

Macbeth

Cast

Macbeth..... *Hugh Ross*
Lady Macbeth *Harriet Walter*
Banquo..... *John Bowe*
Macduff..... *Gary Bakewell*
Malcolm *Mark Bonnar*
Duncan..... *Denys Hawthorne*
First Witch *Shirley Dixon*
Second Witch *Margaret Robertson*
Third Witch..... *Maureen Beattie*
Porter *David Tennant*
Ross *Sean Baker*
Siward *Gavin Muir*
Fleance..... *Peter England*
Old Man *Michael Deacon*
Other parts played by: Alasdair Galbraith, Sidney Livingstone,
Alex Lowe and Nicholas Murchie

Play description

ACT I

Scene 1. Three sinister witches foretell a meeting with Macbeth, then vanish mysteriously.

Scene 2. Duncan, king of Scotland, receives news that his generals Macbeth and Banquo have defeated a rebel army led by the Thane of Cawdor. Delighted, Duncan orders that the Thane's title be given to Macbeth.

Scene 3. On a desolate heath the witches meet Macbeth and Banquo; they greet Macbeth as Thane of Cawdor, then prophesy that he shall 'be king hereafter.' Banquo demands what the future holds for him and is told that he will be the ancestor of a line of kings. No sooner have the witches vanished than emissaries from Duncan arrive to announce that Macbeth is indeed now Thane of Cawdor. Macbeth muses on the witches' prophecy and we learn that dark thoughts are in his mind.

Scene 4. Duncan names his son Malcolm heir to the throne of Scotland. This troubles Macbeth, who hints once more of his 'black and deep desires.'

Scene 5. Lady Macbeth learns of her husband's promotion and the witches' prophecy that he will become king. Word arrives that Duncan intends to spend that night in Macbeth's castle and Lady Macbeth vows that the king will never leave alive.

Scene 6. The unsuspecting Duncan arrives at Macbeth's castle.

Scene 7. Macbeth's conscience is tormented at the thought of the crime to be committed, but Lady Macbeth spurs him on.

ACT II

Scene 1. The vision of a dagger appears to Macbeth, seeming to lead him toward Duncan's bedchamber.

Scene 2. Macbeth returns aghast, his hands covered in blood—he has done the deed, and after striking the fatal blow has heard a voice prophesying that he will never sleep again. Lady Macbeth dismisses his fears as cowardly fantasies. She tells her husband to smear Duncan's sleeping servants with blood so that they will be taken for the murderers. Appalled at what he has done, Macbeth refuses and Lady Macbeth undertakes the task herself.

Scene 3. The drunken porter of the castle stirs himself to answer loud knocking at the gate, imagining that he is porter at the gates of hell. He opens the gate to admit Macduff and Lennox, Scottish lords who have been summoned by the king. Macduff discovers Duncan's body, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth feigning horror at the murder. The king's sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, fearful for their own safety, resolve to flee.

Scene 4. As ominous events are reported, we learn that Macbeth has been named King of Scotland.

ACT III

Scene 1. Remembering the witches' prophecy that Banquo will be progenitor of a royal dynasty, Macbeth arranges for him to be murdered together with Fleance his son.

Scene 2. Achieving his ambition has not brought Macbeth peace. He hints that he will soon be rid of Banquo.

Scene 3. The murderers slay Banquo, but Fleance gets away.

Scene 4. Macbeth learns of Banquo's death and Fleance's escape. The Scottish lords arrive for a feast and to Macbeth's horror the ghost of Banquo appears among the rest. Macbeth determines to return to the witches and discover what the future holds for him.

Scene 5. The witches meet their goddess, Hecate. She warns them that Macbeth will come to them tomorrow.

Scene 6. We learn that Malcolm and Macduff are in England where they are raising an army to remove Macbeth from the throne he has usurped.

ACT IV

Scene 1. The witches warn Macbeth to beware Macduff but reassure him with the prophecy that no one born of woman can harm him and that he will be conquered only when Birnam Wood comes to his castle at Dunsinane—an impossibility. Macbeth vows to attack Macduff's castle and destroy everyone within it.

Scene 2. Murderers enter Macduff's castle and brutally slay his wife and little son.

Scene 3. Macduff learns his family has been murdered. He and Malcolm vow to vanquish Macbeth.

ACT V

Scene 1. Hag-ridden by guilt, Lady Macbeth sleepwalks through the castle, speaking of dark deeds done and trying vainly to wash her hands clean of imagined blood.

Scene 2. The forces led by Malcolm are now in Scotland where rebels against Macbeth's rule flock to them daily.

Scene 3. Macbeth knows himself outnumbered yet takes courage from the witches' prophecies.

Scene 4. Malcolm's army is before Dunsinane. He orders that each soldier cut a branch from the trees in Birnam forest and hold it before his body as he marches.

Scene 5. Macbeth learns that Lady Macbeth is dead and reflects that life has become empty and meaningless. As Malcolm's army approaches, news is brought that Birnam Wood appears to be moving toward the castle. Despite this ominous confirmation of the witches' prophecy Macbeth determines to resist.

Scene 6. Malcolm and Macduff prepare for battle.

Scene 7. On the battlefield Macbeth slays Young Siward, one of the warriors in Malcolm's army.

Scene 8. Macbeth is confronted by Macduff, to whom he boasts that he can only be killed by a man not born of woman; to his horror, he learns that Macduff was 'from his mother's womb/Untimely ripped.' Macbeth knows that the witches have deceived him—nonetheless he determines to battle on to the end. The two warriors exit fighting, then Macduff returns carrying Macbeth's severed head and hails Malcolm as king. In the course of time the Stuarts, descended from Banquo, ascend the throne of Scotland.

Track list

Disc 1

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Track 5	Act I	Scene v
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Track 7	Act I	Scene vii
Track 8	Act II	Scene i
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Track 11	Act II	Scene iv
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Disk 2

Track 1	Act III	Scene v
Track 2	Act III	Scene vi
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