

BRIEF FOR DESIGN STUDENTS

Iamhamlet - A DEVISED PIECE BASED ON SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY OF HAMLET IN WHICH THE AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE THEMSELVES AS HAMLET

See the world through Hamlet's eyes. See yourself through the eyes of Hamlet.

Hamlet - hero and coward - homicidal and suicidal - forced by circumstance to take *action* - paralysed into *inaction* by conscience and confusion.

In this participatory installation, director Geoff Church explores elements of his production, taking place later this year, in which the audience themselves will play hamlet.

Themes and watchwords for the design

1) The theatre is both a confined space and a space of infinite possibilities but it is haunted with 'bad dreams' - the nightmare that Hamlet lives through.

HAMLET: O God, I could be bounded in a nut-shell and count myself a king of infinite space - were it not that I have bad dreams.

2) The audience is inside the 'mind's eye' of Hamlet

HAMLET: My father!--methinks I see my father.

HORATIO: Where, my lord?

HAMLET: In my mind's eye, Horatio.

FRAGMENTS THAT WILL FORM THE BASIS OF THE SCRIPT/DEVISED SHOW.

PROLOGUE- 'IN THE MIND'S EYE'

In front of the audience a very large sheet of glass, smoked, so that when it is lit from the audience side it becomes a mirror and the audience see themselves, but when it is lit from the stage side it is transparent and the audience see the stage.

Behind the glass there is a line of simple black or wooden chairs distributed evenly across the width of the playing space.

To begin with, the glass sheet is lit from the stage side so that it is transparent and the audience simply see the playing space with its line of empty chairs.

The lights dig down on the audience and on the stage. The whole house is temporarily in darkness. Lights up fast on the audience side revealing themselves to themselves. Over the next few minutes the lights switch from one side of the glass to the other, alternately reflecting the audience back to themselves and then revealing the stage - each time with another actor having appeared in one of the seats - until all the seats are full as per following explanation:

1. LIGHTS ON HOUSE.

AUDIENCE SEE THEMSELVES. (MEANWHILE ONE OF THE ACTORS TAKES UP A CHAIR ON STAGE, UNSEEN).

2. LIGHTS ON STAGE.

A PERSON HAS APPEARED IN ONE OF THE CHAIRS, DRESSED SIMPLY IN NON-DESCRIPT CLOTHING.

3. LIGHTS ON HOUSE.

AUDIENCE SEE THEMSELVES. (MEANWHILE ONE OF THE ACTORS TAKES UP A CHAIR ON STAGE, UNSEEN).

4. LIGHTS ON STAGE.

A 2nd PERSON HAS APPEARED IN ONE OF THE CHAIRS DRESSED SIMPLY IN NON-DESCRIPT CLOTHING.

5. LIGHTS ON HOUSE.

AUDIENCE SEE THEMSELVES. (MEANWHILE ONE OF THE ACTORS TAKES UP A CHAIR ON STAGE, UNSEEN).

6. LIGHTS ON STAGE.

A 3rd PERSON HAS APPEARED IN ONE OF THE CHAIRS DRESSED SIMPLY IN NON-DESCRIPT CLOTHING.

THIS PROCESS CONTINUES UNTIL ALL THE CHAIRS ARE FILLED. THE ACTORS STARE SIMPLY AHEAD, SOFTLY LOOKING INTO THE AUDIENCE BUT NOT MOVING THEIR EYES AROUND.

ONCE ALL THE ACTORS ARE SEATED THERE IS A LONG PAUSE AS THE ACTORS CONTINUE TO OUT AR LOOK AT AUDIENCE AND THE AUDIENCE LOOK AT THE ACTORS.

AFTER WHAT SEEMS AN UMBERABLY LONG TIME - THE ACTORS SPEAK SIMULTANEOUSLY

ALL

To be or not to be that is the question.

BLACKOUT. IMMEDIATELY THERE IS RUNNING - AN ALARMING BURST OF ACTIVITY AND NOISE FIREWORKS, GUNFIRE, ARMED TROOPS, A MIXTURE OF NOISE SHOUTING AND ACTIVITY AMID DISTINCT SHOUTS OF

'Who's there? Who's there?'

THE AUDIENCE ARE HUSTLED OUT OF THEIR SEATS IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS, THUS BEGINS THE FIRST PART OF iamhamlet ;

- THE CAROUSEL CONSISTS OF 4 DIFFERENT IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES WHICH SET THE SCENE OF THE PLAY.
- EACH EXPERIENCE LASTS EXACTLY 15 MINUTES.
- THE AUDIENCE IS DIVIDED INTO FOUR GROUPS OF EQUAL SIZE
- ALL 4 GROUPS GOES THROUGH ALL 4 EXPERIENCES, BUT EACH GROUP GOES THROUGH THE EXPERIENCES IN A DIFFERENT ORDER
 - Group A: 1,2,3,4
 - Group B: 2,3,4,1
 - Group C: 3,4,1,2
 - Group D: 4, 1,2,3

EXPERIENCE 1: THE GHOST OF MY FATHER - Ref: Act 1 Sc 5

EXPERIENCE 2: MY MOTHER WEDS MY UNCLE DAYS AFTER MY FATHER'S DEATH - Ref: speech: Act 1 Sc 2 "That it should come to this!..."

EXPERIENCE 3: COURTING OPHELIA- Ref: Act 1 Scene 3

EXPERIENCE 4: DEPRESSION - Ref: Speeches: Act 1 sc 2 "Oh but this too too solid fresh" -Act 2 Sc 2: "I have of late I know not why lost all my mirth."

PART ONE - 'Bad dreams'

The curators of this section - the witnesses who host the experience and let us into Hamlet's mind - are Rosencranz and Guildenstern

SCENES WHICH WILL FORM THE BASIS OF THE STORYLINE

- Rosencranz and Guildenstern's arrival - Ref: Act 2 sc 2
- The actors' arrival - Ref: Act 2 Sc 2
- The play within the play Ref: Act 3 Sc 2
- The closet scene/ murder of Polonius Ref: Act 3 sc 4
- Exile to England Ref: Act 4 sc 2

PART TWO - 'the undiscovered country'

This section takes place inside a grave. The curator of this section - the witnesses who host the experience and let us into Hamlet's mind - are the Gravedigger and Horatio.

SCENES WHICH WILL FORM THE BASIS OF THIS SECTION:

- GRAVEDIGGER - Ref: Act 5 sc 1
- Murder in Exile - Ref: ACT 5 SC 2
- CLAUDIUS O, my offence is rank it smells to heaven;
+ HAMLET 'Now might I do it, pat...' - Ref: ACT 3 SC 3
- HAMLET: 'How all occasions do inform against me...'
ACT 4 sc4
- To be or not to be - speech - Ref: ACT
- Brief symbolic version of the mass murder in Act 5
Sc 2

EPILOGUE - The Rest is silence

HAMLET (from Act 5 Sc 3)

there's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow.

If it be now,

'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all: since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes?

HAMLET

O, I die, Horatio;

The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit:

I cannot live to hear the news from England;

But I do prophesy the election lights

On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice;

So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less,

Which have solicited. The rest is silence.

Dies

HORATIO

Now cracks a noble heart. Good night sweet prince:
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!