

“Double, double toil and trouble,” “what’s done is done,” “one fell swoop”: The language of Shakespeare’s great tragedy *Macbeth* is so ingrained in our culture that it often goes unnoticed. Yet despite its widespread familiarity, the play remains shocking for its penetrating portrayal of violence run amok. Add to that some witches, ghosts, and sleepwalkers and you have a recipe for an engrossing drama that harnesses the force of the supernatural to glean more acutely the inner workings of our own world.

The Met’s new production of Verdi’s thrilling adaptation marks the company debut of Louisa Proske, a brilliant young director making waves around the operatic world, who sees the work as a continuum connecting past and present. “To me, what’s emotionally relevant about the period of Shakespeare is that it was a moment in history where people were keenly aware that they were one step away from total chaos and social disintegration,” Proske remarks. “I think Shakespeare was one of the artists who really articulated the terror of living in an era that is deeply divisive, the sense of the world having gone mad. And I think we once again live in a time like that.”

Through studying Verdi’s opera and its relationship to Shakespeare’s tragedy, students will be able to explore questions of psychology, power, gender, and theatrical stagecraft—all while paying close attention to the interactions between music, text, and embodied performance that make opera an especially powerful form of dramatic expression. In so doing, they will come not only to appreciate the relevance of *Macbeth* both in its own time and in ours, but also to understand why Verdi wrote, in a letter to his benefactor, that *Macbeth* “is dearer to me than all my other operas.”

THE WORK

An opera in four acts, sung in Italian

Music by Giuseppe Verdi

Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave and Andrea Maffei

Based on the play by William Shakespeare

First performed March 14, 1847, at the Teatro della Pergola, Florence, Italy

Revised version performed April 21, 1865, at the Théâtre Lyrique, Paris, France

PRODUCTION

Louisa Proske Production

Jon Bausor Set Designer

Montana Levi Blanco Costume Designer

Adam Silverman Lighting Designer

Jorrell Lawyer-Jefferson
Choreographer

Ran Arthur Braun Action Director

Tilman Michael
C. Graham Berwind, III Chorus Director

PERFORMANCE

The Met: Live in HD

October 17, 2026

Encore October 21, 2026

Lise Davidsen Lady Macbeth

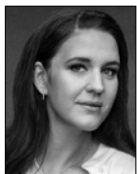
Freddie de Tommaso Macduff

Quinn Kelsey Macbeth

Ryan Speedo Green Banquo

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Conductor

Macbeth Educator Guide
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DAVIDSEN



DE TOMMASO



KELSEY



GREEN

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ONLINE ACCESS To access this guide online, including any audio selections and handouts, visit metopera.org/macbethguide.



CHARACTER	THE LOWDOWN
Macbeth BARITONE	A Scottish nobleman and army general. A loyal and respected general in King Duncan's army, Macbeth quickly shows himself capable of deceit and murder once he hears the witches' prophecy .
Lady Macbeth SOPRANO	With ambitions that possibly exceed her husband's, Lady Macbeth uses her cunning and ruthlessness to propel Macbeth's murderous ascent.
Banquo BASS-BARITONE	A Scottish nobleman and army general. An honorable man and Macbeth's comrade, Banquo soon becomes a threat to Macbeth's lust for power.
Macduff TENOR	A Scottish nobleman. Macduff remains highly suspicious of Macbeth and ultimately leads the uprising against him.

GLOSSARY

Prophecy (*n.*): a prediction of the future

Cunning (*n.*): skill in deceiving others

Lust (*n.*): appetite or desire



Synopsis



Lise Davidsen and Quinn Kelsey
in Verdi's *Macbeth*
PAOLA KUDACKI/MET OPERA

ACT I. *Scotland.* Macbeth and Banquo, leaders of the Scottish army, meet a group of witches who prophesy the future. They address Macbeth as **Thane** of Cawdor and King of Scotland and tell Banquo that he will be the father of kings. The two men try to learn more, but the Witches vanish. Messengers arrive with news that Duncan, the current king of Scotland, has made Macbeth Thane of Cawdor. The first part of the Witches' prediction has come true.

In Macbeth's castle, Lady Macbeth reads a letter from her husband telling her of the events that have just transpired. She resolves to follow her ambitions. A servant announces that Duncan will soon arrive at the castle, and when Macbeth enters, she tells him that they must kill the king. Duncan arrives. Macbeth has a vision of a dagger, then leaves to commit the murder. On his return, he tells his wife how the act has frightened him, and she tells him that he needs more courage. They both leave as Banquo enters with Macduff, a nobleman, who discovers the murder. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth pretend to be horrified and join the others in **condemning** the murder.

ACT II. Macbeth has become king. Duncan's son, Malcolm, is suspected of having killed his father and has fled to England. Worried about the prophecy that Banquo's children will rule, Macbeth and his wife now plan to kill him and his son, Fleance, as well. As Macbeth leaves to prepare the double murder, Lady Macbeth hopes that it will finally make the throne secure.

GLOSSARY

Thane (*n.*): in medieval Scotland, a man who holds land granted by the king

Condemn (*v.*): to blame or disapprove of



Outside the castle, assassins wait for Banquo, who appears with his son, warning him of strange forebodings. Banquo is killed, but Fleance escapes.

Lady Macbeth welcomes the court to the banquet hall and sings a drinking song while Macbeth receives news that Banquo is dead and his son has escaped. About to take Banquo's seat at the table, Macbeth has a terrifying vision of the dead man accusing him. His wife is unable to calm her unsettled husband, and the **courtiers** wonder about the king's strange behavior. Macduff vows to leave the country, which is now ruled by criminals.

ACT III. The Witches gather again, and Macbeth visits them, demanding more prophecies. Apparitions warn him to beware of Macduff and assure him that "no man of woman born" can harm him, and that he will be invincible until **Birnam Wood** marches on his castle. In another vision, he sees a procession of future kings, followed by Banquo. Horrified, Macbeth collapses. The witches disappear and his wife finds him. They resolve to kill Macduff and his family.

ACT IV. On the Scottish border, Macduff has joined the refugees. His wife and children have been killed. Malcolm appears with English soldiers and leads them to invade Scotland.

Lady Macbeth is sleepwalking, haunted by the horrors of what she and her husband have done.

Macbeth awaits the arrival of his enemies and realizes that he will never live to a peaceful old age. Messengers bring news that Lady Macbeth has died, and that Birnam Wood appears to be moving. English soldiers appear, camouflaged by tree branches. Macduff confronts Macbeth and tells him that he was not born naturally but had a **Caesarean birth**. He kills Macbeth and proclaims Malcolm king of Scotland.

GLOSSARY

Courtier (*n.*): a person who attends the court of a monarch or ruler

Birnam Wood (*n.*): the forest in the Scottish village of Birnam

Caesarean birth (*n.*): a surgical procedure where a baby is delivered through incisions in the mother's abdomen



The Play *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare

Paper chromolithograph depicting Sarah Siddons (1755–1831) as Lady Macbeth and William Charles Macready (1793–1873) as Macbeth in Act II, Scene 2 of *Macbeth*; they never played the roles together, however.

GIVEN BY THE BRITISH THEATRE MUSEUM ASSOCIATION TO THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM



Written in 1606, toward the end of his career, *Macbeth* is one of Shakespeare's shortest plays. While the tragedy is set in medieval Scotland, Shakespeare was particularly **attuned** to contemporary political events when crafting it. First, *Macbeth* pays homage to James I of England, who formally undertook sponsorship of Shakespeare's playing company—previously Lord Chamberlain's Men, then the King's Men—when he assumed the throne in 1603. James was believed to be a descendant of Banquo, a figure

GLOSSARY

Attuned (*adj.*): sensitive or responsive to something



mentioned in Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1577). In writing *Macbeth*, Shakespeare downplayed the historical Banquo's role in the murder of King Duncan to portray James's lineage more generously. Second, *Macbeth* was written in the aftermath of the 1605 Gunpowder Plot, when a group of Jesuits, believing James intolerant of Catholics, **conspired** to blow up Parliament while the king and his daughter were inside. And third, Shakespeare was familiar with James's personal interest in witchcraft, the king having published a treatise on the subject and likely interrogated accused witches himself.

Verdi encountered *Macbeth* in an Italian prose translation by Carlo Rusconi first published in 1838. The composer created a detailed outline of the libretto, which he then gave to Francesco Maria Piave—who had previously crafted libretti for Verdi's operas *Ernani* (1844), *I Due Foscari* (1844), and *Attila* (1846)—to **versify**. Verdi was unhappy with Piave's work, however, and recruited poet and translator Andrea Maffei to refine the text (particularly the Witches' Chorus and Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking scene). The opera closely follows Shakespeare's work, though several scenes and characters are removed altogether for **concision**. Verdi did, however, make some significant changes in his adaptation. In Verdi's version, Lady Macbeth convinces her husband to murder Banquo. Meanwhile, her Act II aria from the 1865 revision of the opera, "*La luce langue*," has no direct parallel in Shakespeare's play. Neither does the Act IV chorus of the Scottish refugees, a patriotic **nod** to the Italian unification movement already underway at the time of the opera's composition. Verdi also expanded the role of the witches from three performers to three separate choruses of at least six singers.

FUN FACT

Giuseppe Verdi had not seen a performance of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* when he adapted the play as an opera. In fact, the Shakespearean tragedy was not performed in Italy until two years after the premiere of Verdi's opera.

GLOSSARY

Conspire (*v.*): to plan with others to do something illegal, harmful, or wrongful

Versify (*v.*): to turn or convert writing into poetry

Concision (*n.*): the quality of being brief or communicated in few words

Nod (*n.*): an acknowledgement or reference



The Creation of *Macbeth*

1813 Giuseppe Verdi is born on October 9 in a small village near Busseto, a market town in the province of Parma. His father and mother are both tradespeople—an innkeeper and an innkeeper’s daughter, respectively.

1832 The young Verdi, a promising musician despite a patchy musical education, sits the entrance examination for the Milan Conservatoire; to everyone’s surprise, he is rejected. **Undeterred**, he decides to study privately in Milan.

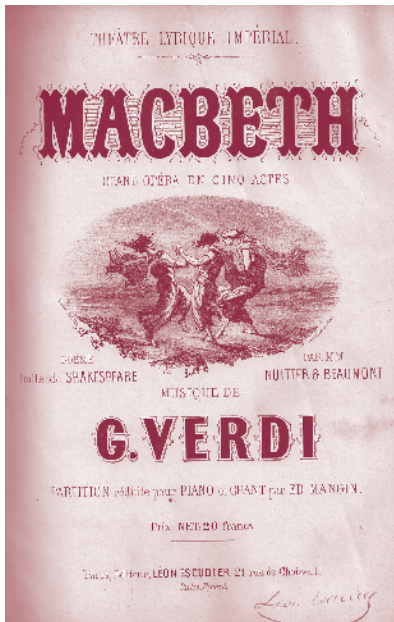
1839 Verdi’s first opera, *Oberto*, scores a modest success in Milan. But success is bittersweet: Verdi’s infant son Icilio had died just weeks before. A few months later, while working on his second opera, Verdi’s first wife, Margherita Barezzi, falls ill and dies. The **bereft** composer is forced to continue working on his next opera, but it flops miserably.

1842 Verdi finally scores a triumphant success with his biblical opera *Nabucco*, which premieres at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan. Among the cast is soprano Giuseppina Strepponi, who eventually becomes the composer’s second wife. Verdi works tirelessly over the next decade, writing at least one opera per year—a period he will later call his “anni di galera,” or “**galley** years.”

1847 *Macbeth* receives its premiere in Florence.

1848 Verdi travels to Milan, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and witnesses the aftermath of the “Five Days” uprising that helped launch the first Italian war of independence.

1853 Two of Verdi’s most enduringly popular operas, *Il Trovatore* and *La Traviata*, premiere within two months of one another. By this point, Verdi is widely acknowledged to be the leading Italian composer of his time, and he is **courted** by opera houses across Italy and Europe.



GLOSSARY

Undeterred (*adj.*): not discouraged by a setback

Bereft (*adj.*): sad and lonely, especially when something has been taken away

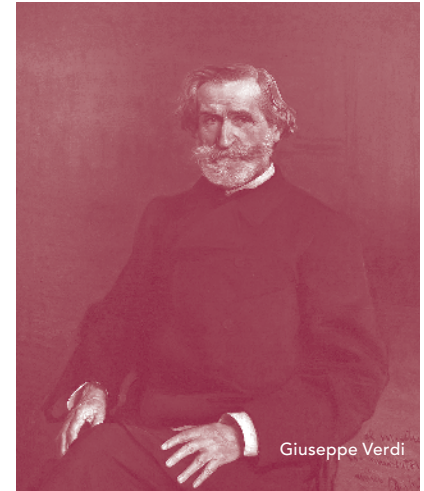
Galley (*n.*): historically, a long, slender ship that primarily relies on oars, most often rowed by criminals or slaves, for propulsion

Court (*v.*): to seek to win or attract



1859 The slogan “Viva VERDI” (an acronym for “Vittorio Emanuele, Re D’Italia”) begins appearing in the streets of Naples, and Verdi’s name becomes inextricably linked to the Risorgimento, or Italian unification movement. Victor Emmanuel II would later become the first king of the unified Italian nation-state.

1861 At the culmination of the decades-long Risorgimento, the independent states on the Italian peninsula are unified into a single Kingdom of Italy. Rome, however, remains under **papal** control for another decade.



Giuseppe Verdi

1865 Verdi revises *Macbeth* for a performance at the Théâtre Lyrique in Paris. In addition to including the extended ballet sequence required by Parisian opera houses, he adds Lady Macbeth’s Act II aria “*La luce langue*,” resets the Act IV chorus of the Scottish refugees to new music, moves Macbeth’s death offstage, and replaces Macbeth’s death aria with a **stirring** choral finale in which the Scottish people give thanks for the liberation of their “homeland” from the “usurper.”

1871 After three wars and more than 50 years of political turmoil, Rome is made the official capital of the Kingdom of Italy, and unification is fully achieved.

1879 Almost a decade after his last operatic project, Verdi is **coaxed** out of retirement and begins composing an opera based on Shakespeare’s *Othello*.

1887 *Otello*, Verdi’s first new opera in more than 15 years, premieres at La Scala.

1893 Verdi, now 80 years old, astonishes the world once more with another Shakespearean opera, *Falstaff*.

1901 Verdi dies in Milan on January 27 following a stroke.

GLOSSARY

Papal (*adj.*): of or relating to the Catholic Pope

Stirring (*adj.*): exciting, moving, or thrilling

Coax (*v.*): to gently influence or persuade



TIMELINE

The Life and Work of William Shakespeare



Michael van der Gucht, *Portrait of Shakespeare* (crowned by tragedy and comedy, with fame above), 1709, engraving
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

1564 William Shakespeare is born in Stratford-upon-Avon, England.

1567 Mary, Queen of Scots is imprisoned. Her son is crowned James VI of Scotland at just 13 months old.

1577 Raphael Holinshed publishes his *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, an account of British history linking the figure of Banquo—though likely fictionalized—to the future James I of England, to whom *Macbeth* was written in **tribute**.

1582 Shakespeare marries Anne Hathaway.

1589–94 Shakespeare begins his career as an actor, working with **playing companies** like Lord Strange's Men and the Lord Admiral's Men.

1590 James VI of Scotland marries Anne of Denmark, whose journey to Scotland is repeatedly beset by storms, stranding her in Norway. The storms are blamed on witchcraft, and a trial in Copenhagen leads to the execution of the accused women. Additional witch trials **ensue** in Scotland.

1592 Shakespeare's *Henry VI* trilogy is performed.

1592–93 Shakespeare writes *Richard III*, *Venus and Adonis*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*.

1594–96 Shakespeare writes *The Rape of Lucrece*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Richard II*, and *Romeo and Juliet*.

1595 Now living in London, Shakespeare is a "**sharer**" for the Lord Chamberlain's Men, another company he had jointly founded the year prior.

GLOSSARY

Tribute (*n.*): something offered as praise or acknowledgement

Playing company (*n.*): a company of actors in Renaissance England

Ensue (*v.*): to follow or come next

Sharer (*n.*): a member of a playing company also responsible for its management, including paying expenses, earning profits, and hiring other members



1596 Shakespeare's son, Hamnet, dies. He writes *King John*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Henry IV, Part 1*.

1597 James VI publishes *Daemonologie*, a **treatise** on witchcraft.

1598 Shakespeare writes *Henry IV, Part 2* and *Much Ado About Nothing*.

1599 The Globe Theatre, where Shakespeare is a **shareholder**, opens in London. He writes *Henry V*, *Julius Caesar*, and *As You Like It*.

1600–2 Shakespeare writes *Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Troilus and Cressida*.

1603 The Lord Chamberlain's Men become the King's Men when James I (formerly James VI of Scotland) assumes the thrones of England and Ireland and becomes the company's **patron**.

1604–8 Shakespeare writes *Measure for Measure*, *Othello*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Timon of Athens*, *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre*, and *Coriolanus*.

1609 An **unauthorized** edition of Shakespeare's sonnets is published. He writes *Cymbeline*.

1610–11 Shakespeare writes *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*.

1613 The Globe Theatre burns down during a performance of *Henry VIII*, a play Shakespeare had co-written with John Fletcher, who succeeded Shakespeare as the house playwright of the King's Men.

1614 The Globe Theatre reopens.

1616 Shakespeare dies.

1623 *Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies*, known as the First Folio, is published by members of the King's Men.

GLOSSARY

Treatise (*n.*): a book that discusses a subject in a formal or methodical manner

Shareholder (*n.*): someone who owns shares in a company, property, or venture

Patron (*n.*): a wealthy or influential person who financially supports an individual, an institution, or a cause

Unauthorized (*adj.*): not having official permission or approval





FUN FACT

In 1846, Verdi received a contract to compose a new opera but was undecided on which project to pursue first: *I Masnadieri*, based on a play by Friedrich von Schiller, or *Macbeth*. The choice would be made according to which singers were available; *I Masnadieri* needed a star tenor, whereas *Macbeth* needed a baritone. Scheduling favored the eminent baritone Felice Varesi, and Verdi commenced writing *Macbeth*.

Which Witch

The three witches—also known as the “weird sisters” in Shakespeare’s play—have been an object of fascination for artists and audiences alike for centuries. Verdi took a special interest in these supernatural figures. In his operatic adaptation of *Macbeth*, he quite literally expanded the witches’ role so that each of the three witches is played by a small chorus of at least six singers. “The roles in this opera are three and no more than three,” the composer wrote to French **impresario** and publisher Léon Escudier in 1865. “Lady Macbeth, Macbeth, and the chorus of the witches.”

By including these characters, Shakespeare was both echoing contemporary social issues and recognizing the **peculiar** interests of James I, the King of England who sponsored the playwright’s work and whose **putative** lineage *Macbeth* was written to honor. Indeed, in early modern Europe, anxieties about witchcraft were widespread. Between 1500 and 1650, roughly 100,000 people were put on trial for witchcraft; about half of those accused were ultimately executed. In England, an estimated 90% of those put to death were women.

GLOSSARY

Impresario (*n.*): someone who organizes performances

Peculiar (*adj.*): specific to a particular person, place, or thing

Putative (*adj.*): commonly believed to be true





James I was no exception to this anti-witch sentiment. In 1589, he married Anne of Denmark by **proxy**. When she set sail for Scotland to be with James, her ship was beset by storms—not once, but twice she was forced to seek refuge in Norway. James eventually made his way to Denmark to retrieve his wife, but the pair once again endured turbulent storms on their return voyage. In Denmark, these **maelstroms** were thought to be the work of witches. A number of women were accused, put on trial, and executed in Copenhagen in 1590. In Scotland, more women were accused of conjuring the storms to harm James and Anne; another trial ensued, leading to at least one execution.

Several years later, and perhaps **prodded** by these events, James published *Daemonologie* (1597), a treatise on witchcraft that argues for the existence of witches, outlines how to identify them, and suggests how best to punish them. According to James, some witches could be identified by a mark or spot hidden on their bodies. (Recall Lady Macbeth: “Out, damned spot!”) James and his contemporaries did not insist that only women dabbled in the occult, but they did believe that women were **constitutionally** weaker than men and thus more vulnerable to demonic possession. And despite these broader agreements, demonologists of the early modern period never achieved consensus on what exactly made a witch a witch.

Macbeth is just as ambiguous. Shakespeare’s witches appear both masculine and feminine: “You should be women,” Banquo remarks, “And yet your beards forbid me to interpret / That you are so.” When Lady Macbeth is herself in the process of becoming a witch, she commands “spirits” to “unsex” her. The weird sisters are at once seemingly prophetic and **vulgar**. They can bend the future to their will yet speak in gibberish. They are twisted but goofy. In Verdi’s hands, they are perceived as menacing, but their music is plainly ordinary. Perhaps it is from this profound uncertainty that the witches draw their supernatural force.

Think about it!

In both the opera and the play, the witches foretell the fates of Macbeth and Banquo—but they don’t explain how their prophecies will come to pass. Do they really know the future? Are Macbeth’s actions inevitable or the result of his conscious choice? Are the witches evil or neutral observers? Are they to blame for Macbeth’s betrayals?

GLOSSARY

Proxy (*n.*): a representative, deputy, or substitute

Maelstrom (*n.*): a powerful whirlpool or turbulent storm

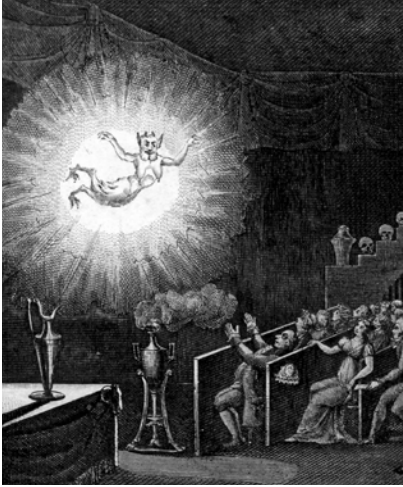
Prod (*v.*): to stir up, stimulate, or incite

Constitution (*n.*): the physical makeup of an individual

Vulgar (*adj.*): unrefined, offensive, or impolite



Smoke and Mirrors



A print depicting a 1797 phantasmagoria show by Étienne-Gaspard Robert

INTERNET ARCHIVE

Verdi's painstaking attention to detail went beyond the score of *Macbeth* and the preparation of singers. (He allegedly made Felice Varesi and Marianna Barbieri-Nini, who respectively created the roles of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in 1847, rehearse their opening duet 150 times in a row.) The composer was also deeply invested in how the opera would be staged. He was **adamant** that the production accurately evoked 11th-century Scotland, and he consulted historical sources to check the dates of Macbeth's reign. Verdi was also concerned about the theatrical effects used in the work's supernatural scenes, especially the **apparitions** (of daggers and kings) and appearance of Banquo's ghost in the Act II banquet scene.

Indeed, *Macbeth* was created amid a flourishing of technological innovation on both sides of the Atlantic. When the opera premiered in Florence, Verdi considered—but ultimately decided against—using a technique called phantasmagoria for these special effects. Phantasmagoria was a form of horror theater that used magic lanterns, an early image projection apparatus developed in the 17th century which worked by placing glass slides with painted images in front of a light source, to project scary images. This new form of theater was brought to its artistic peak by French showman and physicist Étienne-Gaspard Robert, who performed under the stage name “Robertson” and developed his own version of the magic lantern called a Fantoscope. Kept behind a cloth screen coated with varnish to make it slightly transparent, the device would rear-project images onto the screen while remaining out of view of the audience, which remained in total darkness. Also called a “magic lantern on wheels,” the Fantoscope was mounted on a track so it could be moved back and forth to increase or decrease the size of the projected images, thereby making them appear to approach or retreat. Additional glass slides could be layered on top of one another, allowing one slide to stay stationary while another slide was manipulated—for example, to produce the effect of eyes shifting on a figure's face.

GLOSSARY

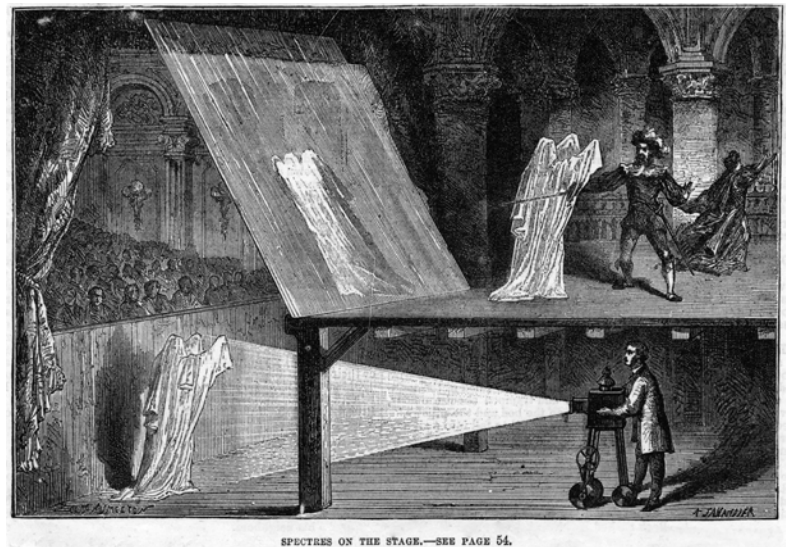
Adamant (*adj.*): absolutely convinced or inflexible

Apparition (*n.*): the supernatural appearance of invisible beings



Beyond this innovation, several other techniques were used in Verdi's time—and even in Shakespeare's time—to create a wide variety of theatrical effects.

ILLUSIONS In the 19th century, Pepper's Ghost was a popular device for projecting ghostly images onto the stage. Rather than place a machine to be manipulated behind a **diaphanous** curtain, as in phantasmagoria, Pepper's Ghost worked by having an actor positioned below the stage (perhaps accessed through a trap door). The actor would stand in front of a mirror, with a light source directed up at them. At the same time, a sheet of glass would be placed on the stage. When the light hit the actor, their image would be reflected in the mirror and then projected onto the glass sheet for the audience to see. An advancement from early forms of image projection, Pepper's Ghost allowed the actor to be seen moving and speaking without being on stage.



An illustration of the "Pepper's Ghost" apparatus, 1871

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THUNDER Verdi loved a good storm. (See, for example, *Rigoletto*.) So did Shakespeare. (See, for example, *King Lear*.) To create the effect of thunder, you can roll a cannonball across a wooden **chute**, floor, or false ceiling above the stage. A thunder machine, a wooden box balanced like a seesaw, could also be manipulated to roll cannonballs back and forth. A thunder cart or rumble is a wooden cart loaded with cannon balls that can be pushed back and forth on non-circular wheels to produce the desired effect. A thunder sheet, meanwhile, is a commonly used thin piece of metal, hung vertically and struck with hands or mallets to create loud rumbling and crashes.

GLOSSARY

Diaphanous (*adj.*): transparent or see-through

Chute (*n.*): a sloping channel, passage, or enclosure



Stain Removal

The operatic repertoire is replete with “mad scenes,” vehicles for vocal **pyrotechnics** that showcase how characters—nearly always women—experience emotional and psychological breakdown. In the tradition of bel canto opera, these women are driven to madness by betrayal or grief, especially at the hands of a (former) lover. Look no further than Bellini’s *I Puritani* (1835) or Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835) for prime examples of this approach.

In Act IV of *Macbeth*, Verdi does something altogether different. “*Una macchia è qui tuttora*” (**Track 1**), Lady Macbeth’s sleepwalking sequence, could in fact be considered an anti-mad scene. Lady Macbeth is not **lamenting** what has been done to her but is instead consumed by the guilt over what she has **wrought**: namely, the



Mary Hoare, *Lady Macbeth, Sleepwalking*, 1781, watercolor and ink on paper

YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART, PAUL MELLON COLLECTION

GLOSSARY

Pyrotechnics (*n.*): a brilliant or sensational performance

Lament (*v.*): to express profound sorrow

Wrought (*v.*): having done or performed



murders of Duncan, Banquo, and Macduff's family, all at her **behest**. What results is not a typical virtuosic display of rapid-fire arpeggios, scales, and ornaments. Instead, Verdi gives us halting, short phrases in the vocal line; a steady, repetitive orchestral accompaniment; and a fragmented style of expression, as if her capacity to sing is going out like the flickering candle she carries.

The composer himself intended for Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking scene not to follow the *bel canto* mold. "Study it well, and you will see that you can make an effect with it," Verdi **counseled** Marianna Barbieri-Nini, the soprano who premiered the role, "even if it lacks one of those flowing, conventional melodies, which can be found everywhere and which are all alike." More than that, Verdi insisted that the role—and this scene especially—be "acted and declaimed" (but not sung!) with a "harsh, stifled, and hollow" voice.

The score bears out this vision. In the introduction (**Track 2**), we hear a soaring, legato melody in the strings over arpeggios shared by the bassoon and harp. (As we will see, this is precisely the kind of melody that Lady Macbeth does not, and cannot, sing.) The aria proper begins with soft, staccato strings; a sneaky chromatic climb is echoed by a half-step descent in the English horn, evoking a sense of unease (**Track 3**). Lady Macbeth enters in brief, punctuated phrases separated by long rests (**Track 4**). At the conclusion of the first stanza, as she sings "*Chi poteva in quel vegliardo / Tanto sangue immaginar?*" ("Who could have imagined so much blood in that old man?"), the first violins introduce a longer chromatic descending line, intensifying the eeriness (**Track 5**).

1. *stent.*
Chi po-te-va in quel ve-gliar-do tanto sangue immagi-nar,..... immaginar?..... chi po-teva tanto sangue immaginar, imma-gi-nar

GLOSSARY

Behest (*n.*): a command or order

Counsel (*v.*): to give or offer advice



FUN FACT

Verdi's *Macbeth* did not have its premiere at the Metropolitan Opera until 1959. General Manager Rudolf Bing hired Maria Callas to sing Lady Macbeth; the role would be her first time performing in a new production at the Met. When Callas tried to renegotiate her contract, which stipulated that she would alternate other repertory roles with Lady Macbeth while working at the opera house, Bing fired her—igniting a global scandal.

Lady Macbeth's phrases slowly elongate and reach higher peaks—but they always come back down, extending deep into the lowest zone of the soprano voice, closer to the range of a mezzo-soprano. These wide leaps recur throughout the scene:

On the phrase, "*Co' suoi balsami non può,*" ("No balm or fragrance") she descends nearly two octaves from a high A $\flat$ to a low C $\flat$;



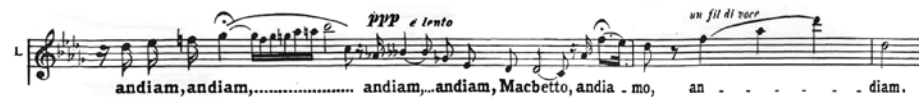
on the phrase, "*Banco è spento, e dalla fossa,*" ("Banquo's gone. He's dead and buried.") from a high F $\flat$ to a low D $\flat$;



on the phrase, "*Non t'accusi il tuo pallor,*" ("lest they see you pale with guilt") from a high G $\flat$ to a low F;



and on the final phrase, "*Andiam, Macbetto,*" ("Macbeth, away now") from a high B $\flat$ to a low C. When she reaches her highest pitch in the aria—a slow, pianissimo high D on the **penultimate** note—the melody dramatically falls back down an octave (**Track 6**).



Verdi thus elegantly reveals that, despite her will to power, Lady Macbeth's triumphs are temporary. She will meet the same fate as her victims.

GLOSSARY

Penultimate (*adj.*): the second to last in a series



Philosophical Chairs

Philosophical Chairs is an activity designed to foster critical thinking, active inquiry, and respectful dialogue among students. To play, participants agree or disagree with a series of statements, but the game doesn't end there. The most crucial element is what happens next: Participants discuss their point of view and can switch sides if their opinions change during the discussions.

Each topic statement is deliberately open ended yet ties into several of the themes present in *Macbeth*—including power, prophecy, and revenge. Offer students a brief overview of the opera's plot, setting, and context, and remind them how to build a safe space for productive conversation. Some of the topics might be confusing or challenging—that's okay! As you and your students explore and learn about *Macbeth*, you can return to these statements: What do they have to do with the opera's story? How might these questions help us explore the opera's story, history, and themes?

A NOTE TO FACILITATORS: Between statements, provide some clarity as to why that statement was chosen. Explain to students where and how each theme shows up in the opera or invite students to offer their own explanations.

STEP 1. INQUIRE

Distribute the included handout with guidelines and statements, making sure to review the rules of engagement as a group. Next, invite students to read one of the statements—out loud as a class, to themselves, or in small groups. As they read, they should ask themselves:

- Do I understand the statement?
 - If not, what questions might clarify it for me?
- What immediately comes to mind when I read the statement?
 - What is my initial reaction: Do I agree or disagree?
- What led me to that decision?
 - What opinions do I hold about this statement?
 - What life experiences may have led me to think this way?

MATERIALS

- Handouts

OBJECTIVES

Learners will be able to:

- Express and defend their point of view on a given topic.
- Listen to thinking different from their own and respond with examples and evidence.

CONNECTIONS

- Delineate and evaluate arguments and claims.
- Evaluate a speaker's reasoning.
- Express ideas persuasively.



STEP 2. RESPOND

Read the statements again out loud and ask students to commit to one side. They can agree or disagree, but there is no middle ground. (Many will not be completely comfortable committing to one side over the other—that's part of the game. It will help foster conversation and debate.)

STEP 3. DISCUSS

Start a conversation! Use the following questions to guide discussion:

- Does anyone feel very strongly either way? Why or why not?
- Does anyone feel conflicted? Why or why not?
- Give voice to what you thought about in the first step:
 - What led me to make my decision?
 - What opinions do I hold about this statement?
 - What life experiences may have led me to think this way?
- What might you not have considered that others are now bringing up in the discussion?
- Did any new questions arise during the discussion?

As the conversation continues, students are free to change their minds or develop more nuanced perspectives.

Repeat steps 1 through 3 for each statement.

SILENT OVERTURE If you have timid students and/or a class with several emerging language learners, consider allowing time for students to silently reflect prior to diving into the activity. Post the statements around the room, provide each student with a small stack of sticky notes of two different colors, and have them complete a gallery walk silently reading the statements. As they read the statements, students should write down questions (one color sticky note) and thoughts that came to mind (other color sticky note) and place them around the posted statement.

Set a ten-minute timer for students to complete this activity. Then, set a five-minute timer for students to read their peers' thoughts and questions prior to completing the active class discussion part of Philosophical Chairs.



The Body Keeps the Score

Thanks to advances in psychology, we now know that emotionally difficult or complex experiences have profound effects on our bodies—and that these effects often linger long after the experience has concluded. But even Shakespeare, and Verdi after him, understood how invisible, intangible mental processes of the mind can register in our muscles, bones, and behavior.

In this activity, students will trace recurring images of blood, sleep, illness, breath, and movement in *Macbeth* while considering how the opera transforms emotional experiences into sound. Then, they will investigate how the body reveals truths that characters may not yet be willing to admit and create a “body biography” for a chosen character by analyzing the opera’s libretto, composition, and staging.

STEP 1. EXPLORE

We often talk about emotions as though they exist only in the mind, but our bodies tell stories too. Fear can make our hearts race. Grief can leave us exhausted. Stress can keep us awake. Guilt can linger long after we try to ignore it.

Guide students in thinking about each part of the body and how it responds under stress. Your mind might race the night before a big test, for example, or your voice might quiver when speaking in front of a crowd. Help students prepare to identify these behaviors and their corresponding emotions using the “Reading the Body” handout included with this guide. Some sample responses are included below:

Heart = race when nervous

Mind = wander when stressed

Eyes = dart when anxious

Hands = wring when guilty

Voice = quiver when under pressure

Breath = become shallow when scared

Skin = prickle when alarmed

Movement = rock back and forth when embarrassed

MATERIALS

- Handouts
- Audio tracks
- Musical Toolbox (optional)
- Opera Orchestra (optional)

OBJECTIVES

Learners will be able to:

- Relate key plot points to a character’s psychological response.
- Create a body biography that represents a character’s internal struggles.

CONNECTIONS

- Cite evidence from various sources to draw conclusions.
- Make use of strategic visual displays to enhance understanding.
- Deduce and draw conclusions from the information provided.



STEP 2. LISTEN

Lead students through a guided listening of the following three scenes from *Macbeth*:

Track 7 Act I: “*Mi si affaccia un pugnall!*”

Macbeth hallucinates the bloody dagger.

Track 8 Act II: “*Va, spirto d’abisso!*”

Macbeth sees Banquo’s ghost at the banquet.

Track 1 Act IV: “*Una macchia è qui tuttora*”

Lady Macbeth’s sleepwalking scene

Begin by reading excerpts from the libretto on the “Text and Translations” handout included with this guide. Then play the audio tracks while students read along with the text. As students listen, have them consider the following three questions independently, in small groups, or as a class:

- What psychological experiences are described?
- How does the music imitate those experiences?
- How might those psychological experiences be expressed physically?

Students can record their observations using the space provided on their handouts. You can provide the Musical Toolbox and/or Opera Orchestra handouts from the “Additional Resources” section of the *HD Live in Schools* Educator Hub (metopera.org/educator-hub) to guide students’ thinking.

 **A NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS:** This is a great place to pause the lesson. Steps 3 and 4 can be completed during a different session, as long as students (or you!) hold onto their handouts.

STEP 3. CREATE

Once students have analyzed both the libretto and Verdi’s music, they can create a life-size “body biography” for Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, or another character of their choosing. They can use the handout included with this guide to map out their work before moving to life-sized paper.

A “body biography” should demonstrate thorough understanding of the text, insight into the chosen character, and creativity in depicting that insight. Here are some things students might include in their body biographies:



HEART: What represents the heart of the person and where should it be placed to identify what or whom the person loves most? What should it look like and what shapes, colors, pictures, or symbols should be included?

EYES: Where is this person's focus? What or whom does this person see?

BACKBONE: What motivates this person the most? What gives them strength?

HANDS: What does this person hold in their hands, literally and figuratively?

FEET: On what foundation is this person standing? What are their fundamental values and beliefs?

BACKGROUND: What elements make up this person's environment or setting?

QUOTATIONS: What excerpts by or about this person best represent them?

VIRTUES AND VICES: What are this person's best and worst qualities?

STEP 4. REFLECT

At the conclusion of this activity, reflect on the following questions, either in writing or via discussion:

- What happens when someone ignores what their conscience is trying to tell them?
- What happens when the body knows the truth before the mind admits it?

SCAFFOLD

- Psychologists often describe guilt, trauma, stress, and anxiety as experiences that affect both mind and body. Have students research one of the following and compare their findings to a character from *Macbeth*: sleep deprivation, anxiety, trauma, stress responses.
- After completing their body biographies, students can create an original text that helps us understand their chosen character. Include it somewhere appropriate on the body biography (e.g., a formula poem, a haiku, a paragraph).
- Have students act out what they think is happening in each of the three scenes in this activity, along with the music, focusing on physically portraying the physiological responses they can infer from the text and music.



ACTIVE EXPLORATION

The Sound of Power

MATERIALS

- Handouts
- Audio tracks
- Synopsis
- Illustrated synopsis (optional)

OBJECTIVES

Learners will be able to:

- Define and distinguish between various forms of power in *Macbeth*.
- Create a power map to evaluate how power shifts throughout the opera.

CONNECTIONS

- Present findings and supporting evidence.
- Make use of strategic displays to enhance understanding.

Displays of power are often visual—how someone stands or occupies space, how they interact with other people. Even mere physical presence can imbue a person or group with authority. (“There is power in numbers.”) In Verdi’s *Macbeth*, power also necessarily has an aural dimension embedded in its score and brought to life on stage.

This activity invites students to explore how music communicates different forms of power. Then, they will examine key musical moments from *Macbeth* before creating a visual “power map” that traces how characters gain, perform, challenge, and lose power throughout the opera.

STEP 1. EXPLORE

When we hear the word power, we often think about kings, queens, presidents, and rulers, but power comes in many forms. Some people command power through force; others persuade. Some gain influence because people trust them; others manipulate, intimidate, or inspire.

In opera, power is communicated not only through words but also through music. A character can sound confident, fearful, persuasive, threatening, desperate, or triumphant long before they ever say so directly.

Before examining the opera, use the “Defining Power” handout included with this guide to help students to think about different forms and expressions of power. For each category, write a definition, identify a real-world example, and explain how that form of power differs from the others.

As students complete their charts, they should consider the following questions:

- Is power always visible?
- Can someone appear powerful while feeling powerless?
- Which kinds of power tend to last?

STEP 2. LISTEN

Once students have brainstormed different manifestations and meanings of power, they should review the opera’s synopsis or illustrated synopsis to gain familiarity with the plot and characters of *Macbeth*.

Next, listen to the following excerpts from the opera and read along with the “Text and Translations” handout included with this guide.

TRACK 9 Act I: The Witches, “*S’allontanarono!—N’accozzarono*”

TRACK 10 Act I: Lady Macbeth, “*Ambizioso spirito*”

TRACK 11 Act II: Macbeth, “*Di voi chi ciò fece?*”

TRACK 12 Act II: Lady Macbeth, “*La luce langue*”



TRACK 13 Act IV: Macduff, “*Ah, la paterna mano*”

As they listen, students should pay attention not only to what the characters are telling us but also how they’re communicating musically. Does the character singing seem powerful? Why or why not? What type of power is exhibited in each scene? How does the music communicate that power? Use the “Listening for Power” handout included with this guide to help students in their thinking.

The following questions may be helpful in facilitating group discussion around who has power and how that power changes hands throughout the opera.

- Who makes decisions?

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

What Do I Do When I Feel Guilty?

Macbeth tells the story of a Scottish general who hears a prophecy that he will one day be king. Encouraged by his wife, Lady Macbeth, he commits murder to fulfill the prophecy. He immediately begins to feel crushed by the weight of his wrongdoing, however, and cannot enjoy his ill-gotten gains. Everyone makes choices from time to time that they later regret. Guilt is that uncomfortable feeling you get in your body when you know that you have done something wrong. The good news is that experiencing guilt, though uncomfortable, can help us learn more about ourselves. Follow the steps below to explore a situation that has left you feeling guilty.

- Reflect on something that makes you feel a sense of guilt. Take a deep breath as you consider it. Simply facing your feelings of guilt can help relieve your discomfort.
- Write about the situation. In as much detail as possible, journal about the scenario that left you feeling guilty. Once you have finished writing, go back and reread your journal entry.
- Discover if your guilt is rational and reasonable or irrational and inappropriate. Do you feel guilty because of something you did or said? Or is your guilt stemming from something you had no control over? If you had no control over the situation, you can move on. If you feel that you are responsible for what happened, reflect on the part you played.
- Practice forgiving yourself and others. Honestly reflect on your actions and take ownership without making excuses.
- Take action. Is there someone you need to make amends to, or someone to whom you owe an apology? Is there a behavior you need to change to prevent hurting someone in the future? Making these changes will prevent feelings of guilt going forward.

If you feel comfortable, share your findings with a friend or a trusted adult. Don’t be afraid to ask for support. Remember that everyone makes mistakes! It is always best to reflect on your choices, make amends where needed, and move forward.



- Who influences the direction of events in the story?
- Who advocates for the general good?
- Who tells the stories and/or creates messages about what's happening?
- Who brings people together around shared values?
- Who influences people?
- Who provides essential services?
- Who knits the community together?
- Are there other forms of power or influence?

 **A NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS:** This is a great place to pause the lesson. Steps 3 and 4 can be completed during a different session, as long as students (or you!) hold onto their handouts.

STEP 3. CREATE

“Power mapping” is a way to identify who has power in a community and figure out what will move those individuals or institutions to act. Using their notes from the previous two steps, students should create visual maps showing how power shifts throughout the opera.

Each map should show who gains power, who loses power, how power changes, and whether power comes from force, persuasion, fear, prophecy, or something else. Students might use arrows, create a timeline, design a flowchart, build a network diagram, or find other ways to depict the ebb and flow of different kinds of power over the course of the opera.

An example power map for *Macbeth* is provided in the “Additional Resources” section of the *HD Live in Schools* Educator Hub (metopera.org/educator-hub), though students should be encouraged to create a map in any style they choose.

STEP 4. REFLECT

At the conclusion of this activity, reflect on the following questions, either in writing or via discussion: Who is the most powerful character in *Macbeth*? How do you know? Once students have attended the *Live in HD* screening (or watched this new production on Met Opera on Demand), revisit these questions to see how the staging impacts their understanding of the opera.

SCAFFOLD

- Practice power mapping your school or local government. Who has the power on paper? Who actually holds the power? How do you know?
- Activate the flow of power physically. Choose six students to embody the six main characters of the opera (Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Banquo, Macduff, the Witches, and the Scottish refugees/chorus). While you read the synopsis aloud, have students pass an object (e.g., a ball or toy) among them as the power shifts and changes across the four acts.

Philosophical Chairs

Active listening, critical thinking, and respectful dialogue (even when we disagree about something) are learned skills. Everyone can learn them, and no one can perfect them without practice. Philosophical Chairs is designed to help us develop these skills while also learning about the opera.

Directions

1. Read the Rules of Engagement
2. Read the Statements
3. Discuss

The Rules of Engagement

Be sure you understand the statement. If something is unclear, ask!

Face each other. Body language helps show that you're listening carefully and respectfully.

Only one speaker at a time. Everyone will get their turn to speak.

Think before you speak. Be sure that what you're going to say is what you really mean.

Summarize the previous person's comments before adding your own.

Address ideas, not the person. Challenging ideas or statements is good only if we respect the individuality and inherent value of the person who expressed them.

Three before me. To make sure everyone's voice is heard, you may not make another comment until three others have shared their thoughts.

Philosophical Chairs (CONTINUED)

The Statements

You might find these statements challenging—and you might find it challenging to talk with someone who has a different answer from your own. That’s okay! Remember, changing your mind when you learn new information is a sign of strength, not weakness.

1. The future is already determined.
2. Knowing the future makes life less meaningful.
3. I would rather know my fate than not know what my future holds.
4. You should always trust your gut.
5. Knowledge of the future creates more problems than solutions.
6. You can leave your problems behind.
7. Guilt is the strongest punishment of all consequences.
8. Those who have been wronged have a right to seek revenge.
9. One bad choice leads to another.
10. Power destroys relationships.

The Body Keeps the Score | Reading the Body

Directions

Use the chart below to explore how our bodies can process emotions, often before we become conscious of them.

	What happens?	What emotions might be connected to it?	What is the body saying?
<i>Heart</i>			
<i>Mind</i>			
<i>Eyes</i>			
<i>Hands</i>			
<i>Voice</i>			
<i>Breath</i>			
<i>Skin</i>			
<i>Movement</i>			

The Body Keeps the Score | Text and Translations

Directions

Read along with the text as you listen to the following excerpts from *Macbeth*. When annotating the text, consider the following questions: What psychological experiences are being described? How does the music imitate those experiences? How might those psychological experiences be expressed physically?

TRACK 7

Macbeth hallucinates the bloody dagger: *“Mi si affaccia un pugnall!”*

MACBETH: Mi si affaccia un pugnall!	Is this a dagger
L’elsa a me volta?	Which I see before me?
Se larva non dei tu, ch’io ti brandisca.	Unless you are a dream, let me grasp you!
Mi sfuggi, eppur ti veggo!	You flee me? But still I see you!
A me precorri	You urge me down a shadowy path
Sul confuso cammin che nella mente	Along the dark course
Di seguir disegnava!	I have already chosen.
Orrenda imago!	Horrible vision!
Solco sanguigno la tua lama irriga!	Dripping blood, your sharp blade gleams!
Ma nulla esiste ancor. Il sol cruento	And yet, in truth, it’s nothing
Mio pensier la dà forma, e come vera	But a dagger of my own creation.
Mi presenta allo sguardo una chimera.	It’s a mere illusion which deceives my eyes.

The Body Keeps the Score | Text and Translations (CONTINUED)

TRACK 8

Macbeth sees Banquo's ghost at the banquet: "*Va, spirto d'abisso!*"

MACBETH: Va, spirto d'abisso!

Spalanca una fossa,

O terra l'ingoia.

Fiammeggian quell'ossa!

Quel sangue fumante

Mi sbalza nel volto!

Quel guardo a me volto

Trafiggemi il cor!

TUTTI: Sventura! Terrore!

MACBETH: Quant'altri io pur oso!

Diventa pur tigre, leon minaccioso

M'abbanca Macbetto tremar non vedrai,

Conoscer potrai—s'io provi timor

Ma fuggi!

Deh, fuggi, fantasma tremendo!

Go, hellish spirit!

Back into Hades!

Back into your grave!

His bones are on fire.

I see his

Blood boiling.

His glance is so piercing

And pierces my heart!

How terrifying!

I do not lack daring

So come as a tiger, a menacing lion!

No matter! I shall never tremble

Or give way to cowardly fear.

But leave me!

Begone, you horrible phantom!

TRACK 1

Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking scene: "*Una macchia è qui tuttora*"

LADY MACBETH: Una macchia è qui tuttora.

Via, ti dico, o maledetta!

Una, Due, gli è questa l'ora!

Tremi tu? Non osi entrar?

There's a stain here. I can still see it.

Out, damned spot! Begone, I curse you!

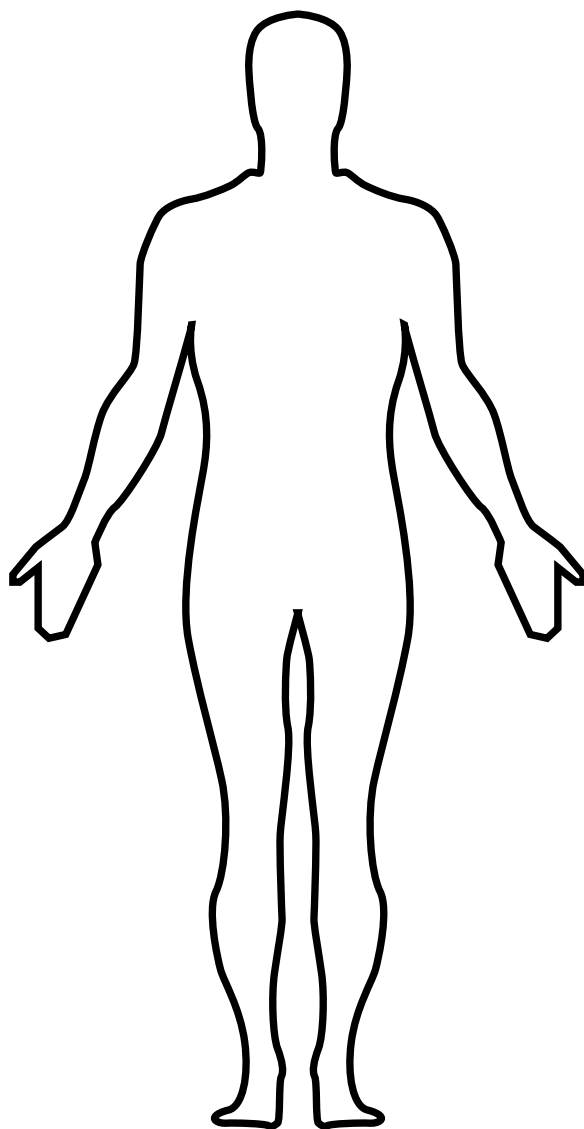
One... two... The hour has sounded.

You're afraid? You won't go in?

The Body Keeps the Score | Body Biography

Directions

Use the outline below to plan your body biography of a chosen character from *Macbeth*. Your body biography should be an accurate depiction of the character based on evidence from the opera. It should creatively represent character traits and actions, exemplifying ideas or issues that go beyond the text (i.e., gender, marriage and love, family loyalty, violence, etc.). You can include the heart, eyes, backbone, hands, feet, background, and quotations from the text.



The Sound of Power | Defining Power

Directions

For each category, write a definition, identify a real-world example, and explain how each form of power differs from the others.

Type of Power	Definition	Example	How does this form of power differ from others?
<i>Command</i>			
<i>Fear</i>			
<i>Persuasion</i>			
<i>Influence</i>			
<i>Resistance</i>			
<i>Authority</i>			
<i>Ambition</i>			

The Sound of Power | Text and Translations

TRACK 9

“S’allontanarono!—N’accozzeremo”

WITCHES: S’allontanarono!—N’accozzeremo
Quando di fulmini—lo scroscio udremo.
S’allontanarono,—fuggiam! ... S’attenda
Le sorti a compiere—nella tregenda.
Macbetto riedere—vedrem colà,
E il nostro oracolo—gli parlerà.
Fuggiam, fuggiam!

Away they go! We’ll meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain.
Away they go! Away we fly
To the witches’ Sabbath.
There, Macbeth will seek us out,
Hoping to learn the future.
Away, away, let’s fly away!

TRACK 10

“Ambizioso spirito”

LADY MACBETH: Ambizioso spirito
Tu sei Macbetto. Alla grandezza aneli,
Ma sarai tu malvagio?
Pien di misfatti è il calle
Della potenza, e mal per lui che il piede
Dubitoso vi pone, e retrocede!
Vieni t’affretta! Accendere
Ti vo’ quel freddo core!
L’audace impresa a compiere
Io ti darò valore.

Ah, Macbeth, your spirit swells with ambition.
But in your quest for greatness,
Will you dare resort to evil?
The path to power is strewn with countless crimes.
So woe to him who walks it
Then let’s doubt force him to retreat.
Come, I am waiting to light a blaze
Which will fire up your courage.
I will kindle in your spirit a fierce resolve
To do whatever bloody deed ambition thrusts
upon you.

The Sound of Power | Text and Translations (CONTINUED)

TRACK 11

“Di voi chi ciò fece?”

MACBETH: Di voi chi ciò fece?

Which of you has done this?

TUTTI: Che parli?

What is he saying?

MACBETH: Non dirmi, non dirmi ch’io fossi!
Le ciocche cruenta non scuotermi incontro.

You cannot accuse me!
What do you glare so fiercely, as if to reproach me?

TUTTI: Macbetto è soffrente! Partiamo.

Macbeth is not well.

LADY MACBETH: Restate! Gli è morbo fugace.
E un uomo voi siete?

No, stay here. He soon will recover.
(aside to Macbeth) What sort of man are you?

MACBETH: Lo sono, ed audace
S’io guardo tal cosa che
Al demone istesso.
Farrebbe spavento ... là ... là nol ravvisi?
Oh, poi che le chiome scollar t’è concesso,
Favella! il sepolcro può render gli uccisi?

A man with the courage to gaze upon something
That even the devil would shrink from
In horror.
Look! There! Don’t you see it there?
(to the ghost) You walk among us, among the living!
Then answer me ... can the dead truly come back from the grave?

The Sound of Power | Text and Translations (CONTINUED)

TRACK 12

“La luce langue”

LADY MACBETH: Nuovo delitto! E' necessario!
Compiersi debbe l'opra fatale.
Ai trapassati regnar non cale;
A loro un requiem, l'eternità.
O voluttà del soglio!
O scettro, alfin sei mio!
Ogni mortal desio
Tace e s'acqueta in te.
Cadrà fra poco esanime
Chi fu predetto re.

Another murder! Yet we must do it!
What was begun here must be completed.
The dead have no desire for power.
Sing them a requiem, sleep without end.
Oh, the ecstasy of power!
Now I wield you, royal scepter!
You fulfill
Every human wish.
He'll fall, and swiftly!
He'll die, this man whose sons, they said,
would reign.

The Sound of Power | Text and Translations (CONTINUED)

TRACK 13

“Ah, la paterna mano”

MACDUFF: Ah, la paterna mano
Non vi fu scudo, o cari,
Dai perfidi sicari
Che a morte vi ferir!
E me fuggiasco, occulto,
Voi chiamavate invano,
Coll’ultimo singulto,
Coll’ultimo respir.
Trammi al tiranno in faccia,
Signore! e s’ei mi sfugge,
Possa a colui le braccia
Del tuo perdono aprir.

There was no loving father there,
No one who could protect you
When those remorseless killers
Came to do the monster’s will.
I am far away, in exile.
I never heard you calling.
I never heard you cry in pain
Or take your last breath.
Let me confront my enemy!
Then, Lord, if he escapes me
If You must grant him mercy,
Then pardon what I cannot!

The Sound of Power | Listening for Power

Directions

For each excerpt, record your observations in the space provided.

	Who seems powerful?	What type of power do they have?	How does the music demonstrate that power?
Track 9: Act I THE WITCHES <i>"S'allontanarono!— N'accozzeremo"</i>			
Track 10: Act I LADY MACBETH <i>"Ambizioso spirto"</i>			
Track 11: Act II MACBETH <i>"Di voi chi ciò fece?"</i>			
Track 12: Act II LADY MACBETH <i>"La luce langue"</i>			
Track 13: Act IV MACDUFF <i>"Ah, la paterna mano"</i>			

Post-Opera Review | *Macbeth*

Directions

For each character, think about the following: **Main Goal:** What does the character want? **Key Moment:** What was their most impactful moment or scene on stage? **Performance Choice:** How did the singer(s) show the character through voice, movement, and expression?

Use specific evidence from the opera—such as a scene, vocal choice, movement, or interaction with another character—to explain your thinking.

Lady Macbeth

MAIN GOAL:

KEY MOMENT:

PERFORMANCE CHOICE:

Macbeth

MAIN GOAL:

KEY MOMENT:

PERFORMANCE CHOICE:

Macduff

MAIN GOAL:

KEY MOMENT:

PERFORMANCE CHOICE:

Banquo

MAIN GOAL:

KEY MOMENT:

PERFORMANCE CHOICE:

The Witches

MAIN GOAL:

KEY MOMENT:

PERFORMANCE CHOICE:

Post-Opera Review | *Macbeth*

Rate the following elements of the opera on their effectiveness in communicating the plot and core theme of the opera, five being extremely effective, one being not effective at all. Justify your rating with at least one example from the opera.

CHOREOGRAPHY AND ACTION DIRECTION RATING: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

JUSTIFICATION: _____

SET AND LIGHTING DESIGN RATING: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

JUSTIFICATION: _____

COSTUME, HAIR, AND MAKEUP DESIGN RATING: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

JUSTIFICATION: _____

OVERALL IMPRESSION What is your overall impression of the opera *Macbeth*? How effectively did it communicate the main themes and emotions? _____

STANDOUT SCENE Which scene was most impactful? How did the music, performance, and staging work together to make it effective? _____

PERSONAL CONNECTION Choose a theme (revenge, power, fate, the supernatural). How does it connect to your own life or the world around you? _____

