

THEATRE FOR A NEW AUDIENCE

P O L O N S K Y S H A K E S P E A R E C E N T E R

DIGITAL PROGRAM AND 360° VIEWFINDER SERIES

FACTS AND PERSPECTIVES
ON THE PLAY, PLAYWRIGHT, AND PRODUCTION

HENRY IV

BY

William Shakespeare

ADAPTED BY

Dakin Matthews

DIRECTED BY

Eric Tucker



THEATRE FOR A NEW AUDIENCE
Polonsky Shakespeare Center

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Present

HENRY IV

by

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

adapted by

DAKIN MATTHEWS

and directed by

ERIC TUCKER

On the Samuel H. Scripps Mainstage

Featuring

WILLIAM BEDNAR, JORDAN BELLOW, STEVEN EPP, NIGEL GORE, SLATE HOLMGREN,
ELIJAH JONES, PJ JU, JOHN KEATING, OWEN LAHEEN, DAKIN MATTHEWS, CARA RICKETTS,
MICHAEL ROGERS, JAY O. SANDERS, SANDRA SHIPLEY, JAMES UDOM, ELAN ZAFIR

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Lighting Designer
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First preview January 30, 2025

Opening night February 9, 2025



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TIME: The 15th Century. PLACE: London and other locations in Britain.

CAST

(in alphabetical order)

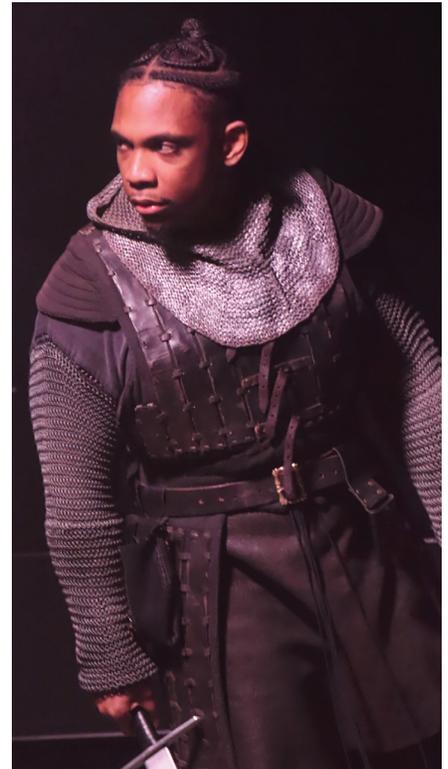
Of the King's Party

Prince John of Lancaster.....JORDAN BELLOW
Earl of Warwick, Lord Chief Justice.....NIGEL GORE
Prince Henry (Hal) Prince of Wales.....ELIJAH JONES
Earl of Westmoreland.....JOHN KEATING
King Henry IV.....DAKIN MATTHEWS

Of the Rebel Faction

Earl of Worcester.....STEVEN EPP
Sir Richard Vernon.....NIGEL GORE
Earl of Douglas.....SLATE HOLMGREN
Lady Mortimer/Hotspur's Squire.....OWEN LAHEEN
Lady Percy.....CARA RICKETTS
Earl of Northumberland/Owen Glendower.....MICHAEL ROGERS
Archbishop of York/Lady Northumberland.....SANDRA SHIPLEY
Henry Percy (Hotspur).....JAMES UDOM
Edmund Mortimer/Lord Hastings.....ELAN ZAFIR

From left to right: James Udom as Henry Percy (Hotspur) and Dakin Matthews as King Henry IV. Photos by Hollis King.
Elijah Jones as Prince Henry (Hal). Photo by Gerry Goodstein.



CAST

(in alphabetical order)

Of London

Ned Poins.....	JORDAN BELLOW
Francis.....	STEVEN EPP
Nym/Sheriff.....	SLATE HOLMGREN
Doll Tearsheet.....	CARA RICKETTS
Sir John Falstaff.....	JAY O. SANDERS
Mistress Quickly.....	SANDRA SHIPLEY
Pistol.....	JAMES UDOM
Bardolph.....	ELAN ZAFIR

Of Gloucestershire

Silence.....	STEVEN EPP
Robert Shallow, Justice of the Peace.....	JOHN KEATING
Davy, Shallow's Squire.....	OWEN LAHEEN

Musician/Traveler/Messenger/Servant.....	WILLIAM BEDNAR
Musician/Traveler/Messenger.....	PJ JU

Lords, Ladies, Servants, Soldiers, Townspeople, Travelers.....THE COMPANY

James Udom as Pistol, Cara Ricketts as Doll Tearsheet, Jay O. Sanders as Sir John Falstaff, Slate Holmgren as Nym, and Elan Zafir as Bardolph.
Photo by Gerry Goodstein.



CAST

(in alphabetical order)

UNDERSTUDIES

Understudies never substitute for the listed players unless a specific announcement is made at the time of the appearance.

For Warwick—ELAN ZAFIR; for Vernon—OWEN LAHEEN

Production Stage Manager.....CHARLIE LOVEJOY

Assistant Stage Manager.....SOPHIA SHAFIUZZAMAN

Fight Captain.....OWEN LAHEEN

Music Director and Arrangements.....PJ JU

Please be advised this production includes haze effects and flashing lights.

HENRY IV will have two intermissions.

This Theatre operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

The stage managers employed in this production are members of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

The scenic, costume, lighting, and sound designers in LORT Theatres are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE.

The Director is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union.



The Director is a Member of the **STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS SOCIETY**, a national theatrical labor union.



PJ Ju as musician. Photo by Hollis King.



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The cast of *Henry IV*. Photo by HanJie Chow.



INTERVIEW “HAL AND FALSTAFF: A SPACE TO PLAY”

TANYA POLLARD IN CONVERSATION WITH ELIJAH JONES AND JAY O. SANDERS



Top: Jay O. Sanders as Sir John Falstaff. Photo by Hollis King.
Below: Elijah Jones as Prince Henry (Hal). Photo by Hollis King.

*On December 17, 2024, during a break from Henry IV rehearsal, **Tanya Pollard**, Chair of TFANA's Council of Scholars, spoke with **Elijah Jones** and **Jay O. Sanders** about the relationship between Hal and Falstaff, what these characters want and need from each other, and the indispensable role of play in their companionship. This conversation has been condensed and edited.*

TANYA POLLARD I'm curious to hear your thoughts about the relationship between Falstaff and Hal. What are you finding, and what are you wrestling with?

ELIJAH JONES I see this as the relationship that Hal wishes he had with his blood father. That relationship is so formal; there's a coldness at court that we don't see in the tavern, or wherever we find Falstaff and Hal. There's a real warmth between them.

TANYA I like that. But it strikes me that along with this closeness, there's also a lot of violence between Hal and Falstaff. Do you think that's related to Falstaff's position as stand-in father?

ELIJAH That's actually fascinating and not something I'd really considered. When you say violence, what do you mean?

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TANYA POLLARD

TANYA There’s teasing, and poking fun, but at times it gets aggressive. When Hal says that he’ll banish Falstaff—“I do, I will”—it’s in the context of a game, but it’s not just playful. There’s something fierce in it, which we see again later.

ELIJAH Something that I’m still wrestling with is how calculating Hal actually is.

TANYA That’s what I’m wondering too.

ELIJAH That moment, the “I do, I will” moment, is a moment of play-acting. There’s truth in what he says, but in that moment, he’s playing his father, right?

TANYA Right.

ELIJAH So he’s speaking as his father, saying “I do and will banish you” to Falstaff. I’m still playing with how much of that is just play and how much of that is serious. We also have Hal’s soliloquy, where he describes his plans: “When this loose behavior I throw off...”

TANYA Yes, when he’ll free himself from “the base contagious clouds” blocking the sun.

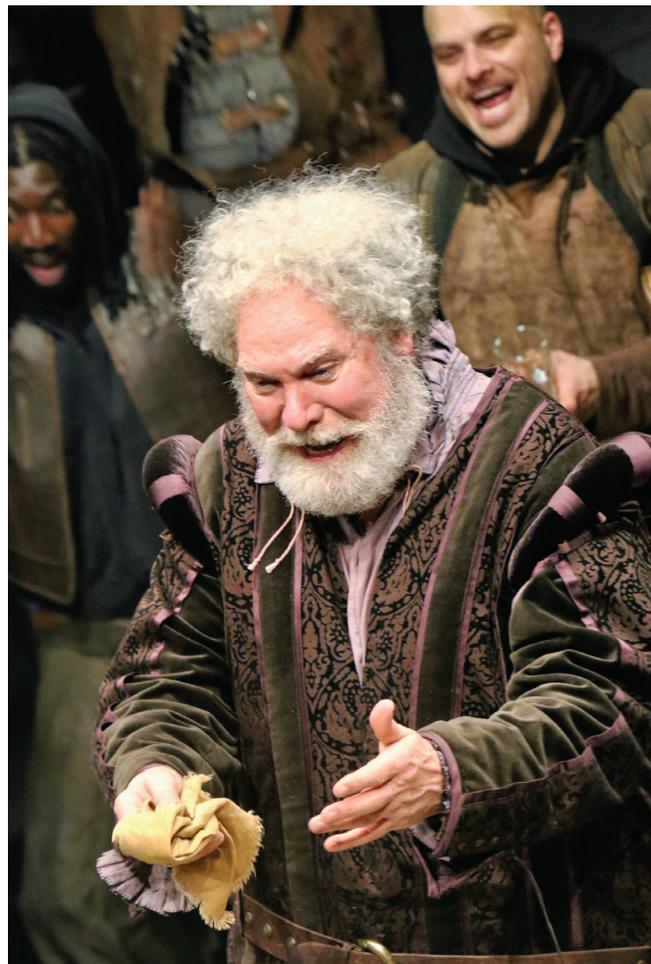
JAY O. SANDERS He seems to be saying he’s trying it on—not that he’s come in to take advantage of people, but that he’s trying this stuff on, the same way he’s listening and learning the language of those around him here. There are many productions which let it get very serious, and it’s like, “Wait a minute, what did you just say? You’re not really going to do this, are you?” “Yes, I will.” And if we give it away there, if we play it heavily, we close something down. But if we do it in play, and then have a moment of looking at each other, like, “All right,” and suddenly we’re interrupted by the bang at the door, it becomes an introduction of that theme, and then it’s a lot more interesting. Because it’s not like we’re saying, “Oh, yeah, this isn’t going to work out.” It’s more like saying, “Yeah, I could banish you.” “Are you kidding me? You’re crazy.” But what you don’t have with your father is play. And what you have with me is constant play. So, things get said that are dead serious and nasty. It’s like the worst insult I could throw at you. And you laugh at me and say something just as bad or worse about me. So that’s in play, but it’s not. . .

TANYA It’s not final.

JAY Yeah, you don’t take it as seriously if the point is insult humor, and you come up with a great insult. It’s like, “Ahh. You got me.” There’s an admiration for the wit that goes into coming up with the most effective insults. It’s back and forth. There’s a safety to being able to say that. Because we never walk away from each other at the end of any of these things. You may say it to make someone else laugh who’s a third party. Or you may say it because, you know, “You tell me I don’t have this, but look at you. I mean, are you going to wear those shoes here? What the f---?” It’s play, because it’s a given that the other person can come back with another insult—it’s a one-upmanship game that allows them to be as pointed as possible.

And you [Hal] also get to say things that in his life, with his father, he could never say. So, if he were to ask me about it, “What should I say to him?” “Put his head back up his own a--!” I can say that to him, but nothing could ever get out to anyone else. And when

Jay O. Sanders as Sir John Falstaff. Photo by Hollis King



“HAL AND FALSTAFF: A SPACE TO PLAY”

TANYA POLLARD

he actually confronts me with, “Wait a minute, what’d you say? What did I hear you say about me?” Then I come back with, “Oh, did you hear that? No, I was putting that on. It was funny, right?” We have little betrayals along the way, like, “Wait a minute, when I’m not there you say this about me?” That’s different. I’m not there to nail you back. Everything becomes about what’s funny and what’s not. But I think there’s a safety in having a place you can say that—you can let go at a father figure. It’s the same kind of release as saying it in my dreams to people I want to say that to, but I could never do that in life. There’s a freedom. In a way it’s like—I’m like therapy.

TANYA There’s permission, a space for play.

JAY And he’s therapy for me, because I’m playing at being royalty.

TANYA Well, that was my next question. We’ve heard something about what Hal wants from Falstaff: to have a father figure, but also a space of freedom, to explore things that he can’t say out loud in the court. But say more about what you [as Falstaff] want from Hal.

JAY Well, validation. It’s a ticket forward. I have no money, I have no connections, and as much as I hang out with the other guys here in the tavern, there’s no one else who meets me with wit, with the mind and the humor that he’s got. That’s what I miss the most.

TANYA That’s interesting. So that’s something you share, that kind of verbal playfulness, the repartee. You have a meeting of minds. So, you get the legitimacy of royalty in the court, plus some financial support, because you have no money. But you also have someone with whom you can hone your wit, your banter.

JAY Yes, it’s honing, it’s keeping it alive. It’s the fire that drives me. I wake up in the morning, and what makes me different than some other old, fat guy is that I have my wit. It’s like talking to Noel Coward. If you have someone who you love talking to, because they always say something interesting, even if they’re talking about nothing – it’s so much more interesting than when I talk with anyone else. So, he [Hal] has a lot to lose by losing me. But it has nothing to do with power. It has nothing to do

Owen Laheen as Davy and Jay O. Sanders as Sir John Falstaff. Photo by Hollis King.



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with money. We keep exploring the nature of the love between us. What do I actually love, and what is it that I need?

Having him nearby means I still have hope that I can get out of here, I can do something, I can have something more with my life. What do I have to look forward to, as an old man? Nothing. I'm not going to make my way back and make a living or fortune. The closest I'm doing is robbing these people to get a little bit of money. Every time I'm sitting alone now, I think, “What would he say?” He would look at me and say, “What are you doing, idiot?” It would be an alive setting that we create through our stories, our insults, our ideas, our fantasies. We create fun, which in this case is life.

We talked about the idea that for all of us, play is a form of life. Basically, you get through the day so that you can have an adventure. And an adventure is often just making something up between people, like kids do: “Let's go, I want to go out and play, let's do this! And then I'll be this person, and then you'll be that person.” That's exactly like what we [Hal and Falstaff] do: “Then I'll be your father, then you be your father.” But you can't get Pistol to go out and do this, you can't get Poin to do this. I'm a totally unique

person, and the same with him; he's got to come and engage with me.

TANYA I was really interested in what Jay said about the balance between love and need. Elijah, with your relationship with Falstaff, how much of it do you think is about love, and how much is about need? How much is he thinking, “This just makes my life better,” and how much is, “I'm not going to make it without this guy”?

ELIJAH It's such an interesting question, because love and need can be very intertwined.

TANYA Yes, and hard to distinguish.

ELIJAH Right. I feel like what Falstaff gives to Hal—or what Hal is really lacking in his life—is balance. He's coming from court, where he's lacking a place to play, to have fun, and exhale, and that's what Falstaff is. I need a space to do that, to release. And because Falstaff is that for Hal, I think there's a deep love, because he meets that need in a way that no one has before.

TANYA Do you think he has the idea from the beginning? I hear your point that if Hal knows early on that he's going to banish Falstaff, then there's no uncertainty, no tension. But when do you think it

Elijah Jones as Prince Henry (Hal). Photo by Hollis King.



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occurs to him? Do you think it’s in his mind all along, or do you think there’s a time in the play when he thinks this is a possibility?

ELIJAH I think he’s aware from the beginning of the play that one day he’ll be the king. That’s the expectation. And he knows how things at court work. So, what I’m interested in finding, or what I’ve been playing with, is this hope that, somehow, he [Hal] can take Falstaff back.

TANYA I see. He’s hoping, “We can make this work.”

ELIJAH Yes. Maybe not exactly as is right now, but at one point I give him “a charge of foot,” which in one sense is like a joke, but in another way is a challenge.

TANYA So, he’s wondering, “Could you do this? Can I put you in the cabinet?”

ELIJAH Yes. I don’t think he’s sure this will never work. Along the way, as the play goes on, he starts to see more and more of Falstaff and how he reacts to certain moments, especially on the battlefield.

JAY Claiming that I killed Percy [Hotspur].

ELIJAH Exactly. If you really want a definitive moment, I would say that’s probably the moment when he decides this is not going to work—once he claims that he killed Percy, Hotspur. I think right now—and we’re only in week two [of rehearsal]—I suspect that that’s the straw that breaks the camel’s back. It’s like, “Oh, now we can’t go back from here.”

TANYA It’s a breakup. The question becomes, at what point do you see there’s not a future.

JAY We’re not seen together after that.

ELIJAH Until the very end.

JAY He splits from me. I say, “Shall we to the west together, to baste the devil Welshman with his own leeks?!” He says, “No—”

ELIJAH “I will not fight with thee.”

TANYA Do you ever see it coming?

Jay O. Sanders as Sir John Falstaff, Elijah Jones as Prince Henry (Hal), and Dakin Matthews as King Henry IV. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.





Elijah Jones as Prince Henry (Hal) and Jay O. Sanders as Sir John Falstaff. Photo by Hollis King.

JAY No. I worry about it, but I think I can manage it. Because I manage everything. When they catch me up in my lies, I say, “Oh, I knew that all the time.” I can get through everything. Even the first time he and Poins hear me talking about him behind his back to Doll Tearsheet and Mistress Quickly, I still joke him out of that.

TANYA So, you’re confident up until that last moment.

JAY I’ve been able to bullsh-t my way through everything. Bullsh-t is really my game. But with the final move, I’ve overstepped. It’s like a brother who knows you so well, and pushes on your last nerve. And then he’s looking at me like, “Man, this is my life, this is my whole reputation, and you’re f---ing with me now? You can f-- with me any other time, but—”

TANYA But this isn’t okay.

JAY I see it all as a joke. Also, I won’t give him my sword on the battlefield. Because I pull out the bottle; I’ve been drinking a bit already, so I’m presenting it as, “This is a joke!” And he’s like, “Somebody can

come in at any moment, and it’s life and death—I can’t deal with you. I just can’t deal with you.” And on top of that, at the moment when he thinks I’m dead, after he’s killed Percy, he gets emotional, or at least as emotional as he gets. It’s a little embarrassing, because when I come back and I wasn’t dead, he realizes I’ve heard this whole thing.

TANYA It’s more vulnerability than Hal would usually show around Falstaff.

JAY All of that leaves us with that moment after Percy dies, and you never see us together again after that.

TANYA Elijah, am I right that you just played *Henry V* [at Chicago Shakespeare Theater]?

ELIJAH Yes.

TANYA What’s it like to have first played this character post-Falstaff, and then go back to play him at an earlier point? How much of that role are you feeling in this one? And what’s it like to do this knowing what his life without Falstaff is going to be like?

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ELIJAH It’s wild. *Henry V* was a journey of a young king navigating how to be king, and this feels like a young man navigating how to be a man, just how to exist in the world and circumstances that he was born into. By the end of this play, I’m seeing how these things are connected. I wish I could go now, having gone through this journey, and do *Henry V* again.

TANYA Maybe you will.

ELIJAH Maybe.

JAY It might affect how you take the death of Falstaff in that play.

ELIJAH All of it. Actually, in that production, we didn’t have that in. It’s hard to make that work if you haven’t done this first. But we still had the hanging of Bardolph.

TANYA Which is similar.

ELIJAH Yes. I see the through-line much more clearly now. There’s a similarity between the two, because both Hal and Henry V are ultimately alone. There’s nobody in either play who could fully understand what they’re going through. Their journey is singular.

TANYA And Falstaff, for a while, promises to ward that off. For a while, it looks like you’re kind of married. But it turns out that this marriage isn’t going to work.

JAY No. When things get serious, I don’t. I’m the promise of, “Maybe this could provide what I need,” but then you find yourself alone. I imagine that as Henry, you might be thinking back to what you had with me, thinking, “Man, I’d like to just go get drunk tonight.”

ELIJAH Yeah, there’s a line where it starts to creep in, a scene between Hal and Poins, when he says “Thou art a blessed fellow to think as every man thinks”—when he’s asking Poins what he would think about him if he were to cry over his father being sick. And that line, it shoots me to *Henry V*, when there’s the soliloquy, “Upon the king!” and just how lonely that is.

So there’s just this weight on Hal, that he’s trying to put off for as long as possible, which Falstaff really helps him do. It’s so nice to be able to forget for a little bit what your responsibilities actually are, and

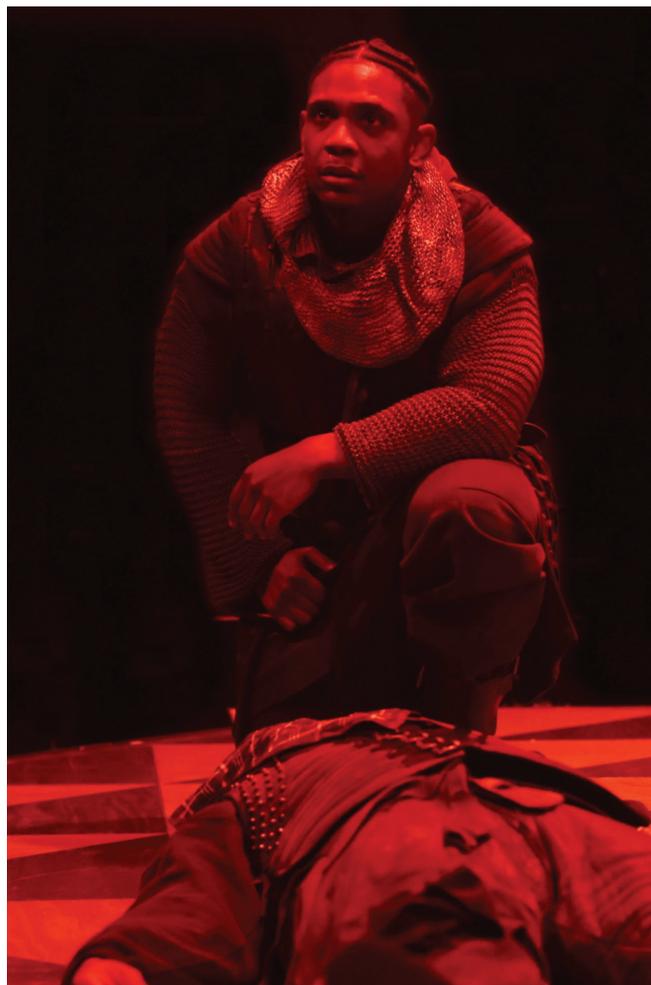
to kind of live carefree in this world, with all these different characters in this tavern, and just drink, and laugh, and play.

TANYA Yes. And to think you have a person who could be an intimate companion. It’s like a marriage—you think maybe there’s someone who can bring you that kind of a bond. And then to realize that this marriage isn’t going to work with your new job—that must be kind of heartbreaking.

ELIJAH Very. As I said before, I’ve been exploring, “Can I take this guy with me?” Because I love him, and there’s so much good to him. But I know that where I’m headed, there are certain rules that we have to follow. And when it’s finally made clear to me that I can’t—yes, it’s like a death, or a divorce. It’s a significant loss.

TANYA How do you feel about Hal?

Elijah Jones as Prince Henry (Hal). Photo by Hollis King.



ELIJAH I love Hal.

TANYA You're making me like him more. I've always found it hard to warm to him, because I find him cold. But you're giving me a sense of him as someone who has real feelings, needs, conflicts.

ELIJAH That's what I try to do as an actor with all my characters. This is a person, and he's doing these things for a reason. In his mind, it's not because he's cold—it's because these are the circumstances that he was born into, or really, that his dad created. He lived through his father deposing a king, which is something that weighs very heavily on him, in both this play and in Henry V. So as much as I want to play around and have fun and just enjoy and laugh and play jokes, I also have to be serious—I know that the eyes are on me, or will be on me, wondering about my legitimacy.

JAY He's a serious guy at root, as opposed to Poins. And I think you're a serious person. We talked about that ability to watch and really take in everything around you [Hal] and think “I can't really trust him that far, but this is fun.” You're analyzing, thinking “What are my bottom-line values?”

ELIJAH Exactly.

JAY You have that in you. You are a serious person. I'm trying to find elements of Falstaff that meet him in this seriousness, but I have no stakes in this life other than connecting to him.

TANYA Do you think Falstaff wants to be a serious person? If...

JAY That's interesting.

TANYA If he's offered the equivalent of a cabinet role, he would take it, because that's security. But it's not something you would look forward to?

JAY No. I'd like to be his advisor. We'll hang out. But it's not like he aspires to be a politician.

TANYA Not a statesman.

JAY Not a statesman. But I do think there's a serious side of Falstaff, which I've often seen played as more joking. He's asked, “When was the last time you saw your own knee?” And that sets off, “You haven't lived through what I've lived through. This fat is a lot of

sadness.” And then I deliver to him the news that we're in trouble. The world is about to change. War is coming. I see no joke in that. I do say, “But you know what? Practice play. Let's keep playing. We can deal with this.” But I'm looking for something serious, for him. A serious understanding, through play.

TANYA So, you want to support him in his mission of becoming a serious person, but you're not really signing onto it yourself other than as a companion.

JAY I don't think so. I think I chanced into this. I wasn't looking for it. He showed up at a point when I was ready to sign off from the world.

TANYA What do you both see as the backstory of this friendship? Do you just run into each other at your favorite bar, get caught up in banter, and go from there?

JAY We haven't talked about that. But it occurs to me that if he shows up at this tavern and there's a particularly attractive prostitute that he likes, then he meets me as we drink. Maybe I'm insulting him across the bar or something. And by the end of it, he's not with the prostitute—we're hanging out talking, because we're entertaining each other. And he's going, “Well, I'm actually—I'm supposed to be king at some point.” And I go, “Well, I have experience in court. I know how to navigate these things. I've been around a long time.” It's a way in. I'm saying, “These other people here don't understand the fine points. They haven't been to court.” But it's really about that wit. We're hanging out and talking late into the evening. And he says, “Are you always an a--hole?” And I say, “I like you. Yes, I'm always an a--hole. And are you always—” You know what I mean?

TANYA Yes, I see.

JAY Two people at those ages. You think, “I don't know anybody else like you, of your age, and your connection to the court; there's no one else I could talk to this way.” So, you sit, you try it out, you get drunk.

TANYA And you think, “This is cool.”

JAY And then you go, “I'm gonna go back and hang out and see if he's around again.” And then after a while—I choose to think that if he woke up, and he was walking around going, “What am I going to do today?” it's, “Where's Falstaff?” He'd want to be with

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me. There’s a thoughtfulness to it, but it’s also just constant play.

TANYA And it’s chemistry. They find someone they click with.

JAY Someone you can talk to. Ultimately getting laid happens—it’s over pretty fast. Whereas having a conversation, you start a conversation and tell stories. You come back for that later.

TANYA I’m also thinking, it’s interesting that Falstaff has never been married, right? As far as we know?

JAY Not that I know of.

ELIJAH He promises himself to Mistress Quickly, though, right?

TANYA Right.

JAY Well, it was a card, as it were. You hear that stuff, and you go, “Oh, God, did I say that to her? How drunk was I?”

TANYA But Hal knows he’s going to have to get married, because when you’re king, that’s your job. You have to produce heirs. So, he’s going to have another person, in whatever level of intimacy that might mean. But Falstaff isn’t necessarily going to have another person, I mean, aside from whatever drunken ramblings he makes to Mistress Quickly. He needs Hal more, I think.

JAY This is Falstaff’s endgame, and it’s his start.

TANYA Yeah, I see.

JAY I definitely need him far more than he needs me, in terms of need. But in terms of wanting to be together, I think it’s very equal. I would want to be with the young prince, not because I’m playing him for the future, but because I love hanging out with him.

TANYA How worried are you that he’s going to break up with you through the play? Does it come and go? You mostly think you’ve got it worked out?

Sandra Shipley as Mistress Quickly, Elijah Jones as Prince Henry (Hal), Steven Epp as Francis, Elan Zafir as Bardolph.
Photo by Hollis King.



JAY No, I don't think he'll do it.

TANYA But there are times that you worry?

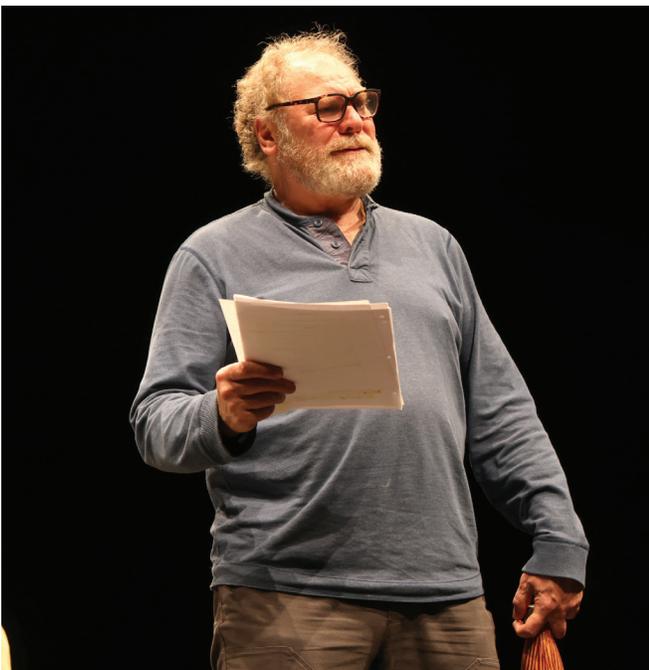
JAY Well, I worry when war is coming, because I know choices have to be made. And when he says that whole thing of the charge of foot, I'm f---ed. I am heinously unprovided. I require his understanding. I require his support, his help. If I'm going to get up and down out of this chair, I need help. We were talking about the gout that I suffer from, and the fact that I go and have to plant myself and get my foot up. We're talking about exploring that in the first scene, that he's helping me with that too, that there's a sense of support from someone who loves you, who knows how uncomfortable you are. And then once you're comfortable, it's back to, "So I told him, I said..." You've forgotten all the problems, but you require that, "Get me in the recliner, make me comfortable, get me a drink."

TANYA You've done Falstaff before. Does it feel different?

JAY I did him in a musical version of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

TANYA And you did this show in a workshop in 2023, which is sort of the same, but not entirely. You had a different Hal.

Jay O. Sanders in the 2023 Theatre for a New Audience workshop production of *Henry IV*. Photo by Hollis King.



JAY Right.

TANYA Does it feel different?

JAY Oh, totally, yeah. But the architecture of the play is the same. It just plays out differently with different people to bounce off of. I can build on things that I learned about, what was in there, all this stuff that we're talking about—the ways in which I let him down, the ways in which he lets me down, where the desperation lives.

TANYA Right.

JAY It was a fantastic introduction to it. But getting to do it now is the real deal. And what we have together for real is so much easier than what I could have in my mind, or with another person who's totally different.

TANYA That makes sense because you need the chemistry. Just as Falstaff and Hal have to walk into the bar and kind of fall in love with each other, you as actors have to kind of walk into the space and fall in love with each other. I mean, that's presumably what you need to make it work.

JAY I would say he makes it easy.

ELIJAH It takes one to know one, brother.

JAY We like each other. I mean, we did from the beginning, getting on this, and we can talk about this stuff without it being, "Don't tell me what to do, don't tell me how..." There's no defensiveness. It's all about, "Hey, let's explore this, let's try that."

TANYA I love that.

JAY And that's a great thing. Because the teamwork and the curiosity is everything.

TANYA I love that. I am so grateful to be able to talk with you both about this. I know you have rehearsal to get back to, but is there anything else you feel like you didn't say that you want to add?

ELIJAH I was just thinking about this idea of love versus need, which are so entwined, like when he makes the decision to break up with Falstaff. Even in the "I know thee not, old man" speech at the end, he's still keeping Falstaff on his payroll. And he says, "As we hear you do reform yourself, we will give you advancement." I think this speaks to how important

“HAL AND FALSTAFF: A SPACE TO PLAY”

TANYA POLLARD

Falstaff really is. Hal hasn't completely given up; he's holding onto some hope. Sometimes people feel, “He's so cold.” I think he's actually still hoping. He hasn't just completely thrown away this person. He just knows that right now, in this moment, Falstaff isn't ready for where I have to go.

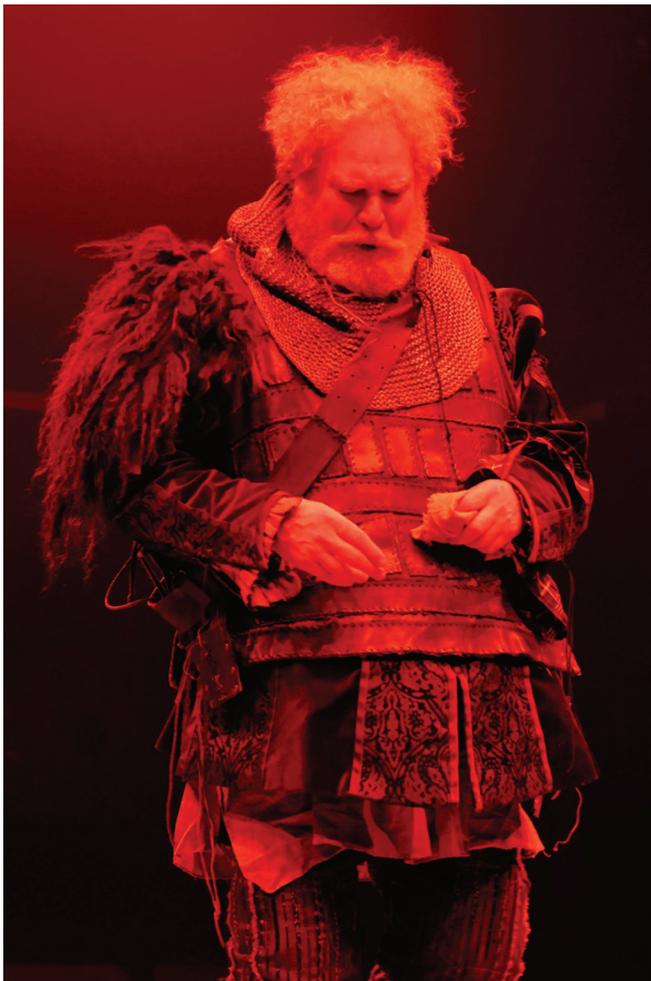
TANYA But you're thinking maybe you can get there.

ELIJAH Maybe we can. The door's not completely shut.

TANYA I really love that. And I think that makes it all the more heartbreaking in *Henry V* when we hear that Falstaff has died.

JAY Well, and at the end of the play, after Hal dismisses me, I'm doing what I've done earlier in terms of getting out of difficult things. I'm letting him out of difficult things, which lets me out. I'm saying, “He must seem thus to the world. Let me talk to him

Jay O. Sanders as Sir John Falstaff. Photo by Hollis King.



in private later. Don't worry, I've still got it—I still have connections. Everything's fine.”

TANYA Do you think there's a part of him that believes that when he says it?

JAY No.

TANYA You think he knows it's over?

JAY I think he will—he has no choice but to keep looking, saying, “Is there any way that I can...?”

TANYA Because he's got nothing else.

JAY Otherwise, he's dead.

TANYA He's counting on the alimony, as it were.

JAY He's thinking, “that's how you feel today,” but he's used to this cycle of, you talk a game, then you have a drink, and then you talk a game, and then you have a couple more drinks, then you get wasted, and then you fall asleep, and you wake yourself up with ideas and jokes and stories, and start it all over again. So, there's the idea of cycles, of “This is not the moment to talk about this, but he'll be back, he's always coming back around. He'll wake up tomorrow morning...” I think hope looms eternally. But I think I see what's happening. I'd like to think it would be the same. I'd like to think it would come back, but something in me thinks, “This is what was always coming, and I always wanted to pretend it wasn't.” It's a denial of death. And I sense it ●

TANYA POLLARD (Chair, Council of Scholars) is Professor of English at Brooklyn College and the CUNY Graduate Center. Her books include Greek Tragic Women on Shakespearean Stages (2017), Drugs and Theater in Early Modern England (2005), Shakespeare's Theater: A Sourcebook (2003), the Arden edition of Ben Jonson's The Alchemist (2023), and four co-edited collections of essays on early modern drama, emotions, bodies, and responses to Greek plays. She appeared in Shakespeare Uncovered: Macbeth (PBS, 2013) with Ethan Hawke and in Shakespeare Uncovered: King Lear (PBS, 2015) with Christopher Plummer. Beyond her involvement with TFANA, she has worked with artists and audiences at theaters including the Red Bull, the Public, the Classic Stage Company, and the Roundabout. A former Rhodes Scholar, she has received fellowships from the Guggenheim, NEH, Whiting, and Mellon foundations.

DIALOGUES "1 HENRY IV" from THIS IS SHAKESPEARE

BY EMMA SMITH



Dakin Matthews as King Henry IV. Photo by Hollis King.

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Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV* is a history play that would prefer not to be. It has scant patience with heroics, fighting, and politics, and little investment in its central character, the king. It is cavalier with historical facts and chronicles. It would much rather be joking in the tavern than politicking in the court. These preferences create a new and compelling version of the history play.

1 Henry IV tells the story of the king who, having taken the throne from his cousin Richard II (a story told by Shakespeare already in his *Richard II*) is now

beset by conspiracy, civil war and insubordination. These take two substantive forms. The first is an insurgency led by the charismatic and chivalric Hotspur, supported by his father Northumberland, his brother-in-law Mortimer who has a claim to be the rightful heir to the throne, the Welshman Glendower, and Douglas, a Scot. This political threat to Henry is a coalition of noblemen, representing constituent parts of the nation, who do not accept his right to the throne. But perhaps a more pressing challenge is the second, the rebelliousness of Henry's son, Prince Hal. The heir to the throne ignores the court and his obligations, preferring instead the company of a disreputable knight Falstaff in the taverns of London's Eastcheap. The play tells the story of the gradual reconciliation of father and son, culminating in the battle of Shrewsbury where Hal protects his father from attack and kills Hotspur in single combat.

The extended title of the first edition covers some of

"1 HENRY IV" FROM THIS IS SHAKESPEARE

EMMA SMITH

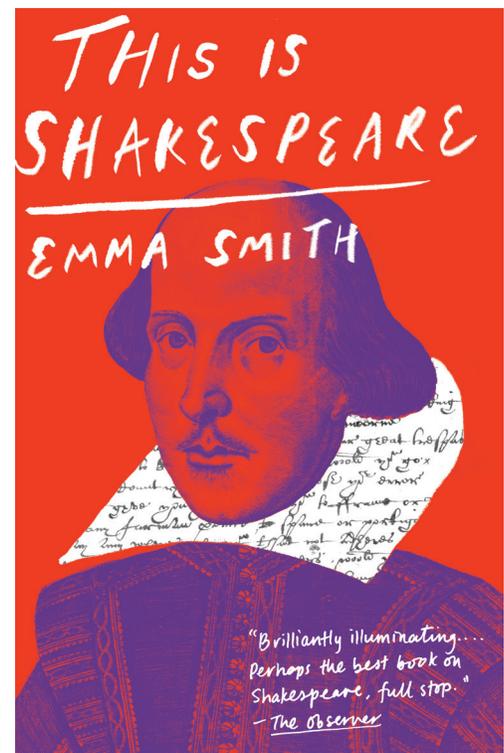
its appeal: 'The History of Henry the Fourth, with the battle at Shrewsbury, between the king and Lord Henry Percy, surnamed Henry Hotspur of the North. With the humorous conceits of Sir John Falstaff'. 'Humorous conceits' here, as in the play, threaten to undermine the high seriousness of political and military conflict. This play was one of Shakespeare's most popular in print, with seven editions in the following twenty-five years. More significantly, it generated two distinct sequels. One, entitled 'the second part of Henry the fourth', was published two years later, producing in its turn the designation of the previous play as 'part 1'. For audiences and early readers the play we now call Part 1 was experienced as a stand-alone entertainment, although it looks backwards, to the reign of Richard II, as well as forwards, to the future reign of King Henry V. We can judge that *1 Henry IV* was popular because, like a modern film, it produced a sequel that essentially tried to repeat the success of the original (and again, like many modern equivalents, failed, because what we liked so much about the first one was that we had never seen anything like it before).

But 'Part 2' is not the only spin-off from this popular play. Shakespeare turned away from the restrictions of the historical play to recast its non-aristocratic

characters in the unexpectedly bourgeois milieu of Windsor, in the romp *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. These opportunistic sequels tell us something about the way the early modern theatre industry was developing responsive, and recognisable, marketing techniques to cash in on successful productions. But they also tell us something more particular about the star quality of *1 Henry IV*. The sequels share only one element. Not the king, not even the prince; not the battles or rebellions or disquisitions on the nature of government. Their common denominator is Falstaff. Fat, dodgy, cash-strapped, self-interested Falstaff. In inventing this anti-hero, Shakespeare had launched a cultural phenomenon that he milked in two further plays: the success of *1 Henry IV* was the success of Falstaff.

So what made Falstaff so compelling? Why did Elizabethans recognise Falstaffs in the world around them, when they did not, for example, see Hamlets? Why did this character come alive for audiences in a way that no other Shakespearean character did? Crucial to Falstaff's characterization is his morbid obesity. Hal's first words to him in the play's second scene call him 'fat-witted' (1.2.2), and there is constant banter about his appetite for food and drink. He is dubbed 'fat-guts' (2.2.31), 'whoreson

Emma Smith, author of *This is Shakespeare*. Photo by John Cairns.



round man' (2.5.140), 'fat rogue' (2.5.548), 'a gross fat man' 'as fat as butter' (2.5.517). In an important sequence in 2.5 where Hal and Falstaff rehearse in the tavern an interview between the prince and his father, Falstaff's fatness and its interpretation is their main topic of conversation. Ventriloquising his father's disapproval, Hal (playing the king) addresses Falstaff (as if he were the prince): 'There is a devil haunts thee in the likeness of an old fat man; a tun of man is thy companion' (2.5.452-3). He extemporizes an extravagant sequence of similes for Falstaff's size: 'that trunk of humours, that bolting-hutch of beastliness, that swollen parcel of dropsies, that huge bombard of sack, that stuffed cloak-beg of guts, that roasted Manningtree ox with the pudding in his belly' (2.5.454-8). Falstaff sticks up for himself against this fat-shaming: 'If to be fat be to be hated, then Pharoah's lean kine are to be loved' (2.5.477-8), referring to the cattle that are the biblical symbols of famine in Joseph's dream. Images of bulk, size and above all, fatness, pepper the play. It is impossible to get away from the fact that Falstaff is fat.

It's worth stepping back a moment to see how unusual this level of physical description is in Shakespeare's writing. Very few characters in Shakespeare are given specific physical characteristics: we hear that Cassius in *Julius Caesar* has a 'lean and hungry look' (1.2.195), just as the apothecary in *Romeo and Juliet* has been worn to the bones by misery; we know that Juliet is just shy of fourteen years old; we know that one of Helena and Hermia is fair and the other dark and one is tall and the other short (but as with everything in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* it's impossible to recall which is which). Beyond this handful of immediate examples, most of which have thematic rather than specifically personal, resonances, there isn't much more. For the most part, Shakespeare does not give his characters extensive physical descriptions, nor is their appearance of particular interest. While we know that Shakespeare writes with a definite group of actors in mind, he seems more interested in their acting ability than their physical appearance. So what? Well, Falstaff's fatness is the most thoroughgoing physical designation we ever get in Shakespeare, or, to put it another way, Falstaff is

Jay O. Sanders as Sir John Falstaff. Photo by Hollis King.



the most insistently physical character Shakespeare ever wrote.

The density of all these inventive signifiers of fatness is also significant when compared to Shakespeare's sources. Although Falstaff as he appears in the play seems to be an ahistorical character enjoyably adrift from the serious political and military business we associate with history plays, he does have a real and controversial historical source, the Lollard knight, Sir John Oldcastle. Oldcastle was a soldier and companion to the young Henry V who was executed as a heretic in the early fifteenth century. His life was included in John Foxe's extensive prehistory of English Protestantism, *Acts and Monuments* (known as the *Book of Martyrs*), and he was understood by Elizabethan England to be a heroic religious man who died for those beliefs. There is firm evidence that in the play's first incarnation, and possibly in its early performances, Falstaff's name was Oldcastle. Hal's phrase 'my old lad of the castle' (1.2.41-2) doesn't make sense without this name, for instance, and the epilogue added to the end of *2 Henry IV* teases the audience with the sense that Falstaff both is and is

not Oldcastle: 'for anything I know, Falstaff shall die of a sweat—unless already a be killed with your hard opinions. For Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man' (Epilogue.27-30). So the historical Oldcastle was a devout and principled man (nothing suggests that he was fat), and it is clear that his Elizabethan successors took exception to seeing their noble ancestor pilloried by Shakespeare, forcing the change of name. The Chamberlain's Men's great rivals, the Admiral's Men, capitalized on this tactlessness by producing a more acceptable and sycophantic version of the story in their own play, *Sir John Oldcastle*.

In part, then, Falstaff's fatness laughs in the face of Oldcastle's piety, presenting a figure who is self-indulgent rather than ascetic, carnal rather than spiritual. He is a figure of feasting rather than fasting. In a joyous moment his itemised bar bill is winkled out of his snoring pocket and brandished for hilarity: 'O monstrous! but one halfpennyworth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack!' (2.5.543-4) And there's been a long history of criticism that has seen his insistent physicality as a marker of personality itself. In the history of Shakespearean character study—even

Slate Holmgren as Nym and Cara Ricketts as Doll Tearsheet. Photo by Hollis King.



of Shakespearean criticism altogether—Falstaff is the weighty foundation stone. In 1777 Maurice Morgann's *An Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff*, the first book-length study of Shakespeare, was published. Morgann attempted to defend his subject against Dr Johnson's withering moral judgement: 'The fat knight has never uttered one sentiment of generosity, and for all his power of exciting mirth, has nothing in him that can be esteemed'. In responding to this character assassination, Morgann inaugurated an interpretative tradition that has informed actors from Henry Irving to Laurence Olivier and implicated critics from William Hazlitt to Harold Bloom. Claiming that Shakespeare invents what it is to be human, Bloom develops two characters as extended examples. Hamlet is a predictable enough choice, but the other is Falstaff. In an interview about his work, Bloom describes Falstaff as 'the most intelligent person in all of literature', but he also suggests something less personal and more general: 'Falstaff is life! Falstaff is the blessing'.

Falstaff's fatness is less an individualizing characteristic of his personality and more

metaphorical, as if his bulk makes him exceed the individually human and take on a kind of symbolic function. That expansive meaning is something Falstaff himself aspires to. As he and Hal each pretend to be the disapproving king, they brandish different meanings. Is Falstaff 'reverend Vice, ... grey Iniquity' (2.5.458-9), the 'abominable misleader of youth' (467-8), or is he simply 'old and merry' (476)? Does he love the prince—one reading of the play sees him as an alternative father figure providing the human affection so lacking from the cold, troubled King—or is he merely exploiting him in expectation of later preferment and advantage? Falstaff-playing-Hal defends Falstaff against the charges: 'sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff, [...] Banish not him thy Harry's company. / Banish plump Jack, and banish all the world' (2.5.480-5).

Falstaff's claim to Hal's—and our—affections here is in the claim that he is representative of 'all the world'. No wonder then, in that Elizabethan age newly fascinated by globes, that he is fat. The suggestion that Falstaff represents a physical, self-centred enjoyment

Elijah Jones as Prince Henry (Hal) and Jordan Bellow as Ned Poins. Photo by Hollis King.



of existence identifies him with popular archetypes such as the lord of misrule or the embodiment of carnival. These operate within structures of inversion or excess that challenge normal hierarchies and protocols of self-discipline. An analogy with Homer might be helpful. Not, on this occasion the epic author, but the cartoon figure Homer Simpson. We all know that Homer Simpson is a loser, wastrel, an inadequate father and a positively dangerous worker at the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant. One choice Homerism is exemplary: 'Kids, you tried your best and you failed miserably. The lesson is, never try'.

This paternal advice is funny because it is counter-cultural. We have all heard—perhaps even heard ourselves delivering—the standard line: it's not the winning, it's the taking part. If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try, again. Homer's rhetoric is funny because it is anticlimactic. He sets up a cliché morality but completes it with his own realist, bathetic conclusion. That makes him attractive, precisely because he is not up to the ideals with which our culture bombards us, and because he therefore allows us, too, the leeway to fail. Now let's compare these with one of Falstaff's musings at the end of 5.1. Amid the chaos of the battle between the forces of the king and the rebellion of Hotspur and his associates, Falstaff is alone for a brief soliloquy. We are prepared. This is the point heavily cued by a structure of repentance elsewhere in the play, when we expect that the selfish drunk, is going to come good. Falstaff is going to find reserves of honour, courage, nobility. He will be like that alcoholic Vietnam vet pilot who does the suicide mission in *Independence Day* (directed by Roland Emmerich, 1996): a man who grasps a final chance at redemption when he realizes what's really important, sets aside his selfishness and narcissism, and goes out in a blaze of glory.

'What is honour?', asks Falstaff, rhetorically, at this moment of anticipated moral renewal. And then the bathos. 'Can honour set to a leg? No. Or an arm? No. Or take away the grief of a wound? No. Honour hath no skill in surgery, then? No. What is honour? A word. What is that word "honour"? What is that "honour"? Air' (5.1.131-5). Falstaff ends this manifesto by describing it as his 'catechism'—a nicely ironic and subversive use of a statement of belief to puncture pious and clichéd definitions of honour and replace them instead with the pragmatic and

selfish concerns of the vulnerable body. Like Homer, Falstaff sets up a rhetoric of piety and draws on our familiarity with the way we know we ought to behave; and like Homer again he deflates that expectation and tells the self-interested, taboo truth. Since this pragmatism would be so offensive to the martyr Sir John Oldcastle's memory, it is easy to see how his family took exception.

Falstaff's popularity, then, is in part related to the fact that he is unapologetic and unrepentant. He embodies the larger anti-moralistic energy of theatrical production in this period, that so annoyed preachers fulminating against theatres as 'Satan's synagogue'. But Falstaff also features as one aspect of a structuring principle of repentance, apology, and recidivism in the play. *Henry IV* is organised, like a number of dramatic and prose texts from the 1590s, around the popular biblical theme of the prodigal son. The theme of the prodigal comes from a parable in Luke's gospel. Jesus tells how the younger son of a rich man claimed his share of his inheritance before his father's death and spent it in profligate city living. Brought to absolute penury by his reckless spending he realises that his father's servants have a better life than he, and vows to return and throw himself on his father's mercy, not as his son but his servant. But on his arrival home his father is so overjoyed to see him that he orders a great feast and the killing of the fatted calf in celebration, much to the chagrin of the older brother, who has had no such reward for his loyalty and consistency. The theme is a prominent one in *Henry IV*: the prince's impressive dedication to excess and riot rather than obedience to his father makes the paradigm clear. Implicit in the theme is the expectation of reformation: as in the parable, the prodigal will repent.

We get an early indication that Hal intends to use this theology entirely strategically. At the end of his first scene, 1.2, the prince delivers an unexpected soliloquy. He has been laughing and joking in prose with his tavern companions, particularly Falstaff, their banter in pronounced contrast to the constipated formal verse of the opening court scene. But after the others have left, he stays on stage to deliver a long speech about his intentions: It begins 'I know you all', and goes on to state how he will continue his 'loose behaviour' until such time as a public repentance has most symbolic effect.

It's a wonderful soliloquy, riffing on the contrast between the prince's apparently dissolute lifestyle and his steely determination to change his conduct when the time comes. He explains that, like the sun—a traditional symbol of monarchy—he allows clouds to obscure his majesty so that he shines more brightly when people are eager to see him. Like precious metal set off against a dull background or foil to make it look more desirable, his 'reformation' will be all the more attractive. Like a holiday, or other rare occurrence, new Hal will be the more desirable because unusual. The language is part religious: 'reformation', 'redeeming', 'fault', 'offense'—Hal is thinking about that prodigal son narrative. It is also part mercantile: 'debt', 'promised', 'foil', 'attract': Hal thinks of himself as a commodity needing its value inflating. It's a masterclass in manipulation. Hal is stage-managing his reformation for maximum effect. He is a manipulatively self-conscious prodigal who knows that the worse his behaviour now, the greater the sense of welcome at his reformation. And this speech echoes the blank verse world of the court—established in the previous scene and in the scene immediately following this soliloquy—to align Hal with his royal birthright. I'm only slumming it in the tavern. I know my rightful

place. In time I will emerge to claim it. We could read this as successional reassurance: no need to worry about the apparently unregal behaviour of the Prince of Wales; it's all under control. But it also has a chilly quality. The forgivably human element of the biblical prodigal son that's missing here is its authenticity. The original prodigal did both parts—the spendthrift years and the humiliating return—sincerely and wholeheartedly. Hal is playing a long strategic game.

In moral and structural terms the play probably needs to end with Hal's repentance and reconciliation with his father. And to some extent it does. Hal assumes the proper role of the Prince of Wales in the climactic battle at Shrewsbury against the rebel forces. He fights alongside his father and, in a Shakespearean invention not found in the historical sources, protects him against attack. The terms of King Henry's gratitude are striking: 'Thou hast redeemed thy lost opinion' (5.4.47), a phrase that echoes 'redeeming' in Hal's earlier speech and suggests that the anticipated time of the Prince's reformation has now come to pass. In fact, the father and son Henries have already showed themselves to be more similar than different (which, as in many families, is of course the root of their disagreements): King

Elijah Jones as Prince Henry (Hal). Photo by Hollis King.



Henry berates his son for being too 'stale and cheap to vulgar company' (3.2.41), for being too visible and therefore not sufficiently respected. The language of strategic self-concealment as an attribute of effective authority is common to both men's understandings of their power. But in its final scenes, the play makes good on the promise of reformation and steps back from it. In *King Henry and Falstaff*, the play has established that there are two incompatible father figures with whom Hal needs to reconcile.

Henry IV is deeply concerned with real and imagined relationships between fathers and sons. There's Northumberland and his son Hotspur as well as King Henry and his son Hal. But when King Henry wishes, at the outset of the play, that Hotspur were really his son, and 'that it could be proved / That some night-tripping fairy had exchanged / In cradle clothes our children where they lay' (1.1.85-7), his wish for an alternative son legitimates Hal's own wish for an alternative father. Falstaff's court of misrule in Eastcheap is full of the warmth, wit, and, yes, sack (a kind of sherry), that is singularly absent from the war-wearied King's council. When Douglas fights first Henry IV and then Falstaff at Shrewsbury, we can see that the two figures are being brought together towards resolution (although they never appear on stage at the same time). What is striking is that while Hal does align himself with his royal father, he does not quite manage the related step of distancing himself entirely from Falstaff. He has the opportunity to reveal Falstaff as a shameless and dishonourable coward, who has claimed Hotspur as his own kill by stabbing his corpse callously and dragging it off to claim the reward. But Hal does not take this decisive chance. At the end of the play he is still caught between his two alternate fathers.

That Hal's own reformation is compromised by this ambivalence is made clear by the existence of the sequel: in part 2, Hal reunites, temporarily, with Falstaff, and his behaviour continues to disappoint his royal father. And perhaps Falstaff's physical size and the difficulty of denying him come together here: Falstaff's bulk makes it more difficult for Hal to turn away from him. The moral thrust of the play and its dramatic energies are in conflict. A morally conclusive ending requires the rejection or defeat of Falstaff, whereas a dramatically satisfying one does not want to see him go. It may be that Shakespeare has been too successful:

he has allowed the play's antagonist, Falstaff, to claim centre stage. Versions of the Henry IV plays that put him at their heart take their cue, perhaps, from Orson Welles' brilliant tragic-comic biopic, *Chimes at Midnight* (1965)—a combined adaptation of the plays organised around Falstaff, played by Welles himself. Such a focus on Falstaff substitutes for Shakespeare's conflicted moral telos of the prodigal, a crowd-pleasing focus on the anti-hero. The end of *1 Henry IV* is no ending at all. Hal and his father have been reconciled, and, at least for now, Hal has behaved in a princely manner. He has dispatched his rival, the rebel Hotspur. One Henry down, one to go. But just as this battle is not the whole war, and just as the last lines of the play see the king reorganising his forces to continue the fight against the rebels, so too Falstaff is an unresolved, and perhaps unresolvable figure. In the Shrewsbury encounter with Douglas, Falstaff falls down as if he were dead, and he lies among the battle casualties for some moments. Hal delivers a eulogy on the dead Hotspur and then on Falstaff himself, with a last nod to his size: 'Could not all this flesh / Keep in a little life?' (5.4.101-2). The prince leaves the stage apparently believing his old acquaintance to be dead, at which the stage direction reads: 'Falstaff riseth up'. The word 'riseth' is wonderfully descriptive—Falstaff takes on a kind of unkillable quality—he is the spirit of life itself, as Bloom would have it. Striding away from the dead of the battle, he resists the historical process that would kill him too. Hal's opening remarks to Falstaff—'What a devil hast thou to do with the time of the day?' (1.2.6)—have here their serious echo: Falstaff is not subject to time, or to history. Adapted beyond recognition from the Lollard knight Oldcastle, he is not really a historical figure. It is almost as if he operates in a different world from the other characters. Falstaff's fatness is, then, finally a challenge to historical pragmatism, the leanness of cause and effect. He is an anti-historical excess intruding on a history play, just as he as a character impedes the patterns of succession that structure historical progress. His bulk blocks historical progress, so we are not quite yet ready for the glorious redemptive reign of Hal as Henry V. The result? Even more Falstaff in *2 Henry IV*. ●

Emma Smith is Professor of Shakespeare Studies at the University of Oxford, and the author of This Is Shakespeare (Pantheon, 2020) from which this extract is adapted.

JACOB GRIGOLIA-ROSENBAUM IN CONVERSATION WITH PETER COOK



Jordan Bellow, William Bednar, and Elan Zafir as Soldiers. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.

On January 23, during tech rehearsals for *Henry IV*, TEANA Artistic Associate **Peter Cook** sat down with **Jacob Grigolia-Rosenbaum**, the production's fight choreographer and intimacy coordinator, for a conversation about stage combat, Shakespeare's English histories, and collaborators "keeping each other honest." This conversation has been edited for clarity.

PETER COOK How do you approach fight choreography for a classical play, particularly a Shakespeare play? Are there special considerations that go into approaching that kind of work?

JACOB GRIGOLIA-ROSENBAUM I think flexibility is the watchword, and going in with an open mind.

Productions of Shakespeare might be anything from hyper-modern, super avant-garde, or incredibly period specific, so you have to go into the rehearsal space—and maybe even more importantly, you have to go into the job interview—with all of your toolbox open. When Eric and I started talking, I had already

been given a brief glimpse into the style of this *Henry IV*: that it very directly, intentionally references the actual historical period, but is not set in an orthodox [version] of that world. So Eric and I immediately started talking about, "Well, what are the guideposts? How specifically in time period are we going to be?" And the answer was, pretty close to period, but with room to run.

And so immediately that means that you're talking about fights that might involve broadswords, or halberds and poleaxes—the specific weapons of military destruction in that period. And luckily, my background—way back when I started—was very, very sword-fighting focused, right? Like, that was my entire thing for years. And the very first show I ever did with stage combat was with broadswords....

PETER What show was that?

JACOB It was the Scottish play, which I won't say anything more about because we're doing

this interview in a theater. [*Laughs*]. It involved broadswords, it involved a beheading onstage, and all of the other things that come with that show. So the moment it was like, this [*Henry IV*] is a period-set, sword fighting show, I was like, ahh, we'll go back home for this.

Knowing that you have the tools, you may be ready to begin the process of doing fight choreography for a Shakespeare show. But the trick is, you don't know until the first day who you're working with exactly, even if you know the actors and you've seen them perform before. Is everyone healthy? Is everyone OK doing even the same stuff that you've seen them do before? The flexibility and the open mind that you start with [in conversations with the director]—what is the style, what are the weapons, what is the genre of choreography?—has to carry over to day one of the actual rehearsal process when you meet the actors and you're like, here's some ideas we have—how do you feel about doing them?

PETER You mention this production's setting being period, or period-ish. How else would you describe the approach to stage combat and violence that you and Eric and the company have found for this production?

JACOB "Honest," I think is the word. I'll veer a bit into Eric's lane and say that our hope is that even though the cast are all in chainmail and period costume, that the action of the show and the telling of this story are very grounded.

As a result, the sword fighting is not a kind of Errol Flynn swashbuckling. It's not even in a sort of hyper-brutal, "Game of Thrones"-ian style. All of it is informed by an efficiency and a directness designed not to put a filter between the action of the story and what the violence is showing you. So, honest.

PETER You saying "honest" makes me think: in this play, there's sham violence—for example, the fake robbery that Hal and Poinciville commit against Falstaff. And then there's deadly serious violence, in the wars. How do you approach representing those differently?

JACOB So, we choreographed and then cut an almost Looney Tunes-level of silliness in the highwaymen scene. There was a fully designed and implemented version of that scene which you're not going to see, because even though it was enjoyable, it was wrong

for the show. We were like, OK, this is too far. This isn't right. It isn't slapstick, in spite of how over the top the lines are—the titanic John Falstaff claiming that they're striking a blow for the out-of-work youth of England. And of course, he's like, the opposite of the youth of England. [*Laughs*]

That scene actually felt totally dishonest when we added comedy to it. The lines are still the lines, they're funny, and what you're going to see is very much not the violence you see later in the show. But it also isn't "comedy violence"—it doesn't get a veneer of comedy to take away from the fact that the scene is about honest people being robbed of every penny that they have.

PETER Is there particular language in the play that's informed any of the choices you and Eric have made regarding the violence?

JACOB Characters very specifically talk about fighting in the language of swordplay. But you also hear a lot of language about gun violence in this show; one of the characters is admired for his prowess with a pistol... there's another character *called* Pistol. [*Laughs*] And recruits for a war are referred to as "food for powder"—as in black powder. There is an extreme callousness toward the "cannon fodder" poor people of England, who are being rounded up and pressed into service.

[But] we decided that, in spite of the fact that the show is replete with mentions of guns, we were not going to mix firearms into the vocabulary of the show. And I don't think you miss them at all because the language of the fights you *see* is the language of sword fighting; while you *hear* a lot about guns, the language doesn't force us to include them. So we were able to maintain both narrative economy and a sort of direct and forthright approach to the violence without introducing, well, what does a gun look like now? And how do you introduce that in a theater in the round?

PETER I want to put a pin in theater in the round....

JACOB [*Laughs*] We'll get back to that.

PETER Let me also ask you about honor, because one of the huge themes of this play is honor, and what it is to be an honorable man and a warrior... the

tangibility, or not, of that. How have the characters' various thoughts and approaches to honor affected your work?

JACOB You can't not be driven by the hopes these characters articulate when you're putting the fights together. I think that's one of the biggest things that all of us have been keeping each other honest about in the choreography of the fights.

Hal's journey away from one father figure towards another... his dream about himself in the first part of the show and how he tries to make that dream a reality. And Hotspur's very... I'll let people have their own opinions about Hotspur, but I find [his] a tragically isolated version of personal honor. Watching those two ideals clash in a sword fight... And of course, there's a third character who has maybe the most direct reference to honor in the show. It's one of the great monologues of Shakespeare, I

James Udom as Henry Percy (Hotspur). Photo by Hollis King.



won't spoil it, but we also tried to give you what his concept of honor and approach to personal violence look like [in a fight] as well.

PETER Let's talk about staging in the round. What are the challenges, and are there opportunities, that come from staging a swordfight-heavy historical epic in the round?

JACOB A lot of stage combat is actually stage magic, right? It's about not showing the audience something and letting our imaginations fill in the blank of, oh my God, his nose got hit, oh my God, he's been cut. A silly version of that is the sword [passing] under the arm. And there's really nothing like that that you can get away with in the round because everything is seen by someone.

Without going into extremely obtuse specifics, I have found that the way to make stage combat in the round watchable, to still let people's imaginations be involved, is to have the movement of the fight match the shape of the stage. The struggle over a sword might involve a lot of angular movements and a lot of movements in a circle that enable everybody in the theater to see what's happening, and for no one to see where the hit landed.

And there are certain elements of contact stage combat where you actually place a blow or a cut, which is its own technique and requires like slightly different choreography than a hit that doesn't land but sounds or looks like it [does]. It's a whole different vocabulary, but it's one that I think, if done right, feels just as if not more legitimate than a stage fight in a proscenium.

PETER You've done fights for a number of Shakespeare's history plays. What are your thoughts on what these plays have to say to us about violence?

JACOB Yeah, I've been at this for a while. [Laughs] I have done, I think, all of the Plantagenet family shows, and a lot of them are near and dear to my heart. I just did *Henry VI parts 1, 2 and 3*... the sequels after that happy bit at Agincourt, I guess.

And the biggest thing that the history plays feel like they're talking to me about is tyranny, and unearned or illegitimately earned power. I think from the moment in *Richard II* when Bolingbroke (Henry

IV, not yet crowned) seizes power, you see that his illegitimate grab at power destabilizes the country for generations and begets wave after wave of other people who follow his example in more and more obviously illegitimate ways. That goes all the way to the Cade rebellion, which is, of course, just dressing on York's rebellion in *Henry VI*. But it all begins with this initial idea that Bolingbroke, Henry IV, kicks off which is that it's OK to disrupt society if you think you can do a better job, or you don't like the guy who's currently in power.

And it has just a horrific toll on the country. And the violence is everything from horrible, deeply personal assassinations and murders to the death of more English people in a single day [at the Battle of Towton] than died all the way up until World War One. So as a result of a totally self-interested decision, a catastrophic cycle of violence kicks off that lasts for a long time.

That's what I think these plays talk about. And I would say that the diversity of the violence that they create is very intentionally everything from deeply personal to national. And that's why we still do them, right? That's why they're done all over the world. As a violence artist, I think humanity's relationship to violence, and how power leads to violence, is something that we can never talk about too much.

PETER You're also the intimacy coordinator on this production. The play takes place partly in a brothel, so sex is in the mix. But your work extends beyond what people might think of when they hear the term intimacy coordinator. Can you talk about that work?

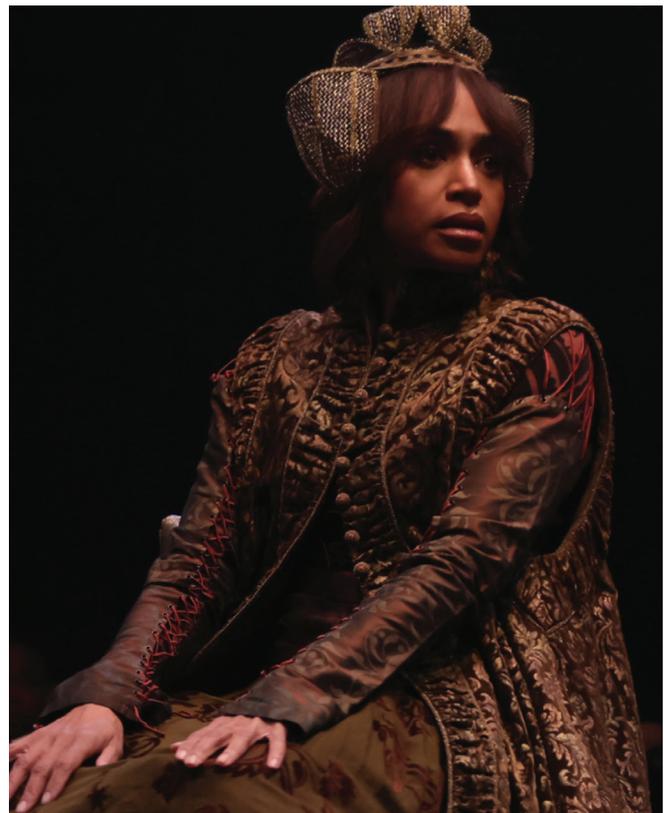
JACOB One of the saving graces of the modern theater is people have realized that it's probably not a good idea to say, "Well, you guys can figure this out," and leave two actors in a room to perform intimacy with each other, maybe unsupervised, maybe with the director barking at them, in a way that offers no safety, no communication, and in many cases no power for an actor to say, "I am uncomfortable." Intimacy coordination is really about making sure that the same ideas of specificity and safety that drive fight choreography are also present in intimate scenes.

There were a lot of ideas that we looked at in the rehearsal room asking, what levels of intimacy do we

want onstage as part of this world? And in addition to the scenes in the brothel—which, some of that is bawdy, mean-spirited comedy, but there's a lot of lightness, too, there's a lot of cleverness—there's also an intimate scene between Hotspur and his wife. A lot of versions of this show that I've seen have a very, "I am the man and I'm telling you what's happening, woman. Don't bother me with your silly love stuff," which on the page looks like might be what happening. But man, it goes on for an awful long time and she [adopts] an awful lot of different strategies, to justify that being a good way to play the scene.

So we were very curious about, is there a more intimate scene in those words? How sexy is that scene? How great a relationship do the Hotspurs have? And it was something that we looked at because, if you don't know that *Henry IV* is setting up the rest of the Plantagenet family shows, it really doesn't look like Hal's the hero for a lot of this show. So do we have a scene that shows you either the abusive intimacy of the Hotspur couple, or the beautiful and healthy details of that relationship? You'll see where we landed.

Cara Ricketts as Lady Percy. Photo by Hollis King.



PETER Last question: these history plays depict cycles of violence, as you said. And of course, the run of a production like this is, on some level, its own cycle of violence. The actors perform these things which are hard on the body, and can be psychologically hard to do in some cases. And you get to the end of the night, then you do it again tomorrow, and you do it eight times a week. How do you think about making a production sustainable for the ensemble?

JACOB I'll speak to the intimacy coordination first, because I've experienced the phenomenon where people in a rehearsal room will be like, this feels right. And over the course of the run, they realize that maybe their character is different than they thought it was. They learn and discover details about

James Udom as Henry Percy (Hotspur) and Elijah Jones as Prince Henry (Hal). Photo by Gerry Goodstein.



the scene, details about their character that maybe they didn't find in the few weeks of rehearsal where they got to run a scene three times or something.

And so even though the creative team is going to leave at opening, the intimacy work has a stopgap where it is up to the actors involved in intimacy scenes to check in with each other. Not right after the scene, not as they're walking off stage, not when their adrenaline is up, but as they arrive for the next day's performance to be like, "Did last night go right?"

And I think that the reason for that is it gives everybody a little bit of space to think about it. If something went wrong, you're like, "It didn't feel right, and I thought about it and I think it's this." It's not like, "Oh, that sucked and I'm angry at you because I'm not sure what it was, but I feel bad."

And so similar to the fight call at the beginning of a performance day—I'll talk about that in a second—there is an intimacy check in. The intimacy check in is retroactive, while the fight call is in advance of what's to come. And there's even a little buffer of time not only to check in, but [to say], "Hey, stage management, we need to look at that because I think something went off the rails. Was it different last night? And if it wasn't different, why did we feel different and what can we do to address that?" So that's how you sustain an intimacy piece, I would say.

And in terms of sustaining a fight show, the simplest answer to that is fight call. Every show that has fighting is required to have a rehearsal moment [each day] before people get into costume. That is, everybody runs the fights in slow motion, and then they run them at show speed. It gives everybody that same opportunity to say, is my body working today? Did my body get injured in the fighting last night? Did I pull something? Does this feel good today? Because there's no responsible way to assume that people are going to show up whole from day-to-day. Most of the time we're not in the theater; even if you're performing a four hour-long piece, that means most of the time you're not here. And so checking in every day to make sure your scene partners are safe and whole and sober is totally critical. That's the magic bullet. ●

PETER COOK is the Artistic Associate at Theatre for a New Audience.

THE PRODUCTION

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

WILLIAM BEDNAR (*Musician/Traveler/Messenger/Servant*). Theater: *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* (Broadway, San Francisco); *Tommy and Me* (Bucks County Playhouse); *As You Like It, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Macbeth* (Barefoot Shakespeare); *Twelfth Night* (Dumb Theater Co). Film: *The Cathedral*. Music: Guitar (*Daddy Longlegs*, White Heron Theater), Composer (*Twelfth Night*, Dumb Theater), (*Pericles*, Fools and Kings).

JORDAN BELLOW (*Poins/Prince John/Feeble*) is happy to return to Theatre for a New Audience after previously appearing in *Gnit* and *Richard II + Henry IV*. NY credits include *California* at Clubbed Thumb, *Interior* at 59E59, *The Feels* (KMS) at New Ohio Theatre, and *Alkestis* and *Macbeth* at The Connelly. Regionally, he has performed across the country including The Wilma, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Chester Theatre Company, Fisher Center at Bard, Westport Country Playhouse, Denver Center, Syracuse Stage, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Florida Studio Theatre and South Coast Repertory. Film/TV: *Dickinson*, *Gotham*, and *Orange Is The New Black*.

STEVEN EPP (*Worcester/Francis/Silence*). Theatre de la Jeune Lune: Co-Artistic Director, over 50 productions, 1983-2008. Lead roles: *Hamlet, Tartuffe, The Miser, Figaro*. The Moving Company: 2009-present, *Love/Labor/Lost, Speechless, Liberty Falls, Say All the Truth*. Broadway: *Hamlet* (New Victory Theatre). Off Broadway: *Servant of Two Masters* (TFANA); *Ruzante* (workshop) (The Public); Orlando: *a Rhapsody* (The Tank). Regional: *Indecent, Metamorphosis, The Little Prince, Refugia*, The Guthrie; *Man of La Mancha, Fiddler on the Roof, The Winter's Tale, Iphigenia at Aulis* (Ten Thousand Things); *The Lorax* (The Children's Theatre). Other: Berkeley Rep, La Jolla Playhouse, Old Globe, Yale Rep, Shakespeare Theatre, American Rep, The Alley. The Moving Company.

NIGEL GORE (*Warwick/Vernon*). Recent: *Women of Will* (Bedlam); The Dadda, *Entertaining Mr. Sloane* (ACP - Gene Frankel); Voltaire, *Emilie du Chatelet Defends her Life Tonight* (Duende NYC); Scrooge, *Christmas Carol, 2021 & 2022* (Orlando Shakes); York/Dick the Butcher, *Henry VI Part 2*; Gloucester, *King Lear*, w/Christopher Lloyd; Prospero, *The Tempest* (Shakespeare and Company); George, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (Eliot Norton Award Outstanding Actor). Off-Broadway: Dr. Rank, *A Doll's House*; Ostermark, *The Father* (TFANA). Pickering, *Pygmalion*; Col. Brandon, *Sense & Sensibility*; Dorn, *The Seagull* (Bedlam). Regional: Enobarbus, *Antony & Cleopatra*; Killigrew, *Nell Gwynne* (Folger DC); Richard, *Richard III*; Macbeth, *Macbeth*; Bottom, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Colorado Shakes).

SLATE HOLMGREN (*Nym/Sheriff/Mouldy/Douglas*). *Othello* (NYTW); The Public: *King Lear, Twelfth Night* (Shakespeare in the Park). New York: *The Seagull* (Culture Project); *The Cherry Orchard, Double Falsehood* (CSC). Regional: *The Taming of the Shrew* (California Shakespeare); *Passion Play, The Master Builder, Trouble in Mind* (Yale Rep); *Macbeth* (A.R.T.E.). Film/TV: *The Instigators, FBI: Most Wanted, The Amazing Spider-Man 2, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Douglas Brown, The Factory, The Following, The Good Wife, Blue Bloods, Elementary*. Education: MFA, Yale School of Drama.

ELIJAH JONES (*Prince Henry [Hal]*). New York: *The Ally, Richard II* (The Public Theater); *Confederates* (Signature Theatre Company, Audience Development Committee, Inc Award for Outstanding Ensemble). Regional: *Henry V* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre), *Bonez* (People's Light, 2024 Barrymore Nomination for Best Ensemble), *Airness, As You Like It* (Chautauqua Theater Company); *Macbeth, A Christmas Carol, The Many Deaths of Nathan Stubblefield* (Actors Theatre of Louisville). Television: *The Crowded Room* (AppleTV+). Education: MFA, The Juilliard School; BA, Penn State University. Instagram: [@elijahjones717](https://www.instagram.com/elijahjones717)

PJ JU (*Music Director/Musician/Messenger*) (They/Them). Broadway: *Wicked* (former Keyboard 2 sub). Off-Broadway: *Music City* (Bedlam), *Big Gay Jamboree, DRAG*, Classical Theatre of Harlem (AUDELCO nomination). Regional: Milwaukee Rep, Hope Summer Rep (BroadwayWorldMI Runner-Up). NYC Music Director: 54 Below, Prospect Theatre Co., Circle in the Square Theatre School. Songwriting: JoJo Siwa's XOMG POP! *1234Ever*, Apple Music Country, Spotify editorials, SiriusXM TopOfTheCountry, iHeartRadio, NY Shorts International Festival, Nashville Film Festival, The Cutting Room, The Bitter End, The Listening Room, The Bluebird Cafe. Juilliard School Pre-College. Taipei National Symphony Orchestra (soloist), Weill Recital Hall/Carnegie Hall. Inaugural Winner, MUSE/Maestra MD Experience w/*Wicked*. BMI Lehman-Engel Composer 2024-2025.

THE PRODUCTION

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

JOHN KEATING (*Westmoreland/Shallow*) is delighted to make his seventh appearance with Theatre for a New Audience (*The Winter's Tale*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Measure for Measure* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, all directed by Arin Arbus; *Pericles*, directed by Trevor Nunn; *The Broken Heart*, directed by Selina Cartmell). A prominent New York theatre actor, he has also performed in 27 shows with Irish Rep (most recently, the 2024 Lortel winning *Translations*, *Molly Sweeney*, *Autumn Royal*, *Two by Synge*, and *The O'Casey Cycle* (Calloway Award 2019)). Numerous other New York appearances include Atlantic, Roundabout, Mint, Pearl, Pond. Most leading regional theatres. Extensive TV includes a dozen guest star appearances, and his work on film includes three recent A24 films: *First Cow* - Time magazine film of the year in 2020, *A Different Man*, and *Marty Supreme* (fall 2025). Also upcoming: the title role in *Sticky* (fall 2025), *Misty Button*, *Lone Ranger*, *Emerald City*, *Freedom*. John has narrated over 250 audiobooks (Audie winner).

OWEN LAHEEN (*Lady Mortimer/Davy/Traveler/Hotspur's Squire/Messenger/Page*) (they/them) is a non-binary actor from Wicklow, Ireland. Their most recent credits include *Translations* (Irish Repertory Theatre, Lucille Lortel Award Winner for Outstanding Revival), *The Wolves* (McCarter Theater), *Belfast Girls* (Irish Repertory Theatre). Screen: *Mutt* (Sundance 2023, Berlinale 2023), *City On A Hill* (Showtime). They have devised and developed new work in collaboration with LaMaMa ETC, Clubbed Thumb, Mercury Store, and others. They trained at UNCSA and BADA, and received a BFA from SUNY Purchase. For Charles Tuthill.

DAKIN MATTHEWS (Adapter, *King Henry IV/Traveler*). Besides acting on stage in over 250 productions in his 60-year career, nine on Broadway (including originating roles in *Rocky the Musical*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and *Waitress the Musical*), on screen with over 300 TV appearances (including *Gilmore Girls*, *King of Queens*, and *The Gilded Age*) and 30 films (including *True Grit*, *Bridge of Spies*, *Lincoln*, and *Zero Charisma*), Mr. Matthews is an award-winning playwright (L. A. Critics Circle 2005 Award for *The Prince of L.A.*), Shakespearean dramaturge (Drama Desk Award for *Henry IV*), and script translator (five Walker Reid Awards for translating Spanish Golden Age plays). He is also a Shakespeare scholar, the creator/host of the YouTube video series "Sheltering with Shakespeare," a teacher of Shakespeare Masterclasses around the world, a former Artistic Director of three theatres, and an Emeritus Professor of English from Cal State East Bay.

Owen Laheen as Davy. Photo by Hollis King.



THE PRODUCTION

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

CARA RICKETTS (*Lady Percy/Doll Tearsheet*) recently starred as Hermione Granger in *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* on Broadway this past fall. Fans of the hit TV series *The Resident* will recall her as Morris Chestnut's feisty love interest. A brilliant stage and screen actress, Cara won the 2020 ACTRA Award (Best Supporting Actress) for her role in Netflix's 19th-century period drama *Anne with an E*. TV credits include the Canadian series reboot of *Street Legal*, *Orphan Black*, and the critically acclaimed mini-series *The Book of Negroes*.

MICHAEL ROGERS (*Glendower/Northumberland/Bullcalf*) was born in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and has worked at theatres across the US and internationally in roles varying from Titania, Dracula, God, Robert Mugabe; his association with TFANA stretches over 30 years. Films: *The Mosquito Coast*, *Weekend at Bernie's II*, and *Dopefiend*, among others. Television: NBC, ABC, and CBS episodics. Mr. Rogers' directing reaches from Off-Broadway to universities. He has written for film and television and was story editor for Soho films US. Mr Rogers is proud of his written work for Brooklyn's Carnival with PAGWAH, UTOPIA PAN SOUL; and his work with Jazz musicians is Still Swinging. Graduate of the Yale School of Drama.

JAY O. SANDERS (*Sir John Falstaff*) appeared in the Broadway revival of *Purlie Victorious* (filmed for Great Performances), the world premiere of Pulitzer-winning *Primary Trust* (Outer Critics Circle Award), the Broadway premiere of *Girl From The North Country*, as *Cyrano* at the Guthrie Theater, and *Uncle Vanya* (Drama Desk Award) at Hunter Theater Project. He and wife, Maryann Plunkett, received a 2024 NY Critics Circle Joint Lifetime Achievement Citation and originated all 12 plays comprising Richard Nelson's *Rhinebeck Panorama*, including two international tours and three Zoom plays. Having played many of Shakespeare's great roles, he is honored to embrace Falstaff. Many films and television projects, (most recently *His Three Daughters*), documentary and audiobook narration.

Michael Rogers as Earl of Northumberland. Photo by Hollis King.





Sandra Shipley as Mistress Quickly and Slate Holmgren as Nym. Photo by Hollis King.

SANDRA SHIPLEY (*Mistress Quickly/Lady Northumberland/Archbishop*). Broadway: *Present Laughter*, *Indiscretions*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Blithe Spirit*, *Equus*, *Vincent in Brixton*. Off-Broadway: *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, *Stuff Happens*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, *Venus*, *The Daughter in Law*, *Phaedra in Delirium*. Regional: *Richard III* (Shakespeare Theatre D.C.), *Mousetrap* (McCarter), *The American Plan* (Old Globe), *Major Barbara* (Guthrie), *Lady Windermere's Fan* (Williamstown), *Platonov*, *Tis Pity She's a Whore* (ART), *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (Gloucester Stage), *Act a Lady* (ATL Humana), *Way of the World*, *Escaped Alone* (Yale), *Macbeth* (Boston Shakespeare), *Medea* (Merrimack Rep), *Merry Wives of Windsor* (Huntington). National Tours: *Anything Goes*, *Blithe Spirit* with Angela Lansbury. UK: *London Assurance*, *When Thou Art King* (RSC), *Look Back in Anger* (Royal Court).

JAMES UDOM (*Henry Percy [Hotspur]/Pistol*). Off Broadway: *The Rolling Stone* (Lincoln Center), *The Revolving Cycles Truly and Steadily Roll'd* (The Playwrights Realm), *Mies Julie* (Classic Stage Company), *Macbeth* (The Public Theater), *The Winter's Tale* (The Pearl Theatre Company), *Tamburlaine* (Theatre for a New Audience). Select Regional: *Primary Trust* (La Jolla Playhouse), *The Taming of the Shrew* (The Old Globe), *Father Comes Home From the Wars* (Yale Rep and A.C.T. (San Francisco Bay Area Critics Circle Award for BEST ACTOR)), *Julius Caesar* (Shakespeare and Company), *Romeo and Juliet* (Elm Shakespeare Company). Film: *Macbeth* (A24), *Judas and the Black Messiah* (Warner Bros), *Murder City* (Village Roadshow), *Crown Heights* (Amazon Studios). TV: Upcoming Apple TV series *Chief of War* opposite Jason Momoa. *Echo 3* (Apple TV), *The Sandman* (Netflix), *Accused* (Hulu), *Chicago PD*, *Law and Order SVU*, *Evil* (NBC). Education: MFA, Yale School of Drama (Princess Grace award and Hershel Williams prize for excellence in acting).

ELAN ZAFIR (*Bardolph/Mortimer/Hastings*) is originally from Montreal, Canada. He is a company member of Bedlam and lives in Manhattan with his wife and kids. THEATER: *Merchant of Venice* (CSC); *Our Class* (CSC); *The Seagull Experience* (En Garde Arts); *Arcadia*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Hedda Gabler* (Bedlam); *Everybody*, *Othello*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *Salomé* (STC); *God of Carnage* (Milwaukee Rep); *There's Always the Hudson* (Woolly Mammoth); *Junk* (Arena Stage); *Twelve Angry Men*, *Ragtime*, (Ford's Theatre); *King John*, *The Way of the World* (Folger Theatre); *Eureka Day*, *The Vagrant Trilogy*, *Paper Dolls* (Mosaic Theatre). FILM/TV: *Triumph of the Will*, *Hired Hands*, *Good Boy*, *Your Friends & Neighbors*, *House of Cards*, *Blue Bloods*, *The Blacklist*, *East New York*, *FBI: International*, and *Law & Order(s)*.

THE PRODUCTION

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

ERIC TUCKER (Director). Wall Street Journal DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR 2014/2021. Off-Broadway: *Music City*; *The Assassination of Julius Caesar*; *Arcadia*; *Fall River Fishing*; *The Winter's Tale*; *Hedda Gabler*; *Persuasion*; *The Crucible*; *Uncle Romeo Vanya Juliet*; *Pygmalion*; *Peter Pan*; *Vanity Fair*; *Bedlam's Sense and Sensibility*; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; *Bedlam's Saint Joan*; *Bedlam's Hamlet*; Tina Packer's *Women of Will*; *New York Animals*; *Twelfth Night* and *What You Will* in Rep; *The Seagull*. Other: *Richard II*, *Henry IV parts 1 & 2* (Workshop Production, TFANA); *Angels in America: Parts 1 & 2* (Bedlam/Boston); *Caesar and Cleopatra* (ASC); *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Two River), Disney's *Beauty & The Beast* (OSF); *Pericles* (American Players); *Copenhagen* (Central Square Theatre), *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (HVSF), *Mate* (The Actors' Gang). Eric resides in New York City where he is Artistic Director of Bedlam.

JIMMY STUBBS (Scenic Designer) Off-Broadway Debut. Regional: *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Signature Theatre), *Pipe Dream* (Berkshire Theatre Group), *The Band's Visit* (The Huntington). Education: David Geffen School of Drama at Yale. Proud member of USA Local 829. [@jimmystubbsdesign](https://www.instagram.com/jimmystubbsdesign)

CATHERINE ZUBER (Co-Costume Designer). Broadway: *Moulin Rouge*, (Tony Award, Olivier Award, Drama Desk Award, Outer Critics Circle Award), *Mrs. Doubtfire*, *My Fair Lady*, (Tony Award, Drama Desk Award, Outer Critics Circle Award), *Oslo*, *War Paint* (Drama Desk Award, Outer Critics Circle Award), *King & I*, (Olivier Award, Tony Award), *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Golden Boy*. *South Pacific* (Tony Award); *The Coast of Utopia* (Tony Award); *The Light in the Piazza* (Tony Award); *Awake and Sing!* (Tony Award); *The Royal Family* (Tony Award); *Gigi* (Drama Desk Award). Metropolitan Opera: *Rigoletto*, *Porgy & Bess*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Les Contes d'Hoffman*, *Comte Ory*, *L'elisir d'Amore*, *Otello*, *Dr. Atomic*, *Roméo et Juliette*. 2016 Induction: Theater Hall of Fame.

Steven Epp as Silence and John Keating as Robert Shallow. Photo by Hollis King.



THE PRODUCTION

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

ALEXANDER COLE GOTTLIEB "AC" (Co-Costume Designer). Recent design credits include: *The Bodyguard*; *Fragments of a Star*; *Dance to This – Kids Version*; *Beyond the Backyard*; *Girl VS Corinth*; *The Secret Garden*; *The Wild Party*; *In the Heights*; *Bonnie and Clyde*; *Passing Strange*; *Out of My Head*. Other Associate/Assistant Collaborations: Broadway - *TINA: The Tina Turner Musical*, *Moulin Rouge the Musical*; *Mean Girls*; *My Fair Lady*; *OSLO*; *Something Rotten!*; *Tuck Everlasting*; *Aladdin*. See more at JamesandAC.com.

NICOLE E. LANG (Lighting Designer). Nicole E. Lang is a Brooklyn-based lighting designer. Her recent designs include *True Love Forever* (Third Rail Projects), *Other People's Dead Dads* (Arterial Projects), *BioAdapted* (Transforma Theater Co.), *Richard II & Henry IV Workshop* (Theatre for a New Audience), *Hanging with Clarence* (Park Avenue Armory), *Today Is My Birthday* (Yale Repertory Theatre). She has worked as an associate lighting designer on Broadway, Off-Broadway, and regionally. Outside the theater, she is a part of the lighting team at the Guggenheim Museum and the co-creator of *Let's Go to the Moon!*, a virtual musical for all ages. Member USA Local 829. nicoleelang.com

JANE SHAW (Sound Designer and Composer) designed *Measure for Measure*, *Tamburlaine*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Jew of Malta*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Hamlet*, and *The Killer* with TFANA. New York work includes *Bedlam's Music City*, directed by Eric Tucker, and productions at Playwrights Horizons, the Mint, MTC, and the Roundabout. Ms. Shaw has designed at the Huntington, the Guthrie, the Alley, Cleveland Play House, Long Wharf, Hartford Stage, Shakespeare Theatre Company, and The Old Globe. Recognition: Drama Desk, Henry Award, Bessie Award, Meet the Composer Grant, and several Lortel nominations. Graduate of Harvard University and the Yale School of Drama. janeshaw.com

ANDREW WADE (Resident Voice Director). Broadway: *Harry Potter and The Cursed Child Parts One and Two* (U.S. Head of Voice and Dialect), *King Lear* with Glenda Jackson (Voice Coach), *Matilda the Musical* (Director of Voice) and national tour. Royal Shakespeare Company: Head of Voice (1990-2003). The Public Theater: Director of Voice. NYTW: *Othello* with Daniel Craig. The Guthrie Theater: since 2002. Teaching: Juilliard (Adjunct Faculty Drama Division), Stella Adler Studio (Master Teacher Voice and Speech). Film: *Shakespeare in Love*. Workshops and Lectures: Worldwide. Fellow: Rose Bruford College.

JON KNUST (Properties Supervisor) Selected credits include: *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune* (Broadway); *Waiting for Godot*, *Des Moines*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Gnit*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Skin of Our Teeth*, *About Alice*, *The Father*, and *A Doll's House* (TFANA); *We Live In Cairo* (NYTW); *A Bright New Boise*, *Painted Rocks at Revolver Creek*, *Big Love and Appropriate* (Signature); and *Peter and the Starcatcher* (tour). Jon got his start in props at the Williamstown Theatre Festival and graduated from Eastern Connecticut State University.

JACOB GRIGOLIA-ROSENBAUM (Fight Director/Intimacy Coordinator) (he/him) (SDC, AEA, SAG/AFTRA) Credits include: Theater: *Here Lies Love* (Broadway, etc.), *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Broadway, etc.), *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* (Broadway, etc.), *Cyrano* (Broadway), *Ghost of John McCain* (Soho Playhouse), *Robber Bridegroom* (Roundabout), *Sailor Man* (co-creator; NYFringe; Outstanding Play), at Old Globe (San Diego): *Henry6*, *Last Goodbye*, *Robin Hood!*, *As You Like It*, *Othello*, *R&J*, *Hamlet*. Other Fight Direction for: Disney Cruises, The Public, Williamstown, Asolo, Ogunquit, Les Freres, Prospect Musicals, Mercury Store, the Tank and many others. Film/TV: *Peter Pan Live!* (NBC/Universal), *Dark Was the Night* (also creature performer; Caliber/Image) Education: Yale College (Fencing NCAA Div1).

TOM WATSON (Hair and Wig Designer). Originally from Northern Ireland, he headed the wig/makeup department at the Metropolitan Opera for 17 years. He has designed more than 100 Broadway productions, including *Wicked*, *Rock of Ages*, *The King & I*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Oslo*, *Falsettos*, *The Little Foxes*, *Junk*, *My Fair Lady*, *King Kong*, *All My Sons*, *The Great Society*, *Plaza Suite*, and *Parade*. Upcoming: *Floyd Collins*, *Just In Time*.

THE PRODUCTION

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

JONATHAN KALB (Dramaturg) is professor of theatre at Hunter College, CUNY and is TFANA's resident dramaturg. The author of five books on theatre, he has worked for more than three decades as a theatre scholar, critic, journalist and dramaturg. He has twice won The George Jean Nathan Award for Dramatic Criticism and has also won the George Freedley Award for an outstanding theatre book from the Theatre Library Association. He often writes about theatre on his TheaterMatters blog at jonathankalb.com.

CHARLIE LOVEJOY (Production Stage Manager). Off-Broadway: *Hold On To Me Darling* (WJP/Seaview); *Kimberly Akimbo* (Atlantic Theater Company); *Seagull* (Elevator Repair Service). Regional: 2024 WTF *Cabaret* (Williamstown Theatre Festival); *Escaped Alone, The Brightest Thing in the World, Between Two Knees* (Yale Repertory Theatre); *The Santaland Diaries, Incendiary, graveyard shift* (Goodman Theatre); *Pericles, As You Like It, Romeo and Juliet, Henry V, A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Elm Shakespeare); *Rossini's Otello, Kiss Me Kate* (Central City Opera). Academic: *Moe's a D*ck, littleboy/littleman, Romeo and Juliet, Bodas de sangre* (David Geffen School of Drama). B.A., University of Chicago. M.F.A., David Geffen School of Drama at Yale.

SOPHIA SHAFIUZZAMAN (Assistant Stage Manager): Her most recent productions include TEETH at New World Stages. Broadway: *The Great Gatsby, Kimberly Akimbo, I Need That, How I Learned to Drive*. Other productions with: Atlantic Theater, Shakespeare in the Park, Williamstown; Thanks to her family & Sean. [@sophiazzaman](https://twitter.com/sophiazzaman)

BLAKE ZIDELL & ASSOCIATES (Press Representative) is a Brooklyn-based public relations firm representing arts organizations and cultural institutions. Clients include St. Ann's Warehouse, Playwrights Horizons, Signature Theatre, Soho Rep, National Sawdust, The Kitchen, Performance Space New York, PEN America, StoryCorps, Symphony Space, the Fisher Center at Bard, Peak Performances, Irish Arts Center, the Merce Cunningham Trust, the Onassis Foundation, Taylor Mac, Page 73, The Playwrights Realm, PlayCo and more.

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In 2001, TFANA became the first American theatre invited to bring a production of Shakespeare to the Royal Shakespeare Company, and in 2007, TFANA returned to the RSC. In 2025, TFANA tours its production of William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* starring John Douglas Thompson as Shylock and directed by Arin Arbus to the Royal Lyceum Theatre of Edinburgh, Scotland.

TFANA performs for audiences of all ages and backgrounds; is devoted to economically accessible tickets and promotes humanities and education programs. TFANA has played on Broadway, Off Broadway and toured internationally and nationally. In 2013, It opened its first permanent home, Polonsky Shakespeare Center (PSC), Brooklyn, with the 299-seat Samuel H. Scripps Mainstage and the 50-seat Theodore Rogers Studio.

ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION ("Equity"), founded in 1913, is the U.S. labor union that represents more than 50,000 actors and stage managers. Equity seeks to foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of society and advances the careers of its members by negotiating wages and working conditions and providing a wide range of benefits including health and pension plans. Actors' Equity is a member of the AFL-CIO and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. #EquityWorks

THE PRODUCTION

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION *Henry IV* adapted by Dakin Matthews marks the company's completion of exploring Shakespeare's eight-play History Cycle as separate productions (not a single presentation of the complete cycle). The commitment began 32 years ago with TFANA's 1993 production of *Henry V*, featuring Mark Rylance in the title role in his New York debut. In 1996, TFANA produced *Henry VI, Parts One, Two, and Three*, adapted into two plays performed in repertory featuring Philp Goodwin in the title role in a Drama Desk Award-winning performance. In 1998, TFANA produced *Richard II* featuring Steven Skybell in the title role, performed in repertory by a single company with *Richard III* featuring Christopher McCann in the title role.



John Keating, Jordan Bellow, Dakin Matthews, Michael Rogers, Owen Laheen, William Bednar, Elan Zafir, Steven Epp. Photo by Gerry Goodstein.

STAFF FOR HENRY IV

Music Director and Arrangements.....PJ Ju
Associate Scenic Designer.....Kim Zhou
Assistant Costume Designer.....Evan Riley
Assistant Lighting Designer.....Matt Lazarus
Associate Sound Designer.....Angela Baughman
Production Assistant.....Thalia Lopez
Riggers.....Cory Asinofsky, Julia Conlon,
Frann McCrann, Tobias Segal
Lead Carpenter.....Tobias Segal
Carpenters.....Cory Asinofsky, Steven Cepeda,
Daniel Cohen, Julia Conlon, Ellie Engstrom,
Jack Lynch, Frann McCrann
Production Electrician.....Michael Cahill
Electricians.....Blaize Adler-Ivanbrook, Jeff D'Ambrosio,
DJ Fralin, Cassandra Gutterman-Johns, Lillian Hilmes,
Tony Mulanix, Alex Nemfakos, Alyssa Paulo
Production Audio.....Hayden Bearden
Assistant Production Audio.....Jonathan Stutz
Audio Technicians.....Brian C. Anner, Rudy Bearden,
Joseph Parisi, Jose Rivas, Dan Santamaria
Deck Carpenter.....Tristan Viner-Brown

Wardrobe Supervisor.....Lily Cunicelli
Dressers.....Kristi D'Arrigo, Clara Gumbart
Swing Dresser/Day Worker.....Nicole Crandall
Lighting Programmer & Operator.....Paul Kennedy
Front-of-house Audio Mixer.....Zo McGlynn

Scenery provided by Daedalus Design & Production.
Lighting gear provided by PRG. Audio gear provided by
FiveOHM Productions. Additional rigging gear provided
by PRG.

Costumes provided by Angels Costumes, Arel Studios,
Euroco Costumes, Arnold Levine, Hali Liles, LR
Tailoring, TDF Costume Collection.

Physical Therapy.....Flyspace Physical Therapy
Medical Director.....Philip Montana MD, MFA



Henry IV was rehearsed at THE NEW 42ND STREET
STUDIOS.

JEFFREY HOROWITZ (Founding Artistic Director) began his career in theatre as an actor and appeared on Broadway, Off-Broadway and in regional theatre. In 1979, he founded Theatre for a New Audience. Horowitz has served on the panel of the New York State Council on the Arts, on the board of directors of Theatre Communications Group, the advisory board of the Shakespeare Society and the artistic directorate of London's Globe Theatre. Awards: 2003 John Houseman Award from The Acting Company, 2004 Gaudium Award from Breukelein Institute, 2019 Obie Lifetime Achievement and TFANA's 2020 Samuel H. Scripps.

DOROTHY RYAN (Managing Director) joined Theatre for a New Audience in 2003 after a ten-year fundraising career with the 92nd Street Y and Brooklyn Museum. Ryan began her career in classical music artist management and also served as company manager and managing leader for several regional opera companies. She is a Brooklyn Women of Distinction honoree and was a founding member of the Downtown Brooklyn Arts Alliance.

CHLOE KNIGHT (General Manager) is a graduate of the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale's Theater Management program, and recipient of Yale's 2024 Morris J. Kaplan Prize in Theater Management. Knight has served as Associate Managing Director of the Yale Repertory Theatre, assistant to the president of LORT, Co-Managing Director of the Yale Summer Cabaret, Company Manager at Yale Rep, and Management Fellow at Lincoln Center Theater. Before earning her MFA, she held myriad fundraising positions at Page 73, consulting firm Advance NYC, and The Lark.



Polonsky Shakespeare Center. Photo © David Sundberg/Esto.



Samuel H. Scripps Mainstage. Photo © Francis Dzikowski/OTTO.

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Theatre for a New Audience Education Programs

Theatre for a New Audience's education programs introduce students to Shakespeare and other classics with the same artistic integrity that we apply to our productions. Through our unique and exciting methodology, students engage in hands-on learning that involves all aspects of literacy set in the context of theatre education. Our residencies are structured to address City and State Learning Standards both in English Language Arts and the Arts, the New York City DOE's Curriculum Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in Theater, and the New York State Common Core Learning Standards for English Language Arts. Begun in 1984, our programs have served more than 140,000 students, ages 9 through 18, in New York City Public Schools city-wide.

A Home in Brooklyn: Polonsky Shakespeare Center

Theatre for a New Audience's home, Polonsky Shakespeare Center, is a centerpiece of the Brooklyn Cultural District.

Designed by celebrated architect Hugh Hardy, Polonsky Shakespeare Center is the first New York City theatre conceived and built for classic drama since Lincoln Center's 1965 Vivian Beaumont. The 27,500-square-foot facility is a uniquely flexible performance space. The 299-seat Samuel H. Scripps Mainstage, inspired by the Cottesloe at London's National Theatre, combines an Elizabethan courtyard theatre with modern theatre technology. It allows the stage and seating to be reconfigured for each production. The facility also includes the Theodore C. Rogers Studio (a 50-seat rehearsal/performance studio), and theatrical support spaces. The City of New York-developed Arts Plaza, designed by landscape architect Ken Smith, creates a natural gathering place around the building. In addition, Polonsky Shakespeare Center is also one of the few sustainable (green) theatres in the country, with LEED-NC Silver rating from the United States Green Building Council.

Now with a home of its own, Theatre for a New Audience is contributing to the continued renaissance of Downtown Brooklyn. In addition to its season of plays, the Theatre has expanded its Humanities offerings to include lectures, seminars, workshops, and other activities for artists, scholars, and the general public. When not in use by the Theatre, its new facility is available for rental, bringing much needed affordable performing and rehearsal space to the community.

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September 1, 2023 – December 31, 2024

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Jeffrey Horowitz, Founding Artistic Director of Theatre for a New Audience, will retire at the end of this season. The Jeffrey Horowitz Legacy Fund has been established to celebrate his extraordinary 45 years of visionary leadership and singular accomplishments in American theatre—and especially in American productions of Shakespeare—as well as provide support for the new Artistic Director in their first seasons. For more information, or to make a gift, please contact James Lynes, Director of Institutional Advancement, at jlynes@tfana.org.

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A 2011 Challenge Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) established a Humanities endowment fund at Theatre for a New Audience to support in perpetuity the 360° Series: Viewfinders as well as the TFANA Council of Scholars and the free TFANA Talks series. Leading matching gifts to the NEH grant were provided by Joan and Robert Arnow, Norman and Elaine Brodsky, The Durst Organization, Perry and Marty Granoff, Stephanie and Tim Ingrassia, John J. Kerr & Nora Wren Kerr, Litowitz Foundation, Inc., Robert and Wendy MacDonald, Sandy and Stephen Perl binder, The Prospect Hill Foundation, Inc., Theodore C. Rogers, and from purchasers in the Theatre's Seat for Shakespeare Campaign, 2013-2015.

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