

THE NOTTINGHAM PLAYHOUSE THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

REVENGER'S **TRAGEDY** BY THOMAS MIDDLETON



Friday 28 November to
Saturday 12 November 2016

INSIGHT PACK

THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY INSIGHT PACK

Created by Allie Spencer, Justine Sharp and Sinéad Bevan

Cast and Creative Team - Plot Synopsis - Snog Marry kill : A guide -
Jacobean theatre - Thomas Middleton - Revenge Tragedy -
The Globe Theatre - Staging a performance –
Behind the glitter: the 70s – Music in the Production -
Director's notes – Design – Cuppa with the cast – Fly on the wall –
Further Resources

Cast and Creative Team

Vindice	Alexander Campbell	Director	Fiona Buffini
The Duke	Paul Brightwell	Designer	Neil Murray
The Duchess	Tabitha Wady	Lighting Designer	Mark Jonathan
Gratiana	Mary Jo Randle	Composer / Sound Designer	Jon Nicholls
Supervacuo	Michael Keane	Choreographer	Cydney Uffindell-Philips
Lussurioso	Declan Perring	Fight Director	Alison de Burgh
Antonio	Martin Miller	Wardrobe Supervisor	Alison Cartledge
Younger Son /	John Askew	Assistant Director	Justine Sharp
Dondolo / Servant / Gentleman	John Askew	DSM	Sharlene Harvard-Young
Ambitiosa	Bethan Mary-James		
Castiza	Isabel Adams		
Spurio	Navinder Bhatti		
Hippolito	Nathan Clarke		
Guard & Keeper	Daniel Dore		
The Girls	Isabella Elliott & Scarlett Shaw		
	Caitlin Kupsa & Honor Solbe		

Revenge, law and corruption – A Plot synopsis by Assistant Director Justine Sharp

The Revenger's Tragedy is a story about corruption, justice and revenge. The play follows the protagonist Vindice (the revenger) as he seeks revenge for the death of his fiancé Gloriana, poisoned by the Duke 9 years before the play begins.

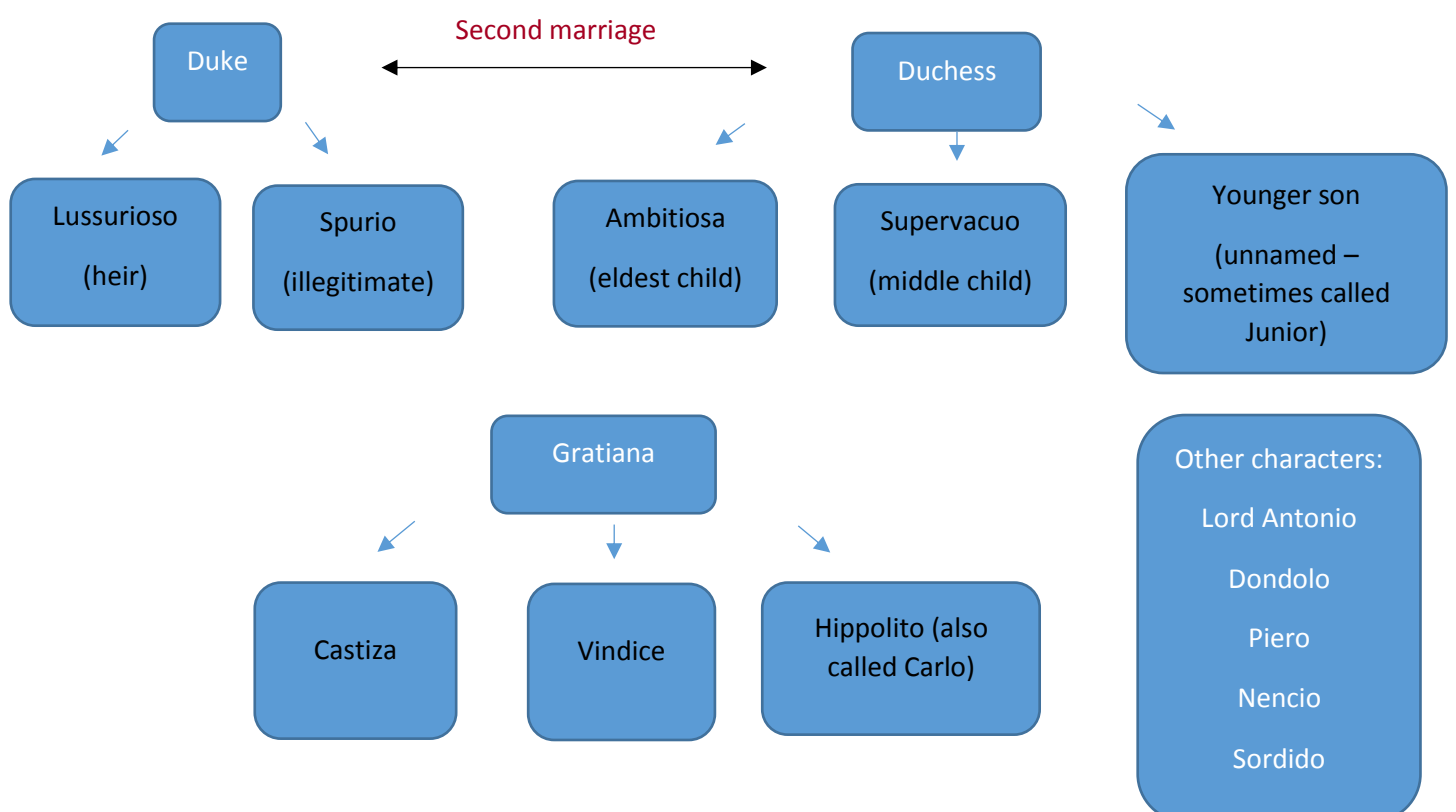
Vindice's brother Hippolito who works at court knows that the Duke's son Lussurioso, is looking for a pimp. Vindice disguises himself as a pimp called Piato and Hippolito introduces him at court.

Meanwhile, at court, the Duchess's youngest son is on trial for rape. The Duchess is furious that the Duke doesn't free him and revengers herself on him by starting an affair with his bastard son Spurio. This upsets her two children, Supervacuo and Ambitiosa who vow to kill Spurio.

Lussurioso is obsessed with a hound virgin and he wants Piato(Vindice in disguise) to persuade her to become his mistress. To his horror, Vindice discovers that the girl is his sister, but having sworn to corrupt her, he has to try. He fails, but manages to corrupt his mother who says she will persuade her daughter.

Lussurioso bursts into the Duchesses bedroom, expecting to find her in bed with Spurio. Instead she's in bed with the Duke who throws Lussurioso into prison for treason.

Ambitiosa and Supervacuo plot to have Lussurioso executed but they manage to get their own brother killed by mistake. They vow to kill Lussurioso but end up being killed by Spurio. Vindice and Hippolito finally manage to kill the Duke, and eventually Lussurioso but their revenge is complete and they nearly get away with it, but a final plot twist sees them being led away by execution.



**SNOG,
MARRY,
KILL**



FAMILY



KILL



LOVE/
LUST

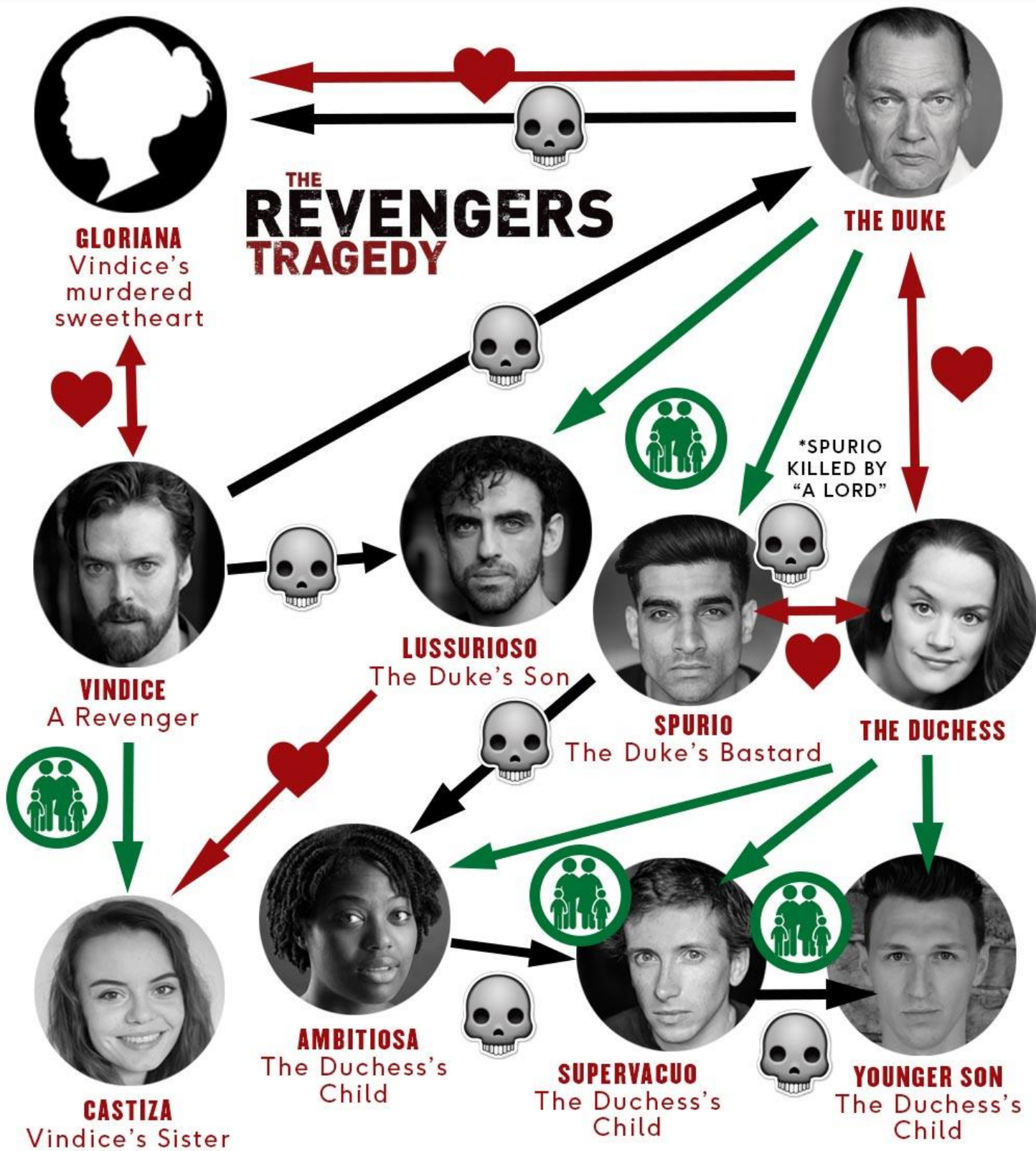


Diagram created by Sinéad Bevan

JACOBEAN THEATRE

As Elizabeth's reign came to an end and King James I took the throne the theatre had become a popular pastime. However the demands of the audience was changing and theatre goers were looking for theatre that had stronger themes and dealt with the darker side of humankind. As the reign of King James continued morality both within and outside the court began to lapse and with it, the morality within plays. Thus Shakespeare's plays became darker (for example Othello, King Lear) and other popular playwrights of the time also explored the darker themes of jealousy, corruption, revenge and other forces of evil. The intelligent, educated middle class audience who attended the more expensive Blackfriars theatres enjoyed the darkness of this new genre of theatre. Whilst Jonson wrote more satire and comedy, Thomas Middleton, John Webster, Ben Jonson, John Marston and William Rowley explored the darker Jacobean themes.

Theatre going was very popular right up to the Puritans closing the theatres in the 1640s. Theatre companies came and went, the two main rivals continuing to be the King's men (originally the Lord Chamberlain's Men) who were a profit sharing company, and The Admiral's men who became known as The Prince's Men from 1603 after their new patron Prince Henry and then The Palatine's Man after Frederik V their patron when Henry died. Other companies included the Worcester's men (who changed to the Queen Anne's men after the James's wife, Anne of Denmark, who was a great supporter of the arts in the Jacobean era) and the Lady Elizabeth' men.

London Theatres in the Jacobean era:

Theatre	Time period	company	North/south of river	Indoor/outdoor	Plays
The Blackfriars	1599 - 1642	From 1609 – the King's Men	North	Indoor with artificial lighting	<i>Duchess of Malfi</i>
The Red Bull Theatre	1557 - 1665	The Queen Anne's Men 1600 - 1617	North *	Outdoor	<i>The White Devil</i>
The Globe	1599 - 1613, 1614 - 1645	The King's Men	South	Outdoor (built from the timber of The Theatre)	<i>Othello, Hamlet, The Revengers Tragedy</i>
The Curtain	1577 - 1622	From 1603 – the Queen Anne's men	North *	Outdoor	<i>The Travels of the Three English Brothers, by Rowley, Day, and Wilkins.</i>
The Fortune	1600 – 1621 1623 - 1661	The Prince's Men (aka Admiral's & The Palatine's men)	North*	Outdoor	<i>The Spanish Tragedy</i> by Thomas Kyd
The Swan	1596 - 1621	The Lady Elizabeth's men 1613	South	Outdoor	<i>A Chaste Maid in Cheapside</i> by Thomas Middleton

- = outside the north city walls

THOMAS MIDDLETON (1580 to 1627)

The Revenger's Tragedy was originally accredited to Tourner. However after many debates and discussion over the last two centuries, the play has now been accredited to Thomas Middleton. Thomas Middleton was equally successful with both comedy and tragedy. A strong satirist, his revenge tragedies explored the dark side of mankind and his comedies poked fun at Jacobean living and sometimes current affairs.



His play *A Game of Chess* went a step too far when it satirized the proposed marriage between James I's son Charles and the Spanish princess the Infanta Maria. After complaints from the Spanish ambassador it closed after nine performances and Middleton and the actors were fined. There is no evidence that Middleton ever wrote a play again.

Middleton wrote masques for court, comedies for theatres and was a freelance playwright. Able to write for more than one company (as opposed to Shakespeare who was hired solely by the king's men) Middleton wrote for the Admiral's men, the King's men and the Lady Elizabeth's men. He co-wrote many plays and also wrote pamphlets and poetry. A theological pamphlet that has been attributed to him suggests that he had strong Calvinist views.

WHAT IS A REVENGE TRAGEDY?

Revenge tragedies take their influence from Roman statesman, philosopher and dramatist Lucius Annaeus Seneca (4BC – 65AD approx.) who worked for Emperor Nero. Seneca, whose own death would make a tragedy of his own (Forced to commit suicide by Emperor Nero; a long, slow tragic suicide), wrote at least eight tragedies. Some would argue that his plays were written to be recited rather than performed, whereas others say they were performed in his own life time. With no evidence of either, we will never know. It is safe to say however, that his plays were to be a great influence on Revenge tragedy in the sixteenth and seventeenth century.



A playwright from Ancient Roman times, his stories were of Greek influence (eg Oedipus). He wrote in five acts (adopted by revenge tragedies) and had blood thirsty revenge themes, usually based around a man driven to avenge an elder's death at the hands of someone more powerful.

Revenge tragedies focus on one or more protagonists within the play being motivated by revenge, for example Hamlet seeking revenge for his father's death. They explore the tensions between public and private revenge, question the social justice system, often involve a supernatural scene, usually include scenes of madness and end in carnage. In the Revenger's tragedy Vindice is seeking to avenge his lover's (Gloriana) death rather than an elder. He carries around Gloriana's skull as a constant reminder.

The Spanish Tragedy by Thomas Kyd was the first well known revenge tragedy in the Elizabethan/Jacobean era with *Titus Andronicus* (Shakespeare), *The Revenger's Tragedy* (Middleton), *The Duchess of Malfi* (Webster) and *Antonio's Revenge* (Marston) being others.

THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY AT THE GLOBE THEATRE, LONDON



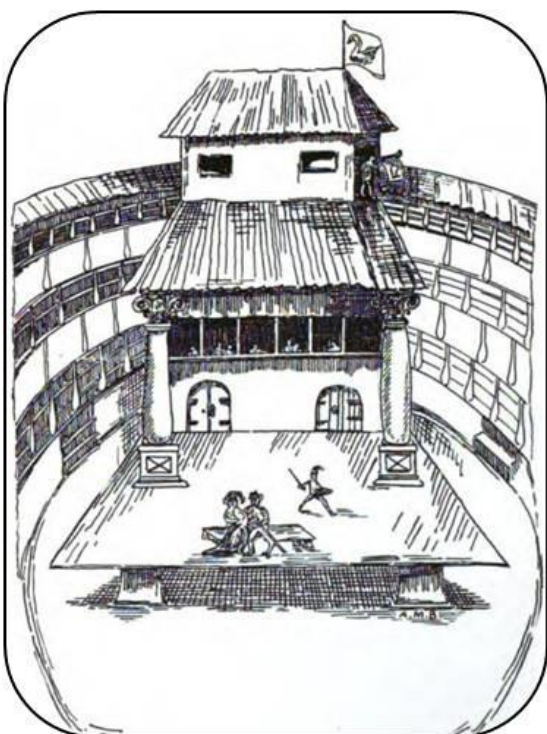
<http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/about-us/history-of-the-globe/original-globe>

The Globe Theatre was an open air theatre – if it rained, you got wet! Round/octagonal in shape, the stage area jutted out into the audience and the audience stood around it on three sides. The ground floor was called the yard or the pit. It cost a penny to get into the pit and it was standing room only. Audience members were called “Groundlings”.

For an extra penny audience members could sit in the surrounding gallery area – this was covered so protected the audience from both the sun and rain. They also had the privilege of sitting down. For another penny audience members could go up to the second gallery and look down on the stage. Again, this area had seats and was covered. It is thought that audience members sat on benches with the benches further back being higher so all audience members could see.



<http://www.william-shakespeare.info/william-shakespeare-globe-theatre-structure.htm>



<http://www.shakespeare-online.com/theatre/theswan.html>

The theatre was only open in the summer months due to being open air, and only open in the afternoons as there was no substantial theatre lighting. In the winter months audiences visited the indoor theatres instead, for example, the Blackfriars theatre.

No original picture of the interior of the Globe remains but it is thought to have looked similar to the interior for the Swan Theatre.

The Globe had a trap door downstage. The stage had two doors at the back. Between the doors in both theatres was an alcove known as the 'inner stage' or 'discovery space' which could be curtained off and where actors could be dramatically revealed.

STAGING A PERFORMANCE

Did you know?

With their love for guts and gore, Jacobean companies would develop good relationships with butchers so that they could use the offcuts in bloody scenes to make it more realistic.

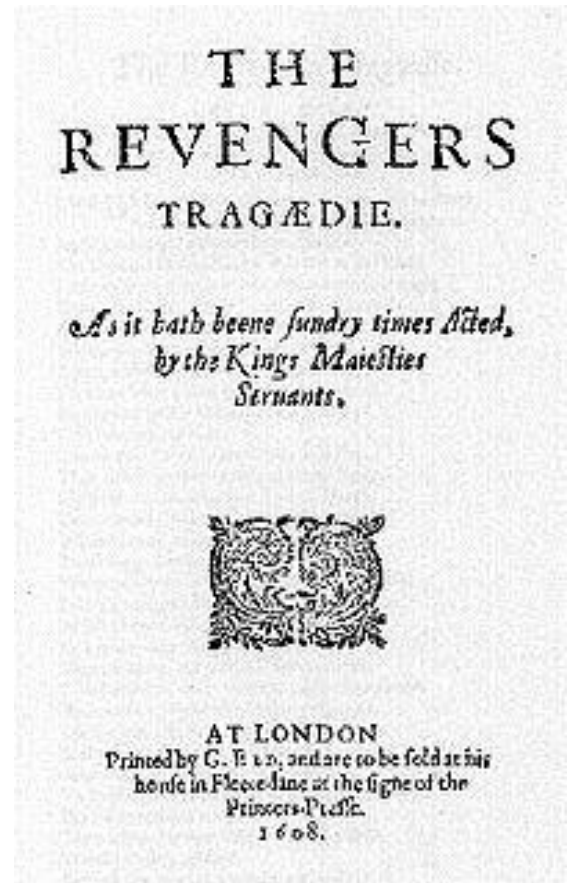
There are no blackouts in the script as the performance will have taken place in the open air in daylight and very few stage directions.

Music will have been used between acts.

Costumes were not historically accurate and scenery was minimal.

The play was first published in 1608.

It is rumoured that the term Box Office comes from this time period. People coming to see the play used to put their pennies in a box held by collectors at the entrance. Then when the play started the boxes were taken backstage and stored in a room. This became known as the Box Office.



Over to you....

If you were staging Act two Scene three at The Globe, how would you do it?

Things to consider:

Where would you place the bed that the Duke and Duchess are discovered in?

Where could Vindice, Supervacuo and the Duke perform their asides when the stage is on three sides?

How can you use the doors at the back of the stage effectively?

Is there any opportunity for you to use the trap door?

What are your challenges performing with the audience on three sides? How can you use this to your advantage?

How can you use the stage effectively to show the differences in power between the characters?

Where should the Duke perform his final speech?

What are the disadvantages of performing this play at the Globe?

ACT II Scene (iii) of The Revenger's Tragedy

LUSSURIOSO, VINDICE and HIPPOLITO.

LUSSURIOSO Where is that villain?

VINDICE Softly, my lord, and you may take 'em twisted.

LUSSURIOSO I care not how!

VINDICE Oh, 'twill be glorious
To kill 'em doubled, when they're heap'd! Be soft,
My lord.

LUSSURIOSO Away! My spleen is not so lazy;
Thus and thus, I'll shake their eyelids ope,
And with my sword shut 'em again forever.

THE DUKE and DUCHESS are discovered in bed.

Villain, strumpet!

DUKE You upper guard defend us!

DUCHESS Treason, treason!

DUKE Oh, take me not
In sleep; I have great sins: I must have days,
Nay, months, dear son, with penitential heavens
To lift 'em out, and not to die unclear.
Oh, thou wilt kill me both in heaven and here!

LUSSURIOSO I am amaz'd to death.

DUKE Nay, villain traitor,
Worse than the foulest epithet, now I'll gripe thee
E'en with the nerves of wrath, and throw thy head
Amongst the lawyers. Guard!

Enter ANTONIO, AMBITIOSA, SUPERVACUO and guards.

ANTONIO How comes the quiet of your grace disturb'd?

DUKE This boy that should be myself after me
Would be myself before me; and in heat
Of that ambition bloodily rush'd in
Intending to depose me in my bed.

ANTONIO Duty and natural loyalty forfend!

DUCHESS He call'd his father villain and me strumpet,
 A word that I abhor to 'file my lips with.

AMBITIOSA That was not so well done, brother.

LUSSURIOSO I am abus'd -
 I know there's no excuse can do me good.

VINDICE [*Aside*] 'Tis now good policy to be from sight;
 His vicious purpose to our sister's honour
 Is cross'd beyond our thought.

HIPPOLITO [*Aside*] You little dreamt
 His father slept here?

VINDICE [*Aside*] Oh, 'twas far beyond me -
 But since it fell so, without frightful words,
 Would he had kill'd him: 'twould have eas'd our swords.

Exit VINDICE and HIPPOLITO.

DUKE Be comforted, our duchess: he shall die.

Exit DUCHESS.

LUSSURIOSO Where's this slave-pander now, out of mine eye,
 Guilty of this abuse?

Enter SPURIO and SERVANT.

SPURIO Y'are villains, fblers;
 You have knaves' chins and harlots' tongues: you lie,
 And I will damn you with one meal a day.

SERVANT Troth, my lord,
 'Twas his intent to meet there.

SPURIO Heart, he's yonder!

LUSSURIOSO The bastard here?
 Nay, then the truth of my intent shall out.
 My lord and father, hear me.

DUKE Bear him hence.

LUSSURIOSO I can with loyalty excuse -

DUKE Excuse? To prison with the villain:
Death shall not long lag after him.

SPURIO [*Aside*] Good, i'faith; then 'tis not much amiss.

LUSSURIOSO Brothers, my best release lies on your tongues;
I pray persuade for me.

AMBITIOSA It is our duties:
Make yourself sure of us.

SUPERVACUO We'll sweat in pleading.

LUSSURIOSO And I may live to thank you.

Exeunt LUSSURIOSO guarded.

AMBITIOSA No, thy death
Shall thank me better.

SPURIO He's gone: I'll after him
And know his trespass; seem to bear a part
In all his ills, but with a puritan heart.

Exit.

AMBITIOSA Now, brother, let our hate and love be woven
So subtly together, that in speaking
One word for his life, we may make three for his death:
The craftiest pleader gets most gold for breath.

SUPERVACUO Set on; I'll not be far behind you, sister.

DUKE Is't possible a son should be disobedient as far as the sword? It
is the highest; he can go no farther.

AMBITIOSA My gracious lord, take pity -

DUKE Pity, youths?

AMBITIOSA Nay, we'd be loath to move your grace too much;
We know the trespass is unpardonable,
Black, wicked, and unnatural -

SUPERVACUO In a son, O, monstrous!

AMBITIOSA - yet, my lord,
A duke's soft hand strokes the rough head of law,
And makes 't lie smooth.

DUKE But my hand shall ne'er do't.

AMBITIOSA That as you please, my lord.

SUPERVACUO We must needs confess
Some father would have enter'd into hate,
So deadly pointed, that before his eyes
He would ha' seen the execution sound
Without corrupted favour.

AMBITIOSA But, my lord,
Your grace may live the wonder of all times
In pard'ning that offence which never yet
Had face to beg a pardon.

SUPERVACUO Forgive him, good my lord: he's your own son -

AMBITIOSA And I must needs say 'twas the vildier done.

SUPERVACUO He's the next heir, yet this true reason gathers:
None can possess that dispossess their fathers.
Be merciful -

DUKE [*Aside*] Here's no stepmother's wit:
I'll try 'em both upon their love and hate.

AMBITIOSA Be merciful, although -

DUKE You have prevail'd:
My wrath like flaming wax hath spent itself.
I know 'twas but some peevish moon in him:
Go, let him be releas'd.

SUPERVACUO [*Aside*] 'Sfoot, how now, sister?

AMBITIOSA Your grace doth please to speak beside your spleen;
I would it were so happy.

DUKE Why, go, release him.

SUPERVACUO O my good lord, I know the fault's too weighty
And full of general loathing, too inhuman,
Rather by all men's voices worthy death.

DUKE 'Tis true too.
Here then, receive this signet; doom shall pass:
Direct it to the judges; he shall die
Ere many days. Make haste.

AMBITIOSA All speed that may be.
We could have wish'd his burthen not so sore;
We knew your grace did but delay before.

Exeunt.

DUKE Here's envy with a poor thin cover o'er 't,
Like scarlet hid in lawn, easily spied through.
This their ambition by the mother's side
Is dangerous, and for safety must be purg'd;
I will prevent their envies. Sure it was
But some mistaken fury in our son,
Which these aspiring youths would climb upon:
He shall be releas'd suddenly

Enter ANTONIO.

DUKE Welcome, my lord.

ANTONIO My knee shall take away the office of my feet forever,
Unless your grace bestow a father's eye
Upon the clouded fortunes of your son,
And in compassionate virtue grant him that
Which makes e'en mean men happy: liberty.

DUKE [*Aside*] How seriously his love and honour woos
For that which I am about to pray him do,
Which – [*To him*] rise, my lord, your knees sign his release.
We freely pardon him.

ANTONIO I owe your grace much thanks, and he much duty.

Exeunt.

DUKE

It well becomes that judge to nod at crimes
That does commit greater himself and lives.
I may forgive a disobedient error
That expect pardon for adultery,
And in my old days am a youth in lust!
Many a beauty have I turn'd to poison
In the denial, covetous of all.
Age hot is like a monster to be seen:
My hairs are white, and yet my sins are green.

**Set model for Nottingham Playhouse's *The Revenger's Tragedy*.
Act Two Scene Three – The Duke's Bedroom. Design by Neil Murray**



The Nottingham Playhouse Production uses a proscenium arch stage. In this scene the bed is centre stage. Entrances and exits are stage left and stage right. Set in the 70s the set is stylish and grand.

If you had the chance to direct or perform this scene in any theatre in the UK, which would you choose and why? (Consider types of stages, entrances and exits and where the audience are.)

What era would you set it in? Why?

BEHIND THE GLITTER – the 70's

Nottingham Playhouse's production of *The Revenger's Tragedy* is set in the 1970s. Known for its stars that abused their power, the corrupt world of *The Revenger's Tragedy* fits well into this era. Evil is disguised with disco and glitter. Bright colourful outfits hide the corruptness within.



<http://pamelaslim.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Stock-000021405196Larae.jpg>



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gary_Glitter

Gary Glitter is a 70s popstar, now serving a prison sentence for sex offences in the 1970s including sex with a girl under 13. Although arrested a number of times, Glitter wasn't officially convicted or sentenced until 2015 as a result of "Operation Yewtree" (an investigation into sex crimes related to the late Jimmy Saville). 1970s star Rolf Harris was also arrested and convicted as a result of this investigation, amongst others. Both *The Duke* and *Lussurioso* are a reminder that underneath the glamour and the glitter of the 70s was a world where stars were untouchable, and young innocent girls often fell victim to their powerful sexual predators and were unable to do anything afterwards.

MUSIC IN THE PRODUCTION

The music in the production is a key feature that moves the action on, underscores the scenes and gives the production the racy quick-moving feel it needs. The final dance (*The Revenger's Ball*) where so many killings take place is to the remix of Walter Murphy's "A Fifth of Beethoven" from *Saturday Night Fever*. Music from Glam Rock bands T Rex and The Sweet also feature within the production alongside tracks by David Bowie and other 70s musicians.



Jon Nicholls, the Sound Designer and composer has written additional composition to underscore and complement the original music and describes it as a "palette of textures and abstract sound".

"I've developed a palette of textures and abstract sounds derived from digital processing of samples of the 1970s tracks. I've also been working with an electric guitar a lot, but treating it much more as a sound generating device, rather than something more 'musical'. It's been scraped, banged, shaken, and run through all sorts of distorting effect pedals and filters from elderly synthesisers, until it becomes an overall texture of 'guitar-ness' rather than a recognisable instrument - as if that pulsing energy of those 1970s guitars has radiated out to infuse and infect the whole atmosphere of the play."

https://rateyourmusic.com/list/weber14/trex_studio_albums_ranked/

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Director Fiona Buffini is entranced by the Jacobean's ability to hold a mirror up to our world. Here she tells Sinéad Bevan about what exactly inspired her vision...



You first read *The Revenger's Tragedy* at A Level – why did it have such an impact on you then?

I was very lucky to have a wonderful teacher called Paddy Toohey who introduced me to the play, and what appealed to me was that although the language was quite similar to Shakespeare, it felt completely different, and very modern. When you're 16 you're just realising that many of the things you've been told about the world aren't necessarily true, and you're starting to form your own ideas about things, and for me, the play chimed with that perfectly. When you're doing your A Levels, you're living in the world that your parents and grandparents' generation have made and it's often far from an ideal world. So I think that's what appealed to me.

This is the second Jacobean play you've done – what is it about this period that appeals to you?

It's almost coincidental that I've done two Jacobean tragedies in a row – I love everything from Greek plays right the way up to contemporary writers, and I just love plays that surprise, delight and shock an audience, and make them think about the world they live in. The two Jacobean plays that I have done absolutely do that. In *The Revenger's Tragedy*, it makes the audience think about sexual corruption and the way the rich and powerful can destroy the lives, particularly of young women. I think it's very interesting that there's just been this huge controversy about Donald Trump; how he's been speaking about women, and making a joke out of assaulting women – that's something that's really prevalent in this play.

What made you decide to set the play in the 1970s?

The setting of the play has borrowed lots of elements from the 1970s, but it's its own unique universe. This "borrowing" started with the music — it's very flamboyant and over the top, which sits well with the play. Many of the characters believe that everything can be bought: they value sex and money, they have no moral compass, they are out for themselves and they like to wear their wealth. They're rather grotesque, which was all there in the excesses of the 1970s. We've since discovered that there was a lot happening behind closed doors in the 1970s that was very dark indeed, that men in particular were able to get away with because of their power and status. This play has a brutal underbelly, so I think that sense of flamboyance and the abuse of power is something which I associate with the 1970s. It's still going on now obviously, but people were able to get away with it far more then, and I wanted to make that very immediate to the modern audience.

http://real-life-villains.wikia.com/wiki/Jimmy_Savile



The Duke ends a scene by acknowledging his depravity to the audience – he says “*Age hot is like a monster to be seen – my hairs are white, and yet my sins are green.*” I’ve added in two young schoolgirls coming into the room to ask him for his autograph. Nothing happens to the girls onstage – but I do want to bring the vulnerability of young women, in both the world of the play and our world into sharp focus with that addition.

You’re working with the same creative team from *The Duchess of Malfi* – what is it about them that clicks with your vision?

The combination of lighting designer Mark Jonathan, who can sculpt with light and hold people in darkness, and Neil Murray, who makes such atmospheric sets, results in the right balance of light and darkness that is so essential to these plays. They are plays with a tremendous sense of atmosphere, and they are able to really simply and beautifully suggest evil. Their darkneses are so dark that they make you afraid. Jon Nicholls is an equal part of the equation. He’s a wonderful composer, but as a sound designer he can create sounds that the audience aren’t even aware of – he uses sound subliminally to layer atmosphere into a scene.

What do you hope people will take away from this production of *The Revenger’s Tragedy*?

It’s a really good night out – the Jacobean and the Elizabethan had to entertain an audience, many of whom were standing. You can’t be boring or plodding – you have to keep the pace moving. The play is full of surprises, full of the most unexpected reversals of fortune – it’s absolutely delightful. It also holds a mirror up to our world, and I would hope that it encourages the audience to ask some serious questions of our society. What do we have to do to live in a world that is fair and safe? How do we protect the young and vulnerable from the ravages of the powerful? What can we do about injustice, when people are literally getting away with murder? The play doesn’t necessarily have the answers, but it certainly poses these important questions for us to all think about.



Act Four Scene Two –
Lussurioso’s Private Space
Designed by Neil Murray

“Their darkneses are so dark that they make you afraid” *Fiona Buffini*

SET AND COSTUME DESIGN

Neil Murray introduces his design and his thoughts on the court as sordid, corrupt, decadent and grotesque.

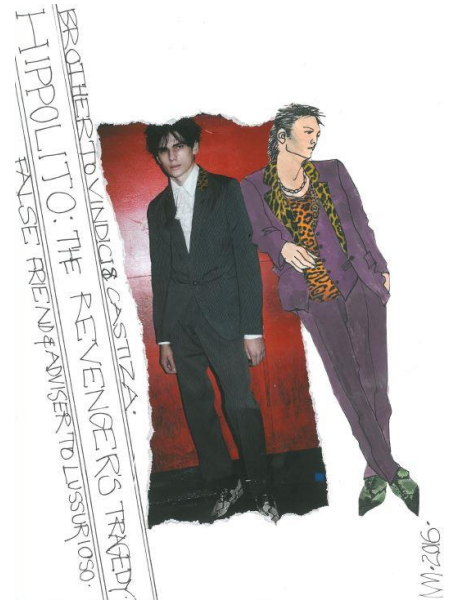
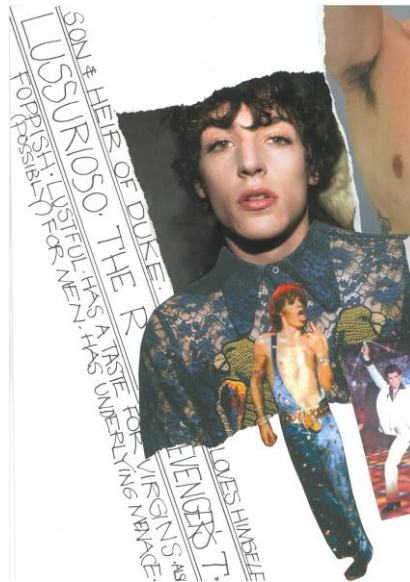
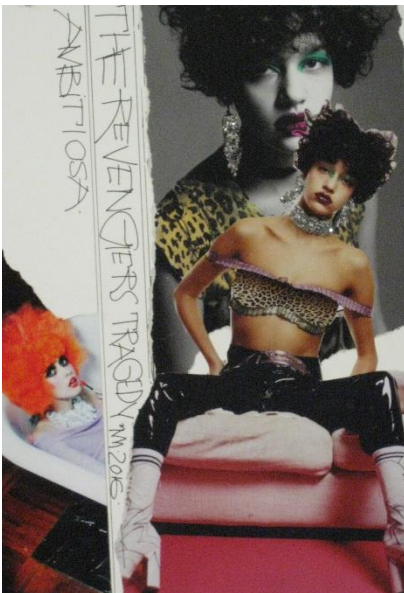
This is a fictitious Italian court, based in the 1970's. The court reflects the world surrounding the court – dark and overpowering, with glitter covering the darkness.

Costumes are lavish and grotesque – fur coats, platform heels, glamorous suits, leopard print, and so much more that the 1970's spat out at us.

Here are some of Neil's original designs and mood boards for the production.



Act One Scene One - The Trial in the Throne room



Act Four Scene Three – The Palace Corridor



A CUPPA WITH THE CAST

Justine Sharp catches up with the cast during a tea break to find out a bit more about them, their thoughts on the character they are playing.

Rehearsal photographs are courtesy of Robert Day.

Bethan Mary-James – (Ambitiosa)

What are your initial thoughts about your character?

I thought she was interesting in the sense of its all in the name, she's ambitious which I thought would be interesting to play. The role of Ambitiosa was originally written as a male role which I found interesting and Fiona changed the role to be female. I am interested in exploring more about Ambitiosa - I have yet to find out more about her.

What is her relationship like with her brother Supervacuo?

At this point I am still exploring. In turn they are family and have family ties but that's as far as it goes I think. There is complete disregardment between the two siblings. Nothing Supervacuo says has any effect on her; it's like two friends who are there for comfort and that is all, however Ambitiosa's relationship with the audience is completely different as she opens up and tells them everything.

What attracted you to this play?

Thomas Middleton I came across in drama school and I never really gave it a thought back then whereas now I get to have the challenge to be a part of a classical play. I get to explore the text and learn what things mean. I have studied classical plays before but never been a part of/ done a full classical play. I really just wanted to jump at the chance of learning new skills.



Isabel Adams (Castiza)

Where was your place of study?

Bluecoat Academy sixth form

Have you a membership with any youth theatres or theatre companies?

I attend Television workshop and that's how I got the audition for *The Revenger's Tragedy*. I also used to be a part of the National Youth Theatre.

Have you ever worked professionally in the theatre before?

No – *The Revenger's Tragedy* is my first professional job.

What are your next steps after *The Revenger's Tragedy*?

I would like to audition for drama school; I would especially like to audition for RADA and Guildhall.



Mary Josephine Randle (Gratiana)

Where did you study?

Birmingham University where I gained a Social Science degree. I also went to RADA.

Have you any other skills or achievements besides acting?

I have had a book published called 'Catch me when I'm happy' and I have written a play called 'Roaring for Munter'

Have you ever been on television?

I have been on TV numerous times but two shows I have really enjoyed doing is a show called 'Another flip for Dominic' and a BBC adaptation of Edward Bond's 'Oilly's prison'.

Other than performing *The Revenger's Tragedy* at Nottingham Playhouse, have you worked in any other theatres?

I have worked in numerous theatres and companies such as- The RSC, Manchester's Royal Exchange, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Soho poly theatre in London, Sheffield's Crucible theatre and Hampstead theatre, London.



FLY ON THE WALL

A Revenger's Tragedy Rehearsal observed by Assistant Director Justine Sharp

10.00am-

Miss Adams (Castiza), Miss Randle (Gratiana) and Mr Campell (Vindice/Piato) are all called to rehearsal and we ease into the morning. With a line run of Act 2 scene 1. Fiona Buffini (Director) then discusses with the actors any problems with understanding the text.

10.10am-

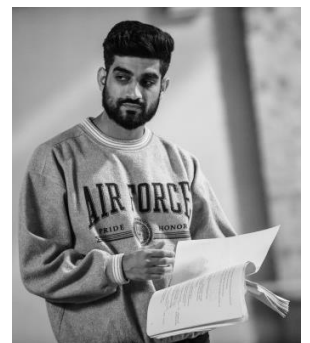
Miss Adams (Castiza), Miss Randle (Gratiana) and Mr Campbell (Vindice/Piato) run sections of Act 2 scene 1 and stop when there is a problem such as a fight that happens that they cannot do until the fight director is present. Fiona discusses the use of props and costume in the scene, Gratiana dresses her daughter Castiza in jewels from the Duke's son in order to persuade her daughter to seduce the Duke's son so they can have all the riches and jewels he has to offer. Miss Adams and Fiona discuss when the costume and props are going to get put into use. Fiona looks at points of focus with the actors and when is appropriate for props/costume to have focus and which character has focus. Miss Adams (Castiza), and Miss Randle (Gratziana) have been exploring their mother and daughter relationship and experimenting with their emotions towards each other in the scene, e.g. when do their feelings change?



11.15am-

Miss Mary-James (Ambitiosa), Miss Wady (Duchess), Mr Askew (Younger Son), Mr Bhatti (Spurio), Mr Brightwell (Duke), Mr Keane (Supervacuo), Mr Miller (Judge), Mr Perring (Lussurioso), start rehearsal with a full run through of Act1 scene 2.

Fiona then gives notes to the actors in order to make the scene progress and the actors get a chance to ask Fiona questions they have about the scene. The actors take on board all the notes they have been given to make the scene better and then run the scene again with added changes.



12.30pm-

Mr Askew (Younger Son) and Mr Miller (Antonio) start off with a read through of Act 3 scene 4. After the read through Fiona tells the actors they will now do a 'Beep' through of the scene. (A Beep-through is a read through with the interruption of a "Beep" when any of the readers have a question about the text.) The two actors along with Fiona look at what certain things mean in the text in depth. The two actors then get the scene up on its feet for the first time.



1.00pm- Lunch

2.00pm-

After lunch we ease into the afternoon with Mr Campbell (Vindice), Mr Clarke (Hippolito), Mr Miller (Antonio) and Mr Perring (Lussurioso) reading through Act 5 scene 3. After a read through the actors do a Beep-through and Fiona is waiting to answer any questions the actors may have. All the actors and Fiona have a discussion on how the characters feel within the scene and why they say what they say. The actors then run the whole scene for the first time with the whole cast focusing on the relationship between Vindice and Hippolito.



4.10pm- Break



4.20pm-

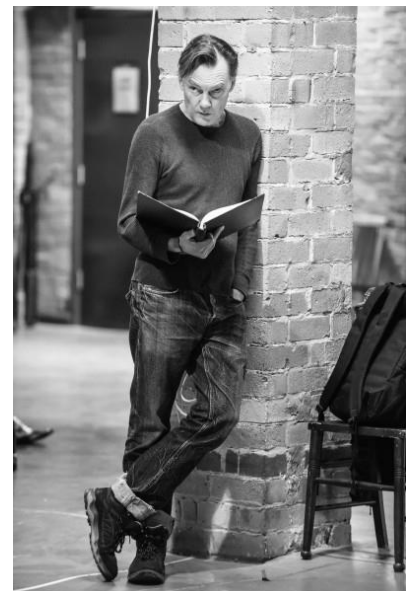
Mr Clarke, Mr Campbell and Mr Perring (Lussurioso) delve straight into Act 2 Scene 2. Fiona and the cast work through the blocking and make slight changes. The cast work through the tempo of the scene and experiment with picking up the pace and slowing it down again to find the right tempo for the scene.

5.00pm-

Before we start of rehearsing Act 2 Scene 3 Mr Brightwell (Duke) is trying different accents for his character with Fiona. Miss Mary-James (Ambitiosa), Mr Brightwell (Duke) and Mr Keane (Supervacuo) then begin to rehearse and have a play around with different things such as accents and exploring the space.

6.00pm-

Rehearsal call to end.



FURTHER RESOURCES:

The following resources were used in preparing this pack

<http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/>

<http://www.william-shakespeare.info/>

<http://www.slideshare.net/hannahsole6/the-revengers-tragedy-review-of-the-plot>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/>

FIND OUT MORE:

The following pre and post show talks are happening to accompany The Revenger's Tragedy production:

Middleton on Shakespeare: The Revenger's Tragedy

Free Pre-Show Talk by Peter Kirwan

Associate Professor in Early Modern Drama at the University of Nottingham

Monday 31 October at 6:30pm

The Rough Guide To The Revenger's Tragedy

Free Pre-Show Talk with director Fiona Buffini

Thursday 3 and Thursday 10 November at 6pm

Free Post-Show Discussion

With director Fiona Buffini and members of the cast.

Tuesday 8 November

Schools masterclass and revision session*

Best Suited for A Level. Led by Fiona Buffini

Masterclass Tuesday 8 November, 4:30pm – 6pm

Revision Session Wednesday 29 March, 11am – 12:30pm

The masterclass will provide an insight into Fiona Buffini's understanding of the play, her artistic choices and design considerations in this 1970s inspired interpretation. The session will give students an understanding of the Director's processes and her choices, in terms of set, performance space, costume, lights, music and sound. Through practical demonstrations, Fiona will explain how her decisions create mood, and have impact on the audience.

*There is a small charge for this.

STAY IN TOUCH:

Should you have any further questions about the Insight pack, The Revenger's Tragedy or any of the participation events we run please get in touch with Education officer Allie Spencer at allies@nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk

STUDENTS..... Don't forget there is a PAY WHAT YOU CAN performance on Wednesday 2 November at 7.30pm. Don't let the cost put you off seeing great theatre! #paywhatyoucan