



P R E S E N T S

THE
HOPE AND HELL THEATRE CO.
PRODUCTION OF

Hamlet

{solo}

by William Shakespeare

Performed by Raoul Bhaneja

Directed by Robert Ross Parker



MAY 7TH - 10TH
VERTIGO STUDIO THEATRE
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The Shakespeare Company
presents



the **Hope and Hell Theatre Company**
production of

Hamlet (solo)

On behalf of The Shakespeare Company...

I would like to say how delighted we are to be able to bring this show to Calgary this season. When I announced my plans for the company at The Bard Bash last year, I talked about focusing on an actor's magical ability to transform. That little act of magic lives at the very heart of my theatre. To accomplish that, we presented two plays with the same cast running in repertory last fall. If you were able to see both *The Comedy of Errors* and *Twelfth Night*, you will have seen eight actors play all of the roles in two plays. I thought that was pretty impressive. But what you see tonight will take that idea several steps further. Raoul is a gifted performer and I can't think of a better way to round out this season than bringing him here to share that gift with you.

Richard Beaune, Artistic Director, The Shakespeare Company

Hamlet (solo) has a running time of approximately two hours and ten minutes including **one fifteen minute intermission**. If you must leave the theatre for any reason during the show, you may not be readmitted other than at the interval.

This production has one special effect: the presence of a live actor on stage. We think he's amazing!

ARTISTIC NOTE

We two, actor and director, have known each other since our days in a high school arts program in Ottawa. We shared many formative experiences including a mentor, English teacher and Improv coach, Jane Moore. She inspired us both with a love of Shakespeare and in particular, Hamlet.

Less than a decade later, in 2001, we began to workshop what would eventually become Hamlet (solo). After the show opened in 2006 in the Backspace of Theatre Passe Muraille in Toronto, our first tour stop was here in Alberta at The Banff Centre. This would be followed by a number of presentations in Edmonton, and then in 2012, here in Calgary as part of The Magnetic North Theatre Festival.

Now, almost thirteen years later, we are back to share our longest and most involved creative collaboration. It finds us again and again, face to face in a rehearsal hall, which could be in Canada, or New York or somewhere in the U.K., wrestling with what is perhaps the greatest play ever written and our humble contribution to its legacy.

It continues to be a great honour to share this effort with you. Particularly in a time of such digital and technological transformation. We are reminded that theatre, one of the most ancient of all art forms, is still possible with only the most essential of elements; a storyteller, a text and you, the audience.

Thank you to our families for their support on this long adventure, Birgitte Solem, cofounder of Hope and Hell Theatre Co and Richard who has invited us back to the city to be a part of The Shakespeare Company season.

We are also very pleased to have the “full circle moment” of reuniting here with our original designer from 2006, Deeter Schurig, who is now a long time Calgary resident and arts community member.

Raoul Bhaneja & Robert Ross Parker



RAOUL BHANEJA* (performer) was born in Manchester, UK and raised in Germany and Canada. Theatre credits include *The Seagull* (Soulpepper), *Disgraced* (Mirvish/Hope and Hell Theatre Co.), *Life, Death and The Blues* (Theatre Passe Muraille/Hope and Hell Theatre - National Tour), *Hamlet* (solo) (Hope and Hell Theatre Co.), *Bashir Lazhar* (Tarragon Theatre), *Rice Boy* (Stratford), *Savage Sensuality* (Shakespeare's Globe). **FILM & TELEVISION:** Over 140 appearances including *Possessor*, *Miss Sloane*, *Blindspot*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Clarice* and two seasons of the hit Canadian comedy *The Trades*. **OTHER:** Graduate of the National

Theatre School, two time Canadian Screen Award, Gemini, Dora and Canadian Comedy award nominee. 2022 Winner Best Actor, United Solo Festival, New York and leader of Maple Blues Award winners Raoul and The Big Time since 1998. He last appeared in town at The Calgary Blues Festival as part of the "Harps of Gold" session, celebrating the best of Canadian blues harmonica players.



ROBERT ROSS PARKER* (director) Robert is a NYC based Canadian director, actor, and writer. He is the co-founder of the Obie winning Vampire Cowboys with Qui Nguyen. He has directed all of their productions including *Soul Samurai*, *Alice in Slasherland*, *Fight Girl/Battle World*, *The Inexplicable Redemption of Agent G*, and *Revenge Song* (Geffen Playhouse and Oregon Shakespeare Festival). Recently the VC team created *The Un-Princess Not-Bride* for Manhattan Theater Club. Other credits include *Godspell*, *Christmas Story*, and *Levi's Relic* (RedHouse) *Anna Moench's Mothers* (Playwrights Realm) *Vietgone* (Royal Manitoba Theatre

Centre) *Disgraced* (Mirvish, Toronto) *Carla Ching's Fast Company* (Ensemble Studio Theatre where Robert is a member) *Erin Malon's Branched* (InViolet) the world premier of *She Kills Monsters* (The Flea) *Goodbye Cruel World* (Roundtable Ensemble) and the award winning *Hamlet* (solo) (Hope and Hell) which has toured for more than fifteen years playing in the US, Canada and the UK.

Favorite acting credits include *Constellations* (The Hangar) and *Frankenstein* (Soho Rep/Flying Machine).

He is the former editor of *The Dramatist*, the Journal of the Dramatists Guild of America. MFA Ohio University.

*members of Canadian Actor's Equity Association



DEETER SHURIG (Original Design) is a multidisciplinary designer with a passion for community and city-building. His 30 years of professional practice combines experience across art and design, theatre, architecture and urban placemaking. Deeter is President & CEO of cSPACE Projects, an award-winning nonprofit, recognized for transformative projects that turn vacant space into vibrant creative community hubs. As a stage designer, projects across Canada include *Lucy Lost her Heart* (Theatre Junction), *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* (Globe), *Mary's Wedding* (Prairie Theatre Exchange), *The Optimists* (Tarragon Theatre), *Rice Boy* and *My Mothers Feet* (CanStage) and several productions at the Shaw Festival.

As Associate Set Designer, Deeter was pleased to open the Four Seasons Opera House with the Canadian Opera Company's production of Wagner's Ring Cycle (2003-2006). Local projects in Calgary include set designs for, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Theatre Calgary) and *Perfect Pie* (Alberta Theatre Projects) for which he received Betty Mitchell Nominations for Best Set Design.

HOPE AND HELL THEATRE COMPANY (TORONTO)

Formed by Birgitte Solem and Raoul Bhaneja, Hope and Hell Theatre first produced the 1995 National Fringe Tour of Chris Ralph's *SAD SURGEON* and then in January 2006 *HAMLET* (solo) which has been performed over 150 times in venues across Canada, at The Edinburgh Festival Fringe and Off Broadway. In 2014 they began a national tour of the theatre/concert hybrid written by Bhaneja *LIFE, DEATH, and THE BLUES* in association with TPM. In 2016 and 2017 they presented the Pulitzer winning *DISGRACED* as part of Off Mirvish season and at The Citadel Theatre in Edmonton. In 2019 they co produced the Canadian premiere of *VIETGONE*. Upcoming is the Canadian premiere of *Apples in Winter* by Jennfier Fawcett at Here for Now Theatre, Stratford, Ontario, directed by Robert Ross Parker, featuring Birgitte Solem.

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