

The **english dramatic society** presents

William Shakespeare

HAMLET

14.-17. February 2013 - 8pm
Experimentiertheater, Bismarckstr. 1, Erlangen

Tickets: EUR 10,50/EUR 7,50

Anglistikbibliothek C602, Bismarckstr. 1, Erlangen, Erlangen Ticket, Onlinereservierung, Abendkasse

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On a dark night, a ghost appears in Elsinore Castle in Denmark to two of the castle's guards and also to the scholar Horatio the following night. The ghost resembles the old King Hamlet, who died recently. His brother Claudius has inherited the throne and married the old king's wife, Queen Gertrude. Horatio and the guards bring Prince Hamlet, the son of Gertrude and the dead king, along with them to see the ghost. The ghost then speaks to Hamlet, declaring that it is indeed his father's spirit, and that he was murdered by his brother Claudius. After ordering Hamlet to seek revenge the ghost disappears again.

Prince Hamlet is very devoted to avenging his father's death, but, because of his thoughtful nature, he finds himself unable to act, which adds to his melancholy and apparent madness. Claudius and Gertrude worry about Hamlet's behaviour and consequently employ a pair of Hamlet's friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, to find out the cause of Hamlet's madness. Polonius, the court's Lord Chamberlain, has his own theories about Hamlet's distemper and suggests that Hamlet might be mad with love for his daughter, Ophelia. Together with Claudius he sets up a meeting between Hamlet and Ophelia with the intention to spy on them.

A group of actors comes to Elsinore, which gives Hamlet the perfect opportunity to test his uncle's guilt by having the players perform a scene similar to how he believes Claudius murdered his father in order to see Claudius reaction should he really be guilty. Claudius interrupts the play and leaves the room at the moment of the murder and Hamlet is now convinced of his guilt. Claudius, thus threatened by Hamlet orders that he be sent to England at once.

When Hamlet goes to confront his mother in her chamber, he suddenly hears a noise from behind the arras where Polonius has placed himself to overhear the conversation. In a moment of rage and convinced that it is Claudius, he kills Polonius. Immediately after this incident he is sent to England together with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. However, Claudius not only sends him away, he demands in a written order that he be put to death.

After her father's death, Ophelia goes mad with grief and drowns in a river. Polonius's son, Laertes, who has been in France, returns to Denmark in a rage. Claudius manages to convince him that his father's death is Hamlet's fault. Hamlet also returns to Denmark unexpectedly, so Claudius needs a plan to secure Hamlet's death. Together with Laertes he arranges a fencing match, but Claudius will poison Laertes' sword, so that one hit would kill him instantly and as a backup plan, he poisons a drink as well, which he plans on giving to Hamlet should all else fail. Hamlet returns to Elsinore just as Ophelia's funeral is taking place. Soon after the funeral a foolish courtier named Osric on order of the king, invites Hamlet to the fencing match with Laertes.

The match begins. Hamlet scores, but doesn't want to drink from the cup. Instead, Gertrude drinks from it. Laertes wounds Hamlet, but then is cut by his own sword's blade. Before he dies, he tells Hamlet that Claudius is the one to blame for the queen's death. Hamlet hurts Claudius with his sword and then forces him to drink his own poison, thus finally getting his revenge.

At the end a Norwegian prince named Fortinbras, who has come to Denmark with his troupes, arrives at the scene together with an ambassador from England, who reports that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead. Fortinbras is stunned by the horrible sight and immediately takes power of the kingdom. Horatio, fulfilling Hamlet's last wish, tells him Hamlet's story and Fortinbras orders that Hamlet be honoured in manner befitting a fallen soldier.