

The Globe Theatre Outcome Statement
by Kristen Barrett

INTRO

Visiting the Globe Theatre was one of the highlights of my summer abroad, and viewing *The Winter's Tale*, *As You Like It*, and *Hamlet* during my stay proved both unforgettable and inspiring. I did not adequately anticipate how much I would thoroughly enjoy and appreciate these three performances. As stipulated in my proposal, my reason for attending these shows was to draw inspiration before I direct *Romeo and Juliet* in the fall. I am elated to report that I succeeded in my mission. I will now describe my findings and how they have impacted my brainstorming for *Romeo and Juliet*.

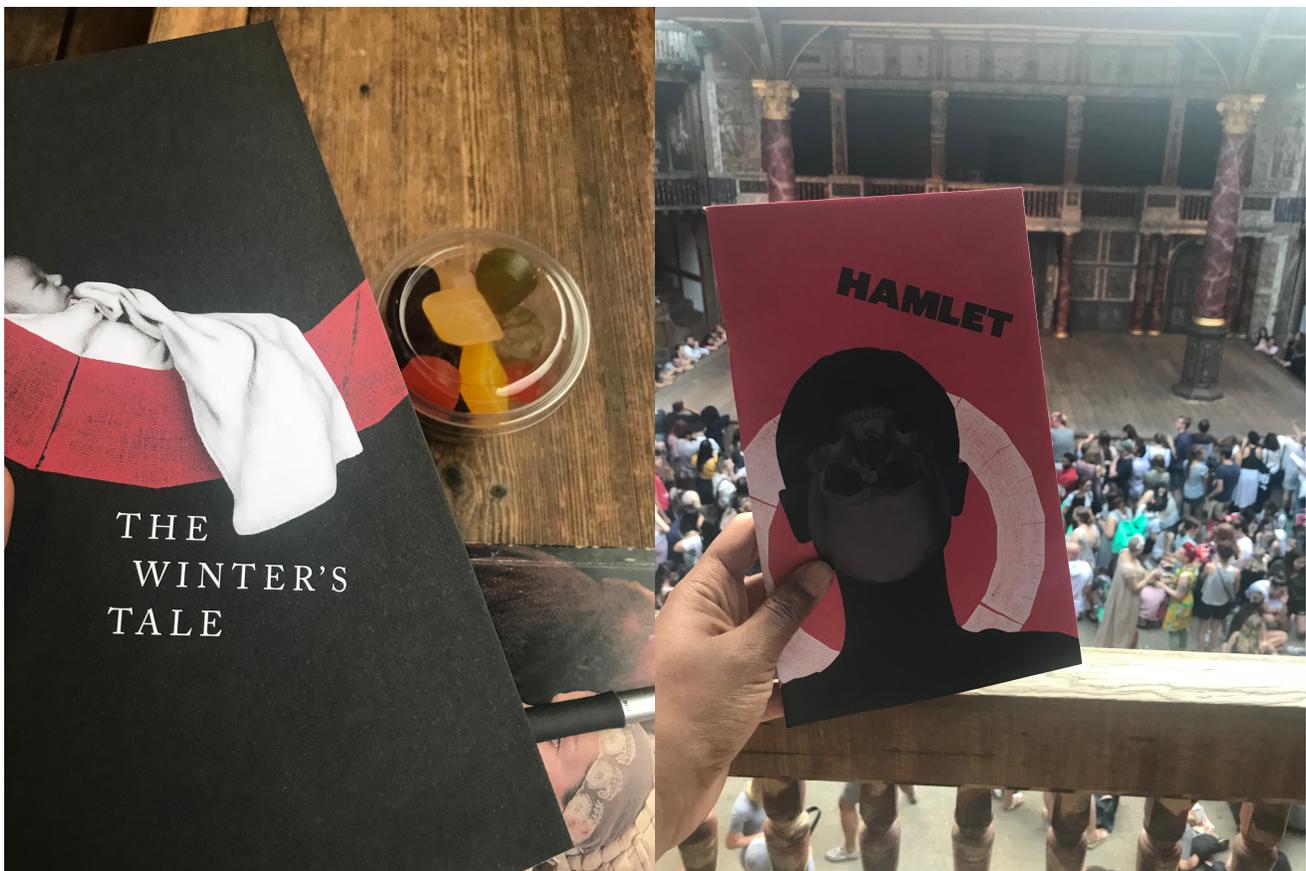
On Friday, July 13, I saw *The Winter's Tale*, one of Shakespeare's later plays. I watched the play with a small copy of the play in my hand so that I could mark where the director chose to make line cuts. I immediately noticed that rather than cutting scenes the director opted to cut out sections of verse (preserving the meter) and some minor characters. In particular, I liked the idea of shortening Shakespeare's verse instead of cutting entire scenes even though the thought had not occurred to me before seeing this production. Furthermore, I appreciated the director's use of costume design. Costumes differentiated between the two settings of Sicily and Bohemia. When in Sicily, characters wore almost Grecian garb while in Bohemia they wore modern day attire. It was visually appealing to see the stark contrast between the two cities represented in the costuming. I look forward to exploring the same concept with the costume designer of *Romeo and Juliet*. The successful use of costuming in *The Winter's Tale* compels me to encourage her to embrace the power of visual signaling.

On the following day, I enjoyed a double feature of *As You Like It* and *Hamlet*. A pair of directors led both productions using the same cast. During *As You Like It*, I watched from the Yard as a "Groundling." From there, I witnessed up-close the cast's playful interactions with the audience and could more easily see/hear actors' ad-libs, comedic whispers, and physical comedy. I appreciated how the directors undermined my expectations of *As You Like It*. For one, they cast a man as Rosalind and a woman as Orlando. While I was not particularly fond of this casting, I still appreciated how the directors brought a new element to the story. Those familiar with this play also know Jacques' famous "All the world's a stage" monologue. Having acted in this production myself, I eagerly awaited to hear Jacques deliver the first line, only to hear him partially choke on a banana instead! This comic change from the norm caused the audience — myself included — burst into laughter. The directors definitely took a risk by starting off the monologue with Jacques munching on a banana, but this departure truly thrilled most as far as I could tell. These directors subverted expectations in *Hamlet* when the titular lead delivered the "To be or not to be" monologue while clasping the hand of an audience member. *Hamlet* also involved a gender-swap casting of the leads: a woman portrayed Hamlet and a man portrayed Ophelia. What most intrigued me about these directors' decision to gender-swap is that they changed the gender of the *actor* not of the character. In effect, a woman was playing a male Hamlet rather than changing Hamlet into a woman. As I am casting for *Romeo and Juliet*, I will revisit this issue of whether to change the gender of a character (altering all the pronouns in the

script) or keep it as originally intended. As a last point, both plays also employed music in a bombastic way. Live music punctuated every transition, death, and dramatic moment in both plays. The music was immensely effective in bolstering the dramatic effect of the plays, and it encouraged me to embrace sound design in my own production this fall.

Even though *Hamlet* and *As You Like It* had different directors from *The Winter's Tale*, they all ended the same way — with a dance. Unbeknownst to me, every Globe play ends with a “jig,” a harkening back to the way Shakespearean plays ended in the Elizabethan era. I really enjoyed this tradition, and I have decided to ask *Romeo and Juliet*'s choreographer to create a jig for the end of our show as well.

All in all, I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Globe Theatre, and my experience there will heavily influence my directing of *Romeo and Juliet*. In the rest of my outcome statement, I will share photos, expenditures, and a brief conclusion.



Pictured: My *The Winter's Tale* program, script, and a container of Wine Gums (on left). My *Hamlet* program in front of my view of the stage (on right).



Pictured: Me posing as a Groundling with my *As You Like It* program and ticket.

EXPENDITURES

| Item | Cost |
|--|---------------|
| Tickets for <i>The Winter's Tale & Hamlet</i> | 133.7 |
| Tickets for <i>As You Like It</i> (cheaper due to Groundling seat) | 6.93 |
| Programs for Shows | 20.78 |
| Seat Cushions | 2.77 |
| Globe Theatre Guided Tour | 20 |
| The Norton Shakespeare | 76.77 |
| Train from Oxford to London and back | 56 |
| Part of Lodging Expenses | 180 |
| Total | 496.95 |

I was able to use the funding to cover most of my trip's expenses. I used my own personal budget to pay for meals, the rest of the lodging expenses, and a few copies of the plays for souvenirs.

CONCLUSION

As I had hoped, visiting the Globe primed me for directing *Romeo and Juliet*. I will use my experience from the Globe to inspire my own script edits and to inform my casting decisions. I cannot wait to share my findings with *Romeo and Juliet*'s artistic staff in the fall. Without a doubt, just as reading more novels makes one a more astute author, so too does viewing more

plays makes one a more discerning director. I thoroughly appreciate the financial support of the Miller Arts Scholars Minigrant for making this discovery possible.