

# SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE

## RESEARCH BULLETIN

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**Findings from the Globe Opening Season**

*The Winter's Tale*

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## Findings from the Opening Season at Shakespeare's Globe.

### *The Winter's Tale*

#### The Rehearsal Process

##### Laying down the principles

The White Company gathered on 7 April 1997 in a temporary rehearsal room on the top floor of a converted warehouse building near London Bridge station<sup>1</sup>. From the outset, the director, David Freeman, lay down a number of ground rules:

- you cannot ignore the authenticity of the reconstruction. In other theatres, you light the stage from all directions, presenting what happens on it like artefacts in a museum. In this space, it is impossible to follow this aestheticising trend. Instead, we have to refer back to productions like Peter Brooks' *Timon of Athens* at the *Bouffes du Nord* Theatre in Paris, where actors were able to speak to the audience because the lights were kept up<sup>2</sup>.
- we have chosen to mark our difference by selecting monochromatic designs for the set and costumes
- the rehearsal time (6 weeks) is too short to allow as much improvisation and pausing as he would like

He underlined the following aspects of the play:

- *The Winter's Tale* is a very charming, very disturbing play, but if you don't believe in oracles, it is just fantasy.
- there is a very sharp break between acts III and IV, which makes *The Winter's Tale* feel like two separate plays if you are not careful
- the way to avoid that problem is to start in a different place, i.e. to concentrate from the very start on act IV.
- the piece is Greek, both in its form of the Romance and in its reference to mythology. Hermione is both Harmony, daughter of Venus and Mars, and Persephone, worshipped under that name in Sicily.
- Each name in the play has a meaning or an animal association: Leontes, the lion, Autolycus, the wolf, Polixenes, the multifold stranger etc.

David Freeman made the point that the Greeks were animists, who believed in metamorphoses. So, rather than taking the piece and trying to make it as close to us as possible, so as to make it more approachable and believable, e.g. by presenting Paulina as a manipulator, he would choose to take the text as earnestly as possible. His view was that this text lends itself neither to irony nor to Freudian analysis, and that the comedy would take care of itself.

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<sup>1</sup> A couple of weeks later the company moved to the ground floor rehearsal room in the same building as the Red Company.

<sup>2</sup> This is the only theatre in Western Europe apart from the *Cartoucherie* that has been consistently offering an experience similar to that of the Globe.

Because David Freeman saw the play as set in an animist world where you believe in oracles, he had the choice of setting it in Athens in 1200 BC rather than 400 BC or in an undefined world influenced by Africa and Asia where animism is still alive. Actors under his direction would attempt to create a world of their own, using African and Asian attitudes as a model. In order to help this process, costumes would be built for the actors and arrive as early as possible so as to avoid the feeling of a fancy-dress ball. They would have to be clothes, not costumes, leaving as much range as possible for body language<sup>3</sup>.

### *Rehearsal principles*

The company was to spend a week exploring the four worlds that form the background of the play:

1. The world of the young Hermione and Leontes
2. The world of the old Hermione and Leontes, which might be seen as the palace of the Sleeping Beauty shortly before the awakening, with the signs of Hermione's trial still visible on stage.
3. The world of the court of Polixenes
4. The world of the Pastoral, where it should be understood how vital goats and sheep were for Ancient Greece but also for Early Modern England: a resource essential for survival, a source of power, the embodiment of all that is wild, unknowable and terrifying.

Some well-known stage-directions have to be dealt with: "Exit pursued by a bear" and "A dance of twelve Satyrs", Time, the tempest during which Perdita is found by the shepherds. No sophisticated stage effects are possible at the Globe, but the Bear was not to be treated as a joke: Nature is very unforgiving in this play. Everyone who is involved with Perdita's loss has to die so that she is really lost. At this point David Freeman had not yet found a way of staging the scene. He envisaged it as 'someone who has had something drastic done to them'.

The twelve Satyrs, on the other hand, were already more or less addressed: they would have to be replaced by a representation of Pan, since the whole cast consists of fifteen actors and there was no budget for extras or dancers. Every actor would take part in making his appearance something extraordinary, and this would also involve the intervention of the above.

Time and the bridge between acts III and IV might be represented by a moving frieze of the *Triumph of Time* as represented by Mantegna or Dürer or as suggested by the tradition of Masques. Time, or Chronos, is a very relevant figure to the story, since he devoured his own children, just as Leontes apparently causes the death of his two children. Later on in the rehearsal process that idea was dropped in favour of Time coming on alone through the yard as a present day drunken down-and-out. The main reasons were the acknowledgment that Time is more of a joke than a serious intervention and the

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<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note that this was also the principle underlying the 'authentic costume' production of *Henry V*, which were always referred to as 'recreated clothing'.

amount of time such a pageant would have added to an already very long production.

The general brief for the rehearsal period was to try out everything but to work fast and with complete intensity at bringing a little madness into this tale, at refusing to dilute a play that is a mystery, not meant to be explained but to be experienced. To that effect, they would concentrate on very physical exercises, aimed at developing the actors' body language.

The rehearsal process would involve improvising the way through the whole play, then trying to keep that improvisatory spirit even with the words. Actors and director would attempt to discover how this text is "the best you can come up with given these characters". And they would learn to deal with the magic of these words, which can sometimes become an oppression.

The reference script would be the First Folio text, with the principle that actors and director should work the text out for themselves, rather than ratify the choices of one editor over another, especially given their attitude to punctuation. *The Winter's Tale* is one of the Folio plays which have been set by a compositor who had a liking for parentheses, and these can actually be very helpful for actors. No cuts were envisaged at this stage, except some in act IV. David Freeman already knew that the work would not be over by the time of the previews, and that changes and cuts would still be possible at that late stage. Two editions of the text were used for reference in rehearsals: the recent Oxford World Classics edition by Stephen Orgel, and the Penguin edition by Ernest Schanzer.

The challenge posed by the play is the huge number of changes of scene. To David Freeman, accepting not to change anything physically would be a defeat, and the idea was to use "Triumphs" to effect these changes and get closer to a 5 act piece than to a 2 part play made up of 3 + 2 acts. Each act might be preceded by a short break rather than having one long central interval. Such decisions would probably be made during the previews. This meant however that extra scenes would have to be inserted, drawing the play toward a sort of Masque, with sandcastles representing cities as well as the *Triumph of Time*. The idea of a concluding Jig was not excluded: it might be solved by a return of the Procession of Time, or an equivalent of the dance of 12 satyrs, since Greek tragedies were also followed by 'Satyr plays'. The actors strongly resisted the idea of a comic afterpiece. As it turned out, the performance would be so long that only two such scenes were added: a mood-setting prologue where Polixenes was presented gifts by all the members of Leontes' Court, and the dance of Pan and Flora that replaced the Dance of Twelve Satyrs (IV.4). The return of Time was reduced to Autolycus' re-donning his down-and-out raincoat and jumping from the stage into the yard rather than exiting through the central opening with the rest of the cast.

#### *Production principles*

Props and costumes would be treated as a single set, combining to create a fantasy world inspired by Third World cultures, characterised by recycling and

rich monochromatic colour schemes: red for Sicily, dark blue for Bohemia, red earth alternating with white sheepskins, with only a few stage props such as tyres to represent a shrine and a throne, cushions and sandbags, pieces of fabric. Important props would include vast quantities of flowers, real or fake jewelry rather than coins in the box laid by Antigonus next to Perdita, unusual musical instruments (e.g. animal skulls, Tibetan gongs etc). The oracle would most probably not be a paper but a little shrine carried by Cleomenes and Dion - an early idea was to have a cage containing an animal, mirroring the cage in which Hermione was to be brought onto stage in the Trial scene.

No steps would be used to pass from the yard to the stage: only Autolycus/Time effects that passage, and he should vault onto the stage. It was envisaged at an early time that a cut would be made into the stage to make this easier, but later on it was decided that whatever difficulty Nicholas Le Prevost did have would be part of the way he played the scene. As a rule, he asked members of the audience for help, much to the amusement of the crowd. This was one of many changes that was brought in during technical rehearsals and previews.

Since technical rehearsals would not involve work on lighting, which is usually the heaviest item on the agenda, they would be devoted to any necessary re-staging, further work on the text and costumes. Music would arrive early enough for music cueing not to be a major issue in the "techs".

### **First stage Rehearsals : developing body language and creating worlds**

**In the first two weeks of rehearsal, actors concentrated on improvisation and physical discovery of their characters and the two worlds (Sicily and Bohemia) they were to create.**

#### *Body Language*

In the very first rehearsal, they were asked to play the animal associated with their character's name or guessed temperament. David Freeman asked them to make him believe that a human being can become an animal, by concentrating on the colours that attract them, the way they use their muscles, the way they see. The Old Shepherd became a sheep, Autolycus a wolf, Leontes a lion, Dorcas a cat etc.

In the following week, they used junk clothes, clay and wax, old bottles and tyres, getting to know the African-Asian attitude of putting familiar objects to unexpected use.

The emphasis on a different body language had two justifications:

The actors cannot be picked out with light on the Globe stage; the audience will be at least as colourful as them; the stage itself is brilliantly painted. Therefore shock and surprise effects are dependent on establishing incredible stillness, then making one extraordinarily powerful sudden movement. Otherwise the

audience's attention will inevitably be drawn to the surroundings.

Animists have a strong relationship to nature and in particular the earth. Actors would have to learn to stand very tall and straight, to use only their legs in single clean-cut movements, to crouch close to the earth, to walk and dance in strict rhythms.

### *Ritual*

The actors were taken through various exercises in ritual. Two of these were particularly important. On one occasion, they were given clay and each of them was instructed to model a god and build a shrine for it, then pray to it and perform a ritual dance. On another occasion, they were asked to discover what it is to perform a human sacrifice: the victim has to be seduced and cajoled into willingly accepting the sacrifice, which would involve a very gentle approach, blindfolding and guiding, massaging, caressing them etc. Pairs would form quite spontaneously, and each partner would be both victim and then priest. Interestingly, all the pairs that formed carried a particular significance for the characters in the play, although at this point there had been very little character study and no text work at all. The pairs were the following:

Autolycus with Mopsa, Antigonus with Leontes, Perdita with Dorcas (Mamilius with Emilia), Old Shepherd (Archidamus) with Dion, Paulina with Polixenes, Young Shepherd or rather Lord with Cleomenes, Florizel (or the Messenger announcing the death of Mamilius) with Hermione, Camillo alone<sup>4</sup>.

This ritual work would be later on integrated into several scenes, most notably the Oracle in the Trial scene (III.2), the Pastoral (IV.4), the animating of the statue in the final scene (V.3). Dumb scenes which were directly inspired from the improvisations were added to the production. The main one was a five minute prologue during which all the members of the Sicilian court heaped gifts in front of Polixenes and Archidamus. At the culmination of this scene, Leontes offered his own crown to Polixenes. The gift-giving ceremony performed at the beginning of *The Winter's Tale* was accompanied by music, which helped convey the feeling of the culture in which the three first acts take place: rich and exotic, given to excess, it is a land of contained violence expressed by the sensuousness and controlled stillness of its inhabitants' bodies.

This dumb show fulfilled several other functions, one of which was to signify that the play was about to begin. At the Globe, there is no curtain, and each production has to devise a way of informing the audience that performance is now starting. In *Henry V*, the atmosphere-setting drumming prologue ended with a flourish that led straight into the first lines of the Chorus; in *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* musicians and actors performed a sort of introductory jig which told the story of the meeting of the two lovers; in *The Maid's Tragedy*, brass instruments situated in various parts of the auditorium played an

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<sup>4</sup> Howard Saddler, the actor who was cast for the part, later withdrew and was replaced at short notice by Ade Sapara, who had to integrate himself into the production without any of the preparation the other actors had undergone.

introductory fanfare, which was probably the most "authentic" approach to signalling the opening of the performance, for as we know from De Witt's sketch of the Swan and other contemporary evidence, this was normally done by a trumpet blown from the turret.

#### *A note on the difficulty of having a free hand at the Globe*

After two or three weeks of rehearsing, two of which had been spent mostly on improvisation and work on developing physicality, discovering alien modes of behaviour and shedding actors' inhibitions, the company and director realised that they were apparently not all on the same wave-length. One rehearsal turned into a discussion of the necessity to start from the text rather than a director's concept. A special meeting was then called, and all voiced their worries. Some actors were still concerned that not enough attention was being devoted to the text, and expressed their misgivings on the lack of a clear focus of the rehearsal process, although others felt that the initial work had been creating the landscape in which they were to live in the next few months. David Freeman confessed that the Globe challenged him to the point that it was the first time in his career as a director that he had no idea beforehand of the way the space was going to work. He insisted that the improvisation work had proved extraordinarily beneficial and rewarding, but agreed that it was now time to concentrate on more text and character work. His intention had been that the play should be performed without interval, and he expressed his concern that it might be impossible to achieve a three hour concentrating span on stage without having done so in rehearsal (equity imposes breaks during rehearsal time). He stated once again that *The Winter's Tale* is not a psychological piece but a mythological piece, one of the only truly religious plays after Mediaeval religious drama. He felt that he had quite deliberately attempted to make the actors "as uncomfortable as hell" in order to foster their creativity rather than let them do what they were already good at.

#### **Working on the story**

##### *The Trial or the Blasphemy of Leontes*

The Trial scene was to be "the biggest thing in the play", because of the incredible weight of Leontes' blasphemy: his refusal to believe the oracle would unleash total pandemonium. In order to reach this level of intensity, Cleomenes and Dion would have to speak the words of the oracle as if they were themselves in a prophetic trance, smashing something at each revelation. The concept of the final scene evolved slowly over the rehearsal period, thanks to the flexibility of Chris Porter's acting as Cleomenes: he became almost an animal, gone blind as a result of the encounter with the oracle, his face painted white. Leaping into Leontes' arms at the climax of the revelations, he spits on the King who denies the oracle, followed by the whole court, including the women who had until then been standing segregated at the back of the stage. At the news of the death of Mamillius, the cage in which Hermione had been standing collapses onto the ground, and all bodies find themselves writhing on the floor in an agony of shock and despair. The tableau this constituted could maybe stand a comparison with Giulio Romano's Giants – the actors certainly piled on

each other as in a mannerist painting in front of the trompe l'oeil façade of the *Frons Scenae*, and after all, Romano is supposed to have carved the statue of Hermione (V-2 l.95)<sup>5</sup>. As Hermione is carried into the central opening, her women start wailing in the ancient Greek / Mediterranean fashion, anticipating and accompanying Paulina's announcement of her death<sup>6</sup>. Among the din, it was not always easy to understand the announcement of the death of Mamillius, but David Freeman felt that the bloodshed was less important than the blasphemy, and the way the story moves from the real world into the realm of magic. During the technical rehearsals, music cueing was changed so that the servant's message of death became clear.

### *The Pastoral, or the Rites of Spring*

The Pastoral was a major concern and much improvisation was devoted to it. David Freeman explained repeatedly that he envisaged it as one long ritual scene, with four outsiders: Florizel, who in effect distracts Perdita from her duty to represent Flora; Autolycus, who has multiple guises but effects his transformation not to become a God but to gain a meal; Polixenes and Camillo, who always stand on the sides. The whole scene was conceived of as one long wait for the arrival of Pan and the explosion of a pagan feast. The other single most important aspect of that scene was seen to be Perdita's transformation into Flora, as happening in a state of trance induced by collective preparation. The culmination of this preparation would be shown in the central opening, that would really be used as a discovery space, a magic place in the background.

Every gesture in the scene has a ritual value: Florizel, a welcome stranger, is to be brought on blindfolded by the shepherds, in a sort of initiation process. He is discovering the darker side of the country: he will not be allowed into the magic circle in which Perdita stands, and in fact he should seriously take her for Flora when the blindfold is removed. Perdita is the focus of this scene because for her it is a real initiation: the other shepherds are enacting a custom, and they must concentrate on their own transformation while acknowledging the arrival of Flora, because they are all dependent on the success of her transformation.

The Old Shepherd, who is in charge of the whole ceremony, chides Perdita with real anger for not taking her role seriously, and she reacts with equivalent violence. The shepherds and shepherdesses acknowledge this exchange, then lay sheepskins on the ground in order to create the ritual space. They become sheep when Perdita welcomes Polixenes, both as a sign that the transformation is

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<sup>5</sup> Guilio Romano is referred to as the author of the statue of Hermione, and reproductions of his work were well known in London, though the English were obviously more interested in their erotic dimension. Encyclopaedia Britannica tells us: "The principal rooms of the Palazzo del Te are the Sala di Psiche, with erotic frescoes of the loved of the gods and the fantastic Sala dei Giganti. This showpiece of trompe l'oeil (illusionistic) decoration is painted from floor to ceiling with a continuous scene of the giants attempting to storm Olympus and being repulsed by the gods. On the ceiling, Jupiter hurls his thunderbolts, and the spectator is made to feel that he, like the giants, is crushed by the mountains that topple onto him, writhing in the burning wreckage. Even the fireplace was incorporated into the decoration, and the flames had a part to play."

<sup>6</sup> Some actors felt that this was going beyond the text, since the shock of the announcement is lessened if we have already guessed the news from the sound of the wailing. David Freeman however thought that Leontes' disbelief should be balanced by the audience's knowledge that Hermione will really die.



effected and as a form of comic relief after the metamorphosis of Perdita. Giving flowers to Polixenes is also part of the ritual, and should be done with great intensity by Perdita, whose example would then be followed by all the participants in the feast. Perdita/Flora must at that point be the tallest thing on stage, which is why she welcomes the strangers standing on the back of one of the 'sheep'. When she offers flowers to Polixenes and Camillo, she raises her arms, revealing her costume which is entirely covered with flowers. The shepherds then pick them from her dress and join into the ritual welcoming. In fact, this point is a return to the ritual after the free improvisation on the theme of "pidenese", the most explicit statement of an idea which, as David Freeman stated, is a leitmotiv of the play.

The whole Pastoral was conceived as a tableau based on Botticelli's Primavera, a fine example - as David Freeman pointed out - of the neo-platonist approach shared by Shakespeare and the Italian Renaissance painter. Mercury, for instance, is directly represented by Autolycus, who states he was "lytter'd under Mercurie" (IV-3-1). The shepherds are called "petty Gods" by Florizel (IV-4-1), and so they must become, both before and during Perdita and Florizel's initial dialogue. This is not an ordinary conversation, though it is not part of the ritual: the shepherds must acknowledge this fact and give focus to it, which means they cannot just behave like an on-stage audience. When Florizel enters, he encounters a real pantheon, where he should be able to recognise Bacchus, the three Graces (Beauty, Chastity and Pleasure), Silenus, Cupid, Iris, Zephyrs etc. Florizel is the only one who does not become a God, but is in charge of describing them<sup>7</sup>.

In the final staging, the petty Gods only really became somewhat recognisable after the dance of Pan and Flora (the Young Shepherd entered as Bacchus straddling an ass). Pan was played - by Mark Lewis-Jones (Leontes) - with a Bull's head, in direct reference to many Cretan myths (the Minotaur, Io, Pasiphae) and to Florizel's line: "Jupiter, / Became a Bull, and bellow'd", which was unfortunately cut at a later stage.

Body language and concentration were deemed essential for an efficient staging of this scene: because it is very crowded (the whole cast is present on stage), there was a potential risk of messiness and lack of focus. David Freeman felt the solution to this was

- That actors should not worry about being in each other's way - whatever they did, they would always be.
- That their bodies should always be fascinating, something that could be achieved by not 'going light' on the intensity, by really *getting* there rather than *being* there without a journey, by keeping their backs always straight.
- That they should use the whole of the space and open up to all sides.

### *Ritual in the Globe Theatre*

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<sup>7</sup> Sadly, the lines in which Florizel tells of the gods' transformation had to be cut later on because the production was too long.

The inscription of a ritual circle on the stage led to interesting discoveries about the use of the theatre. The circle was of necessity fitted to the square created by the two pillars. It was physically defined with the sheepskins laid by the shepherds, but actually reflected the circle of the zodiac on the Heavens and the greater circle of the theatre itself. Because it was conceived in a rectangular rehearsal room, the props felt necessary, but once it was represented on stage, the effect appeared less powerful, not least because the circle of the zodiac extends into the Lords' Rooms. To reflect it accurately, the circle on stage should have gone right into the discovery space. Seen from above however, the visual effect was remarkable, especially from the Lords' Rooms. The white carpet of sheepskins circumscribed a circle of red earth which created a microcosmic version of the Globe Theatre, complete with 'audience' of all classes on all sides, making clear that the playhouse itself is emblematic of the terrestrial globe.

The characters who were allowed to stand in the centre of the circle - Perdita, the Old Shepherd, Pan - automatically found themselves under the Heavens trap, a spot generally accepted to be the 'power position' on the Globe stage because all the audience sightlines converge there and the pillars cause the least amount of hindrance. The characters who stayed on the fringes thus almost became part of the audience. This in fact emphasised the surprisingly persistent absence of audience in the yard on the sides of the stage. *The Winter's Tale* was probably one of the productions that most acknowledged the presence of audience on all sides in the Opening Season. But because most of the time the actors were instructed to be remote from the world around them and completely engrossed in the two worlds created on stage, the potential advantage of standing very close to the actors on the sides was actually lost by this artificially created distance. The only character who consistently interacts with the audience, Autolycus, played most of his scenes on the very front of the stage, often hiding behind the pillars or circling around them, which meant that it was essential not to be too far back of the pillar to take advantage of his hilarious interventions.

The double transformation of the shepherds - into gods and into sheep - is an interesting reflection of the dilemmas created by doubling. The actors playing Leontes, Hermione, Paulina, Antigonus, Dion and Cleomenes all doubled as shepherds, and although they had exchanged their Sienna brown Sicilian clothes for dark blue Bohemian garb, they remained far more recognisable than the actors who changed social classes or sexes in the production of *Henry V*. Yet the inner and outer transformation demanded by the production made it clear that adequate acting can make doubling work even with minimal disguising on the naked space of the stage. Only one critic pointed out that he was disturbed to recognise Hermione among the shepherdesses<sup>8</sup>.

In the pastoral, separation between groups was effected in multiple ways: first, those who were part of the ritual against those who were excluded (Autolycus, Polixenes, Camillo, Florizel), then youth against age (by Perdita who not only mocked Polixenes and Camillo by secretly trumpeting the line "I think they are

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<sup>8</sup> The director was careful to create a long gap between the last appearance in part one and first appearance in part two of the actors who played minor parts in act III then returned as major parts in acts IV and V (the shepherds and Autolycus).

given / To men of middle age", but also by drawing her maiden friends into the circle of her love for Florizel in the lines "I would I had some Flowres o'th Spring...", leaving the older folk on the fringes. The reference she immediately makes to Proserpina was supposed to induce a further state of trance as the mystery of the separation between life and death was evoked, but this aspect faded away rather quickly as the season went on. Finally, men and women separated for the dance, prior to the almost orgiastic explosion of the feast brought on by the dance of Pan and Flora, and then rudely interrupted by the anger of Polixenes.

### **Character study and text work**

Because the working script was the First Folio text, after approximately two weeks of improvising and attempting to shed their 'English actors' inhibitions', much time was then devoted with small groups of actors to making sense of the text of their scenes, an approach Mark Lewis-Jones called 'invaluable', though he himself confessed that after over 70 performances he still did not understand some of Leontes' lines! David Freeman, who is more accustomed to directing opera than Shakespeare, albeit with a very unconventional approach, was concerned that the text should be understood by audiences unused to Elizabethan language, and encouraged actors to make the text flow rather than pause at the ends of lines or emphasise the iambic rhythm of the verse. He made it clear that he would not tell them how to speak their lines - that was not what he was interested in. He did demand however that they avoid breaking up scenes into a 'disjointed succession of songs', and insisted that actors should find the internal logic underlying the shifts in intensity or mood.

The director's paroxysmic approach to some of the scenes and the hollow, resonant acoustic quality of the rehearsal room often meant that actors had to slow their diction down and increase the volume. This led to problems once the cast moved onto the Globe stage, as the acoustics and spatial quality in the theatre differed considerably from those of the studio. It took some of the actors several weeks to adjust their vocal emission to the space, in spite of the constant presence of a voice coach. Marked differences in performance quality between the beginning and the end of the season included the ability to modulate the level of intensity and to increase the speed of delivery without losing clarity.

#### *Autolycus*

The character of Autolycus was marginalised to a certain extent deliberately by the director's decision not to work on his scenes until quite late into the rehearsing schedule. As a result, his songs, a very important component of the character could not be composed until quite late. Nicholas Le Prevost stated that once he had the songs, he finally knew who he was, but Claire van Kampen was only able to write them after the scenes had been rehearsed.

The margins are a defining term for this character, as he is constantly playing tricks on others and never becomes fully integrated with either of the two societies he is in contact with. As a result, it is to be expected that much of the actor's playing should be on the fringes of the stage, with the pillars consistently

used as his hiding-place. He is able to put the audience on his side at all times, simply by keeping them informed of his plans - though not of the manner in which he will carry them out.

David Freeman was struck, just like Simon Forman in 1611<sup>9</sup>, by the importance of the character and his assimilation with Mercury, both as god and as element, and he also pointed out the properties he shares with Hermes, the Greek equivalent of the god Mercury. Autolycus enacts many symbolic roles at the same time: the missing element of alchemy and therefore the one who effects changes; the master of hermetic secrets who is the revealer of truths; the messenger of the gods who brings good news; the traveller and therefore the story-teller; the dissembler and entertainer; the musician and quintessential actor. As such, he holds a special fascination for the characters in the world of the Pastoral when he intrudes into it: dressed in a many-coloured cloak containing alchemist's paraphernalia but also the trinkets that African hawkers usually have on offer, hidden behind dark glasses and a false beard, he frightens to attract. The Clown, Dorcas and Mopsa may well have their little private argument - everyone else is far more intent on carefully exploring the contents of the cloak Autolycus has laid on the ground, wide-eyed like children and careful like cats. David Freeman was hardly stretching the text, since Autolycus himself describes this fascination in IV.4.12, when he says "they throng who should buy first, as if my Trinkets had beene hallowed, and brought a benediction to the buyer". In this disguise Autolycus purports to be an old introverted man who might go up in smoke at any time. The fact that he apparently does not need the inhabitants of Bohemia makes them need him. He enters and squats in the 'power' position beneath the Heavens trap, becoming the smallest character on stage, and gradually sucks up all the other characters by refusing to get involved in their arguments or games, by remaining dead serious as he presents his wares, defends the truth of the tall tales he sells as ballads, or sings with Mopsa and Dorcas.

The songs written by Claire Van Kampen for Autolycus were an important factor in the definition of the character. They were conceived as snatches from famous songs that have been endlessly heard and reheard until they have become appropriated in a bastardised form to the point of not being directly recognisable. This approach can be compared to the principle of ballads, where new words are written to familiar tunes which the audience recognises instantly<sup>10</sup>. This practice is exemplified in IV.4-6 when Autolycus sings with Dorcas and Mopsa "to the tune of two maids wooing a man", of which Dorcas tells us "We had the tune on't, a month agoe." Nicholas Le Prevost was encouraged to modulate and improvise on the tunes, to try to draw in the audience (on stage and in the yard) to the point that they should join in or dance

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<sup>9</sup> Simon Forman devotes on third of his account of the performance of *The Winter's Tale* at the Globe to the character of Autolycus, "the rogue that came in all tattered like clot-pixie". Being a quack doctor and astrologer, he was quite logically attracted to a character 'littered under Mercury', protector of thieves, and concentrated on "...how he changed apparel with the King of Bohemia his son, and then how he turned courtier, etc." The moral he derives of the play also applied very aptly to his own life: "Beware of trusting feigned beggars or fawning fellows."

<sup>10</sup> Experts like Douglas Wootton can recognise the tune a ballad was written to simply from the metre of the text, and no doubt many Elizabethans could do the same.

along. As it turned out, the songs all became comic numbers in their own right but the interaction they generated with the audience was not musical. In his very first song, "When Daffadils begin to peere" (IV.3), Nicholas Le Prevost ran onto stage as if out of breath and frightened, and seemed to sing to reassure himself, using an untuned violin as a guitar. This trick opened up a world of extemporising possibilities without the need to add a single word to the text. In the second song (which immediately follows on the first after a couple of lines), Autolycus would put his hat down on the floor at the very front of the stage and encourage the audience to throw coins into it - usually with success<sup>11</sup>. When he came on in disguise in IV.4-5, the words "Lawne as white as driven Snow", that sound totally mysterious to most twentieth century audience members, were combined with the turban and great cloak into a snake-charming song that literally hypnotised the shepherds, justifying his later claim that they were in a state of 'Lethargie' (IV.4.12)

### *Cleomenes and Dion*

David Freeman pointed out the difficulty for audiences of the passing scenes in Shakespeare's plays where secondary characters appear for a few lines. He stressed the fact that usually by the time spectators have worked out who they were, they have missed the cardinal point. Act III scene 1 illustrates this problem: it was rehearsed to show the transformation effected by the oracle on Cleomenes (Chris Porter) and the intensity of the two courtiers' mission. However, when the total timing of the production became too long, the scene was cut entirely and replaced by a dumb show: the two characters simply came on stage in all their weirdness, Cleomenes tied on a leash like a wild animal, Dion struggling to hold on to the reins like Phaeton on Apollo's chariot. The audience had no chance of working out who they were, although they also appeared in the prologue as members of the Sicilian court. But the scene was sufficient to operate a transition between Leontes' self-pitying of II.3 and the cruelty of the trial, while at the same time fulfilling the traditional function of a dumb-show: giving a foretaste of the scene to come and preparing for the extraordinary shock of the king's blasphemy on hearing the words of the oracle.

### *Leontes*

Trying to make sense of the first scenes, David Freeman was reminded of conversations that have gone on for so long into the night that both parties long for only one thing, to separate, yet there is an effect of extreme tiredness where the host is dying for the guest to go but can do nothing else than insist on his staying - and then becomes angry that he was not able to free himself from the situation. Thus Leontes piles presents up in front of Polixenes, and insists on his staying yet a few more days, then suddenly, on his acceptance, is overcome by violent jealousy. At no point does Leontes become an evil man: in this production it was understood that this could happen to any man, and in the scene with Mamillius (I-2-2) where he describes his plight, the King on the Globe

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<sup>11</sup> Nicholas Le Prevost collected his 'earnings' as a token of the reality of the interaction between the character and the audience and a reminder of the harshness of the life of actors in the Renaissance. (See interview)

stage naturally took the men of the audience into his confidence and created visible embarrassment among them - rather more than had been anticipated in the rehearsal room.

### *Paulina*

She is a shaman, holder of magic powers and when she invokes 'magick', it is felt to be an implacable truth. There was no notion in this production that she could have been a manipulator. Instead, she took on the mythological role of Nemesis or an Erynnia, one who has the power to purify or reduce to ashes. In the final scene, she creates a magic circle which makes it possible to re-create the links severed by time and thus force Hermione to come back to life.

### **Solving 'problem' scenes and stage directions at the Globe**

#### *The prison (II-2)*

This scene was one that actress Joy Richardson was never comfortable with, because the director had chosen to play it in a confined part of the stage in order to convey the impression of imprisonment. Different areas were tried out - near a pillar, in the central opening, with the brief that the actors should not move away from it. In the end, the area in front of one of the side openings was retained (stage left). Paulina's servant knocked on the door then withdrew through the other. The gaoler came out then fetched Emilia, leaving Paulina self-consciously remote from the audience. The effect of confinement was successfully conveyed by the actors' discomfort, but from a narrative point of view the scene could be said to be a failure. Joy Richardson said: "I had to remain there because of the way entrances and exits work. I've never been happy about it, because I have my back to two thirds of the audience, and it's vital information I have to give. It's my first scene as Paulina, and I just feel more cut off than I want to be."

#### *Perdita as Babe*

### **'The good Queene/(For she is good) hath brought you forth a daughter,/Heere 'tis (II-3)**

In Act II, the baby was represented by a bundle of cloths, which stretched the spectators' imagination to a certain extent - especially when Paulina compares its face to Leontes' features. At the Globe, spectators are closer to the actors than in any other theatre, and that particular scene was played on the very front, between the corner of the stage and one of the pillars, so that it was quite evident that this was no real baby. Yet the suspension of disbelief modern audiences are capable of at the Globe has proved greater than anticipated: when Leontes threatened to kill the baby himself ('The Basterd-braynes with these my proper hands/Shall I dash out.' II-3-3) and fetched a sword for Antigonus to swear by, groundlings shuddered and averted their faces in anguish. This was partly achieved because the actors playing Paulina (Joy Richardson) and Antigonus (Andrew Bridgmont) and the courtiers had been

instructed by the director to create the feeling that this baby is in danger, and found so many physical ways of expressing their concern and protectiveness for the child that the bundle of rags was effectively transformed.

### **Enter Antigonus, a Mariner, Babe (III-3)**

This scene follows hard on the trial, requiring a complete change of atmosphere after the cataclysm of the revelations and death of Hermione. In Act III, it was decided to have a 'live' baby on stage. This trick was effected thanks to the "nautical" dumb scene devised to effect the transition between the Sicilian court and the deserts of Bohemia: all the actors who did not play in the following scene came on with large pieces of camouflage canvas that represented the sea or the sails of Antigonus' ship, and ran around shaking them as if they were flapping in the wind. No sound effects other than those provided by the music were used, and the action only lasted thirty or forty seconds during which Anna-Livia Ryan (who played Perdita) had time to lie down without being noticed, and be covered with the discarded cloths. Only her fingers and toes were visible and she wailed so convincingly like a baby that on several occasions real babies in the auditorium answered her (including this writer's own daughter). In this instance, many people felt that David Freeman had underestimated the possibilities offered by the Globe for noises 'within' or 'above' to suggest stormy weather. The Heavens trap was not available because it was set up for the flowers in act IV, but the cannon and other devices could probably have been used quite effectively. However the music provided much of the atmosphere in this scene, with the introduction of Balinese gongs for the first time, and many other exotic sounds which created the feeling of strangeness and being in another land, while conveying the urgency of the oncoming catastrophe.

### **Enter Time, the Chorus (IV-1)**

When Time came in later on and spoke of the sixteen year-old Perdita, the Old Shepherd helped her rise and they exited together through the central opening, giving a silent demonstration of the passing of time and echoes of the creation of man. Unfortunately, because this took place just behind the character of Time, audience sitting or standing in the centre completely missed the point - giving, for once, an advantage to those sitting on the sides. However David Freeman insisted that Anna-Livia Ryan's face not be visible since audience would still associate her features with Mamillius whose part she played in act I. This dumb show replaced the planned Triumph of Time and concluded part one of the performance, shifting the beginning of part two to the second scene of Act IV.

#### *Exit pursued by a Beare (III-3)*

This stage direction has been discussed so often that it seems that no director can ever come up with a satisfactory solution. The style of this production precluded any realistic disguise - which would have been 'authentic' practice as

far as we know<sup>12</sup>. Over the weeks of rehearsing, an intriguing chain of transformations emerged simply from the sequence of movements of bodies on stage in act III. When, in the trial scene, Hermione swooned upon hearing of her son's death, she was carried into the central opening, which was used for the first time as an acting space ('discovery space'). There she was left lying dead by Paulina who later on led Leontes out via one of the side exits. There she remained lying during the tempest. When Antigonus told of his vision, she rose, a live illustration of the dream he was recounting. Then, instead of melting into the air 'with shriekes', she blackened her face and donned bear's claws, becoming herself the instrument of the death she has herself announced to Antigonus - who has in any case misunderstood the meaning of the apparition, since he believes her guilty. The logic of the transformation was twofold: it stemmed directly from the practicalities of the staging, and it neatly presented Hermione as the protector of her baby's secret, ensuring that her identity would only be revealed when they were confronted in Sicilia. Audiences unfamiliar with the play remained baffled by this interpretation.

#### *A dance of twelve Satyres (IV-4)*

Modern conditions and budget restrictions meant that no extras could be brought in for a dance that may well have fitted in with the concept of the production, since Satyrs are eminently Dionysian deities. The Pastoral featured a dance of the shepherds, but the 'dance of twelve Satyres' was transformed into a very brief and solemn dance of Pan and Flora in all their regalia: a bull's head for Pan, a peacock-like head-dress woven with flowers for Perdita - the only gesture made by the designer, Tom Philips, in the direction of the lavishness of an Inigo Jones Masque costume. Garlands of flowers were released from the Heavens trap, the only use of either of the traps in this production. The dance was followed by a Bacchanalian return of the shepherds with Autolycus singing his final song amid the din and chaos. The revels were only interrupted by the anger of Polixenes.

#### *Sicilia, 16 years later (act V)*

All the characters came on looking and behaving older, with sticks, including the statue of Hermione. Though this device could seem a little schematic, David Freeman defended it on the basis that the story itself is naïve, and that is part of its power. Otherwise, you would need film-quality make-up, and have to adopt a completely different attitude to the problem of illusion.

#### *Ile draw the Curtaine (V-3)*

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<sup>12</sup> The Globe was of course the neighbour of the Bear Baiting arena, and some historians have wondered whether a real bear may have been used on the Elizabethan stage. Bears have all but disappeared in Europe partly because they were so easy to tame, and it may not be entirely impractical to imagine a real bear on stage. It is, of course, generally accepted the Bear was played by a man in disguise as a Masques, and that it was done quite consciously as a joke, looking ahead to the wild gambols of the twelve satyres. See Muriel Bradbrook's discussion of the topic in *The Living Moment*, p. 206-214.



The positioning of the statue of Hermione was a controversial issue at the Globe. It seems fairly evident that it was meant to be revealed in the discovery space: it is an opening closed by a hanging, and Paulina and Leontes repeatedly talk about curtains. Experience with the production of *Henry V* has also shown that the greater part of the audience, especially those sitting in the Lords' Rooms, cannot see the scene that is discovered in that space, which explains why Polixenes and Camillo need to describe the scene. Having the statue so remote from the audience might increase the sense of magic, and if the actress is not seen to be breathing, she may indeed be taken for a statue for a split second. During rehearsals in studio, different locations were tried out for the statue: in the discovery space and gradually farther forward, until it was decided that Hermione should stand more or less at the same point as the cage in the trial scene, just below the Heavens trap, far enough from the audience to conceal her breathing. A curtain hanging from a hoop, held up by the ladies in attendance, was lowered and raised as instructed by Paulina and Leontes. The effect was very harmonious, with the hoop reminiscent of the shape of discovery spaces as figured in many 17th century engravings. Hermione stood on a small pedestal of sandbags, but the complete cast standing around her made seeing the details of the action quite difficult, so that the onstage commentary by Polixenes and Camillo was felt to be absolutely necessary. It also meant that the actors did not need to worry about standing in each other's way but on the contrary to rely on speech to convey the sequence of events. Audience reactions to this staging of the scene have been very varied. On the whole, a general hush prevailed, as in the very moving parts of the trial scene, but the sense of remoteness and magic seems to have had the effect of making the emotion less immediately palpable to many audience members.

## **Blocking**

### **Using the whole stage**

Many of the blocking choices derived from the principles described in section 1. The staging was conceived as a succession of contrasts between extreme stillness and very violent movement, both within scenes and between scenes. Landmarks on the stage delimited playing areas: Leontes' throne was set in front of the stage right pillar in act II, on the inner side of the stage left pillar in act V. As a result, some scenes were played either in front of one pillar or in the line between the two pillars, which means that a large part of the audience could not see them. This was compensated by the alternating of playing areas: the prison scene was played in front of the stage left door, immediately followed by Paulina's confronting Leontes in front of the stage right pillar. After Camillo revealed the plot against his life to Polixenes, both characters ran out from the stage left pillar to the stage left door, through which Hermione, Mamillius and the ladies had just entered, crossing the stage diagonally to go and sit in front of the stage right pillar. Thus, because of this localised use of the whole stage, entrances and exits overlapped seamlessly, keeping the story going thanks to quick transitions, with most added pauses being introduced within scenes. Most props were carried off by the actors themselves: stage hands were only required during the interval to clear the collapsed cage and cloths.

In I-2, in order to talk him into staying, Hermione went over to Polixenes, who was already busy taking his leave from courtiers by the stage left pillar, crossing the whole stage widthwise and leaving Leontes to observe from a distance. Leontes then had to travel the same distance before he could speak the line: 'Is he woon yet?', justifying the question, since he could not possibly have heard the dialogue from that far. The scene became reminiscent of *Othello* IV-1, where the Moor cannot hear Cassio and Bianca's words.

In IV-3, the words 'prosper you sweet sir' gave the clown enough time to cross the whole stage diagonally and exit for Autolycus to deliver his explanatory aside unheard, though the Folio actually marks *Exit* before that cue. But Autolycus himself used the whole 4 lines of his song to exit from pillar to door in a straight line, while the old shepherd entered via the central opening for the next scene.

### **Integrating the pillars**

The pillars were mostly not perceived as a hindrance by the director and the actors made imaginative use of them: they served to delimit particular rooms in the palace, though once this feeling had been established, the actors would mostly move into the rest of the space.

- In I-1 Mamillius hid behind a pillar and sprang out to frighten Camillo and Polixenes.
- In II-3 Leontes fetched a sword from behind it for Antigonus to swear on, creating an effect of surprise and shock as both the character and the audience thought he might use it to kill the baby.
- In IV-3 Autolycus hid behind one when the Clown came on and took some of his clothes off to pretend he had been robbed.
- In IV-4-12 Autolycus hid behind one, which then became a pivot around which Camillo and the young lovers followed him, then caught him and cornered him, forcing him to change clothes with Florizel.
- In IV-4-13 Autolycus hid behind the other pillar as the shepherds entered with the box, in order to remove his false beard and play the courtier. To make them go off, he pretended to urinate against the pillar, and delivered the final explanation of his projects to the audience.
- In V-2-5 it was the shepherds who cornered Autolycus in front of a pillar to make him swear to 'amend [his] life'.
- In V-3 the whole cast/court walked around the pillar to come on stage, to give the impression of walking through Paulina's 'Gallerie' before reaching the site of the statue.

### **The yard**

David Freeman was the director who used the yard least in the Opening Season - in accordance with a production mainly conceived as remote from the audience. It was used twice: the captain jumped into the yard, which aptly figured the sea and his imminent death. Later on, Time entered from the yard, creating a surprise effect as he intoned his speech, but then immediately getting lost among the crowd because of his costume: a down-and-out grey raincoat. His hat and bottle were the only means of identifying him until he reached the stage. Audience members were asked to help him climb onto the stage, and

since the same actor played Autolycus, a first taste of the spirit of the second part was provided in these closing lines of the first part: more audience interaction and more comedy. In a sense, the use of the yard bridged the gap that had been created between the mythological world of Sicily and the audience.

### **Addressing the audience**

In Act II, the King and Queen occasionally left their central authority position to come forward and address the groundlings from the very front of the stage, powerfully drawing them into their argument (e.g. Hermione: 'Beseech you all (my Lords) ...measure me;'; 'Leontes: 'Shall I be heard?' II-1).

The three comic characters played most of their scenes together at the very front of the stage, close to the groundlings, though they were not necessarily always addressing them. This area was the natural home of Autolycus, who used the pillars as hiding places, and established a complicity with the audience which was never broken, however he subsequently behaved. Norm Holland wrote in the Shakespeare forum that he

" stood as a groundling right in front of the stage. It was fantastic! Like watching a close-up in a movie. I was often just three feet from the actors. They would be playing to the whole house and I would see the sweat and spit of their speaking-very exciting, like watching a sporting event close-up.

**Nicholas Le Prevost [Autolycus]** was playing to the crowd, strumming a ukelele and otherwise carrying on, confiding his schemes to the upper galleries. Yet I, as groundling, felt he was doing this to me. When he began cadging money, not only I, but everybody in that front row of groundlings began tossing coins at him. Which he cheerfully picked up and pocketed to the guffaws of the rest of the audience. I've never felt quite that relation to an actor, that he was acting, that I knew he was acting and I was in a theatre and part of a crowd, but that I was part of his acting and believing him in his part. "

### **Moving onto the stage**

After the first run in early May, the uncut text was found to be too long for a production where one third of the audience is standing (over 4 hours). The text was cut for the first time. Two other sets of cuts were introduced in the following weeks. Most of the actors felt that these had come too late in the rehearsal process, that they were losing part of their identity. But it can be argued that they had had a chance to discover all the facets of the characters they were playing. David Freeman stated that it had been a conscious decision on his part not to do any cuts before starting, even though it seemed painful when the cuts were introduced. He said there was no egalitarian way of effecting them, and they had to be carried out because if people lose heart in the audience, then all is lost for all the actors. The first cuts included most of the

obscure jokes, the 'pretext' lines in IV-4-11 and 12, the references to the unbelievability of the events in V-2-1, and many of the expressions between brackets (mostly subsidiaries).

Shortening the playing time also involved tightening up the playing: cueing earlier, speaking slower and avoiding unjustified pauses all made the pace quicker and the story clearer. Starting a scene while the previous one is ending is no problem on this stage, but changing the rhythm of a slow scene coming after a fast one would be wrong for the overall effect. Long pauses have to be 'earned' by very fast cueing in the build-up, as in the trial scene before Hermione's first speech.

Other notes on the first run included a reflection on the passage from public to private in I-2. It was proposed to resolve this by using the angles of the stage to close the sub-scenes, as when Hermione and Polixenes go into the garden, or Mamillius plays with his mother and her women. The more public scenes would be played in the centre.

After the runs in studio and on stage, many scenes were re-blocked to take into account the fact that the Globe is a theatre in the round. More diagonals were introduced, particularly in the final scene, and the actors took an active part in working out the best patterns.

## **Acting style**

David Freeman told the actors that whenever he felt they were talking about the situation rather than experiencing it, it meant that there were too many words. That is where he decided to cut the text. He also stated that the actors **are** the very solid, still world of Sicily, where suddenly the King goes berserk, in a totally unacceptable way to its inhabitants. He told them that 'popping out' of the play to talk to the audience meant losing it: they should share things with the audience, make them feel the play is real, not naturalistic. They should not explain things to them, but just open to them, as if they were part of the same world, and avoid the subtle clicking of the brain that makes you speak differently when you become aware that you are an actor on stage in a theatre. They should always keep their own reasons for going out to the audience rather than just speaking like commentators.

The actors were encouraged to play very physically and avoid naturalism. Throughout the season, the physicality got stronger and stronger. Stark contrasts were encouraged. In the trial scene, for instance, the cage provided a pivot, around which the mad Leontes walked to and fro like a caged lion, and gave a deliberate demonstration of what it means to 'strut and bellow' at the Globe. In Act V, the afflicted king was played in very subdued fashion, only allowing the wilder dimension of the character to re-emerge on his long, moving cry of 'she's warm'.

## **Technical rehearsals and re-blocking**

When the actors encountered the stage, they realised they would need to project far more when their voice was lowered, and that they should be very careful to maintain phrases until the end and carry words through to the last syllable. They would have to increase the consonants particularly when they stood at the front of the stage and between the pillars where the reverberation is greater, and where the need to understand them is more important, since they are not visible to a large part of the audience. Jeannette Nelson, the voice-coach, felt it was necessary to reassure the actors that they did not need to shout, as that tended rather to make them lose focus and therefore make less sound.

A lot of repositioning was needed in many little ways, in order to create a feeling of being 'at home' for the Sicilians, and of being 'strange' for the Bohemians. They had been playing to walls in studio, and of course nobody likes to go near walls. Once on stage, they needed to open up far more to the sides. Gestures would have to be made far bigger because there was no lighting to emphasise them. David Freeman felt he had to struggle against actors' 'naturalistic' way of acting, that they did not realise what a great thing walking across a stage can be. He asked them to think the stage expands, and to accept the conventions necessary to play this play in this space, rather than attempt to find a realistic justification for every move.

In public scenes, actors would need to bend their bodies a little and keep a distance even for intimate conversations. What they felt was natural would have to shift, to take in the angles of the audience view and the sheer size of the theatre. They should avoid any movement that can be dispensed with, in order to keep focus. David Freeman told them they should be like gladiators when they entered this space. In the prologue, Hermione and Leontes came to the front of the stage to recline like a pair of Egyptian lions with their backs to the audience rather than sit as had been rehearsed, and the courtiers would run in front of them rather all the way around them. Thus, though their posture had a majesty that belonged more to Antiquity than to Renaissance, it was ensured that no courtier would be turning his back on the King, and the royal pair would get the best view of the action while allowing the audience to get the same point of view<sup>13</sup>. David Freeman told the actors that their best chance of understanding this complicated space was when they were **not** acting at the centre of a big scene.

I-2-4, the dialogue between Leontes and Camillo, had originally been staged entirely in front of the stage left pillar. After the techs, it simply started there to give the feeling of intimacy and plotting, but the whole conflictual section of the scene was played in the central area, first in the line between the pillars, then farther back when director and actors realised that this was a dead area. Only at the end did Camillo return to the pillar, to give Leontes time to exit and haughtily brush past Polixenes. Stark contrasts were introduced in sound levels: Camillo spoke his soliloquy and some of his lines to Polixenes at the very limit of audibility.

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<sup>13</sup> In *The Maid's Tragedy* the King would even be transported into the centre of the yard so that his point of view could be shared by the audience

In general, more movement was introduced, different locations sought to get the best sightlines or exit timing, e.g. in II-1 for Hermione's exit with her women, close enough to the central opening for it to be quick, yet far enough to take the attention of the audience away from Tiring-House activity. Asides and very intimate scenes were moved to the proximity of the pillars or to the front fringe of the stage.

David Freeman asked actors in the galleries if they felt the prison scene worked. They agreed that it was visible and enhanced by the framing of the arched door. Many different positions were tried, because the actors playing the scene were concerned that the audience would not be getting the important information that is conveyed in it. Joy Richardson never really felt that it worked<sup>14</sup>.

Many of the comic scenes were worked out directly on stage, with Time's entrance actually being rehearsed here for the first time. Groups of visitors were delighted to see Nicholas Le Prevost at work, and their presence was obviously a wonderful prop for him to test his extemporising.

The Pastoral scene took on all its meaning once played in the open air. The actors were able to take in the horizon and the sky, beyond the roof. There was a lot of reblocking, mostly to occupy the whole of the stage which is very crowded most of the time, but also to work out the positions of the main characters and their entrances. For a short while, there was the idea that the disguised Autolycus could have come up through the stage-trap, but this was dropped because of the complications posed by the sheep-skins. As a rule, these proved rather problematic for the actors, who tripped on them and had to watch their step almost as much as the Red Company on the rushes. The red clay was equally problematic because of the amount of dust it produced. Actors were concerned about health problems, but in the event, no-one was taken sick during the whole season.

Music cueing was a problem because the musicians above could not always hear the actors on stage when they were already playing.

Actors' reactions after these first days in the theatre was that an incredible level of energy was necessary to fill the space, even without an audience, and that it would take them a while to work it out.

## **Evolution of the production over the season**

After the first performances, on Anna-Livia Ryan's suggestion, part of the Pastoral was restaged so that the focus stayed on Perdita and her love-story with Florizel, rather than on the ritual.

As early as the sixth performance, which was the press night, the actors had begun to adjust their vocal level to the space. They would continue to do so throughout the first weeks, until all of them learned to take full advantage of the acoustics of the theatre and avoid shouting except for very short cues.

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<sup>14</sup> See interview

Gradually a greater familiarity developed between Leontes and the audience, first with the groundlings, but also with the galleries. Laughter and repulsion accompanied him, with cries of 'don't' or 'shame on you, Leontes', which Mark Lewis-Jones actually expected and provoked, pausing or making broad gestures where necessary.

Most of all, the comedy scenes in part two developed and became increasingly funny, involving more and more audience participation, but the actors did not indulge in any oral extemporising.

After the three week break during which *The Maid's Tragedy* had been rehearsed and previewed, the play was revived without re-rehearsing, and was performed in only 3 hours, having incorporated the energy of the other production - somewhat to the annoyance of the director, but much to the benefit of the standing groundlings. The actors felt they were concentrating more on telling the story, that they had learned to keep control of the crowd in the comedy scenes, that they had learned no longer to be daunted by the space, and to try new things out. However, they felt constrained by directorial decisions based on the 'closed world' conception that had been made at the time of rehearsals and left little room for opening up. Most of them felt it would have been necessary to introduce more distance and take advantage of the size of the stage. They felt that acting close-up does not work in this space. Their overall conclusion was that this is not a theatre for directors or designers, but a theatre for playwrights and actors, and that anything conceptual gets into the way of the story and breaks the rapport between actor and audience.

Although the actors were aware that critics had not always liked the production, they did not notice any mixed response among the audience, because the ones who enjoyed it always outnumbered the others and kept it alive.

## **What was learned**

**The overwhelming discovery was that even directors who want to be unconventional are guided by the Globe's architecture to "authentic" choices or results and that after a number of performances, the theatre and the actors' instincts take over.**

## **Symbolism of the theatre**

The decision to follow the interpretation of *The Winter's Tale* as a ritual of death and regeneration was fully justified at the Globe because so much symbolism is written into its shape and decoration.

In the Pastoral, making Pan something extraordinary meant using the three levels of underworld - world - above : Flora comes onto stage crouching very low (she could probably have come through the stage trap, had it been below the heavens trap), she is lifted up toward the Heavens, flowers fall down upon her from above.

In the Trial scene, all the members of the Sicilian court found themselves writhing over each other on the floor, in a tableau whose violence was reminiscent of Italian Mannerist painting. The same can be said of the Bacchanalian that follows the 'Dance of Twelve Satyres', which could have been designed by Annibale Caracci. Although we tend to associate the English Renaissance with the rather formal paintings of Holbein and Hillyard<sup>15</sup>, or the naïve frontispieces of Quartos, in 1611 the most significant European painters were Breughel, Rubens, the Caraccis, Caravaggio (who died in 1610). Yet even Thomas Peacham's illustration of *Titus Andronicus*, surely Shakespeare's most violent play, seems very tame in comparison with the vitality and dramaticity of their work. I suggest that the staging in the 1610 to 1640 period also integrated some of this quality of excess, and that this production of *The Winter's Tale* began to give an idea of the Globe stage's possibilities. For one, in spite of its size, it can be made to seem very full by a cast of 15 very mobile actors who are not afraid to get their clothes dirty. This was of course even clearer in the case of *Umabatha*, where the cast was much larger, and the sheer physical presence of the African actors made the players of the White Company feel their efforts to emulate them had been rather trifling. How much did the Elizabethan companies try to create such tableaux? Because costumes were a very precious resource, it is tempting to think that they retained a degree of formality, and confined themselves to the kind of configuration one might find in a Masque and which was exemplified in the Opening Season's production of *The Maid's Tragedy*. Yet the experience of *Henry V* has shown that Elizabethan clothing can be treated in the same way as ordinary stage costumes, and that they are in fact rather more flexible.

## Entrances and exits

Experience at the Globe showed that much overlapping could be allowed for, including using the use of the same door for entrance and exit of two completely unrelated scenes. For example in II-1, Hermione, Mamillius and the women entered through the stage left door and Polixenes and Camillo ran out through it as the scene began (see **using the whole stage**)

The use of the central opening as the entrance for 'public' scenes leads actors to feel that the side doors could be used even for a King when entering for a more 'private' or intimate scene, e.g. *The Winter's Tale* act II scene 3, where Leontes has retired into his inner world of raving and his courtiers have been living along with his insomnia ("Nor night, nor day, no rest").

The harmonious exit of all the reunited families at the end is made through the central opening, but the outsider Autolycus is not allowed out through that same door. Nicholas Le Prevost put the coat he wore as Time back on and jumped into the yard, where he melted into the crowd.

The dead Hermione was laid down in the discovery space, though attempts to stage the statue scene in that space proved unsatisfactory, and she was brought

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<sup>15</sup> Holbein's work for instance became far more formal when he started painting in London: compare his court portraits with the Dance of Death series of engravings.



forward. Both solutions made seeing difficult because of the large amount of people on stage, and it became clear why Shakespeare felt the need to have Polixenes and Camillo describe the events.

## Parts of the stage

The unexpected entrance of Time via the yard made it very hard to focus on his first lines - although there was a distinctly successful surprise effect when Nicholas Le Prevost uttered his first words from the back of the yard as the young shepherd ran off. Audience members were actively involved in the play from that very moment, as the actor requested help to climb onto the stage. When on occasion he did not get any, he would elicit enthusiastic applause for his comic athletic feat.

As a rule, deceivers and plotters always found themselves playing on the fringe - Autolycus almost all the time, but also Camillo and Polixenes preparing to leave Sicilia, Camillo and the young lovers organising their flight from Bohemia. Quite logically they stumbled upon the hiding Autolycus as they walked around the pivotal pillar where both parties were hiding from different spies.

## Audience interaction

The success of one actor at taking in the audience gradually infected the others, till there was almost a competition between Mark Lewis-Jones and Nicholas Le Prevost, as there presumably was between Burbage and Armin - with the result that Leontes became both more human when in the centre and just the prey of doubt, and more monstrous when on the fringes and opposing his weak arguments to the present, then absent, Paulina and Antigonus ("No: Ile not rear/Anothers Issue." II-3-4).

Leontes elicited some of the most interesting or complex audience reactions. The first was a murmur of disapproval when he spat on the baby, although this was fairly obviously a bundle of rags but treated like a real baby by all the actors.

**This scene exemplified the willingness of audiences at the Globe to suspend their disbelief.** There were two similar babies in *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, but because the context was comedy, whether the audience took the dolls seriously or not had very little relevance. In *The Winter's Tale* on the other hand, the audience expressed both revulsion (women averted their faces, teenagers shuddered in anguish) and disapproval, with shouts of 'Shame on you, Leontes' as he insulted wife and child.

At the same time, in the very same scenes, the King addressed the audience directly, taking men in the audience into his fellowship of doubt and fear of being a cuckold. , and creating not little discomfort among them, while eliciting embarrassed laughter.

## Relevance of the Globe for *The Winter's Tale*

The fact that the theatre is out-of-doors made the Pastoral far more believable as a scene taking place in the country. Likewise when Hermione refers to being 'hurried / Here, to this place, i'th'open ayre'. It introduced an ironic dimension during the spell of bad weather in June, when the captain in III-3 announced that 'the skies look grimly/And threaten present blusters'.

The groundlings were made privy to much of the King and Queen's arguing and to all soliloquies. They became Hermione's tormentors in the trial scene (she waved at them in agony from her cage on the words "play'd to take Spectators"), and later beasts of prey, as the captain looked at them when he said "this place is famous for the Creatures/of prey, that keepe unpon't."

The decoration of the Frons Scenae and Heavens provided references for lines like

- "you'le be found / Be you beneath the Sky" (Leontes, I-2) because Polixenes and Hermione played looking up at the decoration;
- "lytter'd under Mercurie" (Autolycus, IV-3) because there is a trompe l'oeil statue of that God on the Frons;
- the reference to Giulio Romano, who was a master of trompe l'oeil.

## **Other features of the production**

### **Design, costume and props**

Tom Philips kept the design minimal because of the power of the decoration of the Frons Scenae. The major decision was to cover the stage with red earth, reminiscent of the Sienna red of Sicilian landscapes, but also of the rich colour of the Globe pillars. The actors' hair was also styled with mud. In Act IV, sheepskins were laid on the floor by the shepherds then removed by stage hands during the break between Acts IV and V.

Major props included :

- rubber tyres to serve as a shrine in the background and as Leontes' throne in Acts I, II, III and V;
- an iron cage for Hermione in the Trial scene. When the oracle was revealed, the cage collapsed into four separate pieces;
- camouflage cloths shaken by running actors, to suggest sails in a tempest for Act III scene 3
- a curtain hung on a hoop to conceal the statue of Hermione in Act V scene 3;
- gifts presented to Polixenes and Perdita's fardel, which were mostly recycled trunks.

The costumes were pyjama type outfits for the men and plain dresses for the women. All the Sicilians were dressed in brown, all the Bohemians in blue. Perdita had a green dress threaded with flowers and for one scene an elaborate head-dress in the shape of a peacock's tail, covered with flowers. Autolycus

wore dirt white clothes. His pedlar's disguise included a many-coloured coat in which all his wares were pinned, a turban, dark glasses and a false beard. All the actors played barefoot. They wore shiny jewels round their necks, on their arms and ankles, mostly made of recycled material such as bolts and screws.

## Music

Claire Van Kampen wrote new music for the production, exploring both myth and ritual and Asian/African sound modes. She added two off-stage songs to *The Winter's Tale* for which she chose Elizabethan poems relevant to the symbolism of the play. The songs she wrote for Autolycus had a ballad-like quality in the sense that the tunes, though new, sounded familiar. Most strikingly, she made use of psalteries to accompany the awakening of the statue of Hermione, as required by Shakespeare's text:

**Paulina:** Musick; awake her: Strike;

*Music plays.*

'Tis time: descend: be Stone no more:

The music, coming from above, with musicians standing at the back of the balcony, added mystery and awe to this section of the scene, while fulfilling the symbolic requirement of representing both divine intervention and the harmony of the spheres.

In an interview broadcast by the BBC, Claire Van Kampen said:

*I think it's very important to discover Shakespeare 's plays very freshly each time you perform them. What I've done is probably not that inauthentic. It's true that Shakespeare may not have heard Burmese gongs in his time, or a modern trumpet or trombone, but in a sense the instruments he used are not very different to the ones we are using - they were of the same family. I feel it's important for modern audiences to be able to respond directly to what they are seeing, not necessarily to look at them through a telescope to the past. It's very present story-telling. The music that I've done tries to convey an atmosphere, a mood, a narrative mode. The sounds I used have been put together very carefully, minimally, so that the economy of sound draws the audience into the story [to make up for the absence of lights and other theatrical devices]. It's not wall-paper but very specific to what is going on stage.*

*We've learned a lot about using music to get back to focus on the stage at the beginning of the play or after the interval, since there are neither curtains nor lights going down, and since the audience moves around and is distracted in many ways. We've discovered that to keep music going throughout the interval makes people realise that they are just taking a breath but that the action is still going on. Then you can use a motif like a sudden fanfare or an intervention of the tenor to alert them to the fact that something new is going to happen on stage. In a sense that is very authentic because we know that Shakespeare used*

*a 'surge' or trumpet fanfare to warn of the beginning. For me this is the future. It's an incredibly interactive space and the music has to take stock of that too.*

*Autolycus is a case in point, because he really steps out of the play. I believe that he is really the king of the groundlings, so I've given him quite popular songs, far more than the rest of the music of the play. He actually comes on singing, and that's how he makes his first contact with the audience. He really speaks to them, standing in the yard a few feet away from him. So I wanted music from a far more popular genre, that he could play with and they could have fun with. That was a bit of a gamble, but the audience love him and he's really enjoying it. He sings something like 'Bob Dylan and John Lennon meet Taxi Driver in Marrakech', playing a bashed up old violin as a guitar. Nicholas Le Prevost plays that to the hilt because he is a superb clown.*

## **Doubling**

- **Lucy Campbell played Emilia, Dorcas and a servant in Act V**
- **Belinda Davison played Hermione and a shepherdess, and took on the role of the bear in Act III**
- **Polly Pritchett played First Lady and Mopsa and a servant (in male costume) in Act V**
- **Joy Richardson played Paulina and a shepherdess**
- **Anna-Livia Ryan played Mamillius then Perdita**
- **Dean Atkinson played a Lord in Act II, Clown in Acts IV and V**
- **Andrew Bridgmont played Antigonus and Third Gentleman in Act V (telling the story of the death of Antigonus)**
- **Mike Dowling played Dion and the lines of First Gentleman in Act V**
- **Michael Gould played Polixenes**
- **Patrick Godfrey played Archidamus in Act I, then Old Shepherd**
- **Nicholas Le Prevost played the Gaoler in Act II, Time and Autolycus**
- **Mark Lewis-Jones played Leontes and Pan (the twelve satyrs conflated into one)**
- **Chris Porter played Cleomenes and the lines of Second Gentleman in Act V**
- **Ada Sapara played Camillo**
- **Jonathan Slinger played a servant in Acts II and III, the captain in Act III, then Florizel**

## Appendix 1: Interviews

### **Belinda Davison**

Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*

Cynthia in *The Maid's Tragedy*

When I did *Macbeth* with Mark Rylance at Greenwich 3 years ago, it opened up all sorts of things for me personally and spiritually about Shakespeare, and working at the Globe seemed a natural extension of that. And playing Hermione in *The Winter's Tale* just seemed so right for me at this point of my life, having had 2 children and gone through what I've been through in the last 5 years. I feel I had an awful lot to give. The finishing of the Globe has represented something different for every person. It was like a wonderful confirmation of things I had been thinking about. To do *The Winter's Tale* and realise that it was first given in the Globe 400 years ago and that we were the first to do it again in the same context was very moving. I can't imagine doing Shakespeare anywhere else now. I've always felt instinctively that Shakespeare works even better when you connect with the audience. That's something we started doing even with *Macbeth*, which we played in Chichester, also a theatre in the round. It worked really well, because it does in that sort of space. Here, so many things have come alive like there - but there we had the advantage of being able to rehearse in the theatre.

With most other theatres, you are aware of the fourth wall. Here, although you are aware of one too, because it is a play, you get a wonderful feeling that the audience is also in the play with you. I had that feeling as a member of the audience. It's a shared experience, being in a play and watching a play. It's about telling a story, and the people listening to the story are as important. It quite deeply and profoundly affects the way that we play and the way that it comes across. Certain things are much more poignant with certain audiences, depending on the energy they transmit. And you notice it more here than in other theatres.

What things changed according to audience response? In the Trial scene, there were often different reactions. Sometimes people shout; once there was baby crying, and it was very upsetting to hear. Little things like that can give something to me - noises are not necessarily destructive or distracting. You can take them on and use them. Some things can be quite useful, like a bird flying by. It's easier in the Trial scene because I'm on my own, and I can simply make as much as I can of what I've got. If a bird flies on a certain line, it becomes very meaningful. Even someone fainting. I feel a lot of the time that in the audience there is someone I can appeal to. At the beginning, I feel that they can support me, that they can see the truth. Then, in the Trial scene, I feel that they have betrayed me, they have just come to watch.

I feel the groundlings get a different aspect of the play. They feel far more of a "gut" response. It's interesting when there aren't any groundlings, e.g. because it's pouring with rain, and you are just playing to the seated people: it becomes very hard work, because you have no direct response. You have to reach right

out to the galleries, and it's a big space. It feels quite hollow when it's empty, whereas it's quite soft when it's full. I think it was built so that the people sitting were "higher", because they had more money. You get the feeling that they are looking at the play from a different level. They're not there to just enjoy it. The danger, because we're not used to playing so high in most theatres, is missing out and not playing to the galleries. It's also quite weird when there are people sitting behind. You tend to forget them, and suddenly realise there's someone there. I wish we had used it more. We haven't been used to it. I think David Freeman did his best to use the theatre, although like all the directors, had no idea of what would work on the stage. Certainly when we did *The Maid's Tragedy*, all the blocking changed when we got onto stage. Almost a week's rehearsal was completely wasted because we had to change everything. With *The Winter's Tale*, a lot was changed too. Not dramatically, but by creating an awareness. He had worked on it in rehearsal too, by getting people to sit on the sides. But there was a limit to what we could do in the rehearsal room. The great thing was that we had the pillars, but the acoustics were terrible.

For me the greatest challenge has been about being fresh for every performance. I felt a real need to be as truthful as I could, to treat the character as truthfully as possible. This was especially important because we did 2 shows a day. It was very difficult, but very good. There is also a vocal challenge, of course, but I didn't make a technical decision about varying the intensity. It feels like the sound is carrying and I can be heard when I am very quiet. But when we came in on the first day of the technicals, we were all shouting and ended up exhausted, feeling it was such hard work. I can't remember what happened, but I do remember thinking: "I'm really glad we did all that voice work". The demands on the diaphragm are very high, and it's easy to strain. Over the season the demand got less: you find a way, you pace yourself, you find what works and what does not work according to where you are standing on the stage. You can play with much more intensity when you're standing further forward, because you are closer to the audience. I really like being centre front. And I quite like using the sides. And the two centre points where I play my major scenes are very strong, they're a really powerful place to stand.

I wish for *The Winter's Tale* we had done some company work, some getting together like they did for *Henry V*, with the drumming and the warm-ups before performances. After having created such a strong world, it would have been a really important thing to do. But each one of us came in, got changed and went on. It's not good enough. It needs to be much more of a group effort. It was never put into the rehearsals. I felt a bit lonely going back into *The Winter's Tale* after *The Maid's Tragedy*, because we didn't re-rehearse.

The thing I learned about Shakespeare and *The Winter's Tale* is the magnitude of the story. I realised it needs a space like this to live in, to breathe in. Although the way we did it is just one approach, one idea, it feels as if something else speaks through it at a very deep level, and you communicate with people's souls. This is something that never happens in other theatres. A friend of mine, who is not familiar with Shakespeare or the theatre, was completely overwhelmed seeing this performance. She was up all night talking about the meaning of the play, the jealousy, etc. I think it is so wonderful that people can come and still be

moved by those plays. It's because this space is so unique. For some reason it has such a direct way of communicating those deeper levels than in the thousands of theatres where Shakespeare is performed all over the world. You're almost working with other human beings, and it's the human element that feels strongest here, that you are sharing. You can see them listening, not only to you but to the story you are telling. And that's really what it's about: telling the whole story, not just your bit. That would be my advice to actors. The joy of telling the story, no matter how tragic the play, comes first and foremost.

### **Polly Pritchett**

Emilia in *The Winter's Tale* and  
Olympias in *The Maid's Tragedy*

I was very excited by the idea of being involved in the Globe from the start and trying to put into practice things that theatre historians had been talking about.

The greatest challenge is vocal, without a doubt, and I don't think we all conquered it. Because there is no set, and because so much of the time so many people can't see you, everything has to be in your voice. Perhaps this theatre forces an actor to think about all the vocal training that many of us have thrown away, because we spend so much time working on television and in much smaller theatres, where you've got image to help you. All the old-fashioned voice-training that most of us felt we didn't need comes back here, because you have to be able to use your voice to describe everything. And emotionally, it makes no sense to sound it all on one note, because it just gets lost. You can be putting heaps of emotion in, but unless you are able to describe exactly how you are feeling, with all the different colours, it just gets lost.

You've got to be really brave here. You can't just be shy and insecure on this stage, because there is no place to hide on it. I know a lot of actors who say they would not do it, because it requires so much guts to walk out there, particularly when you've got people shouting out at you. Some performances were like being in a building site! In *The Winter's Tale*, people were just shouting embarrassing things, even before anything had happened and I had to think: "no, I'm an actor, I'm not going to get embarrassed!" It felt right, even though there were no women on stage in Shakespeare's day, but presumably a man dressed as a girl would get the same kind of reactions. The moving wasn't distracting except at first - the sellers were. But you got used to it very quickly. I didn't even notice the people fainting.

I definitely changed things over the season in *The Maid's Tragedy*, but less so in *The Winter's Tale*. I feel I knew more exactly what I was doing throughout the whole play. Having worked so hard to get it right, and having so little contact with the audience in most of my scenes, unlike Nicholas Le Prevost, only the scene with Mopsa and Dorcas tended to change, depending on how rowdy the audience was.

The groundlings don't really overpower the rest of the audience, they provide the energy that brings everybody else in. The performances where we did not have any groundlings were hard. In *The Winter's Tale*, when there were few

groundlings, it felt really dead, whereas when there were 400 people having a good time it was very different. You would see people coming down from the top gallery because they knew that was where the best energy was. There were times when they got control of the play for a small section, before someone wrestled it back. In *The Winter's Tale* it was up to characters like Nicholas Le Prevost to keep control, but I don't think they ever got the best of us.

The acoustics were lovely. During warm-ups, hearing the sound not echoing, but just undulating round the auditorium, just how beautiful the sound could be, I got carried away with it. The acoustics are so beautiful, quite seductive. I'd get behind because I was listening to it. When the auditorium is full, you have to work much harder, because the audience sucks up so much sound, and it's noisier. When the yard is empty, you have to colour the sound even more, because the sound has got much farther to go before it meets something to bounce off. It has to get over the yard.

When someone on stage has a soliloquy in a normal theatre, it's their private thoughts, they're picked out with a spotlight etc. But in this theatre, no one is ever alone, because you've got people at your feet. The soliloquy takes on a different aspect, because it's someone communicating his thoughts. There's a complicity between the actor and the audience. And just because someone is saying something does not mean that it's completely true, because you're always being heard. It's in the actions that you see what the truth is. It shows you how much of our modern interpretation of the plays is added on. In this theatre, it's just about the story, and everything else feeds into it. But if you lose the story, you've lost the point completely. Because it is so much harder for us to keep the story going, because we're used to the scenery, the lights, all the things that help, you suddenly see how important it is to get the story across. Just from watching it, I see what our inadequacies are. During rehearsals, I realised that often I could only understand one in four words, and decided to work on that. I felt it was essential to understand the story.

For rapport with the audience, the best part of the stage is definitely the perimeter, where you can move around. When you're right in the centre, in the "hotspot", it's a very strong position, but you're actually quite removed from people, there's quite a long distance. Right in front, although there are a lot of people who can't see you, you do feel quite a lot of contact. There will always be people who can't see, because of the pillars. That's just what we have to live with. And people who complain should either move or understand that that is what is going to happen, that you might not see. Perhaps people were just not very well informed. In the Mopsa/Dorcas scene, we started off in the centre, which was brilliant, then came to the front by the pillar to sing. We couldn't have done that in the centre, because it was so much about entertaining the audience. Whereas the scene itself was about us and our little world, and then the song was an extension out of that. And it was good to have a distraction at the front while the preparation for the presentation of Flora took place. When I came on as Messenger in act V, I stood in the centre, and that was the ideal place to be to deliver such important news. The focus was really on me.



I think the most important thing for my generation of actors, the ones straight out of drama school is to focus on the vocal demands of the theatre. We don't necessarily have bad voices, but we've only had 3 years of training. Older actors are not necessarily better, they may not have done the work but they have lots of experience. I think it's important not necessarily to be loud but to be very flexible, with very good diction and clarity. And physically, you need to know how to be on stage, to have posture. It's very easy, you just have to be flexible. It's not something you learn. But you get to grips with that, the more you do it. You have to be very brave.

### **Joy Richardson**

Paulina in *The Winter's Tale*

Night in *The Maid's Tragedy*

Playing at the Globe was an experience I've never had anywhere else: an open stage, open to the air, to the pigeons, etc. To be able to see people really clearly, especially those in the yard and know that they can respond vocally rather than sit quietly. That barrier between the audience that you sometimes feel, where they are expected to play a certain role which doesn't interfere with your role, is not there in the Globe. Very often when people say things, it has an effect on you, and you respond - without giving them the freedom to carry on. You have the freedom to let them know that they are part of it, and you feed off that. I wanted to communicate the story using the various things that are not available in other theatres. It was a learning experience, learning how to communicate in a different way. At first you rely on what you know because that's all you have, then you trust your instincts more, you respond to what you are given and where you are. With both plays many specific things changed, including my attitude. For instance where before I wouldn't take many lines out to the audience, but would direct them to whoever I was speaking to, my fellow actors, I found that more and more I could gain more energy from the audience, have eye-contact and win them over to my side, or show them a truth or injustice. So I would focus the line out more, or even address one person.

For me the groundlings don't overpower the rest of the audience, because I tend to look up more. I'm very much aware of how much people can get cut off if they are above your eye-level, especially those on the right and left hand side of the auditorium. There's a tendency to play up front all the time, but it's almost a theatre in the round, so you have to be aware of it. I do lots of exercises to take into account people who are not directly in my eye-line. As a result, I tend to take it up more rather than down.

There are several challenges. One of the greatest is the vocal challenge: you cannot be in any way casual with your voice. You can be intimate and soft, but it has to be focussed in a way that suits that space. And until you get feedback, it's very hard to know just where to pitch your vocal range, how to use your voice without straining it, and how to relax so that you're not pushing it out. Otherwise it gets lost when you turn upstage; or when you're on one side, it can get lost on the opposite side. Many people said they could hear me clearly but

that wasn't always true, or they said I sounded tense early on in the season. Those who were high up tended to say they lost parts of the play, but that was at the beginning. Now I'm more relaxed. If we had been able to use the space early on, when we did the vocal warm-ups, it would have been a help. Coming from the echo-y rehearsal room to the Globe was a vocal shock. You had to find a way of freeing your voice. If the house is quite full the sound does bounce back. If the yard is not full you can be aware of your voice falling down, dying away. You need to make an effort to keep it up. People in the auditorium act as a sound-board.

I learned a lot from *The Maid's Tragedy*, which fed into *The Winter's Tale*. We tried very hard not to confuse the two worlds, because they are so different, but when David Freeman came back, he said that we'd picked up the energy of *The Maid's Tragedy* and not actually maintained the energy of *The Winter's Tale* - and he didn't think that was good. A lot of it was subconscious. But *The Maid's Tragedy* had another way of using your body and the language, which fed into *The Winter's Tale*.

This season has taught me how wonderful Shakespeare was at communicating words. It's really shown me what freedom the language can give you when you are able to see the people who are listening. It's not just a toy for the people on stage, it's for people in this real, immediate world. You are able to communicate a truth, which is harder to pinpoint in a theatre like the National. It's almost like it's the only language you have and you are communicating with your friends: you can be freer and make it yours.

I didn't do any extemporising, and it's not something I ever planned to do. But it did come from the experience of playing the part on stage. If someone responds vocally in support to Paulina, I don't say anything but I may glance or nod, and they are aware that I've taken it in.

For different scenes different places are appropriate. I don't like the part I am in for the gaoler scene, but I've had to remain there because of the way entrances and exits work. I've never been happy about it, because I have my back to 2/3 of the audience, and it's vital information I have to give, it's my first scene as Paulina, and I just feel more cut off than I want to be. Otherwise, I like being under the burst of energy where the cloud is in the Heavens. But it's the movement I like: moving from one part of the stage to the other. I respond more to the warmth of coming up, the contrast gained from moving, than to one particular place.

Actors need to do a lot of improvisation in spatial awareness, moving about the space, exploring so that you're free, taking in the sky, the world around you, taking the energy from it and giving it out again. Vocally, you need a lot of stamina and focus. You need to be able to communicate. Someone who had never acted but could communicate would do well here. It's about communicating a truth and not trying to impose something. Physically they will need to retrain their bodies, in order to lose tensions wherever they are, so that when they move it's not like moving within a room. You need to act with your back, but that's true in any theatre. Don't think of the pillars as a problem.

They're part of your world. Don't even give the pillars a chance to become an enemy before you get on stage. Make friends with [the pillars](#).

### **Anna-Livia Ryan**

Mamilius and Perdita in *The Winter's Tale*

Aspatia in *The Maid's Tragedy*

The first time I came, I was just amazed: [the stage](#) wasn't built, there were workmen everywhere, the roof was being thatched. You were just brought into the spirit of it, the whole event, because every time you would arrive you could see it happen: we were getting a sort of history lesson as it went along. That made it more special. If anything, I felt guilty because I hadn't been part of the getting together of the Globe: we just came along at the last minute [to stamp our pegs](#) when it was all ready. We got all the specialness of it, because the ultimate thing to do here is to play. We were really lucky. It was just thrilling and exciting.

When we first started doing *The Winter's Tale*, we talked for the first few times about how tiring it was, physically, and how we ended up being exhausted after the performance. But that doesn't happen any more, it now just does not exist. Vocally it was definitely challenging at the start, because your voice went up into the air. It requires not so much volume but strength of the breath. It took a lot of energy, but now it's OK. I think it is going to be so interesting to work in a smaller space again, because, if anything, it's made me think in the round and appreciate space.

I've never had a problem with my voice since I started training, it's never let me down but here it really let me down, I had no control over the sound that was coming out. I was doing everything I could technically to get it lower, going as low as I possibly could, but it still sounded high. Not knowing why it was happening, because I didn't understand the space or its acoustics, I looked for other reasons (maybe because I had a light voice? maybe because I come off the ends of words? maybe because of my accent?). But I think it's really about the space: it does do things to your voice, you've no control over them. When they say that you're exposed in this space, it's not that there's nothing you can hide behind. It's that you're exposed to your frailties. If I didn't like the sound that was coming out of my mouth, I just had to grow to like it, because there was nothing I could do about it. When you go out onto the stage and there's no one in there, you think: "Oh my God, I need to do more of this or that". But as soon as the people come in, they absorb most of the sound anyway, they take off the edge, and you don't need to do that much.

It's brilliant to be able to look at people. When you do it first, you do it really focused. But there's something about the space that makes it just get bigger and bigger and bigger. With the bigness of the space, of the audience, you just get more confident. And I was feeling from watching the others that they were getting bigger. I make contact with the people in the galleries. As much as possible I try to go right up to the top. But by the nature of the fact that they are so close to you, [the groundlings](#) capture most of your attention because you can see their faces so clearly, their responses so clearly. Just listen to the responses

from the audience! It seems like you get so many different experiences according to where you sit. It's amazing what people get. That even happens among the groundlings: if you're in the back you get a completely different experience from the front. Watching *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* I just went right up to the front, but in *Umabatha*, I had to move right back because there was no way you were going to take in all that spectacle if you were too near. I lost nearly everything when I went up to the front. I could just see feet. It was the same with [Henry V](#), because there are so many people on the stage.

It's been really brilliant doing two plays, because in *The Maid's Tragedy* I get to speak to the audience a bit and that really makes it. It feels to me like two totally different spaces, two totally different theatres, doing *The Maid's Tragedy* and *The Winter's Tale*. It was the strangest experience, because of the completely different relationship to the audience, and how they responded to these characters differently. It was very satisfying. We played *The Maid's Tragedy* to the front, almost like a proscenium arch, whereas in *The Winter's Tale* most of my scenes were to the sides. I am so aware [of being in a theatre in the round], I can see almost every face sitting in those side back seats. In fact, I can see almost everybody in *The Winter's Tale*, but I can't see the groundlings, whereas I really do in *The Maid's Tragedy*. And that was, I think, the most surprising. I was then very excited to go back to do *The Winter's Tale*. But strangely, when we went back, it wasn't this new space that I'd found, but the old space. I think we did integrate some of the confidence of *The Maid's Tragedy* into *The Winter's Tale*, and the speed of it certainly got a bit into *The Winter's Tale*. But we had to be careful, because those worlds are so different. My wish would have been to get everyone together and focus again for a few minutes back on the world of *The Winter's Tale*, the strongest thing that came out of rehearsals. Because if that world doesn't exist, Perdita doesn't exist. The further away you are, the more you feel like you need to go back to rehearsal.

Has playing at the Globe taught me anything about Shakespeare? Definitely. Just from watching: it is what it is, and if you give it to the audience they'll appreciate it, you don't need gimmickry, the space really lends itself. In fact, I only got to see two other plays during the summer, whereas I normally see lots and lots. And they were very good plays, with very good actors, but I just felt: "oh no, please don't tell us it's going to be sad, please don't tell us". That's been a real revelation. No better playwright could be used in this place. Yet I'd love to see lots of different plays: new plays, and I'd love to see spectacles because the space really lends itself to spectacles

The very [centre forefront](#) of the stage is a fantastic position. You've got the whole theatre, the three tiers, the groundlings, the sky, the stage. You're just at the tip of the sky, and if you tilt your head back a little you can see and sense the people on the sides, you've got the whole of the groundlings. And I must be the only person, but I don't feel the space between the two pillars is a dead spot. It's cosier, safer. I was so aware from the directors of getting out of that space, it's been drummed into my head, to get out of it, so that the only time I ever fell out of character was when I got there. It feels like a really good space. But I don't feel that I'm not seen by part of the audience. You're only talking

about a pillar followed by a pillar, about one or two people. But that's the case everywhere in the Globe. Pillars are always going to be in the way. In the majority of *The Winter's Tale* I have my back to the audience and that feels fine.

There's just no comparison with any other theatre, because for one, you get to see everyone's face. It's going to be so strange getting back to a dark, blank wall of blackness, where you can see no one, because the audience can give you so much. The closest I ever got to this sort of exposed space was when we did *Hamlet* with Fiona Shaw, in old abbeys and madhouses and factories all around Ireland. There was no lighting effect, she went for the same sort of experience, but even there, the way the seating was done was different. We tried it in the round, we tried different staging but although the spaces were enormous, she'd only sell 200 seats, so everyone one could have a bird's eye view. Because you've been trained to put up this black wall, we did that too. But here you can't do it to the groundlings. I thought that was going to be very frightening, but it wasn't.

When the yard is too full, it's not great either: you want them to be comfortable, to be able to move round. You know from your own experience that it is not pleasant if you can't move. I prefer it when it's less full.

What advice would I give to actors? To know the character, because that's all you have. And to be physically and vocally fit. The directors were as new as the actors this year: nobody knew what to expect, and both directors were very brave with the space. Story-telling is what it's about in this space. I think the foremost qualities required to act at the Globe are confidence and ensemble feeling - you're here every day, you see people every day. And a sense of fun - it's a really fun place. I feel like the audience are coming to this theatre not as a chore, like they do in other places - sometimes you see them come after work, saying "gotta go to the theatre, gotta get some culture". This is the summer, they're selling ice-cream, boats are going down the river, people are coming here to enjoy. We're here to enjoy it too. The atmosphere around the place is also so great.

I think tragedy definitely works as well as comedy here. It would be the most fantastic venue for stand-up comedians, because from wherever you are you get a great view, the stage is the heart of the theatre

One day I was feeling really down and having a bad day, and I heard a weird sound from the audience that sounded to me like "she's shit". I was wounded, it was like some kind of stabbing and I was really disturbed and saddened. But that's the kind of thing that can happen in this space. Now my attitude as changed: they can say anything they like, I'm not going to flinch! It adds to the way you act, it helps your character: [you can play as if saying] "mock me if you dare".

In *The Winter's Tale* audience members would shout out: "Go on, kiss him". One night, everyone was drunk. At the beginning of the season that was a lot more heckling than there is now, because of all the articles that had been written.

Now it's mostly for Autolycus, because of the way it's written and the way [Nicholas Le Prevost](#) acts.

### **Michael Gould**

Polixenes in *The Winter's Tale*

Diphilus in *The Maid's Tragedy*

I did a [workshop](#) 2 years ago when the Globe was semi-built with Sean Holmes. When I came here then, it was a real eye-opener. One of the scenes we did was the recorder scene in *Hamlet*, with the joke about the cloud. And we could see a real cloud! That sense of being released from your imagination and seeing the real thing in a real space just seemed like a unique possibility of sharing an experience with A) another actor, and B) the audience. The environment of the theatre prompts new questions, or rather reminds us of old questions about the plays. And at that time, the roof wasn't "fretted with golden fire" ...I was Hamlet in that scene, and talked directly to the audience. In the second scene we did, from *The Revenger's Tragedy*, I witnessed another actor speaking to the audience directly in a very antagonistic way, really quite provocative of the audience, and picking out people individually, and the audience being confused and amused by it. It seemed there was a lot to explore. We asked people to move to the sides of the stage, and a character sharing a secret with one half of the audience. We really got a fresh look. Some directors have called for a moratorium on producing Shakespeare because there have been so many productions. But you don't need to now, because there is a fresh look, because there is no other performance place that provides these conditions. That is why I wanted to be part of the first season. I had also done some teaching at the Globe, which gave me access to the stage: I could see it all coming into shape, and that increased my desire to work on that stage. I felt I really had to be part of it, and fortunately I was.

I feel I did learn something about Shakespeare, mostly in the realm of the distinction to be made between the public and the private. As a performer, you need to be absolutely clear about where each is happening. In a sense it's all public, because it is theatre. But sometimes in an indoor theatre, you can mistakenly think that a monologue is a private scene. In this space, you simply can't do that because the audience is so present. A friend of mine, who has done a lot of character work, came to a performance and told me: "I really wasn't interested in what you were doing with the character, all I wanted to do was listen to the language." I think that's interesting if you refer back to Shakespeare's time. I also think that in *The Winter's Tale* it was reinforced by some mistakes we made in the Statue scene. I know a lot of academic energy has been put into the visual dimension of that scene. I think we fell between two stools in the way we constructed that scene. I think the received wisdom is that in Shakespeare's time, the statue would have been in the receding part [discovery space]. But when I stood on stage, I felt that the best sightlines were not somewhere close to the fiery cloud in the Heavens (the "big bang"). There is some confusion as to where that place is. I think the scene itself is written in such a way that the audience does not need to see the statue. We had decided to put Hermione where she was, immediately under the "big bang", but I think the best sightlines would have been 3 or 4 feet more downstage, more or less

the place where she was for the Trial, or even further down. But putting her in the middle, where the lines of perspective meet, was not the best place to be seen. The necessities of the scene involved a big crowd looking at the statue, and it would have been very hard putting the statue right downstage at the front so the audience could see it very clearly: all the characters would be looking at its back, which would be unrealistic and strange. I wish in retrospect that we had been braver and not gone for a visual thing, that we had trusted the language, and put her in the discovery space. There are so many lines dedicated to what is happening, and if the audience can see it anyway, it makes the lines seem redundant. So often in darker auditoria, a lot of language is unnecessary, like when Hamlet talks about the "very witching time of night". In the Globe, you need to tell them, but it's a beautiful line so it's not cut in indoor productions, but actually, all they do is bring the lights down. Often, the modern technology is doing the work of the language. And I think that's what my friend was saying: we got everything we needed from the words. It's important that we should trust that, and use other acting skills, things to do with focus, and being true to the lines, and filling them out. What I've realised here is that because everything is so exposed, you can't hide or fool yourself that the audience is not there. The thing that is not present here is the fourth wall idea. Telling yourself that as long as you're being truthful the audience will pick it up is not quite appropriate here, because the emphasis is slightly different. Being truthful is necessary on any stage. But the challenge here is to tell a story. There's a slightly different responsibility towards the story. You have to be that much more aware of the audience. You shift your energy toward telling the story of the scene. Theatre is a façade anyway, it's not a truthful situation, and you can free yourself from that here. In other theatres you can't, you feel totally committed to the truth of that moment in that scene. Here it is a bit more honest. You acknowledge the fact that it is a theatre, where you tell stories. It's not a court-room where you mete out justice but a re-enactment of a court-room.

We all came with similar problems: our voices weren't strong enough, our physicality wasn't developed enough, which is why the company did a lot of physical work in the beginning of the rehearsal period. A lot of our energy went into building up our equipment in order to do a job that we knew nothing about, because none of us in our company had worked in this space before. We all developed quite big boomy voices, by necessity as we thought at the time. Then, when we moved into the space, we realised just how intimate it could be, and started to reassess that. Watching the *Henry V* cast, we discovered what levels of intensity were possible, and how well clarity of intention worked. I found out that if there was clarity of intention in a very quiet moment, I could hear them, because I really wanted to hear them. Sometimes, louder, richer voices with more dynamic presence just went over my head, because I didn't understand what they were trying to do. In a way, these instincts that we have as actors can and should still be trusted. And the emphasis I would hope to see in future is that we will sharpen those skills and rededicate ourselves to those skills, because they will give us the confidence to be heard. I think this space can take extraordinarily intimate moments, and unfortunately, I think *The Winter's Tale* got locked into a pattern of loudness, because that was our expectation.

And I think a lot of the dramatic choices in many scenes could only be expressed through loudness. Now, we would do it differently.

It's a really difficult space for directors, mainly because the aesthetic of the theatre is so clearly defined, and directors and designers are having to refocus their work far more dramatically than actors. They have been used to providing the aesthetic before the actors arrive. Here, they're going to have to trust actors far more than they do elsewhere. I think David Freeman understood that less than Lucy Bailey. He was trying a unique experiment, bringing an avant-garde approach. But I don't think he took in the avant-garde-ness of the space. I think Tom Philips, the designer, fell into that trap as well, although the set did look very good. The mud in the hair was controversial, but I thought that was really great. But the floorboards and the backdrop are also nice, and the pillars could be used better, the materials are there. I know that a lot of the actors wanted to do much more text-work, and so did I. Most of the actors were also prepared to go with the experimental flow, and so was I. But there came a point where I had enough of the experiment, and wanted something more solid. And it never really happened. What I found more upsetting than anything else was the conflict it created. Of course, it could happen in other theatres too. That kind of tension is very common.

The Globe releases the language very clearly. If the actors' resources could be tuned into it, it could release the actors enormously. The range of acting choices is much greater here. You don't have to bother with lighting, and the aesthetic, which takes up so much of the energy of directors. A third of their work is done away with! The absence of lighting becomes a plus for actors. I've done a lot of work with TIE, where there is no lighting either. IT reminded of it, and showed me how I had become dependent on lighting. If the lights are on you, you can forget the audience. If all the audience is in front, you can hide or opt out of the play. At the Royal Exchange however, you're as important as anybody else even when you're not speaking, and that was the same as the Globe. You have to remind yourself of the galleries, because most of the audience is in front of you. There were occasions when people sat in the Lords' Rooms, on the stage. The only time you can play with that is when you're walking off. If you did a pie-chart of your eye-contact with the audience, you would probably get roughly the same shape as the Globe itself, because your energy is there, the tyranny of the majority is there. I think people in the lower gallery are getting the best deal, because they can stand as groundlings and go and rest when they want to. The emotional energy is with the groundlings. When I was talking from the floor, I had the best contact with them. Later on, in the scene with Florizel, I could start to look up to the upper galleries, and it suited me, because Polixenes is quite an objective character. Somehow, they seemed to have a more objective take on the events, and it felt logical to address them at that point. I'm sure that's what happened in Shakespeare's day. Our groundlings are not "base", of course, they're just more up for a good time - not just laughing, but a full emotional experience. The people in the galleries sit back slightly, not that they're uninvolved, but they're involved in a slightly different manner. I felt it was important to make eye-contact with them. If you did it to a groundling, the people upstairs enjoyed it. But if you did it to them, the groundlings felt left out. I think they felt they owned the play more than the people up there. But it's just



an impression. There were times when you really enjoyed having the groundlings there because you could use them to cock a snoot at the people in the posh boxes. One day, just as I was leaving as Polixenes, saying "Farewell, our brother", a champagne cork popped, and I used it as the idea that they were celebrating my departure. I just looked at the groundlings as if to say: "what do they think they're doing!" The people in that corner did get in on it, and understood what was going on. There are those moments where you drop out of the play slightly, and the audiences love it. In modern terms, it would be cheap, but in Globe terms, it is quite legitimate. Mark Lewis-Jones and Mark Rylance did it all the time. I think extemporising was probably the only way of controlling an audience. Even our audiences, that are much more tame than Shakespeare's were, sometimes get out of control. What I noticed in *The Winter's Tale* was that there would be a line, and when the audience did react, you would realise the next line was the perfect put-down anyway. It's such clever writing: Shakespeare obviously knew his audience very well. If actors had to improvise then, it was obviously because the writing was not good enough to contain the audience. I don't like cheap gags, but I think it's legitimate here, if used with discretion.

The things I changed including some blocking, especially with Ade (Sapara, who played Camillo). We discussed some, and others we just changed on the spot. We opened out more to the audience in act I, we went down to the pillar in the Statue scene because it felt more comfortable. I reduced the distance between Perdita and me because I felt that's what the lines were doing in trying to make contact with the shepherdess in the Pastoral. But the most striking level was deeper. In the scene with Florizel, the blocking was such that I could look straight out, I was closer to the audience, and played through them, though not directly at them. I try to get them on my side, on the side of a father. I could picture fathers and sons in the audience. It reminded me of the responsibility an actor has to the characters and to people in a similar situation in the audience. It made me tune into these responsibilities. But once that contact goes, your job becomes harder to conceive of.

The real difficulty here is to be totally rigorous with your body on stage. Superfluous movement can de-focus a scene immediately. Your movement has to be totally in focus with your intentions. Maybe we should have had a preparation like the sculpture of the character's desire would have been more appropriate than David Freeman's exercises which felt superimposed from the outside.

I do like the downstage corners. They are powerful if you're not too close to the pillars, if you're right in the corner: you get an enormous amount of contact. The pillars are very tempting, even tantalising. If you don't know what to do, you go and lean on a pillar! I suspect they're not great. But if you're not the principal character in a scene, it's quite good to hug a pillar, because of the sight-lines. We did that in the Statue scene, for instance. I quite liked the scene where Ade (Camillo) dragged me to the pillar to tell me to escape from Sicily. From the moment we left the pillar, as other characters had come on stage, we had to act differently, to be "normal". We discovered that rather late. At the beginning, we ran off with the assumption that Hermione could not see us. But that was not

tenable: she could see us running off. It's very hard to play with these conventions here - in a darkened auditorium, you would have taken the lights down on that part of the stage. But here, you're in the same conditions as the other characters. Originally we ran all the way round, and you can play the convention that one scene is in one place and another quite independently. But there, we were going through the same door, and we cracked it by playing in such a way that Hermione would not realise that something was amiss. In fact, Belinda Davison and Anna-Livia Ryan had discussed their entrance and changed something to make it more positive, which actually defocused what we were doing. The next night, they changed it, but that prompted questions about the way we were exiting. But none of us thought of these changes in terms of the Globe, but of the truth of the scene. David Freeman did not really notice those changes, but when he came back, he did not like the show.

### **Patrick Godfrey**

Old Shepherd in *The Winter's Tale*

Calianax in *The Maid's Tragedy*

I've come to the conclusion that I don't really want to do Shakespeare anywhere else. The thought of going back to the RSC and doing a whole lot of endless technicals while they work out how they're going to change the scenery and music cues just doesn't seem to be relevant any more. I joined the company because I wanted to see what it was like to be an Elizabethan actor, to walk out onto the stage, and what I have discovered is that it is very much a theatre where you make contact with people. It works when you make direct contact, and I love it when people nod back at a line you've given them, and even when they're right at the top, you can make eye contact with them. And very often they will either or disagree with something you're telling them. I think that is essentially what – it is very much a two-way process between the audience and the actor in a way that it is not in a darkened theatre. When it works it's very exciting. It also means that it's very good for comedy. Stand up comics would never want to go anywhere else, because they could do their thing and see every single member of their audience, see how they are reacting...

I haven't had the temptation to extemporise in *The Winter's Tale*. It's obviously something you can do very easily. But I've noticed that we've got over this. At the beginning of the season we had a public of groupies, or Globaholics who were prepared to throw cabbage and react, and they were almost out there acting being an audience – which made it rather trying at times. But now everything's calmed down a great deal. David Freeman, in *The Winter's Tale* was very anxious that we played the play and only contact the audience through the characters. So it is in some ways a production which could actually have happened anywhere, in any theatre.

I think the constraint on the director in this space is to tell a story, because it is a story-telling space. And so if you try and overlay a directorial concept I think you're going to find that it is not going to be as successful as someone who just says: "well, this is what happened next" - which after all is what happened in Shakespeare's time. Nobody knew what the play was, and they just said their bits. I think Lucy Bailey was in fact more successful with the space. David had a

very clear idea of creating two societies, and so we spent weeks playing at being savages. It helped what he wanted to do, but with the space – personally I think it confuses people, but that's a personal reaction.

I did not feel that the uniform clothing made it hard to focus on individual actors. The Old and Young Shepherd and Autolycus – we three mostly have our scenes together - are very well defined: the Old Shepherd comes on after a long, agonised first part and sings a completely different song.

There are masses of challenges at the Globe. You've got to treat the space as if it were in the round and act with your back. I think that's what Lucy found in her direction: there's been a lot of talk about what she achieved using the diagonals. Very often you think if you're downstairs facing up you can't be seen, but of course you can: you've got a whole third of this huge audience. One of the fascinating things is that this is the size of the *Olivier* theatre – I think it houses more than the *Olivier* - and yet the actor-audience relationship is so much closer. You've also got to get your head up, you've got to remember the people up at the top. It took a long time to get used to it. It's something I've learned over the season.

I've played in the round before, at Croydon – *As You Like It*. There the audience wasn't so high. The *Swan* at Stratford is the nearest I've been. Usually in the round you concentrate on the person you're playing with, and you allow an audience into what is happening. Here, you've got to do that and get it out to the audience to make the personal contact. That is the problem. But Shakespeare tells you so often: asides, any soliloquy mean sharing your thoughts with the audience.

I think the Globe experience has changed the way I deal with asides and soliloquies. Instead of standing on a stage and being introspective, you are having an active discussion about how you feel, as opposed to examining your own navel, as it were, in front of an audience. And I think Shakespeare meant this to happen. "To be or not to be, that is the question" – 'what do you think? My problem is this "Whether 'tis nobler in the mind...?" ' That is what you learn.

I think there *are* rules, and one of them is that you emote on the line and not between it. That's where the emotion comes out of: the sound, the sound of the word. All those onomatopoeia, pinging the opposites in the verse. It would be interesting to do ... Chekhov here, and to see what happened to a Chekhov play. I think it would be fascinating, because when you think of *The Seagull*, and all these soliloquies: maybe they were meant actually to be played in that way. It would be fascinating to play Chekhov and Ibsen and plays like that: it might give them a new dimension.

I think the acoustic conditions are surprisingly benevolent, as long as you articulate and have the right energy. You don't need to shout – I don't think so. There's one point on the stage, round about where the cage gets put (in the trial scene in *The Winter's Tale*), the sound does bounce back. What I find is that the further upstage you are, the stronger it is. The temptation is to come down all

the time, but the further you come down, the more you are shutting yourself off from an audience who can't see round the pillars. My [favourite place] would be to be up there - I mean, that's where the king was put. The corners are very good as long as you can think of all the people back there. So you just don't stay there too long. The blocking should not be too inflexible. If it is, you're in trouble. It's interesting to see the difference between what happened in the rehearsal room and what happens here. It depends how well a production has been rehearsed. If it's been well rehearsed, you can do anything. You have to have your basics right, the building blocks.

When we came back after the 3 ½ week break for *The Maid's Tragedy* previews, we knocked 15 minutes off the show. I think it's gone back, but it would be wonderful if we could play it like that. I think we were just thinking quicker, and you can. And coming back was remarkable. Suddenly it was well before 5 o'clock instead of 10 past. Probably because with *The Maid's Tragedy* you have a very clear story line. There's no sub-plot, you just go roaring along and it's like a train. Apply that to a Shakespeare play and it works much better than if you stand around and think about what you're going to say before you say it for 5 minutes.

The things I've changed have been to do with making contact with the audience. That is something I'm convinced about: that is what this space is all about. I think David Freeman, last time he saw it, was probably thinking: it's all too much out front. And he may well be right, because I think you've got to do both. You've got to try and stay in character. I try not to come out of character.

There is definitely a temptation to play to the [groundlings](#). It's like the temptation to come down to the front. That's why I think it's better to stay back up, because you're not so locked into the groundlings, but you can see the whole sea of faces. I try to make eye contact up to the top of the [galleries](#). Last night I caught somebody's eye up there, and he just nodded back – I loved it. When you do that, the whole audience feels that it has been contacted. That's what you've got to do: you've got to keep your head up – otherwise, a lot of people are going to miss out.

My advice to future actors and directors? Tell the story. Tell the story, and let the play take care of itself. I've done it before, on two occasions with Shakespeare plays. We've gone round American Universities with a company called *Acters*. This involves 5 actors, and you do a whole play changing characters all the time. It's a fascinating experience. You don't have a director, only 5 actors. Mostly your energy is based on changing character (I was playing Malvolio and Andrew Aguecheek, and we had to devise a way to do it without prop or set or lighting change). So you're completely locked into telling the story. And all the academic nuance will happen of its own accord if you do that, I'm sure.

You need to be more physical on the Globe stage, you need to express what you're doing with your whole body, and the movement classes really helped.

## Nicholas Le Prevost

Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale*,  
King in *The Maid's Tragedy*

I think once you see the Globe you realise that from the sheer shape of it, it's age-old: you always form a circle to see a man killed, or a pig being slaughtered.

It's quite tough for a modern actor. Our basic massive influence is TV, cinema and box-theatre, all things where you only view from one side. That's what so crucially different here: you're surrounded. It means that you can't use the sophisticated and controlled geometry that you can use in a camera situation or Proscenium arch theatre. What seems to work best is to act well. It's a question of intelligence. You have to be intelligent of your function in the play and the production has to be aware of itself, it has to know what the story it's telling is, in a commanding way of which modern theatre is not always capable. Modern theatre often takes a conceptual position on a text, pushing it in a certain way toward something that seems more relevant to our world. That's probably what box theatre came from: making things visible from one side made it easier to prejudice things. [That's what words like] the view, the perspective, the geometry [are about]. The thing about the Globe is that it doesn't work like that, it's a much more open environment, a much more socially strong environment than the average theatre. It reflects the atmosphere of the time when the majority of things were viewed in a market square, from every side. The tradition of circus tents, the ring, the amphitheatre, is older than many things. People were more used to seeing things in the round. They smelled their neighbours, they walked in their neighbour's muck, they lived in public. Privacy and individuality would not have been an issue. The human being was part of a pack. Otherwise, I'm sure people were exactly the same as we are now: no less sensitive or neurotic. It's a political theatre which undermines the privileged perspective of capitalist art: it makes you realise you're part of the human race.

Directors cope badly with that, because people are so much more educated now in this business, always looking for an angle to make sense of things, because of the commodification of things. If you really want to see what Elizabethan actors did in this space, you'd better do modern plays, things that are really *hot*. Then we would learn something about the space. If you only do historical plays, you will get swallowed up by your theories. It's modern plays that would tell us more about the mind-sets and energy of Elizabethan actors. It's impossible to reveal it through a classic text, except by accident or serendipity, which happen in some performances and not in others.

This season has taught me that the rules haven't changed, that it's no different doing Shakespeare than doing modern plays. The best of Shakespeare is like the best of modern theatre. It's about thought, the speed of thought and story-telling, which when it works, is not too complex or out of date, or out of measure, works as well as modern theatre. It's about an overview of the play. It's not only what it means in itself, but what the accumulated meaning of it is, at that moment in the play. It's layering, and you have a cumulative experience. It's like cooking: you never realise the effect one single herb will have to the general taste of the dish. So the way the audience reacts is a shock.

The groundlings are a fantastic connection between the seats and the stage. They do lead them, they connect them. It's a crowd experience at the Globe, it's not a crowd experience in a normal theatre. Here, you see it, smell it, hear it. In a normal theatre you can be immured in yourself. You don't really have to look at anybody. Here it's a social, public, political experience to watch a play. I look up a lot. I see everybody. There are people who talk about picking out faces. I do look at people, but there's a kind of peculiar intimacy with a crowd where you can see them. In normal theatres, you've got marvellous sophisticated lights that blind you and make the experience cinematic and give you an illusion of authenticity, because you feel lifted out of yourself. Here you're in front of the crowd.

Did I change anything through the season? I hope so. When you get to know it, you instinctively go to the gaps rather than fight through the thorns. You choose the path that's open, and improve things that don't work. It's about being open. You can't manufacture and seek to create an effect. In other people I really see more what works and doesn't work than in my own. In *The Winter's Tale* I had lots of time to watch. And it's amazing how people learn and others don't. The greatest challenge for an actor at the Globe is about getting real about yourself, about self-knowledge and openness and clarity of your own thoughts about what you're doing, and a real sense of working with other people. You've got to work with everybody else on the stage. You've got to focus. That's what I find so bad about [this production of] *The Winter's Tale*, how badly focussed it is. These rehearsal rooms are so inadequate. When we went on with *The Winter's Tale*, it didn't work, and we're still doing what didn't work. I could list a thousand things which have got nothing to do with telling a story in that environment. They're all things about perspective and box theatre acting which don't work in the Globe.

Acting is a very dangerous job, it's like going to sea in a ship. It's not as tough as it used to be, and some young actors are not equipped to adapt to this stage: they're still doing things that patently don't work. They're not sensitive to the fact that it doesn't work. The culture today doesn't ask of them to be this brutal about themselves. We're rather lost. Separation is the real experience of society and that's actually what you've got to deal with. That's not going to solve the difficulty of working at the Globe. We live in a violent world. We can't explain why mass movements happen. We've lost the sense of community, we're in a world that's so patently unfair but where you're so protected from having to face up to it. The Globe is actually very middle class, not a popular theatre as in Elizabethan times. I think there should be no volunteers and enthusiasts. There should be only professional people. The whole Globe is built on a dangerous foundation: sponsorship by monopolies and conglomerates is very unhealthy and wrong. I don't feel it should have happened in that way.

What is interesting about something which is a live art is that each day you've got the same basic material and each day something different happens. The way we contract out work to the director and stop paying him once the actors go on stage, especially in an experimental theatre like this one, is really inadequate. You're left with something which was a good idea in the rehearsal room but then becomes completely unworkable on stage and remains fixed. There's an

awful lot we should have done, we should have had a more argumentative temper and show of feeling. We should have been far more muscular in the way we expressed our dissatisfaction with the work. I'm sure in these days, you tried each day to earn more money than the day before. As Autolycus, I begged. I have saved all my takings in a bowl, and each day I set myself the target of making at least as much money as the day before, because I feel that is really how I should approach each performance, and I feel that was really what it was like. You didn't have newspapers, a middle class broadsheet telling how to behave. How can you have an authentic experience in a building and business organisation that so totally defeats the experience of an Elizabethan theatre?

As Autolycus, I have as little concern for the audience as for the characters in the story: I'm only there to profit. I think the audience like me because they realise that this is a real thing. As opposed to people engaged in a tragedy, I am really engaged in earning my living.

I learned an awful lot doing *The Winter's Tale*. I also realised that you can stand very still on this stage, that there is an enormous power. You know the audience will find you if you wait for them. And if you give them the space to find you, they will find you. What I tried to do with the king in *The Maid's Tragedy*, rather than demonstrate anything, was to make that clear. So I kept him much tighter, much more private and intense, less demonstrative. In fact I do almost nothing as the king. I don't go out to the audience.

I do think that it's a cock-eyed experiment because you can't do one bit without doing the rest. How can you have academics trying to observe through a breach when you live in a climate that is so utterly different? [It would be something else] if you made that theatre very real to today in its organisation. It would be essential to do very modern and radical work here. You have to have a real place, ingrained in this time. The poor, whose money has been robbed to build this theatre, are the ones who don't come. It's been a fascinating experience that has reinforced the political experience of my life.

Most of what actors say about this place is so religious and superficial, about being in this business. I'm a well of dissatisfaction, but I would come back, I love it, I love being by the river, and I love being with the audience. I only wish it was a different audience. It would be so much better if people had to queue up to get a ticket, to do away with the brochures and the credit cards, and that the corresponding savings should be reflected in the ticket-prices.

Extemporising is about working in front of a crowd. Most parts don't have the privilege of acknowledging the audience as much as Autolycus. That's his function. It's written into the part, and what is there is probably the approximation of the way the last actor who played it did it. You can't say things that aren't in the text (I do, but just a little), but that is yet another fallacy: because we have a holy text, we lack the possibility of live response to the audience, of taking in the history of the day. There must have been massive extemporising then, which you can't do now because the idiom has changed. That's why you have to do modern plays (because you have to say "fuck"). That's what's so fascinating about the Globe: it's thrown up so clearly the

dilemma of recreating history. We're no different from our ancestors, and you can't freeze things or bring them back to life. Mortality is mortality. The printing word survives, but what you learn by creating this time machine for Shakespeare is the extraordinary exquisite sharpness of modernity and the moment. The greatest lesson that you learn from the Globe is actually what is happening now, because it's exactly the same thing as then. The response in Shakespeare's day to the moment is the same as the response now. I feel strengthened by that feeling, and it's got implications in every area of my life.

### **Mark Lewis-Jones**

Leontes in *The Winter's Tale*

Melantius in *The Maid's Tragedy*

I'd never been to the Globe before. I went about a month before rehearsals started. Mark took me round. They were still [thatching](#) the roof. They were six weeks from finishing. That was my real first time: we were clambering over scaffolding. Even then, I got the thrill of it, there was a real good buzz around the craftsmen, all doing their real craft in the theatre. They were all specialised craftsmen. And in a way that hasn't changed, because in a way you have to develop your own personal craft in order to do it. Everybody - actors, directors, musicians, designers, and the people who did the thatching on the roof. And in a way we're all in our infancy. We've had a first bash at it, which has been a pretty good bash, but there is an enormous way to go to really discover what it is actually capable of doing. I feel that in *The Maid's Tragedy*, having had the benefit of *The Winter's Tale* and being able to see [Henry V](#), one could already feel that there was a confidence, an awareness of the space that wasn't there in *The Winter's Tale* for obvious reasons. Already there has been some ground covered between just two shows. For instance, the way Lucy has used angles has helped overcome some of the negative points of the stage. The pillars can be deemed to be negative in certain stagings.

*The Winter's Tale* and *The Maid's Tragedy* are completely different parts, and *The Winter's Tale* is essentially much more difficult to do because it is far more complex. *The Maid's Tragedy* is a good story that pushes forward like a train, it's well written in that thriller sort of sense, and it's very macabre and dark in places, but essentially it's one plot, which is very different from *The Winter's Tale*, a hugely complex play. But having scaled that first, it helped enormously. We had that confidence to go into *The Maid's Tragedy* because we had a good stab at *The Winter's Tale*. The work on *The Maid's Tragedy* fed back into *The Winter's Tale* (we stopped for 3 1/2 weeks) and when we came back there was a sort of ease to it. They're opposites but they do complement each other.

One of the greatest challenges is to get the audience to actually listen to what you are saying. You have to do that from your own being. No director can do that for you. They can tell you where to stand. It's a very unforgiving space. If you get it right, you can work it to your advantage. If you're still you have to be amazingly still. If you move, don't fuss with it. If you decide to do something, you have to do it. That is probably true about any stage, but even more so here, because it's so unforgiving.



I changed things about way I played scenes over the season, in both plays, but mostly in *The Winter's Tale*. I found, until the very end of the season that I was still paring away, cutting unnecessary branches. That's really what happened all along. In spite of what we discovered in the rehearsal room, when we got to the stage, we thought: "well, it gets in the way". I know it's true of all theatres that ultimately you've got to tell a story, but again the specialness, the uniqueness of the Globe is that it is so unforgiving about anything that is superfluous. Anything that you put in the way of the story is highlighted by the fact that it's on the Globe stage. In a sense you're watching people tell a story, and you've got nothing to help you. You've got yourself and the people on the stage. Anything that gets in the way is more apparent as an obstruction on this stage. It's all little things, in isolation, they would seem totally irrelevant. It could be physical things, or "don't chop lines up, just get to the end", paring away. In *The Winter's Tale*, you can easily get bogged down in the deeper meanings, and frankly you should leave those alone because you can't play them.

It dawned on me during the season that you can't just look toward the audience and speak to them like that, you have to pick out an individual and make a connection, so that everybody else feels they're being spoken to as well. And that's how it works: in a sense it infects the galleries if you pick one person out. And you invariably, I found, choose someone in the groundlings then that infects the rest of the theatre. And I find it is essential and imperative that the audience feel be part of it, they need it, they almost come in needing to, which doesn't mean that they have to hiss and boo each time you come on. That's what happened in the first preview. It's a balance that is yet to be got right. Sometimes I feel I get it - because I speak to the audience a lot. But there is a balance that one can strike so that they do feel part of it, but they're not in control, that you stay in control of it. If they get to control it, they don't know what to do. That sometimes can happen, where you lose control of the story. But in terms of talking to the audience, that just has to happen, you can't fake that. Otherwise you will cut them out. Of course, you also make contact with people in the galleries, but more so to the groundlings.

The fact that *The Winter's Tale* is late Shakespeare and therefore difficult verse, has helped me get the thought through to the end of the line. You can't muck about with it otherwise you lose them, otherwise you get behind or too far ahead.

The audience's role has become clear to me: the areas of the plays that require an audience to participate, in whatever sense that is, has been made obvious to me, in a way that I wasn't aware of before in conventional houses.

I quite like being down centre, right at the front. Certainly when I'm speaking to the audience it feels crazy to be anywhere else, because you can always turn around and take people in on the side. Of course, it might not go in line with the academic point of view.

The Globe requires clarity. There's a fuzziness you can get away with in other theatres, but not here. You have to be absolutely clear in your intentions, for an actor as well as a director. You have to be prepared for changes from the

rehearsal room to the theatre, because they will alter drastically. You have exactly the same amount of space, but it's completely different once you get on stage. You've got to make yourself heard - and I don't mean volume. You've got to listen to them to make them listen to you.

### **Chris Porter**

Dion in *The Winter's Tale*

Diagoras in *The Maid's Tragedy*

It was very important for me to play at the Globe: I only left college last year, and this was my first real job. It was a completely unknown quantity. I was amazed and very excited. When I first came, it looked really small and unfinished. After seeing all the pictures from the outside and of the Prologue Season, it felt very different, especially with all the scaffolding: you could not really see the stage. I was only able to get an impression of what it would be like during the 'techs', but then the whole play changed: everything was re-blocked, things were cut, others put in. If you stand at the back of the yard and look at the balcony, it seems a long way, especially since it's all around, even if by comparison with other theatres it isn't.

The greatest challenge is physical. The vocal part is easy: you just have to be clear, you don't have to project that much. It's a lot friendlier than some much smaller theatres that I've played in. But physically, you've got to take the stage and the audience. You must not let yourself be scared by them. You must let it inflate you as it were.

Something that is more apparent in the Globe, is that you can see the heads turn. If you're on one side of the stage and something is happening on the other side, and you say a line, you can see all the heads turn. It's like a tennis match! To know that people are actually listening to you is great! The closest thing to it is TIE, touring schools, because there is no lighting, everything is blanket lighting. But normally in schools you can see that they don't care, except for the odd face, whereas in the Globe, it's the odd face that is *not* interested.

I don't actually think of the Globe as being outside. In theatre in the round, there isn't a particular focus of the stage, whereas the natural focus of the Globe is out front, because that's where most of the people are. You actively have to tear yourself away from out front and go to the sides so they can see as well. Halfway through a performance you suddenly realise that there are actually people in the balcony you haven't seen, and immediately, because they are much closer, those four people seem far more important than the 1400 who are in the seats and standing. I've usually missed the chance by the time I noticed them! It was tricky because, for instance, act V of *The Winter's Tale* was directed mostly out front, and you wanted to take them in, but you couldn't, because the throne was there, the statue of Hermione was where it was, and there was not much movement. In the Gentlemen scene, David Freeman wanted us all to sit at the front of the stage, so that's what we did. But it felt odd. I was very conscious of the times when I wasn't taking in the main house and angling more to the side. It felt as if you were doing them a favour. If I ever work at the Globe again,

I'd want to correct that impression, and just be in the space, as opposed to behaving like in a proscenium arch theatre.

What I learned about Shakespeare is realising how important the audience are. That was amazing. In a normal theatre, you can shut them out, but the Globe doesn't allow you to do that. Your Hamlet internal struggle at the Globe would have to become an external struggle. You have to let the audience into it. Modern theatre allows you to have an inward reflection more than the Globe does, but the Globe forces you to be more engaging.

I do think the groundlings get the better share. About 70% of your energy goes down toward the groundlings.

I listened to Mark Rylance, who can speak really quietly and still be heard, and tried to do the same. He's just very clear. The clarity can be used in any theatre, but if you shouted and were unclear, you'd probably be heard but not understood in the Globe. Clarity is the main point. You can't get away with washing things away. It's like the TIE, because kids don't let you get away with anything either.

Physically it teaches what it's like to be watched. Those four people at the back - their presence is really felt, you feel that you are being watched, like one person looking through your window! It's going to be really hard going back to a theatre where you can't see the audience. Of course you also see them when they're inattentive or drunk. The first thing you talk about when you come off stage are the people in the audience - anyone you fancy, or who's not listening. It's very difficult to get peoples' attention if they don't want to take part. We had a corporate audience one night. They were all drunk, and wondering why they were there, and were a bit demoralising. Some of them were engaged, but it only takes around 100 people to overpower the whole thing. It works really well with school parties when the teachers have prepared them and told them to enjoy themselves. People would stand with their elbows on the sage and played with the soil, and that could sometimes be annoying.

I was always aware that there are a couple of hundred people who can't see you wherever you stand. When I came to see *Henry V* at the beginning, it was quite full in the yard, that I stayed stuck behind a pillar, 45 degrees to the stage, and I missed a lot - the prayer, the Crispin speech, many 'moments'.

The central bit of the stage (where the mat was for *The Maid's Tragedy*) is a great spot. But I enjoyed running around the back of the stage, although when I watched it didn't look any smaller than people running around in the middle, because there is only a 10 feet difference. As long as you're not crammed up against the pillar, you're OK. They say in the Olivier, there is a golden spot, where suddenly you're given godlike power as an actor. But I don't think that's really true, at least at the Globe.

In act V of *The Winter's Tale*, I felt I was pulling focus too much, with my weird attire and twitching. In the Gentlemen scene, I wanted to make myself as small as possible so people could concentrate on Andrew Bridgmont who was

delivering the plot. I was worried about blocking people, because I could hear them saying: "I can't see anything". I just didn't move when I was listening, then had all the heads turning round when I answered, so actually focus was not really a problem.

The Globe is like a beautiful set. People go: "oooh" for a minute, then they judge the play for what it is. The plays definitely got more rowdy towards the end, because it took them about 2 hours - which was really incredibly quick - to shake off their inhibitions. Which I suppose the Elizabethans didn't have to do. Toward the end, you got the vibes of what happened then. Of course, you probably didn't have the day-trippers coming down and saying: "oh look! It's Elizabethan!". People who came talked about the whole experience, not just about the play or the theatre or the actors. I enjoyed the Dunkirk spirit of it all, the first season where nothing was pre-organised, and lots of things weren't working, at least right at the beginning.

I'd love to come back and rehearse with all what I now know in mind. When I saw *Henry V*, I was completely flabbergasted. I wasn't taken with the idea of having it all in Shakespearean costume, because I don't think it shows much imagination, but in that space, it works. You don't have to do it all the time though. It's not about the gimmicks and the tricks, it's about the play. In the same week, I saw *Lear* at the National (Cottesloe), sealed black box, little bit of set, completely controlled and Spartan, just characters being true to the play. I felt that that is what Shakespeare is about. Then I saw *Henry V*, and I felt: this is true too! Just being very simple, not letting directors' egos take over. I did feel that *The Winter's Tale* was slightly overloaded with concepts and theories, all this magical world, and this means that etc. I heard Peter Hall saying that imagined it running it with lots of plays being quickly rehearsed, not knowing at the beginning of the season what you would be doing at the end, with a constant turnover. I think that would be interesting to do for one season.

### **Ada Sapara**

#### *Camillo in The Winter's Tale*

Playing at the Globe meant going back to the basics of theatre, to the beginning of story telling. Sitting in a circle to tell a story is age-old. In a normal theatre, you're only aware of the audience when they laugh or in the interval. At the Globe, you can see them moving around, you can see the expressions on their faces, you can see them going to the toilet, sleeping. In Shakespeare's time, there was a lot more activity. And I imagine the groundlings were a lot more talkative than they are now. The closest I ever got to this was a tour of *Macbeth* I did in Africa. People would be talking and still listening, it was never rude, and the story slowly came together for them.

It's so rare to see something so big made of wood. You only see equivalent buildings in America. It feels warm and encompassing. You almost feel as if the audience and the theatre are putting their arms around you. The difficult part for us on stage is to make every part of that hug important, not just the fingers or the hands. It's like walking in a forest: it's alive. In the Globe, you feel the life of the wood in the middle of the city.

Seeing the audience was a challenge at first: if you had a soliloquy and someone looked away, you felt you had failed. But then it became a joy. A lot of people are frightened of playing in the space because of the proximity of the audience. Vocally, the very first time we were on stage, we were told to over-project. Then I had a 4 week break, and when I came back I found I didn't need to shout any more. You don't need to project all the time. There are parts of the play where you want to tell the audience what you're thinking, or you want to bring the audience in, and we realised that you didn't have to push all the time, you can relax. As long as you articulate and your intentions are clear, people will understand what you're saying. They see the body language as well. In *Umabatha*, there wasn't much dialogue, it was all to do with the body. I think in Shakespeare's time, actors used their bodies a lot more, so if people didn't hear, the way the actors moved and talked would help to identify them as good or evil, as the clown or the king. Now, a king can sit on the floor, or be bare foot. Good and bad people walk in the same way...

I don't think we used the stage as well as we could have done. We were either at one end or another, and it was all very static. If we had moved around more, it might have been easier. If you move around while having a conversation, everyone will get at least part of it. It was a good lesson for directors: so many people on the sides saw nothing of some scenes, like the Statue scene. It should make directors think or where they put the action. Michael Gould and I reblocked some scenes, to make them less static, and more exciting for us too. Often, we came on and forgot about the scene, just had fun and as a result were more human. And the audience enjoyed the scene much more - especially the one in act IV, after all the action of the Trial, the storm and the comedy that has come before. That scene is really quite boring, specially coming straight after the interval, and we could of livened it up by coming on fencing for instance. Camillo is not the easiest part to play...and we could have made it more exciting.

Big speeches taken very seriously can become very boring, but if you tell a story, audience members forget that they are standing or uncomfortable. The thing is not to be afraid of the audience, to know that they are with you. That's what Mark Rylance did. I remember David Freeman talking about my asides, which he wanted to happen in the middle of the conversation. I would have preferred to take them out to the audience.

The scene where I tell Polixenes that I have to poison him always changed. We always ended up in the same place, but we reacted to one another's energy. We were squatting very close to the audience at the beginning. Most of the time, I'd look away from the audience, because there was no reason to take it out to them, but you felt they were with you, it was more intimate, they felt more involved in our little two-some. You didn't get to know the people in the galleries so well. Whereas you really got to know the groundlings, you'd notice if they moved. In the shows where it rained and the groundlings moved back, it felt as if the whole theatre was empty. The yard is really the heart of the theatre.

I really like the spot right between the two pillars, in the middle, a little bit upstage, because you can see people on all sides. I played close to the pillars in

the scene with Perdita and Florizel, and that was quite nice. I had an aside there, and I was looking at him, and at the same time, could take the aside over him. The audience could see me thinking. The "getting dressed" part of that scene turned into a pantomime - it was blocked quite late, during the techs. I remember Nicholas Le Prevost telling me to take my time, so I slowed it down a little, but I think it could have been more serious. It didn't feel urgent enough. Trying to give credibility to the going round the pillar without noticing Autolycus was difficult, because I could always see him. Autolycus was a funny character, but Camillo, Perdita and Florizel were not funny, and we should not have been drawn into it. Even Autolycus should realise how serious it is when Camillo threatens him.

When we were all dressed in brown, after a while we all seemed to disappear because of the brown earth. Afterward, when we came back in blue, it was refreshing. It was a production that might end up more memorable than the others, because of the clay in our hair and the strangeness of it all etc. Maybe we should have worked more on creating rules for the society we were creating, for it to more credible. The story is quite simple really: it's just about a man who gets jealous of his best friend, and we could have done it far more simply. But if you choose to do it with a strange society, you should go all the way: the celebration at the beginning could have been far bigger and more joyful, and the shock of the sudden jealousy would have been far greater. It didn't feel like a party - especially if you compare it with the opening of *Umabatha* with all the drums and dancing. There was more joy in the Pastoral, with the dancing and so on. It would have been nice for the audience to have the same spirit at the beginning. And the tragedy would have felt more poignant.

I think the Trial scene was too long - I was wearing a mask and looked at the audience... David Freeman always felt that the audience were stupid, so he felt he had to show things. But the words are there and they're sufficient. Hermione doesn't need to die on stage. And it's the same with the trial: you assume that she's been in prison for long. And if someone cries all the time, you don't feel any pity for them. Someone who is strong and not saying how depressed they are can be far more moving. It was not necessary to show the last meeting between Leontes and Polixenes. It was too obvious, and too early. And it was awkward for me because I was waiting on stage, and I had to make a decision not to look at their encounter. Leontes should have gone off, I should have done my soliloquy, then at the end of it Polixenes come on, and all seems normal. This parallel lingering we had to do before our scene could start took all the energy away.

In the Pastoral, we could have done more to fit in. People who go to a strange place normally try and fit in, but we had to remain aloof. As a result there was less of a shock when suddenly Polixenes got cross. If we had become more integrated, and had been dressed more like rustics, rather than in those silly clothes, it would have been more efficient when he suddenly became the enemy.

I wasn't very happy about the way we conveyed having become old. It was half-hearted, rather like school acting. But in 16 years, you don't change that much.

You just get slower, less excitable, you move differently. But the walking sticks... Getting older just means knowing more, being wiser. Perdita and Florizel are hot-headed and absolute whereas Camillo tries to bring them to reason. After all, Leontes says that Hermione looks older, and that is sufficient. You just have to trust the words.

Playing at the Globe is really about telling stories. I wish I could tell stories to the audience the way I tell them to my children. Everyone should be different, should bring out their idiosyncrasies on that stage, for it to be more interesting.

### **Jonathan Slinger**

Florizel in *The Winter's Tale*

Amintor in *The Maid's Tragedy*

I've always loved Shakespeare and the chance to play at the Globe from that point of view was fantastic. I'd encountered a lot of scepticism from a number of people who thought that it was nothing but a museum piece etc. I was a lot less sceptical, more inclined to think that it would illuminate a lot of things, and I felt that someone like Mark Rylance would not allow a museum piece to happen. The first time I went there was when the company got together on [4 April 1997](#). My first impression was how intimate it felt, knowing that it held 1500 people.

It got a bit scary when we got into the theatre because I remember feeling very powerful on the stage - there was a distinct buzz - but I felt that I was not to speed technically, not really commanding it. Very early on, with the voice teacher, we were really surprised how easily the voice carried. But then, the tension created by performing often meant that the performance was quite swallowed. It feels that you have to be perfectly relaxed and in control. If you're tense, it really gets in the way. This felt more acute at the Globe than anywhere else. But some things are easier. I really loved the first preview, when we got that crowd response that no one expected. I'm going to find it really difficult to go back to an ordinary theatre and play in a normal space. But you have to be physically, technically and vocally on top. I think there could have been far more vocal and physical work. I didn't feel that my voice was up to it when we went in, and I didn't feel that it was up to it until well into the season. It could just be me, but I did find that the days I didn't do warm-ups, the performance really suffered from it.

I found it immensely liberating to knock down that fourth wall, to be able to communicate and contact so directly. I find it far more difficult when I pretend that these people are not there. It became active: so many monologues and soliloquies are taken "into" the characters, which takes the heat out of them, makes them passive and introspective. But when you're given the opportunity to ask people what they think, it makes them active again. There is one difficulty, which I don't think I cracked. Given the opportunity to communicate with the audience, there is a definite skill that you need to develop. We were taught that we should focus on one person, who will carry it to the rest of the audience. I tried to do it, but there was often a kind of blur. I tried to take out as many things as I could to the audience. Sometimes it was blurred, sometimes I wasn't focussing on one person, and sometimes it didn't feel right to be doing it. There

is a definite art of doing that, which Mark has really mastered, a technique which needs to be looked at, knowing when it is going to be effective. I felt I was contacting gallery people more than the groundlings. It's probably not true, but I had this horror that if I took it to someone down below, people up there would miss out on it. So I always aimed up to the second row. But actually, because the groundlings are more responsive, stuff directed to them was effective overall, because they inform the response of the whole theatre. It travels up from them.

There was definitely an interaction between the work on the two plays. I was glad that it was that way round, because *The Maid's Tragedy* was the big one as far as I was concerned. I wanted to be familiar with the space and the actors before I started it. The shame was that I got to do far less performances of *The Maid's Tragedy* than of *The Winter's Tale*. But by the time I reached *The Maid's Tragedy*, I was feeling far better equipped vocally and freer physically. I had an awareness of the audience and their part, but it wasn't really until *The Maid's Tragedy* that I used it, because Florizel didn't really contact the audience, whereas for Amintor, there wasn't a single scene where I didn't address the audience. And when I went back to *The Winter's Tale*, I wondered why I hadn't done it, and then opened it out far more in the last performances. As a company, we'd all been very tense on *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Maid's Tragedy* relaxed us all, to the point that I felt a palpable sense of relaxation on *The Winter's Tale* which hadn't been there before, which loosened the production up. It didn't affect the blocking though. It just became freer.

I'm sure I will take that openness to whatever I do next: just because an audience is not visible doesn't mean that they become invisible. They are still there to be contacted. Any acting decision I make in the future will have that question over it. I'll be looking more for that opportunity.

It's now obvious to me that Shakespeare wrote with the audience in mind, especially soliloquies. And he wrote with much more humour in mind than we think. In the preview of *The Winter's Tale* for instance, when Leontes put this succession of questions about the baby (shall I let it live? Better burn it now etc), there was an overwhelming response between each line, where in a darkened auditorium, it would all have been contained. Entrances and exits were obviously written with that simultaneous fading in and out.

I like the forestage, the corners of the forestage, and the box and diagonals that Lucy made in *The Maid's Tragedy*. It's not one particular spot. Some things work in particular areas, and others don't. One very difficult one to play is being downstage facing up diagonally. On the square of the pillar, there is not much room, but if you used them they would probably be very effective. One thing I would have liked to do would be to sit on the edge of the stage and talk to the audience. It could be very intimate.

The Globe is not really about playing completely in the round. It wasn't a particularly liberating space in the sense that I felt I could almost go anywhere and do anything. There are definite rules there, whereas in a really round theatre - like the Royal Exchange, or the New Vic in Stoke, which is raked far less



severely than the Royal Exchange, you can be almost anywhere on stage. At the New Vic, wherever you are, you can see everything. I found that more liberating than the Globe. There are a lot of things you can't do at the Globe, but of course, it has that unique relationship with the audience.

My advice to young actors (like myself) would be to seriously work on the physical and vocal technique. Some actors found it quite inhibiting to take things out to the audience. Fiona Shaw said she felt quite intimidating to see all those people. So my advice is get used to it and learn to like it. If you don't enjoy it or get on top of it, you will find it very difficult to act there.

## Appendix 2: Cuts

The script used was a transcript of the First Folio, with scenes divided into subsections. All quotations in the report have been taken from that script, but for the cuts to be accessible to all readers, I have used the World Classics edition by Stephen Orgel as reference.

I-1 2-3, 5-11, 13-19, 23-32, 37-end

I-2 121-134, 221-2, 241-2, 247-251, 257-8, 341-3, 352-357, 375-379, 386-389, 396-7, 423-426, 430-31, 438-441, 444-446, 452-455

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II-1 143-150, 176-179

II-2 32-34, 41-44, 48-50

II-3 86-90, 141-145, 146-150, 161 *beard* changed to *head*, 163-164, 177-181, 196-7, 201-end

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III-1 cut

III-2 141, 156-168

III-3 18-21, 70-71, 73,

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IV-1 9-12

IV-2 8-9, 13-19, 26-28, 32-5

IV-3 40-44, 56-60, 64-68, 80-82, 111

IV-4 10-14, 28-31, 38-40, 47-8, 52-54, 66, 68-73, 124 (*A malady most incident to maids*), 144, 146-153, 170-173, 189-218, 243-245, 267-9, 319-338 (relating to the dance of 12 satyrs), 344-351, 384-5, 428, 489-494, 497-499, 502-4, 510-12, 517-533, 546-551, 559-61, 565-569, 576-581, 583-4, 590-1, 601-609, 611-614, 629, 656-7 (*what have we twain forgot?*), 670-673, 679-81, 699-701, 719-723, 729-730, 741-748, 767-772, 792-3, 797-8, 806-813, 830-end

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V-1 25-6, 32, 47-9, 95-112, 128-9, 156-163 (reference to Smalus), 193-4, 206, 223-228

V-2 16-19, 21 *Rogero* changed to *Cleomenes*, 24-25, 27-28, 46-48, 56-7, 60-61, 69 (*and in the view of the shepherd*), 75-79, 81 (*caught the water, though not the Fish*), 83-4, 87, 89, 94 (*many years in doing*), 96-7, 102-105, 109, 160-166

V-3 4-8, 9-12