

THE FIRST OF VERDI'S THREE OPERAS BASED ON SHAKESPEARE (preceding *Otello* and *Falstaff* by several decades), *Macbeth* is a tale of power, superstition, and political intrigue. At the center of the story is the title couple, whose fascinating, highly charged relationship is explored in depth in Verdi's music, as well as in the text that his librettist Francesco Maria Piave adapted from the original play. A prediction heard from a group of witches sets Macbeth and his wife on a murderous course that ends in madness, destruction, and, ultimately, hope.

In director Adrian Noble's Metropolitan Opera production, first seen in 2007, *Macbeth* takes place in a world of darkness. Players emerge from perpetual night in costumes evoking a non-specific, contemporary urban setting that perfectly complements Verdi's electrifying music. Written early in his career, the opera was revised by the composer almost 20 years after its premiere—a clear indication that even at the height of his success and artistic powers Verdi considered this score to be an essential part of his oeuvre.

This guide is intended to help your students appreciate the dramatic narrative and musical details of *Macbeth*. By paying close attention to Verdi's choices, comparing the operatic Macbeth to Shakespeare's Macbeth, and considering the different approaches of opera composer and playwright, this guide will give your students a better understanding of what makes *Macbeth* a remarkable and ground-breaking opera. The activities on the following pages are designed to provide context, deepen background knowledge, and enrich the overall experience of this *Live in HD* transmission. This guide also aligns with key strands of the Common Core Standards.

THE WORK:

MACBETH

An opera in four acts, sung in Italian

Music by Giuseppe Verdi

Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave

Based on the play by William Shakespeare

First performed March, 1847
at the Teatro della Pergola, Florence, Italy

Revised version first performed
April 21, 1865 at the Théâtre Lyrique,
Paris, France

PRODUCTION

Fabio Luisi, Conductor

Adrian Noble, Production

Mark Thompson,
Set and Costume Designer

Jean Kalman, Lighting Designer

Sue Lefton, Choreographer

STARRING

(In order of vocal appearance):

Željko Lučić

MACBETH (baritone)

René Pape

BANQUO (bass)

Anna Netrebko

LADY MACBETH (soprano)

Joseph Calleja

MACDUFF (tenor)

Production a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Paul M. Montrone

Additional funding from Mr. and Mrs. William R. Miller; Hermione Foundation, Laura Sloate, Trustee; and The Gilbert S. Kahn & John J. Noffo Kahn Endowment Fund



NETREBKO



CALLEJA



LUČIĆ



PAPE

This guide includes four sections and three types of activities.

- **THE SOURCE, THE STORY, WHO'S WHO IN MACBETH, AND A COMPOSER TIMELINE**
- **CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:**
Three activities designed to align with and support various Common Core Standard strands used in ELA, History/Social Studies, and Music curricula
- **PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES:**
Two activities to be used during *The Met: Live in HD* transmission, highlighting specific aspects of this production
- **POST-SHOW DISCUSSION:**
A wrap-up activity, integrating the *Live in HD* experience into the students' understanding of the performing arts and the humanities
- **STUDENT RESOURCE PAGES:**
Classroom-ready worksheets supporting the activities in the guide

The activities in this guide will address several aspects of *Macbeth*:

- The relationship between Verdi's score and Piave's libretto
- The relationship between Shakespeare's play and the opera by Verdi and Piave
- The musical distinction of Verdi's composition and its relationship to his use of language
- The opera as a unified piece of art, involving the choices made by the composer, the librettist, and the artists of the Metropolitan Opera

This guide is intended to cultivate students' interest in *Macbeth*, whether or not they have any prior acquaintance with opera. It includes activities for students with a wide range of musical backgrounds, and seeks to encourage them to think about opera—and the performing arts as a whole—as a medium of both entertainment and creative expression.

THE SOURCE: SHAKESPEARE'S *MACBETH* One of the most famous plays in the Shakespeare canon, *Macbeth* was most likely written around the year 1606. Shakespeare based his play on previously published material, notably a 1577 history entitled *The Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*. He would return to this large, comprehensive narrative of British history for the source material of *King Lear* and *Cymbeline*. The stories of many of the history plays can also be found in its pages.

ACT I *Scotland*. Macbeth and Banquo, leaders of the Scottish army, meet a group of witches who foretell the future. They address Macbeth as Thane of Cawdor and King of Scotland, and tell Banquo that he will be the father of kings. The two men try to learn more, but the witches vanish. Messengers arrive with news that Duncan, the current king of Scotland, has made Macbeth Thane of Cawdor. The first part of the witches' prediction has come true.

In Macbeth's castle, Lady Macbeth reads a letter from her husband telling her of the events that have just transpired. She resolves to follow her ambitions. A servant announces that Duncan will soon arrive at the castle, and when Macbeth enters, she



Željko Lučić in a scene from *Macbeth*
PHOTO: KEN HOWARD/METROPOLITAN OPERA

VOICE TYPE

Since the early 19th century, singing voices have usually been classified in six basic types, three male and three female, according to their range:

SOPRANO

the highest-pitched type of human voice, normally possessed only by women and boys

MEZZO-SOPRANO

the female voice whose range lies between the soprano and the contralto (Italian “mezzo” = middle, medium)

CONTRALTO

the lowest female voice, also called an alto

COUNTERTENOR

a male singing voice whose vocal range is equivalent to that of a contralto, mezzo-soprano, or (less frequently) a soprano, usually through use of falsetto

TENOR

the highest naturally occurring voice type in adult males

BARITONE

the male voice lying below the tenor and above the bass

BASS

the lowest male voice

tells him that they must kill the king. Duncan arrives. Macbeth has a vision of a dagger, then leaves to commit the murder. On his return, he tells his wife how the act has frightened him, and she tells him that he needs more courage. They both leave as Banquo enters with Macduff, a nobleman, who discovers the murder. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth pretend to be horrified and join the others in condemning the murder.

ACT II Macbeth has become king. Duncan’s son, Malcolm, is suspected of having killed his father and has fled to England. Worried about the prophecy that Banquo’s children will rule, Macbeth and his wife now plan to kill him and his son, Fleance, as well. As Macbeth leaves to prepare the double murder, Lady Macbeth hopes that it will finally make the throne secure.

Outside the castle, assassins wait for Banquo, who appears with his son, warning him of strange forebodings. Banquo is killed, but Fleance escapes.

Lady Macbeth welcomes the court to the banquet hall and sings a drinking song, while Macbeth receives news that Banquo is dead and his son has escaped. About to take Banquo’s seat at the table, Macbeth has a terrifying vision of the dead man accusing him. His wife is unable to calm her unsettled husband, and the courtiers wonder about the king’s strange behavior. Macduff vows to leave the country, which is now ruled by criminals.

ACT III The witches gather again, and Macbeth visits them, demanding more prophecies. Apparitions warn him to beware of Macduff and assure him that “no man of woman born” can harm him, and that he will be invincible until Birnam Wood marches on his castle. In another vision, he sees a procession of future kings, followed by Banquo. Horrified, Macbeth collapses. The witches disappear and his wife finds him. They resolve to kill Macduff and his family.

ACT IV On the Scottish border, Macduff has joined the refugees. His wife and children have been killed. Malcolm appears with British troops and leads them to invade Scotland.

Lady Macbeth is sleepwalking, haunted by the horrors of what she and her husband have done.

Macbeth awaits the arrival of his enemies and realizes that he will never live to a peaceful old age. Messengers bring news that Lady Macbeth has died, and that Birnam Wood appears to be moving. English soldiers appear, camouflaged with its branches. Macduff confronts Macbeth and tells him that he was not born naturally but had a Caesarean birth. He kills Macbeth and proclaims Malcolm king of Scotland.

WHO'S WHO IN MACBETH

CHARACTER		PRONUNCIATION	VOICE TYPE	THE LOWDOWN
Macbeth (referred to as Macbetto in Italian)	A Scottish noble and respected general in King Duncan's army	Italian: mahk-BET-toe	Baritone	An ambitious man, he quickly shows himself capable of deceit and murder to gain the throne once he hears the witches' prophecy.
Lady Macbeth	Macbeth's wife		Soprano	Lady Macbeth's ambitions possibly exceed her husband's; her cunning and ruthlessness help propel Macbeth's rise to power.
Banquo (Banco)	Another nobleman, general in the King's army, and good friend of Macbeth's	BANK-woe Italian: BAHNG-koe	Bass	An honorable man whose children (as prophesied by the witches) threaten Macbeth's grip on power
Fleance	Banquo's son and heir	FLEE-unce	Silent	A young child endangered by the witches' prophesy
Macduff	A nobleman of Scotland		Tenor	Macduff is highly suspicious of Macbeth and ultimately leads the uprising against him.
Duncan	King of Scotland		Silent	An aging ruler, Duncan is murdered by the Macbeths.
Malcolm	Duncan's son and heir		Tenor	Malcolm flees after his father's murder, returning to claim the throne at the end of the opera.
The Witches	Supernatural beings with the ability to see the future		Chorus	Verdi considered the witches central characters. Their prophecies set the opera's plot in motion.

Giuseppe Verdi

- 1813** Verdi is born in a small village in northern Italy.
- 1839** Verdi's first opera to be completed and produced, *Oberto, Conte di San Bonifacio*, premieres at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan. The opera is considered a success, and Verdi is awarded a contract to compose three additional operas for La Scala.
- 1840** After his wife and two children die within two short years, Verdi's second opera, *Un Giorno di Regno*, is rejected by La Scala audiences. This would remain the only comedy Verdi wrote until his final masterpiece, *Falstaff*.
- 1842** *Nabucco* premieres at La Scala. The opera's unprecedented success establishes Verdi as Italy's most famous composer.
- 1846** In the midst of the most prolific period of his career (Verdi himself deemed them his "years in the galleys"), Verdi begins writing his first Shakespearian adaptation, *Macbeth*.
- 1847** *Macbeth* receives its premiere at the Teatro della Pergola in Florence.
- 1848** Verdi travels to Milan, which was then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and witnesses the aftermath of the "Five Days" of uprising that helped launch the first Italian war of independence.
- 1853** After the disastrous premiere of *La Traviata* (he revised the piece substantially the following year), Verdi's compositional output slows considerably.
- 1859** When the slogan "Viva VERDI" (an acronym for "Vittorio Emanuele, Re D'Italia") begins appearing in the streets of Naples, Verdi's name becomes inextricably linked to the Risorgimento, or Italian independence movement (see the *Rulers and the Ruled* sidebar for details). Throughout the 1850s and 1860s, Vittorio Emanuele II was a universal symbol for Italian unification. He would later become the first king of the unified Italian nation-state.





- 1861** The Kingdom of Italy is declared with Vittorio Emanuele II as its ruler. Rome, however, remains under papal control.
- 1865** Verdi revises *Macbeth* for a performance at the Théâtre Lyrique in Paris. An extensive re-working, it includes several new numbers and is invariably the version performed today. Most notably, Verdi completely revised the final act, replacing Macbeth's death aria with a stirring choral finale in which the Scottish people give thanks for the liberation of their "homeland" from the "usurper."
- 1871** After three wars and over 50 years of political turmoil, Rome is made the official capital of the Kingdom of Italy, and unification is fully achieved.
- 1879** Almost a decade after his last operatic project, Verdi is coaxed out of retirement and begins composing an opera based on Shakespeare's *Othello*.
- 1887** *Otello* receives its premiere at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan.
- 1889** Verdi begins work on a large-scale philanthropic project: the building of the Casa di Riposo per Musicisti, a home for elderly musicians. He later wrote that of all his works, the Casa di Riposo was the one that gave him the most pleasure.
- 1889** Verdi and his librettist Arrigo Boito begin work on a third Shakespearean project: an opera based largely on *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. By the spring of 1890, the libretto for *Falstaff* was complete.
- 1893** *Falstaff*, Verdi's final opera, premieres at La Scala.
- 1901** Verdi suffers a stroke on January 21 and dies on January 27. Hundreds of thousands of Italians mourn the composer. To honor Verdi's legacy as a patriot and national icon, "Va pensiero," the famous chorus from *Nabucco*, is conducted by a young Arturo Toscanini.



The Many Moods of Mr. and Mrs. Macbeth

English Language Arts

IN PREPARATION

For this activity, students will need the reproducible resources available at the back of this guide, as well as the audio selections from *Macbeth* available online or on the accompanying CD. If they are not already familiar with the story of *Macbeth*, they will need a copy of the synopsis as well.

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

English Language Arts, Music

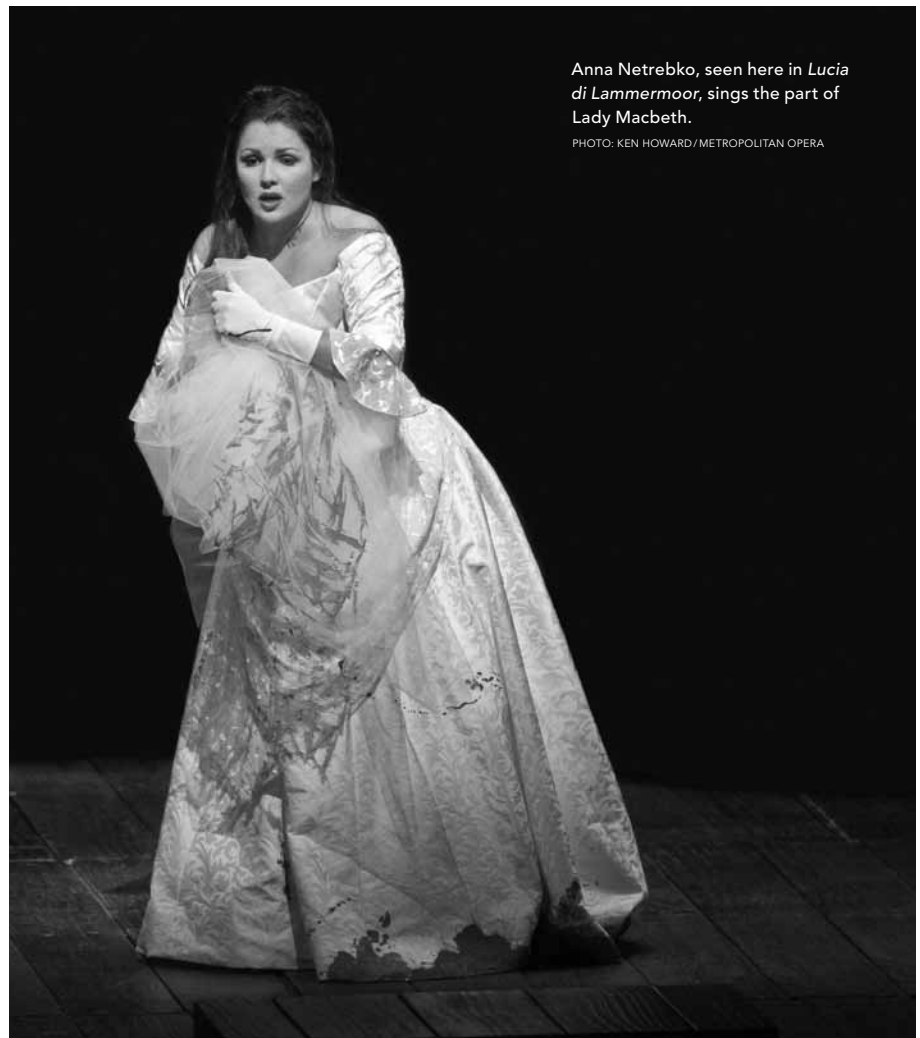
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To explore the way composers express characters' personalities and feelings through music
- To analyze the libretto and music
- To consider the interplay between characters as an aspect of expression in storytelling
- To prompt curiosity about the Met's approach to this opera

In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, we meet a multitude of earls, thanes, and other nobles. For Verdi, only three participants really mattered: Macbeth, his wife, and the group of the witches. Over the course of the opera, composer and librettist carefully delineate the emotional journeys of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, as well as the complexities of their relationship. In this activity, students will explore Verdi's accomplishment in depicting characters' feelings through music.

They will:

- describe characters' moods and attitudes
- construct and defend an argument about the relationship of the opera's protagonists
- acquaint themselves with the characters' journeys
- familiarize themselves with some of the music in advance of the Met's HD transmission



Anna Netrebko, seen here in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, sings the part of Lady Macbeth.

PHOTO: KEN HOWARD/METROPOLITAN OPERA

STEPS

In this activity, students will have several opportunities to listen as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth express their feelings through song. As a class, they will analyze and characterize the moods Verdi's characters go through. Then, they will construct a written argument about the Macbeths' marriage, defending it with evidence from the score and libretto.

STEP 1: Introduce the opera to your students, placing particular emphasis on the central characters, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. This can be as simple as reading the synopsis aloud as a class. Explain that opera offers the opportunity to present characters' feelings and relationships through music. In the first part of this lesson, students will listen to selections from *Macbeth*, identifying the feelings they hear in the characters' voices.

STEP 2: Draw a two-column chart on the chalkboard. At the top of one side, write "Lady Macbeth." At the top of the other, write "Macbeth." As the class listens to selections from the opera, use the chart to keep track of the emotions your students identify.

STEP 3: Distribute the printed resource, *The Many Moods of Mr. and Mrs. Macbeth* found at the back of this guide. Play the musical selections one at a time. Students can follow along on and note their observations on the printed resource.

STEP 4: As students listen to each selection, have them jot down the first word that comes to mind describing any feeling they hear. (You may want to play each selection twice—first for students to get a general sense of the music, and a second time to give them a chance to name the feelings they hear.) After they've written down what they hear, ask them to share their observations with the class and list the feelings they've noted on the chalkboard. Then repeat, adding to the list with each musical selection. A listening guide to the six tracks is below.

Track 1: In this selection, we hear the witches predicting Macbeth and Banquo's futures, followed by Macbeth's response—"*Saranno i figli tuoi sovrani*" ("Your descendants will be kings")—Banquo's response, and their mutual comment, "*Accenti arcani*" ("puzzling words"). Notice that Macbeth is talking about Banquo and Banquo's children. He's not even mentioning the prediction that he will become king. What do your students make of this? What do they hear in his voice?

Track 2: Here, Lady Macbeth gets the same news—not from the witches, but in a letter from her husband. In the first part of the selection, we hear her reading the letter. What do your students make of the fact that she's speaking, not singing, what

COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND MACBETH

This activity directly supports the following ELA-Literacy Common Core Strands:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL9-12.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL9-12.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL9-12.3

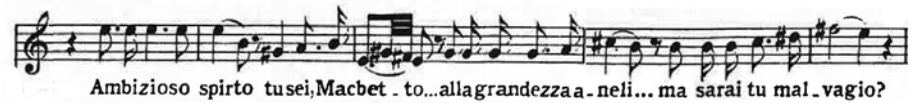
Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1c

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

FUN FACT: At the beginning of the play and opera, Macbeth holds the title of Thane of Glamis. He is later made Thane of Cawdor, fulfilling part of the witches' prophecy. "Thane" was a title given to royal officials in medieval Scotland. Similar to a count, a thane ruled over a part of the country known as a shire or "thaneage."

she reads? What might Verdi be telling us? At *"Ambizioso spirito tu sei, Macbetto"* ("You are an ambitious soul, Macbeth"), she bursts into song.



What does the change tell us? Listen carefully to her shift in tone in the line *"Ma sarai tu malvagio?"* ("But will you be ruthless?"). Notice the descent of the melody as she sings, then repeats the word *"retrocede"* ("to retreat").



As Track 2 continues, *"Vieni, t'affretta"* ("Come! Hurry!"), Lady Macbeth changes tone yet again. What relationship do your students hear between this lively new melody and her message, *"Accendere ti vo' quel freddo core!"* ("I want to set fire to your cold heart!") What kind of person does Lady Macbeth seem to be when she's by herself, revealing herself to the audience?

Track 3: Now we hear Lady Macbeth and her husband together at a critical moment. Macbeth has just killed King Duncan. He's returning to tell his wife. For Verdi, this scene was so important that he insisted his original cast rehearse it over and over again before the opening. The score indicates that Macbeth is not to sing in full voice until he looks down and sees his bloody hands, *"O vista, o vista orribile!"* ("What a terrible sight!").

At that point, the fireworks really begin. Macbeth tells what happened in the King's bedroom—how he could not say "amen" to the guards' night prayers—*"La parola indocile gelò sui labbri miei"* ("the rebellious word froze on my lips"). How does his wife respond to this chilling anecdote? *"Follie!"* ("That's madness!"), repeated as Macbeth insists, *"non potei"* ("I couldn't"). These conflicting attitudes continue through the strange duet that follows—Macbeth obsessed with his experience, Lady Macbeth calling him crazy, foolish, cowardly, and childish.

Macbeth then sings *"Com'angeli d'ira vendetta tuonarmi"* ("Like vengeance Duncan's holy virtues will thunder down on me like angry angels").

a voce spingata
 Co - m'an - ge - li d'i - ra, ven - det - ta tuo - nar - mi u - drò di Dun - ca - no le san - te vir - tù.
Cantabile

Notice how the very melody of Lady Macbeth's response, "*Quell'animo trema, combatte, delira*" ("How his spirit trembles, struggles, raves"), echoes and ridicules her husband. How would your students characterize Macbeth's tone? How does Lady Macbeth's melody correspond to her words?

The argument comes to a head when Lady Macbeth tells her husband to plant the murder weapon at the scene of the crime: "*Il pugnàl là riportate*" ("Bring the dagger back"). We can almost hear him quiver as he says he couldn't possibly go back, "*non posso entrar!*" ("I can't go in there!") What do your students hear in Lady Macbeth's response, "*Dammi il ferro*" ("Give me the blade")? (Some commentators believe the deep percussive strings we hear at the end of this selection are Verdi's musical depiction of Macduff and Banquo banging on the castle gates, seeking admission.) This scene is explored in more depth in the Music Classroom Activity, *To Kill a King*.

Track 4: As Act II opens, we hear attitudes shift rapidly. Lady Macbeth begins the duet "*Perchè mi sfuggi*" ("Why are you avoiding me?"). Notice her tone here, and again, seconds later, as she insists "*Il fatto è irreparabile!*" ("The deed is done"). In contemporary language, she might be saying, "Honey, just get over it!" But Macbeth is worried. We hear it in his voice, mulling over the predicament: "*Dunque i suoi figli regneran? Duncano per costor sarà spento?*" ("So will [Banquo's] sons rule? Did Duncan die for them?")

Dunque i suoi fi.gli re.gne.ran? Dunca.no per co.stor sa.rà spen - to?
 Dunca.no per co.stor sa.rà spen - to?



The next few lines play out an intricate psychological drama. Hear how Lady Macbeth nudges her husband along. She nourishes the thought of killing Banquo, softly encouraging Macbeth. But as soon as he declares “Tonight!” Lady Macbeth turns the screw: “*Immoto sarai tu nel tuo disegno?*” (“Will you be firm in your intention?”) This is the chord she’s been playing all along. Students can decide whether she’s successful or not in both the words and the music of Macbeth’s reply, “*Banco! l’eternità t’apre il suo regno*” (“Banquo, eternity opens its gates to you”). Has Macbeth changed? What do students make of his attitude now?

Track 5 (optional): One of the opera’s best-known arias follows directly after the above duet. In “*La luce langue*” (“The light is fading”), we hear Lady Macbeth’s inner thoughts. With her husband away, does her confidence wane? Does she sound pensive? Concerned? Scheming? Have your students listen carefully at three key moments in the aria:

- *Nuovo delitto!* (“Another murder!”)

Musical score for the aria "Nuovo delitto!". The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "Nuovo de . lit . to!!.. nuovo de . litto!!..". The piano accompaniment is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic.

- *È necessario!* (“It’s necessary!”), and

Musical score for the aria "È necessario!". The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "È neces . sa . rio! È neces . sa . rio!". The piano accompaniment is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic.

- *O voluttà del soglio* (“O coveted throne”).

Musical score for the aria "O voluttà del soglio". The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "O..... volutt.à del soglio! o scettro, o scettro, alfin sei mio.". The piano accompaniment is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes the instruction "con trasporto".

Lady Macbeth is by turns thoughtful, decisive, self-justifying, warming to the thought, and, ultimately, thrilled. Your students can hear all this unfold, even more through her music than the words.



Track 6: Here we find Macbeth and his wife in public, at a banquet, interacting not only with each other but with their assembled guests. Just before the selection begins, Macbeth has seen Banquo's ghost. His queen notices something amiss. She sidles up to ask what the problem is—but, as we can hear from the music, she never drops her happy party face. *“Che ti scosta, o re mio sposo, dalla gioia del banchetto?”* (“What’s keeping you, my king and husband, away from the party?”). Both in words and music, she and Macbeth now play a double game. The melody is merry. The lyrics are in code: they speak of Banquo’s absence, but we know they refer to his murder.

Or they do right up until the ghost reappears. Your students will hear this, as a dramatic chord interrupts the merriment and Macbeth exclaims, *“Di voi chi ciò fece?”* (“Which one of you did this?”). Now the guests know something’s amiss. As Macbeth keeps talking to the ghost, the guests exclaim, *“Macbetto è soffrente. Partiamo.”* (“Macbeth isn’t feeling well. We’ll go.”) But Lady Macbeth will have none of it. How would your students describe her tone when she tells the guests, *“Restate!”* (“Stay!”), then turns to her husband and asks, *“E un uomo voi siete?”* (“What kind of man are you?”).

Macbeth’s answer is revealing, both in words and music. No longer does he crumble beneath her intimidation. He has bigger fears now. What new aspect of his personality does his response present here?

STEP 5: Based on the notes they took while listening to the tracks above, ask your students who they think has more power over the other—Macbeth or Lady Macbeth? Do they think one of them bears more responsibility than the other? Students should write a paragraph making an argument for one side that cites specific evidence from both the libretto and the music.

FOLLOW-UP: Have several students read their paragraphs and engage the class in an informal conversation about the power dynamics of the Macbeths’ marriage.

History and Social Studies

IN PREPARATION

Each student will need a photocopy of the reproducible resources for the activity found at the back of this guide as well as the audio selections from *Macbeth* available online or on the accompanying CD. They will also need basic historical information about King James I of England and his ascent to the throne, as well as about the 19th-century movement to unify Italy that was a major political question in Verdi's lifetime. The sidebar *The Rulers and the Ruled* can be photocopied and assigned as homework in advance of the lesson, or read aloud at the beginning of the class.

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Social Studies, History, Politics, and Government

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To compare political structures across various eras and countries
- To explore ways in which artists' political convictions are expressed through their work
- To consider the influence of contemporary situations on the plots, settings, and perspective of dramatic works of art
- To prompt curiosity about the interpretation of *Macbeth* as seen in the HD production

Macbeth's Murders: Who Cares?

Giuseppe Verdi intended to be faithful to Shakespeare in presenting his version of *Macbeth*. But an opera and a play are different mediums, and any adaptation is also a product of its times. In this activity, students will consider some differences between politics in Shakespeare's and in Verdi's day, then observe how those differences are reflected in Verdi's work.

They will:

- be introduced to basic ideas of government in the early 1600s and mid-1800s: monarchy vs. democracy
- compare depictions of character in the two versions of *Macbeth*
- discover some functions that a chorus can perform in an opera
- acquaint themselves with some of the music of *Macbeth* in advance of the Met's HD transmission

STEPS

In this activity, students will take a close look at two moments in Verdi's *Macbeth* and compare them to parallel scenes in the Shakespeare play. Both moments involve the reaction of Verdi's chorus—the people of Scotland—to major events in the story. By studying these scenes, students will come to see a significant difference between the political theories and realities underlying the two versions. The people, central to Verdi's concept and to the politics of his day, are invisible in Shakespeare's ruling-class drama.

It is important to remember that the *Macbeth* typically performed in modern opera houses (including at the Met) is actually a substantially revised version of the original piece. Nearly twenty years after the opera's premiere in 1847, Verdi completely reshaped it by adding a new aria for Lady Macbeth ("La luce langue"), replacing Macbeth's death aria with a battle fugue, adding two new choruses, and making various other changes. These revisions render the 1865 version of *Macbeth* a stylistic hybrid; Verdi's earlier, more conventional compositions throw his acquired mastery into sharp relief. While Verdi never expressly stated whether the 1865 revisions were motivated by artistic or political sensibilities, it is impossible to deny the prevalence of Risorgimento rhetoric and ideals in the revised work.

STEP 1: The historical context of the two *Macbeths* will most likely be unfamiliar to your students. If possible, have them read articles and/or the sidebar *The Rulers and the Ruled* on James I and Italian unification before class begins. If not, be sure to allow a few minutes at the beginning of the lesson for students to do this background reading.

STEP 2: Write "1865" on the chalkboard. Ask students what associations they have with this year. (Some may mention the American Civil War or other events.) Point out that this is the year the revised version of Verdi's *Macbeth* premiered (the version heard in the Met's *Live in HD* transmission and performed in most productions worldwide).

Directly below, write “1606.” Ask students to guess what happened in that year—Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* premiered in London. Then have them subtract 1606 from 1865. The result, 259 years, is the time between the two *Macbeths*. You may want to point out that a lot can happen in two and a half centuries.

STEP 3: Ask questions based on the background readings:

- Who governed England when Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* premiered?
- How did James I become King of England?
- Who governed Italy when Verdi’s *Macbeth* premiered?
- What was the “Risorgimento?”
- What event took place in Italy in 1861? In 1871?

The points to elicit are these:

- James I was King of England in 1606. Like so many others before him, he came to power in a climate of court intrigue—much like the intrigue in *Macbeth*. Factions, marriages, alliances, backstabbing, and even murder played a role in deciding who would rule England in the 17th century.
- The Gunpowder Plot of 1605 (the year before *Macbeth* was written) had a huge impact on England’s political and cultural atmosphere. James I’s government made it very clear that any challenge to the rightful monarch’s rule was unholy and would be severely punished.
- When Verdi’s revised *Macbeth* premiered, Italy was a parliamentary kingdom, somewhat like today’s Great Britain. The Kingdom of Italy was the result of a movement to unify Italy, called the Risorgimento, or Resurgence. At the beginning

COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND MACBETH

This activity directly supports the following Social Studies/Literacy Common Core Strands:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-12.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.7

Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment.

CCSS-ELA-Literacy.RH.9-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.9

Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work



FUN FACT: Like Verdi, Abraham Lincoln was a Shakespeare devotee. In a 1863 letter to a famous Shakespearian actor of his day, Lincoln wrote, “I think nothing equals *Macbeth*. It is wonderful.”

of the 19th century, the Italian peninsula had been divided among a number of small kingdoms and duchies, lands controlled by Austria, and lands controlled by the Catholic church as supported by France. Much of that century saw a movement to create a single, unified Italian state, with the support not just of ruling-class leaders, but of the entire Italian people.

- The Kingdom of Italy was declared in 1861, but Rome was not integrated as its capital until 1870. Verdi’s revised version of *Macbeth* premiered right between those dates, in 1865.


STEP 4: Before turning to *Macbeth*, draw a copy of the “Who Cares, and Why?” chart on the chalkboard to be filled in as the lesson proceeds. One interesting difference between Shakespeare’s play and Verdi’s opera is the composer’s use of a standard operatic device—the chorus. Choruses can act as characters, representing groups of people. They can also comment on the actions of other characters. In *Macbeth*, Verdi employs two distinct kinds of chorus groups. He turns Shakespeare’s three witches into a three-part female chorus. And he also introduces a new “character,” a chorus representing the people of Scotland. This activity will take a careful look at Verdi’s use of the “people’s chorus.” Fill in the chart based on your students’ comments.

SHAKESPEARE’S MACBETH

	Who cares about...?	Why?	How do you know?
Duncan’s murder			
Macbeth’s defeat			

VERDI’S MACBETH

	Who cares about...?	Why?	How do you know?
Duncan’s murder			
Macbeth’s defeat			



Verdi casts the chorus as the oppressed people of Scotland.

PHOTO: KEN HOWARD / METROPOLITAN OPERA

STEP 5: Play **Track 7** for your students. This clip (referred to here as “Duncan’s Murder”) is the chorus’s response to the news of the king’s murder at the end of Act I. The people of Scotland call heaven and hell down upon the killers of their king. They continue, “*O gran Dio... in te solo fidiamo*” (“Almighty God... we trust in You alone”), significantly addressing their plea above the heads of earthly political leaders. Their prayer is full not only of vengeance, but of grief. Ask your students: Who is upset about Duncan’s murder in Verdi’s opera, and why? How do you know?

STEP 6: Now read Shakespeare’s version of the scene aloud. Shakespeare writes the scene differently. In *Macbeth*, Act II, Scene 3, we find the king’s sons, Malcolm and Donalbain (a character omitted by Verdi), with Banquo. It’s Banquo—a member of the ruling class—who mentions God here, and he’s not seeking help but swearing that he himself will wreak vengeance. Macduff and other assembled lords and nobles agree. The two sons, fearing for their own lives, then plan their escape—one to England, the other to Ireland. Point out that here’s no sign here of the Scottish people. Students can

now begin to fill out the “Who Cares, and Why?” chart. Who is upset about Duncan’s murder in Verdi’s opera, and why? And in Shakespeare’s play? How do you know? Complete the chart based on your students’ discussion of the clip.

STEP 7: Now play **Track 8**, or “Macbeth’s Defeat.” The conclusive evidence of a difference between Shakespeare and Verdi comes at the very end. What do your students make of the lines “*Dov’è l’usurpator? D’un soffio il fulminò il Dio della vittoria?*” (“Where is the usurper? He was no match for the god of victory.”) Again, God is credited with the deed, Macduff is merely his agent. Victory belongs not only to the new king, but to “*la patria,*” the homeland.

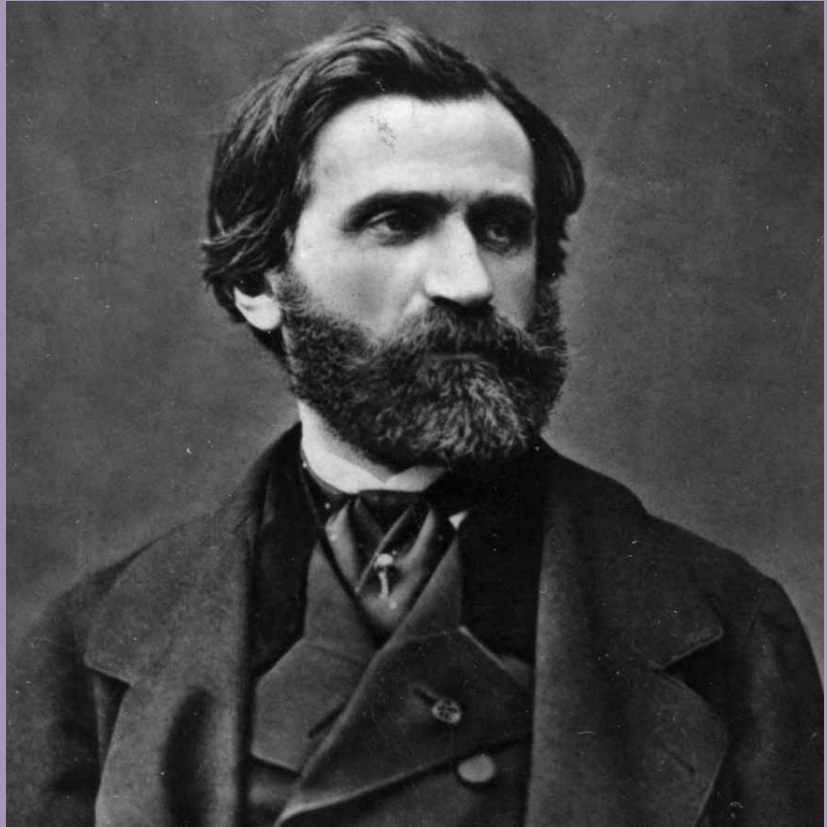
STEP 8: Now have your students read the Shakespeare aloud for comparison. While Verdi’s conclusion is stirring, Shakespeare’s feels like an afterthought. Where Verdi’s chorus sings “*Macbeth, ov’è?*” (“Where is Macbeth?”), Shakespeare shows us: at the end of Act V, Scene 8, Macduff appears with the dead man’s head.

The rest of the scene is tying up loose ends. King Malcolm has the last word—and he uses it to split up the booty and give out new titles to noblemen. He then calls home political allies who fled the country during Macbeth’s reign. Finally, he invites the governing class to his inauguration. Can your students find any mention of the Scottish people in these last two speeches?

STEP 9: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER Now it’s time to take a look at the “Who Cares, and Why?” chart. How do your students explain the differences between the two *Macbeths*? You may need to remind them of the background knowledge with which the lesson began: government looked one way to Shakespeare, another to Verdi. For Shakespeare, the question of who ruled England was one of pure power, duplicity, and cunning—he would also have felt immense pressure to reinforce the message that usurpation (stealing the throne) was ungodly and truly evil. By Verdi’s time, the idea had long existed that a government should at least represent, if not be chosen by, its people. Verdi’s *Macbeth* is not only a musical version of Shakespeare. It’s a statement in support of Italian unification, a process in full bloom, but not yet complete, in 1865. Its future course was unknown. Shakespeare, from his position outside the



Verdi and Politics



The Risorgimento The 19th century was a turbulent period in Italian history. In its early decades, the country was divided into many small kingdoms, duchies, and republics, as well as states controlled by the Catholic Church. Napoleon had invaded Italy in 1796. By 1805 he consolidated the northern territories into a new Kingdom of Italy and reduced the southern Kingdom of Sicily to a small island, renaming its mainland portion the Kingdom of Naples. After Napoleon's fall in 1815, the peninsula again split into an array of small, antagonistic domains, most of them under the influence of other European powers, particular the Habsburg Empire. It was during this period that the notion of a single unified Italian nation arose, driven by a popular movement known as the Risorgimento, or "resurgence." Giuseppe Verdi, a fiercely political and patriotic man, finally saw the creation of the Italian nation-state in 1861, and the full unification of the Italian peninsula in 1871. Several of his operas reflect his support for a unified, independent Italy. Indeed, the chorus "Va, pensiero" from *Nabucco* remains an unofficial anthem of Italian nationalist pride.



The Rulers and the Ruled: SHAKESPEARE AND JAMES I

When Queen Elizabeth I died in 1603, she had ruled England for almost 45 years. Because she had no children, she named her distant cousin, James of Scotland, as her successor. Though James I would rule England for more than 20 years, his first few years on the throne were perilous. He had to contend with conspiracies to overthrow him, and tensions between Catholic and Protestant factions culminated in the notorious Gunpowder Plot of 1605—a failed attempt by a group of Catholics to assassinate the King and destroy the Parliament building. The conspirators were executed. Writing *Macbeth* around this time, Shakespeare would have been highly aware that any play deemed subversive would put his own life in danger.

governing class, wrote a commentary on power as he understood it. Verdi, a member of a people seizing its own destiny, was writing, in part, a call to arms.

FOLLOW-UP: For homework, students can write an op-ed piece, a persuasive essay aimed at the Scottish people. Should they take up arms in the fight against Macbeth? Or is this just a fight among the ruling class? Does the average Scotsman “have a dog in this race”? Use examples from the opera to convince your audience.

To Kill a King

By the time Verdi began composing his first version of *Macbeth*, he was already clearly capable of crafting music that transformed the opera orchestra from background accompaniment into a dramatic force. Verdi’s mastery, however, comes into its full sophistication in the 1865 revisions, with the music written for the orchestra not only conveying the dramatic action of the plot, but also enhancing and delineating the different personalities of the characters on stage. The scene analyzed in this exercise was so important to Verdi that he reportedly had the singers rehearse the duet portion close to 150 times before he was satisfied. Not only does this scene establish the relationship between Lady Macbeth and Macbeth, it also describes the first murder that happens in the story, setting the power-hungry couple on their path to destruction.

In the following lesson, students will

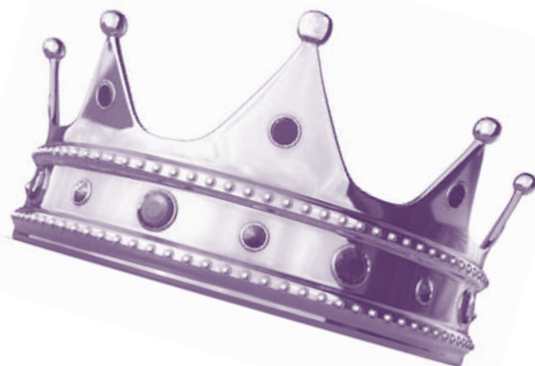
- explore the dramatic role of the orchestra
- learn new musical terminology to describe what they hear
- describe the different musical characterizations of the opera’s two leading characters

STEPS

Students will read a description of the dramatic action, listen to the corresponding audio track, and then use musical terminology to describe and justify their interpretation of the scene. You may also want to familiarize your students with a few musical terms using the *Ten Essential Musical Terms* sidebar—feel free to photocopy this and look at it with your students at the beginning of the lesson.

Also at the back of this guide is a CD with audio examples of each of the ten musical terms. These can be played for your students to illustrate the musical terms in this activity. Below is a guide to these tracks:

TRACK	MUSICAL TERM
9	A cappella
10	Cadence
11	Dotted rhythm
12	Forte
13	Orchestration (ex. 1)
14	Orchestration (ex. 2)
15	Recitative
16	Staccato
17	Timbre
18	Tremolo
19	Trills



Music

IN PREPARATION

For this activity, students will need the reproducible resources available at the back of this guide as well as the audio selections from *Macbeth* available online or on the accompanying CD.

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Music, English Language Arts, Writing

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To introduce and/or reinforce knowledge of musical terminology
- To identify new musical vocabulary by looking at selections from Verdi’s *Macbeth*
- To use new musical vocabulary to construct an argument about the opera’s plot and characters

COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND MACBETH

This activity directly supports the following ELA-Literacy Common Core Strands:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.2

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

Ten Essential Musical Terms

The following list of terms provides basic vocabulary to help your students engage more deeply with the music of *Macbeth*.

A cappella (pronounced “ah-cah-PELL-ah”) An Italian term meaning without accompaniment. In an opera, a cappella refers to a moment in which the orchestra is silent while the singer or singers continue alone.

Cadence In the simplest sense, a cadence is the end of a musical phrase or section, expressed in a sequence of chords or harmonies that create a sense of closure for the listener. Cadences can be dramatic or gentle, fast or slow, loud or soft, depending on the musical context.

Dotted rhythm A dotted rhythm refers to a rhythm in which the beat is divided into unequal parts, so that rather than being divided into two notes of equal length, long notes alternate with one or more short notes. The term comes from the musical notation, in which a dot is added to the notehead to indicate that its duration should be increased by half of its original value. An example of a repeating dotted rhythm is the heartbeat.

Forte This is another Italian word meaning “strong” or “loud.” In musical notation, the “forte” symbol, *f*, is used to indicate that a section or chord should be played or sung loudly. Two or sometimes three forte symbols next to each other, pronounced as “fortissimo,” “double forte,” or “triple forte,” indicate an extra-high volume level. The opposite term is piano (“quiet, soft”), represented by the symbol *p*.

Orchestration The word orchestration refers to the compositional process of choosing which instruments play which part or voice within a piece of music, as well as to the combination of instruments as they eventually appear in the finished score. Orchestration plays an important role in shaping the mood or atmosphere of a musical passage or piece.

Recitative A recitative is a piece or section of music in an opera in which the vocal line closely follows the rhythm and intonation of speech, with sparse instrumental accompaniment, resulting in a more natural delivery of the text than in an aria or ensemble. It can be roughly described as “speech-like singing.” Recitatives can be accompanied by a specific group of instruments like strings or woodwinds, or by the full orchestra. In 18th- and early 19th-century opera like the works of Mozart or Rossini, they are often accompanied by a harpsichord.

Staccato The term “staccato” refers to an articulation marking that tells musicians that they are to play a note in a “short and detached” manner. Playing a note “staccato” gives it a crisp, sharp feeling. The staccato symbol is a dot underneath or on top of a note in the score.

Timbre Timbre (pronounced TAM-bruh) is a French word that refers to the specific quality of sound in an instrument or voice. It is related to but independent of volume. Each person has their own timbre in their speaking and singing voice, and our ears are very good at remembering and recognizing different timbres. In an opera, timbre allows the audience to recognize characters by the sound of their voice. Listeners can also identify instruments by their timbre without being able to see them.

Tremolo A tremolo is created when string players move their bows back and forth across the string as fast as possible on the same pitch. It’s a playing technique composers often use, especially in opera, to create a dramatic musical effect to underline a specific situation or text.

Trills A trill is an ornament in a melody line created by the voice or instrument moving back and forth between two adjacent pitches very quickly. Trills can be used to display a singer’s virtuosic ability, but they’re also a powerful musical effect employed by composers to express an emotion, a state of mind, or an idea like physical movement.

STEP 1: Distribute copies of the *Ten Essential Musical Terms* sidebar. Have your students look it over as a pre-lesson assignment, or at the beginning of the class. Alternatively, you can discuss the terms as you move through the lesson and listen to the audio clips. If your students already know most of these terms, then feel free to jump right into the exercise after a quick review.

STEP 2: If possible, divide the class into ten small groups and assign each group a musical term. Have them review the meaning of their musical term together. Play **Tracks 9 through 34** and have each group raise their hands when they hear their group's musical device being used in a particularly effective way. Feel free to go straight through all tracks, or stop and discuss which musical device students heard in each track.

Note that the terms "timbre," "orchestration," and "dotted rhythms" will be the most difficult. You can also omit these terms if you prefer.

STEP 3: Now that students have been introduced both to the relevant musical terminology and the music of Verdi's *Macbeth*, distribute the *To Kill a King* reproducible handout found at the back of this guide. Begin by reading the description of the dramatic moment aloud as a class, then listen to the corresponding musical section (multiple listens may be desired). In the first empty box of each section, have students use their own words to describe the emotions they hear and feel in the music in that particular section.

In the second empty box, have students describe or list the different musical devices they hear used in the music and/or the specific instruments they hear most strongly in each section. Feel free to adjust the level of detail and specificity required based on your students' abilities. In the last empty box for each section, have students list what they believe that particular moment reveals or reiterates to the audience about Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's character.

You should feel free to provide your students with the texts and translations found in the back of this guide. Also feel free to encourage them to listen solely to the music.

A completed chart with a guide to the tracks is provided on the following pages for your convenience. The last column remains blank as there are no "right answers" for your students' inferences about the characters.



Answer Key to PART 1: THE CONSPIRING PAIR—"O DONNA MIA"

TRACK #	DRAMATIC MOMENT	MUSICAL FEELING OF THE PASSAGE OR CHARACTER(S)	MUSICAL DEVICES & INSTRUMENTS USED	CHARACTER REVEALED
20	Lady Macbeth and Macbeth meet for the first time in the opera. They discuss King Duncan's arrival, and Lady Macbeth suggests that this night might be his last.	Happiness, confidence, plotting	Repeated figures in the strings reflect the racing excitement of Macbeth's return. As Lady Macbeth sings " <i>Mai non ci rechi il sole un tal domani</i> " ("May the sun never bring that tomorrow"), referring to Duncan, Verdi punctuates the line with all-brass accompaniment, drawing attention to the importance of the statement.	
21	Taken aback, Macbeth asks what she means. Lady Macbeth answers with a question: "Don't you understand me?" The insinuation is clear: Macbeth's confirmation that he does understand (" <i>intendo</i> ") is repeated twice.	Understanding, apprehensive	A slow step up and back down in the vocal line, accentuated by the orchestra, works like a musical nudge—Lady Macbeth makes herself understood without ever expressly stating her intention to assassinate the King. A loud, aggressive trill in the lower strings underlines Macbeth's repetition of the word " <i>intendo</i> ."	
22	Macbeth asks, "And if the blow should fail?" Lady Macbeth replies that it will not fail if Macbeth is steadfast and has the courage to see it through.	Macbeth: worried, panicked, doubtful Lady Macbeth: reassuring	Notice that the whole orchestra drops out for this brief exchange, leaving the vocal lines a cappella. This draws attention to the words and allows us to focus specifically on the feelings heard in the voice alone.	
23	Lady Macbeth states that they will go meet their guest "cheerfully." The King and his entourage then appear on stage, accompanied by a merry march. Lady Macbeth leaves to greet her guests.	Confident, carefree, jovial	The music accompanying Lady Macbeth's suggestion of meeting the King "cheerfully" ends in a strong final cadence, accentuating her confidence. Played by an offstage band, the march of the King's entourage is full of dotted rhythms, hinting at a dance tune. The use of brass and snare drum is a deliberate choice of timbre to suggest a military context.	

The complete scene can be found on Track 24.

Answer Key to **PART 2: THE DAGGER LEADING HIM—“SAPPIA LA SPOSA MIA”**

TRACK #	DRAMATIC MOMENT	MUSICAL FEELING OF THE PASSAGE	MUSICAL DEVICES & INSTRUMENTS USED	CHARACTER REVEALED
25	As the King’s entourage leaves the stage and the march dies down, Macbeth asks his servant to tell his wife to bring his nightcap. He then has a vision of a dagger hovering before him.	Calm, dramatic	After a brief recitative in which Macbeth gives orders to his servant, the hushed staccato notes suggest the slow progression of a vision forming. Trills and aggressive ascending figures in the bass build dramatically to Macbeth’s opening line: “Is this a dagger which I see before me?”	
26	Macbeth begins to describe how the dagger hovers in the air in front of him, leading him down a dark path that he was already resolved to follow (the path to murdering Duncan).	Fearful, entranced, supernatural	The orchestration, interspersed with Macbeth’s musings, brings the cello to the forefront; this texture accentuates the foreboding, evil feeling of the passage. The solo cello plays a winding, slowly ascending melody. Combined with Macbeth’s ascending vocal line and the short, repeated rhythmic figures pulsing underneath in the other instruments, the music creates the feeling of Macbeth being helplessly entranced by the vision before him.	
27	Macbeth cries out in horror, then describes his vision of a floating dagger dripping with blood.	Fear, horror	The orchestra trembles underneath Macbeth’s exclamation, with double forte trills and minor harmonies paired with a sharp ascending and descending line in the bass. The music then changes to gentle chords in the strings, shifting to a major harmony.	
28	Macbeth realizes that the dagger is a figment of his imagination.	Sadness, resolution, relief	The orchestra plays gentle chords, keeping the attention on the vocal line and accenting Macbeth’s words.	
29	Macbeth describes silent earth, wrapped in slumber, and reflects on murderers who wander the dark world.	Otherworldly, eerie	Short trills are repeated in the bass, while an English horn rises to the front of the texture, playing a slowly ascending line. The strings move through repeated downward spirals, with the descending motion giving the impression of sliding or floating.	
30	Macbeth’s thoughts turn to the supernatural. He then asks that the earth silence his steps.	Solemn, remorseful	The strings play repeating patterns with aggressive bowing, giving a gnarled harshness to the sound that invokes the supernatural. Drawn-out chords gently tremble underneath Macbeth’s line as he utters a prayer-like phrase.	
31	Macbeth’s reverie is interrupted by the toll of a bell, which he identifies as Duncan’s death knell. He resolves to go through with the killing, then exits, dagger in hand.	Fear, confidence	The sound of a bell cuts through the orchestra, and tremolo in the strings underscores Macbeth’s newfound determination. He ends with a strong cadence, with the high arc of his vocal line giving him a chance to put volume and drama into the phrase. He leaves the stage to a strong descending bass line underneath aggressively trilling strings.	

Answer Key to PART 3: A DEADLY DUET: PARTNERS IN CRIME—“FATAL MIA DONNA!”

TRACK #	DRAMATIC MOMENT	MUSICAL FEELING OF THE PASSAGE	MUSICAL DEVICES & INSTRUMENTS USED	CHARACTER REVEALED
33	While Macbeth is committing the murder, Lady Macbeth enters and nervously reacts to the night sounds. She confesses her fear that Duncan might have awoken before the deadly deed was done.	Nervous, worried	A slow oscillating pattern accompanying Lady Macbeth’s entrance gives way to a mournful cry in the English horn, specifically chosen for its sorrowful timbre.	
34	Macbeth enters, covered in blood. His stunned confession of the murder moves into a description of it. He also heard voices of mourning and asks Lady Macbeth if she heard them as well. She replies that it was just the owl and that she heard nothing until Macbeth returned, assuring him that no one has noticed the crime.	Confused, shocked	Fluttering tremolos and trills are accompanied by a descending pattern in the strings as Macbeth enters. This moves into rapid exchange as he describes hearing mournful cries, with the vocal line accompanied by the English horn and the strings moving in swirling patterns underneath.	
35	Macbeth is horrified by his blood-stained hands. Lady Macbeth urges him not to look at them.	Horrified	The orchestra accentuates Macbeth’s line “ <i>O vista orribile!</i> ” (“What a terrible sight!”) with crashing, accented minor chords. This is juxtaposed sharply with a single chord accompanying Lady Macbeth’s plea that he not look at his bloody hands.	
36	Macbeth begins to describe how he heard Duncan’s courtiers praying in their sleep for protection, admitting that the word “amen” froze on his lips.	Innocent, whimsical	A flute and clarinet play the melody along with Macbeth’s vocal line, lending a childlike quality to Macbeth’s description of the prayers he heard. Sighing motions in the orchestra accompany his mention of the word “amen.”	
37	Macbeth worries that he was unable to pronounce the word “amen.” Lady Macbeth scolds him for his guilty torment, calling him foolish. She asks where his bravery, courage, and pride have gone.	Angry, pensive	Lady Macbeth’s vocal line pecks away at Macbeth in fast, accented rhythm as she chastises him.	
38	Macbeth describes how, as he stabbed Duncan, the King awoke and cursed him with sleeplessness for the rest of his life.	Dramatic, judgmental, mournful, otherworldly	As Macbeth describes Duncan’s curse, the English horn plays the mournful phrase first heard on Lady Macbeth’s entrance. It merges into plodding, funeral-like rhythms as Macbeth repeats Duncan’s words, then slowly rises between accented orchestral punctuations of Macbeth’s line.	
39	Lady Macbeth tries to convince Macbeth to go back into the King’s room and complete the deed, appealing to his sense of pride.	Pleading	Lady Macbeth adopts the same melody Macbeth was singing, trying to present him with a new perspective on what has transpired.	
40	Macbeth fearfully imagines the praise of the dead king’s valor and calls to avenge his murder.	Innocence	The flute returns.	
41	In an aside, Lady Macbeth reflects on the guilt and weakness Macbeth is displaying.	Annoyed, irritated, insulting	Lady Macbeth’s short, detached melodic line, paired with descending repetitions of the same melodic fragment, musically depict her frustrations with her husband.	

TRACK #	DRAMATIC MOMENT	MUSICAL FEELING OF THE PASSAGE	MUSICAL DEVICES & INSTRUMENTS USED	CHARACTER REVEALED
42	Macbeth continues to lament his murder of a valiant king, while Lady Macbeth continues to insult him.	Frustrated, guilty, tormented	Macbeth's noble melody, paired with a flute, is juxtaposed with Lady Macbeth's insults, set to repeated ascending lines as she attempts to drive home to Macbeth her irritation. The stark contrast between Macbeth's lilting melody and the staccato of Lady Macbeth's rant illustrates the difference in their characters.	
43	As their duet comes to a close, Lady Macbeth remains concerned by Macbeth's tormented conscience. Macbeth is still consumed by guilt.	Lamenting	As Lady Macbeth's melodic line becomes more gentle, she and Macbeth stop fighting musically and begin to sing in harmony with one another. This brings them to a joint final cadence. The music tells us that despite their differences they're still in this together.	
44	Lady Macbeth tries to convince Macbeth one last time to take the dagger and go back to finish the deed. Macbeth repeats that he cannot. Lady Macbeth takes the knife, determined to do it herself.	Aggressive, desperate, panicked	Aggressive repeated rhythms alternating with swirling strings depict Lady Macbeth's panic. Macbeth's vocal line, as he states that he cannot go back, sounds almost like wailing. There is no soaring melody as Lady Macbeth picks up the dagger and exits, revealing that this is no moral struggle for her. She will do whatever it takes to protect herself and Macbeth.	
45	There is a sudden, aggressive knocking. Macbeth is terrified by every noise. He then looks at his hands, again sees the blood, and declares that not even an ocean could wash the stains away.	Terrified	The whole orchestra is brought together for three forte knocks, providing the sound effect that Macbeth hears. As Macbeth contemplates the blood on his hands, the orchestra punctuates his line with strong rhythms.	
46	Lady Macbeth returns, covered in blood. She says she will wash away the stains and the deed will be forgotten. The knocking continues.	Anxious, hurried, disturbed	The orchestra continues to race along under Lady Macbeth's vocal line, as if depicting her mind constantly at work.	
47	Lady Macbeth desperately tries to convince Macbeth to leave so they won't rouse suspicion. Macbeth continues to wrestle with his overwhelming guilt.	Conspiring, regretful	Lady Macbeth's vocal line becomes faster and the rhythm more insistent as she tries to convince Macbeth that they need to leave, as if desperately whispering orders to him. The orchestra plays along with her vocal line. Macbeth conveys his guilt over what he has done by the same melody just sung by Lady Macbeth to try to convince him to leave, signaling that her influence over him is stronger than his guilty conscience. As they exit together, the last thing heard is the oscillation of a flute and clarinet between two notes, leaving us with an uneasy, haunted feeling.	

The uninterrupted scene can be found on **Track 48**.

Supporting the Student Experience during *The Met: Live in HD* Transmission

IN PREPARATION

In this activity, students will need the Performance Activity reproducible handouts found in the back of this guide.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND *MACBETH*

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1.c

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.6

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

Watching and listening to a performance is a unique experience which takes students beyond the printed page to an immersion in images, sound, interpretation, technology, drama, skill, and craft. Performance activities help students analyze different aspects of the experience and engage critically with the performance. They will consider the creative choices that have been made for the particular production they are watching and examine different aspects of the performance.

Each Performance Activity incorporates a reproducible sheet. Students should bring this activity sheet to the *Live in HD* transmission and fill it out during intermission and/or after the final curtain. The activities direct attention to details of the production that might otherwise go unnoticed.

The production of *Macbeth* students will hear and see in this *Live in HD* transmission incorporates a very distinctive visual design. Its sets and lighting reflect the metaphorical darkness of the story. The first activity sheet concentrates on these visual and graphic elements specific to the Met's production.

The second basic activity sheet is called *My Highs and Lows*. It is meant to be collected, opera by opera, over the course of the season. This sheet serves to guide students toward a consistent set of objective observations, as well as to help them articulate their own opinions. It is designed to enrich the students' understanding of the art form as a whole. The ratings system encourages students to express their critique: use these ratings to spark discussions that require careful, critical thinking.

The reproducible handouts for the performance activities can be found in the back of this guide. Either activity can provide the basis for class discussion after the transmission. On the next page, you'll find an additional activity created specifically for after-transmission follow-up.

Murder, Mayhem, and *Macbeth*: Examining How Verdi Translates *Macbeth* Into Opera

Students will enjoy starting the class with an open discussion of the Met performance. What did they like? What didn't they? Did anything surprise them? What would they like to see or hear again? What would they have done differently? The discussion offers an opportunity to apply the notes on students' *My Highs & Lows* sheet, as well as their thoughts about the visual design of the Met production—in short, to see themselves as *Macbeth* experts.

For some audience members, *Macbeth* can be such a smoothly integrated experience that a central theme of the opera goes unnoticed: the conflict between free will and predetermination. We see plotting, planning, and manipulation undertaken by Lady Macbeth and, to a lesser extent, by her husband. We witness the crimes they commit. Toward the end of the opera, as their enemies come together and take up arms, we hear references to those crimes and to their guilt. It may seem obvious that, as the chorus proclaims, Macbeth is “a usurper,” and that it's Macduff who liberates Scotland. But what about the witches? From Macbeth's point of view—he might have argued—all he did was act out a prophecy. Everything the witches predicted came true. Were Macbeth and his wife only agents of a predetermined fate?

The question of predetermination and free will is part of a longstanding debate of beliefs among theologians and philosophers. Some of the questions your students might want to consider are:

- Was Macbeth really guilty?
- Was he manipulated by his wife?
- Were his actions controlled by fate, as predicted by the witches?
- Did he have any choice in the matter?
- Was justice done to Macbeth, or was he just acting out a part, “signifying nothing”?

You may want to have your students stage a debate on Macbeth's responsibility and guilt. Evidence can be gathered from the opera. Arguments can be fashioned, including alternative ways to understand each turn of the story. Different characters' points of view can be taken into account.

Students can adopt a formal debate structure, or may also enjoy writing their own rules, including time limits, a code of fairness, and a system for judging the winner.

By conducting a debate, students can engage with the issues raised by *Macbeth*, practice flexible, critical thinking, and sharpen their skills of persuasion and logical argument.

IN PREPARATION

This activity requires no preparation other than attendance at the *Live in HD* transmission of *Macbeth*.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To review students' understanding of Verdi's *Macbeth*
- To explore how music affects dramatization
- To examine the opera's themes and understand their historical context
- To discuss students' overall experience in watching *Macbeth*
- To think about how artistic choices are made
- To examine how the operatic adaptation enhances the drama and power of Shakespeare's play

COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND *MACBETH*

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1d

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

The Many Moods of Mr. and Mrs. Macbeth

- 1 ACT I: The Witches, Macbeth, Banquo. The witches deliver their prophecy to Macbeth and Banquo.
- 2 ACT I: Lady Macbeth. Lady Macbeth receives her husband's report of the Witches' prophecy and begins to plan the couple's bloody rise to power.
- 3 ACT I: Macbeth, Lady Macbeth. The immediate aftermath of Macbeth's murder of Duncan; Lady Macbeth attempts to calm her husband's nerves before the crime is discovered.
- 4 ACT II: Macbeth, Lady Macbeth. Macbeth continues to struggle with his guilt. The couple eventually agrees that Banquo's assassination will take place that evening.
- 5 ACT II: Lady Macbeth. Lady Macbeth justifies the couple's past and future crimes.
- 6 ACT II: Lady Macbeth, Macbeth, Chorus. In the midst of a large banquet, Macbeth is haunted by a vision of the murdered Banquo. Lady Macbeth attempts to persuade the gathered nobles that all is well.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: HISTORY AND SOCIAL STUDIES

Macbeth's Murders: Who Cares?

- 7 ACT I: Chorus. The people of Scotland respond to the news that their King has been murdered.
- 8 ACT V: Chorus. The people of Scotland rejoice in Macbeth's defeat.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: MUSIC

To Kill a King

- 9 Ex. "A cappella"
- 10 Ex. "Cadence"
- 11 Ex. "Dotted rhythm"
- 12 Ex. "Forte"
- 13 Ex. 1 "Orchestration"
- 14 Ex. 2 "Orchestration"
- 15 Ex. "Recitative"
- 16 Ex. "Staccato"
- 17 Ex. "Timbre"
- 18 Ex. "Tremolo"
- 19 Ex. "Trills"
- 20 ACT I: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Husband and wife greet each other; Lady Macbeth insinuates that Duncan will not live through the night.
- 21 ACT I: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Macbeth admits he understands exactly what his wife is implying.
- 22 ACT I: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Macbeth worries that the plot could go awry; Lady Macbeth assures him that it will not if his courage does not waver.
- 23 ACT I: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. The King's entourage approaches and the Macbeths hurry to greet the monarch they plan to kill.
- 24 Tracks 20–23 continuously.
- 25 ACT I: Macbeth. Macbeth asks a servant to carry a message to his wife, then has a vision of a bloody dagger hovering in the air.
- 26 ACT I: Macbeth. Macbeth wonders at the dagger pointing him towards Duncan's chambers.

- 27 ACT I: Macbeth. Macbeth exclaims in horror at the blood dripping from the dagger.
- 28 ACT I: Macbeth. He realizes that the dagger is a figment of his imagination.
- 29 ACT I: Macbeth. Macbeth reflects on the night.
- 30 ACT I: Macbeth. Macbeth's thoughts turn to the supernatural as he asks the earth to muffle to sound of his footsteps.
- 31 ACT I: Macbeth. A bell tolls, a signal from Lady Macbeth that it is time to commit the murder. Macbeth declares it Duncan's death knell and exits to Duncan's chambers.
- 32 Tracks 25–31 continuously
- 33 ACT I: Lady Macbeth. While she awaits Macbeth's return, Lady Macbeth contemplates the night sounds and worries that Duncan might have awoken before the fatal blow.
- 34 ACT I: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Macbeth enters covered in Duncan's blood.
- 35 ACT I: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Macbeth exclaims in horror at the sight of his bloody hands.
- 36 ACT I: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Macbeth describes the murder.
- 37 ACT I: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Macbeth worries that he could not pray after killing Duncan; Lady Macbeth chastises him.
- 38 ACT I: Macbeth. Macbeth tells his wife that he heard a voice telling him he would never sleep again.
- 39 ACT I: Lady Macbeth. Lady Macbeth mocks her husband's sudden weakness.

- 40 ACT I: Macbeth. Macbeth imagines how future remembrances of Duncan's valor will haunt him.
- 41 ACT I: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. In an aside, Lady Macbeth wonders at her husband's sudden weakness.
- 42 ACT I: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Macbeth continues to imagine his future guilt; Lady Macbeth wonders at her husband's torment.
- 43 ACT I: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth continue their individual reflections.
- 44 ACT I: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Lady Macbeth ends their separate reveries by demanding that Macbeth return to the scene of the crime to smear the guards with Duncan's blood. Macbeth refuses; Lady Macbeth takes the dagger from him and returns herself.
- 45 ACT I: Macbeth. Loud knocking at the castle gate startles Macbeth.
- 46 ACT I: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Lady Macbeth returns, her hands now also covered in blood. The knocking continues.
- 47 ACT I: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Lady Macbeth attempts to pull Macbeth away to avoid suspicion; Macbeth remains consumed by guilt.
- 48 Tracks 33–47 continuously

**Excerpts taken from the
Metropolitan Opera broadcast of
December 18, 1982**

LADY MACBETH
Renata Scotto

MACDUFF
Timothy Jenkins

MALCOLM
John Gilmore

MACBETH
Sherrill Milnes

BANQUO
Paul Plishka

Conducted by
James Levine

Metropolitan Opera
Orchestra and Chorus

MACBETH

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

The Many Moods of Mr. and Mrs. Macbeth

TRACK 1

FIRST GROUP OF WITCHES: Salve!	Hail!
SECOND GROUP OF WITCHES: Salve!	Hail!
THIRD GROUP OF WITCHES: Salve!	Hail!
FIRST GROUP OF WITCHES: Men sarai di Macbetto eppur maggiore!	You'll be lesser than Macbeth—yet greater!
SECOND GROUP OF WITCHES: Non quanto lui, ma più di lui felice!	Not as happy as he is—but happier!
THIRD GROUP OF WITCHES: Non re, ma di monarchi genitore!	Not king—but the father of kings!
ALL WITCHES: Macbetto e Banco vivano! Banco e Macbetto vivano!	Long live Macbeth and Banquo! Long live Banquo and Macbeth!
MACBETH: Vanirono. Saranno i figli tuoi sovrani.	They've vanished. Your descendants will be kings.
BANCO: E tu re pria di loro.	And you'll be king before them.
MACBETH & BANCO: Accenti arcani!	What puzzling words!

What feelings did you hear Macbeth express in this excerpt?

MACBETH

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

The Many Moods of Mr. and Mrs. Macbeth (CONTINUED)

TRACK 2

LADY MACBETH: "Nel dì della vittoria io le incontrai. Stupito io n'era per le udite cose; quando i nunzi del Re mi salutarò Sir di Caudore, vaticinio uscito dalle veggenti stesse che predissero un serto al capo mio. Racchiudi in cor questo segreto. Addio."

Ambizioso spirito tu sei, Macbetto.
Alla grandezza aneli, ma sarai tu malvagio?
Pien di misfatti è il calle della potenza,
e mal per lui che il piede dubitoso vi pone, e retrocede!

Vieni t'affretta! Accendere ti vo' quel freddo core!
L'audace impresa a compiere io ti darò valore!

"It was on the day of victory that I met them.
I was stunned to hear them say such things.
When the king's messengers saluted me as Thane of Cawdor,
a prophecy these seers made was fulfilled. These same
fortune tellers predicted that I will wear a crown. Keep this
secret in your heart. Farewell."

You are an ambitious soul, Macbeth.
You long for greatness, but will you be ruthless?
The road to power is paved with crime,
and woe to him who hesitantly starts out on it and retreats!

Come! Hurry! I want to set fire to your cold heart!
I will give you the courage to complete this daring task!

What feelings did you hear Lady Macbeth express in this excerpt?



MACBETH

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

The Many Moods of Mr. and Mrs. Macbeth (CONTINUED)

TRACK 3

MACBETH: Fatal mia donna! un murmure,
Com'io non intendesti?

LADY MACBETH: Del gufo udii lo stridere.
Testé, che mai dicesti?

MACBETH: Io?

LADY MACBETH: Dinanzi udirti parvemi.

MACBETH: Mentre io scendea?

LADY MACBETH: Sì! Sì!

MACBETH: Di! nella stanza attigua chi dorme?

LADY MACBETH: Il regal figlio...

MACBETH: (*looking at his hands*) O vista, o vista orribile!

LADY MACBETH: Storna da questo il ciglio.

MACBETH: Nel sonno udii che oravano i cortigiani,
"E Dio sempre ne assista," ei dissero; "Amen" dir
vulli anch'io, ma la parola indocile gelò sui labbri miei.

LADY MACBETH: Follie!

MACBETH: Perché, ripetere quell'"Amen" non potei?

LADY MACBETH: Follie, follie che sperdono i primi rai del dì.

MACBETH: Allora questa voce m'intesi nel petto:
Avrai per guanciali sol vepri, o Macbetto!
Il sonno per sempre, Glamis, uccidesti!
Non v'è che vigilia, Caudore, per te!

LADY MACBETH: Ma dimmi, altra voce non parti d'udire?
Sei vano, o Macbetto, ma privo d'ardire:
Glamis, a mezz'opra vacilli, t'arresti,
Fanciul vanitoso, Caudore, tu sei.

MACBETH: Com'angeli d'ira vendetta tuonarmi
Udrò di Duncano le sante virtù.

LADY MACBETH: (Quell'animo trema, combatte, delira...
Chi mai lo direbbe l'invitto che fu?)
(*to Macbeth*) Il pugnàl là riportate
Le sue guardie insanguinate.
Che l'accusa in lor ricada.

MACBETH: Io colà non posso entrar!

LADY MACBETH: Dammi il ferro!

Oh my cruel lady, I just heard something.
Did you too?

I heard an owl shriek.
What did you just say a moment ago?

Me?

I thought I just heard you say something.

While I was coming down the stairs?

Yes! Yes!

Tell me, who is sleeping in the next room?

The royal son

What a sight! What a terrible sight!

Look the other way.

In their sleep, I heard the courtiers praying.
"God be with us always," they said. I too wanted to
say "Amen," but the rebellious word froze on my lips.

That's madness!

Why couldn't I say "Amen?"

Madness! Madness that the first light of day will disperse.

Then I heard this voice inside me saying:
You will only have thorns for a pillow, Macbeth!
You have murdered sleep forever, Glamis!
You will never sleep again, Cawdor!

But tell me, didn't you hear another voice?
You're all talk, Macbeth; you don't have any guts.
Glamis, you hesitate halfway through, then you stop.
You're a cocky little runt, Cawdor.

Like vengeance Duncan's holy virtues will thunder
down on me like angry angels.

(How his spirit trembles, struggles, raves.
Who would ever call him the champion that he was?)
Bring the dagger back.
Smear blood on his guards, so that
the blame will fall on them.

Me? I can't go in there!

Give me the blade!

MACBETH

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

The Many Moods of Mr. and Mrs. Macbeth (CONTINUED)

What feelings did you hear Macbeth and Lady Macbeth express in this excerpt?

TRACK 4

LADY MACBETH: Perché, mi sfuggi, e fiso ognor ti veggo in un pensier profondo? Il fatto è irreparabile! Veraci parlar le maliarde, e re tu sei. Il figlio di Duncan, per l'improvvisa sua fuga in Inghilterra, parricida fu detto, e vuoto il soglio a te lasciò.

MACBETH: Ma le spirtali donne Banco padre di regi han profetato. Dunque i suoi figli regneran? Duncano per costor sarà spento?

LADY MACBETH: Egli e suo figlio vivono, è ver.

MACBETH: Ma vita immortale non hanno.

LADY MACBETH: Ah sì, non l'hanno!

MACBETH: Forz'è che scorra un altro sangue, o donna!

LADY MACBETH: Dove? Quando?

MACBETH: Al venir di questa notte!

LADY MACBETH: Immoto sarai tu nel tuo disegno?

MACBETH: Banco! l'eternità t'apre il suo regno!

Why are you avoiding me, and why do I always find you deep in thought? The deed is done. The witches spoke the truth, and you're king. Because he suddenly fled to England, Duncan's son has been accused of killing his father, leaving the throne empty for you.

But the witches prophesied that Banquo would be the father of kings. So will his sons rule? Did Duncan die for them?

True, he and his son are alive.

But they won't live forever.

You're right. They won't!

More blood must flow, my lady!

Where? When?

Tonight!

Will you be firm in your intention?

Banquo, eternity opens its gates to you!

What feelings did you hear Macbeth and Lady Macbeth express in this excerpt?

MACBETH

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

The Many Moods of Mr. and Mrs. Macbeth (CONTINUED)

TRACK 5

LADY MACBETH: La luce langue, il faro spegnesi
Ch'eterno corre per gli ampi cieli!
Notte desiata provvida veli
La man colpevole che ferirà.
Nuovo delitto! È necessario!
Compersi debbe l'opra fatale.
Ai trapassati regnar non cale
A loro un requiem, l'eternità.

O voluttà del soglio! O scettro, alfin sei mio!
Ogni mortal desio tace e s'acqueta in te.
Cadrà fra poco esanime chi fu predetto re.

The light is fading. The beacon that eternally moves
across the broad heavens has gone out!
Longed-for night, cover up
the guilty hand that will strike.
Another murder! It's necessary!
The fatal deed must be done.
To the dead a kingdom means nothing.
They have their requiem—and eternity.

O coveted throne! O sceptre! At last you're mine!
You calm and quench every mortal desire.
In a short while, the one who would be king will die.

What feelings did you hear Lady Macbeth express in this excerpt?

MACBETH

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

The Many Moods of Mr. and Mrs. Macbeth (CONTINUED)

TRACK 6

LADY MACBETH: Che ti scosta, o re mio sposo,
dalla gioia del banchetto?

MACBETH: Banco falla! Il valoroso chiuderebbe io serto eletto a
quant'avvi di più degno nell'intero nostro regno.

LADY MACBETH: Venir disse, e ci mancò.

MACBETH: In sua vece io sederò.
*(Macbeth goes to sit down. Banquo's ghost,
seen only by Macbeth, sits in his place.)*

Di voi chi ciò fece?

GUESTS: Che parli?

MACBETH: *(to the ghost)*
Non dirmi, non dirmi ch'io fossi!
Le ciocche cruenta non scuotermi incontro!

GUESTS: Macbetto è soffrente! Partiamo.

LADY MACBETH: Restate! Gli è morbo fugace.
(softly to Macbeth) E un uomo voi siete?

MACBETH: Lo sono, ed audace s'io guardo tal cosa che al
dimone istesso porrebbe spavento... là... là... nol ravvisi?
(to the ghost)

O, poi che le chiome scollar t'è concesso, favella!
il sepolcro può render gli uccisi?
(The ghost disappears.)

LADY MACBETH: Voi siete demente!

MACBETH: Quest'occhi l'han visto.

What's keeping you, my king and husband,
away from the party?

Banquo is missing! That valiant man would complete the elite
circle of the most honorable in our kingdom.

He said he would come, but he is not here.

I'll sit in his place.

Which one of you did this?

What are you talking about?

Don't tell me that it was me!
Don't shake your bloody locks at me!

Macbeth isn't feeling well. We'll go.

Stay! His sickness is passing.
What kind of man are you?

I am a strong one if I can look upon something that would
scare the devil himself. There! There! Can't you see it?

Oh, since you can shake your head, tell me!
Can the dead come back from the grave?

You're insane!

I saw him with my own eyes.

What feelings did you hear Macbeth and/or Lady Macbeth express in this excerpt?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

The Many Moods of Mr. and Mrs. Macbeth (CONTINUED)

Who do you think has more power over the other—Macbeth or Lady Macbeth? Take a minute to review the notes you took while listening to the music, then write a paragraph justifying your answer. Be sure to use evidence from the music and libretto.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Macbeth's Murders: Who Cares?

Duncan's Murder

Verdi's *Macbeth*: Act I

TRACK 7

CHORUS: Schiudi, inferno, la bocca ed inghiotti
Nel tuo grembo l'intero creato;
Sull'ignoto assassino esecrato
Le tue fiamme discendano, o Ciel!

O gran Dio, che ne' cuori penetri,
Tu ne assisti, in te solo fidiamo;
Da te lume, consiglio cerchiamo
A squarciar delle tenebre il vel!

L'ira tua formidabile e pronta
Colga l'empio, o fatal punitor;
E vi stampi sul volto l'impronta
Che stampasti sul primo uccisor.

Hell, open your mouth wide and slurp
All creation down your belly!
Let your flames rain down on the mysterious,
detestable assassin, oh Heaven!

Almighty God, who can see into our hearts,
help us! We trust in you alone. We look to You
for light and guidance so that we may
tear apart the veil of darkness!

May your swift, formidable anger
capture the unholy one, o deadly punisher;
and mark his head as you marked
that of the first murderer.

Shakespeare's *Macbeth*: Act II, Scene 3

BANQUO: Fears and scruples shake us:
In the great hand of God I stand; and thence
Against the undivulged pretence I fight
Of treasonous malice.

MACDUFF: And so do I.

ALL: So all.

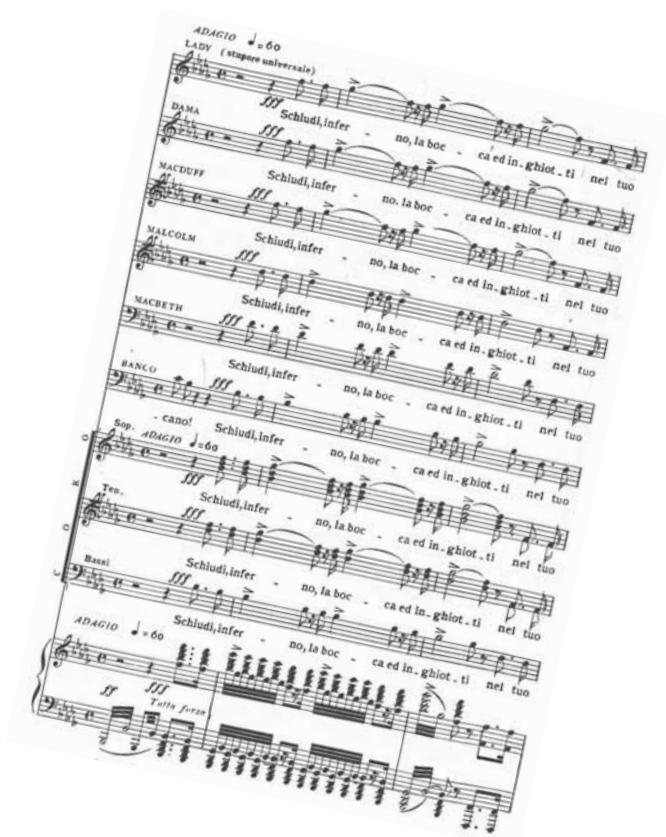
MACBETH: Let's briefly put on manly readiness,
And meet i' the hall together.

ALL: Well contented.

Exeunt all but Malcolm and Donalbain

MALCOLM: What will you do?
Let's not consort with them:
To show an unfelt sorrow is an office
Which the false man does easy. I'll to England.

DONALBAIN: To Ireland, I; our separated fortune
Shall keep us both the safer: where we are,
There's daggers in men's smiles: the near in blood,
The nearer bloody.



MACBETH

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Macbeth's Murders: Who Cares? (CONTINUED)

Macbeth's Defeat

Verdi's *Macbeth*: Act IV

TRACK 8

CHORUS: Macbeth, Macbeth ov'è?

Dov'è l'usurpator?

D'un soffio il fulminò

Il Dio della vittoria.

(to Macduff)

Il prode eroe egli è

Che spense il traditor!

La patria, il re salvò;

A lui onore e gloria.

WOMEN'S CHORUS: Salgan mie grazie a te,

Gran Dio vendicator;

A chi ne liberò

Inni cantiam di gloria.

MACDUFF: S'affidi ognun al re

Ridato al nostro amor!

L'aurora che spuntò

Vi darà pace e gloria!

MALCOLM: Confida, o Scozia, in me;

Fu spento l'oppressor!

La gioia eternerò

Per noi di tal vittoria.

Macbeth, Macbeth, where are you?

Where is the usurper?

He was no match for

the god of victory.

A valiant hero is he

who killed the traitor!

He has saved our homeland and the crown!

Honor and glory to him!

My thanks rise to you,

Great god of vengeance.

Let us sing hymns of glory to

the man that freed us.

Let us all place our trust in the king

who has returned our love!

The dawn has broken and

will bring you peace and glory!

Scotland, trust in me;

for the oppressor is dead!

I will make the joy of our victory

last forever.

Shakespeare's *Macbeth*: Act V, Scene 8

MALCOLM: My thanes and kinsmen,

Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland

In such an honor named. What's more to do,

Which would be planted newly with the time,

As calling home our exiled friends abroad

That fled the snares of watchful tyranny;

Producing forth the cruel ministers

Of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen,

Who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent hands

Took off her life; this, and what needful else

That calls upon us, by the grace of Grace,

We will perform in measure, time and place:

So, thanks to all at once and to each one,

Whom we invite to see us crown'd at Scone.

MACBETH

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Macbeth's Murders: Who Cares? (CONTINUED)



SHAKESPEARE'S MACBETH

	Who cares about...?	Why?	How do you know?
Duncan's murder			
Macbeth's defeat			

VERDI'S MACBETH

	Who cares about...?	Why?	How do you know?
Duncan's murder			
Macbeth's defeat			



MACBETH

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

To Kill a King

Part 1: The Conspiring Pair—“O donna mia”

TRACK	DRAMATIC MOMENT	MUSICAL FEELING	MUSICAL DEVICES & INSTRUMENTS	CHARACTER REVEALING
20	Lady Macbeth and Macbeth meet for the first time in the opera. They discuss King Duncan’s arrival, and Lady Macbeth suggests that this night might be his last.			
21	Taken aback, Macbeth asks what she means. Lady Macbeth answers with a question: “Don’t you understand?” The insinuation is clear—Macbeth’s confirmation that he does understand (“ <i>intendo</i> ”) is repeated twice.			
22	Macbeth asks, “And if the blow should fail?” Lady Macbeth replies that it will not fail if Macbeth is steadfast and has the courage to see it through.			
23	Lady Macbeth states that they will go meet their guest “cheerfully.” The King and his entourage then appear on stage, accompanied by a merry march. Lady Macbeth leaves to greet her guests.			

MACBETH

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

To Kill a King (CONTINUED)

TRACK 20

MACBETH: O donna mia!

LADY MACBETH: Caudore!

MACBETH: Fra poco il re vedrai.

LADY MACBETH: E partirà?

MACBETH: Domani.

LADY MACBETH: Mai non ci rechi il sole un tal domani.

O my lady!

Cawdor!

Soon you will see the King.

And when will he leave?

Tomorrow.

May the sun never bring that tomorrow.

TRACK 21

MACBETH: Che parli?

LADY MACBETH: E non intendi?

MACBETH: Intendo, intendo!

LADY MACBETH: Or bene?

What are you saying?

Don't you understand?

I understand.

Well?

TRACK 22

MACBETH: E se fallisse il colpo?

LADY MACBETH: Non fallirà; se tu non tremi

And if the blow should fail?

It will not fail if you do not waver.

TRACK 23

(sounds of celebration are heard approaching)

LADY MACBETH: Il Re! Lieto or lo vieni ad incontrar con me.

(they exit)

The King! Now come and greet him cheerfully with me.

TRACK 24

Track 24 is an uninterrupted recording of this scene.

MACBETH

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

To Kill a King (CONTINUED)

Part 2: The Dagger Leading Him—“Sappia la sposa mia”

TRACK	DRAMATIC MOMENT	MUSICAL FEELING	MUSICAL DEVICES & INSTRUMENTS	CHARACTER REVEALING
25	As the King’s entourage leaves the stage and the march dies down, Macbeth asks his servant to tell his wife to bring his nightcap. He then has a vision of a dagger hovering before him.			
26	Macbeth begins to describe how the dagger hovers in the air in front of him, leading him down a dark path that he was already resolved to follow (the path to murdering Duncan).			
27	Macbeth cries out in horror, then describes his vision of a floating dagger dripping with blood.			
28	Macbeth realizes that the dagger is a figment of his imagination.			
29	Macbeth describes silent earth, wrapped in slumber, and reflects on murderers who wander the dark world.			
30	Macbeth’s thoughts turn to the supernatural. He then asks that the earth silence his steps.			
31	Macbeth’s reverie is interrupted by the toll of a bell, which he identifies as Duncan’s death knell. He resolves to go through with the killing, then exits, dagger in hand.			

MACBETH

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

To Kill a King (CONTINUED)

TRACK 25

MACBETH: Sappia la sposa mia che, pronta appena la mia tazza
notturna, vo' che un tocco di squilla a me lo avvisi.

Mi si affaccia un pugnol
L'elsa a me volta?
Se larva non dei tu, ch'io ti brandisca.
Mi sfuggi, eppur ti veggo!

Tell my lady to prepare my nightly cup,
And then sound a bell when it is ready.

Is this a dagger which I see before me?
The handle toward my hand?
If you are not a dream, let me clutch you.
You fly from me, and yet I can see you!

TRACK 26

A me precorri sul conuso cammin
che nella mente di seguir disegnavi!

You forge ahead of me along the path
which my mind has already planned for me!

TRACK 27

Orrenda imago! Solco sanguigno la tua lama irriga!

Horrid sight! The blade is streaked with blood!

TRACK 28

Ma nulla esiste ancor. Il sol cruento mio pensier
la da forma, e come vera mi presenta allo
sguardo una chimera.

But now there's no such thing. It is only a figment of my
bloodthirsty imagination, an illusion that tries to fool my eyes
into thinking it is real.

TRACK 29

Sulla metà del mondo or morta è la natura;
Or l'assasino come fantasma per l'ombre si striscia,

Half of the world is now dead asleep. Now the murderer
creeps like a phantom through the shadows.

TRACK 30

Or consuman le streghe i lor misteri,
Immobil terra! a passi miei sta muta.

Now the witches celebrate their secrets.
Sure, firm-set earth! Stay hushed at my steps.

TRACK 31

(A bell rings.) E' deciso.
quel bronzo, ecco, m'invita!
Non udirlo, Duncan!
È squillo eterno
Che nel cielo ti chiama
o nell'inferno.
(He goes into the King's chambers.)

It is done.
That bell invites me!
Hear it not, Duncan.
It is a knell
That summons you to heaven
or to hell.

TRACK 32

Track 32 is an uninterrupted recording of the above.

MACBETH

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

To Kill a King (CONTINUED)

Part 3: A Deadly Duet: Partners in Crime—“Fatal mia donna!”

TRACK	DRAMATIC MOMENT	MUSICAL FEELING	MUSICAL DEVICES & INSTRUMENTS	CHARACTER REVEALING
33	While Macbeth is committing the murder, Lady Macbeth enters and nervously reacts to the night sounds. She confesses her fear that Duncan might have awoken before the deadly deed was done.			
34	Macbeth enters, covered in blood. His stunned confession of the murder moves into a description of it. He also heard voices of mourning and asks Lady Macbeth if she heard them as well. She replies that it was just the owl and that she heard nothing until Macbeth returned, assuring him that no one has noticed the crime.			
35	Macbeth is horrified by his blood-stained hands. Lady Macbeth urges him not to look at them.			
36	Macbeth begins to describe how he heard Duncan’s courtiers praying in their sleep for protection, admitting that the word “amen” froze on his lips.			
37	Macbeth worries that he was unable to pronounce the word “amen.” Lady Macbeth scolds him for his guilty torment, calling him foolish. She asks where his bravery, courage, and pride have gone.			
38	Macbeth describes how, as he stabbed Duncan, the King awoke and cursed him with sleeplessness for the rest of his life.			
39	Lady Macbeth tries to convince Macbeth to go back into the King’s room and complete the deed, appealing to his sense of pride.			

MACBETH

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

To Kill a King (CONTINUED)

TRACK	DRAMATIC MOMENT	MUSICAL FEELING	MUSICAL DEVICES & INSTRUMENTS	CHARACTER REVEALING
40	Macbeth fearfully imagines the praise of the dead king's valor and calls to avenge his murder.			
41	In an aside, Lady Macbeth reflects on the guilt and weakness Macbeth is displaying.			
42	Macbeth continues to lament his murder of a valiant king, while Lady Macbeth continues to insult him.			
43	As their duet comes to a close, Lady Macbeth remains concerned by Macbeth's tormented conscience. Macbeth is still consumed by guilt.			
44	Lady Macbeth tries to convince Macbeth one last time to take the dagger and go back to finish the deed. Macbeth repeats that he cannot. Lady Macbeth takes the knife, determined to do it herself.			
45	There is a sudden, aggressive knocking. Macbeth is terrified by every noise. He then looks at his hands, again sees the blood, and declares that not even an entire ocean could wash the stains away.			
46	Lady Macbeth returns, covered in blood. She says she will wash away the stains and the deed will be forgotten. The knocking continues.			
47	Lady Macbeth desperately tries to convince Macbeth to leave so they won't rouse suspicion. Macbeth continues to wrestle with his overwhelming guilt.			

MACBETH

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

To Kill a King (CONTINUED)

TRACK 33

LADY MACBETH: Regna il sonno su tutti.
Oh, qual lamento!
Risponde il gufo al suo lugubre addio!

MACBETH: (*from inside*) Chi v'ha?

LADY MACBETH: Ch'ei fosse di letargo uscito pria del colpo mortal?

Sleep reigns over everyone.
Ah, that moaning!
The owl responds to his mournful farewell.

Who's there?

What if he was roused from his sleep before the fatal blow?

TRACK 34

MACBETH: Tutto è finito!
(*He approaches Lady Macbeth and whispers.*)
Fatal mia donna! un murmure,
Com'io non intendesti?

LADY MACBETH: Del gufo udii lo stridere.
Testé, che mai dicesti?

MACBETH: Io?

LADY MACBETH: Dinanzi udirti parvemi.

MACBETH: Mentre io scendea?

LADY MACBETH: Sì! Sì!

MACBETH: Dì! nella stanza attigua chi dorme?

LADY MACBETH: Il regal figlio...

It is finished!

Oh my cruel lady, I just heard something.
Did you too?

I heard an owl shriek.
What did you just say a moment ago?

Me?

I thought I just heard you say something.

While I was coming down the stairs?

Yes! Yes!

Tell me, who is sleeping in the next room?

The royal son...

TRACK 35

MACBETH: (*looking at his hands*) O vista, o vista orribile!

LADY MACBETH: Storna da questo il ciglio.

What a sight! What a terrible sight!

Look the other way.

TRACK 36

MACBETH: Nel sonno udii che oravano i cortigiani,
"E Dio sempre ne assista," ei dissero; "Amen" dir
vulli anch'io, ma la parola indocile gelò sui labbri miei.

In their sleep, I heard the courtiers praying.
"God be with us always," they said. I too wanted to
say "Amen," but the rebellious word froze on my lips.

TRACK 37

LADY MACBETH: Follie!

MACBETH: Perché, ripetere quell'Amen non potei?

LADY MACBETH: Follie, follie che sperdono i primi rai del dì.

That's madness!

Why couldn't I say "Amen?"

Madness! Madness that the first light of day will disperse.

MACBETH

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

To Kill a King (CONTINUED)

TRACK 38

MACBETH: Allora questa voce m'intesi nel petto:
Avrai per guanciali sol vepri, o Macbetto!
Il sonno per sempre, Glamis, uccidesti!
Non v'è che vigilia, Caudore, per te!

Then I heard this voice inside me saying:
You will only have thorns for a pillow, Macbeth!
You have murdered sleep forever, Glamis!
You will never sleep again, Cawdor!

TRACK 39

LADY MACBETH: Ma dimmi, altra voce non parti d'udire?
Sei vano, o Macbetto, ma privo d'ardire:
Glamis, a mezz'opra vacilli, t'arresti,
Fanciul vanitoso, Caudore, tu sei.

But tell me, didn't you hear another voice?
You're all talk, Macbeth; you don't have any guts.
Glamis, you hesitate halfway through, then you stop.
You're a cocky little runt, Cawdor.

TRACK 40

MACBETH: Com'angeli d'ira vendetta tuonarmi
Udrò di Duncano le sante virtù.

Like vengeance Duncan's holy virtues will thunder
down on me like angry angels.

TRACK 41

LADY MACBETH: (Quell'animo trema, combatte, delira...
Chi mai lo direbbe l'invitto che fu?)

(How his spirit trembles, struggles, raves.
Who would ever call him the champion that he was?)

TRACKS 42–43

LADY MACBETH: (Quell'animo trema, combatte, delira...
Chi mai lo direbbe l'invitto che fu?)

(How his spirit trembles, struggles, raves.
Who would ever call him the champion that he was?)

MACBETH: Vendetta! tuonarmi com'angeli d'ira
Udrò di Duncano le sante virtù.

Like vengeance, Duncan's holy virtues will thunder
down on me like angry angels.

TRACK 44

LADY MACBETH: (*to Macbeth*) Il pugnàl là riportate
Le sue guardie insanguinate.
Che l'accusa in lor ricada.

Bring the dagger back.
Smear blood on his guards, so that
the blame will fall on them.

MACBETH: Io colà non posso entrar!

Me? I can't go in there!

LADY MACBETH: Dammi il ferro!
(*She takes the knife from Macbeth's hands
and goes into the King's chambers.*)

Give me the blade!

MACBETH

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

To Kill a King (CONTINUED)

TRACK 45

(There is a loud knocking at the castle gates)

MACBETH: Ogni rumore mi spaventa!

(Looking at his hands)

O! Questa mano!

Non potrebbe l'Oceano

Queste mani a me lavar!

MACBETH: Every noise frightens me!

Oh, this hand!

The ocean could not

wash my hands clean!

TRACK 46

LADY MACBETH: *(returning)*

Ve! le mani ho lorde anch'io;

Poco spruzzo, e monde son.

L'opra anch'essa andrà in oblio.

Battono di nuovo.

MACBETH: Odi tu? Raddoppia il suon!

See! My hands are stained too.

A sprinkle of water and they will be clean again.

The deed too will be forgotten.

There is more knocking.

Hear that? It's getting louder.

TRACK 47

LADY MACBETH: Vieni altrove! ogni sospetto

Rimoviam dall'uccisor;

Torna in te! Fa cor, Macbetto!

Non ti vinca un vil timor.

MACBETH: O potessi il mio delitto

Dalla mente cancellar!

Deh, sapessi, o Re trafitto,

L'alto sonno a te spezzar!

(Lady Macbeth drags him off.)

Come away! We must remove

all suspicion from the murderer.

Be yourself, Macbeth! Have courage!

Don't be defeated by fear.

Oh, if only I could wipe my crime

from my mind!

O murdered King, if only I could

rouse you from your deep sleep.

TRACK 48

Track 48 is an uninterrupted recording of this scene.

At the Met: *Black and Light*

Adrian Noble, who directed this production of *Macbeth*, had some very clear ideas about the way the sets, costumes and lighting should look. We're certainly not in 16th-century Scotland! Can you find the visual themes of the production? Take notes on what you see, then see what conclusions you come to.

SETS

CONCLUSIONS:

ACT I _____

ACT II _____

ACT III _____

COSTUMES

WHERE DOES IT TAKE PLACE?

What men wear _____

What Lady Macbeth wears _____

WHEN DOES IT TAKE PLACE?

What the witches wear _____

LIGHTING

WHAT DOES THIS INTERPRETATION OF MACBETH IMPLY ABOUT WORLD HISTORY? DO YOU AGREE?

In the forest _____

In Macbeth's castle _____

On the battlefield _____

Macbeth: My Highs & Lows

OCTOBER 11, 2014

CONDUCTED BY FABIO LUISI

REVIEWED BY _____

THE STARS	STAR POWER	MY COMMENTS
ŽELJKO LUČIĆ AS MACBETH	* * * * *	
ANNA NETREBKO AS LADY MACBETH	* * * * *	
RENÉ PAPE AS BANQUO	* * * * *	
JOSEPH CALLEJA AS MACDUFF	* * * * *	
THE CHORUS OF WITCHES	* * * * *	

THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE	ACTION	MUSIC	SET DESIGN/STAGING
ACT I, SCENE I: A BARREN HEATH MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
SCENE 2: A HALL IN MACBETH'S CASTLE MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
ACT II, SCENE 1: A ROOM IN THE CASTLE MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
SCENE 2: A PARK NEAR THE CASTLE MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
SCENE 3: THE BANQUET HALL MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
ACT III: THE WITCHES' CAVE MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
ACT IV, SCENE 1: THE SCOTTISH-ENGLISH BORDER MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
SCENE 2: MACBETH'S CASTLE MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
SCENE 3: A BATTLEFIELD MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5

