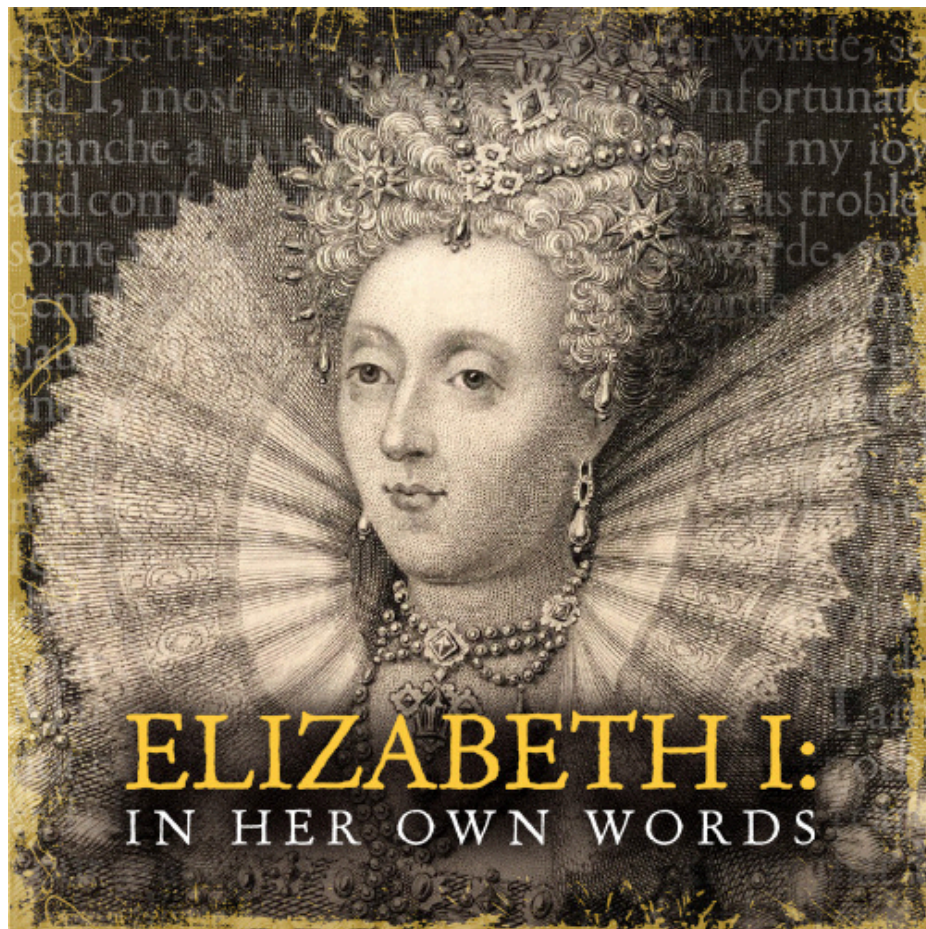


SOUTHWEST SHAKESPEARE

COMPANY

PRESENTS



STUDY GUIDE

Content curated by Breona Conrad



CAST

TAMARA MENEGHINI

Tamara Meneghini is an actor, voice, stage movement & intimacy coach, director, and teaching artist. She teaches courses in acting, voice, movement, musical theatre, and leads the annual Senior Showcase to NY/LA. She is one of the co-founders and lead facilitators of the Rocky Mountain Artists' Safety Alliance (RMASA) having developed the Colorado Theatre Standards with regionally-based artists and theatres, is a voice coach at Articulate Real & Clear (Denver), and a guest teaching artist at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts.

Original solo work producing collaborations include: *Elizabeth I: In Her Own Words* - current touring production in collaboration with Carole Levin, PhD.) and the award-winning original solo work, *The Great Goddess Bazaar* (in collaboration with David Rush) at the International Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland, 2013, Stratford Circus (London), United Solo Festival (NY, Best Variety Show), Boulder International Fringe Festival (Fringe Encore Award) and she garnered the Denver Ovation Award for Best Solo Performance in 2012.

Elizabeth I continues to tour with accompanying workshops in creating period style character through the exploration of voice and movement.

SUMMARY

Using her letters and speeches, and interweaving excerpts from Shakespeare, this play explores the life and reign of Queen Elizabeth I by highlighting her ability to navigate a male-dominated world and her leadership during a turbulent time in English history. By using Elizabeth's own words, the play aims to strip away the layers of historical grandeur to reveal the human being behind the iconic figure.

Awards include:

The Prophet of Bishop Hill (Chicago Dramatists, *Joseph Jefferson Award*, Best Supporting Actress nomination), *Sweeney Todd* (Porchlight Theatre, *After Dark Award* – Best Actress in a Musical), *Vanishing Point* (Porchlight Theatre-*After Dark Award* Best Ensemble) *Company* (Pegasus Players, directed by Gary Griffin, *Joseph Jefferson Citation*, Best Ensemble), *Animal Farm* (Bailiwick Repertory Theatre, *Joseph Jefferson Citation* Best Revival), *Life in the Trees* (*Joseph Jefferson Citation*, Best Ensemble, SummerNITE).

For her complete bio, please go to:
<https://www.colorado.edu/theatredance/tamara-meneghini>



AT A GLANCE:

QUEEN ELIZABETH I

QUICK FACTS

BORN:

SEPTEMBER 7, 1533

DIED:

MARCH 24, 1603

REIGN:

NOVEMBER 17, 1558-
MARCH 24, 1603

CORONATION:

JANUARY 15, 1559

HOUSE:

TUDOR

NICKNAMES:

THE VIRGIN QUEEN
GLORIANA

ACCESSION VS. CORONATION

ACCESSION refers to the day a new monarch takes the throne- the day the old monarch dies.

CORONATION is the day of the formal ceremony celebrating the new monarch and is normally held months after accession to allow for a suitable period of mourning for the previous monarch.

ELIZABETH never married or had children. She used her unmarried status as a political tool, entertaining suitors to strengthen alliances while maintaining independence.

THE ELIZABETHAN ERA

Elizabeth's reign was considered the "Golden Age of England". The arts, exploration, and military flourished with Elizabeth's support: Playwrights like Shakespeare and Marlowe thrived, Sirs Francis Drake and Walter Raleigh saw their explorations funded, and the military celebrated big victories such as defeating the Spanish Armada in 1588.

WHAT WAS THE SPANISH ARMADA?:

A large naval fleet consisting of 130 ships and 30,000 men was sent from Spain with the goal of sailing up the English Channel, connecting with other Spanish troops in Flanders and invade England. Spain's ruler, Philip II, aimed to overthrow Elizabeth, restore Catholicism in England, and curb English privateering in the Americas.

As a Protestant queen in a religiously divided Europe, she faced many threats on her life. Many of them like the Babington Plot (1586) and the Ridolfi Plot (1571) were Catholic plots aimed at assassinating Queen Elizabeth I and replacing her with her cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots. Mary was eventually executed in 1587 for her involvement in these treasonous schemes.

HER DEATH
MARKED THE END
OF THE
TUDOR DYNASTY.

SHE ESTABLISHED AND GOVERNED THE
ENGLISH PROTESTANT CHURCH. IT WAS LATER
NAMED THE ELIZABETHAN RELIGIOUS
SETTLEMENT AND EVOLVED INTO THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

Elizabeth owned over 2,000 dresses and she used a lead-based makeup called Venetian ceruse, which may have caused many health issues.

She carefully cultivated her image as a powerful, almost divine ruler. Her portraits often showed her in lavish gowns, jewels, and with a pale complexion, symbolizing purity and wealth. The famous Rainbow Portrait (1600) depicts her holding a rainbow with the motto:

"NON SINE SOLE IRIS"

("NO RAINBOW WITHOUT THE SUN")

THE RAINBOW
IMPLIED SHE
WAS
ENGLAND'S
LIGHT.

IMAGE QUEEN



SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION

There are *many* historical figures mentioned throughout the play.
This chart offers a brief overview of key figures mentioned and how they are connected to Elizabeth.



KATHERINE PARR
Henry's 6th and final wife.
Elizabeth lived with her
after Henry passed away.

MARRIED



HENRY VIII and ANNE BOLEYN

Her parents.
Anne was Henry's second wife; he had her
beheaded for treason when Elizabeth was 2.



ROBERT DUDLEY
Elizabeth called him one of
her "favorites". After
becoming Queen, she made
him Master of the Horse.
Their relationship caused
many rumors.



THOMAS SEYMOUR
Elizabeth describes him as "a
man of much wit and very
little judgement."

TRIES TO KIDNAP



EDWARD VI
Her younger half sibling
from Henry's third marriage. Being the male
heir to the throne, he became King after
Henry died in 1547 and reigned until his
death in 1553. He was a devout Protestant.



EARL OF ESSEX
Robert Devereux.
Another one of Elizabeth's "favorites"
and Robert Dudley's stepson. Their
friendship was very complicated.



KAT ASHLEY
Her governess and closest
friend. She became Lady of
the Bedchamber when
Elizabeth became Queen.



LADY JANE GREY
Her distant Protestant cousin. Named
heir to the throne in Edward's will to
keep Catholicism from becoming the
dominating religion again. Her reign
lasted for nine days.



MARY TUDOR
Her older half sibling
from Henry's first marriage. She became
Queen in 1553 after deposing Lady Jane
Grey and reigned until her death in 1558.
She was a devout Catholic.



MARY STUART
Mary, Queen of Scots.
Elizabeth's cousin with whom she had
a fierce rivalry.

PLANTAGENET | TUDOR

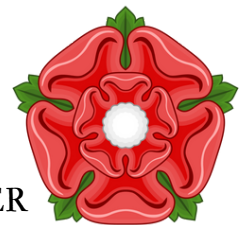
The English Game of Thrones

THE WAR OF THE ROSES 1455 - 1487



THE HOUSE OF YORK

VS.



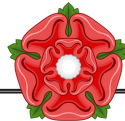
THE HOUSE OF LANCASTER

The year 1154 marked the beginning of the Plantagenet Dynasty. Starting in 1455, a series of civil wars broke out between the Houses York and Lancaster, both descended from King Edward III, vying for control of the English throne.

Throughout this period, the crown passed between the houses of Lancaster and York:



Unrest with the rule of Henry VI (Lancaster), and a rivalry between the Duke of Somerset (Lancaster) and Richard, Duke of York (York) escalated into open warfare. The House of York seized the throne in 1461 with Edward IV becoming king.



In 1470, Henry VI briefly regained power. The Earl of Warwick, who had previously supported Edward IV, switched his allegiance due to a falling out with the king. Warwick's forces invaded England, forcing Edward IV into exile and restoring Henry VI to the throne.

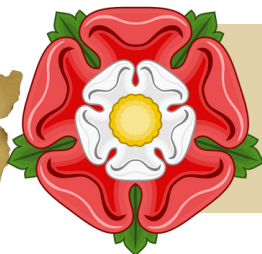


In 1471 Edward IV returned to England with an army, defeated Warwick's forces, and regained the throne, effectively ending Henry VI's second reign. After Edward's death in 1483, his brother Richard III seized the throne from his nephew Edward V.

END OF THE WARS: THE TUDOR DYNASTY

BATTLE OF BOSWORTH FIELD

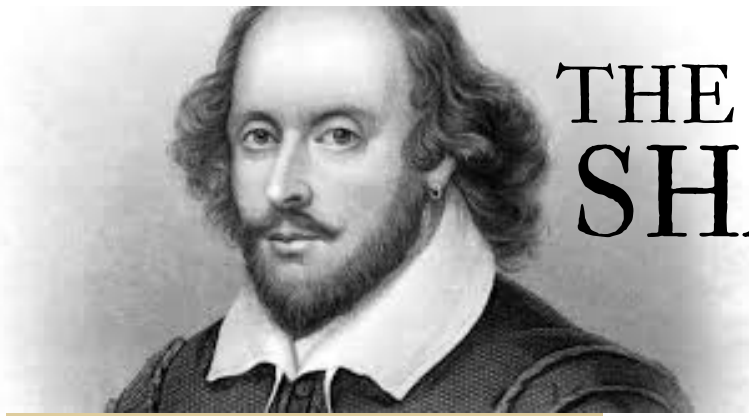
In 1485 Henry Tudor (a distant Lancastrian claimant) defeats and kills Richard III and becomes King Henry VII. He marries Elizabeth of York (Edward IV's daughter), uniting the warring houses and founding the Tudor Dynasty.



This effectively ended The War of the Roses, and the Tudor rose (a combination of the red and white roses) became a symbol of reconciliation.

Though the Tudor Dynasty had begun, Henry VII continued to fight the York resistance until 1487 when his troops defeated Yorkist Lambert Simnel at the Battle of Stoke Field.

The Tudor Dynasty saw 5 monarchs: Henry VII (Elizabeth's Grandfather), Henry VIII (her father), Edward VI (her half-brother), Mary I (her half-sister), and since Elizabeth produced no heir, the Dynasty ended with her death in 1603 when her cousin, James, assumed the throne ushering in the Stuart Dynasty which united England and Scotland under one crown.



THE SHAKESPEARE CONNECTION

Throughout the narrative of the play, Elizabeth recites speeches from the works of Shakespeare that relate to the moment in her life upon which she's reflecting. While Shakespeare and Elizabeth were never close friends, his theatre troupe, The Lord Chamberlain's Men, were frequently asked to perform for the Queen and her guests in her court. Along with this, though not directly about Elizabeth, Shakespeare's plays, particularly his history plays and some comedies, reflect the political and social climate of her reign and address themes relevant to her rule. This is a list of the Bard's work used in this play.



FOLIO VS. QUARTO

Printing and Binding formats based on the number of folds in the paper:

Quartos began with a title page while Folio works went straight into the text. Images of both are featured here; can you tell which is which?

RICHARD II

Act I scene i
JOHN OF GAUNT:
"This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle..."

Act III scene ii
KING RICHARD:
"For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground..."

HAMLET Act III scene I
OPHELIA:
"And I, of ladies most deject and wretched..."

Act IV scene v
OPHELIA:
"There's rosemary, that's for remembrance..."

ROMEO AND JULIET Act II scene ii
Can you find the piece used from Romeo's soliloquy used in the play?

AS YOU LIKE IT Act III scene i
PHOEBE
"Think not I love him, though I ask..."

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING Act III scene i
HERO
"But nature never framed a woman's heart..."

MACBETH Act I scene v
LADY MACBETH:
"...Come you spirits / That tend on..."

Act V scene i KING LEAR
CORDELIA:
"Why should a dog, a horse..."
Act I scene ii EDMUND:
"Why Bastard?...base, base..."

Act III scene ii THE WINTER'S TALE
PAULINA:
"Woe the while! / O cut my lace..."
Act IV scene iv PERDITA:
"...Here's flowers for you / Hot lavender..."

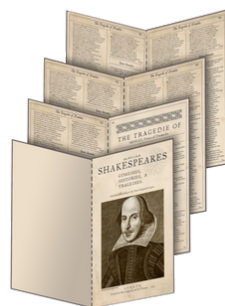
Act III scene ii HERMIONE:
"Sir, spare your threats..."

Act IV scene iii OTHELLO
EMILA
"But I do think it is their husbands..."

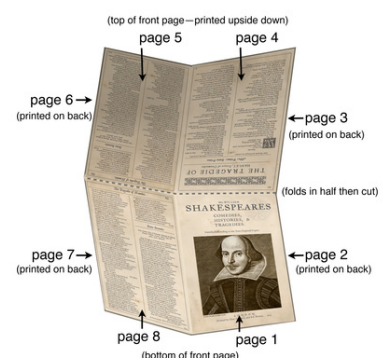
Act I scene ii THE TEMPEST
Ariel's song. Can you find the passage you heard in the show today?

MEASURE FOR MEASURE Act III scene i
CLAUDIO
"Ay but to die, and go ye know not where..."

Act V scene v HENRY VIII
CRANMER:
"Let me speak, sir / For heaven now bids..."



A folio is created by folding a sheet of paper in half once, resulting in two leaves (or four pages).



A quarto is created by folding a sheet of paper in half twice, resulting in four leaves (or eight pages)



AN INTERVIEW WITH **TAMARA MENE GHINI**



Southwest Shakespeare Company Artistic Director, Keath Hall, recently sat down with actress Tamara Meneghini to learn more about the conception and creation of *Elizabeth: In Her Own Words*. Below are some highlights from that discussion.

During a roundtable discussion at the Colorado Shakespeare Festival as to how to interweave these two people who never actually met, it was brought up that Elizabeth herself said, “I am Richard II, know ye not that?” That quote acted as the jumping off point and the first iteration of the play was developed and began touring as a two-woman show until the pandemic shut down production. Three years ago, Tamara and her team reworked the piece into the a one-woman piece we see today.

HOW THE SEED WAS PLANTED

In August of 2016, Shakespeare’s First Folio display settled in Boulder, Colorado as part of the 400 year celebration of its’ publication. As part of the celebration, organizers approached Tamara.

“HEY, WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO SOMETHING IN COMPANION [WITH] DISPLAYING THE FOLIO...”

This planted the seed of the show. Tamara could have just “done some Shakespeare,” but she wanted to add the layer of Elizabeth.

“HIS WORK WAS GREATLY INFLUENCED BY HER.”

In the interview, Tamara discusses the idea that Shakespeare has a similar structure to Musical Theatre and her desire to use the Shakespearean text to amplify a moment: **“WE USE THE SHAKESPEARE, REALLY, WHEN ELIZABETH IS IN THIS PLACE OF GREAT EMOTIONAL CLIMAX...”**



“THE COSTUME DICTATES THE PLAY... [IT’S] A JIGSAW PUZZLE-AS IT COMES APART, IT’S LIKE LITTLE ENERGY FIELDS OF ELIZABETH ARE RELEASED.”

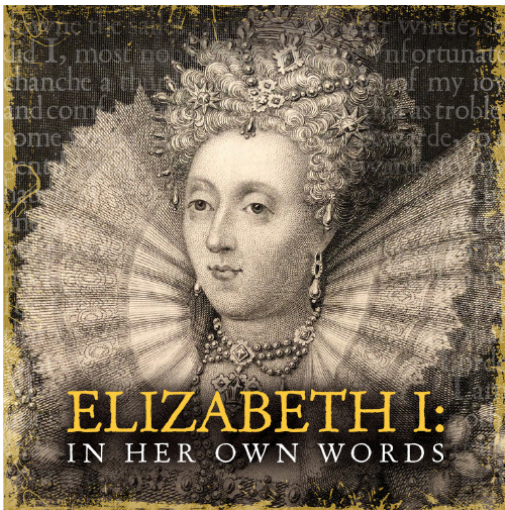
“[MY] MAIN OBJECTIVE IS TO...PROVIDE JUSTICE TO HER LIFE AND TRUTH FOR HER AND OF THE WOMEN IN HER LIFE.”



**WANT TO
LEARN MORE?**

Use this QR code to access
Tamara’s website:
tamarameneghini.com





DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

ELIZABETH OFTEN HAD TO NAVIGATE BEING A WOMAN IN A POSITION OF ABSOLUTE POWER. HOW DOES THE PLAY EXPLORE THE TENSIONS BETWEEN HER FEMININITY AND HER ROLE AS A RULER? ARE THERE SHAKESPEAREAN CHARACTERS THAT ECHO HER STRUGGLES?

WHAT ASPECTS OF ELIZABETH'S STORY FEEL PARTICULARLY RELEVANT TODAY? CAN YOU DRAW ANY PARALLELS BETWEEN THE ADVERSITIES ELIZABETH FACED DURING HER REIGN AND MODERN SOCIETY? HOW ARE THEY SIMILAR AND DIFFERENT?

HOW HAVE THE SOLUTIONS EVOLVED, IF AT ALL?

WHEN AND WHY DO SHAKESPEARE'S TEXTS APPEAR IN THE PLAY? DO THEY AMPLIFY ELIZABETH'S EMOTIONS, CONTRAST WITH THEM, OR PROVIDE A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON HER LIFE? WHAT DOES THIS SUGGEST ABOUT THE ROLE OF THEATER (OR POETRY) IN PROCESSING EMOTION, POWER, OR MEMORY?

HOW DOES ELIZABETH'S MONOLOGUE-STYLE NARRATION SHAPE OUR UNDERSTANDING OF HER AS BOTH A MONARCH AND A WOMAN? WHAT DOES SHE EMPHASIZE ABOUT HER LEGACY, AND WHAT MIGHT SHE OMIT?

SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORY PLAYS PORTRAYED THE STORIES OF HENRY IV, V, VI, AND VIII, RICHARD II AND III, AND KING JOHN. HIS WORKS ALSO GAVE US MEMORABLE MONARCHS SUCH AS LEAR AND MACBETH. ARE THERE MOMENTS WHERE ELIZABETH SEEMS TO RESEMBLE SHAKESPEAREAN RULERS? HOW DO THESE PARALLELS DEEPEN HER CHARACTER?