



[THE GOLDEN RULE FOR GOOD THEATER BEHAVIOR]

Theater behavior falls somewhere in between that expected for a church and a movie theater. If you wouldn't do it in one of the above, don't do it here.

The Golden Rule is a concept that was recognized as early as 1780 BCE, and simply states the idea that all human beings should treat each other how they would like to be treated. The concept of the golden rule has been adapted for many specific situations, and one of those situations is the performing arts arena. More detailed rules can be found at www.pasa-online.org. Follow these and you will have the wonderful experience at the theater.



Backstage Pass

STUDENT GUIDE FOR DAYTIME PERFORMANCES 2011/2012 WWW.PASAOONLINE.ORG



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AQUILA THEATRE PERFORMS MACBETH

STUDENT PERFORMANCE THURSDAY NOV 10 10:30 AM HEYMANN PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

EVENING PERFORMANCE THURSDAY NOV 10 7:30 PM HEYMANN PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Aquila Theatre performs Macbeth

PRESENTED BY



Macbeth & King James IV

Have you ever wondered where someone like William Shakespeare, who wrote nearly 40 plays, over 100 sonnets, and long narrative poems got his many ideas? Or perhaps you have wondered why someone like Shakespeare's work, written hundreds of years ago, remains relevant today. If so, consider this:

Early in Shakespeare's career, Elizabeth I was queen of England. Elizabeth's open enjoyment of the theatre is one of the many ways that she broke with tradition, and there is evidence to support she enjoyed Shakespeare's work. When Elizabeth died and the throne of England passed to her cousin, James IV of Scotland, the English empire expanded, and the role of the theatre grew alongside it. James followed in Elizabeth's footsteps in terms of encouraging theatre and patronizing the arts. Shakespeare's company even changed its name to 'The King's Men' in honor of James, and Shakespeare is said to have written the play Macbeth to honor the king.

CONSIDER THESE CONNECTIONS:

- Scotland, the setting for Macbeth, was King James' home country. Shakespeare consulted a common history book and took the story of a prophecy and a murdered king directly from a section on Scottish history.
In the play, Macbeth and his wife murder King Duncan to take control of Scotland. Some of the details of this murder are similar to those of a foiled plot to murder King James.
Unifying Scotland and England in more than name was a difficult process. Shakespeare wanted to underscore the connection, so he wrote about a period in history when Scotland and England formed an alliance. He played up the connection by showing the English King Edward's support for the Scottish Prince Malcolm in Macbeth, and those who knew their history were reminded that the historical Malcolm had married a daughter of King Edward.
King James himself was an accomplished scholar and wrote a book called Daemonologie. This book was a study of witches and witchcraft, and some say Shakespeare consulted it when creating the characters of the Weird Sisters.
In the scene where the witches show Macbeth the vision of Banquo's descendants on the throne, Shakespeare made sure that the description of these visions matched James' own genealogy.
Macbeth is filled with biblical symbolism to appease King James's interest in biblical history. The King would later go on to commission the King James Bible and hire poets to translate biblical passages into pleasing language.



If you are an actor looking for a way to start out, consider this. Many professional theaters, including Aquila Theatre, sponsor classes and training programs. More information on classes can be found on Aquila Theatre's webpage.

MACBETH TODAY

Want to see the parallels to Macbeth in today's world? Many of Shakespeare's themes are universal, and repeat themselves throughout time.

- Consider for yourself the numerous power struggles and leadership issues that can be seen across the world today. Often, a political leader is assassinated in connection to these struggles.
Think of places and times in history where a belief in witchcraft or prophecy altered someone's fate or made events spin out of control. This has happened many times, even in American history.
Uniting two or more countries or cultures is an ongoing struggle, and numerous examples can be seen in history and the world today.
Consider the basic themes of Macbeth... ambition, revenge, greed, desire, bravery, revenge, regret...and then think of what you see when you turn on the TV. It's safe to say that you'll find many stories with those same themes any time of day.

There are actually many options for young actors looking for training. A community theatre in your area may offer open auditions. Many professional theatre companies, including Aquila Theatre, sponsor classes and training programs. More information on classes can be found on Aquila Theatre's webpage. Or, consider these websites.

- UL Lafayette's Performing Arts Homepage - http://pfar.louisiana.edu/casting_and_expectations.html
Nationwide index of theatre-training summer camps - http://www.mysummercamps.com/camps/Arts_Camps/Theatre/index.html
University of New Orleans' Career Services Center: "What do I do with a degree in Theatre?" - http://career.uno.edu/majors/Theatre.pdf

The New York Times has called Aquila Theatre "a classically trained, modernly hip troupe." Aquila's stage style is unique in every way, but their theatre company mostly performs plays that have been written for 100 years or more. Aquila Theatre has one purpose, to reinterpret classical dramas for modern audiences, and one goal, to bring those great works of art to large numbers of people.

"A classically trained, modernly hip troupe." -THE NEW YORK TIMES



ABOUT AQUILA

AQUILA'S STORY BEGINS IN 1991, WHEN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR PETER MEINECK FOUNDED THE COMPANY IN LONDON. FROM THE START, AQUILA'S FOCUS WAS BRINGING SEEMINGLY INACCESSIBLE CLASSICAL PRODUCTIONS TO LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE IN A MANNER THEY COULD UNDERSTAND AND ENJOY.

To further this goal, the company moved to New York City in 1999. Now, Aquila's touring company visits between fifty and seventy American cities each year. They have performed all over the world including places like Carnegie Hall, the Ancient Stadium in Delphi, Greece, and the White House. They also perform at schools and local theatres like the Heymann Performing Arts Center. In addition, Aquila Theatre is the company in residence at New York University's Center for Ancient Studies, which means almost all of the productions they bring on tour are first performed at this theatre.

Aquila Theatre is devoted to making experiencing the theatre a part of people's lives, so they do not limit themselves to performing onstage. Instead, they continually work to make the old school part of the new school by bridging the gap between what men wrote hundreds of years ago and what people think and feel today. Aquila Theatre also offers community outreach programs, like Shakespeare

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FIND PASA ON f t

Performance Review of Macbeth

A performance review, sometimes referred to as a critique, is a term commonly used in the theatre. Typically, a performance review is an analysis of what is working in a play or performance and what is not. Once a play has been rehearsed and is a full-fledged production, a critic will write a review of the performance. A critic can be a professional who works for a newspaper or magazine, an individual who expresses their views on a blog, or a student doing a class assignment. The best critics are not just critical – they discuss what works, what does not work, and why.

A prewriting guide is available in the Teacher Guide at pasaonline.org.

PARAGRAPH ONE:

- List things you did to prepare for seeing this performance.
- What sort of movies, television, and theatre do you like?
- What did you expect before seeing Macbeth?
- What sort of performances have you seen onstage before?
- List other Shakespeare plays you have read or seen performed before.

PARAGRAPH TWO:

- Rate each of the following as amazing, good, average, below average, or awful.
 - Acting/Actors chosen
 - Story/plot
 - Sets
 - Costumes
 - Wording/Language

PARAGRAPH THREE:

- Rate the audience's reaction to Macbeth as one of the following:
 - Very Engaged/Delighted
 - Amused
 - Somewhat Interested
 - Somewhat Bored
- What do you think contributed to this reaction?
- What specific reactions do you remember that lead to your conclusion?

PARAGRAPH FOUR:

- What do you think the message or lesson of Macbeth is?
- List other things (books, movies, etc.) that have this same message.

PARAGRAPH FIVE:

- Imagine that you are involved in designing a re-working of Macbeth.
- Would you make your production traditional Shakespearian, only somewhat Shakespearian, or very modern?
- Who or what you would choose for each category below?
 - actors
 - costumes
 - speeches
 - lighting/special effects
 - music

Keeping Shakespeare Alive

If you want to fully understand the challenge Aquila Theatre sets for itself when it takes on the task of making the classics hip, consider this; William Shakespeare's plays are, in fact, older than the American Revolution and the Civil War combined. Shakespeare wrote with an awareness of his audience and the world that surrounded them, but much has changed since his day. What was cutting edge for Shakespeare is antiquated now, but parallels still exist.

THE THEATRE ITSELF:

Permanently constructed theatres were not always the norm in Shakespeare's day. Sometimes actors, then referred to as players, traveled from place to place and performed in the home of wealthy individuals, courtyards, or on a portable stages. Even when a theatre such as the Globe was built, players still travelled to perform as requested by the nobility, and made do with the fact that any space they worked in, even their theatre, was limited in terms of special effects and the use of props and sets. Shakespeare's theatre company performed on an empty or nearly empty stage and used a few primitive hand props; audience members used their imaginations to enhance what was before them. The Globe Theatre did provide a trapdoor in the stage floor which could become a swamp, a body pit, or the gateway to Hell and a balcony above the stage, which provided a place for gods to look upon the world from on high.

Aquila Theatre Company, on the other hand, has access to modern technology which is used to create special effects and elaborate lighting designs.

Shakespeare may have been dead for almost four hundred years, but he is alive and well at the Aquila Theatre Company. Many critics have praised Aquila's artistic director for his vision, the company's director for ingenuity, and mentioned again and again how Aquila bridges the gap between classic theatre and the modern world making what seems impossible not just possible, but also believable.

However, it is important to remember that plays are not movies. Plays are created before the viewers' eyes; there is no editing or opportunity to alter things digitally. Aquila uses some props, but not many, and their sets remain nearly as scant as Shakespeare's so they can easily transport them when touring. Since Aquila is frequently on the road, their productions must remain flexible. Rather than hauling trailers full of large sets and props they have taken the Shakespearian habit of using a space creatively to new heights.

LIGHTING AND SPECIAL EFFECTS:

With no electricity and therefore no stage lighting, Shakespeare's audience was forced to listen to the actors and pay close attention to their body language to fill in the gaps. If a character onstage mentioned that it was midnight and shivered, the audience imagined bitter cold blackness. Special effects in Shakespeare's day were not realistic by today's standards – a bleeding character might pull a red rag out of his sleeve to symbolize blood.

Aquila Theatre frequently performs on a stage that allows for some creation of sound and lighting effects, but with no green screens or CGI at hand, they must also ask the audience to extend their imaginations. It is best for the audience at one of their plays to remember the Shakespearian trick of being attuned to the actors' words and body language. The dialogue is always related to the situation at hand and the world created onstage might seem a little more special if the audience picks up on these clues.

COSTUMING: Most scholars agree that Shakespearian actors wore clothes that were modern to them regardless of what they were performing. Therefore, it did not matter that Macbeth is based on a series of events that took place hundreds of years before Shakespeare's time, the actors in his production would have walked the stage in their Jacobean finest. The only extensive costumes would have been worn by the male actors who portrayed female characters, as no women were allowed on stage. These men wore corsets, padding, wigs, and make-up along with their women's clothes.

Clothing choices are one of the ways in which Aquila Theatre frequently expresses their uniqueness. Actual tights, neck ruffs, or Shakespearian doublets are rare for their productions. Instead, viewers can expect to see simple, representative outfits, modern clothing (jeans and t-shirts have appeared in previous performances), or some more elaborate costumes (a past Aquila production featured a leather bodysuits).

THE ACTORS AND THEIR WORDS:

What any play from Shakespeare's day will have in common with the Aquila Theatre interpretation of the same work is the language and style. Aquila's modern actors are trained in Shakespearian style acting, and the language they use and the manner in which they speak is the exact same way the actors in Shakespeare's company spoke them hundreds of years ago. Despite the oceans of time that have passed between the Bard's day and today, the meaning of these words and the magic with which they come to life onstage remains unchanged.

All the World's a Stage...

Think you might want to be an actor? Consider this advice from William Shakespeare, who was a playwright, actor, and director. Although Shakespeare set down his code for actors in Act III, Scene 2 of the play Hamlet, they are applicable to all of Shakespeare's plays and many modern actors still follow these guidelines. Do the actors of Aquila Theatre follow these rules?

Examine the rules below written in modern language. Can you identify where in Hamlet's speech Shakespeare gives the following pieces of advice?

- Speak loudly and clearly, and stick to what is written in the script.
- NEVER turn your back to the audience. If the audience can't see your facial expressions and body language, they won't understand your character.
- Exaggerate facial expressions slightly – a stage is not a movie screen, and people in the back row need to see things, too.
- Keep it real. Many directors say "Remember to act like a human being" as a way of encouraging their actors to avoid unnecessary movements or too-dramatic displays of emotion. The audience should believe you ARE your character, not just someone pretending to be that character.
- Become your character. Be able to show, not tell, the audience their age, social status, and likes and dislikes by the way you move your body and use your voice.
- Learn to do nothing effectively. A good actor knows that they must appear to be part of a scene even when they are not speaking. They will develop ways of remaining active but not taking attention away from the others on the stage.
- Avoid being a scene-stealer, or an actor who makes up things to do that are NOT in the script simply to get the audience's attention.

HAMLET

Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue. But if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand thus, but use all gently, for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. Oh, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise. I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant. It out-Herods Herod. Pray you, avoid it. Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature. For anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone or come tardy off, though it make the unskillful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve, the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. Oh, there be players that I have seen play and heard others praise (and that highly), not to speak it profanely, that, neither having th' accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably. O, reform it altogether! And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for



them, for there be of them that will themselves laugh to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too, though in the meantime some necessary question of the play be then to be considered. That's villainous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it.

And all the men and women merely players

Being an actor is not always a glamorous job. Before an actor gets to walk down the red carpet in flashing lights, he or she must study their craft just like a carpenter, hairstylist, computer technician, or lawyer would do. Many hopeful actors earn theatre degrees in college, where they take part in many plays and participate in "workshops" in which they interpret the rules for acting and critique performances. Every actor must compile a resume, which lists special skills (like dancing or singing) and performance experience (such as dates of plays, names of characters portrayed, etc.). Resumes are accompanied by headshots, which are photos taken to show a detailed study of the actor's face. While people in many other professions go to interviews when they hope to get a job, actors go to auditions, where they perform scenes and individual pieces called monologues for directors and casting directors. A director may also have an actor engage in improvisational exercises as a way of judging their performance skills.

Even after an actor is hired or becomes part of a group like Aquila Theatre, their work is not done. A professional actor will often continue taking acting lessons. They must learn lines, be fitted for costumes, rehearse for performances and audition for new jobs or productions. Actors must do exercises to keep their voices flexible and expressive, and many engage in some form of exercise to keep their bodies limber for performances. Sometimes, a role might require an actor to change their physical appearance, either by training their body or by applying stage makeup.



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Leaders, an after-school program in Harlem and the Bronx which trains students to produce and perform Shakespeare plays. Two other programs, *Workshop America* and *Theatre Breakthrough*, provide unique opportunities for school age children to witness a live performance at a professional theatre. According to their company mission statement, Aquila Theatre operates with the goals of broadening the classical cannon, collaborating across the performing arts, deepening a commitment to artistic excellence, teaching and exchanging ideas, and embracing new technology. Although Aquila Theatre has staged many Shakespeare plays and been widely praised for their original, engaging production style, the actors often look even further into the past. Aquila recently received a National Endowment for the Humanities Chairman's Special Award for *Ancient Greeks / Modern Lives*, a new national public program, which places live theatrical events, reading groups and lectures in cultural institutions to inspire people to come together to read, see, and think about classical literature and how it continues to influence and invigorate American cultural life. In other words, Aquila Theatre never hesitates to make the world their very own stage or to bring that stage to others.

