

# The Canterbury Tales

## Chaucer made modern

by Phil Woods  
with Michael  
Bogdanov



THE 2017  
GEOFFREY CHAUCER  
CANTERBURY  
TALE-TELLING  
COMPETITION

# Souvenir Programme

6, 7, 8, 9 July 2017 at Vinters Studios

[www.streamtheatre.org.uk](http://www.streamtheatre.org.uk)

## Welcome

This retelling of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* marks my directorial return after 22 years. (And what a far cry it is from Athol Fugard's 'A Road to Mecca'!)

We chose six modernised tales that most appealed - with themes from chivalry and feminism to infidelity and rape - told in light-hearted, satirical verse.

The journey from the first reading to this performance has been like a 100m hurdles. With just 6 weeks from auditions to production, the company rose to many challenges such as taking on extra roles due to a last minute cast pull-out.

Although our staging aims to be minimalistic (with a nod to the original medieval period), it presented us with a myriad of little problems ably solved by our competent and creative production team.

My involvement in STC's production of *The Canterbury Tales* has been a roller-coaster experience - mostly exciting, frequently fun and sometimes downright terrifying. When it's over, after the dizzying sense of relief has passed, I shall miss it terribly.

*Sonya de Souza*

## Origins of The Canterbury Tales

*The Canterbury Tales* is a collection of 24 stories written in Middle English by Geoffrey Chaucer, at the end of the 14th century. Chaucer was a high-ranking civil servant, and member of King Richard II's household.

The tales are mostly in verse and are presented as part of a story-telling contest as the pilgrims travel together from London to Canterbury Cathedral to visit the shrine of St Thomas Becket. The prize is a free meal at Southwark's Tabard Inn on their return. Although there is no record of this, it's very likely that the pilgrims passed through Streatham on their way!

The Tabard Inn was on Borough High Street until it burnt down in 1669, but was probably very similar to the surviving George Inn, with galleries around a yard.

The pilgrims who tell the tales come from a wide range of social classes. This is the first time that such people were represented in literature. Although on a spiritual quest, they are far more concerned with worldly things. The narrators of the tales are often named after their jobs or their position in society:

- Wife of Bath: A wife was a woman of a certain age, not necessarily married.
- Nuns' Priest: The priest accompanying a Prioress (Abbess) and a nun.
- Reeve: A man of lower rank, appointed as manager of a manor and overseer of the peasants, rather like an early estate manager.
- Pardoner: A medieval cleric who raised money by selling papal indulgences, allowing the wealthy to buy forgiveness for their sins.
- Franklyn: A medieval English landowner of free but not noble birth; that is, someone who owned land but who was not an aristocrat.
- Miller: Millers then were widely assumed to be shifty and dishonest.

*Liz Burton*

# The Tales

*You will be invited to vote for your favourite tale at the end of the programme. There will be an interval of 20 minutes after three tales. Please make use of our convenient and cheap bar!*

**The Wife of Bath's Tale  
The Nun's Priest's Tale  
The Reeve's Tale**



**The Franklyn's Tale  
The Pardoner's Tale  
The Miller's Tale**

## The Tellers and the Players

Ian Freeman  
Jemma Chukunyere  
Jillian Meadows  
John Edmead  
Liz Burton  
Liz Williams

Mike Jennett  
Patrick Clearwater  
Pauline Kennedy  
Sally Cohen  
Sonya de Souza  
Terry Wynne

## The Production Team

*Directors ..... Sonya de Souza, Teresa Tunstall, Terry Wynne  
Musical Director ..... Liz Williams  
Executive Producer ..... Terry Wynne  
Associate Producer ..... Ian Freeman  
Technical Director ..... David Harvey  
Stage Management ..... Eshani Weeresinghe  
Props and Costume ..... Members of the Company  
..... Windmill built by Sonya's Father*

## Our grateful thanks go to:

Vinters Studios for the space and equipment  
Streatham Festival  
Our committee, our members and friends  
Our patrons Lord (Michael) Grade (Baron Grade of Yarmouth) and  
David Harewood  
Our cast, crew, production and front of house teams  
and of course you our valued audience.

## Coming Soon

We run events on the second Tuesday of every month and at other times too. Our events are usually open to all, and cover a wide range of activities including play readings, workshops and socials. Most events are free to members and only £3 for non-members. Do come along, and if you have a suggestion for an event please let us know.

11 July

### *Lighting Effects Workshop led by Steve Lowe*

At its very basic level, lighting is there so you can see the action and the actors, but there is so much more it can do for you. It can help set time and place, the mood, and much, much more. Steve will show us how to use lighting as part of artistic creation in theatre. No 'techie' background needed.

8 August

### *Pantomime Masterclass led by Nigel Haynes*

Nigel shares his many years' experience of writing and performing in pantomime.

12 September

### *Streatham Shorts II*

STC is inviting submissions (by August 13<sup>th</sup>) for an evening of short performances (max 10 mins) written and directed by new writers. Suitable pieces may be nominated for a public performance.

So far we have staged fourteen productions since our launch in April 2013, and are constantly working on our programme of future productions. If you're interested in getting involved in any capacity, or have any suggestions or proposals for a future show, do get in touch.

## Membership

Membership is open to everyone (aged 18 or over), with a connection to Streatham, and whatever their level of experience in theatre - amateur, professional or none. Annual subscriptions are only £10 - ask one of our team for an application form or contact us as below. Your subscription will help us keep putting theatre into Streatham.

## Contact

You'll find more on our website [www.streathamtheatre.org.uk](http://www.streathamtheatre.org.uk) where you can also join our mailing list and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

You can email us on [info@streathamtheatre.org.uk](mailto:info@streathamtheatre.org.uk) or call 020 3432 5710.

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