



2010-2011 Newsletter No 6 March Issue

Breaking news...

Our newly appointed Director, Paul Taylor-Mills, has scheduled **auditions** and **discussions with prospective Production Team members**

for our forthcoming production of

Much Ado About Nothing

for Sunday 17th April 2011

Keep that date free. More news on that very soon. And there's more about PTM below in our Downstage Centre spot. And, people, a dashing photo! *Much* performance dates are now confirmed as follows:

Wednesday 29th June
Thursday 30th June
Friday 1st July
Saturday 2nd July (2 shows)
Sunday 3rd July

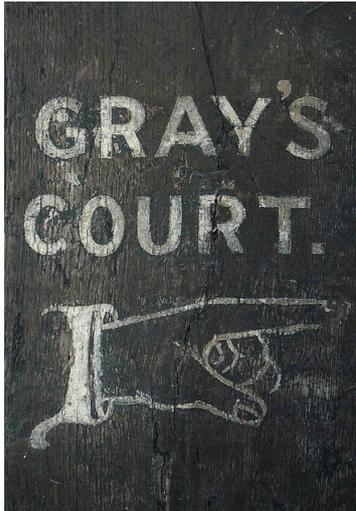
Wednesday 6th July
Thursday 7th July
Friday 8th July
Saturday 9th July (2 Shows)

Put them in your diary dear and we'll see you there. You can come as many times as you want. Bishop. And read on for news of a ****bonus**** performance.

UPDATE ON RSC OPEN STAGES 2011-2012

We have submitted our application to Ian Wainwright at the RSC who is the Producer of this initiative. We are confident that we will be given accreditation not only for *Much Ado* but for all that we produce between now and December 2012. We can hardly wait to receive the Open Stages marketing and recruitment pack.

Not yet up to speed with Open Stages? Have a look at what it is all about [here](#).



YSP to punch in at Gray's Court

Julia Atkinson with news of a new
boutique YSP production...

Pity the fate of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*. Written between 1592 and 1594 when the theatres were closed due to an outbreak of plague, the poem was by Elizabethan standards a huge bestseller. It went through sixteen editions and was widely praised and imitated, yet wasn't included in the iconic *First Folio* of 1623. By the middle of the seventeenth century public and critical interest in Shakespeare's non-dramatic works had waned, a situation that remained unchanged until the post-war period, and it seemed that *Venus and Adonis* was doomed to languish unread – or at least unappreciated - in the back of the *Complete Works*.

I have to admit that I hadn't read *Venus and Adonis* until 2006, when I had the good fortune to see the RSC/Little Angel Theatre co-production of the poem as a Japanese-inspired "Masque For Puppets". For the first time I realized that the poem, most of which takes the form of a dialogue between the protagonists, is in fact as dramatic as any of Shakespeare's plays. Its ornate language and mixture of comedy and tragedy is echoed in several early works, most notably *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

Last summer, when the YSP discussed a possible running order for the remaining plays, it was suggested that we might include the narrative poems and sonnets in the schedule. I immediately thought of the dramatic potential of *Venus and Adonis*, and came up with an edited version (running time about one hour) for two readers which could be illustrated by projected images and accompanied by a lutenist or guitarist.

My trusty assistant Margaret Hillier suggested an ideal venue, [Gray's Court](#) in the heart of York. This beautiful building, once owned by Queen Jane Seymour's brother Edward, is thought to be the oldest continuously inhabited house in England. After inspecting the public areas Margaret and I chose a stunning first-floor room overlooking the gardens, and we were able to book the space for 8.30pm on 4th July. We are confident that the evening will be a magical summer's night out, not simply a poetry reading - canapés and Elizabethan punch will be included in the ticket price – so make a note in your diaries now!

Gray's Court: 8.30pm. Independence Day. One night only. 4th July 2011.

YSP Will Go The Ball Dell

The **Royal Shakespeare Company** cordially invites

York Shakespeare Project

to bring a performance of its forthcoming production of

Much Ado About Nothing

to

The Dell, Avonbank Gardens, Stratford-upon-Avon

on

Saturday 16th July 2011

at 1pm.

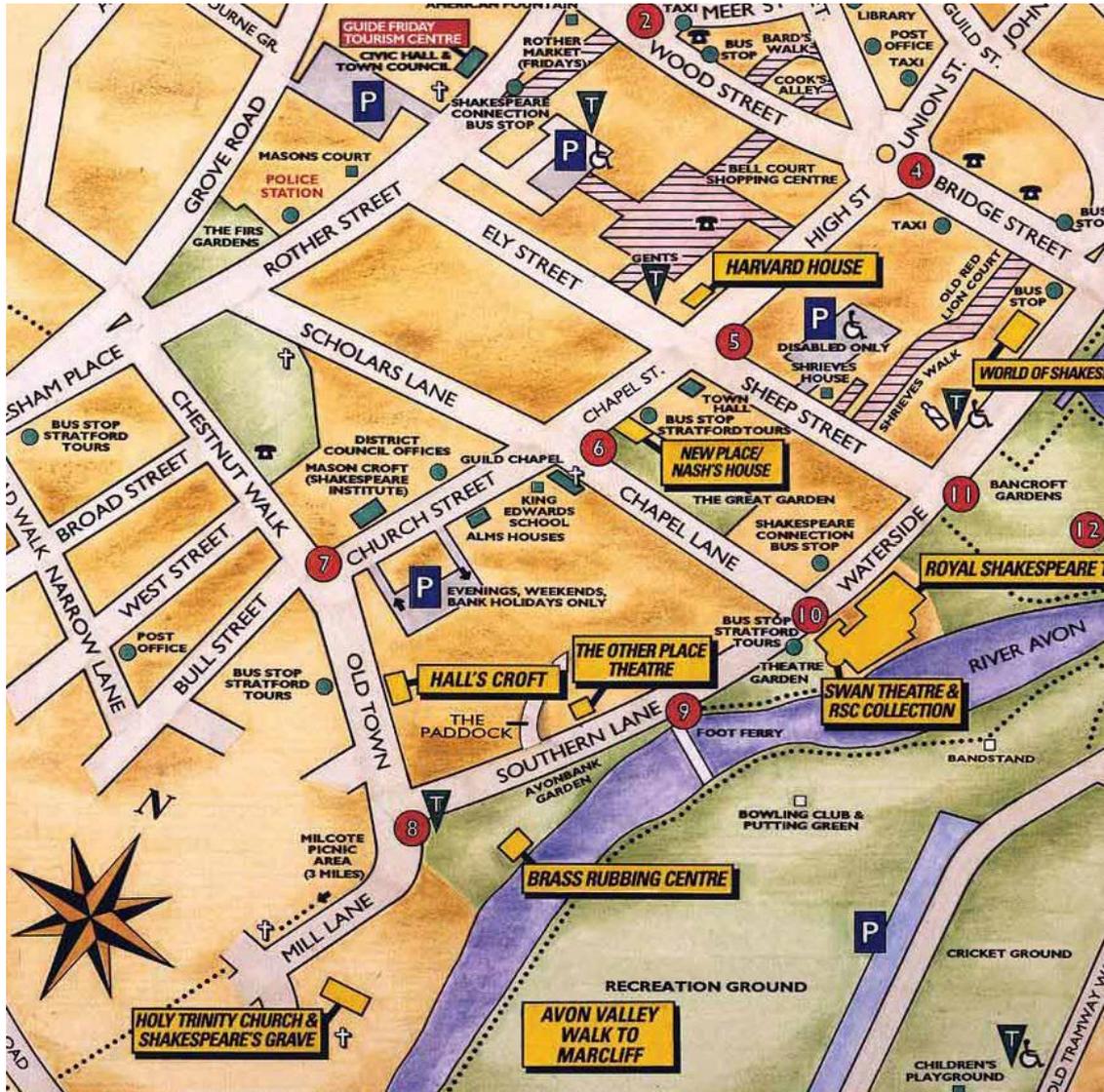
Dress Theatrical

RSVP

Yes my dears, the Stratford Summer jolly is a go! YSP go to the heart of Bard country. To the South will be Holy Trinity Church (last resting place of the bard himself), its bells hopefully silent. To the North West, The Swan Theatre and beyond it the new Royal Shakespeare Theatre in a matinee performance of the Scottish Play. So we will be at the very fulcrum, the omphalos of Bard-dom. Where we are sure to fit right in. Oh yes we will.

The outline plan is for cast and crew to embus early doors on the Saturday morning in time to get us comfortably to Avonbank Gardens for our get in, official RSC warm up and 1pm performance. When that's over and we've cleared up there could be a collective visit to an RSC show in the evening.

But. But. But. Such is the attraction of His Sir Patrick Stewartness that Saturday evening's performance of *The Merchant of Venice* at the all new RST is already sold out. So the town may be full of starry-eyed Trekies just to add to the fun. Hardly any of you will know that Sir Pat is in fact an Honorary Member of YSP so we must certainly give him an invite to our show. And if he can't wangle a block booking for us, it is a toss up between *Cardenio* at The Swan or our own entertainment. A big night out might be the thing. We could then get the bus back the same day or stay over - in say the Youth Hostel - and see some of the Bardic sights on the Sunday before returning in the afternoon. We will need to consider the costings and then we will need to decide the details of the trip as soon as *Much* has been cast. So people, get ready to help shape the Stratford trip. Badger your favourite Committee member now with your ideas and enthusiasm. And all the more reason to get involved in *Much*.



Stratford: The Dell is downstage centre beside the Brass Rubbing. Speaking of which:

Downstage centre (our fairly regular interview spot)

*****Paul Taylor-Mills*****



Paul will be directing *Much Ado* this Summer. By way of introducing himself to the YSP faithful he kindly agreed to subject himself to a Newsletter interview:

Paul, what was your first experience of Shakespeare?

A beautiful production of *Romeo and Juliet* at The Birmingham Rep. I can vividly remember being the only 12 year old in the theatre completely engaged with the action and telling people around me to be quiet. It was at this point I knew I was different to the other children! A bit like Matilda*!

What Shakespeare productions have you been involved with before?

I was the resident director on a musical reinvention of *The Comedy of Errors* which toured North America and Canada. I was also lucky enough to perform in *Hamlet* at the stunning Minack Theatre in Cornwall. However, I'm definitely more at home in my directing shoes*!

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

I have always had a natural bias for the play, its gentle humour and its potential to be placed in a variety of contexts. I am particularly excited by the piece's mileage for being more of an event than a play. Particularly the scope for music at the wonderful masked ball!

Tell us something about your vision for YSP's *Much Ado*.

Now that would be telling... The action is going to be placed at the end of the Second World War in rural Yorkshire. Expect Vera Lynn, Glenn Miller and lots of spam*!

How well do you know York?

I only know York from my very brief visits. If anyone has any suggestions or offers for coffee then please send them my way! I'm very keen to be a York expert by the end of the show. I trained in Bath, which so far feels very similar. I'm sure there are differences...

Tell us your favourite –

Shakespeare play

A Midsummer Nights Dream

Shakespearean character

Gertrude from *Hamlet*

Playwright (not including Shakespeare)

Martin Sherman*

Actor (male or female)

Jim Broadbent

Film

Phone Booth

*Explanatory Notes:

Roald Dahl's Matilda has psychokinetic powers. Hold your horses.

An in depth look at all Paul's shoes will follow in a later edition.

Spam is now officially known as 'Spam Classic – original flavour.' Keep up.

Sherman's 2010 play *Onassis* starred Robert Lindsay, Benedick in the BBC *Much*.



This is either Colin Farrell in *Phone Booth* or the world's sixth sexiest man 2003 ringing for tickets to:

The Slipper and The Rose: The Real Story of Cinderella. York Musical Theatre Company. York Theatre Royal. Feat: Toby Gordon and Sam Valentine from 12th April.

Two Planks and a Passion. Anthony Mingella. York Theatre Royal and Riding Lights Theatre Company. York Theatre Royal 'in the round.' Feat: Maurice Crichton, Helen Wilson. From 1st July.

Much Ado FAQ

Am I too young/too old for Beatrice/ Benedict

What an interesting question! At Wyndham's Theatre from 16th May this Summer David Tennant, just turned 40, will play opposite Catherine Tate, a few year's his elder at 43, while at The Globe from 26th May, Eve Best will be 39 to Charles Edwards' 41. Some consensus there it would seem.

But on the less forgiving celluloid, Ken Branagh was just 32 when he starred and directed opposite his then wife the peerless Emma Thompson, 34. In the earlier BBC Shakespeare, Robert Lindsay was 35 opposite Cherie Lunghi then 32.

But recent big name National Theatre Nicholas Hytner version had Zoe Wanamaker 58 take on Simon Russell Beale at 46. While the last version seen by the MCVI was Greg Doran's 2002 RSC effort with Harriet Walter 52 and Nicholas Le Prevost 55.

Hm. Just go to the audition on Sunday 17th April.

Less frequently asked questions:

Il Freddi:

Before I do anything else, can I just make absolutely sure I have paid my subs?

The boy Gordon:

Would anyone mind if I just had a small part and kept my clothes on for this one?

Wignall:

Can I not play a tortured soul for a change as I am actually a very straight forward sort of bloke.

Laishley:

If Harold the treasure Mozley isn't involved, can my buns be in this one?

Whither YSP in 2012?

Liam Evans- Ford, Community Producer of York Mystery Plays 2012 has visited the last YSP Exec Meeting to give us advance notice of how that event could affect our planning for next year. Here are some notes from that meeting:

The Mystery Plays 2012 is a joint production by York Theatre Royal, Riding Lights Theatre and York Museums Trust with the support of York City Council.

It is hoped that 1000 people from York we be involved as actors, dancers, musicians and backstage/FOH team in bringing a new production of the plays to St Mary's Abbey at the Museum Gardens. There will be seating for over 1400 and 32 performances between 2nd and 30th August 2012 (No performances on Mondays, 2 on Saturdays, 1 on Sundays). Tickets will go on sale on 1st April. Mike Kenny (YTR - *The Railway Children*, *Wind in the Willows*) is drafting a script. His brief is for a 3 hour show with a complete narrative arc. There will be probably be 3 professional actors: Jesus, Satan, & God and two amateur casts in two teams made up of the people of York, 300 in each. No pay for any of these participants. Auditions likely to be Oct/Nov 2011, casting before Christmas, with rehearsals from the end of January 2012.

The next YSP Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 13th April 2011.

***DON'T FORGET YSP ANNUAL FUNDRAISER
KINGS SQUARE
SATURDAY 9th APRIL***

Stand by for our Newsletter Fundraiser Special ...

Liam wants our support. This one-off production is not to cut a swathe through amateur theatre in York but to work to support its involvement in the project and to leave a positive legacy.

We outlined YSP's plans for 2012, ideally 2 shows and an active involvement in an RSC Open Stages showcase. A clash between Mystery Play rehearsals and our first production would appear to be inevitable. We agreed to keep Liam informed of our evolving plans for 2012 to make this work as well as it can for our mutual benefit.

Dr Nick opened a discussion about our hopes to have access to those involved in the project to grow our own ranks as part of the 'legacy' and to the audience to grow our own audience. Liam was very positive about the former and made noises that a free ad in the programme could be doable to help with the latter.

The Committee will invite Liam back when we have made decisions about our 2012 programme.

So. We need to decide what plays to do in 2012 and when.

Your thoughts and ideas are needed, people.

Shakespeare in 100 treasures: Number 7

Imagine

John Lennon as rude mechanical Thisbe. No need. Here he is:



The great man in Shakespearean action and the rest of the band [right here!](#)

Latest Comments: Negative Captain.

****The April edition target date**** is Friday 15th April. Fundraiser report. Updates on Open Stages, and more *Much*. Also the promised instalment of Archive Corner telling the story of our first ever production in 2002 of *Richard III*. Want to plug your show? Paid-up member? Email your plug to the address below before then please. You will be badgered about YSP membership for 2011-12. There should be more about Troy n Cress.

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

Feedback to:
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