

Ian Bartholomew on Richard III

"To play Richard has been a long-held ambition of mine, along with Arturo Ui, which I was fortunate enough to perform in Nottingham at the Playhouse in the winter of 2011.

Young actors always seem to want to play Hamlet or Romeo, neither of which ever came my way. However my sights at that time were already set on Richard.

The combination of his cruelty, his anger, ambition and sheer twisted sense of humour are an irresistible challenge to any actor. Marry that psychological profile to the physical demands of the role, and you have something endlessly fascinating to explore, whilst always remembering the need to entertain. After all, he starts the play by telling you what he's going to do, then proceeds to do it, while you watch in wonder at his audacity, and horror at his methods.

Rehearsing and opening the production at Nottingham is an added bonus for me, as the theatre's production values and expertise are so high, as well as being a hugely enjoyable environment in which to work. Plus my wife, Loveday Ingram is directing me. So, what's not to like?

The discovery of Richard's bones in Leicester comes at a very exciting time for all of us involved in the production. He's very much in the news and the subject of much debate at the moment.

And here's another piece of information worth noting, which adds even more significance to the Playhouse's decision to stage the play; he may have ended up buried in Leicester after the Battle of Bosworth where he was killed, but he marched there with his army, from which city? Yep. Nottingham."