

Press release

03.04.25

barbican

Teatro La Plaza: *Hamlet*

London premiere, Barbican Theatre

Thursday 24 – Sunday 27 April 2025

Press performance: Thu 24 Apr, 7.45pm

Brighton Festival

Thursday 9 – Saturday 11 May 2025

Young Peruvian cast with Down syndrome share their timely message of inclusion and diversity with the world through playful and defiant reimagining of *Hamlet*



Teatro La Plaza's *Hamlet*. Credit Teatro La Plaza

★★★★★ “A joyous affair” – The Stage

★★★★ “oozes charm, humour and imagination” – The Guardian

“audacious...an exhilarating piece of serious fun” - The Herald

“reveals the power of choosing to be yourself” – Chicago Reader

Following a sell-out run at the Edinburgh International Festival last year and fresh from a triumphant opening at the Chicago Shakespeare Theater, **Teatro la Plaza** will make their London debut at the Barbican Theatre this spring with their joyful and defiant reimagining of *Hamlet*. Breathing new life into Shakespeare's classic tragedy, the groundbreaking company visit the capital as part of an unprecedented world tour by a Peruvian theatre company spanning five continents, 37 cities and counting. They are the first Peruvian company to perform in the Barbican Theatre in its 43-year history of showcasing the world's most

exciting international artists, and the run will be followed by performances at Brighton Festival (9-11 May 2025) before the next dates coming up in East Asia and Australia.

The critically acclaimed production from visionary director and writer Chela De Ferrari is inspired by the famous monologue 'To Be or Not To Be' and performed by eight dynamic actors with Down syndrome. The charismatic ensemble now take centre stage, when historically people living with Down syndrome have been relegated to the background. Rather than a window into the world of one young prince, De Ferrari's interpretation of the Elizabethan play vibrantly celebrates community and resilience, fearlessly challenging wider societal prejudices and discrimination.

De Ferrari stays true to the spirit of the original while finding new meaning in the 21st century, exploring what it's like to exist in a world that often excludes difference. Told with playfulness, humour and fighting spirit, the enchanting production weaves together a freely adapted version of the classical text with the desires and frustrations of the eight performers, who each tell their story through compelling words, protest songs, rap, physical comedy, video design, or soaring choreography.

The innovative approach to this production began with a conversation between Jaime Cruz, who had been working for years as an usher at the Teatro La Plaza in Lima, and its artistic director, De Ferrari, who had been searching for a suitable actor to star in a new production of *Hamlet*. When Cruz spoke passionately of his great ambition to act on that very stage, De Ferrari saw an opportunity to find a whole new meaning to the play. Far from the usual time constraints of a few weeks' in rehearsals, she embarked on a deeply considered process that took over a year. De Ferrari and cast developed this uniquely democratic adaptation with a whole company of actors with Down syndrome and dramaturgical support from a team of associate playwrights and directors.

Director Chela De Ferrari says:

"This production reminds us that the stage—like the world—should not be reserved for a few but must reflect the full spectrum of who we are. Shakespeare's plays continue to resonate because they are full of political tension, with a complexity that speaks directly to our current moment. We are living in a time when authoritarian discourses are creating division and promoting fear. These ideologies often rely on the exclusion or erasure of those seen as "different"—whether due to disability, race, gender identity, or migration status. In that context, giving the stage to actors with Down syndrome is not just an artistic choice; it's an act of resistance against the idea that only certain voices deserve to be heard, or that complexity belongs only to the powerful or the "able."

This version of Hamlet challenges and redefines our expectations of performance. Many of the things traditionally considered "flaws" in acting—pronounced speech difficulties, stuttering, long pauses, even moments of blankness—become expressive tools in the actors' hands. They offer us other ways of representing, other ways of being on stage. And in that shift, many people discover beauty in places they had never thought to look before.

We are bringing a Hamlet to the Barbican that is both personal and universal. Sharing it with audiences in London is a dream, and we can't wait."

The cast of *Hamlet* said:

"I am excited to share my stories with audiences all over the world because being an artist and being on stage is difficult, learning the monologues, the scripts. I am very happy to have been able to do it, I am achieving my goals and my dreams" **Diana Gutierrez**

"My life has changed a lot through working on this production because I've always wanted to be an actor and travel around the world. Now we're touring and traveling." **Álvaro Toledo**

"Honestly, this experience has changed me in many ways. I've become more sociable. I've also learned not to be so stubborn. Hamlet has allowed me to meet wonderful people and given me a beautiful family that I feel happy to be a part of." **Octavio Bernaza**

"Sharing my stories with international audiences is a unique experience. I feel that within their hearts, the stories move them. I feel they are going to love the personality of someone with Down syndrome." **Ximena Rodríguez**

"I am super excited to perform at the Barbican Theatre because it's one of the most important theatres in the world. And it's in London, where the incredible playwright Shakespeare was." **Cristina León Barandiarán**

Toni Racklin, Barbican Head of Theatre & Dance, says:

"We are delighted to share this captivating production with London for the first time. For many years, we have presented visionary artists from around the world and wonderful adaptations of Shakespeare's classics in our Theatre. In the search for unforgettable experiences for our audiences, we look to ground-breaking companies like Teatro La Plaza to open up new perspectives on the turbulent world around us. In this Hamlet, a resounding celebration of life that is brilliantly clever, powerfully moving and unexpectedly funny, the company uncovers rarely explored pathways through the bard's timeless search for self and soul."

Peruvian-born Chela De Ferrari founded Teatro La Plaza in Lima in 2003, to connect with its community through theatre that questions, provokes and surprises. The company has since produced over 170 plays and is known for pushing boundaries and creating bold new versions of Shakespearean dramas as well as new Peruvian writing. The world premiere of *Hamlet* was presented at the Teatro La Plaza in 2019.

The company have since been invited to perform *Hamlet* at over 40 major venues and international festivals from Barcelona to São Paulo, Hong Kong to Melbourne, New York to Edinburgh (EIF 2024, winning the inaugural Bestie Award for Inclusivity). After the UK, the world tour continues to cities including Taiwan, Seoul and Toronto. Visit <https://laplaza.com.pe/obras-archive/hamlet-2023/> for further details.

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Press Information

For further information, images or to arrange interviews please contact:

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IMAGES + VIDEO

Images can be downloaded here:

[Hamlet \(Teatro La Plaza\)](#)

Trailer: https://youtu.be/Bsd6_MpedFA

LISTINGS

Barbican Centre, Silk Street, London EC2Y 8DS

Box Office: 020 7870 2500 (Monday-Friday 12noon - 5.30pm)

Barbican Centre's ticket sales team can also now help via WhatsApp, or send a text on 07380 975000

Accessible ticketing line: 020 7101 1188 (Monday–Sunday 10am–4pm), via WhatsApp, or send a text on 07710 854085

Teatro La Plaza: *Hamlet*

London premiere

Barbican Theatre

Thu 24—Sun 27 Apr 2025 (4 performances)

Thu 24 Apr 7:45pm, Fri 25 Apr 7:45pm, Sat 26 Apr 7:45pm, Sun 27 Apr 3pm

Press performance: Thu 24 Apr, 7:45pm

Relaxed performance: Sun 27 Apr, 3pm

Running time: 1 hour and 35 minutes (no interval)

Age guidance: 12+

This performance contains strobe lighting

£16 plus booking fee, £10 Young Barbican tickets available

Performed in Spanish with English surtitles

<https://www.barbican.org.uk/whats-on/2025/event/hamlet-teatro-la-plaza>

Cast

Octavio Bernaza

Jaime Cruz

Lucas Demarchi

Manuel García

Diana Gutierrez

Cristina León Barandiarán

Ximena Rodríguez

Álvaro Toledo

Creative team

Based on the play by William Shakespeare

Chela De Ferrari Playwright and Director

Jonathan Oliveros, Claudia Tangoa, Luis Alberto León Associate Directors and Associate Playwrights

Alessandra Rodríguez Vocal Training
Mirella Carbone Choreography
Lucho Soldevilla Visuals
Jesús Reyes Lighting design
Allyson Espinoza Stage manager
Marvin Calle Lighting Director
Jhosimar Sullon Sound
Dennis Hilario Video Technician
Rocío Puelles Cast Coordination and Accompaniment
Roxana Rodríguez Tour Director

Presented by the Barbican
Produced by Teatro La Plaza

About the Barbican

The Barbican is a catalyst for creativity, sparking possibilities for artists, audiences, and communities. We showcase the most exciting art from around the world, pushing traditional artistic boundaries to entertain and inspire millions of people, create connections, provoke debate, and reflect the world we live in.

We are an international arts and events centre rooted firmly in our own neighbourhood, collaborating with local communities and putting the City of London on the map as a destination for everybody. Central to our purpose is supporting emerging talent and shaping opportunities that will accelerate the next generation of creatives.

As a not-for-profit, we rely on the generosity of individuals and organisations, including our principal funder the City of London Corporation. Every ticket purchased, donation made, and pound earned supports our arts and learning programme and enables the widest possible range of people to experience the joy of the arts.

Opened in 1982, the Barbican is a unique and audacious building, recognised globally as an architectural icon. As well as our theatres, galleries, concert halls and cinemas, we have a large conservatory with over 1,500 species of plants and trees, a library, conference facilities, public and community spaces, restaurants, bars, and a picturesque lakeside oasis.

We're proud to be the home of the [London Symphony Orchestra](#), and a London base of the [Royal Shakespeare Company](#). We regularly co-commission, produce and showcase the work of our other associates and partners including the [Academy of Ancient Music](#), [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#), [Boy Blue](#), [Darbar](#), [Doc'n Roll Film Festival](#), [Drum Works](#), [EFG London Jazz Festival](#), [London Palestine Film Festival](#), [Serious](#), and [Trafalgar Theatre Productions](#).

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