

# 'Macbeth' Ready To Thrill At Festival

BY JAMES COOPER  
For the Plain Talk

As spring turns to summer, the Vermillion community comes alive with artistic outlets for locals. The South Dakota Shakespeare Festival (SDSF) brings the iconic bard's work to the masses as it stages a full production in Prentis Park. The previous two productions, *As You Like It* (2012) and *Taming of the Shrew* (2014) were both comedies, so the company decided that it was time to bring one of Shakespeare's famous tragedies to the public.

*Macbeth*, probably the most historically superstitious show, is on the playbill for 2015. Supposedly, there are real witches' spells inside the text of the play, and as a result, many actors refuse to say the name of *Macbeth*, the main character for fear that bad things will befall the production. There are several ways to counter the curse, including spinning three times in place, spitting over your left shoulder, and uttering an obscenity or leaving the room, knocking three times, and being invited back to the theatre.

Despite the superstition, Chaya Gordon-Bland, director of the production says, "so far, we're in the clear," in terms of mishaps while working on the play. She said that her team has had a wonderful time preparing for *Macbeth* and that even though it is a tragedy, the actors and crew find ways to keep some sense of fun in the show, rather than get bogged down by all of the tragic drama in the

text itself. Gordon-Bland says that, "sometimes you need that relief and release from how dark the material is."

An exciting development for the SDSF is the addition of a guest director. Dennis Turney is a former colleague of Gordon-Bland from New York City's American Globe Theatre, and will be offering a, "fresh, new perspective," as well as assisting Gordon-Bland as they strive to make this show a rousing success for the Vermillion locals.

The lead actors for the show are Tim Pyles – *Macbeth*, Chaya Gordon-Bland – *Lady Macbeth*, and a large ensemble with a mix of actors from New York City, graduate students from around the Midwest, and even Dr. Robert Hubbard, Professor of Theatre and Speech from Northwest College in Orange City, Iowa. The production of *Macbeth* will take place in Prentis Park on June 11-14 at 7 PM. Prior to the show, vendors and live music by the Vermillion Recorder Ensemble will go from 6 PM to 7 PM. The show is free to the public.

Support for the South Dakota Shakespeare Festival is provided by the City of Vermillion, the Vermillion Chamber and Development Company, Vermillion Rotary, Sanford Vermillion, the Dakota Hospital Foundation, the Vermillion Area Community Foundation, the University of South Dakota, and many local and regional businesses and individual patrons. South Dakota Arts Council support is provided with funds from the State of South Dakota, through the Department of Tourism, and the National Endowment for the Arts.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF LAURA VIDLER  
The Three Witches (Ceci Quintero, Kelsey Mitteness, Madeline Phillips) encompass and enchant Macbeth (Timothy Pyles) in the South Dakota Shakespeare Festival's upcoming production of *Macbeth*.

## A Look Back AT SDSF

BY JAMES COOPER  
For the Plain Talk

It was William Shakespeare who said, "Oh, had I but followed the arts!" In Shakespeare's time, unfortunately, making the arts available to everyone was not as easy as it is today. These days, Shakespeare's name is known by nearly everyone, and his plays are known by most. The task of filling in the gaps in South Dakota, falls to all of those involved in the South Dakota Shakespeare Festival (SDSF).

Chaya Gordon-Bland, one of the co-creators of the SDSF and Assistant Professor of Theatre at The University of South Dakota said, "when I was interviewing for the university position...it became abundantly clear that South Dakota, at that time was one of only really a handful of states that did not yet have a statewide Shakespeare Festival." As one who had a history with Shakespeare and long held desire to hold a Shakespeare Festival, Gordon-Bland found herself being able to realize her dream in a place where the opportunity to build and share something that appeals to everyone.

In addition to Gordon-Bland, Greg Huckabee serves as the Executive Director for the SDSF. Huckabee is an Associate Professor of Business Management at USD and head of Coyoteopoly; a USD-student run corporation

that strives to provide charitable work for the Vermillion area. Scott Mollman, Associate Professor of Theatre with Gordon-Bland serves as Production Manager for the Festival. These three professionals formed the company and continue to make decisions for the SDSF, serving a personal want for Shakespeare in the Vermillion Community, and a perceived need for community involvement in the arts. "We're working to develop what was a pretty underdeveloped area in terms of professional theatre – professional arts – and in particular classical theatre and heightened theatre, and Shakespeare" says Gordon-Bland.

Until a summer 2012 production of *As You Like It* by Shakespeare, South Dakota residents were missing out on the magic that is a Shakespeare Festival. Held in Prentis Park, the SDSF offers not only a main stage production, but workshops and entertainment prior to the play. Due to, "a variety of reasons" the SDSF in 2013 only consisted of the educational workshops, but last year's production of *Taming of the Shrew* brought the SDSF back in full force to the park.

Of course, no professional company can survive without the support of community backers and private donations. From its inception in 2011, the South Dakota Shakespeare Festival has been generously helped by companies such as the South Dakota

Arts Council, Sanford of Vermillion, First Dakota National Bank, the Vermillion Area Community Foundation, Walmart, and others. "We have a really, really diverse web of support, and frankly, we need a diverse web of support in order to do what we do," says Gordon-Bland when discussing the financial side of the SDSF. This generous contribution by community businesses and organizations shows the commitment to the arts that makes ventures like the SDSF possible.

Internal fund raising is another way in which the SDSF helps to mount their production efforts. Each year they host Wine with Will, a February wine tasting that is a more "high class affair" that includes costumed actors that perform scenes from Shakespeare pieces, live music, and a Sommelier from Red Steakhouse. There has also been Beer with the Bard, where the SDSF launched a documentary film chronicling the company from beginning to now.

Future plans for the SDSF are to expand into a statewide event that not only holds its traditional Prentis Park production, but also tours to neighboring communities. Gordon-Bland excitedly mentions that "a key part of the mission [of SDSF] is to be serving underserved communities." Gordon-Bland wants to make the work as accessible to everyone because, "Shakespeare has something for everybody and can speak to and touch the lives of people from all different walks of life."

## Event, More Than Just A Play

In addition to the full-length Shakespeare production, the SDSF will feature live music in Prentis Park, along with vending of food and beverages, beginning at 6pm each evening. Workshops and educational programming for all ages will be offered throughout the four days of the Festival. Advance registration for workshops is recommended through the Vermillion Parks and Recreation website: [http://www.vermillionparksandrec.com/Youth\\_Programs.php](http://www.vermillionparksandrec.com/Youth_Programs.php)

A special Scholars' Roundtable Discussion, hosted by USD's College of Arts and Sciences and Department of English, will take place at 3pm on Sunday June 14th in Prentis Park. Join national and international Shakespeare scholars as they lead a discussion on past productions of *Macbeth*, the choices made in this production, and enduring questions of what makes *Macbeth* so special. In keeping with the SDSF's mission of accessibility, all programs are free and open to the public. "Free Will" donations are welcomed.

In advance of the Festival, the SDSF will be performing special preview performances of *Macbeth* for the Senior Care Center at Sanford Vermillion and at SEDDAC, in order to expand their reach to a broader demographic and share the wonders and joys of

Shakespeare and live theatre with a wider audience base.

The South Dakota Shakespeare Festival is a professional non-profit theatre company, and a member of the Shakespeare Theatre Association (STA). The SDSF is supported in collaboration with USD's College of Fine Arts and Department of Theatre, and produced by Coyoteopoly, a USD-student run corporation and interdisciplinary service-learning project that reinforces classroom learning while providing derivative benefits to the community.

The mission of the South Dakota Shakespeare Festival is to increase the cultural, artistic and educational offerings of the state of South Dakota and surrounding regions through professional Shakespeare performances and arts education events delivered in a lively and accessible format. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Chaya Gordon-Bland, Executive Director Greg Huckabee, Production Manager Scott Mollman, and Education Director Tim Pyles, the South Dakota Shakespeare Festival seeks to fulfill an important cultural and educational need throughout the state and Great Plains Region.

For further information, please visit our website at [www.sds Shakespeare Festival.org](http://www.sds Shakespeare Festival.org)

## Fire

From Page 1

asleep we are not aware of what is going on around us," Draper said. "That also goes for someone that is maybe enjoying too many drinks in the afternoon. We are not as aware of our environment."

He said that is why smoke detectors are so valuable.

"This simple, \$8 machine is 24 hours a day, 365 days a year monitoring the environment for us," Draper said. "They pick up on fires in their earliest phase. How a fire works, is the fire is consuming a product and putting off byproducts. The byproducts are smoke and heat. The fine particulates that are in the air from a fire is what the detectors pick up and are monitoring for. Almost within the first few minutes of a fire, these detectors will know it. They would have gone off before this fire ever reached the phase it had. It is a piece of safety equipment that just makes total sense to have. It is common sense."

Draper said there are different types of smoke detectors: battery operated, battery sealed and hard wired smoke detectors.

Because the rental property involved in Saturday's fire was out of city limits the owners don't have to comply with some regulations that would have required working smoke detectors in the city limits, Draper added.

"I would not rent a property if they did not have them, no matter where it was at," he said. "The ordinances require different detectors for different properties. Outside

of the city limits, I don't know legally who was responsible for that. But I personally would not rent a property and live anywhere, or have my children live anywhere, that did not have a smoke detector."

He added if he was moving into a new residence the first thing he would do is check to make sure that it had working smoke detectors.

"If I was moving in some place I would probably start off by putting new batteries in just to make sure they have working batteries and then I would make sure to change them annually," Draper said.

He noted that if there is a resident in Vermillion who doesn't have a smoke detector, the fire department has a program that makes them available to you free of charge.

"What we do with our program here is we install it for you," he said. "It is on our website. There is a lot of information on our Facebook page, also. Our program is geared for senior citizens and those that may not be able to afford a smoke detector. Online there is a request that they fill out at the city website, or they can call and request it and we will go out and install it for them. Home inspections are free for anyone who needs one. That would be where our inspector would come out and meet with somebody to search for issues. Those are things we can do to help."

He said that the fire department currently has 100 smoke detectors in stock and can order another 100 through the grant program.

He noted another easy task that is overlooked is to set up a meeting plan with young children.

"A lot of people have not set up meeting

places with their children, so they know where to go in case of emergency," Draper said. "Something that simple that just takes five minutes a year for a parent to review with their children, 'If we have to get out of the house where are we going to go so we all get out of the house safely?' I kind of put smoke detectors in that same category as a very simple, no nonsense safety feature. It is common sense, why wouldn't you do it."

"The question I would ask is if there was an emergency and you were separated in the house would your kids know where to go? A lot of times we would think, 'Well, they know where to go.' But they don't. They will think about getting to mom and dad's bedroom if that is where you are at. So, they will concentrate on trying to get to you. We don't want them to do that. We want everyone to get out of the house whatever the nearest exit it."

Draper said the fire department wants parents to encourage their children to identify, "How would they get out of the house? How would they get out of their room?"

"We never really think it will happen to us, but when it does happen it is too late to plan it then," he said. "We, as parents, really need to look at what we have taught our children and ask are they well prepared in case it does happen?"

Draper noted that there is valuable information at the department's website at [vermillion.us](http://vermillion.us).

"There is information about buying a smoke detector and the benefits of the different types," he said. "There are some home safety checklists and things people can do to make their homes safer. If there are questions people have they can call the fire department and we will answer them for them."

But most importantly, he said, make sure your smoke detectors are installed and working.

"Smoke detectors are so important," Draper said. "Sometimes it is those really simple, basic things that will save someone's life."

We are pleased to announce that Matt and Carol Lavin are the new owners of the Davis Pharmacy beginning June 1<sup>st</sup>. Matt follows our other family pharmacists, his great grandfather, grandfather, and mother and father to be the owner of the Davis Pharmacy.

We thank all of our customers for your friendship, loyalty and business over the years, and we know that Matt will continue to serve you with his friendly manner, expertise, and dedication to your health in the years to come.

Tom and Sandy Lavin **DAVIS PHARMACY**

*Thank You*

I would like to thank everyone who came to my 90<sup>th</sup> birthday party. It was a wonderful time.

Thank you all for the lovely flowers, gifts and cards. I will cherish them.

*Betty Knutson*

Friends of the W. H. Over Museum invite you to our

**Annual Rhubarb Day Sunday, June 7, 2015 at 1:30 p.m.**

Judy Thompson, cover artist for "Pioneer Girl", to speak at 2:15. She will have prints for sale & will sign book covers.

**Bring Rhubarb Recipes & samples!**

Free will offering.

**Happy Birthday Judy!**

Judy Nedved (Harnois) formerly of Vermillion, will celebrate her **70th Birthday on June 13th**

The family of this Tanager at heart is requesting a card shower in her honor.

Well wishes can be sent to: 39232 305th St. Wagner, SD 57380

Love, Joe, Mary Jo, David, Alyson, Charlotte, Stephanie and Adam.