



A Cry of Treason

by
Lydia Ragosin

Another view of Richard III
Sunday 10th March 7:45pm in the Foyer
Rehearsed Readings at Questors

Admission by programme 50p.

 THE QUESTORS THEATRE

A CRY OF TREASON

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The following extract is taken from the programme for The Questors' production of 'A Cry of Treason' in March 1967, directed by Alfred Emmet.

Plays have been written before about Richard III, but over-shadowing them all has been Shakespeare's masterly and magnificent melodrama of evil. So outstanding and so vivid is this piece of theatre, so tremendous the impact of its central figure, that for all theatregoers, at least, the mention of the name Richard III conjures up an image of one of the most monstrous villains in history.

However superb a play, Shakespeare's "Richard III" is, to say the least, of very doubtful validity as history. Why should it be? Shakespeare's imagination was evidently fired by the picture of Richard he found in the pages of Holinshed and from this he fashioned a superb theatrical experience which has been shared by generation after generation. That Holinshed based his history upon Sir Thomas More and Polydore Vergil; that Vergil was Henry Tudor's official historian, commissioned to write history from the Tudor point of view; that More's source for his history of Richard was John Morton, Richard's implacable enemy, and himself one of the chief plotters of his overthrow; that both More's and Vergil's histories have many gross inaccuracies and demonstrable distortions of fact, Shakespeare was not concerned with these things, and indeed could hardly have been aware of them.

Since then the historical truth of Richard, so different from the Shakespearean picture, has been amply restored. And it is this comparatively new idea of Richard which has fired the imagination of Lydia Ragosin to write "A Cry of Treason." Here we see a Richard who was loyal, just and merciful, impelled by events to accept the crown which was pressed upon him. A Richard who endeavoured to rule in accordance with principles of law and justice, who commanded great affection and loyalty from his people, but who was in the end defeated by the treason of the self seekers around him and by the enemies his generosity and mercy did not succeed in appeasing. We also see a Richard who was in conflict with himself, who became obsessed with a sense of his own guilt for having broken faith with his brother, Edward, and who therein displayed a fatal weakness. Those who wield absolute power must do so with absolute ruthlessness or they fail; that is the corrupting effect of power. This Richard was **not** ruthless, and that was his undoing.

This play, and 'A Crown for the Strong', a play about Henry VII, were performed together in repertoire under the collective title 'The Corruptible Crown'. They were originally written - and broadcast - as radio plays; the stage versions were especially commissioned for The Questors.

It was Alfred Emmet's suggestion that we resurrect Miss Ragosin's play as a Rehearsed Reading to complement our production of Shakespeare's 'Richard III', which opens on March 16th. We offer tonight's reading as a tribute to Alfred, in memory in particular of his lifelong commitment to, and championship of, new plays and developing writers.

We are also mounting a small exhibition of the 1967 production, including programme, photographs and pages from Alfred's prompt copy of the script. The last-mentioned epitomises the depth and breadth of research and preparation which went into all his productions - it makes fascinating and salutary reading for any would-be director!

Cast (in order of speaking)

King Edward IV	...	...	...	David Pearson
Lord William Hastings, Edward's best and most devoted friend				Howard Benbrook
Jane Shore, Edward IV's mistress	...	...	...	Sarah Morrison
Richard, Duke of Gloucester, later King Richard III				Alan Widdrington
Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, a Plantagenet and distant cousin of Richard's				Piers Whibley
Anne Neville, daughter of Warwick the Kingmaker, Richard's wife				Caroline Bleakley
Sir James Tyrell, loyal courtier to Richard	...	...	...	John Davey
Viscount Francis Lovell, Richard's Lord Chamberlain				Robert Gordon Clark
John Kendall, Richard's secretary	...	...	...	Denys Gaskill
Anthony Woodville, Lord Rivers, brother of Queen Elizabeth and Uncle to Edward V				Tony Worth
Lord Richard Grey, younger son of Queen Elizabeth by her first marriage to the Lancastrian Lord Ferrers				Iain Reid
Sir Thomas Vaughan, Edward V's Chamberlain	...	...	...	Ken Ratcliffe
King Edward V (aged 15), elder son of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville				Denys Gaskill
Bishop Stillington, Bishop of Bath and Wells, Counsellor to Richard				Ken Ratcliffe
Lord Stanley, Counsellor to Richard, later loyal to Henry Tudor	...	...	...	Iain Reid
Thomas Rotherham, Archbishop of York, Counsellor to Richard				Tony Worth
John Morton, Bishop of Ely, Counsellor to Richard and later to Henry VII				David Pearson
Duchess of York, Richard's mother	...	...	...	Barbara Hutchins
Queen Elizabeth (Woodville), wife of Edward IV	...	...	...	Jane Dewey
Princess Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville				Sarah Morrison
Duke of Norfolk, commander of Richard's army at Bosworth				Ken Ratcliffe
Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, later King Henry VII				John Davey
Jasper Tudor, Earl of Pembroke, Henry's uncle	...	...	...	Tony Worth
John de Vere, Earl of Oxford, commander of Henry's army at Bosworth				Howard Benbrook
Director	...	...	...	Gwenan Evans
Stage Manager	...	...	...	Denys Gaskill

With thanks to Brad Askew, Jill Gee

