

FORCED ENTERTAINMENT

COMPLETE WORKS: TABLE TOP SHAKESPEARE

EDUCATION PACK



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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



ABOUT FORCED ENTERTAINMENT



Who are Forced Entertainment?

(Above) From left to right: Claire Marshall (performer), Robin Arthur (performer), Tim Etchells (Artistic Director and Performer), Cathy Naden (performer) and Richard Lowdon (designer and performer).

What are Forced Entertainment?

Forced Entertainment are a group of six artists who make work in theatre and performance and tour to audiences all around the world. The work explores and challenges what theatre and performance can be and what it can mean in contemporary life, whilst always pushing and often breaking the accepted boundaries and conventions.

**“BRITAIN’S
MOST BRILLIANT
EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE
COMPANY”
THE GUARDIAN**

Where are Forced Entertainment based?

Sheffield, United Kingdom.

How long have Forced Entertainment been together?

The company met at Exeter University and have been making work together since 1984.

THERE IS A WORLD ELSEWHERE...

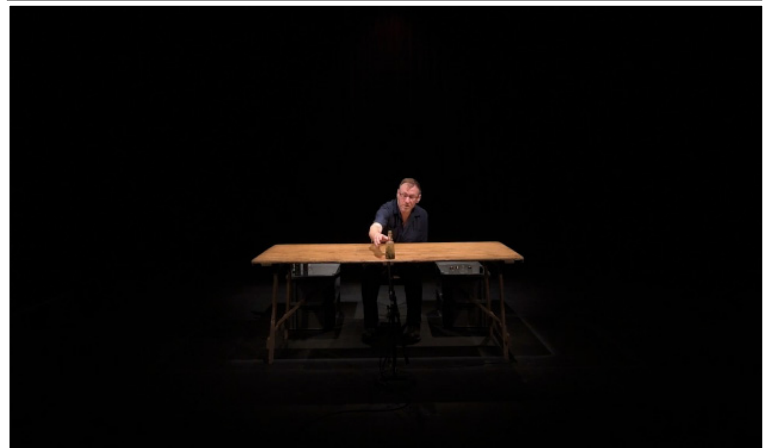
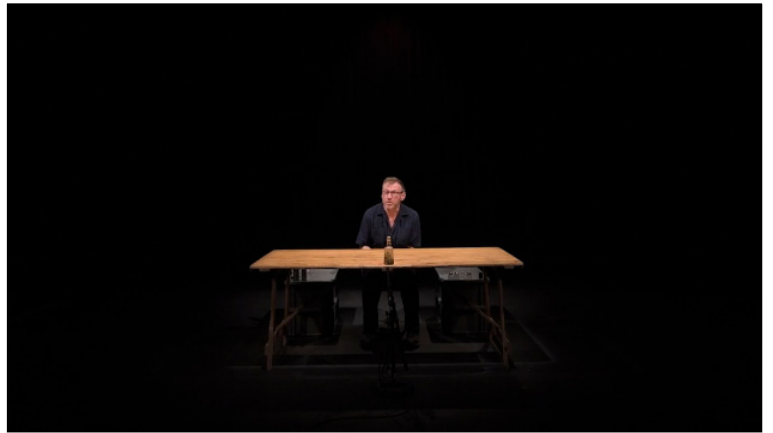
... so goes the famous line spoken by Coriolanus in the original play.

Shakespeare has been translated into more than 100 languages throughout the world and remains today one of the most universally celebrated authors in history.

Since 1960, Hamlet has been published or performed in more than 75 languages!

Shakespeare's plays have influenced thousands of performers, writers, academics and film makers around the world.

Their stories have been remembered and retold over centuries. Our version of the Complete Works of Shakespeare presents these stories in a condensed and uncomplicated way, focussing, not on the language, but on the story at the heart of the plays.



ABOUT COMPLETE WORKS



What is it?

As you can guess from the title - Complete Works: Table Top Shakespeare - it involves the complete works of William Shakespeare.

Even the poems?

Alright, the complete *dramatic* works of Shakespeare - all of his plays (with the exception of Henry VIII, as there are serious questions over its true authorship).

How many's that?

36. Everything from The Two Gentlemen of Verona to The Two Noble Kinsmen.

Take a look at the *Complete Works* [trailer](#).

So how does it work?

One performer sits at a table. The table top is the stage. Using everyday, ordinary objects to represent the characters, and speaking in everyday, ordinary language, the performer narrates the story at the heart of the play.

What about the Table Top part?

One of the key ideas behind Complete Works is to take the most famous plays in the world - famous for their grand language, grand settings, grand characters - and introduce a little intimacy and simplicity to them. This starts with reducing the stage down to a simple one metre wide, two metres long table top.

SHAKESPEARE SIMPLIFIED

When you think of Shakespeare plays, what do you think of? Pretty long, sometimes a little tricky to understand, and unless you're a hardcore fan, you're maybe familiar with the classics - Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth - but perhaps not so with ones like Timon of Athens, Henry VI Part I, II & III and The Comedy of Errors.

Complete Works is back-to-basics Shakespeare. It strips away the fancy sets, lighting, costume, actors and even the archaic language. What it leaves behind are the captivating stories at the heart of it all.

Each performer's role is to be the all-present storyteller, using the table-top characters in a kind of lo-fi puppetry, retracing the plot. They are your guide through Shakespeare's canon.

Check out the 'Making of Complete Works' with Tim Etchells [here](#).



There are no five hour long Hamlets to be found here - each play is condensed down to between 45 minutes and an hour. They are performed in cycles of three plays per evening and six plays per day on weekends.

You are free to see as many or as few as you want - you may like to see those you're familiar with or try some you've never seen before.

“The language is playful, amusing and easy to understand, making for a unique and intimate experience of Shakespeare”

TO QUIZ OR NOT TO QUIZ, THAT IS THE QUESTION...



Take our Shakespeare quiz and test your knowledge!

1. Where was William Shakespeare born?
2. Hamlet was the Prince of which European country?
3. What were the names of the two families in Romeo and Juliet?
4. Who prophesised that Macbeth would be King?
5. Which is the only Shakespeare play set in Spain?

Answers: 1. Stratford-Upon-Avon / 2. Denmark / 3. Montagues & Capulets / 4. The Three Witches / 5. Love's Labour's Lost /

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FURTHER INFORMATION

A large print version of this pack is available on request, please contact:
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The company is also a member of the
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