

**PROPELLER SHAKESPEARE**

# **RICHARD III**

Edited by Edward Hall & Roger Warren



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Cover design by James Illman. The skull is based on that of the historical Richard, recently discovered in Leicester.

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# Contents

[Cast and Production Team](#)

[Edward Hall on Propeller](#)

[Shakespeare's \*Richard III\*](#)

[Designing \*Richard III\*](#)

[Music in \*Richard III\*](#)

[This Edition](#)

[\*Richard III\*](#)

Propeller's *Richard III* was first performed at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry on 18 November 2010, with the following cast:

**RICHARD Duke of Gloucester,**  
**later King Richard III** Richard Clothier  
**GEORGE Duke of Clarence, his brother** John Dougall  
**KING EDWARD IV, also his brother** Robert Hands  
**QUEEN ELIZABETH, Edward's wife** Dominic Tighe  
**LORD RIVERS, her brother** Kelsey Brookfield  
**LORD HASTINGS** Thomas Padden  
**SIR RICHARD RATCLIFFE** Dugald Bruce-Lockhart  
**LADY ANNE** Jon Trenchard  
**DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM** Chris Myles  
**QUEEN MARGARET, widow of King Henry VI** Tony Bell  
**SIR WILLIAM CATESBY** David Newman  
**TWO MURDERERS** Sam Swainsbury, Richard Frame  
**DUCHESS OF YORK, Richard's mother** Kelsey Brookfield  
**BISHOP OF ELY** Wayne Cater

EDWARD PRINCE OF WALES	}	Edward's sons
RICHARD DUKE OF YORK		'the Princes in the Tower'
		Richard Frame, Sam Swainsbury

**SCRIVENER** Tony Bell  
**DUKE OF NORFOLK** Thomas Padden  
**LORD STANLEY** John Dougall  
**EARL OF RICHMOND, his stepson** Robert Hands  
**All other parts played by members of the Company.**

It was subsequently performed at:

Lyceum Theatre, Sheffield

Theatre Royal, Newcastle

Theatre Royal, Norwich

King's Theatre, Edinburgh

Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham

The Lowry, Salford

The Power Center, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Watermill Theatre, Newbury

Theatre Royal, Plymouth

Festival de Otoño a Primavera, Madrid

Huntington Theatre Company, Boston

Hampstead Theatre, London

Neuss Festival, Germany

Galway Festival

The tour was presented in association with the Touring Partnership, funded by the Arts Council of England, and sponsored by Coutts & Co.

Richard Clothier received the Eliot Norton Award for the outstanding performance by an actor in Boston, 2011.

**PRODUCTION TEAM**

**Director** Edward Hall

**Designer** Michael Pavelka

**Lighting Designer** Ben Ormerod

**Music by** Propeller

**Additional Arrangements and Original Music by** Jon Trenchard

**Scrivener's Rap by** Tony Bell

**Text adapted by** Edward Hall and Roger Warren

**Sound** David Gregory

**Associate Director** Paul Hart

**Company Manager** Nick Chesterfield

**Production Manager** Nick Ferguson

**Costume Supervisor** Hannah Lobelson

**Deputy Stage Manager** Laura Routledge

**Assistant Stage Managers** Bryony Rutter & Charley Sargent

**Wardrobe Mistress** Bridget Fell

**Executive Producer** Caro MacKay

**Production Photographer** Manuel Harlan

**Puppets by** Sian Willis



# Propeller

**P**ropeller is a theatre company inspired by Jill Fraser, which began life at the Watermill Theatre in Newbury, Berkshire in 1995. Since then we have been touring Shakespeare all over the world and have now grown in scale whilst still managing to retain the close-knit family feel that has always been such an important part of our work. We like to mix a rigorous approach to the text with a modern physical aesthetic. We have been influenced by mask, animation, classic and contemporary film and music from all ages.

Propeller always places the actor at the centre of the story-making process, which is exactly how it was in Shakespeare's day. The Elizabethans were denied the modern luxuries of elaborate sets and lighting, instead relying on the skills of the actors themselves to help imagine the plays on stage in every way they could. And so it is with us. A Propeller actor is as likely to find himself shifting scenery, singing or playing rock and roll guitar, as he is to be playing his part on stage in a scene. Over the years, actors with many different skills have passed through the company, from tap dancing champions to highly skilled singers and musicians. Our work has become more and more intricate, needing choreography, musical arrangements and fight direction. At no time have we ever used an outside choreographer or composer to help us with this work. It is all generated from within the company, giving them true ownership of the work they are creating. These editions of some of the texts we have performed are designed to give the reader an idea of how we approached

each production from text choices down to doubling schemes, design and music.

Edward Hall

## Shakespeare's *Richard III*

Probably written in 1592, immediately after the *Henry VI* trilogy, *Richard III* is the culmination of Shakespeare's dramatization of the Wars of the Roses, which he had begun in the three parts of *Henry VI*. It has, therefore, a double focus: it concludes the story of those wars, and presents a full-length portrayal of Richard himself. These two aspects are indissolubly linked. The characters constantly refer back to events of the past, especially to Queen Margaret's ritual slaughter of Richard's father York and his young brother Rutland, and to Richard's (and his brothers') murder of Margaret's son at the battle of Tewkesbury, which saw the final defeat of Henry VI, Margaret, and the House of Lancaster. There is a strong sense of the past coming home to roost. One by one, characters reap what they have sown; and while some of them blame or curse Richard, he embodies in himself what they have been: he is the inevitable outcome of their destructive violence.

To this extent, *Richard III* dramatizes the 'Tudor myth', history as the Elizabethan chroniclers presented it, culminating in the Battle of Bosworth, where Richmond – the future King Henry VII and so the grandfather of Elizabeth I – ends a century of civil strife with the establishment of the Tudor dynasty. But, as always, Shakespeare complicates the pattern. Richard is apparently a classic image of villainy, symbolised by his deformity: a crippled mind in a disabled body. Yet he is not only the centre of dramatic vitality: he is also charming, sympathetic even, as the 'virtuous' characters who oppose him are not. From his celebrated opening speech, his candour about his aims lures the

audience into complicity with him: we become his accomplices in his bid to seize power. Truthful to us, he exposes, with great sophistication, the vanity and hypocrisy of the political and social world.

The first half of *Richard III* dramatizes Richard's rise; the second half his fall and his defeat at Bosworth. An important aspect of this defeat is that the character who tricks so many others is himself tricked – by Stanley's treachery, but still more by Queen Elizabeth, the widow of King Edward IV. In a central scene, Richard woos Elizabeth to agree to his marriage with her daughter (sister of the princes in the Tower, whom he has just murdered), in order to secure his political safety. This scene employs the same line-by-line cut-and-thrust of Richard's earlier wooing of Lady Anne, and Richard thinks that, as with Anne, he has won the encounter, contemptuously dismissing Elizabeth as he had earlier dismissed Anne: 'Relenting fool, and shallow changing woman.' But he is wrong. Elizabeth is a tougher opponent than Anne had been; we subsequently learn that she has promised her daughter not to Richard, but to his opponent Richmond. The supreme irony of the play is that the great trickster is himself the victim of a trick. Is the glorious conclusion of the play more equivocal than it seems?

Roger Warren