

TRIST Presents Ultimate Evil in Richard III

William Shakespeare's *Richard III*, currently playing at Roots Arts and Cultural Center in Providence, demonstrates the evil lengths one person will go to in pursuit of a goal. Presented by The Rhode Island Shakespeare Theater (TRIST), this fast-paced production is chock full of dastardly deeds, double-crosses, and murder in every dark corner.

Directed by TRIST Artistic Director Bob Colonna, *Richard III* is entertaining not only for its non-stop action, but also for its dark comedy. Bobby Casey, as the twisted lead character, Richard III, is skin-crawlingly repulsive for the depths to which he sinks to acquire the Throne of England, and yet charmingly silly while attempting to explain the motives behind his behavior. And bodies drop so quickly, one hardly has time to breathe.

Taking out other heirs to the Throne one by one, Casey plays Richard as the ultimate manipulator. He manipulates the audience for sympathy, just as he manipulates the other characters throughout the play. Richard is so persuasive that his victims seem to march knowingly to their own demise. Poor Lady Anne, played with poise and dignity by Leann Heath, allows herself to be seduced by Richard, even though she knows no good awaits her.

Joe Mecca is Buckingham, Richard's cohort in crime, who plays a steady support to Richard's lurching personality. Mike Daniels, as both the Duke of Clarence and the Bishop, has a clear, strong voice and wonderful presence. The acoustics at Roots Center are good, but even better is the distinct articulation Colonna demands of his actors. Pay close attention to the fools in this play, Richard III's bumbling henchmen, Catesby (Christopher Ferreira) and Ratcliffe (David Kane), who have some of the best lines.

Madness and sorcery, two of Shakespeare's favorite themes, are represented in Mad Queen Margaret, played to rafter-shaking intensity by Meryn Flynn. Flynn's Margaret rails against the wrongs done to her and others that she is unable to avenge. She represents the fury of all oppressed women, broken and left for dead, yet still alive. Mad Margaret might be the only force to stop Richard's reign of terror.

Many of the characters in *Richard III* face conflicting emotions. Even Richard's own mother, the Duchess of York, played with a sad sincerity by Carol Drowne, condemns her son for his actions, yet cannot deny her motherly love.

The two youngest actors, Jonah King as Young Prince Edward, and Jasper Summers as Young Duke of York are outstanding. Rounding out this solid cast is Rob Roy in the dual role of Hastings and Richmond, Rosanna Cavanaugh as the bereaved Queen Elizabeth, Mishell Lilly as Brakenbury, and Sara DeAngelos as Jane Shore.

Roots Arts and Cultural Center is located at 276 Westminster Street, Providence, RI. Tickets are \$12. Go to www.rootsprovidence.com/trist or call 401-331-6118. Dates remaining are Nov. 16, 17, and 18. Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m., Sunday at 2 p.m.