

PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Harry the Sixth presented by **Shakespeare's Globe** at **Shakespeare's Globe Theatre**, London, England. June 26–September 28, 2013. Directed by Nick Bagnall. Designed by Ti Green. Music composed by Alex Baranowski. With Graham Butler (King Henry VI), Garry Cooper (Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester), Mary Doherty (Queen Margaret), Roger Evans (Duke of Suffolk), Mike Grady (Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester), Simon Harrison (Charles the Dauphin), David Hartley (Duke of Somerset), Nigel Hastings (Duke of Exeter/Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March), Joe Jameson (John Talbot/Bastard of Orleans), Patrick Myles (Reignier, Duke of Anjou), Brendan O'Hea (Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York), Gareth Pierce (Duke of Alençon), Beatriz Romilly (Joan of Arc), and Andrew Sheridan (Lord Talbot/Earl of Warwick).

The Houses of York and Lancaster presented by **Shakespeare's Globe** at **Shakespeare's Globe Theatre**, London, England. June 26–September 28, 2013. Directed by Nick Bagnall. Designed by Ti Green. Music composed by Alex Baranowski. With Graham Butler (King Henry VI), Garry Cooper (Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester/Old Clifford), Mary Doherty (Queen Margaret), Roger Evans (Duke of Suffolk/Jack Cade), Mike Grady (Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester/Alexander Iden), Simon Harrison (Richard, later Duke of Gloucester), David Hartley (Young Clifford/Duke of Somerset), Nigel Hastings (Duke of Burgundy/Dick the Butcher), Joe Jameson (Duke of Buckingham), Patrick Myles (Edward, Earl of March, later King Edward IV), Brendan O'Hea (Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York), Gareth Pierce (George, Duke of Clarence/Smith the Weaver), Beatriz Romilly (Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester), and Andrew Sheridan (Earl of Warwick).

The True Tragedy of the Duke of York presented by **Shakespeare's Globe** at **Shakespeare's Globe Theatre**, London, England. June 26–September 28, 2013. Directed by Nick Bagnall. Designed by Ti Green. Music composed by Alex Baranowski. With Graham Butler (King Henry VI), Garry Cooper (Old Clifford/Father who Killed his Son), Mary Doherty (Queen Margaret), Roger Evans (Montague), Mike Grady (Lord Hastings), Simon Harrison (Richard, Duke of Gloucester), David Hartley (Young Clifford/Duke of Somerset), Nigel Hastings (Duke of Exeter), Joe Jameson (Duke of Buckingham/Edmund, Earl of Rutland/Son who Killed his Father/Prince Edward), Patrick Myles (Edward, Earl of March, later King Edward IV), Brendan O'Hea (Richard

Plantagenet, Duke of York/Lewis XI, King of France/Duke of Somerset), Gareth Pierce (George, Duke of Clarence), Beatriz Romilly (Lady Grey), and Andrew Sheridan (Earl of Warwick).

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Marshaled by writers and warriors alike to denote the area in which a conflict takes place, the expression “theater of war”—like its comrades “friendly fire” and “battle for hearts and minds”—evokes humanity’s paradoxical capacities for creation and destruction. Unlike the latter euphemisms, however, “theater of war” has a long history and frequency of use that might just promote it from the rank of phrase to the level of collocation. One of the earliest deployments of the idiom can be found in Voltaire’s *Histoire de la Guerre de 1741* (1756), a work prompted by the *philosophe*’s appointment as royal historiographer. Voltaire proved an innovative historian and, as scholars including Pierre Force, Maureen F. O’Meara, and Jerome Rosenthal have persuasively argued, he united a universal perspective that stressed social as well as political history with a presentist attitude that selected and evaluated past events based on their importance to and relevance in the present. Here, in a way, his narrative histories followed the dramatic ones of William Shakespeare—hence the perhaps jarring framing of this review. Shakespeare’s histories of royals, like Voltaire’s, took in all levels of society, shaped material to ideological purposes, and engaged with the idea of a “theater of war” even if they did not utilize that particular linguistic construction. Shakespeare was also a figure with whom Voltaire famously engaged in a long-term literary battle for hearts and minds. At first friendly (promoting and even translating, adapting, and emulating Shakespeare’s plays), Voltaire later turned his considerable critical fire on the Englishman by dismissing him more than once as a “savage” whose works “please only in London and in Canada.”

Shakespeare’s Globe attempted to test that assertion by playing London and beyond with its 2013 productions of all three parts of *Henry VI*. Though the tour never quite reached Canada, Nick Bagnall’s revivals sallied as far west as Belfast, stopping in York, Brighton, Malvern, Milton Keynes, Oxford, Cambridge, and Bath along the way. Day-long marathon performances of the trilogy were also presented at the Bankside Globe and at or near the battlefields of Towton, Tewkesbury, St. Albans, and Barnet. Though Sam Wanamaker may have slightly missed the mark in reconstructing his “authentic” theater some 200m away from its original site, Bagnall’s tour hit the geographical target by presenting battle scenes on the very “sacred ground”—as the director described it to the *New York*

Times (August 1, 2013)—where the conflicts actually occurred. Live theater and historical warfare thus spatially merged to create a site-specific “authenticity” for part of the tour and to give the phrase “theater of war” a new meaning. But if spaces were elided in some performances through a reading of that phrase’s “of” that simultaneously meant “concerning” and “containing,” time was strictly segregated no matter where the players set up camp. Despite publicity and program pieces that connected the *Henry VI* plays to conflicts ranging from the English Civil War, through Northern Ireland and the Falklands, to the 2011 London riots, direction and design choices suggested neither a Voltairean presentist resonance nor a universal experience of war that united times as well as places and actions.

To serve the demands of touring productions that played both indoor proscenium arch spaces and temporary platforms on battlefields, as well as the thrust of the outdoor Globe, designer Ti Green enlisted a flexible setting and a simplified Plantaga-bethan silhouette in muted, yet still pleasingly colorful, costumes. *Part 1*’s sartorial rainbow subtly sorted into alliances with red-earth-toned Lancastrians diverging from Yorkists in bruised blue-black, but frequent doubling and trebling of characters (and resultant switching of allegiance) prohibited major costume changes. Audiences were thus left to rely on accent and bearing to sort the various Thomases, Dicks, and Harrys. Toward the end of *Part 2* and through much of *Part 3*, factions coalesced through smears of red and white facepaint, a choice that notably affected Gareth Pierce’s Clarence, who repeatedly berouged and enwhitened himself as loyalties swayed.

Red and white were not entirely absent from *Part 1*, however, for the production opened with a procession bearing Henry V’s coffin—complete with St. George’s flag flower arrangement—through the pit and up the double set of stairs leading toward the stage, where it remained to serve as a literal and figurative reminder of the dead king’s legacy. The closed casket took center stage in a fractious Temple Garden, but by then it had already opened to disgorge swords that armed French and English lords alike; even the greenest of groundlings could see that foreign quarrels had come home with the king’s corpse. Veteran Globe-watchers might have been tempted to connect the two-story metal frameworks that constituted the setting for all three parts with the wooden ones that had dominated Globe artistic director Dominic Dromgoole’s excellent 2011–12 second *Henriad* on the same stage. Now darkened and hardened in a transition from organic to metallic, the vertical and diagonal supports that then suggested the I’s and V’s of primogeniture reappeared to offer further opportunities for vertical as well as horizontal playing (Fig. 1). In between



Fig. 1. The cast and set of the Globe Theatre's 2013 production of *The True Tragedy of the Duke of York*, directed by Nick Bagnall. Photo courtesy of Gary Calton.

the two towers sat a central wooden structure, just as tall as the others and bracketed by ladders, that not only served as throne and hiding place, but also suggested that the organic unity of Henry V's England had withered in the face of steely threats from home and abroad. To his credit, Bagnall made better use of the scenery than Dromgoole, placing speakers on the (quite worthy) scaffold in a way that moved the eye in chaotic directions, thereby dividing a few crooked figures into, if not millions, then certainly more than the fourteen at his disposal.

Like Shakespeare and Voltaire before him, Bagnall strategically shaped his historical materials, with the result that the plays were cut to around two hours each. Marketing materials—including quarto-inspired revised titles like *Harry the Sixth*, *The Houses of York and Lancaster*, and *The True Tragedy of the Duke of York*—asserted that each play could stand alone, yet editorial and casting choices suggested a Folio-esque unity in the director's conception of the event. Though he told *Around the Globe* magazine that his only experience with the trilogy was a Serbian/Macedonian/Albanian production presented at the Globe in 2012, Bagnall seemed, at times, to be heavily influenced by the precedent set by England's own Royal Shakespeare Company. He certainly drew upon Katie Mitchell's stand-alone 1994 *Part 3*, a production Bagnall appeared in when he was just out of drama school, not least in the heavy drumming that under-

scored battle scenes (and occasionally drowned out dialogue). While claiming ignorance of Michael Boyd's celebrated 2000/2006–08 staging, he nevertheless followed the RSC artistic director by casting performers in a series of archetypal roles that resonated from play to play as each actor created, in effect, a mini-ensemble in one body. Andrew Sheridan, for example, portrayed a Surrogate figure, fighting strenuously on behalf of the one he served. He embodied this role both as Warwick and as a gruff Talbot who, spared romantic temptation by the Countess of Auvergne through cuts, vented his passions by snarling at soldiers and grappling roughly with his son in an angry effort to dissuade him from a less forgiving field of battle. That Son was played by Joe Jameson, who also appeared as an entertainingly camp Bastard and trebled in *Part 3* as the Son who Killed his Father, a vulnerably boyish Rutland, and a Prince Edward whose vicious giggle implied that when Richard killed him, Gloucester faced a mirror image of his own malicious delight. Stranded onstage more than once as corpses, Jameson and his various dead fathers rose at Henry VI's touch and were gently escorted offstage in a technique Bagnall, consciously or coincidentally, borrowed from Mitchell and Boyd before him.

A ludic technique for clearing the stage was, of course, required for performances in the universal light of the Globe or on the battlefield, and some of Bagnall's company proved adept at exploiting the unique actor-audience relationships afforded by non-traditional spaces. As Edward IV, Patrick Myles displayed a gift for rising to the occasion by declaring "in the midst of this bright-shining day / I spy a black, suspicious, threatening cloud" (*3H6*, 5.3.3–4) in a manner that inspired thunderous laughter from rain-drenched groundlings at the Globe. In Antagonist roles, Simon Harrison portrayed an exuberant Dauphin who took delight in himself as well as in the forced internal rhyme of "A parley with the Duke of Burgundy" (*1H6*, 3.7.36), but later became somewhat shell-shocked by the sudden downfall of Pucelle. His Richard of Gloucester, on the other hand, positively relished violence and teemed with self-hatred. Body constantly curled like the perpetual snarl on his lips, he was instantly recognizable to all by virtue of a hump, be-slunged arm, and rounding limp (Fig. 2). Nevertheless, he proved surprisingly nimble with the mace he used to chase David Hartley's equally terrifying Clifford through the pit and to lunge at Margaret after dispatching her son. His emotional pain was evident in *Part 3*'s descant on deformity, and he conjured some menacing charm in bestowing a kiss on two "sweet ladies" in the yard before delivering "bloody axe" with a stunningly sharp voiceless velar stop that



Fig. 2. Simon Harrison as Richard, Duke of Gloucester in the Globe Theatre's 2013 production of *The True Tragedy of the Duke of York*, directed by Nick Bagnall. Photo courtesy of Gary Calton.

sent shivers up the spine. He alone retained a white smear of facepaint in the court as if to signal that the bloodshed was not yet complete: he proved the point not only by continuing to stab Henry VI long after the king had expired, but also by dragging the body upstage to twice bash in the corpse's head for good measure.

In Betrayer roles, meanwhile, Mike Grady exploited his experience in pantomime to great effect through skillful use of the comic ellipsis. His West Country Alexander Iden stoically deadpanned that he was an "esquire . . . of Kent," while his rather more histrionic Winchester drew out "Sooooo, there goes our Protector in a rage" (*1H6*, 1.1.141) to humorous effect. Well-established comic bits were confidently paraded; when the Bishop shook hands with Humphrey in *Part 1*, for example, Winchester's grimacing face offered ocular proof of Gloucester's powerful squeeze. A hirsute Garry Cooper played this and other Father figures with gruff dignity, though the fey nasality of his William Stafford's "therefore yield or die" demonstrated deft comic delivery. As the Father who Killed his Son he required physical, rather than vocal, technique when—in another trope familiar from Boyd's productions—the same two actors played both fathers and both sons, shifting to die then live again to deliver the

requisite lines. Here the terrible effects of war were made evident in an emotional *coup de théâtre* (a phrase the *OED* attributes to Horace Walpole, known for defending Shakespeare from Voltaire's attacks).

Those attacks, of course, were not solely trained on Shakespeare. Indeed, Voltaire shared the Bard's position on Joan of Arc: the former ridiculed her cult in *La Pucelle D'Orléans*, while Shakespeare offered an ambiguous but ultimately unflattering portrait in *1 Henry VI*. In Bagnall's *Harry the Sixth*, Joan was played by Beatriz Romilly, whose triptych of Supernatural roles also included the witchcraft-associated Queen Elizabeth and Duchess of Gloucester. As the Duchess, her voracious aspiration was tempered with frugality: she thought twice about the size of the "reward" offered Hume and took back one of the coins bestowed in anticipation of his services. Those services included the conjuring of a spirit in the form of her husband, plainly visible to watching audience and ambitious wife alike. The spirits belonging to the Maid of Orleans, by contrast, remained stubbornly invisible to all but her the one time she conjured them. Whether their absence resulted from economy or interpretation is difficult to discern, but the effect (or lack thereof) served to undercut her veracity well before her final prevarications. A down-to-earth tomboy, Romilly's Joan came equipped with a high-pitched Northern accent as well as a costume of boots and breeches that implied a certain comfort with combat (Fig. 3). Unfortunately, the struggles that transpired proved awkwardly executed and poorly conceived: Kate Waters' fight direction involved a great deal of improbable sword grabbing, particularly in Joan's final engagement with York. Only the forgiving conventions of theater allowed him to drag a captured Joan by a rope tied around her wrists; in reality, her hands would certainly have gone the way of Lavinia's.

Rope also featured prominently in the entrance and exit of Margaret, an Agent figure played with authority by Mary Doherty. In *Part 1*, she featured as an Agent in the sense of "working for," appearing as Vernon, Mortimer's "kind keeper," a Messenger, the Legate, and the Scout as well as in various other unnamed, interpolated, and often metatheatrical capacities. It was Doherty who sang the wordless funeral dirge for Henry V, armed both Talbot and Joan, propelled the slow motion arrow that felled Salisbury, and led a dead John Talbot to the stage so that he might assume the position of corpse for his father to mourn. It was difficult to discern whether Bagnall intended the audience to read Margaret into these *Part 1* roles: on the one hand, Doherty wore Margaret's red dress from the outset; on the other, it was difficult to see Margaret as a tender carer for the dying Mortimer, or plucking a white rose as Vernon. Only



Fig. 3. Beatriz Romilly as Joan of Arc in the Globe Theatre's 2013 production of *Henry the Sixth*, directed by Nick Bagnall. Photo courtesy of Gary Calton.

when yanked onstage by Suffolk as Margaret *in propria persona* did she become an Agent in the sense of “acting in” the world as a tough operator with a variety of weapons at her disposal. Her physicality was deployed against her enemies when, jaw firmly set, she crossed silently and deliberately to drop her fan at the Duchess of Gloucester’s feet in provocation or taunted York with a cruel impression of his deformed son. Words alone sometimes served her purpose, as when emphatic syllabification forced her husband to retreat to his throne in fear of her scorn for the “per-emptory” Duke of Gloucester, but wordless vocalizations also added power to her formidable agency in battle. Sporting a leather crown, red facepaint, and a sword as big as any man’s, she entered *Part 3* screaming in the heat of battle, roared proudly when accused of carrying a tiger’s heart in her woman’s hide, and finally bore the accusation out with a feral growl loosed whilst lunging at Edward in response to the brutal slaughter of her son. Her devolution from aristocratic gamespersonship to animalistic rage was reinforced by the thick ropes that barely restrained her at the play’s end.

Such treatment was to be expected given the way the Lancastrian camp dealt with Brendan O’Hea’s nakedly ambitious York. O’Hea took on the roles of *Faux* Kings in essaying both York and the French Lewis, a figure he played as an insulting cartoon with a silly falsetto and garish make up. Letting out a fey, interpolated “Yay!” and clapping his hands daintily after announcing “Our sister shall be Edward’s” (*3H6*, 3.3.134), he subsequently flounced across the stage to caress Warwick’s neck and ear while considering “Edward’s good suck-sess.” He then threw a literal hissy fit that ended in a camp faint when plans for Bona (played, for laughs, by a balding and un-wigged David Hartley) collapsed. While a certain amount of Francophobia is necessitated by the texts and Globe audiences have come to expect some good-natured French-baiting in their histories, there is more than an English Channel of difference between the enjoyable ludicrousness of the Dauphin and company in *Part 1* and the unnecessary and uncomfortable caricature of homosexuality offered here in *Part 3*. Less offensive, but no less disappointing, was O’Hea’s clean-shaven, ramrod-straight York. Though crisply spoken (his expanded –éd endings were particularly impressive), O’Hea’s prissy Duke failed to provoke any of the partisan disapproval, begrudging sympathy, or tragic grandeur that would merit his titular position in the renamed *True Tragedy*. O’Hea has done good work at the Globe before, notably as a similarly prim Fluellen in the 2012 *Henry V*, but here both character and actor were overshadowed by Yorkist family and Lancastrian foe in a world that they should have dominated.

The part might have been better served by an excellent Roger Evans, who took on the charismatic Troublemaker roles of Suffolk and Cade. Aggressiveness, rather than sensuality, accounted for the attraction between Suffolk and Doherty's fierce Margaret; her initial resistance to the burly man who forcibly kissed her and grabbed her roughly by the neck in front of her indifferent father turned to desperate need for him as he came to embody everything her wispy husband lacked. Suffolk's toughness was underscored in his execution: it took three hefty strokes of a long knife to remove the head, which dropped from scaffold to stage and remained there through the interval of *Part 2*. Re-entering as Cade after that interval, Evans took up his facsimile head to the audience's delight and elaborately mocked it before dropping it in a convenient pail and sitting on Henry's throne to sing a song about himself in which the audience enthusiastically joined. Of the company, Evans emerged as the most proficient in audience engagement. He earned lusty assent to the textually required order to "kill all the lawyers," but also inspired laughter through actorly gestures such his quick knighting of himself with a meat cleaver borrowed from Nigel Hastings's dim Dick the Butcher. The good cheer established upon his macabre entry extended to acts of violence associated with Cade: the rather brutal slitting of Stafford's throat and removal of Say's tongue were treated lightly, as was the moment Iden broke the rebel's neck.

The sole constant in Bagnall's versatile ensemble was Graham Butler as Henry VI. Butler had cut his teeth at the Globe in Dromgoole's 2012 *Henry V* and even bore a pleasingly plausible resemblance to Jamie Parker's King in that production. Clad alternately in blue and red robes, his near constant presence onstage acting, observing, or reading in some nook established him as the "point of view" character who earned much, if not all, of the audience's sympathy. Touches of charming humor characterized the boy-king of *Part 1*: an improvised "Ooo, crikey" acknowledged the trouble he had in buckling on his sword and, though the onstage audience failed to appreciate the rhyme in "When Gloucester says the word, King Henry goes, / For friendly counsel cuts off many foes" (*1H6*, 3.1.188–9), the larger Globe audience rewarded the young king with the laugh he had obviously been seeking. "Good cousins both, York and Somerset" begrudgingly obliged when Henry delicately patted the steps leading to the throne in indication that they should sit on either side of him to resolve their quarrel, but resistance had grown by the end of *Part 1* and he had to stomp his foot to make his lords kneel in consent to "This sudden execution of [his] will" (*1H6*, 5.7.99). That will was exercised in

his choice to wed Margaret: a choice he seemed later to regret when she chased him around the stage and her lover forced him at swordpoint to scale one of the ladders that bracketed the throne. At times silently resisting Margaret by refusing to touch her or look in her direction, he offered shouted lines and non-verbal screams in scenes surrounding the downfall of Gloucester that betrayed the torment of choosing between beloved parent-figure and constant peer-pressure. By the time he had climbed the mountain of two and a half plays to reach his molehill, Henry had earned great sympathy, and his wistful optimism as he dreamed of a shepherd's life proved truly affecting. Like Voltaire's *Candide*—a figure from another 1756 work that featured the phrase “theater of war”—Butler's Henry was an innocent lost on the field of battle, a shred of humanity in the worst of all possible worlds.



A Midsummer Night's Dream

Presented by **Ten Thousand Things Theater Company** at **Open Book** and other venues, Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 10–November 3, 2013. Directed by Michelle Hensley. Music by Peter Vitale. Costumes by Sonya Berlovitz. Sets by Stephen Mohring. Puppets by Irve Dell. Visual Art by Harriet Bart. Production managed by Nancy Waldoch. With Brittany Bradford (Hermia/Snug/Moth), Sun Mee Chomet (Hippolyta/Oberon), Kurt Kwan (Demetrius/Flute/Mustardseed), Elise Langer (Philostrate/Bottom), Gavin Lawrence (Theseus/Titania), Mo Perry (Helena/Snout/Cobweb), Anna Sundberg (Lysander/Quince/Peaseblossom), and Karen Wiese-Thompson (Egeus/Puck).

Othello

Presented by the **Guthrie Theater** on the **Wurtele Thrust Stage** of the **Guthrie Theater**, Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 8–April 20, 2014. Directed by Marion McClinton. Set by Marjorie Bradley Kellogg. Costumes by Esosa. Lighting by Michael Wangen. Sound by Scott W. Edwards. Dramaturgy by Carla Steen. Voice and Language Consulting by Evamarii Johnson. Movement by Marcela Lorca. Fight direction by Heidi Batz Rogers. Stage managed by Chris A. Code. With Raye Birk (Brabantio), David Anthony Brinkley (Duke), John Catron (Cassio), Sun Mee Chomet (Bianca), Bob Davis (First Senator/First Gentleman), Nathaniel Fuller (Lodovico), Hugh Kennedy (Messenger), Kurt Kwan (Clown), Peter Macon (Othello), Tracey Maloney (Desdemona), Kris L. Nelson (Roderigo), Peter Thomson (Gratiano/Second Gentleman), Regina Marie Williams (Emilia), and Stephen Yoakam (Iago).

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