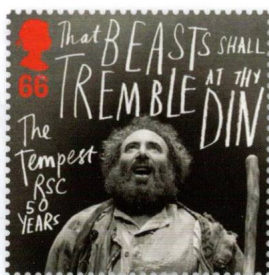




The acclaimed performance of *Hamlet* by David Tennant in 2008



Prospero in RSC's *The Tempest* of 2009, played by Antony Sher



Henry VI played by Chuk Iwuji in the RSC production of 2006



A quotation from *Hamlet* on the RSC Talents House postmark. An alternative postmark is shown on page 239

**A home for the Bard** Ever since the actor David Garrick organised a Shakespeare Jubilee there in 1769, the link between Stratford-upon-Avon and Shakespeare has been acknowledged. But it wasn't until a similar celebration in 1864 – the tercentenary of his birth – that a campaign to build a theatre in Stratford began in earnest. A local brewer, Charles Edward Flower, donated a two-acre site beside the Avon and in 1879 the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre opened, attracting the leading actors of the day, including Ellen Terry and Frank Benson.

That theatre was destroyed by fire in 1936 and its replacement opened in 1932, bringing John Gielgud, Laurence Olivier and Peggy Ashcroft to Stratford and, by 1961, giving the newly formed RSC an official, permanent home. The Royal Shakespeare Theatre, as it was renamed, saw many performances from Paul Scofield, Judi Dench and many other major actors, but its proscenium arch came to be seen as dated as its backstage and other facilities. So the Royal Shakespeare Theatre was reconstructed as part of a major £112.8m transformation project. This new theatre is similar in shape to its temporary replacement, the Courtyard Theatre, and is attached to the Swan Theatre, a 430-seater modelled on the designs of original Elizabethan playhouses.

**Philatelic celebration** Working closely with the RSC, Royal Mail has selected six RSC productions of Shakespeare's plays from the last half century as subjects for the special issue of stamps (shown above) released on 12 April to commemorate the RSC's important anniversary.

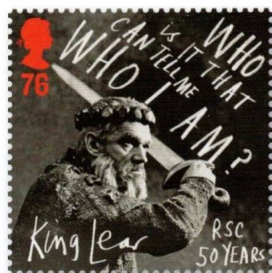
The stamp designs are inspired by the RSC's dynamic, modern take on Shakespeare and feature graffiti-style famous quotations from the

#### Royal Shakespeare Company Prices

Set of stamps	£4.66
Miniature Sheet	£2.90
Presentation Pack	£8.10
First Day Envelope	30p
First Day Cover Stamps	£6.07
First Day Cover Miniature Sheet	£3.96
Stamp Cards (11 in set)	£4.95

#### Royal Shakespeare Company Stamp Specifications

Number of stamps	Six
Design	hat-trick design
Typography	Marion Deuchars
Stamp format	Square
Stamp size	35mm x 35mm
Printer	Walsall Security Printers
Print process	Gravure
Number per sheet	25/50
Perforations	14.5 x 14.5
Phosphor	All over
Gum	PVA



Traditional views of *King Lear* were overturned by Paul Scofield in 1962



Titania, played by Sara Kestelman in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1970



*Romeo and Juliet* of 1976, with Ian McKellen and Francesca Annis

plays. The words of the quotations are overlaid to flow around the shapes of powerful monochrome images taken from photography by the designer Marion Deuchars. The use of a simple black, white and red palette adds to the sense of drama and echoes the bold, forward-thinking ethos of the RSC.

The specially issued Miniature Sheet comprises four stamps showing the cut-out shapes of each of the four theatres where the RSC has performed in Stratford-upon-Avon through the years, set against a stage-themed background with famous Shakespearian characters 'walking the boards' ●

**Royal Shakespeare Company  
Miniature Sheet Specifications**

Number of stamps	Four
Sheet design	hat-trick design
Typographer	Marion Deuchars
Stamp format	Landscape
Size of sheet	115mm x 89mm
Stamp size	41mm x 30mm
Printer	Cartor Security Printing, France
Print process	Lithography
Perforations	14.5 x 14
Phosphor	All over
Gum	PVA



Left: The RSC Miniature Sheet, shown smaller than actual size of 115mm x 89mm

Image collage (page 239) and stamp images courtesy RSC except for *The Tempest*, which was a RSC/Baxter Theatre Company South Africa co-production