

Stand Aside Knave! The Show Must Go On!

Government shutdown, government shmutdown



Fie! Fie I say to the government. A plague on both your houses!

For the past two weeks, we have run into snags in our lives since the U.S. Government shut down. Some people even lost jobs. Public outrage has grown as we see more and more poignant pictures of elderly vets banned from the War Memorial, little children stopped at the gate to the zoo, and average families kept from enjoying the beauty and splendor of our national parks. But another group is being shut out by the government: Artists!

As if it isn't tough enough to be a humble, non-profit performing group with limited resources, the government shut-down has forced a scramble for performing space. Months ago, Bob Colonna's Rhode Island Shakespeare Theatre booked time at the Roger Williams Memorial Park in downtown Providence, a lovely venue. This is the outdoor space the group has used before. Shortly before their opening date in October, Colonna was informed that the park would be closed and unavailable to the troupe. However, there's no stopping the highly talented mere mortals of Director Bob Colonna's Rhode Island Shakespeare Theatre, nor the ghosts in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Shakespeare serves us well, even centuries later. And how goes our own government? Not so much.

The troupe is proceeding with performances close to the original location, at Memorial Park in downtown Providence, located at the corner of South Main and College Streets. Yes, it is still outdoors. "Oh sure," says Colonna. "You may have to bundle up, but it'll be fun. Among other things, the outdoor venue allows us to use fire in certain scenes, which is pretty exciting. And don't forget, it's free! If you

bring along something to warm the blood, you should be perfectly comfortable.” Also bring something to sit on – chair or blanket.

Colonna is known for cleverly modernizing Shakespeare settings, making the presentation fresh. This time, his inventive adaptation has transformed *Macbeth* into a mob story, taking place in the present time. “Audiences will hear Shakespeare’s famous chilling and heart-wrenching words,” says Colonna, “but they will see black leather, fancy furs, AK-47s and baseball bats.” This transformation brings an extra exciting vibe to the production.

Three free-spirited actresses portray the wicked witches stirring up the dark arts. Meryn Flynn, Cherylee Dumas and Meg Taylor-Roth gleefully screech and writhe through their chants. As a special twist in this production, the role of the head witch/goddess, Hecate, is played by a variety of actresses in different performances. This includes Amy Anderson, Mary Paolino and Karyn Valcourt.

Dan White and Leann Heath deliciously play the Macbeths, with their own style of contemporary mob class. They are the ultimate devoted married couple, intensely scary and prone to violence. Christopher Ferreira is a blustery presence as Macduff, the ever patriotic adversary of Macbeth. Geoff White, as the good-hearted Banquo, brings a special quality to the production as a gentler soul.

The multi-talented director, Bob Colonna, also doubles as old King Duncan, and the humorously inebriated Porter. Rosanna Cavanaugh plays Macduff’s doomed wife, CT Larsen and Ben Royer play the royal brothers, Malcolm and Donalbain. David Kane is Macbeth’s loyal servant, Seyton, and two younger cast members are Kiara Wallace as a feisty but unfortunate Macduff daughter, and Brandon Garvey is the brave and resourceful Fleance.

So go on down and enjoy the show, celebrate the season, and don’t let the government sequester your enjoyment of the arts. *Macbeth* will continue through October 27, Thursday through Sunday nights at 7 pm at Memorial Park, Providence. Admission is free. Check out TRIST on Facebook.