

ACORN PRODUCTIONS MACBETH INFO

Acorn Productions' version of "Macbeth" runs approximately 1 hour. Before the show, there is a brief 10 minute presentation about the audience participation and the costuming choices. There is an optional question and answer session after the show with the actors that can last anywhere from 10 minutes to 1/2 hour depending on the school's schedule. We suggest that schools plan for 90 minutes for the entire presentation. The production is performed by 2 actors and a live musician. A program for your students will be provided in advance – we find it is very helpful to go over the plot of the play shortly before attending the production.

We ask that as many teachers as possible attend the show with the students. Teacher attendance accomplishes a number of goals: it sends a message to the students about the importance of this event, teachers can help keep students orderly during the performance, and teachers who have watched the production will be able to lead more effective post-performance discussions in the classrooms.

Acorn's adaptation follows the major plot developments of the play while tightening many of the scenes and reducing some to just a monologue that advances the story. The intention was to focus the production on the psychological aspects of Macbeth's descent into darkness, creating a "chamber theater" feeling to the event by the use of only two actors. Most of the major speeches are included, though we did have to edit in order to allow the production to be accessible to high school students. Due to the need to avoid a huge mess on stage, we have tapped into a common theater convention by utilizing red silk fabric to symbolize blood.

The Acorn Shakespeare Ensemble's ascetic is to present the text in a manner that places the imagination front and center. We follow certain theatrical conventions to increase understanding, such as the use of stage lights, but we do not seek to re-create the world on stage. Rather we wish the audience to listen to the words and rely on the power of the imagery in the language to create the environment. This staging style, with minimal scenery, no lights, and actors wearing contemporary clothes and performing in such an intimate fashion, harkens back to the original performances at the Globe Theater, which featured a great deal of audience interaction.

The actors will be wearing a basic neutral costume with a very specific accessory to identify each character. Please introduce this list to your students (it is also provided in the program).

KAREN (in order of appearance)

Duncan – king robe and crown
Banquo – grey vest
Lady Macbeth – red skirt
Macduff – bomber jacket
Murderer – red leather jacket
Lennox – black cape

PAUL (in order of appearance)

Ross – tartan sash
Macbeth – leather jacket
Doctor – suit jacket

There are several places where students will be encouraged to participate by shouting their support of Duncan and Malcolm. Actors may also need to encourage students to move as Macduff and Macbeth prepare for the battle in order to make room for the fight sequence. At the end of the play, a specific student will be crowned king of Scotland and led to the throne. Actors will be sure to incite this participation, but it would be helpful if teachers could explain to the students in advance that this participation is not only encouraged, but desired as well.

We request that no students leave the room for any reason during the performance. Please take a few minutes to explain basic theater etiquette to all students attending.

VOLUNTEER WITCHES NEEDED!

We need up to 26 students who have volunteered in advance (perhaps extra credit could be offered) to act as witches during the production. All volunteers need to report to the auditorium 20 minutes before the rest of the students arrive.

More information about the Acorn Shakespeare Ensemble is available at

www.nakedshakespeare.com