

A NEW
PUBLICATION
FOR ALL
SHAKESPEARE
EDUCATORS

teaching shakespeare

POLICY • PEDAGOGY • PRACTICE

Issue 1 *Spring 2012*

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SEE **JOHN RUSSELL BROWN'S** TOP READS FOR TEACHERS
LEARN ABOUT **CICELY BERRY'S** ONGOING, INTERNATIONAL IMPACT
GET INVOLVED IN THE **WORLD SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL**
EXPLORE **SIMON CALLOW'S** PERFORMANCE IN *JAMIE'S DREAM SCHOOL*

NOTICEBOARD

Are you looking online for free, reliable resources for teaching Shakespeare? Here is a rundown of some places to start. SYLVIA MORRIS is an independent researcher, previously Head of the Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive, specialising in the Royal Shakespeare Company's archives. Her Shakespeare blog, www.theshakespeareblog.com, is read by people from around the world including the general public, students, theatre professionals and academics.

INTERNET SHAKESPEARE EDITIONS

internetshakespeare.uvic.ca

The site offers fully-edited modern online texts, facsimiles of folios, and of a selection of quartos. You'll also find information on Shakespeare's life and times, a Shakespeare in performance gallery including modern production photographs, and further links. Full texts can be found online at:

shakespeare.mit.edu

ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY

www.rsc.org.uk

There are blogs, interviews and photos of current RSC productions in the *What's On* section, while material on past productions and a section for teachers are in the *Explore* area. *Education Resources* has ideas for classroom participation, resource packs aimed at different key stages and information about Shakespeare's social context.

www.rsc.org.uk/explore

www.rsc.org.uk/education/resources

SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE

www.shakespearesglobe.com

Demonstrating The Globe's commitment to education, their *Discovery Space* contains podcasts by actors, directors and academics relating to their productions. *Playing Shakespeare* is "an educational flagship for

London Schools", but anyone can access its impressive resources including production photographs and interviews with actors in four Globe productions.

www.globe-education.org/discovery-space

www.playingshakespeare.org.uk

SHAKESPEARE BIRTHPLACE TRUST

www.shakespeare.org.uk

Their range of free material includes an online course, *Getting to Know Shakespeare* and in the *Explore Shakespeare* area there is information on Shakespeare's life through FAQs and video posts, as well as several lively blogs and forums. Keep an eye on the recently-announced partnership with *Digital Theatre Plus* which promises "The best of British theatre in your classroom".

www.gettingtoknowshakespeare.com

www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare.html

www.digitaltheatreplus.com

FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY

www.folger.edu

The world's largest collection of Shakespeare material has a website to match, including cool facts for kids, a primary source archive, audio and video resources. Under *Discover Shakespeare* you'll find stacks of information and a digital image bank, *Luna*, consisting of tens of thousands of objects, prints, books and manuscripts.

www.folger.edu/template.cfm?cid=2594&CFID=3734838&CFTOKEN=75139743

www.folger.edu/Content/Collection/Digital-Image-Collection

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

collections.vam.ac.uk

Another great site if you're looking for visual material to inspire your students. Just enter search terms into the box.

CONTENTS

NOTICEBOARD – Sylvia Morris and Sarah McCourt	2
PRACTITIONER INTERVIEW – Cicely Berry & James Stredder (<i>continued on page 14</i>)	4
GIRDLE ROUND THE EARTH: WORLD SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL – Tracy Irish	5
THE LEGACY OF REX GIBSON'S <i>SHAKESPEARE AND SCHOOLS</i> – Sarah Olive	6
VOX POP: WHICH PEDAGOGY, WHICH PLAY? – Richard Spencer	7
WORKING WITH GIANTS: MOZART AND SHAKESPEARE – Gillian Hunter	8
TEACHER FEATURE: CREATIVE MONOLOGUES – Stella Smyth	10
ART IMITATING LIFE: SIMON CALLOW IN <i>JAMIE'S DREAM SCHOOL</i> – Rob Smith	12
THE PERFECTEST HERALD: TEACHING SHAKESPEARE – Rachel Gartside, Jonathan Neelands & Paul Prescott	13
READ ON THIS BOOK – John Russell Brown	15

Introducing our editor: SARAH OLIVE is a lecturer at the University of York, leading the BA English in Education. Other teaching experiences include the Open University and a stint as a Resident Graduate at Bootham School, York. She successfully completed a PhD, *Shakespeare Valued: Policy, practice and pedagogy in English education, 1989–2009*, at the Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham in 2011. Resulting publications have appeared in international journals such as *Shakespeare Survey*.

Welcome to the first issue of *Teaching Shakespeare* – a magazine striving to provide a new and inclusive forum (in print and online) for teachers and students of Shakespeare at school, university, in the arts and heritage sectors, and beyond. Through this publication, the BSA hopes to foster a cross-sector network of those involved in Shakespeare in education, at every level, which will contribute to and engage with this magazine's contents. In doing so, we must acknowledge a debt to the work of the late Rex Gibson (the intersections of our endeavour with his projects and publications is traced in detail on pages 6–7), while also emphasising that we have something to add to Gibson in exploring pedagogies beyond active methods, beyond ages 11–18, beyond the disciplines of English, drama and education. We are also committed to a more varied international input; a greater balance of theory and practice, reflection and description; and a more diverse range of evidence about Shakespeare in education. This will include research literature, government policy, popular culture and personal experience. *Teaching Shakespeare* will feature the latest news and events, debates and analysis concerning teaching Shakespeare as well as revisiting enduring issues.

The contents of this issue demonstrate that 'access for all' to Shakespeare, through a variety of approaches and institutions worldwide, remains a core value of educators using his plays and poems. Performance or active methods feature in articles by John Russell Brown (who also reminds us of the work of great literary critics and textual scholars), Gillian Hunter, Tracy Irish, Sarah McCourt, James Stredder, Rachel Gartside, Jonothan Neelands and Paul Prescott. Resources for taking a contextual tack are included in Sylvia Morris' digest of web links. Creative writing activities are outlined by Stella Smyth. All these authors demonstrate that Shakespeare happens in classrooms, on television, online, from theatre education departments to the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. Our contributors to this issue



Photo © Michelle Morton

are thus linked by their commitment to improving the way that Shakespeare happens for teachers and students, whatever their age, ability or nationality. We hope this will be true of every issue.

Since this is our 'pilot' issue, we are eager to gather your views on *Teaching Shakespeare*: its content, style, and scope. A short online survey can be completed at: www.surveymonkey.com/s/6KQCDWC. Alternatively, you can email us at teachingshakespeare@ymail.com. In this way, we hope to make the magazine responsive to your wants and needs. We are also keen to invite your participation in writing articles and providing other material. Ideas of ways in which you can do so are given at the end of most articles, but these are suggestions rather than constraints – let your imagination and creativity be the limit.

Finally, this publication would not exist without the big ideas, hard work, courage and generosity of the editorial board: Stuart Hampton-Reeves, James Stredder and Debbie Williams; the trustees and members of the BSA; and all our contributors. We have benefitted enormously from the artistic talents of our designer, Becky Chilcott; the efficiency of our printers, Campus Copy and Print, York; and all the people who, in various capacities, have taught us Shakespeare.

If you would like to join the British Shakespeare Association and be part of an international community of teachers, researchers, theatre practitioners and enthusiasts, then visit our website at www.britishshakespeare.ws or email britishshakespeare@ymail.com

OPTIMISM OF THE TEACHER: THE POLITICS OF SHAKESPEARE IN EDUCATION

CICELY BERRY, C.B.E., Director of Text and Voice at the Royal Shakespeare Company, talks to JAMES STREDDER about her current work, as she approaches her 86th birthday. James' book *The North Face of Shakespeare: activities for teaching the plays* (2009) is published by C.U.P.

Cicely Berry is widely acknowledged to be the most inspirational and influential teacher of voice working in the theatre today, the key figure behind the speech and language work central to Rex Gibson's 'Active Shakespeare' movement, and the originator of the educational approach underlying the RSC's *Stand up for Shakespeare* campaign. How is it that one so eminent in the theatre, leading the RSC's voice work for over forty years, has also made such an impact on the world of teaching? How is it that she can go from coaching Judi Dench one day to galvanizing the interest of a class of inner-city children studying Shakespeare the next – through applying essentially the same working principles? The success of her teaching depends on her ability to free the actor's voice, so they can express their inner self, but why should she do this for young people

in, say, Wolverhampton or in Vidigal (a shantytown of Rio de Janeiro) – the two places where Cicely Berry had been working most recently, when I interviewed her, just before Christmas, in Stratford-upon-Avon?

Perhaps the answer is in her disclosure that: "Politics, next to my family, is the most important thing in my life." A few days previously, she had returned from her fifteenth visit to Vidigal, where once again she had been invited back to lead Shakespeare workshops for Nós do Morro ('Us from the Hillside'), founded by Guti Fraga in 1986. The Group provides education and training in all areas of technical and creative work for theatre and cinema, to some 320 young people every year. Cicely finds a tremendous zest for life in the favelas, but they are also dangerous places where drug culture is rife and work is scarce. In spite of this, the Group produces very high quality theatre, as UK audiences saw when their production of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* came to Stratford in 2006, and it also provides routes to employment. Nós do Morro repeatedly asks Cicely Berry to contribute to their work. They share her belief that finding your voice means you can also find your place in the world, escape 'silent anger' (she quotes a favourite line from Thomas Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*: "Where words prevail not, violence prevails") and have the chance to lead a fulfilling life.

**“politics, next to my family,
is the most important thing
in my life.”**

A month before her ten days in Brazil, she was invited to make a programme for BBC 1's *Inside Out* documentary series. A group of young people from Wolverhampton who are part of EYES, an organisation which seeks to engage and empower those whose lives may be affected by the negative aspects of gang culture, had seen the RSC's recent 'Las Vegas' production of *The Merchant of Venice* and had then taken part in a workshop led by Cicely. I asked her if she'd been pleased with the film. "Actually I was disappointed," she said, though in the more forthright words she tends to use when she senses injustice or anything deadening, conformist or inauthentic, "they were showing me and what I did, rather than what the kids did in the session."

 **Continues on page 14**

Photo © James Stredder



WORLD SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

TRACY IRISH, Education programme Developer at the RSC, offers an insight into world-wide Shakespeare education initiatives.

The World Shakespeare Festival, produced by the RSC for London 2012 Festival, is a celebration of Shakespeare as the world's playwright, not just in performance but in education. Our initial research, carried out with the British Council, has indicated that half the world's school children study Shakespeare. His reputation is known by young people across the world from a small village in Oman to the teeming favelas of Rio de Janeiro; 21 million Chinese students every year study an extract from *The Merchant of Venice* and most first language English speakers study at least one full play as a compulsory element of their curriculum. The big question is why: what does this 400 year old writer mean in the lives of young people today?

While knowledge of Shakespeare may well have roots in our colonial past, the level of adoption, adaptation and interrogation of Shakespeare in performance in almost every world language seems to owe more to his ability to raise questions about human ideas, beliefs and social regimes common to us all. Shakespeare's plays have often been the language of rebellion, but in schools they become the language of examination.

Our WSF projects are reaching out to the education community across the world in order to fuel a dialogue about the value of Shakespeare study for young people. Can he be a democratising resource? Can he help us learn more about ourselves and the world around us, wherever we are? And what is it about his language that endures and inspires the numerous appropriations and translations?

We are inviting contributions to a wiki, building a community database on where, how and why Shakespeare is taught around the world (www.shakespearefestival.com/wiki).



Photo © Tracy Irish

[com/wiki](http://www.shakespearefestival.com/wiki)). We are also looking in depth at seven countries (Brazil, China, Czech Republic, India, Oman, South Africa, USA) working and talking with teachers and students to develop case studies to put alongside our UK teachers' action research. The results of all this will feed into a major international education conference, *Worlds Together*, to be held at Tate Modern, 6–8 September 2012. The conference will bring teachers and students together with internationally renowned education experts and artists to examine the place of Shakespeare and the arts in education across the world.

In Stratford-upon-Avon, other conferences and courses for teachers, young people and undergraduates will accompany the performance programme next summer, as well as *Remaking Shakespeare*, a one day education event in Newcastle, developed in collaboration with Newcastle University and Northern Stage. Online we will have *Shakespeare Unlocked*, a partnership project between BBC Learning and the RSC with digital resources providing unique insights into Shakespeare's work through RSC productions and workshops with the cast.

And if you are an Arts Award centre, you can get involved by leading students through the WSF: Shakespeare Challenge Bronze Arts Award, a special project which celebrates how Shakespeare's plays are re-imagined and interpreted by cultures around the world.

THE WORLD SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL, produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company, is an unprecedented collaboration with leading UK and international arts organisations, and with Globe to Globe, a major international programme produced by Shakespeare's Globe. It runs from 23 April to November 2012 and forms part of London 2012 Festival, which is the culmination of the Cultural Olympiad, bringing leading artists from all over the world together in a UK-wide festival in the summer of 2012. More details on this can be found on the WSF website: www.worldshakespearefestival.com/education



THE LEGACY OF REX GIBSON

Rex Gibson's *Shakespeare and Schools* magazines inspired our new publication. In this article, SARAH OLIVE re-introduces this almost-forgotten series.

Among the unbound journals in the Shakespeare Institute library sits a rather nondescript-looking box labelled 'Shakespeare and Schools Vol.1–, 1975–'. Yet its brown cardboard sides house twenty-three slim, glossy magazines that remain the single most important discovery in my time spent there. They represent all but the final issue of the late Rex Gibson's *Shakespeare and Schools* publication (originally styled a 'newsletter', that term was dropped after readers protested that it did not do justice to the quantity and quality of the content), which ran from 1986–1994, despite the archivist's alternative dating. A key element of the Leverhulme-funded project, directed by Gibson and designed to find effective classroom approaches to Shakespeare, the magazines were edited and contributed to by Gibson. Additional input came from the project's research fellow John Salway, and an army of teachers nationally. The contents include teachers' reports on their 'active' Shakespeare lessons; interviews with leading figures in Shakespeare education and performance, such as Sam Wanamaker; snippets from recently published literary criticism; newsy items on the National Curriculum; and reviews of Royal Shakespeare Company productions. The publication fulfilled multiple objectives: to disseminate news from the project to school teachers; to recruit more participants; and to establish a sense of an extended teaching and research community. They offer a vision of Gibson's long-running commitment to a dialogue on teaching Shakespeare which included educators in schools, arts and heritage organisations, and universities; to those in Britain and overseas; and to the diverse concerns of theory, policy and practice.

These highly readable, wide-ranging magazines are little known now, and, judging from the dusty state of the Institute's box, not much used today. The series is less likely to spring to mind when thinking of Gibson than the *Cambridge School Shakespeare* editions of which he was general editor (additionally, editing or co-editing almost half the titles published before his death in 2005) or his

popular monograph *Teaching Shakespeare*. Yet their legacy cannot be contained within the manila boxes of the few libraries which preserve these magazines. Their afterlife is manifested in the continuing demand for editions which provide teachers with up-to-date pedagogical tools (witness the forthcoming third series of the *Cambridge School Shakespeare*); the saturation of RSC education's discourse with phrases and ideas derived from Gibson's work on active methods ('rehearsal room' approaches, 'ownership' of and an 'entitlement' to Shakespeare for all students); the adoption of drama methods for exploring Shakespeare with students in higher education at, for example, the University of Warwick; and the expansion of such approaches to Early Modern authors including Thomas Middleton and John Marston, by teachers such as Perry Mills at King Edward VI school, Stratford-upon-Avon, a teacher-associate on Gibson's project and CSS editor.

“they contain gems of ideas for anyone teaching shakespeare and capture a key period in the evolution of a now widespread pedagogy.”

However, for all the achievements and influence of the *Shakespeare and Schools* magazine, as well as Gibson's project and publications more widely, there is still much for a new publication dealing with teaching Shakespeare to strive to accomplish. In part this is due to change: advances in technology offer far greater potential for working with Shakespeare in multimedia than they did two decades ago. E-books, podcasts and interactive white boards are among the resources available to teachers and demanding ways to be integrated into lessons. Using these advances, the *Teaching Shakespeare* magazine will be able to reach many more readers through its online edition than if it was restricted to print copies. Moreover, introduced in the last two years of Gibson's magazine, Key Stage 3 Shakespeare SATS were abolished in 2008; the teaching of historical context and alternative perspectives on texts (e.g. literary criticism) at A-level was required by *Curriculum 2000*; and the National Curriculum has been under review following the election of the coalition government. Every change in education policy and assessment necessitates reconsideration of what and how Shakespeare is taught.

In part, the need for a new publication to connect educators of Shakespeare across all sectors (and at all levels of education) is one of continuity. There is still a hard-to-shake tendency to work in particular grooves or groups. Added to this is the re-emergence of a similar political and economic environment to that Gibson was working in, where pressures on public funding equated to cuts in theatre budgets as well as a drive towards employability and skills in education which devalued certain classroom practices and unhelpfully questioned teachers' professionalism. The importance of an inclusive, mutually supportive (but not uncritical), cross-sector community of Shakespeare educators at this time cannot be underestimated. Finally, while *Shakespeare and Schools'* eclectic content showcased a range of ways to teach Shakespeare – to a greater extent than some of Gibson's other work (focussed primarily on active methods) – there remains a need for a publication which embraces diverse approaches to the plays and poems. *Teaching Shakespeare* aims to feature performance, creative writing, theory-driven, text- and context-based methods. However, it is open to all potentially engaging pedagogies and activities. In this way, the publication also hopes to avoid criticisms levelled at Gibson of didacticism, over-reliance on character-based (Bradleyan) analysis, and placing excessive demands on the time, physical spaces and skills available to teachers.

The purpose of this article has been two-fold. Firstly, to encourage readers to dust off and leaf through any issues of *Shakespeare and Schools* you may still have on library shelves or in store cupboards. They contain gems of ideas for anyone teaching Shakespeare and capture a key period in the evolution of a now widespread pedagogy. Secondly, to warmly invite you to build on Rex Gibson's legacy by participating in and contributing to this publication's even more ambitious aims to offer a wide-ranging, internationally-aware, high-quality resource for all Shakespeare educators.

VOX POP: WHICH PEDAGOGY, WHICH PLAY?

The Highfield School, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire, is an 11–18 mixed comprehensive. RICHARD SPENCER, Assistant Headteacher, reports that achievement in English is rated 'outstanding', reflecting 'a rigorous approach to assessment combined with an active and exciting pedagogy, for all abilities'. With visits to Shakespeare's Globe, touring companies invited into school and regular theatre visits, few students leave without having experienced live Shakespeare.

WHICH TEACHING METHODS DO YOU CONSIDER MOST USEFUL FOR TEACHING SHAKESPEARE?

- ▶ "Seeing it performed FIRST!" (AS)
- ▶ "When language analysis, and discussions about the language, come through use of the text in performance" (LC)
- ▶ "Freeze frames, thought tracking, hot-seating, interviewing characters, role play, learning soliloquies by heart, supplementing reading with a range of multi-modal adaptations" (JA)
- ▶ "Taking the time to perform" (NS)
- ▶ "Emphasising that the text only exists as a blueprint for performance, and that it only stands out when we stand up to explore it! Get them acting and feeling the language in their mouths!" (RS)

WHICH SHAKESPEARE PLAY DO YOU MOST ENJOY TEACHING?

- ▶ "*The Tempest* – great fun at KS3!" (JA)
- ▶ "*Macbeth* – history, witchcraft and knife crime: perfect!" (NS)
- ▶ "*A Midsummer Night's Dream* – because of the intricacies of plot and the great comic relief" (KP)
- ▶ "*Othello* – fantastic for discussing social, cultural and other issues" (JA)

▶ **NEXT TIME IN VOX POP:**
Shakespeare and assessment . . .





INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN TEACHING MOZART AND SHAKESPEARE

Those teaching Shakespeare know what it is to grapple with the pleasures and pitfalls of teaching a literary and theatrical giant. His legacy within English, drama and theatre studies is so great that we forget to consider that other disciplines have their own gargantuan figures to teach; we rarely stop to ask what lessons can be learnt from colleagues working with other icons. GILLIAN HUNTER is Education Manager at the City of London Sinfonia, one of the first UK orchestras to develop an education programme and manages a range of orchestral outreach projects. Gillian studied music performance and education at the University of British Columbia and completed an MPhil in Educational Research at the University of Cambridge. She is a keen violinist and violist, and continues to play in orchestras and chamber groups whenever she can. She explains how music educators help students to tackle Mozart.

Many of you will have heard of the 'Mozart effect' – the popular belief that 'listening to Mozart makes you

smarter'. Indeed, there has been academic research which indicates as much, looking specifically at the effects of listening to Mozart on spatial-temporal reasoning. This, coupled with vast amounts of anecdotal evidence, has parents and teachers switching over to Classic FM in an effort to increase children's brain power. All this can only be good news for those of us tasked with teaching classical music to children. Young children are innately curious about where music comes from and are fascinated by meeting live musicians and seeing orchestral instruments being played up close. In the orchestral outreach sector, we teach from a starting point that all children should have the opportunity to see and hear live professional musicians and we are passionate about exposing children to 'real' orchestral repertoire.

With this in mind, we bring musicians into schools, nurseries, children's hospitals and a wide range of other settings to run workshops (e.g. *Crash Bang Wallop!* a successful series of Family Concerts at Cadogan Hall in London). These workshops are part of 'themed projects' which culminate in performances. We recently ran a series of workshops and concerts for Early Years and KS1 focused on the theme of 'Magic'. The project included a wide range of orchestral repertoire and an obvious starting point was Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute*. Mozart's operas are a wonderful educational tool

at any level: even Early Years children were engaged by the idea of a magic flute and a prince searching for his princess. When working with younger children, we often extract one element of the plot of an opera as the basis of a workshop. The Papageno/Papagena sub-plot in *The Magic Flute* is especially engaging for Early Years and KS1. A simple, fun storyline from a comic opera can be used in any number of ways as a focus for a workshop and familiarises children with a part of the plot of the opera. Using a small number of musicians sometimes led by a workshop leader, activities are based around the theme and include interactive musical activities, creative music making, building composition skills and listening. Wherever possible the children involved are then able to see a full orchestra in action or have their own special chamber performance.

The breadth of Mozart's work makes it incredibly straightforward to expose children to his music, live. Musicians who visit schools often, without prompting choose to play a Mozart excerpt to illustrate their instruments. From his horn concertos to the violin sonatas, Mozart was a master of writing *for* a specific instrument. His melodies let the instrument they were written for really sing and illustrate brilliantly what makes a flute's sound different from that of an oboe.

In workshops, we try to make the material as accessible as possible and directly relevant to the curriculum. Although as an orchestra, our teaching is not required to relate to the curriculum, we work hard to develop workshops which complement and enhance classroom teaching and learning and the more we can link to curriculum aims and outcomes, the more relevant our work becomes to schools. Activities in workshops are developed to be cross-curricular, engaging not only with the music curriculum but also literacy and numeracy as well as history, geography and language. When the focus is on a composer like Mozart, this cross-curricular learning is not difficult. Learning about Mozart's extraordinary life and his travels as a young child can be used to link to history and geography curriculums and the balance, structure and form of his works can be worked into maths outcomes. Workshops often include some form of lyric development; children as young as 4 and 5 come up with words that fit specific rhythms and these are put to music. Using opera and song as a basis for learning at any level allows us to develop literacy skills and tie into the English and language curriculums. Ensuring that activities stretch across these curriculum areas not only makes it especially relevant to schools, but perhaps more importantly brings the topic alive in the broadest possible way.

“we must ensure that the experience...IS INTERTWINED WITH THE UNDERSTANDING of its form AND meaning”

The work we do in workshops is by nature, short term. Although we do have some long term engagement with specific groups of children and young people, we are always working towards an end product, usually a performance, which directs our learning goals into short, focused projects. This makes it even more important that learning about Mozart, or any composer or piece of music, is done in a contextualised manner. By placing the specific within a wider context we ensure that no project or workshop is a 'one-off', but that there are simple, accessible ways of continuing the thread of learning in any number of different subject areas.

Comparisons are often made between Mozart and Shakespeare; two greats of their respective fields, and I believe there are many lessons to be shared in how we as educators approach teaching these greats. When learning about classical music, there is often a dichotomy between the enjoyable act of listening to the music and the often perceived 'dry' nature of studying and analysing its style and form. As with understanding Shakespeare, we must ensure that the experience of the opera (or play, or symphony) is intertwined with the understanding of its form and meaning. Additionally, we can deepen this understanding by further integrating the study of the composer – or playwright himself. Mozart's playful 'Presto' movements, for example in his chamber works and symphonies, are so easy to engage with when we imagine the playful nature of Mozart's character. Understanding Mozart's relationship with his father makes the plot of his opera *Don Giovanni* all the more gripping. In short, integrating the ways in which we teach and learn Mozart (and indeed Shakespeare), not separating the musical from the historical, the listening from the analysing, the drama from the form, is a positive way forward to making the topic exciting and relevant.

Was there an intersection between teaching Mozart and Shakespeare that struck you? Do you have a colleague in another subject area who would like to contribute an article on how they teach a great figure in their field? E.g. Freud in psychology, Van Gogh in art, Newton in physics. If so, please email: teachingshakespeare@ymail.com

USING CREATIVE MONOLOGUES WITH EAL STUDENTS

STELLA SMYTH is an English language tutor, and course director for credit bearing modules which are offered to overseas undergraduates in the English Language Teaching Unit, University of Leicester. She shares an example of a creative writing and performance assessment that 14 overseas students taking a 10 credit module in 'Shakespeare's Plays' completed.

SO: How old are most of the students you teach? And how would you describe their ability with English (and Shakespeare in particular) before and after this assessment?

SS: The students are generally 19–25 years old. The university requires that they have an advanced level of English as represented by an aggregate score of 6.5 in international English language exams such as IELTS. I give them the socio-historical information to help them decode cultural allusions in the play. Using the 1979 BBC film version of *The Tempest*, including subtitles, facilitates their comprehension of its language and settings. The assessment encourages them to appreciate the way Prospero's use of past tenses brings his memories of his former world into the immediate present of the play's action. It also enables them to see the drama as a matrix of opposing narrative voices, colonial and post-colonial issues.

SO: You collected plentiful feedback on the activity from students. Could you briefly summarise their perception of the benefits and challenges of this creative writing/performance approach?

SS: They felt the assessment gave them a more balanced opportunity to communicate their ideas about the drama in a complementary written and oral mode. In their course feedback, the majority of students stated that they were very nervous about being creative. But once they started to write their own monologues, in accordance with the 5 bullet points for the task, they felt liberated; this would also seem to be the essence of *The Tempest's* magic. Shakespeare challenges assumptions about identity,

talent, aspirations and the nature of language. Most of the class felt empowered by their experience of authoring the monologues and authorising the communicative impact of them in their direct performances.

SO: Do you have any tips for the successful implementation of this exercise in the classroom? Also, how might it be tackled with younger or less-independent students who might not be able to go off and read the whole play?

SS: It is first essential that students personally engage with the storyline and the prejudices that are projected in the play by its major and minor characters. Younger or less-independent students could ignore the Mannoni article and work with an extract, such as the text of Prospero's narrative (1,2.37–184). The tutor could list the key events and characters that Prospero alludes to in his explanation of how he and Miranda came to be on the island. The students then incorporate these by writing short pieces of gossip that the Italians might be saying about Prospero's long disappearance from Milan. They then combine these pieces of gossip in a group to create a summative narrative in the form of an improvisation that they perform together.

*SO: I was intrigued by your choice of Mannoni. What made you choose this older text over more recent post-colonial writing on *The Tempest*?*

SS: I was drawn to the fact that Mannoni was writing about a real island (Madagascar). He is intent on providing didactic assertions from his perspective as a social scientist and direct experiences of being a colonial civil servant there. His shaping of six main concepts in the 1948 essay provides a useful scaffold for devising the parameters and structure of the creative writing task.

Moreover, whereas Mannoni discusses psychological archetypes of the colonizer and his slave to defend his theory, Shakespeare characterises archetypes; he complicates their interactions with each other in the interest of producing theatrical irony. The difference in each author's aims was my reason for using both sources as comparative genres that student readers could appropriate in a reformulated monologue. The task focused on merging the fictional priorities of Shakespeare with Mannoni's psychoanalytical critique of core relationships in the play.

THE PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE DESIGN OF 'THE CREATIVE MONOLOGUE' ASSESSMENT:

- Draw students' attention to the way in which physical elements are incorporated into the style of writing as stage instructions.
- Raise their awareness of how Shakespeare makes poetry dramatic.
- Explore how Shakespeare's methods of characterisation are a manipulation of both off-stage and on-stage audiences' sympathy.
- Raise students' awareness of the choices that were made in *The Tempest's* dramatic construction.
- Encourage students to read forwards and backwards in the play, so that they begin to see its contrasting patterns of scenes, speeches and characters, and how such juxtapositions can contribute to the play's ironic structure.
- Socialise the experience of assessment by including a performance element.
- Develop critical reading of academic sources such as Shakespearean criticism (e.g. through reading Mannoni).
- Encourage students to articulate their own writing decisions.
- Learners analyse ambiguous features of Shakespeare's language and consider its discourse in relation to different kinds of target audiences, both within and outside the play script.

STUDENT GUIDELINES FOR CREATIVE MONOLOGUE ASSESSMENT:

- Read Octave Mannoni's essay, *Prospero and Caliban: the Psychology of Colonization*.
- Consider the following concepts that Octave Mannoni refers to in his essay on *The Tempest*:
 - a) Dependency
 - b) Betrayal
 - c) Domination
 - d) Imagination
 - e) Fear
 - f) Colonialism
- Next, choose any ONE character in the play. It can be a major or minor character, but it must be a figure that you think has *either* experienced *or* demonstrates all of the above concepts in his/her actions, in any scene, particular quotation or theatrical gesture, in the play as a whole.
- Read the play.

- Watch the play – Stella recommends Julie Taymor (2010) and John Gorrie (1979).
- Write a monologue for the character you have chosen. The monologue should tell:
 - a) How that character came to be on the island
 - b) The relationship he/she formed with the island
 - c) His or her perceptions of the landscape and climate
 - d) His or her aspirations for the future
 - e) His or her attitude towards at least one other creature on the island
- Decide on the style of your language: Elizabethan or modern, poetic or prosaic? Do you want to incorporate any of Shakespeare's phrases or images into your piece?
- Select one piece of music that would be played on stage to complement the dramatic monologue you have written. It can be instrumental, modern, classical or lyrical. Suggest when the music would be played.
- Choose a costume and/or props for yourself, since you will have to enact the monologue you have written for your oral assessment.

EXTRACT FROM A STUDENT'S MONOLOGUE:

*... Thereby, my modest domain was restricted to this land of isolation:
At its border rose high cliffs and steep rocks,
like inviolable fortifications
Against the seaward winds and the repeated assaults of the Ocean.
At its heart stretched dark, dank, bushy woods,
like impenetrable sanctuaries,
Which seemed to be unexplored, virgin territories.
And yet, the presence of many spirits, here, could be felt.
Strange movements in the shadow, slight noises in the air:
In this place haunted by secret, the Magic was everywhere.
But for me, that was no threat, since from it,
I drew my strength.
For twelve years I surveyed these landscapes,
and reigned supreme over them ...*

If you'd like to learn more about the work that Stella and her colleagues do in teaching their ELTU modules on Shakespeare, visit their website: www2le.ac.uk/offices/eltu

Do you use creative monologues or something similar with your own students? Did you try this approach with your class? Do you have a lesson plan or resource sheet you'd like to share? Send *Teaching Shakespeare* an email (teachingshakespeare@ymail.com) if you would like to be the next *Teacher Feature*.

A PROFESSIONAL INSIGHT INTO REPRESENTATIONS OF WAYS WITH SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare being taught is one of the recurring ways in which he appears on television. Last year it featured in *Jamie's Dream School* (C4 2011). ROB SMITH is an Advanced Skills Teacher working within the Leadership team and English department at Westwood College, a 13–19 mixed comprehensive in Leek. Additionally, he is an Associate Tutor at Manchester University and supports NQT Induction. He evaluates Simon Callow's teaching of *Romeo and Juliet*.

In *Jamie's Dream School*, self-styled social philanthropist Jamie Oliver sets out to address some of the educational shortcomings that he feels have contributed to a blighted generation of underachieving school leavers. Can a group of twenty disparate, disaffected and academically unqualified youngsters return to education, reenergised and remotivated by a team of charismatic 'experts'? How will actor and writer Simon Callow fare as their drama teacher, charged with the task of making Shakespeare 'relevant'?

In episode one, we catch a glimpse of Callow's first lesson with the group. The students are gathered in the Hall, sitting in chairs, in a semi-circle. The only obvious indication of the theme of the lesson is Shakespeare's profile fronting a flip-chart. Callow does not make an auspicious start: "Sorry to keep you waiting," he proclaims apologetically, "It's the first day isn't it?" The highlight of this opening session appears to be watching one student reading aloud *Sonnet 18*: a wonderful moment for her, but tainted with embarrassed giggles from both her and the group as she stumbles over the lines. Most other students appear disengaged and Callow's key strategy ("to show them there are people just like them in Shakespeare" as Jamie paraphrases) appears oddly disconnected from what is happening in the class. Homework is dutifully given: students are to learn a speech. But how will this work if, as one student observes, "I can't read Shakespeare. It don't make no sense to me"?

Thereafter, Callow appears to rethink his planning. Perhaps focusing on a play such as *Romeo and Juliet* will harness students' attention and engage their interest? As with the previous session, Callow leads from the front. Props are put aside and he is heard declaiming part of the 'Queen Mab' speech, wrongly attributing

it to Romeo. Yet mobile phones proliferate; students struggle to sit still and to connect with the script. He appears frustrated when will not listen and choose to talk over him, also that they will not revere Shakespeare's language as he obviously does: "They don't seem to know what's good for them". Perhaps Callow thinks that he is dealing with a group of semi-professional actors who need 'discipline' of body and mind.

One of the series' key messages is that students learn best by 'doing'. Callow appears to take this on board. After an ambitiously planned trip to the theatre, the students return to drama lessons to find that at last the seating plan has changed. They're now arranged in a circle and Callow has narrowed the focus onto the opening scene of *Romeo and Juliet*. At last he seems to have grasped some critically important concepts: everyone will have "something to do" and they are going to "try to make the scene happen". Rehearsals to prove that every line is 'precious' do not go without a hitch but Callow clearly feels both relief and delight at the climax of his programme of work, the moment when the students bring the script to life, emotionally inhabiting Shakespeare's world. This is a moment few of us can dream of as we see the students performing the opening scene on the stage of the Globe; they even have the support of a specialist stage fight director. But it's a pleasure to witness young people speaking, feeling and understanding the nuances of Shakespeare's language and being genuinely, actively engaged in 'making meaning'.

Callow's own evaluation perhaps points the way forward for all practising teachers:

"IN early classes I wanted to give them BACKGROUND AND HISTORY. maybe that was WRONG . . . that was fantastic. they got it even without me."

View the series at: www.channel4.com/programmes/jamies-dream-school/4od or contact us with your own responses to popular representations of classroom Shakespeare at teachingshakespeare@ymail.com

'TEACHING SHAKESPEARE' FOR *TEACHING SHAKESPEARE*

RACHEL GARTSIDE, JONOTHAN NEELANDS and PAUL PRESCOTT introduce a new educational partnership from the University of Warwick and the RSC. Rachel is Lead Practitioner for Education at the RSC. Jonothan is the National Teaching Fellow Professor of Drama and Theatre Education and WBS Professor of Creative Education at the University of Warwick. Paul is an Associate Professor in the university's English and Comparative Literary Studies department.

It seems apt that in the inaugural edition of this much-needed and very welcome journal, we say a few words about a new educational initiative between the Royal Shakespeare Company and the University of Warwick that happens to share this journal's name, but, more significantly, shares with its editors and readers a common passion for the advancement of teaching Shakespeare both in the UK and across the world. The 'Teaching Shakespeare' initiative aims to transform the classroom experience of Shakespeare for students aged 8–16 through delivering high quality online and residential postgraduate qualifications and professional development for teachers. In October 2012, we will welcome our first cohort of students on our innovative online learning programme; from July 2013, we will host a regular series of week-long residential courses in Stratford built around the live performance programme of the RSC; and from October 2013, it will be possible to combine a number of modules in order to build towards an MA in the Advanced Teaching of Shakespeare.

Teaching Shakespeare is inspired by the idea that the best way for young people to connect with and enjoy Shakespeare's plays is to explore them in the way that RSC actors and directors do: on their feet, speaking the language aloud and unlocking its meaning. Our pedagogy blends the RSC's playful, creative and rigorous approaches to teaching and learning inspired by its rehearsal room practice with the world-leading pedagogical and research practices of the University of Warwick. The courses – whether online or residential – are predicated on the values of the RSC model of 'ensemble-based learning', also referred to at Warwick as 'open-space learning'. Learning is practical, interactive and inter-disciplinary and

is based on critical engagement with, and reflection on, carefully constructed and guided workshop experiences together with annotated readings, webinars, seminars and discussions.

Teaching Shakespeare has grown out of existing collaborations between the RSC and the University of Warwick focusing on teacher professional development. In 2006 and 2007, Warwick's CAPITAL Centre enabled the launch of the Learning and Performance Network (a three-year partnership programme with state primary and secondary schools across England) and the creation of a set of postgraduate qualifications for teachers. Since 2007, over 100 teachers from schools across the country have been awarded a Postgraduate Certificate in the Teaching of Shakespeare and in the Staging and Performance of Shakespeare with young people, through the Institute of Education. In addition, 30 actors from the RSC ensemble have completed a Postgraduate Award in the Teaching of Shakespeare. In 2008 the RSC launched its Stand Up For Shakespeare campaign and in 2010 published the *RSC Shakespeare Toolkit for Teachers*. Running alongside these milestones has been a research programme led by the Universities of Nottingham and Warwick exploring the impact of RSC teaching approaches on pupil attitudes to Shakespeare and on the quality of their practice and written essays. There is powerful evidence here of change in educational attainment and in learning outcomes for pupils. For instance: in a controlled experiment, students taught using rehearsal room approaches showed significant improvements not only in their attitude to Shakespeare but also in their overall attitude to school. It is our ambition that any teacher, whatever their context, who enrolls on one of our qualifications will begin to see similarly significant improvements in their own classrooms.

'Teaching Shakespeare' will be offering its first courses in October 2012, with registrations from April 2012. It is our hope that in the future this journal will become a natural forum in which we can learn from the work of others and share our own discoveries. Meanwhile, to find out more about the research and practice that has fed into the development of 'Teaching Shakespeare', turn to the back cover for articles and links.

 **Continues on page 16**



✍ *Continued from page 4*

Cicely Berry likes to work, with all its challenges and fresh discoveries – and the invitations keep coming in, from both inside and outside the RSC. She is also writing a new book on teaching voice. “And what about the teaching of Shakespeare in schools?” I ask. She replies as an egalitarian: Shakespeare is seen as an icon we can’t approach, he is not for us, his work has been stolen from us. “Really it’s not beyond anybody,” she says, “but you have to hear it. And your thoughts and feelings are just as important as the Prime Minister’s . . . more important!” ‘More important’ is polemical, a declaration about social and cultural inequality. Everyone has a right to speak. Everyone has a right to Shakespeare. She recalls the children she encountered in her early educational work: “sometimes their revelations were quite breathtakingly profound.” But just as Augusto Boal reminds us that our bodies are constricted by the repetition of labour – and that this can deform and imprison us, so Cicely Berry claims that our voices, constrained and blocked by the warping effects of our society, must be freed if they are to be instruments of self-expression. This is why so much of her practice involves physicalisation, speaking out loud, moving and acting. When it comes to engaging with Shakespeare, activity comes first: we must ‘do’, theatricalise, begin to examine the text in action, find the language for ourselves, before we can study it closely.

“everyone has a right to shakespeare.”

She discovered very early on that children, like actors, also “latch on to the physicality of Shakespeare’s language”. “I like to start with how the language takes us into the world of the play,” she says, “how there is an underlying sexual charge in *Dream* (‘Hippolyta, I wooed thee with my sword . . .’), how *Hamlet* opens with the unease of the ghostly, the supernatural (‘What, has this thing appeared again tonight?’). A favourite way to encounter and explore such particular ‘worlds’ is for the whole group to listen first, as some read the lines, and then, as the words are read again, to pick up on words and images that evoke those worlds, through, for example, echoed, whispered or muttered repetition. Individual choices are expressed simultaneously, as the text is spoken – and heard. “Shakespeare’s audience went to listen to the plays”, she explains, “less than

10% could read.” The sound of Shakespeare’s language is so important: “the audience heard Iago speak of ‘he who filches my good name’ – ‘filch’ sounds vile . . . dark, the sound informs our understanding.” Speaking and physicalizing give the access required for engagement, while the action of Shakespeare’s thought, its performability, feeds the speaker’s confidence and understanding.

“his work has been stolen from us.”

In such practical work, Shakespeare is demonstrably accessible, but accessibility is also, always, a political matter. Cicely Berry continues to be dedicated to enabling people to find their voice, re-connect it to the inner self, liberate the mind and imagination, use the wealth of Shakespeare’s writing as a channel of expression. Her workshops, wherever and for whomsoever she holds them, assume there will be equality, inclusiveness, a share in ownership, the right to expression, the opportunity for everyone to make discoveries. They are non-judgemental events, communal, restless, searching, optimistic. They demonstrate the politics of her ‘Shakespeare in Education.’ It is not surprising to hear her say, “Shakespeare’s political message is in every play.”

Look out for our Agony Aunt in issue 2: an expert on Shakespeare’s plays and poems from the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust is ready to answer any queries you (or your classes) have about Shakespeare’s writing, life and times. If there is a word, line, scene, or similar, that continually puzzles you or your students, please email: teachingshakespeare@gmail.com

✍ IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

- ✍ Covering the BSA conference in Lancaster
- ✍ Teaching Shakespeare to acting students
- ✍ Using Shakespeare in the SEN classroom
- ✍ Weighing up opportunities and challenges of the authorship debate
- ✍ And more . . .

Here, experts in Shakespeare from various fields share their recommendations for inspirational reading, with a view to helping those preparing to teach his works. In this issue, JOHN RUSSELL BROWN chooses texts which reflect both the breadth and longevity of his career. He draws on his roles as a Chair in both English and Theatre Studies in the UK and the US, as well as his experience as a director and editor, to select the following choices. John has recently published *The Routledge Companion to Actor's Shakespeare* – a two volume work which complements the existing *Companion to Directors' Shakespeare*.

Preparing to teach courses on Shakespeare in colleges and universities or visiting classes in schools, a few old books are so securely embedded in my mind that I don't take them off my shelves. I think as their authors did and can almost quote from them in my head.

Harley Granville-Barker's experiences as actor, director, playwright and theatre manager inform all his *Prefaces to Shakespeare* (Batsford 1927–48, reprinted Nick Hern/National Theatre, 1993) and help readers to relate the text of a play to how actors can use the words on stage. While living close to Stratford upon Avon and the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, I could see many performances and occasionally talk with the actors late into the night. Instead of reading the text of a play looking for its 'meanings', I found myself considering how actors might use its words. Studying and teaching Shakespeare became an unfinished journey, a pleasure enticing me to engage more fully and personally with the plays.

One experience stands out. While I was living in Stratford, Peter Brook and Laurence Olivier were rehearsing *Titus Andronicus*, a play that few people knew at the time. For a few shillings I could stand at the back of the stalls and for the entire run of previews, see what was changed each day as the production was prepared for its official opening. With this excellent guidance, I learnt to think precisely about every aspect of performance as I read the text of a play.

As I wrestled to understand these experiences, I read what A. C. Bradley, E. M. W. Tillyard, L. C. Knights, Wilson Knight, Donald Stauffer, C. L. Barber and many others had to say about the plays but these books telling me what to think about Shakespeare still further unsettled my mind; and so did innovatory studies by Jonathan Dollimore, Lisa Jardine, Norman Rabkin and Terence Hawkes's *Meaning by Shakespeare* (Routledge, 1992). I was ready for books that introduced me to what is known about the theatre and public for which Shakespeare wrote.

Among the most useful were Steven Purcell's *Popular Shakespeare* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) and Rene Weiss's account of the year 1598, *Shakespeare Revealed* (John Murray, 2007).

“NO matter WHERE OR HOW I am to teach, I start by slowly reading the text while trying to visualize it in performance”

But reading books and talking with actors are never sufficient preparation for one's own study of a play. No matter where or how I am to teach, I start by slowly reading the text while trying to visualize it in performance. To help in this kind of study, I wrote *The Shakespeare Handbook: Hamlet* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), which became the first of a series by authors who have had first-hand experience of their play in rehearsal or privileged access to the director or actors of a recent production. The core of each *Handbook* is a commentary that shows what the text asks of actors, moment by moment, and suggests alternative ways of performing them.

A student will find further basic help in the latest annotated editions of the plays. Besides helping to understand and appreciate the words of a text, they show what ideas and sensations lie under the dialogue and so lead to a deeper understanding of what is spoken on stage. Frank Kermode's *Tempest* (Methuen, 1954) is one of the earliest and most informative of the Arden editions.

Who would you like to see recommending their favourite resources for *Teaching Shakespeare* in the next issue? It might be an actor, director, writer . . . or any other expert. Email your suggestion to teachingshakespeare@ymail.com

Seeing inspiration for staging Shakespeare? SARAH MCCOURT reviews *A Midsummer Night's Dream* directed by Sean Holmes for Filter Theatre at The Brewhouse Theatre, Taunton, 14 November 2011. A PhD student researching small-scale touring adaptations of Shakespeare, she has ten years experience of teaching and examining A-level and BTEC courses and now contributes to undergraduate programmes.

Imaginatively manipulated music and sound effects created the magical world in this production. Puck's meeting with the Fairy established Titania's attendants as microscopic beings. Angry squeaks resolved into a high-pitched electronically distorted voice, supplied by Gemma Saunders, when Puck (Oliver Dimsdale) placed the invisible being onto a microphone. Electronic whooshes to suggest the Fairy's movements completed this aural characterisation.

A soundscape underscored Titania's (Gemma Saunders) description of the natural discord caused by her dispute with Oberon (Jonathan Broadbent). Initiated with haunting metallic chimes, key words such as moon and winter cued the addition of increasingly cold and dissonant sounds including wind howling and bass strings.

Elsewhere sound and movement created the love charm and its effects. The hovering flower represented by a pulsing electronic sound, resisted Oberon's attempts to capture it. A situation remedied by Puck seizing the troublesome bloom. The power of this charm later became apparent in the lovers' enchanted declarations, imaginatively interpreted as funk-influenced numbers.

Bottom's (Fergus O'Donnell) aurally imagined transformation into an ass dispensed with the need for costume. Coconut shells created the clip-clop of his hooves, and rubbed together, the sound of scratching his fur. A cowbell evoked the anatomical enhancements afforded by this new body. Overall, this aural approach to the magical world invited the audience into an act of imaginative collaboration that, judging from their delighted laughter, they clearly relished.

If you would like to inform other readers of conferences, productions, email alerts (offered by many of the institutions listed above) email: teachingshakespeare@ymail.com

 Continued from page 13

USEFUL LINKS

Teaching Shakespeare website:
www.teachingshakespeare.ac.uk

Open-space Learning: www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/iatl/projects/osl-final

Open-space Learning and Shakespeare:
tinyurl.com/c9vx642

Jonathan Neelands and Jacqui O'Hanlon. 'There is Some Soul of Good; an action centred approach to teaching Shakespeare.' *Shakespeare Survey* 64 (2011).

Jonathan Neelands. 'Acting together: ensemble as a democratic process in art and life.' *Research In Drama Education* 14 (2009): 173–189. Available at: wrap.warwick.ac.uk/2721/

RSC Education research and case studies:
www.rsc.org.uk/education/lpn/research-and-case-studies.aspx




Cambridge School Shakespeare

Series editor: Rex Gibson

Cambridge School Shakespeare was developed from the work of the Shakespeare and Schools Project and has gone on to become a bestselling series in schools around the world. Each play edition in the series contains supporting activities enabling students to inhabit Shakespeare's imaginative world in accessible and creative ways.

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