



GLOBE
THEATRE

KING LEAR



VISUAL STORY

To help prepare you for your visit to Shakespeare's Globe

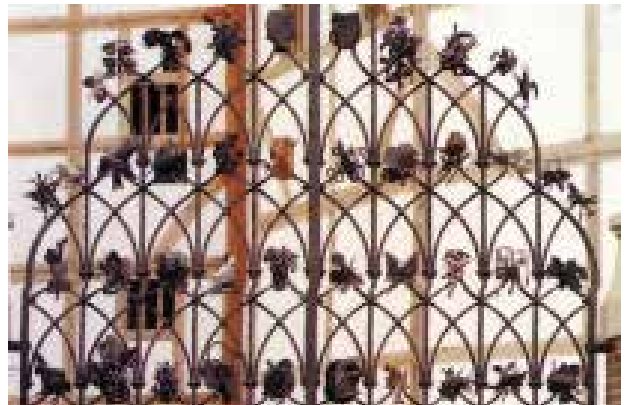
Relaxed Performance

Thursday 14 September, 7.30pm

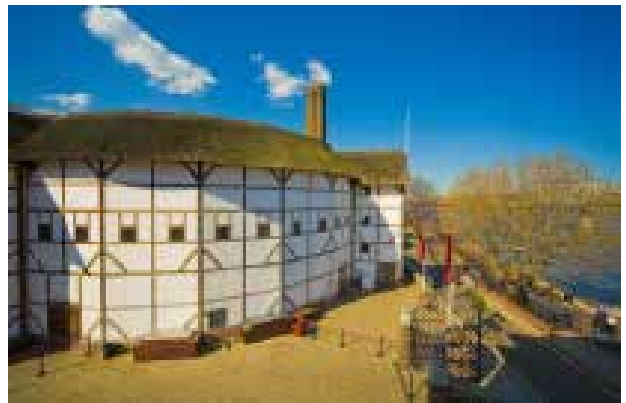


Getting to the theatre

The entrance to Shakespeare's Globe is two large, iron gates facing the river Thames. On the gates are iron animals, flowers and objects, each of which are mentioned in one of Shakespeare's plays.



This is the Piazza. If you need somewhere quiet at any time you can come back out of the theatre onto the Piazza. Each of the doors leads into the theatre.



Your ticket will tell you which gallery, bay and row you are in. Once you have found your row you will need to find the part of the bench reserved for you which will match the number on your ticket. The benches are narrow.





This is the stage. For different plays, designers add pieces of set to make it look different. You will notice that there are two large pillars holding up the roof (which is called 'the Heavens'). You won't be able to see the actors when they are behind the pillars.

When the audience arrive some of them sit in the three galleries and the others stand in the Yard, the open space in the centre.



There is a large hole in the centre of the roof to allow sunlight in. It also allows the rain in if it is raining, so be sure to have a coat. Occasionally, but not always, aeroplanes fly overhead during the play. You might see one. You might not.



These are stewards. You can recognise the stewards by their denim aprons. The stewards are there to help you. If you feel tired, or need to exit please ask a steward. They can also show you where the toilets are.

Stewards are good people to go to if you feel worried about anything in the show.



The characters of the play



King Lear



Goneril and Cornwall



Cordelia, Lear's youngest daughter



Ensemble



Ensemble

The characters of the play



Lear, Regan, Oswald, Cordelia, France, Gloucester and Cornwall



Edmund and Gloucester



Edgar pretending to be poor Tom

The characters of the play



Fool



Kent disguised as Caius



Goneril and Albany

Show Notes

These are notes of things that may happen during the show, or that you may want to think about for the play.

- The play is approximately 2 hours and 45 minutes, with an interval of 20 minutes. A bell will ring five minutes before the play starts and five minutes before the second half starts to let you know it is time to sit down.
- Some of the actors will walk through the yard to get to the stage.
- Shakespeare's Globe is an open air theatre, so it is best to wear suitable clothes.
- You are welcome to come and go from the auditorium as you please.
- If you need quiet, you may relax on the piazza or in the foyer.
- The music can be loud at times throughout the play.
- Pigeons may, but not necessarily, enter the theatre.
- There is drumming throughout, which can be very loud.
- There is blood when Edmund cuts his hand. All blood is fake blood.
- There is blood when Gloucester's eyes are removed. All blood is fake blood.
- Edgar often creeps around the Yard hiding from other characters.
- There are flashing lights during the storm.

Play Summary

Act 1 Scene 1

The Earl of Gloucester introduces his son Edmund. Edmund's mother was not married to Gloucester, which makes Edmund a bastard. Lear enters and declares his plan to split his kingdom between his three daughters – Goneril, Regan and Cordelia – depending on who professes to love him most. Goneril and Regan say nice things about the king. Cordelia tells the truth. She says she loves him as much as a daughter should. This makes Lear Angry. He sends Cordelia away to France. She goes to live with the King of France.

Act 1 Scene 2

Edmund is angry because he is a bastard. This makes him less important than Gloucester's other son, Edgar.

Edmund writes a fake letter from Edgar. The letter has plans to kill Gloucester. Edmund makes sure Gloucester finds the letter. Edmund sends Edgar away, saying that their father will be angry.

Act 1 Scene 3

King Lear and his knights go to live with Goneril.

Goneril complains to Oswald that Lear and his knights are too loud.

Goneril orders her servants to behave rudely to her father.

Act 1 Scene 4

The Earl of Kent pretends to be a man named Caius. She goes to Goneril's house to help the king. Lear strikes Oswald. The fool jokes that Lear should not have split up his kingdom. Goneril enters to demand that half of Lear's knights leave her house. This makes Lear angry and he leaves.

Act 1 Scene 5

Lear leaves Goneril's house. He sends Kent to deliver a message to Gloucester. The fool laughs at him more.

Act 2 Scene 1

Knowing that Regan and Cornwall are visiting Gloucester's house that night, Edmund makes another plan. He gets Edgar out from his hiding place and tells him that he has been discovered and must leave the castle immediately. He then pretends to fight with his brother. He cuts his own hand to make it look like Edgar won the fight.

Act 2 Scene 2

Kent, still in disguise, insults Oswald. He is put in the stocks and reads a letter from Cordelia who promises her help.

Act 2 Scene 3

Edgar disguises himself as 'Poor Tom,' a beggar.

Act 2 Scene 4

Lear arrives at Gloucester's castle and asks Regan to house both him and his knights. Goneril arrives at the castle at the same time. The sisters tell Lear that if he is to stay with either of them, then fifty of his men must leave. When Lear refuses, his daughters say that he cannot have any servants at all. Lear is angry with them both. He leaves the castle. He goes to the heath. Goneril and Regan close the castle gates. Lear is left outside in a storm.

Act 3 Scene 1

Kent and his fool look for Lear on the heath. He meets one of Lear's knights and instructs him to find Cordelia at Dover.

Act 3 Scene 2

Lear wanders the heath with the Fool. Kent finds them and persuades Lear to shelter in a nearby hole in the ground.

Act 3 Scene 3

Gloucester tells Edmund that he wants to find Lear on the heath. He also says there is an argument between Albany and Cornwall. The French army has landed in England. He asks Edmund to keep this information secret. Edmund tells Cornwall in the hope that his father will be put to death.

Act 3 Scene 4

Kent brings Lear to a hovel, but Lear refuses to enter and the fool claims there is a spirit inside. The spirit is in fact Edgar disguised as 'Poor Tom'. Lear removes his clothes in sympathy of Edgar. Gloucester finds the group and is upset. He asks Lear to come with him to safety.

Act 3 Scene 5

Seeking revenge against Gloucester, Cornwall tells Edmund to find Gloucester.

Act 3 Scene 6

Gloucester brings Lear, the fool, Kent and Edgar to a small building and leaves to find food. Gloucester returns and tells Lear of a plot to kill him. Gloucester tells Lear to go to Dover to be safe.

Act 3 Scene 7

Cornwall captures Gloucester and removes both his eyes. Cornwall, Regan and Goneril tell him that Edmund has betrayed him by showing them the letter from the French army. Gloucester realises that Edgar is the son that truly loves him. He is cast out of the castle and taken into the care of an old man.

Act 4 Scene 1

Edgar stands upon the heath and spies his blind father being led by the old man. Gloucester tells the old man that he only wishes to be with Edgar again, but Edgar remains disguised and agrees to lead him to the highest cliff in Dover.

Act 4 Scene 2

Goneril and Edmund return to her castle and learn that Albany has deserted their cause and joined the French army. She orders Edmund to bring Cornwall's army against the French army. As Edmund leaves, Albany enters and tells her off for her cruel treatment of Lear. A messenger arrives and informs them that Cornwall is dead. Albany learns of Edmund's betrayal and swears to take revenge upon him and help Gloucester.

Act 4 Scene 3

Kent, still disguised as Caius, talks to a gentleman at Dover and learns that Cordelia is in charge of the French army. Lear has made it to Dover but refuses to see Cordelia. He is ashamed of how he acted.

Act 4 Scene 4

Cordelia sends her soldiers to find Lear, who is hiding in a field and dressed in plants, singing to himself. A messenger brings word that Cornwall and Albany's armies approaching Dover.

Act 4 Scene 5

Regan asks Oswald what is in the letters he carries between Goneril and Edmund, suspecting that they are having an affair. She admits that she desires Edmund for herself and gives Oswald a token to deliver to him. She also promises Oswald a reward if he kills Gloucester.

Act 4 Scene 6

Edgar and Gloucester reach Dover, and Edgar tells the blind Gloucester that they stand at the top of the high cliff as he asked. This is not true. They are standing on the ground. Gloucester asks that he be left alone to jump off. When Gloucester jumps, he faints. When he awakes, Edgar pretends to be a passer-by who saw Gloucester fall from the high cliff and survive. Lear finds Edgar and Gloucester. Cordelia's men arrive to take him, but he runs back into the fields. Oswald, discovering Edgar and Gloucester, plots to kill Gloucester in order to collect his reward. Edgar, still disguised as

Poor Tom, kills Oswald, and discovers a letter upon him a letter to Goneril, instructing Edmund to kill Albany.

Act 4 Scene 7

Lear is captured and is taken to Cordelia. When he wakes, however, he barely recognises her. She forgives him for banishing her and it is revealed that Edmund now leads the opposing armies.

Act 5 Scene 1

Both desiring Edmund, Reagan and Goneril refuse to leave the other alone with him. Albany declares that he will fight on their side against the foreign invaders, but Edgar, still disguised, enters with the letter Oswald carried in which Goneril ordered Albany's death. Edgar leaves and Albany follows. Edmund returns and describes how he is struggling to choose between Regan and Goneril.

Act 5 Scene 2

Edgar hides Gloucester while he fights for Lear against Edmund's armies. He returns saying that Lear's side has lost and leads his father away. Cordelia and Lear are captured.

Act 5 Scene 3

Edmund takes Lear and Cordelia to prison. Albany enters with Goneril and Regan and demands to see Lear. Edgar arrives and duels Edmund, accusing him of treason. He wins but leaves Edmund alive for Albany to question. Edgar removes his disguise and tells of his father's death.

A messenger announces that Goneril has committed suicide and poisoned her sister, Regan.

Kent and Albany rush to save Lear and Cordelia, but discover they are too late as Lear enters holding Cordelia's lifeless body. A messenger reports Edmund's death. Albany gives Kent and Edgar their titles back, asking them to rule with him.