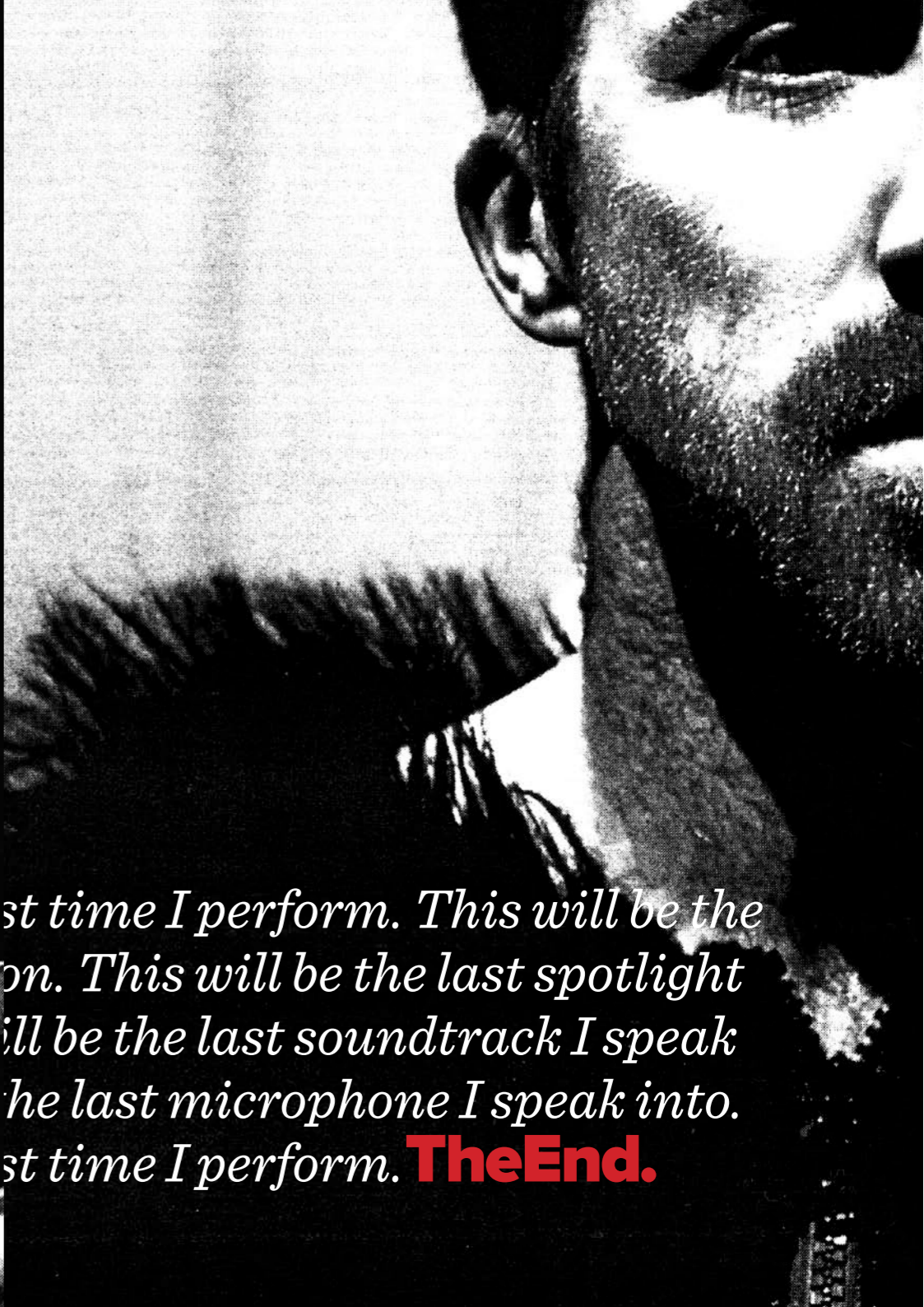


*This will be the last time I perform. This will be the last stage I stand on. This will be the last spotlight I stand in. This will be the last soundtrack I speak over. This will be the last microphone I speak into. This will be the last time I perform. **TheEnd.***



*st time I perform. This will be the
on. This will be the last spotlight
ill be the last soundtrack I speak
he last microphone I speak into.
st time I perform. **TheEnd.***



Performers

Michael Pinchbeck
Ollie Smith

Dramaturgs

Heta Patel
Mole Wetherell

Soundtrack

Chris Cousin

Photography

Julian Hughes

Design

Cubic

Supported by the National Lottery through Arts Council England. Commissioned by Chester Performs and developed at The Junction (Cambridge), Brighton Dome and Festival, New Art Exchange (Nottingham) and Lakeside Arts Centre (Nottingham).



The Junction



chesterperforms

LAKESIDE

the end

The End.

By Michael Pinchbeck

On Endings

(After Michael Pinchbeck's 'The End', Lakeside Arts Centre, Nottingham 2010)

In art, as in life, nothing is truly finished. Something appears to have come to an end – a book, a play, a sculpture, a life – only to linger on in echoes and afterthoughts and corrections. And, of course, in memory. The play finishes, the audience applaud, the house-lights go up, the actors go home. But the next day the actors come back and do it all over again, while the audience carry something of the performance with them into their following days.

But I'm being evasive; works of art do, of course, have designated endings. The reader finds out who done it, the actor removes his face-paint, the projectionist puts away the last reel. And however much the creator of an artwork might want her piece to resonate in the core of the audience's very being, there still needs to be a moment which is called, simply, The End.

In my own writing, I've often had difficulty knowing when I've come to the end of the process. The only time I know a story is truly finished is when I've crossed everything out. Otherwise, it becomes a case of having the thing wrenched out of my hands and put into the hands of the audience, for them to do with as they will. Which is not the end of the process at all, in fact. It's more like the beginning.

The End is Michael Pinchbeck's last performance, and Ollie Smith's first. And Michael's exit from the stage serves as the starting point for this show, which explores ideas of entrances and exits, beginnings and ends, ruptures and closures; and,

of course, that most famous of theatrical departures – "exit, pursued by a bear." As is often the case with Michael's work, the show is openly concerned with the process of its own creation and performance, and the way in which that process began and can never quite be accepted as ending.

At times, the confusion between what Michael and Ollie wanted to do, and are doing, and will do, is reminiscent of the moebius-strip logic of Billy Bragg singing, "I was 21 years when I wrote this song, I'm 22 now but I won't be for long." But of course, as the older Michael keeps reminding the younger Ollie, none of us are 21 or 22 for long. And so as this performance, with its bear costumes, gun-shots, last words, and repeated cries that they "didn't imagine it to end this way," draws to an elliptical end, we see the older performer drift toward the exit, pursued and usurped by the bear of his young apprentice.

But is this really the end of Michael Pinchbeck's performance career? I'm not convinced. His work to date – The Long and Winding Road, The Post Show Party Show, Sit With Me For A Moment And Remember – has played brilliantly with audience expectations, not least of what a performance can or should actually be. I suspect Mr Pinchbeck will realise he's not quite done with us yet.

Jon McGregor
23 December 2010

www.makingtheend.wordpress.com

Biographies

Michael Pinchbeck

Michael is a writer and live artist based in Nottingham. He studied Theatre and Creative Writing at Lancaster University. He has worked with Metro-Boulot-Dodo, Reckless Sleepers and Strange Names Collective. In 2005, Michael was commissioned by Nottingham Playhouse to write The White Album. In 2011, Nottingham Playhouse will stage his second play – The Ashes. In 2008, Michael was selected by Arts Council England to represent the UK at the Biennale for Young Artists. In 2009, his work was selected for the British Council's Edinburgh Showcase. Michael is co-founder of Nottingham performance festival – Hatch. He has a Masters in Performance and Live Art from Nottingham Trent University and is currently pursuing a PhD at Loughborough University. The End is his last performance for the theatre.

www.michaelpinchbeck.co.uk

Ollie Smith

Ollie is a writer and live artist based in Nottingham. He studied Acting at Bretton Hall. Since graduating in 2007, he has created work that explores themes of isolation and belonging, including Alone Time and Help Yourself – a Method Lab commission at greenroom (Manchester). Ollie has experimented with durational work in a series of collaborations and solo performances including Dressing The Part and Non sequitur. In 2010, he was commissioned by Theatre Writing Partnership to write a site-specific work, Do Not Enter: Performance in Progress, for the Momentum festival at Curve Theatre (Leicester). Ollie first collaborated with Michael on a work-in-progress of The End at The Junction (Cambridge) in May 2010. The End is his first performance for the theatre.

www.ollie-smith.com

