

Macbeth By William Shakespeare



STUDY GUIDE

State Theatre Company South Australia
August 2017

By Kimberley Martin
Youth & Education Manager

CONTENTS

The Production	2
Setting	3
Characters	4
Themes	5
Motifs	5
Creative Team	6
From the Director	7
Program Note	7
From the Set & Costume Designer	8
From the Lighting Designer	10
From the Scenic Artist	11
From the Sound Designer	13
Break Out Boxes - Sound Terminology	15
From the Cast	16
From the Publicist	20
Bloody Theatre	22
References	25

OUR PRODUCTION

In a nightmare-scape of war and conflict, murder begets murder and a ruthless ascent to power. At the centre of it all stand Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, the conjoined, madly beating hearts around which a vengeance-soaked world spins . . . Monsters of ambition and savagery, or the fractured result of chaos and trauma?

This extraordinary tale charts the brutal rise and fall of one of theatre's most complex couples as we follow them on their increasingly merciless path towards the crown. Director Geordie Brookman's breathless adaptation of Shakespeare's great tragedy concentrates the action into a fast-paced and cinematic vision of hell unleashed on earth.

See our website to download:

- Pre-Show [Briefing Notes](#) including *Macbeth* synopsis & links to recommended text study guides.
- The adapted [script](#) used by the Company for this production.
- A [useful chapter](#) by Jan Knott in her book, *Shakespeare our Contemporary* from which director, Geordie Brookman, found the major drive for his directorial intention in this production.



SETTING



Scotland is at war with itself. Surrounded by skirmish, we see characters that are battle-hardy, used to living in a war-zone and ready to commit atrocities to achieve their ambition. Originally set in 11th Century Scotland, this 2017 production keeps Shakespeare's original language and surrounds it with a contemporary war. Played out in a dank and claustrophobic bunker, civil unrest hovers just outside while we witness a witch's prophecy unfurl as the Macbeths manipulate and murder.

CHARACTER LIST

Macbeth	A general in the Scottish Army and a nobleman known as the Thane of Glamis. He is ambitious and willing to commit terrible acts to get what he wants.
Lady Macbeth	Married to Macbeth and equally as ambitious, Lady Macbeth is instrumental in driving her husband to murder the King.
King Duncan	King of Scotland; a virtuous and loved king.
Malcolm	Son to King Duncan and heir to the throne, therefore a threat to Macbeth and his ambition to be King.
Banquo	Another noble and soldier who fought side-by-side with Macbeth in the battle that takes place immediately before the story starts. Banquo is with Macbeth when the witch reveals the prophecy. The witch tells Banquo that while he will not be king that his descendants will be kings.
Fleance	Banquo's son; this also makes him a threat to Macbeth after the witches' prophecy that Banquo's descendants will be kings.
Witch	An apparition. Originally three characters, this production sees the witch played primarily by one actor as a manifestation of the Macbeth's pain, loss and guilt. At times, she is joined by a chorus or possessing other characters.
Macduff	A patriotic Scottish nobleman who is wary of Macbeth's reign and therefore pursues Malcolm in order to convince him to fight back and be the rightful king.
Lady Macduff	Well-loved wife of Macduff and mother to several children, symbolised by one child (Macduff Jr) in this production. Lady Macduff's scene is the only scene to provide the audience with a sense of 'normal' domestic setting within this play.
Murderers	Servants well-paid and loyal enough to kill for their masters.
Porter	A servant at the Macbeth residence who is drunk and therefore speaks freely and with energetic liveliness.
Ross	A Scottish nobleman; in this production Ross is an amalgamation of other messengers such as Lennox, Menteth, Angus and Siward.

THEMES

Ambition & Greed

Gender

Cruelty

Temptation

Fate versus free will

Leadership/power

MOTIFS

Blood

Nature

Visions

Sleep

Children

Darkness/light

CREATIVE TEAM

Director

Geordie Brookman

Designer

Victoria Lamb

Lighting Designer

Geoff Cobham

Composer

Dj TR!P

Sound Designer

Andrew Howard

Assistant Director

James Raggart

ENSEMBLE

Rachel Burke

First Witch/Fleance/Macduff Jr

Miranda Daughtry

Ross/Witch Chorus/Third Murderer

Rashidi Edward

Malcolm/Witch Chorus/Second Murderer

Dale March

Banquo/Witch Chorus

Nathan O'Keefe

Macbeth

Anna Steen

Lady Macbeth

GUEST ARTISTS

Elena Carapetis

Lady Macduff/Witch Chorus/First Murderer

Peter Carroll

Duncan/Porter/Witch Chorus

Christopher Pitman

Macduff/Witch Chorus



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Geordie Brookman

PROGRAM NOTE

'It shows us history as a nightmare' - Jan Kott

One of the actors said the other day, as we were in the midst of working out the most visually arresting method of murdering yet another character, 'Isn't what we do ridiculous?'. It was said in jest but *Macbeth* is a play that prods the absurdities of life and indeed of theatre making very forcefully.

What thrills us so, diving into Shakespeare's nightmare of trauma, ego and ambition? For the audience I think it is much like the theatre making process for an actor, dropping into the world of *Macbeth* allows us to explore our shadow selves, to examine humans in extremis, unlimited by self control or moral codes.

For me, the doorway into the text has been something that Shakespeare only mentions in passing, the Macbeths' loss of a child soon after birth. The idea of what trauma does to us, what happens when the concept of life being sacred is ripped away makes much of the rest of the play possible. Shakespeare doesn't simply place a pair of monsters onstage and let them run amok, he, as AC Bradley says, 'appears to have actually taken pains to make the natural psychological genesis of Macbeth's crimes perfectly clear'. In other words, he shows us a path down which almost anyone could tread if infected with the right mix of situation, trauma and greed.

It's been a thrill to construct the world of *Macbeth* with such a wonderful team of artists and a blessing to work with the words of our greatest playwright once again.



FROM THE SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

Victoria Lamb

Tell us about your costume choices and how you've used them to represent characters' status, family or anything else?

The play is set in an abstracted, nightmare warzone. In this world, status means survival. Any character at any time could need to pick up a weapon and fight. When the play starts, it almost comes down to, the less dirty and battle worn, a character is, the higher their status.

There is not much color in this world apart from a lot of red blood, but I have used small amounts of color to link characters to each other. Ie: Macbeth, Lady Macbeth and the Witch are the only characters who wear white. Duncan and Malcolm have burgundy, the Macduff's both wear some green and Banquo wears blue.

Your previous Shakespeare sets (King Lear, Othello) have been very large-scale; how does the set for Macbeth rank on the scale of grandeur? Can you talk us through your background research for the set; your discussions with Geordie; and how the concept has come to life?

The sets for *King Lear* and *Othello* were about as big as you could possibly fit on the Playhouse stage. *Macbeth* is also an epic tragedy. Even though the set feels quite monolithic, we chose to make a set with a smaller footprint than either of these. The director and I wanted to create a play that essentially takes place within Macbeth's own personal nightmare. The play is set in one very bad dream, it is claustrophobic, harsh, oppressive and there is only one door.



It evokes feeling is of a broken, industrial, slaughterhouse or wartime bunker. We researched similar themes; warzones, derelict industrial spaces, morgues and abattoirs. (Not pleasant viewing). We also wanted the audience to always be up close to the action, so the set is placed as far forward on the stage as possible.

How does lighting affect your decisions about the set? How do you structure this into your design and planning process?

Lighting is very important, it can make or break any set design. The lighting designer is usually brought into the discussion once the director and designer have their basic set idea decided. The lighting designer creates a huge amount of the atmosphere and mood of the show.

IMAGE: Martine from Wardrobe 'breaks down' a store-bought costume with paint to age it.



FROM THE SET & COSTUME DESIGNER - CONTINUED

As a set designer, it is important to make sure that the set actually can be lit. The *Macbeth* set is quite difficult to light. The solid walls and closed space mean the lighting designer is limited to overhead and front lighting.

The Macbeth set contains a substantial amount of scenic art; are you able to talk about the process of applying the scenic art from your design concept or model to the final set on-stage?

The art finishing required for this design is extensive. Fortunately I have worked with the State Theatre Company's Scenic Artist for many years and knew she would do a great job.

I use a lot of Photoshop to produce my set models, this provides a reference for the painter. We work together discussing references and examples to get the look I want.

Macbeth also has a great deal of art finishing on the costumes. It is surprising how much work it takes to make new clothes look old.

What have been the major logistical considerations when designing Macbeth and who did you work with to create the solutions?

Every production involves a huge amount of collaboration with all departments contributing their own specialist skills to solve problems. In this particular production, the sheer amounts of blood posed the most obvious logistical challenge.

Several departments had to work together to make it work. The blood recipe was researched and perfected by the Stage Managers and props people, the drainage system in the set was created by the set building workshop. Doubles of every costume had to be made by the wardrobe department, so we would have time to wash everything between shows, especially on days when we have two performances.

FROM THE LIGHTING DESIGNER

Geoff Cobham

What's the coolest lighting state or trickiest element in this production that you've enjoyed creating?

For *Macbeth* I'm using a new light called a Mythos, which has a super bright narrow beam and a warning not to put closer than 12M to a flammable object! I get to use all the steel greens in the lighting colour swatch book. I also used a new colour called 511 Bacon Brown... yum. Our workshop team made me a moving light for the windows (it is an intelligent light on a motorised track) which allows the lighting state to change in a way that sets the time of day.

At what stage do you start consulting with the set designer to establish your lighting design? Were there any set or costume elements that meant you had to make changes to your lighting from your original ideas?

Vic (designer), Geordie and I work together from day one through to the Opening Night. The detailed scale model of the set that Vic made and allowed me to visualise the lighting. I also use a 3D CAD program to check the position and beam angles of the lights, in this virtual space I can turn lights on and see their effect on the set.

In a space surrounded by walls I needed to make use of lots of overhead lighting and less side light. The windows presented many fabulous lighting opportunities. The set resisted the use of bold contained lighting shapes, we needed to mostly embrace the whole space. The witches costume is amazing; when lit in steel blue we were able to get her to blend into the set.



FROM THE SCENIC ARTIST

Sandra Anderson

What was your first reaction when you saw the set design by Victoria Lamb?

Wow, what an amazing set! This is going to make *Macbeth* really sinister and macabre.

What has taken the most experimentation prior to implementation? Can you tell us about this?

Due to the amount of blood being used throughout the play, the floor had to be non-slippery and be able to be hosed down – even more liquid! I found a water based but waterproof paint and did samples to see if this would work. There is also a powdery product which can be added to paint to create a non-slip surface which I experimented with.



What is the most interesting element of this set for you as the scenic artist?

The sliding door is an interesting element. It is built from plywood, metal framework and thin aluminium sheets. Then it's my job to add texture and rust by layering peeling paint and dirty washes to achieve the final effect.



The Vat

Constructed from bendy plywood over a wooden framework (strong enough to hold actors). To achieve a 'concrete' finish she has combined plaster and paint. For the metal-look slats she has used textured silver paint then black washes.

FROM THE SCENIC ARTIST - CONTINUED



The Tiles

Made from marine plywood for the main structure which has been routed (to create the geometric shapes where the 'grout' between tiles would go). For the broken patches of tiling, a layer of polystyrene which has been broken down around the edges is applied in place of the plywood. This has all been painted with rollers in layers, detail applied with brushes around broken areas and then washes and waterproofing as the final layer.

FROM THE SOUND DESIGNER

Andrew Howard

Can you tell us about the process you used to create sound surrounding DJ TR!P's soundtrack? What did he provide you with and how did you turn this into the sound we hear throughout the performance?

Sound Design has many elements in its job description; the first is working with the composer on achieving how they want their music to be heard. The main gateway to this is the technical sound design. Technical sound design involves the selection and implementation of all of the audio equipment needed to be able to create a complete audio world for the play. This system changes every single play depending on what the requirements of this aural world are, which can include physical restraints that stop the placement of a speakers or microphones etc.

In this instance DJ TR!P provided me with approximately one hour's worth of music. As DJ Tr!p does not have a background in music theory I then worked to ascertain the key for each piece of music before I could create my atmospheres, pads and drones. Once I have all of the keys I can then start creating the rest of the sound-world for the play. For this I use a program called Reason. Reason is based around modular synthesis, which enables me to create sounds that are completely unique to the show.

Once I have created all of the content, I need then I work with the director to structure the sound for the play in a piece of show control software called QLab. QLab enables me to control volumes of every piece of content as well as send that content to any speaker I wish. It also allows me to change fade out and fade in timings plus many other functions.

- This link is an educational resource about Modular Synthesisers:
<https://learningmodular.com>
- This link is about teaching music with Reason:
<https://www.propellerheads.se/press/22-teach-music-with-reason#>
- This is Reason:
<https://www.propellerheads.se/en/reason>

Who were the main artists you collaborated with during Macbeth and how did they impact your role on the show?

The main artists I collaborate with on the show are the director, composer, set designer and lighting designer. The director has the final say on everything as it is their vision that we are all working together to achieve.

Depending on the complexity of the show, the lighting designer is someone I work quite closely with. A lot of times there is a good reason to have the lights change on a very specific musical timing, so to achieve this we use one of two methods Midi or OSC. OSC stands for Open Sound Control. I choose OSC where possible as this allows a lot more freedom of control over the lighting desk than Midi does. Midi stands for Musical Instrument Digital Interface.



FROM THE SOUND DESIGNER - CONTINUED

I also collaborate quite closely with Set Designer so I can have a good idea about where I can place my speakers through the stage space then once I have anything that effects the set signed off on with the Set Designer then I work with the scenery workshop to build any shelves or cut any holes I may need in the set for speakers or microphones.

Where are the speakers situated on stage and in the theatre and how does this change what the audience or the actors hear?

In *Macbeth* I am using approximately twenty-seven speaker boxes. Of these twenty-seven, I am only using three on the stage side of the proscenium arch. The ideal goal of any design is trying to make the coverage of the audience as even as possible, meaning that every audience member more or less has the same aural experience of the show. Generally it is difficult for the actors to hear what is out in the auditorium as I have to balance the levels between their voices and the music.

Can you tell us about the balancing, mixing and levels that you control during tech week and what the challenges around this are?

The biggest challenge of balancing the entire soundtrack is keeping the actor's voices heard through the whole auditorium with the soundtrack sitting as another stage for the actors to walk upon. There are two different kinds of sound in theatre and film; these a digetic and non-diagetic sounds. Diabetic sounds are sounds that occur from inside the world of the actors and non-diagetic sounds are those which occur from outside of the world of the actors. Non-diagetic sounds are generally the music and underscored atmospherics while diabetic sounds can be anything from sound effects and music that occur from inside the actors' worlds. Getting these balances can sometimes be very challenging and take some work and others just fall into place easily. There are no set rules to balancing a theatre soundtrack except that the actors must be heard.

How is lighting affected by your sound design? What are the advantages and/or pitfalls of this?

As I've stated previously, it can sometimes be necessary to have lighting be triggered from a sound cue to make the cue as tight as possible. This usually occurs through close collaboration with the lighting designer and sound designer in rehearsals leading up to the show going into the theatre. The main challenges for this are usually physical ones revolving around how far the lighting operation is done from the sound operation. All theatres are different so every transfer you do into a new theatre can develop problems of distance and interconnection between the sound consoles and the lighting consoles.

Is there any other information you'd like to share with students who are interested in your role and work as a sound designer?

Most of the time the best sound designs are ones that go un-noticed and don't infringe upon what the actors are doing. Sound design should always compliment and not detract from what is happening on stage. Sometimes however, there is a need for great volume to produce desired effects and affects. For me being an artist is about having fun and being collaborative and relaxed. Stress very rarely produces good theatre.

FROM THE SOUND DESIGNER - CONTINUED

Atmospheres Are generally made up of environmental sound effects to create place like street scenes etc. In *Macbeth* there are no atmospheres as such.

Pads Synthesised sounds that are usually flat and with no variations.

Drones Comes from hardware synths from the 50s and 60s that you could change modules to be able to create different sounds.



FROM THE CAST

FEATURE INTERVIEW

Rachel Bourke: Witch

Can you tell us about your choice of posture and physicality in your role as the witch? How did you develop this and what are you aiming to project to the audience?

My Physicality: I will be honest and say that one day Geordie said to me it's like having a string from my chin to my chest the whole time. He also sent me a horror film called *It Follows* [2014, directed by David Robert Mitchell] where the main character is cursed and then followed the whole time by people that no one else can see. There something in that, the way the threat that they pose is this relentless thing that is coming towards the person under threat. [This] is counter to what you would normally think was threatening and scary, the unknown thing in the dark, and I think it is really cool that the tension created by the director is that choice to have something relentlessly stalking at a constant rate to build the sense of anxiety. I think especially with my 'head-down' stuff, and the witch not having eyes; and because obviously I am a human person with a body, there's something about that relentless sense of presence that takes me away from somebody who moves naturally in the world.



Did you use the music to develop your blocking or do you find yourself listening to the music for certain cues?

I do a little bit but there is a sense that the witch moves at a different time compared to anyone else. Some things are choreographed to sound cues; there are time where, for instance, we have a quick transition that everyone else needs to make but the witch just takes her own time to do whatever she needs to do.

If you were to translate your movements or physicality into Laban or a technique many students may be familiar with what words might you use?

Pressing and gliding and I guess just I really like to think of it as fluid and liquid and mouldy, as a verb, and kind of a flow, there is a quickness in it.

And I've noticed it is never quickness in reaction to something...

No, it is always more of a pre-meditated movement.

Can I ask you about your voice then, and about the vocal effects that will be implemented in technical rehearsals this week?

I haven't actually heard any of the effects yet but there are distortions and in terms of the layering there's pre-recorded files for the chorus and live reverb.

FROM THE CAST - CONTINUED

Talking about being the bearer of the blood for many deaths, can you talk us through some tricky logistics you have to combat?

We haven't worked out where they will be eventually, but at the moment [start of tech rehearsals] I have two spots where I am getting the blood from but at the moment this one [gestures to wrist where mouthpiece to blood-pack is located] is quite tricky to control. Originally I was trying to, with my physicality, have my hands down a lot but because I have to [bring my wrist to my mouth] I've tried to get this gesture to work in the physicality of my character so it's less obvious when I'm accessing the blood-pack. I will sort of find moments to get a sip surreptitiously and there are some moments when I have to hold it in my mouth for quite a long time witch is pretty gross!

Gross for the receiver as well...

Yes, it gets quite warm so yeah. I need to be aware when it leaks a bit because it's been water [in the rehearsal room] but it will be quite obvious when it's leaking red blood! Also, just stuff like having to deal with the bladders on my legs.

Is there one on each leg?

Yeah, they're sewed into my skirt and when I'm on the ground especially, I'm having to conceal this mouth piece as well, so how we do this has been a really big discussion with the stage management team and Vic [the designer] and the wardrobe crew so that's blood logistics.

Is there a death you particular enjoy?

I really like Lady Macduff's death; I really like the obstruction of it, I really like the sound cue and it's such an awful image.



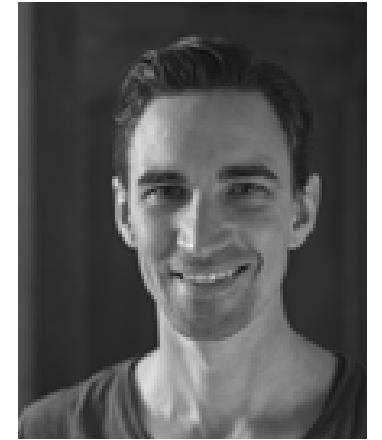
AN INTERVIEW WITH THE CAST



Rachel Burke
Witch/Fleance



Anna Steen
Lady Macbeth



Dale March
Banquo

Which roles do you play in Macbeth, and who did you play in A Doll's House?

- R: I play the Witch, Fleance and Macduff Jnr in *Macbeth*. In *A Doll's House* I was Kristine.
A: I play Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* and I played Anna in *A Doll's House*.
D: I play Banquo in *Macbeth*. I played Torvald in *A Doll's House*.

Geordie chose two of the best known plays in the Western cannon for the Ensemble this year – how did you feel when you learned what the program would be?

- R: A healthy mixture of excitement and intimidation. Every play elicits its own kind of fear and doubt, and canonical texts come with their own special flavour of those feelings. But it sure is good to do things that scare you - especially with these two fabulous teams of people.
A: So excited – what a wonderful opportunity to explore two great classics on different ends of the spectrum. I used to read Shakespeare's plays by torchlight under my doona at night – so any chance to do Shakespeare for me is pretty thrilling.
D: The plays we call Shakespeare's (many people intelligently attribute the works to other authors) will always be my dearest love in the theatre. However, I was particularly thrilled by the prospect of playing Torvald in Elena's new adaptation of *A Doll's House*. I am obsessed with the complexity of our gender struggles in intimate relationships and I was excited to explore a depth and nuance in the marriage of Nora and Torvald that I feel is usually overlooked. Shakespeare is always a joyful challenge. His invitation to reassess the scope of human potential is always wrapped in insight and imagery that enriches our lives.

What has it been like switching immediately from contemporary Australian Christmas that focussed very much on the personal stories of one family, to one of Shakespeare's most grand and brutal tragedies?

- R: It has been a really fun jump between using different acting muscles.
A: It's such a gift to move from one story to another, I've been thinking about *Macbeth* for a while as I had quite a bit of time off stage in *A Doll's House*, so I was raring to go. We're starting to feel stage-fit now after the *A Doll's House* so it's a great jumping-off point.

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE CAST - CONTINUED

D: It took us a few days to shake off the energy and particular relationships that had developed during *A Doll's House*. On one level we have transitioned from a superficial world that needed to be smashed for the characters to grow, to a supernatural world that leaves us feeling that no growth is possible for the characters. It was a very stark transition that certainly destabilized me for a time. Having said that, I wouldn't have wanted a break in between the two processes. Playing Torvald was an intense immersion and it was a relief to be able to redirect the flow of that creative momentum straight away.

A lighter question: how many times do you die in Macbeth?

R: I get killed twice.

A: This might sound weird but I die twice

D: I die once in *Macbeth*. Once, very messily.

Do you have a favourite death?

R: I'm not sure yet. As the most squeamish in the cast I haven't been able to watch them all yet without bursting into self-preserving laughter.

A: That's a hard one, there are so many deaths! *Macbeth's* is pretty spectacular.

D: Lady MacDuff's death is my favourite. It is a satisfying moment in the play that pays off our particular nightmare logic.

Why should people see Macbeth?

A: It is such an incredible story of ambition gone terribly wrong. It's rich in beautiful poetry juxtaposed with vicious action. The world is gritty, real, tortured and intriguing and it's one of Shakespeare's great tragedies – we don't get to see it very often and each production brings its own life to the play – you just have to dive in and see where it takes you!

D: We go to the theatre to glean insight into humanity in both its creative and destructive potentialities. *Macbeth* falls into the latter category. The journey of the play's two central characters remind us of the slippery slope of moral compromise. Macbeth is completely lucid about the consequences of his actions, but he recalibrates his moral compass in the pursuit of enjoying unearned power. Harmless as our own ethical infidelities may seem when compared with the Macbeth's butcheries, the play reminds us that we would do well to keep our moral concessions in check. We modern folk do not have Macbeth's witches to feed our insatiable desire for prestige. What we do have are the seductive forces of media, advertising and delusional expectations of meritocratic dogma to corrode our moral fortitude.

FROM THE PUBLICIST

Lindsay Ferris

The off-stage focus in this study guide will be on the role of the Publicist. Lindsay Ferris has been the Publicist at State Theatre Company South Australia for nearly four years. She has found herself in some extraordinary situations during her time with the Company including dashing across town with actors in tow, photo-shoots at the airport inside brand new aircrafts and juggling multiple phone calls, radio interviews, school students, and even animals all whilst keeping a calm sense of order.

To find out more about how she lands herself in these situations we asked her a few questions:

Using our 2017 production of Macbeth, can you give us an overview of your role as arts publicist for a show?

My role is to communicate all elements of the play to audiences so that they ultimately buy tickets to the show. More specifically, my role is to convince media that *Macbeth* is newsworthy and worth featuring in the media outlet over dozens of other pitches that would be sent through to them in a single day. Doing so means staying very close to the making of the work and the rehearsal room so that I feel confident to get on the phone or meet with journalists and tell them exactly why this work is brilliant and why it's important that they run a story on the show.

As well as publicity for individual shows, what other kinds of publicity do you create for the Company and does this differ from the above in any way?

As well as running individual show campaigns, my role is also responsible for maintaining the public image of the company, developing an idea of the brand the Company is pleased to be associated with - for example, ensuring that State Theatre Company South Australia is thought of by the public as the state's flagship theatre company, as a leader in our industry. Therefore communicating things like the Company's commitment to touring our productions to regional South Australia is important. Recently, when there were funding cuts to the Arts, I took on the lead role of communicating the Company's position on the cuts highlighting that smaller theatre companies in Adelaide needed funding support from the Government to ensure that the theatre ecosystem remains healthy, with young and early career artists constantly feeding through to the professional theatre companies. Maintaining the public image of the company also involves profiling our directors - highlighting their successes and achievements and ensuring that State Theatre Company is aligned with these.

What has been a career highlight for you during your time at State Theatre?

There have been too many. Working with high profile talent like Miriam Margolyes, Xavier Samuel and Lisa McCune has allowed me to work with a different league of media like *The 7pm Project* in Melbourne, or creating feature stories for CH 9 TV series *Postcards*, or setting up cover stories for *The Weekend Australian Review*.



FROM THE PUBLICIST - CONTINUED

Every show however brings its own set of nuances, themes and ideas for media. Being a part of building a show to be performed under the stars each evening of the Adelaide Festival and with such important subjects with *The Secret River* was very powerful. Successfully pulling off a series of weather crosses to the quarry location was hugely satisfying given the struggles that we had in terms of accessing signal to the TV control tower. Running the national publicity campaign for **1984**, a West End production that State theatre Company produced and presented in Australia was also a huge challenge and accomplishment.

Being a part of telling stories about different worldviews and different worlds is important to me personally, so to have worked at State Theatre Company and communicated the stories told on stage to media has certainly been a career highlight.

What personal attributes do you think an arts publicist can't do without?

Each opening night as I sit in amongst the audience, I'm reminded why I do what I do. This role is driven by a passion to communicate. And in order to communicate passionately you need to believe in what you're talking about.

Success as a publicist is driven by relationships and an ability to negotiate and to juggle competing expectations and demands. On one hand you have the creative team's priorities - which are to ultimately create an amazing new piece of theatre. On the other hand, you have your commitments to journalists and editors who are vying for a brilliant piece of publicity that will be relevant and interesting to their readers. Sometimes these priorities do not line up and this is where patience, perseverance and clear communication to keep the peace and get the publicity that you need.

Four years on from your first day in this role, what advice would you give yourself if you could go back to visit yourself on day one with the Company?

- Build strong relationships in every department and be reliable; this will serve you well when you need to turn around and lean on someone for their input at some stage.
- Don't give up - publicity can be a tough industry and don't take rejection of one story as a definite no, try different angles and approaches to the same media to see if there's something else that they're interested in.
- Being extremely organised will make you more efficient and make the access to information down the track much easier.

[Click here](#) to read an excellent article recently published in *Arts Hub* that explores Arts Publicist role through the eyes of some other successful publicists in the industry.

BLOODY THEATRE

Blood is one of the most prominent symbols in *Macbeth*, it represents many things within the play, but most consistently it symbolises is Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's constant stain of guilt for the people they have killed in their rise to power.

Given the importance of blood in a play such as *Macbeth*, which contains so much violence and plays such a crucial role within the plot (notably Act 2, Scene 2), the blood that is used needs to be convincing and easy to work with, which is why the process has taken months of preparation and experimentation. Read on to discover more about our bloody research...

There much trial and error when creating such a tricky prop, and many elements need to be considered:

Consistency	Cost	Colour
Stain	Taste	Time

Consistency

What consistency of blood is needed depending on the desired effect on-stage (spray, pour, spit, drip, gush)? How thick or runny does it need to be? For example, if the blood needs to run out of a knife, it can't be too thick, but if it's too runny, it won't seem as real.

Cost

When having to make a large volume of blood for a show, it can quickly become an extremely costly part of the production. We are using 10 litres of blood per performance, there are 36 rehearsals and performances that require blood which amounts to 360 litres total. Our stage management and production team have therefore acquired enough ingredients to make 400 litres of blood! Store-bought stage blood cost too much so it was much more cost effective to experiment with recipes and make our own. Plus, it's been a whole lot of fun!

Colour & Stain

If it's too dark or too light it won't read on stage, the colour needs to be as true to life as possible. Considering how the colour of the blood will look under stage lights and on costumes is important. Not every character has the same costume pieces, so how do you make sure the blood shows on the darkest and lightest items of clothing, and how the colour will change once the actors are on stage under lights? Experiments were undertaken so that different recipes were tried on skin, costume items, set pieces to make sure the end result met all of our colour requirements.

IMAGE: Stage Management purchased all of the available red food colouring from the city Coles!



BLOODY THEATRE - CONTINUED

Taste & Skin

Does the blood need to be consumed in the show or be in the actor's mouth, and if it does, are they ingredients that are non-toxic? Does it come into contact with skin, and if it does, what are potential reactions that skin could have? Could it stain the skin? Allergies and dietary requirements are also important to consider: do any of the actors have allergies to the base ingredients, or does the blood contain ingredients that the actor can't consume for any dietary reason. Taste also is a consideration made by the props and design team, especially if the blood is to be held in the mouth for any period of time.



Time

How long will the blood last? Does it go off? If we make all 400 litres of blood will it be okay to consume by the end of the season or if we make it for each performance does this take too much time or would the colour/consistency change? Does it come off easily in the shower for the actors between scenes if necessary (e.g. Macduff appears covered in scene one but returns at a later time without so much blood) How much time do the Stage Management team need to dedicate to blood preparation and clean up and is this an effective use of time and resources?

Bloody Effects

There are four main blood effects used in *Macbeth*: spit, spurt, ooze and bucket. All blood effects require different methods; these include blood packs, cups, buckets, camel-packs and sponges. Spit will mean that the actor must have a way to keep the blood in their mouth. Spurting requires a blood pack, so blood consistency must not affect the device

the blood is stored in (thick and thinness of the blood is important to check), as well as making sure the prop is workable for the actor so that it works every show, every time. Our Props Master, Stuart Crane, discovered an old dagger in storage that is designed with a bladder and holes in the blade so that blood can ooze out as it is driven across a surface:

Another crucial part of the process, especially in a play as bloody as *Macbeth* is noting where and when blood will be used and in what form. By breaking it down into each act, and each scene of the play, the stage managers make sure they have pre-set all blood packs, buckets etc. ready for the action in the show. This also helps stage management keep track of and work out how much blood will approximately be used per show, when and where it needs to be cleaned up for safety purposes and to help each show run as smoothly as possible.

IMAGE: Assistant Stage Manager, Cat, with the 44 Gallon drum of glucose for making blood

BLOODY THEATRE - CONTINUED

All of these elements were carefully explored over the six weeks leading up to the final week of rehearsals where we switched from rehearsing with water to rehearsing with blood. This is a great example of the attention to detail that is required when creating theatre with consumable props that need to have the same effect every time and effect so many on-stage and off-stage practitioners every night. Stuart worked for three weeks researching blood recipes alone, and compared notes with his colleagues in other companies including State Opera, Sydney Theatre Company and Adelaide College of the Arts to develop his own concoction for this production.



REFERENCES

Richard Watts. 2017. *Career spotlight: Arts publicist* ArtsHub Australia, [ONLINE] Available at:http://www.artshub.com.au/education/news-article/career-advice/professional-development/richard-watts/career-spotlight-arts-publicist-254040?utm_source=ArtsHub+Australia&utm_campaign=ccba776ebc-UA-828966-1&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_2a8ea75e81-ccba776ebc-302707825. [Accessed 12 July 2017]

Knott, J, 1967. *Shakespeare our contemporary*. 2nd ed. London: Methuen.

QLab. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://figure53.com/qlab>. [Accessed 29 August 2017].

Meyer, C. 2017. *Learning Modular – An Introduction to Modular Synthesis* [ONLINE] Available at: <https://learningmodular.com/>. [Accessed at 29 August 2017].

Press Resources, 2017. *Teach Music With Reason, Propellerhead 2017* [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.propellerheads.se/press/22-teach-music-with-reason>. [Accessed at 29 August 2017].

Photo Credits:

Production Photos by Chris Hertzfeld

Blood and Set reference photos by Kimberley Martin

Many thanks to the entire *Macbeth* team; cast, crew, creatives and to the State Theatre Company South Australia staff who were so generous with their time and their information for this study guide. Thanks also to Publicist Lindsay Ferris for her interview.