

ACTORS' ROUNDTABLE

ACTING SHAKESPEARE: A Roundtable Discussion with Artists from the Utah Shakespeare Festival's 2013 Production of *The Tempest*

Michael Flachmann

Utah Shakespearean Festival Company Dramaturg

Featuring: Henry Woronicz (Prospero), Melinda Parrett (Ariel), Corey Jones (Caliban), Melisa Pereyra (Miranda), Fred Stone (Alonso)

Flachmann: Welcome to the Actor Roundtable, the final event of this year's Wooden O Symposium, a three-day conference for students and scholars of Shakespeare's plays. My name is Michael Flachmann, and I'm the Utah Shakespeare Festival Company Dramaturg. I'll be moderator for our Actor Roundtable discussion on *The Tempest*. First, I'd like to introduce the actors: Henry Woronicz, who plays Prospero; Melinda Parrett, Ariel; Corey Jones, Caliban; Melisa Pereyra, Miranda; and Fred Stone, Alonso.

The Tempest is done so often. It's such a wonderful play. It fits a lot of different times and places. I wonder if we could begin with a question on what *The Tempest* says to today's audience right here in 2013 Cedar City. How relevant is it today? Henry, could we start with you?

Woronicz: That's the question of the theater artist approaching any play. Why are we doing this play? As much as administrators of a theater company like to pay attention to box office and season selection, you spend a great deal of time trying to figure out why you are doing any given play, other than the fact that it might be a good play or it balances out the season or is a cash cow. A Shakespeare play in particular, because it's kind of a Rorschach ink blot, can be many things to many people, and this iteration of *The*

Tempest—this is the second time I've done the role of Prospero—as you work on it, you find different things that rise to the surface in you.

This is a major theme in the play, of course, so it's not a revelation to anybody, but I think the play is an exploration of how we forgive people. How do we forgive these things that are done to us and that we do to others. The role of Prospero, of course, is the focal point in the course of the journey. To me that is why the play is worth doing and that is why the actor finds a thesis statement of some sort that you anchor your character around. All actors ask, "Where do we start, and where do we end up? What's our journey in the arc of the scene, of the speech, of the play, of the summer!" And you end up somewhere. I always look for something to be the grain of sand that the pearl is going to grow around. For me it became the line, "Rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance." If we are really going to walk the walk and talk the talk, we need to forgive people; we need to let things go. Human beings are very good at holding on to things.

I read a story some years ago about a Buddhist psychologist who was dealing with his mother. His father and her husband had died many years ago. He realized one day talking to her that she had still never forgiven him for something, and he turned to her and asked, "Who are you hurting with that? He's gone. What are you holding on to?" There's a lovely line that Prospero says to Alonso late in the play after Alonso wishes aloud that he could ask forgiveness. Prospero says, "There, sir, stop: let us not burthen our remembrances with a heaviness that's gone." If it's gone, let it go. That's the lesson of the play for me as I'm working on it now.

A director would have a larger perspective about why you do this play one time and have a point of view that says something to the audience about themselves because, let's face it, that's why we engage with art: because we want to learn something about ourselves. We want to learn something about the great, great challenge of human beings and this world, which is the fear of the other. What have they got that I don't have? Or who are they, or I don't like them. The sooner we get to us as opposed to the other, the world would be a better place.

Flachmann: Melinda?

Parrett: That is exactly what I think is the importance of this play. The kernel in the middle of it is forgiveness. As for audience reaction, the general comment seems to be—other than "the show is beautiful," "we love the magic"—the personal way that it affects people is, "Oh! that reminded me that I was holding on

to something.” As for being in the middle of it, it’s really lovely to be the element of the play that actually conveys that realization to Prospero. Ariel’s not being human, that’s what makes it so profound for Prospero, which he conveys so profoundly.

Flachmann: Corey?

Jones: Listening to Henry’s response made me think about Caliban’s own course through the play as far as his relationship to forgiveness goes. I have to come to my own terms in forgiving Prospero, because I feel that Caliban has so much done to him in the course of the play. But at the end, even Caliban has a moment of redemption towards Prospero. Henry’s response reminded me that that’s the moment Caliban ends with, that he gets to go off stage with and ruminate on. We don’t ever see what happens after that, if there is another meeting between Prospero and Caliban. But I do think the theme of redemption is the prevalent theme that relates and still resonates with today’s audience.

Flachmann: And Melisa.

Pereyra: One of the lines that I really hold on to—I’m not even in this scene—but it’s when Antonio says, “What’s past is prologue, what to come in yours and my discharge.” For me in this play, Miranda has something bad happen to her. We don’t know, maybe months prior when she has this encounter with Caliban. Now when we see her, she begins to discover all of these new things, these good feelings. So instead of being afraid of being around somebody she can’t even look at, she’s around Ferdinand, who’s somebody handsome and kind. In this play, I have the luxury of saying, “What’s past is prologue”; and as I discover all of these new people and things, I get to revel in that discovery. I think that’s what makes it special for me and I hope translates to an audience.

Flachmann: How about you, Fred?

Stone: I find this play really interesting as well, as you probably do, being scholars. It was most likely Shakespeare’s final play, so there are a lot of theories that this was based on his own life. Wasn’t there a BBC episode about how *The Tempest* related so personally to Shakespeare’s life, that in his last days he was letting go and retiring and moving to Stratford for his final days? I find it extremely interesting to see the culmination of his life in this play and all the things about forgiveness and letting go and what you do in the last days of your life. What is most important? From Alonso’s point of view, it’s his son; it’s his family. I think he goes through that journey because he’s lost his son and fears that he’s lost him forever. That changes him tremendously.

Flachmann: Thanks, Fred. Let's stay on the topic that Fred introduced a second ago about Prospero as Shakespeare renouncing his theatrical magic at the end of the play. I think Mr. Woronicz has perhaps a different opinion on that.

Woronicz: Fred is alluding to a BBC series recently about discovering Shakespeare, and there was the episode on *The Tempest*. It was a posted and narrated by Trevor Nunn, who has been a wonderful director for the Royal Shakespeare Company for many years in England. I've been working in Shakespeare theatre for close to 37 years, and one of the side hazards is that you pick up a lot of information. The notion that Fred is talking about, *The Tempest* being Shakespeare's last play, reveals one of the things we like to do about Shakespeare: Though we actually know very little factual information about him, we romanticize him in terms of what he might have been doing.

Conjectures over the years have led to legends and stories, and—not to dismiss anything Fred said because there are certainly elements in the play that feel valedictory, like saying goodbye to things—it was probably Shakespeare's last solo-authored play. He did co-write *The Two Noble Kinsmen* afterwards and also *Henry VIII*, and he was writing up until probably 16 months before his death at 52; he was fairly young. We like to think that he retired to Stratford, but he really didn't. He owned a residence in London, and he rented out some other rooms in London. He also spent a lot of time there because he was a businessman; he was a shareholder in his company. He made a lot of money. Nobody made money as a playwright in England. But 400 years ago, the reasons and the way people wrote plays was very different from what we do today. And it's very tempting to read into his biography what we would like to see there.

But that doesn't mean that things weren't happening in his life that had influence on his plays. My favorite little biographical episode that I like to pull into *The Tempest* is when Prospero pulls Ferdinand away from Miranda and says, "Don't go to bed with her; you sleep with her, you're in trouble." Then Ariel comes in to do some magic, then those actors leave, and then Prospero says it again: "Look thou be true, the strongest—oh, the straw, the fire in the blood." What did 18-year-old Shakespeare do? He got his 26-year-old girlfriend pregnant. By the time he was 21, he had three kids and a wife, and he was the oldest boy of a failing glove maker, who was the ex-mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon. In the last years of his life, in the last plays of his life, Shakespeare was certainly interested in lost children—especially with finding lost children,

forgiveness. *The Winter's Tale*, *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Tempest*—all of the Romance Plays have this. They're hard to define, but they have this sense of trying to put the world back together, to put a family back together. This is a man who lived most of his life in London with a family back in Stratford. He went back and forth.

Flachmann: That's a lovely comment. I'd like to morph into something different. Perhaps start with Melinda and Corey and then spread out to other people. Can you talk about physical and vocal choices in making these wonderful roles? How did you choose what you're doing with your voice and what you're doing with your bodies? A question that often comes up is how much of that choice is Corey, how much of that choice is BJ Jones, the director. Is that something you could wrestle with?

Parrett: BJ had a very specific idea of what he wanted with Ariel. When I was first cast, I didn't really know how to approach it because in my mind and other productions that I've seen or read about, Ariel has had a certain androgenous quality—a man, and I just don't see myself as that quality. It wasn't until we got into rehearsal that we talked about it. BJ wanted the relationship between Ariel and Prospero to be of a different quality, so I wasn't a sprite-like, puckish spirit. I was more of an intelligent, evolved spirit—an elegant spirit, sensuous, not sexual, but just a different quality. Then when I saw the way they were going visually with a unitard, I knew that it wasn't just going to be Melinda walking around up there or tap dancing through the show. So it evolved. I really had no idea what I was going to do except keeping in mind that Ariel is a spirit and of the air, an element, and very different from an earth-like quality.

That was what we were trying to accomplish. It really didn't start getting into my body until I had that costume on. Then I knew what I was identifying with and what people would be seeing and Ariel morphed into that. Normally, I'm not the type of actor that would wait until I had a costume for my character to evolve; but with Ariel, it really did help to get that idea into my body and to know what it feels like. It's not comfortable to feel so vulnerable out there, but I have to say it's been a gift to just feel not human. That's how it evolved: the dynamic between us is that Prospero is obviously of the human world and I am not, and to make that as different as I could without flying around or whatever. It is still something that is evolving as the show goes on, something I'm still discovering.

Flachmann: Wonderful, Melinda. And you, Corey?

Jones: I didn't know much about *The Tempest* coming in. This was my first experience with the play, and the immediate thing that jumps out is that Caliban is different. There are so many references to his physical difference. Rick (playing Stephano) has a whole moment about how he smells, and I began to think about that probably before I thought about his dramatic function in the play. How am I going to manifest this other-worldliness? He is the only native in the play, but he's the alien in this world of characters. What came first was the accent. Something jumped off the page even before I talked to BJ, that it felt Caribbean, like somewhere in that mid-Atlantic world. You know, my mom's from Africa, and I learned my language from Miranda and Prospero. That combination just read something Caribbean to me, so I called BJ about a week before we met and said, "Hey, what do you think about a Caribbean accent?" He was open to it, but he was concerned about any Colonial themes coming out, which he wanted to stay away from. So what we worked toward in the development of the language was not being so specifically Caribbean, as in Jamaica or Barbados, but we chose instead an amalgamation of Caribbean and African. In that way, it felt less Colonial.

Then in rehearsing the play, there was something about Caliban being a terrestrial being of the island, that probably his early learning came from animals once his mom had passed and maybe before Miranda and Prospero landed on the island. He would imitate things on the island. I started with his vocabulary and stance, where I started very low with both. It took about one scene for me to realize that my knees were so sore I couldn't possibly do that for an entire show, let alone an entire run. So we began to make it sort of upright. We found this monkey-apish vocabulary that seemed to fit and allowed me to have an upright-man posture, but with something obviously a little different to separate me from the rest of the cast and characters. Those were my two departure points, vocally and physically, that allowed me to find his difference; and as Melinda said, you're never done. I'm still trying to be more specific with the accent. It's very grounded in me, but on some nights I feel like I'm grasping for straws trying to find it. I'm still trying to find the specificity and consistency in the voice and the movement, and I'm sure it will keep evolving throughout the course of the play.

Flachmann: Great Corey, thanks. Let's expand this a little more and get Melisa (Miranda) and Henry involved about whether your costume makes the character or not. Melisa?

Pereyra: When I got to wear the costume the first time, it was

more hindering than not because it's just a wrap, so it's constantly falling. I keep thinking it's going to drop to the ground. How do I walk? It gets stuck, so I make these tiny little steps and I can trip over myself. I was working all of these technicalities with this very simple-looking costume, which I was very surprised by, but we have wonderful dressers that help us with that, and we finally got it down. But it's great to feel so light, now that I'm finally used to it. It's great to feel so light where never, no matter what the temperature is outside, cold or hot, it's always right. It always feels right to me because we are in this island, this Caribbean atmosphere; and having this costume is a great differentiation for me to see what I'm wearing and what Prospero's wearing. Then I see Ferdinand and he has all this stuff and I wonder, what is all this stuff? Why are you wearing this? So it starts there and then his face—all those intricacies that I begin to notice about another person that I've never seen before. In that sense, visually, it's a great place to help me discover as I observe all these other people. Even at the end of the play, I see all these people wearing this awesome stuff of different colors and things that are fascinating. It's helpful to me to be the one that's wearing something so simple and not embellished so that I can really pay attention to those who are wearing luxurious clothes.

Flachmann: Fred?

Stone: The costume is always that final ingredient that helps you feel the character physically. I thought my costume was fairly simple, which I liked because it was easy to move in and easy to maneuver, except for that big cape in the storm scene, which gave me a lot of trouble. But other than that, I think it helps keep me upright. If I'm playing a king, I want to have as much stateliness as possible. I thought BJ's choice of "the Donner Party"—if you know what the Donner Party is, that was his nickname for us—for the four guys dressed all in blacks and grays, I thought, was quite good because it certainly contrasted with the rest of the color on the island. We came from an urban environment as opposed to out in nature's colorful surroundings. It made us feel a little darker in temperament. I always look in the mirror before I go on and try to focus on what I look like and how that feeds into my emotional life. This costume helped me with that. I don't know if BJ was planning a mustache and beard for me, but I thought that would add a little regality too, being a king; they liked that and we did it. Antonio had one too, but not Sebastian and Gonzalo. That style of mustache and goatee certainly helped me see myself as a regal character.

Flachmann: I want to get Henry involved in this. You have beautiful costumes and a staff and all sorts of trappings, a lot of which you get rid of in the play. How does that affect your performance, or does it?

Woronicz: A lot of that is discovered in rehearsal. I spend most of the night in my pajamas, so it's very comfortable until they put that robe on me—the robe gets kind of heavy, you know. But, as my fellow actors are alluding to, it's a process. A good costume designer will spend time in rehearsal and in the fitting process making sure things work for the actor. If they are smart, they will do that because the last thing an actor wants to do is get in rehearsal and find it doesn't work—I can't bend over, or I have a collar and when I turn I do this! That's why we have a show-and-tell when we first start rehearsals, so we can each see what we're going to look like. You have that mental picture of how you're going to work in that direction. Every actor will use a different metaphor, but I always liken it to doing a sketch. You start with a very broad light crayon, and you're going to erase. As you get further into rehearsal, the lines get a little more solidified, and you start to color things in. Then the costume gets added in at some point and becomes part of the process as well. Some costumes, like Melinda's for Ariel, have to become the character and absolutely have to suit what she is doing or she's not going to be comfortable. Caliban's is the same way, and to lesser degrees the rest of us. I looked at my costume and said, "Great, I'm going to be in little linen pajamas for most of the time in the hot Utah summer. Perfect!"

Jones: I want to add a comment about what Henry was saying about a costume designer listening to the actors and making adjustments. When I first got my Caliban costume in the dress rehearsal, it had a facial piece that actually came over my face. It spread across my nose, came down my smile lines, and connected to the bottom so it was literally one whole piece. When we got into our first dress rehearsal, I spent the whole show adjusting it because the pieces that crossed my smile lines were so tight, they prevented me from talking. The next day the costume designer called and said we are going to get rid of all that so you can use your face—which is important in theatre. That's a costume designer realizing that what he thought initially would work didn't, and he was amenable to getting rid of it. The makeup designer came up with a palate that took over that space that I think works, yet allows me the freedom to express myself as I need to. That's a perfect example of what Henry was talking about.

Flachmann: That's great Corey. Let's stick with you for a minute, if you don't mind, Corey. Talk a little bit more about Caliban. We've been talking this week about Caliban being an anagram of cannibal and whether there's anything monstrous within your character. In fact, I think that's a good question for everybody—if there's any monstrosity in your character, does it come out at all? Does it get released? So Corey, could I start with you on that, talking a little bit more about Caliban and the type of creature, if that word is permitted, he is.

Jones: This is my first experience with Caliban. I'd never seen *The Tempest*, never done it, and all I heard about Caliban was that he's a monster. It really frightened me a little bit. Do I want to play a monster for the summer? I got the play and read it and realized that that was people's perception of him, but who he really was, was not monstrous, at least from my perspective. His cause became apparent to me, his argument, and once I identified that, he became likeable, loveable, and human to me because I found something notable and legitimate for me to anchor myself in: "I want my home back. I was here first. I have become a prisoner, and if I get my home back, I'll get my freedom." That's something everybody can find noble—that's what we all want—freedom and a place to call our own. Identifying that allowed me to find a sort of humanity in Caliban. Then I included those ancillary things—the way he smells, the way he walks, the way he talks, his inclination to be in the moment and present in nature. He's very much of nature, thus he's very much in tune with his instincts, part of which is to procreate. In that moment where Prospero says, "You tried to rape my daughter," Caliban doesn't see it that way. He sees Miranda as someone who is close to me that I could procreate with, which is what naturally, I'm instinctively programmed to do. I see everything else on this island procreating; why shouldn't I?

I tried to look at Caliban from a non-monstrous point of view and try to understand why he makes the choices he needs to make, then let the audience and those around me color him as a monster. But I tried to make him as noble as possible. Shakespeare gives him some really beautiful language in the play. Here is a guy who pre-Miranda/Prospero was probably using guttural utterances and probably some African words. He was making sounds that he heard from the island. But the intruders taught him this language which he has a great facility with for someone who learned it later in life. He's really embraced it and found the color of it, even to the point that he knows how to use it to curse; as he says to Miranda, "You taught me how to curse." It's funny, I find a lot of

beauty in the guy who was referenced as the monster, so I took that approach and let the reaction from the audience be what it may be.

Flachmann: So you're not an evil character, you're just misunderstood?

Jones: Exactly, exactly.

Flachmann: Melinda?

Parrett: It's a really hard question. I don't think there is anything innately monstrous in Ariel. I think being an element of the air, it's really hard to qualify and quantify emotion. It's not the same. Any emotion that she—"it"—acquires is from watching people or getting an idea of what that emotion might be. When she says, "Do you love me master?" after seeing the lovers kiss, it's not about a sexual love or even a romantic love. It's an idea of affection, acceptance. Do you value me? As for the monstrous quality, I don't think so. If anything, it's a level of grace and openness and, yes, there are things that she wants. She wants freedom. She's done all of these things: She's helped Prospero survive on this island and carried out all of these tasks so that his project can be carried out. To a certain point there are things that she will not do. He has the line about Sycorax, "... for you are too delicate a spirit to carry out her earthly and abhorrent commands"—there's a line she will not cross. When he says, "My charms have come to head, what's the time," I say, "On the sixth hour, at which time, my lord, you said our work should cease." I did what I said I was going to do—come on, look at what you've done. These people are grieving. I just think that there is nothing monstrous about Ariel—well, the harpie—[to Woronicz] first of all, you told me to do it. I think, if anything, it's essential to have Alonzo, Antonio and Sebastian get to the level of remorse that they need to feel, but she doesn't hurt them physically. Yes, she might make their swords heavy, and it's a scare tactic that could be considered monstrous, but I think she knows what she needs to do in order to be free. There's teasing them with things, dropping things on them and poking them—sending lightning bolts. I don't think it's monstrous, it's mischievous, okay? I've got to do this, I've got to do this, I've got to do this. But there's a certain point, I draw the lines so.

Flachmann: Lovely, thank you. I wanted to at least have the panel touch on the question of nature versus nurture in the play, particularly in reference to Melisa teaching Caliban language. Does it not take, does it not stick? Is there a point at which we cannot change someone's innate personality? I want to get Henry involved

in this, too, because you can really look at a lot of what you do as magician in the play as correcting or changing other people's behavior. Setting up trials for them, setting up spectacles with the goddesses. So could we start with Melisa on that?

Pereyra: That makes me think of *Hamlet*, actually in that quote, "There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so." Prospero has taught Miranda everything she knows because this is the only world that she has ever known and he's the only person. Everything she thinks is good or bad is not necessarily from what she's discovered, but from what she's been taught. I wondered if Prospero hadn't told her, "You can't have any sexual relationship with anybody until after you are married." She thought what Caliban had been doing was wrong because that's what she's been taught and because Prospero has reacted by kicking him out and making him a slave. She figures, "Okay, that was bad. He told me it was bad." But when I meet somebody that's good, like Ferdinand, then I might call him a goodly person. Prospero tells her the first time she meets Ferdinand, "Oh, okay, I should like him, yes, I do like him." And then Prospero tugs with her what should be good and what shouldn't be. When it comes to Caliban, I don't think that she has any ideas to whether he can't be taught clearly because she feels like she can teach him and she does. So I think we are a big product of our environment regardless of whether we think so or not.

Flachmann: I want to give Corey equal time on this. Are you teachable as a character?

Jones: Is Caliban teachable from Prospero and Miranda? Tough language, exactly. There's that element. I was trying to think in the course of the play what happens in the course of the play. What do I learn?

Flachmann: Especially at the end, Corey, if I could lead you onward a little bit. Is there any kind of reconciliation there between you and Prospero? Is that a learned script or have you just been subjugated?

Jones: I will say that in thinking of how he is trying to resolve this issue—how do I get my home back, how do I get my freedom?—Caliban's only remedy to the problem is to destroy because I don't think he knows that there is another option: that they could leave. Everybody he has come upon on this island has appeared to him; but he didn't see the shipwreck, so he has this sense of getting rid of things to destroy them. You have to kill it, and that's the only way it will go. By the end he senses that I

might have gone about this the wrong way by seeking your death as a way to right my wrong. In that, it also makes the problem really pertinent for him that it's so bad that he's looking for death. But I do think that he learns a little bit as he says "Grace" and that he seeks for . . . I don't know if he's quite come to a place of full redemption by the end of the play because I think he's still trying to put it all together. I mean, it's a lifetime of subjugation versus a quick two minutes of this thing that he's hearing out of Prospero's mouth for the first time: pardon and these wonderful words and this look of concern and care that he probably hasn't seen since the early days—certainly not since the rape attempt. So it's a tenderness that he responds to and that's another thing that just came to mind. Probably for the first time in a long time, there is a tenderness, a sense of love that he hasn't had since they took him in his care that he probably misses—somebody to show kindness and love. So I do think there is sort of that journey that he comes to and is taught at the end.

Worontcz: If I can just add to that, observing Caliban and looking at the play, Caliban is imminently teachable. He's a quick learner. He learns all kinds of things. He learns this language. As Corey says, he speaks some of the most beautiful language in the play and has a relationship with the spirits that is kind of fascinating. But I think the big teaching moment for him is that he backs the wrong horse. He gets these two drunks and thinks he's got this plot going, and he learns, "What a double ass was I to take this drunkard for a god." That's the greatest learning experience, I think, when you realize you've really backed the wrong horse. From Prospero's perspective of the many themes in this play, certainly nature versus nurture is a big one. We know there are paraphrases of some of Montaigne's essays in this play, one of them about the Caliban and the cannibal and whether or not you can teach the noble savage. Shakespeare seems to come down on the side that we are who we are. After his revelation from the spirit Ariel, from the non-human element, that he must be human, he decides to give up his magic and drown his book.

The thing about the book, about learning, whatever that symbolizes, when Trinculo and Stephano show up, Stephano turns his bottle into a book. Kiss the book, it's about where the wisdom is, where the knowledge is, and Shakespeare—and this might be reading into the biography again—seems to be saying of the young grammar school boy from Stratford who didn't have a university education, that maybe books aren't that important in the long run. They can twist us around in some ways. Prospero

says at one point, “This monster on whose nurture nature will never stick, all my pains humanely taken, all lost, quite lost.” His body is misshapen, so his mind is going to be misshapen. But that’s before he has the revelation about what he’s done wrong. I think, personally, for Prospero, the hardest person to forgive in the whole play is Caliban for what he tried to do to his most precious thing in his life—his daughter. And I think it’s fairly recent, recent enough that it’s very hot and fresh in him. But it’s the one that’s least settled in terms of the forgiveness because there is only one little exchange where Prospero says, “Go to my cell, take with you your companions. As you look to have my pardon, trim it handsomely.” Caliban says, “Yes, I will. I’ll seek for grace.” Then I say, go on, get out. BJ, the director, gave us this last little moment where we look at each other and we give each other a nod of okay, it’s going to be your island, we’re leaving. He bides his time, it’s going to be skamals for days and costering filberts.

Flachmann: Thank you. BJ Jones, when we first started talking about the play back last September and October and sharing emails about the play and the designers are getting involved, he was really interested in having a young, active Prospero. You see a lot of productions of *The Tempest* where Prospero is old and doddering and walking around on a cane. I just want to ask this question generally of Henry and the other actors. I think we have done a great job in finding the right Prospero for the role. Does that affect the production in any interesting ways?

Woronicz: It has to. Whoever you cast in that lead role is going to have an energy that goes through the play. If he’s a doddering old man, everybody has to take care of the old guy and help him remember his lines, which is hard enough as it is. Again, as with all Shakespeare’s plays, there’s a certain amount of baggage that can accumulate, one of which is Prospero as the wise old magician. But as most of us are trained to do, we look at the text. What does the text tell us? At one point—there is some debate about this line—Prospero says to Ferdinand, “I’m giving you here a third of my life.” Does that mean she’s fifteen, he’s forty-five? Obviously, he’s not an old man when they come to the island. They’ve been there for twelve years. He was still active and had withdrawn from his political duties, which opened the door for his brother. So I think, of course, that influences what happens with the rest of the production.

Flachmann: Corey, is he a formidable opponent as a younger man?

Jones: I think so. It's certainly fuels my cause in having a Prospero that I fear. I only get one scene with Henry until the end, but that scene has to last me through the entire play. That's why I stick with the fools, even though at some point, of course, I realize these aren't the gods I thought they were. But my cause is still strong enough that I stick with them. Look, you might not be the gods I thought you were, but you can still do some service if you can just get him out of the way because I need help. I can't do it alone. Caliban, from my sense of it, is a strong man. I mean he carries wood around. He's logging wood around the island all the time for these guys. He's physically strong, but he recognizes not only Prospero's mystical powers, but also something in his command of himself and language that Caliban realizes he can match. It helps that he's a worthy adversary by being a strong, virile Prospero.

Flachmann: Melisa does this affect your relationship with Henry at all?

Pereyra: Yes, absolutely. Because of the way Henry plays Prospero, I was able to find a very strong, assertive, and feisty Miranda. I don't think I could have found that had I not had somebody to fight with and to fight for also. The speech that Prospero and Caliban and Miranda have, that scene they have together at the beginning of the play when she goes off on Caliban and calls him abhorrent slave and even goes on to insult him and tell him why he has been put away in this rock—that's not necessarily for me, but it's because I see the way this event has affected Prospero, and that makes me—not want to protect him because he doesn't need my protection—but to rally the troops and say, "Yea, dad, you're right! Let's do this. What else are you going to do to him because he deserves it?" The strength that Prospero has—like father, like daughter—Miranda carries a lot of that with her, as well as his anger and his compassion and his ability to love. She has all that inside, as we all carry things from our parents. This scene mirrors that, and it's so beautifully written besides.

Flachmann: Fred, let's get you involved in this.

Stone: I think it works really well especially because of Prospero's journey of starting at such a passionate, vengeful place. The anger has to be dissipated, and the physicality that comes from that is very helpful for establishing the journey to forgiveness. If he isn't that passionate and physically alive in his hatred at what he wants to accomplish, you don't see as much of a change in

the end. I think that's really important—that he's extremely vital, physically alive, passionate, and very angry.

Flachmann: Talk about that change in Alonso would you please, Fred?

Stone: The change in Alonso? When he hits this island, he's focused so much on his own pain of losing his son, it turns him around to such an extent from whatever he was doing back in Naples that he is now going through an ordeal. As Gonzalo says at the end of the play, "We've all found out who we are through this journey." Alonso certainly finds out who he is, especially when he's reunited with his son and realizes that this is the most important thing in his life. He doesn't really realize that until he loses his son. It takes that loss for him to grow up and to realize what's most important in life rather than running Naples.

Flachmann: That's lovely.

Woronicz: I just want to add something about a final note about the casting of Prospero. It's not about the actor's age; it's about how the actor and the director want to portray who Prospero is. I did Prospero about five years ago, and this guy's much more angry, much more vital and energized. I fell somewhat into the mistake that you make with a Prospero as the wise old man who's nice to everybody. He gets a little angry at some point, but he's kind of a wise old man. The danger of playing Prospero as a wise know-it-all who really has all this wisdom is conveying a general wash of wisdom and loveliness. He's not really a human being.

Flachmann: I'm going to ask a final brief question and then we'll open it to questions from the audience. Henry has talked about one of the traps that he avoided. I don't know if you want to talk about another one, but I would like to know from each of you what special challenges there were in your role and how you solved them? Or you could focus on one special challenge.

Parrett: As I said before, when you're approached to play a character that you have never really thought is in your range, that's a challenge in itself, to figure out how to approach it to make it work for you so that it is believable. It's really hard to talk about a character that is non-human. It's hard to qualify the emotional and rational. I'm not looking at it from a human point of view, and that's really hard to describe. I'm obviously a human, so you could very well take the text and say, okay, I'm going to say these lines and choose to say it this way and I'm going to move this way and wear my costume. I didn't want to do that. I didn't want to be this surface Ariel or just a flighty little spirit running around with no relationship to Prospero or anybody else on the island. I wanted to

bring a humanity to something that isn't human, and that's really hard. I made it easier by watching the humans on the isle, which is not only a challenge, but also a joy. I am so involved in what everybody else is doing in the show. Seventy-five percent of the show, I'm just watching the others, which is how I rationalized how she has an idea of what emotion is and what human interaction is. So Ariel is learning, too. Nature versus nurture. She's learning, too, and that was a huge challenge for me.

Jones: One of the biggest challenges for me as an actor playing Caliban was spending most of my time pursuing my cause with the two fools because they obviously have no huge stake and eventually no interest in what I'm interested in. Not only that, but Jamie and Rick, as two actors on stage, are enjoying themselves so much in those roles that I'm literally, as actor and character, pulling them to stay on course! Come back to the course! We joked when we first opened that this scene is about fifteen minutes now, but come August, it's going to be twenty-five minutes by the time Jamie's through injecting all the bits that he's going to discover during the course of the play. It provides a worthy obstacle for my character to overcome that these guys don't share my interest while I'm trying to get them to understand that if you can do this with me, this is what you'll get. Between the alcohol—blame it on the alcohol—between that and their general buffoonery as characters, they keep getting off course. It provides a really strong challenge, both as character and actor, to stay on course and focus them to keep the objective sharp and in focus.

Pereyra: One of the traps in Shakespeare's plays, particularly for ingénues or for lovers in general, is just a general wash of love, a general wash of wonder, and I wanted Miranda to have so much more than that. We were talking about nature versus nurture and that she has grown up on this island. The only person that she has known is this monster. She eats with her hands, she sits on the floor. There is no courtly manner of being, and I wanted the way that she grew up, her past, to really influence the way that she walks on stage. When she says, "Yeah, gimme that log. No big deal," she can do this because she is part of this island and eventually she'll be part of something else. Time to discover something else, but for the time the audience gets to see her, all she's known is this place. I wanted that to make her strong and to make her an island girl. That's who she is; she's not just some sensitive girl in love. When she sees Ferdinand, she thinks, "Yeah, what is that, I want it. What do I do to get that?" It's very decisive and very strong, as opposed to "Oh he looks so good, let's get

married.” No, it’s LET’S GET MARRIED! She really means it. That’s one of the challenges, too, because it is really easy to look at Jeb—who’s a very handsome man and, yeah, he looks nice—and kind of get wrapped up in the very surface kind of acting and a general color; but we wanted to make sure that we stayed true to the story and that we discovered things, as you do, one moment at a time so that they really hit our hearts. We do this for three months. We have to fall in love as vulnerably and as openly and as honestly as we can, every time. In that love scene, that is what we go for. It’s intimidating and scary and also one of the most rewarding experiences I’ve ever had on stage.

Flachmann: Thanks, Melisa. Fred, challenges?

Stone: The obviously most important one is the loss of a child or feeling that that child is dead. I don’t have any children, so I had to dig deep to find what I could relate that to and what that pain would be like. The other guys that I’m with are not going through that. They’re philosophizing about the island or they’re having fun mocking Gonzalo, and I’m in a totally different state. So I have to fight against giving in to whatever is going on with them and keep my focus on trying to find my son, if he’s alive. I think that kind of focus and determination was my challenge.

Flachmann: Thanks, Fred. Excellent. We are going to open this to questions and comments from the audience. Who has a question or comment?

Question: Corey, we have spoken a bit about the ages of Prospero and Miranda. How old is Caliban? Does Caliban have any sense of his parents?

Jones: Two great questions. I was actually thinking about this the other day. How old was I when my mom, Sycorax, died? How long was I on the island by myself before Miranda and Prospero came? And then how long did it take for them to teach me, then the incident with Miranda, and then how long have we been in this place where I’ve become subservient? I was thinking I was probably a young child when they came. Young enough to know some things, but not so old that I couldn’t learn some things, too. And so I’m thinking this has probably been, I believe he says, twelve years?

Question: There are a couple of references that we’ve been on the island twelve years. But also it says about Sycorax, put her in the vine tree for a dozen years. She arrived here with child. Sometime in that twelve years, she died.

Jones: Exactly. So we get a window based on the math between twenty-four to thirty years and so yes, we are looking at a thirty-year-

old virgin. I'm full man. I'm a grown man. As for the second part, about my father, I've vacillated between different scenarios. Was he a sailor? When I was in graduate school, there was a playwright who wrote a play on Sycorax and her story. It was a really beautiful play because it talked about her and Angers and again how she had facility with the dark arts; but she wasn't a mean, evil witch. It's all about perspective; who's telling the story shapes how things are perceived. In this story, she was just a misunderstood woman who had certain powers with nature. So she was imprisoned by these sailors; one of the sailors in the play raped her, and that's my father. That play, which is just one playwright's idea, stayed with me and is an option. Another was something along the line of she encountered a man back in Angers and for some reason she was banished. I vacillate between those two, but lean more towards somebody that she ran across in Angers and for some reason she had to leave. But those are two great questions. That's the back story that we don't hear, but as an actor you think about.

Flachmann: Great. This gentleman is a theatre professor at USC so we're not surprised that was a great question. Other questions or comments?

Question: That's the back story but what's the front story—no one else on the island. No little Calibans?

Jones: I think the prospect of freedom, at least at this point where we end the play, is more important to him. It's what we see that he is fighting for more so than I'm looking for a mate. And I don't necessarily think that he wanted to destroy Miranda. He wanted to destroy Prospero with the hopes that Miranda would be left behind. And then he would take care of Stephano and Trinculo after Prospero was out of the way. I think that was his plan was to get him out of the way and then take care of those two idiots. Then I have the island with Miranda. I think that was his ultimate goal, but he doesn't realize and didn't foresee it. First of all, he didn't know where they came from. He doesn't know Milan, so he didn't think there would be other Milanese citizens coming on the island that he thinks again are akin to Prospero. These are gods, these are people with this power and they are all going to leave and leave him alone. I don't think it will dawn on him until he realizes he's alone. And I think there will be a moment of sadness where he will be lonely and then he'll rediscover that sense that he had pre-Prospero, Miranda. But I do think it will be a lonely moment for him that he'll miss his captors.

Worontcz: It's always interesting to me that we assume that Caliban will be left there. We don't know, I mean there might be

a moment as they start to leave that Prospero says why don't you come with us? Bring him to civilization. Who knows?

Jones: And I'll teach poetry at the Milanese University.

Woronicz: He'll open a small clamshell bakery. Young skamals. He's very marketable. That's my favorite thing about the play is everybody who encounters Caliban wants to sell him. All three, and the last thing that Antonio says is, "He's quite marketable."

Flachmann: This is Don Weingust who is our new Director of the Center for Shakespeare Studies here at Southern Utah University. Glad to have you with us, Don.

Weingust: My question ties into the possibility of your going to Milan. Congratulations on the production: a wonderful production. At the end, the culpability of a plot against Prospero; these knuckleheads are yours; this thing of darkness I acknowledge. What are you working with? Is the nature of the relationship ownership? Calling him yours?

Woronicz: It's a very profound moment. That's always a line that's jumped out at me, referring to Caliban as something that is his. I think on a fundamental level he realizes his culpability in creating this malevolent force because of the way he punished him. Justifiably, for a period of time in his mind; Caliban tried to rape his daughter, so he came down on him. He didn't kill him, but turned him into a slave and makes him do these menial tasks for him that Prospero himself admits that we can't do without. He makes our fire; he fetches our wood. He does all these things that Prospero is not used to doing that actually serve us. So I think that's for me become a moment where he catches himself. These two guys belong to you, but this *thing of darkness*? I always found it interesting that Shakespeare, a very deliberate writer, puts that at the end of a line—*this thing of darkness* is at the end of a verse line where you can have a little pause before *I acknowledge mine*. I think it might even be at the *I: this thing of darkness I* (pause) *acknowledge mine*. You find a rhythm that makes sense to you. But I think that's a moment where Prospero has to realize that he's culpable for what has happened to Caliban. There's a private moment that Melisa and I find afterward that's not something rehearsed. These things you find in performance that make moments work and we found them with each other—oh, that's what that's about, and that's partly why we do it—and after that moment, I turn away from Caliban. I turn to look at her and, these are tricky things to talk about—you don't want to jinx them onstage—but I look at her and I realize that she's standing there with Ferdinand and she's going to be okay. She's going to be all right, and it's an internal

moment for the actor that allows me to get to the next moment, which is about forgiving him. Those are the things that we look for in rehearsal and in performance that I call “lining up the gun sights.” You want to get everything lined up so you can find your way through the show and that things make sense in spite of all the contradictions that human beings are capable of embodying. That’s that moment for me, but I’m not sure how that plays for you about the *thing of darkness*. I mean we’ve never talked about it, it just kind of happened.

Jones: No, we haven’t, and certainly I think for Caliban, all he’s known, at least recently—again, since the rape—is this place of subjugation and suffering at the hand of Prospero, and so him thinking about what happened to me after this tempted moment with Miranda, what he did to me, what will he do now that he knows I tried to kill him? It’s going to be ten times worse. That’s where my head is, and the fact that there is this compassion and forgiveness coming from him at the end of that moment where it seems like he’s going to come down on me, it’s such a huge surprise and shock and I do I think Caliban’s not quite sure how to take it because it’s a tenderness he hasn’t seen for years, since the thing happened. So it’s something strange. He takes it, accepts it, and he’s grateful that he’s not being pinched to death, then goes off with the fools. I think my resolution of that moment ends up happening off stage as he’s trying to put the pieces together. What was that about? What’s going on? Did these people have something to do with it? But Shakespeare doesn’t give me any lines, so it is non-verbally that I come to some type of resolution off stage.

Pereyra: After Caliban is offered that kindness and forgiveness by Prospero, he speaks such beautiful things. You just have those two or three lines that you say . . .

Jones: He says, “As you seek my pardon trim it handsomely,” and I say, “Aye, that I will, and I will seek for grace hereafter.”

Pereyra: Yes, “and I will seek for grace.” It’s the first time that the language Miranda has taught him is being used to say something nice, and at the end of the day it’s going to be okay. That is so powerful to me to watch Prospero not only call him his own, but also if Caliban’s his own, then we’re like brothers—very dysfunctional family here, right? Then when he says, “I will seek for grace,” that is all he ever had to do. If he had done that from the beginning, then maybe things would have been different. That is one of those great, small, really fast, fast moments that Shakespeare puts in there, where it’s going to be all right. It’s very

powerful for Miranda to watch, even though I'm not directly a part of it.

Flachmann: Thank you. Other questions or comments?

Question: This is for Henry. Why does Prospero have such an affinity for the magic arts? And what's his relationship to his magic at the point . . . ?

Woronicz: There was a great history in the time of understanding the time of the Magus. The Magus was a kind of white magician: philosophers, people who were trying to turn lead into gold, the alchemist and things like that. It was an interest in those magical arts that were not necessarily dark arts. They were positive arts. We get the impression that Prospero got interested in his books; he says early on, "These became my study." He talks about these certain arts that I got interested in, other-worldly things and things that are ephemeral. His fascination with Ariel is the fact that she's air, but also this manifested energy. There's something about her, and that's the connection we find when she says she can feel. I just want to see if I can feel her, but he doesn't want to break the spell. It becomes the secret, the journey. He's interested in these larger ideas, and I think that's part of the dramaticity in the play. He's gotten so far outside himself, he's forgotten what the self is. And I think that connects to the second part of your question that he's done all these things, and he goes into some big things that he's done. He's rifted Joe's oak; he's raised thunderbolts; and he's even raised the dead. This gets into Biblical metaphors and allusions, but he says, "Whatever the rough magic is, there's something rough." It's a great phrase, rough magic. He's going to give it up, and there's a release in that about letting it go and getting back to just living in the world. He's going to retire to Milan, "my Milan." I'm going to my Milan and I'm going to think about getting ready for being dead. The moment of giving it up is letting go. It's symbolic of letting go of the revenge and all the things he's been holding on to for twelve years.

Question: Fred, talk about your daughter you lost in marriage. You're never going to see her again.

Stone: That's right, I've lost my daughter. That's true, I lost my daughter as well. I don't know what else to say about that.

Question: How do you see the character dealing with loss? Alonso dealing with loss of his son? Prospero looking at the loss of Miranda to Ferdinand, the loss of Caliban, the loss of Ariel. Ariel's looking at the loss of Prospero, Caliban's lost his mother, lost Miranda, lost Prospero. How do you think—

Worontcz: We're all on a lost island. That's a tricky question or that's a hard question to answer because that's the journey of the play. We are all dealing with things that we let go of. And how do I think I'm dealing with it? I'm dealing with it the best I can in terms of working my way through what the play tells me I'm giving up. Now all those different qualities of loss are different colors of loss because her loss is actually gaining a sense of wonder, getting back to what she wants to be. "To the elements be free." And she goes. And the last thing he says to her is, "Fare thou well." And that's where she wants to be. My loss—and then I'll shut up—is a loss that's been coming for some time. The loss of Miranda is a joyous loss because it's getting her taken care of. Those Elizabethans and Jacobean are all tuned into those dynastic marriages. You've got to line it up, and that's partly what he's doing. He's finding the young prince that he's going to marry his princess daughter to and, as Alonso says, "I would they were King and Queen of Naples," but you don't know what's going to happen. That's a happy loss for him but it's also, there's a line from the *Desiderata* that says "Surrender gracefully the things of youth." If we can do that, we've got it made, right? We're talking about our knees and our hips, our grey hairs and everything. All the beautiful young people we see rollicking through life and they just don't get it. They just don't get it. But that's a loss that's part of the actor's job. I'm fifty-eight years old, so it's no surprise to me that most of my life is behind me and so to get a role like Prospero, you're learning. DaVinci said, "All this time I thought I was learning how to live, but I was learning how to die." And that's what we are all doing, we're learning to let go.

Parrett: I would just like to add, there is an element of loss for me because, yes, all I've wanted through the entire play—I want my freedom, I'm going to do this for you. Did I do it well? But it's also about acceptance, and as the play progresses, Ariel you did this great, you did this great, and then it comes to the moment that you are going to be free. And I think that even though I'm a spirit, what does that mean? I'm released to the elements. So this moment, at the end, I can say, "Yes, I got what I wanted; I'm free now," but I think that just as much as he relied on me, I relied on him for a feeling of purpose. So for me it is difficult. It is a loss as well, but it's barely touched on and then I'm blown away. I'm happy in the air blowing over Disneyland!

Stone: What was the question again? How do I deal with my loss? Not very well, but it's so joyous at the end when I find

my son and I'm restored, and I think that's a whole change and reformation. I've already talked about the loss.

Flachmann: We have time perhaps for one more brilliant question.

Question: What did Shakespeare actors think about...

Woronicz: Is the show going to be over before the pub closes? I think that was a lot of it. Who knows, there are historical accounts of actors talking about acting and we hear things through Shakespeare's plays about how they might have felt about stuff. It's hard to say. Again we can go back to full circle, start where we started. We like to project what they might be thinking. I'm sure they had these same kinds of discussions to some degree. I mean they didn't have Stanislavsky's training and the idea of a fourth wall would have been ridiculous to them because there's a thousand people standing in front of them that they are not going to talk to. And I think their playing style was quicker. They probably didn't have deep discussions about what this play was about mainly because they had about four or five days of rehearsal. And imagine doing *Hamlet* with four or five days of rehearsal and then you did *Henry VI* the next day and then you did *Richard II* the next day and then you did *Hamlet* again and then you did *Henry IV*. They would have about nineteen or twenty plays in their heads at any one time, so it's hard to say what they would have in terms of discussions. But a good friend of mine who is the Director of Education at the Globe Theatre in London, Patrick Spottiswoode, guarantees that the actors would sit around the pub talking about their characters because that is what they still do.

Flachmann: Last question.

Question (for Melinda Parrett, whose matinee performance as Reno Sweeny in Cole Porter's *Anything Goes* ended less than three hours before *The Tempest* began): How did you manage physically to do a whole day's worth? Then what is your Shakespeare background?

Parrett: I grew up dancing. I started dancing when I was eight. That was my background until I was probably eighteen or nineteen, and I was in dance companies. Somewhere along the way, I started speaking and singing. It wasn't actually until I went to a performing arts conservatory where I touched on Shakespeare, and all of the exposure I had to it was in studio work. I had never done main stage Shakespeare until I came here and they told me I was playing Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew*. I consider this my training. I am a professional actor, but I've learned more about myself working here because people just say, you are going to do

this, and I say, well, if you think I can do it, then I'm going to find a way to do it. But as far as the physical, that's been a real treat because I'm able to go back into what I feel really comfortable doing, and that's in my body and not so much in speech. This is why I have such wonderful people I work with to learn from every day. It's been a nice melding of experience, a real treat.

Flachmann: Thank you. What a wonderful round table. We thank the actors for spending so much time with us this morning, and we particularly thank you Wooden O scholars and Shakespeare lovers for coming to the festival and supporting this wonderful place. Thanks.