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SF PERUSALS

HOW NOT TO DROWN

by Nicola McCartney and Dritan Kastrati

















How Not To Drown was first performed on 4 August 2019 at the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh.

SAMUEL FRENCH

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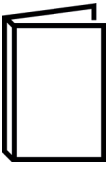
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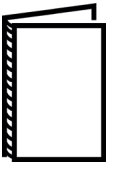
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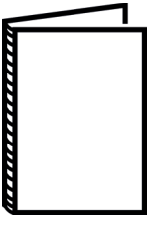
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AUTHORS' NOTE

What follows is a true story adapted and dramatised by Nicola McCartney from transcribed interviews conducted with Dritan Kastrati between 2014 and 2018, about his own life history. It follows a double survival story: of the epic journey he makes as an eleven-year-old asylum seeker, after the Kosovan war, when he must rely on his wits and his humour to get by; and then his battle to keep hold of his own identity and dignity as a non-English-speaking child refugee, voiceless and homeless, within the UK Care system.

Nicola McCartney & Dritan Kastrati
June 2019

How Not To Drown was first performed on 4 August 2019 at Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh with the following cast and creatives:

CAST

Dritan Kastrati
Ajjaz Awad
Esme Bayley
Daniel Cahill
Reuben Joseph

CREATIVES

Writers	Nicola McCartney & Dritan Kastrati
Direction & Choreography	Neil Bettles
Co-choreography	Jonnie Riordan
Design & Costume	Becky Minto
Composition & Sound Design	Alexandra Faye Braithwaite
Lighting	Zoe Spurr
Production Manager	Fiona Fraser
Stage Managers	Kara Jackson
	Jessica Ward
Production Electrician & Relighter	Andy Gannon
Set construction	Pretty Scenic & W A McGarrie & Son
Assistant Production Manager	Emma Campbell
Sound Associate	Annie May Fletcher
Executive Producer	Laura Mallows
Producer	Steph Connell
Associate Producer	Carla Marina Almeida
Publicist	SM Publicity

A ThickSkin and Traverse Theatre Company production, co-produced with Tron Theatre and Lawrence Batley Theatre. Commissioned by ThickSkin and Lawrence Batley Theatre.

Sponsored by Supper Club Compassion and supported by November Productions, Citizens Theatre and the National Lottery through Arts Council England and Creative Scotland. Part of Made in Scotland 2019.

Developed with support from The University of Edinburgh.

Nicola and Dritan would like to thank Albert Kastrati, Dritan's family, Scott Graham, Rosanna Hall, Inga Hirst, Jenny Knotts, Helene Groen, Jorida Ramadani and Wendy Timmons.

ThickSkin would also like to thank the Kastrati Family, Backstage Trust, City of Glasgow Council, Grid Iron, Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh, National Theatre of Scotland, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Scottish Refugee Council, Leon Aarts, Andy Arnold, Caroline Boss, Daniel Cahill, Albi Cahini, Sokol Cahini, Professor Sharon Cowan, Linda Crooks, Lesley Davies, Caroline Donald, Henry Filloux-Bennett, Fiona Gregory, Alison Hargreaves, Steven Hoggett, Robbie Jack, Natali McCleary, Sharon McHendry, Itxaso Moreno, Sally Reid, Bruce Robertson, James Thompson and Adam Tompa.

ThickSkin dedicates this production to Derek Bettles.

CAST

DRITAN KASTRATI (CO-WRITER)

Dritan graduated from Frantic Assembly's Ignition Company in 2009, and was awarded a BBC Performing Arts Fund Bursary. He performed as Montano in Frantic's hit-show *Othello*. He has played the lead in the feature film *Pit Stop Mafia*, directed by Fatmir Koçi. He worked with Koçi again performing as Mickey in the 2016 feature film *Elvis Walks Home*, winning the Best Lead Actor at the International Film Festival Awards. Other recent acting credits: *Agatha Raison* Season 3 (Acorn Entertainment, 2019); *Stan Lee's Lucky Man* (Sky One, 2018); *All the Devil's Men* (Netflix, 2018); *Hooten & the Lady* (Sky, 2016) and *Houdini and Doyle* (Big Talk Productions, 2016).

How Not To Drown is the first play that he has written and is based on his true life story.

AJJAZ AWAD

Ajjaz Awad trained at RADA and ALRA. Recent theatre credits include: *The Hound Of The Baskerville* (The Mill at Sonning) and *Another Star To Steer By* (Brighton Dome). Television and radio credits include: *Holby City* and the radio series of *Dr. Who*. Director/Creative credits include: *Race Today* (Bernie Grant Arts Centre) and *good dog* (Tiata Fahodzi) and *Parrallel: Yerma* (The Young Vic). Ajjaz was the 2010 winner of The Lawrence Olivier Bursary. Ajjaz is also part of the Tamasha Theatre Company Writers Group 18/19, the Royal Court Writers Group 2019 and won the RTYDS Assistant Directors award 2017.

ESME BAYLEY

Esme trained at The University of Manchester and Royal Conservatoire of Scotland graduating with an MA Acting in Classical and Contemporary Text. Recent theatre credits include: *Gaslight* (Perth Theatre at Horsecross Arts); *Edward the Second*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *Measure for Measure*, *Taming of the Shrew* (Bard in the Botanics); *Ricky McWhittington* (Glasgow Life); *Look Back in Anger* (Cumbernauld Theatre) and *Secret Show 1* (Blood of the Young / Tron Theatre).

DANIEL CAHILL

Daniel trained at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Theatre credits include: *All My Sons* (Dundee Rep); *The First Dance* (Oran Mor); *Macbeth* (Stafford Gatehouse Theatre); *Shift* (National Theatre of Scotland); *Small World* (National Theatre of Scotland); *James I*, *James II* and *James III* (National Theatre / National Theatre of Scotland);

Lot and His God (Citizens Theatre); *Truant* (National Theatre of Scotland) and *Blackout* (ThickSkin). TV/Film credits include: *Cassette* (Parkhouse Pictures); *Pumped* (BBC3); *Anna and the Apocalypse* (Blazing Griffin); *Blackout* (Oscar Films); *Exodus 21:24* (Blazing Griffin); *Outpost 3: Rise of the Spetsnaz* (Cinema 3) and *River City* (BBC Scotland). Director/Creative credits include: *Jump, Run Free* in Jamaica and *Jump!* in Trinidad and Tobago (National Theatre of Scotland); *Rock*, *White Noise* and *Bring Your Own* (ThickSkin).

REUBEN JOSEPH

Reuben trained at Glasgow Clyde College and graduated in 2018. Theatre credits include: *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black*, *Black Oil* and *Midsummer* (National Theatre Scotland); *Anything That Gives Off Light* (The TEAM); *A Christmas Carol* (Citizens Theatre); *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *The Hobbit*, *Animal Farm*, *The Day the Whores Came Out to Play Tennis*, *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (Glasgow Clyde College); *We're Here Because We're Here* (National Theatre Scotland / NOW 14-18); *The Island* (Platform Young Company) and *The History Boys* (Glasgow Acting Academy).

CREATIVES

NICOLA MCCARTNEY - WRITER

Nicola McCartney is a playwright, director and dramaturg. She trained as a director with Citizen Theatre/G&J Productions and Charabanc Theatre Company, Belfast. Nicola was Artistic Director of Lookout Theatre Company, Glasgow from 1992–2002, and has twice been an Associate Playwright of Playwrights' Studio Scotland. She has worked for a host of organisations as a dramaturg including Vanishing Point and Stellar Quines/Edinburgh International Festival. Her plays include: *Easy*, *Heritage*, *Home*, *Standing Wave: Delia Derbyshire in the 60s*, *Rachel's House*, *Cave Dwellers* and *Lifeboat*. She is also a social theatre practitioner and has worked with all sorts of groups including people within the criminal justice system in the UK and USA, asylum seekers and refugees, drug users, survivors of domestic violence and childhood abuse. Nicola has worked with Traverse's flagship outreach programme, Class Act, since 1997, taking it to Russia, Ukraine and India. In 2018 she was a recipient of a Writers' Guild of Great Britain Olwen Wymark Award for encouraging theatre in the UK. Nicola is currently Reader in Writing for Performance at the University of Edinburgh where she leads the Masters programme in Playwriting.

NEIL BETTLES – DIRECTOR

Neil is co-founder and Artistic Director of ThickSkin, where his directing credits include: *Chalk Farm*, *The Static* and *Blackout* and as co-director: *Boy Magnet* and *White Noise* for the company. He is Associate Director for Frantic Assembly recently directing *The Unreturning* (UK Tour) and *This Will All Be Gone* (International Tour), he co-directed *No Way Back* (Corby Cube) and was Assistant Director of *Dirty Wonderland* (Brighton Festival). Neil is International Associate Movement Director on *Harry Potter And The Cursed Child* having worked on the West End, Broadway and Melbourne productions. Other credits include: Associate Director of *We Are Here* (La Mama, New York). As Movement Director: *Carmen* (Opera Wuppertal, Germany); *The James Plays* (Edinburgh International Festival and National Theatre); *Blood Wedding* and *The Bacchae* (Royal & Derngate). As Associate Movement Director: *Heisenberg* (Wyndhams Theatre); *The Light Princess* (National Theatre) and *The Full Monty* (Sheffield Theatres and West End). www.neilbettles.co.uk

JONNIE RIORDAN – CO-CHOREOGRAPHER

Jonnie is ThickSkin's Associate Director. Recent theatre directing credits include: *AWOL* and *Boy Magnet* (ThickSkin) and *Nigel Slater's Toast* (West End). As Movement Director: *Great Apes* (Arcola Theatre); *Maggie & Pierre* (Finborough Theatre); *Mobile* (Paper Birds) and

Home (Frozen Light). As an actor, he has appeared in *The Unreturning* (Frantic Assembly, UK tour); *This Will All Be Gone* (Frantic Assembly); *No Way Back* (Frantic Assembly/Made in Corby); *Full Stop* (Light The Fuse/Lyric Hammersmith/Greenwich and Docklands International Festival); *Canticles* (Brighton Festival/Aldeburgh Music/Frantic Assembly). www.jonnieriordan.co.uk

BECKY MINTO - DESIGNER

Becky has designed over 100 productions for main-house and touring theatre productions, aerial and dance performances, site-specific and large outdoor events across Scotland the UK and Europe. *The 306: Dawn* (National Theatre of Scotland) won the Silver Medal for Space Design at World Stage Design Exhibition 2017. Her work was selected to represent the UK at the Staging Places Exhibition at the Prague Quadrennial and the V&A London in 2019 and 2015. She was Associate Designer for the Opening and Designer for the Closing Ceremonies of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. Recent designs include: *Ulster American* (Traverse Theatre); *Catch Me* (Upswing); *Flight Paths* (Extant/Yellow Earth) and *The Ugly One* (Tron Theatre). Upcoming projects include: *Frankenstein* (Perth Rep) and *Hope and Joy* (Pearlfisher).

ALEXANDRA FAYE BRAITHWAITE – SOUND DESIGNER & COMPOSER

Alex's recent theatre credits include: *Enough* (Traverse Theatre), *Nigel Slater's Toast* (West End), *Hamlet*, *Talking Heads*, *Rudolf* (Leeds Playhouse); *Cougar*, *Dealing With Clair*, *The Rolling Stone* (Orange Tree Theatre); *Romeo And Juliet* (China Plate); *My Name Is Rachel Corrie* (The Faction); *Things of Dry Hours* (Young Vic); *Acceptance* (Hampstead Theatre); *Chicken Soup* (Sheffield Crucible); *Dublin Carol* (The Sherman); *Room* (Stratford East/The Abbey); *If I Was Queen* (The Almeida); *The Remains of Maisie Duggan* (The Abbey); *Happy To Help* (Park Theatre); *The Tempest* (Royal & Derngate); *The Future* (The Yard); *The Audience*, *Juicy & Delicious* (Nuffield Theatre), *Dairy of a Madman* (Gate Theatre/ Traverse). Upcoming projects include: *Light Falls* and *Wuthering Heights* (Manchester Royal Exchange) and *Groan Ups* (The Vaudeville).
www.alexandrafayebraithwaite.com

ZOE SPURR – LIGHTING DESIGNER

Zoe trained at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. Recent theatre includes: *Onegin*, *Georgiana* and *Lucio Papirio Dittatore* (Buxton International Festival / Buxton Opera House); *Emilia* (Vaudeville Theatre); *The Phlebotomist* (Hampstead Theatre); *The Maids* (HOME Manchester); *Cat In The Hat* (Leicester Curve / UK Tour); *The Unreturning* (Frantic Assembly / UK Tour); *Nigel Slater's*

Toast (The Other Palace, Traverse 1); *Meek* (Headlong / UK Tour); *Abigail's Party* (Queens Theatre Hornchurch); *Confidence*, *Natives*, *Collective Rage* (Southwark Playhouse); *Tiny Dynamite* (Old Red Lion); *Phoenix Rising*, *Loose Lips* (Big House Theatre Company); *The Beginners* (Unicorn Theatre); *Elephant* (Birmingham REP); *The Magic Flute* (Soho Theatre / UK tour) and *Good Dog* (Watford Palace / UK Tour). www.zoespurrlighting.co.uk

FIONA FRASER – PRODUCTION MANAGER

Fi is the Production Manager for Imaginates' Edinburgh International Children's Festival. She has Production Managed over 22 productions for Grid Iron and headed the Stage Management team who won the 2004 SMA (Stage Management Association) excellence in Stage Management Award. She's production managed for Vanishing Point since 2009. Managing all national and international tours of *Interiors*, *Saturday Night*, *Wonderland*, *The Beautiful Cosmos of Ivor Cutler*, *Tomorrow*, *The Destroyed Room*, *Tabula Rasa* and most recently *The Dark Carnival*. She recently set up a company, Fi Fraser Production Management with the aim to work with and mentor emerging Production Managers. This is her second time working with ThickSkin. www.fifraser.com

JESSICA WARD – STAGE MANAGER

Jessica studied at Manchester Metropolitan University graduating with BA hons in Contemporary Theatre and Performance before training at Edinburgh Lighting and Sound School. Recent theatre credits: *Lost at Sea*, *Miss Julie*, *Snow White and the Seven Dames* (Perth Theatre); *306: Dusk* (Perth Theatre And National Theatre of Scotland); *Ulster American* and *Swallow* (Traverse Theatre); *The Whip Hand* (Traverse Theatre and Birmingham Rep); *Rhinoceros*, *Charlie Sonata* and *The Weir* (Lyceum Theatre) and *Wind Resistance* (Lyceum Theatre and Karine Polwart).

KARA JACKSON – STAGE MANAGER

Kara graduated from Queen Margaret University with a BA in Theatre Production specialising in Stage Management. She has worked with National Theatre of Scotland, Pachamama/Richard Jordan, Theatre503, Trafalgar Studios, Paines Plough, Oran Mor, Random Accomplice, Barrowland Ballet, RCS, Scottish Opera, Grid Iron, Stellar Quines, Imaginate, Lung Ha's, Traverse Theatre and works extensively both nationally and internationally with Vanishing Point.

ANDREW GANNON – PRODUCTION ELECTRICIAN

Andrew is a freelance Theatre Technician and Lighting Designer. Andrew has worked and toured with many companies including Vanishing Point (*Interiors*, *Tomorrow*, *The Dark Carnival*); Tortoise in

a Nutshell (*Fisk*, *Feral*) and the National Theatre of Scotland (*Eve*). He has also designed lighting for Grid Iron, Lung Ha's Theatre Company and Tortoise in Nutshell. Andrew was Technical Manager at Edinburgh International Children's Festival 2019.

LAURA MALLOWS – EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Laura Mallows is co-founder of ThickSkin. For ThickSkin she has Executive Produced: *Chalk Farm*, *The Static*, *Blackout*, *White Noise* and *Boy Magnet*, and designed the concept for *Matchbox Productions*. She also works as an independent arts consultant and producer. Laura was previously Head of Finance & Business at Clean Break. Laura was Associate Producer on *Beautiful Burnout* (Frantic Assembly / National Theatre of Scotland) and supported Frantic Assembly's productions of *Pool (no water)*, *Stockholm* and *Othello* in the role of General Manager, and instigated the company's celebrated Ignition training programme. She has also worked with Fifty Nine Productions, Hofesh Schechter Company, Manchester International Festival, Royal Opera House, Shobana Jeyasingh Dance, The Cholmondeleys and The Featherstonehaughs, and Touring Consortium. www.lauramallows.co.uk

STEPH CONNELL – PRODUCER

ThickSkin's Producer, credits include: *AWOL* and *Chalk Farm* (UK and International Tour) and as Assistant Producer: *The Static* (International Tour). She is also Producer for Wonder Fools recently producing *549: Scots of the Spanish Civil War*. Steph was Stage One Producer at the Citizens Theatre in 2017. Other producing credits include: *No Way Back* (Frantic Assembly); *Leaper – A Fish Tale* and *Finding Victoria* (Tucked In); *Full Stop* (Light The Fuse/ Scribbled Thought); *Playground Victories* (Light The Fuse / Scribbled Thought) and *Superhero Snail Boy* (Scribbled Thought). Steph has also worked for Artichoke, National Theatre of Scotland, Greenwich and Docklands International Festival, National Centre for Circus Arts and is currently Project Coordinator at the Tron Theatre. www.stephconnell.co.uk

CARLA MARINA ALMEIDA – ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

Carla has an MA in Creative and Cultural Entrepreneurship from Goldsmiths. She is a freelance Producer, Performance Programmer for Paisley Arts Centre and Coordinator for Sofar Sounds Glasgow. She has also worked for Dundee Rep, Wilton's Music Hall and National Theatre's River Stage Festival. Recent credits include: Rep Stripped Festival and *Gagarin Way* (Dundee Rep); *Drowning* (Curve Theatre, Stockholm and UK wide); *Blackout* (Vault Festival); *Agent of Influence: The Secret Life of Pamela More* (Theatre503, Underbelly Edinburgh).

ThickSkin

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The Good Review

ThickSkin creates innovative and exciting theatre. The company was formed by Neil Bettles and Laura Mallows in 2010 and quickly established itself as one of the UK's most exciting theatre companies, producing award-winning productions, commissioning new writing and touring worldwide.

We aim to unearth new talent and engage established artists in the creation of new work. We nurture and enable them to take risks and test new ways of working. Our productions provide critical exposure and a springboard for artists ready to take a leap. In doing so we support the sector by finding, commissioning and showcasing diverse talent.

We hope to reach and inspire audiences through our distinctive physicality and cinematic style. The company is based in Manchester and Glasgow and makes work across the UK.

Artistic Director	Neil Bettles
Executive Director	Laura Mallows
Associate Director	Jonnie Riordan
Producer	Steph Connell
Associate Producer	Carla Marina Almeida
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	Luke Brown Dance

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ABOUT TRAVERSE THEATRE

As Scotland's new writing theatre, the Traverse Theatre is a dynamic centre for performance, experience and discovery, often referred to as Edinburgh's 'beating heart of the Fringe' in August. Enabling people across society to access and engage with theatre is our fundamental mission.

Our year-round programme bursts with new stories and live performances that challenge, inform and entertain. We empower artists and audiences to make sense of the world today, providing a safe space to question, learn, empathise and – crucially – encounter different people and experiences. Conversation and the coming together of groups are central to a democratic society, and we champion equal expression and understanding.

We commission, produce and programme for existing and future audiences to offer new and exciting experiences for everyone, and our partnerships with other theatre companies and festivals enable us to present a wide range of innovative performances.

The Traverse would not exist without our over-arching passion for talent development and embracing the unexplored. We work with the newest and rawest talent – with an emphasis on the Scottish-based – nurturing it to become the art, artists and performances that can be seen on our stages through a variety of creative learning and literary programmes.

The timely, powerful stories that start life on our stages have global impact, resulting in dozens of tours, productions and translations. We are critically acclaimed and recognised the world over for our originality and artistic risk, which we hope will create some of the most talked-about plays, productions, directors, writers and actors for years to come.

Find out more about the Traverse: traverse.co.uk

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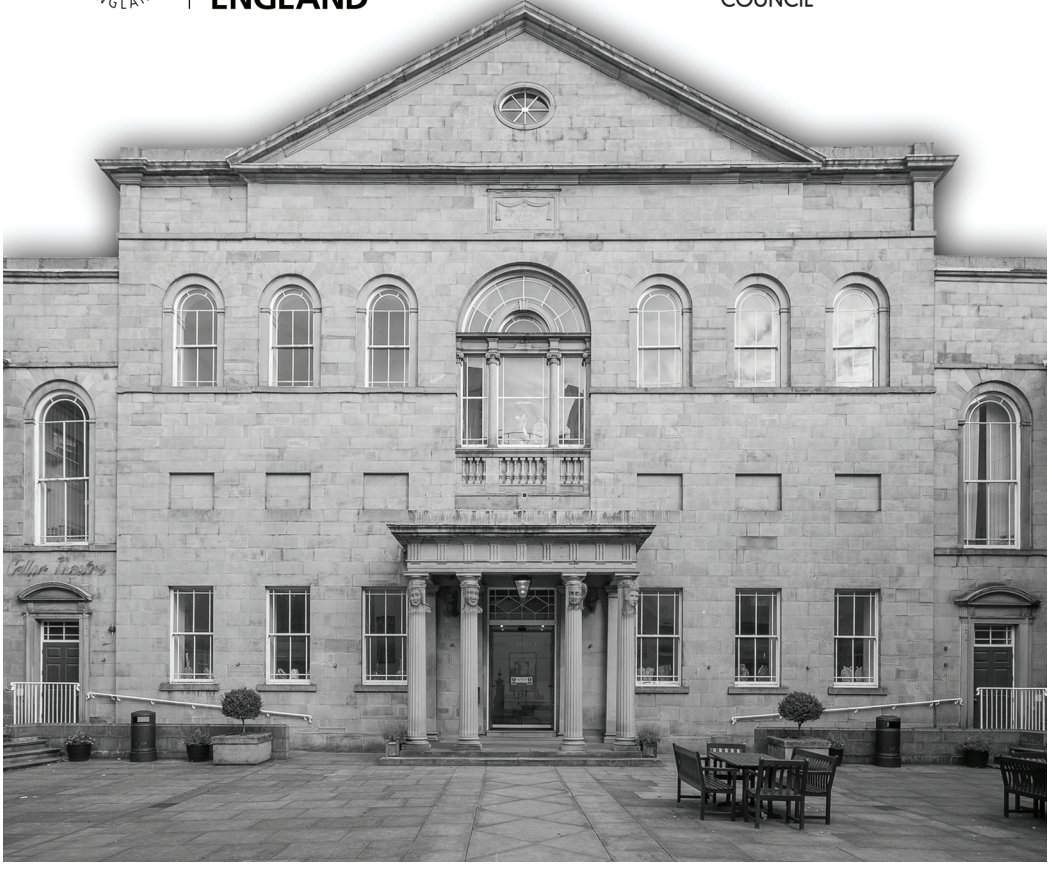
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Over the last 25 years the Lawrence Batley Theatre has played host to some of the UK's most amazing, entertaining and ambitious companies, but we have never forgotten where we come from: we're a theatre created *by* the community in a building created *for* the community.

We present the very best touring drama, dance, circus, comedy and live music, and we produce and commission work for our three spaces as well, but we couldn't do what we do without the incredible support of our audiences and our two major funders...all of whom we're profoundly grateful to.

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Find out more about the Lawrence Batley Theatre and what's on this season at **thelbt.org**

The team working at the Lawrence Batley Theatre is made up of Adele Barclay, Annie Baskeyfield-Bride, Adele Birkenshaw, Tom Blakemore, Freyja Boycott-Garnett, Chris Brearley, Paul Caldwell, James Clare, Craige Clarke, Holly Czolacz, Will Dash, Les Dowie, George Doyle, Karl Eaton, Henry Filloux-Bennett, Sarah Finch, Leah Fisher, Jenny Goodman, Andrew Goulding, Jack Greening, Bev Haigh, Sharon Haigh, David Halloran, Jonathan Hudson, Nancy Hughes , Ruth Jones, Connor Moseley, John Munden, Amy Norman, Laura Norman, Mass Nying, Judy O'Brien, Louise Parsons, Helen Petty, Cathy Pilkington, Olivia Race, Louise Redfearn, Jaqueline Ryan, Roohi Sarwar, Tommy Savage, Jane Sibbald, Jessica Smith, Brett Speakman, Ellie Stringer, Erica Taylor, Le Thi To Nhu, Rebecca Turner, Tom Walsh, Katherine Warman, Dianne Watkinson, Che Wigfield-Turner, Rebecca Winwood, Keren Wood, Mollie Wood and James Yates-Hothersall.

TRON THEATRE

The Tron Theatre Company is currently under the artistic leadership of Andy Arnold, who took up the position of Artistic Director and Chief Executive in 2008. The Tron Theatre presents the people of Glasgow and the West of Scotland with outstanding professional productions of the finest new writing, with an emphasis on world, UK and Scottish premieres; as well as staging co-productions and collaborations with other theatre companies and supporting the work of new and emergent artists.

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STAFF

Box Office and Front of House Manager	Khaliq Ahmed
Artistic Director	Andy Arnold
Cleaner	Daniela Balogova
Finance Manager	Kate Bell
Early Years Outreach Coordinator	Victoria Bianchi
Creative Learning Manager (Maternity Cover)	Julie Brown

Front of House Assistant	Simon Buckley
Bar Manager	Alistair Burton
Food and Beverage Assistant	Thomas Caldwell
Press and Marketing Officer	Olivia Carr
Business Development Manager	Lucy Christopher
Lighting & Sound Technician	Joe Connell
Project Coordinator	Steph Connell
Front of House Assistant	Hazel Ann Crawford
Catering and Back Of House Manager	Roisin Docherty
Kitchen Porter/Cleaner	Dan Domanski
Front of House Assistant	Miriam Sarah Doran
Box Office and Front of House Duty Manager	Catherine Elliott
Front of House Assistant	Phoebe Elliott
Food and Beverage Assistant	Barry Ferns
Cleaner	Letisia Goral
Executive Director	Sam Gough
Programme Administrator	Electra Gouni
Front of House Assistant	Kirsty Hamilton
Front of House Assistant	Isla Howarth
Senior Technician	Mark Hughes
Box Office and Reception Assistant	Olivia Hughes
Fundraising Assistant	Annie Lowry-Thomas
Front of House Duty Manager	Michelle Lynch
Technical Stage Manager	Richard Lyons
Property Supervisor	Iain MacLeod
Front of House Assistant	Rebecca Martin
Front of House Assistant	Grant McDonald
Executive Head Chef	Mark McKenzie
Technical Manager	Naomi McKinLay
Restaurant and Events Manager	Andrew McQuaid
Front of House Assistant	Sarah Miele
Administrative Assistant	Niamh Millar
Head of Marketing and Communications	Lindsay Mitchell
Creative Learning Officer	Debbie Montgomery
Assistant Box Office and Front of House Manager	Aileen Morrison
Front of House Assistant	Lynn Mulvenna
Box Office and Reception Assistant	Innes Nolan
Artistic Producer	Michael John O'Neill
Box Office and Reception Assistant	Richard Owen
Front of House Assistant	Kirsty Pickering
Front of House Assistant	Helen Reeves
Front of House Assistant	Francesca Rullo
Head of Production	Dave Shea
Cleaner	Malgozata Socha
Front of House Assistant	Gavin Stewart
Sous Chef	James Stewart
Front of House Assistant	Miranda Stuart
Stage Manager	Laura Walshe
Creative Learning Coordinator/Front of House Assistant	Catherine Ward-Stoddart
Front of House Assistant	Charneh Watson

BOARD MEMBERS

Audrey Junner	Mark Leese
Gillian McCormack	Debbie McDougall
Johnny McKnight	Kenny Miller
Shereen Nanjiani (Chair)	Lauren Stewart
Chris Stuart	Nicola Walls


BESA
"If you can help someone, then why not?"
Serbia
Kosovo
North Macedoni
Tirana
Albania

CHARACTERS

A Chorus of actors who play all the parts, sometimes including Dritan himself; a cast of 5 or 6 max.

DRITAN – a Kosovan-Albanian refugee; various ages 6–28 yrs, played by Dritan and the Chorus

DAD – Ibish

MUM – Bute

ALFRED – Dritan's older brother

LULI – Dritan's eldest sister

TILA – Dritan's second eldest sister

RICKY

GENZI

ANDI – Dritan's loyal childhood friend

THE BIG BOSS

JIMMY

TRAIN TICKET INSPECTOR

PARISIAN TICKET SALESPERSON

FOSTER CARERS – Indian parents, Sandra and Bill, Geoffrey and Anne, John and Gillian, Mary and Brian

STEPHEN – Sandra & Bill's son

ENVER – another Albanian kid in care

GARETH – another kid in care

ALEX – another kid in care with Dritan

DAVE – Dritan's school friend

PRISCILLA – a social worker (South African)

MICHAEL TULLOCH – a teacher

VARIOUS:

ALFRED'S GANG

DRITAN'S GANG

REFUGEES FROM ACROSS THE BORDER

OTHER REFUGEES, KURDS, KOSOVANS, ALBANIANS; ETC

GANGSTERS/MAFIA DUDES – various

POLICE

EXOTIC DANCERS – in Brussells strip club

MEN IN BAR

IMMIGRATION OFFICER

SOCIAL WORKERS

TRANSLATORS

SCHOOL KIDS

SETTING

A journey through Eastern and mainland Europe to the UK before and after the Kosovan War.

A note on production and casting

This script was written to be performed as a piece of physical theatre for an ensemble cast. The original ensemble casting included Dritan Kastrati himself.



Dritan, as a child, before he leaves home 2001.

Prologue: Learning to Swim

A river. **DRITAN** *and some other* **BOYS** *messing about in and by the water.*

DRITAN/CHORUS I think they chucked me in cos I was a little shit. And because, well, you have to learn, don't you? I was six years old. They'd always told me they would try.

ALFRED One day, we're gonna teach you how to swim.

DRITAN/CHORUS I just didn't know when. At that moment I was too relaxed. It was a nice day. I'm loving it...

There was two places we'd go swimming. But the first time I got chucked in was the river. My brother Alfred and his mates, they'd dive from the top of the waterfall right into it, but I would never do that, or go by myself in the river... Whoah...

Everyone had their little gang – all the boys. Alfred was six years older than me.

ALFRED Hey, little shit. Come on.

DRITAN/CHORUS So, this day, his gang are diving off the top of the waterfall, and I was just throwing stones at them, and hitting them. And because they was diving, there was nothing they could do about it. Just a little shit. And they thought

ALFRED'S GANG – Fuck you, come on then.

– We always told you we'd teach you to swim.

They throw **DRITAN** *into the river. He sinks under water.*

DRITAN/CHORUS It's cold

Whoah

Panic panic panic panic

And just

Go go go

DRITAN *starts drowning and fighting it.*

Forward Forward Forward

Or down

No

He swims.

Forward forward

Until my feet touch the floor

And now I'm on the other side of the river

The **BOYS** *on the other side of the river laugh in his face.*

And I'm like cry-laughing

"Fucking bastards!"

ALFRED'S GANG – Come on.

– Come back

– You can do it.

– Tan!

THE REAL DRITAN That's me by the way: I am Tan: Dritan.

CHORUS I am Dritan.

I'm Dritan.

I am Dritan.

I'm Dritan.

THE REAL DRITAN But I'm the real deal. Anyway, this story you are about to see really happened. To me.

DRITAN/CHORUS "Fuck you! No!"

No way am I getting back in that water. Not today. How am I getting back home? Getting back? I had to go the long way around. Finally, I find some stepping stones and –

He crosses the river on stepping stones.

ALFRED Hahaha where've you been?

DRITAN/CHORUS My brother Alfred and his mates.
Bigger shits.

1. The War in Kosova

DAD Alfred was always business-minded. From the age of fourteen, buying cigarettes, alcohol, and going backwards and forwards across the border between Kosova and Albania and selling it. For triple the price. Trying to make money. Cos he wanted to leave. He always wanted to leave.

DRITAN/CHORUS Why, Dad?

DAD Because there is no money. The government have spent it all. And there are no jobs.

(suddenly there are guns everywhere) And there are guns everywhere.

MUM Everyone has a gun now. At least one.

DAD Because there are wars in the Balkans.

War, chaos and confusion.: death, torture, people grabbing possessions, fleeing, crossing borders.

MUM War is everywhere: Bosnia, Croatia, Slovenia... And now Kosova.

DRITAN Why, Marmi?

DAD When was there not a war in our countries? There have been wars for six hundred years in our countries. And now there is another one.

MUM Because there is no Communism anymore. Because all the peoples want their freedom.

DAD At the expense of another people's freedom. And now Milosevic has pushed Albanians in Kosova too far. He is massacring our people and now Albanians everywhere are rising up.

DRITAN I don't understand.

MUM Serbians control what is left of Yugoslavia and they want to keep Kosova a part of it. It was never theirs to own.

DRITAN/CHORUS We live in the mountains near the border.

Between Kosova and Albania.

I can practically see the border from my house.

But I've never looked at it properly before.

MUM There is no border between Kosovans and Albanians. We are the same people. With the same language, the same flag and the same heart.

DAD Once Kosova was part of Albania. We were united, the same country.

MUM For six hundred years Kosova has had shifting borders. Like the tide going in and out.

DRITAN Why?

MUM Because it's right in the middle of Europe, halfway between East and West, North and South.

DAD And there's lots of gold mines. Lots. It's rich, so everyone wants a piece of it.

MUM And every time the tide goes in and out, people have to flee their homes.

DRITAN/CHORUS Where I live is a place called Has. And across the border there is a place called Has. A Has in Albania, and a Has in Kosova.

MUM There are a lot of places like that in Kosova and Albania, with the same name. And we are the same people, cut in two.

DAD After World War Two, the Allies carved up all our countries yet again, and Kosova was given to Yugoslavia.

MUM And now Yugoslavia is dying and there are so many wars all over the Balkans.

DAD And now in Kosova, the Serbians are driving out the Kosovan-Albanians.

MUM Driving them into their graves, you mean.

DRITAN I think I understand that.

DRITAN/CHORUS And that war...

Is getting closer

Closer

Closer

A stream of refugees.

I wake up one morning and in my village is just...people. Thousands. Fleeing the bloodshed.

A family stays with us – parents and two kids older than me and my brother. They came from a city called Gjakova, an ancient city, a beautiful city, a wealthy city, but now totally flattened and burned to the ground. Except the Serbian people's houses – they had been left untouched. This family are really wealthy, but they come to us on foot with nothing, just the clothes on their backs. They stayed with us cos my dad said:

DAD If you can do something for someone, then, why not? If I can help them I should help them.

DRITAN/CHORUS Besa: "word of honour". That's how my Dad was. Is. And that's how it is in my culture. Everyone else in our village has people, family, staying with them too.

CHORUS – There's too many people coming into our village / and the villages near us.

– We can't cope.

– How do we feed / everybody?

– We'll feed them. / No problem.

– How do we / house everybody?

– Here, who /needs blankets?

– Move on. / Move south.

– The war is getting closer.

– You can stay here. / Of course.

– We have / to move south.

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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