



For Immediate Release, January 29, 2009

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Link to high resolution images: <http://www.hamnertheater.com/RIII/photos>

For an interview, contact Mary Coy at (434)263 8802.

An experiment in Elizabethan theater comes to Nelson County

NELLYSFORD, VA, January 29, 2009 - A Renaissance is coming to Nelson County theater: the Hamner Theater, and the Nelson County Shakespeare Festival will present William Shakespeare's **Richard III** from Feb. 11 – 21.

The play is being rehearsed and performed incorporating Elizabethan practices. Mary Coy, who is managing the play as well as playing King Richard says, "The Elizabethans staged plays in a couple of days. They never performed without an audience present. If a play was a hit after opening night, it continued its run. If the audience didn't like it, it closed immediately. There were no designers and technicians. Costumes were donated by the rich nobility." These practices, as well as forming a company of experienced performers and inexperienced apprentices, became the basis for Coy's organization of **Richard III**. Coy credits her experience working with the American Shakespeare Center in Staunton for infusing her with the skills to take on the project.

Philip Lawton, Michael Dowell, and Mary Coy play the York brothers, Edward, Clarence, and Richard. Jim Johnston, Jonas Collins, and John Holdren play their trusted advisors. Boomie Pedersen plays Queen Elizabeth, and Betty Tabony, DJ and Dakota Crocker, Noah Hughey-Commers and Cody Harlow play members of her family. Mary Haines-Johnson, Koda Kerl, Jack Luecke, Audrey Wood, Margaret Clair, Mariflo Stevens and Ginny Weckstein play other queens, lords, murderers, and brats.

A special Valentine's Day banquet/performance of **Richard III** will be held in the "Great Hall" of the RVCC on Saturday, February 14, where attendees will sit on the stage and dine, while the play is performed at their feet. Playing for the nobility is another Elizabethan theater practice. "In Shakespeare's day the nobility sponsored the playing troupes. Without them, the show would not have gone on," says Coy. Proceeds will offset the cost of the production and keep regular ticket prices low. Benefit tickets are \$75 and include dinner and a lecture/discussion of **Richard III** and Elizabethan theater. Offstage seats will be available for just \$5 (meal & lecture not included).

Richard III previews (free entry) on Wednesday, Feb. 11 at 7:30pm in the Hamner Theater. All other performances will be held at the Hamner Theater from February 12 -21, Thursday - Saturday at 7:30pm, and at 2:00pm on Sunday, Feb. 15. Tickets are \$10, at the door, or by reservation. Call (434)361-1999 for more information & reservations. Learn more at www.thehamnertheater.com.

About the Hamner Theater: The Hamner Theater, a non-profit 501(c)(3) project of the Rockfish Valley Community Center, receives funding from the Virginia Commission for the Arts, the Donovan Foundation, the Perry Foundation as well as several anonymous donors, to support its mission of bringing professional theater to Nelson County.

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Summary:

What	Richard III , by William Shakespeare
Who	Nelson County Shakespeare Festival & the Hamner Theater
Where	The Hamner Theater, 190 Rockfish School Lane, Nellysford, VA
When	Feb 12 – 21, Thurs - Sat at 7:30pm, Sun at 2pm
Tickets	\$10 (except Feb. 14, \$75 inc. banquet & lecture, or \$5 off-stage)
Reservations/ Information	434 361 1999 or www.hamnertheater.com