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Shakespeare Festival: A Trilogy of Kings Playbill

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Shakespeare Festival: *A Trilogy of Kings*

OCTOBER 28 – NOVEMBER 8, 1981



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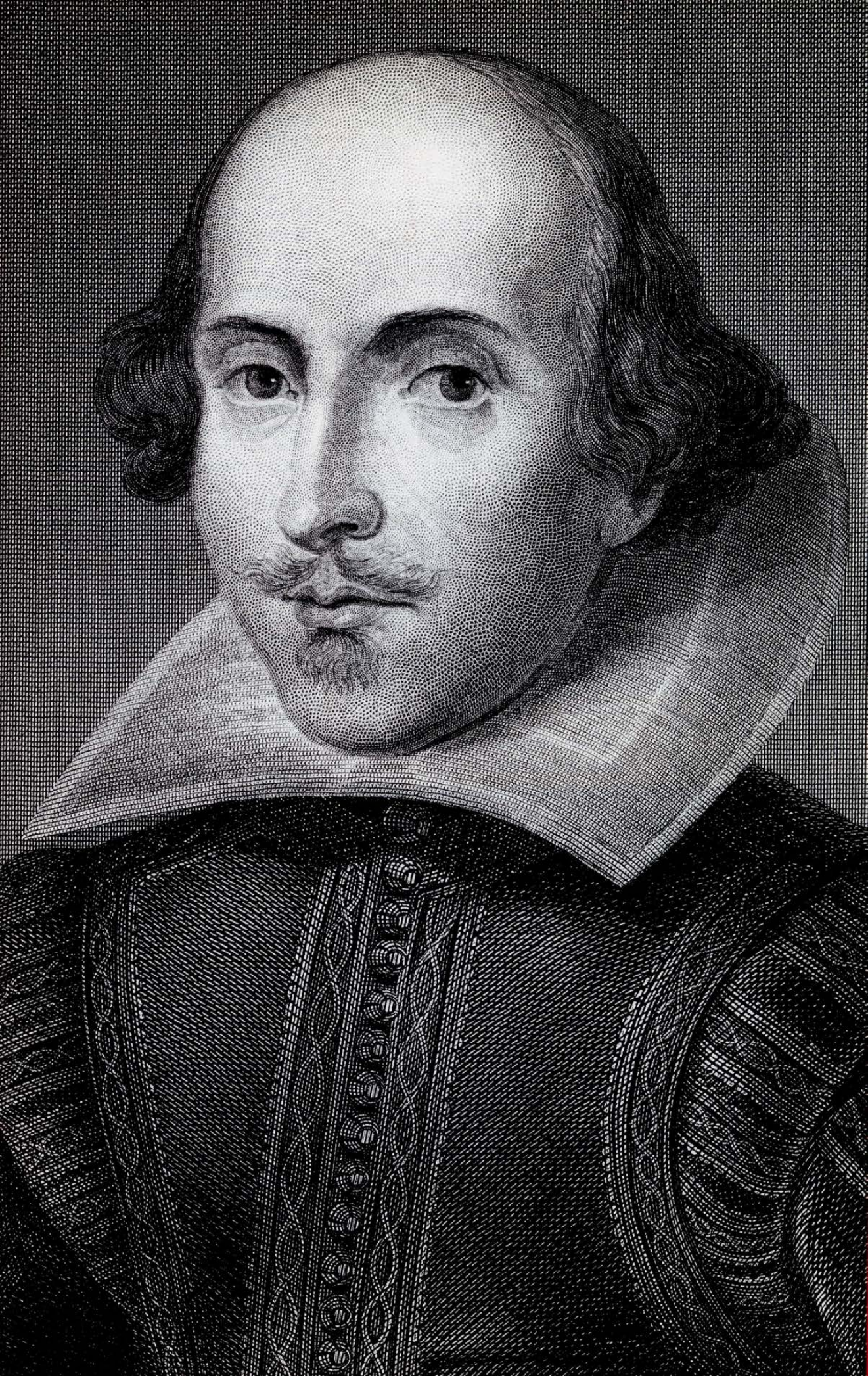
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Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities

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Preface

The programs in theatre arts at Brown University, Providence College, and Rhode Island College are pleased to welcome you to this very special event, a first of its kind in the City of Providence. "A Trilogy of Kings" marks a unique and important advance in the cooperation of our three programs. Furthermore, this is, to the best of our knowledge, the first Shakespeare festival ever undertaken in Rhode Island.

Our three programs have never combined efforts in any type of production endeavor. The project, as it developed, became, in fact, much more than simply coordinating the staging of three Shakespeare history plays. As this program indicates, our festival includes lectures, specially commissioned essays, and numerous other coordinated efforts. Indeed, one of our prime goals in undertaking this festival was to test our strength in unity, which, since our three institutions are really so close in proximity, seemed only natural. The foundation support for this festival is one prime indication of the results of such a consortium effort. Perhaps, more importantly, in the past two years, as a result of dozens of planning sessions, the dialogue between our theatre programs now flows naturally and with eagerness. We are far more supportive of each other and hope that this festival will only be the beginning of more cooperative ventures.



Rehearsal at Brown University

Beyond the important goal of bettering communications, our aims in presenting this festival were basically twofold: 1) to expose our programs to the community and provide our audiences with the opportunity of experiencing each other's work; 2) to provide students and staff with the chance of working on all three campuses, thus bringing our three programs closer together. Our choice of Shakespeare, although we considered all possibilities, ultimately was a natural one. We believe that the engagement of students in the production of Shakespeare as part of their training and understanding of theatre is essential. We trust that the audience will share in this experience and will find our presentations intellectually and emotionally stimulating and rewarding. The rising costs of professional production virtually prohibits the production of Shakespeare today and only academic institutions can dare venture into such enormous undertakings involving large casts of characters. We believe that the live performance of Shakespeare is uniquely different from filmed or televised Shakespeare; thus after lengthy discussion we decided that Shakespeare it must be. Our choice of three history plays was more difficult. Ultimately we had to select three plays that could be staged on similar settings in three theatres. The history plays seemed to offer the fewest technical difficulties. We chose what we considered the best of the history plays—the three that also covered most of the history cycle. We also felt that audiences would have had fewer opportunities of having seen *Henry IV, Part 1*, *Richard II* and *Richard III* previously.

As academic theatre programs, we believe that we collectively comprise an exciting, active, and vital part of the cultural scene in Rhode Island. Combined, our institutions present approximately twenty major productions yearly, plus semi-professional seasons during the summers and student directed work during the academic year. We each believe that our prime responsibility is to serve both the College/University community and the community at large through performances of important theatrical pieces otherwise unavailable to the public at a modest cost, and through community service. We also are charged with the responsibility of training young adults

for theatre careers and exposing as many students as possible to the art, discipline, history, and importance of theatre in a general education, thus returning to the Rhode Island community citizens who will enrich our cultural lives for years to come, as leaders, audience members, and active participants. Although we earnestly believe that our varied efforts deserve greater recognition in our city, we can also report that during an average year our productions play to almost 50,000 people and we engage in the classroom over 1,000 students. Combined, our programs utilize the talents of twenty full-time, professionally trained theatre artists and teachers.

We sincerely hope that this festival is only the first of such cooperative efforts. We are delighted that you have chosen to participate in this historic first and hope that the experience will be a rich and rewarding one.

*Coordinators of **Trilogy of Kings***

DAVID BURR
Rhode Island College

JOHN GARRITY
Providence College

DON B. WILMETH
Brown University



Rehearsal at Providence College



Rehearsal at Rhode Island College

Shakespeare and the History Plays

The civil "War of the Roses" which took place in England during the 15th century was examined by William Shakespeare in two historical tetralogies. These eight "King" plays encompass a period of English history that was very disordered and chaotic. Beginning with the deposition of Richard II in 1399, Shakespeare takes us through the York/Lancaster dispute to the death of Richard III, the ascension of Henry VII and the formation of the House of Tudor in 1487.

As a playwright Shakespeare took the liberty of deviating from historical fact, at times, in order to make for more compelling drama. The romantic temple garden scene in *1 Henry VI* is one such deviation. Here Richard Plantagenet, by tracing his ancestry back to Lionel, third son of Edward III, as opposed to Henry VI who could only trace back to John of Gaunt, Edward's fourth son, stated a superior claim to the throne. He asked all in agreement to follow him in plucking a white rose, the York's symbol, from a nearby bush as opposed to the red rose of Lancaster.

In actuality romance played no part at all in this bloody battle. It was a power struggle between the two noble houses of York and Lancaster which manifested itself with the usurpation of

Richard II's crown by his cousin Henry Bolingbroke.

The only law of inheritance in England at the time of Edward III's death stipulated the eldest son as heir. Edward the Black Prince, Edward III's eldest, predeceased his father, therefore leaving his nine year old son Richard heir to the throne, making it necessary for a council to govern for him until he came of age.

Richard's reign was one of self-indulgence. The King spent ruinously while England lost a good deal of the French territory his grandfather had gained. There was already a considerable feeling against Richard when he banished Henry Bolingbroke, John of Gaunt's son and cousin to Richard, and the Duke of Norfolk. These two men were members of the Lords Appellant, a faction of nobles opposed to the King's friends. A crisis point was reached when John of Gaunt died and Richard seized his uncle's Lancastrian estates, a move which lost him the crown.

Bolingbroke returned from banishment to claim his rightful inheritance and as he marched toward London gained many supporters, including the Percy family of Northumberland. Richard, who had been at war in Ireland, returned too late and was forced to abdicate. Bolingbroke became Henry IV, first in the line of Lancastrian Kings. Shortly thereafter Richard was murdered in Pomphret Castle.



RICHARD & BOLINGBROKE.

Henry found no peace in his reign. The Percies who aided Henry to the throne had now joined with Owen Glendower in a revolt against the King. "Hotspur", son of Henry Percy, was the cause of many troubles for Henry IV. Not only was he the leader of the Northern rebels but his courage, valor, and sense of responsibility caused dissension between the King and his son and heir, Prince Hal, whom Shakespeare presented as a madcap, rambunctious lad who made acquaintance with a rascally group at the Boar's Head Tavern.

Hal proved himself adept at the Battle of Shrewsbury where he killed Hotspur and the rebel forces were resoundingly defeated. The final demise of the revolt came through a trick played by Prince John. He persuaded the Archbishop of York to dismiss his troops and once done, had them arrested.

Henry, who had always wanted to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land to atone for Richard's death, died, ironically, in the Jerusalem chamber of his castle.

Prince Hal became Henry V, Shakespeare's ideal King. As King he was a religious and very able administrator. He brought peace and loyalty to England, something that had not been felt in some time, and therefore turned his attentions toward gaining France as his Kingdom. He crossed into France and renewed the Hundred Year's War with a successful siege at Harfleur. After more victories, Henry decided to take his exhausted troops back to England. He marched toward Agincourt where he was met by a well-rested French Army, superior in numbers. On a muddy field, on 25 Oct. 1415, Henry's troops won a miraculous victory and he made a glorious return to England, returned to France to sign the Treaty of Troyes which made him heir to the French throne, and married the French Princess Katherine. While there he died suddenly, leaving his nine month old son, Henry VI, heir to both Kingdoms.

Rival noble factions governed the child King, causing civil strife in England while all of Henry V's French gains slipped through English fingers. The situation worsened when Henry VI, a weak, indecisive ruler, came of age. Shakespeare dramatized the English loss of France in *I Henry VI*.

At a time when France was losing the battle of Orleans, a peasant girl named Joan La Pucelle, Joan of Arc, came,

claiming to have been sent by voices to save France from the English. It was mainly due to Joan's efforts that Charles the Dauphin gained back his Kingdom. She not only convinced the Duke of Burgundy, England's chief ally, to join the French, but she was also partly responsible for the death of Lord Talbot, England's chief warrior, at the Battle of Bourdeaux. These two events were key elements in France's success. Joan was eventually captured, received no aid from the Dauphin she helped, and was burned at the stake by the English, who thought of her as a witch and a harlot.

Henry's loss of England is dramatized by Shakespeare in the latter two *Henry VI* plays. Mentioned previously was the garden scene where Richard Plantagenet, now Duke of York, spoke out his claim to the throne. Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, followed Richard in plucking a white rose and later declared he would one day make Richard King.

After a Yorkist success at St. Albans, Henry VI was forced to admit Richard's superior claim and named him heir. Margaret of Anjou, Henry's wife, would have none of her husband's weakness. She refused to give up their son, Prince Edward's, birthright that easily and took it upon herself to lead the loyal northern Lords against Richard.

At a battle near Wakefield she captured, taunted and finally murdered Richard, then ordered his head placed on the city gates of York.

The Yorkist cause was quickly taken up by Richard's sons, Edward (eldest and now heir), Richard and Clarence. Soon after, with the help of the powerful Earl of Warwick, Edward was proclaimed King in many towns. Henry was captured and the Yorks were successful in routing the Lancastrian forces.

A frantic Margaret turned to King Louis of France for aid. At that time Warwick proposed that Edward marry the French King's sister-in-law. Louis accepted Warwick's proposal.

When news of Edward's marriage to the Widow Lady Grey came, Warwick, humiliated, joined forces with Margaret. He married his daughter Anne to Prince Edward, convinced Clarence to join him, captured Edward in a camp near Warwick and restored Henry to the throne. Hence his English name of "Kingmaker."

Soon Edward escaped, Clarence rejoined his brother, Henry was recap-



Henry V



Garrick as Richard III, from a nineteenth century engraving after Hogarth.

tured and Warwick was killed at the Battle of Barnet.

In the final battle of "The War of the Roses," at Tewkesbury, Prince Edward was killed, Margaret banished, and Henry VI murdered. The House of York was once again in power.

Edward IV died at thirty-five leaving his two young sons under the protectorship of his brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester. Richard was not trusted by the Queen's family, the Woodvilles. There was a struggle for possession of the princes which Richard won.

Although there is no concrete evidence of Richard's villainous behavior, Shakespeare presents him as a man whose villainy is unsurpassed in dramatic literature. In his quest for the crown Richard successfully wooed Lady Anne, Prince Edward's widow, murdered his brother Clarence and with the help of the Duke of Buckingham usurped the crown from young Edward V. He later had Edward and the youthful Duke of York murdered in the Tower.

With that done Richard thought he could reign securely. But soon a rebellion broke out, led by Buckingham, who was later captured and executed, and, at the same time, Henry Richmond landed in England and marched toward London to make his claim to the throne.

Richmond defeated and killed Richard at the Battle of Bosworth Field, then claimed the throne through Lancastrian inheritance and conquest. As Henry VII he formed the House of Tudor by marrying Edward IV's daughter Elizabeth, uniting the two Houses of York and Lancaster and putting an end to their ferocious enmity.

Shakespeare in Providence

by Don B. Wilmeth

When the first professional theatre company of note arrived in the Colonies in 1752 under the direction of Lewis Hallam, Puritan New England was bas-tioned against the players, and Hallam wisely chose to exploit the Cavalier South and to move no farther up the coast than New York. In 1755 Hallam and his company of second-rate actors moved to the Indies, where they merged management with a Jamaican director named David Douglass. Soon thereafter Hallam died of yellow fever and Douglass assumed control of the "American Company." It was David Douglass, then, who initiated the first theatrical assault on Rhode Island, though with little success. Twice during the early 1760s Douglass led his company into Rhode Island, where, as he knew, there were no statutes restricting theatrical performances, although strong sentiments did exist against revelry. He first arrived in Newport in the late spring of 1761. Newport, already a vacation town and a favorite retreat for rich southerners during the summer months, seemed favorable territory.

Douglass, however, failed to secure from Governor Francis Fauquier of Virginia a "character" before he left Virginia and thus schemed to circumvent the necessity of formal permission to perform by offering plays in the guise of "Moral Dialogues" or "Dissertations." A portion of his playbill for *Othello* read as follows:

*Kings Arms Tavern—Newport, Rhode Island
On Monday, June 10th,
at the Public Room of the above Inn,
will be delivered a Series of*

MORAL DIALOGUES
in Five Parts

*Depicting the evil effects of jealousy
and other bad passions,
and proving that happiness can only spring
from the pursuit of virtue.*

MR. DOUGLASS — *Will represent a noble
and magnanimous Moor, called Othello,
who loves a lady named Desdemona, and
after he has married her, harbours (as in too
many cases) the dreadful passion of jealousy.*

*O jealousy, our being's bane,
Mark the small cause and most dreadful
pain.*

MR. ALLYN — *Will depict the character of
a specious villain, in the regiment of Othello,
who is so base as to hate his commander on
mere suspicion, and to impose on his best
friend. Of such characters, it is to be feared,
there are thousands in the world, and the
one in question may present to us a salutary
warning.*

*The man that wrongs his master to his
friend,*

What can he come to but a shameful end?

And so forth through the various dram-
atis personae of the play, concluding
with:

*Various other dialogues, too numerous to
mention here, will be delivered at night, all
adapted to the improvement of the mind and
manners. The whole will be repeated on
Wednesday and Saturday. Tickets, six
shillings each, to be had within. Com-
mencement at 7, conclusion at half-past 10,
in order that every spectator may go home at
a sober hour and reflect upon what he has
seen before he retires to rest.*

God save the King,

And long may he sway

East, North, and South,

And fair America.

So successful was this first venture, that in the summer of 1762 Douglass and his company returned to Newport, and then to Providence, where they encountered bigotry and intolerance and once more resorted to "Dialogues" and "Dissertations" at their makeshift "His-trionic Academy" on Meeting Street, east of where about 1769 John Carter erected a printing house called the "Shakespeare's Head." Although no bills are extant from this visit, it seems likely that some Shakespeare was included, as it had been in Newport in 1761.

Even though Douglass was careful to advertise that the primary object of the actors was to "deliver dissertations on subjects instructive and entertaining" and to instruct their audience "to speak in public with propriety," there was still violent local opposition. Local champions of the actors, such as the young John Brown, a member of the famous merchant family, kept at least one mob at bay, which was intent on pulling down the theatre, by planting a cannon in their path and threatening to fire if they persisted. Nonetheless, on August 25, 1762, the Assembly passed an act to "prevent Stage Plays and other

Theatrical Entertainments in this Colony" which carried stringent penalties for non-compliance. Thus for the next thirty years theatrical performances in Providence were curtailed.

In the 1790s, despite retention of the 1762 Act on the books, visits by theatrical troupes resumed, first in 1792, followed in 1794 by a company headed by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Harper. They began a long run at the "Providence Theatre" on December 30 and continued until April 13, presenting only one Shakespearean play, *Hamlet*, for two performances. During a summer season in 1796 they presented *Richard III* and *The Merchant of Venice*. Before the 1795 summer season, during which no Shakespeare was apparently presented, the first regular theatre in Providence was built, which continued in regular use for many years. The Providence Theatre, a relatively small playhouse, was located at Washington and Mathewson streets, fronting on Westminster. Soon Providence became a major stop for theatrical tours and remained part of the circuit for years, being remunerative especially during the period of commencement at Brown University. Joseph Harper managed companies until 1810, bringing some of the great Shakespearean actors of the English-speaking world to Providence. In 1799 the sister of the great Sarah Siddons, Mrs. Whitlock, appeared. During the summer of 1805 a *Hamlet* was performed on July 22, followed by a starring engagement by the English-American actor John Hodgkinson, ending with a benefit performance of *Macbeth* on August 5. In September America's first great star, though English born, Thomas A. Cooper was featured in a Shakespearean repertory including *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, and *Richard III*, attracting special notice and some criticism by wearing a Moorish costume as *Othello*. The comedian of the company, William Bates, appeared as Falstaff in a production of *King Henry IV*; or, *The Battle of Shrewsbury* on September 15, 1806, which he repeated on July 8, 1808. Extant playbills for the summer of 1807 indicate productions of *King Lear*, *Richard III*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *King Henry IV*, and *Macbeth*. In 1811 the Harpers were replaced by the Duffs in leading roles; they presented *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *Richard III*.

The year 1812 was a significant one in the history of the Providence stage. On July 13 the great English actor George Frederick Cooke began a nine-

night season, offering most of his great Shakespearean roles: Shylock, Richard III, Macbeth, King Lear, and Falstaff in *Henry IV, Part I*. The impact of this event on this small town was immense. The *Rhode-Island American and General Advertiser* (July 17) gives a typical reaction: "It would far exceed the limits of a newspaper were we to attempt to criticize or point out the various beauties of this inimitable performer, in his impersonation of these truly arduous characters. Throughout the whole there was nothing to condemn, much to admire, and more to astonish." On July 31st "Thespis," writing in the *Rhode-Island American*, noted that Cooke would "make his final bow to the Providence audience this evening in the character of 'Sir Giles Overreach,'" and fervently added: "Those who witnessed the 'brilliant performances' of Mr. Cooke, during his visit here, will pay the tribute of respect due to his superior talent, by attending the Theatre this evening, and those who have not yet seen him, will doubtless avail themselves of the last opportunity which will offer of gratifying their curiosity and taste, by beholding this great Actor, justly styled the Garrick of the present day." Unknown to that audience on July 31, this would, indeed, be the last tribute to Cooke, for upon his return to New York he passed his final days in bed until his death on September 26, 1812.

From Cooke's appearances in 1812 until the end of the century, Providence witnessed most of the great Shakespearean actors of the day, including Junius Brutus Booth and his famous sons, Edwin, America's greatest tragedian, and John Wilkes, the assassin of Lincoln; John Howard Payne, America's first great Hamlet and the author of "Home, Sweet Home"; Edmund Kean, the greatest of England's Romantic actors; Edwin Forrest, America's first great native-born actor; William Augustus Conway; Charles Young, and many others. Indeed, virtually all the great stars, both native and foreign, played Providence during the 19th century. Internationally-known stars such as Tommaso Salvini and Sarah Bernhardt trod the boards in Providence, many presenting Shakespearean roles.

The final performance at the Providence Theatre was in 1832. After that date Providence saw a score of theatres come and go, at times as many as five presenting stage performances in competition by 1900. One playhouse on Dorrance Street built in 1838 was called "Shakespeare Hall" with a



Edwin Booth as Hamlet

medallion head of Shakespeare decorating the exterior and his bust and a model of his birthplace in the lobby. When it was destroyed by fire in 1844 it was occupied by Doctor Lardner for astronomical lectures. Despite the lack of success of this particular theatre, Providence during the first half of the 19th century shared with Boston, New York, and Philadelphia the privilege of regular visits by competent companies and stars. The Shakespearean plays presented capitalized on starring roles, sensation, and as much spectacle as possible. The roles most frequently spotlighted were Richard III, Romeo, Falstaff, Hamlet, Othello, Iago, Macbeth, Juliet, and Lady Macbeth. Until 1871 the pattern established by the Providence Theatre and the Dorrance Street Theatre prevailed — a local company with visiting stars. Several small theatres were in operation; audiences saw Forrest, E.L. Davenport, Charlotte Crampton (who played the male roles of Hamlet, Shylock, and Richard), John Wilkes Booth, Charlotte Cushman (America's first great actress), and, on numerous occasions, the great Edwin Booth (he first played Hamlet in Providence in 1867).

The usual pattern was altered somewhat in 1871 with the opening of The Providence Opera House. With greater respectability, the drama in Providence found a fitting home here for over half a century. For its first six years the Opera House housed a resident stock company with visiting stars. After 1877 it depended on touring companies. Virtually all the famous Shakespearean actors and actresses of the turn of the century appeared in Providence, a list too long to enumerate here. Providence audiences witnessed at the Opera House such greats as Sir Henry Irving and Dame Ellen Terry in *The Merchant of Venice*, the great international star Helena Modjeska as Lady Macbeth, Robert Mantell as Othello and Lear, Nat Goodwin's dignified Shylock with the Portia of Maxine Elliott (in a blond wig), the team of E.H. Sothorn and Julia Marlowe, the charming Hamlet of the English star Johnston Forbes-Robertson, and on and on.

In 1901 one of America's great stock companies was established in Providence, the Albee Stock Company. During its twenty-nine seasons they presented 477 productions of 439 plays. Since they were ostensibly a summer company, few Shakespearean productions graced their seasons. The only production during their first eleven sea-

sons was *Romeo and Juliet* during the week of June 27, 1904, featuring John Craig as Romeo, Lillian Lawrence as Juliet, and Helen Reimer as Nurse. Reimer, Providence's favorite actress for decades, received a life-time contract engraved on gold plate from the management. The plaque and a collection of seven photographs of Reimer are on view in the greenroom of Faunce House Theatre.

During the first half of this century, most Shakespearean production in Providence was in the hands of amateurs. The most prominent of the amateur theatre groups in Providence, The Players, organized in 1909 as the successor of an earlier group, is still going strong. This group, however, has shown little interest in Shakespearean production over the years, having staged only five plays: *The Merchant of Venice* (1911), *Much Ado About Nothing* (1925), *Merry Wives of Windsor* (1930), *The Taming of the Shrew* (1964), and *Hamlet* (1973).

You might be surprised to discover that the most prolific producers of Shakespeare in Providence have been the various theatrical groups at Brown, beginning in 1896 with the activity of a local sorority of Alpha Beta, founded two years after the opening of Pembroke College, up to the present

Providence Theatre.

Time of rising the Curtain is altered to half past 7 o'clock.

Mr. COOPER'S FOURTH NIGHT.

During the engagement no Play can be repeated.

On Monday Evening, July 31, 1815,

Will be presented, Shakespeare's much admired Tragedy, in 5 acts, called

RICHARD THE THIRD,

Or, the Battle of Bosworth Field.

Richard, Duke of Gloucester, for this night only, Mr. COOPER.

King Henry,	Mr. Powell.
Duke of Buckingham,	Mr. W. Jones.
Henry, Earl of Richmond,	Mr. Young.
Prince Edward,	Mr. Day.
Duke of York,	Mrs. H. D. Powell.
Norfolk,	Mr. Savage.
Raoul,	Mr. Fenell.
Carbury,	Mr. Clark.
Lord Stanley,	Mr. Hughes.
Lieutenant of the Tower,	Mr. Savage.
Trevel,	Mr. Legg.
Lord Mayor,	Mr. Day.
Tyrell,	Mr. Jones.
Lady Ann,	Mrs. Young.
Queen Elizabeth,	Mrs. Powell.
Duchess of York,	Mrs. Mills.

To which will be added, for the 5th time, the much admired Farce, called the

BOARDING HOUSE,

Or, Five Hours at Brighton.

Admiral Colpepper,	Mr. Hughes.	Simon Spatterdash,	Mr. Clark.
Albion Contract,	Mr. Legg.	Four Edgels,	Mr. Day.
Young Contract,	Mr. Fenell.	Waite,	Mr. W. Jones.
Capt. Bidart,	Mrs. Young.	Fanny,	Mrs. J. Jones.
Caroline Hearley,	Mrs. Savage.	Budget,	Mrs. Mills.
Caroline Wbeatish,			

Boxes 1 Dollar, Pit 50 Cents, Gallery 25 Cents. Tickets and places for the Boxes may be taken at the Box Office of the Theatre, at 3 o'clock, on the days of performance. Doors opened at half past six and Curtains rise at half past seven o'clock.

The *ETHIOP*—or the Child of the Desert,

Is in preparation, and will be produced with new Scenery, Machinery, &c.

groups, Sock and Buskin and Production Workshop. As far as I can ascertain, the total number of plays performed is twenty-six; the number of productions is at least sixty-six. The most frequently performed plays have been *Macbeth* (four times), *Romeo and Juliet* (five), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (five), *As You Like It* (six), *Twelfth Night* (eight), and *Much Ado About Nothing* (four). At least fifteen plays have been performed twice or more. The most recent Shakespearean productions by Sock and Buskin have been *Henry V* (1967-68), *King Lear* (1968-69), *Much Ado About Nothing* (1970-71), *As You Like It* (1974-75), *Romeo and Juliet* (1977-78), and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1978-79). Production Workshop, the undergraduate experimental group, produced *King John* and *Twelfth Night* in the 1970s; *The Tempest* was performed last season as a Senior Production.

Providence College, although records are incomplete, appears to have presented four of Shakespeare's plays (*Julius Caesar* in 1926 and 1931; *Hamlet* in 1927; *The Merchant of Venice* in 1929; and *Twelfth Night* in 1979). The latter production, guest directed by a RIC theatre professor, was the first step toward this current co-operative effort. Rhode Island College has produced two of Shakespeare's plays: *The Tempest* in 1971 and *Macbeth* during the 1979-80 season. Two other productions based on the works of Shakespeare have been presented in recent years: *An Elizabethan Gallery* and *I Will*.

The founding of the Trinity Square Repertory Theatre in the 1960s once more brought resident professional theatre to Providence after a lengthy dry period. Since 1966 Trinity has presented eight of Shakespeare's plays plus musicals based on Shakespeare (*Two Gentlemen of Verona* in 1975 and *The Boys from Syracuse* in 1976). *Twelfth Night*, Trinity's first Shakespearean production, opened January 6, 1966, followed the next year with *Midsummer Night's Dream* (opened February 7) and *Julius Caesar* (opened November 16). *Macbeth* was staged in 1969, *The Taming of the Shrew* in 1970, *Troilus and Cressida* in 1971, *King Lear* in 1977, and *As You Like It* in 1978. Most of these productions have been unusually successful in large measure because of Project Discovery and special performances for student groups.

In 1971 Robert Colonna, a former member of the Trinity Company, founded in Providence the Rhode Island Shakespeare Theater, an all vol-

unteer organization now located at Swanhurst in Newport. Although their principal interest has been the production of Shakespeare, frequently in off-beat styles, settings, and periods, they have also performed short pieces derived from Shakespeare, Lewis Carroll, G.K. Chesterton, and others. TRIST has presented a musical version of *The Merchant of Venice* set in a burlesque theatre, *Much Ado About Nothing* set during The America's Cup Races, a science fiction version of *Coriolanus*, and *As You Like It* on the Russian Steppes. More conventional versions of *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, and *Henry IV, Part 1* have been staged. In August of this year a musical version of *The Taming of the Shrew* set in the Wild West of the 1890s was presented.

Any brief survey of Shakespearean production in Providence would be incomplete without the mention of one last group, The Providence Shakespearean Society, which has been continuously active for well over seventy-five years, meeting six times a year in various locales, including members' homes, for a reading and refreshments. On these occasions, members in evening dress read, without rehearsal, severely cut versions of Shakespeare, or, as has been true in more recent years, other plays frequently more modern. The rules of the group have changed little since the early part of the century. The plays as read eliminate the bawdiest sections of the plays and shorten them to about two hours in duration. It was decided early in the Society's existence to present only the more familiar and least depressing plays. I suspect that if any member of the Society had the time or endurance to alter these edicts by presenting new versions of the plays, including those originally castigated, the current members would not be disappointed. Indeed, the moralistic aversion to Shakespeare and theatre in general has changed drastically in Providence from the time of Douglass and his "Dialogues" or even the 1830s when the Second Baptist Church, located opposite the "Shakespeare Hall," rang its bell and sang hymns lustily during performances to exorcise the devils in the "temple," and Brown's President Wayland warned students to stay away from the theatre, saying that if they were caught they would be reported to their churches or, if unconverted, expelled.

Professor Wilmeth, chairman of Brown's Department of Theatre Arts, is the author of four books on various aspects of the American theatre. His biography of George Frederick Cooke recently won the Barnard Hewitt Theatre History Award presented by the American Theatre Association.

Calendar of Events

- Oct. 28–Nov. 1 *Henry IV, Part 1* at Brown University,
Faunce House Theatre. 8 pm
- Oct. 29–Nov. 1 *Richard III* at Providence College,
Harkins Auditorium. 8 pm
- Oct. 30–Nov. 1 *Richard II* at Rhode Island College,
Roberts Hall. 8 pm
- Nov. 2 Lecture
“*Richard II*, Envy: The Human Impulse,
the King’s Demise.”
Dr. Robert Comery,
Providence College, Siena Hall, Room 212. 4 pm
- Nov. 3 Lecture
“*Henry IV*, the King and the Character.”
Dr. John Shroeder,
Rhode Island College, Roberts Little Theatre. 4 pm
- Nov. 4 Lecture
“*Richard III*: The Seductions of Power.”
Dr. Rene Fortin,
Brown University, Leeds Theatre. 4 pm
- Nov. 5 and 6 H. IV at Rhode Island College
R. III at Brown University
R. II at Providence College
- Nov. 7 and 8 H. IV at Providence College
R. III at Rhode Island College
R. II at Brown University

Brown University
Department of Theatre Arts
Sock and Buskin
presents

Henry IV, Part 1

Directed by John Emigh
Associate Director
Barbara Tannenbaum
Scene Design and Lighting by
John R. Lucas
Technical Direction by
David Schrader
Costume Design by
Donna Himmelberger
Fight Choreography by
Normand Beauregard
Musical Direction by Joy Williams

*There will be one fifteen-minute
intermission*

CAST
(in order of appearance)

King Henry the Fourth
Elwood Howard

Earl of Westmoreland
Michael Wysession

Lord John of Lancaster
Jon Linden

Sir Walter Blunt
Steven Kaye

Archbishop
David Santoro

Attendant Lord to King Henry
Stuart MacNaught

Soldiers and Attendant Lords
*Mark Jacobs, Jim Munch, Andrew
Wendel*

Monks
Jon Eig, George Sampas

Sir John Falstaff
Andrew Weems

Henry, Prince of Wales
Scott Ellman

Poins
Shiv Khemka

Thomas Percy, Earl of Worcester
Steven Katz

Henry Percy ("Hotspur"), his son
Shaun G. Clarke

Messenger from Northumberland
Ed Farrell

Peto
Tommy Diggs

Gadshill
Dan Swartz

Bardolph
Michael Wiecek

Pilgrims and Tradesmen
*Harrison Alter, Andrew Campbell,
Jon Eig, Joseph Fernandes, Chris
Scales, Ian Watson, Ed Farrell*

Lady Percy, Hotspur's, wife and
Mortimer's sister
Catheleen Jane Greenberg

Hotspur's Servant
Brian Parks

Francis
Al Conti

Mistress Quickly, hostess of the
tavern
Marceline Hugot

Sheriff
David Santoro

Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March
Chris Smith

Owen Glendower
Richard H. Soule, Jr.

Lady Mortimer, Glendower's
daughter and Mortimer's wife
Christina Haag

Piper
Ian Watson

Musicians

(flutes) *Juliet Blau, Annie Greely,
Sarah Lamb, Joy Williams;*
(trumpets) *Nancy Kall, David Lob,
Bob McHugh, Brad Voigt; (horns)*
*Karen Katrinak, Heidi Proegler,
Tom Stockton; (euphoniums) Jeff
Peipert, Nick Philipson; (trombone)*
*Joseph Pina; (tubas) Doug Carlson,
Ted Zateslo; (percussion) Kevin
Pariseau, Bruce Siegell; (harp)*
Maria Santidiago.

Archibald, Earl of Douglas
Gary Weiss

Messengers to Hotspur
Brien Parks, George Sampas

Sir Richard Vernon
Elliott Lippman

PRODUCTION STAFF

Assistants to the Technical
Director
James Scott, Myra Coffield

Assistants to the Costume Designer
*David Santoro, Jane Bossman,
Marsa Zammarelli*

Box Office Management
Lisa Orris

Box Office Assistant
Roger Baumgarten

Stage Manager
Gwendolyn Wynne

Properties
Priscilla Putnam, Della Spring

Dimmerboard Operator
Jack Kohn

Electricians
*Deb Blicher, Jack Kohn, Scott
Mackay*

Set Construction
Theatre Arts 25

Costume Master
David Santoro

Costume Construction Crew
*Jane Bossman, David Santoro,
Marsa Zammarelli, Marcia
Fannarelli, Mimi Reickert, Karen
Marcus, Santana Goodman.*

Costume Running Crew
Janet Tessitorn, Francesca Camp

Production Running Crew
*Al Conti, Julie Cometta, Cathleen
Jane Greenberg*

Rhode Island College Theatre
and the
Department of Communications
and Theatre
presents

Richard II

Directed by David H. Burr
Scene Design Supervised by
John F. Custer
Technical Direction by Gary P. Delp
Costume Design by
Barbara B. Matheson
Lighting Design by John F. Custer
and Elizabeth Regan
Fight Choreography by
Normand Beauregard
Make-up Design by Marg Cappelli

*There will be one fifteen minute
intermission*

CAST (in order of appearance)

Richard
Matt E. Toupin

Bolingbroke
Kyle Fuz. Gillett

Northumberland
Tom King

Duke of York
Glenn Nadeau

Gaunt, Gardener, Exton
Thomas Gleadow

Mowbray, Berkley, Fitzwater
Stephen P. Lynch

Aumerle
James T. Beauregard

Percy
Kenneth McPherson

Salisbury, Surrey, Murderer
William J. Macek, Jr.

Herald I, Ross
John J. Finnerty, Jr.

Herald II, Willoughby
John A. Kelly

Marshall, Carlisle, York's servant
Mark A. Morettini

Welch captain, Scroop, Abbot
Joseph R. Norton

Bushy, Gardener's man, Murderer
Michael A. Seggie

Green, Murderer
Timm Carney

Bagot, Groom
William Oakes

Servant
Donald Nunes

Queen
Sharon Carpentier

Duchess of York
Paula Lynch

Duchess of Gloucester
Paula Fiore

1st Lady
MaryAnn Manni

2nd Lady
Shannon Horan

PRODUCTION STAFF

Technical Director-Roberts
Auditorium
Russell Monaghan

Stage Manager
Sally Anne Santos

Assistant Technical Director
Kathy Fillion

Assistant Stage Manager
Russell Champa

Assistant to the Director
Alfonso G. Girardi

Costume Assistant
Deborah Newton

Master Electrician
Joel P. Blanchard

Make-up Captain
Kathleen N. Bebeau

Costume Captain
Pamela Hoff

Box Office Manager
Joe Norton

Publicity Director
P. William Hutchinson

Publicity Assistant
Daniel Costa

Graphic Artist
Helene Banoff

Photography
Peter Tobia

Light Crew
Bob Howe, Lisa Quinn

Set Crew
*E. John Pina, Luke Sutherland,
Kelly Wright*

Properties
*Russell Champa, Chair; Sally A.
Santos, Susan Leafé*

Costume Running Crew
*Anthony White, Alan Baptista,
Maria Falco, Mara Riekstins,
Sarah Newman, Kate Patrick,
Linda Dutra, Jeffrey Burrows
(traveling captain)*

Make-up Crew
Debbie DiBiase, Jorin Burr

Sound
Meg McKenna, Anna DiStefano

Technical Assistants
*James Beauregard, Joel Blanchard,
Marg Cappelli, Russell Champa,
Scott DeAngelis, Kathy Fillion,
Denise Horn, Meg McKenna, E.
John Pina, Elizabeth Regan, Sally
Anne Santos, Russell Sjogren,
Kathy Vieira, Kelly Wright*

Costume Construction Crew
*Jeffrey Burrows, Clare Dussault,
Kathleen N. Bebeau, Linda Dutra,
Roger Lemlin, John Powesland,
Beverly Burrows, Dorothy
Guillotte, Mary James, Pan Hoff,
Paula Lynch, Alan R. Baptista,
Timm Carney, Anthony White,
Mara Riekstins, Kimberly Kruger,
Linda Hooper, Susan Morriz, and
Theatre 205, 210, 378.*

Providence College Theatre
presents

Richard III

Directed by Jean Scharfenberg
Scene Design and Lighting by
Jim Eddy
Costume Design by Mary G. Farrell
Vocal Coaching by
Reginal B. Haller, O.P.
Fight Choreography by
Normand Beauregard

*There will be two ten-minute
intermissions*

CAST (cast in alphabetical order)

Ratcliff
Ralph G. Brancaccio

Lord Grey (3rd Citizen)
John Brewer

Richard Duke of York
Aaron Burr

Edward Plantagenet (Page)
Carol Caulfield

Norfolk (Bishop, Dorset 2nd
Messenger)
David J. Clements

Tyrrel (Herbert)
John Corbett, O.P.

Buckingham
Wally Dunn

Old Queen Margaret
Mary G. Farrell

Edward IV (2nd Citizen)
Tom Farrell

Queen Elizabeth
Elizabeth Figlock

Richmond
Dan Foster

Lady Anne
Patrice Frattaroli

Richard
Joseph R. Gianni

Drummer
Gary Heaslip

Hastings (Early of Surrey)
Joseph Henderson

1st Messenger, 1st Citizen, Blunt
William P. Lane

Archbishop, Mayor of London,
Bishop
James H. Maher

2nd Murderer, Cardinal Bouchier,
Bishop
Mark R. Molloy

Clarence (Catesby)
Paul Morin

Brakenbury, Oxford
Paul Murphy

Lord Rivers (3rd Messenger)
John Powers

Young Margaret Plantagenet
Julie Redding

Stanley
Marc Tondreau

1st Murderer, Priest, 4th
Messenger
Joe Trimble III

Edward Prince of Wales
Artie Wayne

Duchess of York
Elizabeth M. Whelan

PRODUCTION STAFF

Stage Manager
Chris Ehrler

Assistant Stage Manager
Joseph Mecca

Company Manager
Julie Redding

Properties
*Gary Weir, Paul Morin, Kate
O'Connor*

Assistant Lighting Designer
Judy Weaver

Sound
Jane Dillon

Publicity Coordinator
Mary Ellen Baxter

Timpanist
Gary Heaslip

Publicity Assistant
Brian Ellerbeck

Box Office Manager
Ellen Frey

Box Office Assistant
Matt Oliverio

Secretary to Music and Theatre
Program
Elaine Pontarelli

Costume Design Assistants
Martina Flynn, Donna Lapre

Costume Research Assistant
Mary Jo Flannagan

Costume Shop Assistants
*Mary Ellen Glennon, Pat Landry,
Lynn Mullins, Mimi Skelly, Heidi
Vician, Marie Rinck, Julie
Marrinucci, Mary Ellen Baxter*

Scene Shop Assistants

*Bob Barrett, Bob Caldas, Steve
Callaban, Joe Catalano, Dave
Clements, Stephanie Dalton,
Martina Flynn, Joe Henderson, Jim
Lambert, Joe Mecca, Paul Morin,
Kate O'Connor, Mary O'Connor,
Tom Pavano, Eric Pelletier, John
Powers, Lisa Reagan, Julie
Redding*

Make-up Coordination
Lydia Decyk

Special thanks to the Theatre
Department of Illinois State
University for making possible Ms.
Scharfenberg's participation in the
*Shakespeare Festival: A Trilogy of
Kings*.

Getting Back to Shakespeare

by Charles H. Shattuck

The last half century of Shakespeare production has come to be known as the Age of the Director. This should have been (often it was) a remarkable improvement over the age of the Actor-Manager. During that older time, the purpose of playing was not so much to hold the mirror up to nature, or even to Shakespeare, but far too often to the Actor-Manager. As Shaw used to complain of Henry Irving, that famous artist regarded a Shakespeare play as a mere word-quarry out of which he could hew character-creations that were really his own, sometimes better than Shakespeare's but not what Shakespeare meant at all. And pretty much the same objection might be made to many major actors of the past, from Garrick to Kean to Macready to Beerbohm Tree, who took a theatre and hired a company, raised the banner of Shakespeare, and aspired to leadership in the profession.

In the new age, the Director would change all that. He was not an actor, exhibiting his art and personality nightly before the public. He stood outside the performance, deliberately invisible; but his job was to control every element of the performance, from the acting to the least details of *mise-en-scène*. His responsibility was solely to the play—that it be realized as an authentic esthetic experience, true to the intentions of the author.

One of the first and finest modern Shakespeare directors was W. Bridges-Adams (1889-1965), who took over the spring and summer Shakespeare festivals at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon in 1919 and produced nearly all its plays (including 29 of the 36 Shakespeares) down to 1934. Bridges-Adams was a man of vigorous intelligence, classically educated, of excellent taste and judgment and becoming modesty. He brought to his Stratford assignment a thorough grounding in professional experience—over a decade of acting, directing, and managing in theatres of London and the provinces. His first summer season at Stratford opened on August 2, 1919. A week later William Archer, most discriminating of critics, reported in *The Nation* the effect of what he had seen:

There was no impertinent intrusion of the producer between the poet and his audience, no tedious over-elaboration, no pretentious

"intellectuality." Shakespeare was suffered to speak for himself and to speak rapidly, smoothly, and melodiously. The effect sought for and generally attained was that which lay in the words themselves, not in subtle pauses between them, nor in interpolated business which the poet no doubt ought to have thought of, but didn't. Mr. Adams rightly conceives that the function of a producer is to interpret his author, not to collaborate with him. He is inspired by an artistic chivalry which forbids him to take advantage of the Bard's defencelessness.

To Archer's further delight he observed that Bridges-Adams staged full texts. Out of the 3075 lines of *The Winter's Tale* all but 60 lines were spoken, and these omissions were to be blamed solely on deference to public squeamishness.

From hindsight we can recognize that Archer's enthusiasm for what happened at the Stratford theatre (regarded by most London critics in those days as merely another "country rep") promised too much. Most of the Shakespeare Archer had seen during his half-century of theatre-going had consisted of the textual butcherings, scenic over-loadings, and personality-playing of the Irving-Terry, Augustin Daly, and Beerbohm Tree managements. It was hardly surprising that Bridges-Adams' forthright, honest approach to Shakespeare should seem to Archer a new beginning, a revelation, a healthy return to the original. But Archer died in 1924, before he could even imagine





Fabia Drake as Rosalind in W. Bridges-Adams's *As You Like It*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1933.



Tyrone Guthrie's *Troilus and Cressida*, Old Vic 1955-6.

what strange births the new age might germinate.

Whatever Bridges-Adams method of production might have led to, it was blown out of the water in 1925 by what Muriel St. Clare Byrne has called "the most important single contribution to the history of modern Shakespearian production." This was the introduction to London by Barry Jackson (1879-1961) of a production of *Hamlet* in modern dress. Here for the first time since the Age of Garrick was a Shakespeare play made to appear not a centuries-old classic, not an exercise in antiquarian research, not a mere excuse to display the skills and passions of a famous star, but a play to be listened to as if written yesterday by an author who is "our contemporary." In figures dressed in frockcoats or lounging robes, in evening gowns or short skirts, consulting their wristwatches to time the midnight bell, fingering cocktail glasses and cigarettes against a background of syncopated music, chattering in the high-pitched tones and speedy rhythms of upper-class modern British—here was "our" *Hamlet*. Of course, as Miss Byrne said, it made the audiences hear and see the play "for the first time. . . . It shocked them into thinking."

Thus far, well and good. But what might have been a one-time bright idea became a fad, an epidemic. Jackson's own *Macbeth* of 1928 frittered away its mystery in inescapable reminders of World War I, and prompted Herbert Farjeon's quip that *Macbeth* was "a Scottish gentleman in considerable difficulties." Oscar Asche's *Merry Wives* in 1929, with its self-consciously clever use of telephones, motorbikes, and wireless sets failed in a week. The Lunt and Fontanne *Shrew* in 1935 was needlessly gagged with anachronistic clown-tricks; Tyrone Guthrie's *All's Well* in 1959 mixed Edwardian court scenes with North African battlefield scenes from World War II; the Gielgud-Burton *Hamlet* in "rehearsal clothes" in 1964 was drab without reason. Any regular playgoer can multiply this list of modern dress Shakespeares and assess the degree of their success.

An ancillary effect of the fad for modern dress was that once the "dress-code" of supposed "historically accurate" or "generalized Renaissance" costume was broken, then all manner of visual presentation of Shakespeare became available at the whim of every

director. In 1925 Glenn Hughes, horrified by what was coming, foresaw Hamlet as a 10th century Chinaman, a 16th century Italian, a 19th century Hawaiian, a 20th century American Negro. His ironic prophecy was not far off the mark. As Eric Bentley once said, "It was a great discovery for the mentally indigent that you can costume a play in any period. You choose the one that has not been chosen."

This "undressing" of Shakespeare in the 1920's gave impetus to an even more disastrous effect, which had in fact got under way a generation earlier — the movement to deprive the plays of their verbal music, to *colloquialize* them. In the post-Robertson, post-Ibsen era, with the rising popularity of plays about everyday life, especially parlor comedy, young actors, seeing where the money lay, deliberately eschewed every vestige of the "grand manner." When Edwin Booth and Lawrence Barrett were nearing the end of their careers in America in the late 1880's they despaired of finding successors with the art or the will to carry on the classic drama in the classic manner. In 1916 Alexander Woolcott declared that "it is really understating the case to say that the twentieth century actor has not been trained to play Shakespeare, when the whole point is that he has been trained *not* to. By the stuff of which the present day plays are made, by the implicit directions of the lines he speaks . . . he is trained to prose and to soft speech and to the quiet homely everyday naturalness that would ill comport with the superb verse, the magnificent declamations, the splendid trappings of the plays of Shakespeare." As the contemporary playwright, Henry Arthur Jones, observed, the modern convention that the audience is eaves-dropping through a fourth wall had developed a school of actors "who can render with extreme nicety all those subtleties of the drawing room and the street which are *scarcely worth rendering*."

Unlike Bridges-Adams, the modern Director is rarely contented with anonymity. He is typically very much aware of himself, his hegemony, and his presence in the public eye. Thus he feels called upon to put *his* unmistakable mark upon *his* production. What can he do with the *Comedy of Errors* that no one has done before him? So we have been treated to a voodoo *Macbeth*, a fascist *Julius Caesar*, *The Shrew* (or sometimes *Much Ado*) as a shoot-em-up

western, *Troilus and Cressida* as the War between the States, *The Merry Wives* as gay old pre-war Vienna, *Antony and Cleopatra* as an exposé of drug-infested, degenerate modern imperialism, a psychedelic *Love's Labors Lost* monitored by a bearded guru, *The Dream* as a circus performance in a white box, or as an exhibition of raw lechery or sexual perversion, a *Hamlet* in space suits, an Eskimo *King Lear*. A version of *King John* at Stratford-upon-Avon in 1974 was so absurdly whacked about, rewritten, and farcified that all England blushed for it. At that moment in the play when John surrenders his crown to Pandulph, the papal legate, and receives it back again (a matter of five blank verse lines), John was wrestled to the ground by a clutch of black-clad monks, stripped to his G-string, run up onto a mound, crowned with a golden fool's cap. Then they clapped a golden mask on his face. It was filled with custard pie.

At San Diego in 1976, as reported by Stephen Booth in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, an *As You Like It* was set in Canada in 1776. Lines were altered to fit. "The stubbornest young fellow in France" became "the stubbornest young fellow in the province." References to the "court" became to the "fort." The word "shepherd" was altered, senselessly, to "goatherd." Adam, Audrey, William, Amiens, Corin, Silvius and Phoebe, and half of the Banished Duke's followers were American Indians. The Duke accompanied his speech about the joys of life in the forest with a translation into sign language. While Amiens sang "It was a lover and his lass," his chorus sat in a circle passing a peace pipe. Touchstone was a Scot with an Irish accent or an Irishman with a Scots accent. In any case when he asked Corin if he had ever been at the "fort," it came out had he ever been at the "fart." Touchstone wooed Audrey with beads and other trade goods. When Adam, whose life-long savings was a bag of wampum, announced that he was dying for food he began a ceremonial death chant. Jaques delivered his "Seven Ages" speech to a solitary crouching Indian. When Celia began reading one of Orlando's poems tacked to a tree, she found that it was continued on the next tree! But the audience was so bemused by all these other delightful surprises that it hardly noticed Celia's poor little joke.

Stephen Booth offers this *As You Like*

It, apparently the worst he encountered on the West Coast in the 1976 season, as a fair example of the "hyped up condescending production which derives from contempt for the play and for the audience."

But whatever loopholes our theatrical egomaniacs slip through to launch their attacks, Shakespeare is essentially indestructible. The text is always there in the book. From Dr. Johnson to Blakemore Evans textual scholars have labored to recover from the imperfect records of earliest editions what Shakespeare "really wrote." And whatever minor questions abide we can safely "get back to Shakespeare."

It is instructive to note that scholars in parallel arts have been laboring, like our Shakespeare scholars, to recover lost glories of classic originals. Some twenty-five years ago the Conservation staff of London's National Gallery gave a sound scrubbing to the *Rokeby Venus*, and it is our privilege—the first generation in perhaps three centuries—to enjoy the lovely tints that "nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on" to the flesh of Velazquez's model. Since then the Gallery's Titians have been cleaned, too. The murky skies over *Bacchus and Ariadne* are brilliant now, and by their light we find at the bottom of the canvas a half dozen jokes, some merry and some macabre, to puzzle and amuse us. England during its Renaissance did not produce great painters, but England's Shakespeare—a generation older than Velazquez, a generation younger than Titian—needs only to be "scrubbed clean," as the paintings have been, to be proved master of all the Renaissance artists in whatever medium. And quite apart from so many idle efforts to prove him "our contemporary" it behooves us in our theatres as in our studies to show ourselves worthy to claim rank as "his contemporary."

A parable for producers of Shakespeare turned up lately in Ada Louise Huxtable's "Architecture View" (*New York Times*, June 14, 1981). The State Bank of the little town of Casselton, North Dakota, built to look like a bank in the Sullivanesque red brick vernacular of the late 19th century, in 1959 embraced "the Space Age and the modernistic style" and sheathed itself in slabs of characterless plastic. In 1979 it stripped off the "Great Manufacturer's Coverup" and rediscovered its handsome, honest, reliable original. "At this moment, all over the country," is

Ms. Huxtable's way of putting it, "the future is being repealed."

We have begun to recover the basic theatrical conditions that Shakespeare's plays were designed for. William Poel's endless propagandizing for the "return to the Globe" is bearing fruit. The late Angus Bowmer's magnificent Elizabethan playhouse at Ashland, Oregon, the several "platform stages" initiated by Tyrone Guthrie at Stratford, Ontario, at Minneapolis, at Chichester, and lately at Visalia, California, the St. George's playhouse in the north of London, the "Second Globe" which is to be built at Wayne State in Detroit, and Sam Wanamaker's Globe to be built on the Bankside, not to mention the countless "Globe stagings" of Shakespeare and other Renaissance plays in University theatres, have accustomed millions of modern theatregoers to expect to see the plays acted in plain, essentially undecorated space. Even Joe Papp has been known to say, "The setting Shakespeare *had* for his plays was in some ways exactly right. . . . The lines come out better against that spare background."

In recent years there have been proposals to "free Shakespeare" from the Director and turn him over to the actors to work out among themselves, communally—reading and listening to each other, acting and reacting, until in a sort of natural organic manner the performance creates itself. This might, or might not, free the stage from some of the zanier "interpretations" that we have seen or read about in the last half century. But it guarantees nothing and assures us only of enormous waste of time. A play needs a Director as an orchestra needs a director—a Toscanini when we can find one.

There have been many good, and some superb, Directors of Shakespeare in the modern era. In America, from the time she directed Maurice Evans in *Richard II* in 1937, through Hamlet and Falstaff and Malvolio and Macbeth, down to her great *Othello* with Robeson, Ferrer, and Uta Hagen, Margaret Webster saved Shakespeare for Broadway and America almost single-handed. Her knowledge of Shakespeare, her brilliance, her taste, and her *authority* prompted a delightful profile-study of her in the *New Yorker* entitled "We." When in an argument about a point in Shakespeare Miss Webster said, "We," she meant herself *and* the author, and few could gainsay her. In

1938, when she and Evans brought out the uncut *Hamlet*, Joseph Wood Krutch observed that her "interpretation" of the play was that which emerged when each scene was allowed just the degree of prominence it has in the text itself. "Most actors," he said, "cast about for some novel, often eccentric 'interpretation' of the character, and then arrange the text [to make that interpretation possible]. The Hamlet we have here is not 'Maurice Evans in Hamlet,' but 'Hamlet with Maurice Evans.'"

Between 1953 and 1959, the English Director Glen Byam Shaw brought off at Stratford-upon-Avon a round dozen Shakespeares—none of them modish or avant-garde, but of the two I saw and the others I have read about, surely they rank among the most satisfying of this past generation. In reviewing his *As You Like It* that most judicious critic, Muriel St. Clare Byrne, wrote, "A trust in his author and his actors, in straight playing and in a direct and uncomplicated approach to character seem to me the fundamental virtue in Mr. Byam Shaw's work as a producer." On another occasion one of his actresses, Yvonne Mitchell, paid him this tribute:

Glen talks in the actor's language, which would, I suppose, approximate to an architect being able to tell a builder how to lay the stones which will build a cathedral, but leaving him free to make his own gargoyles. Glen is full of invention, but the invention is never a "clever idea." It springs directly from the words of the play, but few people are imaginative enough to have seen it for themselves.

I trust there will be more and more Directors like Glen Byam Shaw, whose peculiar delight was always to bring together the finest actors, and working intimately but unobtrusively with them, and keeping his *interpretation* pretty much to himself, to deliver Shakespeare to us so forthrightly that the play and the manner of its performance are fused into a perfect unison, and Shakespeare's mind and art, and all that *he* intended, and all that *we* should ever expect to get from it, are simply *there*.

Dr. Shattuck is Professor Emeritus, University of Illinois, and past president of the Shakespeare Association of America. Among his many books are *Shakespeare on the American Stage*, *The Hamlet of Edwin Booth*, and *The Shakespeare Promptbooks*.



The Kings

by Jan Kott

Shakespeare is like the world, or life itself. Every historical period finds in him what it is looking for and what it wants to see. A reader or spectator in the mid-twentieth century interprets *Richard III* through his own experiences. He cannot do otherwise. And that is why he is not terrified—or rather, not amazed—at Shakespeare's cruelty. He views the struggle for power and mutual slaughter of the characters far more calmly than did many generations of spectators and critics in the nineteenth century. More calmly, or, at any rate, more rationally. Cruel death, suffered by most *dramatis personae*, is not regarded today as an aesthetic necessity, or as an essential rule in tragedy in order to produce *catharsis*, or even as a specific characteristic of Shakespeare's genius. Violent deaths of the principal characters are now regarded rather as an historical necessity, or as something altogether natural. By discovering in Shakespeare's plays problems that are relevant to our own time, modern audiences often, unexpectedly, find themselves near to the Elizabethans; or at least are in the position to understand them well. This is particularly true of the Histories.

Apart from *King John*, which deals with events at the turn of the thirteenth century, Shakespeare's Histories deal with the struggle for the English crown that went on from the close of the fourteenth to the end of the fifteenth century. They constitute an historical epic covering over a hundred years and divided into long chapters corresponding to reigns. But when we read these chapters chronologically, following the sequence of reigns, we are struck by the thought that for Shakespeare history stands still. Every chapter opens and closes at the same point. In every one of these plays history turns full circle, returning to the point of departure. These recurring and unchanging circles described by history are the successive kings' reign.

Each of these great historical tragedies begins with a struggle for the throne, or for its consolidation. Each ends with the monarch's death and a new coronation. In each of the Histories the legitimate ruler drags behind him a long chain of crimes. He has rejected the feudal lords who helped him to reach for the crown; he murders, first, his enemies, then his former allies; he

executes possible successors and pretenders to the crown. But he has not been able to execute them all. From banishment a young prince returns—the son, grandson, or brother of those murdered—to defend the violated law. The rejected lords gather round him, he personifies the hope for a new order and justice. But every step to power continues to be marked by murder, violence, treachery. And so, when the new prince finds himself near the throne, he drags behind him a chain of crimes as long as that of the until now legitimate ruler. When he assumes the crown, he will be just as hated as his predecessor. He has killed enemies, now he will kill former allies. And a new pretender appears in the name of violated justice. The wheel has turned full circle. A new chapter opens.

This scheme of things is not, of course, marked with equally clear-cut outline in all Shakespeare's Histories. It is clearest in *King John* and in the two masterpieces of historical tragedy, *Richard II* and *Richard III*. It is least clear in *Henry V*, an idealized and patriotic play which depicts a struggle with an enemy from without. But in Shakespeare's plays the struggle for power is always stripped of all mythology, shown in its "pure state." It is a struggle for the crown, between people who have a name, a title and power.

For Shakespeare the crown is the image of power. It is heavy. It can be handled, torn off a dying king's head, and put on one's own. Then one becomes a king. Only then. But one must wait till the king is dead, or else precipitate his death.

In each of the Histories there are four or five men who look into the eyes of the dying monarch, watch his trembling hands. They have already laid a plot, brought their loyal troops to the capital, communicated with their vassals. They have given orders to hired assassins; the stony Tower awaits new prisoners. There are four or five men, but only one of them may remain alive. Each of them has a different name and title. Each has a different face. One is cunning, another brave; the third is cruel, the fourth—a cynic. They are living people, for Shakespeare was a great writer. We remember their faces. But when we finish reading one chapter and begin to read the next one, when we read the Histories in their entirety, the faces of kings and usurpers become blurred, one after the other.

Emanating from the features of individual kings and usurpers in Shake-



speare's History plays, there gradually emerges the image of history itself. The image of the Grand Mechanism. Every successive chapter, every great Shakespearean act is merely a repetition.

It is this image of history, repeated many times by Shakespeare, that forces itself on us in a most powerful manner. Feudal history is like a great staircase on which there treads a constant procession of kings. Every step upwards is marked by murder, perfidy, treachery. Every step brings the throne nearer. Another step and the crown will fall. One will soon be able to snatch it. From the highest step there is only a leap into the abyss. The monarchs change. But all them—good and bad, brave and cowardly, vile and noble, naive and cynical—tread on the steps that are always the same.

History in the theatre is mostly just a grand setting; a background against which the characters love, suffer, or hate; experience their personal dramas. Sometimes they are involved in history, which complicates their lives, but even then does not cease to be a more or less uncomfortable costume: a wig, a crinoline, a sword knocking about their feet. Of course, such plays are only superficially historical. But there are plays in which history is not just a background or a setting, in which it is played, or rather repeated on the stage, by actors disguised as historical personalities. They know history, have learned it by heart, and do not often go wrong. They interpret history because they know the solutions it offers. They can even sometimes express real trends and conflicts of social forces. But even this does not mean that the dramatization of history has been effected. It is only a historical textbook that has been dramatized. The textbook can be idealistic, as in Schiller and Romain Rolland. Or materialistic, as in some dramas of Büchner and Brecht; but it does not cease to be a textbook.

But Shakespeare's concept of history is of a different kind from the two mentioned above. History unfolds on the stage, but is never merely enacted. It is not a background or a setting. It is itself the protagonist of tragedy. But what tragedy?

There are two fundamental types of historical tragedy. The first is based on the conviction that history has a meaning, fulfills its objective tasks and leads in a definite direction. It is rational, or at least can be made intelligible. Tragedy consists here in the price of history, the price of progress that has to be paid

by humanity. A precursor, one who pushes forward the relentless roller of history, but must himself be crushed by it for the very reason of his coming ahead of his time, is also tragic. This is the concept of historical tragedy proclaimed by Hegel. It was near to the views of the young Marx, even though he substituted the objective development of ideas. He compared history to a mole who unceasingly digs in the earth.

A mole lacks awareness, but digs in a definite direction. It has its dreams but they only dimly express its feeling for the sun and sky. It is not the dreams that set the direction of its march, but the movement of its claws and snout, constantly digging up the earth. A mole will be tragic if it happens to be buried by the earth before it emerges to the surface.

There is another kind of historical tragedy, originating in the conviction that history has no meaning and stands still, or constantly repeats its cruel cycle; that it is an elemental force, like hail, storm, or hurricane, birth and death. A mole digs in the earth but will never come to its surface. New generations of moles are being born all the time, scatter the earth in all directions, but are themselves constantly buried by the earth. A mole has its dreams. For a long time it fancied itself the lord of creation, thinking that earth, sky and stars had been created for moles, that there is a mole's God, who had made moles and promised them a mole-like immortality. But suddenly the mole has realized that it is just a mole, that the earth, sky and stars had not been created for it. A mole suffers, feels and thinks, but its suffering, feelings and thoughts cannot alter its mole's fate. It will go on digging in the earth, and the earth will go on burying. It is at this point that the mole has realized that it is a tragic mole.

It seems to me that the latter concept of historical tragedy was nearer to Shakespeare, not only in the period when he was writing *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, but in all his writings, from the early Histories up to *The Tempest*.

Shakespeare views the implacable mechanism without medieval awe, and without the illusions of the early Renaissance. The sun does not circle round the earth, there is not order of the spheres, or of nature. The king is no Lord's Anointed and politics is only an art aiming at capturing and securing power. The world offers a spectacle similar to a storm or hurricane. Weak bushes are bowed down to the earth,

while tall trees fall uprooted. The order of history and the order of nature are both cruel; terrifying are the passions that breed in the human heart.

Of all the important works written by Shakespeare before 1600, only *Henry IV* can be called a cheerful play. In both *Richard* plays, and in the other *Henrys*, history is the only *dramatis persona* of the tragedy. The protagonist of *Henry IV* is Falstaff.

The great feudal barons are still butchering one another. King Henry IV, who had recently deposed Richard II, and let him be murdered together with his followers, did not atone for his crimes by a journey to the Holy Land. The allies who have put him on the throne are rebelling. For them he is a new tyrant. Wales and Scotland rise. History will begin from the beginning. But in *Henry IV* history is only one of many actors in the drama. It is being played out not only in the royal palace and in courtyards of feudal castles; not only on battlefields, in dungeons of the Tower, and in the London street where frightened townsmen are hurrying by. Nearby the royal palace there is a tavern called "The Boar's Head." In it Falstaff is king. Somehow, between the chapters of an austere historical chronicle there has been interpolated a rich Renaissance comedy about a fat knight, unable for many years to see his own knees under his huge belly.

I prefer *Richard II* and *Richard III* to *Henry IV*. They seem to me a far deeper and more austere kind of tragedy. Shakespeare exposes in them the mechanism of power directly without resorting to subterfuge or fiction. He dethrones regal majesty, strips it of all illusion. He finds that the succession of reigns, and the mere mechanism of history, is sufficient to achieve this. In *Henry IV* the position is different. The successor to the throne is a future national hero, the victor of Agincourt. *Henry IV* is already a patriotic epic.

Shakespeare never renounces his great confrontations. It is only that he poses them differently. Against the feudal barons butchering one another he sets the gargantuan figure of Falstaff. Sir John Falstaff not only personifies the Renaissance lust for life and thunderous laughter at heaven and hell, at the crown and all other laws of the realm. The fat knight possesses a plebian wisdom and experience. He will not let history take him in. He scoffs at it.

We have now to return to Shakespeare's metaphor of the grand staircase. Richard II grows in the course of

his tragedy. On the lower steps he is just the name of a king; only on the last step do we see him in a bit tragic close-up. He has regained his human face.

The dramatic optics of Richard III reverse this order. Here the king is, in the first half of the tragedy, the master-mind of the Grand Mechanism, a demiurge of history, the Machiavellian Prince. But Shakespeare is wiser than the author of *The Prince*. As he walks up the grand stairs, Richard becomes smaller and smaller. It is as if the Grand Mechanism was absorbing him. Gradually he becomes just one of its cogs. He has ceased to be the executioner, he is now a victim, caught in the wheels.

Richard had been making history. The whole world was for him a piece of clay to shape in his hands. And now he himself is a piece of clay, shaped by someone else. In the *Histories* I have always admired Shakespeare's perception of the moment when history pushes the hitherto all-powerful prince into a blind alley; the moment when he who has been making history, or thinks he has been making it, becomes no more than its object. The moment when the Grand Mechanism turns out to be stronger than the man who has put it in motion.

In the last act of the tragedy, Richard III is only the name of a pursued king. The scene shifts from battlefield to battlefield. They are after him. He flees. He becomes weaker and weaker. They have caught up with him. Now he just tries to save his life.

"A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!" (*Richard III*, V,4)

So, this is how much all his efforts have been worth. This is the real price of power, of history, of the crown adorning the Lord's Anointed. One good horse is worth more than the entire kingdom. This is the last sentence of the great cycle of Shakespeare's historical chronicles.

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