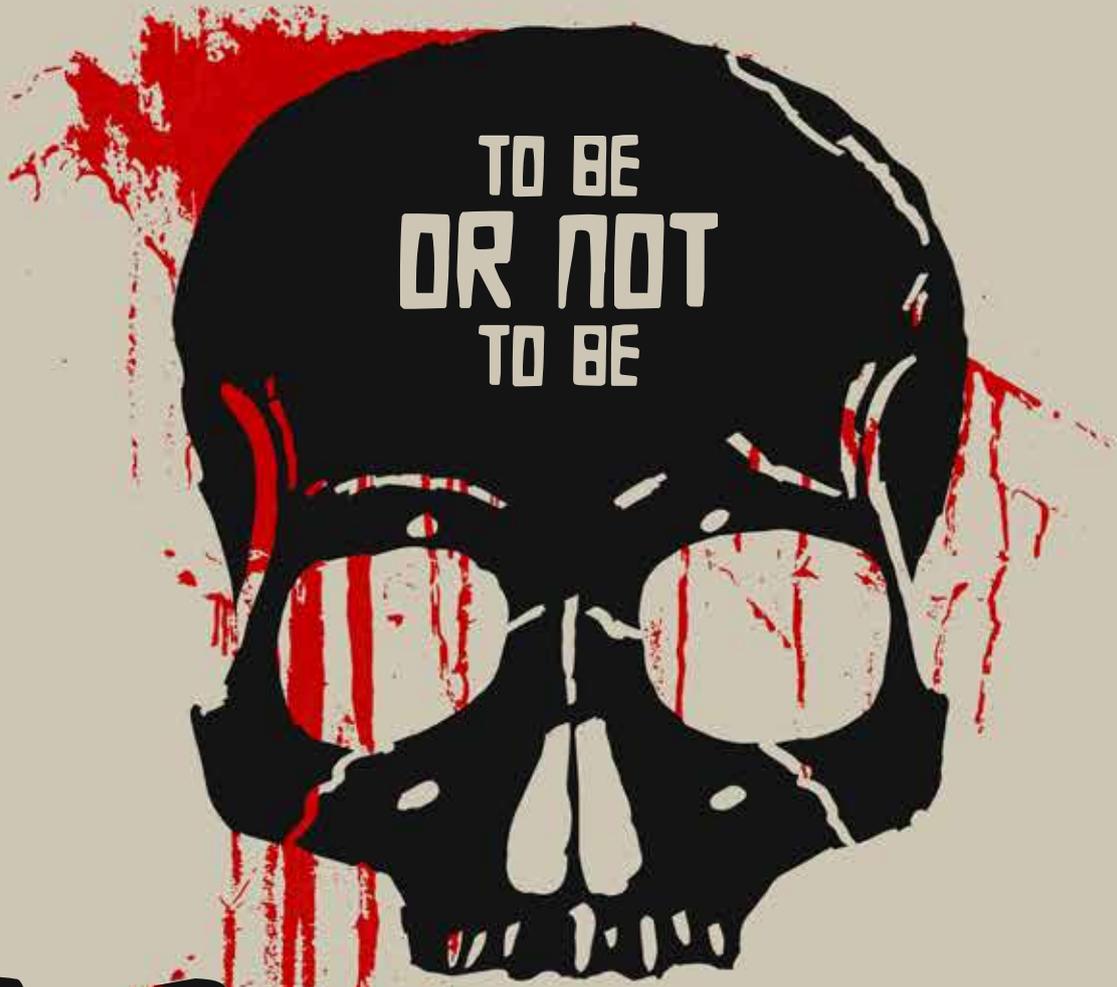


2025



HAMLET

BONZO PRODUCTIONS



HAMLET

Plays are funny, ephemeral things. For many different reasons they shouldn't work, shouldn't happen. Luckily for us, for many more reasons they do. This is especially true of Shakespeare plays, and amateur Shakespeare plays at that. That they do happen is the result of the passion, care and dedication of everyone you will see on stage supported by a handful of superstars you won't. Roland, Laura, Tom, Ian, thank you all for helping get us here, for turning up when you don't need to. Thank you Steve Tomlin for the wonderful set, and an extra special thanks to Fran who has gone above and beyond sourcing set, props, costumes, the lot. We all owe you a big one. And of course to Ross, without whom none of us would've been brought together.

Everyone involved has jobs, family, commitments that mean putting on a play in a field requires more than a passing interest in drama. I'm grateful to you all for that passion.

Thank you for taking the time to come and watch, and making sure these impossible things, these things that shouldn't happen, shouldn't work, do so. The play's the thing.

George Bancroft-Livingston
Director

George Bancroft Livingston directs his second amateur production after 10 years as a professional director in London, and Bonzo Productions are delighted that he has agreed to join the team after directing *Educating Rita*.

George began directing while studying at Nottingham University. He then trained at LAMDA before working professionally across the UK. He has had work staged in London, including the Lyric theatre Hammersmith, and The Park theatre, as well as at the Edinburgh Fringe.

He has toured with the play *The Accrington Pals* and has taught theatre direction abroad. This is his second show since moving away from professional directing and he is delighted to be part of the Bonzo Productions team in this production of such an iconic play.

The Players

Meet the Cast



Hamlet
George Roffe

Bernardo
Priest
Sailor
Paul Barnes

Marcellus
Jacquelyne Morison

Ghost
Jamie Roffe

Claudius
Richard Dampney

Polonius
Osric
Ross Aldridge

Horatio
Amy Benson

Laertes
Chris Walsh

Ophelia
Willow Chaddock

Gertrude
Karen Roffe

Player / King
Jamie Roffe

Player / Queen
Heather Robson

Lucianus
Lucy James

Guildenstern
Percy Vincent

Rosencrantz
Ambassador
Belle Fortt

Gentlewoman
Lucy James

Gravedigger
Jamie Roffe

Courtier
Gertrude's Lady-in-Waiting
Sue Rose

Prologue
Sue Nashe

Messenger / Servant
Lucy James

Player / Courtier
Daryl Hamlett

Player / Courtier
Harry Hamlett



The Players

Hamlet 2025



George Roffe

Hamlet

This is my fourth performance with Bonzo Productions, playing Shakespeare's Malcom and Romeo as well as Rolf in Sound of Music. Having worn a dress and high heels throughout a recent production of Aristophanes' Assemblywomen at Edinburgh fringe, a tunic and boots in this show is a much appreciated step in the right direction.



Karen Roffe

Gertrude

This is Karen's third Bonzo Production having previously enjoyed roles in 'The Sound of Music' and 'Macbeth.' She's horrified to realise she's been treading the boards, or grass in this case, for 50 years this year. However she still gets huge satisfaction from being one of a happy band of players in each production! Basking in the hot evening sunshine for rehearsals this year has been delightful - long may the sun last until the end of the run!



Ross Aldridge

Polonius & Osric

Ross has played Lago, Lachimo, Polonius, Shylock and the Friar in previous Shakespeare productions and has recently played Frank in Educating Rita for which he was best actor nominated. He has also played Fagin, Doolittle and the compère sergeant in Oliver, My Fair Lady and Oh what a lovely war respectively at the Redgrave theatre in Bristol.



Willow Chaddock

Ophelia

This is Willow's first role with Bonzo productions. She has previously performed in plays at university, with Warwick Classics Society - a supporting role in Euripides' Bacchae and as Praxagora in Aristophanes' Assemblywomen. The latter was taken to Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2023. Outside of acting, she works in the luxury travel industry and lives near Stratford upon Avon.



Jamie Roffe

Ghost

**Player King / First Player
Gravedigger**

Jamie has enjoyed acting since playing Joseph at the age of 5 and has been lucky to appear in a range of productions in theatres from Germany to Hong Kong whilst in the Army.

Back home, plays include, An Inspector Calls, Habeas Corpus and Amadeus in Swindon and since returning to Chedworth in 2003, with Chedworth Drama, in many productions including Hobson's Choice, See How They Run, and Seasons Greetings. This is Jamie's 4th Bonzo production having loved every minute of playing Mercutio in Romeo & Juliet, Herr Zeller in The Sound of Music and Macbeth in The Scottish Play. This is another 'family' production acting alongside his wife Karen and son George and has been as much fun as all of the other productions he has been involved in.



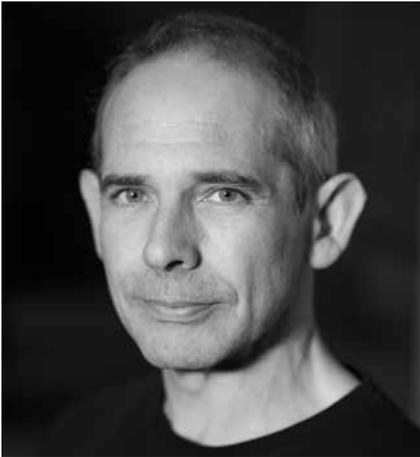
Amy Benson

Horatio

This is my third show with Bonzo productions after playing a nun in The Sound of Music. It's my first time taking on Shakespeare and has been a wonderful challenge. It's great to be back again performing at the beautiful Chedworth Manor.

The Players

Hamlet 2025



Richard Dampney
Claudius

This is Richard's fifth time with Bonzo Productions. Previous shows include The Merchant of Venice, Much Ado About Nothing, Romeo and Juliet, and Macbeth. He has also acted with the Cotswold Arcadians, Chedworth Drama, and Cirencester Theatre Company.



Jacquelyne Morison
Marcellus

Jacquelyne has been involved with amateur theatre as both actor and director for several decades as well as undertaking some part-time professional acting work. Jacquelyne is a classical singer, mediocre pianist, composer and authoress. Jacquelyne is also the founder of Apollo Theatricals which presents thought-provoking dramatic entertainment in the Cotswolds. In recent years Jacquelyne has taken a number of Shakespearean roles in Macbeth (2023), Romeo and Juliet (2021), Much Ado About Nothing (2018) and The Merchant of Venice (2017) with Bonzo Productions.



Paul Barnes
Bernardo

Paul's interest in Shakespeare and outdoor theatre has seen him involved in over 25 years of productions in the Cirencester area, mainly with Cotswold Arcadians and Meysey Players. His last production in 2024 was a first indoor as Richard Rich in "A Man for All seasons" in Cirencester. You will have seen him somewhere in any of these productions as a soldier, merchant, pirate, nobleman, butler and any of the other numerous ensemble parts which stitch the stories together.



Percy Vincent
Guildenstern

I have been involved in a series of theatrical productions throughout my school years whilst also studying Drama for my A-Levels. This is my second open air show with Bonzo productions and have thoroughly enjoyed the process.



Heather Robson
Player Queen

For many years, I worked behind stage, mainly in key roles of Costumes, Set Design, painting scenery and Set Dressing. More recently, I was responsible for Props for the now disbanded Cotswold Arcadians. I have had the pleasure of performing in five productions, the last being appropriately a witch in Bonzo Production's Macbeth!



Daryl Hamlett
Player / Courtier

This is my third role with Bonzo Productions. The first two were speaking but this time, a 'mime' - You can draw your own conclusions!

The Players

Hamlet 2025



Chris Walsh
Laertes

Chris has been performing since 2014 and has done shows with various groups in Cirencester, Cheltenham and Wootton Bassett. Predominantly he has done musical theatre but has also done a few plays in his time. This will be his first attempt at Shakespeare, however. Most recently, he has done numerous shows with Tinkco at the Barn Theatre in Cirencester. He was Peter in Company, Officer Lockstock in Urinetown: The Musical and Trekkie Monster in Avenue Q. This is Chris' first step in Shakespeare and he has massively enjoyed the challenge and he would like to thank the group for being so accommodating to him joining the cast at the last moment.



Sue Rose
Courtier
Gertrude's Lady-in-Waiting

Sue has performed in ten previous acting roles with Chedworth Drama. This will be her forth with Bonzo Productions .



Sue Nashe
Prologue

Sue has had various small roles in the six previous productions at The Manor – Midsummer Night's Dream, Merchant of Venice, Much Ado About Nothing, Romeo & Juliet, The Sound of Music (as a Nun), followed by one of eight Witches in Macbeth! In Hamlet this year, she is playing The Prologue, one of the shortest Prologues in a Shakespeare play, blink and you'll miss it!



Harry Hamlett
Player / Courtier

Thrilled to be part of this epic Shakespeare production! My stage journey has seen me in a few compelling roles, each one a chance to dive deep into human nature. I thrive on genuine connections, whether it's the thrill of a live performance or simply sharing a laugh. Come say hello – I don't bite, unless the script calls for it.



Belle Fort
Ambassador
Rosencrantz

Belle found her love for acting after having a brilliant experience being one of the Felicity's in the 2019 Giffords Circus production of Xandu. Since then she has performed in local productions of The Sound of Music , The Importance of being Ernest , Midsummer Nights Dream, Macbeth, The Caucasian Chalk Circle, A Man for all Seasons, Murder in the Village Hall and the Bacchae.



Lucy James
Messenger / Servant
Gentlewoman
Lucianus

Lucy is a relative newcomer to the stage after being inspired watching her daughter, Belle from the wings. She donned a police uniform for Murder in the Village Hall and looks forward to slipping into her first Shakespearean shoes



Synopsis of the Play

William Shakespeare's play *Hamlet* takes place in Elsinore, Denmark after the death of King Hamlet. The tragedy tells the story of Prince Hamlet's moral struggle after his father's ghost tells him that Claudius, Prince Hamlet's uncle, murdered the king. This condensed version of the masterpiece, divided into individual act summaries, can help you understand the pivotal events of the play.

Hamlet Act I Summary

Hamlet begins on a cold night with the changing of the guard. King Hamlet has died, and his brother Claudius has taken the throne. However, for the past two nights, the guards (Francisco and Bernardo) have seen a restless ghost resembling the old king wandering the castle grounds. They inform Hamlet's friend Horatio of what they've seen.

The next morning, the wedding of Claudius and Gertrude, the wife of the late king, takes place. When the room clears, Hamlet soliloquizes on his disgust at their union, which he views as a betrayal of his father at best and, at worst, incest. Horatio and the guards enter and tell Hamlet to meet the ghost that night. Meanwhile, Laertes, the son of the king's advisor Polonius, is getting ready for school. He says goodbye to his sister Ophelia, who is romantically interested in Hamlet. Polonius enters and lectures Laertes extensively on how to behave at school. Both father and son then warn Ophelia about Hamlet; in response, Ophelia promises to no longer see him.

That night, Hamlet meets the ghost, who claims to be the ghost of the king—Hamlet's father. The ghost says that he was murdered by Claudius, that Claudius put poison in his ear while he slept, and that Gertrude slept with Claudius even before his death. The ghost orders Hamlet to avenge the murder, but not to punish his mother. Hamlet agrees. Later, he informs Horatio and Marcellus, one of the guards, that he will pretend to be mad until he can get his revenge.

Hamlet Act II Summary

Polonius sends a spy, Reynaldo, to France to keep an eye on Laertes. Ophelia enters and tells Polonius that Hamlet entered her room in a mad state, grabbing her wrists and staring



wildly into her eyes. She also adds that she has cut off all contact with Hamlet. Polonius, certain that Hamlet is madly in love with Ophelia and that it was Ophelia's rejection that put him in this state, decides to meet the king to concoct a plan to spy on Hamlet in conversation with Ophelia. Meanwhile, Gertrude has asked Hamlet's school friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to try to figure out the cause of his madness. Hamlet is suspicious of them, and he evades their questions.

Soon, a theatre troupe arrives, and Hamlet requests that the following night they perform a certain play, *The Murder of Gonzago*, with a few passages inserted written by Hamlet. Alone on stage, Hamlet voices his frustration about his indecisiveness. He decides he must figure out if the ghost is truly his father or if it is a specter leading him to sin without reason. Because the play depicts a king who kills his brother and marries his sister-in-law, Hamlet believes that the performance scheduled for the next night will make Claudius show his guilt.

Hamlet Act III Summary

Polonius and Claudius spy on Hamlet and Ophelia as she returns the gifts he gave her. They become confused when Hamlet spurns her, telling her to go to a nunnery. Claudius concludes that the cause of Hamlet's madness is not his love for Ophelia, and decides that he should

send Hamlet away to England unless Gertrude can figure out the true cause.

During the performance of *The Murder of Gonzago*, Claudius stops the action just after the scene in which poison is poured into the king's ear. Hamlet tells Horatio he is now certain that Claudius murdered his father.

In the next scene, Claudius attempts to pray in church, but his guilt prevents him from doing so. Hamlet enters and readies himself to kill Claudius, but stops when he realizes that Claudius might go to heaven if he is killed while praying. Gertrude and Hamlet have a bitter fight in her bedchamber. When Hamlet hears a noise behind the tapestry, he stabs the intruder: it is Polonius, who dies. The ghost appears again, rebuking Hamlet for his harsh words against his mother. Gertrude, who cannot see the ghost, becomes certain that Hamlet is mad. Hamlet drags Polonius's body offstage.

Hamlet Act IV Summary

Hamlet jokes with Claudius about killing Polonius; Claudius, fearing for his own life, orders Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to bring Hamlet to England. Claudius has prepared letters telling the English king to kill Hamlet when he arrives. Gertrude is told that Ophelia has gone mad with the news of her father's death. Ophelia enters, sings many strange songs, and speaks of her father's death, insinuating that her brother Laertes will get revenge. Soon, Laertes enters and demands to see Polonius. When Claudius tells Laertes that he is dead, Ophelia enters with a bundle of flowers, each one symbolic. Laertes, upset by his sister's state, promises to listen to Claudius's explanation.

A messenger approaches Horatio with a letter from Hamlet. The letter explains that Hamlet snuck onto a pirate vessel that attacked them; after they parted, the pirates mercifully agreed to take him back to Denmark in return for some favors. Meanwhile, Claudius has convinced Laertes to join him against Hamlet.

A messenger arrives with a letter for Claudius from Hamlet, announcing his return. Quickly, Claudius and Laertes plot how to kill Hamlet without upsetting Gertrude or the people of Denmark, with whom Hamlet is popular. The two men agree to arrange a duel. Laertes acquires a poison blade, and Claudius plans to give Hamlet a poisoned goblet. Gertrude then enters with news that Ophelia has drowned, reigniting Laertes's anger.

Hamlet Act V Summary

While digging Ophelia's grave, two gravediggers discuss her apparent suicide. Hamlet and Horatio enter, and a gravedigger introduces him to a skull: Yorick, the old king's jester whom Hamlet loved. Hamlet considers the nature of death. The funeral procession interrupts Hamlet; Claudius, Gertrude, and Laertes are among the entourage. Laertes jumps into his sister's grave and demands to be buried alive. Hamlet reveals himself and brawls with Laertes, exclaiming that he loved Ophelia more than forty thousand brothers could. After Hamlet's exit, Claudius reminds Laertes of their plan to kill Hamlet.

Hamlet explains to Horatio that he read Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's letters, rewrote one demanding the beheading of his former friends, and swapped the letters before escaping on the pirate ship. Osric, a courtier, interrupts with news of Laertes's duel. At the court, Laertes takes up the poisoned blade. After the first point, Hamlet refuses the poisoned drink from Claudius, from which Gertrude then takes a sip. While Hamlet is unguarded, Laertes wounds him; they grapple and Hamlet wounds Laertes with his own poisoned blade. Just then, Gertrude collapses, exclaiming she has been poisoned. Laertes confesses the plan he shared with Claudius, and Hamlet wounds Claudius with the poisoned blade, killing him. Laertes asks for Hamlet's forgiveness and dies.

Hamlet asks Horatio to explain his story and declares Fortinbras the next king of Denmark, then dies. Fortinbras enters, and Horatio promises to tell the story of Hamlet. Fortinbras agrees to hear it, declaring that Hamlet will be buried as a soldier.



Production Team

Behind the scenes



Ross Aldridge
PRODUCER

Hamlet is potentially a nightmare to stage lasting over 4 hours if the full text is used and having to cut it to my self imposed rule of no more than two hours; portraying a ghost either as a voice or in person and staging the burial of Ophelia in a grave on stage in which Hamlet and Laertes have a verbal and physical punch up;

I have been absolutely delighted that George agreed to take on the directors role in this iconic play having created such a success with his direction of Educating Rita for Bonzo Productions .

It is no easy task to come from 15 years in London as a professional director to the very different environment of am dram. The audition process is very different as is the inevitably extended rehearsal schedule where actors have to juggle their jobs and home life with performing.

As with previous Shakespeare productions that I have put on at Chedworth manor I am immeasurably grateful to Seb and Pippa Clarke for allowing us not only to use their grounds and facilities but also making sure that the ground and buildings are suitably prepared for a successful production to take place.

I want to make special mention of my tireless girl Friday, Fran Robins, who takes on the management of a team of helpers to provide costumes ,staging,special effects,props and fields all the impossible requests that I make with a wry smile and a "yes I think we can do that" or more rarely a "Come on Ross that's just ridiculous".

Also to Steve Tomlin a special vote of thanks for the superhuman effort he made in sourcing all the materials and constructing the magnificent battlements and "grave".

This is a play on so may levels and has always been my favourite tragedy with its rollicking good plot about love jealousy cowardice religious hypocrisy and revenge .It highlights the unenviable predicament of the stepson with a controlling stepfather and a weak mother whom he adores and chastises and the effect of her behaviour on his treatment of his innocent sweetheart . Ophelias suicide which carries many overtones of modern social media abuse ironically stirs Hamlet from paralysis to a violent death wish attitude which culminates in the death of all of the protagonists of the play.

The end of the play expresses the faint hope that the lancing of the boil of the diseased "rotten state" will lead to a happier and healthier Denmark.

DIRECTOR

George Livingston Bancroft

PRODUCER

Ross Aldridge

STAGE MANAGER

Fran Robbins

COSTUMES

Chrissy Fryers

Sue Powell

SOUND

Ian Chandler

FIGHT DIRECTOR

Dani Mac Combat

PROPS

Fran Robbins

PUBLICITY

Laura Harvey

Tom Wakefield

Mark Lanyon

FRONT OF HOUSE

John Westbeech

Tim Hamilton

Penny Griffin

Jean Aldridge

Thank you Seb and Pippa for hosting our production here in the beautiful grounds of Chedworth Manor.

Fran Robbins





Bonzo productions next show

Tell me on a Sunday



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HAMLET