Theater without Borders Conference Program

Saturday Evening: Opening Reception and Dinner starting at 6 p.m. (Limonaia)

Sunday Morning: Theater without Borders Steering Committee Meeting (Breakfast at the villa) 9-11 a.m.

12:00-1:00 p.m. LUNCH FOR PARTICIPANTS (Sala Bolognese in Villa Sassetti)

Sunday 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Welcome: Susanne Wofford

1. Pam Brown “The Actress Boyed and Englished”. I will consider how English playwrights adapt (and deform) the icon of the the foreign actress in Munday's Fedele and Fortunio, Marlowe's Tragedie of Dido, Marston's Antonio and Mellida, and Middleton's More Dissemblers Besides Women. I plan to explore the usefulness and limitations of concepts of the theatergram, citational femininity, "the virtual woman," and "the actress effect" in examining roles featuring the 'boy diva' type.

2. Alessandro Serpieri, “Some notes on translating Shakespeare”.

Break 3:00-3:15

Sunday 3:15-5:30

3. Jacques Lezra, "The Pleasures of Infanticide." This paper is about Lope's play El niño inocente de la Guardia alongside Macbeth, with a little Midsummer Night's Dream thrown in. It treats the status of ethical judgments in early modernity, passing through an analysis of the way theatricality works in these two plays.

4. David Schalkwyk, “Hamlet’s Dreams.” This paper discusses the relationship between experiences and representations of incarceration by South African prisoners and Hamlet’s sense of Denmark as a “prison,” including his statement: “I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.” It presents its comparative argument via the “Robben Island Shakespeare” that was circulated among political prisoners on the island in the late 1970s.

5. Fernando Cioni, “Italian Alternative Shakespeares: Carmelo Bene’s appropriation of Hamlet”. Carmelo Bene, one of the leading “alternative” and avant-garde Italian actors and directors, produced five Hamlets during his career. Bene’s appropriation of Hamlet is both a reading and a misreading of Shakespeare’s tragedy. The paper will focus on the modes of this appropriation, which involve rewriting, remaking and refashioning of the original play.

6 p.m. Reception and Book Party to celebrate the recent publications of members of the Theater without Borders group. Hosted at the Villa. (Sala Cipressi)
Monday  9:00-11:15

6. Michael Armstrong, “Three Gentlemen of Verona: The Politics and Poetics of the Two-Friends Motif in Cervantes, Ariosto, and Shakespeare. This paper is primarily about Cervantes’s burlesque play La casa de los celos y selvas de Ardenia (The House of Jealousy and the Forest of Arden), Ariosto’s Orlando furioso, and the politics of the (Carolingian) Matter of France as it circulated from page to stage among France, Italy, and Spain. However, I frame the discussion of Cervantes and Ariosto in relation to the two-friends motif (in Cervantes’s play, an episode of Don Quijote set in Florence, and Shakespeare’s Two Gentlemen of Verona), understood (among other ways) as a trope for comparatism.

7. Clare McManus, “He that deserves my favour / … must travel for me”: the English travel play, Italian epic romance and the Hispanic geographies of John Fletcher’s Island Princess (1621). I’ll discuss the complex interaction of Spanish colonial sources and Italian literary models in this late Jacobean tragicomedy to argue that The Island Princess is a Hispanised travel play which also takes its cues for the encounter with the Islamic other from Italian epic romances such as Ariosto’s Orlando Furioso (1532) and Tasso’s Jerusalem Liberata (1581). Somewhat ambitiously, I want to start to think about the implications of this inherent transnationalism for the generic practice of late Jacobean theatre.


11:15-11:30 Break

11:30-12:30

9. Laura Tosi, “’You will think them poor baby-stories to make such a talk about’: Prose Adaptations of Shakespeare’s Venetian Plays for Children”. A discussion of a group of adaptations that have risen to the linguistic and structural challenge of adapting Shakespeare for a young audience. I would like to highlight the changing cultural implications of reimagining the Bard for the child reader, from the Lambs to contemporary authors such as Leon Garfield and Marcia Williams.

10. Gabriela Dragnea Horvath, “Shakespeare’s Encounter with Romania”-- the role of Western theater, in particular Shakespeare, in the cultural identity formation of Romanians.

LUNCH 12:45-1:45

Monday Afternoon: 2:00-3:30 p.m.

11. Pavel Drábek, “‘Eight persons may easily play it’: touring plays and economic casts”. This paper makes a couple of propositions regarding the performing practice of travelling comedians’ plays. Its focus is on economic casts in several early modern English plays, some of which may have been written with a view to the travelling troupes. One concrete result of the study is a model hierarchy of actor types and their doubling.
12. Karen Britland, “Itinerant players and itinerant audiences: theatrical mobility in early modern Europe”. This paper will briefly look at the international make-up of London theater audiences before considering in some detail the visits to England in 1634/5 of a French and a Spanish acting troupe. It will consider the possible reasons for these troupes’ presence in London, and will ask what their reception can tell us about English theatrical tastes and expectations.

3:30-3:45 Coffee Break

3:45-6:00

14. Markéta Polochová, “How chances if they travel?” English strolling players and (their) Shakespeare. The Fratricide Punished (Hamlet) and Titus Andronicus are two out of 4 to 6 Shakespearean plays connected to the travelling troupes. Titus was published as early as 1620, Fratricide was staged a few decades later. The paper aims to introduce characteristic features of comedians’ Shakespeare, with an analysis of their specific procedures in adapting plot and characters.

15. Rob Henke, “Begging as Performance in German, Italian, and English ‘Beggar’s Books’”. Beginning with the origins of the late medieval and early Renaissance “beggar’s book” in German municipal registers from the 1340s, this paper examines the ways in which begging was figured as a kind of performance in texts mainly characterized by hostile attitudes towards the poor. Special attention is given to the German text Liber vagatorum (early sixteenth century), the Italian Il vagabondo (late sixteenth century), and Thomas Harman’s A Caveat for Common Cursetors (mid-sixteenth century).

Dinner in Town

Tuesday Morning:
9:00-11:15 a.m.
16. Paul Kottman, “Love Dramatized: Romeo and Juliet from Narrative to Stage”. My paper will look at ways in which Shakespeare’s dramatization of Romeo and Juliet alters the tragic structure of the non-dramatic, narrative sources on which it draws, especially the novelle by Bandello and Da Porto as well as Ovid’s ‘Pyramus and Thisbe.’ My aim will be to think about how the limits and possibilities implied by the staging of scenes – as opposed to a narrative sequence of events – work to radicalize certain features of the ‘tragic love’ plot, in particular the extent to which the lovers’ bond is ‘individuated’ in relation to pre-existing civic and kinship ties. I will argue that the lovers’ fate in Shakespeare’s play, precisely because of its theatricalization, acquire a socio-political significance that is lacking in the narrative sources.
17. Bianca Calabresi, 'The woeful case of the Nurse in 'Romeo & Juliet'. The paper looks at the first Quarto's setting of the Nurse's speeches in a 'differential' (italic) typeface to ask in what ways it suggests we should think of the Nurse inside & 'outside the box': not only in terms of Italian traditions of Balie & Nourritrice but as a figure of heteronormative, 'alien,' or all too domestic desires.

10:30-11:00 Coffee Break

11:00-12:30

18. Virginia Scott, “Trissino's Sophonisba at Blois in 1556: A French Court Performance of an Italian Model Tragedy”. A surprising amount of documentary information has survived, making it possible to reconstruct in some detail the two performances at Blois of Mellin de Saint-Gelais and Jacques Amyot's translation of Trissino's Sophonisba, commissioned by Catherine de Médicis in 1556. By combining information drawn from a manuscript of the translation and court financial records with various iconographic documents, a credible reconstruction can be offered for consideration.


12:30-2:00 LUNCH

2:00-3:30

20. Maria Stampino, “Aminta and the Others: European Influence of the Italian Pastorals”. Taking the cue from our location and from Lisa Sampson’s monograph, I will argue that the influence of Tasso’s Aminta outside of Italy, although considerable at least in print, is traditionally overrated when one considers that texts such as Isabella Andreini’s Mirtilla were also traveling in performed form.

21. Richard Andrews, “Isabella Andreini’s Stage Repertoire: the Lettere and Fragmenti.” Writings attributed to the actress Isabella Andreini (1562-1604) include her Rime and the verse pastoral play Mirtilla, both issued in her lifetime; and the Lettere e Fragmenti in prose, edited posthumously by her husband Francesco. The purpose of this paper will be to insist that the Lettere, as well as the more obviously theatrical Fragmenti, offer a series of invented dramatic personae, behind which the actress preferred to conceal herself, rather than a picture of Isabella’s own personality or opinions.

3:30-3:45 Coffee break

3:45-4:30

22. Susanne Wofford, “Hymen in As You Like It: Gods and Rituals on-stage in Italian pastoral and Shakespeare”

23. Possible discussion of Future Plans
Tuesday Evening:

6:30 P.M.: Performance of *The Comedy of Errors* by the Performance International Theatre Company, at the Limonaia, Villa La Pietra, with reception to follow.

8:30 P.M. (approx.): Dinner in town at the Perseus restaurant.

Wednesday Morning

9:00-11:00 a.m.

24. M.A. Katritzky, “Shakespeare’s “Portrait of a blinking idiot” and “Picture of we 3”. This presentation focuses on two of Shakespeare’s relatively rare evocations of the visual arts, “the portrait of a blinking idiot” (*The Merchant of Venice*, II.ix.54) and “the picture of ‘we three’” (*Twelfth Night*, II.iii.16-17). Drawing on a multi-disciplinary, comparative, transnational approach, it suggests that they can be usefully viewed from the perspective of a longstanding tradition of closely linked folly-related formulaic sayings and images. Knowledge of this tradition’s images is fundamental to the interpretative process of both its illustrated and unillustrated texts, and enriches our understanding of the transnational context of its usage by Shakespeare and other early modern dramatists.

25. Bella Mirabella, “A Wording Poet: *Othello* among the Mountebanks”. Early modern mountebanks, itinerant, street performers who sold herbs and remedies throughout Europe, were often portrayed in the darkest terms—“lewd,” and “shameless,” “practiced in all cozening,” “a secret back-biter…a common jester, a liar…”, according to John Oberndorff in 1602. In this paper I argue that the mountebank’s negative qualities provided Shakespeare with the template for the kind of villain he wanted to create with Iago. In the transnational mountebank the English Shakespeare found the villain he needed to undo *Othello*—a glib, charismatic, smooth-talking fraud, a Renaissance con man who could sell anything.

26. Melissa Walter, “Prosthesis and Parody in *Twelfth Night* and the novella”

11:00-11:15 Coffee break

11:15-12:00

27. Eric Nicholson, Response to the morning’s papers

28. Christian Billing to lead Discussion of *Comedy of Errors*

Lunch in town. Departure from villa by 12:30, checkout at noon.