

SHAKESPEARE'S ACCENTS

Voices and accents are increasingly perceived as central markers of identity in Shakespearean performance. This book presents a history of the reception of Shakespeare on the English stage with a focus on the vocal dimensions of theatrical performance. The chapters identify key moments when English accents have caused controversy, if not public outrage. Sonia Massai examines the cultural connotations associated with different accents and how accents have catalysed concerns about national, regional and social identities that are (re) constituted in and through Shakespearean performance. She argues that theatre makers and reformers, elocutionists and historical linguists, as well as directors, actors and producers, have all had a major impact on how accents have evolved and changed on the Shakespearean stage over the last four hundred years. This fascinating book offers a rich historical survey alongside close performance analysis.

SONIA MASSAI is Professor of Shakespeare Studies at King's College London and has published widely on the history of the transmission of Shakespeare on the stage and on the page. Her publications include *World-Wide Shakespeares: Local Appropriations in Film and Performance* (2005), *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), *Shakespeare and Textual Studies* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), *Ivo van Hove: from Shakespeare to David Bowie* (2018), and critical editions of John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (2011) and *The Paratexts in English Printed Drama to 1642* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

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Voicing Identity in Performance

SONIA MASSAI

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*To Denton Chikura, Tonderai Munyevu and Arne Pohlmeier,
sine qua non.*

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Two Gents Productions have been the main source of inspiration for this book. I first met Denton Chikura, Tonderai Munyevu and Arne Pohlmeier in 2008. Their very first production, *Vakomana Vaviri ve Zimbabwe*, or ‘what happens when Shakespeare’s *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* meets South African township theatre’, quite literally blew me away. I had not until then, and I have not since then, come across theatre artists who work as creatively and joyfully with Shakespeare. They infuse Shakespeare’s language with Zimbabwean sonorities, with snippets of Shona, with humour, improvisation, and, of course, with Zimbabwean accents. By 2008, I had already started to teach and write about ‘Global Shakespeare’, but watching them, and listening to them, alerted me to the acoustic richness of Shakespeare’s language, when Shakespeare’s language is not delivered in English Standard Pronunciation. ‘What is in an accent?’ – this book attempts to answer this question by telling the story of a very exciting journey of discovery, which starts in the present, thanks to the innovative work of companies like Two Gents Productions.

Sarah Stanton, former commissioning editor at Cambridge University Press, did not only support my decision to extend my journey by stepping back in time, but advised on structure and asked searching questions about the methodological challenges faced by scholars interested in voices that were long gone before Thomas Edison invented the phonograph in 1877. Other scholars invested in acoustic archaeology had paved the way, of course, and I found their work helpful and inspiring. Among them, I am particularly indebted to Gina Bloom, Wes Folkerth and Bruce R. Smith. The anonymous readers who supported the publication of this book also made hugely generous suggestions: it was one of the two readers who, for example, recommended that the book should travel back in time, from the present to Shakespeare’s own time, rather than vice versa. I agreed instantly that allowing living voices to be heard first would help me establish how we got to speak and hear Shakespeare the way we do now.

Other colleagues with an expertise in the different areas covered by this book have helped along the way. Eric Rasmussen, who advised as dramaturg on the Original Pronunciation production of *Hamlet* directed by Rob Gardner for the Nevada Repertory Company at the University of Nevada, talked me through how he first proposed this project to David and Ben Crystal, how the actors were voice coached, and how audiences responded to Original Pronunciation. Jonathan Hope kindly discussed the finer points of his work on early modern socio-historical linguistics with me, and Susan Bennett has continued to inspire my curiosity in audiences, past and present, and how ‘culturally constituted horizons of expectations’ affect how voices are heard and decoded.

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Abbreviations and Conventions

Quotations from Shakespeare's works are referenced to *The Arden Shakespeare: Complete Works*, Revised Edition, ed. by Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson and David Scott Kastan (London: Bloomsbury, 2011).

Quotations from Shakespeare and other early modern texts in Chapter 4 are from the earliest printed or manuscript editions listed in the Bibliography. The early modern spelling in these editions preserves the morphological and phonetic features associated with the dialects and variations, which I discuss in detail in this chapter. Speech headings are expanded and original lineation is preserved only when the quoted extracts are in verse. The earliest printed editions are identified by date of publication and STC or WING numbers, and quotations from these editions are located by signatures and line numbers.

The following abbreviations have been used throughout the book, including its footnotes, preliminaries and bibliography:

Anon.	Anonymous
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
Bite	Barbican International Theatre Events
CWS	The Complete Works Season (2006–2007)
ed.	Editor
<i>EDD</i>	<i>The English Dialect Dictionary</i> , compiled by Joseph Wright (1898)
eds.	Editors
G2G	The Globe to Globe 2012 Festival
l.	line
ll.	lines
NSE	Non-Standard English
NT	The Royal National Theatre, London
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>

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OED	<i>The Oxford English Dictionary</i>
OP	Original Pronunciation
RP	Received Pronunciation
RSC	The Royal Shakespeare Company
STC	The Short-Title Catalogue
StP	Standard Pronunciation
TLN	Through Line Number, based on Charlton Hinman's <i>The Norton Facsimile: The First Folio of Shakespeare</i> (New York: Norton, 1968)
Trans.	Translator
TwoGents	Two Gentlemen Productions
Vol.	Volume
Vols.	Volumes
WING	Donald Wing, ed., <i>Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and British America and of English Books Printed in other Countries: 1641–1700</i> , 3 vols (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945–51)
WSF	The World Shakespeare Festival (2012)