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HAMLET

This edition tells the story of *Hamlet* in production, from Burbage at the Globe to Branagh on film, relating stage interpretations to developments in the theatre, in literary criticism and in society at large.

Hamlet is the most performed play of all time. The stage history records an ongoing process of discovery, as successive performers have found what it is in the play that will speak most powerfully to the audiences of their own times. The introduction focuses not only on star Hamlets, but on whole productions of the play, including supporting players and, in this century, direction and design. Although the volume as a whole concentrates on stage performances in England and the US, outstanding film versions and European stage productions are also featured.

Professor Hapgood makes extensive use of primary sources, especially promptbooks, memoirs and eye-witness accounts. His substantial commentary, printed beneath the text of the play, provides numerous details of line-readings, costuming and stage business culled from this research.

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HAMLET
PRINCE OF DENMARK



EDITED BY
ROBERT HAPGOOD

Professor Emeritus of English, University of New Hampshire



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SERIES EDITORS' PREFACE

It is no longer necessary to stress that the text of a play is only its starting-point, and that only in production is its potential realized and capable of being appreciated fully. Since the coming-of-age of Theatre Studies as an academic discipline, we now understand that even Shakespeare is only one collaborator in the creation and infinite recreation of his play upon the stage. And just as we now agree that no play is complete until it is produced, so we have become interested in the way in which plays often produced – and pre-eminently the plays of the national Bard, William Shakespeare – acquire a life history of their own, after they leave the hands of their first maker.

Since the eighteenth century Shakespeare has become a cultural construct: sometimes the guarantor of nationhood, heritage and the status quo, sometimes seized and transformed to be its critic and antidote. This latter role has been particularly evident in countries where Shakespeare has to be translated. The irony is that while his status as national icon grows in the English-speaking world, his language is both lost and renewed, so that for good or ill, Shakespeare can be made to seem more urgently 'relevant' than in England or America, and may become the one dissenting voice that the censors mistake as harmless.

'Shakespeare in Production' gives the reader, the student and the scholar a comprehensive dossier of materials – eye-witness accounts, contemporary criticism, promptbook marginalia, stage business, cuts, additions and rewritings – from which to construct an understanding of the many meanings that the plays have carried down the ages and across the world. These materials are organized alongside the New Cambridge Shakespeare text of the play, line by line and scene by scene, while a substantial introduction in each volume offers a guide to their interpretation. One may trace an argument about, for example, the many ways of playing Queen Gertrude, or the political transmutations of the text of *Henry V*; or take a scene, an act or a whole play, and work out how it has succeeded or failed in presentation over four hundred years.

For, despite our insistence that the plays are endlessly made and remade by history, Shakespeare is not a blank, scribbled upon by the age. Theatre history charts changes, but also registers something in spite of those changes. Some productions work and others do not. Two interpretations may be entirely different, and yet both will bring the play to life. Why? Without

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setting out to give absolute answers, the history of a play in the theatre can often show where the energy and shape of it lie, what has made it tick, through many permutations. In this way theatre history can find common ground with literary criticism. Both will find suggestive directions in the introductions to these volumes, while the commentaries provide raw material for readers to recreate the living experience of theatre, and become their own eye-witnesses.

J. S. Bratton
Julie Hankey

This series was originated by Jeremy Treglown and published by Junction Books, and later by Bristol Classical Press, as 'Plays in Performance'. Four titles were published; all are now out of print.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The historical record of *Hamlet*-in-production through the centuries is richer than for any other play. Its extent is all but overwhelming. This is true even when, as in this edition, the focus is largely on live performances as reported by eye-witnesses. (Since the numerous *Hamlet* motion pictures and recordings are readily available, they will – with the exception of the landmark films by Laurence Olivier and Kenneth Branagh – receive relatively light treatment here.) Of stage productions, there are reviews in abundance and a number of extraordinarily detailed accounts of full performances. Back-stage lore also abounds, including scores of promptbooks, a host of memoirs and biographies by and about leading actors and directors, and – in recent years – several logs of rehearsals kept by cast-members.

Drawing together these resources, the Introduction offers a chronological survey of the main productions of *Hamlet* from Burbage to Branagh. Even more than for most plays, contemporary accounts of these productions have emphasized the interpretation of the title-role, and my survey reflects this emphasis. But the historical record is full enough to give as well a sense of whole productions, including the work of supporting players, directors, and designers. And these productions are best understood in a cultural context that includes developments in theatre history and literary analysis. The survey incorporates these larger perspectives.

As extensive as the data encompassed in this edition may seem, its coverage of available information is by no means exhaustive; on the contrary, space considerations have made it necessary to be highly selective. There is a need for a full-scale performance history of *Hamlet*. In its absence the interested reader will find especially helpful, as I have, certain standard references. Useful supplements to my chronology of ‘Productions’ are Harold Child’s concise survey of noteworthy English stage performances in an appendix of Dover Wilson’s edition of *Hamlet* and J. C. Trewin’s detailed listing of productions in the West End, at the Old Vic, and at Stratford-upon-Avon in the appendix of *Shakespeare on the English Stage, 1900–1964*. Outside of England, Robert Speaight has chapters on Continental productions in *Shakespeare on the Stage*, while Charles Shattuck devotes two volumes to *Shakespeare on the American Stage*. Both studies give extensive attention to *Hamlet*. For a selection of pictures of stage productions, see *Hamlet through the Ages* by Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson. For

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motion picture versions, Jack Jorgens's *Shakespeare on Film* remains the best place to start.

Two recent studies are especially useful. Readers who wish larger backgrounds for the portraits of the English and American Prince Hamlets profiled in my Introduction will find them in John Mills's *Hamlet on Stage: The Great Tradition*; each of his portraits begins with a knowing section on the general style and career of each actor. Those who wish more instances of stage business and readings than are provided in my Commentary will find them in Marvin Rosenberg's *The Masks of Hamlet*; his work is especially valuable for its details about foreign-language productions and for its particulars about the many English and American productions he has himself seen. With respect to documentation, Mills provides precise and reliable citations of contemporary reviews in periodicals, Rosenberg, a broadly inclusive bibliography of pertinent books and articles.

Of course, my greatest resource has been archival data. Gathering it has taken me to the Harvard Theatre Collection and the Athenaeum Library in Boston, the Hampden/Booth Library at the Players Club and the Billy Rose Theatre Collection at the Lincoln Center in New York, the National Film Archive and the National Sound Archive in London, the Shakespeare Centre Library in Stratford-upon-Avon, and the Special Collections of the University of Southern California. All these institutions have been just as forthcoming as one could wish. Special thanks are due to the patient staffs of the Colindale Newspaper Collection of the British Library, the Shakespeare Collection of the Birmingham (England) Central Library, and the Folger Shakespeare Library, where I made more extended but very intense visits that put heavy stress on their retrieval systems. This travel and other research expenditure was supported by a summer fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities and by grants from the Graduate School, College of Liberal Arts, Research Council, and Humanities Center of the University of New Hampshire.

John Mills and Alan Hughes handed on microfilms, xeroxes, and other materials surviving from their own researches. Miriam Gilbert permitted me to use her unpublished accounts of the Jonathan Pryce and Mark Rylance *Hamlets*. Donald Foster let me inspect his statistical findings while still in progress. Russell Jackson gave me a timely and very fruitful suggestion. William Alexander transcribed the musical items. Julie Hankey was a stimulating general editor. I was privileged to sit in on rehearsals of a production of *Hamlet* at Ashland, Oregon, in 1961, directed by Robert Loper, with Richard Risso as Hamlet.

As always my greatest debt is to my wife Marilyn, who has been especially supportive of this project.

ABBREVIATIONS

Boaden	James Boaden. <i>Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble</i> , I, London, 1825.
Clarke	Charles Clarke. Unpublished columns of commentary on Edwin Booth's <i>Hamlet</i> in the Folger Shakespeare Library.
Davies	Thomas Davies. <i>Dramatic Mi[s]cellanies</i> , London, vol. III, 1784.
F	<i>The Tragedie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke</i> , 1623 (First Folio).
Field	Kate Field. <i>Charles Albert Fechter</i> , Boston, 1882.
<i>G. I. Hamlet</i>	<i>Maurice Evans' G. I. Production of Hamlet</i> , acting edition, Garden City, NY, 1947.
Gilder	Rosamund Gilder. <i>John Gielgud's Hamlet; A Record of Performance</i> , Oxford, 1937.
Gould	Thomas R. Gould. <i>The Tragedian: An Essay on the Histrionic Genius of Junius Brutus Booth</i> , New York, 1868.
Phelps	Henry P. Phelps. <i>Hamlet from the Actor's Standpoint</i> , Brooklyn, 1977.
Q1	<i>The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke</i> , 1603 (First Quarto).
Q2	<i>The Tragedie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke</i> , 1604–5 (Second Quarto).
Rosenberg	Marvin Rosenberg. <i>The Masks of Hamlet</i> , Newark, Del., 1992.
Rossi	Alfred Rossi. <i>Minneapolis Rehearsals: Tyrone Guthrie Directs Hamlet</i> , Los Angeles, 1970.
Russell	Edward R. Russell. <i>Irving as Hamlet</i> , London, 1875.
SD	stage direction.
Senelick	Laurence Senelick. <i>Gordon Craig's Moscow Hamlet</i> , Westport, Conn., 1982.
Shattuck	Charles H. Shattuck. <i>The Hamlet of Edwin Booth</i> , Chicago, 1969.
South Bank Show	'Hamlet', South Bank Show, televised 2 April 1989, prod. M. Bragg; available on video from Iambic Productions.

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| Sterne | Richard L. Sterne. <i>John Gielgud Directs Richard Burton in Hamlet: A Journal of Rehearsals</i> , New York, 1967. |
| Stone | <i>Edwin Booth's Performance: The Mary Isabella Stone Commentaries</i> , ed. D. Watermeier, Ann Arbor, Mich., 1990. |
| Terry | Ellen Terry. <i>Ellen Terry's Memoirs</i> , ed. E. Craig and C. St. John, 1932; rpt. Westport, Conn., 1970. |

PRODUCTIONS

This table presents a select chronological list of the principal productions of *Hamlet* referred to in this edition. Dates of less noteworthy performances are given in passing in the text. A span of years indicates the first and last known dates of performance. Occasionally, the first date indicated is that of the first major performance (Macready, for instance, gave ‘benefit’ performances before his full-scale London debut in 1823). A name on its own indicates the actor of the title-role. The name of the theatre shown first is the site of the first performance date given. Further theatres listed housed subsequent performances; additional dates are indented for distinct later productions by the same performer of special importance. All theatres are in London unless otherwise indicated.

Date(s)	Actor(s), Director	Venue(s)
?1601–1618	Richard Burbage	Globe/Blackfriars
1607, 1608	Captain William Keeling’s crew	HMS Dragon on the high seas
1619/20–1642	Joseph Taylor	at Court Globe/Blackfriars
1661–1709	Thomas Betterton	Opera Lincoln’s Inn Fields Drury Lane
1706–8?–1732	Robert Wilks	Drury Lane
1742–1776	David Garrick	Drury Lane
1777–1784	John Henderson	Haymarket Drury Lane Covent Garden
1783–1817	John Philip Kemble	Drury Lane After 1803: Covent Garden
1803	François Joseph Talma	Comédie Française, Paris
1807–1832	Charles Mayne Young	Covent Garden
1814–1832	Edmund Kean	Drury Lane
1823–1851	William Charles Macready	Drury Lane Covent Garden

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Date(s)	Actor(s), Director	Venue(s)
1837	Pavel Mochalov	Petrovski, Moscow
1838	Charles Kean	Drury Lane Haymarket
1850		Princess's
1860	Edwin Booth	Winter Garden (NY)
1864		Winter Garden
1870		Booth's (NY)
1880		Princess's
1891	Ophelia: Helena Modjeska (1889–90)	touring
1861	Charles Fechter	Princess's
1864		Lyceum
1870		Niblo's Garden (NY)
1874	Henry Irving	Lyceum
1878	Ophelia: Ellen Terry	
1885		
1875	Thomasso Salvini	Drury Lane
1881	William Poel	St. George's Hall
1884	Wilson Barrett Claudius: E. S. Willard	Princess's
1886	Jean Mounet Sully	Comédie Française, Paris
1892	Herbert Beerbohm Tree	Haymarket
1897	Johnston Forbes-Robertson Polonius: J. H. Barnes	Lyceum
1899	Sarah Bernhardt	Théâtre de la Renaissance, Paris
1900	William Poel, dir.	Carpenter's Hall
1900	Claudius: Oscar Asche (with Frank Benson)	Lyceum
1905	(with H. B. Irving)	Adelphi
1904	Ophelia: Julia Marlowe (with E. H. Sothern)	Illinois Theatre, Chicago
1907		Waldorf
1905	John Martin-Harvey	Lyric
1912	Vasili Kachalov/Gordon Craig/ Konstantin Stanislavsky	Kamergersky (Moscow Art Theatre)
1914	Esme Percy/William Poel	Little Theatre
1922	John Barrymore	Sam H. Harris Theatre (NY)
1925		Haymarket

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Date(s)	Actor(s), Director	Venue(s)
1925	Barry Jackson's Birmingham Repertory Claudius: Frank Vosper	Kingsway
1930	John Gielgud	Old Vic, then Queen's New Theatre
1934		Empire, then St James (NY)
1936		Lyceum, then Kronborg Castle
1939		Haymarket
1944		Old Vic
1937	Laurence Olivier	Two Cities Film
1948		Old Vic
1938	Alec Guinness Dir: Tyrone Guthrie	Old Vic
1951		New Theatre
1948	Paul Scofield	Stratford
1955	Claudius: Alec Clunes	Moscow, then Phoenix
1949	Michael Redgrave	Old Vic
1958		Stratford
1953	Richard Burton	Assembly Hall, Edinburgh, then Old Vic and Kronborg Castle
1964	Dir: John Gielgud	Lunt-Fontanne (NY)
1963	George Grizzard Dir: Tyrone Guthrie	Guthrie, Minneapolis
1964	Dir: Grigori Kozintsev	Lenfilm film
1965	David Warner Dir: Peter Hall Ophelia: Glenda Jackson	Stratford
1969	Nicol Williamson	Round House Woodfall film
1971–1980	Vladimir Vysotsky Dir: Yuri Lyubimov	Taganka Theatre, Moscow
1975	Ben Kingsley Dir: Buzz Goodbody	The Other Place, Stratford, then Roundhouse
1980	Jonathan Pryce Dir: Richard Eyre	Royal Court
1980	Derek Jacobi	BBC-TV
1988	Mark Rylance Dir: Ron Daniels	Stratford

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Date(s)	Actor(s), Director	Venue(s)
1988	Kenneth Branagh	Phoenix
1992/3		Barbican then Stratford
1996/7	Claudius: Derek Jacobi	Castle Rock Film
1989	Polonius: Michael Bryant (with Daniel Day Lewis)	National
1990	Mel Gibson Dir: Franco Zeffirelli	Carolco film