

Harlos Productions presents

King Lear

by William Shakespeare

May 7 - May 29

KING LEAR

Directed by Michael P. ...

Starring David Richardson, Angus ...
Michael ... Megan ... Vanessa O'Neill,
Graeme Rhodes and Kyle Wright

Bondi Pavilion

Queen Elizabeth Drive, Bondi Beach

Tickets \$33, concessions \$28, students \$22 (accompanying teachers free with groups of 10 or more)

Tuesday - Saturday 7.30pm

Matinees: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturday - 2.30pm

Bookings/Inquiries: 9958 8525

www.harlos.sitesuite.com.au

Now you're into it!

Act Two, scene one

- The **evil characters** gain ground.
- **Edmund** aligns himself with **Cornwall and Regan**.
- **Plot and subplot** become **intertwined**.

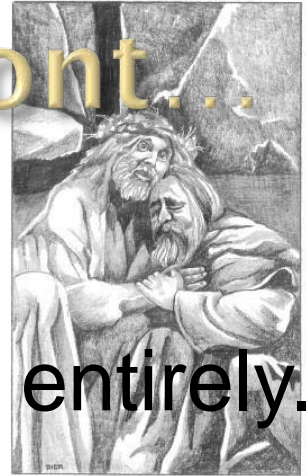


Act Two, scene one cont...



- Edmund's **quick wit** helps him...
- He is **able to respond** to events and **control** them.
- His **lines to Edgar** at the beginning of the scene:
 - **Short, sharp statements** and **questions**.
 - Suggest his **command** of the situation.
- Achieves the **goal** set for himself in 1.2 with ease.
- **Evil let loose** on the kingdom with ease.

Act Two, scene one cont...



- Gloucester follows Edmund's lead entirely.
- Appears overwhelmed.
- Seems vulnerable (like Lear) 'my old heart is cracked, it's cracked'
- Both patriarchs (Gloucester and Lear) distressed by thoughts of filial ingratitude.
- Has little to say as the evil thoughts draw together.

Regan and Cornwall



- As **smooth** and **assured** as Edmund.
- Both assume a **commanding tone**.
- **Regan's** comforting and affectionate words to Gloucester are perhaps surprising.
 - Shakespeare leaves her **true nature** partially **concealed** for dramatic impact in II.4.
 - However – **distrust** her.
 - She shares Gonerill's **low opinion** of Lear's followers.
 - Has chosen to **thwart father's plans** by visiting Gloucester
 - Essentially denies her father shelter
- When **Edmund** offers his **services to Cornwall** – alarmed; what is the bastard son hoping to gain now?

Act Two, scene two

- Kent has an imaginative and lively list of insults.
- Oswald is a worthy object of scorn and the quarrel at the start of the scene provides a moment of relief.
- Behind Kent's insults lies a serious point:
 - dangers of the bad servant.
 - Is King Lear full of bad servants who subvert the natural order?



News Flash!

- Editing note...
- Underline titles!
- King Lear the PLAY (not book or film!)



Kent...

- Makes a **serious point** when he says he does not like **the faces** he sees before him.
- Not fooled by **appearances**.
- Recognises **Cornwall, Regan and Oswald** for what they are.
- **Voices** the **concerns** of the **audience** in his insults of Cornwall.
- **Punished** for his **goodness and honesty** (again).
- Just as **Cordelia and Edgar** have been punished, in spite of their **virtues**.

Punishment of Kent is significant

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- We see that Cornwall is arrogant.
- Regan vindictive.
- Husband and wife operate effectively as a team and enjoy their cruelty.
- Hints at the sorrow to come.
- It is clear that power is in new hands.



Act Two, scene two cont...

- Gloucester is ineffectual in this scene.
- Lear's representative (Kent/ Caius) is treated with scorn.
- Old patriarchs pushed aside as Cornwall and Regan exert their authority.
- Hint that Cordelia will return offers us some hope that the progress of the evil characters might be checked.



Act Two, scene three

- Audience is left in no doubt as to the difficulties Edgar will face.
- Chooses to disguise himself as a social outcast – reveals his desperation and the danger he is in.
- ‘Bedlam’ (Bethlehem hospital) housed the mentally ill.
- Upon release – they were allowed to go begging for survival
- Edgar has been reduced to this.



Oh where has all the goodness gone!

- Goodness has been pushed aside, degraded and punished.
- Edgar's situation mirrors Lear's.
- Edgar is reliant on charity.
- World and expectations turned upside down,
- Glimpse of what Lear will be reduced to.
- Contrast between life as absolute monarch and powerless existence described here could not be more stark.



They're all mad, I tell you!

- Edgar's **assumed madness** also points towards Lear's madness in Act III.



Act Two, scene four



- Lear is presented with a number of **seemingly insurmountable difficulties**.
- His **power and self-possession** are stripped away
 - Rejected by his **daughters**.
 - Kent's presence in the **stocks** is proof that Lear is treated with **contempt**.
 - Cornwall and Regan **refuse to speak** to him.
 - Lear **fetches Regan** himself – no servant to do it for him.
 - Requests for **information** are ignored (e.g. how Kent came to be in the stocks).

Act Two, scene four cont...

- Entrances and exits – mirror the close of 1.4 – hints at chaos to come in Act III.
- Lear's change of mood and tone indicate his increasing mental instability.
- Fool's disturbing tales of misguided kindness operate as an introduction to Gonerill and Regan's 'cruel kindness' (II.4).
- Perfunctory and frosty greeting between Lear, Cornwall and Regan suggest Lear is foolish to pin his hopes on Regan's kindness.
- His belief that she would never 'oppose the bolt/ Against my coming in' (lines 171-2) is ironic.





Gonerill's entrance...

- Turning point for the beleaguered King.
- Unconcerned about his whether Lear returns or not.
- Oblivious to father's pain and suffering.
- G&R are firm and authoritative when 'measuring' out Lear's knights.
- Audience reminded that it is dangerous to measure love in words and number.



Lear's folly continues...

- His **insistence** that he will stay with the daughter who allows him to **retain the greatest** number of followers is as **blind and foolish** as his 'love-test' in 1.1.
- **Desperate** bargaining.
- **Neither** daughter cares for him.
- His **bargaining** is desperate and impotent.
- As are his **curses and threats**.



The tone of the speeches after Lear's exit...

- Gonerill, Regan and Cornwall – are **unmoved** by Lear's **agonised final speech**.
- Their **cool control** contrasts starkly with his **wild passion**.
- **Cruel desire** to inflict **punishment** on 'the old man'.



The audience...

- Should **recognise** the hypocrisy of Regan's fears about Lear's knights.
- Gonerill and Regan are **expert manipulators**
- They use any excuse to **justify their own actions**.
- When the **storm starts**, we know that they have 'won'.
- Lear's fear that he would **go mad**, first voiced in 1.4, is realised.

The end of Act Two!

Adapted from York Notes Advanced

