

SUMMARY: The document below is the letters patent under the Great Seal dated 19 May 1603 by which the Lord Chamberlain's Men became the King's Men. For a facsimile, see Schoenbaum, Samuel, *William Shakespeare: A Documentary Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 197.

Con' sp{ec}ial{i} p{ro} Laurencio ffletcher & Will{elm}o Shakespeare et al{ijs}
 [=Special grant for Lawrence Fletcher & William Shakespeare and others]

James by the grace of God etc., to all justices, mayors, sheriffs, constables, headboroughs and other our officers and loving subjects, greeting;

Be it known that we of our special grace, certain knowledge & mere motion have licenced and authorized, and by these presents do licence and authorize these our servants, Lawrence Fletcher, William Shakespeare, Richard Burbage, Augustine Phillips, John Heminges, Henry Condell, William Sly, Robert Armin, Richard Cowley and the rest of their associates freely to use and exercise the art and faculty of playing comedies, tragedies, histories, interludes, morals, pastorals, stage plays and such other like as they have already studied or hereafter shall use or study, as well for the recreation of our loving subjects as for our solace and pleasure when we shall think good to see them during our pleasure, and the said comedies, tragedies, histories & interludes, morals, pastorals, stage plays and suchlike to show and exercise publicly to their best commodity when the infection of the plague shall decrease, as well within their now usual house called the Globe within our county of Surrey as also within any town halls or moot halls or other convenient places within the liberties and freedom of any other city, university, town or borough whatsoever within our said realms and dominions, willing and commanding you and every of you, as you tender our pleasure, not only to permit and suffer them herein without any your lets, hindrances or molestations during our said pleasure, but also to be aiding and assisting to them if any wrong be to them offered, and to allow them such former courtesies as hath been given to men of their place and quality, and also what further favour you shall show to these our servants for our sake we shall take kindly at your hands;

In witness whereof etc. Witness ourself at Westminster the nineteenth day of May.

p{er} b{reu}e de priuato sigillo &c [=by writ of Privy Seal etc.]