

Findings from the Globe 1998 Season

The Merchant of Venice

Pauline Kiernan MA, D.Phil (Oxon.)

1. Preparing the play for the Globe space

- Cuts in the provisional script
- Cuts that were reinstated
- Doubling, cuts and changes
- Research Work on the Play
 - The authentic brief
 - Coryat's *Crudities*

The Text

Before the start of rehearsals director Richard Olivier and artistic director Mark Rylance went through the Arden edition (ed. John Russell Brown)¹ to make cuts to reduce the play's performance time - in keeping with the production's 'authentic brief' (see Research section). Reference was made to the First Folio in the decision-making process. At this stage of preparing the play for performance, the cut text was given to the actors with the understanding that it was a 'provisional' script. The scripts were distributed with the cut lines still readable beneath the deletion scores. This practice enables actors to see which lines have been cut and, if any of them were to wish to reinstate lines, the whole company could make an informed consideration.

Cuts in the provisional script

(from the Arden edn.):

Act I

i.19; 1.52-6; 1.127 'but my chief care...' 130 '...hath left me gag'd...';

136-9; 146-7 ...'and (like a wilful youth)/ That which is lost...'; 163 'Of wondrous virtues'.

ii. 19-20; 47-9; 'I fear...his youth'; 51 'God defend me from these two';

57-9 'if a throstle sing....shadows'; 74-9; 98-9 'and to...more suit'; 123-5 'if he have...than wive me'.

¹ The Arden Shakespeare *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. John Russell Brown (London: Methuen, 1964, repr. 1984)

iii. 6-9; 16-9 'I understand...abroad'; 20-2 'there be...pirates'; 41-2; 55 'You worship'; 68; 77-8; insert 'And' at beginning of 79; 80; insert 'And' at beginning of

81; 97; 125-6; 128-9 'for when...friend'; 134-5; 142; 151; 171-3.

Act II

i. 15-6; 29; 35.

ii.23 'a kind of devil'; 25- 'certainly'; 26-8; 30; 53-5; 59-60; 73-4 '...knowing me'; 96-7 'how..now?'; 98-100; 107-8 'for I am...longer'; 121-4; 139-147 'if it...out'; 154-5 'aleven...man'.

iii. 13-5.

iv. 5; 17-8; 23; 35-7.

v. 8-9; 25-7; 32; 34; 46-7 'Snail slow...with me'.

vi. 22.

vii. 14; 18-19; 21; 25; 55-9 'They have...within'; 70-3.

viii. 10-11; 15; 19; 39; 40-1.

ix. 28-9; 56-2; 98.

Act III.

i. 4-7; 9 'knapp'd ginger' or'; 19-20 'lest....Jew'; 26 '(for his own part)'; 32; 33; 41; 50-1 'thwarted my bargain'; 79-80 'two thousand...jewels'; 100-101 'I shall...again';

117-8 'for...I will'.

ii. 7-8; 20-21; 42; 58-60 'The rest...exploit'; 87-96; 165; 178-180; 217-8 'his infidel...Salerio'; 244-6; 267-8; 273-8 'never did...justice';

iii. 8-10 'I do...request'; 13;

iv. 36-40; 62-78 'I'll hold...practise'.

v. 2 '(I promise you)'; 2-4 'and so...matter'; 4-5 'be o' good cheer'; 10 'that you are not the Jew's daughter'; 14-15 'thus...mother)'; 20-1 'e'en...another'; 50-1 'wilt...instant?'

Act IV

i. 29-33; 49-50; 51-2; 56-8; 71-2; 95-7 'let...viands?'; 129; 147 'three or four'; 151-2 in...came'; 154-5 'between...merchant'; 156-7 'the...commend'; 168 'to...request'; 159-160 'to...estimation'; 220; 232; 247; 263-8; 330; 354-8; 361-3; 369; 400; 414; 416; 432.

ii. 15-17 'we shall...too'.

Act V

i. 30-2 'she doth...hours'; 36-8; 74; 87; 109-110 'how...awak'd!'; 115; 164-5; 182-84 'in writing...rings'; 194; 203-6; 229; 232.

Once rehearsals began, the cuts were discussed among the company at various stages from read through to improvised character work, first run and so on.

Cuts that were reinstated

Act I

iii. 41-2; 125-6; 128-9 'for when...friend'; 134-5; 140.

Act II.

v. 32; 34; 59;

Act III.

i. 19-20 'lest...Jew'; 40-1; 50; 79-80 'two thousand ducats in that, and other precious, precious jewels'; 83 'Why so!'; 84 'why thou' ; 86 'no revenge'.

ii. 144; 267-8.

Act IV

i. 88-9; 142 'I stand here for law'; 354-8.

Act V

i. 226-8; 232-2.

Doubling, cuts and changes

The *Merchant* company consisted of fifteen actors to play nineteen parts plus magnificos of Venice, Officers of the Court of Justice, a Gaoler, Servants. A base count of fifteen actors is the number given by Platter for a performance of *Julius Caesar*, almost certainly at the Globe, in 1599².

² 'On the 21st of September, after dinner, at about two o'clock, I and my party went across the water, in the straw thatched house we saw the tragedy of the first Emperor Julius Caesar, very

Doubling

Prince of Morocco/ Duke of Venice

Old Gobbo/ Tubal

Prince of Arragon/ Bassanio's Man

Changes

Salerio changed to Leonardo at III.ii.

Research Work on the Play

It was decided that one of the productions in the 1998 season would follow some 'authentic' methods, but not to have an all-male cast (which was the case with *Henry V* in 1997).

The 'Authentic Brief'

- * Cuts to the text to speed up performance time
- * Some interval-free performances
- * Doubling of parts
- * Use of torches for night exterior scenes
- * Extensive historical costume research and practice by designer Jenny Tiramani. The *Merchant* costume team hand-stitched and dyed all clothing with original materials using dressmaking methods of the period, with original fastenings.
- * Historical music research by composer Claire van Kampen, including the use of period instruments: sackbut, cornett, natural trumpet, slide-trumpet, curtal, drum and, of particular interest because rarely played today, the theorbo. The music director and musicians held extensive rehearsals throughout the preparation period.
- * Madrigals
- * Management of the stage was planned to be as close to Elizabethan conditions as was possible within the safety constraints of the modern Globe. At the first production meeting of the play, in which technical requirements for the

pleasantly performed with approximately fifteen characters'. Quoted from Ernest Schanzer, in a translation in his article 'Thomas Platter's Observations on the Elizabethan Stage', *Notes and Queries*, 201 (1956), 465-2 Thomas Platter visited London from 18 September to 20 October, 1599. The Globe was built in 1599.

Merchant production were discussed, it was decided to avoid using modern technology unless it was really necessary.

- * Use of the Lords' room/music room in the balcony above the stage by seated playgoers.
- * Use of the music room by musicians (although there is no evidence for this at the original Globe until 1609).
- * As with all productions at the new Globe, ticket prices set at rough equivalents of Elizabethan playhouse prices.
- * Deliberately non-authentic aspects of the production included the decision not to have an all-male cast: female roles were played by female actors.

Coryat's Crudities

Research Fellow Pauline Kiernan offered research materials for various aspects of the 'authentic brief'. These included the valuable *Coryat's Crudities*, a travel book published in 1611 by Thomas Coryat, whose 'Observations of Venice' provided a wealth of detail and information on Venetian architecture, customs, dress, and the Jews in Renaissance Venice. Designer Jenny Tiramani gleaned much from Coryat's vivid descriptions of the Grand Canal, piazzas, and the Rialto; of interior and exterior details of the palaces and churches; of how men and women of different classes and religions dressed. Coryat proved a rich source of inspiration for the the design of the set and costumes, and for the company's sense of place and people when they began to feel their way into the world of the play.

Such is the rarenesse of the situation of Venice, that it doth even amaze and drive into admiration, all strangers that upon their first arrivall behold the same. For it is built altogether upon the water in the innermost gulfe of the Adriatique Sea which is commonly called Gulfo di Venetia, and is distant from the maine Sea about the space of 3 miles...
(303)

Coryat then goes on to describe the Canal il Grande, on both sides 'adorned with many sumptuous and magnificent Palaces that stand very neare to the water, and make a very beautiful and glorious shew' being of great height and 'adorned with great multitude of stately pillars made partly of white stone, and partly of Istrian marble'. He is particularly taken with the little terraces or galleries which give 'great grace to the whole edifice, and serve only for this purpose, that people may from that place as from a most delectable prospect contemplate and view the parts of the City round about them in the cool evening'. The Globe stage and its gallery provided just such a delectable viewpoint for the characters to look out across the yard as though it was the Grand Canal, and to 'contemplate' the galleries as the City 'round about them'. At other times, it became the Rialto bridge which Coryat describes as the only bridge to go over the great canal, and which cost about 'fourescore thousands

crownes, which doe make foure and twenty thousand pound sterling'. When Coryat describes the city's most stately building, the Exchange of Venice, he provides us with the kind of interesting detail that really helps to convey the sense of place in Shakespeare's play: the daily routine of mercantile commerce that his readers could identify with, 'where the Venetian Gentlemen and the Merchants doe meete twice a day, between eleven and twelve of the clocke in the morning, and betwixt five and six of the clocke in the afternoone.' He notes that it is inferior 'to our Exchange in London, though indeede there is a farre greater quantity of building in this then in ours.'³ The detailed travel guide continues with references to the luxuriously fitted gondolas, and again, there is the comparison with London's equivalent; to St Mark's Square, the Duke's Palace, with its red marble and alabaster pillars and - of particular interest for Shakespeare's play - 'the Image of Dame Justice... with a paire of scales in one hand, and a sword in the other'. He praises the beauty of the Jewish women he saw in Venice:

some were as beautiful as ever I saw,
and so gorgeous in their
apparel, jewels, chaines of gold, and rings
adorned with precious stones, that
some of our English countesses do scarce
exceede them, having marvellous trained
like Princesses that are borne by the waiting
women....
(372)

Among the most valuable details which Coryat provided were those relating to the Jewish Ghetto in Venice. Notice the attention given to the smallest details of dress:

I was at a place where the whole fraternity of the Jews dwelleth together, which is called the Ghetto, being an Iland: for it is inclosed round about with water. It is thought there are of them in all betwixt five and six thousand. They are distinguished and discerned from the Christians by their habites on their heads: for some of them doe weare hats and these redde, onely those Jewes that are borne in the West parts of the world, as in Italy, &c. but the easterne Jewes being otherwise called the Levantine Jewes which are born in Hierusalem, Alexandria, Constantinople, &c. weare Turbents upon their heads as the Turke doe: but the difference is this: the Turkes weare white, the Jewes yellow. By that word Turbent I understande a rowle of fine linnen wrapped together upon their heads, which serveth them

³ The Royal Exchange, built by Sir Thomas Gresham on Cornhill 1566-8, on the model of the great Burse in Antwerp, where merchants in their hundreds traded. It had one hundred shops in its upper corridor. It is probably that references to the 'Rialto' in *The Merchant of Venice* were identified as London's Royal Exchange.

in stead of hats, whereof many have bin often worne by
the Turkes in London.
(370-1)

Coryat gives an English Christian's point of view of Jewish religious customs
which can help us to a closer understanding of the Christian/Jewish relationships
in Shakespeare's play:

[The Jews] have divers Synagogues in their Ghetto, at the
least seven, where all of them, both men, women and
children doe meete together upon their Sabbath, which
is Saturday, to the end to doe their devotion and serve
God in their kinde...The Levite, that readeth the law to
them, hath before him at the time of the divine service
and exceedingly long piece of parchment, rowled upon
two woodden handles: in which is written the whole
whole summe and contents of Moyses law in Herbrew...
not be a sober, distinct, and orderly reading, but by
and exceeding loud yaling, undecent roaring, and as
it were a beastly bellowing forth...
(371)

Coryat confides that he feels sorry for the Jews because, he says, they are not
Christians! 'For indeed I noted some of them to be most elegant and sweet-
featured which gave me occasion the more to lament their religion...'(372) ;
'Truly it is a most lamentable case for a Christian to consider the damnable
estate of these miserable Jewes, in that they reject the true Messias and Saviour
of their soules...' (373). Coryat's view gives a relevant gloss on Antonio's
injunction that Shylock 'presently become a Christian' (IV.i.383) one of the play's
most notorious lines, when the travel writer observes: 'and pitiful it is to see that
few of them living in Italy are converted to the Christian religion' (373). The
reason for this, he says, is 'all their goods are confiscated as soone as they
embrace Christianity' because many of them raise their fortunes by usury, and
bankrupt poor Christians 'by their gripping extortion'.

Other books that were made available on the production's Research Table
included:

Michele Marripodi et al *Shakespeare's Italy: Functions of Italian Locations in
Renaissance Drama* (Manchester, 1993)

Samuel Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare. A Compact Documentary Life* (Oxford, 1977)

Isabel Rivers, *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry*

Gilles, Robert *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge, 1994)

Some of the most rewarding material from the Research Fellow's findings was in
the music of the period. Yonge's *Musica transalpina* yielded much that was of
interest to the strong musical element of the production created by composer

and music director, Claire van Kampen. One fascinating detail to emerge from the research was the vivid sense it gave of Italian music being brought to London by English merchants where enthusiasts like Church scholar, Yonge, would hold weekly musical evenings to play the 'latest hits' from Italy.

James Shapiro's *Shakespeare and the Jews* was an invaluable source for knowledge of the subject for Shakespeare's play⁴, and Peter Dawkins provided material on western philosophical ideas of the Elizabethan period.

It was decided early on in the rehearsal period to perform a 'pre-show' carnival masque.

2. In the Rehearsal Room

30 March 1998

Props list

Recreating Shakespeare's Venice at a Disused Army Base in Dorset, 1998

30 April. First Time on Stage Rehearsal

8 May First run on stage

7 May run all acts together

9 May Director's Notes

30 March 1998

* First read through: 2 hrs. 50 mins

* Mark-ups with accurate measurements of the stage and mock-pillars in their correct positions. Director Richard Olivier talked to the company about the importance of getting used to the dimensions of the stage platform and the positions of the pillars.

* A mock-up central opening caskets on 'plinths' within.

* A mock-up balcony for scenes which included directions for 'Above', and for any moments that may be tried out using the 'Lords' rooms'.

Props list

Act/Scene	Description	Character
Pre-show masque	Masks	(Not in character): Norbert Kentrup Nicholas Monu Benedict Wong

⁴ James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York, 1998)

		Lilo Baur Sonia Ritter Marcello Magni Kathryn Pogson <i>(In character:)</i> Bassanio Gratiano Lorenzo Salerio Solanio
1.1	Elizabethan football	Bassanio / Gratiano
I.ii.	Three caskets	Nerissa / Portia
II.i.	Basket Walking stick	Old Gobbo
	Letters	Bassanio
II.iii	Bag containing silver plate etc	Launcelot
	Coin	Jessica / Launcelot
II.iv	Letter	Launcelot / Bassanio
II.v	Bunch of door keys	Shylock / Jessica
II.vi	Lighted torch	Salerio, Gratiano, Lorenzo
	Chest containing jewels and money	Jessica / Lorenzo
II.vii	Three caskets	Nerissa / Morocco
	Gold casket scroll	
	Skull	Morocco
II.viii	Telescope	Saleria
II.ix	Three caskets	Nerissa / Arragon
	Silver casket scroll	Arragon
	Portrait of idiot	
III.ii	Three Caskets	Nerissa / Bassanio
	Lead casket scroll	
	Portia's picture	Bassanio
	Ring	Portia / Bassanio
	Letter	Leonardo / Bassanio
III.iii	Money book / Writing pen	Shylock
III.iv	Letter	Portia / Stephano
IV.i.	Knife / Scales	Shylock
	Bond	Shylock / Portia

	3 large sacks of ducats	Bassanio / Gratiano
	Throne on dais	Duke
	Chairs	Magnificoes
	Rope 'handcuff'	Antonio
	Portable wooden 'desk'	
	Ink well Papers	Lawyer's Clerk
	Writing utensil	
	Ring	Portia / Bassanio
	Ring	Nerissa / Gratiano
V.i	Blanket	Jessica / Lorenzo
	Lighted torch	Launcelot
	Ring	Portia / Bassanio
	Ring	Nerissa / Gratiano

Recreating Shakespeare's Venice at a Disused Army Base in Dorset, 1998

Two weeks into rehearsals, on Tuesday 14 April, the *Merchant* company left the Globe for a deserted military camp in the wilds of Dorset to spend three days and two nights working on the play. The weather was bitterly cold, the conditions were primitive, especially in the abandoned bare barracks where broken windows let in cold blasts of air. We were all dressed in thermals and layers of sweaters, huge anoraks, and several pairs of socks inside our walking boots, but it was still too cold to stand still for more than a few seconds.

The object of the exercise was to make a 'journey through the play' and to provide the company with 'a physical memory of the whole structure of the play' (Richard Olivier). The play was to be gone through once to improvise scenes with more freedom and time than is usually afforded in the rehearsal room, but, most importantly, to start from what was, in effect, a bare stage to imagine Portia's Belmont, Antonio's Venice, and Shylock's Ghetto, and create a compelling sense of their reality. Place and character were to be magically invented with a few 'props'. The company's 'brief' was to bring things that would help create the mood and atmosphere of the three different 'areas' of 'Venice'. Designers, actors, musicians and stage managers were asked to bring items to trade and barter with; to be prepared to transform any empty concrete hut into the elegant Belmont country house where Portia's royal and titled suitors came to choose from the caskets that would contain their destinies; to turn another hut into the Jewish Ghetto; and to fit up the former dance hall as the Rialto, to be imagined bustling with merchants and their trading activities. In another hall, a large white space was to be used for the Act IV Trial Scene. Designer Jenny Tiramani decided to 'colour code' the different areas, so that everyone wore the appropriate band of colour throughout the three days: Belmont = blue (and yellow); Venice = black; the Ghetto = red. Everything else was white. This was

particularly helpful for distinguishing when an actor was in character or not. Accompanying the group was an adviser on Jewish matters.

Within a matter of a few hours, the transformations were complete. Up at 'Belmont,' the designers and actors playing Portia and Nerissa, conjured a world of exquisite luxury and beauty. Colourful silky swathes of material were draped across walls and door, and lavishly thrown over the army mattresses on the floor; sheepskin rugs were scattered on the floor; ivy cladding the outside walls of the hut were torn off to provide decoration for all the windows; and a trunk covered in silk cloth held the three 'caskets' - cardboard boxes covered in coloured tissue; lighted candles were placed all around the room (a calor gas heater managed to warm up the room quickly).

The idea was to create a space of refined elegance and comfort in contrast to the world of the Rialto. A tour of 'Venice' showed Antonio and Bassanio and their friends trading on the 'Rialto'. In a large empty hall, 'stalls' were set up for business, for buying and selling silks and spices, 'wharfes' were created (where the trading ships unloaded); and nearby, Shylock's 'Ghetto' was shown to have undergone an amazing transformation. The cold, bare concrete hut was now warm (calor heater again), with aromatic oils burning, mattresses were made into sofas, and together with the many books and writing materials, gave the space a cosy, serious, and scholarly feel.

Once the three areas had been set up, work on the scenes could begin. There was a running script, several stage management and research fellow with walkie-talkies taking up positions at various points where the scenes were to be enacted. It was a grey March day, freezing cold, with an ever-falling rain, but this was Venice...

6 p.m. 30 April. First Time on Stage Rehearsal

The Trial Scene was the first to be tried out on the Globe stage. At first the scene was tried out using the yard for the procession of the Doge and Officers to climb steps placed at stage left side of the stage. The procession moved in a straight line across the front of the stage, round the stage right pillar, and took up positions in front of the *frons*. Shylock to follow up the same steps when he is called for. Another try out made use of the balcony for the the Doge and his Officers to sit in judgement on the court case taking place below.

8 May First run on stage

1st run-through 2 PM: 3 hours 16 minutes . 2nd run-through 6.30: 2 hrs 38 mins + 8 minutes carnival.

Richard Olivier sets the scene: 'It's early morning, Salerio and Solario are coming out to trade, when everyone's going home from the masque.

Masquers in yard. Starting of trade bells. Sol and Sal already in the middle of a conversation: they don't come on and start a conversation. Sal points across yard out to the Grand Canal and sea beyond'. Olivier asks the actors to imagine what

is beyond the stage: 'Think of what's out there. Ships are out there. They're coming in with the morning'. Mark Rylance (Bassanio) adds: 'We need to keep our belief in an imagined space. The audience could be friends or enemies - they'll show us very quickly...'

Olivier: 'Concentrate on finding reasons to move. Once you've started speaking, it's fine to move on the speech as long as it's focussed.'

Rylance points out that you can move slowly and speak quite quietly. Distance blocking on the diagonal works. You can face the *frons* while talking - you speak in a loud voice, and turn back again, and talk softer demonstrating as he spoke.

How you move upstage is like going like uphill, and you can bounce off the playgoers at the sides. Olivier: 'Start upstage and move down with it'.

At this point, it was decided that when a character opens or closes a door it's an interior scene; if it opens 'magically' (i.e. by stage management backstage) - it's outside, the street.

Tried out: Enter Bassanio aloft in balcony for first scene.

Antonio (Jack Shepherd) stands in stage right corner of the stage, and realises that this a powerful position: 'It's wonderful position for me and I've got my back to the audience!'

Olivier stressed that 'we are exploring positions and shapes'.

Mark Rylance told the company: 'We just have to find out how to play this unusual space. There are no laws. The overall thing is telling a story. You can see everyone - the audience, you can hear them too. You have to be very careful about how you judge the audience. At the moment, there's a division, but it should be one whole. You have to imagine the reality. We have an audience to watch the trial. It's enough just to have them in mind; that they're there. You don't have to play out to them. The audiences are overwhelming. Last year, with *Henry V*, Richard had to hold us in - not just our bodies but our performances were in danger of toppling off! It's different in rehearsals because the theatre is separated from the stage. You have to complete the circle. We have to create as much reality for our fictional characters as the reality the audience was coming from. Other characters have to play out to the audience too ;if the speaker is speaking out to the audience 'There has to be a balance of holding back and being open'.

Jack Shepherd commented that the Globe stage 'will induce rhetoric. You can talk to one person and there's a way of including other people. We have to let the audience in. They pay their money to come and play their part. You have to aim for precise emotion: it has to be heard'.

Olivier told the actors 'Don't take on whole responsibility - otherwise the performance becomes general. We have to have reins. We have to draw the audience in'.

'Like football, you have to both invite and stop it'.

'The discovery space is part of the reality of the stage. You have to make audience aware of the space behind the stage wall'.

'Find the movement in the reaction, stay with it and trust it'.

A general point which Olivier made to everyone was: 'Don't make so much movement. If you do two movements we lose the sense of one person. The more specific you can be in your role the better. Reactions become more important than actions'

He also talked of the need for preparing to come on stage: 'It's impossible to come on stage and judge every level - you have to have warm-ups.'

For the famous Caskets scene, there was some fear that if they were placed prominently on stage there might be a danger of audience disruption - as in playgoers shouting out 'it's in the lead box!'. The scene was tried with caskets outside the discovery space, then placed inside the discovery space, and each one brought out on to the stage once it had been chosen.

7 May run all acts together - 2 hours 40 mins.

Some actors expressed concern that five weeks of rehearsals might have to be thrown out once the play is on stage. Olivier told them:

'With your imagination, hold it. What you've learned here today, in this space, then we go back to the rehearsal room. We're not throwing anything out. It's a natural growth, paring down is part of the process to make it live on stage'.

9 May Director's Notes

on first tries on stage

1. 'The Carnival needs work.'
2. Olivier stressed that there's a danger of speaking too fast for the Globe stage
3. 'One or two too many moves and bouncing off pillars'.
4. 'We need to look at blocking'.
5. 'Don't stand still on the spot'
6. 'Timing of exits and entrances - we will try overlapping.'

on blocking:

7. 'If you turn round be careful to pull the energy round with you and not leave it behind'.
8. 'Be aware of people at the sides'.
9. 'Variations of pace needed. It's a little even'.
10. 'More vocal energy is needed'.
11. 'Remember that the energy goes when you are sitting on the stage'.

3. The Play in Performance

First Preview 20 May 7.30 p.m.

26 May: 3rd Preview

Run of Public performances

The audience joins the production

First Preview 20 May 7.30 PM

A trumpeter in the turret announced that the play was about to start. After the unscripted pre-show carnival, the first line of the play proper - Antonio's 'In sooth Bassanio I know what I am so sad' - provokes wry laughter in the audience. When Bassanio and Antonio are left alone, Bassanio stands in front of the stage left entrance, and Antonio stands stage right far corner, so that they begin their dialogue in a long diagonal. Bassanio kicks the 'carnival' football around the stage. Antonio moves downstage, and Bassanio takes up the powerful stage right far corner position to deliver the first intimation of the play's plot: 'In Belmont is a lady richly left,/ And she is fair, (and fairer than that word)/ Of wondrous virtues'. Portia's first appearance on stage (II.i) is her entrance through the central opening, followed by Nerrisa. Portia's manservant, Balthazar announces from the balcony the imminent arrival of the Prince of Morocco.

26 May 2 PM 3rd Preview

Thunderstorm/hailstones

Antonio talked more to Audience

Shylock moved to the 'front' of stage to deliver the famous speech beginning 'Hath not a Jew eyes?'

27 May 700 in yard

This was the first experiment with 700 groundlings capacity in the yard. The atmosphere was, as expected, more highly charged than usual. Some groundlings left the performance because they felt it was too crowded!

Run of Public performances

Everyone in the cast was using the '*locus*' or 'authority' position (a few feet before the *frons scenae* more, especially Launcelot who exploited the position's main advantage which is to help the actor include the playgoers at the sides of the stage on three levels. Nerissa decided to come to the 'authority' position for her song. She now sings the song directly to Gratiano who stands a little to one side before her.

At 4.1. Bassanio takes up position in the stage left corner in front of the pillar to appeal to the audience sympathy for his dilemma at being asked by 'Judge' for his ring: 'Good, this ring was given me by my wife' (4.1.437). It was in the same position that, in the last scene, that Bassanio delivered what proved to be one of the funniest lines in the play. In an aside to the audience, he says: 'Why I were best to cut my left hand off...' At every performance the audience's laughter gave the actor the opportunity to play the dramatic pause to its full potential, before finishing the sentence: 'And swear I lost the ring defending it' (V.i.177-8). It is the moment when Bassanio hears his wife declare her husband would never have given away the ring he had promised her only death would part him from. In the break between 4.1. and 5.1. Nicholas Monu (who played Morocco and the Duke of Venice) sang in the balcony .

29 May

Portia's Messenger comes on stage with a torch, and night is further 'created' when Launcelot, in the dark, nearly topples over the edge of the stage.

4. Summary of Findings

<i>Entrances and exits</i>	Interval-free performances
<i>Allusions to the natural elements</i>	Acoustics
<i>Performance time and the weather</i>	Cues
<i>Performance time and unscripted moments</i>	Warming up the audience
Changes through the run	Signalling the start
Blocking	The weather and performance time
A summary	The audience and performance time
	Music
The audience	Actors evidence
Entrances and exits	Scene changes
The central opening	Period clothing
The balcony	Props and furniture
Intervals	Playgoers fainting

The fictional world of a play is, literally, vulnerable to the elements at the new Globe.

A major challenge for actors is to find ways for a character to make contact with the audience without losing contact with the other characters on the stage, and without stepping out of the fiction. Instead of the set, props, and controlled lighting of a traditional proscenium arch stage which projects the world of the play out to the audience, the actor or actors on a comparatively bare stage have to draw the audience in to that world. Words, more than any other single factor, have the job of creating the play-world in an open amphitheatre.

The staging, performance and reception of *The Merchant of Venice* at the new Globe has offered some insights into the significances of the physical conditions of Elizabethan open playhouses for the kind of relationship between actors and audiences which the space fosters.

One aspect of original staging practices which the production has helped to shed light on is the role of the clown and his relationship to the audience. When Hamlet warns the itinerant players who have come to Elsinore not to let their clowns speak more than is written down for them, it seems to have been a playwright's admonition not only to the actors but to the audience, too:

And let those that play your clowns speak no more than
is set down for them; for there be of them that will
themselves laugh to set on some quantity of barren
spectators, to laugh too, though in the mean time
some necessary question of the play be then to
be considered. That's villainous, and shows a
most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it.
(3.2.38-43)

and several aspects of original staging conditions and to prompt fresh enquiry into certain staging practices and their relation to the actors' control (or otherwise) of the circumstances of performance.

The actors' testimony to the experience of playing to (with?) audiences at the new Globe recalls something of what was becoming, in Shakespeare's time, a dying tradition of interacting with the audience. The experience of performance at the new Globe suggests that there may be a reversal of the development from the lost tradition of extemporisation to the controlled circumstances of the Elizabethan playhouse which occurred during Shakespeare's lifetime - when itinerant players moved from open-air playing to the relatively controlled situation of the open playhouse. Today, actors are experiencing a move from the highly controlled environment of a darkened auditorium, localising sets, and mood lighting, where the performance can be accurately 'pre-programmed' to the open space of uncontrollable lighting and weather, and the uncertainties of the audience's responses and provocations.

He's not counted a gentleman that knows not
Dick Burbage and Will Kemp.

Kemp, as he is made to say in *The Second Part of The Return from Parnassus*, IV,
iii.41-2. 1603 (?)

Performances so far at the new Globe have begun to offer up further insights into the ways in which illusionistic modes of drama developed in the early modern period. Experience of public performances in its first two years suggests that the transition from the extemporising which foregrounded the gap between the actor and the role to the illusionistic performance which effected to narrow or close that gap was a more complex and less complete process than is indicated by referring to it as a broadly 'comedy-to-tragedy' development. If the clown's stand-up comic routine was going out of fashion even before the 1590s, the audience's perception of the actor behind the role, on which the humour of his extra dramatic addresses so depended, may have continued strongly alongside the emerging fashion for a self-contained dramatic illusion. In Shakespeare's plays there are the numerous examples of self-referential allusions we can identify (and who knows how many we have not), ranging from the explicit call to audience recollection in Hamlet (Burbage)'s line reminding Polonius of another play they have just starred in. Polonius says: 'I did enact Julius Caesar. I was killed i'th' Capitol. Brutus killed me'. Hamlet-Burbage-Brutus recalls his own part in the killing: 'It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there' (*Julius Caesar*, 3.2.99-102), to the self-referential immediacy (to the fiction, the role, the gender-role, and the actor) of Cleopatra's.

The quick comedians will stage us, and present
Our Alexandrian revels. Antony
Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see
Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness
I' th' posture of a whore.
Antony and Cleopatra, (5.2.212-17)

The vivid description of extemporising clowning, written in a play that was entered on the Stationers' Register in 1608, suggests that if the clown act had died out, it was still alive in audience's memories. As with many other aspects of staging, we seem to be learning that the practices and changes in the actor-role relationship in the early modern theatre are even less clear-cut than we thought.

If we can say that a production's rehearsal period takes the actors only half way to where they will get once the audience is there, we also have to say that the playing of the play before an audience is likely to be less than half a performance if the preparation in the rehearsal room does not involve the creation of a compelling fictional world which the characters can fully inhabit. To take such a world on to the new Globe stage and keep it whole, as it were, while inviting the audience in, requires an extremely strong preparation process, and a disciplined 'tuning' of the play once in performance. Richard Olivier, in the first stages of rehearsing *Merchant*, stressed the importance for actors to focus on creating a fictional world and make it work within the rehearsal room before worrying about the Globe space and its audiences. 'It's a different culture from

the one actors and directors are used to. We have one and a half weeks of technicals in a theatre that has no lighting and no set, so that the "technical" aspect of these rehearsals is not to do timing and controlling the lighting, or with testing whether the stage design works in practice, but with the physical aspects of movement and blocking, entrances and exits, visibility and audibility and so on.' Several actors felt that it would have been helpful to have more rehearsals on the stage to get used to large size of the theatre.

Audience responses in the first seasons showed that actors have to find an extremely fine balance between encouraging playgoers to feel part of the theatrical experience and preventing them from disrupting the story. Paradoxically, it would seem that in the initial stages of the production's development, a good way to prepare for the demands of the new Globe space is for actors to be encouraged to stop thinking about how things will work in the theatre to a full house, and concentrate instead on creating a completely circumscribed fictional world that will be as strong as the audience's reality. It is because the space and energy of the audience has such power that the stage reality has to be more firmly and resolutely anchored on the stage if it is not to be overwhelmed. The actors, then, have to find ways of remaining inside the fiction and bringing the audience into that world, and the quest has to start at the beginning of the preparation period by *not* imagining the audience and the space... Olivier thinks it is important that rehearsals have to be separate from the technicals, and that if you start planning for the Globe stage before the technicals it won't help you to achieve the psychological reality for the characters to inhabit.

Entrances and exits

Overlapping entrances and exits worked very well, and are usually a necessary piece of staging at the new Globe because it takes two or three lines for an actor to move from an entry door in the *frons* to the front of the stage⁵. If the stage is empty, the energy levels in the theatre drop; and apart from the strictly practical point of having to solve the problem of how long it takes to move across such a deep stage, overlapping exits and entrances help to make a production seamless. They also, of course, help to speed up performance time. Such overlapping can reduce running time of the play by allowing a very short hiatus to mark the division of scenes.⁶

Beckerman's theory was that all players always enter through the same door and exit at the other. Others have argued that the player must always enter by the door he last exited through. Theories which have been put forward so far have tended to be just that - theoretical. Experience in playing the reconstructed Globe so far has suggested that inventiveness and expediency have been the determining factors in dictating the staging of any given entrance and exit.

⁵ For examples of 'early entrances' and the symbolic use of stage doors, see Alan C. Dessen's stimulating study of Elizabethan staging practices, *Rediscovering Shakespeare's Theatrical Vocabulary* (Cambridge, 1995)

⁶ Mariko Ichikawa, 'Exits in Shakespeare's Plays: Time Allowed to Exiters', *Studies in English Literature*, 68 (Tokyo, 1992), 189-206.

One entrance practice which was favoured quite a lot for the *Merchant* was: Enter stage left, along the side of the stage and round the pillar (Duke of Morocco's entrances; several of Bassanio's entrances), or Enter stage right, along the side of the stage and round the pillar. This extended the time-span for entrances.

Allusions to the natural elements

Hamlet's 'brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire' is the great canopy of the 'Heavens' which covers the stage. Its underside is painted with sun, moon, stars and clouds. It is to this that Lorenzo directs Jessica's gaze (and the audience's) when he says: 'Look how the floor of heaven/ Is thick inlaid with patens of bright gold' in *The Merchant of Venice*.

Performance time and the weather

Performance times are speeded up when it's raining. It is not only rain falling that effects the acoustics so strongly. When the air is humid the actors have to speak their lines much louder; on a clear day they can judge the acoustics better and speak at their usual level. A surprisingly large number of groundlings stood it out in the rain.

Performance time and unscripted moments

Performance time is strongly affected by the actor-audience interaction, as one would expect. The new Globe is a natural environment for the practice of extemporisation, as Hamlet snootily noted ('And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them; for there be of them that will themselves laugh to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too...' (3.2.38-41) Audience applause, much more frequent than in conventional theatres, often after set pieces, such as the Prince of Morocco's exit accompanied by sympathetic sounds from the audience, adds considerably to performance times.

Changes through the run.

Note: 'Changes through the run' is slightly misleading in the context of this Globe production, because it was not 'pre-set' to the extent that many theatre productions are. Preparation in the rehearsal rooms was focussed on flexibility in staging, with a deliberate willingness to make changes once the play was taken onto the stage. An awareness of the differences which the presence of the audience in the Globe space would make to the staging was also an important part of the rehearsal process.

Blocking.

Not surprisingly, blocking was one of the most significant aspects of changes in staging. Responding to the demands of the configuration of stage and playgoers was a discovery process in itself and meant that the actors were experimenting

with the possibilities of '3-D' staging during the run. The general trend noticeable in the *Henry V* production, towards longer diagonals through the run using the depth of the stage as well as the breadth, was less frequent in this production. A fairly long diagonal for Bassanio and Portia at the moment they turn to each other after he has chosen the right casket, showed that this blocking can be effective to convey intimacy.

* A general trend was that of more playing upstage and in front of the *frons scenae*, particularly in scenes which emphasise a character's emotions. In performances a short way into the season, actors were using the authority position more and more. This was an important result of the exploration of the stage's '3-D' possibilities:.

* At moments when a character was left alone on stage to talk to the audience, the actor would tend to move round the stage more in order to be able to address different sections of the audience on the three different levels, and therefore to move on the line more. But see below...

* An important development of the impulse to keep moving on the Globe stage is that at moments when a character stands still to speak and looks at individuals in the audience it is more effective for being delivered on one spot. This is another example of how the production continues to develop once it is on the stage before an audience.

* There tended to be more spreading out, particularly with the use of positions in front of the two pillars on the corners of the stage when three or more characters were on stage.

* The pillars were used more for what would have been, on stages using controlled lighting, 'out of the spotlight' moments when the focus is on another part of the stage.

* The use of the central opening for the placing of the three caskets meant that some sections of the audience had to imagine their existence: the playgoers at the extreme sides of the stage next to the tiring house wall and those in the 'Lords' rooms' in the balcony, in particular.

A summary.

The Globe, as actors discovered in the Opening Season, is a listening space, a place for telling a story. As I noted in the findings from the 1997 productions, without stage lighting to create mood, to convey a sense of day or night, or to give specific focus to characters; without stage properties to create a sense of place, or an intricate stage design to provide a mimetic representation of a play's world, there is nothing to control the audience's imagination except the story and its tellers. It is not simply a question of telling the story, though. It is how the actors tell it that is important. The audience's belief is paramount.

The audience. In the *Merchant* performances audience responses tended to be less vocal and less frequent than in *Henry V* in 1997. At most performances,

when Shylock turned to the playgoers to tell them how much he hated the Merchant 'I hate him, for he is a Christian:/ But more, for that in low simplicity/ He lends out money gratis, and brings down the/ The rate of usance with us in Venice' (1.iii.37-40), several members of the audience, in the yard and also the galleries, laughed indulgently with, rather than at, Shylock. In the Trial Scene (IV.1.383) when Antonio states one of his terms for showing 'mercy' to Shylock, that 'He presently become a Christian', quite a large number of playgoers laughed at Shylock. For them, Shakespeare's Jew was a figure of fun: entertainment, not tragedy. When he left the stage at the end of the scene, there was less of an ambiguous sense, perhaps, of an underdog punished, that we are more used to in modern productions of the play.

Based on actors' experiences of playing the space in the 1998, the *Merchant* actors were prepared for the need to find ways of playing 'through' the groundlings to reach other parts of the audience in the galleries. Impromptu by-play with playgoers needs to be controlled so that audiences are not allowed to interrupt the story.

Entrances and exits. Overlapping entrances and exits worked very well, and, as we discovered in the 1998 Season, are usually a necessary piece of staging at the Globe because it takes two or three lines for an actor to move from an entry door in the *frons* to the front of the stage. If the stage is empty, the energy levels in the theatre drop; and apart from the strictly practical point of having to solve the problem of how long it takes to move across such a deep stage, overlapping exits and entrances help to make a production seamless. They also, as the actors found in the previous season, help to speed up performance time.

The central opening. This was used for housing the three caskets. It was also used for bringing on the Doge's throne in the Trial Scene (IV.i.) . It was placed on a plinth, flanked by chairs for the magnificoes, in the '*locus*', or 'authority position, centre-stage, a few feet from the central opening, a little way back from the 'line' in between the stage-posts. *Honest Whore*: The central opening was used as a 'kitchen' in the home of Bellafront and Matheo.

Use of the balcony. Effectively used for Jessica in disguise on the night she elopes with Lorenzo. Jessica looks out into the darkness and does not, at first, see Lorenzo until he puts a lighted torch up to his face.

Intervals. For the fifteen-minute interval Marcello Magni played with the audience.

He brought a young woman from the audience in the yard up onto the stage, led her backstage into the discovery space, and the movement and noise coming from behind the hanging suggested 'naughty' activities.

Interval-free performances. As with *Henry V* the previous year, Richard Olivier thought it flowed better without a fifteen-minute interval in the middle. The actors said it felt quicker. There were two-minute pauses between acts to allow for 'costume' changes. Performance time for interval-free performances was cut , as one would expect, from three hours, fifteen minutes, to three hours

(although it lasted slightly shorter when it rained and longer when moments of actor-audience interaction were prolonged).

No systematic survey of audiences' opinions on interval-free performances has yet been carried out. One would assume that the groundlings in the yard would find it more hard-going than seated playgoers. It did seem to make a difference that the audience in the yard had easiest exits through the theatre doors for the two-minute pauses and indeed, for going outside during playing. Also, as with performances with a fifteen-minute interval, the freedom of movement afforded to the groundlings, even simply knowing that you can move about whenever you felt like a change, or to get a different angle on the stage, greatly helped audience attention-span and willingness to put up with standing. A surprising number in my random and unscientific, questioning of groundlings in the yard after interval-free performances had no objections to standing. My own experience during the Workshop, Prologue, Opening, and the 1998 Seasons suggests that it is because they are free to move both on the spot and around the yard, with the knowledge that drinks and food can be bought and consumed and loos can be visited at any time during playing, groundlings feel much less restless than most seated playgoers.

Acoustics The solid oak wood of the stage makes the theatre's acoustics very resonant: Voice coach Jeanette Nelson says: 'It isn't volume that is needed. Actors have to use all their vocal skills. 'The acoustics changed to a considerable extent when it rained. As with the 1997 season, the actors felt as though they were having to speak through a thunderstorm.

Cues. The problem of actors being unable to hear their cues backstage has yet to be solved satisfactorily. We don't know what actors did about hearing cues at the original Globe.

Warming up the audience. Music for both productions from musicians in the gallery. For *Merchant* a 'pre-show' took the form of several of the actors playing in a carnival, using the yard and interacting with the groundlings.

Signalling the start. With a theatre where there is no 'lights down' or 'curtain up' to signal the start of the show, the question of quietening the audience and gaining their attention has to be addressed. *Merchant*: Actors in masques were helped up from the yard on to the stage by the groundlings. The carnival-goers left the stage to Antonio and Bassanio to begin the play with the first lines. *Whore*: Bellafront simply comes on stage and sits at a table.

The weather and performance time. Performance times are speeded up when it's raining. This would seem to be a result of the actors sensing that the audience want them to play faster. A surprisingly large number of groundlings stood it out in the rain.

The audience and performance time. Audience responses - particularly laughing - often lengthened performance time by as much as fifteen minutes.

Music This was made an integral part of the *Merchant* production - something which the play itself tells us, and which further demonstrated the importance given to music in the original staging of *Merchant: For The Honest Whore*, Jacqui Dankworth sang a number in the balcony to stunning effect.

Actors' evidence. As with the 1997 production of *Henry V*, the use of authentic production methods means that actors can provide what might be termed 'experiential evidence' to be weighed with academic scholarship or archaeological evidence. The physical conditions of the theatre, for example, encourages a close relationship between playgoers and players, so that the audience in the Trial Scene automatically became the Doge's court, judging the case before them.

Scene changes. Seamless scene changes seem to be suited to the Globe space - the audience concentrates on whoever is speaking next. This also means that where there are props to be taken off this can be done while the action of the next moment is played without any serious distraction.

Period clothing. As with the 1998 *Henry V* production, to differentiate the approach to authentic dress at the Globe from what we usually associate with the word 'costume', the term 'period clothing' has been used. Historical research was put into practice by using dressmaking methods with materials that were in use at the time. This allowed the actors to feel that they were wearing real clothes rather than the kind of period costume which tends to be made with modern methods, materials and fastenings. The *Merchant* clothing was hand-stitched, including the undergarments, and the different parts of each outfit were fastened in original fashion. This posed some problems for costume changes because of the number of ties that needed to be fastened and unfastened which, of course, took more time than zips, velcro, and other modern methods. Of particular help in the research of costume was *Caryat's Crudities* which offered, as noted above, much important detail of the dress typically worn in Renaissance Venice.

Props and furniture were kept to an absolute minimum for the *Merchant* while domestic interiors - sofa, a kitchen table, laundry, etc. were used in *The Honest Whore*.

Playgoers fainting. As in the 1997 season, a number of playgoers fainted during performances at the Globe. It is not yet clear whether this phenomenon is simply a response to the heat, but research is being carried out to find out more about this phenomenon.

5. Interviews

Sonia Ritter

Nerissa, *The Merchant of Venice*

Infelice, *The Honest Whore*

The space is obviously big, and house styles in British drama are not big. There's no lighting, no technology to help you, so you are thrown back on the plays. The words tell the audience what is small, what is big, whether it's Macbeth's castle or the horns of a snail.

You have to make the theatre space the springboard for everything else, and it is important that you do not forget that the area backstage is the last part of the circle of the Globe. In the rehearsal room, you do not have a sense of this. You need to rehearse with *those* doors, *that* stage. Although we have accurate mark-ups for the size of the stage and the position of the pillars in the rehearsal room, there are restrictions on how much you can reproduce the physical dimensions of the Globe stage and auditorium.

The acoustics change day by day, the temperature changes, so you have to learn to use the voice in the space. The rehearsal space is not the same, it does not have the intensity of the stage. After rehearsing a play in the rehearsal rooms, you have massively to adapt to the bare stage, so I think the process should happen the other way around: I feel that three weeks are needed at the beginning of the preparation period to be wholly *au fait* with the space. You would then understand straight away the need for flexible blocking in the rehearsal room, to make choices about blocking from trusting the Globe space and each other. You also don't know whether you are acting too much when you rehearse extensively in the studio space. I don't know until I'm on that stage. In the modern theatre we can get locked into a need to analyse, so that ideas are coming into the preparation before we let the text do its work.

Language has to be physicalised, not exaggerated, to fill the space. The old language must find a new life through physicalisation. Then the words and even ideas that are so-called obscure or considered on the fringe of our contemporary vocabulary will take flight upon the emotion. The integrity that the actors must devote themselves to is the committing to language of his/her character. The integrity of the actor to his own personality is not enough; indeed, it sometimes can obscure the character. We live in an age of enormously abstract theatre. We're afraid of the old language, but by speaking the text, rather than describing it, you make it live on stage. We need to go for the blood and muscle, not the brain; to inhabit the language. The verse, the prose - *that's* the play. It is you and the text. All the physical work which we did for *Merchant* and *Honest Whore* was invaluable. Peter Gill, who helped us with the language, showed how following the arc of the prose you could find the courage to translate the language into your body. Picking up a Shakespeare text is like going into a gymnasium - you have to flex every muscle.

Neil D'Souza

Salerio, *The Merchant of Venice*

Doctor Benedict, Sweeper, Servant to Hippolito, Master of Bridewell, Madman 3,
The Honest Whore

What is different about this space is, of course, the fact that there were no lights. The audience's eyes - The audience wasn't going to be an invisible force. We can see them and they can see us. It demanded something different. The first time in front of the audience I didn't really know how to play the space, to get the precise timing right, until the second play (*The Honest Whore*). It doesn't matter how much people tell you, nothing really prepares you for that stage.

With *Honest Whore* - it's difficult to make the two plays fit into a show, and characters and scenes were taken out or put in - in the way we couldn't do with a modern playwright. I understand the need for cutting more than changing the characters, and I think we made it work. I think some audiences found it hard to understand Part Two, although they enjoyed Part One, which was a play in itself. I found Part Two quite beguiling. It was bold, and it steamed through events. Perhaps the audience was given less time to digest events. For example, the Bedlam scene was to be taken out completely because it did not relate to the plot as such, but there are always bits of a play that do not relate to the main plot, to produce tension, to take the plot 'off the boil' so to speak, to add an element that contributes to the play as a whole. The scene was put back in. I think that streamlining a play just in order to tell the story, or because for us preparing the play or for editors to think some scene is not important, is a dangerous thing to do. I think it was quite good to be in the rehearsal room, cut off from everything. Jack [Shepherd] saw it very small. You develop a truth in what you're doing. I think we could have done with a little more time in the space at the end of the rehearsal period. The challenge was to take something intimate and introvert and open it out - the audience is part of the equation.

Morris Perry

Prince of Arragon, Leonardo, *The Merchant of Venice*

Gasparo, Second Apprentice to Candido, *The Honest Whore*

I have not played anywhere like it. I've played outdoors - Ludlow has a little in common with the Globe, but it is not really comparable. The first thing to say is that the building is big. I found it terrifying to begin with. The last thing you should do on a stage like that is shout. I think it was interesting that one friend who came to see the shows and had seat tickets said she could only understand the words if the actors *didn't* speak loud. It may be a mistake to speak up... One has to find out what the demands on your voice and diction are. One has to make sure the voice is at ease, and the diction in top-form which, is of course, elementary in any theatre. It's a question of ensuring that the audience can hear everything we say. An actor has to help people understand the words. The Globe audiences were fantastic. Especially those standing - a lot of them were under 45! That's very refreshing in theatre. You could sense the groundlings

were *thinking* and enjoying the wit. You have to face the fact that the standing people in front of the stage have a better experience than those at the sides. I tried emphatically to play to the sides but, I have to say, your major awareness is of the front.

It's important to get really prepared to go on stage, getting the mind right. It means getting your imagination into a state that is responsive. You probably need to be much more alert than usual. But you can't do it on your own. You notice how the audience is responding; how their heads are moving. It is the two of you: you and the audience become one.

Ralph Watson

Old Gobbo, Tubal, *The Merchant of Venice*

Orlando Friscobaldo, Geroge, Madman 1, Servant to Hippolito, *The Honest Whore*

I have never experienced a sensation like it in the whole of my acting career.

It is the shape. It is the nature of the physical space. The other actors on stage are always backed by a set of faces, in the audience, so that actor and audience become part of the same thing. You can't play to the audience round your back; you have to play to the other actors. But you're never able to forget about the audience because they are all around you. You are already connected with them; you don't have to reach out to them.

When I spoke my first soliloquy in *Honest Whore* I found I could talk straight from the heart. In one sense, it's very easy to do this in Globe space, but in another it is difficult because it is revealing as well.

The demands of the space are enormous: you have to reach out to the other actors across this large stage. And with twenty equally 'lit' actors on stage, how do you manage to focus? At the Globe, the focus is achieved with movement. It's the actor moving from A to B, saying something, producing the energy where the eye can take a person to. You also have to energise what you say. When we were performing *Merchant* and *Honest Whore* at the same time this was particularly demanding - you were saving the energy you have to give to the words for performance. This is always true, but the size of the space means you have to produce a spark that's going to leap you forward. At the beginning there was a tendency to over-project. For the first week on stage you really need to discover the right amount. There is something in the oak that tells you how much you need to project. The building itself does a good acoustic job.

It will be interesting to see how tragedy works at the Globe. I think the original audiences accepted tableaux and static things on stage more than we would. We will be finding things in the text that we do not usually notice, such as *how* people got there. They will be no controlled lighting or tricks to get characters

magically on and off the stage. The space, I'm sure, will give a more heightened reality.

Andrew French

Gratiano, *The Merchant of Venice*

Lodovico Sforza, *The Honest Whore*

You have to work harder in this space; to work more on the focus. It is a circle, so the sound does come back at you. Also, you have to be much sharper and more steady in the rapport with the audience - the Globe audience has such power.

I'm glad that in the two plays I did there was not too much prose. Verse is made for a space like that. The Globe is like a tiger. If you get the verse right, get the rhythm and energy into the verse, you can ride it. But if you get the verse wrong, there is no place where you feel more alone. Verse here, compels people to listen. I think with prose, things like comedy compensates for the lack of verse. Prose bounces against the air. There is no place that relies so much on the art of the ear. At the same time, everyone who comes into the theatre is amazed at the look of the place.

You can't really rehearse for the space until you are in it. The wood, the open-air, everything affects performance physically. When it is full of people it changes atmosphere literally. There is this strange spirit at the Globe of long-gone storytellers. Fletcher, Beaumont, Dekker, Shakespeare - it's so apparent they were storytellers. Some of the changes made to the words of *Honest Whore* I found quite painful, to my ear. It was an interesting attempt to do the work; to take a difficult play, then double it, then try to conflate the two plays. It is hard to match that style of work, to that style of place, the craftsmanship of those playwrights...

In some theatres you can act pretty much on your own. In the Globe you need help. It's difficult to create the play in rehearsals. The rehearsal room can't really approximate what impact you will be up against. You have to be accurate, dead disciplined in rehearsals. You have to be so strict about what you're saying, what story you are telling.

On stage, it took me three performances to learn to how to stand on the stage in relation to the audience. You have to pull the front towards you, and pull the back towards you. It's a skill. It takes a long time to learn to simply stand on that stage!

The children, when they come to see a play, really connect to the theatre. One of the great joys of my life is Shakespeare and if children are put off his plays, you've lost them forever. I have never worked harder, never worried so much about a part, never felt so much stress. It's not the easiest place to work. It is the most rewarding.

You're a better actor once you've played the space. You learn from people like Peter Gill and listening to Mark Rylance every performance, and from the audience.

People are tugging at your feet. Groundlings would actually tug at my feet while I was speaking. When it starts to rain it is like a wave moving towards you. When it's cold we play quicker and when it rains - specially when it starts to rain - voice work is harder. What's important is that there is no spotlight: *I* have to say the line and *you* have to listen, and that's even more important in the rain.

Clarence Smith

Lorenzo, *The Merchant of Venice* ,
Matheo, *The Honest Whore*

I was surprised how intimate the space could be. It feels as though the audience is at arm's length. The 'groundling reaction', when it is spontaneous and genuinely reacting to what they see, is a compliment. There were a few occasions when the reaction was out of context; when the playgoer was saying 'Hey, look at me. I'm playing my role, too!'

You can fill the space with very little effort. I never thought about having to project more than in a proscenium arch theatre: the audience is so near. If you are full of technique, if you rely on technique alone, your performance will suffer. You have to think about what it is you're saying. We could probably do with more voice work in the theatre. The danger of moving too soon onto the stage is that you start acting before you have worked out what you are doing with the play. When we moved onto the stage the reality we had created in the rehearsal room had to be heightened, raised in accordance with the space that was right. For my speech 'On such a night...' in the last act, the theatre seemed to do it all for me - creating the atmosphere. I looked up at the stars - 'Look how the floor of heaven/ Is thick inlaid with patens of bright gold' and there it was, above me. It is the texture of the space that allows you as an actor to communicate the thought directly to the audience. I wasn't in the way; I didn't impose myself on what the words are saying. It was an effortless job; effortless. Speeches that could become hurdles can be heightened just enough to have a meaning and a significance without being 'heroic'.

Having played Romeo in a production that was successful, I now look at the Globe stage and think, 'Yes, there's the balcony', and I can see how the space itself can help the actor. It worked best when the aural and the visual came together, when they did not separate from each other. It's as if you have to give the wonderful images some air. It's a question of being really the character in your thought, then when you start to commit the thought to the speaking, you will be clear in the phrasing. Your breath is then supporting the thought, just as it is when you are talking. In everyday speech, you never run out of breath, do you?

I learnt a great deal about the space from *The Honest Whore*. It was a real experiment, and it showed that you don't have to play it all rhetorical when you are doing works that are four hundred years old. It can be intimate and accessible. To condense from seven hours down to three is impossible, but as an acting exercise I loved it. It showed that one can be very natural even with language that is four hundred years old. It was as though we were speaking colloquially, and I think the production was a success in that respect. The subject matter was difficult for modern day audiences: the bitterness, the emotional torture that it dealt with is too easily resolved into a 'love conquers all' ending. But it was an exercise in showing how such plays might reverberate in a modern context. I just did not think that the theatre could support that kind of play. You can't do TV acting, but at the same time, you can't do big gesture acting on that stage.

The effect of tragedy, with its heightened emotion, in that space, is going to be huge. Even with *Honest Whore*, I got a sense of the kind of emotional power it will take for *Macbeth* or *King Lear*: I used to come off stage with headaches.

What we are all doing, really, is work-in-progress. We are trying it out, and finding out how to learn from the space.

Robert Woods

Balthasar, Stephano, *The Merchant of Venice*
Madman 2, Carolo, *The Honest Whore*

This is an Apprentice's point of view of playing the Globe:

Although I have not played professionally in any other theatre before playing the Globe, I do have enough experience in conventional theatre spaces to be able to evaluate, at least for myself, the significant differences of playing the Globe stage.

Firstly, I noticed how much the space demands vocal energy. From my first tentative attempts at filling the space during a voice class I realised just how much energy I would need to give. All subtlety of inflection disappeared. Thoughts and emotional attitudes vanished in an attempt simply to be audible.

The voice has enormous demands placed on it as there are fifteen bays on 180 degrees to hit on three levels!!! I believe only experience and continued playing in this space can enable an actor fully to take possession of it. Only by the end of the season did I feel that I could really 'play' and not just project.

This space seems to demand an incorporation of the audience and I believe that there must be a way of developing a relationship with the audience that does not pander to 'panto' acting. The moments of true union that I experienced with the audience was during bad weather when a 'knowingness' between us in relation to a shared experience developed. This goes to the heart of the matter. The actor needs to bring to his performance the awareness of being in the Globe

theatre, an acknowledgement of the audience and more importantly to personalise that audience as collaborators in his character's journey. Restoration acting without the nudge and wink, so that we share all 1500 plus actors/musicians, a 'knowingness' that we are creating a theatrical experience rather than a reality. This does not mean Brechtian detachment, but it does mean telling the story rather than indulging in 'Actors - Acting'.

I believe that the audiences that come to the Globe in the future deserve better than to suffer the experimentations of new actors every year. Without an in-house company the Globe will always be a Tourist side-show and never a true theatre.

Whilst it is delightful to wear 'authentic' clothing I believe the Globe must not become an exclusive laboratory for every academic and specialist that want to try out something. We must never lose touch with the real reason to open any theatre, and that is to entertain; not ourselves, but the audience. How many of them are Shakespeare scholars? How many of them appreciated three hours on a hard wooden bench, or on their feet just to satisfy someone's curiosity about a no-interval performance? How many of them appreciated the staggering expense of making 'authentic' costumes, or painting a floor cloth at a designer's whim. Perhaps there is a danger of everyone trying to leave their stamp on a production.

In terms of hiring directors, I think someone must stop being afraid of strong individuals with opinions. I would rather see a play with vision fail than no vision at all. The wilful and highly damaging enforcement of ideals and philosophies not shared by all has left a bad taste for me and I have not yet recovered my love of this craft to want to return to any theatre for the foreseeable future. Playing the Globe has been a privilege, but not a happy one.

Nicholas Monu

Duke of Venice/Prince of Morocco, *The Merchant of Venice*

Roger/Friar Anselmo/Lieutenant Bots/First Apprentice to Candido *The Honest Whore*

It is an extra special space. It wraps itself around you like an instrument. The space itself creates its own reality, you can see the audience and the audience can see themselves. It allows for moments of quietness and stillness as well moments of loudness and bawdy. In a lot of theatres it can be easy to gauge what is being heard; in the Globe it depends on how many people are in the audience, where you are standing on the stage, what the weather's doing.

Norbert Kentrup

Shylock, *The Merchant of Venice*

I am very happy about the season going so well. Perhaps there is no need to analyse the season very critically. I feel split in terms of feelings; I am full of joy - I enjoy playing Shylock. I like working with the company, and it's wonderful to play on this stage.

However, I need to put that joy aside sometimes in order to be objective and analyse what should be discussed.

I feel very blessed that I have had the opportunity to play Shylock in the Globe,

and I am very thankful to Mark [Rylance], as he has realised Sam's wish [the late founder of the new Globe, Sam Wanamaker, expressed a wish that Kentrup would play at the Globe when it had opened]. Now I wish to write about my experience to help produce a discussion about the work and to try to help to change things and make progress for the future. This is now the tenth version of the account of my experience, and I already realise that I am not being polite enough for English people. I beg your pardon - perhaps it is the language, which is strange to me, or my German thinking?

The most amazing reality was that we only had four rehearsals on stage. The rest took place in a dark rehearsal room. Last season, this arrangement was understandable, because the Globe was still a building site. I suggested that we go on stage and I heard: no-one in England goes on stage before the last rehearsal week. There's the rub, for 350 years we have not had the Globe. Nobody knows how this space works. We have the most unique stage in the world and we have not been given the opportunity to explore it. Here lies my biggest criticism, that we didn't explore a particular stage within the 'wooden O'. Therefore, we don't play to three sides, nor is the play directed with three sides and three levels in mind, we don't include the audience; instead, most is focussed to the front like a proscenium stage.

We did much preparation (workshops, lectures, costumes, exploring the spiritual world of Shakespeare etc) but were not given enough rehearsals to experiment with the stage. I feel that it is absolutely absurd that we try to be authentic down to the underwear, but we don't work on understanding this space that hasn't been around for 350 years. After a while, I decided that I would rehearse alone in the evening on the stage. Therefore I was able to discover more and more about my character, my relationship to the audience, and my way of acting on the Globe stage. It is important to consider the conditions which develop an artistic work on this special stage. The restrictions imposed by guided tours, technicals, and Equity requirements for a day off were, in my opinion, not helpful. It might be also worth considering whether it is necessary to open the second production a day after the first.

In the future, we should do workshops and lectures before the production, so that the actors can experiment with, and discover what the secret of the space is, and the possibilities that you have in it. We have to give this experience to the next generation, and we have to use all the information we have about playing in the Globe. The academic information, the practical information from the Education Department and from the actors who have acted in the Globe.

If you want to explore the stage you have to know what you are looking for, what you want to explore what the stage does with you, and how the stage changes the feeling and relationship between actors.

In my opinion, it is absolutely not enough to say we want to stage plays authentically, that we will not interpret, but only play with the story. Each blocking, each casting, each cut is an interpretation. If we want to direct to three sides, we always have to judge, to analyse which line is going to be directed to the other actor, which to the audience, to the yard, the upper gallery, to the gentlemen's rooms etc. We always have to decide the focus and who gets the sympathy or aggression. Like a film director, we have to decide what the shot is and from what position.

If we accept that we have to work on the stage in this manner, we have to analyse which conflicts we want to direct and which emotions we want to focus on. At some moments of the play Shylock should be hissed and booed at, but also his counterparts should be hissed and booed at during other parts of the play, The audience must decide who has the right position in the conflict, be it Portia, Antonio, Shylock or Gratiano. The production always has to judge. Although we don't play the other roles, we read them in the text. In spite of this we only play the story, not the conflict. We have to ride the horse, and not the horse ride us.

It is not enough to tell the story authentically. For me, that is both an obsession and a contradiction. I think an academic approach is the wrong way to explore a play: you need a vision and an interpretation- what we want to tell for today. If I have a German Shylock between an Indian and Chinese Solanio and Salerio, this is an interpretation. We have to use it, we don't do it enough. Perhaps this is one of the qualities of German theatre. If we have an international cast and if I illustrate Venice as a cultural melting pot, then it makes sense that the actors play in different styles, I have to look for the cultural difference and must direct these cultural differences. We have different styles of acting (how to work on the text, look for the conflicts, and create the empty space). Sam [Wanamaker] and Theo [Crosby, the Globe's original architect] didn't build a TV set. What is true for an English actor is not always true for a Katakali actor, an Italian actor, a Japanese actor or a German actor. We have to think and talk about what we want to tell and expose the truths for different cultures. That was my biggest shock, experience and challenge. The American actor Sam Wanamaker and the South African architect Theo Crosby gave us all the responsibility and task to be international.

We have to think about what is 'over-acting' or 'under-acting'. The speech in *Hamlet* about how we have to act, is a conflict found in all plays. I heard very often during the rehearsals: 'You can't act like this England - that doesn't fit in with the audiences' tastes'. Therein lies the question: do we have to play to the taste of the audience, or is it our job to change their taste? I believe the Globe will change a lot.

Quite often the aim was to make it 'real'. I think this is a big problem with the theatre, because the theatre is more than real. The Globe Theatre needs a super-

reality because it is an artificial space, and more than a shot from a camera. We have to search this relationship and Shakespeare's indivisible scene, and that's more than we are doing at the moment.

The most important discovery for me, during the conflicts around my way of speaking and acting during rehearsal, occurred when my colleague from the Globe's Artistic Board talked about the language and what it would be like if he had to play at the Comedie Francaise. It helped me very much because I realised that the biggest danger for the Globe would be to turn into an English version of the Comedie Francaise in France. Sam's vision, I believe, was to build an international theatre where languages is not the only formal expression. I don't know another author like Shakespeare: he wrote so exactly where we are, which conflicts and which emotions we have to play. The first thing I heard from Sam was 'Act the words - don't just say the words. Let the words act you.' Very often in rehearsals, I heard, the exact opposite.

We have to find answers during the rehearsals for these questions: How do we play? Where are we? How would we create this location? And how could we create, in an empty space with two pillars, a place that everybody can see? It is not a question of scenery or props, it is a problem to be solved by the actors. It is not enough to create the reality for the actors and the truth of the situations between the actors, ignoring the different truths of actors and audience, too. It is possible to explore different methods but it is most important that the audience can see what we want to tell. We must guide their imaginations.

A cultural problem is the problem of pantomime. I'm sure the tradition of pantomime came from this tradition of theatre and writers like Shakespeare. It is a special thing, I believe we have got from the Globe. We have to use it in a good way, and we must not exclude it because the British newspapers and some artists criticise this form of acting. Again, we have to ride the horse (although in some performances the audience rode us) and we have to find ways in which to manipulate an audience in a certain direction. To really involve the audience takes more than pantomime. It takes Shakespeare.

We have to learn the different techniques to open the 'fourth wall'. Shakespeare's theatre used this technique, so we have to learn how to encourage the audience to evolve. We have to tell more than the story. We have to open their minds up to more confusion, conflicts and chaos, to show them the spirit of Shakespeare's plays. I don't want to get into confrontations with the company or the director. I try to be polite and after a discussion - I am polite. I agree with the director. This is a quality and a problem in a situation without an ensemble. For me, from my German point of view, we do not have an ensemble situation here at the Globe. Actors and directors know each other and have their own independent positions. If we try to find Shakespeare's conflicts, we need to be able to trust others in order to be open with them. This is not the situation in the Globe at this moment. This is nobody's fault, but an honest and frank discussion about the results of the work are not enough. When I ask someone about what he/she really thinks about the work I hear only polite replies. It is a danger and difference between the cultures.

It is not only a problem for the Globe, but also a cultural problem because there aren't ensembles in England. For me, ensemble means people are contracted for two or three years, play different parts, or are not necessarily cast for a production, but instead are given time to develop as an actor. The whole company then builds the style of the theatre, the whole company carries the burden of the theatre, the relation between acting and education is closer, and every department tries to learn from one another. Actors from the Education Department would be playing, and actors from the production would be teaching. If we want to try to be authentic, then we have to have an ensemble. The British theatre system creates a problem for Shakespeare. If I only have a contract for a few months, six months in the Globe, then I have to look for work in the other part of the year in order to survive. Shakespeare, Burbage etc were shareholders! I think it could be a mix between long-contracted actors, actor teachers, guests for a season, international actors from other Shakespeare Globe Centres, with real other ways of acting and languages, and actor school (beginners).

This is not only an artistic and human progress - it has a financial point too. At the end of the season everybody is exhausted, the productions pass away and next year, the same marathon. A repertoire, combined with Education, is a much cheaper way of working.

In England, no one can understand how much freedom all these different attitudes produce in acting. So the actors are more involved, they can articulate genuine problems because people are not afraid to express themselves for fear of losing their contracts.

My friends that have seen the productions, a lot of artists from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, as well as colleagues in London, were not satisfied with the results of our productions. They say the building is saving us. I heard: 'Artistically, and how we tell the story is not enough'. We have to listen to, and recognise, these things. Sam didn't want a Museum. However, we are on the way to exploring the space and we can learn from different cultures, the different approaches, and this wonderful 'wooden O'. It is a gift to play in the Globe. Thank you.