

## PART XX

### CHANGING TECHNOLOGIES OF STAGE PERFORMANCE

*Shoichiro Kawai, University of Tokyo, Japan*

What have been the major technical innovations in theater since Shakespeare's time? Amazing progress has been made in electrical lighting, sound amplification, and many other areas. Shakespearean films have had much influence on theater, and we also have had a reaction against these changes in productions that purport to follow "original practices." Technological innovations characterize today's productions. However, theater is not simply a showcase of technologies, and recent Shakespearean productions are more conscious of the mode of Elizabethan staging that reaches out to the audience. In a sense, the postmodern style is a fusion of tradition and innovation. Postmodern productions are also cross-cultural in their imaginative reach.

What does a multicultural perspective reveal to us that focus on a single cultural tradition would not? What do we discover when we forget about historical narratives and questions of what directly influenced what and concentrate instead on the basic elements of theatrical production? Based on a non-Western focus, this chapter seeks to arrive at a *global* understanding of Shakespeare. In Balinese theater, which inspired Antonin Artaud to write his *Théâtre et son double* (1938), the word "stage" simply means a place to perform. Thus, any place can be a stage in Bali. No matter how much technology helps to "amend" the performance, the audience members must still exercise their imaginations just as the Prologue of *Henry V* demands. No matter how advanced technologies may be, they do not override the persistence of different cultural traditions in the ways that Shakespeare is staged today all over the world.

#### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Physical structures
- Acting techniques
- Costume
- Scenery
- Sound design
- Visual projections
- Original-practices productions

#### 196. PHYSICAL STRUCTURES

*Ronnie Mulryne, University of Warwick, United Kingdom*

The physical characteristics of theater buildings serve a variety of needs for a variety of people: actors, designers, directors, and audiences. These requirements have by no means resulted in a form of building or performance place that has remained even broadly stable over the period from Shakespeare's day to the present. To the contrary, the history of theater types and performance locations is a story of repeated adaptation and experiment. This chapter describes those cycles, focusing on the history of British stages.

#### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Theater buildings of Shakespeare's day: the amphitheaters
- Public stages in Shakespeare's day: spectators, costume, acoustics
- Theater buildings of Shakespeare's day: indoor and informal stages
- Multiple performance spaces of Shakespeare's day
- Shakespearean staging from baroque to Victorian
- Restoration spectacle
- Eighteenth- to nineteenth-century stages: expanded spaces, diversified audiences
- Theaters of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries

- Shakespeare's Globe, London
- The Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon
- New designs and "found space"

## 197. ACTING TECHNIQUES

*Sharon Marie Carnicke, University of Southern California, United States*

Acting has a long and varied history: different eras and global cultures have left their imprints on actors; theatrical conventions and aesthetic assumptions have inculcated in actors different artistic tastes and goals. Consequently, there can be no comprehensive history of how actors have approached Shakespeare's plays over the centuries. Nonetheless, one can identify discrete "paths" in acting that coalesce around key technical approaches to the processes of rehearsing and performing. However emotional or intellectual, spiritual or rational, actors' creative intentions might be, however realistic or abstract their artistic beliefs, actors communicate through their physical and vocal choices. This chapter suggests how an influential group of technical approaches to acting have been used for Shakespeare's plays.

### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Gestural acting
- Early gestural work
- Twentieth-century gestural acting
- Twenty-first-century gestural acting
- The Stanislavsky System
- Stanislavsky's early system
- Stanislavsky's late system: active analysis
- The American Method
- Britain's Royal Shakespeare Company

## 198. COSTUME

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Unlike scenography, in which technology has been developed specifically for theatrical effects, theater costuming has taken advantage of developments in textile and fashion manufacture rather than pioneering new technology. Until the twentieth century, there was little difference between the production of clothes for everyday wear and theatrical costume. The story of stage costume is one in which new technologies are employed to achieve the look and feel of period dress while reducing the cost and the cumbersome and time-consuming nature of wearing and making them.

### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- The acquisition of costume
- <sup>a</sup> Artifice and illusion
- The rise of the costume designer
- Shakespearean costuming: the antiquarian and the authentic
- Elizabethan dress in the twentieth century
- Global Shakespeare

## 199. SCENERY

*Christopher Baugh, University of Leeds, United Kingdom*

Throughout most of the twentieth century, one view of Shakespeare's scenery dominated scholarly thinking and theatrical practice: Shakespeare just built his stage designs into his text. The introduction of Italian Renaissance techniques of illusionist perspective painting in the seventeenth century has been taken to signal a radical redefinition of "scenery" as representational. Neither of these assumptions explains the complex, multilayered presentation of symbol, metaphor, and scenic emblem within which the actors tell their drama in the reconstructed Globe. If we wish to create a contemporary practice that although not imitating or reconstructing the past is nevertheless true to the drama and values of its playwright, then we must fully rethink and reformulate our understanding of the word "scenery."

#### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- The nature of scenery
- Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London
- The visual rhetoric of Shakespeare's stage
- Scenery and architecture
- Scenic harmony
- Nineteenth-century understandings of Shakespeare's scenery
- Early theater history
- Harley Granville Barker
- Shakespeare staging between the wars
- Building new Shakespeare stages
- Shakespeare and Brecht
- Scenography and the Royal Shakespeare Company
- Contemporary approaches

## 200. LIGHTING

*Neil Fraser, Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, United Kingdom*

Perhaps more than any other instrument on the stage – apart from the performers themselves – stage lighting has grown in its fluidity and power to be the foremost communicator and creator of dramatic atmosphere. Lighting also helps create character. With his eminent skill, Shakespeare uses images and descriptions of light, and often the sun, not just to paint the scene but also to pour allusion onto his subjects – characters and themes. Teachers of stage lighting are likely to have among their key precepts “Light depends on shadow,” “Character in light comes from contrast,” and “Shadows are as important as the beams of light.” The Italian word *chiaroscuro* describes the desired effect. Effective lighting is as important in theater as it is in great paintings, in the works of Caravaggio, Rembrandt, and other masters.

#### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Lighting effects in early English and Renaissance drama: the naked flame
- Lighting on the nineteenth-century English stage
- Stage lighting in the twentieth century
- Modern stage lighting: contemporary practice

## 201. SOUND DESIGN

*Ross Brown, Central School of Speech and Drama, United Kingdom*

Sound – vocal, nonvocal, musical, and nonmusical – along with sound's absence, the ticking, anticipatory buzz of stage silence, is elemental to the phenomenal fabric of theater. Instruments that make, enhance, or distort sound are among theater's primary technologies. Today's sound designer tends to work with sound in electronically analogue or digitally codified states, but before the advent of recorded sound there was “practical” noisemaking: an ancient and ingenious stagecraft probably as old as theater itself. Over the centuries, the theater soundscape kept pace with world industrial and economic changes. This chapter surveys the stage history of those changing technologies of sound production and sound design. Aurality is present in every aspect of dramaturgy: in the act of writing, in the playwright's acoustic imagination of words and sounds, in rehearsals, in performance, and in the audience's applause.

#### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- “Practical” noisemaking
- Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century theater sound practices
- Electroacoustic sound
- Scenographic sound
- Aural dramaturgy

## 202. VISUAL PROJECTIONS

THOMAS CARTELLI, MUHLENBERG COLLEGE, UNITED STATES

Computer-generated and live-feed projections both on large screens and on smaller video monitors have become ubiquitous in theatrical productions around the world in the last thirty years but have only recently begun to make their presence felt in Shakespearean stage productions. This chapter surveys the development of projection design over the last century before investigating the active deployment of visual projections in stage productions of Shakespeare during the past fifty years. The intensity of interaction between live actors and their visual projections in productions such as the To-neelgroep's *Roman Tragedies* suggests the productive engagement between the stage and what has more often than not been considered its unassimilable other: the projected, or computer-generated, image.

### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Early developments: Melies to Piscator
- Burian's *Theatergraph*
- *Laterna Magika*
- "Kinetic scenography"
- Technology, television, transformation
- The German connection
- Heyme's electronic *Hamlet*
- *Hamletmachine*
- The Merchant of Venice Beach
- Media as message
- Hytner's *Henry V*
- McBurney's *Measure for Measure*
- The Wooster Group *Hamlet*
- New media messages from Amsterdam
- Multimedia and intermedia

## 203. ORIGINAL PRACTICES

*Don Weingust, Southern Utah University, United States*

In a return to "original practices," some modern theater practitioners have attempted to perform Shakespearean plays as they believe Shakespeare and his contemporaries may have done. Varying from company to company, these practices include performances in reconstructed or original early modern venues; universal lighting; enhanced audience interaction; minimal or no group rehearsal; actor- rather than director-driven preparation; minimalist scenery design and technical intervention; use of actors' parts rather than full texts of plays; original texts rather than edited texts; early modern costuming; early modern and/or acoustically produced music and sound effects; all-male casts; rapid rates of line delivery; continuous action unbroken by scene changes; and original pronunciation.

### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Original practices: motivations and methods
- Development of original practices
- Original practitioners
- The Tucker school of original practices
- The Phoebus's Cart school of original practices
- The Shenandoah school of original practices
- Other companies