



Shakespeare Bulletin

Performance Review Guidelines

The critic could be retrained as a data collector, confined to the production of objective statements, and encouraged to redeem himself in a society for which [...] he has served as a morally disruptive, and aesthetically destructive, influence.

Glenn Gould, *The Glenn Gould Reader*

The next generation of reviewers might adopt a position that is anti-bardolatrous, iconoclastic and fearlessly experimental as they learn to speak of themselves – as we always must – *à propos* of Shakespeare.

Paul Prescott

There are as many different ways of responding to a performance as there are audience members. The performance reviews section of *Shakespeare Bulletin* offers a snapshot of international responses to productions of (or rooted in) the work of Shakespeare and his contemporaries; this is an archive not of the performance object, but of experiences and reflections.

Theater reviewers are the makers of tomorrow's theater history; the accounts in *Shakespeare Bulletin* will, we hope, be of value to future explorers of performance history as well as those triangulating their own responses to productions they have just seen. But no review can be exhaustive, just as no experience of a production can be comprehensive. We encourage reviewers to embrace their own subjectivity and focus on those aspects of a production that *matter* to the reviewer's interpretation. While reviews will give the descriptive detail that provides the basis for interpretation, the reviewer's own emotional and intellectual response to event and context will shape their choices of focus and argument.

Shakespeare Bulletin welcomes reviews of theater productions, films and television series, and performance art that reinterpret early modern drama for today's audiences. These audiences may be diverse geographically or linguistically, in age or composition, in mode of reception or experience of Shakespeare. The journal seeks to continually expand and redefine the parameters of "Shakespearean performance."

We encourage reviewers to take each production on its own terms – for *Shakespeare Bulletin*, there is no "right way" to "do" Shakespeare; nor is there a right way to write about Shakespeare. Different kinds of production will require different kinds of response, and in the tradition of our predecessors (Harry McCarthy, Roberta Barker, Paul Prescott, Jeremy Lopez) we invite reviewers to tailor and experiment with the form to suit the response, exploring how the ephemeral experience of the performance can be best captured on paper.

Please format your review like this:

Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad

Presented by the **Iraqi Theater Company** at **Riverside Studios**, London, in partnership with the Royal Shakespeare Company. June 27-30, 2012. Adapted and directed by Monadhil Daood. Set and lighting by Jabbar Jodi Allabodi. Costumes by Fadel Qazzaz. Music composed and directed by Ali Khassaf. With Sami Abdulhameed (Teacher), Ahmed Salah Moneka (Romeo), Sarwa Rasool (Juliet), Fikrat Salim (Mercutio), Maimoon Abdalhamza (Montague), Haider Monathir (Capulet), Allawi Hussein (Paris), Ameer Hussein (Benvolio), and others.

KATHERINE STEELE BROKAW, *University of California, Merced*

“The night should be for lovers,” lamented the Father Lawrence-like “Teacher” as the play’s opening sounds—sirens, bombs, machine guns—still rang in the audience’s ears. So began *Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad*, an Arabic adaptation only loosely based on Shakespeare’s play. The RSC commissioned the Iraqi Theater Company to write and perform this work as part of the 2012 World Shakespeare Festival, and in the weeks before the Olympics the company traveled from Baghdad to Stratford-upon-Avon to London. *Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad* was their first play since the official end of combat in Iraq, and scars of war as well as fresh wounds from continued violence formed the context for both artists and characters. As director and adapter Monadhil Daood’s program notes explained, “I am the legitimate son of tragedy... Understand that we live in a place where terrorists break our home over our heads.”

GENERAL GUIDELINES

LENGTH: 1000-1500 words, inclusive of header.

CRITICAL VOICE: “I” in preference to “we.” As a general principle, try to avoid speaking for anyone’s experience without their express consent. You might observe visible/audible reactions, but be cautious in interpretation.

TENSE: As a default, please write about live performance (theater, live broadcasts) in the *past* tense, and recorded performance (film, television) in the *present* tense.

SPELLING AND PUNCTUATION: Use the American style for spelling, periods, and commas throughout the review. Switching your spellchecker to US spelling will automatically alert you to US spelling conventions. Closing quotation marks normally go outside punctuation.

REFERENCING: If quoting from secondary material, please use in-text citations (Jones, 20) and include a bibliography at the end of your review (see general author guidelines). There is no need to provide references for theatrical ephemera (programs, cast lists, post-show talks etc).

COMMON FORMATTING QUERIES

- One space, not two, following periods.
- Use additional possessive apostrophe for all plurals (we prefer **Welles's** to **Welles'**)
- words with multi and post should be spelled as one word (e.g. multicultural, postmodern)
- “Theater company,” “ensemble,” and “audience” may be understood as singular *or* plural as appropriate, but please be consistent in usage.
- **act one** (not **Act I**)
- 5.1.163-64 (to indicate act, scene, lines). We use the most recent Arden edition as our standard source for quotations from Shakespeare.
- Spell out numbers up to 100, e.g. **twenty-six** (not **26**).
- Ellipses should have spaces between (. . .). Parenthetical dashes—like this—should have no spaces.

If in doubt, please consult the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (8th edition, and/or use a recent issue of *Shakespeare Bulletin* as your model.

ARRANGING TICKETS: You are welcome to request complimentary tickets from theaters, as long as the review has been commissioned and agreed, but we cannot guarantee that theaters will offer comps, especially for popular productions.

IMAGES: Please include a high-quality image with your review (300ppi). We must have permission to publish, so please obtain images directly from the theater/company, and if you need assistance please ask the reviews editor. Image captions should be formatted as follows:

Claudius (Nicholas Farrell) and Hamlet (Tom Hiddleston) in *Hamlet*, dir. Kenneth Branagh. RADA, 2018. Photo by Johan Persson, courtesy of RADA.

File names for images should start with your surname and then the name of the play you are reviewing: KirwanMacbeth, for example.

Peter Kirwan
Performance Review Editor
Peter.Kirwan@nottingham.ac.uk