

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

<p><b>Institution:</b> University of York</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 35B, Department of Theatre, Film and Television Panel</p>
<p><b>Title of case study:</b> Performing Early Modern Theatre</p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The impact of the research has two elements:</p> <p><b>Romeo &amp; Juliet in Performance:</b> collaboration with the organisation Film Education on the production of a DVD-based interactive teaching resource for GCSE English (2013).</p> <p><b>Jacobean City Comedy.</b> The editing/adaptation, rehearsing, public performances, and filming of Thomas Middleton’s <i>A Mad World, My Masters</i> and John Marston’s <i>The Dutch Courtesan</i> (2011 and 2013). The first project has proved a significant teaching resource with more than 1700 schools nationwide already using it in their teaching. The second project entails significant public engagement through performances, workshops and talks, and educational outreach events, while a website further facilitates and tracks on-going discussion between scholars, theatre professionals and the wider public.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The project is rooted in a longer history of Michael Corder’s on-going research into the relationship between editing practices, close textual study, and performance realisation in Early Modern English theatre, all of which he has carried out while an employee at the University of York (initially in the department of English and since 2007 as a Professor in Theatre, Film and Television). In addition to being the General Editor of OUP’s Oxford English Drama series, Corder has produced editions of fourteen seventeenth and eighteenth century comedies across several series, is the co-editor of collections of essays on English comedy (1994) and performance traditions in the long eighteenth century (2007), and has researched and published extensively on the relationship between editorial and performance traditions, with particular reference to Shakespeare, in top journals and presses. Corder’s creative practice is informed by his scholarship which underpins the process of adaptation (2013) and direction of new productions of plays from the early modern repertoire such as <i>A Mad World...</i> and <i>The Dutch Courtesan</i>. This research as practice in turn facilitates new scholarly insights and understandings and poses new questions for further research. Another key strand of this research programme, closely related to the Jacobean project, is work on how actors have been trained in conservatoires and rehearsal rooms to tackle early modern texts. A first fruit of this – a long article on “(Mis)advising Shakespeare’s Actors” – appears in the 2013 volume of <i>Shakespeare Survey</i>; while an article on the Cambridge academic, director and theatrical legislator George Rylands will appear next year in a CUP collection, <i>Shakespeare and the Universities</i>. The core impetus behind this research project is an ambition to link ambitious historical understanding of Jacobean scripts and detailed, scholarly analysis of their textual properties with performance exploration of their stage potential through to full performance, in ways which can open up those processes to as wide an audience as possible, and prompt discussion in a wider sphere about the nature of the challenges, demands and opportunities which this repertoire presents to modern interpreters and performers.</p> <p>The insight into and understanding of <i>A Mad World, My Masters</i> which emerged from the 2011 explorations is radically different from the received view of the play and an article by Corder exploring this was published in spring 2013 in <i>Shakespeare Bulletin</i>. In addition to a Revels edition of the play which Corder is co-editing, <i>The Dutch Courtesan</i> research provides the basis for a specially-designed website which showcases the integrative elements of historical scholarship and creative practice. This website includes a stage-by-stage tracking of the production (from early research to the performances in June) and the hosting of a debate between an international team of scholars about the play and the worlds out of which it was generated. Scholarship which seriously engages with the kind of performance detail on which these projects hinge is very scarce, outside the Shakespearean repertoire. This York initiative aims to address that lack via an innovative combination of methods.</p>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

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

The underpinning research has been published in various outputs over the past 15 years. These outputs are in top established peer-reviewed academic presses and journals. The OUP edition on Sheridan was submitted to the 2001 RAE for English Language and Literature, which achieved a 5\* rating. With regard to more recent outputs, *Shakespeare Survey* has been published by Cambridge University Press since 1948, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, published by Johns Hopkins University Press has been in existence since 1982.

**Editions**

Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *'The School for Scandal' and Other Plays*, ed. Michael Corder (Oxford University Press, 1998) (now in its 3<sup>rd</sup> edition).

**Edited Collections**

Michael Corder and Peter Holland (eds.), *Players, Playwrights, Playhouses: Investigating Performance, 1660-1800* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) (Derived from the proceedings of a conference organised by the editors at the Huntington Library, California)

**Journal Articles and Chapters in Collections**

'(Mis)advising Shakespeare's Actors', *Shakespeare Survey* 66 (2013)

"The Malcontent' and the 'Hamlet' Aftermath", *Shakespeare Bulletin* 31: 2, (2013), pp. 165-190.  
[http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/shakespeare\\_bulletin/v031/31.2.corder.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/shakespeare_bulletin/v031/31.2.corder.html)

"A Mad World My Masters': From Script to Performance", *Shakespeare Bulletin* 31: 1 (2013), pp. 3-28. DOI: 10.1353/shb.2013.0002

'Are We Being Theatrical Yet? Actors, Editors, and the Possibilities of Dialogue', in Barbara Hodgdon and W. B. Worthen (eds.), *A Companion to Shakespeare and Performance* (Basil Blackwell, 2005), pp. 399-414.

*Publications without a DOI/url are available on request.*

**4. Details of the impact** (indicative maximum 750 words)

**Romeo & Juliet in Performance.** Drawing on Corder's research into on the creative challenges, demands and opportunities the early repertoire offers modern actors, this collaboration with Film Education on an interactive DVD resource for GCSE English seeks to actively engage students with Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* by providing examples of how scenes from the play can be interpreted, staged and performed. Ensuring that the play remains fresh and relevant to new generations, the learning aims also include how to examine texts as a blueprint for performance, and how multiple interpretations of characterisation, voice and relationships can be developed. Corder staged and directed colleague Tom Cantrell in scenes of the play, which were filmed by other departmental colleagues, with additional commentary and insight was provided via an interview with Cantrell. The project has facilitated both a new engagement with Shakespeare and the potential to explore the relationship between Theatre and Film in a teaching resource produced for secondary schools. *Romeo & Juliet in Performance* was piloted by Film Education at their annual teaching conference in 2012 and since then 4400 DVDs have been distributed to schools via direct mail or through the National Association of English Teachers. The DVDs are supplied with a mechanism allowing Film Education to track when a school first registers the DVD online. As research suggests that only a third of teachers use the DVD on a web-connected PC, the 571 users registered by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2013 may actually reflect a total of over 1700 users, a figure that may be increased further if we account for schools registering a single disc for use by multiple teachers. On average each registered user used the disc for three one hour lessons. The resource was nominated for a BAFTA in the 'Children's, Learning – Secondary', category.

**Jacobean City Comedy.** This project has led to the editing, adaptation, staging and production by

## Impact case study (REF3b)

Cordner of two Jacobean masterpieces, *A Mad World My Masters* in June 2011 and *The Dutch Courtesan* in June 2013. These productions have been supported by major funding from the Shepherd Trust. The cast and crew of both, as well as the website team for the second, were drawn from the staff and students of the Department of Theatre, Film and Television. The live performances have a significant local as well as a national reach. Approximately 500 tickets were sold for *A Mad World* and 340 for *The Dutch Courtesan*. There is an additional educational engagement and outreach dimension for the latter production - a public pre-show talk with Guardian theatre critic Michael Billington demonstrated the play's place in modern theatre practices and discussed the place of the Jacobean repertory on the modern stage, while freelance director and TFTV comedy outreach officer Tom Wright conducted three practical workshops on Jacobean trickster comedy for schools and the general public.

The production is accompanied by a specially designed website, [www.dutchcourtesan.co.uk](http://www.dutchcourtesan.co.uk), which will benefit both school and university students as well as a wider, non-university public (including theatre practitioners and companies interested in translating plays from this repertoire into performance). The website:

- tracks the production stage-by-stage from early research to the performances, offering insight into the rehearsal and research processes, and demonstrating ways in which students can unlock the performance potential of demanding, early modern scripts.
- hosts and promotes new debate between an international team of scholars about the play and the worlds out of which it was generated.
- tracks past explorations of the early modern repertory at York. It makes available further materials about the *Mad World* production, including the film made of it.
- engages with theatre professionals, including discussion of the challenges of performance with Olivier award-winning actor Oliver Ford Davies.
- engages with schools and teachers, and will host a filmed workshop with Perry Mills, deputy head at King Edwards School, Stratford-upon-Avon, and director of an internationally-acclaimed company of boys from the school working on this repertory.

The website went live on 15/03/13 and by 22/08/13 had received 1867 unique visitors and over 15,000 page views. The film of *A Mad World* alone has attracted 100 views. Visits from the UK account for 83% of traffic, while around 10% is derived from Canada and the US. Significant traffic has also been seen from Germany, Australia, the Netherlands, France, South Korea, Spain, India and Austria. The site has already been used as a teaching resource by lecturers at the University of Kent and Stanford University and provides a model of early modern theatre research and web-based publishing for the newly-commissioned *Global Shakespeare* series for Blackwell. Cordner conducted workshops with the cast of the Royal Shakespeare Company's production of *A Mad World My Masters*, and wrote an article for the programme.

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

###### *Romeo and Juliet in Performance*

Film Education DVD statistics provided by Director of Education at Film Education.

###### *Jacobean City Comedy*

Statistics for website obtained via Google Analytics, Wordpress.com Stats and Vimeo Stats.

###### *Evidence of educational impact*

Corroborating statements/contacts from:

Senior Lecturer in Renaissance Literature, University of Roehampton

Lecturer, Department of Education, University of York

Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Stanford University and general editor, *Global Shakespeare*