

SECTION V: BRINGING ACTORS TO CAMPUS

"The actors are come hither, my lord":
Inviting a Performance Group to Campus

Garry Walton

Every Shakespearean knows Hamlet is right: the play, in performance, is the thing. Anyone who teaches drama knows how his/her understanding of a scene or a character or an entire play can be transformed by witnessing a powerful performance. All of us wish for such experiences for our students, and we know that a lifelong habit of theater-going is the best way to guarantee that a student will experience such memorable performances. One way to encourage this habit is to make performances accessible for students to attend, by bringing performers to campus. The logistical challenges are formidable, but the potential payoff is enormous. To cope with the challenges and maximize the benefits, here are some of the questions to consider.

WHY: "...the purpose of playing"

The first question a faculty member may ask is **why**: why bother? What are the benefits for my students, my classes, myself, in inviting actors to campus?

I have found that regardless of the proficiency of the actors, the experience of bringing them to campus has positive results. Live theater is more exciting than reading and discussing a play, or watching a film or video. Relationships are clearer, the humor funnier, conflicts more stark -- students simply understand the plays better after they see them. The liveliest class discussion of the semester is invariably the one immediately following a performance we have all seen. Suddenly everyone has something to say. Even a disappointing or wrong-headed production gives us plenty to consider: what went wrong? why were we disappointed? what were they trying to do and why would anyone try that?

The best writing of the semester, as well as the least burdensome, is the students' reviews of the performances. They write with energy, even passion. No one has trouble finding a thesis, or fails to understand the importance of specific examples. And at test time no one has to reread the play she has seen on stage; that's the one she knows best out of the whole semester's reading.

Every semester I am amazed to discover many students who have grown up on film, video and MTV but who have never seen a live dramatic performance. I can't imagine trying to teach sight-reading to a music student who had never heard a song sung. More to the point, I can't imagine such a student having any interest in music.

Clearly, one need not invite a visiting acting company to campus in order for students to experience live theater. Every semester I call all the local university and community theaters to see if anyone is performing anything I can put on the syllabus and require the students to attend. My students have caravanned 2 hours down the interstate to attend Shakespearean performances. But the excitement, and the benefits, of seeing the show seem inversely proportional to the distance the students must travel and the amount of time the whole experience requires. And frankly, I have found it as easy to coordinate a visiting company's performance as to coordinate with our campus theater department the performance of plays I regularly teach at mutually convenient times in the semester. My needs and those of my literature students are often different from those of the drama department, which must consider the needs and skills of student actors and the constraints of a total theater program: I just want my students to see some Shakespeare. A visiting company can satisfy my goals well.

Meeting and talking with actors is valuable for students as well. One

great advantage to a company that stays in residence for a few days is that students can talk with them and learn from them, in classes, workshops, and casual backstage conversations, over coffee or stronger drinks, late into the night, in learning situations that are all the more effective for not seeming academic.

And all the things that benefit students can happen to faculty as well -
- making discoveries, being energized, seeing more clearly and feeling more deeply even those texts we know well.

WHO: "What players are they?"

The single most important decision you will have to make is whom to invite. It is essential that you have a strong personal recommendation from someone you consider totally reliable. If you want more than just stage performances -- if workshops or other work with students is important -- then you need first-hand information about the actors as teachers or workshop leaders too. My best experiences with actors on campus have resulted almost totally from their abilities in teaching and rehearsal situations, not from their skill in on-stage performances. Skills in listening, in directing and coaching, in assessing where students can make some progress in a short time -- these are the talents that the actor who is also a good teacher can bring to your campus.

Talk to colleagues you trust who have hosted companies on campus. One well-known group based on the west coast is ACTER (A Center for Theatre Education and Research). Directed by Homer Swander and managed by Teresa Ragsdale, this small group of professional actors tours nationwide from its home at the University of California at Santa Barbara. A far younger and less experienced group of enthusiastic pre-Equity players is based in Dayton, Virginia; Ralph Cohen's Shenandoah Shakespeare Express prides itself on a youthful, user-friendly brand of rapid-fire Shakespeare-in-tennis-shoes that students find irresistible. Regional companies like the North Carolina Shakespeare Festival take at least one show on the road every season. And overseas troupes such as the English Shakespeare Company (founded by "the Michaels" Bogdanov and Pennington) are available for stateside tours.

WHAT: "Can you play 'The Murder of Gonzago'?"

Once you have identified the performers you wish to invite, you have a key selection left to make: what will you have them do? Answers here will not necessarily determine the success or failure of the enterprise, but they are important. You need to remember why you wanted the company on campus in the first place and decide how they will use their time accordingly. Most visiting companies are prepared to offer workshops or to take over classes, and most have more than one work that they are prepared to perform. Obviously, the more you know about their talents and interests, the more effectively you can use them.

You will want to weigh performances versus workshops, to consider which works in their repertory would work best at your institution, to decide whether you want the actors to visit your classes and assist you or to take over the class period. You may want to open up sessions to the general public, to local teachers or to students from area schools. Finances will certainly play a part in your decisions, but you would be wise not to let financial considerations alone drive your decisions. Carefully conceived, well planned programs may be easier to get funded than those that seem primarily designed not to lose money.

We have had success balancing one popular title (*Romeo and Juliet* or *Midsummer Night's Dream*) with one less familiar (*Antony and Cleopatra* or *Cymbeline*). We have also found it essential to make sure that at least one of the performances has a guaranteed audience of two or three hundred. It is

easy to build a visit around a play that will be studied in several sections of a required course or in area high schools. We also try to include at least one or two workshops a day, in a large space like an auditorium, to which all English and drama faculty and their students are invited, along with area high school and college English and drama teachers. Though we usually have only a few takers from off campus, the public relations is worth the cost of the postage.

WHEN/WHERE: "Get you a place"

Your biggest logistical headache may be getting on the college calendar for the space you want. Do that first, as soon as you begin negotiations with the players. And be sure to get confirmation in writing, to prevent the inevitable conflicts and slip-ups and power plays. Send flowers; write thank-you notes; do whatever it takes to make sure your campus scheduling guru knows you, knows you appreciate being taken care of, and knows you will squawk if anything goes wrong.

HOW: "...will you see the players well bestow'd?"

A faculty member in an English or theater department can answer the WHY and WHO and WHAT questions pretty well alone. By the time you get to the WHEN and WHERE, though, you will probably begin to feel the need for some help. If you don't, you should. Any faculty member who has time to arrange a campus visit for a theater company doesn't have enough to do. Once you have gotten to this step in the process, it's essential that you find someone to hand the project off to, or someone to pick up some of your normal duties so that you can stay with this project. The success of the campus visit now depends on having some one person as the campus contact. That person needs to be available daily, conveniently and consistently, by telephone and fax. That person needs to co-ordinate negotiating the contract and getting it signed, arranging housing and meals and transport, scheduling not just the public performance space but all the other spaces for classes and workshops, arranging for programs and ushers and receptions, and publicizing on and off campus all of the performances and workshops. The persistence and politeness of the campus contact person will determine how successful your campus visit is.

We have handled the logistics of a campus visit by committee and managed to survive. But the most successful experiences have been co-ordinated by the fulltime administrative assistant of the local, foundation-funded school for the performing arts which is housed at my college. I can convince my colleagues in the English department to teach a play that will be performed on campus and then require their students to attend; I can schedule and publicize a couple of workshops open to students in the English and theater departments. But housing, contracts, programs, and off-campus publicity are beyond my ken. And my faculty secretary might do me bodily harm if I tried to hand these tasks off to her.

In the last five years, Meredith College has hosted the following performers:

November 1989: North Carolina Shakespeare Festival
November 1989: Miles Anderson and Leslie Duff, Royal Shakespeare Company actors
September 1991: English Shakespeare Company
April 1993: Shenandoah Shakespeare Express

All but the first of these was co-ordinated by the staff of the Fletcher School for the Performing Arts and funded by the A. J. Fletcher Foundation. Taking the most recent as an example, here is a rough checklist and timetable of what was involved.

March 1992 A student in one of my Shakespeare classes, who is the wife of the Fletcher Foundation president, attends a performance by the Shenandoah Shakespeare Express at Duke University in Durham and suggests them for a Meredith campus visit. Having worked with director Ralph Cohen and the company at a Shakespeare Association of America meeting in Philadelphia in 1990, I agree. The process begins. I start calling Dayton, Virginia -- no answer.

Summer 1992 Mary Beth Deaton of the Fletcher Foundation determines from the Duke performance that the SSE meets the educational and performance criteria of the foundation. She spends a month exchanging letters and phone calls with a succession of people at the SSE office in Dayton, Virginia, trying to determine the right person to work with. They have a personnel change. Space cannot be booked on the Meredith campus until close to the beginning of the academic year. The College's master calendar is not available until the end of the summer. The Fletcher School commits to invite SSE but has no dates or cost figures or contract. The suggested SSE package of a week's residence for \$8500 is longer and more expensive than the foundation or the college desires. Negotiations begin with staff at Duke University for a shared tour with split expenses. Nothing is yet finalized. Included in the Fletcher School's 4-page flier of the upcoming year's attractions is "SSE Spring 1993 (Dates to be Confirmed): a pre-performance lecture and a performance of one of Shakespeare's plays."

Fall 1992 We are still assuming the joint venture with Duke will work. We are now planning on performances of two different plays on successive nights. Dates are set for April 13 and 14 and space is reserved. Of the company's three plays, I ask for *Midsummer Night's Dream* (and urge all English department faculty to teach it in the required survey course) and *Antony and Cleopatra* (a play I have not seen performed and will be teaching in the Shakespeare course in the spring); Deaton had been talking to the company about *A&C* and *Romeo and Juliet.* I commit to help with housing the company in the homes of English department faculty. We talk briefly about workshop topics: the company has several prepared; I want the actors to work scenes for and with my students, not to stand up and talk about acting for an hour. All this will be worked out later. So far I have done little actual work; Deaton has handled everything. She is still having trouble scheduling the performances at Meredith.

February 1993 The Duke deal has never worked out. The contract arrives in the mail; it's only one page! (The English Shakespeare Company sent a 4-page contract with 5 additional pages of technical specifications.) The normal weeklong residency, and price, have been cut in half. The contract calls for *A&C* and *R&J&, not *MND*. That will be corrected. But our contact person with SSE, the managing director, is on tour with the company. The company is driving in and will not need local transport. They will set up and strike their own set. They will bring their own programs; drama students will act as ushers. Suddenly it's time to worry about housing and specify workshops. Deaton books a suite for the male actors; I get the college residence hall director to save us three empty rooms in the dorms for the females in the company. There is a space conflict: performances have to shift to April 14 and 15, dodging Easter and my previous commitment to the Folger. And there are no lights for the show! The college lighting equipment will be in use in another production in the studio theater. Kurt Landry, the drama department's tech person, has to rent a light board for the week. The pace is picking up. What's next? Publicity.

March 1993 Deaton prepares and distributes a succession of press releases, fliers and letters. She requests extra press packets from the company to go to

local print media, with glossies and any attractive handouts furnished by the company. A couple of days before their deadlines, Deaton follows up the mailings with phone calls, "just to see that you got our stuff and to ask if you need anything else" (which we don't have). Result: prominent promotional coverage with pics in local print media.

Meanwhile, individual letters are going out to area college and high school teachers of drama and English, to community theaters, and to all Meredith faculty. Results: capacity audience for *Dream*, respectable crowd for *A&C*.

John Creagh (the head of the drama department) and I have by now decided on the times and titles of the workshops to be offered; he schedules the rooms and I handle publicity with Meredith students and faculty. Some area faculty and townspeople are invited as well.

I get to meet and work with the company at the Folger in a weekend workshop, which proves invaluable during their visit later: I know their names and have some sense of what they can do well in a class or workshop setting; I am more willing to ask them to do what I really want them to do in workshops, and they are more receptive to being asked, because we are not strangers.

April 13-15 SSE arrives at 11 p.m. after a show at Duke. John Creagh has to meet them and help them set up, then make sure they are checked in to their housing and settled. Though it was not included in the contract, the company thought meals were included. Can the college or the foundation furnish 3 meals a day for 14 people for 3 days? The studio theater is filled with the set of the show that opens next week. Can we move the workshops scheduled there back to the main auditorium? Most of all, can we handle all these last-minute snafus so that the visiting actors never know there are any problems? In the midst of logistical questions like these, an unexpected gift: the company arrives early on the morning of the 14th, explores the campus, and spots the college's lake and surrounding amphitheater swathed in azaleas and dogwoods. "Would it be possible," they ask, "for us to perform an extra show, for free, outdoors in the amphitheater?" Amazed and charmed by this request, we crank up the publicity campaign again -- fliers, in-class announcements, campus cable-tv notices. The weather forecast calls for late afternoon showers, but we might just make it. We do, but just barely, as sullen skies and blustery winds threaten all afternoon. But when the balcony blows over and the young actors brilliantly improvise the scene of star-crossed lovers separated not by a wall but by a moat, the play comes alive for both actors and audience in a unreplicable, magical moment that reminds the veterans among us and demonstrates to the novices why we love theater. And the Mercutio-Tybalt-Romeo swordplay makes the local news at 6 and 11!

How successful was the visit to Meredith College of the Shenandoah Shakespeare Express? Was it worth it? Read the following two essays and decide for yourself. The first is a review by a student in my Shakespeare class, a particularly articulate and insightful but not atypical response. The second is a letter of appreciation to the Fletcher Foundation, written by my colleague in the department of speech communication and theatre.

The Shenandoah Shakespeare Express Delivers
an Expressive *Antony and Cleopatra* a review by
Jackie Webb

As The Shenandoah Shakespeare Express made its entrance into Jones Auditorium last Thursday night, it was clear the company's interpretation of *Antony and Cleopatra* was not a wholly tragic one. The cast clapped its way down the aisles jubilantly singing "Down By the Riverside," which at first seemed an

odd, but interesting, way to introduce the play. By the end of the show, however, the use of this and other spirituals made perfect sense; the songs underscored the theme of freedom in death. The Shenandoah Shakespeare Express implemented several seemingly unconventional conventions and delivered as rousing a performance as its entrance promised.

In keeping with its commitment to the Globe tradition, the company exhibited a minimalist philosophy. Managing director Jim Warren took the stage briefly to explain how the show's lighting, set, staging, costuming, and casting were similar to Shakespeare's. His explanation, accompanied with the actors' introducing themselves as each of the characters they played, helped the audience understand and prepare for how this show would differ from the typical contemporary production. With only twelve actors in the troop, some played more than three roles. The most inspired doubling included Kevin Bergen's playing both Mark Antony and the clown who brings Cleopatra the deadly asp; Chad Hoepfel as Octavius Caesar and the messenger who delivers the news of Antony's marriage to Caesar's sister; and Pia Caro as the soothsayer who prophesies Cleopatra's death and Dolabella, who allows Cleo to die the way she wants. Where Shakespeare used young males to play female roles, this company freely casts women as men. It is a tribute to the actors' ability that neither the crossing of gender distinctions nor the playing of multiple roles distracted the audience.

Because Shakespeare's plays were performed originally in daylight, the house lights remained on throughout this show. As a result, the players could see the audience, and several times the actors made audience members a part of the scene. The lighted house also allowed the players to extend their performance area to the pit and aisles. Some of the spectators were seated on the actual stage, another throwback to The Globe. This integration worked especially well during the party scene, where the players distributed drinks to the audience and pulled patrons into the scene as drunken dancers. The set, too, incorporated little change. No curtain appeared between acts, and the actors, themselves, manipulated the stage props when the scene changed location. The only hitch in the set involved the colorful silk streamers that signalled the Egyptian scenes. While the streamers conveyed the lovely, exotic essence of Cleopatra's homeland, their being tossed across the stage proved to be a hazard to the players. The actors had to step awkwardly over the streamers, and several came distractingly close to tripping. It is, however, another tribute to the show's strength that seeing the actors act as stage hands challenged the audience's imagination without compromising its being caught up in the drama.

The costuming, likewise, made the most of little. All the actors wore modern garb of black jeans and tee shirts accessorized to suggest the character. Although their dress--especially the Chuck Taylor Converse athletic shoes--appeared to be a contemporary twist, it was actually a tribute to Shakespeare's tradition, as his actors wore Elizabethan clothes adorned with character-indicating accompaniments. Subtle details, rather than elaborate ensembles, made the costuming work. Antony and Caesar, for example, wore the identical military jacket, but Caesar's was fitted and buttoned to the throat while Antony's was loose and open-collared. The silky shawl-like garment that Cleopatra and her ladies wore needs improving, however. It slipped off the actresses' shoulders repeatedly and required too much fussing to keep straight. Like the streamers, the Egyptian costume accessories are a sound concept, but they need better execution.

Because this show employed few bells and whistles, its success relied almost exclusively on the acting. The absence of showy props, sets, and costumes focused the audience's attention on the players and, more so than in splashier productions, on Shakespeare's words. And here, the cast delivered. What it lacked in experience and technical skill, it made up for in charm and

enthusiasm. Jeff Plitt was a fine Enobarbus. His speech recounting Antony and Cleopatra's falling in love and his final soliloquy before dying of a broken heart were among the show's strongest scenes. Displaying incredible range was Mark McLane, who played five different characters. McLane was consistently convincing, from his slimy Thidius to his macho Menecrates. Joe Falocco and Pia Caro displayed broad range, too, in their multiple roles--with Lepidus and Dolabella, respectively, being their strongest. Kevin Bergen as Antony was the only disappointment, but his weakness derives more from being miscast than lack of skill. Bergen is a high-energy, high-movement actor and would have been better cast as Lepidus or Enobarbus. As Mark Antony, he came across as fidgety rather than impulsive.

Cleopatra, however, was clearly the star of the show. Margaret McGirr brought to life all of the character's complexities --sometimes playing the adolescent manipulator, sometimes the mature lover, but always royal. McGirr was strong not only in her delivery but also in her response. She wrung the sexual innuendo from the lines--such as her envy of the horse Antony mounted and her pleasure at his being a man of passionate steel--without being bawdy. McGirr's Cleopatra seemed to overpower Bergen's Antony; his performance was much stronger toward the end of the play when the action calls for Antony to dominate Cleopatra. Bergen could dominate McGirr, but he had trouble playing her equal. It was through Cleopatra's impassioned words at Antony's death that the audience was able to see him finally as a noble warrior and lover. And Cleopatra's death scene was the show stopper. Elegant, powerful, and ethereal as she prepared for death, Cleopatra mesmerized the audience with her almost orgasmic response to the asp's bite and proclamation, "I am fire and air." As McGirr sat ramrod straight on Cleopatra's throne, so beautiful and so in control even in death, it was clear why the production did not introduce itself as a tragedy. There was no doubt Cleopatra was with her Antony in a far better place than Egypt.

The most striking element of this production was the camaraderie and unity of the actors. Because all were on stage throughout the show, their attentiveness to each other was crucial to the audience's response. The actors not in the scene in progress were seated across the back of the stage. And like players cheering from the dugout bench, they supported and reacted to their teammates' successes. In addition to their emotional support, they assisted each other with costumes and props in an organized and non-distracting manner. Though they had no doubt heard the lines a thousand times, their enthusiasm was opening-night fresh. Taking the actors' cue, the audience cheered them on as well--right through the final chorus of "Amen, Amen, Amen."

April 16, 1993

Dr. Tom H. McGuire, Executive Director
The A. J. Fletcher Foundation
P.O. Box 12800
Raleigh, N.C. 27605

Dear Tom:

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank the Fletcher Foundation for the recent residency of the Shenandoah Shakespeare Express on the Meredith College campus. I am not sure where you find the artists you send to us, but the SSE was a perfect choice. This week has been a thrilling learning experience for many people, including me.

First, the actors in the company were, simply, very fine people. They knew how to teach as well as act, and our students gained immeasurable

benefits from them. In workshop after workshop, I watched students who were either intimidated by Shakespeare, or who found him "irrelevant," change into confident speakers of his verse. The small wins made by these students will, over time, develop into more critical perspectives on Shakespeare in particular, and on theatre and their own critical faculties as well. The actors in the company provided an enthusiastic, friendly, and supportive environment that was never threatening. The results they were able to achieve in such a short time, were, as I am sure Mary Beth Deaton will agree, remarkable.

Second, the shows themselves were very fine. It is rare to see Shakespeare performed in true Elizabethan spirit, as these were. One good example of "Elizabethan" style is worth a thousand lectures. The fact that the company added an extra production to their exhausting schedule is a tribute to their dedication and commitment to their art.

Third, on a personal level, the presence of the Shenandoah Shakespeare Express at Meredith renewed my own dedication and commitment to the theatre. These are hard times for college professors as well as for students, and any activity that enriches while providing great entertainment is worth its weight in gold. I feel renewed and refreshed intellectually and professionally.

Finally, I must commend Mary Beth Deaton's work on this project. She saw to it that all little problems remained little. She also was able to attract audiences for the workshops and the performances (662 people saw A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM). More importantly, the positive spirit with which she accomplished this made the SSE residency a real public relations coup for the Fletcher Foundation, Meredith College, and the company actors. It was a week that restored my faith in many things. Thank you and Mary Beth for everything you did to make it possible. I look forward to working with you again soon.

Sincerely,

John Creagh, Coordinator Speech Communication & Theatre

Would we do it again? Mary Beth Deaton is already at work on a possible return visit for the spring of 1994.

SECTION VI: PERFORMANCE HISTORY IN THE CLASSROOM

Performance History and the Lecture Class, Among Others

Stephen M. Buhler

In the Winter Quarter of 1988, at the University of California at Los Angeles, I had the pleasure for the second time of serving as a teaching assistant for English 90, popularly known as "Shakespeare for Non-Majors." One reason the experience was so pleasant was the fact that Albert D. Hutter was again in charge. Over the years Professor Hutter has learned how to make judicious use of a rich resource in his class population: a sizeable proportion of students interested in acting, many of whom major in Theatre. From the very first meeting each term he recruits a "company" of volunteers who are asked on occasion to acquaint themselves thoroughly with certain scenes in advance. Then, either invited up to the platform or remaining in the relative security of their seats in the lecture hall, either singly or in groups, these students give clear, reasonably confident readings of the passages which most pertain to

the lecture material.

With this structure already in place, it took little imagination on my part to decide that one of my own lectures for the course, on the stage history of *Hamlet*, should incorporate elements of actual performance. The student readings would not primarily be reconstructions or re-enactments of brief passages as they were interpreted and staged in the past. Instead, they were intended as explorations of how certain emotional and ideational effects upon past audiences might be realized in contemporary theatrical practice. So the major historical problems with using reviews or memoirs of celebrated performers, their imprecision and unreliability, were of little importance for this exercise: we focused on what the viewers *felt* in response to the performances, what they *thought* they were receiving, *how* they were affected. For this reason, we used as our primary source a useful, basic compendium of such impressions, John A. Mills' *Hamlet on Stage: The Great Tradition*. Marvin Rosenberg's magisterial *The Masks of Hamlet* would probably take precedence now: it does provide much more information about past (and more recent) approaches not only to Hamlet but the other characters as well. I have to confess, though, to a fear that its size and scope might seriously daunt beginning English and Theatre majors, and non- majors even more so.

Mills (5) begins with Richard Burbage, drawing upon Paul S. Conklin's survey of comments upon performances as Hamlet through the early Nineteenth Century: both Mills and Conklin (18) pay special attention to a "Funerall Elegye" in tribute to Burbage that lists many of the actor's most memorable roles, provides some details of Burbage's performances (the poet had "oft . . . seen him leap into the grave," for example), and suggests the general sense audiences could derive from his characterizations. Especially in light of the action-oriented Hamlet who appears in the First Quarto (and the recent Zeffirelli film version), the pairing of Burbage's appearances as "young Hamlet, [and] ould Hieronymo" indicates not only the range of the ages of man the actor could convincingly represent but also a common theme in the roles--revenge. Both my lecture comments and subsequent class discussions over the years have consequently focused on a view of the character as a man of action and on the pervasive alternative views of him as incapable of action, or even "above" it.

My original lecture dealt briefly with this and continued, as does Mills' survey, with Thomas Betterton and the Restoration cults of decorum and declamation. The first actual performing in that class meeting came with the discussion of the most important figure of the next theatrical generation or so, David Garrick. His more natural, less declamatory delivery--his resolve to "shake off the fetters of numbers"--provides a clear opportunity for historical contextualization and for exploring contemporary analogues for historical impacts. Our conception of Garrick's acting style relies heavily, of course, on the famous, if suspect, account of his Hamlet by Georg Christoph Lichtenberg. We can, though, supplement our understanding of the actor's interpretation of the character from other remembrances as well. Supporting Lichtenberg's view that this Hamlet was consumed by grief for his father, Frederick Reynolds adds a note of ongoing devotion and "paternal love": Garrick "electrified the whole audience" by declaring "I will watch tonight; Perchance 'twill walk again" (1.2.241) in an exultant manner, "buoyant with hope," eagerly awaiting a reunion with this spectral visitor (Mills 4, Reynolds 1:89).

In class, the first volunteers gave "their own" reading of the exchanges among Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus at the end of 1.2 and then gave a reading animated by the notions of Hamlet's all-consuming sorrow and, upon hearing the news, jubilant anticipation. The differences in performance for all the characters were palpable and powerful. Because these students had already shown they could "take direction" even with an audience of hundreds, and because the non-performing members of the class had also proven themselves an engaged and

supportive audience, I felt confident in giving the actors these historically-grounded emotional directives during the lecture. Subsequently, with far smaller classes, I've sometimes done much the same, and other times experimented with letting two different groups prepare the scene more fully beforehand--one to work on their own and the other to work with the Lichtenberg and Reynolds materials.

Some of my students and classes have had great fun with trying to replicate Lichtenberg's description of how Hamlet physically reacts to his first glimpse of the Ghost: in the large lecture class, having one student read the account aloud while others scrambled to match each point of the developing description worked gratifyingly well. Invariably strenuous and hilarious are the students' efforts to keep up as, according to Lichtenberg,

Garrick turns sharply and at the same moment staggers back two or three paces with his knees giving way under him; his hat falls to the ground and both his arms, especially the left, are stretched out nearly to their full length, with the hands as high as his head, the right arm more bent and the hand lower, and the fingers apart; his mouth is open; thus he stands rooted to the spot (Mills 35, Lichtenberg 10) Samuel Johnson's severe judgment that such a display, in his opinion, "should frighten the ghost" (Mills 37, Boswell 5:38) can seem much less malicious after this exercise than it sometimes does. Our comments on Johnson's criticism were followed in class, though, by the same volunteers trying to realize the emotional effects Lichtenberg identifies: dignity and terror, shock and wonder. The purpose of this playing, after all, is not to allege any inadequacy in Garrick's performance, but instead to illustrate that "naturalness" on stage is very much conditioned by audience expectations. In similar fashion, the invocation of Johnson is meant to acknowledge the range of critical responses that is possible in any audience, at any time.

I haven't had as much success with restagings of Kemble or Kean, though I keep hoping some ambitious students will try to replicate some of their legendary effects as part of a research project. Thanks to Kate Pogue's development of the Shurtleffian idea of "discovery" (Shurtleff 58-63), classes in future will focus on Henry Irving not only as operating within Kean's tradition of colloquial delivery but also as conveying a sense of Hamlet wrestling *as he speaks* with the ethical and philosophical issues at work in the language. This would provide a better foundation for the next figure in the "tradition" who has provided useful materials for in-class performance, Johnston Forbes-Robertson.

Again, I've drawn inspiration from a commentator whose objectivity may be called into question, although for different reasons from those involved with Lichtenberg. George Bernard Shaw had definite ideas about Hamlet and about how the character should be played: whether or not Forbes-Robertson's performance was as fully influenced by Shaw and as complete a realization of his views as Shaw seemed to think, the conjunction of this actor and this critic does allow us to envision increased intellectual excitement in the role. (Indeed, Forbes-Robertson and Shaw may have made that vision compulsory in the Twentieth Century: a frequent criticism of stage and film Hamlets has been the actor's perceived inability to communicate a sense of energetic philosophical discovery.) For Shaw, the key to Hamlet was the character's "scorn of brute passion" (Mills 180, Shaw 3:203), an attribute that sharply differentiates him from Fortinbras. So the speech in this interpretation is not "To be or not to be," but rather the conjoined soliloquies uttered at the end of 2.2 in response to the Player's rendition of "Priam's slaughter." Shaw's view was that these are very different speeches: the first caught up in the spirit for "vengeance!"--the last word of the speech--and the second recoiling contemptuously from that passion--beginning with "Why, what an ass am I . . ."

(2.2.582). The same contempt marked this Hamlet's reaction to Laertes' extravagant, histrionic grief over Ophelia. I've been interested, though, in seeing students (men and women) try to realize these affective changes, moving from "philosophic restraint" and curiosity to full-blown rage and then to sharp, abrupt, self-mocking control. Their sense of revelation along the way has motivated similar epiphanies enjoyed by their fellow-students in not only this speech but throughout Shakespearean language. It may not have been Forbes-Robertson's or even Shaw's Hamlet, but each performance did replicate the excitement that comes with authentic discovery through performance of a role.

My original lecture continued with the dizzying array of later Hamlets, from John Barrymore's aggressively "modern" (read post-Darwin, post-Freud) and insistently "virile" interpretation to Olivier's variations on Barrymore's themes in his film of *Hamlet*, and from John Gielgud's three distinctive takes on the character to Richard Burton's performance under Gielgud's direction (see Sterne). But a revised lecture would either have to include greater detail on more recent Hamlets--Nicol Williamson, Derek Jacobi, Mel Gibson, Kevin Kline--or even forgo the contemporary scene altogether, the better to explore past milestones at greater length. Again, my primary interest is not in providing accurate restagings or even a comprehensive view of the character in performance. Stage history, in this exercise, is simply a means to a variety of ends: an appreciation of the text in performance; an awareness of the wide range of meaningful, workable interpretations possible; a sense of the complex interplay of emotions operative within the text, within an actor's engagement with that text, and within an audience member's (and audience's) response to that engaged performance. If those are instilled or nurtured, the rest--while not silence--is just gravy.

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