

SAA Seminar 17 Abstracts

Seminar Organiser: Dr Christie Carson, Reader in Shakespeare in Performance, English Department, Royal Holloway University of London c.carson@rhul.ac.uk

Seminar Title: The Global Shakespeare Festival: Shakespeareans Diplomacy

Seminar Overview:

Performance, Presence and Personal responsibility: Witnessing the Globe to Globe Festival
Christie Carson, Royal Holloway University of London

The Globe to Globe Festival, which took place on London's Bankside, featured all 37 of Shakespeare's plays in 37 different languages as part of the 2012 London Cultural Olympic celebrations. Given that it was in London and at the Globe many of the companies involved risked quite a bit both personally and financially to participate. This Festival was seen as an international showcase for national traditions of Shakespeare and as a result it brought together some of the top actors from these countries to perform for ex-pat communities in London. The result was an extraordinary six weeks of theatre which was summed up in an edited collection entitled *Shakespeare Beyond English: A Global Experiment* (Cambridge, 2013). This paper describes this event and considers the best way to preserve the memory of this project and to help it to have an afterlife in scholarship and teaching. The paper frames the discussion of the seminar which will tackle in more general terms the way that international festivals of this kind can help to further scholarly debates about 'nation', 'language', 'identity' and 'gender' through concrete examples of Shakespearean interpretation, adaptation and appropriation. The members of the group will consider the potential for political commentary on and involvement in international theatre festivals like the Globe to Globe Festival.

Seminar Papers

The Globe to Globe Festival and Intercultural Festival Shakespeare
Rob Ormsby, Memorial University of Newfoundland

In this paper, I want to revisit my own and others' reactions to the Globe to Globe (G2G) Festival in relation to recent work on "global" Shakespeare, intercultural theatre and festival Shakespeare as cultural tourism. Earlier writing about the Globe examined its claims to authenticity, its "theme park" approach to staging Shakespeare and its "tourist" audiences whose active participation is a major component of performance at the theatre. By contrast, one strain of the academic writing that emerged in the (nearly) immediate wake of the G2G focused not so much on how the festival's audiences helped to create a typical Globe performance but on the distinctions between diasporic audiences who had access to the languages and cultures of various non-English productions and the scholars who did not. I want to think about such scholarly narratives in relation Yong Li Lan's notion of productive non-understanding in performance, "the experience of non-understanding as a relation not only to the pleasure and meaningfulness of another culture's art but also to the meaning that art makes of *us*." Besides attending to the ways that G2G performance events transformed traditions associated with the Globe, I will examine how certain scholarly response to Festival performances placed academics in a position analogous to the tourist theatregoer who consumes a spectacle of otherness both onstage *and* in the auditorium.

“What dost thou then in prison?”: Incarceration, International Shakespeare, and the Festival Phenomenon

Kevin A. Quarmby, Oxford College of Emory University

In 2012, Britain celebrated its cultural identity by inviting theatre companies from around the globe to perform Shakespeare in their home languages. Flights were arranged and practitioners transported, all to satisfy the apparent appetite for international Shakespeare. Hailed as a success, the Shakespeare Festival phenomenon spawned commentary and plaudits from aficionados and skeptics alike. For the Globe to Globe Festival, the Isango Ensemble from Cape Town offered their interpretation of ‘Venus and Adonis’. Incorporating six South African languages, the poem’s actors were praised for the clarity of their performances, with one London reviewer commenting, ‘no translation is required to understand what deliciously expressive chief Venus Malefane and her sisters want from the unwilling youth’ Adonis.

Elsewhere in Cape Town, another ‘captive’ audience continues to explore the internationalism of Shakespeare from a totally different perspective. Unable to board a plane and travel to Shakespeare’s home nation, prisoners in the South African prison system are forging their own relationship with Shakespeare. Led by its director, Tauriq Jenkins, the Shakespeare in Prison initiative, in association with the Shakespeare Literacy Project, is forcing an academic reappraisal of globalized Shakespeare through its unrelenting insistence that, only by employing the original ‘language of the oppressor’ in its Shakespearean form, can a process of self-discovery, healing, and remediation truly occur. This paper questions, therefore, the colonialism of International Shakespeare Festivals and considers the underlying condescension of inviting ‘others’ to British shores, while ignoring the empowering effect of Shakespeare’s language on communities unable, through incarceration, to share in the global Shakespeare experiment.

Shakespeare in La Mancha: The Almagro Classical Theatre Festival as an International Meeting Point.

Isabel Guerrero, University of Murcia

Shakespeare has taken over the Almagro Classical Theatre Festival in the last decade. Although the festival was created to commemorate and preserve Spanish Golden Age drama in 1978, the widening of its scope to international companies in 1984 brought with it the first Shakespearean play –*Pericles*, by the British company Cheek by Jowl. Some years later, the beginning of the 21st century saw a considerably increase in the number of Shakespearean productions (e.g. seven in 2004, eleven in 2013). These numbers are surprisingly high if we consider that they surpass the number of plays by national authors such as Cervantes, Lope de Vega or Calderón. This gives rise to questions about the own nature of the festival –no longer restricted to the celebration of Spanish classics–, Shakespeare’s and national classical author’s statuses, or why the most performed author in Almagro is precisely Shakespeare. Both national and international companies frequently stage Shakespeare in Almagro. In the last three editions of the festival (2011-2013), companies from eight different countries have performed twenty-nine Shakespearean productions, each of them from a different perspective (i.e. puppet theatre, monologues, improvisation, etc.). This variety of foreign and non-foreign Shakespeare transforms the festival into a meeting point for international companies, which raises questions about national identity, national traditions of Shakespeare and ways to approach classical texts today. The

purpose of this paper is to address two main questions: why and how Shakespeare has taken over the Almagro Festival, by “how” meaning theatrical traditions and techniques. In order to do so, the focus is on the 2011, 2012 and 2013 editions of the festival.

Teatro Nacional de México at the 2012 Globe to Globe Festival
Professor David Ruiter, University Of Texas, El Paso

As the Teatro Nacional de México prepared for the 2012 Globe to Globe Festival in London, they re-discovered the sort of out-of-into-out-of-back-in-to double translation method famous during Shakespeare’s age. That is, the theatre company was tasked with taking a quintessentially English play (focused on medieval British history, written by the UK’s most iconic author), translating it into contemporary Mexican Spanish, practicing it in Mexico City, and returning it to the reconstructed Globe. But while the values of Early Modern translation focused on a certain effort to return the words to their “perfect” origins, the Teatre Nacional took a more liberating approach to the project.

My paper will focus on the idea that Shakespeare’s late 16th century play found a new, global perfection in May of 2012. And, I will center this short piece on the idea that what is found in translation has the potential to far outstrip what is lost, in terms of meaningful dramatic performance. I will discuss the performance politics and practice that informed this achievement and allowed for this transformative moment.

The Politics of (Inter)Cultural Spectation: Shakespeare and the Global Spectator
Leticia C. Garcia, University of California, Irvine

This paper stands on the critical trend to examine the figure of the ‘global spectator’ within intercultural Shakespeare, and suggests the growing impact of Shakespeare as a festivalized and globalized commodity. In considering this, this paper explores the critical trends in intercultural theatre that have long emphasized issues that intercultural theatre poses for the spectator. In light of the difficulties, this paper will engage in these questions: how does the notion of ‘global Shakespeare’ relate to questions of theatrical tourism, locality criticism, theories of space, and cultural meaning with the forefront of this paper dealing specifically on the summer 2012 Globe to Globe festival staged at Shakespeare’s Globe in conjunction with the London 2012 Olympics.

As the core argument of this paper stresses the problematic of intercultural spectation, conceptualizing the framework of the spectator and audience as both inside and outside the scene and participating in the machine of tourism that is festivalized theatre within the space of the Globe theatre is significant. In doing so, the study of the intercultural spectator redefines notions of Englishness, Shakespeare, and of London, opening up for inversion, reassessment, and renegotiation. Ultimately, the matrixing of cultural identities within the bifurcated space(s) of the intercultural performance posits, I argue, concepts of diplomatic exchange that work against the cultural subtext that gird and displace the performance and the space of Shakespeare’s Globe.