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George Chakravarthi *Thirteen*

20 March to 21 June 2014

Evoking death, drama and identity, George Chakravarthi re-imagines thirteen Shakespearean characters who meet their ends through suicide. Marking the 450th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, this is the first time *Thirteen* has been shown outside the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-Upon-Avon.

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Cleopatra, from *Antony and Cleopatra*

Cleopatra was a powerful African queen, known for her strong leadership and stunning beauty. The historic tragedy, *Antony and Cleopatra*, recounts the turbulent lives and love affair between Cleopatra and the Roman general Mark Antony. At the end of the play, Cleopatra is captured by Roman forces and chooses to take her own life with the venom of poisonous snakes rather than be paraded as an enemy of Rome.



Romeo, from *Romeo and Juliet*

Set in Verona, Italy, *Romeo and Juliet* is a tragic romance telling the story of two young lovers whose families are locked in conflict.

After discovering Juliet's body and presuming her dead, Romeo drinks poison, ending his life.



Goneril, from *King Lear*

King Lear is a tragedy based on the myth of a Celtic king who was driven mad by his daughters' treatment of him.

Goneril, one of Lear's three daughters, is a deceitful character who tricks her father into handing over his wealth, and later in the play plots to kill both her husband and sister. Seeing no way back from her wicked deeds, Goneril eventually takes her own life to avoid capture and justice.



Cassius, from *Julius Caesar*

This play is a historic tragedy set in Ancient Rome, focusing on the assassination of emperor Julius Caesar.

Cassius is the main conspirator in the murder. He manipulates others, including Brutus, against the leader to instigate a savage attack. Later, with the Roman empire in turmoil, Cassius and Brutus go to battle against Caesar's supporters, Mark Antony and Octavius. Certain that he will soon be captured, Cassius falls upon his own sword.



Lady Macbeth, from *Macbeth*

Macbeth is a well known Shakespearean tragedy based on the life of a sixteenth century king of Scotland.

Lady Macbeth is a strong female character who encourages her husband to kill the king and take the crown for himself. Wracked with guilt, Lady Macbeth begins to show signs of madness, eventually taking her own life.



Eros, from *Antony and Cleopatra*

Upon hearing of Cleopatra's death, Mark Antony no longer wants to live. He asks his loyal servant Eros, to kill him.

Out of respect for his master, Eros, takes his own life instead, committing the ultimate act of self sacrifice.



Mark Antony from *Antony and Cleopatra*

Mark Antony is the devoted Roman lover of the Egyptian queen Cleopatra.

In this complex story of love, honour and betrayal, Mark Antony hears false news of Cleopatra's death during battle. Deciding he too must end his life, he asks his servant Eros to kill him, when Eros refuses, Mark Antony falls upon his own sword and suffers a slow painful death, living just long enough to die in the arms of Cleopatra.



Brutus, from *Julius Caesar*

Consumed by guilt for delivering the fatal blow to Caesar, Brutus embraces death whilst at battle. Knowing there is no hope of success, Brutus convinces a servant to hold his sword as he throws himself upon it



Juliet, from *Romeo and Juliet*

Upon waking from her self-induced coma, Juliet finds her lover Romeo dead beside her. As she kisses Romeo one final time, Juliet stabs herself with Romeo's dagger and falls dead upon his body.



Othello, from *Othello*

Othello is a tragedy based on the life of a Moorish general in the Venetian army and explores themes of jealousy and suspicion.

Tricked by his enemies, Othello wrongly accuses his wife, Desdemona, of adultery. After murdering Desdemona he discovers her innocence and drives a dagger into his chest, falling dead beside his wife's body.



Portia, from *Julius Caesar*

Convinced that her husband, Brutus, will not be able to defeat Antony and his army, and sickened at the abandonment by her husband, Portia commits suicide in her Roman home by swallowing burning coals.



Timon, from *Timon of Athens*

One of Shakespeare's less well known plays, *Timon of Athens* recounts the life of the generous and wealthy Athenian, Timon.

Flattered by his friends, Timon gives away his wealth and possessions until he is left with nothing. When creditors arrive demanding payment, Timon is surprised to learn he has nothing left to give. He calls upon friends for assistance and is shocked when they will not help him in his time of need.

Disillusioned with the unkindness of false friends, Timon flees civilisation and establishes a home in a cave. He is later found dead amongst the roots and shoots he eats for sustenance.



Ophelia, from *Hamlet*

Hamlet is a well known tragedy telling the story of a Danish prince who takes revenge on his uncle for the murder of Hamlet's father.

Ophelia, Hamlet's sweetheart, is distraught by Hamlet's apparent madness and the murder of her father. She drowns after falling from a tree branch into a river, making no attempt to save her own life.