RICHARD III

By William Shakespeare
Directed by Rosa Joshi
Produced in partnership with upstart crow collective

EDUCATOR RESOURCE GUIDE

Sarah Hatell as Richard in Bring Down the House; photo by John Ulman.
Dear Educators,

Welcome to our 2018–2019 season, and our performance of Richard III.

This play is a collaboration with upstart crow collective, a production company that focuses on producing classic works with an all-female cast. Given that most of history’s drama plays out with a largely male group of characters, seeing it onstage with all female actors adds a new dimension for modern audiences.

Producing Richard III at this point in history is also important for modern audiences as a warning about the danger of an authoritarian regime taking control. For a majority of today’s play-goers, the examples of Hitler, Stalin, and other bloody 20th century dictators feel more like a history lesson than a very real and possible threat. Richard III reminds us that we cannot be complacent, as a time of relative peace — which we see at the start of the show — can quickly change into a time of war and oppression if the wrong person rises to power. It also reminds us of the importance of those who ride the coattails of dictators, hoping to gain prominence and power by aiding them in their ascent. We see this in the character of Buckingham. Richard would not have been able to rise without his help, but Buckingham did not receive his promised lands for his complicity in Richard’s bloody climb. He both enabled Richard’s regime and became a victim of it.

I hope this play sparks conversations with your students, about both historical and modern warning signs of the rise of autocrats. As the philosopher George Santayana famously said, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Let us all take from this play lessons from the past.

Best,
Michelle Burce
Education Director

seattleshakespeare.org/education
206-733-8228 ext. 251 or education@seattleshakespeare.org

---

2018–2019 Student Matinees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Richard III</th>
<th>Arms and the Man</th>
<th>All’s Well That Ends Well</th>
<th>She Stoops to Conquer</th>
<th>Macbeth (tour)</th>
<th>Romeo and Juliet (tour)</th>
<th>As You Like It</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept 27*</td>
<td>Nov 1*</td>
<td>Jan 15</td>
<td>Mar 26</td>
<td>Mar 27</td>
<td>May 7</td>
<td>Apr 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 3</td>
<td>Nov 8</td>
<td>Jan 17*</td>
<td>Mar 28*</td>
<td>Mar 29</td>
<td>May 2</td>
<td>May 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 4</td>
<td>Nov 14*</td>
<td>Jan 24</td>
<td>Apr 4</td>
<td>Apr 2</td>
<td>May 9</td>
<td>May 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov 15</td>
<td>Jan 31*</td>
<td>Apr 5</td>
<td>Apr 5</td>
<td>May 14</td>
<td>May 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>May 16</td>
<td>May 16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* tentative dates are dependent on bookings.
Contents

Plots and Characters
   Family Tree ................................................................. 1
   Plot of the Prequels ....................................................... 2
   Plot and Characters ....................................................... 3

Articles
   Acting with a Physical Characteristic ............................... 4

At-a-Glance ................................................................. 5

Reflection & Discussion Questions ...................................... 6

Our Production .................................................................. 7

Production Sponsors

This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

upstart crow is an associated program of Shunpike.
Family Feud

In order for this family tree to show how characters are related clearly, it had to be drastically simplified. For example, Richard was the 11th of 12 siblings, but only four are relevant to Shakespeare’s plays. If all parents, siblings, and offspring were represented, this family tree would look more like a tangled, four-dimensional web with branches that split and merged to keep control of the kingdom all in the family. In fact, Margaret of Anjou and Elizabeth Woodville are the only individuals on this family tree who aren’t related to anyone else by blood!

Upstart Woodvilles

King Edward IV scandalized England when he married Elizabeth Woodville, a mid-ranking noblewoman, Elizabeth Woodville and widow of a man who fought against Edward’s family during the Wars of the Roses! The Earl of Warwick, who helped Edward to the throne, was so offended by the marriage that he switched sides mid-war and married his daughter, Anne Neville, to King Henry VI’s son, Prince Edward.

Elizabeth’s sudden rise in rank ushered her relatives into royal circles. Her brother, Rivers, and sons from her first marriage, Dorset and Grey, are all characters in Richard III.
The Prequels

Richard III is the last of eight Shakespeare plays which chronicle England’s crown over nearly a century, starting with the fall of Richard II, and ending with the ascension of Henry VII and beginning of the Tudor dynasty.

Richard II (c. 1398–1400)

King Richard’s cousin, Henry Bolingbroke, seizes the crown for himself (becoming Henry IV) and goes against the established rules of royal succession.

Henry IV parts 1 and 2 (c. 1402–1413)

Multiple civil rebellions challenge Henry IV’s reign while his wayward son, Prince Hal, gets into mischief with the rogue Falstaff. When Henry IV dies, the crown passes to Prince Hal (now Henry V) without incident, and it seems, for the time being, that a stable line of succession has been established.

Henry V (c. 1415)

Hoping to secure his legacy, King Henry V goes to war with France and ends up engaged to the French princess.

Bring Down the House (Henry VI parts 1, 2, and 3) (c. 1422–1471)

After the death of King Henry V, his allies fear the young Henry VI will be unfit to rule. Their fears are realized when the Duke of York revives a long-dormant claim to the throne. York’s followers rally behind the white rose of his house and Henry’s followers behind the red rose of Lancaster.

During infighting between his advisors, Henry marries Margaret of Anjou, hoping to strengthen his position. The Lancasters implode with a series of assassinations that leave them vulnerable.

After the Yorkists and Lancasters engage in battle, both sides race to London. York arrives first and sits on the throne. Desperate to make peace, Henry disinherits his own son, Prince Edward, and names York his heir. Margaret and her forces attack York’s castle, killing York. The two sides battle again, and the Yorkists are victorious. York’s oldest son is crowned King Edward IV and marries Elizabeth Woodville. News arrives that Henry has been captured.

Margaret and Prince Edward try to reclaim the throne but are captured in battle and Edward is executed. Richard of York kills the imprisoned Henry, and Margaret is banished. Edward IV seems to have secured the crown.

Plot Synopsis

Richard, Duke of Gloucester, the youngest brother of King Edward IV, is now sixth in line for the crown. He has already killed King Henry VI and Henry’s son, Prince Edward. Now Richard plots the death of everyone else who stands in his way. His first victim is his older brother, the Duke of Clarence. He convinces the king that Clarence is plotting against him. Edward imprisons Clarence in the tower, where Richard has him drowned in a butt of his favorite Malmsey wine. Lady Anne, the widow of Prince Edward, is grieving by the coffin of her late father-in-law, Henry VI. Richard tells her that she, not he, is responsible for their deaths because he killed them for love of her and, astoundingly, convinces her to marry him.

Edward dies suddenly, leaving his young family in a vulnerable position. Richard declares himself Lord Protector. He places his nephews, the young King Edward V and his brother, in the Tower of London for “safekeeping” and then demands that the Duke of Buckingham have them killed. Buckingham balks, and Richard withdraws his trust in him. Instead, Richard hires two professional murderers who smother the boys to death.

Richard, now free of all impediments, has himself proclaimed King Richard III. Old Queen Margaret, ex-Queen Elizabeth, and even Richard’s mother, the Duchess of York, all curse him. Buckingham leads a revolt, but it fails and he is executed.

Richard poisons Anne, leaving him free to court his niece, Elizabeth, whose brothers were killed in the tower. Marrying Elizabeth would unify the Yorkist and Lancastrian factions and finally bring to an end the 30 years of civil war. Henry Tudor, the Duke of Richmond, has had the same idea. He is a Lancastrian whose claims to the throne are at best tenuous.

Henry raises an army to challenge Richard. The night before the battle of Bosworth, Richard is haunted by the ghosts of those he has so remorselessly murdered. During the battle, his horse is killed, and he is forced to fight on foot. He is killed in single combat with Henry who seizes the crown and proclaims himself King Henry VII.

Adapted from Shakespeare’s Genealogies by Vanessa James.
**Acting with a Physical Characteristic**

“In his opening soliloquy, Richard describes himself as ‘rudely stamped’ (1.1.16), ‘curtailed of this fair proportion’ (l. 18), ‘cheated of feature’ (l. 19) and ‘deformed, unfinished’ (l. 20), finally declaring that he will ‘descant on mine own deformity’ (l. 27). Yet despite Richard’s insistence that he is ‘deformed’, he does not tell us exactly what his body looks like.” — Katherine Schaap Williams.

Richard’s disability itself plays on the Elizabethan belief that outward form was a physical representation of inner values, and therefore disability was often viewed as a sign of moral impairment. Is he truly “deformed” and “monstrous” or was that a reflection on his character? Each actor, director, and often the costume designer must work together to make these choices. The choice of how extreme to present his deformities must support the play and setting chosen, as well as supporting the actor playing the role.

“Richard is notorious for crippling actors.” said Ron Daniels, Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) Director.

Antony Sher played Richard in 1984 at the RSC, and won the Laurence Olivier Award for his performance. He wrote extensively in his diary, later published as the book *Year of the King* about his life leading up to and playing the role.

“The problem in playing him extremely deformed is to devise a position that would be 100 percent safe to sustain over three hours, and for a run that could last for two years,” Sher posed. In one diary entry, just after being offered the role, Sher wonders about possibly playing the role with crutches — something they ended up doing in the production. He says, “The line ‘Behold mine arm is like a blasted sapling wither’d up’, could refer to one of them literally.”

We sat down with our Richard, Sarah Harlett, to discuss these challenges before rehearsals began for the show. Sarah has already played Richard III, in Seattle Shakespeare’s *Henry VI* cycle in the 2017 production of *Bring Down the House*.

Is there costuming to make the hump, or just your posture?

Rosa [Joshi, the director] and Christine [Tschirgi, the costume designer] decided with me on *Bring Down the House* that any physicality choices would be something I would do with my body only.

Do you have a backstory on why Richard’s body is this way?

Shakespeare’s script describes a very specific body. “Crookback,” “withered arm,” “bottled spider,” etc. The script is the first place to look to for clues/ideas. We now know from the recent discovery of Richard III’s actual skeleton that he just had scoliosis. So no hunchback, no withered arm, just an intense curve of his spine. However, Shakespeare is painting a different character. To tell Shakespeare’s story, we worked on making my physicality different — something that would make him feel “other,” but not too big. Not ever a joke or a caricature. Perhaps Richard has made his physical flaws bigger in his head than maybe they actually are. Which is definitely a very human practice.

Is there preparation before and/or after the show to step into this character physically?

I warm up a lot prior to any performance. I imagine Richard III will be no different and that it may require additional stretching afterwards. Physical choices have to be sustainable for the run of a show and it is super important to take care of ourselves.

Sources


**Going Out with a Fight**

Allies and enemies alike praised Richard’s bravery in the Battle of Bosworth. Richard led a cavalry charge into the enemy forces, getting within a sword’s reach of Henry Tudor before being surrounded and killed. His skeleton showed eleven separate wounds — eight to his skull alone. Richard was the last English king to die in battle.

---

**Sensing & Shaping the Future**

Pay attention to dreams and curses throughout the play. These storytelling devices build anticipation and help recap events from the past. When characters relate dreams, it foreshadows future action. When characters curse each other, they remind us what their grievances are and shape the future by speaking their curse.

---

**Names vs. Titles**

Characters are referred to by their given names and their titles. It’s even confusing for the characters: When King Edward learns his children are prophesied to be killed by “G,” he suspects his brother, Duke of Clarence, whose given name is George — but it’s really about his other brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester!

---

**Famous Quotes**

“Now is the winter of our discontent”
— Act I, scene i

“Bloody thou art, bloody will be thy end.”
— Act IV, scene iv

“So wise so young, they say, do never live long.”
— Act III, scene i

“A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!”
— Act V, scene iv

---

**Cold Case**

Shakespeare pins the murder of the princes in the tower on Richard, but their actual disappearance remains a historic mystery, and conspiracy theories (and memes) abound.

---

**A Hunch Confirmed**

For years historians disagreed whether Richard III had an actual hunchback — some scholars suspected it was made up by Tudor enemies. In 2012, an archeological dig uncovered Richard’s grave under a parking lot in Leicester. His skeleton showed that scoliosis had twisted his spine and one shoulder would have appeared higher than the other.

---

**Against All Odds**

Richard was the 11th of 12 siblings, and one of only four brothers to reach adulthood. His ascent to the throne was unlikely, and the glory barely lasted. Richard’s reign (24 months) is the shortest of England’s crowned rulers in 1,000 years.
**Pre-Show Reflection**

These questions will help students to think about some of the big ideas behind the play before watching it.

Many historians agree that Shakespeare exaggerated the historical Richard III's scoliosis into much larger physical difference, including a hunchback and a “withered arm,” to emphasize that Richard was a villain. Would this be appropriate today? What do modern writers do to indicate that a character is untrustworthy or villainous?

It is often said that, “History is written by the victors.” Can you think of any examples of this? In what way is the story of history shaped by who is in power when it is written?

What is the difference between a conquering hero and a murderous villain if they both kill the same number of people in their quest for power?

What makes someone fit to be a monarch? How does hereditary monarchy fit into this? Are the skills needed to gain power the same ones needed to rule well?

---

**Post-Show Discussion**

The following questions are to help lead a discussion with your class after seeing the play. For all of these, there are many possible answers and student responses will vary. Some possible responses are provided.

In one short scene, Lady Anne goes from hating Richard to agreeing to marry her. How can that happen? Why does she agree? Has he actually won her heart, or does she agree for other reasons?

- Anne doesn’t love Richard at all. She is using him to gain power.
- Anne is more scared of Richard than anything, so she agrees to marry him out of fear.
- Anne understands that all marriages are political in this time, particularly for noble women. She is no more or less in love with Richard than with her prior husband.

Is anyone in this play innocent? Is everyone guilty of some misdeeds in their course of seeking power?

- If you take into account the previous part of the story from Henry VI, everyone who is in power got there by backstabbing and killing. Everyone is guilty.
- The youngest generation, including the two princes and young Stanley, are innocent. They have been born into a world at their current stations, and are victims of the misdeeds of their parents.

Prophecies, prophetic dreams, and curses are used throughout the play. Richard III poisons the king against his brother George by “interpreting” a prophecy. Margaret of Anjou curses all the people who wronged her family. What role does prophecy play? Do characters listen to them? Should they?

- Prophecies help the audience look forward to what is to come.
- Curses tell the audience a lot about the relationship between Margaret of Anjou and the other characters in the play, and remind us of what happened in Henry VI.
- Some characters — like King Edward — listen to prophecies too much, and make terrible choices based on misinterpreting them.
- Some characters — like Richard III, and Rivers, Grey, and Vaughn — don’t pay any heed to prophecies, even though they correctly predict their downfall.
- Some characters — like Lady Anne and Buckingham — ironically fall prey to their own curses, and realize it too late.

What do you think of Margaret of Anjou’s view of retribution and justice? Must a death be answered by another death? In the context of 15th century English politics, is there another way to avenge your family and strike fear in your enemies? What about in the context of today?

(answers may vary)
Our Production

“We’re out of civil war [of Bring Down the House],” explained director Rosa Joshi at first rehearsal, “and we are now in an authoritarian fascist world.” Richard’s England is a controlled, piercing, and dangerous world. The set, designed by Shawn Ketchum Johnson, showcases thin, angled wires on a dark and open stage.

Costumes by Christine Tschirgi blend the aesthetics of twentieth century authoritarian regimes with medieval elements — unified in black materials and sleek, severe lines — to create an abstract world that hovers outside of any specific time or location in history.

“’To me the history plays are really cautionary tales,” Joshi reflected. “I think we go back to them to look at the dark, dangerous things that have happened in the past and think about how we might be more mindful about how to avoid these things in our present and our future.”
Mission Statement
With the plays of William Shakespeare at our core, Seattle Shakespeare Company engages our audiences, our artists and our community in the universal human experience inherent in classic drama through the vitality, immediacy and intimacy of live performance and dynamic outreach programs.

ABOUT US
Seattle Shakespeare Company is the Puget Sound region’s year-round, professional, classical theatre. The company’s growing success stems from a deep belief in the power and vibrancy of the time-tested words and ideas of Shakespeare and other classical playwrights along with a commitment to artistic excellence on stage. The results have been provocative performances that both challenge and delight audiences while fostering an appreciation for great stage works.

Our combined programs — which include indoor performances, free outdoor productions, regional tours, educator and youth programs — reach across barriers of income, geography, and education to bring classical theatre to Washington State.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

In-School Residencies, Matinees, and Workshops
• In-School Residencies bring active, customized curriculum into schools across Washington State. Professional teaching artists plan with teachers to tailor each residency to fit the needs and objectives of the classroom. Seattle Shakespeare Company residencies inject vibrant, active exercises into lessons that unlock the text, themes, and actions of a Shakespeare play.
• Student Matinees bring over 3,000 students annually to our mainstage productions in the Seattle Center. Teachers are provided free study guides, and student groups are invited to stay after the show for a free Q&A session with the cast.
• Pre-show and post-show workshops can be booked to accompany mainstage matinees. These workshops include an introduction to the play itself, student activities, and insights into direction and design choices of our specific production.

Touring Productions
• Fresh and accessible 90-minute productions tour across Washington State each Spring, reaching more than 14,000 students and adults. These nimble productions perform as easily in school gymnasiums as professional theatre facilities. Teachers are provided free study guides and students enjoy free post-show Q&A sessions with the cast.
• Schools have the opportunity to book accompanying in-school residencies with touring productions, led by members of the touring cast and additional teaching artists.

Camps and Classes
• Our summer “Camp Bill” series in Seattle and Edmonds offers young actors a variety of camps to choose from or combine. Camps range from a One-Week Introduction to a Three-Week Production Intensive, with many options in between.
• In our Fall and Spring after-school “Short Shakes” programs, young actors develop their skills and gain hands-on performance and production experience.
• Seattle Shakespeare Company occasionally offers adult classes and workshops to our community featuring guest artists who work on our stage.

EDUCATION STAFF CONTACTS

In-School Residencies and Camps
Michelle Burce, Education Director
206-733-8228 ext. 251
michelleb@seattleshakespeare.org

Touring Productions
Casey Brown, Touring Program Manager
206-733-8228 ext. 241
caseyb@seattleshakespeare.org

Student Matinees
Lorri McGinnis, Box Office Manager
206-733-8228 ext. 220
studentmat@seattleshakespeare.org

General
Ticket office: 206-733-8222
Administrative offices: 206-733-8228
Fax: 206-733-8202
Seattle Shakespeare Company
PO Box 19595
Seattle, WA 98109
seattleshakespeare.org