

Stagecraft presents . . .

***The Directors' Reveal -
The 2018 Stagecraft Season***

2018 Schedule

| | The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde | Brontë by Polly Teale | King Lear by William Shakespeare | Yes, Prime Minister by Antony Jay and Jonathan Lynn | Wolf Hall and Bring Up the Bodies adapted for stage by Mike Poulton Based on the novels by Hilary Mantel |
|--|---|------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Plays | | | | | |
| Auditions | 18-19 November 2017 | Early March 2018 | Feb (Older roles of Lear and Gloucester); early-mid April (all the younger leads and ensemble) (TBC) | Early-mid June (TBC) | Early-mid August |
| Rehearsals (Tues/Thurs evenings /Sunday afternoons) | Late November – Late Feb (TBC) | Mid March – Mid May (TBC) | Late April – Late June (TBC) | Early July – Late August (TBC) | Early Sep – Late Oct(TBC) |
| Opening | Wed 28 Feb | Wed 23 May | Wed 27 June | Wed 29 Aug | Sat 3 Nov |
| Closing | Sat 10 March | FRIDAY 1 June | Sat 7 July | Sat 8 Sept | Sat 24 Nov |
| Pack-out | Sun 11 March | SATURDAY 2nd June | Sun 8 July | Sun 9th Sept | Sun 25 Nov |

The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde

Directed by Tony Hogan

February 2018

The Play “A Trivial Comedy for Serious People”

Oscar Wilde wrote this incredibly witty play as a pastiche of late-Victorian morals and the hypocrisy he saw all around him in the beau monde of his day.

Up until the mid-1920's it was performed in the fashion of the day, only remaining as an 1895 period piece from that era onwards. We are taking this play to the Jazz Age, when It Girls were invented, morals had very blurred boundaries and accents were cut-glass. Think glamour, smouldering looks and Wilde's perfectly-pitched dialogue where conventional things are uttered in a way that drips with opposite intention . . .

It will be fast and funny, requiring actors to really flesh out the characters, using every syllable to move us forward from stereotypes, to real people living in this rule-bound world of luxury.

It is in three Acts, and there will be two short intervals, to consider a martini or caviar-topped vol-au-vent.

Do you have an interest in creating or resourcing high glamour props and set dressing, working alongside the talented designer, Sonya? We would love to hear from music experts who know their authentic Jazz, baby!

Let's have the audience leave the theatre feeling good about not being serious for a little while.

The Plot

A handbag gives birth to a posh bloke in Victoria Station, surrounded by cucumber sandwiches. Two sarcastic girls have a duel with diaries but they end up blaming it on their boyfriends, and it turns out adult baptism was all the rage when this play was written. There is an Aunt with a bad memory who is scary, and makes sure the correct morals of the day are adhered to, despite a lack of apparent earnestness on behalf of the younger generation.

Or was that a dream I've been having a lot, recently?

The Characters

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| Algernon Moncrieff | Young man about town. Happy bachelor, secure in his ability to make people do what he wants. Has invented a convenient friend to explain his frequent absences on excursions of a more dubious moral nature. Jolly and funny. |
| John (Jack) Worthing | Algernon's friend who also has a double life, in his case involving a fictitious brother, allowing him to escape responsibility and let off steam. Has a more mature, guilty outlook than Algernon |
| Lady Bracknell | Mature lady, guardian of Society's morals. Leader of her own aristocratic pack. This part has been successfully played by men, being a woman (no drag or panto dame, please), and we are happy to audition either sex. Lady B commands attention, and really gets her own way. |
| Gwendolen Fairfax | Daughter to Lady Bracknell, and cousin to Algernon. Love interest for Jack. Gwendolen is assured, confident, fashionable, and utterly unshakeable in her views, just like Mama. She <i>may</i> allow a man to be in love with her. |
| Cecily Cardew | Jack's ward, who has grown up in the country. Spoiled, indulged, and like all the women in this play, completely aware of her own power. She too is ready for love on her own terms, thank you. |
| Miss Prism | Mature woman, ex-nanny to the baby Jack, now governess to Cecily. Has a secret, and also harbours a passion for . . . |
| Reverend Chasuble | Comfortable, unintelligent preachy country vicar. Needs to sharpen up his baptism skills. |
| Lane/Merriman | Male or female to take on a dual role. Lane – urban sophisticated valet to bachelor and Merriman – country Manor House butler. Not many lines each, but we'd love to see what they really think of their "betters". |

The Crew

As we are first up, some wonderful crew are already on-board.

Anna Allen and Jen Pearce are the incomparable Production Managers.

Sarah Arndt will be the backstage “Arndt Augusta”, keeping everyone on their Charleston toes.

Sonya Thomas is creating a wonderful design, for 3 Acts of splendid, bygone glamour.

Devon Heaphy is lighting up our world with his renowned lighting design skills.

Mel Heaphy is joining us to provide some rhythm and Charleston moves with her Choreography capability.

Helen Pauley will be working her magic to jazz up our wardrobe options to ensure Actors are suitably attired.

Please come forward if you are interested in:

Props:

Not exhaustive, but pitched perfectly to complement the design would be required, and the same person may like to include set dressing.

Operator:

We don't anticipate much complexity, and are happy to hear from you if you enjoy this vital role, likely to only need one operator to do both lighting and sound cues.

Music:

Dance forward Jazz fans! We'd love to get some Charleston in there, and lots of period-perfect songs and music to match the overall concept.

Brontë by Polly Teale

Directed by Jayne Grace

May 2018

The Play

This is the New Zealand premiere of Polly Teale's masterpiece, "Brontë." It's about the three Brontë sisters, who lived single and isolated lives on the Yorkshire moors, yet wrote some of the most powerful fiction ever penned. This play digs into the Brontë family dynamic and explores how the seemingly mundane, isolated and oppressed outward lives of these spinsters was a poor façade for the passionate and brilliant women underneath.

Set predominantly in 1845 (it jumps around a bit), Charlotte Brontë is just about to write *Jane Eyre* and Emily is writing *Wuthering Heights*. During this time, women couldn't publish under their own gender or even enter a library – they had a very limited part in public life. This play combines the real and the imaginary, as the Brontë's fictional characters haunt their creators. This production will be a beautiful voyage into the lives of English literature's early feminists. It will delight book lovers and non-book lovers alike.

The Plot

The play starts meta. Actors are dressing in Victorian garb, becoming the Brontë sisters as they discuss their legacy. Then it's 1845 and Branwell and Anne are on their way back home to Haworth. Their impending arrival brings a heavy cloud – Branwell was dismissed from the house after a bawdy affair with his employer's wife.

We flash back and forward (and around) a bit, and learn that young Branwell was given every opportunity to become the writer of the family. When the girls' proclivity for writing poetry and novels became apparent, it hit the sisters hard because of limitations upon women. It hit Branwell hard too, because despite having every advantage, his work was never good enough to find success.

The journey to publication brought tension for the sisters. Charlotte wanted their work to become known and Emily most decidedly did not. Yet still, they wrote. Each appearance of a character created by one of the Brontës is hugely significant. For instance, Bertha starts as Charlotte's concept of ideal femininity, but as her author grows, she starts to represent Charlotte's less than Victorian qualities (like desire and rage). Charlotte can't bear to be judged for these so she uses Bertha as a way to distance herself. She then casts herself as Jane, 'the good angel', and plays her in all the Jane scenes.

When we return to 1845, Branwell is back home. While his writing career still isn't gaining notoriety, his alcoholism is. This culminates when he lashes out at Charlotte – he's a little too perceptive and a lot too drunk. The play concludes with the actors shedding their Brontë characters and offering new reflections of the family's legacy. The play asks the question, 'how did three Victorian spinsters, living in isolation on the Yorkshire moors, come to write some of the most powerful fiction of all time?'

It's important to emphasise care will be taken to ensure the difficult physical parts of the script are done with sensitivity and all actors are comfortable.

The Characters

Ages are 'stage ages' and there's wiggle room.

Accents: be prepared to audition with an English accent (RP). The actor playing Patrick needs to be able to do an Irish accent. Yorkshire accents would be ideal and will be requested at the audition, but it's an 'everyone does one no one does one' thing.

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| Charlotte Brontë | Charlotte is ambitious and passionate. As the eldest sibling she's painfully conscious of the family's vulnerable financial situation but is powerless to do much about it. Her heavy-handedness in getting her and her sisters published causes tension, especially with Emily. Charlotte craves intimacy. Also plays Jane Eyre, young Charlotte and 'an actor'. |
| Emily Brontë | Emily is the least conforming of the Brontë sisters. She is incredibly frustrated by the constraints of Victorian times and abhors social convention. In particular, she's unwilling and unable to stuff herself into a corset to go be a governess, the only real career available to a woman of her status. Emily's soul is wild. Also plays young Emily, Nelly and 'an actor'. |
| Anne Brontë | Anne is extremely perceptive. She has very firm social and moral leanings and her writing focused on voicing these. As a Victorian woman, she couldn't really express herself through any medium other than thinly veiled fiction. Her strong sense of duty is an echo of her father's. Anne is insightful. Also plays young Anne and 'an actor'. |
| Branwell Brontë | The second eldest Brontë and the only boy. Branwell struggles with the weight of expectation placed on his shoulders – fluctuating between arrogant and overwhelmed. Branwell is addicted to alcohol and opiates and as he spirals, his relationship with Charlotte becomes toxic. Branwell is plagued. Also plays Heathcliff, Young Branwell, Arthur Huntingdon and 'an actor'. |
| Patrick Brontë (30s+) | The father and a Victorian parson. Patrick is Irish. He has a firmly north-pointing moral compass and makes a concerted effort to give Branwell all the tools he needs to become successful. Must also convincingly double as Rochester. Patrick is – I don't have a single word for this, only a metaphor will do: Patrick is a wizened passionfruit; he's full enough looking on the outside but when you slice through, the core is shrivelled and has separated from the outer skin. Also plays Mr Rochester, Arthur Bell Nicholls, Mr Heger and 'an actor'. |
| Cathy (18 – mid 30s) | Emily's character in Wuthering Heights. She's an individualist but is also spoiled, arrogant and selfish. She's obsessed with social climbing but defies social norms. Brontë pulls apart her end-of-life fixation with recapturing the freedom of youth. Cathy is self-absorbed. Also plays 'an actor'. |
| Bertha (18 – 40s) | Charlotte's character in Jane Eyre. The script unpacks Bertha: she's a sensuous woman who doesn't conform to Victorian ideals. This is a meaty role – Bertha has several incarnations, firstly as the 'perfect woman' and latterly as 'the mad woman'. Bertha is uninhibited. Also plays 'an actor'. |

The Crew

Each actor has one Victorian costume per character. For the actors playing a young version of their core character, this could be just a singular item change/addition. The character transitions will be signalled with at least one recognisable costume piece. I.e: Rochester always wears a top hat, Patrick always has a cane, etc. Each actor also has one modern costume when they start the show as 'actors'. You won't be at all surprised to hear I've decided that costume will come from each actor's own wardrobe.

The set and lighting will be challenging but rewarding – the set will be period; but there will be abstract elements in both the set and lighting, most notably some projections, and silhouette lighting (so actors can do some scenes as shadows). A lot of the mood will be set by the sound design – we need moor sounds as well as some other eerie non-diegetic sound.

Local artist Caron Dallas has agreed to loan some of her art to Stagecraft to exhibit as part of the set. Caron's art is folded book pages, which will be suspended from the rig.

King Lear by William Shakespeare

Directed by Joy Hellyer and Paul Kay

June 2018

The Play

This is one of Shakespeare's four great tragedies and the most epic in scope. *King Lear* is based on a mythological pre-Roman Celtic King, does not have an established geographical setting, and appears to take place in a lightly-sketched fantasy world. This is also Shakespeare's least Christian play and examines the meaning of nature, both in the environment and also the character of humankind.

This production of *King Lear* will be set in a mythical New Zealand, not in a specific time period. This is a very powerful story, and we want to be able to bring the plot and characters to life without the restrictions that come with selecting a specific era (for example, we may want to cross cast without tackling the social attitudes of a particular time period to same sex relationships or we may create a modern feel for some of the characters, but we don't wish to complicate the story with technology such as cellphones). Other characters feel like they come from a much more primitive time and we will want to evoke this. The natural environment and the famous storm will evoke New Zealand and New Zealand weather. The soundscape will be New Zealand natural sounds and New Zealand music. Perhaps the best way to describe this approach is to compare it to SteamPunk, but rather than weaving in Victoriana, we're instead weaving Kiwiana from different eras.

King Lear starts out as a relatable family drama with family dynamics and relationship breakdowns and we want to avoid some of the pomposity that often accompanies productions to bring this element to light. As a result the production will be set in the traverse so that all of the audience will be close to the action, including the descent into madness. Although this is a fantasy epic we want to use a modern, accessible acting and delivery style – similar to *Game of Thrones*.

We intend to allow actors to use their own accents and there are no restrictions on age, gender, ethnicity or nationality for casting. Just an enthusiasm to participate in Shakespeare.

The Plot

Lear, the aging king of Britain, decides to step down from the throne and divide his kingdom evenly among his three daughters. First, however, he puts his daughters through a test, asking each to tell him how much she loves him. Goneril and Regan, Lear's older daughters, give their father flattering answers. But Cordelia, Lear's youngest and favorite daughter, remains silent, saying that she has no words to describe how much she loves her father. Lear flies into a rage and disowns Cordelia. The king of France, who has courted Cordelia, says that he still wants to marry her even without her land, and she accompanies him to France without her father's blessing.

Lear quickly learns that he made a bad decision. Goneril and Regan swiftly begin to undermine the little authority that Lear still holds. Unable to believe that his beloved daughters are betraying him, Lear slowly goes insane. He flees his daughters' houses to wander on a heath during a great thunderstorm, accompanied by his Fool and by Kent, a loyal nobleman in disguise.

Meanwhile, an elderly nobleman named Gloucester also experiences family problems. His illegitimate son, Edmund, tricks him into believing that his legitimate son, Edgar, is trying to kill him. Fleeing the manhunt that his father has set for him, Edgar disguises himself as a crazy beggar and calls himself "Poor Tom." Like Lear, he heads out onto the heath. When the loyal Gloucester realizes that Lear's daughters have turned against their father, he decides to help Lear in spite of the danger. Regan and her husband, Cornwall, discover him helping Lear, accuse him of treason, blind him, and turn him out to wander the countryside. He ends up being led by his disguised son, Edgar, toward the city of Dover, where Lear has also been brought.

In Dover, a French army lands as part of an invasion led by Cordelia in an effort to save her father. Edmund apparently becomes romantically entangled with both Regan and Goneril, whose husband, Albany, is increasingly sympathetic to Lear's cause. Goneril and Edmund conspire to kill Albany.

The despairing Gloucester tries to commit suicide, but Edgar saves him by pulling the strange trick of leading him off an imaginary cliff. Meanwhile, the English troops reach Dover, and the English, led by Edmund, defeat the Cordelia-led French. Lear and Cordelia are captured. In the climactic scene, Edgar duels with and kills Edmund; we learn of the death of Gloucester; Goneril poisons Regan out of jealousy over Edmund and then kills herself when her treachery is revealed to Albany; Edmund's betrayal of Cordelia leads to her needless execution in prison; and Lear finally dies out of grief at Cordelia's passing. Albany, Edgar, and the elderly Kent are left to take care of the country under a cloud of sorrow and regret.

Characters

| Early Auditions | |
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| King Lear (M) | Male 50+ The aging king of Britain and the protagonist of the play. Lear is used to enjoying absolute power and to being flattered, and he does not respond well to being contradicted or challenged. At the beginning of the play, his values are notably hollow—he prioritizes the appearance of love over actual devotion and wishes to maintain the power of a king while unburdening himself of the responsibility. Nevertheless, he inspires loyalty in subjects such as Gloucester, Kent, Cordelia, and Edgar, all of whom risk their lives for him. |
| Gloucester (M) | Male 40+ A nobleman loyal to King Lear whose rank, earl, is below that of duke. The first thing we learn about Gloucester is that he is an adulterer, having fathered a bastard son, Edmund. His fate is in many ways parallel to that of Lear: he misjudges which of his children to trust. He appears weak and ineffectual in the early acts, when he is unable to prevent Lear from being turned out of his own house, but he later demonstrates that he is also capable of great bravery. |
| Main Auditions | |
| Goneril (F) | Female 30+ Lear's ruthless oldest daughter and the wife of the duke of Albany. Goneril is jealous, treacherous, and amoral. Shakespeare's audience would have been particularly shocked at Goneril's aggressiveness, a quality that it would not have expected in a female character. She challenges Lear's authority, boldly initiates an affair with Edmund, and wrests military power away from her husband. |
| Regan (F) | Female 30+ Lear's second daughter and similar to Goneril, but even more ruthless |
| Cordelia (F) | Female 20+ Lear's youngest daughter, disowned by her father for refusing to flatter him. Cordelia is held in extremely high regard by all of the good characters in the play—the king of France marries her for her virtue alone, overlooking her lack of dowry. She remains loyal to Lear despite his cruelty toward her, forgives him, and displays a mild and forbearing temperament even toward her evil sisters, Goneril and Regan. Despite her obvious virtues, Cordelia's reticence makes her motivations difficult to read, as in her refusal to declare her love for her father at the beginning of the play. |
| Edmond | Male 20+ Gloucester's younger, illegitimate son. Edmund resents his status as a bastard and schemes to usurp Gloucester's title and possessions from Edgar. He is a formidable character, succeeding in almost all of his schemes and wreaking destruction upon virtually all of the other characters. A very charismatic villain. |
| Edgar | Male 20+ Gloucester's older, legitimate son. Edgar plays many different roles, starting out as a gullible fool easily tricked by his brother, then assuming a disguise as a mad beggar to evade his father's men, then carrying his impersonation further to aid Lear and Gloucester, and finally appearing as an armored champion to avenge his brother's treason. Edgar's propensity for disguises and impersonations makes it difficult to characterize him effectively. |

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| The following roles could be played by any gender: | |
| Lear's Fool | Any age. This role is both comic and tragi-comic. Wise and witty. Uses double-talk and seemingly frivolous songs to give Lear important advice. This role may be played by more than one actor. |
| Kent | 40+ A noble of the same rank as Gloucester who is loyal to King Lear. Kent spends most of the play disguised as a peasant, called "Caius," to be able continue to serve Lear even after being banished. Extremely loyal, but gets himself into trouble throughout the play by being extremely blunt and outspoken. |
| Albany | 30+ Goneril's spouse. Turns out to be honourable but is indecisive and lacks foresight, realizing the evil of Goneril and Regan quite late in the play. |
| Cornwall | 30+ Regan's spouse. Unlike Albany, Cornwall is domineering, cruel, and violent, and works with Regan and Goneril to persecute Lear and Gloucester. |
| King of France | 20+ Cordelia's spouse. One of the good guys. Declares war on the elder two daughters |
| Oswald | Any age. Regan's servant. Craven, insipid and unpleasant, a fun, slightly comic role, Oswald obeys Goneril's commands and helps her in her conspiracies. |

The Crew

The design aesthetic for the show is "New Zealand", especially the natural environment. This is not a "Globe-style" production and will use technical effects and sound to enhance the story.

Designers are required for set, lighting, wardrobe and sound. Props will also play an important role in the production.

Yes, Prime Minister by Antony Jay and Jonathan Lynn

Directed by Andrew Cross

August 2018

The Play

From the writers of the original television series *Yes, Minister* and *Yes, Prime Minister*, comes the equally sharply satirical stage version. Set in pre-Brexit United Kingdom, we follow the British Prime Minister (Jim Hacker) and his 'loyal' team: Private Secretary Bernard Woolley, Cabinet Secretary Sir Humphrey Appleby, and Special Adviser Claire Sutton.

The Plot

The UK is in crisis: debt is spiraling, unemployment is on the rise and the fragile coalition cabinet, led by Prime Minister Jim Hacker, is at breaking point. But salvation may exist in the form of a complex pipeline deal with the oil-rich country of Kumranistan that would entitle the government to a multi-trillion pound loan.

When the Kumranistan Foreign Secretary makes a shocking request to Bernard, moral considerations collide with the economic future of the nation. Political machinations, media manipulation and an appeal for divine intervention ensue.

The Characters

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| Sir Humphrey (40's+ Male) | Cabinet Secretary to the Prime Minister. Sir Humphrey is has a keen sense of self preservation and is more interested in making sure the public service does its job despite the Prime Ministers intentions. Sir Humphrey is a master of obfuscation and manipulation, baffling his opponents with long winded technical jargon and circumlocutions. Red tape is Sir Humphrey's best friend. |
| Jim Hacker (40's+ Male) | The British Prime Minister. Jim, at his worst, is a publicity-seeking bungler who is incapable of making a firm decision. He is prone to make potentially embarrassing blunders, and is a frequent target of criticism from the press. However, he is also relatively politically savvy, and has slowly becomes more aware of how Sir Humphrey operates, leading to a war of one-upmanship between the two. |
| Bernard Woolley (30's+ Male) | The Principal Private Secretary to the Prime Minister. More often than not, Bernard is caught between the plans of Sir Humphry and Jim. This unfortunate middle man, although technically there to support the Prime Minister, completely understands that it is Sir Humphrey who writes his performance reports. |
| Claire Sutton (30's Female) | Special Policy Advisor for the Prime Minister. The antithesis to Sir Humphrey, Claire is much more interested in making sure the Prime Minister gets what he needs despite the public service. Quite clearly someone who can actually get something done. |
| The Kumranistan Ambassador (40's+ Male) | A foreign dignitary who is in London as part of a European Conference. The Ambassador becomes a crucial part in the Prime Ministers plan (Or is it Sir Humphrey's?) to save Britain from the financial crisis |
| Jeremy Burnham (40's+ Male) | Director-General of the BBC. A long-time friend of Jim's, who only seems to arrive when there is something bad about to happen on the BBC. |
| Robin Simpson/Simon Chester (Mid/late 20's+ Male or Female) | BBC press officer and presenter. BBC stalwarts who are interested in finding weak points that can be exploited in the current administration. Anything that will help to improve their ratings! |

The Crew

Yes Prime Minister takes place all in one room over the course of several weeks. Finding a keen stage designer and set dresser will help to bring this to life.

Wolf Hall and Bring Up the Bodies adapted for stage by Mike Poulton

Based on the novels by Hilary Mantel

Directed by Ewen Coleman with Catherine McMechan and Andrew Goddard

November 2018

The Plays

Wolf Hall and *Bring Up the Bodies* are Michael Poulton's adaptations of Hilary Mantel's two Booker Prize winning novels. The Royal Shakespeare Company premiered them to great acclaim at Swan Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon before taking this massive production to enjoy successful seasons in London and New York.

The plays are fast paced and dynamic, with multiple short scenes in an almost filmic style designed to keep the action moving. Filled with court intrigue, fascinating characters and complex relationships, *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies* will be compelling to be involved in and to watch.

The Plot

Wolf Hall and *Bring Up the Bodies* tell the story of Henry VIII's Tudor Court and the rise and fall of Anne Boleyn from a unique perspective – that of the master manipulator Thomas Cromwell.

Wolf Hall begins in England in 1527. Henry has been King for almost twenty years and is desperate for a male heir; but Cardinal Wolsey cannot deliver the divorce he craves. Yet for a man with the right talents, this crisis could be an opportunity. Thomas Cromwell is a commoner who has risen in Wolsey's household—and he will stop at nothing to secure the King's desires and advance his own ambitions.

In *Bring Up the Bodies*, the volatile Anne Boleyn is now Queen, her career seemingly entwined with that of Cromwell. But when the King begins to fall in love with plain Jane Seymour, the ever-pragmatic Cromwell must negotiate within an increasingly perilous Court to satisfy Henry, defend the nation, and above all, to secure his own rise in the world.

The Characters

Collectively, *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies* feature a large cast of highly interesting characters from Henry's court – Royalty, nobles, clergy, politicians, wives, sons and daughters, mistresses, ladies in waiting, musicians, poets, a wide range of servants – and of course an executioner. There is a plethora of acting opportunities for both women and men of a range of ages. Here's a taste of what's on offer:

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| Thomas Cromwell | The central figure in the two plays, which cover his life from his 40s to 50s. A compelling and complex character, Cromwell can be affable and charming, or cold and calculating. He can be calm and assured, yet he can exhibit terrible anger. He can be very loyal, and yet completely ruthless. |
| Henry VIII | Almost 40 at the time the plays begin. Charming and kingly in appearance, but prefers hunting and jousting to governing. He is highly emotional. His charm vanishes when he doesn't get his own way. He keeps his hands clean by using Cromwell to do his dirty work. |
| Cardinal Wolsey | Larger than life and an incredibly powerful figure – cultured, ostentatious, grand and wealthy, every action is a performance. Wolsey was also kind and tolerant – and genuinely fond of his King. |
| Anne Boleyn | Henry VIII's second wife, for whom he forever altered the religious landscape in order to annul his first marriage. During her lifetime Anne was the focus of every lurid story that the imagination of Europe could dream up. She was the most sophisticated woman at Henry's court. While generally elegant, controlled and astute, when under pressure Anne can be highly irrational. Anne is in her late 20s when she catches Henry's attention. |
| Katherine of Aragon | Katherine, Henry's first wife, and the daughter of two reigning European monarchs. She genuinely loves Henry – and, for time, he her. After a number of years, though, and no sons, Henry's attentions turn elsewhere. Proud and very religious, Katherine fights Henry's request for an annulment with every means at her disposal. |
| Thomas More | A very complex and conflicted character, Thomas is a scholar and a wit, but at the same time filled with self-loathing. Intensely religious, he is remembered for imprisoning and torturing those he considered heretics. His opposition to the religious reforms puts him on a collision course with Cromwell. |
| Elizabeth Cromwell | Wife of Thomas |

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| Princess Mary | Teenage daughter of Henry VIII and his first wife Katherine. |
| Stephen Gardiner | Wolsey's secretary and later secretary to the King, pushed out of favour by Cromwell |
| William Warham | Over 80 years old, a former Lord Chancellor and 30 years in the role Archbishop of Canterbury |
| Thomas Cranmer | Warham's successor |
| Rafe Sadler | Raised by Cromwell; discreet, hardworking and loyal |
| Harry Percy, Earl of Northumberland | An early beau of Anne's, a relationship that Cromwell manipulates as he engineers Anne's downfall |
| Christophe | A young French urchin taken into Cromwell's service |
| Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk | An old style noble, but also a soldier, a key player in Wolsey's downfall |
| Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk | A vigorous, hearty slightly older friend of Henry's and one of his comrades in hunting and other sports; although it has its ups and downs, his relationship with Henry remains a close one |
| Eustache Chapuys | French Ambassador to England; cultured and clever, Eustache is very much a supporter of Katherine and later her daughter Mary |
| Sir Henry Norris | The perfect courtier; a confidant of the King and, as chief of the King's Privy Chamber, he controls access to the King, which makes him a powerful figure – and also at odds with Cromwell |
| Sir William Brereton | A member of the King's inner circle and of many accused of being Anne's lover. |
| Mark Smeaton | A young musician at court who is infatuated with Anne. |
| George Boleyn | Anne's younger brother – a poet, flamboyant, expensive and a bit silly. A womaniser. |
| Francis Weston | A golden boy, a page at Court, a good athlete and musician – but a gambler with many debts and another whose relationship with Anne Boleyn proves his downfall. |
| Sir Thomas Boleyn | Anne's father: well connected, elegant and able; quick to take advantage of Anne's favour with the King, but also quick to distance himself when she falls out of favour. |
| Thomas Wyatt | Now recognised as a great poet, but not in his lifetime; one of Henry's wild young friends, a risk taker and a gambler; and still another accused of being one of Anne's lovers. |
| Gregory Cromwell | Thomas's only surviving son, in his late teens as the play unfolds. |
| Jane Boleyn (Lady Rochford) | Wife to Anne's brother George – a dangerous woman. |
| Mary Boleyn | Anne Boleyn's elder sister and at different times mistress of both the Kings of France and England. Mary was notorious for her promiscuity. |
| Elizabeth, Lady Worcester | A member of Anne Boleyn's circle. |
| Mary Shelton | A younger cousin of Anne Boleyn and one of her ladies in waiting. |
| Sir John Seymour | The father of Henry VIII's third wife, Jane Seymour – his other claim to fame was his long-running affair with his son's wife. |
| Jane Seymour | Henry VIII's third wife formally betrothed to him the day of Anne's execution; did not seem to pursue Henry so was either not interested or very clever. |
| Edward Seymour | Jane Seymour's brother. |

The Crew

There are also a lot of opportunities for crew on what promises to be a very rewarding project involving a large and enthusiastic team.

Stage management and backstage crew: if you enjoy working with large groups of people there will two large teams that need wrangling.

Props: we anticipate props to be limited to those items that are either required by or support the script, so this task is likely to be an interesting but very manageable one – one person may be able to take responsibility for props with both plays or this could be shared.

Wardrobe: with a large cast period play, wardrobe will be one of the larger tasks – however it also promises to be a very rewarding one: the simple set and high level of movement will really give the costumes an opportunity to shine. We envisage a designer overseeing the look and colour palette for both plays supported by sewers and sourcers for each play.

Technical: likely to have one designer for each of lighting and sound, but two sets of operators, so opportunities for both experienced and learning techies.

Not sure what you want to do? This is a really big project with multiple facets, so if you're keen to be involved but not sure what you'd like to do, then let us know and we can talk.