

# Leeds Arts Centre

presents



# RICHARD III

by William Shakespeare

## RICHARD III – THE PLAY

“Richard III” is the final part of a sequence of four plays by Shakespeare dealing with the Tudor view of history from the death of Henry V to the accession of Henry VII. The other plays in the sequence are the three parts of “Henry VI”.

In these plays we see the saintly King Henry VI come to the throne and the development of endless quarrels between various factions of the English nobility whom he is unable to control. Most notable of these divisions is that between the ruling House of Lancaster, which takes as its symbol a red rose, and the House of York, represented by a white rose. Henry’s wife, the forceful Margaret of Anjou, helps to widen the gulf between the contending factions by her outspoken arrogance and this eventually leads to the outbreak of the long and bloody “Wars of the Roses”.

Many battles are fought between the Houses of York and Lancaster. Queen Margaret’s army defeats that of the Duke of York and she kills him and his young son, Edmund, Earl of Rutland. Subsequently, she herself is defeated by York’s surviving sons: Edward, who becomes King Edward IV; George, who becomes Duke of Clarence; and Richard, who becomes Duke of Gloucester. Margaret flees to France and Henry is captured and put in the Tower.

The Earl of Warwick, who has helped the Yorkists throughout the struggle, advises Edward to marry the sister-in-law of King Louis of France. Edward agrees and Warwick goes to France to make the arrangements. While he is away, Edward is attracted to a Lancastrian widow, Lady Elizabeth Grey, and decides to make her his wife.

The news of Edward’s marriage is brought to the French court and turns both Warwick and King Louis against him. Warwick pledges his support to Margaret, whose son, Prince Edward, marries Warwick’s daughter, the Lady Anne. Warwick returns to England to release Henry VI from the Tower and re-instate him as king. Clarence, who disapproves of his brother’s marriage, deserts Edward and joins Warwick, whose other daughter he marries. Edward re-captures Henry and returns him to the Tower, and when Edward’s and Warwick’s armies meet, Clarence is persuaded to re-join his brothers before Warwick is defeated and killed.

Margaret lands in England with reinforcements, but is defeated and captured. Her son, Prince Edward, is killed by King Edward and his brothers, and Richard murders King Henry in the Tower. The long contention between the Houses of Lancaster and York appears to be over with the triumph of the House of York. This is the point at which “Richard III” begins.

The deformed and hunchbacked Richard wants the crown for himself, and sets about disposing of all those who stand in his way. Queen Margaret, a lonely survivor of the House of Lancaster, curses Richard and all those responsible for her defeat and the deaths of her husband, Henry VI, and her son, Prince Edward. The play shows the working-out of all her curses, culminating in the defeat and death of Richard at the hands of the Lancastrian, Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, who becomes King Henry VII. He marries Princess Elizabeth, daughter of King Edward IV, thus uniting the Houses of York and Lancaster and founding the Tudor dynasty.

# RICHARD III

## RICHARD III AND HISTORY

Shakespeare's "Richard III" is not history; it is a colourful and dramatic legend. Most of the major events depicted in the play did take place, but the motivation behind them, responsibility for them, and execution of them were historically very different from those presented by Shakespeare.

The "version" of history that the play presents is based upon that put about by such Tudor historians as Sir Thomas More, Holinshed and Hall, who were writing at a time when England was ruled by the descendants of Henry VII – the man who had defeated Richard at the Battle of Bosworth. It was therefore expedient for them to "blacken" Richard's character and "whitewash" the characters of his opponents.

There is no real historical evidence for supposing that Richard was a deformed hunchback; he was almost certainly not responsible for the deaths of Henry VI, his son, Prince Edward, or the Duke of Clarence; and there is no proof that he had anything to do with the deaths of the Princes in the Tower. Yet all these crimes are attributed to Richard in Shakespeare's version of the story.

One of the reasons for this was the contemporary view that history was dominated by a strict moral pattern of sin and retribution. Holinshed explained this moral order in relation to Richard III: "And as it thus well appeared, that the House of York showed itself more bloody in seeking to obtain the kingdom, than that of the House of Lancaster in usurping it: so it came to pass, that the Lord's vengeance appeared more heavy towards the same than towards the other, not ceasing till the whole issue male of the said Richard Duke of York was extinguished. For such is God's justice to leave no unrepentant wickedness unpunished, as especially in this caitiff Richard the Third, not deserving so much as the name of a man, much less a king, most manifestly appeareth".

What emerges from this attitude is not history but legend, which Shakespeare turned into magnificent drama. We must not judge "Richard III" as history, but as a play – a piece of colourful fiction in which the players take their names from those in history, but whose characters and motives and actions are the imaginative creation of a great dramatist.



## CAST

### THE HOUSE OF YORK

KING EDWARD THE FOURTH	<i>Geoffrey Fox</i>
QUEEN ELIZABETH, formerly Lady Grey, Edward's wife	<i>Betty Triggs</i>
EDWARD, Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward V, Edward IV's son	<i>Jonathan Benson</i>
RICHARD, Duke of York, Edward IV's son	<i>Matthew Benson</i>
PRINCESS ELIZABETH, Edward IV's daughter	<i>Joanna Eaves</i>
DUCHESS OF YORK, Edward IV's mother	<i>June Stevenson</i>
GEORGE, Duke of Clarence, Edward IV's brother	<i>Rob Swinton</i>
RICHARD, Duke of Gloucester, afterwards King Richard III, Edward IV's brother	<i>Robin Polley</i>

### THE HOUSE OF LANCASTER

QUEEN MARGARET, widow of King Henry VI	<i>Monica Brown</i>
LADY ANNE, widow of Prince Edward, son of Henry VI, afterwards married to Gloucester	<i>Margaret Artle</i>
HENRY TUDOR, Earl of Richmond, afterwards King Henry VII	<i>Chris Richmond</i>

### LORDS AND COMMONS

LORD HASTINGS, the Lord Chamberlain	<i>John Armitage</i>
JOHN MORTON, Bishop of Ely	<i>George Teale</i>
DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM	<i>Len Sheldon</i>
DUKE OF NORFOLK	<i>Robin Clayton</i>
LORD STANLEY, Earl of Derby, step-father of Richmond	<i>Trevor Money</i>
ANTHONY WOODVILLE, Earl of Rivers, brother of Queen Elizabeth	<i>Jim Young</i>
JANE SHORE, mistress of Edward IV, and afterwards of Lord Hastings	<i>Christine Wilson</i>
SIR WILLIAM CATESBY	<i>Gordon Carlin</i>
SIR RICHARD RATCLIFFE            followers of Gloucester	<i>Geoff Mountain</i>
SIR JAMES TYRREL	<i>Rob Swinton</i>
EARL OF OXFORD	<i>John Lake</i>
SIR JAMES BLUNT                    supporters of Richmond	<i>Jim Young</i>
SIR ROBERT BRAKENBURY, Lieutenant of the Tower	<i>John Lake</i>
LORD MAYOR OF LONDON	<i>Rob Swinton</i>
FIRST MURDERER	<i>Geoff Mountain</i>
SECOND MURDERER	<i>Chris Richmond</i>
GUARD	<i>Robin Clayton</i>

FRIARS, CITIZENS, MESSENGERS, GHOSTS played by Members of the Cast.

Designed and directed by **MALCOLM BROWN**

## THE PRODUCTION

"Richard III" is a very long play with a large cast of characters. For the purpose of this production it has been necessary to cut both the text and the number of characters who appear. In making these cuts we have tried to retain the overall pattern of the play without undue distortions.

Our production begins with a short scene from the end of "Henry VI, Part III", introducing the major characters and showing their relationships. Also Richard's first soliloquy contains passages from his soliloquy in "Henry VI, Part III", clearly stating his aims and motives.

Two characters who are frequently mentioned but never actually appear according to the text have been introduced: Jane Shore, mistress to Edward IV and later to Lord Hastings; and Edward IV's daughter, Princess Elizabeth, who marries Henry VII.

Several minor characters have been cut out completely, or run together into one person: like the Bishop of Ely, who is given greater prominence thereby; and the Earl of Rivers, who represents Queen Elizabeth's family.

None of these changes is intended to "improve" the play, nor is any of them new or original. They are imposed upon us by the limitations of time and casting; or, in the case of the interpolations, they are intended to help clarify for a modern audience the extremely complex historical and family relationships.

**There will be one interval of twenty minutes during which the theatre bar will be open. Ice cream will be on sale in the auditorium and coffee will be available in the bar.**

## FOR THE ARTS CENTRE

Stage Manager	George Westmoreland
Assistant Stage Manager	Dennis Stevenson
Properties	Doreen Parker and Fiona Stevenson
Music and Sound Control	David Scott and Gill Thresh
Sound Recording	Sydney Irving
Prompt	Ann Benson
Front of House Manager	Anita Mountain
Set and Costume Design	Malcolm Brown
Wardrobe	Anne Robinson, Margaret Rhodes and Members of the Wardrobe Team
Publicity	Christine Wilson and Publicity Team
Box Office	Margaret Rhodes and John Pemberton

## FOR THE CIVIC THEATRE

Theatre Manager	Fred Mower
Resident Stage Manager	Julia Piggott
Lighting Technician	Nick Morris

The publicity photographs for this production were taken by Tony Mitchell at Skipton Castle by kind permission of Mr. Fattorini.

**at the Civic Theatre 5th to 9th December 1978**

## RICHARD III AND THE CRITICS

"To think that we are seeing anything like sober history in this play is derisible naivety. What we are offered is a formally patterned sequence presenting two things: on the one hand, a rigid Tudor 'schema' of retributive justice . . . and on the other, a huge triumphant stage-personality".

A. P. Rossiter.

"The symmetry of 'Richard III' is remarkable; it is all-pervading, and extends from the patterning of Richard's character to the design of the dramatic structure and the intricate antiphony of the verse".

J. Middleton Murry.

"Only by realising that Shakespeare expects us at once to enjoy and to detest the monstrous Richard can we fully appreciate the play he wrote about him".

J. D. Wilson.

"The inferiority of his person made the hero seek consolation and compensation in the superiority of his intellect; he thus endeavoured to counter balance his deficiency".

S. T. Coleridge.

"In this play History, in the person of Margaret, represents a crushing weight of retribution. A pattern which becomes a vast ritual of destructive vengeance; and the closer it approaches to ritual, the stronger becomes its associations with the supernatural. This supernatural order emerges . . . as a manifestation of the Divine will, destroying Richard and substituting the unequivocally angelic Richmond. So that in the end the ironist himself is subject to a greater irony, that he has functioned as an instrument of destruction in the world of guilt. This divine pattern is explicitly Christian; one cannot help reflecting that it is, at the same time, repulsive".

Nicholas Brooke.



Coming shortly

# *Saturday, Sunday, Monday*

by Eduardo di Filippo

Translated by Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall

Directed by Sydney Irving

6th to 10th February 1979 at 7.30 p.m.

and later . . . .

## THE CHILTERN HUNDREDS

by William Douglas Home

Directed by Dennis Stevenson

27th to 31st March 1979 at 7.30 p.m.

Next Season . . . .

our programme will probably include Shakespeare's HENRY V and

THE CHANGELING by Thomas Middleton and William Rowley

### BOOKINGS

If you would like tickets for any of these shows please ask at the box office during the interval or telephone Leeds 892346.

Tickets can also be obtained from the Tourist Information Bureau at the Leeds Central Lending Library during the month before each show.

### SEASON TICKETS . . . . .

Available from Mrs. June Stevenson, Stacks House,  
St. Johns Avenue, Thorner, Nr. Leeds.

A season ticket guarantees you the seat of your  
choice anywhere in the theatre for all these shows  
at a substantial discount.

. . . . . a real bargain.

# LEEDS ARTS CENTRE

Leeds Arts Centre was formed in 1945 as an amateur Society to encourage and foster interest in the arts.

**The Drama Group** mounts five productions – usually including a musical or revue type show – at the Civic Theatre.

**The Green Room Group** puts on plays and other forms of entertainment in the rehearsal rooms to give members valuable experience of acting and producing before tackling major parts or productions in the Civic Theatre. Season ticket holders are welcome to attend these performances.

**The Fine Arts Group** meets twice each week throughout the year for drawing, painting and other creative work.

In addition there is a variety of social activities for members, such as theatre visits, outings, parties, etc.

**New Members** are always welcome so if you are interested in acting, drawing, painting (pictures or scenery), set building, making costumes, helping back stage, front of house or even with publicity and think you might like to join the Centre, or would like more information please write to:

*The Secretary, Leeds Arts Centre,  
Stansfeld Chambers, Great George Street,  
Leeds 1.*

**costume hire**

You may not realise that the costumes you have seen tonight and countless others from different periods are available for hire from the Leeds Arts Centre costume collection at reasonable rates.

If you are interested please telephone Leeds 756796 and discuss your requirements with Mrs. Margaret Rhodes, our wardrobe mistress.