

Alton  
Fringe  
Theatre



**MACBETH**

William Shakespeare

27, 28, 29 NOVEMBER 2019  
WESSEX ARTS THEATRE at ALTON COLLEGE

## CAST

<b>1st Witch</b>	Louise Moore	Thanes:	
<b>2nd Witch</b>	Lisa Felix	<b>Lennox</b>	Michael Biddiss
<b>3rd Witch</b>	Alison Ledesma	<b>Ross</b>	Rod Sharp
<b>Macbeth</b>	Tim Guilding	<b>Angus</b>	David Waltham-Hier
<b>Lady Macbeth</b>	Jane Gray	<b>Captain</b>	Stephen Dunne
<b>King Duncan</b>	Douglas Brown	<b>Seyton</b>	Douglas Brown
His sons:		<b>Porter</b>	Ian Dussek
<b>Malcolm</b>	Rowan Kester Mason	<b>1st murderer</b>	Stephen Dunne
<b>Donalbain</b>	Chris Page-Tickell	<b>2nd murderer</b>	David Waltham-Hier
<b>Macduff</b>	Joe de Peyrecave	<b>Doctor</b>	Penny Cushing
<b>Lady Macduff</b>	Jane Samways	<b>Gentlewoman</b>	Jane Samways
<b>Their Son</b>	William Twining	<b>A Lord</b>	Rowan Kester Mason
<b>Banquo</b>	Simon Brencher	<b>Messengers</b>	Jane Samways
His son:			Chris Page-Tickell
<b>Fleance</b>	Chris Page-Tickell		

## PRODUCTION TEAM

<b>Director</b>	Chris Chappell	<b>Graphics</b>	James Willis
<b>Assistant Director</b>	Alison Ledesma	<b>Costume</b>	Sue Hubbard
<b>Screen images</b>	Chris Lang		Jackie Epps
<b>Choreography</b>	Anna Lang	<b>Front of House</b>	Lesley Willis
<b>Technician</b>	Mark Smith	<b>Text editor</b>	Michael Biddiss
<b>Publicity</b>	Steve Gerlach	<b>Fight Director</b>	Tim Guilding
<b>Venue organiser</b>	Cath Gerlach		

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

<b>Venues</b>	Amery Hill School Wessex Arts Centre	<b>Stage set</b>	The Vintage Cupboard Alton Operatic & Dramatic Soc.
<b>Box Office</b>	Wildly Upbeat Printers	<b>Sound props</b>	Barbara Rayner
<b>Photographs</b>	Ian Dumelow	<b>Make up</b>	Judy Holdstock
<b>Wardrobe</b>	Bath Theatrical Costume Hire		

*Action takes place almost wholly in Scotland.*

*There will be one interval.*

## THE CONTEXT

*Macbeth* was first performed in 1606, by the company of actors known as The King's Men that had Shakespeare as its leading playwright and a new monarch as its patron. It appeared three years after James VI of Scotland had also succeeded (as James I) to the English throne, and it followed even more immediately upon the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. This was the context within which our greatest dramatist penned a fast-moving play that highlighted such topical issues as treason, ambition, and revenge. To all of these he added the spice of Witches, whether as the controllers or as the mere agents of the fate that so rapidly overtakes Macbeth, once the acclaimed hero-warrior. Not least, through Lady Macbeth the playwright created here one of his most striking female characterizations. It would surely have pleased the King to witness a drama where the regicidal murderousness of this pair (spurred on by the sort of "weird sisters" he had himself studied and persecuted) stood so clearly condemned, and where his belief in the legitimacy of his own descent from an ancient and true line of royalty was so dramatically endorsed.

*Michael Biddiss*

## THE SOURCES

There really was a King Macbeth who ruled Scotland from 1040 to 1057. Shakespeare relied principally on Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* of 1587, which characterized the era as one of "violent deeds and haunting remorse". This work supplied the playwright with much of the structure of his plot, and even with some verbatim quotations. He was also influenced by other sources, but most scholars agree that Shakespeare was inspired by the ancient classics. Here, above all, was Seneca's version of *Medea* which seems to have influenced the playwright's particularly vivid portrayal of Lady Macbeth.

*Chris Chappell*

## THE WITCHES

James VI holds the ignominious distinction of being the only monarch to have participated directly in witch-hunting. During a reign that began in 1567, Scotland witnessed more of such persecution than its southern neighbour and, unlike in most of Europe, the Jacobean state actively promoted prosecutions. James's participation may even have involved his presence at the torture of accused witches, which would have had a profound effect on the conduct of their trials. He is known to have ordered the defendants to stage dramatic re-creations of their witches' reunions, transforming such trials into macabre theatre for his own consumption. This produced a new image of witches, and a trend towards their depiction on stage that is most famously exemplified in Shakespeare's work.

After James's move to England, Scottish authorities sought to restrict the number of prosecutions. However, lack of adequately trained judges meant that witch-hunting continued unimpeded in rural areas for many years. It is estimated that, in the course of the monarch's long Scottish reign, there were between 1,500 and 3,000 witchcraft executions.

*William Epps*



## SYNOPSIS

Macbeth, Thane of Glamis, returns to Scotland the victorious hero from a battle against the Norwegians. But a chance meeting with the 'three weird sisters' sets him on a path of murder.

We follow him as he descends into a self-inflicted path to hell, mentally and physically wrought by his own crimes. But compelled to continue in order to achieve, for himself and his wife: '*the greatness promised thee*'.



*'For a charm of powerful trouble,  
Like a hell-broth, boil and bubble.'*

*'Lesser than Macbeth,  
and greater'*



*'You lack the season of all natures, sleep.'*

*'Lay on, Macduff  
And damned be him that first cries, Hold, enough!'*

*Rehearsal pictures by Ian Dumelow*



## **ALTON FRINGE THEATRE**

For over 30 years *The Fringe* has been delivering its characteristically small-scale, intimate, and often challenging productions to discerning audiences here in Alton.

Much like a Quaker meeting, productions emerge when someone feels inspired to direct. This has resulted in a huge variety, from full plays by Shakespeare (this is the fourth), Schiller (twice), Ostrovsky, Shaw, Beckett, Euripides (masked), to programmes of readings from Jane Austen to Charles Darwin. In 2008 our production of Oscar Wilde's *Salome* received an independent four star review at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

New members are warmly welcomed. Contact details and other information is on our website:  
[www.altonfringe.com](http://www.altonfringe.com)

