

Special Thanks:

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Funding for this production was provided in part by friends of David “Kam” Coyner to honor his memory and his contributions to their lives and Theatre Roanoke College. Funds from this endowment will enhance theatrical productions at Roanoke College in perpetuity.

The Crystal Lynn Van Hise Endowment provides funds to enhance Theatre Roanoke College productions and honor Crystal’s dedication to quality for the program. Her faith in TRC inspired her to launch this endowment herself, and it continues through gifts from friends who shared her vision.

One final note: I am so very proud of the work the entire production team has put forth for this show. It has been a tremendous amount of time, energy, and artistry that has gone into what you will see. As all of the invited productions have had to do, we restaged the show and made it suitable for travel. In doing so, we changed several aspects of the original production, including a distinctive technical feat, rain onstage. I want you to imagine the change in the room as if you were a few feet away from rain onstage. The temperature shifts, the humidity, the floor, the clothing, and the girls themselves. And everything on stage stays wet for the rest of the play; that alters the energy and mood of the world we are seeing and what the actors are experiencing. We have simulated that effect with lighting, sound, and projection. And, I am pleased to share everything that these fellow artists have done to bring the magic of our production to life for you today.



Limited seating available.
This production contains gruesome violence. Viewer discretion is advised.
\$5/\$7 for general admission, FREE to the Roanoke College Community
box office 375-2333
www.roanoke.edu / TRC



Mac Beth

Adapted by Erica Schmidt
From *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare

Setting

The present. Fall.
By the side of a road, just outside a city:
an urban wasteland

Running Time

90 minutes, no intermission

Cast (in order of speaking):

Witch 1 Mary Langan*
(also Ross, Donalbain, Porter, Murderer 1, Doctor)

Witch 2 Natalie Arnold*
(also Angus, Malcolm, Old Man, Murderer 2)

Witch 3 Erin Trost*
(also Duncan, Fleance, Lenox, Gentlewoman)

Macbeth Kennedy Swineford*

Banquo Hannah Pluim*
(also Seyton)

Lady Macbeth Emy Hampton*

Macduff Hunter Gall

Understudy Jesslyn McAllister*

* denotes members of Alpha Psi Omega

NOTE: *This production contains depictions of gruesome violence.*

Land Acknowledgement:

Roanoke College resides on and near the ancestral lands of the Tutelo, Sappony, S'atsoyaha, and Moneton. We acknowledge this unceded territory and the peoples who lived on them before, during, and after colonization. We recognize the erasure of these groups and the need to support Indigenous stories and communities.

For additional information, please visit native-land.ca



The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, part of the Rubenstein Arts Access Program, is generously funded by David M. Rubenstein.

Special thanks to The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust for supporting the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts' Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival.

Additional support is provided by The Honorable Stuart Bernstein and Wilma E. Bernstein; and the Dr. Gerald and Paula McNichols Foundation.

Kennedy Center education and related artistic programming is made possible through the generosity of the National Committee for the Performing Arts.

This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants and awards for actors, directors, dramaturgs, playwrights, designers, stage managers and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for invitation to the KCACTF regional festival and may also be considered for national awards recognizing outstanding achievement in production, design, direction and performance.

Last year more than 1,500 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

Up Next at Theatre Roanoke College:

***The Wolves* by Sarah DeLappe**

As a high school girls soccer team warms up, they discuss big issues, relationships, complex emotions, and personal grievances. These girls celebrate their highs and fight against their lows, whether that is an individual victory, a team loss, or anything in between. No tickets are necessary for this free event.

January 27, 2024, Donald J Kerr Stadium (on the soccer field)

***Sleeping Handsome* by Bill D'Agostino**

When magic is outlawed in this once-upon-a-time magical kingdom, fairies and other mystical creatures must do what they can to break a spell and save the day. This delightful twist on the story of Sleeping Beauty invites audiences of all ages to enjoy the magic and wonder of fairies, queens, and talking dogs.

February 23 and 24, 2024, Crystal Lynn Van Hise Stage

Stupid Fing Bird* by Aaron Posner, adapted from *The Seagull* by Anton Chekhov**

An aspiring young director rampages against the art created by his mother's generation. A young actress fights an aging Hollywood star for the affections of a renowned novelist. And everyone grapples with disappointment, love, art, and the difficulty of growing up. This adaptation of Chekhov's classic play stages the timeless battle between young and old, past and present, in search of the true meaning of it all.

April 11-13, 2024, Crystal Lynn Van Hise Stage

For additional information, visit roanoke.edu/trc

Crew:

Stage Manager – Matt Scott*

Assistant Stage Manager – Daniel Zearfoss

Dramaturg – Chris Waugh

Set Design – Rob Bessolo

Costume and Makeup Design – Audrey Hamilton

Lighting Design – Rob Bessolo

Sculptor – Arne Johnson

Properties Design – Sarah Halstead & Rob Bessolo

Sound Design – Rob Bessolo & Nelson Barre

Technical Direction – Rob Bessolo

Box Office/Building Manager – Ronda Philips

Costume Assistants/Dressers – Lizzie Clay, Caitlin Diehl*,

Annalisa Green, Mary Langan*, Jesslyn McAllister*,

Bronte Micek*, McKenna Parton, Hannah Plum*, and

Colleen Stow

Intimacy Director – Danielle Barre

Fight Choreographer – Nelson Barre

Poster Design – James Ruhland

Sound Operator – Jake Dellinger

Light Board Operator – Heather Lowery

Stage Crew/Construction – Natalie Arnold*, Dennis Hepworth*,

Heather Lowery, Jillian Morgan*, Hannah Plum*, and

students of THEA 101 and THEA 225

Director – Nelson Barre

Biographies:

Natalie Arnold (Witch 2), she/her, is a sophomore at Roanoke.

This is her first time acting in a TRC production. She would like to thank the crew and production team, and her family and friends for supporting her. She hopes you enjoy the show!

Hunter Gall (Macduff), she/her, is a sophomore Biology major in her second RC theatre production, her first being assistant stage manager for *The Importance of Being Earnest*. I hope you love and enjoy this show as much as I have!

Emy Hampton (Lady Macbeth), she/her, is a fourth-year Theatre major who was previously Cecily Cardew in *The Importance of Being Earnest* and worked wardrobe crew for *Cabaret* and *Blood Wedding*. She would like to thank her girlfriend, Joy, for being her line buddy!

Mary Langan (Witch 1), she/her, is a sophomore at Roanoke College studying Theatre and French. She previously performed as Frenchie in *Cabaret*, Lady Bracknell in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and served as stage manager for *Blood Wedding*. She would like to thank her friends and mentors for their unwavering support.

Jesslyn McAllister (Understudy/Head of Wardrobe), she/her, is a sophomore at Roanoke College. She played Helga in *Cabaret*, Beggar/Girl 4 in *Blood Wedding* (KCACTF nomination) and worked wardrobe for *The Importance of Being Earnest*. For Mill Mountain's production of *Bright Star*, she was Costume Design Assistant. She is very excited for you to see the show.

Hannah Pluim (Banquo), she/her, is a senior Psychology major here at RC. She has been involved in behind-the-scenes work for

powerfully felt in the moment; those moments acting on shared belief can be both cathartic and terrifying.

Since this is still Shakespeare's play, we know it can only end one way. We see the inciting moments that soon spiral out of control and into the chaos of ambition and personal desire. This turmoil aligns with the equally powerful disarray often accompanying one's teenage years, especially among a group of adolescent girls. They are already experiencing the social, physical, and psychological equivalent of a whirlwind with puberty, social expectation, and all the changes that come with that time in life. But now they're also stepping into the roles of lovers, betrayers, friends, foes, kings, queens... It's just pretend, but where should they draw the line? Why shouldn't they act on impulses, try to get the most out of life, and take what control they can when the rest of the world seems to add more and more restrictions? When emotions run high, who is to say how far someone will go to get what they want? And isn't that the story of *Macbeth*?

As a cast, the actors have plumbed the intentions of the original text and found ways that the new context adds to (or changes entirely) what people expect from a play titled *Mac Beth*. We have worked to find moments where there is an overlap between the original and Schmidt's adaptation. From the outset, we explored the multi-layered nature of these performances. Each actor found ways that their girl's personality could come through. They have shared histories and connections that add depth to what we see onstage, and we hope the audience can see where these relationships appear. These girls find a place in which, and a group with whom, they can find joy. Together they also revel in the darkness and tragedy of Shakespeare. The cast and crew have tried to strike that balance, that duality. In that spirit, prepare yourself for murder and giggling, chaos and fun, blood and pleasure. So foul and fair a play I have not seen. Join us at the cauldron; something wicked this way comes.

This story inspired Erica Schmidt to adapt Shakespeare's *Macbeth* to depict seven teenage girls who have a club where they perform the play. All but three lines in the entire show are Shakespeare's, but the context and order have been changed to suit the message intended by Schmidt. The girls play all the roles. They are themselves, but they are, as Schmidt says in her notes on the play, "fully committed and present in the stakes of the characters they inhabit. They believe so fully in character that they are capable of losing themselves." It is this 'losing themselves' that Schmidt wants to explore in this adaptation. Audiences may be horrified by the possibility of this happening, but there are examples of incidences like this spanning decades. The Parker-Hulme murder in 1954, Sylvia Likens in 1965, Skylar Neese in 2012, a 2021 stabbing in Cincinnati, the 2022 Toronto swarming murder, and just last month, a girl named Luise was stabbed 30 times by her 'friends' and left in the woods near Freudenburg, Germany. Many of these cases had similar psychological overlaps, featuring young girls coming together and reveling in a shared delight in violence.

Schmidt created this adaptation to jolt audiences from the comfortability of a well-known, classic story. She cast young women in the roles to force us to confront difficult questions about adolescence, impulsiveness, and the driving desire to do what you want. The fact that they wear school uniforms is not unintentional. Uniforms are a way to counter individuality, to control a girl's body (skirt length, for example), and to give the façade that those who wear it belong to a particular group. Couple that fact with the desire for connections with others and the feelings of isolation that can come when friendships fade or shift, and some young people can find belonging in a group of outsiders. They can go further away from what society demands and expects of them. Finding even one other person with a similar experience can push them further than before. Teenage years are a precarious time,

several shows; this is her second time on stage (after 2022's *The Children's Hour*). Hannah is grateful for the opportunity given and the support from her friends and family, she hopes you enjoy the show!

Matt Scott (Stage Manager), he/him, is a Theater Education Major and has happily been a part of each production that TRC has put on

this school year. He was Ernst in *Cabaret*, Algernon Moncrieff in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and understudy to Youth 1 in *Blood Wedding*. He's excited to be stage managing for *Mac Beth* and hopes everyone enjoys the show!

Kennedy Swineford (Macbeth), she/her, is a freshman Theatre major at Roanoke College and is incredibly excited to be bringing this adaptation to life. Previously Kennedy played Sally Bowles in *Cabaret* and Gwendolen Fairfax in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. She would like to thank the cast and crew for their hours of hard work, and her family and friends for their constant support.

Erin Trost (Witch 3), she/they, is a junior majoring in Math and Physics who is very excited to be a part of *Mac Beth*! Their favorite past shows with TRC include *Cabaret* (Fritzie/Lady 1), *Into the Woods* (Jack's Mother) and *The Children's Hour* (Peggy). She wants to thank you all for coming and supporting TRC!

Daniel Zearfoss (Assistant Stage Manager), he/him, is a sophomore here at Roanoke College and hasn't decided on a major yet, (leaning towards Theatre). He played the role of Youth 1 in *Blood Wedding* and has been a part of two other productions backstage. This past summer, he had the chance to do the Mill Mountain Theater internship.

Dramaturg's Note:

Shakespeare is so much more interesting than we give him credit for. He was writing *Macbeth* in a time of social and political turmoil, a part of life I am afraid many of us, even the young, are all too familiar with. Queen Elizabeth had just died and her distant cousin, James (whose mother Mary Queen of Scots had been executed by Elizabeth) had just taken the throne. Scotland had been at war with England for generations. Just like us, Shakespeare was living in a time of uncertainty and fear, where it seemed anyone (good or bad) could take power with no regard for human life. Even today, it seems we still deal with such cultural anxieties, with many people in political/social power who (like Macbeth) cause or ignore the suffering of others while attempting to silence anything they deem a threat to their positions.

The audiences of Shakespeare's day loved the theater's language. So often was the cry put forth, "Let us hear a play!" The staging was barebones, with no sounds or special effects, so it was often up to the performers and their manner of speaking to carry the weight. Because plays by Shakespeare and his contemporaries were reliant on the dialogue as opposed to the setting and staging, it's the words that carry the power. With these words, we can see Shakespeare (and his characters) in any setting with any context. Performances of *Macbeth* have had various settings, from Patrick Stewart in a hospital during World War II to a Japanese warlord in Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood* to Denzel Washington in a phantasmagoric twisting of Scotland. Within these words, we see universal themes that are still prevalent today. *Macbeth* shows how greed, oppression, and lust for power can lead to the deaths of innocent people and the corruption of an entire nation. Within these last few weeks (in the wake of the Nashville/Louisville shootings and the many bills brought forth to silence/devalue LGBTQ+ lives) we've contended with a nation that turned its back

as the innocent suffered and we have tried to support those who fought to see such horrific things never happen again. Perhaps, by showing *Macbeth* in whatever setting we choose, we can hold a mirror up to the powers that be and hold them accountable for their actions. We hope you'll see a bit of yourself in *Macbeth* too...but not too much.

Playwright's Note:

These girls have a *Macbeth* club. They agree to meet in an abandoned field after school to 'do' the play. Each has learned her part. The playing style is modern, quick, unaffected – the girls never pretend to be boys – they are, however, fully committed and present in the stakes of the characters they inhabit. They believe so fully in character that they are capable of losing themselves.

The tartan print is a nod to Scotland, but we are in America – where school violence is so common as to be horrifyingly banal.

Once a girl enters, she never exits the stage – though she may exit the scene, she is always present, watching.

Director's Note:

In May 2014, three 12-year-old girls went for a walk in a wooded area near Waukesha, Wisconsin. It was the day after a sleepover for one girl's birthday. When they reached the woods, the girls decided to play hide-and-seek. But when one of them went to hide, the other two stalked and stabbed her 19 times. The victim survived and dragged herself to a nearby road, where a cyclist found her. When police apprehended the two assailants, both said they had done it to appease the Slender Man (a fictional entity that lurks in forests created for an online paranormal story contest). The would-be murderers had become so convinced of their shared beliefs that they acted upon them.