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0521617081 - Foreign Shakespeare: Contemporary Performance
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Shakespeare has long been considered the preeminent poet and dramatist of the English-speaking world. Shakespearean criticism has been largely Anglo-centered, stressing his mastery of the English language; even commentary on performance has normally assumed the original English text as the basis of judgment. Though Shakespeare is the most frequently performed playwright in the world, little attention has been paid to theatrical production outside the English language.

This is the first collection to offer a considered account of contemporary Shakespeare performance in non-English-speaking theatres. The essays investigate text and translation theory, the significance of the visual, divergent strategies of acting, directing and of audience culture, intercultural performance, political appropriation and dissent. Focusing on productions in Europe, with some lesser attention to Asia, the volume suggests that “foreign Shakespeare” has much to teach us about Shakespeare’s cultural place in the world at large. Dennis Kennedy introduces the topic within the context of postwar performance, and an Afterword suggests how foreign productions challenge Anglocentric standards of Shakespeare interpretation.

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Contemporary performance

EDITED BY

DENNIS KENNEDY



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PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
 The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK
 40 West 20th Street, New York NY 10011-4211, USA
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
 Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain
 Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

<http://www.cambridge.org>

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First published 1993
 First paperback edition 2004

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data

Foreign Shakespeare: contemporary performance / edited by Dennis Kennedy.
 p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 42025 3 hardback

1. Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616 - Stage history - Foreign countries.
2. Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616 - Stage history - 1950-
3. English drama - Appreciation - Foreign countries.
4. Theater - history - 20th century. I. Kennedy, Dennis.

PR2971.F.66F66 1993

792.9'5 - dc20 92-47235 CIP

ISBN 0 521 42025 3 hardback

ISBN 0 521 61708 1 paperback

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*For Ann
again and always*

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Preface

This collection hopes to open a discourse for a subject much ignored by Anglo-centered Shakespearean commentators. As a first attempt, it cannot pretend to inclusive coverage, whether geographical or canonical, and I certainly do not wish to suggest that it somehow contains its topic. I have selected essays that are provocative in that they make different kinds of entrances. They discuss Shakespeare performance outside of the English-speaking theatre of the last three decades or so, attempting to map out small plots of that vast ground, charting how foreign performances differ from familiar models. They do not proceed by a common methodology or share a political or philosophical viewpoint. Most of the essays are historical to some degree, in that they record details of and ascribe meanings to actual performances, though they do not follow a single historiographical method. What they do share is a concern for how Shakespeare appears and works on stage and in the mind in countries that lie beyond the usual exploration of critics and performance historians.

Obviously a great number of important productions, along with their directors, designers, and actors, cannot be treated here. Their absence results from the limitations of an introductory project, and does not constitute a judgment about value. If the complete Shakespeare work of major directors like Ingmar Bergman, Ariane Mnouchkine, Peter Stein, and Giorgio Strehler were given its due, there would be no room left for other important figures and issues, who are often unknown outside their own countries. In the same vein, with the exceptions of Andrea Nouryeh's essay on Japan and my Afterword, the attention here is on European and Soviet performance. In objecting to Anglo-centric approaches to Shakespeare, the volume thus runs the risk of merely substituting European ones. To a certain extent this is inevitable, since most Shakespeare production outside of English still occurs in Europe, and European theatres

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have led the way in redefining performance models. But it's also worth noting that there is no such thing as a "European value system" for Shakespeare; as the essays reveal, the values and the methods of production vary enormously, and often contradict one another.

Mapping out the larger areas for global Shakespeare performance is clearly going to take more time, more thought, and more scholarship. Since the full significance of foreign Shakespeare in the contemporary theatre is beyond the capabilities of a single volume, what is here should be read as an early sketch of a (mostly) undiscovered country.

I owe debts to many people – scholars, translators, theatre practitioners, archivists, and administrators – who aided this project at various stages and who helped define its contours. For insightful discussion and conversation I particularly thank Gerhard Blashe, John Russell Brown, Jean-Claude Carrière, Bob Crowley, Hank Dobin, Fan Yi Song, Spencer Golub, Dominique Goy-Blanquet, Wolfgang Greisenegger, Maik Hamburger, Wilhelm Hortmann, Pamela Howard, Pia Kleber, Michal Kobialka, Ania Loomba, Milan Lukeš, Mao-Sheng Hu, Cary Mazer, Zdeněk Stříbrný, Atul Tiwari, and Simon Williams. A seminar at a meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America brought some of the essayists together for early and fruitful discussion. Louis Fantasia kindly invited me to try out my own ideas in two lectures at the festival "Shakespeare in the Non-English Speaking World" in Los Angeles in 1991. Martha Coigney of the New York office of the International Theatre Institute was extremely useful in arranging my research visits abroad, and Sarah Stanton of Cambridge University Press made many valuable contributions. My colleagues Benjamin Hicks, Marianne Novy, and Thomas Rimer graciously helped improve different parts of the manuscript; Anthony Parise read and commented on the Introduction and Afterword with his customary discernment. Rachel Resinski, my research assistant for this project, was particularly helpful and efficient, and Melissa Gibson prepared an assiduous index.

Two of these essays have appeared in print before: Leonore Lieblein's "Translation and Mise en Scène" in *The Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* in 1990, and Avraham Oz's "Transformations of Authenticity" in *Shakespeare Jahrbuch/West* in 1983. Both have been substantially revised. The others have been written for this volume.

D. K.