

Shakespeare Association of America
2022 Annual Conference
Seminar: Early Modern Theatre Studies and Podcasting
Seminar Abstracts

Clio Doyle, Queen Mary University of London

"William Shakespeare or Taylor Swift?"

The question "William Shakespeare or Taylor Swift?" is the title of a quiz that has spread across the internet in multiple versions since at least 2016. You can take the quiz or watch a clip of the cast of the recent National Theater production of *Romeo and Juliet* taking the quiz, but either way the game is to identify whether Taylor or the Bard wrote lines such as "Romeo take me somewhere we can be alone." "Clue's in the title," said one of the R&J cast members, incorrectly claiming this line for Shakespeare, proving, you know, what's in a name and stuff. I took the quiz and Buzzfeed told me that I was "clearly a Taylor Swift fan and a Shakespeare scholar!" As this hybrid beast, I ask whether we could read not Shakespeare *or* Swift but Shakespeare *and* Swift, specifically at the moment at which they become indistinguishable. I draw on my experience writing the episode "Taylor Swift and Heteroglossia (Love Story)" for my podcast *Studies in Taylor Swift*, in which I ventriloquize Swift's and Shakespeare's voices, both alike in dignity, although allegedly in little else, and ask how we know for sure, at any moment, who is speaking – William Shakespeare or Taylor Swift?

Elise Lonich Ryan, University of Pittsburgh

"Colour / Your Loneliness: Inigo Jones"

My contribution to our seminar will consist of one thirty-minute podcast episode, along with show notes, bibliography, and an image catalogue that accompanies the episode. This episode represents the first content for a projected podcast series tentatively titled Colour / Your Loneliness. Taking the title for the series from Polonius's admonition to Ophelia to "read on this book / That show of such an exercise may colour / Your loneliness" (3.1.44-46), Colour / Your Loneliness explores the range of meaning inherent in that command and, through podcasting, creates a form that can color the loneliness so many of us face in professional worlds fractured by contingent labor and communities disconnected and weary in this ongoing pandemic. As I research and develop the series arc, I'm motivated by the question of what an imperative to "colour" an existential state might have meant to an early modern audience, and I hope to range widely through early modern color theory, space and geometry on the early modern stage, theological, humanist, and lyric conceptions of identity, and the performance of literacy in manuscript circles. To this end, the episode I will submit focuses on Inigo Jones's stage designs, architectural innovations, and the archival record of his drawings, many of which are hand colored. Beginning with Ben Jonson's "An Expostulation with Inigo Jones," I will lay-out the (supposed) conflict between poetry and the visual arts that Jonson invokes and delve into Jonson's and Jones's feud. From

there, I plan to use several architectural plans, set designs, and costume sketches to marvel at Jones's vision and unique absorption of Italian methods in an English context. The performance of self in a designed space changes within Jones's fanciful and geometric stage concepts. I envision this episode to be a collage of audio essay and interview aimed at an audience of highly curious non-experts. Ultimately, I'm aiming this podcast at listeners who find themselves along the spectrum of interest in and affiliation with the worlds of literature, design, and theater.

Marissa Greenberg, University of New Mexico

“You would have thought the very windows spake”: The Public Theater’s Podcast Performance of Shakespeare’s *Richard II*

The Duke of York’s account of Henry Bolingbroke’s and Richard II’s passage through London occupies less than a hundred lines of Shakespeare’s *Richard II*. Yet it marks a significant moment in the histories of Shakespearean performance. As I have explored elsewhere, plays as varied as *Measure for Measure* and *Henry VIII* stage royal and judicial processions, positioning playgoers as witnesses to the operations of law and order, and adaptations of *The Merchant of Venice* reimagine these movements through public space in the service of or in opposition to dominant authority. These operations are predominantly spectacular; it is what playgoers see onstage that define the event and its implications. The Public Theater’s 2020 podcast performance of *Richard II* points up the importance of sound in these processes. As in Shakespeare’s play, these sounds include affective speech, sonic witnessing, and environmental acoustics; but the podcast also includes scholarly and actorly voices. Creating a meta-auditory experience of performances of power, both in the play and in its production, the podcast invites us to bring scholarly attention to acoustics and hearing in early modern English theatre to bear on the role of sound to delaud, declaim, measure, and amplify systems of social meaning-making and political action on today’s stages and streets. Questions driving my piece, the format for which is TBD, include: What experiences of embodiment, movement, and space are generated by and through the Public’s podcast? How do “when” and “where” of accessing the podcast speak to (no pun intended) current-day/pandemic-times/#MeToo and BLM movements-era experiences of pedagogical and political inclusion, equity, and protest?