

Institution: Queen's University Belfast		
Unit of Assessment: 33		
Title of case study: Performing Restoration Shakespeare		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2012 - 2019		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Richard Schoch Claude Fretz	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Professor Post-Doctoral Research Associate	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 01/09/2012 – present 15/02/2017 – 14/02/2020
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014 - 2019		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) Richard Schoch's archival and practice-based research on Restoration Shakespeare—the radical adaptations of Shakespeare written between 1660 and 1710—has generated significant cultural impact by collaborating and engaging with three communities of non-academic beneficiaries: theatre companies, theatre artists, and audiences. In partnership with the Folger Shakespeare Library/Theatre (USA) and Shakespeare's Globe (UK), Schoch's research has influenced artistic programming at major classical theatres, pioneered a successful new model for scholar-artist collaboration, created unique audience experiences, inspired a 'critics debate' in a major USA newspaper, and generated substantial revenue.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) Professor Schoch is a scholar-artist with expertise in theatre historiography and Shakespeare in performance. His monograph <i>Writing the History of the British Stage</i> [1]—the first on British theatre historiography—traces the practice of theatre history from its origins in the Restoration to its emergence as an academic discipline in the 20th century. The Restoration figures centrally in the monograph's primary sources, research questions, and findings because the Restoration was a unique moment: theatrical activity resumed after 18 years of state oppression, a pattern of trauma and healing that inspired the theatre to reflect on its own history.</p> <p>Schoch's analysis is anchored in readings of theatre histories written during the Restoration: Flecknoe, 'Short Discourse'; Langbaine, <i>English Dramatick Poets</i>; Wright, <i>Historia Histrionica</i>; and Downes, <i>Roscius Anglicanus</i>. Close readings led to research questions on the Restoration's historiographical importance: (i) Why did British theatre history begin in the Restoration? (ii) How did Restoration theatre understand itself as part of a historical process encompassing rupture and restitution? (iii) How did Restoration theatre use Shakespeare to negotiate its relationship to its own past?</p> <p>Schoch's findings emphasize the Restoration theatre's insistent historical consciousness: (i) British theatre history began in the Restoration because that was when the theatre needed to interpret its own experience of suppression and resurrection; (ii) Restoration theatre practice, for all its innovation, was deeply committed to historical continuity; and (iii) rewriting Shakespeare provided Restoration theatre with the perfect balance of continuity and change.</p> <p>Extending his archival findings through practice-based investigations, Schoch subsequently led research teams to analyse how Restoration theatre's commitment to both continuity and innovation was quintessentially expressed in its multimedia adaptations of Shakespeare. The teams comprised scholars (theatre historians, Shakespeareans, musicologists) and artists (actors, singers, instrumentalists) who undertook archival study, ran workshops and created</p>		

public performances, all designed to explore Restoration Shakespeare as a performance genre and to test its appeal for audiences today.

The first of these projects took place in 2014 when Schoch co-led (with Amanda Winkler, Syracuse University) a team which rehearsed scenes from Davenant's *Macbeth* and Gildon's *Measure for Measure* in a Folger Shakespeare Library/Theatre workshop. For this workshop, Schoch contributed as stage director and theatre historian, and Winkler as musical director and historical musicologist. In January 2017, a team led by Schoch embarked on a larger project, 'Performing Restoration Theatre', which was funded by the AHRC. This project also involved Amanda Winkler (Syracuse University) as International Co-Investigator and Claude Fretz (Queen's University Belfast) as a Research Assistant. Scholars and artists from the UK, USA, Ireland, Canada and Belgium were also involved in the research process.

In both 2017 and 2019, the team rehearsed and publicly performed scenes from the Shadwell-Dryden-Davenant *The Tempest* in the Wanamaker Playhouse in collaboration with the Globe. In 2018, the same team partnered with the Folger on a full production of Davenant's *Macbeth*, a research process captured in documentary videos [3]. The team rebalanced current scholarship by interrogating Restoration Shakespeare as complex theatrical experiences possessing their own artistic integrity. Through iterative creative practice, they developed a unique model of intensive scholar-artist collaboration that used contemporary rehearsal and performance to better understand the demands that Restoration Shakespeare makes on artists today. In so doing, they challenged dominant 'Original Practices' methods that reinstate 'period' style [2].

By demonstrating the appeal of Restoration Shakespeare to artists and audiences today, Schoch's research led organically to impact described herein: Folger Theatre's production of Restoration *Macbeth* (2018).

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

Published Research

1. Schoch, *Writing the History of the British Stage, 1660-1900* (Cambridge University Press, 2016) ISBN 1107166926. Finalist, George Freedley Award, Theatre Library Association, USA, 2017. Funded by a Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship, 2011-14.

2. Reimers, S., & Schoch, R. (2019). Performing Restoration Shakespeare Today: Staging Davenant's *Macbeth*. *Shakespeare Bulletin* 37(4), 467-489. [doi:10.1353/shb.2019.0057](https://doi.org/10.1353/shb.2019.0057)

3. Schoch, Restoration Shakespeare and Restoration *Macbeth* research process documentary videos. Released serially from May 2018 to August 2019, and later compiled as a collection: 'Performing Restoration Shakespeare' YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCruFzmO4ohtbBjObTF9fO1g>

Research grant: AHRC, Performing Restoration Shakespeare, £607,311, AH/P004792/1

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

Schoch's research has achieved significant impact in the United States and in the UK: influencing programming at three US theatre companies, implementing a new model of scholar-artist collaboration, providing unique audience experiences, inspiring national media coverage, and generating substantial revenue.

Impact on repertoire and theatre revenue

Schoch's research inspired and enabled a major international theatre company—the Folger Theatre, Washington, DC—to perform Restoration Shakespeare for the first time in its fifty-year history. Folger Theatre is the arts division of the Folger Shakespeare Library, the world's preeminent Shakespeare collection. As a Folger Institute Committee member, Schoch persuaded the Folger to produce Restoration Shakespeare and to use scholar-artist collaboration in the 2014 workshop (Folger-funded) and 2018 *Macbeth* production

(Folger/AHRC-funded) [a]. *Macbeth* generated \$300K in box-office income. This was higher than usual for the Folger because the production achieved a capacity of 120% as opposed to Folger's average capacity of 95% [f]. In addition, in 2016, the Kennedy Center in Washington DC and the Napa Shakespeare company in California jointly produced *Restoration Measure for Measure*, starring Derek Jacobi. Program notes reference Schoch's 2014 workshop as the inspiration [b].

Impact on the creative process, staging and artists

Macbeth successfully pioneered a new collaborative model by having a scholarly team embedded in the full rehearsal process, a new practice for the Folger. In an interview with the *Broadway World* theatre website, the production's director, Robert Richmond, summed up the experience of working with the research team and with the Folger Consort musical ensemble which was also involved in the production:

The international team of scholars collaborating with us throughout the production process offers a unique and historic opportunity for the Folger Shakespeare Library, Folger Theatre, and Folger Consort to come together on a scale that has never been done before ... I, along with our extraordinary creative team, have been working to uncover the dynamics of the unique structure of the original Restoration performance and to make the play as exciting for a modern American audience as it was for Londoners in the 1660's.[g]

Robert Richmond further reflected on the creative process with the research team in an interview with the DCTheatreScene.com website:

I think the collaboration has created something that no sort of auteur could ever come up with; we spark off of each other. It's great. It's really exciting. [i]

Schoch's research influenced how Richmond—who had no experience with Restoration Shakespeare—staged *Macbeth*. Using primary sources, Schoch articulated Restoration aesthetics that integrated music and drama. This understanding led to staging that blended singing, music and acting. Schoch's dramaturgical analysis revealed that the adaptation's new scenes created character conflicts not in Shakespeare's version. This led to extra rehearsal time for those scenes, ensuring the adaptation's distinctiveness was preserved. Using period iconography, Schoch explained scenic effects in Restoration playhouses. This knowledge resulted in designs that deconstructed Restoration changeable scenery [a, d, e]. Reflecting on the 'unique' [23:36] and 'rewarding' [21:55] experience of directing Restoration Shakespeare, Richmond observed that although he began by 'knowing nothing about [it]' [0:36], scholarly 'expertise, historical knowledge and detailed thinking' [30:55] enabled him to 'creat[e]' a work of 'total theatre' [24:58] [c].

Across practice-based events at the Globe and Folger, 72 artists benefited from scholar-artist collaboration. None of the 35 *Macbeth* artists had performed Restoration Shakespeare previously or worked on a production that embedded scholars in all rehearsals [e]. Artists deepened their knowledge of Restoration Shakespeare. In a further interview about the production on the DCTheatreScene.com website, the actor, Ian Merrill Peakes, reflected on his experience of acting *Macbeth* in the production and of working with the research team:

... we're trying to honor the Restoration period, and we have the scholars in the room, and we are all sort of discovering it together, which is fun. [j]

Impact on public awareness and understanding

The sold-out *Macbeth* production was seen by more than 6,300 people, who furthered their learning through a program essay (Schoch, co-author) which was issued to audience members free of charge [f]. Because Restoration Shakespeare is now rarely performed, the production gave audiences a unique experience, affirmed in *The Washington Post's* review of the production which hailed it as a 'world premiere of sorts' and said it offered a 'rare glimpse

of a nearly forgotten performance style' [g]. On the TheatreBloom.com website, the reviewer, Claudia Bach stated:

This production is unmissable. There is no more efficient way to state it than that. Never before, to Folger's knowledge, has Davenant's *Macbeth* been staged, and it is unlikely to be a popular choice in the future given that precedent. The opportunity to experience not only a stunning production, but a once-in-a-lifetime chance to experience Restoration English theater as it might have been, cannot be passed up. [k]

Audience survey evidence testifies to the extent to which the production created a new audience for Restoration Shakespeare, expanded the knowledge of audience members, and changed their perceptions. 198 individuals (8% response rate of total audience) completed the survey which was designed by the research team but administered by the Folger Theatre [h]. Three-quarters (75%) of the respondents said they had had little (32%) or no (43%) knowledge of Restoration Shakespeare prior to seeing the production. More than four-fifths (83%) said they had gained a better understanding of Restoration Shakespeare. One Shakespeare aficionado commented:

I found it singularly enjoyable to get "more" from characters I'd seen so often before. I was worried that it might be jarring to hear new words in their mouths, but it really just felt like an extension or opening-up of what I'd already seen and loved about Shakespeare. [h]

The production also prompted a desire to find out more about Restoration Shakespeare and to see further, similar productions. Nearly half (46%) of the respondents said they wanted to learn more about Restoration theatre, while a similar proportion (48%) said they would like to see more Restoration productions if they had the opportunity. Comments included the following:

I wish I could see it again. It took me a little while to get into it, but then at the end, it took me a little while to get out of it. Stepping onto the streets of Washington made me realize, once again, how the political intrigues are alive and not so well, so Macbethian. I am glad I saw it. Thank you.

I'm keen to go learn more about Davenant and the thought that went into adapting Shakespeare for the Restoration. I wonder how much of the effort going into adapting *Macbeth* was about re-educating the public to remind them that murdering a king was big no-no! [h]

A much wider public gained opportunities to learn about Restoration Shakespeare through national media coverage, Folger engagement, and documentary videos. *The Washington Post* ran a feature article on the production (for which Schoch was interviewed) and reviewed it through a first-ever 'critics debate' [g]. The fact that a major USA newspaper commissioned a feature article and assigned its theatre and classical music critics to 'debate' the production testifies to the unusual significance it accorded to the production. Moreover, through its print and digital version, *The Washington Post* reaches a monthly audience of 143.6 million [g].

Much coverage explained how Shakespeare was performed in the Restoration, thus maximizing public learning opportunities. Examples of this include both the aforementioned feature article and a separate review of the production on the *Broadway World* theatre news website which, in February 2021, was reaching an audience of more than 4.5 million [g]. *Folger Magazine* (Summer 2019), disseminated to 20,000 stakeholders, featured an article on the production [a].

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

- a. Ferington, Esther 'Rediscovering a Music-Filled *Macbeth* from Centuries Ago', Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC, September 19th, 2018.
(<https://www.folger.edu/folger-story/rediscovering-a-music-filled-macbeth>)
- b. Program notes, *Measure for Measure*, Kennedy Center (Washington, DC) and Napa Shakespeare Festival (California), November 2016
(<https://www.folger.edu/events/measuredido> and <https://napashakes.org/2016/10/2237/>).
- c. Video interview of director Robert Richmond conducted at the Folger Theatre in September 2018. Copies held by Queen's University Belfast and Blue Land Media, Washington, DC.
- d. Website for Folger Theatre production of Davenant's *Macbeth* (2018)
<https://www.folger.edu/events/shakespeares-macbeth>
- e. Schoch, Winkler, *et al*, rehearsal field notes, 7 August – 7 September 2018. Copies held at Queen's University Belfast and Syracuse University (USA).
- f. *Macbeth* audience numbers, box office income and press clippings supplied by the Associate Artistic Producer, Folger Theatre, October 2018.
- g. Media Coverage and Circulation:
 - '[Folger Theatre Will Present a Rare Restoration Macbeth](#)', feature article, *Broadway World*, 7th August 2018
 - Peter Marks (chief theatre critic) and Anne Midgette (classical music critic) '[Two critics debate a rare rehashing of a revised "Macbeth", singing witches and all](#)', *The Washington Post*, 12th September 2018. This review is cited above and was produced in the style of a 'critics' debate'.
 - The combined reach figure for *The Washington Post* comprises its weekly print readership, plus its monthly total of unique visitors to its website from both within and outside the United States in April – June 2020. <http://origin.wapo-mk.arcpublishing.com/>
 - Nelson Pressley (theatre critic) '[The radical new "Macbeth" at the Folger Theatre is actually 350 years old](#)', feature article, *The Washington Post*, 6th September 2018.
 - Catlin, Roger, '[Folger's Ambitious Restoration Macbeth](#)' *Broadway World*, 13th September 2018.
 - The reach figure for *Broadway World's* is from its LinkedIn profile (as published on 1st February 2021). See: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/broadwayworld-com>
- h. *Macbeth* audience survey report, September and October 2018, qualitative and quantitative responses held by Queen's University Belfast and Office of External Relations, Folger Shakespeare Library. The survey was emailed to all audience members.
- i. Scafidi, Sarah '[Robert Richmond puts Lady M in Bedlam asylum and other wild ideas for Macbeth at Folger Theatre](#)', DCTheatreScene.com, 6th September, 2018.
- j. Scafidi, Sarah '[Ian Merrill Peakes has played Macbeth before, but never like this Folger production](#)', DCTheatreScene.com, 7th September, 2018.
- k. Bach, Claudia '[Macbeth at Folger Theatre](#)', TheatreBloom.com, 15th September 2018.