Shakespeare Videography (available in Sawyer Library)

By Professor Sherron Knopp, Williams College Department of English

The videos for each play are listed in the order of my preference. I've included a few notes, mostly to remind myself what I liked or didn't like. I would be happy to receive any comments you have on any of the versions you watch. Just send them to me by e-mail. Videos marked with * are on 2-hour reserve in the library and may not leave the building.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM

PR 2827  A2 P361  1988  

PR 2827  A23 H64  1999  
1999 motion picture. Kevin Kline, Michelle Pfeiffer. Gives Bottom a wife and makes him too much of an idealistic dreamer, but otherwise lots of fun.

PR 2827  A2 R95  1984  
BBC television production from 1960’s (b&w). Very amorous Theseus and Hippolyta. Mendelssohn music for fairies. Classical garb. (111 min)

PR 2827  A2H35  1993  
1968 movie by Royal Shakespeare Company. Dir. Peter Hall, with Diana Rigg, Ian Richardson, Judi Dench. Somewhat oppressive production. Fairies look like diabolical swamp children. Woods not an escape into license but into nightmare. (124 min)

HENRY IV, PART I

PR 2803  A2 R65  1989  

PR 2810  A2 E55  1994  
Live performance by English Theatre Company at Swanse (England) ca 1988. Dir. Michael Bogdanov and Michael Pennington, with Pennington as Hal. Library seems to have three or four versions of this with different call numbers. Modern military dress. Hotspur is a shaved-head Cockney punk in a bandana. Takes enormous liberties with text--e.g. substitutes for Henry's opening contrast of Hotspur and Hal a diatribe about the effete Hal (!!!). (172 min)

AS YOU LIKE IT

PR 2803  A2 R65  1986  
much a fairy tale—wicked wear black, good wear light colors. Great music. (158 min)


**1936 motion picture (b&w).** Prod. And dir. Paul Czinner, with Laurence Olivier, Elisabeth Bergner, Sophie Stewart, Felix Aylmer, Leon Quartermaine, Henry Ainley. Has lots going for it. (97 min)

**TWELFTH NIGHT**

**1996 movie dir. Trevor Nunn.** Wirh Helena Bonham Carter, Richard E. Grant, Nigel Hawthorne, Mel Smith, Toby Stephens, Imogen Stubbs, and Ben Kingsley as a wonderful Feste. Modern-ish dress. Takes lots of liberties in re-arranging, juxtaposing, and even inventing scenes, but it’s got the spirit of the comedy just right, and captures the whole range of complex emotions from giddy hilarity to bittersweet nostalgia to dark anger and desperation. (133 min)

**1990 stage performance dir. Kenneth Branagh.** Renaissance Theatre Company, with Richard Briers, Frances Barber, Caroline Langrishe, Christopher Ravenscroft, James Saxon. Musical contributions by Paul McCartney. Modern-ish dress. Shot in tones of blue/white/gray. Most scenes take place outdoors in a bleak, snowy, desolate, crumbling courtyard. This is a very dark and cold version of the play. (165 min)


**HAMLET**

**1996 movie by Kenneth Brangah.** With Branagh as Hamlet, Julie Christie, Gerard Depardieu, Charlton Heston, Derek Jacobi, Jack Lemmon, Billy Crystal, Robin Williams, Kate Winslet. Stunning attention to nuance and detail. Hands down the best Hamlet, and possibly the best Shakespeare I have seen—but LONG. (242 min)

**1990 movie by Franco Zeffirelli.** Mel Gibson as Hamlet, with Glenn Close, Helena Bonham Carter, Alan Bests, Paul Scofield, Ian Holm. Takes many liberties both with the order of scenes and their content. Omits Hamlet’s conversation with the actor and Priam’s speech about Pyrrhus. Very sexual scene between Hamlet and Gertrude. Superb graveyard scene. (135 min)

**1988 movie by Tony Richardson.** Nicol Williamson as an older Hamlet, Anthony Hopkins, Marianne Faithfull. Ophelia is extremely sexy and sexual. Never shows ghost. Good graveyard scene. (114 min)

**Film of live 1964 Broadway performance (b&w).** Dir. John Gielgud, with Richard Burton as Hamlet. Staged in a rehearsal room, modern dress. (190 min)

**1948 movie (b&w) dir. Laurence Olivier.** Olivier as Hamlet, with Jean Simmons, Eileen Herlie, Felix Aylmer. (155 min)
**OTHELLO**

**1988**

*1995 movie, dir. Oliver Parker, with Laurence Fishburne as Othello.*

Kenneth Branagh as Iago, Irene Jacob as Desdemona. Takes more liberties with text than preceding two versions, but strong powerful performances. (124 min)

**1988**

*Film of 1987 Market Theatre performance dir. by Janet Suzman in Johannesburg, South Africa.* Tony winner John Kani as Othello, Richard Haines as Iago, Joanna Weinberg as Desdemona. A very powerful performance. Very sexual relationship between Othello and Desdemona. Haines’s Iago is one of the more vehemently devilish and obscene. 2 copies. (187 min)

**1995**

*Royal Shakespeare Company dir. Trevor Nunn.* BBC tv adaptation of original stage performance. A minimalist production, almost claustrophobic in its confinement to military barracks, conference rooms, etc., but absolutely superb. Ian McKellen is a bitter, lower class, cynical Iago. Michael Grandages is a stately dignified Othello. Imogen Stubbs is a spirited, strong-willed Desdemona who seems a tragically plausible target for Iago’s insinuations and Othello’s suspicions. 2 copies. (210 min)

**1981**

Bard Productions, dir. Franklin Melton. Williams Marshall, Ron Moody, Jenny Agutter. 16th century costumes, music, and staging. Acting a bit stilted at times, but good solid performance. (195 min)

**1971**

1971 movie (b&w) dir. Peter Brook with Paul Scofield as Lear. Set in cold, barren, snowy Siberia with a storm scene that looks and feels like the apocalypse. Scofield’s Lear is a fierce domineering man whose stripping down is brutal and terrifying. (138 min)

**1990**

1988 Thames television production with Patrick Magee as Lear. Perfectly respectable, but nothing outstanding about this production.

**1998**

Royal National Theatre production for BBC tv and WGBH Boston. Dir. Richard Eyre, with Ian Holm as Lear. (150 min)

**1982**

Bard productions, taped 1982. Dir. Alan Cooke, with Mike Kellin as Lear. 16th century staging. (182 min)

**KING LEAR**

**1984**

*1984 movie dir. by and starring Laurence Olivier.* Stonehenge as backdrop conveys ancient pre-Christian time period. Olivier’s Lear is frail, emotionally needy, appealing in the beginning, and grows in depth and stature even as he is stripped of his material accommodations and dignity. (158 min)

**1971**

1971 movie (b&w) dir. Peter Brook with Paul Scofield as Lear. Set in cold, barren, snowy Siberia with a storm scene that looks and feels like the apocalypse. Scofield’s Lear is a fierce domineering man whose stripping down is brutal and terrifying. (138 min)

**1988**

Thames television production with Patrick Magee as Lear. (110 min). Perfectly respectable, but nothing outstanding about this production.

**1998**

Royal National Theatre production for BBC tv and WGBH Boston. Dir. Richard Eyre, with Ian Holm as Lear. (150 min)

**1982**

Bard productions, taped 1982. Dir. Alan Cooke, with Mike Kellin as Lear. 16th century staging. (182 min)
### 1983

**ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA**

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<tr>
<td>PR 2802</td>
<td>*Royal Shakespeare Company, staged for television by Trevor Nunn. Dir. Jon Scofield, with Janet Suzman, Richard Johnson, and Star Trek’s Patrick Stewart as Enobarbus. (161 min). Not great, but there aren’t a lot of choices on this one.</td>
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<td>PR 2802</td>
<td>Bard Productions. Dir. Lawrence Carra, with Lynn Redgrave and Timothy Dalton. (183 min)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PR 2802</td>
<td>1972 movie dir. by and starring Charlton Heston. (160 min). Doesn’t have much to do with the play—as I recall—but I may be wrong.</td>
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**THE TEMPEST**

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<tr>
<td>PR 2833</td>
<td>*Bard Productions. Dir. Williams Woodman, with Efrem Zimbalist, Jr., William H. Bassett, Ted Sorel. Film of live stage production. (127 min). Again not a great production, but there aren’t many other choices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PR 2833</td>
<td>Television adaptation by John Edward Friend. Dir. George Schaefer, with Maurice Evans, Richard Burton, Roddy McDowell. Films for the Humanities. (76 min)</td>
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