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**Grassroots Shakespeare:
Amateur and Community-Based
Shakespeare Performance in the
United States of America**

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requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
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GRASSROOTS SHAKESPEARE:

Amateur and Community-Based Shakespeare Performance in the United States

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After ten years and the production of twenty-four of Shakespeare's plays as the founding Artistic Director of the OrangeMite Shakespeare Company, I was thrilled to be able to pursue a burning curiosity, the omnipresent question of '*why Shakespeare?*' With the help of my grassroots and professional Shakespeare performance colleagues from the around the United States, I'm privileged to offer this thesis as one answer to this time-honoured query. I am profoundly indebted to my grassroots collaborators at OrangeMite and all of the organisational leaders that participated in this research; their names are found throughout the pages of this thesis. Specifically, I'd like to recognize Dr Mary Snow for her two decades of mentorship, friendship, and inspiration. Also, many thanks go to both Dr Katherine Steele Brokaw and Heike Hambley for their bottomless generosity and for welcoming me into the world of Shakespeare they have fostered in Merced, California. This research would never have occurred without the support of my family; I thank my parents, my mother Deb Wolfgang (especially for her assistance with mapping Shakespeare organisations) and my father Tom Wolfgang. My final acknowledgement goes to my husband, Lloyd Naval, who has adventured with me across United States of America from coast to coast, many times over, and has truly made the incredible geographical breadth of this research possible.

DECLARATION

This thesis is my own work, and no part of it has been submitted for a degree at another university.

ABSTRACT

This thesis documents, for the first time, the prevalence and organisational operations of amateur and community-based Shakespeare performance groups in the United States. Between 2018 and 2020, there were over three-hundred sixty-five performance organisations dedicated to actively producing the works of William Shakespeare. Well over one-third of these groups were not professionally trained or compensated, but rather were local grassroots groups with a mission to communally produce the works of Shakespeare through their own particular regional or local perspective. This thesis argues that localized grassroots Shakespeare performance groups in the United States are prevalent organisational structures which develop collective responsibility between participants and which engage communities in socially inspired change.

Continuing the work of the 2014 ‘Shakespeare on the Road’ research initiative led by the University of Warwick, the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, and Misfit Incorporated, interviews were collected for this thesis from leaders and participants from Shakespeare performance organisations across every region of the United States. This thesis aims to demonstrate the historic and contemporary breadth of this phenomenon. Quantitative data which is examined throughout the thesis, in the form of maps and other visuals, supplements the extensive qualitative data, cumulatively representing over three-fifths of the country. Historical antecedents illustrate the entangled roots of this theatrical movement while calling attention to an influential area of Shakespeare in performance that until recently has been overlooked by scholars. Hence, through targeted analyses and a critical survey of this wealth of diverse data, this thesis aims to augment the field at large and push back against a common perspective that localized amateur performance is of little consequence. Studying the foundations, structures, and human relationships that comprise these grassroots groups thus can refine and expand perceptions of the deeply engrained tradition of Shakespeare performance in the United States.

INTRODUCTION

With a population of around 1.3 million people, the rural state of Maine is one of the least populated states in the United States of America.¹ Despite this statistic, between 2018 and 2020 Maine boasted at least seven non-profit organisations dedicated fully, or in part, to the production of Shakespeare's plays. Like their counterparts around the nation these groups varied in structure, size, and mission. These companies are representative of the organisational diversity throughout the nation: a year-round repertory company, professional summer festivals, a community-based summer festival, professional program-based Shakespeare in Portland, as well as a year-round grassroots Shakespeare company dedicated to ecocritical work, the Recycled Shakespeare Company from Fairfield, which is discussed throughout this thesis. Likewise, in America's most populous state, California, there were at least fifty-four organisations dedicated to the production of Shakespeare during the course of this research.² Not bound to any one performance philosophy or methodology, the vast majority of these organisations from Maine, California, and all states in between, are decentralized from the influence of academic and theatrical authority.

Today in the United States there are over three hundred sixty-five performance organisations of many iterations and approximately one hundred thirty companies (around one third) which constitute grassroots or amateur approaches to Shakespeare performance.³ This number is around twice as large as previous estimates have indicated.⁴ Therefore, this thesis argues that localized grassroots Shakespeare performance groups in the United States are prevalent organisational structures which develop collective responsibility and artistic freedom between participants, and which serve as vehicles for social activism. While calling attention to an area of Shakespeare in performance that has historically been overlooked by

¹ 'Quick Facts; Maine, United States', United States Census Bureau, (2018) [Accessed 3 Jan 2019].

² Appendix B.

³ Of the three hundred fifty Shakespeare performing organisations I have catalogued to date for this research, one hundred fifty-six of them either claim to be professional theatre groups or display such characteristics, one hundred fifteen display grassroots qualities, while the remaining thirty-one represent educational organisations or annual programs sponsored by a larger theatrical entity. I have categorized these organisations based on a matrix of characteristics I have developed; this information is located in Appendix A.

⁴ Previous estimations have been based on the number of member organisations of the Shakespeare Theatre Association (STA) such as Shapiro's recent reference of 'nearly one hundred fifty'. James Shapiro, *Shakespeare in a Divided America*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2020), p. 202. The brief history of the studies that have quantified the Shakespeare performance phenomenon is presented at the conclusion of Chapter 1.

scholars, I will define and characterize grassroots Shakespeare in its historic and current form. This underdeveloped academic attention to community-based, amateur work does not go unnoticed by local Shakespeare producers. When seeking out groups for this study, many were hesitant to reply or participate because they did not understand why academia would be interested in their activities.⁵

As a grassroots practitioner at the OrangeMite Shakespeare Company from 2008-2018, I was personally familiar with this sentiment. Not only did it seem that we were producing Shakespeare alone and isolated in a vacuum, but the scholarship I read, at the time, in Shakespeare-based academic journals appeared to be detached from my reality. Much like the practitioners I worked with during this research, I did not feel our work was valued or part of the greater national conversation. In an unpublished doctoral dissertation in 2005, Kevin Crawford argued that mainstream performance studies should take note of ‘companies that are more representative of the American theatrical landscape’. Crawford advocated for academic performance critics to take note of a nation teeming with Shakespeare performance of all varieties including ‘community theatres, college theatre departments, small Renaissance festivals, and professional repertory companies’ that he argued were ‘ignored’ by the greater ‘Shakespeare Industry’.⁶ Having received his training in academia while serving as a founding member of the Palm Beach Shakespeare Festival, Crawford’s full perspective from the standpoint of a scholar, director, and actor was indeed distinct.⁷ There is no doubt that scholarship devoted to these varied forms of Shakespeare performance would lead to a more full and dynamic academic discourse for which Crawford argued.

Since then, two consequential shifts have occurred that have moved scholarship in a more representative direction. First, a scholarly interest in amateur performance has appeared in recent years, starting in the United Kingdom, and most

⁵ William Wolfgang, ‘Grassroots Shakespeare Ethnographic Field Notes and Observations’ (2018-2020), Delaware, Idaho, and South Carolina. This was also the case in the United Kingdom. Helen Nicholson, et al., address the previous lack of scholarship directly in their recent study: ‘It is curious that theatre and performance studies, a discipline that prides itself on its egalitarianism, has been complicit in upholding a cultural hierarchy in which amateur theatre has been largely disregarded’. Helen Nicholson, Nadine Holdsworth, and Jane Milling, *Ecologies of Amateur Theatre*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p. 6.

⁶ Kevin Crawford, ‘What Players Are They?’ from unpublished doctoral dissertation, (University of Alabama, 2005), pp. 3-4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

notably described by Nicholson, Holdsworth and Milling as the ‘amateur turn’.⁸ Additionally, Michael Dobson’s *Shakespeare and Amateur Performance: A Cultural History* provided a compelling case for the value of community-based Shakespeare.⁹ Secondly, the idea of ‘Applied Shakespeare’ has become mainstream within the field of performance studies as a topic for inquiry, coursework, even certification, and is welcomed as an addition to international scholarship.¹⁰ This development is significant, as grassroots practitioners have been weaving Shakespeare’s text into the fabric of local communities for decades, in essence practicing community-based Applied Shakespeare.

Referring to the phenomenon as ‘community Shakespeare’ in a 2017 essay, Katherine Steele Brokaw emphasizes the value of researching local amateur Shakespeare production.¹¹ Brokaw argues that engaging in this Applied Theatre work *with* the grassroots organisations ‘redefines our sense of whose ideas and interpretations of Shakespeare matter’.¹² Likewise, Nicholson, et al. describe research on and with amateur groups as ‘an act of cultural recognition’.¹³ For community-based directors, this is a new form of legitimacy and inclusion that many are still not accustomed to, hence their aforementioned surprise would be expected upon learning of academic interest in their organisation’s programming. Grassroots organisations are not familiar with having their work discussed outside their local communities, nor sharing their expertise outside of their rehearsal space. As a result, this thesis seeks to generate dialogue with grassroots practitioners and participants, credentialed or not, to create an academic space to share their experiences with Shakespeare.

This thesis aims to augment the field at large and push back against a common perspective that amateur performance is of little consequence. These

⁸ Nicholson, Holdsworth, and Milling, *Ecologies of Amateur Theatre*, pp. 4-5, 288.

⁹ Michael Dobson, *Shakespeare and Amateur Performance: A Cultural History*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

¹⁰ ‘Applied Shakespeare’, University of Colorado Boulder, (2020) [Accessed 20 August 2020]. Robert Shaughnessy, ‘Applying Shakespeare: Introduction’, *Critical Survey*, 31 (2019), pp. 1-2. Applied Shakespeare is an area of performance studies that is centered on how Shakespeare productions can be used to socially impact participants outside of the traditional theatre. Shaughnessy elaborated further, stating that Applied Shakespeare offers a ‘space for the stories of audiences that have largely been excluded from existing accounts of Shakespeare’s performance history’.

¹¹ Katherine Steele Brokaw, ‘Shakespeare as Community Practice’, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 35 (2017), pp. 445-47. Brokaw’s three-pronged research methodology is discussed in the subsequent sections of the Introduction.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 446.

¹³ Nicholson, Holdsworth, and Milling, *Ecologies of Amateur Theatre*, p. 6.

inconspicuous ragtag groups can have enormous impact, not only directly on the lives of their participants, but also as they evolve and change over time. Many of the largest and most influential Shakespeare performing organisations in the United States started as amateur, community-based endeavours, such as the festivals in Oregon and Utah. Furthermore, it was an amateur group in California, the Pasadena Community Playhouse, one year after the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's first season, in 1936, that would become the first theatre in the United States to produce the entirety of the canon, setting a new standard for seasonal production of Shakespeare.

The histories of these groups, just as the grassroots groups today, are often glanced over in favour of their 'bigger', 'better', and professionalized counterparts, and therefore, very little has been written on their ongoing legacies. Economist E F Schumacher stated, as a society 'we suffer from an almost universal idolatry of giantism', and hence this is where our collective attention is often directed.¹⁴ Despite over one hundred such organisations producing Shakespeare in the United States, one would be hard-pressed to find an equitable written record of their impact. From deeply personal feelings of belonging to civic pride and collective ownership, grassroots organisations are complex and unpredictable in their purpose and design. Groups are sometimes thrown together casually by a cadre of friends and last for a few years, while other times such organisations are the culmination of over a century of tradition, performance, and engagement with Shakespeare. For many participants, involvement in grassroots Shakespeare fosters a continual desire for this type of communal work; this phenomenon is called the 'cycle of participation'. The histories of these organisations, be it centuries, decades, or months, are vital to fully understanding why and how people continually engage with Shakespeare. Studying the foundations, structures, and human relationships that comprise these grassroots groups thus can refine and expand perceptions on the deeply engrained tradition of Shakespeare performance in the United States.

Following this introduction, this thesis is divided into four chapters that successively build upon the previous: historical antecedents, organisational structures based on Shakespeare, Shakespeare as 'common property', and Shakespeare as social activism. The complex origins of the phenomenon are

¹⁴ E F Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful*, (London: Blond and Briggs, 1973), pp. 70-71.

introduced in ‘Chapter 1 – Grassroots Shakespeare: Historical Antecedents’, which details how Shakespeare’s work became an ‘inheritance’ through America’s imperial march westward. Shakespeare’s work offered cultural capital to be leveraged in a variety of social causes including women’s rights, immigration, and community building. The remaining chapters detail a present-day account of grassroots Shakespeare, and the prevalence of this decentralized phenomenon. ‘Chapter 2 – Organisational Structures’ provides statistics on how grassroots groups differ in their organisational foundation, mission, development, and even geographic location. Operational models are also presented and compared to one another; this includes staffing, funding, and venues. The subsequent chapter, ‘Chapter 3 – Art of the People: Shakespeare as Common Property’ details participants and their shared collective responsibility, their sense of belonging towards the organisation and each other, and how this fosters a sense of artistic freedom.¹⁵ The influence of tradition grown out of this American inheritance of Shakespeare is also examined, and how that interacts at the communal, local, and regional levels. Next, in ‘Chapter 4 – Struggles for Equality: Shakespeare and Social Activism’, I provide examples of the politically resonant work of Shakespeare companies and how they interact with local and national dialogues. Lastly, I present a case study of a bilingual production of *Richard II* directed by myself and a team of grassroots Shakespeare practitioners in Merced, California during the COVID-19 pandemic. I close the thesis with an Epilogue on how this international health crisis has impacted the field of Shakespeare performance, and how grassroots groups can continue.

1. Vocabularies: Grassroots and Community

Grassroots Shakespeare organisations are highly localized, civically minded groups with a mission to communally produce the works of Shakespeare through their own particular regional or local perspective. In these groups, actors, participants, and staff are not compensated for their role within the company or performances and are considered amateur; but, conversely, grassroots performance does not unequivocally exclude the work of professionally trained artists. In fact, the boundaries between such identifiers are fluid; as established in recent scholarship in

¹⁵ See Appendix G for the entirety of the matrix based on *From the Ground Up*.

the United Kingdom, the work of such companies ‘defies neat definition’.¹⁶

Additionally, I will provide examples of how these two types of performance support the other through a symbiotic relationship. Ultimately, the purpose of this thesis is not to critique the amateur versus the professional – as Michael Dobson states this ‘vexed problem’ has historically caused difficulty in the field – but rather to establish characteristics of the grassroots approach to Shakespeare.¹⁷

What I am identifying as ‘grassroots Shakespeare’ is indeed closely akin to what many Americans know as ‘community theatre’, but yet has several distinctions. ‘Community theatre’ in the United States is analogous to ‘amateur theatre’ or ‘am-dram’ in the United Kingdom.¹⁸ With many similar terms available in the field, oftentimes the lexicon can seem nebulous. To provide context I will situate the terms historically. When the vocabularies for community-based or grassroots theatre were in development in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century, the philosophy of what true American theatre would be was part of a great national debate between academics, practitioners, and other members of the literary elite.¹⁹ During these early formative years, theorist and community drama pioneer Percy MacKaye played a central role in the development of American amateur theatre, and for this reason his contributions are analysed throughout this thesis.²⁰ However, Louise Burleigh in her 1917 *Community Theatre in Theory and Practice* would be the first to coin ‘Community Theatre’. This seminal, yet ungainly, definition stated, ‘a house of play in which events offer to every member of a body politic active participation in a common interest’.²¹ During this time, political social movements entwined with the earliest inceptions of community-based theatre in the form of

¹⁶ Nicholson, Holdsworth, and Milling, *Ecologies of Amateur Theatre*, p. 3. Nicholson, et al. researched ‘companies of people who make theatre in, with and for their local communities for love rather than money’, p. 3.

¹⁷ Dobson, *Shakespeare and Amateur Performance: A Cultural History*, p. 6.

¹⁸ Nicholson, Holdsworth, and Milling, *Ecologies of Amateur Theatre*, p. 5.

¹⁹ The formation of American ‘community theatre’ through the ‘Little Theatre Movement’ is detailed in Chapter 1.

²⁰ MacKaye experimented with many different terms during the second decade of the twentieth century to describe this phenomenon: ‘Civic Theater’ (1912), ‘Civic Drama’ (1915), and ‘Drama of Democracy’ (1917).

²¹ Louise Burleigh, *The Community Theatre in Theory and Practice*, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1917), p. 161. Percy MacKaye endorsed this new vocabulary in an introduction to Burleigh’s book, foreseeing it as the definitive term: ‘Our definitions, you see, are worded differently, but clearly their meaning is the same...but I think “community theatre” is a better name for the idea’. *Ibid.*, xi.

pageantry.²² The progressively-charged spirit of communal theatre would continue to grow, and in 1956 Robert Gard took a more concise approach and defined community theatre as ‘essentially theatre at the local level, amateur or volunteer in origin and spirit’.²³

The term ‘community theatre’ has, after a century of practice, moved from the margins to the mainstream and is no longer part of any widespread social movement as it was during its inception in the 1910s. The original progressive aim of community theatre and its backers, like MacKaye, during the first half of the twentieth century was to transition theatrical performances away from a commercial business and into the realm of a civic enterprise.²⁴ A century later, community theatres in America generally perform less experimental work, and embrace the ‘popular’ theatrical fare such as recent Broadway successes.²⁵ Since these amateur groups perform similar material to the well-known professional groups, the qualities of the two are often compared on the same plane. This has led to the perception that ‘community theatre’ is sub-par or amateurish. Therefore, as I discovered during field research for this thesis, the term is actively avoided by some Shakespeare producers. For example, director Curt Foxworth from a grassroots Shakespeare group in New Jersey, Shakespeare 70, stated that he prefers the term ‘nonprofessional’ to describe his organisation due to the stigma surrounding the use of ‘community theatre’.²⁶ Nicholson, et al. argue similarly, that ‘am-dram’ in the UK suffers from ‘derogatory caricatures’ and has historically been seen as a lesser and more conservative ‘obstacle’ to British ‘community theatre’ (the equivalent in the US is community-based, or grassroots theatre).²⁷ Hence, am-dram (UK) and community theatre (US) are nearly synonymous. Not typically associated with the avant garde or political movements, these groups according to Nicholson, et al. ‘tend to regard any social

²² Maryo Gard Ewell, ‘History of Community Arts’, in *Building Communities, Not Audiences*, ed. by Doug Borwick (Winston-Salem, NC: ArtsEngaged, 2012), p. 282.

²³ Robert E Gard and Gertrude S Burley, *Community Theatre: Idea and Achievement*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1959), p. 9.

²⁴ Percy MacKaye, *The Civic Theater: In Relation to the Redemption of Leisure*, (New York: Kennerly, 1917), p. 107.

²⁵ A similar description was made by Robert Gard and Gertrude Burley in 1959. Sixty years later, based upon current practice their assessment is generally still accurate: ‘Most Community Theatres try to bring good plays to their audiences, but not at the expense of the recreational function of the organisation’. Gard and Burley, *Community Theatre*, p. 21.

²⁶ Curt Foxworth, ‘Shakespeare 70’, Interview by William Wolfgang (Ewing, NJ: 20 October 2019), p. 4. Nicholson, et al. note that some practitioners in the UK also prefer other terms such as ‘nonprofessional’. Nicholson, Holdsworth, and Milling, *Ecologies of Amateur Theatre*, p. 289.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 9.

and personal benefit as a welcome by-product; their primary interest lies in the creative activity of putting on plays they find challenging and enjoyable to stage'.²⁸ Community performance scholar Jan Cohen-Cruz identifies community theatre similarly as 'amateur in the best sense – the love of doing it', a definition echoing the approach of Nicholson, Holdsworth, and Milling in the United Kingdom.²⁹

In contrast, upon coining the term 'grassroots theater', Gard delineated it from its community counterpart: 'There must be plays that grow from all the countrysides of America, fabricated by the people themselves'. Gard's pursuit of regionally derived arts was founded upon the principle that 'playwrights [should] have no desire to take their plays far away from home'.³⁰ He and his predecessors wanted playwriting to become part of American civic life, a movement to find true American drama.³¹ The term 'grassroots theatre' deals with issues of the politics, locality, and mobilization of the people with its inherent bottom-up imagery. Cohen-Cruz differentiates grassroots theatre from its analogue by focusing on the type of work produced: community theatre is 'enacted by people who neither generate the material, shape it, work with professional guidance, nor apply it beyond an entertainment frame'.³² In this passage Cohen-Cruz refers to the common practice of producing a show with royalties or a play that is commercially available, hence the material is already 'generated' by a playwright and the participants have nothing to do except follow the directions they are given. This is because when a theatre purchases the performance rights to a commercially available play, they are required to enter a licensing contract designed to protect the intellectual property of the playwright. Producing the work of Shakespeare comes with none of these artistic restrictions; his work has been in the public domain for centuries and enables producers and participants to mould it as desired to fit regional or local perspectives.

²⁸ Ibid. 9. Gard and Burley used similar language in their text: 'in these days culture seems to be a by-product of a movement grown largely avocational in its objectives'. Gard and Burley, *Community Theatre*, p. 21.

²⁹ Jan Cohen-Cruz, *Local Acts: Community-Based Performance in the United States*, (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), p. 6.

³⁰ Robert E Gard, *Grassroots Theatre: A Search for Regional Arts in America*, (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1954), p. 33.

³¹ Cohen-Cruz discusses her approach to this 'veritable movement', also calling it an 'unwieldy field, seemingly contradictory', in her text *Local Acts*. She argued for 'community-based' in place of 'grassroots' because she sees the latter as 'too redolent of rural models', but recognizes that others have made a case for the 'grassroots' term. Cohen-Cruz, *Local Acts*, p. 6.

³² Ibid., p. 7.

The artistic freedom of ‘shaping’ of the work differentiates grassroots theatre from community theatre on a fundamental level.

The final part of Cohen-Cruz’s analysis of community theatre is that it is not applied ‘beyond an entertainment frame’.³³ The purpose of community theatre is to produce a play, and as noted by Nicholson, et al. anything beyond that is a ‘welcome by-product’; politics, artistic freedom, and issues of locality are the domain of grassroots theatre. Therefore, in the United States, hundreds of organisations have coalesced around solely performing Shakespeare’s work, as opposed to other playwrights in the public domain, because these adaptations have historically not stopped with the stage. As I will establish, this is part of a deeply engrained American tradition; one that continually exists on and off the stage, in both political and apolitical realms. Edmondson and Fernie describe this as ‘Civic Shakespeare’ which is closely akin to the philosophy of Applied Shakespeare. This includes adaptations of Shakespeare outside of the traditional contexts of theatres and schools, with the ultimate goal of ‘generating “new” places, happenings, and intentions’.³⁴ In ‘Chapter 1 – Antecedents’, I establish that Americans have produced Shakespeare in a manner similar to this for nearly three hundred years, which has enabled the work to spread throughout the nation. In the early nineteenth century, Shakespeare was unquestionably the country’s favourite playwright. But beyond the theatre, Shakespeare’s presence was seeping into daily life: he was a paragon in America’s developing classrooms, a companion in pioneer travels, and in the later decades he would manifest in the form of clubs and social groups. Eventually, in the early twentieth century, Shakespeare would emerge in a new social and organisational form: the festival.³⁵

Yet another critical aspect of grassroots theatre, as defined by Robert Gard, is the creation of original work or appropriation based on local stories; consequently, it would seem grassroots theatre and Shakespeare are antithetical. While Shakespeare in all his ubiquity has indeed gone ‘far away from home’, he is by no means a new playwright grown from local folklore. To resolve this, I will demonstrate through historical accounts of the people’s Shakespeare in the United States, that Americans

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Paul Edmondson and Ewan Fernie, *New Places: Shakespeare and Civic Creativity*, (London: The Arden Shakespeare: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2018), p. xi.

³⁵ Kim C Sturgess, *Shakespeare and the American Nation*, (Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge Press, 2004), pp. 18, 202.

have a deeply ingrained and complex relationship with his work. This connection is not simply defined by the text itself, but by feelings of ownership coupled with a sense of place and tradition. Lawrence Levine similarly observed this in *Highbrow / Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*:

The liberties taken with Shakespeare in nineteenth-century America were often similar to liberties taken with folklore: Shakespeare was frequently seen as common property to be treated as the user saw fit.³⁶

Levine's astute conclusion holds true not only in the nineteenth century, but also with the modern-day grassroots Shakespeare movement. Shakespeare's work is still 'common property' with a folkloric resonance; the work is essentially a commodity or an 'inexhaustible' raw material that is available in the public domain for any theatre company to appropriate. This attribute of Shakespeare's work establishes it as an alluring vehicle for artistic, and therefore, political desires. Consequently, any property that is to be shared by all, shall, by human nature, become property that will be fought over by all. James Shapiro details such contentions in *Shakespeare in a Divided America*, from the foundation of the nation to the Astor Place Riot in 1849 and finally to The Public's Trump-Caesar in 2017. It is precisely because Shakespeare's work is collectively the property of anyone who makes use of it that makes this 'culture war' so enduring.

While Shakespeare's status as 'common property' in this way is clear, there are practitioners featured in this study who seek to reframe this reality for pragmatic needs. Several directors that I interviewed referred to this as using Shakespeare to find 'common ground' or a cultural 'meeting place' for the local community to unite, leaving their differences aside. This underscores a desire to unify a bitterly divided nation by placing their work 'above the fray' and consequently retaining audience attendance. While these two terms, 'common property' and 'common ground', appear outwardly synonymous, I argue they are set in opposition to one another and represent two distinct ways of approaching Shakespeare's work. Shakespeare as collectively owned, appropriative and political 'common property' is a *fact* supported by centuries of evidence; on the other hand, Shakespeare as an apolitical unifying force for 'common ground' is an *aspiration* supported by anecdotes and statements from directors present in this thesis. Conclusive evidence does not exist

³⁶ Lawrence W Levine, *Highbrow / Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 42.

that indicates Shakespeare is a unifying force for healing cultural divisions. Nevertheless, his work has been (and still is) deployed in this way dating back to the early twentieth century with the work of Percy MacKaye. In ‘Chapter 4 – Struggles for Equality: Shakespeare and Social Activism’ these concepts are further juxtaposed against one another, demonstrating how political realities intersect with apolitical aspirations. For grassroots Shakespeare organisations, it is more practical to engage in this political work or activist work. I will establish in this thesis that grassroots organisations are not bound by funding concerns in the same way as their professional counterparts. This freedom from the existential issue of operating costs enables bold activist work that deliberately utilizes Shakespeare’s text and his associated cultural capital as a vehicle or means to an end. I will explore groups that use Shakespeare’s work to advance opportunities on the following issues: equitable opportunities for women, rights for indigenous people and people of colour, advocacy for the LGBTQ community, and awareness of the climate crisis. Through leveraging the ‘common property’ of Shakespeare, these groups are able to access a collective, transcendent American tradition for their artistic and political purposes that is locally nuanced and nationally embraced.

Cohen-Cruz describes this folkloric, grassroots quality that Levine referred to as a ‘resonance between the play and that place, and those people’, which is unlike its community theatre or professional Shakespearean counterparts.³⁷ This experience is rooted in a ‘sense of place’ and it is often heightened with artistic work that is narratively connected to its physical surroundings, such as ‘site-specific’ productions. Furthermore, professional theatre employs artists, actors and producers from outside the immediate locality, and this creates a different relationship with the audience than when all involved are from the same place. Ryan Szwaja, grassroots Shakespeare practitioner, from York, Pennsylvania described this approach to Shakespeare in a 2018 interview:

We draw the art from the community and give it back to them, and it's like eating from your own field, when you reap what you've sown. And I think that lends an authenticity to it that helps draw in the local people more so than if a fancy actor - being in a rural town that might be what they say - were to come from somewhere else and perform for us. When our audiences particularly are largely comprised of

³⁷ Cohen-Cruz, *Local Acts*, p. 7.

friends, family, and people acquainted with the actors involved, it lends a personal note to it.³⁸

Moreover, this resonance occurs both between the ‘common property’ of Shakespeare and long forgotten, but transcendent, local histories throughout the nation. As previously noted, this is unlike typical community theatre production which focuses on primarily popular, commercial plays. Dobson articulates this with clarity while simultaneously embracing botanical and pastoral imagery found throughout this research:

Shakespeare’s plays are uncannily responsive to the local circumstances of their production, and in those provided by amateur performers they have found perennially fruitful ground.³⁹

The folklore-like resonance described by Levine, Cohen-Cruz, and Dobson between Shakespeare and the actors is, in turn, felt by the audience of local community members toward the overall production itself as Szwaja described. In another passage Dobson writes: ‘Whereas in the professional theatre the actors are at work while the audience are at play ... in the amateur theatre both cast and spectators are at play together’.⁴⁰ Amateur performances are undoubtedly less refined and financially funded than their professional counterparts, but as Dobson notes, this does not mean the performances are any less enjoyable for audiences. On the contrary, the idea of audiences and actors being ‘at play’ couples with what Stephen Purcell describes as both parties sharing ‘in the thrill of the unexpected’ – a desirable quality for all theatre, professional or amateur.⁴¹ Leonard and Kilkelly make a similar assertion in their study of ‘grassroots ensemble theatres’ when discussing the feeling generated between actors and audience as ‘a moment of community that is both known and new’.⁴² Through the following historical antecedents, I argue the United States is a nation that has always known Shakespeare in the grassroots, and never tires of making him new.

³⁸ Ryan Szwaja, ‘OrangeMite Shakespeare Company’, Interview by William Wolfgang (York, PA: 30 November 2018), p. 2.

³⁹ Dobson, *Shakespeare and Amateur Performance*, p. 204.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p. 203.

⁴¹ Stephen Purcell, *Shakespeare and Audience in Practice*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 96.

⁴² Robert H Leonard and Ann Kilkelly, *Performing Communities: Grassroots Ensemble Theaters Deeply Rooted in Eight U.S. Communities*, (Oakland, CA: New Village Press, 2006), p. 29.

A prominent example of a case being made for the term ‘grassroots’ is the definition agreed upon by theatre practitioner Dudley Cocke and his colleagues during a gathering at Cornell University in 1992. These scholars and practitioners emphasized the productive role grassroots theatre can play in marginalized communities *From the Ground Up* and formed a ‘matrix articulating the principles of grassroots theatre’. This included six tenets: the art of the people, sense of place, tradition, inclusion, collective responsibility, and struggling for equality.⁴³ The authors of this matrix also stated that grassroots theatre is ‘fundamentally a theatre of hope and often joy’, an area which I will expand on in light of the COVID-19 pandemic in the final chapter. Due to the alignment between these principles, the aforementioned terminology and this research, I found it best to represent this phenomenon as ‘grassroots Shakespeare’. These principles as defined by Cocke, et al. frame the grassroots Shakespeare organisations analysed in the subsequent chapters of this thesis. In the following section, I detail the methodologies utilized to gather data on the grassroots Shakespeare phenomenon throughout the United States.

2. Methodologies

A. Overview of Methodologies

In order to gather the wide-ranging quantitative and qualitative data presented in this thesis, I employed a multifaceted, blended methodological approach. Representing the historical scope, geographic distribution and the sociological context of the grassroots Shakespeare phenomena, this thesis and the original research presented therein is designed as a critical survey of an underdeveloped field. The first set of research strategies I utilized was ethnographic in design; this field research encompassed oral histories, practice-as-research, and applied theatre activities. I also conducted archival research with the Shakespeare on the Road oral histories at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford-upon-Avon, in addition to newspaper archives, and other local archives throughout the United States. After gathering statistical data from a combination of oral histories, field research, basic internet research, and existing organisational lists, I have catalogued the most comprehensive database of Shakespeare performing organisations currently

⁴³ See Appendix G for the complete matrix. Dudley Cocke, Harry Newman, and Janet Salmons-Rue, *From the Ground Up: Grassroots Theater in Historical and Contemporary Perspective*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1993), pp. 80-81.

available in the United States, which is located in Appendix B, consisting of over three hundred sixty-five performance groups. Upon the completion of this database, I created a classification system for organisational infrastructure, located in Appendix A, to better qualify the field at large, and the distinction between grassroots organisations and their professional counterparts. From these categorized datasets, I analysed quantitative data to serve as a companion to the rich qualitative data collected in the personal interviews.

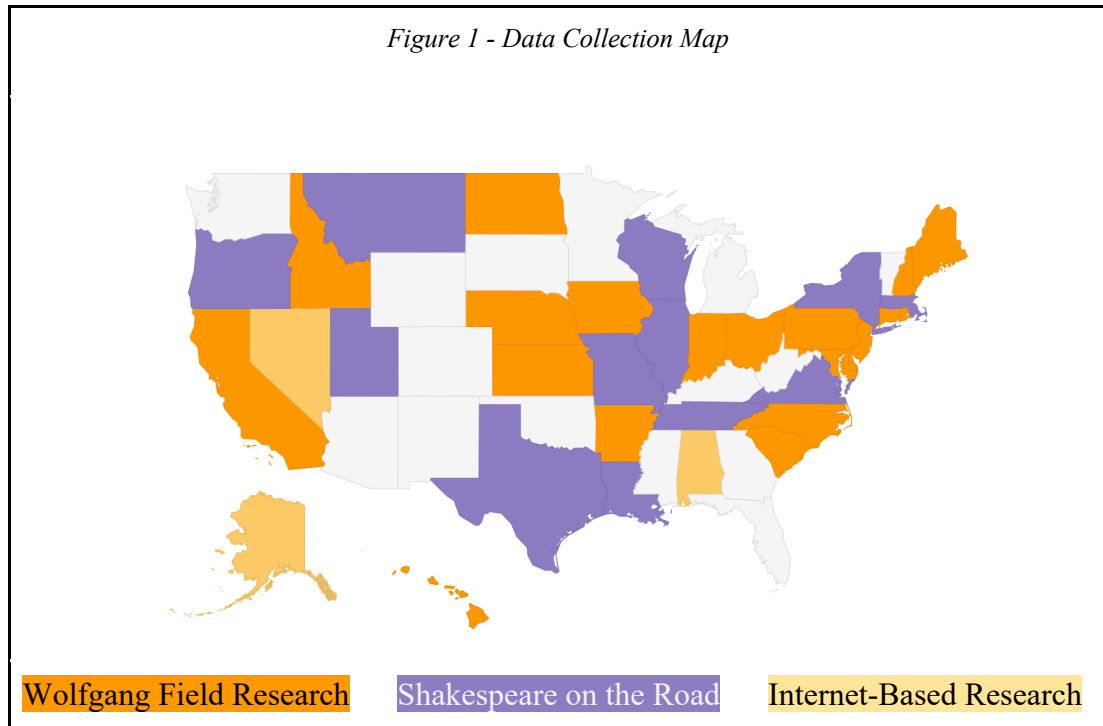
The majority of my research methodology is composed of a three-pronged embedded scholarship approach to researching performing organisations. Katherine Steele Brokaw outlined this methodology in her 2017 essay 'Shakespeare as Community Practice'. Brokaw argues for a 'combination of research practices' to help scholars better study Shakespeare at the community or grassroots level. This 'hybridized methodology' includes: Ethnography (achieved with oral history interviews and observation), Practice-as-Research (achieved through collaborative creative endeavours *with* research participants), and finally Applied Theatre and Community Performance (achieved through 'outreach and activism').⁴⁴ I have employed this to varying levels across the United States during my two and a half years of research. Seeking a broad and representative sample size, the original ethnographic field research I conducted for this thesis constitutes every region in the United States. In total, there are twenty-eight organisational leaders and thirty-six participants from Shakespeare organisations across twenty-one states that comprise the oral history component of this ethnography.⁴⁵ This research also included thirty-one site visits throughout twenty states in the United States (displayed on Figure 1), during which I collected observations in the form of field notes and carried out on-the-ground searches for small, highly localized groups.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Brokaw, 'Shakespeare as Community Practice', 445-47. For list of methodologies utilized, see Appendix F, Section 4.

⁴⁵ Appendix C.

⁴⁶ All regions of the United States are represented in this research. In the New England (or Northeast) region, interviews and site visits were conducted in Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. Field research and oral histories were gathered from New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania (where I have previously conducted all three community research practices), and Maryland in the Middle Atlantic region. In the Southeast, I conducted this research in both North and South Carolina. From the Great Lakes area, I completed interviews and site visits in Ohio and Indiana. Midwest organisations were represented in this study by groups in Iowa, Nebraska, and North Dakota. Interviews, site visits, and archival research occurred in Kansas, with an additional oral history from Arkansas, both representing the South-Central United States. The Southwest region presents the only exception to regional completion from the grassroots research; however, Utah was visited by the Shakespeare on the Road team; my site visits scheduled for March and April in both

Figure 1 - Data Collection Map



Like many terms discussed in the previous section, ‘oral history’ has varying connotations. A common vernacular understanding of this concept simply can be ‘recorded discussions about the past in whatever form they may occur’.⁴⁷ When oral histories are discussed in the context of this research, I am referring to the ‘archival meaning’. This is described by Sommer and Quinlan as a research methodology with five ‘basic benchmarks’. These steps are ‘idea, plan, interview, preservation, and access/use’.⁴⁸ The origins behind the ‘idea’ portion of this project were dual fold. As a practitioner of grassroots Shakespeare for ten years, I had a deep curiosity as to how many others were participating in this art form around the United States, and why. When I learned of the work of the Shakespeare on the Road team in 2014, I created a research proposal that led to this thesis, synthesizing a plan from these two factors. I developed this strategy further by compiling a database of all Shakespeare performing organisations in the United States, and then preparing interview questions aligned with this project-based inquiry. I contacted these geographically diverse organisations from around the country and set-up site visits and interviews.

Arizona (March 2020) and Colorado (April 2020) were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Both California and Hawaii represent the Far West and Pacific region in this study. In the Northwest, I completed a site visit and interview in the state of Idaho.

⁴⁷ Barbara W Sommer and Mary Kay Quinlan, *The Oral History Manual*, third edition (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), p. 2.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 3-7.

Upon arrival at these locations, I discussed the research with the participants, and they signed the ‘Informed Interviewee Consent Form’ from the University of Warwick, Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies. Interviewees consented to the final two aspects of the research methodology which includes, preservation and access/use; the interviewees understood that the audio recording and transcripts of the interview will be deposited into the archives of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and available only for use for research purposes.⁴⁹

This oral history methodology is a foundational facet of ethnographical research. Such a methodology is perfectly suited for this area of inquiry; it is centred on organisations that are small, nonprofessional, and seemingly disconnected from the larger field of Shakespeare performance. I argue that this research augments the field at large and pushes back against the common perspective that amateur performance is of little consequence.⁵⁰ Sommer and Quinlan state that oral history is well-suited for those who are marginalized or those with ‘little or no written record’. They further added:

Oral history is inclusive, brings in many voices, not just the more powerful or dominant that traditionally [are] included in existing records. Oral historians look at their work as a way to complement and supplement the existing record, as well as a chance to make fundamental changes or additions to it.⁵¹

The nation’s largest Shakespeare performing organisations, such as the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the Utah Shakespeare Festival, have archives that preserve their history. Meanwhile, the work of small community-based groups generally has been lost to the passage of time and possibly relegated to only one extraneous clipping in a now defunct newspaper. It is through the use of this oral history methodology that I argue that grassroots Shakespeare groups are prevalent, communally beneficial organisational structures in the United States, representing ‘fly-over country’, marginalized communities, and the nation’s largest metropolitan

⁴⁹ Transcript access and details are part of Appendix H. All Informed Interviewee Consent Forms have been copied and submitted to the University of Warwick and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust with the completion of this thesis.

⁵⁰ In one of the many examples of academia’s general lack of interest in community-based production, Potter states that an amateur production at the University of Utrecht ‘was original enough’ to be an exception to her ‘general rule of discussing only professional interpretations’. This suggests that non-professional production is generally unoriginal and uninteresting on most occasions. Lois Potter, ‘Twentieth-Century Productions’, in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, ed. by Lois Potter (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 95.

⁵¹ Sommer and Quinlan, *The Oral History Manual*, p. 6.

areas. Furthermore, no history of Shakespeare performance is complete without their perspectives, experiences, and stories.

While most of the aforementioned field research was assembled in the form of ethnography (oral history interviews and observation), in California, I had the opportunity to expand my methods to include Practice-as-Research as well as Applied Theatre. While working with my thesis advisor, Paul Prescott, on Shakespeare in Yosemite's *As You Like It* in April 2019 (which he co-founded along with Katherine Steele Brokaw), I engaged with participants directly throughout the rehearsal process, and assisted in the group's mission of creating ecologically based Applied Theatre. I then went on to have an additional research opportunity via Practice-as-Research when I served as the dramaturg for Merced Shakespearefest's *Othello*, collaborating with participants and artistic director Heike Hambley. This form of research results in field notes, process-based outcomes, and is reinforced with oral history individual and group interviews. Aspects of these two research experiences, Shakespeare and Yosemite and Merced Shakespearefest, merged together to create my most fruitful Applied Theatre opportunity when Hambley asked me to direct her June 2020 production of *Richard II*.⁵²

I have also used archival research consistently throughout the project by investigating the grassroots Shakespeare phenomenon at small local archives throughout the country. These included the Bangor Public Library in Bangor, Maine, the Kinsley Public Library in Kinsley, Kansas, and the archives of the Pomona Valley Shakespeare Club housed at the Pomona Public Library in California, among others. The online digital archive Newspapers.com proved to be an invaluable source of information on the multitude of grassroots productions that occurred throughout the late nineteenth and into the twentieth century. I also researched Shakespeare in grassroots performance at larger institutions in the United States and the United Kingdom, including the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Huntington Library, and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

My work at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust primarily included listening through the entirety of the Shakespeare on the Road archive, which includes nearly one hundred oral history interviews from fifteen American Shakespeare companies.

⁵² This project would become *Ricardo II*, a collaborative bilingual web-series adaptation co-led by Shakespeare in Yosemite alumni Ángel Nuñez, María Nguyen-Cruz, and Cathryn Flores during the COVID-19 pandemic which is the subject of the final section of Chapter 4.

This research project consisted of a team of four: Paul Prescott (my supervisor for this thesis) from the University of Warwick, Paul Edmondson (my special supervisor for this thesis) from the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, with AJ Leon and Melissa Leon from Misfit Press Incorporated. This group travelled the nation for nearly two months and conducted oral history interviews with organisational leaders, artists, and participants.⁵³ Following this same methodology of the oral history interviews conducted by the Shakespeare on the Road team and with similar lines of inquiry, my research is designed to augment this existing archive, bringing the total of the represented states to well over three fifths of the country (thirty-two states are represented with similar interviews from this Grassroots Shakespeare and the Shakespeare on the Road Research). It was my original intent to collect interviews from all states, but the COVID-19 pandemic brought an early end to my field research. Nevertheless, one of the outcomes of this research is a fully digitized and transcribed archive of oral histories of Shakespeare producers in the United States from 2014-2020 housed at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.⁵⁴

The oral histories provide invaluable insight in the form of qualitative data that has been analysed and is presented throughout the thesis. Before I was able to locate many of the grassroots organisations to acquire these interviews, I needed to do exhaustive online and in-person research. A national list, or at least a comprehensive publicly available list, of grassroots Shakespeare companies by state has never been formally assembled. These groups are small, decentralized, and in some cases (even in the second decade of the twenty-first century) do not have an online presence. To locate these groups, I started with state-by-state Google searches with ‘Shakespeare performance’ and then the state’s name. This would often only yield the largest professional groups and the occasional sizable grassroots groups. Such wide-ranging, regionally based searches would leave out university-based groups and smaller grassroots groups, hence I adapted the methodology. For some rather sparse areas of the national map, this strategy was achieved by localizing the search process intensely. Through application of this methodology in some of

⁵³ Paul Prescott and others, ‘Shakespeare on the Road Archive’, (Shakespeare Centre Archives, Stratford-upon-Avon, 2014).

⁵⁴ The grassroots Shakespeare transcript format is identical to the transcript from the 2014 research in accordance with the recommendations in the *Oral History Manual* on ‘Preservation’, pp. 91-100. Likewise, arrangements have been made to follow appropriate guidelines for future access with the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. Sommer and Quinlan, *The Oral History Manual*, pp. 101-09.

America's smallest, most rural towns, to my surprise, on occasion I would find a group and add it to the list. However, internet-based inquiries were not my only methodology for located groups to create what would become Appendix B. At times, during conversations in-person with individuals I met in localities around the nation, I would be informed of small local groups that had not previously been identified. This involved being on-site and trying to locate a group in-person that I could not connect with online.⁵⁵

With this database assembled, I developed a system of classification aimed at differentiating organisational infrastructure (located in Appendix A) to better highlight distinctions between professional and grassroots organisations. I did this with a series of matrices. Using these matrices to identify each of the three-hundred sixty-five organisations in Appendix B, I was then able to derive meaningful datasets presented in visual form. This data is included in the form of maps, charts and graphs in the chapters to come.⁵⁶ At times, this information is presented alongside population data from the United States government to help meaningfully contextualize the phenomenon. Next, I have utilized an online mapping platform, ZeeMaps, to create an interactive digital map of all Shakespeare performance organisations in the United States and other relevant historical antecedents. This type of 'Visual Research', as defined by Kim Berman, accesses information that traditional research methods in literary or social sciences do not, 'explicitly aiming to empower research participants by creating visual materials'.⁵⁷ Hence, the map-based visual research has engaged participants in my findings by connecting their unique contributions to Shakespeare performance as part of a national 'grassroots Shakespeare' movement; and based on my field notes, this has energized their practice.⁵⁸ These maps are presented throughout the thesis to visually establish the

⁵⁵ Field notes. This occurred in Maine, South Carolina, Indiana, and Idaho. Another example of this was my attempt to make contact with the Wyoming Shakespeare Festival Company in Lander, Wyoming. While I never spoke with organisational leadership, I had an unofficial conversation with a company member that I was able to locate while researching in the town. This anecdote illustrates the varied methodology I utilized to compile this extensive list of Shakespeare performing organisations.

⁵⁶ Additionally, maps are located in Appendix D – American Shakespeare Cartography, other visual data is located in Appendix E – Organisation Foundations and Operations as well as Appendix F – Historic and Contemporary Performance Data.

⁵⁷ Kim S Berman, *Finding Voice: A Visual Arts Approach to Engaging Social Change*, (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2017), pp. 13-14.

⁵⁸ Feeling that they were part of a larger 'movement', both Heike Hambley and Emily Fournier cited the impact that seeing these maps had on their continued efforts in our correspondence.

breadth of grassroots Shakespeare activities. All of these maps are located in Appendix D – American Shakespeare Cartography.

Finally, the methodology that is predominantly employed throughout the first chapter of this thesis is traditional scholarship based on scholarly texts, academic journals, historical primary sources from archives, and web-based research. These sources helped to establish the historical antecedents for the grassroots phenomenon. Coupled with the ethnographic approach to oral histories, practice-as-research with applied theatre, archival research, statistical analysis with a combination of visual research, these traditional methodologies lay the foundation for this multi-layered research.

B. Organisational Categorisation

Few sources exist on the structure, development, and widespread nature of Shakespeare performing organisations in the United States. *The Shakespeare Complex* in 1975 is the earliest example of a monograph looking into the phenomenon, but it focuses primarily on large professionalized festivals. However, the authors did note that the theatres were not a ‘cohesive’ group, and that it was possible that a ‘new regional or a community festival may have been missed’ in their database of twenty-six organisations.⁵⁹ In preparation to write the *Shakespeare Companies and Festivals* in 1995, Engle, Londré, and Watermeier noted the vast increase in organisations since the prior, aforementioned publication on the topic: ‘We simply did not realize how fast and how far the grass-roots appeal of Shakespeare had spread in only fifteen years’. Engle and his colleagues divide these organisations, which they accounted at the time at around one hundred eighteen, into two categories, ‘destination festivals’ and ‘community festivals’.⁶⁰

I have categorized performing organisations differently, as the indicators for ‘destination festival’ are rather nebulous. The two broad categories I have developed, which can also manifest as varied hybridized models, include professional performing organisations and grassroots organisations. There are subdivisions to these classifications which are discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2 - Organisational Models. For example, both grassroots and professional groups and can be sponsored

⁵⁹ Glenn Loney and Patricia MacKay, *The Shakespeare Complex: A Guide to Summer Festivals and Year Round Repertory*, (New York, New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1975), pp. 1-2.

⁶⁰ Ron Engle, Felicia Hardison Londre, and Daniel J. Watermeier, *Shakespeare Companies and Festivals*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), p. xvii.

by academic institutions, which does not change their primary function or mission, but does fundamentally alter their organisational capacity.

Appendix A is composed of matrices I have developed to classify Shakespeare performing groups based upon their organisational characteristics. I found this to be particularly useful, as did the developers of the ‘Matrix Articulating the Principles of Grassroots Theater’ found in Appendix G, who stated it is ‘not intended to be read hierarchically, nor as some kind of checklist’.⁶¹ This statement is also applicable in relation to the matrices Appendix A. Often, these performance groups possess attributes from multiple categories, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 2. The idea of embedded research in *each* of these organisations is quite beyond the scope of this or likely any future study, therefore only publicly available materials have been used to base my determinations. While some organisations lack basic information on their website, the matrices in Appendix A have been appropriately suited for classification purposes. When I was unable to identify any of the characteristics, I have indicated this by placing a ‘[?]’ following the entry on the database in Appendix B. All charts, data, references and statistics based on organisational classifications used throughout this thesis are derived from the database in Appendix B and classifications therein. The colours assigned to each of the organisational classifications correspond to the ‘Shakespeare Performances Organisations: 2018-2020’ map located in Appendix D.

C. Limitations of the Research

While the scope of this research is geographically wide, spanning the United States, the intent is to understand the grassroots Shakespeare field from the vantage of organisational construction, operations, and programming. As noted previously, this thesis is a survey of these constructs, and is limited only to these areas, despite the many intriguing topics that developed throughout the project’s duration. Therefore, this thesis does not seek to understand audience perspectives; I only venture into such areas when audience response radically impacts operational or programmatic methodology. Similarly, it is not my intent to augment or directly engage in the field of critical performance studies; if a production is discussed, it is done so from an organisational mission-based perspective.

⁶¹ Cocke, Newman, and Salmons-Rue, *From the Ground Up*, p. 80.

The research was also limited by the temporal nature of the phenomenon. Organisations continually form and dissolve, and with such prevalence it is difficult to make contact and establish consistent communication to set up site-visits and interviews. When considering the decentralized nature of the grassroots organisations, even keeping an accurate list of organisations would be an incredibly difficult prospect. This research presents a snapshot of the field from June 2018 to March 2020. Beyond this, stating that a database of this sort is ever complete would be a fallacy. While I have located three-hundred sixty-five organisations for this research, it is a certainty that there are many more that I missed, or ones that have since formed. The methodology I employed to locate these groups could be refined and utilized in the future with a larger research team to uncover even more organisations. For now, however, the research is limited due to these time and logistical constraints.⁶²

It can be difficult, at times, to determine a group's organisational classification when it displays multiple characteristics across several of the matrices developed for Appendix A. Thus, there is minimal subjectivity that is employed at this stage. This is even more evident when looking at grassroots organisational variation and the subcategories presented in Chapter 2 – Organisational Structures. With only basic internet-based research for the majority of the three-hundred sixty-five groups, these categories can be challenging to determine with complete accuracy. Beyond internet-based research, only a survey with a high response rate could achieve absolute accuracy in organisational classification. Due to the funding and time commitment for such a research endeavour, this represents a limitation to this current study. For this research, interviews were the most effective way of determining the nature of many of these very specific characteristics.

Organisations that are represented with interviews are located in Appendix C. Each organisation is classified either as grassroots or professional when, indeed, the organisation may display characteristics of both. It is important to emphasize that grassroots Shakespeare should not be thought of as the absolute antithesis of a

⁶² In the case of Bards of Birmingham, Theatre in the Rough, and Merry War Theatre Company, I utilized extensive online research and was able to locate and assemble a comprehensive qualitative dataset from first-person accounts as if it were an interview, the details of which are included at the conclusion of Appendix H, Section 1, after oral history transcript. I employed this methodology because I was not able to set up an interview with these groups after multiple attempts (in the case of Bards of Birmingham the group had ceased operations). The qualitative data I discovered was rich and consequential, hence, I chose to add these organisations as supplemental sources.

professional Shakespeare company. Rather, each concept falls on a spectrum of characteristics, which is outlined in Appendix A and throughout this thesis. Nevertheless, these two organisational classifications, at times, must comprise a binary pair for the presentation of certain datasets such as the geographic analysis of grassroots versus professional groups. This may appear incongruous, but it allows one to compare quantitative data with inherently qualitative material.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic began in March of 2020, I had a research plan in place to include site-visits and interviews in all fifty states. While all of them would not have been present in the analysis and body of this thesis, due to time constraints, they would at least be present in the archive. That has since changed, as travel generally ceased throughout the nation and in-person interactions have lessened. While video-conference interviews are an option, I felt it best to not change the methodology near the end of the research. Being on-site for these interviews was a great benefit, allowing me to explore the communities themselves, beyond only the Shakespeare organisations. In addition, summer 2014 to early 2020 represents a distinct era in Shakespeare performance in the United States that firmly ended with the advent of COVID-19. What arises with the reopening of theatres will be a great avenue for further inquiry and is the subject of my future research interests.⁶³

⁶³ The first thirteen states were included in the archive in 2014, with the following nineteen being added during 2018-2020; collecting oral histories (when normal theatrical operations resume post-COVID-19) from the remaining eighteen organisations would be of great historical value and serve to complete this archive with all fifty states.

CHAPTER 1 - GRASSROOTS SHAKESPEARE: HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS

The following antecedents of the grassroots Shakespeare phenomenon in the United States are only a survey of a rich and largely untold history. Much like the contemporary grassroots Shakespeare reality, the history of the ‘people’s Shakespeare’, or amateur performances and activities, is much less celebrated than that of the professional domain. It is outside of the scope of this study to claim that this survey of grassroots Shakespeare is anywhere near complete; accordingly, Shapiro has stated ‘[writing] a comprehensive history of Shakespeare in America...from Revolutionary times until our own is an impossible task’.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, these historical events serve as an anchor for the development of organisational structures, the geographic situation of those organisations, the amateur Shakespeare performance tradition, and the consistent use of Shakespeare for political purpose.

1. Shakespeare’s Early American Roots: 1730-1880

Early amateur theatrical performance in America has been traced back as early as 1665. However, the earliest recorded amateur performance, definitively of the Shakespearean variety, occurred in 1730 with a production of *Romeo and Juliet* in New York City.⁶⁵ Shakespeare’s presence on the American stage continued to blossom from this point forward. In the late eighteenth century colonial soldiers chose to adapt Shakespeare to channel their perspective on the American War of Independence. A production of *Coriolanus* in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, with an overt original epilogue comparing the struggles of Americans to those of Caius Martius in his rebellion against his homeland would help to achieve this.⁶⁶ Perhaps this production of *Coriolanus* was one of the earliest American grassroots adaptations of Shakespeare. In this case, the ‘art of the people’ had a very timely political nature, and an appropriative approach to Shakespeare that Americans would come to embrace.

⁶⁴ Shapiro, *Shakespeare in a Divided America*, p. viii.

⁶⁵ Alden T Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan, *Shakespeare in America*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 15.

⁶⁶ Dobson, *Shakespeare and Amateur Performance*, p. 131.

As the new nation formed around the vision of its founders, vivid anecdotes of the nation's first three presidents also exemplify a growing national interest in Shakespeare. George Washington left the Constitutional Convention in 1787 to attend a performance of *The Tempest* at a Philadelphia opera house, and a few years later in 1790 he would host an amateur production at his presidential mansion in Philadelphia.⁶⁷ Washington it seems, however, was upstaged by his two immediate successors to the American Presidency: John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. Both men, along with many of the architects of the fledgling nation, have well-documented histories with Shakespeare. The most famous and vivid example is of Adams and Jefferson's pilgrimage to Stratford-upon-Avon; while on this primarily diplomatic trip to England the founding fathers couldn't resist carving off their own piece of a chair residing in Shakespeare's birthplace.⁶⁸ However, Shakespeare's work would remain far from the preserve of world leaders and the elite during the nineteenth century.

The young nation moved into the early decades of the new century with the publishing of an increasing number of Shakespeare-related texts.⁶⁹ The complete works of Shakespeare became increasingly available to the masses. Meanwhile, British actors began touring Shakespeare productions around the east coast to cities such as New York, Baltimore, and Washington, DC.⁷⁰ However, they would not completely dominate the theatrical market; in 1814 in Mississippi, local actors performed *Othello*, and a few years later on the deck of a riverboat Garrick's adaptation, *Catherine and Petruchio*, was performed.⁷¹ Small pockets of theatrical diversity existed, but not without incredible adversity; the nation's first black theatre group, the African Company, opened its doors in New York City in 1821 under the leadership of William Henry Brown. Inaugurating their theatre with a production of *Richard III*, the company was a grassroots enterprise that told Shakespearean stories

⁶⁷ 'America's Shakespeare: Connections between the Bard and the Founding Fathers', Folger Shakespeare Library, (2016) [Accessed 29 Jan 2019]. Vaughan and Vaughan, *Shakespeare in America*, p. 7.

⁶⁸ James Shapiro, *Shakespeare in America: An Anthology from the Revolution to Now*, (New York: Penguin Group Inc., 2013), p. xxiv.

⁶⁹ Vaughan and Vaughan, *Shakespeare in America*, pp. 51-57.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁷¹ Linwood E Orange, 'Shakespeare in Mississippi, 1814-1980', in *Shakespeare in the South: Essays on Performance*, ed. by Philip C Kolin (Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press, 1983), pp. 157-73. Kolin's collection of essays gives a thorough and varied account of nineteenth and twentieth century productions throughout the states of the American South.

through the eyes of African American actors for African American audiences.⁷² For black actors to perform the work of Shakespeare was seen as an unacceptable power-grab by the white theatrical elites. Shakespeare was at this time, and for two centuries to come, deployed as a linguistic and cultural gatekeeper. Despite the pushback and resistance, the company's leading actor, James Hewlett, played many Shakespearean roles and performed Brown's own grassroots original work, *King Shotaway*, the nation's first drama written by an African American.⁷³ But the theatre would only last three years, as a nearby professional theatre, irritated by their success, made nefarious arrangements to have the African Company raided by the police. The black actors were then forced to swear never to play Shakespeare again. Theatre historian Errol Hill concluded his account of this incident in *Shakespeare in Sable* by noting: 'The determination of the white establishment theatre at this early date to keep Afro-American performers out of the theatrical mainstream was prophetic of its attitudes for generations to come'.⁷⁴

A. *Transcontinental Pollination: 1820-1880*

As America entered the era of Jacksonian expansionism, imperialism, and Manifest Destiny, the population moved westward, and Shakespeare's texts were not far behind. His work would become a cultural mainstay for future generations of the American frontier. French diplomat and author Alexis de Tocqueville, following his travels through the United States in 1835, acknowledged the developing nature of the young nation: 'America is perhaps in our days the civilized country in which literature is least attended to'. But the popularity of Shakespeare was hard to ignore; he went on to famously conclude, 'There is hardly a pioneer's hut which does not contain a few odd volumes of Shakespeare'.⁷⁵ One year after de Tocqueville's book was published, McGuffey's *New Eclectic Reader* was released and would soon be the first encounter with Shakespeare for many young learners. The author himself recommended 'read the Bible first, Shakespeare second'.⁷⁶

⁷² Errol Hill, *Shakespeare in Sable: A History of Black Shakespearean Actors*, (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), pp. 11-14.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁷⁵ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2000), pp. 568-69.

⁷⁶ Katherine West Scheil, *She Hath Been Reading: Women and Shakespeare Clubs in America*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), p. 12.

With the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill, 50 miles northeast of Sacramento, California, westward expansion changed American history forever. Tens of thousands of easterners began to migrate to California, and for these young prospectors, theatre and Shakespeare became more than simple entertainment; as Helene Koon argued, 'it was sustenance for the spirit'.⁷⁷ Shakespeare was the most popular playwright during this time and the prospectors were very familiar with his work:

The vision of rowdy, illiterate miners sitting in rapt silence through performance of *Hamlet*, shouting lines to prompt forgetful actors, and paying great sums for the privilege of playing a favorite role is less fanciful than it might seem... The average miner was between twenty and thirty years old, had at least a sixth-grade education, and was familiar with Shakespeare, either because he had learned long passages from *McGuffey's Reader* or had seen a traveling theater company. He might even have played in an amateur production.⁷⁸

The spontaneous and eclectic nature of amateur and professional Shakespeare in the west created an environment where commitment to the text or the historical period in which they originated was of little concern. In an extensive account of two centuries of Montanan Shakespeare, Gretchen Minton writes of a late 1860s performance of *Romeo and Juliet* by itinerant professional actors in 'modern-dress' which undoubtedly resonated differently than the typical Elizabethan style; similarly, amateur actors assembled productions featuring boys in the women's roles performing in their 'mother's dresses'.⁷⁹ Consequently, these highly localized productions served as opportunity for communal participation and engagement, even featuring social events such as dances at their conclusion. Minton contends that such productions were designed not to be a 'distant museum piece' but rather a 'contemporary story' with strong connections to local audiences.⁸⁰

Likewise, Koon stated, 'necessity brought a good deal of license', marking a critical attribute of all grassroots Shakespeare production of any era.⁸¹ This 'necessity' also contributed to Shakespeare's presence in lesser-known, obscure locations. One can only speculate as to what performing conditions were in site-

⁷⁷ Helene Wickham Koon, *How Shakespeare Won the West: Players and Performances in America's Gold Rush, 1849-1865*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers, 1989), p. 4.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Gretchen E Minton, *Shakespeare in Montana: Big Sky Country's Love Affair with the World's Most Famous Writer*, (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2020), pp. 37, 41.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁸¹ Koon, *How Shakespeare Won the West*, p. 23.

specific locations such as ‘Git-up-and-Git, Hell’s Delight, Rat Trap Slide, Centipede Hollow, and Skunk Gulch’.⁸² America’s familiarity with Shakespeare led to many performances by amateur and amateur military-based acting groups around the rapidly expanding country. Records in the large population centres are numerous: *Othello* in Texas (in 1845 with future president Ulysses S. Grant first cast as Desdemona), *Richard III* in Santa Barbara, California (in 1847), ‘light comedies’ in Salt Lake City, Utah (in 1848).⁸³ Even Brigham Young, the Mormon founder of Salt Lake City, and the first governor of the Utah Territory, was a proponent of theatre, seeing it as an ‘innocent, moral, and highly proper kind of diversion’.⁸⁴ The influential itinerant actor-manager Jack Langrishe strongly agreed with the sentiment of theatre as a ‘moralizing and civilizing force’ as well, and his peripatetic work throughout the west helped to instil this in both urban and rural communities.⁸⁵ The aforementioned factors coalesced into an environment that encouraged individuals to engage in theatre both as an audience member and as a participant.

Shakespeare’s work continued to expand throughout the United States in other formats as well; professional British actors toured the country unrivalled until their American counterparts such as Edwin Forrest and the Booth brothers were able to make names for themselves.⁸⁶ The popularity of these professional actors exemplified the divide between two types of Shakespeare: the popular ‘working man’s Shakespeare’ of Forrest and the aristocratic performance favoured by his elite British rival William Charles Macready. A long-time feud between the two led to the Astor Place Riot in 1849, leaving twenty-two people dead and over one hundred fifty injured. Levine asserts most who were involved in the riot understood the struggle between these actors represented more than an argument between two men, it was ‘a clash over questions of cultural values’.⁸⁷ Furthermore, Levine described the changing nature of Shakespeare’s cultural capital:

Theater no longer functioned as an expressive form that embodied all classes within a shared public space, nor did Shakespeare much

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Shapiro, *Shakespeare in America*, pp. xix-xx. Shapiro considered ‘what effect playing a woman in love with a Moor’ had on the future Union commander and eighteenth president of United States. See also Vaughan and Vaughan, *Shakespeare in America*, p. 75.

⁸⁴ Koon, *How Shakespeare Won the West*, p. 29. This region would become an area of the country that showed early, firm support for amateur and community performance which continues to this day.

⁸⁵ Minton, *Shakespeare in Montana*, p. 44.

⁸⁶ Charles H Shattuck, *Shakespeare on the American Stage: From the Hallams to Edwin Booth.*, (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1976), pp. 31-54.

⁸⁷ Levine, *Highbrow / Lowbrow*, pp. 63-68.

longer remain the common property of all Americans...These changes were not cataclysmic; they were gradual and took place in rough stages.⁸⁸

Such cultural influences and changes were slowly notable in the professional theatre, and the divide would continue to grow. But to discount Shakespeare as a passing trend for 'low brow' audiences would be inaccurate, as his works were still enjoyed by a large portion of the population throughout the nineteenth century. Perhaps, most consequentially, the interaction between 'low-brow' and 'high-brow', the amateur and the professional, would not continue to be one of rivalry, but rather one of mutual benefit.

B. Civic, Domestic, and Social Rhizomes; Shakespeare Clubs: 1860-1930

Formed in Philadelphia in 1851, the first Shakespeare club was exclusively for men of wealth and influence, and this would remain the case until after the conclusion of the Civil War in 1865.⁸⁹ Following the Reconstruction Era in the coming decades, Shakespeare Clubs began to gain prominence outside of the elite in urban centres with the development of co-ed clubs and women's clubs. Each club was an independent group with the general mission to study the works of William Shakespeare; as time progressed, these goals expanded to achieve both civic and political ends. As some of the earliest practitioners of both Civic Shakespeare and Applied Shakespeare, these groups engaged with the major topics of the day, such as the women's suffrage movement. Like many contemporary theatre examples which are discussed in Chapter 4, groups would decide how best to engage in such issues based upon their regional politics. Some groups threw their support behind the movement, while others took a more conservative approach.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, the participants in these small organisations would help to change the cultural climate in the nation.⁹¹ Around two million women at the turn of the twentieth century made such clubs part of their social and personal lives, in locales both urban and rural. Katherine Scheil writes that Shakespeare was 'an author whose significance they could carry into their communities and their home life'.⁹²

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 68.

⁸⁹ Scheil, *She Hath Been Reading*, pp. 3-4.

⁹⁰ Ibid. pp. 9-10.

⁹¹ Ibid. pp. 123-39.

⁹² Ibid. pp. 2, 12.

The convergence of Shakespeare on the stage with the desire to be part of a social and self-education group also pushed women to become part of this widespread national phenomenon (see Figure 2 for an illustration of this). These clubs shared a similar philosophy to the Chautauquas, which were annual and generally outdoor touring performance groups specializing in ‘cultural, community, and individual improvement’ in provincial areas.⁹³ Shakespeare clubs were much smaller than the Chautauquas, and operated weekly or monthly, while the Chautauquas were often only an annual event. The performances at the Chautauquas and even on the professional stage inspired individuals to create their own grassroots organisations in communities across the nation. Charlotte Roberts of Bangor, Maine wrote of her experience after seeing a professional touring production: ‘In the winter of 1896, while attending a performance of Robert Mantell’s *Othello*, I was inspired with a longing to know better those incomparable lines and to become more familiar with the plays of Shakespeare’.⁹⁴

Following this inspiration she felt after viewing this professional production, Roberts would go on to be a founder of the Shakespeare Club of Bangor later that year. This is an early example of the symbiotic relationship between the amateur and the professional. As a woman’s club which served the Bangor area for over eighty years, this group regularly performed examples of early all-female grassroots Shakespeare productions and appropriations of their own, decades before the terms ‘community theatre’ or ‘grassroots theatre’ were coined. This group would assemble to not only create work, but also discuss Shakespeare in professional performance, further establishing the relationship between the two entities. This is a unique connection where the audiences of the professional performances are indeed performers themselves. When discussing the revival of an original work performed as late as 1936 entitled *Their Ocean Trip*, Roberts referred to it as a ‘delightful and highly amusing comedy written in true Shakespeare (Club?) [sic] style’.⁹⁵ Her inclusion of the ‘(Club?)’ following ‘Shakespeare’ brings forth several potential beliefs and questions held by members of this organisation: first, the club itself had developed its own social culture and traditions of which they were very proud. Next,

⁹³ Charlotte M Canning, *The Most American Thing in America: Circuit Chautauqua as Performance*, (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 2005), p. 1.

⁹⁴ Charlotte Roberts, *The First Forty Years of the Shakespeare Club of Bangor (1896-1936)*, (Bangor, Maine: Privately Printed, 1936), p. 3.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

they believed their time studying Shakespeare afforded them the opportunity and ability to create work in what they viewed as his style, while simultaneously adding their own creative influence. It was indeed Maine Shakespeare performed for Mainers by Mainers, and unquestionably unique.

Developing a sense of artistic freedom to alter and adapt Shakespeare’s work is a hallmark of later and even modern grassroots theatre organisations. This is ‘grassroots’ in the sense that Robert Gard described: ‘fabricated by the people themselves’.⁹⁶ Women’s clubs which performed this work, such as the Bangor club, are examples of prototypical grassroots Shakespeare organisations. This is not just because of the artistic liberties taken, but also due to their involvement in local community relations and the collective responsibility they all shared towards the work. In the record of its first forty years, Roberts made many references to charitable causes and civic functions: ‘All these brilliant programs did not make us forget our responsibility to those under-privileged children’.⁹⁷ In the midst of the Great Depression, the Shakespeare Club of Bangor studied Shakespeare, performed Shakespearean adaptations, and helped sustain their community to which they were inextricably linked.

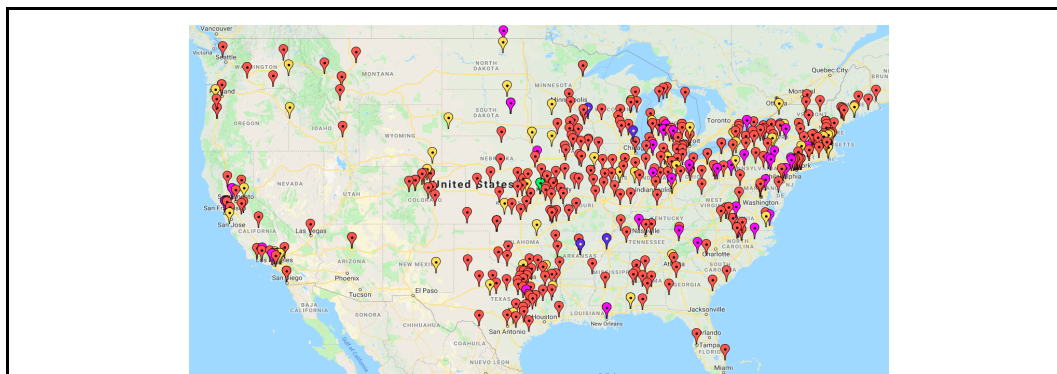


Figure 2 - Shakespeare Clubs, 1850 - 1950

See Appendix D – American Shakespeare Cartography for a more detailed map. Based on data from Katherine Scheil’s *She Hath Been Reading*.

At least sixty of the well over five hundred fifty clubs are still meeting as of 2019.⁹⁸ Founded in 1904, the Shakespeare Club of Pomona Valley participated in similar activities: performing Shakespeare plays, designing pageants, reading and

⁹⁶ Gard, *Grassroots Theatre*, p. 33.

⁹⁷ Roberts, *The First Forty Years*, p. 24.

⁹⁸ Figure 2.b – Active Legacy Shakespeare Clubs, Appendix D.

studying Shakespeare, as well as performing civic duties.⁹⁹ The all-female group was a source for community pride even early in its existence, as seen in the 6 July 1906 edition of the *Pomona Daily Review*:

Certainly no more creditable amateur production has been given here and the city should take just pride in a Shakespeare organisation composed of such energetic and ambitious ladies.¹⁰⁰

In Montana, similar activities occurred. Minton details how club members studied Shakespeare's female characters 'through the lens of their experience as wives and mothers', performed full-length productions of Shakespeare, and consistently interacted with the women's suffrage movement.¹⁰¹ These clubs were part of the social fabric in the West that led to Montana becoming the first state to elect a woman, Jeannette Rankin, to the House of Representatives. Shakespeare clubs not only provided broad social and political support, but also the opportunity to play roles that would not be available for women to professionally portray for decades to come. Unlike in the professional theatre, black women had much greater opportunity to participate in the Women's Club movement and did so with success. Scheil researched this thoroughly, noting Shakespeare was part of a progressive agenda towards civil rights and his work was 'blended into a varied curriculum that included African American writers as well as texts addressing social and community needs'.¹⁰² More so than the white women's clubs, African American clubs were more balanced in their approach to club organizing and placed Shakespeare in context with other writers, not alone on a pedestal. This approach proved fruitful for the groups as they felt responsibility to push urgent social reforms following the motto 'lifting as we climb'.¹⁰³ This common thread of ambition bound all of the over five hundred women's clubs together, throughout every region of the country and propelled the struggle for equality forward.

C. *Early Sylvan Experimentation: 1887-1900*

At the height of the Gilded Age (1870-1900), an era known for the rapid increase in income inequality, Shakespeare was also utilized for a purpose beyond

⁹⁹ 'Shakespeare Club of Pomona Valley' Archives, (Special Collections: Pomona Public Library, Pomona, CA). Still active during my time researching for this thesis, the club members invited me to a meeting where I conducted ethnographic researching including oral history interviews.

¹⁰⁰ 'As You Like It Capittally Played by Local Ladies', *Pomona Daily Review*, (6 July 1906).

¹⁰¹ Minton, *Shakespeare in Montana*, p. 64.

¹⁰² Scheil, *She Hath Been Reading*, p. 103.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 95-97.

education and progressive agendas.¹⁰⁴ Pastoral plays such as *As You Like It* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* became vehicles for influential Americans to display their wealth. Starting in August of 1887, Agnes Booth-Schoeffel along with many of her associates in the professional theatre assembled the first prominent outdoor theatre production in the United States at the Masconomo House north of Boston.¹⁰⁵ The Manchester Historical Museum claims, 'It was the first professional theater performance staged outdoors in the United States'. I have qualified this with the word 'prominent' previously as Shakespeare performance (and theatre, in general) has a long, complicated, and largely undiscovered history in the United States, hence Shakespeare was almost certainly professionally performed outdoors before this. The famous actress at the head of this novel enterprise, Agnes Booth-Schoeffel, was the wife of Junius Brutus Booth Jr. (one of the famous Booth brothers), and after his death in 1883 she married John Schoeffel.¹⁰⁶

While the Masconomo event started what would become a trend in America, this production was not the catalyst for the movement. The first open-air performance of Shakespeare to be part of this movement had taken place across the Atlantic at the Coombe House in Surrey, England three years earlier by Lady Archibald Campbell with a troupe of amateurs and semi-professionals called the Pastoral Players.¹⁰⁷ This caught the attention of the theatrical world; Howard Ticknor from the *Boston Globe* described the 'fascination which the spectators found in it, were themes of comment in two continents for many a day afterward'.¹⁰⁸ This production not only appealed to wealthy socialites, but also to other producers of Shakespeare as well. Both Dobson and Dugas argue that the Pastoral Players production influenced Ben Greet to begin producing outdoors the following year in 1885, thus initiating his long career as a trailblazer of outdoor Shakespeare.¹⁰⁹ The characteristics of this seminal outdoor production would come to define the next fifteen years of Shakespearean performance in the United States; Dobson writes that this approach to performance allowed producers to display 'their own status as hosts,

¹⁰⁴ Howard Zinn, *People's History of the United States*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), p. 253.

¹⁰⁵ 'The Masconomo House Hotel – Masconomo Street', Manchester Historical Museum, [Accessed 10 October 2019].

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Dobson, *Shakespeare and Amateur Performance*, p. 146.

¹⁰⁸ Howard Malcom Ticknor, 'The Sylvan Comedy', *The Boston Globe*, (9 Aug 1887).

¹⁰⁹ Dobson, *Shakespeare and Amateur Performance*, p. 173; Don-John Dugas, *Shakespeare for Everyman: Ben Greet in Early Twentieth-Century America*, (London: Society for Theatre Research, 2016), p. 19.

cultural patrons and social benefactors at the same time as showing off their own grounds'.¹¹⁰

Starting in the 1890s, announcements of these outdoor productions appeared in local papers and often with much fanfare; the editors proclaimed the 'novel' al fresco Shakespeare productions were of 'great interest among society folks', a 'great fad in all the large cities'.¹¹¹ I have located roughly two dozen productions of 'al fresco Shakespeare' before the turn of the century.¹¹² Though the events were philanthropic in design to the benefit of a local cause (kindergartens, missions, charities), the actors were often from well-known stock companies and were professionally compensated by the producers to attract the attention of socialites and create buzz in the press. Aligning with Levine's aforementioned argument of 'high brow' Shakespeare taking hold by the end of the century, audiences in attendance unquestionably included America's elite in Boston, New York, Washington D.C., Chicago, and Los Angeles. Even Grover Cleveland, President of the United States, was rumoured to attend the *As You Like It* production at the Masconomo House, albeit the press pointed out it was most likely a publicity stunt to bolster attendance.¹¹³ Despite the president not attending in 1887, six years later an open-air production of *As You Like It* was so warmly received by Washington socialites that they organized an encore performance in a wooded area nearby the capitol under the patronage of the Second Lady of the United States, Letitia Stevenson.¹¹⁴

From New York to Los Angeles, the popularity of this outdoor performance model was almost exclusively for individuals of wealth, but near the end of the decade that began to change. Howard Zinn wrote of the masses engaging in 'nationwide movements' with the hopes of altering an inequitable economic model, consequently staging elaborate private productions on the grounds of luxurious estates no longer seemed culturally appropriate for the elite. One of the many movements and ideas spreading around the country during the time included self-educated economist Henry George's theory that the basis of all wealth was held in

¹¹⁰ Dobson, *Shakespeare and Amateur Performance*, p. 146.

¹¹¹ 'The Open Air Play', *The Streator Free Press*, (2 Aug 1894).

¹¹² See Appendix F – Historic and Contemporary Performance Data for the complete list and sources for Outdoor Shakespeare Productions from 1887 to 1902.

¹¹³ 'President Cleveland Is Not Coming', *The Boston Globe*, (23 Jul 1887).

¹¹⁴ The company returned again the following year for performances as planned; however, I have not been able to locate further sources detailing the extent of the activities. 'For the Liberty Bell', *Evening Star*, (28 Sep 1893). 'Gallery, Pit, and Greenroom', *The Washington Times*, (27 May 1894).

land.¹¹⁵ In order to break this oppressive system, he advocated for a ‘single-tax’ only on land to help equalize the rampant inequalities in the nation. These ideals were put into practice in 1900 with the founding of Arden, Delaware, a single-tax, utopian-arts community. Finding inspiration in the idyllic Forest of Arden from *As You Like It*, the founders of the town staged Shakespearean dramas outdoors shortly after its formation.¹¹⁶ At first, the founders started with a unique approach. With the goal to improve new residents’ public speaking abilities so they could better convey the advantages of the Georgist system, the Ardenites turned again to Shakespearean drama as articulated by Arden Shakespeare director Tanya Lazar in 2019:

To get them used to speaking in public...the Henry George people started making them recite sonnets and pieces of shows of Shakespeare. And that went from the kind of political standing on street corners to walking up and down the green, entertaining people but not sitting in one spot and having people come to them. They would stroll; and they called themselves the Strolling Players.¹¹⁷

As early outdoor Shakespeare presentation evolved along with the pageant movement in the early 1900s, so did Arden’s productions. The Arden Shakespeare Guild is still active today, one hundred twenty years later, and is the subject of analysis in the chapters to follow.

Similar forces and political movements began to slowly push outdoor Shakespeare performance further away from private charity events and towards the realm of education. In May of 1899, the Janet Waldorf Company performed on the grounds of Oahu College in Hawaii to an audience of high school and college students.¹¹⁸ Despite the remote location on an island in the middle of the Pacific, this early outdoor educational performance demonstrates a major change in the perception of Shakespeare and who his work was for. In yet another example of the interplay between the professional and the amateur, one month later, five thousand miles away, an all-female cast at the University of Vermont would present an

¹¹⁵ Zinn, *People's History of the United States*, pp. 264-65.

¹¹⁶ The founders of this town also relied heavily on the ideals of William Morris’s Arts and Crafts movement which originated in England. Mary Catherine Kelley and Tanya Lazar, ‘Arden Shakespeare Guild’, Interview by William Wolfgang (Arden, DE: 26 September 2019), p. 1. This philosophy was manifest in the Arden’s early embrace of community drama as an agent for progressive politics and place-making. Nicholson, et al. noted that this similar connection to progress politics was reflected by the ‘Garden City Movement’ in Great Britain. Nicholson, Holdsworth, and Milling, *Ecologies of Amateur Theatre*, p. 118-21.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ ‘Drama “Al Fresco”’, *The Hawaiian Star*, (10 May 1899).

amateur production of *As You Like It* outdoors after years of seeing the reports of professionals doing the same through the country.¹¹⁹ Shakespeare performance was becoming part of the American zeitgeist, both professional and amateur, and the stage was now set for a new generation of producers, educators, and participants to make their own.

2. Shakespeare and The Germination of Community Performance: 1895-1920

From ‘high brow’ professional performances to amateur performances of all varieties including clubs and study groups, an environment was developing in America where Shakespeare’s presence in the university classroom was becoming a necessity. As one of the most influential figures in early twentieth-century American theatre, George Pierce Baker recognized Shakespeare first and foremost as a ‘dramatic artist’, not only a literary paragon. Baker would become a major advocate for keeping Shakespeare front and centre in the developing American theatrical pedagogy.¹²⁰ Baker and his contemporaries, such as Percy MacKaye, Thomas Wood Stevens, and the actor-manager Sir Philip Barling Ben Greet of Great Britain would play pivotal roles in defining the American theatrical landscape in the new century.¹²¹ In part because of their efforts, by the turn of the century, Shakespeare was placed on the curriculum in many American universities.¹²² As a prominent educator, Baker was also at the nucleus of several intertwined theatrical movements including the Educational Theatre, Elizabethan Revival, Greek Revival, American Drama, Outdoor Theatre, and Pageantry.¹²³

By the late 1910s, these separate strands coalesced into the Little Theatre Movement, the precursor to what Americans today know as ‘community theatre’.¹²⁴ Little Theatres and community theatres emphasized the communal and civic benefits

¹¹⁹ ‘Shakespeare out of Doors’, *The Burlington Free Press*, (23 Jun 1899).

¹²⁰ Dugas, *Shakespeare for Everyman*, p. 84. Wisner Payne Kinne, *George Pierce Baker and the American Theatre*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954), pp. 119-23.

¹²¹ MacKaye will be covered in-depth in the forthcoming sections of this chapter.

¹²² Dugas, *Shakespeare for Everyman*, p. 75.

¹²³ Kinne, *George Pierce Baker*, pp. 71-72, Educational Theatre; pp. 58-66, Elizabethan Revival; pp. 23-25, Greek Revival; pp. 67-72, American Drama; pp. 147-153, Outdoor Theatre; pp. 138-143, Pageantry.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 135-38. The term ‘Little Theatre’ and ‘community theatre’ were used synonymously throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Now it is most common for organisations to identify as a ‘community theatre’. ‘American Association of Community Theatre History’, 2019, [Accessed 5 October 2019].

of amateur performance at the local level. Constance D'Arcy Mackay described the movement as 'love of drama' not 'love of gain'.¹²⁵ Such organisations have become mainstays in America; in 2019, the American Association of Community Theatre had approximately 1,800 organisational and individual members.¹²⁶ However, it was not a straight path that led Baker and America's other theatrical pioneers to the development of community theatre. Baker fervently promoted what he thought to be the future of American dramatics: pageantry. Acknowledging its medieval origins and varied iterations, Baker described pageantry as the 're-creation by the masses (of) the past history of a community' in a way that 'reveal(s) the artistic and the poetic'.¹²⁷ This involved costuming large numbers of participants, relevant music, as well as poetic, unnaturalistic dialogue meant to draw out a historical or patriotic theme.¹²⁸ Baker's contemporary, Percy MacKaye, believed so strongly in the idea of pageantry he advocated for a 'competition between cities' led by appointed public servants called 'pageant-masters' with the hope to 'stimulate industry, trade, and education'.¹²⁹ Pageantry was not only theorized in academic writings, it was also implemented, in some cases, on a massive scale. Stevens collaborated with MacKaye on 'The Pageant of St. Louis', a four-night celebration in honour of the city's 150th year. With over 7,500 individuals in the cast and playing to an audience of 80,000 a night, the goal was 'to focus the whole city on its past and its aspirations – to start a new idea of the city'.¹³⁰ Baker warned against commercialism and commodification of this art form, and the best way to achieve that, he believed, was through 'trained skill' and education.¹³¹

Ultimately, pageants would not become Baker's legacy; it would be his pedagogical influence.¹³² He began teaching at Harvard University in 1888 and would go on to instruct multitudes of future educators and scholars - most famously

¹²⁵ Constance D'Arcy Mackay, *The Little Theatre in the United States*, (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1917), p. 1.

¹²⁶ 'American Association of Community Theatre History'.

¹²⁷ George Pierce Baker, 'Pageantry', *Art and Progress*, 4 (1913), pp. 834-35.

¹²⁸ Much like the early outdoor productions in the 1890s, the Pageant Movement was not isolated to the United States, the movement was just as profound and influential in Great Britain. Dobson, *Shakespeare and Amateur Performance*, pp. 167-72.

¹²⁹ MacKaye, *The Civic Theater*, p. 176.

¹³⁰ Melvin R White, 'Thomas Wood Stevens: Creative Pioneer', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 3 (1951), p. 287.

¹³¹ Baker, 'Pageantry', pp. 834-35.

¹³² John Mason Brown, 'Introduction', in *George Pierce Baker*, ed. by Wisner Payne Kinne (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. xiv. W L Phelps, 'George Pierce Baker (1866-1935)', *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 73 (1939), p. 132.

in his 47 Workshop - among them Ashley Horace Thorndike (of Columbia University and the first president of the Shakespeare Association of America), Frederick Koch (of the University of North Carolina and early grassroots theatre practitioner), Alexander Drummond (of Cornell University and folk grassroots practitioner), and Allen Crafton (of the University of Kansas and community theatre pioneer).¹³³ By 1895, Baker had created an Elizabethan stage at the University fulfilling his personal interest in the Elizabethan Revival movement. This caught the attention of William Poel who was attempting to recreate Elizabethan staging practices in England.¹³⁴ While Poel came to the United States and lectured alongside Baker to Ivy League institutions, his erstwhile colleague Sir Philip Ben Greet would go on to champion the philosophy of minimal staging and outdoor performance.¹³⁵

Don-John Dugas argues ‘Greet fundamentally changed the way Shakespeare’s plays were performed and received in the United States’ by reframing the way audiences thought of the stage and changing the perception of theatre itself into an educational endeavour.¹³⁶ Greet’s theatrical style was constituted by a bare stage in an outdoor setting coupled with fast-paced action, and no breaks between scenes. He labelled his presentations as ‘educational theatre’, and therefore Baker wholeheartedly endorsed Greet’s work.¹³⁷ Happily identifying his target audience, Greet scheduled the majority of his touring performances at academic or other educational institutions and events such as those of the Chautauquas.¹³⁸ The interactions between Shakespearean touring productions of Greet’s players, Shakespeare Clubs, Chautauqua circuits, and universities, created an unprecedented cross-pollination of Shakespeare enthusiasm. In 1912, Doubleday, Page & Company published a highly successful series of Shakespeare plays edited by Greet specifically for amateur actors entitled *The Ben Greet Shakespeare for Young*

¹³³ Kinne, *George Pierce Baker*, pp. 34, 52, 205-506. See also Gard and Burley, *Community Theatre*, p. 19. Eugene O’Neill and Broadway director and producer Winthrop Ames were also among Baker’s many students. The 47 Workshop was a seminal playwrighting and directing course in which Baker honed students’ skills in ‘dramatic action’ and ‘dramatic construction’. Kinne, *George Pierce Baker*, pp. 104-11.

¹³⁴ Charles H Shattuck, ‘Setting Shakespeare Free?’, *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 17 (1983), p. 114.

¹³⁵ Dobson, *Shakespeare and Amateur Performance*, p. 173. Dugas, *Shakespeare for Everyman*, pp. 11, 158-59.

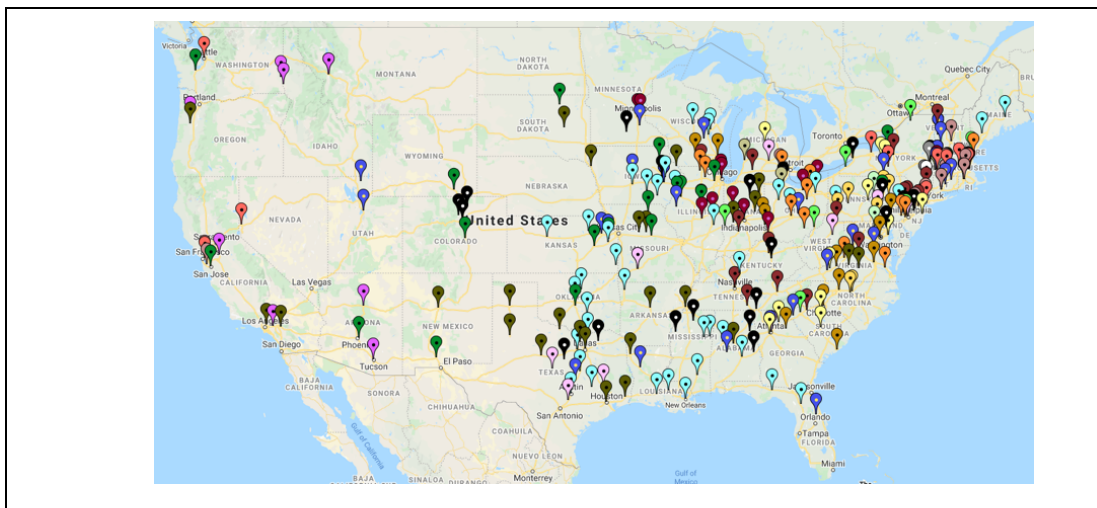
¹³⁶ Dugas, *Shakespeare for Everyman*, p. 9.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹³⁸ Canning, *The Most American Thing in America*, p. 198.

Readers and Amateur Players further developing this enthusiasm in frequent and prevalent amateur performance.¹³⁹

Greet's approach was different than the previous trend in outdoor Shakespeare performance in America. From Angus Booth-Schoeffel's first production at the Masconomo House 1887 to before Greet initially performed in 1903, America viewed outdoor performance as an upper-class novelty, as detailed in the previous section. Greet championed the idea that Shakespeare was something that could be appreciated by ordinary people, by the masses. His influence was far-reaching and long-lasting. With a cultural phenomenon the next generation of Shakespearians would come to build upon, Greet toured around the nation, specifically to colleges, where he would sow the seeds of outdoor Shakespeare in minimalist settings.¹⁴⁰ Dugas articulates Greet's direct influence on Frederick Koch, Angus Bowmer (founder of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, America's longest, continuously running Shakespeare festival), but perhaps most critically, on countless undergraduate dramatic societies: 'While the scholars were reading Poel, thousands of their students were grabbing copies of Greet's Doubleday editions, donning Elizabethan costumes, and stepping onto the greensward and scaffold'.¹⁴¹ Figure 3 visualizes Dugas' list of 'North American Institutions of Higher Learning that Hosted Performance by Ben Greet's Companies, 1902-18, 1929-32' demonstrating the geographic extent of Greet's operations.



¹³⁹ Dugas, *Shakespeare for Everyman*, p. 249.

¹⁴⁰ Richard H Palmer, 'America Goes Bare: Ben Greet and the Elizabethan Revival', in *Elizabethan Performance in North American Spaces*, ed. by Susan Kattwinkel (Southeastern Theatre Conference: University of Alabama Press, 2004), pp. 10, 17, 18.

¹⁴¹ Dugas, *Shakespeare for Everyman*, pp. 347-62.

Figure 3 - Ben Greet's Woodland Players Performances Sites

See Appendix D – American Shakespeare Cartography for a more detailed map. Based on data from Don-John Dugas' *Shakespeare for Everyman: Ben Greet in Early Twentieth-Century America*.

Greet had indeed energized many to participate in theatre directly – as performers and directors – and not just in Shakespeare. Some early pioneers, taking inspiration from the instruction in Baker's 47 Workshop, set off to create their own practical theatrical enterprises. One such individual, Allen Crafton who was coming directly from his graduate work at Harvard in 1915, opened a small proto-community theatre in Galesburg, Illinois in an abandoned saloon, which was named the Prairie Playhouse.¹⁴² Shakespeare's work was not among Crafton's selections during his tenure, reflecting a slow decline in Shakespeare's popular appeal, which is covered in the coming sections. Also, Crafton was influential to the field at large, as he was an undergraduate instructor at the University of Kansas and served as a mentor for grassroots pioneer Robert Gard.¹⁴³ Crafton recalled in an interview with Gard how his productions (written by mostly American playwrights) were cast to create 'everybody's theatre', not just amateur theatre:

We cast our plays from everywhere: a banker's wife, a couple of preachers, shop girls, high-school and college teachers, students - and one of our best character actors I developed from a delivery boy who began hanging around the theatre. This sort of 'democratic' casting was also new.¹⁴⁴

The term 'democratic' was one that permeated many levels of discourse during this era in American history, as the nation was struggling to live up to such ideals amidst labour disputes, explosive racial tensions, and struggles between political philosophies such as nationalism and socialism. Percy MacKaye wrote extensively on the subject of politics and drama; this statement from his 1917 publication *Community Drama* epitomizes his philosophy in his characteristically heightened prose:

Now the time has struck for that expert art to come forth in the open - for the roof of the traditional theatre to be undomed and let in the ancient stars, for its walls to be pushed back by a million aspiring arms of the people, till the soul of the community performs its magic rites

¹⁴² Gard and Burley, *Community Theatre*, p. 30.

¹⁴³ Gard, *Grassroots Theatre*, pp. 6-8.

¹⁴⁴ Gard and Burley, *Community Theatre*, p. 32.

behind the scenes as splendidly among the inspired congregation of the Amphitheatre.¹⁴⁵

MacKaye's central principle, which was less flowery and more direct, called for 'drama *of* and *by* the people, not merely *for* the people'.¹⁴⁶ Since President Abraham Lincoln forged this 'triad' in his famous 'Gettysburg Address', it has been continuously appropriated to express the definition of democratic values in a variety of contexts.¹⁴⁷ Hence, MacKaye seized this famous 'triad' and used it throughout his career. In his 1912 book *The Civic Theater*, he advocated for the style popularized famously by Greet, calling for 'a great out-door theatre of the people in their public park'. MacKaye's ideals came to the forefront as America approached the 300th anniversary of Shakespeare's death.¹⁴⁸

A. First to Bloom: A Shakespeare Festival in Kinsley, Kansas: 1912-1916

One of Ben Greet's company members, Gilmor Brown, would go on to have an impact of his own on the Outdoor Theatre movement, Shakespeare performance, as well as growing interest in community-based dramatics. Born in New Salem, North Dakota in 1886, Brown decided to pursue theatrics at an early age. Before he was twenty years old, he went on tour with Greet, learning as much as he could about Shakespeare, touring companies, and 'playing out of doors'.¹⁴⁹ Brown also had the opportunity to work directly with another one of the nation's most influential practitioners of drama, Percy MacKaye. During studies in Chicago, both MacKaye and the newly formed Drama League of America 'made him sort of a protégé'.¹⁵⁰ Brown met Thomas Wood Stevens, as well, and developed an interest in the pageant movement that was sweeping across the country. At the time, leading pageants and

¹⁴⁵ Percy MacKaye, *Community Drama: Its Motive and Method of Neighborliness*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1917), p. 37.

¹⁴⁶ Joyce Kilmer, *Literature in the Making, by Some of Its Makers*, (New York: Harper Brothers, 1917), p. 315.

¹⁴⁷ Wolfgang Mieder, "'Government of the People, by the People, and for the People": The Making and Meaning of an American Proverb About Democracy', in *Proverbs Are the Best Policy: Folk Wisdom and American Politics*, (Logan, UT: University of Colorado Press, 2005), p. 16.

¹⁴⁸ MacKaye, *The Civic Theater*, p. 21. Percy MacKaye, *A Substitute for War*, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1915), p. 41.

¹⁴⁹ While it is not entirely clear how long Brown played with the company, Shoup postulates at least one season. Gail Leo Shoup, *The Pasadena Community Playhouse: Its Origins and History from 1917 to 1942*, Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, (University of Southern California, 1968), p. 23.

¹⁵⁰ Delmar C Homan, 'Shakespearean Festivals in Western Kansas', *Heritage of the Great Plains*, 21 (1988), p. 4.

large outdoor festivals provided a more stable income than stock companies, therefore, Brown took advantage.¹⁵¹

Having gained considerable experience working alongside Greet, MacKaye, and Stevens, by the age of twenty-six, Brown was well prepared with the most up-to-date dramatic theories to undertake a large, unprecedented Shakespearean festival in the small, rural town of Kinsley, Kansas. Brown secured this opportunity after accepting an invitation from a friend, Charles Edwards, to help produce community drama in the town.¹⁵² Edwards, a Kinsley local, had organized smaller community productions prior to the festival; he saw an opportunity to collaborate with Brown after the latter brought a touring production of *Romeo and Juliet* to the town two years prior.¹⁵³ While the first amateur performance of Shakespeare was recorded nearly two centuries before, never before had a town created an elaborate outdoor production and marketed it to an entire state with the hopes of ‘establishing an institution’.¹⁵⁴

Other than brief, obscure references in two doctoral dissertations at the University of Southern California (both on Gilmor Brown and the Pasadena Community Playhouse) by Altenberg and Shoup, the remaining scholarly references I have located on the Kinsley festivals were written by Delmar C Homan of Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas between 1984-93. The Shakespearean activities in Kinsley and their profound effects on the field at large have been absent from scholarly discourse since Homan’s publications decades ago. Despite this, the Kinsley festival is the earliest example, to the extent that I have been able to locate, of a community wishing to establish annual permanency in their Shakespearean performance while simultaneously making their festival a ‘destination’.¹⁵⁵ This mission statement was not simply in the subtext of the enterprise, but clearly articulated in the considerable press coverage: ‘It is intended to establish a great annual dramatic event in Kinsley, which shall attract crowds from all over the

¹⁵¹ Shoup, *The Pasadena Community Playhouse*, p. 36. Lee Shippey, ‘Lee Side O’ La’, *Los Angeles Times*, (6 November 1929).

¹⁵² Homan, ‘Shakespearean Festivals in Western Kansas’, p. 8.

¹⁵³ ‘Gilmor Brown In “Romeo and Juliet”’, *The Kinsley Graphic*, (22 Sep 1910).

¹⁵⁴ ‘Real Dramatic Center: Kinsley in a Class by Itself’, *The Kinsley Mercury*, (27 Aug 1914).

¹⁵⁵ Dugas wrote of the concept of ‘permanency and continuity’ as he discussed Greet’s influence on Victor H Hoppe, the director of a college-based Shakespeare festival in Bellingham, Washington from 1921-26. This festival was the earliest involvement in Shakespeare for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival’s founder, Angus Bowmer. His festival would go onto be one of the most obvious example of permanence in the field. Dugas, *Shakespeare for Everyman*, pp. 348-49.

western part of the state, and that shall incidentally support a public library in this county'.¹⁵⁶

The first production, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, was sponsored, in part, by a local women's club.¹⁵⁷ The excitement recorded in the reports of both *The Kinsley Graphic* and *The Kinsley Mercury* over the course of the festival's five-year run is palpable as the producers promote not only the civic and artistic benefits, but also the economic impact of being a destination for theatre:

The business management of the play was perhaps the biggest factor in the financial success and was an example of what publicity will do [...] People who were first-nighters came for every other night, and wished they might see it again. The *Graphic* extends congratulations to the Friday Night Club, to Gilmor Brown, to the cast and company, and the business management, and hopes their dream of out-door Shakespeare may become a permanent annual event in Kinsley. It will have the most cordial support of not only our own town, but of the county and surrounding towns.¹⁵⁸

Following widely celebrated success, and intentions to realize ambitions of a permanent annual festival, in 1913, for reasons unclear, there were no Shakespeare festivals in Kansas. Altenberg noted Gilmor Brown was not 'able to work up a dramatic festival for Kansas' in 1913, therefore he travelled with a stock company to Pasadena, California for work (which would set up his future role as founder of the Pasadena Community Playhouse, to be discussed below).¹⁵⁹ Undeterred by falling short of their goal of yearly production, Brown and Edwards announced plans in the summer of 1914 to produce *As You Like It* as their 'second annual presentation'; Edwards followed this by stating the Festival should be 'at least annual, perhaps more frequent'.¹⁶⁰ The fact that the event was not the 'second annual' illustrates the importance the organizers placed on the permanence of their festival, enough so to bend the truth to achieve it.

¹⁵⁶ 'Over One Hundred in the Cast', *The Kinsley Graphic*, (30 May 1912).

¹⁵⁷ 'Gilmor Brown Here', *The Kinsley Graphic*, (23 May 1912).

¹⁵⁸ 'Out-Door Play Drew Crowds: "Midsummer Night's Dream" As Given in Kinsley, Pleased Many', *The Kinsley Graphic*, (13 Jun 1912).

¹⁵⁹ Homan, 'Shakespearean Festivals in Western Kansas', p. 2. Roger Monroe Altenberg, *A Historical Study of Gilmor Brown's Fair Oaks Playbox: 1924-1927*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, (University Southern California, 1964), p. 26.

¹⁶⁰ 'To Out Do Former Production: The Parts Have Been Assigned and the Committees Appointed', *The Kinsley Graphic*, (30 Jul 1914). 'Outdoor Play Pleases Many', *The Kinsley Graphic*, (27 Aug 1914).

The Shakespearean activities did not stay isolated in Kinsley, however. Brown and Edwards expanded to other nearby small towns in the state in 1915. Homan briefly discussed Brown's operations in four other towns: Hutchinson, Lincoln, St. John, and Herington. Since Kinsley saw the most performances during this five-year period, most likely because it was the hometown of Charles Edwards, I have chosen to focus on the events in Kinsley.¹⁶¹ This expansion to other locations, however, meant that Kinsley did not see its own festival that year. Participants could still be involved if they were willing to make a trip to one of the other towns. Brown did not return to Kinsley for the final production in 1916; instead, Edwards took on the responsibility himself, and he proved to be more than capable.¹⁶² Having performed in MacKaye's massive tercentenary event in New York City only two months earlier, Edwards was clearly inspired and decided to assemble the production, the largest he would ever produce.¹⁶³ Percy MacKaye's 1916 tercentenary activities and his massive community production are discussed in detail in the subsequent sections of this chapter. Edwards played the role of Emperor Caligula in this historic production, *Caliban and the Yellow Sands*, in New York City. An article published in Kinsley, documented an interaction between Edwards and the influential writer and pageant-master:

Percy MacKaye the author of this greatest of community dramas, paid especial compliment to Mr. Edwards for his portray of Caligula and presented him with a copy of the play containing a complimentary autographic message.¹⁶⁴

Like the New York City production, Kinsley's 1916 production of *Twelfth Night* included a massive cast. Edwards assembled three-hundred community members in his cast, from a town of only 1,500. These productions were very much a product of their time and reflect the sentiments of the pageant movement. Casting hundreds of community members in a grassroots (or a professional) Shakespearean production would be highly unusual today, and logistically daunting. Nevertheless, the Kinsley and other western Kansas festivals from 1912-16 represented a significant advance toward the modern idea of 'Shakespeare festival'.

¹⁶¹ Homan, 'Shakespearean Festivals in Western Kansas', p. 2.

¹⁶² 'Four Nights of Twelfth Night', *The Kinsley Mercury*, (28 Jul 1916).

¹⁶³ 'Kinsley Man in Great New York Play', *The Kinsley Mercury*, (15 Jun 1916).

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

The western Kansas festivals differed, on many levels, from previous productions or festivals in the United States. Primarily, there was professional leadership, both administrative and artistic, working with the community at large as well as amateur, local performers.¹⁶⁵ Brown and Edwards assigned roles not only for actors but also to a variety of committees to help administrate all aspects of production from costuming to facilities and infrastructure.¹⁶⁶ Evident during the proceedings as Kinsley prepared for the ‘largest outdoor production ever given in Kansas’ was a shared sense of collective responsibility between participants.¹⁶⁷ As a reflection of the national dialogue, led in part by MacKaye, the festival in Kinsley was described as one of the ‘new art forms of democracy’.¹⁶⁸ Whether the activities were truly democratic or not, the community was fully engaged. Private businesses decorated their storefronts with flags, while others such as the Kinsley Electric Lighting company provided in-kind donations of services.¹⁶⁹ This was Kinsley’s festival, and the town itself could feel ownership. *The Kinsley Graphic* tried to capture the excitement in words: ‘The hotels are crowded, the trains are bringing in the merrymakers, the roads are noisy with honking motors’.¹⁷⁰ The festive atmosphere was hard work, but participants seemed very willing to take it on. *The Kinsley Graphic* reported at the conclusion of the 1914 *As You Like It*, ‘Behind the scenes were many happy mothers, who had taken such pleasure in costuming their little folks, and they felt truly repaid when they saw how much pleasure was being given to others’.¹⁷¹ Even the production itself contained elements geared to community interaction that were unusual for the time; the 1912 production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* did not start on the stage, as was the normal convention during the previous century, ‘but in the audience’. As the festivities concluded, the town celebrated daily with communal dinners and line parties.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁵ ‘Out-Door Play Drew Crowds’

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ This is a characteristic of grassroots Shakespeare organisations that is discussed in Chapter 3. ‘Big Festival Opens Tonight’, *Kinsley Graphic*, (6 Jun 1912).

¹⁶⁸ ‘Outdoor Play Pleases Many’.

¹⁶⁹ ‘Big Festival Opens Tonight’. ‘Over One Hundred in the Cast’.

¹⁷⁰ ‘Big Festival Opens Tonight’.

¹⁷¹ ‘Outdoor Play Pleases Many’.

¹⁷² I have not been able to uncover further details on how exactly this play began ‘in the audience’. Nevertheless, it appears to have been a novelty of which the production team was quite proud. ‘Big Festival Opens Tonight’.

Gilmor Brown's experience touring with Ben Greet and various stock companies coupled with his studies with MacKaye and Stevens certainly prepared him to implement the festivals.¹⁷³ However, Charles Edwards was also integral to their development. Born and raised in Kinsley, Edwards was able to network and interact with the community in a way that a touring stock company never could. As early as 1899, Edwards had established a theatrical club in Kinsley, and would return to his hometown to produce community plays sporadically over the next decade amidst his professional acting career.¹⁷⁴ A first-hand account of a local sheriff, John Wire, who played Lysander in the 1912 *Midsummer* gives rare insight into the logistics of organizing such a massive production with amateurs of all ages – many of whom had never participated in theatre before. Wire recalls Edwards at times struggled to work with members of the cast, who the former sheriff called 'a bunch of knotheads'; he also cited relentless attacks from mosquitos inconspicuously breeding near the picturesque outdoor stage.¹⁷⁵ These factors made Brown and Edwards' partnership productive and enabled their ground-breaking work; the two-person team was truly able to create MacKaye's ideal theatre 'of and by the people, not merely for the people'.¹⁷⁶

The people of Kinsley, who were either first or second generation pioneers of the American West, were enthusiastic about the festival for reasons beyond the theatrical theories and techniques: it was seen as a connection to their civilized roots.¹⁷⁷ *The Hutchinson Gazette* was one Kansas newspaper that welcomed the press releases from Kinsley with excitement and made the case that a 'farmer...can certainly appreciate Shakespeare and can train his children to do so'. Appreciating Shakespeare was seen as a positive connection to a collective inheritance; the editorial also pointed to the 'New England lineage' of even the 'smallest Kansas'

¹⁷³ In Brown's press release which appeared the local papers, he stated 'largely through the influence of Ben Greet' outdoor Shakespeare performance had become popularized throughout the nation. 'Arkansas Valley Dramatic Festival', *The Kinsley Graphic*, (30 May 1912).

¹⁷⁴ Edwards performed in a well-received, one-person dramatic reading of *Macbeth* six months after starting the drama club. 'Dramatic Reading', *Kinsley Graphic*, (1 Dec 1899). 'Dramatic Club Organized', *Kinsley Graphic*, (16 Jun 1899); Homan, 'Shakespearean Festivals in Western Kansas', p. 2.

¹⁷⁵ Wire went on to describe Edwards as a 'sissy-type fellow', someone who didn't fit in with the other young men in Kansas at the time: 'I don't think he knew how to be like the other boys'. Everett Brown, 'Californian's Death Recalls "Sylvan Grove" Days at Kinsley', *Great Bend Tribune*, (7 Feb 1960).

¹⁷⁶ Joyce Kilmer, *Literature in the Making, by Some of Its Makers*, (New York: Harper Brothers, 1917), p. 315.

¹⁷⁷ Homan, 'Shakespearean Festivals in Western Kansas', p. 9.

town.¹⁷⁸ Therefore, with the size, scope, and subject of the Kinsley festivals, Kansas had something to be proud of, something they didn't have in the cultural centres in the east in 1916:

The East and the West seem to be growing together, and a few more events like this out of doors performance and of monument unveilings will give the pages of eastern journals something new and fresh and out of their too, too-beaten track to say about 'wild and woolly Kansas'. The grove and stream used for staging Shakespeare may be their theme now.¹⁷⁹

The civic pride in Kinsley was state-wide. Yet another aspect of the unprecedented nature of the festival, the Lieutenant Governor of Kansas, William Yoast Morgan, praised the work in a press release, and encouraged Kansans to attend. Lt. Governor Morgan also did not miss the opportunity to endorse the continuation of such endeavours by explaining their importance: 'It will be a quickening of artistic thought, an elevation of ideals, and an awakening to greater mental activity, and a higher conception of humanity in the community, in the state'.¹⁸⁰

In 1914 *The Kinsley Graphic* wrote: 'To Boston for beans, to Milwaukee for beer, to New Castle for coal, to Lindsborg for music, to Kinsley for dramatic art'.¹⁸¹ This sentiment of Kinsley's theatrical standing would change quickly with the onset of America's involvement in the First World War in 1917, and in several decades the festival would be all but forgotten. The Kinsley festival's decline was due, in part, to wartime rationing. Edwards references this in a press release in *The Kinsley Graphic*: 'Charles Edwards is giving it gorgeous costuming, as he happens to own about twenty costly costumes of the period and is therefore not infringing upon wartime economy by using them'.¹⁸² It would soon no longer be fashionable to produce plays on such a large scale; Edwards was forced to change his approach along with the rest of America's pageant-makers. Also, another factor in Kinsley's decline in dramatic activity was that Gilmor Brown had moved to Pasadena where he would go on to

¹⁷⁸ 'Verily, Kansas Loves "Works of Old Masters"', *The Hutchinson Gazette*, (8 Jun 1912). This evidence parallels Utah Shakespeare Festival founder Fred Adams' description of Shakespearean 'inheritance' discussed in Chapter 3.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ 'Our Kansas Festival', *Kinsley Graphic*, (3 Aug 1916).

¹⁸¹ 'Real Dramatic Center'

¹⁸² 'Junior Play Thursday', *The Kinsley Graphic*, (15 Nov 1917).

assemble a larger and more comprehensive Shakespeare festival in the decades to come.¹⁸³

Edwards was adaptable, however, and continued producing theatre around the Midwest. Propagating the professional-amateur symbiosis as he had throughout his life, he founded another grassroots Shakespeare festival in Okmulgee, Oklahoma at the request of a local Shakespeare club that saw his work in Kinsley.¹⁸⁴ In Oklahoma, he managed to revive large-scale productions for a short period of time, prompting *The Daily Oklahoman* to call Edwards ‘one of the most noted directors of al fresco pageants in the country’.¹⁸⁵ The Okmulgee Festival ran for four theatrical seasons, from 1920 to 1923, with Edwards directing *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *The Tempest* respectively the first two years.¹⁸⁶ Edwards, presumably still in touch with MacKaye, acquired costumes from the pageant-master’s *Caliban* masque in New York City and used them for his 1921 production of *The Tempest* in Okmulgee. *The Tempest* was an unusual selection for outdoor drama, and in the course of my research this is the only production I have located during this era outside of MacKaye’s esoteric adaptation. Shapiro noted this as well, stating that productions of *The Tempest* ‘were few and far between, and mostly forgettable’ between the Civil War and World War II.¹⁸⁷

Continuing to make a name for himself in the Little Theatre Movement, Edwards accepted a position as director of the Tulsa Little Theatre (also in Oklahoma). He served at the theatre for a short time before taking his own life in 1926; Edwards’ aforementioned inability to ‘fit in’ was corroborated by the director himself in his final hours in a suicide note to his father, ‘I know you loved me, father, but you failed to understand how weak and strange I am’.¹⁸⁸ The words ‘weak’ and ‘strange’, along with a host of other more derogatory terms, were

¹⁸³ Gilmore Brown would go on to become the founder of the Pasadena Community Playhouse, the first theatrical organisation in the United States to produce the entire Shakespearean Canon, which is covered in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

¹⁸⁴ One of Edwards’ many jobs included director of the Harlequin Players of The Little Theatre of Kansas City, a theatre company ‘composed wholly of amateurs’. Edwards served as their professional director with ‘a completely organized theatre staff’ of five under him. Mackay, *The Little Theatre in the United States*, p. 164. ‘Okmulgee to Give Classic Pageant’, *The Daily Oklahoman*, (20 Jun 1920).

¹⁸⁵ ‘Okmulgee Will Stage Pageant: Annual Production Is One of Biggest Outdoor Affairs in Oklahoma’, *The Daily Oklahoman*, (25 May 1921).

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.* ‘Okmulgee Club Planning Play’, *The Daily Oklahoman*, (4 Feb 1923). Shapiro, *Shakespeare in a Divided America*, p. 121.

¹⁸⁷ Shapiro, *Shakespeare in a Divided America*, p. 121.

¹⁸⁸ ‘Son of Edwards County Founder Dead in Tulsa’, *The Hutchinson News*, (2 Jun 1926).

deployed by ‘social moralists’ against America’s emerging urban homosexual communities during the final decades of Edwards’ life.¹⁸⁹ As I establish further in Chapters 3 and 4, grassroots theatres provide a sense of belonging for participants, for those who feel they do not have a ‘home’, something that Edwards sought throughout his life. In Chapter 4, I analyse two contemporary organisations that utilize Shakespeare performance as an activist vehicle for the LGBTQ community. Thirty-four years after Edwards’ death, the *Great Bend Tribune* reviewed the slowly vanishing legacy of the Kinsley festival: ‘Only the old-timers remember that Kinsley once was the drama capital of the west’.¹⁹⁰

B. A National Grassroots Event: The 1916 Shakespeare Tercentenary

The Drama League of America, formed in 1910, to spark a ‘great national renaissance’ of theatre across the country joined forces with other groups such as the Women’s Club Association to create a network from coast to coast assuring widespread Shakespeare celebration. Recognizing the still largely provincial nature of the United States, the Drama League assembled a sixty-page guidebook entitled *The Shakespeare Tercentenary* to ‘encourage the producing of worthy drama in rural communities by groups of amateurs’.¹⁹¹ This book which was made available to 50,000 members across ‘all states in the union’ included: lists of plays ‘suitable’ for amateur Shakespearean performance, detailed and methodical approaches to staging pageants and festivals, resources for staging plays in schools, and a variety of other approaches to Shakespeare in performance, even specifics such as costume design. The Drama League, the Chautauquas, and the Women’s Club Association along with an increasingly national media presence created a unique and wide-ranging promotion for Shakespeare’s Tercentenary.¹⁹² A sizeable portion of these activities

¹⁸⁹ Michael Bronski, *A Queer History of the United States*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2012), pp. 105, 121, 132-36. Bronski argues that the growth of America’s urban areas at this time ‘shaped the development of the homosexual community’ (p. 106). While Edwards lived in at least three of America’s largestest cities during his lifetime (New York, Washington DC, and Kansas City), he never settled in a metro area. His inability to adapt to societal pressures created a peripetetic lifestyle between the urban and rural. Edwards’ tragic description of himself coupled with the aforementioned quote describing him as a ‘sissy-type fellow’ and his lifelong status as a bachelor is evidence of his struggle with sexuality and the gender norms of the early twentieth century.

¹⁹⁰ Brown, ‘Californian’s Death Recalls “Sylvan Grove” Days at Kinsley’.

¹⁹¹ Percival Chubb, *The Shakespeare Tercentenary: Suggestions for School and College Celebrations of the Tercentenary of Shakespeare's Death in 1916*, ed. by The Drama League of America (National Capital Press, Inc., 1916), pp. 2, 59.

¹⁹² J. A. Stewart, ‘Shakespeare Tercentenary Celebration’, *The Journal of Education*, 83 (1916), p. 384. The size and scope of such an undertaking can never be fully known on a national level, but many records exist from the Drama League itself, local newspapers and academic journals, such as

was reported to the Drama League, demonstrating the breadth of this effort, which I have tabulated and mapped in Figure 4. The academic community, as well, was now beginning to articulate the tercentenary as an opportunity to use Shakespeare’s cultural capital to revitalize an education system that was antiquated, plagued with ‘dull diligence’ and led by ‘blind drillmasters’. Now America could, as Percival Chubb argued with an overt biblical construction, ‘let the spirit of Shakespeare be our lantern out of this Egyptian darkness’.¹⁹³ The national grassroots fervour over Shakespeare had reached a high-water point, as articulated the following year in *The American Magazine of Art*: ‘It is not conceivable that [...] Shakespeare’s influence on the drama will be greater in the future than it has been in the past.’¹⁹⁴

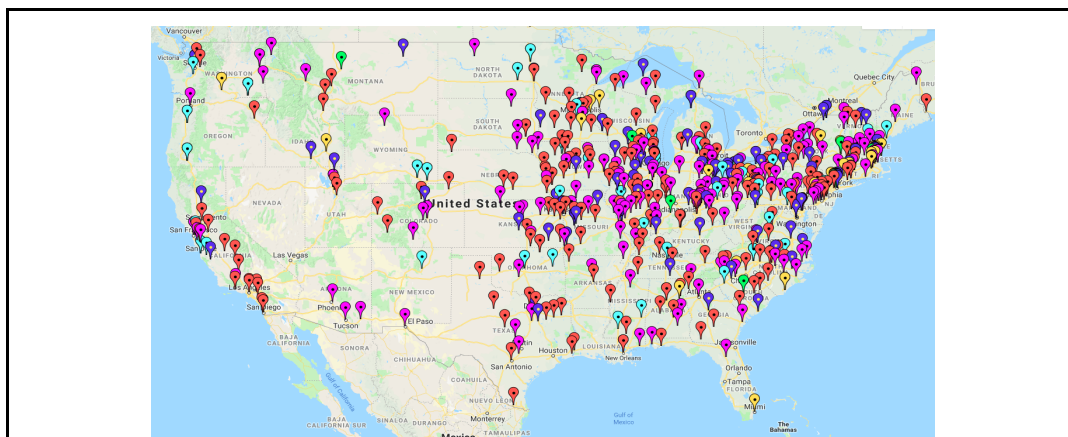


Figure 4 - The 1916 Shakespeare Tercentenary Event Locations

See Appendix D – American Shakespeare Cartography for a more detailed map.

Twenty years before America would see the genesis of what is traditionally thought of as a Shakespeare festival, an editorial in the *English Journal* asked a profound question, ‘Why not have...a Shakespeare Festival?’¹⁹⁵ It seemed at the time the efforts of the Drama League, Women’s Clubs, and other organisations had paid off, and the foundation for Shakespeare as American ‘common ground’ had

Stewart’s descriptive account: ‘Women’s clubs everywhere have been co-operating with schools for the observance of the Shakespeare Tercentenary. Pennsylvania club women’s program includes play-writing contests, folk dance and motion pictures of Shakespeare’s plays’.

¹⁹³ Percival Chubb, ‘What the Shakespeare Tercentenary Celebration Might Mean for the Schools’, *The English Journal*, 5 (1916), p. 238.

¹⁹⁴ Richard Silvester, ‘The Cinderella of the Arts: Our Gradual Awakening to a Truer Appreciation of the Drama’, *The American Magazine of the Arts*, 8 (1917), p. 175.

¹⁹⁵ ‘Editorial: The Coming Struggle. The Shakespeare Tercentenary?’, *The English Journal*, 4 (1915), p. 603.

been established. While some have been critical in retrospect of the upper class, highbrow nature of the tercentenary activities (especially at its epicentre in New York City), recent research indicates that to be a generalized and inaccurate representation. From a nationwide perspective, the 1916 tercentenary events, as Monika Smialkowska contended, were much too ‘widespread and popular’ to be labelled only as an ‘affair staged by the members of the elite’ seeking cultural homogeneity, though that was unquestionably a factor.¹⁹⁶ My research supports this argument as well; for example, Charles Edwards’ production of *Twelfth Night* in Kinsley, Kansas was an independent grassroots event promoted as ‘Kansas’s greatest tercentenary celebration’, despite MacKaye’s clear influence.¹⁹⁷ Figure 4 shows the 1916 tercentenary celebration providing a popular and grassroots approach to Shakespeare in performance from the geographic extremes of San Diego, California to Presque Isle, Maine.

Some of these celebratory events also exposed the racism deeply ingrained in American culture. Smialkowska argued that participation in the tercentenary events was one way for the American people to continue to ‘forge’ their own local and national identities.¹⁹⁸ Professor Frederick Koch, a protégé of George Pierce Baker, certainly achieved this in his production of *Shakespeare the Playmaker*, with a group of his college students called the ‘Dakota Playmakers’.¹⁹⁹ This group created a rural display of grassroots Shakespeare for the Shakespeare Tercentenary in North Dakota, complete with the aspect of communal playwriting. In the Bankside Theatre, an outdoor theatre built into the ‘curve of a stream’, Koch and his students embraced the new Ben Greet style of what he described as ‘Theatre of Nature’. Koch articulated the theatre space in terms that also sum up the political and cultural events of the previous century, America’s ‘Manifest Destiny’ to control, through any means necessary, the entire continent:

By this same stream, not so long ago that living residents cannot remember it, the buffalo herds ranged at will and the Indians met the white man in friendly trade. This may well be taken as a symbol of

¹⁹⁶ Monika Smialkowska, ‘A Democratic Art at a Democratic Price: The American Celebrations of the Shakespeare Tercentenary, 1916’, *Transatlantica: American Studies Journal*, (2010), online.

¹⁹⁷ ‘Third Annual Arkansas Valley Dramatic Festival’, *The Kinsley Mercury*, (3 Aug 1916).

¹⁹⁸ Monika Smialkowska, ‘Shakespeare and Native Americans: Forging Identities through the 1916 Shakespeare Tercentenary’, *Critical Survey*, 22 (2010), pp. 76-90.

¹⁹⁹ Professor Frederick Koch also was a lecturer for the Chautauqua Circuit, presenting on Shakespeare in 1915. Canning, *The Most American Thing in America*, p. 197.

the marvellous transformation of the primitive soil into an institution of fine arts of the people.²⁰⁰

Koch was proud of his production being crafted by the races that comprised ‘our big state’, which he proceeded to list: ‘English, Scandinavian, Russian, Polish, Bohemian, Irish, Scotch, German, Italian’. The omission on his line-up is that of the African Americans and Native Americans. While not included in his article, Koch did not exclude Native Americans from his production.²⁰¹ The two individuals who participated were present only as an ‘exotic spectacle’, completely uninvolved in any other aspect of the proceedings, demonstrating both the local and national perspective on America’s oppressed indigenous populations.²⁰²

Koch’s aspiration for this theatrical movement was very much a product of the Progressive Era. These supremacist beliefs were commonplace in white anglophone America, exemplifying the true selectivity of the era, evident from the working class to the White House. Howard Zinn acknowledges that the Progressive Era is thusly named not because of a rapid and sudden reform, but rather of a ‘reluctant reform, aimed at quieting the popular risings, not making fundamental changes’.²⁰³ All of this is certainly not surprising in a nation that still, in 1916, rejected basic rights to all minority populations and denied women the right to vote. Shakespeare was becoming more than a cultural force, now that the work was intensely political. His work was becoming intertwined with immigration and what it meant to be an American more than ever before. Moreover, Koch’s aspiration for Americans to ‘create a drama democratic - a new art-form of the people, embodying their own interpretation of life’, echoed the words of the loudest voice in the American drama movement, Percy MacKaye.²⁰⁴

C. ‘*Cultivation of the People*’; Percy MacKaye’s *Democracy of Art: 1900-1920*

Community Drama...I have watched its seed take root in soil that seemed sterile; I have seen it take form from almost nothing, watched

²⁰⁰ Frederick H Koch, ‘The Dakota Playmakers’, *The American Magazine of Art*, 10 (1918), pp 40-42.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² An additional example of forced Native American involvement in the 1916 Shakespeare Tercentenary at the Carlisle Indian School as well as contemporary Native Theater is discussed in Chapter 4.

²⁰³ Zinn, *People's History of the United States*, p. 349.

²⁰⁴ Koch, ‘The Dakota Playmakers’, pp. 40-42.

its portentous growth, its magical flowering, its colossal bearing of fruit and the sowing forth again of its own seed in strong fecundity.²⁰⁵

Proudly born in 1875 to parents of ‘New England and Scottish stock’, both involved in the production of theatre, Percy MacKaye was quick to realize and fulfil his personal destiny. Stating in his autobiography that together with his father he created at least ‘one dramatic work a year for fifty years’, MacKaye was a prolific and unapologetic self-promoter. After attending Harvard in the 1890s, he would go on to produce many dramatic works, essays, and books throughout the decades to come. One of his primary areas of interest was the commercialization of theatre versus what he called ‘community’ or ‘civic spirit’.²⁰⁶ A member of the intellectual elite, he was unafraid to share his political leanings towards a widespread growing interest in socialism. In his theatrical manifesto, *Community Drama*, MacKaye praised Karl Marx: ‘now the great stream he charted has been sounded and explored by thousands’. MacKaye longed for a philosopher of ‘community drama’ creating an analogous role to Marx in the field, a position he himself was all too willing to fulfil.²⁰⁷ In one of his many interviews with the *New York Times* to publicize the upcoming tercentenary celebration in New York City, MacKaye promoted his massive community masque, *Caliban by the Yellow Sands*, as the ‘central popular’ celebration of Shakespeare out of the innumerable grassroots events occurring all over the United States.²⁰⁸ Over 2,500 amateur performers participated and more than 135,000 saw the production over the course of ten performances. MacKaye stated where he saw the ultimate value of his work and the Shakespeare Tercentenary:

The masque is the drama of democracy, and I believe that the chief value of the Shakespearean masque is as a step forward in the progress of the co-operative dramatic and poetic expression of the people.²⁰⁹

The event being as massive as it was, the largest theatrical event ever in New York City, created tremendous interest in the press and community.²¹⁰ As venues were

²⁰⁵ While the term ‘grassroots’ was not yet in use in this context (it would be coined by Gard in 1954), MacKaye makes the allusions between the natural world and theatre very apparent in this quote and many of his other writings. MacKaye, *Community Drama*, p. 7.

²⁰⁶ Percy MacKaye, *Percy Mackaye, a Sketch of His Life with Bibliography of His Works*, (Harvard University: Cambridge, MA, 1922), p. 1.

²⁰⁷ MacKaye, *Community Drama*, pp. 9-11.

²⁰⁸ Kilmer, *Literature in the Making*, p. 314.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.* p. 317.

²¹⁰ Shapiro, *Shakespeare in a Divided America*, p. 122.

fought over, and its scale and sheer size were debated, Otto Kahn, a zealous supporter of MacKaye's work and President of the Shakespeare Tercentenary Celebration in New York City, defended the event in his address to his fellow organizers while illustrating the public struggle between Shakespeare of the people and Shakespeare of the elite:

This Tercentenary Celebration which will culminate in the production of Percy MacKaye's Masque, is not a 'high-brow' affair, it is not a benevolent uplift movement backed by a few men and women of wealth...It has the enthusiastic support and active cooperation of two thousand different organisations directly representing 800,000 constituents. It is the most democratic, most comprehensive and most promising response which has ever been given in this community to the appeal of art.²¹¹

This was Kahn's perspective as a wealthy and influential banker, but it was not reality. Shapiro argued that MacKaye's 'overreliance on the support of cultural elites, coupled with his reluctance to make use of grassroots organisations' led to a massive event with the temporary illusion of community.²¹² *Caliban* was on such an enormous scale that it inspired amateur actors to create a daily burlesque parodying MacKaye on a street behind the venue, Lewisohn Stadium, during their long wait backstage.²¹³ With the professional-amateur balance thrown into an unfamiliar territory, these actors created a real impromptu grassroots effort inside a massive professional-led amateur production designed to create community through other means. This burlesque may have been one of the only aspects of the production commonly understood by the people; as Smialkowska argued, the main proceedings were 'esoteric', and 'an arcane affair, for which expert guidance and interpretation were needed'.²¹⁴ MacKaye was seemingly unaware that his drama was not 'by' or 'of' the people.

²¹¹ Otto H Kahn, 'Art and the People', *The Art World*, 1 (1917), pp. 404-07.

²¹² Shapiro, *Shakespeare in a Divided America*, p. 139.

²¹³ Mel Gordon, 'Percy Mackaye's Masque of "Caliban"', *The Drama Review: TDR*, 20 (1976), p. 98. During a site-visit to the location where this event was held on the campus of the City College of New York, where the now demolished Lewisohn Stadium once stood, I was able to contextualize the enormous scale of the production. This striking Greco-Roman colosseum-like structure was not Central Park, as MacKaye preferred, but nonetheless its imposing neoclassical architecture was synchronous with MacKaye's production aesthetics. By the stadium's fifty-first year, it was a natural destination for attending concerts in New York second only to Central Park, and in multiple publications listed side-by-side with Carnegie Hall. 'A New Yorker's New York', *ALA Bulletin*, 60 (1966), p. 569.

²¹⁴ Monika Smialkowska, 'Patchwork Shakespeare: Community Events at the American Tercentenary: 1916', in *Outerspeares: Shakespeare, Intermedia, and Limits of Adaptation*, ed. by Daniel Fischlin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), p. 340.

The plot of *Caliban* was explicitly designed with New York's heterogeneous immigrant community in mind. MacKaye held a contradictory belief that his first massively scaled theatrical endeavour two years prior in St. Louis in 1914 (a collaborative effort with Thomas Wood Stevens) would somehow bring the nation to a post-racial era, with a plot consisting of 'a white child who shall bring back civilization'.²¹⁵ Along similar lines, the titular character of *Caliban*, was portrayed as a lesser 'ape-like missing link', and was educated by the masterful English playwright and American icon representing the highest and most pure form of culture. Caliban falls at the feet of the god-like Shakespeare following hours of watching 'many nationalities... [being] subsumed under American nationality'.²¹⁶ While this was an undeniably blatant attempt to assimilate immigrants into American culture much like the aforementioned work from St. Louis, from a broader perspective Shakespeare was only one of many means to an end.

I argue it is impossible to separate MacKaye's personal and artistic goals from the widespread, rising national movement of 'Americanization'. This movement, described by John Higham, was 'too large and chaotic to conform to any central leadership', as it began to expand in 1917 with America's inevitable entry into the First World War.²¹⁷ Some progressives like MacKaye fought to benevolently, if not reluctantly, assimilate those from many corners of Europe, but were not interested in the rights (or even the assimilation) of African Americans, Native Americans, and recent immigrants from China and elsewhere in Asia.²¹⁸ In his zeal to realize his utopian views of theatrical democracy for all, MacKaye (like other theatrical pioneers of the time) failed to see his own glaring aristocratic, xenophobic philosophy. Shapiro argued similarly, stating 'Anti-immigrant assumptions...had clouded MacKaye's vision and undermined his best intentions'.²¹⁹

This was indeed evident even when looking at the events of the Shakespeare Tercentenary. While marginalized groups such as Jews and Catholics participated directly, Smialkowska noted that African Americans were not permitted the same

²¹⁵ Thomas Wood Stevens and Percy MacKaye, *The Book of Words of the Pageant and Masque of Saint Louis*, (Saint Louis, MO: Saint Louis Pageant Drama Association, 1914).

²¹⁶ Coppelia Kahn, 'Caliban at the Stadium: Shakespeare and the Making of Americans', *The Massachusetts Review*, 41 (2000), pp. 74-75.

²¹⁷ John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860-1925*, (Rutgers University Press, 2002), p. 245.

²¹⁸ Zinn, *People's History of the United States*, p. 349.

²¹⁹ Shapiro, *Shakespeare in a Divided America*, p. 144.

rights, and involvement was ‘limited and restricted’ and ‘to a large extent detached from the mainstream events’.²²⁰ Under the heading ‘Colored Organizations’ in the *Caliban* program touting the myriad Shakespearean events in the city, a statement read ‘for the first time in the history of the negro race, a company of negro actors gave *Othello*’.²²¹ This was not true as this had been done decades earlier (in 1884), and this was symptomatic of the fact that African American actors were still viewed, even if they were allowed to participate in a multicultural community event, only as ‘comic buffoons’.²²² Theatre historian Errol Hill wrote of the experience African Americans faced when they showed interest in Shakespeare:

The spectacle of black actors performing Shakespeare has often seemed incongruous to white critics and patrons who fail to note how irrational is the attitude that acclaims Shakespeare’s plays for their universality and yet wishes to deny their interpretation by people of all races.²²³

MacKaye linked democracy, and human rights for that matter, to theatre more directly than any of his predecessors. For this reason, his work still faces critical scrutiny because he was incapable of living up to his own high ideals. In Cohen-Cruz’s historical account of community-based performance in the United States, she calls MacKaye’s and his associates’ thinking ‘contradictory’, championing democracy and ‘collective input’ meanwhile undemocratically ‘exerting tight control’ over design.²²⁴ In his 1959 book *Community Theatre: Ideas and Achievement*, Robert Gard acknowledged MacKaye as one of the founding pioneers of American community theatre; more than a decade later, Michael Mendelsohn also took a favourable view: ‘Percy MacKaye is rarely mentioned today’, an ‘admirable idealist whose hopes for the American drama could never be fulfilled’.²²⁵ Whether or not MacKaye was ‘America’s most distinguished dramatist’ (as his pamphlet on the *Pageant and Masque of St. Louis: The World’s Greatest Play* claimed), his ideals for a community drama ‘of and by the people’ have, without question, lived on.

²²⁰ Smialkowska, ‘A Democratic Art at a Democratic Price’, p. 6.

²²¹ Percy MacKaye, ‘Program of the Community Masque “Caliban by the Yellow Sands”’, ed. by The New York City Shakespeare Tercentenary Celebration Committee (New York, 1916), p. 9.

²²² Kahn, ‘Caliban at the Stadium: Shakespeare and the Making of Americans’, p. 269.

²²³ Hill, *Shakespeare in Sable*, p. 2.

²²⁴ Cohen-Cruz, *Local Acts*, p. 18.

²²⁵ Michael J Mendelsohn, ‘Percy Mackaye’s Dramatic Theories’, *The Bulletin of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association*, 24 (1970), p. 85.

However, his legacy, like many influential figures in American history, is much more complicated.

3. Reclaiming the People's Shakespeare: 1917-1930

The unprecedented 1916 Shakespeare Tercentenary naturally had nationwide reverberations as the United States moved into a new era; the *New York Times* stated, 'the ramifications of the movement were endless'.²²⁶ While this legacy is not immediately apparent today, evidence exists connecting this transcontinental phenomenon to the centralization of Shakespeare studies at the time of a decline in Shakespeare's popular appeal (as argued by Levine in *High Brow/Low Brow*). Following the logistical and organisational triumph *Caliban* represented for the Shakespeare Tercentenary Celebration Committee, the members sought to install the group as a 'permanent' fixture in the city. The committee's president, Otto Kahn, stated at the celebratory dinner following the event, '[we] have succeeded beyond all expectations in calling the community spirit into action, let us seek to perpetuate it as a concrete and living force'.²²⁷ The United States' entry into the First World War in April of 1917 and the influenza pandemic beginning in 1918 certainly did not help the effort, and the enterprise ended by the conclusion of the decade. It would not be until 1923 when academics and club enthusiasts alike would again convene in New York to reorganize their prior attempts into The Shakespeare Association of America.²²⁸

Despite being composed of members from a prior 1914 celebration, the 1916 Tercentenary celebration, and Women's clubs, this newly created association would not go on to foster widespread and popular Shakespeare at the community level as the Drama League of America did in the previous decade. The goals set were undeniably admirable: one hundred fifty professors and actors were to be the 'nucleus for a larger membership', affiliations with previous Shakespeare clubs were being addressed, and the potential for funding scholarships for Shakespearean research, all to work towards the very first purely 'Shakespeare Theatre' in America. Professor Ashley Thorndike would go on to lead the association as president, and his former mentor at Harvard, George Pierce Baker, along with other scholars such as

²²⁶ 'American Drama Year Now Planned for 1917', *The New York Times*, (28 May 1916).

²²⁷ Otto H Kahn, 'Art and the People', *The Art World*, 1 (1917), p. 406.

²²⁸ Mrs. Donald F Hyde, 'The Shakespeare Association of America', in *Shakespeare 400*, ed. by James G McManaway (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1964), p. 313.

Joseph Quincy Adams of Cornell, and Frederick Koch of North Carolina joined the cause.²²⁹ In his inaugural article in the organisation's *Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, President Thorndike made the case for the group, seemingly far removed from the widespread nature of the tercentenary eight years earlier:

The magnitude and difficulty of this undertaking are apparent, but the need for such an organisation has long been felt. In spite of our regard for Shakespeare he has received little public recognition in this country. There are no funds to encourage Shakespearean scholarship or publication of scholarly works. There is no Shakespeare theatre, no playhouse regularly devoting a part of their time to his plays. There is no Shakespeare journal, no adequate Shakespeare bibliography. Though there are a few monuments there is no national memorial.²³⁰

Thorndike acknowledged the undertaking was difficult; well into the publication's second year, only nine hundred individuals had subscribed. It is only by comparison with the participation of millions of people across the country in Shakespeare-related activities only a decade earlier can this number be placed in its true context. By the mid-1930s the publication would be exclusively for 'bibliophiles and scholars'.²³¹ Gone were the decades of the nineteenth century when audiences would shout out forgotten lines to an unprepared player; new art forms were beginning to replace the stage. The developing presence of film and radio naturally resulted in a shift in arts attendance. Shakespeare had firmly arrived in a new era.

In 1915, before proceeding to the motion picture industry, the famous actor Robert Mantell stated, 'Shakespeare is not dead, just sleeping'.²³² The critics followed suit and picked up on the trend; this sentiment was articulated in a lengthy article, with an equally lengthy subtitle, by the *New York Times* theatre critic Alexander Woolcott, 'Odds Against Shakespeare on the Stage Today: This Is a Generation in Which Theatre Audiences Have Been Carefully Trained Away from Him'. Beyond the obvious premise of the article, Woolcott asserts there will always be those that 'take their Shakespeare scrupulously, attending because they think they ought', and those 'wistfully hungry for culture' will find what they need in the 'roving outdoor companies' and 'multitudinous Chautauquas', but his popular appeal

²²⁹ Ibid. Other backers also threw in their support such as Henry Clay Folger and Andrew Carnegie along with celebrities from Tercentenary committee, including famous Shakespearean actors John Barrymore, E H Sothern, and Julia Marlowe.

²³⁰ Ashley Horace Thorndike, 'Why a Shakespeare Association?', *The Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, 1 (1924), p. 1.

²³¹ Hyde, 'The Shakespeare Association of America', p. 313.

²³² 'Written on the Screen', *The New York Times*, (8 Aug 1915).

was gone.²³³ MacKaye's presentation of *Caliban* at the tercentenary was a prime example; 'archaic and inaccessible - precisely what Shakespeare had become to the vast majority of Americans'.²³⁴

A. *'The Time is Ripe': For the Rich or for the Poor? 1923-1932*

Renowned actor E H Sothern, it seems, had the most contemporaneous awareness of the cultural shift in the United States. He firmly believed in Otto Kahn and Percy MacKaye's original vision of Shakespeare for the masses:

I believe that the time is ripe for established theatres in this country, and that Mr. Kahn's plan for a Shakespearean Theatre is practical and will bear fruit. There have been similar attempts that have failed because the mistake was made of ignoring the masses and catering only to the rich. The theatre is essentially a democratic institution and any theatre to succeed must appeal to what we call the common people because they are poor. It is the great middle class that knows and appreciates Shakespeare best.²³⁵

In 1923 the New York-based literati, led by Shakespeare Association President Ashley Thorndike, desperately wanted the American rendition of a Shakespeare theatre, but they did not pursue Kahn's vision regarding involvement from the masses. As the vision stalled during the second half of the decade, the funding began to go elsewhere. In 1926, E H Sothern and Julia Marlowe assembled a team of wealthy Americans to help rebuild the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon, England which had recently been lost due to fire. The famous acting duo gifted their entire inventory of stage properties to the effort, estimated at \$200,000, but they didn't stop there; the group amassed a staggering \$1.25 million for the project. Otto Kahn returned to the world of Shakespearean leadership, serving as treasurer for this committee, in an effort finally to secure a theatre purely for Shakespeare, but ultimately not in the United States.²³⁶ Meanwhile, the Shakespeare Association happily received a grant from the Carnegie Foundation for their bibliography portion of the *Bulletin*, and oil tycoon Henry Clay Folger kept his eyes

²³³ Alexander Woolcott, 'Odds against Shakespeare on Stage Today', *The New York Times*, (12 Mar 1916).

²³⁴ Levine, *Highbrow / Lowbrow*, p. 80.

²³⁵ 'Why Sothern Is Leaving', *New York Times*, (21 May 1916). In this 1916 op-ed, E H Sothern and his long-time acting and life partner, Julia Marlowe, describe their choice to go to Warwickshire, England in one of their first attempts at retirement amidst Shakespeare declining popularity.

²³⁶ 'Sothern Gift Aids Shakespeare Fund', *New York Times*, (23 April 1926).

on a larger goal, continuing his own personal quest for a much larger, monumental achievement, a Shakespeare Centre.²³⁷

Ben Greet reacted to the influx of money for the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre reconstruction (to be much later named the Royal Shakespeare Theatre) in Stratford-upon-Avon by pushing for the cause he tried to champion twenty years earlier: ‘Now that the million dollars are safe for the Stratford Memorial theatre, is it not an appropriate time for Americans to put their own Shakespeare house in order?’²³⁸ Unsurprisingly, considering his relationship with popular Shakespeare for the masses, Greet thought the best way to achieve this was ‘a million-dollar theatre and should be subscribed for by the public at a dollar a head and underwritten by some of the rich theatre lovers’. Greet’s closing line struck a clear note: if Americans would help England with their Shakespeare Theatre, why couldn’t they help themselves? In characteristically entertaining language, he stated it would make him very pleased ‘if I could know that on the day the American-English Theatre - the tribute to Shakespeare - rose upon Avon’s bank a brother-theatre could rise upon the shores of the Hudson River’.²³⁹ In 1932, Henry Clay Folger posthumously succeeded in opening his Shakespeare Library in Washington D.C.; monumental and historic for generations of scholars, it was not an institution that made Shakespeare any less highbrow. The efforts by the New York elite, academics, and philanthropists to create an American Shakespeare performance venue would never materialize. Such a reality would be achieved as it always had in the past, through the work of theatre practitioners, the public, and through popularizing Shakespeare once more.

When it came to popularizing Shakespeare, in the early twentieth century, few could rival Ben Greet. Even if his aforementioned advocacy for the creation of a professional Shakespearean theatre on the banks of the Hudson would have been successful, it is hard to imagine how his influence could have been greater on the professional-amateur symbiosis in Shakespeare performance than it was historically. Dugas writes, ‘Amateurs, not professionals, became increasingly responsible for sustaining the Shakespeare performance tradition in America after 1916’.²⁴⁰ While the professional Shakespeare performance industry was, as Robert Mantell

²³⁷ Hyde, ‘The Shakespeare Association of America’, p. 314.

²³⁸ Ben Greet, ‘A Plea for Shakespeare’, *New York Times*, (14 November 1927).

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Dugas, *Shakespeare for Everyman: Ben Greet in Early Twentieth-Century America*, p. 361.

described, ‘sleeping’, amateurs in clubs, educational institutions, and proto-typical community organisations were happily performing the work. Inconspicuously producing editions of his plays throughout the country, Dugas argues that these groups were undoubtedly inspired by Greet’s methodology. From 1916 until the late 1950s with the founding of the New York Shakespeare Festival, with notable exceptions, widespread popular Shakespeare performance would predominantly be of the amateur variety. When significant professional productions occurred, such as Max Reinhardt’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, the performances served to further perpetuate this symbiosis, reinvigorating amateurs with new ideas and presentational styles.²⁴¹ This excitement started the cycle again, encouraging amateurs to participate in plays, which further built their desire to see professional work.

4. Blossoming; Realizing Community Theatre, Shakespeare Festivals: 1925-1960

As the search for a professional American Shakespeare performance space futilely continued in the east, frequent Shakespeare performances intensified on the west coast. This unprecedented Shakespearean effort began in 1918 with the Pasadena Community Players under the direction of Gilmore Brown; twenty years later they would become the first theatre organisation, grassroots or professional, to produce the entire 37-play Shakespearean Canon, which occurred according to G.L. Shoup, ‘rather by accident’.²⁴² Following a decade of pontification by the likes of Percy MacKaye and the minimalist performance style popularised by Ben Greet, the Pasadena Community Players had at last realized the dream of ‘theatrical democracy’.²⁴³

After success with touring stock companies in the Midwest and Shakespeare festivals in Kansas, Brown relocated to Pasadena, California to find more consistent theatrical opportunity. Brown had a setback with a failed stock company in the city, but through friendships with members of the local Shakespeare club he soon became connected with wealthy, influential members of the Drama League of America.²⁴⁴

²⁴¹ Max Reinhardt’s *Dream* and its impact on amateur performance, specifically the Pasadena Community Playhouse, is discussed in the following sections.

²⁴² Shoup, *The Pasadena Community Playhouse*, p. 250. A contemporaneous account in the *Los Angeles Times* also confirms this. ‘Record Set in Producing Shakespeare’, *Los Angeles Times*, (21 November 1937).

²⁴³ See Chapter 1, Section 2 – Shakespeare and the Germination of Community-Based Performance.

²⁴⁴ Shippey, ‘Lee Side O’ LA’.

Staging his first productions in the Shakespeare Clubhouse, and with their support, he would launch what would become an exemplar of the community theatre and Little Theatre movements.

The catalyst for this endeavour in 1917 was not isolated from the greater national discussion; this was the same year Louise Burleigh published her seminal text *Community Theatre in Theory and Practice*, Constance Mackay released her *The Little Theatre in the United States*, and Percy MacKaye (no relation to Constance) released two major essays, *Community Drama* and *The Civic Theater*. Morrow Mayo wrote of the Pasadena Community Playhouse's development in a 1925 article in the *Los Angeles Times*:

Their inspiration was the pleas which Percy MacKaye had just made for citizen drama - a plea in which he protested vigorously against the commercial theater, where dramatic ideals were sacrificed to mere money-making... and [MacKaye] asked for a return of plays 'for, of and by' the people instead of paid performers.²⁴⁵

This was not a new idea for Brown. His philosophy of community production was aligned with MacKaye well before he began producing in Kinsley, Kansas in 1912 at the beginning of his directing career, as the latter had served directly as a mentor. He would collaborate with MacKaye once more, ironically, after the Pasadena Playhouse's transition to a fully professional institution in April of 1949.²⁴⁶

Nevertheless, for the first several decades of its existence, the Pasadena Community Players lived up to MacKaye's lofty goals. Stating unequivocally and frequently that their mission was 'a community enterprise', Brown's work in Pasadena was a radical departure from the professional stock companies of the previous decades.²⁴⁷ The use of amateur actors was not just a philosophical commitment, it was also a business strategy. In a 1934 private publication, *The Book of the Pasadena Community Playhouse*, the organisation presented an oversimplified, binary approach to professional actors on the Playhouse stage: '[the Playhouse is] not "professional," since its actors are not paid'.²⁴⁸ However, since a

²⁴⁵ Morrow Mayo, 'The Finest Community Playhouse', *Los Angeles Times*, (8 March 1925).

²⁴⁶ Percy MacKaye, *The Mystery of Hamlet King of Denmark: A Tetralogy*, (New York: The Bond Wheelwright Company, 1950), p. i.

²⁴⁷ Ernest A Batchelder, 'Forward', in *The Book of the Pasadena Community Playhouse*, ed. by Harriet L Green (Pasadena, CA: Privately printed. Pasadena Playhouse Press, 1934), pp. 1-3.

²⁴⁸ Harriet L Green, 'The Pasadena Community Playhouse', in *Book of the Pasadena Community Playhouse*, ed. by Harriet L Green (Pasadena, CA: Privately Printed. Pasadena Community Playhouse Press, 1934), p. 64.

large number of professional actors were involved in varying capacities the Playhouse had to further delineate such participation as a 'two-way current', suggesting that the experience of working with the organisation was remuneration enough.²⁴⁹ Shoup provided a more unbiased and comprehensive look at the inner workings of the Playhouse. He detailed a longstanding internal struggle for the organisation from the 1930s onward, between what the nature of the theatre truly was, amateur, 'quasi-amateur', semi-professional, or professional.²⁵⁰

Jacquelyn Sundstrand described this complex structure as something unique to their geographic location, but yet similar to interactions I have noted throughout this thesis; she called it the 'Hollywood Symbiosis'.²⁵¹ She specifically argued that most Hollywood actors had talent but little training, and training was indeed something the Playhouse could provide. This, in turn, encouraged audiences (and Hollywood producers) to see productions at the Playhouse, and the volunteer professional actors working with amateur actors to produce more theatre than anywhere else in the country. While Sundstrand's definition of the 'Hollywood Symbiosis' is explicitly targeted to the interactions in Pasadena and Hollywood, I argue that evidence exists throughout history, and my contemporary research as well, to indicate that this is part of a more widespread phenomenon. Undoubtedly, Sundstrand's symbiosis is more precarious and nuanced than the balance that exists throughout the country.

Initially, the 'Hollywood Symbiosis' paid off; by 1925, the Players had secured a \$300,000 'state of the art' facility, christening it the Pasadena Community Playhouse. It wasn't long before Pasadena was being recognized as the epicentre of the community theatre movement. George Pierce Baker (who had reviewed and 'approved' the blueprints) travelled cross-country to give an address at the theatre: 'I want to say that I have never seen a more complete set of theatre plans anywhere...it will be the most comprehensive dramatic workshop in America, and I doubt if Europe boasts anything better'.²⁵² Following Baker's visit, the ambitions of the playhouse would only increase, and by the summer of 1934 a staggering number of

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Shoup, *The Pasadena Community Playhouse*, p. 339.

²⁵¹ Jacquelyn K Sundstrand, 'The Great God Brown: Gilmore Brown, the Pasadena Playhouse, and the Depression', *Southern California Quarterly*, 75 (1993), 165-66. Shoup calls this a 'two-way supply and demand trade route'. Shoup, *The Pasadena Community Playhouse*, p. 10.

²⁵² 'Amateurs' Good Word Praised', *Los Angeles Times*, (7 September 1924).

productions, by any theatrical standard, was recorded. With a new production approximately every two weeks, according to the Playhouse's *Chronological List of Productions*, the theatre had accumulated fifty-four original premiers, twenty-four Shakespeare productions consisting of two hundred four performances, which was all part of a staggering four hundred seven productions (typically eleven performance runs) over the course of the previous seventeen seasons (this count excludes 'special' and educational productions).²⁵³ The Playhouse was now unquestionably an internationally recognized community institution; even at the onset of the Great Depression, community theatre had solidified in the United States.²⁵⁴ Shakespeare had always been a part of the success of the Playhouse, but the events of 1934 would push the group, and the rest of the nation, into a new relationship with his work.

A. *The World's Fair and Max Reinhardt's 'Dream': 1934*

As America's financial hardships continued, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt believed cultural programs were essential in 'uplifting' the population from 'commercial and industrial depression as [had] plagued every country on the globe', and one such example was the Chicago World's Fair in 1933.²⁵⁵ With its dual financial and popular success the organizers extended the Century of Progress Exhibition into 1934 and began debating the contents of an England oriented area of their enterprise for this second year. It was seen as a large gamble to include the unmarketable, and recently unsuccessful (at the Chicago Civic Theatre) Shakespeare; Gilbert and Sullivan were seen as a much stronger alternative.²⁵⁶ Ultimately, organizers were convinced to give it a try and Thomas Wood Stevens and his assistant Ben Iden Payne were hired.²⁵⁷ Both Stevens and Payne were fervent

²⁵³ 'Chronological List of Productions of Pasadena Community Playhouse: From November 1917 to July 1934', in *Pasadena Community Playhouse*, (Pasadena, CA: Huntington Library, San Marino, California, 1934).

²⁵⁴ Shoup noted that despite frequent positive press and meaningful accomplishments, the theatre was frequently in financial peril. He wrote of the difficulties in the theatre's first year of operations: 'merely foreshadowed an entire career marked by financial woes'. Shoup, *The Pasadena Community Playhouse*, p. 103.

²⁵⁵ *Chicago: A Century of Progress*, (Chicago, IL: Marquette Publishing Co., 1933), p. 2.

²⁵⁶ This effort was led by Fritz Leiber at the Chicago Civic Theatre under the Chicago Civic Shakespeare Society, producing several productions each year. It was not popular, widespread theater by any means, it 'served primarily as a vehicle for Leiber and his wife'. Engle, Londre, and Watermeier, *Shakespeare Companies and Festivals*, p. xv.

²⁵⁷ Rosemary Kegl, "[W]Rapping Togas over Elizabethan Garb": Tabloid Shakespeare at the 1934 Chicago World's Fair', *Renaissance Drama*, 28 (1997), pp. 89-90.

believers in and former colleagues of William Poel, which helped to shape the structure and design of their space in the ‘Elizabethan manner’.²⁵⁸

As part of the ‘Merrie England’ exhibit young actors performed in a replica of the Globe theatre and on a bare platform stage. Not only did the productions (eight Shakespeare plays in all) embrace minimalist staging, but also a heavily cut script with a typical performance lasting a mere thirty-six minutes.²⁵⁹ Stevens, the director of this enterprise, was the first artistic director of Chicago’s Goodman Theatre and founded America’s first degree-awarding theatre program at Carnegie Mellon University. Therefore, his background as a director, educator, and pageant-master gave him a unique perspective on theatre, and helped generate accolades from critics: ‘Mr. Stevens’s young people seem to have forgotten all of the trappings, and traditions and impediments which classicism has thrown on the bard’.²⁶⁰ The entire endeavour was a popular success on many levels, leading drama publisher Samuel French to seize the opportunity (similar to the publication of Greet’s adaptations two decades earlier) and publish all eight of the abridged plays specifically to be performed by amateur groups.²⁶¹ Stevens had found the answer to unlocking Shakespeare for the people, and it wasn’t by involving the masses in rigid, ritualistic pageants that he and MacKaye championed earlier in the century. The solution was what he, Payne, and the fair organizers had created: fast-paced, slapstick, and irreverent Shakespeare plays at the centre of a comprehensive experience, not simply theatre unto itself. An escape from the harsh realities of the 1930s, this experience was viewed by over 400,000 individuals during its run.²⁶² The success prompted Stevens and Payne to transpose the concept of the replica of the Globe Theatre to San Diego in the creation of the Old Globe Theatre a year later, while the theatre itself was moved to Dallas, Texas. Sam Wanamaker, the future founder of Shakespeare’s Globe, first experienced a Globe replica (which he recalled as a ‘spectacle’) at this event, and it would serve as his inspiration for his lifelong mission to open Shakespeare’s Globe on the south bank of the Thames.²⁶³

²⁵⁸ Charles H Shattuck, ‘Memoirs of B. Iden Payne’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 29 (1978), p. 305.

²⁵⁹ Kegl, ‘[W]Rapping Togas’, pp. 89-90.

²⁶⁰ Rosemary Kegl, ‘Outdistancing the Past: Shakespeare and American Education at the 1934 Chicago World’s Fair’, in *Shakespearean Educations: Power, Citizenship, and Performance*, ed. by Coppelia Kahn and Heather S Nathans (University of Delaware Press, 2011), p. 248.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

²⁶² Kegl, ‘[W]Rapping Togas’, p. 74.

²⁶³ *Ibid.* Additional sources include Wanamaker’s own account of this effort and also Paul Prescott’s more recent analysis. Sam Wanamaker, ‘Shakespeare’s Globe Reborn’, *RSA Journal*, 138 (1989), pp.

Another noteworthy spectator at the World's Fair Globe was German director and 'Herr Doktor Professor' Max Reinhardt. He was on his way, 'speeding across the continent' to his own monumental production of Shakespeare.²⁶⁴ With a little more than a week to organize a cast over four hundred strong, Reinhardt assembled a remarkable spectacle of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* breaking box-office records for the Hollywood Bowl in the process. Accommodating a staggering 150,000 audience members throughout its brief run, the producing organisation, the California Festival Association, was all but obligated to add additional performances, going from five to seven. The success of this spectacle launched the production on a ten-week tour, to San Francisco and finally taking Reinhardt full-circle back to Chicago.²⁶⁵ The public reaction was favourable, and the 'natural response' was for the Festival Association to announce in the *Los Angeles Times* their 'plan [for] an annual dramatic festival on a broad and liberal scale'.²⁶⁶

On the west coast in the summer of 1935 three Shakespeare festivals (all amateur casts), Midsummer Festival at Pasadena Community Playhouse, Old Globe in San Diego, and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, would form almost simultaneously, but completely independent from one another. This was likely a response, and thereby clear example of the symbiosis between the professional and the amateur, to the great public interest in Max Reinhardt's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, in combination with the success of the Globe replica in Chicago. The San Diego work was similar to its previous iteration; therefore, I will focus specifically on the two other endeavours in detail.²⁶⁷

25-34. Paul Prescott, 'Sam Wanamaker', in *Poel, Granville Barker, Guthrie, Wanamaker*, ed. by Cary M Mazer (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), pp. 151-210.

²⁶⁴ 'Max Reinhardt En Route West', *Los Angeles Times*, (31 August 1934). Kegl, '[W]Rapping Togas', p. 74. Regular articles in the *Los Angeles Times* provided updates on Reinhardt's impending arrival as the public anxiously purchased tickets in an 'unprecedented rush'. 'Bowl Production Tickets Cause Rush', *Los Angeles Times*, (1 September 1934).

²⁶⁵ Scott MacQueen, 'Midsummer Dream, Midwinter Nightmare: Max Reinhardt and Shakespeare Versus the Warner Bros.', *The Journal of the Association of Moving Image Archivists*, 9 (2009), pp. 36-39.

²⁶⁶ 'California Festivals', *Los Angeles Times*, (24 September 1934). This event under the auspices of the California Festival Association in collaboration with Max Reinhardt would only continue for two more seasons and would lose its Shakespearean theme, producing *Everyman* (1936) and *Faustus* (1938). 'Women Will Boost Play', *Los Angeles Times*, (9 August 1936). 'Max Reinhardt Bringing "Faust" To Pilgrimage', *Los Angeles Times*, (24 July 1938).

²⁶⁷ Thomas Wood Stevens and Ben Iden Payne transposed their Chicago World's Fair work to San Diego 1935 for the California Pacific International Exposition in Balboa Park. Engle, Londre, and Watermeier, *Shakespeare Companies and Festivals*, pp. 46-47.

B. 'Symbiosis'; Hollywood and the Pasadena Shakespeare Festival: 1935-1942

The Pasadena Community Playhouse, with its proximity to Hollywood, logically wanted to capitalize on the popular Shakespearean success of Reinhardt's *Dream* and that of the Globe reconstructions and jumped in full force with a Shakespeare festival the likes of which the country had never seen.²⁶⁸ While influences can be cited tracing the ideological conception of this event, the organisation stated to the press a few days prior to opening that it had been in development for 'many years', even before some of the aforementioned antecedents occurred.²⁶⁹ Sundstrand suggests a reason common among grassroots and amateur organisations specifically for Shakespeare performance may have also been a factor for the Playhouse: there were no royalties or licensing requirements. Shoup argued similarly, stating original work and other royalty-free plays were 'a substantial aid to the Playhouse budget'.²⁷⁰ The Playhouse articulated their desired outcome from the festival and publicized far outside their community even attempting to secure the attendance of President Roosevelt.²⁷¹ Foreshadowing what would become known as 'destination festivals', the organisation echoed language used twenty years prior in Kinsley, Kansas:

A summer magnet for years to come, it will be a major attraction to tourists and a genuine business asset to the community. From all over America as well as from many foreign countries, the trek to Pasadena has already begun.²⁷²

Visitors had indeed begun the trek, but it wasn't only for a few simple Shakespeare performances, it was to see something 'that [had] never before been attempted'.²⁷³ The Pasadena Community Playhouse had committed to performing all ten of Shakespeare's history plays chronologically from an historical perspective: *King*

²⁶⁸ Another inspiration and source that led to the development of Pasadena's Midsummer Drama Festival was the popular European Festivals in 'Malvern of England, Salzburg of Austria and Heidelberg of Germany'. Sundstrand argued similarly, stating the Pasadena's Festival was 'possibly in response' to the Max Reinhardt *Dream* featuring Mickey Rooney. W L Y Davis, 'Shakespeare to Live Again', *Los Angeles Times*, (28 June 1935). Sundstrand, 'The Great God Brown', p. 171.

²⁶⁹ Davis, 'Shakespeare to Live Again'. Shoup disputes this claim, while the idea may have been in Brown's mind as a prospect (considering his success with Shakespeare festivals between 1912-1916 in Kansas and beyond), it wasn't presented to the organisation's board until early 1935. Davis, 'Shakespeare to Live Again'.

²⁷⁰ Sundstrand, 'The Great God Brown', p. 171. Shoup, *The Pasadena Community Playhouse*, p. 196.

²⁷¹ Davis, 'Shakespeare to Live Again'.

²⁷² Sundstrand, 'The Great God Brown', p. 172.

²⁷³ 'A Shakespearean Summer', *Los Angeles Times*, (30 June 1935).

John, *Richard II*, both parts of *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, all three parts of *Henry VI*, *Richard III* and to conclude with a revival of sorts of their popular 1932 *Henry VIII*. In typical grandiose Playhouse style, the amateur casts of all ten shows - three hundred strong - rehearsed simultaneously at times, 'in every nook and corner of the Playhouse', including the basement, roof, and sidewalks.²⁷⁴ The organisation of these plays was not a ragtag or hapless pursuit; the staff pulled from a reserve of 8,000 period costumes and employed resources unheard of for community (or even professional) endeavours. These full-fledged productions were aided by scholars such as Oscar James Campbell and the resources of the Huntington Library which the *Los Angeles Times* stated, 'has been turning itself inside out in the interests of accuracy'.²⁷⁵ Brown, both the Playhouse's founding producing director and the director of the festival, announced, 'the scenes will be continuous and fluent as in moving pictures', while acknowledging Hollywood's growing influence over America's leisure and cultural activities.²⁷⁶ Meanwhile, through this statement and this work one can see a connection to his early days working with Ben Greet with the minimalist style. The Playhouse didn't stop there, the festival was to be an immersive experience; they involved the Shakespeare Club, included breakfasts with scholars and actors, and arranged trips to Shakespearean exhibits at the Huntington Library.²⁷⁷

By the end of the history cycle festival in August of 1935 the Playhouse had seen sold-out productions, its most profitable period and highest attendance. Ultimately, this came at the cost of its founding principles, testing the limits of the size and scope of a community organisation featuring amateur performers.²⁷⁸ A contributing element to the success of the festival was Brown's showcasing of professional actors to an even larger degree, taking the financially lucrative 'Hollywood Symbiosis' (described as an 'aggregation of headline talent' in the *Los Angeles Times*) to the next level.²⁷⁹ This slow course change caused confusion regarding the status of the playhouse, and many were left to wonder if it was still a

²⁷⁴ 'Shakespeare Festival's Final Details Mapped', *Los Angeles Times*, (17 June 1935).

²⁷⁵ Davis, 'Shakespeare to Live Again'.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Shoup, *The Pasadena Community Playhouse*, p. 252. Davis, 'Shakespeare to Live Again'.

²⁷⁸ Katherine T Von Blon, 'Shakespeare Proves Good Box Office', *Los Angeles Times*, (4 August 1935).

²⁷⁹ Davis, 'Shakespeare to Live Again'.

civic enterprise, undoubtedly setting the stage for the Playhouse's next phase.²⁸⁰ However, to argue the driving force behind Gilmor Brown's programming was commercial and not artistic would be fruitless, as not many Shakespeare performing organisations would choose ten history plays to constitute a summer's repertoire. Subsequently, as a response to the success of this unlikely Shakespearean enterprise in planning the next season (1936) most Shakespeare festivals would not, then, slate the 'Greco-Roman Cycle', featuring *Troilus and Cressida*, *Timon of Athens*, *Pericles*, *Coriolanus*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Cymbeline*, and *Julius Caesar*. Such an unlikely choice was noticed by theatre critics as well as those in academia; DeWitt Bodeen wrote in the *Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, 'no one expected the finished result to be so illuminating regarding the production of Shakespearian drama'.²⁸¹

The symbiotic balance between Hollywood and Pasadena began to fail in 1937 as the use of professional talent was at odds with the increasing presence of Actor's Equity; this same year the Community Playhouse was named 'The State Theater of California'. Because of this honour, it seemed natural for the third annual Midsummer Drama Festival to feature the theme of the 'Story of the Great Southwest', which proved even more lucrative than Shakespeare.²⁸² Shoup states 'it was then realized that the Playhouse had produced thirty-two different plays by the master dramatist', the five remaining plays didn't fit a theme for a summer festival reinforcing the decision to focus elsewhere.²⁸³ Not to miss out on a publicity moment and a chance for history, a plan was devised and the canon was completed (albeit haphazardly) in December of 1937 commemorating the theatre's twentieth anniversary, with a production of *Romeo and Juliet*. It would be Pasadena's final Shakespeare festival.²⁸⁴

By 1942, the theatre that was born from the constant determination of Gilmor Brown along with the coalescence of ideas from Baker, Greet, MacKaye, Stevens,

²⁸⁰ Shoup, *The Pasadena Community Playhouse*, p. 338.

²⁸¹ DeWitt Bodeen, 'Shakespeare's Greco-Roman Plays at the Pasadena Community Playhouse', 12 (1937), p. 49.

²⁸² Sundstrand, 'The Great God Brown', p. 175.

²⁸³ Shoup, *The Pasadena Community Playhouse*, p. 251. The remaining plays included: *The Winter's Tale*, *Measure for Measure*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. Katherine T Von Blon, 'Record Set in Producing Shakespeare', *Los Angeles Times*, (21 November 1937).

²⁸⁴ Producing *Romeo and Juliet*, one of Shakespeare's most often performed works, thirty-seventh out of the thirty-seven play canon underscores Brown's fearless and seemingly cavalier approach to artistic programming.

Shakespeare Clubs, and the Drama League, had dropped the word ‘Community’ from its name. The new ‘Pasadena Playhouse’ would push on as a fully professional regional theatre.²⁸⁵ Brown’s decision to produce the full canon, which included the premiere of *Pericles* in America, and critical praise for *Timon of Athens* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, greatly influenced the development of Shakespeare performance organisations in the United States. The full canon in performance was now available to the public, the trail had been blazed, and the article entitled ‘A Shakespearean Summer’, in 1935 could not have ended on a more prophetic note, claiming the start of ‘a new theatrical epoch in classic drama’.²⁸⁶

C. ‘Great Nature’ *The Beginnings of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival: 1935-1960*

On July 1, 1935, *King John* opened Pasadena’s Shakespearean festival; the following day, 700 miles to the north, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival had its inaugural production of *Twelfth Night*. Instructor of drama at South Oregon College, Angus Bowmer sought to utilize the remnants of an old, dilapidated Chautauqua auditorium in Ashland, Oregon for Shakespeare.²⁸⁷ Realizing the remains of this community facility had a resemblance to the ‘open air English theater’, Bowmer initiated plans for a summer festival consisting of three Shakespearean performances (two of *Twelfth Night* and one of *The Merchant of Venice*). For the first two decades the productions were completely grassroots, ‘directed and staged entirely by Professor Bowmer with the assistance of his students and the townspeople’.²⁸⁸

Unlike Gilmor Brown, Bowmer never sought to create amateur, community-based theatre, but rather a ‘Shakespeare festival’ purposely built upon the nostalgia in Ashland for the days of the Chautauqua; this is how Bowmer successfully located his initial audience.²⁸⁹ After taking off a few seasons during the Second World War, signs of growth could soon be spotted with the company ‘gradually changing in membership’ from locals of the immediate Ashland area to one assembled from ‘the length of the Pacific Coast’.²⁹⁰ In yet another example of the professional-amateur

²⁸⁵ Shoup, *The Pasadena Community Playhouse*, p. 38.

²⁸⁶ ‘A Shakespearean Summer’.

²⁸⁷ Bowmer had studied and performed with Victor H Hoppe (a devoted student of Greet’s style), the director of a college-based Shakespeare festival in Bellingham, Washington from 1921-26. In 1930, Bowmer would perform in Ben Iden Payne’s *Love Labour’s Lost* at the University of Washington and learned directly about Elizabethan staging practices. Dugas, *Shakespeare for Everyman*, pp. 349-50.

²⁸⁸ Horace W Robinson, ‘Shakespeare, Ashland, Oregon’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 6 (1955), p. 449.

²⁸⁹ Dugas, *Shakespeare for Everyman*, p. 351.

²⁹⁰ James Sandoe, ‘The Oregon Shakespeare Festival’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 1 (1950), p. 7.

symbiosis, Horace Robison noted in 1955 that ‘the acting company is essentially an amateur group’ but professionals gladly participate to hone their skills through this ‘intensified Shakespearean program’.²⁹¹ Over the next several decades, the company would eventually grow large enough to formally hire professional actors while creating a destination for theatre. When Angus Bowmer retired as producing director in 1971, the festival’s summer attendance exceeded 150,000 people.²⁹² Robert Horn wrote of his experience at Ashland, in words reminiscent of MacKaye’s dream to ‘let in the ancient stars’ and Greet’s unmistakable style of outdoor theatre:

As Iachimo remarked that ‘the crickets sing’, crickets were audible, rasping out the same sharp notes that penetrated Imogen’s bedchamber. Bats occasionally flitted across the stage; in the distance the barking of dogs and other sounds, and perhaps the most of all the quiet stars overhead, were reminders that there is no divide between Shakespeare’s stage and ‘great Nature’.²⁹³

Laurie Strauss described the nation’s growing presence of amateur and university performance in *The Shakespeare Association Bulletin* in 1949 and recognized Oregon for their success: ‘Perhaps the most important amateur job is that done by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival’. She went on to predict that theatregoers no longer ‘need the lights of Broadway or the review of a select group of city critics’.²⁹⁴

Bowmer had succeeded in bringing together many of the aspirations of his Shakespearean predecessors, and the modern festival movement had begun. In the 1950s, summer Shakespeare festivals began sprouting up all over the country. Many (but certainly not all) were associated with universities, and the amateur nature of the activities began to slowly change: Hofstra Shakespeare Festival (1950), Antioch Shakespeare Festival (1952), New York Shakespeare Festival/Public Theater (1953), American Shakespeare Theater in Stratford, Connecticut (1955), and the Colorado Shakespeare Festival (1958) and the Champlain Shakespeare Festival (1959). Some of these organisations started out as grassroots efforts before transitioning to fully professionalized operations similar to Oregon.

²⁹¹ Robison, ‘Shakespeare, Ashland, Oregon’, p. 449.

²⁹² ‘OSF Timeline: A Quick Tour of OSF Timeline’, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, [Accessed 28 March 2019].

²⁹³ Robert D Horn, ‘The Oregon Shakespeare Festival’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 7 (1956), p. 419.

²⁹⁴ Laurie Strauss, ‘Notes & Comments’, *The Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, 24 (1949), p. 299.

5. Perennial Performance: Grassroots Shakespeare: 1960-Present

Aided by changing national policies and attitudes towards the arts, in the 1960s, many professional non-profit Shakespeare theatres began to form. Arts administrators and founders began to rethink how organisations could be better structured within existing tax codes, which led to the prevalent use of the non-profit model in American theatre.²⁹⁵ Also, starting in 1965, the National Endowment for the Arts began to provide both private and public support for the arts in America.²⁹⁶ With more funding available and organisational models coalescing around the non-profit model, professional Shakespeare groups would facilitate widespread, coast-to-coast professional performance for the first time since the Shakespeare tercentenary in 1916. These new professional groups included the Kentucky Shakespeare Festival (1960), Utah Shakespearean Festival (1961), Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival (1961), Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey (1963), National Shakespeare Company (1963), New Shakespeare Company (1964), and the Globe of the Great Southwest (1968); this rapid development inspired more practitioners from around the nation to create their own Shakespeare festival.²⁹⁷ The next decade brought more diverse organisational constructions; including more professional groups (Theater at Monmouth, 1970 and Alabama Shakespeare Festival, 1972), specifically structured community organisations solely for Shakespeare (Montford Park Players, 1973 and Hilo Shakespeare Festival, 1978), as well as more university-sponsored theatres such as the Wisconsin Shakespeare Festival (1976).²⁹⁸

The historical antecedents presented in this chapter connect directly to both professional and grassroots Shakespeare performance in America today. Founded in 1961 by Fred Adams, the Utah Shakespeare Festival is one of the largest and most prominent professional festivals in the country. Adams described his first experience with Shakespeare as Max Reinhardt's landmark 1934 *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Hollywood Bowl; he also spent time learning from the earlier pioneers in the

²⁹⁵ See Chapter 2, Section 2.A on Legal Models.

²⁹⁶ William J Byrnes, *Management and the Arts*, (Burlington, MA: Taylor & Francis, 2008), p. 53. See Chapter 2 for further discussion on legal models.

²⁹⁷ Engle, Londre, and Watermeier, *Shakespeare Companies and Festivals*, pp. 42-43, 153-58, 210-16, 32-34, 62-65, 310-14, 43-49). This is also evident in the form of the visual research I compiled in Appendix E, Section 4.

²⁹⁸ Larry S Champion, "'Bold to Play": Shakespeare in North Carolina', in *Shakespeare in the South: Essays on Performance* ed. by Philip C. Kolin (Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press, 1983), pp. 237-38. Engle, Londre, and Watermeier, *Shakespeare Companies and Festivals*, pp. 1-9, 134, 64-70, 372.

field like Angus Bowmer and Tyrone Guthrie.²⁹⁹ Another example is that of the Montford Park Players in Asheville, North Carolina, a community Shakespeare theatre founded by Hazel Robinson in 1973. Robinson was a student of Frederick Koch at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill in the early 1940s (and Koch was, himself, a student of George Pierce Baker and Ben Greet). The organisation Robinson founded is still, today, the grassroots endeavour her mentor advocated for eighty years ago. This example demonstrates the continuing legacy of the historical antecedents presented in this chapter. Since the founding of both the Utah and the Asheville festivals in the 1960s and 70s respectively, there has been no sign of an end to the Shakespeare performing organisation phenomenon; when one group ceases operations, another opens.³⁰⁰ Shakespeare performance, in all of its varieties, is a deeply rooted tradition in the United States, and one that continually reinvents itself, in part, through the discreet interplay between the professional and the amateur.³⁰¹

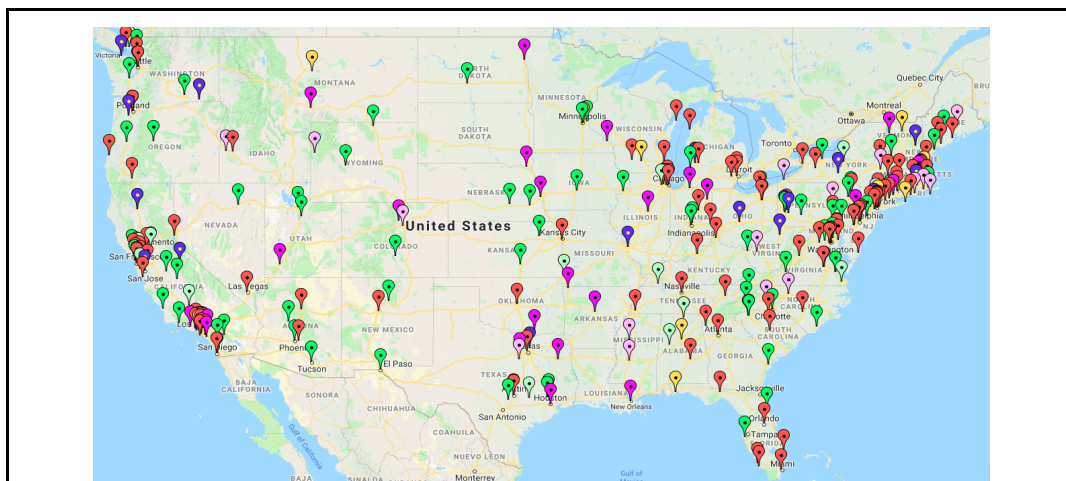


Figure 5 - Shakespeare Performing Organisations, 2018-20.

See Appendix D – American Shakespeare Cartography for a more detailed map. See Appendix B for a complete list of these organisations.

²⁹⁹ Fred Adams, ‘Utah Shakespearean Festival’, Interview in ‘Shakespeare on the Road’ Archive, Shakespeare Centre Archives, Stratford-upon-Avon, pp. 4, 7.

³⁰⁰ See Appendix E, Section 4 – Organisation Development and Continuity. To represent this data, I used at least one representative state from the country, along with organisations that prominently featured throughout the thesis. Several states have more than one entry due to the large amount of Shakespeare activity present in the state over the decades. I did not include all organisations, as the data would have been unwieldy and outside the scope of this study.

³⁰¹ Shakespeare performance as tradition is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

As one can see from Figure 5, in the United States there are over three hundred sixty-five performance organisations of many different iterations devoted exclusively to Shakespeare. This map displays the breadth and prevalence of the phenomenon, while Appendix E, Section 4 establishes its duration. As I've established both through the antecedents presented in this chapter and the maps displaying geographic breadth, Shakespeare's organisational presence is not only more prevalent than is commonly discussed in academia and beyond, but also this organisational presence is more deeply rooted. These roots include community-based efforts throughout America that were previously considered to be of little consequence because of their amateur design. As I established in this chapter, the festivals in Kinsley, Kansas and twenty years later in Pasadena, California had deeply profound and lasting impact on the field as these groups developed the prototypical organisational structures needed to execute these Shakespearean endeavours. Whether directly or indirectly, the cultural factors that led to the development of these aforementioned groups also concurrently contributed to the development of the amateur effort in Ashland, Oregon. Today, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival is one of the largest and most influential Shakespeare performance organisations in the world. Hence, exclusively studying professional groups in the fields of performance studies and Shakespeare studies, in general, provides a narrow and incomplete perspective on America's past, present, and future with Shakespeare.³⁰²

Prior to this research, estimations for how many Shakespeare organisations existed in America were always significantly lower than what this data indicates; I would surmise this is because grassroots groups were not proportionately included in those studies. *The Shakespeare Complex*, published in 1975, counted twenty-six festivals in North America, and by 1995, Engle, et al. located one hundred eighteen Shakespeare organisations in the United States.³⁰³ A quarter of a century later in 2020, Shapiro claimed 'there are nearly one hundred fifty summer Shakespeare festivals (dwarfing the number held in Britain or anywhere else in the world)'.³⁰⁴

³⁰² Dugas argued similarly about the impact of amateur performance in the Epilogue of his monograph on Ben Greet; he wrote that amateur performance is 'worth bearing in mind as we continue to study Shakespeare's place in twentieth-century American culture'. Dugas, *Shakespeare for Everyman*, p. 361.

³⁰³ Loney and MacKay, *The Shakespeare Complex*, p. 1 Engle, Londre, and Watermeier, *Shakespeare Companies and Festivals*, pp. 511-19.

³⁰⁴ Shapiro, *Shakespeare in a Divided America*, p. 202.

Shapiro's source for this data was the Shakespeare Theatre Association (STA). When interviewing the executive director of STA, Patrick Flick, in late 2019, he expressed to me how the research conducted for this thesis would be of great value for STA, as it more than doubles the number of groups once thought to exist.³⁰⁵ The organisational prevalence of grassroots groups, which comprises one-third of these, is indeed very high when compared to an original baseline that was largely inaccurate and not representative of the reality.

The organisations present in Appendix C are predominantly the subject of the subsequent chapters in this thesis. Moreover, Figure 5, which displays the organisations in Appendix C in addition to the remaining over three hundred groups in the nation, contextualizes the scope of Shakespeare performance in America.³⁰⁶ Through the use of qualitative data, generally in the form of interviews, I establish the commonalities and characteristics that all of these organisations share. Also, in the forthcoming chapters, the groups are analysed from the perspective of organisational infrastructure and quantitatively compared, delineating grassroots Shakespeare from its professional counterpart and firmly establishing such work as integral to the Shakespeare performance ecosystem in the United States of America.

³⁰⁵ Wolfgang, 'Grassroots Shakespeare Ethnographic Field Notes and Observations'.

³⁰⁶ This data can also be accessed in Appendix D – American Shakespeare Cartography.

CHAPTER 2 – ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES

The activities surrounding the production of Shakespeare's work have always been social endeavours. From Shakespeare's own company of actors in the late sixteenth century, as with the late nineteenth century women's Shakespeare Clubs, or the modern-day concept of a Shakespeare company, these groups all have been organisational entities. In 'Chapter 1 – Historical Antecedents', I have traced the development of grassroots Shakespeare ideals in America and how, in the past, they have been successful, or unsuccessful, in inspiring collective responsibility, artistic freedom and social activism for participants. In this chapter, I define contemporary grassroots Shakespeare groups through their organisational infrastructure by reporting and analysing the data collected in the nation-wide original research conducted for this thesis. It is because of the structures presented in this chapter that grassroots Shakespeare ideals can be actualized, programming can be implemented, and a sense of collective responsibility towards the work can arise.

First, commonalities in the foundations of both grassroots and professional Shakespeare performing organisations operating in the United States are identified.³⁰⁷ An analysis of the development of organisational nomenclature and mission statements follows this. I also thoroughly analyse the factors in organisational foundations including geographic influence, as well as legal definitions of the groups. Moreover, I identify both grassroots and professional groups and the sub-categories which comprise both constructs. Finally, the day-to-day operations, funding models, and venue-use of grassroots Shakespeare groups are presented, along with how these groups differ from professional Shakespeare theatre.

1. Organisational Foundations

Shakespeare performing groups vary greatly in their organisational capacity, foundation and development. As there is no one way to construct a theatrical performance, there is no one way an organisation develops. From the beginning, the founders establish what the identity of the group should be, and what it should be named. If the group would wish to hold ticketed public performances, the next step is to register as a legal entity in the state in which they reside. A fledgling organisation can also legally solicit charitable contributions after an application is

³⁰⁷ Brief summaries on organisations presented in this research can be found in Appendix C.

approved by the United States federal government. Then, the group may seek a non-profit status under section 501c3 of the tax code.³⁰⁸ At this point or well before, a new organisation would need to address its business model and mission: will it be professional, grassroots, or somewhere in between?

In this section, I provide examples and categorizations of how present-day organisations have developed. For the purposes of distinguishing between grassroots Shakespeare and their professional organisational counterparts, I detail how differing missions and visions originate. The majority of communities in the United States are not capable of financially supporting a fully professional regional theatre, which has certainly contributed to the development of smaller grassroots Shakespeare organisations throughout the country. The factor of geography is therefore consequential when looking at an organisation's foundation and is explored with both quantitative and qualitative data.

A. *'What's in a name?': Organisational Nomenclature*

Shakespeare performing organisations, grassroots, professional, and all groups in between, follow several industry-wide conventions when deciding upon a name for their group. The most common name for a performing organisation includes some form of 'Shakespeare Festival'; out of a sample size of three hundred sixty organisations located during this research, seventy-two or 20 percent of these chose 'Shakespeare Festival' to identify their group. Other patterns of categories include: Shakespeare Companies, '_____ Shakespeare', Shakespeare in the Park, 'Shakespeare in the ___', phrases associated with Shakespeare, Shakespeare Theatre, organisation-based (societies, players, centres, projects), and others. The breakdown of naming practices across the field between professional and grassroots organisation is displayed in Figure 6. While many of the categories are split evenly between the two and therefore industry-wide, there are several notable areas to analyse. Primarily, the concept of 'Shakespeare festival' is more common in the domain of professional theatre. This suggests that the idea of 'festival' is one that is associated with a commercialized and highly developed activity.

³⁰⁸ John H McCarthy, Nancy E Shelmon, and John A Mattie, *Financial and Accounting Guide for Not-for-Profit Organizations*, Eighth Edition edn (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2012), pp. 512-17.

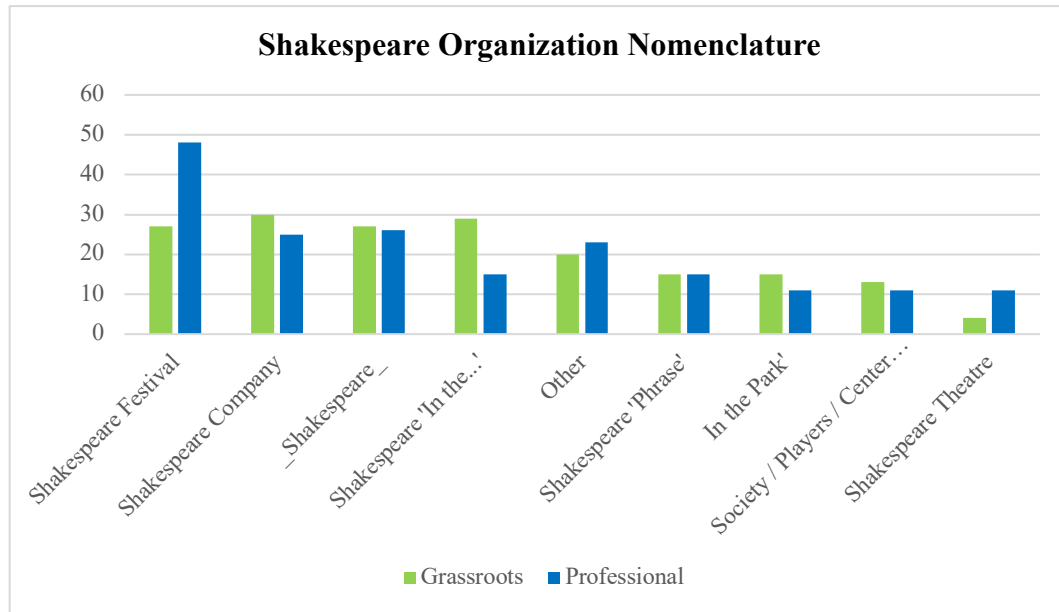


Figure 6 - Shakespeare Organisation Nomenclature

The idea of a Shakespeare festival has deep roots, which can be traced back to David Garrick's 1769 Jubilee in Stratford-upon-Avon.³⁰⁹ This first Shakespeare festival began the transformation of Shakespeare's hometown into a tourist destination. Over a century later, as was discussed in Chapter 1, theatrical producers such as Ben Greet began to promote the idea of Shakespeare festivals for the masses. This cultural tradition was embraced as regional tourism in the United States. Just as community and state-wide leaders realized in Kinsley, Kansas in 1916, larger place-based Shakespeare Festivals could be used to provide economic benefit to the towns that supported them. Smaller festivals followed and expanded this formula into the 1920s with such groups as the Okmulgee Dramatic Festival in Okmulgee, Oklahoma and the Annual Shakespearean Festival at Bellingham Normal School in Washington State.³¹⁰

As previously established, this festival at Bellingham Normal School greatly influenced Angus Bowmer (an undergraduate at the institution by 1925) who founded the annual Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, Oregon composed of local college students and community members in 1935.³¹¹ By 1937, the name was officially changed to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Placing the broad geographic location of the festival prominently as the first word in the organisation's name was

³⁰⁹ Engle, Londre, and Watermeier, *Shakespeare Companies and Festivals*, p. xiii.

³¹⁰ Dugas, *Shakespeare for Everyman*, p. 349.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

a strategic choice used to emphasize collective regional ownership over the festival. This concept would become popular and effective. However, the proliferation of place-based Shakespeare festivals would have to wait until the conclusion of both the Depression era and the Second World War, as theatrical opportunities were few during this time. The next major Shakespeare festival to take its state's name, the New York Shakespeare Festival, was founded by Joseph Papp in 1954.³¹² This organisation was a major step in the development of Shakespeare-centred performing organisations in the United States. Papp's free 'Shakespeare in the Park' formula would be replicated across the country for decades to come.

The nation's largest population centres were not the only areas claiming their own place-based Shakespeare; the success of the rural Oregon festival as it continued to professionalize inspired similar groups throughout the country to take their state's name. During the same decade as Joseph Papp's success in New York, both Colorado and Kentucky followed this model.³¹³ In the 1960s, Utah, New Jersey, and Arkansas developed state-named Shakespeare festivals. Following this, the development increased at a nearly exponential rate with nine festivals forming in the 1970s; in 1981 alone, festivals formed in Georgia, Indiana, and Minnesota. Consistent formation of state-based Shakespeare festivals has occurred every decade since.³¹⁴

As of 2020, forty-six states have, at one point, had a Shakespeare festival named for their state, following the formula '(State name) Shakespeare Festival'. The remaining four states, Massachusetts, Montana, Mississippi, and Rhode Island, all have had longstanding groups with variations of this nomenclature and this is a possible explanation for the lack of a festival developing with the namesake.³¹⁵ Massachusetts has been home to several long-running organisations including Shakespeare and Company and the Hampshire Shakespeare Company, but neither chose to name their groups the 'Massachusetts Shakespeare Festival'. Taking

³¹² Kenneth Turan and Joseph Papp, *Free for All: Joe Papp, the Public and the Greatest Theater Story Ever Told*, (New York: Doubleday, Random House, Inc., 2009), pp. 1-3.

³¹³ Engle, Londre, and Watermeier, *Shakespeare Companies and Festivals*, pp. 89, 151.

³¹⁴ See Appendix E, Section 5 for a complete list of all State-Based Shakespeare festivals and their founding dates.

³¹⁵ Kevin Asselin, 'Montana Shakespeare in the Parks', Interview in 'Shakespeare on the Road' Archive, Shakespeare Centre Archives, Stratford-upon-Avon, p. 1. Phyllis Seawright, 'Mississippi College Hosts 2020 Shakespeare Festival', Mississippi College, (2020) <<https://www.mc.edu/news/mississippi-college-hosts-2020>. Engle, Londre, and Watermeier, *Shakespeare Companies and Festivals*, p. 299.

productions on the road, Montana Shakespeare in the Parks travels vast distances of Montana (and the neighbouring states) and is one of the state's 'most cherished cultural institutions'.³¹⁶ Mississippi College housed a festival but rather than giving ownership for the state they chose to retain 'College' as part of the festival's name, a decision which keeps the group's focus more on the academic community than on the state as a whole. Lastly, Rhode Island has been the home of the Rhode Island Shakespeare Theatre since 1971. Also, another potential factor is simply that the name hasn't been used yet, but likely will be. For example, festivals with state-based nomenclature have developed even in recent years, such as the West Virginia Shakespeare Festival (2018) and the New Mexico Shakespeare Festival (2019).³¹⁷

As indicated in the introduction of this section, groups with the 'Shakespeare festival' nomenclature have historically been professional groups. According to the data assembled in Appendix E, Section 2, approximately 73 percent of such state named festivals are professional while only 19 percent were grassroots, with 6 percent remaining undetermined.³¹⁸ State-based festivals serve often in a high-profile capacity in the state or the region and hence a professional model is best suited to carry out operations on a larger scale. They are the only groups with the necessary funds to do so. These organisations seek to bring in tourists and patrons from beyond their borders not only to engage in their artistic offerings, but also to enjoy their state's tourism industry as a whole. Factors for embracing a broad geographic nomenclature can be found in published materials from these groups and even in their official mission statements. When Fred Adams, founder of the Utah Shakespeare Festival, asked the renowned director Tyrone Guthrie for advice on starting a festival, the latter responded, 'become your state's theatre'. Adams obviously followed Guthrie's advice, since the Utah Shakespeare Festival's mission statement self-identifies the organisation as a 'destination theatre' targeted at 'regional and national audiences'.³¹⁹ A 1997 story in the *Bangor Daily News* thoroughly captures the thinking of founder Mark Torres as he implemented the same approach in Maine:

³¹⁶ Minton, *Shakespeare in Montana*, p. 2.

³¹⁷ Appendix E, Section 5.

³¹⁸ Appendix E, Section 5. The 'undetermined' examples are indicated as such because of the lack of information to make a classification.

³¹⁹ Utah Shakespeare Festival, 'About Us - Our Mission, Vision, and Values', 2019 <<https://www.bard.org/about#mission-statement>> [Accessed 17 December 2019].

His first move was to change the name of the event to the Maine Shakespeare Festival, emphasizing a location that is recognizable to more than just locals...Plus he added out-of-state addresses to the mailing list. A local travel bureau designed a Shakespeare package for tourists, and a glossy brochure sang the praises of Maine in general. The thrust was: Why not come to Bangor for Shakespeare, and then take day trips to Baxter State Park, Moosehead Lake and Mount Desert Island?³²⁰

More recently in 2019, the Albuquerque, New Mexico based Vortex Theatre chose to rebrand their ‘Shakespeare on the Plaza’ program as a state-based festival. The group announced its reasoning: ‘The name speaks to our ambition to be a professional-calibre Shakespeare festival of true excellence for all New Mexicans to participate in and be proud of’.³²¹

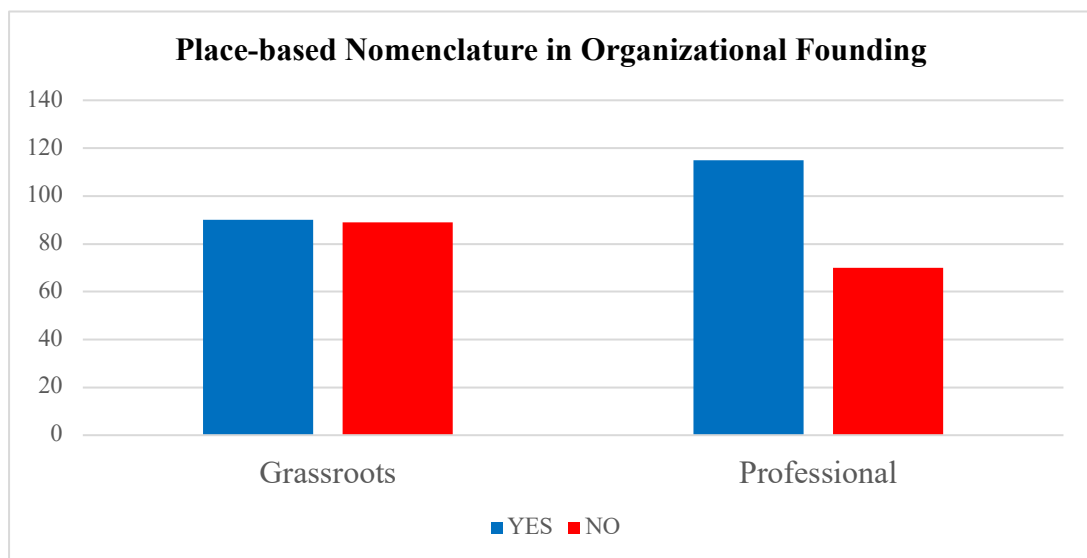


Figure 7 - Place-based Nomenclature in Organisational Founding

The practice of naming festivals or organisations based on geographic location does not only encompass states, but also towns, cities, and other regions. Of the totality of the three hundred sixty-five organisations located for this research, exactly half of the grassroots groups employed place-based naming of their organisation, while 62 percent of professional organisations use the same practice. This data is displayed in Figure 7, and the distinction can be explained by identifying who the audiences and participants primarily are for the two classifications. Professional groups promote their geographic location to a wider audience, while

³²⁰ Alicia Anstead, ‘Much Ado About Shakespeare’, *Bangor Daily News*, (31 July 1997).

³²¹ Richard David Jones, ‘The New Mexico Shakespeare Festival’, Vortex Theatre, (2019) [Accessed 1 June 2019].

grassroots groups serve another purpose entirely. Grassroots groups, by their definition, are not seeking large audiences from broad swaths of the country, but rather, only the support and participation of their immediate community. This also explains why grassroots groups are less likely to use the ‘ _____ Shakespeare Festival’ model, as it suggests an operation that is large, expansive, and often prolific in its programming like the Oregon, Utah, or New York Shakespeare festivals. Furthermore, the word ‘festival’ implies a seasonal event; for some organizations avoiding this term allows for more flexibility with other year-round programming. Thus, it is less likely a grassroots group would use their state, city, or town in their group’s name and the word ‘festival’.³²² For example, 65 percent of groups using the name ‘Shakespeare in the _____’ are grassroots in design. Simply having the identifier ‘Shakespeare’ is enough to give locals an idea of the organisation’s theatrical programming.³²³

Contention between two organisations can exist if one group wants to brand itself in a specific way and another group (usually with a lower public profile) has already done so. This occurred when founder Matt Chiorini was preparing to name his new group at the University of Central Arkansas the ‘Arkansas Shakespeare Festival’. Current artistic director Rebekah Scallet described what took place when Chiorini was informed that such an organisation was already in existence:

They got an angry email very quickly, from the organisation to another organisation that said ‘No, that name is taken’. So, I think that's why they ended up settling on ‘theatre’.³²⁴

This example underscores the value organisations place on having a state-based name for their festival. As Scallet described, this is ultimately how the Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre received its name. Organisational names are one of the most publicly visible parts of an organisation, therefore, great care and thought comprise the construction of such nomenclature. More critical to a group’s foundation, however, is its mission.

³²² This proves to be true with the representative organisations in Appendix C; only three grassroots organisations have broad place-based names. On the state level, there is only the Hawaii Shakespeare Festival. On the city level, there is the Arden Shakespeare Guild, Merced Shakespearefest and the Wichita Shakespeare Company that have such names.

³²³ Appendix D, Figure 6.

³²⁴ Rebekah Scallet, ‘Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre’, Interview by William Wolfgang (Dallas, TX: 31 January 2020), p. 2.

B. The 'Rallying Call': Mission Statements

A mission statement is simply the 'purpose' of an organisation.³²⁵ It is a standard convention that arts organisations have a mission statement and make it publicly available. Hence, all groups regardless of size or organisational model share this commonality. It is considered a best practice by arts administrators for an organisation to derive all aspects of their operations and programming from their mission statement, but in reality, that is not always practical. In the subsequent subsections, I discuss how mission statements are used to develop organisations or the reverse, how the mission statements coalesce around programming after the organisation is formed. In this section, I detail the common constructions of Shakespeare performing mission statements and how they spark organisational development, and provide examples for varying organisational models located on the matrix of characteristics in Appendix A.

Following best practices of a concise mission statement, some grassroots Shakespeare groups utilize a specific language while others are more broad and open-ended.³²⁶ For example, Theatre in the Rough in Alaska, Encore Theatre Company in Idaho, Prezie Players in Iowa, and OrangeMite Shakespeare in Pennsylvania do not specifically mention Shakespeare in their mission statements, even though the work constitutes a majority of their programming and is central to their organisation's purpose.³²⁷ Emphasizing the work as foundational to their operations, some grassroots groups reference Shakespeare directly, such as the Bards of Birmingham in Alabama and Merced Shakespearefest in California.³²⁸ Professional organisations are more likely to include supplemental material such as vision statements and values. Many major professional Shakespeare organisations including the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Utah Shakespeare Festival, and Shakespeare & Company provide such information on their website.³²⁹ Dreeszen noted that it is 'difficult' to develop a mission and these additional statements;

³²⁵ Byrnes, *Management and the Arts*, p. 122.

³²⁶ Ibid. pp. 128-29.

³²⁷ Appendix C.

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ 'Our Mission, Vision, and Values', Utah Shakespeare Festival. 'What Is OSF?', Oregon Shakespeare Festival, (2019) [Accessed 1 June 2019]. 'Mission and Vision', Shakespeare & Company, (2019) [Accessed 1 June 2019].

consequently, he provided the recommendation for a board ‘retreat’.³³⁰ The fully volunteer groups that I worked with during this research did not have the infrastructure nor funding to accommodate these measures.

Arts administrator, scholar, and former board member of the Utah Shakespeare Festival William Byrnes provided this advice on mission statements: it is ‘an introduction...to people who do not know what [the organisation] is’.³³¹ While skimming the organisational summaries and mission statements in Appendix C, one could easily notice the commonalities among the mission statements, and if they are successful at defining or introducing what they are. First, like their professional counterparts, grassroots Shakespeare organisations are very much interested in ‘artistic quality’ while bringing their community together to ‘engage in’ or ‘enjoy’ their programming. Each statement conveys a different tone. Some organisations present a more playful approach suggesting a more avant-garde or experimental programming, while others appear more orthodox and refined. Professional organisations do share many of these traits, and similar verbs to describe programming are used: ‘educate’, ‘engage’, ‘innovate’, ‘inspire’, and ‘provide’.

The majority of Shakespeare organisations, grassroots to professional, utilize the idea of the word ‘accessible’ in both their written statements and in conversation about their work.³³² Throughout the course of thirty-five interviews with organisational leaders, the words ‘access’ or ‘accessible’ appeared sixty-nine times across twenty-four interviews.³³³ The interpretation and application of this concept is broad. In many cases, organisations refer to their work being ‘accessible’, meaning their audiences have the ability to understand and enjoy what they experience, emphasizing Shakespeare as contemporary and not archaic. However, accessibility also can refer to many other areas of the field. Patrick Flick, executive director of the Shakespeare Theatre Association (STA), described the concept as one that permeates all areas of operation including: the community’s ability to attend programming at little to no financial expense, the ability for younger people to be considered for leadership opportunities in the field at large, and the physical layout of the facility to

³³⁰ Craig Dreeszen, ‘Strategic Planning’, in *Fundamentals of Arts Management*, ed. by Pam Korza, Maren Brown, and Craig Dreeszen (University of Massachusetts Amherst: Arts Extension Service, 2007), p. 81. Wolfgang, ‘Grassroots Shakespeare Ethnographic Field Notes and Observations’.

³³¹ Byrnes, *Management and the Arts*, p. 133.

³³² Prescott and others, ‘Shakespeare on the Road Archive’; Wolfgang, ‘Grassroots Shakespeare Ethnographic Field Notes and Observations’.

³³³ Appendix H – Interview Transcripts and Supplemental Research.

be appropriately designed for people of all abilities.³³⁴ Flick's views on access were echoed in interviews throughout the United States. Theatres from California, Connecticut, Idaho, Kansas, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Maryland, Nebraska, New York, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Wisconsin talked in great detail about the importance of Shakespeare's accessibility to their mission.³³⁵ Lisa Wolpe of the Los Angeles Women's Shakespeare Company stated that 'inclusivity, engagement, and access' are the 'rallying call' for Shakespeare theatres throughout the world.³³⁶ Jonathan Perry of Nampa, Idaho built his vision around 'allow[ing] just regular people to do Shakespeare' and hence making it 'accessible to just general audiences'.³³⁷ In Kansas, the Wichita Shakespeare Company's mission exemplifies a sentiment that unites all grassroots and professional groups; director Jane Tanner stated that the organisation was 'a way that people can see Shakespeare that might not otherwise get to experience [it]'.³³⁸

Exemplifying part of the argument of this thesis, the Door Shakespeare from Wisconsin aspires to create 'common ground to experience [...] celebrated traditions', while others similarly seek to engage in 'conversation' around Shakespeare's work. Some organisations define this as 'bring[ing] audiences and actors together' to spark conversation like Shakesperience Productions in Connecticut, a sentiment which is similarly echoed by Shakespeare 70 in New Jersey.³³⁹ The grassroots student-run Shakespeare on the Green in Rhode Island also aims to bring the campus together in conversation.³⁴⁰ Other times this type of conversation is only a by-product of missions that are more oriented towards specific causes; one such example of this is the Recycled Shakespeare Company in Maine. This company's mission is 'to entertain and educate the community on a minimal budget, while relying primarily on used and recycled materials, local enthusiasts, and

³³⁴ Patrick Flick, 'Shakespeare Theatre Association', Interview by William Wolfgang (Oxford, OH: 25 October 2019), p. 3.

³³⁵ Appendix C.

³³⁶ Lisa Wolpe, 'Los Angeles Women's Shakespeare Company', Interview by William Wolfgang (Yosemite Valley, CA: 28 April 2019), p. 2.

³³⁷ Jonathan Perry, 'Shakespeare in the Park: Encore Theatre Company', Interview by William Wolfgang (Meridian, ID: 27 July 2019), p. 1. This concept will be addressed more broadly in Chapter 3.

Jane Tanner, Dan Schuster, and Vonda Schuster, 'Wichita Shakespeare Company', Interview by William Wolfgang (Wichita, KS: 9 June 2019), p. 5.

³³⁹ Jeffrey Lapham and Emily Mattina, 'Shakesperience Productions, Inc.', Interview by William Wolfgang (Waterbury, CT: 17 October 2019), p. 1.

³⁴⁰ Maaiké Laangstra-Corn, 'Shakespeare on the Green', Interview by William Wolfgang (Providence, RI: 17 October 2019), p. 5.

royalty free productions’.³⁴¹ This small grassroots organisation not only includes environmental activism in their statement, but also the group’s business model of ‘minimal budget’ and ‘royalty free productions’.³⁴² This mission statement is an outlier in its forthright, concise, and pragmatic approach to telling the community what it does. Due to the obligatory nature of mission statements, a common critique in the field of arts administration is that they can become mundane or innocuous, having little real impact because of their overwhelming similarity to one another, and fail to ‘clearly present [their] primary purpose’.³⁴³ One can see with the abundant similarities in Appendix C, regardless of the professional or grassroots qualities of the organisation, that the mission statements are formulaic and, at times, impersonal. Therefore, statements like the one formulated by the Recycled Shakespeare Company are likely to have a more enduring and positive effect.

Conversely, there is minimal evidence to support the idea that groups without mission statements are at a disadvantage. Shakespeare 70, a fifty year old Shakespeare performing organisation in New Jersey, does not formally have a mission statement or at least one that is readily available to board members.³⁴⁴ The organisation has been under the same artistic direction of its founder, Dr Frank Erath, for fifty years, and because of this has established itself without a mission statement. One of the few other examples of groups without mission statements is Arden Shakespeare in Delaware, which in lieu of a mission statement on the group’s website, this statement can be found: ‘[Arden Shakespeare] continues a 100-year tradition of community Shakespeare in the historic village of Arden, Delaware’.³⁴⁵ As referenced in the above press statement, the village of Arden has had Shakespeare performances longer than any living resident has been alive. Both of these cases are considerably unique, and they are deeply rooted in tradition which appears to be the substitute for a mission. While driving ideals have always been behind what they were doing, it appears the century-plus tradition has negated the need to formally articulate it.

³⁴¹ Appendix C.

³⁴² Emily Fournier and Lyn Rowden, ‘Recycled Shakespeare Company’, Interview by William Wolfgang (Waterville, ME: 18 September 2018), p. 3.

³⁴³ Byrnes, *Management and the Arts*, p. 133; Duncan M Webb, *Running Theaters: Best Practices for Leaders and Managers*, (New York, New York: Allworth Press, 2004), p. 128.

³⁴⁴ Foxworth, Interview, p. 1.

³⁴⁵ ‘Shakespeare Guild’, The Arden Club, (2019) [Accessed 5 Sep 2019].

Between the two extremes of a concise formal statement and that of no statement at all is where many organisations exist, at least at one point in their lifecycle. This simply can mean that their statement is vague and noncommittal or that the group has outgrown the statement and now works to achieve different goals.³⁴⁶ An example of this would be OrangeMite Studios in Pennsylvania, which originally functioned as a multifaceted arts organisation and operated many musical education programs including a community orchestra and a youth strings initiative. Over time the organisation's mission evolved and Shakespeare became the sole focus. The group began using the name of one of its programs, the OrangeMite Shakespeare Company, for almost all events. However, the board never approved an updated mission statement, which left the group without an official identity. In a candid interview, the organisation's then board vice president, Ryan Szwaja, articulated his frustration over the politics of serving on a board:

We needed a mission statement, so we wrote one. I don't think it has any depth or value, which is why I've always agreed with you that the mission statement should be rewritten.³⁴⁷

OrangeMite certainly is not the only organisation to have gone through such growing pains. Jessie Chapman, executive director of Advice to the Players in New Hampshire, recalled board discussions during a leadership transition in 2018 to expand their Shakespeare-oriented mission and to other areas of the arts. However, unlike OrangeMite, Advice to the Players had a very articulated mission set in Shakespeare production, therefore a change in the group's mission would also have had to accompany program changes, which ultimately did not occur.³⁴⁸

Idaho, much like the locations of Advice to the Players in New Hampshire and OrangeMite in Pennsylvania, is largely rural. Jonathan Perry discussed how this affects attitudes on the development and administration of arts organisations, noting that many groups 'don't have a good vision for how a successful organisation could work'.³⁴⁹ He attributed this to a lack of professional staff or guidance. Nevertheless, all three of these groups with grassroots qualities (Advice to the Players self-identified as a hybrid organisation) were led by individuals with master's degrees in

³⁴⁶ Thomas Wolf, *Managing a Nonprofit Organization: Updated Twenty-First-Century Edition*, (New York: Free Press, 2012), pp. 362-63. Webb, *Running Theaters*, pp. 129-30.

³⁴⁷ Szwaja, Interview, p. 6.

³⁴⁸ Jessie Chapman, 'Advice to the Players', Interview by William Wolfgang (Sandwich, NH: 26 September 2018), p. 9.

³⁴⁹ Perry, Interview, p. 3.

Arts Administration, and hence developed mission-driven tendencies.³⁵⁰ The other groups Perry referenced, those without professional leadership, may have more difficulty in articulating mission, administering programs and developing long-term sustainability to their programs. Leaders trained in the fields of arts administration or theatre, paid or volunteer, are a factor in sustainability for grassroots groups, as all three of the aforementioned organisations have over a decade of rural Shakespeare production behind them.

On the other hand, mission-driven long-term sustainability is only one indicator of success. For some grassroots groups developing personal connections and a sense of belonging with others for a few seasons is all that is required to have achieved their goals, which I expand upon in Chapter 3. Therefore, it is ideal to categorize mission statements, as many arts practitioners have, as best practice, but not the only means to an end. For potential groups wishing to solicit donations and grow complex annual programming, becoming a 501c3 organisation would be the most logical step.³⁵¹ The differentiation between grassroots and professional on this topic is apparent: for grassroots groups, missions can be potentially optional best practice, but for large scale professional organisations they are nothing short of a requirement. Missions are often used to launch an organisation, professional or grassroots, and on occasion, organisations develop prior to their mission.

C. *'Make It Your Own': Factors in Organisational Foundations*

An innumerable quantity of factors can serve as an impetus for beginning a Shakespeare performance group. Major factors indicated throughout the course of this research included mission-based development, organic or accidental development, socially based development, or development based around an academic or other institution. Mission-based organisational development occurs when a founder or founders articulates a mission for the group before any action is taken. Perhaps the most well-known example of a professional Shakespeare organisation with a clear vision is that of the previously mentioned New York

³⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 1. Chapman, Interview, p. 2. Brannock discusses the benefits and difficulties of hiring a professional staff member, stating when the 'scope of activities expands to the point that the board needs staff support'. Amy Brannock, 'Personnel Management Basics', in *Fundamentals of Arts Management*, ed. by Pam Korza, Maren Brown, and Craig Dreeszen (University of Massachusetts Amherst: Arts Extension Service, 2007), pp. 208-09.

³⁵¹ 501c3 organisations will be discussed in the Section 2.1A - 'To the Public': Legal Models.

Shakespeare Festival, founded by Joseph Papp in 1954.³⁵² The festival is now widely seen as a cultural touchstone. Still running today, the New York Shakespeare Festival in Central Park has served as an inspiration for professional and grassroots groups alike all over the world. A direct example of Joseph Papp's influence is with his mentorship of Tony-award winning director Marilyn Strauss. The founder of the professional Heart of American Shakespeare Festival in Kansas City, Missouri, Strauss talked fondly of Papp's encouragement to start a Shakespeare performance organisation in her hometown:

[Papp] said, 'They don't have a Shakespeare Festival within three states. Go home and do it and make it your own'. He said, 'Kiddo, promise me this, you'll keep it free, you'll keep it professional and you'll keep it outdoors'.³⁵³

Much like Ben Greet a few decades prior, Papp knew from the beginning he wanted a professional festival and that it should be highly accessible by the masses. His advice to Strauss illustrates a mission-oriented focus on an accessible, outdoor professional theatre. This was the business model he had championed and advocated for across the country. Strauss followed Papp's lead and founded the Heart of America Festival in 1993. In her 2014 Shakespeare on the Road interview, she emphasized the value placed on that initial founding vision: 'The first thing that pops into my mind is: it's professional. I almost won't go to community theatre anymore. I just can't do it'.³⁵⁴ This powerful model reached many large population centres around the United States; another such example exists in Tennessee with the Nashville Shakespeare Festival. Denise Hicks, executive director of the festival, stated these similar founding ideals rooted in her organisation's mission: 'Our basic principles of making it accessible to all of Nashville will continue to guide us. It will be free. It will be outdoors'.³⁵⁵

The free outdoor Shakespeare examples in the urban centres of New York, Kansas City, and Nashville thrive because of their connection with the city itself, and also the patron access that leads to funding and attendance while demonstrating a tradition of outdoor Shakespeare covered in the previous chapter. In America's

³⁵² Turan and Papp, *Free for All*, pp. 74-75.

³⁵³ Marilyn Strauss, 'Heart of America Shakespeare Festival', Interview in 'Shakespeare on the Road' Archive, Shakespeare Centre Archives, Stratford-upon-Avon, p. 1.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ Denise Hicks, 'Nashville Shakespeare Festival'. Interview in 'Shakespeare on the Road' Archive, Shakespeare Centre Archives, Stratford-upon-Avon, p. 4.

smaller towns, free professional outdoor Shakespeare would be challenging to develop and administrate due to less available funding. Thus, the grassroots model is more conducive to rural areas, which is the subject of a subsequent section. Founders of grassroots organisations also embrace Joe Papp’s ‘keep it free’ sentiment and build it into their philosophy when developing their organisation’s programming. Wichita Shakespeare Company in Kansas, Recycled Shakespeare Company in Maine, and the Montford Park Players in North Carolina are examples of grassroots organisations that were founded on the idea of free Shakespeare performance by the community, for the community.³⁵⁶ Conversely, many founders and organisations determine from the outset that the business model of ‘free Shakespeare’ would not work for their institution, and then specifically build a model of either professional or grassroots ticketed Shakespeare. While these organisations determined selling tickets was core to their business model for a specific period of time, the groups are not bound to maintain this in perpetuity. Ticketed programming balances budgets, but many of the organisations (professional and grassroots alike) have developed engagement and outreach initiatives that provide free programming to parks and other areas, such as Chicago Shakespeare Theatre’s Shakespeare in the Parks program.³⁵⁷

Illustrating a different foundational model, is not uncommon for leaders of grassroots groups to organically develop their founding mission over time. This could occur when an organisation developed around a singular event. One such case would be the OrangeMite Shakespeare Company, as creating a Shakespeare organisation was never an intention, but rather an ‘unplanned’ activity. This came about through unexpected success with a one-time original play loosely based on Shakespeare and the organisation developed later.³⁵⁸ Similarly, Encore Theatre Company in Nampa, Idaho did not begin with a mission to produce Shakespeare. By the group’s sixteenth year in 2019, director Jonathan Perry discerned Shakespeare was one of their most successful offerings, hence the plays had become the annual

³⁵⁶ Appendix E, Section 1, Figure 11 – Ticketed Grassroots vs. Free Grassroots Groups.

³⁵⁷ Barbara Gaines, ‘Chicago Shakespeare Theatre’, Interview in ‘Shakespeare on the Road’ Archive, Shakespeare Centre Archives, Stratford-upon-Avon, p. 7. Shakespeare in the Park is discussed in an operational context related to venues in Section 3.C of this chapter.

³⁵⁸ William Wolfgang, ‘Sowing the Seeds: A Case Study on the Development of a Rural Shakespeare Company’, unpublished master’s thesis (Drexel University, 2015), p. 16. The founding of OrangeMite and the role of in-kind donations is discussed in more detail in Section 3.C of this chapter.

centrepiece for well over a decade.³⁵⁹ Heike Hambley, founder of the Merced Shakespeare Fest in Merced, California, formed the idea of an organisation after success with a Shakespeare production she directed with another local community theatre group. Both Hambley and her participants so thoroughly enjoyed their experience, they decided to create a community organisation specifically dedicated to the performance of Shakespeare's plays.³⁶⁰ Professional organisations, conversely, are often thoroughly planned due to the financial capital and professional expertise required to launch the venture.

Grassroots Shakespeare performing organisations also form by developing their mission around social and political activism.³⁶¹ As mentioned previously, Recycled Shakespeare Company in rural Fairfield, Maine was founded on the premise of environmental awareness and practices through all areas of production, from recycled paper for scripts to recycling old sheets from local hotels as costumes. Founder Emily Fournier also made inclusion of individuals with disabilities a central part of this community group's mission.³⁶² In Greenville, South Carolina the Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company was developed with the objective to use Shakespeare to find a sense of belonging for the marginalized LGBTQ community:

We were created as a place to produce and perform Shakespeare's works through a queer lens. In the Bible Belt, it is often difficult to find where we fit in, and we think that Shakespeare is a perfect vehicle for expression and activism!³⁶³

As these examples indicate, Shakespeare can serve as a medium for such organisations to carry out critical social and political change on the local level. When groups tie their missions with the name 'Shakespeare', his body of work, cultural capital, and deep history in America gives a form of agency to their objective. Not only this, but when applied at the local level, participating in these efforts allows individuals to engage directly in political discourse by rooting their work in the cultural 'common ground' of Shakespeare. In the case of the Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company, the group explicitly states that Shakespeare is a 'vehicle' for their

³⁵⁹ Perry, Interview, p. 3.

³⁶⁰ Heike Hambley, 'Merced Shakespearefest'. Interview by William Wolfgang (Merced, CA: 25 Jan 2019), p. 5.

³⁶¹ The program-based implications to this mission and its promotion of social inclusivity will be presented and analysed in Chapter 4.

³⁶² Fournier and Rowden, Interview, p. 7.

³⁶³ Robert Fuson and Eric Spears, 'Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company', Interview by William Wolfgang (Greenville, South Carolina: 6 August 2019), p. 1.

activism, meaning that his work, for them, is a means to an end. Grassroots qualities such as developing activism as the basis of an organisation's mission can also be applied to professionals that are willing to work against established systems such as the Los Angeles Women's Shakespeare Company and the Harlem Shakespeare Festival which is discussed in detail in 'Chapter 4 – Struggles for Equality'.

Another source for inspiration in developing Shakespeare performing organisations lies in academia. As discussed in Chapter 1, this sector has a long and rich history. Today, there are at least fifty-two Shakespeare performing groups based at colleges or universities around the United States, which comprises approximately 15 percent of all current performance organisations.³⁶⁴ Like Angus Bowmer of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival before him, Fred Adams, a theatre professor, founded the Utah Festival around the activities of the college. At first, funding was not available to Adams through the institution, but he did have the ability to persuade his students to work on the project and thereby creating a built-in pool of actors and crew.³⁶⁵ Over time as the festival proved itself to be financially stable and sustaining, the institution provided more funding, including a grant of land.³⁶⁶ Shakespeare at Winedale was technically part of the University of Texas, Austin since its founding in 1971, but the founder James 'Doc' Ayres had difficulty receiving support for the program initially. Ayres stated, 'I had to go outside of my department' to implement the program. He eventually started the group by teaching a course outside of his department entitled, 'Architecture Design: Shakespeare', and then subsequently received private funds from beyond the university.³⁶⁷ In other cases the university gives its full backing, as with the Shakespeare Festival at Tulane in New Orleans, which was founded by four professors at the institution.³⁶⁸ The Shakespeare festivals from Oregon and Utah both began as community-based endeavours with volunteer

³⁶⁴ I suspect this number is much higher, and it is an area that would require further time to locate all of the annual Shakespeare performance programs at institutions around the United States. Appendix A – Complete Organisational Data and Classifications. Appendix D – American Shakespeare Cartography.

³⁶⁵ Adams, Interview, p. 2. It was not Bowmer that pioneered the model of university-based Shakespeare festivals. Since the first decade of the 1900s and well into the 1930s, partly in response to the national excitement over Ben Greet's educational-based tours, Shakespeare performances (occasionally called 'festivals') were most likely to be seen in association with an educational institution. Dugas, *Shakespeare for Everyman*, pp. 318-24, 347-62.

³⁶⁶ Adams, Interview, p. 11.

³⁶⁷ James Ayres, 'Shakespeare at Winedale', Interview in 'Shakespeare on the Road' Archive, Shakespeare Centre Archives, Stratford-upon-Avon, p. 5.

³⁶⁸ Clare Moncrieff, 'Shakespeare Festival at Tulane', Interview in 'Shakespeare on the Road' Archive, Shakespeare Centre Archives, Stratford-upon-Avon, p. 1.

student and community actors. In some cases, the operations are not managed by faculty. For example, student actors fully operate some campus-based groups, such as the Shakespeare on the Green in Providence, Rhode Island at Brown University.³⁶⁹ Based on my research, these student-led models appear to be less common, relative to other models, in the United States.

D. 'I love Shakespeare, and I live here': Geographic Location

As the phenomenon of grassroots Shakespeare performance is examined as a whole, perhaps the most obvious question is: 'where and why?' In fact, this very question of 'why Shakespeare, and why here?' is one that founding artistic director of the Recycled Shakespeare Company Emily Fournier said, even in her own small town, she was asked frequently. Her response was: 'I love Shakespeare, and I live here' which is evocative of the sentiment that Shakespeare performance can occur anywhere, it simply needs an individual to organize the production.³⁷⁰ Fred Adams' response to why he started the Utah Shakespearean Festival in Cedar City, Utah was similar: 'It's an often-asked question and I can very flippantly say, "Because I was here," but it goes much deeper than that'. Adams also described the city's tradition of Shakespeare as well as the contemporary economic situation.³⁷¹

More than fifty years apart, both Adams and Fournier founded Shakespeare performing groups in relatively small and isolated population centres. Today, the United States Office of Management and Budget (OMB) identifies both Cedar City, Utah and Fairfield, Maine as 'nonmetro'.³⁷² Metro and the two types of nonmetro counties are displayed on Figure 8 which comes from data assembled in 2013 by the Economic Research services.³⁷³

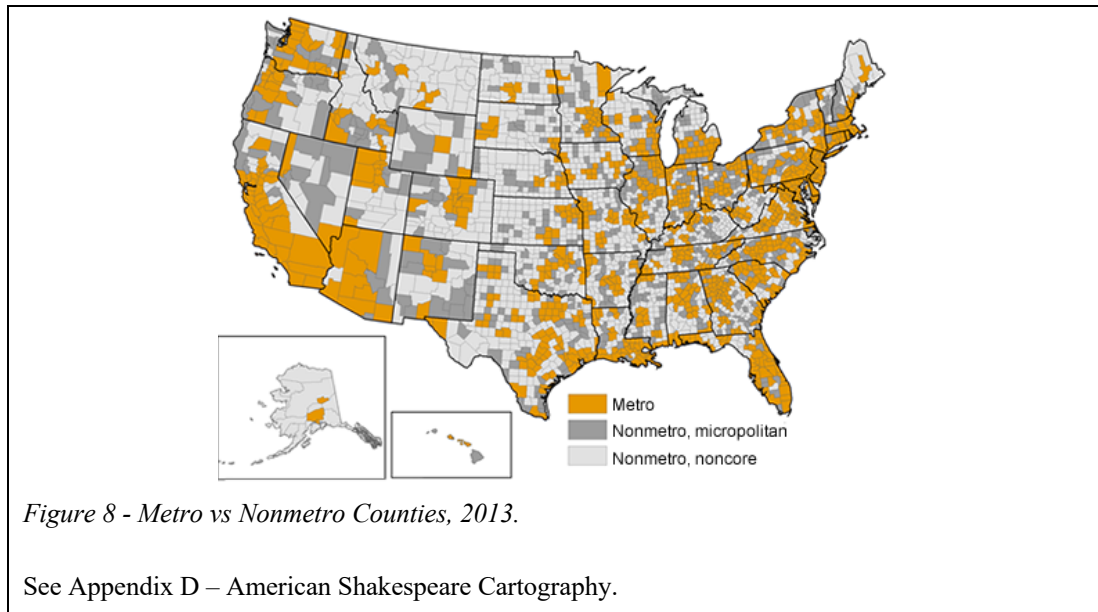
³⁶⁹ Laangstra-Corn, Interview, p. 1.

³⁷⁰ Fournier and Rowden, Interview, p. 3.

³⁷¹ Adams, Interview, p. 2.

³⁷² Specifically, Cedar City is considered Code 4 (Urban population of 20,000 or more, adjacent to a metro area) and Fairfield is labelled Code 6 (Urban population of 2,500 to 19,999, adjacent to a metro area). John Cromartie, 'Rural Classifications: Data for Rural Analysis', United States Department of Agriculture: Economic Research Service, (2019) <<https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/rural-economy-population/rural-classifications/data-for-rural-analysis/>> [Accessed 15 Sep 2019].

³⁷³ John Cromartie, 'Rural Classifications: What Is Rural?', Economic Research Service: United States Department of Agriculture, (2019) <<https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/rural-economy-population/rural-classifications/what-is-rural/>> [Accessed Sep 16 2019].

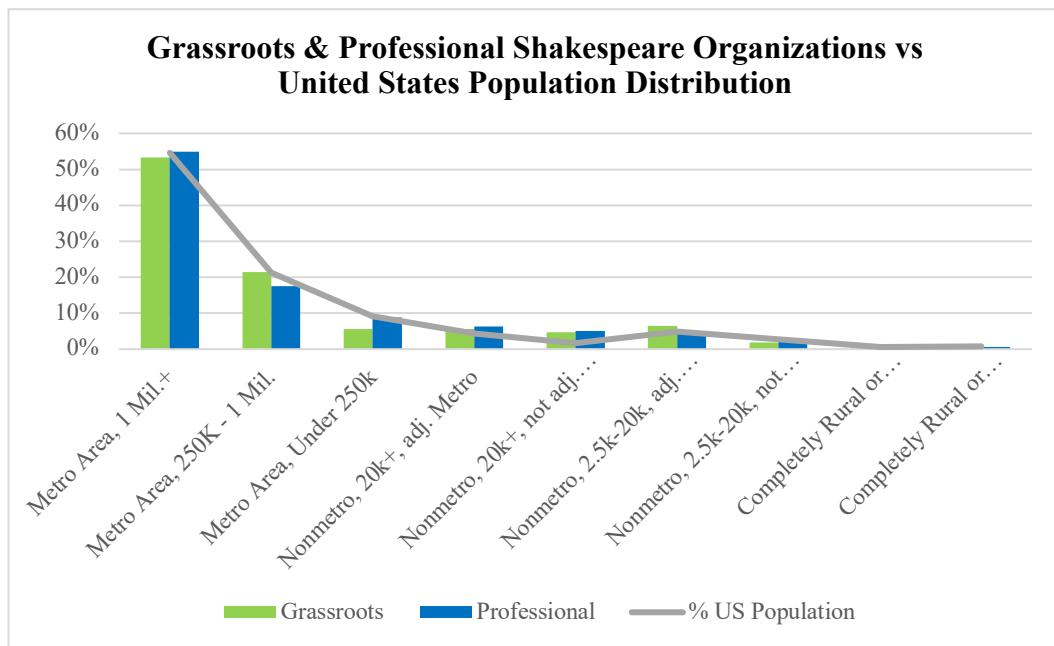


Approximately 4 percent of the United States lives in a Code 4 nonmetro area and approximately 6 percent of both grassroots and professional Shakespeare performing groups in the United States are located in these areas. In Code 6 nonmetro areas, the data is identically distributed; 5 percent of the population lives in these areas and 5 percent of all professional groups are located in these areas. The grassroots data point is marginally larger at 7 percent, but statistically aligned.

Geographic and population terms such as ‘urban’ or ‘rural’ and ‘metro’ or ‘nonmetro’ can result in, as stated by the Economic Research Service, ‘unnecessary confusion’. The group does recognize, however, that both ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ are indeed ‘multidimensional concepts’.³⁷⁴ In order to analyse this data in relation to Shakespeare performance organisations, I located the counties in which each of the three hundred sixty-five Shakespeare groups reside. This data reveals that grassroots organisations are more likely to form in metro counties of populations between 250,000 and 1,000,000, while professional groups are more likely to form in metro counties over 1,000,000. Figure 9 displays the distribution, in full, with all nine category codes as developed and utilized by the OMB.

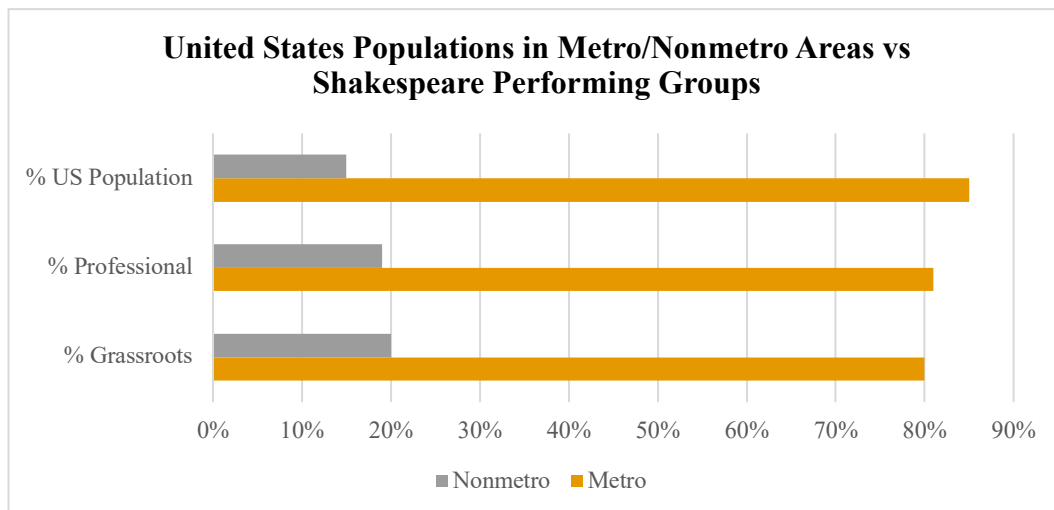
³⁷⁴ Ibid. At times, the definition of these concepts relates to population isolation, and in other instances to size. As these definitions affect not only the lawmakers and researchers working in these areas but also the populations themselves, the development of consistent terminology was required. The following data is based on counties, which are ‘the standard building block for publishing economic data and for conducting research to track and explain regional population and economic trends’. Ibid.

Figure 9 - Grassroots & Professional Shakespeare Organisations vs United States Population Distribution



Indeed, Code 3 (Metro areas under 250,000) provides a counter to this data point, so it is important to look at the data in its entirety by analysing metro v. nonmetro which is displayed in Figure 10. This figure displays all data divided into two categories: metro or nonmetro.

Figure 10 - United States Populations in Metro/Nonmetro Areas vs Shakespeare Performing Groups



Metro is often thought of as urban and suburban communities, while nonmetro identifies rural and small-town America. As 85 percent of the United States population is metro in classification (urban or suburban), this means the remaining 15 percent is in nonmetro and rural areas.³⁷⁵ Therefore, 20 percent of all

³⁷⁵ Cromartie, 'Rural Classifications'.

grassroots groups are in these nonmetro areas. This is a slightly disproportional number of grassroots organisations in rural areas. Hence, geographic location does have some effect on the development of Shakespeare organisations. Logically, grassroots groups are smaller in size, scope, and are community-focused, hence they would fit in well with a small community.

When viewing these findings in relation to arts participation data collected by the National Endowment for the Arts, a diverging trend emerges. This research discovered that 13.4 percent of adults living in a metro county attended theatre at least once a year, while only 8.1 percent of individuals living in rural areas attended theatre events.³⁷⁶ With the nation's widespread rural population, it is not possible that every community would have a nearby grassroots organisation. Additionally, the small organisational capacity of grassroots groups makes it difficult publicize events to wider geographic areas. As rural entities, these organisations serve very small communities, and no one outside of these relatively isolated locations will ever be aware of the programming. Hence, the massive geographical spread between many of these rural groups is their defining characteristic. Going to a Shakespeare event, or any theatre at all, would have to be a determined and deliberate act when one would have to travel many hours to attend, not a casual last-minute choice. Therefore, more grassroots organisations in rural areas proportional to the population distribution does not lead to more access to rural residents when considering the geographic size of the nation. The qualitative data outlined above from both Adams and Fournier, in the rural states of Maine and Utah, is congruent with this quantitative data on participation and organisational distribution. Geographic location does not prevent an organisation from forming, but it will ultimately affect access and participation as a reflection of population distribution.

2. Organisational Models

For the purposes of this research, I have identified commonalities in the Shakespeare performing groups around the country and expanded upon this with the qualitative data from representative organisations found in Appendix C. I have used this data to categorize the variety of organisational models that comprise the field of

³⁷⁶ Bohne Silber and Tim Triplett, 'A Decade of Arts Engagement: Findings from Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, 2002-2012', Office of Research & Analysis (Washington D.C.: National Endowment for the Arts, 2015), p. 91.

Shakespeare performance in the United States. Historically, there have been few other scholarly attempts to classify groups into organisational models outside of *Shakespeare Companies and Festivals* by Engle, et al. in 1995. As previously noted, this cohort of Shakespeare performance researchers identified the two categories of ‘destination festivals’ and ‘community festivals’.³⁷⁷ In order to fully understand the nationwide phenomena of grassroots Shakespeare more specific classifications are required to analyse the field as a whole, especially when using statistical figures such as the ones previously presented in the first section of this chapter.³⁷⁸

The term ‘organisational model’ refers both to the legal and operational construction of a group. Legal considerations primarily include the receipt of a tax status which is an official recognition from the federal and state governments acknowledging the establishment of a non-profit organisation (identified in section 501c3 of the tax code and often referred to as such) or an educational institution. Each state has varying requirements on what constitutes the incorporation of such an entity. Smaller grassroots groups may only be an informal collection of people; without making considerable expenditures, it is possible such efforts will remain unincorporated throughout the duration of their operational lifecycle. Hence, legal structures, recognized by all levels of government, are directly informed by operational models.

Educational institutions and large non-profit organisations have different demands in the areas of fiduciary responsibility and tax reporting than smaller organisations. Furthermore, grassroots groups that choose to not legally incorporate or choose not to acquire their 501c3 tax-exempt status have no such requirements whatsoever. Why then would any group wish to create more complexity, regulation, and bureaucracy in their organisation? The answer is evident from the findings of this research; it is because their organisational operations and capacity demand it. First, in this section, I articulate the legal models and approaches, their characteristics, and how such constructs serve Shakespeare performing organisations in the United States. Finally, I examine variations within the grassroots approach and discuss hybridized grassroots-professional models; I then juxtapose these examples with purely professional models. For a side-by-side breakdown of this in a matrix

³⁷⁷ Engle, Londre, and Watermeier, *Shakespeare Companies and Festivals*, p. xvii.

³⁷⁸ See Appendix A for the matrices that comprise the characteristics of my classifications.

format, see Appendix A. To close, I detail each of these organisational models and how they balance operational aspects such as: boards and funding, programming and participant interactions, and community development.

A. *'To the Public': Legal Models*

A commonality connecting the majority of all Shakespeare performance groups in the United States is the construct of a non-profit entity. The first step begins at the state level with incorporation. Corporations, profit or non-profit, are formed to absolve the members of legal responsibility should anything occur during their activities for which they could be culpable.³⁷⁹ During this initial process the founders need to submit a list of their founding board officers (usually at a minimum, a president, secretary, and treasurer) to their respective state government along with their by-laws. These are rules which outline the entity's governance; by-laws specifically apply to the board of directors or trustees and their responsibilities.³⁸⁰

Non-profit organisations are governed by boards of directors which are legally obliged to act as fiduciaries, or in the group's best financial interest. The board also is responsible for overseeing (hiring and firing) the chief executive of the group. In the case of Shakespeare performing organisations, that could mean either the executive or artistic director, which varies from group to group. Upon the board's receipt of the incorporation documents from the state, the tax-exempt status with the federal government still needs to be achieved via yet another process to assure a group can legally solicit charitable contributions and submit appropriate tax returns. Despite being called a 'non-profit organisation', this does not exclude groups from making a profit. The surplus that such an entity brings in must be, according to federal law, invested back into the organisation, going towards the mission and not specifically to an individual. Employees and contractors can be paid, but only as compensation for their service or employment, and they cannot hold stock or dividends in the legal entity.³⁸¹

Due to rapidly increasing costs of the professional for-profit theatre and a consistent decline in sales during the first half of the twentieth century, most theatrical entities have been following a not-for-profit legal model as early as the

³⁷⁹ Byrnes, *Management and the Arts*, p. 34.

³⁸⁰ Wolf, *Managing a Nonprofit Organization*, p. 37.

³⁸¹ Byrnes, *Management and the Arts*, p. 36.

1950s.³⁸² Since the Revenue Act of 1954, arts activities have been considered charitable enterprises and are recognized along with many others under the federal tax codes outlined in the Internal Revenue Code, section 501c3.³⁸³ In the United States, such entities are interchangeably referred to as ‘non-profit’ or ‘501c3’ organisations. In order for a group to receive this status upon submission of an application, the founders must satisfy three requirements: they must be officially organized (through articles of incorporation with the state in which they reside), they must assure their operations do not benefit any one person or political party, and finally their entity must serve an officially designated ‘exempt purpose’. This section of the tax codes lists the following purposes as eligible for exemption: ‘charitable, educational, religious, scientific, literary, fostering national or international sports competition, preventing cruelty to children or animals, and testing for public safety’.³⁸⁴

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) describes the common types of 501c3 organisations as ‘charitable, educational, and religious’ which includes the vast majority of arts organisations in the United States.³⁸⁵ Most arts organisations, including theatres and Shakespeare-related groups, are founded under the ‘educational’ purpose; this means the purpose of nearly all not-for-profit theatres in America, by tax law, is educational. Hence, organisations use the sentiment of increasing ‘the appreciation or awareness’ of a specific art form in order to meet this educational standard. Byrnes used Shakespeare as an example of what many organisations ‘specialize in’ when they fit their mission into the educational purpose of the tax code, a sentiment that is reflected in the mission statements listed in Appendix C.³⁸⁶ The organisation then submits a lengthy form declaring their educational purpose, as defined previously, along with a variety of other

³⁸² Jim Volz, *How to Run a Theater: A Witty, Practical and Fun Guide to Arts Management*, (New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2011), p. 21.

³⁸³ Paul Arnsberger and others, ‘A History of the Tax-Exempt Sector: An SOI Perspective’, *Statistics of Income Bulletin*, (2008), p. 106.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

³⁸⁵ It is interesting to note that the IRS provides examples of what meets the definition of ‘educational’ as ‘museums, zoos, planetariums, symphony orchestras or similar organisations’ but does not include reference to the ‘arts’ or ‘theatre’. Hence, there has been confusion on the national level as to the meaning of this nebulous but consequential term. This resulted in the report issued by the Congressional Research Service providing legal clarification still with no reference to the arts. Erika K Lunder, ‘501(C)(3) Organizations: What Qualifies as “Educational?”’, (Washington DC: United States Congress, 21 August 2012).

³⁸⁶ Byrnes, *Management and the Arts*, p. 36.

organisational information including: by-laws, specific narrative descriptions of activities, lists of directors or trustees, compensation amounts paid to employees, financial data, among other inquiries. Upon receipt of the tax-exempt status from the IRS, the organisation has three responsibilities to which it must continually adhere in order to retain the status. The group must keep financial records, file an annual report with the IRS, and have records available for public disclosure.³⁸⁷ If a Shakespeare performance group of any model chooses to officially apply for this status, they must adhere to these standards as set forth by the IRS.

Commonly, mid-sized groups to even the largest entities (annual budgets of \$25,000 to beyond \$25,000,000) apply to the IRS to receive their 501c3 non-profit status which, if granted, means the group pays no taxes and can legally solicit for charitable donations.³⁸⁸ The extensive application for the 501c3 often requires professional assistance of either lawyers or accountants to navigate. Therefore, the application's length and dense legal jargon can be prohibitive for the smallest groups not able to afford professional assistance. Grassroots Shakespeare groups occasionally start out without this status and choose to pursue it after their programs have gained momentum and stability in their communities. At least two companies, the Recycled Shakespeare Company and the OrangeMite Shakespeare Company, acquired their statuses after approximately five years of operations.³⁸⁹

The next legal model that some grassroots groups operate under is incorporated at the state level but is not an official non-profit organisation as determined by the federal government. The Hawaii Shakespeare Festival initially represented this model, as they did not apply for their non-profit status for nearly two decades after they began operations. Founder Tony Pisculli reflected on choosing not to seek a federal 501c3 non-profit status for so long: 'I realized that I was holding the Shakespeare festival back from what it could be'. He went on to discuss how all operations had to flow through him on this model. At the time of our interview in January of 2020 the group was preparing to transition into the conventional 501c3 model; by the time of an online performance in August 2020, Pisculli announced the status and the group's ability to accept donations. He emphasized that he felt the

³⁸⁷ 'About Form 1023, Application for Recognition of Exemption under Section 501(C)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code', Internal Revenue Service (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of the Treasury, 2019).

³⁸⁸ Wolf, *Managing a Nonprofit Organization*, p. 7.

³⁸⁹ Fournier and Rowden, Interview, p. 3.

group was moving in a positive direction, away from a model that was in one sense private ownership, to one of collective responsibility:

And by sort of giving it to the public now, it's now a public organisation, people can contribute to it [...] So, they contribute to this thing that belongs to Hawaii, and that's encouraging for them to do. They can donate to it now. We can solicit donations and we can bring more people on [...] I can step away a little bit more. I can just focus on my niche and not have to do everything.³⁹⁰

A variation of the model the Hawaii Shakespeare Festival utilized for nearly twenty years includes groups that have never incorporated and are completely unofficial in every capacity. This legal method of noncorporation is uncommon. When a group begins holding events, it becomes a liability concern to be operating without proper insurances, as any legal responsibility would fall on the individuals running the event and not an organisation. Most often when groups decide they wish to produce public performances they, at the very least, incorporate at the state level. Furthermore, identifying which groups are unincorporated was not possible for this study, as this is not something that a group of people would seek to advertise or make publicly known.

The final remaining legal model are those sponsored by universities, colleges or other educational institutions. These groups generally also operate under section 501c3, but they are bound to differing state and federal guidelines as larger institutions.³⁹¹ The legal model of a larger academic institution is essentially shared with the Shakespeare performing organisation under its auspices. Having this administrative overhead network in place has its advantages and disadvantages. Sharing administrative staff between the institution and the performing group is very beneficial for day-to-day operations; conversely, if funding streams dry up, the university could then cease operations of the Shakespeare performing group. This involuntary separation usually leads to a defunct theatre organisation. One such example is that of the North Dakota Shakespeare Festival in Grand Forks. Part of the University of North Dakota for its first three years, the Shakespeare festival separated from its institution in October of 2019. Seeking to continue the organisation's mission, founding artistic director Stephanie Faatz Murry immediately

³⁹⁰ Tony Pisculli, 'Hawaii Shakespeare Festival', Interview by William Wolfgang (Dallas, TX: 31 January 2020), p. 5.

³⁹¹ 'Life Cycle of a Public Charity/Private Foundation', Internal Revenue Service, (2019) [Accessed 18 Sep 2019].

incorporated the North Dakota Shakespeare Festival with the state, officially making it a legal entity in its own right. As of our conversation in early 2020, Murry was carefully contemplating the group's next move. She will first explore potential partnerships with other community organisations before considering the organisation's own 501c3 status.³⁹²

B. 'Custom-Made Puzzle Pieces': Grassroots Shakespeare Organisational Models

I have determined five distinct categories of grassroots Shakespeare organisations as a result of this research: fully volunteer, professionally staffed, educational youth performance, university sponsored, and hybrid grassroots organisations. It is, at times, difficult to determine which of these subcategories an organisation is a part of with only internet-based research. Outside of a survey with a high response rate, interviews are the most effective way of determining the nature of many of these very specific characteristics. I am identifying these groups not to create additional layers of complexity of classifications (these subcategories are not used in statistical analysis), but rather to qualify the nuances of the broad field of grassroots performance.

The vast majority of the grassroots groups that participated in this research are fully volunteer organisations that primarily produce the work of William Shakespeare. They are staffed entirely from the board to the executive and artistic directors in this manner. The volunteer staff members have varied levels of experience with management and the work of Shakespeare, from decades in community theatre to newcomers. This category is the most practical model for sustainability, as it alleviates the heavy responsibility to pay salaries and other costs associated with maintaining employees. The foundation of this model lies in personal fulfilment derived from one's participation. Hence, this establishes sustainability through regular in-kind (or donated) services, such as acting, designing, and administrating. While financial donations and contributions are part of this business model, these in-kind services primarily drive operations.³⁹³

³⁹² Stephanie Faatz Murry, 'North Dakota Shakespeare Festival', Interview by William Wolfgang (Dallas, TX: 1 February 2020), pp. 7-14. See Appendix H and transcript for organisational model transition from university-based to independent non-profit.

³⁹³ In-kind services and additional funding models are further analysed in this chapter in the subsequent sections.

This model, nonetheless, often runs into difficulty when individuals try to take on more work than they are capable of doing while serving in a volunteer capacity. Even though everyone is a volunteer, many organisations still occupy traditional roles of theatre management, such as board members or executive, artistic, education, and marketing directors. Nine representative grassroots organisations that were a part of this study generally followed this fully volunteer model which included: Merced Shakespearefest, Prenzie Players, Encore Theatre Company, Wichita Shakespeare Company, Recycled Shakespeare Company, Shakespeare 70, OrangeMite Shakespeare Company, Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company, and Theatre in the Rough.³⁹⁴ Theatre in the Rough in Alaska clearly established this on their website: ‘Theatre in the Rough productions were produced, directed, designed, performed and managed by people who work full time at something else’. This group’s frugal mindset of ‘a little must count for a lot’ greatly informed their artistic process as well, all while demonstrating the ‘value of simplicity and imagination’.³⁹⁵ From this perspective, the idea of ‘resourcefulness’ becomes a prerequisite for grassroots organisations.

Programming is developed based on how well the model operates and exactly how much volunteer work the staff and participants are willing to do. In order to keep their programming sustainable, Theatre in the Rough only produced an average of two productions a year.³⁹⁶ Likewise, the Hawaii Shakespeare Festival produced only a summer season, in part, to promote sustainability.³⁹⁷ If a company commits to more productions than they have volunteers or participants to staff, then burn-out can easily ensue for the lead director on the project. Like any type of organisation, sustainability is a critical concern for grassroots groups. Even so, it is considerably more complex as leaders are balancing their career or day job with the pressure of maintaining a producing theatrical organisation. The massive workload on a select few is what led the Bards of Birmingham, at the conclusion of their 2019 season, to close their doors and cease programming.³⁹⁸ Some organisations have attempted to counter this challenge by splitting responsibilities evenly across multiple individuals.

³⁹⁴ Appendix C.

³⁹⁵ Aaron Elmore, Katie Jensen, Peter Freer, and Doniece Gott, ‘About’, Theatre in the Rough, <<http://www.theatreintherough.org/>> [Accessed 17 July 2020].

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

³⁹⁷ Pisculli, Interview, p. 7. For more on this see Chapter 3, programming.

³⁹⁸ Laura Heider, ‘Blog’, Bards of Birmingham, <<http://www.bardsofbirmingham.com/>> [Accessed 11 November 2019].

The Wichita Shakespeare Company aided its sustainability by not having traditional roles such as ‘artistic director’ or ‘executive director’. Rather, the group had a ‘working’ board of directors that took on tasks in a collaborative manner. As the Wichita Shakespeare Company has been around in various incarnations for nearly forty years, there is certainly value in this strategy of collective responsibility.³⁹⁹ This particular approach is closely aligned with the matrix of principles for grassroots theatre located in Appendix G, such as relying on ‘broad participation’ with a ‘voice by the community from which it arises’. This group of individuals collectively selects productions, directors, and manages all operations. Nevertheless, many theatres prefer to have an artistic director that selects the season and then appoints the needed volunteers. Variation like this can easily occur across the grassroots performance model because, other than a few specifications (outlined in the previous section), the prevalent legal models do not provide guidance for such matters.

Nevertheless, the vast majority of Shakespeare performing organisations, professional or otherwise, have boards of directors (rare exceptions exist for groups that are not incorporated). As stated previously, boards are also composed of volunteers. For large professional companies, there is usually a requirement for individuals to donate a specified amount to hold a seat on a board.⁴⁰⁰ This is rarely the case in grassroots groups; as opposed to their professional counterparts, individual financial contributions are not a primary source of income. Rules and regulations are normally relaxed on the boards of these organisations, and groups are frequently looking for qualified candidates to serve. At the time of my interview with Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company in South Carolina, only three people were serving on their board; much like Wichita Shakespeare Company, they are a working board with each member carrying out functions (artistic and managerial tasks) that would normally be done by a member of staff.⁴⁰¹ The OrangeMite Shakespeare Company in January 2020 had only four individuals serving on their board, despite organisational bylaws that state no less than seven.⁴⁰² As there is no

³⁹⁹ Tanner, et al., Interview, p. 1.

⁴⁰⁰ Wolf, *Managing a Nonprofit Organization*, p. 46.

⁴⁰¹ Fuson and Spears, Interview, p. 2.

⁴⁰² Wolfgang, ‘Grassroots Shakespeare Ethnographic Field Notes and Observations’.

one other than the boards themselves to enforce such bylaws, noncompliance with an organisation's own rules have no effect on its ability to continue operating.⁴⁰³

Boards of directors oversee an organisation's volunteers and provide feedback, support, and guidance on financial matters. By design, boards are more involved in day-to-day operations in grassroots organisations than they are in the professional model. This is because individuals are volunteering at every level of the organisation, as opposed to simply taking on meetings in a board room. Grassroots board members, like anyone else in such groups, take on diverse responsibilities. This leads successful members to develop a strong sense of adaptability and deep responsibility for the organisation. Conversely, the opposite can also be true; as volunteer management become central to a grassroots business model. Keeping volunteers focused is critical, if one task is left undone than other aspects of the organisation are negatively affected. Ryan Szwaja candidly described his frustration with what he called 'enthusiasm without competence' in our discussion on the grassroots performance model.⁴⁰⁴ As it can require extensive training to teach individuals to do a second full-time job for free, this particular problem is difficult to correct at the volunteer level.⁴⁰⁵ This situation can be applied across the many responsibilities in theatrical management from marketing to artistic design to budgeting. Very often if the task cannot be completed by a volunteer, it then becomes the responsibility of a lead director, possibly overwhelming him or her and leading to personal and professional burn-out.⁴⁰⁶

Volunteer staff members may not be the first type of volunteer many think of with a community theatre group; in fact, often what comes to mind is the amateur or volunteer actors. While I discuss participants primarily in Chapter 3, it is important to preview that the amateur actor or volunteer professional actor is absolutely central to the grassroots model. The premise of all grassroots operation is founded upon participation of the community. Hence, the idea of having people volunteering their services as performing artists is twofold and mutually beneficial. The actor's

⁴⁰³ Wolf, *Managing a Nonprofit Organization*, pp. 34-36, 54-58.

⁴⁰⁴ Szwaja, Interview, p. 4.

⁴⁰⁵ Pam Korza, 'Volunteers in the Arts', in *Fundamentals of Arts Management*, ed. by Pam Korza, Maren Brown, and Craig Dreeszen (University of Massachusetts Amherst: Arts Extension Service, 2007), pp. 230-31. While Korza detailed many options for groups to orient, train, and lead volunteers for small totally volunteer-operated groups, highly organized efforts like this are not always realistically feasible.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 232. Korza cited 'burnout' as the first reason why volunteers no longer continue in their role, and this certainly applies to volunteer staff as well.

participation enriches the individual personally and propagates the sustainability of the organisation by providing a service free of charge. The organisation exists to carry out a mission in the community, and the amateur or volunteer professional actor participates because of the personal enjoyment they, in turn, receive. Founding artistic director Catherine Bodenbender of the Prenzie Players stated that her participants' love for performing 'is the most sustaining thing'.⁴⁰⁷ The continued operations of the grassroots model intertwines financial sustainability with that of personal and communal aesthetic sustainability.

The ability to be flexible and adaptable is obviously a major aspect of the grassroots model and is a strength that the community actors bring. This greatly contributes to the difficulty in categorising the extent of the variation that occurs in organisational models around the country. This particular aspect was also pointed out by Szwaja during the aforementioned interview. He discussed how many unique circumstances led to the development of OrangeMite's organisational model:

I think grassroots arts is fitting a puzzle piece that you've custom-made into where it fits... We are running out of a barn that was owned by private people that you had a relationship with already; you sort of stumbled into having a theatre in the first place with a group of college friends, [it] wasn't a planned activity.⁴⁰⁸

Szwaja then went on to discuss that after a piece of this model was removed, as I left the organisation to begin this research, the group had to 'mould what's left into that shape'. When applying this concept of nearly infinite variability to programming, attendance, and participation, the numbers and methodologies run the gamut. Grassroots groups range in annual attendance from hundreds of individuals to audiences in the low thousands, and such attendance is often reflective of budget size and organisational longevity.⁴⁰⁹ Nevertheless, business and operational models change and evolve over time. As groups get larger and professionalize certain aspects of their operations, many still wish to keep the close community ties that they had when they were smaller. Executive Director Denice Hicks of Nashville Shakespeare explained this phenomenon: 'I would say the aesthetic has maintained

⁴⁰⁷ Catherine Bodenbender, 'Prenzie Players', Interview by William Wolfgang (Davenport, IA: 27 August 2019), p. 11.

⁴⁰⁸ Szwaja, Interview, p. 5.

⁴⁰⁹ Fuson and Spears, Interview, p. 7. John Russell, et al., 'Montford Park Players', Interview by William Wolfgang (Asheville, NC: 9 August 2019), p. 4.

its grassroots level. It's communal; it's a democracy'.⁴¹⁰ After more than thirty years into professional production, Nashville Shakespeare has sought to retain many of the qualities associated with its grassroots origins, qualities which are desirable to larger groups. This type of balance between a small-scale communal organisation and an arts institution is difficult to achieve.

One organisation that has found this unique balance is the Montford Park Players in Asheville, North Carolina. This group operates under a different grassroots model with a full-time professional staff that organises volunteer actors to produce Shakespeare's work. The Montford Park Players is not only the most prolific grassroots Shakespeare organisation in the United States, it is also one of the longest continually running groups. Founded in 1973, specifically as a community-based theatre by Hazel Robinson, a student of grassroots pioneer Frederick Koch (who was, himself, greatly influenced by Ben Greet as he shared the Chautauqua stage with Greet's players), this organisation has been incredibly successful in the arts-centric community of Asheville.⁴¹¹ Undoubtedly, critical to the group's achievement was the amphitheatre which was created by the city's Department of Parks and Recreation and the Army Corps of Engineers. A consistent venue with minimal costs along with civic support from the local government supported this grassroots group and allowed it to continue, growing and expanding over the decades. Thirty-three years into the organisation's operations, the Montford Park Players hired a full-time executive director, John Russell. The group has been growing its attendance, programming, and participation ever since Russell was hired and currently runs a twenty-three-week summer season with a six-production run.⁴¹² Such availability of programming both to participants and audiences represents an exemplar grassroots Shakespeare organisation.

This particular grassroots model with a paid professional staff is, naturally, the ultimate goal of many other community-based groups. When asked if there's anything she would do differently if she had to go back and do it all over again, Emily Fournier discussed her desire to increase the organisational capacity of the Recycled Shakespeare Company to a point where they would be able to provide her,

⁴¹⁰ Hicks, Interview, p. 2.

⁴¹¹ Russell, et al., Interview, p. 1. Wolfgang, 'Grassroots Shakespeare Ethnographic Field Notes and Observations'. Dugas, *Shakespeare for Everyman*, p. 355.

⁴¹² Russell, et al., Interview, p. 2.

as the founding artistic director, with a ‘stipend’. Fournier qualified her response with the preface of ‘I didn’t go into theatre in Waterville, Maine to be rich,’ nevertheless, having money simply to live one’s life is essential; ultimately, working two full time jobs eventually takes its toll on many.⁴¹³ Laura Heider similarly expressed her exhaustion at the inability to ‘finesse [a pay check] out of the Bards’ bank account’.⁴¹⁴ Working toward the ability to pay an employee sometimes does lead to burn-out, as is discussed further in a forthcoming section. To achieve success, this requires coalition building, fundraising, and strategic planning. These complex tasks could be taken on by individuals trained in non-profit leadership, but boards of small groups can’t afford to hire individuals with such qualifications. Of the other twelve grassroots groups interviewed during the course of this project, none had a full-time professional employee. This very conundrum of professional leadership in the grassroots model is why thirty-three years of fundraising and board discussions occurred before the Montford Park Players could hire a full-time employee.

The most likely way to break free of this cycle is to acquire the necessary funding to hire the professionally trained employee. In the case of the Montford Park Players, John Russell joined the board after previously serving in a volunteer capacity. With previous experience in non-profit leadership, Russell brought in a consultant to the board which helped the organisation realize they were likely large enough to hire a full-time employee if they could locate more funds. Russell was subsequently able to locate seed money from a foundation to acquire the needed support.⁴¹⁵ The changes in attendance and organisational program reach were almost immediate. The annual attendance had averaged approximately 2,000 individuals for many years prior to Russell’s tenure. The next year attendance more than doubled to 4,700, and the trend continued, with the most recent data of 2018’s annual attendance coming in at approximately 18,300. Russell discussed how these changes are moving the organisation in a more professional direction, with a fully professional staff including an artistic director, designers, and others operating a year-round season. He went on to categorize where he felt the Montford Park Players was in respect to Oregon Shakespeare Festival as the professional exemplar:

On a sliding scale where you say 1 is totally grassroots theatre, completely volunteer run and operated - where we used to be when

⁴¹³ Fournier and Rowden, Interview, p. 7.

⁴¹⁴ Heider, ‘Blog’.

⁴¹⁵ Russell, et al., Interview, p. 2.

we started - and 10 being somebody like the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, top rate, with multimillion-dollar budget, we're probably on about 3 moving towards 5.⁴¹⁶

Russell was quick to point out that it was the organisation's intentions to stop the continual progression on this aforementioned professionalization scale, as maintaining community participants is a core part their mission regardless of 'a person's abilities and talents'. The actors who participated in the focus group for this research unanimously praised Montford Park Players for the organisation's balance of professional staff with volunteer actors, providing the rare opportunity in the community theatre world for a 'big stage' with a 'huge draw'.⁴¹⁷

With Russell's experience in non-profit management and backed by a board composed of businesspeople and 'strategic thinkers' of Asheville, the Montford Park Players have expanded what is possible with community-based Shakespeare while maintaining the hallmarks of grassroots theatre. The organisation gives each participant a vote in deciding the theatre's season through a free of charge membership and annual meeting; also, every production is free for the entirety of the season. Embracing artistic freedom, the Montford Park Players doesn't shy away from political content in productions and fully supports its communal identity through the promotion of original work by local playwrights.⁴¹⁸ When asked how one would go about replicating the success of the Montford Park Players elsewhere, Russell stated that 'the mechanics' of the organisation could be put in place in other locales; he cautioned, however, that the city of Asheville had a unique 'vibe' that wasn't present in other places. In more well-defined terms, Asheville has more theatre than other similar sized and even larger cities. Participants in the focus group also discussed this quality, firmly situating the organisation at the centre of a century-plus local tradition of promoting the arts.⁴¹⁹

While the Montford Park Players are the only grassroots organisation represented in this research that had paid professional staff, there were groups, however, that were led by professional volunteer staff. The Shakespeare in the Park by Encore Theatre Company in Nampa, Idaho, the Wichita Shakespeare Company in Kansas and the OrangeMite Shakespeare Company in Dover, Pennsylvania were at

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., p. 5.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., p. 13.

⁴¹⁸ The topic of original work will be discussed in Chapter 3.

⁴¹⁹ Russell, et al., Interview, p. 15.

one point led by individuals with Masters Degrees in Arts Administration or in Theatre education.⁴²⁰ While the training and experience of such leaders (Jonathan Perry in Idaho and myself in Pennsylvania) brought these grassroots organisations stability and longevity, obstacles prevented the necessary funds to be raised to allow even part-time professional employment. Perry emphasized that groups in the rural farming-based communities outside of Boise were lacking arts funding, and hence compensated staff: ‘almost nobody has, especially in the non-profit world, [sic] paid employees to help market, or to lead the organisation’.⁴²¹ Much like the examples from Alabama and Maine, neither Encore Theatre Company nor OrangeMite Shakespeare Company was able to compensate their leadership, professional training or not, despite their best efforts. The grassroots model is always based around volunteer actors and participants, but also volunteer leadership which is a critical part of long-term sustainability.

A third variation of the grassroots model is that of educationally based performance groups for younger, school-age participants. Like other types of grassroots Shakespeare, the organisation’s programming coalesces around the production of Shakespeare’s work, while the primary difference is that participation is often limited exclusively to youth and the group’s mission is exclusively rooted in educational practices. The Bards of Birmingham from Alabama is an example of an organisation that operated on this model. The group identified its work in the following way:

[Bards intends] to engage in theatre to all young people in the Greater Birmingham area, regardless of experience, education level, age, race, and/or economic constraints. Bards’ primary focus is on classical theatre, particularly the works of Shakespeare.⁴²²

Bards of Birmingham’s programming and its effect on participants is discussed and analysed further in both the forthcoming chapters. Using the matrix located in Appendix A, during my research I located twenty such organisations throughout the United States. Examples of these groups include: Children’s Shakespeare Theatre in New York, Get Thee to the Funnery in Vermont, Southeastern Teen Shakespeare Company in Florida, and Belt Valley Shakespeare Players in Montana.

⁴²⁰ Perry, Interview, p. 1. Tanner, et al., Interview, p. 11.

⁴²¹ Perry, Interview, p. 3.

⁴²² Laura Heider, ‘Previous Productions’, Bards of Birmingham, <<http://www.bardsofbirmingham.com/>> [Accessed 11 November 2020].

Shakespeare at the university level has been studied to a slightly greater degree than community-based Shakespeare (but by no means extensively), due in large part to a collection of seventeen essays on the topic in *Shakespeare on the University Stage*, edited by Andrew James Hartley. This type of Shakespeare performing organisation is briefly discussed to the extent that it applies to the grassroots theatre. This model includes two constructions: completely student led groups such as Shakespeare on the Green and groups operated by faculty for students and the community such as Shakespeare at Winedale. The Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival has a rich history of Shakespeare on its campus with performances as early as 1846, possibly predating all other institutions in the nation. The organisation which is part of the university operates three separate companies: a professional company, a touring company, and a community company in South Bend, Indiana.⁴²³ In this way, the Notre Dame Shakespeare Company represents organisational hybridity. However, while the organisation does have aspects of grassroots theatre, with community involvement, it is not purely a grassroots effort and that is because of a major distinction: funding. As Hartley succinctly indicated, funding is generally available because institutions see such productions as a ‘Good Thing’. Funding is more challenging to access for independent grassroots organisations not part of an institutional budgeting system and therefore I have classified them as a separate organisational entity.⁴²⁴

Hybrid models blend together aspects of all of the other models in any and all possible variations. Like Notre Dame, this can mean a mix of professional actors with community actors, academics with the community, education programming with general production programming and at times political issues. Other groups that follow this hybridized model are Shakespeare in Yosemite and Advice to the Players in New Hampshire. It is far more common for organisations that have constructed a hybrid model between professional and grassroots to have professional leadership. When working with actors that are being compensated for their services it is logical that, in turn, the directors and staff are also compensated. Hybrid models often exist

⁴²³ Grant Mudge, ‘Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival’, Interview by William Wolfgang (South Bend, IN: 12 March 2020), p. 1.

⁴²⁴ Andrew James Hartley, *Shakespeare on the University Stage*, (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 2.

to serve an educational purpose. For example, *Advice to the Players* utilizes professional union actors to collaborate and mentor community actors.

C. *'The Highest Level': Professional Models and Other Manifestations*

Professional Shakespeare organisations can operate as an independent organisation or one that is sponsored by a university. During the 2014 Shakespeare on the Road research, eleven organisations were visited in the United States fitting this model. These groups operate on the principle that actors are skilled and trained professionals and they should be rightly and justly compensated. The influences of unions on the professional organisations greatly impacts the theatre's operations and is clearly a distinct characteristic to this model. Also, while budgets are larger and employees more numerous, deeper connections with the local community and the artists manifest in different ways as opposed to their grassroots counterparts. Tina Packer alluded to the artist in touch with a community in opposition to a detached and complex corporate entity in her 2014 Shakespeare on the Road interview:

The artist manager is one of the keys to successful Shakespeare companies, the theatre has existed through actor managers [...] now we're massive corporate structures. And so, how does the artist say in touch with his or her material in the face of being organised from the outside?⁴²⁵

This struggle that Packer described is the same experience that has been occurring with the commercialization of the theatrical industry since Baker, MacKaye and others fought against it in the early twentieth century, attempting to bring about 'theatre of democracy'. Professional theatres and professional theatre artists have historically been the primary focus for performance studies; hence, I continue to discuss this field's qualities insofar as how they relate and interact with grassroots groups. However, ancillary variations of this model do exist. Recently, a popular performance trend of irreverent Shakespeare in the pub or bar setting has emerged, of which groups like *The Wit's Shakesbeer* in Colorado have had much success.⁴²⁶ Also, *Shakesperience Productions* is a professional educational group in Connecticut constituting another model which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. Similarly, Shakespeare in Prison programs are another organisational variation with

⁴²⁵ Tina Packer, 'Shakespeare and Company', Interview in 'Shakespeare on the Road' Archive, Shakespeare Centre Archives, Stratford-upon-Avon, p. 10.

⁴²⁶ Appendix B.

professional leadership which has been covered in other scholarship and publications.

3. Operations and Administration of Grassroots Organisations

A. *'The Job I Pay To Do': Organisational Staffing*

Naturally the first role to be occupied in an organisation is that of the founder, and these individuals occupy a unique place within an organisation, grassroots or professional. As the person responsible for instilling the passion to produce Shakespeare's work in others, founders are tireless advocates for their cause. Hazel Robinson, founder of the Montford Park Players, was described during an interview as a 'force of nature' who started the organisation with 'sheer force of will'.⁴²⁷ Marilyn Strauss talked of Joe Papp's exuberance or 'chutzpah' and how she, too, needed to channel a similar energy as an organisational founder. Laura Heider, the founder of the Bards of Birmingham, captured the tireless 'chutzpah' of these individuals in her personal reflection: 'I'm having trouble remembering a time when I wasn't fixated on the next project, the next production, trying to tweak whatever we were working on to make it a little better'.⁴²⁸ Susan Kenny Stevens described founders of non-profit organisations along the same lines as Heider's autobiographical account, as individuals with 'a calling, a mission, an internal mandate, fuelled by classic entrepreneurial characteristics: energy, drive, intensity, self-determination, and urgency'.⁴²⁹

Founder-driven organisations are common constructs for grassroots organisations. Ten out of thirteen grassroots groups in Appendix C are (or were for at least a decade) founder-driven. Both Heike Hambley and Laura Heider described the organisation as their 'baby', which was the same word that was used during my time as founding artistic director of OrangeMite Shakespeare. Heider wrote, 'I poured myself into it relentlessly'. This was echoed as a warning by Jeffrey Lapham, stating, 'if [the organisation] is not your soul drive, if you're not going to pour everything you have into it, and you're not willing to skip weddings, funerals [then it's not for you]'.⁴³⁰ Burn-out is an unfortunate side-effect from the intensive nature

⁴²⁷ Russell, et al., Interview, p. 10.

⁴²⁸ Heider, 'Blog'.

⁴²⁹ Susan Kenny Stevens, *Nonprofit Lifecycles: Stage-Based Wisdom for Nonprofit Capacity*, Second Edition, (St. Paul, Minnesota: Stagewise Enterprises, Inc., 2008), p. 79.

⁴³⁰ Lapham and Mattina, Interview, p. 6.

of being a founder-driven organisation, especially of a grassroots organisation where it is very often a second full time job. While founder-driven groups also have volunteers to assist, it is difficult because frequently the available volunteers don't have the appropriate trainings or skill sets to carry out all tasks. While articulating the demands on a founding artistic director of a grassroots company in a candid blog post, Laura Heider described her journey to burn-out:

Bards is the job I do for free. Wait, let me back up. Bards of Birmingham is the job I pay to do. I actually have less money in my bank account because I do Bards than I would if I had a saner hobby, like skydiving. I have to work full time to pay my bills and then put plays together after I get home for the day.⁴³¹

There are strategies to combat burn-out, which Theatre in the Rough articulated as doing 'only two shows a year'. Emily Fournier fought off burn-out with carefully allotted personal time:

I learned early on it's important to take personal time because at first it was like all I did, twenty-four hours a day was Shakespeare...after a while, I'm almost sick of talking about Shakespeare. And so, I said I'm going to take a week off, and I did.⁴³²

Catherine Bodenbender of the Prentie Players had friends take over as interim artistic directors to keep the group running while she took a much-needed sabbatical.⁴³³ Whereas these strategies are helpful for certain individuals and organisations, they are not universally applicable, and some groups inevitably have to close their doors. Heider ended the Bards of Birmingham's decade-long operations in May of 2019, stating that the responsibilities of managing the group 'weighed heavily' on her. After announcing she was planning to pursue a PhD, she thought it best to step away 'while the organisation was strong'.⁴³⁴

Consequently, founder-driven organisations can sometimes have the unintentional side-effect of becoming a small cult of personality. The founder of Shakespeare & Company, Tina Packer, stated 'that an organisation has got to survive its founder,' so she stepped away to see if the group would continue on.⁴³⁵ Hence, succession planning is a critical consideration that grassroots and professional

⁴³¹ Heider, 'Blog'.

⁴³² Fournier and Rowden, Interview, p. 10.

⁴³³ Bodenbender, Interview, p. 11.

⁴³⁴ Laura Heider, 'Bards in the News', Bards of Birmingham, <<http://www.bardsofbirmingham.com/>> [Accessed 11 November 2020].

⁴³⁵ Packer, Interview, p. 11.

groups will ultimately face if ‘permanence is an organisational goal’.⁴³⁶ Heike Hambley recognized this challenge as the Merced Shakespearefest approaches its twentieth year in 2022:

For theatres where one person with passion built something and is constantly involved in everything that is happening: producing, directing, whatever. And when this person out of whatever reason, age or moving to another place, when this person leaves, very often theatre organisations just collapse.⁴³⁷

One way to prepare an exit-strategy for hardworking founders who are unable or unwilling to move on, also known as founder’s separation (or founder’s syndrome), is to have a large volunteer staff or board ready and always active like the Wichita Shakespeare Company.⁴³⁸ This approach was similarly employed when the Montford Park Players transitioned from their founder to their next stage, but it does have a downside as well. Current executive director John Russell stated that this transition plan generally works in theory, but in practice, it was harder to manage, ‘because it was all dependent on the least effective person in that organisation’.⁴³⁹ The critical issues of staffing and volunteer management are part of the day-to-day administration of non-profit grassroots Shakespeare groups, not only during a time of succession. Even some professional organisations, especially at the beginning of their lifecycle, rely on volunteer staff. Debra Ann Byrd, founder of the Harlem Shakespeare Festival, rhetorically asked during her 2014 interview, ‘how do you do that and have a season and not lose your mind with a really small staff, mostly made up of volunteers?’⁴⁴⁰ John Russell calls certain responsibilities managed by actor or production participants as daily ‘chores’. Since all tasks for the large majority of grassroots organisations from the executive director to the artistic director to nightly chores are carried out by volunteers, instilling a sense of accountability is challenging for the board and senior leadership. The only accountability that exists is that of the commitment made to one another. Shakespeare 70 is one such organisation that divides responsibilities among board members as Curt Foxworth described to me in 2019:

⁴³⁶ Stevens, *Nonprofit Lifecycles*, p. 84.

⁴³⁷ Hambley, Interview, p. 3.

⁴³⁸ Stevens, *Nonprofit Lifecycles*, p. 85. Tanner, et al., Interview, p. 2.

⁴³⁹ Russell, et al., Interview, p. 2.

⁴⁴⁰ Debra Ann Byrd, ‘Harlem Shakespeare Festival’, Interview in ‘Shakespeare on the Road’ Archive, Shakespeare Centre Archives, Stratford-upon-Avon, p. 1.

The executive committee which currently has really seven people on it, we all have jobs. It's a volunteer organisation. But the seven people that we have really love doing theatre, and we're really committed to it.⁴⁴¹

This commitment and belonging explains how day-to-day responsibilities are accomplished with a volunteer staff. Part of the organisational structure is indeed a sense of shared collective responsibility for grassroots Shakespeare organisations.

B. 'The Most Sustaining Thing': Funding Models and Operations

Anecdotally, when individuals first think of the concept of 'grassroots Shakespeare', they immediately think of amateur actors and low-budget productions. As with many simple generalizations, this is, of course, not accurate. If a broad term had to be applied to describe the approach of grassroots organisations to funding, based on my research I would state, 'resourceful'. Nicholson, Holdsworth and Milling describe a similar situation in their research of amateur dramatics in the United Kingdom; they observe at the core of the phenomena is the participants' 'resilience, imagination and resourcefulness'.⁴⁴² This categorization has proven to align exactly with the efforts of grassroots Shakespeare organisations in the United States, and with few resources available to aid community theatre groups, arts administrators must be tenacious to secure funding and then structure their budgets and programming accordingly.

Funding sources for non-profit organisations are commonly classified as either 'contributed' or 'earned' income.⁴⁴³ Every theatrical organisation has developed, or continues to develop, their own resourceful and unique approach to utilizing both of these aspects of their funds. In the following section, I provide examples of how grassroots Shakespeare companies structure their funding. But first, it is important to stress the largest distinction between grassroots funding and professional funding. External contributed funding sources such as governmental (federal or state) and large corporate or philanthropic entities primarily serve only large professional theatrical groups. This is often the case because the grassroots groups do not meet the annual budget threshold to be considered for such funding. Grassroots groups are very rarely considered for national funds; for example, the

⁴⁴¹ Foxworth, Interview, p. 6. The qualities of Collective Responsibility are covered in greater detail in Chapter 3.

⁴⁴² Nicholson, Holdsworth, and Milling, *Ecologies of Amateur Theatre*, p. 19.

⁴⁴³ Webb, *Running Theaters*, pp. 86-87.

National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) program, Shakespeare in American Communities, only accepts proposals from professional theatre companies.⁴⁴⁴ The Montford Park Players in Asheville, North Carolina has secured a non-Shakespeare-specific grassroots grant through the NEA, but the process is complicated and multifaceted and thereby prohibitive for smaller groups. Executive director John Russell discussed his years of experience serving on the North Carolina Arts Council and recalled how this body assists the legislature in the allocation of arts funding. As America's largest community-based Shakespeare group, the Montford Park Players is a rare exception for receiving funding from a body like the NEA or even state funding.⁴⁴⁵ Many organisational leaders stressed to me the extreme importance of earned income (in the form of ticket sales or camp tuitions) as it constituted the majority of the grassroots group's income from this study.⁴⁴⁶ While this may be the case, it is the numbers that are *not* on the balance sheet that ultimately make a difference. This is due to the fact that grassroots groups never fully account for the massive amount of in-kind donations they receive (or services rendered with no expectation of compensation or anything in return). The vast majority of the representative grassroots organisations operate in a specific IRS tax classification of non-profit which files a less complex form with the IRS. This means recording in-kind contributions is not required by basic levels of tax law under which many smaller non-profits operate (conversely, reporting these contributions is often necessitated for financial grants).⁴⁴⁷ Considering the small annual cashflow with which such organisations are operating and that most, if not all, time-in-service of the group is volunteer, many groups are not able to record the vast amount of contributed income. In-kind donations comprise any item donated for use by the organisation; this could include paper for printing programs, fabric, costumes, stage properties, or any of the enumerable properties used for day-to-day operations.

The concept of in-kind contributions does not end with physical items, but it also includes services rendered. For volunteer staff members who are working at

⁴⁴⁴ Christy Dickinson, 'Shakespeare in American Communities: How to Apply', Arts Midwest, (2020) <<https://www.artsmidwest.org/programs/shakespeare/apply>> [Accessed 1 Sep 2020].

⁴⁴⁵ Russell, et al., Interview, p. 7.

⁴⁴⁶ Appendix H – Transcripts. Wolfgang, 'Grassroots Shakespeare Ethnographic Field Notes and Observations'.

⁴⁴⁷ Norton J Kiritz, 'Essentials of Proposal Writing', in *Fundamentals of Arts Management*, ed. by Pam Korza, Maren Brown, and Craig Dreeszen (University of Massachusetts Amherst: Arts Extension Service, 2007).

least part time for the organisation, this in-kind contribution from these individuals would be enough to place a grassroots group in an entirely different tax report classification with the IRS. Many part-time and even full-time salaries are, in essence, donated to the organisation. Likewise, while the actor-participants are in large part amateurs in grassroots Shakespeare groups, as previously established, this doesn't mean the leadership is also uncredentialed. Examples abound throughout this research with highly qualified leadership, staff, and artists contributing their services to their organisation's mission. Individuals with degrees and professional experience in the performing arts have founded or operated eight grassroots Shakespeare organisations represented in this study.⁴⁴⁸ Meanwhile, professional educators have served as founders and leaders in at least four grassroots organisations.⁴⁴⁹ These examples illustrate the lifeblood of grassroots Shakespeare organisations: professional, experienced leadership donated to their group's mission in service of local communities.

Of course, in-kind services are also donated to all organisations by individuals without credentialed experience. Amateur community actors not only support the organisation's operations by donating their time and talents, but they also deliver, in many cases, the group's core mission. Hawaii Shakespeare Festival artistic director Tony Pisculli articulated this concept:

We could present better shows with professional actors, I'm sure, but we couldn't create those acting opportunities for people in the same way. And I think that's a big part of what we've been doing over the years.⁴⁵⁰

In essence, one of the main sources of funding for grassroots Shakespeare groups is inherently the participation of the very members the organisation seeks to include. Founding artistic director Catherine Bodenbender of the Prenzie Players in Iowa elucidated this philosophy: 'If we had a show where only five people sat in the audience, we would still do the show, we do the show because we love it, and I think that is the most sustaining thing'. Bodenbender's use of the word 'sustaining' is two-fold; not only does she refer to financial sustainability, but also to sustainability of

⁴⁴⁸ These organisations include: Arden Shakespeare Guild, Encore Theatre Company, Hawaii Shakespeare Festival, Montford Park Players, Prenzie Players, Shakespeare 70, Theatre in the Rough, and the OrangeMite Shakespeare Company. Appendix C.

⁴⁴⁹ These organisations include: Bards of Birmingham, Merced Shakespearefest, Wichita Shakespeare Company, and the OrangeMite Shakespeare Company. Appendix C.

⁴⁵⁰ Pisculli, Interview, p. 5.

the group's mission and the passion for it that her participants share.⁴⁵¹ Emily Fournier of the Recycled Shakespeare Company in Maine similarly echoed her colleague from Iowa regarding financial stability and participation: 'I think it's sustainable as long as we have people coming in to act who bring their friends and family'.⁴⁵² Participation, in this case, funds the group in multiple ways.

Contributed income manifests itself for grassroots Shakespeare organisations in less common forms, as well. This includes personal donations and funding from local grants or community foundations. For the most part, securing large personal donations is rare for grassroots Shakespeare groups as this usually requires specialized skills and a base of people financially able to donate year after year. In America's more rural areas, where grassroots groups are more prevalent, it is rare to see an abundance of funds in the local economy. In Idaho, Jonathan Perry stated, 'we're relying almost entirely on in-kind donations, or actual donations from patrons to get by'; likewise, in America's northern most state, Theatre in the Rough also gets by on 'minimal fundraising'.⁴⁵³ The Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company in South Carolina also discussed the difficulty in acquiring donations, therefore the group's leaders tried traditional methods such as sending out letters soliciting donations (like many other groups in this study) and met with little success. Guerrilla Shakespeare also utilized online crowdsourcing for their fundraising via GoFundMe.com.⁴⁵⁴ Nevertheless, these methods ultimately were not enough, as organisational leaders Eric Spears and Robert Fuson both acknowledged supporting many projects from their 'personal funds'. Moreover, these challenges are not exclusively rural; for the first nineteen years of the Hawaii Shakespeare Festival, the organisation did not receive a single donation. The group survived solely on ticket sales, in-kind services and material-based donations. Founder and artistic director Tony Pisculli described this practice as 'nuts'.⁴⁵⁵ He continued by adding, 'when a check would bounce' he would donate just a bit more each time.⁴⁵⁶ Throughout the research I've heard of this practice frequently, and from personal perspective, it was

⁴⁵¹ Bodenbender, Interview, p. 11.

⁴⁵² Fournier and Rowden, Interview, p. 3.

⁴⁵³ Perry, Interview, p. 4. Elmore, et al., 'Theatre in the Rough'.

⁴⁵⁴ Fuson and Spears, Interview, p. 6.

⁴⁵⁵ Pisculli, Interview, p. 5.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

common during my tenure at the OrangeMite Shakespeare Company as well, leading me to become both an in-kind donor as well as a financial contributor.

For organisational leaders donating both in-kind services and financial contributions this does provide the positive feeling of altruism, but unfortunately it is not the most personally sustainable practice. As established previously, numerous grassroots leaders donate their services to keep their organisations afloat, but for many people, a paycheck would greatly enhance the sustainability of their personal long-term and day-to-day contributions. Accordingly, bringing in professional guidance can help, but the group must have the necessary capital available to do this. Therefore, it requires a reset or different message for how people think about and value the work being donated to the community through the organisation.



Funding streams beyond contributions exist for some grassroots companies. Of the thirteen independent grassroots organisations not associated with academic institutions that are represented in this study, nine groups (69 percent) sell tickets while four (31 percent) offer all performances for free as indicated in Figure 11.⁴⁵⁷ This sample size is too small to assure validity of such a ratio across with the over one hundred other grassroots groups in the country, nevertheless, it still has relevance for the purpose of analysis of common funding streams. Many of the

⁴⁵⁷ Appendix E, Section 1.

above groups that sell tickets to their shows reported that the tickets were their main source of revenue. In the case of the Hawaii Shakespeare Festival, which as indicated previously, operated for nineteen years primarily on ticket sales, 95 percent of the group's operating cost was made back per production on ticket sales.⁴⁵⁸ This, naturally, raises the question of the viability of the four organisations that do not charge for performances. How would they pay for future productions and general operating costs if they have no 'earned income'? The answer is surprisingly simple for three of the four groups: 'pass the hat'.⁴⁵⁹ As for the Montford Park Players, their model is much more complex and has more similarities with professional performance organisations than its grassroots complements.⁴⁶⁰

Ultimately, the greatest commonality between all of these groups is their existential need to operate frugally. Shakespeare 70 in New Jersey has self-funded all of the operations without much assistance from grants 'for a number of years', furthermore, board member Curt Foxworth emphasized, 'we do not spend a ton of money'.⁴⁶¹ There is, namely, one factor that makes these organisations more financially viable than other general amateur theatrical organisations: the work of William Shakespeare. Not only is Shakespeare's cultural capital a draw, but primarily, his work is royalty-free to produce. 'Pretty much we only do Shakespeare,' asserted Jane Tanner from the Wichita Shakespeare Company, 'because let's just say we do things on the shoestring'.⁴⁶² Tanner inferred that Shakespeare was much cheaper to produce than other theatrical work, as his work comes with no prerequisites for production. Tanner, like generations of Kansan Shakespearean producers before her covered in the previous chapter, has made dual use of Shakespeare's name recognition: the inexpensive nature of producing the work coupled with its wide availability. This inexpensive style is also the Ben Greet minimal-to-no-staging-style that has dominated outdoor grassroots production for over a century. Additionally, in California, Heike Hambley of Merced Shakespearefest acknowledged that when organisations first form, they can be 'very, very poor', lacking necessary capital to get off the ground. She went on to exclaim,

⁴⁵⁸ Pisculli, Interview, p. 5.

⁴⁵⁹ Tanner, et al., Interview, p. 7.

⁴⁶⁰ Russell, et al., Interview, p. 7.

⁴⁶¹ Foxworth, Interview, p. 3.

⁴⁶² Tanner, et al., Interview, p. 7.

‘you can work with Shakespeare and you never pay a dime for the rights’.⁴⁶³ The Recycled Shakespeare Company and the Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company coalesced their entire mission and funding model around Shakespeare’s royalty-free nature and minimal production costs.

Eric Spears and Robert Fuson from Guerrilla Shakespeare stated that their company’s central focus was being frugal and operating with an incredibly modest budget of fifty to one hundred dollars per entire production run. Both Spears and Fuson were transparent about ‘why Shakespeare’: ‘a lot of [it] has to do with public domain and not having to pay money’.⁴⁶⁴ They went on to state that Shakespeare was a ‘vehicle’ for their theatrical ambitions: ‘you can use Shakespeare to tell great stories for pretty low budget’. Emily Fournier’s founding ideals were similar:

We wanted to do something we could make free because the other thing is, I don't have a lot of money, most of my friends don't have a lot of money and going to theatre is expensive.⁴⁶⁵

When a participant asked Fournier if the Recycled Shakespeare Company would eventually produce something non-Shakespearean, she responded, ‘Sure, but it has to be royalty-free because that's part of our business model, our mission’.⁴⁶⁶ In Idaho, artistic director Jonathan Perry developed his group’s business model by trying both productions he had to license as well as Shakespeare. He discovered that Shakespeare was more profitable:

And the problem with doing a musical, that's a royalty musical, is you got to advertise the heck out of it, or nobody comes, you just don't get the audience to do the payback, and we found that with those shows we don't really make much more profit than we do during free Shakespeare with donations.⁴⁶⁷

The importance of Shakespeare’s royalty-free nature cannot be overstated. For groups young or old, professional or grassroots, this is more than a business model or operating policy, this aspect is existential: ‘[We] don’t worry about royalties’, Mary Catherine Kelley stated from the Arden Shakespeare Guild.⁴⁶⁸ Fred Adams, the founder of the Utah Shakespeare Festival, recalled the beginnings of the effort in the early 1960s: ‘I didn't have enough money for royalty, for anything else, we decided

⁴⁶³ Hambley, Interview, p. 8.

⁴⁶⁴ Fuson and Spears, Interview, p. 3.

⁴⁶⁵ Fournier and Rowden, Interview, p. 4.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴⁶⁷ Perry, Interview, p. 2.

⁴⁶⁸ Kelley and Lazar, Interview, p. 7.

[to] do *Taming of the Shrew*'.⁴⁶⁹ The common intellectual property that is Shakespeare's work has inspired the creation of organisations and continues to sustain them moving forward.

Aspects of funding will continue to permeate the remaining section and upcoming chapters, as venues and programming both require articulated plans to acquire and execute. Indeed, organisational leaders of grassroots Shakespeare groups demonstrate their resourcefulness in more ways than can be articulated within the scope of this study. With perfect combinations of in-kind contributions and services, group participation levels, personal donations, and enough tickets sales, these organisations are funded through what may at times seem like a strange form of alchemy. The spirit of this simile was present in more than one of the interviews conducted for this research. One such example was that of Heike Hambley who shared a similar assessment of grassroots Shakespeare funding streams:

For many years I did fundraising letters that I [would] send out once or twice during the year. In the meantime, we were also making ticket money. Frankly, I should know how it all works, but sometimes it's magic.⁴⁷⁰

C. *'I Fell in Love with This Place': Venues*

Outside of the concept of mission, there are few other areas that are as critical to the infrastructure of a theatrical organisation as performance venues. For many organisations, venues help to define the work they do, while for others the locations they perform at are more utilitarian, serving only as a place to perform and nothing more. The venues that Shakespeare performing organisations utilize for their performances and programs are as diverse as the organisations themselves. Common industry-wide distinctions do exist between grassroots and professional organisations and most are related to the smaller funding streams discussed in the previous section. Figure 12 displays the venues from the thirty-nine organisations that are the subject of this research located in Appendix C and makes some of these differences apparent.

⁴⁶⁹ Adams, Interview, p. 3.

⁴⁷⁰ Hambley, Interview, p. 2.

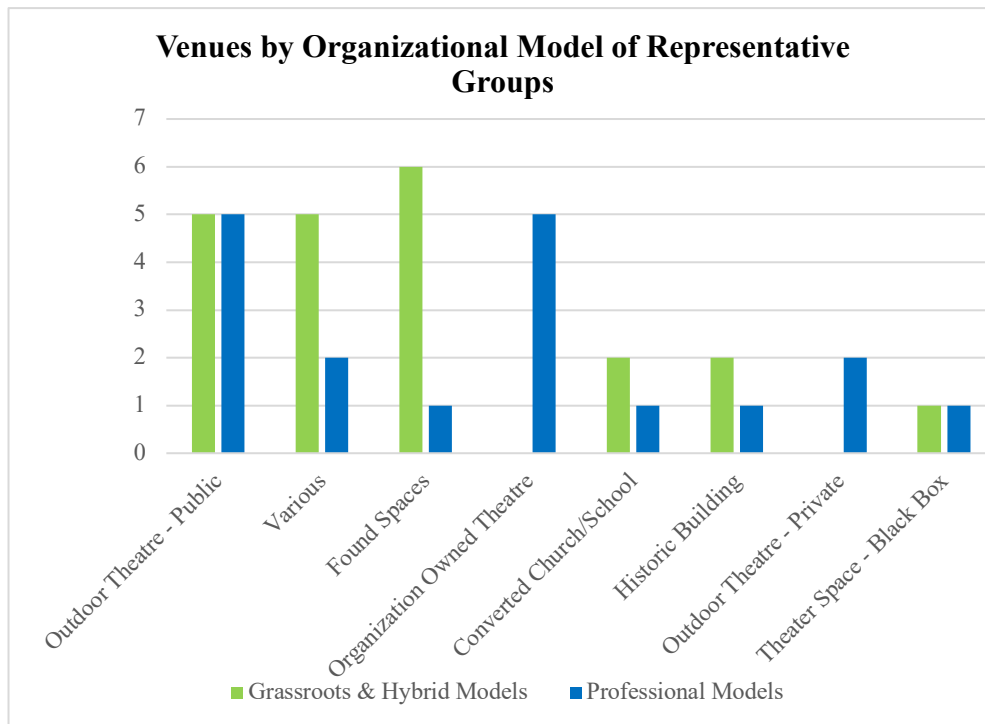


Figure 12 - Venues by Organisational Model

As professional organisations commonly have more working capital, these groups either fully construct their theatrical spaces from the ground up or they renovate or refurbish another space to convert it into a more traditional theatre. A recent example of constructing a new space is the Utah Shakespeare Festival, which opened its 39.1 million dollar arts complex, including three separate theatres, in 2016.⁴⁷¹ Grassroots groups, on the other hand, most often have to seek out their spaces, and therefore some groups use the term ‘found spaces’ for where they operate. Both of these factors are present on Figure 12, as none of the grassroots theatres studied for this research owned their own facility. Furthermore, ‘found spaces’ are almost exclusively a grassroots Shakespeare venue (with the exception of Shakespeare in the Parking Lot in New York City). This ‘various’ category consists of locales that are specifically designed for performances to which a group may go on an annual tour.

To illustrate this distinction, I will compare the hybrid model organisation, Advice to the Players (ATTP) from New Hampshire to the Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company from South Carolina. Annually, ATTP will perform at the local

⁴⁷¹ ‘Our Mission, Vision, and Values’.

fairgrounds, a local park, a performing arts centre, the town hall, and a local pub.⁴⁷² As this schedule repeats yearly, these various venues become part of the group's artistic product. In South Carolina, the Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company's site-specific approach to 'found spaces' includes performances throughout an abandoned middle school, in a boxing ring, and in a garden.⁴⁷³ As is common with site-specific theatre, the environment of each of these locations was made integral to a specified theatrical production, as such, the group will never return to many of these locations again.⁴⁷⁴

Hence, organisations which use various venues (like ATTP) are less peripatetic than their counterparts who use found spaces and engage in site-specific theatre (such as Guerrilla Shakespeare). Beyond physicality of the locality and the meaning derived from it, these productions are seen as a oppositional force, or as Escolme stated a 'politically progressive alternative to theatrical elitism' which is echoed by Shaughnessy in his overview of 'Applied Shakespeare'.⁴⁷⁵ The wide qualitative gulf between a grassroots performance in an abandoned building to a professional performance in a 39.1 million dollar theatrical complex is certainly obvious, and the data displayed on Figure 12 reinforces this quantitatively. Both classifications of venues, 'various' and 'found spaces', are among the most common for grassroots groups. Whereas, based on the thirty-nine groups central to this study, professional groups will commonly have their own physical space, whether it is a traditional theatre or an outdoor theatre.⁴⁷⁶

Collectively comprising over one quarter of all representative organisation venue types in this study, public outdoor venues were equally present for both grassroots and professional. When including the private outdoor theatres in this count, and groups that perform in 'various' venues, the ratio of groups performing out-of-doors rises to nearly half of all organisations. Based on a study I conducted with a sample size of three hundred thirty-one Shakespeare performance organisations in July 2019, slightly more than half of all organisations (52 percent)

⁴⁷² Chapman, Interview, p. 3.

⁴⁷³ Fuson and Spears, Interview, p. 1.

⁴⁷⁴ Bridget Escolme, 'Shakespeare, Rehearsal and the Site-Specific', pp. 505-07. Shaughnessy, 'Applying Shakespeare: Introduction'. The Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company discussed many of their intriguing site-specific productions, which are outside the scope of this study, that asked similar questions to Escolme's essay, which she phrased as 'what does this mean if I say it *here*?'

⁴⁷⁵ Escolme, 'Shakespeare, Rehearsal and the Site-Specific', p. 506.

⁴⁷⁶ Figure 12.

operate a Shakespeare in the Park program in a public park or open space.⁴⁷⁷ This is illustrative of professional groups with large performing arts facilities as they will often operate a ‘Shakespeare in the Park’ as a form of community engagement. Jeffrey Lapham, the executive director of Shakesperience Productions in Connecticut, emphasized the importance of their annual program: ‘There's more than a hundred thousand dollars’ worth of budget for an entire year of development [for] five nights of performance in the park’.⁴⁷⁸ In Indiana, Ray Ontko, board president of the Richmond Shakespeare Festival, cited ‘partnering with organisations and businesses’ to provide a free annual park program which he described as ‘community development’.⁴⁷⁹

Whether Shakespeare in the Park is an organisation’s sole mission or if it is only one of many programs rooted in venue, grassroots and professional groups alike see it as a way to share Shakespeare with new audiences. Throughout this research, organisational leaders often cited park performances as a lure. Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre’s artistic director, Rebekah Scallet, compared the appeal based on location of a Shakespeare in the Park to that of their other programming:

We do three shows in the summer and one of them is outside and is a ‘pay what you can’. The other two are inside and ticketed. I think that free show really allowed people to check it out and with a very limited exposure. Like ‘I'm not going if I don't like it’ I can leave you know, it's outside. I'll bring a picnic.⁴⁸⁰

Especially when the programs are offered for free, this can be a metric for measuring the community’s interest in an organisation’s mission. Barbara Gaines noted the popularity of Chicago Shakespeare Theatre’s parks program: ‘We had 2,000 people in a public park for free Shakespeare, and nobody left’.⁴⁸¹ A similarly positive statistic came from Denise Hicks of the Nashville Shakespeare Festival; she reported ‘on our big nights, we may have one thousand or twelve hundred people’.⁴⁸²

Undoubtedly, park programs are more influential than this quantified data suggests. The Wichita Shakespeare Company in Kansas tours to parks all over their region throughout three weeks in the summer. This grassroots group removed one of

⁴⁷⁷ Appendix E, Section 3.

⁴⁷⁸ Lapham and Mattina, Interview, p. 4.

⁴⁷⁹ Patrick Flick and Ray Ontko, ‘Richmond Shakespeare Festival’, Interview by William Wolfgang (Richmond, IN: 25 October 2019), p. 9.

⁴⁸⁰ Scallet, Interview, p. 3.

⁴⁸¹ Gaines, Interview, p. 7.

⁴⁸² Hicks, Interview, p. 4.

their stops on its park tour, and received feedback asking for them to return. Board member Vonda Schuster described their audiences as ‘very loyal to the parks’.⁴⁸³ Actor Zachary Hamrick from the Montford Park Players qualified his experience as full of ‘audience engagement, and audience excitement, and audience attendance’ as he looked out at large crowds night after night in Asheville, North Carolina during their 2019 season.⁴⁸⁴ While outdoor venues like public parks have charm, appeal, and can safely accommodate much larger crowds than many theatres, there are still challenges for producers to face. Primarily, weather is a challenge regardless of geographic location. In California, Heike Hambley moved Merced Shakespearefest’s summer park program to September because of the oppressive heat of the previous season coming in at ‘104 degrees’.⁴⁸⁵ Jane Tanner described the accommodations she makes in costuming because of the conditions of working outdoors:

We do Shakespeare in the park, in the park, in the summer, in Kansas. [Laughter.] This is going to be cotton and it's going to be washable. And they're not going to be seventeen layers.⁴⁸⁶

Heat is but one trial that outdoor venues face; Marilyn Straus of the Heart of America Festival in Missouri elaborated, ‘Rain. Rain is my enemy’.⁴⁸⁷ Participants from the Montford Park Players referenced problems beyond the weather such as airplanes, helicopters, and noisy neighbours, while Patrick Flick of the Shakespeare Theatre Association recommended all groups attend to the physical set-up of their locale: ‘parking, bathrooms, and access’.⁴⁸⁸ With all of this in mind, on occasion, outdoor venues become too difficult to manage; Clare Moncrieff of the Shakespeare Festival at Tulane in Louisiana stated the two problems with Shakespeare in the Park in New Orleans were ‘the climate and the insect life’. She described an incident that brought an end to the group’s park program: ‘If I swallowed one mosquito, I swallowed three hundred. I will never do it in the park again’.⁴⁸⁹

Considering the difficulties that can arise for organisations while trying to find a perfect venue, it is no surprise that many grassroots groups referenced during this research emphasized their desire to find a permanent location. Leaders from the

⁴⁸³ Tanner, et al., Interview, p. 8.

⁴⁸⁴ Russell, et al., Interview, p. 15.

⁴⁸⁵ Hambley, Interview, p. 2.

⁴⁸⁶ Tanner, et al., Interview, p. 7.

⁴⁸⁷ Strauss, Interview, p. 4.

⁴⁸⁸ Russell, et al., Interview, pp. 14-15. Flick, Interview, p. 3.

⁴⁸⁹ Moncrieff, Interview, p. 8.

Recycled Shakespeare, the OrangeMite Shakespeare, and the Wichita Shakespeare expressed a desire to have a 'permanent space'. Emily Fournier described locating a venue for programs as 'the part of my job that's the hardest'.⁴⁹⁰ Meanwhile, Jane Tanner of Wichita emphasized that the group didn't need a place to perform, as they already had that in the parks, but rather where they could 'store things and rehearse'.⁴⁹¹ What one group may take for granted, like a physical place to rehearse, certainly can be a challenge for others; some smaller organisations have to set up rehearsal at the homes of participants or directors if rehearsal spaces are not found. Theatre in the Rough articulated this difficulty on their website: 'We have always been nomads, working in various venues, with very little storage, functioning primarily on a cash basis with minimal fundraising'.⁴⁹²

Ultimately, when a facility is located, a new set of challenges can emerge. In Iowa, founding artistic director Catherine Bodenbender recalled the experience her organisation faced in their first venue. After trying to locate a performance location for months, Bodenbender discovered a small art gallery for her troupe of actors (yet to be named the Prenzie Players) to perform *Measure for Measure*. While the production did occur as planned, she was concerned as 'it was a firetrap'. Bodenbender went on to recall, 'a day when there were actual sparks coming out of the wall'.⁴⁹³ Less lethal challenges are more common, as in the case of the Hawaii Shakespeare Festival. Tony Pisculli shared his observations after his grassroots group in Honolulu was faced with a traditional theatre space that was too large:

I think Shakespeare really needs to be done in thrust or in the round. It doesn't fare well in proscenium and our amateur actors fare much better when they can be in a much more intimate setting; and for them to project if it's your first time on stage, your first time doing Shakespeare, to project to the back of a three hundred seat house [is very difficult].⁴⁹⁴

These challenges can oftentimes lead to resourcefulness and creativity. In South Carolina, director Robert Fuson, recognized the difficulty of not having a backstage for actors to enter from or to store props. He stated that the problem was solved by positioning actors 'on stage' throughout the production and 'entering' when needed.

⁴⁹⁰ Fournier and Rowden, Interview, p. 11.

⁴⁹¹ Tanner, et al., Interview, p. 2.

⁴⁹² Heider, 'Blog'.

⁴⁹³ Bodenbender, Interview, p. 1.

⁴⁹⁴ Pisculli, Interview, p. 6.

Fuson concluded by saying ‘our audience knows that we don't have resources’ and that primarily they only ‘want our company to have a good time’. He also remarked that the group does not ‘spend money on spaces’, hopping from one found space to the next and working out agreements with each venue.⁴⁹⁵ This provides ample opportunity for the development of their site-specific theatre work.

Similar arrangements also occur for grassroots groups in long-term capacities. Shakespeare 70 receives support from The College of New Jersey in a free place to perform. The group accepts no other funding from the university and is not connected administratively.⁴⁹⁶ However, an agreement like this, between an organisation and another party, is much more than fortuitous; having a venue to perform in is an existential issue. The OrangeMite Shakespeare Company in Pennsylvania performed at The Barn at Tall Fir Acres for a decade, from 2008-2018. The Barn is privately owned by Drs Mary Snow and Douglas Gonzales, and for ten years the couple donated the use of the space for rehearsals and performances to the organisation. A venue that is conducive to Elizabethan-style performance, The Barn (along with previous musical performances organized by Snow) served as the impetus for the organisation’s founding. This venue also helped build excitement and enthusiasm between participants and audiences alike. The OrangeMite Shakespeare Company was the subject of an autoethnographic case study for my Master’s Thesis and is an exemplar for how in-kind donations serve as the lifeblood for many grassroots Shakespeare organisations.⁴⁹⁷

The Barn, like many other Shakespearean performance venues around the United States, took an added significance for participants beyond its initial purpose. Former OrangeMite Board member Cassi Ney described how she would tell others about Shakespeare in The Barn:

I take people there because I just tell them it’s magical, and that’s oftentimes how I introduce people. I don’t tell them anything else about it; I just say we’re going there to have a magical experience.⁴⁹⁸

While alluding to Portia’s return to Belmont in *The Merchant of Venice*, director Tanya Lazar described approaching the outdoor theatre at night in Arden, Delaware in similar terms:

⁴⁹⁵ Fuson and Spears, Interview, p. 2.

⁴⁹⁶ Foxworth, Interview, p. 3.

⁴⁹⁷ Wolfgang, ‘Sowing the Seeds’, p. 47.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 46.

As you are walking across the green, you're coming out of the dark and you look up, and there's this beautiful, little lantern; it just kind of lives all by itself.⁴⁹⁹

Longstanding venues like the outdoor theatre in Arden and the Barn in Dover generate sentimental feelings for participants, connecting them to many positive previous experiences. Lazar reflected on this during our interview at the Arden outdoor theatre, 'I walk in here and I get flooded with memories'.⁵⁰⁰ The findings of Nicholson, et al. in the UK also support this; when discussing another historical performance venue (also known as 'The Barn') the researchers note that 'many amateur theatre-makers have a life-long association with their theatres' which ultimately leads to 'a very special atmosphere'.⁵⁰¹ In Winedale, Texas, yet another nineteenth century barn serves as home for Shakespeare. Dr James Ayres founded 'Shakespeare at Winedale' in 1970 and programs have been running in this building ever since. Ayres reflected on his years running the program to the Shakespeare on the Road team in 2014, 'I fell in love with the place, with the theatre. I mean, it's a barn'.⁵⁰² From multi-million-dollar theatres to abandoned buildings, the value of the right venue for an organisation's mission cannot be overstated. In some cases, venues help to craft the production itself, while in other situations they are commodities hopefully to be temporarily used for storage. Nonetheless, venues are but one part of a complex balance of organisational infrastructure.

This chapter has established the organisational mechanisms that grassroots Shakespeare groups rely on to facilitate programming. Frugality is always a shared attribute of all of these organisations. However, the lifeblood of grassroots Shakespeare is the in-kind donations and volunteer service hours provided by the group's participants coupled with Shakespeare's celebrated free-to-produce, public domain nature. All of the organisational missions, structures and models in this chapter serve as a means to an end, from the royalty-free nature of the work, to the staffing and legal models. The ultimate goal is to create Shakespeare's work communally. Hence, the most critical element for any organisation, regardless of the many geographic and organisational factors discussed in this chapter, is truly the

⁴⁹⁹ Kelley and Lazar, Interview, p. 12.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 11.

⁵⁰¹ Nicholson, Holdsworth, and Milling, *Ecologies of Amateur Theatre*, p. 147. The researchers also noted: 'The Barn's charm lies partly in its architecture and the layers of memory that are etched in its fabric'. Ibid.

⁵⁰² Ayres, Interview, p. 4.

people and how they interact with an organisation's programming and infrastructures. In the next chapter, I outline how grassroots organisational programming fosters artistic freedom with a sense of collective responsibility and tradition throughout the United States.

CHAPTER 3 – ART OF THE PEOPLE: SHAKESPEARE AS ‘COMMON PROPERTY’

The highly adaptable and irreverent Shakespeare of the western frontier is still very much the American grassroots Shakespeare of today. Helene Koon’s assertion that during this time ‘necessity brought a good deal of license’ still remains a hallmark for any grassroots Shakespeare organisation. In these remote locations, there were no critics nor academic authorities, only people with the text of Shakespeare.

Performances were not informed by research or convention, and the purity of text was of little concern.⁵⁰³ It was in every sense, art of the people. In reference to the nineteenth century, Levine called Shakespeare ‘the common property of all Americans’. He continued with the argument that gradually, over the course of decades this began to change, and eventually Shakespeare became the domain of the elite or the ‘highbrow’.⁵⁰⁴ When looking at the popular or mass-media iterations of the Shakespeare, the argument certainly has credence at points in the twentieth century.⁵⁰⁵ However, Shakespeare has consistently been present in the grassroots of American society. Such events hosted by women’s clubs or small community festivals are documented as early as the 1880s, but were too small, isolated, and disparate to receive scholarly attention. Fortunately, archives of local newspapers exist which hold some evidence of these grassroots events around the country during both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The full extent of these historic grassroots performances is outside of the scope of this research, but certainly is a relevant topic for future inquiry.

For the overwhelming majority of the grassroots organisations that participated in this research, they need not worry about the bottom line of a budget sheet, nor the review of an academic or theatrical critic. Many do not concern themselves with trochees or spondees, and in some cases, couldn’t care less about iambic pentameter - which is dismantled as needed. Shakespeare’s text can be presented in its most conventional form by some of the country’s best theatres to the delight of thousands. Meanwhile, this same text is used all around the United States by untrained volunteer actors in innumerable ways, representing their ‘common

⁵⁰³ Koon, *How Shakespeare Won the West*, p. 4.

⁵⁰⁴ Levine, *Highbrow / Lowbrow*, p. 68.

⁵⁰⁵ See Chapter 1 regarding Shakespeare’s popularity decline in mass media between the 1910-1950.

property’ just as Levine wrote of the nineteenth century. In this way, grassroots Shakespeare is ‘art of the people’ because it is made *by* them and *for* them.

This chapter presents the individuals that interact with Shakespeare organisational structures at the local level and the factors that encourage participation. Grassroots Shakespeare artists are individuals who have a day-job that is often outside of the arts, but nevertheless dedicate their evenings and weekends to these collective efforts. As time progresses, participants cultivate a sense of belonging and often develop a personal ‘cycle of participation’. The continued involvement not only further develops these social bonds with their fellow artists, but also with the work of Shakespeare. This work is nuanced and is particular to the area where it is developed. Therefore, geography and culture are discussed in the subsequent sections and their impact on local, regional, and national traditions. While large professional performance organisations have to appeal to wide geographic regions of the country to fill their seats as part of their touristic capacity, grassroots groups do not seek attendance from outside their immediate community. This targeted focus on work by the community and for the community, provides freedom and allows for artistic risk-taking with Shakespeare. The final section of this chapter concludes with an analysis of the full canon in performance as well as an account of current desires for new work written by contemporary playwrights.

1. Participants and Collective Responsibility

The volunteer actor-participants that comprise a grassroots Shakespeare organisation are the driving force behind a group’s programming. These individuals are demographically diverse, coming from varying races and ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, political views, and careers. The meaningful interactions they have with one another serve to fuel this artistic and communal process-based work. While there is an end product on the horizon, each rehearsal is more important to the group than the sum of its parts on display at the final performance. Through all of these experiences, a deep sense of belonging, the expression of artistic passions, community, and ultimately a collective responsibility for one another takes hold; this provides the organisation longevity and local community support.

A. 'Attorney By Day': Volunteers and Professionals as Actor-Participants

Grassroots groups, by their nature, are welcoming groups that need participants, not only to fulfil their missions, but also to continue operations. Like many of the occurrences in this understudied field, there is no universal terminology to refer to these individuals. The most common way participants, actors or otherwise, identify their role within an organisation is with the term 'volunteer'; and they serve in many areas, by providing 'essential services at all levels'.⁵⁰⁶ 'Volunteer' is the preferred term of grassroots practitioners according to the majority of the organisations I interviewed.⁵⁰⁷ Grassroots artists are amateurs as well as volunteers, but this former term is not as commonly used. The Latin root of 'amateur', the word, *amare*, reveals its meaning to be 'to love'.⁵⁰⁸ One of the most notable observations from this data is that the term 'amateur', despite its origins in love for an activity, is not one preferred by the grassroots theatre practitioners in this study. Nor is the term 'community theatre' universally accepted, with one director telling me it has a 'stigma'.⁵⁰⁹ As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the terms hold multiple levels of meaning, hence the *Oxford English Dictionary* noted that 'amateur' is 'used disparagingly'. The term is commonly interpreted in this negative capacity, giving the connotation of 'amateurish' or 'sub-par' and is not frequently utilized in the United States.

Organisational leaders characterized the scope and range of their volunteer participants' backgrounds with the following phrases: a 'wild mix of ability levels', 'all walks of life', and 'a 'strange mix of players'.⁵¹⁰ Theatre in the Rough in Alaska promotes participants' occupational diversity on their website, helping to define their group's identity: 'We are students, officers of the court, lawyers, graphic designers, computer gurus, one or two ne'er-do-wells, and more'.⁵¹¹ Groups are generally interested in creating a representative organisation of individuals that is indicative of the population's demographics, be that occupational, racial, gender, or age. Citing that 'roughly a quarter of the cast will be white', Tony Pisculli discussed that the

⁵⁰⁶ Korza, 'Volunteers in the Arts', p. 219.

⁵⁰⁷ Appendix F, Appendix H.

⁵⁰⁸ Oxford English Dictionary, '*Amateur, N.*', (Oxford University Press).

⁵⁰⁹ Director Curt Foxworth told me 'I don't like [the term] "community theatre", to me that has a little bit of a stigma'. Foxworth, Interview, p. 4.

⁵¹⁰ Pisculli, Interview, p. 2. Bodenbender, Interview, p. 3; Laangstra-Corn, Interview, p. 3.

⁵¹¹ Elmore, et al., 'Theatre in the Rough'.

racial demographics of the Hawaii Shakespeare Festival reflected his local community and Hawaii as a whole.⁵¹² In Kansas, Jane Tanner noted that the Wichita Shakespeare Company is composed of ‘people who come from all walks of life and all kinds of backgrounds’, which they bring to their portrayals on stage.⁵¹³

Throughout the course of this research, each group that participated shared their unique composition. The Recycled Shakespeare Company’s Emily Fournier discussed how the organisation included individuals of all ages from six to eighty-two. The group had members with disabilities along with retirees, ‘the drive-thru guy’, teachers, students, lawyers, and social workers. Participants explained that this type of inclusivity was why they initially chose to participate.⁵¹⁴ This philosophy is not only about altruistic goals, but also about continual operations of which the participants help to achieve. The open doors of grassroots theatres create social interaction that would otherwise not exist between certain occupational groups. For example, at Merced Shakespearefest, Heike Hambley described a production where a local surgeon played a ‘funky little role’ along with the rest of the company’s actors who shared equally diverse professions, from university professors to photographers to ‘a lot of young people’. Hambley referenced that the composition of her acting group consisted of many local educators.⁵¹⁵ Similarly, Jessie Chapman noted a lawyer who also served in local government played Falstaff for her organisation, and similarly three other companies referred to lawyers with a penchant for Shakespearean acting.⁵¹⁶ Likewise, Mary Catherine Kelley described Arden Shakespeare Guild’s lawyer-participant as ‘a very sober-minded attorney by day’, suggesting a sort of transformation: a lawyer by day, and Shakespearean actor by night.⁵¹⁷

To some, such transformations can be unexpected. Ryan Szwaja, who works as a printer in a book factory by night and a Shakespearean actor by day, explained that his co-workers in predominantly politically conservative central Pennsylvania

⁵¹² Pisculli, Interview, p. 2.

⁵¹³ Tanner, et al., Interview, p. 5.

⁵¹⁴ Fournier and Rowden, Interview, p. 8.

⁵¹⁵ Hambley, Interview, p. 8. Also, in line with Shakespeare’s history in the United States, groups also cited professors among their volunteer actor clientele. These groups include: Merced Shakespearefest, Hawaii Shakespeare Festival, Prenzie Players, Wichita Shakespeare Company, OrangeMite Shakespeare Company and the Montford Park Players. Appendix C.

⁵¹⁶ Chapman, Interview, p. 4. Three other organisations are Recycled Shakespeare Company, Theatre in the Rough, the Arden Shakespeare Guild.

⁵¹⁷ Kelley and Lazar, Interview, p. 12.

were ‘very surprised to learn that [he was] involved in Shakespearean theatre’ as he didn’t ‘seem like the type’.⁵¹⁸ Stereotypes undoubtedly exist that infer that theatre is an exclusively liberal endeavour. Such preconceptions likely contributed to the source of the surprise by Szwaja’s co-workers. As politically conservative individuals engage with Shakespeare too, this generalization proves to be untrue. Catherine Bodenbender of the Prenzie Players in Iowa discussed that one of her best actors and a good friend is ‘very, very conservative’; nevertheless, the group happily works together despite stark ideological differences.⁵¹⁹

Grassroots Shakespeare organisations are not exclusively the realm of the volunteer amateur actor. As previously discussed, organisational models are intricate structures that sometimes include both grassroots and professional elements. This research has documented volunteer professional actors who performed in purely grassroots productions, and fully compensated professional actors that acted alongside community members in hybrid model organisations. At Shakespeare 70 in New Jersey, Curt Foxworth indicated that some of the organisation’s participants had professional experience, while others did not. Foxworth and several other actors in the company are Screen Actors Guild (SAG) members but are ‘not currently working professionally’. As some members of Shakespeare 70 are professionally trained, but work ‘day jobs’ as Foxworth described, this sets up a mentorship opportunity for untrained volunteer actors participating in the same production.⁵²⁰

As in any professional or recreational activity, this type of mentorship interaction between participants is industry-wide. Perhaps, the most fertile ground for these experiences comes with hybrid model grassroots organisations such as Advice to the Players (ATTP) in New Hampshire. Delivering strong performances is only one part of the responsibilities of professional actors working with ATTP. Articulating that the philosophy of participant engagement is central to ATTP’s mission and organisational identity, executive Director Jessie Chapman stated ‘anyone who needs professional theatre to be “siloeed” and completely separate [sic] isn’t going to be successful in our company’.⁵²¹ Chapman elaborated on this

⁵¹⁸ Szwaja, Interview, p. 2.

⁵¹⁹ Bodenbender, Interview, p. 6. In Chapter 4, I discuss Shakespeare in the political realm further and how this grassroots work can be used as apolitical ‘common ground’ in some of America’s rural communities. See Chapter 4, Section 1C, ‘Common Ground’: Shakespeare, The Apolitical.

⁵²⁰ Foxworth, Interview, p. 3.

⁵²¹ Chapman, Interview, p. 2.

interaction, emphasizing that it was not a figurative one-way street: ‘The professionals learn as much as the teens and community members, but what they're learning is different’.⁵²² Chapman’s thesis is based on the idea of ‘connection’, and she emphasized that professional actors learn to interact with fellow participants differently in this model. This is because their most moving and impactful work doesn’t occur as a presentation at the time of performance, but rather as a continuing model during the rehearsal process. The nature of this concatenated experience between two very different actors and Shakespeare is recaptured by Chapman in this profound moment:

When you see on stage someone ... on the autism spectrum next to a professional union actor and they're each holding their own, elevating the other to a new level of human connection through Shakespeare text, I think it's a beautiful thing to behold.⁵²³

This unique role for professional actors isn’t for everyone, but because of the connections made between these two very different groups, ATTP is able to achieve its mission and retain participants – professional and volunteer. Chapman indicated that the professional actors come back year after year not because the organisation ‘pays them the most’, but rather because of the unique opportunity for growth. Similar types of interaction between the professional actor and local community actors also occurs with other hybrid organisation models such as Shakespeare in Yosemite, Shakesperience Productions and the Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival.⁵²⁴

The interplay between the local community actors and compensated professional actors also can operate as part of a fully professional production. The Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre is one such organisation that operates with a professional model (funded by the University of Central Arkansas), incorporating ‘four to six’ Actors’ Equity Association actors annually and the rest of the cast filled by ‘nonprofessional’ local actors.⁵²⁵ The actors are still compensated, but not at the same rate as the Equity actors. Likewise, the North Dakota Shakespeare Festival operated under a similar model paying a small stipend to the local actors.⁵²⁶ In Indiana, the Richmond Shakespeare Festival follows the same model with paying a

⁵²² Ibid.

⁵²³ Ibid., p. 3.

⁵²⁴ Appendix B.

⁵²⁵ Scallet, Interview, p. 3.

⁵²⁶ Murry, Interview, p. 4.

small contingency of local actors. The interaction between the professional actors and the local actors in all of aforementioned organisations were reported to me by group leaders as a positive relationship with few difficulties, which Richmond Shakespeare Board President Ray Ontko described as ‘a rich, exciting mix’.⁵²⁷

Ultimately, how participants – amateur or professional – interact with one another is determined by the mission and organisational model. Some groups, such as ATTP, want volunteer actors and professional actors to learn from one another, while others have firmly decided on a more absolute approach. Originally operating as a grassroots, all-volunteer organisation for their first season, Richmond Shakespeare festival changed their model to ‘strive for excellence’ and ‘[pursue] the highest quality’.⁵²⁸ This meant the group would need to hire professional actors from all around the nation. As discussed in Chapter 2, the founder of the Heart of America Shakespeare Festival in Missouri, Marilyn Strauss, believed professional performances was the most central aspect to her organisation.⁵²⁹ Similarly, at Montana Shakespeare in the Parks, artistic director Kevin Asselin’s commitment to touring professional productions to their broad, multi-state audience is predicated on the high quality and professionalism of the actors:

I think if we were bringing anything less than the highest level of professionalism ... our communities would know the difference. So, it is of the utmost importance to make sure that our actors have a strong hold of the verse, of language.⁵³⁰

A high-level performance quality coupled with a firm commitment to Shakespeare’s text is a pairing present among some of the professional organisations in this study. Shakespeare and Company holds a ‘commitment to language’ as part of its mission statement, while the American Shakespeare Center and the Baltimore Shakespeare Factory emphasize not only language, but also ‘Shakespeare’s staging conditions’.⁵³¹ These professional models are rooted in the audience’s experience upon attending the production and as such the performances are products of years of actor training and education. Beyond the work of the actors on stage, and less obvious to the

⁵²⁷ Flick and Ontko, Interview, p. 4.

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁵²⁹ Strauss, ‘Notes & Comments’, p. 4.

⁵³⁰ Asselin, Interview, p. 4.

⁵³¹ Appendix B. Packer, Interview, p. 5. Tom Delise, ‘Baltimore Shakespeare Factory’, Interview by William Wolfgang (Baltimore, MD: 5 August 2018). Jim Warren, ‘American Shakespeare Center’, Interview in ‘Shakespeare on the Road’ Archive, Shakespeare Centre Archives, Stratford-upon-Avon. Appendix C.

audiences, there are often centuries of collective scholarship and criticism on display through the work of academics and dramaturgs. The work is rooted, at least publicly, in presenting excellence as the end product for the audience, and thereby selling more tickets and financially sustaining the organisation.

While it may appear rather self-evident for theatres to ground their practice ultimately in their performances, the work of grassroots organisations diverges from this and is process-based. Therefore, the metric for success is created by the participants themselves, not exclusively by their audiences. In other words, these participants are performing Shakespeare because they enjoy the activity. Catherine Bodenbender articulated this point by sharing her experience as the founding artistic director of the Prenzie Players:

I think...just having a mindset, and this might sound terrible: but we do these shows for us. We want very much for other people to see them...But if we had a show where only five people sat in the audience, we would still do the show. We do the show because we love it, and I think that is the most sustaining thing...And fill yourself with that, and we've had to do that at times.⁵³²

The words Bodenbender chose during the interview are very indicative of grassroots arts in general; she described her direct motivation as 'because we love it' and to 'fill yourself with that'. Eric Spears from the Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company found similar words:

A lot of this art is for the artist...I want the community to appreciate it, but usually the community just is the people that make it, and that's okay.⁵³³

The metric of success is consequently the participant's own personal level of social interaction and self-fulfilment experienced throughout the entirety of the process. This metric is notoriously difficult to measure for researchers, but the collection of oral history interviews, such as the one collected for this thesis, is an effective methodology to qualify this phenomenon. For a participant, the calculation is obviously different; the utilisation of this metric begins with auditions and holds true to the final performance. If a participant enjoyed the communal and theatrical process, they would likely return for future activities.

⁵³² Bodenbender, Interview, p. 11.

⁵³³ Fuson and Spears, Interview, p. 7.

While grassroots organisations use the ‘common property’ of Shakespeare differently than professional theatres, the two metrics for measuring success presented above are not mutually exclusive. Of course, professional actors, directors, and designers enjoy their work and have deep passions for the art form, otherwise they likely would not have chosen a career in theatre. Additionally, grassroots groups also have a great interest in the quality of their work. However, the two fundamentally differ on intended outcomes. Professional organisations want their audience to return to see highest quality theatre; while grassroots groups want their participant-actors to return to make theatre again together. Both types of Shakespearean theatre that comprise this simplified binary are undeniably of great value to the communities of which they serve. This thesis does not argue the efficacy of one model over another. On the contrary, both operational models serve in a symbiotic way to support the other and are necessary for the long-established Shakespeare performance ecosystem, as discussed in Chapter 1. Smaller grassroots Shakespeare groups have been known to sprout up around the locations of larger more established professional organisations.⁵³⁴ The grassroots groups, participants and their audiences, then attend the performances of the professional companies to help inform their work, or simply for their own enjoyment. The development of grassroots organisations from the existence of professional groups, which originally were grassroots organisations themselves, illustrates an entwined interdependent relationship of both volunteer artists and professional artist in the theatrical community.

B. ‘I Found My Home’: A Sense of Belonging and Artistic Freedom

The diversity of life and theatrical experience discussed in the previous section enriches social bonds among grassroots participants. The development of this social environment instils a collective sense of responsibility toward the group’s artistic work. Consequently, the communal nature of grassroots Shakespeare activities is not simply a ‘welcomed by-product’, for some organisations, it is a primary function. These social bonds, cultivated over a period of time, grow into a

⁵³⁴ This is the case with Boise Bard Players rising from the Idaho Shakespeare Festival and also Shakespeare Royal Oak doing the same in Michigan. Perry, Interview, p. 3. Ed Nahhat, ‘Our History’ 2018) <<http://shakespeareroyaloak.com/>> [Accessed 1 Dec 2018]. <http://shakespeareroyaloak.com> ‘We’re proud to say that we have inspired many other groups to pop up around the state, and we encourage their legacy.’

strong sense of belonging and ultimately a collective purpose toward the artistic work; this is reflected both in my research and previous scholarship as well.⁵³⁵ Responses from participants of grassroots Shakespeare organisations supporting this argument were frequently documented during field research and interviews for this thesis, in addition to the Shakespeare on the Road project in 2014. This section details how individuals initially become involved in these groups, how they become involved in a ‘cycle of participation’, and what this sense of belonging looks like for many grassroots Shakespeare artists. An account of how belonging affects a group’s collective responsibility concludes this section.

Before organisations can assemble a cast of volunteer actors, they must first attract interest from their community. Organisations use traditional marketing methods, such as posters and community announcements (digital or in print), as well as word-of-mouth to find their participants. Both professional and grassroots theatre groups stressed to me, and to the Shakespeare on the Road team, the importance of ‘word-of-mouth’ for energizing audiences or participants. During my decade of practice with promoting such events, I similarly observed the effectiveness of this natural method. Anecdotes of this form of organisational promotion are prevalent throughout the research preserved in the Oral History transcripts.⁵³⁶ In Merced, California, Heike Hambley described how she views this organic process:

[A] friend dragged [a new actor] to our reading of *Henry IV* and said, ‘Hey we need another man, can you read?’...And then we started to talk. He realized that this - I think it's the human connection thing - that this is a group that you can talk with...Suddenly he shows up in the next audition. It seems like someone does one little bit, [and then] ‘I want more, I want more’.⁵³⁷

In Hawaii, Tony Pisculli described a very similar situation, emphasizing that even people who have an indifference or dislike for Shakespeare can find their way to participation:

We had a woman, a community theatre actor for a long time in Hawaii who...has never done Shakespeare because she either didn't like it, [or] was intimidated by it. We brought her [in] and convinced her to come to an audition...And she played a witch in the Scottish

⁵³⁵ Kevin F McCarthy and others, *Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate About the Benefits of the Arts*, (Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation, 2004), p. 50.

⁵³⁶ Gaines, Interview, p. 2. Russell, et al., Interview, p. 2. Appendix H.

⁵³⁷ Hambley, Interview, p. 9.

Play, and she had so much fun. She's like, 'I'm doing this every year now'.⁵³⁸

Further noting that this word-of-mouth methodology is much more organic than any sort of target strategy or campaign, Pisculli stated that people 'find their way into it one way or another'.⁵³⁹

Most organisational leaders from around the country were confident that a first-time actor would feel welcomed upon joining their group. In June of 2019, Jane Tanner recalled that the Wichita Shakespeare Company had around 'five or six' first-time Shakespeare performers in their cast of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.⁵⁴⁰ Regardless of the play, grassroots Shakespeare groups are constantly seeking to expand their cast lists; Hambley showed her appreciation for newcomers during our interview after Merced Shakespearefest's production of *Titus Andronicus*: 'we're so grateful for newbies'.⁵⁴¹ The nature of this continuing influx of new personalities necessitates a collective approach to actor training and mentorship with Shakespeare's texts, regardless of the form in which they are presented. Shakespeare's plays are especially useful in this area as well, as the texts provide ample opportunity for large casts consisting of many minor and supernumerary roles. At the Hawaii Shakespeare Festival, experienced community actors served as 'mentors for younger people' and those who 'have never done theatre before'.⁵⁴² This is a cycle that all organisations operating with a grassroots model seek to constantly renew.

As more individuals become familiar with the operations of a grassroots organisation, they build up social bonds, find artistic freedom in the work, and become more likely to return to do it again in future productions. Scholarship has been published on this phenomenon; in *Gifts of the Muse*, researchers identify the desire for continual involvement in the arts as a 'cycle of participation'. The researchers divided this into four cyclical occurrences: 1) the impetus for participating, 2) the activity itself, 3) the feelings generated from the experience, which ultimately develop into 4) 'future plans' or 'intentions'. Of course, the plans

⁵³⁸ Pisculli, Interview, p. 4.

⁵³⁹ Ibid., p. 3.

⁵⁴⁰ Tanner, et al., Interview, p. 9.

⁵⁴¹ Hambley, Interview, p. 9.

⁵⁴² Pisculli, Interview, p. 2.

then lead back to the impetus for participation.⁵⁴³ Providing insight into this cycle while emphasizing the value of every member of the group, Catherine Bodenbender elaborated why actors return to the Prenzie Players:

Because of the size of the casts we use, there's nobody sitting around. Everybody is really integral, an integrated part of the whole. It's just so easy to get caught up in the passion of doing it that people just keep coming back. Sometimes I am amazed; like we've just gone through this incredibly difficult process and there they are at the next audition.⁵⁴⁴

Director Jane Tanner at the Wichita Shakespeare Company called these individuals that 'keep coming back' as 'Shakespeare repeaters', while Tony Pisculli of Honolulu referred to them as a 'loyal core'.⁵⁴⁵ The size of these unofficial 'core' groups is reflective of the group's operational breadth; nevertheless, it is usually large enough to easily mount full casts of most of Shakespeare's plays, with varying levels of doubling of characters. Official organisational memberships to grassroots groups are very rare. The only example of such a structure is the Montford Park Players which has a free annual membership due to the size and scope of their programming.⁵⁴⁶ Nevertheless, for most organisations, veteran performers generally audition for roles just as any newcomer would.

As the above organisational leaders noted, individuals develop a sense of collective responsibility and care towards each other and the organisation over time, which enables the 'cycle of participation'; this includes feelings of belonging, self-identity, and personal continuity. Emily Fournier recalled one of her youngest actors who played a fairy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, had a deep desire to someday play Juliet. She told the participant 'you need to study and work hard and be in the plays'.⁵⁴⁷ With the young participant's dedication and drive she did eventually play Juliet, just in time for her fourteenth birthday. This is one brief anecdote out of many that showcases individuals who worked diligently to fulfil opportunities afforded to them.

Fournier also made sure that anyone who walked through the group's doors was welcomed, whether it was for an audition, a rehearsal, or just see to a

⁵⁴³ McCarthy and others, *Gifts of the Muse*, p. 62.

⁵⁴⁴ Bodenbender, Interview, p. 9.

⁵⁴⁵ Tanner, et al., Interview, p. 9. Pisculli, Interview, p. 3.

⁵⁴⁶ Russell, et al., Interview, p. 2.

⁵⁴⁷ Fournier and Rowden, Interview, p. 8.

performance. Fournier noted that previous casts had included individuals with autism, cerebral palsy, and spina bifida.⁵⁴⁸ She also added that many of these individuals would not, without such local opportunities, be able to ‘call themselves actors’. Fournier continued, emphasizing how critical access is, not only to the building (which is the central focus of other companies), but also in the programs themselves:

People who would not get to audition, even, for most theatre companies, because they would not even be able to climb the stairs to get to the audition, can come to us and get leading roles if they want it.⁵⁴⁹

This feeling of belonging is not, by any means, exclusive to Fairfield, Maine. Sophie Stanley, originally from the United Kingdom, relocated to her husband’s hometown of Asheville, North Carolina. She emphasized that participants from around Asheville ‘always’ come back to continue participation:

I honestly don't know how I would have settled here without joining this group...I've been and done things with other theatres and I keep coming back to the Montford Park Players. And that's how it is here; people go, and they do other things, and always come back here.⁵⁵⁰

Stanley went on to say, ‘This is where I found friends, this is where I found my home’.

I found the feeling of belonging throughout organisations that participated in this research. Across the border in South Carolina, director Robert Fuson reflected on conversations with members of the Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company, ‘these are usually people who don't feel like they have much of a home a lot of the time’. Fuson went on to conclude, ‘it was really great that they felt they had it here’.⁵⁵¹ Similarly, Maaïke Langstra-Corn, board chair of Shakespeare on the Green in Rhode Island, discussed how she struggled to find ‘a place to exist’ on the campus of Brown University at first.⁵⁵² When she found the all-student-run grassroots Shakespeare group on campus this struggle ended for her. It was an activity that she found to be not only ‘so social’, but also one that was teeming with artistic freedom and choice.⁵⁵³ The idea of sharing these feelings with other members of the student

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁰ Russell, et al., Interview, p. 18.

⁵⁵¹ Fuson and Spears, Interview, p. 6.

⁵⁵² Laangstra-Corn, Interview, p. 1.

⁵⁵³ Ibid., p. 2.

body as well is something Langstra-Corn plans to do along with her board. She emphasized the need to continually ‘create’ a place for this artistic and mutually supportive community.

To further elucidate the idea of belonging, Catherine Bodenbender described the feeling of being at a Prenzie Players rehearsal. From the very beginning, after the daily grind for the volunteer-participants at their day-jobs, Bodenbender explained, ‘you walked in and it’s like a relief’.⁵⁵⁴ She described the rehearsal as a safe laboratory space for artistic expression with Shakespeare’s work as the common-property, constant variable: ‘you can risk, you can try things’. But as with all of these organisations, the theatre-making is but one intertwined component, the other is the social nature of the activity. Pinpointing the heart of grassroots Shakespeare, Bodenbender expounded, ‘to create this thing that you love...it’s just the best social time you could ever spend’.⁵⁵⁵

When asked ‘what is one thing she would *never* change, and one thing she would change about the Wichita Shakespeare Company’ Jane Tanner said she would ‘never change the people’.⁵⁵⁶ Tanner emphasized that the group was composed of people with ‘similar interests’ and ‘similar ideas’, and to further demonstrate her sense of belonging she mused, ‘I really can’t think of anything...I would change’. The long-time director then turned to her colleagues during the interview and quipped, ‘Can I still do this when I’m eighty-five?’ While Tanner may not have been entirely literal in her question, it was much more than a simple jest. Participating in the communal construction of Shakespeare’s work, year after year for decades, does contribute in some way to one’s sense of identity. Bodenbender approached this idea more directly:

There are a number of us, and I know for myself, I can't imagine who I would be if I didn't do this. This is such an integral part of who I am, and what I do, that I can't imagine. So, everyone's in, they're all in.⁵⁵⁷

Grassroots Shakespeare production as integral to one’s identity would not seem like an unusual notion to many producers and participants I spoke with throughout this research. Heike Hambley further explored the concept of belonging and identity by saying ‘this bonding that...every show has at the end; I want to keep that’. She also

⁵⁵⁴ Bodenbender, Interview, p. 4.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁶ Tanner, et al., Interview, p. 8.

⁵⁵⁷ Bodenbender, Interview, p. 10.

positioned this concept more globally: ‘we feel we are part of a bigger, wonderful experience in theatre...’ Hambley then continued, ‘Shakespeare ... I’m getting emotional, [sic] this is an emotional thing’.⁵⁵⁸ For the overwhelming majority of the organisational leaders whom I spoke with, the production of Shakespeare was indeed an ‘emotional thing’.

Grassroots Shakespeare is an emotional and social endeavour. For these producers and participants, young or old, it is an activity connected with belonging, identity, and personal continuity. Some organisations are short-lived, but have a lasting impact, while others continue to embody legacies and traditions older than any living memory. The Bards of Birmingham in Alabama operated for approximately a decade; when participants considered the idea of the organisation closing its figurative doors, they were overwhelmed with emotion. One young actor, who began working with the group when she was eight years old, described to local media that the group was ‘a place to wrestle with deep questions’, and that ultimately Bards of Birmingham helped to ‘shape who she’s become’.⁵⁵⁹ Director Tanya Lazar of Delaware reflected on what the Arden Shakespeare Gild has meant for her as she has witnessed participants of all ages grow in their abilities, Shakespearean and otherwise. Lazar fondly recollected a ‘magical experience’ that individuals had each summer, before adding, ‘for me, it’s been almost a half-century; it *has been* a half century’.⁵⁶⁰ Every organisation I visited demonstrated a sense of history, tradition and continuity by fondly cherishing previous productions and memories from years earlier. Lazar’s fifty years of community Shakespeare are an outlier that few in this study matched. Nevertheless, the most common unit of time used to measure organisational leaders’ involvement (that participated in this study) is decades, not months or years. This personal continuity unites with the feeling of belonging to create a bedrock of collective responsibility towards the organisation as a whole.

A communal foundation is indeed built on strong positive emotions toward one another and the organisation’s mission, and from these intangible feelings collaborative productions arise. Jessie Chapman from Advice to the Players in New Hampshire emphatically represented this ideal during our interview: ‘everybody’s

⁵⁵⁸ Hambley, Interview, p. 4.

⁵⁵⁹ Heider, ‘Bards in the News’.

⁵⁶⁰ Kelley and Lazar, Interview, p. 11.

equally important'.⁵⁶¹ Nearly two thousand miles away in Kansas, Jane Tanner agreed: 'We are a community in every sense of the word. [It] takes a village'.⁵⁶² Both Chapman and Tanner, along with a vast majority of grassroots Shakespeare groups from around the United States, promote the belief that every individual's contribution, be it in a participatory or financial capacity, is of enormous consequence to the group as a whole. To some, this may appear to be simple, frivolous or inspirational encouragement intended to rally constant engagement with the organisation. In reality, every individual's contribution is indeed existential for small grassroots groups, and stating the collective equality of every group member is simultaneously aspirational, inspirational, and factual. As detailed in 'Chapter 2 – Organisational Structures', the essence of the business model of grassroots Shakespeare organisations is dependent upon individual participation, with the artistic product in an unofficial secondary role. Thus, recognizing an attitude of collective responsibility is one that promotes the very existence of the organisation while concurrently establishing a laboratory for communal artistic experimentation.

As her counterparts in Maine and Kansas directly stated the importance of the individual contributions, Iowan Catherine Bodenbender's approach seems to be philosophically present in her speech. In the following passage it is not difficult to notice her use of the plural pronoun 'we':

What *we* found is, as long as *we* keep plugging ahead, *we* always get to the end. *We* always manage to get it done.⁵⁶³

The interviews collected throughout this research contain many examples that exhibit not only direct and emphatic references to the communal nature of grassroots groups, but also frequent examples like the quote from Bodenbender above. Hence, collective responsibility is not a mission statement, mantra, or slogan; nor is it a vision or a goal. Collective responsibility is the *modus vivendi* of grassroots Shakespeare organisations, and it is both an operational and philosophical lifestyle.

At times this ideology manifests in small, deliberate ways, such as the Encore Theatre Group's 'Shakespeare in the Park' implementation of cast ensemble bows, rather than individual actors bowing in order of role size.⁵⁶⁴ In other cases, collective

⁵⁶¹ Chapman, Interview, p. 2.

⁵⁶² Tanner, et al., Interview, p. 10.

⁵⁶³ Bodenbender, Interview, p. 9. The above italics have been added by me to emphasize Bodenbender's word choice.

⁵⁶⁴ Perry, Interview, p. 7.

responsibility manifests itself as a purposeful philosophical decision. In Alabama, founding artistic director Laura Heider of the Bards of Birmingham doubted her individual ability to never-endingly produce quality work she stated; ‘it’s likely to come off stilted [and] limited’. Heider found solace in the idea that she, even as the artistic director, was not solely responsible for the group’s end product:

[If] I come at this play as a manifestation of the best work that we, collectively, have to offer, we’re likely to continue surprising ourselves.⁵⁶⁵

In New Jersey, Shakespeare 70 follows a similar approach, with board members taking roles in all aspects of production and encouraging actor-participants to also be involved in staff roles such as set design.⁵⁶⁶ Examples are frequent enough throughout this research to state that it is common practice for grassroots organisations to operate this way. Nonetheless, this seemingly aspirational ‘bottom-up’ idea that the leadership of arts organisation is reliant upon each of its members for successful development of the work is not new. Percy MacKaye attempted to create what he called ‘theatrical democracy’ by promoting his essays and massive community pageants during the early formation of American theatre in the early twentieth century. As previously outlined in ‘Chapter 1 – Historical Antecedents’, MacKaye failed to achieve these ideals due to tight artistic, ‘top-down’, management of his productions. Similarly, modern large professional Shakespeare theatres face the challenge of becoming ‘massive corporate structures’ as Shakespeare & Company founder Tina Packer postulated in 2014.⁵⁶⁷

Neither of these models, whether it be MacKaye’s tight reins over his casts upward of 2,500 people or the modern corporate approach, are known for their collective bottom-up approach to artistic production. In contrast, theatrical organisations have developed that have sought out this communal artistry. These groups have identified themselves as ‘grassroots theatres’ (exclusive of grassroots Shakespeare), not exclusively because they are small and operate on miniscule budgets with volunteer acting, but because the work is created with collective group spirit and responsibility, and deeply rooted in locality.⁵⁶⁸ In these groups, the artistic

⁵⁶⁵ Heider, ‘Blog’.

⁵⁶⁶ Foxworth, Interview, p. 6.

⁵⁶⁷ Packer, Interview, p. 10.

⁵⁶⁸ *Performing Communities* provides case studies eight studies of ensemble grassroots theatre from around the United States. Leonard and Kilkelly, *Performing Communities*.

leadership only cultivates or curates the work, much like the approach of Bards of Birmingham's Laura Heider.

Collective responsibility manifests as strong social bonds between participants, and also personal dedication to the group's mission which can be expressed democratically as outlined above. However, all of the aforementioned interactions occur internally within the confines of the organisation. Fortunately, for these grassroots organisations this communal sense of dedication is one that cycles outwardly as well. Financial contributions are one such example of the immediate community feeling a responsibility to support local arts. When transitioning to a fully non-profit 501c3 model, Tony Pisculli from Honolulu expressed his desire that the sense of responsibility, ownership, and belonging that cast members felt about the organisation would spread out into the community in the form of action. Pisculli stated that the Shakespeare festival 'belongs to Hawaii' and that the community was now able to express that ownership by either contributing their in-kind services or financially donating to the cause.⁵⁶⁹

Examples of this common desire to support grassroots Shakespeare organisations and their participants can be large or small, and they are numerous throughout this research. Explaining that some actors in her ensemble were not able to financially afford a 'crazy wig' for the production, Emily Fournier raised the topic of anonymous donations. She explained that some members of the group would not 'eat for the day' if they had to contribute props from their personal funds.⁵⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the contributions arrived, and each participant had the props they needed. Fournier explained why this occurred:

I know 'so-and-so' can't afford this, here's an anonymous donation. Because everyone wants everyone to be a part of it. And everyone wants to see this thing continue.⁵⁷¹

This sense of belonging and need to care for individual members of the group, as well as the organisation as a whole, is the operational and philosophical lifestyle of grassroots Shakespeare. This approach develops a desire for continuity, as is evident in Fournier's final sentence in the quote above. Shakespeare's plays, with ample casting opportunities, provide a vessel for large and inclusive casts that collectively

⁵⁶⁹ Pisculli, Interview, p. 5.

⁵⁷⁰ Fournier and Rowden, Interview, p. 5.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid.

support one another, year after year. Continuity, and ultimately permanency, are two factors that are infused in every aspect of the grassroots Shakespeare phenomenon. Organisational development, administration, and participant experiences are all rooted in a desire for the activity to continue. Engaged in this ‘cycle of participation’, individuals come from all demographics, careers, and political views to participate in this work. Over time, this continuity and permanence develop with their community into local tradition. In the next section, I detail how collective efforts yield grassroots Shakespeare steeped in place, tradition, and community.

2. A Sense of Place, Tradition, and Community

In Arden, Delaware, where community Shakespeare performance has been a part of the small-town local life for over a century, the idiom ‘it takes a village’ could not be more apt.⁵⁷² The group’s gildmistresses, Tanya Lazar and Mary Catherine Kelley, recalled the blacksmith ‘down at the end of the lane there’ who constructed the crowns for their productions.⁵⁷³ The families located around the theatre have annually contributed their space to the group’s performance as well. Neighbours have opened their sheds for prop storage during performances and have ‘[hung] out of their windows and just watched’. Recalling the local children that would stop by and view rehearsals, Lazar described a scene remarkably congruous with Helene Koon’s ‘rowdy miners’ attending a production of *Hamlet* in the 1850s with the gold prospectors yelling out ‘lines to prompt forgetful actors’.⁵⁷⁴ After about a week of stopping by rehearsals, Lazar stated the neighbourhood children would similarly ‘know everybody’s lines, sitting in the back’ prompting the modern-day actor as he delivered ‘To be...’ with an outburst of ‘or not to be!’⁵⁷⁵

Lazar and Kelley were noticeably delighted to recall the interest the children had in Shakespeare, so much so that it prompted the development of a yearly children’s production in Arden. With an annual children’s production in winter, and the annual Shakespeare outdoors in the summer, Arden’s programming as of 2019 was as vibrant as it has ever been. To chronicle this, the small, local town museum

⁵⁷² See Chapter 1, Section 1.C - *Early Sylvan Experimentation: 1887-1900*, for the early history of Arden, Delaware and the Arden Shakespeare Gild.

⁵⁷³ Kelley and Lazar, Interview, p. 2.

⁵⁷⁴ Koon, *How Shakespeare Won the West*, p. 4.

⁵⁷⁵ Kelley and Lazar, Interview, p. 9.

has curated exhibits on the Shakespeare performances over the decades.⁵⁷⁶

Collectively, Shakespeare is the ‘common property’ of Arden, Delaware and the residents have shown a sense of responsibility in not only securing its future, but also honouring what it has been in the past. With its origin in the very first year of the twentieth century, the Arden Shakespeare Gild is the exemplar for how collective responsibility is rooted in the personal, and perhaps more deeply in local community tradition. Like the Arden Shakespeare Gild, the following section details how aspects of community, place, and tradition influence and develop grassroots Shakespeare organisations rooted in locality.

A. *‘This Rich History’: A Sense of Place and Tradition*

A common methodology employed by grassroots and professional groups alike is to set Shakespeare’s plays in the geographic region where they are being performed. This approach not only connects participants and audiences alike to the text in a more profound and personal way, but also expresses pride in one’s home. A central theme of grassroots theatre characterized by Robert Gard in his seminal text of the same name was that the plays should ‘grow from all the countrysides of America, fabricated by the people themselves’.⁵⁷⁷ In the context of grassroots Shakespeare, this means the plays must be reinterpreted through a regional lens. If all Shakespeare performing organisations are operating with this philosophy, each state would, in theory, produce its own unique form of Shakespeare. The evidence and data collected throughout this research show that to be the case. I have personally observed and recorded accounts from producers of a wide variety of such regionally inspired work. On the other hand, I have also witnessed productions that outwardly appear to not have such influences. As was significantly argued in *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* by Jan Kott in 1964, our times in which we live will always affect interpretation.⁵⁷⁸ I would add that every region also affects the work produced as well. Hence, everything from small nuances to major concepts will reveal local references, attitudes, and politics.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁷ Gard, *Grassroots Theatre*, p. 33.

⁵⁷⁸ Kott stated ‘Shakespeare is like the world, or life itself. Every historical period finds in him what it is looking for and what it wants to see. A reader or spectator in the mid-twentieth century interprets *Richard III* through his own experiences. He cannot do otherwise.’ Jan Kott, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc, 1964), p. 5.

A ‘sense of place’ is, in essence, a feeling one receives as a culmination of the cultural traditions and histories, community interactions, and the local geographic surroundings of a particular location. Geographer Yi-Fun Tuan wrote in the *Geographical Review* that ‘place is a centre of meaning constructed by experience’.⁵⁷⁹ In order to gain a full experience in a particular place, one must also be aware of the historic occurrences there. Tuan stated, ‘to know a place is also to know the past’.⁵⁸⁰ Hence, place manifests within an organisation’s artistic output on stage and through local traditions that accompany the group’s activities. Moreover, as previously established in Chapter 2, place is also an important construct for nomenclature of both grassroots and professional Shakespeare organisations. Professional groups enjoy the use of place-based names like the Oregon Shakespeare Festival or the Utah Shakespeare Festival to bolster the idea of being a regional ‘destination’.⁵⁸¹

To characterize these perspectives on interpretation and place from Kott and Tuan further, I will provide evidence collected from interviews, additional research and my personal field notes. Setting productions in local history is one method organisations use to find this particular resonance. In Kansas, the Wichita Shakespeare Company produced *The Ballad of Kate the Shrew* (which volunteer-participants recalled was ‘very yeehaw’) and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* in conjunction with the local history museum, Cowtown; these interpretation infused local lore with a ‘wild west’ theme.⁵⁸² Merced Shakespearefest also embraced their state’s western frontier past for their production of *Cymbeline* in 2014.⁵⁸³ Taking a similar approach, but going back millennia instead of centuries, the Hawaii Shakespeare Festival produced *Julius Caesar* set in ancient Hawaii.⁵⁸⁴ With all three of these examples having names derived from their locality or region, the importance of place is further emphasized.

Likewise, in 2018, the Montford Park Players produced *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* with their own regional twist. It was described to me during my visit

⁵⁷⁹ Yi-Fu Tuan, ‘Place: An Experiential Perspective’, pp. 151-52.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 164.

⁵⁸¹ See Chapter 2 for statistics and further discussion related to the use of the place-based nomenclature in Shakespeare organisations.

⁵⁸² Tanner, et al., Interview, p. 6.

⁵⁸³ Hambley, Interview, p. 1.

⁵⁸⁴ Pisculli, Interview, p. 3.

to Asheville that it ‘was done in an Appalachian style’.⁵⁸⁵ The director of this production also included another connection to local and personal history, showcasing a traditional element and further enhancing the sense of place within the production. Participant actor David Broshar recalled the experience:

[There] was actually a cabin with a front porch that we, all the Rude Mechanicals, were hanging out at; I was one of the mechanicals, and the wood from it actually came from her great grandfather's tobacco barn.⁵⁸⁶

In this sense, place is a combination of the artistic presentation, the actors representing characters from their own community, as well as heirlooms of local historic importance.

Tangible or intangible, experienced or not, local lore runs deep; and its manifestation on stage gives a sense of ownership to the community and provides yet another way of expressing values. During the course of the Shakespeare on the Road research in 2014, the team was able to view the Nashville Shakespeare Festival’s bluegrass *As You Like It*, deeply connecting to the city’s proud musical traditions. This was a production that the company deliberately chose as a representation of local culture to share with scholars from the United Kingdom of what it meant to be from Nashville.⁵⁸⁷ Sometimes it can be an ephemeral representation of the past, and other times it can be a singularly unique aspect of place, like Nashville’s unparalleled role in the music history of the United States. At the New Orleans Shakespeare Festival, *As You Like It* was set in the ‘bayou forest’ in a southern portion of the state, providing a whole new context for the Forest of Arden, while emphasizing ownership over a unique geographic location.⁵⁸⁸ Similarly, Yosemite National Park itself took on the role of the Forest of Arden during Shakespeare in Yosemite’s *As You Like It*.⁵⁸⁹

During the course of my research, I attended five additional productions of *As You Like It* in five different states: New York, Pennsylvania, California, Idaho,

⁵⁸⁵ Russell, et al., Interview, p. 14.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁷ Hicks, Interview, p. 2. The following year, 2015, the Nashville Shakespeare Festival would produce an American Civil War-themed *Henry V*. Artistic director Denise Hicks cited evidence of soldiers specifically reading *Henry V* on their encampments as they prepared for the bloodshed that awaited them.

⁵⁸⁸ Moncrieff, Interview, p. 6.

⁵⁸⁹ Wolfgang, ‘Grassroots Shakespeare Ethnographic Field Notes and Observations’.

and Rhode Island.⁵⁹⁰ Each of these productions offered less obvious regional nuance, nevertheless when compared with one another in an extensive regionally based study, this could be achieved. Subtleties were all too numerous; they were part of a wide array of presentation styles and organisational constructions in addition to naturally varying levels of funding. This included a large Shakespeare in the Park style music production by San Francisco Shakes to a small indoor historic venue on the campus of Brown University. Additionally, it is beyond the scope of this study to analyse all five of these productions in detail for regional distinction. My focus is not to provide critical overview of artistic work, but rather establish the characteristics of grassroots Shakespeare in the United States. Therefore, I acknowledge the bold, innovative, and truly fascinating manifestation of regionalism in Shakespeare performance in the United States and note that it is a subject awaiting further inquiry and scholarship from a national perspective.⁵⁹¹

A sense of place can connect to audiences of all ages in different ways; it doesn't always have to appear as pride in one's hometown or region. It can manifest as the setting for productions based in political activism. Founder and executive director of the Bards of Birmingham in Alabama, Laura Heider, talked about how and why she would set *Romeo and Juliet* in Alabama:

It also helps to have it set in Alabama, because it makes it much more personal. This isn't some far-off thing. This is something that could happen to kids here.⁵⁹²

Heider's statement is exactly what Robert Gard advocated for in the first text on grassroots theatre: the theatrical work must be derived for, by and about the place from which it arises. The artistic freedom that directors and the general public, alike, have with Shakespeare truly makes the work 'art of the people'. Bards of Birmingham's *Romeo and Juliet* wasn't about Shakespeare's time or another obscure time and place in Renaissance Italy, it was about struggles that the cast members themselves or their peers had. The group's production addressed the staggering issue of LGBTQ teen suicide in the United States in one of America's most conservative

⁵⁹⁰ Appendix F – Chapter 3 Terminology, Data, and Photographs

⁵⁹¹ This area of academic study is indeed developing. In April 2019 at the Shakespeare Association of America's annual conference, I contributed a paper for the 'Shakespeare on the Regional Stage' seminar. A special issue of *Shakespeare Bulletin* on this topic (to which I also contributed) is forthcoming in late 2021.

⁵⁹² Heider, 'Previous Productions'.

states.⁵⁹³ This perspective about life in Alabama for LGBTQ youth is the only one that could be achieved, and the only one to be fully understood, when it arises from the young residents of Alabama itself. This particular production included references to the place, and also to the time.⁵⁹⁴ For all Shakespeare companies, place and tradition are not just considered the day of the performances and the audience interactions, rather these constructs comprise daily life. Hence, the local traditions of a town become manifest as part of the group's collective tradition. Furthermore, American tradition and history are also deeply engrained in how participants express 'art of the people'. For many volunteers and community members some of these traditions are far removed from living memory but continue to resonate today. One such American tradition is the performance of Shakespeare itself.

Fred Adams, founder of the Utah Shakespeare Festival, discussed how his personal discovery of this widespread American tradition in Utah gave him the confidence to initially lay the groundwork for his organisation. When Adams first arrived in the cultural 'wasteland' of Cedar City, Utah in 1960, 'green as could be, just off the Broadway stage', he set out to produce a musical to give 'these country bumpkins a taste of what real theatre was'.⁵⁹⁵ However, Adams was not able to afford the royalties to present a show. Just as many grassroots artists in this study have attested, he then turned to Shakespeare because 'he wasn't asking [for] any kickback'.⁵⁹⁶ What Adams discovered was that there was genuine and consistent interest in the work from the moment he opened his first grassroots, student-based production. After securing some funds, he then attempted to present a musical, which did not fare as well in the box office or with the public's interest. Curious as to why there was such a dramatic difference between attendance at Shakespeare and attendance at a musical production, Adams began to investigate the area's history.

Adams uncovered in Cedar City's history a multi-generational relationship, a tradition of engagement with Shakespeare's work. He described the arrival of the immigrants from Wales, Ireland, and Scotland in what would become Cedar City, Utah:

On the way down, that wagon train rehearsed, and when they arrived within a week...in this godforsaken valley without trees, without a

⁵⁹³ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁴ Bards of Birmingham's *Romeo and Juliet* is analysed in Chapter 4.

⁵⁹⁵ Adams, Interview, p. 2.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid.

home, without a roof over their heads, they produced a full-length version of *Merchant of Venice*.⁵⁹⁷

But the story didn't end there, and the new Utahans would continue to make Shakespeare their own: 'it was, to them, part of their inheritance, part of their culture'. The work of Shakespeare was seen by local faith leaders in the Mormon church to be, as Helene Koon described, a 'highly proper kind of diversion'.⁵⁹⁸ In a community that was 'isolated from everything in the world', Shakespeare would remain a moral and educational companion for generations in reading clubs, grassroots adaptations or 'burlesques' and eventually in the form of one of the nation's largest Shakespeare festivals.⁵⁹⁹ Adams was able to identify this connection through a deep tradition, one that many in Cedar City would not even consciously recognize.

As established in Chapter 1, Shakespeare's influence is far-flung and deeply rooted, and stories about Shakespeare's traditional presence are still part of the American West. In Montana, a similar reverence for Shakespeare's work is still a part of the audience and local lore. Minton writes that the state's early settlers had a 'longing for the traditions' of their homelands; she asserted that engaging with Shakespeare was one way they were able to 'forge cultural continuity'.⁶⁰⁰ Artistic Director of the Montana Shakespeare in the Parks, Kevin Asselin, shared stories of mining camps, traveling players, and how Montana Shakespeare in the Parks itself was modelled after this legacy.⁶⁰¹ Asselin recalled an anecdote of his encounter with an audience member in rural Montana, connecting belonging to place, tradition, and Shakespeare:

I look up and there's a rancher walking over with his *Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. Totally dusty and torn up and tattered, and clearly something he's had with him for years, maybe in his family beyond that. He walks up and says, 'Thank you so much for coming to our community, I'm incredibly passionate about...*As You Like It* because of the reference to living off the land. I really connect to the Duke Senior fellow, finding books in trees and sermons in stones'.⁶⁰²

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁸ Koon, *How Shakespeare Won the West*, p. 29.

⁵⁹⁹ A local grassroots adaptation of Shakespeare by high school students was recorded in the local paper, corroborating Adams claims of Shakespeare's continual presence in the schools and communities. 'Show Next Wednesday', *Iron County Record*, (29 Dec 1911).

⁶⁰⁰ Minton, *Shakespeare in Montana*, p. 41.

⁶⁰¹ Asselin, Interview, p. 1.

⁶⁰² Ibid. Minton also discusses Asselin's anecdote in her monograph. Minton, *Shakespeare in Montana*, p. 8.

As indicated with this personal account and with the history previously presented in this thesis, place and tradition are two constructs that are critical in the development and implementation of the ‘art of the people’.

Audience members and participants alike not only see themselves in such anecdotes like the Montanan rancher above, but also see their ancestors’ unique stories too. Kansan Shakespeare producer and drama teacher Vonda Schuster recollected her ancestors’ journey westward and their search for a new ‘home’.⁶⁰³ To actualize this, the settlers needed to bring a connection to civilization and, just as Minton argues in Montana, for the new Kansans this meant cultivating a relationship with the cultural capital of Shakespeare’s work: ‘Shakespeare symbolized permanence’.⁶⁰⁴ When asked if this legacy of permanence is still apparent in the state today, Schuster noted that ‘in a lot of small towns it has gone away’.⁶⁰⁵ In the case of Kinsley, the site of one of America’s first modern Shakespeare festivals, Schuster’s supposition is correct. As I discovered during my field research, there is no evidence outside of the scant historical records of the event located in archives; all living memory and visible artifacts are now gone. Nevertheless, Shakespeare is still performed in a grassroots capacity in Kansas, even if the institutions themselves have not existed in specific towns continuously over the years. The unspoken tradition, reverence, and interest inarguably lives on.

Like much of the grassroots Shakespeare experience, such as the data presented in the previous section of this chapter, it is qualitative. With this type of data comes human emotion, connection, and other intangible constructs. As a researcher, this can become difficult to fully report on, and inevitably even the best methodologies will leave out critical nuance. In the case of Kansas, and the state’s deeply rooted Shakespeare performance tradition, I thought it appropriate to include two photos to assist in qualifying the concept of ‘sense of place and tradition’. For participants, community audiences, and researchers alike, this can come as a feeling upon seeing a production or interacting with the artists. In Figure 13 and Figure 14, I have included two images of Kansan productions of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. These productions occurred exactly one hundred seven years apart: on the 8 June

⁶⁰³ Tanner, et al., Interview, p. 6.

⁶⁰⁴ Minton, *Shakespeare in Montana*, p. 51.

⁶⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

1912 in Kinsley, Kansas on the 8 June 2019 in Wichita, Kansas.⁶⁰⁶ This feeling of tradition was certainly present for the two performances I attended of this production *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in June of 2019. I characterize this by pleasant memories of previous experiences, along with joy that one is experiencing it again, and for myself and others in attendance, the anticipation that one will get to do the same in the future. For the participants and the audience members, it is now a cherished tradition in the Wichita area, as Shakespeare in the Park has been a part of the community for nearly forty years.



Figure 13 - *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 8 June 1912 in Kinsley, Kansas. Photo from the Kinsley Public Library Archives.



Figure 14 - *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 8 June 2019 in Wichita, Kansas. Photo by the Wichita Shakespeare Company.

As these photos demonstrate, the tradition runs deep for the state of Kansas, and some degree of permanence has been achieved; this is constituted by a nearly identical layout of participants, audience, the natural setting along with remarkably similar costuming.

Direct lines of Shakespearean performance tradition can be traced back continuously into the nineteenth century. Dating back to 1847, one of the longest traditions of performance at an academic institution, is at Notre Dame University in South Bend, Indiana. Artistic Director Grant Mudge of the Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival shared his recent research on an early performance as early as 1847 at the university. When asked how this tradition impacts today's work, Mudge responded:

I think we find comfort in those traditions, and we like to be a part of them. I would acknowledge that definitely. Does that impact the work on stage? Artistically? I don't think so. We challenged our designers,

⁶⁰⁶ Photo from the Kinsley Public Library Archives. Wichita Shakespeare Company performance, photo by the Wichita Shakespeare Company made available through the organisation's publicity materials. 'Facebook.Com/Wichitashakespearecompany/', Kinsley Public Library Archives, (8 Jun 2019) [Accessed 2019 3 Sep].

actors and directors to produce the plays in ways that speak to them very much for 2020. And not trying to recreate...a prior era.⁶⁰⁷

Mudge's challenge to his production team is profound and raises an existential question: when working with a writer who has dominated theatrical tradition in the United States for centuries, as Shakespeare has historically, how do we not continue to comfortably recycle the past? These two characteristics of grassroots Shakespeare, tradition and artistic freedom, can be situated as diametrically opposed constructs.

However, grassroots Shakespeare organisations organically find a way to balance these two contrasting forces, which should come as no surprise considering these are groups that develop such strong feelings of belonging and community. In the areas of participant involvement, place-based production, artistic freedom, and ultimately in the form of activist productions the elements of the past and progress merge. To illustrate this delicate balance, it is beneficial to look at the Arden Shakespeare Guild. As previously discussed, Arden is a small village deeply immersed in tradition, and specifically of the Shakespearean variety. The town's namesake is the most obvious indicator, but interestingly not the most unique. According to local lore of the Ardenites, the performance of Shakespeare was so important to the founding members of the village, that when they died, they requested to be interred under the outdoor stage where actors have been performing since 1900.⁶⁰⁸ Tanya Lazar reflected on Arden's long history, and looked forward to what may be in store for the future:

I think it's going to survive for quite some time. Arden Shakespeare. I do. Because it's such a tradition. This place is kind of irresistible for those of us who have done stuff here.⁶⁰⁹

Despite the sturdy foundation in the past and love for tradition and belonging, the organisation's leadership still promotes and encourages artistic freedom for their directors and participants.

Both directors, Kelley and Lazar, encourage participants to take artistic risks. The two leaders discussed several productions that were definitively not in line with traditional Elizabethan-costumed and straight-text Shakespeare. Noting a particularly difficult incident with a rogue guest director and a sci-fi themed *Troilus and*

⁶⁰⁷ Mudge, Interview, p. 8.

⁶⁰⁸ Kelley and Lazar, Interview, p. 1.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 11.

Cressida complete with lightsabers, ‘strange costumes’, and an oral sex scene, they acknowledged that this process is not always without challenge.⁶¹⁰ Kelley and Lazar did have to intervene on the director’s inclusion of the sexual content as it violated the organisation’s policies for use of the outdoor theatre. Considering, as noted previously, that children frequent the theatre, this decision was in the best interest of the group, the community, and all involved. Nevertheless, this example shows that the tradition and artistic freedom can exist simultaneously, all while acknowledging logical boundaries for that freedom.⁶¹¹

Art-creating communities are developed when participants engage in work with a collective sense of belonging tied with a sense of place, as was established in the first section of this chapter. At times, reverence for deeply engrained Shakespeare tradition can collide with what some see as progress, and it is in this space that programs can continue to develop, challenging leaders, participants and audiences alike. In the next section, I discuss how grassroots Shakespeare organisations interact with their immediate local communities, why grassroots organisations are well-suited for this interaction and how they diverge from professional Shakespeare theatres.

B. ‘That Was Magic’: Community, Locality, and the Tourist

Grassroots groups, at their very core, are cultural mirrors of their communities. Local culture and tradition inform and dictate over time what these places will ‘feel’ like, along with every division of demographics. In this section, I explore how local culture influences and actualizes itself within grassroots Shakespeare organisations, which ultimately leads to ‘art of the people’. Locality influences not only the art on the stage, who the art is for, but ultimately what business model an organisation follows to achieve this. With participants banding together to create work for one another, as a method to better their communities and relationships, they develop a source of local pride that is generally only locally known. Grassroots work, in this sense, becomes the very antithesis to the touristic model of some of the nation’s largest professional Shakespeare theatres, a model that such large multi-million-dollar institutions must follow to sustain their broad operations.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid., p. 6.

⁶¹¹ The balance between the traditional and the progressive approach to programming is discussed in more detail at the conclusion of this chapter.

Artistic director Tony Pisculli elucidated the fact that the Hawaii Shakespeare Festival might not immediately meet the expectation of the tourist: ‘I don’t know that it [the Hawaii Shakespeare Festival’s work] would immediately register as “of Hawaii” to someone who isn’t from Hawaii’.⁶¹² What Pisculli references here is critical for the establishment of a sense of place in locality and serves as a foil against the desire to see highly stylized regional production. Tuan’s essay on the construct of place helps make sense of this: ‘Sense of place is rarely acquired in passing. To know a place well requires long residence and deep involvement’.⁶¹³ A tourist may expect to see something that represents Shakespeare in Hawaii, but that doesn’t reflect the lived experiences of the actors developing the work. The manifestations on stage are the product of the local actors and their daily lives. As these community artists are not connected to actor training programs nor the most recent Shakespeare scholarship, such interpretation through their local or regional lens is the only product that reasonably could be produced. This reflects the previously discussed argument made by Kott: everyone sees Shakespeare ‘through his own experiences. He cannot do otherwise’.⁶¹⁴ Pisculli acknowledged this approach stating that it can appear ‘largely subliminal’ to the passing glance, but inevitably the locality will always appear on stage when local actors are performing as ‘they bring their sense of what it means to be a local person onto the stage with them’.⁶¹⁵

Unlike some of the professional entities that are discussed in this section, and despite its location in a tourist’s haven, the Hawaii Shakespeare Festival doesn’t benefit from the state’s massive tourism industry. Pisculli unequivocally stated what tourists were doing in Hawaii: ‘They come to Hawaii for Hawaii and not to see Shakespeare’.⁶¹⁶ Pisculli’s programs are designed for the people of Hawaii, not the visitors (though they are warmly welcomed). At the conclusion of a Zoom performance of the *Merry Wives of Windsor* in August 2020 that was virtually attended by an international following, Pisculli responded to an audience question during the post-show discussion regarding future online, live-streamed productions. He stated that he did not desire to stream the work online permanently (the 2020

⁶¹² Pisculli, Interview, p. 3.

⁶¹³ Tuan, ‘Place: An Experiential Perspective’, p. 164.

⁶¹⁴ Kott, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, p. 5.

⁶¹⁵ Pisculli, Interview, p. 5.

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

streaming season was an innovative response to the COVID-19 crisis) or make it available outside of Hawaii, as that would change the character of what the organisation does. If the locality of Honolulu is removed, it ceases to be the Hawaii Shakespeare Festival. Pisculli's focus on Shakespeare by Hawaii, and for Hawaii is not accidental or convenient, but rather deliberate and ideological.

The immediate local community producing the grassroots art determines participation and thereby interpretation. For example, in Hawaii, the organisation's casts reflect this, with an 80 percent non-white population being equitably reflected on stage.⁶¹⁷ Like the overwhelming majority of grassroots organisations, the Hawaii Shakespeare Festival does not employ any specific casting policy. For grassroots groups, filling roles is frequently done first and foremost with a sense of necessity and gratitude for those who attend. As such, Pisculli noted that the diversity in the group's casts is the result of 'who comes to the audition', which he further elaborated by noting 'it's just Hawaii – how it works'. Hawaii's reflection of its diverse population is more of a deviation than the norm when it comes to demographic constructions. Groups such as Merced Shakespearefest, Prentie Players, and Shakespeare 70 all expressed during interviews their desire to diversify the racial composition of their companies to better reflect their communities.⁶¹⁸

Beyond population demographics, data, charts, and numbers, a successful grassroots Shakespeare organisation must know its community well in order to maintain its operations for its constituency. Echoing the 'of, by, and for' triad MacKaye used throughout his early career, these groups are not only *for* their community, but composed *of* the community. Such groups could not be uprooted and transplanted to another area, via online streaming or other methods, as Pisculli emphasized in the previously noted audience discussion. Moreover, some localities seemed to be rather predisposed to Shakespeare. Some mid-sized to large cities boast multiple Shakespeare performance organisations, which would come as no surprise for any of the nation's largest cities. However, locales exist that offer a large amount of Shakespeare for their population size. Greenville, South Carolina alone has three

⁶¹⁷ Ibid. 'Quick Facts; Honolulu County, Hawaii, United States', United States Census Bureau, (2020) [Accessed 23 July 2020].

⁶¹⁸ Hambley, Interview, p. 1. Bodenbender, Interview, p. 4. Foxworth, Interview, pp. 4-5. While in other cases, certain areas of the country such as Idaho (93 percent of the population is white) or Maine (95 percent of the population is white) leave little opportunity for diversifying companies and Shakespeare remains, as all activities in these areas, primarily a white endeavour. 'Quick Facts; Merced, California, United States', United States Census Bureau, (2019) [Accessed 23 July 2020].

organisations that produce Shakespeare within its city limits, one of which, the Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company, is part of this study. For the purposes of this section on locality, the Boise-Nampa metro area is analysed because of the presence of three Shakespeare producing organisations.⁶¹⁹

Artistic Director Jonathan Perry of the Encore Theatre Company discussed his company's relationship with his community in Nampa, Idaho, stating we are 'successful in our little, little world'. Perry further described his local community as a 'rural, red, conservative community that hasn't done a whole lot of arts, period'.⁶²⁰ Naturally, this community, theatre or otherwise, doesn't exist in a bubble. A thirty-minute drive from Nampa, Idaho would bring one to the Idaho Shakespeare Festival in the state's capital and largest city, Boise; this city has a successful professional theatre company that has been producing Shakespeare since 1977. Also, in that same city is another grassroots, nonprofessional Shakespeare group, the Boise Bard Players, which is an offshoot from Idaho's professional company.⁶²¹ With access to professional theatre only a short drive away and with multiple grassroots offerings, it is the community and locality that ultimately defines attendance and success. Perry elaborated on this point:

I saw two audience members last night who are definitely Nampa people, who wouldn't be going to see the Idaho Shakespeare Festival. Because that's too liberal or too 'artsy-fartsy' for them. They actually came out to Meridian to see this, because they know us, and they feel enjoyment towards it.⁶²²

Grassroots Shakespeare provides community members an intimate audience experience in their hometowns. Perry's personal reference to 'they know us' is something that becomes exceedingly more difficult as a group grows in size. Larger corporate entities cannot possibly learn who each of their patrons are and build such a rapport. This phenomenon is based on 'feeling' and therefore, nearly impossible to quantify for arts researchers, administrators, and funders alike. This is ultimately why a large portion of this thesis is based on qualitative data found in the interviews conducted.

⁶¹⁹ Appendix A.

⁶²⁰ Perry, Interview, p. 5.

⁶²¹ Ibid., p. 3.

⁶²² Ibid., p. 5.

I attended the particular Shakespeare in the Park production Perry referenced above; it was in the town square of neighbouring Meridian, Idaho. The show was intimate like many grassroots Shakespeare events, and it was obvious that most people knew one another. This sense of community created by the feeling of being out in one's own town square generates a different response when compared to a formalized theatrical setting, and the work is indeed site-specific. Moreover, as arts patrons choose their theatrical engagements just as they choose types of media – based on the perceived or underlying politics – some won't attend the professional company if they feel it is too politically liberal. Whereas attending the Encore Theatre Company's Shakespeare in the Park is both free and local, the Idaho Shakespeare Festival ticket prices would be challenging for the average family in the region to afford. Engle, et al. similarly noted the difference in constituencies between two organisational models: 'destination festivals...are generally affluent' audiences while 'community festivals tend to draw their audiences from the local population [and] are free'. If the local groups charge for such events, Engle, et al. wrote they were more 'modestly priced than at the destination festivals'.⁶²³ Twenty-five years after this analysis, it still proves true. In the spring of 2020 immediately before the COVID-19 pandemic, the festival was offering (taxes included) its cheapest weekend single seat on their lawn for \$59.36, a party of four attending the festival would need to pay \$373.12 to have 'mini-box' seats in the outdoor theatre.⁶²⁴ When looking at the price for admission alone, one can see without equivocation that the two organisations are appealing to different constituencies.⁶²⁵

By their design, regional theatres like the aforementioned Idaho Shakespeare Festival along with Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the Utah Shakespeare Festival appeal to national audiences and therefore must strive to be part of a tourism model. The embrace of this model is parallel with the use of the state-based nomenclature as

⁶²³ Engle, Londre, and Watermeier, *Shakespeare Companies and Festivals*, pp. xvii-xviii.

⁶²⁴ 'Seating and Pricing', Idaho Shakespeare Festival, (2020) <<https://idahoshakespeare.org/seating-pricing/>> [Accessed 25 July 2020].

⁶²⁵ The Idaho Shakespeare Festival's business model relies heavily on corporate, media, and community sponsors and partners, along with the aforementioned ticket sales and a cross-country strategic alliance with two other theatres. As of 2020, the Idaho Shakespeare Festival along with the Great Lakes Theater and the Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival have been part of a 'revolutionary producing model' for a decade which allows these regional theatres to share employment opportunities for artists and managers while maximizing investments. 'Strategic Alliance', Idaho Shakespeare Festival, (2020) <<https://idahoshakespeare.org/strategic-alliance/>> [Accessed 25 July 2020].

discussed in Chapter 2. Nevertheless, as noted throughout this thesis, it is possible for an organisation to have attributes of both professional and grassroots Shakespearean theatre. Qualities such as varying levels of community engagement, participation, local influence in original work, and political activism are not mutually exclusive with professional qualities, like the financial compensation of actors. For example, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival is very involved in the sphere of social justice and activism. A distinction between professional Shakespearean theatre and grassroots Shakespeare theatre, however, is the intended audience. Grassroots theatres are not regional entities; they are local entities. Therefore, grassroots groups do not seek out tourists for attendance at their programs even if they are located in tourist hotspots like Hawaii or Maine.⁶²⁶

Grassroots Shakespeare groups only intend to involve their local community in activities. All other attendance coming from beyond a group's immediate locality is celebrated and welcomed, but never expected nor sought (nevertheless, anecdotes of Shakespeare enthusiasts travelling across state lines to catch a rare *Henry VIII* performed by a small grassroots group do exist).⁶²⁷ This change in mindset between a small local audience to the expectation of a large crowd flocking to an event was first articulated in Kinsley, Kansas in 1912 by Gilmor Brown and Charles Edwards, and ultimately achieved by Angus Bowmer in Ashland, Oregon by the 1950s. While the initial goal of importing large crowds of people from other areas to support your program seems financially sound, it then changes the character of the work, and ultimately the structure of the organisation.

When Fred Adams arrived in Cedar City, Utah in 1960, he saw potential for not only Shakespeare, but also economic impact. Fully aware of the state of Utah's origins of embracing Shakespeare, as discussed in the previous section, Adams knew that eventually a Shakespeare festival could succeed in his remote town. He acknowledged in the 2014 Shakespeare on the Road interview that he wasn't the visionary that first actualized this: 'Don't get me wrong, this [was] not an original thought'.⁶²⁸ Knowing that Ashland, Oregon was even further (480 miles) from 'civilization', and Angus Bowmer had great success with bringing audiences from all over the west coast to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Adams sought his

⁶²⁶ Pisculli, Interview, p. 3. Fournier and Rowden, Interview, p. 9.

⁶²⁷ Bodenbender, Interview, p. 10.

⁶²⁸ Adams, Interview, p. 3.

assistance.⁶²⁹ Adams articulated the similarities between their remote locations in a communication to Bowmer:

I'm in a community that's exactly the same size as Ashland. We have exactly the same size junior college that you have. We're exactly the same distance away from a ski resort that you are. We're 250 miles from civilization.⁶³⁰

Bowmer responded to Adams' request for assistance, and with that guidance helped to launch the Utah Shakespeare Festival. Adams also reached out to three other industry leaders: Tyrone Guthrie, Craig Noel, and Michael Langham.⁶³¹ Clearly, Adams received sound advice. As of his 2014 interview, the festival made an annual financial impact between 36 to 38 million dollars in the Cedar City community. Other than Southern Utah University, the Utah Shakespeare Festival is the single largest economic factor in the community.⁶³²

The Utah Shakespeare Festival has become a 'destination theatre' and the ultimate goal for the organisation is to continue developing community around this idea. In the 2014 interview, he still held the Oregon Shakespeare Festival as an exemplar for what it means to be a community that simultaneously is a destination for theatre:

Ashland is magic, and it is magic because all of the local Ashlanders sold out and left, and San Francisco and Portland came in and bought the stores, bought the restaurants, and turned Ashland into an absolute fairylane of shopping and eating.⁶³³

While grassroots organisations seek to involve the local community becoming a contributing part of their work by providing artistic freedom and opportunity, destination theatres ultimately hope to become the beating heart of the community. The new business owners in Ashland came there because they spotted economic opportunity as well. In the case of both of these organisations, Oregon and Utah, the changes to the community were not sudden, but rather occurred over generations. In

⁶²⁹ See Chapter 1, 'Great Nature' The Beginnings of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival: 1935-1960 for a brief history of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

⁶³⁰ Adams, Interview, p. 3.

⁶³¹ Among many questions that Adams asked of these theatrical producers was, 'if you had to do it again, what one thing would you avoid, and what one thing would you do [again]?' I used this very same question Adams first asked in 1960 in all of my interviews with organisational leaders throughout this project. Responses are found at the end of each of the interview transcripts referenced in Appendix H. Ibid.

⁶³² Ibid.

⁶³³ Ibid., p. 9.

the case of Ashland, the Shakespeare festival has been there for eighty-five years and, for many, the town and the organisation have become synonymous. The Executive director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Cynthia Rider, emphasized this point:

People say, 'I'm going to Ashland', and they mean one and the same thing. They mean I'm coming to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.⁶³⁴

Traveling to Ashland, Oregon is an experience that intertwines both the locality and the Shakespeare organisation, it is indeed tourism in its most pure form. This involves travel that is based on leisure, and ultimately engagement with the business of 'accommodation and entertainment'.⁶³⁵ Individuals seeking this type of travel wish to have, as it was described to me on numerous occasions, the 'magic' of an experience unfamiliar or new to them, and for this they will travel thousands of miles.

The search for this elusive 'magic' is difficult for tourists. Naturally, it is a challenge for researchers and scholars as well, as this theatrical or touristic 'magic' is not a phenomenon that is easy to quantify. However, through the qualitative data collective for this thesis, this word has appeared eighteen times across eight interviews to describe the feeling associated with Shakespearean production.⁶³⁶ Adams captured this phenomenon in an anecdote he shared in 2014. Telling a story of how he and some of his patrons travelled to England to see the Royal Shakespeare Company, Adams described how this feeling of 'magic' can elude larger arts organisations and come more naturally to smaller, community-based grassroots groups. After a visit to the town of Keswick in the Lake District in North West England, Adams recalled:

They had a little community [amateur] theatre and they were doing *Romeo and Juliet* and it was remarkable, it was adorable. My patrons [and I,] we just fell in love with it. We then went down to Stratford and saw two shows at the RSC, and my patrons, when they came home, all they could talk about was Keswick... The comment we made at that time was, 'Why weren't there more little communities around who were doing that?' because to us, that was magic, and we would travel anywhere to see that.⁶³⁷

⁶³⁴ Cynthia Rider, 'Oregon Shakespeare Festival', Interview in 'Shakespeare on the Road' Archive, Shakespeare Centre Archives, Stratford-upon-Avon, p. 1.

⁶³⁵ Oxford English Dictionary, 'Tourism, N.', (Oxford University Press).

⁶³⁶ Appendix H.

⁶³⁷ Adams, Interview, p. 7.

This experience that Adams described is reminiscent of many anecdotes I have heard throughout my twelve years of practice in the world of grassroots theatre. The qualities that Adams' patrons 'fell in love' with, even with only his recollections as a guide, are the qualities that are outlined in this thesis. The patrons felt a sense of belonging not only between the participants on stage, but one that was reflected outward to the audience, as Adams also stated (not in the quote above) 'we were treated as family, real family, not guests, but family'.⁶³⁸ This group of American tourists also experienced a sense of place and tradition while visiting the small community of Keswick. Therefore, it is logical to then suppose that 'place' and 'tradition' enhanced the artistry and storytelling of *Romeo and Juliet* making it 'remarkable', absent further details of the production. Based on years of experience and this research, I would infer that the amateur actors were uneven or unrefined at spots, making the experience more 'human' and actualizing an observation from Dobson referenced in the introduction of this thesis: 'Whereas in the professional theatre the actors are at work while the audience are at play... in the amateur theatre both cast and spectators are at play together'.⁶³⁹

What made the American tourists' experience so palpable, and thereby memorable, was subversion of their expectations. This process reached its completion upon viewing the two productions at the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon. The patrons expected to be treated to the best Shakespeare they had ever experienced; after all, they were in his hometown, at one of the most renowned professional theatre institutions in the world. However, that didn't happen; their expectations were subverted. The professional theatre at the RSC, in all of its grandeur, lacked the intimate 'magic' Adams described of Keswick. The comment that was made in the above quotation, 'Why weren't there more little communities around who were doing that?' is one that resides at the centre of this thesis and why it is present in this section on 'community'. There are indeed communities around doing charming, 'magical' work like this. All one needs to do is look at Appendix D, Figure 5 and locate the grassroots Shakespeare organisation pins, set course for one of their productions, and maybe this experience could be recreated.

⁶³⁸ Ibid.

⁶³⁹ Dobson, *Shakespeare and Amateur Performance*, p. 203.

Indeed, there is a market for locations that are unique and off-the-beaten-path. Coupling an idyllic town with a magical theatre is the beginning of a tourist experience. This is evident in the conclusion to Adams' comment: 'we would travel anywhere to see that'.⁶⁴⁰ In this case, it presents a paradox, and one that is both artistic and economic. As more money comes into this small group, certain desirable qualities will be affected and replaced.⁶⁴¹ The sort of ragtag nature disappears, and the community bonds no longer retain grassroots qualities. Oregon Shakespeare Festival's second artistic director, Jerry Turner, who began his twenty-year tenure in 1971, wrote of the organisation's growth: 'Something attractive about the primitive nature of Ashland's productions was inevitably lost as professional demands and larger repertory took hold'.⁶⁴² Economist E. F. Schumacher referred to this as the 'duality' of human nature.⁶⁴³ It is also the challenge for large arts institutions: how can they capture and retain this 'magic' so frequently mentioned by grassroots practitioners and participants in this study? Schumacher further posited one potential answer to this question. He argued that as a society 'we suffer from an almost universal idolatry of giantism', despite the reality that 'for every activity there is a certain appropriate scale'.⁶⁴⁴ This 'duality' means people cannot simultaneously have both the intimate and magical amateur *Romeo and Juliet* and the gigantic splendours of the commercialized professional theatre that lie on the tourist's path. Hence, society's collective economic embrace of all things large, the 'biggest', and the 'best', has previously relegated many of these desired small 'magical' theatres to the invisible margins in both performance and academia.

3. Programming and Creating Shakespeare

Constructing and creating theatrical work of Shakespeare is the confluence of the previous two sections of this chapter: people and place. The organisational stakeholders, participants, and directors all contribute in various ways to actualize

⁶⁴⁰ Grassroots Shakespeare theatres likely have not purposefully or strategically avoided regional or national attention. Even if a grassroots Shakespeare company would want to expand their audiences (as most do), they are not financially or logistically capable of promoting their work outside of their immediate community.

⁶⁴¹ It is important to note, this research also alters the phenomena itself. By identifying these previously unknown in an academic setting at large, a small part of their anonymity has changed.

⁶⁴² Jerry Turner, 'Epilog', in *As I Remember Adam: An Autobiography of a Festival*, Angus Bowmer (Ashland, OR: The Oregon Shakesperean Festival Association, 1975), p. 285.

⁶⁴³ Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful*, pp. 70-71.

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid.

programming within their community. Based on previous experiences with Shakespeare, their own locality, and traditions, grassroots groups make the work *with* their participants and primarily *for* their participants. Grassroots programming reflects all of these tenets, while a different calculus must be employed for professional organisations.

For grassroots groups, the programmatic planning process is often, to varying degrees, a product of a sense of collective responsibility. The Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company in South Carolina self-identifies as an ‘artist collective’. Director Robert Fuson called this a ‘foundational’ aspect of the group and noted that the organisation’s board seeks proposals from theatre artists on potential projects to develop a season.⁶⁴⁵ He concluded by referring to their bottom-up approach to organisational planning and programming by noting ‘the company is not about us [the leadership]’.⁶⁴⁶ This collective, democratic approach to planning is, just like true democracy, challenging for groups to maintain. It requires either a carefully mapped out and implemented infrastructure like the Montford Park Players or virtually no infrastructure whatsoever like the Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company. As the latter group is composed of less than twenty individuals at any given time, making democratic decisions naturally is not complex. During my visit in 2019 to the Montford Park Players, there were over two hundred fifty organisational members. Obviously, structure is necessitated when giving a voice to such large numbers. A direct vote on the programming is taken by the membership of the Montford Park Players at an annual gathering. The results of this ballot are then moved along by an artistic planning committee before final approval with the organisation’s board of directors.⁶⁴⁷

Some fully professional theatres also strive for the idea of democracy even if the voting infrastructure isn’t as established. Denise Hicks of the Nashville Shakespeare Festival stated in 2014: ‘It’s communal; it’s a democracy. We’re a collaborative and co-creating community’.⁶⁴⁸ When a group doesn’t have democratic structures in place for daily operations or planning, it is still an aspirational sentiment and is alluring for arts organisations. This ideal is furthered by the

⁶⁴⁵ Fuson and Spears, Interview, p. 2.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁷ Russell, et al., Interview, p. 3.

⁶⁴⁸ Hicks, Interview, p. 2.

Shakespeare Theatre Association (STA) which gives each member theatre a vote in the organisation's operations. Executive Director Patrick Flick described this as an 'egalitarian' approach in our 2019 interview.⁶⁴⁹ STA models this democratic structure for its organisational membership which exceeds one hundred twenty groups of all operational models from around the world. The aforementioned approaches are implemented to varying degrees across STA's membership and beyond, and these methods aid in the democratic development of seasons, the inclusion of educational endeavours, and ultimately, how much Shakespeare will be offered by a Shakespeare organisation.

A. 'Finding a Balance': Season Construction

The heart of a Shakespeare company's programming, like most theatrical institutions, is the production season. For the purposes of this thesis, the term 'season' refers to specifically planned productions or events that occur within a designated timeframe. Naturally, great variation exists across the field as to how much time constitutes one season. For some grassroots organisations like the Hawaii Shakespeare Festival, this means only summer production. For others, activities are year-round. In this section, evidence is presented that details the artistic planning process and typical constructions, variation and balance of programming, as well as how education programs interact with season programming.

The planning process for all Shakespeare companies is wide-ranging and must consider a multitude of factors. A small sample of these critical aspects and considerations include community and participant interests, financial and logistical concerns, artistic variety and frequency of similar past productions, and the timing of the production within the season and calendar year. For some groups like the OrangeMite Shakespeare Company and the Prenzie Players, these decisions are made by an artistic director and subsequently approved by a board of directors.⁶⁵⁰ In other cases, like the Hawaii Shakespeare Festival, Shakespeare 70, and Shakespeare on the Green, such decisions are made in committee.⁶⁵¹ Organisations like the Montford Park Players, Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company, and Amerinda,

⁶⁴⁹ Flick, Interview, p. 1.

⁶⁵⁰ Szwaja, Interview, p. 5. Bodenbender, Interview, p. 8.

⁶⁵¹ Pisculli, Interview, p. 7. Foxworth, Interview, p. 2. Laangstra-Corn, Interview, p. 4.

have taken a more democratic approach; within these organisations, the membership votes on season selections.⁶⁵²

It is typical for organisations of all sizes to develop season planning patterns, which leadership generally places into ‘time slots’. As leaders from groups around the country explained, both organisations and their constituencies enjoy the familiarity to such a structure. In other words, interested parties generally know when to expect productions, due to this annual pattern of time slots. Before a group can make these particular decisions about which show fits best into which of its seasonal slots, the organisation must determine if it is to be a year-round producer or only produce a few months of the year. The majority of grassroots groups will have a spring show and a fall show; another common construction is to do a summer ‘Shakespeare in the Park’ and an indoor winter show. Some groups are more prolific, while others take a more targeted approach. For example, Shakespeare in Yosemite’s season currently includes a production in spring around Earth Day and Shakespeare’s birthday in April. While the Montford Park Players advances towards its half-century of operations, with the six productions in the summer and at least two to three in their indoor fall and winter season.⁶⁵³

As discussed in the previous chapter, producing as many productions as the Montford Park Players annually does requires at least one full-time staff member and a well-developed organisational infrastructure. Without the appropriate infrastructure and paid staff members prolific programming is not sustainable for the long term. This was the case for Laura Heider and the Bards of Birmingham discussed in the previous chapter on organisational structures. Similarly, during my time as artistic director at the OrangeMite Shakespeare Company, we culminated with a six-production season during the 2017 season. I was not a full-time employee of the organisation; on the contrary, I was employed elsewhere (like numerous other grassroots directors in this study). This season proved to be personally overwhelming. Eventually, this led to burn-out on my part, and ultimately served as an impetus for this research and thesis.⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁵² Russell, et al., Interview, p. 3. Fuson and Spears, Interview, p. 2. Diane Fraher and Madeline Sayet, ‘Amerinda’, Interview in ‘Shakespeare on the Road’ Archive, Shakespeare Centre Archives, Stratford-upon-Avon, p. 2.

⁶⁵³ Appendix B.

⁶⁵⁴ During my tenth season as artistic director at the OrangeMite Shakespeare Company, I oversaw production of *Measure for Measure* and Sophocles’ *Antigone*, co-directed a youth production of *The Tempest*, directed and assembled a production entitled *Shakespeare in Shorts* (forty-minute reductions

As indicated with Shakespeare in Yosemite, year-round production is not for all organisations. Likewise, Tony Pisculli of the Hawaii Shakespeare Festival reflected on his organisation's decision to produce only a summer season:

One of the smartest decisions we ever made with this company was to operate in the summer, because all the other theatres operate September to May, and so we're the only thing going on in July and August.⁶⁵⁵

Pisculli's example also demonstrates that season planning considerations are not made in an isolated bubble. Groups must consider other artistic offerings in their immediate area. Other arts activities impact not only participant availability, but also audience engagement. The Hawaii Shakespeare Festival's decision to perform only in the summer proved to not only be helpful for promoting the three-production season to volunteer actors, but also allowed Pisculli and his team to focus on other personal endeavours throughout the off-season.⁶⁵⁶ Unlike other grassroots directors in this study, Pisculli noted he did not suffer from burn-out. He also explained that there was annual excitement created due to the narrow season window, which he described as 'an event...like Christmas, but better', as opposed to a year-round schedule with continual shows.⁶⁵⁷

When it is time to program a season, Shakespeare performance organisations of all varieties have one familiar sounding binary question that must be answered every time: Shakespeare or *not* Shakespeare? Some organisations always answer it the same way, season after season, by exclusively programming Shakespeare's work, while others constantly mix-up their offerings for their audiences and participants alike. This non-Shakespeare work by Shakespeare companies is discussed in full in the subsequent section; in this section, I continue to discuss *how* and *why* specific plays are selected for an organisation's season.

Pisculli stated that he selects texts that are 'meaningful and interesting' but most importantly 'create opportunities to do interesting things with Shakespeare'.⁶⁵⁸ With the freedom to be creative with Shakespeare's plays, Pisculli discovered that he

of *Julius Caesar*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Macbeth*), and directed full-length productions of *Antony and Cleopatra* and *The Winter's Tale* while working full time as a teacher in the public school system.

⁶⁵⁵ Pisculli, Interview, p. 3.

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 7.

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 2.

was not bound to produce the most popular works such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Audiences would attend the festival regardless of the title.

I would say two-thirds of the plays that we've done are the first time they've ever been done in Hawaii...And in fact, some of the less popular plays have been more successful plays; *King John* did very, very well. *Pericles* did very well as one of our best-selling plays ever.⁶⁵⁹

Pisculli and his co-directors found this to be liberating, which led them to complete the entire Shakespearean canon by their twelfth year of production.⁶⁶⁰ I have found no evidence of another purely grassroots, community organisation (not associated with a university) completing the canon in such a short time.⁶⁶¹

Pisculli's emphasis on creating 'opportunities' for creative expression and artistic freedom through Shakespeare is a shared value throughout the grassroots field. In Iowa, Catherine Bodenbender echoed this sentiment when discussing how directors were chosen. She explained that earlier in the Prenzie Players history, a season was selected and then directors were found. The organisation discovered that this process had its challenges, specifically a lack of enthusiasm and passion for certain productions. Making the point that directors from the company should select a text from the canon that interested them, Bodenbender determined that 'a person has to really want to do that show'.⁶⁶² Because of this freedom to select the work that excites the membership the most, the group doesn't have to be concerned with selecting crowd-pleasing productions. This embrace of all of Shakespeare's text emphasizes a familiarity and level of comfort with the work:

We personally feel a great deal of license, especially at this point.
We've been working so closely with these texts for so long.
Shakespeare is mine and I am his, and I think I understand him, and
he understands me.⁶⁶³

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 1.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁶¹ The Hawaii Shakespeare Festival completed all of Shakespeare's texts in twelve years (2001-2013). While the first organisation to ever accomplish this feat in America was also a grassroots group, the Pasadena Community Playhouse, it took them a more reasonable nineteen years (1918-1937). The Antioch Shakespeare Festival with a mix of community and professional actors completed the canon in the record time of three years. The next section provides greater detail on programming the canon.

⁶⁶² Bodenbender, Interview, p. 6.

⁶⁶³ Ibid.

The Prenzie Players is able to implement this ‘license’, utilizing the personal creativity of members and reverence for the text at the same time. Bodenbender visualized this point through the following anecdote while distinguishing her grassroots work from professional productions: ‘we seat almost as many for a *Henry VIII* as we do for a *Macbeth*’.⁶⁶⁴ In this way, the Prenzie Players takes two critical aspects of grassroots Shakespeare and entwines them: artistic freedom and collective responsibility. It is from the membership of the organisation that the artistically creative product arises, and logistical concerns regarding audience attendance are *not* at the forefront of decision making. The approach is bottom-up, not the reverse as it frequently can be in a large corporate theatre setting.

The above examples of artistic freedom and collective responsibility demonstrate organisations that do not have to be concerned with attendance numbers. These are groups that are not relying on existential ticket sales. For many professional organisations, this type of ‘art first, business second’ approach would not be successful. Mid-sized to large organisations, despite being categorized by the IRS as 501c3 ‘non-profits’, are business entities that have to make payroll for employees.⁶⁶⁵ Hence, the success of each production at the box-office is imperative and, consequently, programming a season becomes a carefully choreographed and nuanced dance for artistic directors, committees, and membership. Organisational leaders seek to evenly distribute content across the whole season. Artistic director Rebekah Scallet stated: ‘I try to balance it...I try to have one big title in the season every year’.⁶⁶⁶ This planning methodology has been common practice for festivals as early as the 1950s, after it was popularized by Angus Bowmer at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. The festival described their approach at the time as a ‘varied season’ one that ‘[contrasted] the popular with the lesser known; the comedy with the tragedy’ in a promotional story in a newspaper in nearby Reno, Nevada.⁶⁶⁷ This is the modern-day Shakespeare theatre industry standard, as well, and I have observed these common structures throughout the course of this research. The only change that has come to this aforementioned ‘balance’ in the past seventy years, on

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid. Professional theatres likely would not agree that their audience attendance numbers would be equal for *Henry VIII* and *Macbeth*.

⁶⁶⁵ See Section 2.1A - ‘To the Public’: Legal Models.

⁶⁶⁶ Scallet, Interview, p. 5.

⁶⁶⁷ ‘Stay Four Days, See Four Plays: July in Oregon’, *Reno Gazette-Journal*, (20 Dec 1957).

the national level, would be the gradually increasing inclusion of non-Shakespeare production to annual seasons.⁶⁶⁸

Seasonal programming is but one piece of this annual balance for professional organisations. As funding from ticket sales and external sources alone is rarely enough to balance the budget, Shakespeare performance organisations find educational programming helps to achieve both mission-related and financial goals. As established in Chapter 2, nearly all Shakespeare theatres are officially categorised by the IRS as organisations that primarily exist for an educational purpose. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the large majority (at least 90 percent) of professional organisations that are represented in this research have educational programming in addition to their traditional season line-up of productions.⁶⁶⁹ The type of programming varies from summer camps and classes to educational touring productions. Of the twenty professional Shakespeare performance organisations interviewed throughout this research from 2014 to 2020, only three of these organisations did *not* bring up their education programming unprompted during the discussion.⁶⁷⁰ For these seventeen professional organisations, educational programming is a priority. In the case of grassroots organisations, the majority of the field does not have the levels of funding for complex educational programming. Of the grassroots groups not specifically dedicated to youth performance that are part of this study, only the Montford Park Players, the OrangeMite Shakespeare Company, and the Arden Shakespeare Guild offered an educational classes or educational day camps for youth, which is only 20 percent of the non-education based grassroots groups located in Appendix C.⁶⁷¹ The Montford Park Players is the only program that extends beyond one session a year, and as previously noted, the only grassroots organisation with a full-time employee. The administrative capacity needed to conduct such programming is extensive and complex. Furthermore, the existence and extent of education programming is yet another distinguishing aspect between professional Shakespeare performing organisations and their grassroots counterparts.

An exemplar organisation for educational programming is Shakesperience Productions based in Waterbury, Connecticut. The organisation is a multifaceted

⁶⁶⁸ Appendix F, Section 2.

⁶⁶⁹ Appendix C.

⁶⁷⁰ This information was sourced from the multiple oral history transcripts. Appendix H.

⁶⁷¹ Bards of Birmingham and Shakespeare at Winedale are focused on youth or educational programming. This information is sourced from Appendix C.

professional Shakespeare performance company. Founding artistic director Emily Mattina described the operational model of the group, which as she noted bridges classifications, combining educational and presentational theatre:

It really is a mix. You really can't do one without the other. I think almost unfortunately, the way things are categorized now you either do children's theatre, or you do this. I think for us everything is really closely integrated. We believe that you can have a high-quality Equity production, and also have young people involved. The tour has a huge reach: about 55,000 students a year throughout Connecticut and the New England states.⁶⁷²

Shakesperience Productions merges the traditional performance and touring productions with education in their business model. The organisation has a strong relationship with local school districts which it has cultivated over many years. Through this association with independent school districts, Shakesperience Productions receives 60 percent of their annual budget as payment for their services.⁶⁷³ The group is a unique example of a professional organisation that functions primarily through maintaining relationships with other educational or cultural institutions.

While Shakesperience does have a public Shakespeare in the Park performance annually and a winter holiday performance, most of their 'season planning' is not about constructing public performance. Rather, season planning for Shakesperience is the administrative feat of scheduling school tours and developing programming which includes oral history programs, acting classes, fifteen different workshops and local neighbourhood programs, among others. For the purposes of this research, Shakesperience Productions carries out impressive grassroots-based initiatives, such as programs with deep community roots and even unique original playwriting work.⁶⁷⁴ However, the programming is led by a professional staff that employ professional teaching artists to carry out the work, hence the group has been categorized as a professional organisation. Shakesperience's executive director Jeffrey Lapham noted that 'it takes all year' to get the two hundred school contracts that comprise their annual offerings, a task that is built upon layers of administrative past-practice and previous relationships developed with the schools.⁶⁷⁵ Obviously,

⁶⁷² Lapham and Mattina, Interview, p. 2.

⁶⁷³ Ibid., p. 3.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid.

for grassroots organisations, conducting programs like Shakesperience Productions offers would be logistically impossible. As noted in the prior chapter, grassroots groups are almost entirely volunteer led and staffed, and therefore their seasonal offerings are largely based on theatrical productions, not educational programming.

Despite not having the capacity for such programming, what grassroots groups lack in funding and staffing, they make up for in resourcefulness. The Recycled Shakespeare Company offered a variety of special events through the year that are not full-length productions. This included a twenty-four hour playwrighting contest, an event that encouraged original work developed by company members. Shakespeare on the Green also created similar events for their membership and community as well.⁶⁷⁶ Creative non-production based annual programming is not exclusively the preserve of grassroots organisations, thus, there are examples of ingenuity abounding throughout the field at large. A Shakespeare-based five-kilometre run is offered annually by both Advice to the Players (ATTP) and the North Dakota Shakespeare Festival. ATTP also hosted a biannual ‘Shakespeare on Tap’ program which is an improvised stage reading at a local pub.⁶⁷⁷ Examples of communal reading also have become part of the seasonal programmatic offerings for some groups including the Nashville Shakespeare Festival. The organisation started this monthly communal program in 2008, which is hosted in part by the local public library and gives anyone who attends the opportunity to read Shakespeare’s work as a group.⁶⁷⁸

As this section has demonstrated, grassroots and professional Shakespeare groups develop their annual seasons and all of the supplemental or coinciding programming with differing approaches. Regardless of the organisational model, how one production balances thematically, and ultimately financially, with its season counterparts is the primary consideration. Also, timing of the productions throughout the year is yet another critical concern. Grassroots organisations, generally, have the ability to exercise more artistic freedom and collective decision-making with their work, as there is less financial risk. Conversely, professional organisations must take care to balance their seasons’ offerings with commercially licensed productions such as musicals that will see beneficial financial return. Meanwhile, the finite nature of

⁶⁷⁶ Fournier and Rowden, Interview, p. 8. Laangstra-Corn, Interview, p. 1.

⁶⁷⁷ Chapman, Interview, p. 9. Murry, Interview, p. 10.

⁶⁷⁸ Hicks, Interview, p. 5.

the canon is a programming concern that is exclusive to the field of Shakespeare theatre. In the next section, I address how Shakespeare performance organisations navigate Shakespeare's works. The analysis also includes how grassroots organisations, as well as the industry at large, specifically respond to the canon in its entirety while juxtaposing it with original work.

B. 'All or Nothing': The Canon, Non-Shakespeare and Original Work

It is generally accepted convention that the Shakespearean Canon consists of approximately thirty-seven plays, one hundred fifty-four sonnets, and multiple poems that are attributed to William Shakespeare. The canon has been described in paradoxical terms by Shakespearean producers, scholars, and enthusiasts alike. It limits artists to confines of less than forty plays, but simultaneously comprises bottomless, infinite interpretation. At times, it is a relief for organisational leaders to have quantified data: how many words are definitively in a text, how many plays in a canon, or how many productions a company completed. Hence, organisational leaders use their company's progress through Shakespeare's body of work as one metric of success.

Excitement for the canon is a commonality shared among directors. Grassroots and professional practitioners are all fond of discussing their organisation's journey through producing these texts. This is not a new method for exclaiming accomplishment, by any means; the Pasadena Community Playhouse was able to announce their completion of the canon in 1937 and create a cacophony of excitement in the press, as detailed in Chapter 1. Less than twenty years later, in 1956, Shakespeare under the Stars in Antioch, Ohio would complete the canon, and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival would follow in 1958.⁶⁷⁹ The trend of organisations using the canon completion to gain publicity is very much still alive today, and for good reason. The completion of the canon is a massive undertaking, usually representing at least a decade of theatrical presentation.

Two grassroots organisations represented in this study completed the canon before 2020: the Hawaii Shakespeare Festival and the Montford Park Players. For both organisations this is a source of enormous pride. Company member Jered Shults compared the Montford Park Players' success to some of the most renowned Shakespeare productions in the world:

⁶⁷⁹ Appendix F, Section 5.

I've [seen] Shakespeare, as an audience member, that I never would have seen [otherwise] here at Montford. To see some of the shows [you would think] it was the Royal Shakespeare Company.⁶⁸⁰

Not only completing the canon, but simply performing obscure texts like *Edward III* gives an organisation a sense of accomplishment. Pisculli recalls patrons stating that there was 'no one else in the world' doing texts like this on the stage, so they subsequently attended the Hawaii Shakespeare Festival.⁶⁸¹ The sense of pride is palpable for organisations who can celebrate their approach to this rarely performed work.

Even for organisations that have not completed the entire canon, grassroots and professional alike, counting how many different Shakespeare plays one has done is a badge of honour. During the interview with directors Kelley and Lazar of the Arden Shakespeare Gild, both shared an impressive record of productions that the organisation had produced in the last twenty-five years.⁶⁸² In Iowa, Bodenbender inverted her list as the Prenzie Players neared its canon completion, saying 'it's easier for me to list what we *haven't* done yet'. Bodenbender continued to discuss her company's complex vision of the full history cycle starting with *Edward III* by producing every play in historical chronological order (*Richard II*, *Henry IV parts 1 & 2*, *Henry V*, *Henry VI parts 1, 2, & 3*, and *Richard III*) with a unified production concept and cast throughout.⁶⁸³

Professional companies complete the canon with even more fanfare. In 2014, the Cincinnati Shakespeare Company received statements of congratulations from sponsors, local civic and business leaders, Shakespeare Theatre Association Executive Director Patrick Flick, and the Director of Education from Shakespeare's Globe, Patrick Spottiswoode, on the completion of their canon. The organisation then launched an educational program in the schools to further the effort called 'Project 38', which then culminated in a fundraising gala.⁶⁸⁴ Cincinnati Shakespeare Company (which is not a representative group from this study included in Appendix C) also touted in multiple locations as being 'one of the first five theatres in the

⁶⁸⁰ Russell, et al., Interview, p. 13.

⁶⁸¹ Pisculli, Interview, p. 4.

⁶⁸² Kelley and Lazar, Interview, p. 7.

⁶⁸³ Bodenbender, Interview, p. 8. This plan is surprisingly similar to Pasadena's landmark 1935 'history cycle' Shakespeare festival.

⁶⁸⁴ 'Cincinnati Shakespeare Company Presents "The Two Noble Kinsmen" As the Final Play to Complete the Canon!', (Cincinnati, Shakespeare: Cincinnati Shakespeare Company, 15 April 2014).

United States' to complete the canon. This is untrue; and like many previous and subsequent claims of which theatre completed it before the other, there is no indication that these organisations are attempting to be disingenuous. Rather, scholarship and research that chronicles such achievements is not readily available for these organisations. Hence, they inadvertently and inaccurately report the information to the press.⁶⁸⁵

Meanwhile, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival has completed the canon four times, and the Colorado Shakespeare Festival has completed it twice.⁶⁸⁶ Esther French, writing for the 'Shakespeare and Beyond' blog for the Folger Shakespeare Library, wisely does not mention who was the first, second, third, or fourth, as the sources available have not been amalgamated into a scholarly publication on this topic.⁶⁸⁷ Theatres make such announcements, using the canon itself to gain publicity for their event and accomplishment with not as much regard for the nebulous historical veracity of the situation. Appendix F, Section 5 includes a list of these organisation that I was able to compile with a limited study within the scope of this broad overview. An in-depth study on this matter would certainly yield fruitful returns for both performance studies and the Shakespeare theatre themselves.⁶⁸⁸

When asked why an organisation would want to endure the production of at least thirty-seven different works by Shakespeare over an extended duration of time, producers enthusiastically responded. In Kansas, director Dan Schuster stated that it was exciting to bring plays, 'particularly ones that are not done as often', in Wichita, Kansas 'to life'.⁶⁸⁹ Bodenbender stated that her company pursues artistic challenges simply because they 'like to do hard things'.⁶⁹⁰ The challenge of completing the canon gives a company something to set course for, and something to rally around. Ray Ontko of the Richmond Shakespeare Festival discussed board members' long-

⁶⁸⁵ In Georgia, in 2011, The Shakespeare Tavern (Atlanta Shakespeare Company) announced that they would be the first company ever to complete the thirty-nine-play canon (with the completion of *Edward III*). Leonard Pallats, 'Atlanta Troupe Claims First in U.S. To Perform All 39 of Bard's Plays', *Ledger-Enquirer*, (25 March 2011).

⁶⁸⁶ Esther French, 'Completing the Shakespeare Canon', in *Shakespeare & Beyond*, ed. by Esther French (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 11 August 2017).

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁸ Appendix F, Section 5. Scholarly consensus and a full study on this matter would be beneficial. John Russell of the Montford Park Players was informed by a researcher that his organisation was the fourteenth theatre in the world to complete the canon in 2017. According to my brief research, the Montford Park Players *could possibly* be the fourteenth in the United States. Regardless, the inclusion of 'the world' makes this statement almost impossible to prove.

⁶⁸⁹ Tanner, et al., Interview, p. 5.

⁶⁹⁰ Bodenbender, Interview, p. 10.

term programming goals of the company. The board is composed of two groups of individuals; some who are, as Ontko stated, ‘completionists’ versus a more pragmatic contingent. He described the pragmatic thinking in this following statement: ‘it wouldn't kill us if we did *A Midsummer Night's Dream* every four or five years’.⁶⁹¹ In other words, boards must consider how much of the canon is appropriate from a business as well as an artistic perspective.

Meanwhile, Curt Foxworth in New Jersey stated that after the company performed some obscure selections from the history plays, the ‘entire company [was] a little more intrigued about venturing beyond’ normal Shakespearean fare.⁶⁹² Nevertheless, for Foxworth, unlike many of his colleagues around the nation, the intrigue ends with only the works of artistic integrity for today’s world. ‘I am comfortable with some of those plays remaining on the shelf,’ Foxworth stated when asked if Shakespeare 70 aimed to complete the canon. He continued:

Not necessarily because there's a lack of merit to the writing, but because I feel, at least at this time, this is not a play that serves our culture or our community...*Taming of the Shrew* comes to mind. A play that makes me want to flip a table. And when that name came up a few years ago, I was like we should not be doing that...I don't think we're so interested in completing the canon that we're going to make ourselves do a play that we haven't found an argument for.⁶⁹³

Foxworth’s twenty-first century approach to the canon will undoubtedly help his organisation stay artistically focused and avoid obligatory productions of unwanted plays. For Shakespeare 70, the artistic freedom associated with performing and adapting Shakespeare’s plays also includes the freedom to choose *not* to perform certain texts.

When a group has completed the canon, it is time to reset and think about what to do next. For the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, that meant completing it three more times. I asked the question, ‘what comes next?’ of the largest grassroots Shakespeare organisation in the United States, the Montford Park Players. Executive director John Russell explained: ‘having accomplished that goal, this gives us the freedom to move on and do even more experimental work’.⁶⁹⁴ Russell explained that the process of ‘branching out’ occurred through persuading his board of directors

⁶⁹¹ Flick and Ontko, Interview, p. 4.

⁶⁹² Foxworth, Interview, p. 2.

⁶⁹³ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁴ Russell, et al., Interview, p .3.

that Shakespeare companies performing other work is ‘not an aberration, but the norm’. He explained how he arrived at this conclusion:

Looking at the website for probably the top six or eight different Shakespeare festivals, and the average number of Shakespeare plays they did in the season was only about 25 percent to 33 percent of their total repertoire.⁶⁹⁵

Russell’s research is congruous with my own. Some of the largest festivals and companies have moved through the canon multiple times, and afterwards added new work initiatives in addition to popular crowd-pleasing work.⁶⁹⁶ For these organisations, the inclusion of musicals and other well-known work, serves as a critical cash-flow and helps to balance out the season with a variety of repertoire. Rebekah Scallet explained why the Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre’s annual musical has become a vital part of her organisation’s season structure:

[The musical has] always been our biggest seller, our biggest draw, because that's an entertainment that people are more familiar with, and the Shakespeare part has been about growing the interest, and some of that I do think is because there hasn't been that much of it. That's not something that's just part of the DNA of the community as in a place like Utah, Oregon.⁶⁹⁷

Scallet’s reference to Shakespeare’s engrained presence in the communities of Ashland and Cedar City implies that such organisations would not have to include musicals in the season. On the contrary, both the Oregon and Utah festivals along with other professional theatres in this study (like the Chicago Shakespeare Theater) produce musicals to diversify their offerings, and presumably to expand their financial options as well. As detailed in Chapter 2, grassroots organisations rarely have the ability to afford the performance rights for such productions, and choose to focus on public domain work, of which Shakespeare is the majority. Nevertheless, Shakespeare still represents a majority of the work produced by Shakespeare performance organisations.⁶⁹⁸ While this seems intuitive and self-evident to most, some have still made a push to diversify offerings. John Russell and the board of the Montford Park Players, along with the democratic input of the organisational

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁶ Appendix F, Section 2 and Section 5. See also French, 'Completing the Shakespeare Canon'.

⁶⁹⁷ Scallet, Interview, p. 3.

⁶⁹⁸ Appendix F, Section 2.

membership, have begun to commission and program original work and license existing non-Shakespearean plays.

Several other companies involved in this research have mentioned producing original work, and much of it was based on Shakespeare. Bards of Birmingham, the OrangeMite Shakespeare Company, and Merced Shakespearefest noted such offerings.⁶⁹⁹ Additionally, three grassroots companies, all in New England, encouraged new works from their membership during twenty-four hour playwriting events.⁷⁰⁰ Stephanie Murry, the founding artistic director of the North Dakota Shakespeare Festival, discussed her vision for 'The Bard and Beyond', a new play festival to feature North Dakota playwrights. Murry was able to start with the reading of a new full-length play, along with a student written one-act play.⁷⁰¹ Murry's work in Grand Forks, North Dakota is of historical curiosity, as her predecessor by one century, Frederick Koch, began to actualize an American playwriting movement from the same city using Shakespeare as a vehicle.⁷⁰² Perhaps the most curious aspect of this geographic and artistic coincidence is that one-hundred years later the visions of a uniquely American theatre as articulated by Baker, MacKaye, Koch, and Gard have not materialized around American playwrights, but rather the work of William Shakespeare. The same revered English playwright that this group of scholars and practitioners used to spark their grassroots theatre movement in 1916 still dominates today in 2020.⁷⁰³

Quantitative data supports Shakespeare's long-lasting reign over America's theatrical programming. Founded in 1998, the National New Play Network is the nation's largest alliance of theatres promoting new work which has thirty-one core members, and ninety associate members.⁷⁰⁴ Meanwhile, the STA (Shakespeare Theater Association) boasts over one-hundred twenty-five members and at least

⁶⁹⁹ Heider, 'Previous Productions'. Wolfgang, 'Sowing the Seeds'. Hambley, Interview, p. 3.

⁷⁰⁰ These groups include: the Recycled Shakespeare Company, Shakespeare on the Green, and Advice to the Players Fournier and Rowden, Interview, p. 8. Laangstra-Corn, Interview, p. 1. Chapman, Interview, p. 4.

⁷⁰¹ Murry, Interview, p. 6.

⁷⁰² See Chapter 1, Section 2.B, 'A National Grassroots Event' for Frederick Koch's contributions to field at large.

⁷⁰³ As far as I am aware, there has not been an attempt to quantify the number of the American theatres that currently identify as (non-Shakespeare) grassroots theatres. Hence, the discussion above is referring to American theatre in its broadest sense.

⁷⁰⁴ Jordana Fraider, 'National New Play Network', 2020

<<https://newplayexchange.org/organisations/1693/national-new-play-network>> [Accessed 4 August 2020].

thirty associate members. The *American Theatre*, which is a publication of the Theatre Communications Group, received 387 ‘self-reported’ season announcements totalling to 2,280 entries from its membership for the 2018-19 season. The editor of this report wrote that *A Christmas Carol* and all works by Shakespeare were ‘as usual’ filtered out ‘to make more room on our list for everyone and everything else’. Likewise, during 2019, Shakespeare remained ‘as ever’ the most produced playwright in America.⁷⁰⁵ Meanwhile in America’s high schools for the last thirty years, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* remained in its spot as one of the top three plays produced in the nation.⁷⁰⁶

Despite the work of George Pierce Baker and his colleagues in the previous century, it is Shakespeare’s canon, not the purely original work created by an American playwright, that has loomed over the American theatrical landscape for well over a century. Not unaware of this imbalance between traditional and the innovative, many professional companies have begun the process in the late 2010s of assembling programs dedicated to promoting new playwrights. In 2019, the California Shakespeare Theatre premiered its New Classics campaign with a production entitled *Quixote Nuevo* written by Octavio Solis.⁷⁰⁷ America’s oldest professional Shakespeare company, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival has a variety of programs that serve this purpose with the overarching goal to create a new ‘United States History Cycle’, an initiative launched in 2008 entitled *American Revolutions*.⁷⁰⁸ In October of 2018, the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, another one of America’s largest professional companies, announced a new program effort entitled ‘Southern Writers Festival of New Plays’. However, as well-intended as these programs are, that’s not what all audiences want. Some audience members

⁷⁰⁵ Diep Tran, ‘The Top 10 Most-Produced Plays of the 2018-19 Season’, Theatre Communications Group, (2018) <<https://www.americantheatre.org/2018/09/20/the-top-10-most-produced-plays-of-the-2018-19-season/>> [Accessed 3 August 2020]. Diep Tran, ‘The Top 20 Most-Produced Playwrights of the 2019-20 Season’, Theatre Communications Group, (2019) <<https://www.americantheatre.org/2019/09/18/the-top-20-most-produced-playwrights-of-the-2019-20-season/>> [Accessed 3 August 2020].

⁷⁰⁶ During the first decade of the twenty-first century, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* play was the most performed play in America’s school system. Elissa Nadworny, ‘The Most Popular High School Plays and Musicals’, National Public Radio, (2020) <<https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2019/07/31/427138970/the-most-popular-high-school-plays-and-musicals>> [Accessed 3 August 2020].

⁷⁰⁷ ‘The New Classics 30k Matching Challenge! Support the Creation of New Theater’, California Shakespeare Theatre, (2019) [Accessed 2 August 2020].

⁷⁰⁸ ‘American Revolutions: The United States History Cycle’, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, (2008) <<https://www.osfashland.org/artistic/american-revolutions.aspx>> [Accessed 2020 3 August].

prefer Shakespeare companies to present ‘doublets and hose, not social justice stuff’.⁷⁰⁹ The push and pull between tradition and progress continues in Alabama with professional and grassroots Shakespeare organisations alike.

Comparable to their predecessors from a century ago, it is the Shakespeare producers and theatres that are trying to develop and expand the canon. Both academics and practitioners will continue to observe how this movement affects the societal view of Shakespeare’s work moving forward in the coming years. If past events are precedent, Shakespeare’s work, as freely available ‘common property’ in the public domain coupled with large casting opportunities inherent in the text, will maintain its role as the bedrock for organisations that desire to produce communal theatre. This work has embedded itself as tradition in America’s collective subconscious as demonstrated by the history of Shakespeare in places like Delaware, Kansas, Montana, Utah, and Oregon and, as such, has become shared apolitical ‘common ground’ for some Americans. It is a collective tradition that engages volunteers of all demographics in a process-based communal activity, all while developing a deep sense of belonging between participants. This ‘art of the people’ is an experience that participants return to have again, and a ‘magic’ that institutions seek to replicate. Because of these many meaningful experiences, individuals have developed grassroots organisations to assure Shakespeare can continue to be an asset to their community.

For hundreds of locally based groups around the United States, safe spaces have developed for volunteer artist-participants to express themselves, retell, and reimagine stories through unique perspectives. Much like the suffragettes wielding Shakespeare’s agency to push for progress a century ago, today this work is being developed and actualized for an identical purpose: to struggle for equality. In the final chapter of this thesis, I build upon the presented historic, structural, and communal foundations to articulate how grassroots Shakespeare is a vehicle for social activism while concurrently maintaining its status as ‘common ground’.

⁷⁰⁹ Peter Libbey, ‘Alabama Shakespeare Festival Aims to Update Southern Canon’, *The New York Times*, (21 November 2018). Safiya Charles, ‘Montgomery Is 60% Black, but Local Theater Doesn't Reflect This. Here's How Asf Is Trying to Change That’, *Montgomery Advertiser*, (4 October 2019).

CHAPTER 4 – STRUGGLES FOR EQUALITY: SHAKESPEARE AND SOCIAL ACTIVISM

Even without the benefit of years of historical scholarly analysis, there can be little doubt that the second decade of the twenty-first century was one fraught with political instability. The increased rise of ultra conservative and alt-right leaders the world over has served to only extend the ideological chasm separating opposing sides. As a response, in the United States, widespread protests coupled with organised social movements (Black Lives Matter, #MeToo, and many others) began to push back on injustices as well as the policies and rhetoric of the Trump administration. These progressive social movements were countered by mobilisation of white supremacist rallies such as the one in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017. With the global health crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the political turmoil only continued to intensify throughout 2020. Amidst this tumultuous time, Shakespeare performance has continued in both traditional and novel manifestations; these innovative forms of performance were necessitated by the COVID-19 lockdowns and the closing of traditional theatres. Like their predecessors one century ago, the grassroots artists and organisations featured in this chapter directly engage with these progressive social movements to affect change locally, nationally, and internationally during a time of rapid change and daily instability.

In the particular area of Shakespeare as social activism, there are professional organisations and artists that are central subjects to this chapter.⁷¹⁰ Much like the ‘Hollywood Symbiosis’ that was of great benefit to the Pasadena Community Playhouse in its early years, the professional and the amateur organisations in this chapter often unknowingly support one another in their shared struggles for equality. Whether the artists are paid or not, classified as professional or amateurs, they are indeed grassroots artists that use the agency of Shakespeare to actualize an American tradition of non-traditional Shakespeare. The rich history of Shakespeare performance presented in this thesis demonstrates both mirroring and diverging trajectories of overt political performance. These historical connections encompass all organisational categories and are evidence of the aforementioned professional-amateur symbiosis. The women’s clubs through Shakespeare’s text advocated for the

⁷¹⁰ The professional organisations and artists represented here include: Lisa Wolpe’s Los Angeles Women’s Shakespeare Company, Debra Ann Byrd’s Harlem Shakespeare Festival, and the work of Madeline Sayet.

right to vote in the early twentieth century with all-female productions, and one hundred years later activist and director Lisa Wolpe continues the fight with her all-female company to include women equally on the classical stage. William Henry Brown established a theatre for black artists in New York City to perform the classics and their own original work. Today, Debra Ann Byrd is still fighting for the same principles with the Harlem Shakespeare Festival. Historical references also demonstrate how Shakespeare production was forced upon some as a method to assimilate indigenous populations. Now, Madeline Sayet fights back with anti-colonial productions and the promotion of Native theatre. MacKaye's gargantuan *Caliban* production with its anti-immigrant, emphatically monolingual ideology can now be juxtaposed against Merced Shakespearefest's bilingual *Ricardo II* web series. Designed to achieve various outcomes, these examples, throughout time, from across America, are part of a diverse theatrical ecosystem formed around the work of Shakespeare. Throughout these instances the amateur and the professional are continually at a symbiotic balance, each affecting the other as detailed in Chapter 1.

I begin this chapter by situating the work of Will Geer, whose career spanned most of the twentieth century, as one manifestation of political Shakespeare occupying, at times, both the space of the professional and the amateur. Next, I provide examples of the political environment in America at the end of the 2010s by anchoring the section to The Public's *Julius Caesar*. In the summer of 2017, The Public staged an overtly Trump-like Julius Caesar, who was unsurprisingly assassinated on stage by conspirators to the horror of some spectators, and consequently ignited the right-wing media into a frenzy. This event reverberated across the Shakespeare performance industry and affected how Shakespeare performance organisations of all types approached their work. The response to this particular production energised the political work of some, while it encouraged others to pragmatically cultivate Shakespeare's role as apolitical 'common ground' for a bitterly divided America. Next, I detail four critical issues that appeared throughout the qualitative data collected during my field research and how these respective areas manifest through the work of Shakespeare performance organisations. Finally, I provide an overview of my Practice-as-Research within an autoethnographic case study on Merced Shakespearefest's, *Ricardo II*. Through this bilingual production, my collaborators and I aimed to actualise the tenets of

grassroots theatre while providing an outlet of ‘hope’ for a marginalised community during a time of crisis.

1. ‘All Kinds of Power’: Shakespeare, the Political

Many volumes have been written about the political nature of Shakespeare’s texts over the course of the last four centuries. From the obvious political implications arising from works such as *Richard II* during Shakespeare’s own lifetime to such explicit references as the Trump-Caesar in New York City in 2017, examples in performance are numerous. For this section, I provide evidence and examples of how organisations throughout the course of this study approached and reacted to politics – local or national – on the stage, and eventually how that can manifest change outside of the theatre. This line of political inquiry was present during the 2014 ‘Shakespeare on the Road’ project, as researchers asked the companies if the work they produced was ‘political in any way’. This approach continued through my research from 2018 to 2020. The responses to this question are found throughout the chapter. Overall, the qualitative data indicates that professional and grassroots organisations must make the determination to *embrace* or *avoid* overt political reference in their work. The political climate in a locality was often a critical factor in determining if politics manifested on the stage in an activist style, if it was negotiated in a subliminal way, or if it was evaded entirely. Nevertheless, however it was approached contributes to the atmosphere of the Shakespearean ecosystem consisting of three hundred sixty-five performing organisations throughout the nation.

I discuss the rapid political changes (which have concurrently transpired with the completion of this thesis during the Trump presidency, January 2017 to the present) and how these shifts differ from the state of the field when this research initially began in 2014. As with many of the issues discussed in this thesis, there are a wide range of approaches and interactions with politics. Some organisational leaders see theatre as entirely political and as ‘common property’ for that purpose, while others contend that Shakespeare’s works are ‘common ground’ and should be apolitical. How an organisation negotiates the political sphere is influenced not only by the group’s mission but also participants and audiences alike. These perceptions ultimately serve as a conduit for how we, as a society, view Shakespeare at this moment, and how his work should or should not continue to influence our lives.

A. *Theatricum Botanicum and Twentieth Century Political Shakespeare*

While not a central subject of this thesis, Will Geer (1902-1978) holds a singularly unique role within the history of Shakespeare performance in the United States. Having trained with the well-connected Shakespearean E H Sothern (1859-1933) in the 1920s, he is a direct link to a time when America's Shakespearean institutions and structures were in their infancy.⁷¹¹ Geer was obviously influenced by Ben Greet's pastoral, minimalist style, as the two men were actively performing at the same time in competing companies. In the 1930s, Geer became a part of the explosion of opportunity in Hollywood as he performed throughout the country. Geer and his wife, Herta Ware, lived in Arden, Delaware, in 1935, a liberal bastion and site of the longest running Shakespeare performance activities in the nation. In yet another example of the interconnected web of grassroots and professional Shakespeare performance in the United States, Geer performed in a number of plays with the amateur Arden company, presumably only for the love of the activity.⁷¹² By the next decade, he would become very active in political theatre throughout the nation. He was, like many of his colleagues, accused of far-left communist activities and was targeted by Senator Joseph McCarthy in the early 1950s. Geer was brought before the House of Representatives' Un-American Activities Committee and subjected to an inquisition like many of his liberal associates at the time.⁷¹³ He was effectively labelled a traitor. Following this intense life-upending inquiry, Geer was blacklisted from the entertainment industry and went into exile with his family in Topanga, a small village in the mountains northwest of Los Angeles.⁷¹⁴ He still found employment in the world of Shakespeare performing at the American Shakespeare Theatre in Connecticut and the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, but always returned to Topanga. Despite its proximity to Los Angeles, the small village truly was an oasis for the Geers, sufficiently removed from the city, nestled in a

⁷¹¹ Engle, Londre, and Watermeier, *Shakespeare Companies and Festivals*, p. 85.

⁷¹² Philip F Crosland, 'Actor Geer Is Back, Wooded Girls in Arden', *The New Journal*, (6 January 1965).

⁷¹³ Engle, Londre, and Watermeier, *Shakespeare Companies and Festivals*, p. 85.

⁷¹⁴ Ellen Geer noted that at this time the President of the Screen Actors Guild was Ronald Regan, future President of the United States, who 'kept people from working'. Geer continued to say that was not the case with the Actor's Equity, the union for theatre actors, which she acknowledged her pride in belonging to. Ellen Geer, 'Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum', Interview in 'Shakespeare on the Road' Archive, Shakespeare Centre Archives, Stratford-upon-Avon, p. 2.

canyon, but still close enough to occasionally engage in Hollywood's opportunities after the conclusion of the McCarthy era.

With the total embrace of outdoor Shakespeare popularized decades earlier by Greet, Will Geer founded the Theatricum Botanicum in 1973 with a company of both professional and amateur actors.⁷¹⁵ The location of this sylvan theatre in Topanga Canyon could not have been more apt for reasons beyond geography; it gave Geer the opportunity to embrace his love of botany, a subject in which he held a degree from the University of Chicago and which notably contributed to the organisation's name.⁷¹⁶ What began as a small local effort led by a Hollywood actor who infused American folk music with Shakespeare and nature would eventually become Los Angeles's longest running professional Shakespearean theatre. Geer's work can also be viewed as the beginning of a new generation of activist Shakespeareans.

When Geer died in 1978 his daughter, Ellen, became the theatre's artistic director and has held the position since. In Ellen Geer's oral history for Shakespeare on the Road she fondly discussed her great-grandmother, Ella Reeve Bloor (1862-1951), who was a renowned socialist organizer of unions, labour rights, and women's suffrage in the United States. Further expanding upon her family's connection with American history and politics, Ellen Geer recalled how the McCarthy inquisitors questioned her father's connections with Bloor's socialist ideology, 'so that was another reason Pop got in trouble with the society'. She recollected 'it as a very dangerous time'. Crediting her father for instilling in her the artistic and political approach to theatre, she mused, 'all we can do as theatre people is just encourage people to open up their minds more'. Geer, like much of her family that came before her, is fiercely progressive in her political ideology, and keenly aware of America's moral deficits.⁷¹⁷ She described this during the same interview, foreshadowing the racial reckoning the United States would go through six years later, in the summer of 2020, following the murder of George Floyd at the hands of police: 'We are a racist country, we should be ashamed of ourselves. I'm ashamed for us... You can say you're democratic but what is democracy now?'⁷¹⁸

⁷¹⁵ A R Braummuller and William L Stull, 'Shakespeare in Los Angeles', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 29 (1978).

⁷¹⁶ Geer, Interview, p. 1.

⁷¹⁷ Ibid.

⁷¹⁸ Ibid., p. 5.

In an effort to affect change, Ellen Geer has developed many productions during her tenure that present strands of American history that have been typically swept away. Therefore, to Geer and her colleagues at Theatricum Botanicum, theatre is ‘extremely political’. She recalled pushback from veterans when her ‘Americana’ production referenced the Vietnam War and the atrocities that were committed. Along similar lines, Geer wrote a theatrical piece covering the full story of Christopher Columbus, a man that has been historically deified in the United States, despite the brutality he unleashed upon indigenous people upon his arrival in the Americas. Nevertheless, Geer’s early efforts to address this topic through theatre, even in liberal Los Angeles, yielded few results. She recalled: ‘the schools wouldn’t book it’.⁷¹⁹ After years of obstacles and pushback, Geer remained cautiously optimistic about the positive influence that Shakespeare theatre can have:

[The United States is] in bad shape. We are not healthy at all...The reason I don't get tired is there is so much to do to make it better. You can't change things, but you can make it better by showing the young people history, seeing the great works like Shakespeare, who to me is one of the great humanitarian writers.⁷²⁰

The productions at Will Geer Theatrical Botanicum under Ellen Geer’s direction have been inspired by activism for education and especially a more complete representation of American history.

Various forms of direct political activism, much like the work of the Geers, that advocates for equality and change continues to manifest throughout the United States in the form of Shakespearean theatre. Efforts like this continue today in both the grassroots and professional sectors; regardless of their classification, these groups produce Shakespeare that is set in opposition to the mainstream. The organisations and artists that conduct these initiatives are the subject of the subsequent section of this chapter. These groups are examples of direct advocacy related to the rights of women, the LGBTQ community, indigenous peoples, people of colour, in addition to environmental activism. Before discussing these groups, I identify characteristics of the political climate in the late 2010s in the United States situated within a national controversy surrounding a high-profile Shakespeare

⁷¹⁹ Ibid.

⁷²⁰ Ibid.

production. As a response to this incident, some organisations have attempted to forge a path to apolitical Shakespeare.

B. Trump-Caesar and other Modern Political Shakespeare Manifestations

Political activism in grassroots Shakespeare is very dependent on locality. This type of work is not embraced by all organisations, as these arenas – local, national and global – are dynamic and complex places. Leaders of grassroots Shakespeare groups are keenly aware of this, as they are generally in tune with their artistic constituency. Artistic director Heike Hambley of Merced Shakespearefest noted that ‘here in Merced...people that do art are extremely liberal, on the left side’. Embracing her youth growing up in Frankfurt, Germany and being a part of the Social Democracy movement there, Hambley wholeheartedly acknowledged that ‘all theatre is political’. Much like Theatricum Botanicum, Merced Shakespearefest does not have a particular issue-based agenda written into their mission statement advocating for a specific point, but rather that they take a general approach by aspiring to produce ‘plays that reflect and embrace the diversity of our community’. Merced Shakespearefest has recently actualized this portion of their mission statement with an English and Spanish bilingual production of *Richard II* which is the subject of the final section of this chapter. Beyond their mission statement and the associated casting and production practices, other recent activities from the organisation in 2019 reflect a progressive ideology with a *Titus Andronicus* with anti-fascist undertones, and a production of *Othello* in collaboration with another local community arts organisation.⁷²¹

While Hambley acknowledged that most of her artistic colleagues are politically left leaning, that does not equate to a politically monolithic community. Hambley recalled a moment when a prospective patron asked about the organisation’s work:

Somebody asked, ‘Is this political?’ I’m thinking, ‘What a question?’ So, if I say no that's not political at all, then I'm lying. Will she not come? Well, maybe you shouldn't come? I don't know – it's just real!⁷²²

This response shows the difficult equilibrium local organisational leaders must achieve in their community when presenting Shakespeare in an explicitly political

⁷²¹ Wolfgang, ‘Grassroots Shakespeare Ethnographic Field Notes and Observations’.

⁷²² Hambley, Interview, p. 6.

manner. While many other grassroots organisations choose a different approach due to their local political climate, Merced Shakespearefest is not alone in their embrace of the political. The Montford Park Players in Asheville, North Carolina is one such organisation that is freely open to overt political production. Executive director John Russell emphasized his personal feelings on the subject:

Theatre is not just to entertain or to educate, but also sometimes to incite, sometimes you need to arouse, to agitate; in some cases, to serve as a call to action. We don't censor our directors here.⁷²³

Despite political production or activist outcomes not being present in the mission statement of the Montford Park Players, the organisation's leadership is in line with the majority of their community's desires. The city of Asheville is a liberal oasis in comparison to the solidly conservative surrounding areas (which Russell himself jokingly revealed has been called 'The People's Republic of Asheville'). The politics of the majority of the city's residents translate to the interpretation of Shakespeare on the stage.⁷²⁴ Therefore, at times, the ideals represented on the stage and through the work of the Montford Park Players are not always mission-driven, but a political response to a particular issue. Russell himself employed this tactic around the time of the Republican National Convention in 2016 and the official nomination of Donald J Trump for the party's presidential ticket. Upon walking on stage for the Montford Park Player's traditional opening curtain speech, Russell opened the production of Shakespeare's bloodiest work, *Titus Andronicus*, with a direct reference to Trump's ubiquitous campaign slogan:

You probably don't know, don't have any idea, what *Titus* is all about. So, here's a one-sentence summary: Titus is here to make Rome great again.⁷²⁵

Russell proceeded to then take out a red cap with this exact slogan embroidered on it. He recalled in his 2019 interview that the audience enjoyed this reference and responded with a great deal of laughter. While this blood-soaked revenge tragedy and the story of Trump's political rise are not synchronous, Russell's implication

⁷²³ Russell, et al., Interview, p. 9.

⁷²⁴ Ibid.

⁷²⁵ Ibid. Trump's campaign slogan 'Make America great again' has become both a rallying call for his supporters and a commonly satirized phrase by his detractors, as Russell made clear with this statement.

was unambiguous, and ultimately prophetic in theme, for a politician who began his presidency months later with a jarring inaugural speech on ‘American Carnage’.⁷²⁶

This 2016 reference was not the last time the organisation overtly referenced Trump. In the heightened partisan condition of the country, this sort of direct political statement can be a risky business move, especially in a state that Trump won by 3 percent of the vote in 2016.⁷²⁷ Nevertheless, Russell only noted one such moment of pushback that occurred during the Prince of Arragon’s line in Act I. 9. of *The Merchant of Venice*, ‘What’s here? The portrait of a blinking idiot?’ to which the Prince revealed Trump’s visage to the audience.⁷²⁸ Russell recalled a patron left the theatre at this point and informed him of her support of President Trump before storming away with the words, ‘I’ll have you know, I’m a deplorable’.⁷²⁹ Both of these moments involve micro-references to Trump. They were not related to the overall vision of the show but represent continued resistance and objection to the Trump administration. Seemingly simplistic and trite in non-polarized times, both of these moments illustrate direct reference to the political sphere which a majority of Shakespeare groups, both grassroots and professional, in this study, have made active decisions to avoid.

Even in highly liberal areas some grassroots theatres actively avoid the political realm and prefer the sentiment of ‘letting Shakespeare speak for himself’. When asked about politics on the stage in Arden, Delaware, director Mary Catherine Kelley cited past objections from audience members: ‘You get too much blowback from the audience, and people get upset’. She went on to conclude, ‘It’s just not worth it’. Kelley’s observations are critical; there is a point when the mission of the organisation is obstructed if the work is not well received or if audience members are unhappy, cutting down on attendance and participation. Tanya Lazar, a long-time resident of Arden, ruminated during our 2019 interview, ‘I know a couple of Republicans who live here; they don’t advertise,’ to which her colleague, Kelley,

⁷²⁶ Donald J Trump, ‘The Inaugural Address’, Briefings and Statements (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 20 January 2017).

⁷²⁷ ‘2016 Electoral College Results’, National Archives, (Washington, D.C.: The United States National Archives and Records Administration, 2016).

⁷²⁸ Russell, et al., Interview, p. 9.

⁷²⁹ Ibid. This is a reference to a statement made by Trump’s opponent in the 2016 presidential election, Hillary Clinton, who stated that ‘half of his supporters’ could be placed in a ‘basket of deplorables’. Aaron Blake, ‘Voters Strongly Reject Hillary Clinton’s “Basket of Deplorables” Approach’, *The Washington Post*, (26 September 2016).

replied ‘They stay inside’.⁷³⁰ Nevertheless, the idiom ‘all politics are local’ is true; likewise, in the United States during the Trump Era, all politics are simultaneously national. The intensity of the national political discourse has influenced some arts organisations to not engage even in majority Democratic areas (where the Republicans ‘stay inside’) seeking to affect change in more subtle ways. Thus, the political affiliation of a locality does not unequivocally transfer to oppositional political activism on the stage.

There has not been a clearer example of Shakespeare dominating the national political headlines than in the summer of 2017 with The Public’s *Julius Caesar*.⁷³¹ This production featured a Trump-like character in the titular role. For the production’s incensed right-wing critics, this alone would obscure any other meaning director Oscar Eustis wished to convey.⁷³² Conservative news outlet Fox News stated that the ‘Central Park’ play ‘very obviously depicts the assassination of a US president’ and called for the organisation to be defunded by its sponsors.⁷³³ The right-wing retaliation via the full force of conservative social media was swift and widespread and, as Shapiro argued, would become ‘the new normal’ for how ‘political battles’ would be waged in the years to come.⁷³⁴ The Public’s sponsors fled, and the National Endowment for the Arts retreated behind a statement declaring the agency’s non-involvement, which sent a chilling effect across the Shakespeare performance community in the United States. This incident was referred to, unsolicited, multiple times by directors throughout the field research conducted for this thesis, demonstrating the lasting mark it left on the minds of Shakespearean directors and producers in the United States.

Affecting theatres far beyond New York City, unhinged and wild threats of violence began pouring into Shakespeare companies around the nation, large and small organisations, professional and grassroots alike. Shakespeare Dallas was reported to have received over forty violently threatening emails. Also, Shapiro cites

⁷³⁰ Kelley and Lazar, Interview, p. 10. In an interesting historic coincidence, one hundred years prior in Arden, Delaware, a ‘play interpreter’ was fired from a production for using Shakespeare’s plays as ‘a vehicle for Socialist propaganda’ despite many from the town holding similar beliefs. Politics were explicitly separate from Shakespeare performance in Arden since this early date. ‘Socialist Loses Job as Play Interpreter’, *The Evening Journal*, (7 August 1916).

⁷³¹ Shakespeare in the Park in New York City was known as the New York Shakespeare Festival until 2002 when reorganized by The Public Theatre. Appendix E, Section 4.

⁷³² Shapiro, *Shakespeare in a Divided America*, pp. 219-20.

⁷³³ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

⁷³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

theatres in Massachusetts and Washington, DC received disturbing threats as well.⁷³⁵ Anecdotal evidence I have collected suggests that the extent of these disturbing incidents was even more widespread throughout the nation. Before formally starting this research, in January 2018, I recorded notes after my attendance at the Shakespeare Theatre Association conference in Cincinnati, Ohio. The Public's *Julius Caesar* was still a pressing topic of discussion six months after it closed. A palpable shellshocked feeling was certainly present as STA's organisational membership grappled with the confounding reality that one Shakespeare festival's production, through distorted media reports, had come to seemingly represent all Shakespeare organisations. Groups that had previously walked a thin line on how they approached politics in Shakespearean production, would now be even more careful. Some directors even displayed frustrations toward the artistic choices made during this production of *Julius Caesar* instead of the overblown, incensed right-wing response to silence the work.⁷³⁶

While organisations did not have to be producing *Julius Caesar* in the summer of 2017 to receive threats (the word 'Shakespeare' was the only prerequisite needed for some instigators), Encore Theatre Company's Shakespeare in the Park from Nampa, Idaho was performing it at the exact same time. As a very small grassroots organisation, executive director Jonathan Perry did not see substantial opposition as some groups did (other than the persistent disappearance of his posters he was using to advertise the production). Counterintuitively, Perry acknowledged that he was 'hoping for a little controversy', presumably embracing the idiom 'all publicity is good publicity'.⁷³⁷ This line of thinking is synchronous with another small grassroots Shakespeare group, the Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company, who noted that their activist work wasn't 'on the radar' of those who would seek to oppose it.⁷³⁸

As the national whirlwind over The Public's *Julius Caesar* concluded, Perry's presentation of a gender-flipped cast of the same text in heavily conservative Idaho represented a more subtle change in the production of Shakespeare throughout America. Perry reversed Roman masculinity along with ages of gender expectations

⁷³⁵ Ibid., pp. 211-12.

⁷³⁶ Wolfgang, 'Grassroots Shakespeare Ethnographic Field Notes and Observations'.

⁷³⁷ Perry, Interview, p. 5.

⁷³⁸ Fuson and Spears, Interview, p. 5.

and norms by having Portia played by a man, while a female Caesar was assassinated by a band of her peers. He recalls ‘no direct feedback’ from his majority conservative local community, other than the aforementioned rather paltry attempt to subvert his advertising through the removal of posters.⁷³⁹ While pundits and incensed internet commentators furiously debated The Public’s *Caesar*, smaller more incremental change was manifesting around the country in the form of grassroots Shakespeare. In the summer of 2017 in Idaho, the Encore Theatre Company changed gender expectations in *Julius Caesar*, and in the summer of 2019 this same group began to further explore same-sex relationships through their work in *As You Like It*.⁷⁴⁰

For many in America’s liberal enclaves this type of change may appear to be too little, and too late. Conversely, for those who have been struggling for equality in America’s expansive ‘fly-over country’, these advances that are accepted as normal by conservative audiences represent realization of progressive ideals. Shapiro reinforced this with a similar argument. He emphasised that by the 1970s, Joe Papp (at the New York Shakespeare Festival) was demonstrating through his high-profile productions that ‘actors speaking Shakespeare’s words’ could in fact ‘resemble the nation’.⁷⁴¹ This practice then spread throughout the nation to large and small Shakespeare festivals throughout the subsequent decades; Shapiro noted that the groups spanned ‘all fifty states, quietly acclimating many Americans to greater diversity’.⁷⁴² The *Julius Caesar* in Idaho further supports the potency of Shapiro’s argument: these smaller grassroots groups have played a vital role in providing more opportunities for previously marginalised participant groups by normalizing inclusive casting practices. Perry stated in our interview that his job as a theatre producer in his small community in Idaho was to ‘challenge our own perceptions about how the world works’.⁷⁴³ The small challenges Perry has made to the status quo in his Idaho community may not have radically shattered norms, but his performances have exposed audiences and participants to a more inclusive future. In the next section, I will further explore the aspiration (held by a number of companies in this study) of using Shakespeare to bring opposing sides together in compromise.

⁷³⁹ Perry, Interview, p. 5.

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 6.

⁷⁴¹ Shapiro, *Shakespeare in a Divided America*, p. 202.

⁷⁴² Ibid.

⁷⁴³ Perry, Interview, p. 6.

C. 'Common Ground': Shakespeare, the Apolitical

Theatre is not exclusively a liberal or conservative endeavour. Therefore, many producers interviewed for this research emphasized a similar vision that theatre can be used as a meeting place for productive dialogue and exchange between opposing ideologies. This vision is not new. As detailed in Chapter 1, MacKaye and his elitist supporters took this sentiment to the extreme. They believed theatrical democracy could help push American society to a post-racial utopia. This fantasy has, to a much less potent degree, endured. Shakespeare's work is not *above* politics – as history has demonstrated across three centuries in New York City, from the Astor Place Riot to MacKaye's *Caliban* and finally to The Public's *Julius Caesar* – on the contrary, the work often has become the *centre* of political debates. For politically right-leaning audiences, altering the text or applying many of the aforementioned references to modern society, changing the gender of characters, or applying a concept to the production can be seen as adulterating the text. On the other hand, for liberal groups, lacking a concept or true purpose for performing this centuries-old text by 'a dead white male and agent of imperialism' is therefore similarly viewed as offensive, arcane and irrelevant.⁷⁴⁴ Finding the middle ground between these two poles is a difficult balance for all Shakespeare theatres. Nevertheless, in America during the 2010s, many Shakespeare groups indicated that it was incumbent upon them to find a way to unite polarized communities. Around one quarter of all the representative organisations found in Appendix C described their apolitical approach, ultimately rooted in a pragmatic need to retain funding and broad support; the following is a critical analysis of this practice.

One such organisation that seeks to bridge this political divide is the Richmond Shakespeare Festival in Indiana. Board president Ray Ontko discussed the conservative and liberal balance as he observed it in Richmond:

It opens doors to two very different audiences from the political spectrum... people who are more conservative have an idea what Shakespeare represents; what they believe is true, that there are traditional values carried by Shakespeare or tradition or that it's part of the history of Western civilization that they want to see carry forward. When I talk to people from another part of the political spectrum, they say Shakespeare theatre...understands nuance and human relationship in a way that they value very deeply.⁷⁴⁵

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid., 201-202.

⁷⁴⁵ Flick and Ontko, Interview, p. 8.

The Vice President of the United States, Mike Pence, is an Indiana native who was the former conservative governor of the state, and his parents are patrons of the Richmond Shakespeare Festival. Ontko went on to discuss the positive interplay between the predominantly liberal cast performing for a generally conservative audience, the Vice President's family included. Artistic director of the company, Patrick Flick, noted that Mrs. Pence removes her 'Trump hat' before enjoying the performance. Following up with his hope that 'there can be a meeting place – not everything has to be political', Flick mused about how Shakespeare can be a tool for unity, not division.⁷⁴⁶ While not directly calling out The Public's Trump-Caesar, Flick inferred, 'you don't have to be heavy-handed with Shakespeare to be effective' before making his point:

By showing characters as believable as they can be, that's when we achieve our best work. That the audience identifies with every character that's on the stage and can see them through a different lens; and that does more work than forcing a political figure into the action, for example.⁷⁴⁷

The Richmond Shakespeare Festival aims to utilize the inherently political nature of Shakespeare's texts in their productions. Through this approach, Flick and Ontko aspire to create a meeting place and generate dialogue that otherwise would not exist in their community.

A view similar to Flick's is reflected by other Shakespearean directors throughout the country – in red and blue America –with the same goal of bringing people together to create what one director called a 'purple lens', in essence the 'common ground'.⁷⁴⁸ To illustrate this point, examples from a conservative state, Nebraska (Flatwater Shakespeare Company), and a liberal state, New Jersey (Shakespeare 70), are analysed. Both directors referenced The Public's Trump-Caesar as well, to varying degrees, in response to a question on the nation's political divide. Curt Foxworth stated that he felt approaches that are 'directly allegorical', ones that specifically identify characters like Trump, 'answer too many questions for the audience'. He continued, stating the conversation gets a 'little too narrow' with such concepts; Foxworth nevertheless remained open to the possibility of such an

⁷⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁸ Summer Lukaszewicz, 'Flatwater Shakespeare Company', Interview by William Wolfgang (Lincoln, NE: 13 March 2020), p. 6.

interpretation as he would not be opposed to a colleague who ‘had a really strong choice’.⁷⁴⁹ For Summer Lukasiewicz, executive artistic director of the small, professional Flatwater Shakespeare Company in Nebraska, awareness of exactly how specific issues would play in her community is central to her strategy. Lukasiewicz discussed an eco-theatre production of *Cymbeline*, politically charged to fight back against climate change; she stated that something like that could possibly work in Nebraska.⁷⁵⁰ She continued to bring up The Public’s production unsolicited, demonstrating the lingering nature of the 2017 controversy:

Could I make my Julius Caesar look like the president of the United States? No. Not if I wanted people to come see it.

Theatre produced in primarily conservative areas like Nebraska must recognize local politics or face the reality of no audience. Contrary to the financial needs of grassroots organisations, the Flatwater Shakespeare Company is a professional group, and therefore the group’s administrative and business model necessitates ticket sales. This doesn’t mean the group’s collective ideals need to be sacrificed; Lukasiewicz’s objective is to bring people together, of any political standing, and unify through her production’s message. She concluded by stating, ‘My agenda is empathy’.⁷⁵¹

This pragmatic approach is not uncommon for Shakespearean theatres which ultimately have to challenge and intrigue their patrons, while simultaneously giving them what they want. Artistic directors around the country respond, naturally, to the times in which they live. As the nation becomes further politically entrenched, active decisions must be made by artistic leadership regarding organisational approaches to certain political issues. During the Shakespeare on the Road project, that was not necessarily the case. In 2014, the national climate was not as intensely politically charged and the reckoning on America’s institutionalized racism would not come to pass for another six years. At the time artistic leaders weren’t looking at the work through this lens, for direct activism or even as a way to find unity. At this time, for several directors interviewed for Shakespeare on the Road, the work was inherently apolitical.

⁷⁴⁹ Foxworth, Interview, p. 6.

⁷⁵⁰ Lukasiewicz, Interview, p 5.

⁷⁵¹ Ibid., p. 6.

During the 2014 Shakespeare on the Road project, Paul Prescott asked Jim Ayres, the founder of Shakespeare at Winedale, if the Shakespeare he had produced in Texas with young people since 1973 was ‘in any way political’. Ayres’ response was ‘I can’t figure out how; as Andrew Aguecheek said, “I hate policy”’.⁷⁵² Jim Warren, co-founder of the American Shakespeare Center, responded similarly to Prescott’s question: ‘I’m not sure I ever considered that question before’.⁷⁵³ Artistic director Denise Hicks stated unequivocally at the time that the Nashville Shakespeare Company was ‘apolitical’. She went on to elaborate that she tries to ‘walk that line’ between the two sides as ‘Shakespeare was not necessarily a liberal or a conservative’.⁷⁵⁴ Compared to the response of ‘it’s extremely political’ given around the same time from artistic director Ellen Geer, one can see how these political approaches are developed based on mission, time, and place. The politics of Geer’s home state of California are no doubt quite different than politics in Texas, Tennessee, and Virginia, and clearly influenced the above responses.

In 2019 and into early 2020, with the impeachment of the President of the United States by the House of Representatives and his subsequent acquittal in the Senate, politics had seemingly seeped into nearly every arena of American life. Even for the cultural organisations that wished to stay above the fray, this discourse became rather difficult to entirely ignore. In a February 2020 interview, Stephanie Faatz Murry of the North Dakota Shakespeare Festival stated ‘we’ve made a very intentional choice to not make political statements with the shows, in the sense that the shows themselves do make political statements’.⁷⁵⁵ Murry’s use of the word *intentional* is critical. For Murry’s young company, growth would be difficult in extremely conservative North Dakota if she chose another presentational path. She too, like Denise Hicks in Tennessee six years earlier, used the same expression, ‘walking a fine line’, with fear of alienating conservatives. Indeed, when the disaffection of a specific group can result in loss of funding from individual donors or corporate sponsors, an array of death-threats, and a tempestuous social media assault, the ‘fine line’ would be more aptly called a ‘tight rope’.⁷⁵⁶

⁷⁵² Ayres, Interview, p. 5.

⁷⁵³ Warren, Interview, p. 7.

⁷⁵⁴ Hicks, Interview, p. 2.

⁷⁵⁵ Murry, Interview, p. 13.

⁷⁵⁶ As discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.A, ‘Legal Models’, the 501c3 organisational model, as dictated by the federal government, forbids organizational operations to benefit any one person or political party. This means organisations may not support a candidate for office or specific legislation.

Nevertheless, like the incremental change discussed and exemplified by Encore Theatre Company in Idaho, Murry's specified intention to have a 'shared space' and 'shared experience' has rather paradoxically become its own, intentional, political statement.⁷⁵⁷ Hence, the focus should not be given to what's *not* happening on the stage, but rather what *is* happening in the audience. By assembling a heterogenous group of people to witness theatre together, they are engaging in the public sphere and with one another, in a way that is nonconfrontational, and in-person. This is by no means as politically potent as activist theatre but does accomplish more than may initially meet the eye. Murry shared one such moment at her Shakespeare in the Park in Grand Forks, North Dakota, with a gay couple interacting with a Trump supporter with a 'big old Trump shirt' and his family. In a nation dominated by echo-chambers and demagoguery, coming together with those that hold opposing and noncompatible views is becoming less common. Murry perceived the following:

Seeing them literally sitting next to a gay couple and they're sharing the same experience and, you know, whether or not they agreed with each other, they were able to be in the same space and share some common ground.⁷⁵⁸

Did this moment change any hearts or minds? One cannot be sure, but nevertheless, attending a Shakespeare production is a quintessential American activity, whether it be political or apolitical. It appears that for the North Dakota Shakespeare Festival and many of the aforementioned organisations, maintaining Shakespeare's political neutrality could not be more critical, not only philosophically, but also existentially. Without broad apolitical support in the form of contributions, financial or in-kind, it would be unlikely that many of these organisations could continue operations. The geographic breadth and prevalence of Shakespeare organisations displayed on the map in Figure 5 (Appendix D) would not be possible without broad appeal. If Shakespeare's plays were always considered political and they became solely the preserve of progressive politics, their potency as an agent for adaptation and continual reappropriation for specific causes would be severely diminished.

They may, however, engage in discussion through their work about social or political movements. This aspect likely compounds the desire from the groups above to remain apolitical.

⁷⁵⁷ Murry, Interview, p. 14.

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid.

Therefore, part of Shakespeare's continuing legacy in America is that he is valued both as 'common property' to alter and as 'common ground' on which to celebrate.

All of this makes clear that the varied approaches to politics are as diverse as the organisations themselves and part of an inconspicuous balance. Shakespeare's work will continue to be 'common property' for organisations like the Will Geer Theatrum Botanicum, Merced Shakespearefest, and the Montford Park Players to adapt as they see fit for their constituencies. For groups like the Encore Theatre Company in Idaho, a more measured approach is applied, and in this sense, change is achieved incrementally. For another sizeable group of mostly professional producers, like the American Shakespeare Center and the Richmond Shakespeare Festival, they have established that Shakespeare's work alone is all that is needed to find 'common ground' with one another. Emphasizing that the politics of specific locations on the map do not predetermine artistic messaging, in famously liberal Arden, Delaware, the producers made the decision to generally keep political work off the stage. This decision maintained Shakespeare as the literal foundation of their community and established the production of his work as an institution that was above the fray. Specifically because groups like the Arden Shakespeare Guild maintained the work in this manner, other groups like the Bards of Birmingham are continually able to harness this political agency and present powerful, resonant art on issues they deeply believe in. For the Bards of Birmingham, this meant that in ultra-conservative Alabama they were able to exploit the mainstream authority given to Shakespeare's texts through a prism of women's rights, LGBTQ rights, and critical race issues. The next section continues to detail how some grassroots organisations explore social equity both within their own communities and in the field of Shakespeare performance at large.

2. 'We're Marching. We're Soldiers in the Army; Shakespeare is our Medium'

During a group interview for Oregon Shakespeare Festival's *Why Shakespeare?* series, scholar Ayanna Thompson discussed research on the organisation's 'audience surveys and letters of complaint'. She revealed that her team had discovered a unifying thread throughout these criticisms which Thompson described as, 'I can't believe you just did *whatever production* with *whatever actors* because you violated what Shakespeare intended'. She continued by addressing this

‘fantasy’ that is the ‘violation’ of Shakespeare’s unknowable intent as ‘part of the Shakespeare Industrial Complex, part of systemic racism’.⁷⁵⁹ As previously discussed, this is a general conservative expectation that opposes any alteration to Elizabethan presentation, encourages performance of the text without added creative influence, and promotes minimal artistic freedom of a director and performance artists. This philosophy appears to embrace Shakespeare as universal and refined literature that some should enjoy but resists the reality that he is indeed a resource for all to use.

As Thompson referenced, this is a deeply engrained ideology that is also built upon an industry that not only expects a specific type of performance, it is also one that determines *who* can play specific roles. Shapiro addressed this as well: ‘It turns out that who gets to perform in Shakespeare’s plays is a fairly accurate index of who is considered fully American’.⁷⁶⁰ This was true in the 1820s, in New York City when the African Company was raided and disbanded by the police for success with their Shakespearean and theatrical endeavours, and it still remains true today, based upon the letters of complaint sent to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. While progress has undeniably occurred, as Shapiro noted in regard to Joe Papp’s work and its widespread influence on the diversification of casting, the belief that certain characters are for certain people is still a force in society. Hence, two hundred years after William Henry Brown inaugurated the African Company, also in New York City, Debra Ann Byrd is continuing the fight for opportunities for actors of colour and aiming to dismantle what Thompson referred to as the ‘Shakespeare Industrial Complex’. Byrd characterized her social justice mission in this way: ‘We’re marching. We’re soldiers in the army; Shakespeare is our medium’.

Byrd and her contemporaries featured in this section aimed to challenge and disrupt the Shakespeare industry by presenting Shakespeare’s text through their perspectives, undaunted by any repercussions. Throughout this section, I detail how specific grassroots theatre companies in the United States have repurposed Shakespeare as an effective tool, in essence practicing Applied Shakespeare, through the use of Shakespeare’s cultural capital to further advance their struggles toward

⁷⁵⁹ Ayanna Thompson and others, 'Shakespeare and Colonialism', in *Why Shakespeare?*, moderated by Amrita Ramanan (Ashland, Oregon: Oregon Shakespeare Festival, 2020), Timestamp 37:00-38:30. Crawford is quoted in the Introduction to this thesis with a similar description of the ‘Shakespeare Industry’.

⁷⁶⁰ Shapiro, *Shakespeare in a Divided America*, p. xii.

equality. The following issues are discussed in the upcoming section in the context of grassroots Shakespearean theatre: gender parity, rights for indigenous people and people of colour, LGBTQ rights, and environmental advocacy.

A. Gender Parity through Shakespeare

For at least one hundred fifty years in the United States, grassroots iterations of Shakespeare have been designed by all-female organisations with the hope of changing contemporary power structures. The self-education movement in the late nineteenth century, formed around Shakespeare's text, presented women from all over America with opportunities to harness some of this political capital away from a patriarchal society. By the early 1900s, it was not uncommon to see an all-female production presented by these clubs. As noted in Chapter 1, some of these clubs grew into prominent civic groups which contributed to local community betterment, and in some cases brought attention to political issues such as the women's suffrage movement.

Citing the limited nature of the roles available to women actors in the twentieth century as the impetus for founding the Los Angeles Women's Shakespeare Company, Lisa Wolpe was ahead of her time. She founded her professional theatre organisation as 'a multicultural all-female company' that was committed to casts that included at least 50 percent people of colour.⁷⁶¹ As an actor, producer, and activist, Wolpe's mission to create opportunities within the white male-dominated Shakespeare industry was formed around the idea that all of the work within the company could be, and should be, female-driven. A model similar to this did not exist for classical actors in the early 1990s and her approach was viewed to be radical. Aware that the theatre industry was a place where she could affect change, Wolpe ultimately fought to create the same opportunities for women as their male counterparts in the world at large. To take this fight beyond the boundaries of Los Angeles, for decades, Wolpe would attend many national and international conferences such as the Shakespeare Theatre Association (STA), driving her ideals to audiences, especially early on, that were not always responsive to her message. Undeterred by existing power structures within the Shakespeare industry, Wolpe identified herself as 'an advocate for diversity and female empowerment in the

⁷⁶¹ Wolpe, Interview, p. 1.

Shakespeare theatre tribe'.⁷⁶² In 2019, Wolpe acknowledged the solid formation of 'fifty, fifty gender parity' in professional productions was a major 'milestone' and noted that 'change [is] happening everywhere and rapidly'.⁷⁶³ From the time the first interviews were done for the Shakespeare on the Road research in 2014 to the writing of this thesis in 2020, major strides have occurred.

In 2014, executive director Cynthia Rider noted that there was still much 'controversy around' the cross-gender casting of Shakespeare's plays at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Rider had recently encountered resistance to the organisation's first all-female *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. With both reflection and considerable foresight, she astutely noted that ten years prior casting characters in multiracial families was similarly incendiary. Rider's point proved true; in the six years since she noted that 'the gender stuff [was] still a hot button for us', the field has changed considerably.⁷⁶⁴ As of 2020, all-female production no longer occupied the realm of the radical. Lisa Wolpe said to me in 2019 regarding cross-gender casting, as she referred to the organisational leaders in the field, 'if the Globe is doing it, and if the Oregon Shakespeare is doing it, it's done'. Furthermore, Wolpe went on to say there is always more to fight for:

We are not done, women are still making far less, female playwrights are not being produced, female directors are not being hired in the same numbers. There is a lot of work to be done, Asian women are working at I think two percent of the workforce; so, we're not done, but it's better than it was.⁷⁶⁵

Wolpe's efforts with the Los Angeles Women's Shakespeare Company for twenty years unquestionably influenced dozens, if not hundreds, of women who directly participated in her work (not taking into account the thousands who viewed the productions over the years). Additionally, Wolpe has chaired STA's IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access) Committee for years, furthering her influence among producers throughout the world. After decades of working to achieve equity for women in the field, she has greatly helped to influence the aforementioned tangible results in the professional realm. However, the grassroots

⁷⁶² Charles Ney, *Directing Shakespeare in America: Current Practices*, (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2016), pp. 82-83.

⁷⁶³ Wolpe, Interview, p. 2.

⁷⁶⁴ Rider, Interview, p. 6.

⁷⁶⁵ Wolpe, Interview, p. 2.

sector is a bit more challenging to quantify, as it is disparate and less connected than professional groups.

Geography has played a large role in the politics and viewpoints of issues related to gender as well. After time in New York and Chicago, artistic director Catherine Bodenbender of the Prenzie Players discussed her surprise upon returning to Iowa and discovering local views on gender roles: ‘equity between the sexes feels kind of like a progressive idea instead of just a status quo’.⁷⁶⁶ She added that this line of thinking was influenced by ‘small towns’ around her community of Davenport. Acknowledging that this attitude exists, Bodenbender said she has made it a deliberate decision to have casts that are ‘fifty-fifty men and women’ to resist and ‘push back against’ these perceptions.⁷⁶⁷

For many other grassroots organisations in this study, casting all-female groups, gender reversed casts, or gender-flipped roles are not as much about progressive ideals, but rather about serving their communities. One such example comes from Tony Pisculli: we have an ‘army of women in Hawaii that are very, very good at Shakespeare’. He added that he has more female auditioners than male auditioners, so it was only logical to cast all-female shows in addition to other combinations.⁷⁶⁸ Merced Shakespearefest, OrangeMite Shakespeare Company, Encore Theatre Company, the Wichita Shakespeare Company, similarly cast based upon who attended the audition, as there is no other option in grassroots theatre – all casting calls are public and organisations work with those willing to participate.⁷⁶⁹ Throughout the thirty-four productions I attended during this research, twenty-two grassroots and twelve professional, I noted gender fluid casting choices throughout.⁷⁷⁰ In this sense, it appears that years of advocacy have brought about change; but as Wolpe acknowledge, still, ‘we’re not done’.

⁷⁶⁶ Bodenbender, Interview, p. 2.

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 7.

⁷⁶⁸ Pisculli, Interview, p. 2.

⁷⁶⁹ This information was sourced from the multiple oral history transcripts. Appendix H.

⁷⁷⁰ Appendix F, Section 3.

B. Rights for Indigenous Peoples and People of Colour through Shakespeare

Director Madeline Sayet, a member of the Mohegan Tribe, became the executive director of the Yale Indigenous Performing Arts Program in October 2019.⁷⁷¹ Previously, Sayet had served as a director for Amerinda's Native Shakespeare Ensemble during the Shakespeare on the Road research in 2014. Among her many accolades, Sayet's work has received national attention from the Obama administration as a recipient of the White House Champion of Change Award. In addition, she has received coverage in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *National Geographic*, and many other publications for her work with Native artists at the grassroots, community-based level. Sayet's work with these groups mirrors the communal spirit observed throughout this thesis. She described her approach to collective responsibility with the Shakespeare on the Road team in 2014; at the time Sayet was working as a director of the Native Shakespeare Ensemble. At first, she was planning to utilize the traditional methodology of theatrical production: select a Shakespeare text that she felt would work best, and then hold auditions, cast, and then begin rehearsals.

I realized very quickly that it wouldn't work that way, that due to the nature of the native community, especially in New York, where we all come from different nations. It was important to choose the ensemble first.⁷⁷²

Knowing her participants at Amerinda, Sayet decided to utilize a collective approach, and that was even more critical to help dispel the false belief that indigenous populations in the United States are monolithic, when the reality is indeed the opposite. Upon receiving a role in the project, the cast collectively selected *Macbeth* as the text. Next, they began their process of working through and creating their approach to the production, while emphasizing the colonialism present in the work.

Much like fellow activist, artist, and director Lisa Wolpe, Sayet understood that systemic change in theatrical institutions is not altered by work on the stage alone, which is why she frequently appears as a public speaker, both nationally and internationally. Recently, Sayet appeared on the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's *Why*

⁷⁷¹ Susan Gonzalez, 'Madeline Sayet: The Opposite of Erasure', *YaleNews*, (22 March 2020).

⁷⁷² Fraher and Sayet, Interview, p. 2.

Shakespeare? series of online presentations that sought to understand ‘Shakespeare’s prominence within a global spectrum of art makers’.⁷⁷³ In this conversation, Sayet discussed her work on three Shakespeare texts, *Macbeth*, *The Tempest*, and *The Winter’s Tale*, with Native artists. In particular for *The Tempest*, Sayet set the production in an alternate-reality-America where the ‘colonists left’. She framed the production with a prologue in the Mohegan language; this enabled the production to foreground issues of inequality embedded in the text in a fashion that was ‘not neutral’.⁷⁷⁴ Sayet found that the only way for her to apply Shakespeare effectively to the lives of an all Native cast was that the ‘darkness be tied to colonialism because those structures are so strong throughout the plays’.⁷⁷⁵

This same struggle has manifested itself in the education system in the United States; most glaringly in examples of the forced, and brutal English education of indigenous youth over the centuries, of which Shakespeare was a part. Even as late as 1916, students at the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania performed in a Shakespeare pageant for the Tercentenary event presented in Chapter 1.⁷⁷⁶ As the following article from the *New York Sun* demonstrates (Figure 15), one does not have to look closely to see how Shakespeare was employed. As Dunbar-Ortiz argued there was little to no choice in the matter when it came to education at these institutions.⁷⁷⁷ Additionally, the production had to be advertised with multiple qualifiers, to help explain how ‘Real North American Indians’ could take on the task of performing Shakespeare. Readers were assured that the ‘white strain’ was ‘predominant’ and that they were adopting ‘sterling English surnames’, possibly providing a defence against detractors who believed indigenous peoples should not perform Shakespeare. While this article represents a startling era of American history, the legacy of this pervasive colonial attitude is very much part of our society today, as Sayet articulated.

⁷⁷³ Madeline Sayet, Ayanna Thompson, and Sharifa Johka, 'Episode 6: Shakespeare and Colonialism', in *Why Shakespeare?*, moderated by Amrita Ramanan (O!: Oregon Shakespeare Festival, 2020).

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid., Timestamp 16:00.

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid., Timestamp 14:30.

⁷⁷⁶ New York Sun. 4 Jun 1916. ‘Carlisle Indian School’s Shakespeare Tercentenary Celebration’. Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014), p. 212.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid. pp. 212-13.



Sayet described working through this 'system of supremacy [that] is really, really problematic'. She noted that she was a senior in her undergraduate program before realizing that there were indeed Native playwrights in the nation, a world beyond Shakespeare.⁷⁷⁸ Sayet continued by explaining how she ultimately became a director after growing up with outdoor Shakespeare productions in addition to traditional Mohegan stories:

I didn't know how to connect as a young person why my voice felt so inadequate, but Shakespeare, I felt, could give me voice to the system happening around me. There was no where I could go to learn my language, but there were infinite places where I could go to learn Shakespeare.⁷⁷⁹

Now that Sayet is leading the Yale Indigenous Performing Arts Program, a group dedicated to the production of work by Native playwrights and advocacy for a more prominent role in American theatre as a whole, her focus has obviously shifted away from producing Shakespeare.

⁷⁷⁸ Sayet, Thompson, and Johka, 'Episode 6: Shakespeare and Colonialism', Timestamp 7:42.

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid., Timestamp 7:51.

Nevertheless, in a March 2020 interview, Sayet noted that she was organizing an upcoming conference to discuss indigenization and address how ‘historically Shakespeare’s work has been so colonial’.⁷⁸⁰ This is evidence of her intentions to continue to engage in the political fight for equality. Through this struggle, Sayet is not working to include more Shakespeare, but rather, less; ultimately, she seeks to push back against the notion that Shakespeare’s work and the systems that promote it are always ‘good and apolitical’.⁷⁸¹ Through this perspective, we can see how Shakespeare productions can always be interpreted as political events, whether they are determined to be so by the producers or not. This work is critical for indigenous communities and for the future of the United States. Native historian Jack Forbes emphasized that while the living population of the United States is ‘not responsible for what their ancestors did’, he reasons succinctly that the current population is indeed ‘responsible for the society they live in’.⁷⁸² Hoping to instil this sense of responsibility through the arts, Sayet is leading the fight to elevate Native theatre, ‘the foundational theatre of this land’, from the margins. Through her work, she intends to help others realize that without the indigenous voices contributing to the national discourse there will never truly be an ‘American’ theatre.⁷⁸³

A history of American theatre would also be incomplete without an account of the influence of black Americans. In 1999, Debra Ann Byrd founded Take Wing and Soar productions to create ‘centre stage opportunities for classically trained actors of colour’, and after success with the organisation’s Shakespeare performances by 2013, Byrd established the Harlem Shakespeare Festival.⁷⁸⁴ During her 2014 interview for *Shakespeare on the Road*, she discussed the social justice mission of the Harlem Shakespeare Festival and how it was designed to help the whole community, and how Shakespeare was situated as the ‘medium’ for attaining this goal. Considering the problematic areas of Shakespeare’s texts and the history of how his plays have been appropriated to oppress instead of uplift people of all races, Byrd had a challenging task to explain ‘why Shakespeare?’ She reflected on this in 2014:

⁷⁸⁰ Gonzalez, ‘Madeline Sayet: The Opposite of Erasure’.

⁷⁸¹ Sayet, Thompson, and Johka, ‘Episode 6: Shakespeare and Colonialism’, Timestamp 14:00.

⁷⁸² Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, p. 235.

⁷⁸³ Gonzalez, ‘Madeline Sayet: The Opposite of Erasure’.

⁷⁸⁴ Byrd, Interview, p. 1.

Early on there were some Black Power girls, they came to me and they said, ‘Debra Ann, why are you doing Shakespeare?’ I said, ‘Well, I don't know’. At that time, I said, ‘I don't know how to answer that. I really don't know’.⁷⁸⁵

Byrd was not alone with this question, as it has appeared throughout this research as a foundational question for many. By the summer of 2020, this question felt existential for Shakespeare producers across the nation as protests against systematic racism in the United States became part of daily life.⁷⁸⁶ Byrd then went on to explain that the answer to this foundational question ‘found me and grabbed me’: the history of Black Shakespeareans written by Errol Hill, *Shakespeare in Sable*. In this historical survey, Hill made a profound case for how Shakespeare was both used to oppress and empower people of colour throughout the centuries. Byrd emphasized how *Shakespeare in Sable* made her feel ‘connected’ and ‘emotional’ and part of a larger movement. This historical account would ultimately serve as inspiration for the Harlem Shakespeare Festival, Byrd articulated, through a new generation of Shakespeare producers, actors and advocates.⁷⁸⁷

The fact that we are pushing to make sure that artists of colour have a better space in classical theatre gives our thing a political, social justice mission ... like civil rights. At the same time, it is the love of the art and the language which pushed us towards there... ‘Oh, my goodness, we've been handed the mantle. We've been handed the torch in the relay race’. Now it's our turn to carry this torch.⁷⁸⁸

Much like Wolpe and Sayet, Byrd has taken her work for advocacy beyond the walls of her theatre organisation. Working at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust as a writer-in-residence in late 2017, Byrd developed her experiences into a theatrical memoir, *Becoming Othello: A Black Girl's Journey*.⁷⁸⁹ She then returned two years later in 2019 to perform the work in Stratford-upon-Avon and also at the University of Warwick; additionally, she toured the production to locations around the United States before the COVID-19 crisis temporarily halted all theatrical performance.

Much like her professional and grassroots colleagues from around the nation, Byrd stated that the festival brought Harlem ‘a sense of pride’, and a connection to ‘a

⁷⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 7.

⁷⁸⁶ Sayet, Thompson, and Johka, ‘Episode 6: Shakespeare and Colonialism’.

⁷⁸⁷ Byrd, Interview, p. 7. See also: Hill, *Shakespeare in Sable*.

⁷⁸⁸ Byrd, Interview, p. 7.

⁷⁸⁹ Wolfgang, ‘Grassroots Shakespeare Ethnographic Field Notes and Observations’. Specifically, 1 Feb 2020, Shakespeare Theatre Association Conference, Dallas, Texas.

rich history' echoing much of the qualitative data already presented. However, Byrd was certain to emphasize that it is 'our own brand of history and culture'.⁷⁹⁰ This has been a profound change for many of the actors that have participated in the Harlem Shakespeare Festival. Byrd described how being asked to play some of these roles would bewilder some actors, as they were not used to such opportunity. Upon receiving the role of Richard III, a young black actor asked Byrd if 'Richard's deformity [was] that he's a black man?' She responded 'No, your momma will be black, your brothers will be black. Queen Elizabeth will be black'. The actor was surprised, and very grateful for the opportunity. Byrd went on to emphasize that in 2014 she was beginning to see 'over the years, doors opening more', noting that there were more 'artists of colour on stage'.⁷⁹¹ There is no doubt that through the work of Byrd, and the work of Madeline Sayet with indigenous peoples, that opportunity is indeed increasing in the field.

C. *LGBTQ Rights through Shakespeare*

As cultural historian Michael Bronski writes in *A Queer History of the United States*, theatre has always been seen as a threat to 'civil and personal virtue' in the nation because it allowed 'deviations from sexual and gender norms to materialize on stage'.⁷⁹² This is especially true with the work of Shakespeare. With only male actors at his disposal, every relationship on his stage was indeed a same-sex relationship. The texts themselves include more than a few isolated references to homoerotic desire and gender-bending. Therefore, all Shakespeare companies are presented with a choice as to how to embrace these references or avoid them. Moments that highlight same-sex relationships have occurred in several of the productions throughout the organisations represented in this study. I have seen these relationships represented on stage in a number of grassroots organisations including the Encore Theatre Company, Shakespeare in Yosemite, and the OrangeMite Shakespeare Company. For the purpose of this section, I focus exclusively on two organisations, the Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company and the Bards of Birmingham, that have made it part of their mission or productions to advocate for the rights of the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) community.

⁷⁹⁰ Byrd, Interview, p. 2.

⁷⁹¹ Ibid. p. 6.

⁷⁹² Bronski, *A Queer History of the United States*, pp. 104-05.

These organisations share a geographic region: the American South (Guerrilla Shakespeare from South Carolina and Bards from Alabama). This area is broadly and deeply socially conservative; consequently, the productions that utilized the ‘common property’ of Shakespeare for the purpose of advocating for LGBTQ issues were not only bold, but, according to participant accounts, also more meaningful.⁷⁹³ Additionally, both organisations recently performed *Romeo and Juliet* with title characters portrayed as female; these productions are the subject of analysis in this section. For these companies, the grassroots artists did not insert brief LGBTQ references for the purpose of being inclusive or for comic relief, but rather they constructed the entire production around a same-sex relationship. The two organisations do differ, however, in their missions. The Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company, to the extent that this study has been able to uncover, is the only Shakespeare-based organisation that has defined LGBTQ rights in their mission statement. Alternatively, the Bards of Birmingham’s mission statement was broader, but focused primarily on ‘empowering youth’.⁷⁹⁴ This company was composed, in part, of some LGBTQ adolescents, which is why director Laura Heider chose to empower their life experience through a deliberately interventionist approach to Shakespeare production and theatre.

The Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company was founded by Miriam Miller and Crystal Stewart to focus specifically on LGBTQ issues and other ‘marginalized groups’ with the unmistakable slogan of ‘Big Queer Shakespeare’. The group has performed a gender-queered productions of *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* among other initiatives. Directors Robert Fuson and Eric Spears stated in our interview that it was remarkable how a ‘slight’ change to the casting makes the story ‘unlike something you’ve ever seen with Shakespeare’.⁷⁹⁵ In the cases of both Guerrilla’s and Bards’ *Romeo and Juliet*, the story was set in their geographic region in the late 1980s into the early 1990s.⁷⁹⁶ This timeline provided space between this decades-removed setting and the contemporary reality for participants and audiences alike. It is still, in the present day, a world where many of these same issues that the grassroots artist depicted can easily occur. Guerrilla Shakespeare director Robert

⁷⁹³ Heider, ‘Bards in the News’.

⁷⁹⁴ Appendix C.

⁷⁹⁵ Fuson and Spears, Interview, p. 2.

⁷⁹⁶ Ibid. Heider, ‘Bards in the News’.

Fuson talked about the compounded situation presented in his company's production of youth getting 'thrown out of their homes' for showing interest in someone of the same gender. He discussed several similarities; this included being outcasted much like Romeo's forced exile, and parental behaviour not dissimilar from that of the Capulets. Fuson articulated that after experiencing his organisation's production of *Romeo and Juliet*, it was conceivable why these teens would consider the same final action of Shakespeare's star-crossed lovers. He continued by describing that this same world 'drives kids to take these drastic measures like suicide – it was extremely real and poignant'.⁷⁹⁷ The organisation does not stop with productions; the group also has advocated for the passage of local ordinances and laws. Most recently in February 2020, the group was pushing for the passage of hate crime legislation at the local city level, as South Carolina's legislation failed to advance at the state level, maintaining its status as one of four states without laws protecting citizens against bigotry-based violence.⁷⁹⁸

At the Bards of Birmingham, the artists took this similar premise with *Romeo and Juliet* and communicated it both qualitatively and quantitatively, like their counterparts in South Carolina, through theatrical presentation, and also quantitatively through data on LGBTQ youth suicide, which was present in the program.⁷⁹⁹ Grassroots actor Emma Camp, who was a sophomore at the Alabama School of Fine Arts at the time of the production, expressed her thoughts on the staggering suicide statistics from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) that were presented along with the group's production. LGBTQ youth suffer from challenging social, emotional, and educational disadvantages which may explain why the statistics show that approximately one third of LGBTQ youth have attempted suicide, compared to only 6 percent of their heterosexual peers.⁸⁰⁰ Camp, who portrayed Juliet in Bards' production, elucidated the experience of growing up in a conservative, rural area where the idea of identifying with any of the letters in the LGBTQ acronym was beyond a distant concept, it was entirely unknown:

⁷⁹⁷ Fuson and Spears, Interview, p. 2.

⁷⁹⁸ 'Facebook.Com/Guerrillashakestheatreco/', 13 February 2020 [Accessed 30 August 2020]. Eric Connor, 'Greenville Passes Hate Crime Law, Including Potential Restitution', *The Greenville News*, (28 January 2020).

⁷⁹⁹ Heider, 'Bards in the News'.

⁸⁰⁰ Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 'LGBT Youth - Effects on Education and Mental Health', U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, (2017) [Accessed 3 Sep 2020].

For me personally, it was really exciting [to be a part of this production] because I'm an openly lesbian young woman, so it's being able to have that representation that's so important. Especially growing up, it's really hard to *be* something you don't know exists.⁸⁰¹

For a politically conservative locale like Alabama, a production dedicated to raising awareness of suicide rates of gay youth in a political climate that, as Camp described, 'is increasingly homophobic and increasingly transphobic' was incredibly meaningful for the company members. Camp noted that the issue was not danced around, but rather, 'tackled' by the company with a 'story that everyone knows'.⁸⁰²

This, ultimately, is the power of Shakespeare's work as political activism. Through the education system in the United States, nearly every student is at some point exposed to it in some way. Additionally, in part, through the apolitical work of companies noted in the previous section, plays like *Romeo and Juliet* are still considered 'common ground' that is universally shared by those with a differing world view. Without doubt, *Romeo and Juliet* is *the* quintessential love story for Americans, and to harness this story and its centuries of agency and power, is to struggle for equality in a meaningful way. Director Laura Heider stated that this production being set in Alabama, and being performed by several young LGBTQ Alabamans, made it 'much more personal'.⁸⁰³ Through Shakespeare's established cultural capital, something that is personal for many can become amplified, with the goal of raising this issue into productive dialogue. Ultimately, the desire is to achieve lasting and impactful policies that support this community. This is Shakespeare that likely is not universally approved of by all political factions; nevertheless, by doing productions such as these, the producers, actors, and audiences alike are engaging in the process of activism. The history presented in this thesis has proven that productions such as these have granted individual participants a greater sense of personal agency.

D. Environmental Activism through Shakespeare

Each time a Shakespeare play is produced there is a cultural expectation, even if it is a latent perception, that the text will continue to be reused and reimagined ad infinitum. As argued throughout Chapter 3, Shakespeare as 'common

⁸⁰¹ Heider, 'Bards in the News'.

⁸⁰² Ibid. p. 2.

⁸⁰³ Ibid.

property’ means his work is ubiquitously and perpetually replenished by the hundreds of organisations that regularly program his work. In this respect, the work’s sustainability is rather self-evident. However, Shakespeare’s cultural sustainability only goes as far as society’s capacity to maintain and cultivate a habitable planet for future generations. Likewise, as Shakespeare in Yosemite founders Katherine Steele Brokaw and Paul Prescott argue to their practitioner colleagues in the Shakespeare Theatre Association publication *Quarto*, Shakespeare’s texts may be ‘inexhaustible and invulnerable’ but the act of producing them is not.⁸⁰⁴ The professional theatre industry in the United States is estimated to contribute in excess of \$2.7 billion to the economy, hence fighting to alter the practices of this industry, starting with Shakespeare (as established, a large part of this), can serve to effect widespread change.⁸⁰⁵ Seeking to initiate rapid change in a world that will suffer the ‘irreversible’ and existential effects of climate change, Shakespeare theatres small, medium, and large, on the stage and through banding together, are pushing back against those that deny the very existence of the climate emergency.⁸⁰⁶ With some influence on this sector of the economy, these Shakespeare producers are energized to engage in this fight.

Two grassroots Shakespeare companies present in this research have made it their purpose to break through with the foundational practice of eco-Shakespeare: the Recycled Shakespeare Company and Shakespeare in Yosemite. As a community-based organisation, Recycled Shakespeare Company’s trailblazing purpose is manifest in its name and has produced its work ‘primarily on used and recycled material, [with] local enthusiasts, and royalty free production’ for seven years. The company’s tagline sums up their work in three words: ‘Reduce, Reuse, Recite’.⁸⁰⁷ The implication that Shakespeare’s texts are also part of the theme of recycling is evident, as previously noted by Brokaw and Prescott. As Emily Fournier emphasized

⁸⁰⁴ Katherine Steele Brokaw and Paul Prescott, ‘The #Earth Shakes Alliance’, *Quarto*, (2020) <<https://www.flipsnack.com/quarto/spring-summer-2020-final-f7c54jcx2.html>>.

⁸⁰⁵ Zannie Giraud Voss and others, ‘Theatre Facts 2018: Theatre Communications Group’s Report on the Fiscal State of the U.S. Professional Not-for-Profit Theatre Field’, (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2019). http://www.tcg.org/pdfs/tools/TCG_TheatreFacts_2018.pdf.

⁸⁰⁶ Brokaw and Prescott, ‘The #Earth Shakes Alliance’. In the first monograph dedicated to the subject of eco-Shakespeare, Randall Martin agreed with this performance-based approach noting that, ‘Shakespeare’s greatest possibilities for become our eco-contemporary, however, arguably lie not in academic discourse but in performance’. Randall Martin, *Shakespeare and Ecology*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 167.

⁸⁰⁷ Appendix C.

in our interview, for the Recycled Shakespeare Company, these goals were beyond aspirational, they were daily practice.

Shakespeare in Yosemite is a hybrid grassroots organisation that blends university students, community members, National Park rangers, professional actors and performers, with scholar-practitioners into a cohesive ensemble.⁸⁰⁸ The group's 2019 show was, like all of the organisation's productions, a site-specific adaptation of *As You Like It* featuring many musical performances and grounded in eco-dramaturgy. As the production's director, Brokaw reinforced that the actors stress specific words relating to natural imagery throughout their performances. The aim of the production was to be emphatic at all times regarding the ecological themes.⁸⁰⁹ Similar in methodology to fellow activist theatre group the Bards of Birmingham, Shakespeare in Yosemite included quantified data regarding climate change throughout the performance; these were at times read in interludes, in other cases these statistics could be found on papers tied around nearby trees (with audience members left to wonder if the character Orlando had something to do with these conspicuous messages).⁸¹⁰

As is the nature of site-specific theatre, the production was deeply rooted in a sense of place making the allusions and plot elements self-evident that were connected to the natural world. Discussing the 'sensual nature' of performing a play about the forest while being in the forest, activist-artist Lisa Wolpe who played Jaques in the production expressed the nature of the production.⁸¹¹ She elucidated the dichotomy between the al fresco Shakespeare in Yosemite and its traditional indoor counterparts: '[It's] very hard to [perform] inside of a theatre in a major city with a couple of artificial trees, but here it's effortless to talk about the river because I can see it'. Further describing the production as 'a radical shift in terms of trying to make Shakespeare relevant and meaningful – what it can actually do in the world', Wolpe further expressed her support for Shakespeare in Yosemite's Applied Theatre mission of combining storytelling with nature, and environmental advocacy.⁸¹²

⁸⁰⁸ Shakespeare in Yosemite was sponsored by both the University of California, Merced and the University of Warwick.

⁸⁰⁹ Wolfgang, 'Grassroots Shakespeare Ethnographic Field Notes and Observations'.

⁸¹⁰ This climate change research was provided by scientists at the University of California, Merced further linking the production to the local community. Ibid.

⁸¹¹ Wolpe was one of two professional performers in the cast of *As You Like It*; Shakespearean hip hop artist Devon Glover complemented her work.

⁸¹² Wolpe, Interview, p. 2.

As with any activism, there will be those who are vehemently opposed to the cause because of an alternative political view; moreover, appropriating the ‘common ground’ of Shakespeare can compound this disapproval. While this thesis is not the forum to lament that stewardship for the planet has to be a politically charged concept, the responses on the post-performance audience survey were overwhelmingly positive and the audiences were extremely receptive to the adaptation. Out of one hundred forty-two respondents, only two (or one percent) of the individuals chose to voice their displeasure, with the most succinct and coherent complaint representing a familiar symptomatic refrain of the ‘Shakespeare Industrial Complex’ which was ‘please don’t distort Shakespeare’.⁸¹³ In this case, supporters of the traditional, reverent Shakespeare, seem to either be silent or underrepresented in Shakespeare in Yosemite’s audience. As noted in the second section of the Introduction, ‘Limitations of Research’, this thesis does not seek to understand audience perspectives. However, in the case of activist productions, dealing with pushback becomes an operational activity. For example, in the extreme situation of the previously discussed 2017 *Julius Caesar*, audience response became a central issue for the field at large.

Brokaw and Prescott were keenly aware that annual eco-theatre performances, however poignantly performed with the breath-taking backdrop of Half Dome in Yosemite National Park, could only reach a finite audience. Therefore, like other artists and organisations in this study, they took their work to the Shakespeare performance industry itself. Brokaw and Prescott began forming a partnership of Shakespeare performing organisations from around the world to implement this change on a global scale. This coalition, the #Earth Shakes Alliance, was to begin its activities after an inaugural event at a two-day conference hosted by Shakespeare’s Globe in London in conjunction with the University of Warwick and the University of California, Merced. However, the COVID-19 pandemic caused the event to be postponed until 2021. Nevertheless, the #Earth Shakes Alliance already includes eighteen founding members across four continents, grassroots and professional groups alike, united in a common purpose. Brokaw and Prescott outlined their vision for the Alliance: having each representative company

⁸¹³ Katherine Steele Brokaw and Paul Prescott, ‘As You Like It - Unpublished Audience Survey’, (University of California, Merced, 2020).

emphasize the importance of climate change to their constituencies, providing a ‘network of like-minded practitioners’ to collaborate on best eco-practice, and signing-on to the group’s seven specific climate-based aspirations.⁸¹⁴ The #Earth Shakes Alliance is designed to impact not only producers and artists, but their communities as well. Especially for grassroots organisations, this will be meaningful considering the nature of the organisations and their relationships with their community. Uniting behind a cause like this serves to inspire and rally participants behind something larger than Shakespeare; as Wolpe said, ‘what [Shakespeare] can actually do in the world’, which in essence becomes the actualization of Applied Theatre. I experienced this first-hand, as I assisted Brokaw and Prescott throughout the rehearsal process and provided support at the performances.

During my time working with the participants of Shakespeare in Yosemite, I was able to sense the ‘magic’ that the participants were experiencing, as evident in my daily field notes. This is the same experience that many directors and participants emphasized to me throughout interviews across the United States. This feeling was something that had been absent for me since I had left the OrangeMite Shakespeare Company to begin this research. Previously described in Chapter 3 as a sense of belonging, in this case I would refer to this ‘magic’ more succinctly as a distinct esprit de corps, which was no doubt heightened in the natural grandeur of Yosemite National Park. Beyond the stunning natural setting, the group itself was united in the cause of producing Shakespeare, but more so to convey a message they strongly believed in. Brokaw and Prescott hope that through the #Earth Shakes Alliance this type of production becomes more visible throughout the world. The research and practice-based experience I had at Yosemite and with the help of Brokaw, Prescott, and the participants, eventually led to my opportunity to direct a production, *Ricardo II*, in the Merced community.

⁸¹⁴ Brokaw and Prescott, ‘The #Earth Shakes Alliance’. In addition to their work with The #Earth Shakes Alliance, Brokaw and Prescott are also part of another international eco-Shakespeare effort. This project led by Randall Martin, features seven theatres from around the world, including two present in this research, Shakespeare in Yosemite and Montana Shakespeare in the Parks. The initiative entitled ‘Cymbeline in the Anthropocene’ is designed to create an ‘online open-access research archive that will document the discoveries of individual *Cymbeline* performances and broaden their collective ecological scope’. Randall Martin, ‘Cymbeline in the Anthropocene’ (2020) <https://www.cymbeline-anthropocene.com/> [Accessed 5 November 2020]

3. *Ricardo II*: Grassroots Shakespeare in Translation (in the Era of COVID-19)

A. *Origins and Methodology*

This section details my Practice-as-Research and my Applied Shakespeare work with Merced Shakespearefest's *Ricardo II*. Through this bilingual production amidst the most significant global health crisis in more than a century, my collaborators and I aspired to create true grassroots theatre with a marginalised community. The following brief autoethnographic case study provides insight into the process of producing a play about failed leadership during an era of profound crisis.

Following my interview with founding artistic director Heike Hambley on the 25 January 2019 we remained in contact. Knowing that I would be in the area conducting research as an embedded scholar for Shakespeare in Yosemite, Hambley inquired if I would be interested in serving as dramaturg for a production of *Othello* that she would direct in June 2019. I agreed to take the position, fully aware that I would have a great deal of opportunity to conduct Practice-as-Research while doing so. One of the community participants who was previously cast in Merced Shakespearefest's production of *Othello* was Ángel Nuñez, a Global Arts Studies student at the University of California, Merced. Nuñez was also a cast member in Shakespeare in Yosemite and by April 2019 had produced a Spanish language synopsis for Spanish-speakers attending the production. He had also assisted with a few Spanish lines in the script and translated and delivered Brokaw's welcome speech to the audience. During this time, Nuñez and I had an ongoing conversation about Spanish language grassroots theatre and bilingual grassroots theatre. He indicated that while theatrical endeavours existed for participants in his hometown of Los Angeles, there were no opportunities in California's Central Valley for the Spanish-speaking community to engage in theatre. Meanwhile, there are at least three organisations producing English-speaking theatre in Merced. This disparity is especially evident when noting that 52 percent of the Merced community is Hispanic, with 46 percent of the population speaking another language than English.⁸¹⁵

⁸¹⁵ 'Quick Facts; Merced'.

At the conclusion of Shakespeare and Yosemite, Nuñez and I subsequently worked with Hambley on Merced Shakespearefest's *Othello*. Upon closing that production, Hambley asked if I would be interested in directing the organisation's production of *Richard II* the following year, in June of 2020. I enthusiastically accepted the offer. I began to synthesize the conversations with Nuñez, my ongoing research on grassroots theatre, along with Hambley's desire to include the Spanish-speaking community of Merced in the organisation's productions. The result was bilingual grassroots theatre inspired by the collaborative nature of the groups I interviewed for this research. The plan was to create an adaptation that was evenly divided between each language and set in the region's past, during the formation of the State of California at the end of the Mexican-American War. Hambley accepted my proposal, and Nuñez eagerly agreed to the role of translator and co-director. Maria Nguyen-Cruz, research assistant and cast member from Shakespeare in Yosemite, also joined the group as text editor and co-director. Our production team was completed with Shakespeare in Yosemite alumna, Cathryn Flores, taking on the role of music director.

The production team began working on this project in July 2019 in Los Angeles. Nguyen-Cruz and I attended multiple productions in the region, including a production of *Richard II*, as we continued our field research, which we applied to our initial cut of the script.⁸¹⁶ Like the aforementioned grassroots groups in this thesis that embraced the idea of artistic freedom and collective responsibility, we as a group went through the text word-by-word and decided which language certain sections would be, and why. As a team, we analysed and determined which themes should remain present in the text for our future participants and community. This collaborative effort that began in person in July and continued weekly online as I returned to the east coast (and the United Kingdom) to conduct further interviews and research. We concluded the script design of our production, *Ricardo II*, in December of 2019, well aware that it was a living document and would see many future changes. Following the essence of my research, and the idea of Applied Shakespeare, it was essential that our future participants were involved in shaping this work as well. Of course, we were not prepared for how drastically the document would have to be altered. The pre-production phase ended with a script reading via

⁸¹⁶ See Appendix F, Sections 3 and 4.

videoconference (with Hambley, Nuñez, Nguyen-Cruz, Flores and myself); this distant approach, in retrospect, was prophetic of what was to come only a few months later with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nguyen-Cruz secured funding from the University of California, Merced, to assist Merced Shakespearefest in promoting the auditions to the Spanish-speaking community in the Central Valley. The organisation had never before produced a production that was at least fifty percent Spanish dialogue, which necessitated the need for individuals new to the group, so the community partnership with the university was of consequence. Merced Shakespearefest promoted the auditions with announcements in both languages in local papers, Facebook, online, and with posters displayed throughout the community. ‘Word of mouth’, as indicated previously in this thesis, was an especially powerful method, most critically on the campus of the university. With the financial assistance designed in the grant to get the word out along with general enthusiasm for the project, the organisation was able to cast a bilingual group of sixteen community actors from open auditions alone. However, locating interested individuals would not be our challenge; the novel coronavirus and the daily struggles that came with it would be life-altering and world-changing.

B. *‘Theatre of Hope’: Grassroots Theatre and the Onset of COVID-19*

Despite the World Health Organisation declaring a ‘global public health emergency’ due to the spread of COVID-19 on 30 January 2020, under the leadership of the Trump administration America continued operating as normal.⁸¹⁷ Days later, in Merced’s neighbouring county, San Benito, the first known transmission of the disease between individuals occurred in the state, and by 6 February, the first individual in the United States would succumb to the virus (though this would not be determined until months later).⁸¹⁸ In mid-March, Merced Shakespearefest conducted physically-distant auditions (14 March) and call-back auditions (18 March). On 19 March, Governor Gavin Newsom issued a ‘stay-at-

⁸¹⁷ Tamara Keith and Malaka Gharib, ‘A Timeline of Coronavirus Comments from President Trump and WHO’, *Stories of Life in a Changing World*, (15 April 2020) <<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/04/15/835011346/a-timeline-of-coronavirus-comments-from-president-trump-and-who>>.

⁸¹⁸ Corey Egel, ‘Six Confirmed Cases of Novel Coronavirus in California’, (Sacramento, California: Office of Public Affairs, 2 February 2020). Erin Allday and Matt Kawahara, ‘First Known U.S. Coronavirus Death Occurred on Feb. 6 in Santa Clara County’, *San Francisco Chronicle*, (22 April 2020).

home order’, becoming the first state in the nation to do so.⁸¹⁹ It had finally become very obvious, that despite contradictory, misleading, and careless statements from President Trump, such as it will ‘miraculously [go] away’ and that it was ‘very much under control’, that this would be a prolonged and unprecedented crisis.⁸²⁰ When faced with the decision to cancel the production or continue working online in a video conferencing format, Hambley and I both agreed that the feeling of ‘human connection’ (as she had described in our interview the previous year) was uniquely valuable in the midst of the developing crisis. We chose to operate on the online video conferencing platform, Zoom, like millions around the world would come to do in the weeks that followed.⁸²¹

On this platform, cast members cited the challenges inherent to rehearsing theatre without the natural physicality central to the art form. Also, as a director, I struggled with preparing the cast, as we didn’t know if, how, or when we were performing. Testing the limits of ‘process-based’ work and other iterations of Applied Shakespeare discussed in the previous chapters, we continued rehearsing on Zoom for forty-five days. While all of us in the group at times experienced ‘Zoom Fatigue’ and the trials that came with living in quarantine, the production started to embody, for many of us, another aspect of grassroots theatre yet to be discussed.⁸²² In the ‘Matrix’ of grassroots theatre present in Appendix G, the collaborators stated the art form is ‘fundamentally a theatre of hope and often joy’.⁸²³ One would not immediately think ‘hope’ or ‘joy’ would arise from a production about the deposition of a fourteenth century English king. Through the resiliency of the production team and the cast, and the hope that we would indeed perform this production, we pushed forward. We abandoned our original theatrical concept set

⁸¹⁹ Gavin Newsom, ‘Executive Order N-33-20’, Executive Department (Sacramento, California: State of California, 19 March 2020). Reuters Staff, ‘California's New Lockdown Dims Outlook for U.S. Growth in Pandemic’, *Reuters*, (13 July 2020) <<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-california-economy/californias-new-lockdown-dims-outlook-for-u-s-growth-in-pandemic-idUSKCN24E31R>>.

⁸²⁰ Keith and Gharib, ‘A Timeline of Coronavirus Comments from President Trump and WHO’.

⁸²¹ Analysts estimated that approximately 173 million people were using Zoom as of May 2020. Lucy Handley, ‘“I Don't Know Exactly What the Secret Is”: Zoom's Marketing Chief on the Company's Rise through the Pandemic’, *Marketing.Media.Money*, (24 July 2020) <<https://www.cnbc.com/2020/07/24/zooms-marketing-chief-on-the-companys-rise-through-the-pandemic.html>>.

⁸²² Liz Fosslien and Mollie West Duffy, ‘How to Combat Zoom Fatigue’, *Harvard Business Review*, (29 April 2020) <<https://hbr.org/2020/04/how-to-combat-zoom-fatigue>>.

⁸²³ Appendix G.

during the Mexican-American War, began script alterations, and abruptly prepared our participants for the production of a filmed *Ricardo II* web series.

This resiliency, and ultimately hope and joy, propelled the project forward despite the unique circumstances. The production team proudly reflected on this process in a post-production interview; Nuñez recalled the feeling of overcoming these challenges through ‘adapting the script constantly, adapting scenes, and adapting characters’.⁸²⁴ Nguyen-Cruz similarly described ‘constant change’ that became more difficult as we started the filming process especially as our window of time for the filming process narrowed.⁸²⁵ Ultimately, the group’s resiliency led to the successful completion of six days of physically-distant filming in June of 2020 that took place in various identifiable locations around the community.⁸²⁶ The entire production was filmed; from Ricardo’s banishment of Bolingbroke, to Bolingbroke’s return from exile, and finally to the deposition and demise of the ordained king. We reorganized the setting of our production to be during the pandemic, with actors wearing masks, very much alluding to John of Gaunt’s line in I. 3. 284 of *Richard II*: ‘Suppose devouring pestilence hangs in our air, / And thou art flying to a fresher clime’.⁸²⁷

Music director Cathryn Flores reflected on the year-long process, from pre-production to post-production, finding hope and joy in our collective perseverance. Flores commented on the ‘immense amount of resilience’ the participants displayed, signing up for theatre in March, and producing a bilingual web series by June in the midst of a pandemic. She also considered how she was to create music for a theatrical production, but now she was, in essence, writing a film score.

[COVID-19] led me to have to figure out a new innovative way to create a musical score that was composed of modern-day music...I really do love today's modern-day music, pop culture, Latin culture, but to do a film score for it was a challenge.⁸²⁸

Undaunted by this challenge while displaying a great deal of her own resilience, Flores had created an opening credits theme song for the production by late July 2020. She composed original lyrics for this song based on the text for *Ricardo II*, and

⁸²⁴ Cathryn Flores, Maria Nguyen-Cruz, and Ángel Nuñez. ‘Merced Shakespearefest's *Ricardo II*’, Interview by William Wolfgang (Merced, CA: 28 July 2020), p. 6.

⁸²⁵ Ibid.

⁸²⁶ This place-based work was analysed in Chapter 3 as well.

⁸²⁷ William Shakespeare, *Richard II*, (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2002), p. 231.

⁸²⁸ Flores, Nguyen-Cruz, and Nuñez, Interview, p. 7.

with unmistakable contemporary resonance as America prepared for the November 2020 presidential election:

Two voices, one story,
A land divided,
Misfortune, deception,
Country misguided.
Battle for the crown,
Pride leading the way,
Can you survive this reign?
Ricardo el Segundo,
Throne is slipping away.

Flores' work based on Shakespeare's text demonstrates multiple aspects of grassroots theatre.⁸²⁹ Primarily, that the work itself is generated by the community 'from which it arises', which is clearly evident in Flores' original music found throughout the twelve-part web series.⁸³⁰ Through this production, also, the participants were able to maintain the organisation's connection to Shakespeare while responding to the current world and looking forward. Flores stated that by changing bilingual theatre to a bilingual Shakespeare-based web series, the group created something 'more innovative than what this production already was'.⁸³¹ Alejandro Gutiérrez, a professor of engineering at the University of California, Merced, took on his first acting role with *King Ricardo*. In a post-production interview, Gutiérrez reflected on the correlations between Ricardo's failed leadership and aforementioned failures amidst the coronavirus pandemic. He said that the similarities were 'fine as a joke', but that it should end there. Gutiérrez continued:

These types of characters like the Trumps, the Chavezes, the Maduros of the world [...] they're vulgar, they're simple, their brute, they're very raw, coarse characters, whereas Ricardo is actually complex and has these sort of tragic things that he's trying to do. He's trying to be the divine king, but he's not. He's very lyrical, and these [contemporary leaders] are always extremely ignorant and incapable of any type of subtle language.

Ultimately, the production was not about Ricardo's fall from power, nor the continued ineptitude of today's autocratic leaders. By proudly reflecting on not only

⁸²⁹ Cathryn Flores, 'Ricardo El Segundo Theme Song', (Fremont, CA: Merced Shakespearefest, 2020).

⁸³⁰ William Wolfgang, Maria Nguyen-Cruz, and Ángel Nuñez, 'RICARDO II – EP. 1: Traición Bien Conocida', *Ricardo II*, YouTube, Merced Shakespearefest, 4 September 2020, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOv3kiVGIWM>> [accessed 4 September 2020].

⁸³¹ Flores, Nguyen-Cruz, and Nuñez, Interview, p. 6.

on the hope and resiliency that pushed Merced's first bilingual production to completion, Gutiérrez also acknowledged the role of collective responsibility: 'It is very difficult to create something beautiful in such dark circumstances, but we did'.⁸³² The hope that the participants derived from this production was not simply based on overcoming the tragic disruptions of COVID-19 nor the failed leadership that permeated our reality and the text of the play, but also from the original conceptual intent: opportunities to collectively create art for the Spanish-speaking community in Merced.

C. *'Esperanza': Bilingual Shakespeare in Merced, California*

The idea of bilingual Shakespeare, especially in the midst of a worldwide health crisis, meant a great deal to the participants. In a series of post-production interviews conducted for this research, the actor-participants discussed their experience with the project and how that related to their daily lives in California's Central Valley. Their experiences were parallel to other studies on Shakespeare in Hispanic communities. Ruben Espinosa, who teaches Shakespeare and early modern studies at the University of Texas at El Paso, worked with a student population that was 80 percent Latinx. While Shakespeare is certainly not a panacea to wipe away inequalities, scrutinizing what his work means in today's political climate does affect the incremental change discussed earlier in this chapter, and as Espinosa argued, 'generate possibilities for social change'.⁸³³ To meaningfully approach Shakespeare's work for his students, Espinosa advocated for examining Shakespeare on the 'peripheries of performance', most often through online content on YouTube. Acknowledging that this is not a simple task, especially with a 'white monopoly on Shakespeare' (or, as Thompson suggested the 'Shakespeare Industrial Complex') that promotes a palpable sense of 'invisibility' for the Hispanic community, Espinosa countered this factor by helping students find a way to 'have legitimate access to him' and 'make Shakespeare their own'.⁸³⁴ Through the equal use of Spanish and English, and the constant editing of the script and translations by the

⁸³² Alejandro Gutiérrez and Claudia Boehm, 'Merced Shakespearefest's *Ricardo II*', Interview by William Wolfgang (Merced, CA: 24 July 2020), p. 3.

⁸³³ Ruben Espinosa, 'Chicano Shakespeare the Bard, the Border, and the Peripheries of Performance', in *Teaching Social Justice through Shakespeare*, ed. by Hillary Eklund and Wendy Beth Hyman (Edinburgh University Press, 2019), p. 77.

⁸³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

actor-participants themselves, *Ricardo II* similarly encouraged Latinx members of the Merced community to take this same ownership of Shakespeare.

First, it was important to delineate relevant themes from the text to assure the narrative of the production was aligned with our mission of inclusivity and legitimacy. To achieve this, we chose to specifically emphasize the motif of ‘displacement’, a theme that has a stronger resonance for the Latinx community in America than it does for its white majority population. While this motif makes appearances throughout the text, between Bolingbroke’s exile to Ricardo’s displacement of self and identity, we centred our thesis around Thomas Mowbray’s speech after King Richard banishes him from England (I. 3. 154-173). In *Ricardo II*, Mowbray is renamed ‘Tomás Mercedes’ and speaks solely in Spanish; in essence, character was reinvented to be indigenous to Merced. Nuñez’s translation along with the change of the language from ‘my native English’ to ‘mi español nativo’ makes an eloquent case for the plight of the immigrant or the exiled:

The language I have learnt these forty years, My native English, now I must forgo, And now my tongue’s use is to me no more Than an unstringed viol or harp, Within my mouth you have engaol’d my tongue, Doubly portcullised with my teeth and lips, And dull unfeeling barren Ignorance Is made my gaoler to attend on me. ⁸³⁵	La lengua que yo he aprendido estos cuarento años, Mi español nativo, ahora lo dejare: Y ahora el uso de mi lengua es nada más Que un viola o arpa sin cordón, Dentro mi boca tu has clausurado mi lengua, Doblemente impedido con mis dientes y labios; Y opaca insensible ignorancia Ha hecho mi guarda asistir.
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Nuñez stated that viewers would make the connection that Mercedes is ‘essentially being deported for a crime he did not commit’.⁸³⁶ The loss of agency one experiences when prejudiced societal pressures discourage the use of a native language is evident in the participant responses in this study and is still a feeling present in Americans of Hispanic heritage. Claudia Boehm, who played the role of Queen Isabella, discussed how she’s always had to leave behind her ‘español nativo’, when engaging with theatre in the Central Valley, and oftentimes she felt

⁸³⁵ Shakespeare, *Richard II*, pp. 220-21.

⁸³⁶ Ángel Nuñez, Maria Nguyen-Cruz, and Cathryn Flores, *Ricardo El Segundo: A Bilingual Adaptation of Shakespeare’s Richard II*, ed. by William Wolfgang (Merced, California, 2020). William Wolfgang, Maria Nguyen-Cruz, and Ángel Nuñez, ‘RICARDO II – EP. 2: Arpa sin Cordon’, in *Ricardo II*, YouTube, Merced Shakespearefest, 11 September 2020, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=czCQDK015FQ>> [accessed 11 September 2020].

that being Latina led to her not receiving roles. Because of this, Boehm stated that she ‘always thought the characters [in Shakespeare] were more for white people’.⁸³⁷ Growing up in Merced, Boehm said it would have been ‘unheard of’ to participate in a Spanish-speaking theatrical production.

I would watch productions performed in Mexico in the Grand Theatre, in Guadalajara or Mexico City through the television dreaming ‘why can’t we have this here’, and so it has just been a dream come true to be able to perform in my own language here in California with such amazing people.⁸³⁸

Boehm was not alone in feeling this way; other participants cited similar experiences. Gutiérrez, who immigrated from Venezuela, acknowledged that Latinxs are a marginalized community in the United States, but cautioned in his experience that, ‘things like this are normal and happen in all countries, Californians are no more racist - others are just as racist’.⁸³⁹ However, what was a surprise for Gutiérrez was the perception that speaking Spanish is ‘less than’ speaking English; he elaborated, ‘for me, Spanish is the language of high culture’.⁸⁴⁰ He then cited the work of Cervantes, Lope de Vega and Rubén Darío among others; but ultimately, high culture in the United States is associated with Shakespeare, and current power structures in America resists the notion that Latinxs possess a ‘legitimate linguistic identity’.⁸⁴¹ This project was able to provide this legitimacy for participants while undermining very real prejudices against the Hispanic community. Musing about what such a project would mean to non-Spanish speakers, Gutiérrez continued ‘The Spanish language is not only these immigrant Latinos who come take away our jobs, but [it is] also Shakespeare. Spanish can be anything’.⁸⁴² Gutiérrez’s statement has double meaning: first that the Spanish language is literally more than an immigrant language; in its legitimacy it is complex, rich, and deserves more than a quick,

⁸³⁷ The above quote is my translation of following from our bilingual interview: ‘pero yo siempre pensé que los personajes eran más para las personas blanca’. Alejandro Gutiérrez and Claudia Boehm, Interview, p. 3.

⁸³⁸ Ruben Espinosa, ‘Chicano Shakespeare’, p. 79.

⁸³⁹ The above quote is my translation of following from our bilingual interview: ‘Cosas que es normal y que sucede en todos los países, los Californianos no son más racistas que otra personas son iguales de racistas.’ Gutiérrez and Boehm, Interview, p. 4.

⁸⁴⁰ The above quote is my translation of following from our bilingual interview: ‘Para mí, el español es la lengua de la alta cultura’. Ibid.

⁸⁴¹ Espinosa, ‘Chicano Shakespeare’, p. 79.

⁸⁴² The above quote is my translation of following from our bilingual interview: ‘el español no es solamente estos latinos inmigrantes que vienen a quitarnos el trabajo sino que también es Shakespeare. El español puedo ser todo.’ Gutiérrez and Boehm, Interview, p. 4.

common stereotype. Also, he is referring to the classic xenophobic trope that immigrants come into a country to take opportunities from residents of that country. This sentiment in America, of course, is not new. As Shapiro argued, by the late 1880s, Shakespeare's cultural role was weaponized to fight back against what some saw as 'the threat that unrestricted immigration posed to America's identity'.⁸⁴³ For those that still hold similar beliefs one hundred forty years later, *Ricardo II* disrupts their belief in Shakespeare's traditional role.

Cast members were very aware that this production subverted expectations regarding Shakespeare's typical English-speaking audience. Recognizing the historical roots as well as the present-day reality, Harker Hale (who portrayed Northumberland in *Ricardo II*) talked specifically of how this production pushed back against white supremacy. They went on to elaborate:

I have known people who have used the works of Shakespeare as evidence of their own white, western superiority. And knowing that there are people out there who look at Shakespeare's works that way, and then knowing that I was involved in a production like this, that must truly infuriate them.⁸⁴⁴

Hale's statement displays a keen awareness of historical antecedents (while also demonstrating their oppositional zeal) as well as the contemporary realities presented in this thesis. Also, this analysis unmistakably intersects with MacKaye's 1916 production of *Caliban*. With overt allusions to white supremacy in the name of Shakespeare's deity-like genius, xenophobic and anti-immigrant messaging, along with exclusionary and ridged artistic practices, it would not be difficult to establish *Ricardo II* as an antithesis of MacKaye's production. His *Caliban* sought to assimilate immigrants and homogenize American culture as a whole. Luther Ely Smith, MacKaye's associate, made the case for tolerating foreigners amidst a time of great immigration from 'the south of Europe'. It was Smith's belief that after participating in these grand city-wide community artistic functions like *Caliban*, the communal spirit will have the 'artificial barriers...burned away', and ultimately, 'all the foreigners are transfused into Americans, our race or national antipathy has vanished'.⁸⁴⁵ Unsurprisingly, this misguidedly naïve expectation failed, and barriers

⁸⁴³ Shapiro, *Shakespeare in a Divided America*, p. 126.

⁸⁴⁴ Harker Hale and Heike Hambley, 'Merced Shakespearefest's *Ricardo II*', Interview by William Wolfgang (Merced, CA: 20 July 2020), p. 1.

⁸⁴⁵ MacKaye, *A Substitute for War*, pp. 47-51.

were not burned away in 1916 through MacKaye's esoteric production. The strategy of rather literally asking audience members to bow down to Shakespeare's greatness was not effective.⁸⁴⁶ MacKaye identified the problem was that the people were still a 'polyglot population'. To carry out his 'community meaning' more effectively in New York City, MacKaye had the idea to translate the text of *Caliban* into multiple languages. This translation never materialized, and the people he was seeking to benevolently assimilate were given no legitimacy.⁸⁴⁷

In light of how Shakespeare's work has been appropriated by those who wish to exclude and oppress, it was vital for the *Ricardo II* team to develop a production that would do the opposite. The production sought not only to increase opportunity for participants, but also encourage their responsibility in the process of sculpting a Shakespearean adaptation. In this respect, we endeavoured to follow the matrix of grassroots theatre, having participants create and shape their own characters, outside of directorial control. This methodology was approached through the adaptation work of myself, Nuñez and Nguyen-Cruz on the script, meanwhile Flores applied this collaborative philosophy in her planning and execution of the music. After months of independent work, Nuñez opened the translation process up to the group at large and sought their opinions and experiences. Taking on the role of Henry Percy, cast member Lupita Yopez emphasized the unique intersectionality between personal and collective responsibility in grassroots theatre. 'I feel a lot of responsibility when trying to play with words, like Shakespeare does', Yopez continued by emphasizing that this meant careful attention to specific Spanish pronunciations as well. She stated that the Spanish and English balance in the production was 'something that I could really connect to'; and she did so on multiple levels.⁸⁴⁸ Yopez added that this was the type of communication, rapidly transitioning back and forth between the two languages, or code-switching, that she used in everyday life with her friends and family.⁸⁴⁹ Through this, Yopez described an experience markedly similar to Espinosa's students using Shakespeare as a 'vehicle'

⁸⁴⁶ Shapiro, *Shakespeare in a Divided America*, pp. 143-144

⁸⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 142.

⁸⁴⁸ Cynthia Robles and Lupita Yopez, 'Merced Shakespearefest's *Ricardo II*', Interview by William Wolfgang (Merced, CA: 25 July 2020), p. 2.

⁸⁴⁹ Ibid.

to ‘register apprehensions’ regarding the ‘burdens of hybridity’ along with ‘daily bi-national, cross-cultural experiences’.⁸⁵⁰

Negotiating these experiences meant the group had to maintain the script as a living document, and thereby Nuñez collaboratively led the effort to assure the local dialect was present in the Spanish of *Ricardo II*. Script alterations occurred daily throughout the months-long rehearsal process. This progression was not only artistically engaging to be a part of, but also enlightening for many of the participants regardless of their command of the Spanish or English languages. This collective responsibility in designing the production also meant that we needed to avoid generalizations, linguistic or otherwise. Cynthia Robles, who played three roles in the production, was very pleased to be involved in creating work that had ‘really strong characters, just speaking in Spanish’ without stereotypes.⁸⁵¹ In this way, Shakespeare’s role in our creative process with *Ricardo II* was diametrically opposed to MacKaye’s approach. Rather than prostrating in front of the linguistic demigod in *Caliban*, the creative team along with the participants harnessed the ‘common property’ of Shakespeare; they freely revelled in the two languages, adjusted syntax and grammar, and debated the use of arcane words. Co-director Maria Nguyen-Cruz explained how even primarily English speakers ‘no matter [their] level of familiarity’ with Spanish began to ‘absorb one another’s language’.⁸⁵² Nguyen-Cruz’s description alludes to the production as a linguistic laboratory. Decisions regarding the nature of Shakespeare’s text or the Spanish text were made with the surrounding community in mind. These considerations included adaptations for local dialect, and a continual balancing act between Latin American Spanish and Shakespeare’s English.⁸⁵³ The *Ricardo II* participants embraced Shakespeare’s verse when necessary, but with the nature of the Spanish language and its general incompatibility with iambic pentameter this only occurred in predominantly English language sections.

The challenges that came with bilingual grassroots theatre were fused with the challenges of daily life in the pandemic, and it was difficult to analyse them independently. It is also critical to note, working in a collaborative and practical

⁸⁵⁰ Espinosa, ‘Chicano Shakespeare’, p. 81.

⁸⁵¹ Robles and Yopez, Interview, p. 3.

⁸⁵² Flores, Nguyen-Cruz, and Nuñez, Interview, p. 4.

⁸⁵³ Nuñez, Nguyen-Cruz, and Flores, *Ricardo El Segundo: A Bilingual Adaptation of Shakespeare's Richard II*.

theatrical environment in addition to the constantly changing and, at times, ambiguous performance medium, left us without an administrative blueprint. The process was participant-led as often as it was guided by time-constraints and outside factors. The COVID-19 pandemic brought about the need for adaptations that previously, in the theatre, would have seemed inconceivable. Oftentimes, there didn't seem to be a precedent for the decisions we were faced with, as our reliance on technology (such as Zoom rehearsals) appeared to be the only way forward. After establishing protocols for in-person activities, we had to adjust as they failed to work. Primarily, we had to adapt to the recommended 'six feet' of distance between individuals when we began the filming process and blocking the actor's position on set was improvised accordingly. Actors were masked, but nevertheless, from my leadership vantage, this was an extraordinarily difficult undertaking. Despite the guidelines and constant reminders, even the best-intentioned individuals (myself included) naturally would find themselves breaking this distance guideline, unintentionally, in a theatrically collaborative space. Nevertheless, the pressure to do the work correctly and to take the coronavirus spread seriously was immense; in the polarised climate of 2020, this alone was seen as a political gesture. Armed with masks and six-foot spacing poles that doubled as spears, we limited filming to six days during a window when the county of Merced and the state of California were open for business. Ultimately, the responsibility for the production as a whole rested with Merced Shakespearefest's founding artistic director, Heike Hambley, who reflected on the process one month after filming had concluded:

So, we're trying Zoom, it works for a while. Then we can open up a little bit. We work in our backyard with masks and branches that are showing us six feet of social distancing, and then Billy (William Wolfgang) changes all the time with it...I think it's a mystery, it's a miracle...with a lot of work from lots of people...I also think it was good for everybody's soul to be involved, and that's what we hoped for.⁸⁵⁴

Hambley's closing sentence reflects a common thread in the oral histories shared with us after the production. These were personal stories and experiences entwined with themes of growth, hope, and resiliency. Gutiérrez emphasized the challenges of creating theatre in the midst of the pandemic; he proudly stated, 'but we did'.⁸⁵⁵ A

⁸⁵⁴ Greg Ruelas and Heike Hambley, 'Merced Shakespearefest's *Ricardo II*', Interview by William Wolfgang (Merced, CA: 25 July 2020), p. 2.

⁸⁵⁵ Gutiérrez and Boehm, Interview, p. 5.

dominant theme present in the closing interviews of the project was ‘hope that things can change’.⁸⁵⁶ Hope is a characteristic of grassroots theatre that is profoundly rooted in struggling for equality, and it is naturally a prelude to social activism.⁸⁵⁷ It seemed for many participants, that the rapid and consistent layering of political, health, economic, and social crises fuelled a profound need for hope. Boehm extended this feeling to the community at large, emphasizing many times the word ‘hope’ (or ‘esperanza’ in Spanish), directing it specifically to young members of the Hispanic community in Merced:

Hope. Hope right now is something that is very great, not only for this type of thing, but hope right now is everything. Hope that all this passes soon, hope that we return to a normal, not like before but a new normal with more knowledge of how we should treat other people. And also hope for the young people of ‘oh, they did this because I can't, because I haven't been given that opportunity?’⁸⁵⁸

As Boehm established, she felt this project would provide hope to her high school-aged students making them aware of newly developing artistic opportunities in their community. Beyond that, Nuñez similarly aspired that at the conclusion of this project we would have ‘created the space of representation, [and] a feeling of accessibility’, and achieved the feeling of ‘legitimacy’ discussed by Espinosa.⁸⁵⁹ According to the participants in this production, that goal has been met. Just as Catherine Bodenbender of the Prenzie Players emphasized, the participant experience is the primary objective of grassroots theatre. It is the process-based nature of creating art that brings the individuals back continually. It is not the product that does so. By this important metric, *Ricardo II* and the Applied Shakespeare work therein, even before the first episode appeared online, was a success. Boehm ended the interview cherishing this very sentiment: ‘I get so emotional, I'm sorry this is just how much it means to me; I mean... [I have] no words.’⁸⁶⁰

⁸⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁵⁷ Appendix G.

⁸⁵⁸ The above quote is my translation of following from our bilingual interview: ‘Esperanza. La esperanza ahorita es algo que es muy grande, no solamente para este tipo de cosas, sino la esperanza ahorita es todo. Esperanza de que todo esto pase pronto, la esperanza de que volvamos a una normalidad, no como antes, pero una normalidad nueva con más conocimiento de cómo debemos tratar a las demás personas. Y también a la esperanza para los jóvenes de ellos hicieron esto porque yo no puedo porque no tengo se me ha dado esa oportunidad?’ Gutiérrez and Boehm, Interview, p. 4.

⁸⁵⁹ Flores, Nguyen-Cruz, and Nuñez, Interview, p. 8. Espinosa, ‘Chicano Shakespeare’, p. 77.

⁸⁶⁰ Gutiérrez and Boehm, Interview, p. 4.

For her part, artistic director Heike Hambley (who is a bilingual German and English speaker) wanted to do a bilingual production ‘for a long time’. After completing this production, she believed that it would have a deep impact on how she looks at the plays, even after two decades of directing Shakespeare. Hambley mused during the post-production interviews: ‘I will never look at this play again without having two languages in my head’. Meanwhile, in yet another example for the desire to have permanence and continuity in grassroots theatre activities, participants asked for more translated texts, and more bilingual opportunities.⁸⁶¹ Co-director and text translator Ángel Nuñez had a parallel viewpoint but didn’t specify that these opportunities needed to come with Shakespeare as the vehicle. Instead, Nuñez saw *Ricardo II* as the impetus for ‘opening doors’ to a variety of diverse and multicultural arts projects yet to come.⁸⁶²

Like their grassroots colleagues from around the nation, the collective work assembled by the cast of *Ricardo II* has the familiar feeling of esprit de corps. Debra Ann Byrd made the allusion that ‘we’re soldiers’. While the ‘we’ portion of this statement is certainly her organisation, the Harlem Shakespeare Festival, she also could very easily be referring to all of the artists and activists in this decentralized grassroots Shakespeare movement from the Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company to Recycled Shakespeare to the cast of *Ricardo II*. These organisations and artists are placing their work in opposition to various establishments. As a founding principle of grassroots theatre states ‘to meet with no resistance indicates a failure to enter the fight’.⁸⁶³ This resistance does indeed exist in many iterations and has appeared in the form of audience dissent from individuals who feel Shakespeare’s intent has been irreverently distorted. As such, some audiences want ‘doublets and hose, not social justice stuff’. This demands the question: how long can Shakespeare be both ‘common property’ owned and *altered* by all and ‘common ground’ owned and *shared* by all? This question represents a necessary balance of political and apolitical Shakespeare. As previously argued, if all Shakespeare were to become politically charged in this way, this longstanding balance between reverence and adaptation

⁸⁶¹ Robles and Yopez, Interview, p. 1.

⁸⁶² Flores, Nguyen-Cruz, and Nuñez, Interview, p. 8.

⁸⁶³ Appendix G – ‘A Matrix Articulating the Principles of Grassroots Theater’ *From the Ground Up: Grassroots Theater in Historical and Contemporary Perspective*. ‘Grassroots theater is linked to the struggles for cultural, social, economic, and equity for all people. It is fundamentally a theater of hope and often joy. It recognizes that to advocate for equity is to meet resistance and to meet with no resistance indicates a failure to enter the fight.’

would cease to be sustainable. Ironically, in this sense, it is the forces that wish to keep Shakespeare safely enshrined as a cultural deity that have enabled this work to have been consistently reinvented in America for centuries. This unrivalled agency that has been assigned to the Shakespearean canon has clearly benefited the activist causes of the groups in this study. Hence, political and apolitical performance are equally necessary for the continuation of this art in its current form.

As demonstrated throughout this chapter, the aforementioned previously unnoticed organisations have enriched cultural and political debates while providing a platform of legitimacy for America's marginalized voices. In some cases, the groups and artists band together, like the #EarthShakes Alliance, to tackle some of our most existential collective issues. In other moments, change happened slowly and incrementally, but nonetheless deliberately.

CONCLUSION

Grassroots Shakespeare is oppositional Shakespeare. While embracing centuries of inherited tradition, this artform is composed of practices that subvert preconception and resist the status quo. It is part of an American culture that perpetuates the complex dualities of Shakespeare. As established in this thesis, Shakespeare's work is at the heart of a capitalist theatre industry while simultaneously occupying the centre of an altruistic and decentralised volunteer-based amateur movement. The work can be begrudgingly conservative to some and obscenely progressive to others; this is one of the most central binaries of the phenomenon. Shakespeare is both 'common ground' and 'common property'. His work is treasured in its unaltered form, and endlessly intriguing in its adaptations. If his works were not celebrated in this manner, professional and amateur actors would certainly not continue to routinely traverse through thirty-seven of his plays across fifty states. Instead, the accepted nature of the capital of his work has become widespread, as demonstrated by the history and contemporary accounts in this thesis.

Therefore, individuals from 'all walks of life' collectively assemble with this shared value to make this 'common property' their own. As Robert Gard imagined for grassroots theatre, these stories come from 'all of the countrysides of America'. This work is also the artform that was so elusive for theatrical pioneer Percy MacKaye whose vision of 'drama *of and by* the people, not merely *for* the people' still remains aspirational today. The data, qualitative and quantitative, covered throughout this thesis prove that Shakespeare in the grassroots is indeed a prevalent cultural phenomenon, present in each of the fifty states. By the end of the 2010s, there were at least one hundred thirty grassroots Shakespeare organisations serving communities around the United States. While their inconspicuous, yet nonetheless widespread, nature certainly contributed to the dearth of scholarly writing on the topic, this thesis has demonstrated the local and deeply personal impact such groups have had on their communities and participants. Beyond these personal connections that cannot be measured appropriately with data, the field of amateur performance is so deeply entwined with the history of Shakespeare in America that the two are inseparable.

As Fred Adams, founder of the Utah Shakespeare Festival, talked of the locality in Cedar City, he stated Shakespeare was 'part of their inheritance, part of

their culture'. This 'inheritance' unquestionably extends far beyond Cedar City, and beyond Utah to the rest of the United States. This legacy is older than the nation itself and is not one built upon Shakespeare as an activity rooted in 'mere spectatorship'. Rather, this legacy includes innumerable structures built upon the professional-amateur symbiosis. This can be traced back as early as a grassroots-style Revolutionary War era production advocating for self-rule and freedom from British tyranny. Future presidents and the common man alike played in amateur productions, while professional touring companies helped to spread Shakespeare's popularity from coast to coast. It was at the local level, and the individual community level, where Shakespeare would profoundly take hold. Sentiments like 'read the Bible first, Shakespeare second' were at the heart of developing this nationally shared value.

Because of the widespread nature of Shakespeare's presence, his work had become, in essence, unregulated and decentralized. Hence, Levine's assertion that Shakespeare was the 'common property to be treated as the user saw fit' is true. Shakespeare had made it to the frontiers of Montana, pioneer huts in Kansas, and had developed into the form of amateur performance in mining camps outside of Sacramento, California. These isolated, disparate locations would see the formation of organisational structures around this inherited interest in Shakespeare. From 1912 to 1916 in Kinsley, Kansas, the earliest modern place-based grassroots Shakespeare festival occurred. This structure was remarkably similar to professional and grassroots organisations of today: the group's name was based in locality, its funding model was based locally and regionally, the participants and community alike found pride in the group, it was deeply rooted in tradition, and it was very much a product of Kansas. This festival also is the earliest documented desire, as I have been able to locate, for a Shakespeare organisation's continuity and permanence.

Since the Kinsley Festival over one hundred years ago, countless organisational entities have developed for the same purpose, many of which have since ceased operations, and likely been lost to history. Along the way, the impact of grassroots amateur organisations has been captured in a few accounts. Notably, the origins of multiple professional groups, but also in the trailblazing accomplishments of the Pasadena Community Playhouse. This group pioneered not only expansive and unprecedented Shakespearean programming (a model which most groups represented in this study now follow), but also organisational structure itself. Many

of these groups, old and new, endure with a deep continuity in America today because of this ability to coalesce as an official organisational entity. With the majority of these groups legally incorporating with their respective states, and then subsequently achieving a tax-exempt non-profit status from the federal government, most of these groups officially serve an 'educational purpose'. The groups vary in their approach to staffing, funding, and programming, and consequently, general statements regarding their administrative structures are difficult. Described as 'custom-made puzzle pieces', the facets that comprise these small organisations are diverse and unique. The unifying common thread across the field at large is the embrace of the volunteer.

Grassroots organisations are composed of volunteers who participate because of a combination of many factors covered in this thesis, but mainly by blending artistic work with feelings of belonging. Artistic freedom is central for Tony Pisculli from the Hawaii Shakespeare Festival who enthusiastically completed the canon in twelve years, while especially enjoying the process of creatively shaping the most obscure plays. Additionally, Catherine Bodenbender of the Prenzie Players in Iowa described a sense of belonging derived from the process-based experiences that permeates all the organisation's productions. She stated their foundational ideology, which is, like the volunteers themselves, present throughout the field: 'we do the show because we love it, and I think that is the most sustaining thing'.

Beyond the sustainability of volunteer actors, Shakespeare's body of work is, as Brokaw and Prescott conclude, 'inexhaustible and invulnerable'. Shakespeare will always be free for these groups to produce, alter, and make one's own, meanwhile building on centuries of American tradition. All of this makes Shakespeare an unrivalled asset for grassroots groups, as opposed to the repertoire of another theatrical organisation. Moreover, individuals continually return to this activity, as well, in what was referred to as a 'cycle of participation'. These volunteers return for a sense of esprit de corps, which was ambiguously referred to, throughout this research by multiple participants across multiple states, as 'magic'. Hence, a desire for permanence is logically a contributor to the continuity of the centuries-long traditions discussed throughout the thesis.

These traditions have been celebrated, and at times challenged by the same organisations; this includes the deconstruction of Shakespeare's words, only to build them back anew with added meaning for particular groups, as with *Ricardo II*.

Through the oral histories and field research in twenty states, I have established and presented that grassroots groups have developed inclusive programming, collective planning processes, and ultimately work that engages in the political sphere. This work is not isolated only in America's liberal bastions. As such, the aforementioned organisations not only share the commonality of struggling for equality based on a vision for a more equitable future, but they also do so in the same way, by embracing the 'common ground' of Shakespeare and then interpreting it as their own to further the causes they believe in. Consequently, grassroots Shakespeare has manifested in the heart of some of America's most conservative states, like Alabama (Bards of Birmingham) and South Carolina (Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company). In this way, the American 'inheritance' of Shakespeare is like American history itself, and with this history comes not only the pride of shared values and tradition, but also the uncomfortable legacies of the past. While early theorists and practitioners like MacKaye were not successful in implementing an equitable future through community arts, many of today's groups have succeeded in reimagining Shakespeare in their immediate localities, even if that change is incremental.

Ultimately, this thesis has amalgamated, for the first time, the extensive accomplishments and impact grassroots practitioners and participants have had, historically and contemporaneously, on the field of Shakespeare performance. Chronicling and analysing the participant experience with Shakespeare will ensure a more representative future for the field at large, and a more complete understanding of the past. These oral histories have been recorded in both audio and transcript form and will be preserved in the archives at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. The legitimacy such inclusion gives previously unnoticed organisations and practitioners will help to broaden the discussion moving forward with diverse and often marginalized voices from America. Regardless of specific research-based outcomes of this thesis, with historic and present research as a guide, one conclusion is certain: grassroots organisations will continue to produce Shakespeare with a collective sense of responsibility toward one another and the vital issues that permeate our local and national discourse. With this responsibility comes not only the freedom to make art, but also the freedom to envision and enact a better future.

EPILOGUE: SHAKESPEARE PERFORMANCE IN THE ERA OF COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic struck near the beginning of my third year of research for this thesis. On course from Pennsylvania to California, I was in transit through central Ohio when the seismic changes in our national way of life began. I had four interviews scheduled for this trip, although I was only able to complete two of these: the Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival in Indiana and the Flatwater Shakespeare Company in Nebraska. Two interviews and site visits in Arizona were cancelled: one at the Flagstaff Shakespeare Festival and the other at the Southwest Shakespeare Company. During this time, the situation was largely unknown, yet rapidly developing.

On 13 March 2020, upon concluding an interview with Summer Lukasiewicz in Lincoln, Nebraska, we both were trying to predict the future. Lukasiewicz was, at the time, in the process of deciding how exactly to cancel or postpone Flatwater Shakespeare Company's *Romeo and Juliet* which was opening the following week. Even at this early date in the pandemic timeline, Lukasiewicz was preparing alternatives, desperately trying to do something with her production that was ready to open in a few days.⁸⁶⁴ A local film artist was preparing to do the work 'pro bono' so the company could possibly recover from the financial loss; like many other non-profits and other small business, the impact would be existential. Lukasiewicz went on to muse at many vital, nevertheless rhetorical, questions that neither of us would have answers for. My visit to Nebraska marked the end of my in-person interviews with companies and concluded the window of this research of Shakespeare performance oral histories that spanned from summer 2014 to early 2020. When thinking of the rest of the year and her company's season, Lukasiewicz said: 'hope for the best'.⁸⁶⁵

Unfortunately, despite our hopes, the best was not what the United States received. A leadership crisis, political infighting and mismanagement beleaguered the national response.⁸⁶⁶ At the time of writing this Epilogue, on 15 August 2020, the United States had over 5.3 million confirmed cases and a staggering 168,903 deaths

⁸⁶⁴ Lukasiewicz, Interview, p. 1.

⁸⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁶ See Chapter 4, Section 3.

due to COVID-19.⁸⁶⁷ This was by far the largest case and numeric death count in the world. Naturally, because of this crisis, amassing large crowds into small spaces, as theatres generally do, would no longer be possible. Even if individuals could safely attend a production, due to the economic shutdown caused by the health crisis, 10.2 percent of all Americans were unemployed.⁸⁶⁸ Coupled with this staggering tragedy, one could surmise that most of the American theatre-going populous would not be terribly interested in this art form during this time. While this hypothesis is impossible to prove or disprove without research on the subject, I include in this Epilogue how the Shakespeare performance organisations that comprised this study responded. The loss of income across the field dramatically affected professional theatres' ability to operate and the industry's ability to conduct research as well. Accepting this reality of 'catastrophic revenue loss' the Theatre Communications Group, a vital source for research on the field, announced among many changes that the organisation would be closing its research department on 18 June 2020.⁸⁶⁹ In a field that already had a minimum of available published data, such an occurrence proves the need for continued scholarship on theatrical activities, Shakespearean or otherwise.

Moreover, the distinction between professional and grassroots Shakespeare groups is of even more consequence during the COVID-19 era. Grassroots organisations do not have to pay their staff or their actors, nor do these groups own venues. Therefore, going into a form of business hibernation without income or expenses is plausible for grassroots organisations. As established throughout the thesis, these groups are small, nimble, and resilient. Conversely, professional groups employ administrators, educators, artists and many others. Without cashflow or meaningful ticket sales, season and production-based sponsorships, balancing a budget obviously would be impossible. This is why professional Shakespeare groups such as the American Shakespeare Center in Staunton, Virginia were forced to furlough all of their staff and release their artists from their contracts (the organisation employed 'twenty-five full-time staff, fifteen part-time, and nearly

⁸⁶⁷ Lauren Gardner, 'COVID-19 Dashboard', Johns Hopkins University of Medicine, (2020) [Accessed 15 August 2020]. Despite the nation's population only being 4 percent of the worldwide population, the United States constituted 25 percent of world's cases.

⁸⁶⁸ 'Employment Situation News Release', (Washington, DC: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 7 August 2020).

⁸⁶⁹ Teresa Eyring, 'Changes at TCG', (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 18 June 2020).

thirty actors’).⁸⁷⁰ Artistic director Ethan McSweeney said in an email to patrons that closing the theatre on the 16 March 2020 was ‘the only path to save our organisation and position us to return and help rebuild’.⁸⁷¹ In the meantime, the group was able to launch online content, one of the few safe avenues to take for organisations and institutions of any size or structure as they attempted to continue operations.

The American Shakespeare Center was in good company. Every theatre organisation present in this study cancelled all or part of their physical season with the exception of Theatre in the Rough in Juneau, Alaska. Despite the nearly universal cancellations, some grassroots and professional groups alike could not remain in quarantine without their passion or financial need for the art form. Of the professional groups in this study, nine out of twenty-one (42 percent) completely cancelled their season. The others, with the exception of the American Shakespeare Center, took their season online. Of the seventeen fully grassroots groups located in Appendix C that were the subject of this thesis, fifteen of them were still operational as of January 2020 (Amerinda and Bards of Birmingham had ceased Shakespearean production previously). Nine of the fifteen grassroots organisations completely cancelled and shut their doors for the entire year (OrangeMite, Encore Theatre Co., Guerrilla Shakespeare, Prenzie Players, Arden Shakespeare, Shakespeare on the Green, Shakespeare 70, Shakespeare at Winedale, and Shakespeare in Yosemite).⁸⁷² Three groups are planning to or have produced supplemental content online; the Montford Park Players and the Recycled Shakespeare Company had prepared to make online productions and events available to their constituencies.⁸⁷³ The Wichita Shakespeare Company is set to produce a series of online monologue episodes in a program it calls ‘Viral Shakespeare: The Second Wave’.⁸⁷⁴ The case study presented in Chapter 4, the twelve-part, bilingual web series *Ricardo II*, is only Merced Shakespearefest’s first offering of their innovative season. The group is also preparing *The Tempest* for a radio drama format, with yet another online project in development after this.⁸⁷⁵ The only organisation to be as prolific in the pandemic as

⁸⁷⁰ Ethan McSweeney, ‘COVID-19 Update’, (Staunton, VA: American Shakespeare Center, 16 March 2020).

⁸⁷¹ Ibid.

⁸⁷² Organisational websites.

⁸⁷³ Organisational websites.

⁸⁷⁴ ‘Wichita Shakespeare Company Facebook Page’ <facebook.com/wichitashakespearecompany> (8 Jun 2019) [Accessed 28 July 2020].

⁸⁷⁵ Wolfgang, ‘Grassroots Shakespeare Ethnographic Field Notes and Observations’.

Merced Shakespearefest is the Hawaii Shakespeare Festival; Tony Pisculli took his entire three show summer season and repurposed it for Zoom theatre, successfully performing three Shakespeare plays, *As You Like It*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* online between 17 July and 23 August 2020.⁸⁷⁶

While much of the future is uncertain during this challenging era for live performance amidst the most devastating health crisis in more than a century, grassroots organisations continually demonstrate, all around the United States, their ingenuity and resiliency. For the groups that were able to continue operations, the work became even more meaningful to the participants as the United States wrestled with multiple crises: the impeachment of the president, the global pandemic with its associated mass fatalities, profound economic hardship, and a nation-wide racial reckoning. Alejandro Gutiérrez played the titular role in Merced Shakespearefest's *Ricardo II*; in a post-production interview, he reflected on what it meant to continue amidst the daily instability:

You put on top of these dark times even additional darkness because of the pandemic, and everybody is locked in their homes. And it's very difficult, although not impossible, as we collectively demonstrated. It is very difficult to create something beautiful in such dark circumstances, but we did.⁸⁷⁷

As Gutiérrez and his fellow community artists demonstrated with *Ricardo II*, having an outlet for expression during this time proved personally and collectively beneficial. As this thesis has established, Merced Shakespearefest and groups like it around the nation produce this art not to enjoy a casual pastime, but to inspire and provide hope by reimagining theatre itself for, by, and of their communities.

⁸⁷⁶ This was a ticketed event streamed live on YouTube with actors performing via Zoom; the performance provided me with the only opportunity to see grassroots Shakespeare that I did not direct myself in 2020. In Hawaii's non-contiguous counterpart, Alaska, Theatre in the Rough took on the only live grassroots performance of 2020 from an organisation represented in this study with a fully masked and socially distant *As You Like It* in an isolated outdoor pavilion. Organisational websites. Wolfgang, 'Grassroots Shakespeare Ethnographic Field Notes and Observations'.

⁸⁷⁷ Gutiérrez and Boehm, Interview, p. 3.

APPENDIX A – MATRICES FOR ORGANISATIONAL CLASSIFICATION

GRASSROOTS SHAKESPEARE PERFORMANCE MODEL	Map
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The organisation overtly and primarily centralizes its repertoire and artistic programming on the work of William Shakespeare. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The actors, and often the staff, are not financially compensated for their role within the company or performances. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants in these organisations could be described as amateurs - motivated to participate simply for the love of the activity. The participants come from all parts of the community, concurrently maintaining other careers and community roles during their involvement. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The productions often incorporate a regional quality and are designed by the community and for their community. These groups do not intentionally seek out audiences from beyond their immediate locale. Productions can be ‘oppositional’, as they go against mainstream or current standards. Likewise, the organisation can use Shakespeare’s work as a vehicle social and political activism. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The organisation finances its own operation through a variety of funding sources. Often funds are scarce, necessitating resourcefulness with artistic programming and administrative policy. Grassroots groups are heavily reliant on in-kind contributions of services to continue operations. 	
GRASSROOTS SHAKESPEARE UNIVERSITY-BASED MODEL	Map
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This organisational classification is the same as ‘Grassroots Shakespeare Performance Organisations’, with the primary distinction of being composed of university students <i>and</i> community members. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The organisation is financially supported in part or in full by a university or other educational institution, and therefore the size, scope, and frequency of the group’s programming is expanded. 	
PROFESSIONAL SHAKESPEARE PERFORMANCE MODEL	Map
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The organisation overtly and primarily centralizes its repertoire and artistic programming on the work of William Shakespeare. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The actors and staff are financially compensated by the organisation for their work, and it can serve as their primary source of income. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The professional actors and staff are professionally trained and credentialed. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The organisation finances its own operation through a variety of funding sources. 	

PROFESSIONAL SHAKESPEARE UNIVERSITY-BASED MODEL	Map
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This organisational classification is similar to ‘Professional Shakespeare Performance Organisations’ with the exception of participation and organisational funding capacity. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The professional actors and staff are professionally trained and credentialed. University students are occasionally given the opportunity to work side-by-side with professional artists. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation is financially supported in part or in full by a university or other educational institution, and therefore the size, scope, and frequency of the group’s programming is expanded 	

HYBRID SHAKESPEARE PERFORMANCE MODEL	Map
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation overtly and primarily centralizes its repertoire and artistic programming on the work of William Shakespeare. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This organisational model combines the qualities of the other classifications; these groups could be referred to as ‘semi-professional’, occasionally working with professional actors, but primarily relying on the surrounding community for participation. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This model can include varying levels of involvement from an educational institution. 	

YOUTH SHAKESPEARE PERFORMANCE MODEL	Map
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation overtly and primarily centralizes its educational and artistic programming on the work of William Shakespeare. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation’s mission is based on youth participants, usually in their teens or younger. While the participants are not professional, the instructors are often credentialed and compensated. All performances, however, are amateur in design and serve an educational purpose. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other aspects of these organisations are quite similar to grassroots performance organisations. 	

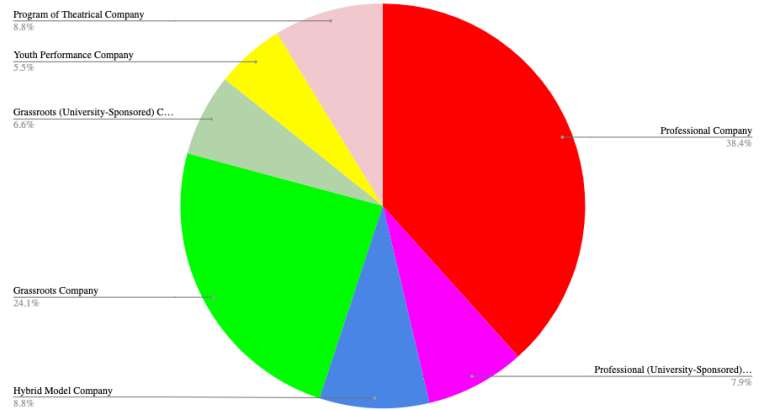
ANNUAL PROGRAM OF A LARGER THEATRICAL GROUP	Map
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These seasonal programs are part of a larger theatrical organisation that does not primarily produce the works of William Shakespeare, but they have become a large and vital presence in the community as an annual event, such as a local community ‘Shakespeare in the Park’. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These organisations can have qualities of any of the aforementioned classifications, including grassroots, professional, and hybrid models. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Such groups sponsor Shakespeare events or programs that are annual and are the only access to Shakespeare performance for some communities. 	

APPENDIX B - COMPLETE ORGANISATIONAL DATABASE

Statistical Overview of All Organisational Models:⁸⁷⁸

Organisational Model	# of orgs.
Professional Company	140
Professional (University-Sponsored) Company	29
Hybrid Model Company	32
Grassroots Company	88
Grassroots (University-Sponsored) Company	24
Youth Performance Company	20
Program of Theatrical Company	32
Total	365

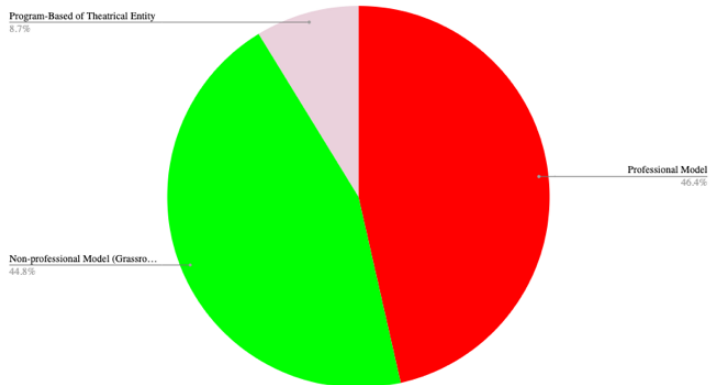
Organisational Models



Statistical Overview Professional vs Non-professional Models:

Organisational Model	# of orgs.
Professional Model	169
Non-professional Model (Grassroots, Hybrid, Youth)	164
Program-Based of Theatrical Entity	32
Total	365

Professional vs Non-professional Models



⁸⁷⁸ These organisations are classified based on the qualities outlined in Appendix A – Matrices for Organisational Classification. These organisations are also represented geographically in Appendix D – American Shakespeare Cartography.

State	Name	City	State	Model
ALABAMA	Alabama Shakespeare Festival	Montgomery	Alabama	Professional
	Bards of Birmingham*	Birmingham	Alabama	Youth Perf. Org. - Grassroots
	Huntsville Shakespeare	Huntsville	Alabama	Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
	Rude Mechanicals	Tuscaloosa	Alabama	Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
ALASKA	Anchorage Shakespeare Festival	Anchorage	Alaska	Grassroots
	Fairbanks Shakespeare Theatre	Fairbanks	Alaska	Hybrid Organisation
	Theatre in the Rough* El Rio Theatre Project - Shakespeare in the Park	Juneau Tucson	Alaska Arizona	Grassroots Grassroots
ARIZONA	Flagstaff Shakespeare Festival	Flagstaff	Arizona	Professional
	Grassroots Shakespeare Arizona	Phoenix	Arizona	Grassroots
	Laark Productions	Prescott	Arizona	Grassroots
	Southwest Shakespeare Company	Mesa	Arizona	Professional Professional - Uni. Spon.
ARKANSAS	Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre*	Conway	Arkansas	Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
	Arkansas Shakespeare Festival	Beebe	Arkansas	Professional - Uni. Spon.
	Northwest Arkansas Theatre Festival	Bentonville	Arkansas	Spon.
CALIFORNIA	A Noise Within	Pasadena	California	Professional
	African American Shakespeare Company	San Francisco	California	Professional
	Arabian Shakespeare Festival	San Francisco	California	Professional
	Archway Theatre	Burbank	California	Professional
	California Shakespeare Theater	Orinda	California	Professional
	Colonials: An American Shakespeare Co.	Santa Monica	California	Hybrid Organisation
	Courtyard Shakespeare Festival	Riverside	California	Professional - Uni. Spon.
	Curtain Theatre	Mill Valley	California	Grassroots
	Davis Shakespeare Festival	Davis	California	Professional
	Ensemble Shakespeare Theater Company	La Cañada Flintridge	California	Hybrid Organisation
	Half Moon Bay Shakespeare	Half Moon Bay	California	Professional
	Independent Shakespeare Company	Los Angeles	California	Professional
	Kern Shakespeare Festival	Bakersfield	California	Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
	Kinsmen Shakespeare Company	Thousand Oaks	California	Professional - Uni. Spon.
	Livermore Shakespeare Festival	Livermore	California	Professional
	Long Beach Shakespeare Company	Long Beach	California	Grassroots
	Los Angeles Drama Club	Los Angeles	California	Youth Perf. Org. - Grassroots
	Marin Shakespeare Company	San Rafael	California	Professional
	Merced Shakespeare Fest*	Merced	California	Grassroots
	Naked Shakes	Santa Barbara	California	Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
New Swan Shakespeare Festival	Irvine	California	Professional - Uni. Spon.	
Ophelia's Jump Productions	Upland	California	Professional	
Pacific Repertory Theatre: Carmel Shakespeare Festival	Carmel-by-the-Sea	California	Professional	
Petaluma Shakespeare Company	Petaluma	California	Hybrid Organisation	
CALIFORNIA	Porters of Hellgate Theatre Company	Los Angeles	California	Professional

	Sacramento Shakespeare Festival	Sacramento	California	Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
	San Diego Shakespeare Society	San Diego	California	Youth Perf. Org. - Grassroots
	San Francisco Shakespeare Festival	San Francisco	California	Professional
	Santa Barbara Shakespeare	Santa Barbara	California	Grassroots
	Santa Clarita Shakespeare Festival	Santa Clarita	California	Professional
	Santa Cruz Shakespeare	Santa Cruz	California	Professional
	Shakespeare by the Sea	San Pedro	California	Professional
	Shakespeare in the Cannery	Santa Rosa	California	Grassroots
	Shakespeare in the Vines	Temecula	California	Grassroots
	Shakespeare in Yosemite*	Yosemite Valley	California	Hybrid Organisation
	Shakespeare Napa Valley	Napa	California	Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
	Shakespeare on the Vine Theatre Company	Murphys	California	Hybrid Organisation
	Shakespeare Orange County	Garden Grove	California	Professional
	Sierra Classic Theatre: Shakespeare in the Woods	Mammoth Lakes	California	Program of Larger Group
	Sierra Madre Shakespeare Festival	Sierra Madre	California	Grassroots
	Silicon Valley Shakespeare	San Jose	California	Professional
	Sonoma Shakespeare Avalon Players	Sonoma	California	Professional
	Southern California Shakespeare Festival	Pomona	California	Professional - Uni. Spon.
	Spiritus Productions: Shakespeare in the Park	Redding	California	Hybrid Organisation
	Stanford Shakespeare Company	Stanford	California	Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
	Stratford Players	Idyllwild-Pine Cove	California	Grassroots
	The Central Coast Shakespeare Festival	San Luis Obispo	California	Grassroots
	The Old Globe	San Diego	California	Professional
	The Shakespeare Center of Los Angeles	Los Angeles	California	Professional
	Vallejo Shakespeare in the Park	Vallejo	California	Professional
	We Players	San Francisco	California	Hybrid Organisation
	Wildflower Women's Ensemble	Sacramento	California	Grassroots
	Will Geer's Theatricum Botanicum*	Topanga	California	Professional
	Woodward Shakespeare	Fresno	California	Grassroots
COLORADO	Colorado Shakespeare Festival	Boulder	Colorado	Professional - Uni. Spon.
	Denver Public Schools Shakespeare Festival	Denver	Colorado	Youth Perf. Org. - Grassroots
	Hudson Reed Ensemble: Annual Shakespeare in the Park	Basalt	Colorado	Program of Larger Group
	Shakespeare in the Parking Lot	Denver	Colorado	Program of Larger Group
	Shakespeare in the Sangres Festival	Westcliffe	Colorado	Grassroots
	The Wit's Shakesbeer	Denver	Colorado	Grassroots
	UCCS - Theatreworks Shakespeare Festival	Colorado Springs	Colorado	Professional - Uni. Spon.
CONNECTICUT	ArtFarm (Shakespeare in the Grove)	Middletown	Conn.	Professional
	Connecticut Free Shakespeare	Bridgeport	Conn.	Professional
	Curtain Call's "Shakespeare on the Green"	Stamford	Conn.	Program of Larger Group
	Elm Shakespeare	New Haven	Conn.	Professional - Uni. Spon.
	Flock Theatre	New London	Conn.	Professional - Uni. Spon.

	Greater Hartford Shakespeare Festival	West Hartford	Conn.	Professional Educational / Professional
	Shakespeare Academy @ Stratford	Stratford	Conn.	Professional
	Shakespeare on the Shoreline	Guilford	Conn.	Grassroots ?
	Shakespeare on the Sound	Norwalk	Conn.	Professional Professional / Educational
	Shakesperience Productions, Inc.*	Waterbury	Conn.	Educational
	Valley Shakespeare Festival	Shelton	Conn.	Grassroots
DELAWARE	Delaware Shakespeare	Wilmington	Delaware	Professional
	Possum Point Shakespeare Players The Arden Club - The Shakespeare Gild*	Georgetown Wilmington	Delaware Delaware	Grassroots Grassroots
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	Bootleg Shakespeare	Washington	District of Columbia District of Columbia District of Columbia	Program of Larger Group
	Folger Shakespeare Theatre	Washington	District of Columbia	Professional
	Shakespeare Theatre Company	Washington	District of Columbia	Professional
FLORIDA	Florida Shakespeare Theater	Coral Gables	Florida	Professional
	Marco Island Shakespeare Festival	Marco Island	Florida	Professional Professional - Uni. Spon.
	Orlando Shakespeare Theater	Orlando	Florida	Professional
	Palm Beach Shakespeare Festival Palm Coast Arts Foundation: Shakespeare in the Park	Jupiter Palm Coast	Florida Florida	Professional Grassroots
	Shakespeare in Paradise, Inc.	Naples	Florida	Professional Youth Perf. Org. - Grassroots
	Southeastern Teen Shakespeare Co.	Pensacola	Florida	Grassroots
	Southern Shakespeare Festival	Tallahassee	Florida	Professional
	St. Petersburg Shakespeare Festival	Saint Petersburg	Florida	Grassroots
GEORGIA	Newnan Shakes	Newnan	Georgia	Professional
	Rome Shakespeare Festival	Rome	Georgia	Professional Hybrid Organisation
	North Georgia Shakespeare Festival	Cumming	Georgia	Organisation
	Savannah Shakes	Savannah	Georgia	Grassroots
	Atlanta Shakespeare Company	Atlanta	Georgia	Professional
HAWAII	Hawaii Shakespeare Festival*	Honolulu	Hawaii	Grassroots
	Shakespeare in the Park	Hilo	Hawaii	Grassroots
IDAHO	Boise Bard Players Encore Theatre Co.: Shakespeare in the Park*	Boise Nampa	Idaho Idaho	Grassroots Program of Larger Group
	Idaho Shakespeare Festival	Boise	Idaho	Professional Youth Perf. Org. - Grassroots
	iShakespeare Live	Menan	Idaho	Grassroots
ILLINOIS	Chicago Shakespeare Theater*	Chicago	Illinois	Professional
	First Folio Theatre	Chicago	Illinois	Professional
	Genesius Guild	Rock Island	Illinois	Grassroots Professional - Uni. Spon.
	Illinois Shakespeare Festival	Bloomington	Illinois	Spon.
	Midsommer Flight	Chicago	Illinois	Professional
	Muse of Fire	Evanston	Illinois	Professional
	Oak Park Festival Theatre	Oak Park	Illinois	Professional
	Stone Soup Shakespeare	Carbondale	Illinois	Professional
	The Shakespeare Project of Chicago Wheaton Park District - Shakespeare in the Park	Elmhurst Wheaton	Illinois Illinois	Professional Grassroots - Uni. Spon.

INDIANA	Bard Fest	Indianapolis	Indiana	Professional
	Eclectic Pond Theatre Company	Indianapolis	Indiana	Grassroots
	Garfield Shakespeare Company	Indianapolis	Indiana	Grassroots
	Hoosier Shakes	Marion	Indiana	Professional
	Indianapolis Shakespeare Company	Indianapolis	Indiana	Professional
	Richmond Shakespeare Festival*	Richmond	Indiana	Professional
	Shakespeare at Notre Dame*	Notre Dame	Indiana	Professional - Uni. Spon.
	Shakespeare Machine	Fort Wayne	Indiana	Professional - Uni. Spon.
IOWA	Iowa Shakespeare Experience	Des Moines	Iowa	Grassroots
	Prenzie Players*	Davenport	Iowa	Grassroots
	Riverside Theatre: Shakespeare in the Park	Iowa City	Iowa	Program of Larger Group
KANSAS	Flint Hills Shakespeare Festival	Saint Marys	Kansas	Grassroots
	Shakespeare on the Porch	Hutchinson	Kansas	Youth Perf. Org. - Grassroots
	Wichita Shakespeare Company* Appalachian Shakespeare Center: Shakespeare in the Ravine	Wichita	Kansas	Grassroots
KENTUCKY	Appalachian Shakespeare Center: Shakespeare in the Ravine	Richmond	Kentucky	Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
	Kentucky Shakespeare	Louisville	Kentucky	Professional
	Murray Shakespeare Festival	Murray	Kentucky	Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
LOUISIANA	Acting Up (in Acadiana) Summer Youth Shakespeare	LaFayette	Louisiana	Youth Perf. Org. - Grassroots
	New Orleans Shakespeare Festival at Tulane*	New Orleans	Louisiana	Professional - Uni. Spon.
	Acorn Productions: Naked Shakespeare	Portland	Maine	Program of Larger Group
MAINE	Bath Shakespeare Festival	Bath	Maine	Professional
	Camden Shakespeare Festival	Camden	Maine	Professional
	Recycled Shakespeare Company*	Waterville	Maine	Grassroots
	Sound and Fury	Portland	Maine	Grassroots
	Ten Bucks Theatre Company	Bangor	Maine	Program of Larger Group
	Theater at Monmouth	Monmouth	Maine	Professional
	MARYLAND	Annapolis Shakespeare Company	Annapolis	Maryland
Baltimore Shakespeare Factory* Brown Box Theatre: Shakespeare in the Park	Baltimore	Maryland	Professional	
Chesapeake Shakespeare Company	Berlin	Maryland	Professional	
Shore Shakespeare Company	Baltimore	Maryland	Professional	
The Rude Mechanicals	Centreville	Maryland	Grassroots	
MASSACHUSETTS	Actors' Shakespeare Project	Laurel	Maryland	Grassroots
	Actors' Shakespeare Project	Somerville	Mass.	Professional
	Bay Colony Shakespeare Company	Marshfield	Mass.	Professional
	Commonwealth Shakespeare Company	Wellesley	Mass.	Professional - Uni. Spon.
	Gazebo Players of Medfield: Shakespeare in the Woods	Medfield	Mass.	Grassroots
	Glass Horse Project: Shakespeare in Buttonwood	New Bedford	Mass.	Program of Larger Group
	Hampshire Shakespeare Company	Amherst	Mass.	Professional
	Midsummer Shakespeare	Wareham	Mass.	Grassroots
	Outdoor Shakespeare - Martha's Vineyard Playhouse	Edgartown	Mass.	Program of Larger Group
Pittsfield Shakespeare in the Park	Pittsfield	Mass.	Grassroots	

	Rebel Shakespeare Company	Salem	Mass.	Youth Perf. Org. - Grassroots
	Shakespeare & Company*	Lenox	Mass.	Professional
	Shakespeare Now! Theatre Company	Brookline	Mass.	Professional Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
	The MIT Shakespeare Ensemble	Cambridge	Mass.	Professional Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
	Worcester Shakespeare Company	Northbridge	Mass.	Professional Educational / Professional
MICHIGAN	Blue Lake Shakespeare Camp	Twin Lake	Michigan	Professional
	Grand Valley Shakespeare Festival	Allendale Charter Township	Michigan	Hybrid Organisation Professional - Uni. Spon.
	Interlochen Shakespeare Festival	Interlochen	Michigan	Professional
	Lakeside Shakespeare Theatre	Frankfort	Michigan	Professional
	Michigan Shakespeare Festival	Canton	Michigan	Professional
	Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Company	Grand Rapids	Michigan	Professional
	Shakespeare Behind Bars	Macatawa	Michigan	Grassroots
	Shakespeare in Detroit	Dearborn	Michigan	Professional Program of Larger Group
	Shakespeare in Prison	Detroit	Michigan	Hybrid Organisation
	Shakespeare in the Arb	Ann Arbor	Michigan	Professional
	Shakespeare in the Park: Branch County Community Theatre	Coldwater	Michigan	Program of Larger Group
	Shakespeare Royal Oak	Royal Oak	Michigan	Professional
	Upper Peninsula Shakespeare Festival	Marquette	Michigan	Professional
MINNESOTA	Cromulent Shakespeare Company	Minneapolis	Minnesota	Grassroots Professional - Uni. Spon.
	Great River Shakespeare Festival	Winona	Minnesota	Professional
	Minnesota Shakespeare Company	Saint Paul	Minnesota	Grassroots Grassroots / Education Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
	Redeeming Time Project	Moose Lake	Minnesota	Grassroots Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
	Shakespeare & Company	White Bear Lake	Minnesota	Youth Perf. Org. - Grassroots
	Shakespearean Youth Theatre	Saint Paul	Minnesota	Grassroots Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
	Wise Fool Theatre	Duluth	Minnesota	Grassroots Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
MISSISSIPPI	Mississippi College Shakespeare Festival	Clinton	Mississippi	Grassroots Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
	The Bard on the Bricks	Clinton	Mississippi	Grassroots Program of Larger Group
	Belhaven Shakespeare in the Park	Jackson	Mississippi	Program of Larger Group
	Greenwood Shakespeare Project Heart of America Shakespeare Festival*	Greenwood	Mississippi	Professional Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
MISSOURI	Missouri Shakespeare Festival	Joplin	Missouri	Hybrid Organisation Youth Perf. Org. - Grassroots
	Shakespeare Festival St. Louis	St. Louis	Missouri	Professional Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
MONTANA	Belt Valley Shakespeare Players	Belt	Montana	Professional Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
	Montana Shakespeare in the Parks*	Bozeman	Montana	Professional Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
NEBRASKA	Flatwater Shakespeare Company*	Lincoln	Nebraska	Grassroots Professional - Uni. Spon.
	Nebraska Shakespeare Festival	Omaha	Nebraska	Professional Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
	Shakespeare on the Square	Aurora	Nebraska	Grassroots
NEVADA	Bard in the Yard	Elko	Nevada	Grassroots
	Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival	Incline Village	Nevada	Professional Hybrid Organisation
	Merry War Theatre Group*	Reno	Nevada	Professional Hybrid Organisation

NEW HAMPSHIRE	Shakespeare Institute of Nevada	Las Vegas	Nevada	Professional
	Advice to the Players*	Sandwich	New Hampshire	Hybrid Organisation
NEW JERSEY	Seven Stages Shakespeare Company	Portsmouth	New Hampshire	Professional
	Blackbox Studios: Shakespeare in the Park	Teaneck	New Jersey	Program of Larger Group
NEW MEXICO	Bradley Beach Arts Council: Shakespeare at the Beach	Bradley Beach	New Jersey	Program of Larger Group
	Hudson Shakespeare	Woodland Park West Windsor Township	New Jersey	Grassroots Hybrid Organisation
	Shakespeare 70* The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey	Madison	New Jersey	Professional
	International Shakespeare Center Santa Fe	Santa Fe	New Mexico	Professional
	New Mexico Shakespeare Festival	Albuquerque	New Mexico	Professional
NEW YORK	Santa Fe Shakespeare Society	Santa Fe	New Mexico	Grassroots
	Acting Company	Kings County	New York	Professional
	Amerinda Inc.*	New York	New York	Professional
	Aquila Theatre	New York	New York	Professional
	Bad Quarto Productions	New York	New York	Professional
	Children's Shakespeare Theatre	Orangeburg	New York	Professional Youth Perf. Org. - Grassroots
	English Speaking Union	New York	New York	Educational / Professional
	Hamlet Isn't Dead	New York	New York	Professional
	Harlem Shakespeare Festival*	New York	New York	Professional Youth Perf. Org. - Grassroots
	Hamptons Shakespeare Festival	Amagansett	New York	Professional
	Hip to Hip Theatre Company	Queens County	New York	Professional
	Hofstra University Shakespeare Festival	Hempstead	New York	Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
	Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival	Philipstown	New York	Professional
	Hudson Warehouse	New York	New York	Professional
	Ithaca Shakespeare Company	Ithaca	New York	Hybrid Organisation
	New York Classical Theatre	New York	New York	Professional
	Rochester Community Players	Rochester	New York	Grassroots
	Rockland Shakespeare Company	Suffern	New York	Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
	Saratoga Shakespeare Company	Saratoga Springs	New York	Professional
	Shake on the Lake	Silver Lake	New York	Professional
	Shakespeare Forum	New York	New York	Professional
	Shakespeare in Delaware Park	Buffalo	New York	Professional
	Shakespeare in Lincoln Park	Albany	New York	Professional
	Shakespeare in the Parking Lot*	New York	New York	Program of Larger Group
	Shakespeare in the Square	New York	New York	Professional
	Staten Island Shakespearean Theatre Company	Richmond County	New York	Professional
	Syracuse Shakespeare-in-the-Park	Syracuse	New York	Hybrid Organisation Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
	The Public Theatre	New York	New York	Professional
Titan Theatre Company	Queens County	New York	Professional	
NORTH CAROLINA	Chickspeare	Charlotte	North Carolina	Grassroots

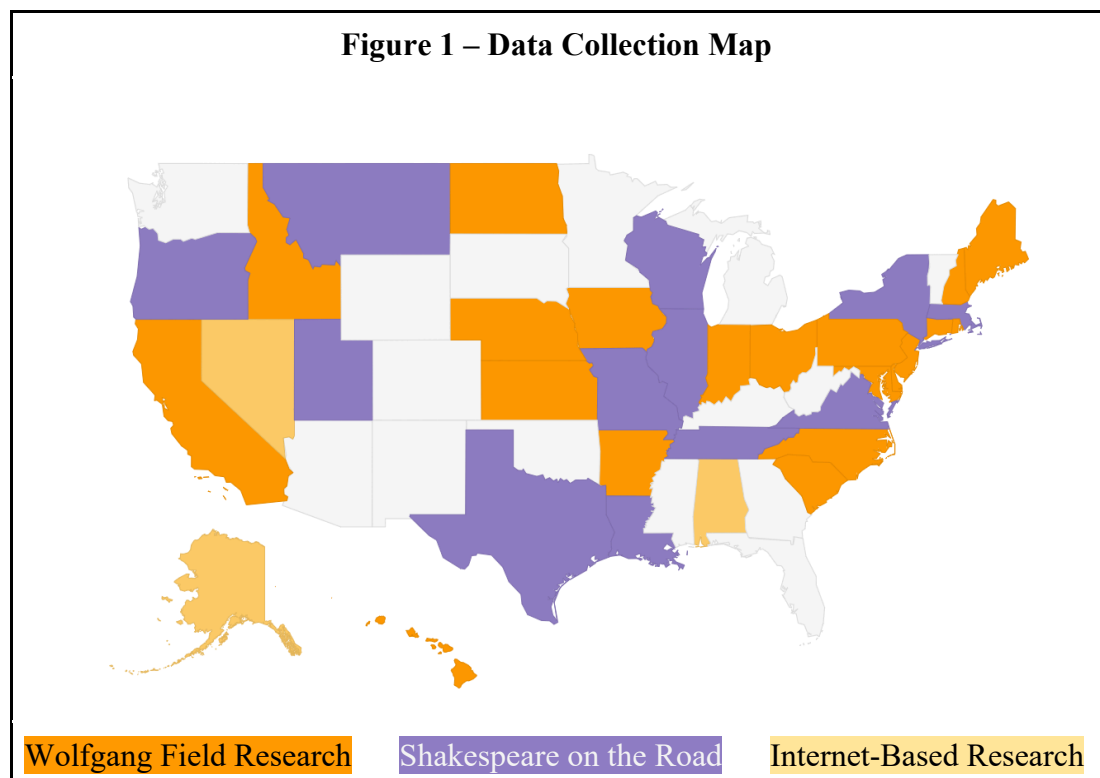
	Dram Tree Shakespeare	Wilmington	North Carolina	Grassroots	
	Green Room Comm. Theatre: Shakespeare in the Park	Newton	North Carolina	Program of Larger Group	
	Montford Park Players*	Asheville	North Carolina	Grassroots	
	Shared Radiance Performing Arts Company	Greensboro	North Carolina	Grassroots	
	Sweet Tea Shakespeare	Fayetteville	North Carolina	Professional	
NORTH DAKOTA	The City of Greensboro: Shakespeare in the Park	Greensboro	North Carolina	Program of Larger Group	
	Capitol Shakespeare	Bismarck	North Dakota	Grassroots	
OHIO	North Dakota Shakespeare Festival*	Grand Forks	North Dakota	Professional - Uni. Spon.	
	Actors' Theatre of Columbus	Columbus	Ohio	Professional	
	Cincinnati Shakespeare Company	Cincinnati	Ohio	Professional	
	Cleveland Shakespeare Festival	Cleveland Heights	Ohio	Hybrid Organisation	
	Great Lakes Theater	Cleveland	Ohio	Professional	
	Lord Denney's Players	Columbus	Ohio	Grassroots - Uni. Spon.	
	Ohio Shakespeare Festival	Akron	Ohio	Professional	
	Rubber City Theatre	Akron	Ohio	Professional	
	OKLAHOMA	Ada Shakespeare Company	Ada	Oklahoma	Hybrid Organisation
		Oklahoma Shakespeare Festival	Durant	Oklahoma	Professional - Uni. Spon.
Oklahoma Shakespeare in the Park		Oklahoma City	Oklahoma	Professional	
OREGON	Coos Bay Shakespeare in the Park	Coos Bay	Oregon	Professional	
	Free Shakespeare in the Park	Eugene	Oregon	Grassroots	
	Guerrilla Shakespeare Company	Bend	Oregon	Grassroots	
	Oregon Shakespeare Festival*	Ashland	Oregon	Professional	
	Original Practices Shakespeare Festival	Portland	Oregon	Hybrid Organisation	
	Portland Actors Ensemble	Portland	Oregon	Professional	
	Portland Shakespeare Project	Portland	Oregon	Professional	
	Rose City Shakespeare	Portland	Oregon	Grassroots	
	Willamette Shakespeare	Newberg	Oregon	Hybrid Organisation	
	PENNSYLVANIA	Band of Brothers Shakespeare Company	Johnstown	Pennsylvania	Grassroots
Gas Pipe Theatre Co.: Shakes. in the Park		Lewisburg Wilkes-Barre Township	Pennsylvania	Program of Larger Group	
Gaslight Theatre Company		South Abington Township	Pennsylvania	Grassroots	
Ghostlight Productions		South Abington Township	Pennsylvania	Grassroots	
Harrisburg Shakespeare Company		Harrisburg	Pennsylvania	Professional	
New Renaissance Theatre Company		Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania	Professional	
OrangeMite Shakespeare Company*		Dover Upper Saucon Township	Pennsylvania	Grassroots	
Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival		Upper Saucon Township	Pennsylvania	Professional - Uni. Spon.	
People's Shakespeare Project		Lancaster	Pennsylvania	Grassroots	
Philadelphia Shakespeare Theatre		Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	Professional	
Pittsburgh Shakespeare in the Parks		Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania	Grassroots	
Poor Yorick's Players		Monroeville	Pennsylvania	Hybrid Organisation	
Revolution Shakespeare		Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	Professional	
Scranton Shakespeare Festival		Scranton	Pennsylvania	Professional	

RHODE ISLAND	Shakespeare in Clark Park	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	Professional Program of Larger Group	
	Shakespeare Summer Nights	Erie	Pennsylvania	Hybrid Organisation	
	Steel City Shakespeare Center	Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania	Professional Hybrid Organisation	
	Colonial Theatre	Westerly	Rhode Island	Professional Hybrid Organisation	
	Shakespeare in the City	Providence	Rhode Island	Grassroots - Uni. Spon.	
	Shakespeare on the Green*	Providence	Rhode Island	Program of Larger Group	
SOUTH CAROLINA	Shakespeare on the Saugatucket The Rhode Island Shakespeare Theatre (TRIST)	South Kingstown Pawtucket	Rhode Island Rhode Island	Hybrid Organisation	
	Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company*	Greenville	South Carolina	Grassroots	
	Shakespeare Carolina	Spartanburg	South Carolina	Professional	
	Shakespeare in the Park: Market Theatre Company	Rock Hill Anderson	South Carolina South Carolina	Professional Program of Larger Group	
	South Carolina Shakespeare Company	Columbia	South Carolina	Grassroots	
	The Greenville Shakespeare Company	Greenville	South Carolina	Grassroots Program of Larger Group	
	Upstate Shakespeare Festival	Greenville	South Carolina	Grassroots	
	SOUTH DAKOTA	Bare Bodkins Theatre Company	Sioux Falls	South Dakota	Professional Professional - Uni. Spon.
		South Dakota Shakespeare Festival	Vermillion	South Dakota	Program of Larger Group
		Back Alley Productions: Shakespeare in the Park	Chattanooga	Tennessee	Professional
TENNESSEE	Nashville Shakespeare Festival*	Nashville	Tennessee	Professional	
	Shakespeare in Johnson City	Johnson City	Tennessee	Grassroots	
	Tennessee Shakespeare Company	Memphis	Tennessee	Professional	
	Tennessee Stage Company	Knoxville	Tennessee	Professional	
	TEXAS	Austin Shakespeare	Austin	Texas	Professional Hybrid Organisation
Bare Bones Shakespeare		Plano	Texas	Grassroots	
Conroe Shakespeare Festival		Conroe	Texas	Grassroots	
EmilyAnn Theatre & Gardens		Wimberley	Texas	Grassroots	
En Route's "Shakespeare on the Farm"		Austin	Texas	Grassroots Hybrid Organisation	
Hidden Room Theatre		Austin	Texas	Professional - Uni. Spon.	
Houston Shakespeare Festival		Houston	Texas	Program of Larger Group	
Magik Theatre: Shakespeare on the River		San Antonio	Texas	Hybrid Organisation	
Odessa Shakespeare Festival		Odessa	Texas	Program of Larger Group	
Plaza Theatre Company - Shakespeare in the Park		Cleburne	Texas	Grassroots - Uni. Spon.	
Shakespeare at Winedale*		Round Top	Texas	Professional	
Shakespeare Dallas		Dallas	Texas	Grassroots	
Shakespeare in the Shade		Tomball	Texas	Grassroots	
Shakespeare on the Concho		San Angelo	Texas	Grassroots	
Shakespeare on the Rocks		El Paso	Texas	Grassroots	
Something For Nothing Theatre Company		Austin	Texas	Grassroots Professional - Uni. Spon.	
Texas Shakespeare Festival		Kilgore	Texas	Grassroots	
The Baron's Men	Austin	Texas	Grassroots		

	Trinity Shakespeare Festival	Fort Worth	Texas	Professional - Uni. Spon.
	UpStage Theatre: Shakespeare in the Park	Spring	Texas	Program of Larger Group
UTAH	Grassroots Shakespeare Company	Provo	Utah	Grassroots
	New World Shakespeare Company	Salt Lake City	Utah	Grassroots Professional - Uni.
	Utah Shakespeare Festival*	Cedar City	Utah	Spon. Youth Perf. Org. - Grassroots
VERMONT	Get Thee to the Funnery	Hardwick	Vermont	Professional
	Shakespeare in the Woods	Pawlet	Vermont	Grassroots Professional - Uni. Spon.
	Shakespeare on Main Street	Danby	Vermont	Grassroots Professional - Uni. Spon.
	Vermont Shakespeare Festival	Burlington	Vermont	Professional Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
VIRGINIA	American Shakespeare Center*	Staunton	Virginia	Professional Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
	Bard Unbound	Richmond	Virginia	Professional
	Brave Spirits Theatre	Alexandria	Virginia	Grassroots
	Britches and Hose Theatre Company	Herndon	Virginia	Professional
	Quill Theatre	Richmond	Virginia	Grassroots Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
	Shakespeare Alive	Williamsburg	Virginia	Professional Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
	Shakespeare in the Dark	Williamsburg	Virginia	Professional Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
	Shakespeare Opera Theatre	The Plains	Virginia	Grassroots
	TCC's Shakespeare in the Grove	Chesapeake	Virginia	Professional Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
	Two Muses Productions	Roanoke	Virginia	Professional
	WSC Avant Bard	Arlington	Virginia	Grassroots
WASHINGTON	Animal Fire Theatre	Olympia	Washington	Grassroots Youth Perf. Org. - Grassroots
	Community Shakespeare	Lopez Island	Washington	Professional
	Fern Shakespeare Company	Seattle	Washington	Professional
	Green Stage	Seattle	Washington	Professional
	Island Shakespeare Festival	Langley	Washington	Professional
	Island Stage Left	Friday Harbor	Washington	Grassroots
	Northwest Shakespeare	Mount Vernon	Washington	Grassroots
	Rude Mechanicals	Richland	Washington	Professional Hybrid Organisation Hybrid Organisation
	Seattle Shakespeare Company	Seattle	Washington	Professional Program of Larger Group Hybrid Organisation
	Shakespeare in the Woods	Port Angeles	Washington	Grassroots
	Shakespeare Walla Walla	Walla Walla	Washington	Professional Program of Larger Group Hybrid Organisation
	Upstart Crow Collective	Seattle	Washington	Grassroots
WEST VIRGINIA	Alban Arts Center: Shakespeare in the Park	Saint Albans	West Virginia	Professional Program of Larger Group Hybrid Organisation
	The Rustic Mechanicals	Clarksburg	West Virginia	Grassroots
	West Virginia Shakespeare Festival	Huntington	West Virginia	Professional
WISCONSIN	American Players Theatre	Spring Green	Wisconsin	Professional
	Door Shakespeare*	Baileys Harbor	Wisconsin	Professional Youth Perf. Org. - Grassroots
	Optimist Theatre	Milwaukee	Wisconsin	Professional Program of Larger Group
	Young Shakespeare Players	Madison	Wisconsin	Grassroots
WYOMING	Off Square Theatre Co.: Thin Air Shakespeare	Jackson	Wyoming	Grassroots
	Sheridan Shakespeare Company	Sheridan	Wyoming	Grassroots
	Wyoming Shakespeare Festival Company	Lander	Wyoming	Grassroots

APPENDIX C - REPRESENTATIVE ORGANISATIONS AND THEIR MISSION STATEMENTS

As discussed in the methodology section in the introduction to this thesis, data was directly collected from organisations in three separate research initiatives: the 2014 ‘Shakespeare on the Road’ project, interviews I personally conducted for this thesis from 2018 to 2020, and finally data I collated from targeted online research. All organisations discussed in this thesis are presented here along with a short description to be used as a reference. Thirty-five states are represented in this research with extensive qualitative data; the research initiative used to acquire the data is present below on Figure I.1. The following brief summaries serve as a point of reference.



1. Representative Organisations Summaries: State-by-State

Alabama: Bards of Birmingham - Birmingham, Alabama

Summary - Founded in 2009 by artistic director Laura Heider, this grassroots Shakespeare youth performance organisation provided opportunities for youth between the ages of 5 to 25 through a variety of Shakespeare productions and programming during its nine-year run. The group went on ‘indefinite hiatus’ when Heider left the group to pursue a PhD. The group’s mission statement was: ‘Innovating Theatre. Empowering Youth. Inspiring Community’.

Supplementary Research Internet Research - The data collected is summarised in Appendix H.

Alaska: Theatre in the Rough - Juneau, Alaska

Summary - Self identifying as a ‘Shakespeare-enamored’ theatre company, this grassroots Shakespeare organisation has been producing since 1991. The group’s mission statement is: ‘With every show, within every staged moment, whether comedy or tragedy, our objective is delight and our mission is to bring our artists, our audience and our community together in joy. Known for rich costumes, spare sets and great language, we celebrate the power of imagination and explore a wide range of storytelling forms; dance, music, poetry, masks, and puppets’.

Supplementary Research Internet Research - The data collected is summarised in Appendix H.

Arkansas: Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre - Conway, Arkansas

Summary - Founded in 2015, the Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre took up the mantle from the Shakespeare Festival of Arkansas which had closed its doors two years before. This group is part of the University of Central Arkansas and it is the only professional Shakespeare group in the state. The organisation’s mission is ‘To entertain, engage, and enrich the community by creating professional and accessible productions of Shakespeare and other works that promote educational opportunities, community involvement, and the highest artistic standards’.

William Wolfgang Field Research - The interview was conducted with Rebekah Scallet, producing artistic director, on 31 January 2020 in Dallas, Texas.

California: Merced Shakespearefest - Merced, California

Summary - Founded in 2002 by current artistic director Heike Hambley, this grassroots community-based Shakespeare performance organisation is located in the city of Merced in California’s Central Valley. The organisation’s programming includes a three-production season of Shakespeare’s works occurring throughout the year. The group’s mission statement is the following: ‘Merced Shakespearefest is dedicated to creating and performing high quality productions of Shakespeare plays that reflect and embrace the diversity of our community’.

William Wolfgang Field Research - The interview was conducted with Heike Hambley, founding artistic director, on 25 January 2019 in Merced, California.

Supplemental Research - The following performances and activities have been recorded in the form of field notes and Practice-as-Research: worked as dramaturg and embedded scholar for *Othello* May-June 2019, director and co-adaptor for *Ricardo II* August 2019-April 2020.

Performances Attended - 24 January 2019 - Titus Andronicus.

California: Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum - Topanga, California

Summary - With an annual season of five repertory plays and educational opportunities and classes offered year-round, the Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum is a Shakespearean oasis nestle in the Topanga Canyon northwest of Los Angeles. The theatre was founded in 1973 by Will Geer and has been producing professional Shakespeare and folk plays in their outdoor amphitheatre built into the canyon hills since then. The group's mission statement is 'to elevate, educate and entertain audiences of all ages by presenting thought-provoking classics, socially relevant plays, and education programs in a beautiful, natural outdoor sanctuary for the arts'.
Shakespeare on the Road Research - The interview was conducted with Ellen Geer, artistic director, on 25 July 2014 in Topanga, California.
William Wolfgang Field Research - The interview was conducted with Ellen Geer, artistic director, on 19 February 2019 in Topanga, California.

California: Shakespeare in Yosemite - Yosemite National Park, California

Summary - Founded in 2017 by Dr Paul Prescott and Dr Katherine Steele Brokaw, Shakespeare in Yosemite blends professional Shakespearean actors with community and student performers. The organisation is funded by the University of California Merced, and co-sponsored by the University of Warwick, and the National Park Service. The group was founded to 'bring short, accessible, and free productions of Shakespeare's plays to Yosemite National Park for Earth Day and Shakespeare's birthday each April. Our shows are 90 minutes long, feature lots of music, and are adapted to address issues relevant to Earth Day and Yosemite'.
William Wolfgang Field Research - Interviews were conducted with multiple participants on 27-28 April 2019. Also, an interview with professional Shakespearean actor and founder of the Los Angeles Women's Shakespeare Company, Lisa Wolpe. Interview with participant Angel Nuñez on 28 May 2019.
Supplemental Research - The following performances and activities have been recorded in the form of field notes and Practice-as-Research: worked as an embedded scholar for *As You Like It* April 2019.

California: Shakespeare Club of Pomona Valley - Pomona, California

Summary - Founded in 1904 by young socialites in the outskirts of Los Angeles, the group consisted of young women producing grassroots adaptations of Shakespeare's plays for social entertainment and academic enrichment. By the 1940s, the group had completely transitioned to a club for studies and lectures on Shakespeare. Well over one hundred years after its founding the club is still operating and meeting monthly to discuss the work of Shakespeare. A mission statement was not available for this organisation.
William Wolfgang Field Research - The interview was conducted with Lenore Pearlman, president, and five club members on 11 March 2019 in Claremont, California.

Connecticut: Shakesperience Productions, Inc. - Waterbury, Connecticut

Summary - Founded in 1996 by Emily Mattina and Jeffrey Lapham, this professional theatre company offers a wide range of educationally based programs for youth,

community performance, as well as professional performances around the state. The group's mission statement is to 'educate and inspire students, families, and theatre professionals through the arts in order to explore social constructs and foster mutual respect for all people'.

William Wolfgang Field Research - The interview was conducted with Jeffrey Lapham, executive director, and Emily Mattina, artistic director, on 17 October 2019 in Waterbury, Connecticut.

Delaware: Arden Shakespeare Gild - Arden, Delaware

Summary - Originally founded in 1900 along with the single-tax utopian-arts community of Arden, Delaware, this grassroots community-based Shakespeare group has gone through several different incarnations over the past one hundred twenty years, only ceasing operations for a decade between 1963-1973. Currently, the organisation offers a youth education program during the winter and a community Shakespeare production in the summer in the town's historic outdoor Shakespeare theatre. A mission statement was not available for this organisation.

William Wolfgang Field Research - The interview was conducted with Mary Catherine Kelley and Tanya Lazar, Gildmistresses, on 26 September 2019 in Arden, Delaware.

Hawaii: Hawaii Shakespeare Festival - Honolulu, Hawaii

Summary - Founded in 2002 by a trio of Shakespeare enthusiasts, this group is in its nineteenth annual season of producing three summer productions of Shakespeare with the mission of making 'Shakespeare accessible to the people of Hawaii'.

William Wolfgang Field Research - The interview was conducted with Tony Pisculli, founding artistic director, on 31 January 2020 in Dallas, Texas.

Performances Attended – 23 August 2020 – *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

Idaho: Encore Theatre Company, Shakespeare in the Park - Nampa, Idaho

Summary - Founded in 2003 by a group of six theatre enthusiasts in the Nampa area, the Encore Theatre Company started with a general focus on all theatrical productions. By the group's fifth season one of the most popular offerings had become their free Shakespeare in the Park program and creating grassroots Shakespeare in the process. The group's mission is to 'produce performing arts programming of the highest artistic integrity' through educating, enriching, and entering their local community.

William Wolfgang Field Research - The interview was conducted with Jonathan Perry, founding artistic director, on 27 July 2019 in Nampa, Idaho.

Performances Attended – 26 July 2019 – *As You Like It*

Illinois: Chicago Shakespeare Theatre - Chicago, Illinois

Summary - Founded in 1986 by Barbara Gaines, the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre has become a 'global theater' and a leader in professional regional theatre with up to twenty productions and six hundred fifty performances in their year-round season. While a specified statement was not immediately available, the organisation lists these four tenets of its work: 'Bold theatricality, creative learning, global theater, and a partner in innovation'.

Shakespeare on the Road 2014 Research - The interview was conducted with Barbara Gaines, founding artistic director, on 9 August 2014 in Chicago, Illinois.

Indiana: Richmond Shakespeare Festival - Richmond, Indiana

Summary - Founded in 2013 by a group of local theatre enthusiasts, the group started with a performance by local community actors but has produced summer seasons with professional actors ever since under the artistic direction of Patrick Flick. The mission has remained the same since the group's inception, to produce 'highest-quality theater in Richmond along with educational and community outreach activities'.

William Wolfgang Field Research - The interview was conducted with Patrick Flick, artistic director, and Ray Ontko, board president, on 25 October 2019 in Richmond, Indiana.

Indiana: Shakespeare at Notre Dame - South Bend, Indiana

Summary - Founded in 2000, the Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival celebrates a profound legacy (the first performance can be traced back as early as 1846) of Shakespeare on the campus of one of America's most iconic universities. While the group boasts a professional company, the organisation also is composed of a touring and community company as well. The group 'dedicates itself to exploring the works of William Shakespeare and other classical authors through performance for the educational, social, and cultural enrichment of its surrounding communities'.

William Wolfgang Field Research - The interview was conducted with Grant Mudge, the producing artistic director, on 12 March 2020 in South Bend, Indiana.

Iowa: Prenzie Players - Davenport, Iowa

Summary - Founded in 2003 by Catherine Bodenbender and a group of likeminded community theatre advocates, the Prenzie Players is a grassroots Shakespeare organisation that is 'committed to engaging and challenging audiences with intimate performances' the group performs in found spaces and has nearly completely the entire Shakespearean canon.

William Wolfgang Field Research - The interview was conducted with Catherine Bodenbender, founding artistic director, on 27 August 2019 in Davenport, Iowa.

Kansas: Wichita Shakespeare Company - Wichita, Kansas

Summary - Founded in 1999 by a group of residents in the Wichita area, the Wichita Shakespeare Company is the most recent incarnation of a group that has been performing community grassroots Shakespeare in the area's parks since 1981. The organisation's programming includes two production tours around the Wichita park system in early and late summer. The organisation's mission is 'to provide quality, free of charge performances of Shakespearean plays in a setting that is accessible and provide an opportunity for those interested in working in the arts to develop their skills through practical application'.

William Wolfgang Field Research - The interview was conducted with Jane Tanner, director, and Dan and Vonda Schuster, Board members, on 9 June 2019 in Wichita, Kansas.

Performances Attended – 8-9 June 2019 - *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Louisiana: Shakespeare Festival at Tulane - New Orleans, Louisiana

Summary - Founded in 1993 by faculty members from Tulane University, this professional company produces an annual summer season of two productions in addition to educational touring and intern productions. This university-based

professional company's mission is 'to produce professional, classical theatre with a primary focus upon the works of William Shakespeare'.

Shakespeare on the Road Research - The interview was conducted with Clare Moncrieff, artistic director, on 11 July 2014 in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Maine: Recycled Shakespeare Company - Fairfield, Maine

Summary - Founded in 2013 by Emily Fournier, this grassroots Shakespeare group produces several productions and community-based events per year. The organisation welcomes participation from all individuals in the community, giving opportunities to perform in a play to many who would otherwise never have the chance. The RSC's mission is 'to entertain and educate the community on a minimal budget, while relying primarily on used and recycled materials, local enthusiasts, and royalty free productions'. The company also uses the following statement to emphasize their approach to eco-theatre: 'Reduce, Reuse, Recite'.

William Wolfgang Field Research - The interviews were conducted with Emily Fournier, founding artistic director, and eight participants on 18 September 2018 in Fairfield, Maine.

Maryland: Baltimore Shakespeare Factory - Baltimore, Maryland

Summary - Founded in 2008 by Tom Delise, the Baltimore Shakespeare Factory is a professional company that specializes in recreating the 'staging conditions, spirit, and atmosphere' of Shakespeare's time. The organisation's mission is focused on the 'understanding and enjoying [of] Shakespeare by unpacking his works in a way that is deeply rooted in the text and that connects to the lives and experiences of our communities'.

William Wolfgang Field Research - The interview was conducted with Tom Delise, founding artistic director, on 8 August 2018 in Baltimore, Maryland.

Performances Attended – 10 August 2018 – *King John*

Massachusetts: Shakespeare and Company - Lenox, Massachusetts

Summary - Founded in 1978 by Tina Packer, Shakespeare and Company is a year-round professional theatre and is one of America's largest Shakespeare festivals. The organisation's mission is 'to deliver a sustainable, integrated, and vital program of Performance, Training, and Education for the audience, the artist, the Company, and the community'.

Shakespeare on the Road Research - The interview was conducted with Tina Packer, founder, on 17 August 2014 in Lenox, Massachusetts.

Missouri: Heart of America Shakespeare Festival - Kansas City, Missouri

Summary - Founded in 1993 by Kansas City native and Tony Award-winning Broadway producer Marilyn Strauss this professional Shakespeare group produces an annual summer festival in addition to educational programs for the Kansas City area. The organisation's mission is 'to make the works of Shakespeare and Shakespeare-inspired works accessible to a diverse audience through a free, professional, outdoor festival, and additional free and paid performances and educational programs'.

Shakespeare on the Road Research - The interview was conducted with Marilyn Strauss, founder, on 6 July 2014 in Kansas City, Missouri.

Montana: Montana Shakespeare in the Parks - Bozeman, Montana

Summary - Founded in 1973 by Dr Bruce Jacobsen, the group's first season consisted of students from Montana State University and local community members. By the second season, the group had hired a cast of professional actors and developed a tour to eighteen Montana cities. This professional university-based company now serves Montana, North Dakota, Wyoming, Idaho, and Washington with touring productions and educational programming. The group's mission is 'to engage and enrich both rural and underserved communities with professional productions of Shakespeare and other classics and, through educational outreach, to inspire creative expression and appreciation of the arts in young audiences'.
Shakespeare on the Road Research - The interview was conducted with Kevin Asselin, artistic director, on 4 August 2014 in Bozeman, Montana.

Nebraska: Flatwater Shakespeare Company - Lincoln, Nebraska

Summary - Flatwater Shakespeare was founded in 2001 by a group of enthusiastic local Lincoln residents around the premise of performing Shakespeare in an historic horse stable from the late 1800s. This professional Shakespeare performing organisation has been performing in this venue and other venues around Lincoln ever since. The organisation's programming includes multiple productions throughout the year and some touring programs throughout the region. The group's mission statement is: 'The mission of Flatwater Shakespeare Company is to entertain and educate audiences in Lincoln and surrounding communities through Shakespeare and other high quality theatre productions'.

William Wolfgang Field Research - The interview was conducted with Summer Lukasiewicz, executive director, on 13 March 2020 in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Nevada: Merry War Theatre Group - Reno, Nevada

Summary - Founded in 2008 by Chase McKenna in Los Angeles, this hybrid theatre and community service organisation has been serving the Reno, Nevada area ever since 2014 with original work, Shakespeare productions, and community service projects. Merry War annually operates food drives for various holidays, toy drives for Christmas, as well as other socially inspired community projects. A mission statement was not available for this organisation.

Supplementary Research Internet Research - The data collected is summarised in Appendix H.

New Hampshire: Advice to the Players - Sandwich, New Hampshire

Summary - Founded in 1999 by Caroline Nesbitt, this rural Shakespeare company follows a hybrid model employing professional actors while including community members in its productions. Advice to the Players produces three to four productions a year and operates a variety of educational programming. The group's mission is 'to engage students and community to enjoy and benefit from the rich language and passionate action of Shakespeare's plays as an exploration of our shared humanity'.

William Wolfgang Field Research - The interview was conducted with Jessie Chapman, executive director, on 16 September 2018 in Sandwich, New Hampshire.
Performances Attended – 16 September 2018 – *The Taming of the Shrew*

New Jersey: Shakespeare 70 - Ewing, New Jersey

Summary - Founded in 1970 by current board president Dr Frank Erath, this grassroots non-professional Shakespeare performance organisation produces three

productions annually in central New Jersey. A mission statement was not available for this organisation.

William Wolfgang Field Research - The interview was conducted with Curt Foxworth, director and board member, on 21 October 2019 in Ewing Township, New Jersey.

Performances Attended – 21 Oct 2019 – *Richard III*

New York: Harlem Shakespeare Festival - New York, New York⁸⁷⁹

Summary - This professional theatre company opened its inaugural season in summer of 2013 under the direction of founder and producing artistic director Debra Ann Byrd. The festival is part of Take Wing And Soar Productions which Byrd founded in 1999; the group's mission is to 'produce the classics, [and give] centerstage opportunities for classically trained actors of colour'.

Shakespeare on the Road Research - The interview was conducted with Debra Ann Byrd, founding artistic director, on 12 August 2014 in New York, New York.

New York: Shakespeare in the Parking Lot - New York, New York

Summary - Founded in 1995, Shakespeare in the Parking Lot is now managed by the professional theatre company, The Drilling Company, which was self-described as 'an incubator of new plays'. Shakespeare in the Parking Lot has now become a tradition in New York City and this group produces a free production every summer in the 'spirit of' fellow New Yorker, Joe Papp. A mission statement was not available for this organisation.

Shakespeare on the Road Research - The interview was conducted with Hamilton Clancy, artistic director, on 17 August 2014 in New York, New York.

New York: Amerinda - New York City, New York

Summary - Founded in 1987 by Diane Fraher, Amerinda is a unique community-based multi-arts service organisation created to 'promote the indigenous perspective in the arts to a broad audience through the creation of new work in contemporary art forms—visual, performing, literary and media'. One of the group's many programs includes the Amerinda Native Shakespeare Ensemble.

Shakespeare on the Road 2014 Research - The interview was conducted with Diane Fraher, founder, and Madeline Sayet, resident director, on 13 August 2014 in New York, New York.

North Carolina: Montford Park Players - Asheville, North Carolina

Summary - Founded in 1973 by Hazel Robinson, the Montford Park Players is not only the most prolific grassroots Shakespeare organisation in the United States, it is also one of the longest continually running groups. All casts are composed of community members and the organisation's season currently runs for twenty-three weeks in the summer consisting of six different productions. The Montford Park Players' mission statement is 'to serve as North Carolina's longest running Shakespeare theatre company, primarily dedicated to performing the works of Shakespeare, and dedicated to providing exceptional dramatic entertainment for the enrichment, education, and enjoyment of our audiences'.

⁸⁷⁹ I attended a performance in Upstate New York, as well, during the course of my research on 29 July 2018 of *As You Like It* by the Ithaca Shakespeare Company in Ithaca, NY.

William Wolfgang Field Research - The interviews were conducted with John Russell, executive director, and six participants on 4-9 August 2019 in Asheville, North Carolina.

Performances Attended – 4 August 2019 – *Romeo and Juliet*

North Dakota: North Dakota Shakespeare Festival - Grand Forks, North Dakota

Summary - Founded in 2017 by Stephanie Faatz Murry, this professional theatre organisation was sponsored in part by the University of North Dakota for its first three seasons and is preparing to transition into another organisational model. The mission of the North Dakota Shakespeare Festival is 'To bring professional theater to the community regardless of economic status, fostered by the belief that access to the arts is a human right'.

William Wolfgang Field Research - The interview was conducted with Stephanie Faatz Murry, founding artistic director, on 1 February 2020 in Dallas, Texas.

Ohio: Shakespeare Theatre Association - Oxford, Ohio

Summary - Founded in 1991 by a group of Shakespeare festival producers, the Shakespeare Theatre Association (STA) is an international member service organisation that meets annually to discuss contemporary topics within the field. While the organisation's offices are currently based in Oxford, Ohio, conferences have recently been held in Dallas, Prague, Baltimore, South Bend (Indiana), and San Francisco. The STA mission statement is to 'provide a forum for the artistic, managerial, educational leadership for theatres primarily involved with the production of the works of William Shakespeare; to discuss issues and methods of work, resources, and information; and to act as an advocate for Shakespearean productions and training'.

William Wolfgang Field Research - The interview was conducted with Patrick Flick, executive director, on 25 October 2019 in Oxford, Ohio.

Oregon: Oregon Shakespeare Festival - Ashland, Oregon

Summary - Founded in 1935 by Angus Bowmer, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) is America's longest running Shakespeare company and a prolific regional theatre. OSF currently produces eleven fully staged productions per year in addition to a wide variety of education programming. Considered a 'destination festival', visitors could view up to nine plays during a one week stay in Ashland. OSF's mission embraces its continuing role in theatre history in America: 'inspired by Shakespeare's work and the cultural richness of the United States, we reveal our collective humanity through illuminating interpretations of new and classic plays, deepened by the kaleidoscope of rotating repertory'.

Shakespeare on the Road Research - The interview was conducted with Cynthia Rider, executive director, on 30 July 2014 in Ashland, Oregon.

Pennsylvania: OrangeMite Shakespeare Company - Dover, Pennsylvania

Summary - Founded in 2008 by William Wolfgang and a group of young theatre enthusiasts as OrangeMite Studios, this grassroots community organisation began as a multi-arts organisation offering a community orchestra, educational music initiatives, and original plays. Always central to the programming was the group's flagship 'Shakespeare in the Barn' program, which ran for a decade from 2008-2018. During this time the organisation produced twenty-four of Shakespeare's plays. The

group continues to stage Shakespeare productions in found spaces in York County, Pennsylvania. The mission of OrangeMite Studios is ‘to involve the greater Dover, Pennsylvania community in high-quality artistic performances brought to life through innovative educational experiences’.

William Wolfgang Field Research - The interviews were conducted with Dr Mary Snow, former board member, owner of The Barn, and costume designer on 27 November 2018 in Dover, Pennsylvania and with Ryan Szwaja, vice president of board, on 30 November 2018 in York, Pennsylvania.

Performances Attended - 10 July 2018, *Much Ado About Nothing*; 31 July 2018 - *Comedy of Errors* by the Youth Shakespeare group; 6 September 2018 - *Henry IV, Part 1*.

Rhode Island: Shakespeare on the Green - Providence, Rhode Island

Summary - This university-based grassroots student group, producing Shakespeare productions in found spaces on the campus of Brown University. This group is entirely student led, from the board, to directing, to individuals on stage. A mission statement was not available for this organisation.

William Wolfgang Field Research - The interview was conducted with Maaiké Langstra-Corn, Chair of the Board, on 17 October 2019 in Providence, Rhode Island.
Performances Attended – 17 October 2019 – *As You Like It*

South Carolina: Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company - Greenville, South Carolina

Summary - Founded in 2016 by Miriam Miller and Crystal Stewart, this grassroots community-based Shakespeare group advocates for LGBTQ issues in upstate South Carolina through classical performance. The company performs both Shakespeare adaptations and original work in found spaces. A mission statement was not available for this organisation.

William Wolfgang Field Research - The interview was conducted with Eric Spears, director, and Robert Fuson, former director, on 6 August 2019 in Greenville, South Carolina.

Tennessee: Nashville Shakespeare Festival - Nashville, Tennessee

Summary - Founded in 1988 by a group of local actors, the Nashville Shakespeare Festival gave its first professional production two years later under the artistic direction of Denise Hicks. This organisation offers free summer Shakespeare in the Park, a winter production and also hosts a monthly ‘Shakespeare Allowed’ program at a local library which encourages community members to gather and read Shakespeare together. The festival’s mission is ‘to educate and entertain the Mid-South community through professional Shakespearean experiences’.

Shakespeare on the Road Research - The interview was conducted with Denise Hicks, executive artistic director, on 15 August 2014 in Nashville, Tennessee.

Texas: Shakespeare at Winedale - Winedale, Texas

Summary - Founded in 1970 by University of Texas Professor James Ayres, this educational performance program includes year-round activities, performances, and camps. Performances by university-aged and school-aged actors have been occurring in an 1880s hay barn for fifty years. Shakespeare at Winedale’s mission includes: ‘All of the elements of the program are intended to promote an understanding and appreciation of the works of Shakespeare, and of their extraordinarily complex and

penetrating vision of human life. Students at Winedale develop, test and transcend their sense of self through their exploration of Shakespearean characters. Audiences come to Winedale to share, not the polished product of a professional Shakespeare festival, but the excitement of risk-taking and discovery’.

Shakespeare on the Road Research - The interview was conducted with Dr Jim Ayers, founder, on 13 July 2014 in Winedale, Texas.

Utah: Utah Shakespearean Festival - Cedar City, Utah

Summary - Founded in 1961 by Fred Adams, the Utah Shakespeare Festival has become world-renown Tony award winning regional theatre. The organisation’s campus boasts three separate theatres to execute the festival’s mission statement: ‘the Utah Shakespearean Festival is a destination theatre that presents life-affirming classical and contemporary plays and musicals, in rotating repertory, and interactive experiences. All of our work is intended to entertain, educate, and enrich regional and national audiences’.

Shakespeare on the Road Research - The interview was conducted with Fred Adams, founder, on 19 July 2014 in Cedar City, Utah.

Virginia: American Shakespeare Center - Staunton, Virginia

Summary - Founded in 1988 as the Shenandoah Shakespeare Express by Jim Warren and Ralph Alan Cohen, the American Shakespeare Center (ASC) is professional Shakespeare theatre organisation. The organisation’s venue, the Blackfriars Playhouse, is the ‘world’s only re-creation of Shakespeare’s indoor playhouse’. ASC in association with Mary Baldwin University began offering America’s first MF program in Shakespeare and Performance. The organisation also hosts a biennial gathering of hundreds of Shakespeare scholars from around the world at the Blackfriars Conference. The group’s mission statement is the following: ‘American Shakespeare Center illuminates the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, classic and new, refreshing the individual, fostering civil discourse, and creating community in the Blackfriars Playhouse and beyond’.

Shakespeare on the Road Research - The interview was conducted with Jim Warren, co-founder, on 29 August 2014 in Staunton, Virginia.

Performances Attended – 11 August 2019 – *Antony and Cleopatra*

Wisconsin: Door Shakespeare - Baileys Harbor, Wisconsin

Summary - Door Shakespeare is a professional theatre organisation and was founded in 1995 under the name of the American Folklore Theatre. The group performs an annual summer festival of plays and is considered a regional theatre. The mission of Door Shakespeare is ‘to provide relevant and entertaining productions of the works of William Shakespeare and other classical playwrights through artistic excellence in both the conception and performance of our plays, and to enhance the theatrical experience through interactive educational opportunities designed for audiences of all ages, thereby creating a common ground to experience these celebrated traditions’.

Shakespeare on the Road 2014 Research - The interview was conducted with Amy Ludwigsen, artistic director, on 7 August 2014 in Baileys Harbor, Wisconsin.

2. Representative Organisations - Alphabetical List

William Wolfgang Field Research Locations, 2018-2020

- Advice to the Players - Sandwich, New Hampshire
- Arden Shakespeare Guild - Arden, Delaware
- Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre - Conway, Arkansas
- Baltimore Shakespeare Factory - Baltimore, Maryland
- Encore Theatre Company, Shakespeare in the Park - Nampa, Idaho
- Flatwater Shakespeare Company - Lincoln, Nebraska
- Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company - Greenville, South Carolina
- Hawaii Shakespeare Festival - Honolulu, Hawaii
- Merced Shakespeare Fest - Merced, California
- Montford Park Players - Asheville, North Carolina
- North Dakota Shakespeare Festival - Grand Forks, North Dakota
- OrangeMite Shakespeare Company - Dover, Pennsylvania
- Prenzie Players - Davenport, Iowa
- Recycled Shakespeare Company - Fairfield, Maine
- Richmond Shakespeare Festival - Richmond, Indiana
- Shakespeare 70 - Ewing, New Jersey
- Shakespeare at Notre Dame - South Bend, Indiana
- Shakespeare Club of Pomona Valley - Pomona, California
- Shakespeare in Yosemite - Yosemite National Park, California
- Shakespeare on the Green - Providence, Rhode Island
- Shakespeare Theatre Association - Oxford, Ohio
- Shakesperience Productions, Inc. - Waterbury, Connecticut
- Wichita Shakespeare Company - Wichita, Kansas
- Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum - Topanga, California

‘Shakespeare on the Road’ Field Research Locations, July & August 2014 conducted by Paul Prescott, Paul Edmondson, AJ & Melissa Leon

- American Shakespeare Center - Staunton, Virginia
- Amerinda - New York City, New York
- Chicago Shakespeare Theatre - Chicago, Illinois

- Door Shakespeare - Baileys Harbor, Wisconsin
- Harlem Shakespeare Festival - New York, New York
- Heart of America Shakespeare Festival - Kansas City, Missouri
- Montana Shakespeare in the Parks - Bozeman, Montana
- Nashville Shakespeare Festival - Nashville, Tennessee
- Oregon Shakespeare Festival - Ashland, Oregon
- Shakespeare and Company - Lenox, Massachusetts
- Shakespeare at Winedale - Winedale, Texas
- Shakespeare Festival at Tulane - New Orleans, Louisiana
- Shakespeare in the Parking Lot - New York, New York
- Utah Shakespearean Festival - Cedar City, Utah
- Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum - Topanga, California

Supplementary Research Internet Research, 2019-2020 by William Wolfgang

- Bards of Birmingham - Birmingham, Alabama
- Merry War Theatre Group - Reno, Nevada
- Theatre in the Rough - Juneau, Alaska

APPENDIX D – AMERICAN SHAKESPEARE CARTOGRAPHY

1. Shakespeare Clubs, 1850-2020

Figure 2.a - American Shakespeare Clubs⁸⁸⁰
1850-1950

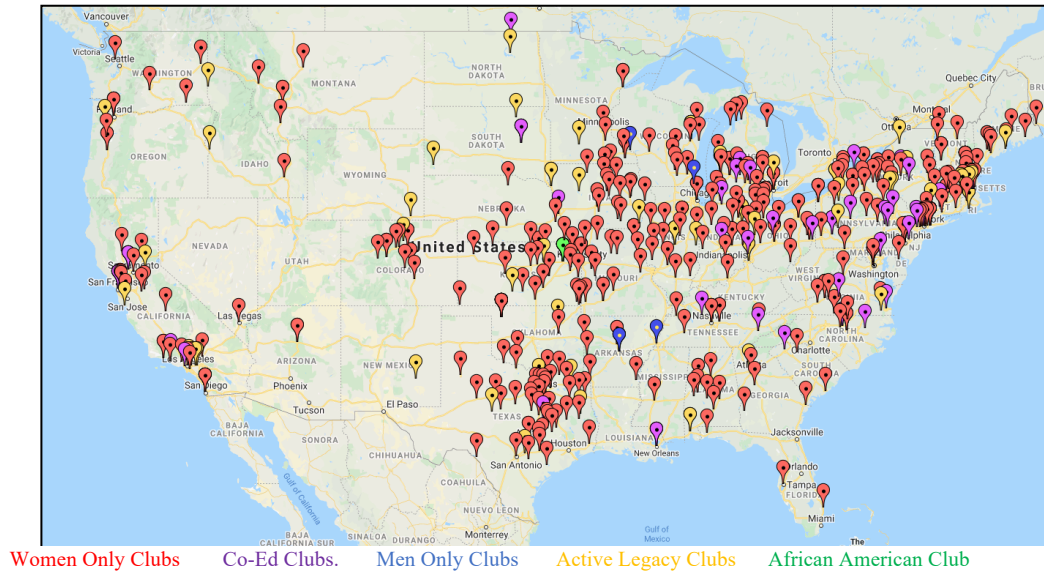
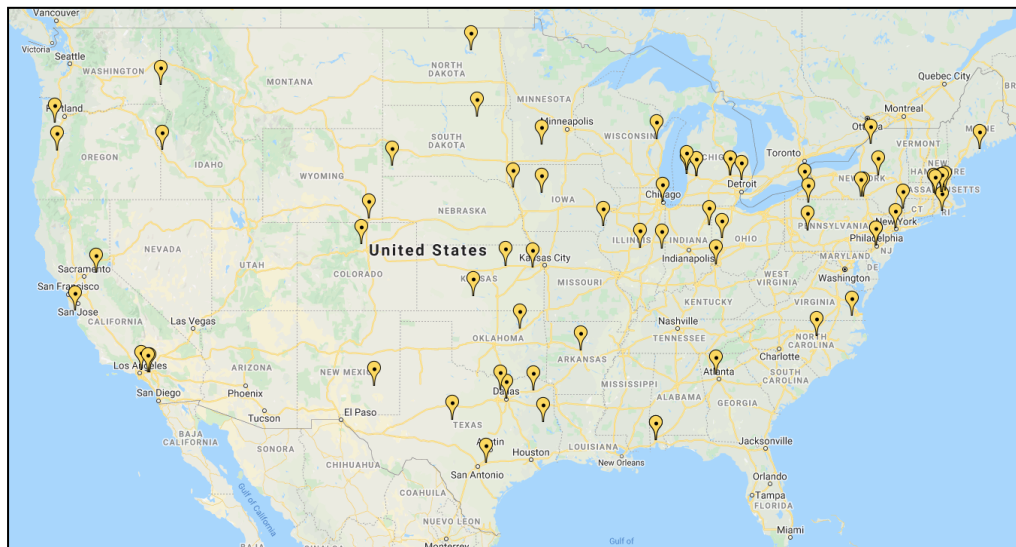


Figure 2.b - Active Legacy Shakespeare Clubs⁸⁸¹
2000-2020



⁸⁸⁰ Scheil, *She Hath Been Reading: Women and Shakespeare Clubs in America*.

⁸⁸¹ *Ibid.* I am using the term 'Active Legacy Clubs' to represent Shakespeare clubs that were founded during the height of the movement's popularity (1870-1930) and are still meeting in the present day.

2. The Geographic Spread of Ben Greet and the 1916 Tercentenary

Figure 3 - Ben Greet's Woodland Players Performance Sites⁸⁸²
1902-1932

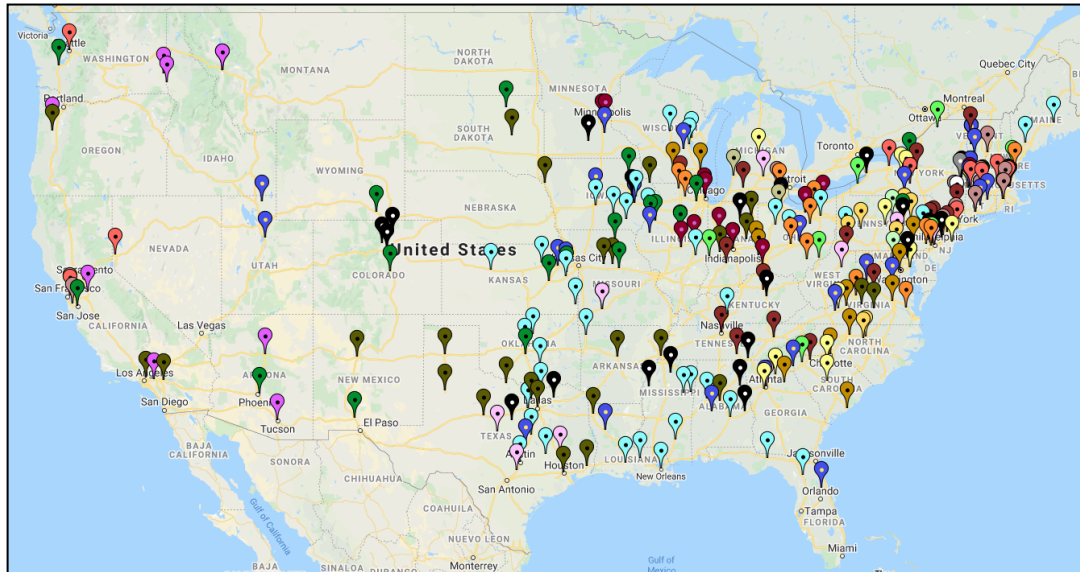
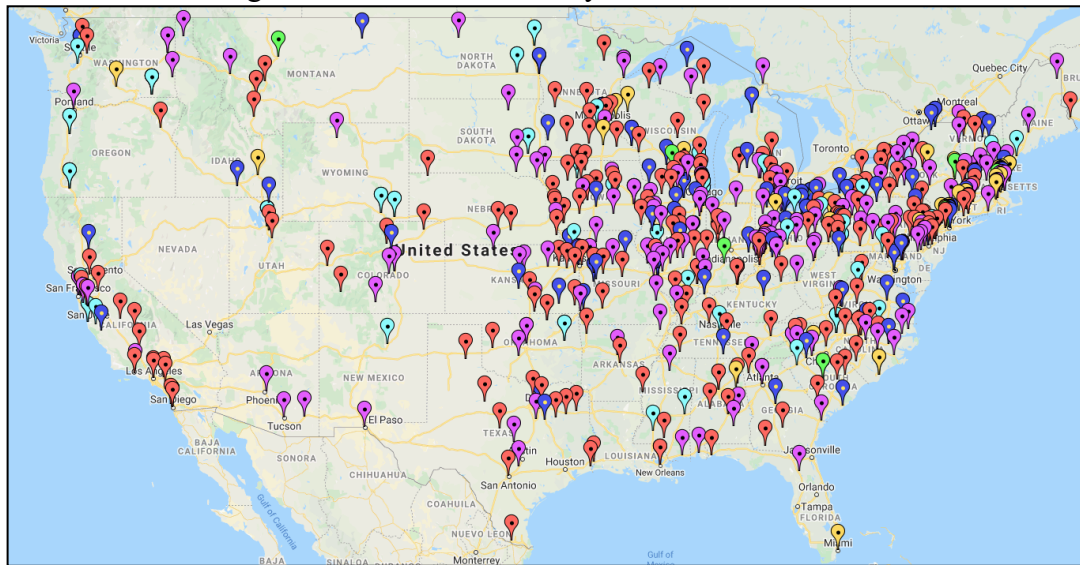


Figure 4 – 1916 Tercentenary Event Locations⁸⁸³



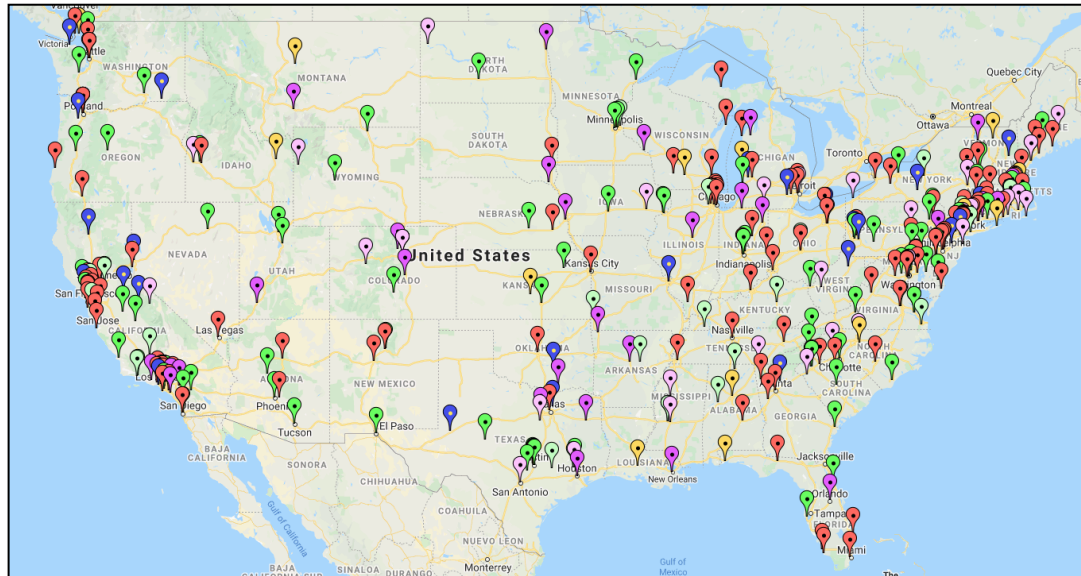
Original Work Play Performance Women's Club Celebration Civic Festival or Pageant Educational Inst. Other

⁸⁸² Dugas, *Shakespeare for Everyman*.

⁸⁸³ Clara Fitch, 'The Shakespeare Tercentenary Celebration: Chart', *Drama League of America: Monthly Bulletin*, 1 (1916).

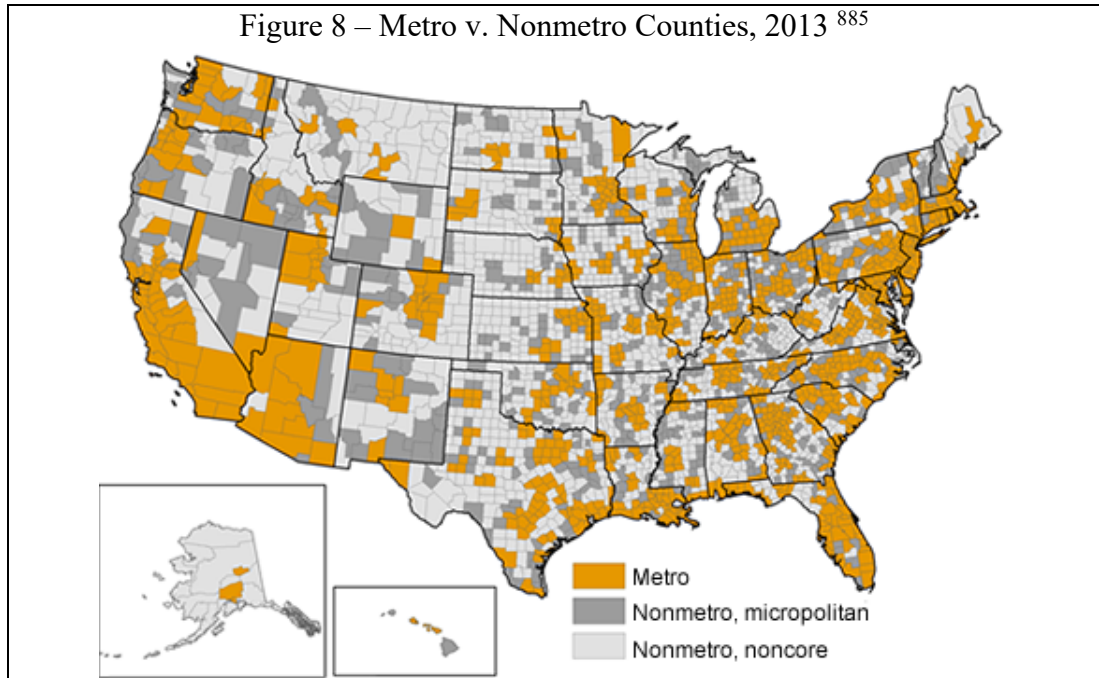
3. Contemporary Shakespeare Cartography

Figure 5 – Shakespeare Performing Organisations ⁸⁸⁴
2018-2020



Grassroots Model Grassroots Uni. Spons. Hybrid Model Youth Perf. Group Professional Professional Uni. Spons.
Sub-Program

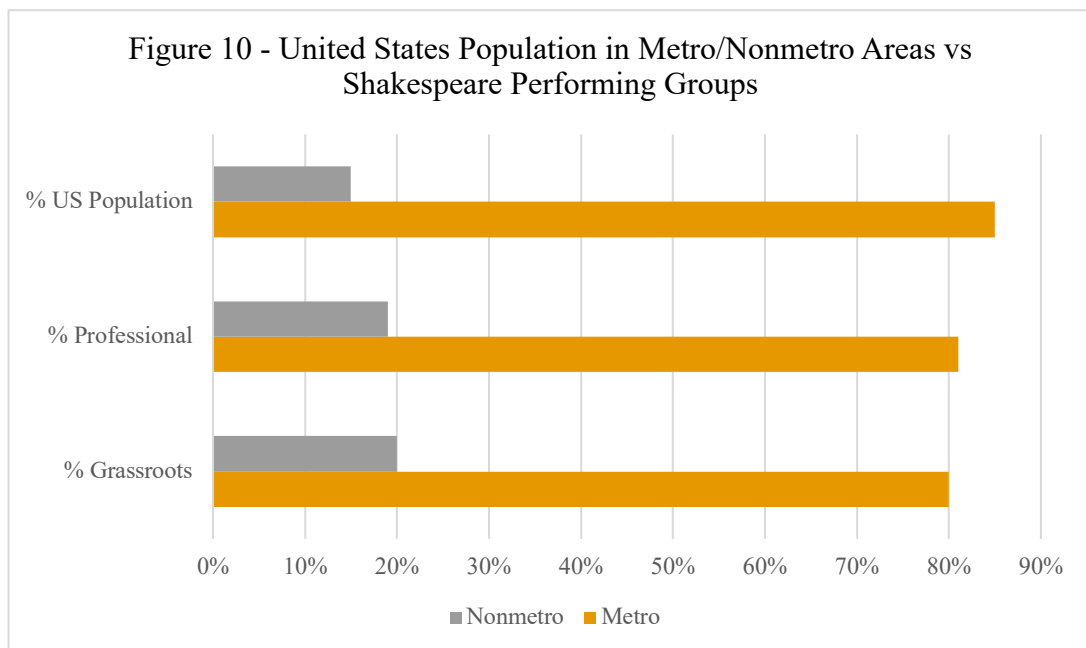
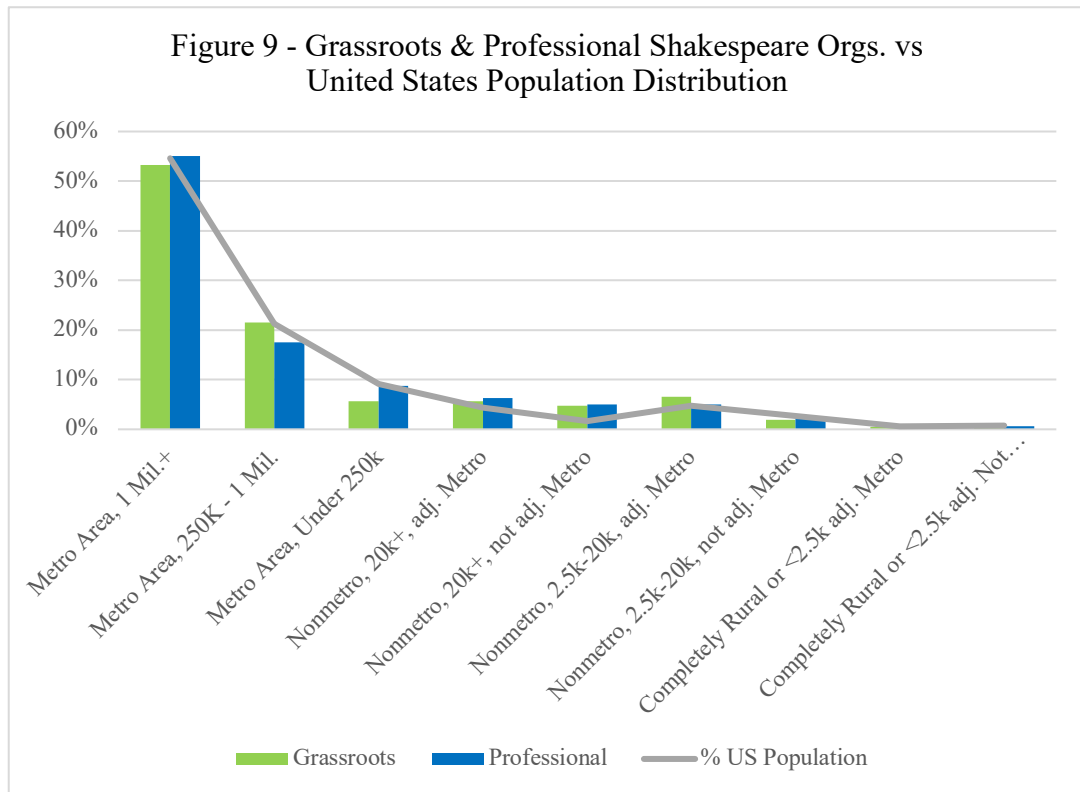
Figure 8 – Metro v. Nonmetro Counties, 2013 ⁸⁸⁵



⁸⁸⁴ This information is presented in list form in Appendix B.

⁸⁸⁵ Metro v. Nonmetro Counties, 2013 - USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Census Bureau. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/rural-economy-population/rural-classifications/what-is-rural/>

4. Geographic and Population Distribution Analysis



APPENDIX E – ORGANISATION FOUNDATIONS AND OPERATIONS

1. Organisational Data from Representative Organisations

Figure 6 - Shakespeare Organization Naming Practices

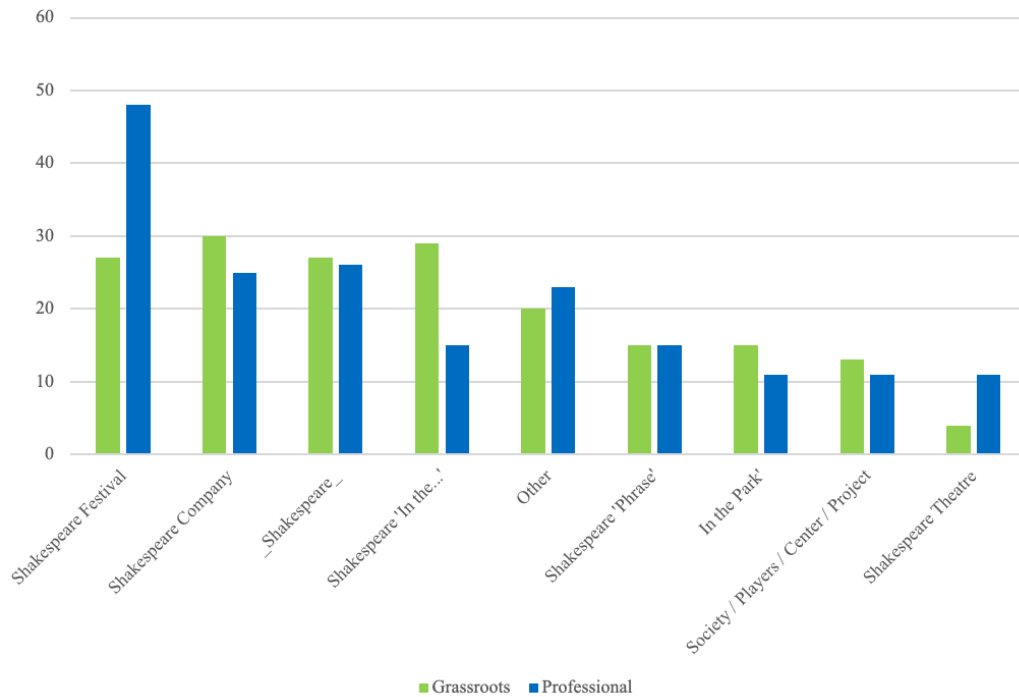
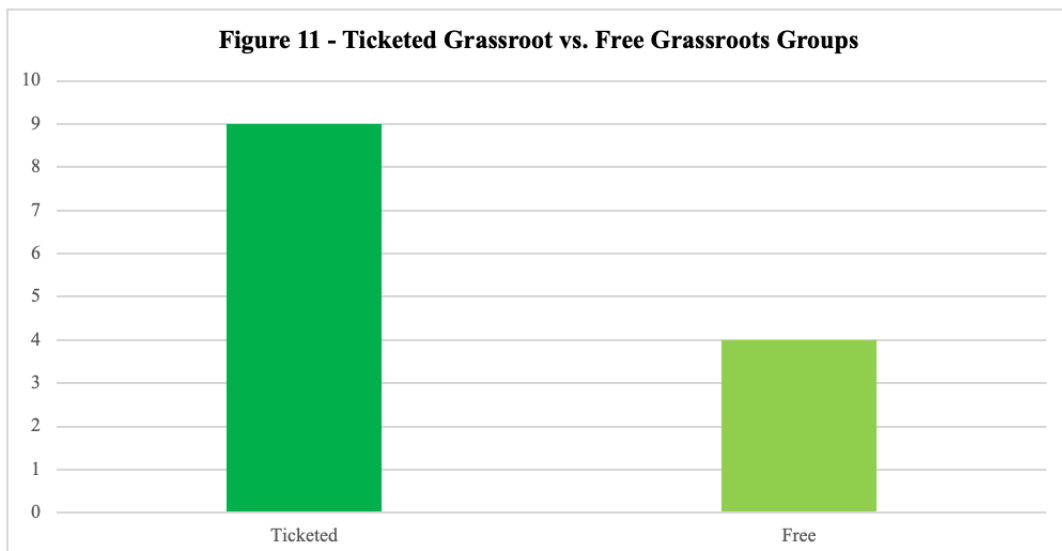


Figure 11 - Ticketed Grassroot vs. Free Grassroots Groups



This table displays only the independent grassroots Shakespeare (non-university affiliated) organisations represented in Appendix C. The following nine groups charge for their performances: Theatre in the Rough in Alaska, Bards of Birmingham in Alabama, Merced Shakespearefest in California, Arden Shakespeare Guild in Delaware, Hawaii Shakespeare Festival, Prenzie Players in Iowa, Shakespeare '70 in New Jersey, OrangeMite Shakespeare in Pennsylvania, and Guerrilla Shakespeare in South Carolina. The remain four organisations offer only free (often outdoor) performances: Encore Theatre Company in Idaho, Wichita Shakespeare Company in Kansas, Recycled Shakespeare Company in Maine, Montford Park Players in North Carolina.

2. Organisational Data from All Organisations

FIGURE 12 - Venues by Organizational Model

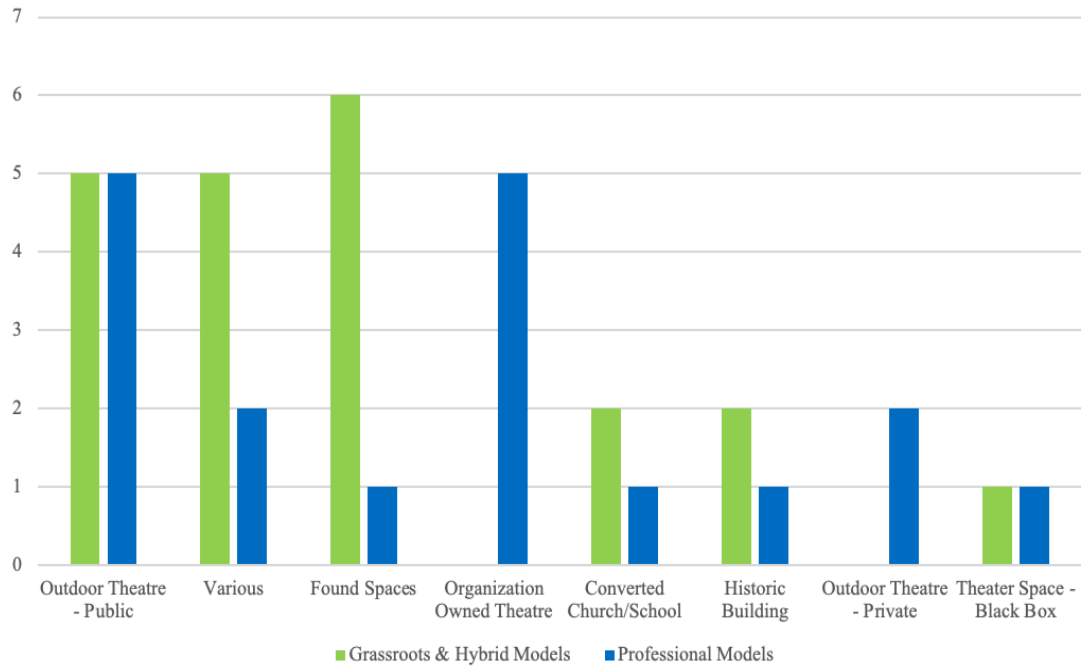
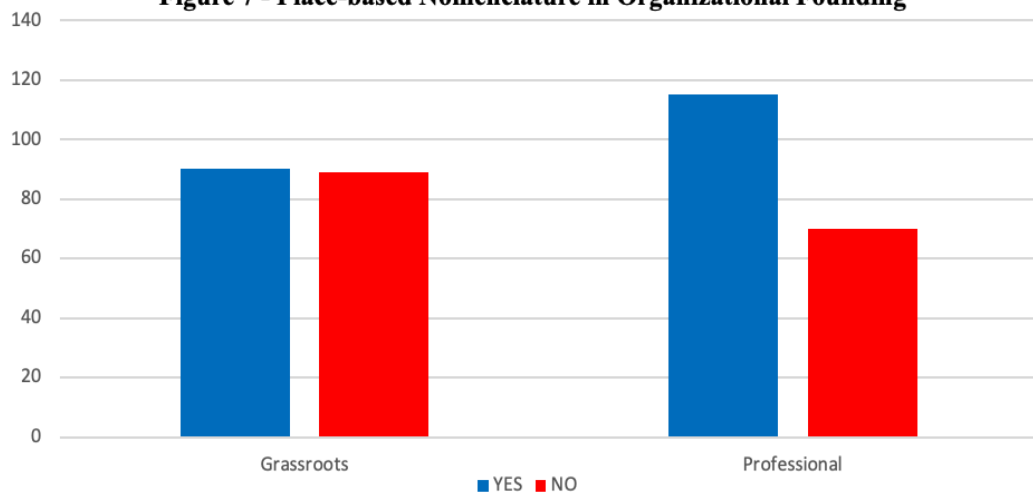


Figure 7 - Place-based Nomenclature in Organizational Founding



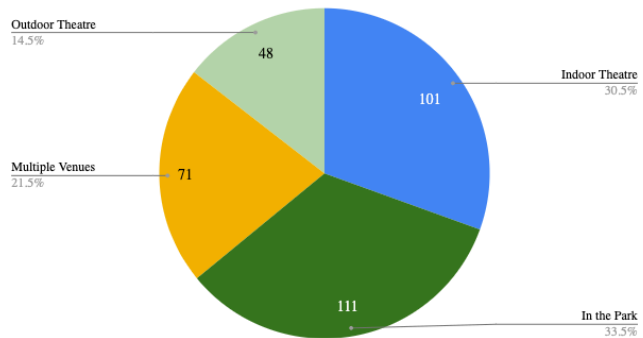
3. Organisational Venue Use and ‘Shakespeare in the Park’ Database, 2019

The following is the statistical data pertaining to venue use and the presence of a ‘Shakespeare in the Park’ program out of a sample size of three hundred thirty-one Shakespeare-based performance organisations in the United States. This survey was completed with an earlier version of Appendix B’s database, in the summer of 2019, hence the sample size is smaller than the three hundred sixty-five groups counted elsewhere in the thesis. Nevertheless, this data is not contingent upon any conclusions researched with the larger sample size, and still provides statistical validity on this ‘Shakespeare in the Park’ programming as well as the use of venues.

Venue Use Statistical Summary:

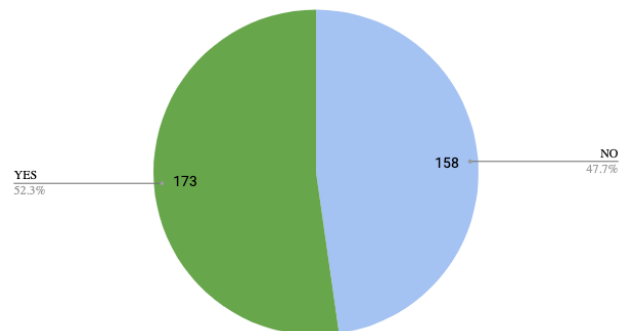
Venue	# of Orgs.
In the Park	111
Indoor Theatre	101
Multiple Venues	71
Outdoor Theatre	48
Total	331

Shakespeare Performing Organizations in the United States - Venue Classifications



Organisation Programming - Shakespeare in the Park	# of Orgs.
Yes	173
No	158
Total	331

Organisational Programming - Shakespeare in the Park



Venue Use Complete Database:

State / Company	Type	City	VENUE TYPE	In the Park	Specifics
Alabama Shakespeare Festival	Professional	Montgomery, AL	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Bards of Birmingham	Grassroots	Birmingham, AL	Indoor Theatre	NO	Church
Huntsville Shakespeare	Grassroots / Uni. Spon.	Huntsville, AL	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre - University
Rude Mechanicals	Grassroots / Uni. Spon.	Tuscaloosa, AL	In the Park	YES	Park
Anchorage Shakespeare Festival	Grassroots	Anchorage, AK	Multiple Venues	YES	Found Spaces / Town Square (multiple locations)
Fairbanks Shakespeare Theatre	Professional / Grassroots	Fairbanks, AK	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
Theatre in the Rough	Grassroots	Juneau, AK	Indoor Theatre	NO	Church / Community Hall
El Rio Theatre Project - Shakespeare in the Park	Grassroots	Tuscon, AZ	In the Park	YES	Park
Flagstaff Shakespeare Festival	Professional	Flagstaff, AZ	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Multiple Venues
Grassroots Shakespeare Arizona	Grassroots	Phoenix, AZ	In the Park	YES	Park
Laark Productions	Grassroots	Prescott, AZ	Outdoor Theatre	NO	History Center (Shakespeare in the Pines)
Southwest Shakespeare Company	Professional	Mesa, AZ	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre	Professional / Uni. Spon.	Conway, AR	Outdoor Theatre	YES	Multiple Venues
Northwest Arkansas Shakespeare Festival	Professional / Uni. Spon.	Bentonville, AR	In the Park	YES	Park
A Noise Within	Professional	Pasadena, CA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
African American Shakespeare Co.	Professional	San Francisco, CA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Multiple Venues
Arabian Shakespeare Festival	Professional	San Francisco, CA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Archway Theatre Company	Professional	Burbank, CA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Multiple Venues
California Shakespeare Theatre	Professional	Berkley, CA	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
Carmel Shakespeare Festival: Pacific Rep.	Professional	Carmel, CA	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Multiple Venues
Central Coast Shakespeare Festival	Grassroots	San Luis Obispo, CA	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Winery
Colonials: An American Shakespeare Co.	Grassroots	Santa Monica, CA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Curtain Theatre	Grassroots	Mill Valley, CA	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
Davis Shakespeare Festival	Professional	Davis, CA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Ensemble Shakespeare Theatre	Hybrid	Pasadena, CA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Half Moon Bay Shakespeare	Professional	La Mesa, CA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Independent Shakespeare Company	Professional	Los Angeles, CA	In the Park	YES	Park
Kern Shakespeare Festival	Grassroots / Uni. Spon.	Bakersfield, CA	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
Kingsmen Shakespeare	Professional / Uni. Spon.	Simi Valley, CA	In the Park	YES	Park

Livermore Shakespeare Festival	Professional	Livermore, CA	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Winery
Long Beach Shakespeare Company	Grassroots	Long Beach, CA	In the Park	YES	Park
Los Angeles Drama Club	Educational / Grassroots	Los Angeles, CA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Multiple Venues
Marin Shakespeare Company	Professional	San Rafael, CA	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
Merced Shakespeare Festival	Grassroots	Merced, CA	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
New Swan Shakespeare Festival	Professional / Uni. Spon.	Irvine, CA	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
The Old Globe Theater	Professional	San Diego, CA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Petaluma Shakespeare Company	Hybrid	Petaluma, CA	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Porters of Hellgate Theatre Co.	Professional	Los Angeles, CA	Multiple Venues	NO	Multiple Venues
Sacramento Shakespeare Festival	Grassroots / Uni. Spon.	Sacramento, CA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
San Diego Shakespeare Society	Grassroots	San Diego, CA	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
San Francisco Shakespeare Festival	Professional	San Francisco, CA	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Santa Barbara Shakespeare	Grassroots	Santa Barbara, CA	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Santa Clarita Shakespeare Festival	Professional	Santa Clarita, CA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Multiple Venues
Santa Cruz Shakespeare	Professional	Santa Cruz, CA	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
Sierra Madre Shakespeare Festival	Grassroots	Sierra Madre, CA	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Silicon Valley Shakespeare	Professional	San Jose, CA	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Shakespeare By the Sea	Professional	San Pedro, CA	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Shakespeare Center of Los Angeles	Professional	Los Angeles, CA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Shakespeare in the Cannery	Grassroots	Santa Rosa, CA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Shakespeare in the Vines	Grassroots	Temecula, CA	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Winery
Shakespeare in Yosemite	Hybrid / Uni. Spon.	Yosemite Valley, CA	In the Park	YES	NPS Site - Yosemite National Park
Shakespeare Napa Valley	Grassroots / Uni. Spon.	Napa, CA	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Shakespeare on the Vine Theatre Co.	Grassroots	Murphys, CA	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Winery
Shakespeare Orange County	Professional	Garden Grove, CA	Multiple Venues	NO	Multiple Venues
Sonoma Shakespeare Avalon Players	Professional	Sonoma, CA	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Winery
Southern California Shakespeare Festival	Professional / Uni. Spon.	Pomona, CA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Spiritus Productions: Shakespeare in the Park	Hybrid Model	Redding, CA	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Stanford Shakespeare Company	Grassroots / Uni. Spon.	Palo Alto, CA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Stratford Players	Grassroots	Idyllwild, CA	Multiple Venues	NO	Multiple Venues
Vallejo Shakespeare in the Park	Professional	Vallejo, CA	In the Park	YES	In the Park

We Players	Hybrid Model	San Francisco, CA	Multiple Venues	YES	Found Spaces / Multiple Venues / NPS Sites
Wildflower Women's Ensemble	Grassroots	Sacramento, CA	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Will Geer's Theatricum Botanicum	Professional	Topanga, CA	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
Woodward Shakespeare Festival	Grassroots	Fresno, CA	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Colorado Shakespeare Festival	Professional / Uni. Spon.	Boulder, CO	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
Denver Public Schools Shakespeare Festival	Youth Performance	Denver, CO	Outdoor Theatre	YES	Outdoor Theatre
Hudson Reed Ensemble: Shakespeare in the Park	Grassroots / Summer Program	Basalt, CO	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Shakespeare in the Parking Lot	Educational Program	Denver, CO	Multiple Venues	NO	Parking Lot / Found Spaces
Shakespeare in the Sangres Festival	Grassroots	Westcliffe, CO	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
The Wit's Shakesbeer	Grassroots	Denver, CO	Multiple Venues	NO	Bar
ArtFarm (Shakespeare in the Grove)	Professional / Edu. Based	Middletown, CT	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Capital Classics Theatre Company	Professional / Program based	West Hartford, CT	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Connecticut Free Shakespeare	Professional	Bridgeport, CT	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Elm Shakespeare	Professional / Uni. Spon.	New Haven, CT	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Shakespeare on the Sound	Professional	Norwalk, CT	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Valley Shakespeare Festival	Grassroots	Shelton, CT	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Arden Club: Shakespeare Guild	Grassroots	Wilmington, DE	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
Delaware Shakespeare	Professional	Wilmington, DE	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Brave Spirits Theatre	Professional	Washington, DC	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Folger Shakespeare Library	Professional	Washington, DC	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Shakespeare Theatre Company	Professional	Washington, DC	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Taffety Punk: Bootleg Shakespeare	Professional	Washington, DC	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Florida Shakespeare Theatre	Professional	Miami, FL	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Marco Island Shakespeare Festival	Professional	Marco Island, FL	Indoor Theatre	NO	Church
Orlando Shakespeare Theatre	Professional / Uni. Spon.	Orlando, FL	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Palm Beach Shakespeare Festival	Professional	Palm Beach, FL	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Palm Coast Arts Foundation: Shakespeare in the Park	Grassroots	Palm Coast, FL	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Shakespeare in Paradise, Inc.	Professional	Naples, FL	Multiple Venues	NO	Multiple Venues
St. Petersburg Shakespeare Festival	Grassroots	St. Petersburg, FL	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Southeastern Teen Shakespeare Co.	Youth Performance	Pensacola, FL	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Southern Shakespeare Company	Professional	Tallahassee, FL	In the Park	YES	In the Park

Atlanta Shakespeare Company	Professional	Atlanta, GA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Shakespeare Tavern
Newnan Shakes	Professional	Newnan, CA	In the Park	NO	In the Park
Rome Shakespeare Festival	Professional	Rome, GA	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
Savannah Shakes	Grassroots	Savannah, GA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Multiple Venues
Hawaii Shakespeare Festival	Grassroots	Honolulu, HI	Multiple Venues	NO	Multiple Venues
Hilo Shakespeare Festival	Grassroots	Hilo, HI	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Idaho Shakespeare Festival	Professional	Boise, ID	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
iShakespeare Live	Youth Educational Org.	Menan, ID	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Shakespeare's Garden: Encore Theatre Co.	Grassroots	Nampa, ID	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Chicago Shakespeare Theatre	Professional	Chicago, IL	Indoor Theatre	YES	Multiple Venues
First Folio Theatre	Professional	Oak Brook, IL	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
Illinois Shakespeare Festival	Professional / Uni. Spon.	Normal, IL	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Multiple Venues
Midsommer Flight	Professional	Chicago, IL	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Muse of Fire Theatre Company	Professional	Evanston, IL	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Oak Park Festival Theatre	Professional	Oak Park, IL	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
Shakespeare Project of Chicago	Professional	Chicago, IL	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Stone Soup Shakespeare	Professional	Carbondale, IL	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Wheaton Park District - Shakespeare in the Park	Grassroots / Uni. Spon.	Wheaton, IL	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Bard Fest	Professional	Indianapolis, IN	Indoor Theatre	NO	Multiple Venues
Eclectic Pond Theatre Company	Grassroots	Indianapolis, IN	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Garfield Shakespeare Company	Grassroots	Indianapolis, IN	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Hossier Shakes	Professional	Marion, IN	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Indianapolis Shakespeare Company	Professional	Indianapolis, IN	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Richmond Shakespeare Festival	Professional	Richmond, IN	Indoor Theatre	NO	Old Piano Factory
Shakespeare at Notre Dame	Professional / Uni. Spon.	South Bend, IN	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Shakespeare Machine	Professional / Uni. Spon.	Fort Wayne, IN	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Iowa Shakespeare Experience	Grassroots	Des Moines, IA	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Prenzie Players	Grassroots	Davenport, IA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Riverside Theatre: Shakespeare in the Park	Professional / Summer program	Iowa City, IA	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Flint Hill Shakespeare Festival	Grassroots	Saint Mary's, KS	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
Wichita Shakespeare Company	Grassroots	Wichita, KS	In the Park	YES	In the Park

Appalachian Shakespeare Center: Shakespeare in the Ravine	Grassroots / Uni. Spon.	Richmond, KY	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Kentucky Shakespeare Festival	Professional	Louisville, KY	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Murray Shakespeare Festival	Grassroots / Uni. Spon.	Murray, KY	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
New Orleans Shakespeare Festival at Tulane	Professional / Uni. Spon.	New Orleans, LA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Acorn Productions: Naked Shakespeare	Professional / Program	Portland, ME	Multiple Venues	NO	Bar
Bath Shakespeare Festival	Professional	Bath, ME	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Camden Shakespeare Festival	Professional	Camden, ME	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Recycled Shakespeare Company	Grassroots	Waterville, ME	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Sound and Fury	Grassroots	Portland, ME	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Ten Bucks Theatre Company: Shakespeare Under the Stars	Grassroots / Summer program	Bangor, ME	In the Park	YES	Multiple Venues
Theater at Monmouth	Professional	Monmouth, ME	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Annapolis Shakespeare Company	Professional	Annapolis, MD	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Baltimore Shakespeare Factory	Professional	Baltimore, MD	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Brown Box Theatre: Shakespeare in the Park	Professional	Berlin, MD	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Chesapeake Shakespeare Company	Professional	Baltimore, MD	Multiple Venues	NO	Multiple Venues
Rude Mechanicals	Grassroots	Laurel, MD	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Actor's Shakespeare Project	Professional	Somerville, MA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Bay Colony Shakespeare Company	Professional	Marshfield, MA	Multiple Venues	NO	Multiple Venues
Commonwealth Shakespeare Company	Professional / Uni. Spon.	Babson Park, MA	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Glass Horse Project: Shakespeare in Buttonwood	Program Based	New Bedford, MA	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Hampshire Shakespeare Company	Professional*	Amherst, MA	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Martha's Vineyard Playhouse, Outdoor Shakespeare	Professional	Vineyard Haven, MA	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
MIT Shakespeare Ensemble	Grassroots / Uni. Spon.	Cambridge, MA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Midsummer Shakespeare	Grassroots	Onset, MA	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Pittsfield Shakespeare in the Park	Grassroots	Pittsfield, MA	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Rebel Shakespeare Company	Grassroots	Salem, MA	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Shakespeare and Company	Professional	Lenox, MA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Shakespeare Now!	Professional	Brookline, MA	Multiple Venues	NO	Multiple Venues
Worcester Shakespeare Company	Professional	Worcester, MA	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
Grand Valley Shakespeare Festival	Hybrid / Uni. Spon.	Allendale, MI	Multiple Venues	NO	Multiple Venues
Lakeside Shakespeare Theatre	Professional	Frankfort, MI	In the Park	YES	In the Park

Michigan Shakespeare Festival	Professional	Jackson, MI	Multiple Venues	NO	Multiple Venues
Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Company	Professional	Grand Haven, MI	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Elizabethan Replica
Shakespeare Behind Bars	Grassroots	Macatawa, MI	Multiple Venues	NO	Prisons
Shakespeare in Detroit	Professional	Dearborn, MI	Multiple Venues	YES	Site Specific
Shakespeare in the Arb	Hybrid / Uni. Spon.	Ann Arbor, MI	In the Park	YES	Multiple Venues during production
Shakespeare Royal Oak	Professional / Grassroots	Royal Oak, MI	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Cromulent Shakespeare Company	Grassroots	Minneapolis, MN	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Great River Shakespeare Festival	Professional / Uni. Spon.	Winona, MN	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Minnesota Shakespeare Company	Grassroots	St. Paul, MN	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Shakespeare and Company	Grassroots / Uni. Spon.	White Bear Lake, MN	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
Shakespearean Youth Theatre	Youth Performance	St. Paul, MN	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Belhaven Shakespeare in the Park	Program Based Youth	Jackson, MS	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Greenwood Shakespeare Project	Grassroots / Youth / Program	Greenwood, MS	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Heart of America Shakespeare Festival	Professional	Kansas City, MO	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Missouri Shakespeare Festival	Grassroots / Uni. Spon.	Joplin, MO	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Shakespeare Festival St. Louis	Hybrid Model	St. Louis, MO	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Belt Valley Shakespeare Players	Grassroots / Youth Perf.	Belt, MT	Multiple Venues	NO	Multiple Venues
Montana Shakespeare in the Parks	Professional	Bozeman, MT	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Flatwater Shakespeare Company	Grassroots	Lincoln, NE	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Nebraska Shakespeare	Professional / Uni. Spons.	Omaha, NE	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Shakespeare on the Square	Grassroots	Aurora, NE	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Bard in the Yard	Grassroots	Elko, NV	Outdoor Theatre	NO	'In the Yard'
Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival	Professional	Lake Tahoe, NV	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
Merry War Theatre Group	Hybrid Model	Reno, NV	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
Shakespeare Institute of Nevada	Professional	Las Vegas, NV	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Advice to the Players	Hybrid	Sandwich, NH	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Seven Stages Shakespeare Company	Professional	Portsmouth, NH	Multiple Venues	NO	Multiple Venues
Blackbox Studios: Shakespeare in the Park	Grassroots / Summer Program	Teaneck, NJ	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Hudson Shakespeare Company	Hybrid	Jersey City, NJ	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey	Professional	Madison, NJ	Indoor Theatre	YES	Indoor & Park program
Shakespeare 70	Grassroots	West Windsor, NJ	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues

International Shakespeare Center Santa Fe	Professional	Santa Fe, NM	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Santa Fe Shakespeare Society	Grassroots	Santa Fe, NM	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Shakespeare on the Plaza Festival	Grassroots	Albuquerque, NM	In the Park	YES	City Center
Acting Company	Professional	New York, NY	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Amerinda Native Shakespeare Ensemble	Professional	New York, NY	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Aquila Theatre	Professional	New York, NY	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Bad Quarto Productions	Grassroots	New York, NY	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Children's Shakespeare Theatre	Grassroots	Orangeburg, NY	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Hamlet Isn't Dead	Professional	New York, NY	Multiple Venues	NO	Multiple Venues
Hamptons Shakespeare Festival	Educational / Youth Perf.	Amagansett, NY	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Hip to Hip Theatre Company	Professional	Woodside, NY	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Hofstra University Shakespeare Festival	Grassroots / Uni. Spons.	Hempstead, NY	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Hudson Valley Shakespeare	Professional	Garrison, NY	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Open-air Theater Tent
Hudson Warehouse	Professional	New York, NY	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Ithaca Shakespeare Company	Hybrid Model	Ithaca, NY	In the Park	YES	In the Park
New York Classical Theatre	Professional	New York, NY	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Public Theater (Shakespeare in the Park)	Professional	New York, NY	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Rochester Community Shakespeare	Grassroots	Rochester, NY	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Rockland Shakespeare Company	Grassroots / Uni. Spons.	Suffern, NY	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Saratoga Shakespeare Company	Professional	Saratoga Springs, NY	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Shake on the Lake	Professional	Silver Lake, NY	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Shakespeare Forum	Professional	New York, NY	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Shakespeare in Delaware Park	Professional	Buffalo, NY	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Shakespeare in Lincoln Park	Program Based	Albany, NY	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Shakespeare in the Parking Lot	Professional	New York, NY	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Parking Lot
Shakespeare in the Square	Professional	New York, NY	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Staten Island Shakespearean Theatre Co.	Hybrid Model	Staten Island, NY	Multiple Venues	YES	NPS Site - Gateway National Rec. Area (Fort Wadsworth)
Syracuse Shakespeare-In-The-Park	Grassroots / Uni. Spons.	Syracuse, NY	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Titan Theatre Company	Professional	New York, NY	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Chickspeare	Grassroots	Charlotte, NC	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Dram Tree Shakespeare Company	Grassroots	Wilmington, NC	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Greensboro City: Shakespeare in the Park	Grassroots [?]	Greensboro, NC	In the Park	YES	In the Park

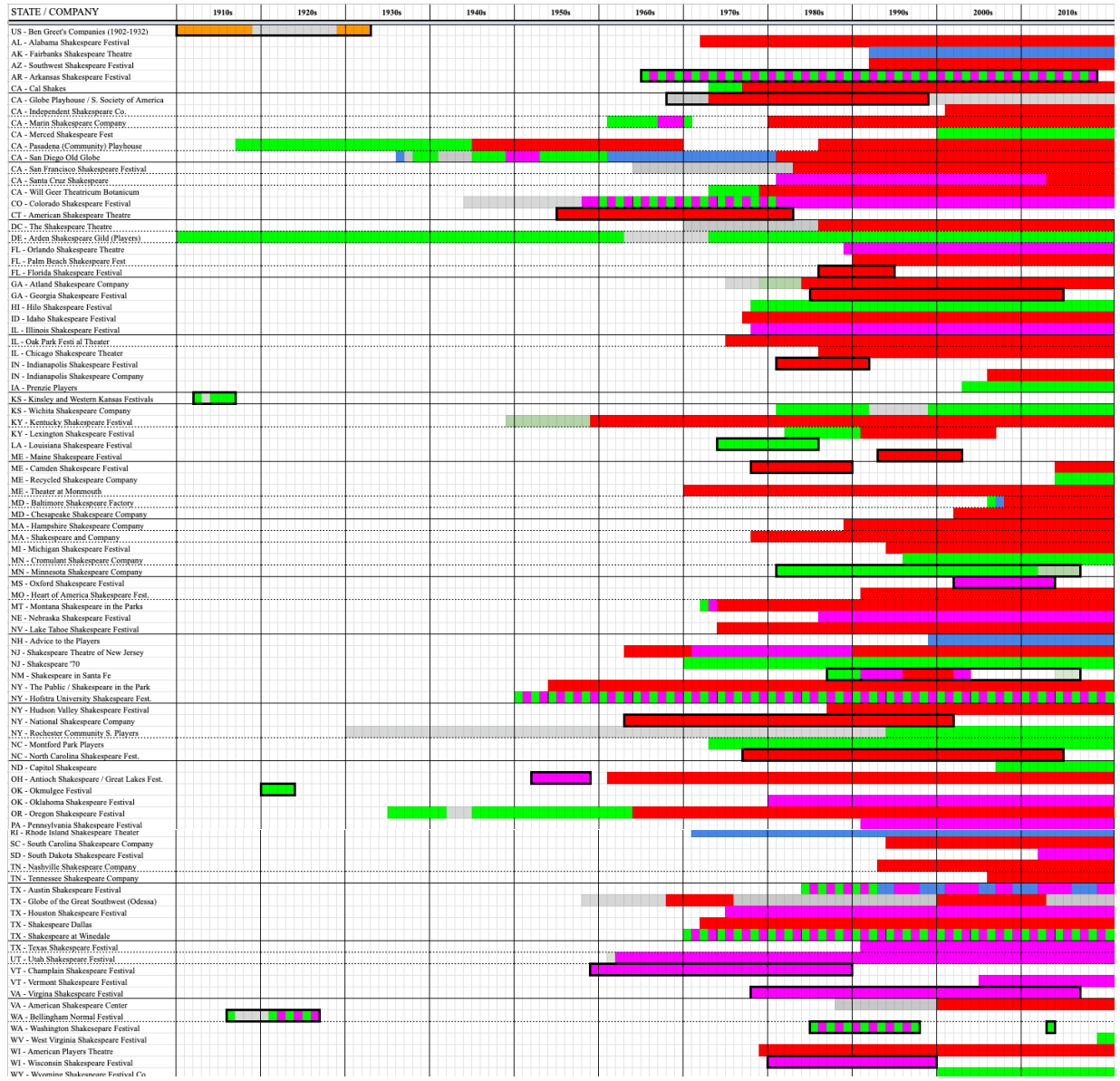
Green Room Comm. Theatre: Shakes. in the Park	Grassroots	Newton, NC	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Montford Park Players	Grassroots	Asheville, NC	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
Sweet Tea Shakespeare	Professional [?]	Fayetteville, NC	Multiple Venues	NO	Multiple Venues
Capitol Shakespeare	Grassroots	Bismarck, ND	Multiple Venues	YES	Park & State Museum
North Dakota Shakespeare	Professional / Uni. Spon.	Grand Forks, ND	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Actors' Theatre of Columbus	Hybrid Model	Columbus, OH	Indoor Theatre	YES	Multiple Venues
Cincinnati Shakespeare Company	Professional	Cincinnati, OH	Indoor Theatre	YES	Multiple Venues
Cleveland Shakespeare Festival	Grassroots	Cleveland, OH	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues; NPS Site - President James A Garfield NHS
Great Lakes Theater Festival	Professional	Cleveland, OH	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Ohio Shakespeare Festival	Professional	Kent, OH	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues; bar, indoor, outdoor
Rubber City Theatre	Professional	Akron, OH	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Ada Shakespeare Company	Hybrid	Ada, OK	Outdoor Theatre	YES	Multiple Venues; main venue is outdoor theatre
Oklahoma Shakespeare in the Park	Professional	Oklahoma City, OK	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Oklahoma Shakespearean Festival	Professional / Uni. Spon.	Durant, OK	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Coos Bay Shakespeare in the Park	Professional	Coos Bay, OR	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Free Shakespeare in the Park	Grassroots	Eugene, OR	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Guerrilla Shakespeare Company	Grassroots	Bend, OR	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Oregon Shakespeare Festival	Professional	Ashland, OR	Multiple Venues	NO	Outdoor Theatre, primary venues; multiple venues on site
Original Practices Shakespeare Festival	Grassroots	Portland, OR	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Portland Shakespeare Project	Professional	Portland, OR	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Portland Actor's Ensemble	Professional [?]	Portland, OR	Multiple Venues	YES	Parks, Bars, cemeteries, etc.
Rose City Shakespeare Company	Grassroots	Portland, OR	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Willamette Shakespeare	Hybrid	Newberg, OR	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Band of Brothers Shakespeare Co.	Grassroots	Johnstown, PA	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Gamut Theatre (Harrisburg Shakespeare Company)	Professional	Harrisburg, PA	Indoor Theatre	YES	Indoor Theatre, primary; annual Shakespeare in the Park
Gaslight Theatre Company	Grassroots	Wilkes Barre, PA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Gas Pipe Theatre Co.: Shakes. in the Park	Grassroots	Lewisburg, PA	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Ghostlight Productions	Grassroots	South Abington Twp, PA	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
New Renaissance Theatre Company	Professional	Pittsburgh, PA	In the Park	YES	In the Park
OrangeMite Shakespeare Company	Grassroots	Dover, PA	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues

Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival	Professional / Uni. Spon.	Center Valley, PA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
People's Shakespeare Project	Grassroots	Lancaster, PA	Multiple Venues	YES	President James Buchanan's historic home
Philadelphia Shakespeare Theatre	Professional	Philadelphia, PA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Pittsburgh Shakespeare in the Parks	Grassroots	Pittsburgh, PA	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Poor Yorick's Players	Hybrid Model	Monroeville, PA	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Revolution Shakespeare	Professional [?]	Philadelphia, PA	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Scranton Shakespeare Festival	Professional [?]	Scranton, PA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Shakespeare in Clark Park	Professional	Philadelphia, PA	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Shakespeare Summer Nights	Grassroots / Uni. Spon.	Erie, PA	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Steel City Shakespeare Center	Hybrid Model	Pittsburgh, PA	In the Park	YES	In the Park, and detention centers
Colonial Theatre Shakespeare	Grassroots	Westerly, RI	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Rhode Island Shakespeare Theatre	Hybrid	Pawtucket, RI	In the Park	YES	In the Park, schools, etc.
Shakespeare in the City	Hybrid	Providence, RI	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Shakespeare on the Green	Grassroots / Uni. Spon.	Providence, RI	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Shakespeare on the Saugatucket	Program	Wakefield, RI	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Greenville Shakespeare Company	Grassroots [?]	Greenville, SC	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Company	Grassroots	Greenville, SC	Multiple Venues	YES	In the Park
Shakespeare Carolina	Professional [?]	Rock Hill, SC	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
South Carolina Shakespeare Company	Grassroots	Columbia, SC	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Upstate Shakespeare Festival	Grassroots	Greenville, SC	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Bare Bodkins Theatre Company	Professional	Sioux Falls, SD	In the Park	YES	In the Park
South Dakota Shakespeare Festival	Professional / Uni. Spon.	Vermillion, SD	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Back Alley Productions: Shakespeare in the Park	Summer Program	Chattanooga, TN	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Nashville Shakespeare Company	Professional	Nashville, TN	Indoor Theatre	YES	Multiple Locations; indoor, park, museums, etc.
Shakespeare in Johnson City	Grassroots	Johnson City, TN	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Tennessee Shakespeare Company	Professional	Memphis, TN	Indoor Theatre	YES	Multiple Venues
Tennessee Stage Company	Professional	Knoxville, TN	Indoor Theatre	YES	Indoor and on 'Market Square', outdoor location
Austin Shakespeare	Professional	Austin, TX	Indoor Theatre	YES	Primarily indoor with annual Shakespeare in the Park
Bare Bones Shakespeare	Hybrid	Plano, TX	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
The Baron's Men	Grassroots	Austin, TX	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Elizabethan theatre replica
Conroe Shakespeare Festival	Grassroots	Conroe, TX	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Downtown outdoor venue

EmilyAnn Theatre & Gardens	Grassroots	Wimberley, TX	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Amphitheatre on site with gardens
En Route Productions' Shakespeare On The Farm	Grassroots	Austin, TX	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Hidden Room Theatre	Hybrid	Austin, TX	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Houston Shakespeare Festival	Professional / Uni. Spon.	Houston, TX	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
Magik Theatre: Shakespeare on the River	Program	San Antonio, TX	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Odessa Shakespeare Festival	Grassroots / Uni. Spon.	Odessa, TX	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Plaza Theatre Company: Shakespeare in the Park	Program	Cleburne, TX	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Shakespeare Dallas	Professional	Dallas, TX	In the Park	YES	In the Park; other venues
Shakespeare on the Concho	Grassroots	San Angelo, TX	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Shakespeare on the Rocks	Grassroots	El Paso, TX	In the Park	YES	Multiple Venues; NPS Site - Chamizal National Memorial
Texas Shakespeare Festival	Professional / Uni. Spon.	Kilgore, TX	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Trinity Shakespeare Festival	Professional / Uni. Spon.	Fort Worth, TX	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Shakespeare at Winedale	Grassroots / Uni. Spon.	Austin, TX	Indoor Theatre	NO	Barn
Shakespeare in the Shade	Grassroots	Tomball, TX	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Something for Nothing Theatre Company	Grassroots	Austin, TX	In the Park	YES	In the Park
UpStage Theatre: Shakespeare in the Park	Program	The Woodlands, TX	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Grassroots Shakespeare Company	Grassroots	Provo, UT	In the Park	YES	In the Park
New World Shakespeare Company	Grassroots	Salt Lake City, UT	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Utah Shakespeare Festival	Professional / Uni. Spon.	Cedar City, UT	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre, primary venue; multiple venues on site
Get Thee to the Funnery	Grassroots / Youth	Hardwick, VT	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Shakespeare in the Woods	Professional	Pawlet, VT	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Shakespeare on Main Street	Grassroots	Danby, VT	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Vermont Shakespeare Festival	Professional / Uni. Spon.	Burlington, VT	Multiple Venues	NO	Multiple Venues
American Shakespeare Center	Professional	Staunton, VA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Bard Unbound LLC	Grassroots	Richmond, VA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Britches and Hoes	Grassroots	Herndon, VA	Multiple Venues	NO	Libraries, etc.
Quill Theatre	Professional	Richmond, VA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Shakespeare Alive	Grassroots	Williamsburg, VA	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Shakespeare in the Dark	Grassroots / Uni. Spon.	Williamsburg, VA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Shakespeare Opera Theatre	Professional	The Plains, VA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Two Muses Productions	Grassroots	Roanoke, VA	In the Park	YES	In the Park
WSC Avante Bard	Professional	Arlington, VA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre

Animal Fire Theatre	Grassroots	Olympia, WA	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Community Shakespeare	Grassroots / Youth	Lopez Island, WA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Fern Shakespeare Company	Professional	Seattle, WA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Green Stage	Professional	Seattle, WA	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Island Shakespeare Festival	Professional	Langley, WA	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
Island Stage Left	Professional	Friday Harbor, WA	Multiple Venues	NO	Multiple Venues
Northwest Shakespeare	Professional	Mount Vernon, WA	Outdoor Theatre	YES	Multiple Venues
Rude Mechanicals	Grassroots	Richland, WA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Seattle Shakespeare Company	Professional	Seattle, WA	Indoor Theatre	YES	Indoor Theatre with Parks program
Shakespeare in the Woods: Port Angeles Fine Arts Center	Hybrid	Port Angeles, WA	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
Shakespeare Wala Wala	Hybrid	Walla Walla, WA	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues
Upstart Crow Collective	Professional	Seattle, WA	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Alban Arts Center: Shakespeare in the Park	Summer Program	St. Albans, WV	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Vintage Theatre Company	Hybrid Model	Clarksburg, WV	In the Park	YES	In the Park
West Virginia Shakespeare Festival	Grassroots	Huntington, WV	In the Park	YES	In the Park
American Players Theatre	Professional	Green Spring, WI	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
Door Shakespeare	Professional	Baileys Harbor, WI	Outdoor Theatre	NO	Outdoor Theatre
Optimist Theatre	Professional	Milwaukee, WI	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Young Shakespeare Players	Grassroots	Madison, WI	Indoor Theatre	NO	Indoor Theatre
Sheridan Shakespeare Company	Grassroots	Sheridan, WY	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Off Square Theatre Co.: Thin Air Shakespeare	Grassroots	Jackson, WY	In the Park	YES	In the Park
Wyoming Shakespeare Festival Co.	Grassroots	Lander, WY	Multiple Venues	YES	Multiple Venues

4. Organisational Development and Continuity, 1910-2020



ORGANISATIONAL MODEL KEY						
Grassroots	Professional	University Sponsored Grassroots	University Sponsored Professional	Hybrid	Prototypical Professional Touring Company	Organisation Existing in Different Form

5. State-Named Festivals

KEY
ACTIVE
UNKNOWN
DEFUNCT

State	Name	Founded	Closing / Active	Notes or Name Change	Type
OR	Oregon Shakespeare Festival	1935	Active	Officially named the Oregon Shakespeare Festival by 1937.	Professional
NY	New York Shakespeare Festival	1954	Active	Renamed only 'Shakespeare in the Park' by the Public Theatre in 2002.	Professional
KY	Kentucky Shakespeare Festival	1959	Active	N/A	Professional
UT	Utah Shakespeare Festival	1961	Active	In 2016, the organisation's name changed from the 'Utah Shakespearean Festival' to its current name.	Professional
NJ	New Jersey Shakespeare Festival	1963	Active	Changed the name to 'Shakespeare Theatre of NJ' after 1995.	Professional
AR	Arkansas Shakespeare Festival	1966	2019	This group was still active in 2017; recent operational evidence could not be found.	Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
CO	Colorado Shakespeare Festival	1968	Active	N/A	Professional - Uni. Spon.
SC	South Carolina Shakespeare Festival	1971	1972	The SC Shakespeare Festival was again (at least) started in 1993 for a brief run.	Professional
AL	Alabama Shakespeare Festival	1972	Active	N/A	Professional
KS	Kansas Shakespeare Festival	1972	1973	University of Kansas at Lawrence	Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
MT	Montana Shakespeare in the Parks	1972	Active	N/A	N/A
LA	Louisiana Shakespeare Festival	1974	1985	This name was contested between two groups detailed in this dissertation and media articles on the organisation: A Narrative History of the Lake Charles Little Theatre Lake Charles, Louisiana, 1927-1982, by Nancy Martin.	Grassroots
ID	Idaho Shakespeare Festival	1977	Active	N/A	Professional
NC	North Carolina Shakespeare Festival	1977	2013	N/A	Professional
IL	Illinois Shakespeare Festival	1978	Active	N/A	Professional - Uni. Spon.
VA	Virginia Shakespeare Festival	1978	2016	N/A	Professional - Uni. Spon.
OK	Oklahoma Shakespearean Festival	1980	Active	N/A	Professional - Uni. Spon.
WI	Wisconsin Shakespeare Festival	1980	2000	N/A	Professional - Uni. Spon.
GA	Georgia Shakespeare Festival	1981	2014	N/A	Professional
IN	Indiana Shakespeare Festival	1981	1991	N/A	Unknown
MN	Minnesota Shakespeare Festival	1981	1983	Another organisation resumed activities under this name in 2001 and 2002.	Unknown
IA	Iowa Shakespeare Festival	1983	1985	The first iteration under this name was university-based. A late 1990s version stemmed from the 'Iowa Shakespeare Project'. Next iteration started in '07 as a 'festival' then changed to 'experience'. None of these groups were related.	Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
TX	Texas Shakespeare Festival	1984	Active	N/A	Professional
WA	Washington Shakespeare Festival	1985	1997	A new grassroots festival formed under this name in 2013, attending the STA conference in Bethlehem PA, but appears to be inactive since then.	Grassroots - Uni. Spon.

FL	Florida Shakespeare Festival	1986	1994	Several iterations of an organisation have form in Florida, but none have had a long lifecycle.	Professional
NE	Nebraska Shakespeare Festival	1986	Active	N/A	Professional
CA	California Shakespeare Festival	1991	Active	This group became 'California Shakespeare Theatre' in 2003, which is still operating today.	Professional
ND	North Dakota Shakespeare Festival	1991	2004	The original North Dakota Shakespeare Festival is defunct, and a new group was founded by Stephanie Faatz Murry under this name in 2017.	University Based
PA	Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival	1992	Active	N/A	Professional - Uni. Spon.
ME	Maine Shakespeare Festival	1993	2002	This was an annual program of the Penobscot Theatre Company which is still in existence.	Professional
NH	New Hampshire Shakespeare Festival	1993	2010	This group changed its name to 'New England Shakespeare Festival' in 2002.	Professional
MI	Michigan Shakespeare Festival	1995	Active	N/A	Professional
AZ	Arizona Shakespeare Festival	1998	2009	N/A	Professional
NV	Nevada Shakespeare Festival	1998	Unknown	This group changed the name to 'Company' in 2002; unknown date of dissolution.	Professional
MD	Maryland Shakespeare Festival	1999	2015	This group changed its name from 'Festival' to 'Company' during its final year.	Professional
WY	Wyoming Shakespeare Festival Company	2000	Active	N/A	
HI	Hawaii Shakespeare Festival	2001	Active	N/A	Grassroots
DE	Delaware Shakespeare Festival	2002	Active	Now referred to as just 'Delaware Shakespeare'.	Professional
OH	Ohio Shakespeare Festival	2002	Active	Started as the grassroots 'Shakespeare at Stan Hywet' in 1975 and remained such for 20 years before taking its current name.	Professional
CT	Central Connecticut Shakespeare Festival*	2004	2006	This is the closest example of a 'Connecticut Shakespeare Festival'.	Unknown
TN	Tennessee Shakespeare Festival	2007	2011	At the Webb School in Bell Buckle, TN.	Professional
AK	Alaska Shakespeare Festival	2008	2012	This group was still active in 2012, more recent operational evidence could not be found.	Professional
MO	Missouri Shakespeare Festival	2012	Active	N/A	Grassroots - Uni. Spon.
SD	South Dakota Shakespeare Festival	2012	Active	N/A	Professional - Uni. Spon.
VT	Vermont Shakespeare Festival	2012	Active	N/A	Professional - Uni. Spon.
WV	West Virginia Shakespeare Festival	2018	Active	N/A	Grassroots
NM	New Mexico Shakespeare Festival	2019	Active	This group started as 'Shakespeare on the Plaza' in 2014.	Hybrid / Professional
MA	N/A	Unknown	Unknown	N/A	N/A
MS	N/A	Unknown	Unknown	'Mississippi College Shakespeare Festival' exists, but evidence has not been found for a 'Mississippi Shakespeare Festival'.	N/A
RI	N/A	Unknown	Unknown	N/A	N/A

APPENDIX F – HISTORIC AND CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCE DATA

1. Early Outdoor Shakespeare Performance, 1887-1899

Outdoor Production	Location	Venue	Type	Source	Article Title
<i>As You Like It</i> - by Mrs. Agnes Booth	Manchester-by-the-Sea, MA	Hotel / Estate	Professional / Charity	The Times (Philadelphia, PA) Wed, Aug 10, 1887	Shakespeare Out Of Doors
<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> - by Mrs. Agnes Booth	Manchester-by-the-Sea, MA	Hotel / Estate	Professional / Charity	The Boston Globe (Boston, MA) Sun, Jul 31, 1888	The Masconomo Play
<i>As You Like It</i> - Stevens Mansion	Hoboken, NJ	Mansion Lawn	Professional	Bismarck Tribune (Bismarck, ND) Sun, Aug 16, 1891	Al Fresco Performances
<i>As You Like It</i> - Lake Harriet	St. Paul, MN	Park	Professional	Star Tribune (Minneapolis, MN) 19 Jul 1891	'As You Like It' A Delightful Performance in the Open Air at Lake Harriet
<i>As You Like It</i> - by Order of the Elks	Chicago, IL	Park	Professional	Chicago Tribune (Chicago, IL) Sat, Jul 25, 1891	Treidon Nature's Stage
<i>As You Like It</i> - Daly Company	Chicago, IL	Home / Lawn	Professional	The Inter Ocean (Chicago, IL) 1 Jul 1892	At the Home of Mr. and Mrs. Hobart Taylor
<i>As You Like It</i> - Hanford & Cloward	Washington, DC	Al Fresco	Professional	Evening Star (Washington, DC) 16 Sep 1893 / 28 Sep 1893	Amusements Tonight / For the Liberty Bell
'Shakespearian Festival' - Grand Union Hotel	Saratoga, NY	Hotel / Estate	Professional	The Streator Free Press (Streator, IL) 24 Aug 1894	The Open Air Play
<i>As You Like It</i> - William Morris Company	Decatur, IL	Home / Lawn	Professional	The Decatur Herald (Decatur, IL) 22 Jun 1895	A Novel Experiment
<i>As You Like It</i> - William Morris Company	Louisville, KY	Open Air	Professional	The Courier-Journal (Louisville, KY) 25 Jun 1895	'As You Like It' Will be Given Under the Auspices of Well-Known Women
<i>As You Like It</i> - William Morris Company	Fort Wayne, IN	Park	Professional	The Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette (Fort Wayne, IN) 3 Jul 1895	One Night Only Centlivre Park
<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> - Kemper Stock Company	Kansas City, MO	Park	Professional	Kansas City Journal (Kansas City, MO) 5 Jul 1895	Music and the Drama
<i>As You Like It</i> - Columbia Theatre	San Francisco, CA	Al Fresco	Professional	The San Francisco Call (San Francisco, CA) 10 Jul 1895	'As You Like It' Al Fresco
<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> - Shakespeare Club of Christ Church	Rochester, NY	Home / Lawn	Amateur	Democrat and Chronicle (Rochester, NY) 1 Jul 1896	Shakespeare Out of Doors
<i>As You Like It</i> - Miss Marie Wainwright	Asbury Park, NJ	Park	Professional	Cincinnati Enquirer (Cincinnati, OH) 26 Jul 1896	The Olio
<i>As You Like It</i> - William Morris Company	Newport, RI	Casino Grounds	Professional	Newport Daily News (Newport, RI) 1 Aug 1896	'As You Like It'
<i>As You Like It</i> - Lonergan & Dalglish Company	Sacramento, CA	Capitol Grounds	Professional	The Record-Union (Sacramento, CA) 9 May 1897	Amusements
<i>As You Like It</i> - Lonergan & Dalglish Company	Santa Cruz, CA	Hotel / Estate	Professional	Santa Cruz Sentinel (Santa Cruz, CA) 12 May 1897	'As You Like It'
<i>As You Like It</i> - Lonergan & Dalglish Company	San Bernardino, CA	Park	Professional	The San Bernardino County Sun (San Bernardino, CA) 23 Jun 1897	Amusements
<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> -?	Kansas City, MO	Home / Lawn	Amateur	Kansas City Journal (Kansas City, MO) 11 Jul 1897	Al Fresco Affairs

<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> - Edmund Lyons Co.	New York, NY	Park	Professional / Charity	New York Tribune (New York, NY) 25 Jul 1897	Shakespeare Out of Doors
<i>As You Like It</i> - Burbank Theater Stock Company	Los Angeles, CA	Home / Lawn	Professional	Los Angeles Herald (Los Angeles, CA) 8 Jul 1898	Drama Out of Doors
<i>As You Like It</i> - Janet Waldorf Company	Honolulu, HI	College Grounds	Professional	The Hawaiian Star (Honolulu, HI) 10 May / 12 May 1899	Drama 'Al Fresco' / Outdoor "As You Like It"
<i>As You Like It</i> - University of Vermont	Burlington, VT	Mansion Lawn	Amateur	The Burlington Free Press (Burlington, VT) 23 Jun 1899	Shakespeare Out of Doors

2. Overview of Season Programming in Shakespeare Companies, 2018

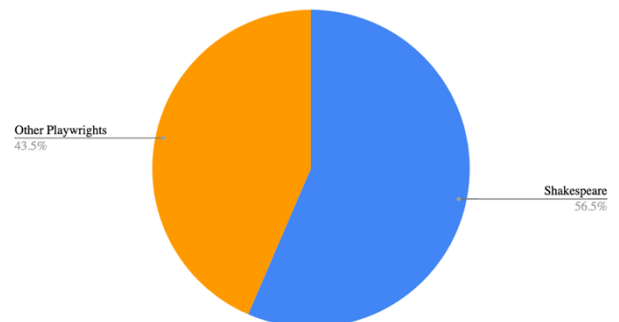
The following statistical data pertaining to specific productions of Shakespeare's plays produced in the United States was collected from a sample size of one hundred ninety-two Shakespeare performance organisations in the United States. This information was sourced from their available press materials on their websites. This does not include Shakespeare performed by other theatrical organisations that do not special in Shakespeare (as established in Chapter 3, Shakespeare's work still is the most popular among these groups as well). This survey was completed with the earliest version of Appendix B's database, in the summer of 2018, hence the sample size is considerably smaller than the three hundred sixty-five groups counted elsewhere in the thesis. Nevertheless, this data is not contingent upon any conclusions researched with the larger sample size, and still provides valuable insight into how approximately half of the groups in Appendix B program Shakespeare's work throughout a season.

Shakespeare Play	# of Productions
<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	27
<i>Romeo & Juliet</i>	23
<i>Macbeth</i>	23
<i>Twelfth Night</i>	21
<i>As You Like It</i>	19
<i>Hamlet</i>	18
<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	18
<i>King Lear</i>	17
<i>The Tempest</i>	16
<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	15
<i>Othello</i>	15
<i>Richard III</i>	14
<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>	13
<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	13
<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	12
<i>The Winter's Tale</i>	12

<i>Henry IV, Part 1</i>	10
<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	9
<i>Julius Caesar</i>	8
<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	7
<i>Richard II</i>	7
<i>Measure for Measure</i>	6
<i>Pericles</i>	6
<i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>	6
<i>King John</i>	6
<i>Timon of Athens</i>	5
<i>Antony & Cleopatra</i>	4
<i>Coriolanus</i>	4
<i>Henry V</i>	3
<i>Henry VI, Part 3</i>	3
<i>Titus Andronicus</i>	3
<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>	3
<i>Cymbeline</i>	2
<i>Henry IV, Part 2</i>	2
<i>The Two Noble Kinsmen</i>	2
<i>Henry VI, Part 1</i>	1
<i>Henry VI, Part 2</i>	1
<i>Henry VIII</i>	1
TOTAL	375

Work Produced by Shakespeare Companies in the U.S.	# of Productions
Shakespeare	375
Other Playwrights	289
TOTAL	663

Work Produced by Shakespeare Companies, 2018



3. Performances Attended, 2018-2020

PRODUCTION	COMPANY	TYPE	DATE	LOCATION
<i>Comedy of Errors</i>	OrangeMite Shakespeare	Student	31 Jun 2018	Dover, PA
<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	OrangeMite Shakespeare	Grassroots	10 Jul 2018	York, PA
<i>As You Like It</i>	Scranton Shakespeare Festival	Professional	14 Jul 2018	Scranton, PA
<i>As You Like It</i>	Ithaca Shakespeare Company	Hybrid Model	29 Jul 2018	Ithaca, NY
<i>King John</i>	Baltimore Shakespeare Factory	Professional	11 Aug 2018	Baltimore, MD
<i>Henry IV, Part 1</i>	OrangeMite Shakespeare	Grassroots	6 Sep 2018	Dover, PA
<i>Taming of the Shrew</i>	Advice to the Players	Hybrid Model	18 Sep 2018	Sandwich, NH
<i>Othello</i>	English Touring Theatre, Oxford Playhouse & Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory	Professional	7 Nov 2018	Coventry, UK
<i>Titus Andronicus</i>	Merced Shakespeare Fest	Grassroots	24 Jan 2019	Merced, CA
<i>As You Like It</i>	Shakespeare in Yosemite	Hybrid / Uni.	27 Apr 2019	Yosemite Valley, CA
<i>The Winter's Tale</i>	Wildflower Women's Ensemble	Grassroots	31 May 2019	Sacramento, CA
<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	Wichita Shakespeare Company	Grassroots	9 Jun 2019	Wichita, KS
<i>Othello</i>	Merced Shakespeare Fest	Grassroots	14 Jun 2019	Merced, CA
<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	Silicon Valley Shakespeare Festival	Hybrid Model	22 Jun 2019	San Jose, CA
<i>Measure for Measure</i>	Marin Shakespeare Festival	Professional	28 Jun 2019	San Rafael, CA
<i>As You Like It</i>	San Francisco Shakes	Professional	7 Jul 2019	Pleasanton, CA
<i>Comedy of Errors</i>	Woodward Shakespeare Festival	Grassroots	12 Jul 2019	Fresno, CA
<i>Twelfth Night</i>	Independent Shakespeare Company	Professional	18 Jul 2019	Los Angeles, CA
<i>Richard II</i>	Kingsmen Shakespeare Festival	Professional / Uni.	19 Jul 2019	Thousand Oaks, CA
<i>As You Like It</i>	Shakespeare in the Park, Encore Theatre Co.	Grassroots	27 Jul 2019	Meridian, ID
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Montford Park Players	Grassroots	4 Aug 2019	Asheville, NC
<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>	American Shakespeare Center	Professional	10 Aug 2019	Staunton, VA
<i>As You Like It</i>	Shakespeare on the Green, Brown University	Grassroots / Uni. Spon.	17 Oct 2019	Providence, RI
<i>Richard III</i>	Shakespeare 70	Grassroots	20 Oct 2019	Ewing, NJ
<i>Coriolanus</i>	OrangeMite Shakespeare	Grassroots	14 Dec 2019	York, PA
<i>Richard II</i>	Merced Shakespeare Fest	Grassroots	17 Jun 2020	Merced, CA
<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	Hawaii Shakespeare Festival	Grassroots	23 Aug 2020	Honolulu, HI (via Zoom)

4. Site Visits, Methodologies, and other Records, 2018-2020

Company	Site Visit	Site Date	City / State	Oral History Interview	Embedded Scholarship	Additional Artifacts	Prfm Date	Production
OrangeMite Shakespeare Company	The Barn at Tall Fir Acres	31 Jul 2018	Dover, PA	27 Nov 2018 - Dr Mary Snow, Board Member, Venue Owner, and Costume designer; 30 Nov 2018 - Ryan Szwaja, Board Vice President	Continued PaR based work conducted Apr - May 2015 - Autoethnographic 1 Master's Thesis - 'Sowing the Seeds'	Programs, attendance records, scripts, etc.	A) 10 Jul 2018, B) 31 Jul 2018, C) 6 Sep 2018, D) 14 Dec 2019	A) <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> , B) <i>Comedy of Errors</i> , C) <i>Henry IV, Part 1</i> , D) <i>Coriolanus</i>
Baltimore Shakespeare Factory	Baltimore Shakespeare Factory	10 Aug 2018	Baltimore, MD	8 Aug 2018 - Tom Delise, Founding Artistic Director; 17 Aug - Jess Behar, actor	None	Programs, notes on OP, and Book written by Founding artistic director, Tom Delise	10 & 17 Aug 2018	<i>King John</i>
Advice to the Players	Sandwich Arts Center and Local Pub	16 Sep 2018	Sandwich, NH	16 Sep 2018 - Jessie Chapman, executive director	16 Sep 2018 - Participated in rehearsal before staged, improv reading. Read and performed the part of Lucentio in a pub with other veteran community members of the group.	Interviews with Jessie Chapman from Master's Thesis research in 2015.	16 Sep 2018	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>
Recycled Shakespeare Company	Downtown Waterville Rehearsal Site	18 Sep 2018	Fairfield, ME	18 Sep 2018 - Emily Fournier, founding artistic director; Lyn Rowden, treasurer; Josh Fournier, board member; six cast members from current production.	18 Sep 2018 - Briefly participated in rehearsal, filling in for a missing actor, sat down with cast members and conducted interviews.	None	None	<i>Sheridan's School for Scandal</i>
Merced Shakespeare Fest	Merced Multicultural Arts Center, Playhouse Merced, and Merced College	24 Jan 2019	Merced, CA	25 Jan 2019 - Heike Hambley, founding artistic director; Jun - Jul 2020 - production team and cast members from <i>Ricardo II</i>	May - June 2019 as dramaturg. Worked with actors directly for an entire rehearsal period. Served as director of <i>Ricardo II</i> for nearly a year and a half from Jul 2019 - Nov 2020.	Programs, promotional items, daily field notes and communications, scripts, final performances on YouTube	A) 24 Jan 2019, B) 14 Jun 2019, C) 17 Jun 2020	A) <i>Titus Andronicus</i> , B) <i>Othello</i> , C) <i>Richard II</i>
Will Geer Theatrical Botanicum	Theatrical Botanicum outdoor theatre	19 Feb 2019	Topanga, CA	19 Feb 2019 - Ellen Geer, artistic director	None	None	N/A	N/A
Shakespeare Club of Pomona Valley	Jocelyn Center	11 Mar 2019	Claremont, CA	11 Mar 2019 - Group interview with several long-time club members tracing the club's influence in the area.	None	Program 2018-19; Archival Research housed in the Pomona Public Library - March 25, 2019	N/A	N/A
Shakespeare in Yosemite	Yosemite National Park and University of California, Merced	7 - 28 Apr 2019	Yosemite Valley, CA	27 & 28 April 2019 - Interviews with many participants; interview with professional Shakespearean actor Lisa Wolpe; Interviews with other cast members. 28 May 2019 - Ángel Nuñez, cast member.	April 7 to April 28, 2019 and follow research and data analysis based on audience surveys and participant interviews.	Programs, Audience surveys, pictures, etc.	26 - 28 Apr 2019	<i>As You Like It</i>

Wichita Shakespeare Company	University Friend's Church & Buffalo Park	8 - 9 Jun 2019	Wichita, KS	9 Jun 2019 - Dan Schuster, Vonda Schuster, and Jane Tanner, board members	<i>None</i>	Program, photos, field notes	8 - 9 Jun 2019	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
Shakespeare in the Park, Encore Theatre Co.	Meridian City Hall Plaza	26 Jul 2019	Meridian, ID	27 Jul 2019 - Jonathan Perry, founding artistic director	<i>None</i>	Program, photos, field notes	26 Jul 2019	<i>As You Like It</i>
Montford Park Players	Hazel Robison Memorial Theater and Downtown Asheville	4 - 9 Aug 2019	Asheville, NC	8 Aug 2019 - John Russell, executive director; 9 Aug 2019 - Sophie Stanley, actor and set designer; Focus Group with participants	Additional Focus Group Interview	Program, photos, field notes, magazine articles, budget analysis and details, history print-out, etc.	4 & 9 Aug 2019	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Co.	Downtown Greenville	6 Aug 2019	Greenville, SC	6 Aug 2019 - Eric Spears and Robert Fuson, directors	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Prenzie Players	Quad City Theatre Workshop	27 Aug 2019	Davenport, IA	27 Aug 2019 - Catherine Bodenbender, Artistic Director	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Arden Shakespeare Guild	Arden Gild Hall and Frank Stephens Memorial Theatre	26 Sep 2019	Arden, DE	26 Sep 2019 - Mary Catherine Kelley & Tanya Lazar, Gildmistresses	<i>None</i>	Photos	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Shakesperience Productions, Inc.	Shakesperience Productions Studio	17 Oct 2019	Waterbury, CT	17 Oct 2019 - Jeffrey Lapham, Executive Director; Emily Mattina, Artistic Director	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Shakespeare on the Green	Marsten Hall, Brown University	17 Oct 2019	Providence, RI	17 Oct 2019 - Maaiké Langstra-Corn, Chair of the Board	<i>None</i>	Photos, field notes	17 Oct 2019	<i>As You Like It</i>
Shakespeare 70	The College of New Jersey, Don Evans Black Box Theater, Kendall Hall	21 Oct 2019	Ewing Township, NJ	21 Oct 2019 - Curt Foxsworth, Director	<i>None</i>	Program, photos, field notes	21 Oct 2019	<i>Richard III</i>
Shakespeare Theatre Association	The Campus of Miami University	25 Oct 2019	Oxford, OH	21 Oct 2019 - Pat Flick, Executive Director	Time at conferences from 2015-2018	Programs	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Richmond Shakespeare Festival	Piano Factory Performance Site; Richmond Shakespeare Festival Offices	25 Oct 2019	Richmond, IN	25 Oct 2019 - Raymond Onkto, President of the Board; Patrick Flick, Artistic Director	<i>None</i>	Programs, photos	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre	Shakespeare Theatre Association Annual Conference	31 Jan 2020	Dallas, TX	31 Jan 2020 - Rebekah Scallet, Producing Artistic Director	<i>None</i>	STA program	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Hawaii Shakespeare Festival	Shakespeare Theatre Association Annual Conference	31 Jan 2020	Dallas, TX	31 Jan 2020 - Tony Pisculli, Founder and Artistic Director	<i>None</i>	STA program, Production Program	23 Aug 2020	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor; Streamed Online</i>

North Dakota Shakespeare Festival	Shakespeare Theatre Association Annual Conference	1 Feb 2020	Dallas, TX	1 Feb 2020 - Stephanie Faatz Murry, Founding Artistic Director	<i>None</i>	STA program	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Shakespeare at Notre Dame	DeBartollo Performing Arts Center, Notre Dame University	12 Mar 2020	South Bend, IN	12 March 2020 - Grant Mudge, Producing Artistic Director	<i>None</i>	Photos of Performance Site; notes from tour	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Flatwater Shakespeare Company	Downtown Lincoln and the Stables at Wyuka, performance venue	13 Mar 2020	Lincoln, NE	13 March 2020 - Summer Lukaszovic, Artistic Director	<i>None</i>	Photos of Performance Site	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
ADDITIONAL ORGANISATIONAL SITE VISTS, PERFORMANCES, and FIELD RESEARCH								
Scranton Shakespeare Festival	Scranton, PA	14 Jul 2018	Scranton, PA	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	Programs	14 Jul 2018	<i>As You Like It</i>
Ithaca Shakespeare Company	Ithaca, NY	29 Jul 2018	Ithaca, NY	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	29 Jul 2018	<i>As You Like It</i>
Wildflower Women's Ensemble	Fremont Park in Sacramento, CA	31 May 2019	Sacramento, CA	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	Program, photos, field notes	31 May 2019	<i>The Winter's Tale</i>
American Shakespeare Center	Blackfriars Playhouse	10 Aug 2019	Stuanton, VA	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	Program, photos, field notes	10 Aug 2019	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>
Silicon Valley Shakespeare	Willow Street Park Amphitheatre	22 June 2019	San Jose, CA	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	Program, photos, field notes	22 June 2019	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
Marin Shakespeare Company	Theatre	28 Jun 2019	San Rafael, CA	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	Program, photos, field notes	28 Jun 2019	<i>Measure for Measure</i>
San Francisco Shakes	Pleasanton, CA	7 Jul 2019	Pleasanton, CA	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	Program, photos, field notes	7 Jul 2019	<i>As You Like It</i>
Woodward Shakespeare Festival	Downtown Fresno, CA	12 Jul 2019	Fresno, CA	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	Program, photos, field notes	12 Jul 2019	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>
Independent Shakespeare Company	Griffith Park, near the Old Zoo	18 Jul 2019	Los Angeles, CA	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	Program, photos, field notes	18 Jul 2019	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
Kingsmen Shakespeare Festival	California Lutheran University	19 Jul 2019	Thousand Oaks, CA	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	Program, photos, field notes	19 Jul 2019	<i>Ricard II</i>

5. The Shakespeare Canon Completion

Theatrical Organisation	Date	Source
Pasadena Community Playhouse	1937	Katherine T Von Blon, 'Record Set in Producing Shakespeare' <i>Los Angeles Times</i> (Los Angeles, California) 21 November 1937. <small>80 80 80 80 80 80 80 80 79 79 79 79 80 80 80 80 80 80 80 80 80 80 80 80 80 80 80 80 80 80 80 79 79 79 79 79</small>
Antioch Shakespeare Festival	1956	Engle, Londré, and Watermeier, <i>Shakespeare Companies and Festivals</i> , 262.
Oregon Shakespeare Festival	1958	Engle, Londré, and Watermeier, <i>Shakespeare Companies and Festivals</i> , 277.
University of Michigan	1974	Engle, Londré, and Watermeier, <i>Shakespeare Companies and Festivals</i> , 91.
Colorado Shakespeare Festival	1975	Engle, Londré, and Watermeier, <i>Shakespeare Companies and Festivals</i> , 91.
Shakespeare Society of America	1980	Engle, Londré, and Watermeier, <i>Shakespeare Companies and Festivals</i> , 33.
Champlain Shakespeare Festival	1983	Engle, Londré, and Watermeier, <i>Shakespeare Companies and Festivals</i> , 352.
New York Shakespeare Festival	1997	Laura MacDonald, 'All's Well That Ends Well with NYSF's Shakespeare Marathon' <i>PlayBill</i> , (New York, New York) 27 June 1997.
Atlanta Shakespeare Company	2011	Leonard Pallats, 'Atlanta Troupe Claims First in the U.S. to Perform All 39 of Bard's Plays' <i>Ledger-Enquirer</i> (Columbus, Georgia) 25 March 2011.
Hawaii Shakespeare Festival	2013	Pisculli, 'Hawaii Shakespeare Festival'.
American Shakespeare Center	2014	'History,' American Shakespeare Center, 2020, accessed 27 July 2020, https://americanshakespearecenter.com/history/ .
Cincinnati Shakespeare Company	2014	David Lyman, 'CSC Completes the Shakespeare Canon,' <i>The Cincinnati Enquirer</i> (Cincinnati, Ohio) 4 May 2014.
Alabama Shakespeare Festival	2014	Teri Greene, 'Transcribing Timon,' <i>The Montgomery Advertiser</i> (Montgomery, Alabama) 30 April 2014.
Montford Park Players	2017	Russell, et al., 'Montford Park Players'.

APPENDIX G – GRASSROOTS THEATER MATRIX

‘A Matrix Articulating the Principles of Grassroots Theater’

*From the Ground Up: Grassroots Theater in Historical and Contemporary Perspective.*⁸⁸⁶

<p>Grassroots theater is given its voice by the community from which it arises. The makers of grassroots theater are part of the culture from which the work is drawn. The people who are the subjects of the work are part of its development from inception through presentation. Their stories and histories inform the work, their feedback during the creation process shapes it. The audience is not a consumer of, but participant in the performance.</p>
<p>Grassroots theater grows out of a commitment to place. It is grounded in local and specific, which when rendered faithfully and creatively can affect people anywhere.</p>
<p>The traditional and indigenous are integral to grassroots theater and valued for their ability to help us maintain continuity with the past, respond to the present, and prepare for the future. Thus, the relationship to the traditional and indigenous is dynamic, not fixed.</p>
<p>Grassroots theater strives to be inclusive in its producing practices. Presentation of the work is made in partnership with community organisations. Performances are held in meeting places where the entire community feels welcome. Ticket prices are kept affordable.</p>
<p>Grassroots theaters recognize that management structures and business practices are value-laden; they affect the mission, goals, and creative processes of organisations. Through their structures and practices, grassroots endeavour to support broad participation, self-reliance, and collective responsibility.</p>
<p>Grassroots theater is linked to the struggles for cultural, social, economic, and equity for all people. It is fundamentally a theater of hope and often joy. It recognizes that to advocate for equity is to meet resistance and to meet with no resistance indicates a failure to enter the fight.</p>

⁸⁸⁶ Cocke, Newman, and Salmons-Rue, *From the Ground Up: Grassroots Theater in Historical and Contemporary Perspective*. pp. 80-81.

APPENDIX H – INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS AND ARCHIVAL INFORMATION

This thesis utilized grassroots characteristics to frame original field research, quantitative data, and participant experiences from twenty-eight organisational leaders and thirty-six participants from Shakespeare organisations across twenty-one states. The following transcripts and audio files are available upon request for research purposes and are housed with the Shakespeare on the Road archive at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford-upon-Avon, United Kingdom.

1. Transcript and Oral History Interview Statistics

#	Company	Location	Individuals Interviewed	Transcript Name	Duration	# of Words	# of Pages	Leaders	Total # of Int.
1	Baltimore Shakespeare Factory	Baltimore, MD	8 Aug 2018 - Tom Delise, Founding Artistic Director; 17 Aug - Jess Behar, actor	MD - Baltimore Shakespeare Factory - Tom Delise.docx	01:26:44	11572	18	1	2
2	Advice to the Players	Sandwich, NH	16 Sep 2018 - Jessie Chapman, executive director	NH - Advice to the Players - Jessie Chapman.docx	00:29:32	5547	10	1	0
3	Recycled Shakespeare Company	Fairfield, ME	18 Sep 2018 - Emily Fournier, founding artistic director; Lyn Rowden, treasurer; Josh Fournier, board member; six cast members from current production.	ME - Recycled Shakespeare Company - Emily Fournier.docx	00:46:31	7521	11	1	7
4	OrangeMite Shakespeare Company	Dover, PA	27 Nov 2018 - Dr Mary Snow, Board Member and Costume designer; 30 Nov 2018 - Ryan Szwaja, Board Vice President	PA - OrangeMite Shakespeare - Ryan Szwaja.docx	00:44:47	6338	8	1	0
5	Merced Shakespearefest	Merced, CA	25 Jan 2019 - Heike Hambley, founding artistic director; Jun - Jul 2020 - production team and cast members from <i>Ricardo II</i>	CA - Merced Shakespearefest - Heike Hambley.docx	00:57:46	8105	10	1	0
5	Merced Shakespearefest	Merced, CA	Jun - Jul 2020 - production team and cast members from <i>Ricardo II</i>		03:47:25	34774	53	0	9
6	Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum	Topanga, CA	19 Feb 2019 - Ellen Geer, artistic director	CA - Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum - Ellen Geer.docx	00:41:57	7081	9	1	0

7	Shakespeare Club of Pomona Valley	Claremont, CA	11 Mar 2019 - Group interview with several long-time club members tracing the club's influence in the area.	N/A					1	5
8	Shakespeare in Yosemite	Yosemite Valley, CA	27 & 28 April 2019 - Interviews with many participants; interview with professional Shakespearean actor Lisa Wolpe; Interviews with other cast members. 28 May 2019 - Ángel Nuñez, cast member.	CA - Los Angeles Women's Shakespeare Co. - Lisa Wolpe.docx	00:12:28	2059	3		0	7
9	Wichita Shakespeare Company	Wichita, KS	9 Jun 2019 - Dan Schuster, Vonda Schuster, and Jane Tanner, board members	KS - Wichita Shakespeare Company - Schuster, Tanner.docx	00:40:53	7639	11		2	0
10	Shakespeare in the Park, Encore Theatre Co.	Meridian, ID	27 Jul 2019 - Jonathan Perry, founding artistic director	ID - Shakespeare in the Park, ETC - Jonathan Perry.docx	00:40:34	5240	7		1	0
11	Montford Park Players	Asheville, NC	8 Aug 2019 - John Russell, executive director; 9 Aug 2019 - Sophie Stanley, actor and set designer; Focus Group with participants	NC - Montford Park Players - John Russell & Participant Focus Group.docx	01:46:08	16249	19		1	6
12	Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Co.	Greenville, SC	6 Aug 2019 - Eric Spears and Robert Fuson, directors	SC - Guerrilla Shakespeare Theatre Co. - Spears_Fuson.docx	00:39:45	6521	8		2	0
13	Prenzie Players	Davenport, IA	27 Aug 2019 - Catherine Bodenbender, Artistic Director	IA - Prenzie Players - Catherine Bodenbender.docx	00:58:58	9972	11		1	0
14	Arden Shakespeare Guild	Arden, DE	26 Sep 2019 - Mary Catherine Kelley & Tanya Lazar, Gildmistresses	DE - Arden Shakespeare Guild - Kelley & Lazar.docx	00:57:01	8138	12		2	0
15	Shakesperience Productions, Inc.	Waterbury, CT	17 Oct 2019 - Jeffrey Lapham, Executive Director; Emily Mattina, Artistic Director	CT - Shakesperience Productions - Lapham & Mattina.docx	00:37:11	5503	7		2	0
16	Shakespeare on the Green	Providence, RI	17 Oct 2019 - Maaiké Langstra-Corn, Chair of the Board	RI - Shakespeare on the Green - Maaiké Laangstra-Corn.docx	00:25:59	4666	6		1	0
17	Shakespeare 70	Ewing Township, NJ	21 Oct 2019 - Curt Foxworth, Director	NJ - Shakespeare 70 - Curt Foxworth.docx	00:41:53	5274	7		1	0
18	Shakespeare Theatre Association	Oxford, OH	21 Oct 2019 - Pat Flick, Executive Director	OH - Shakespeare Theatre Association - Flick.docx	00:20:42	3003	4		1	0

19	Richmond Shakespeare Festival	Richmond, IN	25 Oct 2019 - Raymond Onkto, President of the Board; Patrick Flick, Artistic Director	IN - Richmond Shakespeare Festival - Flick & Ontko.docx	00:53:32	7578	10		2	0
20	Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre	Dallas, TX	31 Jan 2020 - Rebekah Scallet, Producing Artistic Director	AR - Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre - Rebekah Scallet.docx	00:23:03	4290	6		1	0
21	Hawaii Shakespeare Festival	Dallas, TX	31 Jan 2020 - Tony Pisculli, Founder and Artistic Director	HI - Hawaii Shakespeare Festival - Tony Pisculli.docx	00:41:40	6109	7		1	0
22	North Dakota Shakespeare Festival	Dallas, TX	1 Feb 2020 - Stephanie Faatz Murry, Founding Artistic Director	ND - North Dakota Shakespeare Festival - Stephanie Murry.docx	00:59:54	12657	14		1	0
23	Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival	South Bend, IN	12 March 2020 - Grant Mudge, Producing Artistic Director	IN - Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival - Grant Mudge.docx	00:54:14	8579	9		1	0
24	Flatwater Shakespeare Company	Lincoln, NE	13 March 2020 - Summer Lukaszavicz, Artistic Director	NE - Flatwater Shakespeare Co. - Summer Lukaszavicz.docx	00:54:05	8091	9		1	0
TOTALS					21:42:42	202506	269		28	36

INTERNET-BASED RESEARCH										
Company	Location	Individuals Cited	Document Name / Source of Document	Duration	# of Words	# of Pages	Leaders	Total # of Int.		
Bards of Birmingham	Birmingham, AL	Laura Heider, Executive Director	AL - Bards of Birmingham - Website Research / http://www.bardsofbirmingham.com/	N/A	8314	14	1	11		
Theatre in the Rough	Juneau, AK	Aaron Elmore, President; Katie Jensen, Vice President	AK - Theatre in the Rough - Website Research / http://www.theatreintherough.org/	N/A	2146	3	4	0		
Merry War Theatre Group	Reno, NV	Chase McKenna, Founder	NV - Merry War Theatre Group - Website Research / https://www.merrywar.com/	N/A	1551	3	1	0		

2. Sample Oral History Interview Questions

Shakespeare Performance in American Communities

20 October 2019, Shakespeare 70 - Ewing, New Jersey

Curt Foxworth, Director of *Richard III* & Executive Committee Member

- 1) Could you give me the **background** on how Shakespeare70 began and the origin of the name?
- 2) Could you tell me about your **mission**, and give me an overview of your **current programming**?
- 3) What does your typical **season** look like? What is the role of other playwrights, if any, (early modern, modern, musicals, etc.) in your season structure? (Follow-up with a question about lesser performed or difficult plays)
- 4) Throughout the course of this project, I'm searching for a diverse **range of organizational sizes and structures**. Some are community-based with local actors, while others are fully professional, and some are in-between, or funded fully by a university. How would you best identify Shakespeare 70's model? (Follow-up with how this has contributed to the organization's success)
- 5) Can you tell me a bit about this part of New Jersey as a community? As **artists**, how do you view **your role** within that community?
- 6) In general, what does the '**arts world**' look like in central New Jersey? In New Jersey at large?
- 7) Is there something about your work with Shakespeare 70 that feels, in a sense, a product of **this place**? Do think it has regional qualities?
- 8) As a director, do find **artistic freedom** in the work of Shakespeare? (Follow-up on casting approaches)
- 9) In a time of great **political** divide in our country, how do you view Shakespeare performance? Does this body of work have a role to play in that discourse? (Follow-up on approach to *Richard III*)
- 10) From an **administrative** standpoint, can you tell me about how Shakespeare 70 is structured?
- 11) What roles do **volunteers** play within your organization?
- 12) How does your **funding** model function and support your mission?
- 13) Shakespeare 70 has been producing Shakespeare for 50 seasons. Can you tell me a bit about that **legacy**? (Follow-up on what factors have contributed to that success)
- 14) Is there anything else you'd like to add regarding your work with Shakespeare in this community?

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