

Architecture of Collaboration: Michael Boyd, Malaya Bronnaya, and the Royal Shakespeare Theatre

Andrew Blasenak
Ohio State University

Throughout the twentieth century, theatre artists have created thrust stages to challenge the stagecraft and actor-audience dynamic of proscenium theatres.¹ In 2011, the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) opened the most recent of these thrust stages: the redesigned Royal Shakespeare Theatre. The new design transformed a proscenium theatre into a thrust stage surrounded by 1040 seats. Rab Bennetts, the architect of the new Royal Shakespeare Theatre, noted the “uncanny” similarity between the 1989 excavation of the elongated Rose theatre foundations and the twelve-sided figure that “won out at the RSC.”² The inspiration for the redesign, however, was not a desire to recover Shakespeare’s original theatre, as with Shakespeare’s Globe or The American Shakespeare Center’s Blackfrairs Playhouse. The new Royal Shakespeare Theatre, rather, was a part of Tyrone Guthrie’s legacy of theatre design that reflected his dissatisfaction with proscenium theatres like the 1932 Royal Shakespeare Theatre and his desire to revitalize the staging of Shakespeare’s plays. This new Royal Shakespeare Theatre also reflected RSC artistic director Michael Boyd’s commitment to ideals of ensemble that he observed in his training at the Malaya Bronnaya Theatre in Moscow with director Anatoly Efros. The redesigned Royal Shakespeare Theatre resembled an Elizabethan playhouse, but the inspiration for the redesign reflected Guthrie’s legacy and the RSC’s commitment to ensemble.

The dissatisfaction with the 1932 design of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre was legendary.³ Director William Bridges-

Adam called it “a theatre, of all theatres in England, in which it is hardest to make an audience laugh or cry.”²⁴ The actors felt little connection with the audience, as Balliol Holloway explained: “It is like acting to Calais from the cliffs of Dover.”²⁵ Tyrone Guthrie also noted the Royal Shakespeare Theatre’s inadequacy for his vision of Shakespeare’s plays: “It’s a dreadfully old-fashioned theatre. You can only do old-fashioned work there. Push it into the Avon!”²⁶ As part of Guthrie’s continued dedication to redefining the actor-audience relationship in classical plays, he built “open stages” with designer Tanya Moiseiwitsch, including the Festival Stage at the Stratford Festival (1953) and the stage at the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis (1963). Guthrie saw the thrust stage and the use of a unit set as the alternative to the “old-fashioned” proscenium theatre with cumbersome set changes for each scene. Theatre artists throughout England and North America would continue to refine the use of these stages for the next sixty years, often through the production of Shakespeare’s plays.

When Peter Hall assumed leadership of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in 1958, he instituted a series of changes to revitalize the performance of Shakespeare’s plays. In 1961, Hall changed the name of the organization to the Royal Shakespeare Company in order to emphasize the centrality of the acting company rather than the memorial to Shakespeare or an unsatisfactory theatre building. Hall instituted actor training programs like The Studio (1962-1965) under the leadership of Michel Saint-Denis and Peter Brook. In order to gain the loyalty and commitment of actors skilled in working together on Shakespeare’s plays, Hall signed an ensemble of actors to three-year contracts. Additionally, Hall wanted to rebuild the Royal Shakespeare Theatre to bring the audience closer to the actors. He commissioned a redesign of the playing space that would include “a rake, a new false proscenium arch, and an apron stage that jutted fourteen feet into the auditorium.”²⁷ An unexpected drop of Arts Council funding forced Hall to shelve this plan to re-build the theatre as “a 2000-seat thrust-stage amphitheater,”²⁸ which would have created a theatre space that reflected the directorial practices of the RSC.⁹

The RSC for much of the 1960s developed a style known for its minimalism in design and emphasis on well-trained actors. Peter Brook’s iconic production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* used a white unit set with platforms rising to various levels and

trapeze bars hanging over the stage. Kenneth Tynan called Peter Hall's 1962 *Comedy of Errors* "unmistakably an RSC production."¹⁰ "How is it to be recognized?" he continued; "By solid Brechtian settings that emphasize wood and metal instead of paint and canvas; and by cogent deliberate verse speaking, that discards melodic cadenzas in favour of meaning and motivation."¹¹ Similar to the conventions of Shakespeare's theatre, this "Brechtian" setting created a theatre emphasizing imaginative rather than pictorial scenery. The lack of visual elements encouraged actors to engage the audience directly with the clarity of their language and the specificity of their actions. The moat between the actors and audience in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre made this direct engagement difficult.

In 2011, artistic director Michael Boyd finally succeeded in bringing the audience closer to the actors by transforming the Royal Shakespeare Theatre from a proscenium to a thrust stage. The transformation of the theatre was only a final step in Boyd's attempts to reform the practices of the professional theatre through the use of ensemble principles. Instead of short contracts and brief rehearsals advocated by his predecessor, Adrian Noble, Boyd contracted actors for thirty months, emphasized actor-training resources like the Artist Development Programme, and fostered collaborative rehearsals. In rehearsals, Boyd instituted ensemble-building exercises, such as daily warm-ups and trapeze lessons for the *Histories Cycle*, and encouraged all actors to express their own interpretations of the play. The ideal of collaboration in rehearsal extended to performance: Boyd wished for the audience to engage directly with the actors and other audience members. This dedication to ensemble in rehearsal and performance reflected Boyd's training and the influence of Anatoly Efros at the Malaya Bronnaya Theatre.

Michael Boyd received a British council fellowship in 1978 and 1979 to study in Moscow at the Malaya Bronnaya Theatre. As Sarah Comptom summarized, "The experience left him with two overriding beliefs: firstly, that theatre mattered and could change society; secondly, that the best way of working was to collaborate as an ensemble, a close-knit group of actors and technicians pulling together to create theatrical magic."¹² Efros had earned renown particularly for his interpretation of classical works with

relevance to modern contexts. As James Thomas explains, “In Efros’s hands, classical playwrights became as accessible as their modern counterparts, and modern playwrights seemed to be unintentional historians of the past. ‘I can direct only as I feel myself today,’ he said. His guiding principle could have been that of the Italian Neo-Realists, above all Federico Fellini, for whose films he had a deep regard: ‘Today, here, now.’”¹³

Efros often spent long rehearsals collaborating with actors to find modern relevance in classic plays. Thomas explained, “Efros felt compelled to look at Shakespeare with fresher eyes because the old ones could only see what they were accustomed to seeing. ‘Shakespeare was born into the world,’ he remarked, ‘to release millions of people from . . . artistic constraints.’”¹⁴ Efros’s description of Shakespeare’s plays as providing a release from artistic constraints manifested in the deep inquiry of collaborative rehearsals that required actors to form physically active performances and psychologically complex characters. Even though the Malaya Bronnaya Theatre used a proscenium stage, Efros’s stagecraft reflected the fluid stagecraft Guthrie envisioned. In addition to developing “psychophysics” wherein actors “illustrated the inner lives of characters through virtually continuous stage movement,” his scenic design “was abstract, neutral, and unlocalized; scenery that encouraged freedom of movement in the actors within a carefully structured stage environment.”¹⁵

In addition to collaborative rehearsal techniques and minimalist stagecraft, Boyd adopted Efros’s definition of the director’s role. As Efros explained, “The director is a poet, only he does not deal with a pen and paper, but composes his verse on the platform of a stage, working with a large group of people . . . He is a person who is not afraid of loneliness, and a person who is in love with the craft, the actors, the pupils and the teachers.”¹⁶ In 2000, Boyd reflected: “I was impressed by the Russian directors’ sense of themselves as artists. I know very few British directors who would call themselves artists. Most say, ‘No, no, we’re just interpreters of text.’ Well, I don’t believe that. I am an artist.”¹⁷ He further explained his independence from Shakespeare’s original context: “Moscow certainly helped me realize that the phrase ‘But it’s not in the text’ is not terribly creative. Many people here are

a bit scared of anything that isn't in the text, to the point where theatre can be a bit dull."¹⁸ For Boyd, then, the plays were to be reinvented through the collaboration of the director and the actors who would discuss, stage, and sometimes revise the playwright's script through the rehearsal process in order to create a play with imaginative stagecraft and contemporary social relevance.¹⁹ Interpretations of Shakespeare's original performance conditions, therefore, had little sway in Boyd's directorial practice.

Prior to his work with the Royal Shakespeare Company, Michael Boyd developed his directorial practice on a variety of stages in the United Kingdom. From 1980-1982, he worked as Assistant Associate Director at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, a proscenium theatre with two balconies. He then became Associate Director at The Crucible Theatre Sheffield from 1982-1984. The Crucible Theatre Sheffield, a thrust stage with an audience arc of 180 degrees, was a direct descendant of the Guthrie stage at the Stratford Festival: Tanya Moiseiwitsch advised architects Renton Howard Wood in its design.²⁰ Such a design was a major limitation for directors trained in visually resplendent stagecraft. Director Michael Elliott reflected on The Crucible Theatre Sheffield's design: "[Guthrie achieved] immense flexibility and pace of stage action . . . by chucking everything else out of the window. At that time it was a huge step forward but perhaps now something more is demanded. These theatres have a certain visual aridity."²¹ This "visual aridity" echoed Efros's productions which carefully selected set design elements to keep the focus on the actors. Boyd's later RSC productions would reflect Efros's minimalist stagecraft in order to highlight the actors and their relationship with audience. In 1985, Boyd founded the Tron Theatre in Glasgow where he regularly worked throughout the next eleven years until he became an Associate Director of the RSC in 1996. After winning the Best Director Olivier Award for his 2001 *This England: The Histories*, he was invited to become Artistic Director of the RSC in 2002.²²

Michael Boyd's commitments to ensemble and minimalist stagecraft helped him succeed with ambitious projects like the four-play *This England: The Histories* and the eight-play *Histories Cycle* (2007-2008). As artistic director, these commitments required Boyd to alter the hiring, training, and stagecraft practices to make feasible projects like the Olivier-Award-winning *Histories Cycle*.

Instead of hiring established star actors for the major roles in individual plays, Boyd signed an ensemble of thirty-four actors to thirty-month contracts. This ensemble performed the two hundred and sixty roles in eight of Shakespeare's history plays, from *Richard II* through *Richard III* with all the Henries in between. Boyd used the same unit set for all eight plays. Whereas most of the scenes took place on a bare stage, occasionally a set piece would descend from the heavens to dominate the playing space, like the cross-shaped coffin of Henry V at the beginning of *Henry VI, part 1*. By rehearsing with the same ensemble of actors for all eight plays over the course of two years, Boyd was able to develop, over time, collaborative rehearsal methods similar to those of Efros.

Due to the size and scope of the project, the dedication and collaboration of the ensemble was vital to the success of the *Histories Cycle*. Rather than leading actors toward a preconceived director's concept, directors like Boyd and Efros required actors who could contribute to the interpretation of the play: "Actors need to have the ability to understand meaning. No, not merely to understand you when you tell them something about the meaning. But to have the taste to search for the meaning themselves. A classic is impossible without interpretation, without scope, without judgment . . . You cannot play Mercutio without the ability to think. You cannot play Don Juan without a philosophy."²³ Boyd could not dictate the interpretation of even half the two hundred and sixty roles in the *Histories Cycle*, so the company of actors needed to be able to contribute to the meaning of the play on their own initiative. In rehearsal, Boyd prompted actors to contribute to meaning by persistently asking them to clarify given circumstances, character status, and character objectives. Through the interrogative style of rehearsal, the training of actors, and the mutual respect gained through a lengthy and rigorous rehearsal and performance schedule, Boyd challenged the commercial practices of the British theatre that sought to produce the best productions as quickly as possible by fulfilling a single director's vision.

Boyd's dedication to collaboration in rehearsal helped inform his vision of collaboration between actor and audience in performance. Boyd did not have a clear plan for the redesign of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre when he became Artistic Director. In 2003, He focused more on the actors than the performance

space: “My main concern in the stage . . . has been regarding the company rather than the buildings it operates in, important though they are. I hope to be very flexible when it comes to buildings!”²⁴ The RSC acting company had been flexible in their staging. In 1974, the RSC built *The Other Place*, a black box space. The RSC took up residency at the Barbican in London in 1982, and in 1986, the RSC built the Swan Theatre, a 450-seat thrust stage. As the RSC approached the redesign of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, architect Rab Bennetts described “the objective [as] an improved version of the Swan which would be larger without sacrificing intimacy.”²⁵ In 2006, the RSC transformed the *Other Place* into the 1045-seat Courtyard Theatre as a “1:1 model from which to draw lessons” for the final redesign of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre.²⁶ After the success of the *Histories Cycle* at the Courtyard, Boyd praised the stage: “We are working in and at the same time building a kind of theatre that really doesn’t exist anywhere else. It is a deep thrust space of over 1000 seats that manages to combine the epic and the intimate in a way that I have not witnessed in a theatre anywhere else.”²⁷ When the Royal Shakespeare Theatre opened in 2011 its design mirrored the Courtyard stage with a few redesigns to improve acoustics.

Even though Boyd was aware of stages like Shakespeare’s Globe and worked on the thrust stage at The Crucible Theatre Sheffield, he claimed the redesigned Royal Shakespeare Theatre offered a different actor-audience dynamic than other theatres inspired by Shakespeare or Guthrie. Boyd argued that the theatre space reflected an ability of actors and audiences to collaborate in performance. During construction, Boyd claimed, “Time may be right for theatre to offer a better, more honest, more active, more intimate relationship also between the performer and the audience. I sense a new contract being drawn up among young theatre artists, between young theatre artists and audiences that acknowledge the audience as part of this ensemble as well. They are an ensemble that has the ability either to achieve a consensus or disagree. They are not sitting in the dark, they’re participants.”²⁸

Unlike at the Globe, Boyd never directly lit the audience, but he considered the light spill from the stage sufficient for the actors to view the audience. In all but the darkest scenes, the audience could view all audience members sitting on the opposite

side of the stage, and the actors could easily see all the audience members. Boyd's stagecraft often sought to include the audience. When describing the advantage of the stage's redesign, Boyd said, "[The] deep thrust [stage] . . . allows direct and honest address to an audience that is aware of itself and letting down the barriers that isolate the individuals within the audience. The audience relationships with the actors are active. Individuals are invited to be part of the community, as [an] extension of [the] ensemble community."²⁹ Boyd hoped that the theatre space would extend to the audience the sense of ensemble he fostered in rehearsals.

Despite the fact that Boyd's commitment to ensemble inspired the architecture of the new theatre, individual directors at the RSC did not necessarily share his commitment in their own productions. In 2011, the redesigned Royal Shakespeare Theatre opened with a repertory of Michael Boyd's production of *Macbeth* and Associate Director Rupert Goold's production of *The Merchant of Venice*. Boyd's *Macbeth* reflected his commitment to ensemble and stagecraft styles consistent with his previous work and training. Boyd's staging frequently filled the vertical space above the stage with action and characters. The three weird sisters initially appeared as three dead children hovering over downstage-center on nooses. Lady Macbeth and Macbeth knelt at a silver bowl center stage to wash their hands as a long stream of water fell from an obscured source above. Aside from this moment of hand-washing and the banquet where the ghost of Banquo appeared, few props occupied center stage. The unit set, a crumbling, gothic church-like façade, formed the upstage wall of the stage space. On the balcony of this façade, three cellists observed the performance, underscoring various moments of the action and filling transitions between scenes. In addition to this vertical expansion, Boyd's stagecraft expanded horizontally as well. The actors came into the audience and stood in the aisles to voice their support for the newly crowned Macbeth. The actors, often in soliloquies, spoke directly to the audience. The Porter, for instance, threatened the audience with lit dynamite that he tossed about the stage in mad nonchalance. In all these choices, Boyd's direction sought to blur the boundaries between actors and audience and to take advantage of the sculptural opportunities of blocking on a thrust stage.

Rupert Goold, whose direction was noted for its "eye-boggling technical effects," and designer Tom Scutt created a visually lush,

but emotionally shallow, Las Vegas setting for *The Merchant of Venice*.³⁰ Goold added a twenty-minute improvisation to the beginning of the play during which actors gambled at various gaming tables and waitresses delivered drinks while a live band on the upstage bandstand underscored Launcelot Gobbo, an Elvis Impersonator. Portia and Nerissa hosted a reality TV show called *Destiny* for the casket-selection scenes. To set the scene, a couch surfaced from an elevator center stage and two video monitors dropped in, oriented toward the downstage center portion of the audience. In the scenes in the real-estate office of Patrick Stewart's Shylock, a large table center stage forced the actors to play their scenes far downstage. Launcelot Gobbo, however, often spoke directly to the audience, and Scott Handy's Antonio hid among the audience to avoid meeting Shylock.³¹ In general, the stagecraft remained visually-oriented towards the downstage-center section of the audience rather than the surrounding audience. By filling the center of the stage, actors often had little room to play on the front portion of the stage or at the sides of these central set pieces. The scenic design fulfilled a thematic purpose by counterbalancing the exuberant design with the moments of the simple, heartfelt love between Bassiano and Portia (and Bassiano and Antonio), but the director's vision took priority over any mission to collaborate directly with the audience in performance.

Even though directors used a variety of stagecraft styles on the new Royal Shakespeare Theatre, the RSC promoted their new stage as a key part of the RSC brand. In 2011, the Royal Shakespeare Company erected a portable replica of the new Royal Shakespeare Theatre in the Park Avenue Armory in New York City. The company shipped the one-hundred-and-sixty-one ton stage, one-hundred-and-fifty ton auditorium, and eighty-five tons of scenery and costumes and erected, in eighteen days, the "3-level, 975-seat auditorium where the furthest seat was only 49 feet from the stage."³² Over the course of the next six weeks, the same ensemble of actors performed five plays by four different directors. Ostensibly, by refusing to transfer the plays to a proscenium stage, the Royal Shakespeare Company argued that their stage was as integral to the RSC brand as the ensemble of actors.

Boyd's vision of ensemble and actor-audience dynamic did not universally appear in other directors' shows, but he was able to hire a director who shared his commitment to collaboration and audience interaction for the Young People's Shakespeare tours. Boyd and Director of Education Jacqui O'Hanlon emphasized direct engagement of school audiences in these seventy-five-minute performances of Shakespeare's plays, so they sought out a director skilled in interactive performance events.³³ For the 2011 Young People's Shakespeare production of *The Taming of the Shrew* Boyd and O'Hanlon hired a director with much experience devising interactive theatre and no experience directing Shakespeare: Tim Crouch.

Tim Crouch's previous plays required minimal stagecraft elements and maximal collaboration between actors and the audience. Many of Crouch's productions required the audience to participate with their imaginations or reactions in order to create the intended (or unintended) theatrical effects. For instance, in his first original play, *My Arm* (2003), Crouch told the story of a 10-year-old boy who decided to put his arm above his head and refused to put it down during the next thirty years of his life. At no time in the performance, however, did Crouch raise his arm above his head. An artistic principle that Crouch described in his work was, "I won't show you, but you will see it."³⁴ His play, *ENGLAND* (2007), also required the audience members to see actions and characters solely in their imaginations. In November 2009, Hannah Ringham and Tim Crouch performed this play among the paintings on display at the Wexner Center for the Arts. Interwoven with a curatorial talk about the paintings, the actors narrated the events of a story about a transplanted heart that may have been obtained through semi-legal or nefarious means from an unwilling donor. The actors did not act out the scenes for the audience. Rather, they spoke directly to the audience, frequently repeating the catchword "look" to guide the audience members' imaginations from place to place in the story. In the final confrontation between the widow of the heart donor and the narrator, the actors looked into the eyes of audience members and reacted to them as if they were the widow in the scene. In *The Author* (2009), the actors sat among the audience in "two banks of raked seating facing each other, with no gap in between."³⁵ The actors recounted to the audience

the events of “a violent, shocking, and abusive play written by a playwright called Tim Crouch.”³⁶ The proximity of the actors to the audience allowed them to blur the line between the fictive events of the play and the present theatrical event, itself devised and performed by a playwright called Tim Crouch.³⁷ Crouch’s working styles, therefore, matched Boyd’s desire for collaboration in rehearsal and performance.

Rehearsals for Crouch’s 2011 Young People’s Shakespeare production of *The Taming of the Shrew* shared with his earlier work a focus on the audience and an ethos of collaboration.³⁸ “I am an outsider here,” Crouch noted, “and I am sure that’s one of the reasons they brought me in.”³⁹ Jacqui O’Hanlon confirmed that she and Boyd hired Crouch for the Young People’s Shakespeare production because young audiences responded well to shows with a direct actor-audience dynamic.⁴⁰ Crouch’s style of performance also accommodated the smaller budget and prop limitations of the touring productions. Due to the success of *The Taming of the Shrew*, Boyd and O’Hanlon re-hired Crouch for the 2012 Young People’s Shakespeare production of *King Lear*. The collaborative rehearsals and performances Crouch brought with him were exactly the sort of work Boyd had envisioned for the company.

Michael Boyd and Tim Crouch shared Peter Hall’s vision of challenging the commercial theatre through their dedication to collaboration in rehearsal and performance. Boyd’s success with these collaborative methods revitalized the financial and critical fortunes of the RSC in productions like the *Histories Cycle*. The redesigned Royal Shakespeare Theatre was a stage, however, and not necessarily a way of working. Making effective use of stages like the new Royal Shakespeare Theatre required a strong commitment from artistic leadership in order to change the RSC’s approach to stagecraft and actor-audience dynamic. Whereas Shakespeare’s Globe and The American Shakespeare Center’s Blackfriars Playhouse used replicas of Shakespeare’s theatre spaces to inspire these changes, Boyd used the clout of his leadership to change the architecture of the theatre and the practitioners using it. Without a mission statement or a visionary leader mandating collaboration between actors and audiences, directors had little incentive to alter their stagecraft to suit the stage; rather, they altered the stage to suit their stagecraft. Although the architecture of collaboration

between actor and audience was in place at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in 2011, the practice of collaboration still rested with directors, like Boyd, whose artistic visions challenged the stagecraft and performance practices of the commercial theatre.

Notes

1. Throughout this article, the term “stagecraft” refers not only to the technical elements of the performance, but also includes the movement of the actors and the conventions established for the audience in performance.

2. Rab Bennetts, untitled article, in *The Guthrie Thrust Stage: A Living Legacy*, ed. Iain Mackintosh (London: Association of British Theatre Technicians, 2011), 26. Published on the occasion of the 2011 Prague Quadrennial of Scenography and Theatre Architecture.

3. The theatre was originally called the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre until the founding of the Royal Shakespeare Company under Peter Hall in 1961.

4. Iain Mackintosh, *The Guthrie Thrust Stage: A Living Legacy* (Association of British Theatre Technicians: 2011), 6.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Quoted in Albert Rossi, *Astonish Us in the Morning: Tyrone Guthrie Remembered* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1977), 26.

7. Sally Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 239.

8. Beauman, *Royal Shakespeare Company*, 255.

9. Before Hall, the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre had a history of hiring directors who were at least partly inspired by William Poel, founder of the Elizabethan Stage Society: William Bridges-Adams, Ben Iden Payne, Robert Adkins, and Barry Jackson.

10. Quoted in Beauman, *Royal Shakespeare Company*, 251.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Sarah Crompton, “Michael Boyd: the Modest Man who Saved the RSC,” *Telegraph*, September 14, 2012, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/theatre-features/9540674/Michael-Boyd-the-modest-man-who-saved-the-RSC.html>.

13. James Thomas, introduction to *The Joy of Rehearsal* by Anatoly Efros, trans. James Thomas (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 16.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*, 17.

16. Quoted in Thomas, introduction to *The Joy of Rehearsal*, 17.

17. Daniel Rosenthal, “Arts: The Power Behind the Throne,” *Independent*, December 13, 2000, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-5130173.html>.

18. Rosenthal, “Power Behind the Throne.”

19. For instance, in the 2011 *Macbeth*, three children descended from the rafters with nooses around their necks. Their lifeless bodies dangled ten feet above the downstage area until they revived to deliver their fateful prophecies. Instead of referring to this supernatural trio as the weird sisters, Boyd changed all references to the “witches” to “children” in order to reflect this production choice.

20. Mackintosh, *The Guthrie Thrust Stage*, 15.
21. Quoted in Mackintosh, *The Guthrie Thrust Stage*, 15.
22. *This England: The Histories* consisted of four plays, *Richard III* and the three parts of *Henry VI*. The same ensemble of actors performed these plays back-to-back over the course of several days in 2001.
23. Anatoly Efros, *The Joy of Rehearsal*, trans. James Thomas (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 186.
24. Michael Boyd, interview by Paul Webb, *Playbill.com*, July 25, 2002, <http://www.playbill.com/news/article/71075-Michael-Boyd-Appointed-As-New-Director-of-Royal-Shakespeare-Company>.
25. Felix Mara, "Royal Shakespeare Theatre Renovation, Stratford-upon-Avon, by Bennetts Associates," *Architects Journal*, December 16, 2010, <http://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/royal-shakespeare-theatre-renovation-stratford-upon-avon-by-bennetts-associates/8609274.article>.
26. Mackintosh, *The Guthrie Thrust Stage*, 25.
27. Michael Boyd, "Making Theater and New Communities: A Talk by Michael Boyd" (presentation, New York Public Library, New York, NY, June 20, 2008), Video, 65 min, <http://newyorkpubliclibrary.org/audiovideo/making-theater-and-new-communities-talk-michael-boyd>.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ben Brantley, "Theater Review: *Macbeth*, Something Wicked This Way Comes," *New York Times*, February 15, 2008, http://theater2.nytimes.com/2008/02/15/theater/reviews/15macb.html?pagewanted=all&_moc.semityn.2retaecht.
31. On June 14, 2011, the elevator lifting up the couch was off its rails and broke the stage as it rose. In the twenty-minute break that followed, actor Jamie Beamish, who played Launcelot Gobbo, led the audience in a sing-along of Elvis songs while the technicians attended to the repairs. This moment, in spite of the intricate design, helped realize the "conspiracy between performer and audience" that was Boyd's ideal, if not Goold's desire.
32. "RSC by the Numbers," *Park Avenue Armory*, August 31, 2011, http://www.armoryonpark.org/index.php/emails/110831_newsletter.
33. The Young People's Shakespeare tours also presented 15-minute versions of these plays for "Shakespeare in a Suitcase" performances. The technical demands of these shows were minimal, usually requiring only costumes and key props that could easily fit in a suitcase.
34. Tim Crouch, "Tim Crouch Speaks on his Work with Shakespeare and Young People" (lecture, The Ohio State University and Royal Shakespeare Company Stand Up For Shakespeare Professional Development Day, Columbus, OH, February 16, 2013).
35. Tim Crouch, "*The Author*. An Article by Tim Crouch," *Tim Crouch Theatre*, accessed July 28, 2012, <http://www.timcrouchtheatre.co.uk/shows/the-author/the-author>.
36. Ibid.
37. Even though Crouch receives credit as playwright, he collaborated with other actors and directors to create all of his shows.
38. In the RSC's 2011 season, Crouch also performed his one-man shows, *I, Peaseblossom*, and *I, Malvolio*. These plays retold the events of *A Midsummer Night's*

14 Andrew Blasenak

Dream and *Twelfth Night* from the supporting characters' points of view using direct audience address.

39. Tim Crouch, interview by author, Stratford-upon-Avon, UK, June 16, 2011.

40. Jacqui O'Hanlon, telephone interview by author, Stratford-upon-Avon, UK, August 20, 2011.