

FronteraFest 2010

Lady M

A woman's descent into darkness...

A play by Melissa Smith-Rodriguez
Directed by Matthew Braylon Haynes

Salvage Vanguard Theater
2803 Manor Road
Austin, Texas 78722

Tuesday, January 19 - 8:45 pm
Saturday, January 23 - 5:15 pm
Monday, January 25 - 9:15 pm
Thursday, January 28 - 7:00 pm



Production Notes

Director's Reflection

The entire journey of Lady Mall began with a late night phone call asking if I would be interested in directing a prequel to the infamous Macbeth. I am forever changed for agreeing to this project. The tale that Melissa Rodriguez has spun centers on both factual and fictional elements. It became my job to bring the audience into the story so much so, that they were unable to identify these separate elements.

After receiving the script and having our initial read through, Melissa stepped back and allowed me to interpret everything she wrote in my own way. This led us to many new discoveries within the text that neither of us had seen in the beginning. Knowing this was an attempt to redeem Gruoch, I really had to find an actress who could be innocent, sweet, and naive, but could turn in an instant. If it had not been for finding the perfect actress for this role the show would never have happened.

Lady M has given me over a dozen friends, new and old, which I will cherish forever. Each one has brought the breath of life to their characters and given so much of themselves throughout the entire process. I cannot thank my cast, crew, or Melissa enough. This journey has forever changed my life and I am eternally grateful.

Playwright's Thoughts

Ever since the first time I read Macbeth, I was strangely fascinated with the character of Lady Macbeth. Instead of condemning her, I wondered what had happened to her to make her so cold. My interest evolved into an obsession when I started graduate school and began to research in depth the history behind the play. I decided to write a play that could explain and in a way redeem the character of Lady Macbeth.

First, I looked at Macbeth, and I researched the ideas behind Shakespeare's creation of the story. I discovered that the play audiences are all familiar with is actually quite distant from the little history that is known. Neither Macbeth nor Lady Macbeth, or Gruoch, were involved in murder, and they ruled in peace for many years. I also researched the culture of Elizabethan England and Scotland to understand why Shakespeare chose to portray these two characters in such a bloodthirsty way, and a lot of scholarship has been written about James I's influence, as king, on theatre during his reign. Since the history and the story were so different, my problem became writing a story that married the play audiences are familiar with to the history that exists, which is unfortunately minimal.

Shakespeare's infamous witches reflected James I's view on witchcraft, as put down in Daemonologie. In reclaiming the feminine qualities of Lady Macbeth, I decided to redefine witchcraft as well. Most witches were village wisewomen and healers, so I decided to include a character that was more closely aligned to nature-based, goddess worship than the evil characters of Shakespeare's world.

Eventually, ~ evolved from the decision that severe or prolonged trauma or abuse would cause an emotional break that would lead Lady Macbeth from mother to fiend. Despite being not exactly historically accurate, this play draws on some of the factual evidence to offer a new perspective to one of theatre's most hated, maligned characters. It became the story of a woman in a patriarchal society who was so damaged that she became exactly what the men in her life forged her to be, and that explanation became her tragedy.

I cannot thank Matthew Haynes and the cast and crew of ~ enough for using their energy, passion, dedication, and creative brilliance to bring this story to life.

Cast List

Gruoch: Katie Townsend

Boite: Rob Novak

Gilla: Wesley Riddle

Ceana: Brittany Flurry

Macbeth: Wesley Scott Crump

Dearshul: Melissa King-Knowles

Servant: Ben Manno



Biographies

Actors

Wesley Scott Crump (Macbeth) is a Senior REA. Acting major. He appeared in the Mainstage production of And the World Goes Round in the Spring of '09 in which he won a Ramsey Award for Best Actor in a Minor Role. His other credits include Terminal in TSU's Studio Theatre, CB in Dog Sees God. Ralph Rackstraw in H.M.S. Pinafore. Pericles in Pericles. Prince of Tyre. Gerry Evans in Dancing at Lughnasa. and Rosencrantz. in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead. He would like to thank Matthew Haynes and Melissa Rodriguez for giving him this wonderful opportunity, and the rest of his friends and family for being so supportive through all his endeavors.

Brittany Flurry (Ceana) is a BFA Acting major at Texas State University. She is honored to be a part of this original production, as well as working with such a talented group of people! Brittany would like to thank her family, friends, and all who have worked on Lady M for their unending love and support. Many thanks to Kelsey for keeping me sane. If only life understood me like you. Thank you Chris for all your love and being there when I need you. Sincerest thanks to Melissa Rodriguez for creating this piece. Thank you to Rebecca Brummet for her work as stage manager. Last, and certainly not least, thank you Matthew Haynes for bringing this amazing group of people together and bringing this wonderful work to life. All my love to all of you!

Melissa King-Knowles (Dearshul) has over 30 years experience that includes studying abroad with the RSC and the Globe and such roles as Queen Margaret in *Richard III* and Mariah in *Twelfth Night*. Now in her 7th year of teaching theatre, it is rare that Melissa gets the chance to devote time to pursue her own thirst for being on stage. It is with great excitement that she debuts in the Austin community through this project. Melissa would like to thank Matthew for giving her this opportunity. She would also like to thank the cast for being such a wonderful, talented, and fun group to collaborate with. Additionally, Melissa would like to thank her Mom for her unyielding support and lastly, she wants to thank her amazing husband Kelly. You have put up with many late nights and many a distraction. You are truly her B-movie hero!

Ben Manno (Servant) is currently a freshman at Texas State University-San Marcos on the BFA-Acting track. He has previous experience as board operator for the Main Stage production *Big Love*, and a lead role in a @Random 10 minute play. He is a Dallas native and graduated from Lake Highlands High School. Many thanks go out to the wonderful cast and director he has been blessed to work along side. And above all, thanks to his parents.

Rob Novak (Boite) is a graduate of Texas State where he was seen in *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Macbeth*, *House of Blue Leaves*, *Fuddy Meers*, *Die Fledermaus*, among others. He also studied with the Royal Shakespeare Company for a summer through Texas State. Rob recently played Hamlet for the Austin Drama Club and Titinius in *Julius Caesar* for the Emily Ann Theatre in Wimberley. Thanks, Mom, Dad and Tiff for your love and support.

Wesley Riddle (Gilla) is a student at Texas State University-San Marcos. He is a professionally trained stage combat instructor and stunt man. His stage credits include: *Macbeth*, *A Chorus Line*, and most recently *The Elephant Man*. This summer he is set to study with the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-Upon-Avon, England. He would like to thank his folks, Molly, and Rigby.

Katie Townsend (Gruoch) is thrilled to have been able to work with such wonderful people for Lady M. She will graduate in May with her Masters of Arts from Texas State in Theatre History with an emphasis on Dramaturgy. School and her job as Box Office Manager keep her extremely busy, but when she has an ounce of free time, Katie is an avid knitter and puppy snuggler.

CREW

Tim Ashby (Stagehand) is more an actor than a stagehand, but... He is a Theatre Major at Texas State University-San Marcos and he has done plenty of student directed shows and scenes. His acting credits include a furry murderer in *Macbeth* among others. His technical assistance credits are: stagehand for *Fuddy Meers* and sound operator for *House of Blue Leaves*.

Biographies Continued

Rebecca Brummett (Stage Manager) is a Senior BFATheatre Teacher Certification major at Texas State University. This is her second show to stage manage while at Texas State. Her first was assistant stage managing the mainstage musical *A Chorus Line*. She would like to thank her friends and family for always supporting her dream. She also hopes that everyone enjoy's the show.

Tiffany M. Harris (Costumes) is a recent graduate from Texas State University with a BFA in Costume Design. Texas State credits include: Costume Coordinator for *A Monster Carol*, Costume Designer for *Big Love*, Assistant to the Cutter/Draper for *MacBeth*, Assistant to the Costume Designer for *The House of Blue Leaves*, Cutter/Draper for *The Piano Lesson*, Assistant to the Costume Designer for *A Chorus Line*, as well as various work on other productions. She has also worked with Austin Shakespeare Festival on their recent productions of *Measure for Measure*, *An Ideal Husband*, *Macbeth* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, and with The Scottish Rite Theatre on their summer production of *As You Like It*.

Jordan Smith (Stagehand) is a student at Texas State University-San Marcos and is currently working towards his Bachelors of Fine Arts in Performance and Production. He hopes you enjoy the show.



Special Thanks

The Cast and Crew of *Lady M* would like to extend a special Thanks to the following:

Dr. John Fleming

The EmilyAnn Theatre

Dewey Markus

Erin Dodd

Lindsay Jones

Sheila Hargett

Bridget Farias

St. Edwards University

Michelle Heath

Elizabeth Munoz

Callie Langford

All of our friends and family for all of their ongoing love and support



