



Our sixteenth major production is upon us. Tickets are available in advance [here](#) or they can be purchased on the night. Bring a bottle of wine, a picnic, kickback and enjoy... There will be about 70 chairs and grass to sit on.

If you would like to help out with Front of House and haven't yet volunteered, OR have a table or gazebo/canopy thingy we can use to protect our sound/lighting desk and our FOH operation from the elements please get in touch with the indefatigable Jeremy Muldowney ASAP.

j.e.muldowney@dsl.pipex.com or jermym@yorkminster.org

or 17 Second Ave., Heworth, York YO31 ORS

or (mobile) 0754 36 36 101 (landline) 01904 421588.

***A Special Moment *** for Andy Curry for his fantastic poster (one of my favourites).



Are we meant to be on?
Claudio [Alan Flower]; Beatrice [Gemma Sharp]; Hero [Anna Rogers]



Relax, it's Strasz who's on.
Dogberry [Tom Straszewski]



Er, what exactly do you mean by a proper haircut Paul?
Ben Sawyer [Don John]; Damian Freddi [Borachio]

An update on *Venus and Adonis*... a bit of a saga

Julia Atkinson writes:

First the bad news: our production of *Venus and Adonis* – a reading of Shakespeare’s poem accompanied by live music and projected images – has been cancelled. The event was due to take place at Grays Court on 4th July, and for many weeks everyone involved had been looking forward to it tremendously. Sadly, a last-minute breakdown in communications between the venue and ourselves made it impossible for the show to go forward. [The cancellation has not cost YSP: no deposit was paid]

Now for the good news: Pocklington Arts Centre has expressed an interest in the show. YSP chair, Janet Looker, and myself will be visiting the venue soon to check its suitability and, fingers crossed, *Venus and Adonis* will make its debut there next spring. We are also looking into the possibility of performing the show at several historic houses in the York area.

Watch this space for more news of YSP’s foray into the world of Shakespeare’s narrative poems!

UPDATE ON RSC OPEN STAGES 2011-2012

Much Ado About Nothing will be our first Open Stages production. Hooray!

As for the Skills exchange days at Contact Theatre, Manchester:

19th June 2011 Matt Simpson (directing) Megan Middleton (stage management) and Karen Millar (lighting and sound) attended the day. We are thinking about how best to debrief their experience for the wider benefit of YSP.

24th July 2011 for Performers

11 people expressed an interest in going. Anna Rogers, Anjali Vyas-Brannick. And Tom Straszewski have been randomly selected to go. We look forward to hearing how they get on. Feed your envy by having a look at [this video trailer](#).

The York Stars our only York based Open Stages rivals as at 17th June were looking for someone to take on the role of Macduff in their production of *Macbeth* to take place at St Nicholas Fields 7-10th September. Any takers? charlottegray77@hotmail.com

The YSP Committee are still thinking hard about what shows to stage in 2012 given the looming presence of the Mystery Plays 2012 in the Museum Gardens in August 2012 and the dazzling opportunity to showcase a production of ours at Contact Theatre, Manchester between June and August. We are thinking of bringing forward our first show to May to enable performers also to appear in the Mystery Plays and to give us a shot at the showcase. But what oh what should we put on. Your ideas, your opinions, your pitch please. Really and truly, this decision will be the better if we all put our heads together. Speak up!

Missed the whole Open Stages thing? Have a look at what it is all about [here](#).

Troilus and Cressida

is our Next Big Thing. And we have 3 crucial announcements...

One. **Paul Toy** will direct the show. Paul is a YSP old hand. He has directed for us twice before (*The Taming of the Shrew* and *Titus Andronicus*) so this new appointment makes him the first ever three time YSP director. Paul also did musical direction for our very first show *Richard III*, and appeared as the King of Navarre in *Love's Labour's Lost* and as The Prince of Aragon in *The Merchant of Venice*. He has directed fights for *Romeo and Juliet*, for *Julius Caesar* and for [Henry IV](#). Phew. And that's without going into his involvement in the Mystery Plays...

The play will be set in the English Civil War with Trojans as Royalists/Cavaliers and Greeks as Parliamentarians/Roundheads. Paul is planning to use the Penguin edition of the play. He writes:

"Troilus and Cressida takes place during the Trojan War when Chivalry has turned sour and Love has been reduced to a bargaining counter. Unpopular during the idealistic 18th & 19th centuries, it has come into its own since the First World War. A black satire, it is neither tragedy, history nor comedy, but has elements of all three. There is no overall dominating character, but a vibrant ensemble of at least 17 interesting parts."

Two. The show will be staged at **Upstage Centre Youth Theatre** at 41 Monkgate. This will be our fourth show there making it our most used venue. Paul has plans use the balcony in the action.

Three. The performance dates will be in the **week beginning Monday 15th November** and we are likely to do at least 5 performances.

AUDITIONS will take place very soon, in July. An ****announcement**** about specific dates and format is expected very soon. Watch this space. A list of characters with approximate number of lines each appeared in our [November 2010 Newsletter](#). A synopsis of sorts has been appearing sporadically.

Downstage centre left (our regular interview spot) this month we have: *** Gemma Sharp ***

Gem will be familiar to those who saw our King's Square Fundraiser as in the *Twelfth Night* extract. But *Much Ado* is her first full show for YSP. She appeared as Masha in Helen Wilson's production of Chekhov's *Three Sisters* for YSCP in March 2010.

What has brought you to York and what would make you leave the city?

I was brought up in a town that's about 40 minutes drive away, and as a child I came to theatre school in York on weekends, and completely fell in love with the place. Then I came to university here. I worked as an actress in London for a while after I graduated, but couldn't help coming back up to York. It would have to be a pretty spectacular job that takes me away.

In Matt Pattison's video trailer for the show, you say you first saw *Much Ado* when you were about 10. What do you remember of this show, was it your first experience of Shakespeare?

I saw *Much Ado* when I was ten at the Minack Theatre in Cornwall, it's a theatre carved into a cliff face over looking the sea and I remember the sun setting over the sea, the waves hitting the rocks in the background. But most poignantly I discovered Beatrice and fell in love in a way and have wanted to play her ever since. My first experience of Shakespeare was when I was 8, my parents took me to see an open air production of *The Comedy of Errors* at Fountains Abbey. It was a cast of four and a wicker basket full of different costumes. I've been hooked ever since.

Apart from your appearance in King's Square for our fundraiser, what other Shakespeare productions have you been involved in?

I played Bianca in Mooted Theatre Company's *Taming of the Shrew* in Rowntree Park two years ago and that was such amazing fun. I've played Juliet a couple of times at school and uni and Snug the Joiner in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the Deans Garden in Ripon.

What appealed to you about doing *Much Ado* with the YSP?

Beatrice. The chance to play Beatrice in Rowntree Park, a place I have such great memories of.

**Tell us something of how the rehearsal process is going for you.
Has there been a rehearsal highlight?**

Rehearsals have been great fun, I really look forward to them. I've met so many lovely talented people. But our first rehearsal in the Park has probably been my highlight, a lovely sunny day, but completely terrifying. I'd forgotten how hard and tiring open air theatre can be.

In what ways are you like Beatrice and how are you different?

I think I come across as a little sweeter, but those who are close to me would say we have the same fiery temper, I just hold mine a little better. And I'd like to think I'm as sarcastic and witty!

Which other Shakespearean character would you most like to play?

Lady Macbeth.

Why should we come and see the play?

If it's as much fun to watch as it is to perform, it'll be an amazing night.

Briefly, a favourite book: *Catch 22* by Joseph Heller

A favourite actor: Vivien Leigh

A favourite film: *Mary Poppins*

A piece of music we should all hear: Wow that's tough, I suppose it depends on my mood, but I absolutely love Bruce Springsteen. So in my opinion everyone should listen to the *Born in the USA* album by the Boss.



**And Downstage centre
right not quite at
Gemma's side – but who
knows – is ***Seb
Hulkkov *****

Seb is new to YSP and we need to know more about him.

What has brought you to York and what would make you leave the city?

I've lived in London for the last two years but am originally from East Yorkshire. I moved to York to be nearer family and to take advantage of the acting opportunities on offer at the Theatre Royal. I plan to pursue a postgraduate certificate in acting of some array probably next year or so and that will inevitably mean relocating yet again. I have a very nomadic spirit however, which will probably put me in good stead if I'm fortunate enough to make a career out of acting. I would like to get involved in the Mystery Plays before I move again however.

You are new to YSP and have come straight in to play a leading part. What other productions have you been involved in? Where have you been?

I was lucky enough to have performed in an open-air performance of *As You Like It* last year at my university, which presumably put me in good stead for this particular venture. Prior to my move to York I was pursuing a Foundation Diploma in acting for stage. Besides that I've acted in numerous other productions, performed at the fringe, directed and more recently written a play, which I would like to see performed in the autumn and hopefully here in York.

Wow. You have written a play?

It's more of a dramatic poem although I'm keen to see it performed nonetheless. It's basically a series of observational vignettes concerned with the intricacies and intimacies of love shared through the eyes of a group of friends on a Saturday night out in town, which I utilize as a sort of 21st century dramatic Greek chorus.

What appealed to you about doing *Much Ado with the YSP*?

I'm very interested in gaining as much acting experience as possible, particularly in challenging roles such as this one. Mostly I am interested in new and contemporary writing although naturally I also have a reverence for the classical canon. The YSP is dedicated exclusively to performing Shakespeare's plays and I'm hugely admiring of that.

What was that your first experience of Shakespeare?

Probably Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo and Juliet*! Embarrassingly uncultured I know but I didn't discover my love for stage acting until university and I was never a particularly literary-minded person so Shakespeare was always a bit alien to me. But then I started taking a more pro-active interest in his plays such as actually reading them but also reading the criticism surrounding the plays in addition to seeing every production going.

Tell us something of how the rehearsal process is going for you.

It's been going really well. I particularly enjoy the final stages. There is a much greater degree of confidence and trust between actors. I always find this the most fertile environment for extracting the finer nuances of expression from the script and imbuing the scenes with a greater sense of vitality and life as you are apportioning less mental energy into remembering your lines.

Has there been a rehearsal highlight?

Perhaps the first few days of rehearsal? I don't mean this to go against what I just said but there was and always is a certain nervous energy and tenuousness of approach from the actors, which I love because it can be revelatory from a creative perspective. I always enjoy the teething stages and the freedoms inherent within.

In what ways are you like Benedict and how are you different?

Benedick is a very multi-dimensional character, which is refreshing. His language defies too reductionist an approach. Through his soliloquies, he comes across as incredibly introspective and that self-analytical nature appeals quite naturally to me because I, like many actors am interested in the human condition generally. Some of his musings are so labyrinthine and self-questioning and yet there is a biological rhythmicity to these thought processes, which makes for a fascinating and intimate experience when expressing that fluidity of shifting perceptions on stage- I love it. There is a subtle but resonating conviviality to his character, which is infectious and very enriching. Toward the end of the play he is a stoutly affirmative individual and a lot of his speech conveys a real die-hard romanticism and that's a lot like me-dramatic!

Which other Shakespearean character would you most like to play?

Coriolanus.

Why should we come and see the play?

There is an unconventional tone to this particular performance, which I feel will surprise audience members and perhaps enrich their experience of the play. There are also several highly talented individuals in this particular production who are worth watching.

Briefly, a favourite book: John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*

A favourite actor: Jack Laskey. I have seen him in several productions and am greatly admiring. [Orlando in The Globe's 2009 *As You Like It* now on DVD]

A favourite film: *The Big Blue* [Luc Besson, 1988]

A piece of music we should all hear: Patrick Wolf's *Lupercalia* [released 20.06.11!].

Tell us some other thing we should know about you but haven't asked?

I am a practising artist and am currently working on a collection of paintings and drawings, which I plan to exhibit later in the year.

****Coming Soon****

Two Planks and a Passion. Anthony Mingella. York Theatre Royal and Riding Lights Theatre Company. York Theatre Royal 'in the round.' From 1st July. Feat: Maurice Crichton, Toby Gordon 1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 14, 16(Mat) July and Feat: Helen Wilson, Lee Maloney, Jon Adams 2, 6, 9(Mat), 12, 13, 15, 16 July.

Shakespeare in 100 treasures: Number 9

The Globe Theatre



If you've not yet been you have to go. This is the set for the current production of *Much Ado*. Orange tree boughs, flowers to right and left, 4 wee pools of water at the front of the stage. An actor at the front of the stage really is in the middle of the space. To see how it works have a look [here](#) at a scene from *Richard II* as played by a mercurial Mark Rylance. I have not found a better Shakespearean gem on You Tube. No really. This is the biz. Broadcast live by the BBC 4 in January 2004. There is sadly no DVD.

Errata (or as we say in Yorkshire, cock-ups)

Much Ado cast list. The legendary Robin Sanger is playing Balthasar not Borachio.

The next YSP Committee meeting is scheduled for 21st July. The AGM is now not too far away. Start thinking about standing for the Committee people.

****The July edition target date**** is Sunday 24th July. Want to plug your show? Paid-up member? Email your plug to the address below before then please.

*Gentle breath of yours my sails
Must fill, or else my project fails,
Which was to please.*

Feedback to:
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