

**press release**

**World Premiere: news from nowhere presents**

**an oak tree**

*by tim crouch*

**TRAVERSE THEATRE**

**August 4 – 28th 2005**

**First Press Performance: August 5 @ 4.45pm**

*starts:*

**man changes tree into daughter**

A father loses his daughter to a car. His response is to meet the loss with a colossal act of projection: the tree next to where she died he transforms into his girl. For him, nothing now is what it is. It's like he's in a play - everything represented by something else. But he's never seen the words before and he doesn't know the moves.

The man who killed the girl is a stage hypnotist. Since the accident, he's lost the ability to make a convincing suggestion. His act is a disaster. He's a drowning man. For him, everything now is exactly what it is.

For the first time since the accident, these two men meet. They meet when the Father volunteer's for the Hypnotist's act. He volunteers because he's looking for some answers. And, this time, he really doesn't know the words or the moves...

**writer changes person into character**

**an oak tree** is a two-hander. The Hypnotist is played by Tim

Crouch. The Father, however, will be played by a different actor at each performance. That second actor, male or female, will walk on stage having neither seen nor read a word of the play they're in until they're in it. Like the Father's transformation of the tree, this is another act of projection: the projection of a performance given from one actor to another, from a hypnotist to their subject, from the audience onto a person.

**an oak tree** weaves themes of human suggestibility, art and loss through a vivid and absurdly comic narrative that swoops between a tree by a road and the stage of a pub. It is a bold experiment in theatre form, but an experiment housed within a powerful and accessible story. The device of the second actor supports that story but also provides a startling image of someone discovering their own meaning from moment to moment.

For the Festival run, the Father will be played by actors working in the Traverse season, as well as by specially invited guests. Any actors who have already read or even seen the play will be disqualified from performing in it. This is an exploration of the moment of discovery as well as in the power of suggestion.

**an oak tree** contains that breathless balance of accessible narrative, complex idea, rich theatricality and broad humour which characterises Tim Crouch's work. It is a remarkable play that expands the ideas of performance and story-telling explored in Tim's 2003 hit, **my arm**.

*...ends*