

**14 – 18 November 2017**

**The Premiere of a brand new play**

## **The Ballad of Lady Bessy**

**Written & Directed by David Fletcher**

Director David Fletcher has an abiding interest in one of the most turbulent times in English history, the battle for the throne between the Houses of York and Lancaster (The Wars of The Roses) and the emergence of one of the most charismatic dynasties in our history – the Tudors. During his research of this period he came upon an epic, but little known, poem - *The Most Pleasant Song of Lady Bessy* – which shone a very different light on some of the characters found in Shakespeare's *Richard III* and the 2013 BBC drama *The White Queen*. It also provided the inspiration for David's new play *The Ballad of Lady Bessy*, which The Loft is delighted to premiere.

The central character Bessy is Elizabeth of York, daughter of Edward IV, wife to Henry VII and mother of Henry VIII. History sees her as a dynastic pawn who accepted her role with meekness. *The Ballad*, tells a very different story. In it Bessy is an intelligent, resourceful and ambitious young woman who plays a significant role in Henry Tudor's seizure of the crown. This play reflects on the role of women in the turbulent world of usurpation, Princes in The Tower, and the establishment of a new dynasty, and the effect that such events have on their personal relationships.

"This is a tale of a fearless and intelligent woman in politically dangerous times" says David, "based on a work written not long after the events it depicts took place".

Between the two performances on Saturday, 18 November, David will be hosting a Director's Discussion about the play and its historical setting. This will take place from 6.45pm to 7.30pm. Admission to this session is free and tickets can be booked through the theatre's Box Office.

***The Ballad of Lady Bessy*** can be seen in the Douglas Ford Studio at The Loft Theatre, Victoria Colonnade, Leamington Spa from 14 to 18 November 2017. Performances will take place at 7.30pm on Tuesday through Friday (14-17 November) and at 5.00pm and 8.00pm on Saturday (18 November). Tickets can be booked online at any time via the Loft Theatre Company website ([www.loft-theatre.co.uk](http://www.loft-theatre.co.uk)), by emailing [box-office@loft-theatre.co.uk](mailto:box-office@loft-theatre.co.uk), by calling 01926 800360 (answerphone service), or from the Box Office between 7.00pm and 8.00pm on performance evenings.



Meredith (Henry VII) and Elizabeth Morris (Lady Bessy) — *Richard Smith Photography*

Pete