



WAR OF THE WORLDS

A retelling of H.G. Wells's classic novel by
IMITATING THE DOG

PROGRAMME

SUPPORTED BY LANCASTER ARTS AND CAST, DONCASTER



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@imitatingthedog
imitatingthedog.co.uk

DIRECTORS' NOTE

H. G. Wells's novel *The War of the Worlds* (1898) has been on the company's radar for some time. In previous years, we shied away from staging an adaptation because, in our discussions, we always arrived at the problem of how we would 'do' the Martians. Wells's comprehensive representation of the catastrophe that unfolds because of alien invasion also felt like a huge challenge. In short, how could we do justice to the magisterial sweep of the novel and to the symbolic and wider political elements of Wells's vision.

As we write this, we are in the middle point of our rehearsals, and like the making process in all our adaptations, we are in the welter of problem solving each day. We started off playing with the concept of making a film live on stage. This move to the cinema solved certain problems for us – we could use the cinematic to stage some of the epic moments in the novel and it allowed us to present the Martian presence through the lens of shock and inference, through partial showing and tense-making revelation. It also gave us a framework for creating stage pictures as performers act as camera people and characters, using the trickery of models, props and camera angles to tell a complex story. We have had a lot of fun creating the piece and we hope the humour and energy of our process shine through to our audiences.

This turn to the cinematic and its languages is not merely formal. It also ties our interrogation of Wells's vision of the breakdown of human society to the wider question of how we engage with media to understand how we situate ourselves in the world. Screens, in all their formats, shape how we think, interact and make decisions. As the novelist Don DeLillo observed:

[Film] is more than the twentieth-century art. It's another part of the twentieth-century mind. It's the world seen from inside.¹

¹Don DeLillo, *The Names* (New York: Knopf, 1982), p.200.

DIRECTORS' NOTE

In this sense, the cinematic is a device through which we can get into the mindset of our central protagonist, Will Travers, as he not only faces up to the Martians and the devastation that they unleash but also to the realisation that he and his beliefs have conjured up the world that is disintegrating before him. For us as theatre makers, as I hope you will see and enjoy in the following performance, the cinematic is not just the representation of an image but also a staging of how the image is constructed. Our central protagonist has made the world, and our staging reveals that he must suffer the consequences of this construction.

When we began working on our adaptation, we learned that Wells had been responding to the invasion literature of the late nineteenth century, to the devastating results of colonial acquisition of lands on indigenous peoples, and to the terrifying technological developments in modern warfare. He claimed the novel had an element of irony and satire that drew from the writing of Jonathan Swift, and we have attempted to incorporate some of these traits in our own version.

There seem to be so many unsettling connections between the novel and current anxieties and realities and these have directly fed into the show you are about to witness. Our *War of the Worlds* is set in 1968 because, as a company, we always like a bit of critical and historical distance. And although framed by the 1960s it is, like all history plays, an exploration of our contemporary condition. We hope you enjoy our staging and radical retelling of Wells's original. Although we have changed many things, we have attempted to follow elements of the novel's structure and events, drawing heavily on Wells's sensibility to tell a story that we feel is important today.

Many thanks for coming to see the show.

Andrew Quick, Simon Wainwright and Pete Brooks.

ABOUT IMITATING THE DOG

“imitating the dog’s three artistic co-directors... magicking together technology and live performance, create spectacular, innovative theatre, as dramatically forceful and thought-provoking as it is entertaining.”

Clare Brennan, *The Guardian*

imitating the dog have been making ground-breaking work for theatres, outdoor festivals, events and other spaces for 25 years, and their productions and installations have been seen by hundreds of thousands of people across the world.

Led by Artistic Directors Pete Brooks, Andrew Quick and Simon Wainwright, the work fuses live performance with film and projection technologies, showcasing stories from a new perspective and asking audiences to see things from a different angle – often literally!

Past theatre productions include *Hotel Methusalah*, *A Farewell to Arms*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Night of The Living Dead™ - Remix*, *Dracula: The Untold Story*, *Macbeth*, *Frankenstein* and *All Blood Runs Red*. Recent installation projects and site-specific installations include *Homeward* for Selby Light, *Dear Joan...* for Light Up Lancaster, *All Change* for S&DR200 Festival, *Otherham* Winter Light Festival and immersive sociological installation *The City Off the Map* in Cali, Colombia.

In 2022, the company staged *Cinema Inferno*, a groundbreaking presentation of Maison Margiela and John Galliano’s haute couture show as part of Paris fashion week.

imitating the dog enjoy collaborating with other artists, sharing their creative processes with students and practitioners and engaging with communities in workshops and productions, and working with developing artists.

ABOUT IMITATING THE DOG

Artistic Directors

Andrew Quick, Pete Brooks, Simon Wainwright

Executive Director

Julie Brown

Chair of the Board

David Dolan Martin





All Blood Runs Red (2025)



Macbeth (2023)

STAY IN TOUCH

Follow us on Facebook  and Instagram  at [@imitatingthedog](https://www.instagram.com/imitatingthedog) for the latest news on upcoming projects and opportunities to get involved.

You can also receive monthly updates from the company direct to your inbox by signing up for the imitating the dog newsletter at imitatingthedog.co.uk

WHERE TO WATCH

There are recordings of past theatre productions and projection-mapping installations available to watch for FREE at imitatingthedog.co.uk/work

FEEDBACK

We greatly appreciate your feedback. Keep an eye out for surveys from your venue and let us know what you think via email or social media:

  [@imitatingthedog](https://www.instagram.com/imitatingthedog)
 thedog@imitatingthedog.co.uk



War of the Worlds (2026)

ON STAGE

BONNIE BADDOO performer

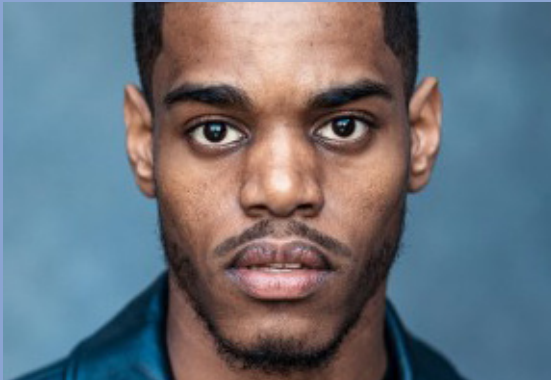


Bonnie trained at Bristol Old Vic. Her theatre work includes Ian Rickson's *All Of Us* at the National with feature work in *Time Is Up* for Amazon alongside Bella Thorne.

In television her most recent work includes the role of Tess in *Alex Rider* for Eleventh Hour Films as well as *Hijack* for Apple TV and series 2 of *The Capture* for the BBC.

Bonnie voices the role of Lottie Summers in beloved BBC Radio 4 series *The Archers*.

MORGAN BAILEY performer



Morgan has cultivated an exciting and varied career over the last 10 years, working on screen in many genres across feature film and television. Screen credits include: *Funny Woman*, *Coronation Street*, *Emmerdale*, *In The Dark*. Most recently Morgan appeared in a French film, *Along Came Love*, set in World War Two.

Alongside acting, he has also flexed his muscles as a writer, producer and director. This will be his fourth theatre show with imitating the dog, and he is excited to be working with the team on another dynamic and groundbreaking production.

ON STAGE

GARETH CASSIDY performer



Theatre credits include: *The Snow Queen*, *Wizard of Oz*, *The Hobbit*, *Hansel & Gretel*, *Life & Times of Mitchell and Kenyon*, *Christmas Carol* (The Dukes Lancaster), *Kinky Boots* (Storyhouse), *Three Musketeers*, *Ladies Day*, *Astley's Astounding Adventures*, *The 39 Steps* (New Vic), *Marvellous* (New Vic/@sohoplace), *Spring & Port Wine* (Oldham Coliseum), *Vincent in Brixton*, *She Stoops to Conquer* (Theatre by the Lake), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Salisbury Playhouse), *Heidi*, *We Are Three Sisters* (Northern Broadsides), *Hard Times* (Library Theatre).

TV credits include: *Brassic* (Sky), *South Riding* (BBC), *The Great Train Robbery* (World Productions), *Curfew* (Tiger Aspect/Sky) and Elton John in *Ten Days That Rocked Elton* (Channel 5).

AMY DUNN performer



Theatre includes: *Edward II* (RSC), *Hushabye Mountain* (Hope Mill Theatre), *Turn of the Screw* (UK Tour), *Rupert Street Lonely Hearts Club* (Above the Stag), *Clickbait* (Theatre 503), *Chatroom* (Arcola)

Television includes: *Stonehouse* (ITV), *Dickensian* (BBC), *Tracey Ullman's Show* (BBC), *Doctors* (BBC) and *Holby City* (BBC).

Radio includes: *His Dark Materials* (BBC).

Trained at: Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

CREATIVE TEAM



imitating the dog

SIMON WAINWRIGHT

itd co-artistic director

Simon is a theatre maker, musician, visual artist and one of imitating the dog's three artistic directors. He formed the company after leaving Lancaster University and has been centrally involved in every production since, specialising in the last 10 years as a video and visual designer. As a freelance designer he has worked on many productions including *Derren Brown's Miracle*, *Lanark* at The Citizen's Theatre, the touring musical *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and Complicité's *The Kid Stays in the Picture* at the Royal Court. As a musician he is a member of Hope and Social, a band who define themselves by their inclusive community projects. They have released six studio albums and toured extensively.

CREATIVE TEAM

PETE BROOKS

itd co-artistic director

After graduating from Leeds University, Pete founded the ground-breaking Impact Theatre Cooperative. Notable productions include *The Carrier Frequency* (1984). Pete has directed several award-winning productions including *Imitation of Life* (1987) with Claire Macdonald and *L'Ascensore* (1992), *Clair de Luz* (1993) and *Peepshow* (1997)

In 2004 Pete began working with imitating the dog, initially as a collaborator on a single project, *Hotel Methuselah*, and subsequently as one of the Artistic Directors. In 2012 Pete co-wrote/devised *Soul Sister* with John Miller (nominated for an Olivier Award for Best New Musical). More recently, he has directed opera for Teatro delle Muse, Ancona. Pete also teaches Performance Design and Practice at Central St.Martin's, London.

ANDREW QUICK

itd co-artistic director

Andrew is a founder member of imitating the dog and, with Pete Brooks, he has written and directed *Hotel Methuselah* (2006), *Kellerman* (2008), *Six Degrees Below the Horizon* (2011), *The Zero Hour* (2012), *A Farewell to Arms* (2014), *The Train* (2016), *Nocturnes* (2017), *Heart of Darkness* (2018), *Night of the Living Dead™ - Remix* (2020), *Dr Blood's Old Travelling Show* (2020), *Dracula: the Untold Story* (2021), *Cinema Inferno* (2022) *Macbeth* (2023), *Frankenstein* (2024) and *All Blood Runs Red* (2025).

Andrew taught at the University of Lancaster (1991-2025) where he is currently Professor Emeritus. He has written widely on performance and the creative arts including *The Wooster Group Work Book* (2007).

ABBY CLARKE

set and costume design

Abby is a designer and practitioner working across theatre, live performance and installation. She was a finalist at the 2024 Offie awards for both Set and Costume Design, was nominated as 'Best Designer' for the The Stage Debut Awards 2019, and was a finalist in the 2017 Linbury Prize for Stage Design.

Recent design credits include: *A Symphony of Flesh and Bones* (Manchester International Festival), *All Change* (imitating the dog), *In the Ruins of the Big House* (Factory International), *The Jolly Christmas Postman* (Royal & Derngate), *Beauty and the Beast* (Albany Theatre), *Unfortunate* (UK Tour), *Road* (Leicester Curve).

ANDREW CROFTS

lighting design

Andrew Crofts is a Lighting and Video Designer who has worked with imitating the dog since 2005. With a background in live art and contemporary performance, Andrew works across theatre, dance and opera with companies and artists including Jasmin Vardimon Company, Nigel and Louise, Thunder Road, Malandra Jacks, Jaz Woodcock-Stewart and Blast Theory. Andrew is an Associate Practitioner with imitating the dog.

JAMES HAMILTON

composer & co-sound design

James is a composer, arranger, trumpet player and educator. He studied jazz performance and composition at Leeds College of Music. He has written and released three albums with the James Hamilton Jazz Orchestra and his work has been recognised through a British Composers award and Ivor Novello nomination. He is a member of Leeds bands Hope and Social and Back Chat Brass.

James is an associate practitioner with imitating the dog and has worked as a composer and musical director on various site-specific works and theatre productions for the company over the past 10 years.

RORY HOWSON

co-sound design & technician

Now a Project Manager with Atom Herders, providing creative design and build engineering across the events industry, Rory has worked internationally across theatre, festivals, events and touring for over 15 years, gaining a breadth of knowledge and experience.

He is an Associate Practitioner with imitating the dog, working with them as both Technical Manager and Sound Designer since 2014 on several productions including *The Train*, *Storm From Paradise*, *Dracula: The Untold Story*, *Macbeth*, *Frankenstein* and *Cinema Inferno*. Other credits of note include Production Manager for Tin Drum and Technical Manager & Sound Engineer for *Old Stock: A Refugee Love Story*.

DAVI CALLANAN

video associate

Theatre credits include Video Design for *Wrestle Lads Wrestle* (Battersea Arts Center and UK Tour), *The Accountants* (Factory International), *Blizzard* (Soho Theatre), and *Coppergate Woman* (York Theatre Royal), plus Co-Video Design for *Macbeth: Retold* (Leeds Playhouse, UK Tour). As Associate Video Designer, work includes *In Dreams* (Leeds Playhouse, Ed Mirvish Toronto), *Next To Normal* (Donmar Warehouse, Wyndhams Theatre), and UK tours of *Hairspray*, *Derren Brown Showman*, *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory*, and *Night of The Living Dead*. Film work includes directing *To Miss the Ending* (idontloveyouanymore), which was selected for Sundance Film Festival. Davi is also the co-creative director for idontloveyouanymore.

ELLIE COLLYER-BRISTOW CDG

casting director

For imitating the dog, Ellie has previously cast *Frankenstein & Macbeth*. Other recent credits include *Witness For the Prosecution* (London County Hall), *A Christmas Carol* (Octagon), *(the) Woman*, *Antigone on Strike & 23.5 Hours* (Park Theatre), *Romeo & Juliet* (Liverpool Everyman), *Death and the King's Horseman* and *The Hypochondriac* (Sheffield Crucible), *Little Women* (York Theatre Royal), *Alice in Wonderland*, *Welfare* and *A Christmas Carol* (Derby Theatre), *Murder at Midnight*, *The Shark is Broken*, *And Then There Were None*, *Birdsong*, *The Mirror Cracked*, *The Swearing Jar*, *Dusty*, *The Croft*, *A Splinter of Ice*, *The Night Watch* (all UK tours), *Elvis Evolution*, *The War of the Worlds*, *The Gunpowder Plot*, *Plied* and *Prejudice* (immersive productions).

OFF STAGE

MATT CARNAZZA

production manager

Matt trained at Rose Bruford College in Lighting Design specialises in lighting for theatre, dance, and touring productions. Production Management experience includes working with: *imitating the dog*, *Jasmin Vardimon Company*, and *Sadler's Wells*.

Associate lighting design, Relighter, and programmer experience includes: *Macbeth* (imitating the dog), *Restless Natives* (Leith Theatre), *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (Birmingham Rep), *NYDC* (Sadler's Wells), *Now* (UK Tour, JVC), *The Clothes They Stood Up In* (Nottingham Playhouse), *ALiCE* (UK tour, JVC), *Young Associates* (Sadler's Wells), *You Bury Me* (Bristol Old Vic, Paines Plough), *Force of Nature* (International Tour, Bloom Dance Project), *Shock Horror* (UK Tour, Thunder Road).

HELEN FAGELMAN

company stage manager

With 35 years of experience in the industry, Helen has worked across a wide range of theatrical genres — from circus and outdoor performance to musicals, drama, opera, and ballet. In 2025, she was Company Stage Manager for *Animal Farm*, a national tour produced by the Octagon, Bolton, CSM for *Hamlet & Sleeping Beauty* at Stafford Gatehouse and CSM for *Displace Yourself's World Without Death & Upswing's Bloom* for Bradford 2025. She is delighted to be working with *imitating the dog* on *War Of the Worlds*.

FAITH TO

design & production assistant

Faith is a multidisciplinary performance designer and maker from Hong Kong now based in Manchester. They trained at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts, recently graduating in 2025. With a keen interest in experimental theatre and pushing the boundaries of perception and immersion, Faith is passionate about telling stories that challenge one's perspective on art, life, and the ordinary by tapping into the core of what makes us human. Recent credits include theatre work *Flesh: Code* (Filter Theatre), *The Sweet Science of Bruising* (Lucy Jane Atkinson), *Scuttlers* (Reuben Johnson), as well as light-piece *Still Waters Run Deep*, Light Up Lancaster 2025 (James Hooton) and short films *LIAR* and *Breaths of Lilies*.

STEVE JACKSON

video systems designer

DORIAN RALSTON

production placement

ROB ROBERTS

sound technician and operator

SAM MCCARTHY-ROBINSON

touring technical manager

HENRIETTA DUCKWORTH

tour consultant

IZZIE SMITH

administrative producer

SODIUM FILMS

production filming & trailers

ED WARING

production photography

DUNCAN CLARKE PR

production pr manager

JULIE BROWN

imitating the dog executive producer

LAUREN RANDALL

imitating the dog communications &

audience development officer

BEN MELLOR

imitating the dog creative engagement

manager

WITH THANKS TO

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Sophie Firth and Mikayla Teodoro for assisting model and prop making.

Alan Cox, Simon Attwood and Steve Wade for their continued collaboration.

LEARNING RESOURCES

Whether you're looking to learn more about H.G. Wells's classic novel or are keen to know more about how we put a show together, you'll find something of interest in our FREE collection of *War of the Worlds* learning resources.

These resources are intended for all learners of appropriate age, whether that's secondary school students, anyone in further or higher education or adult learning courses and discussion groups.

You can find blogs, reading lists and more at imitatingthedog.co.uk/learning-resources



War of the Worlds (2026). Rehearsal Images

THROUGH TIME AND SPACE:

The War of the Worlds's Legacy

There is a delicious irony to H.G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds* (1898). The author's tale of destruction and societal collapse has produced an enduring legacy, building narrative tropes and iconic imagery that have held fast in the century-and-a-quarter since its conception and that continue to shape stories today. When we think of alien invasion narratives – of which this is one of the earliest and most prominent – it's likely that what we conjure in our minds is inspired, knowingly or otherwise, by the beats and descriptions of Wells's novel. Its descriptions of Martians and Mars as the invading enemy, Tripods, heat rays and post-apocalyptic landscapes and societies are pioneering signifiers – shorthand language for genre(s) and stories aplenty.

Yet, while there might be familiarity in any close encounter with *The War of the Worlds*, time has not dulled its impact into comfort. It is still so thrillingly disruptive and chilling, as relentless in its potency as it is in its longevity.

Paradoxically, this is because of Wells grounding the otherworldliness of his narrative in the reality of the world around him. His story unfolds in allegory with the contemporary sociological, political and cultural concerns of the time and place from which it sprang from. Written at both the turn of the century and the closing out of the Victorian era, *The War of the Worlds* arrives on the precipice of uncertainty, and the 'battleground of fear and curiosity' in response to that unknowability.¹ (Indeed, the novel's original publication as a serialisation in Pearson's magazine from 1895-1897 even leans into this state of flux with readers kept in suspense, both in fear of what lies in store and keen to find out more.) As such, the novel is a quintessential slice of *fin-de-siècle* literature, notable particularly at the end of the nineteenth century for its preoccupation with the state of the nation, from complacency to the fear of a society's disintegration and end.

¹ H.G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds* (London: William Heinemann, 1898), p.38.

In his writings on apocalypse, Frank Kermode writes that apocalypse fictions 'underlie our ways of making sense of the world from where we stand, in the midst.'²In other words, with a view of all (or as many) contributing factors at once. Wells's story, though deceptively straightforward, places its contemporary reader in turnabout, looking at the Martians as representative of the threat of foreign invasion and occupation from European rivals looking to usurp Britain, to Britain's own role in the act of colonisation and its identity and actions as Imperialists stepping into the lands of others. Similarly, the threat of ever-evolving technology, looming large in the form of the seemingly indestructible Tripods and their death blasts, suggest inevitable, nihilistic death by mechanical creation. All this whilst running parallel with the surge in industrialisation in Britain's towns and cities during the nineteenth century, skylines anxiously shifting with the rising up of chimneys and factories billowing smoke and hot with flames.

While this appears to tether Wells's story to the Victorian era immovably, it instead can be viewed as a historical precedent – a template others might draw from, move and use for looking closely at their own surroundings in another time and another place. Though Wells roots his narrator – and, by extension, his reader – in the centre to look outward at what is happening, the character is constantly moving from place to place in his attempt to find a safe haven and survive. In itself, this is both an early template for the haunted pilgrimage of similar apocalypse narratives (*The Road*, *The Walking Dead*, and so on) and the opportunity for Wells to have fun, injecting bone-deep satire and jet-black humour into the uncomfortable individuals gone mad with the absence of structure and security. It is also a premonition of *The War of the Worlds*'s own ability to progress. As Kermode writes, 'Apocalypse and the related themes are strikingly long-lived; and that is the first thing to say about them, although the second is that they change.'³

Orson Welles is responsible for arguably the most scandalous adaptation of Wells's novel in a live radio broadcast on 30 October 1938. Welles, then just twenty-three years old, was so convincing, so meticulous, so

² Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p.29.

³ Ibid, p.29.

committed in his attention to detail as both director and performer that numerous listeners tuning in to CBS Radio Network that evening became convinced that a Martian invasion really was happening across America. Inspired by previous radio hoaxes and audio dramas, it was Orson Welles's intention to blur the lines of reality and fiction. He had worked with adaptor Howard Koch in the week running up to broadcast, relocating the UK setting to the East Coast of America and presenting it as a simulated newscast, with 'breaking news' bulletins interrupting seemingly regular programming. Commercial breaks were kept to a minimum, with the first coming after the descriptions of the fall of New York City. Complaints and media backlash followed, along with a (half-hearted) public apology from Welles.

Aside from cementing his reputation as a mercurial creator, Welles's production demonstrates the power of media in retelling the original story. Whilst it is likely that the extent and truth of the panicked reaction was and has been mythologised, Welles's recreation nevertheless delivered a warning about the power of reckless and inaccurate broadcasting - keenly felt as fascism rose to power in Europe.

Film adaptations followed suit in updating or transporting the source material. The first cinematic version, directed by Byron Haskin and starring Gene Barry, was released in 1953. Set in California, the film leant into nuclear panic, introducing the atomic bomb to the story and the potential worldwide annihilation that might be the result of the Cold War. Meanwhile, Steven Spielberg's 2004 blockbuster version, starring Tom Cruise, used the story as a lens to consider the feeling of uncertainty of post-9/11 America – and as a more serious, scary version take on aliens, which until that point had been part of the director's family-friendly oeuvre.

Other pieces of media have also had their fun with Wells's blueprint: Roland Emmerich's *Independence Day* (1996) updated nineteenth-century *fin-de-siècle* to Y2K tech anxiety (amidst very big explosions, of course), even putting a cheeky spin on the novel's original ending in homage to its apparent influence. Elsewhere, Danny Boyle's *28 Days Later* (2002) swapping aliens for infected people, charted a similar journey of encounters for its protagonists in their attempt to reach a safe place, even

encountering a group of British squaddies with a leader driven so mad by the collapse of order that he makes it his personal mission to reinstate that order in the new world around him.

There are more, many more allusions to *The War of the Worlds* out there, often in the strangest of things and, of course, also apolitically. But regardless of whether the intent of an adaptation or homage is as intrinsically tethered to the world around it as the original, there is no doubting that the wheels keep on turning for Wells's story, that there is still diesel in the tank for more and more journeys into the unknown. Best to buckle up.

Dr. Lauren Randall



War of the Worlds (2026)



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TOUR DATES

5-7 February

Cast, Doncaster

castindoncaster.com

13-14 February

BEAM, Hertford

beamhertford.co.uk

18-21 February

The Dukes, Lancaster

dukeslancaster.org

25-28 February

Lowry, Salford Quays

thelowry.com

4-7 March

Liverpool Playhouse

everymanplayhouse.com

11-14 March

New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich

wolseytheatre.co.uk

18-21 March

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

belgrade.co.uk

25-28 March

Leeds Playhouse

leedsplayhouse.org.uk

7 April

Stadttheater Schaffhausen

Switzerland

stadttheater-sh.ch

9 April

Theater Winterthur

Switzerland

theaterwinterthur.ch

15-18 April

Theatr Clwyd, Mold

theatrclwyd.com

22-25 April

Blackpool Grand Theatre

blackpoolgrand.co.uk

29 April – 2 May

The Arts Theatre Cambridge

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Thank you for coming to see *War of the Worlds*.

imitating the dog will be on tour with their next production in 2027



War of the Worlds (2026)

Programme Anthony Briggs
Photography Ed Waring