

An Act of Will

YORK SHAKESPEARE PROJECT NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 1 MAY 2002

Stage set for Richard III

We are up and running. Richard III, the first production of the York Shakespeare Project, will open at Joseph Rowntree Theatre on Wednesday October 30.

John White, a former Royal Shakespeare Company actor who lives in York, has agreed to take over as director and about 15 of the cast are staying on including Alan Booty in the title role.

The production team will be run by Lee Maloney, back stage, and Ali Borthwick, cast. Their first priorities are for a costume mistress, set and lighting designers, general technicians, stage management and anyone with painting ability.

John's idea is to have a simple set using arches and artists are needed to make banners of the Houses of York and Lancaster and back cloths for other scenes.

Auditions for the remaining parts - and for present members of the cast to try for another role if they want - will be held on Saturday August 31, provisionally at St Martin's Church, Micklegate.

Murderers needed

In particular we will be looking for a Duchess of York, Richmond (the Henry VII to be) and assorted royals, clergy and murderers.

Rehearsals will begin on September 9 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays evenings at Konflux Theatre, Neville Street, Haxby Road. We will get into Joseph Rowntree on Monday October 28 for a technical rehearsal with a full dress on the Tuesday and then run Wednesday until Saturday.

The production will be partly funded by a £5,000 grant from Awards for All with something left over for our education and outreach programme. This started off with a very successful workshop at the Brunswick Organic Centre which was set up and run by an executive member Effie Arestides.

Effie, as publicity officer, will also help organise an exhibition on Richard III at York Central Library from October 14 to the end of the run of the play in conjunction with the library, York Archives and the Richard III Museum who are both donating material.

All this is good news after the previous director, Ben Naylor, resigned and means we are back on course to start the first part of our ambitious project.

Happy production

John whose stage name in Richard Conway has said in the Yorkshire Evening Press: "I got involved from a love of theatre and Shakespeare. The people who are in it are very talented, so it should be a happy production."

Lee can be contacted on 411713, mobile 07732-329215, email leemaloney@btinternet.com and Ali at 421466, email alice_borthwick@hotmail.com

Annual meeting

The annual meeting is at The Main Hall, Priory Street Centre, off Micklegate on Wednesday, May 29 at 8pm. Please come.

As Frank Brogan has said in his letter, he will be standing down as chair after nearly 18 months hard work. Most of the executive will be standing again but there is a need for more help from anyone with a little bit of time and a lot of enthusiasm.

In particular there is a vacancy for a secretary. A couple of executive members have said they will step in if needed but they are both involved in other parts of the project and we need someone with administrative knowhow.

We have done well with funding and need someone to collate all we have done and look to the future. We also need people on the education and community side. We always had a remit to do workshops. As part of the funding we have received, we now have a responsibility as well.

Production

As reported on page one, we are on our way and now need people to do the hard work of actually putting the show together. This production is open to everyone, regardless of age or experience. All that is required is enthusiasm (mind you, we will need lots of that). Anyone keen and willing should contact Lee or Ali.

Education

We indulged in early midsummer magic in March with our first workshop at the Brunswick Organic Centre for adults with learning disabilities in Bishopthorpe. Twelve of the centre's trainees and four workers took part in the day which involved the Pyramus and Thisby play-within-a-play scene from A Midsummer Night's Dream. The trainees were taken through the scene and then they took the parts of the five characters - Pyramus, Thisby, Lion, the Wall and Moon - themselves.

Alan Robertson, a craft worker at the centre, said: "The day whizzed by. The trainees were able to bring their own experience to the parts. It created confidence in them, some were prepared to give it a go and that encouraged others. It would benefit us if there were more workshops like this."

Frank Brogan, chair of the project, said: "Never before has Pyramus died with such gusto. Never before has Thisby been so forlorn. We picked this scene because we thought it would be fun. This is a great start to our plans for community and school workshops and shows what can be done."

Effie Aristedes, who created and ran the workshop, said: It was a magnificent day with a lot of expression and imagination from the trainees - and

the odd line of Shakespeare! Quite a few of them asked if there would be any more."

The project plans to do the same workshop with other trainees at Brunswick and will do a reading from Midsummer Nights' Dream and discussion at The Driveway, Bootham Park hospital, for people living back in the community, from 11 to 12 on Monday, May 27. Anyone interested in helping contact Jennifer Aitken on **638874**.

Fund raising

Treasurer Linda Maloney has made a plea to members to do some mini-fundraising. If 50 of our 75 members could raise £20 each, that would cover the cost of printing. Possible events could include a coffee morning, recruiting new members or a cinema night. Linda, who has plenty of other ideas, can be contacted on **411713**, email leemaloney@btinternet.net. We have applied for a stall at the York Charity Market on Saturday, August 3. If that goes ahead we will want help for ideas, items to sell and help on the day.

Wagon Plays

The project is putting on The Conspiracy (The Cutlers' Play) on behalf of the Freeman of York Guild for the Mystery Plays on two Sundays July 7 and 14 at various stages in the city centre.

The cast is:

Pilate	Michael Ireton
Judas	Jamie Searle
Caiaphas	Hugh Bernays
Annas	Chris Rawson
Porter	Shelia Shouksmith
1st clerk	Rachael Johnson
2nd clerk	Lee Maloney
1st soldier	Frank Brogan
2nd soldier	Alan Lyons

David Wilde, the director, is looking for non-speaking soldiers to add to the spectacle and an asm/prompter. His number is **654338**

Membership

This is being organised by Chris Rawson who will be writing to you when your membership is renewable. We will try to print memberships cards this year.

Publicity

Effie Aristedes has offered to deal with press, radio and organising posters and pre-show publicity. She can be found at **644167**, email effiearistides@hotmail.com

Other contacts

Frank Brogan (chair) **413661**
email fb106@yahoo.com
Alan Lyons **638865**
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