

THE KINGS

Shakespeare's History Cycle at Bard on the Beach 2009 through 2011

Over the next three seasons, Bard on the Beach will present the great sweep of Shakespeare's history cycle in the Douglas Campbell studio theatre. With compelling characters, political intrigue, warring factions, epic battles plus memorable comedy and brilliant wit, Shakespeare weaves a gripping story that covers more than eighty years of history and follows the crown as it passes through no less than seven different kings.

2009 SEASON

RICHARD II

Richard II is an unpopular king, resented for his perceived weakness, vanity and tendency to give power to undeserving favourites. He makes a grave political error when he banishes his wealthy, popular cousin, Henry Bolingbroke, then confiscates his inheritance. When Bolingbroke returns to England to claim his estate, Richard yields the crown to him. Richard is later put into prison, where he is murdered. Bolingbroke, now King Henry IV, denies responsibility for the murder but plans a pilgrimage to the Holy Land to make amends.

2010 SEASON

FALSTAFF (a condensation of *Henry IV, Parts I & II*)

King Henry IV is challenged by both public insurrection in the country and private rebellion at home in this next chapter of the history. Armed rebellions challenge Henry's claim to the throne while Prince Hal, Henry's eldest son, spends his time drinking, frequenting brothels and committing petty crimes in the company of the fat knight, Sir John Falstaff. The young prince must choose between his two father figures and decide the way he will live his life.

HENRY V

When Prince Hal becomes King Henry V, he follows his father's advice to discourage civil strife by pursuing 'foreign quarrels'. After the French Dauphin mocks Henry for his wilder days, the new king decides to claim the French throne and launches an invasion. The story unfolds with epic poetry, fantastic action and delightful comedy. In the midst of stirring speeches and heroic battles, we also get glimpses of the weight of majesty and the human cost of war.

2011 SEASON

THE WARS OF THE ROSES (a condensation of *Henry VI, Parts I, II & III*)

When the young hero Henry V dies unexpectedly, his infant son becomes King Henry VI. Bitter rivalries develop among the nobles surrounding the young king that develop into full-blown civil war, as Richard, Duke of York makes his claim for the throne. The story presents a thrill-ride of power politics, family strife, shifting allegiances and fighting to win, all with colourful characters and powerful poetry.

RICHARD III

In the aftermath of the war between the houses of York and Lancaster, the Duke of York's eldest son is crowned King Edward IV. However, peace remains elusive for England. Shakespeare's story concerns Edward's youngest brother, Richard, who begins a relentless campaign of deception and murder to clear his path to the crown. Richard III's triumph, however, is short-lived, as he is defeated and killed on the battlefield by Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond. The new king, Henry VII, begins the dynasty that brought us Elizabeth I.