

Macbett

By Eugene Ionesco

Play no. 294

Opening show: 01/02/1975

Hebrew by: Amos Keinan

Directed by: David Bergman

Set and Costumes by : Eli Sinai

Music composed and collected by: Poldi Saetzman

Lighting by: Natan Panturin

The Cast

Glamiss: Yitzchak Bareket

Candor: Ariel Furman

Banco: Israel Biederman

Macbett: Nissim Azikri

Lemonade Seller: Jaacov Ben-Sira

1st Soldier: Alex Kutai

2nd Soldier: Yitzchak Kluger

2nd Soldier: Yitzchak Kluger

Another Soldier: Yitzchak Kluger

Adjutant: Yitzchak Kluger

The Officer: Alex Kutai

Duncan: Avraam Ronai

Lady Duncan: Tehia Shmuelli

Attending Lady: Dalia Gur

The Wounded Soldier: Jaacov Ben-Sira

Rad Dealer: Jaacov Ben-Sira

1st Sorceress: Tehia Shmuelli

2nd Sorceress: Dalia Gur

Sick People

1st Servant: Alex Kutai

2nd Servant: Yitzchak Kluger

Macol: Raffi Goldwasser

Choral Performance: Benanim Choir

The Play

The distorted spelling of the play's name – "Macbett", instead of the correct name "Macbeth" – indicates simultaneously its source and Ionesco's especial handling of it through polarization and the use of the grotesque, Ionesco has chosen Shakespeare's play as a point of departure for the plot and also for its tackling both in content and in form, ageless problems.

Shakespeare's Macbeth is a tale of blood and violence. Its protagonists have complex psychological structures, the unavoidable courses of which lead them to destruction and death. Shakespeare's theme has to do with the tragedy of crime (regicide) and punishment. Ionesco is concerned with the meaning of crime against authority and with the processes that turn it into punishment for its executors. His interest lies in the cyclical recurrence of murder and in its victims – murderer and murdered – who are always meaningless. According to Ionesco all authority is ultimately revealed as

violent, dictatorial and actually subject to a superior logic which dominates the apparent ruler. That is why the rulers in this play, Duncan, Macbeth, and Macol are all presented as images on one archetype. Ionesco's anti-heroes are but reflections and shadows of real people and events. Thus the problem of personal identity, which is central in this play, is doubly emphasized.

Unlike the Shakespearean tragedy and its structure.

Macbeth has a broken and fragmented plot line. This plot is network of difficulty existential situations: confrontation with greed, with war, with murder, with the temptations of sex. Individual loneliness and the subjection to degrading eternal pressures make the conflicts more acute, while they are intensified, accumulated and accelerated throughout the play. When the tensions reach a climax, the irretrievable act is performed which will cause the perpetuation of the murder cycle. A combination of cinematically fast moving dramatic, poetic and comic elements, creates the play's style, a rich style which allows for a multitude of responses. Ionesco defines the meaning of the comic in his play himself.

Ionesco's Macbeth is opened by the rebellious barons who are only referred to by Shakespeare: "Glamis and Candor ("Cawdor" in Shakespeare. Name distortion in this play is a means of alienation, mainly from the hovering associations of the Shakespearean tragedy). They are practically interchangeable. They are seen plotting King Duncan's deposal and murder. Macbeth and Banquo, who also almost interchangeable and even resemble the rebellious barons in appearance, demonstrate in their first meeting with Glamis and Candor, unlimited loyalty to their lawful king in whose service they later put down the rebellion. Yet the reasons for Glamis and Candor's discontent lurk within Macbeth and Banquo's hearts as well. As the play progresses, they too become conspirators against their king and against each other. In Shakespeare's play, the weird sisters, who act as messengers of Hell, are those who plant ambition in Macbeth. Ionesco turns them into the voice of the unconscious, which raises to the surface the greed, power drive and jealousy already existing within Macbeth and Banquo's souls. They have nothing to do with supernatural powers. Their accomplishments are the consequence of egocentric self-fulfillment, as made manifest in the diabolic tempting power of their sensuality.

Mystery is but a disguise, magic – a delusion, sex – a practical joke, victory – accidental, authority – arbitrary, achievement – a figment of the imagination. Ionesco's drama drives its protagonists to frustration, madness and death. But we are constantly reminded by strange appearances as from another world, and by the cyclical processes shown, that despair and downfall for one man and kingdom are not the end all. Such is the way of the world. War never inhibited the covetous, nor does murder necessarily mortify the flesh. The lesson of experience is seldom learned, and some will chase butterflies even when cannons are heard. "No society", says Ionesco, "has been able to abolish human sadness, no political system can deliver us from the pain of living from our fear of death, our thirst of the absolute". This is the bitter lesson that fallen Macbeth has personally learned: "We would have wished to do many things; we never do them. We do other things that we have not desired. History is tricky. Everything evades you. We are never masters of events we have unrolled. What we have done is thrown in our faces. Whatever happens

is the opposite of what you wanted to happen. To rule, to rule... It is chance who rules over man, not man over chance".