

# William Shakespeare's

## *HENRY V*

The Shire Hall 29 May-1 June 7:30pm

Programme 2024



Arts and  
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Research Council



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# INTRODUCTION TO *HENRY V*

## A Plot Summary

Following his riotous past, spent in the Boar's Head tavern, the reformed King Henry (like his ancestor Edward III) seeks to claim the French throne, and ratifies his right by consulting the churchmen Canterbury and Ely. The Dauphin's mocking words about Henry's youth solidifies Henry's decision to invade France. Henry's former friends from the tavern – Pistol, Nym and Bardolph – hear of Sir John Falstaff's death and decide to join Henry's army. At Southampton, the King arrests three traitors and has them executed.

The French King rejects Henry's claim to the throne, delivered by Exeter, so Henry's army, led by English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish captains, attack the French town of Harfleur, which surrenders. The Boy who serves Pistol, Nym and Bardolph, gives a brutally truthful account of his companions' inglorious conduct in France. The weakened English soldiers begin to retreat, but are challenged by the French to fight. Henry refuses to ransom himself. His army prepare to fight at Agincourt, even though they are vastly outnumbered.

The night before the Battle of Agincourt, Henry, in disguise, discovers what his common soldiers truly think about the invasion, forcing him to reflect on his responsibility and leadership. In the French camp, by contrast, extreme confidence makes the nobles boast. Henry rouses his troops before the battle, putting their fate into God's hands. Remarkably, the English win with minimal losses, while the French losses are huge. The victorious Henry visits the French court to make peace and claim the crown. He woos the French Princess Katherine to be his queen, thus establishing English control of the two countries.

# CAST LIST



## ROLE: HENRY V

Maggie Wignall is an actor from Bolton-le-Sands. She thoroughly enjoys performing early modern texts, and has previously played Musella in Lady Mary Wroth's *Love's Victory*. Maggie performs and directs with The Smashed Project GB - a global alcohol awareness campaign which is on track to reach 10 million young people by 2030 - and has worked on different projects like a sensory puppet show for children in hospices and SEN schools. Maggie is thrilled to be playing the role of Henry V in her first professional Shakespeare role. Maggie trained at ALRA North and is represented by LJP Management.



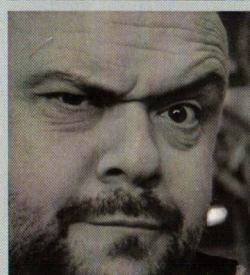
## ROLES: WESTMORLAND AND FLUELLEN

Anthony is a professional actor who graduated from Birmingham Conservatoire last year after completing his BA in Acting. Whilst there, he performed in productions such as Terrence Rattigan's *Flare Path* as Teddy Graham and Berkoff's adaptation of Kafka's *The Trial*. He has since moved back to the north after performing in *Physical Education*, a new play by Welsh playwright Jonathan Houlston that examines the environment of teenage boys. Anthony is looking forward to performing in the beautiful Shire Hall, where his mum once took him to see *Richard III* (although he doesn't remember).



## ROLES: CHORUS, BEDFORD AND GOWER

David made his professional acting debut in 1986 and has toured extensively in Britain and Ireland with, among others, Hull Truck, Major Road and Northern Broadsides. Lancaster audiences may recognise him from his work with Demi-Paradise and Bingo Dragon, whereas in Morecambe he is better known for his association with The West End Playhouse. David is delighted to be back in Lancaster Castle having last appeared here last year as Edward III.



## ROLES: BARDOLPH AND ERPINGHAM

How the mighty have fallen; Ben has gone from, in last year's *Edward III*, playing one of the richest, most powerful men in the land, to playing one of its most pitiful.. a low, down dirty thief.. And who knew that it would all be so much fun? Well if your idea of fun is developing a drinking problem, threatening to kill your friends, marching off to war, and robbing a church that is ... He wishes everyone, especially the "B-Team", well with the rest of the production, and their future lives to come! Bonne chance mes amis!



### CREATIVE ROLE: STAGE MANAGER

Vicky Strong is a third year English Language and Literature student acting as stage manager on the production of *Henry V*. This is her first experience in a stage production but has really enjoyed the process and would love to be involved in more opportunities like this in the future!



### ROLE: EXETER

David has had the pleasure of acting in several ELART Productions performances (dir. Emma Rucastle), notably *Vaclav Havel's Memorandum*, *A Christmas Carol*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Crucible* and *Faust*. David always enjoys acting at Lancaster Castle. Last year, he played Warwick in the LU production of *Edward III* and he is pleased, this year, to be playing Exeter.



### CREATIVE ROLE: SHADOW PUPPETS

Astrid Welfare is a third year English Literature student at Lancaster University. *Henry V* is her first production since secondary school in which she took part in performances such as *Billy Elliot* and *Aladdin*.



### ROLES: WILLIAMS AND YORK

Jonty is a third year English Literature with Creative Writing student. He is playing the roles of Williams and York, as well as helping out with creative aspects such as props and costumes.



### ROLES: HOSTESS AND KATHERINE

Lydia Howarth is an English Literature student at Lancaster University. She is an enthusiastic fan of Shakespeare's work and is interested in the duality of honour within *Henry V*. She has performed in small productions in the past; excited to add this experience to the list!



### ROLES: BOY AND JAMY

Alana is currently studying her first year of Drama, Theatre and Performance at Lancaster University. She first performed as The First Witch and a range of other roles, such as the Porter, Fleance and the Son of Macduff in *Macbeth*. Alana's most recent work was a contemporary dance performance, based upon *4.48 Psychosis* by Sarah Kane. She has also recently been seen in a short film based upon feminist rage and femininity as a performance; dancing in the style of Butoh, a form of Japanese dance theatre. Alana has previously performed as Ismene from *Antigone* by Sophocles' ancient Greek tragedy.



### ROLES: CAMBRIDGE, DAUPHIN AND QUEEN ISABELLE

Luce is a third year English Literature and Creative Writing student with previous acting experience in college doing a BTEC in Birmingham. She has been in various shows including Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* and Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. She has also written short plays, including *The Isolation of an Addict* which won an award and went on to be performed by local actors in the west midlands.



### ROLES: ORLEANS, RAMBURES AND GREY

Dorian has been in a variety of productions through drama clubs and school, and now through the West End Players. This includes everything from *Our Day* to *Grease*, and most recent *Alien the musical* and *Robin Hood*. They have a level 3 acting qualification (grade 6 LAMDA). This is Dorian's first full Shakespeare play, which has been a long-time dream of theirs.



### ROLES: CANTERBURY, MACMORRIS AND GLOUCESTER

Rebecca Gilbert is a third year English Literature with Creative Writing student at Lancaster University. *Henry VI* is her first production since secondary school where she performed in school musicals and took part in the Shakespeare Schools festive every year.



### **ROLES: ELY, CONSTABLE, BOURBON, AND HERALD**

Helen is a director of the West End Players, she has written and directed shows, most recently *Alien the Musical*. Helen is performing her third fringe show this year and performing in *Robin Hood* at festivals. Previous experiences of Shakespeare include Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* and Feste in *Twelfth Night*. She is also a member of local music groups where she sings and plays violin and ukulele.



### **ROLES: PISTOL**

Alicia is a third year English Literature and Politics student at Lancaster University. She was drawn to the project because it is a unique experience to finish off the Shakespeare course, and her eagerness to bring Shakespeare to the stage matched with this perfectly. With pairing her degree with politics, Alicia is also excited to explore the history of Henry V and how he presents himself in such a unique setting as the Shire Hall.



### **ROLES: MESSENGER AND COURT**

Matilda Walden is home educated. She is a singer, songwriter, pianist, dancer, Youtuber, actor and all round performer. She has directed and produced many of her own productions.



### **ROLES: SALISBURY AND BURGANDY**

Andrew Dobel began his acting career later in life but has still had a fantastic range of roles and experiences. His favourite parts over the years have included Micheal in *Dancing At Lughnasa*, Lloyd in *Noises Off*, Frank in *84 Charing Cross Rd*, seven parts in *Under Milk Wood* and to cap it all, Toad in *The Wind in the Willows*, plus many others all in the North West for various companies.



### **CREATIVE ROLE: FILMING AND EDITING**

Ruby Saunders is an English Literature student at Lancaster University whose role in *Henry V* has been filming the rehearsals and production, as well as helping with social media content. With a background in videography and video editing, this project has been a great opportunity for her to gain some further experience in live recording, interviewing, and marketing.



## Emma Rucastle DIRECTOR

Emma is a Lancaster-based, freelance, theatre director and creative practitioner. Passionate about inclusive theatre, she has directed, devised, written and performed in a wide variety of professional and community performances in theatres, libraries, churches, parks, streets, squares and castles. She has particular interests in early modern texts, verbatim theatre, audio drama and new writing. Selected directing credits include:

Macbeth (Rotherham Shakespeare Festival), A Christmas Carol (Lancaster Castle), I Have A Speech of Fire (Rose Company), Right Where We Are (TramShed Theatre Company), A North Lancashire Passion (ELART Productions), Love's Victory (Lancaster University/AHRA), Edward 3 (Lancaster University/AHRA). As well as directing Henry V, Emma's 2024 work currently includes projects for The Dukes Theatre, Lancaster, and Blackpool-based TramShed Theatre Company. She is also developing an interest in everyday creativity and play-for-wellbeing and is planning research and development projects in these areas for the autumn, alongside a new, large-scale, community production in Lancaster. She can be contacted on social media at @elartpro (Instagram) and ELART Productions (facebook) and via LinkedIn.

## Alison Findlay PRODUCER AND DRAMATURG

Alison Findlay is Professor of Renaissance Drama in the Department of English Literature and Creative Writing at Lancaster University. She has published essays and books on Shakespeare and his contemporary dramatists, male and female. She produced Wroth's Love's Victory in

2022 and Edward III at Lancaster Castle, playing Salisbury in 2023. She has enjoyed researching and producing Henry V, as well as playing the cameo role of Alice, and creating the costumes.



English Literature &  
Creative Writing

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# HENRY V IN THE SHIRE HALL

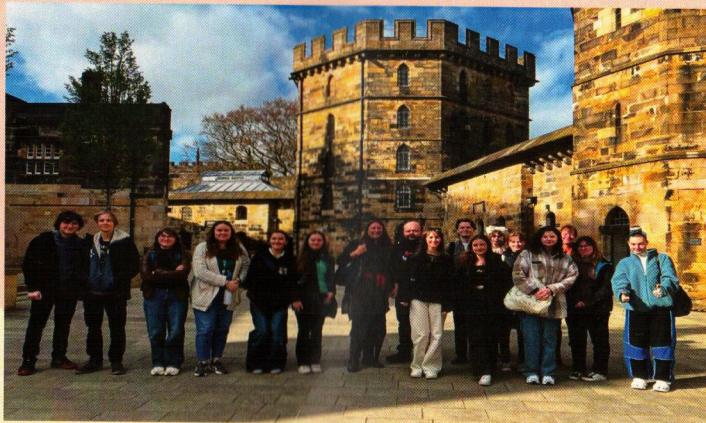
Shakespeare's Henry V (1599) is fascinatingly enigmatic. Its portrait of King Henry as the 'mirror of all Christian kings', is set against impressions of him as a warmonger, using 'famine, sword and fire' to invade France. The play celebrates patriotism when Henry commands 'Cry "God, for Harry, England and Saint George!"' Likewise, his speech at Agincourt is brilliantly seductive. It reaches out to all - 'We few, we happy few, we band of brothers' - to remember a glorious battle fought on St Crispin's day. From the opening scene, however, Henry appears in a less positive light in his treatment of others. He uses rhetorical skill to shift blame for the sufferings of war onto others - the Dauphin, the French King, and the governors of besieged Harfleur, for example. The King cruelly manipulates the captured traitors at Southampton and even the common soldier, Williams. He abandons his old friends Falstaff, Bardolph and Nym. In giving an order to kill all the French prisoners, Henry transgresses the law of arms, so has been condemned as a war criminal. Although he modestly gives all credit for the English victory to God, this display of piety is also politically strategic. It advertizes divine approval for his claim to the French crown and also the English one, which his father, Henry IV, stole from the anointed king Richard II.

Henry's conquest is as much about language as it is about territory. The play advertizes the colonizing power of English. The speech differences between the Scots captain Jamy, the Welsh captain Fluellen, and particularly the Irish captain, MacMorris, who asks 'What ish my Nation?' symbolize the problems caused by forging a 'united' kingdom. Shakespeare dramatizes the spectacular recovery of native English - after the Norman Conquest - in the defeat of the French who arrogantly dismiss their enemies as 'Norman bastards' (3.5). The Dauphin's French phrases are replaced by his sister's learning of English. Henry's demand for Princess Katherine in marriage, as a condition to make peace, completes the suppression of France and French.

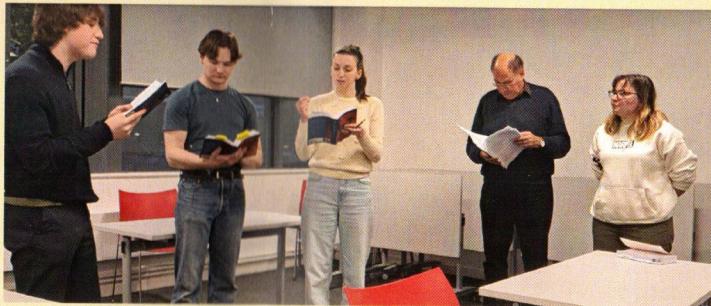
Critics have argued that it is impossible to perceive both sides of Henry or the play at the same time. Our production challenges that. Shire Hall's splendour reflects Henry's legacy as a charismatic 'mirror of all Christian kings'. Simultaneously, its courtroom puts the more sinister elements of Henry's ruthless machiavellianism on trial. It is for you to judge: as the Chorus says, it is 'your thoughts that now must deck our kings.'

**Professor Alison Findlay**

# REHEARSAL PICTURES



The company at Lancaster Castle

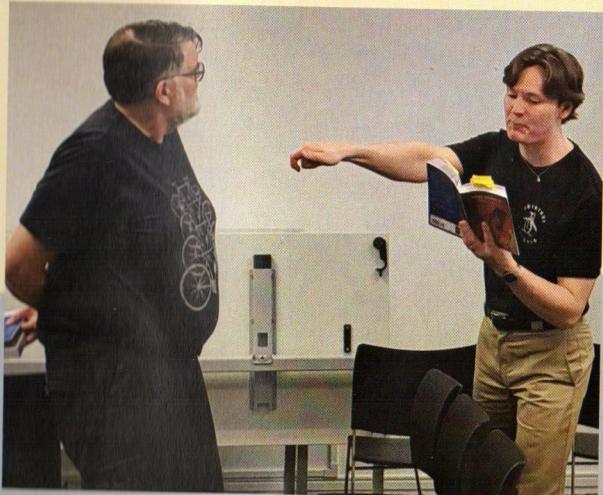


Williams confronts the King





Experimenting with shadow puppetry - the duality of Henry V as 'Mirror of all Christian Kings' or machiavellian war criminal?



Documenting the rehearsal process, led by Lina Yordnaova, Matt Panesh and Ethan Ward (West End Players, Morecambe)

## Thanks to:

Gill Hayton for help sewing costume and Anne Jackson for knitting armour for the English army.

Lancaster Castle tour guides and Castlegate Security

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West End Players, Morecambe

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