



HAMLET

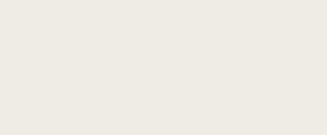
A SITE-SPECIFIC ADAPTION OF THE PLAY
BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

ROOK'S THEATRE X SAME BOAT THEATRE

ST. LUKE'S MISSION

SEPTEMBER 26 - 28
OCTOBER 3 - 5
07.30 PM

454 JOHN ST N
HAMILTON



AUTUMN 2024
SEASON

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ANCESTRAL LANDS

Rook's Theatre and Same Boat Theatre gratefully acknowledge that the work we do takes place on Turtle Island, in what is known today as the City of Hamilton.

Here, we are situated on the traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Mississaugas. This land is covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and Anishnaabek to share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

- Resources:**
- [Local Indigenous Resources \(Hamilton Community Legal Clinic\)](#)
 - [Whose Land](#)
 - [How to Share Stuff](#)

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

ROOK'S THEATRE

Story-driven theatre in a city of stories.

Since 2017, Rook's Theatre has been committed to creating exciting, pop-up theatrical experiences that engage and challenge Hamilton audiences. By cultivating relationships with other Hamilton-based organizations, our goal is to foster meaningful connections between artists and industry.

- [RooksTheatre.com](#)
- [@RooksTheatre](#)
- [@RooksTheatre](#)

SAME BOAT THEATRE

We create theatre that is immediate and authentic and confronts the status quo.

Same Boat Theatre is dedicated to telling authentic and provocative stories onstage that challenge the heart and confront the mind. With a focus on new and established plays, we strive for compelling theatre that gives voice to urgent ideas and speaks to our community.

- [SameBoatTheatre.com](#)
- [@SameBoatTheatre](#)
- [@SameBoatTheatre](#)

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

I want you to know that Hamlet is just a play.

It's a good play, an important play in the history of the western theatrical canon - maybe the most important (depending on who you ask) - but it is, fundamentally, just a play.

Ok, it's a very famous play, maybe the most famous play. At first blush, that can make a project like this one a bit daunting. With that in mind, our guiding principle has been to approach the text with Respect, instead of Reverence. We knew we wanted to come to the text with a healthy understanding of its cultural impact and grandeur, and didn't want to be overwhelmed by the importance of Hamlet. We wanted to make a show that felt intimate and personal, that was deeply rooted in the place we're in (both St. Luke's and Hamilton) and that made us a little bit scared - something that was ambitious and out of the ordinary.

You'll notice these priorities in the text and in our cast. We have actors playing against traditional gender casting but haven't changed pronouns, made cuts to focus on the core of the story we want to tell and to open up the text to new readings and interesting complications to our own expectations and rote readings of a text that is pretty widely studied and 'understood'.

We owe a lot of our exploration to this building, St. Luke's Mission, for inspiring us to think in new ways about our relationship to 'performance' spaces. This is especially important for artists in this city now, given how few dedicated 'traditional' theatre spaces exist or are accessible to us after the last few years. We're so grateful to Rob and the community here for the freedom and welcome they've extended to us - it's been a real gift to build a show and a community among ourselves here.

We're grateful you've chosen to become a part of our community tonight. We don't take your support lightly, and we hope you'll follow along with us as we work to see what dreams may come. **AJC**



AARON JOEL CRAIG
DIRECTOR

Aaron Joel Craig (he/him) is a director, dramaturge, designer and performer. His passion for developing new work with artists in Hamilton led to the founding of Same Boat Theatre, alongside Stephen Near. His theatre work focuses on questions of identity, power and how to stay hopeful in a difficult world. Some past projects include *Test*, *Your Own Sons* and *The Conspiracy of Michael*, and most recently, the national tour of *Whale Fall*, all with Same Boat, and *Henry the Fifth* and *Waiting for Godot* for Redeemer University. He recently completed work on a masters degree at Wycliffe College/University of Toronto, exploring the intersections of art and spirituality. He lives in the East End of Hamilton with his partner, Cath, their two kids, and his probably- too-big record collection.

THE ACTING COMPANY

* This is a Canadian Actors' Equity Association production under the Artists' Collective Policy



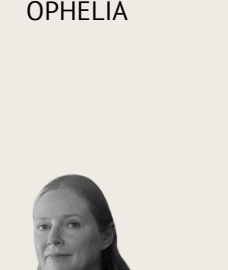
SOPHIE CÔTÉ
GUILDENSTERN & OTHERS
Young Artist Mentorship Program Participant

Sophie (she/her) has been training in theatre for 5 years and has done a few theatre projects over this time. You might have seen her in *Ignite*, for Hamilton Fringe 2022, or as Jane in HTI's *Descendants the Musical* in 2023. Hamlet is the most challenging project she has done and she is so grateful to have the support of all of the talented people in this production. Sophie can be found watching apocalypse TV shows or playing with her dog, Rosie. Thank you to Stephanie, Michael, and Aaron for teaching me so much, my family for supporting me, and Allison for all the rides!



DAVID DIFRANCESCO
LAERTES

Absolutely thrilled to be back working with Rook's Theatre after co-creating *Treasure Island* many years ago. Past credits include *Three Men in a Boat/on a Bike* (Pea Green Theatre), *Avenue Q*, *We Will Rock You*, *Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (Stephenville Theatre Festival). Having stepped away from theatre to complete a master's in Teaching, David is excited to wear both actor and teacher hat this fall. Thankful for artistic friendships that last decades and the constant support of those closest in his life.



REBEKKA GONDOSCH
OPHELIA

Rebekka Gondosch (they/she) is a theatre maker, writer, and arts educator based in Hamilton, Ontario. They are beyond delighted to be playing Ophelia and working with such a magical cast. Rebekka is a graduate of Trinity College Dublin's M.Phil. in Theatre and Performance program and enjoys engaging in artistic work rooted in devised theatre, site-specific theatre, Irish theatre, and queer performance. Rebekka spent much of their childhood reading Shakespeare for fun, so it is no wonder their first job was with the Stratford Festival Theatre's Shakespeare School and their current vocation is as a high school Dramatic Arts and English teacher. Rebekka has had the great honour of teaching amazing students for over seven years and is currently teaching with HWDSB. They are a proud member of Passing Through Theatre in Toronto and Light Echo Theatre in Hamilton. They dedicate this performance to F.D. IG @theatre_is_wild



ALLISON HOSSACK *
POLONIUS

Allison Hossack (she/her) is an actor, mom, and lifelong student. Some favourite theatre projects include: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, an all-female production of *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Closer*, *Paper Wheel*, *The Sound of Music*, and most recently, *Sweat*, at Theatre Aquarius. Allison has appeared on over 90 different television shows. Recent appearances include: the anthology series *Accused*, the Hallmark movie *Riverside Romance*, and the feature film *Longing*. In 2021, Allison completed a master's degree in education, where she focused on arts-based research, specifically storytelling as a means to understanding ourselves and the world around us. She is very grateful for this return to Shakespeare and the opportunity to play with this wonderful group of artists.



STEPHANIE HOPE LAWLOR *
HAMLET

Stephanie Hope Lawlor (she/her) is an accomplished actor, theatre maker, and teaching artist in Hamilton. Selected theatre: *Rebecca in Whale Fall* (Same Boat Theatre in Hamilton, Vancouver, Toronto, then Hamilton again), *Never Not Once*, *One Night Only*, *The Sound of Music* (Theatre Aquarius), *Every Brilliant Thing*, *Mary's Wedding*, *Venus in Fur* (Rook's Theatre), *Snow White* (Drayton Ent.), *Providence* (Berkeley Street Theatre), *Why Do Fools Fall in Love?* (Stage West), *Salt-Water Moon* (Studio Theatre). Graduate of Randolph Academy (College) for the Performing Arts and McMaster University. Stephanie serves at the head of the HCA Theatre School at the Hamilton Conservatory for the Arts and is the recipient of the inaugural Innovation - Cutting Edge Gilded Hammer Award (2020). For MJL, whether he likes it or not. hopelawlor.com



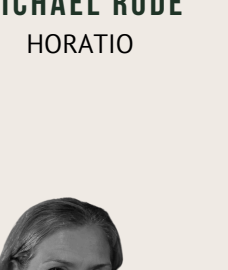
STEPHEN NEAR
CLAUDIUS

Yorphen Near (he/him) is a writer, theatre creator and educator living in Hamilton. He is a graduate of York University (BFA), the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (B. Ed) and the MFA Creative Writing program at the University of Guelph. Stephen is a member of the Playwright's Guild of Canada and an alumnus of the Sage Hill Writing Experience and the Banff Centre. He is co-founder of Same Boat Theatre alongside Aaron Joel Craig; together they have collaborated on such shows as *Finding Mr. Right*, *Conspiracy of Michael*, *Your Own Sons*, *Test* and the award-winning *Whale Fall*. He is very pleased to be bringing the role of Claudius to life for this co-production with Rook's Theatre. stephennear.com



RICK ROBERTS
THE GHOST

Rick Roberts has appeared in theatres across Canada and in several films and TV series. Most recently he appeared in *The Goat* and *Cymbeline* at the Stratford Festival. He is a graduate of the National Theatre School and lives in Hamilton.



MICHAEL RODE
HORATIO

Michael is a Hamilton based actor and Montessori educator. Shakespeare credits include: *The Tempest* (Tottering Biped), *Twelfth Night* (Direct Flight); *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Rose Theatre); *Romeo & Juliet*, *Much Ado About Nothing* (Theatre Prospero); *All's Well That Ends Well* (Alchemy Theatre); *Othello*, *Julius Caesar* (Single Thread); *The Winter's Tale* (Theatre Kingston). Hamilton credits include *Mary's Wedding* (Rook's Theatre); *Amadeus* (Theatre Aquarius); *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (Land Mermaid). Michael conducted and co-founded the Hamilton Choir Project, sang (virtually with 7,000 other artists) for Queen Elizabeth II, performed in theatres across the country, and has proudly directed his adolescent students in a Shakespeare production for the past seven years.



JENNIFER WALTON
GERTRUDE

Jennifer Walton's acting credits include *Your Own Sons* for Same Boat Theatre, the film *Things I Do for Money* directed by Warren Sonoda and *Woman in Black* and *The Diary of Anne Frank* for Theatre Aquarius. Directing credits include *Stationary* (Hamilton Fringe 2024), *The Tragedy of Othello Moore* (Best of Hamilton Fringe, 2016), and *The Soldier's Tale* for Amphion Ensemble where she also played the Devil. Jennifer is the 2021 recipient of the Voaden Prize in Playwriting for *GUNPLAY (After the Gun Goes Off)*. She was a founding member and co-director of Hamilton-based Women's Work Playwright Collective and a former member of the Theatre Aquarius Playwright Unit. Jennifer's short plays have been featured in staged reading festivals across North America and most recently, *Brave New Works* at Theatre Aquarius that she also directed. She's a teaching artist who spent almost 30 years as co-director of The Creative Theatre Company and currently teaches Public Speaking for Brain Power.



JAY WATSON
ROSENCRANTZ & OTHERS
Young Artist Mentorship Program Participant

Julianne (or Jay) Watson is an acting student and overall theatre lover. She is making her professional theatre debut in Hamlet. Jay is a theatre student at the Hamilton Conservatory for the Arts and has been in several plays, most recently, *[un]charted* (through HCA). She can often be found in the racks of a thrift store and will stop to say hi to any cat she sees. Jay would like to say thank you to her family and shout out all of her favourite cats.

SPECIAL THANKS

- Rob Miller and St. Luke's Mission
- Michael J. Lawlor
- Talia @naked.niagara, for the green room
- Khadeeja Maklad, for Ophelia's song
- Scott Aasman, for the skull @sanillustration

