

## **TransEuropa: Early Modern Drama between East and West**

### **Conference Program**

The Conference will take place at Charles University, Faculty of Arts / Filozofická fakulta, Jana Palacha 2, 116 38 Prague 1, Rooms No. 104 and 111, first floor.

### **Wednesday, May 16<sup>th</sup>**

Room 104 (first floor)

5-6:30 pm Registration

6:30-7:30 pm Drinks,

Welcome address of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and of the Local Organizer

8 pm Dinner (arranged for the group)

### **Thursday May 17<sup>th</sup>**

Clare McManus, Conference respondent throughout

#### **Panel 1: Theory and Practice of the Transnational on Stage 9 a.m. -1p.m.**

##### **9:00-9:45: Richard Andrews**

"Flaminio Scala and Artisan Theater"

Flamminio Scala's printed collection of *commedia dell'arte* scenarios demonstrates a method of 'cut-and-paste' dramaturgy, using well-known plot theatergrams often traceable to identifiable written plays in the Italian *commedia erudita* tradition. This paper will reflect on the extent to which such an artisan practice might underlie not only the methodology of Italian improvised theatre, but the construction of plays in the wider early modern European tradition.

##### **9:45-10:30: Donald Hedrick**

"Transnational Entertainment Logic: London Entertainment Culture"

The paper will review my theory of "entertainment value" and its origins and in Elizabethan theater and entertainment economies, providing "axioms" of entertainment value for theoretical application. It will also attend to this theoretical approach in terms of transnational entertainment such as was increasingly registered by the Master of Revels, and the mixes of tourism with entertainment.

#### **BREAK 10:30-10:45**

##### **10:45-11:30: Christian Billing**

"When Did the Borders Close? Trans-historical, Trans-national and Trans-cultural exchange versus Modern Performance: Shakespeare's Lavinia in Recent Stage and Film Productions"

This paper considers contemporary stagings of Lavinia in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* with a particular emphasis on the ways in which modern directors deal (or do

not deal) with the character of Lavinia as a site of cultural and performative intertextuality. The paper also considers the performative strategies of the early modern transvestite acting tradition and modern gender-political issues. (showing Video Clips)

**11:30-12:15 p.m.: Martin Prochazka**

“Beyond Cultural Capital and Authenticity: Theorizing Heterotopias in Shakespeare in the Age of Globalization”

**LUNCH 12:30-2:15 p.m.**

**Panel 2: 2:30-4:30 p.m.**

**Friends and Enemies in Shakespeare and Theory**

**2:30-3:15 Jacques Lezra**

"*Hostis humani generis*: Pirate Histories in the Early Modern Mediterranean." (Braudel, Measure for Measure, Pericles, HVI, Scarron. *Le Prince Corsaire*)

**3:15-4:00 David Schalkwyk**

"Can women be friends? Montaigne, *Twelfth Night* and the Theatre of Friendship”

**Friday May 18<sup>th</sup>**

**Panel 3: 9 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**

**St Genesis and Eastern/Greek Narratives in Early Modern Drama**

Like the omnipresent story of Dr Faustus or that of Don Juan, the myth of the actor-martyr St Genesis has had a perennial presence in the history of European culture. The first four papers on this panel investigate several of the facets of the Genesis legend in European drama and theatre, while the fifth extends the exploration into eastern and Greek sources, this time for Shakespeare.

**9:00-9:45 Alena Sarkissian**

“St. Genesis and Other Saint Actors”

The paper introduces the issue of attitude of Early Christianity to theatre and actors in particular. Social conditions of actors and the attitude of Roman Empire and Early Christianity to the social group are traced on the background of the personalities of the early saints-actors. St. Genesis is not the only saint martyr with the occupation of an actor in the times of the Late Antiquity. Other three saints-actors of the period are introduced (on the base of Greek and Latin sources).

**9:45-10:30 Magdaléna Jacková**

“The role of the theatre in two plays about St. Genesis”

The paper analyzes the part of the theatre in becoming Christian in Lope de Vega’s *Lo fingido verdadero* and Václav Renč’s *The Caesar’s Mime*, drawing attention especially to differences between Ginès in Lope de Vega’s baroque play, whose conversion is due for the most part to his dramatic art, and his modern double, who comes to conversion after a painful searching of himself.

**BREAK 10:30-10:45****10:45-11:30 Pavel Drábek**

“The Hidden Saint in Philip Massinger’s *The Roman Actor*”

The paper analyzes the clandestine usage of the St. Genesius motif in Philip Massinger’s otherwise secular play, drawing attention to the relation to its ultimate source, Lope de Vega’s *Lo fingido verdadero*, as well as the ingenious ways in which Massinger upholds the hagiographic (or more broadly spiritual) dimension of the play.

**11:30-12:15 Petr Christov**

“Actors and Martyrs – Play within the Play in Rotrou’s *St. Genesius Play*”

The paper analyzes the dramatic structure of Jean de Rotrou’s play *Le Véritable Saint Genest* and the phenomenon of the “play within the play” (and “*mis en abîme*”) in baroque theatre and its consequences for the techniques of acting in the European theatre.

**12:15-1:00 p.m. Melissa Walter**

“Portia’s Inheritance: Eastern Narrative in the *Merchant of Venice*.”

The sources for the casket test in *The Merchant of Venice* tap into a web of narrative that includes the Greek saint’s life of Barlaam and Iodasaph, the Georgian Balavariani, Indian fables, and the life of the Buddha. This casket test is a site of spiritual knowledge and the testing ground of insider/outsider status in Shakespeare’s play. Therefore, the eastern textuality of this key moment can help us rethink how “us” (the Venetians in the play, but also Christian Europe, and even the Englishness under construction on Shakespeare’s stage) is being imagined through the crossroads space of Venice.

**LUNCH: 1:00 – 2: 30 p.m.****Panel 4: 2:30-5:00 p.m.****Courtly Entertainments and Courtly Internationalism****2:30-3:15 p.m. (Peg) M A Katritzky**

“Court festival, English players and conjoined twins: Peter Mundy’s descriptions of theatrical entertainments in Danzig in the 1640s”

The British sea-merchant Peter Mundy’s “*Itinerarium Mundii*” is known to early modern scholars through manuscript versions at the Bodleian and British Libraries, and a multi-volume edition of the 1920s. Documenting his extensive travels, one of its highlights is a detailed account of his stay in Danzig in the 1640s that includes several descriptions of theatrical interest. These descriptions are the focus of this talk.

**3:15-4:00 p.m. Pam Brown**

"Extraordinary Bodies at the Early Modern Court"

Early modern courts in Spain, France, Italy and England used the body of the dwarf as a performing object and fashionable collectible. Rosemarie Thompson recently created the term "the extraordinary body" to describe the human being once called monstrous, freakish, or bizarre, and subject to both stigma and "minstrelization," that is, forced or

passive exhibition. From roughly 1500-1700 royals and aristocrats sought out and imported all sorts of extraordinary bodies, from the hunchback and blackamoor to the dwarf, to display and minstrelize them in entertainments that dramatized stigma. Dwarfs in particular spurred spectacles troping on the non-human, the soulless, or the powerless: they played food to be consumed, animals to be petted, infants to be pampered, and sex toys to be fondled. What did this peculiarly early modern form of "dark play" reveal about the fantasies and bad dreams of power?

**4:00-4:45 p.m. Ema Vyroubalova,**

“The Pragmatics of foreign speech on the Elizabethan stage”

Having a character speak in a manner would will be perceived by the audiences as "foreign," represented a deliberate choice on the part of the early modern English playwright to exploit the theatrical potential of linguistic alterity and opacity. If the presence of foreign languages necessarily produced a certain confusion and exclusion, this very confusion and exclusion paradoxically opened up new channels of communication within early modern performance spaces. Foreign speech variously incorporated into early modern English plays constituted a complex cultural product which was created and inflected by the linguistic resources and attitudes all those partaking in the early modern theater communities whether directly as playwrights, actors, audiences, or indirectly as censors, setters, printers, and booksellers

This paper discusses how two Elizabethan plays--Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and Marston's *Antonio and Mellida*--account linguistically for each play's Italian locale. *The Merchant of Venice* deploys a monolingual mode in which all characters, whether from Italy or even farther afield, speak in English. *Antonio and Mellida* on the contrary resorts to a bilingual mode and interpolates numerous lines in Italian into its English text. I argue that both approaches provide revealing insights into the complex linguistic dynamic that foreign languages generate in early modern English plays. The differences between them then suggest that a play's linguistic dynamic may or may not crucially hinge on the practical relationships with a concrete foreign language held by those who in diverse capacities produce and consume the plays.

**Discussion of papers from the Panel: 4:45-5:00 p.m.**

**Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>**

**Panel 5: 9:00-11:00**

**The Politics of the *Commedia dell'arte*: Poverty and Servants**

**9:00-9:45 Eric Nicholson**

“The Third Woman Shall be first, or the Theatrical *serva* as Padrona”

In contrast to the *commedia dell'arte* “prima donna innamorata,” little comparative study has been devoted to the role of “la serva” (often named Franceschina). With reference to historical conditions of serving women in early modern Europe, my paper will explore links between the Franceschina *maschera* of Italian scenarios and her transmutations in English and French plays.

**9:45-10:30 Robert Henke**

“Representations of Poverty in the Commedia dell’Arte”

An examination of social history, performance texts, and popular literature reveals the social resonance of a theater usually considered non-political

**10:30-10:45 BREAK****Panel 6 10:45-11:30 (Continues after Lunch)****Theatrical Politics of the Transnational on Stage****10:45-11:30 Shormishtha Panja**

"Lebedeff, Kendal, Dutt: Three Theatrical Travelers on the Indian Stage."

My paper deals with the work of three theatre producers/directors and playwrights, the Russian musician and theatrical entrepreneur Herasim Lebedeff who produced the first commercial play on the Calcutta stage in 1795; Geoffrey Kendal, the driving force behind the touring group 'Shakespeareana' that performed Shakespeare in India right at the time of Independence and Partition (1940s and '50s) and Utpal Dutt who began by doing English language theatre, Shakespeare and Shaw, on the Calcutta stage but later switched to Marxist Bengali plays commenting on contemporary social and political ills (1950s to 1970s). The paper will examine the connection between theatre and ideology particularly in relation to the problematic role of Shakespeare in a society that is in transition--throwing off the shackles of the Raj and becoming an independent country.

**11:30-12:00 Discussion of Patricia Parker’s Paper**

“Cutting Both Ways: Bloodletting, Castration / Circumcision, and the “Lancelet” of The Merchant of Venice” (Paper Circulated in Advance)

**LUNCH 12:00-1:30****Panel 6 continues: 1:30-3:00 p.m.****Transnational Subtexts/Theatrical Politics of the Transnational on Stage****1:30-2:15****Jane Tylus**

“Othello Imitated”

In act III of *Othello*, Cassio asks his mistress, Bianca, to copy the handkerchief that Desdemona has carelessly dropped. But Bianca refuses: “Wheresoever you had it, I’ll take out no work on it.” Bianca’s refusal contrasts with Shakespeare’s Italian source, a novella from Giraldi’s *Ecatommitti*, in which Othello’s madness ensues when he sees a seamstress copying his lost fabric. The Italian novella, that is, allows for the fatal prop to be imitated; Shakespeare’s play does not. I will use this episode to discuss Shakespearean imitation on several levels: his positing of his Italian source as something easily “imitated”; his positing of Othello’s African, Muslim culture as inimitable. But there is another Italian text that lies behind Shakespeare -- and perhaps Giraldi -- that complicates matters even further: Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*.

**2:15-3:00 p.m. Susanne Wofford**

"Roman and Shakespearean Festival: Ovid's *Fasti* , Shakespeare's *MND*, and the Problem of Festive Violence"

This paper considers the Roman roots, especially in the Ovid's *Fasti*, for an alternative understand of feasts and festivity as a basis for early modern festive and pastoral drama. I will also be looking at Bellini's painting "Feast of the Gods" and considering the role of rape and averted rape in humanist and theatrical representations of the festive and the pastoral (or locus amoenus).

**CONCLUSION AND FINAL DISCUSSION****3:00- 3:30 p.m. Final Discussion****Unable to Attend:****Bianca Calabresi**

"Imperia or the Global Prostitute of Early Modern Drama":

My paper will explore the tradition of the international sex worker as a figure for European forms of exchange, her parallels with the textual construction of national "virtuose," and the Renaissance delineation of both female sex workers and intellectuals as "parragons" or "paragone"--as personae who pressure distinctions between visual and verbal culture, linguistic communities, and unequal economic states.