Richard III is early Shakespeare. It has abundant energy but lacks the maturity of feeling and thought that is characteristic of Shakespeare in his later years.

I think it is one of the great theatrical pieces of all time. At the very outset of the play Richard tells us that since he temperamentally and physically cannot play the lover and the courtier in the newly peaceful and lustful court of his brother Edward, he has decided to play the villain and murder his way to the crown. The rest of the play is a series of elaborately staged climactic scenes in which a gay, monstrously wicked Richard moves nimbly through a welter of wailing ladies and intriguing barons until that critical moment when his cool deserts him and his ambition drowns the world and himself in a sea of blood.

Historians now incline to the view that King Richard was not the bloodthirsty monster whom Shakespeare portrayed. I don't think Shakespeare was necessarily concerned with historical or psychological accuracy. I do think he meant the play to be the concluding episode in a carefully planned and comprehensive view of the War of the Roses which he began in Henry VI. In addition, I think it's fairly sure Shakespeare was writing a paean to Tudor reign and a warning to Elizabethan England not to return to civil war when their good Queen Bess died.

In the creative process, however, history and propaganda gave way to pure theatre. In addition to whatever else Shakespeare intended the play to be I am certain he aimed at creating a rip-roaring series of events about a highly-coloured central figure intended not so much to be life-sized or even life-like, but rather to be a vehicle for a virtuoso performance.

Shakespeare's statement of history is poetic and theatrical rather than literal; violent and exaggerated rather than balanced.

Why? Perhaps, as various writers have suggested, Shakespeare cast this play into so violently theatrical a form because he intended to symbolize the dying convulsions of the Houses of York and Lancaster? or perhaps he saw history as a succession of kings climbing and pushing one another off the staircase of power? or a wave of hot blood rising in the head? or a natural order violated so that evil spawns evil, injury calls for revenge, every crime calls forth another? or the irresistible beat of the human heart which reason cannot accelerate or hold back but which a dead piece of sharp iron interrupts once and for all?
Setting Designed by RICHARD MAHood  
Music composed and Supervised by NICK STRIMPLE  

CAST  
In Order of Appearance  

Richard, Duke of Gloucester, brother to King Edward and later King Richard III  
George, Duke of Clarence, brother to King Edward and to Richard  
Lord Hastings, Lord Chamberlain to Edward IV  
Archbishop of York  
Tressel  
Berkley  
Lady Anne, widow to Edward, Prince of Wales, Son of Henry VI  
and later married to Richard III  
Elizabeth, Queen to Edward IV  
Anthony Woodville, Lord River, brother to Queen Elizabeth  
Lord Grey, Elizabeth’s son by her first marriage  
Marquess of Dorset, Elizabeth’s son by her first marriage  
Lord Stanley, Earl of Derby  
Duke of Buckingham  
Ladies-in-waiting to Queen Elizabeth  
Margaret, widow to Henry VI  

First Murder  
Second Murder  
Sir Robert Brakenbury, Lieutenant to the Tower  
King Edward the Fourth  
Sir William Catesby  
Sir Richard Ratcliff  
Duchess of York, Mother to Edward, Clarence, Richard  

Mark Murphy  
Richard Sims  
John Seeley  
J. E. Masters  
Robert Sloan  
Ronnie Littlejohn  
*Martha Acker  
†Mary Ann Long  
Linda Rodolph  
Tony Greaves  
Paul Haines  
Jerry Grabey  
Steve Powell  
Everett Robertson  
Linda Sourcey  
Christy Marsh  
*Dana Fletcher  
†Betty Martin  
Mark Murphy  
Richard Sims  
John Seeley  
J. E. Masters  
Robert Sloan  
Ronnie Littlejohn  
*Martha Acker  
†Mary Ann Long  
Linda Rodolph  
Tony Greaves  
Paul Haines  
Jerry Grabey  
Steve Powell  
Everett Robertson  
Linda Sourcey  
Christy Marsh  
*Dana Fletcher  
†Betty Martin  

First Citizen  
Second Citizen  
Third Citizen  
Lord Mayor of London  
Nurse  
Derby’s Messenger  
Bishop of Ely  
Duke of Norfolk  
Sir James Tyrrel  
Messenger #1  
Messenger #2  
Messenger #3  
Messenger #4  

Henry, Earl of Richmond, afterwards King Henry VII  
Earl of Oxford  
Sir James Blunt  
Sir Walter Herbert  

Dave Ford  
Tony Greaves  
Bob Guthrie  
Brad Jones  
Melody Lee  
Robert Littlejohn  
J. E. Masters  
Jerry McLaughlin  
David Metcalf  
Mike Prin  
Tommy Riggins  
Nick Roberts  

*Martha Acker (March 19, 22), *Gallya Brown (March 19, 22), *Dana Fletcher (March 18, 20, 21), †Mary Ann Long (March 18, 20, 21), †Betty Martin (March 19, 22), *Mary Ellen Mathews (March 18, 20, 21).  

Scene  
The Action of the play takes place in and around the tower of London  
*Martha Acker (March 19, 22), *Gallya Brown (March 19, 22), *Dana Fletcher (March 18, 20, 21), †Mary Ann Long (March 18, 20, 21), †Betty Martin (March 19, 22), *Mary Ellen Mathews (March 18, 20, 21).  

There will be two ten minute intermissions  

Costumes Designed by JAMES W. SWAIN  
Lighting Designed by BOB GUTHRIE  

Jerry Senter  
Lyle Anderson  
Cary Gilliam  
Stewart Kelly  
Evan Klaras  
Ronald Stroud  
Joe Conley  
Brenda Ross  
Rober Murchison  
Herd Holliday  
David Metcalf  
Jerry McLaughlin  
Paul Haines  
Jerry McLaughlin  
Tony Greaves  
Tommy Jacobs  
Bob Wayne Ousley  
Robert Littlejohn  
Tim Brazanman  
Greg Schroeder  

Everett Robertson  
Byron Sands  
John Seeley  
David Shellenberger  
Richard Sims  
Paul Shoop  
Robert Sloan  
Glenda Stanton  
Ronald Stroud  

Background to the Play:

King Richard II, a weak tyrant, is deposed by Henry Bolingbroke who becomes King Henry IV. His reign is beset from within and without by minor squabbles and armed rebellion and he dies regretting his usurpation of the throne. His son, King Henry V, a strong ruler, invades France and diverts the energies of the warlike nobles to external conquest. At his death, his son, King Henry VI, weak and ineffectual, is unable to unify the nobles. To make matters worse he marries Margaret of Anjou, a French princess with political ambitions of her own. Increasingly she interferes in the government and provokes various nobles to conspire against her and the King. Gradually England is polarized into two political factions. King Henry VI, leader of the Lancaster faction, is unable to reconcile the parties. Finally, the Duke of York, great nephew of Richard II, rallies an army, captures King Henry and forces him to declare that when he dies the reign will pass to York's eldest son, Edward, by-passing King Henry's and Queen Margaret's son. When Margaret refuses to accept this arrangement, open warfare breaks out between the two factions.

The Duke's York and his four sons, Rutland, Clarence, Richard, and Edward, contend with the Lancaster family for the throne of England. Small and large wars see-saw back and forth between these two families for thirty years. This war is called the War of the Roses because the emblem of the House of York was a white rose and the emblem of the House of Lancaster was a red rose.

At the battle of Towton, the Yorkist Edward becomes King Edward the IV after defeating the Lancastrian forces. He sends the defeated Lancastrian, King Henry the VI, into exile in Scotland and his Queen Margaret and her son, Prince Edward, into exile in France.

The new King Edward then proceeds to marry Lady Grey, a widow and a commoner. Edward's brothers, Clarence and Richard, are against the match. Clarence deserts his brother and goes to fight for the House of Lancaster. Richard sees in Edward's marriage and Clarence's desertion a chance to eventually seize the crown for himself and stays loyal to King Edward who now must fight a new rebellion led by the deposed King Henry VI and Queen Margaret. At a decisive point in the Battle of Tetbury, Clarence is stripped with a guilty conscience and withdraws his vital forces returning them to his brother Edward's side thus enabling the three brothers to win the battle, to stab the young Prince Edward in front of the eyes of Queen Margaret, and assassinate her husband, King Henry VI, in his castle.

Edward resumes his reign and during the next seventeen years tries to affect a coalition of his wife's relatives: Lord Rivers, Lord Grey, Lord Dorset; his brothers: Richard and Clarence; his nobles: Lord Hastings, The Duke of Buckingham and Lord Stanley, Earl of Derby, who have long mistrusted and hated each other. It is this mistrust that enables Richard to turn brother against brother, noble against noble, friend against friend. The deposed Queen Margaret attempts to warn them of Richard's schemes. They scorn her, and she prophesies the death of each of them at Richard's hands. One by one her prophecies come true.

England has through the reign of six kings failed to achieve national unity and stability. The great conflict between the two families begun with the deposition of Richard II has left behind more than a tradition of interminable war. It has unleashed chaos: anarchy of power in which the strong devour the weak; in which duty is subservient to expediency; in which no man hesitates to kill an enemy or a friend; in which politics serve self instead of nation; in which trivial wars greatly more significant than riots alternate with struggles that involve the lives of thousands.

When the war is finally resolved in the defeat of Richard III at Bosworth Field, Henry, Earl of Richmond, nephew to King Henry VI, marries Elizabeth's daughter, and they unite the white rose and the red rose and establish the Tudor dynasty. Only then does England achieve a stability and a central authority that allows it to turn its energies towards building a nation.

Crew - Richard III

- Production Manager: Ed Baker
- Stage Manager: Paul Haines
- Crew: Joe Conley, Marilee Hebert, Jerry Senter, Karen Smith, Glenda Stanton
- Lighting Designer: Bob Guthrie
- Crew: Kathryn Baker, Mike Duncan, Everett Robertson, Brenda Ross
- Costume Mistress: Sandy Speagle
- Crew: Donna Adams, Renee Anderson, Kathie Holt, Nancy Holt, Mary Ann Long, Jerry McLaughlin, Betty Martin, Bob Wayne Owler, Steve Powell, Sharon White
- Prop Mistress: Sandra Prescott
- Crew: Joel Adams, Peggy Davis, Jerry Grabey, Melody Lee, Kathy Posey, Nick Roberts, Linda Rodolph, Richard Sims
- Sound Mistress: Susan Pierce
- Make-up Master: Cary Gilliam
- Crew: Margaret Hawthorne, Christy Marsh
- House and Publicity Mistress: Gailyn Brown
- Crew: Martha Acker, Dana Fletcher, Mary Ellen Mathews

Instrumentalists:
- Gary Adams, Mary Alexander, Jane Allen, Donald Balmos, Dr. William Casey, Phil Driessell, Claude Harding, John Head, Dennis Hopkins, Michael Lamkin, Paul Lamkin, Adron Ming, John Nichols, Robert Reid, Dorothy Reimer, Jerry Robertson, Paul Rogers, Sue Schmidt, Sandy Simons, Steve Stucky, Betty Walls, Barney Warner, Gene Wayman, John Weems, Melissa Whitehead, Ralph Whiteside, Rusty Widener.

Reperatory Dates

THE WOULD-BE GENTLEMAN
- April 11, 13, 20, 25
- CAMINO REAL
- April 12, 18, 20, 27
- RICHARD III
- April 213, 19, 25, 27

Evening performances will begin at 8:00 p.m. in Weston Theatre. Matinees will begin at 1:30 p.m. in Weston Theatre.