



INSCAPE RETREAT  
Three Plays  
ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY THEATRES  
STRATFORD-ON-AVON

Thursday 31 May - Sunday 3 June 2018

For our third annual spring visit to Shakespeare's Stratford, we have secured tickets to three excellent plays. We will see Sir Antony Sher playing the lead in a play that never ceases to astonish, King Lear, arguably Shakespeare's greatest play. The turbulent world of Lear from court to beach to storm on a heath addresses timeless themes of human cruelty, love, and the frailties and follies of old age. Extraordinarily vivid language alternates between stabbing realism and evocative lyricism. Perhaps less well known is Webster's magnificent (and timely) The Duchess of Malfi, a strong woman destroyed by her corrupt brothers in a violent revenge tragedy full of toxic masculinity and dark humour. Brilliantly directed by Maria Aberg whose work has been described as 'soul-scouring theatre'. These intense moments will be deliciously offset by a newly discovered Restoration comedy of manners, The Fantastic Follies of Mrs Rich, written by late 17c English novelist and playwright Mary Pix, and directed by Jo Davies. An Encyclopaedia of British Women Writers (1998) describes Pix's comedic work as 'lively and full of double plots, intrigue, confusion, songs, dances and humorous disguise.'

We punctuate first class performances with enlightening lectures and in-depth visits in the surrounding countryside. At Coughton Court, a magnificent Warwickshire house of the period, onetime home of dazzling Elizabethan Throckmorton, lover of Sir Walter Raleigh, we are taken round by a member of the Throckmorton family. We explore Beauchamp Chapel in St Marys Warwick, extremely likely to have been known to Shakespeare, one of the finest medieval works of art in Britain.

## THURSDAY 31 May

- 10.10 Suggested train departs London Marylebone, change at Solihull
- 12.06 Arrive Stratford station for minibus transport to Hotel
- 1.00 Opening Drinks reception
- 1.30 Group Lunch in Arden Hotel
- 2.30 Nicholas Friend lecture: King Lear, Truth and Falsehood
- 4.00 Tea in Hotel. Rest
- 5.45 Pre-Theatre group dinner in hotel
- 7.15 Shakespeare's King Lear

## FRIDAY 1 June

- 10.30 Coffee in Hotel
- 11.00 Nicholas Friend lecture: Virtue and Corruption in The Duchess of Malfi
- 12.30 Group lunch in hotel
- 2.00 Leave for visit to Coughton Court
- 2.30 Private visit Coughton Court with Throckmorton family member
- 3.30 Tea in Coughton Court
- 4.00 Leave for Hotel
- 5.45 Pre-Theatre group dinner in hotel
- 7.15 Webster's The Duchess of Malfi

## SATURDAY 2 June

- 10.30 Coffee in Hotel
- 11.00 Nicholas Friend lecture: Corruption and Comeuppance in Restoration Comedy
- 12.30 Group lunch in hotel
- 2.00 Leave for Warwick
- 2.30 Visit Beauchamp Chapel, St Mary's Warwick, one of finest works of medieval art in Britain, and contemplate the exterior of Warwick Castle
- 4.00 Return to Hotel and rest
- 5.45 Pre-Theatre group dinner
- 7.30 Mary Pix's The Fantastic Follies of Mrs Rich

## SUNDAY 3 June

- 11.00 Checkout please
- 11.30 Discussion session on the three plays
- 12.30 Group closing lunch in hotel
- 2.15 Minibus to Stratford Station
- 2.46 Suggested train to London, change at Leamington Spa Station
- 4.40 Arrive London Marylebone



INSCAPE RETREAT  
THE ARDEN HOTEL  
Waterside, Stratford-Upon-Avon  
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Located in the heart of historic Stratford-upon-Avon, directly opposite the world-renowned Royal Shakespeare Company Theatres, The Arden Hotel is an elegant and sophisticated hotel in the birthplace of Shakespeare. Located beside the River Avon and close to the town centre, it is unquestionably the best and most convenient hotel in town. Many actors stay at the Arden and the walls are covered with photographs of past greats and modern actors. An elegant 45-bedroom hotel, its recent multi-million pound refurbishment addressed every detail. The rooms are light and spacious and beautifully appointed. All have sitting areas. The bathrooms are huge with large baths and double showers. The Arden Hotel has won a host of awards including four AA silver stars for the levels of comfort and hospitality, alongside two AA Rosettes for its creative cuisine served in the Waterside Brasserie or on the terrace. Its proximity to the Royal Shakespeare Theatres will allow us to pop back for interval drinks

£1395 members, £1445 non-members, Single Room Supplement £95, deposit £300, including three nights' accommodation in the Arden Hotel Stratford, all meals included: breakfast, private lunches in the Arden Hotel, hotel dinners with wine; a private tour with tea at Coughton Court, best theatre tickets to King Lear, The Duchess of Malfi, and The Fantastic Follies of Mrs Rich in the Royal Shakespeare and Swan Theatres, all lectures, transport to and from Stratford station, to and from Coughton Court and to and from Warwick, VAT and service. Cost excludes travel to and from Stratford.