

## WHAT TO EXPECT GUIDE

### 27 APR – 18 MAY

# HAMLET

## HAIL TO THE THIEF

*Hamlet* by William Shakespeare adapted by

CHRISTINE JONES with STEVEN HOGGETT

Music by **RADIOHEAD**

Directed by **STEVEN HOGGETT** and **CHRISTINE JONES**

Orchestrations by **THOM YORKE**

Arrangements by **JUSTIN LEVINE**

# AVIVA studios

Water Street, Manchester [avivastudios.co.uk](http://avivastudios.co.uk)

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*Please be advised that this resource contains information about significant narrative moments that some visitors may not wish to know about ahead of attending the performance.*

# About Hamlet Hail to the Thief

*Hamlet Hail to the Thief* is an **adaptation of a play** by William Shakespeare called *Hamlet*.

It **incorporates musical elements** from an album by Radiohead called *Hail to the Thief* into the story.

It is being performed at **Aviva Studios** in Manchester from **Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> April** until **Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2025**.

The performance is approximately **1 hour, 40 minutes long**. There is **no interval**.

It has been **co-created** by Radiohead frontman, **Thom Yorke**, and celebrated directors, **Steven Hoggett** and **Christine Jones**.

It has been **co-produced** by **Factory International** and the **Royal Shakespeare Company**.



# About the Venue

*Hamlet Hail to the Thief* is being performed at **Aviva Studios** in Manchester.

The address is:

**Aviva Studios**  
**Water Lane**  
**Manchester**  
**M3 4JQ**

The What3words location is

**///rent.bids.gather**

The venue can be accessed by **bus**, **bike**, **train**, **car** and **on foot**.

For **more information** about getting to Aviva Studios, visit:

[factoryinternational.org/aviva-studios/](https://factoryinternational.org/aviva-studios/)

**Facilities available** at Aviva Studios include, but are not limited to, a Chill Out Space, a Multi-faith room, a Changing Places Toilet and **portable sensory kits**.





# Arriving at Aviva Studios

This is what **Aviva Studios** looks like.

You can enter the building either through the **City or River doors**.



Whichever entrance you use, you will arrive into the same place – **the Social**.

In the Social you will find a **bar** where you can purchase food and drinks, and the **toilets**, including accessible facilities and a Changing Places unit.



The Social can be a **busy and noisy** place, especially just before an event.



There will be **announcements** telling the audience what to do and **music** might be playing.

The **digital screens** in the Social will be showing **moving images**.



It's ok to **arrive early** for your show to get used to the Social space before it gets too busy. The Social is **open from 10am**.



If you need some help when you arrive, you can go to the **orange information point** that is close to the City entrance.



Here you'll find people from our Ticketing team who can **answer any questions** you may have.

Our **Hosts** can also help you if you need anything during your visit.



They wear **orange t-shirts** with black writing on them, like this.

There will be Hosts all around the Social when you come in, and in the performance space when you go into the show.



# The Performance Space

*Hamlet Hail to the Thief* is being performed in **The Warehouse**.

To access this space, you will either need to walk up these stairs to the **2<sup>nd</sup> floor**, or make use of the lifts that are available.

To enter the Warehouse, a Host will ask to see your **ticket**. It will look like this. You may have a paper or digital copy. It will show the **date and time** of the performance and your **seat number**.

Once your ticket has been scanned, you will be invited to **find your seat**. This may involve walking up an additional set or stairs or navigating to the front of the seating bank. Hosts will be available to help you with this.

The seats for this performance are blue, plastic, flip-down, 'arena style' seating. All seats have **back support** and none have **armrests**.



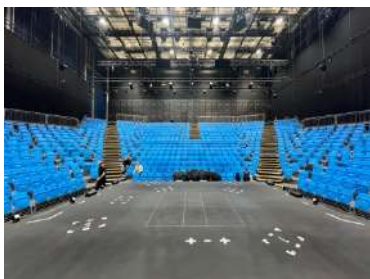
We have a limited number of **seat pads** available for visitors to borrow who would benefit from some extra padding, though you are more than welcome to **bring your own** cushion with you should you wish.



**If you are late** to the performance, you will be asked by the Hosts to **wait outside** the Warehouse until an appropriate entry point.



If you choose to leave part way through the performance, you may also be **asked to wait** until an appropriate **re-entry point** before returning to your seat.



The **energy and volume** of the show will **rise of fall** throughout the performance. Some parts will be loud and fast, others will be quiet and slow.

A **sonic story** for *Hamlet Hail to the Thief*, created by [Touretteshero](#), can be viewed on our website.





# The Characters

## Hamlet

The young Prince of Denmark.



## The King

Hamlet's late father. Appears as a ghost/spirit in the form of a projection.



## Claudius

Hamlet's uncle and the new king.  
Played by the same actor as The King.



## Gertrude

Hamlet's mother, now married to Claudius.



## **Polonius**

Claudius' advisor.



## **Laertes**

Polonius' son and Ophelia's brother.



## **Ophelia**

Polonius' daughter, Laertes' sister, and Hamlet's love interest.



## **Horatio**

Hamlet's closet friend.



## **Rosencrantz and Guildenstern**

Two of Hamlet's old friends.



# The Story

Hamlet is the young Prince of Denmark. His father, the king, has just died and his uncle, Claudius, is now on the throne. Hamlet's mother, Gertrude has remarried to Claudius following the death of her husband.

Polonius is the new King's advisor. He has a son, Laertes and a daughter, Ophelia. Laertes is about to leave and travel to France. Ophelia is in a secret relationship with Hamlet. Polonius and Laertes do not approve of the relationship.

Horatio is Hamlet's trustworthy friend. As Hamlet tries to cope with his grief, a ghost of his father appears to the both of them late at night. The ghost tells Hamlet that Claudius poisoned him to claim the crown and urges Hamlet to seek revenge for his murder.

Hamlet is very disturbed by seeing this ghost and starts behaving erratically. He wants to be certain the ghost is telling the truth before he acts.

Claudius and Gertrude become worried about Hamlet's strange behaviour. Polonius finds a love letter from Hamlet to Ophelia and believes his madness is due to heartache. Polonius and Claudius devise a plan for Ophelia to reject Hamlet's love.

Unconvinced that love is the cause of Hamlet's unset, Gertrude tells two of Hamlet's old friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, to find out what's wrong with him. Hamlet immediately suspects them of spying on him on behalf of his mother.

When a company of travelling actors show up, Hamlet comes up with a plan with Horatio to re-enact his father's murder in front of

Claudius to see whether he will react and reveal the truth of his actions – he does!

Hamlet's behaviour becomes increasingly more erratic. Polonius suggests that Gertrude speak to Hamlet whilst he hides and watch their conversation. Hamlet confronts his mother about her marriage and the murder of his father. In desperation, Hamlet pulls out a dagger. There's a struggle for the knife and Hamlet accidentally stabs the hiding Polonius.

Claudius is afraid of what Hamlet might do next. He decides to send Hamlet to England and instructs Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to have Hamlet murdered there. However, Hamlet finds out and avoids the trap. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are killed instead.

Ophelia grieves her fractured relationship with Hamlet. When she discovers that her father has been killed, she is overwhelmed with sadness. She decides to take her own life by drowning.

Ophelia's brother, Laertes, returns from France. Enraged by the crimes committed against his family, Claudius manages to convince him that Hamlet is responsible for all of it.

Laertes challenges Hamlet to a duel, and Claudius ensures Laertes will win by preparing some poison. But the plan goes wrong.

After Laertes stabs Hamlet, Gertrude unknowingly drinks the poisoned wine. When she discovers her fate, her final act is to spit some wine at Laertes, allowing Hamlet to fatally wound him.

With Ophelia and Hamlet's mother both dead, and with his one life fading away, Hamlet finally gets revenge and kills Claudius.



# Advice on Content

## Mental Health

The story of Hamlet is a **tragedy**, and one that focuses on the gradual decline of the main characters mental state.



Hamlet often **sees or hears things others in the story cannot**, and his thinking patterns are often difficult for others to understand.



*Hamlet Hail to the Thief* includes technical elements that are intended to add to this feeling of confusion. Some characters have **reverberation added** to their voices, and **projection is used** throughout the show to represent or heighten different emotional states.



## Suicide

*Hamlet Hail to the Thief* includes a **non-graphic depiction of suicide**. This takes place at appropriately **1 hour, 15 minutes** into the performance.



## Violence

Many characters are killed in the story of Hamlet. This is represented on stage through the use of stage (i.e., fake) **daggers and blood**.

The use of **stage blood** occurs at approximately **1 hour** into the performance, and again, approximately **5 minutes before the end**.



## Haze

Haze is used throughout the performance and is **present in the performance space** from when you first enter.



## Strobe/Flashing lights

Flashing lights are used to either indicate a **strike of lightning** or to add to the emotional significance of a scene. Timings can be found below. These are all approximate.

- 00:01:00 – flash of lightning
- 00:18:00 – flash of lightning

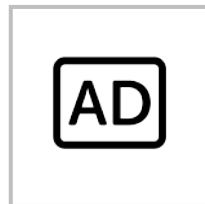


- 01:01:00 – flash of lightning
- 01:09:00 – pulsating lighting in time with the music.
- 01:35:00 – extended period where flashing lighting and strobe is used lasting for approximately 3 minutes.

Strobe lighting **will be removed** for the relaxed performance on **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May**.

## Accessible Performances

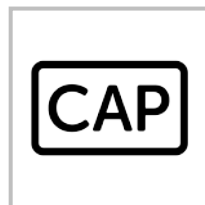
**Audio Described** performances are scheduled to take place on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May at 7:30pm and Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May at 7:30pm. Audio description will be delivered by Anne Hornsby.



A **BSL Interpreted** performance is scheduled to take place on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> May at 7:30pm. BSL interpretation will be delivered by Clare Edwards.



**Captioned** performances are scheduled to take place on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May at 2:30pm and Friday 16<sup>th</sup> May at 7:30pm. Captions will be delivered by Stevie Burrows.



A **Relaxed** performance is scheduled to take place on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May at 7:30pm. Changes made to this performance include:



- Removal of strobe/flashing light
- House lights will remain on low
- Readmittance freely allowed
- Sound levels slightly lowered
- What to Expect Guide available





For more information about the event and venue, please visit:  
**[factoryinternational.org/whats-on/hamlet-hail-to-the-thief](http://factoryinternational.org/whats-on/hamlet-hail-to-the-thief)**

To speak to our team, you can email us at  
**[access@factoryinternational.org](mailto:access@factoryinternational.org)** or call us on **0161 817 4531**. Our  
phoneline is open Monday-Saturday, 10am–6pm.

This guide was produced by Factory International.