“London and the London Theatre Scene”
Field Trip, 18-22 May 2008

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Jonathan Munby’s production of A Midsummer Night's Dream premiered at the Globe on May 10, 2008. Theatre critics Ms. Leiter and Ms. Pingist were among the first to experience Shakespeare's magical world. They accepted the invitation to talk to The Guardian in an exclusive interview.

G: Thank you for your time. You've been reviewing theatre productions for several years now and your opinion is highly regarded. There's been a lot of hype over this production. Is the hype justified and did the performance live up to your expectations?
L: It's always fantastic to watch a play at the Globe – not even airplanes, bad weather or the fact that most of the audience has to stand for nearly three hours can take away from the experience. However, if a production is as outstanding as Jonathan Munby's, then it's truly a thrill.

G: What makes the production so outstanding?
P: Well, all actors are perfectly cast. The Athenian lovers Oliver Boot, Christopher Brandon, Pippa Nixon and Laura Rogers are so convincing in their roles, they have the entire audience sympathizing with them. Tom Mannion and Siobhan Redmond, who took on the hard task of playing two characters each throughout the whole play, act brilliantly in both roles. However, thanks to the mechanicals, especially Bottom, who was superbly played by Paul Hunter, this production of A Midsummer Night's Dream will become a favourite with audiences.

G: Would you mind telling us about the staging, scenery and costumes?
L: No, not at all. The stage scenery and the props were kept to a minimum to resemble the way the plays were staged in Shakespeare’s time. What really left an impression on us was the way the designer worked with the colours. The play began on a bare dark blue stage with the characters dressed in black; the costumes in a way mirrored an ordered, civilized world. On the other hand, once the play moved into the woods, the lovers were dressed in green and orange tones, the fairies in bright pink, purple and blue – and the stage was decorated with pink roses. At the back of the stage there was a blue backdrop, which at the end of the scene was pulled over the heads of the groundlings, distracting viewers from the scene change...
on stage. The stage itself extended to both sides of the audience, so that the characters were not limited to entering and exiting the stage only through the back. It also gave the audience the feeling of being closer to the action. We both thought this was clever staging. At the end of the play, during the wedding ceremony, the entire cast was dressed in white. Again this contrasted with the previous scenes in the woods. The colour now represented harmony and the restoration of order. Whenever there was a scene change it took place through music and dances, so in a way it was incorporated into the play.

G: That sounds very interesting. What can you tell us about humor in the play?

P: Well, it's simply hilariously staged. That is thanks to Jonathan Munby because he added props not mentioned in the book. We do not want to reveal too much, but just to give you an example: in one of the scenes, in order to stress Snout's boredom, Snout is eating a cookie, while an excited Quince is handing out roles for the play. In a different scene the audience has to laugh when fake eyes are pulled out of a lover's head so that the flower's liquid can be dribbled onto them. The audience also laughed about the characters’ exaggerated gestures and expressions or sexual references; for instance, the long duration of the kiss between Pyramus and Thisbe or Titania’s extreme infatuation with Bottom.

However, the interlude at the end of the play was the best part. It had the whole audience screaming with laughter. The mechanicals were playing their parts in a very witty manner - Quince taking his role very seriously while the other characters were enjoying themselves. For comic effect, the wall talked with a lack of enthusiasm and Pyramus’ staged death lasted a few minutes. He needed extra time to stab every part of his body until he finally castrated himself – a scene, like so many others, rewarded with roaring applause. In fact, judging by the continuous laughs and applause from the audience throughout the entire performance we can say that we were definitely not the only ones who enjoyed the play.

G: Once again, thank you for your time and this exclusive insight into the play!

A Midsummer Night's Dream will be playing at the Globe until October 4th. For tickets and further information, please visit: www.shakespeares-globe.uk.

Jenna Leiter / Daniela Pingist

The British Museum

The British Museum is located in the Bloomsbury area and with its 54.600 m² of exhibition space it is the largest museum in Britain. It is the home of a comprehensive collection of art and antiquities – more than 13 million objects in total. These have come from all over the world and cover different periods of time, from ancient Egypt, to Rome, Greece, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East as well as modern Europe. Admission to the Museum is free, only special exhibitions require an entrance fee. It is therefore not surprising that over four million visitors from all over the world flock into the museum every year. However, it is far too spacious to see everything in one day; we doubt that even a week would be sufficient.

The best known exhibit is the Rosetta Stone. It was discovered during Napoleon’s campaign in Egypt in 1799 but came into British hands shortly afterwards. The stone played a
key role in the decipherment of hieroglyphic writing. Moreover, it can be said that this very stone disclosed thousands of years of human history. In addition, hundreds of breathtaking objects from ancient Egypt may be admired in the museum. The uniqueness of the exhibits makes this section a must and also explains the huge crowd wandering around between coffins, mummies and sculptures.

Another important and astonishing object which the British Museum is famous for is the Lindow Man, though it was on loan in Manchester at the time we visited the museum. An exhibit which currently causes some problems is the Parthenon. Greece is anxious to regain the Parthenon sculptures, which were removed from Athens by the British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire in 1801. The British Museum argues that the ambassador acted with full permission and also points out that more people have access to the sculptures if they remain in London. The case is far from being closed, as Athens is currently building a museum with the express purpose to exhibit the sculptures there.

As regards the different services the Museum provides to guide visitors through the various exhibition spaces the audio tours have to be mentioned. An even better opportunity are the free tours during which knowledgeable guides briefly introduce different areas of the museum. Moreover, the museum organizes various family activities and special programmes for school classes.

To conclude, the British Museum is a great and cheap way to explore the past and get some glimpses of the lifestyles and traditions of former cultures. Our most important advice is to take your time and choose what you want to see. Otherwise you will be completely lost in the fascinating and enormously grand British Museum.

Jenna Hirschl & Andreas Gahlleitner

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**The Birthday Party**

by Harold Pinter

Harold Pinter’s play *The Birthday Party* was staged at the Lyric Hammersmith in London in May 2008 with the following cast: Justin Salinger as Stan, Sheila Hancock as Meg, Nicholas Woodeson as Goldberg, Lloyd Hutchinson as McCann, Alan Williams as Petey, and Sian Brooke as Lulu.

Outlining the play’s plot is not an easy task. As it is a *comedy of menace*, it deals with power games, fear and violence. The characters and their roles remain fragmented throughout the play. Furthermore, the dialogue is funny and witty at times, but the context alters its meaning and makes it absolutely horrible. In the opening scene, we get to know Meg, an elderly housewife, and her husband Petey, who seem to lead a very quiet life at the seaside. Their tenant Stanley, a seemingly morose young artist, is the only diversion for Meg from her daily routine. All this changes when two gentlemen arrive. At first it seems as if Goldberg and McCann were two businessmen who just needed accommodation. After some time it turns out, however, that they have come in order to collect Stanley. During and after his birthday party, he is subjected to a gunfire of cross-examination and breaks down in the end.

Exactly 50 years after its London premiere, Harold Pinter’s first full-length play *The Birthday Party* is staged again. The reviews this time stand in complete contrast to the ones of 1958, when the play closed after only eight performances. Giving it a four-out-of-five star rating, *The Guardian* journalist Michael Billington praises the production with the words: “We may have learned much about Pinter in the 50 years since the play was first performed. But Farr gives the
play the best possible birthday party by conveying the dislocating oddity that so disturbed its original critics” (See http://www.lyric.co.uk/pl330reviews.html).

The mood of the play is emphasised by the set. The walls are dark, with the tapestry coming off, the light effects are stunning, and the total absence of music makes the atmosphere unpleasant. The long pauses, for which Pinter is famous, seem even longer. Meg (Sheila Hancock) sends shivers down our spines as she lives out her mother-son relationship with the neurotic tenant Stan, a relationship not free of sexual undertones as she both babies him and flirts with him shamelessly. Justin Salinger gives a fantastic interpretation of the troubled Stan throughout the whole play, and the only person who seems to keep his sanity is the quiet landlord Petey, played by Alan Williams. He is the silent observer, until at last Stan, totally altered in personality and appearance, is forced to leave the boarding house with Goldberg and McCann. The only active interference on Petey’s part is a piece of advice at the end: “Don’t let them tell you what to do”. And so the play ends.

Mari Anne Kyllesdal & Katharina Hoff

*Never So Good*

To be honest, after reading the book, the whole weight lay on superstar Jeremy Irons’ shoulders to convince us of the play’s merits. How would he transform “Supermac” into a stage figure that would attract both those who still remembered old Macmillan and younger spectators who would not?

The show at the Lyttelton theatre was booked out. The audience held their breath for a moment. Then Jeremy Irons walked on and addressed the audience as a Macmillan who needed no further explanation. People who had not known Macmillan in real life knew him then. They got carried away by his manners, attitudes and behaviour. In an interview with the BBC, Jeremy Irons had suggested that Macmillan’s wife was in love with her husband despite her affair with Bob Boothby. What seemed to be inconceivable became quite plausible on stage due to the convincing performance of Anna Chancellor. The conflict was touching. It seemed to be difficult to digest that Supermac did not care about his wife’s adultery but the intense dialogues between husband and wife shed light on their relationship: she loved him and he knew that.

Leaving aside this romantic view of their marriage, there was only a woman who defined herself through her male counterparts. In the end we cannot disavow the fact that Dorothy was attracted to power too.

Pyrotechnics gave the war scenes a frightening immediacy. The heat could be felt even in the back rows. Were those special effects necessary? The answer is yes. They left the audience feeling uneasy and agitated but also brought them closer to the reality of the play. All their senses were involved.

Laughter burst out in the theatre when Winston Churchill explained his views on the world or when Macmillan referred to Peter Cook and the famous radio comedy programme *Beyond the Fringe*. Differences in technical development on stage, like the telephone, made the difference in the power relations between Britain and the US visible. The audience was by then already suspicious about the US sharing their nuclear power plans with Britain.

Phone calls between the British Prime Minister and the US President always had a comic edge though dealing with entirely serious topics like the Suez crisis. If the aim was to bring politicians down to earth and closer to the audience, this goal was achieved elegantly.
Young Macmillan complemented Irons’ performance excellently, being on stage with him all the time. Applause grew frantic when Jeremy Irons took his curtain call. It was only then that the superstar reappeared, with a smile on his face. We had forgotten about him. For two and a half hours it had been Supermac who had given us a lesson in history, or rather, “his story”.

Esther Wöckinger & Szofia Forgo

**Theatre, vintage 1888, successful, vital, flexible, direct and honest, is looking for an audience to spend delightful hours**

Although I do not attract that much attention by my appearance, I will certainly surprise you, once you get to know me better. That is not to say that I am not good looking; in fact my exterior combines the charisma of the British red brick-tradition with a touch of free Italianate ornamental charm. Face lifting and various other plastic surgery procedures between 1997 and 2000 have made me look decades younger and now I feel full of energy and I can proudly state that I am in the prime of my life!

My CV is just as unconventional as my outward appearance: I was born in 1888 and baptised “The Royal Court Theatre”. Until 1932, the stage was my source of success and joy, but then I passed through a midlife crisis that lasted until 1935. First, I turned my back on everything. Then I experimented with cinema for several years until I finally realized in 1952 that I was really destined to be a theatre. Nevertheless, I have always been trying out different styles on stage, from social criticism to neo-socialism, from humanism to politics. Having overcome my financial problems of the 1970s, I am now once more living through an experimental period, staging young, angry and noisy plays. As you can see, I am open for new ideas and I don’t hesitate to try out new things!

Theatre is my passion - especially new and contemporary plays. I always try to discover and support new, young playwriting talents who have a passion for writing and who have something to say. I also sponsor good friends when they stage their productions abroad.

If you are young, creative and interested in theatre or playwriting, I’ll be the perfect match for you! Just check me out! I’d like to see you in my Café Bar, where the natural light pours through glass pavement blocks. That’s the special atmosphere I’d like to share with you... Of course I’d like you to take out a subscription in order to see me regularly, but I’m not adverse to one-night stands either! You can even bring along your friends! 😊

If you are interested, just contact me!

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Barbara Schwarzenbacher & Eveline Koren
**Pen and Paper Through the Ages**

Red brick buildings are nothing extraordinary in the City of London. One of them, however, is special. A tall gate bears its name in wrought iron – The British Library. Upon entering the courtyard, the visitor beholds a statue, and no standard specimen at that. It shows Isaac Newton in an unusual pose – bent over, wearing glasses and handling a pair of compasses with utmost concentration. Not quite what one is used to from busts or paintings depicting the famous scientist.

After a quick search of bags at the entrance, one steps into the vast entrance hall which is a far cry from the cramped and stuffy confines conjured up by the image of a stereotypical library. High ceilings, excellent lighting and a few pieces of artwork are combined with information notices, computers and the first eye-catcher, a metal seat formed like an oversized book opened in the middle.

The centre of the entrance hall is dominated by the King’s Library, which contains numerous rows of old books in shelves over ten metres high. It is not open to the public, but one can glimpse the spines of the books because the outer walls are made of glass. The reading rooms require a reading pass, which is why visitors can ‘only’ enter the exhibition room. However, this part of the library fully compensates for the areas one is not allowed to enter. Containing dozens of literary jewels from nearly all corners of the world, it offers a breathtaking display of antique and rare texts in languages from Old English to Tamil about topics ranging from natural history to religion. It is difficult to determine what is the most impressive exhibit since there are so many which capture the visitor’s attention. The musically inclined can marvel at originals of sheet music including works of Bach, Beethoven and the Beatles, amongst others. Fans of geography will find ancient maps of places near and far. Those who are looking for works by famous authors will not be disappointed either, with exhibits ranging from a page from the only surviving copy of *Beowulf* to Lewis Carroll’s autograph of *Alice’s Adventures Under Ground*. We could go on about all the wondrous things that are to be seen there, but there is really nothing that surpasses the experience of having only a few centimetres (and a pane of glass) between yourself and a much-admired masterpiece. To sum up, a visit to the British Library is a great experience for a broad range of people interested in anything from history or literature to basically any topic one can think of, as well as for those who simply enjoy books.

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Katharina Jurik & Maria Valencia Cuberos
Dear Andrew and Phil,

west end whingers and composers of the highly interesting review on *Tinderbox* on westendwhingers.wordpress.com,

I have recently read your views on *Tinderbox* and as I am myself part of the cast, I feel obliged to put your review into perspective. Especially, since I played one of the most significant roles, was on stage throughout the whole performance and gained a thorough understanding of what was really going on. If you do not know by now who I am, you must have missed an essential part of the play: yes, I am the juicy and rosy raw piece of meat, Danielle, the pork chop! You may think that I must have been rotten, but you are wrong. I am taking my role absolutely seriously and I am not letting myself go. And neither do the other actors, which brings me to my first point.

I completely share your opinion on Sheridan Smith, that “she’s a treat - funny and lovable as ever” and I have to admit that I fell in love with her performance of Vanessa as well. I know that I am doing a great job lying around there, simply looking delicious, but I can definitely not make up for the shallow humour of Lucy Kirkwood’s script. Sheridan, however, can do so. With “little bits of ‘business’”, as you state, like spitting, playing the trumpet, or acting Lady Hamilton out of one of Vanessa’s early pornographic movies *Fellatio Nelson*, she wins occasional laughs from the audience almost singlehandedly – in contrast to Jamie Foreman and Brian Dick as Saul and Perchik, whose performance sometimes seems exaggerated and slightly unconvincing, and was almost outshone by Sheridan’s brilliance. I would even go so far as to that she is the most outstanding thing in *Tinderbox*.

You are also right as far as the length of the play is concerned. Even though I find myself in a pretty comfortable place throughout the two and a half hours, I agree that it is unreasonable to demand from the audience to sit patiently on those incredibly uncomfortable benches for such a long time. Moreover, if they had shortened the to-ing and fro-ing in the end, it could have really been as fast and wild as the theatre management itself described it.

Another point on which I agree with you is that “derivative would be a generous way of putting it.” Lucy Kirkwood is a young playwright, and it is obvious that she has made an effort to create an innovative and catching play, however, the result simply appears to be a mediocre imitation of *Sweeney Todd*. There are some absurd, but funny ideas about a dystopian future, such as Cornwall being sold off to the Chinese or the ban on bananas, but on the whole it is Sheridan Smith and from time to time the other actors who earn the laughter and not the script.

So what I actually want to put straight, as I mostly agree with your criticism, is that you should definitely have paid more attention to the meat on stage. Yes, Sheridan did a great job and,
yes, Lucy Kirkwood has come up with some absurd ideas about a dystopian future, but do you not think that using real raw meat, which, by the way, has been beautifully arranged on a fake counter, is the most exciting and innovative thing that you have ever seen in a play? I advise you to consider this carefully. If you have finally understood what I am trying to tell you and have grasped the whole significance of the involvement of meat, you are always welcome to contact me. But you better be quick. I look tremendously delicious and who knows…?

Yours,
Danielle
(The “lone and very convincing pork chop,” as you call me in your review, which, besides, I am taking as a compliment.)

Here is the link to the review we are referring to in our text:
http://westendwhingers.wordpress.com/2008/05/07/review-tinderbox-bush-theatre/

Tanja Meissinger & Katrin Waldhart

Oxford Street

If there is one single location that absolutely everyone of our group paid an individual (and extensive) visit, it must be Oxford Street. ‘Oxford Street’, however, was not only one of the very first places we explored on our London Field Trip, but it was also the title of our final play in London.

Staged at the Royal Court Theatre, which is renowned for its experimental productions, it turned out to be completely different from the three plays we had previously seen. Upon entering the auditorium you felt as if you were entering a London disco rather than a theatre hall. Roaring pop and hip-hop music could be heard coming out of the speakers as you walked in. We were seated on white plastic stools (which were, of course, less comfortable than conventional seats) right at the edge of the stage, with the actors running around us all the time. The lights were not dimmed when the actors changed the set between the acts; one could even watch the leading character, Kofi, undress and put on new clothes…

Regarding the play itself, our expectations were quite low, since various reviews had emphasized that Levi David Addai, the playwright, had omitted any kind of plot development. After seeing the extraordinary performance by Jeremy Irons at the National Theatre and the brilliant production of Harold Pinter’s The Birthday Party, we were definitely ready for anything. The reviews of Oxford Street had claimed that ‘a lorry-load of laughs’ without ‘much of a plot’ was awaiting us. And indeed the play turned out to be full of hilarious jokes (especially those by Cyril Nri’s character Emmanuel, who added a lot of ‘comic relief’ to the show within the rather simple storyline of a ‘martyr’ accused of a crime he had not committed.

It is the story of Kofi, a self-sacrificing security guard (euphemistically referred to as ‘loss prevention officer’ ;-) at a sports shop on Oxford Street, who, instead of betraying his old schoolmate who attempted to steal from the shop, takes on the responsibility for the crime himself – and consequently loses his job. After telling his ‘would-be lover’ Loraina that one day he would tell her the truth about what had happened and that she would understand him, the play abruptly ends – which left many of us wondering, ‘Is this just the break, or is it really over?’
The sudden and unexpected ending of the play, however, was soon forgotten when we discovered Kristian Kiehling (a German actor who played a minor role in the play) after the performance outside the theatre. Just as Bottom had evidently been the secret star of the production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at the Globe, Kristian Kiehling was the ‘Oxford Street’ Robbie Williams that impressed (at least) the girls of our group most of all. Kristian also added a heart and a kiss when giving autographs (see the facsimile attached) – and many a heart was broken that night…

Quoting what our Isabella immediately said after Kristian had left: ‘When he ran his fingers through his hair… oh my God, that was so exciting… I’ve never been that childish since I was 15… I’m gonna dream of him tonight’ – to which Gunda, who shared the room with her, replied, ‘but dream of him silently, please’ ;-)

And so, in the end, everyone had found something they particularly liked about *Oxford Street*: some may have enjoyed the characters’ funny repartees; linguists may have been mesmerized by the variety of different accents; those who found the play utterly boring (since ‘nothing really exciting happens’) and said that most of the time they kept on thinking how they’d rather be in the bar downstairs, sitting in a conventional way in a comfortable chair, were at least excited about having seen Harold Pinter in front of the Royal Court; and others (in particular the girls) were simply fascinated by the play’s only German actor. The lack of a ‘happy ending in the play’ was thus turned into a ‘happy ending after the play’… So whatever it was that attracted us – *Oxford Street* was definitely worth a visit.

Lisa Aponte & Dieter Huber & Ivana Marijanovic

**The Royal National Theatre**

It is a warm and sunny day and we are strolling along the Thames, enjoying London’s wonderful atmosphere. Suddenly a huge concrete block catches our eyes and we remember Prince Charles talking about “a clever way of building a nuclear power station in the middle of London without anyone objecting”. At first glance, one might think Prince Charles was right but when we take a closer look at the Royal National Theatre, it turns out to be a fascinating location.

Since we were booked for the backstage tour, we decided to explore the whole area around the theatre before. The atmosphere, loaded with cultural vibes, was amazing and totally catching. It seems as if people just go there to enjoy themselves in the many cafés and bars even if they do not have tickets for any of the plays. After having experienced this feeling of cultural liveliness at the outside, we were quite curious what the Royal National Theatre had to offer backstage. A nice, young and enthusiastic tour guide welcomed us and after some introductory words, she started taking us around.
Our first stop was the *Olivier Theatre*, the biggest of the three auditoria. The huge empty theatre with all its purple seats was an impressive sight, even more so after getting some insider information about it. Normally, technical details are not particularly fascinating, but in this case they were really interesting and showed the theatre’s sophisticated construction. At first sight, the auditorium resembles a Greek amphitheatre, but the angle of the *Olivier* is not 180°, but only 118°, as the architect did not want the audience to face each other at any point so they would not get distracted. Furthermore, a human being’s field of vision is 118°, although women, as the tour guide told us with a broad grin on her face, may command broader views. Moreover, the stage is very impressive. With the crane construction in the tower above the stage you could lift and move around a double-decker bus. Furthermore, the revolving stage helps to carry out dramatic and fluid scene changes.

Then we moved on to the *Lyttleton*, which is the more traditional auditorium with its conventional proscenium arch stage. To be blunt, the *Lyttelton* looks quite ugly with its brown velvet seats, but even this was intended as the audience shouldn’t be enchanted by the decor and should concentrate on the actors and events on stage.

Our final destination was the *Cottesloe*, which originally was a rehearsal room and opened a year after the *Lyttleton*. In contrast to the two other theatres, it has its own identity and different facilities. It doesn’t have any technical extras, however, it profits from its flexibility as the seats can be moved around and arranged in any possible way. For example, the space was once turned into a pub where actors and audience could mingle. It is new writing and experimental work in particular that is shown in the *Cottesloe*.

Apart from the three auditoria, which were really impressive, we were fascinated by all these little details you would never think of while sitting in the audience, such as fake food made out of latex in order not to have to buy, for example, fresh fruit over and over again. To simulate whiskey, actors don’t use apple juice as one might think, but gravy with water so that they do not pour it down so quickly and really look as if they were drinking whiskey. Moreover, when doing executions on stage, designers make sure that the plastic head has got the right weight so that it falls and rolls like a real one. All of us were really impressed by the care devoted to all these tiny details and after having heard all this, we saw the play (*Never So Good*) from a different point of view and enjoyed it even more.

After the play and the backstage tour we really appreciated the Royal National Theatre with all its sophisticated details, primarily the inside and the character of the building. However, when we left, its beautifully illuminated façade at night made us fall in love also with the outside.

Gunda Weiss & Isabella Greifeneder
Tuesday was a busy day. There was so much going on at the Southbank that I could not (as usual) enjoy crumbs and all the other bits and pieces Londoners and tourists leave behind for my pigeon friends and me. Tremendous excitement was in the air, as the shooting for a movie was going on, starring Dustin Hoffmann and Emma Thompson, and crowds of people gathered around the film set. Since I am not such a big film fan and rather prefer watching a play on stage, the wind swayed me to Shakespeare’s Globe.

On my flights I often pass the Globe Theatre and although I have stopped at this beautiful theatre numerous times before, its charm is always striking. On Tuesday I heard that drums were beating loudly, which usually announces the opening of a play, and so I decided to stop and have a rest up on the thatched roof. Whenever I am at the Globe Theatre I feel like being taken back to Shakespearean times. In my opinion, the designers did an excellent job in reconstructing this impressive and unique building.

Taking a glance at the yard and the galleries I could observe a great variety of visitors among the audience, all enthusiastically following the performance of Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream. I can consider myself extremely lucky that the Globe is an open-air theatre and therefore my kind can also enjoy a play every now and then. Although the play had already started there were still some latecomers who were ushered to their places by the extraordinarily friendly and helpful stewards. The stage itself reaches into the yard and so the groundlings are very close to the action. The audience experienced the coming and going of various characters; what was even more fantastic was that some actors were so close to the spectators that they could see their facial expressions at close range and realised that the actors are at one with the characters they play.
Not only did I enjoy watching the movement of the actors but also the changing of places that was going on among the groundlings. At times I also flew from one side to the other in order to see the performance from various angles and to get a better view of the wonderful stage design and the stunning props and costumes. It would have been exciting if I could have exchanged my coat for one of those beautiful pink and purple dresses. At first the groundlings seemed not to mind standing but as the play proceeded their feet were getting tired and I am sure that they would have preferred to swap places with someone sitting in the galleries. Compared to other London theatres the Globe Theatre offers its visitors the chance to sit or stand and enjoy a performance out in the fresh air. That afternoon London’s weather presented itself as rather fair, as a mixture of clouds and sun accompanied by some wind. From my perspective I can say that numerous flights of planes and helicopters distracted my attention and I could also notice some angry looks from other members of the audience. All in all I spent a lovely afternoon watching this magnificent performance at one of the most thrilling playhouses in London.

Valerie Aspöck & Karin Huber