

**STRANGE  
TOWN** ★

# DR KORCZAK'S EXAMPLE

By David Greig

Directed by Steve Small

Photo: Andy Collin [www.andycollin.com](http://www.andycollin.com)

venue 30 |

**PRODUCTION PACK**

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## THE PLAY

**“This story happened. It did happen.”**

Based on real events *Dr Korczak's Example* is set in 1942 during the final days of an orphanage in the Warsaw Ghetto. Food is scarce, tempers are rising and everyone wants to survive.

Dr Korczak was a Polish Jewish doctor and writer. He passionately championed every child's right to freedom, respect and love.

Award-winning playwright David Greig tells the powerful tale of Korczak's refusal to abandon the young people in his care. The play focuses on the human need for respect and hope, even in the face of appalling injustice.

Strange Town's production originally showcased in January 2018 for Holocaust Memorial Day and was revived for a successful Fringe run in August 2018 prior to touring to Edinburgh secondary schools. Following the run at the Fringe the production was invited to perform at the Brighton Festival. Due to popular demand the production was revived for the 2019 Edinburgh fringe and then toured to 18 secondary schools.



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# INTERVIEWS WITH THE *DR KORCZAK'S EXAMPLE COMPANY*

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## FRASER DODDS ACTOR

### Q1. How did you get into acting?

I did not do much acting at school. I was in the choir twice for two musicals and had a small role in one school production, however loved every minute of it. So after leaving school I thought I'd give what I love doing a shot as a career.

### Q2. Who do you play and what do you think of your character?

I play Dr Korczak. He is an extremely complex character but I love playing him. I feel he is in desperate need of love, however he does not realise this himself. For this run of Dr K I have been trying to find what is bad about Korczak, as nobody is perfect. This has given him a whole new dimension I never realised before.

### Q3. Do you have a favourite scene in *Dr Korczak's Example*?

The telling off scene, after the throwing stones, and the Nazi scene.

### Q4. What was the most difficult part of rehearsing *Dr Korczak's Example*?

For me it was talking to the soldier. Having to perform with no one giving you a reaction is difficult, however the questions the director and assistant director asked me helped give the soldier's character some depth, making me as Korczak feel empathy and/or anger towards him.

### Q5. How do you approach learning lines?

About a month before rehearsals start (if I have that amount of time!) I'll read the play once or twice a day. Not to learn lines, but as an audience member. So when rehearsals come I know the play extremely well, but not as a character. If you learn your lines before rehearsals, you've read them in a certain way and will remember them in a certain way, so if the director wants you to change it, it will be difficult. Knowing the play and not the lines gives you more freedom to try things out.

### Q6. What do you think is the message of the play?

To be fortunate for what you have.

### Q7. What is your favourite part of the play?

Adzio and Stephanie hiding at the end.

### Q8. What is your favourite part of touring?

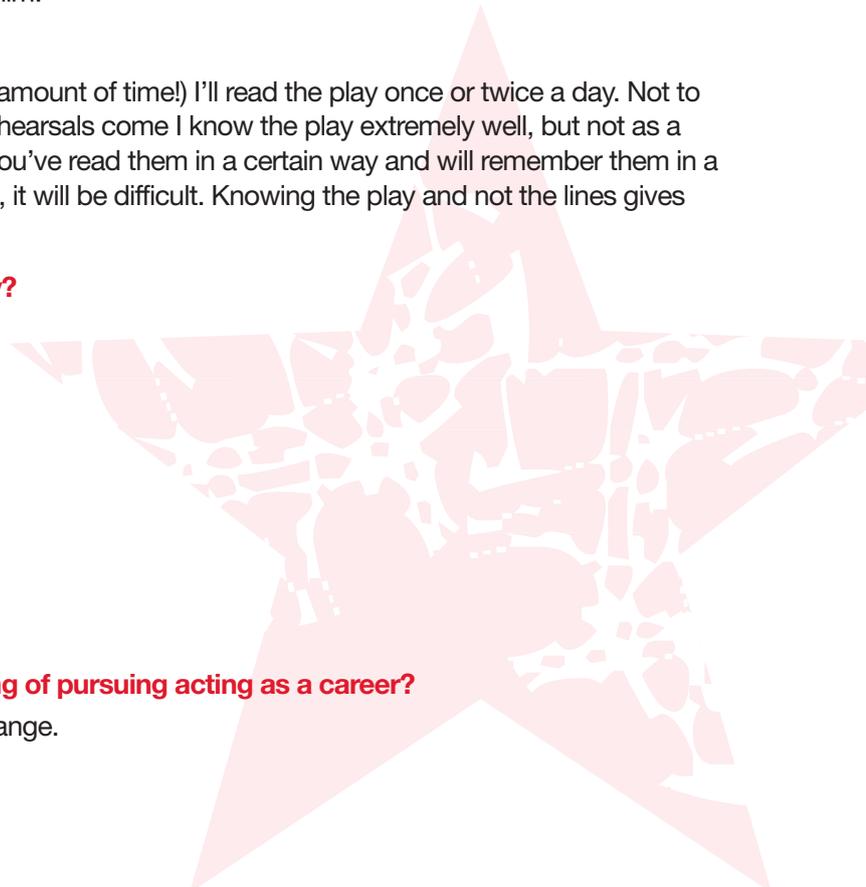
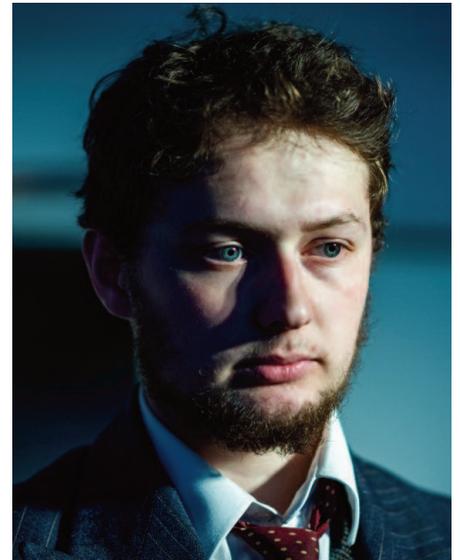
Talking to the students after the show.

### Q9. What is your favourite play?

*Other People* by Christopher Shinn.

### Q10. What advice do you have for anyone thinking of pursuing acting as a career?

Turn up on time, know your lines and be open to change.



## LIANNE HARRIS ACTOR

### Q1. How did you get into acting?

I took Drama in high school, then later did a practical acting course at Edinburgh College (PASS). Someone I knew from college, who is with Strange Town, told me about the audition for the fringe run of *Dr Korczak* last year. I auditioned and got the part and that led on to me auditioning for and doing a couple of other shows with Strange Town.

### Q2. Who do you play and what do you think of your character?

I play Stephanie. I really love Steffi's appreciation for nature, I relate to that a lot. I think she's brave, caring and probably not as smart as she thinks she is.

### Q3. Do you have a favourite scene in *Dr Korczak's Example*?

I think my favourite scene to be in sort of changes for each performance. In terms of the story, I love the scene where Dr Korczak and Adzio are playing "King Adzio the Fly".

### Q4. What was the most difficult part of rehearsing *Dr Korczak's Example*?

Because we've done this play before, the most difficult part was to not let the performance be mechanical or flat just because we were familiar with the play. It's set in an important time in history and we wanted it to be truthful and respectful to that. To keep it fresh we had to do more analysis and character work and research. Our directors really pushed us to question and try to understand why every line was in the script.

### Q5. How do you approach learning lines?

Reading the lines aloud, even when I'm going over it alone, helps me remember them. Also splitting the text into smaller chunks based on changes in tone or atmosphere can be useful.

### Q6. What do you think is the message of the play?

I think the message of the play is "It is always honourable to stand up to evil. Any way you choose to protest is valid."

### Q7. What is your favourite part of the play?

The dolls.

### Q8. What is your favourite part of touring?

How different every audience and performance space is. The atmosphere of a show and the audience reaction can change so much from school to school and that's really fun for me as an actor.

### Q9. What is your favourite play?

*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* by Tom Stoppard.

### Q10. What advice do you have for anyone thinking of pursuing acting as a career?

Go to the theatre, read plays, try new things so you can find out what kind of acting you want to do, and why you want to do it. Also, join a youth theatre or take a course if you can. There are a lot of ways into the industry and if you look for opportunities and try lots of different things you'll be able to find the path that suits you.



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## FRASER MACRAE ACTOR

### Q1. How did you get into acting?

At high school I studied higher Drama but then went on to a business management degree at University. Eventually I came back to acting when I realised the course wasn't for me. Luckily I was given the opportunity to be part of a Strange Town show and haven't looked back since.

### Q2. Who do you play and what do you think of your character?

Adzio who is a streetwise 16-year-old Jewish orphan. I think you end up liking every character you get to play as you see yourself in them. If Adzio was an animal, he would be a stray dog that barks, howls and bites until someone shows him a bit of love which transforms him into a big soft puppy.

### Q3. Do you have a favourite scene in *Dr Korczak's Example*?

My favourite scene is the last time Dr Korczak speaks to Adzio and Steffi. He has called them into his office as they have just thrown stones at a church. For me this scene asks the most interesting question of the play, if you were in the shoes of these characters would you fight fire with fire or would you live by example?

### Q4. What was the most difficult part of rehearsing *Dr Korczak's Example*?

The biggest challenge was keeping the play fresh and interesting due to the fact that I had already played the character twice before. To combat this I delved deeper into the character of Adzio and asked myself exactly what he hopes to achieve by the end of the play.

### Q5. How do you approach learning lines?

I have dyslexia and learning lines can take a long time but repetition is the best way. There's also an app called Line Learner which I highly recommend.

### Q6. What do you think is the message of the play?

What are our rights and what are our responsibilities?

### Q7. What is your favourite part of the play?

Adzio and Steffi's first meeting.

### Q8. What is your favourite part of touring?

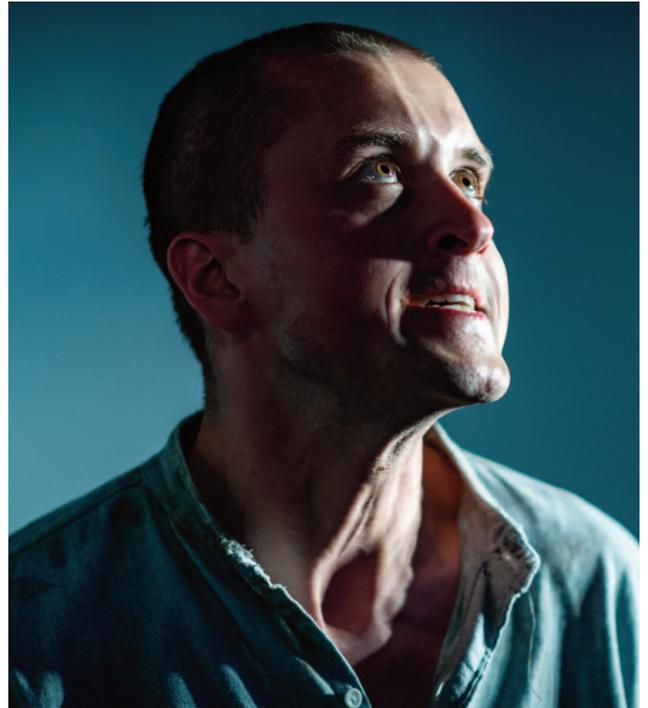
The challenge of performing in a different space every day.

### Q9. What is your favourite play?

I don't have an all time favourite. One of my favourite plays to perform in was *Balisong* by Jennifer Adam.

### Q10. What advice do you have for anyone thinking of pursuing acting as a career?

Be lucky! And be kind to yourself. You will face a lot of rejection but always try and find the positive if you can.



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## STEVE SMALL DIRECTOR

### Q1. Describe what your job entails?

I oversee every part of the production. I choose the script, audition the actors and put together the creative team – designer, sound designer, lighting designer and assistant director to try and create a play that works for the secondary schools audience we're taking it to.

### Q2. How did you get into theatre?

I didn't know what I wanted to do when I left school and had enjoyed doing a school play. I did a Scottish Youth Theatre Summer school, joined a government training scheme theatre company and studied Theatre and English at University. I read, saw and was involved in the making of a lot of plays. I've been 'doing' theatre ever since.

### Q3. What do you do during rehearsals?

I sit and watch every part of the rehearsals and try to help the actors by supporting, challenging and questioning them. I think it's really important to create an atmosphere where people feel they are all part of one team all working towards making the best possible piece of theatre.

### Q4. Do you have a favourite scene in *Dr Korczak's Example*?

Scene 20 when Adzio sneaks into the girls dorm, wakes Stephanie and asks her to go with him. It's an amazing scene with so much going on in a very short amount of time. It shows how hopeless a situation they are in, how unrealistic they are about what they are going to do but also how real they are as characters. It's a scene about hope.

### Q5. What's the hardest bit of your job?

When you don't have the answer to something. Everyone looks to you to know the answers to everything and sometimes you just don't. You have to trust that you'll work it out and usually working with everyone you do but it can be quite stressful ...

### Q6. What do you think is the message of the play?

That even in the darkest times there is always hope and love.

### Q7. What is your favourite part of the play?

See Q4.

### Q8. What is your favourite part of touring?

I like the scariness and the camaraderie of it. You turn up somewhere, unload the van, put up the set, rig the lights and sound, do the show and then take it all down again and reverse the procedure. You've no idea how the audience will react or what they will think. You have to trust in your team and in the strength of the play.

### Q9. What is your favourite play?

Far, far too many to even begin to choose. If I had to choose from the plays I've worked on there are two that stand out – *Our Country's Good* by Timberlake Wertenbaker and *Laurel and Hardy* by Tom McGrath. I also really like *Midsummer* another play by David Greig and then there's... I better stop there.

### Q10. What advice do you have for anyone thinking of going into theatre as a career?

Do it but remember it won't be easy. Do it because you have to and because you can't imagine doing anything else. Don't do it if you want to be famous. Your chances of being famous are 100/1. Finally remember you have to spend a great deal of your life at work so try to do something you enjoy doing.



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## VEERA LAITINEN

### STAGE MANAGER (SM) / TOURING MANAGER (TM)

#### Q1. Describe what your job entails?

The SM's role is to communicate between cast members, production staff and venue staff (schools). The SM makes sure that rehearsals are running to time and everyone knows about any changes. The SM creates a prompt book which is the main copy of the script. The SM also makes sure that the rehearsal room or the stage is ready and all the set and props are in the right place. The SM is often responsible for Risk Assessments and looks after budgets sometimes too. On tour, the SM might be driving the set, props, costumes and lights to venues and oversees the get-in/out to and from venue. The SM will report about any issues eg. in Show Report to the Director and other member of the creative team. Sometimes the SM will operate sound or lights.



#### Q2. How did you get into theatre?

I did some performances at school and always enjoyed performing. I took drama in middle school and high school and did youth drama after school for some years. At university I was member of a student theatre company. After two years, I decided I wanted to make theatre my career and applied for a Drama and Performance Degree in Edinburgh. Since then I have studied contemporary performance, community theatre, physical theatre and stage management. I think it is good to have an understanding of work on and off stage.

#### Q3. What do you do during rehearsals?

My role is to make sure the space is ready for rehearsals; that the set and props are in place and I would be following the script, prompting lines and operating sound cues. I would also make sure everyone knows the timetable, any changes and make note in Rehearsal Reports.

#### Q4. Do you have a favourite scene in *Dr Korczak's Example*?

My favourite scene in the play is when Dr. Korczak asks Adzio to dream about being a king. I also like using puppets.

#### Q5. What's the hardest bit of your job?

Sometimes things can change unexpectedly and this might cause things to not go as planned. On tour, we might go to places where we don't know what will await us so we have to improvise a lot. Experience helps to cope with changing environments.

#### Q6. What do you think is the message of the play?

To appreciate what we have today and not to take things for granted.

#### Q7. What is your favourite part of the play?

I like the beginning when Adzio moves in the orphanage. His transformation is interesting to observe.

#### Q8. What is your favourite part of touring?

I like meeting new people and visiting new places. It keeps the work interesting and challenging. I like working in (touring) theatre due to the fact that everyday is a bit different from the next. Also there is the possibility to be creative, problem solve and take a performance to audience whom would not otherwise see it.

#### Q9. What is your favourite play?

I enjoy watching physical theatre and circus so any kind of big trick is the best!



## MALCOLM ROGAN LIGHTING DESIGNER

### Q1. Describe what your job entails?

Imagining what each scene could or should look like and creating it with lighting to set moods.

### Q2. How did you get into theatre?

I started making props for an amateur company and wound up volunteering as a crew member.

### Q3. What do you do during rehearsals?

During rehearsal I have to feel the overall mood based on text, performance and setting, then work out how best to compliment these using lighting and timing.

### Q4. Do you have a favourite scene in *Dr Korczak's Example*?

I think the church scene as it shows the arrogance, cowardice and selfishness of organised religion.

### Q5. What's the hardest bit of your job?

All of my work is inside my mind and I can not rehearse any of it. When I come to the point of trying to make it work, it is the first time anyone, including me, has seen it. There is a massive time pressure and an awareness that everyone is waiting for me to finish.

### Q6. What do you think is the message of the play?

I think the message is about the fragility of life and our trial to survive is dependant on so many external factors that we simply have to make the very most of any opportunities we find.

### Q7. What is your favourite part of the play?

The ending where we see determination and resignation at the same time. The struggle and acceptance of destiny.

### Q8. What is your favourite part of touring?

New challenges, new people, new audiences and new reactions in each place.

### Q9. What is your favourite play?

*Enrico 4* by Pirandello which explores mentality and social issues with the twist of who is kidding who.

### Q10. What advice do you have for anyone thinking of going into theatre as a career?

Run away before you ruin a good hobby! Or, always consider that someone has done it before but you can try to do it better. Or we are all here pretending and if an audience member laughs or cries or applauds, we have done our job well. Remember that creation is not always what we dreamed it would be. See *Frankenstein* for example.



## DAVID GREIG WRITER

David Greig is a multi award-winning playwright who became the Artistic Director of The Lyceum in 2016. David's most notable plays include *The Events*, *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart*, *Midsummer*, *Dunsinane* and *Europe*. More recently, David teamed up with original creators Bill Forsyth and Mark Knopfler to adapt the international hit film *Local Hero* for the stage – this premiered in Edinburgh in 2019. David also wrote the stage adaptation of Joe Simpson's best-selling 1988 memoir *Touching the Void*, which was co-produced by The Lyceum and Bristol Old Vic and toured round the UK and to Hong Kong. His other adaptations recently seen on The Lyceum stage include Strindberg's *Creditors* (2018) and Aeschylus' *The Suppliant Women* (2016) which went on to the Belfast International Festival, Manchester Royal Exchange, and the Young Vic in London. David wrote the book for *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* which opened in the West End in 2013 and then transferred to Broadway in 2017. His adaptation of Dr Seuss' *The Lorax* opened at The Old Vic for Christmas 2015. David is currently working on a new stage adaptation of *Solaris*, based on Stanislaw Lem's 1961 Soviet science fiction novel, which is being co-produced by The Lyceum in Edinburgh and Malthouse Theatre in Melbourne Australia and will open at The Lyceum in September 2019.



## REVIEWS

[www.theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2018/08/edinburgh-festival-fringe-2018-review-dr-korczaks-example/](http://www.theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2018/08/edinburgh-festival-fringe-2018-review-dr-korczaks-example/)

<http://www.alledinburghtheatre.com/dr-korczaks-example-review-edfringe-2018/>

<http://www.alledinburghtheatre.com/dr-korczaks-example-strange-town-edfringe-2019-review/>

## AUDIENCE FEEDBACK

‘ ... thank you for an incredible afternoon of theatre on Friday ... It is such a great play and your production was beautifully portrayed. Please pass on my congratulations to your cast and crew and keep in touch regarding future productions.’

‘It was a real privilege watching *Dr Korczak’s Example*. Thank you for bringing this production to our classes. I hope the rest of the run goes well.’

‘The play was extremely powerful and emotionally gripping. It even reduced some of us to tears and it left us thinking deeply about the main issues regarding the play and how they relate to our modern day society.’

‘The use of yellow stars to represent the lives of the children being lost was extremely heart wrenching and the silence whilst dropping each star really helped to build tension and was really emotional.’

‘Overall, the play had a massive impact on the audience and encouraged us to think about Dr Korczak’s decision to stay with his children, and if we would have made the same decision in his shoes.’





Photo by Andy Catlin

**Strange Town** is a theatre company for young people based in Leith. Over the last eleven years it has staged 124 productions, commissioned over 100 original scripts, established an actors' agency, set up a young company for 18-25 year olds, performed at the fringe, toured to secondary schools, prisons and youth work conferences across Scotland, commissioned and produced two series of original radio drama, offered regular youth theatre classes and provided jobs and career opportunities to countless numbers of people starting out.

Strange Town have performed at The Scottish Storytelling Centre, Out of the Blue, The Royal Lyceum Theatre, Assembly Roxy, Rothes Halls, Glenrothes, Hill Street Theatre, The Traverse, Summerhall, the Great Hall Edinburgh Castle, MacRobert, St. John's Church in the West End, underneath the East Stand at Easter Road, Leith Theatre and countless schools across Scotland.

For further information about a performance in your school contact:

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