

Shakespeare's Globe



2 Twenty Minute Programs Grade(s) 7 - 12 Language Arts, Drama, Theatre Studies

Shakespeare's Globe programs provide an excellent introduction to the famous Shakespearean Theatre. These stunning recreations celebrate the opening of the new Globe Theatre in London, and show how stimulating Shakespeare's work can be when experienced in context. The programs will:

- Help students to experience Shakespearean theatre and language in an authentic setting
- Demonstrate drama as theatre, not merely text.
- Put the drama on social context, where students can see how theatre became an agent for linguistic change and development.
- Illustrate the conventions of Elizabethan theatre.

A Production of the BBC 1997

For more information on the theatre
and the education department go to the Globe website
<http://www.shakespeares-globe.org>

Program 1: The Audience



Alan Davies introduces the theme and we see footage of the new Globe's 1997 production of *Henry V*, showing the actors and audience interacting. Alan talks about Shakespeare's audience, then appears in period costume, as a barman in a tavern in 1599, observing the customers as they watch a troupe of traveling players. Two members of the audience talk about contemporary issues, such as the Plague and the Puritans' attacks on the new theatres. These two characters move on to talk about the experience of going to the theatre the crowds and the cost (one penny). They talk about what people enjoy about the theatre, such as seeing how Kings and Queens behave, witnessing murders and seeing their 'betters' mocked.

Then Alan is in modern London, telling us how the city in Shakespeare's time was surrounded by a wall and that all entertainment was banned within the wall so people had to go outside of it - usually south across the River Thames, to view such spectacles as bear-baiting and the theatre. Alan crosses the river himself, telling us about the first theatres in London. and the Puritan, John Northbrook's, scathing attacks on their morality. By contrast, Alan tells how exciting and entertaining it was to go to the theatre and mingle with a cross-section of society.

Alan looks at a model of the 'wooden O', the Globe, and tells us about how Shakespeare was one of the owners of the theatre and how his plays were performed there for 40 years before it was closed by the Puritans in 1642. Then he takes us to 400 years later to see the building of the new Globe theatre in London. Alan goes into the Globe and shows us around, explaining the different audience spaces and the benefits of being in the Yard (the floor of the theatre)

He explains more about what people liked about the theatre: they could see a huge variety of plays, enjoy the spectacle of people dressed up as lords and nobles (it was against the law to dress up as a member of a higher class of society) and to be made to laugh.

There is more film of the 1997 Globe production of *Henry V* and Alan explains how Shakespeare introduced many new words into the English language - we are treated to some choice insults from the play.

Alan explains who would sit in the galleries and in the seats behind the stage, then we see him in character costume again, mingling with the crowd in the Yard at a performance, while his friends from the tavern discuss another concern of the day, Spanish invasion.

Program 2. The Actor



Alan introduces the theme and tells us a little about Shakespeare's life. He talks about the challenges actors faced in Shakespeare's day. We see a company of actors rehearsing Julius Caesar at the Globe and learn that Shakespeare had a share in the company, the theatre and in the takings. We learn that actors often played more than one role and discover something about the history of actors in traveling troupes before theatres were built

Alan talks to Lennie James, who explains that on the Shakespearean stage, the author had to set the scene with words, as there was no scenery or lighting. He uses the example of *Macbeth*, in which there are constant references to night and darkness to remind the audience of the setting. We see a clip of the BBC Television production of *Macbeth* in 1983, which shows the use of actual darkness to create the mood in this modern medium.

Then we see Michael Maloney explaining that each actor in Shakespeare's time was only given his own part to learn, so that no one person could take the play to a printer and sell it to someone else, as there was no copyright protection at that time. A short clip of the BBC TV *A Midsummer Night's Dream* of 1981 shows the players in that play each being given their part

Next, Toby Cockerell, a young actor, talks about playing two roles; a boy and a princess. He describes how hard it is to change his body language between these two very different parts.

Lennie James talks again, about performing soliloquies on the Globe stage. Another clip from the BBC's 1983 *Macbeth* shows how the actor treats the soliloquy as if talking to himself, while Lennie explains that, due to the close contact between actor and audience at the Globe, the speech can successfully be addressed to the audience.

Actress, Joy Richardson, talks to Alan about Shakespeare's language and how actors must make it their own. She acts an emotional scene from *A Winter's Tale* for him. Then we see Alan in costume pretending to rehearse for his two companions from the tavern. He goes backstage and tells us about costume in Shakespeare's time.

Background Notes

This 1997 documentary on the meticulous restoration of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre features the people most closely involved in the twenty-year process of its re-construction. Beset by building delays, financial crises, and artistic conflicts, actors, directors and backstage staff struggle to overcome the vast logistical and creative challenges they face by working within the constraints of a 400-year old theatre.

Recreating the Globe Theatre on the South Bank close to the site of the original Globe was the dream of American filmmaker Sam Wanamaker, who arrived in London in 1949. He was appalled that there was no permanent theatre devoted to Shakespeare in London and so he began a long process of fund-raising and involving academics, actors and the wider community in helping to realize this dream. Sam Wanamaker died in 1993 but he was able to see construction begin on the Globe in the late 80's. The Globe was finally completed in May 1997, at a total cost of £24 million, thanks to a lottery grant and countless private sponsors.

The original Globe was sited on the Southwark side of the Thames, outside the jurisdiction of the City of London. The first Globe was built in 1599. Elizabethan theatre was popular entertainment and attracted a mass audience. Up to 3000 people could fit into the Globe for a performance, including standing room for 1000. They were known as 'groundlings' in the original Globe. They paid a penny to see a play and would vociferously react to what they saw on the stage. Unfortunately, the first theatre was burnt down in 1613 when a prop cannon shot an ember into the thatched roof during a performance of Henry VIII. The theatre was eventually pulled down in the 1640's in a Puritan backlash against all forms of entertainment.

The documentary follows the final stages of the construction up to and including the official opening by the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. There are interviews with people who were involved since the beginning of the project, such as Sir Peter Hall and Julian Glover, as well as academics and artists who decided what the Globe should look like, based on original drawings, panoramas of London and knowledge of Elizabethan theatre. There are interviews with the craftsmen involved in its construction who used green oak timber, brick, plaster and thatch to recreate the structure and interviews with the painters who used lime-washes and paints to decorate according to descriptions of the original theatre interior.

Unlike other theatres in London, the Globe relies on natural light and has no scenery. Actors have a very intimate relationship with the audience, in spite of the size of the theatre. In the documentary Mark Rylance the Artistic Director, talks about the impact this has on the staging of the first two plays at the Globe - Henry V and A Winter's Tale. The stage managers and costume designers also discuss how they approach the plays in this setting. Unlike the original Globe, the theatre has a specialist management team responsible for the programming, marketing and running of each performance. The documentary interviews many of those involved behind the scenes leading up to the opening.

The documentary also examines the educational work of the Globe, which Sam Wanamaker believed to be of equal importance to performances in the theatre. The Education Department runs courses and workshops for all ages and also runs a schools program. The Education Department uses the theatre outside the festival period for lectures, staged readings etc.

In addition to the theatre and the education department, the Globe site also contains an exhibition about the Globe and the Inigo Jones theatre, which will serve as the International Shakespeare Globe company's winter venue, as the Blackfriars served for the King's Men, Shakespeare's company, from 1609 onwards. The inside of this theatre is based on plans for the Cockpit in Court by Inigo Jones found relatively recently at Worcester College (Oxford).
