



MACBETH* and *MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

EDUCATION PACK

This teaching pack has been designed to accompany your visit to Oddsocks Productions
Summer 2016 tour of *Macbeth* and *Much Ado About Nothing*

It is created to assist English and Drama teachers at GCSE and A-Level, although some of the
exercises may be suitable for Youth Groups and KS2/3/4

Schools workshops are available - early booking is advised please contact hope@oddsocks.co.uk
for more information

We welcome feedback to our resources please email info@oddsocks.co.uk
Full tour dates online at www.oddsocks.co.uk

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About Oddsocks

Oddsocks Productions takes classic texts and create bold, challenging innovative and interactive theatre to be enjoyed by all. We tell good stories, in exciting ways and have been touring nationally and internationally for 26 years to theatres and non-traditional arts venues.

Set up by Andy Barrow and Elli Mackenzie, Oddsocks Productions is a critically acclaimed family enterprise taking its work out to diverse communities across the UK. Touring indoor and outdoor venues in all seasons, Oddsocks have become established as one of the UK's best-loved touring theatre companies with supporters in there thousands.

MACBETH - CHARACTER LIST

MACBETH
LADY MACBETH
KING DUNCAN
BANQUO
MACDUFF
THREE WITCHES
MALCOLM
FLEANE
DONALBAIN
LADY MACDUFF
MACDUFF'S SON
YOUNG SIWARD

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING - CHARACTER LIST

BENEDICK
BEATRICE
CLAUDIO
HERO
DON PEDRO
DON JOHN
LEONATO
MARGARET
BORACHIO
CONRAD
DOGBERRY
VERGES
ANTONIO



SYNOPSIS - MACBETH

Macbeth begins with the appearance of three witches and moves swiftly to a military camp where the Scottish king Duncan is informed that Macbeth and Banquo - two army generals - have been successful in battle. Then we meet Macbeth and Banquo who whilst travelling back from battle meet the three witches who prophesise that Macbeth will be made thane (Scottish nobility) of Cawdor and finally King of Scotland. They also tell Banquo that he will create a line of Scottish King's - although will never be King himself. After the witches vanish, the men ignore their prophecies until they learn that Macbeth has unknowingly been titled thane of Cawdor.

Macbeth tells his wife of this, Lady Macbeth, who is convinced that Macbeth must murder King Duncan in order for this prophecy to come true. When he returns home to her with the King and his party, she convinces him that he should kill him tonight. The plan on getting the King's two chamberlains drunk so they will be unaware of the plot. While King Duncan is asleep, Macbeth murders him despite his uncertainties and visions.

When Duncan's death is discovered Macbeth kills the chamberlains supposedly out of rage for the crime. King Duncan's sons flee to Ireland and England.

Macbeth is worried that Banquo will suspect him of the crime and so hires a group of murdered to kill Banquo and his son Fleance. They succeed in killing Banquo but Fleance escapes. At the feast that evening Macbeth sees the vision of Banquo's ghost and is greatly alarmed. He is so frightened that he goes to visit the witches. They show him spirits which present him with further prophecies: he must beware of Macduff, a Scottish nobleman who opposed Macbeth's accession to the throne; he is incapable of being harmed by any man born of woman; and he will be safe until Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane Castle. Macbeth is relieved and feels secure as he knows that all men are born of women and forests can't move so therefore he cannot be harmed. When he learns that Macduff has fled to England to join Malcolm, Macbeth orders that Macduff's castle be seized and, most cruelly, that Lady Macduff and her children be murdered.

Macduff is furious at the death of his family and vows revenge. Lady Macbeth is troubled by sleepwalking and nightmares and believes there to be bloodstains on her hands. Before the final battle, Macbeth learns that his wife has killed herself. Nevertheless he heads for battle, although fearful for his life. He learns that the English army is advancing on Dunsinane shielded with boughs cut from Birnam Wood. Birnam Wood is indeed coming to Dunsinane, fulfilling half of the witches' prophecy.

During the battle Macbeth meets Macduff who declares that he was not "of woman born" but was instead "untimely ripped" from his mother's womb (what we now call birth by cesarean section). Macbeth and Macduff fight until Macduff beheads Macbeth.

Malcolm (Duncan's eldest son) is declared King of Scotland.



SYNOPSIS - MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Don Pedro and his men, including Benedick and Claudio, return home from a war victorious to stay at Leonato's house. Benedick has had an on-going difficult relationship with Leonato's niece, Beatrice. Both Beatrice and Benedick vow never to get married. Claudio, a soldier returned home from war quickly falls in love with Leonato's daughter named Hero. Knowing this, Don Pedro agrees to woo Hero on behalf of Claudio, but his illegitimate brother (Don John) plans ruin of the couple along with his two friends named Borachio and Conrad.

Claudio and Hero are set to get married. Further bickering and bitterness from Benedick and Beatrice sparks an idea of a plan from Pedro, who wants to trick them into falling in love with each other. Leonato, Claudio and Don Pedro let Benedick purposefully overhear their conversation about how much Beatrice loves him. Later, Hero and Maria purposefully let Beatrice overheard how much Benedick is in love with her. This causes them both to realise their feelings for each other.

In the meantime, Don John arranges for Borachio to woo Hero's maid (Margaret) at Hero's window. He tells Pedro and Claudio that Hero will be unfaithful and they will be able to see her tonight. That night they go to Hero's window and hear Borachio call Margaret 'Hero', therefore assuming Hero has been unfaithful to Claudio.

The Watch, led by Dogberry and Verdes, are preparing for their evening duty. Borachio is overheard talking about the plot and he is arrested. An interrogation starts but the wedding gets in the way and they have to wait. At the wedding, Claudio announces to the wedding crowd that Hero has been unfaithful and she faints with shock. Claudio and his men leave the wedding. Don John flees the house as Hero is interrogated by her father. They all believe her to be innocent, (which she is) and the Priest has a plan to pretend that Hero is dead until the truth is discovered. Beatrice and Benedick declare their feelings towards each other and Beatrice makes Benedick vow to kill Claudio for publically shaming Hero.

Leonato plans to fight Claudio, but all learn the truth about Hero's innocence. Presuming her to be dead, Claudio begs forgiveness for his wrongdoing from Leonato. For recompense, Leonato demands that Claudio marries his 'brothers daughter' who he claims looks just like Hero. Claudio feeling the guilt of what he has done immediately agrees. At the wedding it's unveiled that it is in fact the 'real' Hero - who isn't dead! Benedick and Beatrice reveal their love for each other publically and agree to get married. At the end of the play the couples hear that Don John has been captured and there is a big celebration!



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire and was baptised on 26th April 1564. His father, Jon Shakespeare was a glove merchant and wool trader. His mother, Mary Arden, was the daughter of a wealthy land-owner. It's likely that William attended and was educated at King George VI Grammar School in Stratford.



Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway at age 18, the daughter of a local farmer on November 28, 1582. Anne was 8 years older than him and their first child, Susanna was born 6 months after the wedding. 2 years later, twins Hamnet and Judith were both. Hamnet died when he was 11 years old.

The next time there is a record of Shakespeare shows us that he had moved to London without his family and was working in theatre. He gained experience as an actor and playwright and was also one of the managing partners of Lord Chamberlains Company, which was renamed the Kings Company when James was on the throne. From 1593 and 1594 it's thought that Shakespeare wrote most of his sonnets.

Records of Shakespeare's plays start appearing from 1594 and he began to churn out roughly 2 plays a year until 1611. He started to earn larger amounts of money for his work and his father, Jon Shakespeare commissioned a coat of arms to be designed, which Shakespeare paid for. His early plays are mainly considered the histories and the comedies including 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and 'Henry VI'.

By the late 1590s he was established as a well-respected playwright throughout London and England. In 1599 the company moved to newly built Globe Theatre. In 1602 Shakespeare moved to Silver Street (where the Barbican is now situated) and it was here he writes some of his most respected works including 'Hamlet', 'Othello' and 'King Lear'.

Although his sonnets were published in 1609, Shakespeare's plays weren't in print until after his death in 1623 when the first folio was published.

Towards the end of his life, Shakespeare spent 5 years back in Stratford. He died on 23rd April 1616 at the age of 52 and is buried at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford.



THEATRE IN SHAKESPEARE'S DAY

Theatre in Shakespeare's time was theatre for the masses. Audiences members may not have been able to read or write, and would be rowdy and raucous during the performance. Elizabethan theatre was available for everyone as long as you could pay a penny to get in and were happy to stand for the whole performance as a groundling.

Shakespeare wasn't the only one writing at this time, many of his contemporaries including Christopher Marlowe were often considered his superior. However, Marlowe's career was cut short after he died after being stabbed in the eye with a knife in a tavern brawl.

It was a very different experience to how we think of theatre today. Forget ice-cream at the interval, audiences would eat, drink, talk with friends throughout the performance. Plus, all theatres were outdoors and relied on natural light meaning plays were always performed in the afternoon.

All female roles in Shakespeare's plays would have been performed by men, normally young boys. Women would visit the theatre, though more wealthy women might wear a mask to protect their identity. It wasn't until years later (in 1660) when the first women appeared legally onstage.

Plays were performed in courtyards and inns and in the houses of noblemen until the first theatre named 'The Theatre' was built in 1576 in London. After that, a number of open-air performances spaces were built including the Rose (1587), the Hope (1613) followed by the Globe (1599); a theatre in which Shakespeare had a stake. The Globe, which could house an astounding 3000 spectators, was only in use for 14 years, until a performance of *Henry VIII* in 1613 when a cannon was fired and the roof caught fire and the theatre was burnt to the ground.

It was the licensing and restriction of the plays that posed such difficulty for Elizabethan playwrights and actors. From 1596-97 it was prohibited to perform plays within the inner limits of London. There was much dispute about if the Theatre could be built and the lease wasn't agreed for a number of years.



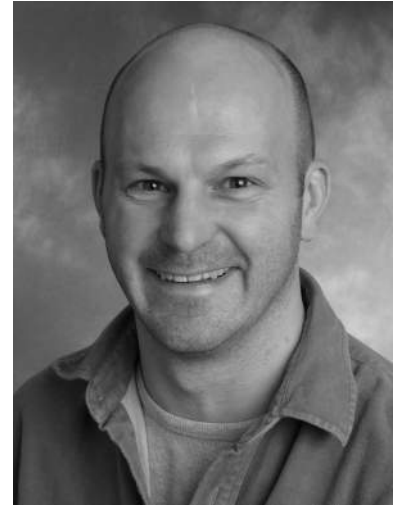
INTERVIEW WITH ANDY BARROW - DIRECTOR/ACTOR

Can you tell us a bit about Oddsocks?

We're an independent, unfunded, family run touring theatre company who have been performing for 26 years. We strive to make classic, well-known stories into accessible entertaining theatre!

What is the first thing you do when you approach a script to direct?

Firstly, understand the narrative and what's actually going on! We decide the clear themes and plot line, so that I can get a strong indication of where the story is moving and where the beginning, middle and end is!



Oddsocks are doing Much Ado About Nothing AND Macbeth? How do you approach rehearsing two texts?

We work backwards from when the first performance of each show is. We know it's important to be rehearsing the right play directly before we do a show, so we try and book the first few shows of one play in a block meaning we can have a good run into the play. Then we're secure and can go into the next play.

Generally speaking, we work on the music first and make sure that's confident. We then get an understanding of the play, block the scenes, learn the lines and add the musical numbers until we're in a position to rehearse the play fully, with music at speed!

Oddsocks have a very distinct performance style, talking and involving the audience - Why is this a choice? Do you think this compares to the original performance conditions?

I think historically it's more accurate to the early works of Shakespeare but I also think theatre is at its best and its most unique when it's in the moment. It's not a recording, it's not on TV, it's there and physical and three-dimensional! If we can create theatre that is energetic, then we can use the moments of adrenalin and chaos, whether it's due to the elements we're working in or the audience reactions, to create a moment that's shared and real for all of us. If we were to ignore those moments and opportunities, and put on the same play every night - then it ignores the energy that's present in the live performance.

You mentioned you're a director as well as an actor? How do those roles interlink?

As an actor it's important for me not to direct whilst I'm acting, and it's important for me not to act when I'm directing! So it's about separating those two tasks so I can be objective. I can have my mind on the production from the outside when directing and then see it from the characters point of view when I'm acting. So for me, I create the separation in rehearsal but allow myself enough time to work as an actor and give my role justice. This means that the other actors don't feel that they are rehearsing with an under-rehearsed actor when I'm onstage!

Why have Oddsocks chosen to stage Macbeth and Much Ado About Nothing?

They are entertaining, classic and popular pieces so we know we can create a great night out! They're exam pieces too so we know students will be able to benefit from it. Plus, Much Ado About Nothing was such a success last year and audiences asked for it back so we wanted to be able to share it again!



How do you go about turning Shakespeare's plays into something for a modern audience?

I think it's important that we don't put on a history piece. Again, it's about the live theatre experience - it has to mean something to the audience. We're not travelling around the country representing Shakespeare as it was 400 years ago, we're doing an interpretation of Shakespeare's play that's relevant for today. Elements within what Shakespeare wrote are universal and timeless, what we do is fit it into a contemporary world that enables the meaning and characters to be accepted by the audience.

Do audiences need to understand Shakespeare and read the play before coming to see the show?

They don't need to pre-read it at all! We make it understandable for them, they get the Shakespeare text and the story through our performances. No prior knowledge is necessary, and that's why we're delighted that people choose to introduce their children, students and friends to Shakespeare with our style! There's a guarantee that we'll communicate the story clearly and that Shakespeare isn't something to be afraid of.

You're also an unsubsidised theatre company. How do you think you've managed to survive 25 years in the arts industry being self-funded?

It's down to a lot of hard work and commitment and having a style of theatre which works and is unique, and perhaps sticking to that. Meaning that our audiences have an expectation of an Oddsocks performance. We do change and challenge audience perceptions each time we grow and develop but we don't move too far away from the audiences expectations and our fundamental ideas of why we produce theatre.

Also because we are popular and commercially viable in this difficult climate! We're a limited amount of risk because of our popularity but enough amount of risk to be stimulating. A balance between careful and exciting.

What can an audience expect from Oddsocks Macbeth and Much Ado About Nothing?

Lively characters, live music and thoughtful performances of experiences that things they will have experienced. Whether it's love, shame, misunderstanding, judgement, accusation; all these things in the plays are things we come across today in our lives. Those feelings that people have in the play are recognisable to people now; so it's about sharing those moments and understanding how they affect us. Expect to be energised and moved on a journey that you can relive time and time again in your imaginations!

What are you most looking forward to about the tour?

Crazy summer nights sharing an energised Shakespeare comedy with hundreds of people! There's a fantastic buzz of hearing an audience clapping along and laughing along to something we've worked on and created! The energy that it creates in that moment...well there's nothing quite like it!



THEMES FOR DISCUSSION- MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

MARRIAGE

- Marriage is right at the heart of *Much Ado About Nothing*. Right from the offset, Claudio is intent on marrying Hero. Much of the scheming and plotting done by the characters is about marrying and un-marrying each other.
- Consider why Benedick and Beatrice are so determined not to marry - question whether the dislike stems from a fear of being unwanted, unhappy or a genuine dislike for marriage? What changes their mind and at what point in the play?
- Do you think the view of marriage is different for the different genders? Is there a difference in the meaning of marriage for Hero and Claudio? What evidence can you use to support this?

LOVE AND LOYALTY

- Love can be a difficult topic in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Interestingly the play is also known as *Love Labour's Won* (and therefore paired with *Love's Labours Lost*). Discuss which title you think suits the play better and why?
- None of the characters seem especially determined to seek love, it seems to spontaneously find them or is the product of plotting from other characters- consider if you agree that the relationships in the play are imposed upon them?
- Loyalty and love seem to go hand in hand for some characters in the play i.e Beatrice asking Benedick to kill Claudio when Hero is slandered. Discuss the impact that divided loyalties has on the events in the play.
- Discuss what the motivation for Don John being disloyal to his brother might be. He is often considered a very basic, passive 'villain'; how far do you agree with statement? Think about how little lines he has considering he is such an influential part of the plot.

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY: Consider what the marriages and relationships might be like after the play has ended. Improvise a scene with Beatrice and Benedick or Hero and Claudio a month/a year/5 years into marriage - imagine they are speaking to a marriage counsellor. How do you think the relationships will have changed? Remember to think about how events in the play might influenced them e.g Hero and Claudio might be distrusting of each other, Benedick and Beatrice both have a temper and are strong-willed etc..

REPUTATION/PRIDE

- Reputation is vital in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Read the opening of scene 1 and think about all the phrases used to describe the characters before we meet them, are these statements true? Does this distort our opinion of them?
- Think about the couples in the play; do they have similar views of reputation? Or are equally proud? Do you think their paired attitudes might foreshadow their relationships?



- Consider how characters react when their pride/reputation is damaged or altered. Would you argue that Beatrice and Benedick lose their reputation/pride when they fall in love? Or has it been a façade all along? Or do they merely accept each other's faults?

Similarly, think about how Claudio reacts after he has publically slandered Hero. Many argue he is unmoved by the situation? What do you think he might be thinking after the accusation and Hero's reaction?

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY: Improvise the scene after Claudio walks out of the church. Shakespeare chooses for us not to see this moment in the play so improvise/explore what Claudio might be feeling/thinking/saying to Don Pedro and Don Jon, and what they might say in return.

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

Create your own playlist for *Much Ado About Nothing* choosing a song for each scene. Think about what tone you want to set and how the song might reflect the narrative.



THEMES FOR DISCUSSION - MACBETH

AMBITION

- A number of the characters in Macbeth are weighted with ambition. Create a scale from MOST to LEAST ambitious using extracts from the play. Does this change at different parts of the narrative?
- Do you think Macbeth is naturally ambitious or is he driven to it by Lady Macbeth? Why might Lady Macbeth be so determined for Macbeth to be King?
- Can we determine a difference between characters being 'ambitious' and 'violent'? Is there a difference? Is Macbeth naturally violent or does his ambition drive his? Could it be visa versa?
- Do you think there are strong characters and weak characters? Is this linked to ambition? For example, do you think Banquo is a strong character? Investigate this. Remember he is a soldier like Macbeth.

THE SUPERNATURAL

- Supernatural elements appear a number of times throughout Macbeth. The Witches, Banquo's ghost, Macbeth seeing a vision of a dagger. How many of these do you think are true? Do you think they may represent something else?
- What would have been the impact of seeing Witches and Spirits on stage during the original performance conditions? Do you think this would have been received differently to audiences today? Think about the amount of technology we have to create images on stage and on film today compared to the first time the play was performed.
- During the scene of Banquo's ghost, some theatre productions choose to not see the ghost at all.

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY: Read the scene with and without the presence of a ghost. Which do you prefer and why? What impact does it have on the audience? In the scene WITH the ghost, think about pace and movement and how this can be used to create tension.

GENDER

- There are a number of times when masculinity is questioned or provoked. Lady Macbeth frequently asked Macbeth "Are you a man?" Why do you think she does this? What is she hoping to achieve?
- Lady Macbeth says that she wishes herself could be "unsexed" - what does she mean by this? Think about the idea of place and time and how women may have been restricted.
- Make a list of stereotypically 'male' and 'female' qualities. Think about if some characters confirm to these, if not, why? Split into 2 groups and make still images of one of these qualities. See if the other group can guess what you are trying to portray. See if these still images might also reflect a moment in the play.

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

Create your own playlist for *Macbeth* choosing a song for each scene. Think about what tone you want to set and how the song might reflect the narrative.



SCRIPT EXTRACT - MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Act 1 - Scene 1

BEATRICE

I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick: nobody marks you.

BENEDICK

What, my dear Lady Disdain! are you yet living?

BEATRICE

Is it possible disdain should die while she hath such meet food to feed it as Signior Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come in her presence.

BENEDICK

Then is courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted: and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart; for, truly, I love none.

BEATRICE

A dear happiness to women: they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that: I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me.

BENEDICK

God keep your ladyship still in that mind! so some gentleman or other shall 'scape a predestinate scratched face.

BEATRICE

Scratching could not make it worse, an 'twere such a face as yours were.

BENEDICK

Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

BEATRICE

A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

BENEDICK

I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer. But keep your way, i' God's name; I have done.

BEATRICE

You always end with a jade's trick: I know you of old.

Things to consider:

- Beatrice and Benedick are outside in a public place, other people will be listening and watching. How might this impact the way they speak to each other?
- This is a battle of wits for both characters. Think about adding an action verb to each line to help the actors actively use and deliver the text. An example for the first line for Beatrice might be *to mock*, *to belittle* or *to embarrass*.
- This is not the first time they have met each other - think about how you can show their dislike before they speak to each other e.g. how close/far apart do they stand from each other on stage?

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY: STATUS

This duologue is all about both Beatrice and Benedick trying to gain status. Draw an imaginary line in the centre of the room, one end is low status and one end is high status. Each time a character speaks a line or feels they have gained higher status they move up the line. See how this illustrates physically, how the status changes during the scene.

Who ends up having the higher status? Discuss if that is based on the text or in the delivery of the lines from the actors.

Disdain: the feeling that someone or something is unworthy of your consideration or respect.

Turncoat: someone who changes his or her mind/opinion quickly

Parrot-teacher: copying and twisting words, instructing as a parrot would

Continuer: tireless

Jade's trick: (Jade) ill-conditioned/unhealthy horse, i.e. someone who backs out of an argument easily



SCRIPT EXTRACT - MACBETH Cut version of Act 1 Scene 7

LADY MACBETH

He has almost supp'd: why have you left the chamber?

MACBETH

Hath he ask'd for me?

LADY MACBETH

Know you not he has?

MACBETH

We will proceed no further in this business:
He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought
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 dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time
Such I account thy love.

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?
I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.

MACBETH

If we should fail?

LADY MACBETH

We fail!
But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll not fail.

Things to consider:

- Lady Macbeth and Macbeth are talking about the murder of someone who is in the next room - how does this change the way they might speak to each other?
- Think about the amount of tension in the scene. Are they stressed or relaxed? Formal or informal? Think about how high the stakes are and how that changes the amount of tension in their voices and speech.

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY: ACTIONING

Read the scene through and then discuss what you think is the objective of just this scene for each character? What are they trying to achieve? Play the scene trying out different ideas.

Examples for Macbeth could be *to dismiss my wife, to avoid the situation, to remain safe.*

Examples for Lady Macbeth could be *to convince, to persuade, to force Macbeth to kill Duncan.*

Actors use objectives a lot to help inform the way a scene is played.

Supp'd: Finished supper

Sticking-place: Tighten up your courage until it is fixed in the place necessary for the murder of Duncan.