

York Shakespeare Project

Newsletter

September 2014

Hello and welcome to the YSP newsletter! Phew! What a busy few months. *Twelfth Night* both in the Studio and at the Dell, Shakespeare's birthday celebrations, Sonnet Walks for the Grand Depart, fundraising at St Crux, auditions and rehearsals for *All's Well That Ends Well*, and, of course, committee meetings! With so much news of what is past, and some very **exciting and exclusive** news of what's to come, we better get on with it hadn't we?!

Twelfth Night

Our last production was *Twelfth Night*, performed at the York Theatre Royal studio 3-12 April and directed by Mark Smith. If you didn't attend the production, here are some thoughts from the reviewers and a couple of pics courtesy of photographer John Saunders.

In the highest echelons of
YSP productions

(Charles Hutchinson
York Press)



A production so fun and
imaginative that it will have me
cooing for days

(Lawrence Edmonds York Mix)

A humorous, creative and
captivating performance.
Overall, a memorable
evening and a must-see for
any theatre fans.

(Sarah Crombie-Wheeler
remotegoat.com)



All's Well That Ends Well

Our next production will be *All's Well That Ends Well* directed by YSP chair Maurice Crichton and showing at Friargate Theatre **27th- 30th November**. This will be YSP's 26th Shakespeare play!

Out of 46 auditionees, the cast has been announced as follows:

BERTRAM - Sam Hill
COUNTESS - Helen Wilson
HELEN - Molly Kay
REYNALDO/ASTRINGER - Ian Crossley
LAVATCH - Bill Laverick
PAROLLES - Jamie Smelt
KING - Paul French
LAFEW - Roger Farrington
FIRST LORD DUMAINE - John Hoyland
SECOND LORD DUMAINE – Andrew Isherwood
MORGAN - Claire Morley
WIDOW - Carys Evans
DIANA - Sophie Tyler
MARIANA - Gaynor Spivey

We had a chat with Maurice to find out about his plans for the production...

Maurice Crichton, Director.



Hi Maurice! You've acted in many a YSP show but this is your directorial debut. What made you want to direct *All's Well That Ends Well*?

I've been in 9 Shakespeare productions as a performer and another as Stage Manager and was finding it harder and harder not to stick my oar in what are really directorial waters. I decided that before I become an insufferable pain in the neck, I should have a go myself and at the least learn some humility.

The YSP opportunity for this slot was to pitch to direct *Timon of Athens* or *All's Well* as YSP's contribution to the RSC Open Stages 2013-16 initiative. The reward for a successful pitch would be a director's weekend in Stratford and ongoing support from Contact Theatre in Manchester. To me, something of a no brainer.

Of the two plays *All's Well* seemed a much more suitable opportunity for an inexperienced director (and I like the play!).

Are you enjoying the process so far and what are you most looking forward to?

My own process started in August last year with my pitch to the RSC and since then I have all sorts of ideas some of which I have remembered to write down. That's been fun. I've really enjoyed all the Open Stages stuff but I'm not too sure how much of that I can actually use. As the point at which we actually start rehearsing has approached it's all got a bit terrifying. Acting experience counts for something but directing really is a very different and bigger bag.

I really like the play and I have been extremely fortunate to gather a cast of great promise around me. I'm most looking forward to getting into the rehearsal room and working on specific scenes.

***All's Well That Ends Well* isn't one of Shakespeare's more well-known plays. Could you sum it up for us with a limerick?**

Young Count Bertram's a bit of a cad
The love-sick-for-him Helen, a bit sad
But their wedding night blues
Like Parolles' and Lafew's
End up sunny - well - it's all a bit mad.

Can you tell us a bit about your vision for the production?

This play is set mostly in France. In a year that has seen York explore its French connections I want us to have as much fun as possible with this. To French it up. I have some definite ideas about some French tunes and moves, and have got maybe too involved in the early films of Jean-Luc Godard (which I may say are bursting with theatrical ideas). And we may make some reference to these. There's some nonsense language in this play and an interpreter of it. I'm wondering if there is something in that idea we can develop.

But the cast themselves deserve the opportunity to create and grow our production out of a Shakespeare script that not many people know. My job is to get them into the play as a cohesive group and to introduce some timely provocations. The director as agent provocateur?

We are planning to perform in the round which will make movement and direct engagement with the audience a particular necessity. That will be a considerable challenge in itself.

This play has been mislabelled a 'problem play' in a category with *Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure*. It seems to me not nearly as grubby as those two and much more of a genuine comedy. I'll be working on demonstrating that.

For more regular updates on the progress of *All's Well That Ends Well* you can:



[Search for York Shakespeare Project's All's Well](#)



[Search for @Y_S_P_](#)

Other recent events!

A Shakespearean Celebration

In April we celebrated our main man's 450th birthday with a celebration of his work at Bedern Hall, under the direction of Helen Wilson. It was a fabulous evening full of sonnets, sketches and a sumptuous supper and we received a great review from the Press which you can read here:

http://www.yorkpress.co.uk/leisure/theatre/11177312.Review__York_Shakespeare_Project_s_A_Shakespearean_Evening__Bedern_Hall__York/

YSP at The Dell

Following the success of *Twelfth Night* in the YTR Studio, we took a coach down to Stratford to perform in the RSC's outside space The Dell as part of Open Stages. The rain just about held off and it was a marvellous last hurrah for the production.



Sonnet Walks

Ooh la la! This year has seen another extra project for YSP following a generous grant from the city council. The Sonnet Walks (directed by Tom Straszewski and Helen Wilson) were part of the Yorkshire Festival in the run up to the Tour de France coming to York! Following either King Henry V or his potential bride Kate through the streets



and walls of York, audiences encountered a variety of characters along the way, each with their own story of love to tell. Charles Hutchinson from the Press called it "a joy from start to fin".

BREAKING NEWS!

Director Appointed for our all-female production!



It was decided at our last AGM that at least one of YSP's forthcoming productions will be presented with an all-female cast. We had a record breaking 25 pitches for the post and the recruitment panel had a very hard decision to make. However, we can now announce that the appointed director is:

Maggie Smales

who will be directing

Henry V

Our congratulations go to Maggie! Henry V will be our Autumn production in 2015, which leads us to another exciting announcement...

Director Wanted!

We will soon be seeking a director for our Spring/Summer 2015 production of

Timon of Athens

Keep an eye on your emails and facebook for more details!

St Crux Fundraising Event

Thank you to everyone who helped with our May fundraiser, whether that was donating cakes or books to serving customers on the day, it was greatly appreciated. Our next slot at St Crux will be **Friday 24th October** and we really need your help! If you can volunteer for all or part of the day, if you have items to sell (books, CDs, household items, cakes, jams, biscuits etc) or if you would like some more information, please contact Harold on 01904 410 619, text 077 949 333 27 or email information@yorkshakespeareproject.org.uk

AGM

Our Annual General Meeting has come round again, and will be held on **Monday 13th October** 7.30-9.30 at St Lawrence's Church. Refreshments will be available and we will be celebrating a great year and looking to the future! Everyone is welcome to attend, but only paid up members can vote. We are also looking for new committee members. Look out for more information about our AGM via email. See you there!

Membership

Our membership year runs from 23rd April 2014 – 23rd April 2015. Fees for 2014-2015 have been set at £15, £7.50 unwaged (including students and the over 60s) and £20 for couples at the same address. Members are entitled to vote at our AGM in October and receive free programmes at our shows and other benefits such as workshop discounts. Anyone wishing to join YSP can contact isobelcarrick@gmail.com.

We'd also love to hear your feedback on anything you've been to see or been involved with over the past months so feel free to email us info@yorkshakespeareproject.com, tweet or facebook!

