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“YES WE WILL”: The International Shakespeare Festival in Craiova as a powerful factor of cultural interaction

Торкут Н., Дейнека С. “YES WE WILL”: Міжнародний Шекспірівський фестиваль у Крайові як потужний чинник культурної взаємодії.

Стаття присвячена Міжнародному Шекспірівському фестивалю в Крайові, що розглядається як потужний інструмент формування спільноти, впливовий каталізатор творчих експериментів театральних митців і важливий чинник шекспірознавчого дискурсу.

Автори простежують історію ритуалізованих форм вшанування Шекспіра – від ювілею в Стретфордї, організованого Девідом Гарріком у 1769 році, – до започаткування традиції проведення Крайовського фестивалю, ініційованого видатним румунським актором Емілем Борогіною у 1994 році. Постає Шекспіра, що задає надвисоку планку художньої досконалості, постає також як універсальний інструмент зміцнення міжнародних контактів між театрами, культурними інституціями та шекспірознавцями з різних країн.

Фестиваль, що відбувся у Крайові 16–26 травня 2024 року, продемонстрував свій потужний вплив у різних сферах суспільного життя, а також здатність мистецьких культурних практик формувати міжнародні спільноти, об'єднані спільними цінностями та усвідомленням ролі мистецтва у протистоянні тоталітаризму, жорстокості та насильству.

У статті проаналізована структурна й організаційна модель Крайовського Шекспірівського фестивалю, який став впливовою мультимедійною культурною подією, що поєднує театральні вистави, вуличні святкування, урочисті церемонії та академічний дискурс. Ця модель виявила свою ефективність як у стимулюванні мистецьких експериментів, так і в переосмисленні міського простору, зміцненні міжнародних театральних зв'язків та просуванні культурної дипломатії. Крайовський Шекспірівський фестиваль продемонстрував сталі зацікавлення

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творчістю Шекспіра в глобальному світі та спроможність театру бути впливовим агентом культурної спадкоємності й новаторства.

Ключові слова: Шекспір, Фестиваль, Крайова, розбудова спільноти, театральні вистави, академічний дискурс, міський простір, міждисциплінарний діалог, інтермедіальні студії, міжкультурний обмін.

The tradition of Shakespeare theatre festivals has a long and productive history. Its origins date back to the famous Shakespeare Jubilee, organised and held in Stratford-upon-Avon in September 1769 by the English director and actor David Garrick (1717–1779).¹ The well-known contemporary Shakespearean scholar Peter Holland, who considers this public event to be one of the landmark events associated with the commemoration of Shakespeare, suggests that the word ‘jubilee’ was chosen by David Garrick and the local authorities with a certain far-reaching goal.² By sacralising the figure of the world-famous playwright in this way, the festival organisers hoped to launch a pilgrimage to Stratford for his admirers, which to some extent was similar to the religious practice of pilgrimages to Rome. Such pilgrimages took place in the years of Jubilees proclaimed by the Christian church.³

The Stratford Jubilee of 1769 bore little resemblance to the festivals of later times: it included a festive procession of Shakespearean characters, which was cancelled due to heavy rain, and did not include theatrical performances at all. Nevertheless, it was the solemn event that brought representatives of the cultural elite of the time from all over the world to the provincial town where William Shakespeare was born. The scale of the celebration and the focus of all its elements (the grand opening with shots from thirty cannons, church bells, a festive dinner, the unveiling of the monument, etc.) on the glorification of the genius playwright give reason to consider the anniversary a kind of harbinger of future festivals.

¹ David Garrick (1717–1779) became famous for his successful performance in the title role in Shakespeare's historical play *Richard III* (1741) as well as for his active work to honour the Bard himself and promote his creative legacy. For more information about this outstanding personality, see: Stochholm J. Garrick's Folly: The Shakespeare Jubilee of 1769 at Stratford and Drury Lane. New York : Barnes & Noble Inc., 1964; Tankard P. The Stratford Jubilee. *Facts and Inventions: Selections from the Journalism of James Boswell*. New Haven : Yale University Press, 2014. P. 17–34; Holland P. David Garrick: Saints, Temples and Jubilees. *Actes des congrès de la Société française Shakespeare*. 33. 2015. P. 1–18.

² Holland P. Op. cit.

³ This tradition was initiated by Pope Boniface VIII, who called the year 1300 the Jubilee year and proclaimed that anyone who made a pilgrimage to Rome during this year would be exempt from punishment for their sins.

The tradition of grand celebrations to commemorate the Bard was renewed in the early nineteenth century: in 1816, to honour the bicentenary of the playwright's death, soldiers of the local garrison staged an amateur performance of *Hamlet* in the Danish town of Helsingør (Elsinore), which later became an annual practice. At the beginning of the twentieth century, professional acting troupes began to come to the Danish Kronborg Castle to perform *Hamlet*, turning this iconic location into a Shakespeare festival.

In 1830, a group of enthusiasts, united in the so-called 'Mulberry Club', launched the annual April Shakespeare festivals, which were held until 1836. This cultural tradition was later picked up by Frank Benson (1858–1939), an actor and manager of the Lyceum Theatre in London, who organised twenty-eight spring and six summer Shakespeare festivals in Stratford between 1888 and 1919.

In 1893, the Bard's hometown revived the tradition of solemn parades, the first of which took place as part of the Shakespeare anniversary of 1769, initiated by David Garrick. Students of Stratford's Edward VI School marched through the streets of the city to the Holy Trinity Church and laid flowers on Shakespeare's grave. Nowadays, the tradition of crowded parades involving city residents and guests has become an essential element of the annual Shakespearean celebrations that take place in Stratford-upon-Avon in April.⁴

At the end of the nineteenth century, William Poel (1852–1934) founded the Elizabethan Stage Society (1895), whose activities inspired Angus L. Bowmer, an American actor, to found the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (1935). Today, the largest number of theatre festivals whose names include Shakespeare's name are held in the United States, confirming the words of the American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson, who called the English Renaissance genius 'the father of the American man'.⁵

As for the European continent, numerous countries including Great Britain (in cities such as London, York, Bath, Bristol, Cambridge, Liverpool, Stratford-upon-Avon, etc.), France (Nice), Germany (Neuss), Poland (Gdańsk), Spain (Barcelona), Italy (Verona), Czech Republic (Prague, Ostrava), Armenia (Yerevan),

⁴ For more information on Shakespeare's forms of commemoration, see: Торкут Н. М. Святування Шекспірівських днів у Стретфорд-на-Ейвоні: історія, традиція, сучасність. *Іноземна філологія. Вісник Київського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка*. Вип. 1 (54). 2023. С. 46–58.

⁵ Emerson R. W. *Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson* / Ed. R. E. Spiller and A. R. Ferguson.. Cambridge, Mass. : Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 1971. Vol. 1. P. 66.

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Denmark (Helsingør (Elsinore)), etc., have their own Shakespearean festivals. The popularity of Shakespeare Festivals all over the world is caused not only by the ability of Shakespeare's genius to serve as a *perpetuum mobile* of theatre experiments but by several benefits of urban festivals themselves. According to Faivre D'Arcier, these benefits include the following: a potential for the democratization of cultural participation, the forging of social connections and identities (e.g. neighbourhoods), economic opportunities, tourism and image enhancement, and unique artistic and cultural value.⁶

The International Shakespeare Festival in Craiova (Romania), founded thirty years ago, is rightly considered one of the most powerful in the world today – and currently the largest. It is this festival, which plays an extremely important role in theatre life and sets a high standard for the organisation of such cultural and artistic events, that we are focusing on in this article, which is relevant because of the need for analytical reflection and dissemination of the extremely valuable Craiova experience. For several years, Ukrainian Shakespeare scholars who had visited the CISF since 2010 discussed the possibility of creating a Shakespeare festival in Ukraine, and in 2024, this dream came true. The detailed description and analysis of the Romanian colleagues' achievements will be of use to develop the structural and organisational model of the Ukrainian Shakespeare Festival.

Shakespeare festivals have repeatedly attracted the attention of scholars, as evidenced by numerous works, including the collective monograph *Shakespeare on the European Festival Stages* edited by Nicoleta Cinpoș, Florence March and Paul Prescott,⁷ articles by Nicoleta Cinpoș,⁸ Janice Valls-Russell,⁹ Lawrence Guntner,¹⁰ Jacek Fabiszak, Marta Gibińska, Jan Grzanka, Wojciech Kieler, Anna Kowalcze-Pawlik, Ewa Nawrocka.¹¹ Nataliya Torkut,¹² Maiia

⁶ Faivre D'Arcier B. *The Future of European Festivals. Festivals in Focus* / Ed. D. Klaic. Budapest : Central European University Press, 2014. P. 114–116.

⁷ *Shakespeare on the European Festival Stages* / Eds. Cinpoș N., March F., Prescott P. London : Bloomsbury, 2022.

⁸ Cinpoș N. "So our virtues / Lie in the interpretation of the time": The Royal Shakespeare Company Rome Season (2017). *This Treasure of Theatre* / Eds. Marta Gibińska et al. Gdańsk : Słowo/Obraz Terytoria, 2020. P. 88–102.

⁹ Cinpoș N., Valls-Russell J. Prologue: Viewing and Reviewing "Planet Shakespeare" (Craiova, 23 April – 6 May 2018). *Cahiers Élisabéthains*. 2019. P. 51–55.

¹⁰ Cinpoș N., Guntner L., Valls-Russell J. Play Review: A Midsummer Night's Dream, an itinerant performance, directed by Philip Parr... *Cahiers Élisabéthains*. 2019. P. 94–96.

¹¹ Fabiszak J., Gibińska M., Grzanka J., Kieler W., Kowalcze-Pawlik A., Nawrocka E. *Reminiscencie Festiwalowe. 23 Festiwal Szekspirowski. T. 1. 2019.*

¹² Торкут Н. М. Шекспірівські театральні фестивалі в Європі: історія і сучасність. *Просценіум*. 2016. № 1–3(44–46). С. 80–85.

Harbuziuk, Oksana Sobol (in co-authorship with Nataliya Torkut),¹³ Daria Moskvitina¹⁴ and Bohdan Korneliuk (in co-authorship with Daria Moskvitina).¹⁵ In particular, these works, as well as the anniversary edition *Shakestivalling in Craiova* by Nicoleta Cinpoes and Sorin Cazacu,¹⁶ reflect the history of Shakespeare festivals in Europe.

This year's Shakespeare Festival in Craiova (16–26 May 2024) demonstrated the power of resonance in various spheres of public life and the ability of cultural and artistic projects to form international communities united by values and awareness of the role of art in opposing barbarism, aggression, and totalitarianism.

The aim of this article is to outline the structural and organisational model of the Shakespeare Festival and to identify those features of the Craiova Festival that determine its outstanding role in the modern world festival tradition, turning it into a powerful platform for cultural interaction. Being a contribution to the intermedial studies, this publication can be of interest for those who study theatrical representation of Shakespeare on the world stage, the history of the Festivals movement, and theatre practitioners.

The tradition of Shakespeare festivals in Craiova was initiated by Romanian actor Emil Boroghina back in 1994. Emil Boroghina, who is a famous Romanian actor, was the former manager of the “Marin Sorescu” National Theatre, Craiova, and founder of the Craiova International Shakespeare Festival. Thanks to his immense creative energy and enthusiasm, Emil Boroghina managed to unite the efforts of different structures, foundations, and sponsors in order to launch this huge cultural initiative. As Nicoleta Cinpoes and Sorin Cazacu mention, the Craiova festival can be seen “as a ‘vehicle for performance-based cultural expression, regeneration, and social inclusion’ (Johanson 2020:55) that has reconfigured, beneficially and at times somewhat disruptively, its urban home, the Romanian theatrical landscape and international Shakespeare production”.¹⁷

¹³ Torkut N., Harbuziuk M., Sobol O. Shakespeare Festivals as a Medium of Value. *Transfer of European Values in Ukrainian Education: Challenges and Frontiers*. Lviv–Toruń : Liha-Pres, 2021. P. 159–173; Люк М. На гостину до Шекспіра... в Румунію! (Нотатки з Шекспірівського фестивалю 2018 р. у м. Крайова, Румунія). *Просценіум*. 2018. Вип. 50–51. С. 53.

¹⁴ Москвітін Д. Шекспірівська столиця Східної Європи: Конференція Європейської асоціації дослідників Шекспіра у Гданську. *Ренесансні студії*. 2018. Вип. 29–30. С. 255–259.

¹⁵ Москвітін Д., Корнелюк Б. 9-й Міжнародний шекспірівський театральний фестиваль у м. Крайова. *Ренесансні студії*. 2015. Вип. 23–24. С. 297–305.

¹⁶ Cinpoes N., Cazacu S. *Shakestivalling in Craiova (1994–2024)*. Craiova : Editura UNIVERSITARIA, 2024.

¹⁷ Ibid. P. 9.

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From the very beginning, the organisers (the “Marin Sorescu” National Theatre and the Shakespeare Theatre Foundation) clearly understood the significance of their project for the public life of the nation: after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the overthrow of the pro-Kremlin dictator Ceaușescu, Romania needed to understand its own history, and theatre was able to offer such an understanding, acting as a tool for healing collective trauma. The role of such type of cultural enterprises in the public space was emphasised by Chalcraft and Magaudda who claimed that ‘festivals can be seen and analysed as terrains where different cultural, aesthetic and political patterns and values temporarily converge and clash, constantly creating, stabilizing and redefining the setting of festival interaction’.¹⁸ The choice of Shakespeare as a key figure was not accidental: it is noted in the programme of the First International Shakespeare Festival in Craiova that “as actors test their mettle by doing Shakespeare, so do theatres.”¹⁹

As history has demonstrated, the Craiova Festival not only successfully fulfilled its own functions, stimulating the development of theatre and popularising Shakespeare's work in Romania, but also contributed to strengthening international contacts between theatres, cultural institutions, and Shakespearean communities from different countries. The first 1994 festival opened with Cheek by Jowl's *As You Like It*, then it was followed by five Romanian productions. Also among the organisers, there were the Romanian Ministry of Culture, the British Council, the Romanian-British Cultural Programme NOROC as well as regional and local sponsors.²⁰ In 1997 apart from Romanian theatres, there were also plays from Yugoslavia, Slovenia, Moldova, alongside with some cinema adaptations from France. As for the international support, it was from the French Cultural Service and Alliance Française in Romania (alongside regional and local support). Subsequent festivals have been marked by the presence of an increasing number of foreign theatre companies, famous actors and directors, and in 2006 the UNESCO Chair of the International Theatre Institute organised the training workshops for the theatre students from all around the world.²¹

¹⁸ Chalcraft J., Magaudda P. “Space is the Place”: The Global Localities of the Sónar and WOMAD Music Festivals. *Festivals and the Cultural Public Sphere* / Eds. L. Giorgi, M. Sassatelli and G. Delanty. Abingdon : Routledge, 2011. P. 174.

¹⁹ Craiova International Shakespeare Festival Programme, 1994. P. 6.

²⁰ Cinpoș N., Cazacu S. P. 15.

²¹ Ibid. P. 21.

This expansion of the festival's geography created a fertile ground for mutual enrichment of the theatrical experience for representatives of different national traditions, for expanding the area of mutually beneficial creative dialogue, and helped to create an environment in which young theatre practitioners could join the world's artistic trends and gain new knowledge. This turned the festival venues of Craiova into a propitious space for creative experiments, for exploring new methods, and for incubating fresh ideas.

The CISF had a significant impact on re-imagining the urban space. It mobilized the city authorities and sponsors to improve the infrastructure of the existing Craiova's theatres and create several theatrical spots, and specially designed performance sites where Shakespeare's plays were staged. The changes that have been taking place in Craiova since the establishment of the Shakespeare Festival tradition prove Marjana Johansson's observation that "Festivals have undoubtedly come to occupy significant positions in national, regional and local cultural policy and promotion strategies..."²² The fact that this Shakespeare Festival was launched not in Bucharest, the capital of Romania, but in a provincial town in the South-West of the country was quite symptomatic. Nicoleta Cinpoes and Sorin Cazacu claim that "Its location outside Bucharest was crucial to earning the 'province' cultural capital by devolving arts funding away from the capital and encouraging more investment in theatres across the country".²³ Although Craiova did not have such a locational (spatial) correlation with the Bard's creative work as Stratford-upon-Avon, Verona, or Helsingør, the festival made it a kind of Shakespearean landmark for Romania. This set an example for non-capital cities in other countries: for example, in Ukraine, the first Shakespeare festival was held on 17-23 June 2024 in Ivano-Frankivsk, a picturesque Carpathian city on the banks of the Bystrytsia River.

Another feature of the CISF, which testifies to its high socio-cultural significance, is its ability to perform the community-making function. In this context, it is worth quoting a keen metaphorical observation of Rosabeth Moss Kanter, who states that "Communities need both magnets and glue. They must have magnets that attract a flow of external resources – new people or companies – to expand skills, broaden horizons, and hold up a comparative mirror against

²² Johansson M. City Festivals and Festival Cities. *The Cambridge Companion to International Theatre Festivals* / Ed. Knowles R. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2020. P. 55.

²³ Cinpoes N., Cazacu S. P. 20.

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world standards. The flow might involve customers, outside investors, foreign companies, students, or business travellers. Communities also need social glue – a way to bring people together to define the common good, create joint plans, and identify strategies that benefit a wide range of people and organizations’ and in the case of festivals, the ‘glue’ are leaders whose festival spirit and experience brings people together to strategize and devise joint plans that effect social cohesion”.²⁴ Commenting on Rosabeth Moss Kanter’s brilliant metaphor, Nicoleta Cinpoș argues that “For many theatre critics and festival consumers, the Craiova National was *‘the magnet’* and Emil Boroghină *‘the glue’*; together, they ensured the entity and community of the Shakespeare Festival as a cultural act no longer viewed as local but as national”.²⁵

In 2024, the Craiova Festival celebrated its 30-th anniversary, gathering both those who were standing at its roots, participating in its preceding activities, and newcomers. This year's Festival was organised by the Shakespeare Theatre Foundation (Craiova), the “Marin Sorescu” National Theatre (Craiova), and the ‘I. L. Caragiale’ National University of Theatre and Film (Bucharest).

Similarly to previous years, the festival brought together cultural figures (theatre representatives, musicians, artists, fashion designers, writers) and experts in Shakespearean studies and theatre criticism, making it an outstanding event for theatre lovers and admirers of William Shakespeare’s work.

One of the distinctive features of the Craiova Shakespeare Festival is that since 2010 its programme has included not only productions, concerts, street performances, and exhibitions, but also a surprisingly powerful and multidisciplinary academic component. Initiated by Nicoleta Cinpoș, it gained ESRA status immediately as the key event and best forum for developing performance criticism practices in Shakespeare studies and beyond. Renamed the ESRA Shakespeare in Performance Seminar as a permanent event at the CISF, the series of scientific and educational events of the festival aims to create an academic environment in which the dialogue between theatre practitioners who interpret Shakespeare on stage and

²⁴ Cited by Cinpoș N., Cazacu S. P. 20–21.

²⁵ Ibid. P. 21. For more information, see: Kanter R. M. Thriving Locally in the Global Economy. *Harvard Business Review*. 2003. Vol. 81. P. 127.

those who work with his texts as researchers or translators opens up new horizons of understanding the depths of Shakespeare's word.²⁶

Cinpoș and Cazacu argue at length that "The Festival has been the partner, home, laboratory, inspiration, collaborator and champion of performance criticism research in and as practice: a place where academics have enjoyed international dialogue not only with one another but with the theatre artists who have made illuminating guest appearances at seminars the day after the performances under consideration. This unique working mode, taking place at the heart of a festival which cherishes the play as book as the play as performance, has stimulated cutting-edge work on Shakespeare staged and adapted, translated and taught".²⁷

The opening ceremony of this year's festival took place in the foyer of the "Marin Sorescu" National Theatre on 16 May 2024, where four thematic exhibitions were presented to the audience. The photography exhibition "International Shakespeare Festival at 30 Years Old" highlighted the most crucial events in the history of this landmark event not only for Romania but also for the world cultural community. Two book expositions "Shakespeare and the European Canon. National Geniuses, Universal Geniuses" and "Craiova International Shakespeare Festival and Its Books" were aimed at demonstrating how extensive the library of world classics is in foreign language translations, including Romanian, what place the English Renaissance playwright occupies among the classics of world literature and what role he plays as a central figure in the festival movement. The exhibition of Elizabethan costumes invited participants and guests of the Festival to the magnificent world of Renaissance theatre and showed them the scenery, decor, and props created by means of innovative technologies.

The Festival programme included four components: theatre performances, academic events, fringe activities and ceremonies. Each of the components was an important constituent and an organic part of the whole concept, making it possible to fulfil the various functions of the Festival under the banner of the 2024 edition: Communities create festivals.

²⁶ For more information see: Торкут Н., Дейнека С. Міжнародний шекспірівський фестиваль у Румунії. *Слово і час*. 2024. Вип. 4. С. 118–119. URL: https://il-journal.com/index.php/journal/issue/view/242/full%20issue_4.

²⁷ Cinpoș N., Cazacu S. P. 46.

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The theatrical component of the festival began with *The Tempest*, directed by Robert Wilson (Ivan Vazov National Theatre, Bulgaria), which created a unique atmosphere of festive theatricality. In total, over 180 theatre productions, concerts, street performances, etc. were staged during the festival. For 10 days, theatres from Argentina, Bulgaria, Canada, Hong Kong, France, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Moldova, Poland, Romania, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom performed on the theatre stages of Craiova.

Among the guests were both world-famous directors with their performances and young creators of theatrical productions of Shakespeare's works. *Tempest Project* (directed by Peter Brook and completed by Marie-Hélène Estienne, France), *Short Shakespeare – As You Like It*, *Short Shakespeare – Twelfth Night* and *Short Shakespeare – Macbeth* (directed by Philip Parr, UK), *Hamlet* (directed by Declan Donnellan, UK), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (directed by Kelly Hunter, UK), *Hamlet, The Dance of The Melancholic* (directed by Jesús Herrera, Spain) and *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (directed by Robert Lepage, Canada) made an incredibly powerful impression on the audience.

With great interest and sincere enthusiasm, the audience greeted the play *Romeo and Juliet. Drame per musica* by the outstanding Ukrainian director Rostyslav Derzhypilskyi, presented by the Ivan Franko National Academic Drama Theatre in Ivano-Frankivsk. The post-apocalyptic production by the Frankivsk team was surprisingly original in its concept of stage space – site specific to their home city. As Nicoleta Cinpoș remarked in the discussion after the production on 26 May 2024, recasting the space completely (taking the auditorium seats out and turning the space into a cavernous underworld for the promenade first half then restricting their mobility by seating them on the stage proper), it managed innovatively given that they were confined to the traditional Italian Box space in Casa de Cultura a Studentilor. It drew the audience into a whirlwind of dramatic events that unfolded against the symbolic backdrop of Hell (Part 1) and Purgatory (Part 2) and ended with a tragic realisation of collective guilt for the ruined lives of young lovers.²⁸

²⁸ For more information about this performance, see: Torkut N., Shchukina Y. *Romeo and Juliet. Drame per musica* dir. by The Ivan Franko National Academic Drama Theater in Ivano-Frankivsk (review). *Shakespeare Bulletin*. 2024. Vol. 42. No. 4, P. 534–538.

Thus, the theatrical masterpieces gave the audience immense aesthetic pleasure and much food for thought. Kelly Hunter's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was staged twice: first it was a usual performance, and next it was followed by a show for autistic people and their families, which was extremely heart-warming. During the festival, there were rather traditional, Shakespeare-based performances, such as *King Lear*, directed by Mihai Țărnă (Moldova), as well as the combination of Shakespeare's play with other authors, e.g. *Macbeth*, directed by Mihai Țărnă, includes some elements of Eugène Ionesco's *Macbett*. Various theatrical contexts were the source of intertextuality, which stimulated creative experiments.

Every day, the European Shakespeare Research Association (ESRA) Shakespeare in Performance seminar series conducted seminars and panel discussions to debate performances and present new research related to both the Bard's work and the festival. The following performances were discussed with particular interest: *Hamlet* (dir. Declan Donnellan, UK), *Richard II* (dir. Kochi Yamato, Japan), *Hamlet, The Dance of The Melancholic* (dir. Jesús Herrera, Spain) and *Romeo and Juliet. Drame per musica* (dir. Rostyslav Derzhypilskyi, Ukraine), as well as adaptations of the tragedies *Macbeth* and *King Lear* (dir. Mihai Țărnă, Moldova). The discussions were also attended by the creators of the plays, including director Mihai Țărnă (Moldova), director Kelly Hunter (UK), Jesús Herrera (Spain), and Rostyslav Derzhypilskyi (Ukraine). An important part of the festival was the solemn ceremonies, such as the awarding of honorary doctorate titles of the 'I. L. Caragiale' National University of Theatre and Film Bucharest to director Declan Donnellan and theatre designer Nick Ormerod, and to the veteran theatre critic John Elsom, and the awarding of honorary doctorate title of the University of Craiova to Professor Nicoleta Cinpoș.

It is impossible to overestimate Nicoleta Cinpoș's contribution to the organisation and conduct of the Festival and the European Shakespeare Festival Movement in general. Her considerable authority in Shakespearean scholarly circles and her profound knowledge of Shakespeare's works enabled the creation of a unique model of academic communication within the framework of the Craiova Shakespeare Festival. This model made it possible, during post-performance discussions, to integrate the insights of literary scholars, theatre theorists, and theatre practitioners from different

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countries. In this context, an interdisciplinary lens for analysing Shakespearean productions was formed, which, on the one hand, fostered a mutually enriching exchange of experience across various dimensions (historical-literary, textual, theatre studies, aesthetic, socio-cultural, etc.), and on the other hand, promoted fruitful exchange between dramatists/theatre practitioners and literary academics. As a result of the long-lasting exchange and successful implementation of this model into the framework of the Craiova International Shakespeare Festival, the space of communication between representatives of academic Shakespeare studies and theatre practitioners has been significantly expanded since the seminar series' inception, in 2010. This, in turn has contributed to the loosening of disciplinary boundaries and to a deeper understanding of the cognitive potential of Shakespeare's plays, as well as the epistemological and aesthetic productivity of their theatrical representations.

The festival featured 18 presentations of books related to the Bard and his contemporaries, theatre performances and film adaptations, and various national experiences of Shakespearean festivals. On 17 May, the participants and guests of the festival were presented with a monograph-album (in separate volumes in Romanian and English) *Purcărete and Boroghină – National Theatre Craiova. Pilgrims in the Great Theatre of the World* by Ludmila Patlanjoglu. Also, there was a presentation of the book by Alexandru Olaru entitled *Shakespeare and Dramatic Psychiatry – 3rd edition* as well as the book *Furtuna/O Baro Brişind*, published by MJM. On 18 May, the festival guests got acquainted with the album by Mihaela Marin *Silviu Purcărete. Infinite Metamorphoses*, and on 19 May, all the present had the opportunity to learn more about the books *The Actor and the Space* by Declan Donnellan and *Hamlet – Theatrical Kaleidoscope* by Andy Lavender. On 20 May, the director of the National Museum of Romanian Literature, Ioan Cristescu, presented the book *George Banu. On Departure*.

On 21 May, a celebration was held to mark the publication of two books which are of significant value for both Shakespeare Festival movement and Inter-medial Shakespeare Studies. The bilingual edition *Shakestivalling in Craiova: 1994–2024* by Nicoleta Cinpoş and Sorin Cazacu highlights the distinctive development of the Shakespeare Festival in Craiova against the backdrop of pivotal events in national history of Romania, explores its conceptual foundations and its role in placing Craiova on the global

Shakespearean map. The book, which is richly illustrated with photographs, production stills, and performance posters, also includes testimonies from Shakespeare scholars who were invited to the festival over the years and shared their impressions.

The book *Shakespeare: the man who pays the rent* by Dame Judy Dench was presented to the festival audience by Sir Stanley Wells, one of the highest authorities in the world of Shakespeare studies and life-long friend of the actress. The book introduces the reader into the world of cinema and research, it helps to discover interesting facts that the actress, who played different roles in Shakespearean plays, generously shares with the reader. Among the speakers at this presentation moderated by Octavian Saiu were such famous Shakespeare scholars as Paul Edmondson, Michael Dobson, Nicoleta Cinpoș. The attendees watched a video message by Dame Judy Dench, a famous Shakespearean actress who has won the Oscar, the Tony and the Olivier awards. In the video she told the history of this book and discovered the secret of its title rooted in her family's context. Judy Dench has been playing roles of Shakespeare heroines for over seventy years, and thanks to his dramas she improved not only her professional skills but also financial status. Judy's husband, Michael Williams, who was also a famous actor, humorously called the Bard "the man who pays the rent". Thus, these very words show the respectful attitude of the actors towards the Renaissance playwright and the everlasting topicality of his works.

On 22 May, there were presentations of books devoted to particular works of Shakespeare by Adrian Papahagi, such as *Pericles*, *Cymbeline* and *The Tempest* (Part I), *Troilus and Cressida* and *Timon of Athens* (Part II), and *King John* and *Richard II* (Part III), as well as Shakespeare's *Sonnets* translated by Adrian Vasiliu. Another important presentation dealt with the books of translations of Shakespeare's contemporaries, in particular, Ben Johnson, Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene and George Peel, and aroused great interest. On 23 May, the audience was presented with the books *Hamlet in the Imperative* by Oliver Py, *Shakespeare, Goldoni, Brecht* by Giorgio Strehler, and *Accompanying Richard III* by Mugur Arvunescu. On 24 May, the presentation of the original edition of *Shakespeare's Works in Braille*, which consists of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, took place. This book was compiled and published with the direct participation of the Romanian Association of the Blind. On the same day, Stephen Greenblatt's book *Tyrant – Shakespeare on Politics*

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was presented. On 25 May, there was a discussion of Corneliu Dumitriu's book *Shakespeare's Theatre* and Silviu Cristian Mirescu's photo album *With Emil Boroghina Strolling in Nicolae Romanescu Park*. On 26 May, there was a discussion of the books by Simona Hodos *Romano-Canadian Theatre. Cultural Exchanges, Management Strategies* and Cosmin Vasilescu's *Robert Lepage and the Theatre of Images. Needles and Opium*.

Thus, we can conclude that the presentations of the Shakespeare-centered books proved to be a significant component of the Festival structure. The range of printed materials was quite broad, including albums with visual and informative content, scholarly monographs by renowned researchers and theatre practitioners, as well as Renaissance studies. Notably, Romanian-English bilingual editions and works by Romanian Shakespeare scholars held an important place among the presented books, which demonstrates Romania's significant role in global Shakespeare studies and active intercultural dialogue. This component of Festival structure enlarges the general vision of Bard's universe and stimulates the Festival attendees' interest towards the published production of the Shakespeare industry.

The academic component of the festival also included lectures by renowned Shakespeare scholars. For example, Dr Christy Carson's lecture *The (Hi)Story of a Shakespeare Festival: Stratford, Ontario, 1953–2023* aroused great interest among the audience, and the lecture by Boika Sokolova, Kirilka Stavreva and Yavor Gardev on the stage history of *The Merchant of Venice* was the subject of a lively discussion. The organisational and global challenges of holding festivals were highlighted at a panel discussion *Festivals (and) Sustainability*, which was attended by, among others, the President of the European Shakespeare Festivals Network Foundation, director Philip Parr, Director of the Shakespeare Institute at the University of Birmingham, Professor Michael Dobson, director and artistic director of the Flute Theatre, Member of the Order of the British Empire, Kelly Hunter, as well as directors of other European Shakespeare Festivals with decades of experience – Vlad Dragulescu (Craiova), Joanna Sniezko Misterek (Gdansk) – as well as aspiring new festival managers – Mihai Țărnă (Moldova), Iryna Chuzhynova (Ukraine) and two representatives of the Spanish festival aiming to reopen after a 10-year gap (Barcelona). At this event, Deputy General Director and Artistic Director of the Ivan Franko National Academic Drama

Theatre in Ivano-Frankivsk, PhD in Art History Iryna Chuzhynova and Head of the Ukrainian Shakespeare Centre, Professor Nataliya Torkut expressed their gratitude to the world theatre and Shakespearean communities for supporting the first international Shakespeare festival in Ukraine, which was planned and then successfully held between 17–23 June 2024 in Ivano-Frankivsk.

The Ukrainian Shakespeare Festival (directed by Taras Shevchenko National Prize winner, People's Artist of Ukraine Rostyslav Derzhypilskyi, General Director and Artistic Director of the Ivan Franko National Academic Drama Theatre in Ivano-Frankivsk) was a large-scale cultural event, significant not only for Ukrainian theatre and Shakespearean studies, but also for our country as a whole, as it took place during a full-scale war.²⁹ Undoubtedly, this festival deserves a separate systematic study, both in Shakespearean and theatre studies.³⁰ For now, we would like to emphasise that the experience of the Shakespeare Festival in Craiova proved to be extremely valuable for the organisation of the festival in Ivano-Frankivsk. It is impossible to overestimate the role of foreign colleagues – Nicoleta Cinpoes, Michael Dobson, Philip Parr, Sorin Cazacu, Ema Vyroubalova, Anna Kowalcze-Pawlik and theatre groups from Italy, Moldova, Poland, who joined the organisation and delivery of the Ukrainian Shakespeare Festival.

Conclusion.

The Craiova Shakespeare Festival structural model, which includes theatre performances, fringe activities, solemn ceremonies, and an academic part, proved to be fruitful and promoted mutual enrichment and cultural dialogue between literary scholars and theatre practitioners from different countries. As there were more than 200 thousand visitors from 30 countries of the world, the role of the Festival organisational scheme turned crucial. The scheme aimed at and succeeded in attracting substantial investments from local and domestic enterprises, as well as significant financial support from global enterprises and international businesses, alongside the major investment from the local council (1

²⁹ For more information about the First Shakespeare Festival in Ukraine, see: Торкут Н., Дейнека С. Перший міжнародний шекспірівський фестиваль в Україні. *Слово і час*. 2024. Вип. 6. С. 117–118. URL: https://il-journal.com/index.php/journal/issue/view/244/pdf_6_24.

³⁰ Reviews of the theatre productions at the First Shakespeare Festival in Ukraine, see: Shakespeare Bulletin. 2024. Vol. 42. No. 4. URL: https://muse.jhu.edu/issue/53960/print#info_wrap. Also forthcoming is a full volume dedicated to Ukrainian Shakespeare which includes work on the history of Shakespeareana as well as contemporary practices – *Multicultural Shakespeare* special guest volume (2025) entitled *Shakespeare Shelter*, curated by Nicoleta Cinpoes and Imke Lichterfeld.

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million euros). Involving all the theatre buildings and numerous scenes around the city enabled the Festival participants to perform different shows simultaneously at different venues, and gave the spectators space to choose from the wide variety of events to attend. Such a well-thought-out structural and organisational model, together with a meticulously planned framework, made it possible to fulfil the various functions of the Festival on the highest level. Apart from inspiring the theatrical progress in Romania, it promoted the enhancement of international connections between theatrical societies, global cultural organisations, and Shakespeare enthusiasts. The Festival has grown, over its 30 years of existence, to enable intensive mutual enrichment of the theatrical experience of representatives of different national traditions and brings together different cultural agents, such as theatre practitioners (directors, actors, musicians, artists, fashion designers etc), scholarly community (experts in Shakespearean and theatre studies, translators, University staff and students etc.), theatre critics and mass-media specialists (reporters, journalists, reviewers, media analysts etc.). It had a significant impact on the re-imagining of urban space, performed the community-making function, and became an outstanding event for theatre lovers and admirers of William Shakespeare from around the world.

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