Introduction

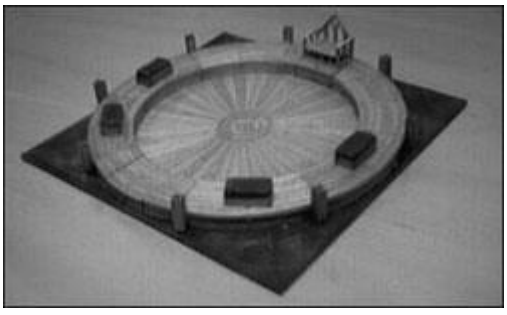
Northern Broadsides is one of the country's leading exponents of classic drama – drama where it is the language that conjures the world of the play and enables the audience's imagination to take flight. One of the trademarks of a Northern Broadsides' production, therefore, is the use of simple, minimal sets which create a theatrical space where the language can come to the fore.

This ethos is particularly relevant in this tour of HENRY V as the prologue to the play sets up the concept of theatre, highlighting the innate theatricality of the plays and appealing to the audience to use their imagination.

The play is a perfect vehicle for Northern Broadsides' distinctive approach to theatre – no frills, maximum impact, minimum paraphernalia.

The production design is therefore very simple – the play will be performed on a simple 'wooden O', which is mentioned in the prologue to HENRY V.

"…But pardon, gentles all,
The flat unraised spirits that hath dared
On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
So great an object. Can this cockpit hold
The vasty fields of France? Or may we cram
Within this wooden O the very casques
That did afright the air at Agincourt?
….let us, ciphers to this great account,
On your imaginary forces work."



[The set design for Henry V]

This will create a dynamic and innovative space with great potential for imaginative direction. Simple yet effective, the wooden 'O' will be used as the battle ground for royal wars. The set will also be used for the accompanying production of Heywood's A WOMAN KILLED WITH KINDNESS **.**

Set Design Interview:

Giuseppe Belli *was born in Manchester and studied Theatre Design at Birmingham Polytechnic before postgraduate study at The Slade School of Fine Art. He became Artist in Residence and Teacher Fellow at Bretton Hall College in 1995-98. Giuseppe is a practising painter and sculptor and has also worked extensively in special effects sculpture for the film, TV and advertising industries.*

Emma *was born and brought up in Leeds and studied Theatre Design BA(hons) at Bretton Hall College. Since graduating in 1998 she has worked extensively as an Assistant Designer for repertory, West End and Broadway theatre and European opera. Emma was the recipient of the young designers award to design 'King Lear' for The Cambridge Arts Theatre in 1999. She received the BBC 'Vision' design Award for costume and began her training in design for television on 'A Rather English Marriage' BBC. In 2001, Emma was Assistant Costume Designer on the series 'The Glass' for ITV.*

Giuseppe and Emma began working together in 1999 and since 2001 began concentrating specifically on theatre and devised work.

G. Barrie had said that he was interested in doing a wooden O. I hadn't thought about doing an O as that would take away from the maximum amount of space we could get within the posts. In the end, what we tried to do was to make the circle as dynamic as possible to suggest, with the wooden boards that were on the O, movement. That's why the boards around the edge are curved - not just slats, so you got a sense of that movement before any of the action happened.

E. We started to think about the grain in the wood so that that could take you round the edge, and the boards in the middle would draw your focus into the centre. We had very strong ideas about the chorus in particular taking that journey around the ring.

Barrie had quite a strong idea about the transformation in the last scene of 'Henry V'. We wanted to go from that heavy central focus to a wider format. The mud of the battlefield at Harfleur became a muddy cloth that is drawn over the wooden structure so that you could almost destroy the O for a period of time and then reveal it again.

The set model with the 'mud cloth'.

G. The initial concept was to try and create a canopy of some sort, a tent, which would have been alright for here [at The Viaduct] but it would have been very difficult to replicate anywhere else. We abandoned that in the end and started experimenting with cloth and the idea of revealing rather than adding.

E. We tried to keep some height in initially by suggesting a structure with posts round the edge and the addition of flags in the final scene, but it's one of those situations where sometimes it's better to pare down. Consequently, some of that detail has been lost now, though the interest in the set has been retained. You can see where that it is an architectural shape and that it still retains that changeability.

For 'A Woman Killed With Kindness' we take away sections of the O to create a walk through path and that's when it comes into it's own really - the dynamic of the shape changes.

So how was it trying design one set for two shows?

G. Well, you look at both the texts and then you start writing down ideas to do more with the ergonomics of the play rather than the environments. You're dealing with it in a reverse way really. You have to think about how people are going to move around this space, what kind of action's going to take place in those pieces. Then you choose which are the most

important elements design-wise to suggest those ideas.

For both, more so in 'Woman Killed,' the costume and the acting is very suggestive of mood and place rather than set. Initially we were thinking of introducing loads of things like balustrades that would slot into the postholes to suggest upstairs and downstairs and inside and outside. But then even that got pared down.

Once we had decided that the movements inside and around the circle would work for both plays, we started taking bits away. It was only really once the set was built that we realised fully the effect taking away the two inserts from the O had on creating a walk way and a feeling of entering a room or a space. You only really get that when you're on stage level, when you're next to it. And it works quite well.

Another thing we did was, rather than make the platform small, we made it as high as we could so that it was still comfortable to step up, but it was high enough to use as a seat as well. You could create this sort of amphitheatre feel if the actors sat around it. It takes away the reason to have furniture as well.

Because of the way Barrie works, the more minimal the set is, the better. We did actually design in benches that would sit on the set, but we knew that they would probably be dumped.

The fact that there is no furniture fits in with the style of both pieces really, because we're taking ideas from different periods. If you had furniture, it would necessarily suggest a specific timeframe. We didn't want to do this, so we picked and chose things from different times to create a world - two different worlds.

E. The O is also framed by the grey slating. This was really to finish the picture and to increase the focus of the set. It was also an idea that it was a separate area that could hold furniture or props that wouldn't interfere with the action. It became a secondary area on the stage.

G. The idea was that the slates enclose the circle and create a feeling of outside. The corner spaces also create four separate areas which are usable for other parts of the action. You can in effect use them to move the audiences' focus around the set.

E. We have in effect got several things working at once. You've got the passage way through the wood creating the central focus point in the middle of the circle, the outer circle and the journey that happens around that, then the outer framing which again seems to intensify the colour of the wood. It pulls it in and makes it a cleaner, clearer picture.

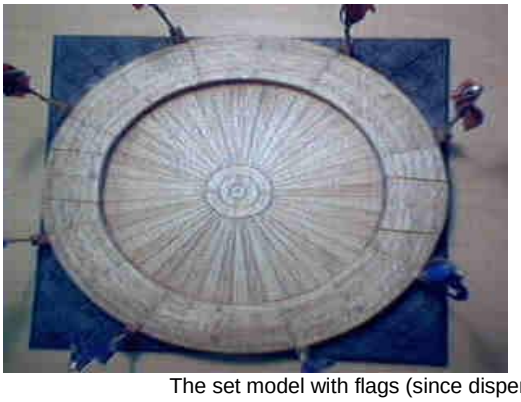
G. Initially with the O we realised that O's have been done a lot and it was a bit tricky to try to do one that was original. It's very difficult to do an original O.

E. I was working at the Globe at the time so I popped in and had a look around. But it's not the look, it's more about the feel.

G. A lot of shows loose their impact because the director's forgotten that it is a theatre piece and that it is important and that it is important for the audience to use their imaginations.

E. And there's so much in the play about believing you're somewhere else now.

G. Really all we did was try and create something which gave a feeling of architecture, a feeling of structure which could equally be interior or exterior, by adding or removing small items, which were very crisp. So for example, the card playing scene, how we chose the fabric the detail on the fabric was crucial. It's only a small thing, but when it's in that circle, it's the focal point of the stage and so it's really important. So it has to be right.



The set model with flags (since dispensed).

E. It makes anything else that you use on top of the set important so you have to stay focussed with all those small details.

G. In fact we've created a focal point. Even the radii draw you into the centre of the stage.

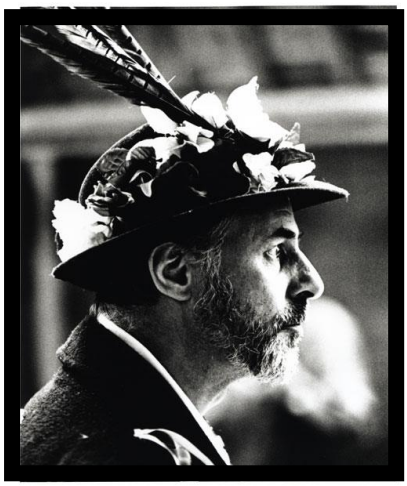
E. There were a few versions to start off with. Ones that were more like a bear pit & square versions that then just had the circle cut out the middle, or square platforms. But nothing worked quite so well as that circular journey

G. We tried hexagons & octagons as well. When you've got the set model in front of you and you're sat reading the script, you're thinking how's that bit going to work in there? What do we have to move her to make this bit work?

In the end it worked out that after a while when you were looking at the ones which were more angular like the squares, you were always aware of a structure being there. With the circle, you forgot it was there. Because it is a continuous thing, there are no points for you to focus on structurally. Wherever you eye lands is a part of that circle and so wherever the actors place themselves becomes the focal point.

Barrie Rutter – Northern Dreamer

A Short Biography



[Barrie Rutter in
A Midsummer Nights Dream]

"He is the archetypal bluff Yorkshireman, a figure seemingly created in its own image by the land which bore him"
Harpers & Queen

"If someone ever creates an arts version of Mount Rushmore, they should carve it into the Pennines and chisel Barrie Rutter's imposing features in the foreground."
Whatsonstage.com

Born in 1946, the son of a Hull fishworker, Rutter grew up in a two-up two-down on the Hessle Road, the fishdock area of Hull, around the corner from Tom Courtney.

At school, an English teacher frogmarched him into the school play because he had "the gob for it", and feeling at home on stage, Rutter chose his future direction. There followed a period at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama and many years in the National Youth Theatre culminating in The Apprentices' by Peter Terson – a role specially written for him, a practice to be repeated later in his career.

Seasons at the RSC in Stratford, London and Europe completed the 1970s. In 1980 he joined the National Theatre, a formative period. He met and worked closely with a poet who was to become his guru, Tony Harrison. Rutter performed in all three of Harrison's adaptations, all written for the Northern voice: The Mysteries, The Orestia, and The Trackers of Oxyrynchus. In Trackers, the part of Silenus was written especially for Rutter. It was this experience of performing in the northern voice that germinated the idea for Northern Broadsides.

Trackers toured to a wool-combing shed in Salts Mill, three miles north of Bradford. This was to be Rutter's 'Damascus'. He was deeply affected by the raw emotion of speaking to a northern audience in a northern voice in a classical play.

Northern Broadsides officially began when two projects in which he was to star - a major TV series and world tour of the Tony Harrison play - bit the dust. His agent suggested Rutter start his own company, and so he did. In 1992, he assembled some of the cast of Trackers and created Northern Broadsides, thanks to a grant of £15K from Hull City Council and Yorkshire and Humberside Arts, office space in Halifax at a nominal rate from entrepreneur Sir Ernest Hall, free rehearsal space from fellow entrepreneur Jonathan Silver at his Salts Mill, and free administrative support from the Bradford Alhambra.

The company's aesthetic, as Rutter explained, was "Northern voices, doing classical work in non-velvet spaces". Wherever they performed, this radical new aesthetic excited the critics.

The first production, Richard III, took the company to a variety of unusual venues including the Marina Boatshed in Hull, West Yorkshire Transport Museum in Bradford and Middleham Castle, North Yorkshire. Since that first production, Northern Broadsides has continued to tour to unusual spaces across the world, for example - the Rose Garden in Chandigarh, India, a Roman amphitheatre in Austria (where they performed with live bears and lions on stage!), and the Tower of London!

With the company's success has come invitations from theatres and spaces nationwide. Northern Broadsides will perform anywhere from proscenium and in-the-round to castles, churches, cattle markets, train sheds, post-industrial mills and riding stables across the UK.

The company's home base remains in Halifax.

Their performance and rehearsal space is a subterranean viaduct beneath what was Crossley's carpet mill. Renamed Dean Clough, this large old Victorian mill is now a thriving arts and enterprise centre owned by Sir Ernest Hall.

When Rutter first encountered the dark arches and rough hewn floors under Dean Clough, the space sparked his imagination. Where everyone saw a dank, dirty basement fit only for car-parking, Rutter saw a theatre. Christened The Viaduct, it has thrilled audiences and critics alike with its post-industrial character and unique atmosphere. All Northern Broadsides productions now open at The Viaduct and London critics make the arduous physical and mental journey north of Watford to review Northern Broadsides productions.

Since the company's humble beginnings in 1992, it has gone from strength to strength, from surviving hand-to-mouth on a shoestring budget for years, to winning numerous awards, culminating in the country's largest and most lucrative arts prize – Creative Briton 2000 – awarded to Rutter with a cheque for £100,000 to spend on his company.

Company Style

"Barrie's northern accent, fast-action, factory floor Shakespeare is as far from elitism as can be, though it has never dumbed Shakespeare down.
What you get is the text, the poetry, the real thing, but with a northern vigour."
Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott

Northern Broadsides - a regional company with an international reputation.

Northern Broadsides' repertoire consists mainly of Shakespeare and classical texts. These plays possess a timeless resonance and their universal explorations of the human condition have currency in any day and age, appealing directly to the soul, the emotions and the imagination.

For nearly ten years, they have toured the UK and the world with their highly distinctive performance style, including Brazil, the USA, Greece, Poland, Germany, Austria, India and Denmark.

"an evening of rip-roaring laughter".
The Sunday Tribune, India (The Merry Wives)

Language & The Northern Voice

Barrie Rutter's distinctive approach to theatre is fuelled by his passion for language and his unceasing celebration of the richness and muscularity of the Northern voice.

Northern Broadsides is a company of Northern actors who perform in their natural voices and have an indisputable command of the language and poetry of classic drama. The result is performance that has a directness and immediacy which is liberating and invigorating, breaking the southern stranglehold on classical performance and making the audience hear the words afresh.

"Shakespeare sounds terrific in authentic northern voices"
Daily Telegraph

"The Northern voice, with its short blunt vowels and tactile concrete consonants, makes a sensual meal of language, quite unlike the icky snacking gone in for by some of the more clipped southern accents."
The Independent

Northern Broadsides productions are unpretentious. Simple and stark, they make the audience focus on the language.

Rutter's directorial style can be characterised by the stripping down of all the paraphernalia of theatre, taking it down to its bare essential so that the audience's imagination can run riot.

Northern Broadsides has a reputation for performing in unconventional locations. These stark, non-velvet spaces with their absence of stage paraphernalia add a particular atmosphere to their work, and invite the mind to soar.

An industrial atmosphere pervades many of the productions as sets and props are magically constructed out of the flotsam and jetsam of the underground Viaduct Theatre where they are based.

The result is simple, brilliant, visceral theatre.

Language not Psychology

The work of Northern Broadsides has sometimes been berated by critics as lacking in psychological depth, a criticism which Barrie Rutter sweeps aside.

Of the 'psychological investigation of the characters', Rutter says: "All that rubbish has just been a fad for the last 150 years."

Northern Broadsides' work celebrates the language of the poetry, written at a time (whether Classic or Elizabethan) when the notion of character internalisation didn't exist. The result is theatre that brings the language to life, and because of the brilliance of the poetry, resonates with all the universal appeal inherent within the text.

"I don't believe in the word character. I think everything on the page is the poet's imagination with characteristics. You play the characteristics. I don't believe there is some psychological being somewhere up on the astral plane, and through the process of rehearsing, we climb up the umbilical cord towards them"
Barrie Rutter

[The Chorus in *Oedipus*.]

PISTOL

KING HENRY V

Act IV, scene o: lines 49 - 53

CHORUS
And so our scene must to the battle fly;
Where--O for pity!--we shall much disgrace
With four or five most vile and ragged foils,
Right ill-disposed in brawl ridiculous,
The name of Agincourt. Yet sit and see,
Minding true things by what their mockeries be.

Text: Act IV, scene i: lines 35 - 64

PISTOL
Qui va la?

KING HENRY V
A friend.

PISTOL
Discuss unto me; art thou officer?
Or art thou base, common and popular?

KING HENRY V
I am a gentleman of a company.

PISTOL
Trail'st thou the puissant pike?

KING HENRY V
Even so. What are you?

PISTOL
As good a gentleman as the emperor.

KING HENRY V
Then you are a better than the king.

PISTOL
The king's a bawcock, and a heart of gold,
A lad of life, an imp of fame;
Of parents good, of fist most valiant.
I kiss his dirty shoe, and from heart-string
I love the lovely bully. What is thy name?

KING HENRY V
Harry le Roy.

PISTOL
Le Roy! a Cornish name: art thou of Cornish crew?

KING HENRY V
No, I am a Welshman.

PISTOL
Know'st thou Fluellen?

KING HENRY V
Yes.

PISTOL
Tell him, I'll knock his leek about his pate
Upon Saint Davy's day.

KING HENRY V
Do not you wear your dagger in your cap that day,
lest he knock that about yours.

PISTOL
Art thou his friend?

KING HENRY V
And his kinsman too.

PISTOL
The figo for thee, then!

KING HENRY V
I thank you: God be with you!

PISTOL
My name is Pistol call'd.

Text: Act IV, scene ii: lines 1 - 51

ORLEANS
The sun doth gild our armour; up, my lords!
DAUPHIN
Montez a cheval! My horse! varlet! laquais! ha!
ORLEANS
O brave spirit!
DAUPHIN
Via! les eaux et la terre.
ORLEANS
L'air et la feu?
DAUPHIN
Ciel, cousin Orleans.
Enter Constable
Now, my lord constable!
CONSTABLE
To horse, you gallant princes! straight to horse!

DAUPHIN
Mount them, and make incision in their hides,
That their hot blood may spin in English eyes,
And dout them with superfluous courage, ha!

ORLEANS
What, will you have them weep our horses' blood?
How shall we, then, behold their natural tears?

MOUNTJOY
The English are embattled, you French peers.

CONSTABLE
Yon island carrions, desperate of their bones,
Ill-favouredly become the morning field:
There is not work enough for all our hands;
Scarce blood enough in all their sickly veins
To give each naked curtle-axe a stain,
let us but blow on them,
The vapour of our valour will o'erturn them.

DAUPHIN
But that our honours must not. Come, come, away!
The sun is high, and we outwear the day.

MOUNTJOY
Do but behold yon poor and starved band,
The horsemen sit like fixed candlesticks,
And in their paled mouths the gimmal bit
Lies foul with chewed grass, still and motionless;
Description cannot suit itself in words
To demonstrate the life of such a battle
In life so lifeless as it shows itself.

ORLEANS
They have said their prayers, and they stay for death.

DAUPHIN
Shall we go send them dinners and fresh suits
And give their fasting horses provender,
And after fight with them?

CONSTABLE
What's to say?
A very little little let us do,
And all is done. Then let the trumpets sound
The tucket sonance and the note to mount;
For our approach shall so much dare the field
That England shall couch down in fear and yield.

Text: Act IV, scene ii: lines 1 - 51

ORLEANS
The sun shines on our armour. Get up!

DAUPHIN
Mount up! My horse! Groom! Footmen! Hey!

ORLEANS
Our courageous Prince!

DAUPHIN
I'll gallop over the water and the land!

ORLEANS
Nothing after that? Certainly air and fire too.

DAUPHIN
The heavens, cousin Orleans.
Enter Constable
Now, my lord constable.

CONSTABLE
Saddle up, brave friends!

DAUPHIN
Mount them and dig your spurs into them so deeply that their hot blood puts out the English eyes; and blinds them with our overflowing courage.

ORLEANS
If their faces are full of blood, how are we going to see their tears?

MOUNTJOY
The English are ready for battle, you French lords.

CONSTABLE
Look at the poor and starved English troops;
There's not enough English for all our men to kill.
They don't have enough blood to stain all our swords.
Let us just blow on them, and the breath of our bravery will defeat them.

DAUPHIN
But our honour won't let us do that. Come on, let's get on with it & not waste time.

MOUNTJOY
Look at the poor and starved English troops.
The horsemen sit as still as candlesticks, with staffs for torches in their hand. And the bit hinged to their pale mouths he's closed with chewed grass within, still and motionless.
The description of such a battle cannot be made in words to show the cause of a battle with an army that shows itself so lifeless.

ORLEANS
They have said their prayers, and now only await death.

DAUPHIN
Should we provide them dinner, fresh clothing, and food for their starving horses, and then fight them?

CONSTABLE
What do you say?
We have very little to do. And it'll all be done.
Then let the trumpets sound the signal to march and mount our steeds.
For our approach will dazzle the field of battle so much that England will cower and surrender.

Exercise:

Rousing the troops.
In our production of Henry V, the English army have become very dispirited by the time of the great battle between the English & the French. The King speaks directly to his men to raise their spirits and prepare them for war.

Here are some suggestions for exercises which may help in understanding the speech:

Expansion.
Ask the group to stand in a circle.
Decide on an imaginary object e.g. a chicken.
The object starts off being very small, but as it is passed around the circle, it grows in size.
When it gets to the last person, it should be too big even to carry.

Bragging.
Repeat the exercise with a different imaginary object, but this time, ask each person to say something good about it.
At first, the object will sound ok, but by the time it reaches the end of the circle, it should be the biggest, bestest thing ever!

That's nothing!
Each member of the group is an old age pensioner. They were all involved in an event that took place years ago e.g. a party, a football game, a march etc.

Start off telling the story of the event, one at a time. The first person should recall one thing that they did and show off to the others when telling them. Each person in succession should begin their story with 'That's nothing!' and try and 'out do' the previous persons story.

Now onto the text.
Use the speech as it is divided up opposite. Give one section each to seven people (or fewer & they can have two or more sections each). Ask them to read through the speech in the style of the previous exercises, so that the speech builds from being a quiet contemplation to a hearty call to arms.

Each member of the group should have the opportunity to deliver a section of the speech & if possible, they should learn their section (it's only four lines!).

Once they have done this, choose one group to do their piece. Ask the others in the session to start to respond to the speech, starting off lying on the floor as the speakers move around them, and ending up ready to go into battle.

Text: Act IV, scene iii: lines 40 – 67

This day is called the feast of Crispian.
He that outlives this day, and comes safe home
Will stand a tip-toe when the day is named,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.

He that shall live this day, and see old age
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
And say 'To-morrow is Saint Crispian.'
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,
And say 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day.'

Old men forget: yet all shall be forgot,
But he'll remember, with advantages
What feats he did that day.

Then shall our names,
Familiar in his mouth as household words
Harry the King, Bedford and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,
Be in their flowing cups freshly remembered.

This story shall the good man teach his son,
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world
But we in it shall be remembered;

We few, we happy few, we band of brothers.
For he today that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition.

And gentlemen in England now a-bed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

Text: **Act IV, scene iv: lines 54 – 90**

PISTOL
Come hither, boy: ask me this slave in French
What is his name.

BOY
Ecoutez: comment etes-vous appele?

French Soldier
Monsieur le Fer.

BOY
He says his name is Master Fer.

PISTOL
Master Fer! I'll fer him, and firk him, and ferret him: discuss the same in French unto him.

BOY
I do not know the French for fer, and ferret, and firk.

PISTOL
Bid him prepare; for I will cut his throat.

French Soldier
Que dit-il, monsieur?

BOY
Il me commande de vous dire que vous faites vous pret; car ce soldat ici est dispose tout a cette heure de couper votre gorge.

PISTOL
Owy, cuppele gorge, permafoy,
Peasant, unless thou give me crowns, brave crowns;
Or mangled shalt thou be by this my sword.

French Soldier
O, je vous supplie, pour l'amour de Dieu, me pardonner! Je suis gentilhomme de bonne maison: gardez ma vie, et je vous donnerai deux cents ecus.

PISTOL
What are his words?

BOY
He prays you to save his life: he is a gentleman of a good house; and for his ransom he will give you two hundred crowns.

PISTOL
Tell him
My fury shall abate, and I the crowns will take.

Text**: **Modern Language version!

PISTOL
Come closer, boy. Ask this slave in French what his name is.

BOY
Listen, what's your name?

French Soldier
Monsieur le Fer.

BOY
He says his name is Mister Fer.

PISTOL
Master Fer! I'll beat him and whomp him, and hassle him. Tell him what I said, but in French.

BOY
I don't know how to say beat, whomp, and hassle in French.

PISTOL
Well, tell him to get ready for me to cut his throat.

French Soldier
What is he saying, sir?

BOY
He orders me to tell you that you are to make yourself ready, for this soldier here is supposed to cut your throat immediately.

PISTOL
Owy, cuppele gorge, permafoy, peasant, unless you give me money, serious money, or I'll cut you up.

French Soldier
Oh, I beg you, for the love of God, to pardon me. I am a gentleman of a good house. Preserve my life and I will give you 200 crowns [money].

PISTOL
What did he say?

BOY
He begs you to not kill him; he is a gentleman, and for his ransom, he is willing to give you 200 crowns.

PISTOL
Tell him I'll calm down, and that I'll accept the ransom of 200 crowns.

CONSTABLE

ORLEANS

DAUPHIN

Text: **Act IV, scene v: lines 54 – 90**

CONSTABLE
O diable!

ORLEANS
O seigneur! le jour est perdu, tout est perdu!

DAUPHIN
Mort de ma vie! all is confounded, all!
Reproach and everlasting shame
Sits mocking in our plumes. O merchante fortune!
Do not run away.

A short alarum

CONSTABLE
Why, all our ranks are broke.

DAUPHIN
O perdurable shame! let's stab ourselves.
Be these the wretches that we play'd at dice for?

ORLEANS
Is this the king we sent to for his ransom?

DAUPHIN
Shame and eternal shame, nothing but shame!
Let us die in honour: once more back again;
And he that will not follow Bourbon now,
Let him go hence, and with his cap in hand,
Like a base pander, hold the chamber-door
Whilst by a slave, no gentler than my dog,
His fairest daughter is contaminated.

CONSTABLE
Disorder, that hath spoil'd us, friend us now!
Let us on heaps go offer up our lives.

ORLEANS
We are enow yet living in the field
To smother up the English in our throngs,
If any order might be thought upon.

DAUPHIN
The devil take order now! I'll to the throng:
Let life be short; else shame will be too long.

Exeunt

KING HENRY V

EXETER

GLOUCESTER

MONTJOY

Text: **Act IV, scene vii: lines 54 – 90**

KING HENRY V
I was not angry since I came to France
Until this instant. Take a trumpet, herald;
Ride thou unto the horsemen on yon hill:
If they will fight with us, bid them come down,
Or void the field; they do offend our sight:
If they'll do neither, we will come to them,
And make them skirr away, as swift as stones
Enforced from the old Assyrian slings:
Besides, we'll cut the throats of those we have,
And not a man of them that we shall take
Shall taste our mercy. Go and tell them so.

Enter **MONTJOY**

EXETER
Here comes the herald of the French, my liege.

GLOUCESTER
His eyes are humbler than they used to be.

KING HENRY V
How now! what means this, herald? know'st thou not
That I have fined these bones of mine for ransom?
Comest thou again for ransom?

MONTJOY
No, great king:
I come to thee for charitable licence,
That we may wander o'er this bloody field
To look our dead, and then to bury them;
To sort our nobles from our common men.
For many of our princes--woe the while!--
Lie drown'd and soak'd in mercenary blood;
So do our vulgar drench their peasant limbs
In blood of princes; and their wounded steeds
Fret fetlock deep in gore and with wild rage
Yerk out their armed heels at their dead masters,
Killing them twice. O, give us leave, great king,
To view the field in safety and dispose
Of their dead bodies!

KING HENRY V
I tell thee truly, herald,
I know not if the day be ours or no;
For yet a many of your horsemen peer
And gallop o'er the field.

MONTJOY
The day is yours.

KING HENRY V
Praised be God, and not our strength, for it!
What is this castle call'd that stands hard by?

MONTJOY
They call it Agincourt.

KING HENRY V
Then call we this the field of Agincourt,
Fought on the day of Crispin Crispianus.

KING HENRY V

Herald

EXETER

FLUELLEN

Text: **Act IV, scene viii: lines 54 – 90**

KING HENRY V
Now, herald, are the dead number'd?

Herald
Here is the number of the slaughter'd French.

KING HENRY V
What prisoners of good sort are taken, uncle?

EXETER
Charles Duke of Orleans, nephew to the king;
John Duke of Bourbon, and Lord Bouciqualt:
Of other lords and barons, knights and squires,
Full fifteen hundred, besides common men.

KING HENRY V
This note doth tell me of ten thousand French
That in the field lie slain: of princes, in this number,
And nobles bearing banners, there lie dead
One hundred twenty six: added to these,
Of knights, esquires, and gallant gentlemen,
Eight thousand and four hundred; of the which,
Five hundred were but yesterday dubb'd knights:
So that, in these ten thousand they have lost,
There are but sixteen hundred mercenaries;
The rest are princes, barons, lords, knights, squires,
And gentlemen of blood and quality.
Here was a royal fellowship of death!
Where is the number of our English dead?

Herald shews him another paper

Edward the Duke of York, the Earl of Suffolk,
Sir Richard Ketly, Davy Gam, esquire:
None else of name; and of all other men
But five and twenty. O God, thy arm was here;
And not to us, but to thy arm alone,
Ascribe we all! Take it, God,
For it is none but thine!

EXETER
'Tis wonderful!

KING HENRY V
Come, go we in procession to the village.
And be it death proclaimed through our host
To boast of this or take the praise from God
Which is his only.

FLUELLEN
Is it not lawful, an please your majesty, to tell
how many is killed?

KING HENRY V
Yes, captain; but with this acknowledgement,
That God fought for us.

FLUELLEN
Yes, my conscience, he did us great good.

KING HENRY V
Do we all holy rites;
Let there be sung 'Non nobis' and 'Te Deum;'
The dead with charity enclosed in clay:
And then to Calais; and to England then:
Where ne'er from France arrived more happy men.

Enter FLUELLEN and GOWER

GOWER
Captain Fluellen!

FLUELLEN
So! in the name of Jesu Christ, speak lower. It is the greatest admiration of the universal world, when the true and aunchient prerogatifes and laws of the wars is not kept: if you would take the pains but to examine the wars of Pompey the Great, you shall find, I warrant you, that there is no tiddle toddle nor pibble pabble in Pompey's camp; I warrant you, you shall find the ceremonies of the wars, and the cares of it, and the forms of it, and the sobriety of it, and the modesty of it, to be otherwise.

GOWER
Why, the enemy is loud; you hear him all night.

FLUELLEN
If the enemy is an ass and a fool and a prating coxcomb, is it meet, think you, that we should also, look you, be an ass and a fool and a prating coxcomb? in your own conscience, now?

GOWER
I will speak lower.

FLUELLEN
I pray you and beseech you that you will.

Review

★★★★☆Viaduct, Halifax

The Guardian
Lyn Gardner
Thursday March 6, 2003

Henry V is a dangerous play, a play for spin doctors and politicians. It can be made to bend with the winds of the time, most famously in Olivier's 1944 film version when it became a piece of morale-boosting propaganda. In the current climate, it is impossible to watch this Hal trying to understand his archbishop's spurious arguments for legitimate claim on France and certain war without thinking of a nation being given a blast of Tony Blair's persuasive powers.

The production does not push this angle, which could be seen as a missed trick. Tricksiness, however, is not in the Northern Broadsides' vocabulary. Barrie Rutter's direction is plain but satisfying and his production intimate and robust, never losing sight of the fact that it is spinning a yarn. Most of all, it never allows the audience to forget that this is theatre, a wonderful make-believe. Rutter himself plays the Chorus with a twinkle in his eye, a trusty guide who effortlessly takes the audience on an imaginative journey in which a tiny circular space in a dank former mill is suddenly a French battlefield.

This is a play about transformations: a boy into a man, a man into a king, enmity to possible love (the wooing scene between the bluff Henry and the enchanting French princess is a delight). It is also about the transformations that can occur when an audience sits in the dark and imagines together. Shakespeare never wrote more directly about the alchemy of live performance than he does in this play, and this production is infused with that spirit.

Conrad Nelson's Henry is no cut-out hero, but a man struggling to find himself and desperately wanting to do the right thing. Like all the other performances here it is strong, direct and feels scrupulously honest. It is acting without the fancy show-off bits, and you can't help warming to it. Rutter's production sometimes lacks pace, and it will be interesting to see how it plays on tour in other possibly less sympathetic spaces. But there is something true and tender at the heart here that makes me think it will do just fine.

The Chorus

by Mike Poulton

From the programme notes.

So why should Shakespeare choose to have a Chorus in this particular play? His only previous use of one was in *Romeo and Juliet.* There, the Chorus uses the bright metrical form of the sonnet - a vehicle for words of love - to shockingly describe the bloody nature of the action, and timing of the play. It's true that *Henry IV part two,* Shakespeare's previous play, is opened by a Chorus like character called Rumour, but his function is to mislead the other characters by spreading false reports of the death of King Henry IV and Prince Hal his son.

The Chorus in *Henry V* is different. He speaks directly to the crowd, apologising for the weakness of his writing, the limitations of his actors and, with a subtle dig, the quality of the audience he's addressing.

But the tone is misleading - remember this is Shakespeare himself who is addressing us - and he remains slyly confident that he has up his sleeve more thrills, spills and laughs than in any attempted cardboard reality on stage, or even on a screen crammed with hundreds of extras re-fighting the battle of Agincourt.

If only the audience will accept what it's given, relax, listen to the words, and use its imagination. It should be enough. In fact the lines of the Chorus, rejected for centuries, contain the key to the style of the play. The Chorus sets out the play's dramatic manifesto.

King Henry V – a little background

The historical Henry became king when he was twenty-five. His repulsive father, Henry IV, had first stolen the crown from his cousin, Richard II, deposed him, then sent him up the A1 to Pontefract to be murdered. This was bad enough, but Henry went on to execute the Archbishop of York who said deposing and murdering kings was bad form. At last the usurper was punished for his sins with horrible diseases which swelled him up, and covered him with boils and pustules, rendering him almost immobile so that he could hardly climb down from the throne he had so wickedly acquired.

At the point of death the much loathed monarch is supposed to have wheezed to Prince Harry - our hero - "What right have you to the crown, my son, seeing I had none?" At that time the chronicles listed young Prince Harry's hobbies as reading, playing the harp, drinking, brawling, and mugging the citizens of London.

He fought in his first battle at the age of thirteen, and at fifteen had been knighted in Ireland by King Richard. (While Harry was receiving the accolade, his father was back in England beginning his usurpation bid.) But the minute Prince Harry became King Henry V he underwent a dramatic personal change, and became a religious fanatic. This change was so sudden, and so unexpected that people really did believe it was an actual miracle. There could be no other plausible explanation. Now the ex-Jack-the-lad was forever banging on about religion to his Archbishop and asking awkward questions.

Imagine the poor cleric's embarrassment. He goes to see the young king, expecting a chat about repairs to the church roof, over beer and sandwiches, and he gets asked what was St Augustine's opinion on Eutyches' monophysitism, or why Tertullian gave the Neoplatonists such a hard time, or why is the Paraclete a member of the Holy Trinity. Harry was even toying with the idea of going on crusade and taking all his bishops along for the ride. (Imagine what a fix our own Archbishop would be in if our next king decided he really was head of the Church, and he wanted to go and conquer the Holy Land.)

On the one hand the idea of a war seemed quite a good one - there's nothing like a war to distract people from problems at home. On the other hand Jerusalem was clearly a non-starter. A much better idea, the Archbishop told his king, was to lower his sights a bit and have a go at France. It was more convenient, being much nearer than Palestine. And heavily armed war horses didn't work properly in all that sand.

Soon Harry's hobbies were listed as reading, playing the harp, praying all the time, and planning to conquer France. But there were more problems. Some people were still saying that Richard's murder was jolly unfair - some were even saying Richard was alive and well and getting ready to reclaim his throne. There were Yorkist plots to kill Henry. The Wars of the Roses were just waiting to happen - one wrong move on Harry's part could set them off.

But how could Harry go to France when somebody claiming to be Richard might turn up at home and ask for the crown back? Harry's answer to this one was to go to King's Langley, dig Richard up, and bring the body, exposed on a hearse back to London for a splendid reburial in Westminster Abbey. Then, at last, it was time to cross the channel.

The first move in the French campaign was for Henry to say that the throne of France actually belonged to him and please could he have it back.

And here's where the play starts. It helps to know what happened in the previous episode as some of the events have a bearing on the present work. So at the end of the previous play, *Henry IV pt 2*, Harry has just been crowned King Henry V - as luck would have it, in a snowstorm.

As he comes out of Westminster Abbey Falstaff, and all Harry's other cronies from his Jack-the-lad days turn up expecting to be made Lord Chancellor, given government posts, put on advisory committees etc. - how times have changed! Henry tells them he doesn't know them and sends Falstaff into banishment. (However, Falstaff stays in London and dies offstage, as we discover.)

The play takes us through Agincourt, then on to the drawing up of the Treaty of Troyes by which the English got possession of France. And there the play ends, with a brief epilogue from the Chorus. After Agincourt Harry did indeed marry the French king's daughter. (Actually, Agincourt was just the beginning of the campaign and the Treaty of Troyes wasn't signed until about five years later - but whose counting.) It was agreed that Charles VI would continue to be king for his lifetime, but then the throne would pass to Harry. Sadly, it was not to be. Henry V died in France of amoebic dysentery, predeceasing his father-in-law by a few months, and never having seen his infant son, who was actually crowned King of both England and France.

On his death bed he said sorry to God for neglecting the conquest of Jerusalem. A death mask was made, then Harry was put in a big cauldron and all the flesh boiled off his body. Skeleton and mask were dressed in the royal regalia and brought in procession to Dover and then on to Westminster Abbey - his final resting place. The sword, shield, and helmet he wore at Agincourt can still be seen hanging over his tomb.

From the programme notes by Mike Poulton.