



King Lear: Michael Pennington, Sally Scott and Shane Attwooll. Picture by Marc Brenner

By Rebecca Taylor

rebecca.taylor@newsquest.co.uk

SHAKESPEARE'S *King Lear* is a tragedy with elements to make soap operas look tame. Family rivalry, adultery, death, and anguish – all facets of human despair are explored in this play.

Indeed there is little to smile about as we follow the trials of King Lear, the mad monarch.

Lear, king of England, is nearing the end of his reign and his life. His slow descent into dementia is known to all around him and the play opens as he divides his kingdom among his three daughters and their partners should they have them.

King Lear, as the title role, bears the weight of the play's success on his shoulders, but it is a challenge that Michael Pennington rises to.

By the end, he has captured the torment of the decline in 'madness', dodging between moments of wellness when he knows he is ill and simply being ill.

It was harder to warm to the daughters and though Goneril and Regan are clearly the enemies of the piece – even Cordelia did not rally people to her cause.

Scott Karim's Edmund is self-assured but could be more



Michael Pennington. Picture by Marc Brenner.

wily.

The costume design is somewhat confusing as for the most part the play feels as though it could be set in the 1920s. Female dress has a distinctly wartime feel to it but within minutes, the actors look as though they have shared outfits with the cast of *Les Misérables*.

As he took to the stage for the second time as the doomed King Lear, Mr Pennington wrote: "All but two of Shakespeare's cast end up dead, unable to come to terms with their circumstances or to tolerate each other."

"Even by his standards, this must be a mortality record."

"There seems to be nothing left, nothing at all.

"But there is a chance, just a small one.

"When we need to start again, we take hands."

He adds: "It would be a sentimental thing to see Edgar and Albany, the play's only survivors, take hands at the end of Lear – for one thing

Audiences should be warned that though the weather outside has been somewhat tropical of late, the air conditioning in Richmond Theatre is working very well. King Lear by the Royal Dengate and Northampton group is at Richmond Theatre until tomorrow.

Tickets are still available at www.ATGtickets.com/Richmond.

Mausoleum reopens after work

KILMOREY Mausoleum has reopened after a £90,000 restoration programme by Richmond Council.

The council's arts team was joined by cabinet member for arts and culture, Cllr Meena Bond, and the deputy mayor of Richmond, Cllr Jean Loveland for a ceremony to mark the project's completion in St Margaret's on May 11. The Mausoleum,

described as St Margaret's best kept secret, was built in 1854 and has a distinctive pink and grey Egyptian style design.

The bronze door is in the style of an ancient Egyptian monument and has been described by Historic England as "a fine example of an Egyptian-style mausoleum, with an unusually good interior".



Rachel Tranter, Cllr Jean Loveland and architect Mike Kaner



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EU debates ahead of referendum

A DEBATE on Britain's future in the European Union with Sir Vince Cable is just one of the events in the Richmond Chamber of Commerce calendar this morning. The former Twickenham MP will join Baroness Kramer, Ian Coxon and Conservative MEPs at a Brexit or Remain debate held on Friday, May 20 from 6.15pm at the Richmond Adult Community College.

Dermot Murnaghan of Sky News will be a neutral chairman for the evening. Tickets cost £15 and wine and canapes will be served. Before that, the chamber will host a business masterclass on May 17. The event will help businesses map their customer

journeys to identify opportunities to sell. Tickets cost between £49 and £79, and the event runs in Teddington from 2 to 5pm.

On May 26, the Richmond Business Awards Launch will be held at St Mary's University for the 2016 event. The launch party will introduce the categories and give businesses the opportunity to hear from previous winners. There will be time to network with other borough businesses as well. Tickets cost between £17 and £30 and the event runs from 6pm until 7.30pm.

All tickets can be bought by visiting www.richmondchamberofcommerce.co.uk/upcoming-events.



Anne Newton

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