

2018 SAA Seminar: Scholar-Practitioner Shakespeare 1
Leaders: Amy Rodgers, Mount Holyoke College
Chad Thomas, University of Alabama Huntsville

Respondent: Will Tosh, Shakespeare's Globe

Theo Black, Cornell University

**Cue-cuffs and 'slapdash fire' – freeing the inter-acted dialectics of
Shakespeare's text**

In this paper I'll look at an acting & directing technique termed 'The 4-Stage Exercise,' developed by Gary Logan, which suspends customary cue/line divides - and examine it in relation to prominent methods and motivations of Cue-Script interpretations. I'm interested in how reframing the conception of 'speech-giver' as dominant in stage focus (in part modeled upon a readerly conceit of textual sequentialism) towards one in which multiple speakers persuasively inter-act upon each other works to enfranchise students/performers/audience of Shakespeare's plays, and its recalibrating implications for both dynamic soundscape and dramatic spectacle.

Kurt Daw, San Francisco State University

Performing Texts

For reasons that are understandable, but not inevitable, critical editions of Shakespeare have – at least since Malone – been explicitly intended for reading and literary study. In serving these purposes, however, "traditional codes of editorial commentary", in Barbara Hodgdon's memorable phrase, "serve neither performers nor performance." My paper will explore why the editorial tradition developed in this manner, how this tradition fails performers, and imagines what a scholarly editorial practice designed to facilitate performance might look like.

Brett Gamboa, Dartmouth College

Trading 'Places' in *Othello*

Many questions in Shakespeare studies cannot be answered definitively. Among these are questions about casting and representation on Shakespeare's stages, and the reception of his original audiences. Theories have developed about the company's practices—cast sizes, doubling, costumes, female representation, etc.— though many are founded on doubtful premises, because they depend on scant evidence from rival companies in Elizabethan times or from King's Men practices in the Caroline period. Close 'reading' of dramaturgy and contemporary performance, then, is critical in testing and refining casting theories. Since Shakespeare embedded consistent casting patterns in his play structures, we can learn about what the plays were designed to make possible, whether the historical company realized those possibilities in performance or not. In this essay I discuss doubling possibilities for *Othello*, based on a 'workshop' version I directed. The essays shows how the text can be performed with as few as nine actors and discusses the benefits of playing with such a cast, meanwhile suggesting that attending to dramaturgy might valuably inform historical questions about casting and staging in Shakespeare.

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Douglas E. Green, Augsburg University

Is There a Shakespearean in the House?
Or, a Dramaturg, a Reviewer, and a Professor Walk Into a Bar

I'm interested in the confluence of three areas of my work on Shakespeare and performance that speak to the idea of Scholar-Practitioner Shakespeare: dramaturgy, reviewing, and classroom 'production.' Concurrent work in these areas is, of course, not unique to me: Many Shakespeare colleagues do the same. I have served as literary consultant or dramaturg for almost every Shakespeare production on campus over the last thirty years (at least one every other year). While historical questions and the pronunciation of unfamiliar words and names, commonly considered "scholarly" concerns, dominated initially, I've found that directors and student-actors are more interested in *possibility*: What possibilities does the text offer? Can these lines be read in this way? Or, rather, what happens if we play the lines this way or in relation to this current context? What happens if in our Shakespeare we don't play (i.e., cut) these lines or this sub-plot? In other words, working on a production forces me to think about Worthen's complication of Taylor's terms, of the intersection of the Shakespeare *archive*, which itself is less stable than the term implies by virtue of its complicated textual status right from the get-go, and the *repertoire*, all those practices and conventions (current, past, variously cultural) that constitute embodied performance.

Ariane Nada Helou, University of California Los Angeles

Shakespeare in Song

I'm interested in the use of vocal music in Shakespeare's plays; this paper will draw on some of the preliminary research I'm doing for a future book project, tentatively titled *Shakespeare's Singers*. There are three big questions I'm exploring: Who were Shakespeare's singers (i.e. the singing actors in his theater company)? How did Shakespeare's use of vocal music evolve over time, and might his singing actors have played a role in this evolution? And what might we take away from this historical / musicological / literary information to use in the practice of staging Shakespeare's plays?

Kathryn M. Moncrief, Washington College

"In sorrow all devour'd":
Staging Parental Grief in Shakespeare's Late Romances

From Lady Macbeth's "I have given suck, and know/ how tender 'tis to love the babe this milks me" (1.7.54-55) and Macbeth's realization of the significance of his "fruitless crown" (3.1.60) and "barren sceptre" (3.1.61), to King Lear's loss of his daughter Cordelia, to the missing princes in *Cymbeline* and lost infant daughters *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale*, the importance of children and the pain of child loss pervades the plays of Shakespeare, as it did the lives of early

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modern parents. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, historians estimate 1/4 to 1/3 of all English children died before age 15. Given that women bore 6-10 children, only half of who survived to adulthood, few families would have escaped experiencing the death of children. Unsurprisingly, numerous print and manuscript sources (including mother's elegies, diaries, and poetry) pay repeated attention to the subject of child-loss. The complicated emotions expressed by poets and diarists, and their not always successful attempts to find consolation in their understanding of a Christian heaven, would have been familiar to early modern English parents, including Shakespeare. His only son, Hamnet, died in the summer of 1596, at the age of 11. His reaction (and the reaction of his wife) to the personal tragedy goes unrecorded but it cannot be a coincidence that on stage, Shakespeare repeatedly examines child loss and its consequences. This paper explores the significance of child loss and grief in early modern) in relation to the fantasy of recovery and restoration in Shakespeare's late romances and suggests that the stage both rehearses mourning and, in staging grief, functions powerfully as place of recovery. It will examine moments of parental grief and recovery in *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale* to consider how, specifically, the stage (embodied and enacted) rehearses grief, loss, and recovery.

John Ray Proctor III, Tulane University

***Romeo and Juliet* and an HBCU**

My purpose is to examine and consider the ways in which multiple "hats" intersect (or converge) when directing Shakespeare. Such a consideration would be relevant and/or valid in a broader consideration of directing, generally, but specifically for directing Shakespeare I want to look at the ways in which my own experiences (and career) as an actor has informed the ways in which I converse with actors (in particular, actors of color) when directing Shakespeare. My primary concerns include consideration of the ways in which Actors of color negotiate "finding" (or developing) authenticity when speaking Shakespearean text. I want to address deconstructing the idea that there is a "proper" way for Shakespeare to sound in performance. I am going to consider the intersection between Shakespeare and "class" or social hierarchy (at least hear in America). I will defer to Lawrence Levine's "Highbrow-Lowbrow" for support regarding the division of Shakespeare to the American upper class. I want to consider the ways in which performers who have correctly identified themselves and the ways in which they have been located, or pigeon-holed, in the American social status, how these performers reconcile and reclaim Shakespeare in performance. I want to consider and examine the ways in which these performers reconcile and reclaim language, in such a way that they claim ownership of their artistic contributions to Shakespeare in performance. I am going to look at a specific production of *Romeo and Juliet*.

Paige M. Reynolds, University of Central Arkansas

Dying in Romeo and Juliet

Women have always had to confront, when it comes to performing Shakespeare's plays, the precondition of their preclusion. That is, since boy actors originated Shakespeare's female roles, the woman who steps on stage to say Shakespeare's words is always already pushing up against

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an unspoken accusation of usurpation. Or a spoken one, as in Harley Granville-Barker's wistful fantasy of "the restoring of the celibate stage" (a fantasy frequently fulfilled by modern all-male performances). Warning female performers that Shakespeare "has left no blank spaces for her to fill with her charm," Granville-Barker cautions, "Let the usurping actress remember that her sex is a liability, not an asset." The performance heritage for female actors of Shakespeare is thus, in some ways, a study in deprivation. The performer of Shakespeare's women faces the constant pressure to bring her body into alignment with (historically male) critical assumptions about that character or risk critical assault. Because the female characters Shakespeare shaped occupy less textual space and function with fewer privileges than their male counterparts, criticism has made it easy to deny the artistic appetites of female performers. Women performing in Shakespeare's plays may therefore find it difficult in practice to defy—or even discuss—their own theatrical starvation (as characters and as actors). I want to explore women and starvation in Shakespeare, using Lady Capulet as a case study.

Deb Streusand, University of Texas Austin

The Authority of "What Works"

Performance and scholarship can and should be mutually supporting. Performance informs scholarship by expanding the range of options for how to interpret a scene. On the other hand, scholarship can help directors and performers make choices that the text supports, if that is what the practitioners wish to do. The next step is to bring representatives of each into the other's spaces. The theatrical side is somewhat ahead in this respect, to the extent that some theatre companies do employ production dramaturgs in order to bring scholarly knowledge to bear when they do Shakespeare or other classical works. But what would a representative of performers in scholarly venues look like? Beyond the projects of scholar-practitioners like ourselves, there is room in the field for close collaboration between working practitioners and active scholars. With a mutual respect and acknowledging the value of the other's field, new forms of theatrical and scholarly production will become possible.