PROGRAM NOTES

THE ADVENTURES OF ALVIN SPUTNIK: DEEP SEA EXPLORER
BY TIM WATTS

Creator: Tim Watts
Performer: St John Cowcher
Production and Touring Manager: Sam Longley
Creative Advisor: Arielle Gray
Technical Advisor: Chris Isaacs
Producer: Sarah Weber / The Last Great Hunt
Exclusive Representation in North America: Elsie Management, Laura Colby, Director

This performance is approximately 50 minutes in length. No intermission.
Alvin began in a puppetry workshop with ‘Spare Parts Puppet Theatre’ in Fremantle, Australia, in 2007. He was a humble little puppet, just a buoy and a white glove that I instantly had a fondness for. His big head, wide eye, and funny little body - he couldn’t be anything but a curious deep sea diver. Friends who saw the little guy in the workshop encouraged me to make a show with him. So with that, and a desire to make a highly tourable, yet still visually interesting show, I created The Adventures of Alvin Sputnik: Deep Sea Explorer for a slot at the Blue Room Theatre program in Perth, Australia, in May 2009.

It was a thrilling and exhausting process. I collaborated with Arielle Gray, did lots of experiments and little shows for friends, trying to get as much feedback and ideas as possible as to what was fun and what worked. I got my dad, Anthony Watts, to build the set and all the gadgets and just managed to pull the whole thing off in time. We got rave reviews, performed to sell-out crowds and won awards for ‘Best Production,’ ‘Best Production Team,’ and ‘Member’s Choice.’

Since then, with the assistance of Perth Theatre Company and The Last Great Hunt as producers, Alvin Sputnik has toured all over the world, experiencing more sold-out shows, winning more awards, and getting overwhelming responses from audiences and reviewers alike. The show won ‘Outstanding Solo Show’ at the New York International Fringe Festival in 2009, ‘Best Puppetry’ at the 2010 Adelaide Fringe Awards, ‘Best Theatre’ at the Auckland Fringe in 2011, ‘Best Male Performer’ at the Dublin Fringe, and was nominated for Australia’s top performance prize, the Helpmann Award, in 2012.

So far, Alvin Sputnik has been performed in the USA, New Zealand, India, South Korea, the UK, Denmark, Scotland, Hong Kong, Malta, Taiwan, Japan and all over Australia. It has been a long journey - and we still continue to develop and improve the show as we tour. I am determined to keep it a continual, creative process. If you have any thoughts or feedback, I would love to hear them. Just shoot me an email: tim@thelastgreathunt.com Thank you for coming, and I hope you enjoy the show.

Tim Watts (Creator)
At Tim Hortons, if we can’t serve our premium blend coffee within twenty minutes of brewing it, we won’t serve it at all. That’s why we write the time on the pot, whenever we brew a fresh one. It’s your guarantee that you’ll always get a great-tasting cup of coffee.
ABOUT THE LAST GREAT HUNT

The Last Great Hunt is a collective of artists that create, produce and tour new innovative theatre. The Last Great Hunt artists have a combined 52 years of experience in making theatre and have received critical acclaim both at home and abroad.

Operating out of Perth, Western Australia, these artists prove that living in the most isolated capital city in the world is no limit to creating great theatre.

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Proud to support the TD 30 Under 30 Program.

We’re working together with Centre In The Square to make a difference in our community.
ST JOHN COWCHER (PERFORMER)
St John Cowcher is an actor, writer and theatre practitioner. A Contemporary Performance graduate (ECU '09), founding member of performance company The Wet Weather Ensemble and Spare Parts Puppet Theatre associate artist. Theatre: The Velveteen Rabbit (SPPT'12), Hachiko (SPPT'12), Adam and Eve (BR’11), The Bearskinner (TW’11), Spellbound (SPPT’10), A Reptile Dreamed (BR '09), The Human Voice (MC’09), Happy Buddha (UNIMA World Puppetry Festival '08) Film: The Road to the Sandman (CU’10), Alice (Remix) (NSP’10), Awards: Blue Room Theatre Audience Award (The Bearskinner) St John performs in improvised comedy group The Big Hoo-Haa. St John has been performing The Adventures of Alvin Sputnik since early 2013, and toured the show to Singapore, Canada, the US and Spain.

SAM LONGLEY (PRODUCTION AND TOURING MANAGER) Sam has been working as an actor, comedian, writer, director and tour manager since the mid nineties. He studied improv comedy at The Second City, Improv Olympic and Comedy Sportz in Chicago, IL.

He has performed everything from a Shakespearian drunkard to an eight year old delinquent. Some of his high lights include Horse Head at the Blue Room Theatre, DIY: Disaster Movie at The Awesome Arts Festival, Thisbe at the new Heath Ledger Theatre in Perth, WA, Not Like Beckett for Deck Chair Theatre, Bindjareb Pinjarra, a comedy about a massacre. In 2006 Sam filmed Where The Wild Things Are, a Warner Brothers Feature Film directed by Spike Jonze. Sam once again used his height to full effect in playing the largest of the Wild Things, IRA.

Sam has written plays, hosted TV shows and is the creator of the improv comedy show The Big Hoo-Haa that is now in its 12th sellout season. Sam has been involved with The Adventures of Alvin Sputnik since early 2013 and has toured to Japan, Canada and the US several times since then.

TIM WATTS (CREATOR) Tim is a performer, devisor, director, producer, puppeteer and animator. He is a founding member of Weeping Spoon Productions. He has created and toured theatre all around Australia and internationally, winning numerous awards and critical acclaim along the way. Since graduating from Notre Dame University, Fremantle with a Bachelor of Performing Arts in 2005, he has participated in numerous workshops, including studying clown and physical comedy with Dell’Arte International in Blue Lake California, as well as Puppetry workshops with Spare Parts Puppet Theatre in Fremantle, Western Australia, and Blind Summit in the UK.

In 2009 he created The Adventures of Alvin Sputnik: Deep Sea Explorer, which has since toured all over the world. In 2012 he co-created It’s Dark Outside, which was commissioned by Perth Theatre Company and was also the inaugural artist in residence for Perth Theatre Company. Presented at the 2013 Sydney Festival, It’s Dark Outside received its US premiere in Pittsburgh at the Festival of Firsts in 2013. Other creative credits include co-creating and performing in The Wives of Hemingway (Fringe World 2013), Deathtrap (PICA, Perth) The World Inspite of Itself (China), Greed (Canada Fringe), Hope Is The Saddest (Brisbane Festival), Duck Duck Goose (The Blue Room, Perth), Oscar (Perth) and Heart of Gold (PICA, Perth), as well as directing Pollyanna (Fringe World 2012) and Red Lashes (UNIMA 2008).
CHRIS ISAACS (TECHNICAL ADVISOR)
Chris graduated with a BA Double Major in English and Writing from Edith Cowan University in Perth in 2006. Since then he has worked in independent and professional theatre as a writer/devisor/performer/lighting designer and stage manager. In 2012 he co-created It’s Dark Outside, commissioned by Perth Theatre Company, which won the Arts Hub Critics’ Choice Award for ‘Innovation’.

From 2009-2013, he was the touring & technical manager of The Adventures Of Alvin Sputnik: Deep Sea Explorer. As stage manager; Barking Gecko Theatre Company’s Driving Into Walls (2012), Perth Theatre Company’s The Removalists (2010), Black Swan State Theatre Company & HotHouse Theatre The Web (Albury/Wodonga & Perth Seasons 2009). Chris has been lighting designer for multiple shows at The Blue Room, Yirra Yaakin, ARTrage, Rechabites’ Hall & for the 2008 UNIMA International Puppet Festival.

In 2010 he received a JUMP mentorship as a writer, which he undertook with Kate Mulvany & he is a member of the Black Swan State Theatre Companies Young Writer Program. As part of this program, in 2014 his play Flood was presented by the Black Swan Theatre Company and received critical acclaim. Chris has been a performer/musician in the comedy troupe The Big Hoo Haa for five years now, & contributed to The Blue Room as a board member for five years including the roles of Artistic Sub-Committee member & acting Board Chair @Chris_Isaacs

ARIELLE GRAY (CREATIVE ADVISOR)
Arielle Gray graduated in 2005 with a BA (Contemporary Performance) in Perth. She is a performer/theatre-maker/puppeteer/improviser. Arielle’s theatre credits include creating and performing in It’s Dark Outside in Perth 2012 and at Sydney Festival in 2013, devising and performing in Pollyanna, a large scale interactive, promenade work first performed at FringeWorld 2012, performing in They Ran ‘Til They Stopped with The Duck House, Black Swan State Theatre Company’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream directed by Kate Cherry, Hope Is The Saddest for Mythophobic Productions at the Brisbane Festival ‘Under the Radar’, Duck, Duck, Goose! (Winner ‘Member’s Choice’ at The Blue Room Theatre Awards), & solo show Nobody Cares But You at The Blue Room Theatre & Adelaide Fringe Festival (for which she was nominated ‘Best Actress’ at The Actor’s Equity Guild Awards). Arielle also assisted in the creation of The Adventures of Alvin Sputnik: Deep Sea Explorer with Tim Watts.

In 2009, Arielle was a part of The Black Swan State Theatre Company’s HOTBED program, performing in Pool [No Water] by Mark Ravenhill & The Darkroom by Angela Betzien (nominated ‘Best Supporting Actress’ for both shows at the Actors Equity Guild Awards). Arielle is also a member of The Big Hoo Haa improvised comedy group, and has been a proud member of equity since 2007. Arielle lives in Perth, Western Australia. http://ariellegray.com @ArielleGray
BIOGRAPHIES

SARAH WEBER (PRODUCER) Sarah obtained a Master of Arts in Zurich, Switzerland and now lives in Perth, Australia, where she works as an arts manager. From 2010-2013, she worked as Operations Manager for Perth Theatre Company, where she was responsible for philanthropy, fundraising and touring. In 2013, Sarah spent three months in New York, with the artist representative company Elsie Management, to learn all about international producing and the performing arts industry in the US. Since July 2013, Sarah is also working as producer for the newly founded artist collective The Last Great Hunt.

LAURA COLBY (DIRECTOR, ELSIE MANAGEMENT) Laura Colby established Elsie Management in 1995, an artist management company representing a global roster of dance, theater, world music, and special attractions including the celebrated interactive family theater company Polyglot Theatre (Melbourne) and the renowned outdoor spectacle company Australia’s Strange Fruit. She served as the President of NAPAMA (2007 & 2008, North American Performing Arts Managers and Agents), was the founding Chair of the Dance/USA Agents Council, and currently serves on the board of the Association of Performing Arts Presenters. Since forming Elsie, Laura has represented over twenty-five performing arts touring companies from five continents, coordinating tours to over two hundred global venues. She was the initiating facilitator between Dr. Edward Fishkin, Medical Director at Brooklyn’s Woodhull Hospital and Medical Center and the performing arts community in the creation of ArtistAccess, the groundbreaking healthcare program for artists and arts workers begun in May of 2005. A frequently invited speaker for panels, workshops, and educational sessions, Laura began her arts administration career as a manager for several independent contemporary choreographers. She has had the pleasure of representing Tim Watts’ work since 2011.

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Please don’t leave me tonight, written by Tim Watts
Welcome song, written by Tim Watts
Down and Down, written by Tim Watts
Aquatic Dance by Vangelis, courtesy of Emi Music Publishing Australia
Rachel’s Song by Vangelis, courtesy of Warner Chappell Music Australia
Story Time by Daniel Elfman, courtesy of Emi Music Publishing Australia
Ain’t No Stopping Us Now by J. Cohen, G. McFadden & J. Whitehead, courtesy of Warner Chappell Music Australia
Together in Electric Dreams by P. Oakey & G. Moroder, courtesy of Emi / Warner Chappell Music Australia
Happy Ending by Mika, courtesy of Rondor Music Australia

THANK YOU to Sandra Bender and the staff and crew at the Centre In The Square for making these performances possible!

THANK YOU to Laura Colby, Katie Diamond and Anna Amadei, the amazing team at Elsie Management, Perth Theatre Company for all their support, The Australia Council for the Arts, The Department of Culture and the Arts, The Blue Room Theatre, The City of Perth, ARTRAGE, FringeNYC, HER Arts Centre, Ron Lasko at Spin Cycle, Sam Longley and Lazy Suzans, terraNOVA and the undergroundzero festival, Phillip Mitchel and Michael Barlow at Spare Parts Puppet Theatre, Fi McCurdy and Ed Bartlam from Underbelly in the UK, and everywhere we have toured so far.
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