



GLORY, GRIEF and GORE in TOY'S TRAGIC TITUS

Titus Andronicus:

from the bloody hand on the posters to the bowls collecting the life-blood of the inverted Goth sons, this was clearly not a Shakespearean play for the squeamish. Presented at the Joseph Rowntree Theatre in April to appreciative, though modest audiences, this was a drama of compelling cruelty, terror and cynicism, under the direction of Paul Toy's. His inspired Far-East setting took us away from any Roman preconceptions and made both performers and audience look afresh on the play. The cast rose to the challenge of the work, giving strong performances that conveyed the ruthlessness and corruption of Saturnine's regime.

I found it heartening to see the stage shared by those who've acted for many years with those quite new to the stage; supporting each other to make a production that was 'all of a piece' - surely a vital part of what the YSP is about.

Peter Latham of The British Theatre Guide noted: "... all credit, too, to the cast. Like all YSP productions, the cast of Titus is a mixture of experienced and inexperienced actors, ... with - as usual - some people who have never been onstage before. Director Toy has brought out the best in his actors."

The necessarily robust set went together smoothly and made good use of the Joseph Rowntree stage and pit, providing three levels to act upon.



Life is cheap under Saturnine- the Clown with a message (Kit Bird) about to meet his end at the hands of the callously indifferent Romans (Alan Booty and Ray Baggaley)

carefully handled, with the matter-of-fact barbarity having all the more impact on the audience. This was a strong (perhaps gutsy?) production which deserved to be seen by more but had a powerful impact on those that did.

Annual General Meeting

was held on a pleasantly warm Spring evening which made for a good turn-out, as the pundits say. The fruit juice and iced lemon-water flowed like ...water: no coups though the entire Executive Committee resigned (they do this every year...) and elections held with this result:
Chair- Raymond Baggaley
Treasurer- Kit Bird

The Romans in striking oriental costume and the Goths as a wild, war-painted tribe unfolded the grizzly tragedy under intelligent lighting, the atmosphere yet further enhanced by the measured on-stage musical accompaniment.

Portraying the acts of multiple murder and mutilation could have become farcical, but these scenes were



Titus (Dave Parkinson) about to prepare the hapless Goth sons (Alex Ball & Oliver Bevan) for their mother's meal...

Project Secretary-Alan Lyons
Minuting Secretary- Eileen Dale
Production- Lee Maloney
Education- Val Parker
Membership - Jamie Searle
and Executive Committee members without
specific portfolio: Ali Borthwick, Judith Ireland,
Linda Maloney, Chris Rawson, John Sharpe,
Matt Simpson and Richard Stell.
Holding trustees now include Frank Brogan,
Janet Looker (currently Lord Mayor of York) and
Adam Myers.

Most of last year's committee has been re-
elected, but there are some new members too:
Val Parker (appeared in *The Comedy of Errors*
and *Titus Andronicus*); John Sharpe (appeared
in *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Titus*
Andronicus); Matt Simpson (York born and new
to YSP, has acted and directed at Lancaster
University) and Richard Stell (appeared in *The*
Comedy of Errors and *Titus Andronicus*).
Committee meetings are scheduled for 21st July,
25th August, 15th September and 13th October at
8pm at Guppy's on Nunnery Lane.

Thanks to those who've left the committee- we
hope that you'll continue to participate in the
Project as members.

Funding

The Gannett Foundation, the charity arm of the
American owners of the York Evening Press, has
awarded our project a grant of £5,000. We have
also had donations of £300 from Norwich Union
and £500 from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
Besides our 'usual' running costs, this great
boost to our funds will enable us to provide
signing for the hearing-impaired and audio
description for the visually-impaired at some of
our future productions .

Asda You Like It.....(sorry Will)

a novel fund-raising idea from Paul Toy: to hold
a non-stop sponsored reading of all of
Shakespeare's plays! All we need is a round-the-
clock venue with heat, light, toilets, security and
a regular audience with available money in their
pockets...hmmm- impossible? Not for us:
ASDA supermarkets have offered YSP space in
their Monk's Cross store in early 2005 - many
readers will be needed to cover as much as five
days of Shakespearean delivery...more details to
follow.

Our next production

is to be *Love's Labour's Lost*, directed by Chris
Rawson. Auditions will be held on Saturday 31st
July and Saturday 7th August between 10am and
4:30pm at Southlands Methodist Church Hall,
Southlands Road. Please come either day - with a
prepared piece if you can though there will be
audition pieces from the play also. There are
plenty of other opportunities too: music, sound,
lighting, costume, set construction, props,
assistant stage management roles and more.

If you can't make these dates then please contact
Chris on 01937 586482 or 07986 368050.

There will be a get-together 26th August at
7:30pm and the first read-through will be on 2nd
September at 7:30pm.

Love's Labour's Lost performances will be at the
Friargate Theatre from Weds. 1st to Sat 4th
December, then Tues. 7th to Sat 11th, all at
7:30pm and with one matinee at 2:30 pm on
Sat. 11th December.

Chris writes: "I plan to set the play in the
summer of 1914, the end of the Edwardian era:
the last days of peace are dwindling and the guns
of the First World War are already sounding in
the distance. The play centres on the temptations
of a king and three young men whose vowed
intentions to follow a life of celibacy are blown
apart when a princess and three other beautiful
young women come along.

While I have sketched out some of the themes
and a basic setting, it will be the creative process
of rehearsal that will really form the play for us. I
know I will, as always, cast some long cherished
notions aside and develop others as the work and
imagination of clever actors begins to breathe
form and shape into this beautiful balloon. We
will above all be able to have great fun with this
play...and no one is allowed to take themselves
seriously for long."

Y.E.A.R.S. ahead

the York Eboracvm Annual Roman Spectacular
will be held on the weekend of 24/25th July.
There will be lots of Roman-related romps
around Eboracvm and YSP will be presenting a
work at the Hospitvm in Museum Gardens on
both afternoons. If you'd like to be involved
please contact Richard Stell, Alan Lyons or
Jamie Searle.

Please send your contributions for the next issue of Will to Jamie Searle at:
20 Bootham Row, York , YO30 7BR or e-mail: jamie.searle@bbc.co.uk