

Institution: UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM
Unit of Assessment: D35 Drama
Title of case study: Helping directors, actors and audiences to understand Shakespeare's writing: textual advice, programme-writing and public speaking in relation to Shakespeare's plays
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) Jackson has provided professional enhancement for directors and actors by bringing his research-led insight into the texts and acting traditions of Shakespearean theatre to bear on the preparation of scripts for performances. He has achieved this through collaboration during rehearsals, working at a detailed level of interpretation and performance. His research has also enhanced cultural enrichment for audiences through such forms of public engagement as essays in theatre programmes.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) All research has been conducted by Professor Russell Jackson, Allardyce Nicoll Chair of Drama at the University of Birmingham, in the period 1993–2013.</p> <p>Jackson has published monographs, edited volumes, and contributed essays and articles on aspects of theatre history, Shakespeare performance and adaptation in a variety of journals (see outputs R1 – R6 below). All these have focussed in one way or another on the relationship between rehearsal and production process and performance, with attention as appropriate to their historical and cultural contexts. The research typically involves extensive original exploration and analysis of theatrical archive material, including script materials, and of other documents and film and TV productions. The recent research cited in the present case study also builds on Jackson's much longer career of publishing academic research in this area, with an emphasis on the exploration of the range and variety of possible interpretations (and performances) of dramatic texts. His ten years of substantial (approximately 10,000 word) annual reviews of seasons at Stratford-upon-Avon in <i>Shakespeare Quarterly</i> has directly informed both research and practice.</p> <p>Jackson's essays 'Actor-Managers and the Spectacular' and 'Shakespeare in opposition: from the 1950s to the 1990s' in <i>The Oxford Illustrated History of Shakespeare on Stage</i> (co-edited by Jackson) explore theatrical performances and responses to them in the context of the culture of the period, both theatrical and general. This line of critical and historical enquiry is given fuller scope in <i>Shakespeare at Stratford: Romeo and Juliet</i>, a study, informed by extensive archival research, of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> productions at Stratford since 1945. This draws on promptbooks, reviews and other documents to examine the variety of interpretations in productions over a long period, and analyses their place in the general policies of successive artistic regimes as well as the 'climate' of the time, ranging from the post-war revival of the theatre to its reconstruction of the RSC as a subsidized company in the 1960s, and subsequent developments. Here, as in other research, the priorities and achievements of performance are measured against (literary) critical approaches of the period(s) in question. The study of film adaptations is represented by the monograph <i>Shakespeare Films in the Making</i>, a detailed analysis of five major films, drawing on studio files, script drafts, reviews and publicity materials; articles on a 1910-11 silent version of <i>Richard III</i> filmed on stage at Stratford-upon Avon; and on a TV production and film project on <i>Richard II</i> by the American actor/director Maurice Evans. Jackson's edited collection <i>The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film</i>, featuring his introduction and essay, offers an overview of important aspects of this field. His monograph <i>Theatres on Film: How the Cinema Imagines the Stage</i> carries Jackson's work on film and its relationship with theatre into a related but wider area of study, again combining analysis of performance choices with discussion of their artistic and social context in film and theatre history.</p> <p>Research of this kind is also a two-way process, in which academic research, with an emphasis on archival investigation, has informed Jackson's practical experience in theatre and film, leading in turn to consolidation and enrichment of the academic work. In the rehearsal room, Jackson's research in performance history and in the interpretation of the texts is brought to bear</p>

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on solo and group work with actors, and in a relationship with directors that shares some of the functions of an assistant director.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- R1) (with Jonathan Bate) *Shakespeare. An Illustrated Stage History* (Oxford University Press, 1996; 2nd ed., as *The Oxford Illustrated History of Shakespeare on Stage*, 2001): 'Actor Managers and the Spectacular,' and 'Shakespeare in Opposition: from the 1950s to the 1990s'
- R2) 'Richard III at Stratford-upon-Avon, c.1910: staging and story-telling for theatre and film', *New Theatre Quarterly*, XVI/2 (NTQ 62) May 2000, 107-121
- R3) *Shakespeare at Stratford: 'Romeo and Juliet'* (New Arden series, Thomson Learning: 2003.)
- R4) *Shakespeare Films in the Making: Vision, Production and Reception* (Cambridge University Press, 2007)
- R5) 'Maurice Evans' *Richard II* on stage, television and – almost- film,' *Shakespeare Survey*, 61 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 36-5.
- R6) *Theatres on Film: how the Cinema Imagines the Stage* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013)

4. Details of the impact

(a) Informing the practice of actors and directors in rehearsal, and providing cultural enrichment for audiences through print and other media connected with productions.

Jackson's work in the theatre typically involves attendance at the whole of the first week of rehearsals, during which the groundwork on text and a rough outline of the performance is reached, and at subsequent rehearsals and run-throughs as appropriate into the final period of technical and dress rehearsals and previews, including additional preparatory work on text with individual actors. Beginning in the 2008-9 season, Jackson acted as text consultant on five productions of Shakespeare plays directed by Michael Grandage at the Donmar Warehouse in the West end and on tour. The Donmar productions in question were *Othello*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Hamlet* (2008-9); *King Lear* (2010-11); and *Richard II* (2012-13). *Othello* and *Richard II* each played for three months at the Donmar Warehouse (which seats 250) and *Twelfth Night* and *Hamlet* played at Wyndham's Theatre (seats 956) in London. *Hamlet* also ran on Broadway from 12 September to 6 December 2009. *King Lear*, after a run of three months at the Donmar, had a national tour in the UK before transferring to the Harvey Lichtenstein Theater at Brooklyn Academy of Music (seats 874) in June 2011. All productions played to capacity or near-capacity audiences in London and on tour. *Lear* was broadcast internationally in HD: its **total audience was calculated by the company at 180,000** (see source 1 below). *Othello* was recorded for radio by the BBC and distributed on CD in 2009. In the 2013-14 season Jackson has worked in the same capacity on productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Henry V* in the Michael Grandage Company's season at the Noel Coward Theatre.

Michael Grandage is clear about the impact of Jackson's research on his work, he states that through productions detailed above Jackson 'has **offered invaluable textual support to myself and the actors during rehearsals as well as performance**. ... During my time at the Donmar the many Shakespeare productions that I worked on all involved Russell Jackson and all of them were a critical success that took the theatre's standing to a new level. I genuinely believe **this would not have been possible without his considerable input**' (source 2). Actor, Jude Law (with whom Jackson worked on *Hamlet*) writes that 'Working with Russell on Shakespeare's texts has been an invaluable part of my preparation before and during rehearsals' (source 3). David Walliams summarises Jackson's position in relation to cast and director as providing 'help in understanding the bollocks that Shakespeare wrote' (source 4).

In May-July 2013 Jackson worked in the same capacity with Kenneth Branagh and Rob Ashford on *Macbeth*. This production played for 18 performances in a 280-seat venue in Manchester as part of the Manchester International Festival, a sold-out event seen live by an audience of approximately 5000). Reviews included enthusiastic endorsement by the *New York Times* critic Ben Brantley (8 July 2013) and acclaim from British reviewers (source 5). The production was also relayed locally as a 'big screen' event and nationally and internationally in the NT's HD broadcast. (Specific

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audience figures are not available, but National Theatre Live broadcasts play to 23 countries, including 250 cinemas and performing arts venues in the UK alone). An essay by Jackson appeared in the print programme and its online version. The production will be revived in New York in June 2014 as part of the Lincoln Center Festival. After the rehearsal period, Kenneth Branagh wrote: 'Russell Jackson's work with myself, my co-director Rob Ashford and fellow cast members of *Macbeth* was a **significant contribution to the success of the production** in Manchester, particularly with regard to the **clarity and effectiveness of the interpretation and delivery of the text**' (source 6). Ashford wrote: 'Thank you for all your great work on this production. We certainly couldn't have done it without you. ... I look forward to learning more from you on the next one (source 7).

(b) Cultural enrichment for audiences

Jackson has contributed a 1000-1500-word essay to the programme of each production. These programmes are sold at each performance, and the absence of free cast sheets means that the sales figures are high compared to those of some other companies' productions. The programme for *King Lear* was distributed in print in London, on the national tour and in New York, made available on-line to accompany the HD broadcasts, and included in the printed text accompanying the production. Jackson's programme essays were also included in the published scripts of *Richard II*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Henry V*, and that for *Othello* was in the booklet issued in the CD set.

In November 2010 Jackson contributed a programme essay for the National Theatre production of *Hamlet*, and in December 2012, he wrote another for the production of Pinero's *The Magistrate*. The *Hamlet* programme's total sales were 30,000, including those for the Olivier and Lyttelton transfer (within the NT complex), the tour and sales to cinemas for NT Live. It played six weeks on tour (Salford, Nottingham, Woking, Milton Keynes, Plymouth, and Luxembourg). 5,000 programmes were supplied to the UK dates. For *The Magistrate*, 22,000 programmes have been printed (as of January 2013) and a second run included a number that sent out to cinemas for the NT Live showing.

Jackson has also engaged widely with audiences for Shakespeare by giving talks and 'in conversation' sessions with non-academic bodies in the UK and internationally, including the Shakespeare Guild (New York) and the English-speaking Union (Arts Club, New York and Cosmos Club, Washington DC), and a 'talkback' session for Theatre for a New Audience (New York) for Peter Brook's adaptation of sonnets by Shakespeare. In 2009 he gave the annual Shakespeare's Birthday lecture at the Folger Shakespeare Library. His research-informed contribution to an OU programme on film versions of *Othello* has been made available to wider audiences in education and beyond on DVD. In 2012 Jackson shared his research with a range of audiences by giving a pre-performance talk for a production of *The Taming of the Shrew* at the Derby Theatre, introducing three film screenings in the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's 'Shakespeare on Screen' festival, and taking part with Stanley Wells and Paul Edmondson in a webinar sponsored by the SBT and Cambridge University Press.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- [1] Statistics from Donmar Warehouse Company reports of audience figures and estimates of programme/text sales and access (available on request)
- [2] Factual statement provided by director, Michael Grandage
- [3] Factual statement provided by actor, Jude Law
- [4] Factual statement provided by actor, David Walliams
- [5] http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/09/theater/something-wicked-this-way-runs.html?_r=0
- [6] Factual statement provided by director, Kenneth Branagh
- [7] Factual statement provided by director, Rob Ashford