

## "Hamlet" presented by the Theatre Department

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Media Contacts: Susan Pollock, 534-3120 Lori Carlson, 534-3793

"HAMLET" OPENS FEBRUARY 25 AT UCSD

William Shakespeare's "Hamlet" -- occurring in an unspecified time, set in an unidentified place -- will open Feb. 25 and run through March 1 at the Warren Theater on the campus of the University of California, San Diego.

The performance, presented by the Department of Theatre, begins at 8 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday and at 7 p.m. on Sunday.

From the moment the curtain opens, it will be apparent to theatre-goers that they are about to confront "Hamlet" from a different perspective. There will be no castle walls, no ornate thrones, no Elizabethan trappings. Instead, there will be a multi-level set of wood and steel.

Graduate student Ralph Janes, the play's English-born director, explains: "Hamlet lived in volatile times. Society was changing. Paganism was giving way to Christianity, the oral tradition was giving way to the literal, and warlike behavior was being replaced by diplomacy. Change is the important element. The old world in our production is represented by wood and the new world by steel."

By removing such "distractions" as lush scenery and ornate costuming, Janes hopes to focus the audience's attention on the language, verse and structure of the play. He wants the rich, profound meaning of "Hamlet" -- the implications of the play's action and ethos -- to cross the centuries and "speak" to contemporary audiences.

"I expect that everyone in the audience will know something about 'Hamlet,'" Janes said.

The time-honored play tells of "carnal, bloody and unnatural acts." It is the story of Prince Hamlet, his murdered father, his tainted mother, and his usurping uncle. It is also a story of moral and ethical choices, chilling repercussions, and above all revenge.

"People will be familiar with some part of it--a line, a scene. And the mental image most people have of the play is a guy in black tights and a black jacket, saying, 'Alas, Poor Yorick.' What we have to do is shatter that image and force people to re-examine this play in its totality. It's such a complex and human play. I think it has something to say to all of us."

Janes taught drama in the English countryside for a number of years and worked in industry before enrolling in England's Leeds University, where he majored in education and drama. During breaks in his college career, he developed into a highly skilled lighting designer for theater and dance companies. He directed a wide variety of plays in English regional and street theaters prior to enrolling in UCSD's graduate theater program in fall 1985.

Janes has been steeped in the world of Shakespeare since his eighth birthday, when he received the playwright's complete works from his parents. Over the years, he has collected 20 different versions of "Hamlet"

alone. He recently found a modern version of the play in street language for people who find verse, as Janes says, "hard to access."

In this UCSD production, Hamlet is played by Giovanni Felicioni. Other major roles are performed by Ivan G'Vera, Lawrence Nadler, Carolyn Sweeney, Andrew Weems, Deryl Caitlyn, and Theresa McCarthy. John Murphy, Jr. is set and lighting designer; Cathy F. McFarland designed the costumes. Dramaturg is Richard Gale, and stage manager is Maria Mangiavellano. All are UCSD theater students.

The thematic music was composed by Burnham Joiner and James Mooney. Sound designer is David Leyton.

Tickets for "Hamlet" are \$5 (student) and \$7 (general public), available in advance at the Mandell Weiss Center Ticket Office. On nights of performance, tickets may be purchased at the Warren Theater Ticket Office, beginning one hour prior to curtain. Call 534-4574 for more information and to charge by phone.

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