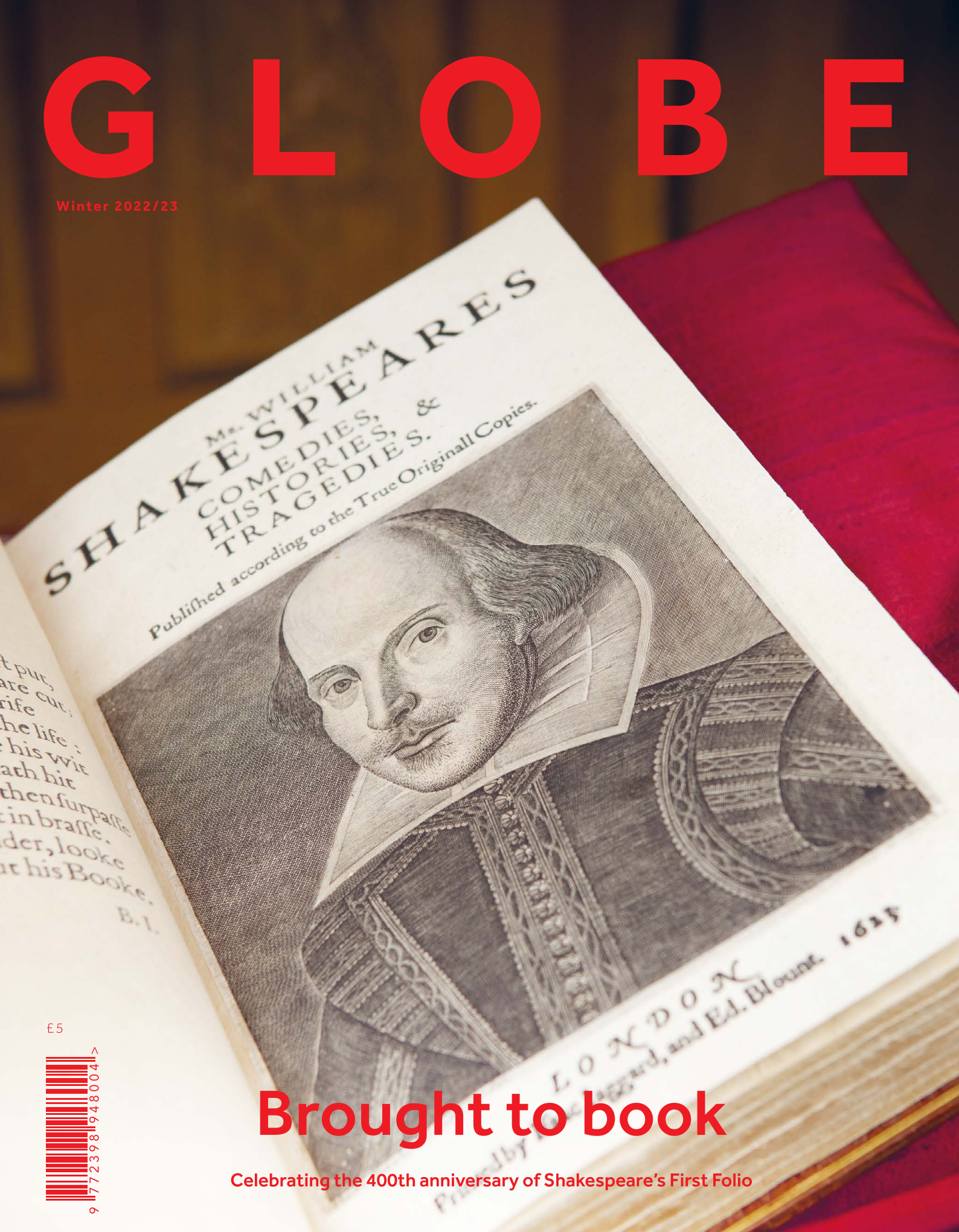
# GLOBE

Winter 2022/23

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SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE

Photo: Simon Kane

# Welcome

From glimpses behind the scenes of our wooden 'O' to interviews with the creatives leading our productions and Education work, there is much to explore in this Winter 2022/23 issue of *Globe*.

This season sees a wonderful array of plays with *Henry V*, *Titus Andronicus*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Hakawatis* and the return of our Christmas family offering *The Fir Tree*, which will be directed by our very own Artistic Director, Michelle Terry.

Our brilliant Education team has been preparing for our much-loved Storytelling sessions, adapting 400-year-old stories for 5–12-year-olds. This year, as the Globe turns 25, we are proud that more people engage with Shakespeare through the Globe than anywhere else in the world, with something for every age and stage of life.

It is hard to describe precisely how unique it is to create and curate in the architectural playing space that would have been home to Shakespeare and his contemporaries. The feature on the timber of the Globe is a fascinating insight – astoundingly 12,000 wooden pegs hold our wooden 'O' together.

From one anniversary to another, 2023 sees the prestigious First Folio celebrate its 400th year. To kickstart celebrations, we have teamed up with the German Literature Archive Marbach to present *Will's Book*, an exhibition and conference in Germany. In 1622, a catalogue of the Frankfurt Book Fair announced the first printed collection of Shakespeare's plays. Only individual plays had previously been published – without the 1623 First Folio, we would have lost half of his dramatic works.

I hope you and your loved ones will have the chance to visit us soon and view the beautiful Munro First Folio on show in our Foyer, thanks to an anonymous supporter. It is one of the rare and true wonders of the literary world, which we are honoured to display throughout 2023, once again making Shakespeare accessible to all.

**Neil Constable**
**Chief Executive**

# Contents

# AROUND THE GLOBE

Left to right: Akiya Henry, Cameron Knight and Imtiaz Dharker appear in the festival

**Shakespeare and Race Festival**

Formalising 20 years of collaboration between two world-renowned institutions, Shakespeare's Globe and King's College London have established a new research centre: Shakespeare Centre London. It will be a place of excellence for Shakespeare studies, dedicated to exploring Shakespeare and early modern literary works.

The Centre's first joint activity from the new centre will be co-curating and co-hosting the fourth annual Shakespeare and Race Festival 2022. This will highlight the importance of race in the consideration of Shakespeare – the theme of the festival is 'Spoken Word(s)', exploring the intersection between poetry and performance.

Visit shakespearesglobe.com/seasons/shakespeare-and-race

**Festive shop**

Treat thyself or a loved one this Christmas with a festive Membership discount of 20% off the Globe Shop on 19–20 November. From decorations and games to books and socks, find great ideas for stocking fillers and under-the-tree surprises with our eco-friendly range.

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In recognition of the Globe's 25th anniversary, Lola's Cupcakes is generously offering Globe Members a 25% discount on sweet treats at lolascupcakes.co.uk. From scrumptious brownies to tasty cupcakes, enter GLOBE25 at the online checkout by 30 November 2022 to join in with the celebrations.

Offer valid on online purchases between 1–30 November 2022

# The Queen

We were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Her Majesty The Queen on 8 September.

During her extraordinary and historic reign, we were honoured to have her officially open the Globe Theatre on 12 June 1997. She was accompanied by Prince Philip, who served as our Royal Patron for more than 40 years.

A remarkable and devoted Queen, she will be greatly missed worldwide.


SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE THEATRE

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The Queen opened Shakespeare's Globe in 1997. Photos: Richard Kalina

# THE DARKEST PLACE

Jude Christian talks to Fergus Morgan as she prepares to enter the uniquely cruel world of *Titus Andronicus*

Illustration: Eleanor Shakespeare for *Globe*

There have been some headline-grabbing productions at Shakespeare's Globe during its 25-year history, but perhaps none more so than Lucy Bailey's uniquely gory 2006 staging of *Titus Andronicus*, which was so disturbing that dozens of audience members either fainted or fled.

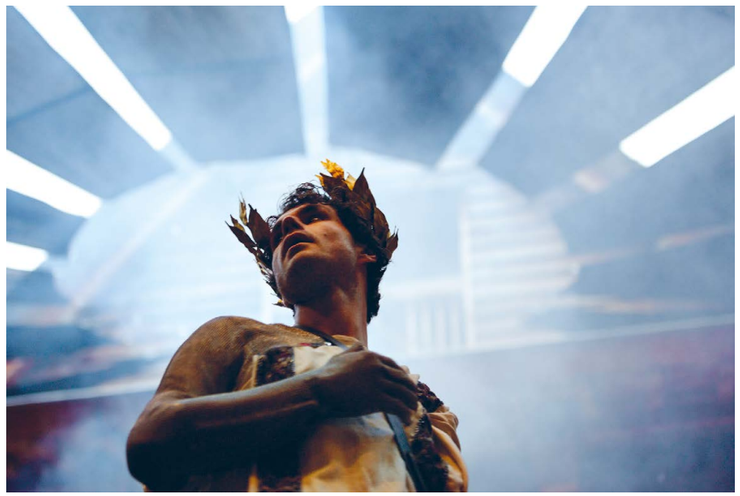
Hong Kong's Tang Shu-wing Theatre visited with their version in 2012, and Bailey's show made a grisly return run in 2014, but Shakespeare's bloodiest play – it has 14 deaths, four more than its nearest challenger, *King Lear* – has not been seen on Bankside since. This winter, though, director Jude Christian will take on *Titus Andronicus* with a staging in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse. She never saw Bailey's blood-spattered production – she has never seen any production of the play, in fact – but knows that it casts a long shadow.

'That production was so iconic,' Christian says. 'My version will be very different. Lucy so comprehensively did a big, fat, disgusting, gory, infamous *Titus* out in the Globe in the summertime. Mine is going to be in the Sam Wanamaker Theatre in the winter, and it is going to go in a totally different direction.'

Christian specialises in totally different directions. Her 12-year career to date is nothing if not eclectic. Born in Coventry in 1986, she grew up in Milton Keynes, and first fell in love with theatre at Aylesbury High School. At first, though, she wasn't sure the performing arts were for her.

'I liked drama at school, but I was quite an awkward, weird kid, and I had this notion that the only kids who could do drama were blonde girls who were really good at dancing,' Christian remembers. 'We didn't go to the theatre much, maybe once a year on a school trip to see *Cats* or something.'

Right: Matthew Needham in *Titus Andronicus*, 2014. Far right: Tang Shu-wing Theatre Studio's production in Globe to Globe Festival, 2012. Photos: Simon Kane



**'*Titus* is this big, fat, violent orgy of Roman punishment and justice, but Shakespeare is exploring the absolute limits of human cruelty'**

'Then I remember reading *Waiting For Godot*, and our drama teacher explaining how the fact that it is confusing and boring and infuriating was exactly the point of it,' she continues. 'I remember being really excited by the idea of an artform that was experiential as much as it was intellectual.'

That excitement has driven Christian ever since. She went on to study English at the University of Exeter, then an MA in Theatre Directing at RADA, graduating in 2010. A short stint in Berlin followed, before she returned to Britain to begin her career in earnest in her early 20s.

'I have always loved the idea of theatre as an exploration of a feeling, rather than a nice story on stage,' she says. 'I like the idea of putting an audience through something – that can be something unsettling and unpleasant, or something joyful and reassuring – and asking them to figure it out.'

'You find that a lot in art and in contemporary classical music, but not very much in theatre,' Christian adds. 'I often read reviews of shows where the writer is annoyed because a show didn't make itself explicitly clear, and I think: "Doesn't that sound like quite a boring way to spend your evening?"'

It is still early days in the production process for *Titus Andronicus*, and Christian's creative thoughts are still coalescing. She is listening to Nick Cave's album *Murder Ballads* a lot for inspiration, tossing around interesting potential ideas – a possible all-female cast, some meaningful multiple roles, an intriguing concept involving candles – and relishing the challenge that *Titus Andronicus* poses.

'There are Shakespeare plays like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* that are kind of considered complete and perfect and brilliant,' she says. 'Everyone knows what to do with those plays. Then there are plays like *Titus Andronicus* and *Measure For Measure* that, for whatever reason, are considered a bit more problematic to produce. *Titus*, for example, is this *Macbeth*-style revenge tragedy with some loopy moments and some really ropey bits, too.'

'Of course, the play is this big, fat, disgusting, violent orgy of Roman punishment and justice and sadism, but I think there is something else going on,' Christian continues. 'I think Shakespeare is trying to explore the absolute limits of human cruelty and ruthlessness, and that becomes very darkly funny quite quickly, and I find it hard to think he didn't intend that, too.'

Some scenarios in *Titus Andronicus* are so terrible – the rape and mutilation of Lavinia or the famous cooking of Chiron and Demetrius – that they prompt questions about whether they should even be seen on stage. As Christian points out, if someone wrote something like *Titus* today, the play would never see the light of day and the playwright would likely be given the phone number of a good psychotherapist.

Her solution is to construct conceits that allow the play's grimmest elements to be explored in a less alarming fashion: using the cutting of a candle's wax to symbolise assault, for example, and the extinguishing of its

Right: Jude Christian in rehearsal for *Violet* and (above right) performing *Nanjing*. Photos: Patrick Young, Pete Le May

Richard Burkhard in *Violet* (Music Theatre Wales/Aldeburgh). Photo: Marc Brenner

**‘I put real pigs in a show for an element of chaos. I thought, “What’s the worst that could happen?”’**

flame to represent murder. It would add a dissociating distance that would allow the audience to enjoy themselves. Having an all-female cast would help, too, she thinks.

‘When you stage *Titus Andronicus*, you have to go to the darkest place possible, you have to embrace the reckless abandon of a killing spree,’ she says. ‘I think watching a group of women discussing and doing those terrible things is different to watching a group of men do it. It’s still awful, but it doesn’t tend to happen in real life, so it’s still thrilling for an audience, but it is not triggering, and that allows us to piss around and push things and really have fun with the play.’

Having fun on stage is nothing new for Christian. She writes, works as a dramaturg, and even performs herself occasionally, but it is as a director that she has become best known over the past decade – a director unafraid of tackling traditional texts and new writing in exciting, innovative ways. Such daring was evident early on in her career when, in 2014, she made actor Steffan Rhodri cling on to two wriggling, squealing piglets for her Gate Theatre production of Rodrigo Garcia’s short Spanish play *I’d Rather Goya Robbed Me of My Sleep Than Some Other Arsehole*.

‘Having real pigs in the show brought a genuine element of liveness and chaos into the production,’ Christian reflects. ‘I just thought, “What’s the worst that could happen?” As it turned out, that production did get some pretty terrible reviews, which was partly the play’s fault and partly my fault, but it did make some people sit up. I was just being my weird self, but I think people noticed that I had an interesting way of doing things.’

That show sparked creative conversations that are still spiralling today. It introduced Christian to Sean Holmes, then artistic director of the Lyric Hammersmith, and that relationship led to Christian’s involvement in the Lyric’s annual pantomime.

Christian’s other notable directing credits include Cordelia Lynn’s *Lela & Co*, Vivienne Franzmann’s *Bodies* and Anoushka Warden’s *My Mum’s a Twat* at the Royal Court, the opera *Violet* for Music Theatre Wales and *OthelloMacbeth*, in Manchester and back at the Lyric – a radical, smashing-together of Shakespeare’s two tragedies that only used scenes featuring women, and flipped both plays on their heads in doing so.

She has worked at Shakespeare’s Globe before, too. In 2018, she directed *Dark Night Of The Soul*, a series of short plays written by women in parallel to Paulette Randall’s production of Christopher Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus*, on which she also worked as dramaturg.

She has also performed *Nanjing*, her own solo show exploring the Nanjing Massacre and the effect it had on her family – one side of Christian’s family hails from China, via Malaysia, the other from the Isle of Man – in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, the same stage where she will soon be staging *Titus Andronicus*. After which, another totally different direction.

‘If I had a magic wand, there are about 15 productions I would love to stage, but which I have no idea how to make happen, possibly because they are too indulgent and terrible,’ Christian laughs. ‘Sometimes that is frustrating, but most days life feels quite exciting. I like to do lots of different things, and I feel like people are trusting me to do them more and more. I hope they are, anyway.’

Fergus Morgan is a freelance arts journalist based in Edinburgh, writing for *The Stage*, *The Independent* and others. He publishes *The Crush Bar*, an online newsletter focused on emerging theatremakers

*Titus Andronicus*, Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, 19 January to 15 April

# IN THE MOOD

How do you stage an epic war play in the intimate Sam Wanamaker Playhouse? Rosemary Waugh speaks to Cordelia Lynn, dramaturg on the new production of *Henry V*

'We're setting it in a mood,' explains playwright and dramaturg Cordelia Lynn when asked to describe the forthcoming *Henry V* she is working on with director Holly Race Roughan at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse. 'We're trying to capture a particularly English sense of nostalgia and the concept of English exceptionalism, which is really what the play is about.'

Focusing on the ambiance and packaging of a play rather than, for example, a particular location or historical period, might seem like an unorthodox approach. But, as Lynn points out, *Henry V* has always been a history play that captured a particular notion of 'Englishness' as much as accurately recording a series of past events. When Shakespeare sat down to write, the events he described, which centre on the Battle of Agincourt, had happened almost 200 years previously. So in one sense, it tells us as much about how a nation writes its own history as it does about a specific military invasion. 'It's almost like an origin myth for English nationalism,' says Lynn. 'And it helps create this idea of plucky little England against the world. Or, in this case: the French.'

Roughan recently became Artistic Director of Headlong, who co-produce *Henry V*, along with Leeds Playhouse and Royal & Derngate, Northampton. Lynn, the dramaturg for this show, is best known for her own plays and opera libretti. Recent work includes *Love and Other Acts of Violence* at the Donmar Warehouse in 2021, and *Like Flesh*, an Ovid-inspired opera for Opéra de Lille. She also adapted Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* (as *Hedda Tesman*) and Chekhov's *Three Sisters*.

Teaming up with Roughan for *Henry V* marks the latest chapter in a long-running collaboration which dates back to when they met at university. This time around, they're also working closely with designer Moi Tran to deliver a distinct take on the play.

'I love working with Holly,' shares Lynn, who also notes that she probably wouldn't have been drawn to *Henry V* were it not for Roughan's invite. 'We share a sense of humour which is quite absurdist. When we work with other people there's always someone there to rein that in a bit. Whereas when we're working together it just goes further and further and further...'

Perhaps unsurprisingly for an established playwright, Lynn's focus throughout the pre-rehearsal creative period has largely centred on the text itself.

Holly Race Roughan and Cordelia Lynn in rehearsal for *Hedda Tesman* at Chichester. Photo: Johan Persson

Some changes she has made are modest, while others are much bolder. As she notes, 'If people turn up expecting *Henry V* as they've always known it, they're going to be surprised – hopefully in a good way.'

An audience familiar with the play will notice a series of changes and cuts to the extensive character list, which was in part necessitated by the decision to use a company of 10 actors, along with some small-but-impactful changes to the language, mainly in the interest of making it immediately accessible to a modern listener to ensure they don't disengage from the story. Limiting the cast list initially struck Lynn as being borderline undoable. 'I said to Holly, "I don't think we can do this with nine actors unless you want it to be completely deranged!" So we're doing it with 10 actors – which is still deranged but it's also really good fun and stops the characters becoming so attached to the body of an actor, in a way. We're trying to create the sense with the cast that they can be read as a broad representation of people in the UK, and there's something very freeing about that.'

Making cuts to a Shakespeare play could be a daunting task, especially when, as Lynn notes, people can 'feel very protective over certain texts and hold them very close'. For editorship to be successful, she believes, the contemporary writer needs to be highly respectful of the original. This doesn't, however, translate into a handle-with-kid-gloves situation. 'If I started thinking about the status of the play, I would get quite nervous,' Lynn explains. 'I don't approach it with reverence because that wouldn't be helpful to the task. It's quite technical work and if you start to think about status, you end up in a difficult place.'

Instead, Lynn has focused on discovering the psychological depths of the characters, a dynamic particularly suited to the intimate, darkened confines of the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, which she describes as 'this unbelievably beautiful space which touches pretty much anyone who goes in there.' The difference between staging this epic play in here, for the first time in the theatre's history, rather than in the more obvious outdoor Globe Theatre, is pronounced and creates the mouth-watering question of, in Lynn's words, 'How do you stage a war in a tiny space with limited actors and no swords?'

These practical limitations appear to suit Lynn and Roughan very nicely. The last thing they want is to stage a rabble-rousing play infused with nationalistic messaging – and that includes *Henry V*'s most famous feature, the king's St Crispin's Day speech and other troop-rallying cries. 'We want people to see that war is not cute and no matter how much our culture tries to claim it is exciting and glamourous, and – even when horrible – somewhat noble, it's ultimately not,' Lynn says. 'Here is a man inciting people to go to war: we want people to feel disturbed by that.'

**'We're capturing a particularly English sense of nostalgia. It's almost like an origin myth for English nationalism'**

Hadyn Gwynne in *Hedda Tesman* (Chichester). Opposite: Jamie Parker (Globe) and Michelle Terry (Open Air Theatre) as Henry V. Photos: Johan Persson, Stephen Vaughan

Rosemary Waugh is an art and performance critic who writes for publications including *The i*, *New Statesman*, *Art UK* and *The Stage*

*Henry V*, Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, 10 November to 4 February


# TROUBLE IN MIND

*The Winter's Tale* is set in two countries and two different time periods. So why not stage it in two theatres? Sean Holmes and Grace Smart tell David Jays about their audacious new production

TROUBLE IN

Sean Holmes still remembers his first encounter with the Globe, before it opened to the public. Then an assistant director at the Royal Shakespeare Company, he was one of the artists who were invited to experiment on a temporary stage. 'We did some scenes from *Hamlet* and *The Revenger's Tragedy*,' he recalls. 'Subsequently, there was a conversation with all the great and good – Peter Hall, Zoë Wanamaker, everyone. I remember saying one thing: "I think what you've done is build the most radical space in London."'

For Holmes that radical charge is ignited by the theatre's unique relationship between actor and audience. Having explored the possibilities of both the Globe (with a riotous *Midsummer Night's Dream* and this summer's *The Tempest*) and Sam Wanamaker Playhouse (notably on bristling productions of *Hamlet* and Shakespeare's history plays), his next show will, audaciously, use both spaces. *The Winter's Tale* takes place in two countries – Sicilia and Bohemia – and in two time periods, as King Leontes accuses his wife of infidelity with his best friend, and as their children bring the story full circle. So why not stage it in two theatres, leading the audience from candlelit intimacy into the crisp open air?

Holmes tells me that the idea originated with the Globe's artistic director, Michelle Terry. He wasn't immediately convinced, but thought it through when he and Grace Smart, his frequent design collaborator, were in Tokyo earlier this year for a production of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*.

The pair mulled over the notion on days off. 'It's always useful, when you're working on a project, to have another one to talk about,' Smart says. 'You're talking theoretically, so there's no real pressure,' Holmes agrees. Neither fancied a promenade version of Shakespeare's late romance: 'I hate standing up for shows,' Smart declares, 'I hate walking around, everyone milling awkwardly.' Gradually, the pair realised how to change location, but never lose focus. 'The audience comes to the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse

Right: Grace Smart. Left: Sean Holmes. Photo: Marc Brenner

**'It's like an elaborate set change – except, instead of the set, the audience moves'**

**– GRACE SMART**

for Sicily,' Holmes explains. 'Second half, you come into the Globe, where Bohemia happens. And then you go back to the Wanamaker for the final scenes.' As Smart puts it, 'it's like an elaborate set change – except, instead of the set changing, the audience moves. It's two theatrical experiences.'

We're chatting in the Globe's lower gallery on a summer morning, shortly before *The Tempest* opens. Holmes jogs off the benches to demonstrate how he imagines *The Winter's Tale*'s Bohemia: 'Our world is in the yard and the Globe stage itself is a backdrop to that world.' 'The joy of having these two spaces is embracing what they are so good at, to the extreme,' Smart says. 'The Globe feels massive – so we'll make it even more vast by using the yard as a stage. Whereas in the Wanamaker we'll slightly turn up the intimate, so we're all on top of it.'

We're all in short sleeves, basking in summer sun. But, come February, won't the audience feel a bit... chilly? 'You're only going to be out here for 45 minutes,' Holmes responds briskly. 'I go with my children to football – that's two hours, sitting outside sometimes in minus temperatures. Just dress warmly.' Smart adds, 'It's fun, I think, to do a wintry *Winter's Tale*.'

So much for logistics – what about the heart? The play is famously knotty: Leontes' jealousy arrives out of nowhere, expressed in language of great, complex force. How will this production lead us into that world? 'Something like *Succession* is a good touchpoint,' Holmes suggests. Like the TV series of rancorous family politics, 'it's a world of privilege and of luxury, wealth and power lightly worn – to start with. Shakespeare is fascinated with monarchy, because that is the one political system that his world operates in, and it's so dependent on the personality of the person in charge. Up to the moment of jealousy, Leontes seems to be a reasonably good king in

**‘The bear emerges when the jealousy emerges. Some violence or danger is unleashed’**

**– SEAN HOLMES**

a reasonably happy marriage. He has this insane attack of jealousy, and everyone else says you’re mad – but because of the system there is no way to properly challenge or stop him, until a seemingly divine intervention.’

Smart embraces the play’s challenges. ‘You have to respond to the poetry with something equally poetic, mad or hideously ugly,’ she suggests, arguing that Shakespeare reminds us that ‘humans are way more extreme than often they are on stage. Leontes’ route into madness and jealousy is very real.’ Holmes argues that ‘we’ve all felt jealousy at some point in our lives, and Shakespeare just turns that to the max. The playwright Edward Bond says that all great plays allow the audience to enter psychosis without going mad themselves, and *Winter’s Tale* is a prime example.’ He explored similar territory around Prospero’s journey through vengeance in *The Tempest*, another late play. ‘More and more, Shakespeare removes motive or explanation. Things happen.’

Sophie Russell in *Richard III*. Photo: Marc Brenner

The collaborators hold some secrets – especially around that most famous Shakespearean stage direction, ‘exit, pursued by a bear,’ adding peril to arrival in Bohemia. All Smart will disclose is that ‘we’re allowing him to be as big a character in this production as he is in all of our minds.’ For Holmes, ‘the bear emerges when the jealousy emerges. Some kind of violence or danger is unleashed from the moment Leontes gets jealous.’ As for Bohemia’s sheep-shearing festivities in the Globe’s wider spaces, Holmes warns that rural life, steeped in harsh realities, ‘is not quite as jolly as it might appear. Someone gets eaten by a bear, we have trickery and a threat to young lovers – it’s not bucolic.’

Smart hasn’t previously designed a show for the Globe stage (‘hint hint, nudge nudge!’), but became familiar with the space on school trips. It and the Wanamaker, each so floridly decorated, have such assertive personalities – is that challenging for a designer? ‘Both of these spaces are so environmental,’ she says, ‘the set needs to get out of the way. I really love the SWP – given the sightlines, costume is so much more impactful and from a design perspective you can go nuts. They’re both site-specific spaces that just happen to be theatres.’

To Holmes, the Wanamaker is ‘brilliantly acoustic. It’s also a very visual space but everyone sees it from a different perspective. The Globe is a space of action and energy, both in thought and movement, and the Wanamaker is more a space of psychology.’

Holmes and Smart have collaborated on a series of thought-provoking shows in the Wanamaker: Shakespeare’s bare-knuckle *Henry VI* and *Richard III* (2019, co-directed with Ilinca Radulian), *Metamorphoses* (2021, co-directed with Holly Race Roughan) and most recently *Hamlet*. ‘I thought of Grace as the perfect collaborator for *The Winter’s Tale*,’ Holmes says. ‘Our way of discovering a play is the mutual journey, until you can’t remember which of you had the idea.’ It’s rare to speak to two colleagues who seem so thoroughly in sync – Smart confirms that, ‘even when there are competing ideas, you’re still working towards the same thought.’

The other key collaborators are, of course, the actors (Holmes’ shows at the Globe have mostly been with the Ensemble). ‘That’s really important,’ he insists, ‘you want to make the work a springboard for their creativity and passion. We try to get elements of the design in the rehearsal room as early as possible, so that the actors feel ownership.’ ‘We’ve been lucky to work with actors,’ Smart says, ‘who if you present them with a pond, or with mud, or a plastic bag, will pick them up, play with them and find creative ways of demonstrating their purpose.’ *The Winter’s Tale* too will surely allow more radical gestures for the most radical spaces in London.

*The Winter’s Tale*, Sam Wanamaker Playhouse and Globe Theatre, 9 February to 16 April

Supported by Shakespeare’s Globe USA Patrons, Supporters and Friends

# THE WRITERS' ROOM

How do you reboot the stories of *One Thousand and One Nights*? Hannah Khalil and Pooja Ghai tell Anya Ryan about their new candlelit version

Shalini Peiris in *Lions and Tigers*.
Photo: Marc Brenner

It is somewhat 'prescient' that *Hakawatis: Women of the Arabian Nights* is opening at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, says its writer Hannah Khalil. It was on a walk home from the same theatre after watching Tanika Gupta's *Lions and Tigers* in 2017 that the idea for the play was first conceived. 'I had never seen anything at the Sam Wanamaker before,' she says. 'When I left, all I could think about was how amazing it was. I had to write something for that space.'

Fast forward five years and Khalil's play is finally getting its premiere. 'Originally it was supposed to go in the Globe's 2020 season, just before we went into lockdown,' she says. 'Everything was a bit in limbo for a while, but we were delighted that it could be put on this Christmas,' adds the director, Pooja Ghai, who coincidentally also directed *Lions and Tigers*, the play that first inspired Khalil to write. 'She's the perfect person for the job,' is how Khalil, the Globe's writer-in-residence, describes her collaborator, the Artistic Director of Tamasha Theatre who co-produced the play.

The play, which Khalil describes as 'a reclaimed ancient story,' originally came from thinking about Scheherazade, the queen and storyteller in *One Thousand and One Nights* (a hakawati is a storyteller). 'I wanted to work on the idea of her as a fable teller – but not as good as she thinks,' she says. Khalil developed the idea of a writers' room, with the women next in line for the king's 'wed, bed and behead' coming together and rooting for Scheherazade to tell stories and do well. 'It is a new version of *One Thousand and One Nights* where Arab women are empowered to tell sexual, dark stories,' she adds.

Key to the play's development has been creating varied and full roles for non-white actors. 'It is a great

Left: Hannah Khalil.
Right: Pooja Ghai.
Photos: Marc Brenner, Myah Jeffers

**'In this version of *One Thousand and One Nights*, Arab women are empowered to tell sexual, dark stories'**

– HANNAH KHALIL

Natasha Cottriall in *Henry VIII*, co-written by Hannah Khalil. Photo: Marc Brenner

**‘The play explores a group of women coming together to survive, adapt and evolve’**

– POOJA GHAI

privilege to know actors from your community to write for,’ says Khalil, recalling moments from her career where actors have thanked her for writing parts that ‘feel genuinely complex.’ ‘This play is so human in its exploration of a group of women coming together to survive, adapt and evolve,’ adds Ghai.

Both seem ecstatic to stage the play in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse. Khalil tells the story of deciding to send Michelle Terry, the Globe’s Artistic Director, an email pitching her idea. ‘I was astonished when she commissioned me to do it,’ she says. ‘Because of that, the narrative is built completely for the space,’ continues Ghai, who describes the theatre as ‘energetic’. ‘The magic of the Sam Wanamaker is that it is a character in its own right. It is a real force,’ she says. Even so, Khalil describes the writing process for *Hakawatis* as being ‘quite demanding.’ ‘I’ve learnt that this theatre really needs clean, direct storytelling,’ she adds.

Although Ghai is keen to keep many of her directorial decisions close to her chest, she reveals that the image of the candle has been vital. ‘Atmospherically, candlelight gives the audience so much to experience,’ she says. ‘It acts as a metaphor for the pen, the storyteller and for change. We want the space to be interactive for both the audience and the storyteller.’ And Ghai has focused on the production as a timeless one; ‘I want it to be easy for people now to access the world and culture of the women onstage.’

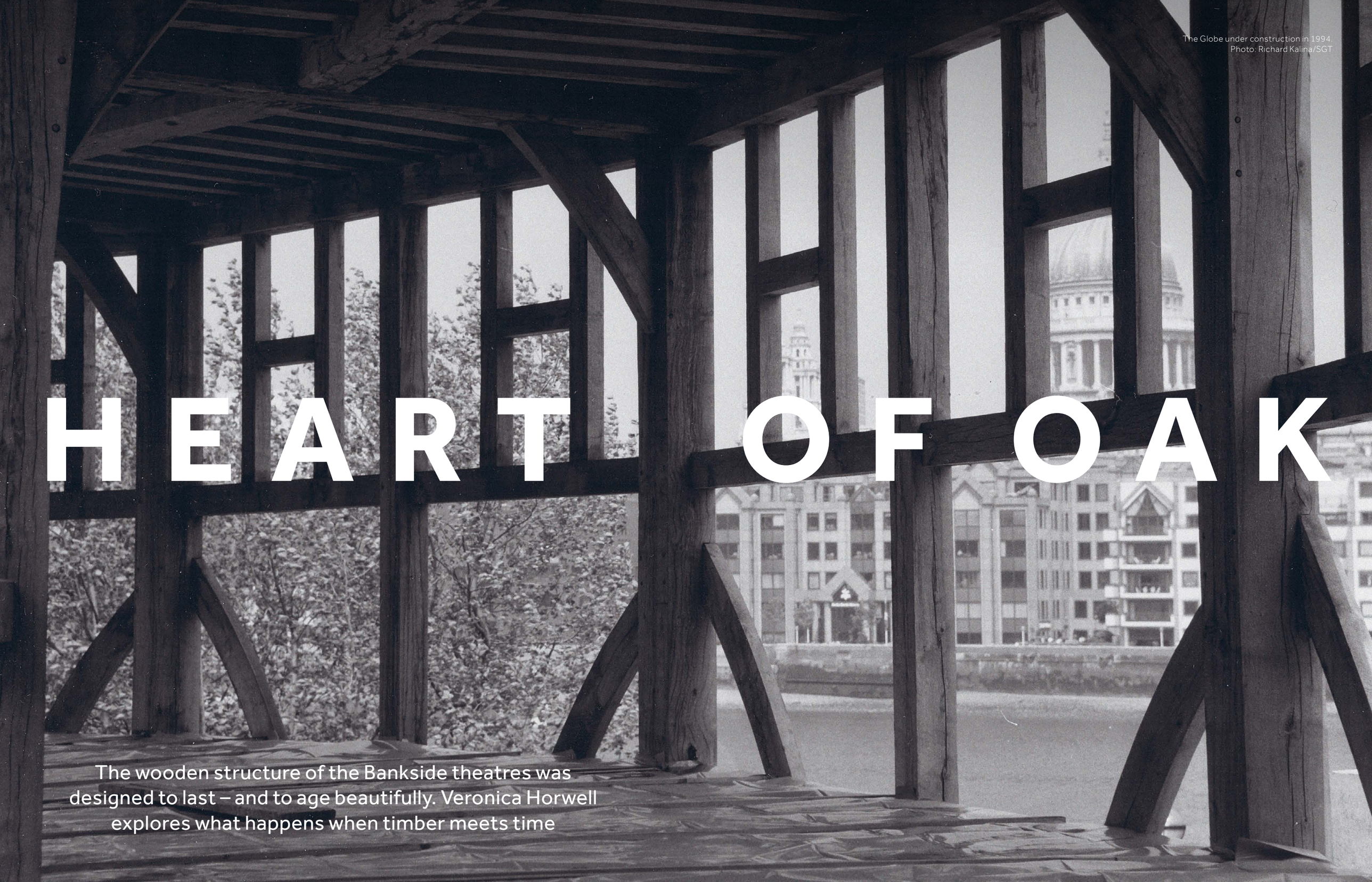
Khalil recognises that some might be resistant to the play being staged at Shakespeare’s home. ‘Even things like the play’s title might make people nervous,’ she says. This, however, only makes Khalil and Ghai prouder that the Globe has chosen to produce *Hakawatis*. ‘I argue for a certain community, it will make them feel welcome,’ says Khalil. ‘It is so important that we expand our minds about what institutions like the Globe can do and be.’

Of course, the Globe still has ‘a programme of Shakespeare’ for the bard’s devotees to enjoy, says Ghai. ‘But Shakespeare would have come across the stories of *One Thousand and One Nights* too – or at the very least things they inspired, like *The Canterbury Tales*,’ Khalil chimes in. ‘I see this play as something that can be in conversation with Shakespeare’s classics.’

Looking forward, both hope that the Globe and theatre, in general, will continue to champion ‘diverse stories, like *Hakawatis*. Obviously coming out of the pandemic, theatres are really worried about money and taking risks,’ says Khalil. ‘But the reality is, risk can be an exciting thing. A theatre’s choice of play will bring in an audience, and it can be a different audience than it is used to. All they need to do is the work.’

Anya Ryan is a culture writer and journalist

*Hakawatis: Women of the Arabian Nights*, Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, 1 December to 14 January



The Globe under construction in 1994.
Photo: Richard Kalina/SGT

# HEART OF OAK

The wooden structure of the Bankside theatres was designed to last – and to age beautifully. Veronica Horwell explores what happens when timber meets time

The best book to read on that oaken Bankside bench at the head of the Globe groundlings' queue is Roger Deakin's love letter to trees, *Wildwood*. I've read it so often my copy opens to the chapter 'The Sacred Groves of Devon': about oak from the county's deep wooded river valleys, where a local told him, 'oaks come up here just for fun.'

From prehistory on, they flourished tall and mostly straight in forest unhampered by lesser growths, material for sacred henges, circles of trunk pillars, in Devon as in the great ancient holy complex on Salisbury Plain. Between 2600–2400 BC, a timber circle was put up at Durrington Walls along the River Avon from Stonehenge, orientated to the rising sun on the midwinter solstice: light's rebirth, where Stonehenge faces midsummer sunrise, after which daylight contracts. Deakin called it the oaken land of the living linked to the stone realm of the dead.

The pillars of Hercules, the 28ft (8.5m) oak trunks that prop up the 44ft (13.4m) beam supporting the Heavens above the Globe stage,


**'It is fascinating seeing the buildings age. The maturity brings a new beauty'**

**– JON GREENFIELD**

are each 400 years old; snaps of their fellers show them by the stumps, triumphant but sad, like men who've slain giants. Counting by the lifespan of those trees, cut down in middle-age, a Bronze Age woodhenge is a mere 11 oaken generations back. Stonehenge was completed when the great-great-grandfather of the 1,000-year-old Bowthorpe Oak in Lincolnshire was a sapling.

That's what I think about when allowed in through to the Globe pit: oaks and time. On the Globe blog, Matt Trueman wrote that the O of the Globe's timbers enfolded him like a wooden hug, and it does feel as warm as that when the pit rocks with a jig. But it also feels deeper, a new re-enactment

Above: The half-built Globe in 1994. Right: Jon Greenfield leads a tour. Photos: Richard Kalina/SGT, Pete Le May

Left: McCurdy & Co's workshop. Photo: Pete Le May

of a relationship with a very old human resource, timber – the Wood Age preceded the Stone: the mortise and tenon joints of Stonehenge's lintels and uprights were borrowed from woodworking, where they had already been used for about 4,000 years.

Peter McCurdy – whose practical scholarship about historical carpentry made building the Globe, and the less elemental Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, possible – will always the demonstrate the organic simplicity of the joint. A tapered oaken peg, the treenail, driven in through holes in interlocking timbers, not just holds but draws them tighter with time: 12,000 pegs organically clench the Globe's frame together where the wood was scriven, which was adjusted to its imperfections to create each joint. The Globe and much of the Playhouse were sawn, riven, chiselled, axed, adzed, planed, lathed, and augured from the heart wood of green – raw, unseasoned – oak. Heart of Oak, hard enough for warships!

The odd outer corner of softer sapwood may chamfer away in time, but the Globe's heart has been seasoning in place for 25 years. When McCurdy's men originally worked the oak they had auditioned trunk by trunk in the nation's woods, it was 75% moisture, accepting of their tools. Hardwood oak doesn't exhale moisture casually: it dries an inch of thickness a year, so as Jon Greenfield, reconstruction architect to the Globe and Playhouse, says 'in 10 years all of the timbers reach their equilibrium moisture – ie fully seasoned – and will therefore have stopped moving, so the Globe has had about 15 years of stability.' Oak absorbs little moisture, hence its durability, and Bankside's is now in balance with London air, adjusting by a breath with seasons and climate change.

McCurdy says: 'Organic materials are on a very slow degrading process, a bit like the half-life of isotopes.' The oak grew lighter as it hardened to cellulose steel, and shrank marginally – less along its grain than across it, knitting every component closer. Audiences interact physically with this material, so many and so frequently they erode it, though, says Greenfield, 'there are some nice effects– the handrails at the front of the galleries have taken on a polished look, all from the oil in people's hands as they touch the timber'.

Dr Will Tosh, Head of Research for Shakespeare's Globe – he does phenomenology, how plays, place and people interreact – was struck, on returning from lockdown lockout, by the solitary eeriness of a Globe unpeopled by audiences and tours, the wood dry, and bleached paler. He's very aware of how wood, especially oak, shapes performance. The timber affects timbre in the Globe: 'The wood is quite bouncy, the sound bounces off the rear wall and whooshes up through the unroofed pit.' (The actor James Garnon, a frequent company member, once said it was like any wooden instrument, requiring subtlety and delicacy.)

And the audience listens differently to unamplified voices with no complex sound design, as they would in natural gathering venues under the sky. A grove, maybe a henge? Tosh has noticed that at conferences and meetings in the Playhouse, which, determined by the timbers, overlaps in box shape and seating with ancient synagogues and Christian dissenter chapels, that ligneous acoustics encourage many more attendees to speak up because they don't have to speak out. Wood doesn't make echoes for announcements and pronouncements unlike stone and marble, but produces a 'vibrant intellectual space.'

Every pit-sawn Bankside plank, let alone the beams, is good for centuries yet to come according to Greenfield and McCurdy, who check for things going right – beam shrinkage causing a tiny lean-in of the balconies towards the pit, joints melding into a permanent but astonishingly flexible whole – as much as wrong. (Not much has gone wrong.)

As for the many surface cracks in both theatres where the oak fibres pull away from each other, they're no more than wrinkles on an unlifted ageing face with strong bones behind. (Oaken stools in the Swan bar do the same.) Oak oxidises silver grey in sun and darkens red-brown sheltered under the thatched roof, while the ventilation-drawn-up candle exhalations in the Playhouse slowly smoke its timbers like a ham or haddock. Greenfield loves it all. 'It is fascinating seeing the buildings age. The maturity brings a new beauty.'

Every year I've had my groundling elbows on the stage, the great rives in the pillars of Hercules lengthen dramatically. *Will they be all right?* Greenfield calls the clefts by their proper, so fitting, name – 'shakes' – and explains they too are fibres separating along the grain, if with proportionate magnificence; those mighty pillars were hunted for across Britain. No structural problem, and the wood is in as steady a state as any Bronze Age post once was. But he favours filling the cracks, because 'they give the material away as timber immediately,' when the pillars were meant to be, as they are, 'painted like marble "to deceive the most prying eye."'

Veronica Horwell is a writer for *The Guardian* among other publications

Photos: Pete Le May

# Every pit-sawn Bankside plank and beam is good for centuries yet to come

Photos: Pete Le May

**This is what I think about when I go through to the Globe yard: oaks and time**

Sam Wanamaker Playhouse.
Photo: Pete Le May

# TELLING TALES

## Alex McFadyen meets the Globe's expert Education team and hears how they spin stories from Shakespeare for younger audiences

When you think of *Hamlet*, what's the first word that springs to mind? For actor Chris Nayak, it is fun. One year ago he began adapting the play for audiences of five to 12-year-olds, to deliver as an hour-long narrated story, which was staged for a fourth time in October.

'Shakespeare was an entertainer,' he tells me on a video call from his home in north London. Born in Birmingham and trained at the Bristol Old Vic, Nayak has appeared in *King Lear* at the Globe, Royal Shakespeare Company productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, and on TV in *Coronation Street*. In his role as a Globe Education Practitioner (GEP), he runs Shakespeare workshops for students from primary school through to postgraduate level.

'Shakespeare's theatre was next to the bear baiting and the pubs,' he continues, 'and people would go there for a laugh. Even the blackest, darkest tragedies – *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Titus Andronicus* – are full of jokes. That doesn't reduce him, I don't think. On the contrary, it makes him a genius.'

Globe Storytelling Performances are staged by one or more GEPs in the atmospheric Sam Wanamaker Playhouse and the Underglobe space, and at schools around the country. They were conceived as a way to get children excited by Shakespeare as performance, with actors relating the plot over the course of an hour and soliciting plenty of audience interaction. The children – who come with their parents in groups of up to 200 – might sing, dance and dress up and will generally have a ball.

Using puppets lets the young audience project their personalities onto the characters, he explains, while some of Shakespeare's most iconic lines are delivered through inventive theatrical touches. For the 'To be or not to be' soliloquy, 'the thoughts are little bits of paper that we pull out of Hamlet's ears,' Nayak explains.

And because children are less likely to have preconceptions of Shakespeare's works, he has plenty of freedom when shaping the plot. Scripting for *Hamlet* was done over two weeks with Fiona Drummond, a fellow GEP, who has also worked on Storytelling adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Henry V* and *As You Like It*. 'We asked, what story do we want to tell?' Nayak says. 'There are stories about family, identity, invading armies, loss, revenge...'

In the end, they settled on exploring the purpose of storytelling itself, with Drummond playing the role of Hamlet's friend (a 'sort of Horatio') in casual modern clothes, who competes with a stuffy academic – played by Nayak in full Elizabethan costume – over the framing of the prince's life. Many characters and scenes were cut as they defined their core plot, weaving in the original language as often as possible.

'Some of it they might not even realise is Shakespeare, because it flows and feels quite natural,' Drummond explains. Young groups also 'really like being asked the big moral questions. At the end of *Romeo and Juliet*, I ask: What should the adults do to stop these tragedies happening?'

According to Lucy Cuthbertson, Co-Director of Education at Shakespeare's Globe, this is

**'THESE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE DESPERATE TO TELL THE STORY FOR YOU. THERE'S NOTHING BETTER'**

**– CHRIS NAYAK**

Fiona Drummond, Globe Education Practitioner. Photo: Richard Eaton

# ‘THEY MIGHT NOT EVEN REALISE THE LANGUAGE IS BY SHAKESPEARE, BECAUSE IT FLOWS AND FEELS NATURAL’

**– FIONA DRUMMOND**

Clockwise from top left: Olivia Mace performing *Julius Caesar* storytelling; a storytelling audience; Chris Nayak in *Hamlet*. Photos: Richard Eaton

key. She wants the children to shape the narrative live, and picks storytellers who thrive off audience contributions. ‘It’s not just passively receiving a story,’ she says. ‘They have the option to be critical of what they’ve heard. That’s what you’re trying to do all the time in education.’

‘I know that these young people are involved and engaged,’ Nayak adds. ‘Because they’re desperate to tell the story for you. There’s nothing better than that.’ But it requires the actors to be quick on their feet. ‘If we ask what we should do to cheer Hamlet up and someone says, I think you should do a dance – we’ve got to do a dance!’

It’s also important to consider how the stories are relevant to the children’s lives, says Cuthbertson. In the wake of Black Lives Matter, regular Storyteller Olivia Mace shifted the narrative to create a ‘decolonised version’ of *The Tempest*. ‘She framed the story using a sailor on the boat that goes down. He had been on a colonisation mission, and by the end we come back to that sailor, who doesn’t want to do it any more. It’s getting them to think about who’s come to this island, who it belongs to, and the parallels. You don’t have to look very far, it’s in the context of when the play was written.’

Finding those threads that bind Shakespeare to contemporary life is vital, agrees Nayak, and *Hamlet* is perfect. ‘Characters as big as Shakespeare’s are so brilliant for young people because they can relate to feeling things that deeply. Mental health is huge.’ As a person of colour, he also notes the impact that seeing him perform *Hamlet* has on diverse audiences. ‘For young people to see Shakespeare done accessibly changes their perspective on those plays for the rest of their life.’

Alex McFadyen is an arts and culture writer based in London

Storytelling will return to Shakespeare’s Globe in early 2023, with Members receiving a 20% discount on tickets


# Puppet

Theatre designer Sam Wilde is the king of cardboard creations. As his production of *The Fir Tree* returns to light up the festive season, he tells David Jays about the joy of making

# love

Richard Katz and Bettrys Jones in *The Fir Tree* (2021).
Photo: Pete Le May

Below: Sam Wilde's window for Fortnum & Mason. Right: Mice in *The Fir Tree*. Photos: Natasa Leoni for Fortnum & Mason; Pete Le May

'Whenever I think about that moment, it brings a tear to my eye.' The designer Sam Wilde is recalling the premiere of *The Fir Tree* at the Globe last winter. It was a special production for several reasons – staged in the open air during pandemic gloom, committed to both sustainability and fun, with Wilde's signature cardboard puppets in the Hans Christian Andersen adaptation. And the audience were invited to make their own cardboard birds and bring them along.

'It was a strange old time,' Wilde says now. 'Theatre was being cancelled, but through sheer dogged determination we got the show on. I'd forgotten the bird thing was happening, if I'm honest, being so wrapped up in everything. So on the first night, when the sparrows came out...' He sighs, happily. 'They just came out of nowhere, the Globe filled with them in all sizes and shapes and different colours. It was incredible. It's the highlight of my career, without a doubt.'

There was a pattern template on the Globe website with a jolly video explaining how to make birds the Wilde way (the designer has a plaster on his finger in the video, and arrives on the Zoom for our chat after a painful encounter with a glue gun. It's fighty stuff, cardboard). 'But I don't think anybody printed the template,' he says. 'Why would they? There were eagles and fireflies, all sorts – everyone made their own thing.'

The improvisatory impulse is strong in Wilde, so it's no wonder he was so delighted at an audience following their hearts and imaginations. He has turned a knack for making wonders from cardboard into a career as a sought-after designer – and came into his own during the make-do-and-mend months of lockdown, lifting anxious hearts with versions of Jon Klassen's blackly humorous *I Want My Hat Back* trilogy, an inventive window for Fortnum & Mason and then *The Fir Tree*.


Making was folded into Wilde's childhood in the Peak District. 'My dad was a child psychiatrist, specialising in art therapy, and my mum was a nurse who worked nights.' Weekend fun became a release for the family. 'We would go to my dad's work, where there would be vats of papier-mâché and art supplies – I was obsessed with *Star Trek* and made a Klingon mask. I've still got it.'

So far, so wholesome – but dad also invented 'adventure games' that may explain Wilde's love of the merrily gruesome. 'You'd wake up and go downstairs and find a riddle or something to get us out of the house. The one that sticks in my mind is where dad showed up, topless, in a massive papier-mâché bear head, like Herne the Hunter, and chased us around the moors.

Some bloke came up and wanted to know we were OK. We had to have a chat with Social Services.' My face on Zoom shows my jaw dropped in delighted disbelief.

'I'm a classic working-class creative, I just took the work I was given.' Theatre wasn't the original career path – Wilde was originally a maths teacher. 'I was awful at it,' he insists, before correcting himself. 'I mean, I was Ofsted outstanding, but realised I missed theatre.' He was directing in youth theatre when a friend called in need of a last-minute designer. A hundred quid for two days' work? Absolutely. 'I'd never even met a designer,' Wilde admits. 'I had no idea what to do. I looked around and saw a bunch of old cardboard boxes. So I shoved them in the car, drove off and spent

**'The birds came out of nowhere, filling the Globe. It's the highlight of my career'**

the entire time making puppets. Which is exactly how I work now. It was a eureka moment.'

His first full production in 2015 was *Eloise and the Curse of the Golden Whisk*, a wartime adventure story by Wardrobe Ensemble. 'I often think of my sets like puppetry – how they can be used and manipulated. Going into design, I knew there would be puppets and adaptive sets, because those are my strengths.'

Few pandemic digital projects had the joyous reach of the *I Want My Hat Back* trilogy that Wilde and director Ian Nicholson adapted from Klassen's picture books about poker-faced and often unscrupulous animals. 'We did that first one for free, just for something to do,' Wilde remembers. 'My mum, dad and sisters work in the NHS, and it's like, what am I offering, how am I helping?' Viewers were inspired to make their own cardboard creations. 'You share that magic and it becomes so much bigger. It is affirming about the purpose and nature of art.'

That warmth also infuses *The Fir Tree*, Hannah Khalil's version of the Hans Christian Andersen tale of a little tree that longs to see the world – which, via birds, mice and other cardboard creations, it does. As is the way with Andersen, it's a tale whose apparent simplicity winds through a forest of troubling emotion. 'It's about a tree that wants to become something else, that logic made sense to me – that and the ever-presence of death. It's a children's story, but kids love a bit of fear. I think we forget that you need to give your kids a little bit of terror. You can hide from it or you cannot – and I'd rather not.'

*The Fir Tree* and (opposite) *I Want My Hat Back* trilogy at the Little Angel. Photos: Pete Le May, Suzi Corker

The emotional landscape may skew dark but the ethical attitude has a positive tilt – Wilde told Khalil and director Michelle Terry 'that I wanted to make a very eco-friendly show, and they were very on board with that.' I ask if Wilde's sustainable ethos predates the cardboard years. 'The cardboard years? Is that we call them?' But yes, it's a longstanding interest that influences the entire aesthetic. 'You see it in every element of *The Fir Tree*. Nothing was bought new. All the clothes are old costumes or from charity shops, every element of the set is from a previous show or something the Globe had lying around. The puppets cost nothing because they're all Amazon boxes. Even the trees in the courtyard were replanted at the end. It was a tiny budget and I don't think we spent it all.'

'I honestly don't think I would have done the show if we hadn't been able to do it that way,' he continues. 'But it's what everybody wanted, because it was inherent in the text.' Sustainability prompts Wilde to keep his cardboard creations relatively unadorned. 'If you paint it, you can't recycle it as easily. The puppets, when they are done, will go into recycling.' It's a very Hans Christian Andersen trajectory, not unlike the fate of the fir tree itself.

I'm diverted from our conversation by a charismatic green-eyed cat, looming on the shelf behind Wilde. 'Ophelia!' he cries. 'She was the last puppet to make it into the *Fir Tree* rehearsal

**‘Dad chased us round the moors topless, in a massive papier-mâché bear head. We had to have a chat with Social Services’**

*The Fir Tree* puppet in Sam Wilde’s workshop. Photos: Sam Wilde

room, because my kids fell in love with her and hid her.’ Like her cardboard co-stars, she’s getting a little refresh for the revival, ‘a few new tricks’. We treat cardboard as disposable, but Wilde’s puppets are made solid – no understudies required. The *Hat* trilogy moved from screen to stage at the Little Angel theatre this summer, and none of its 92 puppets had to be remade.

So what makes a good theatre puppet? ‘I think of them as real actors,’ Wilde says. ‘Real actors that I have complete control over.’ Cardboard allows him to audition potential puppets ruthlessly (again, don’t do this with human actors). ‘You can chuck it out, it’s not expensive, it’s recyclable. I’m very good at making mistakes – I make a lot of them and I make them very quickly. The mice in *The Fir Tree* looked like koalas for ages, I just couldn’t get them right. That’s the great thing about cardboard: you try and fail and try and fail.’

Anyone planning a homemade bird for the Globe this winter may wonder if all cardboard boxes are created equal. ‘They all have a place but are good for different things. I’ve never turned a box away.’ Very diplomatic. For fluttering, ‘something flat is brilliant, something that gives them a bend. You could use a cereal box, even a paper bag, it all works.’ Tape adds strength and flexibility. ‘Tape is the secret sauce. You can do anything with any old box as long as you’ve got the right sort of tape.’

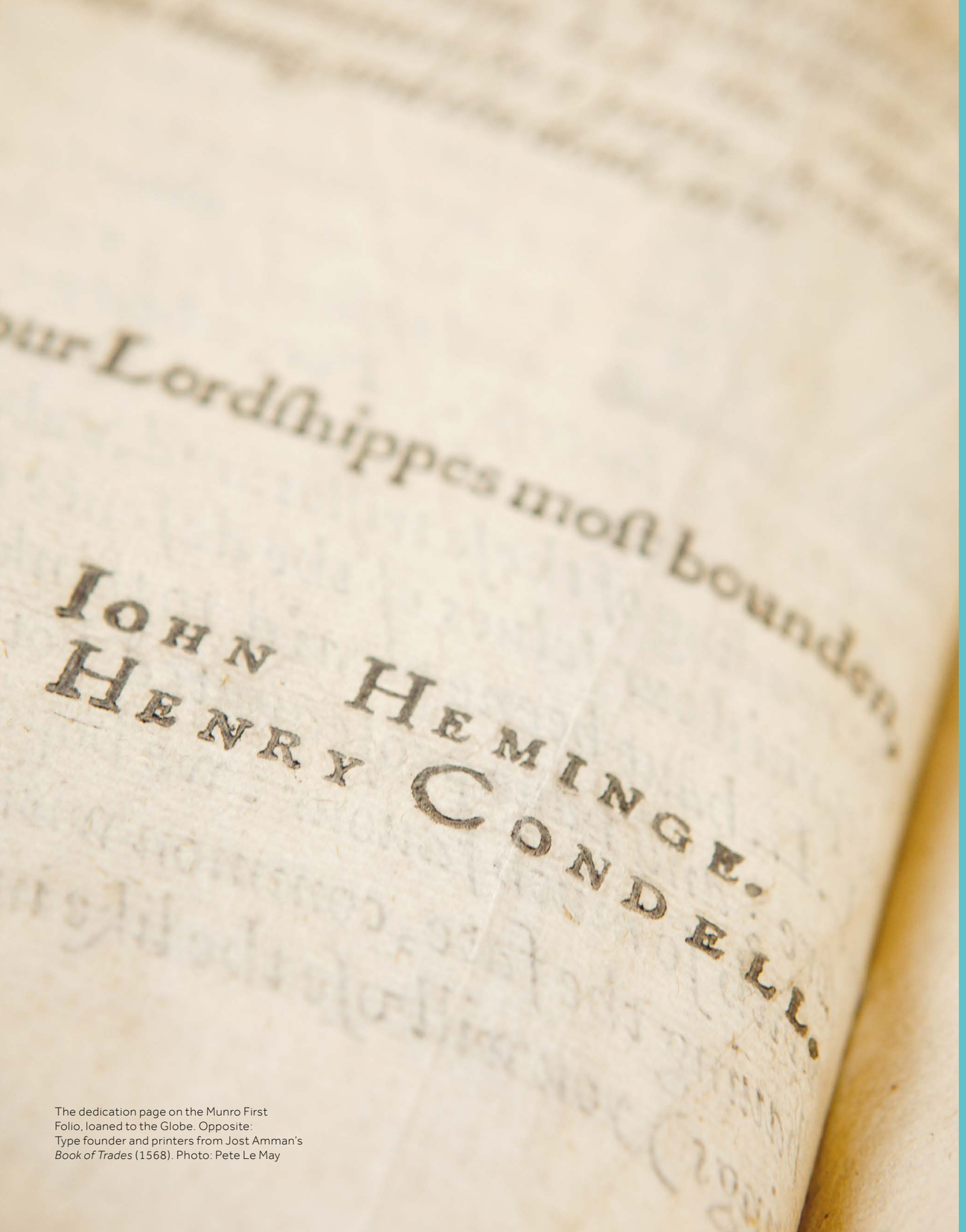
Cardboard has enveloped every part of Wilde’s life. When he became a father himself, Wilde realised that ‘I’d decided to have a career in the arts and therefore had no money to buy toys, so I started making them all out of cardboard boxes.’

He now shares patterns and ideas for toys via a new website, cardboardadventures.co.uk – a boon for our latest age of austerity. ‘I was a poor, out-of-work designer when I had kids, and I’ve managed to give them quite a beautiful childhood, making these things, and now other people can.’

He reflects again on the wonder of seeing the Globe a-flutter with homemade birds. ‘There’s beauty everywhere. You just need to look for it.’

Find Sam Wilde’s patterns and videos about making your own bird puppets and decorations at shakespearesglobe.com/whats-on/the-fir-tree-2022

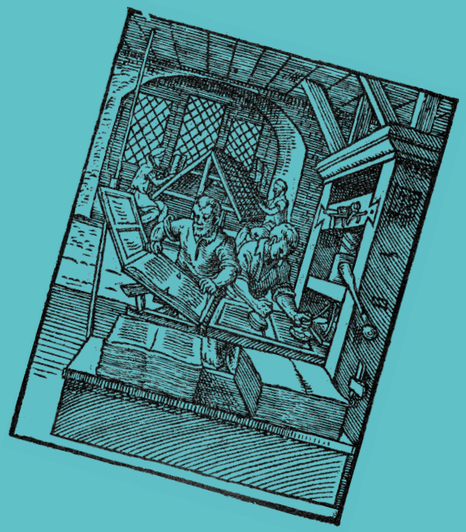
*The Fir Tree*, Globe Theatre, 15 to 31 December




The dedication page on the Munro First Folio, loaned to the Globe. Opposite: Type founder and printers from Jost Amman's *Book of Trades* (1568). Photo: Pete Le May

# BOOKED

Few books have had the continued impact of the First Folio of Shakespeare's plays. As the Globe prepares to celebrate the Folio's 400th anniversary next year, Claire Allfree explores the Folio and its legacy



Nearly 400 years ago, on 8 November 1623 at a printing shop in London near to where now stands the Barbican, a book was published that would change the world. Several years in the making, and painstakingly compiled by hand from a mix of published manuscripts and hand-written scripts, it was primarily the work of two actors, Henry Condell and John Heminge, and the printers William Jaggard and his son Isaac. It was, says the researcher Marcus Coles, a very English undertaking, 'like that of Dunkirk, in which victory was snatched from the jaws of defeat. The whole thing was amateurish, like something produced by Pyramus and Thisbe. So much could have gone wrong.' And yet, he adds, it was a defining moment for us as a country to be given that book. 'These men literally hand delivered it to us.'

The book, of course, is the First Folio, published seven years after Shakespeare's death and the first instance of a book devoted solely to a largely complete set of plays (the Ben Jonson Folio, published in 1616, also featured masques and poems). What's more, the Folio contains 18 Shakespeare plays never previously published, including *Macbeth*, *Twelfth Night* and *The Tempest*; the remainder had previously been published individually in quarto form (ie, as folded sheets without a binding). Two additional plays, *Love's Labour's Won* and *Cardenio* (the latter is believed to have been written in 1613 with John Fletcher) don't appear, each a possible masterpiece, now forever lost. Had the Folio not been published when it was, about half of Shakespeare's tragedies and comedies would also no longer exist. 'You cannot put a price on that,' says Dr Will Tosh, Head of Research at Shakespeare's Globe. 'You can barely describe it.'

Next year the Globe, under the aegis of Coles, a Folio expert, will celebrate the 400th anniversary of the First Folio, a book considered so essential to our understanding of ourselves it sits as prescribed reading for castaways on Radio 4's *Desert Island Discs*. Around 750 copies were published in that first print run, of which around a remarkable 235 are known to have survived (one recently sold for more than £2m at Sotheby's New York). Fifty of them are in the UK, including one in the Queen's library, and the one sitting behind reinforced glass in the Globe foyer, known as the Munro and on loan from an anonymous donor.

Clockwise from top left: printing demonstration at the Globe;the Munro Folio; Will Tosh; Marcus Coles. Photos: Pete Le May, Cesare De Giglio

**'So much could have gone wrong – but it was a defining moment for the country to be given that book'**

– MARCUS COLES

Coles, who hopes to get permission for a permanent monument to Condell, Heminge and the Jaggards at the Barbican, gets quite emotional at the sheer physicality of a Folio: not just for the way it incarnates Shakespeare's works but because it memorialises those who helped bring those works into being. 'We forget that for art to come into being there is often a degree of craftsmanship,' he says. 'We never spare a thought for those people at the coal face.'

Because of the idiosyncrasies of 17th-century printing techniques no two Folios are the same; what's more each one bears the thumbprint of the many owners through whose mucky hands over the centuries it would have passed. Food stains, underlinings, even corrections are common. In the Munro one 17th-century reader, Ann Bruce, has written her name on the title page for *The Tempest*.

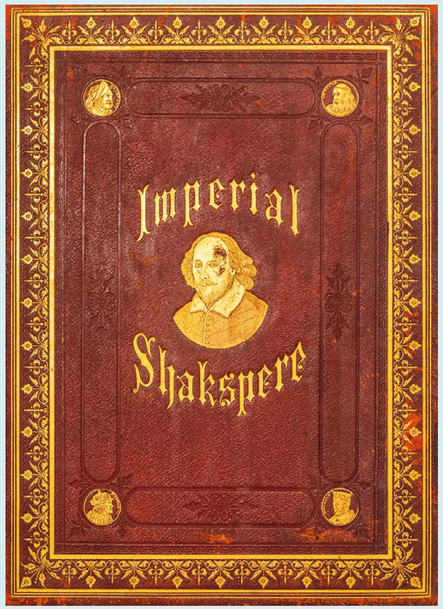
Yet the First Folio is much more than a marvel of determination, creative vision, hard manual labour and the odd ancient scribble. It contains within its some 900 pages what Tosh calls a foundation myth of England itself. What's more it was instrumental in spreading that myth around the world. 'The Folio

and its later iterations [it went through several editions during the 17th century] goes around the world as a quite deliberate tool of empire,' Tosh explains. 'The sense we have today that Shakespeare is speaking to all isn't just a romantic notion, it's because the Folio was literally planted in places around the globe as part of an expanding English-speaking empire. It was a soft-power tool of English colony-building and represented what the colonisers claimed to be bringing to far-off places: literary culture, civilisation, art.'

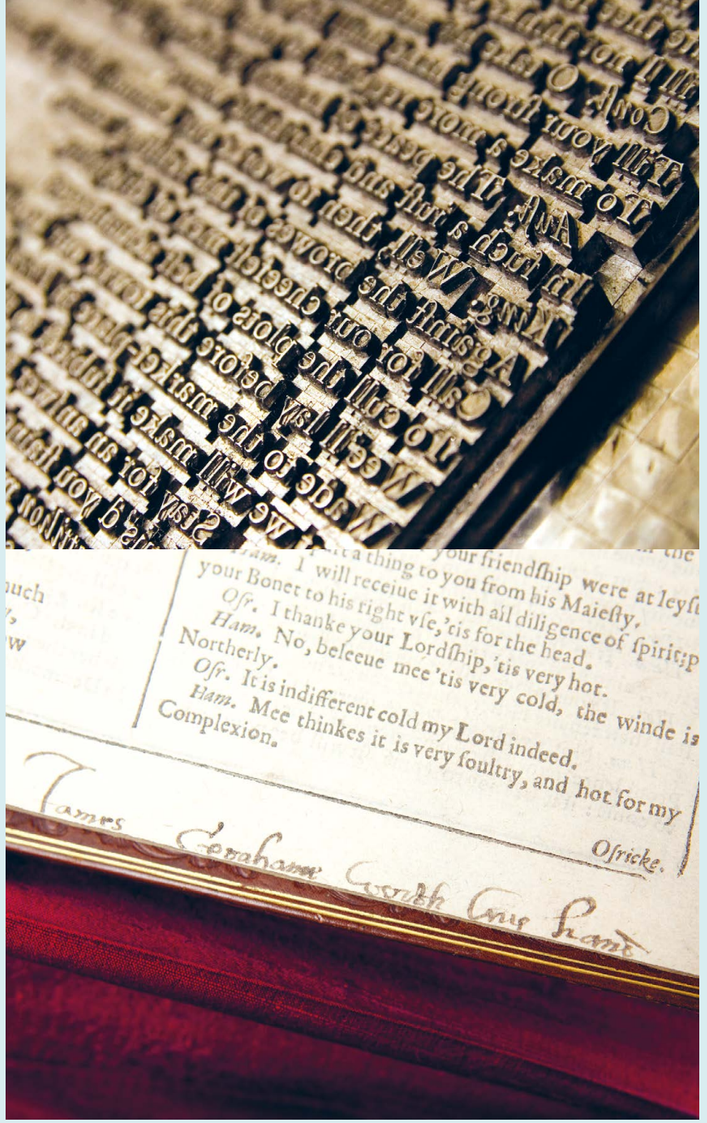
Such a history can only complicate our understanding of Shakespeare's plays in light of the unprecedented challenges they are facing in some quarters for their perceived attitudes towards race and empire, not to mention gender and sexuality. Yet Tosh thinks it's primarily useful to be reminded of the gap between Shakespeare the man and his work as a physical product. 'It's not about cancelling Shakespeare because of the way his work has been deployed in the centuries after his death. Scholars and artists today are interested in learning about the afterlife of those plays in different ages and societies, and in being honest about how his work has been enjoyed – but also utilised and even exploited. Shakespeare's plays have fed into ideas about nation-making pretty much since the beginning. And it wouldn't have happened without the Folio.'

**'In the Folio, Shakespeare gives us our view of history, our national story'**

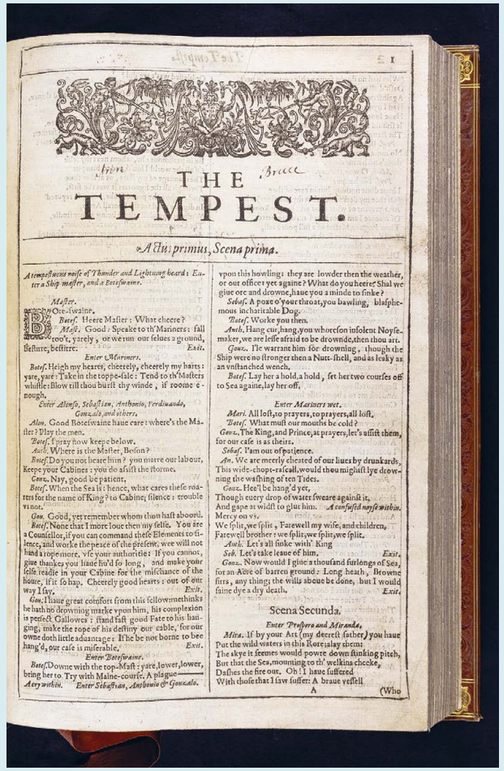
– WILL TOSH




To some extent, some of this myth making was enabled by the Folio's editors. For one thing they made a clear editorial decision to arrange the plays by genre, meaning that several plays end up in a very odd home indeed: that discomforting, melancholic curio, *The Winter's Tale*, for instance, is housed as a comedy. More significantly they presented the history plays according to historical chronology rather than according to when Shakespeare wrote them. 'There's no evidence that this is how they were staged, or that anyone prior to this point saw the history plays as a cycle, or even really as pairs or trios, for all that earlier copies of the Henrys advertised themselves as "part two",' says Tosh. 'The editors impose this coherence. This has a huge impact on how we view them, and how they informed people's understanding of history as a narrative dynastic saga from A to Z. The Folio was crucial in creating the sense of a national historical story told by Shakespeare.'



From far left: *Imperial Shakespeare* (c.1870); printing blocks at the Globe; Annotations on the Munro Folio. Photos: Pete Le May. *Imperial Shakespeare* kindly donated by Gareth Jones




Does this sort of textual interventionism chip away at Shakespeare's image as a godlike figure, with the Folio the absolute inviolable manifestation of his – and only his – imagination? 'Yes, but in a healthy way,' says Tosh. 'One of the reasons people get cross about the Shakespeare authorship question is that it doesn't reflect the way in which dramatists and theatre companies worked with their material. Shakespeare collaborated with other playwrights. The King's Men would have added their own lines to the plays. But that genius still existed in this world. For other hands to be involved is not sullying it, it's how it was.' And will be for as long as we have the Folio. 'Thou art a monument without a tomb,' wrote Ben Jonson in the Folio's dedicatory ode. 'And art still alive while thy book doth live.'

**Claire Allfree** is a freelance arts journalist

A schedule of events marking the celebration will be announced in the new year

# What's on

## Sam Wanamaker Playhouse

**Henry V**
10 November–4 February

**Hakawatis: Women of the Arabian Nights**
1 December–14 January

**Titus Andronicus**
19 January–15 April

**The Winter's Tale**
9 February–16 April

## Globe Theatre

**The Fir Tree**
15–31 December

## Events for the whole family

**Playing Shakespeare: The Tempest**
Public performances
18 March – 15 April

**Midsummer Mechanicals***
21 July – 26 August

**Young Actors Short Course***
4–8 April

## Anti-racist Shakespeare: perspectives on the plays

**Henry V**
26 January

**Titus Andronicus**
23 February

**The Winter's Tale**
16 March

## Research in Action*

17 May

14 June

12 July

*Members receive a 20% discount on selected education and family events.

Please check the Globe website for further details about all productions and events. Details are correct at the time of printing but may be subject to change.



# Members' events

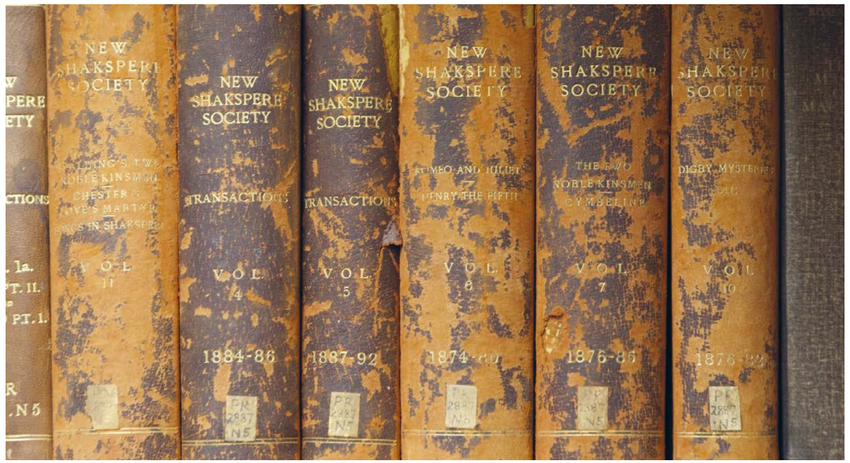



Photo: Pete Le May

## Members' Drama Club

Bringing Members together from around the world, these workshops explore the magic of the Globe. This season we will explore two of our Winter 2022 plays – **Henry V** and **Titus Andronicus**.

Stepping into the shoes of some of Shakespeare's iconic characters, participants will consider historical context, contemporary interpretations, and past Globe renditions of the plays as they read, discuss, and even have a chance to perform together.

For the first time, we will be bringing Drama Club together in person in our wooden 'O' for **Henry V**, while **Titus Andronicus** will remain online for those unable to reach the Globe.

**Henry V**
Sunday 20 November, 11am–12.30pm, Shakespeare's Globe

**Titus Andronicus**
Sunday 12 March,
2pm–3.30pm, Zoom

## Heaven to Hell

Our exclusive Heaven to Hell experience offers our Members the chance to sneak backstage at Shakespeare's Globe. Beginning in the attics and ending through the trapdoors, this experience explores how our shows are staged by revealing the secrets that lie above and below our iconic wooden 'O'. Join us for a view of the Globe you won't see anywhere else.

Sunday 20 November – 2pm and 4pm
Sunday 29 January – 12pm and 2pm
Saturday 18 February – 11am and 1pm
Sunday 16 April – 3.30pm

## Festive Friends

Join us at the Globe for a festive cup of mulled wine or a warming hot chocolate ahead of a matinee performance of **The Fir Tree**. The whole family are welcome to join us, with Christmas craft-making for the children and backstage insights for the grown-ups!

Saturday 17 December,
1.30–2.45pm

## Production Archive: Private View

Our Library & Archive team offer an exclusive glimpse into the Globe's rich performance archive for Members. These free events will be running alongside performances, making the plays all the more vibrant.

Take a look at hidden gems from past Globe productions, from prompt books to costume designs, intimate letters and much more. We invite you to reminisce and celebrate our fantastic collection. We will have drop-in sessions for the following production:

**The Winter's Tale**
Friday 24 March
12–1.30pm

## Patrons' Performance: The Winter's Tale

Meet fellow Patrons and members of the Globe Directorate for a pre-show reception ahead of a performance of **The Winter's Tale**. We will be joined by a creative from the production who will share insights on bringing the show to life across our two iconic playhouses.

Wednesday 29 March – from 6.30pm

Tickets for all these events can be booked by logging into the digital Members' Room, or by contacting the Membership Office at friends@shakespearesglobe.com

# My Shakespeare

Olivier Huband was a member of the Globe Ensemble this summer. He describes what happens when *The Tempest* is interrupted by... the weather

**What do you do at the Globe?**
I am an actor and this summer appeared in two productions – *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Tempest*. I play Don John, the 'villainous' party pooper in the former and Ferdinand, the swoony heartthrob, in the latter. I also take a lot of naps.

**What do you do when you're not at the Globe?**
I spend a lot of my time trying to rest up. Otherwise, I'm in a band so do the music thing where possible, get some sport in, write, and socialise when I've got the energy.

**Why is the Globe a special place for you?**
It's a one-of-a-kind place. As a kid I was introduced to theatre via Shakespeare, so it feels extra magical being in the building that was designed to perform his plays. The entire layout, the history, the relationship between performer and audience, with rolling, diverse companies that tell Shakespeare's stories. There's nowhere like it.

**What brought you to the Globe?**
When I was at drama school, I was selected to perform a scene from *Henry V* for the Sam Wanamaker Festival. The minute I set foot on the stage and felt the surge of audience energy, I knew that it was a place I had to work at eventually.

**What has been your favourite production?**
I saw a friend in a production of *Romeo and Juliet* for schools, which was brilliantly executed. It was abridged and full of anachronisms, which reminded me that you can play 16th-century text while getting down to modern tunes.

**What does Shakespeare mean to you?**
It's family for me. My grandfather showed me the film of *Henry V* when I was a kid and I was transfixed. My dad played the Chorus at school, and when I went to school I was forever studying Shakespeare and performing in it. I feel very at home working on Shakespeare.

**What has been your favourite moment at the Globe?**
It has to be when a storm broke out during our recent performance of *The Tempest*. Right at the end of the play, Prospero speaks about the weather: as Ferdy Roberts (Prospero) raised his hands to the sky, there was a huge thunderclap. There's something divine and otherworldly about it.

**What's your favourite Shakespeare character and why?**
For a long while it was Henry V. But playing Ferdinand has been a wonderful experience – nice to play the nice guy! Let's say that the three roles I'd like to play next are: Petruchio, Mercutio and Othello. Maybe you can pull some strings?

**What's the best part of your job?**
It has to be watching the audience fall in love with Shakespeare as we tell the stories.

**Who would be your dream guest to a show at the Globe?**
Denzel Washington.

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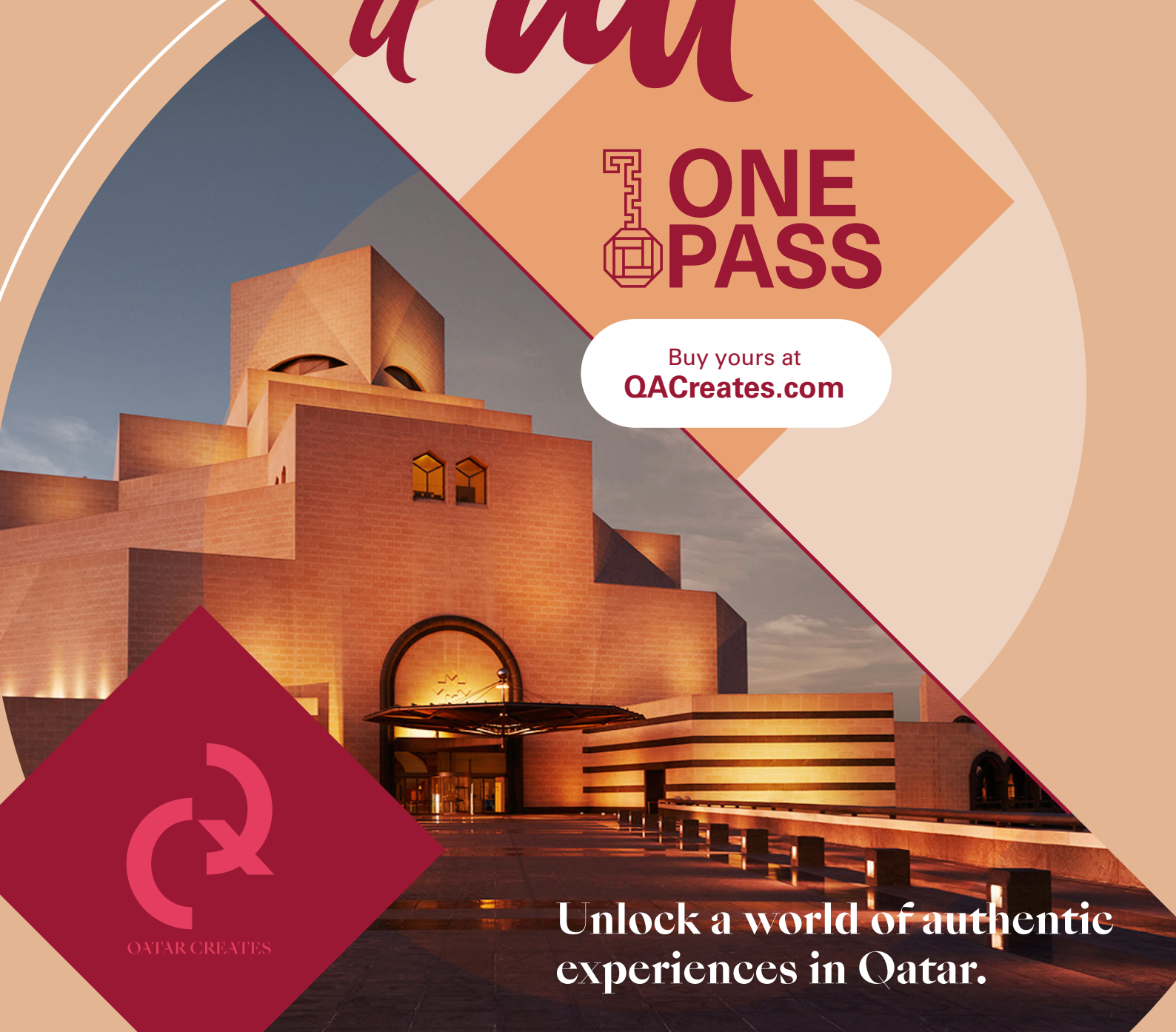

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