

February 2009

***SPEAK BITTERNESS***

28 February 2009

**PACT Zollverein, Essen**

**And Webcast Live**

**Visit [www.forcedentertainment.com](http://www.forcedentertainment.com) between 5pm - 11pm (UK time)**

In *Speak Bitterness* a small group of performers take on the task of confessing to everything. Dressed in their best suits, lined-up as if for a show trial or a press conference, they meet the gaze of the audience, speaking softly, drawing them in and admitting to it all. For the six hour duration of the work the audience are free to come and go as they please whilst the performers are trapped - by turns cowed, breezy, anguished, reluctant, jovial and of course determined. The text they work from is a constantly updated catalogue of human wrong-doing great and small, from murder, genocide, rape and arson to bad moods, jealous rages and never washing-up properly or taking the dogs out for a walk.

The first text-based durational work by Forced Entertainment first performed in 1994, this seminal but rarely presented six hour version of *Speak Bitterness* laid the ground for later durational performances by the group such as *Quizoola!* and *And On The Thousandth Night*. A simple set of rules, a team of inventive and long-suffering performers, a sharp eye on the world outside the window and the piece is underway. What follows is playful, poignant and astute - a moving camera across the contemporary political and cultural landscape, and an engaging rethink on current TV and internet obsessions with reality, real time and confession.

The Essen performance of *Speak Bitterness* will be webcast live - re-entering the media space which the performance already reflects on, with echoes of televised trials, event news coverage and confessional reality television. It will also allow a wider audience to access this important work as the group return to it for the first time in five years.

2009 marks Forced Entertainment's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Since forming the company on graduation from Exeter University in 1984, the six core members of the group have sustained a unique artistic partnership for quarter of a century, confirming time and again their position as trailblazers in contemporary theatre. The company's substantial canon of work reflects an interest in the mechanics of performance, the role of the audience and the machinations of contemporary urban life. The work - framed and focused by Artistic Director Tim Etchells - is distinctive and provocative, delighting in disrupting the conventions of theatre and the expectations of audiences. Forced Entertainment's trademark collaborative process - devising work as a group through improvisation, experimentation and debate - has made them pioneers of British avant-garde theatre and earned them an unparalleled international reputation.

*Speak Bitterness* will be performed by the six core-members of Forced Entertainment including Artistic Director, Tim Etchells. Having the whole company performing together is a rare event and an appropriate marker of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

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## CREDITS

**Conceived and devised by the company**

**Performers** Robin Arthur, Tim Etchells, Richard Lowdon, Claire Marshall, Cathy Naden, and Terry O'Connor.

**Text** Tim Etchells and the company

**Direction** Tim Etchells

**Design** Richard Lowdon

**Soundtrack** John Avery

**Lighting Design** Nigel Edwards

### **Forced Entertainment Management Team**

General Manager	Eileen Evans
Administrator	Gareth James
Marketing Manager	Sarah Cockburn
Administrative Assistant	Natalie Simpson

***Speak Bitterness*** was originally developed as a commission for the National Review Of Live Art (October 1994) in Glasgow.

This performance of ***Speak Bitterness*** is supported by PACT Zollverein, Essen.

Forced Entertainment is regularly funded by Arts Council England and Sheffield City Council.

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