



MEDIA KIT:

FRONTIER SHAKESPEARE: AFRICA, THE UK AND WESTERN AUSTRALIA





The ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions, Europe 1100 - 1800 presents:

FRONTIER SHAKESPEARE: AFRICA, THE UK AND WESTERN AUSTRALIA

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DEPRIVE SHAKESPEARE OF HIS TONGUE AND RE-WORD THE PLAYS FOR A DIFFERENT AUDIENCE?



VERONA, HARARE, MILAN, BULAWAYO, LONDON, ELSINORE, JOHANNESBURG, PERTH...

The arrival of Two Gents Productions at the New Fortune Theatre in Perth in 2013 is another stage in a global trajectory. The Two Gents performed *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (*Vakomana Vaviri Ve Zimbabwe*) in the world's first Shona translation at Shakespeare's Globe for the Globe to Globe festival. This award-winning festival, celebrating the London 2012 Olympics, hosted thirty-seven companies from around the world. WA's own Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company represented Australia, performing Shakespeare's Sonnets in the first ever translation of Shakespeare into Nyungar. A performance of these sonnets opens the Perth International Arts Festival 2013.

The Frontier Shakespeare roundtable brings the Two Gents together with Kate Cherry (Artistic Director, Black Swan State Theatre Company), Paige Newmark (Artistic Director, Shakespeare WA), Robert Marshall (Executive Producer of Live Recordings at Shakespeare's Globe), Emeritus Professor Chris Wortham, who taught literature in Zimbabwe for many years, and Winthrop Professor Robert White, a pre-eminent scholar in the field of Shakespeare and emotions. These stalwarts of Shakespearean research and production will discuss the global appeal of Shakespeare and what characterises Western Australian performances of Shakespeare.

In this roundtable conversation we consider what happens when you dis-place Shakespeare and when you re-place the plays elsewhere. What happens when you deprive Shakespeare of his tongue and re-word the plays for a different audience? What happens when you

exchange the histories, fairytales and myths that underpin the plays with those from other cultures? We consider whether these adaptations, translations, and appropriations are more concerned with global futures or national pasts and whether Frontier Shakespeare is a cultural act of globalization. We invite you to join in the discussion.

Dr Penelope Woods, Research Associate at the ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions (CHE) at UWA, who recently arrived from Shakespeare's Globe, will lead this conversation. It will consider the role of emotions in adapting and re-presenting Shakespeare's plays and ask whether emotions translate across time and between cultures when language can't.

For more information, contact: Penelope Woods
(penelope.woods@uwa.edu.au), Tel: +61 8 6488 3858 or go to our website www.historyofemotions.org.au

Date: Tuesday 26 February 2013
Location: Roundtable- The Octagon Theatre
Performance- The New Fortune Theatre
Time: Roundtable 5-7pm
Opening night performance 8pm

Enter the word 'STAFF' in the promo code box to get \$5 off when buying your ticket at www.ticketsWA.com



PRESENTERS:

TWO GENTS PRODUCTIONS was established in 2007 as a collaboration on *Vakomana Vaviri ve Zimbabwe* or Two Gentlemen of Verona, by William Shakespeare. The three-man company made up of actors Denton Chikura and Tonderai Munyevu and director Arne Pohlmeier have played to packed houses at the Globe Theatre in London and toured extensively in the UK and around the world. The 8pm performance on 26 February at the New Fortune Theatre is the Australian premier of *Vakomana Vaviri ve Zimbabwe*

PROFESSOR CHRIS WORTHAM is an Emeritus Professor after 30 years at UWA. Since 2009 he has held the position of Professor of Theatre Studies and English Literature at the University of Notre Dame Australia in Fremantle. Chris was a member of the Executive of ANZ Shakespeare Association and former President of the ANZA Association for Medieval and Renaissance Studies and edited *Parergon* from 1995 to 2001. He is currently working on a book to be entitled *Shakespeare's Maps*. He serves on editorial and advisory boards of academic journals and internet editions, including the Internet Shakespeare Editions.

KATE CHERRY has been the Artistic Director of Black Swan State Theatre Company since 2008. She has directed at theatres throughout Australia and America, including working as Associate Director at Melbourne Theatre Company. She has acted as Professor of Directing at University of California, and at Colorado College. She received her MFA from UCLA and a B.A. in English Literature from Bard College. Kate received the Gielgud Award for Best Emerging Director of the Classics in the US, and numerous other awards for her direction in the US. She has also been nominated for a Helpmann and a Green Room Award.

PAIGE NEWMARK is the Artistic Director of Shakespeare WA and an internationally acclaimed theatrical director and scholar who has directed and taught Shakespeare all over the world including Britain, Australia, South Africa, and throughout the USA. Paige spent three years as Founding Artistic Director of South Africa's most successful touring Shakespeare company, Shakespeare SA, and was Founding Artistic Director of The Australian Shakespeare Festival.

DR. PENELOPE WOODS is a Research Associate at the ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions (1100-1800) working on theatre audience research and early modern performance history. Penelope is collaborating with UK and Australian theatres on research into audience emotion in theatre spectatorship today and developing our understanding of audience emotion in theatres in Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. Penelope collaborated with Shakespeare's Globe and Queen Mary, University of London on a PhD on spectatorship, reconstruction and audiences. She has a forthcoming chapter on seventeenth century audiences: *The Indoor Theatre Audience: Pity and Wonder in Moving Shakespeare Indoors* by Andrew Gurr and Farah Karim-Cooper and a forthcoming chapter on young audiences today: "The Shakespeare Audience" in *Shakespeare in Practice: The Audience* by Stephen Purcell.

ROBERT MARSHALL is the Executive Producer for Live Recordings at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre (and other leading theatres in the UK and Australia) through Heritage Theatre Ltd. These productions are distributed through cinema, broadcast, web-streaming, digital cinema distribution and the company's DVD label. Robert was a Producer and Director for twenty years at the BBC before establishing his own digital media company, bringing recordings of live performances to regional venues across Western Australia and diverse audience who might otherwise not encounter world class theatre.

PROFESSOR ROBERT WHITE is leader of the Meanings Program, at the ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions (Europe 1100-1800), focusing on ways in which emotions were defined and understood in pre-modern European culture. Bob's work concerns interpreting emotions and their reception in Shakespearean drama and its later adaptations, for example into film. Bob's CHE-related projects explore how emotions were described in Shakespeare and how we interpret those emotions today





Frontier Shakespeare: Africa, UK, Western Australia

The Roundtable Roundup

This event was opened by Professor Ted Snell, the Director of UWA's Cultural Precinct. Professor Snell highlighted the extraordinary moment of Shakespeare and indigenous language production in Australia, with the first ever Noongar translation in 2012 that premiered in London at Shakespeare's Globe and the first full length indigenous language production forthcoming at the Malthouse in 2013. However, he pointed out that Perth International Festival featured no Shakespeare in its lineup for 2013. This was then a timely point at which to welcome the Two Gents Zimbabwean adaptations and discuss what the place of Shakespeare was in Western Australia with the State Theatre Company and representatives of other leading practitioners and scholars in the field in Western Australia.

Dr Penelope Woods framed the conversation by briefly outlining her work to date with Shakespeare's Globe and its audiences. Woods highlighted the significance of space and locale for the performance text created between performer and audience and referenced her engagement with the cross-cultural, multilingual work of the Two Gents who performed at Shakespeare's Globe last year. This company had taken up an invitation to open their first Australian tour at UWA.

Arne Pohlmeier described the nature of the Two Gents performance style. This company have three plays in their touring repertory. Each is a two-person play. This means that for the adaptations of the Shakespeare plays the two actors, Denton Chikura and Tonderai Munyevu, play up to fifteen characters (and a dog). Pohlmeier's approach had been influenced by his study of South African protest theatre at University. Unable to get a visa to work there he came to London to set up a theatre company where he met Munyevu and then Chikura. They began work with a production of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* initially because it had suggested itself as a two-person production, however, in performing and developing the production over five years of touring to different countries the complexity and playfulness of the production has been incubated in ways that most theatre companies rarely have the opportunity for. The company were invited to perform a version of the production translated into Shona as part of the Globe to Globe Festival held as part of the Cultural Olympiad for London 2012 at Shakespeare's Globe. The Two Gents were one of thirty-eight companies from around the world, including WA's Yirra Yaakin, to perform the plays in their own languages as part of this festival, with the first production of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* translated into Shona. This next stage in the development of the Gents' production has had an impact on how they play it today. There is a greater multilingualism built into the texture of the production. Pohlmeier mentioned that at one of the early performances of the play in its English version shortly

after the festival a small boy had asked if the Gents could at least do the bits "where they get angry" in Shona. For Pohlmeier, the key to successful Shakespearean production is ownership. "You have to own Shakespeare if you're going to do it well" he said. "It has to feel like something important and resonant, fully-digested and fully alive in order for it to be worth doing". Pohlmeier felt that in cross-cultural performance the "journey of taking ownership is much more visible". When a white British cast does a production, he added, there is a tacit assumption that they already have ownership. Cross cultural productions help to destabilise that idea and remind us that these plays, ideas and sentiments are alien to all of us, culturally and historically.

Kyle Morrison asked Pohlmeier about the process of translating the play into Shona. Arne replied that this process had given the actors further points of resonance and a deeper understanding of their relationship to the text. Shakespeare's language and use of metaphor in the play is similar to the flowery, metaphorical and rich expression of Shona. This was only really unlocked in that process of translating the play and owning it in their own language.

Kyle Morrison reflected on his experience with Shakespeare and particularly the sonnets production for Globe to Globe. Reading the plays Morrison had found that they were infused with old legends and myths and drew on spiritual and metaphoric stories told to explain and make sense of situations. This correlated with the ways in which the Dreaming works in Noongar culture. Morrison found that the Noongar stories paralleled some of creation stories and elemental symbolism and metaphor. He said "I like to think of those myths as Western Dreamtime stories". The parallels the company found in the sonnets provided a way of telling Noongar stories in a new way. *Sonnet 45*, which was one of the sonnets translated and performed by Yirra Yaakin, describes the elements of 'slight air' and 'purging fire' and their roles as messengers of love. This had a particular resonance for Morrison and the company. Morrison said that the medicine man is considered to have mobran(?), or 'magic'. The writer of the plays and sonnets also had the mobran. This is a magic to express stories of how things are and have come to be in ways that help people to understand and feel their way through them with greater clarity.

The company had found that the act of translating Shakespearean verse into Noongar posed particular challenges. Morrison described Noongar as "an ancient, traditional language with no fat. Like kangaroo, there is no fat on that meat". By contrast the sonnets are full of flourishes and linguistic playfulness. The actor, Kylie Farmer, who translated the poems, had to work hard to achieve an equivalence of structure and formal rhythm



whilst telling the story. They had found that it was possible to play with Noongar words to extend or contract them to sustain the rhythms of the line. This felt like mirroring the Shakespearean and sonnet-writing process. The sense of connection in translating and performing these sonnets in Noongar afforded an intense experience of ownership for the company. Morrison experienced a much greater sense of connection to these works than any other English text he has worked with. Yirra Yaakin begin work on a larger Shakespeare production this year and Morrison is excited about the level of connection that Noongar actors will find with the texts and their stories. This sense of connection underscores a performance “that enables Shakespeare to hit people not just in their mind but also deep down in their stomachs”.

SONNET 45

*The other two, slight air and purging fire,
Are both with thee, wherever I abide;
The first my thought, the other my desire,
These present-absent with swift motion slide.
For when these quicker elements are gone
In tender embassy of love to thee,
My life, being made of four, with two alone
Sinks down to death, oppress'd with melancholy;*

*Until life's composition be recured
By those swift messengers return'd from thee,
Who even but now come back again, assured
Of thy fair health, recounting it to me:
This told, I joy; but then no longer glad,
I send them back again and straight grow sad.*

Winthrop Professor Bob White spoke next and introduced another perspective on performance and emotion. Professor White discussed the *Nāṭyasāstra*, the ancient work of dramatic performance written by the sage Bharata in India between 200 BC and 200 AD. In this work the fundamental human feelings, or Sthayi-bhavas, correspond to a series of expressions in art designed to produce these feelings in spectators. These are known as *Rasas*. This work, written in Sanskrit, was based on the much older and larger Gandharva Veda that is now lost.

Professor White provided the following table and explained how precise these gestures are. They are an ongoing practice of performance in India. It was possible to see how some of these identified feelings and expressions overlapped with those identified by Aristotle in the *Poetics* written just a hundred years before the *Nāṭyasāstra*. White spoke to particular emotions choreographed by the plays being performed by the Two Gents Company: *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Hamlet*.

Sthayi-bhavas [Fundamental feelings]	Rasas [Emotions in art]	Sanskrit	Deity	Colour
Delight in Love (Rati)	Erotic Appeal	Śṛṅgāram (शृङ्गारं)	Vishnu	Light green
Laughter, mirth (Hasya)	Comedy	Hāsya (हास्यं)	Pramata	White
Sorrow, compassion (Soka)	Pathos	Kāruṇyam (कारुण्यं)	Yama	Grey
Anger (krodha)	Fury	Raudram (रौद्रं)	Rudra	Red
Energy (Utsaha)	Heroic Mood	Vīram (वीरं)	Indra	Yellowish
Fear, horror (Bhaya)	Terror	Bhayānakam (भयानकं)	Kala	Black
Disgust (Jugupsa)	Aversion	Bībhatsam (बीभत्सं)	Shiva	Blue
Wonder (Vismaya)	The Marvelous	Adbhutam (अद्भुतं)	Brahma	Yellow
	Peace, tranquility	Shantam	Vishnu	



ROBERT MARSHALL spoke next of his experience filming and broadcasting theatre productions in London and Western Australia. He worked with Kate Cherry of Black Swan Theatre to film and broadcast their productions to WA's regional audiences. Marshall also coordinates the filming of productions at Shakespeare's Globe which he finds is a unique venue in his experience. The centrality of the actor / audience relationship in this venue where the audience share the same lighting as the performers and are arranged almost in the round, means that to convey a the complexity and multi-directionality of the performance several different camera shots need to be interwoven. Marshall illustrated this with two clips of *Much Ado About Nothing* (dir. Jeremy Herrin, 2012). One was a soliloquy by Benedict (I) and one by Beatrice (Eve Best). Although only one person was on stage several shots were required to encompass the complexity and variety of the audience relationship and response being established in these scenes. Eve Best's scene further demonstrated the spontaneity of performance response that happens in this venue because of the idiosyncrasies of audience relationships in any given performance. This means that not all of the planning and blocking of a film of the production can be done in advance, but the crew must be reactive in the moment just the audience and performers are.

PAIGE NEWMARK focused mainly on his experiences directing Shakespeare production in South Africa and Western Australia with the companies Shakespeare SA and Shakespeare WA. He emphasized that one of his philosophies in performance was about accessibility. Whilst he felt that he himself was not motivated by politics for the audiences in South Africa the plays were inescapably imbued with politics. In particular Newmark highlighted the politics of casting and described how the interracial mix of his companies became more equal over the years. Newmark emphasized his strategy of localizing the plays in terms of context and reference- Shakespeare WA's production of *Much Ado About Nothing* was set in Western Australia in the 1940s with the return of the Australian soldiers, for instance. In the late nineties in South Africa Newmark described using the character of "Ali G" as Autolycus in a production of *The Winter's Tale*. The geopolitical issues of white British comedian in a comic characterization of a black British man were very issues for audiences in South Africa. Newmark also referenced the practice in the plays of having women cross-dress to travel (*As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *Merchant of Venice*, *All's Well that Ends Well*). The incidence of rape against women in South Africa is one of the highest in the world per capita. This practice of disguise does not read like a quaint theatrical device but a choice made in the context of genuine risk and real fear. One of the productions toured to a small community in the foothills of the Maluti mountains and was attended primarily by children who had no shoes and no books but were powerfully engaged by the performance. The only time that local language was used tended to arise organically at moments of heightened emotion when the actors were not able to get their tongues around a bit of Shakespearean verse and instead expressed the sentiment in isiXhosa. The first production in Western Australia, in King's Park, was *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This was very populist by comparison and attended by lots of people who do not usually go to the theatre, because performances in the park are more accessible. Newmark also spoke briefly of the production of *The Tempest* in 2012 which toured up to Kalbarrie and performed on the beach to a community not used to seeing theatre of any sort. Newmark described the

dead silence at the opening as well as the sheer attentiveness of this audience. Newmark concluded by suggesting that Shakespeare is a writer both appropriated by and appropriate to everyone. The main point is to make it accessible to the audience it is being performed for.

KATE CHERRY shared her very first memory as a three year old which was of watching a production of *Romeo and Juliet*. Her parents took her to see lots of theatre and they travelled extensively. It did not occur to her that Shakespeare might not be 'owned' by Australians. The Australian-ness of Shakespeare was a given from an early age. Cherry became interested in the work of Kristin Linklater and Tina Packer-Wood, who ran the largest outdoor Shakespeare in the United States. Ethical aspects of their company practice, such as colour-blind casting and claiming the language of Shakespeare for everyone were also appealing. One of the focuses of this school of thought about Shakespearean performance concerns the "emotional life of actors". The way that breath is manipulated and controlled in speaking the lines, and the way that iambic pentameter echoes the natural rhythm of a heartbeat, engage a physiological basis of performance that itself produces authentic emotion. gave an example of the breathing patterns indicated by the punctuation of Hermione's trial speech (3.2) in *The Winter's Tale* proposing that if you follow the structure of breath indicated for the performer by the punctuation it will produce 'passion' because of the rhythm of the breathing. Cherry added that the plays offer form and importantly break that form and this is a unique richness. In her work at Black Swan Cherry is keen to stage Shakespeare and believes it is really important to have on stage performers of different colours and accents without comment because that reflects back to the audience the society of Western Australia. The company opened with a production of *Twelfth Night* in 1991. The vision of BSST is that Shakespeare should be shared by all the people for all the people. This is why Cherry is keen to continue work with Marshall on broadcasting the productions to remote regional areas of Western Australia. "We celebrate being Australian with Shakespeare", Cherry concluded, "and perhaps more importantly we celebrate being human. The more Shakespeare can reveal our common humanity the more we can reach out."

DR STEVE CHINNA began by raising the question of the term 'intercultural Shakespeare' for further thought in this discussion. Chinna's own work with Shakespeare plays in production and his own playwriting derives form a practice of intertextuality, perhaps more than interculturalism. He has staged many student productions at UWA including Howard Barker's *Seven Lears* and *Gertrude the Cry* as well as his own play *When Hamlet Met Salome* and Heinrich Müller's *Hamlet Machine*. This last was written at a point of intense political conflict in Germany and sees Hamlet, more German than English, as "an intellectual in conflict with history". This work emphasizes how remote Shakespeare is from us. It requires adaptation and rewriting to gain insight. Chinna has found writing by Helen Gilbert and Jacqueline Lo *Performance and Cosmopolitics: Cross-cultural Transactions in Australasia* particularly useful in disentangling the issues of "intercultural" performance. In this work the authors separate the cross-cultural into three parts: the multicultural, the post-colonial and the intercultural. The multicultural exists both as lower case category concerned with practices of blind-casting in the theatre and cultural diversity in practice, and big m-

"Multiculturalism" which is a discursive politics of marginality, ghetto theatre, community theatre. The post-colonial is divided into the "syncretic" and "non-syncretic" [referring to the degrees of acculturation, appropriation, integration or not in productions]. The concept of the Intercultural is a hybrid which breaks into 3 further categories: the transcultural- which transcends culture and seeks universals. This is seen to be essentialist enterprise by the authors who include Peter Brook's late work in this category. The intercultural in Rustom Bharucha's use of the term challenges an organicist notion of culture seeing it as always multifaceted. Finally the extracultural refers to exchanges across west, east, north and south global boundaries. Chinna is keen to use these frameworks to problematize and rethink the notion of the Intercultural in performance. He highlighted the dangers that are always present in crosscultural creations and transactions, since these are always implicated in "power transactions, dynamics of ownership and the dangers of patronising and/or speaking for the other". Chinna proposed that these were issues that were perhaps particularly at stake in performance in Africa and Western Australia. Every choice about adaptation, staging and casting is implicated in pressing social and political concerns of gender, race and equality. But Chinna warned against the danger of ending up paralysed with anxiety about the politics of casting. Productions are always multi-directional. It is not possible to prefigure the ways in which an actor will develop a character or the response and relationship that audiences will have to this character or the production.

EMERITUS PROFESSOR CHRIS WORTHAM concluded the Roundtable presentations by highlighting three key features of Shakespearean plays and performance: structure, characterisation and language. Wortham proposed that

Shakespeare was not operating by Aristotelian principles but was influenced by a medieval performance practice. The evidence for this lay in the genre lability of the plays. He said: "the tragedies have comic moments and the comedies are potentially very tragic" and pointed to the example of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Wortham had himself recently performed in a production of this play at the University of Notre Dame in Australia. This play has a "contrived ending" and in other ways reflected the influence of *Commedia dell'Arte*. This was a potent form of theatre in Europe in the late medieval and early renaissance period. Its influence on *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is evident in its two-dimensional roles. Wortham suggested "In an open-theatre like the Globe it is not possible to produce finesse". He also suggested that it was possible to perceive a shift in Shakespeare from more Latinate language and grammar that worked with a five-beat (pentameter) line, to more "Anglo-Saxon" language in the later plays and a tendency to write in four-beat (tetrameter) lines. Wortham felt that *The Tempest* in particular featured four-beat rather than five-beat lines. [*The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is a very early play].

When the Roundtable was opened out for questions the Director of the ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions, PROFESSOR PHILIPPA MADDERN, asked whether the panelists felt that multilingual productions today spoke to the inherent multilingualism of society in London in the sixteenth century, given its vibrant language communities of Welsh, Cornish, Dutch, Italian and French. Dr Penelope Woods responded pointing to the passages in the Shakespeare plays in French and Welsh, such as *Henry V*, but also Dekker's *Shoemaker's Holiday* with its passages in Dutch. This multilingualism reflected the multilingualism of the audiences of the period. Other questions were continued over a reception hosted by the Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions to conclude the Roundtable and launch the opening night of the *Two Gents* Productions at the New Fortune Theatre in the University of Western Australia.