

Othello

Written by William Shakespeare

Directed by Duncan Moore

27-31 March 2018

Barons Court Theatre



1. Auditions

You do not need to register to audition or prepare anything in advance. Please come on whichever day is best for you. The recalls are invite only.

On the night you audition, you will be asked to fill in a preference form so that we have your contact details and know if there are any specific parts you'd like to audition for.

The first round of auditions will be based on cold readings and improvisations. If you are recalled, you may be supplied with a monologue to look at and work on in advance of the recalls (you will not need to learn the piece off by heart).

All accents and ethnicities are welcome. We are open to casting all roles with actors who may not reflect the original description in terms of ethno-cultural identity. Othello is the only role that will definitely be played by a non-white actor.

Please do not be put off by the fact you will be reading verse – this play is about emotions, relationships, drama, tragedy and these are the things that this production and the auditions will focus on.

KDC is an amateur theatre company and auditioning for all KDC Theatre shows is free. Please note, you will not be paid to appear in the show, and if cast, you will be asked to pay subs. Further information can be found online: www.kdctheatre.com/pay/

When: 8th, 10th and 11th January 2018. Choose whichever date suits you best. 6:30pm registration and auditions start at 7pm.

Where: The Albany, Douglas Way, Deptford, London, SE8 4AG

www.thealbany.org.uk/visit/12/Your-Visit

Recalls will be on Saturday 13th January (venue and time tbc).

2. Show Dates

We'll be performing from **Tuesday 27th March to Saturday 31st March** at **The Barons Court Theatre** in Barons Court/West Kensington. The shows will start at 7.30pm, and **there is a 2.30pm matinee on the 31st March**. You'll need to be at the theatre at least an hour beforehand. The dress rehearsal will be on Monday 26th March. You will need to be free at least from midday onwards, possibly all day.

3. Rehearsals

Rehearsals will be on Monday and Wednesday evenings, and Sunday afternoons/evenings. You might not be needed for every single rehearsal. All rehearsals will be in central London. A rehearsal schedule will be created as soon as possible, once the cast's availability dates are all accounted for. First rehearsal: 15 January 2018.

4. About the Play and Production

Othello: a story of love, jealousy, revenge, paranoia, murder, deception, duplicity and death.

Set in modern-day London, KDC's production tells the tale of newly married Othello, who is sent to defend the Cyprus Housing Estate from a rival Turkish gang, The Ottomites, and who finds himself a pawn in a manipulative game that tests the thin lines that lie between love, jealousy and hate.

This timeless thriller is set in a world filled with the destructive power of prejudice, racism and sexism. Where whispered words poison Othello's mind and lead to the destruction of everything that he holds dear.

KDC's production moves the story from Venice and Cyprus to the housing estates, bars and clubs of modern-day London.

Why modern-day London? Shakespeare's play of manipulative mind games revolves around two key themes: racism and misogyny. Both of these are prevalent in contemporary Britain and London, as evidenced below. This production seeks to be inspired by these shocking cases and statistics, showcasing how Shakespeare's tragedy is more relevant than ever.

Modern Britain and racism

Reker Ahmed: On March 31 2017, an attack on Reker Ahmed, a young asylum seeker, saw a mob of up to 30 people beat him unconscious. He was left for dead with a fractured spine, fractured eye socket and a bleed on his brain after south London police said he was singled out as a refugee in a racially motivated attack.

Brexit vote: Hate crime rose sharply following the EU referendum. Reported hate crime rose by 57% in the four days after the referendum.

Modern Britain and domestic violence and misogyny

2016: The Femicide Census (an annual report on cases of femicide in the UK) showed that more than 113 women in England, N. Ireland and Wales in 2016 were killed by men. Two-thirds of these were killed by a current or ex-partner.

Stacey's story: It has been estimated that 6,000 girls are sexually exploited or gang-raped in street gangs across the UK. One example from 2014 is Stacey: *Stacey wasn't involved in a gang but a friend of hers, Angie, started hanging out with one. Stacey told Angie she didn't think one of the guys in the gang was a very nice person and Angie reported that back to the guy in question.*

He rounded up three mates and together they waited for Stacey after school, grabbed her just a few feet from her own front door and threatened her with a knife. They took her to a nearby block of flats and then all of them raped her. Her ordeal didn't stop there. They rang more friends who came and joined the attack – nine of them in total, all assaulting one girl for the 'crime' of one offensive remark. Source: Centre for Social Justice/The Guardian.

Othello is a timeless play that speaks to every generation. Its key themes and messages, and its narrative, are still (unfortunately) very pertinent today.

5. Cast Breakdown

11 characters played by 10 or 11 actors. Additionally, we are looking for 4-5 actors to play ensemble non-speaking, but important roles, to create the world in which the play is set. Aside from Othello, who will be played by a non-white actor, the ethnicity of the cast is not fixed.

OTHELLO (M)

Othello is strong, proud and honourable. He has known a lot of violence in his life and committed a lot of violence. He commands respect and expects respect (but without arrogance). There is an anger that is deep in him and in this play it is let out. Othello has an angel on one shoulder and a devil on the other. The angel, Desdemona, is truth, fairness, purity and goodness, while on the other shoulder is evil (Iago); and they both battle for his soul.

This role requires presence, stamina, and a lot of availability for rehearsals.

Playing age: 20s-30s.

DESDEMONA (F)

Desdemona is a strong-minded woman, who knows what she wants and gets it (without showing disrespect). Her love for Othello is pure and true, but this doesn't stop her disagreeing with her husband when she feels he is in the wrong. Women in *Othello* are forced to be second-class citizens, but Desdemona rises above this without causing offence. She has a soft subtle power.

Desdemona also represents all the purity and goodness in the play. She embodies truth and fairness, but without being too much of a 'goody two-shoes'. She 'sits' (metaphorically) on Othello's shoulder and battles for his soul.

Playing age: 20s.

IAGO (M)

Iago's character, like Desdemona's, is central to the play, but the lines between his characteristics and motivations are more blurred. What are the reasons for his hatred and his actions? Is it because he was passed over for promotion, or because of racial hatred, hatred of women, jealousy, or just pure evil? Iago *could* be motivated by all, or none, of these. Iago has charm as he guides Othello on his self-destructive journey; we have to like him and Othello has to believe him.

This role also requires presence, stamina, and a lot of availability for rehearsals.

Playing age: 20s-30s.

EMILIA (F)

Emilia is Iago's wife. She gets caught up in his plans and is an active participant, however does not know what Iago's plans actually are. Like all the women in the play, Emilia is treated really badly; she puts up with a hell of a lot. Emilia is on stage a lot observing, and by the end of the play she stands up and not only speaks, she roars!

Playing age: 20s-30s.

CASSIO (M)

Cassio is promoted to become Othello's deputy (instead of Iago). It is often said that Cassio is weak. Yes, he can't take his drink, but he also commands some respect. He tries always to be the decent bloke, but at the same time gets caught up in 'women baiting and using' like the rest of the men in the play. The role will require stage-combat experience, or a willingness to learn.

Playing age: 20s.

RODERIGO (M)

The desperate foolish wannabe lover who believes he is high status, but in the grand scheme of things, isn't. He is easily controlled and manipulated. This role has the potential for some enjoyable character comedy.

Playing age: 20s-30s.

THE DUKE (F)

In this show, The Duke is the queen of the local area – she controls the drugs, the prostitutes, etc. Nothing can happen in her 'manor' without her giving permission or her taking revenge. On hearing that the Turks are coming to try to take control of part of her patch she sends in Othello to defend it – basically gang war. She has money and power. She has not used her position to help other women around her. It is a wonderful role for someone who does not have a lot of available time. This role may double with Bianca.

Playing age: 30s.

BRABANTIO (M)

The father of Desdemona. He has worked closely with The Duke and is therefore more wealthy than most other people in the play. The last thing he wants is for his daughter to marry below herself, especially to someone like Othello. This role is suitable for someone without a lot of availability for rehearsal.

Playing age: 40s-50s.

LUDOVICO (M)

One of The Duke's key players. He acts as The Duke's ambassador to the Cyprus estate. He has played the political game to get where he is within The Duke's criminal organisation. He can talk the talk.

Playing age: 20s-30s.

MONTANO (M)

The Duke's original key man on the Cyprus estate. He's not the strongest or most skilled fighter – maybe this is why the Turks have decided to try to take over his estate. The role will require stage-combat experience, or a willingness to learn.

Playing age: 20s-30s.

BIANCA (F)

In KDC's production, Bianca represents how a lot of women are used by men in the UK today. She sees that her only way to survive is by sleeping with men; she must

either 'agree' to this treatment, or be raped. Bianca is a small, yet pivotal role with a couple of key scenes. This role may double with The Duke.
Playing age: 20s-30s.