

AUDIENCE – list of press quotes

18-3-2011 – Knack blog – Els Van Steenberghe - *1/2**

“We beseffen dat we vrij vraag blijven in onze beschrijving van de creatie. Maar we willen u, als (mogelijke) toekomstige toeschouwer, het plezier van de verrassing niet ontnemen. Want de voorstelling is precies een marathon van theatrale verrassingen.”

“We realize we’re staying quite vague in our description of the show, but we wouldn’t want you – possible spectators- to miss out on the surprise elements of the show. This whole show seems to be a marathon of theatrical surprises”

16-3-2011 – Het Nieuwsblad – Rudy Tollenaere

“Het zou kunnen dat we hier ooit eerder schreven dat Alexander Devriendt een theatermaker is waar we nog zouden van horen. De afgelopen jaren heeft hij met *Ontroerend Goed* al een mooi parcours afgelegd. Met *Audience* wijkt hij niet van dat pad af.”

*“it’s possible that we wrote here before that Alexander Devriendt is a theatre maker we would be hearing from. The past few years he has traveled a beautiful path with *Ontroerend Goed*. With *Audience* there’s no deviation from this path.”*

17-3-2011 – Cobra.be – Liv Laveyne

“Hoe straf ‘Audience’ wordt, is uiteindelijk up to you!”

“How good ‘Audience’ can become in the end is up to you!”

18-3-2011 – CJP.BE – Filip Tielens - ****

“Te veel verklappen is de pret bederven voor wie nog gaat kijken, maar het is vooral in kleine inventieve dingen dat *Audience* uitblinkt.”

*“Saying too much about the show is spoiling it, but it’s in the small inventive stuff that *Audience* is truly amazing”*

28-8-2011 – EXEUNT MAGAZINE – Daniel B. Yates - *****

“...far from the madding crowds of something like the fourth plinth and Sky Arts, or the populist tyranny of reality television, *Audience* makes a slick and aggressive case for considering how we might conceive of ourselves as an audience: as receivers of, and responders to messages: how we might recognise ourselves – when broadcasted, when scrutinised, when singled-out or brought together. A far cry from the intimacy of their previous work *Internal*, here OG reduce theatre to a drop under a microscope, a cold hard diagram, strategically and obliquely approaching some of its very basic concepts. It feels born clean of some deep frustration with the orthodoxical knots of how interactive theatre has come to consider audience-versus-performer, and so with a fundamentalist clarity of purpose, and an almost totalitarian sense of spectacle, they come at us from the cool and dispassionate darkness to rain down thunder and guts, simplified and outrageous, seeking to dispense with much of what went before.”

10-8-2011 TVBOMB – Emma Hay - *****

“Invasive, perverse, provocative and confrontational; *Audience* is relentless and ruthless. Doubtless, this show will divide the audience: people won't like it, but it's not necessarily there to be liked. It's an anthropological extravaganza and makes for an aggressive post-show dissection”

10-8-2011 British Theatre Guide – Philip Fisher - *****

“*Audience* makes for compelling, if deeply uncomfortable, viewing and asks some very serious questions about contemporary society and the ways in which the public are being turned into performers and sources of entertainment.”

18-8-2011 BroadwayBaby.com – David Levesly - *****

“Ontroerend Goed's new production, the latest in a long line of probing pieces, stands tall as the true master of the topsy-turvy... the overall show lacks no punch; Maria Dafneros, Mathieu Sys, Tiemen Van Haver and Joeri Smet are a spectacular ensemble who carry the peculiar performance along with tremendous gusto.”

13-8-2011 The Scotsman – Joyce McMillan - ****

“...the supremely skilful Ontroerend Goed team lead us on into an exploration of authoritarianism itself, and of how it depends on its ability to manipulate crowd behaviour.... In Belgium and the Netherlands, though, the voice of the authoritarian right has become insistent enough, in recent years, to make these questions both valid and essential; and Ontroerend Goed earn the right to ask them, with a brilliantly-shaped show that's impossible to ignore.”

11-8-2011 The Herald – Neil Cooper - ****

“the company make explicit how easy it is to manipulate en masse, and if the relationship between football match, stadium rock concert and fascist rally wasn't clear before, it will be afterwards.”

10-8-2011 The Guardian – Lyn Gardner

“nowhere is the role of the audience examined more savagely than in Ontroerend Goed's aptly named *Audience*”

10-8-2011 Whats On Stage – Terri Paddock - ****

“in a week when riots are erupting in London and other UK cities, Ontroerend's Edinburgh experiment in the power of group-think takes on added significance. It could not be more timely.”

11-8-2011 The List – Kirstin Innes -***

“...one of the most notorious, manipulative experimental companies”

15-8-2011 The Independent – Holly Williams - **

“Belgian theatre company Ontroerend Goed are know for pushing their audiences with their interactive work, but this time they don't just become part of the process, they become the subject too.”

10-8-2011 The Daily Telegraph – Laura Barnett - *

“Ontroerend Goed’s shows are not for the faint-hearted. The Belgian company exists to push boundaries: theatrical, moral, ethical.”

14-8-2011 Sunday Herald – Mark Brown

“AUDIENCE is clever...”

14-8-2011 Scotland on Sunday – Mark Fisher

“Director Alexander Devriendt, however, knows exactly what he’s doing and the company have already asked themselves every question the audience may ask – about the morality of putting people’s private lives on show, about bullying spectators, about our free will when part of a crowd. It’s an uncomfortable, confrontational experience, but you won’t find a more animated audience anywhere in town.”

14-8-2011 Scotland on Sunday – Andrew Eaton-Lewis

“...I can’t help noticing how star ratings become almost irrelevant when it comes to discussing a show like this, where the debate is not over the usual benchmarks of quality and innovation, but over what moral right this show has to exist...”

20-8-2011 The Times – Donald Hutera - ****

“Ontroerend Goed know full well that what they are doing here will inspire debate. They invite it and then hijack it, providing their performance with a greater social context...”

12-8-2011 The Guardian – Edinburgh Festival week 1 Round Up

“Brilliantly subversive drama or sensationalist spectacle? Definitely the only show I’ve seen where people were arguing about it in the rain afterwards.”



Audience, by Ontroerend Goed. Photograph: Murdo Macleod for the Guardian

7-11-2011 The Guardian – Are you sitting uncomfortably? - Maddy Costa

“...audiences who feel manipulated might be shying away from a fact of modern life: that in a world of political spin and untrustworthy media, *“we are being manipulated all the time.”*”

11-12-2011 The Guardian – Lyn Gardner - ****

“There is undoubted power in the piece, ... it's a fascinating and slippery hour, and if nothing else, proves that an audience isn't just integral to a show it can "be" the show, and theatre is a forum to work out who we are, what we think and understand that sometimes being a witness is not enough. Sometimes we must stand up and break the rules. Being a really bad audience can be a really good thing.”

12-12-2011 Financial Times – Suzi Feay - ****

“It's a brave group of actors who can set out so thoroughly to invite contempt. I've never felt so uncomfortable and on edge in a theatre, and this funny, but also frightening show will stay with me for a long time.”

8-12-2011 Topsy Hippo Theatre Reviews – John Ord - ***

“A word of warning if you are considering seeing this show: if you are the kind of person who is easily upset or disturbed, someone who is perhaps vulnerable to the machinations of the stage then think hard before walking in. It may be entertaining at times but it is also chilling at times, depending on how hard you think and how much store you put in the insightful comments made by the actors in your midst. If you can go and think it will challenge you in ways you are willing to be challenged then I urge you not to miss it, as it's not the kind of show that comes around every year.”

15-12-2011 Mark Fisher on blog piece by Maddy Costa

“... name me another company that would make you go home and write an extra 3000 words above what you'd been commissioned.”

12-12-2011 British Theatre Guide – Diana Damian

“Given the controversy that has been imposed on it, *Audience* functions on a complex dramatic structure in which the actors—excellent in their duplicity and control—serve as guides to a game. The game is based on a binary—this is a piece of theatre, yet the audience is a real collective.”



12-12-2011 EXEUNT – Stewart Pringle - ****

“This is the Jerry Springer show with overtones of Orwell, a rough and spiky debate which constantly threatens to derail its forum, where the monolithic aesthetics feel like the potential backdrop for a revolution. The giant screen seems made to be torn down, the performers ready for a fight, comfortable with the prospect of things turning nasty.”

12-12-2011 Londonist – Jon Davis

“There is a current of feeling dividing and uniting the audience. And it’s this turning, the process of looking back over the audience which is the show’s greatest success, for at its heart Audience explores the paradoxical feeling of being an individual within a crowd.”

12-12-2011 Spoonfed – Naima Khan - ****

“In *Audience* however, we are put under the lens. It questions the extent to which theatre audiences follow the crowd and at what point we will stand up for an injustice. It looks at what it takes to rectify an unprovoked cruelty when surrounded by others who may or may not be sitting down doing nothing.”

13-12-2011 Time Out London – Caroline McGinn -***

“...discomfiting and stimulating.”

Dec/Jan 2012 – The Book issue2 – Christine Twite

“*Audience*’s power lies in the way it questions the individual’s capacity for action, and his or her place in larger groups in society – never more relevant than after this summer’s riots... Being reminded about the way group dynamics work has to be a good thing, even though the experience is a difficult one.”

16-12-2011 Beatmagazine – Pete Rann

“It’s totally unique but it’s also one of those productions that should be seen quickly before it becomes talk of the town and frequented by the masses.”

12-12-2011 What’s on Stage – Radica Anikpe - *

“This is the type of show that divides theatregoers into two distinct camps; those who buy it, and those who don’t.”

13-12-2011 The National – Jessica Holland

“To some, it all sounds cynically provocative, but in reality Audience packs a hefty emotional punch. Ontroerend Goed could have concocted a play in which characters make speeches about crowd behaviour and how uncomfortable it feels to disagree with those in power; instead, it decided to take us on a journey during which we feel for ourselves how easy it is to unwittingly participate in the status quo. Causing offence may be a by-product, but it’s not the intention.”

15-12-2011 The Guardian – Ontroerend Goed’s Audience gets bloggers talking back – Matt Trueman

“It plays fast and loose with the rules of theatre; simultaneously dismissing them and relying on them, but never setting out any of its own. That’s probably problematic, but it’s precisely what makes Audience such a talking point”