

<b>Institution:</b> University of Warwick		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> D27 – English Language and Literature		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Consulting Shakespeare: Involving Audiences, Training Practitioners and Developing Educational Resources through Interactive Performance		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2007-Present		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Dr Stephen Purcell Professor Carol Chillington Rutter	Associate Professor Professor of Shakespeare and Performance Studies	September 2011 - present October 1989 - present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2014-2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Since 2013, Purcell and Rutter have collaborated at Warwick to enable theatre practitioners, audiences, and students in secondary education to perform, stage, experience and learn Shakespeare in new and interactive ways. Through their research on performance and rehearsal history and rich pedagogical experience teaching Shakespeare through performance, the two have developed a model of <i>interactive involvement</i> to excite and capture multiple theatrical constituencies. From the RSC to street theatre, elite to grassroots productions, the researchers' extensive expertise in Shakespearean performance, reception, and dramaturgy has shaped professional practice, introducing a distinct form of audience engagement and theatre pedagogy to the UK and beyond. Purcell, Co-Artistic Director of The Pantaloon Theatre Company, employs a participatory and playful approach to performance enhanced by Rutter's connections with the world's leading writers, directors, and cultural agencies. Together they have significantly shaped the way a range of practitioners and audiences interactively act, stage, and realise the exuberance of performances that resonate with the most urgent social and cultural concerns/politics.</p>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Rutter and Purcell have produced world-leading academic and applied research in Shakespeare and other forms of theatre, including analysis of contemporary performance, historical reception, and dramaturgical output.</p> <p>Purcell's research on Shakespeare and performance has explored such topics as audience interaction, theatre-as-game, improvisation, and stage space. His work considers questions of audience agency (to what extent can and should Shakespearean productions control audience response?) and audience interaction (what happens when characters within Shakespeare's fictional worlds play with spectators in the real world?) (3.1). He has developed a number of innovative exercises designed to make interventions into rehearsal room practice. He has also made a detailed study of the practices at Shakespeare's Globe, analysing acting and directing techniques developed during the theatre's first decade that exploited its unique capacity for audience interaction and game-like playing styles (3.2).</p> <p>Purcell's dramaturgical output draws on and informs his scholarly work. Since 2014, he has worked on at least one annual production with his theatre company The Pantaloon, creating fast-paced, accessible edits of seven of Shakespeare's plays. These productions are influenced directly by his scholarly research and include built-in space for theatre games and audience interaction. He has led workshops on early modern drama, improvisation and audience interaction at national and international venues, including Shakespeare's Globe Theatre.</p>		

A central element of Rutter's renowned and extensive research on Shakespeare's plays focuses on their performance from the early modern period to the present. Rutter is interested in historical context and offers 'thick descriptions' of the culture in which Shakespeare's plays were embedded, researching, for example, notions of childhood, education, gendered speech practice and the legibility of the female body (3.3, 3.4). Her archival research into the working conditions of the early modern playhouse establishes how those conditions impacted the writing and performance of Shakespeare's plays on the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage and audience reception (3.3, 3.4, 3.5). Her work is theoretically informed by cultural materialism, which is also applied to her research focus on subsequent performance (3.3; 3.4; 3.6).

Rutter's close reading of Shakespeare's plays in their multiple re-makings examines how his scripts have been adapted and appropriated for different cultural contexts and political projects; how they have been staged to audiences of thousands as both lavish productions and 'poor' theatre (3.4; 3.5; 3.6). She is an internationally recognised authority on Shakespeare performance in the UK: 'there is no better interpreter of performance writing today' (James C. Bulman, 3.3). Her body of historically-informed research is alive to the immediate present and, as detailed below, is impacting theatre-making today (3.3; 3.4; 3.6).

Both Rutter (2008-14) and Purcell (2015-19) have regularly written extensive yearly reviews of Shakespearean performances in England for *Shakespeare Survey*, the preeminent academic publication in the UK. These provide a vital synthesis of the landscape of Shakespearean performance across the country (3.6).

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

Purcell and Rutter's publications include monographs and articles in peer-reviewed journals:

1. **Purcell, Stephen** (2013) *Shakespeare and Audience in Practice*, Shakespeare in Practice Series. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan. ISBN: 9780230364035
2. **Purcell, Stephen** (2017) *Shakespeare in the Theatre: Mark Rylance at the Globe*, London: Arden Shakespeare. ISBN: 9781472581747
3. **Rutter, Carol Chillington** (2007) *Shakespeare and Child's Play: performing lost boys on stage and screen*. London, UK: Routledge. ISBN: 9780415365185
4. **Rutter, Carol Chillington** (2020) *Antony and Cleopatra*. Shakespeare in Performance. Manchester: Manchester University Press. ISBN: 978-1-5261-3249-9
5. **Rutter, Carol Chillington** (2017) *Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice in and beyond the Ghetto*. In: Holland, Peter, (ed.) *Shakespeare Survey: creating Shakespeare*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 79-88. doi: 10.1017/9781108277648.009
6. **Rutter, Carol Chillington** (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015) and **Purcell, Stephen** (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020) *Shakespeare Performances in England*. In: Holland, Peter (ed.), *Shakespeare Survey* 62 pp. 349-385; 63 pp. 338-375; SS 64 pp. 340-377; SS 65 pp. 445-483; SS 66 pp. 354-394; SS 67 pp. 396-438; SS 68 pp. 368-407; SS 69 pp. 394-431; SS 70 pp. 287-325; SS 71, pp. 305-346; Smith, Emma (ed.) *Shakespeare Survey* 72 pp. 284-305; 73 pp. 203-222. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Grant details:** European Commission (Creative Europe): Shakespeare in and Beyond the Ghetto, 01.06.2016 - 31.08.2019. Ref: 570754-CREA-1-2016-1-IT-CULT-COOP1. **EUR199,189.07** (06.2016).

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

Purcell and Rutter have helped shape myriad performances of Shakespeare from their conception, rehearsal, and production through to their reception and comprehension. These projects have established new audiences and presented longstanding ones with new adaptations. They incorporate research-based approaches into production, working with theatre practitioners and institutions and through the development of educational resources. As practitioners and consultants, their work, as detailed below, impacts in rehearsal rooms, city-

spaces, multiple stages, documentary, digital platforms and social media, school classrooms and sitting rooms.

### Bringing Performances to New Audiences

As an Artistic Director of the Pantaloons Theatre Company, Purcell has used his research into Shakespeare and popular performance styles to incorporate clowning, audience participation, and game-based structure into open-air performances, employing the techniques outlined in 3.1 and 3.2. Between 2014 and 2020, The Pantaloons performed 7 different Shakespearean plays in 236 venues from Cornwall to Scotland, including non-traditional and community spaces such as schools, village halls and churches. They reached audiences for whom classical theatre is minimally available, supported by initiatives such as a ticket scheme that allowed 78 teenagers to watch the production of *Macbeth* for free in Norfolk (repeated for *Romeo and Juliet*).

Purcell's interactive techniques generate enthusiastic feedback and transform cultural sensibilities. Spectators refer to 'brilliant audience participation' and 'great audience involvement'. Significant engagement is evidenced from young people and spectators who had previously found Shakespeare inaccessible: 'I adore Shakespeare, [but] my husband doesn't always understand it so this was a true "bridge" performance deftly combining audience participation, immersion, contemporary & old'. Another described it 'lovely' to see the children in her party 'laughing so much at such a great performance', evidence 'that children can love Shakespeare'. Teachers reported highly positive reactions from their students: one described how the performance of *As You Like It* 'made us laugh and appreciate Shakespeare' (5.1).

Venues have also benefitted economically from Pantaloons performances; profits are split between venue and company, who employ a touring cast. One venue, Godinton House in Kent, claimed 'the uniqueness of your performance will enable us to unlock new audiences and allow people to enjoy the very essence of Shakespeare' (5.1). The Pantaloons' 2020 open-air performance of *Twelfth Night* (touring 24 venues) was particularly beneficial during Covid-19 disruption, in helping keep afloat venues that normally rely on indoor performances for their income.

Rutter's research has informed prestigious productions in unconventional sites. A celebrated high-profile 2016 production of *The Merchant of Venice* in the Venetian Ghetto (the first Jewish Ghetto) marked the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare's death and the Ghetto's 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary. A European Commission-funded project, this was the first-ever performance of the play there. In addition to advising the Director, Rutter delivered 2 public talks on the play, and organised and participated in a roundtable discussion described as 'a most productive and energetic discussion for a lively crowd' (5.2). The production's use of an open-air public venue and live streaming enabled them to reach an audience of over 120,000 (119,000 via Facebook Live), many more than would attend a traditional performance venue (5.3). It toured to a prestigious festival in northern Italy, various locations in the USA and was performed in a prison in Padua. The performance also featured in 4 international television and radio documentaries aired in Italy, Germany and the UK (5.3).

### Fostering New ways of Performing Shakespeare

With The Pantaloons, Purcell has developed innovative performance techniques and exercises, detailed in 3.1. He has led over 30 professional actors in these practices in rehearsals and open workshops between 2015 and 2016, which led to The Pantaloons' development of a new improvisation-based Shakespeare show, *Play On!* Pantaloons alumni have incorporated Purcell's techniques of audience interaction and games into theatre companies that they have founded, including: Open Bar, Living Record Productions and Mangled Yarn Theatre Company. The co-founder of Mangled Yarn Theatre Company notes that Purcell's work with him 'helped shape my identity as a comedian and improviser'. For the Artistic Director of Living Record Productions, working with Purcell 'changed everything', reversing his earlier sense that, as a

dyslexic person, Shakespeare was 'never going to be for me'. Having never read a Shakespeare play prior to working with Purcell, he has since directed many of them (5.4).

Rutter's consultancy work is equally lauded for altering and shaping professional practice, exemplified by the Director of *The Merchant of Venice*'s comments that she particularly valued Rutter's unique ability to connect scholars and practitioners, appreciating her 'energetic leadership over the diverse gathering of scholars and her unequalled authority on matters of Shakespeare text and performance' (5.2).

### Working with National Institutions

Through collaborations with organisations such as Shakespeare's Globe and Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) Purcell and Rutter have also influenced Shakespearean performance on a national level. One Theatre Director, who has directed 4 productions at Shakespeare's Globe since 2018, adapted Purcell's ideas into her own rehearsal-room work, referring to Purcell's book (3.2) 'again and again'. The book 'greatly informed' her approach to audience interaction, shifting her understanding 'from simple direct address to the scope for highly personal connections with members of the audience' (5.5).

Purcell led a public workshop at the Globe in August 2019, exploring the concept of drama as a form of play. With 4 Pantaloons actors and a public audience, he workshopped scenes focusing especially on audience interaction. One audience member was surprised by 'the overwhelming approval of the audience for more inclusivity/engagement'. This spectator, evidently a professional theatre director, subsequently planned to 'encourage more audience interaction before a play is officially open. Rather than only having an audience for previews, include them earlier in the process' (5.1). Another practitioner was 'surprised by how much I loved the audience interaction/engagement', having been previously encouraged to maintain the imaginary 'fourth wall'; they felt the workshop 'showed me another avenue I can explore in my own art as an actor and director' (5.1).

In parallel, Rutter has used her textual and historical expertise on performances to inform a number of prestigious productions as a rehearsal consultant for director Phillip Breen's productions of Shakespeare and other early modern writers. Since 2014, productions consulted on include *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, RSC, 2014-15; *Shakespeare In Love*, Theatre Royal Bath and national tour, 2018; *The Provoked Wife*, RSC, 2019; and *The Comedy of Errors*, RSC (scheduled for Summer 2020 but C-19 postponed). Rutter's expert guidance has supported Breen to maintain the level of authenticity expected by audiences, securing box office receipts well into seven figures. Breen described her contribution as 'indispensable...giving our creative team the necessary rigour that is required to produce top quality professional Shakespeare productions that fill one-thousand-seat theatres for long runs.' He adds that Rutter's 'in-depth knowledge of the classical canon... [and] the state of the Shakespearean art as a critic and recorder of contemporary practice' has informed 'choices at key points of the creative process' (5.6).

Rutter's application of research to practice has also provided actors with a deeper understanding of the text that they are able to apply to their craft. A Shakespearean actor described the value of Rutter's expertise in rehearsals for the RSC's production of *The Comedy of Errors*: 'Carol will be there in the room, with a gentle guiding hand or suggestion where you might struggle with a particularly opaque piece of dialogue... I'd very strongly argue that it's the input that Carol offers that can lift the mere everyday to the absolutely virtuosic. She's brilliant, her practice is brilliant, and we need her' (5.7).

### Informing Educational Resources

Based on his extensive research of performance at Shakespeare's Globe (3.2), Purcell provided expertise for the creation of *Shakespeare's Globe Archive: Theatres, Players and Performance*, a resource from Adam Matthew Digital, a digital publisher who curates and contextualises



primary sources for use in Higher Education teaching. This resource, published in March 2019, enables students to use carefully curated primary sources that would have been otherwise inaccessible. A member of the Editorial Board, Purcell contributed an accompanying essay and provided crucial counsel on primary sources and development. The publisher notes the advice as 'a great help in identifying key elements of the collection that would offer an important context to the main performance materials' (5.8).

As an academic consultant, Rutter collaborated with Shanty Productions in 2018 to adapt Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* for a full text film to appeal to a modern, diverse and younger audience, particularly students. The film is available on iTunes and Amazon Prime Video, and has been downloaded 4,891 times. One reviewer commented that the film is a 'great way of engaging a more diverse and contemporary audience whilst holding true to Shakespeare' (5.9). Additionally, Rutter has appeared in 25 educational 'viewtutorials', aimed particularly at A-Level students. As of 24.11.20, these have been viewed on YouTube 18,489 times (5.9). A 30-second Facebook clip of Rutter discussing the ending received approximately 13,000 views. Typical comments echo the teacher on Twitter who described the videos as 'fantastic' and encouraged her Sixth Form students to watch them (5.9).

Rutter has also provided expert insights in Digital Theatre+ (DT+), including interviews, an introduction to Shakespeare and a detailed interview with actor Harriet Walter analysing Shakespeare's parts for women. DT+ is a subscription service for theatre productions and educational resources used by over 2,000 educational institutions worldwide. The DT+ Editorial Director for Higher Education described Rutter's contributions as 'a fruitful bridge between scholarship and practice, deepening and enriching the performance and understanding of Shakespeare' (5.8). Between 2018 and June 2020 Rutter's audio-video materials alone have been viewed approximately 1,900 times, likely including classes of students as a single view. DT+ anticipates a growing audience following a website rebuild and teaching moving online due to COVID-19. Rutter's contributions to the DT+ advisory board have been 'crucial in bringing together the worlds of industry and education, and, again, creating a genuine and lasting dialogue between often divided communities' (5.8).

Finally, Rutter has worked closely as an academic mentor and advisor for WillShake (2015), a television series for younger audiences produced by Emily Blacksell with the aim of 'amplifying the voices of under-represented groups'. Blacksell described how 'Professor Rutter's peerless breadth of reference, good humour and supportive gaze is, and will continue to be, key to the success of the project.' In particular, Blacksell identifies Rutter's 'vast knowledge and frame of reference for Shakespeare in performance, coupled with her significant and crucial understanding of the political prisms through which new versions are viewed' as helpful in adapting Shakespeare for modern, diverse audiences (5.8).

Through sustained collaboration with theatre and education practitioners, both Purcell and Rutter have used their research and collaborative teaching experience to produce and enrich new techniques, performances and teaching resources, providing an innovative, interactive and inclusive approach to Shakespeare for a broad range of audiences around the world.

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

1. The Pantaloon Event Feedback (Social Media Feedback, 2019 Globe workshop feedback, Venue feedback)
2. Statement from the Director of the *Merchant of Venice*
3. *Merchant of Venice* Response: live stream viewing numbers and documentaries list
4. Statements from actors from The Pantaloon
5. Statement from Director
6. Statement from Phillip Breen (Director)
7. Statement from Actor
8. Feedback on digital resources (Statements from: Digital Theatre+, Emily Blacksell (producer for *WillShake*) and Adam Matthew Digital)
9. Statement from Shanty Productions and public comments on videos