAH HAUER-KING



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THE BRIEF LIFE & MYSTERIOUS DEATH OF BORIS III, KING OF BULGARIA

BY **SASHA WILSON** & **JOSEPH CULLEN**
DIRECTED BY **HANNAH HAUER-KING**

— CAST —

Filov ..... LAWRENCE BOOTHMAN
Boris III ..... JOSEPH CULLEN
Gabrovski, Anka Lazarov ..... CLARE FRAENKEL
Belev, Metropolitan Stefan ..... DAVID LEOPOLD
Giovanna, Dannecker, Liliana Panitza ..... SASHA WILSON

— CREATIVE TEAM —

Writers ..... SASHA WILSON and JOSEPH CULLEN
Director & Dramaturg ..... HANNAH HAUER-KING
Lighting Designer ..... WILL ALDER
Set Designer ..... SORCHA CORCORAN
Design Associate ..... ALICE CARROLL
Costume Designer ..... HELEN STEWART
Music Consultant ..... DESSI STEFANOVA
Company Stage Manager ..... ZOË MacKINNON
Production Stage Manager ..... JOHN CONCANNON
Producer ..... CLAIRE GILBERT
Assistant Producer ..... LORRA VIDEV

Run time: 90 minutes with no intermission

ACTORS' EQUITY

* The Production Stage Manager is a member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.



History is made up of an infinite number of butterfly wings that wildly and wondrously influence our fate. This play would not exist if Joe and I hadn't found a biography of Boris III on O'papa's (my grandfather's) bookshelf in Cleveland, Ohio. That book would never have been there if he hadn't fled Bulgaria during the war or made a peripatetic journey through a ravaged Europe. This play wouldn't exist if he hadn't met Charlotte Verosta, my O'mama, in an internment camp in Trieste, Italy. You wouldn't be reading this if they hadn't married and had such a raucous wedding party that they damaged the walls of the barracks in which they were living. If the bits of silver they discovered amongst the rubble twisted up in tissue paper hadn't been enough to buy each other wedding rings and passage to the States, you might very well be here tonight at 59E59 Theaters to watch a production of ***Our Town*** instead. There's a fantastic Scottish expression "what's for you won't go by you," and we are here in New York City, able to share this incredible story with you because a lot of very specific things happened in a very particular way. It wasn't preordained per se, but there is meaning in how it all unfolded. The Bulgarians call this късмет. I wanted to share my profound gratitude to everyone who has been even a small (but not inconsequential) part of this story, both then and now.

- Sasha Wilson, Playwright

SASHA WILSON

(Co-writer / Giovanna, Dannecker, Liliana Panitsa)



Sasha is a Bulgarian-American LAMDA-trained actor. Recent credits include: ***A Christmas Carol*** (Taunton Brewhouse), ***Noises Off*** (Beck Center for the Arts), ***The Tempest*** (Shakespeare in the Squares), ***The Mechanicals Present: Julius Caesar or Macbeth*** (UK tour). Winner of BroadwayWorld Award for Best Actress in a Play for ***Romeo and Juliet*** (Southwest Shakespeare Company) in 2018. Alongside her theater work, Sasha works as a story scout for the podcast Spooked! For Out Of The Forest Theatre: ***Bury The Hatchet*** (UK & US tour), ***Call Me Fury*** (VAULT Festival, North Wall, Hope Theatre), and ***Louisa & Jo (& Me)*** (Golden Goose). Sasha is also the artistic director of Out Of The Forest Theatre.

JOSEPH CULLEN

(Co-writer / Boris III)



Joseph Cullen is an actor, writer and producer from South Somerset; his love for theater began at a young age with amateur dramatics and community shows. Recent credits include: ***The Darklings*** (VAULT Festival); ***Alice's Adventures Underground, The Game's Afoot*** (Les Enfants Terribles); ***Twelfth Night, The Three Musketeers*** (Southwest Shakespeare Company). Joseph's first one-man show ***You Having Olaf?*** won Best Newcomer at VAULT Festival. Joseph is also the executive producer of Out Of The Forest Theatre.

LAWRENCE BOOTHMAN
(Filov)



Lawrence studied at the Music School of Douglas Academy in Milngavie and holds an MA in Acting from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Recent credits include: ***Jack*** (Òran Mór/Traverse Theatre/Macrobert Arts Centre), ***Ode To Joy (How Gordon got to go to the Nasty pig party)*** (Sydney Festival), ***The Devil Drinks Cava*** (Òran Mór), ***Julius Caesar*** (Scottish Tour), ***The Odyssey*** (The Scoop), and ***Incident At Vichy*** (Finborough Theatre).

CLARE FRAENKEL
(Gabrovski, Anka Lazarov)



Clare studied English at Bristol University, then trained at Drama Studio London. An actor, puppeteer, and writer, her autobiographical show is entitled ***I Was A German***. Recent credits include: ***I Was A German*** (VAULT Festival, nominated for Off West End Award), ***Against Democracy*** (Arcola), ***Girl with The Iron Claws*** (Soho Theatre & tour), ***Wolves of Willoughby Chase*** (UK tour), ***Rough Music*** (Kings Head), ***The Borrowers*** (Haymarket Basingstoke), ***The Rivals*** (UK tour), and multiple productions and tours for Polka Theatre and Oxford Shakespeare Company. Screen credits include: *This Is Going to Hurt* (BBC), *Magic Mike's Last Dance* (Warner Bros).

DAVID LEOPOLD
(Belev, Metropolitan Stefan)



David trained at LAMDA. Upon graduating, David was selected for the Graduate Actors Scheme at Leeds Playhouse. Recent credits include: ***Late Company*** (Trafalgar Studios/Finborough Theatre), ***Burnt Part Boys*** (Park Theatre), ***Little Sure Shot*** (The Egg Theatre); ***Uncle Vanya***, ***The Crucible*** (Leeds Playhouse). For Out Of The Forest Theatre: ***Bury The Hatchet*** (Hope Theatre), ***Louisa & Jo (& Me)*** (Golden Goose). Screen credits include: *The Angel* (Netflix). Also a singer/songwriter, David released his debut EP *Lost On Abbotswood* in 2023. David is the associate artist of Out Of The Forest Theatre.

HANNAH HAUER-KING
(Director/Dramaturg)

Hannah is a director and dramaturg, with a focus on new writing, LGBTQIA+ work, and musicals. She is artistic director of theater company Damsel Productions, and currently works as resident director at the National Theatre Studio. Recent directing credits include: ***The Swell*** (Orange Tree, Olivier Award-nominated); ***The Ministry of Lesbian Affairs***, ***Fabric***, ***Fury*** (Soho Theatre); ***The Funeral Director*** (Southwark Playhouse/ETT UK tour), ***The Amber Trap*** (Theatre 503), ***Dry Land*** (Jermyn Street Theatre). For Out Of The Forest Theatre: ***Call Me Fury*** (Hope Theatre), ***Louisa & Jo (& Me)*** (Golden Goose). Associate/assistant credits include: ***The Wife of Willesden*** (Kiln Theatre, BAM & ART), ***Romeo & Juliet*** (Shakespeare's Globe), ***Daytona*** (Park Theatre, Theatre Royal Haymarket).

WILL ALDER
(Lighting Designer)

Will enjoys a busy portfolio career as a lighting designer and producer. He has previously worked at the Barbican, Oxford Playhouse, Battersea Arts Centre, on tour throughout the United Kingdom, and internationally. Recent designs include: ***Dick Whittington*** (Esher Theatre), ***Robin Hood*** (Applecart Arts); ***Gentlemen***, ***In Other Words*** (Arcola Theatre); ***Gabriel*** (Barbican Concert Hall). For Out Of The Forest Theatre: ***Bury The Hatchet*** (VAULT Festival, Hope Theatre), ***Call Me Fury*** (VAULT Festival, Northwall). In 2022, he renovated the Passmore Edwards Building in East London, turning it into a theater and arts space for Applecart Arts where he is producer. Member of the Association for Lighting Production and Design.

SORCHA CORCORAN
(Set Designer)

Sorcha is a five-time Off West End Award-nominated set and costume designer. Recent credits include ***Anna Karenina***, ***Her Naked Skin*** (Rose Bruford College); ***Hot Orange***, ***Grandad***

Anansi (Half Moon Theatre); ***The Changeling***, ***On the Other Side of the War***, ***Hamlet***, ***Dr Faustus***, ***Salome*** (Southwark Playhouse); ***Lear***, ***The Replacement Child***, ***Vagina Cake*** (Hope Mill Theatre), ***Papercut*** (Park Theatre), ***Variation and Buckets*** (Egg Theatre), ***Agrippina*** (Hampstead Garden Opera), ***Closure*** (HOME), ***Edward II*** (Lazarus Theatre), ***Baby Box*** (York Theatre Royal), ***Fever Pitch*** (Hope Theatre), ***How To Find Your Name*** (English Touring Opera), ***Khojaly*** (Union Theatre).

ALICE CARROLL

(Design Associate)

Recent credits as design associate: ***Home, I'm Darling*** (Frinton Summer Theatre), ***Lear*** (Hope Mill Theatre), ***I Wish My Life Was Like a Musical*** (Wiltons Music Hall), ***The Changeling*** (Southwark Playhouse), ***Ten in the Bed*** (Half Moon Theatre). Theater designer credits: ***The Light Trail*** (costume, Hope Theatre), ***Astoria*** (costume, Brockley Jack), ***Agrippina*** (costume, Jacksons Lane), ***Can't See For Looking*** (set, Oxford Fire Station/Cockpit), ***The Dumb Waiter and A Slight Ache, Vincent River*** (set and costume, Greenwich Theatre), ***Robin Hood*** (set and costume, Applecart Arts).

HELEN STEWART

(Costume Designer)

Helen Stewart is a costume designer who spends her summers designing for theater and opera, and the winters making period costumes. She trained at Angles and the Northern College of Costume. Previous employers include American Shakespeare Theatre, Glyndebourne, and Apple TV. For Out of the Forest Theatre: ***Call Me Fury*** (VAULT Festival, Hope Theatre).

ZOË MacKINNON

(Company Stage Manager)

Zoë is a 2023 graduate of The Bristol Old Vic Theatre School where she specialized in stage management. Recent credits include: ***Cable Street*** (Southwark Playhouse), ***Pandemonium*** (Soho Theatre), ***Once on this Island*** (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre), ***42nd Street*** (Upstairs at the Gatehouse). For Out of the Forest Theatre: ***Louisa & Jo (& Me)*** (Golden Goose).

JOHN CONCANNON

(Production Stage Manager)

Recent: ***Fifth Avenue, A Jazz Musical Comedy*** (Don't Tell Mama) and ***Eisenhower: This Piece of Ground*** (Theatre at St. Clement's with John Rubinstein). New York credits include: ***The Waltz of the Stork*** with Melvin van Peebles, ***Two's A Crowd*** with Rita Rudner, ***The Freak***, ***It's Hard to be a Jew***. ASM on ***Freedom Rider*** at Alabama Shakespeare Festival and Crossroads Theatre Company. He stage managed several shows at Lucille Lortel's White Barn Theater and was the production supervisor of the gala name change of the Theatre de Lys to the Lucille Lortel Theatre. Lifetime member of The Stage Managers' Association, a member of Actors' Equity Association and served his country as a combat infantryman in the Republic of Vietnam.

CLAIRE GILBERT

(Producer)

Claire is an international independent theater producer who makes art for social change. She produces and co-runs political company British-Romanian BĒZNĂ Theatre (***wipe these tears***, ***The People's Tribunal on Crimes of Aggression Afghanistan Sessions***, ***ILLEGALISED***), and Claire Gilbert Ltd (***In Her Strength, The Axiom of Choice***). She works with Bulgarian artist Lora Krasteva to deliver ***Becoming***, a series of multi-art-form residencies in UK, Czech Republic, Germany, and Romania, and has also produced for companies including Cardboard Citizens, Deafinitely Theatre, and Wayward Productions. She has worked with venues including National Theatre, Royal Court, and Barbican Centre for Complicité. For Out Of The Forest she has produced ***Louisa & Jo (& Me)***, ***Call Me Fury***, ***Bury The Hatchet***.

SPECIAL THANKS

The team at 59E59 Theaters, Arcola Theatre, The Bulgarian Embassy in London, Arts Council England, US Embassy, Kyril of Saxe-Coburg & Katharine Butler, Boris Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Dessi Stefanova, Anthony Alderson & Nic Connaughton, Pleasance Theatre, Chloe Nelkin PR, VAULT Festival London, Suzanna Rosenthal, Charlotte Lund, Jennifer Amey, Judith Dimant,

Nancy Stewart, Stage One, Riverside Studios, James Bulgin and the Imperial War Museum, Tristan Tull and Regents Park University, Hugh Edwards and Reigate Grammar School, Steve Dykes and Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance, Paul Anderson and Sparks Theatrical Hires, Althea Theatre, Callan McCarthy and Methuen Drama, Becky Bainbridge, Holly Ellis, Françoise Davis, Axel Veerkamp, Aydan Wilder, Will McLeod, Debra Hauer and Westminster Synagogue, Eliana Ostro, Geargin Wilson, Christina Gelev, Tom Williams, Rosie Bauer, Brian Williams, Carolyn Williams, Helen Gilbert, Paul Gilbert, Louise & Matt Phillips, Abi Matthews, Callum Patrick Hughes, David Shopland, Georgia Harris, John Wakefield, Zdravka Momcheva, and Wassil Rascheeff.

OUT OF THE FOREST THEATRE

Out Of The Forest Theatre is a multi-award winning ensemble-based company. We take misremembered or forgotten stories from history, set them to live folk music, and tell them through a lens to better understand today. Irreverently presented, knee-slapping, historical theatre with a modern revisionist twist. Previous productions include ***Bury The Hatchet*** (winner of Best Ensemble at Off West End Awards), ***Call Me Fury*** (winner of Alchymy Award), ***Louisa & Jo (& Me)***.

The company was founded in 2018 by Sasha Wilson, Joseph Cullen, and Claire Gilbert. In 2023 they appointed David Leopold as their first associate artist.

www.outoftheforesttheatre.com

@outoftheforesttheatre

@OutOfThe_Forest

"Out Of The Forest has managed to navigate an ensemble of heavy topics with haste humour and honesty. The history of Bulgaria during WWII was anything but simple and yet Sasha, Joseph and the team masterfully make BORIS III easy to follow and difficult to ignore.

Their awards and merits are well deserved for the people they are and the effort they have made. This story, being brought back to life, and the story of every character should be told far and wide. I am excited to continue to follow their trajectory and I know the story will touch many."

- HRH Prince Boris of Bulgaria, Boris III's great-grandson

"Whether a jazz fan, a history buff or just someone who loves gripping real-life stories, this is a must see."

- HRH Prince Kyril of Bulgaria, Boris III's grandson











OUR MISSION

59E59 Theaters was established by the Elysabeth Kleinhans Theatrical Foundation in 2004 to grant professional space and expertise to non-profit theater companies premiering their work in New York City. Under the leadership of Val Day, Artistic Director, and Brian Beirne, Managing Director, 59E59 Theaters presents a year-round curated program of Off Broadway plays and musicals that are nurtured and supported through rent-free spaces, as well as production, ticketing, FOH, marketing, and press support.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

59E59 Theaters reside on the traditional homelands of the Lenni-Lenape People on the Lenape Island of Mannahatta. We acknowledge the Lenni-Lenape as the original people of the land who were forcefully removed during colonization resulting in erased and excluded peoples and culture. We are grateful for the opportunity to work on the land and honor their elders, past and present alongside future generations for their stewardship and continuing relationship with their territory.

This presentation is not a production of the Elysabeth Kleinhans Theatrical Foundation, Inc., which offers its facilities, when available, for productions by not-for-profit theater companies. For further information regarding licensing this theater or other theaters in this Theater Building, contact Brian Beirne, Managing Director. The use of cameras and other recording devices in the Theater is prohibited by law. There is no smoking in this Theater or any part of the Theater Building.

CURATOR'S NOTE

Out Of The Forest Theatre makes it their mission to "always start with something true," taking overlooked stories from history and filling them with new life, invention, and irreverence in a unique brand of historical theater that educates as much as it entertains.

Joseph Cullen and Sasha Wilson's show hooked me from the first minute when I saw it in Edinburgh last summer. The inventiveness of the writing in how it handles its serious subject with irreverent aplomb and the musical talent of the cast are unlike anything I've seen before.



Val

VAL DAY
Artistic Director,
59E59 Theaters

59E59 THEATERS STAFF

Founding Artistic Director
ELYSABETH KLEINHANS

Artistic Director
VAL DAY

Managing Director
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ANNA BONGARDINO
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