



HOW NOT TO DROWN

BY NICOLA McCARTNEY AND DRITAN KASTRATI

INFORMATION PACK

2023

ThickSkin

TRAVERSE
THEATRE



'truly stunning'

★★★★★ The Scotsman

*'A heroic evocation of
human triumph'*

★★★★★ The Herald

How Not To Drown is the true story of Dritan Kastrati, who plays the lead in this emotionally charged and uplifting show.

"I don't know why my Dad let me go, especially when he knew how dangerous, how hard it was... I was too young, too weak to make this journey. I wouldn't have sent me... He wouldn't have sent me unless there was a reason."

Winner: 2019 Scotsman Fringe First award

Winner: 2019 Herald Angel award

Winner: 2020 Hector McMillan Best New Scottish Play award

thickskintheatre.co.uk

In 2002, after the end of the Kosovan War, Dritan is sent on the notoriously perilous journey across the Adriatic with a gang of people smugglers to a new life in Europe. The fight for survival continues as he clings to his identity and sense of self when he ends up in the British care system. He relies on his young wit and charm to navigate this journey. With ThickSkin's trademark physicality and slick production values, How Not To Drown presents an action film for the stage.

Written by Dritan alongside renowned playwright Nicola McCartney and directed by ThickSkin's Artistic Director Neil Bettles (Frantic Assembly's *The Unreturning*, Disney's *Bedknobs & Broomsticks*). How Not To Drown sees Dritan and an impressive cast share his own story of endurance as a little kid who wasn't safe or welcome anywhere in the world.

CREATIVE TEAM

Writers	Nicola McCartney & Dritan Kastrati
Director	Neil Bettles
Set & Costume Design	Becky Minto
Sound Designer	Alexandra Faye Braithwaite
Lighting Design	Zoe Spurr

ABOUT THICKSKIN

Extraordinary stories told in unexpected ways

ThickSkin is reinventing theatre for the next generation. We are reimagining what theatre can be and looking to share human stories through quality, future-facing, multi-disciplined formats. We're developing 360° artists of the future for a hybrid world where physical and digital collide in more ways than ever before.

We produce bold and ambitious theatre; using our distinctive physicality and cinematic style to reach and inspire young, new and diverse audiences across the world. Our desire to make theatre accessible and exciting for young people underpins all our work. We draw on a wide range of creative approaches to tell stories in new and inspiring ways. From live stage productions to virtual reality experiences, to immersive audio plays, we make theatre that is rooted in contemporary culture.

ThickSkin has a long history of seeking out and supporting new talent, providing meaningful opportunities for collaboration alongside high-calibre creative teams. We nurture talented theatre makers, providing a springboard for artists who are ready to take a leap.

The company was founded by Neil Bettles and Laura Mallows in 2010 and quickly established itself as one of the UK's most exciting theatre companies, producing multi-award-winning productions, commissioning new writing and touring worldwide. We have recently been invited to join Arts Council England's National Portfolio and with a new home as Resident Company at The Old Courts, we are the only touring theatre company based in Wigan.

thickskintheatre.co.uk

[@thickskintheatre](https://www.instagram.com/thickskintheatre)

[@thickskintweets](https://www.twitter.com/thickskintweets)

GENERAL INFO

- Running time is 90 minutes without an interval. Haze and loud bangs are used during the production.
- Latecomers will only be admitted after the first 6 minutes of performance.
- How Not to Drown uses loud sound effects, flashing lights & haze.

TRANSLATION

How Not to Drown requires an experienced technical translator, fluent in English and the relevant language. The translator MUST be onstage with ThickSkin's crew for the meeting with the venue and staff, duration of the get-in, set up time for each performance (approx. 2 hours), every performance and the get-out. The translator must NOT have any other role during this time.

TRANSPORT

How Not to Drown travels in a long wheel-based transit van external dimensions 5.70m (L) x 2.40m (w) x 2.55m (H). Overall freight including all toured technical equipment is approximately 1200kg – the set alone weights approximately 700kg.

'Stunning, fluid, beautiful choreography... inspirational and moving.' ★★★★★
BritishTheatre.com

'A triumph from beginning to end... truly something not to be missed.' ★★★★★
The Reviews Hub

'Its power springs from its absolute authenticity... fluently and brilliantly told.' ★★★★★
What's On Stage



TECHNICAL

SPACE & VENUE

How Not to Drown is designed to fit within a footprint of 8m (w) x 7m (d) x 5m (H).

These dimensions represent usable performance space and do not include wing space or space downstage of a proscenium.

How Not to Drown is intended for an end-on proscenium stage or an end-on black box theatre with seating directly opposite the performance area. Semi-thrust configuration can work.

The stage floor must be smooth, level (0% gradient/rake) and painted black or covered in black dance floor.

The loading dock of the theatre must have direct access to the performance area. All loading doors must be at least 3 meters high x 2.5 meters wide (this is slightly flexible depending on the access – stairs, double/single doors etc).

SCENIC ELEMENTS

How Not to Drown set consist of:

- A 4600mm x 3600mm wooden raft. The top of the raft is made up of 4 x 8 x 4 sections weighting approximately 50kg each. These sections slot into each other.
- The tops are bolted in through a metal structure made from 30mm boxed steel. Constructed by McGarrie Steel Fabricators. The metal structure is made up of 7 rectangular sections creating the centre box. With 18 outriggers. The largest section is 1220mm(H) x 2590mm(L)
- A centre pivot. The base of this requires being screwed into the stage floor.
- The central rectangle has 4 casters to rotate the set.
- US left & US right casters have foot breaks on them.
- Each corner has stage weights to counterweight using the extreme corners.
- A 'cat' style ladder from stage level to the highest section of the set.
- 3 x metal pedestrian barriers
- 1 x metal rectangle, used as a door and various other items
- 2 x chairs, 1 x table, 1 x small roll of carpet.
- 2 x gym mats positions US of the raft for safety.

We require:

- A minimum of 12 stage weights. This is to put on the caster plates to counterweight the set.

MASKING

We require:

- Full backs upstage.
- 1 x set of legs - 2.5m(w). These should be the full height to the grid. Position to be determined at the fit-up.
- Full wing masking running perpendicular to the proscenium (German masking), positioned behind the booms.

STAGE & COMPANY MANAGEMENT

We require:

- Easy access to drinking water and access to tea and coffee and a microwave during lunch and dinner breaks.
- Dish washing facilities and use of fridge and minimal storage.
- A secure place to lock up two Airsoft BB AK47 guns. These are in a locked case (please see separate risk assessment).

CAST WARM UPS

The company participate in a half hour warm up before show. Due to the physical nature of the performance we request that the venue is a minimum temperature of 22 degrees Celsius (71f) during warm up, performance and warm down.

SOUND

How Not to Drown tours with:

- Laptop to run Qlab, however we will use inhouse computer if this is an option.
- Audio Interface with 8 sends to inhouse mixer.

We require:

- The capability to run midi cues with inhouse equipment.
- Please see sperate speaker plan which. Can you please advise the best position for surround speakers.

LIGHTING

We require:

- An ETC ION
- All boom hardware, tank traps, pipes, de-rig arms
- All socapec/harting multi used to feed under deck: 4 x dimmer circuits (floods), 1 x hot power (hazer)
- Suitable jumps to send 13A hot power down as multi for hazer under deck
- DMX5 cabling to feed hazer under deck
- 4 x floor plates/bases for floods
- 2 x hazers (the venue must have the ability to isolate any smoke detection)

We tour with:

- The show ETC ION show file
- Please see separate venue specific lighting plan
- All lighting gels

COMMS

- We require a set of comms upstage centre.
- We require 2 sets in the control room

SURTITLES

In venues where projected translation is desired, the promoter will provide a black (or dark grey) projection surface/screen and all hardware to run the projections - including the projector. This can be an LED screen if required.

The size, material, and exact location of surtitles screen must be discussed with the company's Production Manager in advance of the visit. The promoter will also provide a computer and projection system to operate the surtitles.

The surtitles are to be operated by an operator supplied by the promoter. The promoter will insure the operator is given a recording of the show in advance to rehearse with, as well as rehearsals in the theatre. The promoter will ensure that the operator is experienced and capable of adapting to changing timing and performances. The script translation should be supplied by the promoter in liaison with the company.

COSTUME & WARDROBE

We require:

- 1 x Dressing room for 3 x male performers
- 1 x Dressing Room for 2 x female performers.
- Full laundry facilities including washing machine, dryer, steamer & iron/ironing board
- Access to showers for all performers.

STAFFING & CREW

- The show tours with a Stage Manager, Deputy Stage Manager, Production Electrician & Sound Engineer all of whom participate in the get in & fit up.
- How Not To Drown provides Lighting & Sound operators.

We require:

Day 1 – fit up

Morning - 2 x Stage Technician, 2 x Lighting Technician, 1 x Sound Technician

Afternoon - 2 x Stage Technician, 2 x Lighting Technician, 1 x Sound Technician

Evening - 2 x Lighting Technician, 1 x Sound Technician

Day 2 – fit up

Morning - 1 x Lighting Technician, 1 x Sound Technician

Afternoon Dress Rehearsal - Duty Technician

Evening Performance - Duty Technician

Subsequent days

Performances - Duty Technicians

Get out - 2 x Stage Technician, 2 x Lighting Technician, 1 x Sound Technician

- All personnel must wear the correct PPE and be capable of carrying shared weights of up to 60kg.

WORK SCHEDULE

- A detailed schedule will be prepared on a per-venue basis.
- How Not to Drown requires 5 x 4 hour sessions from the start of the load-in to the first performance.
- The get out will take between 2 and 4 hours, this is venue dependent.
- All technical equipment must be in the theatre and in working order from the beginning of our fit up.

CREATIVE LEARNING OFFER

ThickSkin has designed an exciting package of creative learning, access and audience development activity to support young people and local communities to engage with *How Not To Drown* at your venue. Activities are designed to engage students aged 14+, through school, college and degree levels; enriching their experience of seeing the show and providing an in-depth look at ThickSkin's process of making work.

Our production and workshops are recommended for age 14+. Examples of groups that would benefit from these activities are:

- School or college students
- Community groups
- Young companies
- d/Deaf or disabled audiences
- University students
- Early career artists

Activities include:

- Post show discussions
- Accessible performance
- Workshops
- Free digital learning resources

Onsite Workshops

We're offering two free workshops led by experienced ThickSkin artists and members of the cast, for young people seeing the show. The workshop is movement based. Participants are led through some of the creative processes used by the company to devise new work. A fun, active and collaborative session in a creative and supportive environment.

"In the future, this will be a drama department/exam piece standard. It's so perfect."

Drama Teacher

Workshops in Schools

Devising Physical Theatre workshops can also be delivered in school/college settings and are led by ThickSkin's artists. These workshops have a strong link to GCSE and A-Level learning objectives, encouraging students to create and develop their ideas to communicate meaning for theatrical performance. Sessions are designed to inspire students to develop their own material and become confident with physical devising.

"ThickSkin understand how young people think, what they want and also enjoy." Drama Teacher

Digital Learning Resources - ThickSkin TV

For teachers, students, and audiences who want to explore behind the scenes, ThickSkin TV is a brilliant free learning resources.

Alongside the show, ThickSkin TV offers a series of short films, including a behind-the-scenes documentary, creative tasks and a deep dive into the creative process.

Curriculum links allow students to develop a knowledge and understanding of how theatre is developed and performed.

PRESS RESPONSE

'Neil Bettles' superbly physical production' ★★★★★ The Scotsman

'Kastrati's disciplined, often humorous central performance is at times almost unbearably moving' ★★★★★ The Scotsman

'so telling and so inspirational' ★★★★★ What's On Stage

'fluently told and shocking in its straightforward account' ★★★★★ Sunday Times

'pulls the audience headfirst into a sea of emotion... This is truly something not to be missed.' ★★★★★ 1/2 ReviewsHub

'brilliantly stylised choreography' ★★★★★ The Herald

'The staging is as turbulent and as knife-edge as Kastrati's life itself.' ★★★★★ EdFest

'This is a painful, heartfelt show. One which reminds of the emotional costs of being forced to leave home as a child and being denied love.' Lyn Gardner, Stage Door





Work with us

If you would like to programme this production, or wish to find out more please get in touch:

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thickskintheatre.co.uk
[@ThickSkinTweets](https://twitter.com/ThickSkinTweets)
[@thickskintheatre](https://twitter.com/thickskintheatre)

Other ways we can work with you:

Alongside each of our productions we offer show-specific workshops, which focus on physical devising skills and digital learning resources to support school groups seeing the show. We can provide post show discussions and 'meet the company' activities.

ThickSkin can partner your organisation to provide bespoke services, such as:

- Movement direction / choreography for your in-house productions.
- Creative content for your social media.
- Immersive theatre experiences.
- Unique events, such as pop up / flash mob performances.
- Work with young people and communities.

For more info about our other shows, visit:

thickskintheatre.co.uk/promoters