



Richmond Shakespeare Society

# AUDITION NOTICE

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## BINGO: Scenes of Money and Death

by Edward Bond

**Directors: John Buckingham & Cath Messum**  
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- Reading:** Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30pm at the Mary Wallace Theatre.
- Auditions:** Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> June at 7.30pm at the Mary Wallace Theatre.  
Registration at 7pm.
- Playing dates:** Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> - Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2025  
(excluding Wed, 17<sup>th</sup> September).
- Rehearsals:** Starting Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> July (and from then on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday evenings at 7.30pm & Sunday afternoons - usually 2.30 - 5.30pm). Rehearsals will take place close to the theatre.

**AUDITIONS ARE OPEN TO ALL.** The RSS actively encourages diversity in casting, and casting decisions will *not* be constrained by the perceived gender or ethnicity of the roles being auditioned, unless specified by the author.

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It is 1615. Shakespeare has written nothing in five years since *The Tempest* and now fears that, without his words, he is dying. He returns to his birthplace in Stratford, a wealthy celebrity, seeking financial security by investing in local land deals, and solace in his family. Yet peace eludes him. His long absence has festered tensions in his family. He is still haunted by the horrors and brutality of life in London and, as he witnesses the cruel injustice visited on the local poor, from vagrancy laws and land enclosures, it seems that the horrors have followed him home.

Bond's ironically titled drama dates from 1973 and has by now achieved the status of a contemporary classic. It is probably his most accessible play and, according to Michael Billington, his best. It has certainly proved a magnet for some of our greatest actors, and Bob Peck, John Gielgud and David Suchet have all notably tested themselves in Bond's depiction of Shakespeare - Patrick Stewart has even played him twice!

### Characters

Bond has a somewhat idiosyncratic way of naming his characters which, I imagine, will generate much discussion in rehearsal. For example, several major characters are not given personal names, but are simply identified in general terms (e.g. First Old Woman). Contrarywise, several minor supporting roles are given personal names (e.g. Wally). Designation of titles "Old" or "Young" to some characters can be taken very flexibly, given the difference of life expectancy in 1615/16 compared to today. All characters (with the exceptions of SHAKESPEARE, JONSON and possibly COMBE) should speak with **Warwickshire accents**. This is indicated in the phonetic rendering of dialogue for most characters.

## **Major Roles:**

- SHAKESPEARE:** Early 50s. With or without make-up, the actor will probably require a passing resemblance to the famous Droeshout engraving of a balding, lightly-bearded man. Bond's Shakespeare is intelligent and sensitive but, now, anxious, angry and depressed. His dialogue is punctuated by long silences, suggesting internalised struggles. Occasionally, these explode into lengthy but powerful speeches that vividly bare his soul.
- JUDITH:** Shakespeare's youngest daughter, about 30 years old. Bitter and resentful towards him for his treatment of her mother.
- OLD MAN:** Shakespeare's gardener, old enough to have fathered a son, who is now a young man. He is brain-damaged, with the mental capacity of a twelve-year old. He has a childlike cunning but will weep like a child when things go wrong, as tragically, they do. Will need to work with our Intimacy Coordinator on scenes with Young Woman.
- FIRST OLD WOMAN:** Old Man's wife. Shakespeare's housekeeper, with a more sympathetic ear than Judith's. Bond based her on Shakespeare's eldest daughter, Susanna.
- SON (to Old Man):** A young Man. A religious zealot who leads a rebellion against Combe.
- YOUNG WOMAN:** Teens or early twenties. Forced by destitution into a life of vagrancy, begging and prostitution, all punishable by public whipping. Whipped as a child, she has been damaged, both physically and mentally. This is demanding part, also requiring the performer to 'act dead' on a gibbet throughout Scene 3. Will need to work with our Intimacy Coordinator on scenes with Old Man.
- WILLIAM COMBE:** A wealthy landowner and magistrate, scheming to enclose the common lands for his own profit. Historically, Combe would have been 30 years old at this time, but could be played much older or slightly younger than this.
- BEN JONSON:** Witty and sardonic, Shakespeare's great theatrical rival and boozing chum steals the tavern scene at the start of the second half. Historically Jonson was 44 years old at this time, but could be played older or younger.
- Supporting Roles:** Played by three actors, who could also make up some of the Stage Management team. **JOAN, JEROME** and **WALLY** are peasant workers (ages unspecified) who join the SON in fighting Combe. **SECOND OLD WOMAN** (doubled with JOAN) is, in fact, Shakespeare's wife, Anne Hathaway. She is heard offstage but never seen.

## **Audition Pieces**

**For those interested in auditioning, please email me on [malfi1614@gmail.com](mailto:malfi1614@gmail.com) after the Reading and I will get details of the audition speeches to you as soon as they are available.**

**JOHN BUCKINGHAM**

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**You do not have to be an RSS member to audition but, if cast, you will be required to become a member before the first rehearsal.**

**Membership Application** forms are available in the theatre - or contact the Membership Secretary at - [membership@rss-mwt.org.uk](mailto:membership@rss-mwt.org.uk)

**Audition Application** forms are available in the theatre, or can be downloaded via the GET INVOLVED and ACTING pages of [www.richmondshakespeare.org.uk](http://www.richmondshakespeare.org.uk) Please return your completed form to the Hon. Secretary at the theatre, or by e-mail to - **[secretary@rss-mwt.org.uk](mailto:secretary@rss-mwt.org.uk)**

