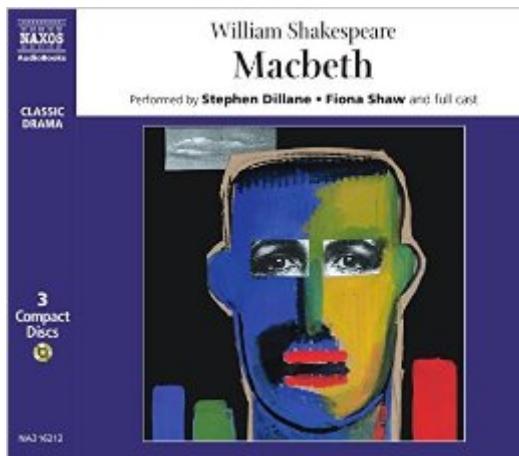


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Macbeth (New Cambridge Shakespeare (Naxos Audio))



Synopsis

MACBETH, Shakespeare's last great tragedy, has remained one of the most popular plays since its first performance in 1606 - probably in front of King James. This exciting audiobook production is directed with fresh imagination by Fiona Shaw who breaks the conventional strait jacket that has hampered the development of Shakespeare on audio. We are as much in the 21st century as in medieval Scotland - the tensions, the politics, the struggle for power and dark ambition is part of our lives. This is also reflected in the sound world, with modern machinery and tanks. MACBETH is part of Naxos AudioBooks' exciting series of complete dramatisations of the works of Shakespeare, in conjunction with Cambridge University Press. It uses the New Cambridge Shakespeare text, as used by the Royal Shakespeare Company and educational institutions across the world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is an excellent performance of Macbeth. A great deal of thought and commitment obviously went into it. Many lines are memorably delivered. The acting, even for the smallest parts, is of very high quality. The wounded Sergeant, the Porter, and Macduff's Wife are alone almost worth the price of admission. The commoners sound Scottish and the nobility English. Macbeth is played by Stephen Dillane. It's an interesting interpretation. He starts out soft-spoken and pensive. After Duncan's murder, Macbeth often sounds as emotionless as an automaton, as though he has lost control of the evil potential within him that has been unleashed. Fiona Shaw plays Lady Macbeth and is also credited as the director of the performance. Fiona Shaw's Lady Macbeth is very interesting

and worth hearing. There may be a little over-acting here, as each lines she delivers commands attention. Her Lady Macbeth sounds quite manic already at her first entrance. She comes off as emotionally unstable from the very beginning. There is nothing surprising about the suicidal madness that eventually overtakes her. The entire Tragedy could probably have been prevented with a little lithium according to this interpretation. The text allows for it, and it's worth considering. On the other hand, here's why I deducted a star:- The spoken line is sometimes delivered so dramatically, and with such distinct mid-line inserted pauses, that the poetic meter is lost and poetry is converted into prose.- The performance is full of sound effects and music. They are usually quite effective, but the mood is often determined as much by them as by Shakespeare's text. Whether this is a net plus or minus is a matter of taste.

SOURCE:This is a 1970 recording of a live performance, presumably at the Vienna State Opera.SOUND:I have had his recording for a couple of years, listening to it only through my admittedly far from state-of-the-art speakers. I had always taken it to be mono. However, prior to writing this review, I listened to it once again, this time with headphones. To my great surprise, there is either a fault in my phones or the recording actually does possess some very anemic stereo separation.It should be noted that there is a certain amount of stage noise, perfectly acceptable to me but horribly intrusive to others--and inevitably, one delicate little cough from the audience at exactly, precisely the wrong moment. That audience, by the way, had to have been massively sedated. With one or two exceptions, their reactions range from bland to blander.The overall sound quality is nothing remarkable--not bad, but no more. On the other hand, the sound quality on this recording is head and shoulders above--no, more than that, a whole order of magnitude better than that of the famous Callas recording from the 1950s.

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