

Łódź Celebrates the 450th Anniversary of Shakespeare's Birth



The exhibition was organized by the International Shakespeare Studies Centre, the Faculty of International and Political Studies (Department of British and Commonwealth Studies), the Faculty of Philology (Department of Studies in Drama and pre-1800 English Literature), and the University of Łódź Library.

Editors

Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney, Magdalena Cieślak, Agnieszka Rasmus, Monika Sosnowska

Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney,
Monika Sosnowska – University of Łódź,
Faculty of International and Political Studies,
Department of British and Commonwealth
Studies, International Shakespeare Studies
Centre

Magdalena Cieślak, Agnieszka Rasmus
– University of Łódź, Faculty of Philology,
Department of Studies in Drama and pre-1800
English Literature, International Shakespeare
Studies Centre

TYPESETTING AND TEXT MAKEUP
Oficyna Wydawnicza Edytor.org

© Copyright by Łódzkie Towarzystwo Naukowe,
Łódź 2014

© Copyright for this edition by Uniwersytet
Łódzki, Łódź 2014

Co-funded by the Ministry of Science and High-
er Education; Co-funded by the Institute
of English Studies, University of Łódź
Issue I. W.06744.14.0.I



International Shakespeare Studies Centre
Szekspirowskich

XIV Festiwal
Nauki, Techniki i Sztuki w Łodzi


ISBN WUŁ 978-83-7969-413-6
ISBN ŁTN 978-83-60655-75-7

Łódzkie Towarzystwo Naukowe
Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego
90-131 Łódź, ul. Lindleya 8
www.wydawnictwo.uni.lodz.pl

Table of contents

	Foreword	
	Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney, Head of ISSC	4
	Antoni Różalski, Pro-Rector in Charge of Research, University of Łódź	6
1	Tomasz Domański, Dean of the Faculty of International and Political Studies, University of Łódź	10
	Piotr Cap, Vice-Dean for Research, Faculty of Philology, University of Łódź	13
	Mariola Augustyniak	
2	Shakespeare in the Collection of the University of Łódź Library	14
	Monika Sosnowska	
3	Shakespeare at the University of Łódź	17
	Katarzyna Jasińska	
4	Shakespeare at the Grand Theatre in Łódź	21
	Magdalena Cieślak	
5	Shakespeare in Łódź Theatres	23
	Agnieszka Rasmus	
6	Shakespeare on Film	27

Acknowledgements

 We are sincerely grateful to the Head of the Institute of English Studies at the University of Łódź, Professor Łukasz Bogucki, for his financial support without which this exhibition would not have been possible.

We would also like to express our gratitude to the distinguished guests who honoured the exhibition with their presence: Pro-Rector in Charge of Research at the University of Łódź, Professor Antoni Różalski, the Dean of the Faculty of Biology and Environmental Protection, Professor Elżbieta Żądzińska, and the Dean of the Faculty of International and Political Studies, Professor Tomasz Domański.

We would also like to thank the Director of the University of Łódź Library, Tomasz Piestrzyński, for his permission to show the exhibition in the Library and to use its collections. We are grateful to the Assistant Director of the University of Łódź Library, Mariola Augustyniak, and to the curators – Marzena Kowalska and dr Irena Łabiszewska – for their invaluable assistance in preparing the exhibition.

Furthermore, we would like to thank the Managers of the Stefan Jaracz and the Nowy (New) Theatres in Łódź, and the Manager of the Literary Department at the Grand Theatre, Katarzyna Jasińska, for lending costumes and props for the exhibition. We also extend our thanks to Filip Jesionek for his fantastic photographs.

Dear readers,

This online catalogue chronicles the exhibition entitled “Łódź Celebrates the 450th Anniversary of Shakespeare’s Birth,” which took place at the University of Łódź Library from 7 April to 1 May 2014.

The idea for the exhibition was put forward by the **International Shakespeare Studies Centre**, and realized by the representatives of the **Faculty of Philology and the Faculty of International and Political Studies** at the **University of Łódź**, who are also members of the Centre. Furthermore, this event would not have taken place without the support of the **University of Łódź Library**.

Poster for the exhibition “Łódź Celebrates the 450th Anniversary of Shakespeare’s Birth”

Łódź Szekspirowi w 450. rocznicę urodzin



Wystawa zorganizowana przez
Międzynarodowe Centrum Badań Szekspirowskich
Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego

we współpracy z

Katedrę Studiów Brytyjskich i Krajów Współnoży Brytyjskiej, Wydział Studiów Międzynarodowych i Politologicznych
Zakładem Dramatu i Dawnej Literatury Angielskiej, Instytut Anglistyki, Wydział Filologiczny
oraz Biblioteką Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego

Honorowy patronat Prezydent Miasta Łodzi oraz Rektora Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego

7-26 kwietnia 2014.



1 Foreword

Prof. Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney

Unfortunately, when the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth was celebrated in 1964, Łódź did not actively participate in the various events organized then in Poland or abroad. The only form of celebration was the exhibition arranged by the British Council, which was shown in Warsaw, Cracow, and Łódź. It displayed contemporary works of Anglophone writers, paintings of Shakespeare, and photographs from the Royal Shakespeare Company's productions of his plays.

There were many reasons for this situation. One was the peculiar location of our city on the cultural map of Poland. When Ira Aldridge (born in 1807 in New York), the first African-American Shakespearean actor, died in Łódź during his 1867 European tour, a Warsaw journalist commented in the Polish weekly *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* (24 August 1867): Who would have expected that Othello, Macbeth, and Shylock would die in Łódź, a city of factories, which due to its nature has never had anything in common with Shakespeare or his characters?



Exhibition "Łódź Celebrates the 450th Anniversary of Shakespeare's Birth" in the University of Łódź Library



Organizers of the exhibition (from the left): dr Agnieszka Rasmus, dr Magdalena Cieślak, prof. dr hab. Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney, dr Monika Sosnowska

This catalogue shows that today Łódź, with its impressive academic, theatrical, film, and operatic output and its expanding collection of old pre-1800 prints, closely follows Polish and international trends in Shakespeare studies.

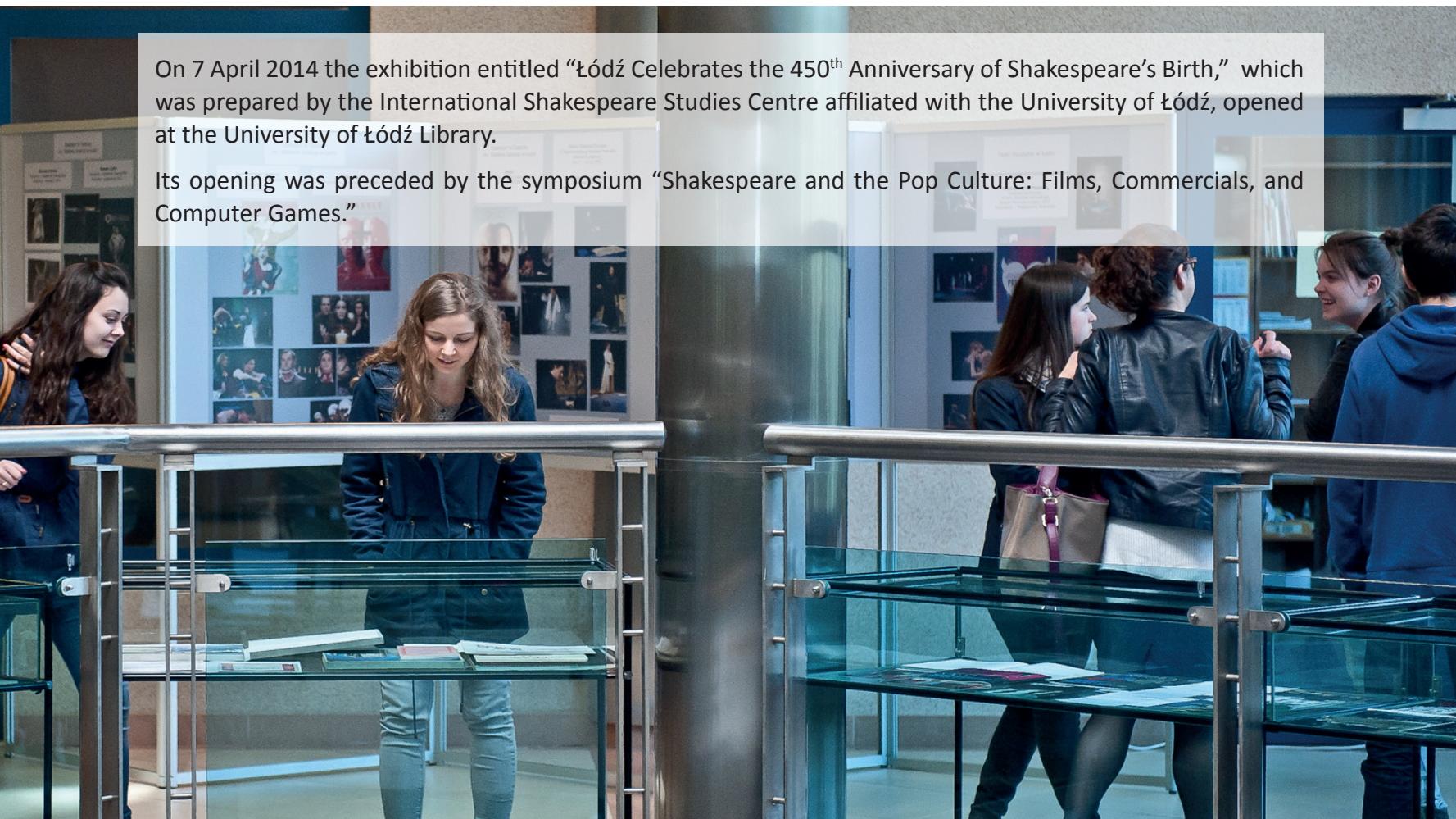
We are grateful to all the cultural and academic institutions that helped create the exhibition and this catalogue. We also hope that our city will celebrate the 500th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth with even more splendour. Let me finish with a quote from one of his plays: "Strong reasons make strong actions" (*King John*, 3.4). I believe that both Łódź citizens and authorities will continue cultivating Shakespeare's presence in our city, which is indispensable for the promotion of Łódź and the city's contribution to the development of culture in Poland and around the world.

I wish you pleasant reading,

Professor Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney

On 7 April 2014 the exhibition entitled “Łódź Celebrates the 450th Anniversary of Shakespeare’s Birth,” which was prepared by the International Shakespeare Studies Centre affiliated with the University of Łódź, opened at the University of Łódź Library.

Its opening was preceded by the symposium “Shakespeare and the Pop Culture: Films, Commercials, and Computer Games.”



Both events attracted a large number of attendees. I was truly impressed by the exhibition, as were other participants in the event.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the organizers – the team of the above-mentioned Centre and the University of Łódź Library – for collecting old and new translations of Shakespeare’s texts, along with works about his output authored by academics from Łódź, for presentation to the public. I was also impressed by the overview of the adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays that were staged in Łódź theatres.



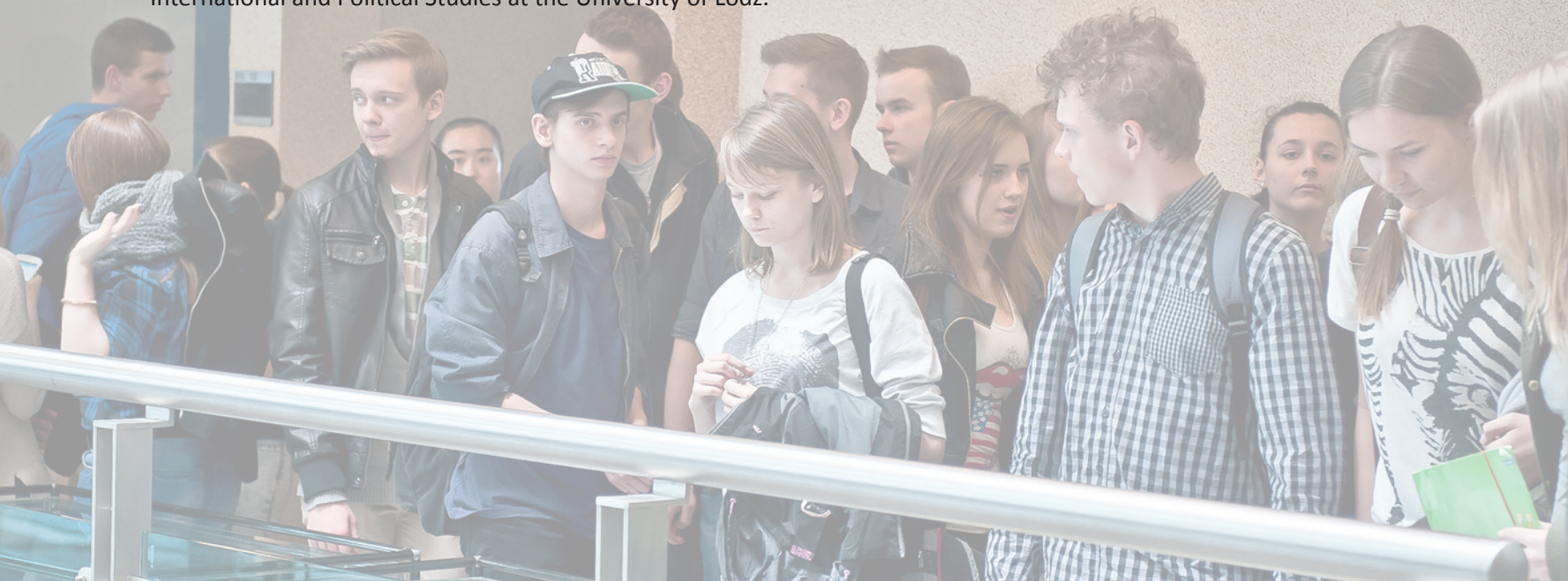
Exhibition “Łódź Celebrates the 450th Anniversary of Shakespeare’s Birth” in the University of Łódź Library

The organizers presented not only a collection of theatre programmes and photographs from the productions, but also elements of stage designs, selected props and costumes. The exhibition also displayed the programmes of the concerts given at the Arthur Rubinstein Philharmonic and the opera performances at the Grand Theatre in Łódź, along with a collection of film adaptations of Shakespeare that highlight his continuing presence in popular culture.

While this exhibition was part of the international celebrations of the 450th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, it was also an important part of the 14th Festival of Science, Technology, and Art in Łódź, which took place from 7 to 14 April 2014. This annual festival presents not only the scientific, practical, and technological output of experts from Łódź, but also stages events at the intersection of science and arts. The organizers of the exhibition utilized a variety of approaches to Shakespeare studies and highlighted the social reception of his work to demonstrate this interdisciplinary approach. This catalogue summarizes the exhibition and helps us recall all the pleasant memories of the event.

The exhibition entitled “Łódź Celebrates the 450th Anniversary of Shakespeare’s Birth” was arranged by the team of the International Shakespeare Studies Centre affiliated with the Faculty of International and Political Studies at the University of Łódź, under the supervision of Professor Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney. It was also co-organized by the University of Łódź Library and the Faculty of Philology at the University of Łódź.

The International Shakespeare Studies Centre has won acclaim for academic achievement in Poland and abroad. Its philosophy corresponds to the programme of interdisciplinary cultural studies at the Faculty of International and Political Studies at the University of Łódź.



The interpretation of Shakespeare's works by secondary school and university students is a particularly important aspect of the Centre's activity. Therefore, the Shakespearean exhibition and symposium were one of the most important events organized as part of the 14th Festival of Science, Technology, and Art in Łódź, which every year enjoys popularity among the young people who are interested in literature and arts.

The Faculty of International and Political Studies at the University of Łódź is mostly oriented towards interdisciplinary and international research at the intersection of humanities and social sciences. The research conducted at the International Shakespeare Studies Centre covers the analysis of various aspects of Shakespeare's works, which are reflected in the exhibition. In future the Centre may also focus on other research areas at the intersection of humanities and political studies, for instance, on the way in which Shakespeare's plays depict the problem of political power and authority, or on the social context of these texts.



Nevertheless, the international reception of Shakespeare's works will remain a crucial research field. The Centre maintains thorough documentation of the presence of Shakespeare's plays on the theatre stages in Poland and, especially, in Łódź. The exhibition offers an overview of its large archival collection.

The creative concept of the exhibition and the accompanying symposium was addressed to young people as a way to popularize Shakespeare's presence in Polish cultural life and to promote international cultural studies. The unique curriculum offered by the Faculty of International and Political Studies also gives young people an exceptional opportunity to approach various cultural issues from a number of perspectives. Thus, the exhibition and the symposium entitled "Shakespeare and the Pop Culture: Films, Commercials, and Computer Games" was an invitation to a debate with young people about the contemporary reception and understanding of Shakespeare's works.

The exhibition organized by the International Shakespeare Studies Centre reflected a number of academic (as well as promotional and educational) priorities of the Faculty of Philology at the University of Łódź. These include international and interdisciplinary research, along with finding new, undiscovered research directions which contextualize classical approaches and

works in the contemporary, multidirectional academic canon. The question posed by the organizers: “Is Shakespeare ‘pop’?” should be approached globally and systemically as a form of encouragement to broaden our academic perspective to include the field of research which covers the recontextualization of classical content in the complex reality of the contemporary world.

2 Shakespeare in the Collection of the University of Łódź Library

Mariola Augustyniak

14

In the context of the exhibition entitled “Łódź Celebrates the 450th Anniversary of Shakespeare’s Birth,” it is worthwhile to mention the vast collection of works by William Shakespeare that can be found at the University of Łódź Library, where the event took place. It includes collected works, selections of writings, and individual texts, both in the original language and in translation. Many of these were published in the 19th and

the beginning of the 20th centuries, but we also have many contemporary editions.


The Library houses not only a large collection of Polish translations, but also Shakespeare’s texts translated into Russian, German, Italian, and French, and two plays translated into Esperanto: *Hamlet* (translated by Ludwik Zamenhof himself) and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (translated by Louise Briggs).



The collection also includes other exquisite editions of Shakespeare's works, including three volumes of Shakespeare's plays from 1875-1877, which were edited by J.I. Kraszewski and illustrated with H.C. Selous's woodcuts; *Shakespeare's Tragedy of Hamlet* from 1910 illustrated by W.G. Simmonds, eight volumes of *The Pictorial Edition of the Works of Shakspeare*, and sixteen volumes of *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* with beautiful photogravures.

The most precious editions of Shakespeare's works are old pre-1800 prints, including thirteen volumes of the first incomplete translation of his texts into German by J. J. Eschenburg, entitled *William Shakespeares Schauspiele* and published in Zurich in 1775/82. Another, more recent book that is of special interest is the collector's edition of "Sonnet 55," translated by J. Pietrkiewicz and graphically designed by W. Chomicz, which was published to commemorate the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare's birth.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
(SZEKSPIRA)
WYKLANE ILLUSTROWANE OZDOBIONE 545 DRZEWORYTAMI
RYSUNKU H. C. SELOUSA.
PRZEKLAD
St. KOŹMIANA, J. PASZKOWSKIEGO I L. UL
Z YC I O R Y S U P O E T Y I O B J A S N I E N I A
J. I. KRASZEWSKI
z dodatkiem
pod redakcją



The bilingual, Polish-English edition of *Sonnets*, published in the “Biblioteka Poetycka Wydawnictwa a5” (“Poetic Library of the a5 Publishing House”) series, is accompanied with a CD with the recordings of selected sonnets interpreted by M. Kondrat to G. Turnau’s music. Shakespeare’s texts have often been used in song lyrics. These include not only songs based on his sonnets, but also operas and symphonic overtures. The Music Collection of the University of Łódź Library contains both music manuscripts of pieces inspired by Shakespeare’s texts, such as Stanisław Moniuszko’s *March to Act Four of Hamlet*, Nicolai Otto’s *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Thomas Ambroise’s *Hamlet* (ca. 1900), and various recordings, e.g. a fragment of Marek Grechuta’s music to *Othello* and Sergei Prokofiev’s ballet *Romeo and Juliet*.

The above-mentioned titles are only a few representative examples of William Shakespeare’s presence in our collections, which indicate that his centuries-old works are timeless and that he will be remembered by future generations. Shakespeare foresees this in his “Sonnet 55,” in which he states:

*Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone besmear’d with sluttish time.*

3 Shakespeare at the University of Łódź

Monika Sosnowska

17

Teaching Shakespeare at the university is not an easy task. The difficulty does not result from the inaccessibility of his texts or the content of the academic courses, but rather from the attitudes the students have developed at the earlier stages of school education.

Young people nowadays perceive Shakespeare as a museum piece or an inviolable classic, whose sublime metaphors and unusual syntax discourage them from reading his works or watching them on the stage. This attitude needs to be challenged by Shakespeare lecturers, whose task is to design a course which will transform the fossilized Shakespeare into a playwright who addresses contemporary issues, and to actively engage students in the course.



The University of Łódź has long offered courses on Shakespeare, many by lecturers in the Faculty of Philology, and especially at the Institute of English Studies. **Professor Witold Ostrowski** – the cofounder of English Studies in Łódź and a renowned Shakespeare scholar – paved the way for future generations of Shakespeare specialists at the University of Łódź. The Institute of English Studies offered proseminars on Shakespeare and a course on pre-1800 drama, which was largely devoted to Shakespeare and Elizabethan theatre. Another ground-breaking scholar was **Professor Irena Janicka-Świderska**, who used to teach Shakespeare in practice as part of the “Teaching English

through Drama” specialization course and whose students staged plays based on Shakespeare. In addition, Professor Janicka-Świderska directed a student adaptation of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, just as years later **dr Magdalena Cieślak**, directed a student production of Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*. At present the Institute of English Studies offers seminars which focus on film adaptations of Shakespeare, Shakespeare in pop culture, and the recycling of Shakespeare’s works in contemporary literature and culture. They are all taught by dr Magdalena Cieślak (“Bold and Beautiful: Shakespeare and Mass Culture”) and dr Agnieszka Rasmus (“Shakespeare, Film and Popular Culture”).

The students of the Faculty of International and Political Studies are also given an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the life and works of Shakespeare. Thanks to the efforts of **Professor Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney** and her more than ten years of scholarly and didactic work at the Faculty, Shakespeare has always been present in the curriculum. At first single lectures in the British culture course were devoted to Shakespeare and now he is a part of the courses on theatre, literature, and film around the world. These courses include series of classes on theatre, drama, and Shakespeare's adaptations. Many of these classes are taught in a special Shakespeare-themed room. Professor Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney has also introduced a course entitled "Hamlet, Sex, Lies and YouTube," taught in English, which aims to familiarize students of all faculties with Shakespeare. In particular, it centres on Shakespeare's presence in pop culture, demonstrating how frequently the members of the Internet community allude to his oeuvre.

Furthermore, the Faculty of International and Political Studies organized a special event to celebrate the opening of the International Shakespeare Studies Centre in 2012. It was a performance entitled *Hamlet chuligański* (*Hooligan Hamlet*), which featured students of international cultural studies. Supervised by **dr Monika Sosnowska**, a group of the first year students staged a cabaret parody of *Hamlet* by **Jeremi Przybora**.



Finally, Shakespeare's presence at the University of Łódź manifests itself in a series of guest lectures for students and scholars, which have been organized by Professor Kujawińska Courtney. Since April 2012 the International Shakespeare Studies Centre has hosted the following open lectures in Polish and English:

- 1) Professor Grace Ioppolo, University of Reading, Great Britain, "Late Shakespeare: Writing and Rewriting Shakespeare?" (April 2012);
- 2) Professor Mario Domenichelli, University of Florence, Italy, "Shakespeare's Italy" (October 2012);
- 3) Dr Agnieszka Rasmus, University of Łódź, "Shakespeare, Film and Pop Culture" (December 2012);
- 4) Theatre director Grzegorz Wiśniewski, Teatr Wybrzeże (The Coastal Theatre in Gdańsk), "Mój Szekspir" ("My Shakespeare," January 2013);
- 5) Dr Magdalena Cieślak, University of Łódź, "Kicz czy wizjonerstwo? Ostentacyjny styl Kennetha Branagha w filmowych adaptacjach Szekspira" ("Kitsch or an Artistic Vision? The Ostentatious Style of Kenneth Branagh's in His Film Adaptations of Shakespeare," March 2013);
- 6) Dr Agnieszka Szwach, Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, Poland, "Renesans, medycyna i Szekspir" ("Renaissance, Medicine, and Shakespeare," May 2012);
- 7) Professor Marvin Carlson, University of New York, USA, "What is (a) Theatre?" (October 2013);
- 8) Professor John Drakakis, University of Stirling, Great Britain, "English Renaissance Drama and the Aesthetics of Violence," "Shakespeare as Presentist," "Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*," and "An Introductory Two-Lecture *Hamlet*" (October 2013);

9) Professor Tina Krontiris, University of Thessaloniki, Greece, "*The Merchant of Venice* and the Greek Holocaust," "Shakespeare and Aristotle," and "Gender, Adolescence, and Renaissance Culture" (November 2013);

10) Professor Jose Manuel Gonzalez Fernandez de Sevilla, University of Alicante, Spain, "Shakespeare as Cultural Catalyst," "Cervantes' and Shakespeare's Closest Encounters in *Cardenio*," "Shakespeare's Other Literary Lives: The Bard Living Presence in Literary Studies," and "Recent Theatre Productions of Shakespeare in Spain" (November 2013);

11) Professor David Fuller, Durham University, Great Britain, "Reading Aloud: Performance as Interpretation?," "*King Lear*," "*Hamlet*: Sex, Lies, Power Struggles and Performance," "Myriad-minded?: Shakespeare as an International Figure," and "*Othello* and Christianity" (April 2014);

12) Professor Ton Hoenselaars, University of Utrecht, the Netherlands, "Shakespeare: How and Why," "Shakespeare behind Barbed Wire," "*Hamlet*, Europe, and the Great War," "Shakespeare in France," and "Hitler and Shakespeare" (May 2014).

Collaborating with various researchers from Poland and abroad, the University of Łódź familiarizes its students and scholars with different aspects of Shakespeare's works in many ways. The University organizes seminars, actively participates in Shakespearean productions, and give multimedia presentations at the lectures of Shakespeare scholars. All of this emphasizes the importance of Shakespeare – the most popular and most often "updated" author of all times.

An Italian *libretto* means “a booklet,” which may not sound serious enough to be combined with the works of one of the most widely acknowledged masters of drama in the world. In fact, for many years librettos were considered as works that are incomplete and of no value, belonging neither to literature nor music, but such a belief is misleading. According to the literary scholar Klaus Günther Just, “the opera libretto derived from a reflection on literature, its themes and motifs. Since the very beginning of their existence, librettos have been using pre-existing sources and themes. By reflecting them, librettos every time gave them a new shape in the world of acting and in the mirror of a stage play.”

William Shakespeare plays the leading role among the playwrights whose works serve as a source of inspiration for librettists and composers, greatly surpassing even Goethe, Schiller, Hugo, and Racine. *Romeo and Juliet* was the first ballet based on Shakespeare to be performed at the Grand Theatre in Łódź. The renowned Polish choreographer Witold Borkowski, who was at that time the director of the ballet company affiliated with the Theatre, chose Sergei Prokofiev’s masterpiece. The premiere took place on 13 September 1969. Zygmunt Latoszewski and Józef Klimanek were the music directors and Jerzy Maślowski was responsible for the stage design. The role of Juliet was performed by Iwona Wakowska, a talented and charming dancer.



The tragic story of the lovers from Verona was again staged in 1992 (choreographed by Gay Veredon to Hector Berlioz's music) and in 2009. In the latter case, Jerzy Makarowski presented his own artistic version of the play to Prokofiev's music, with Ryszard Kai's impressive stage design. This was not the first choreography designed by Makarowski for the Grand Theatre. On 23 April 1994 the Theatre hosted the premiere of *Macbeth* choreographed by Makarowski to Ennio Morricone's music. *Macbeth* has been performed two more times at the Grand Theatre in operatic versions to the music by Giuseppe Verdi, who was, in fact, a great enthusiast of Shakespeare. In 1999 the ballet was choreographed by Laco Adamik, and in 2005 – by Tomasz Konin. In both cases, the role of music director was given to Tadeusz Kozłowski, one of the most renowned Polish opera conductors.

Verdi was fascinated with Shakespeare's works. He even received a commission for the libretto to *Hamlet*, but never composed it. Still, opera enthusiasts must have enjoyed the Grand Theatre's 1976 staging of Verdi's *Othello* conducted by Bogusław Madey, directed by Sławomir Żerdzicki and with Wiktor Zin's stage design. Conducted by Marco Balderi in 2002, and featuring the world-famous baritone Renato Bruson, *Falstaff* also won the audience's favour.

The Theatre enjoyed a great success on 26 October 1985 when Gray Veredon's ballet *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was staged to Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's music with the excellent Ewa Wycichowska in the role of Titania.

In 1973 Krzysztof Pankiewicz, the now famous stage designer and director, took interest in another Shakespeare's comedy when he staged Otto Nicolai's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in a vivid and colourful way.

Finally, let me mention the unusual premiere of Georg Friedrich Handel's *Julius Caesar*, which was staged to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the composer's death by Łódź art colleges: The Grażyna and Kiejstut Bacewicz Academy of Music, The Strzemiński Academy of Arts, and The Leon Schiller Polish National Film, Television and Theatre School, together with the Grand Theatre in Łódź. The opera was conducted by Paul Esswood, and directed by Artur Stefanowicz. Ewa Bloom-Kwiatkowska was responsible for the stage design and Wojciech Puś – for the light design. *Julius Caesar* premiered on 12 December 2009.

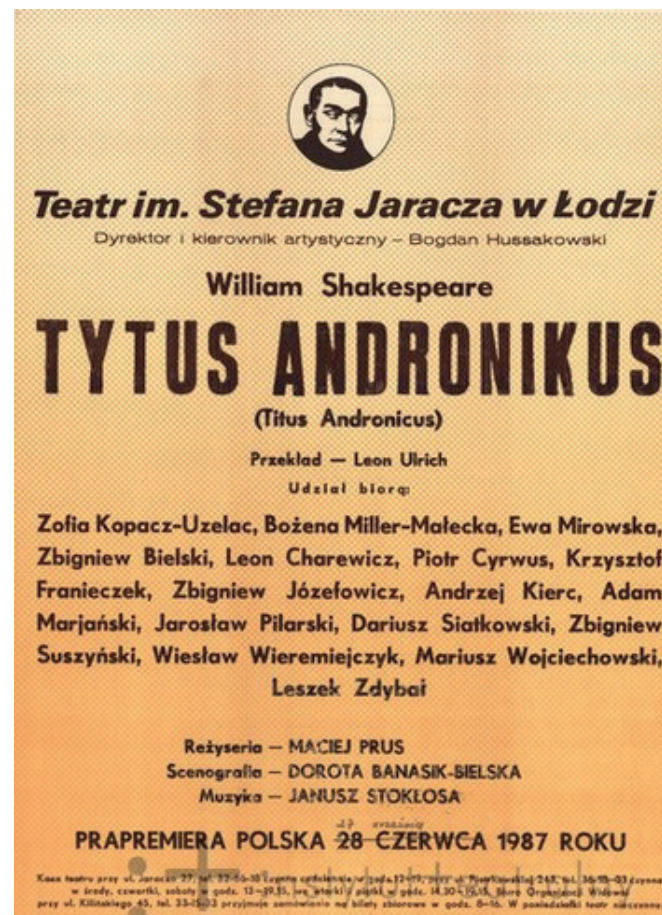
5 Shakespeare in Łódź Theatres Magdalena Cieślak

23

Although Łódź has mostly been present on the maps of Poland as an industrial city, its cultural life has always been rich and intense. Today it is known as the city of four cultures, the place where the world-famous Film School is located, and the host of numerous festivals. Łódź theatres are also becoming more and more recognizable and thus attract various renowned artists, actors, and directors.

Shakespeare's plays have always been present in the repertoires of Łódź theatres. It is interesting to note that Łódź hosted three Polish premieres of Shakespeare's plays. On 2 April 1970 *Henry V* was for the first time staged in Poland in Powszechny (Popular) Theatre. The director Maciej Z. Bor-dowicz discovered the multidimen-

sionality and the political character of the play. The production he directed examined the meaning, or rather meaninglessness, of war. The role of the young, emotional and whimsical king was performed by Eugeniusz Kamiński. On 10 January 1975 the Nowy (New) Theatre staged *Henry VIII* – a difficult and unpopular play. It was directed by Jerzy Goliński, and featured Bogusław Sochnacki in the role of the eponymous ruler. Although the production did not receive many enthusiastic reviews, the Theatre can take pride in having faced the challenge which most Polish theatres preferred to avoid. *Titus Andronicus*, another difficult play, had its Polish premiere opening the 1987/88 season at the Stefan Jaracz Theatre and was directed by Maciej Prus.



Poster for the Polish premiere of *Titus Andronicus* at the Stefan Jaracz Theatre in Łódź



The Stefan Jaracz Theatre regularly stages Shakespeare's works. It has recently hosted two productions which deserve special attention. In November 2012, as part of the second edition of the international theatre festival entitled "New Classics of Europe," the Stefan Jaracz Theatre played host to *The Rape of Lucrece* by the Royal Shakespeare Company, directed by Elizabeth Freestone and featuring Camille O'Sullivan and Feargal Murray, who gave an electrifying performance.

The best production of the 2011/12 season, *Richard III* directed by Grzegorz Wiśniewski received the prestigious Golden Yorick – the main prize for the best adaptation of Shakespeare's play. It was also awarded two Golden Masks: for Grzegorz Wiśniewski for the stage design and for Michał Staszczak, who played Buckingham, for the best male performance.



Left: Camille O'Sullivan in *The Rape of Lucrece* performed at the Stefan Jaracz Theatre during the 2nd edition of the "New Classics of Europe" festival; right: poster for *Richard III* at the Stefan Jaracz Theatre in Łódź

In January 2013 the director Grzegorz Wiśniewski was the guest of the International Shakespeare Studies Centre, where he gave a talk to students about his work with Shakespeare's text. The fragments of his presentation which are given below address very crucial aspects of the process of understanding and analyzing the text. They show the challenge of Wiśniewski's undertaking and, at the same time, reveal the magic of a theatre director's work.

Grzegorz Wiśniewski, January 2013, International Shakespeare Studies Centre (fragments)

Shakespeare poses important questions about the human condition. He is also among the few writers who do not answer these questions. Throughout the ages, Shakespeare's works have been subjected to various interpretations which, however, do not exhaust the richness of his plays. *Richard III* is a contemporary text, based on a great legend of a lame, hump-backed, crooked man with a withered arm, whom no one loves and who employs all possible means in his struggle for power. The extremity of this image intrigues directors and demands high standards of acting from the person who performs this role. At first glance, the theme of the play seems extremely attractive.

However, in the production process, *Richard III* reveals a number of challenges. First, it is a text of non-standard length, which does not fit in the framework of a two-hour production. Furthermore, Shakespeare does not bring many of the plotlines to a quick conclusion and constantly develops his characters. But what I found most annoying about this otherwise interest-

ing text was its monodramatic, testimonial structure. Explaining and anticipating the future events, Richard's monologues push the duels between the characters to the background. I was most intrigued by the group portrait, and in particular by the depiction of a family whose members keep struggling for power. We had to start our work with the condensation of the text and removal of all the dead-end and less interesting story lines, while preserving Shakespeare's ideas. Paradoxically, by removing a large part of the text, we created a space in which WORDS could exist in a more meaningful way.

Apart from taking these editorial steps, we had to develop certain dramatic threads. The short sequence which opens the production was borrowed from *Henry VI*. In this scene we have three brothers: Edward, Clarence, and Richard, whom in *Richard III* we never see together. So we observe Edward and Clarence manipulating Richard, who subsequently kills Margaret's son and husband on their behalf. While watching





Grzegorz Wiśniewski, January 2013, International Shakespeare Studies Centre, University of Łódź (fragments):

the scene, we learn more about the hierarchy among the brothers and their familial relations. I have always been interested in the family and, in particular, the family in the context of evil. Furthermore, this radical situation of gaining power by means of a double murder greatly dynamizes the beginning of the performance.

I also wanted to introduce a character that would be Richard's alter ego – an assassin who would be fascinated by Richard and would be his friend. Shakespeare's play features Tyrrel, who is introduced towards the end and whose role is to kill Edward's heirs. I decided to invest some effort in developing this character. Thus, now Tyrrel appears at the beginning of the production, in the scene of Henry VI's murder. Richard kills Henry in the Tower, but spares Tyrrel's life, beginning a relationship which is developed in the course of the play.

In the scene in which Tyrrel kills Rivers, I used a fragment from *King Lear*, which features a spectacular and brutal eye-gauging scene. By his subsequent, increasingly cruel and refined murders, Tyrrel becomes more and more dependent on his superior. Tyrrel's story reaches its climax in the scene of Lady Anne's murder. Shakespeare does not present her assassination on the stage; it is only indirectly mentioned in the characters' conversations. Thus, I had to use

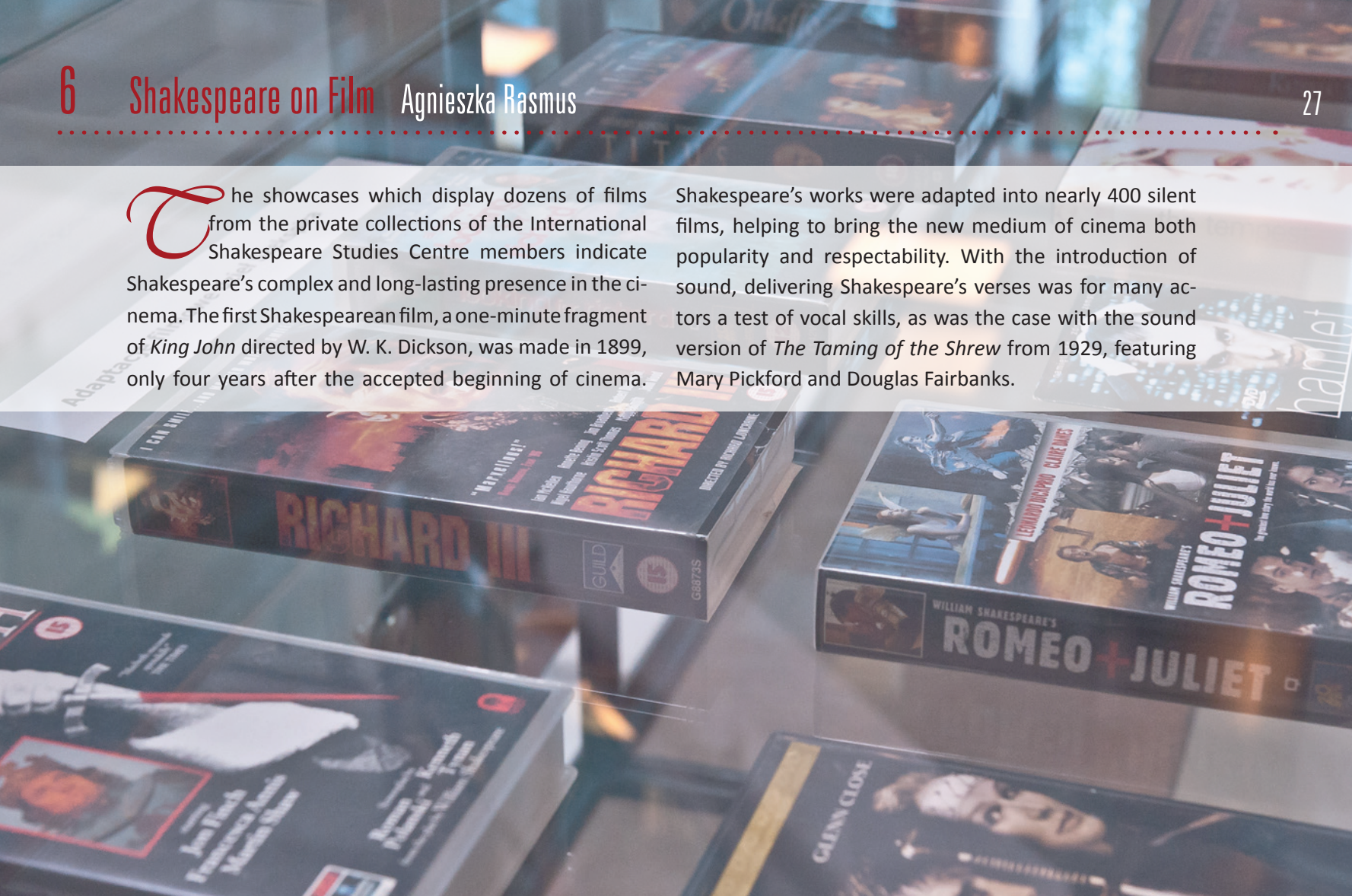
a scene from another text by another author – from Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*. Thanks to this borrowing, Anne's story could be fully told. This scene also benefits Tyrrel. When he has to kill Richard's inconvenient wife, he for the first time hesitates and reflects upon his deed: he has to kill a person whom Richard loved.

It is interesting that women in *Richard III* mostly remain in the background. I thought they should be brought to the foreground; for instance, although Richard's relationship with his mother is not fully articulated in Shakespeare's text, I find it very important. Somewhere at the beginning of the play there is a scene in which she does not give her blessing to her son, which is very unusual and which Richard notices. Later in the play the mother states that she regrets that Richards has ever been born. I decided to use this moment in the final scene of the production.

While working with such a lengthy and complex text as *Richard III*, we often have to shorten the original and fully materialize the plotlines that are barely suggested by the author, in order to follow our intuition and realize our vision. If one examines the structure of the play, and knows other Shakespeare's texts, which feature recurrent motifs, it is possible to manipulate the original material and, at the same time, be faithful to the author's ideas.

The showcases which display dozens of films from the private collections of the International Shakespeare Studies Centre members indicate Shakespeare's complex and long-lasting presence in the cinema. The first Shakespearean film, a one-minute fragment of *King John* directed by W. K. Dickson, was made in 1899, only four years after the accepted beginning of cinema.

Shakespeare's works were adapted into nearly 400 silent films, helping to bring the new medium of cinema both popularity and respectability. With the introduction of sound, delivering Shakespeare's verses was for many actors a test of vocal skills, as was the case with the sound version of *The Taming of the Shrew* from 1929, featuring Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks.



6 Shakespeare on Film Agnieszka Rasmus

Shakespeare was used in the cinema as a form of propaganda; for instance, during the Second World War, Laurence Olivier's *Henry V* was used to boost soldiers' morale. The film also served as a battle field of another kind – between various film styles, acting schools and directorial interpretations. Film adaptations of Shakespeare's works have been made in languages other than English. Shakespeare's characters and their stories inspire artists all around the world – thus, we have a Russian Shakespeare, a Finnish Shakespeare, a French Shakespeare, a Polish Shakespeare, and a Shakespeare dressed in a samurai robe. Thanks to scriptwriters' imagination, his plays have been set at a basketball court, in gang-ridden streets, skyscrapers, and fast food bars.

Many films that are based on Shakespeare's works have become part of pop culture, while others can serve as excellent lessons in the history of the cinema, illustrating changing trends, technologies, and audience's tastes. Looking at the various film versions of Shakespeare displayed at this exhibition, one arrives at a conclusion that they are a barometer of the contemporary world – and a mirror in which every generation wants to see its face.



Łódź Celebrates

the 450th Anniversary of Shakespeare's Birth

Exhibition photos by:
Filip Jesionek

Poster for the Polish premiere of *Titus Andronicus* at the Stefan Jaracz Theatre in Łódź
from the archives of the Stefan Jaracz Theatre in Łódź

Camille O'Sullivan in *The Rape of Lucrece* performed at the Stefan Jaracz Theatre during
the 2nd edition of the "New Classics of Europe"
Photo by Keith Pattison

Poster for *Ryszard III* at the Stefan Jaracz Theatre in Łódź
by Mariusz Grzegorzek