

GREAT
LAKES
THEATER

TEACHER PREPARATION GUIDE



HAMLET

By WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
Directed By CHARLES FEE

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Cleveland's Classic Company
at Playhouse Square

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Spring 2017

Dear Educator,

Thank you for your student matinee ticket order to Great Lakes Theater's production of *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare, which will be performed in the beautiful Hanna Theatre at Playhouse Square from March 31st through April 15th, 2017.

When his suspiciously widowed mother swiftly marries his uncle, amidst demands for revenge from his murdered father's ghost, the young prince Hamlet resolves that something is indeed "rotten in the state of Denmark." Forced by circumstance into a world turned upside down by betrayal, distrust and madness, Hamlet spirals through a torrent of erratic emotion and bizarre behavior in a relentless pursuit of truth. Torn between duty and doubt, he wrestles tenaciously with the profound question "to be or not to be," until fate exacts its final answer.

This guide is designed – through essays, discussion questions and classroom activities – to give students both an introduction to, and a point of entry for, a personal exploration of *Hamlet*. We offer special thanks to arts educator Jodi Kirk and retired Riverside High School teacher Cheryl Kleps for their outstanding contributions to this guide.

Great Lakes Theater is proud to provide you with the finest in classic theater and the necessary educational resources to support your work in the classroom. We are thrilled that you will be coming to see us and we welcome your input on how best to support your classroom preparation for our work. Please let us know what you think!

Sincerely,

Kelly Schaffer Florian
Director of Educational Services
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The mission of Great Lakes Theater, through its mainstage productions and its educational programming, is to bring the pleasure, power and relevance of classic theater to the widest possible audience.

A NOTE TO STUDENTS: WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE THEATER



You may or may not have attended a live theater performance before. To increase your enjoyment, it might be helpful to look at the unique qualities of this art form — because it is so different from movies or video.

The live theatrical performance not only involves the actors on the stage; it is meant to involve you, the audience, in ways that film and television cannot. In truth, although you are sitting in an auditorium and the actors are on stage, there is very little separating the audience from the performers. How you react to the play *deeply affects* the actors. Something as seemingly trivial as whispering or unwrapping a candy bar can distract them and disrupt the mood and tone of their performance. Due to the important relationship between actors and audience members, there are certain, perhaps obvious, provisions of live theater we wish to call to your attention.

In the Hanna Theatre, it is important to know that the taking of pictures, either with or without a flash, is strictly prohibited. Also, it is essential that all electronic equipment, including cell phones, music players (even with headphones), alarm watches, etc.,

be completely powered off once you have entered the theatre. Even the glow from a silent cell phone (used for text messaging, or posting social network updates, for example) can be very distracting to fellow audience members, even if you try to mask it under your hand or an article of clothing. Our goal is to provide every person in the audience with the best possible theatrical experience, so we appreciate your respectful cooperation during the performance.

Other differences live theater provides: in film or video, the camera and editing define what we will see. In the theater, however, each of us works as a camera and editor, choosing his or her personal points of focus. And in the Hanna Theatre, you should know that often we do not use microphones. As audience members you'll need to actively listen and "tune in" to the sound of the unamplified human voice.

As for our lighting and scenery, it might surprise you to know that these are not necessarily meant to be realistic. In this production, for example, there are design elements that are abstract or metaphorical.

The theater's ability to focus on human experience — distilled through the dialogue and behavior of people on stage and enhanced by the scenery, costumes, lighting, music and dance — is a centuries-old tradition. Being part of the communal magic when performer and audience connect — whether at a baseball game, music concert or theater performance — cannot be duplicated.

The performance you will see at Great Lakes Theater will happen only once. It is unique and personal. Though this play will be performed more than a dozen times, the performance you see belongs only to you.

We hope you enjoy it, and we'd like you to share your response with us.

GLT: OUR HISTORY, OUR FUTURE



Tom Hanks and fellow company member Bert Goldstein.



The beautifully renovated Hanna Theatre.

Since 1962, Great Lakes Theater (GLT) has brought the world's greatest plays to life for all of Cleveland. In 1961, the Lakewood Board of Education president persuaded a Shakespeare troupe, led by Arthur Lithgow, to make Lakewood Civic Auditorium its home. The theater that opened its doors on July 11, 1962 as Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival presented six Shakespeare plays in rotating repertory. In exchange for free rent, the company provided student matinee productions. The repertory was expanded in 1965 to include non-Shakespearean classics as a result of an exchange of productions with Princeton's McCarter Theater. The Company outgrew its original home at Lakewood Civic Auditorium and, in 1982, made the move to the Ohio Theatre in Playhouse Square, launching the revitalization of downtown Cleveland's Theatre District.

In 2001 the Company was searching for a new Producing Artistic Director, and the Board sought a candidate with well-established business skills as well as artistic leadership. Charles Fee was selected for his commitment to Shakespeare and his reputation for building Idaho Shakespeare Festival into a highly successful regional theater. GLT recommitted itself to its founding core values: Shakespeare, rotating repertory and an acting company of the highest caliber. During Fee's tenure, the company has been recognized for its artistic excellence, winning the *Northern Ohio Live Magazine Award* for excellence in Theater in 2005 after three years of being a finalist, as well as *The Free Times Reader's Choice Award* for Best Performing Arts Group in 2006, and for eliminating the inherited accumulated net deficit of over one million dollars.

The Company has also been a revolutionary producing model unlike any other in America to create cost efficiency and enhance our artistic product. We now exchange our repertory productions with Idaho Shakespeare Festival (ISF) in Boise, Idaho and Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival (LTSF) in Nevada. This deep collaboration between independent producing organizations is a first in American theater. With this visionary model now fully in place, GLT, ISF, and LTSF are able to deepen the artistic quality of the work on our stages, share our production costs, maximize our resources, and provide nearly year-round employment to our resident company of artists.

Now, GLT has entered into a new phase, making the historic Hanna Theatre in Playhouse Square its home. The renovation of the Hanna Theatre, as well as the creation of GLT's first endowment fund, is part of our *Re-Imagine A Classic* Campaign to ensure GLT's future. Our new home in the Hanna features a hydraulically operated thrust stage, a first for this region, and innovative and intimate seating where no seat is farther than eleven rows from the stage. We believe that this extraordinary theater experience will revolutionize the way Northern Ohio experiences classic theater.

Great Lakes Theater is one of only a handful of American theaters that have stayed the course as a classic theater. With a plucky history of bucking economic trends to strive for and nurture the highest artistic quality, it remains a distinctive and significant cultural resource in an extraordinary American city.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

BY CHARLES FEE

“ Perhaps casting two actors as different as Laura Berg and Jonathan Dyrud are, is an acknowledgment of Hamlet’s divided soul. ”



Two Hamlets: In choosing to double cast the role of Hamlet with a woman and a man playing alternate performances, we are exploring the possibility that Hamlet’s nature and his responses to the dramatic action may reveal more depth and elicit more compassion than we would experience through a single actor’s interpretation of the role. Is it possible, for instance, that a woman playing Hamlet will allow us to experience his relationships to Gertrude and Ophelia from a profoundly different perspective, perhaps opening up the text in unique ways? What about his relationship to his father’s ghost? His uncle Claudius? And might both actors’ performances be affected by working together on the role in rehearsal?

Hamlet’s relationship to his mother, Gertrude, and his “beloved” Ophelia, are deeply troubling, both to him and to most modern audiences. His sense of betrayal by both women—first by his mother for marrying his uncle (an act that he views as adulterous and incestuous); and then by Ophelia, for giving back his love letters and tokens—seem to infect his view of all women: “Frailty, thy name is woman.” But his cruelty toward Ophelia is contradicted by his professed love for her. The first time we see Hamlet speak to Ophelia his words are fraught with ambiguity: “I did love you once,” he says, only to follow with, “You should not have believed me . . . I loved you not.” What are we in the audience to believe? Is this madness? Or is Hamlet feigning madness? Or, as the noted Shakespearean scholar, Harold Bloom asserts: “The question of Hamlet must always be Hamlet himself, for Shakespeare created him to be as ambivalent and divided a consciousness as a coherent drama could sustain.” Perhaps casting two actors as different as Laura Berg and Jonathan Dyrud are, is an acknowledgment of Hamlet’s divided soul.

Setting and Space: We have chosen to set *Hamlet* in the Elizabethan period for several reasons. Foremost is our desire to create a stage structure similar to that of the Globe Theatre in which *Hamlet* was performed. Our scenic design will allow part of the audience to sit onstage, surrounding the actors, as well as on either side of the platform downstage. With this choice we are inviting the audience onstage to create a sense of participation in the action of the play. For those sitting onstage the experience may feel like being in the play rather than passively watching the play. For those sitting in the traditional location in front of

the stage, the audience onstage will appear to be in the play – like a jury in a court room judging the events as they unfold. The stage side seating works to increase the pressure of the audience in relationship to the action onstage.

All of this could have been achieved without setting the play in Elizabethan costumes. The period costuming is being created as a way of relating the ideas of the play to the historical context of the Elizabethan Renaissance and specifically, the Protestant Reformation – as opposed to the historical source material of *Hamlet* (Saxo Grammaticus' 12th century history of Denmark). Hamlet's education at the University of Wittenberg – where Martin Luther was on the faculty – is referred to 3 times in *Hamlet*'s first scene. For the audience of Shakespeare's time this was clearly meant to signal that Hamlet (and Horatio) have been exposed to both a Renaissance humanist education (note how many references they make to Greek and Roman writings) and the teachings of Martin Luther. Shakespeare's audience was actively engaged in the ideas and arguments of the Reformation and humanist thought. It is our desire to foreground this historical context through our Elizabethan period setting and costumes.

Our Text: there are many existing texts of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Most scholars consider the Second Quarto (published 1604) and the First Folio (published 1623) as the editions closest to the author's intentions; however, these texts vary greatly from each other. The Second Quarto is over 4,000 lines long (nearly twice the length of the First Quarto edition) and is generally believed to derive from Shakespeare's written manuscript. Given its extreme length, it is unlikely that this script would have been performed by Shakespeare's company (compare to *Macbeth* at 2,477 lines). The First Folio text is considerably shorter and was probably derived from the theater promptbook. We are primarily using the First Folio text as the starting point for our production but we have included some of the Second Quarto text as well. In any production of *Hamlet*, the director and actors must make decisions about what to keep and what to cut. Without cutting, the Second Quarto *Hamlet* would take nearly five hours to perform! The most significant editorial decision we have made is to remove virtually all references to the Fortinbras plot, and the character of Fortinbras does not appear. It is our belief that the parallel revenge plots of Hamlet and Laertes give the audience the deepest experience, and contrast, of the themes of justice and revenge.

Dramatis Personae

CLAUDIUS, *King of Denmark*

HAMLET, *son to the late King Hamlet, and nephew to the present King*

POLONIUS, *Lord Chamberlain*

HORATIO, *friend to Hamlet*

LAERTES, *son to Polonius*

ROSENCRANTZ,

GILDENSTERN, *courtiers*

BARNARDO *an officer*

FRANCISCO, *a soldier*

REYNALDO, *servant to Polonius*

PLAYERS

PRIEST

Two CLOWNS, *grave diggers*

GERTRUDE, *Queen of Denmark, and mother to Hamlet*

OPHELIA, *daughter to Polonius*

GHOST *of Hamlet's Father*

LORDS, LADIES, OFFICERS, SOLDIERS, SAILORS, MESSENGERS, *and* ATTENDANTS

PLAYNOTES BY MARGARET LYNCH

“ Shakespeare transformed a straightforward revenge tale into a mature play brimming with thought and action. ”

William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* has compelled theater artists and audiences in every generation. In *Hamlet*, says Great Lakes Theater’s Producing Artistic Director Charles Fee, “We are witnessing a character struggling with the most profound questions of the meaning of existence, morality, duty – in short, of being human.”

Like *Twelfth Night*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and the Sonnets, *Hamlet* was a product of the playwright’s mid-30s. A bitter melancholy runs through these works, a sharp sense of failure, death, and betrayal. Family deaths — his only son Hamnet’s in 1596 and his father’s in 1601— may have weighed heavily on Shakespeare at this time.

Hamlet was probably composed between 1599 and 1602. It was not on the list of Shakespeare plays compiled by schoolmaster Francis Meres in 1598, but it was registered for publication on July 26, 1602. While no references have surfaced to performances by Shakespeare’s company in his lifetime, other evidence — relating to the play’s sources, its topical allusions, and publication history — suggests a play that attracted the notice of the playwright’s contemporaries.

A history chronicle, *Gesta Danorum*, assembled in 1200 AD by Saxo Grammaticus, provided the story of a Danish prince who feigns madness, kills a spy, confronts his mother, and sails to England while revenging himself on his uncle for killing his father and marrying his mother.

But it’s possible that another English writer could have beat Shakespeare to the story. A revenge play about Hamlet of Denmark was circulating in London by 1589. Since Shakespeare cannot be placed in London with certainty before 1592—when a jealous rival, Robert Greene, pegged him an “upstart crow” —generations of scholars posited an earlier “Ur-*Hamlet*” or “Source-*Hamlet*” that Shakespeare subsequently revised.

Some scholars tagged Thomas Kyd as the writer of the lost early *Hamlet*. Even though the case for Kyd has been disputed, the *Hamlet* story — in whichever version — and Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy* do have an affinity. Actor Richard Burbage was known for playing the leading roles in both. With ghosts inciting bloodthirsty revenge, both share a debt to the Roman tragedian Seneca. Writer Thomas Nashe, in his preface to Robert Greene’s 1589 *Menaphon*, even joked that reading Seneca “will afford you whole Hamlets.”

In Shakespeare’s day, material could be re-used — adapted by writers working as collaborators one moment and rivals the next, in theater companies that re-formed quickly as events demanded. The Lord Chamberlain’s Men — Shakespeare’s company — were usually in competition with the Lord Admiral’s Men. But the account books of theater manager Philip Henslowe list a joint production of a *Hamlet* play on June 9, 1594, when plague forced the two companies to work together. Proponents of the “Ur-*Hamlet*” theory suggest that this joint production brought the story to Shakespeare’s attention, while other scholars think the less developed *Hamlet* of 1589 and 1594 may represent one of the playwright’s own fledgling efforts, one that



Thomas Kyd



John Marston



Thomas Dekker



Ben Jonson

fanned the jealousy of the university-educated Thomas Nashe and Richard Greene.

Whatever his source, Shakespeare's take on the old revenge tale was admired in his day. Gabriel Harvey, a frequent antagonist of Nashe's, scribbled in a book margin, "The younger sort takes much delight in Shakespeare's *Venus & Adonis*: but his *Lucrece*, & his tragedie of *Hamlet*, Prince of Denmark, haue it in them to please the wiser sort." Another contemporary, Thomas Lodge, mentioned "Hamlet, Revenge" in his 1594 pamphlet, *Wit's Miserie*, which scolded both Nashe and Harvey for feuding.

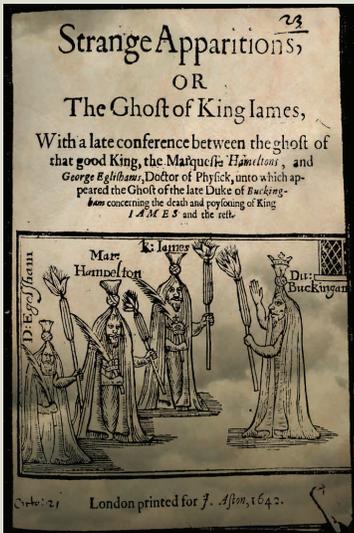
Hamlet may have been entangled in other literary rivalries as well. Between 1599 and 1601, playwrights John Marston — with ally Thomas Dekker — and Ben Jonson hurled a volley of satirical plays at each other in a "War of the Theatres." Dekker and Jonson both wrote for the Lord Chamberlain's Men but skirmished through the "boy's" companies, with Dekker and Marston writing for the Children of St. Paul's and Jonson for the Children of the Chapel Royal. One of Marston's plays, *Antonio's Revenge*, was modeled closely on *Hamlet*, and Dekker mentioned *Hamlet* in his 1601 *Satiromastix*. Whatever Shakespeare's allegiance in the fight, he alluded in *Hamlet* to the explosive popularity of the children's companies as "an aery of children" who "berattle the common stages."

Dissension within the Lord Chamberlain's Men may have found its way into *Hamlet*. Hamlet's complaint about clowns speaking "more than is set down for them" may voice Shakespeare's own frustration with the extroverted actor Will Kempe, who left the Lord Chamberlain's Men in 1599. Other pressures are reflected in the "First Quarto" edition of *Hamlet*, which was published in 1603. The title page references the play as acted "in the two universities of Cambridge and Oxford, and elsewhere." Shakespeare's company had to go on tour in 1601 after being banned from Queen Elizabeth's court for associating with the Earl of Essex, who was executed for treason on February 25, 1601.

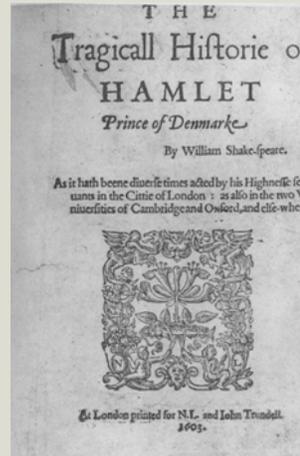
The truncated text of the First Quarto may have been reconstructed from memory by an actor; it may also reflect a shortened touring script. The "Second Quarto," published one year later, was "enlarged to almost as much againe as it was." When Shakespeare's company members collected his plays in the First Folio edition in 1623, they relied primarily on the fuller Second Quarto, suggesting it accorded with Shakespeare's intentions. However, the Second Quarto text would take more than four hours to perform, and the play is frequently cut in production.

Shakespeare transformed a straightforward revenge tale into a mature play brimming with thought and action. Ghosts were a standard-issue

plot device in revenge tragedies, but the Protestant Reformation had relegated ghosts to the realm of superstition. The appearance of his father's ghost triggers a crisis of doubt in Hamlet, a student at Wittenberg, where Martin Luther had taught. Shakespeare's Hamlet stands at the crossroads between a traditional belief system and modern individualism. His soliloquies convey an unparalleled immediacy. As Director Fee observes, "This staggering innovation of Shakespeare creates the experience of being in the presence of a 'real' person, not a character, and invites us to think, and question, and react with him."



How might Shakespeare's company have portrayed the ghost that incites the play's revenge plot? Contemporary woodcuts — this one purports to be an expose of a poison plot against King James — suggest that ghosts may have been identified visually by cloth draping. Legend, passed on in 1709 by Nicholas Rowe, held that Shakespeare played the role of the Ghost of Hamlet's father.



The First Quarto of *Hamlet*, published in 1603, makes reference to the provincial tour that Shakespeare's company made in 1601.

The picture of Gabriell Harney, as hee is readie to let fly upon Ajax.



Writer Gabriel Harvey (1545-1630) scribbled appreciation for Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in the margins of a 1598 edition of Chaucer.

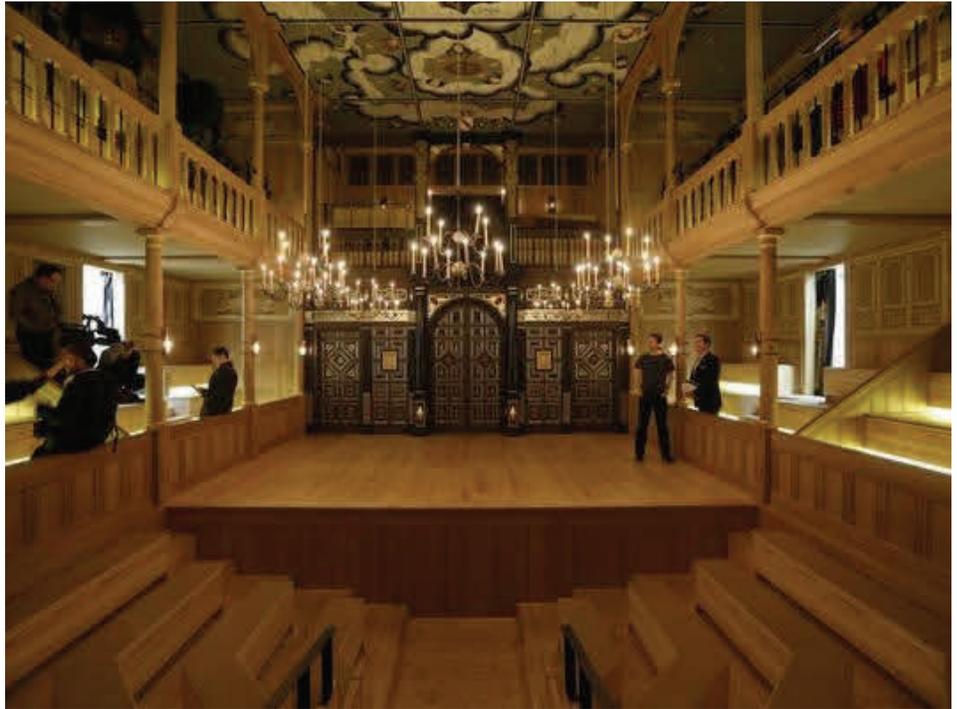
FROM INSPIRATION TO DESIGN

BY MARGARET LYNCH

Shakespeare has always been core to Great Lakes Theater’s mission as Ohio’s only classical theater company. And the theater has felt a strong responsibility to introduce audiences to the breadth of Shakespeare but at the same time to provide every theater-going generation with an experience of the playwright’s most enduring works. Revisiting Shakespeare’s most inexhaustible work also challenges the theater’s company of artists.

Charles Fee directed *Hamlet* in 2003, early in his tenure as Producing Artistic Director. Some of the same actors who were with the theater in 2003 are still core company members today. But the opportunity to explore different roles engages them anew. Double-casting the title role also allows more than one company member the chance to take on the role of a lifetime, particularly since one of those double-cast is a woman.

There are so many questions to answer in rehearsal. To start with, says Fee, “Is it possible that a woman, playing Hamlet, will allow us to experience his response to Gertrude and Ophelia from a profoundly different perspective, perhaps opening up the text in unique ways? And might both actors’ performances be affected by working together on the role? We should remember that during Shakespeare’s lifetime, men would have played the roles of Gertrude and Ophelia.” The play’s perspective on gender relationships can be troubling, Fee adds. “Both women seem powerless in the world of this play, and a contemporary audience may be appalled by Hamlet’s treatment of them. A case against Hamlet’s “noble” nature can easily be

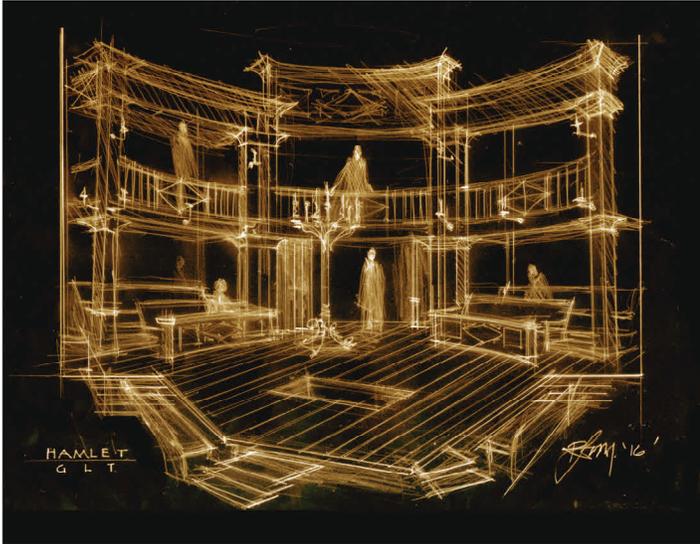


The candlelit Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, part of the Globe Theatre complex in London, conveys the intimacy that lighting can create.

made. And yet, *Hamlet* is a role that seems to transcend any single interpretation.”

The play’s length requires decisions as well. The full script contains a subplot concerning Fortinbras, son of a King of Norway, which repeats the theme of a son revenging his father while reinforcing larger issues of succession and statehood. Fee has removed virtually all references to the Fortinbras plot, and the character of Fortinbras does not appear in this production. As the director explains, “We believe that the parallel revenge plots of Hamlet and Laertes give the audience the deepest experience, and contrast, of the themes of justice and revenge without diminishing the political import of the play.”

To match the immediacy of the play’s extraordinary soliloquies, Fee and scenic designer Russell Metheny came to a radical conclusion:



Scenic design rendering by Russell Metheny.

the Hanna Theatre is re-configured to allow some audience members to sit onstage, surrounding the actors, as well as on either side of the platform downstage. “We are inviting the audience onstage to create an active sense of participation,” Fee attests. “For those sitting in the traditional seating in front of the stage, the audience onstage will appear to be in the play—like a jury in a court room judging the events as they unfold.”

The resulting stage structure is similar to that of Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre, explains scenic designer Russell Metheny. “We’re making the thrust platform the playing space, which will bring the action closer to the audience in the house as well. When you sit across from people on the other side of a thrust stage, it’s a very dynamic

experience. Theater is a social event. The audience may have to use different routes to get to their seats, and the actors will also have to deal with the space in a new way. It’s great for our company.”

The physical set evokes the simple wooden structure of an Elizabethan stage. Without using actual candles, the lighting and light fixtures create an intimate, candlelit atmosphere—evocative of the kind of stage lighting that could have been used in Shakespeare’s day. Against this simple backdrop, Elizabethan period costumes—rich in color and texture—will also help to anchor the production in Shakespeare’s time period. The play provides signals that Hamlet is steeped in the Greek and Roman classics of a Renaissance humanist education but has also been exposed to the teachings of Martin Luther. As Fee points out, “Shakespeare’s audience was actively engaged in the ideas and arguments of the Reformation and humanist thought. We wanted to foreground this crucial historical context by setting the play in the Elizabethan Renaissance.”

As costume designer Kim Krumm Sorenson reflects, “There have been so many television series recently set in the Renaissance—*The Tudors*, *The Borgias*, *Wolf Hall*. The silhouette of the period will be familiar. It won’t seem archaic or foreign.” Source images for the costumes ranged from Tudor-era portraits by court painter Hans Holbein to contemporary runway fashion that called the earlier period to mind in decorative detail, fabrics, or silhouettes. Observes Metheny, “We don’t lose our own contemporaneity.” The period setting—an unusual choice in the theater’s recent history—provided parameters but allowed for freedom to create dazzling court scenes, devise a generational “look” for the many young people in the play, and to interpret Hamlet’s “style” in ways that would suit both genders. “It’s been exciting,” exclaims Sorenson.



Runway inspiration for Ophelia

FAMOUS FEMALE HAMLETS



The 18th-century actor Charlotte Charke played many male characters including Shakespeare's troubled Prince of Denmark. Photograph: Alamy



The French actor and theatre manager Sarah Bernhardt played Hamlet on stage in Paris and London in 1899, and then in a 1900 film. She was the first actress to play the part on film. Photograph: Imagno/Getty Images



The Danish star Asta Nielsen also played Hamlet on screen. The silent film, made in Germany in 1920, was a box-office hit. Nielsen's Hamlet was portrayed as a woman raised as a boy. Photograph: akg-images



Frances de la Tour played Hamlet in a promenade production at the Half Moon theatre, London in 1979. 'She is tough, abrasive, virile and impassioned,' wrote Michael Billington of a production full of 'bruising intimacy'. Photograph: Donald Cooper/Donald Cooper/Photostage



Maxine Peake has won rave reviews as Hamlet at the Royal Exchange theatre in Manchester. 'She is a stripling prince, almost pre-sexual, who glides, without swagger and without girliness,' wrote Susannah Clapp. Photograph: Jonathan Keenan

Angela Winkler played Hamlet at the Edinburgh festival in 2000. 'Winkler makes no obvious attempt to impersonate a man,' wrote Michael Billington. 'She does not adopt a surface maleness; instead she absorbs Hamlet's

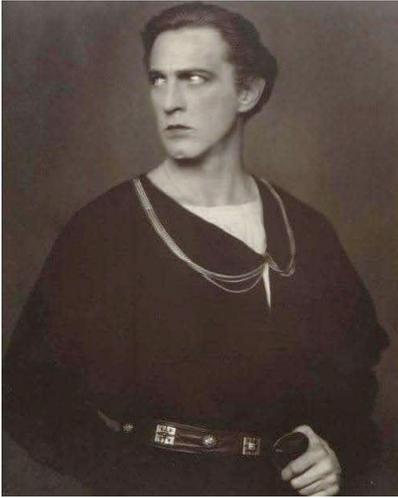


emotions into her own personality.' Photograph: Murdo Macleod

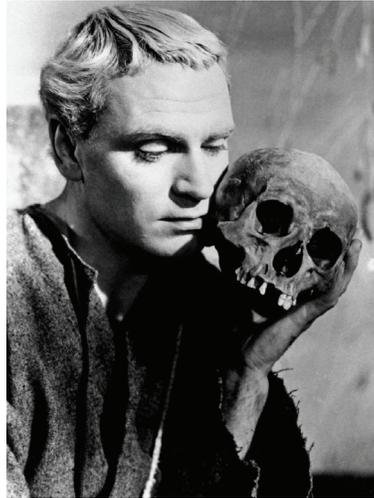


Zainab Jah was cast as one of the first black women to be cast by a major theater (Philadelphia's Wilma Theater in 2015) to play Hamlet. Her run was met with rave reviews.

FAMOUS MALE HAMLETS



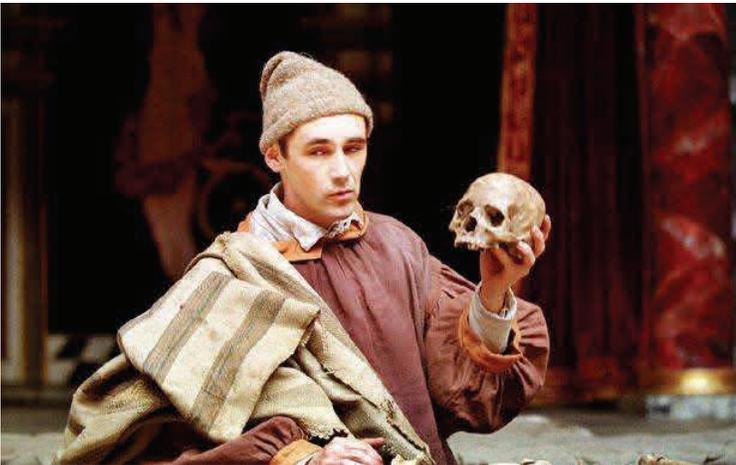
John Barrymore played Hamlet in 1922.



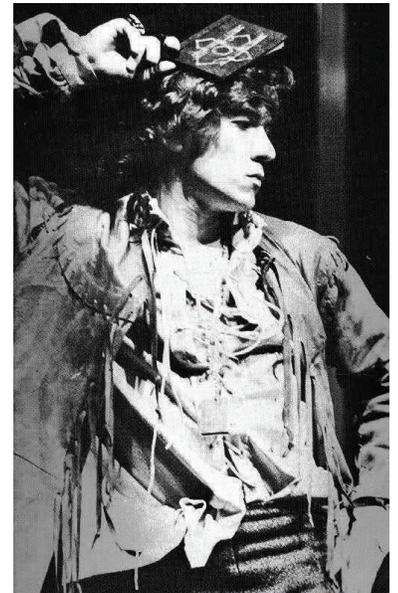
Laurence Olivier played Hamlet in a 1948 film which he also directed.



Christopher Plummer played Hamlet in a 1964 BBC TV production.



Mark Rylance first played Hamlet in a 1976 production at the University School of Milwaukee. He went on to act in and directed several productions at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London.



Ian McKellen played Hamlet in a 1970 TV movie.

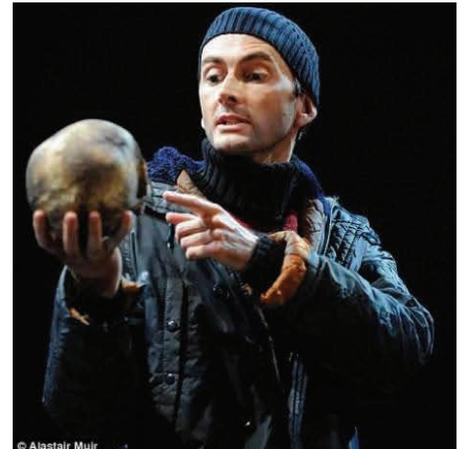
Mel Gibson played Hamlet in Franco Zeffirelli's 1990 film.



Kenneth Branagh played Hamlet in a 1996 film which he also directed.



David Tennant played Hamlet in a 2010 BBC film.



SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Near the castle in Elsinore, a sentry, Barnardo, replaces Francisco on guard and is joined by Horatio. Barnardo tells of a supernatural being he has seen. The Ghost of the late King of Denmark silently appears and withdraws. The three agree that this visitation seems ominous. The Ghost re-enters but disappears again when a cock crows. Horatio decides that they should tell Prince Hamlet of the appearance of what seems to be his father's spirit.

Claudius, the King of Denmark, speaks of the recent death of the late king, his brother, and of his recent marriage to Queen Gertrude, his brother's widow and Hamlet's mother. Laertes, the son of the King's advisor Polonius, requests permission to return to his studies in France, which the King grants. The King and Queen urge Hamlet to cease mourning his father's death. The King denies Hamlet permission to return to his own studies at Wittenberg; the Queen adds her wish that he stay in Denmark, and Hamlet agrees to do so. The monarchs and their retinue depart. Hamlet remains and muses on his mother's hasty and incestuous marriage. Horatio and Barnardo appear and tell Hamlet of the ghost. With great excitement, he arranges to meet them before the castle that night.

Laertes, leaving for France, warns his sister, Ophelia, about Hamlet's affection for her, which he says cannot be permanent in view of the prince's royal status. Polonius arrives and gives Laertes moralizing advice on his conduct abroad. Laertes departs with a last word to Ophelia about Hamlet; this triggers a diatribe from Polonius about the suspect morals of young men, and he forbids Ophelia to see the prince.

The Ghost appears to Hamlet and Horatio, and Hamlet speaks to it. It beckons, and Hamlet follows alone.

The Ghost confirms that he is the spirit of Hamlet's father. He declares that the prince must avenge his murder: the King had poured lethal poison in his ear. The Ghost departs, and Hamlet vows to carry out its wishes. Horatio appears, and Hamlet swears him to secrecy – about the Ghost and about his own intention to feign madness – as the Ghost's disembodied voice demands their oaths.

ACT II

Polonius sends his servant Reynaldo to spy on Laertes in Paris. Ophelia reports that Hamlet has come to her and behaved as if he were insane. Polonius concludes that his separation of Ophelia and Hamlet has driven the prince mad, and he decides to inform the King of this.

The King and Queen welcome Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, childhood friends of Hamlet, who have been summoned in the hope that the prince will confide in them. They agree to spy on their friend. Polonius then declares – with comical tediousness – Hamlet is lovesick, producing a love letter from the prince that he has confiscated from Ophelia. He offers to arrange for the King to eavesdrop on an encounter between Ophelia and Hamlet. Hamlet appears; Polonius advises the King and Queen to leave, and he approaches the prince alone. Hamlet answers Polonius with nonsensical remarks and absurd insults, who interprets these as symptoms of madness and departs, as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern enter. Hamlet greets them with more wild talk, and he badgers them into admitting that they have been sent to observe him. Players sent from the city arrive, and Hamlet welcomes them enthusiastically. Hamlet requests that the Players perform *The Murder of Gonzago* before the court that night, inserting lines that he will compose. He dismisses the actors and the courtiers, and soliloquizes on his delay in avenging the Ghost. He suspects that the spirit may have

lied; he will have the Players enact a killing similar to his father's murder, and if Claudius responds guiltily, he will know the Ghost has spoken the truth.

ACT III

Polonius instructs Ophelia to meet Hamlet while he and the King eavesdrop. The two men hide themselves as Hamlet approaches, meditating on the value of life, and Ophelia greets him. He passionately rejects her with a diatribe against women. He leaves her grieving for his apparent madness. The King tells Polonius that he has decided to send Hamlet on a mission to England, accompanied by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Polonius suggests further surveillance in the meantime, proposing that his mother summon Hamlet after the performance by the Players; he, Polonius, will spy on their conversation.

Hamlet lectures the Players on acting, saying that overacting and improvisation are distractions from a play's purposes. The court assembles, and the Players perform an introductory Dumb Show, in which a murderer kills a king by pouring poison in his ear as he sleeps. He then takes the king's crown and exits with the king's wife. The Player King and the Player Queen then speak; she asserts that she will never remarry if he dies, but he insists that she will. He then rests, falling asleep. Another Player, in the part of Lucianus, speaks darkly of the evil powers of poison and pours a potion in the ear of the Player King. The real King, distressed, rises and leaves in anger. Hamlet exults in the success of his plan. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and then Polonius, deliver the Queen's summons to Hamlet, and he agrees to go to her, but not before ridiculing them. He prepares to meet his mother, feeling great anger but reminding himself not to use violence against her.

Polonius tells the King that Hamlet is on his way to the Queen's chamber, where he, Polonius, will spy on their meeting. He goes, and the King soliloquies about his murder of his brother. He says that he has been unable to pray for forgiveness because he is conscious that he is still enjoying the fruits of his crime – his brother's kingdom and his widow. He tries again to pray; Hamlet enters, sees the King on his knees, and contemplates killing him on the spot. He reflects, however, that, if the King dies while at prayer, he will probably go to heaven and the revenge will be incomplete. He decides instead to wait until he finds the King engaged in some sin, however petty, and then kill him, ensuring that his soul will go to hell.

Polonius hides behind a curtain in the Queen's chambers. Hamlet arrives; he attempts to make his mother sit down, and she cries for help. Polonius cries out also, and Hamlet stabs him through the drapery, killing him. After expressing regret that the victim was not the King, Hamlet condemns his mother's behavior. He compares the virtues of his father to the vices of his uncle; the distraught Queen's cries for mercy only enrage him more. The Ghost appears. The Queen, unaware of its presence, thinks Hamlet is mad as he speaks with the spirit. The Ghost reminds Hamlet of the vengeance he must exact, urges pity on the Queen, and departs. Less violently than before, Hamlet urges his mother to confess her sins and refuse to have sex with the king. He leaves, dragging the body of Polonius with him.

ACT IV

The Queen tells the King that Hamlet has killed Polonius. The King sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to recover the body. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern confront Hamlet. He mocks them, refusing to tell them where the body is, but he goes with them to the King.

The King tells his Lords that Hamlet is dangerous, yet, because of the prince's popularity, his exile to England must seem routine. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern return with Hamlet under guard. Hamlet expounds humorously on corpses before revealing where he has put Polonius' body. The King tells Hamlet that he is being sent to England immediately for his own safety. The King's entourage escort Hamlet to the boat, leaving the King alone to muse on his plot: he is sending letters to the English requesting they kill

Hamlet to settle a debt.

A gentleman tells the Queen that Ophelia is insane, rambling in senseless speeches that yet seem to convey some unhappy truth. Ophelia enters, singing a song about a dead lover. The King arrives, and Ophelia sings of seduction and betrayal. She leaves, speaking distractedly about a burial. A messenger appears with news that Laertes has raised a rebellion and is approaching the castle. Laertes and several followers break down the door and enter. He demands vengeance for his father's death, and the King promises that he shall have it. Ophelia returns, singing of a funeral, and distributes flowers to the King, Queen and Laertes. She sings again, about an old man's death, and finally departs. The King takes Laertes away to plot revenge on Hamlet.

A sailor brings Horatio a letter from Hamlet. It tells of his capture by pirates who have agreed to release the Danish Prince; Rosencrantz and Guildenstern continue to sail to England. Horatio goes with the sailor to meet Hamlet. The King tells Laertes that he cannot act directly against Hamlet, out of consideration for the Queen and the Prince's popularity. The King proposes a plot: they shall arrange a fencing match between Hamlet and Laertes, in which Hamlet will use a blunted sword intended for sport while Laertes shall secretly have a sharp sword. Laertes agrees and adds that he has a powerful poison that he will apply to his sword point. The King further suggests a poisoned glass of wine to be given Hamlet when the sport has made him thirsty. The Queen appears with the news that Ophelia has drowned.

ACT V

A grave-digger who is a clown speaks with his friend, another clown, about Ophelia, who has been granted a Christian burial although she was possibly a suicide. He misconstrues the law on suicide and jokes about grave-digging. Hamlet and Horatio arrive, and Hamlet meditates on death's leveling of the wealthy and ambitious. He talks with the Grave-digger, who displays a skull that had belonged to Yorick, a court jester whom Hamlet had known. The prince reflects on the inevitability of death. Ophelia's funeral procession arrives, accompanied by Laertes and the King and Queen; the Priest declares her death a suicide. When Hamlet realizes whose funeral he is witnessing, he rushes forth and tries to fight Laertes, challenging his position of chief mourner. Restrained, Hamlet departs in a rage. The King assures Laertes that he will get his revenge.

Hamlet tells Horatio how he rewrote the King's letter arranging his death, substituting Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's names for his own. He assumes that the two courtiers were killed, but feels no remorse, since they were schemers. Osric, an obsequious and mannered courtier, arrives with the King's request that Hamlet fence with Laertes; the King has wagered that Hamlet can win. Hamlet mocks Osric before sending word that he will fight. He tells Horatio that the proposed match makes him uneasy but says that he is prepared to die. The King and Queen, a group of courtiers, and Laertes arrive for the match. The King pours wine to toast Hamlet's first successful round, and places a pearl – a congratulatory token, he says – in Hamlet's cup. Hamlet and Laertes fence, but after his first victory Hamlet postpones refreshment and resumes the match. The Queen drinks from the poisoned cup, although the King tries to stop her. Laertes wounds Hamlet with the poisoned sword, the two fighters scuffle and accidentally exchange swords, and Hamlet wounds Laertes. The Queen falls, exclaims that she is poisoned, and dies. Laertes, himself poisoned by the exchanged sword, reveals the King's plot. Hamlet wounds the King with the sword and then forces him to drink the poisoned wine. Hamlet and Laertes forgive each other, and Laertes dies. Horatio attempts to drink the remains of the poisoned wine, but Hamlet demands that he remain alive to tell his side of the story.

COSTUME DESIGN

BY KIM KRUMM SORENSON



Hamlet



Claudius



Ghost of Hamlet's
Father



Gertrude



Polonius



Laertes



Horatio



Ophelia





Barnardo



Player King & Queen



Rosencrantz & Guildenstern



Gravediggers

SCENIC DESIGN

BY RUSSELL METHENY



Photo of scenic model.



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

PRIOR TO ATTENDING THE PERFORMANCE

1. What are the first thoughts and/or images that come to mind when you hear “Shakespeare?” Why do you think that his plays continue to be read and produced almost 400 years after his death? What makes his work relevant to a modern audience? What — if anything — prevents contemporary productions from being fully accessible? Be honest, what are some of your expectations about seeing Great Lake Theater's production of *Hamlet*?
2. *Hamlet* is one of Shakespeare's greatest tragedies and one of the most famous plays ever written. Prior to seeing the production or reading the play for English class, what did/do you know about the play? Why do you think it is so highly regarded? What famous lines come to mind? What images and ideas do they evoke?
3. Define tragedy. What lessons can you learn from tragic events in your personal life or those in the community at large? Explore the meaning and validity in the saying/idiom, “the gift in the problem.” What, if any, gifts can be seen in a tragedy the scope of *Hamlet*?
4. Charlie Fee, Artistic Director and the director of GLT's current production of *Hamlet*, double cast the role of Hamlet. A male and female actor share the role and alternate performances. In what ways do you think that production choice will alter the audience's perception and understanding of the play? Gender/color blind or conscious casting is defined as:

COLOR BLIND, GENDER BLIND, NON-TRADITIONAL and/or INTEGRATED

CASTING is the practice of casting a role without considering the actor's ethnicity. It derives its name from the medical condition of color blindness. A representative of Actor's Equity has disputed the use of the term "color blind," preferring the definition "non-traditional casting." Non-traditional casting "is defined as the casting of ethnic minority and female actors in roles where race, ethnicity, or sex is not germane."

COLOR OR GENDER CONSCIOUS CASTING is a casting practice that intentionally considers the race, gender and ethnicity of actors and the characters they play in order to oppose racism, sexism, honor and respect cultures, foster stronger productions, and contribute to a more equitable world.

How does an actor's gender or race impact your personal connection to story/character? Can you think of any current examples in film or theatrical productions where “non-traditional” or “color/gender conscious” casting was featured?

5. The character of Hamlet has very complicated relationships with his recently deceased father; his new step father, Claudius; his mother, Gertrude; and his girlfriend, Ophelia. How do think those primary relationships shift with a woman cast in the title role? What do you perceive are the differences in mother/daughter vs. mother/son and father/daughter vs. father/son relationships? How, if at all, does our gender shape and define our relationships with our family and our friends? One of Hamlet's most famous lines is “Frailty, thy name is woman!” How do you think that line will land differently when being said by a female actor?

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6. GLT's current production of *Hamlet* is using a 16th century Dutch Renaissance painting as a visual/aesthetic inspiration for the costume design. How does a period style and color palette add to the emotional experience of a play? How do you feel about Shakespeare or other classic/period plays that are set in modern day and costume actors in contemporary garb? If you were directing or designing *Hamlet* what time period would you use? Why? Is there any particular visual art, art period or specific works of art that would help you as a designer or director capture the emotional landscape or feeling of the play?
 7. The play opens with a sighting of the ghost of Hamlet's deceased father. Do you believe in ghosts? In what way, if any, do the spirits of those gone before us continue to speak to us and guide us from beyond? Have you ever felt the presence of a loved one after they have passed? Did their presence offer comfort or concern?
 8. How does the death of a loved one change your understanding of life and your place in the world? What is the "proper" way to mourn the death of a parent or spouse? Is marrying someone within a month, two months, six months, a year, two years, or five years after the death of a spouse acceptable? Is there a time table for grief? In your mind, when is too soon for someone to move on with their life? How do you personally deal with loss?
 9. Describe the perfect parent/child relationship. How do you keep the lines of communication open when a parent or someone you look up to doesn't live up to your expectations? What does it feel like to be shocked or disappointed by a parent's actions or behavior? How do you get past that betrayal of faith and trust? How do past loyalties shift when the person you love shocks and disappoints you? Is there any way to get past that deep hurt? What does it take to forgive and heal those wounds? How do you deal with a parent's bad choice?
 10. What does it take to stand up for a belief and fight against the status quo? Have you ever fought for something that you felt was unjust? What stops most of us from doing the right and/or difficult and unpopular thing? How do you know when to respect authority and abide by set rules and when to oppose them? What does it take for you to personally take action?
 11. For most of the play, Hamlet is trapped in a web of his own making and is forever pondering the depth of his loss – the death of his father and the hurt/shock of his mother's action's – and the role he ought to play in avenging his father's death. In his efforts to both ease the depth of his grief, follow his dead father's wish and assure Claudius's guilt, Hamlet both feigns "madness" and shares with the audience in his many soliloquies the inner workings of his heart and mind. Do you think that "madness" is a natural response to personal tragedy? What is the difference between grief and sadness and depression? In what ways, if any, would sharing his true feelings with his family, his friends or Ophelia have helped Hamlet through this difficult time in his life? What happens when you bottle up your feelings? Who do you turn to when everything is going wrong? What is the best thing that anyone can do to help you through what feels like impossible circumstances?
 12. Have you ever been so overcome with hurt, frustration and/or hate that your desire to get even canceled out all rational thought and decent behavior? What happens when you act on that primal desire to strike back? Is revenge sweeter in thought or deed? Explain. Have you ever regretted a moment when you did seek retribution? Why?
 13. What does it feel like to be falsely accused? Have you ever experienced the pain and humiliation of a public shaming or embarrassment? How do witnesses and public exposure impact the sense of being

wronged and fuel the feelings of anger and revenge? How does someone recover from a public scandal and redeem reputation? Does it matter if the rumors or accusations are true? Explain. How do you – personally – deal with gossip, ugly rumor and – possible false accusations?

14. Who, in your world, plays the role of the clown? What attributes do they possess? What happens when a person who appears to lack both qualifications and common sense is given a position of authority? What does it feel like to be in a position where you are obliged to follow? What is a malapropism? Can you think of an example where someone misused a phrase or word to comic effect? Please share.
15. What do you imagine it takes to produce a successful production of a classic tragedy, the scope of *Hamlet*? Do you believe that producing Shakespeare requires a different skill set from the actors, than a contemporary piece? What skills are required? What does it take for you to personally to lose yourself in the story and journey of the characters? Is this type of transcendence more difficult at a live performance? Why? How does the experience of witnessing live performance differ from going to the movie, renting a DVD, or sitting in front of the TV?

VOCABULARY

ACT 1

moiety competent:	sufficient portion
sharked:	snatched indiscriminately as the shark takes prey
obsequious:	proper to obsequies or funerals
retrograde:	contrary
rouse:	toast drunk in wine
bruit:	echo
sullied:	damage the purity or integrity of; defile
Hyperion:	the sun god
satyr:	lustful, drunken woodland gods, part man and part goat
Niobe:	proud mother in Greek Mythology whose children are slain by Apollo and Artemis, Zeus turns the grieving Niobe into a stone statue which continues to shed tears.
galled:	irritated, annoyed
truncheon:	military commander's baton
beaver:	visor or movable face guard of the helmet
tenable:	held firmly
husbandry:	thriftiness
investments:	clothes
livery:	characteristic
cerements:	waxed grave cloths
sepulcher:	a tomb; a burial chamber ; a mausoleum
enmity:	the state or feeling of being actively opposed or hostile to someone or something
tetter:	a skin disease in humans or animals causing itchy or pustular patches
unhouseled:	without benefits of last rites/communion
unaneled:	having died without receiving extreme unction; not anointed.
pernicious:	having a harmful effect, especially in a gradual or subtle way
antic (disposition):	gruesome; mad
bespew:	curse

ACT 2

forgeries:	invented wrongdoings
drabbing:	whoring
videlicet:	namely
doublet:	jacket
ecstasy:	madness
sith:	since
gentry:	courtesy
assay:	trial
expostulate:	discuss
perpend:	ponder
prescripts:	instructions
fishmonger:	seller of harlots (prostitutes)
pregnant:	full of meaning ("how pregnant sometimes his replies are!")
foil and target:	sword and shield

'Sblood:	by God's blood
clouts:	clothes
Roscius:	one of the greatest of Roman actors
Seneca:	Roman playwright best known his for tragedies
Plautus:	Roman playwright best known for his comedies
Jephthah:	the compelled sacrifice of a beloved daughter (Judges 11)
valanced:	fringed with a beard
ominous:	fateful
coagulate:	clotted
bison rheum;	blinding tears
God's bodkin:	by God's body
conceit:	conception; idea
muddy-mettled:	dull spirited
John-a-dream:	a sleepy dawdler
'swounds:	by God's wounds
pigeon livered:	dove-like gentleness
blench:	flinch

ACT 3

drift of conference:	direction of conversation
shuffled off:	cast off
coil:	to do; turmoil
quietus:	settlement; release from debt
bodkin:	dagger
fardels:	burdens
ourn:	confine; region
orisons:	prayers
commerce:	intercourse
periwig pated:	wig wearing
groundlings:	rowdy and somewhat crude spectators who paid the least and stood on the ground or pit of the theater in Shakespeare's day
dumb show:	a simple mime shown before the play; a preview without spoken word
Termagent:	a Saracen "god" in medieval romance and drama
Herod:	raging tyrant in the Bible
journeymen:	an apprentice tradesmen who has not quite mastered their craft
occulted:	hidden
be idle:	act foolish; play the madman
cousin:	nephew (Claudius: " <i>how fares our cousin Hamlet?</i> ")
country matters:	goings on; barnyard mating
Phoebus' cart:	the sun's chariot
Tellis:	Roman goddess of the earth
Hymen:	Greek god of marriage
wormwood:	bitter herb
enactures:	fulfillments
Hecate:	goddess of witchcraft and black magic
turn Turk:	turn renegade
perdy:	by God ('par dieu')
choler:	anger
toil:	snare
offense:	sin

gilded:	gold-laden
shuffling:	double dealing
pat:	opportunistically
broad blown:	fully blossomed
round:	plain spoken
rood:	cross
brazed:	hardened like brass
Hyperion:	Sun god
batten:	feed greedily
heyday:	excitement of passion
cozened:	cheated
enseamed:	grease-laden
cutpurse:	skulking thief
incorporal:	bodiless
gambol:	shy; skittish
unction:	ointment
petar:	bomb or mine

ACT 4

replication:	reply
countenance:	favor
bent:	set in readiness (like a bent bow...)
cherub:	angel with a distinctive quality of knowledge
congruing:	agreeing
haps:	fortunes
inform:	take shape
fust:	grow moldy
dild:	yield; repay
muddied:	stirred up and confused
hugger-mugger:	secrecy and disorder
matter beggared:	not provided with facts
impiteous:	pitiless
fennel:	symbol of flattery
columbines:	symbol of thankfulness
rue:	symbol of repentance
daisy:	symbol of dissembling
violets:	symbol of faithfulness
riband:	decoration
incorpsed:	made one body
feats:	deeds

ACT 5

mazzard:	head
equivocation:	ambiguity
pocky:	rotten
ordinant:	controlling
canker:	cancer; ulcer
rawer breath:	cruder speech
wanton:	pampered child
sounds:	swoons

ACTIVITIES

THE POWER OF WORDS/WRITING EXERCISE

Shakespeare's poetry and use of language is astounding in its depth, beauty and imagery but can also be intimidating to many students. The following exercise is a way to take Shakespeare's poetry out of context, to eliminate the need to interpret and elicit meaning. This activity allows the language to wash over the listener and allow whatever words and images that become illuminated to take a new shape and form. For the purposes of this exercise we will use three pieces of text — monologues from Claudius, Hamlet and Gertrude.

Claudius, Act III scene iii

*Oh, my offence is rank. It smells to heaven.
It hath the primal eldest curse upon 't,
A brother's murder. Pray can I not.
Though inclination be as sharp as will,
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,
And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursèd hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood?
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy
But to confront the visage of offence?
And what's in prayer but this twofold force,
To be forestallèd ere we come to fall
Or pardoned being down? Then I'll look up.
My fault is past. But oh, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn, "Forgive me my foul murder"?*

Hamlet, Act IV scene iv

*How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.
Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and god-like reason
To fust in us unused. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on the event,
A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom
And ever three parts coward, I do not know*

*Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do;'
Sith I have cause and will and strength and means
To do't.*

Gertrude, Act IV scene vii

*There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream.
There with fantastic garlands did she come
Of crowsflowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them.
There on the pendant boughs her coronet weeds
Clamb'ring to hang, an envious sliver broke,
When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide
And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up;
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,
As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indued
Unto that element; but long it could not be
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.*

The exercise will have **four** phases. The **first phase** involves the reading of the passage multiple times with different voices. Have 3 - 5 students read the passage out loud. The remainder of the class should allow the words and images to wash over them. They should write down any words or phrases that “glisten” or stand out, or provide any kind of energy.

The second phase involves meditation. Based on the chosen words and images, allow ideas to flow and release any thoughts or reactions that come to mind. Remind students not to edit themselves. This is a free writing exercise.

The third phase is transforming those images, ideas and reactions into a new form — a poem, an essay, a journal reflection or whatever.

The final phase focuses on contemplation and selective sharing. Ask students to sit with their discovery, what emerged from this exercise in terms of feeling, impressions and/or understanding. See if anyone wants to share either their writing or an idea/image that emerged from the exercise. Complete the exercise in its' entirety before introducing the second and/or third monologue. Compare and contrast the images and ideas that they evoke.

CHARACTER COLLAGES

The characters in *Hamlet* are as complex as they are compelling. Their motivation, wants and relationships are multifaceted. Choose one of the central figures of the play — Hamlet, Claudius, Gertrude, Polonius, Ophelia or Laertes — and search for images, words, headlines, metaphors, colors and textures that best reflect and/or capture the essence of the character. Create a visual collage. Display the various collages throughout the classroom and have the class meander through, museum style. Discuss what you see. Challenge students to articulate and defend the choices they made in putting together the collage. Were various characters easy to identify? Why? What similarities and differences were present? Discuss.

ELEVATOR SPEECH

Shakespeare's Hamlet is one of the greatest characters ever written and the play has been a vehicle for many stars of both stage and screen including Laurence Olivier, Richard Burton, Mel Gibson, Kevin Kline, Kenneth Branagh, Ethan Hawke and Benedict Cumberbatch with many interpretations and revisions including several film versions. Given the universal appeal of this classic tale, how would you re-tell this story? Either as a group, or individually, prepare a movie pitch — a 5-minute “elevator speech” — to Hollywood producers. Where will you set this film? Describe the world of the play. What design elements stand out? How will you costume the piece? What stars will you cast? What contemporary twist will you incorporate to make the piece more meaningful to a modern day audience? To make your pitch have more resonance, include images, music clips, location preferences, character names and descriptions as well as a basic plot outline.

PLAY LIST

Have your students create a playlist that reflects the journey of one of the central characters or underscores the full emotional spectrum of the play itself. Have the class share, discuss and defend their choices

THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

Split the class in two to three groups of 8 – 10 students. Have each group choose a student director. Each group will discuss, rehearse and stage a cutting from Act I, scene ii of *Hamlet*.

Each group must envision how each character should behave and respond.

Consider some of the following questions before staging the opening court scene with your students:

- Who is Claudius? Do the people in his court respect him? Are they afraid of him?
- Is Claudius comfortable in his new role? Is he a manipulator? Do you believe he is being sincere?
- How should he react to Hamlet? Is he compassionate? Is he deliberately testing Hamlet? Is he trying to make a scene? Is he asserting his power?
- What's up with Gertrude? What is her disposition?
- How do you think she feels about Claudius? What kind of couple are they? Do they seem like newlyweds – very touchy/feely — or are they super-reserved? (*Look at some of the recent comparisons of the Obamas and the Trumps at the inauguration. Or at portraits of other famous couples at major social events*)
- Where would you place Gertrude in relation to her husband, Claudius, and her son, Hamlet?
- What about Ophelia? Even though she doesn't have lines, what is her place in court? Where would you place her on stage?
- How does she respond to Claudius' seeming condemnation of Hamlet? Does she try to connect to Hamlet during the scene?
- The silent Prince ... what are our desired first impressions of Hamlet?

- Hamlet does not speak for quite some time in this scene. Is he engaged in what is going on? If so, is he actively or passively listening? How alert is he to what others are saying around him? Where would you place him on stage?
- The Royal Court. Your social status and rank at court is often denoted by where you stand in relation to the king. Look at the list of characters in this scene, who has a higher social status and where would you place them? Where would you place those of lower ranks and why?
- How genuine are people's responses? How do they feel about their new ruler? How do they feel about their old King? (*Again, think about divisions in our current political situation. Imagine Trump supporters at his inauguration vs. loyal Obama supporters who are forced to be there ... how does the energy of the crowd shift?*)
- Is this a public or a private scene or a little of both? What can you do to differentiate the public moments vs. the private encounters?
- Is there a shift in mood in the scene? If so, where does it happen and why?

Look for stage direction clues in the text. Plot out on the handout which entrance you would have each character come from and where they would be placed on stage. When ready, try out the following:

1. Present the scene as a "dumb" show. Use exaggerated gestures and movements to present the essence of each character, their status in court, their relationship to each other and their overall emotional state.
2. Act out the scene using your own words.
3. Act out the scene using Shakespeare's text
4. Share your scene with the group. Compare the overall direction of the scene, differences in staging and varying character choices.

ACT I SCENE ii:

A room of state in the castle.

(Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES, VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, Lords, and Attendants)

KING CLAUDIUS

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
 The memory be green, and that it us befitted
 To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom
 To be contracted in one brow of woe,
 Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
 That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
 Together with remembrance of ourselves.
 Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
 The imperial jointress to this warlike state,
 Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,—
 With an auspicious and a dropping eye,
 With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
 In equal scale weighing delight and dole,—
 Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd
 Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
 With this affair along. For all, our thanks.

Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,
 Holding a weak supposal of our worth,

Collegued with the dream of his advantage,
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,
Importing the surrender of those lands
Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,
To our most valiant brother. So much for him.
Now for ourself and for this time of meeting:
Thus much the business is: we have here writ
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,—
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway;
Giving to you no further personal power
To business with the king, more than the scope
Of these delated articles allow.
Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

CORNELIUS VOLTIMAND

In that and all things will we show our duty.

KING CLAUDIUS

We doubt it nothing: heartily farewell.

(Exeunt VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS)

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?
You told us of some suit; what is't, Laertes?

LAERTES

My dread lord,
Your leave and favour to return to France;
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,
To show my duty in your coronation,
Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

KING CLAUDIUS

Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?

LORD POLONIUS

He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave
By laboursome petition, and at last
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent:
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

KING CLAUDIUS

Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,
And thy best graces spend it at thy will!
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,
HAMLET

[Aside] A little more than kin, and less than kind.

KING CLAUDIUS

How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

HAMLET

Not so, my lord; I am too much i' the sun.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not for ever with thy veiled lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust:
Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.

HAMLET

Ay, madam, it is common.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

If it be,
Why seems it so particular with thee?

HAMLET

Seems, madam! nay it is; I know not 'seems.'
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected 'havior of the visage,
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,
That can denote me truly: these indeed seem,
For they are actions that a man might play:
But I have that within which passeth show;
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

KING CLAUDIUS

'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
To give these mourning duties to your father:
But, you must know, your father lost a father;
That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound
In filial obligation for some term
To do obsequious sorrow: but to persever
In obstinate condolement is a course
Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief;
For what we know must be and is as common
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
Why should we in our peevish opposition

Take it to heart? Fie! 'tis a fault to heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
To reason most absurd: whose common theme
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
From the first corse till he that died to-day,
'This must be so.' ...
... For your intent
In going back to school in Wittenberg,
It is most retrograde to our desire:
And we beseech you, bend you to remain
Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet:
I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Wittenberg.

HAMLET

I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

KING CLAUDIUS

Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply:
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come;
This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet
Sits smiling to my heart: in grace whereof,
No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,
And the king's rouse the heavens all bruit again,
Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

(Exeunt all but HAMLET)

HAMLET

O, that this too too solid flesh would melt
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't! ah fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead: nay, not so much, not two:
So excellent a king; that was, to this,
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown

By what it fed on: and yet, within a month—
Let me not think on't—Frailty, thy name is woman!—
A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears:—why she, even she—
O, God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer—married with my uncle,
My father's brother, but no more like my father
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married. O, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not nor it cannot come to good:
But break, my heart; for I must hold my tongue.

FAMOUS QUOTATIONS FROM *HAMLET*

Directions: The following cryptograms are based on memorable quotes from *Hamlet*. Certain letters have been supplied to aid you. Each letter in the quotation has been assigned a number value. The speaker of the quotation and the act and scene in which the quote was given is also supplied. (Answers supplied on page following puzzles) Additional puzzle creations are available at www.puzzlemaker.school.discovery.com.

Quote 1 - Hamlet Act V, scene 1

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	
5														4												

$\frac{A}{5} \frac{A}{26} \frac{A}{5} \frac{A}{12} , \frac{O}{23} \frac{O}{4} \frac{O}{4} \frac{O}{2} \frac{O}{9} \frac{O}{4} \frac{O}{2} \frac{O}{25} \frac{O}{21} \frac{O}{10} | \frac{O}{25} \frac{O}{10} \frac{O}{1} \frac{O}{24} \frac{O}{20}$
 $\frac{O}{15} \frac{O}{25} \frac{O}{8} \frac{O}{20} \frac{O}{24} \frac{O}{26} \frac{O}{26} \frac{O}{15} \frac{O}{4} \frac{O}{2} \frac{O}{5} \frac{O}{16} \frac{O}{25} \frac{O}{4} \frac{O}{5}$

Quote 2 - Ophelia Act IV, scene 5

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	
				11										1								22				

$\frac{W}{22} \frac{E}{11} \frac{O}{26} \frac{W}{19} \frac{W}{1} \frac{W}{22} \frac{W}{18} \frac{W}{7} \frac{W}{8} \frac{W}{22} \frac{E}{11} \frac{E}{7} \frac{E}{20} \frac{E}{11} , \frac{O}{5} \frac{W}{21} \frac{W}{8} \frac{O}{26} \frac{W}{19} \frac{O}{1} \frac{W}{22}$
 $\frac{O}{19} \frac{W}{1} \frac{W}{8} \frac{W}{22} \frac{W}{18} \frac{W}{7} \frac{W}{8} \frac{W}{22} \frac{E}{11} \frac{E}{12} \frac{E}{7} \frac{E}{13} \frac{E}{5} \frac{E}{11}$

Quote 3 - Hamlet Act III, scene 4

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	
				11											17		15	9								

$\frac{R}{23} \frac{R}{18} \frac{R}{15} \frac{S}{5} \frac{S}{20} \frac{S}{9} \frac{E}{5} \frac{E}{7} \frac{E}{11} \frac{S}{9} \frac{P}{17} \frac{R}{18} \frac{R}{15} \frac{R}{5} \frac{S}{5} \frac{S}{18} \frac{E}{7} \frac{E}{21} \frac{E}{14} \frac{E}{11}$
 $\frac{E}{5} \frac{E}{7} \frac{E}{11} \frac{E}{11} \frac{E}{26} \frac{E}{25} \frac{E}{20} \frac{E}{26} \frac{E}{11} \frac{E}{11} \frac{E}{15} \frac{S}{7} \frac{S}{18} \frac{S}{20} \frac{S}{9} \frac{S}{5} \frac{S}{1} \frac{S}{20} \frac{S}{5} \frac{S}{7}$
 $\frac{S}{7} \frac{S}{20} \frac{S}{9} \frac{P}{18} \frac{P}{1} \frac{P}{26} \frac{P}{17} \frac{P}{11} \frac{P}{5} \frac{P}{21} \frac{P}{15} \frac{P}{13}$

Quote 4 - Hamlet Act III, scene 1

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
	24			25										8				9							

$\frac{O}{23 \ 8}$ $\frac{B \ E}{24 \ 25}$ $\frac{O}{8 \ 6}$ $\frac{O}{22 \ 8 \ 23}$ $\frac{O}{23 \ 8}$ $\frac{B \ E}{24 \ 25}$, $\frac{S}{23 \ 13 \ 2 \ 23}$ $\frac{S}{20 \ 9}$
 $\frac{E}{23 \ 13 \ 25}$ $\frac{E \ S}{12 \ 16 \ 25 \ 9}$ $\frac{O}{23 \ 20 \ 8 \ 22}$

Quote 5 - Polonius Act I, scene 3

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
				21				22						15											

$\frac{E \ I}{25 \ 21 \ 22 \ 4 \ 18 \ 21 \ 9}$ $\frac{E}{24}$ $\frac{O}{7 \ 15 \ 9 \ 9 \ 15 \ 3 \ 21 \ 9}$ $\frac{O}{25 \ 15 \ 9}$ $\frac{E}{24}$ $\frac{E}{11 \ 21 \ 25 \ 13 \ 21 \ 9}$
 $\frac{E}{7 \ 21}$

Quote 6 - Horatio Act V, scene 2

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
3				21										26											

$\frac{O \ O}{22 \ 26 \ 26 \ 10}$ $\frac{E \ E}{5 \ 6 \ 22 \ 11 \ 25}$, $\frac{E \ E}{1 \ 13 \ 21 \ 21 \ 25}$ $\frac{E}{7 \ 15 \ 6 \ 5 \ 8 \ 21}$ $\frac{A}{2 \ 3 \ 20}$
 $\frac{A}{3}$ $\frac{O}{26 \ 17}$ $\frac{A \ E}{3 \ 5 \ 22 \ 21 \ 23 \ 1}$ $\frac{E \ E}{1 \ 6 \ 5 \ 22 \ 25 \ 11 \ 21 \ 21}$
 $\frac{O}{25 \ 26}$ $\frac{E}{25 \ 11 \ 20}$ $\frac{E}{15 \ 21 \ 1 \ 25}$

Quote 7 - Marcellus Act I, scene 4

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
				17																					

$\frac{E}{24 \ 11 \ 8 \ 17 \ 25 \ 21 \ 18 \ 6 \ 19}$ $\frac{E}{18 \ 24}$ $\frac{E}{13 \ 11 \ 25 \ 25}$ $\frac{E}{17 \ 6}$ $\frac{E}{18 \ 6}$ $\frac{E}{25 \ 21 \ 17}$
 $\frac{E}{24 \ 25 \ 4 \ 25 \ 17}$ $\frac{E}{11 \ 7}$ $\frac{E}{3 \ 17 \ 6 \ 8 \ 4 \ 13 \ 12}$

ANSWERS:

1. Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him well Horatio.
2. We know what we are, but know not what we may be
3. For 'tis the sport to have the engineer
Hoist with his own petard
4. To be or not to be, that is the question
5. Neither a borrower nor a lender be
6. Good night, sweet prince may a flight of angels sing thee to thy rest
7. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark
8. Madness in great ones must not unwatched go
9. But know, thou noble youth
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown
10. The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

ALLUSIONS IN HAMLET

A reference to a person, place, or event drawn from the Bible, mythology, history, art, or literature is an allusion. Shakespeare uses allusions to develop an idea or reveal something about a character. In order to comprehend Shakespeare's purpose, it is helpful to be familiar with the story behind the allusion. In Shakespeare's time, the two major sources for allusions were mythology and the Bible. Directions: Research the following allusions used in *Hamlet*. Identify the allusion and explain its use in the play.

ALLUSION	ORIGINAL STORY	USE IN HAMLET
1. Julius (I.1. 114) III. 2. 91 V. 1. 180)		
2. Neptune (I. 1. 119) III. 2. 137)		
3. Hyperion (I. 2. 140) III. 4. 36)		
4. satyr (I. 2. 140)		
5. Niobe (I. 2. 150)		
6. Hercules (I. 2. 153 II. 2. 333 V. 1. 258)		
7. Nemean lion (I. 5. 83)		
8. Lethe (I. 5. 34)		
9. St. Patrick (I. 5. 136)		
10. Seneca (II, 2. 366)		
11. Plautus (II. 2. 366)		

-
12. Jephtha
(II. 2. 375)
 13. Aeneas
(II. 2. 404)
 14. Dido
(II.2. 405)
 15. Priam
(II. 2. 406)
 16. Pyrrhus
(II. 2. 408)
 17. Cyclops
(II. 2. 447)
 18. Mars
(II. 2. 448
III. 4. 57)
 19. Fortune
(II. 2. 220,
226,231, 451)
 20. Hecuba
(II. 2. 459)
 21. nymph
(III. 1. 89)
 22. Termagant
(III. 2. 9)
 23. Herod
(III. 2. 9)
 24. Vulcan
(III. 2. 75)
 25. Capitol
(III. 2. 91)
 26. Brutus
(III. 2. 91)
 27. Phoebus
(III. 2. 136)

-
28. Tellus
(III. 2. 137)
 29. Hymen
(III. 2. 140)
 30. Hecat (Hecate)
(III. 2. 234)
 31. Damon
(III. 2. 255)
 32. Jove
(III. 2. 257
III. 4. 56)
 33. Nero
(III. 2. 355)
 34. primal eldest curse
(Cain and Abel)
(III. 3. 37
V. 1. 65)
 35. Mercury
(III. 4. 58)
 36. Saint Valentine
(IV. 5. 48, 51)
 37. Adam
(V. 1. 26, 31)
 38. Alexander
(V. 1. 167, 172, 176, 177)
 39. Pelion
(V. 1. 220)
 40. Olympus
(V. 1. 221)
 41. Ossa
(V. 1. 250)
 42. antique Roman
(V. 2. 320)

WRITING PROMPTS

1. Assume the identity of Ophelia. Write four diary or journal entries for Ophelia. The first entry is written after Ophelia receives advice from Laertes and Polonius concerning her relationship with Hamlet. For example, Ophelia could relate her romantic involvement with Hamlet. She might give her feelings about her promise to her father. Ophelia writes her second journal entry immediately after she reports to her father about Hamlet's strange behavior in Act II, scene 1. She can describe Hamlet's actions and dress, her father's decision to see Claudius, and her feelings about giving her father the romantic letter sent by Hamlet. The third entry occurs after Hamlet treats Ophelia brutally in the "get thee to a nunnery scene" and the performance of the play. In this entry Ophelia may reveal how she feels about Hamlet and the advice her brother had given her. The final entry should be written after Ophelia learns that Polonius has died. In this entry, indicate how Ophelia learned of Polonius's death. Decide whether she knows about Hamlet's role. Did she overhear talk in the palace, or did someone tell her. If so, who? What's her reaction? Did she write to Laertes? And, this entry could reveal that the delicate state of Ophelia's mind is beginning to unravel.
2. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have had Hamlet under surveillance for sometime. Using Act II and Act III as a basis, write a complete report of Hamlet's antic behavior. Assume the identity of either man, or write a joint report. You may choose to exercise your creativity by including behaviors not related by Shakespeare in the play. Remember that Claudius is your king and employer. You will likely want to be very respectful to him in your report.
3. Assume the identity of Horatio. As a concerned friend, you realize that Hamlet appears deeply troubled. Write a letter to Hamlet, expressing your concerns about his melancholy state. Be creative and invent shared experiences. Advise him on a sensible course of action. Consider the portrait of Hamlet that Ophelia presents in Act III and Hamlet's behavior when he first met Horatio and Marcellus in Act I. Also consider Hamlet's behavior around the players.
4. Give a portrait of Polonius, his history, and his life as seen through the eyes of Polonius. You are considered a natural born meddler. However, you also document your life (much like Samuel Pepys kept a diary of his life). You are also very wordy and absent-minded. In a diary entry, tell all. What was your reaction to the death of King Hamlet? Were you part of his inner circle or not? Were you closely associated with Claudius? Did you have any knowledge of Claudius's deed? How do you feel about Claudius now? What disturbs you the most about Prince Hamlet? What are your feelings and expectations concerning Laertes and Ophelia? What happened to their mother? What is your day like?
5. Imagine that you are Gertrude writing to her sister, an abbess of a nunnery. You know that your sister will never reveal the contents of your letter to anyone. Write this letter after you learn of Ophelia's death. In this letter, pour your heart out about all the problems that you are facing. This is your chance to unburden your heart to a sympathetic listener. Reveal all. Give Gertrude's sister a name.
6. Hamlet refers to the letters that Claudius has given Rosencrantz and Guildenstern for the king of England. Write the letter that Claudius wrote to the English king. You must convince the king that Hamlet is such a dangerous threat that he must be killed immediately. Create reasons that would convince a monarch to take this action. (Remember monarchs often ransomed royals rather than killing

those that they believed God had designated as rightful kings.) Now, reconstruct the letter that Hamlet substituted for Claudius's letter. Give reasons why you wish Rosencrantz and Guildenstern put to death.

7. The new king of Denmark, King Fortinbras, has summoned Horatio to a private audience in the King's chamber. In this scene, Horatio discloses all the events that led to the final tragedy. What proof can Horatio give to Fortinbras? Write this missing scene that would have taken place after the final scene in Hamlet.
8. In Act I, scene 2, Claudius sends a communication to the King of Norway about the activities of Fortinbras. In Act II, scene 2, Claudius receives the response from the King of Norway. Create these two documents. Use the information contained within these two scenes as the basis for your documents.
9. Imagine that you are the grief-stricken Laertes. Although rumors surround the untimely death of your sister Ophelia, you intend to deliver a eulogy at her funeral. Write this eulogy in which you express your feelings about your sister. Reveal those qualities that you wish everyone to remember about Ophelia.
10. Imagine that you are a psychiatrist who has been summoned by King Claudius and Queen Gertrude to analyze either Hamlet or Ophelia. You will meet with the individual twice. During these sessions, try to determine the character's motives, dreams, feelings, and goals. Write down your conclusions/diagnosis about the character's problems or conflicts. Below are suggestions on how to remedy the situation. You may use the following to organize your observations about the character. Include descriptive phrases or lines of dialogue from the play to support your conclusions or suggestions. Then write a formal report for the King and Queen.

Description of the character at the first meeting, related to events in the play. (Meet Ophelia after the play performance.)

- a. Physical appearance
- b. Mental state
- c. Behavior

Background of family

- a. Mother
- b. Father
- c. Siblings
- d. Home environment

Background of the character

- a. Education
- b. Social (friends, acquaintances)
- c. Interests/hobbies
- d. Religious upbringing/values

Description of the character at the second meeting (relate to events)

- a. Physical appearance
- b. Mental state
- c. Behavior

Diagnosis – state the problem as you see it. Give specific examples from the play to support your conclusions.

Conclusions

- a. Treatment
- b. Result
 1. Cured
 2. Death

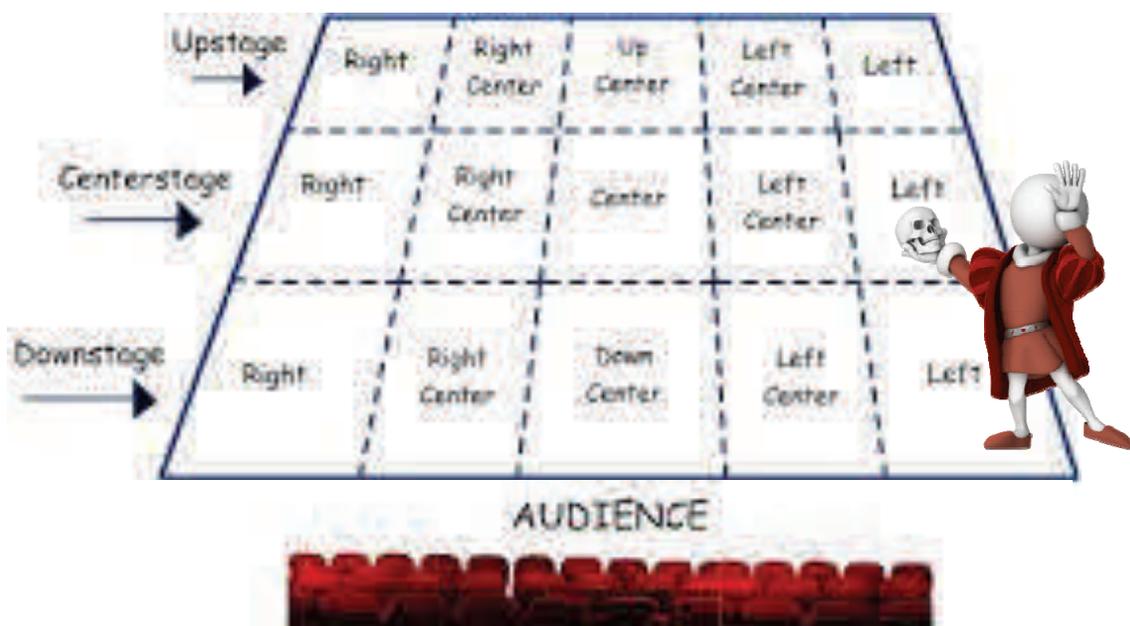
11. In an essay, discuss how Hamlet can be read as three stories: a ghost story, a detective story, and a revenge story. Explain how the three stories are interrelated. Use specific references from the play to support your answer.
12. Create a front page for the imaginary newspaper the *Elsinore Herald* that discusses the events of the play. Choose one of the following:
 - a. The death of King Hamlet
The marriage of Gertrude and Claudius
Claudius's ascent to the throne
The threat of young Fortinbras
 - b. The arrival of the traveling players
The background of the theatrical feud that forced them to take to the road
The review of "The Murder of Gonzaga"
 - c. The death of Polonius
The departure of Hamlet
The appearance of Fortinbras on Danish soil
The weird behavior of Ophelia
The arrival of Laertes
 - d. The strange death of Ophelia
The fencing match between Hamlet and Laertes
The death of the royal family
The new king – Fortinbras
13. Imagine that the ghosts of King Hamlet, Ophelia, and Polonius meet somewhere in Elsinore. At this midnight meeting, the ghosts discuss the events in the play from a ghostly perspective. Have King Hamlet tell the other two about the circumstances of his death and his request for revenge. Have Ophelia and Polonius respond.
14. A key theme quotation by Marcellus, "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark" introduces the disease/decay/poison/corruption imagery in the play. Trace the quotations that develop this imagery. Discuss how the initial poisoning murder by Claudius corrupts and poisons that kingdom and all the characters that Claudius meets. Discuss how Claudius has corrupted himself.

A BRIEF GLOSSARY OF THEATER TERMS

Apron	The part of the stage in front of the curtain
Auditorium or House	Where the audience sits
Beam Spread	The area a single light covers
Blackout	Turning off all the lights in the theatre at once
Board	The control center for lights, sound, or both
Book (The)	A copy of the script containing all notes and blocking
Box Office	Where the audience buys tickets
Box Set	A set in a proscenium with three walls
Call	The time certain members of the production need to be at the theatre
Cheat	When an actor takes a realistic action and modifies it for the audience to see
Cloth	Scenery painted on fabric
Cue	A line or action that immediately leads to another action by the actor (for them to speak) designer or stage manager (to change the lights or sound)
Curtain Call	The bows at the end of the show
Dimmer	Equipment that controls the brightness of a light
Director	The creative head of a production. They create a vision for the show and work with actors, designers, and crew to bring that vision to life
Flat	A frame covered with canvas, cardboard, or some other light material which is then painted as part of the set
Floodlight	A light that has a wide unfocused beam covering most of the stage
Fly	A system used to raise set backgrounds, set pieces, or potentially actors
Follow-spot	A spotlight that can follow an actor as they move across around the stage
Footlights	Floodlights on the floor at the front of the stage.
Gel	A piece of plastic placed over the light to change its color
Greenroom	A room where the company can relax, eat, or potentially watch the show if a TV and a camera has been rigged
Notes	The director's notes on the performance or rehearsal
Pit	An area between the stage and the audience where an orchestra can sit (typically below audience level)
Producer	The person responsible for all logistical and financial aspects of a production (as opposed to the creative head, the director).

Properties or Props	Items used by actors in a show (such as swords, plates, watches, etc.)
Proscenium	A type of stage defined by a proscenium arch. Proscenium theatres typically distinctly separate the audience and stage by a window (defined by the proscenium arch). The stage typically will not go far past the proscenium arch (the Ohio Theatre, for example).
Raked Stage	A stage that is angled (upstage is the top of the hill and downstage the bottom) so that the audience can see the action more clearly
Set	The scenery used in a scene or throughout the play
Set Dressing	Parts of the set that don't serve a practical function but make the set look realistic.
Spotlight	A type of light that is focused so that it can light a very specific area
Strike	Taking apart and removing a set from the theatre
Thrust	A stage that goes beyond the proscenium arch so that the audience is sitting on three sides of the set - in front, and on either side (the Hanna Theatre, for example).
Tracks	The rails on which curtains (tabs) run.
Trap	A hole in the stage covered by a door where actors or set pieces can exit or enter
Understudy	An actor who learns all of the lines and blocking of another actor (typically one of the actors in a lead role) who can perform in case the main actor cannot go on
Upstage	The rear of the stage
Wings	The sides of the stage typically blocked off by curtains where actors and crew can stand and wait for their cues

STAGE DIRECTIONS



HOW TO WRITE A REVIEW

MORE HOW AND LESS WHAT

A theater review is not a book review, you do not need to summarize what happens. Provide the necessary background so the reader knows the name of the play and the basics of what kind of play it is, and then move into your commentary. You do not need to explain WHAT the play is, instead write about HOW successfully it was presented.

THE ACTOR NOT THE CHARACTER

You can disapprove of the decisions a character makes, but how well did the ACTOR perform the role? Was their behavior appropriate to the part as written? Feel free to share your opinions, comparing or contrasting their work with other actors with whom you are familiar.

WHAT IS DIRECTION?

Maybe you have heard of a “director” in theater or film, but do you know what they do? It is not a director’s job to tell the actors how to say every line, but they are the person responsible for creating the general mood and concept for the production. What was your impression of the production as a whole? Was it too funny for a serious play? Or not amusing enough for a comic play? Use words to reflect back to the director how successful the production is as a whole.

DON’T FORGET THE DESIGN

The set you see and the sounds you hear are also unique to this one production of this play. Describe what you see and hear, but also be sure to make clear how successful these designs are in telling the story of the play.

IN CONCLUSION ...

While it is not necessary to give a “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” your concluding sentence should summarize your impression of the production as a whole.

THEATER REVIEWS IN THE NEW MEDIA

Reviews in news websites may be 1000 words, they may be as brief as 300 words. Can you write a one-page review? Can you write a 100 word review, to post on Facebook? Do you think you could create a 140-character review that sums up the production for posting on Twitter?

A sample review written by a student follows this page.

— *David Hansen, Education Outreach Associate*

A SAMPLE REVIEW WRITTEN BY A STUDENT

"Gambit": More Poetry Than History — Mark Wood

If Aristotle was correct when he said that poetry “is a higher thing than history,” then “Royal Gambit,” which opened Friday night at Pentacle Theater, is, I suppose, on the right track.

For those who were expecting a representational treatment of the life of England’s Henry VIII, “Royal Gambit” was a shock, if not a disappointment. Those who sought poetry got it, although of a very dogmatic and simplistic sort.

This unusual, highly presentational play by Hermann Gressieker, directed by Ed Classen, is an indictment of modern man as a ruthless opportunist. The Tudor king is a representative of a rationalizing, shifty society which has become “superior to the highest” while “wallowing in the depths.”

As Henry uses the banners of “reason” and “humanism” to obtain then dispose of his six wives, so modern man uses them for his own pleasure and glorification, uses them to wage war in the name of peace, to hate in the name of love.

Such is the grim theme pleasingly presented by a company of seven actors, who performed their roles energetically, if unevenly. The presentational acting style employed here is difficult to perfect. It should be theatrical, yet believable; aimed at the head, yet acceptable to the heart.

Louise Larsen was a standout as Catherine of Aragon, Largely because she utilized this presentational approach and was not afraid of open theatricality. Her flamboyant stage presence, which needed to be toned down in her recent role in “Last of the Red Hot Lovers,” found full vent here.

Henry's fourth wife, Anne of Cleves, was portrayed by Gale Rieder, who quickly became an audience favorite. Her thick accent was letter-perfect and her direct humor was a welcome contrast to the bitter satire of the rest of the play.

The other four actresses—Kathy Stratton, Marcia Engblom, Polly Bond and Patricia Sloan—each had their exceptional moments. However, they generally seemed tied to more conventional, representational acting styles.

Ron Fox was superb in the role of Henry. Tuxedoed, leering with the look of a demonic marionette, the vacant stare of a deranged orator, Fox dominated the stage fully, commanding both in voice and stage presence.

The technical elements of the play were more than adequate. Musical accompaniment was appropriately sparse and simple.

At one point the play, King Henry roared, “In my realm I decide what constitutes tragedy!” Ironically, Gressieker strips modern man not only of his possibilities as a tragic figure worthy of any sympathies at all. In the final moments of the play, Catherine of Aragon announces the death of modern man and the birth of a new era. It is a scene of great hope, but it is not as profound as her earlier pronouncement to her husband that “the ways of the world are not so cut and dried!”

For my own part, I wish that “Royal Gambit’s” statement were not so cut and dried. By making man out to be such a simple monster the play defeats its own purposes and turns poetry into scathing dogma, which is probably even less interesting than, say, history.

<http://faculty.chemeketa.edu/jrupert3/eng105/Annrev.html>

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ABOUT GREAT LAKES THEATER



Charles Fee, Producing Artistic Director

The mission of Great Lakes Theater, through its main stage productions and its education programs, is to bring the pleasure, power and relevance of classic theater to the widest possible audience.

Since the company's inception in 1962, programming has been rooted in Shakespeare, but the company's commitment to great plays spans the breadth of all cultures, forms of theater and time periods including the 20th century, and provides for the occasional mounting of new works that complement the classical repertoire.

Classic theater holds the capacity to illuminate truth and enduring values, celebrate and challenge human nature and actions, revel in eloquent language, preserve the traditions of diverse cultures and generate communal spirit. On its mainstage and through its education program, the company seeks to create visceral, immediate experiences for participants, asserting theater's historic role as a vehicle for advancing the common good, and helping people make the most joyful and meaningful connections between classic plays and their own lives. This Cleveland theater company wishes to share such vibrant experiences with people across all age groups, creeds, racial and ethnic groups and socio-economic backgrounds.

The company's commitment to classic theater is magnified in the educational programs (for both adults and students) that surround its productions. Great Lakes Theater has a strong presence in area schools, offering an annual series of student matinees and, for over 30 years, an acclaimed school residency program led by teams of specially trained actor-teachers.

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