Hello! Thank you for your interest in auditioning for Richard II!

This production is the first show of the up and coming Yale Shakespeare Festival. This year will have a truncated season of just this play, along with performances of sonnets and lectures. Next spring, we will produce a full festival consisting of three plays. The Yale Shakespeare Festival aims to create Shakespeare productions that are simultaneously accessible and artistically challenging. This production will take place outside, performed in the spirit of Elizabethan theater (think Shakespeare in the Park). Our goal for bold work is built on the foundation that we will approach Shakespeare’s work with generosity, humility, playfulness, but, most importantly, truthfulness.

We are hoping to cultivate a rehearsal process that is respectful of everyone’s time, inclusive, and text-driven. You do not have to have experience with Shakespeare to audition for this show. We are looking for people who will approach the language with intention and patience.

Meet the Team

**Director:** Leo Egger ‘23.5 (he/him/his)

Leo hails from Durham, North Carolina, and is the Artistic Director of The Eno River Players, a small theater in Durham which produces cutting-edge classical theater. He is interested in how artifice in the theater brings us closer to truth. He is also an avid art lover, with a few of his favourite works in the YUAG being *Girl in White Chemise* by Ernest Ludwig Kirchner, *Tu m'* by Marcel Duchamp, *Ecce Homo* by Manuel Pereira, and the *Sande Society Mask* made by the Mende People. He thoroughly recommends you checking it out.
**Assistant Director:** Daliya Habib ’25 (she/her/hers)

Daliya is from Dubai, UAE, and is super excited to be working on the Yale Shakespeare Festival. Back home, she’s been playwriting for Short + Sweet Theatre Festival in both Dubai & Hollywood, and acts & directs with the National Youth Theatre of Great Britain as a company member. Over her gap year, she was brought onboard as a producer on her first short film, *Kitchen Tales*, alongside a powerhouse of female producers in the industry. She’s also directing the FroShow this year, and says a big thank you to her incredible team of first years!

**Producer:** Dominic Sullivan ’23 (he/him/his)

Dom is from London, UK and loves iambic pentameter. In England, it’s very standard to have Shakespeare thrown on you as a child, so Dom was incredibly reluctant to it at the start. However, he started to really appreciate the beauty of the language, especially after he studied Shakespeare’s work at LAMDA. When he’s not practicing his iambic pentameter, he’s trying to find examples of trochaic feet. Sour Patch Kids are the way to his heart.

**Producer:** Peter Li (he/him/his)

Peter is from Maryland, and has loved being a part of undergraduate theatre at Yale. From acting in Zoom shows to joining the Dramat Associate Board to directing last year’s Froshshowcase, and now producing the Spring Mainstage: *Everybody*, he’s had the opportunity to work with fascinating artists in all contexts of theater.
A brief synopsis:

Richard II, set in the year 1398, traces the fall of the unpopular Richard II and the rise of Henry Bolingbroke, the first king of Lancaster. Richard is a young man who relishes in his role as king; but poor governance, bad advisors, ill-advised wars, and the seizure of nobleman’s land makes him deeply unpopular in the eyes of his country. After being banished by Richard in the first act of the play, Henry Bolingbroke returns to England, reclaims his land, builds an army, and deposes Richard. Richard’s absence of allies leads to a peaceful transfer of power.

The heart of the play is the gradual downfall of Richard, who must reckon with his nakedness when stripped of the veneer of kingship. The play explores the existential question of what we are without the things that define us. From the top of castle walls, to court houses, and finally a small prison cell, Richard reckons with “being nothing.” This tragedy faces themes of identity, faith, and the limitations of human life with sublime humour, sorrow, and beauty.

The directorial vision reflects Richard’s own performance of identity into the act of performance. This show will embrace its own artificiality and theatricality. A full director’s statement will be given to the actors once the show is cast.

Lead Characters:

*A note about gender and casting: This productions aims to be as inclusive of trans, non-binary, and gender-non-conforming artists as possible. Because this is a play with no copyright, it means that this is a gender-blind, colour-blind, and age-blind production. We strongly encourage people from all backgrounds, identities, abilities, and ages to audition. All of these decisions will be made only with the consent of our auditionees/actors, starting from the beginning of the audition process and going all the way through rehearsal. We will never ask you to read for a character you don’t feel comfortable reading for, and if we’re considering switching the gender identity of any character, this will only be done in ongoing conversation with the actor and with their continued consent. We will also have space on our audition form where you will be able to tell us any information you’d like us to know about what gender of character you feel comfortable playing, as well as anything else you’d like us to know about your experience of gender. If there is anything that we can do to make the audition space feel more welcoming and safe for you, or any access needs that you can help you with, please don’t hesitate to reach out to Leo ([Leo.egger@yale.edu](mailto:Leo.egger@yale.edu)) or Dominic ([dominic.sullivan@yale.edu](mailto:dominic.sullivan@yale.edu)).

King Richard: He is a young man and the king of England. He enjoys everything that comes with being king. He is usurped by his cousin Bolingbroke and is assassinated at the end of the play.

Henry Bolingbroke: King Richard’s cousin. He is banished at the start of the play, then returns, deposes King Richard and becomes King Henry IV.
**John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster:** Richard’s uncles, Bolingbroke’s father. He curses Richard after Bolingbroke’s banishment.

**Edmund, Duke of York:** Lord governor of England while Richard is at war in Ireland. Despite being a traditionalist, he eventually joins Bolingbroke.

**Duke of Aumerle:** Cousin to Bolingbroke and Richard. Remains loyal to Richard and is involved in a failed scheme to kill King Henry IV.

**Thomas Mowbray:** Banished at the beginning of the play with Bolingbroke. Dies in exile.

**Bushy; Bagot; Green:** Richard’s most loyal friends in the court. Bushy and Green are executed by Bolingbroke.

**Queen Isabel:** Wife to King Richard. Escapes to France when he is deposed.

**Duchess of York:** Mother of Duke of Aumerle. Pleads for his life before Henry IV.

**Henry Percy; Lord Ross; Lord Willoughby:** Noblemen who join Bolingbroke.

**Auditions:**

Auditions will be held on the week starting with November 29th. You will have a 15 minute time slot. These auditions will be very chill. Please come prepared with a monologue from any Shakespeare play, ideally memorized, but it does not have to be. Some monologues from Richard II have been attached below if you aren’t sure what to bring in. The most important thing we are looking for is that you have taken time to fully understand what you are saying.

We will hold callbacks on **December 10th and 11th.** In callbacks, you will read sides from the play that also do not have to be memorized. Please reach out to us if you aren’t able to attend these dates - we want this to be as pressureless as possible.

The show will be cast on **December 12th.**

**Additional Roles:**

If you are interested in being part of the production team, we would love to have you! Roles that we are actively looking for:

- Assistant Stage Manager
- Costume Assistant
- Lighting Assistant
- Set Assistant
However, if you believe you could be of some assistance in another role, please let us know and we would love to have you onboard!

Rehearsal:

We will be supportive of everyone’s commitments. Our rehearsal process will take place over a long period of time so everyone feels comfortable with the text. We will be off book by early March.

In the month of January, we will have a table read and do some table work. Everyone should expect 1 to 2 hours of rehearsal a week. Actors playing Richard and Bolingbroke should expect 2-4 hours.

February: Everyone should expect about four-six hours of rehearsal a week. Rehearsal will still be very chill.

Late March through April: Rehearsal will pick up with about eight hours of rehearsal a week. Smaller roles will certainly not be called at this level.

The show will be April 21nd, 22nd, and 23rd.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to reach out to: leo.egger@yale.edu or dominic.sullivan@yale.edu
Potential Monologues:

JOHN OF GAUNT

All places that the eye of heaven visits
Are to a wise man ports and happy havens.
Teach thy necessity to reason thus;
There is no virtue like necessity.
Think not the king did banish thee,
But thou the king. Woe doth the heavier sit,
Where it perceives it is but faintly borne.
Go, say I sent thee forth to purchase honour
And not the king exiled thee; or suppose
Devouring pestilence hangs in our air
And thou art flying to a fresher clime:
Look, what thy soul holds dear, imagine it
To lie that way thou go'st, not whence thou comest:
Suppose the singing birds musicians,
The grass whereon thou tread'st the presence strew'd,
The flowers fair ladies, and thy steps no more
Than a delightful measure or a dance;
For gnarling sorrow hath less power to bite
The man that mocks at it and sets it light.

DUCHESS OF YORK

Finds brotherhood in thee no sharper spur?
Hath love in thy old blood no living fire?
Edward's seven sons, whereof thyself art one,
Were as seven vials of his sacred blood,
Or seven fair branches springing from one root:
Some of those seven are dried by nature's course,
Some of those branches by the Destinies cut;
But Thomas, my dear lord, my life, my Gloucester,
One vial full of Edward's sacred blood,
One flourishing branch of his most royal root,
Is crack'd, and all the precious liquor spilt,
Is hack'd down, and his summer leaves all faded,
By envy's hand and murder's bloody axe.
Ah, Gaunt, his blood was thine! that bed, that womb,
That metal, that self-mould, that fashion'd thee
Made him a man; and though thou livest and breathest,
Yet art thou slain in him: thou dost consent
In some large measure to thy father's death,
In that thou seest thy wretched brother die,
Who was the model of thy father's life.
Call it not patience, Gaunt; it is despair:
In suffering thus thy brother to be slaughter'd,
Thou showest the naked pathway to thy life,
Teaching stern murder how to butcher thee:
That which in mean men we intitle patience
Is pale cold cowardice in noble breasts.
What shall I say? to safeguard thine own life,
The best way is to venge my Gloucester's death.

KING RICHARD II
I have been studying how I may compare
This prison where I live unto the world:
And for because the world is populous
And here is not a creature but myself,
I cannot do it; yet I'll hammer it out.
My brain I'll prove the female to my soul,
My soul the father; and these two beget
A generation of still-breeding thoughts,
And these same thoughts people this little world,
In humours like the people of this world,
For no thought is contented. The better sort,
As thoughts of things divine, are intermix'd
With scruples and do set the word itself
Against the word:
As thus, 'Come, little ones,' and then again,
'It is as hard to come as for a camel
To thread the postern of a small needle's eye.'
Thoughts tending to ambition, they do plot
Unlike wonders; how these vain weak nails
May tear a passage through the flinty ribs
Of this hard world, my ragged prison walls,
And, for they cannot, die in their own pride.
Thoughts tending to content flatter themselves
That they are not the first of fortune's slaves,
Nor shall not be the last; like silly beggars
Who sitting in the stocks refuge their shame,
That many have and others must sit there;
And in this thought they find a kind of ease,
Bearing their own misfortunes on the back
Of such as have before endured the like.
Thus play I in one person many people,
And none contented: sometimes am I king;
Then treasons make me wish myself a beggar,
And so I am: then crushing penury
Persuades me I was better when a king;
Then am I king'd again: and by and by
Think that I am unking'd by Bolingbroke,
And straight am nothing: but whate'er I be,
Nor I nor any man that but man is
With nothing shall be pleased, till he be eased
With being nothing.

HENRY BOLINGBROKE
As I was banish'd, I was banish'd Hereford;
But as I come, I come for Lancaster.
And, noble uncle, I beseech your grace
Look on my wrongs with an indifferent eye:
You are my father, for methinks in you
I see old Gaunt alive; O, then, my father,
Will you permit that I shall stand condemn'd
A wandering vagabond; my rights and royalties
Pluck'd from my arms perforce and given away
To upstart unthrifts? Wherefore was I born?
If that my cousin king be King of England,
It must be granted I am Duke of Lancaster.
You have a son, Aumerle, my noble cousin;
Had you first died, and he been thus trod down,
He should have found his uncle Gaunt a father,
To rouse his wrongs and chase them to the bay.
I am denied to sue my livery here,
And yet my letters-patents give me leave:
My father's goods are all distrain'd and sold,
And these and all are all amiss employ'd.
What would you have me do? I am a subject,
And I challenge law: attorneys are denied me;
And therefore, personally I lay my claim
To my inheritance of free descent.