

*Moving Shakespeare Indoors: Performance and Repertoire in the Jacobean Playhouse.* Andrew Gurr and Farah Karim-Cooper, eds.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. xiv + 284 pp. \$95.

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Indoor, private, or hall playhouses are under renewed and sustained focus by scholars of early modern drama. *Moving Shakespeare Indoors* sits squarely in the center of this critical crucible, presenting both provocative readings and summary overviews of important topics. Between three sections — “The Context of Hard Evidence,” “Materiality Indoors,” and “The New Fashions for Indoors” — the collection covers many of the major questions facing seventeenth-century theater history and drama studies (and introduces more along the way) in its varied discussions of “the material, social and economic conditions that made the Shakespeare company invest in two playhouses” and “the effects this had on the repertory after 1608” (2).

*Moving Shakespeare Indoors* asks whether a new repertory of plays attended the occupation of the Blackfriars; what the material, visual, and acoustic conditions at the playhouse were; how conditions affected repertory; and the effects of indoor playing on audiences, reception, and taste. The chapters broadly share “bold ways of reading these spaces and the plays performed within them” (12), though such unity disappears when it comes to finer details (including dates and terms). The chapters therefore underscore the diverse opinions and approaches that characterize current scholarship on indoor playing.

A number of the chapters draw on recent architectural, archival, and performance experience to offer valuable evidence and case studies (Greenfield, Jones, White). The first section in particular provides a welcome scholarly backdrop to the project of building Shakespeare’s Globe’s Sam Wanamaker Playhouse (SWP). Jon Greenfield’s (with assistance from Peter McCurdy) and Oliver Jones’s chapters explain how the team behind the playhouse used surviving examples as “prototypes” or “analogues” for an archetypal Jacobean theater: ceilings, decorative interiors, documentation, and sources including stage directions, court performances, and great houses. However, the collection does not explicitly offer a clear description of the project. Shakespeare’s Globe’s preferred term for the SWP, it is understood, is an “archetype” — and pointedly not a reconstruction — but chapters in the first section employ an array of terms: “simulacrum,” “ideal,” “archetype,” even “re-creation” (32). Alongside the hard evidence, some theoretical context to the project would bring welcome clarity.

The middle section assesses the materiality of indoor playing, ranging from acoustic and visual practices through audience proximity to cosmetics. Sarah Dustagheer’s wide-ranging overview of the Blackfriars’s “rich, materialistic vision” (137) is a compelling introduction to extraordinarily broad topics (acoustic and visual practices), which in the limit of one chapter feel contained within (in Ben Jonson’s image) the compass of a cheese trencher. Penelope Woods and Paul Menzer both entertain the proximity between audience and actor in a playhouse like the Blackfriars, and Woods offers an important historicization of what she calls the “theatrical in-between” (152). It is in chapters like Woods’s (also Tiffany Stern’s discussion of the Blackfriars’s “nostalgia” and Eleanor Collins’s exploration

of Caroline genres and female representation) that the collection feels most challenging and critically significant. Here, *Moving Shakespeare Indoors* allows a sustained focus on underresearched or undertheorized aspects of indoor playing. Elsewhere, chapters like Farah Karim-Cooper's exploration of cosmetics and Martin White's study of lighting present excellent introductions to major topics. White's exploration of the metaphorical and physical uses of light ends on a number of speculations about the differences between indoor and outdoor stagings in Jacobean England; these observations tease at a major issue in early modern drama studies (and current experiments), suggesting rich areas for further studies.

Indeed, many of the chapters in *Moving Shakespeare Indoors* leave tensions underexamined, not least the exact relationship between indoor and outdoor theaters that stage the same plays. Likewise, influential earlier boy players can risk being slightly obscured by an implicit focus on the King's Men as the be-all and start-all of indoor playing, though earlier performers are given space in several chapters. It is fitting, therefore, that the collection ends on Bart van Es's skeptical approach to a Blackfriars repertory. His chapter (which contentiously argues for Shakespeare's post-tragedy writerliness) looks beyond and before Shakespeare and draws into question many of the assumptions and suggestions surrounding early modern playing and repertory.

Taken together, these chapters leave a reader with more question marks, flickering like candles, over indoor playhouses. Yet that is in part the aim of a collection that promises "bold ways of reading these spaces," and the lively and provocative dialogue within and beyond the covers of *Moving Shakespeare Indoors* is, surely, more illuminating than scholarship that fades to black.

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