

**NAXOS**  
AudioBooks

**CLASSIC  
DRAMA**



William Shakespeare  
**Great  
Speeches  
and  
Soliloquies**

Performed by  
**Simon Russell Beale  
Estelle Kohler  
Clifford Rose  
Sarah Woodward**

NA201512D

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1	Richard II Act 2 Scene 1 John of Gaunt	3:34
2	Richard II Act 3 Scene 2 King Richard	3:16
3	Henry IV Part 1 Act 2 Scene 3 Lady Percy	2:08
4	Henry IV Part 1 Act 2 Scene 3 King Henry	2:27
5	Henry IV Part 2 Act 2 Scene 1 Prince Harry	3:07
6	Henry IV Part 2 Act 4 Scene 3 Falstaff	3:57
7	Henry V Act 2 Scene 3 Mistress Quickly	2:26
8	Henry V Prologue Chorus	3:13
9	Henry V Act 3 Scene 1 King Henry	3:17
10	Henry V Act 4 Scene 1 King Henry	4:05
11	Henry V Act 4 Scene 3 King Henry	4:06
12	Henry VI Part 3 Act 1 Scene 4 Queen Margaret	3:07
13	Richard III Act I Scene 1 King Richard	3:28
14	Richard III Act 1 Scene 4 Clarence	4:24
15	Merchant of Venice Act 4 Scene 1 Portia	1:53
16	As You Like It Act 2 Scene 7 Jacques	2:23
17	A Midsummer Night's Dream Act 2 Scene 1 Titania	2:27
18	The Taming of the Shrew Act 5 Scene 2 Katharine	3:40
19	Troilus and Cressida Act 5 Scene 2 Troilus	2:41
20	Troilus and Cressida Act 5 Scene 3 Ulysses	3:51
21	Two Noble Kinsmen Act 2 Scene 4 Jailer's Daughter	3:34
22	Julius Caesar Act 2 Scene 1 Portia	3:22

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23	Julius Caesar Act 3 Scene 1 Antony	2:06
24	Julius Caesar Act 3 Scene 2 Antony	2:40
25	Romeo and Juliet Act 1 Scene 3 Nurse	3:36
26	Romeo and Juliet Act 2 Scene 2 Romeo	2:22
27	Romeo and Juliet Act 3 Scene 2 Juliet	2:23
28	Hamlet Act 1 Scene 2 Hamlet	2:33
29	Hamlet Act 1 Scene 3 Polonius	2:10
30	Hamlet Act 3 Scene 1 Hamlet	2:41
31	Hamlet Act 3 Scene 1 Ophelia	1:34
32	Hamlet Act 3 Scene 3 King Claudius	2:55
33	Hamlet Act 4 Scene 7 Queen Gertrude	1:31
34	Othello Act 1 Scene 3 Othello	2:50
35	Othello Act 5 Scene 2 Othello	3:10
36	King Lear Act 1 Scene 2 Edmond	2:01
37	Macbeth Act 1 Scene 5 Lady Macbeth	2:36
38	Macbeth Act 1 Scene 5 Lady Macbeth	1:44
39	Macbeth Act 1 Scene 7 Macbeth	2:18
40	Macbeth Act 2 Scene 1 Macbeth	2:37
41	Macbeth Act 5 Scene 5 Macbeth	1:45
42	Antony and Cleopatra Act 2 Scene 2 Enobarbus	3:10
43	Antony and Cleopatra Act 1 Scene 5 Cleopatra	2:05
44	Antony and Cleopatra Act 4 Scene 5 Cleopatra	3:17
45	The Tempest Act 4 Scene 1 Prospero	1:38

**Total time: 2:07:41**

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William Shakespeare

# Great Speeches and Soliloquies

The plays of William Shakespeare (1564-1616) have become a part of all of us, whether we know it or not, and especially (though not exclusively) within the English-speaking world. Even our everyday speech is shot through with half-remembered or unconscious snatches: 'To be or not to be' ... 'The hollow crown'... 'All the world's a stage'...'The quality of mercy is not strained'... 'Neither a borrower nor a lender be'... 'Is this a dagger which I see before me'.

This collection of speeches gives the listener a chance to enjoy the sources of many of these quotations – to put them in a context and, perhaps, to explore more fully the plays from which they come.

Shakespeare's plays may be roughly divided into Histories, Comedies and Tragedies. They are written in blank verse (unrhymed ten-syllable line— iambic pentameter), with excursions into prose for more 'down to earth' scenes or characters; and occasional rhyming songs (especially in the comedies).

Many of the speeches included here are

soliloquies – delivered by a character alone on stage and, as it were, shared with or overheard by the audience. Thus Shakespeare enables his characters to express the inmost workings of their minds and hearts – vowing vengeance (Antony in *Julius Caesar*, Act 3 Scene 2) agonising over the problem of existence itself (*Hamlet* Act 3 Scene 1) or wrestling with guilt (*Macbeth* Act 1 Scene 7).

Other speeches are essentially 'public' in their intention – speeches of exhortation, like Henry V's before Agincourt (*Henry V* Act 4 Scene 3) or of clever manipulation, like Antony's to the Roman crowd (*Julius Caesar* Act 3 Scene 2). Others again address a more private audience, such as Polonius' advice to his son Laertes (*Hamlet* Act 1 Scene 3) or Clarence's painfully vivid recollection of a nightmare which indirectly foretells his imminent murder (*Richard III* Act 1 Scene 4).

It may be noticed that Shakespeare's comedies are less well represented in the collection: this is because such plays offer fewer opportunities for a character to muse

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intensely over his or her plight, or for grand public address.

In the History plays, however, we (typically) find the theme of kingship recurring, in private reflections on the monarch's particular plight. And in the Tragedies, it is natural for the protagonists to be heard taking stock of their circumstances and feelings as the action moves towards some dramatic resolution of private and public destiny.

Some of the characteristic themes developed in these speeches have been touched on above (kingship, exhortation, introspection, advice) but we also find expressions of love well represented, especially among the female roles – adolescent love in *Romeo and Juliet* or, for

example, the maturer articulation of a woman's right to be part of all her husband's concerns in Portia's speech (*Julius Caesar* Act 2 Scene 1). A speech which combines great tenderness with richly evocative language is Othello's account of his wooing of Desdemona (Act 1 Scene 3).

It can be seen throughout this collection that what distinguishes Shakespeare's genius is not only his deep understanding of human nature but also the extraordinary power of his language, through which the external, concrete world of everyday things is joined with the abstract inner world of reason, imagination and feeling.

### **Notes by Perry Keenlyside**

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## The music on this CD taken from the NAXOS catalogue

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MUSIC OF THE SPANISH RENAISSANCE Shirley Rumsey, voice, vihuelas, lute & Renaissance guitar	8.550614
PURCELL The Fairy Queen The Scholars Baroque Ensemble	8.550660-1
JENKINS All in a Garden Green Rose Consort of Viols	8.550687

Cover picture: *The Ides of March* by Sir Edward John Poynter.  
Courtesy of Manchester City Art Galleries, Manchester.



In his first five years with the Royal Shakespeare Company, **Simon Russell Beale** has played many of the leading Shakespeare roles ranging widely from *Richard III* to Ariel in *The Tempest*, though his dramatic range extends to Samuel Beckett. He also frequently appears on television and radio.



In his extended career **Clifford Rose** has divided his time between the stage and television. His theatre work has included many Shakespeare roles as well as *Marat/Sade* and *The Thebans* for the RSC. His television work has encompassed *The Roads to Freedom*, *Fortunes of War*, *Secret Army* and *Inspector Morse*.



As an Associate Artist of the Royal Shakespeare Company, **Estelle Kohler's** long career as a Stratford leading lady began with her famous Juliet to Ian Holm's Romeo, for which she won the London Critics' Award. She has won other awards and nominations for a great range of work on stage, film and television.



**Sarah Woodward** joined the RSC after leaving RADA and has since appeared in many Shakespearean roles, including Juliet directed by Declan Donnellan. She played Rose in *The Sea* by Edward Bond and Anne Danby in *Kean*, both directed by Sam Mendes. She is seen regularly on UK television in programmes as varied as *Poirot* and *Casualty*.

# William Shakespeare

## Great Speeches and Soliloquies

Hamlet • Macbeth • Henry IV • Henry V • Julius Caesar • Richard II • Richard III  
The Merchant of Venice • The Taming of the Shrew • As You Like It • Romeo and Juliet  
Troilus and Cressida • King Lear • Antony and Cleopatra • The Tempest

Performed by **Simon Russell Beale, Estelle Kohler, Clifford Rose, Sarah Woodward**  
Introductions read by **Daniel Philpott**

*To be or not to be... Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow...  
O for a Muse of Fire... The quality of mercy is not strained...  
This sceptred isle... Once more unto the breach dear friends...*

Many of Shakespeare's greatest and best-loved speeches are brought together in this superb collection, performed by outstanding artists who bring to vivid life words which are an integral part of our language, our culture and our everyday lives.

Simon Russell Beale, Estelle Kohler, Clifford Rose and Sarah Woodward are all members of the Royal Shakespeare Company. They have performed many of the roles they present on this recording on the RSC stages in Stratford-upon-Avon and London under leading directors of the time from Peter Brook to Sam Mendes.

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Total time  
2:07:41