

York Shakespear Project

Newsletter 2009-10, issue 2

The Sequel is always better...

Empire Strikes Back, Godfather Part II, The Born Supremacy, Superman II, The Dark Knight, Young Guns 2 - all sequels which far surpassed their predecessors.

This newsletter is going to be similar to that. Obviously the next one is going to be a bit too indulgent, a bit too long, and not very exciting. Like all third films (except Return of the Jedi, which was still great, and Young Guns 3, which was disappointingly never made).

After my triumphant first newsletter, I'm back again, **and with an extra column!**

When I wrote the first one, I thought it was funny. Then I read it through, and thought 'I'm not sure I can send this out, it isn't interesting or funny'. But I'm too lazy to re-write a whole newsletter, so I sent it out anyway.

And you know what? I got responses from many kind and lovely people who liked it - three of them, in fact -

including my own Godfather Part II, Don Alistair. So thank you for that.

So I thought to myself this time - reading it back didn't help anyone, it just made me feel empty and disappointed, so no more proof reading for me!

Now we've got that one out of the way, here we go!

Hugh Hugh Hugh
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Hugh Hugh Hugh!

Here's something from Hugh, our faithful Director, who only has mere days left before his show is over and he leaves York for pastures new... apologies that my tardiness has meant that the first thing Hugh wrote is no longer true: it is not Friday 13th...

It is Friday 13th. It is two days after the last run through and two days before we bring the magic into the theatre. The day after that we have a full run and then we open on Tuesday.

We have sound in place; we have been running in costume for over a week and all props are fully operational. This is better than I thought we would be at this point,

hence cancelling yesterday's rehearsal.

Needless to say, the actors are brilliant in every way imaginable.

Wednesday was the fun one. One of my typical "hugh" style rehearsals, sadly without a table to tip over. Was facing away from cast for most of the run; I told them (afterwards) that this was to check their energy levels would stay high regardless of what was happening in the audience.

I could hear every line that was said (as the rehearsal space is not to scale, facing away is the nearest thing I could do to standing far away, to check the actors acoustically) and, with the cast not thinking I was paying full attention, they had less worries about playing around. They seemed to enjoy that run more than any other, and further naturalism was added, thus I now fear not as to what will happen if I miss any performances. I can sit back and relax, because aside from checking the blocking etc at the venue, my creative work is done.

Is the tedium getting to me? Nope, as I am still (at time of writing) sorting out the programme, flying like mad, re-arranging the Get-In to deal with the venue's previous show being in-the-round and doing the prelim research for A Christmas Carol - As Told By Jacob Marley (deceased). Contact me for more details of this Dickensian tour which I am to start directing in 10 days...

Two things I have learned from this experience. The first one is to leave people wanting more.

If you haven't figured this out from Hugh's article...

Richard II starts tonight! (Tuesday 17th November)

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Hmm... I'm not sure three columns lends itself to the drama of big text. Only William himself knows what will happen when I get to next issue, with four columns. Or the one after, with five. Or even worse, six columns in the Bumper **BIG TEXT** ISSUE 5.

But then maybe that issue will have as misleading a title as this one. For those of you expecting anything Special Richard II about this issue, you will be disappointed. Unless you think of seeing the words Richard II in size 60 font as special. Which I do, incidentally.

The show starts tonight – Tuesday 17th, and runs until Saturday at 41 Monkgate – and before you say 'where?' think carefully about the name of the venue.

Come along, tell your friends.

Reportedly, there's a woman coming who has seen every other Shakespeare play, but never this one. Don't risk missing potentially your only chance to see it and becoming like her!

See you there!

The Future...

No, this title isn't another music-reference (well, it is, but I don't expect you people to know about Leonard Cohen as well as William Shakespeare, two wordsmiths is too much for anyone).

In fact, it's a reference to the forthcoming York Shakespeare Project Away Day.

One of the things that really enchanted me when I first heard about York Shakespeare Project was its longevity. 20 years is a time frame which I can barely comprehend, being a little whipper-snapper. It started when I was 16, and will finish when I reach the ungodly age of 36. As Jeremy has pointed out to me before, the girl who plays Miranda in the Tempest – widely expected to be the final production – may not even have been born when the project started.

Saturday 28th November is your chance to have a real impact on the next twelve or so years of Shakespeare in York.

Some of the issues we shall endeavour to cover are:

What plays come next? Then which plays after that? Should we have professional **directors**? **Where** should we do shows? Should we – in fact – be limited to do each show only once? Should the timeframe be 20 years? And many more things beyond...

The venue is Holy Trinity Church, Heworth. If you can't

find it, Google is a good place to start. If that doesn't help, email me on info@yorkshakespeareproject.org

Further to that, for anyone who can't make it, please send any ideas, views, feelings or philosophising (to do with York Shakespeare Project) to me at that address. I'll do my best to present any ideas and suggestions at the meeting.

I have been selected to run the session – so expect intriguing discussions, the big picture, several columns, superfluous fonts, and Zip-Zap-Boing.

I think it will be a really productive day, with plenty of opportunity for discussion, ideas and – for want of a better, non-'business speak' phrase – blue sky thinking.

Any better, non-business-speak phrases meaning the same thing as 'blue sky thinking' to me info@yorkshakespeareproject.org, please.

In fact, anything you like to that address, including letting us know if you're thinking of coming along...

So there you go. Have a think about whether you can come along to the away day, or if you've got anything to contribute.

York Shakespeare Project is one of the most ambitious and far-sighted amateur theatre projects in the UK – if not anywhere. This is your chance affect the next twelve years of Shakespeare in York!

The next show...

I've heard a rumour about what the next York Shakespeare Project show might be...it's a summer favourite... it once had a modern adaptation starring that ginger bloke out of Band of Brothers, who – incidentally – my girlfriend Charlotte once saw riding his bike along Charlotte Street (figure that one out). Its initials are M.A.A.N... and the last word in it isn't 'Ninjas'.

For more information, an expanded acronym, and a promised article from a YSP member about performing it in Chinese, see the next magical edition of this newsletter.

In other 'little bird told me' rumours...

I was speaking to a very nice man from the world of theatre the other day who is trying to build an actual replica of the Globe in York. Not that silly flat-pack idea, a proper one – for us! (Us being the Shakespeare-loving people of York, not the York Shakespeare Project, unfortunately.)

More on that later as it happens, but if you know anyone important to mention it to, tell them what a great idea it is...

Until next time, then - much love, and send anything YSP related you like to info@yorkshakespeareproject.org.

And don't forget to see Richard III!

And finally...

The prize for first unasked-for contribution in the history of the York Shakespeare Project Newsletter...

Goes to...

LARA PATTISON AND JIM STAFFORD... for this piece of magic. Inspired by Julia's artwork last time, and the sort of fun you can only have at Hallowe'en, comes this... wait for it... scroll up to the top of the column



That makes me so happy!

Nothing can follow it (except a newsletter with four columns), so this is the end.

FOR NOW.