
Shakespeare's Globe Theater

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This year, on April 23, the 450th anniversary of William Shakespeare's birth was celebrated, and the London theater company which bears his name, Shakespeare's Globe, began a two-year tour presenting a version of **Hamlet** around the world.



Naeem Hayat and Jenniffer Leong in the roles of Hamlet and Ophelia. Photo: Ladyrene Pérez/ Cubadebate.

After traveling 34,345 kilometers and visiting 30 countries, including Norway, Russia, Finland,

Ukraine, Croatia, the United States, and the Bahamas, the project entitled **Globe to Globe Hamlet** has arrived in Cuba, the company's first stop in a Spanish-speaking nation.

From Havana, the small group of artists will take their rendition of the great tragedy **Hamlet, Prince of Denmark** to other locations in the region, including the Cathedral Esplanade, Yucatán, Mexico; Bliss Centre for the Performing Arts in Belize; Cerro Santo Domingo, Antigua Guatemala; the Copán archaeological site in Honduras; El Salvador's National Theater; the Rubén Darío National Theater in Managua; the Espressivo Theater, San José, Costa Rica; Little Theatre, Kingston, Jamaica; Karibe Resort, Port-au-Prince, Haiti; and the National Theater in Santo Domingo.

According to artistic director Dominic Dromgoole, this is a theater adventure which has come to terms with the spirit of touring, communicating stories to fresh audiences, always central to Shakespeare's work.



The project's artistic director,

Dominic Dromgoole

Dromgoole, who has staged a number of classics including **Coriolanus**, **Anthony and Cleopatra** and **King Lear** at the Globe, commented, "**Hamlet** has been on tour for 400 years. In 1608, just eight years after Shakespeare wrote it, the play was staged on a boat, the Red Dragon, off the coast of Yemen. Other versions were taken, very early on, to Holland, northern Germany and Poland."

To help overcome the barriers of language, he added, actors emphasize the physical, in a somewhat shorter two-act version, and although the performance is in the original English, a large screen to the side offers subtitles.

The set is minimalist, and 12 actors perform all the roles in the almost three hour long work. In the two shows at Havana's Mella Theater, Jennifer Leong played Ophelia, Horatio and Rosencrantz.

It was an extraordinary opportunity for Havana to be included on the Globe's world tour, and to enjoy this version of **Hamlet**, one of English literature's most powerful and influential tragedies.



work. William Shakespeare, his tragedies are among the most famous within his vast body of

The play has been taken to the big screen some 20 times, first in 1900, and most recently in 2000. Phrases from Hamlet are among the world's most quoted, cited not only by English speakers, but in many other languages as well.

In the first scene of the third act, in Elsinore Castle, Hamlet speaks one of the play's most famous lines, "To be or not to be. That is the question. Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, Or to take arms against a sea of troubles, And, by opposing, end them? To die, to sleep - no more - and by a sleep to say we end the heartache and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to - 'tis a consummation devoutly to be wished! To die, to sleep. To sleep, perchance to dream - ay, there's the rub."

The **Globe to Globe Hamlet** tour will conclude in London at the company's home theater, on April 23, 2016, the 400th anniversary of the bard's death.

Four centuries later, William Shakespeare speaks like a contemporary to theater audiences, readers and movie-goers, allowing all, "Perchance, to dream."
