

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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UAE TO EXPERIENCE MACBETH IN A MODERN, IMMERSIVE INTERPRETATION

Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Ajman to Engage in Shakespeare's Tragedy in April 2017

Abu Dhabi, UAE – Shakespeare Under the Stars returns in 2017 with an immersive production of *Macbeth*, the classic tragedy of ambition and power. Like 2016's *Romeo+Juliet* on the roof of Mall of the Emirates, this is much more than sit-and-watch, standard theatre.

Macbeth is a modern interpretation, set in the UAE, where the cut-throat world of corporate politics replaces the Shakespearean regal politics. The board members of the powerful Scotland Corp., a security and surveillance company, find themselves in a struggle for leadership, with Macbeth seizing control in a most unorthodox fashion.

Macbeth is presented by the UAE Ministry of Culture & Knowledge Development, in partnership with the British Council as part of the UK/UAE 2017 Year of Creative Collaboration. This production will travel through various emirates, starting at the Abu Dhabi National Theatre on April 14th & 15th, and carrying on to Alserkal Avenue in Dubai on April 21 - 22, and the Ajman Cultural Centre on April 28 - 29. The Ajman production is the first English-language immersive production to occur in the Northern Emirates. The setting will be integrated into each location, giving each emirate a different experience of the same production.

Truly unique for the UAE, it is an immersive, promenade theatrical experience. Of immersive theatre, Liz Hadaway, Artistic Director of *Macbeth* says:

“Audiences are demanding more from theatrical events. We aim to draw you into a world, utilizing all of your senses: sight, sound, touch, taste, feel... this is a multi-sensory experience. The audiences are free to roam the spaces and interact with performers and engage with the set, becoming part of the action themselves. It is an adventure into the unknown. Each audience member will emerge with a different perspective on the production.”

Macbeth will feature an all-female cast, subverting the notion of the all-male casts of Shakespeare's time. The multi-national cast is experienced and extensively trained, and includes Emirati actor Hanan Alshabebi. Allison Williams, who plays Macbeth, brings a new angle to the character. Her professional credits include the Kentucky Shakespeare Festival and multiple Off-Broadway productions, including *Macbeth* and *Romeo & Juliet*. Venetia Tiarks-Clark (*Animal*, *Glass Menagerie*) plays Lady Macbeth.

Romeo+Juliet 2016 was lauded for its realistic fight sequences and choreography. Expect even more from *Macbeth* in 2017. “People often think of women as weak physical fighters, but without brute strength, we get a lot trickier!,” says Allison Williams, who also is the show's Fight Director – she is a Member of the Society of American Fight Directors. “Watch for feints, suckerpunches, and lots of chasing. We've also come up with creative ways to handle the deaths of the Macduff family, and a very bloody, supernatural end for Banquo—look away if you're squeamish.”

Additional Quotes:

Liz Hadaway (Artistic Director) says:

“Shakespeare plays with gender and identity in many of his plays. Originally, Macbeth would have been played by an all-male cast, so to turn it on its head, to twist that has been an interesting challenge. I think that sadly in the 21st-century, there are still too few really good parts for women, so to play Macbeth as all-female gives an opportunity for female actors to really show what they can do. Setting it in the UAE in the world of corporate politics also shows how much power women have here in the UAE and the vital roles Emirati women have in corporations and government. It is an interesting dynamic.”

Allison Williams (Macbeth/Fight Director) says:

“What I love about this production is how the machinations of the plot are exposed more by the all-female cast. There’s this idea that women are scheming, backstabbers, cat-fighters, and yet this whole play is about trickery and deceit and willingness to lay everything on the line to get what you want. Most productions of Macbeth lay on pretty thickly that he’s manipulated by his wife— but when there’s two women on stage, it’s easier to see how, in Shakespeare’s text, Macbeth is convincing himself as much as being badgered into murder.”

“I’ve acted in or directed five productions of Macbeth, and this is the most challenging. To play not only the largest role in the show, but to play it as a man and work against expectations, is taking a lot of thought and energy.”

Venetia Tiarks-Clark (Lady Macbeth) says:

“I was apprehensive as it was one of the few pieces by the Bard I’d never touched. Taking on a woman as fierce, strong and in-control, meant I needed to be at the height of both my psychological and physical awareness. So, I began a rigorous program of physical training, mind-body techniques and strict nutritional diet. I can safely say she will be the most challenging role I have embarked on, but one that has imprinted into my every waking moment, and hopefully the reward of this immersion will pay off in the performance.”

Emirati Hanan Alshabebi (Witch) says:

“Macbeth is a classic and we studied it in school, so to be acting in this is beyond my wildest dreams. Learning Shakespearean English has been a challenge. But, the way Liz [Hadaway] has developed this, the witches could be in any part of the world, in any situation, which allows me to occasionally speak Arabic. This will be a great way to experience Shakespeare for the first time.”

Macbeth is in Abu Dhabi, Ajman & Dubai from April 14 – April 29. Tickets are AED 150 and are available from www.shakespeareunderthestars.ae.

The UK/UAE 2017 Year of Creative Collaboration is a season of arts and events in the UAE aimed at building new audiences, creating new collaborations and strengthening relationships.

Constellation is a Dubai-based theatrical events company. Established in 2014, Constellation brings together a talented international team of actors, writers and directors who are passionate about developing the performing arts scene and local talent in Dubai.

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All Dates, Times & Locations:

April 14 – 8:00pm – Abu Dhabi National Theater
April 15 – 8:00pm – Abu Dhabi National Theater
April 21 – 8:00pm – Alserkal Avenue (Dubai)
April 22 – 8:00pm – Alserkal Avenue (Dubai)
April 28 – 8:00pm – Ajman Cultural Centre
April 29 – 8:00pm – Ajman Cultural Centre

For more information or to schedule interviews & press viewings, please contact:

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