

## To infinity and beyond in new take on Henry V



**A distinctly modern take on Shakespeare's Henry V is being staged by Elizabeth College. (11971115)**

CAMO fatigues and Second World War army uniforms mix with medieval chainmail and swords, all set against a backdrop of Guernica-like paintings and projections of Vietnam.

This is Elizabeth College's latest stage production H5∞, 'Shakespeare's Henry V for the modern world'. 'It's Henry V Infinite, the timeless nature of conflict,' explained Jamie Hardie, 18, who plays the title role. 'We have modern elements in the play. For example, we have Second World War songs in between the scenes, sung by a choir made up of students from Elizabeth and Ladies' Colleges, music like The Dam Busters March and I Don't Want to be a Soldier.' The play has been revised specifically to make it more powerful and understandable to a modern-day audience.

'We've cut out all the scenes concerning the French princess,' explains director Maz Campbell. 'Basically it's 600 years since Agincourt, 100 years after the First World War and 70 after the Second World War. We wanted to make a statement on the perpetual nature of war.'

All ages in the audience will identify with the images and songs chosen.

'We have Te Deum, songs from Pete Seeger, The End by The Doors, Dirty Little War and First World War songs as well as video and stills from both world wars, Vietnam and the contemporary war and current pictures of migrants and refugees.'

The student cast includes pupils who have taken part in previous productions.

It's the second Shakespeare production for Ed Garrod this year.

'I performed in Romeo and Juliet at Ladies' College this year,' said the 15-year-old. 'In H5 I play Llewellyn. We've studied both the Kenneth Branagh Henry and the Lawrence Olivier Henry. The Branagh one is more anti-war but the Olivier one came out just before the Battle of Britain, so it's more pro.'

Jude Wegerer, 16, has the second largest number of lines in the lengthy play, but was not put off.

'I relish it, in a way' he said. 'Henry has 600 lines and I have 70, so you can see how many Jamie has to learn.'

Jude, Jamie and Oliver were part of the college's production of Sweeney Todd earlier in the year.

'I like the balance between Sweeney and Henry,' Jude said. 'I like making people laugh, but with something like this it's good to make them think, to actually stimulate them.'

● **H5∞ is at Elizabeth College tonight, tomorrow and Friday at 7.30pm. Tickets are adults £7.50, children/senior citizens £5, available from the college reception during school hours. Interval mulled wine and mince pies are included. Contact Dot Carruthers on 728217, 07781 447229 or dot@elizabethcollege.gg to book or for more details.**