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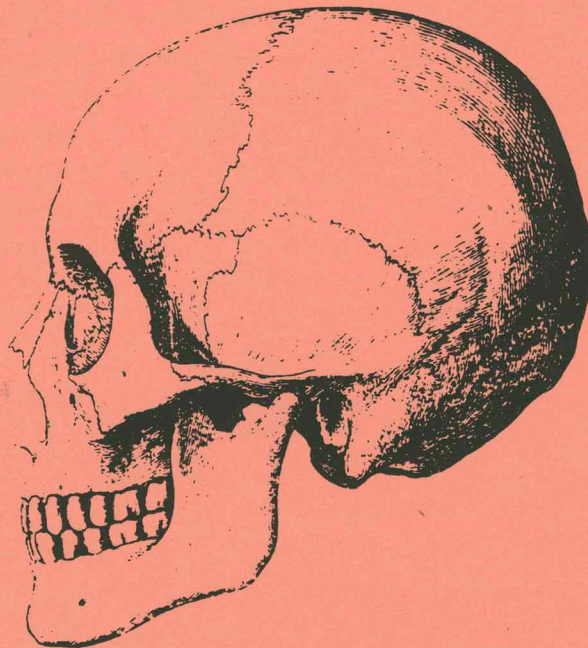
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PSU THEATRE COMPANY
Spring Production 1996

HAMLET

by
William Shakespeare



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Grubbs Hall Studio Theatre

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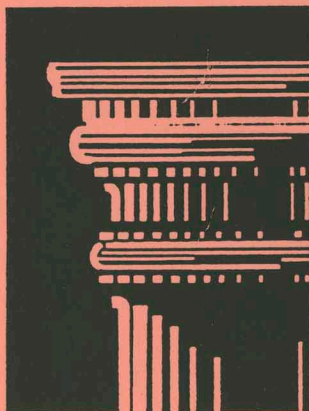
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And by opposing end them. To die, to sleep -
No more - and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep -
To sleep - perchance to dream. Ay, there's the rub.
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil
Must give us pause. There's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th'unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action.

Hamlet: Act III, scene 1.

PLOT

Claudius has murdered his brother Old Hamlet, King of Denmark, usurped the throne, and married the King's wife Gertrude, Hamlet's mother. Hamlet is told of the murder by his father's Ghost, who commands him to avenge the crime. Hamlet hesitates, only half convinced that what he has been told is true, and pretends to be mad.

Polonius, the Lord Chamberlain, sends his daughter Ophelia to question Hamlet and return his love tokens to him, thinking that Hamlet is mad for love of his daughter. Hamlet rejects her.

To test the Ghost's story, Hamlet arranges a play simulating the murder, so that Claudius, watching it, will, if guilty, betray himself.

Hamlet reviles his mother for her hasty incestuous marriage and kills Polonius. Claudius sends Hamlet to England, and plans his death, but Hamlet returns to confront Claudius and Laertes, Polonius' son, at the funeral of Ophelia, who has gone mad and drowned herself.

Claudius arranges for Hamlet to be killed in a fencing match with Laertes, whose rapier has been dipped in poison. The plot miscarries and Laertes dies. Gertrude drinks the poisoned cup intended for Hamlet and Hamlet kills Claudius and wounded by the poisoned rapier, he too dies.

STAGE HISTORY

Hamlet was written in 1600/1, the first of Shakespeare's mature tragedies. The first record of a performance was in 1602 by the Lord Chamberlain's Men and it is a tradition that Shakespeare himself played the Ghost. Richard Burbage was the first Hamlet. The First Quarto explained that the play had already been acted 'diverse times' by the King's Servants 'in the City of London; also in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and elsewhere'.

Court performances were noted in 1619 and 1637. Public production has continued regularly to the present day, and Hamlet is now one of the most frequently performed of all Shakespeare's plays.

SOURCE

Hamlet was known in Northern legend many hundreds of years before his story came to Shakespeare. The earliest reference to him is in an 11th century poem; and his pretended madness was a popular and powerful theme in Viking and Icelandic folklore.

In the 12th century a version of the story, from which Hamlet emerges triumphantly as the new king, was included by the Danish scholar Saxo Grammaticus, in his Latin history of Denmark and its heroes. Four hundred years later, the French chronicler, Belleforest, told the Hamlet legend in his *Histoires Tragiques*, as he had read it in Saxo, and his version later appeared in English.

There is evidence of an English revenge tragedy of the 1580s based on Belleforest and attributed to Thomas Kyd. Philip Henslowe's diary records a performance of this play in 1594 by the Lord Chamberlain's Men. Shakespeare follows the story of the old myth but is considered to have departed from the spirit of his sources more than in any other of his plays.

THE TEXT

There were three different texts of Hamlet published in Shakespeare's time. The first, entered in the Stationer's Register in 1603 was called *The Revenge of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, and became known as the First Quarto. It is very inaccurate and is considered a pirated edition, transcribed from performances at the Globe.

In 1604 the Second Quarto was printed, with the inscription 'newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Copie', which would indicate it to be the genuine edition. Next came the First Folio of 1623. This contained a pruned and revised version of the Second Quarto, probably set up from a prompt book or an acting copy, as the cuts are more literary than dramatic.

WHAT A PIECE OF WORK IS HAMLET

Hamlet here, Hamlet there, Hamlet everywhere. Actors of all sizes, shapes, styles, each able to justify their approach, their suitability for the role. As with the Bible, you can prove anything from Hamlet; or so it would seem. Because of course, we know nothing about what Shakespeare actually thought. We have no letters, no rehearsal notes, no articles written by Shakespeare - or "Shakespeare", as some would have it, that committee of shy aristocrats, lawyers, scholars, philosophers, doctors and joke-writers who supposedly masterminded the most sustained burst of genius in the English language, using the bit-part player of that name as a clever front for their possibly subversive output. It is true that Hamlet does sometimes feel as if it were written by a committee - a committee of genius, to be sure, but one determined to leave nothing out, regardless of ultimate coherence or practical feasibility. The plot seems to ramble, stands still, then tracks back on itself. As for Hamlet himself: what is he up to?

Perhaps, though, "Shakespeare" knew what they were doing. The very contradictoriness, the apparent formlessness, the ungraspability of the play and its central character, are precisely the reasons for the fascination that both exercise. Something unquestionably profound and crucial to our understanding of ourselves is set forth without ever being spelled out, and a good performance takes us on a journey through some of the central experiences of humankind.

The play's originality has little to do with the story, as such. Hamlet has had an astonishing hold, not only on British (and American) audiences, not merely on European ones, but on virtually every culture that has come in contact with it. It swept through continental Europe in the 18th century and was a fundamental influence in the formation of 19th-century Romanticism, with an impact far beyond the theatre or even literature, vividly inspiring painters and musicians; Berlioz even entered into a disastrous marriage with an actress on the strength of her Ophelia. Philosophers, too, have found Hamlet's meditations not merely profound, but his character archetypal of the human condition. Turgenev, in the mid-1850s, described the essential Russian temperament as consisting of two elements - one half Don Quixote, the other Hamlet; even today, Russians are inclined to think of Gamlet (sic) as a Russian rather than an English play. Freud meditated long on the pattern of the character's central emotional relationships with his mother and father, finding in them a myth almost as potent as that of Oedipus.

No other play has entered the world's consciousness to the same degree - not even Oedipus itself. This is the more astonishing in view of the unique richness, complexity and audacity of the verse, which seems to respond to the emotional pressure of the action in the most subtle and unexpected ways, and the unexampled quantity of music and metaphor lavished on the language by the poet-playwright, making the play, as the old lady complained, "full of quotations."

One of the play's many richnesses is the range of its supporting characters, from the Ghost to the Player King, Horatio to Osric, encompassing along the way Polonius, Laertes, Ophelia, not to mention Rosencrantz and Guildenstern: they all have equal status as archetypal figures in our imaginations, and offer almost equally remarkable acting opportunities.

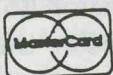
Almost. It is of course the central role that, by any calculation, dominates: his centrality has even been commemorated in another proverbial phrase, Hamlet without the prince. Scene after scene offers yet another dimension to the character. We know him absolutely, even if we do not understand him. For this alone the role would be bound to stir the lust of actors. But here there is something else. There is something essential in Hamlet to which no actor in the world can fail to respond. His dilemma, in a nutshell, is that he cannot act, he can only Act. And we can all, as they say, relate to that. For whatever reasons, instead of living his life, Hamlet is engaged in playing out a situation. His passivity is that of somebody awaiting the right cue, or, like a pioneer method actor, waiting until he feels it, really feels it. In imagining his strangely paralysed revenger, Shakespeare (yes, the actor-writer not The Committee) has drawn deeply on his own professional experience, with his awareness of a split between what the actor seems to be feeling and what is actually going on inside him, on the Elizabethan theatre's fascination with the power of gesture to provoke emotion and on the Renaissance's sense of the limitless potential of the human brain. The single phrase "nothing is but thinking makes it so", which expresses the very heart of the nature of acting, is also the very heart of the modern view of life: the source of all our glory and all our pain. The actor-prince thus becomes the mouthpiece of a whole culture; but not merely the mouthpiece, the paradigm. "It's all in the mind." And this has made Hamlet seem very modern to every new generation. Somehow it has seemed as if the actor playing Hamlet (and the director directing him) is saying: "This is what it means to be alive today."

Simon Callow (1995)

English actor, director and author Simon Callow is probably best known here for his roles in the films **Howard's End** and **Four Weddings and a Funeral**.

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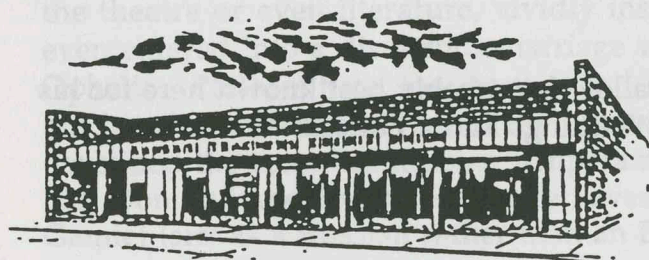
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DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Shakespeare is not dealing with gender in **Hamlet**, he's juggling with vast statements about the human psyche. It doesn't matter if it's a man or a woman playing the role.

For this production a number of cuts to the original text have been made purely in the interest of interpretation, gone is Act 1 scene 1, all references to the Fortinbras sub plot and all the dialogue in the Players scene. A number of minor characters have also been combined into one role. As well as playing characters, the actors also create the environment of Elsinore - playing a succession of secretaries, commuters, audiences at a play, and even the doors and windows of the buildings themselves. In the first Player's scene Ariel Gutierrez recites Shakespeare's lines in Spanish while Santhi Ganesan interprets them physically, using gestures from classical Indian Dance, she then repeats the speech in English. The Spanish translation is by Patricio Canto, based on the 1603 edition of **Hamlet**.

When I was working on the play at home over Christmas I happened to be listening to the symphonies of Gustav Mahler, particularly his Third Symphony, one movement of which, the third, started to penetrate my consciousness and I found myself listening to it as a 'soundtrack' to the stage imagery I was envisioning. A recorded version of the third movement from Mahler's Third Symphony is played just before the play begins. Stephen Taylor's incidental music makes reference to Mahler's theme to underscore key moments in the action.

Shakespeare's plays are cinematic in structure - he cuts back and forth from scene to scene, action to action, across time and space. In this production we have emphasized this filmic quality, employing such devices as freeze-frames, slow motion action, and even a parody of silent film. And staging the production in a small studio means that you, the audience, are experiencing Shakespeare close-up.

Finally, this is a minimalist production of Shakespeare's play, designed to be performed anywhere - classroom, community hall, eating establishment or barn - the only requirement being twenty chairs, an electric socket to plug in the keyboard and amp, and the desire to listen and let your imagination work. It is an act of homage to those sixteen actors who in the Fall of 1600, led by Richard Burbage - and including in their number so tradition has it, Shakespeare himself in the role of the Ghost - emerged onto the stage of the Globe Theatre in London, with few props and little scenery, to give the world the first performance of **Hamlet**.

John Green

CAST

GHOST of Hamlet's Father

Fred Murphy

HAMLET *his son, nephew to Claudius*

Elizabeth Campbell

CLAUDIUS *King of Denmark*

Paul Huybrechts

GERTRUDE *Queen, Hamlet's mother*

Lael Meats

POLONIUS *Lord Chamberlain*

Matthew William Wells

LAERTES *son of Polonius*

Ryan Katzer

OPHELIA *daughter of Polonius*

Erin O'Rear

HORATIO *friend to Hamlet*

Ben Anderson

ROSENCRANTZ *friend to Hamlet*

Brian Walrod

GUILDENSTERN *friend to Hamlet*

DeeAnn Borchardt

PLAYER/OSRIC

Santhi Ganesan

PLAYER/SAILOR/PRIEST

Ariel Gutierrez

GRAVEDIGGER

Stephen Teller

PLAYER KING

Fred Murphy

PLAYER QUEEN

Lael Meats

PLAYER VILLAIN

Paul Huybrechts

KEYBOARDS

Stephen Taylor

PERCUSSION

Neil Bryan

DIRECTOR

John Green

ASSISTANT

Elaina Allison

MUSIC COMPOSED BY

**Stephen Taylor
Louise Glen**

SET DESIGN

Barry R Bengtsen

LIGHTING DESIGN

Lisa Dickey

MAKE UP

**Aimee Kennedy
Pam Jones**

FENCING INSTRUCTOR

Sandra Bauchmoyer

TECHNICAL CREW

**Brian Bartlett
Jason Blick
Lisa Dickey
Matt Hinton
Jon Mateson
Scott Simpson**

PUBLICITY

**Jamorn Jirapaet
Tammy Willits**

POSTER DESIGN

David Hensley

SPECIAL THANKS TO :

Vanitha Chandrasegaram, Doug Carmichael, Paul Smith, Bob Larson, Charles Cagle, Department of Communication Advertizing and Public Relations Club, PSU Printing Services, PSU Ticket Office, Lucy's Tux & Gown, and Dr. and Mrs. John White for their generous financial support of the PSU Theatre Company.

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THE 1996 STUDENT THEATRE COMPANY:

ELAINA ALLISON	Senior, Communication
BEN ANDERSON	Freshman, Music
DEEANN BORCHARDT	Junior, Communication/Political Science
ELIZABETH CAMPBELL	Graduated Fall '95 BA in Pre-Law & Spanish
LISADICKEY	Junior, Communication
SANTHI GANESAN	Graduate, Psychology
LOUISEGLEN	Junior, Music
ARIEL GUTIERREZ	Junior, Communication
RYAN KATZER	Junior, Psychology
LAEL MEATS	Senior, Psychology
FRED MURPHY	Junior, Communication Studies
ERIN O'REAR	Freshman, Music
BRIAN WALROD	Sophomor, Communication
MATTHEW WILLIAM WELLS	Freshman, Music

THE MELANCHOLY DAMES -- WOMEN AS HAMLET

When Diane Venora stepped into the spotlight (stage and TV) in Joseph Papp's 1982 version of Hamlet, she was following in a long and some might think curious line of actresses hellbent to play one of the greatest male roles in the history of Western drama: Hamlet. But then, why not a female in the role? After all, in the very first production of the play (Shakespeare himself played the Ghost!) males played the parts of both Ophelia and Gertrude. Indeed, no actress appeared on a public stage in England until Mrs. Edward Coleman in 1656, some 40 years after Shakespeare's death. Then, with the "restoration" of Charles II females suddenly filled the stages playing "breeches parts" (male roles) much to the titillation of men accustomed to seeing females covered from head to foot, rather than winched into tight pants that left little to the imagination. For some, the stage became a garish peep-show--naughty but nice. However, there were some serious actresses who looked beyond the silly and risqué comedies of the time to the masterpieces of real art. Thus, in 1741 one Fanny Furnival stepped on a Dublin stage as the first female Hamlet--and the tradition began.

To date there have been about 60 female Hamlets in both America and Europe since Fanny Furnival, many of them obscure or forgotten actresses, but a handful of great fame and stature. The first of these was Sarah Siddons who played Hamlet in both England and Ireland from 1777 to 1802; she modestly wore a shawl-like garment for the part, but her "pallor and melancholy" together with her fine voice made her a great hit--at least in the provinces. In America there were nearly a dozen female Hamlets before Charlotte Cushman challenged the role in Boston in 1850; she was a tall, large, coarse-featured and masculine woman with a deeply resonant voice who played Hamlet for 11 years in England, Ireland, and America with what some nervous male critic termed a "vigorous and manly" style. During Cushman's time there were even two teenage "Hamlettes" (they drew great crowds in San Francisco), as well as lady Hamlets in Germany, Australia, and France. One actress--Bertha Kalisch--in 1901 performed her Hamlet in Yiddish! But it was the great Bernhardt--the Divine Sarah--who provoked the most admiration (and irritation) when she trod the boards as Hamlet at the turn of the century in Europe, London, and New York.

Bernhardt had Hamlet rewritten in a French prose version for her audacious venture, and she elected to play Hamlet as "a youth of 20 summers" (she was 55 at the time). She staged her lengthy (5 1/2 hours!) 1899 Paris version in her own theatre, and it ran successfully for months. Even her lover, a celebrated male Hamlet named Mounet-Sully, thought Sarah divine in the role. She took Hamlet to London, then with daring theatricality to Stratford-upon-Avon, and on to Edinburgh, where she played Hamlet in a blonde wig and kilts! Her London gambit won mixed reviews: most critics were polite and even admiring for her "tigrine" grace and "introspective brooding," but fun-loving Max Beerbohm called Sarah the

"Princess of Denmark," and said the British custom officials should have confiscated her doublet and hose before she was allowed to turn Hamlet into a comedy. Punch said her production would have been fine if she had only cast Henry Irving as Ophelia. Undaunted and laden with roses from her fans, Sarah continued to play Hamlet in Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, and the French provinces before returning to Paris for 50 more performances. Then it was off to America to play the Dane before both refined and unrefined audiences, most of whom understood not one syllable of French.

In more modern times, American (both native and transplanted) actresses have held the stage, so to speak. In 1937 Eva Le Gallienne at age 38 played Hamlet, an ambition she had harboured since she was 16. The Boston critics loved her, but a New York critic said she played Hamlet like a schoolteacher reciting Shakespeare. She turned down an offer of a national tour and a Broadway run, saying she hated the idea of being compared to the two leading male Hamlets of the day, Gielgud and Leslie Howard. "Why ask for trouble?" Eva opined. Then in 1957 Siobhan McKenna did a somewhat surrealistic version of the play (no stage, no scenery, supporting actors hiding behind curtains and never seen). The sometimes waspish male critic Brooks Atkinson didn't like it, and said as much in the *New York Times*, bitchily congratulating Ms McKenna on having successfully memorized so many lines. Perhaps the unkindest critical cuts of all were reserved for the aging Dame Judith Anderson's performance as Hamlet in 1971. Mel Gussow, again in the *New York Times*, wrote: "Should a 72-year-old lady attempt to play Hamlet? Not *this* 72-year-old lady." He went on to say that Anderson, once a fiery Medea, played the Dane merely with "a pained expression and fixed gestures." As for Diane Venora in Joseph Papp's version, *Time* magazine's male critic said she was much too macho, that she strutted about "like a fascist bullyboy," and even a female critic in the *New Yorker* said she played "without wit or melancholy," but that at least she seemed sincere in the part!

And what of the future female Hamlets? Even today Fiona Shaw is playing Shakespeare's Richard II in London (the first female to do the role), so the odds are good she will look soon to Hamlet. Glenn Close has played Gertrude (to Mel Gibson's Hamlet), so she may follow the lead of other Gertrudes -- Siddons, Bernhardt, Cushman, Anderson -- and trade a ribbon for a rapier. And what about Emma Thompson?

But why conjure up or speculate about imaginary female Hamlets when we have a very real one waiting in the wings -- as you are about to see.

Charles Cagle (1996)
Professor of English

O VENGEANCE !

Why does Hamlet wreak revenge? Revenge is a form of expression for the blood tie of family, for the sacrifice made for loved ones, a sacred duty.

Hamlet took his revenge, as we know, in order to set right a time that was 'out of joint'. It would be nearer the truth to say he did so in order to embody the idea of self-sacrifice.

We often display resolution or obstinacy in actions that do us nothing but harm. This, too, is a kind of search for self-sacrifice, self-denial, duty. Strange, absurd moments of deliberately putting yourself in someone's debt, of dependence, of being the victim - things that the materialist, Freud, would call masochism. The religious man would call them - duty. What Dostoevsky called - the desire to suffer.

This desire to suffer without any organized religious system can become simply psychotic.

In the end, it is love that has failed to find a form. But not Freudian love; spiritual love. Love is always the gift of oneself to another. And even though the word sacrificial (in the vulgar understanding of the term) has negative, outwardly destructive connotations, when it is applied to the individual who is sacrificing himself, the essence of the act is always love, that is - a positive, creative, Divine act.

Hamlet was well ahead of his time, and when he realizes that it is up to him to destroy that world, he starts to take revenge, and becomes the same as everyone else, and that is his downfall. That idea of Shakespeare is pursuing me. Can a man judge another, can one man shed another's blood? I do not consider that he can, that he has the right. Society can. Unfortunately - it can! And there is nothing to be done about that . . . But one drop of blood shed is equal to an ocean. And that is Hamlet's tragedy. After he meets the Ghost, Hamlet dedicates his life to revenge, and that is why he perishes, he kills himself, it is suicide, he couldn't withstand the blood, good cannot be achieved through blood.

Andrey Tarkovsky (1934-86)

Russian film director

MY THOUGHTS BE BLOODY

If Hamlet had written Hamlet, it would have been a very different play. I don't think that Shakespeare would have had to have been Danish and literally his father have been murdered, but I think it's interesting when you meet people who've had a father murdered or a sister or a brother and then you question them about how they see Hamlet. That's a very different viewing to an actor's. There are other ways of looking at Hamlet.

I thought about a version - I had, well, my sister was murdered by her husband four years ago. And I thought, well, how does Hamlet feel? And I think he wants to do two things. I think, one: he wants to put the world right, that is, clear the slate, have some sort of moral control over life again. But he also wants to kill himself. He really does. I believe that Hamlet's really the story of someone struggling specifically with their conscience and looking at the world where conscience isn't important, where people can just go on and push things under the carpet.

If I did a Hamlet I would probably do something about a bit of my story, about my sister's murder and how I feel as someone involved in theatre, what I want to do. Because I understand the desire to kill. I can imagine getting in my car, driving to where the murderer lives - he only got two years in prison - and I can imagine killing him. And I'm supposedly a civilised person, educated, reasonable.

Jeremy Weller (1994)

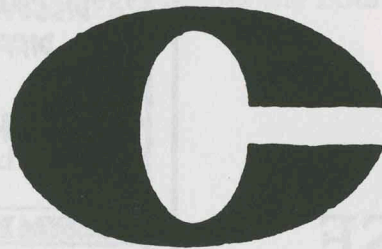
Community Theatre director, Edinburgh, Scotland.

Charles Cagle (1996)
Professor of English

*No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;
Am an attendant Lord, one that will do
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,
Advise the prince; no doubt an easy tool,
Deferential, glad to be of use,
Politic, cautious, and meticulous;
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous -
Almost, at times, the Fool.*

T.S. Eliot

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock



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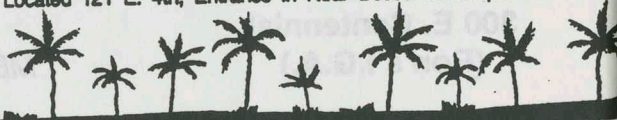
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Directed by John Green

SHAKESPEARE'S DARK LADY

Devised and Directed by John Green

performed by Lael Meats and Kathryn Parke

Both productions will be staged as part of **WILLPOWER** the first annual Schools Shakespeare study day, devised by John Green and staffed by faculty from the Departments of Communication and English at PSU. Over 500 students from schools and colleges across the Four State area will be attending this event.

PSU OPERA

Pittsburg Memorial Auditorium

May 3 & 5

THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE

by Gilbert & Sullivan

Directed by Paul Huybrechts

Conducted by Carol Ann Martin

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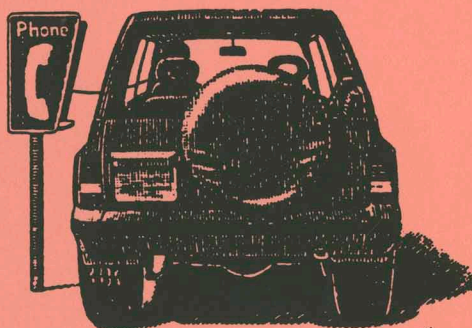
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