



## • The Rest is Silence: Therapy, Tragedy, and Shakespearean Shenanigans

### Description

**Salt Lake City, UT** Written by **Arlise C. Hanson**. Directed by **Blayne Wiley**. Produced by **Blayne Wiley, Dustin Kennedy, Arlise C. Hanson, & Cami Rozanas** at the 2025 Great Salt Lake Fringe Festival

*In this wildly inventive therapy session for the Bard's broken-hearted, laughter and lament share the same stage*

### Rhetorical Review

In *The Rest is Silence*, the answer is clear: group therapy, emotional baggage, and pizza—sometimes served on a corpse.

From the opening scene—where the presence of a headless body somehow doesn't derail snack time—you know you're in for something ridiculous. The dialogue crackles with dark absurdity, and emotional reckoning. Is there room in the kiddie pool for everyone? Who brought the donuts? Does therapy work on ghosts? Or are they still alive? And how exactly did everyone get here?



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Photo Credit: Rhetorical Review

Presented by **New World Shakespeare Company** and penned by **Å?lise C. Hanson**, this irreverent comedy imagines a support group for survivors (and victims) of the Bard's most harrowing plays. Directed by **Blayne Wiley**, this dark comedy assembles a brilliant ensemble of Shakespeare's most dramatically damaged characters—from the brooding Hamlet and the shattered Ophelia to the guilt-ridden Lady Macbeth and the melodramatic Romeo. Led by an emotionally exhausted Horatio, the group includes familiar characters like Ophelia, Juliet, and Lady Macbeth, all reeling from betrayal, trauma.

The cast is first-rate:

- **Zachari Reynolds** brings soulful weight and comic restraint to Horatio and Hamlet.
- **Jaxton Romeo Brenner** delights as the heartbreak-prone Edgar and ever-yearning Romeo.
- **Å?lise C. Hanson** is sharp and layered as both the regal Elizabeth and vulnerable Ophelia.
- **Mandy Titcomb**, equal parts commanding and chaotic, plays a magnetic Lady Macbeth and fiery Bianca.
- **Cami Rozanas** balances vulnerability and grandeur as Perdita and Cleopatra.

Design by Wiley and Hanson keeps the space minimal but purposeful—lending focus to character, dialogue, and timing. Titcomb's costume work and contributions from **The Grand Theatre** help anchor the meta-madness with just the right visual nods.

What could have been pure parody becomes something richer in Hanson's hands: a space to ask, *what happens to characters when their stories end?* Between laughs, there's a haunting sincerity in the play's exploration of grief, identity, and surviving the stories we're written into.

With Shakespearean deep cuts, deadpan therapy tropes, and devastating one-liners, *The Rest Is Silence* earns its **Full-Fledged Fringe** rating and then some. It's a chaotic, cathartic, and unexpectedly healing ride—one that proves the drama doesn't stop at the final soliloquy. Neither, it seems, does the need for closure.

## What Worked—and What Didn't

Let's start with what worked: the concept is brilliant. *The Rest Is Silence* plays with a compelling premise—what if Shakespeare's most tragic characters found themselves in group therapy, trying to process what the Bard put them through? It's irreverent, imaginative, and bursting with potential. The script gestures toward something deeper, tapping into the emotional limbo these characters inhabit. Are they in hell? Purgatory? A never-ending rehearsal? These questions linger in the air—and in some ways, that ambiguity enhances the play's strange, dreamlike logic.

But what didn't work for me was the sheer number of characters. Every actor plays two Shakespearean roles (plus one plays Queen Elizabeth I), which quickly becomes overwhelming in a one-act Fringe runtime. The show begins with helpful name tags, but once those are gone, it's hard to track who's who—especially when the costumes don't always signal a clear transition. A single character arc per performer would have allowed for deeper emotional payoff and greater clarity.

I also found myself craving more grounding: *Where are we?* Is this a timeless afterlife, a dreamscape, a spiritual waiting room? Are the characters aware theyâ??re dead? Immortal? Do they remember their plays? These questions are intriguing, but when left completely unanchored, they risk leaving the audience adrift.

Still, **what *The Rest Is Silence* gets absolutely right is Shakespeareâ??s genre-defying legacy.** It reminds us that Shakespeare never colored within the lines. His works blur comedy and tragedy, farce and fatalism, often within a single scene. That same fluidity pulses through this play. In that way, itâ??s not just a postmodern remixâ??itâ??s actually very Shakespearean.

As we try to make sense of this genre-bending support group, weâ??re reminded that Shakespeareâ??s characters are never just one thing. And maybe thatâ??s the point. Like real people, they carry contradictions, wounds, desires, and regrets. And even centuries later, they still have something to say.

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Image made by Rhetorical Review

With its mix of meta-humor, Shakespearean deep cuts, and genuinely touching moments, *The Rest is Silence* earns its full-fledged Fringe rating and then some. It's a chaotic, cathartic romp that proves the drama doesn't stop when the play ends and neither should the healing.

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## The Rest is Silence: A Support Group for the Dramatically Damaged

**Presented by:** New World Shakespeare Company

**Playwright:** Ålise C. Hanson

**Venue:** Alliance Theater â?? Black Box

**Genre:** Theatre Â· Comedy Â· Drama Â· Original Script

**Rating:** FFF â?? Full-Fledged Fringe (Recommended for mature audiences)

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### ð?? Show Dates

- **Saturday, July 26** â?? 9:00 PM
- **Sunday, July 27** â?? 4:30 PM
- **Wednesday, July 30** â?? 9:00 PM
- **Friday, August 1** â?? 9:00 PM
- **Saturday, August 2** â?? 3:00 PM
- **Sunday, August 3** â?? 3:00 PM

(Confirmed from full Fringe schedule. Please verify times on [tickets.greatsaltlakefringe.org](https://tickets.greatsaltlakefringe.org) if needed.)

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### ð??? Tickets

**General Admission:** \$15

ð??« Available at: [tickets.greatsaltlakefringe.org](https://tickets.greatsaltlakefringe.org)

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### ð??• More Info

ð??? [newworldshakespeare.com](https://newworldshakespeare.com)

### About the Playwright: Ålise C. Hanson

Ålise C. Hanson has been a dedicated member of New World Shakespeare Company for over a decade, contributing both onstage and behind the scenes. A lifelong lover of the Bard, her Shakespeare obsession began at age eleven, when her stepfather introduced her to Orson Wellesâ??

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*Othello*. Since then, her creative journey has been fueled by joy, passion, tears, and plenty of “high apple pie in the sky” dreams.

*The Rest Is Silence*—a play she wrote years ago and is thrilled to see revived—marks a full-circle moment, allowing her to perform alongside a wildly talented cast in a story she once imagined and now brings to life. This November, she will return to the role of Hamlet (for the second time!) with [NWSC](#), and next up, she’ll appear as Miss Prism in *The Importance of Being Earnest* at [The Off Broadway Theatre](#).

Alise extends deep gratitude to Blayne Wiley, her steadfast artistic collaborator and friend, and to the entire New World Shakespeare ensemble, who continue to make the stage feel like home.

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