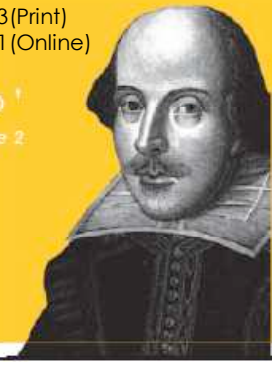




'Here's the book I sought for so'
Julius Caesar Act 4 Scene 2



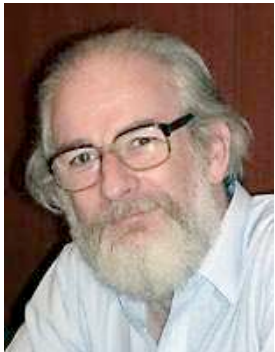
THE SHAKESPEARE BOOKSHOP

Issue 10 - March 2008

NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the tenth issue of The Shakespeare Bookshop Newsletter. As well as news and reviews of the latest Shakespeare titles and details of forthcoming literary events, we are very pleased to bring you an exclusive interview with linguist David Crystal about his literary career and his new book *'Think on My Words': Exploring Shakespeare's Language*. We are always looking at ways to improve the newsletter and its circulation. Please feel free to forward a copy to friends and colleagues who you think might like to read it, and if you have any ideas for future issues, or if you are not on our mailing list already and would like to subscribe, please get in touch with us by email at bookshop@shakespeare.org.uk. Best wishes, Will Sharpe (editor) Adam Sherratt (Bookshop manager)

Think on My Words **David Crystal talks to Will Sharpe in** **an exclusive Newsletter interview**



Former Professor of Linguistics at the University of Reading, and current Honorary Professor at the University of Wales, Bangor, **David Crystal** is one of the world's foremost authorities on human languages, and has published a staggeringly large number of books ("100 or so" according to his website) over a distinguished forty-year career. Though his publications span a very broad range of subjects, he has written many times on the English language specifically. In 2002, in collaboration with his son, Ben, he turned his attention to the language's greatest practitioner, and bequeathed to scholars and everyday readers alike the heroic and compendious reference work, ***Shakespeare's Words: A Glossary & Language Companion***, listing thousands of words and deftly teasing out their nuances of meaning with economy and precision. Now, with ***'Think On My Words': Exploring Shakespeare's Language***, David talks us through the mechanisms of Shakespeare's linguistic art, his grammar, his poetic brain, and the ways in which he manipulated ordinary words, his building blocks, into the breathtaking poetry we have before us today. In an exclusive Newsletter interview, he reflects on his literary career, on his love for languages, and, of course, for Shakespeare.

WS: To start with what I hope isn't a flippant question: your publication history really is extraordinary. Many academics wouldn't manage what you've achieved in several lifetimes. How have you found the time to produce so many books, many of which have become standard reference works on linguistics, English usage, teaching, learning, translation, and, now, on Shakespeare?

DC: I guess the answer could sound flippant too: it's what I do. I see myself first and foremost as a writer, and I spend every available moment writing. To allow that to happen, though, the sad thing is that I had to leave the full-time university world. I quit in 1984, just after the horrendous Thatcher-cuts period, when universities were being asked to slim down. The result of so many cuts was that those of us remaining had to do far more admin than before. The day I decided to leave was the day I had spent hours working out whether it was cheaper to send my speech therapy students to their clinics by bus or by train. I saved the university a few pounds, as a result - but nobody took account of the proportion of a professorial salary wasted on a secretarial task. The effect of leaving was immediate: my *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language* had been commissioned in 1980, and by 1984 I had written a few dozen pages only. By 1985 it was finished. But there is a second and much more important reason. Going independent doesn't eliminate admin, and this is where my wife Hilary comes in. She is also my business partner, and it is she who looks after all the financial side of my work, the liaison when it comes to lecture tours, and a thousand other things, leaving me the time to get on with the writing. We've done a few books together, too. She's a brilliant page designer, as is evident from the books we've produced on the

Franciscan missionary-poet John Bradburne. Putting it in university terms, she is a combination of registrar, bursar, housing officer, facilities manager and chief catering officer. It's a great partnership, and it explains a lot of my productivity.

WS: Perhaps you wouldn't mind explaining to our readers a little about the role of a linguist: what is involved in the study of linguistics, and when did your love affair with languages begin?

DC: Linguistics is simply the science of language - in other words, the attempt to study language as objectively, systematically, and comprehensively as possible. Linguists are interested in the 'how' of language - how everything happens, when we speak, write, or sign - and also in the 'why'. Why do words have the effect they have? Why are there regional accents? And, of course, why did Shakespeare write in the way he did? There are thousands of such questions - and the joy of linguistics is that the answers are always changing. In linguistics, tomorrow is always a new day, for the language will have changed since yesterday. So the most important thing, as I see it, is to establish the 'what', by describing language as fully as possible. What do people actually say and write? The amazing thing is that many areas of everyday language use have never been fully described - think of all the domains of the Internet, for example, or the new varieties of English evolving around the world. And the descriptions always bring surprises.

I became a linguist, I think, when I was three. I was brought up in Holyhead, and can remember being puzzled by the existence on the streets of a language I could not understand (our home language was English), and wanting to find out about it. Uncle Joe started to teach me, and in

school we got a great deal of Welsh, alongside English. I was fascinated by Latin too (I served Mass), and then later in secondary school there was French and Greek and more Latin, and at university there was Anglo-Saxon, Old Norse, and much more. Linguistics was the natural outcome, I suppose. But I've always been particularly interested in the English language and its history.

WS: What is your view on the way English is used today? I readily admit that my generation's grammar doesn't measure up to the taut perfection of my mother's, and many popular books like Lynne Truss's *Eats, Shoots and Leaves* bemoan the decline. Do you see a problem, and, if so, is it reversible?

DC: It's been a temporary problem. The latest generation of schoolkids is benefiting from the renewed interest in language (including grammar) which has come from the National Curriculum. I'm in schools or giving A-level days or talking to teachers dozens of times each year, and it's very clear that the period when you could leave school without any awareness of grammar at all is long over. Lynne Truss's book worked, because it spoke to the insecurities of the generations that had little or no formal language work in school, and it was very elegantly and humorously written, so I'm not surprised it did so well. I disapprove strongly of her 'zero tolerance' approach to language, though - but I've told that story in my *The Fight for English: How Language Pundits Ate, Shot, and Left!*

WS: Now, onto your work on Shakespeare. Firstly, I'd like to thank and congratulate you and Ben on *Shakespeare's Words*. It really is a unique and incredibly useful resource, though the sheer amount of work in it looks withering: what made you decide to take it on, and how long did it take the two of you to put it together?

DC: Well, thank you. It was actually Ben's idea. He was preparing for a production of a Shakespeare play in Lancaster and he rang me because he had found a word he didn't know and it wasn't explained in the notes of the edition he was using. I suggested he would find it in Onions, the Shakespeare glossary that was around at the time - but it wasn't there. Puzzled by this, I started to look for other 'difficult words', in the standard texts, and found that huge numbers were missing. Onions, you must remember, was writing at a time (early 1900s) when kids learned Latin in school routinely, and he assumed quite a high level of general knowledge

on the part of his readers. No need to explain what *contumely* means - everyone knows that! So we decided to start from scratch. We went through every play and poem and highlighted the words we thought were in some way different from modern English words. Ben highlighted more than I did - an interesting gloss on our respective generations. For example, I didn't highlight *Goth* because I said everyone knew who the Goths were. Yes he said, people who wear black eye make-up and black clothing. *Goths* went in!

The double perspective was hugely illuminating, for both of us (and thus, we hope, for the reader). For example, I did the philological work, checking on Early Modern English usage; Ben added a contextual perspective to each entry - every quotation has a 'who says what to whom' gloss, which is of course how an actor would see a word. The project took three years. What's in the book, of course, is only a part of the whole thing. It uses a selection of quotations to support each entry. If we had included all the quotations the book would have been three times the size. You can get at the entire database online, of course, at www.shakespeareswords.com

WS: You also found time to compile the *Shakespeare Miscellany*, which is very popular with our customers, and a real treasure-house of curios. Could you share with us a few of your memories of putting that together?

DC: Penguin wanted a general book to accompany their new editions of the plays, and a miscellany seemed a good way of getting a lot into a small space. Again, as with the other book, we played to our respective strengths. I hunted for material on language matters, Ben delved into innumerable books on acting and directing Shakespeare and on the theatrical world of Jacobethan England. We shared the task of presenting the basic facts and fictions about Shakespeare's life. We ended up with over 600 items, each typed on a separate piece of paper, which we laid out on my study floor in a long chain - a sort of storyboard. We then started to group these together to make pages - sometimes single themes, sometimes complementary themes. It took ages, especially as we had to make sure that a set of entries fitted the page exactly - no overmatter, no ugly spaces. Hilary's design abilities helped us here.

WS: Then, with *Pronouncing Shakespeare*, you made a foray into the world of theatre, collaborating with the Globe company on a production of *Troilus and Cressida* in

"original" pronunciation (OP). What was that like to work on, and how can we know what Shakespeare's company would have sounded like?

DC: It was *Romeo and Juliet* first, in 2004 - then *Troilus* in 2005. The collaboration was one of the most rewarding events I've ever participated in. Theatre is such an exciting world, in any case, and to have the opportunity to work at close quarters with two companies was enthralling - and on a project which I knew was a real first. Everything was a fresh experience - how easy would it be for the actors to learn the accent? how to teach it? what effect would it have on their approach to their parts? how would the audience take it? what insights would it add to our understanding of the plays? I've discussed all these questions in *Pronouncing Shakespeare*. And the experiment goes on - not at the Globe, where the interest in OP seems to have waned, but in other parts of the world. People watched our work with real fascination, and since 2005 there have been OP forays at the Blackfriars project in Virginia, in New York, and in a few other places. Introducing OP is one of the talks I find myself doing most frequently these days, and I rope Ben in to handle the examples, as often the effects are best perceived in dialogue. I've done an OP sonnets version for Will Sutton. US director Paul Meier is doing an OP presentation on his dialects website. And I expect there will be other OP productions in due course. How do we know? That's the question everyone immediately asks, and it's easy to answer. We study the rhymes and puns that don't work in modern English (like the last two lines of *Macbeth*) and deduce what the original sounds must have been like. We study the spellings of words in the Folio and Quartos and make deductions from that - spellings were a much closer reflection of pronunciation in those days. And, most important of all, we study the detailed descriptions that contemporaries made of how words were pronounced. People don't realise that there were several specialist studies of Elizabethan spelling and pronunciation written during the 16th and 17th centuries. They are enormously helpful. Combining all these sources results in an OP that I personally feel is pretty accurate - though there are inevitably words where you have to make an informed guess about how it sounded.

WS: Your new book, *Think On My Words*, is out this month. Could you tell our readers a little bit about what they can expect?

DC: I've been preparing for this book for ten years. Given the huge literary tradition surrounding Shakespeare, you have to prepare yourself properly. That means reviewing all the areas of language (sounds, spellings, punctuation, grammar, vocabulary, patterns of discourse), and finding something fresh to say about them. It took me a lot of time to think everything through. I had been asked to write an introductory book by two or three publishers during the 1990s and early 2000s (I was writing regularly on Shakespeare at the time, for *Around the Globe*), but I always said no, as I simply wasn't ready. The *Shakespeare's Words* project helped me get to grips with the texts - that's mainly about vocabulary, but it also included some material on grammar and discourse. And from 2000 I was helped by the appearance of some books written from a linguistic perspective - the first to appear for some time, such as Norman Blake's study of Shakespeare's grammar. Essays for some of Stanley Wells's publications (in particular, for the second edition of the *Oxford Complete Works*) gave me an opportunity to present my kind of approach and to get some valuable feedback. By 2004 I was nearly ready to write a book which distilled all this into something more systematic and comprehensive, but there was a big gap - I'd never looked at pronunciation in depth. The Globe project filled that gap, and took me two years. So, when *CUP* approached me in 2006 with the idea of an introductory book, I took a deep breath and said yes. It involved a bit more work than I expected - I suddenly realized that there were some gaps in my understanding of certain aspects of punctuation, for instance - so I had to do some fresh research. But it's done now, and I await the outcome with not a little trepidation!

WS: What do you think it is about Shakespeare's use of English that is so special?

DC: More than anyone else, Shakespeare teaches us how to dare, in using language. Linguistic innovation was a notable feature of Renaissance English, of course, but no-one has ever matched Shakespeare for creative uses of language, at all of the levels mentioned earlier. Illustrating this is one of the main themes of the new book.

WS: Has working on this new project been an education for you too? Has it forced you to think about Shakespeare's art in ways that have surprised you? For my part, there is no Shakespeare speech so familiar that does not

have the power to seem completely new-minted each time I encounter it.

DC: What surprises me, given the huge history of work on Shakespeare, is how much we still do not know, with respect to his use of language. Every time I do an article for *Around the Globe*, I discover something new. Every time I ask a word-frequency question of our computer database, I discover something new. The new technology has opened up extraordinary research perspectives. To take just one small but familiar example: the way he manipulates the choice between *thou* and *you* has long attracted attention, but there is still no thorough account of all the factors and effects in all the plays. And the numerous insights about the plays that I've gleaned from the OP work - puns I hadn't realized before (nor, I think, had most other people, for they are not mentioned in the notes to the editions - the *loins/lines* one in the prologue to *Romeo*, for instance) - regularly results in the new-minted effect that you mention. And from an OP point of view I have studied only a handful of plays. There is plenty left to explore.

WS: So what's next for you and Ben? Any more Shakespeare projects in the pipeline?

DC: Well Ben has his first solo production coming out in September of this year, *Shakespeare on Toast* - a book which aims to persuade people who have been turned off Shakespeare in the past by some bad experience, or who never got into him in the first place, to think again. He and I are still doing Shakespeare talks for schools, and we occasionally revive the performance pieces we did to publicise *Shakespeare's Words* and the *Miscellany*. But as of this moment I don't know what the next thing will be for me. It might be a new OP production. There'll be a talk to follow up *Think on my Words*, which I'll take around some of the shops and lifefests this year, starting with yourselves and then probably Hay. I don't know what will happen next. But I do know one thing: when Shakespeare gets hold of you, he doesn't let you go. So I hold my breath!

WS: Professor Crystal, it's been a real pleasure talking to you. Many thanks.

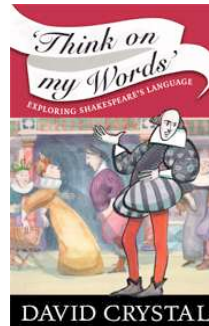
DC: And thank you for your interest.

Think on my Words is published by Cambridge University Press and is available from the Shakespeare Bookshop at the special price of £10 (rrp £12.99). Signed copies will be available from 2 April.

Literary Events

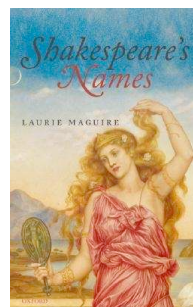
For 2008 we have teamed up with the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's Learning Department to offer a series of literary lunchtime lectures at the Shakespeare Centre, with a book signing to follow each event. We'll have a bookstall at every lecture but if you are unable to attend and would like to reserve a signed book please contact us. Tickets are available from the Shakespeare Centre reception (tel. 01789 204016) or on the door, priced £3.50, concessions £3.00.

Wednesday 2 April 1pm



David Crystal
Think on my Words: Exploring Shakespeare's Language

Wednesday 4 June 1pm



Laurie Maguire
Shakespeare's Names

Wednesday 2 July 1pm



Emma Vieceli and Richard Appignanesi
Manga Hamlet

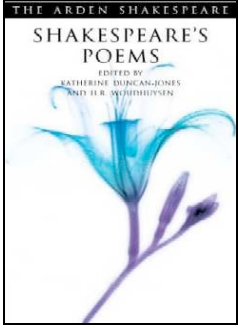
Wednesday 30 July 1pm

Stanley Wells and Paul Edmondson
Coffee With Shakespeare

Shakespeare's Poems

Arden 3 Series

Katherine Duncan-Jones and
H.R. Woudhuysen eds. £9.99
ISBN 9781903436875 Pbk



It is a gripe universally acknowledged, that Shakespeare the poet always plays second fiddle to Shakespeare the playwright. And yet that claim, if advanced today, would probably ring as hollow as the one about rich men wanting nothing more than to get hitched – as Austen well knew. Shakespeare the poet has received rather a lot of popular attention in recent years, even to the extent that all of his non-dramatic works were performed by the RSC as part of their *Complete Works* season. Far from them simply being droned aloud in order to fulfil the technical mission of performing 'everything Shakespeare wrote', *Venus and Adonis* – which was a revival of the acclaimed 2004 production – wowed audiences as much for the ravishing, muscular eroticism of Shakespeare's pulsating verse, so unfamiliar to many, as for the exquisite and inventive puppetry it deployed to tell the Ovidian tale (this is the first edition of the poems to discuss the production). A young man's poem it may be, but stone-cold proof was provided that *Venus* deserves its place in the canon every bit as much as *Hamlet*. So does all of the major work represented in this volume, in fact, and the editors are keen from the offset to challenge the preconception that the poems are somehow artistically inferior to the drama both in terms of lasting achievement and of Shakespeare's chief interests. Yet, strangely, the plays are approached in this volume in a way that affords them near centrality. This is possibly a way of trying to encourage more people to dip into the poetry and therefore buy the volume, but *Venus* and *Lucrece* are framed in relation and opposition to drama from the outset. This can be seen as a rhetorical stance adopted by the edition; the notes are littered with references to the plays to draw the reader's attention to verbal and thematic parallels across the scope of

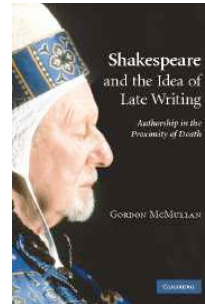
Shakespeare's career, as though the poems are chiefly the ground for the hatch and brood of later ideas. Yet there is a tighter focus at work too, and the shrewdest gaze is directed at the works that immediately precede 1593-4 (when *Venus* and *Lucrece* were composed, the theatres closed due to plague): the *Henry VI* trilogy and *The Taming of the Shrew*. In one fascinating section of the introduction, Shakespeare's treatment of his two female protagonists is compared with their dramatic forebears, Katherine and Margaret, and we are shown how the erotic female body finds a totally new scope for expression when divorced from the limitations of boy actors, and given free reign in the imaginative realms of poetry. Katherine Duncan-Jones most recently edited *Arden's Sonnets*, with Woudhuysen responsible for their treatment of that most poetic of Shakespeare's plays – at least, that is, the one most concerned with the formal structures and watered-down abuses of professional wordsmithery – *Love's Labour's Lost*. In this respect they are extremely well-placed to edit the poems, and they make a formidable and witty pairing, with Duncan-Jones taking care of the introduction and Woudhuysen providing an admirably complete textual discussion, and rich and incisive glossarial notes. Duncan-Jones also edited *Oxford's* volume of Sir Philip Sidney's major poetry, while Woudhuysen devoted a large part of his *Love's Labour's* introduction to Sidney, discussing the rash of poetic commonplaces in the early 1590s, so mocked in the play, as products of neo-Petrarchan plagiary and pastorally obsessed Sidney imitators. It is interesting that the *Poems* have been given their own volume under *Arden*; *Oxford* produced a sprawlingly epic and richly ruminative version of the *Complete Sonnets and Poems* in 2002, suffused with the halcyon erudition of its editor, Cambridge don Colin Burrow, the cover adorned with an image of a simpering youth. The *Arden* editors really roll their sleeves up on this one though, treating the poems and sonnets as distinct enterprises, and rightly presenting the poems as racier, sexier, and more dramatically vital than we are usually given to view them. Given the variorum tendencies of the *Arden* series, one volume was never going to be enough, and the obvious downside is that you end up forking out for two books, yet in terms of a marketplace plurality it is very welcome that there has been a strategic thinking about how difference is articulated. Editorial matter aside, if you want to

simply dive in to some of the greatest artworks you'll ever encounter, the *Arden* volume is so handsome, so complete, and so stuffed to the gills with information, that you could do a lot worse than to treat yourself. The poems represent a treasure house of (probably) unfamiliar Shakespeare, and taking the time to discover them will offer infinitely rich rewards: trust me; I'm a bookseller (as the Latin epigraph on the 1593 edition translates).

(Will Sharpe)

Shakespeare's Late Plays

Continuing the theme of less familiar works, the last couple of years have seen a few major critical studies of Shakespeare's late plays, commonly known as the 'romances' (comprising *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, *The Tempest*, *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*), so it seems apt to offer a little review of what's on offer.



Shakespeare and the Idea of Late Writing

Gordon McMullan
Cambridge University Press £55
ISBN 9780521863049 Hbk

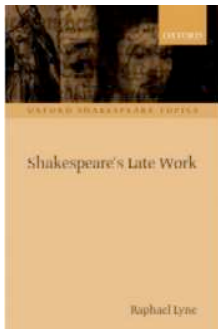
Gordon McMullan's *Shakespeare and the Idea of Late Writing* is a massively ambitious tome that takes on the entire critical heritage surrounding these works, and looks further afield at the notion of 'lateness' in artists' works more generally. McMullan takes exception to the type of criticism that was cemented in the Victorian era by critics like Edward Dowden, which saw Shakespeare entering a phase of serene wisdom in the autumn years of his life. The book's subtitle, 'Authorship in the Proximity of Death', might be taken as a slightly caustic and bald way of articulating what it is we're really saying when we talk about someone's artistic 'lateness', which McMullan is keen to prove a critical construct. This work might be too overbearing and pedantic for some, and the chapter headings betray a subject that simply won't be contained, taking in a plethora of trans-historical targets. Yet the book's aims, to interrogate not only these plays and their critical reception afresh, but to examine the essential meaning of an artistic self, make it a compelling prospect indeed.

Shakespeare's Late Work

Raphael Lyne

Oxford University Press £12.99
ISBN 9780199265954 Pbk

Conversely, Raphael Lyne's warm, compact, elegant and courteous introduction to the late plays might be more the thing you're after. The *Oxford Topics* series is pitched at the level of serious introduction, taking broad and useful topics relating to Shakespeare and richly developing them for undergraduates and above. Lyne begins with the 'late' canon, before taking the reader through the characteristics of Shakespeare's late plays, looking especially at illusion, faith, magic, revelation, and the reunification of the divided family, and rounding it all off with a comparative look at Shakespeare's early and late styles.



Shakespeare's Late Style

Russ McDonald

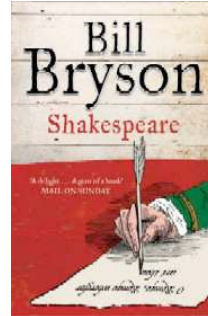
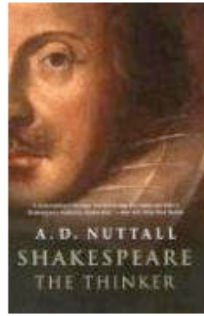
Cambridge University Press £51
ISBN 9780199265954 Hbk

Which brings us neatly onto *Shakespeare's Late Style* by Russ McDonald, the author of the *Oxford Topics* volume on language. Critics have long noted a crammed and elliptical quality to Shakespeare's late writing, and this volume is the last word in analysing it, not only in terms of grammatical function, but also in terms of how the late style itself contributed to the making of meaning, offering the stage a robust and entirely new idiolect for a new kind of dramatic expression.

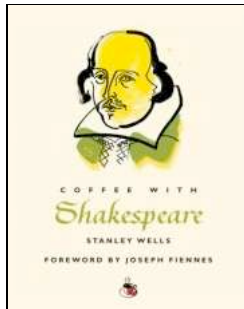
(Will Sharpe)

New Books

This month and next see the release into paperback of a number of titles that have previously been reviewed here in hardback. Stanley Wells called A.D. Nuttall's *Shakespeare The Thinker* (Yale £10.99) 'a deeply considered and constantly absorbing study'. Bill Bryson's *Shakespeare: The World as a Stage* (HarperCollins £7.99) was a Christmas bestseller in hardback and its speedy release into paperback will undoubtedly make it the book of choice for anybody coming to Shakespeare's biography for the first time.



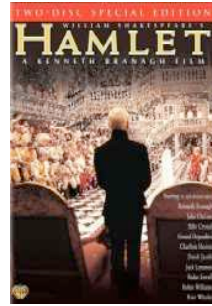
Rene Weis's *Shakespeare Revealed* (John Murray £9.99) fared rather less well in hard cover, but for all its faults it nevertheless offers a moving and engaging account of Shakespeare's art. The paperback edition of the **RSC Shakespeare: The Complete Works** (Palgrave £19.99) is just published and while promotional stocks last we're giving away a CD of *The Essential Shakespeare Live: The RSC in Performance* with every copy bought.



New too is *Coffee With Shakespeare* (Duncan Baird £6.99), the latest title in a series of imagined conversations with great artists and historical figures. Stanley Wells and Paul Edmondson ask (and answer) the questions we would all put to Shakespeare if we had an hour of his time.

New DVDs

Whoever said Kenneth Branagh DVDs were like buses was right. You wait ages for one and then two come along at once. **As You Like It** (Lionsgate £17.99), set in 19th-century Japan, is released this month and the full four-hour version of **Hamlet** (Warner £16.99) finally goes on general release at the end of April in a two-disc special edition, featuring an introduction by the director and audio commentary by Branagh and Russell Jackson.



Other recent releases on DVD include Geoffrey White's contemporary take on **Macbeth** (Revolver £15.99), set in gangland Melbourne and starring Sam Worthington, and the live recording of the Globe Theatre's 2007 production of **Othello** (Heritage Theatre £19.99), starring Eamonn Walker, Tim McInnerny and Zoe Tapper.

Special Offers

Finally, there is just space to list a selection of hardback books we've secured at great prices, available while stocks last. See the website for further details:

Shakespeare In Art

Jean Martineau (Merrell £15.99)

Exit, Pursued by a Bear: An A-Z Guide to Shakespeare's Plays, Poems and Stagecraft

Louise McConnell (Bloomsbury £5.99)

Squeaking Cleopatras:

The Elizabethan Boy Player

Joy Leslie Gibson (Sutton £5.99)

The Age of Shakespeare

Frank Kermode (Orion £3.99)

The Shakespeare First Folio Volume II: A New Worldwide Census of First Folios

Anthony James West (OUP £35)

(Adam Sherratt)



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