

Audiences at the Red Bull: A Review of the Evidence

Recently, the view that the Red Bull audience consisted largely of “unlettered” members of the lower classes has been challenged by several scholars, notably Marta Straznicky, Tom Rutter and Eva Griffith. On the other hand, Mark Bayer seems to confirm the traditional view, though he rejects the assumption that this meant the performances were of low artistic value. In this paper I look carefully at the very limited amount of evidence that survives about the patrons of the Red Bull, focusing especially on the period prior to 1625. This evidence consists essentially of a few contemporary references and a group of extant plays believed with varying degrees of certainty to have been performed there. My thesis is that all the above-mentioned scholars are partially right. Early modern theatre companies had to appeal to several different audiences at the same time; while there certainly were apprentices and artisans in the yard, the higher-paying, more numerous, and more socially-prestigious audience in the galleries was likely the main focus of the company’s attention. This audience may have contained a higher proportion of “citizens” than at the Globe, but its main distinguishing feature was a more conservative world view and theatrical taste.

Douglas Arrell, University of Winnipeg

Catherine Clifford

SAA 2015: Playhouses and Other Early Modern Playing Venues

University of Texas at Arlington

catherinerclifford@yahoo.com

Anne of Denmark’s Temporary Courtyard Theatre and the Consecration of a New Court at Somerset House in 1614

On February 2, 1614, upon the near-completion of extensive renovations at Somerset House, soon to be known as Denmark House, Anne of Denmark hosted a wedding celebration for one of her ladies-in-waiting at her palace. The event, less of a wedding reception and more of a housewarming, featured a performance of Samuel Daniel’s pastoral play *Hymen’s Triumph* as its finale, for which a temporary playing space was constructed in a smaller paved courtyard to the east of the palace’s Great Court. This temporary venue, once removed from the heavily trafficked spheres of the

palace, was constructed from timber and cloth, but recalled, in some ways, an indoor theatre with its raised stage, banked seating, and separate place for musicians. My paper seeks to locate this space within an architectural history of English court banqueting and entertainment houses. It is my contention that this temporary theatre at Somerset/Denmark House was indebted to these types of venues constructed under English monarchs going back over a century before. Furthermore, the space, which revised certain key elements of the Tudor court banqueting and entertainment houses that preceded it, serves as a performative representation of the queen herself and the separate court culture she sought to establish at Denmark House. I hope to address, here, how reading court theatre spaces alongside an intellectual history of courtly banqueting houses might prove valuable to scholars interested in the landscape of court performance.

Ralph Alan Cohen
Abstract for SAA Seminar 2015
“Playhouses and Other Early Modern Playing Venues”
David Kathman, Leader

The Stools

Laurence Olivier got a lot right in his film of *Henry V*, but one mistake he made was to have gallants sitting on the Globe stage on stools. We have no record of audience members sitting on the stage of the outdoor theatres, and Sam Wanamaker’s re-created Globe shows us why: the sightlines of the groundlings standing around the stage would have been blocked by the stools. But the Blackfriars did have stools for the gallants, and we have found at the re-created Blackfriars Playhouse in Staunton, that that distinction makes a number of important differences. My paper will look at the differences the stools make in relation to the architecture, the audience, and the actor. My hope is to meld primary source material (Jonson, Dekker, et al) about the gallants and their stools in early modern London with photographs of how the gallants’ stools function today and – with a number of winning anecdotes from 12 years of watching actors and stool-sitters at the Blackfriars – to suggest something about the way they may have worked historically, all the while urging more exploration of their value to the stage in the future.

2015 SAA Theatre History Seminar:
Richard Dutton Abstract

How Wrong Was Hotson about the Globe?

It seems safe to say that Leslie Hotson's *Shakespeare's Wooden 'O'* (1959) was not part of the scholarship that informed the construction of 'Shakespeare's Globe' in the 1990s. It advances a variety of eccentric suggestions. It claims, for example, that the tiring-house was part of the cellarage, below the stage, and that all the actors (not just, say, ghosts) enters via trap doors. But its most contentious claims – the ones that drive all the others – are to do with the disposition of the audience. As Bernard Beckerman dismissively put it: 'Citing a compote of evidence from English and Spanish theaters, he asserts that the essential relationship between actor and audience maintained at Court, playhouse, and college, was one in which the actor performed between two masses of audience, with the privileged audience sitting on one side. In the Globe this privileged audience sat in the gallery over the stage and on the stage between the stage doors' (*Shakespeare at the Globe*, 95). As more recent scholarship by Alan Nelson and John Astington has confirmed, that was indeed the normal relationship between actors and audiences at colleges and at court. And there is an argument for seating on the stage at the Blackfriars and other private theatres being an attempt to recreate it there. Is it absolutely unthinkable that there was such seating at the Globe? Even if not, is it possible that the Lords' Room figured socially and symbolically larger than accounts of the Globe normally suggest? This paper reviews the evidence.

My fair Rose wither: Shakespeare & Company's Rose Theatre Project

Sarah Enloe

The myriad of theatres approximating early modern spaces, such as the Rose at Blue Lakes Fine Arts Camp in Michigan, New Swan Festival at UC Irvine, and The Curtain Theatre in Austin, which have opened in the last few years reveal an atmosphere ripe for re-created playing spaces beyond Shakespeare's Globe in London or Blackfriars Playhouse in Staunton, Virginia. One theatre, The Rose Playhouse at Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, Massachusetts, however, has languished since the initial burst of research, planning, and funding that occurred in 2000-2002. Arguably, this project has the potential to be the most "authentic" of any reconstructed theatre given the availability the 1989 archeological discoveries, yet, the builders, scholars, and artists at Lenox have not been able to move forward. Why, then, has Shakespeare & Company made significant progress, but been stalled for over a decade? Is the issue historical accuracy? Funding? Priorities?

By presenting interviews with the parties involved, including the major players, such as Tina Packer from Shakespeare & Company, Peter McCurdy from McCurdy & Company,

and Julian Bowsher from the Museum of London, this paper seeks to answer those questions and document the project's challenges and successes.

SAA 2015: Seminar 25

Dr. Eva Griffith, London.

Title: Discovering the size and shape of the first theatre in Drury Lane: land documents for Christopher Beeston's Cockpit-Phoenix.

In 1988 Dr. Graham Barlow demonstrated in what ways Christopher Beeston's Cockpit could not have been built using the designs housed at Worcester College Oxford. Following on from an article published in *The Times Literary Supplement* on 16 May 2014 I supply up-to-date details of the land documents associated with the Cockpit - one of London's most important, indoor, economically-successful seventeenth-century playhouses. Are we design-less for this theatre now or what other clues can be garnered about Beeston's 1616 enterprise? What kinds of expert could be useful for further help? Archaeological experts? (Difficult in view of the buildings currently in place.) Architectural? Or would a historically-aware modern-day surveyor be the person to approach for further understanding? This paper is mainly one to do with data, but opens up the hope of useful reconstruction as a way toward more creatively stimulating theatre history.

HOW TO TRACK A BEAR IN SOUTHWARK: A LEARNING MODULE

Tanya Hagen and Sally-Beth MacLean
Records of Early English Drama

The development of the first phase of REED's *Early Modern London Theatres* open access website included a *Learning Zone*, an educational module that draws on database records to introduce undergraduate students to the rudiments of bibliographical and historical research. As we mark the half-way point in Phase 2 of the project, we begin work on a new module that seeks both to engage student users with a fresh body of records, and to push the technological bounds of the original resource.

Our current research brings EMLoT's focus from the eight theatres north of the Thames – the subject of Phase I – to the six theatres south of the Thames. Amongst these, the complex of venues associated over the course of a century with bear-baiting and animal entertainments – loosely adumbrated as the 'Bear Garden,' and including the Hope theatre – have yielded the richest store of material to date. Records range in provenance from chronicles to court cases to the voluminous Henslowe-Alleyn papers

now housed at Dulwich College, and represent over four centuries of published work related either directly or tangentially to the early English theatre. The EMLoT Bear Garden event records form the core of a projected interactive module that offers students a case study in the formation (and indeterminacy) of historical narrative, and provides a hands-on introduction to archival research.

'How to Track a Bear in Southwark' will use the open-source web-publishing platform Omeka, to chart a series of pathways through the Bear Garden records, each presenting a different perspective on the history of London's multiple baiting venues. Related exercises invite students to map a unique narrative pathway based on the EMLoT records, but also to pursue the story beyond the database confines, tracking original versions of the documents in online forums such as the Henslowe-Alleyn Digitisation Project, or hunting down materials not considered in the database, as in the original *Learning Zone's* 'The Space Between.'

The Playing Places of *Edward II*
Roslyn L. Knutson

The purpose of this submission is to consider the venues in London and on the road where Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II* might have been performed. An identification of the venues has been done (though not, I think, collated), but there is a contrast in the kind of evidence used to name London venues and that for provincial venues. Theater historians know that Pembroke's Men, who owned *Edward II* in 1592-3, were in London around Christmas 1592, at which time they performed twice at court. Presumably, they also had a commercial London venue before they set out for the provinces in late spring 1593. Thanks to REED publications and the *Patrons and Performances Web Site*, Pembroke's tour and its venues on tour are as well documented as extant records permit. I will focus here on 1592-3, but there are ancillary questions to consider about the stage life and performance venues of *Edward II* before November 1592 and after August 1593.

SAA 2015, Playhouses and Other Early Modern Playing Venues
Seminar leader: David Kathman

The Presbyterian Elder at the Fortune: Tobias Lisle, 1639-1649

Christopher Matusiak
Ithaca College
cmatusiak@ithaca.edu

It is now commonplace to observe that players kept four of London's commercial playhouses sporadically functional during the revolutionary 1640s and 50s; however, to better appreciate the complexity of the mid-century theatrical scene, deeper knowledge is

needed about the many other men and women whose financial, political, and religious investments were as instrumental in determining the fate of these wartime theatres. To this end, my paper explores the attitudes and relationships of some of the less well-known people orbiting two venues in particular, the Fortune and Salisbury Court playhouses. First among them is Tobias Lisle, a prosperous grocer and elder in the Presbyterian community of St Leonard Eastcheap, whose hold on shares at the Fortune during the second civil war triggered a protracted legal dispute with Edward Alleyn's successors at the College of God's Gift. I am also interested in the last days of Edward Sackville, the psychologically troubled fourth Earl of Dorset, who opted shortly before his death in 1652 to lease the Salisbury Court playhouse to the player William Beeston rather than follow through with a plan for Edward Lightmaker to convert the damaged building into a brewing house—a decision which ultimately drew the Lord Buckhurst (Dorset's son), Buckhurst's wife Frances Cranfield, and their Catholic friend Sir Kenelm Digby into the complicated business of negotiating theatrical commerce during the Protectorate.

Mayberry Abstract
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Give Me Audience: Audience, Actors, and Playhouse Architecture in the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp's Rose Theatre

In 2010, the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp in Twin Lake, Michigan, built the Rose, a recreation of an early modern, outdoor playhouse. Rather than seeking to reconstruct any single, specific playhouse from early modern England, architect Dick Borgeson and the builders of the Rose included features of multiple different early modern playhouses.

Like their counterparts at the American Shakespeare Center's Blackfriars playhouse and the Globe and Swan Theatre theatres in London, spectators and performers at the Rose enjoy a rare opportunity to experience the ways in which theatre architecture influences the experience of theatrical performance. Until 2012, public audiences did not have access to performances of Shakespeare's plays in the Rose. Then, in the summer of 2012, Blue Lake Public Radio, an NPR station affiliated with the camp, formed a partnership with the Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Company, a touring company based in Michigan, to produce public performances in this remarkable space. Using audience

surveys and interviews with actors who have performed in the Rose, this paper examines such issues as the influence of theatre architecture on the actors' direct address to the theatre audience; the ways in which theatrical architecture defines the physical relationship between actors and audience; the significance of theatre architecture in audience members' relationship to each other; and the ways in which early modern play texts reflect the theatre architecture of their time period.

"New" Documents for the Red Bull Playhouse: Court of Requests and King's Bench, 1613

By Alan H. Nelson (with David Mateer)

Much of our knowledge of Elizabethan and Jacobean playhouses derives from the fact that they were part of an elaborate business, with agreements and understandings recorded in legal contracts. Some playhouse contracts survive in the original; many more survive only because they are cited in the course of subsequent litigation. David Mateer has discovered a hitherto unknown legal dispute in the rolls of King's Bench citing the 14 February 1608/9 indenture between Aaron Holland and Philip Stone in sufficient detail to permit its reconstruction. The Holland-Stone indenture confirms what is already known about the Red Bull, including the fact that the playhouse was comprised of a "Great Gate," galleries, and a stage. Provision is also made for the sale of beer, ale, and 'fructus' (fruit). With the consent and assistance of David Mateer, I plan to extract this and subsequent Red Bull indentures or contracts from a succession of lawsuits, and to present them in a chronological sequence which may make more explicit the legal history of the Red Bull.

"Let me the curtains draw": Re-evaluating Bed Curtains on the Renaissance Stage

Elizabeth Sharrett

In 5.2 of *Othello* Desdemona has just been smothered on her bed. Not wanting his dying wife to be discovered, Othello exclaims, "let me the curtains draw" (5.2.106), at which point, according to Michael Neill's edition, "*He closes the bed curtains*" (106.1).¹ When Emilia discovers Desdemona, the editor again includes, "*She opens the bed curtains*" (120.1), as well as annotation concerning "The extensive business in this scene, involving repeated openings and closings of the bed curtains" (106.1-107). In identifying the textiles as those attached to a bed, Neill assumes the use of a curtained structure in performance. This paper investigates this common

¹ Michael Neill, ed., *Othello* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

assumption, exploring prop beds and their real-life counterparts, as well as the physical theatres in which they appeared. While the actor in *Othello* may have drawn something meant to represent a bed curtain, such as one concealing a discovery space, there are no indications in either the 1622 quarto or the 1623 Folio that such a textile was attached to an actual prop bed. As Tiffany Stern points out, Shakespeare was “sometimes wrapping [the theatres’] features into his fictional world, sometimes wrapping his fictions around their features.”² This teasing out of evidence forces the critic to re-evaluate the assumed structure of prop beds. In turn, this may reveal a more nuanced understanding of the playhouses, and consequently the dramatic impact of these scenes.

Mass Complicity: Imagining Shakespeare’s Audience Spaces through Modern Venues

Jennifer L. Steigerwalt

One major criticism frequently leveled at Shakespeare productions that use the playing practices of early modern English troupes, sometimes referred to as original practices, is that no matter how many conventions can be authentically recreated in the twenty-first century, modern audiences cannot be Elizabethan, regardless of how willing they might be to stand in the London rain for a three-hour production. Despite this valid concern, this paper explores what these modern audiences’ reactions can suggest about early modern playing spaces. Audiences attending original-practices productions at non-recreated spaces, such as the 2013 Globe on Broadway productions of *Richard III* and *Twelfth Night* or Stratford Shakespeare Festival’s *Romeo & Juliet*, tend to not coalesce into making a unified response as readily as audiences at the recreated theatres, such as the Globe or Blackfriars. The indoor theatrical spaces that playing companies began to build after the success of the King’s Men with the Blackfriars in 1608 differed from their outdoor predecessors in ways which made them more architecturally sociofugal, with fixed-features that anticipated later venues, but the playtexts written for both spaces expect the same kind of audience response. Therefore, investigating the varying factors that influence modern audiences differently between recreated and non-recreated spaces—such as architecture, seating, lighting, and sets—will shed light on how the differing early modern spaces achieved their mass complicity.

SAA 2015: Seminar 25, Playhouses and Other Early Modern Playing Venues

Leslie Thomson, University of Toronto

Title: Was there an opening in the middle of the tiring house wall?

Abstract: It is generally believed by experts and non-experts alike that there was a central opening in the tiring-house wall. Theatre historians with opinions on the matter have offered a variety of reasons to argue for such an opening, despite both the paucity of hard evidence and the fact of just two doors in the Swan drawing.

² Tiffany Stern, “‘This wide and universal theatre’: The theatre as prop in Shakespeare’s metadrama,” *Shakespeare’s Theatres and the Effects of Performance* eds. Farah Karim-Cooper and Tiffany Stern, 11-32 (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2013), 32.

Recently, however, it has been argued that the Swan drawing is essentially correct, at least with regard to the number and location of openings in the tiring-house wall. The purpose of this paper is to summarize these opposing theories and the reasons for them, as a way of beginning to reconsider the question.

SAA 2015: Playhouses and Other Early Modern Playing Venues

'The Sam Wanamaker Playhouse: confronting the past'

Will Tosh (Post-doctoral research fellow, Globe Education, Shakespeare's Globe)

On opening in January 2014, the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse at Shakespeare's Globe was immediately hailed as an excitingly 'intimate' new venue – in the Globe's own promotional material as well as in reviews and reportage. It was an apt word: it connotes on the one hand an environment that is small-scale and hospitable, and on the other hand a form of relationship that is personal and extremely close, as the Latin root *intimare*, to press or impress, suggests. But if the SWP sustains both definitions, they relate to different aspects of the space: the former pertains to the structure of the room, and the latter to the proximity of the audience. The Playhouse's 'two intimacies' are key components of its protean nature. It is a venue that suggests welcoming domesticity as well as shuttered privacy. It encourages open-hearted involvement and voyeuristic looking-on.

This paper explores intimacy in the SWP in relation to its status as a 21st century Jacobean archetype. With reference to Susan Bennett's interpretation of contemporary Jacobeanism as a theatrical mode that allows for a contained ventilation of deviant desires, I offer an analysis of the theatre's first two seasons that draws on the experiences of audiences, actors, and the findings of Globe Education's Indoor Performance Practice Project.