



Shakespeare's Globe



Research Bulletin

Annex to Issue Numbers 21, 22, 23

May 2002

**Interviews with Company Members
from the 2001 Theatre Season**

The Celtic Season

Dr Jaq Bessell
(Globe Research)

Contents

Barry Kyle	3
Geoffrey Whitehead	6
Harry Gostelow	8
Jack Morrison	10
Jasper Britton	15
Mark Springer	18
Michael Gould	20
Patricia Kerrigan	23
Patrick Brennan	27
Paul Brennen	30
Peter Hamilton-Dyer	32
Roger McKern	35
Liam Brennan	37

Interview with Barry Kyle

Master of Play, *King Lear*

Response to the space

I think the Globe experiment is evolutionary - that it is never complete. Before I actually began working here, I thought the civic function of the architecture was very successful, not because the architect had succeeded in imitating what we thought the Globe was, but because it was possible for the plays to be experienced as part of a civic summer London celebration. It reminded me very much of the promenade concerts. The promenaders - those audience members who stand in front of the stage - define the experience in a particularly vivid way. Likewise, we are always conscious of the Globe's groundling-promenaders, whether we are one of them or whether we are seeing the play over their heads.

Though I recognised the success of the 'wooden O' in civic terms, I think I came on board for this production in the spirit of watchful investigation. I wasn't sure, for instance, how the rather decorative *frons scenae* and heavens would function for this play. I wished that the stage area was plainer, somewhat closer to the auditorium in decoration.

I felt that the random natural life of the Globe and its immediate environs would suit the play. For example, this afternoon, in early August, Patricia Kerrigan (Goneril) who has red hair, stood down stage right and turned in and faced Lear. Her red hair was brilliantly backlit by the sunshine, and every single outfit on the stage was in shadow. In this moment, when the knights and Lear all realize that they're being insulted and that she means to cause trouble, the event was briefly shown like something out of Goya or Rembrandt, with her flaming red hair in the corner in the summer sun. Extraordinary - and totally accidental. What happens is the random life of the city south of the river - you can actually smell the river - the changes in temperature, the changes of wind, the changes of light combine to create a constantly shifting series of perspectives from the city that created these plays.

The imagery of the poetry is filled with a sense of a peculiarly English landscape, an element that has been somewhat neglected in productions for indoor theatres with increasingly sophisticated technology at their disposal. Since the Sixties, *Lear* has been regarded, in English productions at least, as a profound artwork increasingly interpreted in the shadow of Existentialism. We've created increasingly complex, usually post-modern, highly conceptual responses to the play, and we've rather arrogantly assumed this to be the only plausible way to interpret the plays. I would describe that as leaning rather too heavily on the 'art' side of the art/nature divide. I have been living and working away from England for 10 years and, when I returned I was reminded of Cordelia's response to the landscape on her return from France.

So, I came to the Globe with both a definite sense of what the Globe might do for *King Lear*, as well as a wish to see a stage environment that was rougher and simpler, one that created the possibility of something quite different.

The Globe audience

The audience's physical condition fluctuates in heat, rain or cold, and this of course directly affects the production. Some of the actors have talked about two or three performances that were hard to get through because the weather was so bad, and the audience was so uncomfortable, that there was so much movement. The yard can become addictive for actors. You can just get focused on the groundlings, because they give so much back, but unless the show is locked solid between actors, that stuff just seems like cheap repetitive thrills. I think of the playing conditions here as a party; you have to join in.

Replacement of technical supports with other elements

Coming to work at the Globe, I was certainly apprehensive about the fact that there is no lighting. A director has to create a whole visual and conceptual life for the play. That's the element that you can identify as the director's. At the Globe, that layer is gone. I think this can lead you to press your identity on the work some other way, and I hope a brave, brazen honesty has taken the place of the technical support I rely on at other theatres as a director.

I think the Globe is really about the relationship between actor and spectator. In contrast, I think that for at least the past 30 years, 'Shakespeare' has been about the relationship between the director and the critic. And given that critics are keen to keep their jobs once they get them, that relationship rarely changes. For instance, can you imagine how many times Michael Billington has seen *Twelfth Night*? What could you possibly do that they haven't seen?

When I did *Lear* in Prague exactly ten years ago for the national theatre, the production was about what happens to a country when the big stone statues fall and the next generation gets its chance. However, to do a production at the Globe specifically intended to enlighten us about Eastern European politics would be wrong. What I attempted to do was produce an organic production of *King Lear*, one which was kind of influenced by the words of Hardy and Blake and Strindberg. We were very much trying to deal with the psychological implications of dictatorship, particularly on women, and the nature of that kind of injury and the spiritual opportunities of dispossession. And to try to create a production which had some roots in the Celtic season. Those were the guideposts I used in creating this work. Fundamentally, I think it's the relationship between the actor and spectator that I was drawn to.

Spatial dynamics

Before I came to the Globe, I thought that it was a 'one space', that is, a space where we put a heroic image in the central spot and the stage seems complete. That's a very nineteenth century idea. But actually the Globe is a 'two space': when you try to put a single actor in 'the hot spot', you can't find it. There is no single spot that is one hundred percent visible to every seat in the theatre. The stage feels "dressed" when one actor is in powerful conflict with another. In my view, it's an epic space, a democratic space. It requires a counterview in order to actually exist. That's also why diagonals are so important.

Working within a 'Masters system'

The press frequently point out that the term 'Master of Play' is Globe-speak for 'director'. I think titles should reflect what you're actually doing. My way of working is to start with the language and work out. I feel that the process of bringing the language to life is absolutely paramount. Early on in rehearsals we were looking at the opportunities that the verse presents, and in a theatre without scenery and lighting, I confess that the notion of someone else other than the director doing the verse, is initially odd.

Essentially, my work with Giles has been collaborative rather than divisive. For his part he was unsure whether I wanted him to be there, because he thought I might feel the administration of the company was making him be there. But my sense as a guest here has been to come in the room and not to start work by throwing the carpet out. You adapt to the custom of the country, so to speak. However, I don't believe that the division of these roles in the Globe Masters system is axiomatic to producing the plays of Shakespeare.

The play in performance and the re-rehearsal period

I've been involved with *Lear* a number of times now, and in directing a play like this one, you're never finished! I think that in terms of staging, I probably would restage at least a third of play. But when you're in a middle of a season and something in the play is successful, it's not a great idea to start slashing through it. So during the re-rehearsal period it was more like taking the car in for a forty point tune-up; it wasn't rebuilding the car.

What's good about it is that in most Shakespeare theatres that have big McDonald's cultures - you know, 'Millions served,' - it's really difficult to find time to change anything. In the case of the RSC, for example, the actors would all be in rehearsals for the next show. There was rarely time for re-rehearsal. I don't know if the re-rehearsal period was helpful. Yes, I think it was useful, given that the play is *King Lear*. But did I feel that I made thirty percent improvement in the show? No.

***Lear* and the director**

The play is almost unbearable to live through. I have to be one of the few directors in history who's ever turned down *King Lear* at the Royal Shakespeare Company. I did that in the late 80s, because I was going through a period in my life at the time when I think if I had done *King Lear*, I would have finished up sectioned. The play's a terrible thing, particularly the psychosis in it. I'm not really a craft director; I'm an exploring, intuitive director. I have to go through it with the actors in the rehearsal room. I have to experience it in order to find a way of interpreting it, and the play tears you apart.

Interview with Geoffrey Whitehead

Gloucester, King Lear

Technical demands of the space

When I first came to the Globe to see a show here, I saw the possibilities, the potential of the space, but I thought 'it's too difficult for me'. I felt that I didn't have enough power on a purely technical level, something that I feel is a requirement for the space. So I put the Globe to the back of my mind. When I got the offer to play Gloucester, I didn't think I could really do it, but the prospect of such a good part in such a wonderful play, plus the opportunity to work with an experienced director, really swayed me to do it. The rehearsals were fine, so I wasn't worried about playing the part, but when we got onto the stage, as I had expected, in the space I felt I was never on top of the wave, and instead I was always swimming against the tide somewhat. If I did four or five performances in a row and I got a good sleep each night, I found I was able to deal with it much better. I have found that I need to be physically at the top of my form to give it my best here.

It's draining to perform here. Finding the physical strength and energy that's required in this space became a challenge for me that no-one ever really mentioned beforehand. After the first preview, I was reassured that 'yes, it's fine', and so I didn't realise. When the notices came up, two or three of them said that I was bland, which sounds bad; I took this to mean that I wasn't going far enough with the part. It was what I had expected all along, that I hadn't got the right sort of equipment to deal with this space. I always read notices, because I think it's good to know what people are saying about you, but they don't upset me. However, sensitivity and underplaying, which some critics pick up on, are risky assets at the Globe.

Because the rehearsal rooms provided a very intimate environment, everyone in the cast had the same leap to make when we transferred the production to the stage. It was suddenly another world. This transition led me to identify a few basic technical things I think have to be addressed, in particular, picking up cues, and pace. Playing at the Globe requires such absolute precision in terms of pace, so that the actor is not gabbling, but absolutely keeping the ball in the air, keeping the momentum of the play going. Regardless of the particular role or function of each character in the play, all actors are drivers rather than passengers.

So it was difficult transition, but gradually, I have tried to give my performance more weight as the months have gone by. I feel I'm better equipped to deal with the space now, as a result. If I was starting tomorrow, I'd know what to expect.

The Globe audience

As an actor you're very well supported here, and welcomed into the company. It's when you get out there in the space that your trouble starts! I wasn't prepared for the audience, and I didn't quite know what to expect. I'd heard tales about them chipping in, making comments and being unruly, but I've not experienced any of that whilst I've been here. The audiences have been fantastic. They are obviously lovers of theatre and lovers of Shakespeare. At the end of the show you can tell that they've had

some kind of emotional experience, and that's been a surprise to me - a revelation. Audiences here are much more enthusiastic, much more fired up with what they see than others I have played for before. Perhaps it is because they're asked to *do* something; they're asked to imagine what elaborate sets would normally represent in more technically supported theatres.

I don't engage directly with the audience. Occasionally I catch someone's eye, but I find that unsettling. The audience is tangible enough without making direct contact. If they're looking bored, it makes me more anxious. Also, it's not always appropriate.

Physical features of the stage

Using the area down towards the front of the stage is the best. There you can think about taking your levels down a little bit. I enjoy the scene I have with Julian when we're sitting on the edge of the stage. The upstage area, funnily enough, seems to throw the sound forward, possibly because you're close to all that boarding.

One thing that I think they've got to sort out is the festoon lighting. It's very pretty and it's okay in June, July and the beginning of August, but once it starts to get into September, it doesn't do the job, and it needs to be brighter.

Re-rehearsal

I didn't find the re-rehearsal period tremendously useful, though of course there are always little bits and pieces in any production that need tidying up. I think that in an ideal world the director would see the show once a week throughout the season, keeping an eye on it, giving notes, etc. It's important for an actor to be able to imagine that they are performing *for* someone, and very often the person they have in mind is the director. This might be another way of keeping the production focused, rather than having a re-rehearsal period.

Interview with Harry Gostelow *Albany, King Lear*

One of the lessons I've learnt is about how low you can take your voice and speak quietly in that theatre. I hadn't imagined my characters in previous shows could do that, so I usually kept to a medium or large level, vocally. It was nice to take it quite low this time, and as long as the voice was supported then I felt it was carrying to the whole theatre. So that was a good discovery.

Physically, I made most discoveries during my first season here, in *The Comedy of Errors*. During that show I learned that standing downstage and turning your back to face upstage is a very strong position; it gives focus to whoever might be speaking. I also learned that the corners are very good places to get to, whereas the pillars are good places to be if you haven't got much to say for a long while, where people can see you but you don't get in their way. Entering on the diagonal and moving across the stage is always very strong. A big swooping figure of eight pattern of movement around the pillars can be made to look naturalistic, and it takes in most of the auditorium. Mark (Rylance) talked to us about the 'Valley of Death', the line between the two pillars, and reminded us to avoid that.

Focus

This company is very good at holding the focus; it actually takes a while before you realise where you should be *giving* focus; a lot of movement can actually seem extraneous, even if it helps with establishing a character, if you find yourself filling too much space on the stage when someone else is supposed to be holding the focus. In the first scene of *King Lear*, a lot of us are just standing around, taking in this very important news, and we're reacting our socks off; the way the kingdom is being divided up is changing our lives, after all. You just need to place those non-verbal exchanges so that they're not right in the middle of King Lear's lines; the reaction should come bang on the end of the line, and then you focus back to simply standing there.

Verse

Giles (Block, Master of Verse) is really helpful in encouraging us to follow through to the end of each line. His approach works so well because it makes clear to the audience that the character is saying things for a reason. If every syllable and word became elaborate, the audience would forget the first bit of the sentence by the time you reached the end of it. To use the analogy of a game of tennis, if you have got the ball in your court for a long time (a long speech, perhaps) this needs to finish in an almighty smash, which will return and devastate the person on the other side of the stage. That is something to react to.

As Albany I have lots of times when I have to listen to King Lear and to Goneril, without speaking. Maintaining a physical (rather than verbal) life on stage is made easier by one or two tricks, and my great cheat is looking like I'm just about to speak, before the other person says something else, or thinking about how I might defend

myself before they crash in with the next point of accusation against me. I think I'm justified in bringing that sort of characterisation into Albany, but I don't know if it would work for other characters. Albany is slightly put upon; he is two seconds too slow to get into the conversation. That suits Albany well, in fact, until the end of the play, when he finds strength and consequently doesn't hesitate in his words. At the play's close he speaks very well chosen, powerful words, and even though he gets very emotional towards the end, he still expresses himself very articulately.

Audience reaction

Albany's not a laugh a minute guy, so I don't get that kind of audience reaction. One or two times they do gasp when I'm standing up to Goneril, which is sort of satisfying. I've had to learn to trust the stillness in the audience and their attentiveness, and that being true to Albany's character is enough, rather than trying to play directly with the audience. In *The Comedy of Errors* I had to be much larger in a physical sense, building up a kind of hysteria or pushing the play on to the next madcap scene. It was important then to make sure that the audience didn't droop. The challenge in this play for me is to draw the audience in, rather than go out to them like I had done in other plays, and to try and keep the scenes as intense as possible

Transition from rehearsal room to stage

In the initial rehearsals, Barry (Kyle, Master of Play) was very keen to emphasise very domestic elements of this family tragedy, rather than the epic qualities of the play. However, as we went into the space it became clear that it would be impossible to play the kind of intricate details we had developed in rehearsals in that space, as it demands that extra dimension in the storytelling.

I think people like Kathryn Hunter and Giles have said the same thing before: 'Make mistakes; take bigger risks'. And there is a certain size of gesture required to perform effectively, I think, but you have to be true to the character. And you quickly realise whether your choices are grounded or not, after a few shows. The experience of playing teaches you.

Interview with Jack Morrison.

Technical Resources Manager, Shakespeare's Globe

Hamlet at the Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza, 2000

I'd seen pictures of the Teatro Olimpico before I went there, but nothing really prepared me for the reality. It was incredible. Before the company arrived last year, Giles (Block, Master of Verse and Play, *Hamlet*) walked through the whole play in this new space, entrance by entrance, scene by scene. He walked through everyone's movement, and then he drew incredibly complicated diagrams to show where he thought everyone come in from. So he had mapped it out quite thoroughly in his mind.

There were a couple of surprises, such as discovering how narrow the stage left, or the extreme stage left door is. It is a lovely entrance and exit, so we wanted to bring on the Norwegian army through there, but they found it a very tight squeeze. Giles was very sensitive to issues like people having to walk on carrying big, long halberds, spears and flags, in a very fragile, unique theatrical environment, and a lot of preparation was done on handling weapons with care and precision back stage.

Macbeth at the Teatro Olimpico, 2001

It was much easier for this production. There were twelve chairs and as many actors. This year, we arrived the night before the actors did, to do a lighting session and to look around back stage. We made decisions about where furniture was going to come on from, and we spoke to the Teatro Olimpico staff to discuss what they would and would not let us do. In 2000 they were fairly jittery about it: we couldn't go into the alcoves between pillars, we couldn't stand in between the pillars on the stage. However, this year they were more relaxed, and we were able to use chairs all over the stage. We just tried to impress on everybody in the Globe company to be as sensible as possible.

Palladian architecture, *ad quadratum* theory, and the Globe

If everything that we believe about the design of the theatres is true, then Palladio's contributions (of which the Teatro Olimpico is only one) and his use of *ad quadratum* theory represent some of the greatest breakthroughs in Renaissance architecture. Palladio was using *ad quadratum* to explore the perfect dimensions of architecture, the perfect door for example. You see the same dimensions and proportions in doorways from buildings like the Rotunda and the Basilica, and so many of the other famous buildings in Vicenza. So when you're walking around here, you're looking at the best reference materials for the Globe, and its use of the same *ad quadratum* principles, because it's still here. For me, the great thing about being in Vicenza, with so many buildings designed by Palladio, is seeing where the Globe's got it right. It means someone's been doing their research!

To extend the metaphor, we are working on a stage which is constructed around certain ideals concerning the relationship between man, his environment and

architecture. Much has been said and written about the actor-audience relationship at the Globe, and that's down to physically where you put the people to engage in the story and where you put the story-tellers - that's the exciting thing. The actor-audience relationship is the concept and the theatre is the ideal hardware, so to speak. In Vicenza you can walk around an entire town that's been built with a similar set of ideal principles in mind. Palladio was looking to build an ideal city, to get an ideal relationship between the people who lived in the city and the architecture around them. Using Ancient Roman plans as his basis, he was trying to develop or rediscover the past in order to inform his present and the future, in just the same way that we are trying to do in theatrical terms today.

That said, we are making our stumbling, first steps at trying to make the Globe work, and trying to find parallels between it and an indoor space poses all sorts of problems. Tim Carroll is right when he says the Teatro Olimpico is an intensely beautiful thing, yet we shouldn't necessarily call it a theatre. It fulfils most of the criteria of a theatre whilst not fulfilling others.

The Teatro Olimpico as a performance space

It is interesting dealing with a vertical element which we don't really have to deal with at the Globe. We've got infinite vertical space at the Globe and yet, to me, it feels more intimate than the indoor Teatro Olimpico. The pentice roof gives a kind of scale to the humans on the stage, and the pillars of Hercules give a sense of scale to the human drama going on, but that scale is different in the Olimpico. It's a strange one. Later, when they painted the ceiling in *trompe l'oeil* fashion to look like the sky, perhaps they made a nod in the direction of this idea of infinite vertical space – but they didn't want to get wet, obviously!

Like its ancestor the Roman theatre, the Olimpico features a back wall so enormous that it swallows people up, and you get an incredible fore-shortening effect. Although it's a very shallow stage, people right on the forestage seem enormous and people up by the back wall appear very small.

Modern theatre practitioners that I've spoken to about the Olimpico have the same reaction: that it is too busy, too distracting. But I find it doesn't detract from the action on stage, in the same way that the decoration on the *frons scenae* at the Globe seems to vanish once you engage with the story.

The set

The Teatro Olimpico is a bit of a 'mule' of a theatre: the *frons scenae* was built by Palladio and the backstage scene perspective was done by his associate Scamozzi. It's incredible – a set for *Oedipus Rex* – and it's the sort of thing that in London we'd have taken down years ago in order to put something sensible up. It's intensely beautiful and should be preserved, but in a sense the box of tricks that Palladio designed is not useable.

Theatre today is often a very destructive thing; to show emotion an actor might smash wine glasses on stage every night, or throw things against the walls. Of course the thing about the Teatro Olimpico is that it's a place of conservation and if you do

anything destructive there you are effectively destroying a piece of history, which is quite scary really. It's quite a responsibility.

Use of the space

Our production uses the forestage area, and because the set is just chairs, that is fine. We wanted to use a centre opening, but this one is so exposed, and without being able to hang curtains we would have had to sidle on from left or right of the central opening, and Tim (Carroll) wasn't keen on that. He wanted a central focus with a sense of reveal, so we had to use what they had which is the trap door; we custom built a set of treads which the Teatro Olimpico like and are keeping.

The entrances are very narrow - you can just about get a chair through them - and there's only one crossover point back stage. There's also a very large and modern under-stage. I don't know the exact date of it but it's certainly a Victorian addition. It's fantastic to have all this space under the stage because you can treat it as a working environment.

Lighting

For *Hamlet* we had to use the windows as performance spaces and because we couldn't have side lights there we had to do a general cover from the front. This gave a lot of shadows off to the sides, so this time for *Macbeth* we asked if we could position lights in the windows at the sides of the stage. We also asked the Italians to provide us with a general cover, which we then tweaked. It's the general cover that they use for most of their shows, but it has limitations. For example, there are a lot of shadows around the *frons scenae*, and the light drops off remarkably right down stage centre at the front, which means that if you were to stay in light all the time you would always need to be at least three feet away from the edge of the stage at the front, and at least three feet in from the wall at the back. It's not the most subtle or sympathetic lighting of space, but it is what it has to be, given the limited lighting positions available to us.

Lighting has affected the way the actors respond: there was a moment during tech when things stopped so that a couple of the actors were able to look at the stage from the front to be sure that they could be seen. Fears of that kind can make actors feel very uncomfortable and here it's clear that they don't feel they have the same kind of freedom of movement as on the Globe stage.

We tried to put every spare light we had onto the audience, so the actors can see the audience faces just about, but it's still rather dim out there. We can't recreate the Globe production here, in that respect.

Authentic lighting practice

The evidence of how they used to light the Olimpico is so apparent everywhere that it's a shame that we ignore that and try and focus everything on the centre stage area, which is not where the major illumination would have been 400 years ago. There are hundreds of bracket holes that indicate lighting was around each major figure and relief on the proscenium and around the auditorium and inside the perspectives. We

gave up on trying to count them, and I have no idea how they got up high enough to light ones positioned in the centre of the top of the proscenium. This would have caused a very different kind of light, but fire precautions mean that we can't now find out what that would have looked like. We have to contend with a fire engine in the garden every night as it is, but if we wanted to place torches where they would have been, we'd probably have to have one inside the theatre as well!

Presumably all the windows would have been open, not only to let daylight in but because of the many candles they must have used; torches, flaming torches, candles, wicks, burners, etc. The heat would have been incredibly intense.

Acoustics

The back wall of the *frons scenae*, although not completely flat, is a fantastic sounding board, and voices bounce off it with terrific resonance. Then, the ceiling throws everything back down on the audience again, so there is a terrible echo. Local rumour has it that Palladio's original design had a cloth ceiling, and portions of the audience sat up above it and looked down onto the stage through this cloth ceiling. Presumably that would have deadened a lot of the noise. The Victorians put in a huge rucked fabric ceiling, and it's only recently that the fabric ceiling was taken down and the ceiling was plastered and painted to look like the sky.

The Minister of Culture for Vicenza praised the audibility of our actors. Jeanette Nelson (Master of Voice) has obviously done good work, because our actors know how to use their voices very well. I think the Globe actors are more equipped than most to take on big open spaces, and they are able to use their voices to control them. Globe actors are able to whisper in the Olimpico.

The musicians warned us that it was going to be really difficult to balance the sound from them and the sound of the actors, and occasionally it is quite confused out there. The good thing about the Musicians' Gallery at the Globe is that it has a big, flat sounding board at the back, as well as a roof, which means the musicians' sound is refracted straight into the auditorium. We don't use amplification in the Globe, because usually we're using the right instruments, designed for people to be able to speak on the stage.

For this production at the Olimpico the band is on stage (they're too small as a band to put them in the orchestra pit) and so they have to take their levels right down in places. The underscoring sections were the big problem when we first started rehearsals. One great strength of the company is that Fraser (Tannock) who plays lead trumpet can talk directly to Jasper (Britton, Macbeth) and say, 'this is absolutely as quiet as I can play it' and Jasper will say 'okay I'll take it up a bit at this point'; in other companies the actor would have gone to the stage manager, who would have had to speak to the MD, and the MD would have spoken to the trumpet player. The wonderful thing about the Globe is that the musicians and actors just talk to each other. Long may that last!

Sense of history

It's wonderful to be working in a space which has been here for hundreds of years, a space in which hundreds and thousands of people have done shows in the past; just to be part of that incredible cycle of theatre. It's nice to be romantic about theatre.

Also there's a sense of reawakening: the exciting thing about working at the Globe is learning about actor/audience relationships, and so it's great to come to a theatre contemporary with the one we are trying to research, though it throws up far too many questions: What was the expectation of the people who came through the door? Why was it important to this town to have art and culture? What was it they were striving for, trying to recreate? Were they heading towards what we are doing now, or did we go off on a completely irrelevant tangent in the 1700s?

Interview with Jasper Britton

Macbeth, Macbeth

I was quite nervous of this role to begin with. When I picked the script up I thought it seemed so simple and so direct, but there's something deceptively simple about it on the page. Because when I started to say the words themselves aloud to other actors and actresses, I suddenly thought, 'I don't know what I'm talking about. This is a nightmare!'

I think it's because the thoughts go deeper than any other Shakespeare part I've yet tackled. I didn't begin to scratch the surface in rehearsal, partly through my own laziness and partly through the way the rehearsals were conducted. But there's a limit to what one can achieve in rehearsal, particularly with this theatre. You only start doing the main part of the work once you are out there, in performance.

The thing that I've learnt about playing this part is that there's so much I have to do. I always thought there isn't any subtext in Shakespeare but actually I've found that I'm completely wrong. Often in this play I find that I'm saying one thing while thinking something else; that may have something to do with my deceiving everybody – the thanes, my wife, the audience. There are so many layers of thought even in one line.

The other extraordinary thing about it is that there are some things that I play completely differently every performance, not through wanting to be perverse. If I was good enough, actually, I would probably perform all of it differently every day. But I need to be in a scene, while thinking of the scene that's just gone by, and of the scene that's coming up next. Then I've got to think of how those two things are likely to influence what I'm doing at the moment. And this is all happening whilst I'm considering the atmospheric conditions, the audience and their mood. If I immerse myself entirely in the moment and I'm not thinking ahead, then my performance gets away from me. I need to be thinking all the time, and there are too many layers in it to allow total immersion. I can't just let it unfold. So it's a real challenge every time.

I have an example: immediately after the killing of Duncan, I have various items of information to impart to Lady Macbeth, but my preoccupation is with something that I've heard, or whether she heard anything. And of course, she heard the owl. But I heard something else, and it takes me a long time to get around to telling her about the guards that spoke in their sleep and woke each other up, that I stood and listened whilst they said their prayers, that I couldn't say 'amen'. So though eventually we get to 'Methought I heard a voice cry', I have to be thinking of 'Methought I heard a voice cry' from the moment I re-enter. But the weirdest thing is this terrible preamble which makes it all very difficult. None of this occurred to me in rehearsal. In rehearsal I was just thinking, when I say the words why do I not feel a thing?

The discovery of Duncan

After the terrible scene with Lady Macbeth you have the Porter, which in our production is a nightmare in Macbeth's head. He presumably hasn't slept and then he's woken up early by Macduff who says: I've come to wake the king up, is he

awake yet? And I'm thinking, of course he isn't, not yet, it must be six in the morning, what are you doing here? And then Lennox says: oh, a funny thing happened where we were en route here, I heard these voices, screams of death! which is of course connected to 'Methought I heard a voice cry'. So instantly, I'm on the defensive. I'm also fighting the urge to cry 'I heard it too! When I killed Duncan!'. Then the feelings of guilt start to grow, and everyone comes charging in asking who did it, and the character and actor are presented with a terrible range of options. For example, you can play a guilty person trying to cover up but not doing it very well; at the other extreme you can play someone who's appalled by the whole thing.

Why does Macbeth kill the grooms? And why does Macbeth admit that he has killed the grooms? It's never explained, and he just goes offstage with Lennox to see the murdered Duncan. So when I'm standing with Lennox, I'm imagining hideous pictures in my head, and thinking about what would drive me to do that, to kill the guards – anger and disgust at myself projected onto them, perhaps.

There's the explanation 'Here lay Duncan...': I started with absolute moral indignation, but now I think he's tripping over paving stones in his mind, and he falls into the explanation of it by mistake. He killed them by mistake, he's thinking more about Duncan than them, and when he's asked why he killed the guards, he doesn't know but he has to answer. His answer, 'Who can be loyal, and neutral, in a moment? No man.' isn't really good enough. So he offers the another reason –

'Th'expedition of my violent love
Outrun the pauser, reason'.

- and all he can think of is that his wife covered the grooms with the blood; he is seeing them there and he's angry with her because she took control, and he couldn't tell her not to because there was no time. So, somehow, there's a disconnection.

Pre and post re-rehearsal

The rehearsal period offered us a chance to set right some errors of theatricality in terms of telling the story. I had been experiencing difficulty with all the soliloquies – in particular, with 'To be thus is nothing...' – and so during re-rehearsals I asked Giles (Block) for his thoughts on how to engage the audience with this speech. He suggested that I think of the upper gallery, middle gallery and groundlings as the head, heart and guts of the theatre respectively, and to address them as such. So, if Macbeth thinks 'high' thoughts, they could be expressed to the head of the theatre, and low ones could be given to the groundlings. So, Macbeth has a lot of quite of lofty, 'high' opinions in the first couple of acts, and if you are a groundling and are not included in those, you see Macbeth in a different perspective than if he were addressing you directly. So I implemented that straight away and it started to help. It was as though the more I didn't play to the audience, the more they came to me.

We went into re-rehearsal with a lot of stuff that needed to be refined and tidied up. There were subtle changes in terms of focus, and energies became more refined. I think after the re-rehearsal period the audience felt less like a gun was going off in their faces, and that they were more able to relax for the first half hour, being guided into the story rather than being grabbed by the scruffs of their necks! Instantly we

noticed that the groundlings were much stiller, there was less coughing, less talking and rustling. Matinees were always hell in the early part of the run. Now I am proud to say that we can inspire almost the same quality of attention during matinees that we do at an evening performance.

Once when we were in re-rehearsal we did a run of the play without regard for any of the style or conventions we had been using in the show to that point. We were liberated from the form, from all of the props, and it was frightening, funny, spooky, mysterious, illogical, poetical, romantic, and hideous. If all those reviewers who loathed the play at first (in its frankly under-rehearsed state) came now, I think perhaps they would be keener to accept the form of the production, because the content has deepened.

Risk-taking

I think so much of the real work for the actors here is done through the experience of performance, which is always the most valuable, but it does tend to mean that you have to be rather courageous. I had very little training as an actor, I did just a few workshops with a few people, and one of them was with a Swiss-Austrian woman and she said: 'If you can see the risk, you must take it!' And it often pays off. If you are playing truthfully you make choices which can suggest possibilities all the way down the line. It's our duty as actors and actresses to remember only the things that happened today, not those which happened in previous performances.

Interview with Mark Springer

Donalbain, *Macbeth*

Vocal requirements of the space

Because it's a big, outdoor space you tend to feel that you have to hammer everything out vocally. But what I've discovered by listening to other people on the stage is that you don't. Acoustically, the space isn't as daunting as you think it's going to be, and you can afford to be quite subtle. However, I think that performing over a long period of time, or coming back here again is the only way to really get a feel for it. If you want to play a subtle or discreet moment, as long as the intention is strong, it will carry. I don't think it is as simple as volume at all.

The audience

The first time I ever came out on the stage, I noticed there is nowhere to hide! If you look towards the ground you'll find you've got someone staring at you, regardless of whether you are the focus of the scene or not. That's really quite liberating in a funny way. I was very nervous on the first night, but after that I began to realise that the audience are really your friends, more here than in any other theatre I've worked in. They are so supportive and so excited to be here, it's such a different kind of event for them. I think they really like the fact that they can be so close to us and feel that they can almost touch us.

I have a feeling that maybe the Elizabethan audiences weren't quite as forgiving as our audiences are today, because we know that they are always going to clap for us. And though they're aware that they're allowed to scream stuff at us, they are usually quite polite. I'm not sure how they would have been all those years ago.

It's almost impossible not to establish eye contact with someone in the audience, even if only for a split second. But it is possible to include them and yet not play *to* them. You might play an intimate scene with one or two other actors, and the audience will want to work, to find out what is going on between you. You don't want to do all the work for them.

Physical features of the space

It's not the type of stage where stillness really works for too long. Of course you need to move with intention, but you need to move far more than on other stages I've worked on. You have got to be aware of the pillars, and you need to know where the strong points are. There are sections of the audience who might miss a lot if you don't try to involve them.

The downstage corners are very strong; standing within a corner you'll see the vast majority of the audience. The centre of the stage and upstage centre are also very strong positions. I do not speak very much in this play, but there are times when I am on the stage when someone else is speaking, and I know that if I choose a position where the people in the yard can see me and see how what's happening on stage has

affected me, they can see the story through my eyes. That way, even if that section of the audience cannot see the speaker, they can listen and understand.

I don't think any space is particularly 'right for Shakespeare'; I feel a space is right for a particular type of production. I didn't see Trevor Nunn's famous production of Macbeth with Judi Dench, but I understand that one of the main reasons that production was so successful was that it was played in a small studio. Though the Globe is a much bigger space, the presence of the audience at the Globe can produce its own unique intimacy.

Physicality

Our production is very stylised, and as actors we have to be confident, even audacious in our playing; we have to really push the boat out. The production design is stylish and slick, so that needs to be evident in the physicality of the actors on stage. Playing in a small studio space would obviously need a different kind of physicality, but I can't think how my physicality would be different in another big space. I cannot think that my physicality has been challenged in a radically different way as a result of playing here.

The 'Masters' system

This is a great idea. If you have a system whereby the director is in charge of all elements of the production (acting, voice, verse, movement), there may be times when the director has got a lot on his plate, and may be too busy to deal with an enquiry about physicality, for instance. Here at the Globe, there is someone who you can go to, whose job is to focus just on that element. This means that the Director (or Master of Play) can get on with what they do. Without set, lights and amplified sound, all the actors have are their voices, bodies, and the words they speak.

Re-rehearsal

It was a very good idea to have a re-rehearsal period for this production, which is a lot stronger and a lot clearer as a result. I had no idea whatsoever how this show was going to be received.

The Globe itself is an experiment on many levels and it is great to be involved in an experimental production here. Re-rehearsal was useful because by the mid-point of the season you know the play very well, and so you can be clearer about whether new ideas found in re-rehearsals are going to work.

The fourth wall

I'm doing a masters degree in play writing at the moment and one of my essays was on breaking down the fourth wall in theatre. I wrote it during my time here while I was experiencing that from the actor's point of view. It's so great to be free of those theatrical rules. More generally, I don't think the theatre industry can afford to be conservative anymore, because there are so many other things for people to do. Here, audience members can leave when they want to, and eat or drink inside the auditorium. People can relax at the Globe, and that can only be a good thing.

Interview with Michael Gould

Edmund, *King Lear*

Transition from rehearsal space to performance space

My character in this production has quite a lot of direct audience contact, particularly with the soliloquies, and so rehearsing without an audience is obviously a strange experience. Also, in the shorter moments just before or after a scene, Edmund often takes the opportunity to express his point of view, and I remember that this was a part of rehearsals that seemed frustrating because I knew that an important element was missing. During that time I sneaked out into the theatre with Stuart (Pearce, Master of Voice). Barry (Kyle, Master of Play) seemed reluctant to take the production out into the space during the final phase of rehearsals, but I felt I needed to get used to the space physically, especially in terms of my relationship with the audience.

Paul (Brennan, Edgar) and I tried a bit of scene work for ourselves in the space; immediately we became aware that what had been walls in the rehearsal rooms were now audience members, and that immediately expanded the scope of our actions. I found that quite liberating, and I think Paul did too. In the rehearsal space the taped-out corners of the stage floor were right next to a wall, so these were a finite point, rather than a jumping off point. Consequently most of us felt a degree of reluctance to go into those corners in the rehearsal room, but on the stage the corners just became immediately attractive places to go. You felt quite bold going down there; I found there was a different kind of energy available in those corners which we hadn't been able to explore in the rehearsal room.

When we rehearsed on the stage we had the benefit of some school parties in the galleries, and it was great to realise where my argument had to be clearer, for instance, or where the thought had to be clearer. So I found the on-stage rehearsal time very valuable, and I would have liked more of it.

The Globe audience

I think Barry described the audience here as a kind of drug which an actor could get addicted to, and I think that is a very good way of looking at it. You can get yourself into a position where you think 'entertainment' is everything, because the Globe is unique, and because audience participation in a Shakespeare play is quite a thrilling notion for the actor. But the worry on the other side of the fence is that it's reductive, that that then makes it a pantomime or a burlesque piece of entertainment. There is quite a fine line.

During the first show the audience answered a question I put to them, 'Which should I take?', meaning Goneril or Regan; someone shouted out 'both', which is part of the next line I speak. In the notes session that followed the first performance it was asked whether that was a legitimate way of playing with the audience, as some people felt I was pandering to the audience. I think it made me realise that what is of interest to me is not whether the audience answer or not; but, unless there's a clear indication that it's a rhetorical question, I will try to prompt an answer from the person or persons to whom I'm speaking. In Edmund's case it's for the audience to *think* about the answer.

I think that when you can see the audience here, you are more inclined to push the question to such an extent that they feel compelled to answer you. What is relevant is whether or not the question impacts on them.

Stanislavsky and Shakespeare

One of the playing traditions born of Stanislavsky - or rather an interpretation of his work - is a tendency to make Shakespearean soliloquies quite introspective. So, for example, Edmund's soliloquy ('Thou, Nature, art my goddess...') contains several questions - 'Why 'bastard'? Wherefore 'base'? which could be treated as rhetorical, but in this case would be approached as an internal analysis of his situation, asking the questions of himself. It surprises me that many directors and scholars believe that Stanislavsky's work is irrelevant to the playing of Shakespeare's plays; I think that on certain levels Stanislavsky and Shakespeare are entirely compatible. The texts are really clear in terms of external action, for instance - how you seek to affect another character - but perhaps less so on the introspective side. Emotional memory is an important tool for the actor using Stanislavsky's approach, but playing here has convinced me that Shakespeare's characters don't dig deep into themselves; they project themselves onto the audience, or onto the other characters in the scene. Emotional memory is not a particularly useful tool on the Globe stage, because it involves 'digging down' rather than 'sending out'.

I think emotional memory can be useful in the research for the part: Edmund, for instance, has this experience of being away for nine years, during which time he may have been a mercenary, a drug addict, or something else entirely. Though this may help me more than the audience, it gives the character insight of a sort; Edmund can see very clearly what Gloucester's thinking, so he knows how to play him, he knows what action to play on Gloucester to get what he wants.

In preparation for this discussion I was trying to think up metaphors - the Globe works like a magnifying glass, one that makes everything you do seem much more sharply defined. Because you feel so visible under this magnifying glass, you want to make your intention much more clear and pure, and that manifests in your vocal pattern and your physical pattern. What I found really interesting about the first month or so of playing this role was the worry I had about undermining the play; I suddenly realised how very malleable the space is. It's funny, you don't have to turn to the audience and wink at them to be inclusive. I try to imagine that the given circumstances of the scene include 1500 people watching. The more shared the circumstances the more engaged they are.

Different characters have different jobs, of course, and though it is appropriate for Edmund to engage directly with the audience for much of the time, it may not be so for other characters. I think Edmund's is a very modern voice in the otherwise archaic world of the play. He's a bridge between the two worlds, and much of his language asks the audience to consider universal things: the relevance of astronomy; what it is to be a drunk, a liar, a traitor, an adulterer, to be human. I think he reaches exactly the same understanding of the human condition that Lear comes to at the end of the play. Michael Chekhov talks about Edmund and Lear as parallel characters in his book *To the Actor*. Edmund, with nothing materially, wants things, and ends the play having achieved many of his aims, but somehow his over-weening ambition is what kills him.

Lear who has everything at the beginning of the play, goes out with nothing, loses all three daughters and dies, but gains tremendous insight and understanding.

Verse work

Edmund talks to the audience in both prose and verse. What I found incredibly useful in the verse work was the idea of creating the next phrase that follows the line break: For example, Edmund speaks with reference to Albany about the need to 'devise -' - devise what? - 'devise/ His death'. I find this technique very compatible with Stanislavsky's ideas: you observe the verse, but also you find a reason why it's important where the line breaks fall. From a situation point of view, that line ending means that Edmund doesn't yet know what to do with Albany. I find that this way the verse becomes much more natural. That is the other task I set myself really, to be as natural as possible. The verse work here has encouraged me to be much more spontaneous in my verse speaking.

Interview with Patricia Kerrigan

Goneril, *King Lear*

Technical requirements of working in the space

You have to be very clear about what your task is in the play. After we got into the space, Barry (Kyle) emphasised the importance of being aware of whether you were a 'driver' or not. Being a driver is a tremendous responsibility, and there are some drivers in the play that don't *always* drive, which makes things much more difficult for others. If you don't identify your role within the story, then you disappear. I've had friends who are actors come and see the play, and one of the most interesting comments I've heard from them is that the minute anyone starts acting 'off the verse', you lose interest in them. I hope I'm at an age and point in my career when I've made most of those mistakes. What interests me now is what I can do with my ability within someone's writing, within the story, and to stop making it about me. Goneril is a fantastic part to explore that with, because you can decide how much of a driver she is.

Initially, I found the Globe audience very distracting, and my gut reaction was to be loud and quick. If I paused and heard someone speaking to their friend or rustling their raincoat, I found it disrupted my performance. So, until I got used to these distractions, I found it was better not to leave any gaps. Now I reckon I pause twice in this play. Once is before I do my very first speech. I say 'Sir...' and that's a pause that I think is in the text, because the rest of the line is empty. Then I pause before my very last line, 'Ask me not what I know.' I feel as if I've earned that one. If I don't, I won't take it. Avoiding unnecessary pauses gives you the energy to feel as big as you can without feeling as though you're in a pantomime.

Physical demands of the space

There was a lot of talk before we got into the theatre about this being a yielding, feminine space, but I found it the most physically demanding space I've ever worked in. The floor has no give in it, so if you have to land on it with any force, you get bruised at the very least, and you might actually get hurt. Silly things can hurt: I slipped on my dress one day and I really hurt my back, because of the un-sprung floor. You can also get hurt by bashing into the pillars. The backstage area is also uncomfortable and noisy, which makes it quite a tough space to work in.

Vocal demands of the space

Vocally, it is incredibly demanding. You can speak quietly, but if you do I don't think you can be heard by people who can't see you. If the audience members are in those expensive seats, or in the yard, then they're fine, but people in those difficult seats to the sides and in the upper galleries can have a harder time of it. I always think you should play to the cheapest seat.

All my instincts in that place made me feel that you have to give quite a lot of volume. I don't mean tense volume, but you need to go down into your boots. Maybe what I really mean is an intensity of feeling, because if you have that, then your voice will

carry. Direction is important as well. You have to let your voice carry over the groundlings rather than get sucked underneath them.

Language and emotion

I think that the rhythm in the verse gives the emotion. The stretches of verse give you the character. Goneril's language is like building blocks: it's quite clear, and she plans ahead. It's the language of someone practical who has learned to control her emotions to some extent. Someone who squashes down how they feel.

If you trust the language and the verse, your performance can achieve an energy or shape that has nothing to do with yourself, and has everything to do with the writing. Getting into the space and starting to really use the language gave me something that I didn't know would happen. If you have the courage to dive off a higher diving board, you have more chance of executing your dive well. If you try to be cooler than the language - if you don't commit to it - then it can become clogged up and doesn't work. By somehow committing yourself to the language in this space, you get something that I haven't really experienced before. I've never quite had the courage or the reason to commit myself in the way that I have in this production. It's a very exciting discovery for me.

The audience

When I walked out to do my big 'chucking Lear out of the house' scene for the first time, I remember feeling that the audience wanted me to be nice! The Fool had given them a few tunes on his banjo and there had been a nice banter going on with the lads (Lear's knights), and the audience was beginning to get the sense that King Lear isn't such a grumpy old sort after all. I knew that the audience was thinking, 'Ahh, yes! It's lovely here. Love this space!' And then I came on like a bad smell, and they didn't want the play to go that way at all. They didn't want to see the disintegration of a relationship between father and daughter. I learned to steel myself for it. I would say that moment is one in which you can't include the audience, because if you do, they feel let off the hook.

I have seen productions in this theatre in which the actors have been seduced by the audience and allowed them to dictate how to proceed. You can't change the story that you're telling. Actors want to be liked, but there's a danger that the audience won't give back the focus you give to them.

In a conventional theatre, you can simply ignore the audience. If you have to address the audience directly, you might have to do a bit more work and imagine who the audience might be, but you can make them whoever you want. When I say my asides here, quite often I look at someone who's asleep or not looking at me. It's hard not to feel rejected when that happens! When you've got a soliloquy, however, you can't pretend the audience is not there.

Perfect storytelling happens when you get the balance right. That's why I have to keep reminding myself all the time, this isn't about thinking 'I can look at 15 people in the eye during that little bit, so I must be brilliant, I'm not scared.' Instead I have to think, 'It's important that they know what I'm feeling at this time within the story.' I don't

think it's difficult to make contact with the audience; it's more difficult to keep within the bounds of the story.

Re-rehearsal

To be perfectly honest, I thought the re-rehearsal was a waste of time. Originally, I understood that we were going to use that week to take the play to Cambridge, where we could rehearse during the day and try it out at night. As the Cambridge venture did not happen, instead we had a week of re-rehearsal without performing the show, and so when it came time to perform, we had to remember a week's worth of alterations. We were all very tired by this point, too, and it might have been better to have a week off instead!

I really think it would have been more useful to have Barry come to see the play every night for a week and then give us notes. We worked on improvisations in character a bit, which was fun, but we could not then use that improvisation to restate and reinterpret the staging, because these elements remained very set. But I can see that, in a different production, the idea of a re-rehearsal period might be useful.

Features of the stage

I'm very fond of playing from the two extreme corners, and so I find myself going there quite a lot. You can be more private there. They look and feel like a different domain.

I'm sorry that I don't have the chance to enter and exit through the yard; that's not appropriate in our production because the yard is being used quite specifically for something else. But more than anything else in this theatre, I would love to fly in, on a big swing, doing a speech as I swung!

I try to move around the pillars as much as possible. I have to say that our production doesn't use the space particularly well in respect to the pillars. It is easy to find yourself playing to the majority of the audience, and it's very easy to forget the people on the side. It's a tricky space, and I know you have a better chance of including everyone if you keep on the move.

Acting requirements of the space

You have to be really generous, trying to make sure that you're all telling the same story, because tiny things can make a difference. One day when we were in the court scene, I was attacked by a fly. It landed in my eye, and I simply had to wipe my eye and get it out. I noticed heads turning to look at what I was doing. So you have to be careful not to pull focus.

You can't do fourth wall acting in here. I came to see a production here that used fourth wall acting, and though I was in the yard, I couldn't hear the actors. If you don't commit to sending it out, you look awkward, as if you're not supposed to be there.

It's not a neutral space, but you do have to be comfortable. I'm not so frightened any more. We've done 52 shows, and for the first time, yesterday, I felt as if I'd made the appropriate connection with the audience during one of my asides. Several people have said to me that by the end of the season, you will feel as if you know how to work in this space.

I think working here is a wonderful way to explore your potential as an actor. It's not a place to be subtle and naturalistic, it's a place to explore the extremes of your craft. If you can do that, you may transform yourself in a way you haven't before. But it's jolly hard work!

Interview with Patrick Brennan

Banquo, *Macbeth*

Dynamics of the space

It's a thrust stage, thrust half way into the audience. It's quite a deep stage as well, which gives you a lot of fluidity of movement, I'd say. When we opened this stylised and conceptual production of *Macbeth*, it was more like a painting or a film. The pictures we were creating seemed to be quite big and worked rather well in the space if you were looking at it from the middle gallery or the upper gallery, face-on, but I never thought the pictures were quite three-dimensional.

In terms of getting used to the space, the larger the number of people in the scene, the less room there was for individual inspiration. The ability to work off the cuff was not encouraged in this production, at least not in the ensemble scenes. It is only in the smaller group scenes that I have looked around and felt more comfortable on stage; it is the human contact which seems to be the most refreshing aspect of working on this stage.

Vocal demands of the space

It is a very creative space. You have the natural elements to contend with, and you also have this language that talks a lot about the elements, and that's rather nice. Anyone who has ever worked on radio in what is called a dead room will tell you that if you have to record an outdoor scene, you have to try and pitch yourself at a different level of vocal interest because you are outside. We speak in a totally different way when we are outside, and even 'internal' scenes have extra colour at the Globe because they are played outside.

You can be quite gentle and intimate with the audience, and not raise your pitch very loud, but the pitch still has to reverberate to be clear. At the beginning of the run I didn't trust that I was doing enough to be *sotto voce* if you like, and so quite often I spoke at quite a high level of intensity and volume. Now I hope I've still got the intensity, the imagination and creativity for my speech to be spontaneous, while bringing the dynamic and volume way down. I would not have been brave enough to do that at the start of the season, because I felt I had to 'conquer' the space I suppose.

Lighting/atmosphere

I bought into the concept of our production very strongly when rehearsals began, and I liked the idea that we were going to counteract the fact that we couldn't do atmospheric half lighting and dry ice for instance, by relying on the words alone instead. However, it is noticeable how atmospheric this plays suddenly becomes when the sun goes down during the second half of the evening performances. Playing *Macbeth* in the afternoon (wearing dinner jackets and using jazz music) under the glare of bright sunlight means that we have to work harder to create the same atmosphere using the words alone. When it gets dark we are helped by the natural elements and the fact of being outdoors, and the building becomes very beautiful.

In the scene with Fleance and Banquo, prior to Macbeth seeing the dagger, there is a moment of danger where there is a noise and Banquo and Fleance tighten up and wonder what's going on Banquo shouts 'Give me my sword! / Who's there?' Playing that in full daylight when I can see Jasper out of the corner of my eye is slightly odd, but we both act as if we can't see each other and that is helping immensely. Prior to that moment I have got lines like 'There's husbandry in heaven: / Their candles are all out', but sometimes I do wonder if the audience gets the idea that it is very dark under a starless sky, because I'm standing there in full sunlight, I can see them and they can see me. But all we have are those words, and so the experience is slightly coded and depends on the ability of the actor and the alertness of the audience.

The Globe audience

If the audience doesn't like what you are doing, if you are not engaging them, they will let you know! You have to try to be open to their suggestion, but strong enough not to be seduced by them. Quite often the audience here is as liberated as any you will find, because several of them seem to be newcomers to live theatre. And because many are standing up they seem to have an extra 'edge' you wouldn't find in a wholly seated auditorium, so they interact and laugh, or hiss, or whatever. You get that very live connection which you wouldn't normally expect.

Sometimes I can see the best part of six hundred people standing in the yard, and there is a little bit of movement that suggests that they are changing their weight so they don't get cramp in their backs, but the focus and the energy is directed straight towards the stage. Likewise, I hope our focus and energy in telling the story doesn't become so myopic that it extends only to our fellow actors on the stage. It has to reach out to them.

Inclusivity

Occasionally, when Jasper (who has a great affinity with this space and its audience) and I have played the intimate scenes between Macbeth and Banquo, we have found ourselves a little too close to each other physically. When this happens it is not just that some people cannot see beyond my back or Jasper's back, but that we have broken the link between us and the audience. For these kinds of scenes you want to let the audience in on the fact you are conspiring, and actually you can be extraordinarily naturalistic, but I suppose you have to let them in on the secret too, and so you have to play those intimate scenes with distance between you, to allow them in.

I'm finding more and more that if I've got a one-on-one conversation with somebody, on stage or in real life, I look away from the person I'm talking to, as if to make sure I'm speaking my mind, and not theirs. If you look in the other person's eyes when you talk to them you can see their expectancy - that they're waiting for you to say something - and it may be the case that you haven't quite got your real thoughts straight yet. And so you begin to harmonise, so to speak. Harmonising is actually to the detriment of drama generally, so, when I have these lovely scenes with Jasper, though I'm really enjoying the fact that we're friends - we're fellow warriors, we've been through this extraordinary experience with the prophesy - I feel less and less the need to look at him. And at that point that there's a lovely dynamic where you go right into the audience; it's not like you're speaking *to* them, but you can see an

audience react, all the same. You can formulate another thought by looking into the galleries as opposed to the yard. Though that may seem a simple point to make, it is different from looking into a black space where you cannot see how your audience is receiving you, because of lights pointing at you.

One of the reasons we were not getting that dynamic at the beginning of the run is that we're used to doing what is considered 'generous acting', the idea of supporting your scene partner by looking at them for the whole scene. Well, that's kind of right, but in real life people don't look at each other all the time, and you can broaden your work at the Globe and deepen it by doing what is more lifelike; and as a result you're welcoming the audience into the moment as well. Being aware that there are people behind you when you speak makes you compensate in what is a surprisingly naturalistic way. What's nice about the experience of playing here is that the 'house rules' are not solely performance-related, but based on a kind of natural, *human* behaviour.

Interview with Paul Brennen

Edgar, King Lear

Transition from rehearsal room to the Globe space

I think the way we worked over the rehearsal period was very layered. By the time this production reached the end of rehearsals it was a very full, very dense piece. However, in moving the production on to the stage I think we lost some of the subtleties and some of the richness, which is natural and happens with many productions in different spaces. It can happen when you take a play on tour, for instance, and it's all part of the process really.

Physical features of the space

If you sit up in the top gallery, upstage right, you're watching the play from a specific perspective, whereas if you stand face-on to the stage, in the yard, you're involved with a different kind of connection. I don't think the actors should try to connect with the entire audience all of the time, because it is part of the experience for the audience to feel that they are all seeing a slightly different show from people in other parts of the auditorium.

I love investigating the space. The downstage corners, in front of the pillars, are very strong positions to play in. I've got a long speech towards the end of the play, and though I've always known that technically I should really play it out to the audience, I like the idea of playing it with my back to the majority of the people straight out in front, giving it instead to Edmund. When that works, and I feel the speech still holds their attention, it's fantastic.

Sometimes I like to hide behind the pillars. Edgar's role changes throughout, and sometimes I think it's important that the audience forgets he's there watching. Sometimes I like to be an observer for and with the audience, and the pillars are useful in those moments. I don't think they should be seen as terrible things that we should try to avoid; they should be embraced as a feature of the space - as long as you're not hugging them all the time!

Another feature of the Globe is that the actor is not trapped by lighting. Often you can feel trapped by a pool of light, and I've really enjoyed that freedom to roam, to find new places, because it's something you don't get in many modern theatres. I know there have been safety issues in previous years, but I had been warned about the potential dangers in moving at speed on the stage. If I'm in bare feet, for instance, I know to try and be loose on the knees and try not to jar. But the solid oak floor gives a real feeling of being rooted on a solid stage.

Vocal demands of the space

Over the course of a long run of performances you really need to reap the voice, so the classes we have with the Master of Voice are a great idea. I think my voice has changed over the course of the run to become much lower, much more rooted and more connected.

I've been much more aware of my own technical vocal needs here than I've noticed before. I've found it is important to remember to breathe deeply from the back, and to retain control over the breath if you want to be effective vocally in the space. In the past I have often felt as though I've lost something of my character whilst bringing it out of the rehearsal room onto that stage. I think what I might have done before is just turn the volume up. That doesn't work here at all. Technically, you need to be able to move very quickly; vocally, you need to be able to turn on a sixpence.

I realised about half way through previews that the space demands a lot of breath and a lot of support. You can be very intimate too, and I like to play with the idea of my character having a little secret that I share with the audience – it really seems to draw them in at times.

It takes an incredible amount of energy to move from an evening performance and into a matinee on the following day. In those situations I've discovered that if I feel tired or distracted, just breathing and listening will usually help me get to where I need to be.

Verse

Working with Giles has been great, not least because as a result everybody in the cast knows what the 'house rules' of verse speaking are. It's vital when you do these plays. If you establish that rule, you can do anything with the verse: you can break it, you can do a bit of jazz with it. The 'house rule' here means that when I reach the end of the verse line, I find myself playing with the last word. I like playing with the verse, sometimes breaking it up and sometimes really driving through it. If you're aware of the rules you can really keep inventing.

Ensemble work

Ensemble is interesting; it's about taking on responsibility. I hadn't realised before that Edgar had so much responsibility for the storytelling in the second half, for instance. True ensemble playing involves knowing when you're in the driving seat, as well as really supporting the actor who then takes up that responsibility after you. What's more, it's obvious that the Globe audience is always aware of you, and if your concentration wavers, you feel the scene go flat instantly.

For instance, in my scene with Edmund (Michael Gould), Edmund does a commando-style tumble, which Edgar imitates quite poorly. Sometimes, I find I need to register 'What's he done? Do I have to do that?' before I try it. Sometimes the audience finds the very thought of me doing that funny, and other times you know that they're really only watching Edmund, and they won't want to find it funny at all. You've just got to try and be alive to that audience. If you are, I think you find you can do anything in performance, because they give you the energy to do it.

I just really think that ours is a different play every night. This is an incredibly supportive company, led by Julian (Glover), full of people supporting you. That's a special thing.

Interview with Peter Hamilton Dyer

Oswald, *King Lear*

Physical requirements of the space

I think that the two basic raw materials for any actor are the voice and the body. With no great scenery and no extensive props, the Globe stage is in many ways more exposed than many other spaces, so your physicality and vocal support are really all you have to fall back on.

During the first few performances I found myself more concerned with size of gesture and clarity of movement. Now, having run the play for about 50 performances, I'm enjoying exploring greater physical freedom. I think it's important to *inhabit* the space as a whole: that means being physically aware and *sensing* the space through every pore in your body, from every direction. That's very important in whatever theatre you work in, but especially so at the Globe, where the audience surrounds you, wherever you stand, wherever you move.

Vocal requirements of the space

The Globe's shape supports you in a way very different to other theatres, I think. I remember working with Stuart [Pearce, the Master of Voice] on an exercise to lengthen the spine and lift the body up, supporting myself from the top of the head. Suddenly, I genuinely felt as though I was inhabiting the space, and I felt almost as tall as the 'cylinder' of galleries. Supporting myself from the crown of my head enabled me to use the whole cylinder around me. It was a terribly exciting moment: a physical moment when I felt embraced, surrounded by this fantastic 'Wooden O'.

I found the wood itself particularly helpful to fill vocally. It's not as though one's just sending one's voice out into space; it feeds back. I discovered that the space embraces you vocally as well as physically. It was a very moving discovery.

Language and emotion

Shakespeare's verse is very powerful poetry, and this is a space in which the verse can be heard. For instance, the extension of vowel sounds is audible here, rather than sounding short and clipped. The audience's ear goes to vowel, and there is an emotional connection to vowel sounds, like 'howl' and so on. The vowels are obviously very open sounds and require one to put them to work. If we're worth what we're being paid, we can offer up this emotional content and let it out. The verse is written with that in mind, to let these longer sounds out into the space to be warmly received. It makes one listen to plays, rather than just looking at them.

In examining Shakespeare's text, we usually focus so much on consonants that we really don't think so much about the vowel sounds. But there are all those rhymes and half rhymes within the vowel sounds. These are put there deliberately and work wonderfully within this wooden circle.

Obviously one needs consonants to spit things out, but the vowels communicate the actor's pulse, heart, and the emotion that he's going through as he speaks. It's terribly exciting. It's a thrill as an actor to let these vowels go, to let them out. It's very exciting, but it's also a challenge.

Actor/audience relationship

You try to get rid of the 'fourth wall', to feel that it isn't there. Still, the reality of 'no fourth wall' was far greater than anything that I had expected, and it remains so. I'm still learning how no fourth wall demands a greater honesty from the actor. You can't really get away with any lies as an actor in this space. It's a very egalitarian space - actor and audience are in the same light, and as a result share a more equal relationship in the space.

There's an episode in the play in which Kent is put into the stocks. In this production, the director chose to have Oswald spit upon Kent at this moment. Initially, I found that very difficult to do, because I felt that it burst through the frame (of reference) that Kent (Bruce Alexander) and myself had established: that we were people of equal status to the people in the audience two feet behind us. Given that, I felt that to spit on a fellow actor was the same as to spit on people in the audience.

Somehow this distinction between actor and character is blurred at the Globe. I'm still discovering when it's useful to speak or look out to the house, as an actor or as a character. I have only begun digging away at dynamic over the last 10 or 12 performances, learning to sense in the moment whether a certain thought is stronger shared with the audience or solely with oneself or another character on the stage. You have to judge in each case whether your relationship with the audience is going to be enhanced or compromised by speaking directly out to the house.

Though it is foolish to claim there are any hard and fast rules about this, in general I would agree with John Barton's view that the soliloquies are not just internal to the character, but episodes of bold, boisterous communication, to be shared with the audience. And I think the Globe is a space that's about communicating with the people who have come to *listen*, so I can't see the advantage of standing there literally muttering to oneself.

In certain situations, you could choose to cut yourself off from the audience. You can say things for your own benefit, to clarify your thoughts, and once you have decided on a course of action you can then re-engage in communication. However, playing an internal moment depends on the existence of its opposite: direct address. Direct address is the norm here. In this way it's the polar opposite to modern cinematic versions of Shakespeare, where direct address to the camera is often used to shock the viewer in some way.

Re-rehearsal

I've worked on shows in the past where directors have liked to continue rehearsal throughout a production. This is the first time I've been involved in a show that has rehearsed, opened, run and voluntarily sought readjustment later in the run.

There's such a fine balance in a company of 17 people: it is a big tapestry of individual wants and needs. If you start to pull one thread, often it leads to other threads being tugged. Unless there is an area that is specifically problematic and doesn't feel right, I think there is a danger that re-rehearsals can cause more harm than good. Once a company takes hold of the story, they have to create an entity of their own making. On a day-to-day basis we get to work as a company and get to learn about each other. It's not possible to go back to the play as it was when we were first together, making that first statement as a company. You can't reconstruct that. However, if there were specific moments in a show that needed work, then a re-rehearsal period would seem to be a good idea. Actually, the reality of performing at the Globe means that the show changes with every performance, it's an organic process.

The pillars

The pillars are very interesting. Sometimes, they are where actors go to 'hide'. I remember thinking once, 'Well, I don't know where I am now, so I'll go to the pillars!' They're as near as one gets to a 'safe place' in this exposed space. Rather than simply thinking, 'don't go to the pillars', I think we should examine why we are going there, why we want to have a bit of security at that moment. Then we have to embrace the fact that we *don't* have any security, and go out, stand strong and enjoy it.

Storytelling

Theatre is in one sense still reeling from the last century's advent of film and television. To recapture a genuine, theatrical sense of excitement, I think there are two routes down which theatre can go: it can either become spectacular, using state of the art pyrotechnics and so on; alternatively it can follow the direction being followed at the Globe and focus on the storytelling, and the power of one person - a person the same as all the other people of the company of man - standing up among his fellows to tell a story.

It's a terribly exciting space to work in as an actor. That's how I think this space is different: it's an actor's theatre.

Interview with Roger McKern

Curan/Old Man, King Lear

Technical requirements of the space

When as a guide I used to give a guided tour of the space, I used to claim that an actor can see every expression on every face in the audience, but of course that's not true! Unless you're engaged in a soliloquy, you might direct your focus out to the auditorium, but you're not usually looking at individuals; it would be wrong to, unless you're talking to them. You're always aware of the audience, but you don't *see* them really, unless you start losing concentration.

Some people say that you can be too loud in this space, and I agree. If you get too loud without very clear diction you lose the clarity. I think my main objective is to be really clear, and I've used the year here as a guide to work on my voice.

This space is a thrust, almost in the round, so you're not just doing it out to the front, and I try and take the opportunity to throw some lines over my shoulder, to the people behind me.

Sometimes, if you get near the front of the stage, you're aware that half a dozen people will suddenly come around and look at you, even though one of the main actors is talking; they are checking people's reactions. That's all part of the storytelling.

Verse

Giles (Block, Master of Verse) is so good and so clever and he does nothing but serve you. Therefore I have totally bought his way of doing things now. I will always work with line-endings from now on. As I understand his method, you keep pushing through to the end of the line, and if you take a pause, you pause at the end of the line, rather than at punctuation marks mid-line. Often the line-breaks fall in the middle of a thought. Giles explained that verse is more like real speaking than prose, and when Shakespeare writes prose, it's for a character that's trying to hide something or is confused. When he writes verse, he's writing how he heard people speak; people don't pause at the end of a sentence, because this invites others to interrupt. Often, they will often pause in mid-sentence for inspiration, however. And that's what we see reflected in the verse, as Shakespeare's career develops.

Playing a storm

We experimented with trying to physically show characters who were buffeted by the weather, with their feet making percussive noises at the same time, giving a thundery sound. That didn't work when we got it on the stage. That scene is just before the most famous lines in the play, 'Blow winds...', and I think the scene was looking too much like the scene that followed it, and it was wrong for Scene 7 to upstage Scene 8.

I think Julian (Glover, Lear) and Paul (Brennan, Edgar) have to communicate the storm to a greater extent.

Focus

I think that all of the knights and everybody do a wonderful job of directing the audience to where they should be concentrating. Scene 7 is a typical example, the scene before Lear walks out into the storm: there's a lot of to-ing and fro-ing, and the sisters are trying to get rid of half of the knights. What is noticeable is that the knights are there on stage, listening to all of this. So you can hear the argument while at the same time reflecting on how the knights are going to react to it.

This is definitely characteristic of real *ensemble* playing, and Barry (Kyle) made a great comment: 'This company bats down to number eleven'. I'm proud to be part of it.

Interview with Liam Brennan

Macduff, Macbeth

Technical requirements of the space

Without artificial lighting and scenery, the storytelling becomes reliant on the actor's voice and movement. But this doesn't mean you don't rely on the spoken word in conventional theatres; people are still entitled to hear everything and hear it done well, even when there is a great deal of technical backup. I don't know if audience expectations here are necessarily different, and I'm certainly not aware of that on the stage.

I think that you have to make some discoveries about articulation during the first few performances you do here, but I don't think projection is really the issue. If you want to whisper then you can do that. I think that being able to see the audience makes the technical requirements of the space easier to judge, after a few performances.

For such a wide, outdoor space it is surprising, actually, how details can be magnified; it's a very exposing place, in many ways. The platform is very wide, and usually quite bare, so the focus is always on you. I think this theatre plays a bit with what's intimate and what's not. This is supposed to be a hard space for 'television acting' (i.e. very naturalistic, subtle gestures), but actually the intimate relationship with the audience means that they will notice things – moments, gestures - that are on the scale of television acting.

Using the space

The blocking for this production (apart from the choreography) is completely loose, and because of this you have to be careful not to get drawn too close in towards the other actor on stage with you. The pillars, also, can become a magnet; I suppose there's something reassuring about them. And often I find myself forgetting about the people around the sides of the stage and up in the top galleries. I feel sorry for those people because I think they get the worst deal, if you don't pay special attention to them and be constantly aware of them.

Verse speaking

I found it helpful to have someone specifically assigned to developing verse speaking. I thought Giles (Block) was great. He presented his approach to verse as something of a toolkit from which you can take what you find useful. I probably learned a lot during those few weeks of rehearsals when I just accepted everything, but at the end of the day, verse or voice or movement coaches will (and should) be looking at your work from a scientific point of view, crossing all the Ts and dotting all the Is, and though that's right from their point of view, it's just one portion of my work as a whole.

Playing Macduff

I tried to approach the character (and especially the 'England scene') from a position of humility. I was thinking, maybe in every second audience there will be someone who has had that kind of news, so I just thought, try and start small and take it from there. When people do get terrible shocks or get bad news, they hardly ever behave predictably. They tend not to shout or scream or burst into tears. That's what actors do but it's not what real people do.

As an example of the degree of subtlety that you can bring to a defining moment of the play, the 'England scene' showed me how the audience will come in and focus on a tiny, subtle reaction. The idea was to send out my line, 'He has no children', rather intimately, to the audience, rather than making it a completely internal moment, and referring it to Malcolm. And that choice came about from thinking about the space I'd be playing in.

The opportunity to play my own son is lovely for me. I think Macduff is a very difficult part, perhaps because every moment for him is huge, everything's heavy. Obviously, the Lady Macduff episode is a terrible scene, but the kid doesn't know that. So for me it's just lovely to get five minutes in this little oasis of fun; it's like a shot in the arm. Young Macduff is a very bright kid so his lines are witty and fun to say. And of course I get a scene when I'm onstage with my wife, which is not the norm in productions of this play! I try and just think 'wee boy' and actually not to do anything; I think that the only thing you can't do is put on an awful piping 'little boy voice!

Staging of the apparitions scene

The 'England scene' is interspersed with portions of the 'Apparitions scene' in this production. When Tim (Carroll, Master of Play) first suggested it, I was very unsure about it, but I must admit that I have come round to it. Tim has cut the England scene quite cleverly, so that the points when the England scene jumps to the Apparitions all coincide with crucial obstacles for Macduff and Malcolm. When the scene cuts back to Macduff and Malcolm we hear the trigger-line repeated again, so the problem or obstacle is reiterated for the audience, and hopefully that makes the situation a little clearer.