

KING LEAR

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



**NEW
VENTURE
THEATRE**

**Bedford Place
Brighton BN1 2PT**

PERFORMANCES:

Fri 15th to Sat 23rd March 2024 at 7:30pm

Matinées: Sun 17th & Sat 23rd March at 2:30pm


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KING LEAR

by William Shakespeare



Apologies to any Shakespeare purists. You are not about to see *King Lear* as the Bard wrote it. You are about to see about five-eighths of one of the greatest tragedies in the English language. I am not alone in pruning the roughly three-hour text. Kenneth Brannagh squeezed his recent West-End *Lear* into two hours (without an interval) and Jonathan Miller's 1975 TV production, starring Michael Hordern as Lear, lasted 1hr 57mins (including credits) to fit into the BBC's schedule.

So why cut it? Because you can. There are no copyright issues. Copyright expires seventy years after the author's death and Shakespeare shuffled off this mortal coil (his words not mine) a good deal longer ago than that. I think three hours of a language most of us are not totally familiar with is probably asking a great deal of a modern audience. Hopefully, leave them wanting more. And keep in the greatest hits.

Recently I watched a Q+A at the Duke of Yorks with Andrew Haigh, director of the latest big thing, *All of Us Strangers*. When asked to define the art of directing, he said it was getting the best people together and helping them to do the best work they could. He also said directing was like being a parent – you're there when you're needed, should keep out of it when you're not, but you always have the final say. And you're the one they blame.

I have directed a number of Shakespeare plays in my time, but never in the round. This style of production does throw up technical problems – eye-gouging being one of them – but I wanted you to experience up-close and personal the human and political disintegration sparked by one man's stubborn vanity.

Not only is Shakespeare a challenge for the actors, it is also a challenge for you, the audience. Everyone inside that amazingly intimate studio space needs to be able to concentrate. So may I beg you not to open sweets, knock over glasses or whisper during the two-hour traffic of our stage (again his words, not mine). That would make an old man very happy. Thank you.

Richard Lindfield

Cast in order of appearance

EDMUND	Michael Grant
GLOUCESTER	John Hartnett
KENT	Chris Parke
LEAR	John Tolputt
GONERIL	Amy Brangwyn
ALBANY	Andrew Bird
REGAN	Mandy Jackson
CORNWALL	Richard Fisher
CORDELIA	Melissa Paris
DUKE OF BURGUNDY	Colin Rogers-March
KING OF FRANCE	Fred Lindfield
EDGAR	Sam Masters
FOOL	Nick Roche
OSWALD	Ivan Kirby
SERVANTS, MESSENGERS ETC	Julian Beresford, Fred Lindfield, Colin Rogers-March

DIRECTOR: Richard Lindfield

LIGHTING DESIGN: Apollo Videaux

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Nikki Dunsford

STAGE MANAGER: Carol Croft

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER: Martyn Coates

COSTUME DESIGN : Emma Sayers

FIGHT DIRECTOR: Nathan Charman

VOICE COACH: Sam Ferree

CARTOGRAPHER: Michael Folkard

PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHY: Zuzana Sukova

HEADSHOTS: Julian Beresford

POSTER DESIGN: Henry Lindfield

PROGRAMME: Ian Amos

Thanks to: Simon Glazier, Chris Horlock,
and Amanda West (Phoenix Theatre Company).

The production would also like to thank the front-of-house, bar staff and
box office volunteers without whom none of this would be possible. Thank you.



Julian Beresford/SERVANT & MESSENGER: Having studied theatre at college and more recently attended acting classes, Julian is performing in his first play at NVT. The chance to drag off bodies, wield a machine gun and help gouge the odd eye or two was too great an opportunity to pass up.



Andrew Bird/ALBANY: This is Andrew's first rodeo at NVT, and it is a joy to be performing in the space that has seen so many great productions in the last few years. He most recently appeared in *Shakespeare in Love*, and after those choice cuts he is enjoying sinking his teeth into the raw meat of *Lear*.



Amy Brangwyn/GONERIL: Amy trained at The Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute in New York and her professional credits include: Alex in *A Clockwork Orange* (Fourth Monkey Theatre Company); Catherine in *A View From The Bridge* (The Broadway Theatre); *Conversations With Love* (The Soho Theatre & Riverside Studios). *King Lear* is Amy's third NVT production.



Richard Fisher/CORNWALL: Having moved to Brighton in 2022, Richard and his wife have spent most of the last 18 months renovating their house. To break out of the seemingly endless cycle of building work, after a tip-off from Nikki, the production manager, he auditioned for *King Lear*. And as you can see he got the part.



Michael Grant/EDMUND: Michael regularly performed on stage through school and university and has rekindled his love of theatre since moving to Brighton. Off stage he can be found in the forests of Sussex researching beetle behaviour. This is Michael's first performance with NVT. He recently played Marlowe in *Shakespeare in Love* at BLT and B.O.A.T.





John Hartnett/GLOUCESTER: John's last appearance at NVT was in *Quartet*, another Richard Lindfield production. Half way through the run every theatre in the country was shut down for two years, though John insists that his performance was not the primary cause. His latest role was as King George V in *The King's Speech* at Brighton Little Theatre.



Mandy Jackson/REGAN: Mandy trained at Webber Douglas. She is a novelist and an accomplished singer. She has recently directed *Dad's Army & Stay Happy, Keep Smiling* for BLT. Having played Juliet in a European Tour, it's been a pleasure to revisit Shakespeare. Reagan is her second role at NVT after Rose in *Di, Viv and Rose*.



Ivan Kirby/OSWALD: After previously performing in North London with Theatre in the Square and the Guild Players, Ivan is making his first appearance for NVT with this production. He is also an experienced stand-up comedian and drag performer.



Fred Lindfield/KING OF FRANCE: Fred has just finished a sell-out week in *Oliver* at the Theatre Royal. Next up is *Everybody's Talking About Jamie* with Brighton Theatre Group. When he made his stage debut at the age of seven as Pirate Joe, Fred cried before he went on. Hopefully that won't happen this time.



Colin Rogers-March/DUKE OF BURGUNDY: Fresh from his Brighton debut in *Shakespeare in Love*, Colin is delighted to be making his Shakespeare debut! Back catalogue is mainly musicals, reviews and concerts as performer and director and in semi-pro cabaret. Favourite roles? Moonface in *Anything Goes*, Daddy Warbucks in *Annie* and Freddie in *My Fair Lady*.





Sam Masters/EDGAR: Sam is the co-founder of Relish Theatre and has relished getting back on stage in Brighton. Recent roles include James (*James and the Giant Peach*, BLT), Rick (*Woman in Mind*, WTC), Ned (*Shakespeare in Love*, BLT), and Man (*You*, NVT). He is directing *The Real Inspector Hound* later this year.



Chris Parke/KENT: Chris is really happy to be back at NVT with fond memories of *Antigone* in 2017. He is looking forward to experiencing further, from within, the resonances of this cosmic work of art. He is also enjoying being part of a typically talented NVT cast and crew.



Melissa Paris/CORDELIA: Melissa joined NVT in 2022 in *Cock*. Mr Lindfield was the first director she worked with in Brighton and, fortunately, the experience didn't frighten her away. Instead, she was inspired and has since appeared in *The Revlon Girl*, *Farragut North* and as Viola de Lessops in *Shakespeare in Love* at BLT and B.O.A.T.



Nick Roche/FOOL: Nick has played various Shakespearean roles over the years, ranging from Prospero to Touchstone to Jaques (in different productions of *As You Like It*). He played Hamlet's 'tedious old fool' Polonius when only 35. Now Nick is attempting to show there really is no fool like an old fool.



John Tolputt/LEAR: John has recently appeared at NVT in *Bedroom Farce*, *Not Talking*, *Hangman* and a Chekhov monologue. He has worked twice before with director Richard Lindfield in *Festen* and *No Man's Land*. John can be seen briefly in *Vindication Swim*, currently in cinemas. He finds it a huge joy to join Lear in his 'crawl towards death'.





AN EXPERIMENT WITH AN AIR PUMP

by Shelagh Stephenson
Fri 19th to Sat 27th April

One grand house is occupied by two families both teetering on the edge of change:

1799 - On the eve of a new century, the house buzzes with scientific experiments, furtive romance and farcical amateur dramatics; 1999 - In a world of scientific chaos, cloning and genetic engineering, the cellar of the same house reveals a dark secret buried for 200 years.

PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK

by Tom Wright
Fri 17th to Sat 25th May



On a sweltering hot Valentines Day 1900, in the Macedon region of Australia, 3 Australian schoolgirls and a teacher, on a picnic expedition to the remote Hanging Rock, abscond from their group.

They are last seen heading towards the Rock.

In this chilling adaptation of Joan Lindsay's classic story, 5 female performers struggle to solve the mystery of the missing girls and their teacher, they also tell of the horrific reverberations that their disappearance creates in the community.

Supporting The New Venture

We all need a little 'care and maintenance' from time to time and our lovely Grade II listed theatre is certainly no exception. Whether it's fixing the roof or upgrading equipment it is all increasingly expensive. So any donation you can make to help keep the New Venture alive and kicking will be hugely appreciated, and you can do it either via the donations box by the fireplace in the bar, or using the Donate Button on the homepage of our website - www.newventure.org.uk

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Contacting the NVT

For ticket information only, call the Box Office - 01273 746118. To book tickets or for other information check our website at www.newventure.org.uk. All other enquiries 01273 808353.

New Venture Young Adults Theatre

For young people wanting to build their skills and experience within the theatre sector (17-25) Fridays 4.30-6.30pm. £55 per 10 week term, first session is FREE!

NVT Acting Class

Monday evenings at 7.30pm for all levels of acting skills. It will cost you just £5 per session (£2.50 for NVT members) First visit is FREE! See website for details.

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Or why not become an Angel, Archangel or even Archangel Gabriel to help us support the current and future improvements to our theatre. For further information please contact the Angels Coordinator Gerry McCrudden: angels@newventure.org.uk.

Membership

Company membership - £15 a year. Full participation, discount on tickets & newsletter. Student/Unwaged - £10 a year. As above... Proof of status is required.