

[Archives](#)[Home](#)[Saved Search](#)[Logout](#)[Search Tips](#)[FAQ](#)[Pricing](#)[My Account](#)[Help](#)[About the Archive](#)[Terms](#)

## Document

[Start a New Search](#) | [Previous Results](#)**Other Formats:**  [Abstract](#)  [Full Text](#)  [Printer Friendly](#)

### 'Hamlet' thought provoking

Montgomery Advertiser - Montgomery, Ala.

Subjects: Theater; Design

Date: Jun 18, 2003

Start Page: 1

Section: C

---

#### Document Text

---

By Randy Foster

Special to the Advertiser

This is not your father's "Hamlet."

This is imaginative, visceral, post-modern Shakespeare. It is affecting, taut, and thought provoking.

Is it completely successful? Probably not. However, there to provide a reason to see yet another production of one of Shakespeare's most often-performed and well-known tragedies.

Ray Chambers and a remarkable group of designers have brought this production at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival to visual fruition. The set designed by Donald Eastman is inspired by the work of Columbian sculptor Doris Salcedo. The environment is timeless, bounded by two-story wooden doors with a rear wall that seems to be mud-covered. A triad of oversized cabinets, large interlocking tables, and a number of nondescript chairs complete the setting.

The lighting design by Rachel Budin uses high angles, stark shadows, and harsh effects. This design could signify the light and shadow of either an ancient castle or a sterile modern industrial site. Budin wisely chose to use light to establish mood and create tension, rather than as mere illumination.

Kristine Kearney's excellent costumes combine highly detailed Renaissance designs with clothes of the 20th century. The effect, at times somewhat disconcerting, is acceptable because of the extreme beauty and general appropriateness of her designs. Kearney uses color and hue to great effect in these designs.

This large cast includes some of ASF's most venerable actors, as well as some impressive newcomers. David Furr is an actor who possesses the youth to make Hamlet believable, but also the intelligence and acumen to create a fascinating psychic study. Furr is especially accomplished in the famous soliloquies. He makes these speeches intimate, personal, very modern emanations from the very soul of the disturbed prince.

This Hamlet is a young man with a clear mission - revenge against everyone who has wronged him. We clearly see and understand, if not agree with, this motivation in Furr's intense performance.

Greg Thornton is a powerful Claudius. His is a character who has formal eloquence in his court, grace in his treatment of Polonius' family, love and tenderness with Gertrude, massive persuasive power in his dealings with Laertes, and self-control after the players enact his crime before his own eyes. Thornton is masterful in the soliloquy after "The Mousetrap." He shows a man genuinely remorseful, but in complete knowledge of the motives that actuated his crime. He is the perfect foil for Prince Hamlet.

Greta Lambert brings a maternal sensibility, a hard-edged pragmatism, and veiled sensuality to her performance as Gertrude. This woman is no shrinking violet. She dresses in deep red, rather than widow's weeds. She is no tyro in dealing with her son, her husband or the courtiers. Lambert is well-spoken and lovely. The moment at which we see her realize the truth is subtle and unsettling. This Gertrude is an additional gem in this actress's diadem of roles at ASF.

Polonius as portrayed by Traber

Burns, who also plays the Gravedigger, is a pompous, puffed-up, windbag. His platitudes seem to emit from the soul of a totally fawning, obsequious busybody. Aptly, his very personality is his own downfall.

Duane Boutte and Devon Sorvari portray Laertes and Ophelia, Polonius' children. Boutte is a wordy, attentive son, a loving brother, and the perfect pawn for Claudius' powers of persuasion. Sorvari goes from the naïf to the mad Ophelia without missing a beat. This pair is a perfect example of how different siblings can be.

Rosecrantz and Guildenstern, a Laurel and Hardy pair of courtiers, portrayed by David Lee Nelson and Thomas Ward, offer their "service freely at your feet/to be commanded." Their developing journey elicits a growing sense of disgust toward them from the audience.

In a largely clear and thoughtful production, some of the minor players are difficult to hear or understand. Additionally, there are small glitches in dialogue that should work themselves out as the production sets.

Ray Chambers, who is best known as an actor at ASF, has directed this non-realistic, modern Shakespeare production. The strength of his vision is his, largely successful, attempt to strip away the accouterments of a typical Hamlet and to bring the warring elements of Shakespeare's drama into focus for us in the 21st century. Chambers has created powerful images - the ghost - recreating his murder with Hamlet, the attendant scene with Polonius' dead body covered in red while Hamlet and Gertrude argue, the tableau of dead bodies at Fortinbras' entrance that arrest the eye, and dig themselves into the mind. This production is a strong credit to the developing power of Chambers as director. It will be fascinating to see the further directions that his work takes.

Perhaps the greatest recommendation for seeing any production is the ideas and questions that it educes. If the response of the opening night audience is an accurate indicator, this 3-hour-15-minute Hamlet will be talked

about long after it has left the Festival Stage. See it for the strength of its principal performances, as well as the antitheses of its vision.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction or distribution is prohibited without permission.

---

**Abstract** (Document Summary)

---

Kristine Kearney's excellent costumes combine highly detailed Renaissance designs with clothes of the 20th century. Chambers has created powerful images - the ghost - recreating his murder with Hamlet, the attendant scene with polonius' dead body covered in red while Hamlet and Gertrude argue, the tableau of dead bodies at Fortinbras' entrance that arrest the eye, and dig themselves into the mind.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction or distribution is prohibited without permission.

---

**Other Formats:**  [Abstract](#)  [Full Text](#)  [Printer Friendly](#)

---

**Most Viewed Articles** (Updated Daily)

- [Active duty women and spouses learning yoga](#)
- [BASEBALL DRAFT: Cleveland rocks for Faulkner's Adams](#)
- [Bishop's message inspires crowd](#)
- [Officials not worried by empty storefronts](#)
- [JCPenney becomes Eastdale's fourth anchor](#)

**Logged in as:** Joan Kelly  
[Log Out](#)

**8 accesses** expiring on **07/27/2015**.  
[Previously Viewed Articles](#)

Powered by **ProQuest Archiver** 

---

[News](#) | [Sports](#) | [MyLife](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Blogs](#)

Copyright © 2015 archive.montgomeryadvertiser.com. All rights reserved. Users of this site agree to the [Terms of Service](#), [Privacy Notice](#), and [Ad Choices](#)