



Shakespeare's Globe



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The 2000 Globe Season The White Company

Hamlet

By Dr Jaq Bessell
(Globe Research)

HAMLET

The White Company, 2000

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HAMLET

Dramatis Personae, The White Company

GHOST OF HAMLET, THE LATE KING OF DENMARK	Tim Preece
KING CLAUDIUS , HIS BROTHER	Tim Woodward
QUEEN GERTRUDE OF DENMARK, WIDOW OF KING HAMLET, NOW WIFE OF CLAUDIUS	Joanna McCallum
PRINCE HAMLET , SON OF KING HAMLET AND QUEEN GERTRUDE	Mark Rylance
POLONIUS , A LORD	James Hayes
LAERTES , SON OF POLONIUS	Mark Lockyer
OPHELIA , DAUGHTER OF POLONIUS	Penny Layden
REYNALDO , SERVANT OF POLONIUS	Jan Knightley
HORATIO , FRIEND OF HAMLET	Geoffrey Beevers
ROSENCRANTZ , SCHOOL-FRIEND OF HAMLET	David Phelan
GUILDENSTERN , SCHOOL-FRIEND OF HAMLET	Harry Gostelow
FRANCISCO , SOLDIER	Chris Tranchell
BARNARDO , SOLDIER	Roger Gartland
MARCELLUS , SOLDIER	Tim Block
VOLTEMAND , COURTIER	Leader Hawkins
CORNELIUS , COURTIER	Chris Tranchell
OSRIC , COURTIER	Harry Gostelow
A SAILOR	Tim Block
TWO CLOWNS , A GRAVEDIGGER AND HIS COMPANION	Roger Gartland Jan Knightley
A PRIEST	Chris Tranchell
FORTINBRAS , PRINCE OF NORWAY	Dragan Micanovic
A CAPTAIN IN HIS ARMY	Chris Tranchell
PLAYER KING	Tim Preece
PLAYER QUEEN	Karen Tomlin
PLAYERS	Roger Gartland Jan Knightley

Other roles played by members of the Company

**MUSICIANS
PERCUSSION
TROMBONE**

**FIDDLE
TRUMPET**

Phil Hopkins
Tom Lees / Tom Hammond
Abigail Newman
Sharon Lindo / Giles Lewin
Paul Sharp / John Hutchinson
Frazer Tannock
Adrian Woodward / Richard Thomas

**COMPANY MANAGER
STAGE MANAGERS**

Marian Spon
Sid Charlton
Bryan Paterson
Tamzin Gibb
Helen Wallis
Giles Block
Giles Block
Jenny Tiramani
Claire van Kampen
Rodney Cottier
Alexis Denisof (Advisor)
Sue Lefton (Jig)
Sían Williams (Dumb show)
Viktor Bischoff
Jackie Matthews
Glynn MacDonald
Stewart Pearce

**MASTER OF PLAY
MASTER OF VERSE
MASTER OF CLOTHING AND PROPERTIES
MASTER OF MUSIC
MASTERS OF FIGHTS**

MASTERS OF DANCE

MASTERS OF MOVEMENT

MASTER OF VOICE

PRODUCTION NOTES IN GENERAL

SET

- Early on in design meetings, Jenny Tiramani (Master of Clothing and Properties) and Mark Rylance worked with the idea of suspending a “modern”, prefabricated kind of ceiling underneath the Heavens, that hid the Heavens from view. Such an intervention into the space was ultimately not adopted as a design ploy, but it is indicative of the prevailing sense of experimentation in Globe productions.
- A low rail (approx. 18’ high), supported by small balustrades, ran along the edge of the stage for this production. This was designed as an experiment to encourage the groundlings to respond more freely, relieving them of any feelings of obligation to do so. The rail also contained the world of the play and was thus an attempt to help define the “interior” feel of the play. It impacted the way the actors used the space in many ways, but perhaps the most advantageous was the way in which it allowed the actors to use the outer perimeter more. The edges of the stage were clearly defined and this encouraged the actors to play right up to the edge.
- Four benches featured on the stage throughout the play. Two of these were placed along the front edge of the stage (one DSR, one DSL) and two were placed at the same interval along the *frons scenae*. At various points in the play these benches were moved in order to enclose portions of the acting area. At certain points actors sat on the benches, which in some cases strongly encouraged the actors to face the Lords’ Rooms at times when otherwise they might have been tempted to play everything out to the front.
- Advances were made in use of the sub-stage area for the “pioneer” scene, when Hamlet asks his friends to swear that they will not reveal that they have seen the ghost of his father. As they prepare to swear on Hamlet’s sword, the Ghost’s voice bellows “Swear!” from beneath the stage. Hamlet tiptoed from place to place on the stage and the Ghost’s voice appeared to follow him wherever he went. This was because beneath the stage a series of pipes had been rigged up, that pointed to the corners of the stage area. These converged in the under-stage centre, enabling the actor playing the Ghost (Tim Preece) to stand beneath the stage and “throw” his voice from the centre area to any corner of the stage he wished, without physically changing his position.
- The use of the trap as a playing area in its own right, was one of the salient features of this production. By experimenting with an inlaid earth tray and platforms of varying depths, it was possible for us to give the impression of the grave deepening as it was dug. Hamlet and the Gravedigger (Roger Gartland) exchanged anecdotes about Yorick while waist-deep in the pit, and later Laertes (Mark Lockyer) plunged into the same grave to embrace Ophelia’s corpse, only to be joined by Hamlet moments later for an undignified scuffle. We had originally intended to have the actress playing Ophelia (Penny Layden) lowered in a winding sheet into the trap, but it proved difficult to have her roll off the platform prior to Laertes jumping in, without being seen by audience members in the upper galleries. A dummy was lowered in her place, which made the scuffle between Hamlet and Laertes much less complicated and dangerous.
- The yard did not feature as an acting area in its own right in this production. The world of the Danish court needed to feel more enclosed and claustrophobic.

CLOTHING

- Discussions about the design of this production were lengthy and considered. The concern was to make sure that the story resonated with today's audiences. The decision facing the creative team was whether to translate *Hamlet* in modern dress, into another period in history, into its "own world", or to experiment with original clothing.

The team wanted to avoid the popular cliché image of Hamlet in a ruff holding a skull, as this was felt to be too remote from the audience at the new Globe in 2000.

The team accepted that in 1600, the first production of *Hamlet* would have been in modern dress, but in 2000 how do we depict "dread royalty", and make this read as something other than "men in suits"?

Hamlet in a different period in history might involve self-conscious design choices, and distance the audience from the story. *Hamlet* in an "own world" (ahistorical) setting was unappealing for the same reasons. Without elaborate sets, lighting and amplified sound, storytelling is paramount.

- JT and the creative team opted for "modern dress circa 1600". The play fitted the world of the stage, and it was hoped that this would highlight not individual design choices, but the story in general. JT remarked to me that she found it interesting that many people associate the Globe theatre exclusively with Elizabethan dress productions, when in fact these are in the minority.
- JT drew her influences from extant garments in the collections of the Danish castles of Elsinore and Frederiksborg. These surviving garments offered a remarkable opportunity to be sure of having got it "right".
- Golden elephants hung around the necks of distinguished men of the court – the Danish later 16th century equivalent of the Order of the Garter.
- In a 1988 RSC production of the play, MR had worn pyjamas for a good deal of the play. In 2000, these were replaced by their Elizabethan equivalent (smock). The idea came from Ophelia's description of Hamlet appearing in her chamber in a state of partial undress. MR wanted our Hamlet's condition to have worsened in the time between Ophelia's description of him and the time we next encounter him.
- The Players' clothes based on source nearer home – a tapestry in Hardwick Hall shows men wearing Elizabethan versions of Roman dress, probably in the midst of a dramatic performance. Designs also drew on the extant theatrical costumes that JT saw in Sweden.
- Fortinbras wore his own colours, which, like the colours of the Switzers, were much bolder and more vibrant than anyone might have suspected.
- GB noted that once a week there would be a dresser provided in rehearsals to help everyone so that we could rehearse in period clothing. This practice would continue over the next three weeks.

- After meetings with all of the actors, JT had decided upon most costumes, apart from collars and cuffs. JT noted that over the course of the seventeen conversations she had had with the actors, she was definitely aware of a “world” of the play developing. She said that the “world” of the court as such was very small; most people, with the exception of Claudius and Gertrude, felt as though they were in some ways outsiders or visitors to the court.
- MR recognised that the 1999 *Julius Caesar* company had to deal with several last-minute clothing issues that they were not prepared for. This made their job more difficult, and he was anxious that we should learn from mistakes made last year.

MUSIC

- Master of Music Claire van Kampen wanted to experiment with a score that informed rather than echoed the other design elements of the play. Her band featured not only the trumpets and drums of the original practices brief, but also a violin, a vibraphone and exotic percussion. The musicians were dressed in modern clothes, dark shirts and trousers, to underline their link with the world of the audience. They completed the circle of the Globe galleries as they played from the balcony, and their clothing reflected this.
- Differences between the upper and the lower levels of the tiring house as playing areas for musicians were explored in this production. The ghost music from the upper tiring house was played using a vibraphone and cello bow, which created a lot of harmonics and a spooky, metallic sound. This really resonated around the building at a higher level.
- The performances began with a series of fanfares, the brass players standing all the way around the middle level gallery. The effect was startling, with the sound coming at you from 360 degrees. Three fanfares heralded the start of the performance. The third fanfare dovetailed directly into the tolling of the bell, the first sound belonging to the world of the play itself.
- The jig, an authentic conclusion to a tragedy (cf: *Julius Caesar*) was given a twist in this production. CvK wrote a *danse macabre* that featured Elizabethan dance steps to Spanish rhythms, with a nod to New Orleans jazz.

VERSE WORK

- Master of Verse and Play Giles Block said that he hoped what he had to offer as Master of Verse was restorative as much as revolutionary. He believed that since the Restoration prose dramas following the re-opening of the theatres, we have forgotten how to tell verse stories. The verse dramas which did survive were usually heightened in the extreme, and had little to do with real life. Dryden -among others- thought that the theatre of their time had diminished and so tried to go back to Shakespeare, although no verse comedies were written.
- The company acknowledged that in modern times a feeling that Shakespeare wrote poetry, not “ordinary language” prevailed. GB contradicted this. His approach aimed to clarify the precise nature of what a line means: to help make verse speaking the norm, not a heightened version of it.

GB reminded the company that 'Dramatic verse is a blueprint for speech. It comes from a need, and is the expression of that need.'

- In conversation we run one word into another very commonly; GB had only one "rule": don't run one line into the next. This naturally stresses the last word of each line.
- One of the things that interested GB was the way in which Shakespeare's style changed over his career. GB distributed pamphlets with excerpts from early and late plays, to make comparisons. Comparing a passage from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with one from *The Winter's Tale*, the Company described the earlier excerpt as "more regular", and the later as "more densely packed"
GB noted that the early writing often features thoughts that end with the end of the line. This process becomes more broken down, knotty and complex as his career progresses, and almost never do you find heavy punctuation at the end of lines in the late plays.

GB indicated a revealing excerpt from *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594):

Her pity-pleading eyes are sadly fixed

*In the remorseless wrinkles of his face;
Her modest eloquence with sighs is mixed,
Which to her oratory adds more grace;
She puts the period often from his place,
And midst the sentence so her accent breaks
That twice she doth begin ere once she speaks.*

GB thought that this extract shows an acute awareness of the ways in which we speak, pausing in mid-flow and hooking straight into the next thought so as not to be interrupted. Whatever words we choose are emphasised depending upon the meaning we wish to communicate. We do not pause at the ends of our thoughts, unless we wish to be interrupted. GB believed that the playwright's career could be traced as a continuing effort to capture accurately the essence of how we express ourselves in different circumstances.

In the later plays, we observe that the thoughts run over from one line to another, and yet Shakespeare does not abandon iambic pentameter. Verse is verse because it has an **end** of a line; the thought wants to get to the end of the line – it is a natural, sustaining way of expressing ourselves. Iambic pentameter is not simply a literary invention concocted in some ivory tower.

GB counselled the actors to notice the ends of the lines, and to see if this aided a level of spontaneous creation, of absolute thought. Nowadays if a line is not punctuated, we tend to run on the ends, which betrays our ignorance of how the lines are written. The lines are written to help the actor take the time to create the images spontaneously every time they speak the words. GB said that this required daring.

In some cases, apparently awkward lines which end, for example, in a conjunction - "...and"- can be wonderful character hints. These pauses or hesitations can indicate how in control (or out of control) the character is; do they have enough breath? Are they relaxed or agitated? Is what they have to say difficult or easy for them?

- The Company read from *Twelfth Night*, I,v., a scene that begins in prose and progresses to verse. It seemed to GB that Viola slips from prose to verse only when she becomes genuinely upset by Olivia's hardness. When she becomes emotional, she uses verse; this honesty touches Olivia and she follows into verse. Verse is the truth speaking; at the beginning of the scene they both speak prose, as they are both pretending in some regard. Letters are learned - 'conned' - and thus always in prose. Prose reflects a mind censoring the heart. Prose, as in the speeches of Brutus or Shylock, can express things the speaker has wanted to say for some time. When we express ourselves, we speak in "sprays" of words, which correspond more closely to verse than to prose.

- 'We speak in order to conceal our thoughts, not to reveal them'. Goldsmith was a Restoration playwright, but his words could be applied to our drama today. Nowadays we are interested in what the characters mean, not what they say; in Shakespeare's plays, the characters speaking verse mean what they say!

- MR concluded that 'The mind is more active in prose; the heart is more naked in verse.'

- **Colons:** These mark a moment, a hiatus. They differ from a full stop, which should cue you to hook into the next thought as soon as possible; the expectation is that you will usually not be interrupted at a colon.

Punctuation in speech (in verse speaking) should be thought of in general as giving emphasis to the previous word, not simply as an excuse to pause. For prose, the punctuation might indicate pauses that will help to clarify the meaning (but GB cautioned against indulgent pauses). If you can use punctuation to emphasise rather than to pause, this emphasises the **muscularity** of the text.

- 11-beat lines (or lines with feminine endings) soften the line, and make it even more speechlike. In general the penultimate and not the ultimate syllable should be stressed.

- GB brought in the final scene of *The Antipodes* – in prose in the acting edition – that he had re-written in verse. All agreed that it worked far better than the prose version. GB was troubled as to why this should appear as a single prose scene within the whole verse play, and he had a hunch that there had been some editorial mistake made at some time in the past.

- GB said that the text for this production was based on the Folio, but retained the punctuation of Q2, the Quarto generally believed to be closest to a performance text.

OTLEY HALL

- Richard Olivier came in to discuss the plan for the period of rehearsals in residence at the Elizabethan mansion Otley Hall, near Woodbridge in Suffolk. He said that the plan was to try to "live through" the play as fully as possible, giving everyone powerful memories of the play's events to feed upon for performances. The Ghost's first appearance would be scheduled for the first night, and the second day would be devoted to playing through the play, culminating with the Graveyard scene on the second night.

- GB thought the best plan was to work until about 9pm on the second night, and then to break for the evening meal. A snack would be available at around 5.30pm.
- RO suggested an Earth Ritual, a Shamanistic kind of meditation, with people buried up to their necks in muddy graves in order to get in touch with the earth. MR decided to go through with this, and with a nice touch of irony Roger Gartland and Jan Knightley (the actors playing Gravediggers) dug the hole for him.

SCENES IN REHEARSAL

Note on abbreviations

Descriptions of the scenes in rehearsal contain abbreviations that correspond to the following directions or areas of the stage:

SR – stage right (audience left)

SL – stage left (audience right)

CS – centre stage

DS – down stage area (front of stage)

US – up stage area (back of stage – *frons scenae*)

These terms were developed as a means of describing movement and position in proscenium-arch theatres; though they are far from ideal for the Globe's purposes, I use them in the absence of a more satisfactory set of terms.

The terms "long exit" or "long entrance" refer to an exit or entrance through either of the flanking doors, that passes in front of either of the two stage pillars.

The terms "short exit" or "short entrance" refer to diagonal exits or entrances through either of the flanking doors, that do not pass in front of either of the two pillars.

Other abbreviations correspond to the initials of various company members.

Act I, Scene 1

One of the main challenges in this scene was how to establish the darkness and cold experienced by the Watch, as the text describes it. The time spent in rehearsals at Otley Hall gave the actors the chance to rehearse this scene at night, in the open air. The cast's "collective memory" of this experience proved very useful when rehearsals moved back into the rehearsal rooms in Southwark. The knowledge that silhouettes could be hard to distinguish one from another without the help of artificial light helped the actors make the imaginary leap when playing the scene in broad daylight. The extent to which a whisper could carry great distances in the quiet night air was a great surprise to the Company, and this also informed their playing of the scene. The acoustic qualities of the Globe differed greatly from the rural seclusion of Otley's grounds, but nonetheless the work there informed the final production.

• 21 May 2000

TB, RG and CT had taken part in a coaching session with the Tudor Group, to learn how to handle their pikes, or partisans. The weapons proved rather heavy and unwieldy, and it was clear that the confident handling of these implements would come only with more practice.

• 23 May 2000: Day 1 of Technicals

The benches and rail in place around the edges of the stage provide a natural "boundary" for the actors in this scene to "defend". The helmets worn by the guards could all too

easily obscure their eyes, and the actors had to compensate by purposefully looking up to the upper galleries, where the sightlines were most compromised by headgear.

The “ghostly sounds” that heralded the Ghost’s entrance were harmonics, produced by a bowed vibraphone. The armour worn by TP made for a noisy entrance, and so GB amended his entrance to cut down on the amount of ground he had to cover. TP entered through the discovery space and travelled to the mid-point of the stage.

Act I, Scene 2

As the scene began, tiring-house staff brought on a table and two benches through the central opening. This was set USC, with a throne for Claudius at its head. Here the Fortinbras policy was discussed.

GB was keen to sew the seeds of rivalry between Laertes and Hamlet at an early stage in the play. As MR knelt before the table with a travelling stick and bag, hoping that Claudius would excuse him from the Court, TW made a great show of asking ML (Laertes) what he could do for him. Hamlet was unmistakably overlooked, and seemed an outsider from the start.

• 23 May 2000: Day 1 of Technicals

The convention of continuous staging presented a challenge as this scene was brought to the stage: the exit of Barnardo, Francisco and Horatio at the end of the previous scene presented problems for the mass entrance needed for this scene. Both flanking doors needed to be used for the ensemble entrances, and the central opening was needed for the entrance of Gertrude and Claudius. GB solved the issue by having the soldiers in I.1 make a “long” exit, along the front and side edges of the stage, through the door SL. This lapse allowed the party entering this scene through the SL door to be on stage by the time the soldiers exited. The court party entering used a “short” (diagonal) entrance, which helped to separate the two locations further.

Gertrude entered carrying a large platter of small cakes that were offered around the Court. This helped create an impression of bounty and hospitality. GB noted that the buns needed to be half the size for performances, so that the actors could finish the morsels in one bite.

Act I, Scene 3

• 19 May 2000: First Run through Play

PL kept on the move, listening to Laertes in a playful fashion, circling the SL pillar and the L part of the stage in a figure-of-eight manner. This opened up Laertes’ speech, making it available to the whole space.

• 21 May 2000

PL entered at the end of the previous scene, and was addressed by MR as “my soul”. As PL gazed at him, puzzled, MR made enigmatic reference to “Foul deeds...” before the arrival of Laertes interrupted his train of thought.

ML entered through the SR door very speedily, to “catch” MR and PL together. ML addressed his opening “Farewell” to MR, departing, rather than to PL: “And sister...” seemed almost an afterthought.

This had the effect of bringing the two characters together, inviting the kinds of comparisons set up in I.2, and making the advice “touching the Lord Hamlet” more pertinent and current.

• 23 May 2000: Day 1 of Technicals

GB asked that the “Fortuna” hanging in the discovery space be drawn back as Laertes enters at the top of this scene. The noise caused by the hanging rings on the rails affected the timing of ML’s first line, ‘My necessaries are embark’d...’. The line had to be delayed for a second or two.

Act I, Scene 4

• 23 May 2000: Day 1 of Technicals

The timing of the different “noises” in this scene needed much attention. Two cannon needed to be fired from the attic, as well as the bell chimes, drum and trumpet calls. It proved quite difficult to hear cues from the stage in the attic, as the musicians one floor below tended to drown out other audio cues.

The entrance of the Ghost required a drum roll, a bell peal and the paging of the doors to the discovery space.

TP experienced difficulty in his movement for this scene. The full suit of armour proved very restrictive, and the noise was considerable when he walked. The armoured toe-caps seemed to be the most troublesome element in this regard, but GB worked with TP’s blocking, and suggested a couple of instances when he might sit on the SR bench, rather than remove any of the suit of armour.

Act I, Scene 5

• 4 April, 2000

The Company read through the scene and discussed some of the images it conjured up. The Ghost talks of the crust that crept over his body as he died – “tetter bark’d about” – and the actor playing the Ghost commented that he found that interesting given that he would be encased in armour.

Which would be the richer choice? Did old Hamlet know about the affair for a long time before his death? Did he discover it in death? Did he just accept it? Perhaps it was relatively common? JMc thought that the more hot-blooded choice was to think of the murder as having followed the affair rather closely. Similarly, it was generally agreed that the marriage between old Hamlet and Gertrude should be thought of as a chivalric, rather than politic, union.

JK thought it interesting that the first person young Hamlet mentions after the departure of the Ghost is his mother, rather than the villain. GB was interested in this idea – Hamlet either turns upon his mother in the same slightly sanctimonious fashion as his father does, or he *becomes* his father, to a certain extent.

The text does not indicate that anyone else but Hamlet sees the Ghost or hear him swear. GB pointed out that Shakespeare is remarkably good at communicating everything an audience needs to know – if they did not see the Ghost there would surely be a line that indicate this. We have to assume that those present are all aware of the things that we as an audience are aware of. JK pointed out that otherwise, we get into difficulties: we might assume that if Hamlet is the only one who sees the Ghost, then it could be a figment of his own imagination.

Similarly, it is odd that neither Horatio nor Marcellus actually swear to keep Hamlet's secret when urged to do so. GB reminded the Company that the Ghost speaks from under the stage at this point, moving around to wherever the people on *terra firma* are. Horatio and Marcellus are asked to swear three different oaths:

- 1) not to tell what they have seen
- 2) not to tell what they have heard
- 3) not to tell what Prince Hamlet might get up to in the future.

MR suggested losing a couple of lines: 'As well...they might' (lines 176-77). GB thought maybe one line of the two could go. GB reconsidered, and thought that it would be better to cut three lines from 176-178 ('As well...to note').

GB read from *Saxus* (source) that the original story had Claudius kill Hamlet to save Gertrude, not in malice.

• 7 May 2000: Rehearsal on Stage

The technical details of the Ghost's voice under the stage were explored. Three large pipes (drainpipe size) in the substage enabled one voice to be carried to three different areas of the stage. A megaphone boosted the volume too. This meant that the Ghost did not have to run silently around the substage area to achieve the same effect! (Armour made this a practical impossibility).

Before the first "Swear!" from the Ghost, MR had planted his sword's point into the floor, and offered the hilt to GBe and TB to pledge by laying their hands on it. MR liked this because it gave him the chance to "conduct" the Ghost's cry up through the earth to the top of the sword. This process happened at three different point on the stage – DSL corner, USC and DSR corner.

Act II, Scene 1

• 4 April, 2000

GB began the discussion of this scene by asking "Who is Reynaldo?" Most thought he might be some kind of spy, a confidante, a valet. GB thought he might be more of a personal private secretary, but that it would be dangerous to underestimate how powerful the Polonius family is. JK indicated that JT wanted to know if he needed a cloak for this

scene – was he on the absolute point of departure for Paris at the beginning of this scene, rather than at the end? GB thought the former option was helpful, for the play is absolutely full of people leaving for other places.

JH asked if the relationship between Polonius and Reynaldo could be established prior to this scene – GB thought this would be helpful, as we need to communicate that Reynaldo is not simply a servant who shines shoes, but perhaps part of a network of spies throughout Europe, an a trusted confidante of Polonius.

Polonius sanctions Reynaldo to cast aspersions about his own son, to see if the Parisians corroborate these aspersions. This is the strange tactic of gathering information that Reynaldo has (most agree) already worked out for himself.

JK thought that Ophelia's description of Hamlet bursting in on her in her room might be another echo of Essex bursting in on Elizabeth I in his muddy boots (referred to in an earlier discussion). PL wondered how much Ophelia has been scared by what Polonius and Laertes have filled her head with, regarding love and sex. She thought Ophelia's emotions must be extremely complex and confused.

GB pointed to a double time-scheme at work. Though the beginning of the Act suggests a new day had started, Ophelia's description of Hamlet suggests someone who has quite literally "just seen a ghost". MR disagreed, and thought that a couple of months must have passed since he saw the ghost, and the description points to the fact that Ophelia has not had access to him for some time. GB noted that at a later point in the play there is a time reference (four months after the death of old Hamlet). For the audience's sake, and for the sake of the storytelling, GB suggests that we play everything as an immediate "now" moment. Enough of such moments in succession will allow the audience to make up their own minds about how long this has been going on.

MR suggested that Polonius' cut lines 'Whose violent...I am sorry' (102-106) should be reinstated. He thought it resonant not just for the character of Polonius, but also for the story of Gertrude and Claudius. GB agreed, if time could be made up elsewhere.

Act II, Scene 2

• 4 April 2000

This is the first time we meet Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. GB thought it was important to establish concretely their relationship with Hamlet. If Hamlet is right to question why they would come to visit him in this "prison", then they must hail from outside Denmark. JMc liked the idea that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are childhood (rather than college) friends. David Phelan (playing Rosencrantz) said he felt that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern were quite provincial, and not ambassadors. MR disagreed and said he thought it was unlikely the two men would be so familiar with the Players unless they were more metropolitan types. The theory that they were Dutch businessmen was floated – MR added that they might be associated with the "Rose on the Cross" movement in the Low Countries at the time. However, GB pointed to the reference in the text to Gertrude as their "sovereign" suggests that they are Danish. LH wondered if they might be Jewish

bankers. MR thought the language connected to them definitely smacks of a business connection.

On a related note, the nationality of the Players was discussed. MR said it was very important that the audience know the Players are forced to tour, that they do not come from the same city that the castle lies in. MR liked the idea that the Players are from London, perhaps a Company from the Globe, and argued that the references to *Julius Caesar* and to Hercules supported this choice.

The question of the degree to which Polonius is complicit with Claudius was raised. No firm conclusions were drawn immediately, as the idea that Polonius might know something of the real circumstances of old Hamlet's death was too intriguing to be let go.

- **14 April 2000**

GB thought that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern would actually be in place from the top of the scene, ready to meet the King and Queen. GB noted that the doors (unless explicitly stated otherwise) would be paged, and the actors would not have to worry about opening or closing them.

TB, DP and HG entered through the SR door (a "long entrance") on the heels of JH's exit line (JH then exited diagonally, through SR door). GB asked HG and DP about the summons they received from the Danish court: all three agreed that the summons would have come in the form of a messenger, rather than a letter, and that the summons would have been urgent.

TW drew DP and HG aside slightly to mention "Hamlet's transformation", this excluded JMc somewhat, and made for an intriguing picture.

- **23 May 2000: Day 1 of Technicals**

A long banqueting table featured in this scene, the centrepiece a large bowl of fresh cherries. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern presented Gertrude with a velvet-lined wooden box, which contained some item of silverware. For this, they were rewarded with the famous "double-thanks" first from Claudius, second from Gertrude.

Polonius, Voltemand and Cornelius

- **14 April 2000**

Voltemand (LH) and Cornelius (CT) entered from door SR. The defining moment of this scene is the information that Fortinbras 'Makes vow before his uncle never more/To give th'assay of arms against your Majesty' (70-71). GB thought it might be effective to retain a little suspense as to the contents of the ambassadors' message until this point.

- **23 May 2000: Day 1 of Technicals**

A "line" of ambassadors began to form between the two pillars. GB pointed this out, and advised LH and CT to choose instead two positions from which to speak in this scene –

directly DSC of the table, and extreme DSC (i.e. US and DS of the so-called "valley of death"). When standing US of the pillars at the point GB suggested, the pillars line up with the exits. Thus, sight lines were greatly improved.

Polonius, Claudius and Gertrude

• 14 April 2000

JMc wondered whether it might be unwise to play this part of the scene with too much pathos, given that the royal couple have just heard very good news. GB thought this might well be true, but reminded her that when Polonius produces the letter from Hamlet to Ophelia, she would probably be quite anxious to get her hands on it. She would probably believe Polonius, given her own circumstances, and because she understands Hamlet is at an age when he might well fall in love.

Words, words, words.

• 14 April, 2000

GB noted that this part of the scene takes place in the lobby of the castle, the same location where the ambassadors had been received a few moments previously. MR thought it might be more helpful to think of the hall and the lobby as being the same place – that way, the Players' stage can be set up in advance. GB thought that the only "set" the Players would have would be a green cloth covering the floor.

MR wondered if a table and cloth would help to define this as an interior space. MR wondered what the Elizabethan version of a flower arrangement might be, and whether this would also help to establish this as an interior.

JH remarked that the reception Hamlet gives him is not at all what he expected! MR treated the line 'These tedious old fools' as an aside to the audience, directly referring to Polonius. Having tried this, MR thought he might play the line as though as he has seen something in his book – "pictures of tedious old fools" – that prompts him to share this joke with the audience.

MR thought that the present tension between them could be explained by imagining that Hamlet's "unbrac'd" encounter with Ophelia happened earlier that same day. His animosity stems from what he sees as a lifeline (Ophelia) being severed by Polonius.

MR noted that there are 3 parts to this episode, 3 encounters defined by asides. JH remarked how open the episode felt, and he said that the episode could be played in a different way each time the play is performed.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern meet Hamlet

• 4 April 2000

Hamlet's "antic disposition": GB noted that the first time Hamlet feigns madness, he slips into prose for the first time (see notes on *verse work*). However, Hamlet uses the truth when he feigns madness with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and he speaks prose here too. The question was raised about how much "choice" Hamlet has when choosing to be mad.

The question of madness, of what we define as madness today, became the subject of a lengthy discussion. GB pointed out that it might be possible that a person could think he was feigning madness, and be wrong – that is, he could find in fact that it *is* mad!

MR thought it was helpful to imagine that Hamlet had not seen Rosencrantz and Guildenstern for about 5 years, rather than the 18 months first proposed in the readthrough. That way, he suggested, the awkwardness between them might be more easily realised.

The actors discussed Hamlet's tactics in this part of the scene: most agreed that Hamlet must be aware that whatever he says will get back to the King. This should make the whole section of the scene feel quite dangerous. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have plenty of chances to tell the truth to Hamlet (before Guildenstern admits "we were sent for"), but despite their generally benevolent agenda, they tend to sidestep these chances. JH thought that Hamlet might be partly telling Rosencrantz and Guildenstern what they want to hear.

GB noted that Hamlet is using the truth to hide the truth, but there is a big difference between this section and the episodes when Hamlet is free to speak alone.

The cut exchange between Hamlet, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern ('Which dreams indeed...dreadfully attended') were reinstated, subject to further cuts later in the play. (lines 251-264)

A fairly lengthy discussion of the references to London theatrical life in this scene involved GB and the actors for a good portion of the afternoon. The references to the troubles the Globe Company had with the boy companies must have been very enjoyable and immediate for the first audiences of Hamlet, who, in effect, saw the famous actors of the day turn up in a play to play themselves!

The lines: 'O Jephthah... my abridgements come' had been cut from this scene. MR said that this section resonated with him partially because a previous production he was involved with placed the nunnery scene before this one; reinstating these lines in the Globe version would make this lines prophetic rather than responsive. GB decided to think about this. Later, the lines were reinstated.

• 14 April 2000

JH and MR puzzled over the Jephthah reference: JH came to the conclusion that Hamlet recognises in Polonius a man capable of sacrificing his own daughter. JH suggested that unless the reference be made pointed and explicit, it should be dropped from our performance script. MR noted that it was useful to him because it afforded him an opportunity to make fun of actors, and to lull his immediate audience into a false sense of security before the Player works his effect upon them.

MR, HG and DP paraphrased their exchange, leading up to the revelation that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern were indeed sent for. MR noted that Rosencrantz seemed most culpable, and that he now realised how ambitious the pair are. GB added that they are not able to talk about the one thing that is at the forefront of their minds. JH wanted to know why Hamlet seemed mad in such a different fashion, compared to his meeting with Polonius earlier.

Hamlet's "quintessence of dust" speech: GB said it reminded him of the "unweeded garden" in the first soliloquy. This time the sentiment has been worked, shaped, and forms an effective smokescreen that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern cannot penetrate. The truth of the speech is undeniable, but not transparent.

The entrance of the Players

• 4 April, 2000

GB asked JH about his response to the "tears in the eyes" of the First Player. Did he think this was what acting was all about? Does he fancy himself as an actor? MR thought that Polonius was fond of the "university wits" that preceded the drama of Shakespeare, which was more literary, wittier, and less emotional than Shakespeare's.

GB suggested that Hamlet might have the idea to employ the Players as a means of bolstering his resolve to act for real. However, the Players' art is disconcertingly real, and this has a disturbing effect upon him.

The First Player and his relation to the other "players" in the company was discussed. Would it not be appropriate for the actor playing the First Player to appear in his own, modern clothes? Should we try to recreate a scenario of Burbage (Hamlet) looking at an actor playing Burbage? On a similar note, the clothing for KT as the Player Queen was discussed – should she dress as a boy when we first see her? Should we be sure of her sexuality when we first see her? CvK noted that whatever convention we adopt should be applied to the female musicians who appear as part of the Players' company. This was left to be decided at a later juncture.

'O what a rogue and peasant slave am I'

• 4 April, 2000

GB thought that it seemed a little strange that Hamlet has the idea of the Mouse Trap at the end of this speech, when he appears to have set it up some time ago. MR thought this apparent contradiction might seem less strange if he used the opportunity to check in with the audience, to run the same idea by them, as it were. GB took this on board.

GB noted that Hamlet has learned something from the Player's speech. He becomes almost self-lacerating because he feels unable to *act* himself. His feelings are real, but blocked, said GB, and he wishes that he was able to express his feelings as well as the Player apparently can.

CvK noted that 'Mobled' should have been changed to the F1 "inobled". It was duly altered.

Act III, Scene 1

• 17 May 2000

MR used a drum to punctuate the opening moment of the Act, "conducting" JK through his paces as Lucianus. The rhythm he beat out was slow and heavy, a stark counterpoint to the soft, lyrical music CvK planned to use in performance. CvK noted that this contrast might be very effective, but if it implied that the dumbshow or the play (in III.2) would be performed to a strict rhythm (like Kabuki) then it fought rather than enhanced the rhythm of the scene in general. MR considered using Lucianus' text ('Thoughts black, hands apt...') rather than a drum to "rehearse" the Players.

Ophelia and Polonius used the "long exit" to the SL door.

- **20 May 2000**

MR scribbled an amended version of JK's "script" for Lucianus, which he then passed to him to rehearse 'Thoughts black, hands apt...'. As he spoke his "new lines", TP and MR paced about, assessing the playing area. This hint of the performance to come was interrupted by the arrival of Ophelia and Polonius, as before.

- **24 May 2000: Day 2 of Technicals**

Two musicians (Sharon Lindo the fiddle player, and CvK on harp) emerged through the central opening to accompany the actors apparently rehearsing *The Mouse Trap*. KT was dressed as a boy, as were the two musicians. A flourish warned of the arrival of the royal party, and so the Players hastily exited through the central opening, drawing the curtain behind them.

GB noted that the Players should retreat to "rehearse" in the tiring-house (unseen). GB wanted music from the upper level of the tiring-house to be heard in the distance (as the Players continued to rehearse elsewhere, so to speak). The cessation of the "rehearsal music within" would help Polonius to "hear" Hamlet coming for 'To be or not to be...' etc.

'To be, or not to be...'

- **17 May 2000**

MR brought on the drum for this speech, and referred to the drumstick as the 'bare bodkin'. For the main part he used the speech internally, though at times he opened it up to "the Globe". The bulk of the speech might be described as contemplative rather than discursive.

- **24 May 2000: Day 2 of Technicals**

MR entered through the central opening, with his drum. The speech seemed much more opened out in the space, and had a more reflective and discursive quality than could be seen in the rehearsal hall.

The 'nunnery' scene

- **17 May 2000**

PL played the 'O what a noble mind...' speech out to the Globe, in a state of anxiety but not helplessness. She was not in a state of collapse, but of fright and horror at Hamlet's outbursts.

- **20 May 2000**

GB discussed the scene with PL and MR. GB asked the two actors what role desire played in this scene – was it a foil to Hamlet's rage, or a trap in itself? Giving Hamlet's gifts back to him might be a good way to help him remember how he *used* to be – he seems to have forgotten the past. PL said that she was playing the scene with a hope that Hamlet would in turn re-present those gifts to her, as a means of showing that he did in fact remember.

- **24 May 2000: Day 2 of Technicals**

PL used both extreme front corners of the stage very effectively over the course of the scene. She spoke her 'O what a noble mind...' soliloquy in front of the SR pillar, a very strong position on the Globe stage, fitting her feelings of helplessness and abandonment.

- **26 May 2000**

GB, MR and PL experimented with the "shape of the scene", in the Inigo Jones Theatre. GB wanted to explore different options in terms of the placement of the benches. GB thought that the long diagonal between MR and PL at the very start of their exchange was a strong choice, and he wanted to look in particular at ways to reinforce this in the early stages of the scene.

Playing through the scene, PL came only to the centre of the "lozenge" shape defined by the benches on the stage – MR moved along the periphery of the space. This made Ophelia seem more exposed, less at ease. GB thought that although there were moments when it would be good for PL to physically reach MR and sit with him on one of the benches, the new discoveries improved on the old blocking as it avoided "getting stuck" in one place for a long time.

Act III, Scene 2

Hamlet's Speech to the Players

- **18 April 2000**

GB noted that the musicians would be on the stage for the play-within-the-play. This scene should begin with Lucianus going through his lines, to prompt Hamlet's advice, 'Speak the speech...' etc. GB said he thought the company visiting the castle would draft in "mutes" from the servants and staff of the castle, rather than bring hirelings with them. TB and the tiring-house gentlemen would be drafted in like manner, thought GB.

The "set" would consist of a small mound, on top of which there would be a tree, bearing fruit, around which a serpent would be coiled. Claudius and Gertrude would find themselves seated underneath this tree, to watch the show. A green playing area would lie in front of the tree, with "audience" seated around the periphery.

MR suggested that Hamlet's advice to Lucianus might be the tail-end of a whole afternoon's badgering – that he might be in danger of inciting Lucianus and his fellows to walk out in protest.

GB noted that TP's Player King would play Gonzago in the play-within-the-play. For this part of the scene, however, the "clown" RG substituted for his mentor, as JK flapped around in a black cape rehearsing various permutations of stressed and unstressed syllables in the line "Thoughts black, hands apt". His dire renditions prompted a tantrum and an outburst from Hamlet: "Speak the speech!..." etc.

• 3 May 2000: Rehearsal on Stage

The Company rehearsed on the stage with pieces of rehearsal clothing. A small raised platform was put in place to elevate two chairs (thrones for Claudius and Gertrude) as well as four benches placed on the stage to define the Players' area as a large diamond, with the pillars as two points.

JK "rehearsed" his act of poisoning, uttering snatches of his lines to come in *The Murder of Gonzago*. KT paced around, going over her part in the same. MR addressed Hamlet's speech chiefly to JK, clearly unhappy with way that the character of Lucianus was developing.

GB suggested that the Players adopt the central discovery space as their "backstage area". Here they congregated to make last minute preparations for their play.

• 14 May 2000

MR suggested that the scene could have a more explosive entrance if we imagined KT storming out of "rehearsals" in the tiring house (and so onto the Globe stage). MR could follow her out and begin the "speak the speech" speech to her. KT was given the line 'I warrant your honour' (previously spoken by JK). GB liked the idea of a crisis within the company. He reminded the Company of the tremendous time pressure on Hamlet at this point. He also remarked that the explosive entrance helped this scene to "overwhelm" III.1. This would help the flow of play in general.

To help with the context for this scene, the actors improvised a "rehearsal" of *The Mouse Trap* using Hamlet's advice to the Players as the basis for his "direction" for KT. GB asked KT to rehearse some of her later Player Queen lines before MR's line 'Be not too tame neither'. It seemed likely that GB would transpose the lines into this scene twice.

The technical implications of setting the chairs, tree and mound were discussed – MR was worried that this business was pulling focus from the action on the stage.

MR experimented with some drastic line cuts, and as his delivery was much faster, this part of the scene was over very quickly. MR wondered whether the scene had lost some of its earlier subtleties. GB also noted that Hamlet's advice is sound, but his obsessive manner is completely uncalled for – the Players are professional, after all, and he is only an amateur.

• 17 May 2000

MR played the scene in a state of high agitation, in much the same state as he was in the "nunnery" scene. He lent the scene a kind of frightened excitement.

- **24 May 2000: Day 2 of Technicals**

The "mound" made its first appearance, wheeled on under the 'Speak the speech...' exchange between MR and KT. The mound was mounted on castors, and was a bright green platform, smooth in texture like papier-mâché. A model apple tree in the centre of the mound bent over the two thrones that were placed upon the platform. The effect was naïve and charming.

A miniature mound served as a place for the Player King to lay his head. TP was told there would be a cushion of flowers on top of it, which would make it more comfortable.

MR beat the drum furiously to quieten the musicians and the Players before counselling the actors to 'Suit the action to the word...' etc. This highlighted the famous section of this famous speech, as all the performers on the stage listened intently to Hamlet's advice.

- **31 May 2000**

GB wanted to try 4 large cushions in place of the downstage benches in this scene. This improved the sightlines for the first few rows of groundlings. The "mini-mound" that had been used as a pillow for the Player King's head as he feigned sleeping was rejected in favour of the Player King sleeping at the feet of Claudius and Gertrude on the "mound proper".

Hamlet's "idleness" and "country matters"

- **18 April 2000**

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's entrance seems rather superfluous to the scene; DP and HG countered this by emerging as though waiting to rehearse a small part each in the play-within-the-play.

CvK noted that bagpipes would provide the musical accompaniment to the entrance of Claudius and Gertrude. There would also be torches carried to light their way.

Initially, MR and PL played the exchange between Hamlet and Ophelia while seated next to each other on a bench. A second time through, MR spoke to PL from across the stage, thus making the remarks about "country matters" all the more embarrassing for her. GB thought that Polonius should intervene and signal to the musicians to start the cue for the dumbshow, to diffuse the atmosphere quickly. For a third run of this episode, MR pulled PL up from her bench and made her "dance" with him in the centre of the stage, while he taunted her about "country matters". This was even more humiliating for Ophelia, as well as for Polonius and Gertrude.

- **24 May 2000: Day 2 of Technicals**

MR sported a bright yellow ankle-length jerkin on top of his doublet, hose and jerkin, giving him the appearance of a jester. A bright red pointed hat completed the ensemble. As Claudius and Gertrude entered through the SR flanking door he lounged on the mound, banging his drum at odds with the flourish played above. DM and TB carried torches to light the royal couple's way.

The scene required the entire Company (except ML) to be on stage at the same time, and the stage seemed crowded. Also, the dominant position of the mound (CS) tended to pull the focus of all the actors on stage, and the actors developed a tendency to close off the sections of the audience to the sides, as they faced the mound, their backs to the sides of the theatre. GB amended the musicians' position (from against the SL pillar to the pillar SR of the discovery space, to open out the sightlines.

The Dumbshow

• 18 April 2000

TP thought it might be more interesting if he did not play the wronged King in the dumbshow. GB thought that it was interesting to think about the possibility of masks for the dumbshow. It was generally agreed that it is puzzling that Claudius allows the play to go ahead, given the events shown in the dumbshow. A discussion followed: should we make our dumbshow comedic? Perhaps modern audiences find the dumbshow superfluous because *Hamlet* itself is so well-known? One of the main purposes of the dumbshow is to focus the audiences' attention on Claudius for the play-within-the-play, rather than on the plot of that play itself.

CvK noted that the hautboys mentioned as the dumbshow's introduction would have warned the audience that the piece that follows deals with the supernatural. She added that our production would not be using hautboys in this way, as this particular association is lost on our contemporary audiences.

GB read out the stage directions for the dumbshow to prompt the Players to act it out. CvK accompanied this with a harp. This would be choreographed at a later point by Sian Williams. KT was concerned that the storytelling was unclear at this point, and asked for assurance that the dumbshow would be properly rehearsed prior to the incorporation of choreography; GB reassured her that the choreographer would finesse the work of the players, rather than prescribe anew.

GB suggested that what Claudius and Gertrude are expecting is a comedy celebrating love and marriage. In effect, they get the reverse. The dumbshow can show us the sight of Claudius *alone* realising the relevance of the story to his own actions; we the audience then see how Claudius attempts to hide this realisation from the Court. This would be a much more interesting choice than trying to devise ways in which Claudius does *not* see the dumbshow. He also added that Gertrude is insulted by the references to the hasty marriage, not those to the murderer. TW noted that he had to play the scene so that he seemed offended because of Gertrude's distress.

• 3 May 2000 : Rehearsal on Stage

After working with Sian Williams, the dumbshow movements were tried on the stage. The Players emerged from within the discovery space and performed their highly stylised dumbshow with CvK accompanying them on stage with a harp. TW and JH began to make amused comments about the action, and this led to an excited buzz around the court as a whole. The finale of the dumbshow featured movements lewd and grotesque enough to dispel rather than build more tension, and on the whole it was received with great pleasure. MR sat in a state of extreme tension throughout.

• 24 May 2000: Day 2 of Technicals

The large number of actors on the stage made JK's entrance through the central opening difficult. The dumbshow itself seemed to need more space to be played safely and effectively. GB altered the position of the benches DS, to lie flush against the insides of the pillars, rather than point diagonally across the stage front. This made more room available for the dumbshow, and enabled those occupying the benches to impede the view of fewer audience members.

GB wanted the called-for torches to appear more quickly on Claudius' demand. TP and DM had been watching *The Mouse Trap* just inside the SR door, but the time needed by them to go into the tiring-house and pick up torches was too long. GB suggested that they have the torches ready on cue, and hence they should not watch the play on the stage.

The Mousetrap

• 18 April 2000

JK raised the point that the Lucianus character is identified as 'nephew to the King'; was it possible that the Court perceived this as Hamlet plotting to kill Claudius? Was it possible that Hamlet is playing a double trick on Claudius, showing him what he did, and hinting at what might happen to him soon? Does Lucianus become identified with Hamlet, or is the nephew-reference an off-the-cuff one? All of these possibilities were discussed, but no solid conclusions were reached at this point.

GB noted that *The Mousetrap* should be played in the round. Also, Hamlet's commentary ('He poisons him i'th' garden for's estate') should be matched to the action of the play-within-the-play, so that it is in the present tense.

• 3 May 2000: Rehearsal on Stage

The action of *The Mousetrap* was explored in a much more naturalistic style of acting than that of the dumbshow. Lucianus appeared to have heeded Hamlet's advice to the Player.

GB thought it would be sensible to agree that the entire Court finds the constant references to the Queen's second marriage rather in bad taste. He added that, conversely, only Claudius should be disturbed by the murder references.

• 17 May 2000

JK perched on the mound behind Claudius and Gertrude to watch the opening exchange of *The Mousetrap*. As he jumped down to enter on his cue MR pulled him back to ask JMc,

'Madam, what think you of the play?'. From that point, JK's attempt to "play his part" as Lucianus was interrupted or narrated by MR. Lucianus' lines – 'Thoughts black...usurps immediately.' (249-54) were interspersed with Hamlet's lines (255-258). At the point where Hamlet hints at '...how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife', Claudius rose from his throne and restrained JK as he attempted to "poison" the Player King. This action clearly implicated Claudius, and MR became triumphant as the court was evacuated.

- **24 May 2000: Day 2 of Technicals**

MR seized the pillow from the "mini-mound" as the "set" of *The Mousetrap* was struck by the tiring-house gentlemen, stuffing it inside his shirt, and impersonating Claudius in front on the aghast Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Act III, Scene 3

Claudius' monologue (35-72)

- **17 May 2000**

TW chose to play this speech out, "to the Globe", and made good use of the place where the upper galleries would be. The bench at a diagonal from the SR pillar provided the altar at which he knelt to pray. This allowed MR to use the CS area to draw his sword and contemplate his murder, before a "long exit" at SL door.

- **24 May 2000: Day 2 of Technicals**

GB had altered the positions on the benches on the stage (2 against the *frons scenae*, 2 facing each other between the pillars) and so the bench TW had been using to kneel at in prayer was no longer there. As a result TW experimented kneeling at the perimeter rail, DSC, facing the front. This made for a much stronger stage picture than the previous arrangement.

Act III, Scene 4

- **17 May 2000**

A table CS indicated Gertrude's closet. Polonius' lines at the beginning of this scene were cut, and Hamlet quickly drew his rapier on his mother, soon after entering. JMc's cries for help were given more weight as MR rampaged and berated her, brandishing his weapon.

After MR "stabbed" JH (hiding in the discovery space), he wept in anger and remorse. However, he quickly turned his fury on JMc and screeched at her, throwing her "dirty bedlinen" in her face. TP also entered through the discovery space, seen only by MR, to physically urge MR on.

- **24 May 2000: Day 2 of Technicals**

Polonius' exit to hide behind the hanging needed finessing in the space. Prior to Hamlet's entrance through the central opening, the split hanging was drawn shut. As MR entered

through the centre parting, JH lurked by the (unfastened) SR edge. JH slipped into the discovery space as MR stepped onto the stage.

Blood had been proposed for Hamlet's sword, to be applied by one of the tiring-house staff using a "bloody mitten" while the sword tip protruded into the discovery space. This was cut during technicals because the move was considered rather dangerous in the dark conditions inside the discovery space, and there was a real danger of damaging JH's clothing with the stage blood.

Act III, Scene 5

• 24 May 2000: Day 2 Techincals

MR used a large (human head-size) cabbage inside a red-stained fabric bag to suggest the head of Polonius. The other characters chasing Hamlet on to the stage stared in horror as Hamlet hacked away at the bag, his sword making a sickening sound. Then, MR whooped loudly, throwing the cabbage up in the air before his terrified pursuers.

Act III, Scene 6

• 20 April 2000

The actors rehearsed in costumes for this scene. While the majority of the men wore full doublet and hose, MR sported a sorry ensemble – open shirt protruding from the bottom of his hose, bare legs, with the remnants of stockings sagging around his ankles.

The scene begins in the chapel as Claudius awaits the arrival of the body of Polonius. As MR was brought in by TB and DM, he sank to his knees in a pastiche of a Christian priest at prayer. As he told of Polonius' being "at supper" he crossed to USC – to the altar – and mimicked the musical tones of a Latin Mass.

As Rosencrantz and Guildenstern escorted Hamlet off through the SR door, Claudius delivered his speech to "England" in soliloquy, in front of the SL pillar. GB wondered whether it might be appropriate to have Horatio DSR so that he could see Hamlet being led away.

GB noted that the end of this scene would mark the beginning of the second interval. GB and MR discussed various ways of planting seeds of expectation for what is to follow in the final portion. GB thought that it might be a good idea to bring on Reynaldo at the close of the scene, to intimate in some way that he has stepped into Polonius' shoes. MR also noted that audience members who have not seen the play before might think that Hamlet is going away to his death, and that we should try to capitalise on this sense of suspense. GB wondered whether Ophelia and Horatio have heard what has happened, and come to see what is going on. He thought that this might point nicely to some of the themes of the final portion to follow.

Act IV, Scene 1

Fortinbras with an Army

• 20 April 2000

This short scene has to establish the identity and purposes of Fortinbras.

GB opened up a discussion about the scene, and noted that Fortinbras had a father killed by Hamlet's father. Fortinbras could be an exact contemporary of Hamlet, and is in a comparable situation, with his uncle on the throne.

JK wondered whether the soldiers with Fortinbras are armed. There had been earlier discussions about this scene, and all were in favour of standing (at the top of the final Act) for a few moments to survey the audience. JK thought that to come in heavily armed, and to pause before disarming noisily might help to quieten the audience and signal the start of the Act.

GB wondered if DM wanted to mark his arrival at the land upon which his father was killed. He thought that music would help to set the right atmosphere, and that a mark of his respect might be more powerful than an aggressive gesture. Perhaps a "last post" style of trumpet flourish, followed by lowering the colour, and a moment's silence might be effective, thought GB.

JH wanted to know whether it was possible to enter through the yard, to help to suggest this moment of crossing a border. He also thought the papal gesture of kissing the earth might be worth considering.

As the scene was put on its feet, JK entered with the colour through the central opening, followed by the rest of Fortinbras' army. DM mimed pulling off a medallion from his neck, and laying on the ground. This mimicked an earlier action of Hamlet's (unknown to DM), a tribute to *his* dead father.

• 17 May 2000

GB noted that there would be music during the interval after Act III. The doors would then open and signal the start of the scene. GB wanted to rehearse the transition from this scene to the next; he told JMc and GBe that as the soldiers exited through the central opening, they should enter via the flanking doors.

• 25 May 2000: Day 3 of Technicals

The large size of the Fortinbras colours, carried by JK, meant that the blocking for this scene had to be altered slightly, to avoid obscuring TP from view.

Act IV, Scene 2

• 20 April 2000

GB asked PL if she was beginning to find some resonances and meanings in the songs she sings in this scene. PL reported that she had learned a great deal in a session with CvK the previous day. She said she found the folk traditions CvK had described to her useful – the songs were "a place of safety", rather than an expression of madness. She felt that this was more important than some of the more academic references as to the precise meanings of the words.

Jaq brought up a comparison to Desdemona's "Willow Song" in *Othello*. Perhaps Ophelia sings a song of lost love, betrayal and lost virginity, with her reasons for singing not entirely known to her.

GB noted that it was likely that Ophelia has just been told of Hamlet's part in her father's death. That is the conclusion that most of the audience would draw from her "distracted" appearance and behaviour, GB thought. Perhaps Horatio or the Priest had told her?

GB noted that the difficulty and joy of a double time scheme at work in the play. We mustn't lose sight of the excitement of one thing following another (a sense that there's hardly time to catch breath), but we also must not lose sight of the characters' journeys, of the ways in which they mature as time goes on.

CT thought that Horatio was part of a "young Camelot"; a former association with Gertrude is possible, though he didn't feel that he had a history with Claudius. He also thought that Horatio was probably keeping a record of the events at Court while Hamlet is away, in the hope that he will eventually hear of Hamlet's whereabouts, and send news to him. GBe found this helpful, giving him a reason for his presence in this scene with Ophelia: Hamlet had asked Horatio to keep an eye on her, he thought.

The reason why Ophelia wishes to see the Queen was a subject for much discussion. It was suggested that Horatio is ignorant of Ophelia's true wishes, and simply needs support from Gertrude. PL played the scene a second time with more direct need of maternal comfort from Gertrude than before. This had the effect of further raising the stakes of the scene. Furthermore, when TW entered (as Claudius) the atmosphere in the room changed considerably. The moment was filled with ambiguity, and for a tantalising moment it seemed that Ophelia's encroaching madness might be on the point of uncovering a terrible truth.

After a fairly lengthy discussion, PL summed up her feelings: it was better for her to enter with some direct need of Gertrude (another female in an otherwise male world?) and it was important to avoid imposing a "logical" interpretation on her songs. That way, she felt able to play with a rich selection of possibilities.

• 17 May 2000

PL confessed to feeling lost on her entrance. GB suggested that we look for something that was "hotter", more anxious, more full of grief, from the outset. The song at the beginning of the scene was mysterious, he acknowledged, but he thought that we might explore more closely to see if the song of the "pilgrim" held any truths or revelations – either for Gertrude, or for the larger Globe audience. The "St Valentine's Day" song, by contrast, had a logic that made it comparatively easy to play to Gertrude and Claudius.

GB pointed out that, however unjustly, Hamlet *blames* the women in this play. He wondered whether the fact that Ophelia explicitly wishes to speak with the only *other* woman in the play might indicate that it is the *women* alone who can "solve" the terrible situation in the Court. PL thought this would help her play this part of the scene with higher stakes and concentrate her purpose in the song. She decided to try this, and the resulting run seemed successful.

Laertes Arrives

7 April 2000

The Elizabethans believed the **pelican** fed its young on its own blood. In the act of regurgitating it stimulates its breast to reveal red plumage – hence Shakespeare uses a physical act to launch an image or metaphor – the parent-child image at its most giving and tender:

*Laertes: And like the kind life-rend'ring Pelican,
Repast them with my blood.*

Here, as in previous scenes, the process of reinstating cut lines continued. GB reported that his first draft cut about 700 lines from the Folio, and he guessed that at this point we had reinstated around 100 of these (or 10 minutes in playing time). GB remained open to cast members' suggestions throughout the rehearsal process, and welcomed the collaborative process of building "our text".

ML said that he felt the relationship between Laertes and Claudius that pre-exists the play is what prevents Laertes from killing Claudius on arrival at Elsinore. MR agreed with this, but reminded everyone that there would be another scene to come between these two characters, and it would be dangerous to anticipate this, and let the tension disperse too soon.

• 20 April 2000

The precise identity of the "followers" in this scene was the subject of a discussion. ML thought it was helpful to imagine a large group of Laertes' followers outside, and that a few of these enter with him. GB said there would be as many voices as possible in the tiring house, and that it was possible the tiring-house gentlemen would be used in this scene.

The cause of the popular uprising was also discussed. GB thought that the public might be hearing many rumours connected with the demise of Polonius and the disappearance of Hamlet. Gertrude and Claudius would almost certainly have avoided making a public appearance up to this point, further fuelling the feelings of the rebellious commoners.

GB wondered why Laertes does not draw a weapon on Claudius. ML said he simply thought it was stronger to save the swords until the end of the play. He also argued that he had a large army outside, and did not need a weapon. GB countered that it would be rather thrilling for the audience to see him draw on Claudius; he added that the "climbdown" would be stronger if it started from a more dangerous point. GB said he hoped we could imagine that if Claudius makes a wrong move at this moment, he would be instantly killed. ML warned that it was a stage cliché to think of Laertes as a "man of action who shouts a lot". GB reminded him that Laertes has staged a coup, and that the drama lies in how Claudius manages to win him over.

• 25 May 2000: Day 3 of Technicals

The “noises within” needed finessing during Technicals. The marauding mob needed to be inside the tiring-house in order for their noises to be sufficiently loud and threatening. Also, ML was concerned that the actors supplying the noise were simply shouting portions of his lines – such as ‘Where is the King?’ – and he felt that these lines were inappropriate for anyone else but Laertes. GB suggested that the noisemakers and musicians find other things to shout.

Another problem was that LH could not be heard as he described the mayhem outside. The mayhem itself drowned him out, and made his warning redundant. GB suggested that CvK take the musicians into the stairwell of the main building, at a greater remove from the stage. CvK agreed to try this, although it presented more cueing challenges.

The second time the cue was tried (in the stairwell) the starting level was too low, because of the closed door to the tiring house and the distance of the actors and musicians from the stage. At an agreed point (immediately before Claudius’ revelation that ‘the doors have broke’) the “mob” had moved through from the stairwell into the tiring-house itself, thus increasing the noise significantly.

A third time the cue was tried, the relative levels were much more contained, and much better overall.

Ophelia: a ‘document in madness’

•7 April 2000

On the subject of Ophelia’s final song, GB suggested that Ophelia might be asking for mercy for what she is about to do.

• 20 April 2000

GB thought it would be a good idea to have Horatio come on with Ophelia, to sustain the story begun at the beginning of this scene.

GB asked PL if she wanted to come in carrying the actual flowers she mentions, or to imagine them. PL thought that it would be helpful to have real flowers in her hands and to be able to imagine having picked them earlier.

Act IV, Scene 3

• 7 April 2000

The sailors mentioned in this scene are pirates, which were far more prevalent than we might think. Hamlet mentions as much in his letter to Horatio.

HG wondered why, having lost Hamlet, they would continue on to England with a letter (now replaced by Hamlet and resealed)? HG thought that perhaps they had no idea what was in their letter in the first place.

The circuitous route that the letters from Hamlet take was discussed. He must have sent at least three letters (Horatio – Gertrude – Claudius), carried by the Sailors and perhaps forwarded by Horatio. MR wondered if all of this detail was absolutely necessary – the

letter itself will be delivered to the King in a very few lines anyway. MR suggested cuts in the letter which were agreed upon.

Act IV, Scene 4

TW noted that it was strange that Claudius speaks so highly of Hamlet in this scene as a means of persuading Laertes to unbate his sword. JH wondered why Hamlet isn't more suspicious of Claudius. GB reminded everyone that up until very recently Claudius was fully expecting to hear news of Hamlet's death, and that this scene shows a very speedily improvised contingency plan taking shape. To help this happen, GB reinstated the line "Let's further think on this" before Gertrude enters.

The detailed account that Gertrude gives of Ophelia's suicide troubled most of the group. If she saw it, why didn't she help her? If she's making it up, how do we play that? RG wondered if this apparent "dislocation" was a sign of Gertrude's emotional state – perhaps she is so involved, she sounds completely *uninvolved* when speaking of this. GB said he didn't mind letting the audience make their own minds up about how and why it happened. Ophelia's death. JMc suggested that Gertrude might have seen the event from a balcony or other vantage point.

PL thought that Ophelia's suicide might not be as deliberate as others perceive it. She imagined Ophelia climbing into the tree, being surprised by her fall, but not unduly alarmed because of her deranged state.

Act V, Scene 1

Two Clowns

• 7 April, 2000

RG related his experience in conversation a modern grave-digger. He noted that graves had to be shored up with timbers to reinforce it and prevent it collapsing on the hapless digger, and that many of the practices have not changed since Shakespeare's time.

MR suggested some line cuts in this scene, as he was particularly keen to go straight into "whose grave is this sir?". MR thought that many of the jokes Hamlet makes in this are for a court audience whose entertainment often continued into the small hours.

• 5 May 2000: Rehearsal on Stage

RG and JK experimented with the trap door as a grave. There was a good deal of discussion about the depth to which the trap should sink. The actors stood on a raised wooden platform inside the trap, which made them visible from the waist up. The challenge was to avoid sightline difficulties from the upper galleries – was it possible to have the bottom of the "grave" at a depth that meant Ophelia's body would disappear from view? Would this interfere with the movements of the Gravediggers? Perhaps a ladder could be used, so that a deep trap would not necessarily obscure the Gravediggers, who might stand on a higher rung of the ladder? RG noted that a ladder in the grave would be in keeping with standard gravedigging practice. GB reminded him that if he were perched on a ladder it would be difficult to act "digging" convincingly at the moment

when JK went off stage to retrieve a stoop of liquor. MR expressed concern that the grave might not yet be deep enough; he thought that the illusion might be half-hearted if the grave was dug to half-measures.

• **18 May 2000**

A large sheet spread on the rehearsal room floor was used to mark the grave area; a portion measuring approximately 5'x2' was cut out of the sheet, to indicate the grave itself. RG and JK used 3 plastic casts of skulls, plus several casts of femurs and a pelvis. The plastic "bones" were hard-wearing, and could be thrown about with abandon.

MR was interested in the possibility of the crushing some of the bones on the stage. He thought that there would be theatrical value in the RG smashing some of the bones to make room in the grave, as to his character, the bones themselves have no "soul". RG was fairly certain that in reality the bones would be carried back to a charnel-house, but he agreed that there was theatrical value in "jowling" the skull to the ground with terrific force.

• **25 May 2000: Day 3 of Technicals**

The paging of two sets of doors (central and SR) was required for the smooth transition into this scene. This was managed because ML exited a few seconds before TW and JMc, and the door was left open for the later pair. This gave the tiring-house gentleman enough time to move to the discovery space in time to page the doors of the central opening in time for the Clowns' entrance.

The grave, with its earth tray and bones, looked impressive, even from the upper galleries. A large white sheet, covered in mud, had been cut to size, to reveal the grave itself but protect the stage floor around the sides of the trap. Props Master Lily Mollgaard wondered whether an oilcloth would look better. JT thought that the cotton sheet might be easier for the actors to set in place, since they had used the same fabric in rehearsals. The edges of the "cut-out" needed to match the edges of the open trap.

GB decided to alter the idea of Hamlet and Horatio exchanging opinions on the 1st Gravedigger's work habits from the vantage point of the balcony. Instead he opted for having them enter through the discovery space, at which point they both crossed to the extreme DSR corner to comment on RG's conduct.

MR experimented with a gag whereby he placed his woollen cap on the skull's "head" and manipulated it like a ventriloquist's dummy to his song of "Imperial Caesar", causing a good deal of mirth among the company.

Ophelia's funeral

• **7 April 2000**

GB said that the interjections by Claudius and Gertrude into the argument between Laertes and Hamlet should probably be overlapped, to help the sense of disorder and chaos. MR said he would like Hamlet's lines cut as Laertes grabs his throat.

- GB said that he thought Hamlet does not leap into Ophelia's grave until after "Be buried quick with her and so will I". The fight itself seems more likely to happen on the ground, rather than in the grave. JK thought that Horatio might also be involved in the fight at some point, perhaps trying to pull Hamlet off?

- **20 May 2000**

A camp bed stood in for Ophelia's funeral bier. CT and ML came DS to stand close to the SL pillar for the 'No ceremony else?' exchange. This helped with the technical problems of how to lower Ophelia's body into the grave; it also helped the rather "private" nature of the Priest's rebuke to Laertes. GB noted that it would be possible to open up the exchange a little to the rest of the house, if desirable.

- **25 May 2000: Day 3 of Technicals**

PL said that the winding sheet worked quite well. Two of the tiring-house staff waited below the stage to help roll PL off the trap platform when needed. JK and RG lowered PL into the trap on a diagonal, to leave clearance in two corners, and GB asked ML and MR to be very careful when they jumped into the grave.

Staging a struggle between 2 men and a corpse in the trap was proving problematic. To help the two assailants out of the trap without harm to PL required the help of other actors: ML was supported from behind by CT and DM as he pushed with his feet against the edges of the trap, to spring himself clear. The winding sheet covered PL's face, according to custom; this also helped to keep any loose soil from falling in her eyes.

The trap was gently lowered deeper as the scene came to a close. This helped to mask the point at which tiring-house staff rolled PL off the platform. Unfortunately, it also helped to reveal the newly-installed TV monitors in the substage. JT noted this and said she would make the performance oilcloth so that it featured a deep enough panel to fall into the trap and mask the monitors.

Ultimately it was decided that it would be better to use a dummy in the winding-sheet, rather than risk injury to PL.

Act V, Scene 2

The Duel

- **18 May 2000**

Rehearsal foils, gauntlets, cups, trays, decanter etc were in place. The benches occupied a "square" position (in parallel, along the US and DS edge of the stage). MR placed Yorick's skull on the bench DSR.

MR knelt (DSC) in front of ML, facing the Lords' Rooms to offer Hamlet's apology to Laertes. Horatio (GBe) stood as second to Hamlet, Osric (HG) to Laertes. TB helped MR on with his jacket; GBe was given the rapier to inspect, as TB tied up his boots. GB noted that the judges in a fencing bout (in this case, TB, HG and RG) move with the action (left or

right); if feasible, he wanted our judges to do the same, thought the fight itself was choreographed to take the opponents to the edge of the stage.

GB noted that as the King drinks, the musicians sound a flourish with trumpets and drums.

The business of Gertrude drinking from the poisoned cup needed some attention. The dimensions of the rehearsal room (roughly equivalent to the Globe stage) were such that TW could easily cross the stage in time to prevent JMc from drinking. RG thought that it was very significant that Gertrude chooses to disobey Claudius in drinking to Hamlet, and that perhaps she makes a great show of it, in front of the Court. TW was having difficulty lending credence to the idea that he "fails" to reach JMc in time, and yet the exact timing of Gertrude's sip seemed to be crucial. The lines-

Gert: The Queen carouses to thy fortune *Hamlet*.

Ham: Good madam.

Claud: *Gertrude* do not drink.¹

Gert: I will my Lord, I pray you pardon me.²

Claud: It is the poisoned cup, it is too late.

- illustrate that there is enough time (in naturalistic terms) for Claudius to cross the width of the stage between ¹ and ², and thus prevent Gertrude from drinking.

GB wondered if Claudius could be momentarily confused, and think that Gertrude is offering Hamlet the wine, and not drinking herself. TW said that this was helpful, but he remained concerned that his prime motivation was to knock the cup out of her hand if he had the chance.

The forthcoming period of technical rehearsals would provide a good opportunity to resolve this matter.

GB thought that Hamlet's command 'Let the doors be locked' would have to refer to doors other than the ones visible on the stage; otherwise, Osric's later exit would be impossible. He asked the company to imagine the main doors as those separating the tiring-house from the rest of the Globe Theatre complex. The flanking doors and central opening could then be left open plausibly, and Fortinbras could make his entrance through the SL flanking door. In addition, the main exit could be executed through the discovery space.

JK noted that as the Standard Bearer, he would have difficulty leaving his vantage point of the balcony in time to change into his costume for the Jig.

• 21 May 2000

JK (as Reynaldo) and CT were introduced into this scene. GB thought that they should both serve as judges for the fencing bout. GB's chief concern in drafting extra characters into the scene was to have more "survivors" at the Court when Fortinbras arrives. JK replaced GBe as a judge, and so Horatio took up a new position as "second" in Hamlet's "corner" (on the DSR bench)

• 25 May 2000: Day 3 of Technicals

Leather sleeveless fencing doublets were provided for ML and MR, which they buttoned on top of their regular doublets. MR noticed that the stage floor was quite slippery, and was concerned that this might make the fencing bout hazardous. MR was concerned that remnants of soil from the Gravediggers' scene were still present on the stage floor, further increasing its slippery surface. GB asked JT if there was anything she could recommend to brush over the stage surface to increase the grip from leather-soled shoes.

After the stage had been swept, the duel was tried again, but the problem of the slippery surface had improved little. ML asked that rosin be brought on, to see if this helped. The rosin helped ML and MR a little, but also left a white dusty residue on the stage floor that deposited itself on JMc's black silk dress as she fell on the floor, poisoned. JMc and GB found a relatively clean spot in the same general area, and reblocked her fall to the floor, to avoid the worst of the rosin. This, it was hoped, would be the best compromise.

JT and the tiring-house staff tried to devise a way of sweeping the stage before the duel that didn't look incongruous with the story-telling in general. It was agreed that RG would bring on the rosin tray as a "fixture" before the duel began.

• 26 May 2000

GB worked in the Inigo Jones Theatre on the last remaining part of the show that was as yet "un-teched". The mechanics of the removal of Hamlet's body from the stage had to be worked out, and GB wanted to include the draping of Hamlet's body in Denmark's colour, before being carried at shoulder-height by the 'four captains' Fortinbras describes. GB selected JK, RG and tiring-house gentlemen BP and SC to bear the body; TB brought the colour (pre-folded), to be placed on Hamlet's body.

THE JIG

• 14 April, 2000

This was the third rehearsal of the jig with Sue Lefton. Master of Movement Jackie Matthews stayed to observe.

The Company were each given a stick (about the size of a broom handle), to which a mask or a skull would be added at a later stage. SL explained that the general tone of the jig would be one of burlesque and carnival, of defying death, to provide a counterpoint to the play's conclusion. JK would be performing acrobatic movements to be developed by JM and SL.

After discussion with the actors, SL suggested that skulls be used, instead of masks. This would increase the grotesque qualities of the jig, as well as providing a witty comment on certain episodes and themes of the play.

• 19 May 2000

The Company's movements for the bulk of the jig were more established by this time. The staffs (eventually to be mounted by skulls) were held at a precise, uniform height.

The characters played by JK and KT had been changed; KT entered on JK's shoulders, so that the two of them formed a giant figure of Death, complete with skull-head and scythe. As the Company cowered away from the Reaper figure, it came forward to the front of the stage. At this point, JK eased KT to the floor, allowing a "baby skeleton" (JK) to be "born" out of the bottom of the giant's "skirt". This "baby" skeleton led the company in a merry, mocking gambol, literally "laughing in the face of death".

CvK brought the musicians into rehearsal in Duthy Hall (19 May) to give the actors a flavour of the Spanish influences in the music, as well as to see if the estimated 44 bars of music tallied with the length of dance routine.

• 27 May 2000

Once the skeleton costumes were available for use in rehearsal it became clear that the skull worn by JK was too large to allow KT to balance on his shoulders properly. Therefore, the appearance of the "Grim Reaper" needed to be rethought. JK and KT worked quickly together to devise a last-minute alternative, and in the end JK hid under KT's boned petticoat as she walked on stage, before emerging to "be born" as usual.

Notes after Preview 2

• 31 May 2000

GB said that in general, he was very pleased with the performances. He thought that time could still be saved by picking up on cues more quickly.

GB thought that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern should recover Hamlet's sword as "murder weapon" evidence.

GB thought that JK could "test the waters" a little more with JH in the Reynaldo/Polonius scene. He wanted JK to emphasise Reynaldo's acumen and quick learning skills a little more. GB noted that from Reynaldo's point of view, the strangeness of the situation lies in the behaviour of his employer.

GB asked if the cues for the 'noises off' in IV.2 (Laertes and the angry mob) could be looked at; he wanted to hear the line relating to letting Ophelia pass. GB also noted that the cue 'What warlike noise is this?' was late in Preview 2.

The Play-within-the-Play needed a small amount of attention. GB wanted to establish the "through-line" of the play's story; he acknowledged that there was plenty of interest going on, but that this needed to be fine-tuned. The general mood of the scene should be established as quite hopeful and exciting, and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern might feel that the Players could in fact help them to fulfil their promise to the King and Queen. Hamlet is now at long last out of mourning dress, another hopeful sign. GB noted that the dumbshow is most effective when generally enjoyed by its audience. MR might lead the reaction to this, GB thought.

GB noted that the Play-within-the-Play should appear to celebrate the virtues of marriage from the outset. The twist on this – the question of second marriage – should make

everyone increasingly uncomfortable, as they realise Hamlet has “pulled a fast one”. GB also thought that it might be more effective if JK was allowed to speak his speech *prior* to the action of poisoning, so that MR could then speak over the action, rather than over JK’s speech.

GB wanted to try to lose the “mini-mound” that had been used as a pillow for the Player King, and have him lie instead at the foot of the “mound proper”, with Claudius and Gertrude sitting atop.