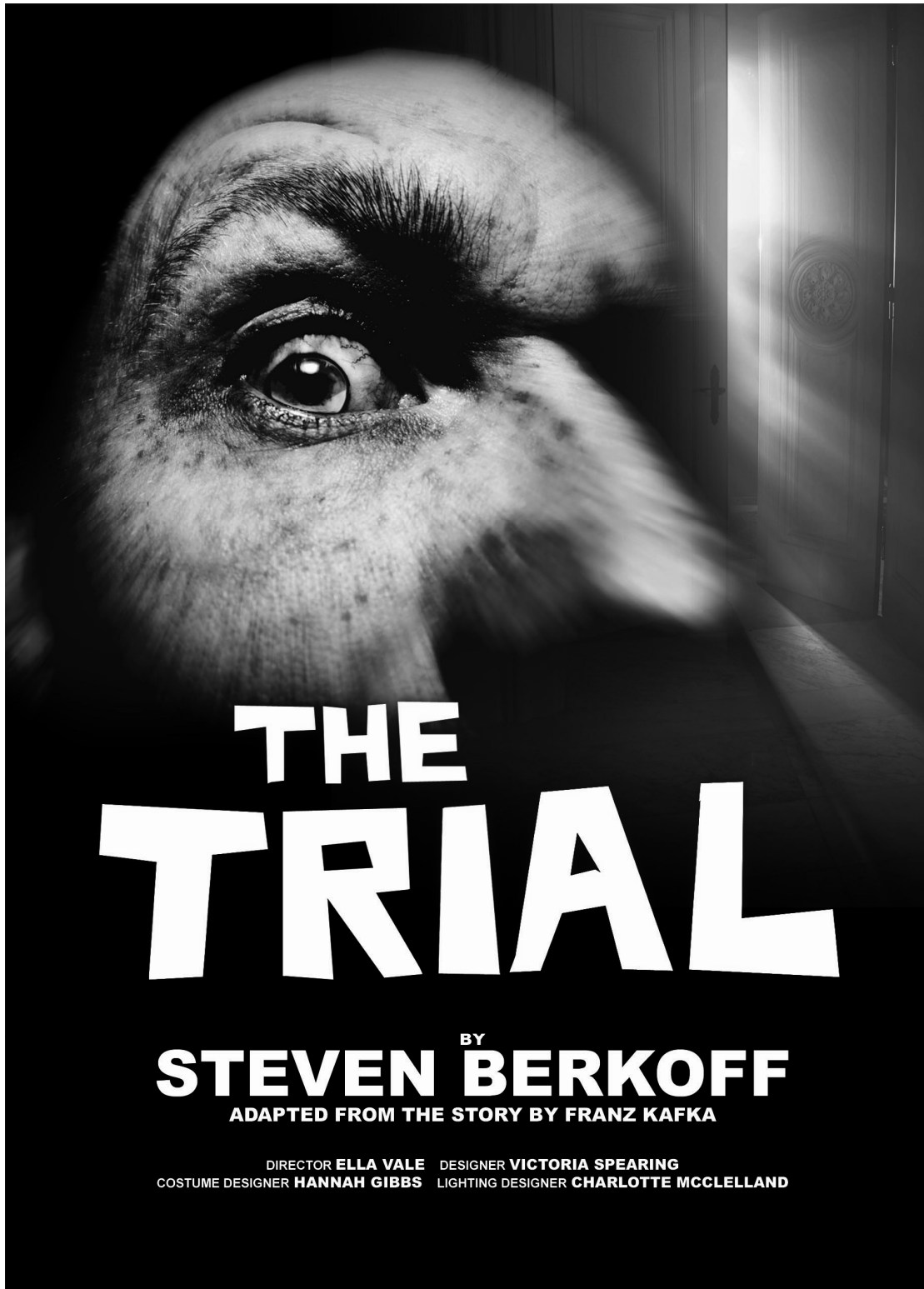




Blackeyed Theatre presents



THE TRIAL

BY
STEVEN BERKOFF

ADAPTED FROM THE STORY BY FRANZ KAFKA

DIRECTOR **ELLA VALE** DESIGNER **VICTORIA SPEARING**
COSTUME DESIGNER **HANNAH GIBBS** LIGHTING DESIGNER **CHARLOTTE MCCLELLAND**

Media Pack

www.blackeyedtheatre.co.uk



Contents	Page
Creatives and Cast	3
Tour dates	4
Press release	5
Steven Berkoff	6
Franz Kafka	7
Berkoff's Version of The Trial	8
Directing The Trial	9
Interview with simon Wegrzyn	10
Cast biographies	12
Creatives' biographies	14
Blackeyed Theatre	15
Local press angles	16
Press images and contact details	17



Creatives and Cast

Blackeyed Theatre presents

The Trial

By Steven Berkoff

Adapted from the novel by Franz Kafka

Artistic Team

Director	Ella Vale
Designer	Victoria Spearing
Costume Design	Hannah Gibbs
Lighting Designer	Charlotte McClelland
Producer	Adrian McDougall for Blackeyed Theatre, in association with North Devon Theatres and South Hill Park Arts Centre, Bracknell

Cast

Inspector/Whipper/Father/Huld/Chorus	Derek Elwood
Mrs Grubach/Elsa/Laundress/Leni/Chorus	Nadia Morgan
Assistant Manager/Student/Smart Man/Block/Titorelli/Chorus	Robert Snell
Baliff/Manager/Judge/Priest/Chorus	Paul Taylor
Joseph K	Simon Wegrzyn



Tour Dates

Spring 2012

Jan 24 – 25 Queen's Theatre, Barnstable - 8pm	01271 324242
Jan 27 Radlett Centre - 8pm	01923 857546
Jan 28 Cornerstone Arts, Didcot - 7.30pm	01235 515144
Jan 31 – Feb 1 Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton – 7.30pm (+ 1.30pm Wed)	01902 321321
Feb 2 Castle Theatre, Wellingborough – 7.30pm	01933 270007
Feb 3 Courtyard Theatre, Hereford - 7.30pm	01432 340555
Feb 7 Middlesbrough Theatre - 7.30pm	01642 815181
Feb 10 The Byre Theatre, Fife - 7.30pm	01334 475000
Feb 11 The Brunton Theatre, Mussleburgh - 7.30pm	0131 665 2240
Feb 20 Brewhouse, Taunton - 7.45pm	01823 283244
Feb 21 – 25 Greenwich Theatre – 7.30pm (+ 2.30pm Sat)	020 8858 7755
Feb 27 Buxton Opera House - 7.30pm	0845 127 2190
Feb 29 Brewery Arts Centre, Kendal - 7.30pm	01539 725133
Mar 2 Queen's Hall, Hexham - 7.30pm	01434 652477
Mar 5 – 6 Mumford Theatre, Cambridge – 7.30pm	01223 352932
Mar 7 The Theatre, Chipping Norton - 2pm & 7.45pm	01608 642350
Mar 8 The Lights, Andover - 7.30pm	01264 368368
Mar 12 Theatre Royal, Margate - 7.30pm	01227 787787
Mar 13 Key Theatre, Peterborough - 7.30pm	01733 552439
Mar 14 Stahl Theatre, Oundle - 7.45pm	01832 273930
Mar 15 Hertford Theatre - 1.30pm & 7.45pm	01992 531500
Mar 16 Trinity Theatre, Tunbridge Wells - 8pm	01892 678678
Mar 19 Stantonbury Campus Theatre - 7.30pm	01908 324422
Mar 20 - 22 Wilde Theatre, Bracknell - 7.30pm (1.30pm Thu)	01344 484123
Mar 23 - 24 Connaught Theatre, Worthing - 7.30pm	01903 206206
Mar 26 Loughborough Town Hall - 7pm	01509 231914
Mar 27 Forum Theatre, Malvern - 7.30pm	01684 892277
Mar 29 Grand Theatre, Lancaster - 8pm	01524 64695
Mar 30 Venue Cymru, Llandudno – 7.30pm	01492 872000
Mar 31 Royal Spa Centre Studio, Leamington Spa – 7.45pm	01926 334418



Press Release

Blackeyed Theatre, in association with North Devon Theatres and South Hill Park, presents

The Trial

By Steven Berkoff

Adapted from the novel by Franz Kafka

Director **Ella Vale** Designer **Victoria Spearing**

Cast **Derek Elwood, Nadia Morgan, Robert Snell, Paul Taylor, Simon Wegrzyn**

Monday 12 December 2011 – In Spring 2012, Berkshire-based Blackeyed Theatre Company tours Steven Berkoff's *The Trial* to theatres throughout England and Scotland. Berkoff's seminal adaptation of Franz Kafka's classic story has performances from 24 January until 31 March 2012.

The Trial is the story of Joseph K, an estranged citizen who finds himself the victim of anonymous governing forces beyond his control. Deceived by authoritarian power, he is relentlessly hunted down for a crime that remains nameless. Finding himself arrested and awaiting trial, K sinks deeper and deeper as he tries to escape through twists and turns that are at once shocking, thrilling and funny.

More than forty years after its first performance, Steven Berkoff's brilliant adaptation of Franz Kafka's masterpiece has become a classic work of twentieth century theatre and a widely studied syllabus piece. Kafka's universal parable about the human condition is retold in Berkoff's startlingly original, fresh and endlessly surprising play, brought back to the stage in Blackeyed Theatre's trademark ensemble, physical theatre style to create an inspiring and unforgettable piece of theatre, ideal for lovers of pure theatre and those studying the 'Berkovian' theatre style.

SUGGESTION: Add quote from an actor about your venue (see pages 11 - 13).

Tickets for *The Trial* are priced at **£XX (£xx Concs)** and can be purchased at the Box Office on **ADD NUMBER** or online at **ADD WEBSITE**.

For more information on *The Trial* visit www.blackeyedtheatre.co.uk. Blackeyed Theatre, based in Berkshire, is a nationally-renowned producer of high-quality theatre. "***Blackeyed Theatre, one of the most audacious, innovative companies working in contemporary British theatre***" The Stage

Ends

For further info, to arrange interviews or arrange Press Tickets please contact
ADD DETAILS



Steven Berkoff

Steven Berkoff is one of the most famous playwrights of the 20th and 21st centuries. The Guardian said recently, 'At the grand age of 70, Steven Berkoff remains one of the most provocative voices in British theatre.'

Born into a Jewish Russian family in Hackney in 1937, Berkoff was part of the large immigrant population of East London. He was originally named Leslie Steven Berks (his original surname, "Berkovitch", was subsequently shortened by his father). As a young child he was evacuated to Luton during the Second World War, then returned to the blitzed East End to go to Harold Pinter's Old School in Hackney, which he hated.

At the age of 15 he spent a short time in Borstal after stealing a bike. A child who could not settle in the bleak and crumbling world of post-war London, Berkoff used the theatre to escape from his reality. He was educated at Hackney Downs School and trained at the Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art in 1958, and in 1965, at the Ecole Jacques Le Coq in Paris. In 1968, after working in repertory theatre, he founded the London Theatre Group, working with a group of actors to perform an adaptation of Franz Kafka's story *In The Penal Colony*, and his first original play *East* established him as a major talent.

Berkoff's hard start in life comes through in his writing, and particularly in the plays he wrote in the 1970s and 1980s, many of which have a bleak, nightmarish quality. As a playwright he is performed all over the world, and at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival he is the most performed playwright after Shakespeare!

It also shaped him as an actor. "Acting was my therapy," Berkoff once told the Observer. "A person can find themselves through acting - and escape themselves. Acting can release you and make you so much more aware of life." As a performer, it's on stage that Berkoff comes into his own. Celebrated as an amazingly physical performer, his one man performances in particular have to be seen to be believed! However, many will recognise him for his film roles, which are varied and include aliens, bond villains and Adolf Hitler in films including *Beverly Hills Cop*, *Octopussy*, *A Clockwork Orange* and *Rambo: First Blood Part II*.

And even at the age of 74, he's not exactly 'taking it easy'. For despite claiming to be in semi-retirement, in the five years he's appeared in a number of films and TV episodes, acted in his own plays and did a solo tour with Shakespeare's Villains. In 2008 he brought his own stage version of the classic film *On the Waterfront* to the West End and in 2011 directed his own version of *Oedipus* at Nottingham Playhouse and performed a one man show at Riverside Studios in Hammersmith called *One Man*.



Franz Kafka

Franz Kafka was born in Prague on 3 July 1883. As a Czech-born Jewish who spoke German, Kafka experienced the effects of a low social status amongst the various other ethnicities and social classes that were residing in Prague at that time. Kafka spent most of his life living with his parents, despite the relationship with his father, which could be described as abusive according to Kafka's diary entries and Kafka's reflections in other short stories. Franz Kafka's father, Hermann was a successful businessman, importing goods for the up-and-coming middle class, and the conflict between Kafka and his father was mostly likely to have been rooted in his father's disdain for his lack of success and ambition. Kafka also suffered from conditions such as hypochondria and over-anxiety, and so, from a man who was strong-willed and pragmatic, it seems there was little patience from Hermann.

His father's opinion of him did not seem to improve until he graduated with a law degree in 1906 from German University in Prague, and then Kafka spent a short time working for an Italian insurance company. After this he was employed by the Workers' Accident Insurance Institute. Before even studying at university, Kafka read a large amount of philosophy and science, such as Nietzsche, Darwin and Spinoza, and this helped him write his first works, yet he destroyed them later on, an occurrence which happened several times during his life. It is estimated that in his lifetime he burnt around 90% of his work. It was during this time that he met Max Brod, the editor of Prager Tagblatt, who he became close friends with over the years. Just before he died, Kafka had told Brod to destroy his works, such as *The Trial*, which had no ending at the time but instead Brod fabricated an ending and published the play along with other works.

Kafka became interested in Jewish folk tales, with the support of an actor named Isak Löwy, and possibly the influence of his Jewish mother. He investigated the history, myths and the language, including giving lectures at universities on Yiddish. He wrote *The Judgement* in eight hours in September 1912 and therefore showed an original version of surrealism in literature, but never in his writing did he write a full-length novel. He became accustomed to writing in a feverish and addictive manner, lacking in sleep and forgetting to eat. He would write in German, due to his disdain for the oppression he had received from the local Czechs in Prague for being Jewish. This meant that his stories and diaries were not translated until over ten years after his death.

In 1924, Kafka was taken to Wiener Wald Sanatorium, dying only a few months later at the age of 41. Despite his efforts to maintain a physical and mental health, his hypochondria, tuberculosis and depression tormented him particularly towards the end. A letter to Brod was found in his desk in Prague, stating his final wish for all his diaries and stories to be destroyed, but less than two months later Brod signed an agreement to produce a posthumous edition of Kafka's writings.



Berkoff's Version of The Trial

Berkoff had given several interviews on his development of *The Trial*, which gave insight to his concept of the story. He believed that the story was not based solely on one theme; that it appealed to audience members in many different ways. Some would think it was about totalitarianism, some about bureaucracy, perhaps nihilism, madness or paranoia. Whatever the theme would be, Berkoff claimed that the story essentially reaches out on the investigation of human nature, a universal subject, and Kafka managed an approach that was simple and direct, yet profound. He had put a magnifying glass on society and presented it in the form of Joseph K. Berkoff believed that Kafka's fear of life, the uncertainty of the immortal soul and his complexes with society around him were reflected strongly in this piece.

Berkoff first began to work on *The Trial* with a group of students when he took a teaching post at Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art. He had been teaching mime and movement alongside drama, and when he was asked to put on a more experimental production with the students, he chose a novel, simply because most plays did not have 20 characters, and *The Trial* was the story he chose. He read out the first line and encouraged the students to act it out, and from that he continued to write a form of play incorporating the use of an ensemble.

Because of the nature of the story, an ensemble became a thoroughly fitting tool for the presentation of the play, Berkoff's version of which was published in 1981. It gave the nightmarish style of the play a particular detachment that meant the characters that the actors portrayed did not have the rigid restriction of staying as that character; they were able to slip back into the ensemble without breaking the moment where they once adopted a character's personality. Berkoff also played Titorelli and chose to base the character on Salvador Dali, to compliment the surrealism of the play. At that point in his career Berkoff was fascinated with the work of Alwin Nikolais, an American choreographer, who in one dance piece had used coloured screens to create different scenes and environments. With a hope to involve this method of making images with props, they constructed screens as well, with the idea that they could reveal and close the scenes. The screens had reached the point of construction where they were simple frames, and Berkoff realized that the frames presented much more opportunity for *The Trial*. The frames could create corridors, and place the ensemble inside them, and therefore forming another dimension to the space on the stage and give a new edge to the story. These props could express the play by developing the story physically (changing from one location to another) but could also act as a metaphor for the parable of the doorkeeper before the door.



Directing *The Trial*

When I first read this play I honestly thought - my goodness, what on earth is this all about? Then I read it again, and I understood a bit more, then I read it again and understood a bit more still! The hardest thing about it, and also the most interesting thing, is that we as an audience must make up our own minds about what *The Trial* really means. Albert Camus says of Kafka's book, *The Trial*, 'It is the fate and perhaps the greatness of this work that it offers everything and confirms nothing.' I think what he's trying to say is that we will each have our own ideas when we watch or read this play, that it will speak to us according to the life we have experienced and the things we individually relate to as human beings.

So one of my greatest challenges as a director is to allow this play when it is being performed to still 'confirm nothing.' I want to make it approachable, I want to bring my audience close to Joseph K and the world he inhabits, I want them to go on the journey with him and feel that they too could have been Joseph K, could have acted in the same way, could have felt both innocent and guilty of a crime which is never named. But I must try to avoid forcing my audience to feel that *The Trial* is only about what I think it is about. The glorious thing about Berkoff's piece is that there are no wrong answers!

I am so looking forward to getting my cast in a room and discovering this play. It isn't going to be a production with a grand gimmick or design concept - it is going to be the production I and five fantastic actors create through the pooling of all our minds and ideas. I am expecting it to be very, very hard work; I am expecting it to be a bit of a brain-melter, and I am expecting it to be funny, anarchic and silly! Like the best things in life, it will be an enormous challenge - but it may also be a great adventure.

Ella Vale



Interview with Simon Wegrzyn

Simon Wegrzyn, who plays Joseph K in *The Trial*, talks to Georgina Elsmere about the production, ahead of its national tour.

Could you tell me a bit about the production?

The director is Ella Vale, who I'm very excited to be working with. It's a great opportunity for me to work with her. It's a huge leap for me as an actor to take on a lead role in a Berkoff play. We're creating a world; one that's terrifying and overshadowed by a feeling of nameless guilt. We've got a 1950s Cold War setting, which adds to this element of a higher threat.

We've been researching Franz Kafka, who was Jewish, and I think there's a definite feeling of being threatened. Obviously it adds to that feeling, the knowledge of the huge crimes against the Jews by the Germans. We're trying to instil the production with subtle elements of threat. I think it's still relevant, that feeling.

The Berkovian elements are very challenging. It's a very physical style with a lot of movement, vocal work and improvisation. I think I'll probably be on stage the whole time, which helps to embody that living environment of the piece.

Tell me about your character, Joseph K.

I'm excited to play him. He's a very complex character who faces this huge crisis. He's charged with a crime, but he and the audience don't know what the charge is. He's definitely very much at unrest within himself.

He's torn between two realities; one of order, with his job in a bank which has routine and is quite mundane, and the other of disorder, which is chaos and his struggles against the law. Despite that, I think he's very much in charge of his existence. Society has this feeling of strange guilt, which he shares in, and I think that drives him.

The part is emotionally and physically draining. I've been reading the Kafka book, and it's very ambiguous. He's a victim of the law, but he has a very strong inner voice driving him to escape it, but he never succeeds.

I'm making it sound so dark! There are comedic elements too. There will be moments that make the audience laugh. Getting that lighter side in with the dark is something that Blackeyed Theatre do well.

Blackeyed Theatre Company is well-loved and well-respected. Is there pressure joining a company like that?

It's my first time working with them, and I'm excited to do so. I'd heard of the Blackeyed Theatre Company through other people I know who'd worked with them, and it's great for me, as I really am an ensemble performer.

I've been very lucky as an actor. I worked with Kneehigh Theatre, and I was with the RSC for a bit. I studied at UCLan, where we did a lot of work on physical skills,



character embodiment, that sort of thing. The training I did there really made me sure I wanted to do ensemble work.

It's wonderful to work with a company like this. It gives me the chance to perform in theatres I've dreamed of performing in. I'm particularly looking forward to the Buxton Opera House.

I grew up in Cheltenham, which isn't all that far from Hereford, so I have been to many productions there. It's going to be amazing to be on a stage I've watched performances on. I know The Courtyard well, and the theatre in Malvern too.

Are you in rehearsals yet?

Not yet, we start tomorrow. Ella's been sending us lots of emails, with pictures and other inspiration. I've been talking with Nadia a lot, who plays all the female characters. She's got a bit of a job, actually! The women are very important in it, Joseph uses them to escape.

We go into rehearsals tomorrow. It's going to be quite a physical day, I think. We're going to be playing with the set. It's like a big play-area, so I'm looking forward to it, getting to be a big kid.

How have you been preparing for the part?

I've been reading the script to draw out Berkoff's take on the story. It's continuously shifting; it's not dissimilar from the original book actually, which I've also been reading. I've sort of been reading with one in each hand to get the full picture of the character.

I've spoken to friends who work in law about the law processes, and the strangeness of being accused of a crime without knowing what it is. I don't know what he is he might have done. K is a bachelor, leading a bachelor lifestyle, so I think it could be connected to that. He ends up kind of trying to justify his right to existence, so it may be that his lifestyle isn't seen as being right. I suppose I might get more of an idea when I get into rehearsals. It could be of course that's he's innocent. He could be just a victim of this hideous, dominating law, which links with Kafka's experience of the Jews under the Germans, during the Second World War. It may be the sort of crime where you've done nothing but been yourself.

I'm excited to find out, actually. I'd prefer to go in not knowing, I think.

Ends.

Georgina Elsmere is Press and Marketing Officer at The Courtyard Centre for the Arts in Hereford



Cast Biographies

Derek Elwood

Derek trained at Arts Educational, London, and has a wide range of theatrical credits to his name, including Tiresias in Oedipus (Blackeyed Theatre) and Mr Twit in The Twits at The Dukes, Lancaster. His other stage credits include Clown (Travelling Light), Pinocchio (mac - Midlands Arts Centre), Gulliver's Travels (MakeBelieve Arts), Arabian Nights...and Days (Shifting Sands), The Man Next Door (Hoipolloi), Faust (Burning Cat Productions), Jack Drum's Entertainment (Work In Progress Theatre Company), Malvolio's Revenge (Works Well Productions), Twelfth Night (Maqama Theatre Company), Richard III (UQ Productions), Lucky Winner (Wildtune Productions), Alice In Wonderland (Giddy Kipper Productions), Richard III (Broken Ruler Theatre).

Derek has also performed street theatre with the Natural Theatre Company and Lightening Ensemble. Film and television credits include Centenary, Jack the Ripper: An Ongoing Mystery and Don't Walk.



Nadia Morgan

Nadia studied at UCL and trained at the Central School of Speech and Drama. She recently appeared as Hermione in The Winter's Tale, at the Mercury Theatre Colchester. Other recent work includes The Gypsy Bible – a new 'folk opera' for Opera North, and Grimm Tales at Theatre by the Lake, in Keswick.

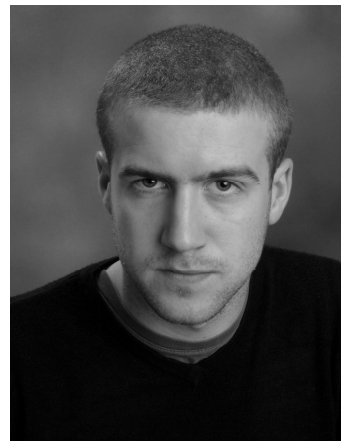
For the National Theatre education: Helena and Flute in A Midsummer Night's Dream, and various roles in Macbeth. For Opera North: the Mute in The Abduction from the Seraglio. Also for the Mercury Theatre, Colchester: Julia in The Rivals; Iphigenia in IPH...; Assumption; Julius Caesar; and Depot. For Eastern Angles: Charlie in Bentwater Roads; and Stephan van Calcar in The Anatomist. For the Unicorn Theatre: Red Fortress; and Beauty and the Beast. Other credits include Hideaway (Complicite/Quiconque); St George and the Dragon (national tour); Cordelia and the Fool in King Lear (international tour); and Jarman Garden (Riverside Studios).

Nadia has also participated in a range of projects in development for a variety of theatre companies, including at the National Theatre Studio and the Young Vic, as well as appearing in several short films and radio productions.



Robert Snell

After graduating from Bretton Hall Robert has gained a wide variety of Theatre experience in parts such as Ariel in The Tempest at the Crucible Sheffield and Algernon in The Importance of Being Earnest. He has toured many plays across the country and has worked in Film and Television. Robert is very much looking forward to being part of Blackeyed Theatre's version of "The Trial" as it's a great opportunity not only to show off his physical ability but also the reality and depth he can bring to all his characters.



Paul Taylor

Paul has toured extensively around Britain and the rest of Europe, nearly fulfilling his dream of travelling in a troupe, in a caravan, to a town, put up the stage, do the show, pack up and move on.

Paul has enjoyed a varied and interesting career with roles including Emcee in Cabaret, Mozart in Amadeus, Tom Jones in The History of Tom Jones, several outings as Oberon/Theseus in A Midsummer Night's Dream, Norman in The Dresser, Peter Quinn/Miles in Turn of the Screw, Macheath in The Beggars Opera, Dorian Gray in A Picture of Dorian Gray, Jesus in Godspell, Orin and others in Little Shop of Horrors, Dick/Schnitzerschitz in Ha Ha Hitler and Jerome in Tom Neill's adaptation of Three Men in a Boat. Previous roles for Blackeyed Theatre include The Singer in The Caucasian Chalk Circle, Arturo Ui in The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui, Yvan in Art, Paul in Misery, Willy in Blue Remembered Hills and Mme Ranyevskaya/Firs in The Cherry Orchard.



Christmas, always a fun time for actors, has given just as much variety and has seen Paul as Captain Hook in Peter Pan, King Pie Rat in Dick Whittington, as an Ugly Sister in Cinderella (twice - he looks good in a frock and has great legs), The Devil and everything else in The Snow Queen, Big Bad Wolf in Big Bad Wolf, Ghost of Christmas Past and others in A Christmas Carol, Widow Twanky in Aladdin and Fleur in Beauty and The Beast.

His film credits include Tim in Curtain Call, Jamie in Unbelievably British (nominated in several international film festivals, Short Film category) and Tim in Chocolates and Champagne – a film he enjoyed making immensely. Lately, Paul has been enjoying several interesting projects in Norwich and the rest of Norfolk, most recently as part of An impossible Journey: The Art of Tadeusz Kantor, a site specific theatre piece for installation on a steam train.

Simon Wegrzyn

Simon is an actor based in London, and for many years was a member of the National Youth Theatre. He graduated with a 1st class BA (Hons) in Acting from UCLAN and has since gone on to work extensively in theatre, television, and film.

Theatre includes; Mr Darcy in 'Pride & Prejudice' and Sergeant Troy in 'Far From The Madding Crowd' (The Times Literature Festival), Pocket Boy in 'Fret' (National Theatre Studio), Charlie in 'Me, Fatty' (Southwark Playhouse), Nym in 'Henry V' (RSC), Raleigh in 'Journey's End' (Edinburgh Playhouse), Fats in 'Hansel & Grettel' (PBM/New Wimbledon Theatre), Algernon in 'The Importance of Being Earnest' (Buxton Festival), Nick in 'Curious' (Southwark Playhouse), Scott in 'Calling' (Kings Head), The Thief in 'Hanging Around' (Kneehigh Theatre/National Theatre), Martin in 'Citizenship' (NYT/National Theatre).

Television & Film includes; Lewis in 'Wannabes' (BBC Three), Michael in Welcome to Neverland (North London Film Council), Punk in 'Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll', Shaun in 'Baby Girl', Wigga in 'London's Language' (in association with the Old Vic Theatre) and appeared at Cannes Film Festival 2011 in 'War of the Sexes', playing lead role Stiffy.

Radio & Voiceover includes; Captain Stuart Braithwaite in 'The Christmas Truce' (BBC Radio Devon/Splinter Media), and Narration for new television talent show 'Stage' (Zodiak Media)

Simon is also a Director most known for 'Alice In Wonderland The Musical' (Castle Theatre, Wellingborough), and is Co-Artistic Director of Splinter Theatre & Media.





Creative Biographies

Ella Vale – Director

Ella trained first as a dancer then as an actress at the Manchester Metropolitan School of Theatre and has worked extensively throughout the UK at theatres including the West Yorkshire Playhouse, the Tricycle Theatre, the Manchester Library Theatre and the Colchester Mercury Theatre. She has also worked with Georgina Lamb and Liam Steel of Frantic Assembly and as a writer and choreographer for Illuminos, producing and directing films and large scale projection art.

She was assistant director on *The Madness of George III*, a co-production for Original, Blackeyed and Icarus Theatre companies, on *Treasure Island* for the Northern Broadsides and on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *the Mikado* for the Stephen Joseph Theatre. Movement direction work includes *The Snow Queen* for the Stephen Joseph Theatre, *A Clockwork Orange* for the Glasgow Citizen's Theatre and *Tom's Midnight Garden* for Theatre by the Lake.

Victoria Spearing - Designer

Since graduating from Bretton Hall in 2001, Victoria has worked as a freelance theatre designer and maker. Theatre work includes *The Queen and I*, *Bugsy Malone*, *BFG*, *Whistle Down the Wind*, *When We Were Married*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Norfolk's Rose*, *The Caretaker*, *Around the World in 80 days*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Blue Remembered Hills*, *Summer Holiday*, *House and Garden*, *The Adventures of Mr Toad*, *Henry V*, *Oliver!* *Fantastic Mr Fox*, *Brassed Off*, *Noughts and Crosses*, *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *Billy Elliot* (all for South Hill Park Arts Centre), *Mort the Musical* and *Loserville the Musical* for Youth Music Theatre UK.

Touring work includes *The Caretaker*, *Art*, *Misery*, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, *Oedipus*, *Oh What a Lovely War*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Alfie*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *The Beekeeper* (all for Blackeyed Theatre), *See How They Run*, *Twelfth Night*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Shakespeare's R&J*, *The Importance of Being Oscar*, *Mallard and Journey's End* for Original Theatre, *The Madness of George III* for Wilde Enterprises and the *Go! Go! Go! Show* for Shows4kids.

She has also designed South Hill Park's hugely successful pantomimes, *Dick Whittington*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Cinderella*, *Aladdin*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Peter Pan*.

In addition she has designed and made props for use in educational productions in most of the major London museums.

Charlotte McClelland - Lighting Designer

Charlotte trained at Central School of Speech and Drama on an Arts Council Bursary.

Recent lighting designs include: *Angels on High* for Guildford International Music festival (vertical dance on Guildford Cathedral), *Carmen* and *The Marriage of Figaro* for Longborough Festival Opera, *Chicos del 21* and *The City Weeps* for Frances M Lynch/electric voice theatre.

Previous work for Blackeyed Theatre includes *Oedipus*, *The Beekeeper* and *Oh! What a Lovely War*.

Hannah Gibbs - Costume Designer

Other productions with Blackeyed Theatre: *The Beekeeper*

West End credits: *Lend Me A Tenor* (Gielgud Theatre), *Sweet Charity* (Theatre Royal Haymarket)

Other theatre credits: *Guys and Dolls* (Upstairs at the Gatehouse), *Burlesque* (Jermyn Street Theatre), *Ragtime* (Landor Theatre), *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night* (GB Theatre), *As You Like It* (Rose Theatre, Kingston), *Just So*, *Stiffed* (Tabard Theatre) *Gilbert is Dead* (Hoxton Hall) *Demi Monde*, *Richard III*, *Fool for Love*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Taste of Honey*, *Ajax* (Love and Madness), *Duet for One* (Milton Keynes Theatre), *The Time of Your Life* (The Finborough Theatre), *A Latesummer Night's Dream* (Mill Pond Media), *Crazy for You* (The Church Hill Theatre), *The Wind in the Willows* (Theatre Workshop), *Dick McWhittington* (The Brunton Theatre), *Troilus and Cressida* (The Kings Theatre, Edinburgh).

Hannah trained in Costume Design and Construction at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh.



Blackeyed Theatre

Blackeyed Theatre Company was established in 2004 to create exciting opportunities for artists and audiences alike, and to offer challenging, high quality theatre to the mid-scale touring circuit. The company specialises in reviving modern classics and staging established titles in innovative ways, using small ensembles of actor/musicians to create theatre that is audacious, fresh and far bigger than the sum of its parts. Since 2004 Blackeyed Theatre has embarked on national tours of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (Bertolt Brecht), *Alfie* (Bill Naughton), *The Cherry Orchard* (Anton Chekhov), *Oh What a Lovely War* (Joan Littlewood), the world premiere of *Oedipus* (Steven Berkoff) and *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (Bertolt Brecht).

In 2009, Blackeyed Theatre became an associate company of South Hill Park Arts Centre. In 2008, the company produced its first Christmas show, *A Christmas Carol*, a year later *Peter Pan* and in 2010 *Beauty and the Beast*. In 2011, the company launched PULSE, a new writing initiative designed to create new, sustainable theatre, from which its latest production, *The Beekeeper*, was discovered. *The Beekeeper* premiered in Bracknell in October 2011 and transfers to London in May 2012.

Blackeyed Theatre is largely self-sufficient and receives no funding for its national tours, creating innovative, challenging theatre that's also commercially viable. It achieves this by producing work that audiences want to see but in ways that challenge their expectations, by bringing together artists with a genuine passion for the work they produce, and through an appreciation that works of art with a mass appeal do not have to be presented in a dumbed-down way. By offering a theatrical experience that's both artistically excellent and affordable, audiences and theatres are far more sustainable in the long term. And responding to demand ensures that more people see innovative theatre.

Blackeyed Theatre has a growing national reputation for creating dynamic theatre using live music and great performances to tell stories with honesty and passion.

Company press quotes:

"One of the most innovative, audacious companies working in contemporary English theatre"

The Stage

"One of the best performances ever seen in this theatre"

Hexham Courant (*Alfie*)

"Any assumption that Oh! What a Lovely War is a period piece is shot to shrapnel. Forty years on, we need Littlewood's vision more than ever. Blackeyed Theatre restore it to us with astonishing power. Catch it if you can."

The Stage (*Oh What A Lovely War*)

"Quite why Steven Berkoff's version of Oedipus has not been performed since it was first published in 2000 is maybe that it was just waiting for Blackeyed Theatre to do it full justice. It has been worth the wait"

The Stage (*Oedipus*)



Local Press Angles

Simon Wegrzyn, who plays Joseph K.

Simon has big connections with **THE CASTLE WELLINGBOROUGH** and **BREWERY ARTS CENTRE** in Kendal.

In 2005, he directed the Brewery Youth Theatre in **THE EMPERORS NEW CLOTHES**.

In 2008, he directed **ALICE IN WONDERLAND The Musical** at The Castle in Wellingborough. This was a fantastic production with a very talented cast. It received great reviews and really put The Castle on the map for great Christmas productions.

Simon is very excited to return to these theatres as an actor.

Ella Vale, the director.

Ella was born in **BUXTON** and grew up in Matlock, where she also went to school.

Her first experience of theatre was in Bakewell, not far from **BUXTON**.

Ella has worked a lot at Theatre by the Lake in Keswick, not far from **KENDAL**, as well as the **LANCASTER** Dukes Theatre.

Nadia Morgan, who plays all the female roles.

Nadia grew up and had her first experience of theatre in Melton Mowbray – not far from **LOUGHBOROUGH** - where she attended youth theatre from the age of 8.

Paul Taylor, who plays a number of ensemble roles.

Having grown up in Lee-on-Solent, Paul moved to **BRACKNELL** when he was 13, where he attended Edgbarrow School in Crowthorne, then Bracknell College.

Paul's acting career started at The Wilde Theatre in **BRACKNELL**.

He has worked at the Castle **WELLINGBOROUGH** several times, with their community company on Oliver, as well as two of their Christmas shows, playing The Big Bad Wolf in Big Bad Wolf and The Devil in The Snow Queen.

Paul has toured to all the other venues in England, some of them several times.



Press Images and Contact Details

Publicity shots for *The Trial* will be available from 11 January and can be downloaded from *The Trial* page at www.blackeyedtheatre.co.uk

Alternatively, contact us and we will email images to you.

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