

BIGMOUTH

Image credit: Maya Wilsens

Direction & Performance: Valentijn Dhaenens

FREE PROGRAMME

POST-SHOW TALK: WEDNESDAY 16 MARCH



SKaGeN and Richard Jordan Productions
in a co-production with
De Tijd & STUK

BIGMOUTH

Q LOFT

TUESDAY 15 – WEDNESDAY 16 MARCH, 7:00 PM

THURSDAY 17 – FRIDAY 18 MARCH, 8:30 PM

SATURDAY 19 MARCH, 2:00 PM & 8:30 PM

SUNDAY 20 MARCH, 7:00 PM

1 HOUR 20 MINUTES WITH NO INTERVAL

ABOUT THE SHOW

He who picks his words well, can turn the weakest argument into the strongest.

Valentijn Dhaenens has received universal critical acclaim and been described as a one-man powerhouse for his thrilling and virtuoso performance in *BigMouth*. Using fragments of well-known and lesser known speeches, he shows that in 2,500 years, the tricks of the trade have hardly changed and that whilst the absolute truth doesn't exist, it is just a pretty lie for those who aspire to world power or simply just the hand of their beloved.

★★★★ "Brilliant ... a fascinating experience."

Lyn Gardner, *Guardian* (UK)

★★★★★ "...it is in performance, and the skilled hands and mouth of Belgian virtuoso Valentijn Dhaenens, that this deceptively simple idea of one man and a few microphones morphs into an electrifying and transcendent piece of art."

exeuntmagazine.com (UK)

★★★★★ "Enthralling roller-coaster through history and its (in)humanity by one-man powerhouse Valentijn Dhaenens"

The List Magazine (UK)

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE SHOW

Over the course of a year I promised myself to read at least one speech a day. Doing so, I read more than a thousand speeches that year. I tried not to force speeches to relate to one another but simply put them on stacks hoping that one day they would start communicating with each other. For instance, there were 5 months between the reading of Goebbel's 'Totaler Krieg' speech and the moment I ran into the Patton-speech. I learned that they were given at about the same time, saying exactly the same thing to exactly the same kind of people in a very different manner. Those speeches were begging to be interweaved and become a massive go-to-war-appeal.

One of the key moments in the development of the show came when I had just memorised the funeral oration of Pericles (around 400BC) and at night watched the television news and saw French President Sarkozy (who had just lost 10 soldiers in Afghanistan) repeating almost the same words. A few months later I added King Boudewijn's abduction speech right after Pericles'. The last one talking to the parents of literally thousands killed lying there at his feet. The first one refusing to sign an abortion-law, fighting for the single life of the unborn.

I knew I wanted the songs between the speeches to be produced only by my live voice to add to the idea of what human vocal cords are capable of doing. I looked for songs that added up to the speech it accompanied in a historical way to mark the period, sometimes in an ironical way, sometimes even in an emotional way. When I turned my attention away from the speeches I worked on finding the perfect harmonies that would be able to put live in a loop to support the songs.

Valentijn Dhaenens



CREDITS



Direction & Performance

Valentijn Dhaenens



Producer

Richard Jordan



Scenic, Lighting and Sound Design

Jeroen Wuyts



Production Management, Tech & Stage Assistant,

Saskia Liénard

BIOGRAPHIES

PERFORMER / WRITER– Valentijn Dhaenens

After obtaining a Master's Degree in Dramatic Arts at the Royal Conservatory in Antwerp, Valentijn co-founded the theater company SKaGeN. From 2006, the company has been rewarded with structural subsidisation from the Flemish / Belgian Government for their work as one of the leading modern theater groups in Belgium and Holland.

Outside SKaGeN he has worked extensively as an actor in over 30 productions for Belgium's major companies such as *NTGent*, *Kaaitheater Brussels* and *Ontroerend Goed*. His international breakthrough however came with his own written and directed solo-show *BigMouth* that is touring extensively major festivals and venues worldwide. A follow up called *SmallWaR* was presented at the Edinburgh festival 2014 and the Adelaide Festival 2015 and will also be touring through 2016.

Aside from his theatre work, Valentijn is a sought-after narrator for documentaries such as *The boy is Gone* by Christophe Bohn.

Occasionally he is a guest lecturer at Belgian and Dutch theatreschools.

To a broader audience, Valentijn is best known for his acting in several TV shows and films. Most notably for his lead-role in *De helaasheid der dingen / The Misfortunates* by Felix Van Groeningen which won numerous prizes worldwide such as the Prix Art et Essai at the Cannes Film Festival 2009

Scenic, Lighting and Sound Design – Jeroen Wuyts

Jeroen Wuyts started in Kunstencentrum Vooruit, Ghent, as an all-round technician before moving on to include lighting design for En-Knap dance company and Foi, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui. He combined his technical skills and lighting design for Isabella's Room, Needcompany, and toured with *Once*, *Rosas*. Jeroen began working with SKaGeN when he did the company's lighting designs and touring performances, including *BigMouth*. SKaGeN presented him with a sound challenge, as their performances use complicated sound and video cues and is used it for *SmallWaR*, a video-based puzzle.

FOR ALL PRODUCTION ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:

Richard Jordan Productions Ltd

Mews Studios

16 Vernon Yard

London W11 2DX

+44 (0) 207 243 9001

info@richardjordanproductions.com

SKaGeN

SKaGeN has been producing plays in Flanders and the Netherlands since 2000, both on the art-house circuit and at festivals, with appearances at the Summer in Antwerp and Theatre on the Market festivals. Driven by an aim to combine of high artistic standards and accessibility, the company was formed by graduates from the Antwerp Conservatory who trained under the leading Flemish actress Dora van der Groen and the notable theatre and opera director Ivo Van Hove. SKaGeN is now established as one of the leading Flemish theatre companies of its generation, particularly noted for its adaptations of great novels such as *La Peste* by Albert Camus, *Voyage au bout de la nuit* by Louis-Ferdinand Céline and *Berlin Alexanderplatz* by Alfred Döblin. SKaGeN comprises of Valentijn Dhaenens, Korneel Hamers, Mathijs Scheepers and Clara van den Broek. www.skagen.be

Richard Jordan Productions Ltd

Richard Jordan Productions is an Olivier and TONY Award-winning production company based in London under the artistic leadership of producer Richard Jordan. Founded in 1998, his company has produced over 190 productions in the UK as well as 21 other countries, including 70 world premieres and 81 European, Australian or US premieres enjoying associations with many of the world's leading theatres, arts organisations. For previous Auckland Festivals, he produced: *en route* and *Othello: the Remix*; This year at the Festival Richard Jordan Productions also produces *The Great Downhill Journey of Little Tommy*. Described by *The Stage* newspaper as "one of the UK's most prolific theatre producers", Richard has been at the forefront of developing and presenting works by a diverse range of established and emerging writers and artists. He has been named seven times in the Stage Top 100 UK Theatre Professionals. In 2010 for his work in UK and international theatre, Richard was selected for lifetime inclusion in A & C's Black's annual publication, *Who's Who*. Richard's productions have won over 30 awards including: the TONY Award for Best Play; the Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement at an Affiliate Theatre; the EMMY Award for Best Feature Section; eleven Scotsman Fringe Firsts Awards; two Herald Angel Awards; six Total Theatre Awards; The Spirit of the Fringe Award; Drama Desk; Drama League; New York Critics; Broadway.com and Outer Critic Circle Best Play Awards; three Helen Hayes Awards; the Adelaide Festival Award; the US Black Alliance Award; Obie Award; Jeff Award; the Lucille Lortel Award and the John Gassner Award for Best New American Play.

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2 - 20 March

17 - 20 March
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The Chorus; Oedipus

더 코러스; 오이디푸스

Korea

**the entire thing was a
goosebump moment**

- Today, Singapore

**worthy of the ten-minute
standing ovation it received**

- TimeOut Singapore

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