



DIRECTED BY BEN CRYSTAL

MACBETH

FRI 11 SEP – SAT 3 OCT 2026

SHAKESPEARE
NORTH PLAYHOUSE

WELCOME

FROM SHAKESPEARE NORTH PLAYHOUSE

We're incredibly excited to welcome you to Shakespeare North Playhouse and Macbeth, our latest in-house production, directed by renowned Shakespeare scholar, actor and facilitator Ben Crystal.

There is something particularly exciting about producing Shakespeare's work in a space inspired by the playhouses of his own time. With *Macbeth*, we have embraced that connection more fully than ever before, creating a performance illuminated entirely by candlelight. As the flames flicker around the Cockpit, they create an atmosphere that feels immediate, intimate, supernatural and alive, bringing audiences closer to the story and its characters in a way that is rarely experienced in modern theatre.

This production arrives at a remarkable moment. It has been 420 years since the first recorded performance of *Macbeth*, a play that has captivated audiences for generations with its exploration of ambition, power, fate and conscience. More than four centuries later Shakespeare's darkest tragedy continues to challenge us, inviting us to consider what happens when desire eclipses morality and how far we are willing to go in pursuit of our ambitions.

"MORE THAN FOUR CENTURIES LATER SHAKESPEARE'S DARKEST TRAGEDY CONTINUES TO CHALLENGE US..."



Lisa Allen

Chief Executive & Creative Director
at Shakespeare North

Working with Ben Crystal has been a wonderful opportunity to further deepen our exploration of Shakespeare's language and performance practices. His passion for bringing audiences closer to the plays as they may once have been experienced aligns perfectly with our mission to connect the past and present through bold and adventurous theatre-making. Together, we have sought to create an experience that feels both historically informed and thrillingly fresh.

As you take your seat, we invite you to let the candlelight guide you into one of Shakespeare's most haunted stories and experience this extraordinary play as it unfolds around you. We hope you leave captivated by the storytelling, inspired by the artistry on stage and reminded of the enduring power of live theatre.

Enjoy the performance.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

BEN CRYSTAL



The theatre that wraps around you was designed in 1629. You're sitting in a modern recreation of a 400-year-old idea.

Over the last 30 years, curiosity has taken flame: what can be gained by making Shakespeare's plays in a similar way to how his actors did, when he was putting quill to parchment?

What if Romeo and Tybalt use sword-fighting styles that were popular in the 1590s? How does it change an actor's movement if the actors wear an Elizabethan-style corset?

And – what would happen if the plays that Shakespeare wrote for a candle-lit theatre, were performed in a candle-lit theatre?

Candlelight changes the way we breathe. Even with all the candelabra lit, light appears to be diffused to our modern, screen-familiar eyes. Candlelight brings flickering shadows and invites us to question what lies beyond them.

I've taken 400-year-old rehearsal and production practices and fused them into a modern recreation (see the piece in this programme about Quick-Raising Shakespeare), mirroring the idea of creating this theatre.

The Quick-Raise process creates an immediacy and presence in performance that deliciously, tangibly emulates a modern version of the experience Shakespeare's audiences might have had.

The movement that you will see tonight is almost entirely improvised (though we take care to make sure the beautiful or complicated bits are pretty and safe).

"I'VE TAKEN 400 YEAR OLD REHEARSAL AND PRODUCTION PRACTICES, AND FUSED THEM INTO A MODERN RECREATION,"

So, every performance will be different, as we tune towards you, and play for, and with you. They will surprise themselves and hopefully surprise you all – in the moment of performance. We're making plays not plans.

Shakespeare's actors worked together for over 20 years. Their shared knowledge of playful performance with each other would be incredible. Modern theatre practice calls this kind of working togetherness an 'ensemble-driven' process. This style of theatre-making invites audiences to lean in and become the final, missing member of the ensemble.

We haven't set this production in a particular time – but the world is Godless, filled with magic, and the supernatural. You're about to witness a tragedy, a tale of murder, a ghost story.

Macbeth looks at ambition, fear, and fate, the extraordinary lengths people are driven to, and the wider struggle of holding a kingdom together under one authoritative power.

As the author Michel Faber wrote, "What would you destroy to get what you want?"



QUICK-RAISING SHAKESPEARE WITH CRYSTAL'S ELEVEN

Director Ben Crystal on how he delivers Shakespeare's plays in 5 days

400 years ago, when Shakespeare wrote a new play, he knew his actors didn't have much time to prepare. They were performing a different play every day, so they had about 18 hours to prepare a new play. Fast preparation is woven into the DNA of Shakespeare's writing.

This made me wonder: is it possible to rehearse a Shakespeare play in the same time-frame as Shakespeare's actors? The answer is very much yes: I've made full productions of Shakespeare to a professional standard in 5 days, 3 days, and sometimes, in 1 day, and I call this 'quick-raising' Shakespeare.

How did Shakespeare's actors do it? We know they rehearsed the 'songs, dances, and the fights' – in other words, the complicated bits – the sections that needed to look pretty, or that would be dangerous if they weren't practised.

Everything else – including their movement around the stage – was improvised. They *played* together, when they made a play.

I was trained by the Shakespeare director Patrick Tucker, who taught me about Elizabethan cue-scripts (his niece, Tiffany Stern, is the scholarly world authority on this practice).

Cue scripts – where you only have your lines, your cues of when to speak, when to enter, and exit. Nothing else. Just like a modern orchestra, where each musician has only their notes, each actor only has their words to prepare.

The focus a cue-script brings your attention to your character is incredible; the information about them that can be gleaned by myopically staring at only your words is fascinating. The ease and speed with which lines can be learnt is breath-taking.

I fuse 400 year old rehearsal and performance practices – like cue-scripts – with movement techniques I learnt from the movement director Jennifer Jackson,

the choreographer David Zambrano, and Complicite's Annabel Arden.

Shakespeare's actors had played together for 15 years by the time they made *Macbeth*. We had three weeks (a modern professional production would normally have 6 weeks or more), and we spent much of that time training.

We spent a lot of time together talking. We worked hard for ours to be a non-hierarchical, democratic space.

We spent a lot of our time short-circuiting towards a playful familiarity with each other, with the words, and with this beautiful theatre. As if we had been working here for 15 years.

We spent a lot of time listening to each other; to how our last 24 hours have been; to how each artist moves; to how we move in response to music; to how we move when we become playful with each other.

We spent a lot of time learning how each artist plays – reinforcing permission to explore, to dare, to risk, to fail.

Creativity comes from the freedom and permission to fail beautifully, with good humour. Freedom to fail facilitates experimentation. Experimentation leads to innovation, which is so important as we, theatre archaeologists, detective-like, try to fill in the gaps of what we don't know, and forge a new-old approach to making Shakespeare.

Non-velcro hands are also vital; this ensemble has demonstrated themselves to be robust, flexible, and quick to throw away things that don't work.

This kind of Quick-Raise process needs a crew that are excited at the novelty of approaching theatre-making in this way, that eagerly look to the past to see how we might excitedly build pathways to the future.

"Yeah, You gotta be nuts too. And you gonna need a crew as nuts as you are." – *Oceans Eleven* (2001)

MACBETH SOME HELPFUL GEMS

An introduction for new audiences...

Macbeth is image-famous for witches, a floating dagger, and the midnight murder of a Scottish king. Beyond these, it's a blood-soaked play with unspeakable brutality – throat-slitting, decapitation, the killing of an innocent mother and child which is nothing less than horrific, the murder of three people while they sleep, the splitting of someone from stomach to jawbone with a sword, a possible suicide, and a few other deaths which make the on- and off-stage body count around a dozen.

There are bloody ghosts, witches, and spirits – all ideas that would have brought terror to the minds of Shakespeare's audience. Characters hallucinate, are drugged, and are so terrified of their leader that they flee from their home and country. Some are so opposed to the dictator-like, tyrannical killing of innocents that they raise an army and go to war.

King Duncan and his generals are fighting the rebellious Scottish Thanes Cawdor and Macdonwald. Two of Duncan's generals, Macbeth and Banquo, meet three 'Weyward Sisters' as they return from battle. The Sisters tell Macbeth he will become king – and that Banquo will be the father of many Kings. Macbeth relates the prediction to his wife, and together they kill Duncan as he sleeps in their castle, and are crowned King and Queen. In a mixture of paranoia and insomnia, Macbeth becomes tyrannical, Lady Macbeth goes mad, and they both die quite horribly.

In Shakespeare's time, the monarch was thought to be a single step down from God. Commit an act against the monarch, and you're committing an act against God. Plot to murder the monarch, and you're essentially plotting to murder God. And if you murder the monarch to become the monarch, then you essentially become God on Earth, but in the process, turn everything natural upside down and inside out.

These were terrible, treasonous ideas – and something that Shakespeare's audience had *nearly* recently witnessed. In 1605 (a few months before *Macbeth* was first performed) the Scottish King James survived an assassination attempt by Guy Fawkes and his co-conspirators.

For his audience, *Macbeth* would have been one of the most topical, thrilling, socially relevant pieces of theatre they'd ever seen.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Macbeth – also referred to as Thane* of Glams, Thane of Cawdor, and King of Scotland

Macduff – also referred to as Thane of Fife

Malcolm – son of King Duncan, also referred to as Prince of Cumberland**, and King of Scotland

***Thane** – the chief of a clan, and one of the King's leaders. A Thane is similar to a Governor in Wild West movies, helping reign over a section of the country for the President.

****Prince of Cumberland** – The crown of Scotland was originally not hereditary. When a successor was declared in the lifetime of a king, the title of Prince of Cumberland was given

WHERE THE PLAGE?

Birnam Wood – the forest Malcolm uses to disguise his army

Cawdor – a town in the Highlands, north Scotland; Macbeth's new territory

Dunsinane – the location of King Macbeth's battle fortress

Fife – a county in east Scotland; Macduff's territory

Glamis – a town in east Scotland; Macbeth's territory

Inverness – the site of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's home castle

Scone – an ancient royal city in east Scotland; the Stone of Destiny lay here, on which Macbeth is crowned King

CHARACTERS MENTIONED (BUT WHO DON'T APPEAR)

Thane of Cawdor – a rebel against King Duncan. Duncan orders his execution at the beginning of the play, and Macbeth is given his lands and title

Macdonwald – a rebel against King Duncan

WHY ARE MACBETH'S WITCHES CALLED 'THE WEIRD SISTERS'?

Written by Mark Lee,
Volunteer at Shakespeare North Playhouse



The Weird Sisters, John Raphael Smith, 1785 (original artist Henry Fuseli)

You may have heard the three witches who haunt the woods in Macbeth being referred to as “the Weird Sisters”, but they do not possess that title because they are odd or a bit strange... (as unusual as they may be.) The word has a far more interesting history than that.

One thing that is particularly interesting about Shakespeare's witches is that he never actually uses *that* word to describe them. Certain editions use it as a character name or in the stage directions: Witch 1, Witch 2, Witch 3., but the word “witch” appears only once in the entire play (Act 1, Scene 3), when one of the Sisters remembers an encounter with a sailor's wife who refused to share her chestnuts and yelled “Aroint thee, witch!” (‘Aroint thee’ is an old expression meaning ‘be gone’, ‘stand off’, or ‘clear out’.) While the term is directed at a Sister, it appears to be used as an insult rather than as a general name or title for the Sisters themselves. Throughout the play, they are primarily referred to as “the weird Sisters” and yet, the imagery of them has dominated the public's image of what a witch is: a cryptic, prophesying woman speaking in riddles and hunched over a boiling cauldron, chanting “Double, double toil and trouble; Fire burn and caldron bubble.” You even see this quote printed on tote bags come Halloween season, so how odd that the origin for it does not ever use the word “witch”...

The word “weird” comes from the Old English *wyrð*, meaning “fate” or “destiny”. The Weird Sisters are, after all, prophetic figures: they foresee Macbeth's future and set him on the path towards becoming King of Scotland.

They do not strictly manipulate anyone or force them to act in a particular way: but they do influence Macbeth psychologically, spinning a web of predictions and cackling as the events unfold.¹

In Shakespeare's time, “weird” did not have quite the same meaning that it has today (with the modern meaning of “weird” being “*very strange and unusual, unexpected.*”) The earliest use of the word was in regard to The Three Fates, who were what The Weird Sisters were based on: three prophesying Goddesses who could see the future. Names are important, and Shakespeare knew this better than anyone. By labelling the sisters as “weird”, he signals to the audience that these are no ordinary figures. They possess a mysterious connection to fate and an uncanny insight into the future. Whether they merely foresee Macbeth's destiny or help set it in motion remains one of the play's great ambiguities, but their title grants them authority, raising the stakes of the play and their role within it.

It's not only the word that has changed; our perception of the witches has changed too. Contemporary adaptations often portray them as terrifying figures with boils, crooked noses, and sinister cackles. Their entrances are designed to unsettle audiences. Yet this has

**“CONTEMPORARY ADAPTATIONS OFTEN
PORTRAY THEM AS TERRIFYING FIGURES,
YET THIS HAS NOT ALWAYS BEEN THE CASE...”**

not always been the case. Restoration adaptations, for example, reimagined the sisters as comic or even musical characters. This is particularly striking given Macbeth's historical context. When the play was first performed in 1606, witchcraft was more than theatrical fantasy. Although the Salem witch trials would not occur until 1692, witch trials had been taking place across Europe since the fifteenth century. Time changes not just the meaning of words, but perceptions too. The same three witches can terrify one generation and become a source of theatrical spectacle or ridicule to the next.

**“WHEN THE PLAY WAS FIRST PERFORMED
IN 1606, WITCHCRAFT WAS MORE THAN
THEATRICAL FANTASY...”**

Yet the sisters' power to disturb Shakespeare's original audience did not stem solely from fears of witchcraft. It was also linked to ideas about gender and femininity. It is difficult to discuss *Macbeth* without exploring these themes, especially through an Elizabethan lens. The Weird Sisters dominate the forest scenes, while Lady Macbeth is arguably more ruthless than her husband. Yet, to summon the resolve to murder Duncan, she rejects her femininity, crying, “come, you spirits / That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here, / And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full / Of direst cruelty!” This is revealing, suggesting Shakespeare and his contemporaries associated such cruelty with a rejection of feminine qualities. The witches are similarly stripped

**“What are these
So withered and so wild in their attire,
That look not like th' inhabitants o' th' Earth,
And yet are on 't?—Live you?
Or are you aught
That man may question?”**

Act I, Scene III

of their femininity. Though repeatedly called “the weird sisters”, Banquo notes, “You should be women / And yet your beards forbid us to interpret / That you are so”. Like Lady Macbeth, they are masculinised in order to appear unsettling and dangerous.

Perhaps that is why “weird” is such an appropriate word for them: not simply because they are strange, but because they are figures who exist outside the ordinary rules of the world around them. Shakespeare chose this specific word for a reason: to let audiences know that they stray from the “normal”, which is probably why these characters have fascinated us for 420 years. Shakespeare gave them a name that meant “fate”, and we eventually turned it into a word meaning “strange”. Wonderfully, the Weird Sisters somehow managed to suit both titles. Shakespeare used this label not only to identify, but to condemn the actions of the witches standing around in the woods foreseeing the future of England... because god forbid women have hobbies.



Q: What was your initial reaction when it was proposed that this production should be lit entirely by candlelight?

A: My background in production is primarily working as a lighting technician; I love how theatrical lighting can be used to help set the scene and support the telling of stories onstage. My first response was that candlelight would reduce the options available; for example, the colours and directional lighting often used in modern theatre lighting practises would be difficult to replicate with candles. I'm aware of previous productions in The Cockpit that have been fully candle-lit, this was before I worked here but it has been great to look back at the plans and production photography from these performances. I have also worked on productions that have combined candlelight and electric lights, so it was an interesting challenge to explore how candlelight alone can be used to build the world Macbeth takes place in.

“IT WAS AN INTERESTING CHALLENGE TO EXPLORE HOW CANDLELIGHT ALONE CAN BE USED TO BUILD THE WORLD MACBETH TAKES PLACE IN.”

How does being in a wooden theatre influence the way you approach planning and risk management for a candlelit production?

The Cockpit was designed to be candlelit, and timber framed from the very first plans. Everyone involved in the building of Shakespeare North was aware of the history of many original theatres burning down throughout history, however with modern Health and Safety regulations and fire prevention technology, this means the fire engineering in place has always been designed to allow safe use of live candles in The Cockpit.

There is a very lengthy document that specifies how we can best manage any risk from both the live flame and timber structure, including state of the art smoke extraction systems, a huge number of fire exits, fire doors and protected stair wells to allow safe and fast evacuation and prevent the spread of a fire should the worst happen.

What additional safety measures have been implemented to allow the use of open flames throughout the performance?

As production specific elements, costume and hair design has been considered to reduce loose clothing that is more likely to waft into a candle, and all candle work has been rehearsed in costume to ensure safe distances for skirts etc. Candles are lit immediately prior to carry onstage and extinguished on exit to avoid carry through doors or curtains.



Did you learn anything from other venues about best practices?

We were lucky to be able to visit The Sam Wanaker Theatre at the Globe, where all productions feature live candle. We met their Senior Technician in charge of candles for a really informative day. We had the chance to explore how candlelight works in their space and talk through practices we could replicate at Shakespeare North. It was reassuring to hear from someone who does this all the time about how effective candlelight can be in stage lighting. Even the light from a single candle can be used to illuminate the whole theatre.

How do you balance preserving the atmosphere and authenticity of candlelit theatre with the practical realities of audience and performer safety?

The work on the candlelight has been a collaborative process between the production team and the creative team. Everyone was aware of the safety parameters ahead of starting the project and all requests and decisions have been made with a safety-first approach. This has made my job as Production Manager easy as it has meant I haven't needed to say no to any requests, they have all come to me as "what is the safest way to achieve this"

How are the candles selected, positioned, and monitored?

We use Beeswax candles selected for their low melting point and low drip properties. These are used in both the flown candelabras and handhelds. Stage Management and Technical staff have a clear line of sight to monitor lit candles and react to any incident that might occur. This would include a candle maybe tipping in its holder or being held too closely to an actor onstage.

What work goes on behind the scenes to make those flames appear effortless and safe?

There is a preparation method for the candles that includes melting the base slightly to ensure they fit snugly within the holders, the wicks are all pre-burnt to encourage even burning and easy lighting during performance. The candles are stored in the fridge to prolong burn time and keep them as efficient as possible.

“EVEN THE LIGHT FROM A SINGLE CANDLE CAN BE USED TO ILLUMINATE THE WHOLE THEATRE.”

Other interesting things and thoughts and facts:

The used candle stumps are saved and offered for sale in our shop; excess stumps are returned to the candle makers to be reclaimed and made into new candles to reduce waste.



DESIGNING MACBETH

Q&A with Costume Designer Mark Bailey

Where did or do you find inspiration for costumes?

It varies from project to project, but my starting point is always with the text, and then talking with the director, looking at images together, and refining those ideas.

For this production, we've sourced a lot of images for inspirations, mostly to do with the world of candlelight, of armour, of creating a world where people fight in battles and believe in the supernatural. So, a very different world from the one that we inhabit nowadays.

Are there practical challenges the performers need to be prepared for?

To be honest, I'd hope not, because my job is to overcome those challenges for them. (laughs)

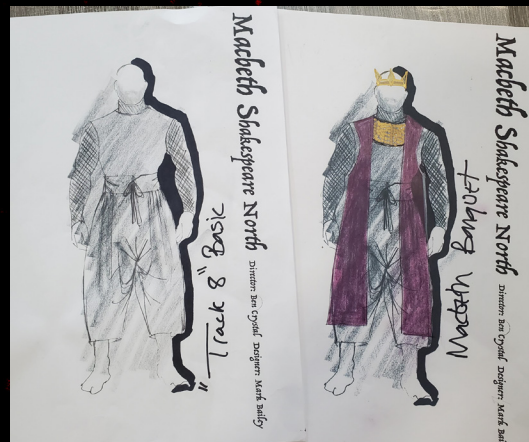
This is a true ensemble piece, so we [the creative team] are working very closely with the actors, and have been from day one, to make sure that they can do everything that they need, that we're supporting them as much as possible. I want to give everyone a lot of freedom in terms of movement, as it's a very physical production; we don't want them to feel restricted in any way by their costumes, apart from one or two moments where we're really using constraints and restraints to tell a story.

Another consideration is that the production is lit by candles, so we have to bear the safety of the cast in mind, in choice of fabrics and the way costumes are made and used, and alongside this we have been making sure the cast have plenty of sessions working with the candles so that they are confident and secure.

How closely are the costume concepts tied to character development?

I've created a sort of a base world that everyone inhabits, which I've done in collaboration with the director, and then we're putting the characters on top of that, superimposing those characters onto this base world, I suppose.

After coming up with the initial concept it was shared with the actors, so we can develop it collaboratively during the fitting process. Hopefully this gives them a real feeling of ownership and input as well. Also, we are linking certain characters and family groups by choice of colour to support clarity in storytelling for the audience.



Concept sketches by Mark Bailey

What is your favourite costume or prop, and why?

I don't think I can answer that question until we get them all together on stage. (laughs)

I think I know which two will be my favourites: Lady Macbeth and Macbeth in the banquet. Because this the production is lit by candlelight, I mean that's one of the many unique things about this production, and we've created costumes that hopefully will work particularly well with the candlelight. So, I'm looking forward to seeing that. But I'm always open to being surprised. Sometimes something that you never really thought of suddenly fires your imagination and then becomes the favourite.

Is this your first production of Macbeth that you have worked on?

No, this is my fourth production of Macbeth. They've all been very, very different. (Smiles.)

What are you most excited about regarding this show?

The fact that it's a real challenge. It's a very different way of working for me. I've designed over 250 productions, and I've never done one like this before, in this collaborative style, in the way that Ben works with the actors and with the whole technique, based on some of the principles that actors and theatres companies in Elizabethan times used. So, for me, it's just a whole new learning experience. It's great to be at this stage of my career, and to be surprised. I'm really enjoying that.



"I'VE DESIGNED OVER 250 PRODUCTIONS, AND I'VE NEVER DONE ONE LIKE THIS BEFORE, IN THIS COLLABORATIVE STYLE"



MACBETH CAST & CREATIVES

Photography by Lucy Williams (@lucymadeleinstudio)

ENSEMBLE ALPHABETICAL

Banquo, Duncan's General
DEVON ANDERSON

Lennox, Lady Macbeth's servant
KATE BENFIELD

King Duncan
CRANKS

Macbeth, Duncan's General
BEN CRYSTAL

Lady Macduff
JEN HARDY

Lady Macbeth
MEGS KUMARI

Rosse, the King's Royal Advisor
MACSEN MCKAY

Macduff, Duncan's General
JANELLE THOMPSON

Malcolm, Duncan's son
CALLUM SIM

providing live improvised
underscore
SEMAY WU

Fleance, Sisters, and Apparitions
played by members of the Ensemble

CREATIVE TEAM

Director, Curator & Co-Facilitator
BEN CRYSTAL

Associate Director & Co-Facilitator
ANDREW CODISPOTTI

Producer
STOBHAN NOBLE

Designer
MARK BAILEY

Abstract Violence Consultant
ARIANA KARP

Intimacy Direction Consultant
NEHA VYASO

Musician
SEMAY WU

Wardrobe Supervisor
HANNAH BOLD

Company Stage Manager
RAE WOODS

Deputy Stage Manager
VEE CLAIRE

Assistant Stage Manager
ELLA KIRK

Dramaturgy & Text Consultant
DAVID BAYNES

Costume Makers
HANNAH BOLD

BARRY HAN

SARAH HAN

RUTA STASEVICIUTE

ABBIE SUTCLIFFE

Production therapy assistance dog
EDIE

PRODUCED BY

**SHAKESPEARE
NORTH
PLAYHOUSE**

WITH THANKS TO

New Vic Theatre (Stoke-on-Trent), Faz Kemp at Shakespeare's Globe, Jones Props & FX Ltd, Jessie Lillis, Rob Gander, Jake Kemp, Hilary & David Crystal, Kate Wasserberg, Stuart Crowther, Celyn Jones, Mariana Pires, Em Thane, Will Dickie, Ryan Hardy-Byrne, Eve Thompson, Laura Crow, James O'Lynch, Claire Bigley, Paisley Reid & all at LIPA, the entire team at Shakespeare North, and all our friends and families.



DEVON ANDERSON

Devon Anderson is an award-winning screen and stage actor with over two decades of professional experience. His extensive television work includes *EastEnders*, *Hollyoaks*,

Casualty, *Sinbad* and *Kerching!*, while his stage credits include the critically acclaimed *A Deportational Road* at the Finborough Theatre. Devon is excited to join Shakespeare North Playhouse for *Macbeth*, embracing his first professional Shakespeare production as part of the ensemble company.



KATE BENFIELD

Kate is delighted to be joining the cast of *Macbeth* and to be working in such a beautiful theatre that is very close to home and her heart.

She trained at ALRA North and with Both Feet.

Theatre credits include: *Joy Unspeakable* (Ordinary Glory); *Lights On/Lights Off* (Shakespeare North Playhouse); *Under My Skin* (Pegasus Theatre); *Lost* (Kindred Folk Dance Theatre); *The Star that Lost Its Twinkle* (Theatre Tots); *Making Love* (Broken Tongue); *Well, Boys, Perhaps it's Peace* (National Trust); *Sanctuary From the Trenches* (National Trust & Royal Exchange Theatre).

Screen credits include: *By Faith and Industry* (Culture Knowsley); *An Injection a Day* (xRhodes Films); *Fredonia* (Gee Gee Productions). She has recently finished filming for a soon to be announced Netflix drama.

Kate also works as a freelance facilitator, including running workshops for Shakespeare North Playhouse, the Unity theatre and the Lowry. She is one half of Tiring House Productions.



CRANKS

Cranks has been a professional actor for 18 years. She has appeared across the London fringe, garnering two OffWestEnd nominations – Best Lead Performance in a Play for

The Island (2023) and Best Solo Performance for *21 Round for Christmas* (2022). She won a Norman Beaton Fellowship in 2021 and as a result then spent a fantastic five months as a member of the BBC Radio Drama Company. You can catch her on Radio 4 in October playing Marina in Emma Pritchard's play *Meanwhile*. She has appeared in *EastEnders*, *Coronation Street*, *Doctors* and the ITV drama *Grace*. Theatre will always be her first love however, and she is thrilled to be making her Shakespeare Playhouse North debut.



BEN CRYSTAL

Ben Crystal is an actor, author, curator, and creative producer.

He is an Associate Artist with the Shakespeare North Playhouse, patron of the primary school

initiative Shakespeare Week, and a consultant for theatre companies around the world.

He developed the "Quick-raise" process, creating professional productions of Shakespeare's plays in 5 days, inspired by Shakespeare's actors' theatrical practice.

He is the author of *Shakespeare on Toast* and *Springboard Shakespeare*, and the co-author with his father of *Shakespeare's Words and Everyday Shakespeare*.

He curated the British Library's CD *Shakespeare's Original Pronunciation*, and played the title role in the contemporary world premieres in OP of *Hamlet*, *Henry V*, and *Richard II*.

His TEDx talk was called *Original Practices: Shakespeare's Craft*. He lives online at www.bencrystal.com and on Instagram @Shakespeare_on_Toast



JEN HARDY

Hailing from the North West of England, Jen is an improviser, poet, teacher and coach.

Jen is part of The Rubbish Shakespeare Company, touring in their improvised Shakespeare

show which sold out its 5-star run at the Pleasance Courtyard at The Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Jen is also part of Playing Dead Theatre and Impromptwo and Co, companies who travel internationally performing theatrical spontaneous theatre. She has also created an award winning, fully improvised solo show which has toured festivals around the world. Jen also hosts The Seriously Stupid Show, an accessible family-friendly sketch show which has a monthly residency at The Unity Theatre.

As a trained teacher and clown, Jen has coached teams who've gone on to perform at international festivals and individuals who've gone on to carve out professional comedy careers.

She makes her Cockpit Theatre debut as part of the ensemble of *Macbeth*.



MEGS KUMARI

Megs Kumari trained at Bird College (BA Hons, Professional Dance & Musical Theatre) and has since built a career spanning stage, screen and dance.

Theatre credits include *Same,*

Same, But Different (Unnamed Friend Productions) and *Jacqueline Wilson Is Gay* (Bold Mellon), alongside musical theatre work including *Little Women*, *Land Girls* and *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. On screen, they have appeared in Sky's *World's Most Evil Killers* and led immersive productions for Warner Bros' *The Polar Express*. Megs is also an experienced improviser, with credits including *The M.O.B.* and *Kerfuffle* (Hoopla), and a choreographer for stage and competition. A member of BollyQueer dance company, Megs regularly takes on performance work for a range of clients, including Channel 4, Paramount Pictures, and UK Black Pride. Whether on stage, screen or dancefloor, Megs brings the same zeal to every project and *Macbeth* is no exception.



MACSEN MCKAY

Macsen McKay is an actor and theatre maker. He has worked with companies including Told By An Idiot on their production *Let Me Play The Lion Too*, and Taking Flight Theatre on productions such

as *First Three Drops* and Jim Cartwright's *Road*, where he played Brink, Professor and Curt. Most recently, he appeared in Theatr Clwyd's acclaimed production of *Under Milk Wood*, playing Mog Edwards, Mr Pugh, Mr Pritchard and Evans the Death. He is also a co-founder of the disabled and neurodivergent-led theatre collective Same Hat Theatre, who are currently developing their debut show.

His screen credits include the role of Callum in the Channel 4 / S4C drama *The Light In The Hall: Still Waters / Y Golau: Dŵi* and the role of Court Clerk in the BBC Wales drama *Keeping Faith*. Macsen also has two upcoming feature film credits in *Werewolf*, directed by Robert Eggers, and *Mountain*, directed by Celyn Jones.

ENSEMBLE



JANELLE THOMPSON

Janelle is a versatile actor who loves to play. She studied at the University of Central Lancashire, and graduated with a BA in Contemporary Performing Arts.

Her theatre credits include, *Bessie at Midnight, Alone*, where she won the Best Newcomer award at Birmingham Fringe Festival. She has also worked with Box of Tricks, Hidden Track Theatre and HER Productions, performing at The Lowry, Chester Storyhouse, Unity Theatre and Leeds Playhouse.

Her TV credits include *Emmerdale* and *The VAR Room*, for ITV and Amazon Prime, respectively. She has featured in commercials for Ikea, UberEats, and Tesco Mobile.

When she's not working, you can find her making homemade soups, jams and chutneys!

Janelle is represented by Icon Actors Management and is 'absolutely buzzing' to be joining the team.



CALLUM SIM

Cal is thrilled to be returning to Shakespeare North Playhouse for *Macbeth*. His recent credits include *Girl Troop vs Aliens* (CBBC), *Half Man* (BBC), *Twelfth Night* (Gatehouse Theatre),

Talamasca (AMC), *Book of Will* (Shakespeare North Playhouse).



SEMAY WU

Semay Wu (she/her) is a Scotland-based composer, cellist/improviser, and media/sound artist. Hailing from Liverpool, then on to Manchester, The Netherlands and now

Scotland, Semay's musical heritage is a mix of classical to theatre, dance, film-work, recording, touring, and visual artist; to electronics, software and electroacoustic instruments; and to building a grassroots non-profit organisation in The Hague called New Emergences.

Since 2022, Semay has released solo works: *Raspberry Hotel* (Akashic Records, 2022), *Sharmanka & Unsteady Stones* (Scatter Archive, 2023 & 2024), and *Unsteady Stones/The Spinal Cactus #001* (self-released, 2024).

Alongside this, Semay has produced a wide range of works from hand-drawn scores, sound and video productions, installations, to creating an online audio cookbook for Manchester's communities, called *Sounds Like Scran*.

Heavily influenced in spontaneous and freely improvised frameworks, Semay works in solo or collaborative spaces, building relationships between disciplines such as in movement (Skye Reynolds), space, mark-making (Emily Fong), poetry (Juana Adcock) and others. She spends time with larger groups too (Ubu Warp Cheer, New String Collective and Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra).

And to Semay's theatre experience, she has worked in roles of Performer, Composer and/or Musical Director, with many devised shows from *20 Stories High*, *Improbable*, *Punchdrunk*, *Forkbeard Fantasy*, *Theatre Alibi*, *Avanti Display*, *Walk the Plank*, and most recently, on children's shows with *New Wolsey Theatre* and *Theatre Porto*.

CREATIVE TEAM

MACBETH

ANDREW CODISPOTTI

Associate Director & Co-Facilitator

Andrew Codispotti (they || he) is a New England-based theatre maker & performer specializing in ensemble-led and historically informed performances of Shakespeare.

They are a founding member of The Shakespeare Ensemble and the Bridge Ensemble (both with Ben Crystal), an Associate Artist with Incite Shakespeare Company Santa Fe, and an Artistic Associate with Elsewhere Shakespeare. They have facilitated and produced productions (including 2-3 day Shakespeare "quick-raises") throughout the world. They have performed on 600-year-old shrine stages in Japan, under candlelight in 12th-century churches in North Wales and spent 10 years creating "ShakesBEERience" performances in a pub in New Hampshire with Seven Stages Shakespeare Company. With their acting & devising partner Ariana Karp they are Cod & Karp Productions, creating small-scale productions including the continually-evolving two-hander Shakespeare's Duets: *Turn & Change*. They worked extensively with The Barnstormers Theatre and *Advice to the Players* (where they were Artistic Director for two years).

News, blog, and poetry at andrewcodispotti.com

MARK BAILEY

Designer

Mark Bailey has designed over 250 productions of theatre, opera and ballet in Britain, Europe and North America. In the UK work for major producing theatres includes productions at Bristol Old Vic, Theatre Royal York, Theatre Royal Plymouth, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Chichester Festival Theatre, Theatre Clwyd and Birmingham Rep as well as the RSC (*The Provoked Wife*) and the National Theatre (*The Threepenny Opera*).

West End credits include: *Dickens Abridged*, *Rent*, *Legal Fictions*, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (also Toronto), *The Winslow Boy*, *Present Laughter*, *Rat Pack Confidential*, *Which Witch* (costumes) and *The Gondoliers* and *Mack and Mabel*. Recent designs include *The Red Rogue of Bala* (Theatre Clwyd); *Sherlock Holmes and the Twelve Days of Christmas* (Birmingham Rep), *Travels with My Aunt* (Citizens Glasgow) and the UK tour of *Ghost The Musical*.

Mark's designs for ballet include: *Cinderella*, *Chaplin the Tramp* and *Nijinsky*, *God of the Dance* (Slovak National Ballet); *The Boy In the Striped Pyjamas* (Northern Ballet); *The Snow Queen*, (English National Ballet, National Ballet of Lithuania, Vienna Staatsballet, Czech National Ballet); *Melody on the Move* (English National Ballet); *The Sleeping Beauty* (Hong Kong Ballet); *A Time There Was* (Tivoli Ballet, Copenhagen).

Opera designs include: *Madame Butterfly* (Nevill Holt /Grange Park), *Carmen* (Royal Opera House, Linbury Studio); *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* (Los Angeles Opera), *Iolanthe* (D'Oyly Carte Opera), and *Ariadne Auf Naxos* (Maggio Musicale Florence/Opera de Lausanne).

Other notable productions include: *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre); *Pieces* (Clwyd and New York); *The Pretenders* (National Theatre of Norway); *The Double Dealer*, *The Seagull* (Gate Theatre, Dublin); *The York Mystery Plays*, and UK tours of *Hadrian VII*, *Peace in Our Time*, *Entertaining Mr Sloane*, *A Judgement in Stone*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Save the Last Dance for Me* and *Jekyll and Hyde The Musical*.

CREATIVE TEAM

ARIANA KARP

Abstract Violence Consultant

Ariana Karp (she|her) is a theatre-maker who has worked as an actor, director, educator, and cellist in New York, London, and across the United States and Japan. Since 2018 she has been the Artistic Director of Incite Shakespeare Company Santa Fe. She is an alumna of London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) with a master's degree in Classical Acting.

Ariana is passionate about the cultivation of radical empathy, working as a teaching artist with Marin Shakespeare Company's Shakespeare for Social Justice program in various prisons throughout California. She has taught university courses on acting, Shakespeare, voice, movement, and improvisational practices in performance and completed teaching residencies and workshops for actors and students of all ages throughout the US. www.arianakarp.com

NEHA VYASO

Intimacy Direction Consultant

Neha Vyaso (she/they) is an actor-director and one of India's first IDC-certified intimacy directors. A pioneer of intimacy work in India, they founded BraveSpaces Creative India, an organisation centred on consent-forward practice across Asia, and lead the BraveSpaces Asia Intimacy Professionals Studio, the region's first training programme for intimacy professionals. Their consent work adapts to the cultures, processes and people it meets, while honouring the principle of people before art. They have trained as a performer in acting, clowning and movement, which helps them expand the breadth of intimacy work meaningfully.

They believe that art can change lives and have performed with Clowns Without Borders in psychosocial relief programmes for high-risk children. They are also passionate about returning Shakespeare to the people, which they do through Salaam Shakespeare, a decolonial micro-film initiative, and by being a part of the Decentred Shakespeares Network.

SEMAY WU

Musician

Semay Wu (she/her) is a composer, cellist, improviser, and sound/media artist. Born in Liverpool, took off to Manchester, explored how to be a proper European in The Netherlands, and then finally, in 2017, Semay settled in Scotland.

Through a thirty-year discipline, her musical heritage has become a rich and eclectic mesh of classical to devised theatre and dance; from improvisation to weaving within movement, mark-making, poetry and others; from multiple recordings and touring to being a long-term member of bands *Homelife*, *The Earlies*, *Mayming* and others; delving into creative DIY and software electronics to building intriguing electroacoustic instruments; and in 2016, birthed a grassroots non-profit organisation, *New Emergences*, in The Hague for re-balancing voices within electronic music and sound-art.

Semay has worked on an incredible mix of inspired devised theatre, in varying roles of performer, composer and musical director: with *Improbable*, *20 Stories High*, *Avanti Display*, *Walk the Plank*, *Forkbeard Fantasy*, *Theatre Alibi*, *Punchdrunk*, and most recently, on children's shows with *New Wolsey Theatre* and *Theatre Porto*.

Semay always feels at home with spontaneous, connecting and freely improvised frameworks, and here in *Macbeth*, Semay's brought not just the cello, but a collection of instruments. With a completely acoustic process, Semay will be gathering, fermenting, distilling sounds and creating a soundscape that is improvised every night.

To be part of Ben Crystal and Andrew Codisotti's direction and facilitation for *Macbeth*, it has been the most beautiful experience. Add Mark Bailey's costumes, the cockpit theatre-stage, candlelight, and a phenomenal cast and crew, Semay is very excited to make music for this production of *Macbeth*.

HANNAH BOLD

Wardrobe Supervisor

Hannah graduated from LIPA in Theatre and Performance Design and has worked across Theatre and Community Arts for almost 20 years.

Credits include: Shakespeare North Playhouse (2023-present) Wardrobe Supervisor: *Two. Dresser*; *The Book of Will*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Wardrobe Assistant/Maintenance: *The Wind in the Willows*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Loves Labours Lost*, *The Tempest*, *Cinderella*.

Costume Design, Costume prop making and workshops for Manchester Day and Light Up Leigh Community Parades (2010-2025)

Dresser, Wardrobe Assistant, Costume Props Maker at Oldham Coliseum Theatre (2011-2023)

RAE WOODS

Company Stage Manager

Rae is a 2022 LIPA graduate. Previous credits include: *Snake In The Grass* (Theatr Clwyd), *Boys From The Blackstuff* (Liverpool Royal Court), *I Do* (Dante or Die, Barbican), *Tell Me How It Ends* (Liverpool Everyman)

VEE CLAIRE

Deputy Stage Manager

Previous credits include: *Cured* (disability led production, Liverpool's Royal Court), *Larkrise to Candleford* - (Watermill Theatre, Newbury) *The Full Monty* (Lowther Theatre), *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare North Playhouse).

ELLA KIRK

Assistant Stage Manager

Previous credits include: *Mrs Dalloway* (Chester Storyhouse), *The Memory of Water* (Octagon Theatre Bolton & Liverpool Everyman), *The Snow Queen* (The Dukes Lancaster) and *Gods of Salford* (LOWRY).

IN REHEARSAL

Photography by Lucy Williams (@lucymadeleinstudio)

MACBETH

"Is this a dagger which I
see before me, The handle
toward my hand?"

(Act 2, Scene 1)





NURTURING CREATIVE VOICES: ORIGIN8

Supporting artists is a core part of our mission. We want to foster growth at every stage of an artist's career, helping to shape the future of performance and creative work.



From emerging talent to established creators, our goal is to make Shakespeare North Playhouse a vibrant hub where creativity thrives, and lasting connections are made between artists and audiences.

Supporting artists isn't just about providing space to make work, it's about building confidence, community, and opportunity. This belief sits at the heart of ORIGIN8, our newly enhanced artist development programme, designed to nurture new creative voices across Knowsley, the Liverpool City Region, and the wider North West.

ORIGIN8 reflects our commitment to ensuring artists at all stages of their careers can explore bold ideas in an environment that is supportive, practical, and connected. With backing from the Amazon Regional Creatives Fund, the programme expanded its reach, particularly toward underrepresented artists, strengthening access to creative development opportunities and the networks that sustain them."

The programme is specifically designed to prioritise support for artists who are working-class, from the global majority, Deaf, disabled or neurodiverse, or LGBTQIA+. Beyond individual development, ORIGIN8 fosters a reciprocal creative network, encouraging collaboration, knowledge sharing, and long-term relationships that strengthen the wider regional arts ecology.

“

Supporting local artists is vital to the creative life of our region. Artist development programmes nurture talent, build confidence and ensure that diverse voices are shaping the cultural stories we share. ORIGIN8 offers artists the time and space to grow, connecting them with resources and networks that can transform ideas into impactful work.”

Lisa Allen, CEO and Creative Director

Since 2022, we have supported more than 1,000 creatives through free Research and Development space, workshops, networking opportunities, and funding advice delivered in partnership with organisations including Graeae, Shakespeare's Globe, and Not Too Tame. ORIGIN8 takes this further by offering a clearer and more structured pathway for progression.

The impact extends beyond the programme itself. ORIGIN8 alumni may move into wider programming opportunities, including SCRATCH, the theatre's quarterly platform for presenting works-in-progress, while also accessing masterclasses, workshops, funding guidance, and networking events that continue building skills and professional connections.

At its core is a three-stage artist journey.

GENER8

Idea Generation

Artists explore early ideas through mentoring conversations with producers, refining concepts and considering practical pathways forward.

INCUB8

Space to create

We provide space for creation, offering flexible R&D time in the theatre's Studio to accommodate artists' varied commitments and responsibilities.

CELEBR8

Sharing the work

Artists are invited to share work with an audience, gathering feedback to inform next steps and celebrating progress before joining a growing alumni network.



Together, these opportunities reflect our ambition to act as a regional hub for inclusive talent development, ensuring creative careers are accessible and sustainable.

Paul Firth, Director of Global Music Industry at Amazon Music and judge for the Regional Creatives Fund:

“Shakespeare North Playhouse does incredible work in the community, and we were blown away by its commitment to upskilling people in underserved communities for careers in creative industries. We're excited to support its programmes as they expand their impact.”

Ultimately, ORIGIN8 is about more than individual artistic growth. By embedding artist development within the community, it ensures that creativity continues to shape local identity, resilience, and pride; reinforcing the idea that when artists are supported to thrive, the cultural life of the entire region flourishes alongside them.



COMMUNITY MAGIC

Together, we make stories shine.

Every story begins with a spark of imagination, and for us, that spark comes from creativity, connection, and a belief in possibility. We know that theatre can transform lives, not just through the stories told on stage, but through the connections made beyond it.

Our work is rooted in people and community.

We are proud to be a local hub in Knowsley where people come together to create, learn, and grow. Whether it's a first trip to the theatre, a storytelling session for young children, or a creative workshop for adults, each encounter builds something lasting. These moments show that art is not a luxury but a shared experience that belongs to everyone.

Our key strands of delivery have Shakespeare, his stories and the worlds he built at the centre; **we encourage creative reading, writing and performing** through the work we do with all age groups. We know his work is a conversation starter, something almost universal that can be offered as a gateway into exploring characters, themes and stories that resonate today. Whether that's talking about idioms with residents in supported accommodation, exploring monologues with learners in prisons or staging his plays with our youth theatre- we use Shakespeare as a central connective tissue across the opportunities we create.

Inclusion sits at the centre of everything we do.

We believe that everyone deserves to see themselves represented in the arts, to feel welcome, and to know that their voice matters. That belief shapes our Learning and Engagement programmes, which offer opportunities for people of all ages. The shape of getting involved with Shakespeare North's Engagement work spans a variety of opportunities including shared reading groups, regular



schools work, activity for adults including acting and comedy classes, early years sessions, and outreach workshops across the region.

All of our activity strives to **build connections, foster community and grow creative conversation and skills**. Creativity builds confidence, reduces isolation, and nurtures wellbeing. Each session and project adds another thread to the social fabric of our town, borough, and City Region. We're building cultural citizens who can self-advocate, stay connected and use the arts as part of a full life.

Our Playhouse is more than a building; it's a space where imagination leads the way. Every participant, whether joining a workshop, rehearsal, or performance, becomes part of something bigger.

BE PART OF SOMETHING SPECIAL...

THEATRE FOR CONNECTION, BELONGING, AND HUMANITY

As the lights dim and the music begins to play, a spark of magic fills the air. Every twinkle of the spotlight, every shared laugh and gasp, every child's first encounter with theatre or Shakespeare – they all begin with generosity.



That belief is made real every day by the kindness of our audiences, supporters, and partners; people just like you who recognise the value that arts and culture bring to our communities.

We are proud to be a charitable organisation here in Knowsley, at the heart of the Liverpool City Region. Our theatre belongs to everyone. It's a place where people of all ages and backgrounds can come together to enjoy much-loved stories, discover bold new voices, and share experiences that move, inspire, and connect.

Beyond the stage, our work reaches deep into the community. We deliver creative workshops for children and young people, offer learning programmes that build confidence and skills, and run projects that make culture accessible to all. At its best, theatre creates belonging, and we're proud to shape spaces where everyone can feel part of something meaningful.



YOUR SUPPORT UPLIFTS THE COMMUNITY

Every gift, large or small, helps us open doors and create opportunities for others.

Your support helps us:

- Deliver creative workshops for children and young people, igniting imaginations and inspiring future storytellers, actors, and dreamers.
- Provide safe, welcoming spaces where people of all ages can connect, learn, and grow.
- Offer free and low-cost tickets, so that no one is excluded from experiencing the joy and wonder of live theatre.

When you choose to give, you become part of something that reaches far beyond our walls. You might help a young person discover their voice, enable a parent and child to share their first show together, or support someone in finding friendship and confidence through community events.



“

"I can honestly say this place has done wonders for my confidence – and for my belief that my words matter."

Mark Jackson, winner of our volunteer award



Learn more
about how you
can support us.



JOIN THE COCKPIT CIRCLE

If you'd like to play an even bigger role in what we do, we warmly invite you to join the Cockpit Circle, our community of regular supporters.

From just £50 a year (less than the cost of a monthly takeaway or a weekly coffee-to-go), you help us to:

- Create theatre that inspires and connects, bringing people together through shared experiences.
- Nurture local talent and future artists, giving them the confidence and platform to grow.
- Preserve our cultural heritage, protecting the stories, traditions, and spaces that define our region.



As a Cockpit Circle supporter, you'll receive behind-the-scenes updates, early booking access, and invitations to special events. You'll get chances to meet the artists and creative teams who bring work to life and see first-hand the difference your support makes.

Most importantly, you'll be helping to sustain a theatre that belongs to everyone.

TAKE YOUR PLACE IN THE STORY...

Every person who walks through our doors becomes part of our journey. Whether you're joining us for the first time or have supported us for years, your presence helps keep creativity thriving.

Theatre builds connections, between performers and audiences, neighbours and generations. It reminds us of something deeply human: our shared desire to imagine, to feel, and to celebrate together.

Your support, whether through a donation, by joining the Cockpit Circle, or simply being here, ensures future generations can share that same experience.

Imagine a child stepping onto a stage for the first time. A writer seeing their work performed. Someone discovering a sense of belonging in a place they never expected to find it. That's the difference your generosity makes.



We invite you to take your place with us. Help us continue creating theatre that uplifts, connects, and belongs to everyone.

Thank you for being part of something special.

RELAX, EAT, DRINK AND ENJOY...



THE MACBETH MENU

- Marinated Olives (ve) - £4.5
- Hummus & flat breads (ve) - £7
- Blue Murder, Port Onions, oat crackers (v) £8
- Charcuterie, pickles & bread - £9
- Smoked Salmon, lemon cream cheese and capers, on home made soda bread - £9
- Haggis Croquettes with Whisky sauce - £8
 - Mushroom & truffle croquettes, garlic aioli (v) - £8
 - Baked goats cheese, beetroot, candied walnut, & soda bread (v) £9
 - Roasted squash, braised hispi cabbage, mustard sauce & savoury fennel granola (ve) £9
 - Beef Scotch Pie, turnip mash & whisky sauce - £9
 - Birnam wood mushroom pie, with turnip mash & whisky sauce (ve) £9
-
- Fries (ve) - £4.5
- Truffle & Parmesan fries (v) £6
-
- Pizzettes - £9**
 - Margherita; Olive Marinara (no cheese) (ve); Ham & Mushroom; Spicy Beef & Onion; Beetroot & Pesto (ve)



MACBETH INSPIRED COCKTAIL BLOOD & SAND

Ingredients

- 30ml scotch
- 15ml sweet vermouth
- 15ml cherry liqueur
- 25ml orange juice
- Garnish: orange peel

Directions

Add the scotch, sweet vermouth, cherry liqueur and orange juice into a shaker with ice and shake until well-chilled.
Strain into a chilled coupe or cocktail glass.
Garnish with an orange peel.



"I love the challenge of building a menu around a production. It's storytelling in another form. Every dish is an opportunity to weave the themes of the production into the audience experience. **For Macbeth, I drew on seasonal Scottish ingredients and the imagery of Burnham Wood**, to create dishes that echo the mood and themes of the play. Being able to craft food that complements what audiences are seeing on stage is one of the most exciting parts of cooking in a theatre."

Roland Williams,
Head Chef

SCAN THE QR CODE
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT
BAR & KITCHEN



SPACES MADE FOR MOMENTS

Our building is alive with possibility. It is a place where people gather to celebrate, share ideas, and create lasting memories. From business conferences and team away days to family celebrations, each event is treated with the same care and attention that shapes our performances and menus. For those beginning a new chapter, the Playhouse also offers a wedding setting filled with beauty, history, and theatre-inspired charm. Imagine exchanging vows in the oak-framed Cockpit Theatre, a space where every promise feels timeless. It is a unique stage for new beginnings and a perfect backdrop for memories that will last a lifetime.

Flexible spaces, excellent facilities, and dedicated support make the Playhouse a unique venue for your personal gatherings and corporate events.

For community connections, we host makers markets and workshops, creating spaces for local artists, craftspeople, and friends to come together. Our family area offers a family friendly extension to the Bar & Kitchen and is a welcoming environment for all ages to learn, play, and enjoy creativity together.

We "would not wish any companion in the world but you".
(The Tempest, Act 3, Scene 1)



"Thanks for a lovely day. It was fantastic! Everyone seemed to really enjoy it and it was something completely different. The staff on the day were excellent, and the food was great too. We were so happy with the venue, the team and the support that you gave."

Corporate Team Building Day,
with tour and performance tickets for
60 people



SCAN THE QR CODE
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT
VENUE OPPORTUNITIES



TEAM SHAKESPEARE NORTH PLAYHOUSE



LEADERSHIP TEAM

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Claire Will – Executive Director
Victoria Armstrong – Head of Audiences & Sales
Kay Buckley – Head of Production & Facilities
Steph Green – Head of Engagement
Siobhan Noble – Head of Producing
Ana Pinto Goncalves – Head of Fundraising

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Morven Currie – Project Producer
Anna Considine – Coordinator, Learning and Engagement

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Mel Paget – Senior Theatre Technician
Adam Harper – Senior Theatre Technician
Rob Murtagh – Theatre Technician
Jess Thomas – Theatre Technician

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Richard Wilkie-Riley – Senior Visitor Experience Manager
Danielle Youds – Interim Catering & Events Manager
Fiona Hall – Event Sales Manager
Roland Williams – Head Chef
Liz Hann – Front of House Manager
Catherine Hazley – Front of House Manager
Chris Matthews – Junior Chef / CDP
Terrimarie Appleyard – Assistant Catering & Events Manager

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Max Steinberg (Chair), Chris Brown (Deputy Chair), Coral Cameron, Jon Corner, Natalie Gilmore, Peter Mearns, Ashley Morgan, Ian McCarthy, Michael Salla, Kate Tipton-Thomas, Sheena Wrigley.

WITH THANKS TO

All our Catering & Events Assistants, Ticketing & Retail Assistants, Visitor Experience Assistants and Volunteers.



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Knowsley Council

“DOUBLE, DOUBLE TOIL AND TROUBLE; FIRE BURN, AND CAULDRON BUBBLE.”

(Act 4, Scene 1)

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HEAR ABOUT IT FIRST

Sign up to our newsletter and hear it from us first. Some events fly out the door, make sure you're not left disappointed.

