



# *Shakespeare Bulletin*

## Performance Reviews Style Sheet



## 1 Structure

### 1.1 Length

Please aim to make your review 1,000–1,500 words in length, inclusive of header and bibliography, as far as possible. Reviews significantly longer or shorter than this may be returned for further development or cutting before being edited.

### 1.2 Images

Please include a high-quality image with your review, if possible. Ideally this should be at least 300 dpi (dots per inch). Most image files of this quality will be at least 1–2 MB in size. Please supply images as separate files along with your review.

We must have permission to publish any images, so please obtain them directly from the theater/company press office. If you need assistance, please ask the Performance Reviews Editor. Do not copy photographs from websites without explicit permission from the rights holder(s).

### 1.3 Image captions

Your caption should be included below the author credit and above the first paragraph of your review. The caption should be formatted as follows:

**Beatrice (Meav Beaty) and Benedick (Graham Abbey) in *Much Ado About Nothing*, dir. Chris Abraham. Stratford Festival, 2023. Photo by David Hou, courtesy of the Stratford Festival.**

## 2 Style

### 2.1 Journal Style

Shakespeare Bulletin broadly follows the guidelines set down in the most recent *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (currently the 9th edition, 2021), with some tailoring to suit the journal's content.

Please format your review according to the journal's house style, accessed [via this link](#).

## **2.2 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.

## **2.3 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.

## **2.4 Referencing and Quotations**

If quoting from secondary material, please use in-text citations, e.g. (Jackson 20), and include a bibliography (titled “Works Cited”) at the end of your review (see the journal style sheet for more details). There is no need to provide references for theatrical ephemera, e.g. programs, cast lists, post-show talks, etc.

The journal uses the Arden Shakespeare Third Series *Complete Works* as our standard source for Shakespeare quotations. This does not need to be included in the Works Cited. Please use in-text citations with parentheses, e.g. (5.5.18–27).

When including citations for a non-Shakespeare play, editions should be included in Works Cited.

When citing a line spoken in the performance you are reviewing (e.g. if discussing the line delivery of the “To be, or not to be” speech in a production of *Hamlet*), this generally does not need an in-text citation.

## **2.5 Non-English Languages**

The journal does not normally italicize non-English languages in order to avoid typographically othering said languages, except when preferred for clarity. All non-English languages should be respectfully represented with attention to accents, layout, etc.

# **3 Language**

## **3.1 Inclusive Language**

### **3.1.1 Ableism**

The journal avoids any and all ableist language. Authors and editors are asked to be alert to clichés such as “crippling,” “deaf,” “blind,” “lame,” “dumb,” etc.

### **3.1.2 Actors’ Bodies**

The journal actively opposes any and all objectification and prejudicial language. All reviews should be respectful in the language used to describe onstage bodies.

### **3.1.3 Pronouns**

The journal respects the pronouns of actors when discussing the work, and of characters as used in the production (e.g. Vanessa Redgrave’s Prospero was “he,” while Helen Mirren’s Prospera was “she”).

### **3.1.4 Race**

Please be respectful of metaphorical uses of words such as “black” and “white” when given moral value. The journal prefers BIPOC to BAME when discussing groups; but, where possible, the specific identification of an individual actor/character should always be privileged. Checking an actor’s self-identification (e.g. on agents’ websites) is encouraged.

### **3.1.5 Sex and Gender**

The journal prefers to use “male”/“female” only as adjectives, and “man”/“woman” as nouns. The journal typically uses “actor” as gender-neutral, though “actress” for female-identifying actors is acceptable according to the author’s preference.

## **3.2 Critical Voice and Describing Audiences**

Please use “I” in preference to “we.”

It is impossible to know how every member of the audience felt at the performance you attended, or that they all felt the same way. As a general principle, therefore, avoid speaking for anyone’s experience—other than your own—without their express consent.

Where appropriate, you may report observable audience behaviors as evidence of the performance event, but it is important to consider carefully the ethical implications of doing so.

## **3.3 Evaluative Language**

Please aim to avoid purely evaluative language. For example:

- Avoid describing a performance as “effective” or “successful,” without defining the parameters of effect/success.
- Avoid describing a performance as “good” or “bad,” without including detail of what the actor was doing.
- Avoid assessing a performance according to a preconceived notion of what the play *should* look/sound like, or a hypothetical production you went in *expecting* to see.

## **3.4 Fidelity**

“Fidelity” is not a criterion the journal privileges, nor is it a precise or meaningful lens through which to view contemporary performance. Using the language of a production being “faithful to” or “true to” Shakespeare introduces assumptions. The journal encourages authors to take productions on their own terms.

## 4 Formatting

### 4.1 Tracked Changes

The Performance Reviews Editor will provide feedback to you on your review using comments and tracked changes. Where possible, please make any necessary edits to your review also using tracked changes.

If you are using Microsoft Word, tracked changes can be turned on and off by selecting “Review” from the top menu bar, then selecting “Track Changes.” Alternatively, you can use the keyboard shortcut Ctrl + Shift + E.

### 4.2 Layout

Please format the header, author credit and opening paragraph of your review like this:

#### *Much Ado About Nothing*

Presented by the **Stratford Shakespeare Festival** at the **Festival Theatre**, Stratford, Ontario. 29 May–27 October 2023. Directed by Chris Abraham. Additional text by Erin Shields. Designed by Julie Fox. Lights by Arun Srinivasan. Music and sound by Thomas Ryder Payne. With Graham Abbey (Benedick), Anousha Alamian (Sexton), Akosua Amo-Adem (Ursula), Maev Beaty (Beatrice), Michael Blake (Don John), Déjah Dixon-Green (Margaret), Austin Eckert (Claudio), Allison Edwards-Crewe (Hero), Jakob Ehman (Borachio), John Kirkpatrick (Verges), Kevin Kruchkywich (Seacoal), Josue Laboucane (Dogberry), Cyrus Lane (Conrade), Patrick McManus (Leonato), Jameela McNeil (Member of the Watch/Attendant), Danté Prince (Hugh Oatcake/Valet), Glynis Ranney (Member of the Watch/Attendant), Anthony Santiago (Antonio), André Sills (Don Pedro), Gordon Patrick White (Friar Francis), Rylan Wilkie (Balthasar), and Micah Woods (Messenger).

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“It is *exhausting* to be innocent.” This was the message Maev Beaty’s Beatrice gave the audience in Erin Shields’s new opening scene for director Chris Abraham’s *Much Ado About Nothing*. The line seemed to be the framing device through which the play’s female characters were to be understood: there is more to women, Beatrice suggested, than virginity, prettiness, and the hope of a good marriage. The scene reminded me of Emilia’s words to Desdemona in act one scene three of *Othello*: “And have not [women] affections? / Desires for sport? and frailty, as men have?” (4.3.99–100). But as Beatrice’s words were juxtaposed with the image of Allison Edwards-Crewe as Hero admiring herself in front of a giant, lighted circular mirror, I worried that the message was being undercut before the play had begun.