**Richard the Third**

**by William Shakespeare**

**Programme notes for Audio Described Performance**

**Abbey Theatre, 27th October 2018, 2pm**

Welcome to the introductory notes for **Druid Shakespeare:** **Richard the Third** presented by Druid in association with the Abbey Theatre, at the Dublin Theatre Festival. This production is directed by Garry Hynes and designed by Francis O’Connor. Lighting Design is by James F. Ingalls and Sound Design is by Gregory Clarke. The Movement Director and Fight Choreographer is David Bolger and original music was composed by Conor Linehan. The dramaturg is Thomas Conway.

The performance lasts for three hours including one fifteen minute interval.

**ABOUT THE PLAY**

Intensely ambitious from birth, Richard sets about bending the world to his own desires. No bond is too sacred, no blood too thick – nothing will stand between Richard and the crown.

Shakespeare gives us one of the great villains in **Richard the Third**, in a chilling and darkly comic story of power and ambition. Druid continues its exploration of Shakespeare’s kings with the acclaimed creative team and members of the Druid Ensemble who worked on **Druid Shakespeare:** **Richard the Second**, **Henry the Fourth (Parts 1 & 2)** and **Henry the Fifth**.

**ABOUT THE SET**

The floor of the set is covered with a fine brown soil, with a pit in the centre – an oblong rectangle with the long edge nearest us. There is a section of soil-covered floor which rises up from underneath the stage at times to cover over this pit. In the back left-hand corner is an unpolished metal drum, about hip height, with no lid and rust forming along the bottom. An enamel cup hangs from a hook at the back.

On the right hand side of the stage a lime-washed, wooden chair sits against the wall underneath a large metal junction box. A thick red electrical cable comes out from the side of this box and up to a rail that spans the width of the stage. Long loops of this red cable hang, pulled over to the right-hand side, but probably long enough to stretch across the stage.

The side- and back-walls of the stage are lined with grey panels the full height of the stage. A small rectangle has been cut out of the top of each panel which can be opened to form a window. Each of these simple windows is protected by three metal bars. Every one of these panels can be opened like a doorway, revealing a large screen on the back wall - a huge mottled, watercolour, featureless skyscape. Its colours change over time, sometimes a granite grey, or a rosy sunset hue.

At the front, on both the left and right hand sides are two ordinary-sized doorways set into panels. There are low panels cut out as windows here, both protected by three iron bars. At the top of these front panels are two massive air vents with fan blades rotating lazily, harsh yellow light pouring through. On the left hand side only, there is a set of iron rungs from floor to rafters forming a ladder.

Hanging over the centre of the stage, well-clear of the actors, is a metal-framed glass box with a human skull mounted on two metal bars. It is lit by a pale white light set in the lid of the box throughout the performance.

Strobe lighting and some sudden, loud noises are featured in this production.

**ABOUT THE CAST & COSTUMES**

The costumes for this production are a stylised version of medieval dress. They are often embellished with sequins or lace netting – giving them a distinctly 21st Century flavour. The men at court, for example, all wear jackets, with velvet or brocade chests. A flamboyant cape of velvet is draped over one arm, often brightly coloured. Around their waists, these noblemen wear a pleated half-skirt, like a short kilt, hung to one side, These half-skirts are often in leather, perhaps to protect them from the swords that hang from their belts. Almost all of the men in this production wear leather trousers and neat leather ankle boots.

The women all appear in long flowing gowns with ornate, bejewelled panels at the front. They wear rolls under the skirts of their gowns – large padded crescents worn around the waist and lower back, so as to allow their dresses to stick out. All of the ladies cover their heads. They all have very long hair, pulled back severely from their faces, tied in a high ponytail and then falling down the full length of their backs.

**Richard**, also known as the Duke of Gloucester, is played by Aaron Monaghan. A short man, with brown hair and beard cut neatly, he has an open face with bright eyes. When he smiles, crinkles appear in the corner of his eyes, but when he is upset, his brow furrows tightly. He is mostly soft-spoken, though well-capable of throwing his voice to make a point. He uses two walking sticks of different heights to move around. One of his legs is bent in at the knee and his ankle is limp. This causes him to walk at a slight angle.

He wears a black biker’s leather jacket with gold zips, and a black top underneath, and khaki trousers with bronze eyelets studded down one thigh. The arms of his jacket are embellished with glinting sequins and sections of black lace. On one shoulder is an epaulette of large, matt black sequins. He wears studded canvas shoes and sometimes wears a black woollen muffler around his neck. A short sword hangs from his belt.

His brother **Clarence**, also known as George, is played by Marty Rea. A tall, slender man with dark brown hair and beard, he wears a jacket of cream leather with a caped sleeve of rich claret velvet and a fur stole draped over one shoulder. He speaks earnestly and clearly and moves in a calm fashion.

The eldest brother, played by John Olohan, is **King Edward the Fourth**. He arrives more like a clergyman than a king, wearing an ivory gown and a cloak edged with black velvet with golden brocade. His face is pale and marked with small red lesions. His hair is thinning and grey, like his beard. On his head is a crown of rose-gold bands wrapped in circles with three roses made out of burnished gold sitting at the front.

Edward’s wife, **Queen Elizabeth**, is played by Jane Brennan. A tall woman, she wears a gown of golden sequins with a black sequinned panel at the front. The sleeves are sheer with coils of tiny sequins like fine filigree.

She wears a starched gold lace collar on her dress that frames her face. Her hair, from the top of her forehead to the high ponytail at the back, has been encrusted with gold leaf. She is soft-spoken.

The King’s eldest son, **Edward** Prince of Wales, is played by Siobhán Cullen. With pale complexion and hair in a short, dark bob, this young boy appears to be in his early teens, wearing a caped sleeve jacket of black velvet with gold embroidery, leather trousers and a velvet cap.

Their second son, **Richard** Duke of York, is played by Zara Devlin. This boy is more lively than his older brother, and a few inches shorter. With long brown hair pulled into a low ponytail under a velvet cap, young Richard wears a cape-sleeved jacket of grey velvet.

A previous queen of England, **Margaret**, is played by Marie Mullen. She is dressed in a black dress overlain with a net skirt covered in tiny flecks of diamante so that she appears to shimmer as she moves. The central panel of her dress is maroon with sections of lace frayed and coming loose as though the dress were decades old. Her long, white hair is pinned back with high, black combs over which a long black lace veil is hung. Her voice has a nasal quality to it and she often speaks in poetic riddles.

The **Duchess of York**, mother to Richard, Clarence and King Edward, is played by Ingrid Craigie. A thin lady, with gaunt face and long, light-brown hair, she wears a dress of chocolate brown silk with a front panel of burnished gold brocade. She wears a simple headdress that frames her face.

Queen Elizabeth’s brother, **Rivers**, is played by Peter Daly. A man of medium height, with an open, honest face and bald head, he wears a velvet coat of moss green with wine-coloured cuffs and caped-sleeve.

Her son from her first marriage, **Dorset**, is played by Frank Blake. A tall man with red hair and neat beard, he is dressed in grey with a bright blue velvet caped sleeve and a red muffler around his neck.

A courtier, Lord **Hastings**, is played by Garrett Lombard. He has a booming voice and a large, round stomach, and wears his auburn hair parted in the centre and slick with gel. His coat is in grey velvet with rust-coloured cape.

The Duke of **Buckingham** is played by Rory Nolan. A tall man, with auburn hair closely shaved and neat beard, he wears a jacket in brown leather with burnished gold pattern inlaid. He later appears with a velvet caped sleeve in pale blues, greens and brown.

Lord **Stanley**, an earl, is played by Seán McGinley. A tall man - a little older than the others - his white hair is receding at the temples. He wears a jacket of pale brown velvet with rust-red accents.

Most of the cast play an array of characters as well as these roles.

A pair of **Murderers** are played by Frank Blake and Seán McGinley, dressed in black wool coats with leather buckles, They speak with Limerick accents.

Siobhán Cullen also plays the recently widowed **Lady Anne**. Her fine features are accentuated by a pearly, iridescent powder on her face. Her long brown hair is covered by a headdress covered in pearls, tied close to the skull. She wears a black striped silk gown with front panel embroidered with black sequins and lace.

Frank Blake also plays **Richmond**, who wears a cream-coloured jacket with a panel of large matt white and black sequins forming the half-skirt that appears like a fish scale pattern. Over his shoulder is draped a cloak of shiny, scarlet sequins.

Marty Rea also plays **Catesby**, dressed in a cream linen tunic with black waistcoat and leather trousers, and a black bowler hat. He wears thick-rimmed glasses and speaks with a Northern Irish accent. His movements are always slow and deliberate.

**Brakenbury**, a guard, is played by Peter Daly, and wears a leather jacket with chevron pattern in brown and fawn leather and a leather cap. Garrett Lombard plays **Tyrell**, a shady figure dressed in a hooded wax coat with a very deep voice, and later still, **Captain Blunt**. Seán McGinley plays the **Archbishop of York**, wearing a soutane of pale gold, while John Olohan plays the **Bishop of Ely** with robes of orange-red silk. Zara Devlin also plays a young page boy in grey wool clothes and cap, while Marie Mullen plays the **Lord Mayor** of London in a ruffled gown of greenish-grey with petrol blue velvet sleeves and cap.

That concludes the introductory notes for this production of **Richard the Third**. The notes and audio description were prepared by Máirín Harte and Bríd Ní Ghruagáin. Audio description for **Richard the Third** is provided by Arts and Disability Ireland with support from The Arts Council.

Thank you. Go raibh maith agaibh.

