



A Man for All Seasons

by Robert Bolt
Directed by Paul Mullins

Know-the-Show
Audience Guide
researched and written by
the Education Department of

The
SHAKESPEARE
Theatre of
New Jersey



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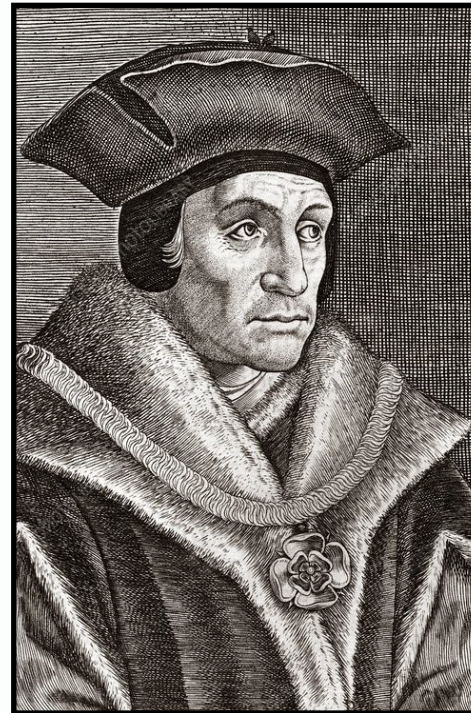




Director's Note

-Paul Mullins

History is storytelling and each account of history is unique to its writer. Ten years ago at this Theatre, I had the good fortune to direct Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, first produced in 1613. This year, I have the privilege to direct Robert Bolt's *A Man For All Seasons*, first produced in 1960. Both plays are set in London in the 1530's and concern the court of Henry VIII. They are an account of the same historical events from two completely different perspectives. Shakespeare centers his story on King Henry and Queen Catherine. Bolt focuses on Thomas More, an advisor to Henry, and later, his Chancellor. *A Man For All Seasons* is a new (relatively speaking!) take on a piece of history that has fascinated people since the days in which it actually took place. How exciting it is for me to be able to direct two plays about the same people and same events from such radically different viewpoints.



Sir Thomas More



King Henry VIII



Playwright's Note

-from Robert Bolt's Intro to the Play

The bit of English history which is the background to this play is pretty well known. Henry VIII, who started with everything and squandered it all, who had the physical and mental fortitude to endure a lifetime of gratified greeds, the monstrous baby whom none dared gainsay, is one of the most popular figures in the whole procession. We recognize in him an archetype, one of the champions of our baser nature, and are in him vicariously indulged.

Against him stood the whole edifice of medieval religion, founded on piety, but by then as moneyed, elaborate, heaped high and inflexible as those abbey churches which Henry brought down with such a satisfying and disgraceful crash.

The collision came about like this: While yet a Prince, Henry did not expect to become a King, for he had an elder brother, Arthur. A marriage was made between this Arthur and a Spanish Princess, Catherine, but Arthur presently died. The Royal Houses of Spain and England wished to repair the connection, and the obvious way to do it was to marry the young widow to Henry, now heir in Arthur's place. But Spain and England were Christian monarchies and Christian law forbade a man to marry his brother's widow.

To be a Christian was to be a Churchman and there was only one Church (though plagued with many heresies) and the Pope was its head. At the request of Christian Spain and Christian England the Pope

dispensed with the Christian law forbidding a man to marry his brother's widow, and when in due course Prince Henry ascended the English throne as Henry VIII, Catherine was his Queen.

For some years the marriage was successful; they respected and liked one another, and Henry took his pleasures elsewhere but lightly. However, at length he wished to divorce her.

The motives for such a wish are presumably as confused, inaccessible, and helpless in a King as any other man, but here are three which make sense: Catherine had grown increasingly plain and intensely religious; Henry had fallen in love with Anne Boleyn; the Spanish alliance had become unpopular. None of these absolutely necessitated a divorce but there was a fourth that did. Catherine had not been able to provide Henry with a male child and was now presumed barren. There was a daughter, but competent statesmen were unanimous that a Queen on the throne of England was unthinkable. Anne and Henry were confident that between them they could produce a son; but if that son was to be Henry's heir, Anne would have to be Henry's wife.





Robert Bolt

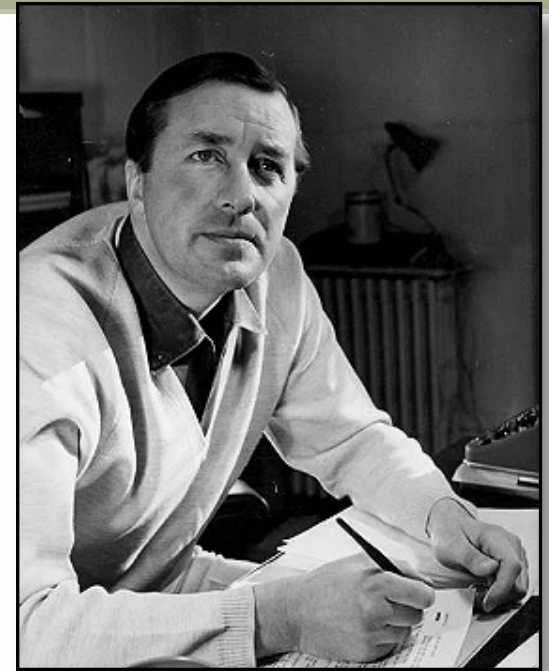
About the Playwright

Robert Bolt is a two-time Academy Award-winning screenwriter and playwright, and is best known for his screenplays for *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Doctor Zhivago*, and *A Man for All Seasons*.

Born in August of 1924, Bolt had an uneventful childhood in his Methodist household in Cheshire. He left school at sixteen to work in an insurance office, but after much studying, he was able to finish his education and attend the University of Manchester. From age 19-23 he was enlisted in the armed forces. His hopes of becoming a pilot were dashed when air-sickness prevented him from moving past basic training. In 1947, he left the Army and returned to the University of Manchester where he completed an honours degree in history. He taught English and History for several years and continued to write in the evenings.

He wrote many radio plays for BBC Radio and several unproduced works throughout the 1950s. When his play *The Flowering Cherry*, opened in London in 1958, he left teaching to focus on his writing full time. His script of *A Man for All Seasons*, which began as a radio drama, received great acclaim in 1960. Bolt's work as a writer is noted for presenting a strong protagonist at odds with the society around him. His subsequent screenplays were also well received.

Portrait of
Robert Bolt



Bolt received a Tony Award for Best Play for *A Man for All Seasons* in 1962. He won Academy Awards for *Doctor Zhivago* (1965) and *A Man for All Seasons* (1966), and BAFTA Awards for *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) and *A Man for All Seasons* (1966). In 1972,

Bolt was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire, a British order of chivalry honoring contributions in the arts among others.

In 1979, Bolt suffered a heart attack and a stroke, which left him paralyzed and affected his ability to speak. He continued to write, however, producing the screenplays for *Bounty* and *The Mission* in later years.

Robert Bolt died in 1995 at the age of 70.





SELECTED WORKS OF ROBERT BOLT

PLAYS

The Last of the Wine (1955)

Flowering Cherry (1958)

The Tiger and the Horse (1960)

A Man for All Seasons (1960)

-*Tony Award - BEST PLAY

Vivat! Vivat Regina! (1971)*

-nominated for Best Play

State of Revolution (1977)

SCREENPLAYS

Lawrence of Arabia (1962)

-Seven Academy Awards including
BEST PICTURE

Doctor Zhivago (1965)

-Ten Academy Awards including:
BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY

A Man for All Seasons (1966)

-Six Academy Awards including:
BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY
and BEST PICTURE

Ryan's Daughter (1970)

-Four Academy Award Nominations

The Mission (1986)

-Seven Academy Award Nominations



"Writing a play is thinking, not thinking about thinking; more like a dream than a scheme..."

-Robert Bolt, 1960

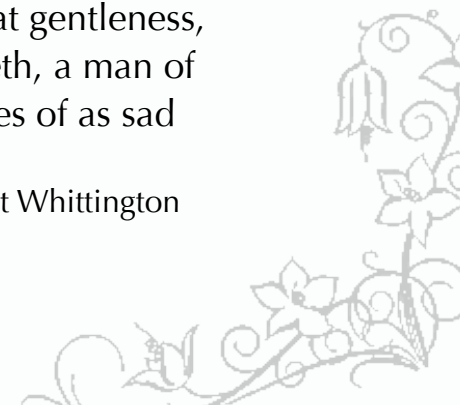
"I tried then for a 'bold and beautiful verbal architecture,' a story rather than a plot, and overtly theatrical means of switching from one locale to another"

-Robert Bolt, 1960

ON SIR THOMAS MORE:

"More is a man of angel's wit and singular learning; I know not of his fellow. For where is the man of that gentleness, lowliness, and affability? And as time requireth, a man of marvelous mirth and pastimes; and sometimes of as sad gravity: a man for all seasons."

-Robert Whittington





Who's Who: *History and the Stage*

THE FAMILY:



SIR THOMAS MORE

(played by Tom Hammond)
February 7, 1478 – July 6, 1535

-More was a celebrated English lawyer, judge, social philosopher, author, statesman, and Renaissance humanist.

- As a boy, More served as a page to the Archbishop of Canterbury and received schooling at the best institutions, including Oxford.
- He spoke Latin as fluently as English.
- More went against social norms and educated his daughters.
- In 1516, he wrote *Utopia*, as an attempt to suggest ways to improve European society, which included a strong focus on the moral and political responsibilities of individuals.



ALICE MORE

(played by Mary Stewart)
1474 – 1546 (or 1551)

-Alice was More's second wife. They were married 30 days after his first wife, Jane, died.

-Alice had no children with Thomas, but she cared for the three children he had with his first wife.



MARGARET ROPER

(**nee MORE**)

(played by Brianna Martinez)
1505 – 1544

-Meg was the eldest child of Thomas and Jane More, and considered one of the most learned women in sixteenth-century Europe.

- She was a writer and translator, and translated many Latin texts into English. She was the first non-royal woman to publish a translation.
- After More's death, she took steps to posthumously clear her family's name.

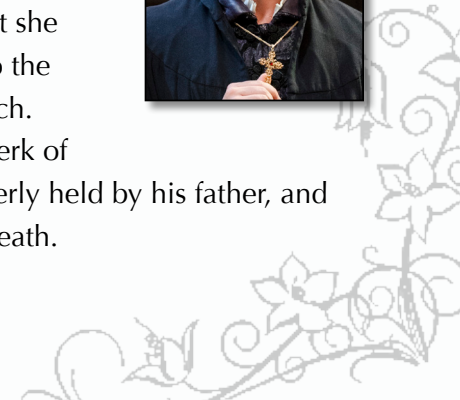


WILLIAM ROPER

(played by Ty Lane)
1496 – January 4, 1578

-A Lutheran when he married Meg, it is believed that she converted him back to the Roman Catholic Church.

-He was appointed Clerk of Pleas, a position formerly held by his father, and held it until shortly before his death.





MEN OF POWER:



KING HENRY VIII

(played by Roger Clark)

June 28, 1491 - January 28, 1547

-He was crowned King of England at 17yrs old when his father, Henry VII, died.

-His elder brother (Arthur) was intended to rule, but died five months after

marrying Catherine of Aragon, several years before Henry VII's death.

-At the beginning of this play, he has been married to Catherine for over 20 years.

-Henry was a devout man of the church in his younger years, and Pope Leo X named him *Fidei Defensor* (Defender of the Faith) in 1521 after Henry wrote "Declaration of Seven Sacraments Against Martin Luther."

-He was also an avid musician and composer, and common lore suggest that he write "Greensleeves" for Anne Boleyn.



CARDINAL WOLSEY

(played by Raphael Nash Thompson)

March 1473 – November 29, 1530

-Wolsey came from very humble beginnings in Ipswich, and it was the source of mockery and disdain from lords throughout his career. Many claimed he was the son of a



THOMAS HOWARD, 3rd DUKE OF NORFOLK

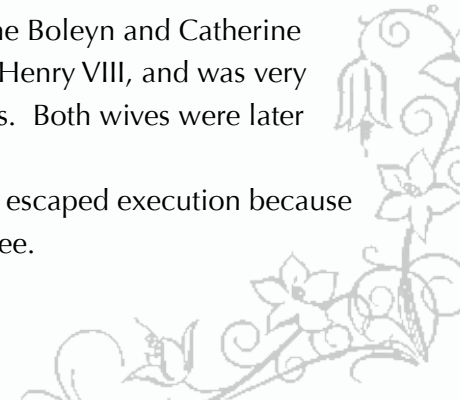
(played by Tony Marble)

1473 – August 25, 1554

-Norfolk was a prominent nobleman and served under Henry VII and Henry VIII.

-He was uncle to Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard, the 2nd and 5th wives of Henry VIII, and was very active in promoting these marriages. Both wives were later beheaded.

-He was imprisoned in 1546, and only escaped execution because Henry died before signing the decree.





MEN SEEKING POWER:



THOMAS CROMWELL
(played by James McMenamain)
1485 - July 28, 1540

-Cromwell was the son of a blacksmith from Putney, and his humble beginnings were never forgotten by the court nobility.

-A smart and cunning individual, Cromwell quickly advanced in the English court: lawyer, adviser to Cardinal Wolsey, burgess in the House of Commons, and eventually chief minister to Henry VIII.

-Though an essential player in Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn, Cromwell later was involved in her demise and eventual execution. He also aided in Henry's later marriages to Jane Seymour and Anne of Cleves.

-Cromwell was arrested and sent to the Tower of London on June 10, 1540. He was later condemned to death without trial and beheaded on July 28, 1540, the same day as Henry's marriage to Catherine Howard.



RICHARD RICH
(played by Aaron McDaniel)
July 1496 – June 12, 1567

-Little is known about Rich's early life, but it is believed he studied at Cambridge.

-He had several important preferments and was knighted in 1533.



EUSTACE CHAPUYS
(played by Edward Furs)
1489 – January 21, 1556

-From 1529 – 1545, Chapuys was Savoyard diplomat under Charles V, serving as Imperial Ambassador to England.

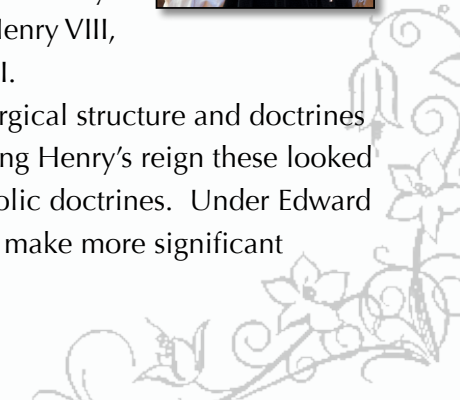
-Chapuys' legal background was most valuable as he supported Catherine in Henry's attempt to divorce her.



THOMAS CRAMNER
(played by Sean Mahan)
July 2, 1489 March 21, 1556

-Cramner was a major leader in the English Reformation. He was Archbishop of Canterbury during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Mary I.

-Cramner established the initial liturgical structure and doctrines of the Church of England. During Henry's reign these looked very similar to the Roman Catholic doctrines. Under Edward VI, however, Cramner began to make more significant changes.



After

A Man for All Seasons

At his trial, Sir Thomas More was originally sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, the usual punishments for treason. King Henry VIII, however, commuted his sentence to execution by decapitation, considered a quicker, less painful, and possibly more honorable death.

More's final words before his execution were reported to be "The King's good servant, and God's first."

After his death, his head was displayed on London Bridge for a month to dissuade others from going against the King.

At the end of the appointed display, the head was to be discarded into the Thames. More's daughter, Margaret (Meg) Roper bribed the man in charge of the task, and took the head home. She had the head pickled and cared for it until her death, when her husband, William Roper took charge of it. Roper wrote a biography of his father-in-law decades after More's death. It is reputedly the earliest personal biography in the English language.

Thomas More's head was buried with William Roper at Roper's death.





In This Production

Scenic rendering by Charlie Calvert, Scenic Designer for the 2023 Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey production of *A Man for All Seasons* directed by Paul Mullins.

