

# PROSCENIUM

## **Macbeth**

By William Shakespeare

Macbeth

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June to Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2006  
Travellers Studio, Hatch End

# MACBETH

By  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

First Witch.....	Kathleen Jones
Second Witch .....	Caroline Bronne-Shanbury
Third Witch .....	Sheila Harvey
Duncan, King of Scotland.....	Keith Bayross
Malcolm, his son .....	Kaffe Keating-Jungreuthmayer
Donalbain, his son .....	Mitchell Rose
Macbeth, Thane of Glamis .....	Mark Sutherland
Lady Macbeth.....	Isabelle Cartwright
Banquo .....	Vincent Eavis
Fleance, his son .....	Adrian Sykes
Macduff .....	Charles Anthony
Lady Macduff .....	Lynette Shanbury
Their son.....	Edward Sykes
Ross .....	Christina Baker
Lennox .....	Alan Bobroff
Siward .....	Mitchell Rose
The Porter.....	Michael Gerrard
Gentlewoman.....	Crystal Anthony
Murderers .....	Mitchell Rose
	Kaffe Keating-Jungreuthmayer
	Mark Fuller
Doctor .....	Colin Hickman
Director .....	Anton Jungreuthmayer
Stage Manager .....	Mark Fuller
Fight Director.....	Ginge Hopkins
Costumes.....	Caroline Bronne-Shanbury
	Lynette Shanbury
Set Design .....	Anton Jungreuthmayer
Lighting Design.....	Janet Harrison
Properties .....	Anne Gerrard
Lighting and sound .....	Arts Culture Harrow

*We would like to thank East Lane for their help with properties on this production*

## DATE AND SOURCES

The major source for *Macbeth* was Holinshed's Chronicle, which itself drew on other chronicles which may have been available to Shakespeare. He may have been familiar with Boethius' *Scotorum Historiae* and John Leslie's *De Origine Scotorum* (1578), which purported to trace the Stuart family tree back to Banquo. The character of Lady Macbeth, who does not emerge strongly from the chronicles, was perhaps suggested by Seneca's *Medea*, but otherwise is Shakespeare's own creation, while Macbeth himself was a real historical character, who became king after murdering Duncan in 1040. However, he appears to have been an able and conscientious monarch, ruling for seventeen years.

*Macbeth* is thought to have been written in 1606, although it did not appear in print until the First Folio of 1623. References within the play make it clear that it was written after the succession of the Scottish James VI to the English throne in 1603, and references to the play by Shakespeare's contemporaries indicate that it could not have been written later than 1607. The spring and summer of 1606 seem the most likely date, when repercussions of the Gunpowder Plot made the subject of regicide and the Scottish succession topics of vital interest.

## WITCHCRAFT

*The Elizabethan Act against Witchcraft* 1563 stated that the penalty for murder by witchcraft or the raising of evil spirits was death, otherwise witchcraft earned a sentence of one year imprisonment for a first offence. For subsequent offences: for recovery of stolen goods or seeking to cause murder by witchcraft, life imprisonment; making of love charms, life imprisonment and confiscation of property; causing bodily injury, death penalty.

The Witchcraft Act was finally repealed in 1951.

“Here were no erotic orgies, no Sabbats or elaborate rituals; merely the hatred and spite of narrow peasant life assisted by vicious laws. The Sabbat, or congregation of witches finds no place in Elizabethan witchcraft, which is unsophisticated and down-to-earth. In Elizabethan times almost everybody believed in magic, and probably practised it as well. If the Witchcraft Act had been rigorously enforced the accused would have included not only the village scapegoats and the white wizards, but every man or woman who secretly tried to dispose of an enemy or achieve a desire by magic rituals.”

*Eric Maple, 1962*

“It is most true that some for these feats have been accounted saints, some other witches. And therefore I saie, that the Pope maketh rich witches, saints; and burneth the poor witches.”

*Reginald Scott, 1584*

“The situation was very different in Scotland, where it is estimated that 4,400 witches were executed between 1590 and 1680. John Knox himself preached against a condemned witch at St. Andrews in 1572, before she was burned at the stake. The best known case is that of the North Berwick witches in 1590-92. Among other things they were accused of worshipping the Devil in a church at night, flying in sieves, raising storms and trying to murder King James by melting a wax image of him in a fire. The king himself interrogated them and one witch, Agnes Sampson, was able to whisper in his ear the words he and his wife had spoken privately to each other on their wedding night, which naturally impressed him.”

*Richard Cavendish, 1977*

“It is the three witches, above all, who symbolise that chaotic darkness beyond the social order: and though a ‘fair’ society defines them as ‘foul’, one wonders whether the terms might not, like so much else in the play, be inverted. As androgynous creatures who speak riddlingly, ambiguously, the witches strile at the stability of all social,

sexual and linguistic forms, betraying their ultimate arbitrariness and absurdity. They are poets, prophetesses and devotees of female cult, radical separatists who mock the pomp of male power and lay bare the hollow sound and fury at its heart. Their words and bodies scorn rigid boundaries and fixed positions as they dance, dissolve and re-materialise. As such the witches are a transgressive force, refusing all truck with the official social order; but whereas the transgression of the Macbeths takes the destructive form of social ambition, and so is still bound up with the social order, the witches creatively reject a society founded on hierarchy and violence. Macbeth, mesmerised by such things, will never understand what the witches mean – a failing for which we may all feel grateful, since if he had done we would have no play to watch.”

*Terry Eagleton, 1988*

## **KINGSHIP**

“..one Makbeth, a valiant gentleman, and one that if he had not beene somewhat cruell of nature, might have beene thought most woorthie the government of a realme. On the other part, Duncane was so soft and gentle of nature, that the people wished the inclinations and maners of these two cousins to have been so tempered and interchangeable bestowed betwixt them ...so should Duncane have proved a worthie king, and Makbeth an excellent captaine.”

*Holinshed, 1577*

“It is a miserable state of mind to have few things to desire and many things to fear; and yet that commonly is the case of kings.”

*Francis Bacon, 1612*

“Of the five royal namesakes who had preceded James VI, two had been assassinated by their subjects and three had died in or as a result of wars with England. Of the four regents who had governed Scotland in his minority, only one had died a natural death.”

*Sir James Ferguson, 1969*

## LADY MACBETH

“We may take as an example of a person who collapses on reaching success, after striving for it with single-minded energy, the figure of Shakespeare’s Lady Macbeth. Beforehand there is no hesitation, no sign of any internal conflict in her, no endeavour but that of overcoming the scruples of her ambitious and yet tender-minded husband. She is ready to sacrifice even her womanliness to her murderous intention, without reflecting on the decisive part which this womanliness must play when the question afterwards arises of preserving the aim of her ambition, which has been attained through a crime.

One solitary faint stirring of a reluctance comes over her before the deed: *had he not resembled my father as he slept I had done it*. Then, when she has become queen through the murder of Duncan, she betrays for a moment something like disappointment, something like disillusionment, We cannot tell why.

Nevertheless she holds out. In the banqueting scene which follows, she alone keeps her head, cloaks her husband’s state of confusion and finds a pretext for dismissing the guests. And then she disappears from view. We next see her in the sleep-walking scene in the last act. She who had seemed so remorseless seems to have been borne down by remorse.”

*Sigmund Freud, 1916*

## MACBETH

“He is a general and has just won a battle; he enters the scene making a remark about the weather. *So foul and fair a day I have not seen*. On this flat note Macbeth’s character tone is set. “Terrible weather we’re having.” “Is it hot/cold/wet enough for you?” A commonplace man who talks in commonplaces, a golfer, one might guess, on the Scottish fairways. Macbeth is the only Shakespeare hero who corresponds to a bourgeois type: a murderous Babbit, let us say ...

What is modern and bourgeois in Macbeth’s character is his wholly social outlook. He has no feeling for others, yet until the end he is a vicarious creature, existing in his own eyes through others, through what they may say of him or promise him. This paradox is typical of the

social being – at once a wolf out for himself and a sheep.”

*Mary McCarthy, 1963*

“Macbeth lives as an exemplum of the perverted hero, because of Shakespeare’s ability to give life to every stage of his disastrous career. The aspects of his character which are developed successively, and draw him on, are suggested in the dense and allusive blank verse with such vividness that we are tempted to erect whole theories of his personality structure upon them, but *Macbeth* resists this process much better than *Hamlet*. The character insists upon its universality, just as the stage insists in being a kind of no-man’s land, a world where we may all be lost, except by ‘grace of Grace’.”

*Germaine Greer, 1986*

## THE RED AND THE BLACK

The two key images which create the atmosphere in the play are night and blood. The blackness of night is to the hero a thing of fear, even of horror; and that which he feels becomes the spirit of the play. The witches dance in the thick air of a storm, or, black and midnight hags, receive Macbeth in a cavern. Macbeth bids the stars hide their fires that his black desires may be concealed; Lady Macbeth calls on thick night to come, palled in the dunnest smoke of hell. When the day after the murder dawns, its light is strangled, and darkness does the face of earth entomb.

The feeling of fear, horror and pain is increased by constant and recurring images of blood. The most terrible is Macbeth’s description of himself wading in a river of blood, while the most stirring to the imagination is the picture of him gazing, rigid with horror, at his own blood-stained hand and watching it dye the whole green ocean red.

It is this accumulation of images which makes *Macbeth* the most intense, claustrophobic and modern of tragedies.

# **OUR NEXT PRODUCTION**

## **THE GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR**

By Nikolai Gogol (adapted by Adrian Mitchell)

The self-serving officials of a small town in Tsarist Russia are worried by the report of an impending visit from a Government Inspector. Hurriedly making plans to hide the evidence of their mismanagement and corruption, they are thrown into a state of utter confusion at the news that the august personage has been living in their town, incognito, for the past two weeks.

Kicking his heels in the dingiest room of the local inn, the young and temporarily penniless Ivan Khlestakov suddenly finds himself the centre of official attention, courted by every important man in town. Never one to pass up an opportunity, he decides to test his new friends' apparent loyalty to the government, filling his stomach and lining his purse along the way.

Regarded as Gogol's masterpiece, The Government Inspector is described as a classic satire on human vanity.

Directed by Shirley Wooten  
Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> November to Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2006  
7.45pm Compass Theatre, Ickenham  
Box Office : 020 8866 7075

## **ABOUT PROSCENIUM**

George Woollands and Margaret Rendle founded Proscenium in 1924.

The company's first production was the now little-known "The Tide" by Basil McDonald Hastings. Since then, the company has performed nearly 250 plays, using Harrow as a base since 1945.

In this time Proscenium has built up a strong reputation for performing challenging plays (both classic and contemporary) to a high standard.

For more information on Proscenium, and to join our mailing list, please visit our web site :

<http://www.proscenium.org.uk>