

SHAKESPEARE, TECHNICITY, THEATRE

This urgent and provocative study explores contemporary Shakespeare performance to bring a sense of theatre *as technology* into view. Rather than merely using the technologies of gesture and costume, of written documents, of light and sound, of live and now recorded acting, the complex *technicity* of theatre is predicated on its historically intermedial character, on technological change that resists essentially intermedial theatre as a single perdurable medium. In a series of probing discussions, W. B. Worthen interrogates the interaction of live and mediated acting onstage, the impact of written media from the handwritten scroll to the small-screen app in acting as a *tekhnē*, the work of Original Practices as an interactive modern theatre technology, the economies of theatrical immersion, and the consequences of an emerging algorithmic theatre, providing a richly theoretical reading of the stakes of theatre as an always-emerging technology.

W. B. WORTHEN is Alice Brady Pels Professor in the Arts, and Chair of the Theatre Department at Barnard College. He is also co-chair of the PhD Program in Theatre and Performance at Columbia University, where he is appointed as Professor of English and Comparative Literature. He is the author of many books, including *The Idea of the Actor* (1984), *Modern Drama and the Rhetoric of Theater* (1992), *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance* (Cambridge, 1997), *Shakespeare and the Force of Modern Performance* (Cambridge, 2003), *Print and the Poetics of Modern Drama* (Cambridge, 2006), *Drama: Between Poetry and Performance* (2010), and *Shakespeare Performance Studies* (Cambridge, 2014). He is the General Editor of the Cambridge Elements series, *Shakespeare Performance*.

SHAKESPEARE,
TECHNICITY, THEATRE

W. B. WORTHEN

Barnard College, Columbia University



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-108-70304-8 — Shakespeare, Technicity, Theatre
W. B. Worthen
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi - 110025, India
103 Penang Road, #05-06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.
It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of
education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108703048
DOI: 10.1017/9781108628464

© W. B. Worthen 2020

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2020
First paperback edition 2022

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

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data

NAMES: Worthen, William B., 1955–
TITLE: Shakespeare, technicity, theatre / W. B. Worthen.
DESCRIPTION: Cambridge ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 2020. | Includes
bibliographical references and index.
IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2019040760 (print) | LCCN 2019040761 (ebook) | ISBN 9781108498135
(hardback) | ISBN 9781108703048 (paperback) | ISBN 9781108628464 (epub)
SUBJECTS: LCSH: Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616—Dramatic production. | Shakespeare,
William, 1564-1616—Stage history—1950- | Performing arts—Technological innovations. |
Technology and the arts. | Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616—Film adaptations. |
Film adaptations—History and criticism.
CLASSIFICATION: LCC PR3091 .S3674 2020 (print) | LCC PR3091 (ebook) | DDC 822.3/3—dc23
LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2019040760>
LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2019040760>

ISBN 978-1-108-49813-5 Hardback
ISBN 978-1-108-70304-8 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or
accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in
this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is,
or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> vi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	vii
1 Introduction: Theatre, Medium, Technology	i
2 The Face, the Mask, the Screen: Acting and the Technologies of the Other	38
3 Shax the App	68
4 Interactive Remediation: Original Practices	104
5 Designing the Spectator	147
6 And Or And Not: Recoding Theatre	176
<i>Notes</i>	204
<i>Works Cited</i>	234
<i>Index</i>	260

Illustrations

1	Lars Eidinger, lower left, as Hamlet in Thomas Ostermeier's 2008 production for the Berlin Schaubühne. Photo: Arno Declair	<i>page</i> 39
2	Onstage at <i>Roman Tragedies</i> , Brooklyn Academy of Music. Photo: W. B. Worthen	62
3	Gregory Moss, <i>Play Viewed from a Distance</i> . Postcard	70
4	Robert Quillen Camp, <i>The Secret Bear</i> . Postcard	72
5	<i>Actsophia</i> , iPhone app. Screenshot	90
6	<i>Scene Partner</i> voice options. Screenshot	91
7	<i>Scene Partner</i> voices for purchase. Screenshot	92
8	<i>Rehearsal</i> script for rehearsal markup. Screenshot	93
9	<i>A Piece of Work</i> : the trestle stage, fog, and typographic performance. Screenshot	185
10	<i>A Piece of Work</i> : typography as action. Screenshot	188
11	<i>A Piece of Work</i> : page design. Screenshot	189

Acknowledgments

In the extended course of writing this book, I have been grateful to audiences and editors for the opportunity to share its progress. My thanks, too, for the permission to revise and extend material that was published earlier, as this book was taking shape: “Shakespearean Technicity,” *Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare and Performance*, edited by James Bulman (Oxford University Press, 2017); “Free Reign? Designing the Spectator in Immersive Theatre,” *Routledge Companion to Scenography*, edited by Arnold Aronson (Routledge, 2018); “Shax the App,” *Shakespeare and Textual Studies*, edited by Margaret Jane Kidnie and Sonia Massai (Cambridge University Press, 2015); “Interactive, Immersive, Original Shakespeare,” *Shakespeare Bulletin* 35.3 (2017): 407–24; “Hamlet’s Face,” *Face-to-Face in Shakespearean Drama: Ethics, Performance, Philosophy*, edited by Julia Reinhard Lupton and Matthew James Smith (Edinburgh University Press, 2019). And many thanks to Annie Dorsen for answering questions, and for permission to publish photos of *A Piece of Work*, and to Robert Quillen Camp and Gregory Moss to reprint their provocative postcard plays here. My gratitude to Hana Worthen, for the example, support, and inspiration that allowed this book to take its stage.