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Players
52nd Season



SEASON SPONSOR

MUSE OF FIRE: SHAKESPEARE'S WARS OF THE ROSES PARTS 6-8 HENRY VI (1, 2 & 3)

Aug 30-Sep 22, Friday-Sunday at 7:30pm, Hazel Robinson Amphitheatre, 92 Gay St, Asheville, NC



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This project receives support from Buncombe County through ArtsAVL, and the North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Dept of Natural and Cultural Resources, with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

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THE MONTFORD PARK PLAYERS PRESENTS

Muse of Fire: Shakespeare's Wars of the Roses

Henry VI, Parts 1 & 2

Written By

William Shakespeare

Directed by

Glenna Grant &

Ariel Robinson

Adam Kampouris, Assistant Director

Nichole Sumpter, Stage Manager

2024 Season Sponsored by

The Leaven Law Firm



CAST

Paula O'Brien - Duke of York

Jon Robinson - Duke of Gloucester (later King Richard III)

Elizabeth DeVault - Margaret

Goober Berdine - Talbot, Dick the Butcher, Somerset

Emily Tucker - Suffolk, Lady Bona

Mars Mignon- King Henry VI

Jon Stockdale - Warwick

Dakota Mann - Bolingbroke, Jack Cade, Northumberland

Cody Fox - King Edward IV

Eric Vik - Duke of Gloucester

Lauren Powers - Duchess of Gloucester

Ronnie Z Nielson - Prince Edward, John Hume, Rivers, Fight Corps

Sam Cintron - John Talbot, Young Clifford, Fight Corps

Selah Atwood - Sir William Lucy, Rutland, Lawyer, Fight Corps

Stan Smith - Mortimer, Exeter

Lauren Otis - Joan la Pucelle, Lady Grey (later Queen Elizabeth)

Kevin Norris - Bishop of Winchester, Fight Corps

James Blaine McColl - Burgundy, Clifford Sr., Hastings, Fight Corps

Sarah Felmet - Fight Corps, King Louis of France, Salisbury

Tom Griffin - Reignier, Buckingham

Jered Shults - Michael, Oxford, Fight Corps

Josh Kerber - Charles le Dauphin, Clarence

PRODUCTION STAFF

Costume Designer: Kayren Reynolds McKnight

Dramaturgy: Skyler Goff

Script Editing: Glenna Grant, Ariel Robinson, Adam Kampouris,
and Kevin Norris

Fight Choreography: Deanna Braine Smith and Jon Robinson

Fight Assistants: Jered Jackson Shults, Carly Berdine

Puppetry: Kayren Reynolds McKnight, Skyler Goff, and Glenna
Grant

Season Artistic Director: Jason Williams

Season Costume Designer: Victoria Smith

Intimacy Choreographer: Laura Rikard

Season Set Designer: Gina Purri

Season Lighting Designer: Jason Williams

Season Props Master: Jenny Luttrell

TO OUR PATRONS

- Thank you for joining us this evening. We hope you enjoy our **once-in-a-generation** production of *Muse of Fire: Shakespeare's Wars of the Roses* as presented by The Montford Park Players, North Carolina's longest running Shakespeare Festival.
- There will be one twenty-minute intermission. Concessions will be available at the entrance to the amphitheatre. Many thanks to **The Matt & Molly Team** for sponsoring Shakespeare's Tavern, where you will find a delightful selection of wines and local beers on tap.
- We are pleased to accept all major credit/debit cards, cash, checks, Venmo and PayPal for your donations and concessions. One of our actors will be in the audience each night with a credit card reader for your convenience.
- Please turn the volume off on all cell phones and pagers to avoid distracting your fellow audience members.
- Flash photography is not permitted in the theatre.
- Canine companions will be given a treat at the concession stand.
- Unattended children will be given a double espresso, an energy drink and a free puppy .
- The Montford Park Players is going GREEN! Please help us conserve the environment by depositing your empty cans in the marked recycle bins.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions or comments by phone at (828) 254-5146, email at info@montfordparkplayers.org, or snail mail at Montford Park Players, PO Box 2663, Asheville NC 28802-2663. You can also follow us on Facebook (Montford Park Players) or on Twitter (@MontfordPlayers) or on Instagram (@montfordparkplayers).

WELCOME FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



On behalf of the board of directors and the members of The Montford Park Players, I want to personally welcome YOU to our **52nd season of free theatre**, sponsored by **The Leaven Law Firm!**

We're pleased to tell you that ALL our shows are free-of-charge – all season long! We at MPP envision a world in which everyone can experience exceptional live theatre, regardless of the ability to pay. Therefore, all of our shows are donation only. "Pay what we're worth." "Pay what you can." Some may even call it crazy. Call it what you will – and enjoy the show!

Here's our summer 2024 schedule:

- **Edward III:** May 10 – 26
- **Richard II:** May 31 – June 23
- **Henry IV:** June 28 – July 21
- **Henry V:** July 26 – Aug 25
- **Henry VI:** Aug. 30 – Sept. 22
- **Richard III:** Sept. 27 – Oct. 27
- **The Montford Moppets**, our youth theatre in residence, will be presenting two productions this summer:
The Winter's Tale July 5 – 7 and 12 – 14 at 5:00 pm, July 10 at 11:00 am
King Lear: August 2 – 4 and 9 – 11 at 5:00 pm, August 7 at 11:00 am

This will be a 25 week season with 75 scheduled performances, plus 14 performances by The Montford Moppets.

Making the most of your visit:

We want you to fully enjoy your experience with us. Feel free to bring a picnic and your favorite beverage, or purchase wine, sodas, local beers and snacks at our concession cart. Four-legged friends are always welcome! (There are treats for them at the concession stand, too!)

We are so grateful to our current donors, sponsors, and advertisers and YOU, our faithful audience, without whom we could not exist. Now sit back, relax, and be ready to laugh, cry, and be entertained as the curtain rises on another great production by the Montford Park Players.

John Russell
Executive Director



**MONTFORD PARK
PLAYERS**

MEET THE CAST & CREW



putting this together with an amazing cast!



Dakota Mann (Part 1: Bastard of Orleans, Bolingbroke/Part 2: Jack Cade, Northumberland) is no stranger to the Montford Park Players, coming back for his nineteenth production! Dakota is a local theatre artist with over ninety credits at theatres such as Haywood Regional Arts Theatre, Parkway Playhouse, Hendersonville Theatre, Anam Cara, and the Magnetic Theatre, as well as performing overseas in Scotland during the 2019 Edinburgh Festival Fringe. He received a Bachelor's in Drama from UNC-Asheville and currently freelances as the production manager for the Sublime Theater and Press. Past roles: Ken in *Red (HART)*, Happy Loman in *Death of a Salesman (HART)*, Kyle in *Legally Blonde (Hendersonville)*, Prince John in *Robin Hood (MPP)*, Nibs in *Peter Pan (MPP)*, the Douglas in *Henry IV, Pt. 1 (MPP)*, Chuck in *She Kills Monsters (UNCA)*, Christopher Wren in *The Mousetrap (Parkway)*, and Dobchinsky in *The Government Inspector (Anam Cara)*.



Carly "Goober" Berdine (Part 1: Talbot, Part 2: Dick the Butcher, Somerset) has been a part of community theater since 2022 and has loved every second of it. She is excited to continue this season with MPP in this amazing production of *Henry VI*. Recently, she has played Douglas in *Henry IV*, King Edward in *Edward III*, Annie Canon in *Silent Sky*, Tweedle Dum in *Alice in Murderland*, and a handful of others. She hopes you enjoy this production as much as she had fun



Paula O'Brien (Duke of York) is really into the whole Shakespeare thing. She recently appeared as Lady Capulet in Nemesis' production of *Romeo and Juliet* and was

in last year's production of *The Tempest* as Prospero. She will be in *Richard III* as the Duchess of York (just keeping it in the family). Grateful to this band of people, Melon Wedick for unwrapping the gift of the bard and the hubby, Andrew, for putting up with this hot mess.



Lauren Powers (Part 1: Duchess of Gloucester) is enjoying a second childhood in WNC! She most recently played Hostess Quickly, owner of the Boar's Head Inn, in Montford Park Players productions of *Henry IV (1 & 2)* and *Henry V*. In *Richard II*, she was the Duchess of Gloucester and a Very Royal Gardener. Lauren's other Montford appearances include Dr. Livesey in *Treasure Island* and Felton in *The Three Musketeers*. All this playing is especially fun when she performs with her husband, Eric Vik.



Samuel Cintron (Part 1: John Talbot, Part 2: Young Clifford) is a rising junior at the School of Inquiry and Life Sciences at Asheville. Sam has been very active in the theatre community in Asheville for years, appearing in multiple productions with local youth organizations including Asheville Community Theatre and the Montford Moppets, as well as with his school. His most recent role on the Montford stage was in the Moppets'

production of *The Winter's Tale* as Leontes. Sam has appeared in other past Moppets productions including *Tartuffe*, *Henry V*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Macbeth*. He has also had many leading roles in productions at Asheville High School, including Billy Flynn in *Chicago*, Hercule Poirot in *Murder on the Orient Express*, and Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. *Henry VI* marks Sam's debut with the Montford Park Players, and he couldn't have asked for a better introduction. He would like to thank his directors Ariel, Glenna, and Adam for giving him this opportunity, and the entirety of the cast and crew for bringing this show to life. Your talent and commitment are an inspiration to us all. Break a leg and may your head be gloriously severed.



Elizabeth DeVault (Queen Margaret) is an actor, singer, director, and voice artist in the Asheville area. She holds degrees in Vocal Performance (MM, U of SC 2013) and Theatre (MA, Regent University 2019). Recent performing credits include *Hamlet (Rosencrantz)* and *Wendy & Peter (Mrs. Darling/Panther Protea)* with Montford Park Players, and *Romeo & Juliet (Rosaline/Friar John)* with Nemesis Theatre. She has also performed with Ovation Theatre Arts Collective of Asheville and Magnetic Theatre. As a stage director, recent credits include *Little Women*, *OTMA*, *One Act Festival 2023 (The Magnetic Theatre)*, *Young Frankenstein (Hendersonville Theatre)*, and *Henry IV Pt 1 & 2* in this very Muse of Fire Montford season! She will also be directing in the 2024 Appalachian Playwriting Festival with Parkway Playhouse. Outside of the theatre world, Elizabeth is a voice artist and educator.

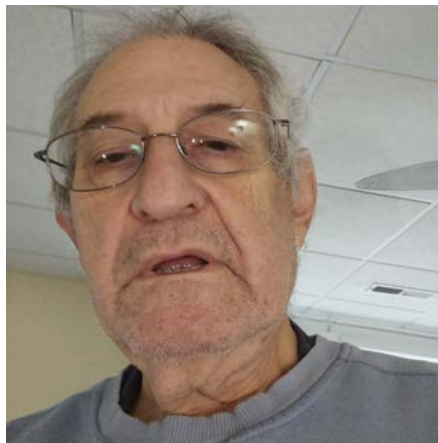
WAR OF THE ROSES FAMILY TREE



MEET THE CAST & CREW



Mars Mignon (King Henry VI) is delighted to be making his return to the Hazel Robinson Theatre after six years. His previous rendezvous with MPP started in 2017 in Peter Pan as the titular boy who never grew up, and in 2018 with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Puck) and *Robin Hood: The Legend of Sherwood* (Much). Since then, Mars earned his BFA in Acting with a minor in Musical Theatre from the University of North Carolina Greensboro. Some of his other credits include *Pippin* (Theo), *The SpongeBob Musical* (Patchy), *Polaroid Stories* (Skinhead-boy), and *Fiddler On The Roof* (Nachum Yussel).



Stan Smith (Part 1: Exeter, Mortimer, Spirit) is delighted to join the illustrious, innovative, playful, inclusive troupe that is the Montford Players. He hasn't been on a stage for 25 years, but Shakespeare is just too tempting to resist. He was a part of the Triangle theater community through the 90's. Shylock was his most beloved role at TIP in Raleigh. He's too theatrical for his own taste, but his Mom liked that about him and his long suffering wife has learned to tolerate his quirky adoration of the bard and applauds him politely in the service of their marriage vows.



Sarah Felmet (Part 1: Alencon, French General, Salisbury, Part 2: Salisbury, King Louis) has been in and around Montford for several years. Long ago she played Dorine in *Tartuffe*, as well as more recently, Lady Macbeth in *Living Dead in Denmark*, Claudius in *Hamlet*, and Stephano in last year's *Tempest*. She'd like you to know that this place is family, and lives are made better by Montford existing. Put a little more in the tip bucket and keep this place going strong!



Ronnie Z. Nielsen (Part 1: John Hume Part 2: Sir Humphry Stafford/Rivers/Prince Edward) is an actor, musician, and illustrator based right here in Asheville. They are thrilled to be returning Montford's stage with so many fun and talented people! Previous shows include *Julius Caesar* (Brutus) with Melon Wedick, *Wendy & Peter* (Wendy) with the Montford Park Players, and *Romeo and Juliet* (Ensemble/Balthasar) with Nemesis theatre company. They hope everyone enjoys the show, and reminds the audience to

keep a firm grasp on their heads— they sure are rolling this season!



Eric Vik (Gloucester) is stoked to be joining MPP for a third season. His MPP Shakespeare credits include Henry IV in *Henry IV parts 1 and 2*, Bolingbroke/Henry IV in *Richard II*, Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, Polonius in *Hamlet* and Leonato in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Eric trained in acting at Berg Studios in Los Angeles and Classical Acting at LAMDA in London. He is also happy to share the stage with his lovely wife Lauren.



James McColl (Part 1: Duke of Burgundy, Stanley Part 2: Clifford, Hastings) James is making his return to the stage after nearly a decade away. His previous roles include Colonel Pickering in *Pygmalion*, Brabantio/Lodovico in *Othello*, Jim in *The Glass Menagerie*, Mr Peachum in *Threepenny Opera*, and Don Jon in *Much Ado About Nothing*. When not at the theatre James co-owns Budgie's Bakeshop in Candler, runs rpg's at the library, and co parents a spirited two year old. He looks forward to joining more shows here at Montford. He is looking forward to doing more shows in the coming seasons.



Cody Fox (Part 2: Edward IV) is thrilled to be part of the Montford Park Players again this season. Having participated in *Wendy & Peter* and *Alice in Murderland* during the 2023 season, he had to come back for more. His involvement in theater started in high school and continued through college, where he wrote, directed, and acted finding his love for the stage. Continuing the Wars of the Roses narrative from Henry IV as Poins and Lancaster, Henry V as Clarence and Williams, he's ready to share in the adventures of *Henry VI!*



Kevin Norris (Cardinal Winchester,) remains thrilled at "Muse of Fire 2024!" You may have seen him previously as King Alonso in *The Tempest*, Rochefort in *Three Musketeers*, or King Duncan, the Porter, Helicanus in our repertory production of *Macbeth / Pericles*. His favorite roles were the Earl of Northumberland in *Richard II* and *Henry IV* parts one and two, and Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Certainly, the cardinal will now join those roles as a favorite. His lovely and patient wife of thirty-nine years, Kathy, and all of YOU, make this possible through your support of live theatre! Thank you!

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Photo by Travis Bordley

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Nemesis Theatre Company, NC Stage, Flat Rock Playhouse, the Sublime Theater, the Magnetic Theatre, Different Strokes!, Dark Horse Theatre, and the Montford Park Players. Recent credits include *Romeo and Juliet* (Romeo), *A God in the Waters* (Anthony), *Antigone* (Hamon, Guard), *Cymbeline* (Cloten, Cadwal), *The Frankenstein Rubrics* (Victor Frankenstein), and *Midsummer for Haters* (Oberon, Demetrius). He is proud to be a core ensemble member with Nemesis Theatre Company.

Emily Tucker (Suffolk Part 2: Lady Bona) has been an active member of the theatre community in Asheville for over 10 years. Working in many different facets of shows, both on and backstage. She is a lifelong thespian and theatre nerd. You might have seen her as Titania in *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Montford Park Players), Elizabeth Darcy in *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley* (Multiverse Theatre Collective), *Algorithm & Blues* (The Magnetic Theatre), Celia in *As You Like It* (Montford Park Players), Margaret in *Much Ado About Nothing* (Montford Park Players), Evelyn in *Beautiful Cages* (The Magnetic Theatre), Ms. Treadboards/Lucy in *Caroling By Gaslight* (The Magnetic Theatre) and the Countess of Salisbury in *Edward III* (Montford Park Players).



Jered Jackson Shults (Part 1: Salisbury, Jailor, Part 2: Michael, Oxford) Jered has been acting in the WNC area for 12 years and has worked at Parkway Playhouse, The Montford Park Players, and the Magnetic Theatre. Recent credits include: *Robin Hood: The Legend of Sherwood*, Norman in *Star Spangled Girl*, and Harold in *Black Comedy*. Jered earned a BA in Theatre from Catawba College. He is also a fight choreographer and stage combatant. Jered would like to thank his family, friends, cast, director, crew, and audience. "Thank you for your support, and enjoy the show!!!"



Jon Stockdale (Warwick) is very happy to be returning to Montford after a long absence. He has performed locally with



Joshua Kerber (Part 1: Charles the Dauphin, Part 2: Vaux, Clarence) Joshua is an Asheville local actor who you may have seen earlier this season as Mowbray, Willoughby, and Fitzwater in *Richard II* and Cambridge, Captain Jamy, and York in *Henry V*. He would like to thank you for coming out to support Montford Park Players. He appreciates you and hopes you enjoy our fantastic production.



Lauren Otis (Part 1: Joan la Pucelle, Party 2: Lady Elizabeth Grey/Tutor) is excited to be back on the Montford stage for this historic season! Lauren holds a BFA in Acting from Arcadia University and has been very active in the WNC theatre arts community. Past favorite credits include Thalia in *The Gods of Comedy* (Hart Theatre), Lydia Wickham in *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley* and *The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley* (Multiverse Theatre Collective), Miranda in *The Tempest* (MPP), Nova in *Some Notes on Dating During Outbreak*

(The Sublime Theater), Asha in *Blood at the Root* (DSPAC), and Hermia/Titania in *Midsummer for Haters* (Nemesis). Next up, Lauren will be continuing her role as Lady Elizabeth Grey as Queen Elizabeth in *Richard III*! Thank you for supporting artists; hope you enjoy the show!



Jon Robinson (fight choreographer; Part 1: Basset, Part 2: Richard III) is an Asheville native actor and artist most recently seen as the Mad Hatter in MPP's *Alice in Murderland*. Favorite roles include the titular role of *Hamlet*, Oberon (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Touchstone (*As You Like It*), Athos (*The Three Musketeers*), Hamlet the Zombie Lord (*Living Dead in Denmark*) Long John Silver (*Treasure Island*) and Abe (*Abe Lincoln and Uncle Tom in the White House* at Different Strokes). Away from the stage, Jon spends his time drawing & painting show-inspired pieces. He shares his love for art with his 10 year old daughter & his fondness for swordplay with his 6 year old son. Special thanks to Gabby, Brooks, Jered, and Deanna for making these fights look good!



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MEET THE CAST & CREW



Glenna Grant (director) is an actor, director, and teacher currently based in her hometown of Asheville, NC. She is incredibly excited to be back directing at MPP, after directing *Hamlet* in 2022. As a double treat, she gets to create all this wonderful mayhem at the side of her ride-or-die darling, Ariel Robinson!

Glenna is a graduate of the NC School of the Arts, and holds a BFA in Acting from the Conservatory at Purchase College. In over a decade as an NYC based actor, she performed with such companies as The Public, LABYrith Theatre, The Riot Group, and as a long term member of "The Bats" at the Flea Theater. In Asheville she has been most recently seen at NC Stage Company in *Jeeves Takes A Bow*, *The Revolutionists*, *Antigone*, and *As You Like It*, as well as several iterations of Immediate Theatre Projects beloved WVU Radio Theatre series. Offstage, Glenna can be seen on OWN's *Queen Sugar* and Fox's *The Following*, among others. Her voiceover work can be heard in *GTA IV*, *Red Dead Redemption*, Amazon digital ads, and more. As a teaching artist, Glenna taught theatre and playwrighting in rural Ecuador & Tanzania with Dramatic Adventure Theatre Co. This sparked her love of teaching actors, and she has continued to do so throughout WNC and Virginia. A lifelong lover of Shakespeare, Glenna maintains a focus

on work that bridges the classical and the modern. She is deeply grateful to all of you for joining us on this adventure!



Ariel Robinson (Director) Ariel is tickled to have her first directing adventure! Ariel was most recently seen in *Legally Blonde* at HVL Theatre, and last season she was in *The Tempest* here at MPP. Some of her favorite MPP roles are Don Pedro in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Audrey in *As You Like It* and Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*. Ariel received her degree in Drama from UNC-Asheville. She has a Master's in English Literature from Western Carolina University and is pursuing her doctorate in English Pedagogy from Murray State University. She spends most of her time teaching Shakespeare to budding young sprites as an English teacher and has two thespian children who love to play on the stage. Some of her previous performances include *Pericles*, *Fight Girl Battle World*, *A Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour's Lost* (with Glenna!), *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Crucible*, *Playboy of the Western World*, *Cabaret*, and *Trojan Women*. Thank you for coming to share in our momentous undertaking.



Adam Kampouris (Asst. Director - Henry VI) is a director/fight choreographer, actor, and musician living in Barnardsville, NC. Raised largely in Haywood County, Adam received a B.F.A in Acting from UNC Greensboro before pursuing a career in NYC, where he was based until 2020. Most recently, Adam has directed Lauren Gunderson's *The Book of Will* in collaboration with longtime friend, mentor, and former executive director at HART, Steve Lloyd (HART). Local acting credits: *Hamlet*, *Equus*, *All My Sons* (HART); *Edward the King*, *Gilgamesh* (David Hopes). NYC: *Oresteia* (Classic Stage Co./Ashes Co.), *Twelfth Night: A Folk Musical* (Essential Theatre Group/ NYC Fringe '14); *Cymbeline* (Wyrd Theatre Company), *Cherry Orchard* (Columbia Stages). Regional: *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Twelfth Night* (Philly Shakes); *The Ladies Man* (Creede Rep.); *The Illusion*, *X-mas Carol* (Triad Stage); *Romeo & Juliet* (NC Shakespeare Festival). Outside of theatre Adam you can find him outside in the mountains working as a backpacking & hiking guide with Blue Ridge Hiking Co. He looks forward to sharing his original song, *Tenderfoot*, an Appalachian fanboy's interpretation of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* this fall. Follow @brdrwlkr on Instagram for occasional updates and nature posts



Nichole Sumpter (Stage Manager) is excited to work with this fantastic cast and crew. She has worked in theatre as a stage manager, board operator, sound designer, and made her recent directorial debut this year with *Constellations*. Thank you to Adam, Ariel, Glenna for letting her be a part of this show, and to the cast for always being such a fun group to be with. Enjoy the show!



Jenny Luttrell (Property Mistress) - After several seasons of enthusiastically playing the role of audience member and Montford patron, Jenny is thrilled to step into the role of Props Mistress for this historic season with the Montford Park Players! With an eye towards historical accuracy, she created a Regency kitchen for *The Wickhams* (Multiverse Theatre Collective), as well as experience as Visual Designer for several independent boutiques and Design Director for fundraising galas benefitting a non-profit foundation. She hopes you enjoy the show!

MEET THE CAST & CREW

assisted in all the preparations. Now please sit back and enjoy the play!



Gina Purri (Set Designer/Builder) - Gina is so pleased to be joining the Montford family this season to make a cool castle for everyone to play in. You can find her acting, singing, trapeze-ing while singing, composing, writing, painting, building, and/or stage managing at various Asheville venues. She is deeply grateful to Jason and John for offering her this wonderful creative opportunity.



Montford Park Players

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Victoria Smith (Season Costume Supervisor). Victoria has worked with Montford Park Players for over two decades. Many of her favorites have been here in the Amphitheatre: *Twelfth Night*, *Tempest*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, and *Coriolanus* to name a few. She is also quick to tell you that she is quite thankful and proud of her family and their support and, when requested, assistance. It is wonderful to watch Montford Park Players grow over the years and this season is no exception! Thanks to all those who have



SYNOPSIS

PART ONE

Act I

In the prologue, Mortimer reveals his family's suffering under the Lancastrians to his nephew, Richard Plantagenet, and charges him with restoring their honor. In Scene I, the English nobility react to King Henry V's death and troubling news from France. Scene II shows Joan la Pucelle persuading Charles and his allies to continue fighting the English. Scene III features a heated rivalry between Gloucester and Bishop Winchester. Scene IV sees English forces, led by Talbot, defeated by Joan and the French, with Talbot retreating in frustration.

Act II

Joan of Arc celebrates a victory at Orleans and is honored by Charles, while Talbot plans a new assault on the city but faces strong French resistance. Richard Plantagenet and Suffolk clash over power claims in London's Temple Garden, using a rose-plucking contest to symbolize their dispute, which escalates into threats and personal attacks. Warwick predicts the conflict will lead to significant bloodshed.

Act III

In Parliament, Gloucester and Bishop Winchester's conflict turns violent, disrupting London and alarming King Henry VI. The King calls for a truce, and Gloucester supports Richard Plantagenet as Duke of York. Joan, disguised, persuades the Duke of Burgundy to ally with the French, altering the power balance despite an English victory led by Talbot.

Act IV

King Henry VI deals with Burgundy's betrayal and appoints York as regent in France. Talbot demands Bordeaux's surrender but faces a standoff. York and Lucy discuss rescuing Talbot, who fights alongside his son but mourns his death. The French, led by Charles and Joan, prepare to advance to Paris after a significant victory.

Act V

King Henry VI and his nobles discuss peace proposals to end the conflict with France, including a marriage alliance with Armagnac's daughter. Cardinal Winchester aims to assert authority over Gloucester. In France, Charles and his allies prepare for battle, while Suffolk captures Margaret, planning to marry her to Henry. Joan, condemned to death, curses her captors before being executed. Suffolk manipulates the political landscape to his advantage.

Act VI

Following Henry VI's marriage to Margaret, the political situation in England becomes turbulent. Gloucester and other nobles are displeased with the peace treaty, and Gloucester

faces personal and political challenges. Hume and their allies conduct rituals to influence politics, which York and Buckingham uncover. The instability sets the stage for future conflict.

Act VII

Gloucester faces accusations against his wife, Eleanor Cobham, who is charged with witchcraft and treason. Gloucester resigns his position and distances himself from her. York, Salisbury, and Warwick plot to support York's claim to the throne, while Eleanor is sentenced to exile. Gloucester's wife endures public humiliation and predicts further betrayal.

Act VIII

King Henry VI and his council, including Queen Margaret, Suffolk, and York, deal with Gloucester's absence. Margaret criticizes Gloucester, and Suffolk and York accuse him of treason. Gloucester is arrested despite his protests. York is appointed to handle an Irish rebellion and vows to use it to further his ambitions, planning to stir unrest in England through a rebel named John Cade.

PART TWO

Act I: York anticipates conflict and allies with rebel John Cade, who incites chaos with radical demands. Cade's uprising gains traction, leading to battles against the king's forces and further unrest in London. Meanwhile, York prepares to challenge both the rebels and the king.

Act II: The Duke of York advances on London with a claim to the throne, challenging King Henry VI. York's forces defeat the Lancastrians, including key figures like Clifford, setting the stage for York to press his claim further.

Act III: York occupies Parliament, demanding his claim to the throne be recognized. A compromise is reached where York will succeed Henry VI, but conflict continues as Queen Margaret and the Lancastrians respond aggressively. York's eventual defeat and death escalate the power struggle.

Act IV: Following York's death, Edward IV seeks revenge, and conflicts with Henry VI and his supporters persist. Edward ultimately triumphs and prepares to ascend the throne. Meanwhile, alliances shift, with Margaret seeking French support and Warwick proposing a strategic marriage alliance.

Act V: Edward IV consolidates his power and seeks vengeance for his father's death. As Henry VI flees, Edward plans a marriage to Lady Grey despite opposition. Richard visits Henry VI to seek power. In France, Margaret's attempts to secure support and Warwick's marriage negotiations reflect the ongoing power struggles and shifting alliances.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE:

Our production of Shakespeare's Henry VI trilogy is a bold reimagining that dives headfirst into the raw, chaotic energy of political ambition and civil unrest. We've taken this epic story of England's most tumultuous period and infused it with a modern, punk rock aesthetic to reflect the urgency and relevance of these timeless themes. "Henry VI" is not just a historical narrative; it's a visceral exploration of the monstrous nature of power and the brutal consequences of unchecked ambition. In bringing this trilogy to life, we've faced the immense challenge of condensing Shakespeare's 8,759 lines across three plays into two action-packed performances, each running around 2.5 hours. This meant cutting and reshaping the material and reimagining how to convey the story's grand scale and intense emotion. We've leaned into the over-the-top nature of the original text, embracing its cinematic quality by creating a visually dynamic reenactment of brutality.

Our vision for the show is rooted in the idea that history is theater, and theater can be prophecy. The set design, with its crumbling structures and skewed angles, reflects the distorted and unstable political landscape, mirroring the disintegration of the English empire and the moral decay of its leaders. This crumbling world is underscored by a soundtrack of anarchic British punk music, featuring bands like The Clash and The Sex Pistols to harness the play's rebellious, chaotic spirit.

We've also incorporated massive "death puppets" operated by multiple actors, broadcast internal monologues, and allowed the cast to graffiti the set, all to enhance the sense of a world unraveling under the weight of its corruption. The grotesque, exaggerated elements of the production underscore the dehumanizing effects of war and ambition, making the play's themes starkly relevant to contemporary audiences.

Our goal is to create a theatrical experience that is immersive and visceral, one that entertains while provoking deep reflection on the dangers of political polarization and the fragility of power. We want the audience to leave with a profound understanding of how the relentless pursuit of power can lead to societal collapse and to see the clear parallels between Shakespeare's world and our own. To create this piece was no small feat, but we hope that the themes of dissension resonate with the audience and reflect the monster that is always around us.

Special Thanks to Jered Shults for stepping in to help us with all the fight choreography, Donna Robinson for her support, Daniel (for ongoing love & support, and for keeping the apartment from decay), and Lily and Lucas Robinson for being rehearsal buddies for dad and mom.

Dedicated to Lindsey Grant and Nancy Sherrill Wrangham

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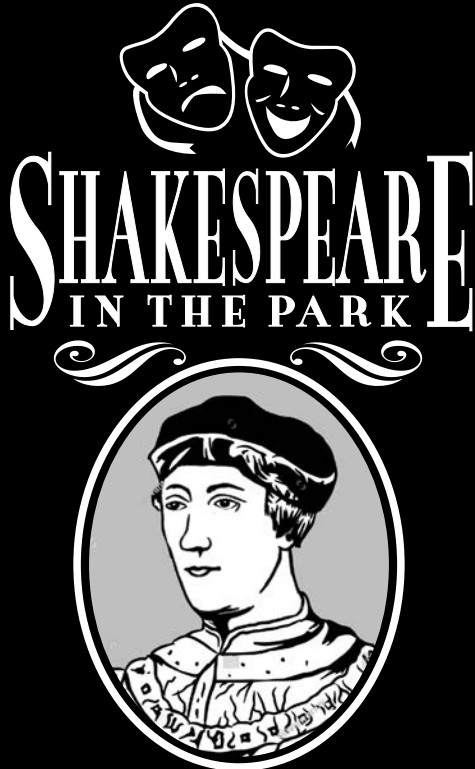
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