

# Royal Shakespeare Company performs modern reimagining of the myth of St George

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## *Redcrosse: A Modern Day Celebration of England and St George*

*What is this England? We have a patron saint. What does he stand for? We have a flag. Sometimes it speaks of sporting passion. Sometimes it speaks of pomp. Sometimes it speaks of grief, at memories of war. Sometimes it speaks of vicious hatred. But when it flies upon this church it speaks of something else. What is this country called to be, and to become?*

The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) will perform their interpretation of a new poetic liturgy for England and St George on **Saturday 17 November 2012**. The one off performance of *Redcrosse*, which was conceived by Ewan Fernie, Professor of Shakespeare Studies at the University of Birmingham, will be directed by Luke Kernaghan and will take place in the beautiful modernist surroundings of Coventry Cathedral as part of its Golden Jubilee celebrations.

*Redcrosse* offers its new vision of England and St. George through brand new poetry by the former Poet Laureate **Andrew Motion**, the winner of this year's Costa Prize **Jo Shapcott**, **Michael Symmons Roberts** and **Andrew Shanks**. The work brings St George into the present, into new solidarity with a changed and changing contemporary England.

The production also includes original music by Grammy-award winning **Tim Garland** for trio Acoustic Triangle and the Choir of Royal Holloway, University of London.

*Redcrosse* was premiered at the Windsor Spring Festival but this is the first time that the piece will be performed for Midlands audiences.

Director Luke Kernaghan said:

*'It is such an honour to be presenting Redcrosse as part of Coventry Cathedral's 50th anniversary celebrations.*

*'As a director, you are very rarely given the opportunity to be creative in such an inspiring environment as this Cathedral. Moreover, the text of Redcrosse matches and reflects the stunning fusions at the heart of the building itself – it is epic yet intimate, poetic yet direct, rooted in England's mythic past yet unequivocally contemporary.*

*'In a year of Jubilee celebrations and Olympic achievements, the question of what defines 'Englishness', and how we relate to our national flag, has never been so relevant.*

*'This is an exhilarating and exciting project that I hope will celebrate such a unique text and extraordinary building.'*

Professor Ewan Fernie commented:

*'I'm hugely excited that the most famous theatre company in the world has agreed to perform the work. Luke brings a very fresh and distinctive vision to Redcrosse and we hope the RSC production will appeal to all sorts of people from across the Midlands.*

*'Coventry Cathedral holds a particularly important place in British history and it also stands as eloquent testimony to peace and reconciliation. For these reasons it is perfect for a new work which celebrates what England is and could be.*

*'Redcrosse is a liturgy for everyone - all spiritual seekers, anyone who's seeking something better and seeking others who want the same. It ultimately celebrates England and St George in terms of our potential openness to each other and to truth. It also attempts to reclaim Englishness and St George from damagingly narrow, jingoistic conceptions.*

*'St. George is patron saint not only of England, but also of Aragon, Catalonia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Greece, Lithuania, Montenegro, Palestine, Portugal, Russia and Serbia! In the area of Palestine, Lebanon and Syria, he's traditionally honoured not only by Christians but also by Muslims and Jews.'*

Acting Dean and Canon Pastor, the Revd Canon Tim Pullen added:

*'We are absolutely delighted that Redcrosse will be performed in Coventry Cathedral which is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. It is wonderful that it is the first time audiences in the Midlands will see it and, of course, with the backdrop of our wonderful West Screen of Saints and Angels – including St George – by John Hutton.'*

*Redcrosse* takes place at Coventry Cathedral on **Saturday 17 November 2012** at **7.30pm**. Tickets which cost £8 (£6.50 concessions) can be booked through the Coventry Cathedral website ([www.coventrycathedral.org.uk](http://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk) (<http://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk>)).