

Merely Players
Presents
Hamlet
by William Shakespeare

Directed by
Mona Wood-Patterson+

Tech Director/Scenic, Light, Mask Designer
Charles Ford+

Center these within themselves

Costume Designers

Megan Sander

Kathleen McGee

Stage Manager

Deborah Heath+

October 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 2025

at

Merely Underground in Durango, Colorado

Thanks to:

Psyche Digital, City of Durango, Ballantine Family Fund

Hamlet

CAST

Hamlet	Conor Sheehan+
Claudius	Matt Bodo+
Gertrude	Georgi Silverman
Polonius/Gravedigger	Brian Devine+
Ophelia	Mohriah James+
Ghost/Rosencrantz	Charlie Grice+
Laertes/Guildenstern	Geoff Johnson+
Horatio	Jessica McCallum+
Marcellus/Lead Player	Steve Miller
Bernardo/Sailor/Player/Priest	Shaunibah Morfin+
Osric/Player	Penelope Cartwright*
Francisco/Player/Gentlewoman	Jeni Hartmann

PRODUCTION TEAM

Assistant Stage Manager	Margy Dudley+
Light Technician	Jay Hecker+
Sound Technician	Andy Rude+
Props/Box Office Manager	Diane Panelli+
Wardrobe Lead	Mary Lynn Clark+
Costume Manager	Grace Dendy+
Assistant Costumer	Claire Sarnow
Mask Director	Tara Demmy+
Dance/Combat Choreographer	Mary-Catherine McAlvany+
Ticket Manager	Greta Richter+
Photographer	Kara Cavalca+
PlotChat	Mona Wood-Patterson+
Master Carpenters	Charles Ford+ Mark Russell+

Technical Lead Matt Bodo+

Technical Assistant Jenny Mason+

Poster Design Kate Ishay+

Set/Props Construction/Scenic Painting

Michael Lee+	Mohriah James+
Paul Laakso+	Stephen Bowers+
Cindy Laudadio-Hill+	McKenzie James
Travis Carlson	Penelope Cartwright
Jay Hecker	Mick Souder+
Jeannie Wheeldon+	Evan Dion
Jeff Widen+	Michael Chapman+
Jacob Keller	Grace Morledge+
Randy Hertzman+	Jill Somrak+
Margy Dudley	+Mary-Catherine McAlvany+

+ Merely Players Artistic Company

* Merely Players Intern

HOW LONG IS THE PLAY? *It's Shakespeare, folks. And he sure wrote a lot of beautiful words. The complete Hamlet runs over four hours. We have cut it, and the first half of the play is about an hour and thirty five minutes. The second half is about an hour and 15 minutes. There's a 15-minute intermission in between. We suggest that you set aside your to-do list and let the words and images wash over you. "Pleasure and action make the hours seem short."*

Concessions from Gabe's Goodies will be on sale at intermission.

Please silence your cell phones; they don't work that well down here anyway.

To enhance your theatre experience, we invite you to join us for a pre-show PLOT CHAT 45 minutes before each performance. If you missed it for this performance, you are welcome to come to another.

The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited. We know that, for many of you, taking performance photos or video of your loved ones is a huge temptation. Please respect this rule of theatre etiquette and resist! Phone use during a show is distracting to actors and audience members and is disrespectful of our creative property. Live theatre is meant to be temporal – let it be just that. Thank you!

*That said, we welcome you to take photos/video in the theatre before and after, **but not during**, the performance. If you post photos of the stage, please be sure to credit and tag Merely Players. @merely_players_durango*

WHO'S WHO

Matt Bodo (*Claudius*) The Shakespearean Skaterat. Merely audiences may or may not recognize Matt as Nathan Detroit (*Guys & Dolls*), Lucius & Bull (*The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*), Henry (*The Book of Will*), Frank (*Hands on a Hardbody*), Caliban (*The Tempest*), and Duke Fredrick & Silvius (*As You Like It*). Other Durango roles include Simon (*Drowning* – 2025 Durango Playfest), Pastor Greg (*Hand to God* – Doctuh Mistuh), and Ebenezer Scrooge (*A Christmas Carol* – Doctuh Mistuh/Fort Lewis). Matt is a featured writer for *Durango Magazine* and is a technical lead & acting coach with Merely Players. Winner – 2024 BroadwayWorld Denver Award – Best Performer in a Play for Henry in *Book of Will*. *And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover...I am determined to prove a villain.*

Penelope Cartwright (Player/Osric/ is a senior at Animas High School and is proud to be an acting intern for this production. She is ecstatic to be involved with such an amazing company, and performing in *Hamlet*! She started performing Shakespeare in Middle School but her love for it came far before. A few of her recent acting roles include The Rose (*The Little Prince*), Pandora (*Pandora's Box*), and Ariel (*The Little Mermaid*). She also performs as the singer in her band along with doing stand-up comedy, finding any way to expand her artistic expression. *Boldness be my friend.*

Mary Lynn Clark (*Wardrobe Lead/Company Manager*) would like to thank Shakespeare for his genius & for composing some of the most timeless original works that continue to be performed in live theater around the world today or made into knock-off movies for mass consumption. Thank you, Merely Players, for making novice Shakespeare fans like myself understand, enjoy & love Shakespeare like they never knew they could. She is very excited to work with Megan, Kathleen, Grace & Claire on costumes. *I would not wish any companion in the world but you.*

Tara Demmy (*Mask Director*) is a comedian, theatre artist, and historian from Philadelphia. Merely credits include: *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* (Nellie), *Book of Will* (Costume Manager), and *Small Mouth Sounds* (Alicia). She has performed in comedy festivals all over the country and co-created five shows with the award-winning physical theatre company, Tribe of Fools. Tara currently teaches at Lower Left Improv and Fort Lewis College. tarademmy.com. *What say you, James Soundpost?*

Grace Dendy (*Costume Manager*) is a Durango local, raised in the creative world. She is a movie connoisseur, a crafter of high-end jewelry, and a bargain hunter at local thrift shops. Grace has been invited to play with Merely Players since 2021. Her particular specialty is maintaining and organizing costumes with lots of quick changes. Grace is excited to help curate this month's closet for her first Shakespeare play. *Where shall we three meet again in thunder, lightning, or in rain? When the battle's lost and won.*

Brian Devine (*Polonius/Gravedigger*) returns to the Merely stage for his fourth encounter with the Bard, having previously appeared in *Macbeth*, *Much Ado About Nothing* (Studio Series), and *The Tempest*. He has also appeared in the Bard-loving shows *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)* and *I Hate Hamlet* (no endorsement of the title is implied) across town at the Durango Arts Center and the Merely Players production of *Murder on the Orient Express*. *Brevity is the soul of wit.*

Margy Dudley (*Assistant Stage Manager*) retired from running a retail art business for 15 years, and decide it was finally time to jump into the theatre world with both feet.

Margy has known Mona and Charles since her son, Graham, was in their DHS theatre program. Now she's following in her son's footsteps when usually it's the other way around! She has enjoyed putting in hours working on sets with Charles, and loves spending time seeing Broadway and Off Broadway shows in NYC, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and Creede Repertory Theatre. She wanted to know more about how it all worked on and off stage, and learn something new. Margy is delighted to be Deborah Heath's ASM! *We are such stuff as dreams are made on.*

Charles Ford (Technical Director/Scenic and Light Designer) has evolved into a Shakespeare aficionado. Just like Shakespeare, he was born in a rural setting (Arkansas/Stratford), and he moved to the big city, just like Shakespeare, (Los Angeles/London). There the similarity abruptly ends. Charles has a deep and abiding love of Shakespeare's works. After 400 years, the man is still relevant and inspiring. Charles has designed sets for a dozen of Shakespeare's plays. *Sweep on, you fat and greasy citizens!*

Charlie Grice (*Rosencrantz/Ghost*) dedicates his performance tonight to the loving memory of Georganne Sugden, who forged Charlie's love for Shakespeare back in 1987 at "Stage Eleven," the children's theater he grew up in. A visiting director needed some more kids for her upper classmen's production of *Richard III*, and Charlie and two other freshmen were asked to join the cast. It was that show that exposed Charlie to the beauty of Shakespeare's words (... plus the sword fight was pretty fun too). Since then, Charlie has been in many Shakespeare and Shakespeare-adjacent plays, including Merely Players productions of *Macbeth*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and most recently, *The Book of Will*. *If sack and sugar be a fault, God help the wicked!*

Jeni Hartmann (*Francisco/Player/Gentlewoman/Ensemble*) never knew that watching the Merely Players production of *The Book of Will* last year would lead to her being on this stage in *Hamlet*. Encouragement from her husband Shawn, her father-in-law Raul, her sister Signe, and Diane Panelli gave her the strength to audition. She appreciates the open and accepting atmosphere created by the Merely community including those on and off stage. She had the privilege of working under the skilled direction of Mona Wood-Patterson as Agatha in *Guys and Dolls*. To act in *Hamlet* fulfills a dream of being in a Shakespearean production. She thanks Mona for trusting her with multiple roles in *Hamlet* and also Shakespeare himself. *It is required you do awake your faith.*

Deborah Heath (*Stage Manager*) developed an appreciation for Shakespeare at a young age from her English teacher mother. She was fascinated by the three scenes from *Macbeth* painted on her mother's classroom wall, so was thrilled beyond belief when cast as a witch in Merely's production of *The Scottish Play* in 2020. Deborah has been part of the Merely Players community since 2013 and joined the Board of Directors in 2021. This is her fourth Shakespeare experience with Merely having acted in *Macbeth* and *The Tempest* and stage managed *As You Like It*. *With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come.*

Jay Hecker (*Light Technician*) bloomed late in the theatrical arena. He joined a community Follespian troupe at 43, some 20 years ago as an actor and backstage hand. Recently, he has joined Merely Players to grow his theatrical family and develop his skills under professional mentoring. *Neither a borrower nor a lender be.*

Mohriah James (*Ophelia*) most recently appeared with Merely Players as a Hot Box Girl/Crapshooter in *Guys and Dolls* and as Alice Heminges in *The Book of Will*. She graduated with a B.A. in Theatre from Fort Lewis College where she was in her first Shakespeare play (*Macbeth*). Mohriah grew up in Bayfield watching the movie *Clueless* countless times and forever remembering from Alicia Silverstone's character that Hamlet didn't say "To thine own self be true" but instead "That Polonius guy did." She is grateful to work along-side her wonderful husband Geoff, movie-quoting comrade Conor, and the rest of this talented cast/crew. Much love and gratitude to Mona W-P. *No legacy is so rich as honesty.*

Geoff Johnson (*Laertes/Guildenstern*) has been in numerous Shakespeare plays and has even understood large chunks of those shows. This summer he took a brief respite from acting to play 3rd base in rec softball. He managed a perfect 0% batting average and nearly contributed as many outs as errors. Recent Merely credits include: Nicely Nicely in *Guys & Dolls*, Ben Jonson & others in *The Book of Will*, and performed the one man show *Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol*. Geoff is thrilled once again to share the stage with his bodacious bride Mohriah James. *The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool.*

Mary-Catherine McAlvany (*Dance/Combat Choreographer*) wants to live in a world with people singing and dancing in TSA line, books bundled with coupons for coffee dates with the author, and an invisibility shield she wears while choreographing an entire show in a house of constantly inquiring, fussy people! She's Executive Director of Wildwood Dance Project, a mother of four sarcastic kids, and an Arts Strategist with a global think tank. Her first brush with the Bard with in high school as Ophelia. With Merely Players, she later choreographed for "the play which shall not be named." She studied philosophy and theology at Boston College, and encounters everyone with Ophelia's visional ethics: *We know what we are, but not what we may be.*

Jessica McCallum (*Horatio*) has loved Shakespeare for most of her years on Earth. She has been the executive producer of many Shakespearean shenanigans in her day job at AHS, where she has been able to engage young people in the profound fun of bringing the Bard's words to life. With Merely, she has played Audrey in *As You Like It*, a slate of magic-charged beings in *The Tempest*, and Shakespeare's daughter AND lover in *Book of Will* last year. Nothing brings her greater joy than swimming around in Shakespeare's verses, especially with fellow Bardophiles. She looks forward to many more frolics in the Folio with these players and dreams of someday writing a play in iambic pentameter. *Ay, much is the force of heaven-bred poesy.*

Kathleen McGee (*Costume Designer*) is currently the Head Draper in the Theatre Department at Fort Lewis College and has worked on over twelve productions there. She teaches sewing and constructs the more complicated works of art worn by the actors. Before moving to Durango, she taught garment construction and was on the board at Jacqui Burke's Fashion School, was Wardrobe Supervisor at the Dunbar Lyric Group, and was an apprentice Kiltmaker, all in Scotland. Kathleen has admired the outstanding performances of Merely Players since arriving in Durango and is thrilled to be a part of the team. *If music be the food of love, play on.*

Steve Miller (*Marcellus/Player/Messenger/Ambassador/Ensemble*) was gifted a love of theatre starting with Durango High's Troupe 1096 under the direction of Mona and Charles. Steve was fortunate enough to be in Merely Player's production of *The Book of*

Will last year, and is additionally lucky and grateful to come full circle and return to this year's *Hamlet*. *I love you with so much of my heart that none is left to protest.*

Shaunibah Morfin (*Bernardo/Sailor/Player/Priest*) has had four battles with the Bard thus far. The first as Antonia, the second as Lord to the Duke Ferdinand, and a brief bout as Bianca and the third Wyrd Sister, and now she plays the sentinel, Bernardo. When she is not playing alongside the Merely Players, Shaunibah enjoys taking improv classes, spending time at any river or lake, and cooking meals with her partner. *Our doubts are traitors, and make us lose the good we oft might win, by fearing to attempt.*

Diane Panelli (*Props and Box Office Manager*) dreamed of dancing on stage or singing in a smoky cabaret when she was a child. Neither of these worked out, since she is not a great dancer and an even worse singer, but that didn't stop her. She surrounded herself with plenty of those that can do both!! Now she enjoys all the chaos, laughter and excitement of watching a show come together. All parts working smoothly and in harmony and if she can add a little prop here and there, well that delights her too!! *Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.*

Greta Richter (*Ticket Manager*) was born and raised in Sierra Madre, not far from Hollywood and Burbank. She grew up enjoying musicals and was excited when her children became involved in theatre when they moved to Durango in 1994. Greta loves her work as Merely Players' Ticket Manager, and has been working with Mona and Charles for around 25 years now. She is grateful to God for bringing amazing theatre people into her life. *No Legacy is so Rich as Honesty.*

Andy Rude (*Sound Technician*) is excited to be part of another Merely production. He enjoys all aspects of the creative process and is grateful to be running sound. You may have seen him on stage doing improv, standup, or other plays in the region. If you bring him snacks after the show, he might tell you a joke. *The empty vessel makes the greatest sound.*

Megan Sander (*Costume Designer*) is a costume designer for film and stage. Since 1998, she's designed for the Rose Parade (Humor Trophy 2000), various film projects, commercials and stage productions. She is delighted and honored to join Merely Players for *Hamlet* and *Silent Sky*. As an instructor at Fort Lewis College if she's not teaching, designing or sewing costumes, you can find her unglamorously sniffing armpits for laundry detail and organizing her many bottles of blood. *Yet here's a spot... Out, damned spot! out, I say!*

Claire Sarnow (*Backstage Costumer*) would like to thank that eerie bell toll from that cold bitter night many lifetimes ago that would fill her with a mysterious burning desire, only to learn within the past few months that it was a desire for the Bard. She would also like to thank her best friend, Lex, for encouraging her to get involved with *Hamlet* even though Shakespeare writes SO many words. This is her first time since ever in any production. *Though she be little, she be fierce.*

Conor Sheehan (*Hamlet*) is unabashedly beside himself to be a part of such an integral and immortalized piece of theatre with individuals of such talent. Last seen butchering these words as Boy Hamlet and preserving them as Isaac Jaggard in last year's *The Book of Will*, he has been most iambic-ally humbled to portray Ariel in *The Tempest*, Oliver/Amiens in *As You Like It*, and Romeo (not the Nurse, surprisingly) in *Romeo and Juliet*. Thank you to Mona for letting me speak Shakespeare, his excellent friends on-

stage and off, his queens Teresa and Grace, his loveliest lady Tara, and extra special thanks to his father Mike, who ‘gave the world assurance of a man’. *Forty-thousand brothers, could not, with all their quantity of love, make up my sum.*

Georgi Silverman (*Gertrude*) is excited to be back at Merely after playing Rebecca in *The Book of Will* last fall. She discovered Shakespeare in high school English, which was her gateway drug into acting, moving to New York at 19 to study at the National Shakespeare Conservatory. She has worked at theatres in New Hampshire, San Francisco, New York and Houston. Now based in Durango, she does Improv with Lower Left, where she is a part of the house team. She is thrilled to be circling back to *Hamlet*, as one of her first roles was Ophelia. She loves Ricky, Ginger & Evelyn even more than Shakespeare. *When we are born we cry, that we are come to this great stage of fools.*

Mona Wood-Patterson (*Director*) would like to thank Santa Claus for instilling a lifelong passion for the Bard when he gifted her ten-year-old self with *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. Since that time, Mona has taught numerous classes in the literature and acting of Shakespeare and has directed *As You Like It* (twice), *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice* (twice), *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (three times), *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest* (twice), and *Twelfth Night*. Her heart beats in iambic pentameter. *To thine own self be true.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We offer our sincere gratitude to those who donated items or helped us with this show. Many hands and kind hearts help us to do our work:

Community Foundation Serving SW Colorado
Daisy Grice
Dashel McAlvany
Dave Sander
The Durango Herald
Fort Lewis College Theatre
Four Corners Fencing Club
Margy Dudley/4 Corners Arts Forum/ KDUR

We are grateful to the City of Durango Lodger’s Tax Arts and Culture Fund for their support of this project.

MERELY PLAYERS began work in 1994, was officially founded in 1997, and has been bringing theatre to our community ever since. Our vision is to consistently provide quality theatre in this region, while broadening the range of types of experiences available to local theatergoers through relevant, exciting productions. Merely Players is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, and we assure you that any money donated will go toward making quality theatre in Durango both now and in the future.

MERELY PLAYERS ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Artistic Director	Mona Wood-Patterson+
Technical Director	Charles Ford+
Company Manager	Mary Lynn Clark+

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Janet Curry, President
Marc Arbeeney, Vice-President
Kate Ishay, Secretary
Jessica Jane Harris, Treasurer
Diane Panelli
Heather Howe
Deborah Heath

Thank you for spending your time with us. We would love to know what you thought about the play. Drop us an email at merelydirectors@gmail.com or share with us on Facebook at Merely Players – Durango.

This production is dedicated to the memory of Shaila Van Sickle, an extraordinary educator who loved the beauty of Shakespearean language and inspired others to do the same.

The STORY

Claudius has seized the throne of Denmark by marrying Queen Gertrude, the widow of his late brother. Prince Hamlet, still grieving his father's death, is unsettled by this swift union. His unease deepens when the ghost of King Hamlet appears, declaring that Claudius murdered him to gain the crown. The revelation ignites a storm of grief, anger, and doubt within the young prince.

Unsure whom to trust and torn between duty and despair, Hamlet feigns madness to mask his suspicions. His erratic behavior unsettles the court, especially Ophelia, the young woman he loves, who is caught between her loyalty to her father, Polonius, and her affection for Hamlet. Meanwhile, Claudius summons Hamlet's old friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, hoping they will spy on him and uncover the cause of his strange behavior.

When a troupe of actors arrives at Elsinore, Hamlet seizes the opportunity to stage a play that mirrors the king's crime. Claudius's guilty reaction convinces Hamlet of his uncle's treachery. In a confrontation with his mother, Hamlet mistakenly kills Polonius. This act deepens the tragedy, shattering Ophelia's sanity and fueling her brother Laertes's thirst for revenge.

Denmark slides into chaos as Claudius plots to rid himself of Hamlet once and for all. He sends Hamlet to England in the company of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, bearing sealed orders for Hamlet's execution. Hamlet discovers the plot, outwits his companions, and returns home, more certain than ever that his fate lies in confrontation.

The kingdom rushes toward calamity as Laertes, manipulated by Claudius, challenges Hamlet to a duel. The duel ends in bloodshed, as the royal family dies. With his dying breath, Hamlet entrusts his story to his steadfast friend, Horatio. The stage bears witness to a kingdom destroyed by ambition, deceit, and corruption.