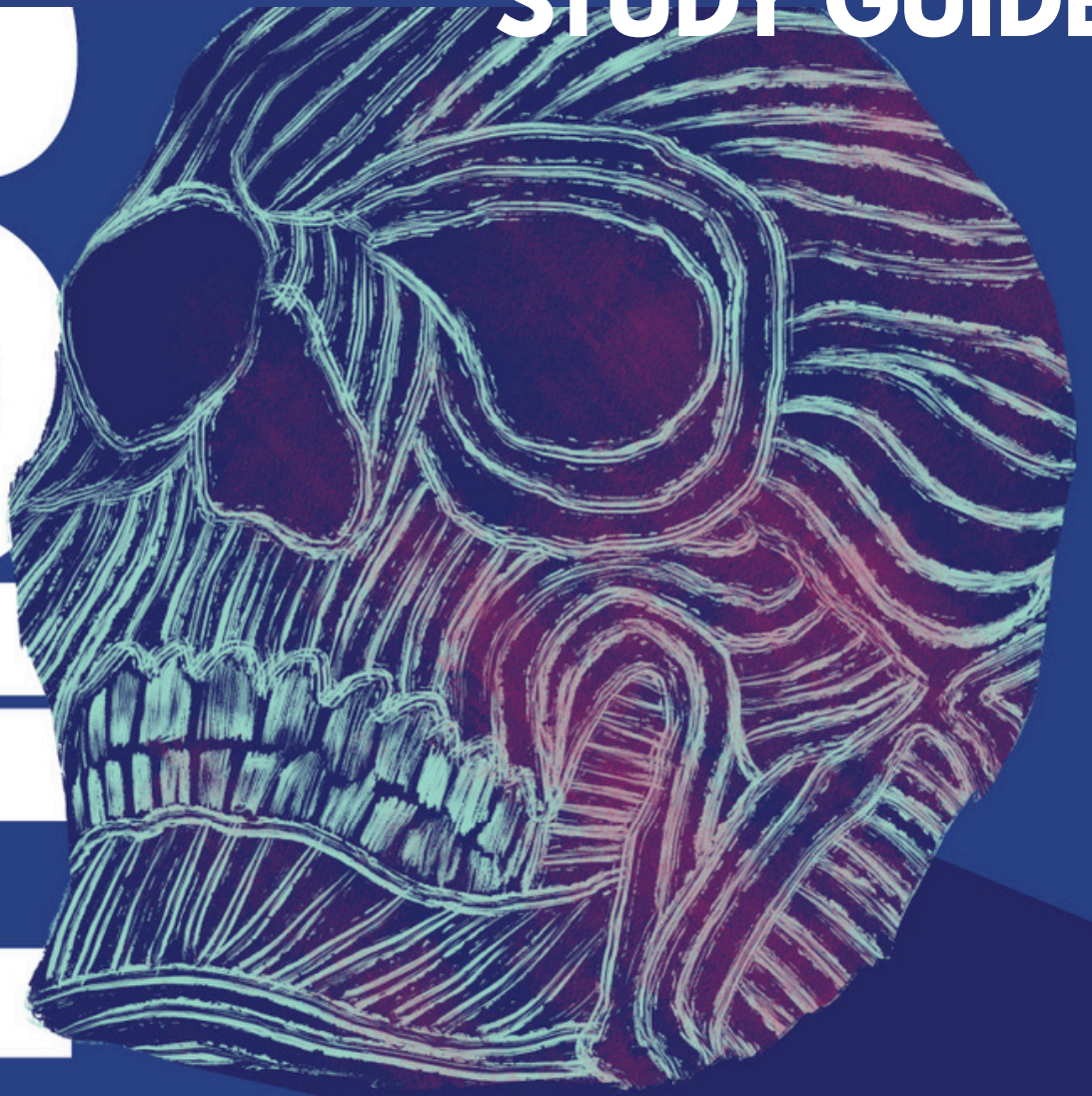


STUDY GUIDE



by **William Shakespeare**
directed by **Victor Pappas**

**september 19 -
october 11**

UAC union arts center

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**Darrah Kennan “Hamlet”, Seattle
Shakespeare Company 2010-2011**

Characters

This above all: to thine own self be true.

-Polonius, *Hamlet* Act 1 Scene 3

Barnardo, Francisco & Marcellus – soldiers of the watch at Elsinore

Horatio – Hamlet's close friend from school

Ghost – of Hamlet's father

Claudius – new king of Denmark and brother of the dead king

Gertrude – queen of Denmark and Hamlet's mother

Hamlet – prince of Denmark

Polonius – counselor in the king's court

Laertes – Polonius's son

Ophelia – Polonius's daughter

Rosencrantz & Guildenstern – school friends of Hamlet's

Players – company of actors

Osric – courtier of Elsinore

Fortinbras – prince of Norway

A Gravedigger

A Sailor

A Priest

The English Ambassador



Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

The play opens on the battlements of Elsinore Castle in which the guards and Horatio are witness to a Ghost resembling the late king haunting during the dead of night. Hamlet, the young prince returned to mourn his father the king, is struck with anger upon learning of his mother's marriage to his uncle Claudius and laments her lack of loyalty. When Hamlet is then told by Horatio of this ghostly figure he is curious to see it for himself.

Elsewhere, Polonius, a counselor in the king's court, bids his son Laertes farewell as he departs for France. Laertes warns his sister, Ophelia, to stay away from Hamlet for he feels Hamlet's attentions towards her are not honorable.

After encountering the Ghost, who claims to be his father and murdered by his own brother—Claudius, Hamlet swears vengeance. To confirm the allegations made by the Ghost, Hamlet feigns madness and accordance with this plan, begins to act strangely. He rejects Ophelia under the spying eyes of Claudius and Polonius, who are hoping to discern the sudden change in his behavior. Claudius summons Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, old friends of his, to help find out what is wrong. They arrive at the same time is a troupe of traveling actors, whom Hamlet also knows. So, Hamlet writes a play with a scene that mimics the murder of his father and tasks the troupe with presenting it before the King and Queen.

At the performance, Hamlet closely watches Claudius' reactions. Claudius interrupts the action and storms out, resolving to send Hamlet away. Gertrude summons Hamlet to her chambers, and Polonius hides to protect her from her unpredictable son. Hamlet hears Polonius moving around behind the arras (a kind of tapestry), and he stabs through and, in doing so, kills Polonius. The Ghost reappears and warns his son to not delay revenge or upset his mother.

Hamlet is sent to England, just as Fortinbras of Norway crosses Denmark to attack Poland. On his journey, Hamlet learns that Claudius has plans in place to kill him in England, so he returns to Denmark alone sending Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to their deaths in his place.

Ophelia, desolate at the loss of her father and rejected by Hamlet, goes mad and drowns.

Returning again to Denmark, Hamlet meets a gravedigger and they discuss the chances of life and death. Ophelia's funeral procession arrives, which saddens Hamlet to learn of her death and driving him to confronts Laertes, who has now taken his father's place in court.

A duel is arranged between the two, and during the match, Claudius conspires with Laertes to kill Hamlet. They plan that he will die on a poisoned rapier or with poisoned wine. But plans go awry when Gertrude unwittingly drinks from the poisoned cup and dies. Both Laertes and Hamlet are wounded by the poisoned blade and Laertes dies.

Hamlet kills Claudius and then dies himself, leaving only his friend Horatio to explain the truth to the new King, Fortinbras, as he returns in victory from the Polish Wars.

The Danish Monarchy



The Danish Monarchy is over 1200 years old and can be traced back to d. 958 and Gorm the Old. The monarchy was originally an elective one. The elective system had eligibility requirements, and only members of the royal bloodline would qualify for the vote. The Danish Crown would then be passed to the next monarch after a vote passed a council of noble or powerful families.

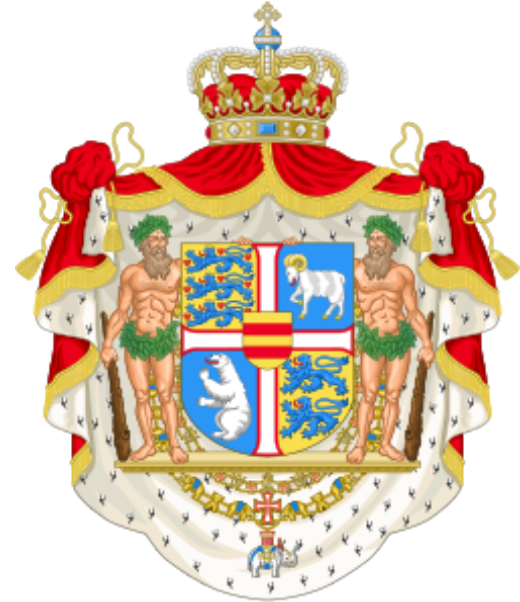
In 1660-1661 when absolutism was introduced by King Frederick III with the signing of a Coronation Charter, the elective monarchy was replaced by inherited monarchy. In 1665, succession was laid down by Lex Regia which was based on the principle that a male primogeniture, firstborn son, gets all or most of the inheritance. March 27, 1953, the Act of Succession allowed for the possibility of a female monarch and Denmark had its first female monarch in 1972 with HM Queen Margrethe.

The Act of Succession in Denmark was amended in 2009 so that the eldest child, regardless of gender, would succeed the throne.

The Monarchy in Hamlet

While the play does not specify a year, it was expected to be set, scholars believe that Shakespeare's intent was that the story takes place in the Middle Ages, what we would consider the 14th or 15th Century.

With this understanding, we can conclude that in order to ascend the throne in the play, you would have to be a male of the royal bloodline, which only qualifies Hamlet and Claudius.



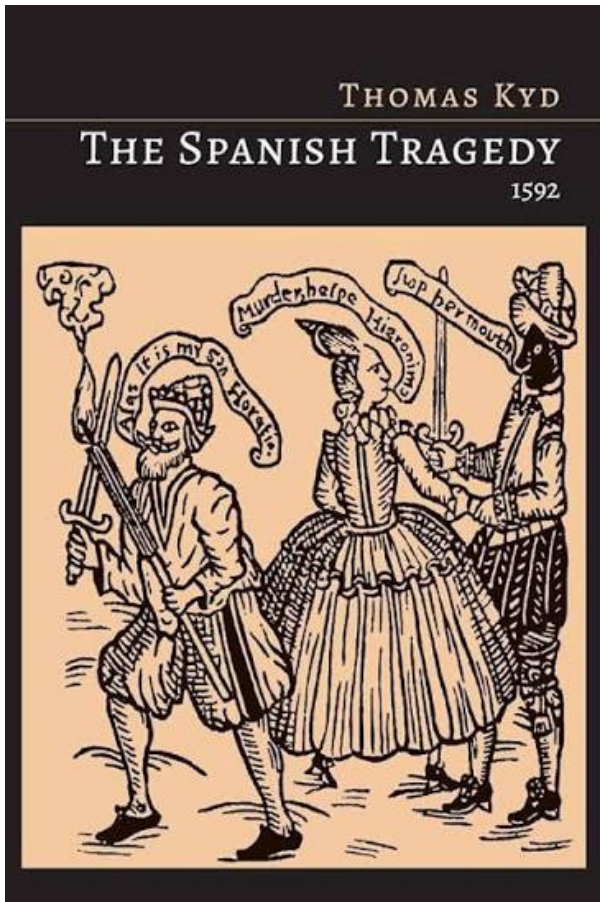
Through quick political moves, the council chooses Claudius as the next monarch. Hamlet notes this to Horatio "He that hath...popped in between th' election and my hopes, thrown out his angle for my proper life." (Act 5 Scene 2) Claudius secures the vote to the throne by swiftly marrying the widowed Queen Gertrude and creating political stability amid threats from Norway.



Kronborg, built in 1574 to replace the stronghold—Krogen, serves as the setting of Shakespeare's tragedy. *Hamlet* has been performed at the castle several times.

Revenge Tragedy

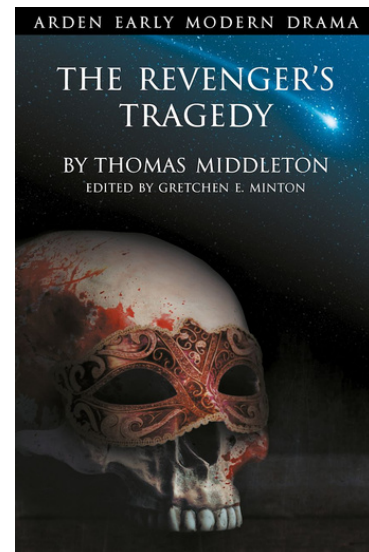
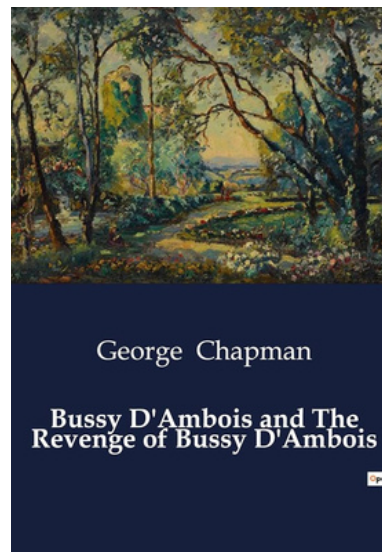
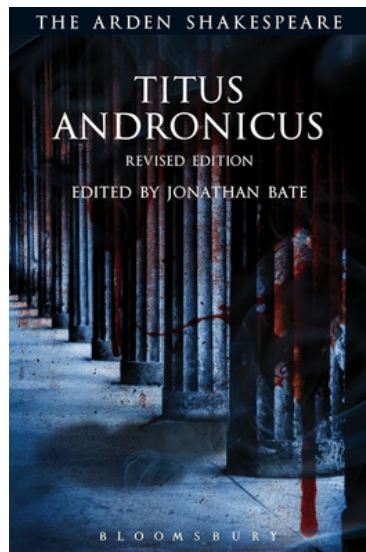
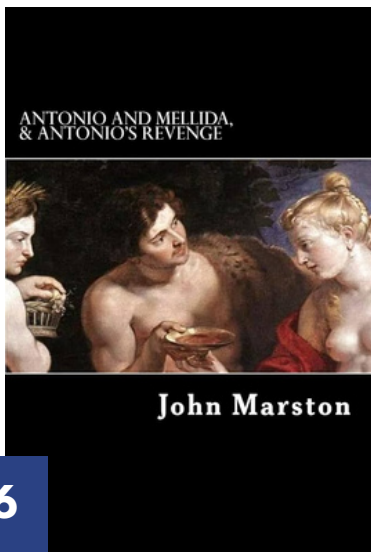
Revenge tragedy, is drama in which the dominant motive is revenge for a real or imagined injury. Serving as the favorite form of English tragedy during the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras, William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is still considered the most well known of this genre.



The revenge drama derived originally from the Roman tragedies of Seneca was established on the English stage by Thomas Kyd with *The Spanish Tragedy*. The play opens with the ghost of Don Andrea, a Spanish nobleman killed in a recent battle with Portugal. Accompanied by the spirit of Revenge, he tells the story of his death and pleads his case to judges who are supposed to assign him to his place in the underworld. They are unable to reach a decision and instead send him to the palace of the King and Queen of the Underworld. Who then decide that Revenge should accompany Don Andrea back to the world of the living. The spirit of Revenge promises that by the play's end, Don Andrea will see his revenge.

Revenge and Don Andrea have the final words of the play. In which, Don Andrea assigns each of the play's "good" characters to their happy eternities. The rest of the characters are assigned to the various tortures and punishments of Hell.

Other popular revenge tragedies...



A Play within a Play



Hamlet Company, Wooden O-Seattle Shakespeare 2016

Is a dramatic device in which a secondary performance is staged inside the larger work. This inner play can mirror, parody, or contrast with the main story.

When the traveling players arrive at Elisnore, Hamlet finds the perfect means to help him discover the truths of the ghost's claims.

Tasking the players to perform “The Murder of Gonzago”, Hamlet adds an element of pantomime in which the players will enact the murder of King Hamlet as the ghost has described it. Hamlet and Horation will then observe Claudius closely to see if he reacts in a way that confirms he is the murderer.

Using the play with in a play devise, Shakespeare enables the audience (both on stage and in the theatre) to reflect on the Claudius' guilt in the matter.

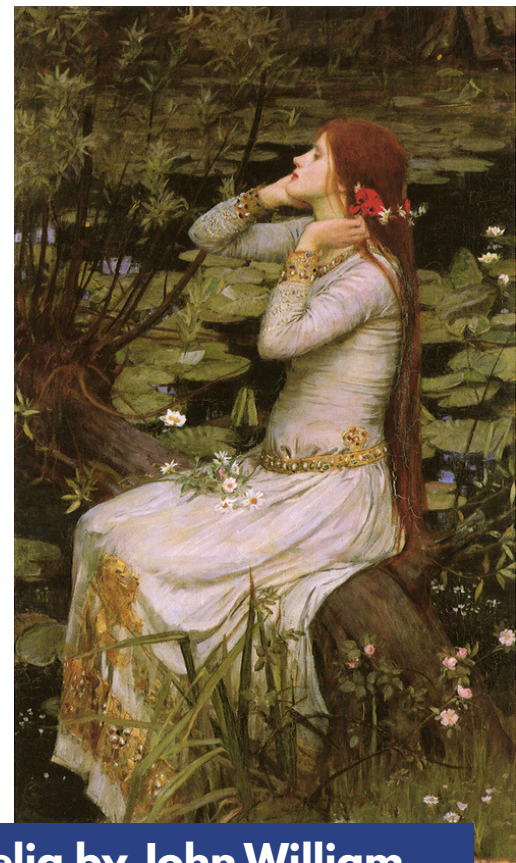
Ophelia Portrayed

Ophelia is one of the most frequently depicted literary figures during the 19th Century.



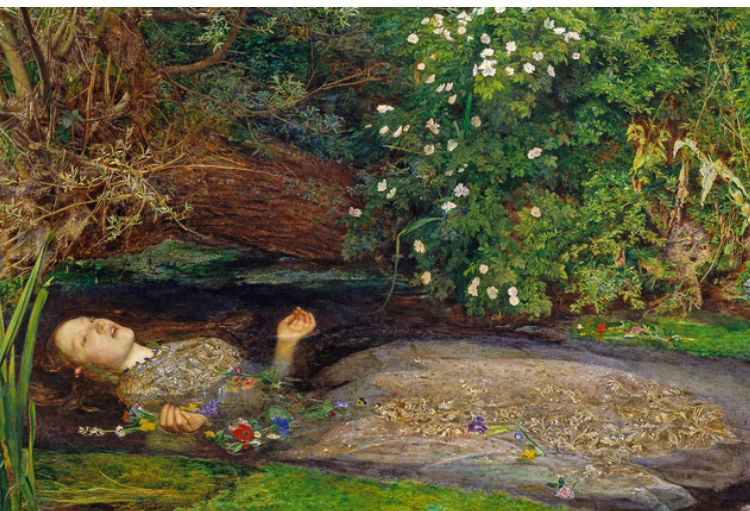
Ophelia by Arthur Hughes, c.1851

There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;
There with fantastic garlands did she come,
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them;
There, on the pendant bows her coronet weeds,
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;
When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide
-Queen Gertrude, *Hamlet* Act 4 Scene 7



Ophelia by John William Waterhouse, c.1894

Ophelia is depicted sitting on a willow branch extending out over a pond of lilies. Her royal dress strongly contrasts with her natural surroundings. Waterhouse has placed flowers on her lap and in her hair, tying her into her natural surroundings.



Ophelia by John Everett Millais, c.1851

The painting depicts Ophelia singing while floating in a river.

Setting the Stage

My goal as a director has been to bring this great story to you with clarity, energy, and depth of feeling – to emphasize the humanity at the core of this great play, to awaken your empathy, and involve you emotionally in the events of the story.



“I believe Shakespeare’s plays have an immediacy and magnificence that speaks to us as if they were written today.”

-Victor Pappas, Director

To be or not to be.... **Do you know these other famous quotes from Hamlet?**

**Brevity is the soul of wit
-Polonius, Act 2 Scene 2**

**Frailty, thy name is woman!
-Hamlet, Act 1 Scene 2**

**Neither a borrower nor a lender be
-Polonius, Act 1 Scene 3**

**Lord, we know what we are but know not what we may be.
-Ophelia, Act 4 Scene 5**

**There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in our philosophy.
-Hamlet, Act 1 Scene 5**

**The lady protests too much, methinks.
-Gertrude, Act 3 Scene 2**

**Good night, sweet prince, And flights of angels
sing thee to thy rest!
-Horatio, Act 5 Scene 2**

Inspired by Hamlet



This Canadian series takes its title from *Hamlet*, and the first season follows a production of the play. Throughout which, the play's artistic director is haunted by the ghost of his predecessor.



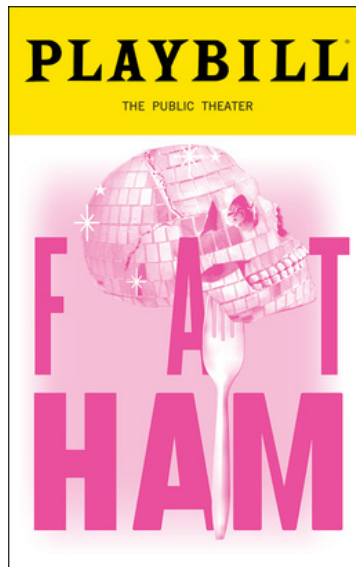
A 1994 Disney animated musical, Simba, the main character, goes through a similar journey to that of Hamlet, with two Rosencratz & Guildenstern coded friends.



In this musical *Hamlet* is the play that Nostradamus sees in the future as Shakespeare's biggest play, but instead of 'Hamlet', he misinterprets it to be called 'Omelette'.



This 2006 Chinese film (also known as Legend of the Black Scorpion) has a storyline loosely based on the story of Hamlet.

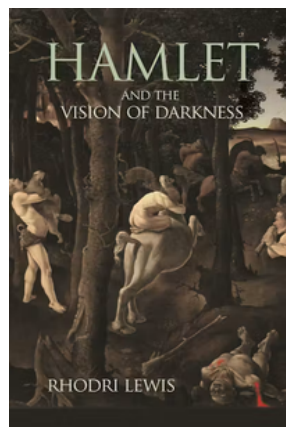
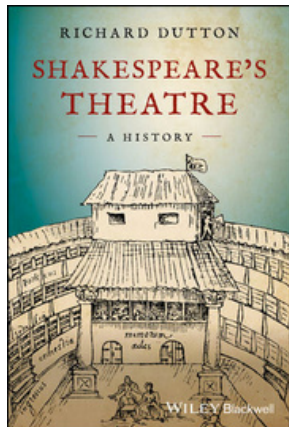


Modern-day adaptation of *Hamlet*. Juicy, a young gay black man, is confronted by the ghost of his father during a cookout, who demands that Juicy avenge his murder.

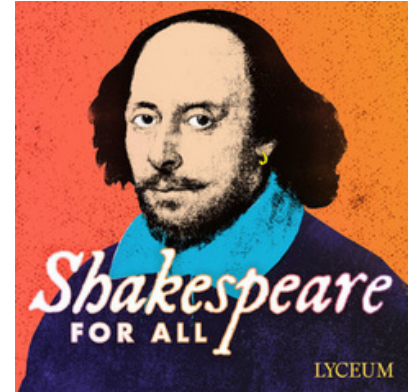


Directed by Chloé Zhao, based on the novel by Maggie O'Farrell. The film dramatises the family life of William Shakespeare and his wife Agnes Hathaway as they cope with the death of their son Hamnet.

To Learn More...

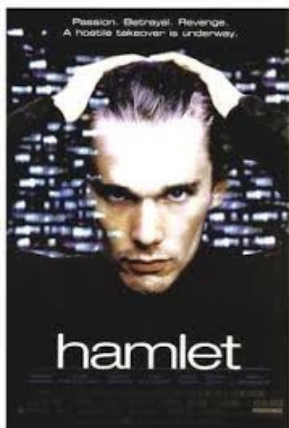


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union arts center

The names you know. The stages you love. The art that brings us together. ACT and Seattle Shakespeare have come together as Union Arts Center, keeping our community connected, our artists supported, and our stories alive.

OUR MISSION

Local artists creating theatre for everyone.

OUR VISION

Connecting theatre & community. Enlivening downtown Seattle. **A thriving artistic home.**