



National Youth Theatre's award-winning
REP Company present

William Shakespeare's

Macbeth

Abridged by Moira Buffini

Directed by Natasha Nixon

As seen on BBC1

Exclusive resources, interviews & classroom activities for
key stage 3–5

Garick Theatre, 2 Charing Cross Rd, London WC2H 0HH

20th Nov—9th Dec 2018

The National Youth Theatre empowers young people to take centre stage in their lives

We are a world leading youth arts charity. We have been centre stage for over 60 years, inspiring young people and audiences alike in the importance of live theatre.

Our charitable remit is to give free and affordable opportunities both onstage and backstage to young people aged 14-25 from across the UK. We seek out the most diverse, the most talented and the most vulnerable through an active audition programme and community engagement to give unique, life-changing experiences working with some of the UK's leading professional directors, writers, producers, designers and stage managers.

We have engaged over 150,000 young people since 1956 and reached an audience of over 2 billion people from stadiums to studios at national and international events. We continue to represent the best of British young talent whilst sharing our best practice abroad to extend opportunities for young voices and to effect positive change in a complex world.

Our work benefits each new generation of artists, creative leaders, and social and political

game changers in both the private and public sectors. These alumni represent our four pillars of excellence, opportunity, compassion and community. They often return to NYT to offer free mentorship, leadership and vital job opportunities across all art platforms.

We believe we are a force for good, breaking down social and economic barriers by our investment in diversity and community and telling relevant challenging stories for our time.

In an increasingly virtual world, the value of LIVE has never been greater.

We learn by doing, vocation is at our heart, experience at our finger tips and excellence at our core.

We are as ambitious as the young people we serve.

Paul Roseby, CEO and Artistic Director



A world in which resources are scarce and survival is difficult. A world of conflict, where power means safety. A world in which the psychological and the supernatural are sometimes one and the same thing.

This is a kingdom ravaged by civil war. A rebellious noble, the Thane of Cawdor, has recently risen up against the reigning King of Scotland, the ageing Duncan. Amidst the clamour of this insurrection, three witch-like figures suddenly appear. These are the Weird Sisters, who reveal their intention to meet with Macbeth once the 'hurly-burly' of the ongoing battle is concluded.

At Duncan's camp, we learn from an injured Captain that the King's army has triumphed in the war against the rebels - mainly due to the ferocity and valour of the current Thane of Glamis, a fearsome warrior named Macbeth, who has revealed herself to be astonishingly brutal and effective in battle. Duncan tells the Thane of Ross to convey her thanks to Macbeth, who shall be rewarded with the title previously held by the rebel leader - 'Thane of Cawdor'.

Meanwhile, Macbeth and her trusted comrade Banquo survey the battlefield. The Weird Sisters appear to them and greet Macbeth not only as Thane of Glamis, but also as Thane of Cawdor and, astonishingly, as the future King. They then tell Banquo that although he will never be King himself, his children's children will sit upon the throne. Macbeth and Banquo are astounded, but before they can interrogate the Weird Sisters, they disappear. Ross arrives and, as directed by Duncan, bestows on Macbeth the title of Thane of Cawdor - the first of the witches' predictions has come true. But when Macbeth and Banquo finally make it back to Duncan's camp, they discover that Duncan plans to name her son Malcolm as heir to the

throne. If Macbeth is indeed to be King, it won't happen without some bloodshed. At Glamis castle, Lady Macbeth learns of the day's events through a letter sent to her by Macbeth. When she is then told by her servant that the King is heading to her castle to spend the night as a guest, a plan begins to form in her mind. She appeals to the evil spirits of the occult to fill her with cruelty, ready for what needs to be done. Macbeth returns home, and the two begin to plot Duncan's murder.

That evening, with Duncan dining as her guest, Macbeth has second thoughts, but Lady Macbeth convinces her to go through with the plan. Alone in the castle in the dead of night, Macbeth sees a vision of a bloody dagger, guiding her towards Duncan's bedroom. She creeps in and murders the King in her bed. The deed done, Macbeth panics and rushes away with the daggers still in her hands, before Lady Macbeth returns to the scene of the crime and plants the murder weapons on Duncan's servants.

The next morning, a nobleman named Macduff arrives and asks to speak with the King. Macbeth guides him to the King's bedchamber, and Macduff discovers Duncan's murdered body. Macbeth feigns surprise and rushes into the room herself. She emerges moments later having killed Duncan's servants in a supposed fit of rage, claiming that they were responsible for the crime. Fearing for their own lives, Duncan's sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, flee the country. In their absence, Macbeth is crowned King.

Privately, Banquo begins to suspect that his friend may have '[played] most foully' for the crown. Meanwhile, Macbeth begins to doubt that she can trust Banquo, and can't help but wonder if the last part of the prophecy - the part about Banquo's descendants ruling for generations - will



also come true. She resolves to have Banquo murdered and sets a trap for her old friend. Banquo is killed as planned, but his daughter, Fleance, escapes, running off into the night.

When the killers return to deliver the news of Banquo's death and Fleance's escape, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are hosting a banquet. Macbeth is distressed to learn of Fleance's survival, and begins to hallucinate a ghostly apparition of her friend Banquo at the feast. Lady Macbeth clears the room and chides Macbeth for losing her composure. Macbeth voices her suspicion that Macduff, who didn't come to the banquet as invited, might turn against them.

Macbeth seeks out the Weird Sisters, who reveal three further prophecies to her; firstly, that she must beware Macduff; but secondly, that nobody 'of woman born' will ever harm her; and thirdly, that she shall reign until Birnham Wood uproots itself and moves to Dunsinane Hill (a distance of about 15 miles). The last two of these prophecies suggest that Macbeth is safe, but when she learns that Macduff has fled to England, Macbeth nevertheless sends her assassins to storm Macduff's castle in Fife, where they murder his wife and children.

In England, Macduff is trying to persuade Malcolm to challenge Macbeth for the throne of Scotland when Ross arrives to deliver the terrible news. Malcolm encourages Macduff to convert his grief to anger and journey back home with him to wreak revenge on Macbeth.

At Glamis castle, Lady Macbeth is attended by a physician; wracked with guilt for her part in Duncan's murder, she is beginning to lose her mind. Macbeth learns of the approaching English army, but the witches' most recent prophecies have assured

her that she can never be defeated. Meanwhile, Malcolm and Macduff's forces assemble in nearby Birnham Wood to cut the branches from the trees so that they can use them as cover. Birnham Wood is marching to Dunsinane...

Macbeth learns that Lady Macbeth has died of her grief. She reflects on the futility of life itself, before discovering that Birnham Wood has come to Dunsinane, just as the Weird Sisters promised. Macbeth kills an enemy soldier, Young Siward, in combat, and even when she is confronted by Macduff, has no fear - after all, nobody 'of woman born' can harm her. Her arrogance turns to terror when Macduff reveals that he was delivered by caesarean section - 'from his mother's womb / Untimely ripped' - and so, in a sense, is not of woman born. In spite of this, a weary Macbeth resolves to fight Macduff to the death. Macduff kills her, exacting revenge for the murder of his family, and Malcolm is crowned as the next King of Scotland.



The World of the Play

The world of the play is set in an unknown location where resources are scarce and there are continuous flare-ups of violence and conflict. You are born into a world where you need to fight, and safety is found in power. It's also a world in which the psychological and the supernatural are sometimes one and the same thing.

The concept is a collaboration between myself and our writer, Moira Buffini, addressing the brief from the National Youth Theatre to make Macbeth 90 minutes in running time with gender fluid casting.

The process began with our shared understanding of what we thought this Macbeth could be and how it could relate to a contemporary audience. From there, it was about drafting up a script which was reaching towards our ideas whilst leaving enough space for the company to step inside the process and share with us what they imagined and what resonated with them.

Gender and Casting

Casting is a huge part of creating the world and ensuring the concept of the play is clear. We used the auditions as a bit of a testing ground around the question of gender, keeping everything open. We held auditions where most people read for a few different characters, and it became a more liberated process of feeling that the casting was about the right quality for each character, irrespective of gender.

Once cast, we then went back to the script and continued the process of ensuring that the logic around the gender fluid casting was clear and robust. Everything means something on stage, so it's much like a jigsaw puzzle, fitting everybody into the world and justifying all the choices. We're playing for balance and imbalance at the same time, trying to embrace all the

complexities around the questions rather than give any answers and solutions. In fact, there aren't any. It's a process and a debate very much alive today.

In this production, by casting Macbeth as a woman we can say that women can be warriors and tyrants. Shakespeare wrote Macbeth as a response to the political and social realities of the world in which he lived - the play reflects, questions and provokes. And that is exactly what we are doing with our production. Ultimately, we wanted everything to be possible; to treat it as a new play (simultaneously, a revival and a premiere), and not be complacent, nor make any assumptions. To 'start again' with our understanding of who can play what character and, particularly, what is offered to us by the idea of having Macbeth played by a woman.

Design and Movement

We have staged our production in the empty space with a non-naturalistic setting, which is the point of a triangle reaching up towards the sky (representing a tree or/and a dagger and/or shard). Whichever of these you see, it is sharp, jagged, and looms over the stage. There are very few props in the production and the ones that we have are poetic and symbolic rather than practical and necessary.

Everything in the production is kaleidoscopic in terms of how it combines a number of theatrical devices to tell the story. Take, for example, the murder of Lady Macduff and her son; when the two murderers enter the stage, the son clicks his rubix cube, and it is that twist and sound which Lady Macduff instinctively and subliminally recognises as the metaphor of a neck breaking - twisting, cracking bones - danger. Indeed, the murderer does break the son's neck, and the last thing to drop out of his hand as he is dying is the rubix cube which he has been clutching

from the beginning. A moment later, the murderer who doesn't even blink twice at death and killing, picks up the rubix cube and goes on to play with it as Lady Macduff stands, stunned. The final beat of this example is that the murderer completes the rubix cube, and that's symbolic of an ending. The story here is without words, we could tell this whole scene just through movement. The challenge with our production has been to use movement at the right points to support the story and our world.



The inciting incident that sets into motion the tragic plot of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is clearly and starkly rendered. This is a play that takes as its catalyst the ultimate taboo for a contemporary Jacobean audience; namely, the damnable crime of Regicide - the murder of a ruling King or Queen.

Given the irredeemable nature of this crime, we are bound to question what it is that spurs Macbeth and Lady Macbeth on in their pursuit of the crown. The text suggests that it is essentially no more or less than an irrepressible urge to attain the power of 'solely sovereign sway and masterdom'; in other words, a desire for the absolute authority that monarchy will bring. As such, Macbeth has often been understood as a tragedy about the dangers of all-consuming ambition which, as Macbeth himself acknowledges, 'o'erleaps itself, / And falls on th'other'.

There's no doubt that this is a key theme in the play. In spite of his conscience and previously loyal nature, Macbeth is unable to deny the urgings of his own ambitions, and it is Lady Macbeth's aspiration on her spouse's behalf that prompts her to be so forceful when she encourages Duncan's murder. Later in the play, it is Macbeth's compulsion to secure and consolidate his power that leads him to commit further, arguably more heinous crimes. He sends assassins to murder his best friend Banquo (an encounter from which Banquo's child Fleance only narrowly escapes), and orders the assault on Macduff's home in Fife, an atrocity in which a mother and her children are mercilessly put to the sword.

The play is also profoundly interested in forces of the supernatural and notions of the occult. It opens with the appearance of three witch-like figures, who seem to be endowed with the gift of prophecy,

or 'supernatural soliciting'. The witches announce their intention to meet with Macbeth long before the title character first appears on stage, and within the first act alone, we witness them reciting incantatory spells around their cauldron and predicting the future of the play's protagonist.

The witches' ability to foresee what will unfold also hints at another of the play's key themes, which is the concept of predestination. The witches' prophecies are all proven to be entirely accurate, and the play often seems to suggest that our notions of human free will are misguided. Whatever our characters plan or hope to achieve through their actions, and however formidable the challenges they face, 'Time and the hour runs through the roughest day,' - and no matter how implausible it may initially seem, Birnham Wood will indeed come to Dunsinane, and Macbeth will be killed by a man of no woman born.

It is in the face of this, the idea that all human action is essentially futile, that Macbeth offers up his final soliloquy, which is surely one of the bleakest moments in any of Shakespeare's plays. It's a speech that concludes with the idea that a person's life is a merely 'a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury / Signifying nothing'. How sympathetic we feel to this world-view as we leave the theatre depends on how optimistically Malcolm's ascension to the throne in the final moments of Act V is handled - but it may be that the writer meant us to wonder whether Macbeth might have felt less hopeless if he'd had a son or daughter. Shakespeare deliberately chose to make his leading couple childless, and given that Queen Elizabeth I had recently taken the entire Tudor dynasty to the grave with her, audiences of the time knew only too well how dangerous it was for a monarch to die without leaving an heir.



The Tragedy of Macbeth was most likely first written and first performed in 1606, and as ever, it demonstrates Shakespeare's talent for taking an existing story and reworking it into a play that spoke to his own time. The new King of England, James I, also happened to be King James VI of Scotland, and so it was a shrewd move on the part of Shakespeare to honour his new monarch with a story set in his home country. Shakespeare also chose to include elements of witchcraft and the occult as key themes in his play, and even this was a smart ploy to pander to the new ruler's hobbies - James I was himself something of an authority on the subject, having published a treatise on witchcraft titled 'Demonology' in 1597.

That having been said, Shakespeare didn't play it entirely safe with his new play. A key part of *Macbeth's* plot revolves around the fact that the medieval Scottish monarchy didn't follow the law of primogeniture - which meant that instead of the eldest son (or failing that, daughter) of the King automatically inheriting the throne, the King had to name an heir. This is why it's possible for Macbeth to believe, at the beginning of the play, that Duncan could name him as next in line to the throne. It's only the fact that this doesn't happen that sets Macbeth on his murderous course.

The English monarchy, on the other hand, did obey the law of primogeniture, but Elizabeth I had died in 1603 leaving no heir (male or female) to inherit the throne. Although he was probably the next best bet, it was by no means a done deal that James would replace her. There were still those who questioned his right to be King even now, a few years into his reign.

Act I of *Macbeth* thus raises quite a touchy subject, not to mention the fact that any play that dramatised the murder

of a sovereign was bound to raise a few eyebrows. Ultimately, however, Shakespeare included enough flattery in the play for the King to excuse the potential slight; James I was said to be descended from Banquo, whose children's children will rule for untold generations according to the witches' prophecies, and in addition, the first act of the play makes reference to a recent rebellion that has been successfully quashed - a clear allusion to the thwarted Gunpowder Plot of 1605, which we still commemorate to this day on 5th November each year.

There are further minor aspects of the play which lead us to believe that it was originally performed at this time. For example, although the Porter's monologue in Act II Scene 3 is often treated as a surreal and sinister slice of clowning, there is evidence to suggest that it was originally written as a piece of topical satire. In March 1606, a Jesuit Catholic preacher named Henry Garnett had been tried and executed for treason, and in his attempts to defend himself, he was condemned as an 'equivocator'. The Porter uses this word several times as he welcomes a succession of traitors to hell. One of these traitors is apparently a farmer - and the name 'Farmer' was an alias used by Garnett.

Although scholars are therefore fairly confident that the play was first performed during the early years of James I's reign, the only text we have of the play is the one included in the First Folio, which was compiled by two of Shakespeare's colleagues, John Heminges and Henry Condell, and published after the playwright's death in 1623. As such, it's hard for us to know whether the script we have is the original text as written, or a 'cut-down' version prepared for performance by the company - it's striking that it is significantly shorter than many of Shakespeare's other tragedies - about half the length of *Hamlet!*



When Shakespeare's plays were written and first performed, it was illegal for a woman to appear on stage. Acting was therefore a profession open to men alone.

With a few possible exceptions, female roles were played by the boy apprentices of Shakespeare's acting company. Whilst it's tempting to imagine these young men delivering something akin to a pantomime dame or drag act, they were apparently highly trained and extremely skilled at portraying women - so much so that contemporary commentators often use female pronouns when describing their acting, as if they have temporarily forgotten that the performers they are watching are not, in fact, women.

Although the theatre of Shakespeare's time was therefore extremely restricted in terms of the gender of its performers, it is replete with startlingly fluid explorations of the gender of its characters. Many of Shakespeare's plays feature characters presenting themselves as members of the 'opposite' sex (within the binary understanding of gender common to the time). This is especially true of his comedies, with *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* being obvious examples, but the idea also crops up in the far more serious *The Merchant of Venice*, in which the heroine Portia presides over the judgment of Antonio in the guise of a learned male judge.

In all three of these plays, the playhouse audience of the time would have seen boys playing women who are pretending to be men. The fondness for this device may very well be partly due to the legal necessity of employing all-male companies - after all, if the theatre has to openly acknowledge that the gender of the actor does not necessarily match that of the character, why not explore that notion

even further? It may also have something to do with the fact that these plays were almost certainly written during the reign of Elizabeth I - a powerful woman who was very successfully performing what was traditionally seen to be a man's role.

As such, far from being a departure from Shakespeare's intentions, taking a fluid approach to the concept of gender is very much part of the DNA of his plays. In recent performance history, productions that have taken a creative approach to this aspect of casting have illuminated the texts in new and exciting ways - particularly striking examples include Fiona Shaw's portrayal of *Richard II* at the National Theatre in 1995, Phyllida Lloyd's all-female productions of *Julius Caesar*, *Henry IV*, and *The Tempest* at the Donmar Warehouse from 2012 - 2106, and Michelle Terry's performance as Hamlet in her first season as artistic director of Shakespeare's Globe this summer. In September 2018, a new production of *Measure for Measure* opened, again at the Donmar Warehouse, in which the roles of Angelo and Isabella are shared by Hayley Atwell and Jack Lowden, with the actors alternating the parts during the course of each performance - a truly exciting concept that promises to throw into sharp relief the knotty gender politics of what is often considered one of Shakespeare's 'problem plays'.





Macbeth
by Olivia Dowd

Macbeth is a warrior. The best one, in fact. She's the fittest, the most agile, and a savage killer on the battlefield. This makes her loved by her King and her comrades. Unfortunately it is still a man's world and she has to work doubly hard to win this respect. Her and her partner are fed up with this, and had high hopes that King Duncan would change this sort of power structure - but she has not. In this war-torn world, power also means security. It is no surprise then that Macbeth is enraptured by the witches when their prophecy plays into the couples' ambitions. Above all else, Macbeth loves Lady Macbeth, which is why she commits the first act of murder. Unfortunately her paranoia, fear and killer instinct overcome her, and by the time she becomes aware of this, it is too late.



Lady Macbeth
by Isabel Adomakoh Young

Lady Macbeth is a power-hungry young woman who is besotted with her partner. In a resource-short world where conflicts flare up frequently, she is relatively well-off, enjoying safety and good reputation through her marriage to Macbeth, a skilled fighter who's high up in the army. Since their 3-year-old son died, she's dreamed of having a family again, and sees power as the way to get it - especially once the witches prophesy that Macbeth will be King.

I see Lady Macbeth as intelligent but frustrated. She doesn't have many friends, though she is a consummate hostess, keeping a tight grip on her household. Traditionally, she is the manipulative feminine force to Macbeth's violent masculine one. This becomes especially interesting when they're both women. United, they feed off one another, climbing ever higher, until Macbeth goes too far and Lady Macbeth is consumed by remorse. In Moira Buffini's abridgement of the script, the seeds of Lady M's decline are sown early on when she is horrified by Macbeth's murder of the King's chamberlains. That wasn't the plan.



First Witch
by Aidan Cheng

An ancient being with prophetic powers, the First Witch is the eldest of the three 'Weird Sisters' who approach Macbeth and Banquo and tempt them with tales of future glories.

Though they walk among other characters of the play, the witches live and operate in-between worlds, straddling the divide between the ordinary and the supernatural. They transcend human boundaries of age and sex, and have a close affinity to natural elements. The First Witch is a child of forked lightning, and therefore emanates its unpredictable, jagged power. She is a purveyor of the dark arts, able to look into future and punish those who cross her - such as the sailor's wife, who was bold enough to refuse her chestnuts.

Being so alien to the normal world, it's hard to decipher the First Witch's motives. It's clear she possesses a deep understanding of the power of words, and delights in confusion and discord. She also has a great affection for her tawny cat Graymalkin, and adores her six inch heel-less wedges.

First Murderer:
by Aidan Cheng

The First Murderer is a dark, embittered youth and a societal reject.

Growing up in a war-torn Scotland has exposed the First Murderer to strife and horrors, and fed his taste for blood and violence. Though small and wiry, his methods are unparalleled in their cruelty and cunning, and he has earned the rather grisly reputation of being the best throat cutter in the kingdom.



Witch 2
by Jeffrey Sangalang

I was born from natural elements. Water, earth, fire, mud, wood. I have no name but I have two sisters. I am the middle child. We move together and love to play with the 'real world'. We think that people in the 'real' world are blind to the fact that a greater power exists, and that nothing is in their control. I love the sound of screaming, explosions, burning and slicing. It is music to my ears. I move with the ground between my toes and between my hands, and I gather all my information from the natural energies around me. I love to play.

Murderer 2
by Jeffrey Sangalang

My name is Eren. I have no memory of my parents and have been an outcast in this world because I was not 'fit' enough to get a job in the army. I ride and die with

my gang. Without them I wouldn't have a purpose. I am so angry with hierarchy and status that I just want to see the world burn and it start all over again. I've got nothing to live for but I do love thinking of ways to murder. So if you ever need someone wiped out, let me know. I only ask for a favour in return. I may look like a teenager, but I am savage.



Malcolm
by Chris Williams

Malcolm's psychological evolution is one of 'boy' to 'man'. Upon first meeting him he displays few conventional 'kingly' qualities, and despite being a member of the 'Royal family', in our world of conflict and lawless survival, he does not fit in.

Unlike his mother, Malcolm is not a warrior – he was previously saved from captivity by the 'brave' Captain, and in Act I he brings news of Cawdor's execution with a poetic melancholy. Indeed, even when Duncan passes down her 'estate' to him, he accepts it with silence. His mother's boots are big ones to fill, and it seems that expectation sits heavily on his shoulders.

Throughout the opening acts, and certainly in the aftermath of his mother's murder, Malcolm relies deeply on his relationship with his younger sister, Donalbain. They are particularly close and caring towards one another (perhaps the result of having a King for a mother), and we get a sense that neither of them fully relate to the world they have been brought up in, which makes their separation all the more poignant.

When we meet Malcolm again in Act IV, he has changed. He is tactile, firm, and in some respects impressive, yet he still possesses compassion and sensitivity. He is inventive and assured with battle plans, and after being hailed as King, brings forth

hope and the promise of peace with a measured, business-like final speech.

The exact reasoning behind his evolution is not explicit, yet to me it is not born of revenge, but rather stems from fraternal love and an acknowledgement of the duty his mother had bestowed upon him.

To me Malcolm acts as the antithesis of Macbeth. His rise becomes her fall. She ruled with 'watchful tyranny' - he will lead with order and diplomacy (...we hope!).



Ross
by Jay Mailer

Ross is a Nobleman and a Lord who is also referred to by his title of the Thane of Ross. He works for King Duncan and is cousin of Macduff.

Ross is part of Macbeth's cohort until the murder of King Duncan. The last time Ross is seen on the side of Macbeth is at the banquet when Macbeth sees the ghost of Banquo. Ross is next seen talking to Lady Macduff, having switched allegiances to Malcolm and Macduff's faction. He delivers the news of Macduff fleeing to England to Macbeth. Immediately after Ross leaves, Lady Macduff and her son are 'savagely slaughtered', which Ross reports back to Macduff in England. This triggers Macduff's famed 'all my pretty ones' speech. At the end of the play, Ross pledges his allegiance to the newly appointed King, Malcolm.



**Captain
by Freddie Hughes**

The Captain is a soldier who fights alongside Macbeth and Macduff in the war between King Duncan's army and the rebel forces. The Captain appears at the beginning of the play for one scene where he is badly wounded; in our version, he is wounded in an explosion. After he is injured, he manages to make his way towards King Duncan. Before the play begins, he has saved Malcolm from being captured by rebel forces, so Malcolm is pleased to see him when he arrives. Malcolm asks him to tell them all how the battle stood when he did leave it. The captain explains that it was a fierce and close battle when he left. The captain is a great storyteller, but before he can finish his story he says 'but I am faint, my gashes cry for help,' and is taken off stage to receive medical attention. He is not seen again during the play; he dies.

**Son by
Freddie Hughes**

Macduff and Lady Macduff's son is eight years old. He is savagely intelligent, sweet and caring. He has a conversation with his mum about his father leaving; his mother is extremely distraught, but the son is empathetic and resilient in his belief that his Dad will come home. He asks his mother about his father being a traitor, and what a traitor is, to which his mother replies 'one who swears and lies.' Macbeth sends murderers to the Macduff household who kill Lady Macduff, Son, and all the other relatives.

**Young Siward
by Freddie Hughes**

Young Siward is the son of Siward, a general who raises an English army of 10,000 men to join Malcolm and Macduff to fight Macbeth in the final act of the play. Young Siward meets Macbeth on the battlefield to prove that he is a worthy warrior. Unfortunately, Macbeth is a highly skilled fighter and as 'none of woman born' can harm Macbeth, Young Siward is killed.



**Fleance
by Laurie Odgen**

Fleance is the daughter of Banquo. The witches say that Banquo's descendants will rule in the kingdom, meaning that Fleance could take the crown. She is curious and bright, and follows her father around; they go on evening walks and rides together. Macbeth tries to have Banquo and Fleance murdered after one of these rides, but Fleance escapes.

**Gentlewoman
by Laurie Odgen**

The Gentlewoman is a servant in the Macbeth household and has a particularly close relationship with Lady Macbeth as her personal servant. When she sees Lady Macbeth sleepwalking, she brings in a doctor as she is worried - not only about Lady Macbeth's mental state, but also that nobody will believe her, as she says she has 'no witness to confirm my speech'.



**Lady Macduff
by Fran Regis**

Lady Macduff is a strong character; a loving mother and a wife, she has a sharp tongue and is unafraid to articulate her thoughts when they strike her mind. She seems to mock the social structure of 'womanly defence' that has played into her given circumstances; left vulnerable and a victim within her own home. Macduff, whom she loves and with whom she shares a 'mansion' and a family, a warrior and protector by trade, has nevertheless abandoned his brood at a most vulnerable time. Her description of her husband being dead reflects the utter heartbreak she feels as a result of his betrayal and thoughtlessness. 'All is the fear and nothing is the love'.



Porter
by Leah Mains

The Porter is the gate keeper of Macbeth's home. One of Shakespeare's famous clowns, she is bold, wise, and cheeky. She has a lively imagination, pretending to be the Devil's porter, and that Macbeth's castle is hell. She will willingly speak bawdily - not only to the witches, but also to Macduff, who is highly superior to her socially. She admits that 'we were carousing till the second cock' without a trace of shame or fear. Because the porter lets people in and out of the gates, she sees a lot that goes on. She observes and listens, and is not as naïve as people thinks. Instead, she is well aware, and thoroughly enjoys knowing this information whether or not she tells anyone.

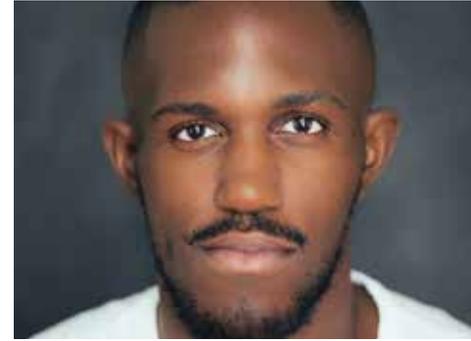
Angus
by Leah Mains

Angus is a nobleman of Macbeth; in our world, a fighter on the front line. She is a best friend of Ross and Lennox, and is very close to Macbeth. Angus first delivers the news to Macbeth that she will be Thane of Cawdor and is supportive and honest in her view that Macbeth is going to do a great job, only being patient and giving her time. Angus goes on a journey from support and love for Macbeth to anger and hate; 'Now does she feel her secret murders sticking to her hands'. Angus leaves feeling betrayed, heartbroken and angry, which leads her to joining Malcolm and Macduff's army.



Lennox
by Muhammad Khan

Lennox is a Thane and also a lord. This means he owns a piece of land in the kingdom and has an elevated status in society. He is also a warrior, and has fought in battles. In the beginning, he is loyal to King Duncan and Duncan's family. However, as events unfold, his loyalty shifts to the Macbeth family. He works in close partnership with other lords such as Ross and Angus. Lennox is the last lord to stay with Macbeth until the very end before he switches sides and hands over his loyalty to Macduff and Malcolm's army.



Macduff
by Oseloka Gregory Obi

Macduff is a 'man' of few words, but when he does speak, people tend to listen. Macduff stands alone as a symbol of hope in a world where wrongdoing seems neither acknowledged nor corrected. He is Macbeth's rival and the person who is resolute in his desire to restore Scotland to glory.

I found Macduff extremely complex; when told to stop crying, he says 'But I must also feel it like a man' – completely redressing representations of masculinity within the world. He constantly challenges binary understandings, often wearing his heart on his sleeve, while also acting upon notions of patriarchy - but he always does so in a way that allows compassion to coalesce with obligation.

The Revolt of the Newest Estate

As a group, imagine that you are part of the press corp in Duncan's kingdom, reporting on the rebellion described in the First Act of the play. Use the text to put together a news report detailing the key figures involved in the rebellion, the events of the conflict so far, and ultimately, how the conflict is resolved. Pay particularly close attention to how the death of the treacherous Thane of Cawdor is described - it may surprise you...

Whither are they Vanished?

At the time at which Shakespeare was writing, theatrical 'special effects' were quite rudimentary by modern day standards - however, Macbeth is a play that relies fairly heavily on the use of onstage spectacle in the form of apparitions, ghostly visitations and vanishing witches. As a group, try and devise ingenious ways of presenting these effects theatrically...

Unsex Me Here

The NYT has taken a gender-fluid approach to this production of Macbeth. As a group, discuss the ways in which this presentation of the play has rendered it illuminating or relevant to a modern audience. It may be helpful to draw on any previous productions of the play you might have seen, or to relate the production to other works of theatre, television or film...



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