

Eden by Luke Dunne

Actors Audition Pack, Plaintext Version

Neues Schauspiel, March 2024

English Theatre Leipzig

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ABOUT THE PLAY

“That’s the problem with leaving.

What is?

It deprives you of catharsis.

What’s catharsis?

It means ‘to cleanse with blood’.”

‘Eden’ is a play about exile. It draws inspiration from a wide array of exile myths – from Exodus, to Gilgamesh, to contemporary cult mythologies – to investigate the timeless desire to retreat from the world in order to reshape it, to begin again from scratch.

Exile is explored as a repetitive process, which is reflected in the play’s structure. Different motivations for exile – the corruption of flesh, external threat, and divine intervention – emerge, are abandoned, and then recur later on in the play.

Eden explores the exile myth as a story of spiritual incapacity, and particularly examines the role of the leader of an exiled group. Often a man, this leader takes on an intensified patriarchal role: instead of being head of a household he becomes father of a whole people. What crisis of masculinity follows reckoning with the patriarch’s fallibility?

The story is told through seven unnamed characters: A, B, C, D, E, F and O. The first six form a chorus who variously interweave together or stand distinctly; at times they finish one another’s sentences, at others they discourse in collaboration and opposition. Their dialogue is at times lyrical and abstract, forming the thrumming rhythm and heartbeat of the show. O is their leader, described in the stage directions as “*king-in-exile, ringleader, master of ceremonies, preacher, prophet*”. O speaks more directly and often in soliloquy, thereby leading both the characters and audience through the journey of the play.

The primary aesthetic touchstone for *Eden* is Pina Bausch’s choreography for *The Rite of Spring*. The stage will be covered in soil, and all actors will get progressively dirty as the show goes on. Rehearsals will involve physical theatre and devising, and will therefore involve a series of workshops to develop these skills before rehearsing the text of the play.

PRODUCTION DETAILS

Performance dates: 7th, 8th, 9th, 15th & 16th March 2024

Location: Neues Schauspiel, Leipzig

Rehearsal dates: December 2023-March 2024

Rehearsal location: Neues Schauspiel

Funding: We have a 1000€ budget total for production costs (set, costume, props, etc)

Pay: At the moment, we do not have the funds to pay anyone on the production. We will apply for funding from various sources and hope to be able to give everybody a financial contribution for their time, but this is not a guarantee.

Eden will be performed by a cast of 7 actors, will run for about 80 minutes, and will be performed and rehearsed entirely in English.

You don't need to be a native English speaker to work on the production, but you do need to be able to work with the rest of the cast and production team in English.

To ensure a comfortable, professional, and fun environment for everybody, *Eden* will have two Welfare Contacts for the production. The role of a Welfare Contact is to be an approachable member of the team, to whom any member of cast or crew can turn if they have a problem or concern within the production. Examples of problems that might arise are: somebody finds the rehearsals are too frequent or too long, somebody finds another member of the team uncooperative, etc. The Welfare Contacts will be appointed after the Production Team has been finalised but will most likely be the Producer and the Assistant Director.

OVERVIEW OF THE AUDITION PROCESS

Audition dates & times:

14:00-21:00, Friday 1st December

10:00-21:00, Saturday 2nd December

10:00-15:00, Sunday 3rd December

14:00-21.00, Friday 8th December

Link to book an audition slot: <https://edenbylukedunne.dayschedule.com/eden-by-luke-dunne-auditions>

Location: Dresdner59, Dresdner Str. 59, 04317 –
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/1LNx5VuV2TskzkZv7>

Accessibility: The venue is accessible by wheelchair, but unfortunately there is no accessible toilet. If you need to use the accessible entrance, please book a slot as normal and email izzyc.c@icloud.com to tell us the date and time of your audition, so we can meet you and let you in.

Each actor will have a 15-minute audition slot. In this time we will:

Do a brief warm-up

You will perform an extract from 'Eden' (any one of the four in this document)

The directing team will give you some redirection

You will perform the extract a second time

We will ask you for your availability on 9th December (callback date)

If you have any questions or any problems booking a slot, please email izzyc.c@icloud.com

We are looking for 7 actors to play in an ensemble cast. We have no expectations about the gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, ability, religion, previous experience, or age of our cast.

We encourage absolutely anybody who is interested to audition, and we can make adjustments to our process if you require them! Just get in touch :)

Thank you for taking the time to audition, we really look forward to meeting you!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

What is redirection?

Redirection is when the directing team (director + assistant director) ask you to perform the extract you have chosen with a different mood or motivation than you had the first time you performed it. For example, we might ask you to 'imagine you are saying this just after an argument' or 'imagine you are saying this while extremely tired' or 'could you emphasize the character's excitement'. When we redirect you, we are not telling you that your first performance was wrong! Rather, we want to see your range as an actor, and we want to see how you respond to being directed.

How much preparation should I do?

You need to choose an audition extract from this document to read in the audition, but you don't need to learn it by heart! Just become familiar with it so you can perform relatively freely in front of the directing team.

Who will I be auditioning in front of?

The director and assistant director, and our Producer will drop in sometimes too. One of us will read the second part of the extract if you choose one with dialogue.

What happens after the audition?

We will email you by the evening of Friday 8th December to let you know whether you have a callback audition. We are hosting callbacks on Saturday 9th December in Neues Schauspiel, and they will most likely be group auditions. We understand that this is a quick turnaround, so please be as accurate as possible when you give us your availability for Saturday 9th – and thank you for understanding :)

What if I want to audition but I cannot attend any of the scheduled dates?

Email izzyc.c@icloud.com and we can discuss alternative arrangements.

EXTRACT 1

O: Everyone has a delusion which they cannot live without. Here is mine. I was still a boy when I first began to think that I could never have been born, would never be allowed to die, until I had stood on virgin soil, and run a plough through it for the first time. I found it unbearable to be born (as I was) into a vast, prefabricated organism, to be just one of a thousand anonymous babies born to weary mothers, to take my first breath as one of fumes, digestive odours, the stench of men and women in close proximity. I grew up to be a distracted and unexceptionable adult. I spent years trying to figure out what was drawing my attention. At first I thought it was the pollution, emerging from every available orifice, organic or mechanical. I fixated on the smoke which would drift from my neighbours' gardens and crawl through my open window. I closed the window, stapled it shut, applied industrial standard, adhesive putty to the slightest cracks. No luck. Nothing changed. Then I thought it might be the incessant beeping, whirring, ringing of the household machines, the telephone above all. I cut my own cord, and – whenever possible – those of my friends and family. But still I was taunted by the telephones of strangers. It was enough to see my neighbours, silent through their windows, twirling the cord around their fingers aimlessly, talking nonsense till the early hours. At last, I could take it no more. I hammered on the door of my young neighbour, a woman of twenty or so, and demanded to see her telephone. She seemed bemused, but I didn't have time to explain myself. I shoved her against the outside of the door, and fumbled around in the dark until – aha! – there it was. I had brought a pair of scissors, of course, and I cut the cord. She was screaming, claiming she'd call the police if I stayed a moment longer. But that's the beauty of it – *(laughs)* She didn't have

a telephone anymore. She was alone with me, and would be calling no one any time soon. (*suddenly serious*) In that moment I recognized that the telephone was the least of my problems, and indeed the least of hers.

EXTRACT 2

[You may choose to read A or B]

The sun is setting. The chorus enter, marching in time.

A: He said he'd lead us out of the city

B: And we followed where he led

A: To begin with a journey

B: To the land which was promised

A: That promise was made a long time ago

B: *(Sarcastic)* Venerable

A: Whole continents beckon

B: Opening their legs wide

A: Unto the women he said

B: I will multiply your sorrow

A: In sorrow you will bear children

B: Shh ... the children are sleeping

A: More twigs snapping

B: More branches breaking

A: They've sent men after us, no doubt

B: Men with rough, capable hands

A: Men with cruel, scrunched up faces

B: Weather beaten

A: Wife beaters

B: We'll march through the night

A: *(Despondent)* An army of women and children

B: An army without a purpose
A: Marching towards no destination in mind
B: Weren't there any graves left?
A: *(Sadly)* The children are awake
B: They're clutching at your hem
A: They're clutching at your throat
B: Gasping for air, tearing at it, trying to clear a passage
A: Breathe your last
B: Life is but a breath
A: Breathe your last, and think no more.

EXTRACT 3

[Please read A]

A: The Word is sharper than a two-edged sword

B: And is now half forgotten

A: The truth is, we are all groping around in the twilight

B: For the certainties it held

A: But for now, all that can wait

B: First we've got to get out

A: Out of the city.

The city is enclosed by a ring of mountains. Today they're brown with summer foliage, but the rot has set in and soon it will be winter. Tomorrow the mountains may be impassable, and we will have to wait until spring. The ridge of the mountains is an even, firm line, an artificial horizon. The sun sets across the city hours before it should. If you cut a pass through the mountains in the evening, you'll be thrust out into the light again. It feels miraculous. Turning night into day. Two sunsets. So when night falls, we'll slip through their fingers

A life spent looking over your shoulder is the most miserable existence imaginable.

B: I feel completely numb

A: You're afraid

B: No, just numb

A: Let's just say we've made it into the mountains. Now let's look down.

B: Pale with weariness

A: Climbing towards heaven, gazing on the earth

EXTRACT 4

O: Consider this train station, for example. You know it well. Of course, the trains no longer run from here, simply because there is no longer anyone who is interested in taking them. But try to remember when you were young. You used to hang out here all the time. It was somewhere to go, after all. It was easy and, at times, quite pleasant to disappear here, to settle into your favoured corner and just watch. Watch what? Watch the people going by, drifting by, rushing by. Perhaps you even had a vague ambition to become a writer, and so you'd bring your notebook along, to try and jot down well-observed details to populate a poem or a play. So much for all that. The vast central concourse would, as the name suggests, strain like a river bank attempting to ease the passage of endless gallons of meltwater running together at once. The marble façade, the gloss lacquered onto the concrete structure, was noticeably chipped away where generations of travellers had rapped their knuckles impatiently as they waited for trains to take them to - wherever. Times change, industries arrive and depart, periods of plenty are followed by periods of want. Yet even at the best of times the direction of travel was clear - out, always out. It was just that kind of place. Forever at the edge of the frame, marginalized by events, and prone to inspire dreams of more substantial, exciting places in the children born here. As a child, the snatches of conversation you caught at the dinner table, whenever the adults were confident that you couldn't possibly be listening, were always repetitive, sombre reflections on that theme . "We must find a way to leave. It's time to leave, soon everyone will have left but us. Did you hear that so and so packed up just last week? Yes, and such and such too." Often, the appropriate trains wouldn't arrive, or if they did then the travellers would themselves be thwarted - at the last - by officious guards or unexplained stoppages.

You often thought, as you watched these unhappy people trudging home, that it would be easier, and more honest, to depart on foot. The train, as with the ocean liner or the aeroplane, relies on too many moving parts, and on too many other human beings. It's difficult not to feel a kind of yearning for the straightforward, spatial logic of great journeys made on foot. Imagine a distant

mountain range or, even better, a fabled land beyond the mountains. However many thousands or millions of steps it would require to take you there, it is only ever a question of one foot in front of the other, over and over and over again. But don't you need food? But don't you need water? But don't you need shelter? Is it really that simple, to just ... go? Well, let's see.