

NATIONAL THEATRE OF SCOTLAND AND
THE ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY PRESENT

DUNSLINANE

BY DAVID GREIG AND DIRECTED BY ROXANA SILBERT

THU, JAN 29 • 7:30PM & FRI, JAN 30 • 8PM

Supported by the Scottish Government International Touring Fund

CPAIO ARTIST



photo credit: Simon Murphy

PERFORMANCE BENEFACTOR

This performance is sponsored by the Charles H. Goren Foundation, Tom and Lisa Hazen, Trustees.

THU/FRI, JAN 29 7:30PM • JAN 30 8PM

CAST

George Brockbanks, *sergeant/Scottish lord*
Helen Darbyshire, *Gruach's attendant/hen girl*
Darrell D'Silva, *Siward*
Ewan Donald, *Malcolm*
Keith Fleming, *Macduff*
Tom Gill, *the boy soldier*
Toyin Omari-Kinch, *Eric the archer*
Arthur McBain, *English soldier*
Matt McClure, *English soldier/
Scottish soldier/Scottish lord*
Alex Mann, *Egham*
Mairi Morrison, *Gruach's attendant/Gaelic singer*
Siobhan Redmond, *Gruach*

MUSICIANS

Rosalind Acton, *musical director/cello*
Robert Owen, *percussion*
Andy Taylor, *guitar*

CREATIVE TEAM

David Greig, *writer*
Roxana Silbert, *director*
Robert Innes Hopkins, *designer*
Chahine Yavroyan, *lighting designer*
Nick Powell, *composer/sound designer*
Luke Kernaghan, *associate director*
Anna Morrissey, *movement director*
Polly Bennett, *associate movement director*
Terry King, *fight director*
Stephen Kemble, *voice coach*

Ruth Cooper-Brown

of RC-Annie Ltd., *archery consultant*
Anne Henderson, *casting director*
Laura Donnelly, *casting director*

Original 2010 production casting by
Royal Shakespeare Company.

2011 and 2013 production casting
by Anne Henderson.

2014 and 2015 production casting
by Laura Donnelly.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Neil Murray, *executive producer*
Margaret-Anne O'Donnell, *producer*
Chris Hay, *production manager*
Paul Claydon, *head of lighting*
Carrie Hutcheon, *company stage manager*
Heather Wilson, *deputy stage manager*
David Mason-Hill, *assistant stage manager*
Neill Pollard, *lighting supervisor*
Fergus Lockie, *sound supervisor*
Martin Woolley, *stage supervisor*
Pam Fulton, *wardrobe supervisor*
Michelle Lyon, *wigs/makeup technician*
Raymond Short, *props technician*
Clare McCormack, *press officer*

The Company would like to thank the National
Theatre of Great Britain and the cast and
production teams of previous *Dunsinane* tours.

International Representation by Michael
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PROGRAM NOTES

After the Dictator Falls: Tracing the Steps of Gruach **By Jackie McGlone, 2013**

In his essay, *A Philosophical Enquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), the great parliamentarian and philosopher Edmund Burke argued that we like to go to violent plays for the same reason that people went to hangings; not because violence improves us but because it interests us, as long as it's happening to someone else.

There is no bloodier play in the Shakespearean canon – with the exception of *Titus Andronicus* – than *The Tragedy of Macbeth*. “And yet *Macbeth* is a play that I would happily sit through on a weekly basis,” says David Greig, author of *Dunsinane*, a magnificent “sequel” to Shakespeare’s version of the life and death of the Celtic warrior-king and his “fiendlike” queen. Greig was inspired to write *Dunsinane* after seeing a production of *Macbeth* at Dundee Rep. “I really like the play,” he confesses. “I like

the narrative of it and I love seeing different actors playing it. I also admire the space it gives actors to explore these two archetypal figures, particularly Lady Macbeth.” He remembers seeing five or six productions in the UK in rapid succession, always wanting the play to carry on, longing to see part two. “I kept wondering, ‘What happens after the dictator falls?’”

Dunsinane is Greig’s response to that question. “If Macbeth is about the toppling of a dictator, then we see in it a mirror of the Romanian dictator Ceausescu or Gaddafi, say, and the really interesting question is what happens next,” Greig explains, adding that he began writing as Saddam Hussein’s regime in Iraq crumbled. A great deal of violence was actually happening to other people, not only in Iraq but in Afghanistan. Tragically, the continuing unrest and bloodshed in the Middle East makes the timeless *Dunsinane* even more timely today. As Greig notes, “Civil wars are always with us.”

If Macbeth is “the Scottish play,” then *Dunsinane* reverses that – it’s a play about English people. It tells of an English garrison trying to survive in a hostile land, just as our “peacekeeping” forces have struggled in distant lands of late. When Greig’s play begins, Macbeth is dead. The queen has not taken her own life. She is very much alive and she certainly has not “unsexed” herself. We encounter an icily regal woman who is cleverly playing the occupying army, led by the aristocratic Siward [Earl of Northumbria], at various complex games while carving up clan allegiances.

“And this is where, I think, events in Syria are relevant,” says Greig. “What interests me is this impulse to do good which can often end up causing as much or, indeed, more bloodshed. In *Dunsinane*, Siward doesn’t begin by wishing to cause harm – he believes himself to be doing the right thing. I’m actually fond of Siward, a man of action who finds himself in a confusing situation. He ends up mired in trouble and even more violence. The sad thing is, in war, one man’s downfall is the downfall of many.”

“Bizarrely, when I began writing the play, which tells a story but is also a speculation, I didn’t know that this desire to do the right thing would become increasingly relevant. ‘We must do something,’ we say when we see what is happening in Syria, Iraq and many other countries. This desire to ‘do’ is both attractive and dangerous.”

Attractive and dangerous is, of course, a perfect description of Lady Macbeth, wicked power behind the throne. But here’s a thought to conjure with. I ask Greig, who has adapted Roald Dahl’s *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, currently playing to packed houses in London’s West End, how surreal it is to go from that deliciously dark world to the dark drama of *Dunsinane*. “It’s funny, but Willy Wonka [eccentric chocolatier and maverick recluse] is actually a very Shakespearean character,” responds Greig. “He’s a huge character – and that is very appealing to me. I really like approaching characters who have mythologies about them, characters that you can’t quite get to the bottom of – whether that’s Willy Wonka or Lady Macbeth. There’s the same appeal, to try to explore them further.”

So who was this woman who, surely for the first time ever, has been spoken of in the same breath as Willy Wonka? Who was the woman who married a king who murdered his way to the throne, but brought regime change and peace to Scotland in brutal times?

The academic, historian and broadcaster Fiona Watson believes that we can’t lay all the blame on Shakespeare for the demonizing of the Macbeths. The king’s posthumous reputation had been bloodied, besmirched and blackened by Scotland’s mythmakers – early practitioners of the black art of spin – long before an Englishman dramatized his tragic rise and fall.

In her scholarly “factional” biography, *Macbeth: A True Story**, Watson points out that Shakespeare’s Macbeth bears no resemblance to the king who ruled between 1040 and 1057/8. “It is difficult to exaggerate how great an injustice history has inflicted on him and his queen, although Shakespeare was merely repeating, with some of his own embellishment, what was already being said by the Scots themselves,” she says.

Macbeth’s queen was Gruoch – Gruach in *Dunsinane* – great-great-great-granddaughter of Malcolm I. Macbeth had married her after slaughtering her first husband, Gillacomgain of Moray, Macbeth’s cousin and father of her son, Lulach. Is her image as a virago a farrago of lies? Why is it that she seems more of a monster than Macbeth? And why is it that, most troublingly, of all Shakespeare’s characters the Macbeths seem the most “modern?”

“One of the things I love about Gruach is the fact that she doesn’t talk much,” says Siobhan Redmond, who is playing the seductive, flame-haired queen for the third time, finding ever more contemporary resonances in the character. “She’s a woman with secrets, a marvel. It’s admirable that she never wastes words. However, that does not mean that she’s not telling the truth. I think she is always telling the truth but she’s not always telling the whole truth. She’s cool enough to think before she speaks, an enviable quality.”

“Ah, the silence of medieval women!” exclaims Watson, to whose impressive and illuminating researches Greig insists he’ll be forever indebted, while echoing Watson’s view that the real queen has perhaps been wronged by history even more unjustly than Macbeth himself. Gruoch is conspicuous by her absence from the chronicles and sources scoured by Watson in her intellectually rigorous determination to fill in the “gaping crevasses” in our knowledge about Macbeth’s 17-year reign.

Do not, however, be tempted to interpret Gruoch’s absence as indicative of a weak and submissive personality, warns Watson, pointing to the uniqueness of Gruoch’s only recorded foray into public life. She was named with her husband in documents relating to the gift of land to the Culdee monastic community of St. Serf’s, an island in Loch Leven, Fife. “An undeniable hint that this doubly royal woman played an active role both in her marriage and in public life more generally,” Watson writes, stressing that Gruoch made a political match with Macbeth. Her first husband had been murdered by him. She and her fatherless son needed a strong protector; Macbeth fitted the bill perfectly.

Was Macbeth’s queen mad, bad and dangerous to know?

“I think today that when women get to a certain age we’re often described as ‘mad,’ but I do think she’d have made an excellent warrior herself,” Redmond believes. “One thing Gruach does not do is ask for anybody’s approval, despite her awful circumstances – she is, after all, a prisoner of war but she’s a politician, too.”

Greig says: “Once you take another point of view of Macbeth himself from Shakespeare’s, then you have to think again about this woman, who has been painted as monstrous. You have to recognize that she may have been behaving not only rationally but with honor. I’m not saying that Gruach is a good woman. She’s in a complex situation – and she’s a queen. The real woman came from a very important clan – and this is where Fiona was so helpful – while Macbeth emerged from nowhere. It’s that discovery that made me actually rethink the play, that and the fact that when rehearsals began, we were embroiled in Afghanistan. So, I see Gruach as a woman of authority, but I also wanted her to have her own story. Of course it’s cheeky to write a sequel to a great Shakespeare play, but I wanted to reclaim a bit of our history, and that’s how I feel about Gruach. I’m reclaiming her, too, although there’s a cheekiness in saying, ‘Well, maybe Lady Macbeth was a bit more like this.’ I don’t think that she’s a silent woman – indeed, that’s evident in the final confrontation between Gruach and Siward, when she releases invective upon him, which feels like a curse. The war is embedded and it will not go away so I was interested in her ability to call that up – her very real power to lay a curse.”

**Macbeth: A True Story*, by Fiona Watson (Quercus, £8.99)
Jackie McGlone is a freelance feature writer.

On Sequels

By Jonathan Melville, 2013

Want to find out what happened to Rick and Ilsa after the closing moments of *Casablanca*? Ever wondered how the Wicked Witch spent her days before Dorothy arrived in *The Wizard of Oz*? Keen to see how the simians took over in *Planet of the Apes*?

Answers can be found in Michael Walsh’s 1998 novel, *As Time Goes By*, Gregory Maguire’s 1995 book (and West End musical), *Wicked* and 2011’s *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*, just three of the numerous sequels, prequels and reboots that have proliferated in recent years.

These days we’re used to scanning cinema listings and seeing follow-ups to a hit film we probably weren’t that interested in the first time around, while a stroll around a bookshop inevitably reveals a new installment in a teen vampire franchise or the latest case for a quirky New York pathologist/psychiatrist/district attorney turned PI.

Sequels can be worth making. Pixar’s *Toy Story 3* is regularly touted as being as good, if not better, than its predecessors. Richard Linklater’s *Before Sunrise*, *Before Sunset* and *Before Midnight*, a trilogy of romantic dramas starring Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy as Jesse and Céline, are adored by their fans in equal measure.

Too often a sequel is forced upon filmmakers by studios looking to capitalize on good box office, but what connects the above examples is a desire by their creators to wait until the time is right to tell the next part of their characters’ story, rather than simply making a quick cash grab.

The makers of the *Toy Story* franchise knew that the audience cared for Woody, Buzz and co. and wanted to spend more time in their company, allowing them to watch in “real time” as Andy grew up and grew out of his plastic pals. In the *Before...* films, Jesse and Céline’s conversations were the results of years of shared lives and experiences, feeling genuine as a result.

At the other extreme, you only have to look at *Star Wars: Episode One – The Phantom Menace* (1999), *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (2008), or *A Good Day to Die Hard* (2013) to see what can happen when cash comes before scruples. Forget what made the original so well loved and you risk alienating the very people who helped make it a success.

If I’ve avoided mentioning the notion of sequels in theatre up to this point, that’s because the medium remains relatively untarnished by the phenomenon, though they do exist.

Shakespeare was known to dabble with sequels in his history plays, while Falstaff appears in *Henry IV Parts I and II* and the later *Merry Wives of Windsor*. In musical theatre, Andrew Lloyd Webber’s long-running *The Phantom of the Opera* gained a follow-up with 2010’s *Love Never Dies*.

One of the reasons for there not being a great amount of theatrical sequels is that it can often be difficult to see the first installment of a production. It’s simple enough to pick up a copy of *Iron Man* on DVD before heading out to see the latest sequel, but nipping out to catch a tour of an obscure Russian play could be difficult.

Which brings us to David Greig’s bold decision to make his way up Dunsinane Hill and into the lives of characters known the world over for more than 400 years.

In *Macbeth*, we’re faced with a play staged for centuries and put on film numerous times. Endlessly quotable, it’s still one of the most accessible of Shakespeare’s works. There’s also the incomparable Lady Macbeth, the template for strong fictional female characters through the ages.

Greig transports us to a Scotland where the King may be dead, but his wife is still scheming and the English are wondering just what they’ve got themselves into north of the Border. They’re an occupying force in a strange land, one which isn’t quite as welcoming as they’d expected.

As with any great play, *Dunsinane* works on different levels. Those who want a straightforward story will find one in the relationship between Gruach (Lady Macbeth), Siward and those around them. Dig deeper and parallels between events in *Dunsinane* and those in post 9/11 Afghanistan are easy to find, ensuring the play has an added relevance to modern audiences.

It also helps that Greig is himself a Scot, bringing with him some local perspective on the characters, their motives and the politics unique to the country.

Dunsinane may be as close to an “official” sequel as it’s possible to get, but anyone overly concerned that Shakespeare is being compromised should remember that the original is still available and waiting to shock, enthrall and intrigue audiences for generations to come.

- Jonathan Melville, freelance arts journalist, twitter.com/jon_melville

DAVID GREIG, WRITER

David is a playwright. His work for the National Theatre of Scotland includes *Glasgow Girls*, *The Great Yes, No, Don't Know Five Minute Theatre Show*, *One Day in Spring*, *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart*, *Peter Pan*, *The Bacchae*, *Futurology: A Global Review* and *Gobbo*. Other theatre work includes *The Events*, *Victoria*, *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory*, *The Monster In The Hall*, *Midsummer*, *Yellow Moon*, *Letter of Last Resort*, *Miniskirts of Kabul*, *Kyoto*, *Being Norwegian*, *Damascus*, *Pyrenees*, *San Diego*, *The American Pilot*, *Outlying Islands* and *The Cosmonaut's Last Message to the Woman He Once Loved in the Former Soviet Union*. Work with Suspect Culture includes *8000m*, *Lament Timeless*, *Mainstream* and *Airport*.

ROXANA SILBERT, DIRECTOR

Roxana is artistic director of Birmingham Repertory Theatre, for whom she has directed Moliere's *Tartuffe*, the world premiere of *KHANDAN (Family)* (with the Royal Court) and most recently *Of Mice and Men*. Previously, she was associate director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, where her work included *A Soldier in Every Son*, *Galileo*, *Measure for Measure*, *Richard III*, *Shakespeare Shorts*, *Such Tweet Sorrow* (the world's first Twitter play), *Little Eagles* and *Brixton Stories*. As artistic director of Paines Plough, her work included *Orphans*, *Roaring Trade*, *Being Norwegian*, *Between Wolf and Dog*, *Long Time Dead*, *Strawberries in January*, *After the End* and *Dallas Sweetman*. As literary associate of the Traverse Theatre, her work included *The Slab Boys*, *Still Life*, *The People Next Door*, *Iron*, *15 Seconds* and *Greenfields*. As associate director at the Royal Court, her work included *At the Table*, *Still Nothing*, *I Was So Lucky*, *Been So Long*, *Fairgame*, *Bazaar*, *Sweetheart*, *Essex Girls* and *Mules*. Her freelance work includes *Whistle in the Dark* (Citizens, Glasgow), *Under the Black Flag* (Shakespeare's Globe), *Precious* and *Blonde Bombshells of 1943* (West Yorkshire Playhouse), *Property* (National Theatre Studio, London), *Damages* (the Bush), *The Price* (Bolton Octagon), *Top Girls* and *Translations* (New Vic), *Cadillac Ranch* (Soho) and *Slash Hatch on the E* (Donmar). Radio work includes *Hysteria*, *Billiards*, *Japanese Gothic Tales*, *The Tall One*, *The Tape Recorded Highlights of a Humble Bee*, *The Good Father* and *Brace Position*.

Gregory Burke, which won four Laurence Olivier Awards amongst a multitude of awards; the award-winning landmark historical trilogy *The James Plays* by Rona Munro; a radical reimagining of *Macbeth* starring Alan Cumming, presented in Glasgow and at the Lincoln Center Festival and subsequently on Broadway, New York; and *Let The Right One In*, adapted by Jack Thorne from John Ajvide Lindqvist's novel and screenplay, which won the 2014 South Bank Sky Arts Award for theatre (currently showing at St. Ann's Warehouse, New York until February 15, 2015).

The National Theatre of Scotland creates much of its work in partnership with theatre-makers, companies, venues and participants across the globe. From extraordinary projects with schools and communities to the groundbreaking online *5 Minute Theatre* to immersive pieces such as David Greig's *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart*, the National Theatre of Scotland's aspiration is to tell the stories that need to be told and to take work to wherever audiences are to be found.

Laurie Sansom, artistic director/chief executive
Dame Seona Reid DBE, chair

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THE ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY

Everyone at the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), from actors to technicians, milliners to musicians, plays a part in creating the world you see on stage. Our work begins its life at our Stratford workshops, rehearsal rooms and theatres and we share it with audiences across the world through our touring, residencies, live broadcasts and online activity. So, wherever you experience the RSC, you experience work that began life in Shakespeare's hometown. Shakespeare has been performed and celebrated in Stratford for centuries and the RSC has trained generations of the very best theatre makers since the Company was founded. We pioneer contemporary approaches to Shakespeare's plays, as well as staging the work of other writers and artists.



NATIONAL THEATRE OF SCOTLAND

In its short life, the National Theatre of Scotland has already earned a significant national and international reputation for its daring and originality. The National Theatre of Scotland was established in 2006 and has created over 200 productions. Being a theatre without walls and building-free, the Company presents a wide variety of work that ranges from large-scale productions to projects tailored to the smallest performing spaces. In addition to conventional theatres, the Company has performed in airports, schools, tower blocks, community halls, ferries and forests.

The Company has toured extensively across Scotland, the rest of the UK and worldwide. Notable productions include *Black Watch* by