



Directed by Karl Heimer

March 31st – April 15th, 2000

CAST

The Family of Duncan, King of Scotland

Duncan. Larry Simmons
Malcolm, his son, Prince of Cumberland. Andy Greenleaf
Donalbain, his son. Sean Eustis
Macbeth, Duncan's cousin. Steve Cox
Lady Macbeth. Annaliese Moyer
. Jonela Ruka
Banquo, Duncan's cousin. Andrew Schneider
Fleance, Banquo's son. Chenoa Jones
Macduff, Duncan's cousin. Kevin Hollenbeck
Lady Macduff. Lauren Zambreny
Macduff's son. Chenoa Jones
. Gwyn Mitchell
Ross, cousin to Lady Macduff. Dan Lavanga

The Nobility

Lennox. Alicia-Marie Smyth
Angus. Preston Wood
Caithness. Arthur Adams
Seyton. Alan Duda
Lady Macbeth's gentlewoman. Sheilah Crossley-Cox

The Royal Court

a captain in Duncan's army. Joshua Engel
the court doctor. Daniel Delaney
Macbeth's porter. Charley Ward
Macbeth's hired murderers. B.J. Mitchell,
. Preston Wood,
. Alan Duda
an old man. Alan Duda

The Court of Edward the Confessor, King of England

Siward, an English general. Josh Engel
Siward's son. Sean Eustis

The Realm of Hecate

Hecate, goddess of magic. Sheilah Crossley-Cox
. Annaliese Moyer
three weird sisters who serve Hecate. Kendra Simmons
. Tina Segovia
. Leanne Mitchell,
. Chenoa Jones

Technical

technical director. Honor Woodward
combat choreography. Steve Cox,
. Kevin Hollenbeck,
. Sean Eustis,
. Jack Wibbe
set design. Honor Woodward,
. Jim Fenton
sound. Preston Wood
lights. Bob Dover,
. Gwyn Mitchell
props. Sheilah Crossley-Cox and the cast
costumes. Leanne Mitchell
stage manager. Honor Woodward
assistant director. Jack Wibbe
director. Karl Heimer

The play is set in Scotland in the middle of the eleventh century, with one brief visit to London.

Shakespeare's Macbeth

Let's face facts: Macbeth is a mass-murderer. But ironically enough he often does not get the respect he deserves. He is often portrayed as a helpless puppet, driven along by his harridan wife, and by Fate, as personified by the three weird sisters. Not so! Macbeth is responsible for setting in motion the chain of events in the play -- that is why the play is named after him. Whatever else he is, he is not a spineless marionette.

The weird sisters do not impel Macbeth to commit murder -- they put ideas of kingship into his head, which brings to light the ambition and evil which was already in Macbeth's soul beneath the nobility on the surface. But the idea to kill the king comes from Macbeth, not the sisters.

By the same token, Lady Macbeth is not ultimately responsible for the crimes committed in the play. She and her husband both conceive the idea of killing Duncan independently; but while she does plan the details of the killing, and spurs Macbeth on when his resolve to kill weakens, nevertheless she hesitates to commit the actual murder because Duncan looks like her father, so Macbeth must do the job himself. And of course the crimes which follow the first act of treachery are all Macbeth's doing -- he refuses even to tell his wife what he is up to. That is another casualty of Macbeth's choices -- he loses the ability to communicate with his wife, and their marriage unravels.

Macbeth is in the end responsible for the crimes committed, and this is compounded by the fact that he, unlike his wife, truly understands the implications of what he is doing. He knows that just as one lie usually requires other lies to cover up the original deception, it is also true that once a man begins to commit crimes and terrorize people on the way to the top, he can't stop. When a man commits a heinous crime which divides him forever from the society to which he belongs, he must dedicate his life to crime forever, because society will never accept him again, crowned or not -- that's what it means to be an outlaw. So he must kill and terrorize, which creates new enemies, requiring more terrorizing, thereby creating even more enemies. As the man asserted in Casablanca -- for every one of us you kill, a thousand will rise to take his place.

And once a man rises to the top by terror, he can never hope to win the respect and support of the people he rules, as a popular ruler can, so he must continue to base his rule on fear: surrounded by an

ever-growing circle of enemies, he must make clear that anyone who even thinks of attacking him is risking the lives of his whole family. Worse, the tyrant can never retire, because as soon as he loosens his grip on power, his enemies will kill him. That's why the Soviet Union was run by elderly men for decades -- a ruling elite which governs by means of terror must maintain its grip on power until death.

Macbeth knows his attack on Duncan will cause Malcolm, Donalbain, Banquo and Macduff to fear him, and that he may be forced to attack all of them as well as their families, thus causing an ever-growing group of Scots to seek his death. Day after day we see the horrid examples of people doing reprehensible things just because they think they can get away with it, but Macbeth knows, right from Act 1, that he will be punished for his actions. He knows that once he starts down that path there is no return -- but he heads down that path anyway.

When Macbeth is not portrayed as a puppet, he is often portrayed as a garden-variety villain. This is also unfair. Throughout the play we see signs of nobility in him. He begins the play as the brilliant field general, hardy combatant, loyal subject of the king, beloved friend, beloved husband, courteous and loving to all. Shakespeare, a brilliant poet who enjoyed complete mastery of his craft late in his career, showed to us Macbeth's nobility of mind. Had Macbeth simply left well enough alone, he would have attained the throne as the sisters promised, and as a man of obvious talent he probably would have gone down in history as one of Scotland's great kings.

The key to understanding Macbeth is that he is not an evil man: he is a good man who hoped he could climb the ladder of success a bit more quickly by committing just one crime, even though deep down he knew it would never work. And this is what makes the play a great tragedy: the image of a good man who committed one heinous act, and then watched helplessly as the consequences of his acts engulfed him. Just as Hamlet was cast into a role he didn't want -- assassin -- Macbeth has trapped himself into the role of villain.

When Shakespeare wrote Macbeth, he kept firmly in mind the audiences he was writing for. Seventeenth-century England was a place in which the crown was supposed to pass from father to son -- from the king to the Prince of Wales -- but in practice, that process could be interrupted by dukes, who were cousins of the king who had enough royal blood to make their own claims for the crown. Shakespeare made his audience understand eleventh-century Scotland by making it look like home: the audience saw King Duncan solemnizing his son's title as "Prince of Cumberland", surrounded all the while by thanes who had royal blood and could conceivably claim the crown, just like English

dukes, and the audience knew that one of those thanes might try to grab the crown away from the Prince.

Shakespeare also added historical tidbits which the English audience would appreciate: as luck would have it, Macbeth and his contemporaries lived during the period in which the neighboring country, England, was being run by Edward the Confessor. King Edward's story was familiar to English audiences, because he ruled from 1042 A.D. to 1066, just before William the Conqueror launched the Norman invasion of England, won the Battle of Hastings, and changed the history of England (and Europe) forever.

The most important member of Shakespeare's audience was his patron, King James I. He was a native of Scotland, believed to be a descendant of Banquo, a self-proclaimed expert on witchcraft, so he was certain to enjoy Macbeth more than his predecessor, Queen Elizabeth, who reacted testily to plays depicting a disputed succession to the crown (a sore subject for her).

The Rude Mechanicals are a non-profit theatrical group which is still in its infancy: having staged a successful *Midsummer Night's Dream* last fall, we plan to stage *Much Ado About Nothing* in June and July, and *Hamlet* in November.

If you would like to take part in our upcoming productions as an actor, our doors are always open: two-thirds of our cast for *Macbeth* are newcomers to the group, and only a handful of them have more than a few years' experience. If you would like to take part behind the scenes, there is plenty to do -- designing and building sets, shopping for props, picking out music, designing and making costumes, publicity, the works. We consider ourselves to be a teaching theater group, just like a teaching hospital: if there's something you'd like to learn, here is where you can learn it! We take donations as well. For further information, you can call Jack Wibbe or Lauren Zambreny at 301-317-9438, or Josh Engel at 301-317-7964.

We would like to thank --

--Annaliese and Honey, for solving a hundred of our problems before we even asked...

--Leanne, who kept the curse of *Macbeth* away during the first week by getting us into the armory during a snowstorm...

--Steve, Kevin and Sean, who saved our bacon in the stage combat...

--the army of actors who drove through snowstorms to play tiny roles, which enabled us to open our doors to more new actors...