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Dramatic Publishing

Voodoo Macbeth



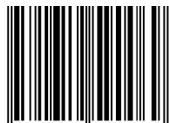
Drama
by
Tonya Hays

Voodoo Macbeth

Drama. *By Tonya Hays. Based on William Shakespeare's Macbeth. Cast: 3 to 5m., 3 to 9w., 6 to 8 either gender.* Shakespeare's classic tragedy comes to life in a unique way. The setting is Bayou St. John in New Orleans where Marie Laveau invites everyone to come and watch this tragic tale. "I welcome you to Bayou St. John on St. John's Eve. On this hallowed night, I have something special for you. Members of our group have been preparing a presentation, a celebration of a dark tale of a tragic king. My children, ZiZi, Saloppe and Josephine, will lead you through with the power of the gris-gris and voodoo to weave this story of greed, passion and despair. ... As I have told you many times voodoo for me is never evil. It will be used for good, so enjoy this tale and learn its lesson well my children." The witches ZiZi, Saloppe and Josephine manipulate the characters and the story. The use of puppetry, voodoo dolls and gris-gris add to the surreal setting. Dead characters appearing as zombies from the voodoo tradition lend an eerie, evil ambience to the entire macabre tale. The optional use of percussion through traditional drum rhythms enhances the experience and heightens the tension and intrigue of Macbeth's doomed quest. *Area staging. Approximate running time: 45 minutes. Code: V45.*

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Voodoo Macbeth

Adapted by
TONYA HAYS

From the play by William Shakespeare



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Voodoo Macbeth was premiered by the WINGS Performing Arts program in November 2012 at the Lynn Meadows Discovery Center in Gulfport, Miss.

Cast (in order of appearance):

ZiZiBrandi Bowen, Brielle Jordan
Saloppe.....Katie Glydewell, Sarah Grammar
Josephine..... Lizy Hurlbert, Sarah Pendleton
Marie Laveau/Hecate Jade Dedeaux, Dominique Howard
Duncan/Doctor Elliot Storey
Malcolm Daniel Ridge
Ross.....Alyssa Diamond, Dominique Howard
Captain Lucy Ridge, Denzle Walker
Macbeth..... Dayton Williams, Kenny McGravey
Banquo Jason Toth
Lady Macbeth Rebecca Johnson
Messenger/Porter Mollye Ladner, Emily Overmyer
Macduff..... Ray Zanders, Jordan Denz
Lennox Lucy Ridge
Murderers Katie Miller,
Gabriella Cuevas, Emily Overmyer
Lady Macduff..... Sarah Campbell, Gracie Hays
Macduff’s Child Maddie Ridge, Ayden Ladner
Dede Gabrielle Cuevas, Emily Overmyer
Regina Alyssa Diamond, Mollye Ladner
Rosalie..... Katie Miller, Lucy Ridge
Swing Lucy Ridge

Production:

Directors..... Tonya Hays, Bob Williams,
Producers..... Tanya Prater, Flo Williams,
Stage Manager Summerlin LaCour,
Choreographer..... Gabriella Cuevas,
Set Design Bob Williams,
Joseph Williams, James Nelson.
Music Director Joseph Williams
Asst. Music Director Ray Zanders
Musicians Ray Zanders, Joseph Williams,
Lane Stewart, Melody Waldrop,
Jason Toth, Gracie Hays
Costumes Designer Lizy Hurlbert

Voodoo Macbeth is dedicated to the Lynn Dedeaux family—
direct descendents of Marie Laveau. Many thanks for their
support of this project.

Voodoo Macbeth

CHARACTERS

Marie Laveau / Hecate

Witches

ZiZi: First Witch

Saloppe: Second Witch

Josephine: Third Witch

Additional Witches / Murderers / Puppeteers

Dede: Witch A

Regina: Witch B

Rosalie: Witch C

Captain / Soldier / Angus

King Duncan: King of Scotland

Malcolm: his son and heir to the throne

Macbeth: general in the king's army

Banquo: general in the king's army and friend of Macbeth

Lords

Macduff

Lennox

Ross

Angus

Servant / Porter / Messenger: officer, attending Macbeth

Son: child of Macduff

Lady Macduff: wife of Macduff (can also be gentlewoman)

2 Murderers (Witches can also serve as murderers)

Lady Macbeth

Doctor

Gentlewoman: attending Lady Macbeth

PRODUCTION NOTES

CHARACTER: Many characters can be double cast for a smaller ensemble as indicated above. Exploring gender in the roles can lead to interesting directing choices as well. The murderers may also be witches. The witches may take on character roles as well. They may also function as musicians.

As the characters are killed, they become zombies, which is part of the voodoo tradition. They reappear with their bloodied wounds and pale complexions. They appear in the final scene holding branches and surrounding Macbeth as victims of his crimes.

Since the three main witches are onstage the entire show, their reactions and movement can be experimented with to denote they are in control. They can function as a Greek chorus repeating lines, making sounds and whispering when warranted. The director is encouraged to experiment with this concept.

MUSIC: Music and percussion are suggested. Actors/musicians can experiment with various percussion instruments throughout the piece. Congas, African drums and bells, Calinda rhythms and Bamboula dance and rhythms were studied via YouTube. All music and sound are live, generated by the percussion ensemble. Actors/musicians are encouraged to find moments for percussion.

COSTUME: Costumes are simple in nature as if the poorer people of the time period of Marie Laveau are putting on a play in the 1800s. Men wear simple drawstring pants and loose shirts. Women wear simple blouses and skirts. All put on suggestive pieces for whatever character they are portraying. The witches all wear tignons. Their hair is tied up in these scarves, and they wear fabric skirts as if made of scarves, the traditional voodoo queen's dress.

SET: Two elevated platforms create the large pier. Poles/pylons placed along the platforms add to the pier look. Ropes can be strung between the pylons, and Spanish moss and camouflage netting can be used along the rope and pylons. Skulls can be placed on the pier poles. The show is set in Bayou St. John. Scenes are played simply in front of the pier, with various pieces of furniture being brought in as needed. The witches are on the pier/platform watching over the entire play when not interacting. In the touring production, a single unit of scaffolding was used and dressed with camouflage netting and Spanish moss.

The banquet may be depicted simply by banquet guests each having a stein and standing as if at a table.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Voodoo Macbeth was one our most popular productions. The students loved performing it, and teachers enjoyed the unique way Shakespeare's *Macbeth* came to life for their students in our touring shows. In addition to studying Shakespeare's play, Voodoo traditions and Marie Laveau can be explored and researched. This history and mystery are fascinating. Directors are encouraged to explore and collaborate with their actors to add to the mystic quality indicated in the script.

Voodoo Macbeth works very well for festivals. Roles can be expanded, or you may use a few actors and double or triple cast. The tragic story of Macbeth's misguided quest for power, aided by his greedy and beautiful queen, comes to life in a new way that appeals to young performers. Audiences will be intrigued and engaged by the voodoo influences.

PROPERTIES

Instruments:

Congas

African bell or cowbell

Woodblock and stick

Metal thunder sheet

3 wooden stools

Wooden chairs

Letter

3 daggers, 1 on a string or fishing line

3 red cloths

Tray with pewter looking steins

2 large voodoo dolls

2 long knitting needles

Stage blood

Pieces of gauze

Cauldron

Paddle for stirring cauldron

Cauldron ingredients:

Eye of newt

Tongue of dog

Wool of bat, etc.

3 puppets for witches

Can be created by using baby dolls or ragdolls.

Can appear from behind the pier on simple dowels or be hung from cane like fishing poles

Large rubber snake

4 wooden swords

Garden tools (trowels) for sword sounds (sounds created by musicians when sword fights take place)

10 branches

Voodoo Macbeth

SETTING: *The stage is set with a large pier-like structure upstage covered with Spanish moss and vines giving suggestion of a swamp, specifically Bayou St. John. Three wooden stools are on the pier. The WITCHES never leave the stage areas, watching from the pier when they are not actively engaged in the scenes. Their constant presence suggests they are puppeteers of fate. Everything is organic in look and feel. Puppets, voodoo dolls, etc.*

AT RISE: *Music up: The sound of the congas begins. Musicians are present onstage. They begin to play Bamboula rhythms as the WITCHES dance.*

ACT I, Scene 1

MARIE LAVEAU (*entering*). Peace, my children, peace.

(Drums stop.)

MARIE LAVEAU (*cont'd*). I welcome you to Bayou St. John on St. John's Eve. On this hallowed night, I have something special for you. Members of our group have been preparing a presentation, a celebration of a dark tale of a tragic king. My children, ZiZi, Saloppe and Josephine, will lead you through with the power of the gris, gris and voodoo, to weave this story of greed, passion and despair. I will also take part with the grand zombie. As I have told you many times, voodoo for me is never evil. It will be used for good. So enjoy this tale and learn its lesson well, my children.

(Music up: Drums begin as Zizi [FIRST WITCH], Saloppe [SECOND WITCH] and Josephine [THIRD WITCH] continue to dance and take their positions.)

FIRST WITCH. When shall we three meet again? In thunder, lighting or in rain?

SECOND WITCH. When the hurly-burly's done, when the battle's lost and won.

THIRD WITCH. That will be ere the set of sun.

FIRST WITCH. Where the place?

SECOND WITCH. Upon the heath.

THIRD WITCH. There to meet with Macbeth.

(A cat cry is heard.)

FIRST WITCH. I come, Graymalkin.

(A frog croak is heard.)

SECOND WITCH. Paddock calls.

THIRD WITCH. Anon.

ALL *(as they climb onto the pier)*. Fair is foul and foul is fair, hover through the fog and filthy air.

(Music up: Percussion.)

ACT I, Scene 2

(Enter KING DUNCAN, MALCOLM, LENNOX and a wounded CAPTAIN.)

KING. What bloody man is that?

MALCOLM. This is the sergeant who fought 'gainst my captivity. Say to the king the knowledge of the broil as thou didst' leave it.

CAPTAIN. Brave Macbeth carved out his passage, till he faced merciless Macdonald, unseamed him from the nave to th' chops, and fixed his head upon the battlements.

DUNCAN. O valiant cousin! Worthy gentleman!

CAPTAIN. Mark, King of Scotland, mark: No sooner justice had, with valor armed, compelled these skipping kerns to trust their heels, but the Norway Lord began a fresh assault.

DUNCAN. Dismayed not this our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?

CAPTAIN. I must report they were as cannons overcharged with double cracks. But I am faint, my gashes cry for help.

DUNCAN. So well thy words become thee as thy wounds; They smack of honor both. Get him surgeons.

(Exit CAPTAIN with LENNOX. Enter ROSS.)

DUNCAN *(cont'd)*. Who comes here?

MALCOLM. The worthy thane of Ross.

DUNCAN. Whence cam'st thou, worthy thane?

ROSS. From Fife, great king. Norway assisted by that most disloyal traitor, the Thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict. The victory fell on us.

DUNCAN. Great happiness. No more that Thane of Cawdor shall deceive our bosom interest: go pronounce his death, and with his former title greet Macbeth.

ROSS. I'll see it done.

DUNCAN. What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won.

(They exit.)

The WITCHES come downstage during the following dialogue. Music up: Percussion drum.)

ACT I, Scenes 3 and 4

THIRD WITCH. A drum, a drum! Macbeth doth come.

ALL (*dancing together in a circle*). The weird sisters, hand in hand, posters of the sea and land, thus do go about, thrice to thine, and thrice to mine, and thrice again to make up nine. Peace the charm's wound up.

(*Enter MACBETH and BANQUO.*)

MACBETH. So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

BANQUO. What are these, so withered and so wild in their attire, that look not like the' inhabitants o' th' earth and yet are on 't?

MACBETH. Speak if you can: What are you?

FIRST WITCH. All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee Thane of Glamis!

SECOND WITCH. All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!

THIRD WITCH. All hail, Macbeth that shalt be king hereafter!

BANQUO (*to MACBETH*). Good sir, why do you start and seem to fear things that do sound so fair. (*To WITCHES.*) If you can look into the seeds of time, speak then to me.

FIRST WITCH. Hail! Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

SECOND WITCH. Hail! Not so happy, yet much happier.

THIRD WITCH. Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none. So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo.

(*SECOND WITCH and THRID WITCH climb up on the pier.*)

FIRST WITCH. Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

MACBETH. Stay you imperfect speakers. How am I Thane of Cawdor? The Thane of Cawdor lives. Say from whence you owe this strange intelligence? Speak, I charge you.

(*FIRST WITCH climbs onto the pier*)

MACBETH (*cont'd*). Would they have stayed. Your children shall be kings.

BANQUO. You shall be king.

MACBETH. And Thane of Cawdor too: went it not so?

BANQUO. To th' self same tune and words. Who's there?

(Enter ANGUS and ROSS.)

ANGUS. We are sent, to give thee, from our royal master, thanks.

ROSS. He bade me, from him, call thee Thane of Cawdor;
hail most worthy Thane!

MACBETH. The Thane of Cawdor lives. Why do you dress
me in borrowed robes?

ANGUS. Who was the Thane lives yet but treasons, capital,
confessed and proved, have overthrown him.

MACBETH. Thanks for your pains. *(Aside to BANQUO.)* Do
you not hope your children be kings?

BANQUO. Oftentimes, to win us to harm, the instruments
of darkness tell us truths, win us with honest trifles, to be-
trays, in deepest consequence. *(To ANGUS and ROSS.)*
Cousins, a word, I pray you.

MACBETH *(aside)*. This supernatural soliciting cannot be
ill, cannot be good. Present fears are less than horrible
imaginings.

BANQUO. Worthy Macbeth, let us toward the king.

MACBETH *(to BANQUO)*. Think about what hath chanced,
and at more time, the interim having weighed it, let us
speak our free hearts each to other.

BANQUO. Very gladly.

MACBETH. Till then, enough. *(To ROSS and ANGUS.)*
Come friends.

(They exit. Music up: Percussion.)

ACT I, Scene 5 and 6

(MACBETH's castle.)

LADY MACBETH (*entering alone with a letter*). They met me in the day of success; and I have learned by the perfectest report they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the king, who all-hailed me “Thane of Cawdor,” by which title, before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referred me to the coming on of time, with “Hail, king that shalt be!” This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart farewell.

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be what thou art promised. Yet I do fear thy nature; It is too full o’ the’ milk of human kindness to catch the nearest way. Hie thee hither, that I may pour my spirits in thine ear and chastise with the valor or my tongue all that impedes thee from the golden round, which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem to have thee crowned withal.

(*MESSENGER enters.*)

LADY MACBETH (*cont’d*). What is your tidings?

MESSENGER. The king comes here tonight and with him his sons, Malcolm Prince of Cumberland and Donalbain.

LADY MACBETH. Thou’rt mad to say it! Is not thy master with him, who, were’t so, would have informed for preparation?

MESSENGER. It is true. Our thane is coming. One of my fellows had the speed of him, who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely more than would make up his message.

LADY MACBETH. Give him tending; he brings great news.

(MESSENGER exits. The WITCHES stand and raise their hands as LADY MACBETH continues.)

LADY MACBETH *(cont'd)*. 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! Make thick my blood. Come to my woman's breasts, and take my milk for gall. Come, thick night, and pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell, that my keen knife see not the wound it makes, nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark to cry, "Hold, hold!"

(MACBETH enters.)

LADY MACBETH. Great Glamis! Worthy Cawdor! Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!

MACBETH. My dearest love, Duncan comes here tonight.

LADY MACBETH. O, never shall sun that morrow see!
Look like th' innocent flower, but be the serpent under't.
You shall put this night's great business into my dispatch.

MACBETH. We will speak further. *(He exits.)*

(Music up: Percussion—Announcing KING. He enters with entourage of LORDS.)

KING. See, see our honored hostess!

LADY MACBETH. Your servants ever.

KING. Give me your hand. Conduct me to mine host. We love him highly and shall continue our graces toward him.

(Music up: Percussion.)

ACT I, Scene 7 – ACT II, Scene 4

(As KING, LORDS and LADY MACBETH leave, enter MACBETH.)

MACBETH. If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly. If th' assassination could trammel up the consequence and catch, with his surcease, success, that but this blow might be the be-all and the end-all here, but here, upon this bank and shoal of time, we'd jump the life to come. He's here in double trust: first, as I am his kinsman and his subject, strong both against the deed; then, as his host, who should against the murderer shut the door, not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been so clear in his great office, that his virtues will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against the deep damnation of his taking-off; I have no spur to prick the sides of my intent, but only vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself and falls on th' other.

(Enter LADY MACBETH.)

LADY MACBETH. He has almost supped. Why have you left the chamber?

MACBETH. We will proceed no further in this business. He hath honored me of late, and I have brought golden opinions from all sorts of people, which would be worn now in their newest gloss, not cast aside so soon.

LADY MACBETH. Was the hope drunk wherein you dressed yourself? Hath it slept since? From this time such I account thy love. Wouldst thou have that which thou esteem'st the ornament of life, and live a coward in thine own esteem, letting "I dare not" wait upon "I would," like the poor cat in the adage?

MACBETH. Prithee, peace: I dare do all that may become a man; who dares do more is none.

LADY MACBETH. What beast was't then, that made you break this enterprise to me? When you durst do it, then you were a man.

MACBETH. If we should fail?

LADY MACBETH. We fail! But screw your courage to the sticking place, and we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep—his two chamberlains will I with wine and wassail so convince that memory, the warder of the brain, shall be a fume and the receipt of reason a limbeck only. What cannot you and I perform upon the unguarded Duncan? What not put upon his spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt of our great quell?

MACBETH. Bring forth men-children only, for thy undaunted mettles should compose nothing but males. Will it not be received, when we have marked with blood those sleepy two of his own chamber and used their very daggers, that they have done't?

LADY MACBETH. Who dares receive it other, as we shall make our grief and clamor roar upon his death?

MACBETH. I am settled, and bend up each corporal agent to this terrible feat. Away, and mock the time with fairest show. False face must hide what false heart doth know.

(LADY MACBETH exits as a witch dangles a sword from a pole above on the pier.)

MACBETH *(cont'd)*. Is this a dagger which I see before me, the handle toward my hand? Come let me clutch thee.

(He tries to grab the dagger and it disappears as the witch pulls it back.)

MACBETH *(cont'd)*. I have thee not and yet I see thee still. O art thou but a dagger of the mind, a false creation? Witches are offering sacrifices to their goddess Hecate. Thou marshal'st me the way I was going; and such an instrument I was to use,

(Witch or musician rings a cow bell or African Bell.)

MACBETH *(cont'd)*. A bell rings. I go, and it is done: the bell invites me. Hear it not, Duncan, for it is knell that summons thee to heaven, or to hell.

(MACBETH exits. WITCHES begin whispering, "Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep.")

MACBETH *(cont'd, offstage)*. Who's there? What, ho?

LADY MACBETH *(enters)*. Alack, I am afraid they have awaked and 'tis not done! I laid their daggers ready; He could not miss 'em.

(A cry is heard. Enter MACBETH with the bloodied daggers. The WITCHES stab a voodoo doll with a knitting needle.)

LADY MACBETH *(cont'd)*. My husband!

MACBETH. I have done the deed. Didst' thou not hear a noise?

LADY MACBETH. I heard the owl scream and the cricket's cry. Did you not speak?

MACBETH *(as he speaks, the WITCHES whisper it behind him and with him)* Methought I heard a voice cry, "Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep. Sleep no more! Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor shall sleep no more. Macbeth shall sleep no more."

LADY MACBETH. You do unbend your noble strength to think so brainsickly of things. Why did you bring the daggers from the place? Go carry them and smear the sleepy grooms with blood.

MACBETH. I'll go no more.

LADY MACBETH. Give me the daggers. I'll gild the faces of the grooms withall, for it must seem their guilt.

(She exits. There is a knocking created by the percussion ensemble.)