GLOBE

Summer 2023

Shakespeare in the Abbey

A magical night underneath the arches of Westminster Abbey

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GLOBE SUMMER 2023

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SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE

Photo: Simon Kane

Welcome

This issue covers a most important anniversary – the 400th Anniversary of the First Folio. Thanks to a private owner, Shakespeare's Globe is delighted to be the custodian of one of the surviving copies, which is displayed in our main foyer throughout the year. Without this collection, 18 of Shakespeare's plays would have been lost forever. If you are able to, I recommend coming to see this wonder of the literary world and celebrate the creation of the First Folio. I also recommend our award-winning Guided Tour – now including a brand-new walk-through exhibition space to immerse you in the sights, sounds and secrets of Shakespeare's London.

It is unimaginable to us today to think of having fewer of Shakespeare's plays than the 37 famous works we produce year after year at the Globe. This issue includes personal insights on the Folio from Professor Emma Smith, who specialises in the cultural reception of Shakespeare in performance, print and criticism. She is also our 2023 Sam Wanamaker Fellow, which is awarded in recognition of an academic's contribution to Shakespeare studies. Each Sam Wanamaker Fellow delivers a public lecture and collaborates with the Globe to bring cutting-edge research to a wider audience.

Read on for first-look interviews with our directors for our summer season – each bringing their own vision to these beloved plays. We open the summer season with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, featuring our very own Artistic Director Michelle Terry as the mischievous Puck. *The Comedy of Errors* will follow, then *Macbeth* and *As You Like It*. I also particularly enjoy the wonderful images from our special event at Westminster Abbey 'Shakespeare in the Abbey'. It was fantastic to be able to return to the Abbey so close to the Coronation, giving Shakespeare's words a new life in this historic setting.

Read on, and we hope to see you at the wooden 'O' over this Shakespeare-packed summer season.

And as always, thank you for your continued support.

Neil Constable
Chief Executive

Contents

AROUND THE GLOBE

More mayhem!
The Olivier Award-nominated 2022 production of *Midsummer Mechanicals* returns to the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse for more side-splitting fun and mayhem this summer. 'Hanging out with these woodland thesps is a riot' (*The Times*) and 'a joy to watch...great family entertainment' (*British Theatre Guide*). It's a perfect first experience of Shakespeare's plays as the Mechanicals 'make a young audience feel right at home' (*The Guardian*).

22 July to 26 August, Sam Wanamaker Playhouse

Above: Side-splitting... the 2022 cast of Midsummer Mechanicals. Photo: Manuel Harlan

Top shop
We are very proud that the Globe Shop has been named as the winner of the 'Best Online Shop' award at the recent Cultural Enterprises Awards. Our Retail Supervisor, Tavia Fox, accepted the award on behalf of the Globe, at a glitzy awards ceremony held in the Royal Hall in Harrogate.

The judges praised the site for its 'easy navigation, great products, and a real sense of connection back to the venue.'

As a thank you for your support, Members receive a 10% discount on purchases at our award-winning shop!

Greenery at the Globe
When visiting us this summer, you may notice the addition of some greenery adorning our wooden 'O'.

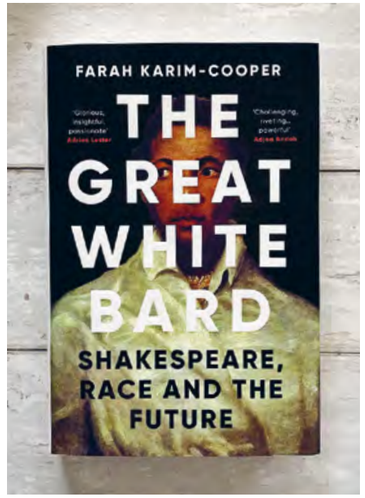
Celebrating the importance of flora in Shakespeare's plays, and rooted in the architecture of our theatre, these planters and pergolas have been built with European oak to reflect the materials used in building the Globe and over time will match the colour palette as the timber naturally ages.

Wills, Head of Production, collaborated with Sam Aldridge of Eden Restored Garden Design on the installation.

The array of plants have been carefully selected, inspired by those mentioned in Shakespeare's works, including honeysuckle (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) and olive (*Twelfth Night*). These plants were used to structure the design and then additional plants were paired with them to create lush wild beds that will evolve and flower over the growing season. As a result, the aesthetics of the planting will continue to develop and change throughout the year.

Once the 2023 Summer Season ends, we have a plan to offer the plants to local community gardens, and share the gift of greenery.

The planting is based on flora mentioned by Shakespeare, including: box (*Twelfth Night*), daisy (*Hamlet)*, ferns (*Henry IV, Part 1*), geranium (*King Lear*), honeysuckle (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), ivy (*The Tempest*), lavender (*The Winter's Tale*), mint (*Love's Labour's Lost*), olive (*Twelfth Night*), rosemary (*Hamlet*), thistle (*Much Ado About Nothing*) and thyme (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*).



Great white bard
A brand-new book by Professor Farah Karim-Cooper, the Globe's Director of Education, Higher Education & Research, is out now. *The Great White Bard: Shakespeare, Race and the Future* is a fascinating and illuminating read on race, gender and otherness in Shakespeare, from *Othello* to *The Tempest*. Karim-Cooper's pioneering work will help us rediscover Shakespeare for the future generations exploring his work.

Twilight tours
Be transported back to London's 'Kingdom of Night' and discover Shakespeare's fascination with the dark on our Twilight Walking Tour of the Bankside area and beyond.

Murderous midnights in *Macbeth*, early morning treason in *Julius Caesar*, after-dark scheming in *Henry IV Part I & II*: references to sinister night-time activity are rife in Shakespeare's plays.

Follow our expert guides into the City of London and allow them to invoke the 'absolute darkness' of the 16th century and discover where Shakespeare's fascination with night might have come from.

Much ado about film
Last year we worked with film students from Anglia Ruskin University who made a series of 60-second micro-shorts based on the plays of the 2022 Summer Season.

We are delighted to celebrate that the creative team of *THERAPY* (inspired by *Much Ado About Nothing*) won the Royal Television Society's Best Entertainment and Comedy award (at the RTS East Student Awards). *THERAPY* will now compete in the National Royal Television Society Awards.

Huge congratulations to Martha Wallam (director), Kai Wissler (producer), Chloe Kelly (camera) and Yegor Chmilewsky (editor) and the cast and crew – as well as Hans Petch (Senior Lecturer, Film & Television Production). It's a wonderful recognition of their work, and of the project with Anglia Ruskin University, which continues with a new series this summer.

Right: The Twilight Walking Tour.
Below: The *THERAPY* filmmakers at the RTS awards ceremony.
Photo: Philip Mynott

EXIT INTERVIEW

Neil Constable leaves the Globe this year after 14 years as its Chief Executive. Having opened the indoor theatre and weathered the pandemic, he shares his highs and lows with David Jays

Neil Constable at Shakespeare in the Abbey. Photo: Edward Thompson

‘THE GLOBE IS AN ORGANISATION THAT SUCKS YOU IN’

‘I’ve been so lucky that Shakespeare has been part of my life,’ Neil Constable sighs happily. The bug bit him early: he saw Simon Russell Beale’s first, teenaged performance of *King Lear* while still at school, and never looked back. Shakespeare has been a constant through a four-decade career: at the Royal Shakespeare Company, Almeida Theatre and, for almost 14 years, as Chief Executive at the Globe. As he prepares to step down later this year, it’s a good moment for a reflective exit interview.

Constable is a reliably cheering presence: big smile, booming voice, eyes round and button-bright. His energy seems undimmed, so why retire now? ‘It is time to hand over to the next generation,’ Constable replies. ‘In America people can do up to 30 years in these roles – you lose a whole generation of talented people.’ Having steered the Globe through the tempestuous pandemic years, he feels change is due. ‘There’s a three-year strategic plan to put the organisation back on a much stronger financial footing after everything that we’ve been through. Michelle [Terry] will step down at some point, and I think it’s time for someone else to lead the recruitment for the next artistic director.’

It’s striking that several theatre leaders who made it through the pandemic – including artistic directors at the RSC, Royal Court and Donmar – are now stepping away. These past few years must have been bruising? ‘I don’t think people who weren’t inside really know what went on,’ Constable says. ‘Two months after the pandemic started, we lost 95% of our income overnight. We considered mothballing everything for three years. The stress and strain…’ he tails off. ‘I don’t think people recognise how exhausted they are until they stop.’

Gamely, he revisits the anxiety of that notoriously unprecedented period. It was the Globe, along with venues similarly without government funding, that were ‘the first to come out and say, “Our organisations are in peril.” The furlough scheme would help to pay for staff, but not for running the site or putting on work. We had to reduce our running costs down to the bare minimum.’ After much lobbying, a Cultural Recovery Fund was established, which then-Chancellor Rishi Sunak launched from the stage of the Globe.

Although things are calmer and the deficit is receding, we are a long way from the old normal. ‘This summer, we won’t cross-cast shows, because we recognise how illness can affect performances, and we won’t programme any new writing or touring – we’re simplifying things. Normally we’d welcome a million visitors – last year, it was around 550,000. That has an impact on the bottom line.’ As Constable says, ‘There are still challenges for my successor to deal with.’

Crammed with landmarks… Jonathan Pryce and Dominic Mafham in *The Merchant of Venice* (below) and (right) Constable with Prince Philip at the opening of the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse. Photos: Manuel Harlan; Hannah Yates

Time for some happier memories. ‘This is the 40th year since my first paid job,’ Constable muses. ‘These 40 years have gone by very quickly.’ Having trained in lighting design at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, he swerved into stage management, fetching up at the RSC. His first show remains vivid: ‘Nick Hytner’s *Measure for Measure* with Roger Allam and Josette Simon.’

Over the next 16 years, he became company manager and led ambitious international tours. ‘One learns a lot about leadership,’ he suggests, ‘and how to support a group of people to do outstanding work, when you’re thousands of miles away from home.’

Soon came even greater responsibility, becoming Executive Director of London’s Almeida Theatre in 2003. ‘My motto has always been: enable, serve and support people to do great work. How you create a great rehearsal room is also how you create a great organisation. I am one of those arts leaders that has come from the shop floor in some ways.’

Constable admits he only grasped the Globe’s full potential when he was invited to apply for the Chief Executive role in 2010. ‘I realised how much more the Globe was beyond what you see on stage – the range of education, academic and research work, the significant cultural tourism offer. Dominic Dromgoole was exploding the Globe with national and international touring. It was much greater than the sum of its parts.’

‘When I arrived,I realised that the role of the Chief Executive was to ensure that the individual offerings all came together and bounced off each other,’ he says. ‘What excited me was how much there was to do.’ Much has been achieved: as ‘project champion’ for the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse (‘My pitch to the board was: “We must find a way of fulfilling Sam’s dream”’); celebrating the 500th anniversary of the King James Bible in 2011; the 2012 World Shakespeare Festival. He celebrates the Globe’s thriving education and research work and champions its new writing: ‘*Nell Gwynn*, *Blue Stockings*, *Emilia*, *Farinelli and the King* – all had fantastic journeys. When a writer responds to that democratic space and takes on big themes – that’s something.’ No wonder Constable describes the Globe as ‘an organisation that sucks you in’.

Constable’s tenure was crammed with landmarks, none

shinier than opening the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse in 2014. 'We delivered on budget and on time, and didn't receive any government funding,' he says proudly. 'Working with the architects on the look and feel of the space, wondering if people could cope with three hours under candlelight – it was magical.' Now, he relishes the varied repertory that appears in that golden glow: 'Shakespeare's late plays, Jacobean plays and new writing, alongside baroque opera, the spoken word and concert series.'

A theatre is nothing without its supporters and volunteers, and Constable pays tribute to 'so many longstanding members who have been involved all the way through. They are on our journey with us. What I love is that you get letters from the older community of Friends, who thought something might not be to their taste, but they've come back and brought their grandchildren to see, for example, Ola Ince's *Romeo and Juliet*. They got to know me over the years so they're not frightened to say when they think things aren't going well, but they also give huge support to things they enjoy.'

Michelle Terry has said: 'Neil proudly and resolutely continued

to support our biggest and most outlandish creative ambitions, offered experience, trust and understanding when things did not always go to plan, and loudly celebrated our successes.'

How would Constable define his Globe years? 'I'm there to support the organisation,' he says. 'Not many people in our roles have huge egos. It's about providing guidance, knowledge and experience. Having a real understanding of what the organisation can achieve, making sure you keep building on the successes and step up to the plate when things are challenging. All major decisions go through the lens of the Chief Executive: you're an advocate and ambassador for the organisation. That has been demonstrated by the government recognising the importance of the Globe in the cultural landscape.'

'I'M THERE TO SUPPORT THE GLOBE AND STEP UP TO THE PLATE WHEN THINGS ARE CHALLENGING'

Proud moments... Neil Constable (left) launching the Cultural Recovery Fund and (right) Michelle Terry as Hamlet. Photos: Simon Walker; Tristram Kenton

Perhaps his most testing pre-pandemic moment was Emma Rice's very public departure as artistic director in 2018. 'You're in the firing line but that's what you're paid for,' he grimaces. 'You just crack on and do your best. I hope that people who had worked with me knew I'd be trying to do the best, both for Emma and the organisation. Emma and I still talk, and we still very much celebrate her time here.' Rice's successor was no safe choice – Terry had performed at the Globe, but had never run a theatre. 'Her offer came from such a wonderful place, as an artist who knows the space, but also what she could offer the organisation – what she wanted to do and the people she wanted to work with.'

Despite its trials, what are the job's abiding pleasures? 'There's nowhere else with two such different theatres,' he says. 'And there's a wonderful, talented team, creating fantastic work in challenging environments. I feel so proud that six members of the senior leadership team have now become members of the directorate. That's fantastic – an opportunity to give people the next step in their career and work together as a leadership team.'

Time for the toughest question of all: can he pick a favourite Globe production? No surprise, he can't. 'Winding backwards, there was something extraordinary with Michelle Terry playing Hamlet,' he says. 'Playing *King John* in the Globe in 2015 meant all the canon had been performed here at least once. Taking Jonathon Pryce's *The Merchant of Venice* around the

world was quite magical, plus the *Hamlet* tour to 198 countries in 2014, marking the 450th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth. The penultimate place it played was in the ballroom at Elsinore. I was sitting with the Queen of Denmark watching Gertrude, with the audience watching her!'

As Constable prepares to leave the building, does he have any advice for his successor, Stella Kanu? 'Do everything you can to stay engaged with the work and what's happening on our stages,' he declares. 'I have seen nearly every first preview and press night over the last 13 years. The higher up you get in any organisation the further away you get from the work, but this is the only way that you can stay connected to what our artists and theatres are creating.'

Introducing our new Chief Executive

Shakespeare's Globe is delighted to announce the appointment of Stella Kanu as Chief Executive. Stella brings more than 30 years of experience working in the theatre, festival and cultural sectors, and is currently Executive Director at LIFT (London International Festival of Theatre).

During her tenure, Stella led LIFT through a challenging pandemic, and has since built a healthy surplus for the first time in 10 years; secured international research partnerships focused on Climate Change; and overseen the creation of 'LIFT the City' – a new innovative partnership with City of London Corporation to reshape the square mile through culture.

Neil Constable steps down as Chief Executive after almost 14 years, and Stella will join the Globe this autumn, allowing for a smooth leadership transition.

Stella Kanu says: 'Shakespeare's Globe is more than a theatre or Shakespeare's workplace. It is an extraordinary meeting place of the past and the future held together with storytelling that questions what it means to be human – flaws, triumphs, ambitions, and epic fails. It has proved it can hold the past while being responsive to the demands of now.

'I am thrilled to be building on the extraordinary foundation Neil has put in place in the pursuit of access for all. I remain humbled and ready to lead us into a future where access, equity and inclusion mean we can open our doors to everyone we can, where those who work with us are inspired to do their best work and those who support us see our true and lasting value. It's an exciting time and I can't wait to get started!'

Previously, Stella founded The Pivotal Place, a coaching practice for creative leaders, and was Executive Producer at Ovalhouse, CEO at Soundwave Cumbria and held pivotal roles at Theatre Royal Margate, Harlem Stage (NYC) and Cardboard Citizens, among others. At the Globe Stella spoke at the Women and Power: Women and Leadership Symposium (2019) and led the 2019 photoshoot for 'Black Women in Theatre', gathering more than 250 Black women and non-binary people together on the Globe stage.

Margaret Casely-Hayford CBE, Chair of Shakespeare's Globe, said: 'Neil Constable's contribution to the Globe has been immense. He has left big shoes to fill. Our wonderful incoming CEO Stella Kanu combines an impressive mix of commercial skill and experience with vision, she has a passion and great knowledge of theatre, a love of Shakespeare and new thinking. I greatly look forward to working with her as the Globe takes its next strategic leaps forward into a future of growth and continued success.'

Photo: Sarah Lee

INTO THE WOODS

The directors of this season's productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It* tell Ella Satin about comedy, queer joy and breaking the rules in the forest

Photo: Gerd Harder/Alamy

James Garnon (left), and Peter Bray and Bettrys Jones (below) in *As You Like It* in 2019. Photos: Helen Murray

Queer joy is the order of the day for Elle While, director of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Ellen McDougall, director of *As You Like It*. As a drag performer myself, I find it heartening to hear how thoroughly both directors embrace the playfulness of gender swapping – which is central to Shakespeare's work – and investigate the questions that bubble up from the texts.

Playing with gender in Shakespeare is nothing new to While, whose 2018 production of *As You Like It* at the Globe notably paired the petite Bettrys Jones as Orlando with the 6ft 2in-tall Jack Laskey as Rosalind. McDougall didn't see that production, but the actor on the poster for her *As You Like It* looks like a drag king. She hasn't cast the show yet, but when asked whether her Rosalind is in drag she pauses for a second. 'I don't know. But it is definitely a queer production. I can definitely say that.'

While, speaking before her *A Midsummer Night's Dream* cast was announced, calls her production 'gender fluid'. 'We're acknowledging gender, whether you're playing it or whether you're inhabiting it... and what that means for the person playing it and being it,' she says. While is currently working on a new play by Charlie Josephine, whose show *I, Joan* was part of summer 2022 at the Globe. Josephine's work interrogates the lived experience of transgender people, and While seems to be focusing on these themes in recent years. Laughing, she tells me, 'On the way into work this morning, I was like, "I don't know how I found myself here". But yes, I think probably that's always been there'. She is pensive for a moment. 'The Globe has been a real heart and soul opener for me about how we treat gender, and how, actually, we need to rethink how we treat gender.' For her current project, she has a queer consultant in her associate director, who adds a protection layer for the queer performers who may not always feel safe or comfortable touring the rural circuit.

McDougall tells me about rural settings in *As You Like It*: 'We were looking at where the word forest comes from, and it comes from an idea of it being other rules.' The forests in both *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It* present pastoral idylls and for McDougall, that means diving into notions about society, politics and biology. She has been reading about forests as 'sophisticated, multi-species ecosystems, built on collaboration and mutual support'. Darwin's writing, she explains, is not only about survival of the fittest, but also includes sections on collaboration, which, according to her reading, we ignore because they don't fit a capitalistic ideal. 'I love thinking about the forest as a space in which other things might be possible than what we imagine... and whether we can imagine that together in the space.' I suggest that in this instance, that means that it's a queer forest, and she laughs, 'Yeah, you said it better than I could.'

For both McDougall and While, Shakespeare's texts present exciting challenges in their chaotic, sometimes unwieldy structures. McDougall notes that characters often appear for one scene, then disappear entirely. Contrary to directing modern texts, she is learning to let go of a sense of order: 'Don't tidy up – let it continue to unravel and go where it's going to go.' While relishes the chance for reinterpretation: 'It's about allowing it to be expansive and weird and not razor-sharp in its lens.'

Both directors want the performers to be able to experience each action as it comes, with all the mystery and spontaneity of a lesser-known text. After recently directing a wartime drama (*Watch on the Rhine* by Lillian Hellman) at the Donmar Warehouse, McDougall is excited about the irreverence and playfulness of a Shakespearean comedy. As part of her creative process, she uses improvisation, getting the creative team to respond to the text with writing and music. But she wants to retain the deeper thoughts she has in relation to the forest: 'I love finding serious things to say through being silly.'

'I love finding serious things to say through being silly'

– ELLEN MCDOUGALL

While, on the other hand, is bringing out darker undertones in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She mentions the subtext of certain moments – for example, when Theseus, Duke of Athens tells his future wife, 'I wooed thee with my sword.'

'Once you dig into it,' While asks, 'has he defeated this woman, taken her from her home and made her be his wife?' She wants the story to feel fresh, so the audience are kept on their toes, and it's important that the actors can 'peel away those protective layers that we build up at the door... You wouldn't not dare go there if it was *Macbeth* or *Romeo and Juliet,* so why not go there with this, just because we're told it's a comedy?'

McDougall, who is in research and development at the time of our conversation, says she is interested in exploring our relationship with her play, given its history. A meeting she has had with the theatre's Head of Wigs, Hair & Make-up led to a lesson about historical wigs made from rabbits and weasels. She is making full use of the Globe's historical resources and academic expertise, considering theatre not just as an experience in the moment, but also as something that can affect people in their lives away from the space. As part of this, the conversations with both of my interviewees circle back to *I, Joan*, which seems to all of us to have been a cultural phenomenon. Speaking of the show's wider impact, McDougall muses, 'Lots of people came with an idea about there being some joy in being together in a queer space that felt really present.'

> 'The Globe has been a real heart-opener for me about rethinking how we treat gender'
>
> – ELLE WHILE

While, however, is wary of leaning too heavily on the audience's energy. She says 'You can make the audience laugh at the Globe, and that can feel great, but you can get so used to that, that you can leave the characters and the moment and the scene behind.' With shining eyes, she says, 'Whenever I've watched a production and seen an actor really tell the truth... I've experienced something in the Globe where shivers go up my neck.'

Similarly, McDougall has been thinking about love, and tells me there is a lot of subtlety to how it is experienced in the play – not only romantic love, but also brotherly love, care and a meeting of minds. She is considering adding a prologue, to relate the play to how audiences meet it today.

Ultimately, for both directors, the plays should be accessible and fun – both are all-singing, all-dancing summer shows, guaranteed to be a joyful time for all. But it is important for While and McDougall to maintain their integrity within that. As While notes, 'It's important that everyone feels welcome. It's going to be the magic that the theatre and especially the Globe brings but it is a worry if casting trans people makes something inaccessible. We can't pander to that.' As a trans journalist in these uncertain times, it means a lot to hear that.

From left: *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in 2019; Elle While; Ellen McDougall. Photos: Helen Murray; Marc Brenner

Ella Satin is a freelance performing arts critic. Their specialism is theatre, but she also writes about dance, comedy, film and music.

A Midsummer Night's Dream, Globe Theatre, 27 April to 12 August.
As You Like It, Globe Theatre, 18 August to 29 October

‘I want people to surprise me’: director Abigail Graham. Photo: Marc Brenner

GOOD GRIEF

Preparing to enter the bleak world of *Macbeth*, director Abigail Graham tells David Jays how she is preparing to go big on grief and still protect her actors

Abigail Graham hadn’t ever read *Macbeth* until the Globe invited her to direct it. So what struck her on first reading? ‘The horror for me was the amount of people that die. So many people die for absolutely no reason at all. I’d always heard it was a scary play because of the witches. And I was like: “No, the scary thing is the amount of people, children, that die”.’

Macbeth follows Graham’s uncompromising production of *The Merchant of Venice* in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse last year, but her path to Shakespeare has been a gradual one – avoidance followed by immersion. ‘I’m painfully dyslexic,’ she tells me, so at university, she selected modules that required coursework rather than time-pressured exams. Loads of interesting areas, but no Shakespeare. ‘So *Macbeth*, for me, is like a new play.’ Working at the Globe has sparked a fascination; she was recently awarded an Arts Council Developing your Creative Practice grant to explore ‘big classic plays and directing at scale’. *Macbeth* has arrived at just the right moment.

The only thing I’ve heard about Graham’s production is that she plans to dig into the idea of grieving in the play. ‘The inciting incident for me is Lady Macbeth and Macbeth burying their child,’ she confirms. ‘I feel like it really starts there.’

It’s an incident that the couple only address head-on when plotting to assassinate King Duncan – an arrestingly unlikely context for such a raw subject. Have the Macbeths previously discussed their loss, I wonder? ‘I don’t feel like they have,’ Graham considers. ‘There’s so much in the play about not having a son or an heir, but it’s hard to talk about grief, and particularly about burying a child. Even though in Shakespeare’s time it was a relatively common experience – and we know that Shakespeare buried his own son – it doesn’t mean the pain was any less.’

'THE HORROR FOR ME IS THAT SO MANY PEOPLE DIE FOR ABSOLUTELY NO REASON AT ALL'

'There isn't a language for grief in our society,' she continues. 'I've had a couple of miscarriages, and no one knows what to say. I didn't know how to talk about it either – I didn't have the tools, and I'm pretty tooled up. I can only imagine how much harder it would be if you'd actually held your child and breastfed as Lady Macbeth obviously had.' Instead of working through loss, the Macbeths put their energies elsewhere. 'Project King and Queen – it's somewhere to put the energy rather than sit with grief. Though it does involve killing someone, so it's not quite the same as doing up your house!'

It isn't just the central couple who behave in this way. 'No one grieves, they just leg it. The king's sons don't grieve, nor does Macduff – there's no time. The world keeps moving so they have to suppress it, and that's really dangerous.' Graham notes the tragedy's famously propulsive structure, hurtling from battlefield to murder and onto the throne with barely a pause. 'Nobody in the play stops to grieve,' she says. 'The pursuit of power and control – it's all a distraction. They're people who don't stop moving, because if they do, they might have to deal with something.' What a pity the Macbeths can't go to counselling, I joke. 'If there were fewer witches and some lovely grief counsellors available,' Graham says wryly, 'it would be a totally different play.'

Uncompromising... from left, Adrian Schiller and Tripti Tripuraneni in *The Merchant of Venice*; Graham in rehearsal. Photos: Tristram Kenton; Marc Brenner

More widely, in Graham's view, 'the play explores the Venn diagram between grief, power, control and nature'. The natural world that Shakespeare depicts is in turmoil – freak weather, bizarre events. 'Exactly like now, Mother Nature is not happy with us, and rightly so. We've exploited the world, we've taken and taken. We need to get back to understanding the impact of our actions.'

Having placed *The Merchant of Venice* in the Playhouse's candlelit intensity, how much does the outdoor Globe theatre affect her thinking? 'It's such a character,' she confirms. 'Ti Green, the designer, and I are very much working with the space. Making work for outside is different, because you've only got the elements, and the energy between actors and audience. You don't have anywhere to hide. You need actors at the top of their game.' She and Green will set the play here and now, 'because the audience is in London now, we're all in the same space'.

The bizarre, scrambled theatre schedules of post-lockdown London meant that Graham was directing three wildly distinct shows almost simultaneously: *Mum* by Morgan Lloyd Malcolm, *Aladdin* at the Lyric Hammersmith and *The Merchant of Venice*. 'It was absolutely excruciating at first,' she laughs. Now she returns to the rehearsal room. 'I want it to be a collaboration,' she says firmly. 'And I want people to surprise me. It requires letting go of control to allow actors to bring their magic to the table.' She credits Michelle Terry, the Globe's Artistic Director, with fostering this kind of approach. 'Because she's also an actor she understands on a soul level the value of true collaboration. With a room of amazing collaborators, you make something unique.'

Macbeth will develop the process she solidified on *Merchant*. It begins with identifying the production's core: 'How do we use this text to talk about the intersection between grief, power, control and nature? You have it as your north star on the wall. So every choice we make as actors and as a team – is it serving that?'

But this material is, as Graham acknowledges, 'really bleak'. As a director, and as a parent of a young child, how does she protect herself from the difficulty of that exploration? 'Actually, having a young child solidifies your purpose,' she considers. 'What's the world I want my son to grow up in? That really clarifies things. And there's nothing like a toddler to snap you out of it.' Even so, squaring up to the play's bleakness can 'get into your soul and your body. I have to do things like yoga to get it out.'

A wellbeing practitioner is attached to the project, and Graham devotes a day early in rehearsal to 'creating a constitutional document as a group of people about what we need to do our best work: from ourselves, from each other, and from the organisation.'

She adds, 'Care has to be built in from the beginning. The creative team and actors have to be as diverse as possible. And how do you hold space for everyone's differing opinions and life experiences – we're asking people to dive in and *feel*. We need to create spaces where people feel safe to be brave.'

Macbeth, Globe Theatre, 21 July to 28 October

Peacocking... Portrait of *Sir Henry Unton*, 1586.
Photo: Print Collector/Heritage Images/Alamy

DIRTY FUNNY

The creatives behind a new production of *The Comedy of Errors* tell Alice Saville why Shakespeare's London is like the Wild West, why Elizabethan gents dyed their beards – and why they must go funny or go home

Today, Southbank is a pristine riverside destination where locals stroll, tourists take selfies, and parents wheel prams, all safe in the knowledge they're unlikely to come across a dagger-wielding villain or a rotting head on a pike. But the Globe's new production of *The Comedy of Errors* is determined to bring a bit of Elizabethan danger back to the streets of London Bridge. 'The London of the time had a sort of Wild West boomtown energy,' its director Sean Holmes tells me, visibly excited by the half-forgotten tumult of this city, four centuries ago. 'Lots of money, lots of poverty, lots of trade and a sort of crackling energy. That's the world I want to build for the play.'

The Comedy of Errors is an early Shakespeare play that follows the labyrinthine complications of when two different sets of twins are separated at birth, then run into each other as very confused adults. Theoretically, it's set in the Greek city of Ephesus. But for Holmes, 'It's clearly set in Shakespeare's London, in the streets just outside the theatre. Using that setting supports the play, and also gives you a place to move into somewhere more profound and transformative.'

He's aided and abetted by designer Paul Wills, who is enjoying immersing himself in research into the city's murky past. 'It was a really grotty, grimy, rough and dangerous place,' he says, showing me some of the dark, heavily cross-hatched images he's gathered of 16th-century London Bridge. 'You can see how beautiful, dark and atmospheric it was,' he says, pointing out the narrow alleyways overhung by galleried timber buildings, or the dark gibbet overhanging the murky-looking Thames. 'What's brilliant about setting it in the docks is that we have so many visual references for how London Bridge would have looked, and images of this rough timber world just outside the theatre. We can bring all that into the Globe.'

Initially, Holmes and Wills thought of a Wild West setting, and that idea remains in the wooden saloon doors in the centre of the stage, but most of the visual influences are straight out of the docks: barrels and hay bales that could be freshly unloaded cargo, the wooden prow of a ship, mooring bollards. There's even a reference to the rough justice of the time, in the form of helmets on poles – a reference to the traitor's heads that were once displayed on pikes on Southbank at London Bridge, with William Wallace, Thomas More and Thomas Cromwell all making an appearance in this proto-Madame Tussauds local attraction.

Holmes got the idea for the helmets on poles from a detail in an old *Star Wars* film, which is pretty unsurprising for a director who's known for letting unexpected, joyful visual ideas crash their way into Shakespeare's texts. In 2019 (and again in 2021), his fiesta-style take on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* featured fairies dressed as surreal, giant piñatas. More recently, his bold interpretation of *A Winter's Tale* leapt from the *Succession*-style excess of the super rich in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse to a rough-and-ready folk knees-up in the chill of the Globe Theatre.

A lot of Holmes' most left-field ideas emerge in the rehearsal room. But there's already a lot of rainbow-hued levity storming its way through this production's costumes. 'I found a portrait of a man wearing entirely red, and his costume was so striking

From left: Paul Wills; Wills' productions of *Hamlet* and *King Lear*; Sean Holmes with Prime Isaac in rehearsal. Photos: Johan Persson; Marc Brenner

'The London of the time had a Wild West boomtown energy'

– SEAN HOLMES

and bright,' says Wills, showing me an image of a two-metre high 16th-century painting from Hampton Court Palace that showcases the surreal boldness of the era's fashions. He's planning to play with the peacocking tendencies of wealthy Renaissance gentlemen, with primary-coloured hose and even tinted facial hair: 'There was a fashion for beards that were dyed red, yellow or even green,' he explains.

It sounds zany, but when ludicrously posturing Bottom is deciding how to play the part of Pyramus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, he takes his facial furniture very seriously: 'I will discharge it in either your straw-colour beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-colour beard, your perfect yellow,' he says. At the time, beards were seen as a symbol of virility, and men would use them to signal their social status: a clown's would be big and bushy, a courtier's would be neat and pointed. Wills is collaborating with seasoned professionals to make sure this production won't have a hair out of place: 'There's a great team here in wardrobe and wigs, so we're going to spend a lot of time together going through the library of references here, so we can pull together a really realistic, detailed world.'

Costumes for the principals will be made specially by seasoned makers, while other ensembles will be drawn from the Globe's costume store. 'As part of our Green Book policies on reusing and recycling, we'll use as much of the material that's already in the building as we can,' says Wills. There's a formidable archive to draw on: Shakespeare's Globe is known for its Original Practices work under former artistic director

‘This was a grotty, grimy, rough and dangerous place. We can bring all that into the Globe’

– PAUL WILLS

Mark Rylance (1995–2005), during which time costume designer Jenny Tiramani created historically accurate garments using original Elizabethan and Jacobean methods, while successive designers’ creations have been lovingly stored away for future use, too.

Holmes is adamant that although his production will be packed with historical references, it’ll also have clear connections between then and now: ‘You want to also see the parallels between their London and ours, so you feel like those characters could have gone off the tube.’

That’s particularly important when *The Comedy of Errors* has a surprising degree of contemporary relevance for a play that’s often been dismissed as a featherweight comedy. ‘A lot of the themes in the play are about foreigners coming into your land and rejecting them, or in this case, trying to kill them – which is very relevant to what’s going on at the time currently,’ says Wills, referencing current fierce political debates about how we should treat refugees. The play begins with a moment where a migrant is treated brutally: ‘People used to celebrate executions, so we’re going to create a real nationalistic celebration of this man being murdered for arriving in the country.’

So far, so bleak. But Holmes reassures me that this play will have plenty to chuckle at alongside the grim contemporary parallels. ‘It’s called *The Comedy of Errors*. It needs to be funny or you might as well go home,’ he says. He’s got faith that the original will tickle audiences’ ribs – ‘we’re trying to unlock its rhythm, rather than trying to add gags or make jokes’ – while also being ready to remake jokes that rely on niche knowledge about the minutiae of 16th-century slang. The play will be enlivened by a band playing Elizabethan instruments, dressed to look like salty sailors from the docks, and it’ll also be full of the spontaneous spirit Holmes always brings to his productions, one where actors are encouraged to bring their own ideas, personalities and funny bones to the rehearsal room.

Wills and Holmes have been working together for 15 years now, and they’ve developed an organic way of working together where ideas simmer away over months, then get brutally chipped away at in rehearsals. ‘I live on the Kent coast, so Sean will come down, and we’ll walk along the beach talking about the play – we come up with a lot of ideas that way,’ explains Wills. Then, he creates a model box, which is an intricate scale model of the designer’s plan for the setting. I ask if I can see it, but Wills ruefully explains that ‘Sean and I just tore it apart in our meeting, it’s all just little bits of card now.’ Some people would take umbrage at this, but for Wills, it’s all part of designing for Shakespeare’s Globe’s distinctive, resilient space. ‘Unlike other theatres, the Globe works perfectly well on its own as a space, so you’ve got to find the right balance between bringing your own aesthetic to it, and overcomplicating something that’s already perfect. Every meeting, Sean and I will pull something out because we’ll realise you don’t need it.’

It’s a very Coco Chanel sort of approach: the designer famously advised women to remove at least one accessory before they left the house. But what’s guaranteed is that this production of *The Comedy of Errors* will be anything but restrained or pared down: ‘It’s like *Alice in Wonderland*, where you start off in the real world, then leave it completely,’ says Holmes. ‘We need to find the moment when our characters tumble down the rabbit hole.’ Soon, they’ll take audiences down there with them, to a joyful interpretation that’s built on the gritty foundations of murky old London.

Alice Saville is a theatre critic writing for publications including *Financial Times*, *Time Out* and *Evening Standard*, and is editor of *Exeunt*

The Comedy of Errors, Globe Theatre, 12 May to 29 July

Fiesta! Peter Bourne and Jocelyn Jee Esien in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Photos: Tristram Kenton

RETURN TO THE ABBEY

The Globe's actors made the air sing in Westminster Abbey as Shakespeare in the Abbey returned for the first time in three years. Photographer Edward Thompson captured this thrilling promenade show exclusively for Globe

Raphael Sowole takes a minute to sit with Shakespeare's monument

Clockwise from far left: Charlotte Bate (centre) and Martina Laird (right); Jeffrey Kissoon; Jessica Warbeck and Raphael Sowole

Dancing in the aisles... André Sylvester with an enthusiastic audience member and behind Jessica Warbeck, Peter Bourke and Ewart James Walters

Left: Mark Rylance enjoys performances by Peter Bourke (top) and Asley Zhangazha (bottom). Below: Philip Correia

Left: Shobu Kapoor. Below: Sara Mokonen

Edward Thompson is a British documentary photographer.
His latest book is *In-A-Gadda-Da-England*. With thanks to Sharni Lockwood

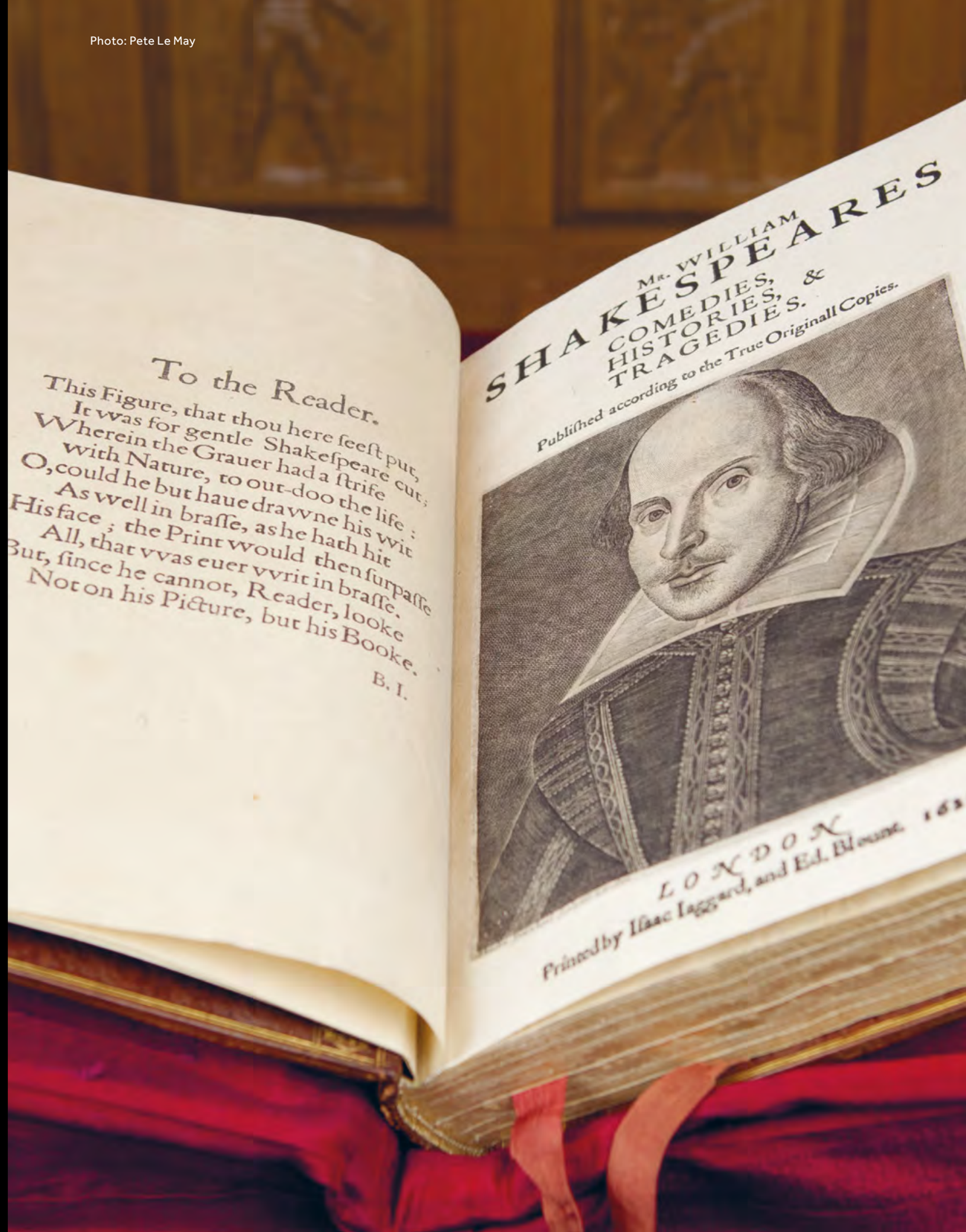
MY FIRST FOLIO

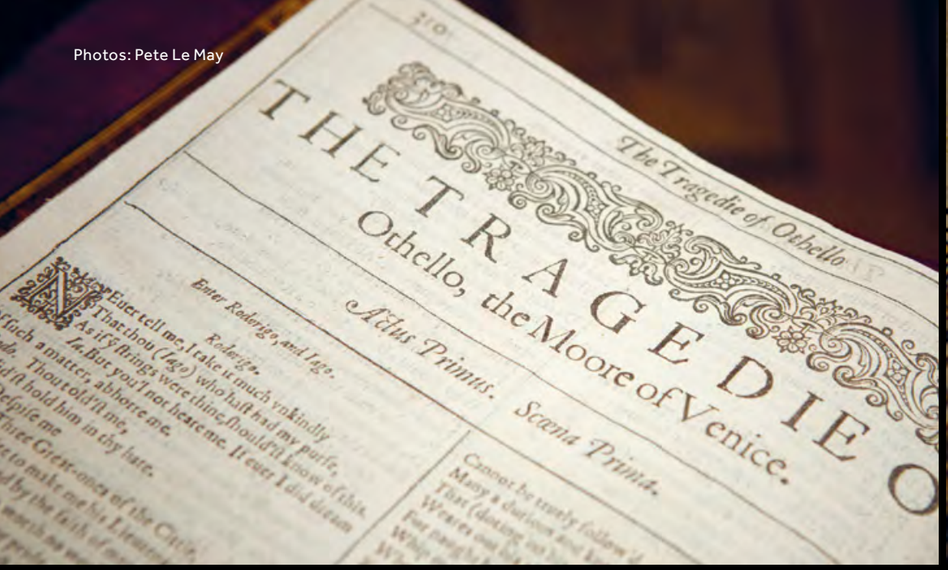
Marked by wine glasses and paw prints, with doodles and scribbles and a printer's fingerprint – Emma Smith describes the pages from the First Folio that catch her heart

My First Folio. It's an ambitious headline, I know. I have had the enormous privilege of consulting scores of Folios in the course of my research, and all are different. They have different combinations of corrected and uncorrected sheets, they are bound at different times and in different styles. I've seen scruffy Folios and pristine ones, ones with annotation, paw prints and rims from wine glasses, and ones with pages washed clean and soft by later booksellers. I have met private owners and visited university libraries. Each book has occupied its own particular space in its context.

At Dulwich College, I consulted their copy while sharing a library table with a small boy researching former pupils from the war memorial in a wet playtime; at Buffalo Public Library in New York, we did a show and tell with the book in their foyer; in Oxford, I agitated to get a fragile copy digitised so that we could all access it without harm to its lacy pages. I even had the once-in-a-lifetime experience of authenticating a previously unknown First Folio at Mount Stuart House on the Isle of Bute. And I've watched online the most recent First Folio auction, where a copy, owned by Mills College in California, was sold for almost $10m.

All this research attempted to answer the question about why this book is so charismatic. It's not its rarity: there are more than 230 copies in existence, perhaps almost a third of the initial print run, although there is some argument about how complete a First Folio needs to be to count. It's not its usefulness: it would not be anyone's preferred way of accessing the text of Shakespeare's plays. Ever since Nicholas Rowe's 1709 edition inaugurated the popularity of the new multi-volume Shakespeares, we have





Photos: Pete Le May

I've seen scruffy Folios and pristine ones, ones with annotation, paw prints and the rims from wine glasses

preferred our playwright in more manageable portions, and appreciated some editorial help with the more abstruse elements of the text.

It is a book, then, that is neither rare nor directly useful. Its extraordinary financial value has made it both more, and less, than a book: most of us will encounter a First Folio as a museum treasure behind reinforced glass, unable to turn its pages or engage with its contents. And yet however much, objectively, I recognise the folly of treating this book as a sacred relic, I still feel a sense of real physical excitement at encountering an unfamiliar copy. First Folios have an aura that is impossible to justify in our brisker, less bardolatrous age, but also difficult entirely to discount.

Susan Hill's poised, spooky ghost story *The Small Hand* (2010) concerns a bookseller who is haunted by two things. One is familiar, if uncanny: a mysterious ruined house where an unseen child clasps his hand with his own small, insinuating grip. The second is more unexpected: a copy of Shakespeare's First Folio that a French monastery is keen to sell, without fuss, and that might be just the thing for his wealthy clients. When the troubled bookseller arrives at the monastery he finds that their book is the ultimate association copy, signed by Ben Jonson.

I don't think I am haunted, quite, by First Folios (nor, you'll be relieved to hear, by creepy invisible children), but Hill's story helps me to see the element of fantasy and projection that attaches itself to First Folios. That may seem an odd thing to say: after all, this is perhaps the most studied book object in the world, and, thanks to the work of generations of scholars, we know it in extraordinary detail.

We have studied corrections, misprints and errors, reconstructed the rotas for print shop workers and identified their spelling preferences, and even traced individual pieces of type through the process. Scholars have effectively reverse-engineered from the pages of this book a complex human and artisanal narrative of its production, and those insights have often been taken as axiomatic for publishing more generally in the period. The wonderful catalogue of First Folios produced by Eric Rasmussen and Anthony J West gives further details – binding, ink spots, marginalia, paper tears. These physical copies have been so closely analysed that they seem the very opposite of the ghostly immateriality that haunts *The Small Hand*.

Charlton Hinman produced a photographic facsimile of the First Folio in 1968, cherry-picking from the enormous selection of copies of this book held by the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington DC. Each page was chosen for the clarity of its printing, and reproduced in its corrected form. Hinman's facsimile was a perfect and desirable copy, but one that had never existed. Perhaps it was our version of the Jonson copy in Susan Hill's story.

In the spirit of Hinman, then, my own First Folio would be a composite facsimile drawing from a different set of copies. Where Hinman wanted clean, unspoiled pages with no sign of use, I would pick each page for its distinctive biography. From Glasgow, I would take the list of the actors, annotated by an early playgoer; from the Folger, I would have the page claimed by young Elizabeth Okell, let loose on some blank Folio paper to draw a house with a chimney puffing smoke; from Queen's College Oxford, I would have the page from *King Lear* marked with printer's corrections in the margin.

I would want the distinct whorls of a printshop fingerprint in the margin of Edmond Malone's copy now in the Bodleian Library, and I would also include annotations by William Johnstoune, the disapproving Scot who kept a running commentary on a copy now in Meisei in Japan, perhaps his glum recognition in *The Comedy of Errors* 'women vnWilling to be controlled'. There would be space for the many compulsive page renumberers, for those who corrected errors or provided retrospective collations, and for the censors who blotted out objectionable oaths. I would want to include the unknown owner who wrote, in pencil, in Folio endpapers the date of the start, and then the end, of the First World War.

My First Folio, then, would be less a collection of plays and more a document of engagement and use. As John Heminge and Henry Condell, Shakespeare's fellow actors, acknowledged in their dedicatory epistle, this has been a book 'for the great variety of readers'. The publication of the First Folio 400 years ago was just the beginning.

Emma Smith is professor of Shakespeare Studies at Hertford College, Oxford, and the 2023 Sam Wanamaker Fellow at Shakespeare's Globe. A second edition of her *Shakespeare's First Folio: Four Centuries of an Iconic Book* is now available

Sorting type at the Globe.
Photo: Pete Le May

PRINT THE LEGEND

The First Folio is an iconic publication. But how was it printed? Veronica Horwell ventures into the Globe basement to investigate

Allie Croker demonstrates the Globe's printing press. Photos: Pete Le May

Pete Le May used to demonstrate at the Globe how Shakespeare's words met paper. He would stand there, be-aproned, with a little tray held flat in his left hand, picking out individual letters, like tiny fragments of metal jewellery, one by one from their open-box cases and arrange them, with minute spaces between the words, a line at a time.

The tray is a composing stick. In it, the letters are arranged backwards and upside down, because everything in printing works in reverse – to put the glorious positive on a page, everything is done in the negative. The stick has room for about eight lines, each a fixed length, and Le May had to hold the lines together by thumb and finger pressure as he transferred them to a flat galley tray, where they joined the lines that went before (in sequent toil all forward do contend, as the sonnet says), ready to be put on the page.

Composing is a fiddly task, done by habit, and practised judgement of space to make a line fit. Collections & Content Curator at the Globe, Le May never served the seven-year apprenticeship of a Jacobean printer – he started demonstrating after some quick super-tuition from Eleanor Collins of Oxford University Press – but he's nifty enough that each stickful doesn't take long. The process still seems protracted enough, a morning's effort for a single page, that at most demonstrations, there would always be a child who asked: 'Why don't you just pay somebody to copy the book by hand?'

That goes to the core of the revolution that was moveable type printing – because, yes, it would have been quicker and cheaper to pay a scribe to fair-hand copy a manuscript at a likely 10 pages a day, three months for all 900 pages of collected Shakespeare with bonus pen flourishes. But once a pageful of work from William and Isaac Jaggard's print shop, done by five compositors (including the klutzy and slow newbie apprentice John Leason), was transferred from a galley and wedged into the iron confines of metal

'PRINTING WORKS IN REVERSE. TO PUT THE GLORIOUS POSITIVE ON A PAGE, EVERYTHING IS DONE IN THE NEGATIVE'

negative called a forme, then a copy could be pressed in under a minute. Say, 12 hours at the presses – the Jaggards had more than one – for 750 copies of each First Folio page.

The maths of the Folio are a fascination: 900 pages, 884,647 words, 118,406 lines. That's 14,800 sticks of copy, excluding any Leason had to redo because he dropped them, over 20 months of setting, with Sundays off, and at the same time as the printers were also producing another big book. More than six million letter impressions from type bought from specialist casters, who first had to sculpt each minute master-letter in steel, then punch that into brass or copper to make a matrix, then cast a low-melting-point alloy of lead, tin and antimony in the matrix to form the type. Do it all over again for a different design of font or another size or italics, right down to the commas.

Type was expensive and the Jaggards stocked as little as they could manage with, so the supplies of s or u or l could run out before a finished page was broken up and Leason set to his daily chore of cleaning and sorting letters back into their cases again. Meanwhile, z or v or y were pressed into service as substitutes.

These are the rabbit holes you happily go down into conversation with Le May.

He's also an inspired photographer of the theatre's details – oak grain, candle flicker, typeface ampersand – who started off there taking tickets around the turn of the century, and might now also be described as Master of its Attic, except that stuff is kept in the basement. The Globe's press has been dwelling in gloom down there through the lockdown years.

It's a stunner, specially made to the specifications of a specimen in the Smithsonian in Washington, somewhat later in time but much the same as the Jaggards' hard-used equipment. The Globe's characters were a job lot from the Type Archive (then the Type Museum), limited in number so needing the same improvisations Jaggard's crew long ago devised, such as a question mark at the end of every sentence in lieu of the full stops otherwise engaged elsewhere in the shop. Le May worked in graphic design too, and is amused by the compositors' ingenious solutions to make their predetermined allotment of text per page budge up or swan about airily to fit.

As he says, getting your hands and eyes on the actual objects spurs speculation on how and why things were done on the Folio, and Quartos and Octavos, too. The long-dead re-enter the room, making sarky

Elizabethan paper maker and blockcutter and (right) the Globe's printing press. Photos: Book of Trades; Pete Le May

'TYPE WAS EXPENSIVE – SUPPLIES OF S OR U OR I COULD RUN OUT'

comments when you attempt their crafts. Not just composing. The era's printing ink, a gloop of soot, turpentine and walnut oil, was dabbed on the typeface in the forme with a pair of wool-stuffed sheepskin balls by the 'dirty man' (Le May can ink, a little stickily). While the 'clean man' handled and protected the paper – more than half the capital investment of the Folio was in its hand-laid paper, imported from France, which had abundant linen rags and water-powered mills to grind them, where England was poor in all but words.

Le May has many questions about paper – how did it travel to London when the only available packing on damp ships and carts was sacks or barrels? Where was it stored in dry safety in a crammed London of leaks, rats, and fires, especially those thousands of loose quires awaiting assembly into saleable Folios after the paper's value had been increased by having Shakespeare's words printed on both sides? Where did they find room in the workplace to dry a day's inky bounty? Paper was so precious that when mistakes in a proof were marked up with corrections, so lines could be reset and the rest of the run perfected, those marked-up proofs still went on sale.

Within touch of the Globe press and the type cases, questions multiply. How much light did a compositor need? There were no marks on the subdivided cases in which supplies of each character were kept, and so apprentices had to learn to reach for the letter from the right section instinctively, like touch-typing. Original pages might be read aloud, like dictation, as well as peered at, pinned up over the workstation. The Jaggards employed 10 or 12 men, so who read through all the battered prompt copies and scrawled raw manuscripts to calculate – 'cast off' – how much would fit on each page? Whoever commanded the schedule to plan and track assignment of a playtext into six-paged, 12-sided (so a dozen times under the press) quires decided how each page would slot into the multi-dimensional puzzle in space and work time that was the printing of a book. What Le May would give for an hour's conversation with a Jaggard hand, even klutzy young Leason.

Should you pass the now spiffed-up Globe press on exhibit this Folio year, say thank you to its ancestors. And to the French rags. Without these, the compositors' hands and the dirty man, we wouldn't have the words.

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

Shakespeare's Printers and Playscripts Walking Tour, until 11 October

JUST OUR TYPE

Celebrating the First Folio: we chart the creation of a new season typeface inspired by 400-year-old prints

To mark the 400th anniversary of the publication of Shakespeare's First Folio – the most renowned collection of the playwright's works – the design team at Shakespeare's Globe drew inspiration from the delicate original woodcut illustrations featured in the Folio for the designs for Summer 2023 season shows, including *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Macbeth*, *As You Like It* and *Midsummer Mechanicals*. Without the First Folio, printed seven years after Shakespeare's death, these and 14 other Shakespeare's plays would have been lost.

Originally printed in the 17th century as ornamental devices to break up the text, these intricate illustrations reflect elements and themes of the natural world. They have been digitally revitalised by south London-based type design studio Typeland under the art direction of the Globe's in-house design team: art director Irene Omodeo Zorini and freelance art director Louise Richardson. The result is a series of ornamented letterforms, which will be incorporated into all the artwork for the Summer 2023 season.

This year the natural world was a recurring theme in conversations between Artistic Director Michelle Terry and the directors of each Globe play, and so nature took centre stage when the designers began their visual exploration. The woodcut illustrations serve as a perfect reminder of the fragility and beauty of the natural world, not just visually, but also in their scarcity, as they only exist in fewer than 200 remaining copies of the Folio. In this sense, the ornamented letterforms

The woodcut illustrations are a perfect reminder of the fragility and beauty of the natural world

act as symbols of the connection between art, nature and our cultural heritage, and the importance of preserving it all.

The five main posters for the Summer 2023 season take inspiration from visual representations of nature, from untamedwildness to more controlled, man made environments. Through the imaginative exploration of nature and its absence, they challenge the notion of what we might have lost by emphasising what we possess.

Each poster captures a unique conversation with the directors, exploring their personal relationship with the play, their perspectives on human nature and a consideration of the natural world as key themes for this season.

With this theme in mind, the Globe's design team collaborated with Alessia Mazzarella and Vaibhav Singh of Typeland to develop typographic treatments in greater detail. The Globe had used Typeland's Amifer font family for the previous seasons, and the team thought it would be interesting to incorporate illustrated elements within the typography, as opposed to having them superimposed as separate elements.

Taking inspiration from the Folio's decorative initials, the brief was developed to design the entire uppercase alphabet, with a focus on hero letters from six summer season plays. Details included a shooting arrow through the M in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and a regal bird on the M in *Macbeth*. The alphabet features alternate designs for M, S and T, along with original patterns in their entirety.

Picking elements from the decorative imagery and patterns that appear in the First Folio, Typeland designed a bespoke layer font for Shakespeare's Globe: Amifer Folio. They worked through the Folio's pages, interpreting and drawing a set of elements that could form the basis for the overall illustrative treatment. The challenge was to create combinations and variations that were intricate in their design, but would be effective at varying sizes and levels of detail. Typeland created two separate styles in the type family: Amifer Folio Small serves as the base layer of elements with simpler details, while Amifer Folio Big features a greater number of elements and fills, providing a more impressive presence at larger sizes.

Each style makes use not only of the peculiar cast of characters (angelic and demonic entities, symbols, masks, gargoyles, flora and fauna) that appear in the First Folio's woodcuts, but it also uses the pattern elements that mark the beginning and end of various sections in the Folio. These patterns have been carefully interpreted to be used on their own, and spaced in a manner that ensures that they can be seamlessly repeated.

The team aimed to honour the 17th-century roots of the designs by creating 50 limited-edition prints using a 17th-century printing press. They created a metal plate featuring the 'This Wooden O' design with the Amifer Folio typeface and printed the 50 prints on site at the Globe Theatre. The result was a beautifully unique piece celebrating Shakespeare, the Globe Theatre and its artists, and the techniques that preserved his work centuries ago.

Although the project began as a celebration of the First Folio's 400th anniversary, the Amifer Folio letterforms will continue their journey beyond the Summer 2023 season and anniversary year. They celebrate the preservation of Shakespeare's work and the writers, artists, and friends who ensured its survival.

And finally... There is a special Shakespeare glyph, the famous likeness of the man himself with a particularly dandyish take on facial hair, of which the bard may or may not have approved!

FEEL THE NOISE

A new exhibition space at the Globe will bring Elizabethan London to life. But what did it sound like? Alex McFadyen explores bells, bears and booing theatre audiences

Bustling London: a display in the Globe's new exhibition. Photo: Pete Le May

In March, the Shakespeare Experience exhibition at the Globe reopened. Reimagined around the theme of storytelling, this new exhibition takes visitors through the London that inspired Shakespeare and his contemporaries, with displays that compare and contrast the Globe's home in Bankside with the City; examine patronage and censorship in the Jacobean period; and explore the capital's status as an international trading port with a diverse citizenry.

One way to understand London as it was experienced by Elizabethans – not just with their eyes, but their ears, too – is through its sounds. When writing his book *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England*, historian Bruce R Smith used archival maps to reconstruct this sonic landscape, as well as contemporary sources such as the 1553 satirical novel *Beware The Cat* by William Baldwin, who catalogued the sounds of his neighbourhood in Aldgate. The book 'suggested the noisiness of the immediate environment, but with a contrast that the land outside the city walls very quickly turned into countryside,' he tells me over the phone. 'So Baldwin was also very attuned to animal sounds.'

Though London was officially contained to the square mile within its medieval walls at this point – the city authorities' jurisdiction did not extend to Bankside – its population was growing. Between 1550 and 1600, London's population doubled in size to around 200,000. (Norwich, then Britain's second-largest city, had an estimated population of just 12,000.) This expanding metropolis, Smith says, was divided into 'broad streets like Cheapside and narrow streets leading off those broad thoroughfares. A lot of the business activity happened in those narrow side streets.' Each part of the city was home to a different trade, and a district could be identified by its sounds. In Aldgate, it was metalworking.

Population growth was accompanied by social and technological advances. The proliferation of the printing press in Europe during the 15th century was bringing about greater literacy, but Shakespeare's England remained a primarily oral culture, and by extension an aural one, says Smith.

'MASS LITERACY WAS A 19TH-CENTURY PHENOMENON. BEFORE THAT, PEOPLE TOOK IN INFORMATION THROUGH THEIR EARS'

BRUCE R SMITH

'Mass literacy as we imagine it was a 19th-century phenomenon. Before that, people were used to taking in information through their ears.' Dr Will Tosh, Head of Research at Shakespeare's Globe, describes the period as a 'performance culture', with the emerging publishing industry creating texts that could be read aloud in taverns and at town meetings. 'There were a lot of different ways in which print and literacy and aurality related together,' he explains. 'And the theatre, absolutely, was in the middle of that.'

In the inn courtyards of rural England, the locals would gather to watch travelling troupes of actors – known as a players company – perform, says Tosh. 'To an extent, the town would have stopped. If there were a couple of hundred people or more watching a play, then the town has been brought into the performance space, and everything else was on pause.' The power of theatre to cut though the rhythms of everyday life, with stories of murderous princes, scheming monarchs and lovestruck couples – often thinly veiled accounts of real events – helped shape the population's understanding of their own history and identity.

But while plays performed around the country might draw the entire town or village to watch, in Bankside, Shakespeare's company were 'inveigling their way into the London soundscape,' says Tosh, and contending with the competing sounds of entertainment, trade and commerce. 'Plays are available at the Globe, but also at the Fortune or the Swan or the Red Bull. You could leave, and 20 minutes later be through the doors of another theatre watching a different play. London had a whole theatrical ecosystem

Alarming: the Globe's new exhibition. Photos: Pete Le May

that was effected by – and affected – the sounds of the city.' This stretch of the Thames offered other, more vicious forms of entertainment, too. A few hundred metres from the Globe's original location stood an open-topped bear-baiting ring, where chained bears were attacked by dogs for the amusement of the assembled crowds. This, combined with an array of brothels, street traders and the sounds of ships being loaded and unloaded, created an unruly atmosphere around the theatre.

Similar accounts can be found in the diaries of foreign travellers to London, says Smith. 'They give a sense of it being a very gregarious place. People's behaviour seems to have been looser than they were used to on the continent. Several talked about how at the end of the day, the young men of different parishes would go up into the bell tower and pull the ropes and bang the bells. There was a contest to see who could make the loudest bell sounds. They thought that was bizarre, because in churches on the continent, especially Catholic churches, the bells would toll strictly according to the services. This was recreational bell pulling.'

As well as the noise outside, the audience inside the Globe, particularly in the open-air, standing space in the middle of the theatre known as the yard, would be chatting, buying food and drink from peddlers in the crowd, and reacting to the action on stage, explains Smith. 'For the actors, there's always the possibility that the audience might get out of control in terms of booing, catcalling, shouting or applauding. They constantly had to hold the audience's attention acoustically or visually.' Doing this with props could be dangerous – in fact, it was the use of a stage cannon in a performance of *Henry VIII* at the Globe in 1613 that ignited the thatched roof and beams, and burned the original building to the ground.

> 'FOREIGN TRAVELLERS DESCRIBE HOW THE YOUNG MEN OF DIFFERENT PARISHES HAD A CONTEST TO SEE WHO COULD MAKE THE LOUDEST BELL SOUNDS'
>
> WILL TOSH

But Shakespeare had other ways to hold the audience's attention. 'I have been looking at Shakespeare's scripts as attempts to control the acoustic space,' explains Smith. 'That could be a prologue, like at the beginning of *Romeo and Juliet* or *Henry V*. But one of Shakespeare's distinctive things is to begin with a conversation in progress, like at the beginning of *Othello* with Iago and Roderigo, and in *King Lear*.'

Actors at the Globe, he adds, have the benefit of performing in a space that is similar in shape to the human voice box. 'It's built as a sound producing environment, and you can get that effect by attending performances in the Globe today. The surfaces are not quite as reverberant as they were then, because the outside walls have fire retardant stuffing inside. But it's very close.' Long-standing Globe actor James Garnon has attested to this, telling this magazine in 2017 that 'the acoustic [in the theatre] is very, very true. It's like any wooden instrument. It requires subtlety and delicacy.'

Attention to how the physical spaces at the Globe can be used to create different sound worlds informed the theatre's staging of *The Winter's Tale* this year, for which the Globe Theatre (Sicilia) and adjacent Sam Wanamaker Playhouse (Bohemia) provided the play's two settings. 'The musicians manage to create two distinct almost improvisatory sound worlds,' writes theatre critic Michael Bennett in a review for online magazine the *Upcoming*, 'punctuating scenes [in Sicilia] with discordant cadences and filling the dry acoustic of the Playhouse. In Bohemia, with guitar and percussion, they are bawdy singers and become part of the cast.'

Though London has been transformed many times over by social, technological and political advances in the centuries since Shakespeare walked its streets, the manipulation of sound to elevate the Globe from the city surrounding it is true to its original purpose, says Tosh. 'It was a space to hear and see things that you would struggle to hear and see in your daily life. You were shown other countries, other times, other cultures, stories from history, stories that are made up, stories from classical myth. All of these were astonishing things to be witness to – the theatre was a world you'd visit to be taken out of yourself.'

Sound world: Jacoba Williams in *The Winter's Tale* (right). Photo: Tristram Kenton

Alex McFadyen is an arts and culture writer based in London

Discover Shakespeare's Globe Story & Tour runs daily

What's on

Globe Theatre

A Midsummer Night's Dream
Until 12 August

The Comedy of Errors
Until 29 July

Macbeth
21 July–28 October

As You Like It
18 August–29 October

Events for the whole family

Family Workshops*
May to August

BBC CBeebies: Twelfth Night
30–31 May

Midsummer Mechanicals
22 July–22 August

Young Actors Short Course*
Ages 8–10 years
31 July–4 August

Young Actors Short Course*
Ages 11–13 years
31 July–4 August

Young Actors Short Course*
Ages 14–16 years
7–11 July

Young Actors Short Course*
Ages 17–19 years
21–25 August

Young Academics*
Ages 17–19 years
21–25 August

Anti-racist Shakespeare: perspectives on the plays

The Comedy of Errors
1 June

Macbeth
17 August

As You Like It
19 September

Research in Action

Play on Shakespeare*
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

Study Days

The Comedy of Errors
10 June

As You Like It
2 September

Macbeth
23 September

Spend an afternoon with expert academics and researchers and explore a play from our Summer 2023 season. The day will end with a Q&A with members of the acting company, giving you the chance to ask questions and gain further insight into this summer's show.

Member price: £80

Members' Drama Club: Macbeth

Come face to face with one of Shakespeare's most chilling tragedies with our Members-exclusive Drama Club, focusing on Macbeth.

This 90-minute workshop brings together Members from across the world to explore the play's historical context and discuss some of the Globe's past (and present) interpretations of the play.

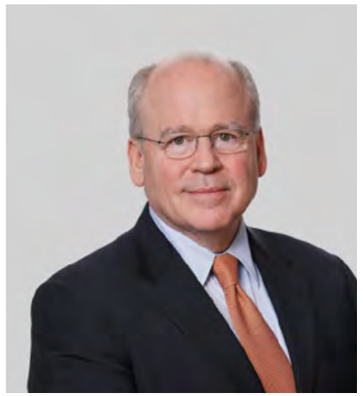
You'll have the chance to step into the shoes of Shakespeare's iconic characters, hear some of the secrets of staging a play at the Globe and even have a chance to tread the boards of the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse.

16 September
11am–12.30pm
Sam Wanamaker Playhouse

Further Member events to be announced throughout the year. For more information and to book, visit the digital Members' Room or email friends@shakespearesglobe.com

My Shakespeare

Alan Jones chairs Shakespeare's Globe USA. How did he become hooked on the theatre?



What do you do at the Globe?
I'm lucky enough to be chair of Shakespeare's Globe USA, which enables American supporters to contribute to the Globe's work.

What do you do when you're not at the Globe?
After a 25-year career at Morgan Stanley, about three years ago, I joined ICG, a UK alternatives asset manager. I say – only partly tongue-in-cheek – that it was because they're across the Millennium Bridge from the Globe.

What brought you to the Globe?
I had the good fortune to move to London in 1997, as the Globe was launching. A friend told me that I must go. It was love at first sight, I was overwhelmed. Ever since, I've supported it in whatever way I can.

What has been your favourite production?
A memory I cherish was Mark Rylance playing Olivia in *Twelfth Night*. I cannot unsee the beauty of that production, with Rylance gliding across the stage. I played a small role in bringing it and *Richard III* to Broadway: they created a huge level of support in US audiences.

What does Shakespeare mean to you?
At university, I was a biochemistry major, but my favourite class was on Shakespeare's plays and poetry, taught by Walter Kaiser and Marjorie Garber. The way they opened Shakespeare's world has stayed with me forever.

What makes you smile at the Globe?
Absolutely everything, it's the totality of the experience. I'm overwhelmed by the pains taken to transport us to Shakespeare's world.

What has been your favourite moment at the Globe?
Roger Allam as Prospero in *The Tempest* was magical. As a father of two daughters, watching Prospero lovingly try to do the best he can for his daughter was very special. The poignant, bittersweet moment when he breaks his staff and ultimately relinquishes his magic, as interpreted by such a gifted actor, was absolutely extraordinary.

Who is your favourite Shakespeare character?
Lear conveys the essence of what it means to be human. As he goes through madness and ultimately finds enlightenment, we begin to understand how experience teaches us through all the suffering that we endure, to get to wisdom. The older I get, the more Lear resonates with me.

Who would be your dream guest to a Globe show?
My ideal guest is someone who does not think that they appreciate Shakespeare – someone who says: 'I don't understand the language', or struggled with it at school. I love watching their faces as the drama unfolds. Their inevitable response is: 'I can't wait to come back.' I see that as my real job: to expose people to the magic of the Globe, and have them want to come back again.

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Image:
Tutor Dan Coombs with Louis Loveless in his ESOP studio
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