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Shakespeare Festival: A Trilogy of Kings Press Release

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Shakespeare Festival: *A Trilogy of Kings*

October 28–November 8

BROWN UNIVERSITY
PROVIDENCE COLLEGE
RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

NEWS RELEASE

July, 1981

"Let us sit upon the ground, and tell sad stories of
the death of kings...."

With these words of Shakespeare's Richard II three city colleges mark the advent of a new and exciting cultural activity which will be coming to Providence this fall. Thanks to the inventiveness and foresight of the theatre arts faculties at Brown University, Providence College and Rhode Island College, the state of Rhode Island will be able to enjoy--from October 28 through November 8-- the first inter-collegiate Shakespearean Festival ever. Titled "A Trilogy of Kings" and funded in part by grants from the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities and the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, this multi-faceted Festival will include not only elaborately staged touring productions of Henry IV, Part I, Richard II, and Richard III, but also lectures and essays by prominent Shakespearean scholars, an attractive commemorative booklet of the whole event, and stimulating public forums of these issues in the plays which are particularly pertinent to the contemporary milieu.

According to Don Wilmeth, Chair of Theatre Arts at Brown University, John Garrity, Director of Theatre Programs at Providence College,

Made possible in part by grants from: Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities Rhode Island State Council on the Arts

and David Burr, Managing Director of Theatre at Rhode Island College, the initiators and coordinators of this mammoth project, the purpose of the Festival is to awaken renewed interest and enjoyment in the history plays of the Bard of Avon. In addition, it will demonstrate to the Rhode Island community the educational and cultural benefit which can accrue when three eminent institutions of higher learning join in a close spirit of cooperation. "In this instance the focus is on Shakespeare; in the future who knows what other cooperative ventures could be generated", the coordinators agreed. In addition to the grants received, each of the educational institutions involved is contributing to the project--with both matching funds and in-kind contributions.

The Festival Calendar includes the production of each play on the campus of each institution, plus the touring of each production to each of the other campuses. For example, Henry IV, Part I will open at Brown University on October 28. At the same time Richard III will open at Providence College on October 29, and Richard II at Rhode Island College on October 30. All three productions will play on their respective campuses.

The following weekend these productions will tour, as follows:

November 5 and 6--Henry IV Part I at Rhode Island College

Richard III at Brown

Richard II at Providence College

November 7 and 8--Henry IV, Part I at ~~Rhode Island College~~ Providence Colleg

Richard III at Rhode Island College

Richard II at Brown

The purpose of the touring across town is at least threefold: to expose each campus audience to the threatre program of the other two institutions; to foster future appreciation of and cooperation between the other institutions; and to give the student actors and technicians the additional educational experience and training concomitant with touring.

Highlighting the series of lectures, essays, and forums will be presentations by such internationally known Shakespearean scholars as Jan Kott and Charles Shattuck. The prominent scholars from each of the local participating institutions will include Drs. John Schroeder and Don Wilmeth of Brown University, Dr. Rene Fortin of Providence College and Dr. Robert Comery of Rhode Island College. The essays and lectures will focus on Shakespeare's impact upon dramatic literature, the art of acting, and philology and the philosophy of language. Also to be discussed will be such topics as: the relationship between Elizabethan and contemporary drama; the intellectual, moral and ethical issues that emerge from Shakespeare's plays; and the relevancy of these issues to the present-day audience. In addition, the commemorative booklet will include a brief synopsis and analysis of Shakespeare's history plays, as well as a chronicle of the production of Shakespeare's plays in Rhode Island by various theatrical groups.

It is anticipated that there will be a spontaneous response on the part of students and teachers to the Shakespearean Festival. It is the hope of those planning the Festival that all Rhode Island and near-by Massachusetts and Connecticut will turn out and participate.