



[CULTURE](#), [REVIEW](#), [SHAKESPEARE](#), [THEATRE](#)

ENERGETIC AND INTIMATE THEATRE – RICHARD III AT TRAFALGAR STUDIOS, LONDON

[OCTOBER 9, 2014](#) [CONNY KAUFMANN](#) [10 COMMENTS](#)

This is one of my real-life writing samples. I'm a trained journalist, so I sometimes write theatre reviews. This one I'm particularly proud of, as it combined a trip to London (I'm based in Germany), my favourite actor and Shakespeare.

It's a review of *Trafalgar Transformed Season 2: "Richard III"* at Trafalgar Studios, London, which ran from 1st July 2014 until 27th September 2014, starring Martin Freeman.

First published on [Fernweh & Wanderlust](#) on 27th July 2014.

Review: *Trafalgar Transformed Season 2: "Richard III"*

Jamie Lloyd's production of *Richard III*, set during Britain's 1979 "Winter of Discontent" and starring Martin Freeman, is theatre at its finest.

The Shakespeare classic, re-imagined for [Season Two of Trafalgar Transformed](#), is a bold and energetic Cold War-style thriller, set in a dystopic Britain, in the midst of a military coup and during a time of great political upheaval between the Houses of York and Lancaster.



Cast of Richard III, Opening of Act One, Scene One. Photo: Marc Brenner

[Martin Freeman](#) (*Sherlock*, *The Hobbit*, *Fargo*) in the title role of Richard III, shows off just how brilliant and versatile he is. His performance as the scheming Duke of Gloucester is phenomenal and he plays with the force of someone to be reckoned with.



Martin Freeman as Richard III and Lauren O'Neil as Lady Anne. Photo: Marc Brenner

Simultaneously funny and terrifying, he understands full well how to use the tiniest expression and gesture to the greatest effect and he has impeccable comic timing.

Richard, (who suffered from scoliosis in real life), walks with a limp to get sympathy when it suits him, sports a hump and has no use of his right arm. Yet, he is a commanding presence, very agile and energetic during his fight scenes with more than one unexpected leap onto and over the conference desks that form the centre of the set. Even in scenes during which he doesn't speak, he holds the audience's attention.

Richard is witty, manipulative and downright schizophrenic, and Martin Freeman knows how to wander the fine line between mild-mannered and menacing with an ever-present undercurrent of rage. So when he locks eyes with the audience and lays out his murderous plans, he creates a very chilling atmosphere indeed.



Simon Coombs as Tyrell, Gerald Kyd as Catesby and Gina McKee as Queen Elizabeth. Photo Marc Brenner

The production also benefits from a superb supporting cast. [Maggie Steed](#) as spurned Queen Margaret is an ever-present reminder of the prophecy of doom, while [Gina McKee](#) as Queen Elizabeth portrays a headstrong woman slowly and heartbreakingly falling apart and into despair due to Richard's manipulations.

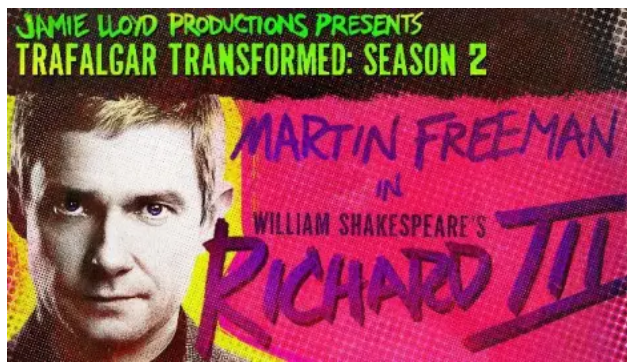
The performance on 26th July 2014 featured Alasdair Buchan, instead of Mark Meadows, as Clarence and Lord Mayor and he gave a very sympathetic performance of the betrayed royal brother.

By using 70s technology, clever integration of audio cues to transition from live action to soliloquies, microphones for public speeches and debates as well as television transmissions to round up the plot, *Richard III* becomes a very relatable play for younger audience members, despite Shakespeare's original dialogue.

Standing ovations for the entire cast and crew were well and truly deserved. This is Shakespeare how it should be played, and it will definitely stay with you.

Conclusion: Funny, terrifying and brilliant. Theatre as bold, energetic and intimate as it should be!

Rating: ♥♥♥♥♥



Tickets available through ATG. Limited Run until 27th September 2014, Trafalgar Studios, London

