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Shakespeare's 'MacDeth' political commentary as farce at Hollywood Fringe

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Rogue Shakespeare Company Press photos for their production of 'MacDeth' at the Hollywood Fringe 2016 Ryan J-W Smith as MacDeth

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This year British Artistic Director and writer Ryan J-W Smith with his Rogue [Shakespeare](#) company brings a new take on Shakespeare's dramatic Scottish play "MacBeth," apply named "MacDeth," twisting it into a rhyming [farce](#) tinged with politics.

In this comic venture, Lance Frantzich with the help of the audience, begins the story, and cast his spells as the Witch. He/she wearing drag always breaks the fourth wall as do many of the cast members informing and including those attending in the jokes. One of the Witch's most memorable lines says a great deal: "Like you I am struggling with the plot." He introduces the hero of the tale, stress on hero, MacDeth played by Ryan J-W Smith himself.

Smith's performance makes MacDeth out to be both a person out for power, a bit of a narcissist, a hero to the buffoonery of the king, and strangely a victim of the drive of others. As MacDeth states he will "go first class, and send the king coach." Yet also weaved in are such words of wisdom as "the enemy of man is man" and MacDeth is driven by his wife Lady MacDeth played by Helena Grace Donald costumed like a black velvet Cruella de Vil. Her costume fits her character for as MacDeth states "A household needs a murder, ask the wife."

This production though based on the Scottish play, deviates from the original in many ways. For instance one witch as stated, and women playing men, and in one case a character being portrayed by a puppet. Ross (Lisa Lynn) one of the Scottish noble men is played by a girl and the language makes it clear Ross is female and not intended to be a woman in drag. Jason Linforth plays Banquo and also uses a puppet to replace the actor according to the script the players were too poor to pay.

Ryan Stiffelman plays not one, but four distinctive characters, Duncan, MacBuff, Assassin, and an Apparition. In addition there are additions that lend this play it's political aspect. Duncan the king of Scotland has a daughter instead of two sons apply named [Clinton](#) played by Faith Kearns.

Laced throughout the play are symbols and commentary on the current state of politics craftily disguised as jokes and innuendo. The character of Clinton gives a brilliant monologue perhaps reflecting on the current state of election affairs. The play is laced with lines such as "our rulers have been bought," "look at what we do," subjugated vulnerable poor," and the "lie of every kingdom that people have a choice in kings and queens." Even the faithful Witch of the people brings in the 99%. Smith gives a brilliant closing monologue informing the audience that the "monarchy is bought" and "This precious earth deserves a people's kingdom." Overall this performance subtly tells the audience to think of politics while making them laugh.

For more information about the production please see the [Hollywood Fringe website](#) or see [the Rogue Shakespeare Company site](#).

SUGGESTED LINKS

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