

See Booth's promptbook and more in...

## SHAKESPEARE IN PRINT & PERFORMANCE

Running through May 29, 2016 at the Harry Ransom Center

No writer is more central to the English literary tradition than William Shakespeare. For centuries, his works have intrigued and inspired generations of readers, audiences, and scholars. Four hundred years after his death, the Harry Ransom Center commemorates Shakespeare's legacy by presenting a selection of rare and unique materials relating to his plays. These materials, primarily drawn from the Ransom Center's collections, demonstrate how much we can learn about his historical context, sources, texts, and productions of the plays from early printed books and theatrical archives. Learn more at: <http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/>

### HIDDEN ROOM THEATRE

<http://www.hiddenroomtheatre.com>

Billing itself as a "theatrical curiosity shop" in Austin, TX, and named one of the Top Ten Theatrical Wonders of 2010 by Austin Chronicle, Hidden Room specializes in producing unpublished or rarely-seen works. Recently, their production of Nahum Tate's *History of King Lear* was performed to critical acclaim here in Austin, TX and at the Blackfriar's Conference at the American Shakespeare Center in Virginia. In July, they will return to London with their production of *Brudermord: The Puppet Hamlet* (1710) at the Globe Theater.

### HARRY RANSOM CENTER

<http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/>

The Ransom Center is an internationally renowned humanities research library and museum at The University of Texas at Austin. Its extensive collections provide unique insight into the creative process of writers and artists, deepening our understanding and appreciation of literature, photography, film, art, and the performing arts. Visitors engage with the Center's collections through research and study, exhibitions, publications, and a rich variety of program offerings including readings, talks, symposia, and film screenings.

**JOIN THE DISCUSSION ON TWITTER:**

**#BoothR3**

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# HARRY RANSOM CENTER & THE HIDDEN ROOM PRESENT

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## ONE NIGHT ONLY

A STAGED READING OF  
THE ORIGINAL PROMPTBOOK OF MR.

# JOHN WILKES BOOTH THE YOUNG AMERICAN TRAGEDIAN

IN SHAKESPEARE'S

# RICHARD III

AFTER COLLEY CIBBER

A PART IN WHICH HE WAS RECEIVED IN  
THE PRINCIPAL CITIES OF THE UNION  
WITH THE MOST ENTHUSIASTIC FAVOR  
AND WHICH HASN'T BEEN SEEN BY  
AUDIENCES SINCE 1864.

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**THIS EVENING,  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2<sup>D</sup>, 2016  
PROTHRO THEATER | AUSTIN, TX**

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## WITH THE FOLLOWING CAST AND COMPANY:

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Richard, Duke of Gloucester | Judd Farris  |
| Queen Elizabeth             | Liz Fisher   |
| Lady Anne                   | Liz Beckham  |
| Duchess of York             | Jill K. Swanson  |
| King Henry VI               | Ryan Crowder   |
| Prince of Wales             | Katy Taylor  |
| Duke of York                | Julia Lorenz-Olson                                     |
| Earl of Richmond            | Ryan Crowder   |
| Duke of Buckingham          | Nathan Jerkins   |
| Duke of Norfolk             | Rommel Sulit   |
| Lord Stanley                | Todd Kassens   |
| Earl of Oxford              | Brock England  |
| Sir William Catesby         | Justin Scalise   |
| Tressel                     | Brock England  |
| LT. of the Tower            | Rommel Sulit   |
| Lord Mayor, Blunt           | Reagan Tankersley                                      |
| Tyrrel, Ratcliffe           | Zac Crofford   |
| Officer, Guard, Soldier     | Dan Dalbout  |
| Master of Music             | Howard Burkett   |
| Musicians                   | Howard Burkett,<br>Joan Ely Carlson,<br>Natalie Naquin |
| Master of Costume           | Jennifer Rose Davis                                    |
| Costume Assistant           | Samantha Smith   |
| Master of Fight             | Toby Minor   |
| Master of Research          | Eric Colleary  |
| Research Assistant          | Stephanie Donowho                                      |
| Master of Play              | Beth Burns   |

With many thanks to Ransom Center staff who helped support and promote tonight's program.

## SETTING THE SCENE: BOOTH'S *RICHARD III*

For over 200 years after the death of Shakespeare, most of the Bard's plays were performed in adaptation. Colley Cibber's *Richard III* dominated Shakespeare's version for over 120 years. Known as the "blood and thunder" or "rapid action" version, Cibber's *Richard* was written so that audiences wouldn't have to see any of Shakespeare's *Henry* plays to understand the action. Many nineteenth-century American audiences saw Cibber's King Richard as a tragic hero, rather than as Shakespeare's villain.



Detail of the promptbook cover

John Wilkes Booth, son of the noted Shakespearean actor Junius Brutus Booth and brother to actor Edwin Booth, made his professional stage debut on August 14, 1855 in the role of Richmond in *Richard III*. Within five years, Wilkes Booth had made a name for himself nationally as a star actor and took on the role of Richard himself. He took his job seriously, was encouraging of the actors he performed with, and received overwhelmingly positive critical reviews during his brief career. His talents matched with his good looks made him a box office success until his politics made it difficult for him to find a theater that would hire him. Booth was shot and killed 12 days after he assassinated President Abraham Lincoln. Much of his theater material went to his brother Edwin, who had it burned.

It is not known how the promptbook for John Wilkes Booth's *Richard III* survived the fire. A promptbook is the full script of a play with all of the script edits, acting, music, and technical cues specific to a particular production – in short, one of the best records of what a production looked like. Another handwritten copy of Booth's promptbook can be found in the Harvard Theatre Collection. It is believed that he had two copies – one to keep at the theatre where he was performing and one that he could send ahead. These are the only two promptbooks of John Wilkes Booth known to exist. A digital facsimile of the Ransom Center's promptbook can be viewed in its entirety through the Digital Collections portal on our website: <http://www.hrc.utexas.edu>