Casting Notice for MACBETH: A Surround Sound Experiment

Co-produced by Theater Emory and Knock at the Gate, this project breathes new life into Shakespeare’s psychological tale of raw political ambition in a high-definition immersive audio experience designed for in-home listening on a pair of headphones in the dark.

Rehearsal dates:
Student Cast Members: September 7 - October 3 (with additional avails “as needed” for re-recording week of Oct 4th)

Please note that rehearsals and recording sessions will take place six days a week in person on the main campus of Emory University, with Thursday as the day off. Weeknight rehearsals run 6pm-11pm, and weekend rehearsals are TBD. (You will not be called for every hour of rehearsal every day after the first week, but it’s important that you remain available for the full span of rehearsal time. Since this is a much shorter process than most shows, with a commitment of less than four weeks, we will need as much flexibility as possible from our cast within the appointed time frame. Thank you!)

Streaming:
The show will be livestreaming the last week in Oct and first week in Nov (dates TBD)

About our co-producer, Knock at the Gate:
Knock at the Gate builds high-fidelity immersive audio experiences for adventurous listeners around the world. Born over a bonfire during the pandemic and fueled by works of Shakespeare, this collaboration between celebrated theatre and filmmakers in isolation tests the boundaries of immersion and resonance through a series of full-length surround sound experiments designed for in-home listening on a pair of headphones in the dark.

Listen to past clips of featured Knock at the Gate projects:

Clips on Soundcloud
www.Soundcloud.com/KnockattheGate

Submission:
Email your recording, audition form, and resume to teauditions@gmail.com due July 9, 2021.

This production of Macbeth: A Surround Sound Experiment – although it will be recorded on Zoom – does necessitate in-person participation from the entire cast, on the Emory Atlanta campus. Week one will consist entirely of in-person rehearsals, and for weeks two through four, actors must be on the Atlanta campus in order to obtain their recording equipment, and to use approved recording spaces. All Emory students are welcome to audition; however, students are required to obtain their own transportation to and from the Atlanta campus for all rehearsals and auditions, which occur on weeknights from 6pm-11pm, and weekends TBD, from Sept 7-Oct 3, and as-needed the week of Oct 4th for re-recording sessions.
A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR:

Hello! I look forward to hearing your submissions! I am passionate about Shakespeare and even more so about working with students on Shakespeare. I wanted to share a few thoughts to aid your audition process, and also some character descriptions for MACBETH.

First, I want to tell you a secret: I didn’t like Shakespeare in high school, or even in college. I found the plays difficult to understand, frustrating even, when reading them. It was not until I worked on an actual production (MIDSUMMER) and heard the words aloud that it clicked. So if you find Shakespeare unapproachable or difficult to connect with, I hope you’ll still give this a shot. Making Shakespeare accessible to people and giving actors ownership of the work, are two of the things I love most.

I hope you will enjoy the unique fact that this production will be cast purely on the basis of your vocal acting; something which I have found to be quite freeing, creatively speaking. When recording myself for an audio audition I don’t feel bound in any way by my age, or the physical qualities by which a casting director might judge me or pigeon-hole me. I don’t even feel limited vocally, because I can make whatever faces and expressions, move in whatever way I might feel will help the vocal quality I’m going for with a certain character. To put it simply, I find it easier to be more daring and have fun when it’s just me recording on my own. I hope you will too.

I know a lot of people (I used to be one of them) who can’t bear to listen to a recording of themselves. When you record your audition, and you are reviewing it, try not to judge yourself harshly. If you feel that might be difficult, I suggest letting someone you trust listen to a couple of your takes. They can give you their opinion and feedback if you want it. In the end, it’s your choice as to what recording you submit.

Thank you in advance for participating in this process!

Sincerely,

Joe Discher
He/him/his
Director of MACBETH
CASTING:

You may audition with any of the sides provided, but please choose no more than two sides. Everyone auditioning will be considered for all available roles, no matter the sides you audition with. After all submissions are reviewed, we will do call-backs as needed. If you choose a side with two different roles on it (Bloody Sergeant/Porter), please read both as different characters.

Sides are being provided for the following roles:

Leading roles:
Witches, Malcolm, Banquo

Featured and supporting roles:
Lady Macduff, Ross, Lennox, Gentlewoman, Bloody Sergeant/Porter

- Though the characters may be described below according to Shakespeare’s original descriptions in his text, all parts/roles shall be open to actors of all ethnicities, genders, and actors with disabilities.

- Most actors in the production will play multiple roles. The combinations of these doublings or triplings will be decided during the casting process.

- If there is a specific role (or roles) you are very interested in and would like to be considered for, please let us know.

- Please note that the following roles will be cast with professional actors: Macbeth, Lady Macbeth (cast: January LaVoy), Duncan, Macduff

RECORDING:

You do not need to have professional equipment to record your audition. Recording on a phone or other hand-held device is totally fine. The main point is to for us to get a sense of your acting and your voice.

You should only submit an audio recording; no video, please.

Be sure to record in a quiet place that does not have an echo and is not “live” (your voice bounces of the wall) such as a bathroom, or other heavily tiled or glass-enclosed space. Close windows and/or turn off air conditioning units that make noise to get your space as quiet as possible. The main point is to hear your acting and your voice.

Most importantly, you do not need to “project” or act for the stage when recording. The stakes in many scenes are high and you can certainly be loud in moments that call for it, but do take
advantage of the intimacy that acting into a microphone affords you. There is no space between the actor and the audience in this medium. Your acting will be right in our ears.

**CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS:**

**The Witches** – called the “Weird Sisters” in the play, from the Scottish word “wyrd,” meaning “fate.” They are said to be supernatural beings who often represent the Fates. They are also said to represent Past, Present and Future and believed to have made a pact with the devil. They prophesy that Macbeth will become king, setting the play events of the play in motion.

**Macbeth** – A Scottish nobleman and general, heroic in battle and loved by King Duncan. After hearing the witches’ prophesy that he will someday become king, he takes matters into his own hands to make it a reality. He murders the King, and his guilt and paranoia drive him mad. *(This role will be performed by a professional actor.)*

**Lady Macbeth** – Macbeth’s wife. Deeply in love with her husband and ambitious for power and status. She spurs Macbeth on to murder Duncan. Her suppressed guilt drives her mad as well and she takes her own life. *(This role will be performed by a professional actor.)*

**Servant** – this role consists of several messengers and servants combined into one servant of the Macbeths, and will double with a few other roles.

**Banquo** – Macbeth’s best friend. Heroic in battle and loved by King Duncan. The witches prophesy that Banquo’s descendants will be kings. Macbeth fears Banquo’s offspring will take the throne from him, so he murders Banquo.

**Fleance** – son of Banquo; narrowly escapes being murdered by the men who kill Banquo.

**Duncan** – King of Scotland. A benevolent ruler, who some feel is becoming too old for the job. At the beginning of the play, he names his son Malcolm to be his heir. *(This role will be performed by a professional actor.)*

**Malcolm** – elder son of Duncan and heir to the throne. When Duncan is murdered, he and his younger brother flee the country for fear of being blamed or murdered themselves. Malcolm eventually builds an army with support from England, returns to Scotland and defeats Macbeth.

**Donalbain** – younger son of Duncan. He flees to Ireland after the murder of his father and is not heard from again during the play.

**Bloody Sergeant** – A soldier loyal to King Duncan, he tells Duncan the details of the battle at the beginning of the play, despite being seriously wounded. He returns at the end of the play with Malcolm’s army to defeat Macbeth.
**Ross and Lennox** – Thanes (Scottish noblemen) loyal to King Duncan and eventually subjects of Macbeth. They both begin to suspect that Macbeth murdered Duncan.

**Three Murderers** – hired by Macbeth to kill Banquo.

**Porter** – A drunken servant who tends the gate and lets people into Macbeth’s castle. He lets in Macduff when he arrives just before the King is discovered murdered.

**Macduff** – The Thane of Fife. He finds Duncan murdered and believes Macbeth responsible. He flees to England to convince Malcolm to return and save Scotland, then claim his throne as rightful heir. While in England, he learns Macbeth has had his wife and children slaughtered. Macduff kills Macbeth in single combat at the end of the play. *(This role will be performed by a professional actor.)*

**Lady Macduff** – Macduff’s wife. Mother to three children. When she learns Macduff has left the country, she is angry and afraid for her family. She speaks to her son pretending as if Macduff is dead.

**Doctor** – comes to observe Lady Macbeth, who has been sleepwalking, and is terrified by what he sees her doing.

**Gentlewoman** – a servant to Lady Macbeth, she calls a doctor because she is frightened by Lady Macbeth’s sleepwalking.

**A Lord** – a landowner who is a friend of Lennox. They discuss Macbeth’s guilt and what has become of Malcolm.

**Seyton** – an attendant to Macbeth. He informs Macbeth that Lady Macbeth has killed herself.

**Apparitions** – three spirits, possibly demons in disguise, who rise from the witches’ cauldron and give Macbeth several prophesies.