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Shakespeare at the Globe, London, Summer 2001:
King Lear, Macbeth, Cymbeline

Paul A. S. Harvey

King Lear

Summer 2001 at Shakespeare's Globe was Celtic. *King Lear, Macbeth and Cymbeline* were offered, with no other minor plays. In conjunction with the year of Japan in the UK, there was also an excellent production of *The Comedy of Errors* 「まちがいの狂言」, an adaptation by Yasunari Takahashi, which turned out to be one of the wittiest productions I saw in England, summer 2001. I will discuss this production elsewhere.⁽¹⁾ This review will discuss the three Globe productions, beginning with *King Lear*.

For this production of *King Lear*, the gaudy Tudor stage-ornamentations and pillars were all masked with huge grey planking, which gave the stage a timeless universal feel. There were two hidden side entrances, with one huge central entrance, closed by heavy wooden doors. There were steps, stage left, leading down to the groundlings, and a large wooden maypole in the yard, topped by a round horizontal cartwheel. Costumes were smocks and trousers, with Lear in a white feathered cloak to open the play, and on return from hunting, a rabbit's skin waistcoat. Footwear was modern old black walking shoes (Edmund) or sheepskins bound into boots (Lear). The fool's costume was a floppy cockscomb, a smock, a shapeless ragged cloak, short buskins, a cod's piece, and period shoes which curled up at the toes. Cordelia wore a blue dress and scarf for the final scenes. Senior nobles wore white shirts, braces, black trousers and boots. The costumes were thus eclectic and non-period. In general, the colours used on the stage were beige, brown, grey, and black — it was a set bleached of bright colour. Barry Kyle, Master of Play, together with his team, Hayden Griffin, Master of Design, and others (notably Claire Van Kampen, Master of Music) were striving to create a particular visual effect which was not "authentic." This was because the gaudy marbled pillars and decoration of the frons scenae, (and Tudor/Jacobean costume itself) would have clashed

with the production's emphasis on the elemental nature of the play. Of course, when *Lear* was first performed the stage would not have been concealed in this way, and *Lear* himself was most certainly (if past performance is anything to go by) dressed in finer clothes. The lack of colour and quality in the clothing made status differentiation difficult, something of vital importance in 1600. (I am indebted for this point to Ildiko Solti, Scaena conference, St. John's, Cambridge August 2001). However, Barry Kyle was probably correct in assuming that the production would be more powerful done this way. Further, wearing Jacobean dress on a hot summer's day has an effect on what the actors can achieve. If anything, the design and costumes recalled Ninagawa's recent *Lear* (Lear's costume), or the great *Lears* of the recent past, directed by Peter Brook, or the film by Kozintsev.

I attended two performances of *Lear*, one in the afternoon, and one on a wet thundery evening. The new evening lighting, which runs along the gallery edges intertwined with the harvest wreaths is rather beautiful. The question of powerful theatre vs. authentic period production is raised by this also: performance in the afternoon was the rule in Shakespeare's day, but the extra focus given by the darkness and lighting to the stage meant that the storm scene was more powerful when played at night.

Julian Glover was a memorable *Lear*. He was young, doughty, used to command, unable to brook opposition. The first scene was played brusquely, with Kent dismissed abruptly, and Cordelia turned aside. He was a tyrant, aggressively physical in his relation to Goneril and Regan, slapping them on their behinds as they passed by. The danger of the interpretation was that it gave no great hint that his actions in 1.1 were the beginning of "madness": that he stood on the edge of fragile senility, as Olivier had done in the 1984 Granada film. This was more of a problem by the end of the play, when *Lear* famously kills Cordelia's hangman, "I kill'd the slave that was a-hanging thee," which is poignant because the enfeebled *Lear* has summoned up his former strength, too late (5.3.273). Glover, however, seemed capable of polishing off any number of hangmen. On clambering up on stage with his hunting party, he signals an attendant to douse his head and shoulders with water, and this was the action of a man still in his prime. Although in general Glover was not as strong at communicating frailty and madness, nevertheless in the key scenes at the end he was very good. Cordelia, played by Tonia Chauvet, who had played *Celia* in the *Globe As You Like It*, was most successful with *Lear* at 4.7, in the French camp. The tenderness between them was

touching. At times I found that Cordelia was intoning her lines, rather than speaking them with conviction, but her delivery of "No cause, no cause" in this scene was particularly moving.

The storm scene was eagerly anticipated: how would it work on the Globe's open stage, in daylight? I saw this twice, and found that Glover succeeded rather well, though I felt that he needed to dig deeper to give us a real sense of being at the very limit of endurance, battling a hostile universe. The storm was created by cymbals, drums and thunder sheets making a considerable din. I noted how much better this was than the artificial bombardment that is produced by electric amplification. As usual, the Globe musicians justified their presence many times over. In *Cymbeline*, they were quite superb. Glover came on, miming his struggle against the huge gale, towing the fool behind him with a red rope. This vivid scarlet rope symbolized the love between the two men, the only thing which preserves them under the hail of adversity. They entered from stage right, and progressed over to the pillar stage left, looping round the pillar across to centre stage. Lear led onwards and the Fool followed, testimony to Lear's superior strength and perhaps indicating his tenderness for the fool, part of the transformation that begins to occur from this point onwards, when he begins to show sympathy for beleaguered humanity after his meeting with Edgar in the guise of Poor Tom. Lear stood by the pillar stage right and tried to out-shout the storm.

The mock trial scene in the hovel (exclusive to the Quarto) was included (3.6.17-55). This is important for it brings the notion of judgement to the surface, objectifying the moral structure of the play's world (in which by the end all the evil characters are destroyed), and also indicating the interim powerlessness of good to do anything about evil when it is ascendant. When the rule of law is overturned, when good men are illegally blinded, or turned out of doors, then moral chaos ensues, and the storm is also a metaphor for this. As the storm rages, good struggles in vain to assert order and justice.

Lear's most famous entrance was strikingly performed: "Howl, howl, howl!" (5.3.256) The lines were boomed forth from the dark cavernous centre stage entrance. Lear then entered, with the dead body of Cordelia limp across his back. It was the most powerful moment in the play, crystalising the tragedy, Lear bowed down under the weight of his dead daughter, the result of all his folly. Following this, Glover's Lear continued to grow in stature: "No, no, no life!" was most movingly expressed. In this last section the Quarto and the Folio were conflated. In the Quarto Lear dies in despair: Cordelia "wilt

come no more" and Lear groans "O O O O" and expires (or possibly does so after "Break, heart" given to Lear by the Quarto); in the Folio he seems to see some movement, perhaps thinking that Cordelia lives: "Look on her, look, her lips, / Look there, look there!" and dies of joy (5.3.309). Here, after the five "nevers" of the Folio, this production added the four "Os" of the Quarto. Lear's last speech moved from comparative forte at its beginning, to diminuendo at the four groans, and then gathered pace and strength with "Look there!" Glover's Lear seemed to believe that Cordelia still lived, though this was left inconclusive. We were not sure exactly what Lear was seeing; he was confused; was it a vision of bliss? The despair of the "nevers" and the suffering of the groans served to underscore the poignancy of the death-scene.

John McEnery gave his strongest performance to date at the Globe as Lear's fool. There is something of the mournful joker about him, and past Globe performances had tried to exploit this, making him a Jaques in *As You Like It*. He had also played Enobarbus in *Antony and Cleopatra*. With Mark Rylance, he is one of the few performers who have played most seasons since 1997. He communicated a sense of enjoyment in the role, conveyed in the life he gave to the Fool's irreverent twitting, and also in his George Formby impersonation and ukulele, singing the songs with a Lancashire accent. He had lost a lot of weight, and his spare angular form, clad in the most medieval costume on stage, and carrying on his back a tatty canvas and wood rucksack, made a strong dramatic statement. His gaunt figure illustrated the lines: "Since my young Lady's [Cordelia's] going into France, Sir, / the Fool hath much pined away" (1.4.72). He managed to squeeze quite a few laughs out of the Fool's often opaque asides. As Lear hurries away to Dover the fool is left behind, and we see he has hanged himself at the end of the scene, visible through the central exit. This underscored the darkness in the play, which is at its nadir at this point.

Geoffrey Whitehead as Gloucester gave a restrained but powerful performance. He had a patrician style and a smooth urbane delivery, which contrasted with the slightly rougher Lear. Inga-Stina Ewbank's comment on Whitehead and Glover in the summer issue of the *Globe Magazine* is useful: "Julian Glover's vigorous Lear does not look 'four-score and upward'... the very fact that both Lear and Gloucester are such tall and up-standing gentlemen, well-nourished and unimaginative, gives a peculiarly British edge to the theme of social injustice in their confrontation with —indeed reduction to— 'poor naked wretches'" (18:7). Whitehead modulated his performance extremely well, moving

from ease and confidence in the early scenes to the pitiful and broken man who tries to fling himself from Dover Cliff. He is a veteran performer, obviously more used to playing on a more intimate stage or for TV. This could be seen in the smaller scale of the work, though not so small that it lost impact. Following the savagery of Gloucester's blinding, the incident where the servants attempt to comfort Gloucester was omitted, perhaps adding to the sense of good forsaken in an evil world.

After appearing briefly with Gloucester in 1.1, Edmund entered through the yard, climbing the maypole up to a height level with the stage. The wheel on its top recalled the play's references to fortune's wheel, ("the wheel is come full circle" 5.3.173 spoken by Edmund at the end of the play); and the pole seemed to objectify Edmund's vaunting ambition. Michael Gould played Edmund with verve and commitment. His delivery of the first soliloquy was given with a clipped rhythm and crisp enunciation. To hear such a speech given in such a way in the Globe was a thrill — it is what the theatre space is primarily for. The position at which the speech was given was also significant: Edmund stood above the groundlings (on the pole) on a diagonal from stage left, as though he had risen above them, a further visual correlative for his ambition.

Edmund was played for laughs — to appeal to the groundlings. It was a revelation that he got so many. At times, however, this interaction was carried too far. At one point, Edmund relieved somebody of their beer can, and took a few swigs. Later, he turned to the audience and asked which of the two sisters he should choose, eliciting the response, "Both!" This worked well, the audience enjoyed him, but at a cost — it diluted the darkness of the play. After all, Edmund is not really someone to laugh at. Too much of this diminishes the play's intensity.

Edgar, played by Paul Brennen, as happened with Michael Maloney during Nini-gawa's recent *King Lear*, gave an unforgettable performance. The production reminded us how the play is balanced between these two brothers, with Edmund appearing with greater frequency in the first half, and Edgar in the second half, as though the play builds up to the climactic blinding of Gloucester, the triumph of evil, from which point evil begins to lose ground, and good reassert itself, although with terrible loss. Edmund is an agent of darkness; and Edgar, disguised as a madman, an agent of light. The parallel between the two was heightened by the way that Edgar also climbed the pole for his soliloquy at 2.3 when he declared that he would disguise himself as Poor Tom.

It was as Poor Tom that Brennen was so effective. His shaved head, and thin semi-

naked torso, grimed with filth, which he stabbed at repeatedly, was an acute metaphor for suffering humanity. He also had (self-inflicted) stigmata on his hands and a gash on his right side — a clear reference to Christ. The production emphasized that Poor Tom *is* Christ-like, or that Christ is to be seen in the suffering of the lowly. Although there is no explicit Christian reference in the play, it has a deeply-seated Christian structure, and the production brought this out, with Edgar crossing himself before combat with Edmund. Edgar's self-mutilation was also a metaphor for Lear himself, who had brought suffering upon himself by giving away his kingdom. In a world where evil is watchful, good must be ever vigilant; it is madness to allow the Gonerils and Regans to seize the reins of power. Edgar also prompts the most important development of the second half of the play, the growth in Lear's sympathy for hard-run humanity. We meet this in the great Shakespearean speech:

Poor naked wretches, whereso'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm (3.4.28).

Glover moved to the front-edge, centre-stage to deliver this speech, signaling its importance.

The play closed with the Folio ascription, spoken by Edgar: "We that are young / shall never see so much, nor live so long," uttered with a voice breaking with emotion, with a long pause after "young," with Edgar closing the double doors as he dashed out through the central exit, as though unable to go on speaking without breaking down (5.3.324). The pause on the word "young" emphasized that the last speech referred specifically to the younger characters remaining, meaning himself and perhaps France. The lines state that in the new order those remaining will not suffer or experience as much as Lear and Gloucester did, nor be able to endure existence for so long, leaving us with the tragic sense that events have changed the world forever, a sense of loss, even if good has finally triumphed.

This Globe production was, after Rylance's successful *Hamlet* last year, the most ambitious play yet attempted. All things considered, it was a great success. In a few years, it will be interesting to return to the Globe and see how the play bears up on a stage with no planking, and a Lear wearing Jacobean dress.

***King Lear*: Newspaper Reviews**

Critical reception of the Globe production of *King Lear* was generally favourable, with qualified praise for Glover's portrayal, highlighting the professional clarity of diction and commenting that he did not scale the heights of passion and madness. Many of the critics commented on the role played by the theatre itself, an important issue with a play such as *Lear*. Hayden Griffin's set décor also received a favourable press, most critics finding the masking of the gaudy Tudor frons scenae with the rough grey planks appropriate to the play. There was praise for the other players, in particular John McEnery as the Fool, who won plaudits from all. Reviewing a selection of some 28 critics writing over the first month of performance (*Lear* was comparatively widely covered), one discovers that the critics themselves have become more comfortable with the Globe, finding that in its fifth season (prologue season 1996, first season 1997), the theatre performed very well, surprising some of the critics, who were concerned that *Lear* and the Globe's festival atmosphere would clash. One might cavil at the quality and brevity of some of the reviews — more detailed commentary and insight would be welcome.

Nicholas de Jongh (*ThisisLondon* 23 May 2001) found Glover to have the "peppery, martial briskness of a Field Marshal" with the "vigorous air of a very young old man in a hurry." He found the final scenes worked well: "Even though missing the role's Everest peaks of emotion, [Glover] charts all Lear's transformations, finally achieving a tremendous finale, when he makes the fourfold "Howl" a great wail and staggers on, grossly bowed down by the corpse of Tonia Chauvet's Cordelia, slumped over his shoulder." He disliked the set design. He also noted that the production captured the audience's attention very successfully.

Benedict Nightingale (*The Times* 24 May 2001: 21) commented on an individual who shouted out in response to Edmund's question which of the two sisters, Goneril or Regan, he should choose (5.1.56). This raised the question of the role of comedy in the play, an issue that a few of the critics engaged with. Nightingale found this comic interaction to derive from the Globe's own uniquely informal milieu, but to carry with it "a troubling lack of intensity." He praised Glover, who "uses his imposing figure to show us an effortlessly authoritative king who inspires real fear" but who "doesn't suggest the weakness within the strength early enough"; and praised Patricia Kerrigan as a Goneril "freed by independence, power and Edmund to become a brutal parody of [her] father."

Maddy Costa (*The Guardian* 24 May 2001: 11) was one of the few outright hostile reviews, objecting primarily to the "pantomime atmosphere," commenting on how "Edmund points at the balconies when he talks of 'drunkards, liars, adulterers'; Kent storms through the audience into banishment; Lear's rowdy entourage even involves the crowd in a game of catch," business which other critics praised. The production's poetic clarity was praised.

Charles Spencer, (*Daily Telegraph* 24 May 2001) in a more judicious review, also commented on the irritation (shared by Costa and others) caused by the lady who shouted out "Both!" to Edmund's question which of the two sisters he should take. "I felt like ramming her programme down her throat" was his response. The Globe's audience is problematic, but Spencer also noted that "there is a lot of laughter, and the play does prove far funnier than I'd previously suspected." Spencer found the acting to be good, with "the recognition scene with Cordelia (Tonia Chauvet), when [Lear's] voice suddenly cracks, [is] deeply affecting." There was praise for Michael Gould's "charismatic Edmund, buttonholing the audience like a pushy stand-up comic," and also for Dean and McEnery.

Claire Allfree had some useful observations (*Metro London* May 24 2001: 23), commenting on Julian Glover's "roughly hewn, uncomplicated Lear, who is imperial and ugly in his cruelty towards his daughters, yet strangely phlegmatic and disappointingly unprepossessing in madness," and John McEnery, who "nicely establishes himself as Lear's symbolic alter-ego."

Paul Taylor, (*The Independent* 25 May 2001) in a characteristically well-written review, retrospectively lining up the production with the "highly stimulating" *Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Antipodes* of the fourth season, found that *King Lear* had "true drive and a keen directorial vision." Taylor had previously been rather hostile to the Globe. He found the set design worked very well. He commented on the shock felt when "the central doors swing open to reveal to a stricken Edgar that John McEnery's excellent Fool, a lugubrious ukelele-playing northern comic, has hung himself in despair." He also observed that "Goneril and Edmund parody, as part of their love-play, Gloucester's blindfolded progress to Dover," something that no other critic commented on. He saw that Edmund could be problematic: "the crowd loved Michael Gould's Edmund, whom they are in danger of turning into an undisquietingly likeable rogue."

John Peter's (*Sunday Times: Culture Magazine* 27 May 2001: 20) glowing report was slightly over the top: "Julian Glover, in the title role, gives the most thrilling, pro-

foundly thought-out performance of his distinguished career” and, “in his final scenes, with the blind Gloucester and Cordelia, he is rocklike and broken, like some prehistoric carving: as moving as any Lear I have seen.” Peter also found the audience “genuinely fresh and responsive.” McEnery was “a gaunt, bitter Fool: sad, watchful, and lovingly and helplessly loyal.”

Susannah Clapp, (*The Observer* 27 May 2001) agreed with Nightingale, de Jongh and others that Glover’s Lear is “capable and forceful, but the journey he travels... is never seriously disturbing.” She regretted the masking of the Tudor decoration by the planking. She commented on the Beckettian role that laughter played in the production: “In the laughter which greets [Gloucester’s] fall from an imaginary cliff-top, you hear the beginnings of the Theatre of the Absurd.” Also, she made a sensitive observation that “audience and actors are exposed to each other, as they aren’t in a conventional modern theatre, because they aren’t screened by footlights; they undergo together the gradual fading of the light through an evening.” The gradual fading of the light could work very well with a play like Lear.

Robert Gore-Langton, (*Daily Express* May 25 2001: 60) in a populist review, commented on how important the actual theatre is (“the building is always the star”), and how distracting tourists munching pretzels in the yard can be — a useful reminder that many people do buy tickets just to see how the Globe works as a theatre. Although Georgina Brown’s comments (*Mail on Sunday* May 27 2001: 77) are too perfunctory, she agrees with De Jongh and others, that it was “all about clarity rather than dramatic illumination, a rather trad, uninspired affair.” She praised McEnery’s excellent Fool.

Ian Shuttleworth, (*Financial Times* 30 May 2001) has some thought-provoking comments on problems with dramatic tone. These occur because of inappropriate laughter, on lines such as “Lear’s ‘O, let me not be mad’, Gloucester’s ‘Alack, I have no eyes’ and even [on]... Edmund’s reaction to the news of Goneril’s and Regan’s deaths.” Lear’s soldiers “show that they are the real ‘base football-players’ by having a knock-around in the crowd. ... Having established a bantering relationship of equals with the audience, characters find it difficult to force us to follow them when they attempt to change emotional register.” Shuttleworth felt that these comic interactions diminished the tragic stature of the play. This is a serious charge, sensitively stated. In reply, one might partially agree. Nevertheless, one thing that the Globe does prove is that comedy is absolutely integral to Shakespearean performance, and was the key to how he filled the

theatre so successfully. To counteract this, Lear perhaps needs to be bigger, more engrossing of the audience's attention.

Graham Hassell, (*What's On In London* May 30 2001: 61) found that the production "needed a fire under it" because the "playing [was] earnest to the point of staid." He praised the scene at Goneril's house, saying that "when Goneril does give Lear and his men their marching orders, the king straddles the chair she's sitting in to deliver an in-your-face 'thankless child' speech of real venom," and notes that Glover's Lear seemed unlikely to descend into madness. His comments on McEnery were good: "Ashen-faced and spindly-legged, he easily oscillate[d] between mischief and melancholy."

Heather Neill, (*Times Educational Supplement* June 1 2001) has some insightful comments on concepts behind the performance: "Kyle has said (not in the programme notes) that he would like people to guess from their looks that each of Lear's daughters has a different mother." The political disintegration of the kingdom is matched by dissolution of sexual ties "expressed in the changing behaviour of Lear's elder daughters, ... both intent on seducing Edmund, as they change from buttoned-up respectability to bosom-revealing temptresses. For them, the spiral of death, torture and betrayal also represents a perverse liberation from the constraints of their father's household." Neill's comments also remind us of the oppressive nature of Lear's overbearing physicality, a strong point in Glover's interpretation of the role, patting his daughters on their bottoms, or straddling the chair in which they sit. Glover is "a vigorous authoritarian, young for his 80 years. His performance is well crafted rather than moving. His clear verse-speaking serves the performance well, clarity being its virtue."

Sheridan Morley, (*The Spectator* 2 June 2001: 54) praised Glover's "fine, brisk, military monarch" noting that he was "admittedly one of nature's Gloucesters." He found the production "darkly intelligent," and that the company "are acquiring the kind of teamwork confidence which is inevitably lacking at the National."

Reading the press response to *King Lear*, although it was the most positive critical reception that the Globe has yet received, one is struck by the general lack of informed insight into what the director might actually be doing, and a lack of well-chosen exemplification. This is no doubt due to the need to produce rapid copy, but Newspaper Editors could demand that more production details be noted down, both to give potential playgoers something substantial to seize hold of, and also to preserve such details in the public record, which is the chief value of newspaper reviews after the event.

Macbeth

In contrast to previous Shakespeare productions at the Globe, *Macbeth* was avant-garde, breaking new ground in suggesting ways that the Globe stage space might be used. Master of Play was Tim Carroll, who directed *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (2000), and *Augustine's Oak* (1999). Music, which played an important role in the production, was by Claire van Kampen, who has now composed scores for nine Globe productions, and with her husband Mark Rylance, the artistic director, her work provides an important thread of continuity in the performance since the Globe reopened in 1997⁽²⁾. Design was by Laura Hopkins. Jasper Britton who had played Caliban in Vanessa Redgrave's *Tempest* at the Globe (2000) played Macbeth and Eve Best played Lady Macbeth.

The piece was avant-garde in the way that it staged the play through the matrix of a dinner party, (either a formal Oxford College dinner or formal Christmas Party) with all the characters in dinner jackets or long dresses. The effect of this merging was to suggest a dinner party *which was like Macbeth*, a metaphorical equivalent, meaning that psychologically the experience of the dinner party was a tortured and attenuated one, with individuals on one level dressed for an urbane social occasion, and on another acting through the plot of *Macbeth*, with Lady Macbeth's descent into madness, and Macbeth's despair. The production was thus an examination of a particular state of mind that could experience these two events simultaneously, in effect a study in schizophrenia, two states being superimposed one upon the other, and occurring simultaneously, with the audience being switched between the two. It was a study in madness, a poetic kind of madness that latched onto a social setting and objects (golden tinsel was used to symbolize blood, small stones symbolized a character's lifeforce) and constructed from them the extraordinary *Macbeth* plot. The play and the dinner party progressed in tandem, with the dinner jackets coming off and collars loosened as the play came to the end. Not surprisingly, watching it was somewhat disconcerting.

The staging was beautifully simple and economical. This was due to the use made of wooden concert-hall chairs, painted glossy black, carried on and off by the actors. These were the sort of chairs one might find in a small provincial hall, or a festival venue at Edinburgh. They were danced with in the opening scenes, and at other points used to figure knapsacks; in 5.1 they were lined up to stand in for the outward walls. When Macbeth met Duncan at Forres (1.4) the chairs were used to form a tightly composed

group stage right, with Duncan and courtiers seated and standing on the chairs, as in a photograph. The only other major prop was a black rectangular slab, suspended from the flies, situated central backstage. It was raised and lowered, and at times tilted, being used as the banqueting table, a platform, a balcony, and even a funeral slab, on which Macbeth lay.

The play began with the whole cast dancing to a lively jazz score, lined up and facing us on the stage like a dance number from the thirties, snapping their fingers. This was also the period used for Trevor Nunn's *Merchant of Venice* (with Henry Goodman as Shylock) which had played at the National Theatre ten minutes stroll up the river (2000). The cast carried on the black concert chairs and danced with them (like a dozen Gene Kellys). Although few in the audience were laughing, being surprised rather by the incongruity of dinner jackets and concert-hall chairs mid-afternoon on the Globe stage, there was a strong underlying current of comic absurdity, which offset the sense of schizophrenic alienation. The three witches came on, wearing opaque glasses (which looked steamed-up, with holes in them to peer through, one critic described them as "shattered"), perhaps as a symbol of their occult nature, played by two men and a woman (1st witch Liza Hayden, 2nd witch Paul Chahidi, 3rd witch Colin Hurley). During the play the witches filled minor roles, such as servants, as though they were secretly making things happen behind the scenes. Hayden took the main speeches, though she was less impressive than Chahidi, a strong performer, whose appearance (slightly balding, like a young chubby Philip Larkin or Eric Morecombe) added to the sense of absurdity. No one could look less witch-like. The witches sang out their verse while dancing lightly around the stage to the jazz score: though nobody laughed it was quite absurd. There was a wicked sense of humour here. The score was bright and attractive, but at times it made it difficult to hear the lines. The production had a number of symbols, the most potent being the smooth round stone that characters surrendered on being killed. The stones were effective metaphors because, being of little worth, they suggested that a person's life, when taken from them, was of little value *to anyone else*.

There was a feeling that the production had been conceived with a different venue in mind. This was due to a number of factors. The production colour scheme, which was black and white, did not go with the gaudy Tudor decoration. The costume, being dinner jackets for men and women (the witches were in DJs, evening dress for Lady M), was emphatically 20th century — a slim boxed silhouette for the men, emphasizing their

shoulders and forming the triangular male shape.⁽³⁾ It was out of place on the Globe stage. The open stage, which tends to open up the action, did not work very well for this production, which would have worked better in the concentrated focus of an enclosed space with a spare decor and spotlights. This would have made more sense with evening wear, which always looks out of place in the sunlight. However, the clash of style contributed to the sense of comic absurdity, and may have been part of the intention.

It is invidious to critique a play for being what it is not, but I felt some disappointment that the Globe did not do an orthodox *Macbeth*. This play, with its climactic fight scenes, will work very well on the Globe stage. It will be of great interest to see what kind of costumes Jenny Tiramani could come up with: to what extent Scottish elements could be used, together with the Tudor doublet and hose. Although Tudor period costumes are very hard on the actors (Ophelia in last year's *Hamlet* suffered dreadfully in one of the narrow corsets) one has come to look forward to them, in the same way that one enjoys the high quality costume and coiffure on the National Bunraku stage in Osaka. We need to establish a tradition of acting in Jacobean costume. Just as with Kabuki, costume dictates the nature of movement on the stage, and actors have to learn new ways of moving. This is particularly true for the women, whose costumes are cumbersome and restrictive (tight bodices and farthingales) and to move gracefully means learning an entirely new body language. A serious disappointment was the fact that for much of the play the speeches were delivered badly. An exception was the Sergeant (Colin Hurley) painting the evocative word picture of valiant Macbeth. He stood on a chair to do this, and held a white swab up to the side of his face — he had cut himself shaving, a witty joke on the phrase "What bloody man is that?"

Jasper Britton denied us the chance to hear a first class Macbeth, something he is undoubtedly capable of. He gabbled his lines, and some of the stage business proved to be a distraction. His speaking style had at times such long end-stopped pauses that the rhythmical thread broke. Offsetting this, however, the production was full of stimulating directorial intervention. When Macbeth first met the witches he was prompted by the first witch to release the stone he had in his hand, which he refused to do, suggesting that the witches were, in the end, aiming at his life, not to be had from him then. In 1.3, when the witches chanted "Yet it shall be tempest-toss'd" a stone was flung up into the air and caught: the stone symbolized Macbeth. The witches cried out, "The charm's wound up" and released white feathers, which symbolized the fact that the supernatural

was present or that characters were enthralled by magic. These were released at various moments in the play, most tellingly in Macbeth's final combat with Macduff, when Macbeth flings white feathers at Macduff as he fights him, until he is told that Macduff was not "born of woman." After he is killed, white feathers are tipped over his corpse. Later, when Macbeth gave his "two truths are told" soliloquy, on saying "My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical," he pointed at Duncan, (who had remained on stage). This suggested that the stage itself was the arena of consciousness, Duncan being present in Macbeth's mind, and also visible on stage. A similarly adroit use of the stage was provided when Duncan gave his speech "We will establish our estate upon / Our eldest" and rested his hands upon Macbeth's shoulders, and then pointed at Malcolm (1.4.37). Here we had the future in the instant, with Macbeth iconically placed as Duncan's successor, with Malcolm to follow.

The transition to 1.5 was very neat. Macbeth took a handkerchief from the front pocket of his DJ and wiped his face, a gesture of weariness, and turned, waving it in the air, upon which Lady Macbeth entered and plucked it from him and it became the letter that she then proceeded to read. The handkerchief used to wipe his face becomes the letter: i.e. his face is a letter, in fact a book, as she says, for all to read.

In 1.7 during the "If it were done" speech, on the words "naked new-born babe" Macbeth pointed to a baby in the yard, suddenly breaking open the stage space, including the audience in the play. Later, on "If we should fail" the two embrace — Lady Macbeth sustaining Macbeth, not being the icy-hard virago that she often is portrayed as.

Prior to Duncan's murder (2.1) Banquo asks for his sword, and takes his jacket instead, the production suggesting that the jacket and sword might be equivalent. Both perhaps masculine symbols. "Is this a dagger" was well given, Macbeth clutching at it, seeing it close to the floor rather than in mid-air. He gave the second half of the speech "Now o'er the one half world" while untying his laces and taking off his shoes, not easy to do. Presumably done so that he could move noiselessly. However, it was a distraction. The verse is of the highest calibre, and both for actor and audience deserves the highest concentration. The dagger, instead of being followed out, quite literally marshaled Macbeth from the stage, Macbeth being ushered backwards to the centre stage exit. Britton showed something of his skill in the way he handled this difficult manoeuvre.

After the murder of Duncan, (2.2) both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth emerged from centre stage with golden tinsel on their hands, symbolic of blood. This was presumably

taken from the line "his silver skin lac'd with his golden blood" (2.3.112) Murder and partying formed a bizarre link; the very decorations for the party became a cipher for blood. In this way the production coded the world into madness, Shakespeare text and social event forming arcane links, showing what a mad world might be like, providing a dramatic equivalence for the mental alienation that Macbeth himself was undergoing through the play. Macbeth's post-murder rhetoric was delivered in a deadpan voice without feeling, which allowed it to sound insincere, without it sounding obviously so. A delicate balance was achieved here.

At 3.1 we had "to be thus is nothing, but to be safely thus," which was deliberate and well-paced, spoken to persuade himself. But the effect was dissipated when the pace was accelerated towards the end. Earlier, the king had worn a gold cummerbund. This was now worn by Macbeth, with a pattern of gold coins: it symbolized the crown, or "golden round." As he said "to be thus is nothing," he glanced at it meaningfully.

3.2 (the murder of Banquo) was played with Macbeth giving the great lines "come, seeling night, / Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day," while embracing Lady Macbeth — a great distraction, and unfair on the poetry. The jazz played loud, so that the lines were inaudible. This was visual and aural distraction. Prior to this, Macbeth used the verb "scorched" instead of "scotched," in discussing the need to kill Banquo. This is the Folio reading. It works better than the Theobald emendation "scotch'd" — the long vowel and the "r", pronounced in 1600, give the line greater resonance. Macbeth's relationship with Lady Macbeth was figured as a dependent one, with a clever emphasis on the word comfort: "There's comfort yet," he said, turning pointedly to his wife, and performing a jig, as he realized that the problem of Banquo and Fleance could be resolved. This sensitively filled out a psychology behind Macbeth, who derived emotional strength from his wife. The murder was carried out as a party game as mentioned above. Six or seven of the cast took off their jackets and lay prostrate on the stage (signifying night-time), rapping on the stage with stones. Drums and the jazz score started up. Following his murder Banquo was left lying on stage.

The Banquet scene (3.4) was one of the most effective scenes in the play. The black slab was suspended and served as a banqueting table. Britton's appalled reactions carried conviction. Banquo appeared first in Macbeth's seat, to which Macbeth reacted strongly. On the disappearance of the ghost he recovered, and then a coup de theatre followed as Banquo was lowered straight down to the middle of the black slab from the

flies, totally unexpectedly, and the dinner party exploded apart. The guests stood with stones held up. The scene ended with Lady Macbeth screeching at the guests not to stand upon the order of their going, which was curiously over-charged. It needs to be coldly authoritative, with a note of desperation perhaps. The scene ended with Macbeth under the black slab. Above him on the slab was the crown. This moment visually encapsulated something about the untenability of sovereignty under such conditions: the black slab being the darkness that stood between Macbeth and true enjoyment of sovereignty. The slab also suggested a funereal monument, the multiple murders carried out to achieve his ambition.

The major set piece of the play, the "tomorrow and tomorrow" soliloquy was given a strong interpretation (5.4.17). Britton ran "she should have died hereafter" directly onto the first "tomorrow," with the meaning that "she ought to have died tomorrow (i.e. not now, because inconvenient)." This sounded curiously callous, but the lines following this, delivered seated at the front of the stage (there were six chairs lined up at the front and Macbeth sat on the stage leftmost chair) were spoken with feeling, and Britton gave us a taste of what the lines could sound like when given as though being thought of on the spot, with an effective pause — "Life's but a [pause] walking shadow" — suggesting that Macbeth was thinking up the speech as he spoke it. As he gave the speech he had a stone in hand, which he kissed as he said "Out, out, brief candle," the stone obviously symbolizing his wife, and the desolation in the speech therefore the desolation of grief.

Eve Best as Lady Macbeth was in general unsatisfactory, requiring more menace, and more chilly authority. She dodged about the stage too much — it is a role that requires stillness and strength, standing at the front edge in the centre, holding the whole theatre silent with the powerful speech she has in 1.5 "the raven himself is hoarse." Reading the letter at the beginning of 1.5 she cast it down and then picked it up again at "shalt be" — becoming very excited — one felt a need for more controlled power, a lack of stage experience being visible. For "unsex me here" she knelt and prayed, facing away from the audience, with a swivel round on "come, thick night." At points like these business is just superfluous, a distraction. Praying at this point, to be seen in a number of productions, is fundamentally wrong: Lady Macbeth is not a Satanist, she is not *praying* to the forces of darkness, she is *invoking* them, calling them into presence. Kneeling to pray becomes a parody with an inappropriate weight. At times, however, we glimpsed greater things. Lady Macbeth's "but screw your courage to the sticking place, /

and we'll not fail" was spoken with quiet authority — this was a woman who would make things happen (1.7.60). On saying "nought's had, all's spent, / Where our desire is got without content," (3.2.4) Lady Macbeth reached down to the groundlings and held someone's hand — physical contact being achieved with the audience. This was similar to Macbeth's pointing to a baby in the yard, an action breaking up the illusion, and forming a link with the audience. In a sense, such action brings the groundlings into the play as active participants, but this works best when most appropriate, as in the crowd scenes in *Julius Caesar*, where the groundlings formed an excellent mob. The Jack Cade scenes in *Henry VI* part two would also be interesting.

The mad scene (5.1) was rather effective. The slab was used here, with Lady Macbeth washing her hands from the slab raised aloft like a balcony backstage. Holding a bucket, she walked up and down the tilted slab, which tilted as she came to the end, an extraordinary effect, though simple in operation. She was on an eternal Sisyphean treadmill. The doctor and maid stood at either pillar observing her, the orchestra on the balcony proper, where they were for the whole play. At "Oh! oh! oh! — What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charg'd," the slab tilted, and Lady Macbeth slid off (5.1.53).

One of the most powerful scenes in the play was the murder of Lady Macduff and her children. Here we felt a nightmare consciousness being enacted, where simple and innocent actions have huge occult meanings. The murderers appeared and started to waltz with her. Given the context, the waltzing horrifically suggested rape. She was passed from murderer to murderer, and she kissed each one, before having the stone (symbolizing her life) taken away from her as she was led away centre stage. In the mildest terms the most horrible violence was being described. All the critics failed to note the power of this subtle and disturbing sequence. The same technique was used with the murder of Banquo. It was carried out like a party game, with Banquo blindfolded, and three assassins rapping the stage with a stone, which Banquo lunged after in vain, trying to seize back the life that had been taken from him. An innocent party game became murder. The surrendering of the smooth round stone somehow increased the poignancy of the death of these two characters. Macduff's son was played by Macduff himself. Macduff's sole Scottish accent was a very welcome addition to the play, but he was not right to play a young boy. He was also somewhat subdued in 4.3, coming to Macduff's cry, "Scotland! Scotland!" in quiet manner, when it needed to be roared out. Earlier, his "Horror! Horror!" had come like a note of integrity, and sanity.

By the third witches scene (4.1), the audience had got used to the production style, and "double, double, toil and trouble," was chanted out rhythmically to the jazz score, and it got quite a few laughs. It was indeed absurdly comic. "Make the gruel thick and slab" provided a witty answer to the question of where the idea for a slab came from. For this scene the 1st witch wore a white dress. The witches danced as they gave their lines, retreating to cast things in the cauldron. There was laughter at the marked pause after "Cool it!" (cool it with a baboon's blood).

From the beginning of this scene, Macbeth was lying on the slab (he had lain down on the slab on saying "we are yet but young in deed" 3.4.143), and the witches one by one, when not dancing, retreated to the backstage and chanted the lines over his prostrate body, as though he was the cauldron, and into which all sorts of nasty things were being put. This was an intriguing interpretation in terms of the play, Macbeth having had nasty ideas implanted into his head by the witches, the witches spurring him onto evil. As Macbeth demanded to be told more from the witches, the whole cast filed past on the other side of the slab, representing the line of kings, wearing party hats and opaque or shattered glasses (as the witches did). There was a loud cackle at the end which was rather startling. Notwithstanding the mid-afternoon sunshine, it somehow managed to be rather frightening.

The production opted for an unusual way of treating the last few scenes of the play, chopping them up, and splicing them together as though to produce continuity in a film. The witches cauldron scene (4.1) was spliced with Lady Macduff's murder (4.2) and Malcolm and Macduff (4.3). This contributed pace to this part of the play, particularly the overlong Malcolm and Macduff scene, which needs to be cut in performance. This splicing also produced the filmic effect of cutting from the murder of Lady Macduff directly to Macduff's reaction to it. Macbeth witnessing the spirits is spliced with Malcolm and Macduff, planning his downfall, increasing the sense of moving towards an ineluctable doom. As the spirits tell Macbeth about Dunsinane wood, on "here's another", Lady Macbeth with a baby stands up. This was rather unusual. On beware the Thane of Fife, spoken with a woman's voice coming from the male witch, the scene cut to Malcolm and Macduff, rather effectively, a very cinematic effect. Macduff's "Not in the legions / Of horrid Hell can come a devil more damn'd / In evils, to top Macbeth," also spliced very well with the spirits and the cauldron (4.3.55).

In Act 5 the short scenes with Malcolm and others advancing on Macbeth's castle

were delivered from the galleries: this worked very well. Alarums and excursions with fanfares played round the galleries.

Paul Chahidi was an excellent Porter, one of the highlights of the production, getting quite a few laughs from the audience. Macbeth in these scenes had removed his trousers, perhaps to suggest being in his nightshirt. The assassins chosen to kill Banquo had had their hands bound, which were unbound in order to allow them to go ahead with the deed. Obviously these were men who had been specially released from prison.

There was a hint from Tim Carroll, the director, as to how to understand the production in the programme, in an interview with Heather Neill: "The amazing poetry of this play is often commented on. To me it is a wonderful paradox: a beautiful and even charming play about something appalling — something, moreover, that could be inside all of us. It is about the way human beings behave in situations of crisis and moral collapse." The last sentence is important here: the party-which-is-Macbeth is, from the conceiving consciousness, a situation in crisis.

In general, despite the abundance of good ideas, the central idea being remarkably original, one was left with the impression that it was a very uneven production. The principal fault being the failure of the actors to deliver the verse properly. I found the jazz score very good to listen to. It conjured a mood totally at variance with the play — relaxed summer evenings — the direction proceeding by such juxtapositions. It reminded me of the way that Ninagawa offset the violence of his *Macbeth*, with the soothing cadences of Faure's *Requiem*. With some paring down, perhaps in a different venue, without the vocal clumsiness, this could be a first rate piece.

***Macbeth*: Newspaper Reviews**

Consulting a range of thirty odd critical reviews and commentary from newspapers, magazines and the internet, one was reminded how it easy it is for the majority to refuse to grapple with the demands of experimental theatre. Although, for reasons I have outlined above, the production was not successful, (above all, the verse was shoddily spoken), there *were* intriguing ideas that merited discussion. In a different venue, with arrestingly spoken verse, with the same attractive jazz score, with the leads inhabiting their parts more convincingly, this would be a very powerful piece of theatre.

Most of the well-known newspaper critics did not discuss *why* the director had chosen

to present *Macbeth* in this way. In general, the press response was ungenerous and unimaginative. Nicholas de Jongh (*This is London* 6 June 2001), Charles Spencer, one of the better writers, (*Daily Telegraph* June 7 2001: 22), Alastair Macaulay (*Financial Times* June 7 2001), Lyn Gardner (*The Guardian* June 8 2001), John Peter (*Sunday Times* June 10 2001), John Gross (*Sunday Telegraph* June 10 2001), Ian Johns, (standing in for Benedict Nightingale), (*The Times* June 11 2001: 20) were unanimous in their hostility. The chief criticism was that this was director's theatre at its worst, with a concept that made no sense. Given the level of sophistication, one wonders to what extent the copy is generated by the projected reaction of their readers to the play in question. After all, one has only to remember Ionesco's *Macbeth* to realize that the Globe production was not, in fact, terribly unusual. It was startling to see such a production in such a venue, (a mistake) but the superimposition of social texts, cultural contexts, and mental states has been a recurrent feature of theatre for many years — Yukio Ninagawa's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, set in the rock garden of Ryoanji Temple, with an acrobatic Puck from the Peking Opera performing cartwheels over the sand; in the Japan-UK Festival 2001, we had two such examples, Yasunari Takahashi's *Kyogen of Errors*, (seen at the Globe July 2001) and Toshio Hosokawa's opera, *Lear* (based on an adaptation of *King Lear* by Tadashi Suzuki) premiered in the UK in Covent Garden in February 2002. The failure of influential critical voices even to grapple with the metaphors that were being proposed by Carroll's production (whether one *likes* such metaphors or not is another matter) calls their professionalism into question. Before we write off a work of art, we need to consider it first in its own terms. Charles Spencer in his review noted that "in no way has the Globe played it safe or predictable." With conceptual modern art filling the Tate Modern only a few yards down the Thames, experimental modern Shakespearean theatre at the Globe is highly welcome. But it should not be forgotten that original practice performance **breaks new territory** every time: how do actors deliver high calibre performance in full Tudor costume, moving and interacting in a manner that does not show that they have **never worn Venetians** or a Spanish farthingale before in their lives?

My reference to Ionesco derives from some **sensitive** comments by Carole Woddis, (*The Glasgow Herald*, June 20 2001) who described the production thus: "Gone is any literal representation. In its place is a metaphorical **dinner-jacketed** "other" world, one more aligned to Dadaism, Ionesco, even Edith Sitwell, **with its cut-up verse, smoky jazz score,**

and three witches who, with their broken spectacles, resemble a trio of existential clowns: bitter, dangerous, outside of time." There were sensitive comments from other critics as well: Paul Taylor, (*The Independent* June 7 2001) generally acute, praised Jasper Britton, but was cautious about the production as a whole: "it remains too cerebral." Claire Allfree, (*London Metro* June 8 2001) had some clearheaded points to make: "It's as though Carroll has taken the nihilism that lies at the core of *Macbeth* to an inclusive, nightmare extreme; draining the blood from this most bloody of plays and leaving behind a cerebral chill. The result is often alienating and confusing but Carroll's skilful defamiliarizing has an exhilarating strength of its own." Kate Kellaway, (*The Observer* June 10 2001) put her finger on what was going on when she wrote: "Tim Carroll's fastidious but over-inventive production treats Shakespeare's play as a cross between a party (black tie mandatory) and a primitive ritual involving stones, buckets and feathers. ...I liked Laura Hopkins's chic design and the look of the cast as matinee idols who, after midnight, would be up to no good. I liked, too, the sense of facade, of the social surface with hell beneath the starch. The only trouble was that hell was never hellish enough, and never properly tragic at all." Kate Basset, (*The Independent* on Sunday 10 June 2001) was impressed with the two leads: "Britton and Eve Best (playing Lady Macbeth) are an electrifyingly natural couple," which I cannot agree with, finding Best (compared with Britton) to lack stage experience. Heather Neill, (*Times Educational Supplement* June 15 2001), in a sympathetic review, pointed out that the very stylization brought us closer to the text, a point made by Michael Coveney (*The Daily Mail* June 22 2001): "Such devices make you listen to the text anew, and in Jasper Britton and Eve Best as the murderous Macbeths we have two of the most talented and watchable young actors around." Christine Edzard's film of *As You Like It*, (1992) set in an inner city wasteland, was doing the same kind of work, putting the Shakespearean text together with a filmic text about social deprivation and inequality, and when most successful, allowing the play to make its inimitably eloquent statement (Jaques played by James Fox, "All the world's a stage").

There were a number of voices raised in approbation, on the internet and elsewhere. There were sensible comments on basic practical problems — it was difficult to tell who was who with any security, a point made by Adam Scott (*Living Abroad Magazine* July 1 2001: 42). Robert Tanitch (*The Tablet* June 30 2001) was obviously standing in the yard: "Macbeth, recalling the horror of murdering Duncan, bawls, 'Still it cried,' Sleep

no more' " in such a hammy way that the school party standing next to the stage cannot stop giggling. Macbeth then takes off his trousers, which the children find hilarious. Britton yells at them to shut up. There is more laughter when he sees the Ghost of Banquo and runs, frightened, into the audience." It must have been a very tough assignment for the actors. Britton had been quite outstanding as Caliban in Redgrave's *Tempest* the year before (surely we have a great performer here); Paul Chahidi, who brought a successful comic touch to the second witch, went on to be an excellent Maria in the all male *Twelfth Night* at the Globe the following season. Let us see them together again, with the first witch, Liza Hayden, in something difficult like *Love's Labour's Lost*, which they might do rather well.

Cymbeline

As with *Macbeth*, this production offered us another way of understanding how the Globe stage might be used. Unlike *Macbeth*, or *Lear* however, which added features to the stage such as the chairs carried on and off by the actors, and the black slab lowered from the flies, or *Lear* transforming the stage into a fort clad with rough planking, this production took features away, covering the exits up with grey board, and masking the pillars, so that in effect the Globe stage became a space like any other, bar the fact that the pillars could not be entirely removed. The company itself and the company style owed a great deal to the influence of Peter Brook. Two musicians sat to the right and left back stage; there was a large cloth spread for an acting area; the actors sat on the edges on the acting area when they were not in role. Costumes were white cotton pajama suits — easy to wear in the July heat wave when I saw the performance. The company numbered only six actors, with doubling and tripling of parts. There were no props to speak of, other than musical instruments borrowed from the backstage, or small props that could be easily handed over when required (Mike Alfreds commented that this was something learnt from Kabuki): paper and wood instruments stood for various things, a wooden rattle for a book; a piece of parchment with wooden slats for an all purpose letter; for a sword a long narrow board with a hinged flap which made a very loud "bang" — a clapperstick. It was a beautifully pared-back, economical setup, giving the actors maximum space to concentrate on the acting. Gone were the elaborate Jacobean costumes, gone were all exits and entrances, and procession across the stage,

though the stage itself was used very inventively. It is often said that actors have an intense dislike of showing off their legs in tights, and there is no doubt that actors feel hampered in elaborate costume, particularly corsets and farthingales (not to mention the additional discomfort of wearing them in summer). At any rate, the acting was some of the most accomplished I have seen in three years of going to the Globe.

Master of Play was Mike Alfreds, who had taught Mark Rylance at Drama School. Master of Music was Claire van Kampen. The players were Jane Arnfield, Richard Hope, Fergus O'Donnell, John Ramm, Mark Rylance and Abigail Thaw, doubling and tripling the parts. There were some cuts, lines by Imogen taken out of 2.2, from 5.3 Sicilius, mother and brother removed.

Since the actors were constantly in view for the whole performance, and props were minimal, it was necessary at the beginning of scenes for the actors to identify themselves and the location. This was surprising for most of the audience, and generally provoked some laughter, though it was adroitly handled by the players. It had the advantage of greatly increasing the pace of the performance, with one scene literally melting into another, as actors would sit down, stand up, announce the new locale, adopt a different pose and move forward with the play. This is a very good way to do Shakespeare, since it moves the story along, and throws emphasis on what is being said. Some sudden changes, such as the British court suddenly becoming Rome, got a good laugh, and the company had obviously decided to accept the laughter gratefully, with Rylance dropping suddenly to the stage and lying as on a Roman couch, and Rome announced — with a big laugh in response. One remembered Philip Sidney's comments on plays that switched locale, "the player, when he cometh in, must ever begin with telling where he is, or else the tale will not be conceived," and felt that he would have objected here, but it worked very well — one accepts the locale change without hesitation, such is the power invested in the players on the dais before us. Presumably, performance by a small traveling troupe would have been rather like this.⁽⁴⁾ At times it created logistical difficulty, with actors ending one scene and beginning the next in a different role. This was solved by the fact that the team was accomplished enough to create a new character by a consistent change in voice, body language and mannerism, so that we saw Rylance transform Cloten into Posthumus like the turn of a page, and hold it consistently, a bravura demonstration of actorly skill. The nature of the production allowed this kind of craft to be visible, and on that basis alone justified itself completely.

The production also justified itself in the way that all Shakespeare productions have to justify themselves, and this is in making us learn something new about the play. I found that the production succeeded in doing so in three areas in particular. On reading the play one would never consider that Cloten could be so important to an *enjoyment* of the play — this was a discovery for me. Posthumus was given less emphasis than I would usually expect (a corollary of the strong Cloten) and this allowed a rather demonic Iachimo to stand forth, played very strongly by John Ramm. The choice that Posthumus makes, in the first instance to give ear to Iachimo's suggestions, was forcefully presented as the wrong choice — from this choice grew the evil that led to later suffering. This is a Shakespearean theme: in *King Lear*, it is Lear's prior decision to divide the kingdom, the crass stupidity of such a decision, that gives the forces of darkness the opening they need. Likewise, Macbeth's decision to give ear to the witches is in the first instance wrong; similarly, Claudio (like Posthumus) unaccountably gives credence to Don John, and evil follows in *Much Ado*; in *A Winter's Tale* the process is internalized: Leontes listens to his own inner madness, and evil ensues. The third area lay in the complex revelations at the end of the play. Perhaps the greatest success achieved by this small company was to carry through these revelations (switching roles before our eyes) without the thread being lost. It was a demonstration of what a small troupe, ideal for traveling, could achieve: all their kit and belongings could be piled into one cart, and the play could be recreated anywhere. From not having thought much of the play before, I found myself placing it higher in my Shakespearean rankings.

What was lost by doing the production in this way? It is worth pausing for a moment to consider. As with *Macbeth*, we lost all costumes. As I commented above, there is no doubt that an aesthetic layer is thus stripped away, though it is true that focus is gained by the reduction. One also loses the sense of identity conferred by costume, with visual information providing a commentary on character. The loss of entrance and exit is more serious. The Shakespearean play works by juxtaposition, with scene contrasting with scene, providing a dialectical progression, building a complex dramatic statement. This was still part of the performance, but the clean break between scenes, and the scene's aesthetic shape, with different numbers of actors moving through the stage space (i.e. from stage left to stage right) was lost. For some plays the loss of the balcony would be serious, though it mattered little for *Cymbeline*. Perhaps the most serious loss, and one which impaired the production, was Jupiter's descent, which was mimed by four

of the actors standing with outstretched arms as though hovering, and Richard Hope as Jupiter with arms upraised. It was a brave effort but simply looked rather silly, and if one did not know the play, one would not have known what was going on.

The music played an especially important role in this production, with the two percussionists (Irita Kutchmy and Gillian McDonagh) seated on the stage in full view, and providing a musical score which commented on and enhanced what was going on in front of them. There were gongs hung between them. Unfamiliar musical instruments were used: a bow drawn across a cylinder of pipes produced an eery but beautiful sound; there was a gamelan from Bali (beautiful tone); the texture of sound was given due attention, with gourds and rattles, hand-held cymbals were used. The only danger is that voice and music might compete — this sometimes happens in Kabuki, with the shamisen accompaniment sometimes counterpointing the dialogue too strongly, so that one cannot hear the words. The music was generally used for transitions, and for special moments such as Jupiter's descent, with two large gongs being sounded. Imogen awoke to the sound of cymbals and percussion. Musical instruments were also used as props, wittily so with a large gourd with seeds (a rattle) standing in for Cloten's decapitated head. The music is one of the most successful aspects to the Globe performances, the tangible warmth of live performance and the varied timbre of the unusual instruments adding great aesthetic value.

There was a surprising amount of laughter during the performance, encouraged by the company. I found this to be somewhat unsatisfactory, though all around me there was much enjoyment of the show, and this is vital — one cannot let the audience leave disgruntled. Rylance's Cloten was key to this, as noted above. He puffed out his chest, placed his hands on his hips or raised them above his head and swaggered about the stage, occasionally jutting out his jaw prognathously. He bellowed out his lines with emphatic deliberation, emphasizing Cloten's witlessness. He was a clown, stupid and oafish. There was also some coarse humour, with Cloten handing his purse to Pisanio (3.5), which was two round seed pods looking like testicles. This was picked up by Rylance in his lines discussing his mother's control of his step-father "having power of his testiness," which was given as "teste-ness", a gratuitous change, but one which got a loud guffaw from the audience (4.1.21). There was also some elaboration of textual coarseness, when Cloten prepares music for Imogen and says: "Come on, tune. If you can penetrate her with your fingering, so; we'll try with tongue too. If none will do, let her remain;

but I'll never give o'er" (2.3.15). The lines were given with a knowing lasciviousness which again was rather amusing. His defiance of Caesar, bombastically issuing threats like a latterday Pistol was very good — one might hope that Rylance will take on more of these kinds of roles. There was comedy elsewhere as well: Guiderius' scorn for Cloten, and his blunt responses after killing him provoked laughter, as did his scorn for the empty gourd representing Cloten's head. There was also a moment of coarseness supplied by the Queen, who at one point pronounced Pisanio's name "Piss-anio", which was greeted with a loud roar. There was unwarranted laughter here and there throughout the performance, the most unwelcome coming at the end of the play during the final scene, the complexity of doing which with only six actors led to some rapid role changes which provoked laughter. In the post-show discussion one of the audience commented that she had seen four productions of *Cymbeline* in the last few years and that this was the most comic and the most successful. One would agree that it was most successful, but fewer cheap jokes at the expense of the text seemed to be called for; though of course, in order to appeal to the groundlings c. 1600, it is most likely that this kind of coarseness was an essential part of the performance.

There was much to praise during the performance. Rylance was generally strong throughout, though as mentioned above, his Cloten did overshadow his Posthumus. The transition from Cloten to Posthumus (2.3 to 2.4) was masterly and won applause. Posthumus's reception of the news of Imogen's apparent betrayal was a commanding interpretation. He gave way to rapid despair following Iachimo's poisonous insinuation, flinging the ring he received from Imogen down onto the stage (he did this twice) "keep the ring — 'tis true. I am sure / She would not lose it," (2.4.124) joining the list of those who trust too quickly to forces only too willing to bring them to ruin. In the post-show discussion Mike Alfreds informed us that there was no fixed blocking for the production, and that the actors went with their instincts, so that each performance was slightly different. This meant that the energy invested in certain set-pieces varied: when Iachimo first suggested that Imogen might be unfaithful (1.4), he and Posthumus grappled on the stage, nearly coming to blows. This was playing it too strong: Posthumus would not lose control so quickly. Perhaps his Posthumus could have had a bit more backbone, been tougher, more heroic. Rylance played him as *wagoto* to his *aragoto* Cloten. Rylance is very good at portraying gentle, vulnerable men. Also, the verse technique of fading the lines suggestively at the end was overemployed. In the post-show discussion, he de-

scribed Posthumus as someone who needs to get things right, as vulnerable, honourable, and lower in social rank, an outsider. One key moment in the play which worked very well was Posthumus's embrace of Imogen, with the passionate lines (5.5.263) "Hang there like fruit, my soul, / Till the tree die!" clasping Imogen closely to him so that her feet left the ground and swinging her round in embrace, so that she was the fruit, which was also his soul, hanging against his body.

John Ramm as Iachimo was very strong, he was also good as Morgan, and as a minor lord. He came on attending Cloten (1.2.2), who "reeked like a sacrifice." Ramm got good comic mileage out of this, wrinkling his nose in disgust. John Ramm's work was very precise and detailed, with carefully etched verse lines, and a rather disturbing fixed smile that he used to good effect. I stood in the yard in front of the stage and was able to pick up these details. When I came to see the performance again, I sat in the second gallery and found that I lost some of the power of Ramm's performance, but that Ry-lance's large projection came into better focus: it is certainly true that the performance changes from where one views it. Meeting Imogen, Ramm was chillingly effective at constructing a pleasant façade behind which lurked a deeply predatory menace. He would make a very good Iago. It was the sense of tense excitement held in abeyance that was particularly good. As a character, he is a very good example of slippery eloquence indicating insincerity, something one has to watch out for in Shakespeare's work. Posthumus is of more robust tongue-tied integrity. The eloquence, though, had its successes: Ramm's soliloquy in Imogen's bedroom was a tour de force, and for anyone who did not know this it was a revelation. It contains Ovidian and other references to violation, Tarquin and Tereus (Tarquin was cut from this performance). The only problem with it was perhaps the lack of a trunk from which he could emerge. This was mimed effectively, but the visual impact of a trunk opening and the villain creeping out would have greater power. He knelt astride the sleeping Imogen and stole a kiss: a very unsettling moment. Equally unsettling was the way that Ramm gave the poetry such resonance. These can be very powerful lines:

That I might touch!

But kiss, one kiss! Rubies unparagon'd,
How dearly they do't! 'Tis her breathing that
Perfumes the chamber thus. The flame o'th' taper
Bows toward her, and would under-peep her lids,

To see th'enclosed lights, now canopied
 Under these windows, white and azure lac'd
 With blue of heaven's own tinct. (2.2.16)

We have to look with his eyes, which figure Imogen in such beautiful language, beneath which festers such a malicious motivation. On his return to Rome in 2.4 he loses no time in deceiving Posthumus — this was done with a cool offhand callousness: "I beg but leave to air this jewel. See! / And now 'tis up again," he says as he shows the bracelet that he stole from Imogen, showing it briefly and snatching it back (2.4.96). Iachimo then practically disappears until Act 5, when he returns penitent for causing Imogen's death (as he thinks). Later, as Morgan, Ramm succeeded in building a totally different kind of character, older, plodding, sincere, a bit of a worrier.

Jane Arnfield's Imogen and Abigail Thaw's Queen were both very strong. Thaw giving the Queen very clear lines, with something of a pantomime style about her. She is a very assured and accomplished actor, comfortable on the Globe stage. She would be an excellent Lady Macbeth. Thaw switched to playing Arvirargus, and gave the character a youthful enthusiasm. The problem of differentiating the two adolescents, Arvirargus and Guiderius was very neatly solved by doing it cross-gender. Arnfield was a sincere, passionate Imogen. Compared to the others she seemed to lack stage experience: at times she seemed to be dashing about the stage too much. But she communicated a strong sense of Imogen at the centre of a very hostile world, with difficulties piled upon difficulties. She was most natural in her response to Iachimo when he arched his body close to hers; she thrust him aside with a shudder of horror, communicating a sense of chaste virginity. Difficulties crowd upon her: when she discovered the loss of her jewel, she is plagued by the troublesome suit by Cloten. On reading Posthumus's letter which says that he has arrived at Milford Haven, she repeated "blessed Milford Haven" in a rather affecting way, conveying her innocence and sincerity. There was some annoying laughter when she disguised herself as a boy: she could not recourse to costume, so she had to rely on voice and manner, announcing "Enter Imogen dressed as a boy," which worked well, but struck the audience as incongruous. She was very good at getting to the front of the stage and speaking directly out. She characterized Imogen as someone who knew her own mind, decisive, not softly feminine, intelligent, capable of suffering. This was not a fragile Shakespearean heroine.

One should also mention Fergus O'Donnell, who was an accomplished Pisanio and

later a good Guiderius. Richard Hope, who had fewer lines as Cymbeline, was very good in support. Indeed, excellent ensemble work was true of the production as whole, with the exception that Rylance perhaps took a bit too much of the spotlight, taking more time over his lines than the others. One of the best moments was the funeral dirge sung over the apparently dead Imogen. "Fear no more the heat o' th' sun," the first verse sung by Guiderius, the second by Arvirargus (Thaw has a lovely voice), and alternate lines thereafter. The whole theatre fell to a complete attentive silence: good music works very well in The Globe. It was poignant and affecting.

One of the puzzles that the production raises is the question of how one should read the British opposition to Rome. In terms of the period, a Globe audience could only have viewed such opposition as a good thing, especially with the example of the Netherlands across the channel being so important (where Philip Sidney lost his life). Shakespeare won his spurs with patriotic plays in which the English trounced the French in the years shortly after the Armada, with the French standing in as surrogate Spanish. By the time of *Cymbeline*, of course, official policy towards Spain had been completely reversed, and those of the war party were in prison, like Raleigh, or out of favour. Cloten is vociferous for war, as is Cymbeline. Although Cloten obviously does not provide a safe moral viewpoint (quite the reverse), nevertheless, there is a sense that British valour against the Romans is laudable, especially with Belarius and his sons, and Posthumus. And yet the ending is one in which the British resubmit to Rome. It seems faintly disappointing. It feels as though the play is teetering between the need to fall in with official policy, and yet at the same time provide the Talbotian excitement of British success at arms. The company was preparing to move to the Blackfriars theatre at the time of *Cymbeline* (c. 1609): perhaps the play represents an attempt to appeal to the two different audiences.

Mike Alfreds makes the useful comment in the programme that "the plot itself shoots off in all directions with a wealth of incident and surprising twists, tying itself into complicated knots which only get untied in a final scene of exceptional technical virtuosity in which 27 pieces of information, already known to the audience, are revealed to the characters." The final scene, given the pared-down nature of the production, I found to be a tour de force, with characters switching role very suddenly and yet keeping the audience with them. Fergus O'Donnell switching between Pisanio and Guiderius; John Ramm, between Iachimo and Belarius. The switching between roles was done by moving

position on the stage and by clever use of the pillars, which could be hid behind or used as reference points. The play was closed by the company forming a circle palm to palm and then opening out into a line, and taking a bow. Let us hope that these eight work together again, and go on tour: it would be a perfect low-budget high-quality troupe for the dozens of theatres that stand empty up and down Japan. Perhaps there could be two different styles of performance when the Globe visits Kotohira in Shikoku (October 2003).

Cymbeline: Newspaper Reviews

Critical reaction to *Cymbeline* was almost universally favourable, in strong contrast to the reaction to *Macbeth*. Mark Rylance was awarded so much praise for his Cloten and Posthumus that it is to be hoped that it will not have a Cloten-like effect. (We were able to judge this the following season with his superb Olivia in the all-male *Twelfth Night*, Middle Temple Hall and Globe — new territory, see my review). Many of the critics found a Japanese influence on the production style, mistakenly comparing it to Noh, or commenting on the similarity between the white pajama suits and martial arts gear. If there was to be a Japanese influence, it might be seen in the minimalism of the props, and in the announcement of name and locale (*nanoru*), features derived from Kyogen, which is more directly comparable with Shakespeare. Strangely, there were very few voices raised in regret for the lack of period costume, or the fact that the Globe stage was effectively turned into a neutral playing area. But this was due entirely to the fact that the performance, within its own boundaries, commanded assent. It was great theatre, the verse was startlingly good, one rediscovered a new work of art. It was this that the more avant-garde and surreal *Macbeth* could not achieve.

Surveying some twenty or so reports and reviews of the production, there were one or two dissenting voices. John Russell Taylor (*Plays International* July 1 2001: 18) noted that it was not easy to sort out who was who. This was fair criticism. Benedict Nightingale, (*The Times* July 12 2001) in a wrong-headed review, fired off erratically at the production, complaining about the uniformity of costume and the confusion it caused: "the effect is as much of a fashion parade for ghosts, an undersized village cricket team." Nightingale is usually more insightful than this. Fiona Mountford, (*Time Out* July 18-25 2001) found the ending unsatisfactory: "Where it falls horribly apart is at the

end, with the normal level of farce raised unbearably due to the doubling and tripling up of parts." Many of the critics, however, found the ending done rather well, most of them citing the information supplied in the programme by Mike Alfreds, a canny move, who informs us specifically that in the final scene "of exceptional technical virtuosity, ... 27 pieces of information, already known to the audience, are revealed to the characters." Katherine Duncan-Jones (*New Statesman* July 30 2001: 30-1) was a sole voice offering a critically acerbic assessment of Rylance: "Even the usually compelling Mark Rylance seems to be performing empty stunts. His throttled delivery of such speeches as Posthumus's great rant against women falls remarkably flat, seeming to express no inner darkness." She also made the valuable observation that many people had donated to the Globe for the purpose of seeing Shakespeare in authentic costume and movement under Tudor decorations: Alfreds's production, after all, could be performed anywhere (which was also part of the point — to show that the Globe is also a versatile space, and *Brook's Hamlet* could be performed there as well).

There were also some other comments worth recording. Charlotte Seales, (*Theatre-world Internet Magazine* July 11 2001) had an insightful comment: "the characters deliver their lines with perfect comic timing, throwing knowing and colluding glances at the audience at every opportunity. A great rapport is built up between cast and spectators at this intimate venue, which manages to last throughout the three hours of performance." It is interesting how some critics recognize that the Globe can indeed be an intimate venue, and others recognize that it can also be the opposite, depending on the use of the space and the acting style. Finally, let us end with Michael Billington's praise for Mark Rylance: "Rylance — playing Cloten, Posthumus and a physician — demonstrates a transformative energy that dominates proceedings in a way we've scarcely seen since the heyday of Donald Wolfit. His Cloten, with gaping mouth and prognathous jaw, is a masterly study of vengeful idiocy."

Cast Lists and Performance times (these are taken from programmes and brochures)

King Lear

Performance time was approximately three hours fifteen minutes, with an interval after two hours following the blinding of Gloucester (3.7).

Master of Play: Barry Kyle

Master of Design: Hayden Griffin
 Master of Music: Claire Van Kampen
 Master of Fights: John Waller, Rodney Cottier
 Assistant to Master of Play: Andrew Lamb
 Company Manager: Marian Spon
 Master of Verse: Giles Block
 Master of Movement: Glynn MacDonald
 Master of Voice: Stewart Pearce
 Costume Supervisor: Susan Coates
 General Manager: Maralyn Sarrington
 Head of Research: Jacquelyn Bessell

Musicians

Voice: Helen Neeves
 Voice: Rachel Wheatley
 Voice: Phil Hopkins
 Percussion: Phil Hopkins
 Percussion: Michael Gregory
 Cornet, Natural Trumpet, Modern Trumpet: Paul Sharp, Adrian Woodward
 Sackbut, Trumpet, Trombone: Tom Lees

Players

King Lear: Julian Glover
 Fool: John McEnery
 Edgar: Paul Brennen
 Edmund: Michael Gould
 Goneril: Patricia Kerrigan
 Regan: Felicity Dean
 Cordelia: Tonia Chauvet
 Gloucester: Geoffrey Whitehead
 Kent: Bruce Alexander
 Cornwall: Michael Fenner
 Albany: Harry Gostelow
 France: Andrew Whipp
 Burgundy: David Caron

Oswald: Peter Hamilton Dyer

Curan: Roger McKern

Macbeth

The play was about two hours ten minutes without interval.

Master of Play: Tim Carroll

Master of Design: Laura Hopkins

Master of Music: Claire Van Kampen

Master of Choreography: Sian Williams

Company Manager: Marian Spon

Costume Supervisor: Chloe Staples

Master of Movement: Glynn Macdonald

Master of Verse: Giles Block

Master of Voice: Jeannette Nelson

Executive Producer: Greg Ripley-Duggan

General Manager: Maralyn Sarrington

Head of Research: Jacquelyn Bessell

Musicians

Trumpet: Frazer Tannock

Bass clarinet, soprano & alto saxophones: Andy Keenan

Double bass: Andy Lewis

Percussion: Phil Hopkins and Michael Gregory

Players

Macbeth: Jasper Britton

Lady Macbeth: Eve Best

Duncan: Terry McGinity

Malcolm: Chu Omambala

Donalbain: Mark Springer

A Captain: Colin Hurley

Porter & Seyton: Paul Chahidi

Doctor to Lady Macbeth: Terry McGinity

Waiting Gentlewoman: Hilary Tones

Two murderers: Jan Knightley & Richard Attlee

Banquo: Patrick Brennan

Fleance: Mark Springer

Macduff: Liam Brennan

Lady Macduff: Hilary Tones

Lennox: Richard Attlee

Ross: Jonathan Oliver

Angus: Jan Knightley

Weird Sisters: Liza Hayden, Paul Chahidi, Colin Hurley

Cymbeline

The interval occurred after 95 minutes after 3.4, when Imogen has decided to join Lucius. The play was approximately 3 hours 15 minutes long.

Master of Play: Mike Alfreds

Master of Clothing and Properties: Jenny Tiramani

Master of Music: Claire van Kampen

Master of Movement: Glynn Macdonald

Master of Verse: Giles Block

Master of Voice: Stewart Pearce

Company Manager: Marian Spon

Costume Supervisor: Hattie Barsby

General Manager: Maralyn Sarrington

Head of Research: Jacquelyn Bessell

Musicians

Percussion: Irita Kutchmy

Percussion: Gillian McDonagh

Players

Imogen: Jane Arnfield

Cymbeline / Jupiter / Jailer: Richard Hope

Pisano / Philario / Polydore / Caius Lucius: Fergus O'Donnell

Iachimo / Morgan: John Ramm

Posthumus / Cloten / Cornelius: Mark Rylance

Queen / Cadwal / Philharmonus: Abigail Thaw

- (1) Paper given at Aistugia (Associazione Italiana per gli Studi Giapponesi) Conference, Turin (Sept. 2002). I have used G. Blakemore Evans, ed. *Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974) for *Cymbeline and Macbeth*, and Kenneth Muir, ed. *King Lear* (London: Methuen, 1975). I recommend Stanley Wells' Oxford edition (based on the Quarto), for its excellent introduction: Stanley Wells, ed. *King Lear* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- (2) There is a CD available of the jazz score used for *Macbeth: Sleep No More: Incidental Jazz Music Composed by Claire Van Kampen* (International Globe Centre, 2001).
- (3) Modern male evening wear first appeared in the 1880s. See Iris Brooke, *A History of English Costume* third edition (London: Methuen, 1979) 152.
- (4) Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry*, ed. Geoffrey Shepherd (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1973) 134.