



**Craig Edwards**

As a director Craig's work includes:

The Last Voyage of Sinbad the Sailor (Tobacco Factory), Mother Savage, The Mysterious Vanishment Of Pobby & Dingan (Travelling Light), Penetrator (Bristol Old Vic), Romeo & Juliet (Bath Theatre Royal Storm On The Lawn), Danny King Of The Basement (M6 Theatre Co), The Nothing Show (Nothing Productions).

He has also worked extensively as an actor (he was the dog in Jane Eyre), but Howard and Stu said there wasn't room to list all the things he's been in.

He is co-founder of Shoofly Theatre with Designer Katie Sykes.

Written & Performed by  
Stu McLoughlin & Howard Coggins  
Directed by Craig Edwards  
Choreography by Anna Croxson



**Howard Coggins**

Howard's theatre work includes:

Peter Pan, Treasure Island, Short Fuses, Around the World in 80 Days, Alice's Adventures In Wonderland, Beasts & Beauties, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Up The Feeder Down The Mouth, Babes In the Wood, Jack & The Beanstalk, Aladdin, The Great Big Story Mix Up, Myrtle On The Mainline (Bristol Old Vic), The Wind in the Willows, Treasure Island (Watermill), The Lion The Witch and The Wardrobe (West Yorkshire Playhouse), Aladdin, Jack and the Beanstalk (Watford Palace), Cinderella (Roses, Tewkesbury), City of One (Myrtle Theatre Company), The Magic Carpet (Lyric Hammersmith), The Wizard Of Oz (Hall For Cornwall), Aladdin (Reading Hexagon), Elsie & Norm's Macbeth (Show Of Strength), Still Waters (Theatre Gwent), Aladdin (Cheltenham Everyman), A Midsummer Night's Dream, Watchers Of The Night Sky (Theatre Iolo)

He has also appeared many times on the telly, and occasionally in films.

Howard also works with the Bristol based comedy improvisation show, Instant Wit.



**Stu McLoughlin**

Stu trained at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama where he won a Carleton Hobbs Radio Bursary award and subsequently spent six months working for the BBC as part of the radio drama company.

Theatre work includes:  
The Odyssey (Bristol Old Vic & Lyric Hammersmith), Coram Boy (National Theatre), A Matter of Life And Death (National Theatre & Kneehigh), Brief Encounter (Kneehigh West End & USA tour), Peter Pan, Swallows and Amazons, Suspension (Bristol Old Vic), The Wild Bride (Kneehigh Asylum, UK tour, Berkely Rep, New Zealand International Arts Festival).

Television and film work includes:  
Waking The Dead, Little Dorritt, Trevor Island, Clone, Elizabeth: The Golden Age, The Deep Blue Sea and Made In Dagenham.

He is also the Musical Director and Composer for Shanty Theatre Company, and has composed music for Smugglers, Rebel Harbour, A Rat's Tale, The Salty Socks of Dunkirk, as well as co-writer and composer for The Rime of the Ancient Mariner and The Story Giant.

# Living Spit

# ADOLF & WINSTON



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# A Brief History of Living Spit

Living Spit is the longest-running producing theatre company in the world, currently comprising the sixth generation of a partnership stretching back to 1862 when well known actor-manager and owner of the now-defunct Pavillion Theatre in Burnham-on Sea, Thaddeus Coggins, had a chance meeting with "Mad" Willie McLoughlin when the latter tried to pick the former's pocket on the concourse at Weston-super-Mare Station. McLoughlin was on the run from the authorities after escaping from the nearby lunatic asylum in Banwell. As a well-known philanthropist and Colonel in the Salvation Army, Coggins took pity on him, smuggling him into the theatre under cover of darkness in a mail-sack he'd been keeping for just such an occasion. Inviting him into his home for a wash and a shave, Coggins noticed that, between McLoughlin's burbling and barely coherent ravings, he had an extraordinary singing voice and a talent for mimicry of a quality that he



Cornelius Edwards pictured in 1885 shortly after inventing the Filofax™

had never come across in that corner of rural Somerset. Despite having, on the face of it, very little in common, and with McLoughlin's unorthodox appearance and behaviour causing some embarrassment to the other members of the Coggins family, particularly when members of the local Clergy were present, the two men became firm friends. McLoughlin's talents were

encouraged, and under the direction of local teacher and keen amateur musician Cornelius Edwards, within three months the pair were ready to unveil their first production, a two-man version of Homer's



Thaddeus Coggins, pictured with his fourth wife (and mother of Jeremiah), Constance. They separated seven minutes after this photo was taken.

Odyssey, with Coggins playing Odysseus and McLoughlin playing all the other parts. The show was a moderate success playing a short tour of venues in the north of the county, but was not received well by the press (the Weston Mercury describing the show as "shit") but the trio were undeterred, embarking on a thirty-year career together, producing 42 two-man shows including all of Shakespeare's histories and a dramatisation of Milton's "Paradise Lost". The run only ended when Coggins was hit by a runaway hansom cab during the duo's run of "The Relapse" at the Criterion. Fortunately Thaddeus's son, Jeremiah, was staying with his father in London at the time, and took over that evening avoiding the need for an expensive cancellation. Following Willie's death from liver failure in 1902, his son, Cyrus and Jeremiah, along with Cornelius's nephew, Eugene, joined forces and decided to explore the theatre of the far east, sailing for Shanghai on the 17th September 1904.

There the trail goes rather cold for three decades, although we do know that the trio toured extensively through Asia Major and Minor including a very successful two year run in Papua New Guinea with their two-man version of

William Wycherley's "The Country Wife", where Cyrus McLoughlin is still revered as a god.

We pick up the scent again in 1930 when Coggins and McLoughlin's sons, Cecil and Jeremiah Jr, along with Cornelius's pregnant daughter, Eliza, arrived at Ellis Island for processing pending their arrival in the United States. The father of Eliza's baby, Harold, is unrecorded, but all through his life, people commented on his physical similarity to his mother's colleague, Cecil McLoughlin. The trio were early co-founders of the Group Theatre alongside Lee Strasberg, Harold Clurman and Cheryl Crawford, a fact which is often left out of Strasberg histories, due to a falling out over the optimum quantity of pickled gherkin in a pastrami bagel in 1932. Following this, the company was shunned by the New York theatre scene and embarked on a series of tours of the American midwest with what was billed as an "erotic cabaret". Quite what this consisted of goes unrecorded, but it is safe to say that this marked a low point in the company's fortunes.

Perhaps because of this, there is little recorded history of the next 2 generations of "The Living Spit", as they had, by this point become known, but by the late sixties they pop up in the North-East of England touring

village halls in Cleveland with a two-man version of "Macbeth". This was one of the most popular pieces in the company's canon and was astonishingly still in their repertoire in 1975 when

Steve Coggins, Cecil's grandson, and financial controller of the company took a sabbatical to become one of the founders of Gay Sweatshop, only returning when the other founder members discovered that he'd lied about his sexuality.

The following years were salad days for the company, quite literally in at least one case, as their two-man version of "Salad Days" ran for two years in the West End. Of Peterborough.

This brings us up to date, with the current incarnation of Living Spit (the definite article having been shed after a long discussion over three pints of Thatchers and a bag of Prawn Cocktail crisps in a pub in Blagdon), the Great-Great-Great-Grandsons of the original trio.

All three men have been involved in side projects during their time with the company, with Craig Edwards working extensively as an actor and director including the Olivier-nominated Cinderella and also running another company, Shoofly. Stu McLoughlin has worked extensively with Kneehigh and at the Bristol Old Vic and also plays with his band, the Zu Zu Men. Howard Coggins has also appeared many times at the Bristol Old Vic, most recently with Stu in Peter Pan, and is sometimes on the telly.

## Many Thanks to

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