

Like the previous Institutes, “Shakespeare’s Playhouses Inside and Out 2008” will combine presentations by some of the world’s foremost experts on the original conditions of Shakespearean staging with daily workshops using Equity actors working on the two stages that most closely approximate those for which Shakespeare and his contemporaries wrote. Furthermore, the 2008 Institute refines the earlier programs, offering participants a more thoroughgoing investigation of original staging practices, the culmination of which will be a full, original-practice production of William Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*.

As before, Institute’s goals are to inspire the teaching, research, and practice of Shakespeare. We aim to show teachers how serious consideration of literary texts as scripts designed for specific playing conditions will energize classroom teaching. We aim to prompt literary critics to think afresh about everything from the production of the text to its performance. We aim to have the Institute answer these essential questions: What do the playing conditions mean for an understanding of Shakespeare’s plays and the plays of his contemporaries? For the way we write about Shakespeare? For the production of plays written for the Renaissance stage? For the future of theatre? And, most centrally, to the ways in which we teach Shakespeare?

As an Institute for university scholars and teachers, “Shakespeare’s Playhouses Inside and Out 2008” has five overlapping goals:

- (A) to provide a training ground and laboratory that help literary scholars become familiar—even comfortable—with the process of converting abstractions about the plays into theatre,
- (B) to give participants the acting personnel and the settings to examine seriously the staging conditions at the heart of the world’s most productive dramatic period,
- (C) to apply the lessons of early modern English staging to the exploration of Shakespeare in the classroom,
- (D) to expose participants to the buildings for which Shakespeare wrote, to the literary and theatrical implications of those two buildings, and to the differences between the two, and
- (E) to give participants an initial exposure to the world-class collection at the Folger Shakespeare Library and to the collections and research time and space at the University of Virginia’s Alderman Library in Charlottesville, VA (just 40 minutes away from Staunton, VA).

Implications of Renaissance Staging

When teachers' workshops in Ashland or Stratford discuss the plays they see produced by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival or the RSC, they are frequently talking about production designs and ideas foreign to the conditions for which Shakespeare wrote. Such discussions can provide profitable perspectives on character and theme in the plays, but they can also lead away from, not toward, the study of Shakespeare's stagecraft and the way his language is tied to its setting and to the actors performing it.

The Two Stages

The Blackfriars. The Blackfriars Playhouse, opened in September 2001 in Staunton, Virginia, is a recreation of the indoor playhouse that Shakespeare and his partners acquired in 1596 and in which they played regularly after 1607. Designed by architect Tom McLaughlin with the advice of Andrew Gurr, Jon Greenfield, Walter Hodges, and Peter McCurdy (chief builder of Shakespeare's Globe), it recreates in size and material that original space. With the theatre at Drottningholm, Sweden, the Blackfriars is one of only two theatres in the world universally lighted, as Shakespeare's indoor plays were lighted, by chandeliers. The Blackfriars Playhouse is the home of the American Shakespeare Center, whose mission since 1988 has been to use original staging practices to recover an understanding and enjoyment of Shakespeare's plays. Two troupes perform all year in repertory under the artistic direction of Jim Warren.

The Globe II Footprint. In the coming year, under the supervision of Peter McCurdy, who built Sam Wanamaker's Globe in London, we will establish a footprint for Globe II and construct a temporary stage with a trap door, a balcony, and a *frons scena* that includes two stage doors and one "discovery space." That stage will replicate the size of the Globe II stage (for which we have dimensions from the Fortune contract) and give our participants not only a working space to explore the differences between playing indoors and out, but also a sense of sharing in the planning for a major new theatre.

What will participants learn here that they cannot learn elsewhere?

For scholars, the benefits of understanding the plays of Shakespeare by rehearsing and studying with actors and by working on these two stages are literally everywhere and are everywhere literary. Simply put, a grasp of the physical place of Shakespeare's plays has as much significance to understanding a Shakespeare scene as, for example, the knowledge of the shape of a baseball diamond has to an

