

# Bard production more than just history lesson



**NIGHT OUT . . . Emma Smith, 4,  
and Anna Wallace, 18**

**WATCHING** the haunting but hilarious production of *Richard III* last week, caused me to revisit a well-known nursery rhyme and reveal its murderous meaning after all these years.

It goes: "Oh, the grand old Duke of York he had ten thousand men

He marched them up to the top of the hill

and he marched them down again."

It was a rhyme I often sang with glee as a four-year-old but I was too discover the origins of the 15th century rhyme, at a production of Shakespeare Under the Stars, in a Townsville park.

It refers to the defeat of the Duke of York in the bloody Wars of the Roses.

This dark comedy has its share of shady and innocent characters, deception and hilarious one-liners as the wiles of man are relayed in classic, timeless Shakespearean fashion.

It was my first time to a home-made production of the locally renowned Shakespeare Under the Stars, which plays at Queens' Gardens, but now that I have discovered this great outdoors theatre concept, it certainly won't be my last.

I was surprised at how moved I was not only by the production itself, but the fabulous acting

from the youngest little actress to the elderly mother of Richard III, the Duchess of York played by Beth Honeycombe.

The treacherous Richard III, Duke of Gloucester is played by Brendan O'Connor, and his interpretation of the villainous and contorted duke, ran shivers down my spine.

At other times, his confidence, faultless acting and easy interaction with the audience made us laugh out loud.

O'Connor, who we would all know better as the ("charter boat ... what charter boat?" advertisement guy) stole the show.

But the ensemble of local talent

also included some favourites such as Bernie Lanigan, John Goodson and Sandra Neal and the director Terri Brabon who plays "mad Margaret".

The show's director Terri Brabon has done an outstanding job of bringing together an exceptional cast to present this story of treachery, greed and passion in a contemporary setting on a balmy Townsville night.

*Richard III* runs until Saturday, with nightly performances from 6.30pm and a Sunday show from 5pm.

Book online at [www.shakespeare-under-the-stars.com](http://www.shakespeare-under-the-stars.com) or phone 0458 758 510.

**EMMA CHADWICK**