



E.Y.'s R2:  
The armchair Shakespearean

## Description

# Edward Yankie brings his unique one-man show of Richard 2 to the MainLine Theatre

By Faith Langston

In a sold-out performance at the **Mini MainLine Theatre** last Friday, **E.Y.** (TV and film actor **Edward Yankie**) sat in a la-z-boy and recited **R2** (Shakespeare's ***Richard II***) in its entirety. Sporting a tee shirt and jeans, and taking occasional swigs of water from a mammoth bottle, he recounted the history play to an enraptured audience.



The early Richard is arrogant, indecisive, but assured of his

position as rightful ruler of England. Yankee captures his moods of defiance and despair as he loses his place of authority, is forced to face the consequences of his rash decisions, and finally, is deposed and imprisoned.

But Richard is not the only character brought to life in this seamless one-man show. We meet many other personages: a feeble John of Gaunt, a bereft Queen to King Richard, a sympathetic Bushy, a pragmatic Bolingbroke, among them.

With no set or costumes to distract us, the play is rendered in its purest form. We fulfil the original meaning of 'audience', which the play's director **Marjorie Silcoff** reminds us is "a group that comes to listen". *Richard 2* requires an attention to detail, a quality lost in these days of media overload.

Though an audience may overlook some of the subtleties of the play, they are sure to be swept away by the poetic text. At the end of Act 2, Salisbury's words showcase Shakespeare at the height his poetic powers:

I see thy glory like a shooting star  
Fall to the base earth from a firmament  
The sun sets weeping in the lowly west

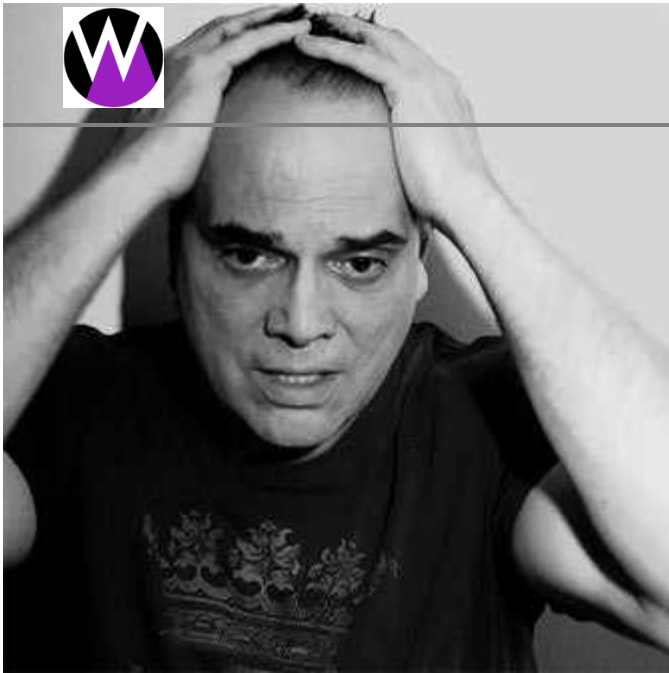
*Richard 2* transcends the boundaries of a history play. It offered an aesthetic escape from the world, one that will remain with us.

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"In the midst of horror, disease, and death, Shakespeare was offering access to a golden world, showing the delights of applying learning for pleasure rather than pointing out the obvious morals to be drawn from classical authors when faced with awful catastrophe."

– The Poetry Foundation

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Though some members of the audience had difficulty hearing all

the words in the first act, this problem was later rectified with a microphone.

Last but not least, it seems that Yankie's talent doesn't end with acting. His interesting piano pieces – *Fanfare Number 6* and *Piano Piece Number 10* – are heard pre-show and at intermission.

**Richard 2** returns to the MainLine on **Friday, August 23** at 7:30 pm.

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[mainlinetheatre.ca](http://mainlinetheatre.ca)

*Images: courtesy of MainLine Theatre*



## Category

1. Review
2. Theatre

## Tags

1. Edward Yankie
2. Faith Langston
3. Mainline Theatre



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4. Marjorie Silcoff
  5. one man show
  6. Richard 2
  7. shakespeare

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