

West Yorkshire Playhouse present

Richard III

By William Shakespeare
Director Mark Rosenblatt

25 September – 17 October 2015

Richard III: The beginning stages...

Actor Reece Dinsdale (playing Richard III) and Director Mark Rosenblatt spent an intensive and exciting week exploring Richard III here at West Yorkshire Playhouse. Here's an insight into what they discussed.

On a vital rehearsal...

It was vital to meet this early on in the process in order to discuss the piece and what it would say to an audience through the character of Richard. It's a huge psychological drama about Richard III as a man and raises the question of how much he is aware of his own conscience. Does he have one? Do we want to represent that? How and where does it surface and how do we make it theatrical? If you're going to do Shakespeare it's got to have something to say. It's got to speak to the modern world. It wouldn't be possible to make choices about Richard's character without each other's input.

On Design...

Having to simplify the design due to budget constraints has actually allowed for a more playful interpretation of the play – it has unlocked something and freed us up to be bolder in our choices. As a result, the production can now be more playfully staged. We are looking at the design and production with more of an abstract nature than before. We can now open up the play and be less literal in our approach.

On being a psychological drama...

Richard will be put centre stage and we will have a production that explores what's inside Richard's head. Questions have been raised such as: Has an injustice done to Richard in his past made him behave the way he does? Has he been pushed to the side lines and forced to look at everything from the edges? Is he aware of his own conscience? When he becomes aware of it, it is too late. Is he physically self-conscious? Has his conscience lay buried and is he angry about the cards nature has dealt him with? Has he convinced himself that he doesn't have a conscience? Anger in him has created a gamesmanship – everything has become a warped game in his life.

On adapting...

Being able to adapt the script and being in charge of what to say has been empowering for us as a creative team. One of the more radical cuts we have made is to remove Richmond from the play. For example, in Act 5 we have decided that he should not be on stage. When the ghosts appear, they only speak to Richard – putting him centre stage. This production is about Richard battling with his own thoughts. Richmond is a metaphor – the onset of Richard's conscience coming through. This approach means we can open up the play to be less literal and approach everything in a more abstract and playful way. This new approach also changes the casting process. We are now looking for actors who are up for different kinds of work – a different kind of actor/ performer. It will become a more inventive, ensemble piece.