

## **Shakespeare's Greatest Plays Explored on "Shakespeare Uncovered" on NET Television**

The stories behind William Shakespeare's greatest plays will be told in "Shakespeare Uncovered," a unique series of six programs combining history, biography, iconic performances and new analysis.

Premiering on Friday, Jan. 25, on NET1 and NET-HD, the series will also include the personal passions of its celebrated hosts – actors Ethan Hawke, Jeremy Irons, Derek Jacobi, Trevor Nunn, Joely Richardson and director David Tennant.

Each hour-long episode explores and reveals the extraordinary world and works of William Shakespeare and the still-potent impact they have today. The programs combine interviews with actors, directors and scholars, along with visits to key locations, clips from some of the most-celebrated film and television adaptations, and illustrative excerpts from the plays staged specially for the series at Shakespeare's Globe in London.

Behind every Shakespeare play there is a story: for instance, how he and his company dismantled their theater and rowed it across the river Thames when their landlord cancelled their lease -- then staged "Henry V" for the first time. There are echoes of the playwright's life -- who named his twins Hamnet (a boy, who died at age 11) and Judith -- in plays like "Twelfth Night," where the plot turns on the adventures of separated twins; and "Hamlet," where the drama begins with the grief of a son who has lost his father.

The series shows Shakespeare as an impresario who, four centuries ago, defined early the tenets of show business -- drawing on historical sources, stealing and adapting ideas, bringing back popular characters, writing prequels, and developing dramatic ideas from the politics of the day.

Each program's host has deep personal experience with Shakespeare's work and relates not only the stories of the plays themselves, but also the stories of how they came to be written, how they have been performed, and how they have survived over 400 years.

The series begins at 9 p.m. CT on Jan. 25 with a look at "Macbeth" as Ethan Hawke describes his quest to play Shakespeare's murderous Thane of Cawdor by researching the true story and real-life events that served as the play's inspiration. Historian Justin Champion visits the actual Scottish sites of the story on Hawke's behalf, introducing him to Dunsinane where Macbeth supposedly lived, and to the history books that distorted the true story and consequently led Shakespeare to do the same. Immersing himself in some of the most memorable and innovative productions of "the Scottish Play," Hawke gleans extraordinary insights into Shakespeare's understanding of the criminal mind. Lady Macbeth's relationship to the titular Thane is a critical role in the play and is examined by observing Shakespeare's Globe actors rehearsing and performing scenes from the play, as well as by revisiting recent productions starring Patrick Stewart and Antony Sher.

Following at 10 p.m. CT, Joely Richardson -- along with her mother Vanessa Redgrave -- investigates the legacy of "Twelfth Night" and "As You Like It," two brilliant cross-dressing comedies. Richardson explores the comic and dramatic potential of female roles written for male actors to play. At the same time, she demonstrates that Shakespeare revealed an acute understanding and sympathy for women when he wrote these characters. Redgrave's portrayal of Rosalind in "As

You Like It” made her a star in England and soon after, all over the world, and the show reveals the legacy of strong, sassy, witty women that we inherit from William Shakespeare’s great comedies.

The series continues on Friday, Feb. 1, with “Richard II with Derek Jacobi” at 9:30 p.m. CT, followed at 10:30 p.m. CT by “Henry IV & Henry V with Jeremy Irons.” The series concludes on Friday, Feb. 8, with “Hamlet with David Tennant” at 9 p.m. CT and “The Tempest with Trevor Nunn” at 10 p.m. CT.

NET1/HD are part of NET Television. NET Television is a service of NET. For a complete program schedule, visit NET's website ([netNebraska.org/television](http://netNebraska.org/television)).

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