Royal Shakespeare Company wickedly wonderful

The War of the Roses in all its bloody savagery is being fought again on the stage of the Power Center for the Performing Arts

Center for the Performing are in Ann Arbo.

The Royal Shakespeare Company of Stratiford and London in presenting the rarely performed Henry VI, Parts I, II and III and the more familiar sequel Richard III in a stunning and unprecedunted evel.

dented cycle.

By the time Richard cries in despair "A horse, a horse, my by the time Richard cries in despair "A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse," Shake-speare fans and history buffs aliko will have immersed themselves in 12 hours of the Bard's take on the dynastic war that brought the Tudors to power.

Partnership

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The University Musical Secicity and the University of Michigan have entered a partnership with the actained Royal Shakespeare Company. In addition to presenting three complete cycles of the plays, the 53 member company is in residency at the university participating in a variety of workshops and lectures for students and the community.

The productions are a mind-beggling undertaking for the theater company and the audience. This past weekend the three Henry VI plays were presented on Saturday, requiring more than nine hours of playing time. Richard III was presented on Sunday afternoon. This schedule

■ The real joy of these productions is the acting. Even the smallest roles are well played and the leads are superb.

is repeated this coming weekend. The plays are also being presented over three days this week, with Richard III being staged toxists. tonight.

Blood and thunder

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The four plays are from Shakespearc's early years. What they
lack in richness of language,
they make up for in blood and
thunder. In the hunchbacked
Richard, Shakespearc creates
his first great villain and for
those who are only familiar with
Richard III, the Henry plays
help give focus to Richard's villainy while presenting a strong
contrast in the eaintly, sad and
weak Henry VI.

The Henry VI.

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The Henry tries to live by his
Christian principles, others plot
to usurp his questionable hold on
the throne. He vacillates, compromises and rotreats, leaving
his strong, passionate and ambitious wife Margaret to fill the
vacuum of leadership. The Housso of Lancaster and York are
joined in conflict, trading allies
as each gains a hold.

Margaret proves as cruel as
sony man, while Richard turns on

as each gains a noid.

Margaret proves as cruel as any man, while Richard turns on brothers, children and his closest allies with gleeful abandon.

Despite the complex, shifting

alliances and huge cast of characters, director Michael Boyd's production is a model of clarity. Shakespear's language is clearly spoken. Whether spoken conversationally or declaimed in high oratory, it is usually easy to follow. The muddy areas are few and easily covered. Some of the young Bard's clunky construction is handled with a sense of humor and a knowing wink to the audience.

The action is lively with several choreographed battle scenes and numerous bloody deaths. A percussive score punctuates the drama. Actors twist acrobatically on dangling ropes giving an added dimension to the aword clanging fights.

Supberb acting

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But the real Joy of these productions is the acting. Even the smallest roles are well played and the leads are superb.
Aidan McArdle's Richard is an amusing villain, someone aware of his own evil who glories in letting us in on his cruel resolve. McArdle makes Richard not just a grotesque but something of a peevish and arrested adolescent thinking only of himself.
His opposite is Fions Bell's fierce, bitter Queen Margaret, taking on all the attributes of an Alpha Male as her husband



On stage: Clive Wood as the Duke of York.

and his voice has a warm musi-cal quality that is perfect for Henry.

It is a rare opportunity to see this level of acting and the public has responded. The series has been sold out but returned tick-ets to individual plays will be



LENTEN FISH FRIES

Batter up – it's Lent and time for fish fries. We're putting together a list of churches, clubs and restaurants that offering Lenten fish fries. If you would like to be included, send information to: Keely Wygonik, Assistant Managing Editor Features, Observer Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, fax (734) 591-7279 or e-mail kwygonik@e.homecomm.ngt wygonik@e.homecomm.ngt = Plymouth Knights of Columbus Hall – 5-7:30 pm. Friday during Lent, 160 Fair St., Plymouth. Fish dinners, all you can eat 56, shrimp and macaroni dinners also available. For takeouts call (734) 453-9833.

St. Genevieve Parish Fish Fry – 5-7 p.m. Friday during Lent, (except Good Friday), 28933 Jamison, two blocks south of Five Mile Road, east of Middlebelt, Livonia, (734) 251-520. Two dinner options: Option one (\$6.50): Choice of freshly battered fried or baked fish, french

fries or baked potato. Option two (\$3.50): Two slices of pizza or macaroni and cheese, bag of chips. All meals include coleslaw, soup and dinner roll, coffee, tea or lemonade, pop and dessert extra. Children 5-10, \$3.50, no charge for children under five.

Monaghan Knights of Columbus – 19801 Farmington Rond, Livonia, (248) 476-3835 – Fish & Chips with coleslaw and roll (\$7.25) served 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 5-9 p.m. Friday, carryout available. Additional items include soup, broiled haddock, perch, shrimp, and frog legs. Carryout available.

■ Page's Food & Spirits –
23621 Farmington Road (one block south of Grand River, (248) 477-0959, kitchen open 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., Monday-Thurs-day; 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday-Saturday. "All you-can-eat" fish dinner \$10.56 offered every day, comes with fries and coleslaw.

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