

MACHOMER

Cue
sheet
FOR STUDENTS

Welcome to *Cuesheet*, a performance guide published by the Education Department of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, DC. This *Cuesheet* is designed to help you enjoy the performance of *MacHomer*.



The cauldron marks items you may want to talk about with other students, friends, or family.

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Created and Performed
by Rick Miller

Adapted from *Macbeth*
by William Shakespeare

Based on characters
from Matt Groening's
"The Simpsons"

THE KENNEDY CENTER

The Kennedy Center

MACHOMER AND THE CAST

adapted – a reshaping of an original work of art

prophecy – prediction of a future event

treacherous – traitorous, deceitful, betraying trust

MacHomer is adapted from the play *Macbeth*, written by William Shakespeare in 1606. *MacHomer*, performed by Rick Miller, is a one-person show that uses the voices from the popular television show “The Simpsons” to tell the story of a power-hungry Scottish nobleman, Lord MacHomer.

The Story and Cast

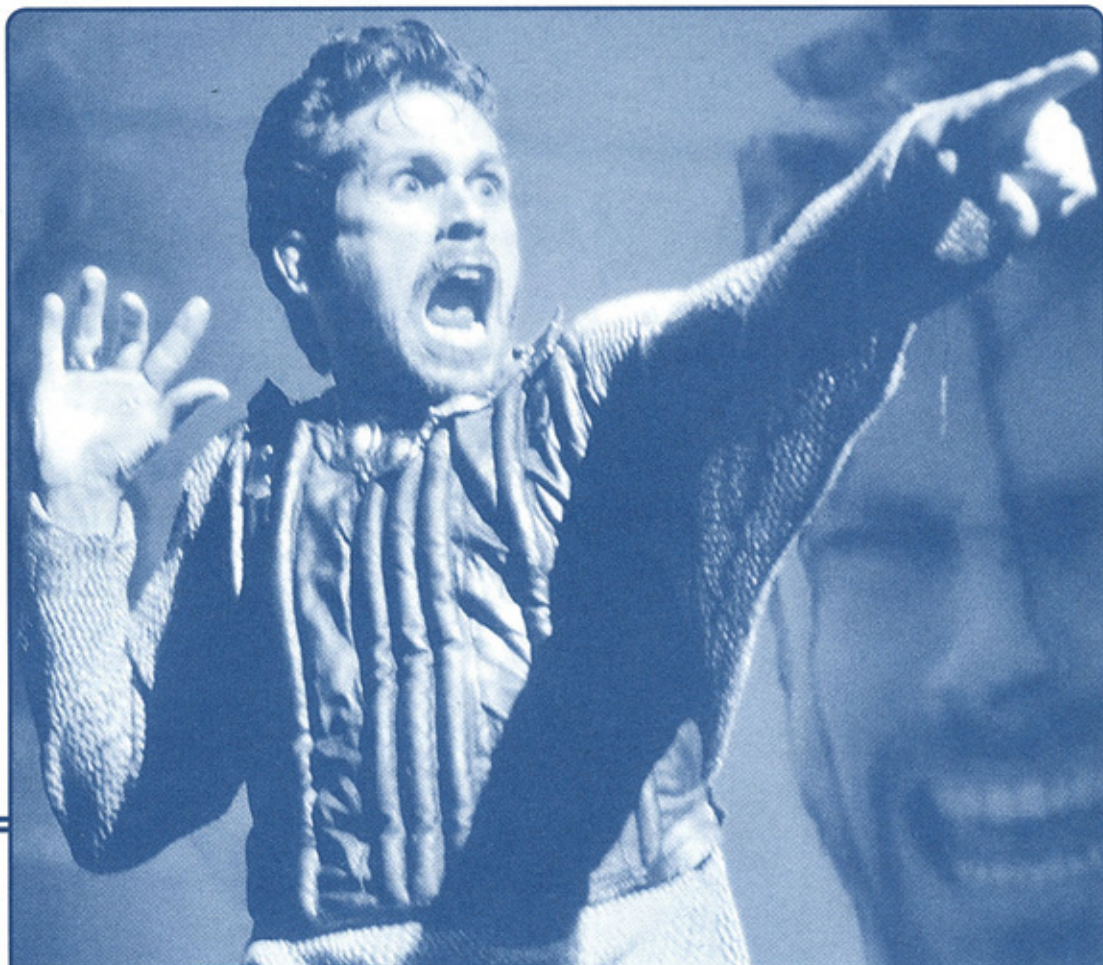
With the voice of Homer Simpson and Homer’s love of doughnuts, MacHomer rides through Scotland with his good friend Banquo, whose voice is that of Ned Flanders. They meet three witches who tell MacHomer that he will one

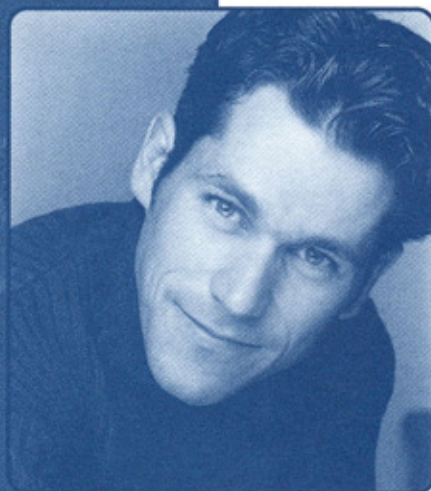
day be crowned king. When he shares this **prophecy** with Lady MacHomer, voiced by Marge Simpson, she urges him to take matters into his own hands and kill the current ruler, King Duncan. Duncan’s voice is that of C. Montgomery Burns. The two carry out their **treacherous** plan, but are then filled with guilt. Their hands are permanently stained with blood and the ghosts of their victims haunt them. MacHomer is then forced to pay for his evil deeds.

During the Performance

Notice that a cauldron is always on stage. What is its purpose in the play? See how photographic slides are used in this production. What role do they play?

Actor Rick Miller plays all of the characters in *MacHomer*.





Rick Miller, offstage

Rick Miller, onstage, as one of *MacHomer's* many characters.

A ONE-PERSON SHOW



mannerisms – things that people do repeatedly that become associated with them

In a one-person show, just one actor plays all the different roles. In this production of *MacHomer*, Rick Miller plays every one of the characters, using more than 60 voices from one of TV's funniest comedies. Actors need to train very hard to be in a one-person show. They need to be able to change their voices and **mannerisms** for each new character.

What to look for...

Rick Miller has to become many different characters in this play. Besides changing his voice, what does he do physically to change from character to character?



Learning Activity

Try Your Own One-Person Show

Write down a simple story about something you and your family did together, and focus on what people said to each other. In front of the class, read your story, assigning a different voice and mannerism for each of your family members. How difficult or how easy is it to keep changing characters? Why?



RICK MILLER AND MACHOMER

Rick Miller is the creator of *MacHomer* and the only actor in the play. Mr. Miller is a

Shakespearean actor – an actor who is known specifically for his/her work in the plays of Shakespeare

mimic – one who is able to imitate another

Shakespearean actor from Canada who has performed on stage, in films and on television. In addition to writing and acting, Mr. Miller is an excellent **mimic**. While acting in *Macbeth*, Mr. Miller

came up with the idea to use the voices of different characters from TV’s “The Simpsons” to read the lines. He did this to entertain the other cast members. Everyone who heard his imitations liked them, so he decided to create a whole show around them. Mr. Miller likes the idea of using a television show to help communicate a great work of literature to new audiences.



Learning Activity

Try Mimicking

Look at the following passage from the play. Can you mimic the voice of a cartoon character and read the lines in their voice? How about reading the lines with a foreign accent? How hard or easy is it to do?

"To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing." (Macbeth, Act V, Scene V)

Rick Miller's costume is a humorous mixture of Elizabethan and modern dress.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE AND MACBETH

The Playwright

William Shakespeare lived in England more than 400 years ago in **Elizabethan times**. He was quite **prolific**, writing a total of 38 plays, including histories, comedies, and **tragedies**. Many of these were written for his first **patron**, Queen Elizabeth I of England. *Macbeth*, however, was written after Elizabeth's death for his new patron, James I of Scotland. King James wanted an exciting play that dealt with witchcraft and Scotland, and that's certainly what he got. The play uses sorcery to show that "unnatural deeds do breed unnatural troubles" or that when we do great wrongs, great wrongs are then done to us.

What to listen for...

There are many famous lines from *Macbeth*. Do you recognize any of the following? What do you think they mean?

- “Double, double toil and trouble;
fire burn and cauldron bubble.”
- “Yet do I fear thy nature; it is too
full o’ the milk of human kindness.”
- “What’s done is done.”
- “I bear a charmed life.”
- “Have we eaten on the insane root
that takes the reason prisoner?”



FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY

William Shakespeare (1564—1616)

Elizabethan times – the time in England under the rule of Elizabeth I, approximately 1558-1603

prolific – producing a great amount

tragedies – dramatic plays that deal with ideas of a serious nature

patron – one who financially supports an artist's work



J. ANDREW SIMMONS

The Globe Theatre in London, England is the Elizabethan public theater most closely associated with William Shakespeare's career as both playwright and actor. It was the home of Shakespeare's company, the Chamberlain's Men, and most of his plays after 1599 were first performed in the theater.

THE SIMPSONS

animated – film or television characters that aren't real but are made to move

satirical – anything that makes fun of human nature

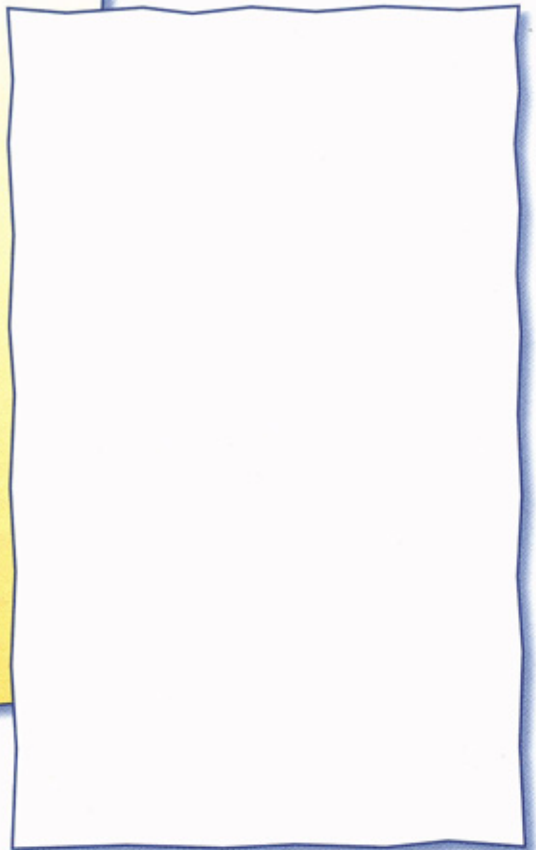
The Simpsons” is the longest running **animated** series in television history. Created by cartoonist Matt Groening, the program has won six Emmy Awards for Outstanding Animated Program. The show is a **satirical** look at the American family, centered around the Simpson family (Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, and Maggie) and all of the unusual people they know in their hometown of Springfield. In *MacHomer*, Rick Miller imitates the voices of more than 60 characters from “The Simpsons.”



Learning Activity

Try Cartooning

Cartoonists usually take one detail of a person and exaggerate it until it's funny. Think about Marge Simpson's tall blue hair or Lisa and Bart's large eyes. If you were a cartoon character, what physical detail would the cartoonist exaggerate? In the box to the right, sketch yourself as a cartoon character, adding in all the funny exaggerated details.



Through gesture and movement, Rick Miller quickly transforms himself from one character to another.

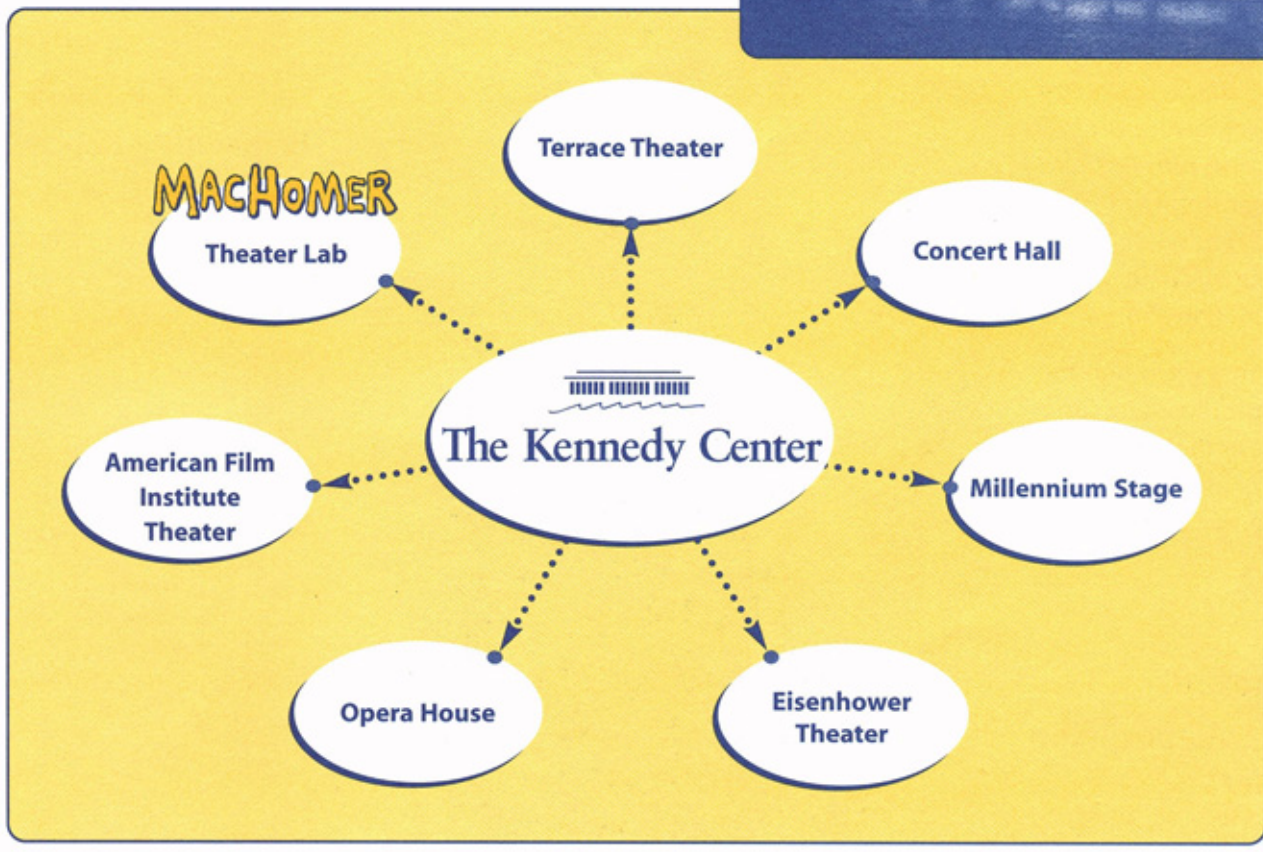
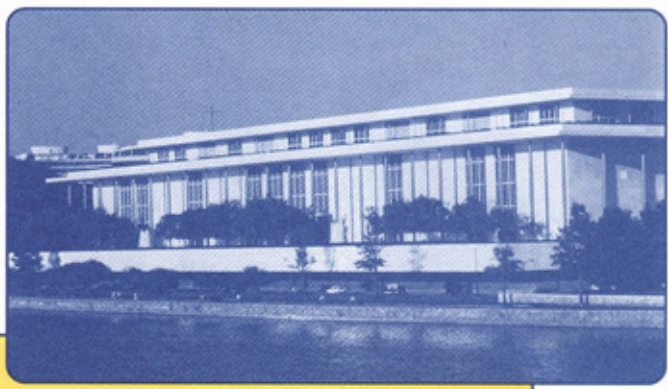
VISITING THE KENNEDY CENTER

The Kennedy Center is a living memorial to John F. Kennedy, the President of the United States from 1961 to 1963. As a living memorial, the Kennedy Center is a place where dance, music, theater, and film can be experienced every day. There are seven stages in the Kennedy Center. *MacHomer* will be performed in the Theater Lab.

When you enter the Kennedy Center you will walk into the Hall of States where you will see the flags of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the five U.S. Territories. To get to the Theater Lab, you will take an elevator to the Roof Terrace Level, the Kennedy Center's top floor. A large banner,

reading "Theater Lab," hangs on the wall outside the theater. Inside, an usher will direct you to your seat. The Theater Lab does not have a curtain in front of the stage, so you will be able to see the set for *MacHomer*.

Four hundred people can watch a performance together in the Theater Lab!



AUDIENCE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Final Collaborators: The Audience

Theater is a collaborative art. This means that it requires the work of many people: playwrights, directors, designers, actors--and the audience. The audience is the final collaborator of every theater performance.

Plays require audiences to observe the action on stage carefully. That means listening to and watching the actors, and observing the sets, lighting, and costumes. It also means watching the action for clues about the story.

Remember, theater is performed live. You and the performers are in the same room. Therefore, it is different from television and movies. Actors must move precisely and must time their lines and reactions carefully. Any talking or movement in the audience can destroy their concentration.

Help the actors by watching and listening carefully. The other members of the audience will also appreciate your thoughtful attention during the performance.

Watch. Listen.
Think. Imagine.

**Enjoy your collaboration
in *MacHomer*!**



Learning Activity

After the Performance

Talk to your classmates. Did they see how hard it is to perform in a one-person show? Did seeing one actor perform all the characters make it harder or easier to understand the story? Did they have a favorite character? If so, why? Did you?



Resources

You may want to:

go online for information about...

"MacHomer" at Rick Miller's own Web site that discusses the play and the ideas behind it in detail. machomer.com

The Folger Shakespeare Library and Museum, located in Washington, DC for further information about Shakespeare and his numerous plays. folger.edu

read...

Hart, Christopher. *Cartooning For The Beginner*. New York: Watson-Guptill, 2000.

Richmond, Ray and Antonia Coffman, eds. *The Simpsons, A Complete Guide To Our Favorite Family*. New York: Harper Collins, 1997.

Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*.

Toropov, Brandon. *Shakespeare For Beginners*. New York: Writers and Readers, 1999.

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MacHomer

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Cuesheet Editor- Lisa Resnick
Writer-Ricia Anne Chansky
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