

ROMEO  
ROMEO  
WHEREFORE  
ART  
THOU  
ROMEO?



# Shakespeare Week 2022

London • August 2022

5 DAYS.

14 HUMANS.

2 PLAYS. 1 CITY.

The  
humans...



One of many group pictures...



High Tea at the Globe's Swan

# Red carpet at Shakespeare's Globe





The  
plays...



Ⓜ brave  
new world,  
That has such  
people in 't!

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William Shakespeare  
The Tempest  
act V scene I

*The Tempest*

Presented by the 2022 **Globe Ensemble** at the **Globe Theatre**, London, UK. July 22, 2022 - October 22, 2022. Directed by Sean Holmes. Music by Cassie Kinoshi. Casting by Becky Paris. Costume supervision by Jackie Orton. Design by Sandra Falase and Paul Wills. Movement by Rachael Nanyonja. With Peter Bourke (Gonzalo), Rachel Hannah Clarke (Ariel), Ralph Davis (Trinculo), George Fouracres (Stefano), Joanne Howarth (Francisco), Olivier Huband (Ferdinand), Nadi Kemp-Sayfi (Miranda), Ciarán O'Brien (Caliban), Patrick Osborne (Antonio), Lucy Phelps (Sebastian), Ferdy Roberts (Prospero), Katy Stephens (Alonso), and others.

It is unusual for a theatre performance to first rouse the audience's sense of smell, even before their sense of sound. Yet, unusual might overall be the word to best characterize The Globe's 2022 production of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Opening with Prospero on his island, silently standing at a BBQ grill while occasionally turning a piece of meat, the audience is left waiting for any action to occur for quite some time. Only after a good while of pondering and consulting his spell book (which looks more like a haphazardly put together scrapbook) does he decide on certain spells to be cast, for the plot to then pick up quite rapidly with the start of the actual tempest. But, while connoisseurs of Shakespeare might expect the appearance of a boat in a sea storm, the audience is instead presented with a transparent plastic tank that is rolled onto stage, with the royal entourage frantically shouting and screaming from within, while Ariel is spraying the actors (and the audience) with a water hose. This unusual stage setting continues throughout the play, ranging from various animal pool floaties to massive yellow containers filled with rubber ducks.



The absurdity of the stage sets is mirrored in the costumes, with Prospero in bright yellow speedos throughout most of the play and Miranda in a short neon red ensemble. Caliban, too, fits in with the beach resort aesthetic, in his tight shorts and (generously tattered) Hawaiian shirt, while also sporting a staff tag on his chest, making his servitude appear more voluntary than it really is. The islanders provide a stark contrast to the shipwrecked royals in their business attire, yet the costumes not only function to highlight the difference between the two clearly distinct lifestyles, but also allow for nuance and change to showcase the willingness – and lack thereof – of characters to adapt to the life on the island. Ferdinand’s wardrobe becomes less and less formal with every appearance on stage, as he slowly adjusts to the island and his newfound company of Miranda, while characters like Sebastian and Antonio show a clear lack of willingness to adjust to the island by sticking to their three-piece suits. Prospero’s change of attire at the end of the play – from summer tan speedos to business suit – also shows his readiness to return to civilized society and to leave the island life behind. Ariel, who is portrayed as a woman in this production of *The Tempest*, continuously changes her costumes, ranging from sailor, over glamorous cowboy and waitress uniform, to the flower power overalls which characterize the spirits. These costume changes reflect her attitude, as she is constantly performing and taking on roles, leaving the audience in wonder as to what her actual appearance – and moral stance – is.

Remarkable about this production is how the space of The Globe is used to its full capacities. While the thrust stage is used for most of the acting, a platform which extends further into the crowd is used throughout to let the characters address the audience or in fact, to let them become part of the audience themselves. Prospero watches most of the action (and chaos he creates) unfold from this vantage point and laughs heartily at the mishaps of the other characters. Thus, the 'play within the play' convention becomes more pronounced in this production, as it is clear that Prospero is the puppeteer who orchestrates nearly everything that unfolds onstage. But the space of The Globe is also used beyond the stage, with the royal entourage standing in the galleries when Prospero recounts their misdeeds in the first act, and Ferdinand appearing through the trap doors on-stage and running off through the crowd when Ariel recounts the illusion of the shipwreck. Even the balcony above the stage is used to its full capacity, as it holds the live music ensemble, all dressed in the flower power attire of the spirits. The entire space is fitted in blue plastic, reminiscent of the sky, and thus creates the illusion of a 'godly' choir which accompanies the play. And indeed, it is mainly in magical moments orchestrated by Prospero that the music accompanies the action, thus reinforcing his semblance of authority and divine power.



Throughout the play, it is however constantly hinted at that Prospero's power, as everything else, is merely an illusion. While he assumes an air of authority over everyone, it is really Ariel that executes most of his plans. How much magic Prospero really is capable of is left unclear, but his power can be quickly undermined if Ariel wills it so, as is demonstrated in the masque of Act IV, where the intended homage to marriage for Miranda and Ferdinand quickly turns into an overtly sexual dance that cumulates in a passionate kiss between the couple and a frantic intervention by Prospero. Ariel's power or influence over Prospero is also hinted at in the eventual reunion of Prospero and his banishers in Act V Scene I. It was Ariel that moved Prospero to finally end the illusions and torture and to approach his adversaries face to face. Then, being once more overcome by rage when he finally faces his traitorous brother, it is a pause, a hesitant look to Ariel, and a warning hand motion on her part that leads him to finally utter the words 'I forgive thee'. This power play between the two characters is given another depth, due to the fact that the role of Prospero is played by an older white man while Ariel is played by a young black woman. The oppression that Ariel experiences through Prospero's hands seems much graver due to the cultural systems of oppression and marginalization that the audience is familiar with. The fact that Prospero takes credit for all of Ariel's wondrous illusions is also perceived as more unjust, as it mirrors the lack of credit that black women oftentimes receive for their work in society. However, the seriousness of their power dynamic is often overshadowed by the comedic tone of the play, thus distracting the audience from thinking more critically about the action at hand.

This strategy is employed throughout the rest of the play as well. It is clear that the main aim of this modernized production is to make the audience laugh. The violent themes of the original text are all heavily played down, for example by replacing actual weapons with golf clubs and water pistols, while scenes referencing abuse, such as Caliban's attempted rape of Miranda, are swept over and quickly followed by comedic lines that distract the audience's attention. Moreover, the play is packed throughout with over-the-top pop culture references, such as mentions of the Tate Modern, a display of an entire buffet of British fast food, a drunken performance of football chants, and an entire scene with Harry Potter costumes and references. These scenes which cater to the audience are mostly dragged on for too long and done too explicitly, lowering the quality of the comedy from sincerely witty to cheaply artificial.

Keeping the audience active and attentive is definitely also a main goal of the performance, as the actors oftentimes interact with audience members through glances and gestures and in one instance, even through a Freddie-Mercury-style vocal match with the audience. These interactions are mainly done by magical beings such as Ariel, Caliban, and the spirits, although the rest of the characters seem more and more inclined to address the audience, the longer they find themselves on the magical island.

Surprising after a build-up of more and more comedic moments throughout the play is the sobering ending. With a defeated look, Prospero takes centre stage and delivers an epilogue which is rather unexpected, as the lines he speaks would usually occur in Act IV Scene I after the masque. In this closing scene, he does not ask for the audience's applause or thanks, but instead speaks about the evanescence of life and solemnly leaves the stage through the crowd and exits through the main door. The sombre and defeated tone of this speech, which would usually occur before the resolution of the play, gains an entirely new meaning here, as Prospero adopts this tone of voice when everything is supposed to have come together in a happy ending. His exit leaves the audience in suspense, as everyone is unsure if the play has come to an end on such a sombre note, and further, while the rest of the cast is still on stage in a frozen state. Despite the cheerful tone throughout the play, this ending makes it evident that the audience is not asked to 'release' Prospero from this island and thus pardon his behaviour throughout the play, which was full of oppression, deception, and spiteful revenge. Instead, they are now finally tasked to reflect on the story they were shown, which was a sombre tale, shrouded in comedy and laughter.

*Ren Schnüriger*



HE THINKS TOO MUCH:  
such men are  
**DANGEROUS**

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE  
Julius Caesar



## *Julius Caesar*

Presented by the 2022 Globe Ensemble at the Globe Theatre, London, UK. August 13, 2022 – September 10, 2022. Performed across the UK as part of Globe on Tour. Directed by Diane Page. Assistant Direction by Indiana Lown Collins. Casting by Becky Paris. Choreography by Asha Jennings-Grant. Composition by Simon Slater. Costume by Sian Harris. Design by Khadija Raza. Dramaturgy by Jesse Haughton-Shaw. Fight direction by Rachel Bown-Williams and Ruth Cooper Brown. Movement by Glynn MacDonald. Text by Christine Schmidle. Voice by Emma Woodvine. With Charlotte Bate (Cassius), Omar Bynon (Decius / Soothsayer), Anna Chrichlow (Brutus), Amie Francis (Calpurnia), Cash Holland (Portia / Murellus), Jack Myers (Casca / Octavius), Samuel Oatley (Mark Antony), Dickon Tyrrell (Julius Caesar).

William Shakespeare wrote *Julius Caesar* with its performance setting in mind; he most likely “prepared [...] *Julius Caesar* for the opening of his company’s new custom-built theatre on Bankside, the Globe, in 1599” (Daniell 10). Additionally, the audience’s interest was guaranteed by the subject matter, “the single best-known story from the pagan ancient world”, namely the assassination of Julius Caesar (9), and the fact that political turmoil, confusion, and rebellion were familiar topics to the Elizabethan audience. Page’s 2022 version of the play similarly claims topicality, as the description on the Globe website proclaims that the performance of *Julius Caesar* would “[take] on startlingly new relevance in the Globe Theatre” by “[confronting] our own political landscape” (Shakespeare’s Globe). However, although the performance raises several contemporary issues, it does not succeed in integrating them profoundly into the story; In an attempt to unite both the political anxieties and turmoil around Julius Caesar’s dictatorship and the political climate at “home” (Shakespeare’s Globe), the performance fails to create the intense atmosphere that would do the play justice.

The performance starts with the Cobbler, one of the many roles of Omar Bynon, hurrying through the pit towards the stage and leading the audience in several chants, including ‘Pompey is a wasteman’. Bynon’s animating and ecstatic energy quickly transforms the audience into a Roman mob celebrating Caesar’s victory over Pompey, therefore establishing the role the audience is going to assume throughout the play; the audience, especially the crowd gathered in the pit, is assigned the role of the diegetic spectator, serving as a witness to both private soliloquies and public speeches, and is oftentimes addressed as such. This promotes audience engagement in the story, which increases the likelihood of the audience making connections between what is being shown onstage and what is going on in their everyday lives. However, it could also lead to a detachment of the story and the present, as the members of the crowd might think that what they are taking on is merely a ‘role’ that has nothing to do with them once the play is over.

The pit is not only the spectators’ space, but also the characters’. Throughout the performance, characters enter and exit through the crowd, and Tyrrell’s Caesar even shakes some hands, welcoming the people to Rome, highlighting once again the ambivalence of the audience’s status as theatregoers or Roman citizens. There is even so much coming and going through the crowd that eventually the audience leaves a clear path for any potential exits/entrances. The seating Untouched, however, remain the stalls and balconies, whose audience is harder to interact with. If one considers that in more conventional theatres, this would be the only audience available to the performers, then it becomes clear that the play’s effect greatly relies on the standing audience becoming a part of the performance. The ensemble recognizes this necessity and, through the audience interaction just mentioned, keeps the crowd engaged and therefore uses the Globe’s structural features to their advantage.



However, other aspects of the performance do not profit from the stage setting quite as much. Intimate moments, for example, are difficult to uphold in the grand and open-air space of the Globe, especially for a performance that tries to highlight the complex inner workings of its characters. Indeed, the performance, which focuses especially on Brutus and Cassius rather than on Brutus and Caesar, struggles to convey deeper scenes that deal with more complex personal moments. Bate's performance shows Cassius as desperately struggling for Brutus' participation in the conspiracy, and how Brutus' own inner conflict is greatly influenced and guided by Cassius' insistence. Despite Cassius appearing to be the more constant character in the play, who knows exactly what he thinks is right for Rome and how to achieve it, Bate's Cassius is constantly in distress, nervously pacing the entire stage and alternately addressing Brutus and the audience. Although an exploration of Cassius' character as a more desperate rather than resolute figure has its charms, in some instances this interpretation can lead to a ridicule of her character. For example, Cassius' statement "This is my birthday" (5.1.71), performed in a way that resembles a crying child, evokes laughter in the audience, despite the monologue that follows revealing that Cassius has basically given up and accepts her death that shall soon come. The comical introduction to this moment diminishes the gravity of what is being portrayed and therefore restricts the intimacy that can be conveyed on an already challenging stage.



The design of this stage is at first largely inspired by Ancient Rome; a Roman statue of a man, presumably Julius Caesar but perhaps also Pompey, occupies the center of the main stage. In front of it, leading down the stairs into the pit, is a purple carpet, matched in color by three banners, one of which hangs above the balcony and features the face of Caesar, and two which hang by the main stage, declaring “libertas, dignitas, veritas”. Of this minimalist staging, only the banners remain throughout the play; both the statue and the carpet are removed after the assassination of Julius Caesar, at which point the more modern elements start to dominate the stage, mostly in the form of stage properties and costumes. The characters trade their formal military suits (which already hinted at the upcoming contemporary touch at the beginning, as an authentic Roman costuming would have had the characters wearing togas) into green uniforms which, along with the distribution of revolutionary flyers, remind of the Russian Revolution. However, the machine guns and pistols the characters start carrying along with their knives call more modern warfare to mind, whereas the howling of bomb sirens that accompany some scenes rather call the Blitz to mind. This amalgamation of epochs of war remains unresolved as the performance does not fully commit to any of them. This is confusing insofar as some of the modern elements are introduced quite unnecessarily; for example, the guns are essentially useless for the characters, as the opposing sides cannot suddenly start gunning each other down, as this would raise the question why the conspirators killed Caesar with swords in the first place instead of just shooting him. The modernizing aspects of the performance therefore mostly contribute to the aesthetics of the stage, yet due to the noncommittal to a clear aesthetic, this is ultimately the only thing they serve to do.

The characters' crossgendered and, in Brutus' case, crossracial casting against Caesar's and Mark Antony's casting as white men creates a web of implications. Indeed, the focus on Brutus' and Cassius' complex relationship to both each other and the actions they must take, as opposed to Caesar's obliviousness and even ignorance of the state of things and Mark Antony's remorselessness perhaps reflects on women who have fought and are fighting against tyrannical men in power, and the necessity of collaboration between all women to end patriarchy. Similarly, the changes to the text to adjust to the crossgendered cast allow for a feminist reading, such as when Cassius is described by Caesar as "a great observer, and **she** looks / Quite through the deeds of men" (1.2.201-2, changed pronoun in bold). However, the strength of the performance lies mostly on the sisterly or even romantic love between Brutus and Cassius and their devotion to each other, and not on their struggle against men. For example, in their final scene together, Chrichlow and Bate manage to convey the emotional vulnerability that failed to reach the audience in Cassius' monologue. As the two characters discuss their most certainly impending defeat and death, they are standing at the edge of the main stage, facing each other. It seems like they are about to hug, or perhaps even kiss, but instead they resort to saluting each other, Cassius declaring "If we do meet again, we'll smile indeed; / If not, 'tis true this parting was well made" (5.1.120-1). The potential of the moment, the will-they-won't-they and the convincingly acted hesitation between the two of them, demonstrates the complicated relationship and yet deep admiration that Brutus and Cassius share, and their committal to each other is perhaps the only committal the performance delivers.

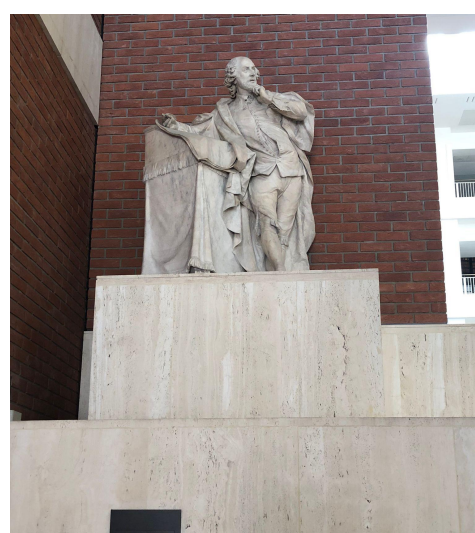
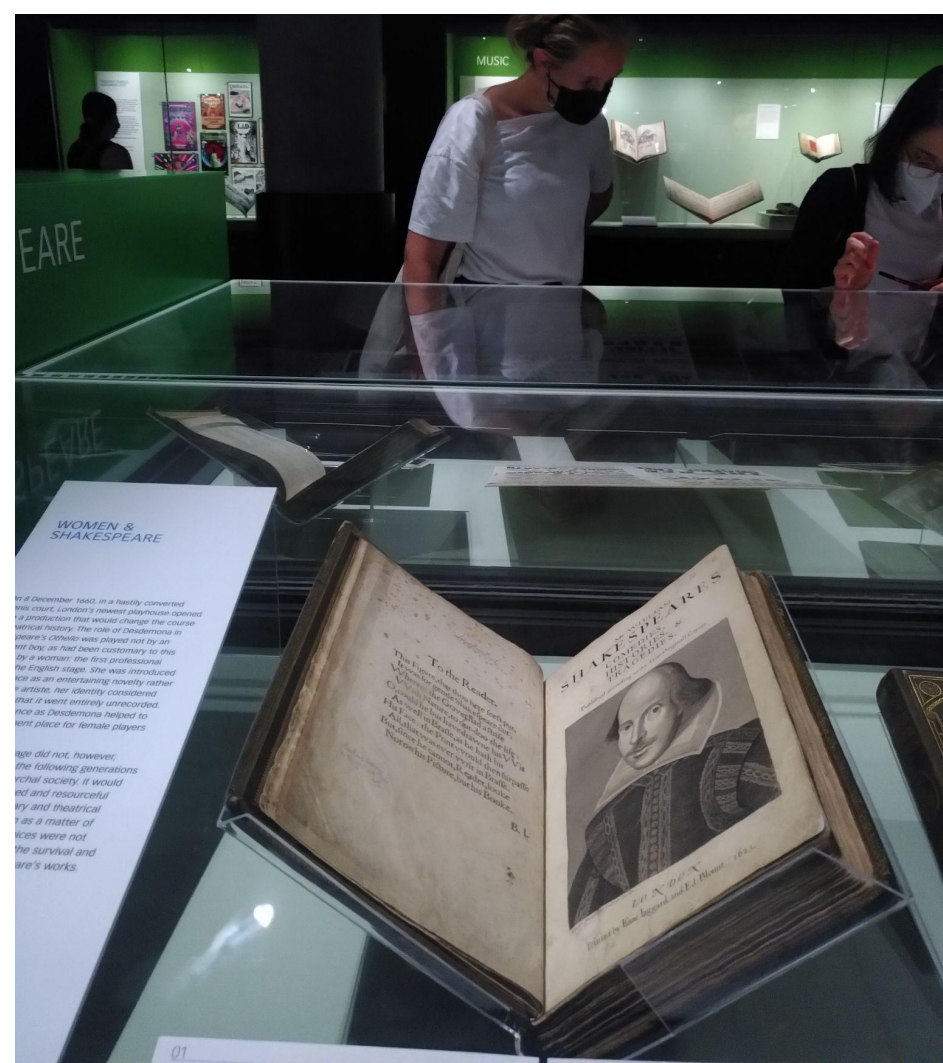
In conclusion, although the participation of the audience was nicely managed and the theatre space was mostly used well, there is indeed still upside potential for Page's and the 2022 Globe Ensemble's adaptation to Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Especially the promised connection to "our political landscape" (Shakespeare's Globe) left much to be desired, and instead the audience was confronted with a jumble of different historic influences, which mostly resulted in confusion than in a clear argument. However, the collaborative efforts of Brutus and Cassius are the highlight of the performance, and if there is one takeaway from it, it is that hard choices cannot only divide us, they can also unite us.



The  
city...







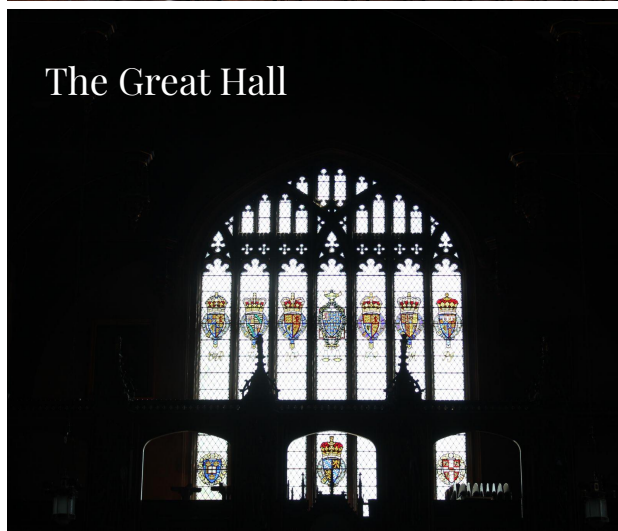
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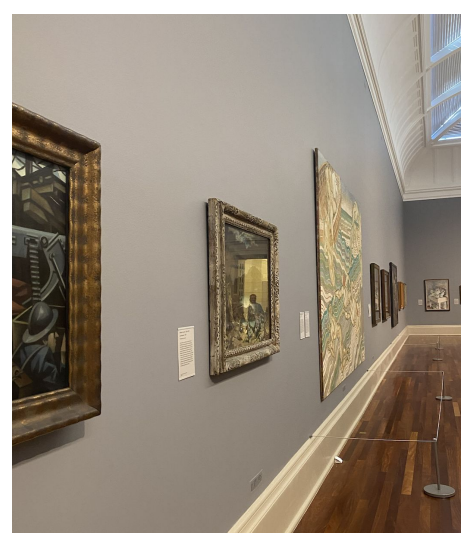




Lincoln's Inn Court



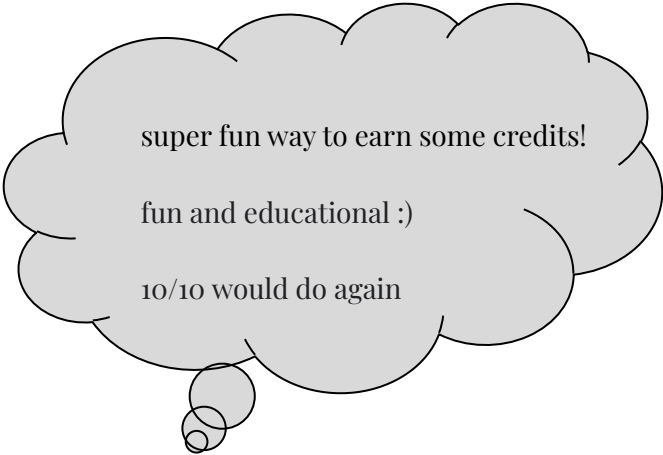




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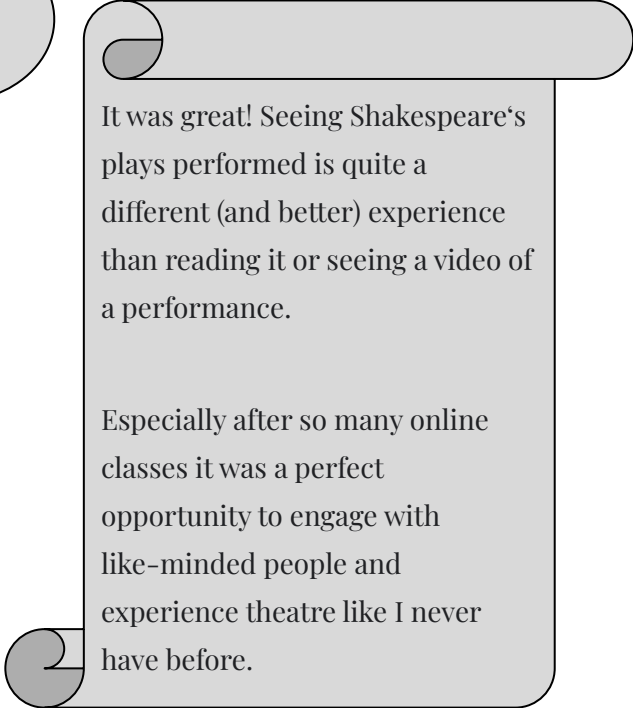
Afterword:  
what the  
students are  
saying about  
the week...



super fun way to earn some credits!

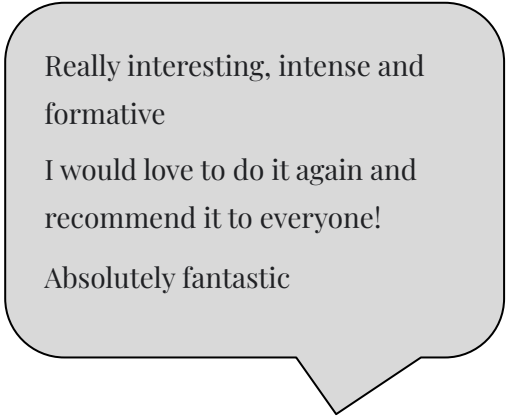
fun and educational :)

10/10 would do again



It was great! Seeing Shakespeare's plays performed is quite a different (and better) experience than reading it or seeing a video of a performance.

Especially after so many online classes it was a perfect opportunity to engage with like-minded people and experience theatre like I never have before.



Really interesting, intense and formative

I would love to do it again and recommend it to everyone!

Absolutely fantastic

For further information about future trips feel free to email [beatrice.montedoro@es.uzh.ch](mailto:beatrice.montedoro@es.uzh.ch) or consult the webpage [www.es.uzh.ch/shakespeareweek](http://www.es.uzh.ch/shakespeareweek)

