



BROWNSEA
OPEN AIR THEATRE

REGISTERED CHARITY №278003

EST. 1964

Brownsea Open Air Theatre

2024 Production.



М А С В Е Т И

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

Principals.

Macbeth Age 30-55

Very physical role.

The main male role. Lots of lines, obviously.

He is a warrior, a lover and a fighter. But also, it seems, a touch gullible and easy to manipulate if the right things are said to him.

He needs to be played in such a way that we should hate him, but we also root for him as a protagonist and sympathise with him when it all goes pear-shaped for him.

If you're a "Breaking Bad" fan, think Walter White.. He was definitely a good guy gone very, very bad, but audiences ALMOST wanted him to succeed....

His descent into madness is violent and palpable.

Lady Macbeth – Age 30-55

The main female role. Manipulative, coercive and fiercely ambitious.

At first, she is desperate to better herself and when hearing of the Witches prophecies uses every trick in her arsenal of tricks to persuade her husband to perform such deeds as to further their standing.

She watches what happens, comes to bitterly regret it and, as a result of this, and her overriding guilt at the consequences of her desires pulls her into a melancholic madness.

There also needs to be some sympathy for her toward the end, even though it is obvious to us that she bought this madness upon herself.

Duncan – Age 60-80

King of Scotland (initially anyway). An old warrior who is supremely proud of his sons and his armies in the war with Norway. To such an extent that, I think, he firmly wishes he was thirty years younger and in the thick of things, doing a lot of killing.

Malcolm – Age 25-40

Duncan's son. A warrior too. The rightful heir to the Crown of Scotland, he flees to England to plan his return and revenge against Macbeth, who he suspects as having a role in his father's death.

We definitely need to root for Malcolm and he needs to have such a personality that he can take the audience with him – almost charming.

Macduff – Age 30 – 55 – Physical and emotional role.

Macduff is also suspicious of Macbeth, and suspects that his life is in danger, so joins Malcolm in England.

This role requires an ability to fight and to be viscerally in touch with his emotions.

Like Malcolm, we need to see him as a hero who, through the most tremendous adversity and horrific life events comes through and exacts his revenge. We need to be almost confused as to who to root for when he's fighting with Macbeth towards the end of the play, but, through a guttural, emotional shriek after vanquishing the title character, we see his is a righteous victory.

Lady Macduff. Age 30 - 55

Wife of Macduff. A very important role. In one particular scene, we need her to run the gamut of emotion from bemused as to why Macduff has left, to motherly ways, to abject terror.

I need a scream from Lady Macduff which will make my ears flap and my eyes vibrate.

Lady Macduff may well appear in other parts of the play that aren't usually scripted for her.

Banquo – Age 30 to 60 – Physical role.

Macbeth's friend and comrade at arms. He is loyal to his core, even when he severely doubts Macbeth's honour and legitimacy as king, and how he got to be king.

Because he knows.....

Banquo's murder will be a full-on fight – a right good tussle. He must not, repeat NOT die without having really fought to live. He must give the murderers a run for their money.

His return as the "Ghost at the Feast" will be something that we work on together to get the most impact.

Witches (Speaking) – Ages 18 to 80 – Female

Sometimes, the witches have been played by either sex and have become androgenous over the centuries of this play, but, to my mind and for my production, I feel that because there are too few decent female roles in Shakespeare, I would prefer the witches to be female.

The Witches are mischievous. They are manipulative. They are dark, twisted, fast to react and very, very powerful.

The Witches will be present at many places throughout this production – in some places where they often are absent, their presence will be of sinister observers.

Witches (Dancing)

I'm loathe to put an age here, but this needs to be three dancers who can dance and prance and bend and curl. Three dancers who can respond to the movement of their associated speaking witch and who can perform a routine or two that will be choreographed by our dancing director.

Your facial expressions and movements need to reflect the goings on of the speaking witches. There will be some audience interaction, so you need to be comfortable with looking someone dead in the eye, even if only for a few seconds. Maybe even putting hands on people's shoulders to make them jump.... The act of giving an audience member something "extra" from the show that nobody else got is a true gift.

Porter. Any age. Any Gender

This role is pivotal and one that is often remembered fondly by audiences.

The role of “The Porter” has two purposes one as a sort of “Comic Relief” and the other as a buffer between scenes to give Macbeth and Lady Macbeth time to clean up and change.

What is needed here is someone who can really engage with the audience. Someone who is not afraid to look to the whites of the eyes of audience members and take them on the short but eventful journey you are telling them about.

As with the Dancing Witches, you will have the gift of giving some members of the audience an augmented experience that no one else has had. Something just for them, but that the rest of the audience will be in on and appreciate.

(For Lennox or Ross, please use Ross’ audition piece).

Lennox – 30-80. Male

Lennox is loyal to whoever is in charge. He is trusted by everyone and is a gather and teller of information to the other characters.

Ross – 30-65. Male

Like Lennox, he is widely trusted. He is also related to Lady Macduff and has a scene with her where he is trying to shield her from certain realities. He comes to life again when delivering some terrible news to Macduff in England.

Young roles:**Donalbain – Age 16 to 20 - Any Gender**

Malcolm’s brother. Doesn’t have much to do, but their confidence in the very early part of the play needs to switch to fear at the consequences of their father’s murder.

A role that will possibly double up as a servant later in the play.

Fleance – Age 14-20 – Any Gender

Banquo's Son/Daughter. They need to be able to telegraph strength. There may be some fighting where they attempt to protect their father – but that is subject to rehearsal.

Young Macduff(s). Age 10-16 – Any Gender

If I can have more than one Macduff child, that will be great. One will be required to speak. Both/all will be required to be cheeky in performance of the “non-murder” moments and to give it serious attitude to the murderers.

Young Siward. – Age 16 to 25 – Any Gender. Physical role.

This role is vital in displaying both the weaknesses in Macbeth's psyche and his pathos at the killing of someone so young.

Other Vital Roles

Whilst each of the following roles is vital, with many pivotal and important moments throughout the play, for audition purposes, please choose one of the main characters to show me what you can do!

Siward. Age 40-55 – Male

A veteran of the English army. Needs to be powerful and daunting in both stature and in attitude.

Murderers – Any age – Any Gender – Physical roles

Absolutely vital in some major, pivotal scenes. There will be fighting and all manner of unpleasantness.

Servants, Doctor, Gentlewoman, Lords, Thanes and worthies such as Caithness, Seyton, Angus. – All Any Gender

There will be some doubling up here. Each role has an important and pivotal moment to deliver at some point.