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AMERICAN SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL THEATRES:
A SENSE OF OCCASION

Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Donald David Shandler, B.S., M.A.

*****

The Ohio State University
1972

Approved by

John C. [Signature]
Adviser
Department of Theatre
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December 1, 1940.......................... Born - Newark, New Jersey

1963.............................................. B.A., Montclair State College, Upper Montclair, New Jersey

1963-1968 ..................................... Teacher of Speech and Dramatics, Madison High School, Madison, New Jersey

1968.............................................. M.A., Montclair State College, Upper Montclair, New Jersey

1968-1970 ..................................... Teaching Associate, Department of Theatre, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1971.............................................. Graduate Administrative Associate, Department of Theatre, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1971.............................................. Instructor, Department of Communication and Theatre, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

PUBLICATIONS


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Theatre

Aesthetics: The Foundation of Twentieth Century Total Theatre. Professor George C. Crepeau.
Classical, Elizabethan, and Commedia dell'Arte Theatre History. Professor John C. Morrow.


Precritical, Classical, and Renaissance Dance History. Professor Shirley Wynne.


The Emergence of the Director: Meinningen to Grotowski. Professor Roy H. Bowen.
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CHAPTER I: A BASIC CONCERN

An Introductory Note

Artistic disappointment, economic uncertainty, and identity crises have characterized more than a decade of American theatre activity. At other "moments" in theatre history--Athenian Greece and Elizabethan England--stability and quality of production, presence of a universal audience representative of the entire community, and an immediacy of relationship between audience and artist were characteristic. During the Athenian and Elizabethan moments, audiences flocked to the theatre in multitudes; yet today the American theatre audience is sought by the questionnaires and gimmicks of the market analysis specialist.

Certainly, it would be naive to suggest that any "magic formulae" exist which could produce a meaningful period of theatre history. Scholars suggest that the previously cited "moments" were "felicitous accidents," impossible to duplicate. Although this may be true, we cannot deny that we can better understand today by looking at yesterday. This chapter's basic concern will be to isolate and discuss the major characteristics of these two moments and relate them as indigenous elements of the present activities of American Shakespeare festival theatres.

As a theatre institution, the individual and collective activities of the American Shakespeare festival theatres appear to
serve as a welcomed contradiction of the past decade of American theatre activity. While an American theatre crisis has existed—economic and artistic inconsistency to name two characteristics—the American Shakespeare festival theatres have demonstrated the ability to grow and flourish. Accompanying this growth there has been a most important sense of occasion, event quality, genial atmosphere and audience unity which festival audiences experience that is absent from the general theatre scene. Therefore, a collective appraisal of the repertory, playhouses, audiences and activities of American Shakespeare festival theatre is felt to be of merit. Conclusions and implications will be shown and perhaps in a modest yet significant way, we can rediscover what theatre can mean to America.

1. The Performing Arts Dilemma: In Search of an Audience

Reappraisal of the myth of the cultural boom. One of the major art phenomena of the 1960's has been that of the "cultural boom." Newspapers, magazines, television, and radio have reported a resurgence of interest in the arts of massive proportions. For a "moment"—defined in this study as a short period in time and space in the civilization of man—the cultural image of America appeared to be experiencing growth and development. But as critics take a closer look at this cultural "boom" the need for reappraisal becomes apparent. True, the sixties has been characterized by the construction of magnificent cultural centers of multiple buildings designed to house the performing arts. However, there appears to have been far more attention given the elements of architecture than the nature of
presentation and performance. A "bricks and mortar" approach to the arts—foundation funding of physical plants, but not of production activity—characterized much of this cultural, or perhaps more accurately, architectural activity of the 1960's.

Careful analysis of the activities and attendance of the nation's theatres, particularly those of the larger performing arts centers, will indicate that no cultural renaissance occurred during the sixties. The authors of Performing Arts: The Economic Dilemma, William J. Baumol and William G. Bowen, more accurately reappraise the past and present nature of this "cultural boom" myth. They state:

In sum, this analysis of the record entitles us to conclude neither that the nation has entered a great cultural renaissance nor that it is lost in an artistic wilderness. Rather, as is often the case, one is forced to a comparatively colorless in-between position—that over the course of the last decade and a half, the over-all progress of professional activity in the living arts has amounted to little more than a continuation of past trends.

There has been considerable building during the past decade of cultural complexes, but the financial and artistic successes of these performing arts centers fail to evidence a boom in culture.

A more realistic appraisal of the performing arts will indicate the presence of a chronic problem—an economic dilemma. Studies of the financial problems of the performing arts have important implications for the future of the arts in our culture, for society must be prepared to bear the costs of the arts. Apparently economists are not surprised by this economic dilemma. Baumol and Bowen state that in the performing arts, crisis is apparently a way of life. One reads constantly of disappointing seasons, of disastrous rise in cost, of emergency fund drives and desperate pleas to foundations for assistance.
Music, dance, and drama all experience similar financial problems. America has traditionally possessed no great thirst for the arts and this has produced a problem of chronic financial ills. The absence of a strong climate of municipal, state, and national financial support has also contributed to the economic dilemma. During the mid-sixties there appeared to be the start of a trend on the part of state and government to help the arts; 'several states and municipalities have undertaken to provide direct or indirect subsidies to the arts, and in 1965 the federal government, through the agency of a national foundation, provided funds to the arts and the humanities.' Yet even subsidy is merely a partial panacea for the economic problem confronting the arts. A closer look at the profile of the audience who attends live professional performing arts in America is deserving of attention.

Findings of the foundations: absence of audience heterogeneity. The state of the performing arts in America has been a preoccupation of the foundations, (Ford, Rockefeller, Twentieth Century Fund), during the past decade. No longer does the intuitive response of the artist or producer appear adequate for coping with the economic and artistic challenges the performing arts present. The market analyst, motivational research specialist, and the economist have emerged as the leading spokesmen of performing art's trends, appraisals, and challenges. The Performing Arts: Problems and Prospects, perhaps better known as the Rockefeller Panel Report, is one such sophisticated statement on the state of the performing arts in the United States. John D. Rockefeller III, writing in the Foreword of the report states, "Its purpose is to present a thoughtful
assessment of the place of the performing arts in our national life and to identify the impediments to their greater welfare and to their wider enjoyment. A major finding of this and other reports is the fact that in all too many cases the arts are merely for the privileged few at the periphery of the society and not for the many at its center. The position of the performing arts as "just a form of recreation" fails to realize the potential of the arts as a major importance to the well-being and happiness of the majority. John Rockefeller III argues for the recognition of "the arts as a community concern to be placed alongside our long-accepted responsibilities for libraries, museums, hospitals, and schools." While there is general agreement that the performing arts should be a community resource, there has been little success in realizing this potential. The absence of a popular audience is the next subject of concern.

The search for an audience—a broad base audience crossing barriers of social, economic, and cultural profiles—is the major problem facing the performing arts in America today. Oliver Rea, former Managing-Director of the Minnesota Theatre Company, has stated that "it is my strong belief that institutions survive in proportion to the efforts they make toward community involvement." The encouraging of public acceptance and community support of the performing arts will not occur spontaneously, but will be rather a process demanding a complex interrelationship of numerous factors. Bradley G. Morrison and Kay Fliehr, market analysis specialists, write, in their recent book In Search of an Audience, of the need for new audience development methods going beyond antiquated techniques of traditional
theatrical press agentry. They state that "a climate must be established which will encourage public acceptance of artistic policy, long-and-short-range audience development, broad-based financial contributions, favorable governmental actions, and the involved support of every part of the total community." The performing arts have a responsibility to expand and enlarge their audience in order to make it representative of the total community. The broadening of the base of the audience, the going beyond the cultural curtain "will take time, money, and innovation in people, ideas, and actions--and, indeed in the institutions themselves." A more sophisticated analysis of the American performing arts audience is a first step.

The American performing arts audience. The subject of this dissertation is theatre. Yet, previous discussion has focused on the performing arts collectively. While art forms may differ, the profile of the performing arts audience does not. Consistency in composition of audience from art form to art form exists. In each case, be it concert or drama, the audience is drawn from an extremely narrow segment of the American population. "In the main, it consists of persons who are extraordinarily well-educated, whose incomes are very high, who are predomately in the professions, and who are in their late youth or early middle age." Obviously, such an audience fails to encompass the general public. And even when there is evidence of a significant rise in the size of a performing arts' audience, it does not reflect a widely representative profile of the audience. A dismal picture of the role of theatre in our culture is apparent because "live professional performances are attended by less than five million
different Americans in a year—that less than three percent of our population goes even to a single performance.\textsuperscript{10}

Just how the base of the performing arts audience may be widened is the major problem facing the performing arts today. If this very small and narrowly restricted audience is to grow it will not evolve by itself, but will need the support of the public at large. It is naive to think that such a universal increase in audience attendance can be expected to occur spontaneously, with no great expenditure of effort by those who are now concerned with the arts.\textsuperscript{11} Tomorrow's audience must be cultivated and educated. The arts must find ways to interest and communicate with the majority of Americans who presently believe that the arts are not for them. To many Americans the image of the arts is an obstacle in itself—too long-haired, intellectual, affected. One way of overcoming this particular obstacle would be to cultivate the artistic taste of students in public schools. In fact, the foundations have shown more of a willingness to subsidize performing arts activities which make provision for students. They see this as one way to expand and enlarge the audience as representative of the total society.

Theatre as architecture: empty shells. Successful development of the performing arts demands a delicate balance between artist, performer, and audience. This is particularly true of the theatrical experience which is the joint enterprise of playwright, company, and audience. Architects have long recognized the need for a carefully balanced relationship of buildings, people, and culture; buildings demand a public occasion—a sense of the community. And yet, even a
casual survey of the design, construction, and administration of performing arts centers will all too often reveal the absence of this relationship of buildings, people, and art. A. H. Reiss, leading American architect, discusses this problem in an article published in *The Drama Review*, "Who Builds Theatres and Why?" The construction of arts facilities, or paradoxically labeled "cultural centers," is plagued by recurring oversights. First, the building is often erected before it is determined who will use it. Secondly, a community may discover that it has no "program" for its new building. Thirdly, the needs of the user and the nature of the facility may not be compatible. Fourthly, too often personal and arbitrary motivations shape the design of the structure. Often what is created is a testimony to a person or committee—not a people.

Successful facilities have been created where evidence of governmental and community involvement has existed and where the leadership has been indigenous—a respected member of the community, social leaders. Any solution to the performing arts dilemma must go beyond consideration of the art form as an isolated appendage to society. Rather it must be thought of as representative of the culture of a people. Magnificent new building complexes must be designed to house the living arts of an involved community and not exist as mere "bricks and mortar."

**AMERICAN THEATRE ACTIVITY OF THE 1960'S**

Many-faceted image of theatre in the United States. Reporting on the state of American theatre activity is not without its difficulties.
Theatre in the United States is a multi-faceted institution which includes the activities of the commercial, community, educational, regional, and summer enterprises; any attempts to appraise current trends and developments must concern itself with this broad panorama. Understanding the American theatre as a collective institution requires an understanding of its component parts. Such an appraisal was commissioned in November of 1961 by the National Theatre Conference. As stated in the final report *Theatre in America: Appraisal and Challenge*, "The purpose of the project was to prepare an accurate, up-to-date, critical report of the total, many-faced image of theatre in the United States in the third quarter of the twentieth century." A brief discussion of the findings of this diagnostic and prescriptive analysis of the component elements of American theatre now follows.

**Broadway activity: problems and decline.** "Broadway" is synonymous with the more formal and all-inclusive term, "commercial theatre." The problems and structure of the commercial theatre are of special importance in a discussion of American theatre activity. The editors of *Theatre in America* sum up the nature of this importance, stating,

> the problems and promise of theatre in America are reflected vividly on the New York stage. There, both on and off Broadway, the dilemmas, complexities, and constant attempts to achieve a theatrical success are continuously being played out.

Isolating 'what's wrong with Broadway' is not terribly difficult, the problems are familiar to both theatregoer and practitioner.

Of the many problems of the commercial theatre several deserve special attention. First, Broadway must be thought of as a business
or industry, and as such operates primarily as a profit venture. Rising production costs caused by the interrelating factors of real estate, unions, and theatre ticket systems have produced a theatre monster: the hit-or-flop psychology of production. Joseph Anthony, well-known Broadway director, comments on the effect of this psychology. He states:

The successful or "hit" play and the search for it, to the exclusion of all other concerns, interests, and passions, is, of course, destructive and aimless. There is no future in it, certainly none that would make the 'great American Theatre' a rational goal.  

Secondly, the organizational structure of the commercial theatre is founded on a concept of impermanence. Each new play is a new business enterprise organized expressly for the production of that play. Although a major producer may be able to sustain a skeletal production crew of play reader, production assistant, and general manager, "all of the other participants in a production—director, actors, designers and the rest—are assembled anew with each new performing enterprise." In addition to requiring the formation of a new company each time a show is produced, such a theatrical organization plays havoc with the focus of control of each production. Production control is divided between the owner of the theatre, the producer of the production, and the director of the show. The growth of regional repertory companies has tended to make this concept of organizational structure appear anachronistic.

Production standards, too, are frequently criticized. The high cost of mounting productions and union problems trouble too many opening shows; consequently, all aspects of the production suffer.
Marston Balch summarizes this production dilemma by stating:

Criticism is continually directed against Broadway that too many shows open underrehearsed; that the script is not quite satisfactory to author or director; that the cast is still imperfectly acquainted with the play, their roles, and each other; that elements of the set, lighting, costumes, music, or choreography are not yet in final shape.

If the organizational structure of the commercial theatre could be viewed as being capable of producing a season of hits, it might be rationalized as a means to an end. Paradoxically, not only has the number of new productions decreased each year, but the number of successes, either financial or artistic, appears to be declining. Disappointing seasons of "light comedies" and "light musicals" all too often characterized past seasons. Critical success on Broadway is measured by one yardstick: financial success. Even this record of financial success is dismal. An unusually profitable season (1965-66), as reported in Variety, documented a total of sixty-eight productions, of which thirty-three were box office failures. "The fact that one in three paid off made it a successful season as Broadway dollars are measured." Oddly enough, it appears that the stronger the achievement artistically, the weaker the likelihood of financial success.

Theatre is often thought of as a mirror of the age that nourishes it. But what is the reflection of our age that the commercial theatre produces? Broadway, our nation's theatrical capital, a capital viewed as a business enterprise, is experiencing an absence of vital, questioning drama. The cultural image of the commercial theatre as a valid comment on its society as a whole is incomplete and limited in perspective.
Regional repertory: an unfulfilled promise. Over a decade ago American theatre production showed an increased concern for the concept of repertory theatre organization. At different times this concept has had many names: resident professional, regional repertory, permanent professional, repertory, and regional. In any case, it has been a movement away from Broadway, emphasizing decentralization of theatre activity; permanent companies have been established throughout America. In a December 24, 1960, an article entitled "Plays for the Provinces" appearing in the British paper The Economist, this concern was documented as follows;

To Americans, Britain's repertory companies seem an ideal solution for a persistent problem, in that they provide training for young actors as well as employment for old ones. Moreover, at least from the point of view of the intellectual community, they hold out the promise of offering an antidote to Broadway.18

While British repertory companies have experienced their share of problems they, nevertheless, have established a model worthy of our attention.

During the past decade regional repertory theatres and performing arts centers have frequently grown in tandem. As previously discussed, the "myth of the cultural boom" revealed, all too often, the emergence of magnificent new building complexes designed to house the living arts, with too much thought given the building and too little the presentations. Regional repertory, while possessing considerable potential, appears to be an unfulfilled promise. Lincoln Center Repertory Company is perhaps the most ambitious and publicized new repertory company in the United States. Its enthusiastic, yet ill-fated bid for success, has resulted in artistic disappointment,
management disputes, and chronic economic difficulties. Similar situations characterize the activities of the numerous regional repertory companies throughout America. Lack of critical and economic success are two of the more important recurring problems. Companies have consistently shown themselves to be unable to exist without subsidy, and consistently experience difficulty in creating a cohesive and polished acting company.

Perhaps it is unfair to criticize regional repertory theatre too severely for they do hold promise. They express a concern beyond the one-show hit-or-miss of the commercial theatre structure. Their organization is geared for continuity of management and artistic policy. Their aim is not that of mere profit-making which characterizes all Broadway activity. However, to date, regional repertory in America has not met with great success. In many cases failures can be attributed to the support or lack of support of the community. Once the initial enthusiasm has died down local communities have appeared to be either unable or unwilling to support their theatres. And, as reported in Theatre in America, community support is vital for regional repertory companies. "No matter how much outside subsidy the resident theatre will require and receive for its building and its continued operation, local support, both moral and financial, is indispensable."^19

**University theatre: embarrassing riches.** The history and role of educational theatre has often been suspect and misunderstood. Both university faculties and administrators resisted any attempt to concede a position in the curriculum for drama in its more inclusive form, theatre. However, "educational theatre"—defined by the National
Theatre Conference as "all programs of instruction and production in
drama and theatre arts that are sponsored by and conducted within
educational institutions"—has undergone considerable growth. In
the periods following both World War I and II extracurricular dramatic
activity and formal theatre instruction increased greatly throughout
the country. The established leadership of the American Educational
Theatre Association in 1936 has helped to elevate standards of teaching,
research, and production in the area of educational theatre.

While theatrical production now has a firm place in the legiti­
mate objectives of liberal education, it has not met with unanimous
success. Both the diversity and quality of the theatrical achievement
of American colleges and universities vary greatly. Aims, purposes of
curriculum, quality and extent of facilities, and caliber and imagina­
tion of production cannot be described by a single statement. The
editors of Theatre in America state:

Opinions vary widely concerning the quality of theatrical
achievement attained by college-university productions in
America....Everyone knows there are many imaginatively-directed
and well-acted campus productions, and of course some, perhaps
many, 'duds.' Equally variable in quality are the physical
settings: some new, elaborate, and expensive theatres and some
old, inadequate quarters...some of the finest playhouses in the
United States are to be found on college and university campuses.21

Oddly, there appears to be little relationship between the money spent
on theatre programs and the quality of production and the use of facili­
ties. Richard Levy, in his article entitled "University Theatre:
Embarrassing Riches," indicates that university theatre activity does
not experience the money worries that commercial theatre experiences.
He writes that while "money is not the problem, lack of imaginative
conception is.... Free as they are from commercial pressures,
universities have resisted a full program of new plays."

If there is yet promise for university theatre it appears that it might be in the establishing of professional theatre companies in the university setting. While there is disagreement from some university theatre people, there has long appeared a clearly defined trend toward professionalization of university theatre activity. This "professionalization" is in fact a major recommendation of the National Theatre Conference report of 1968. For years various college theatres have added guest stars to single productions, while other colleges have sought to develop B.F.A. and M.F.A. programs and full-fledged professional companies. Gregory Falls, director of The University of Washington Theatre, writes of the potential of such a collaboration:

"I believe in...a growing recognition by the large state universities that they have a responsibility in being respositories of performing art culture—at the most professional level. In short, I envision the large American university hiring a truly professional theatre company that will serve as a regional theatre."

Whether professionalization comes from the developing of B.F.A. or M.F.A. degree programs or from sponsoring Equity companies remains to be seen, but the trend toward professionalization is apparent.

Dramatic literature. The theatre activity of America is a direct indication of its cultural image. Allan Lewis writes, "The American theatre mirrors—as does all theatre—the age that nourishes it....Important plays are cultural milestones holding within them the hopes, dreams, struggles, victories, and ceaseless inquietude of man's conflict with himself and the external world." And yet even a casual survey of theatre and drama activity will reflect a discouraging tone.
A suggested bibliography of this period might read as follows:

Seasons of Discontent: Dramatic Opinions, 1959-1965; The Impossible Theatre (1964); The Death of Tinker Bell; The Splintered Stage: The Decline of the American Theatre (1965); The Theatre in Spite of Itself (1963). It is of course dangerous to make sweeping generalizations of an age, or even a decade. But the need still exists to look back and reappraise American drama activity of the sixties.

Harold Clurman, director, critic, and author, wrote a comprehensive article entitled "Mainstreams of American Drama" which was published in the November 1966 issue of World Theatre. In one part of that article, "Disarray in the Sixties," he states quite concisely, "Virtually everyone who gives more than a passing thought to the state of our theatre agrees that since 1956 it has been in a bad way. This is particularly true of our native drama." Another director and critic, and Dean of Yale University's School of Drama, Robert Brustein, enlarges the question of dramatic activity of the sixties to that of the entire institution of theatre in America. Part of this problem of the absence of a significant body of dramatic literature is related to the broader question of what is the role of theatre as an institution in our society. In his recent book The Third Theatre he questions whether America actually wants a theatre. "If it is true that we are now on the verge of redefining ourselves as a nation, will theatre have a share in this process?...Can it again become a creative, meaningful force in our lives, providing us with symbolic acts of communal existence?"

The picture of dramatic activity of this past decade is not
totally dismal. There have been moments Off-Broadway which have encouraged a generation of potentially good playwrights, a few of the more prominent being Jack Gelber, Sam Shepard, Arthur Kopit, Israel Horovitz, Frank Gilford, and Jack Richardson. But the general thrust and duration of the decade's activity have been limited—certainly by comparison to that of England's Angry Young Man movement of Osborne, Pinter, Arden, and Wesker.

If there is one factor which can be chosen to explain the inadequacies in the dramatic literature and theatrical activity of the sixties, perhaps it is the spirit—or absence of it—of the times. Edward Albee, writing an end of a decade appraisal of theatre in *Saturday Review* (January 24, 1970), states, "retrenchment began... or perhaps a swing away from adventure in our society, a confusion and dismay with the ways of the world. Our politics have swung toward reaction, our vocal youth are viewed with hostility....And the theatre has suffered as a result." Drama is influenced most directly by the spirit of the age. A play, unlike a painting or a book, is the collective work of playwright, actors, and audience. Frederick Lumley discusses this very issue in his book *New Trends in 20th Century Drama*. He states:

The spirit of the age is something completely alien to the delight of discovery of the Renaissance or Elizabethan man, who celebrated the crescendo of his excitement in poetry, drama, and the arts. Today we all know that the individual no longer exists—as one wit once noted, there is even a society of individualists—and man has been replaced by machines which operate without thinking. The spirit of the age is anxiety, confusion, despair and desire to escape from the responsibilities of man's genius and folly without being able to do so."
Challenges and recommendations. American theatre activity of the last decade has been characterized by artistic disappointment and economic dilemma. First, despite an effort on the part of the regional repertory movement, commercial theatre remains a dominant force with an organization based on impermanence (a new play, company, producer, and playhouse assembling for each production) and a business oriented structure in search of profit through a "hit" play. Secondly, an absence of a relationship between audience and playhouse is particularly apparent where foundation "bricks and mortar" money builds magnificent theatre complexes that are not indigenously part of the community's life.

It is the concept of theatre as an organic part of a community that must be singled out as the disappointment that is of concern to this study. Theatre in America—according to foundation reports, critics' appraisals, artists' perspectives—is obviously not a creative and meaningful force in our lives. Theatre—and its sister arts of music, dance, painting—is thought of as longhaired, intellectual, affected. It is supported by a coterie of the privileged few in a select socio-economic position. The community—a heterogeneous group of people of all ages, occupations, backgrounds—has failed to provide its moral and financial support. This is the indictment of theatre in America; what is a possible solution?

The Rockefeller Panel Report argues that radical change in the structure of theatre is needed in order for it to assume a position at the center of our society and culture. Audiences must be found and theatregoing must be made enjoyable to the general public, in order for theatre to find its place in the community. Ted Kehoe, a National
Theatre Conference member, suggests that theatre must become more of an intoxicant and less of gaily ribboned clap-trap.

The creation of an intoxicant requires chemistry. And the building of a theatre of significance appealing to a popular audience might require magic. Is it possible to create a climate for theatrical activity that is festive, that celebrates mankind, that speaks for an entire community? Brad Morrison and Kay Fliehr, co-authors of *In Search of An Audience*, feel that creating this theatre mentality is the duty and obligation of contemporary theatre artists. They write:

Everyone who attends a theatre anticipates the experience of an occasion. It is the theatre's obligation—and the particular duty of the public relations department—to make sure the theatre-goer finds his sense of occasion echoed in the building itself.... A theatre must provide an environment of comfort and cleanliness and then go on from there to heighten the sense of occasion.

Perhaps this theatre of anticipation and occasion appears to evoke images of "moments" past of musicians on balconies and heraldic trumpet flourishes, a theatre for dreamers and not practitioners. Yet it is this type of theatre, or at least one quite similar, that the National Theatre Conference recommended in 1968. In their appraisal of the present state of theatre in America—an appraisal which considered the role of theatre for the American people as a whole—the National Theatre Conference recommended the "creation of a general National Theatre Festival of America program to highlight the living theatre in a multitude of locations throughout the country." Theatre not in a vacuum, but in the mainstream of a people—this is the concern of this study.
II. The Athenian Moment

The picture of theatre has not always been so dismal. There have been "moments" in which man knew the place that he and his theatre occupied in the universe--when theatregoing was enjoyable, important, a community experience. Two of these moments, Athenian Greece and Elizabethan England, deserve special discussion.

The Athenian moment: a popular audience and a public event. The contemporary theatre artist is often forced to view his craft as a "social appendix," extraneous and dispensable. He and his art are often frills supported by foundation subsidy, not community involvement. Such a delimiting view of theatre could not have been imagined by the Greek; government and drama were closely interrelated in Greek society. George Thompson, author of The Social Origins of Greek Tragedy, is quoted in the Introduction of Myth and Society as stating, "Of Greek tragedy it has been recently said that it was one of the functions of Athenian democracy and that in form and content, in growth and decay, it was conditioned by the evolution of the social organism to which it belonged." 31

The Greeks were a religious people having neither authoritative Sacred Book nor commandments; rather, a system of many gods presided over by Zeus brought order to their universe. To the Greek, religion afforded a provision for festival and celebration. Religion and drama were jointly, "from the beginning, addressed to a whole community which was its own political master and its own government." 32 It may be difficult for a contemporary theatre audience--a select coterie of
intellectuals who seek out a theatre of "private venture"—to appreciate the concept of the Greek theatre of celebration, holiday, and universal merriment. Author A. E. Haigh writing in *The Attic Theatre: A Description of the Stage and Theatre of the Athenians, and of the Dramatic Performances at Athens* vividly describes a day at one of the Athenian Festivals of Dionysus, the City Dionysia:

Each day soon after sunrise the great majority of the citizens made their way to the southern slopes of the Acropolis, seats rising up the side of the hill were speedily filled with a crowd of nearly twenty thousand persons. The sight of such a vast multitude of people, gathered together at daybreak in the huge open amphitheatre...must have been exceedingly striking and picturesque. The performances which brought them together were not unworthy of the occasion. The plays exhibited at the festivals of Dionysus rank among the very noblest achievements of Greek genius. For beauty of form, depth of meaning, and poetical inspiration they have never been surpassed. It would be difficult to point to any similar example of the whole population of a city meeting together each year to enjoy works of the highest beauty. It is seldom that art and poetry have penetrated so deeply into the life of the ordinary citizens.  

This description of the audience of the City Dionysia will be of considerable importance later in this paper. It was a popular audience attending a public event.

While the Greek religion made provision for a heirachy of gods it was Dionysus, the god of fertility, to whom they chose to pay the greatest honors. Festivals to Dionysus consisted of The Lesser Festivals: The Anthesteria, The Lenai, The Rural Dionysia, and The Great or City Dionysia. It was at the City Dionysia in Athens that the drama festivals received greatest attention. Here, the entire Hellenic world was invited to witness performances of dramatic and lyric poetry of unsurpassed artistic and literary merit. Visiting ambassadors from other states and countries witnessed the proclamation of honors...
conferred upon citizens. The wealth, power, and spirit of Athens were all displayed at a time of holiday. A. E. Haigh describes the quality and significance of this festival:

The Theatre of Dionysus at Athens, during the period of the Lenaea and the City Dionysia, presented a spectacle which for interest and significance has few parallels in the ancient or the modern world. The city kept universal holiday. The various proceedings were in reality so many religious celebrations. But there was nothing of an austere character about the worship of Dionysus. To give freedom from care was his special attribute, and the sincerest mode of paying homage to his power was by genial enjoyment of the various pleasures of life. At this time of universal merriment the dramatic performances form the principal attraction.

This rather lengthy citation describes a public event, a religious and theatrical experience attended by celebrants. The experience was pleasurable, important, and thought-provoking. It took place in fifth century B.C. Athens.

Sir Arthur Pickard-Cambridge has devoted an entire book to The Dramatic Festivals of Athens, giving special consideration to the City Dionysia. He states: "As far as intelligence and discrimination are concerned, the Athenian audiences were probably superior to any audience of the same size which has ever been brought together." Of even more importance this audience was heterogeneous. Drawn from all classes of people, it included not only the wealthy and intellectual, but those uncultured and ignorant. As the enthusiastic support of such plays grew and theatregoers struggled to their seats in greater numbers, a need for specific procedures for the distribution of seats, price and conditions of admission, and seats of honor became apparent. The state later charged a small entrance fee of two obols in an attempt to sell tickets in advance and provide better seating conditions. Pickard-Cambridge and other authors noted in the bibliography of this
chapter discuss this and other elements in considerable detail. Facts are few and inferences many, but several statements must go unrefuted. First, the Athenian audience was immense, at times numbering twenty thousand persons for a single festival. Secondly, the Athenians demonstrated great enthusiasm for theatre. A. E. Haigh quotes one old historian as stating the Athenians "spend the public revenues on their festivals, were more familiar with the stage than with the camp, and paid more regard versemakers than to generals."\(^\text{36}\) Crowds from all parts of Greece, representatives from allied states, ambassadors from foreign cities; libations, tributes, proclamations; tragedies, comedies, hymns, dithyrambs all characterized the City Dionysia.

*Communal emotion and participation.* The Athenian theatre was to remain a people's theatre even after the role of dithyrambic activity in the theatre decreased. As discussed earlier Greek drama was never a private venture for a select coterie of the community; rather, it was a public event attended by a large and representative cross-section of the Athenian people. The poet was a member of the community; he became their teacher. "The Athenian tragedian wrote for the theatre, that is to say, for an audience practically identical with all citizens, and they regarded the poet as a member of their community as well as a mouthpiece of divine wisdom."\(^\text{37}\) The poet and audience had a mutual vocabulary upon which to draw. Myths, either Homeric Hymns or stories of local gods and heroes, became the content of the dramas. The further addition of dramatic dialogue extended dramatic discussion to the religious, political, and ethical. Throughout the transition from dithyramb to drama provision was always made
for the intellectual and emotional involvement of the community.

During the Athenian moment theatre enjoyed the support of the city state. Theatre was a social organism of a community to whom theatre going was a time of festival, celebration, and universal merriment. Dramatic and lyric poetry of unsurpassed artistic merit was enjoyed by an audience representative of the entire community.

III. The Elizabethan Moment

Parallels between Athenian and Elizabethan moments. There are a number of implications and parallels that can be drawn between the influences, environments, and provocations of the Athenian and Elizabethan 'moments' of theatre history. Lauchlan M. Watt, devoting an entire book, Attic and Elizabethan Tragedy, to the tandem analysis of these moments, feels that 'perhaps in all the history of the fluctuation, conflict, and yearnings of the world, there are not recorded any periods more fraught with greatness than the age in which Attic Tragedy rose and flourished, and that which the genius of the Elizabethan era found its highest utterance on the English Tragic Stage.' What elements are common to these two moments and absent in the contemporary period?

A vocabulary of universality in both the drama and its age was mutually present in Elizabethan England and Athenian Greece. In each case the poet spoke as the voice of his age. The result was a legacy of significant drama unequalled in both range and intensity. Lauchlan Watt describes this activity as follows:

With a grandeur, depth, and breadth never eclipsed, the national thought took up the most momentous questions--life, death, God,
man, judgment, and all the huge ethical shadows that, on the skirts of these, haunt man's being and conduct; and probing the deeps, or piercing the heights, tried to arrive at an understanding of the mysteries of the Eternal here in Time. 39

Rich literary activity characterizes such ages in which the poet's cry spoke as the vox humana of a nation. Sixteenth-century Elizabethan England was to emulate, in its own way, the dramatic activity of Athenian Greece.

The Elizabethan mentality. A closer look at the Elizabethan moment, its audience, poet and playhouse, will indicate the presence of numerous "factors" which contributed to the prolific dramatic activity of the period. In a number of cases the same factors will be seen reappearing in the activities of American Shakespeare festival theatres.

A term generally used to identify the period beginning with Elizabeth's accession in 1558 and ending in the 1640's with the Puritan Revolution, the "Elizabethan Age" was characterized by social, political, and intellectual changes. Of particular importance to the development of a commercial class (later to be shown to be of great importance to the drama of this period). Although Louis Wright warns against the inaccuracy of compartmentalizing factions of society he does concede in his book Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England, "there can be discerned nevertheless a large middle group in Elizabethan society whose preoccupation was trade and whose intellectual concerns were largely colored by the peculiarities of their place in the social order." 40 The more complex aspect of the age "is that it contained so much of the new without bursting the noble form of the old order." 41 It is an understanding of the physical and abstract world of the
"average Elizabethan citizen" which is crucial if the dramatic activity of the age is to be fully appreciated. In his book The Elizabethan World Picture, E. M. W. Tillyard writes of this concern:

My object then is to extract and expound the most ordinary beliefs about the constitution of the world as pictured in the Elizabethan age and through this exposition to help the ordinary reader to understand and to enjoy the great writers of the age.42

While Puritans, courtiers, and average citizen may have experienced certain ethical, political, and social disagreements, they had in common a mass of basic assumptions about the world; they were to a great extent united by a common theological belief. During this moment in history there existed a collective mind of a people, and the poet was its spokesman.

Several general deductions can be drawn from Tillyard's survey of the Elizabethan mentality. First, two concepts dominated all of Elizabethan thought: the conception of world order and the effect of sin—a legacy of the medieval period—greatly influenced the drama of the period. Tillyard writes, "its great strength is that it admits of sufficient optimism and sufficient pessimism to satisfy the different tastes of varied types of man and the genius for inconsistency and contradiction that distinguishes the single human mind."43 Secondly, for over a quarter of a century, 1580 to 1605, a "bloom of creative freshness" in the literature existed. Tillyard argues rather convincingly that Shakespeare's views on man's place in the world "divested of their literary form are the commonplace property of every third rate mind of the age."44 The Elizabethan writer reflected the tastes and attitudes of citizens and courtier by passionately surveying the range of the universe.
The Elizabethan audience. Although there does not exist any scientifically acceptable method of evaluating those "swarms and multitudes" of Elizabethans who frequented theatre activities, there nevertheless does exist valid data on the size, social composition, behavior, aesthetic and intellectual capacity of the Elizabethan audience. Alfred Harbage's definitive study Shakespeare's Audience will be used to enlarge this discussion. Surveyed in it, and of especial significance to this paper, are such topics as the selective nature of the audience, their basic characteristics, and habits of theatrical attendance.

The legitimate drama audience of America in the sixties has been described as basically refined, intellectual, and sedentary, comprising a homogeneous representation of less than three percent of the population. The Elizabethan audience, "Shakespeare's audience," since he was the most popular writer and best representative of dramatic activity, was heterogeneous. An analysis of its composition will reflect a cross section of the London populations. The young and old, the pious and worldly, men and women, citizen and courtier all were present. Of particular interest to the contemporary theatre artist who may be conditioned to regard his art as high culture as opposed to popular culture is the fact that fifty-two percent of Shakespeare's audience were either craftsmen or "blue collar workers." Gentry, professional men, dealers, and laborers composed the remainder. Harbage shows that during the whole period of Shakespeare's theatrical career thirteen percent of the population, or two persons in fifteen, went to the theatre each week. While these statistics are
the result of multiple conjecture they do reflect cautious interpretation of evidence.

The Elizabethan playhouse was essentially a democratic institution in an undemocratic age. In the theatre "the rights and privileges of class melted before the magical process of dropping pennies in a box." Drama, particularly Shakespeare's plays, offered such widespread appeal to both courtier and apprentice that making generalizations about the Elizabethan audience on a basis of class distinction is questionable. A further portrait of the Elizabethan playgoer would indicate he was earthy, enthusiastic, and representative of all classes and mentalities. The success of the drama of the period was directly responsive to this heterogeneity. Harbage describes this unique audience as follows:

I believe that Shakespeare's audience was a large and receptive assemblage of men and women of all ages and of all classes.... Unlike some other audiences existing in and near his time, Shakespeare's audience was literally popular, ascending through each gradation from pot boy to prince.... The drama reached its peak when the audience formed a great amalgam, and it began its decline when the amalgam split in two.

Paraphrasing Harbage, where there are all classes there is no class, rather there is a common humanity.

To continue studying this Elizabethan amalgam, habits of theatrical attendance as well as basic characteristics must be considered. Attendance was not one hundred percent. On the negative side it can be said, first, that the performance of plays--usually once a day during working hours--competed with labor. Both play production and work demanded the use of valuable daylight. Secondly, both the cost of admission and the inconvenience of attending were
sometimes prohibitive. There was a pronounced scarcity of leisure for the middle class. On the other hand, neither cost nor inconvenience, nor Puritan belief that playhouses were contaminate, kept a popular audience from attending the theatre. The habit of playgoing was firmly woven into the culture.

Just what caused Shakespeare's audience to gather in "swarms" and "multitudes?" The price of attending the theatre was costly in both time and money, and yet the presence of a large, popular audience is clearly documented. It is here that the elements of festivity, celebration, and a sense of the occasion deserve special discussion. (These elements will be shown to be of great importance to the growth of American Shakespeare festival theatres.) Theatregoing during the Elizabethan period was a convivial experience, a festive occasion, an opportunity to socialize. The Elizabethan had a clear appreciation and understanding of a sense of community life. Boris Ford discusses this concept in The Age of Shakespeare. He states:

One of these elements was the persistence of popular customs of speech and thought and entertainment rooted in the communal life of medieval towns and villages. . . . The Tudors established a firm and broadly based national community, and by combining they invigorated the whole idiom of literature. 47

Drama, to the Elizabethan, was a communal art. Theatregoing was synonymous with festivity, pageantry, and joviality.

The effect of such diverse attendance was positive. In writing for a mixed public, Shakespeare and his peers elevated the Elizabethan literary language, providing a range of interests and vitality for all. "[These] playwrights had before them the increasingly complicated task of devising drama to suit all tastes without an undue amount of
The universal quality of Elizabethan drama was the product of this task. Louis Wright describes the characteristics of drama as such:

Themes as kaleidoscopic as the life of the times went into its composition. Wild romance which took the Londoner to the Indies or the courts of Eastern potentates; dramatized history which re-created the past and magnified the deeds of English heroes; plays which glorified plain folk and homespun virtues; dramatic journalism which brought the stage the latest murder of domestic triangle, properly moralized, clownery, boisterous and crude, which entertained playgoers not too critical—these ingredients created a drama which the general public found irresistible, even if it did at times smack of damnation.

The Elizabethan audience, as was true with the Athenian audience, had a varied aesthetic and intellectual capacity, and while a varied "season" of plays may have been presented both playgoer and playwright shared a basic unity of taste. The Elizabethan audience was keenly interested in character and the thoughts of men. They demonstrated an eagerness to listen to poetic utterance, and responded as a single collective mind. They were trained in listening and were accustomed to seeking entertainment as a group.

Late in the sixteenth century a distinction of taste between the courtier and shopkeeper was to become stronger. The coterie theatre which had existed concurrently with the innyard stage became more elaborate, catering to a small audience of "specialists." But for several decades a socially and economically heterogeneous audience had sought entertainment with enthusiastic support. Louis Wright describes this phenomenon as follows:

So ingrained was the love of dramatic spectacle that neither the power of Puritanism with its proof of the iniquity of stage plays, nor the cogent reasoning of the municipal authorities against the waste or danger of idle amusement could prevent
drama from gaining a great hold on the mass of citizens.\textsuperscript{50}

The Elizabethan literary Renaissance. A major measurement of the worth and significance of a "moment" of theatre history is the permanence of its drama. Both the significance of Elizabethan drama and the flexibility of its playhouses have gone unsurpassed; Shakespeare still remains the classic theatre of the English speaking world. The success of the Elizabethan literary Renaissance can be attributed to three separate factors. First, for a period of approximately twenty-five years, 1580-1605, conditions in London were favorable to the development of poetry and theatre. It was a period of social, economic, and even topographical change. And as Martin Holmes writes, "All of them had their effect on the public that came to the theatre to be entertained, and consequently on the entertainment provided for that public."\textsuperscript{51} Secondly, the drama was the direct response of an institution, the commercial theatre, to a public. The fact that Shakespeare wrote classics of English literature was secondary to his main intention of providing entertainment to a demanding audience. Thirdly, characteristic of a renaissance is the wealth of dramatic literature it produces. Variety, vigor, and vitality characterized Elizabethan drama. E. M. W. Tillyard says of this period that "we can estimate the eminence of the Elizabethan writers by the earnestness and the passion and the assurance with which they surveyed the range of the universe."\textsuperscript{52} It was a glorious period of stability and quality. Heroes and clowns, love and death, poetry and prose, dance and song all were part of the Elizabethan moment.

The Elizabethan age was Shakespeare's age and the Elizabethan
audience was Shakespeare's audience; his feelings, thoughts, and means of expression captured the quintessence of the Elizabethan period. As a playwright addressing a wide-base audience he responded to the environs of his age. To understand Shakespeare and his literary techniques of expression and development of character is to know his age. His influence may best be evaluated by surveying the repertory and dramatic activity of a single representative playhouse during a single decade. Bernard Beckerman writes in *Shakespeare at the Globe, 1599-1609*:

The playhouse signifies more than a physical structure for the presentation of plays. It became the symbol for an entire art. Its construction initiated a glorious decade during which the company achieved a level of stability and quality of productivity rarely matched in the history of the theatre. Of the twenty extant works produced at the Globe during this decade fifteen were those of Shakespeare. It was his genius which best expressed the Elizabethan spirit and moment.

**Characteristics of the Elizabethan playhouse.** It is not necessary to write in detail of the Elizabethan playhouse; the literature on the subject is quite substantial. Adams, Chambers, Hodges, and Wickham are but a few who have studied the Elizabethan playhouse and stage conditions in great depth. While there is much conjecture about many architectural elements, there is general agreement on the basic characteristics of the playhouse.

The construction of Elizabethan playhouses attested to evidence of this theatrical venture as a profitable business. The existence and interrelation of permanent, public, outdoor theatres were directly related to the growth and continuance of companies of actors, and the
wealth of dramatic literature. Ashley Thorndike's synthesis of Shakespeare's theatre, in a book of the same name, is helpful in isolating the "essentials" of these playhouses. He feels that "it was evident that the public playhouses were very much alike." Flexibility and intimacy were most basic. The Elizabethan stage was free from any suggestions of a particular locality. A theatre of spectacle, not a stage of scenery, "the platform, three parts surrounded, could not be curtained off, there was no possibility of picture-stage scenery; it was usually bare, leaving the imagined stage locality fluid and indeterminate, to be indicated, when necessary, by the actors themselves." At the same time it demonstrated adaptability, it remained an intimate theatre. Sweeping balconies surrounding the innyard literally embraced the audience as communal celebrants, not as isolated spectators peeking through a fourth wall.

This flexible and intimate playhouse never experienced the threat of becoming an extraneous empty shell of stone and wood. Rather it was to remain an indigenous part of the collective expression of audience and dramatist. Shakespeare best demonstrated its potential by the skill in which he utilized its conventions. Muriel Bradbrook writes of this ability in her book *Elizabethan Stage Conditions*. She states:

The proof and test of Shakespeare's genius lie precisely in that he hardly bowed to a single exigency or utilized a single stage device without making it an integral part of the play so that of both necessities and conveniences he made virtues. Playhouse, audience, dramatist were the collective expression of the Elizabethan moment.
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER I


3Ibid., p. 7.


5Ibid., p. v.


7Ibid., p. xix.

8Ibid., p. 213.

9Baumol and Bowen, op. cit., p. 96.

10Ibid., p. 403.

11Ibid., p. 68.


13Ibid., p. 3.

14Ibid., p. 4.

15Baumol and Bowen, op. cit., p. 20.

16Balch, op. cit., p. 16.

17Ibid., p. 11.


19Balch, op. cit., p. 31.

20Ibid., p. 73.

21Ibid., p. 81.


23Balch, op. cit., pp. 85-86.


29 Morison and Fliehr, op. cit., p. 147.

30 Balch, op. cit., p. 170.


34 Ibid., p. 323


36 Ibid., p. 346.


39 Ibid., p. 2.


42 Ibid., p. vi.

43 Ibid., p. 20.

44 Ibid., p. 100.
46 Ibid., pp. 158-59.
49 Louis Wright, op. cit., p. 607.
50 Ibid., p. 603. 51 Holmes, op. cit., p. 1.
52 Tillyard, op. cit., p. 100.
53 Bernard Beckerman, op. cit., p. v.
55 Ford., op. cit., p. 66.
Existence of cultural curtain. A realistic appraisal of the performing arts in America of the past decade will reflect that neither a cultural renaissance nor an artistic wilderness exists. But problems--chronic problems--are nevertheless plaguing the arts in America. First, as previously discussed, there is an absence of financial support on municipal, state, and national levels. Unlike past moments of Athenian Greece and Elizabethan England both populus and government are finding that the arts, theatre in particular, are no longer thought of as an indigenous community resource, but rather as an extraneous frill for the privileged few at the periphery of society. In propagating this misconception, the American theatre has virtually drawn closed its own "cultural curtain" on the audience representative of the entire community. And as this curtain is closed both foundation subsidy and popular box office is affected. Secondly, the enthusiasm for building performing arts centers with multiple theatres has proven disappointing, one cause being the failure to accurately determine what people will use such facilities. Bricks and mortar, steel and glass, have all too often resulted in empty architectural shells with the community failing to provide the necessary moral and financial
support. And the local support of a wide base community audience is indispensable to the support of a theatre.

Absence of a sense of occasion. A comparative analysis of Athenian Greece and Elizabethan England was made in the previous chapter as a basis to suggest several questions. What were those evasive "elements" that provided each moment with a period of exciting theatre? Do similarities exist between the Athenian and Elizabethan moments? Could a study and understanding of past successful moments encourage future "moments" of theatrical excellence?

The disappointing state of American theatre is certainly not the result of any single factor; rather multiple factors must be considered. In addition to the disappointing degree of effectiveness of cultural centers, and the absence of financial and moral support of government and community, consideration must also be given the broader implications of the climate of the times. Both contemporary playwright and playgoer are products of an age of anxiety, confusion, and despair resulting from social and political issues which have perhaps limited the adventure and spirit of our age. Playwrights appear unable to celebrate man, to sing in prose and poetry of his achievements. And theatre, as a collective institution that in the past met the needs of the community as an indigenous resource, is at best maintaining its existence as a purchasable commodity, one which fewer and fewer are seeking to buy. In short, recent American theatre activity--unlike past moments of theatre--has failed to evoke a feeling of excitement, anticipation, and a sense of occasion.

Our theatre of the past decade has been a theatre in which
market analysis specialists searched for audiences to fill empty monolithic shells of concrete and steel; certainly it was not a theatre of celebration and festivity. Why these elements were present in one period of western man and absent in another is a question which might be best answered by a theologian rather than a student of theatre. One such theologian is Harvey Cox, Professor of Divinity at Harvard University. Writing in his book *The Feast of Fools: A Theological Essay on Fantasy*, he discusses the community's need for a "socially approved occasion for the expression of feelings that are normally repressed or neglected." As the title of his book indicated he is concerned with the contemporary relevance of the Feast of Fools, a medieval church festival characterized by inversion of status. As an institution which lasted several hundred years, it demonstrated the medieval period's well-developed capacity for festivity and fantasy which "related men to history and bound them to each other in a single community." The Greeks—whom Edith Hamilton describes as possessing the capacity to play on a grand scale—had the talent for festivity. And the Elizabethans, as the Greeks, also had a tradition of festivity. But Harvey Cox questions if our Age of Technology does. He states:

> We need to develop that capacity again today....Today we need a rebirth of festivity that will make us part of a larger history than those the Medieval period knew and will link us to an immensely expanded world community...more heterogeneous, messier, more variegated, more venturesome, more playful.3

Author and theologian Cox refers to a book by Joseph Piper to further clarify his concern for festivity, *In Tune With the World: A Theory of Festivity*. "Joseph Piper...called attention to the element of rejoicing and affirmation in festivity. He also dwells on the fact
that festivity is an activity pursued for its own sake. To celebrate
for Piper is to live out 'the universal ascent to the world as a
whole.' A festival to Piper is a special time in which we affirm all
of life by saying yes to part of it.\textsuperscript{4}

As Professor Cox goes on to define the component parts of the
festive occasion—(1) conscious excess, (2) celebration affirmation,
and (3) juxtaposition—he underscores those elements that were part of
the Athenian and Elizabethan moments. He defines the 'essential
ingredients' of festivity as follows:

(1) By excess I mean that festive activity is revelry. We
always 'overdo it,' and we do so on purpose. We 'live it up'
....Festivity provides a short vacation from convention, and
without elements of socially approved infraction of norms of
ordinary behavior, festivity would not be festivity. (2) By
celebrative affirmation, I mean that festivity always entails
'saying yes to life.' It includes joy in the deepest sense.
(3) Juxtaposition is related to the element of excess. It
means simply that festivity must display contrast. It must be
noticeably different from 'everyday life.'\textsuperscript{5}

Theologian, philosopher, anthropologist, and theatre practi-
tioner all take a special interest in The Feast of Fools. For as it
appeared in the medieval period it reflected a well-developed capacity
on the part of a community for festivity. As Cox states in the "Coda"
of his book, "What the medieval period had was a kind of festivity
which related men to history and bound them to each other in a single
community."\textsuperscript{6} A discussion of the rebirth of festivity as an indigenous
component of American Shakespeare festival theatres—both in plays and
playhouses—will occupy a larger part of the attention of this study.
As a theologian Harvey Cox emphasizes the need for a contemporary
Feast of Fools be it a fiesta, a love-in, or even a theatrical
experience.
II. Multiple Points of Origin of Theatre

Permeated by a Sense of Occasion

In drawing comparisons of the Athenian and Elizabethan moments, discussion so far may appear to propose a simple linear development of feast-festival drama. This is not the intention of this paper. Richard Southern, in his book The Seven Ages of Theatre, warns the reader of such over-simplification:

Looking at a West-End theatre, or a theatre on Broadway, or in Paris, or Bombay, or Osaka, at night with the names in lights and the audience going in past the box office, it is really not believable that this all started out of a tenth-century Christian Church liturgy. It is no more convincing to place its origin on the threshing-floors of Ancient Greece. Would it then be any more satisfying to say that the beginnings lie in Primitive Ritual.

If we recognize the proposal that there is no single, simple development of theatre then what can be assumed? Southern suggests that there appears to have been a "succession of intrusions from outside upon what would otherwise appear as a self-contained, modest, and not unpopular human act; that is to say of performing something before a group of other people." And if the trimmings and immense amount of paraphernalia is peeled away a basic crude intention exists--"that is with the human and social act of a person or persons performing something before a group of other people."

If there is any single motif or source of energy which has transcended over the 2,500 years of western man's theatre activity, it has been "the element of special occasion arising from the time of the year of performance, and the significance of the season." And whether it is the activity of the Greater Dionysia,
Medieval drama or redemption, or Renaissance Mummer's play that is studied there is a reappearance of specific component elements of festivity. It will be these elements—which are now to be defined—that will later be shown to be most important indigenous elements of the American Shakespeare festival theatres.

**Definition of terms.** Discussion so far has casually alluded to several terms which now need specific definition. Such definitions, which follow, transcend any single discipline, be it that of anthropology, religion, or sociology. They have been designed to serve as the basic frame of reference for this study of American Shakespeare festival theatres:

**Celebration.** A formal public event attended by a popular audience representative of the entire community; a commemorative means of marking an occasion; a joyous gathering.

**Community.** A heterogeneous representation of a group of people living in the same environment who participate in and share a common social life; human and social interdependence binding together and keeping alive the traditions of its members.

**Festival.** A periodic celebration addressed to the entire community held to commemorate and make merry; a participatory experience providing for both intellectual and emotional involvement; a moment to rejoice in life and reaffirm man's place in the universe.

**Ritual.** A public observance of prescribed customs, rites, and traditions indigenous to the community; an experience by which participants becomes one by sharing a collective emotion.

**A sense of occasion.** A special time or event processing elements of anticipation, excitement, importance, celebration, holiday, universal merriment in which common excitement exists.

### III. Feast, Festival, Drama: A Selected Chronology

Northrup Frye: archetypal criticism. Before beginning to document the reappearing relationship of elements of feast, festival,
and drama a basis for this conjecture must be established. Two men—one a literary critic and the other a historian—have concerned themselves with this approach. The first, Northrup Frye, writes in his book *Anatomy of Criticism* about ritual clusters—a partial basis for discussion of festivity, a sense of occasion—and the archetypal critic. The first concept to understand is that of the cyclical nature of both life and art. Frye states:

> The principle of recurrence in the rhythm of art seems to be derived from the repetitions in nature that make time intelligible to us. Ritual clusters around the cyclical movements of the sun, the moon, the seasons, and human life. Every critical periodicity of experience: dawn, sunset, and the phases of the moon, seed-time and harvest...get rituals attached to them. The pull of ritual is toward pure cyclical nature.11

Stated on the simplest level Frye suggests there exists a relationship between the rhythm of nature and the rhythm of art. As specific analysis of the component elements of the festivals of ancient Greece, medieval Europe, and later Shakespeare festival theatres is made it will appear that the archetypal critic—the critic concerned with a recurring pattern or model—has much in common with anthropologist and psychologist. The fact must be accepted that the "three subjects of anthropology, psychology, and literary criticism are not clearly separated, and the danger of determinism has to be watched carefully."12

What is of concern here—for the student of theatre and for the purpose of this study—is the fact that "the archetypal critic studies the poem as part of poetry, and poetry as part of the total human imitation of nature that we call civilization."13 Frye continues this discussion by showing the complex interrelationship of the social aspect of the mimetic process.
Component elements: ritual origins of drama. If it is to be suggested later that there is a direct relationship between component elements of festival, sense of occasion, and celebration, and the success of American Shakespeare festival theatres, further analysis of the ritual origins of drama must be explored. Theodor H. Gaster, writing in *Thespis: Ritual, Myth and Drama in the Ancient Near East*, presents a discussion of several concepts that will later be shown to be of importance to the success of Shakespeare festivals. First, the concept of the seasonal pattern as having a relationship between nature and art must be recognized as a primary source of an entire literary genre. He states:

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that when we look back to the beginnings of European literature we find everywhere drama, and always drama derived from a religious ritual designed to ensure the rebirth of the dead world. And even of greater importance is the fact that what was created—drama—was not an extraneous artistic creation but a product of communal life which served a strictly functional purpose. At all times drama was an expression and projection of life. Secondly, as civilization developed and sophisticated urban patterns of living emerged, the urgency of primitive seasonal rituals receded. However, this does not negate the fact that their influence was to linger on in numerous ways; both festivals and literature from the Great Dionysia to contemporary American Shakespeare festival theatres show evidence of this lingering. As seasonal rituals become drama, mimetic representations are altered. Now a single representative individual performs the rites that were originally performed by the entire community. Later in this chapter Shakespeare will be shown to carry
this progression—or perhaps regression—a step further by putting characters in the role of festive celebrants. (No longer is the entire community participating in a festival, but rather watching characters in a play participate for them.) In addition, the word festival, while undergoing varying alterations, was never to lose its significance as synonymous with "community," "celebration," "occasion."

Gaster writes:

The most obvious demonstration of this is the fact that the word festival, which originally denoted no more than the ritual meal eaten in common at topocosmic crises, came in time to acquire the meaning of an essentially joyous celebration and ultimately to serve as the more appropriate designation of the seasonal ceremonies as a whole.

As a study of both the activities and repertory of American Shakespeare festival theatres is presented in following chapters, it must be remembered that the Shakespeare festival must be regarded as an expression and projection of life—a life of festival and a sense of occasion, not a museum of closet dramas.

**Greece: rural rites and festival tradition.** There are numerous writers who are concerned with the relationship of agrarian festivals giving rise to drama. One, E. O. James, has devoted an entire book to *Seasonal Feasts and Festivals*. Of the many periods of history he treats in his discussion, the rural rites and festival traditions of ancient Greece deserve special consideration. He reminds us that a direct relationship existed in the everyday life of ancient, rural Greece between the activities of the farm and fields, spring and autumn, and the lesser gods and spirits. Feasting, music, gods, and games were all one in the Greek rural life. He states:
Rustic rites and communal feasts known as Panegyreis were held at village sanctuaries dedicated to a particular god appropriate to the occasion. Thus, a festival was in truth a feast, as indeed it often still is in the more rustic and remote parts of Greece, feasting being combined with music, dancing, games and merry-making, especially after the ingathering of harvest when...there was more leisure to engage in these festivities. In this setting, festival, ritual and later drama were one. As the Greek calendar merged it showed a direct response to seasonal routines of agricultural rites. Even the Great City Dionysia, an urban community festival, continued to reflect a rustic origin in agrarian folk drama, for it was in full spring that the Great City Dionysia became the principal occasion for staging new tragedies. A connection between feasting and drama can also be seen reappearing in numerous theatre moments: Shakespeare's "Merrie England" possessed a rich legacy of banqueting and theatre; and increasingly popular contemporary American dinner-theatres still maintain such a tradition. Of more immediate importance—as discussion in later chapters will show—there is evidence of the feast-drama existence in the activities of Shakespeare festival theatres.

Drama of the Medieval church: a sense of occasion. While controversy exists concerning the linear development of drama from church liturgy it cannot be denied that during the Middle Ages seasonal festivals were quite popular. And, frequently these festivals "included a sacred drama arising out of the liturgical year, portraying the events proper to the occasion." By the ninth century sentences of the psalms used as the Introit in the Mass were supplemented and appointed for specific festivals of Christmas and Easter. Additional words, melodies, and choral singing all added embellishment.
And appreciation of the festival tradition of this period is partially evidenced by the drama of Redemption in which the Resurrection became a central event (soon to be known as the "queen of festivals"). Miracle and Mystery plays of the church arose out of seasonal rites and festivals with a recurring death and resurrection theme.

Folk drama, dance, and festival during the Renaissance. The tradition of entertainment was rich during the Renaissance. Mime, dance, song, and acrobatics all were interwoven into the popular drama of the period. Ancient seasonal rituals were still apparent—perhaps in the degenerated form—in Mummer's Plays. Such plays were presented at public festivals where Mummers, "wearing masks or animal disguises, and clad in fantastic garments, serenaded outside houses...portraying the antithesis of winter and summer, spring and autumn, in a folk version of the ancient seasonal ritual." The function of such traditions was the same as the agrarian rites and festivals of Ancient Greece. E. O. James describes this in his discussion of the Sword Dance, one such Renaissance tradition:

From cradle to the grave, and from season to season, in the primitive and peasant cultures the entire group, domestic and social, have been united as a harmonious whole in a common activity, welded together by collective emotions as a corporate unified entity. Therefore, the dance has found its rightful place in all the principal celebrations in the cycle of human life and of the seasons—initiation, puberty, marriage, death; planting, sowing, harvesting and vintage, and at the turn of the year.

The interrelating of festival, ritual, and myth have been shown to influence liturgical worship, folk drama and dance, dramatic art, and social customs... What initially served a specifically sacred purpose
later acquired secular characteristics. The rhythm of nature as it was reflected in the seasonal sequence has been and continues to be of concern to the anthropologist, theologian, and literary critic. Its legacy—feast and festival, occasion and celebration, community and celebrants—will now be shown of immediate importance to the England of the Middle Ages and the England of Shakespeare.

IV. Early English Stages: Festivity and A Sense of Occasion

The Middle Ages: processions, pageants, a sense of occasion. The success of Shakespeare as playwright and producer and the success of the contemporary Shakespeare festival theatre activity owes much to the enthusiasm which Medieval England had for celebration, festival, and rituals. Art and theatre were not peripheral elements partitioned apart from ritual, but rather an indigenous part of the activities of the community. And although centuries later a public and a private theatre was to delineate clearly the bourgeois and aristocracy, thirteenth century England was rich in its variety of celebrations and festivity.

Glynne Wickham, writing in Early English Stages, explores a number of medieval traditions and finds the pageant, with its "sense of occasion" and "mystic communion," of special interest. He writes:

For this [pageantry] is something we still associate with special state or Civic functions, with processions and decorated streets, flags and uniforms, with heraldic blazon and livery, with a sense of the occasion, above all with rituals bringing ruler and subject into mystic communion.20

The pageant tradition (which the plays of Shakespeare embrace) consisted of two similar yet distinct forms, the first of which was
processional or street pageantry. Appearing early in the thirteenth century, processional pageantry celebrated four kinds of events: the visit of a distinguished visitor, a coronation, a major military victory, and a royal wedding. Unlike tournaments which were basically a pastime organized for and enacted by the nobility, pageants were bourgeois activities—activities for the community. And as such, a close tie existed between the municipal and ecclesiastic authorities concerning the devising and enacting of the pageants.

Pageant theatres were the second form of the pageant tradition, performing to two different audiences at the same time. Wickham describes this phenomenon:

The actors of the street pageant theatres performed to two distinct audiences simultaneously. On the one hand there was the distinguished visitor and his retinue who progressed from one stage to the next and on other hand there was the much larger audience who could not hope to see more than the tableau nearest to the position where they were themselves stationed.

Both audiences, aristocrat and bourgeois, responded to the visual impact of the pageant theatre with great enthusiasm. Wickham observes:

Indeed, from whatever angle we approach the pageant theatres of the streets—purpose, characters, stages, scenic background, cast or costume—the same startling constant emerges: that the medieval and Tudor 'multitude' were constantly addicted to spectacle.

The professional dramatists of this period—and later Shakespeare—were keenly aware of this hunger for spectacle, and wrote plays to satisfy it. This was but an early hint of the legacy Shakespeare festival theatres had to build on.

Indoor entertainments of the Middle Ages. Other traditions of the period were to further enlarge and support Medieval England's
appreciation for the community and its festivals and occasions. Feasting and ministrelling brought the people away from the pageants outside, into the banquet hall indoors. Here feasting—usually begun in daylight and lasting well into the night—was one tradition that might be difficult for our age of franchise food distributors and automated cafeterias to appreciate. An extensive menu was provided, and long pauses between courses was firmly rooted as part of the Tudor tradition. Equipped with an open area, the thirteenth century banquet hall was especially suited to entertainments. Glynne Wickham describes the attributes as follows:

Hangings of rich materials and tapestry enjoyed great popularity, possibly as much because of the additional warmth and better acoustics their presence afforded as for their decorative value. These paintings and tapestries very often represented the stories already familiar from the verse chronicles and romances by the trouveres.23

During the long intervals between courses a minstrel troupe performed. By the fourteenth century the tradition further exacted landowners to maintain or hire a minstrel troupe of poets, acrobats, musicians, jugglers, and comedians, to perform at occasional festivities.

The variety and tradition of indoor entertainment for festive and social occasions continue throughout the thirteenth to the sixteenth century. At the same time open-air performances of Miracle and Morality plays were being performed, entertainments of a primarily secular kind were regularly offered indoors. The nobility and merchant bourgeois of the fourteenth century enjoyed diversions similar to those of the Court and Private theatres of Elizabethan sixteenth century. Morals and Interludes, Mummings and Disguising, are but a few of the many examples of community celebratory rituals and
festivals. The Interlude is of particular interest in that it was essentially an indoor entertainment for festive and social occasions. And unlike the full-length Morality plays which were of a religious origin or the sophisticated Mumming of agrarian descent, the Interlude was a light, short, farcical entertainment staged between courses at the court banquet. It later moved out of doors to appear on the village green and street corner. Mumming were essentially a nocturnal, indoor entertainment which descended from Greco-Roman rituals and "involved a coherent group of people, working corporately to a pre-designed end." Initially the main object of Mumming was the seasonal giving of gifts, but it became an important social recreation when the ceremony enlarged and merged with dancing.

The sources of dramatic entertainment in medieval England were varied. They provided for worship (Morality and Miracle plays) and social recreation (Tournaments, Civic Pageants, Disguisings). In each case evidence of the festive and social occasion was evident. And as the farcical Interlude of the court banquet moved out of doors to the village green another phase of the "shared experience" can be seen.

V. Shakespeare's Plays: Historic Interplay Between Social and Artistic Form

It is not the purpose of this chapter to trace the story of drama on a single continuum from feast to festival to drama, but rather to point out to the reader that a relationship between social and artistic form has been evident in several of the more significant moments of theatre history, and that perhaps this relationship
deserves consideration when the success of American Shakespeare festival theatres is considered. In order to study and isolate those factors which have made those theatres successful, it is necessary to study both the plays and the playhouses. The first of these areas is the subject of C. L. Barber's book *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and Its Relationship to Social Custom*. Barber observes:

To get at the form and meaning of the plays, which is my first and last interest, I have been led into an exploration of the way the social form of Elizabethan holidays contributed to the dramatic form of festive comedy....And this historical interplay between social and artistic form has an interest of its own: we can see here, with more clarity of outline and details than is usually possible, how art develops underlying configurations in the social life of a culture.25

Barber articulates a concept which is an essential basis of this chapter--that social rituals and dramatic forms are at times analogous. In the case of the Elizabethan moment, parallel manifestations of the same pattern of culture are suggested by both the comedy of the playwright and the festivity of holiday. As an artist Shakespeare was concerned with the way men cope with life; he, says Barber, "gives the ritual pattern aesthetic actuality by discovering expressions of it in the fragmentary and incomplete gestures of daily life."26 And in our age--an age that theologian Harvey Cox points out as having lost the capacity for festivity--it is not surprising that Shakespeare, both his plays and playhouse, have been singled out for their festival potential.

In expressing interest in the plays of Shakespeare in a contemporary festival setting--be it Stratford England, Ontario, or Connecticut--the opportunity exists to embrace not merely the plays of
a dramatist but all of "Merrie England." The term "Merrie England" aptly denotes a time of holiday, community observance, feast days and period sport. Popular pastimes and entertainments included: Morris-Dances, Sword Dances, Mummings, Disguising, Masques, game shows, Pageants, and sports. Holiday festivals included Candlemas, Shrove Tuesday, Hocktide, May Day, Whitsuntide, Midsummer Eve, Halloween, and the twelve days of Christmas. Shakespeare's many casual references to such holidays and sport suggest the implicit role they played; his audience could respond readily to the familiar events and surrounding celebrations. Perhaps the audiences of American Shakespeare festival theatres share this enthusiasm for festival in part as peephole voyeurs.

Shakespeare festival quotient. C. L. Barber warns that it would be grossly unfair and rather erroneous to present Shakespeare as "a primitive who began with nothing but festival custom and invented a comedy to express it." Rather he was "simply" an inventive dramatist having rich traditions and resources from which to draw. He wrote at a moment--the Elizabethan moment--"when the educated part of society was modifying a ceremonial, ritualistic conception of human life to create a historical, psychological conception." Elizabethan England during Shakespeare's life time was an England overly conscious of holiday custom; no other period can surpass it in the keeping of holidays. Against this holiday tradition Shakespeare designed characters who in addition to appearing as motivated, complex individuals also served in the capacity of festive celebrants. Add to this the outdoor playhouses and all the trappings of Merrie England (dancing on the
Green, feasting, song, heraldry), and the "festival quotient" of Shakespeare was fluently realized. There have been Shaw festivals (at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario) and Ibsen festivals, but they have somehow lacked the potential the Shakespeare festivals have possessed.

More specifically, according to Barber, the festival quotient of the plays of Shakespeare is best realized in his comedies. While Barber warns of overstretching the analogous nature between social rituals and dramatic forms, he does state that "they reflect the fact that the holiday occasion and the comedy are parallel manifestations of the same pattern of culture, of a way that men can cope with life." Shakespeare accomplished this by placing his characters in the position of festive celebrants. Barber writes:

The fundamental method is to shape the loose narrative so that 'events' put its persons in the position of festive celebrants: if they do not seek holiday it happens to them. A tyrant duke forces Rosalind into disguise; but her mock wooing with Orlando amounts to a Disguising, with carnival freedom from the decorum of her identity and her sex.

Barber suggests that the festive comedies achieve a heightened awareness between man and his "nature," the nature celebrated on holiday. Celebrants, individually and collectively, appear in Shakespeare's plays--*Love's Labour's Lost*, *As You Like It*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Twelfth Night*. Elements of festivity, holiday, celebration, and a sense of occasion were integral parts of Merry England and of the plays of Shakespeare; they will later be viewed as important aspects of Shakespeare festival theatres.

*Adonis to Shakespeare:* theme of festival with poignance.

Other writers have been concerned with Shakespeare's "festival
quotient." C. L. Barber sought "to get at the form and meaning of Shakespeare's plays by an exploration of the way the social form of Elizabethan holidays contributed to the dramatic form of festive comedy." He discusses Shakespeare as a professional dramatist who assumed the responsibilities of the members of the community. This resulted when he, as a dramatist, shaped the ceremonial and ritualistic conception of life previously evidenced by the holiday tradition into that of a historical and psychological conception now evidenced by dramas. Another writer, Richard Wincor, explores the same subject in a slightly different manner. In an article entitled "Shakespeare's Festival Plays" appearing over twenty years ago (just a few years before the thrust of the American Shakespeare festival movement took form in the mid-1950's) in The Shakespeare Quarterly he suggests that "Shakespeare's last plays may be best understood by comparing them with the old festival plays that celebrate the return of spring after a barren winter." He states rather specifically his concern:

Truths about life are often lost and rediscovered; even the original symbols for their expression suggest themselves once again. And so it seems entirely natural that they should be the essence both of Shakespeare's sunset masterpieces [Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale, and The Tempest] and the old ceremonies from which drama was born. It was for the more sophisticated art to relate them to all human experience....The theme of festivals for over two thousand years took on a sudden poignance....At last he rediscovered the symbolic meaning of winter and summer. Wincor is specifically concerned with presenting William Shakespeare as writing a definite festival play (which he defines as "any dramatic celebration, but here applied to a drama growing out of seasonal rites and worship") which is a comprehensive statement about humanity. Shakespeare's festival plays, as Wincor labels them, are...
not isolated dramatic products but part of the continuum of theatre of western man:

Festival drama grew up in every part of the world. Mystical rites celebrated the death and resurrection of the life-principle known in different lands as Tammuz, Attis, Osiris, Adonis; perhaps Jesus as well. Actual plays, with dialogue and human heroes, finally appeared in Greece. From Thespis to Aristophanes the theme was carried on, a prelude of its ripe and glorious restatement by Shakespeare. Magical rites turned into festival plays.  

Shakespeare's festival plays, as Richard Wincor presents them, are in part a second telling in rich and beautiful language of a simple seasonal rite.

It appears that a basic theme of death and resurrection has reappeared in countless varieties of theatre and dramatic activity. Religious plays, Pageants, Mumming, Sword Dances, folk plays and Elizabethan drama (Ralph Roister Doister, The Shoemaker's Holiday, and Love's Labour Lost are three examples of the old ritual theme) all evidence a recurring motif. Wincor summarizes by stating:

It begins with primitive man first learning agriculture and being impressed by the momentous transformations that pass over the face of the earth. Changes attended the season, changes that had an apparently magical effect upon growth and life. This was symbolized in early religious ritual... So it went, and in ritual imitation of these old ideas appear the origins of drama. Fertility magic is the beginning of comedy. The winter mock death of good things in life is the source of tragedy.  

Perhaps this discussion of feast, festival, and Elizabethan drama appears fuzzy and irrelevant to the subject of this study. The opposite is true. The Elizabethan audience, as the Elizabethan community, was heterogeneous and representative of the entire society—all classes and mentalities. To the Elizabethan, theatre-going was natural, woven into the entire fabric of their culture; it was a
convivial experience, a festive occasion. The Elizabethan had a clear appreciation and understanding of a sense of community life, and the elements of this life—celebration, festivity, a sense of occasion—also characterized theatregoing. Theatre was exciting, fun, and important to the Elizabethan. It fulfilled the needs of the community and served as an indigenous and collective voice.

The search for a popular audience representative of the entire community, who participated in an experience that provided emotional and intellectual involvement, who rejoiced in life and reaffirmed man's place in the universe, was the successful achievement of both the Athenian and Elizabethan moments. Perhaps evidence of these vital components can again be seen in the potential of American Shakespeare festival theatres.
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER II


2 Ibid., p. 161.

3 Ibid., pp. 161-162.

4 Ibid., p. 22.

5 Ibid., p. 23.

6 Ibid., p. 161.


8 Ibid., p. 21.

9 Ibid., p. 21.

10 Ibid., p. 44.


12 Ibid., p. 108.

13 Ibid., p. 105.


15 Ibid., p. 27.


17 Ibid., p. 239.

18 Ibid., p. 273.

19 Ibid., p. 275.


21 Ibid., p. 59.

22 Ibid., p. 111.


24 Ibid., p. 198.


26 Ibid., p. 11.  
27 Ibid., p. 15.  
28 Ibid., p. 15.  
29 Ibid., p. 6.  
30 Ibid., p. 6.  
31 Ibid., p. 4.  
32 Ibid., p. 207.  
33 Ibid., p. 220.  
34 Ibid., p. 220.  
36 Ibid., p. 220.
CHAPTER III: SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL THEATRES: ENGLISH AND CANADIAN PRECURSORS

I. The Post-Elizabethan Moment: An Indefinite Continuum

The Elizabethan moment: a dual chronology. During the years beginning with Elizabeth's accession to the throne in 1558 and ending in 1642 with Parliament's action theatre enjoyed a most unique position. Multiple coalescing took place: (1) court and public stages shared similar interests and conventions, (2) traditions from the Middle Ages merged with ideals of the Renaissance, (3) popular and aristocratic audiences enjoyed the professional performance of vernacular drama. The closing of the theatres thus brought to an end one of the most brilliant and productive moments in the history of theatre. Both the complexion of 'Merrie Olde England' with its public playhouses and popular audiences, and the reputation of Shakespeare's plays were to be seriously affected. However, the parliamentary action of 1642 was not an abrupt termination of Shakespearean production; the Bard's popularity, although initially strong at the Blackfriars and Globe, was to diminish slowly but certainly over a span of years at both the indoor private and outdoor public theatres.

In attempting to trace the "festival impulse" of the plays of Shakespeare it is necessary to clarify the chronology of the indoor and outdoor, public and private theatres. It is tempting to suggest that Shakespeare in the setting of a public outdoor playhouse--not too
unlike contemporary American Shakespeare festivals—had an exclusive monopoly on play production; and further, that a coterie audience, cultural curtain, and indoor theatre were the direct results of the Interregnum. But, this was certainly not true. During the same span of years (1576-1642) when permanent outdoor theatres were built; a strong indoor theatre tradition emerged, a tradition most apparent in the Blackfriar's Playhouse.

**Supremacy of the Globe and significance of the Blackfriars.**

Suggesting the concurrent existence of public outdoor and private indoor theatres (perhaps best represented by the Globe and Blackfriars) does not in any way negate the significance of Shakespeare's outdoor playhouse. Irwin Smith, writing in *Shakespeare's Blackfriar's Playhouse* reinforces this point. He states:

> In the perspective of three and a half centuries; it can be said unhesitatingly that the supreme decade in the history of the English drama was the decade during which the Lord Chamberlain's Men played at the Globe alone. The Globe staged the first performance of many of Shakespeare's greatest comedies, all of his tragedies except Romeo and Juliet and all of his Greek and Roman plays except Titus Andronicus.

And while the Globe was supreme as the representative outdoor playhouse for the period of a decade it was not without the support of the Blackfriars.

Within the precinct walls of a former friary of a community of Dominican friars (the crown confiscated the property in 1539) located in the "liberties" of London was situated a great hall. In 1576, the same year in which the outdoor public playhouse The Theatre was built, two other playhouses in succession were erected; Smith writes of these theatres and their significance.
Of the two theatres, the first was England's first commercial indoor theatre, and as such the forerunner of all the theatres of today. The second and greater Blackfriars Playhouse was England's leading theatre during a great theatrical age, and one of two playhouses of which Shakespeare was a part owner. He wrote his final plays for its stage, and it left its mark upon them. The two Blackfriars Playhouses spanned the years that saw the English drama in its greatest glory and the English stage in its greatest transition. Together, with a sixteen-year intermission, they lasted from 1576 until 1642.

The Blackfriars shared many similarities with its contemporary outdoor playhouses. First, it was, as the Globe, owned by a syndicate of which Shakespeare was a member. As such a syndicate it was operated as a fully professional theatrical venture—a business enterprise. Secondly, both Shakespeare and his contemporaries enjoyed the production of their plays at the Blackfriars. And while its effect on theatrical conditions influenced the moving from fixed polyscenic settings of the medieval stage to changeable flats and painted scenery, the physical playhouse was no stranger to the King's Men. Irwin Smith writes of Richard Burbage's, the syndicates' leader knowledge of both the intricacies of the Globe and Blackfriars:

The elder Burbage [Richard] had planned it [the second Blackfriars theatre] for their use in the first place, and in its designing he had probably consulted his two sons, and Shakespeare, Heminges, and Condell. Three years later, the same company had built the Globe, and in the designing of its stage they had inevitably been influenced by their experience in designing the stage at the Blackfriars. Of their own knowledge, they knew all the respects in which the two stages were alike, and those in which they differed.

In distinguishing the Blackfriars as a private theatre, it must be understood that such theatres were private in the sense they were roofed and lit artificially by candles, that higher admission prices than those of public outdoor theatres were charged, and that seats
for all spectators were provided. And yet while they accommodated less than one-half as many spectators they were not exclusive, in that non-aristocrats could and did attend.

Shakespeare eclipsed: pre-Interregnum. While both public and private theatres existed concurrently they did nevertheless experience a shift in popularity—a shift that seriously affected the festival impulse of Shakespeare in production. The private theatres attracted an audience more refined and exclusive than their outdoor counterparts. Such a shift in audience composition had to influence the type of drama performed. Smith writes:

Scholars have recognized that the physical conditions of the indoor stage and the taste of the elite audience would have required or permitted important, perhaps radical, changes in methods of production and staging of plays and in the style of acting. Playwrights would produce a new kind of drama.\(^4\)

So even before Shakespeare's retirement in 1610, audiences were demonstrating signs of a collective class-oriented change in tastes. Irwin Smith continues to write of this new demand to move beyond the canon of Shakespeare. He states:

The months between August of 1608 and the winter of 1609-1610 were busy ones for the King's Men. To meet the demand for new plays they secured the services of Ben Jonson and of Beaumont and Fletcher to supplement the output of their own man, Shakespeare.\(^5\)

When William Shakespeare died on April 23, 1616 the Chamberlain's-King's Men had been in existence for twenty-two years. His company and his plays had been the dominant force of the Elizabethan moment—a moment shared by both indoor and outdoor, public and private theatres.
Elizabethan theatres closed: democratic audiences and festive occasion altered. Writing in *The Cult of Shakespeare*, F. E. Halliday, discusses the fortunes of the playwright and "his" Elizabethan theatre. Of particular interest to this study is the chronology Halliday develops: Shakespeare eclipsed, reformed, refined, and once again celebrated. In Chapter I, "Shakespeare Eclipsed," Halliday states:

By 1640, however, the day of the open public playhouses was almost over. It was here, at the Theatre, Curtain, Rose, and Globe, that the Elizabethan drama had been born and nourished, drama on the titanic scale of Marlowe and Shakespeare, of Tamburlaine and Lear, when miniature armies had room to deploy, and actors declaimed their lines from the apron stage to an audience of a thousand or more, drawn from all sections of society.6

Two years later the glories of the stage of Shakespeare were brought to final halt by Parliament's act which closed the theatres. During the period of the Interregnum both Shakespeare's plays and their Elizabethan settings were viewed with disfavor. By 1660, forty-four years after the Bard's death, both were considered barbaric and medieval; far out of place in the polite and polished society of new English aristocracy. The Elizabethan moment was now but a faint memory.

*Shakespeare reformed and refined.* The curious eclipsing of both Shakespeare and the Elizabethan moment is of importance to this study, for it is a microcosmic reflection of two views of theatre: the popular and the coterie. As Shakespeare continues to be reformed, refined, and eventually celebrated we shall see these two concepts competing with each other. When the theatres reopened in 1660—at first, apparently without much legal authority—the production of Shakespeare's plays was to undergo change. For one, the people of fashion who now attended the theatre sought a more sophisticated form
of drama. Once again, as before the Interregnum Beaumont and Fletcher enjoyed popularity—a popularity displacing that of the Bard. The fortunes of Shakespeare on the stage were to undergo additional alterations, attempts to polish, refine, or make "fitt" the Bard's plays. Many curious liberties have been taken with his works. Although Shakespeare's reputation did not stand very high in 1660 it underwent vast changes during the years 1660-1668, ultimately giving rise to a cult known as Bardolatry by 1729. The names of Davenant, Dryden, Betterton all were associated with this "new" interest in the Bard. Halliday writes:

The reputation of Shakespeare had changed vastly between 1660 and 1668. Then his plays had been read by only a few, now they were seen, even in mangled versions rather than heard in their original forms, by crowded houses who clamoured for more. This was mainly the work of Davenant. Moreover, he had handed on his work to the next generation. It was he who first taught Dryden to admire Shakespeare, as it was he who first fired Betterton with the desire to emulate Burbage by playing all the great Shakespearean heroes, and to find out more about the dramatist to whose work he was indebted for his success. Dryden and Betterton had thirty to forty years of active life before them, time enough to consolidate and advance what Davenant had begun.

After Dryden's death (in 1700) and Betterton's death (in 1710) Shakespeare's plays were almost forgotten once again. His work was accessible only in cumbersome folios and read by "mere" men of letters. But as the Georgian era began, Shakespeare once again enjoyed popularity. Halliday writes of this rebirth in Chapter III, "Shakespeare Refined:"

Now, on the threshold of the Georgian era, he was recognized as England's greatest poet and dramatist, his work not only read...but seen more frequently in some sort of version, than any others on the London stage. He was already on the way to becoming a legend, as a trophy to his happy triumph his plays had been edited and published in six handy octavo volumes. It was the first modern critical edition
of Shakespeare. 8

The rise of Bardolatry was beginning to take shape. And while frenzied excesses and follies were to be committed from time to time, the continued desire to produce Shakespeare became more and more apparent.

This discussion of Halliday's view of Shakespeare "eclipsed," "reformed," and "refined" would be of minor peripheral interest to this study were it not for one important consideration. A major contention of this study is that the success of Shakespeare as a playwright is in direct proportion to the provision he and the Elizabethan moment made for elements of festival, celebration, and occasion. The preceding chapter attempts to argue this point; later chapters will examine this concept in depth as individual American Shakespeare festivals are discussed. But, in the eighteenth century an important precedent was established, that precedent being "Shakespeare celebrated" by a Grand Shakespeare Jubilee at Stratford-upon-Avon in September, 1769 with David Garrick as Master of Ceremonies.

II. A Neo-Elizabethan Tradition Emerges

Grand Shakespeare Jubilee of 1769. As an examination of the institution of Shakespeare festivals is made several reappearing concepts emerge. Perhaps of greatest importance is the fact that the creation and ultimate success of a festival theatre is, in many cases, the result of the abilities and leadership of a single man. Such was the case with the first Shakespeare Jubilee organized by David Garrick at Stratford in the summer of 1769. Garrick, as Christian Deelman writes in The Great Shakespeare Jubilee, embraced the organizing of this first festival with a passion:
The greatest truth that Garrick wished to diffuse was the pre-eminence of Shakespeare. For over twenty years he spread the gospel through his acting, until in 1769 he moved out of the limiting confines of Drury Lane to Stratford itself, there to stage the greatest ritual he could devise to the God or his Idolatry.9

This festival was seen by Garrick as part of a campaign to popularize Shakespeare. He had devoted his entire career to this objective.

Preparation for the Jubilee began in May 9, 1769—the opening day was to be September 6th of the same year—with a formal press release sent by Garrick to the London papers. No expense was spared; and from the start—with the building of an octagonal wooden amphitheatre on the Avon's banks—all stops were pulled. Halliday, writing in The Cult of Shakespeare, describes the pavilion (it was not a true playhouse as such) for this first festival:

Preparations were already well advanced in Stratford where an octagonal wooden amphitheatre was rising on the Avon's bank. No expense was spared in adorning and rendering commodious this elegant piece of architecture; ceiling and cornice were covered with tasteful and appropriate paintings, and from the dome, supported by Columns of the Corinthian order, richly gilt, was suspended a huge chandelier containing eight hundred wax lights. There was room for more than a thousand spectators, and the orchestra would accommodate a hundred performers.10

Although Garrick had intended the Jubilee to be a celebration in honor of the genius of Shakespeare, it was overproduced and overpriced. The trappings of this ritual were unlimited. Halliday describes Stratford, the proper setting for the Jubilee, as it appeared a full week before the festival:

By the end of August [1769] the nobility and gentry were pouring into Stratford, and a week before the high festival began the neighboring towns and villages were crammed with visitors paying exorbitant prices for quite inconsiderable accommodations. ... There was plenty to do. They could buy Jubilee Medals, in copper, silver, or gold, with the
likeness of Shakespeare on one side and 'D.G.' [David Garrick] on the other. . . . By the fifth of September all was ready: the poet's bust in the church was loaded with laurel; the Birthplace was covered with a curious emblematical transparency of the sun struggling through the clouds, a figurative representation of the fate and fortune of the much-beloved bard; transparent silk paintings hung in the windows of the Town Hall, the Genius of Shakespeare flanked by Falstaff and Pistol.

This extravagance permeated the entire tone of the Jubilee. Events during the three day celebration included ceremonies, dedications, processions, banquets, fireworks, feasts, pageants, orations, and both a Grand and a costume ball. Both Deelman and Halliday discuss the events of the three day Jubilee in great depth. A short description, by Deelman, of the start of the first day captures the quality of the entire festival:

[Wednesday, September 6, 1769] Stratford woke early: it had little choice. The thirty cannons on the banks of the Avon sprang to life at six a.m., and the start of the great Shakespeare Jubilee was announced with resounding thunder.... The guns continued to boom forth at the turn of each hour throughout the day....A musical detachment from the Warwickshire Militia paraded through the streets toward the Town Hall, beating Reveille on fifes and drums....The serenaders, tired but willing sang on and on, until the hour for breakfast was at least reached, and they disappeared to tidy themselves up, and prepare for the more formal musical events of the day. The Jubilee began well.

A sense of the ridiculous appeared to characterize the festival. For the first Shakespeare festival was not a cultural event, but rather a "public ceremony of opening a civic building, in the presence of a large number of guests for whom entertainment was provided." It was called by some critics as a "comic fiasco," "rather ridiculous," "a publicity stunt," for its overproduction of effects and events coupled with bad weather. Garrick had made, other critics felt, a vain attempt to link his name with the Bard's forevermore. It was in many ways an economic and artistic failure.
Visitors to Stratford were either waylaid by robbers on the trip from London or overcharged for poor accommodations when they arrived. Recurring bad weather interrupted or forced cancellation of a number of festival events. And after all was done—despite fireworks and feats, pageants and prologues, dances and dedications—not a single word of Shakespeare text was spoken during the entire Jubilee. But with these elements put in perspective, the Jubilee must be judged a success. For, despite its initial purpose of a ceremony in honor of a civic building (a townhall having nothing to do with theatre), the Jubilee was commonly taken to be a celebration in honor of the genius of Shakespeare. Its importance in the history of Shakespeare's reputation must be noted. Deelman states,

it marks the point at which Shakespeare stopped being regarded as an increasingly popular and admirable dramatist, and became a god. Much romantic criticism, based on worship of the man who could create his own world of living creatures, has its roots in the enthusiasm aroused by Garrick.

Shakespeare had been popularized more by this single three day event than by the editors of his works of the previous fifty years.

The Grand Shakespeare Jubilee of 1769 can claim the distinction of being the first Shakespeare festival. It was a long term success gaining importance as time went by. All subsequent Shakespeare festivals in Stratford, England, Ontario, and Connecticut have their roots in this Jubilee. In years to come every Shakespeare anniversary would be held at the birthplace of the Bard. Eventually an annual Shakespeare anniversary would emerge that would last the greater part of the year. This festival and its various theatres and activities were to receive the continuous support of not only the small
Warwickshire community of Stratford, but the entire country of England. Shakespeare was now a national institution, and Stratford was a community of international importance.

A Shakespeare festival with Shakespeare. Despite the fact the "Garrick Jubilee" had no particular chronological significance (it came fifteen years after the bicentenary of Shakespeare's birth) it was nevertheless the first formal effort to organize a Shakespearean celebration. As previously discussed, in the midst of all the planning (including oratorios, pageants, banquets, balls) not a single scene of Shakespeare was presented. Ivor Brown and George Fearon document this curious phenomenon in their book *The Shakespeare Industry: Amazing Monument:*

The Garrick Festival...produced some dubious poetry, much eloquence, and no acting, except of the kind which goes on every day in normal life. Certainly there was no acting of Shakespeare's own work....But Shakespeare's plays in Shakespeare's own town were soon to be accepted, and even normal. 15

In the spring of 1771 the first series of authenticated performances of Shakespeare's plays took place at The New Theatre, at the Unicorn in Stratford. These performances consisted of *The Merchant of Venice,* [with] Shylock by Mr. Kennedy...There was also *Hamlet* (Mr. Booth as the Prince), and this was held to be insufficient entertainment in itself; it followed, presumably in a much-cut version, a musical show called 'Padlock.' 16

A new Shakespearean theatre. The production of Shakespeare in Stratford had uneven moments of popularity during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, but this course was to change. In 1828
the New Shakespeare Theatre was constructed on a site in Stratford known as New Place Garden. *King Lear* and a farce *Fortune's Frolic* were the first productions, enjoying the attendance of the many thousands of Shakespeare-conscious pilgrims who visited Stratford-upon-Avon during these early years of the nineteenth century. "Going to Stratford" had become a national pastime.

Tercentenary festival: a community rallies. Both Stratford and Shakespeare continued to grow in popularity. And as the Tercentenary of Shakespeare's birth (1864) came closer, great enthusiasm in planning an anniversary celebration became evident. There appear to be recurring characteristics which make Shakespeare festivals successful, and early planning for the Tercentenary highlighted one of these: the ability of a single individual to generate enthusiasm for the festival concept. As David Garrick demonstrated earlier in 1769, a community—once again Stratford—could be seen rallying to give its support and enthusiasm to the festival idea. This was certainly the case when London had quickly seized upon Stratford's idea of a Tercentenary Festival of their own. Brown and Fearon discuss this rivalry:

It was not an easy matter to convince the world that the Tercentenary of the birth of Shakespeare should be nationally celebrated in the town which claimed his honor. It appeared to be a walkover as far as London was concerned, for the great City apparently had every advantage over its country rival. Stratford had no actors and no theatre worth the mention....But it had one great advantage over the opponent. It would show the world where Shakespeare was born, where he walked, where his wife lived, where he went to school, and above all, where he got his inspiration.17

Shakespeare and Stratford-upon-Avon were indigenous, interrelated
elements. The "community" (as defined earlier in this study) could provide a setting which could not be duplicated in London.

Planning for the anniversary celebration began one full year before the event with the drawing up of a draft program. Plans included a ceremony, dramatic reading, banquet, fancy ball, oratorio, concert, and theatrical performances. By six weeks before the Tercentenary began, the "theatre" for the event was completed. Halliday describes it as follows:

The Grand Pavilion, delightfully sited in a meadow between New Place and the church [was a] wooden duodecagon that would have made Garrick's octagon look ridiculously inadequate. With a diameter of 152 feet and a height of 74 feet, it had an orchestra that would accommodate five hundred and thirty performers and a stage 74 feet wide and 56 feet deep. Twenty thousand cubic feet of timber, twelve tons of wrought iron, and upwards of four tons of nails were used in the construction. The interior was tastefully decorated in Elizabethan style.

This was certainly not a fully equipped theatre; it was a temporary structure for an anniversary celebration torn down eight years later in 1872.

A large part of the planning of this festival (as of later festivals in Canada and America) was centered on a concern for "the sense of occasion" that was to be created both in approaching the town and festival location as well as in the activities of the town during the celebration. Halliday describes the view of a visitor approaching the anniversary setting by train:

A visitor arriving by the Will Shakespeare in April 1864 would be greeted by the station platform... On his progress towards the hostelry he would pass the Shakespearean Foundry, the Shakespearean Needle works, the site of the proposed Shakespeare Monument at the top of Bridge Street, where turning into High Street, just beyond the Shakespeare Book Shop, he would find the Shakespeare Hotel.
The celebration made provision for numerous festive elements; the entire town was decked in bunting and banners, a fancy-dress gala had dancing until five in the morning, a fireworks display climaxed in a set piece called "The Vision of Shakespeare," a pageant featured a Grand Military Band and a Grand Triumphant Car on which Shakespeare rode at the apex of a living pyramid of his famous characters. During the "Peoples Week"—actually a half-week—performance of Othello, Much Ado and the trial scene from The Merchant of Venice were presented to "more visitors in one day than in the whole of the previous week... with the most expensive seats costing only three shillings." 20 (During the previous week The Comedy of Errors and Twelfth Night had been presented.)

Although crowds were enthusiastic, the celebration lost two thousand pounds for its backers. The Tercentenary Festival was a financial failure. The lessons learned by the festival committee were valuable ones, later becoming ground rules for future festivals. Preparations should have begun several years before the festival; not crammed in to the last few months before the opening. The committee lacked experience in national and international propaganda. Lastly, problems with celebrated stars resulted in personality clashes. And yet, although the event was a financial failure, Halliday considers the celebration a success:

Yet in spite of opposition and adversity they had carried through a festival on a scale never before attempted by a small provincial town. More important they had kindled an enthusiasm that nothing now could extinguish. 'To found a theatre in which Shakespearean drama could be acted... would be a work really worthy of the occasion.' 21

The quest for a permanent, fully equipped theatre for the production
of Shakespeare's plays was soon to become a reality.

Charles Edmond Flower. At this point in the history of English Shakespeare festival models two important factors were present: (1) the desire to produce Shakespeare in a festival setting, (2) community support and enthusiasm for such an objective. Curiously missing was a permanent theatre for production of Shakespeare's plays.

It was Charles Edward Flower, son of the mayor who had been chairman of the 1864 Committee, who was to supply this missing element. As a result of his vision, energy, and generosity, the first Shakespeare Memorial Theatre was built at Stratford, replacing the Royal Shakespeare Theatre which had been torn down in 1872. Flower was the single leader, the respected member of the community who was most responsible for the new theatre. Nancy and Jean Webb describe the new edifice as follows:

The new structure was erected with funds raised by a national appeal, on a marshy two-acre river front site donated by an enthusiastic townsman [Charles Edmond Flower]. It was completed in 1884, with seats for seven hundred people, its initial ten-day season--featuring Much Ado About Nothing, Hamlet, and As You Like It--was a reasonable success.\(^{22}\)

The erection of the Memorial Theatre was the end cumulative result of the work of David Garrick (and the Great Shakespeare Jubilee), lesser festival activity, and the Tercentenary Festival where Shakespeare's plays were first included in the Stratford Celebration. The concept of a Shakespeare festival theatre was now a firm reality.

Shakespeare festival industry emerges: 1884-1935. During an approximately fifty-year period the concept of a Shakespeare festival in England grew and developed. A brief overview of some of the more
eventful years follows. Now (1884) that the concept of an annual festival of plays was established—it continued in a modest fashion for several years—it was time for a more ambitious and clearer planning. Francis Robert Benson was the man to accomplish this objective. Webb writes of his work:

Between 1885 and 1919 (when the project) [the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre] was headed by a vigorous actor named Francis Robert Benson) its fortunes flourished. Benson sometimes managed to set as many as twenty different plays upon the theatre's stage in a single festival. A Silver Jubilee in 1904 stretched the season to three weeks, and in 1910, a summer season was added for the tourist trade. Even during World War I. Benson managed to keep the festival going, and in 1916, was knighted for his achievement.  

By the mid-twenties the Festival Company had achieved national and international acclaim. In 1925 a Royal Charter was granted the Memorial Theatre in Stratford; H. M. King George V was now its Patron. Also, for the first time in its forty-six year life it was making a profit. Not only was the company a success in England, but it had now toured Canada, the United States, South Africa, and was invited to act in Oslo's State Theatre before the Norwegian King and Queen. It is of no surprise, then, that when the old theatre burnt down on March 6, 1926 not only the entire community of Stratford, but England itself and the United States rallied to aid the institution. A new structure was financed by subscription and opened by the Prince of Wales on April 23, 1932. Of special interest was the fact that almost two-thirds of the sum raised was a tribute from American contributions. (This American enthusiasm to support financially the production of Shakespeare was to be of great importance later.)

Once the new theatre was opened another wave of festival
growth and progress took place. By 1935 a continuous season from April to September was operative. Production of Shakespeare's plays continued during W.W. II when audiences carried gas masks to performances. Attendance figures increased, prestige mounted, financial solvency existed, and two London theatres were acquired to offer winter runs of its productions. The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre was by the 1950's an important and permanent part of the English theatre scene.

III. Burgeoning Festivals and Shakespeare Industry

The modern Shakespeare industry: an overview. There could be no doubt that the results of Shakespearean activity in Stratford, beginning with the Garrick Jubilee in 1729 and ending (for the moment in this discussion) with the internationally acclaimed Festival Company of the Stratford Memorial Theatre, had produced a new industry. Ivor Brown and George Fearon discuss this production in their book This Shakespeare Industry: Amazing Monument. They write of it:

For not in Stratford only but all over the world Shakespeare has passed far beyond his old status of poet and playwright. He is now, on the grand scale, a commercial magnet....As a raw material available without cost and without cease, he everywhere sustains actors and their critics, musicians and stage-decorators, costumers and scene shifters, electricians and box-office staff, teachers and lecturers, librarians, publishers and editors of texts, controversialists.

The attraction of the public to the plays of Shakespeare in a festival setting is a major concern of this study. For if it must be acknowledged that a Shakespeare industry exists, it must also be acknowledged that Shakespeare festival theatres are the producers of this "product" currently selling in England, Canada, and the United States. There appears to be some magic attraction that draws audiences to
festival playhouses at a time when they are reluctant to attend regular commercial theatres. What Brown and Fearon have to say about this phenomenon in England is also true of American Shakespeare festival activity:

The English have to be coaxed by tricks of publicity, by kindly, even flattering, reviews, and by everlasting appeals to support this or that playhouse of good intentions...There is certainly not one visit made to the theatre for every twenty made to the film, and nineteen out of twenty of those who will flock to Stratford and pack its theatre, which offers Shakespeare only, through the summer from April to September, would never think of attending a Shakespeare play in their own town, should it by chance happen to arrive there....But now the name of Shakespeare seems to act like a strange intoxicant upon the very people who one thought to be totally immune from such Dionysias infection.25

It is this "strange intoxicant" of Shakespeare in a festival setting that will occupy the major part of the remainder of this study. Brown and Fearon attempt to chronicle, analyze, and explain the growth of a local cult (Bardolatry) into a cosmic industry. Their concern is limited to England. This study will consider the burgeoning American Shakespeare festival activity, which—despite occasional ups and downs—has widened its repertory, activities, and appeal considerably during the past two decades.

Burgeoning festivals in mid-twentieth century. Before discussing those mysterious components which have contributed to the "festival impulse" of the Shakespeare industry, it is necessary to reiterate that the Shakespeare industry—particularly that part of it concerning the Shakespeare festival theatres—has experienced wide and diverse growth since the 1950's. Irwin Smith, writing in the Introduction to his book Shakespeare's Globe Playhouse, presents an
The middle decades of the twentieth century are witnessing a remarkable burgeoning of Shakespeare festivals. In England, the Memorial Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon has a home company performing before capacity audiences and a touring company that plays in London, the provinces, and on the Continent, and occasionally ventures as far as the Antipodes. In America, the spectacular success of the Shakespearean Festival at Stratford, Ontario, is being emulated by the American Shakespeare Festival Theatre and Academy at Stratford, Connecticut, while the older Shakespeare Festivals at San Diego, California; Ashland, Oregon...flourish as never before.26

That the growth of Shakespeare festivals is not merely a concern for the dramas of the Bard will be demonstrated later. In the majority of the cases discussed, the impetus involved will be shown to be a more all-embracing concern to capture and rekindle the entire Elizabethan moment. Part of that moment and of contemporary festival activity involves a reconstructing of facsimiles (authentic or suggestive) of the Elizabethan playhouse. Ronald Watkins writing in On Producing Shakespeare argues for this concept. Indeed, Watkins states that his book:

...is by implication a plea for the rebuilding now, after three hundred years, of the Globe--in London, preferably, in Stratford too, if possible, and wherever an audience will meet to support a Shakespearean repertory....The wonderful detail of Shakespeare's stagecraft is waiting to be revealed....The broad architectural design of his plays is habitually obscured, because we have not understood the nature of his poetic drama. That poetic drama was designed for, and evolved from, the unique conditions of performance in the Elizabethan theatre.27

After two centuries, the rise of Bardolatry, partly initiated by David Garrick's Great Shakespeare Jubilee, has resulted in a most encouraging moment of theatre revisited. A neo-Elizabethan tradition--Shakespeare festival theatres--appears to be well underway. Its multiple successes will perhaps provide new insights into theatre
once again becoming a popular art for a democratic audience.

Component elements of the "festival impulse." An earlier chapter presented and defined a series of terms indigenous to the Athenian and Elizabethan moments: celebration, festival, ritual, and a sense of the occasion. Each of these elements was present in varying degrees in both "moments" of theatre. Now as a more specific look at modern English and Canadian Shakespeare festivals precursors is made, a similar set of terms and generalizations can be made concerning the component elements or "festival impulse" characterizing these contemporary theatre moments. Characteristic of festival activity of Stratford, England and Stratford, Ontario (to be discussed shortly) and American Shakespeare festival theatres are the following elements. First, in each case a community has demonstrated the desire to celebrate a man, namely Shakespeare, and his dramas; and second, continued enthusiasm for Shakespeare has firmly established his work as the classic theatre of the English speaking world. This celebratory impulse is evident in their contributions of energy, enthusiasm, and financial support. In many cases the nature of the playhouse, its geographic setting, and peripheral elements have demonstrated a return to a theatre of ceremony and ritual. Many of the festival elements indigenous to Merrie Olde England can be seen reappearing in English, Canadian, and later American Shakespeare festival theatres. Thirdly, it appears that each festival or phrase of a festival's development has its singular leader. David Garrick initiated the trend for future Bardolators. Later Charles Edmond Flower as a fundraiser, philanthropist, and visionary was to
demonstrate the ability to lead the fund raising campaign for a permanent Memorial Theatre. In each country the "festival impulse" has been directly related to the leadership of one man, be it a Garrick, Guthrie, or Papp. (This characteristic is one that foundations have found to be of great importance for solving our contemporary performing arts dilemma.) Fourthly, both of the festival precursors mentioned in this chapter have demonstrated a concern for going beyond an exclusive, coterie audience, for drawing aside the cultural curtain. They have sought to provide a universal, popular theatre of artistic integrity for a broad base democratic audience.

These previously cited component elements of the "festival impulse" will be seen appearing and reappearing in American Shakespeare festival theatres. Their roots are nevertheless in English and Canadian precursors.

IV. The Royal Shakespeare Company:

A Significant Model

If the eighteenth century provided the Great Shakespeare Jubilee (1769) and the nineteenth century provided the Tercentenary Festival (1864) as important Shakespeare festival progenitors, it remained for the twentieth century and the Royal Shakespeare Company to complete this continuum of festival activity. It was not until 1961 that the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre was called the Royal Shakespeare Theatre at the command of the Queen. As previously discussed the first Memorial Theatre was opened in 1879 at Stratford-upon-Avon, the oldest of festival towns. For the next ninety years it became known to millions of people for its artistic excellence
and extensive production facilities. But the year 1960 provided the RSC with another opportunity for development; Peter Hall was appointed Director of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre.

Peter Hall: a new thrust for the RSC. Peter Hall inherited a festival theatre rich in traditions and successes. It was a box office and artistic success and enjoyed a heritage of enthusiastic support. But Hall added a new dimension to the RSC. John Goodwin discusses just this point in his book *Royal Shakespeare Theatre Company 1960-1963*:

Mr. Hall inherited a theatre moving to the end of one phase in its history, and posed for another. For more than a decade, under the successive direction of Sir Barry Jackson, Anthony Quayle, and Glen Byam Shaw, it had staged Shakespeare seasons in which great stars led companies newly formed.

Within four intense years of work (coincidentally marking the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth 1964), Hall established a model of artistic excellence that still serves as the director's ideal.

John Goodwin writes of these achievements:

The changes brought by Mr. Hall were immediate and far-reaching. A number of actors and actresses were engaged under long-term contract to ensure a strong permanent core to the company; a London theatre, the Aldwych, was found so that the company could introduce modern plays and non-Shakespeare classics into their repertorie; Peter Brook and Michael Saint-Denis joined Mr. Hall in the Direction of the Theatre.

Between January, 1960, and December, 1963, the Royal Shakespeare Company emerged as an internationally acclaimed ensemble. A true neo-Elizabethan movement existed in which forty-three new productions were seen by a wide-base audience at the Aldwych, at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, and on tour throughout England and abroad.
Within a short period of time a variety and volume of drama of artistic merit was seen by a popular audience. Approximately 750,000 people had the opportunity to see a continuous repertory of new and classic plays.

Another and most important contribution the RSC has made to the Shakespeare festival scene is its concern for modernity. But this concern does not negate their loyalty to the Bard. Goodwin writes of this duality:

The Royal Shakespeare Company believed that the Elizabethan theatre—and especially Shakespeare—offers a dramatic richness unequalled in any other epoch or language; it is a theatre where the ritualistic and the comic, the high-brow and the low-brow, the lyrical and the bawdy, all meet and intermingle with the complexity of life...The aim of the RSC is to express this richness so that it is immediate to modern audiences, an experience that reverberates with the thoughts and feelings of today. Such an aim must have certain instruments.

The means to achieve this objective have been varied. Peter Hall enabled the RSC to be characterized by the following elements: first, a true ensemble of actors has been developed who rely on a repertory of modern and classic drama (their work is still rooted in Shakespeare, but draws on the entire spectrum of world drama). Secondly, the RSC makes use of experimental drama and techniques to capture an Elizabethan fullness of expression and continuity of method. The works of Pinter, Brecht, Gorki, and Gogol have all been produced. Peter Brook's direction of the RSC production of Marat/Sade demonstrated the wide range and potential of the company's methods and materials. This concern for modernity and relevance has worked to add a new dimension to the company's productions. Bernard F. Dukore writing in the Educational Theatre Journal (December, 1969) has stated:
While a modern outlook shapes the Royal Shakespeare Company's productions, it does not distort them. The RSC does not 'play...according to the printed book in the learned way;' instead, it illuminates the play by inventive business in harmony with text or subject and by suggesting the work's relevance. Modernism is not dragged in for spurious relevance or laid with a trowel, but instead is subtly suggested.

The achievements of the RSC, under the direction of Peter Hall, were not immediately obtained; Peter Hall and the RSC had their growing pains, their artistic failures. But within four years the company at its London and Stratford theatres had enlarged their repertory to all of world drama (classic to experimental—with Shakespeare as the backbone of their activity) and extended their season to ten months. Hall's aim, and that of the RSC, was "to build a strong bridge between classical theatre and the truly popular theatre of our time."

The first Memorial Theatre was opened in 1879. Its traditions and legacies have been rich. Now named the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, it still remains a Shakespeare festival theatre. It is located in the small market town where Shakespeare was born and died, and since its incorporation under the Royal Charter, with the Queen as Patron, it belongs to the nation.

V. The Stratford Shakespearean Festival

Shakespeare festival in an agricultural area: Tom Patterson and the community. The desire to produce Shakespeare in a "festival" setting appears to know no limitations. In most cases a grassroots movement indigenous to the community is capable of creating exciting festival theatre virtually beginning from scratch. The fact that the Stratford Shakespeare Festival Foundation of Canada (its formal
incorporated name) exists today is a remarkable story; the fact that it
has achieved artistic excellence and "S.R.O." audiences exhausts
superlatives when one looks back at the festival setting but twenty
years ago. Nancy and Jean Webb describe this setting in their book
Will Shakespeare and His America:

In the Province of Ontario's wide southern farmland, a small
railroad shop city of some sixteen thousand population bore
the name of Stratford. It even boasted a small meandering
stream through it, called the Avon. And only five miles
distant on Route Eight lay the village of Shakespeare. None
of these names had been bestowed because of any theatrical
or literary connection, but were simply survivals of a
somewhat flowery real estate scheme of the nineteenth
century.3

The name "Shakespeare" was all that existed in rural, agrarian
Stratford, Ontario twenty years ago. But, in fact, other elements of
the "festival impulse" were present; they were present in the leader­
ship of one man, Tom Patterson, and the subsequent support of the
community.

Tom Patterson was an energetic and visionary businessman who
intuitively felt that a "Shakespeare festival" in the small city had
great potential. It would be a boost of the community's prestige and
would perhaps attract tourists and business. Never did a businessman
call his shots so well. As a native of the town (an indigenous
member of the community) he formed a committee to investigate the
possibilities of such a venture. Problems were solved and results
were produced almost immediately. The Webbs write:

When he [Tom Patterson] had committed his project to paper,
it became clear that at least $150,000 would be needed to
make it an actuality. He set about communicating his
enthusiasm to others, and did this so successfully that
Stratford sources alone provided $70,000 of the required
sum. As news of the project spread, so did the enthusiasm.
Some eighty Canadian actors signed up to participate in the
first season. And problems mounted along with the public zest: Stratford was a hundred miles from any theatre center and costumes and properties would have to be manufactured in shops with no theatrical experience; housing for all those arriving to work on the undertaking must be arranged; and transportation must be organized. The problems were solved and the results almost legendary. The committee which Tom Patterson was responsible for helping to form invited Tanya Moiseiwitsch to design and Tyrone Guthrie to direct the first theatre and its productions. His decision, made in response to a trans-Atlantic phone call, was based on a large part on what Guthrie felt was the enthusiasm of the community. At this point a theatre had to be built, actors and plays selected, and productions mounted. Through each and every difficult phase, the town of "Stratford dedicated itself to its undertaking with a sort of community frenzy." The first problem was resolved with allegiance to the Elizabethan moment. Both the nature and location of the theatre caught the flavor of Merrie Olde England. Webb describes the first theatre:

It was early decided that the festival would run five weeks and the theatre to house it would be a tent in one of Stratford's pretty parks. Work on the tent was in itself a staggering undertaking. It was to seat an audience of fourteen hundred. Its stage was to have no proscenium, but a narrow apron projecting into the audience, a layout on which could be constructed a permanent formalized setting of steps and wooden columns with a balcony level above. The arrangement was not unlike that of London's playhouse in the Bard's own day.

The tent theatre and Elizabethan stage enjoyed modern, high-powered lighting support and later magnificent costumes and properties from which the productions would derive their color. These are still a Stratford trademark.

1953: an opening season and theatrical moment revisited. The
inaugural season found Alex Guiness and Irene Worth appearing in Richard III and All's Well That Ends Well. Webb's description of the opening night rekindles thoughts of the sense of occasion typical of the Athenian and Elizabethan moments. The setting was 1953 in the southern farmlands of Canada:

Opening night for that first festival was July 13, 1953. As the appointed hour arrived and the park filled with an expectant audience, all factory whistles in the city blew and all the church bells rang. A flourish of trumpets summoned the spectators to their seats. At 8:15 P.M. exactly, a rocket gun was fired, spraying the sky over Stratford with synthetic stars—and the play was on. Nothing could dampen the enormous elation of all those who had toiled to bring the infant festival into being, not even the incessant hooting of engines from the many rail lines converging on the city.37

Audiences and critics agreed that the first season was an artistic success. But of greater importance was the success of the "festival impulse." A member (Tom Patterson) of a community (Stratford, Ontario) had suggested the celebrating of a man (Shakespeare). Businessmen, citizens, artists, and critics rallied to make this festival an important and meaningful experience to be emulated as a Shakespeare festival precursor.

Stratford, Ontario: an investment in an idea. The Royal Shakespeare Company, under the directorship of Peter Hall, was to prove the worth of the "ensemble" and "company" approach to the production of plays. Unlike the Broadway "instant hit" psychology, the RSC argued—as did Shakespeare's own theatre company--of the value of a group of artists working together in fixed conditions for a given period of time to produce the finest product possible. This concept of company and ensemble was to again reappear at Stratford, Ontario. Peter Raby, author of The Stratford Scene 1958-1968,
writes of Michael Langham's twelve years (1955-1967) as artistic
director of the Stratford Festival. Considering the rather primitive
conditions of the early years of the Festival it is even more meaning-
ful that this growth and development ever took place. Langham
describes his initial response in 1954 to Tyrone Guthrie's invitation
to direct at the Stratford Festival:

At the time, like too many Englishmen I knew next to
nothing about Canada—I had never even heard of Stratford,
Ontario—and the idea of putting a Shakespearean work
into an un-airconditioned tent in an agricultural area
during Ontario's reputed hot-house summer seemed rather
bizarre. But Guthrie not only gave the proposal an air
of sanity; he made it seem like the only thing worth
doing.38

Tyrone Guthrie, perhaps as David Garrick and Sir. F. R. Benson, was
to capture the enthusiasm of large groups of people to support the
production of Shakespeare in a Festival setting. When Michael Langham
took over the role of artistic director he too chose to invest in the
same idea. He states:

So I came, did battle on Stratford's thrust stage...and was
asked by Guthrie, with the approval of the Board of
Governors, to take over the artistic directorship from him.
I agreed. The subsequent twelve years were of decisive
importance both to Stratford and to myself. They had their
fare share of crisis, of failure and success, of conflict
and uncertainty. But Stratford survived—into its sixteenth
season, which, when compared to the life spans of other
Canadian theatres is pg small achievement—and so, despite
a few bruises, I did.39

(It is this very ability to survive which will become an important
part of this study's definition of "success" later in the chapter.)

Langham invested in an idea—the production of the plays of
Shakespeare in a festival setting—that was to reap endless dividends.
These "dividends" required time to accumulate and multiply. Langham's
description of the eighth season (1960) of the Stratford Festival
exemplifies once again the potential of the Shakespeare festival. He writes:

It wasn't until the eighth season (1960) that Stratford emerged from its teething period. Now, at last, the management blossomed into maturity, while the acting company, having mastered the complexities of the Stratford stage, began to achieve a coherent unity of style. The infinite possibilities for interplay of character, which this stage greedily demands, were given instinctive expression; and the standard of speech showed the company was at last discovering the elusive habit of mind that verse-speaking calls for. The whole enterprise, in fact, now meshed together so harmoniously and productively that one was proud to belong to it. At last the stresses and strains that had followed the Festival's spectacular birth were paying dividends, and the next three flourishing years, which included a rewarding workshop tour of universities, represented a firm consolidation of lessons well-learned.

It might be worthwhile at this point to take a moment to look back at selected moments in those few early years of the Stratford Festival preceding Michael Langham's arrival; the rapid growth of the repertory and facilities that took place in the 1950's deserves discussion. From that very first season in 1953 the Stratford Festival enjoyed the enthusiasm of audiences and critics. As a result, the 1954 season was expanded from five to nine weeks and from two to three productions (the third production was non-Shakespearean: Oedipus Rex of Sophocles). The 1955 season had multiple importance, with the Stratford Music Festival being organized to supplement the three productions. Also in 1955, a "no-star policy" (still a much-disputed point in some festival circles) was established. The year 1956 saw the community and entire country rally to support the Festival. Nancy and Jean Webb describe this encouragement the community provided:
By 1956, the Stratford festival was a proven venture and its permanence a matter of concern to Canadians and to theatre folk elsewhere. In this season, the model for a permanent home to replace the canvas tent was on display, and a drive to raise the $984,000 was underway. Tentative a few years back, the Ontario Provincial Government now proudly involved itself to the extent of a $100,000 appropriation. Foundations and individuals and business concerns and cultural organizations carried the drive forward.  

When the new, original, permanent theatre was built the following year it quickly became a model to be emulated, in one form or another, throughout North America. A description of this theatre appears as follows in The Oxford Companion to the Theatre:

In 1957 a permanent structure replaced the original tent, though the architect, Robert Fairfield, was able to retain the original stage, and also the style of the pillars. The conical roof, locked by thirty-four girders which meet at the center like spokes, is without visible means of support. This means no obstructing pillars in the auditorium, which sweeps in to full semicircle around the stage; although the building holds over 2,000 people, no one of them is further than seventy feet from the stage. This makes for Elizabethan intimacy between players and audience. The stage, which is lit from above, has a deep practicle trap, and at the back is a triangular balcony, supported on slender columns, which is a permanent fixture. The whole of the stage area, with its doors and extra entrances through the audience is designed to facilitate the swift succession of scenes which is the essence of modern productions of Shakespeare.

Within five years the festival impulse and potential brought to the Stratford festival a popular and enthusiastic audience, a permanent and exciting playhouse, and foundation support and subsidy.

Directions refined and altered. As the Stratford Festival Theatre grew, it found itself achieving more and more of its festival potential. During the 1958-1967 years, a decade known as the "Langham era," new directions were explored. The new director sought to respond more directly to the needs of the audience (not too unlike
the RSC's concern for modernity and relevance). Langham described his intention as follows:

I have wanted to try to relate our work on stage more vividly to the world around us; and to encourage in our audience, most conditioned outside Stratford by the trade playhouse of sentiment and sensation, a very close identification between life and reality. I wanted to make them feel that what they were experiencing with us was a revelation of truth, a dimension beyond reality, and not an expensively-produced distraction from it.

Michael Langham has been described as suffering from creative impatience. During the 1958-1967 period under his leadership the Stratford company produced twenty-eight of Shakespeare's plays. Seasons were not free from inconsistency, but audiences grew, and multiple artistic successes were produced. The Stratford audience grew in size, curiosity, and composition, and it became increasingly apparent that the festival impulse could go beyond a single playhouse and drama itself. By 1971, its nineteenth season, three playhouses were operated by the National Theatre of Canada: the thrust-stage Festival Theatre, the reconstructed seventy-year-old Avon Theatre, and the Third Stage in the Park; it had, as had the Royal Shakespeare Company, come to belong to the nation. In addition to the ten theatre productions at three theatres, other activities included an extensive music series, an international film festival, Shakespearean seminars, art and music courses and art exhibits. Visitors coming to see Shakespeare have multiple cultural diversions to choose from.

**Beyond the canon: an identity crisis.** The Ontario Stratford Festival theatre, as its precursor the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, has sought to explore festival activity beyond the canon of Shakespeare. Although Tyrone Guthrie, in the second year of the Festival, produced
Sophocles' Oedipus Rex, the Festival stage had been reserved for Shakespeare until 1961 when Canadian playwright Donald Jack's The Canvas Barricade was produced there. A more or less consistent policy of presenting another playwright against Shakespeare on the main stage Festival Theatre has continued; both praise and criticism have resulted. On the favorable side is the philosophy that going beyond the canon of Shakespeare provides both wider selection appeal for audiences and greater flexibility for actors.

The Royal Shakespeare Company has also met with success in tempering the works of Shakespeare with insights gained from performance of a modern repertoire. Frequently the non-Shakespearean productions are superior to the Shakespeare plays. Allan Lewis writing in the Educational Theatre Journal (Summer, 1969) stated "Of the non-Shakespearean productions, Tartuffe is a holdover from last year and is still the most expertly designed production of the repertory." Other equally successful non-Shakespearean productions included Oedipus Rex, Cyrano de Bergerac, Yeomen of the Guard, Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, and The Country Wife.

But it is of interest to note that the abandonment of an exclusively Shakespearean repertory cannot escape the traditionalist's criticism. Some critics even question if such action does not seriously undermine the potential of the "Shakespeare" festival movement. Allan Lewis, writing in his book American Plays and Playwrights of the Contemporary Theatre discusses such an action at Stratford, Ontario in 1965. He writes:

The peaceful industrial town in the low hills of Ontario has become famous because of Shakespeare, its streets
have been renamed after Shakespearean characters, and people from all over the world have flocked to see superior productions of Shakespeare's plays. Now even the name of the organization has dropped the word 'Shakespeare.'

Later chapters which specifically discuss the repertory of American Shakespeare festivals will seek to evaluate both the ratio and relationship of non-Shakespearean to Shakespearean productions. Lewis warns of possible loss of interest in the Shakespearean repertory. He states that "lack of confidence in Shakespeare may presage a weakening of interest and a preference for the immediately spectacular. Shakespeare has always triumphed in the long run. He is worthy of persistent devotion." It is even illogical to suggest as some do, that repetition of the canon is unprogressive. Raby, in The Stratford Scene, explodes this argument by stating:

There are thirty-seven plays in the Shakespearean canon, that played at the rate of two or three a season they will provide a cycle of ten to fifteen years of theatre before necessary repetition, and that during that time not only the actors and directors change, but a whole new generation of playgoers comes into the theatre.... In short, a playwright of Shakespeare's stature and variety not only can support a festival but, on his past record, deserves one.

While the question of going beyond the canon can be debated, it should be carefully considered. This study will seek, in part, to determine how much of the "festival impulse" of the American Shakespeare festival movement has been, and continues to remain, within the canon of Shakespeare.

The previously discussed Shakespeare festival precursors will be seen to influence in numerous ways the entire thrust of the American Shakespeare festival movement. Their legacy is one that lives and grows and continues to affect change at this very moment.
CHAPTER III: FOOTNOTES


2Ibid., p. vii. 3Ibid., p. 249.

4Ibid., p. xiii. 5Ibid., p. 250.


7George Odell, Shakespeare From Betterton to Irving (New York: Scribners & Sons, 1920), p. 22.

8Halliday, op. cit., p. 43.


10Halliday, op. cit., p. 67.

11Ibid., p. 68. 12Deelman, op. cit., p. 175.


16Ibid., p. 97. 17Ibid., p. 170.

18Halliday, op. cit., p. 155.


21Ibid., p. 161.


23Ibid., p. 259.

25 ibid., pp. 4-5.


29 ibid., p. 6. 30 ibid., p. 8.


35 ibid., p. 260. 36 ibid., p. 261.

37 ibid., p. 262.


39 ibid., p. 6. 40 ibid., p. 10.

41 Webb, op. cit., p. 263.


43 Raby, op. cit., p. 11.


46 ibid., p. 245. 47 Raby, op. cit., p. 24.
Why this study? The festival impulse of today's American Shakespeare festival theatres still shares elements of both the Athenian and Elizabethan moments. Whether celebrating gods or poets, or both, drama was and still is, in American Shakespeare festival theatres, the vehicle for communal involvement of audience, playhouse, and playwright. As the Rockefeller Panel Report was presenting the indictment that "as a nation we have traditionally possessed no great thirst for music, dance, drama; if anything we have inherited a suspicion that the practice of these arts is unmanly and superfluous and that support of them is not of vital importance to our national well-being," American Shakespeare festivals were appearing and demonstrating a civic responsibility to serve as a community resource; perhaps even to seek out and speak as a collective mind of a common humanity. Perhaps the festivals' success owes much to the means through which each activity campaigned to relight the Elizabethan spark.

A clearly defined objective of American Shakespeare festival theatres has been the search for a democratic audience representative of the entire community. Consequently, American Shakespeare festival theatres have sought to build and enlarge their audiences. One
example of this effort is the "tie-in" of festival activity with student audiences. Both the New York Shakespeare Festival and The American Shakespeare Festival Theatre, to name only two festival theatres, have put a major emphasis on student-audience programs. Either Shakespeare has been taken directly to the schools or the students have been invited to the festival theatre. In 1963, 56,000 New York students witnessed performances of "free" Shakespeare with the state, city, or foundation picking up the bill. In 1964, 107,000 students visited The American Shakespeare Festival Theatre. Such student audience programs have been strongly endorsed by the Rockefeller Panel Report as a means of bringing a "sizable public" to the arts. One of the conclusions reached in their report is that "the effective exposure of young people to the arts is as much a civic responsibility as programs in health and welfare." The Ford Foundation, during the years 1956-64, gave the American Shakespeare Festival a total of $699,800 to subsidize its activities. Participation of student audience, as part of the "sizable public," will be evident as American Shakespeare festivals are individually discussed.

American Shakespeare festival theatres: definition and spin-offs. During the past two decades American theatre audiences have had the opportunity to witness the major thrust of the American festival movement. And, it truly has been a movement. Festivals have appeared and disappeared (and some remain unproven) in locations as far-ranging as Cedar City, Utah; Monmouth, Maine; Phoenix, Arizona; and Odessa, Texas. Writing in *The Best Plays of 1963-1964*, Henry Hewes summarizes this activity: "The summer of 1963 saw Shakespeare-going reach a new
high in North America. The *Shakespeare Newsletter* reported more than 800,000 audience members occupied seats at some 750 performances given by sixteen festivals.\(^3\)

For the purpose of this study an original definition of Shakespeare festival theatre is submitted:

*Shakespeare festival theatre*: theatre, either indoors or outdoors, with permanent facilities and production staff, producing primarily Shakespearean plays in a concentrated summer repertory season.

With the seven festivals selected for discussion in this paper, there appears a similar "spinning-off process." As was the course of the Royal Shakespeare Company, initially each festival's concern is for only the plays of Shakespeare. Once the project is successfully accomplished, the desire to move beyond the canon is typical. This is followed in many cases by the scheduling of extradramatic satellite activities—concerts, lectures, workshops. What begins as a short season of Shakespeare, later (sometimes years later) emerges as a festival, perhaps no longer with "Shakespeare" in the title, lasting twelve months and performing in multiple theatres. A most impressive growth potential is characteristic of Shakespeare festival theatres.

American Shakespeare festival theatres: successes, failures, importance. Seven American Shakespeare festivals have been selected for discussion in this study; they are located across the country. Their names appear below in order of discussion.

San Diego National Shakespeare Festival; San Diego, California
Oregon Shakespeare Festival; Ashland, Oregon
New York Shakespeare Festival; New York City, New York
American Shakespeare Festival; Stratford, Connecticut
Colorado Shakespeare Festival; Boulder, Colorado
Champlain Shakespeare Festival; Burlington, Vermont
Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival; Cleveland, Ohio

Although many factors may vary among them—topography, climate, community setting, facilities, repertory, and audience composition—they have a major point in common: they are of importance. Their importance, and perhaps success (a difficult word to define in theatre), lies in the fact that they have survived, grown, and contributed to theatre practice in America. Each festival is at least ten years old and has managed to stay alive and even grow during a period when theatre activity in America has had its share of artistic and economic difficulties. The following chapters will show that these festivals have survived by making an attempt to respond to community needs—an effort rewarded by financial support and encouraging attendance figures. In many cases a "growth quotient" has been sown by the festival by which the ability to plant new ideas and to develop new approaches to the performing arts has been fostered. The necessary concern for building a wide-base audience, representative of the entire community, has resulted. Each festival has demonstrated a certain integrity and stability of growth, with both audiences and productions increasing in number. Although each has had uneven results and disappointing moments, nonetheless, each will be shown to offer a vital force to the American theatre.

Methodology. There are many ways to determine the importance and success of a given festival production. Financial solvency provides
one means of evaluating each theatre; artistic achievement, as measured by critics, offers another dimension of evaluation. Even so, merely evaluating artistic or box office data is not sufficient to measure the importance or true significance of a festival's activity; endurance is another key to evaluation. As mentioned earlier, the seven festivals were selected because of their ability to sustain activity for ten years or longer, a period which has proven—from the standpoint of descriptive research—to be an adequate time interval for evaluation and appraisal. And of perhaps greatest single importance is the "festival impulse" found in each selected festival. Partial histories of the festivals presented in this and the following chapter will illustrate elements of this festival impulse and those distinguishing characteristics which have contributed to their individual importance. Photographs, where available, will provide visual evidence of the "festival impulse" indigenous to each festival. Lastly, souvenir programs for a five year period will be used as a major supplementary device.

II. San Diego National Shakespeare Festival

A thirty-seven year festival tradition. While the major thrust of American Shakespeare festival growth was experienced in the late 1950's and concentrated in the northeast (Stratford, Connecticut; Stratford, Ontario; and New York City), the true roots of the movement are located in another time and another place: the 1930's—in San Diego, California and Ashland, Oregon. Although often relegated by some critics of the past to a second best status, the San Diego National Shakespeare Festival and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival are
most important members of the American Shakespeare festival tradition. Both festivals will be discussed in this chapter.

The annual summer Shakespeare festival held in the Old Globe Theatre in Balboa Park, San Diego, California has continuously evolved since its inception in 1935. Its activities have run in tandem with international expositions, world wars, college and professional theatre trends. Throughout its thirty-seven year tradition, two recurring factors remain constant: the greater San Diego community has always provided moral and financial support and the festival has always provided a sense of occasion.

The first Old Globe: a community success. San Diego's homage to Shakespeare was actually an outgrowth of its desire to honor the growing technology of the industrial revolution; the city wanted to host an exposition similar to that of Chicago. John Donnelly wrote in his unpublished M.A. thesis (The Old Globe Theatre at San Diego, California: An Historical Survey of Its Origin and Development, University of California, Los Angeles, 1957) of how this ambition gave impetus to the San Diego National Shakespeare Festival:

In 1934, a group of San Diegans became aware of the fact that the city had a good place in which to house an exposition similar to that which was enjoying its second year in Chicago...These San Diegans determined to have a fair in San Diego, using the site of the Pan Pacific Exposition of 1915, at Balboa Park. Here were hundreds of acres, municipally owned, with buildings still extant for exhibits of culture and enlightenment, and ground upon which to erect midways, and places of amusement. They sent men to Chicago to bring the attractions which would be available when the 'Century of Progress' [the Chicago Exposition] closed its gates. Among the attractions they obtained was a troupe of players, known to the clientele of the Chicago Exposition as the Old Globe Players.
In such random fashion was the Shakespeare company selected. Yet oddly enough, this company was to have an unusually sound production philosophy and level of performance. The founder, Thomas Wood Stevens, was not only one of those rare Renaissance men—he was a scholar, teacher, painter, poet, and author—but also an important figure in American educational theatre, who, at the age of thirty-three, was responsible for creating a School of Drama for the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh. His ability to found a Shakespearean company and to build an Elizabethan playhouse later in San Diego reflects his multiple talents. He was the first "singular leader" this festival was to have. Donnelly wrote of Steven's initial Shakespearean project:

The Old Globe Players were a group assembled by Thomas Wood Stevens, for the purpose of presenting the plays of William Shakespeare to the people attending the Century of Progress. Stevens, a scholar, had felt that some of the Shakespearean plays could be condensed without sacrificing the essentials of the dramatic impact, and had selected several of the better known plays...which had been abbreviated... and assembled a company of players to act in these truncated versions. 5

When it was agreed that Stevens would bring the players to San Diego, and, in February of 1935, when construction was started on the three buildings that would house the Old Globe Players and an Elizabethan festival, he was on the scene to supervise the construction. Donnelly maintains that "the plans for the building were his [Stevens], although the entrepreneur of the Old Globe Theatre was Marc T. Neisen, who arranged the financial backing for the venture ...and were as close an approximation of the original Globe as existing documents permitted." 6 Opening on May 2, 1935, with the California Pacific
International Exposition, it was perhaps the earliest Elizabethan facsimile theatre in the United States:

The stage was in the Elizabethan style, with a long forestage into the 'pit' and there was no proscenium arch. The 'scenery' consisted of Shakespeare's 'inner above', and 'inner below', with draw-curtains to close off those spaces when not in use; columns at the right and the left of the apron to support the 'heaven's' and the 'exit right' and 'exit left' of the Elizabethan stage period. The house was constructed like its prototype, with galleries and boxes or 'stalls', but the 'groundlings' in the 'pit' were not forced to stand during the performance, rough benches being provided for seating.

This "first" American Old Globe, a smaller facsimile of the Globe, seating only 400, was originally built with an open roof, but the audience's discomfort caused by the sun resulted in a roof, first canvas then wood, being added. Aside from this inconvenience, the theatre and its first plays were well received.

Stevens' company, while young, were by no means inexperienced. They were professionals who played at four successive expositions, presenting nineteen of Shakespeare's plays to over two million people. More specifically, in San Diego, where the company performed shortened versions of Shakespeare from June 15 to November 11, 1935, a most successful first season record was logged, typified by

...full houses and appreciative audiences, with many people turned away for lack of space in the theatre despite an increase in the seating capacity. At the close of the season the Old Globe Theatre was a success, both financially and popularly. The players had become more than just characters on a stage, and were felt by many people to be friends. Indeed, they had made many personal friends outside the theatre, and some had come to feel themselves members of the community.

With the combined success of players and playhouse, as well as that of
the Fair itself, major attractions—including the Old Globe Players—were invited to return for a second year. Unfortunately, the 1936 season was not particularly successful. The Old Globe Players went on tour, leaving a new company, the Fortune Players, to continue their repertory. Attendance at both the Old Globe and the California International Exposition dwindled rapidly, and prior plans to dispose of all temporary buildings, including the Old Globe, were initiated. This was the first of several crises the Old Globe Playhouse was to experience.

The new Old Globe: community support rallies. In December, 1936, while workmen were in the process of dismantling the Old Globe Theatre, community leaders suddenly rallied to its support; this aid was not unlike that afforded the early Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford, England. The townspeople felt strongly about the Globe, perhaps because at the time the Exposition ended in 1936, San Diego had only one legitimate theatre. And various amateur groups scattered throughout the city, including persons of wealth and influence, felt the Old Globe had potential as a permanent theatre after the Exposition closed; the playhouse was already well publicized, centrally located, and on city property. This theatre was seen as a means of making drama a more meaningful force in the cultural activities of the San Diego community.

The Ford and Rockefeller Foundation reports indicate that in order for the arts to flourish in the community, the support of responsible and respected members of the community is needed; the Old Globe Theatre had this support. Donnelly wrote:
It became obvious that if the Globe Theatre were to be preserved, swift and concerted action must be taken. This action began when Mr. Mel Baer, an executive of a printing corporation in San Diego, invited a group of people to his home to discuss ways and means of preventing the destruction of the theatre and its adjacent buildings. At this point it was necessary to create a corporation, fully chartered, to ensure the proper disbursement of this money ($10,807.44 grossed), and to avoid certain tax and fiscal pitfalls. The name chosen for this organization was San Diego Community Theatre, and the charter was granted February 3, 1937.

What followed was the rebuilding and renovation of the Old Globe, originally constructed under a separate building code as a temporary building. A proscenium was added, but the major features of the original stage were kept. This peculiar compromise became the subject of much controversy but both a proscenium stage facade and concrete stage house resulted. Donnelly more specifically described the exact nature of this change:

First, the two pillars which supported the 'heavens' were moved upstage to the present curtain line, where they could be used in Elizabethan manner or become part of the proscenium arch, as required. Second, the forestage was shortened to about half its original depth, making it a long apron for proscenium staging, and a short forestage for the Elizabethan stage. Third, the backstage area upstage of the added proscenium was enlarged, creating space for scene-shifting when modern productions were given. Fourth, a rudimentary lighting system and switchboard were installed, permitting greater flexibility of scenic effects. These were the principle changes made.

Unfortunately no pictures of the present stage with these modifications were available from the festival. At the same time the building was being overhauled, the Board of Directors of the new San Diego Community Theatre were recruiting actors, directors, and supportive personnel to mount the first season of nine plays. On December 2, 1937 the reconstructed Globe Theatre opened to the public, and during the first
two seasons, before World War II curtailed its activities until 1947, the San Diego Community Theatre functioned as a self-supporting producing organization.

During the war years (1941-1947), Mrs. Hubert Martin managed the organization, holding monthly meetings and starting a monthly newsletter named Globaloney. When the theatre's Board of Directors met in 1947, new policies and aims were to be articulated, since this theatre had already undergone two metamorphoses: first, when opened in 1935, under the direction of Thomas Wood Stevens, the aim was to present truncated versions of Shakespeare's plays to an Exposition audience; second, the next producer, the formally-chartered San Diego Community Theatre, endeavored to operate a warmed-over Broadway season throughout the entire year. At that Board meeting in 1947, a third methodology was presented by James Holloway, a member of SDCT, whereby responsibility for management and for production would be divided. This was adopted and is the present-day system of operation of the Old Globe.

Post war years: summer Shakespeare festival re-emerges. From the San Diego Community Theatre's first season in 1938, an attempt was made at financial solvency. This was in part accomplished by relying on plays that had box office appeal; of the season's nine productions, only one, The Merry Wives of Windsor, was by Shakespeare. By the 1948-1949 season the SDCT wanted to produce more Shakespeare, more consistently and at least for an entire summer season. Craig Noel, in a magazine article "Twenty Years After," wrote of this desire:

Although the melodramas were very successful, and made
money when it was badly needed, the group had long wanted
to produce plays of higher caliber during the summer. The
unexpected prosperity in the spring of 1949 made the change
possible. It also made way for a complete new policy in
regard to the summer season."

The new policy was to produce a wide range of contemporary drama during
the regular season. In the summer, a Shakespeare festival would be
added, co-sponsored by the SDCT and the San Diego State College Drama
Department. B. Iden Payne, interestingly the former director of the
Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon for eight years,
collaborated with Hunton D. Sellman, head of the San Diego State
College Drama Department. (Sellman was the individual who initially
was responsible for bringing Payne to San Diego.) The early college
and festival collaboration was described by Donnelly thus:

The agreement between the college and the theatre stated
that the college would provide funds for the salaries of
the instructional staff and the stage properties, and the
theatre would provide costumes, promotional services, and
handle the box office. Students were offered college
credit for courses in stage design, stage lighting, acting,
dramatic production, technical practices and stage
direction."

The first production of the San Diego Community Theatre's
summer Shakespeare Festival was *Twelfth Night*, running twenty days and
playing to 7,699 persons and receptive critics. For the first time
since 1935, dancing on the green before the performance (a practice
which later became part of the "Old English Fair") added color and
pageantry to the summer season. The first season (1949) established,
or rather revived from the Exposition years, the concept of an annual
summer Shakespeare festival; in the following years the Shakespeare
Festival became more famous than the seasonal productions of the SDCT.
A clearly articulated single purpose directly contributed to this
success. Donnelly described this purpose:

The summer productions of Shakespeare are planned with but a single purpose, which is to give theatre-goers a chance to see the works of Shakespeare given the best conditions permitted....The number of people who have enjoyed the play is of more importance than how much they paid to see them.  

As policies developed, the summer Shakespeare Festival became more obviously a separate theatrical venture, and was ultimately handled as a separate branch of the SDCT organization. In 1952 San Diego State College decided to discontinue its co-sponsorship of the festival as it was basically dissatisfied with the overall artistic results of the third festival (Much Ado About Nothing, The Merry Wives of Windsor). Donnelly noted: "At this time the college and the theatre went their separate ways, having enjoyed a cordial relationship, which exists today."  

Shakespeare vs. Mr. Roberts: a new festival emerges. In 1952, with the San Diego State College having severed its co-sponsorship of the summer festival, the SDCT found itself facing an economic dilemma: could the SDCT survive, and could it survive playing Shakespeare? In an attempt to consolidate funds and festival interest, Mr. Roberts was produced. Running for sixty-nine performances to 27,102 spectators, it made a considerable profit, enabling the SDCT not only to reinstate the Bard, but to expand the Shakespeare summer festival. Donnelly described the curious interplay:

Regardless of the record-breaking attendance of Mr. Roberts [box office figures unfortunately not available], a segment, a large segment, of the public wanted the festivals resumed. After many meetings, and much discussion, a decision was made to again present the Summer Shakespeare, but in a different way. Three plays would be offered in
repertory, and a system of scholarships would be devised, permitting students from all parts of the nation to attend. Three directors would be invited; each play was to have its own director, and each director his own play. Brochures announcing the festival were prepared, application forms for scholarships were made, and wide distribution was given this material. 15

Members of the community were asked to provide the financial support for these scholarships and salaries for directors and actors. Donnelly explained this appeal to the community:

Even though the theatre was in good shape financially it was obvious that the repertory productions could not be handled with what funds were available, and that outside help would be required. To raise this money it would be necessary to appeal to the members of the community who were financially able to contribute to the festival in order to provide scholarships for the actors and salaries for the guest directors, in the form of scholarships.... Play choices were left to the directors. 16

As stated, during the next few years the San Diego National Shakespeare Festival, as it was now called, became a separate producing organization operating within the parent corporation of the SDCT. In the summer of 1955 (the sixth Shakespeare festival), three of Shakespeare's plays (Measure for Measure, Hamlet, and The Taming of the Shrew) ran for a total of forty-five days. Expansion in the following year was characterized by the production of a non-Shakespearean play, Ben Jonson's Volpone, and by the dispersion of twenty-five scholarships awarded to student-festival members from all over the country. The wooden benches were replaced by 400 cushioned seats; two revolving stages were added to the stage floor; sound and lighting equipment was also added.

Having undergone numerous crises and changes both as a producing group and as a playhouse, the tradition of a summer Shakespeare festival had earned its place in the community. Donnelly described
this communal security:

The Globe has taken its place in a growing, wealthy, and solid community of nearly a half a million inhabitants. It has carefully built up an organization which is financially sound, and respected by the public. Each year sees new improvements to the buildings and grounds. New attendance records are being set, and box office revenues are good.¹⁷

By the late 1960's the Old Globe Theatre, renovated, fireproofed, remodeled, still remained, together with its companion buildings, the Falstaff Tavern and the Old Curiosity Shop, in its original 1935 Pacific International Exposition site in Balboa Park. Its tradition as an American summer Shakespeare festival theatre has bridged well over three decades, several producers, numerous directors; throughout, it has maintained its position as a community resource.

A sense of occasion. Having briefly traced the rather unique thirty-seven year history of this American Shakespeare festival theatre, it is now important to take a closer look at its more recent seasons in an attempt to measure partially— from a more critical standpoint—its success, importance, and significance. A major contention of this study is that it is difficult and maybe unnecessary to apply rigid critical or financial formulas in evaluating the season of a Shakespeare festival theatre. Rather, it is important to step back and experience the total "festival impulse" and its sense of occasion in a broader fashion. Howard Gordon, writing in the Educational Theatre Journal (1969), commented on this exact point:

An assessment of an evening at the San Diego National Shakespearean Festival must begin as one approaches the theatre. The Old Globe Theatre is situated in San Diego's Balboa Park. There is an outdoor green with
occasional benches and a complex of buildings in a setting of towering eucalyptus trees. Atop the concession stalls a costumed musical group plays proper Elizabethan melodies, and the spiced tea and Banbury tarts available in the booths top off a pre-play interlude which is charming without becoming precious. Producer-director Craig Noel had capitalized on the pleasure and audience unity before the audience enters the 419-seat house.¹⁸

The uniqueness of this attractive setting—this slice of Merrie Olde England—was reiterated by another writer, Eugene Donnelly:

Visitors in San Diego, California, are frequently surprised, as they wander during the day through the fourteen hundred acre expanse at Balboa Park to come upon a little 'village green' surrounded on two sides by buildings in the style of sixteenth century English architecture. The largest of those, a polygonal structure is a theatre....For these buildings on this tiny green house a growing, living theatre of which the community may well be proud.¹⁹

The producers and directors of the San Diego National Shakespeare Festival Theatre (SDNSFT) have always appreciated and utilized this unique setting. The 1970 Old Globe Theatre Festival Program Book more specifically describes the use of this setting in a section entitled "entertainment on the greensward." Figures 1, 2, and 3 illustrate the extent of this activity. "Entertainment on the greensward" refers to the SDNSFT's pre-curtain Bartholomew's Faire on the Green. The Faire (first established in Smithfield, England in 1120 and traditionally celebrated on St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24th) is a daily tradition of the National Shakespeare Festival. It not only includes a cast of players--Queen Elizabeth, Lord Major, Attendants to the Queen—but jugglers, dancers and a variety of singing groups (Old Globe Madrigal Singers, Silvergate Consort, Old Globe Madrigal Singer's Septet). Those who attend a production of the
Figure 1. Bartholomew's Faire on the Green
Figure 2. Bartholomew's Faire on the Green—Dancing
Figure 3. Bartholomew's Faire on the Green—Singing
festival not only "see a play," but embrace an entire period or moment.

The seasons: 1965-1970. Each festival theatre has its artistic and economic wins and losses. An individual tabulation of single productions is not as important to the goals of this paper as an evaluation of the overall intent of the festival. The 1965 season (Henry VIII, Coriolanus, The Merry Wives of Windsor) was well received. Dorothy Nichols writing a combined review "Shakespeare on the West Coast, at Ashland and San Diego" in the Autumn, 1965 issue of Shakespeare Quarterly maintained:

The play is still the thing, not exploitation of a star or a director, at the two long-established Shakespeare summer theatres on the west coast....Their intent is not to impose interpretations, but to draw out of the plays all they can find within them. Their Elizabethan stages allow continuous action...At least five out of the seven [total plays] were stirring, imaginative productions. 20

"Fast-moving," "gripping," "unified" were several of the terms used in her review of the plays. The following year (1966) another critic, Peter D. Smith, presented a more ambivalent appraisal of the festival. He stated of the season:

San Diego chose three plays that admirably matched its company: strongest in young actors and actresses endowed with unusual amounts of gaiety, grace, and good looks, it avoided the major tragedies and dark comedies and offered The Tempest, Romeo and Juliet, and Two Gentlemen of Verona. 21

But Smith's review of the 1966 season is highly critical of the festival's goals and artistic standards. The most crucial on his list of criticisms was the problem of ascertaining standards to apply in evaluating the San Diego Festival. He felt it was difficult to compare
this festival to the larger ones because of San Diego's shorter season, smaller seating capacity, and absence of subsidies. He suggests that "perhaps the only possible approach is to try to estimate what the companies set as their goals, and to suggest how far they succeeded in achieving them." It is this very pursuit of goals which concerns Smith the most. In his discussion of both the Ashland and San Diego 1966 seasons he stated:

I hope they are asking themselves lots of questions about what the future holds and ought to hold for them, and I hope that they will arrive at answers that will lead to their making an even greater contribution to the theatre in this part of the world.

In 1966 the SDNSFT was regarded by Peter Smith as having the potential for real distinction, but needing more adventurous direction.

In the 1969 season, as reviewed by Homer D. Swander in Shakespeare Quarterly, both experimentation and traditional approaches were employed. Ellis Rabb and Jack O'Brien, who directed Macbeth and The Comedy of Errors respectively, painstakingly wrote new interpretations of the Bard's plays. Story, plot, design, all were altered, retaining only some of the events and the names of the players. Richard Easton's direction of Julius Caesar was occasionally imprecise but unpretentious and straightforward. The following year, 1970, was at least artistically disappointing. Although in its history of several decades the festival had enjoyed the support of numerous talented directors--among them William Ball, Allen Fletcher, and Ellis Rabb--the three guest directors of the 1970 season, Stephen Porter, Louis Criss, and Pirie MacDonald, were cited as the main source of the summer's problems. Lynn K. Horobetz writes that "the result
[of these directors] was a misinterpreted *Cymbeline*, a dull *Richard II*, and an indiscernible *Much Ado About Nothing*.

And yet an artistically disappointing season did not make the overall festival unsuccessful. The souvenir program book included a list of numerous achievements. First, a welcome letter from Mr. Lowell Davis, President, Board of Directors stated:

Welcome to San Diego's 21st annual Festival at the Old Globe Theatre. I intentionally say 'San Diego's Festival': This year the Globe is proud to become an integral part of San Diego's family of the arts: COMBO (Combined Arts and Education Council of San Diego County). We are most grateful for this united program to assure San Diego's opportunity for its performing arts to live and grow.

Secondly, the festival program could boast drawing a "sizable public." Not only did approximately 45,000 playgoers fill houses for twenty-five performances of five main-stage productions, but student audiences, totaling over thirteen thousand, saw pre- or post-season productions of Shakespeare as part of the Teen Tour program. The program stated:

More than 4,800 junior and senior high school students of San Diego City and County (both public and private schools) attended eight complete performances of *Much Ado About Nothing* and four performances of *King Richard II* prior to the official opening of the Festival on June 9....During three weeks in March, mornings and afternoons were alive at the Old Globe Theatre with 8,499 teenagers as they assembled for hour long Teen Tours....The Old Globe Theatre considers this investment in the youth of San Diego a significant theatrical experience to stimulate and involve young persons in the brilliance of William Shakespeare.

Thirdly, program notes announced the opening of a new theatre-in-the-round replacing the Falstaff Tavern which had previously served as a second stage (boasting twenty-five productions staged for more than
250 performances in five years). Designed by architect Victor L. Wulff and renamed the Cassius Carter Centre Stage in honor of a civic-minded San Diegan devoted to culture, it was designed to expand production activities at the Globe. Lastly, plans were announced explaining the SDNSFT's trend toward a professional repertory company with expanded use of grants, scholarships, and contributions.

The San Diego National Shakespeare Festival has its strengths and weaknesses. But of greatest importance it has continued to grow and respond to the desires of the community. As with other festival theatres, uneven artistic seasons has not caused sustained setbacks. This festival has roots dating back to 1935. Despite interruptions of a world war, changes in administrative policies, and at times limitations of facilities, it has earned its place of importance in the American Shakespeare festival tradition. Dancing on the green, strolling minstrels playing Elizabethan melodies, the production of Shakespeare, and a sense of occasion have merged to become a community resource and tradition.

III. Oregon Shakespeare Festival

Angus Bowmer: the singular leader. A characteristic of the American Shakespeare festival theatres discussed in this study is the presence of the singular leader. As a producer, director, entrepreneur--frequently all of these--he is the individual who is most responsible for the festival's endurance and success. The San Diego National Shakespeare Festival Theatre had its singular leader--in fact three of them in succession over its thirty-seven year history; Thomas Wood
Stevens, B. Iden Payne, and Craig Noel. With the Oregon Shakespeare Festival one man, Angus L. Bowmer, served as the singular leader for a period of thirty-six years. It is he, and his impetus in providing the "festival fundamental" that deserves initial discussion.

As founder and producing director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Angus L. Bowmer deserves multiple credits. It was his creative inspiration and effort which enabled the Festival to be born in 1935, and it has been his enthusiasm and leadership which has guided its growth for over three decades. As Producing Director, Bowmer has been the man who was "directly responsible for the overall aesthetic impact of the Festival," and who had to "make decisions, hire staff and approve production techniques with this in mind." His accolades and accomplishments are numerous: among them, producing all thirty-seven of Shakespeare's plays and performing thirty-two Shakespearean roles in forty-three stagings. Peter Smith describes one of his performances in a 1966 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

The performance that comes most readily to mind was that of the founder of the Festival, Angus L. Bowmer as Peter Quince....He set a splendid example of verse speaking, of movement about the stage, and of acting all the time he was on the stage.

His accomplishments as a producer and director have earned him state, regional, and national recognition: a personal salute from the Oregon Legislature; the Washington State Arts Council Award for his contributions to the development of theatre in the Northwest; two honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degrees, as one of the ten men who have done most for this century's development in the social, cultural and economic
Atkinson's guidance and trust in those he has chosen as colleagues, which has enabled the Oregon Shakespeare Festival to thrive.  

Angus Bowmer and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival are synonymous.

Origin and development of the festival. Isolated in the Pacific Northwestern United States is the genial and scenic setting of Ashland, Oregon. It is here more than thirty-five years ago that the Oregon Shakespeare Festival began; Ashland, Oregon and Angus L. Bowmer were to form a long-lasting collaboration. The Ashland area in which the festival was to flourish offered a unique "indigenous" intellectual curiosity so vital to the development of a Shakespeare festival. Horace W. Robinson, writing in Shakespeare Quarterly (Autumn, 1955), elaborated upon this:

Because of its famed Lithia Springs and salubrious climate the area had been a popular Pacific Northwest spa since the early pioneer days. Annual summer gatherers of the intellectually and culturally inclined produced a growing number of lectures and concerts that eventually resulted in the establishment of a Chautauqua and Lyceum series and the erection of an auditorium to house those attractions. Later in the century when the building had been condemned and its roof removed, the remaining concrete walls stood in Lithia Park as a reminder of the community's past.

An abandoned Chautauqua site on a wooded hillside in Ashland's Lithia Park was to provide the ideal setting for a new experiment in theatre. And it was Angus L. Bowmer, at that time Professor of Drama at
Southern Oregon College, who led the experiment. As a graduate of the University of Washington and a former student of B. Iden Payne, a vital force behind the San Diego National Shakespeare Theatre, "Bowmer developed a strong interest in returning Shakespeare's plays to a kind of stage for which they were written."31 Professor Bowmer was intrigued by the resemblance in both form and function of the Chautauqua auditorium walls to the open-air English theatres; perhaps, he mused, this might serve as a site for occasional productions of Shakespeare "under-the-stars." A note in the 1970 Souvenir Program indicated that 'With the aid of the City of Ashland and an eager group of residents, Mr. Bowmer launched the first Oregon Shakespeare Festival as part of the city's three-day Fourth of July Celebration."32 Another American Shakespeare festival tradition had begun.

Production and facilities and public support evidenced continuous and stable growth. Horace Robinson presents a brief overview of the changes the playhouse experienced during the first twenty years:

The original showing in 1935 consisted of three performances, one of The Merchant of Venice and two of Twelfth Night....Thus encouraged it was decided that the temporary staging on which those two productions were given would be replaced with a more permanent and accurate reproduction of the Shakespearean stage. The remodeling continued over a number of years.... In 1940 the stage was damaged by fire; 1941-46 were war years and there were no seasons; in 1947 a new stage was built and even now [1955] additions are made annually that add to the authenticity of the staging, and showings now occupy the entire month of August in a house seating over one thousand and on a stage which is an accurate and scale reproduction of the Fortune Theatre as outlined by Phillip Henslowe and Edward Alleyn in 1500 and built by Peter Street.33

The playhouse evolved partially supported by WPA funds, and while
adhering to the basic measurements of the Fortune, was modified by modern construction methods and limitations. James Sandoe's detailed description of the playhouse is supplemented by two photographs (Figures 4 and 5) of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival Theatre as it now appears:

Thus there are twenty-four feet between the forward pillars, twenty-four feet from the front of the apron (which at that point is sixteen feet wide to the inner below while the inner below itself is twenty-four feet wide at the curtain line.) The stage is a half foot short of the Henslowe's fifty-five foot extreme width, the inner above twelve feet from the main stage flooring level...those curtains of course are an addition to the Elizabethan stage arrangement.34

This spacious facsimile Elizabethan playhouse with a fifty-five foot stage provides the Oregon Shakespeare Festival with multiple playing areas and varying levels. Productions presented without interruption are characterized by one continuous flow of action. Progression from a makeshift stage and inexperienced actors to professionally mounted stagings of the Bard's plays characterized the first few years of the OSF. But of more significance was the instant and continuous support the community gave the venture—although civic leaders had their doubts the first season. There is even a now famous 'Boxing Match Story' that underscores the success of the first season. It was described in the 1970 Festival Program as follows:

A boxing exhibition was booked for the afternoon of the Fourth on the same stage, because civic leaders doubted public response to the Festival. Proceeds from the 'more popular' entertainment were to underwrite an expected Shakespearean loss. The reverse happened. The Festival not only paid for itself, but also covered the boxing match losses. That success trend has continued with every new season.35

While during the early years the Festival was limited to local
Figure 4. The Oregon Shakespeare Festival Theatre, frontal view.
Figure 5. The Oregon Shakespeare Festival Theatre, side view.
participation it was soon to go beyond the rank of a small, civic event to that of state, regional, and national importance. What was once a three-day "venture" has become a summer-long tradition.

The first nine years: an appraisal. The growth of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival has been progressive and continuous. James Sandoe, writing in the January, 1950 issue of Shakespeare Quarterly, appraised the first nine years of its activity. His observations evidence a contagious community and regional support. Early in the article he stated:

Audiences at the outset were largely local, residents of Rogue River Valley, but in recent years playgoers had come from wider reaches so that the guest book for final dress rehearsals this summer showed addresses from nearly all the forty-eight states, among them a growing number of teachers and workers in the theatre who had become aware of a bold and substantial enterprise.

Year after year, the Festival made a sustained attempt to study and refine the production of Shakespeare on their "tailored" Elizabethan stage. Played with few cuts and no intermissions, Shakespeare's plays came alive.

The first production of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival was brought by Bowmer from Southern Oregon College and was supplemented by a second production, Twelfth Night rehearsed on location. The following season Twelfth Night was again presented, along with Romeo and Juliet. The practice of carrying over one production from the previous season continued until World War II interrupted Festival activities (1941-46). When production activity resumed in 1947 a new stage, four new productions (Hamlet, Macbeth, Love's Labour's Lost, and The Merchant of Venice), and a second director, Frank Lambert-Smith, were
present. By now the acting company enlisted participants from the entire Pacific Coast region. Actors recognized the opportunity the Festival provided to gain classic acting experience. In 1948, the Festival's eighth season introduced both its first production of a chronicle play (King John), and a new director, Allen Fletcher.

What general appraisals can be made of these first nine years? While there was not a spectacular growth from season to season as in the case of the New York Shakespeare Festival, there has been definite evidence of a slow maturation, solid accomplishment, and a clear sense of "vision tempered by an intelligent sense of limitations." The Festival grew from year to year and throughout its first nine years—and certainly the next two decades—both the City of Ashland and Southern Oregon College embraced the Festival as a civic undertaking, a true community resource. Audiences were attracted by the chance to see Shakespeare's plays staged in the Elizabethan manner. Moreover, the Oregon State Board of Higher Education and Southern Oregon College extended curriculums to offer courses directly related to the problems of Festival production, and a series of lectures on "the plays and the playwright in his theatre and his age." Other Shakespeare festival theatres chronically experienced great difficulty in mounting plays due to the wide variety of experiences and abilities of individual members of the company. But the Oregon company, despite the inconsistent training of individual actors appeared to play together as a true ensemble. The rapid pacing of scenes together with the absence of intermission brought to the plays a cumulative power. Clear and compelling stories were
soundly presented. James Sandoe, in his appraisal of Oregon Shakespeare Festival's ninth year, outlined what he thought to be future objectives of the Festival:

There are still measurable strides to be made. The completion of the theatre building and the acquisition of much essential stage equipment will be many years' accomplishment. There is need too for the establishment of scholarships to assist or support able players who cannot afford a summer profitable only in intangibles. Artistic achievement, improvement of facilities, and enthusiastic community support were to develop concurrently.

Festival impulse and twin seasons. Over the next decade the Festival would change in status from amateur to professional, one stage would be altered and a second stage built, and the length of the season expanded several times. It was the community's enthusiastic support that made this all possible. Horace W. Robinson evaluated this support:

The success of the venture is probably due to a number of factors; the quaint and idyllic physical surroundings, the ideal weather, the imagination and drive of the founders, the high talent level of the performances, and the beaming pride of the local citizenry, whose bankers, butchers, and bakers will quote Shakespeare with or without provocation. The familiarity with Shakespearian lore and their love of plays may have been the result of years of playgoing. Few other communities in America have had the rare opportunity of growing up with produced Shakespeare and seeing all his works in one generation.

When the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the oldest permanent repertory theatre in the Western Hemisphere, completed its twentieth anniversary season in 1955, 20,243 people had attended the season's plays. At this point it must be noted that Ashland had only 5,000 residents at
the time, and while some may have seen several performances, an analysis of the festival's guest book revealed visitors from every state in the union and foreign countries as well. U. S. Highway 99 had become a well-known route to the Southern Oregon "total Shakespeare community" of Ashland. This community support has enabled the Oregon Shakespeare Festival Association to incorporate as a non-profit corporation made up of persons who purchase memberships. While the festival receives foundation and state grants, financial aid is obtained mainly by four classes of membership: Donor, Sponsor, Contribution, and Sustaining. All membership fees go directly to the Festival Endowment Fund.

Development of programming policy and production staff has also contributed to the Festival's growth. Initially, in the mid-1930's, the Festival would hold over one or more productions each year to form the nucleus of the next season's productions. However, the practice was soon discontinued and the current policy of presenting a totally new season of four or five plays annually in revolving repertory was started, enabling visitors to see a sequence of Shakespeare's plays in a relatively short stay of several days. There is no discernible pattern of programming; plays are neither built around a single theme nor selected from specific categories of comedy, tragedy, or chronicle. Programming policy is "simply an effort to present the plays of Shakespeare as a vivid living theatre with the same entertainment impact on today's audience as they had on those who first applauded them three centuries ago."¹⁴¹

Over the years Bowmer has enlarged his production staff with
rapidity and clarity. Early in the history of the Festival, students from Southern Oregon College and local townspeople formed a non-professional group augmented by professionals. A more careful screening method is now employed. Those selected are more advanced students and instructors from colleges and universities all over the United States seeking to improve their acting skills in the Festival's Shakespearean program. While still involved as the Festival's Founder and Development Consultant, Angus L. Bowmer passed on his role of Producing Director on June 15, 1971 to Dr. Jerry Turner, a nine-season Ashland veteran. As of this writing it is Turner who is responsible for the annual selection of productions, directors, acting, and technical companies.

A continually developed programming policy, production staff and community support has returned generous rewards to both the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and to the festival town of Ashland. A news article entitled "The Bard Gives Business a Hand," appearing in Business Week magazine a decade ago, discusses the financial rewards of the "festival impulse" in Ashland. First, discussing box office it stated:

One of the major festivals, in Ashland, Oregon, will draw about 50,000 enthusiasts this summer [1962] with a six-week season--up steadily from 24,000 five years ago. Seated in a $275,000 Shakespearean Globe-style theatre, they will see a series of four plays that requires about $128,000 to produce.42

Not only the Festival, but the community at large has shared this profit. The Business Week article also stated:

But this outlay [$128,000 to finance the season] is small change compared with the resulting boost to the community's
Visitors patronize not only theatre, but hotels, motels, shops, restaurants, and even the local tavern in Ashland.

Angus Bowmer, as Producing Director until 1971, has enjoyed the support of a solid administrative arm consisting of a Board of Directors and Festival Association. The 1971 souvenir program clearly delineated the Board of Directors' duties:

The Board of Directors sets and defines policies controlling the Oregon Shakespearean Festival and all of its allied activities. It delegates the responsibility of execution of the policies and analyzes the results. Of concern to this study is the emphasis on the selection of members who represent a unique cross-section of the community; willingness and interest in serving are the chief qualifications for membership. The OSF Association is the parent organization whose major concern is fostering the continuance of the Festival and the executing of the Board's policy decisions. Financial and artistic policies concern both groups.

With the administrative foundation of a Producing Director, Board of Directors, and Festival Association, and the enthusiastic support of the community (not to mention state and region), it is not surprising to read of the expansion of facilities which have occurred. In an article entitled "Starting a New Decade of Theatre" appearing in the 1969 OSF Souvenir Program plans for the 1970 season were discussed:
The decade of the seventies will usher in a new and expanded concern for the Oregon Shakespearean Festival. Using both the outdoor Elizabethan theatre and the sparkling new Angus Bowmer Theatre to full advantage, the 1970 summer repertory will open in late June and play in matinee and nightly rotation through mid-September. This will more than double our current performance schedule to approximately 144 performances.45

For this pivotal year (1970) seating capacity was expected to jump from 65,000 to over 90,000. Festival audiences could choose from three Shakespearean productions rotating on a nightly basis in the outdoor Elizabethan playhouse, and a fourth Shakespearean production and musical production rotating on a matinee basis in the indoor Bowmer Theatre. Such expansion was made possible by both local and national aid. The City of Ashland sponsored an application to the Economic Development Administration and the Department of Commerce. (This was done by the City because the Festival properties are located on park land.) The application was submitted in Fall of 1968 for a $1,792,000 project, with the then-planned Angus Bowmer Theatre as a keystone. In April of 1969 approval from the EDA came providing $896,000 to match an equal amount raised through private donations by the Festival Association. While the larger part of the funds were used to build another theatre, the grant also included provision for remodeling the administration building, building a scene shop and exhibit hall, realigning streets approaching the theatre, and landscaping the grounds.

Each American Shakespeare festival has, at one time or another, been concerned with improving facilities. The new Angus Bowmer Theatre seating 600 was a most exciting acquisition. It doubled the
Festival's seating capacity and eliminated the problem of turning away the disappointed public because of absence of seats. (In 1969, over 11,000 potential patrons were turned away from the Ashland box office.) The new theatre enabled "Stage II," the second season, to be introduced. New Festival brochures would announce "Two seasons spanning six months of the year and four centuries of drama." And by 1971 eight productions beginning March 19 and ending September 12th were offered. The Angus Bowmer Theatre was a physical externalization of the intimate actor-audience relationship; its thrust stage enabled performers and audience to meet in one room. A program note by Angus Bowmer described it as follows:

> It's a natural extension of what has made this Festival something special for audiences for nearly thirty years. There is a certain quality... I suppose it has something to do with rapport and the importance we've always placed on the audience/actor relationship. 

Even the very materials of which it was built were indigenous to the area. It has the distinction of being one of the few new theatres designed to use Pacific Northwest timber products.

A sense of occasion. Many of the American Shakespeare festivals, though separated by thousands of miles, have much in common. One of the more important similarities is the excitement and sense of occasion their playhouses and setting evokes. The OSF has one of the most dramatic settings—a setting that begins as the playgoer approaches the town. Lee Mitchell, reviewing the 1969 summer season, made particular mention of the importance of the local and genial atmosphere of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. He spoke highly of
"event quality," the festive spirit of the setting, the sense of occasion which characterized the theatre-going experience in Ashland. His long quote is worth inclusion:

It is difficult to imagine a better location for a theatre festival. Ashland, a clean attractive town of about 13,000 lies in the wide valley of Bear Creek in Southern Oregon surrounded by the green and gold foothills of the Siskyyou range. Upon entering town one is greeted on both sides of the main thoroughfare by handsome banners announcing the Festival. At all intersections large signs point to the theatre, information center, or box office. Close to the center of town, on the near slope of a wooded ravine in the park is the theatre itself, a large ivy-walled enclosure open to the sky and containing a spacious promenade and large seating slope with tip-up stadium chairs arranged on the continental plan. The stage is four stories high, with an apron and a forestage about sixty feet across. Standing on the stage and facing outward toward the seating slope it does not look as if the audience would be hard for the actor to reach. 48

Whether one approaches the theatre during the day and walks around its carefully landscaped exterior, complete with swans (see Figure 6) or sits in the audience during an evening performance (see Figure 7) a most overt sense of occasion and "event quality" exists; it is as if a moment, the Elizabethan moment, was once again embraced.

Another dimension that contributes to the sense of occasion is the formally organized and elaborately produced "pre-play" activity in the form of a Tudor Fair. Similar to the San Diego National Shakespeare Festival, evening performances are introduced with an entertainment on the green of dancing and music which sets an appropriate mood of festival and period and provides an opportunity to experience other delights, the delicate effects of consorted krummhorn, shawns, Renaissance trumpets, gambas, and other period instruments. 49

The 1969 Souvenir Program carefully explained the festival's intent in
Figure 6. The Oregon Shakespeare Festival Theatre, rear exterior view.
Figure 7. Oregon Shakespeare Festival, play in production, evening.
employing "Dancing-on-the-Green."

Dancing-on-the-Green has helped put the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in tune with Elizabethan times....Elizabethans put a high priority on dance, often as part of after-dinner activity....It has become as much a part of the Ashland scene as the unique stage itself. Festival audiences have learned to arrive early in time for this nightly pre-show entertainment.50

The Festival's Tudor Fair embraces not only music and dance, but attempts to capture the flavor of Merrie Old England. Robinson described this "total environment" as follows:

Patrons are greeted by costumed ushers as they enter the theatre. The surrounding walls are decorated by pennants and banners. Vendors sell typical Elizabethan candies, tarts, and ceramic objects and the not-so-typical coffee. Spectators are invited to visit the booths on the lawn at the rear of the seating arena, and...sections of the seated audience are serenaded by a trio or quartet of madrigal singers. The general atmosphere is both congenial and festive.51

The audience's approach to the theatre (now theatres), their experiences inside and outside, before and after performances of the Bard's play cumulatively insure an evening of importance and occasion.

The seasons and educational tie-ins: 1965-1970. While other Shakespeare festivals searched for magic formulas for box office sellouts--name personalities in leading roles, gimmick production--the Oregon Festival Company in the 1965 season attempted "to draw out of the plays all they can find in them....The play is still the thing, not the exploitation of star or director."52 By 1965 the Festival was on its second round of the complete Shakespeare canon and was still receiving critical praise. One case in point was Dorothy Nichol's comment on director Richard Risso's production of Macbeth,
saying it was directed 'with so much skill, so rich in imagination
that it held the suspense even through the series of final battle
scenes, up to the last instant.' But, in the following year, the
Festival experienced some difficulties—at least from the critical
standpoint. As a result of its rapid growth and changing status,
critic Peter D. Smith, writing in the Shakespeare Quarterly, questioned
on what level the Festival should be appraised. The OSF as the San
Diego National Shakespeare Festival was no longer amateur, and yet,
he implies, not fully professional. However, at the very moment he
comments on the lack of a totally professional artistic statement, he
nevertheless admits to the importance of the Festival and its success.
He stated:

They [both Ashland and San Diego] exist to educate new
generations of playgoers to enjoy and admire Shakespeare,
and it is evident that in this they are being very success­
ful for audiences are alert, enthusiastic, and appreciative
....I would urge any theatre-lover or Shakespeare buff who
can manage it to visit them and to enjoy, as I did, their
lively productions.

The 1969 season provided more than a dozen performances each
of four Shakespearean and one non-Shakespearean play. Each of the
plays was directed by a different director who also doubled as an
actor in one or more shows. Costumes and properties were basically
Elizabethan with variations from other periods and countries. Lee
Mitchell spoke quite highly of one production, Romeo and Juliet,
directed by Patrick Hines. He stated:

Whenever the play called for fighting, dancing, or
pageantry the production was brilliant. The street
scenes with great swirling clashes of swordsmen,
tradesmen, and frightened citizenry were thrilling.
The ball scene was beautifully staged, with good music, elaborate dances and handsome dancers.\textsuperscript{55}

In 1970 the $1.4 million dollar indoor Angus Bovmer Theatre opened, dedicated to housing contemporary drama and innovative Shakespearean productions. Yet the ultimate success of the OSF was its masterful mounting of Elizabethan plays outdoors. Robin Carey, writing "The Oregon Shakespeare Festival--1970," stated:

A thirty-year tradition of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival is to present its outdoor productions in entirety in Elizabethan style. The tradition bestows advantages. For example, Ashland's Company has mastered the Elizabethan scene transition and made of it a theatrically effective device. Also the Company has mastered the kind of pacing required for effective uncut productions of the longer scripts, and that mastery carries over with advantages to the less lengthy productions....I am certain pacing is a sometimes underrated quality of theatre. I am thankful to the Ashland Company for rating it highly and employing it masterfully. Finally, the Company's reliance on the universality of Shakespearean Shakespeare directs the creative energies wholly towards the exploration of undistorted meanings and actions, thus further enriching traditional Shakespearean values.\textsuperscript{56}

During the years 1965-1970, the OSF produced Shakespeare with integrity and artistic achievement.

It is not the purpose of this discussion to present a definitive critical appraisal of recent seasons of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Rather, an attempt is made to document a community resource in action.

A major concern of the OSF has been students. Its elaborate program complete with educational coordinator, Institute of Renaissance Studies, lectures and events, has been focused at its student audience—the new generation of playgoers of concern to the Foundations. The OSF could claim in 1971 that it "was serving
schools during the school year in a way unmatched by any other organization in the area.\textsuperscript{157} What began as a Student Tour Program in 1964, and a Shakespearean Apprentice Program for high school and college students has grown to a fully developed educational tie-in. The 1971 Festival Program presents a detailed nine-point list of recent achievements. Several of the more significant ones are listed below:

Sent teacher/lecturer teams to 171 schools from Seattle to Central California with illustrated lectures on the Festival, its history and operation.

Hired its first Education Coordinator with the help of an Oregon Arts Commission grant.

Hosted a total of 61,115 students from grades 3 through sixteen from 223 schools throughout Oregon, Northern California and Southern Washington to special school matinees at reduced rates.

Published five teacher guides, designed to help the classroom teacher prepare study units around Festival productions.

The activities of the Education Coordinator, Forbes W. Rogers, have been geared to make such previously cited accomplishments an on-going and continuous part of the OSF. Another educational tie-in the Festival sponsors is the Institute of Renaissance Studies. It boasts an extensive lecture series, with Stanford, Yale, and Northwestern Ph.D.'s, and a variety of course offerings attempting "to provide background and interpretation for the drama at the center of our cultural heritage."\textsuperscript{159} In addition to a distinguished visiting faculty, a series of academic courses and an extensive lecture series, the Institute of Renaissance Studies has produced the \textit{Ashland Studies in Shakespeare}. Reviewed in the \textit{Shakespeare Quarterly} they were
described as follows:

Most of the critical essays are published here for the first time, primarily for the short-term academic courses of the Summer Institute of Renaissance Studies. They are used to augment the observation of the festival's stage productions. However, the articles merit wider distribution. Museums, concerts, libraries, and historical landmarks round out the cultural resources of the greater Ashland community.

Now approaching the conclusion of four decades of producing Shakespeare, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival has moved from amateur to professional status; it has built, rebuilt, and expanded its theatre facilities, enlarged its production staff, and developed an ambitious program policy. Isolated in the Pacific Northwestern United States in the naturally dramatic setting of Ashland, Oregon, the festival first drew a local audience, which ultimately grew to the statewide, regional, and even national support it enjoys today. And while goals have changed, production quality has varied, and facilities have grown, its importance and success as an American Shakespeare festival theatre cannot be questioned.
CHAPTER IV: FOOTNOTES


2 Ibid., p. 5.


5 Ibid., p. 6.

6 Ibid., p. 7.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., p. 19.

9 Ibid., pp. 30-31.

10 Ibid.; p. 32.

11 Ibid., p. 75.

12 Ibid., p. 92.

13 Ibid., p. 90.

14 Ibid., p. 98.

15 Ibid., p. 99.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid., p. 97.


22 Ibid., p. 407.

23 Ibid., p. 409.


26 Ibid., p. 31.

27 1971 Stage II Souvenir Program. The Oregon Shakespeare Festival Association, Ashland, Oregon, p. 6.


29 1971 Stage II Souvenir Program, op. cit., p. 6.


33 Robinson, op. cit., p. 448.


36 Sandoe, op. cit., p. 5.

37 Ibid., p. 10. 38 Ibid. 39 Ibid.

40 Robinson, op. cit., p. 447.

41 Ibid., p. 448.


43 Ibid. 44 1971 Souvenir Program, op. cit., p. 17.


46 1971 Stage II Souvenir Program, op. cit., p. 44.

47 1970 Stage II Souvenir Program, op. cit., p. 18.


50 1969 Souvenir Program, op. cit., p. 44.


54 Peter D. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 407.


CHAPTER V: AMERICAN SHAKESPEARE

FESTIVAL THEATRES: PART II

1. New York Shakespeare Festival

Joseph Papp: another singular leader. Synonymous with "Oregon Shakespeare Festival" is the name Angus Bowmer, and synonymous with "New York Shakespeare Festival" is the name Joseph Papp. Michael Robert Newman writes of this Papp-NYSF alter ego in his M.A. thesis "S.R.O. Culture: The Development of the New York Shakespeare Festival:"

Papp and the Festival are basically synonymous, and their story is a modern cultural 'rags-to-riches' saga, involving all of New York and millions of her citizens. From modern-dress productions in a bare Sunday School auditorium, the Festival has swelled to a theatrical enterprise which gainfully employs more performers and production personnel than almost any other production organization in the United States.

The NYSF and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival are located at opposite ends of the United States, yet both festivals and their leaders have much in common. These similarities (and differences) are the concern of this chapter.

Few men can boast of the accomplishments achieved by the singular leaders of American Shakespeare festival theatres. Joseph Papp, producer and director of the New York Shakespeare Festival, has emerged as not only one of the most important festival leaders, but a man of increasing importance to theatre in America. He has been
described as everything from a cultural populist and imperialist to empire builder and impresario. At a time when committees, teams, boards of directors, and market analysis specialists are dominating much of performing arts administration, Papp has moved away from group rule. While he recognizes a central core of production and administrative assistance is needed (with two or three people in each area of responsibility), he has stressed the importance of maintaining a single leader: he has been that leader, one to be recognized as the 'elder statesman' of subsidized theatre. Papp's concern is for a popular American theatre, a theatre dedicated to seeking out new audiences and introducing them to the arts. Robert Brustein, Head of Yale's School of Drama, states in his recent book *The Third Theatre*:

> Mr. Papp's group remains, to my mind, the most audacious permanent organization in town, and the only dedicated not simply to remounting familiar masterpieces but trying to discover what theatre can mean to America in the sixties.  

Joseph Papp was born Joseph Papirotsky fifty-two years ago. As a son of immigrant Polish parents he grew up in the tough Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. After graduating from high school and working twenty odd jobs ranging from short-order cook to sheet metal worker, he enlisted in the Navy. His theatre experiences began when his four year Navy tour ended. Between 1946-1950 he used the G.I. Bill of Rights to attend the Actors Laboratory Theatre in Hollywood; two years later (1952) Papp was hired by C.B.S. in Manhattan as a production stage manager. This position, while providing financial security and limited creative opportunity, did not totally fulfill Papp's artistic desires. He wished to establish a group dedicated to the performance
of poetic drama, the classics, and especially to the works of Shakespeare.

The Shakespeare Workshop: the beginnings of a festival and the roots of an educational tie-in. Within a year of beginning his TV job Papp initiated plans to make his "Shakespeare wish" become a reality. "Himself a New Yorker, Papp dreamed of bringing free Shakespeare to the citizens of his city; Shakespeare's plays stripped, as originally they had been, of all unnecessary trappings." Joseph Papp's first New York theatrical venture was to direct John Patrick's The Curious Savage (oddly a non-Shakespearean play) for a Stuyvesant Town community theatre group; it was presented in 1953 in Seymour Hall of the Emmanuel Presbyterian Church, 729 E. Sixth Street, N.Y.C. Later that year, here in this school auditorium on the Lower East Side, the Shakespeare Workshop was founded. Its purpose, as outlined in Newman's M.A. thesis, was "to explore techniques of poetic drama with American actors and directors and to present work to invited audiences." Papp was here provided with the opportunity to demonstrate his ability to recruit, organize, and expand: his initial financing was two hundred dollars; his actors performed without salary; his stage lights were salvaged from a defunct Bronx movie theatre. And his director was Stuart Vaughan. While organized in 1953, productions were not mounted until November 1954.

In the past Joseph Papp has demonstrated an interest in directing, the results of which were not always to the satisfaction of the critics; his greatest strength has been his natural talent as
organizer, producer, and entrepreneur. Such was apparent early in the history of the Shakespeare Workshop. Newman writes:

Papp was interested in directing, but knew the Workshop first had to be organized. He had the idea of making it an educational venture in order to enlist wide support. Thus, even before the auditorium became a workable theatre, application was made to the New York State Board of Regents in Albany for an educational charter. To aid the Workshop’s chances, a board of trustees was chosen, both for purposes of incorporation—a step toward finding a financial base—and for possible usefulness to the theatre.5

On November 19, 1954 the Shakespeare Workshop, soon to evolve into the New York Shakespeare Festival, was granted a five-year provisional educational charter "to encourage and cultivate interest in poetic drama, with emphasis on the works of William Shakespeare and his Elizabethan contemporaries,...to establish an annual Summer Shakespeare Festival, and to construct a replica of the Elizabethan playhouse."6

Shakespeare Workshop activity: a successful tie-in emerges. In only its first year the Shakespeare Workshop declared its educational intent, established a financial base, obtained a charter from the New York Regents, and expressed its desire to establish an annual Summer Shakespeare Festival. In its second year it achieved its first critical success. Production activity accelerated quickly: February 25, 1955, "An Evening of Scenes and Dances With Shakespeare's Women" was presented; April 15, 16, 29, and 30, 1955, Much Ado About Nothing was presented, directed by Joel Freidman who served as the Workshop's artistic and primary stage director the next year; July 22, 23, and 28-30, 1955, Joseph Papp's Cymbeline was featured; and in October of the same year As You Like It was presented. With this
production, the critics began to visit the Shakespeare Workshop at the East Side Church. Louis Calta of *The New York Times* praised "the player's enthusiasm, self-assurance and boldness, the swift direction of Friedman, and the clear enunciation of Shakespeare's verse."7

At the end of the second season (1955), accolades were numerous. First, Papp as producer and Joel Friedman as director were credited with pioneering an American approach to Shakespeare in which accumulated Shakespearean traditions are "peeled away" to rediscover the inherent reality. As a direct result of this approach to an unadulterated Shakespeare and its favorable critical response, the National Council of Teachers of English invited the Workshop to perform selected scenes for their forty-fifth Annual Conference on November 25, 1955. In addition, the first true season of the Workshop (six Shakespearean dramas) received an OBIE (Off-Broadway Award) Special Citation from the *Village Voice*. The award, presented in June, 1956, stated,

> For passion, the good humor, the clarity with which it has brought Shakespeare and the other Elizabethans back to life in a small East Side playhouse with virtually no budget; and for its simple, whole-hearted love for the English language as it is written and spoken.8

This discussion of the Shakespeare Workshop ends what for the purpose of this study is called "Phase I" of the history and origin of the NYSF.

*Shakespeare-in-the-Park: new audiences and subsidies.* Joseph Papp's concern from the early years of the Shakespeare Workshop to the present multiple-theatre activity of the Public Theatre has been characterized by a unique vocabulary: civic responsibility, democratic
audiences, and free Shakespeare. When Joseph Papp moved to the park
and streets of New York City in 1956 he had the opportunity to turn
his conceptual vocabulary into a production philosophy. For Papp, the
arts—particularly theatre—are not for the exclusive minority of the
elite, but for all men. A brochure entitled "New York Shakespeare
Festival Report" states:

The belief that every citizen needs and is entitled to
a theatre—just as he needs and is entitled to schools,
libraries and museums—that a theatre can be run for
beauty and wisdom rather than for money—the belief
that the arts are indispensable to a full life—upon
such bedrock has the New York Shakespeare Festival been
built.9

This concern for a theatre for every citizen was to take Papp to the
parks and beyond the middle class. Newman writes of this:

The free idea; going outside of the usual audience,
which is the middle-class educated audience. Even
a small portion of the middle class is an audience—
there are very few theatre goers in the United States.
But really breaking that barrier is the key thing.10

In the streets and parks of New York City Papp refuses to charge
admission, even when in critical financial binds, for his civic
responsibility is focused on a popular theatre, free and open to all.
This civic responsibility tie-in will be seen guaranteeing time and
again the existence of the NYSF.

Phase II, Shakespeare-in-the-Parks, began during the 1956-1957
season of the NYSF (still called the Shakespeare Workshop at this
time), was a particularly eventful year for Shakespeare in New York
City: the Old Vic Company appeared at the Winter Garden from October
to January; and the Shakespeare Workshop found a home in a city park—
this time it was the East River Park Amphitheatre, a Grecian-style
2,000 seat theatre built in the 1930's by the WPA. *Julius Caesar* and *The Taming of the Shrew* were presented nightly on a portable stage mounted on a truck to capacity audiences of two thousand. Stuart Vaughan had replaced Friedman as artistic director because of differences of opinion, yet the turnover did no harm to the company; major New York newspaper critics found performances robust and lively. Throughout the summer season (June 20-September 7) Papp's artistic standards never relaxed despite unusual and difficult working conditions. Nancy Webb describes the dynamics of the first summer "festival" as follows:

> Working conditions for the dedicated little company were almost prohibitively difficult. Planes roared across the metropolitan sky overhead, the hum and rumble of traffic never stilled on the nearby East River Drive, tug boats hooted on the river, diesel engines sputtered. And open-air performances, even under ideal circumstances, are trying for actors. Amplifiers can almost never be placed so that every section of the acting area receives uniform pick-ups, and delivery of speeches becomes uneven, often distorted.11

Despite technical difficulties, free Shakespeare-in-the-Park was on its way to becoming a New York City summer theatre tradition. Production cost for the two-month park season was a mere two thousand dollars paid for by contributions. Joseph Papp's time, energy, and money (he literally drew upon all his resources) were achieving the aims the Shakespeare Workshop's charter indicated; an annual summer Shakespeare festival was established and interest in poetic drama was encouraged and cultivated. The next year found more extensive facilities and increased financial support being sought.

Each festival discussed in this study appears to have both its pied piper singular leader and its "magic year," a year of artistic
integrity: good reviews and performances. For the Summer Shakespeare Festival, as the Shakespeare Workshop was now called, Papp was the obvious and ubiquitous piper, and the "magic Year" was 1957, the year it moved to Central Park (and established a winter home at the Heckscher Theatre).

Early that summer the NYSF company toured New York City with a portable stage mounted on a truck. Romeo and Juliet thereby played to capacity audiences and enthusiastic critics free. During the second half of the summer the truck set up "permanently" in a site offered by the City in Central Park, to remain until the end of the season. Productions of Two Gentlemen of Verona and Macbeth supplemented Romeo and Juliet. Thousands of people who ordinarily did not go to the theatre attended both touring and "permanent" Central Park productions; Joseph Papp had found his "untapped audience." The settling down in Central Park proved advantageous to the NYSF. The idea of touring the boroughs of New York City (Brooklyn War Memorial Park, Williamsbridge Oval Park in the Bronx, Cloves Lake Park in Richmond, and King's Park in Queens) was a good one, later to be more fully realized; but in 1957 it was premature and surrounded with problems. Webb writes,

the city-wide tour had proven a strain, both technically and economically. Eighteen hours were required for setting up the portable stage by amateur technicians. Money for advance publicity was lacking, so that people often missed performances through ignorance of scheduling.12

Papp decided to emphasize a new objective: permanent, free Shakespeare-in-the-Park. Located in the Belvedere Tower area of Central Park, the "permanent-portable" stage was augmented by a seating arrangement of bleachers or benches set up by the Park
Department. Additional help came from Civil Defense authorities who contributed a generator for lighting needs; Papp's C.B.S. television colleagues helped solve sound problems—a perennial Park problem; and actors were willing to work for Equity's forty dollar a week minimum. While there were production problems, the 1957 season was nevertheless a unanimous and instant success.

Alice Griffin, writing in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, describes the effectiveness of the 1957 season:

Director Stuart Vaughan's conception of the productions was just right for the outdoor audience, fast-moving and clear, accenting dramatic action and theatrical effect. The setting designed by Mr. Vaughan and Bernie Joy were well suited to a popular production. A modified Elizabethan stage with upper and inner stages, a fair-sized platform, and stairs on either side leading to the upper stage, it permitted great flexibility of movement, and Mr. Vaughan kept his players in motion most of the time.

Shakespeare-in-the-Park had found a new home and enjoyed praise from popular as well as academic circles. *Time Magazine* wrote:

*Performances are uniformly first rate...the best summer Shakespeare in the United States...smooth, clear, and professional, the Central Park group offers, in the words of Elizabethan scholar Marchette Chute, 'bright, swift Shakespeare, over-acting, rather like a poster, as it had to be out of doors....it brings Shakespeare back to his original, wonderfully motley audience.'*

At the end of the 1957 season, productions both in Central Park and the Heckscher Theatre received artists' laurels. Awards included the American Theatre Wing's Antoinette Perry, Newspaper Guild's Page One, *Village Voice*’s OBIE, and Vernon Rice Memorial awards for individual directors, actors, and numerous festival innovations. In addition to almost immediate artistic achievement, the NYSF was cited as a laudable civic enterprise reaching thousands of
enthusiastic people who had been previously uninitiated to the theatre. Such dual success was obtained for "a little over $30,000, half the cost [in 1957] of a single-set, four-character Broadway production." The forty-two performances of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (excluding *Macbeth*) had drawn over 70,000 spectators; critics were comparing the NYSF presentations to those of the more sophisticated American Shakespeare Festival Theatre.

Joseph Papp had seen in the parks of New York an ideal setting for enjoyable theatre experience. As Newman states:

> The parks are wonderful and the theatre doesn't have to be such an affair. You don't have to dress up to enjoy it... He anticipated that Shakespeare in the parks would help reduce the ritual of theatregoing to an uncomplicated walk in the park.

First at the East River Park located on Corlear's Hook, and later at the Central Park site, (not to mention the many tours to park locations in all five boroughs of New York City), the concept of outdoor, summer, park Shakespeare gained strength and substance, and became a cornerstone of the NYSF philosophy.

As a result of this artistic achievement and popular support of the festival's productions, the Department of Parks drew up plans to improve the Belvedere Tower area. The following summer a new multi-level Elizabethan stage was ready to replace the truck stage. Additions included improved seating arrangements, dressing rooms, and storage space. And in 1962 another "new" Festival Theatre was to appear on the same site, an open air auditorium with a semi-arena stage, good lighting and amplification, dressing rooms, and a seating area designed for improved sight-lines and acoustics. The growth in size from the earlier borough Shakespeare-in-the-Park (see Figure 8)
Figure 8: New York Shakespeare Festival—an early borough theatre.
to Shakespeare in Central Park (see Figure 9) was most impressive. While larger in scale the Central Park facility had much in common with the earlier "theatre;" both were outdoors, and in the city parks for the people of New York City.

Joseph Papp's desire for a totally free outdoor theatre for the public (now in Central Park), open to all without restriction, and without tickets or charges, was directly aimed at broadening the base of his audience. Newman elaborates on this point:

If the principle of playing in a park was the cornerstone of Joseph Papp's philosophy, the nature of the audience could be termed the mortar which solidified his idea of a theatre for all, regardless of ability to pay. He felt that Shakespeare, as the greatest writer in the English language, had something to say to everybody, and he wished to bring the Bard to as many people as possible. He intended to bring the bulk of the population—those who had never witnessed live actors—to the theatre, instilling in them the love he had for the stage.

Papp saw free admission as one means of breaking the "cultural curtain." The "great dispossessed audience," as Papp described the masses uninitiated to theatre forms, would be attracted by the characteristics of the Festival: free admission, unusual locale (with the sense of occasion so important to American Shakespeare festivals), and high quality productions. Further, as Papp stated in a recent magazine article (Time, 1972), "You can more easily reach a working-class audience with Shakespeare than you can with contemporary plays." Papp would agree that Shakespeare wrote for a popular audience during the Elizabethan moment—a moment revisited, in part, in the summer Shakespeare festivals.

With so firm and valid a festival philosophy—democratic
Figure 9: New York Festival—Central Park theatre.
audience, free admission—it is not surprising that chaos broke out when in the early spring of 1959 the Commissioner of Parks suddenly announced that there would be no more free Shakespeare in New York. (Basically the Commissioner claimed that related Festival activities were ruining the grass, and its replacement must be paid for by a small admission charge.) As expected,

Papp firmly rejected the order to establish box-office prices. The Commissioner announced that Shakespeare in the Park was at the end. Public reaction was instant and outraged. Newspapers protested editorially; civic organizations presented formal demands for the project's reinstatement; thousands of high-school students petitioned City Hall; strong theatre organizations registered their condemnation of that edict.19

With such unanimous support, the Festival continued and the Commissioner resigned. The New York Shakespeare Festival carried with its victory of civic enterprise the press, the public, theatre-goers, and producers, all enthusiastic followers and participants of the now both popular and permanent NYSF. 

Papp's objective was to build a popular, democratic audience. His means were varied: Shakespeare-in-the-Park, Shakespeare on mobile stages touring city streets, and Shakespeare-in-the-schools. His victory in the Park now won, he chose to rebuild the mobile touring unit concept. It is here, once again, that Joseph Papp can be seen anticipating trends of the performing arts. The concern for a mobility was later to be described by the Rockefeller Panel Report:

Many more resident professional performing arts organizations are needed in communities throughout the country, but if the arts are to be made as widely available as is desirable, the panel emphasizes the necessity of increasing the mobility of the performing arts by new means on a new scale.20
The members of the panel cite the NYSF as the most exciting prototype of this concept:

A more dramatic example of the new mobility is provided by the summer tours of the New York Shakespeare Festival into the five boroughs of New York City. In the summer of 1964, with the cooperation of the City, it took a mobile unit playing *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to thirty-four locations, giving fifty-four performances. Describing the opening night in Harlem, Howard Taubman, drama critic of *The New York Times*, reported: 'The 1,600 seats provided by the festival's rolling theatre were occupied by a lot more than 1,600 persons...The older children could not have been more attentive if they had been sitting through a mystery or a Western.21

Despite technical difficulties, an amateur staff, and a barely adequate budget, the touring truck stage met with instant success in bringing Shakespeare to congested neighborhoods where thousands of people saw their first live play. Papp's mobile Shakespeare festival performing on flat-bed trucks in less traveled borough locations was to find a "raw energy" on the streets of New York. Joseph Papp describes this experience:

You get a sense of street-level energy from them (borough audiences). It's strong. It's exhilarating. Sometimes it can even be damaging when it begins to push the play out. But boy, what a fantastic energy it is! And we have to match that life energy with theatre energy.22

Typical of the tour to the five boroughs was Walter Kerr's comment describing the June 27, 1965 truck stage production of *Romeo and Juliet* in Central Park: "This is in many respects the best production of *Romeo and Juliet* I've ever seen."23 The worth of the touring idea seemed undisputed, but various difficulties (deterioration of stage and equipment as it was assembled and transported, and amount of time needed for set up) forced the company to settle in Central Park the
first season.

The NYSF tour of the boroughs remained inactive until Mayor Wagner expressed interest in the project in 1962. Two years later, in the summer of 1964, the NYSF would once again journey through the city, much like Medieval pageant wagons. *Time* Magazine describes this similarity between the modern and the Elizabethan pageant wagons:

In the Middle Ages, plays in England were sometimes performed from Pageant Wagons, which traveled around the ancient cities stopping at key spots....New York has its pageant wagons too—set to perform everywhere from ye Bronx to ye Staten Island. Belonging to the New York Shakespeare Festival—, they are a caravan of six trucks.24

But this time the "wagons" for the journey were considerably more sophisticated and better equipped. The new mobile unit is described by Newman as follows:

The Mobile Theatre had, as its central unit, a $35,000 stage donated by George T. Delacorte Jr. The stage, which unfolded from a forty foot truck trailer, was designed by Ming Cho Lee, who patterned it after the playing area at Stratford Ontario Festival...The traveling theatre was actually a caravan. Two twenty-eight foot ventilated dressing room trailers flanked the stage...Another truck carried 500 folding chairs...Opposite the stage was a thrifty-five foot trailer serving as a lighting and sound control booth...Completing the caravan was a forty passenger bus to transport the cast, a pair of station wagons for directorial and technical personnel, and one or two additional trucks carrying step units, properties and other equipment.25

With community involvement, cooperation, and support via close planning with tenant groups affiliated with United Neighborhood Houses and City Housing Authorities, Papp's "great dispossessed audience" found seats under the stars around a mobile stage unit, and they saw Shakespeare.
Joseph Papp's attempt to enlarge his audience, or rather Shakespeare's audience, had a third methodology: Shakespeare was also brought to the schools. In mid-August of 1956 the Department of Welfare, through the mayor's interest, allowed the NYSF to obtain a permanent rent-free home in an old Manhattan playhouse located in a building on Fifth Avenue at 104th Street. The building, after seats were repaired, electric lines installed for stage lights, and the stage extended beyond the proscenium—all paid for by the City—became the winter headquarters of the NYSF: this was the Heckscher Theatre.

Papp moved quickly. After receiving promise of fund raising support from both Robert Moses, Park's Commissioner, and Howard Cullman, honorary chairman of the Port of New York Authority, he "then established an educational project with the Associate Superintendent of the City's High School Division and a Board of Education representative for high school activities." The Festival's "tie-in" with civic responsibility was now assured to include school activity and a student audience program, which later was to undergo extensions and refinements, including a $50,000 Board of Education appropriation for a full-scale touring production. By June 17, 1960 the State Education Department presented the now officially named New York Shakespeare Festival with an Absolute Charter. The success and importance of Shakespeare-in-the-schools was well summarized by Howard Taubman of The New York Times:

Mr. Papp and his troupe are giving the city full value for its investment in Shakespeare. Some students may be
missing some of the poet's ardor and wisdom, but many
have never seen a live professional performance of any
play. Tastes cannot be cultivated in an afternoon.
There is a world of theatrical experience for the
youngsters to encompass. The schools are a fine place
in which to begin.  

During the approximately twenty year history of the New York
Shakespeare Festival (the Shakespeare Workshop started in 1953),
Joseph Papp has stressed a concern for two mutually agreeable
factors: democratic audiences and public subsidy. The cost for Free
Shakespeare and other related NYSF activities has not been small. Even
with revenues of nine to eleven million dollars (1970, 1971) the NYSF
runs a projected deficit of $2.5 million. It has been public subsidies
from city, state, federal government, and sponsors, benefactors and
friends which have enabled the Festival to reach its democratic
audience. Joseph B. Martinson, Chairman of the Board of the NYSF,
explains this public subsidy concept in a 1961 Festival publication
entitled "...And Then There's Free Shakespeare in the Park:"

The Festival has also developed a most unusual pattern of
support for its deficit operations. It demonstrated the
case for free-Shakespeare sufficiently well to convince
the City fathers to include the Festival as a principal
participant in the allocations of the City's cultural
budget. Thousands of small donors contribute to the
Festival's support each year as audience sponsors.
Hundreds of other citizens who care contribute in
categories from Friends to Benefactors of the New York
Shakespeare Festival. Most significantly, within the
past three months, a major gift to the Festival has
come from one of the leading foundations of the country:
the Rockefeller Foundation recently announced a three-
year $400,000 matching grant towards the program of new
plays at the Public Theatre.  

By 1970 the NYSF enjoyed a firmly established subsidy program
receiving contributions of $350,000 from the city, $200,000 from New
York State and $100,000 from Washington—popular and financial support had been won. For this unique achievement Joseph Papp was to enjoy Congressional recognition. Robert Newman describes this:

Joseph Papp, who started his enterprise with hundreds of dollars from his own pocket, is now an 'elder statesman' of subsidized theatre, and a recognized master of seeking out new audiences and introducing them to live dramas. The Shakespeare Festival has been cited in Congress by New York Senator Jacob Javits, as a case history in the field of government aid for the arts.29

Audiences and subsidy have been synonymous with both the success and importance of the New York Shakespeare Festival. But there have been other elements deserving consideration.

**Shakespeare-in-the-Park: a sense of occasion.** One most important element all Shakespeare festivals share is the sense of occasion. The audiences appear to find "going to the theatre" fun and exciting; a sense of the community, festivity, and meaning appears to embrace playgoing and viewing. True of the New York Shakespeare Festival, when its Mobile Theatre tours the city "townspeople" respond with uninhibited revelry. Stuart Little, writing in the N.Y. Herald Tribune, describes this merriment of both traveling company and onlookers:

As gallant a crew of actors as the city can muster rode through town in full costume yesterday on a flat-bed trailer truck. In a motorcade two blocks long were two white station wagons and four large trailers. Bringing up the rear was a bright orange generator truck. Horns honking all the way, balloons flying, actors waving, the motorcade moved to Mt. Morris Park in the center of Harlem. Passersby who waved back might not have realized it, but here was a complete theatre on wheels—the new Mobile Theatre of the New York Shakespeare Festival.30
As the Mobile Theatre arrived on location and assembled its stage, an exciting transformation took place. The "NYSF Report" relates this change: "Neighborhoods that viewed in their bleakness were transformed, if only for a single night, into something fine."31

When Shakespeare moved to its first permanent outdoor home at the Delacorte Theatre in Central Park, it was to enjoy and embrace all the excitement of New York City. Looking at a panoramic view of the audience assembled for an evening performance in the Delacorte Theatre (see Figure 10), with its thrust stage surrounded on three sides by amphitheatre and shimmering lake, a flavor is generated not too unlike that of other Shakespeare festivals--certainly not too different from the San Diego or Oregon festivals. But Shakespeare-in-the-Park has the added attraction of New York City. A cyclorama of real three dimensional skyscrapers (see Figure 11) surrounds the entire playhouse--most definitely the stage. The raw energy and excitement of Shakespeare-in-the-streets is also indigenous to Shakespeare-in-the-Park. Audiences wait in line for performances not merely because the show is free, but because it is in the park and it is good. The interplay of these elements--anticipation, occasion, celebration--is in part described by Robert Hatch writing in Horizon Magazine:

The first thing always said of the New York Shakespeare Festival is that it is free, but the more important fact is that it is good. The public is said not to appreciate anything it gets for nothing, but night after night, summer after summer, the long line forms at the gate to the Festival grounds and waits as long as three hours for admission. People come in the tens of thousands, not because the seats are free--every bench in Central Park is that--but because they are aroused and instructed by the play...I know of no company that is as successful as the New York Shakespeare Festival at finding the eternally contemporary in Shakespeare and presenting it, without
Figure 10: The New York Shakespeare Festival—Delacorte Theatre Panorama
Figure 11. The New York Shakespeare Festival—Stage and Skyscraper.
strain, in the Elizabethan idiom. You get the eeriest feeling, in the Park sometimes that Shakespeare is alive and among us.32

All of these elements--fun, excitement, occasion--would be of little meaning if not coupled with one additional element--artistic integrity.

1965-1970 seasons: artistic integrity. It is not the concern at this point to attempt to measure and evaluate the "hits" or "misses" of individual plays or seasons, but rather to appraise the thrust and direction of the Festival. The NYSF has demonstrated from the start an integrity that transcends mere production of plays. It has proven itself financially and politically. And it was soon to claim the achievement of "establishing itself as an essential before the city undertook to construct a 2,500 seat permanent open-air amphitheatre to house the free summer Festivals."33 By 1965 Papp and the NYSF had succeeded in consistently capturing an excited and enthusiastic audience. The vision of the NYSF was stripped of gimmicks; it was to bring exciting theatre to both stage and audience. Alice Griffin, reviewing the 1965 season in Shakespeare Quarterly, stated:

To the credit of Joseph Papp, the producer, the Festival since the beginning has always approached Shakespeare with great honesty, letting the merits of the play speak for themselves, rather than over larding the plays with such tricks as changes of period...and the general 'hoking up' which productions often employ.34

The NYSF was to have its artistic criticisms, but not without winning the enthusiastic response of not only audience, but critics as well. By 1967, six years after the formal opening of the Delacorte Theatre, the Festival had come into its own. Critics Richard Watt, Jr., Dan Sullivan, Frances Herridge, and Douglas Watt, writing in the New York
Post, New York Times and Daily News respectively, tossed their accolades and praise. The critics recognized difficulties and they appreciated advantages. The wedding of Central Park and Shakespeare was singled out as a particularly important stride. Richard Watts, Jr. wrote; "Joseph Papp's Shakespeare Festival players are having a wild and uninhibited romp at the Delacorte Theatre in Central Park, and it's great fun for audiences as well as for the actors." Dan Sullivan shares this enthusiasm for Shakespeare-in-the-Park, in writing "Of all the nice things that have happened in Central Park since Thomas P. F. Hoving reclaimed it--so to speak--for the natives, the NYSF's Comedy of Errors is one of the nicest." King John, The Comedy of Errors, Titus Andronicus at the Delacorte Theatre and Volpone on tour throughout the city were praised for their artistry and integrity.

The next season continued to boldly bespeak artistic worth. "Towards Excellence 1968-1969" is the title of an article appearing in a July 1969 Souvenir Program for the NYSF production of Peer Gynt. In it appears representative reviews for that season's productions. The following quotes, in part, effectively evidence the caliber of the Festival's productions:

Go to Central Park to see the Shakespeare Festival's warm, beautiful, and incisive production of Henry IV, Parts I and II.

Clive Barnes, New York Times

Part Two of the New York Shakespeare Festival's Henry IV... turned out to be that rare thing, a sequel that does not disappoint.

Dan Sullivan, New York Times
In the Central Park production of *Romeo and Juliet*, sight sharpens insight into the play's verbal music...A brilliantly conceived production.

Emily Genaur, *New York Post*

This critically sound season experienced difficulties of another sort. Just shortly after receiving these accolades the NYSF was faced with a serious cutback in financial backing; the 1970 season appeared endangered by insufficient supporting funds from the city. Papp turned to the "festival impulse"—the energy to go beyond conventional means of play production—to resolve the financial dilemma. *The Chronicles of King Henry VI* and *Richard III* were telescoped into three plays and produced in succession by a total of sixty-five actors in the Delacorte Theatre. Alfred E. Clark writes of this unique marathon (also accomplished by the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, but with the advantages of daytime and indoors): "For nearly twelve hours, from dusk to Saturday to dawn yesterday, the clash of broadswords, the flare of torches, the pomp of heraldic banners...enthralled 3,000 spectators in Central Park." The entire company received a ten-minute ovation from an audience of 2,300.

It is not the purpose of this study to whitewash critical appraisal of a festival season or production. The NYSF has had its weaker moments—the year of 1966 is one case in point. According to reviewers the actors were not properly trained and the productions were uneven. Both the shows produced in the park and the touring productions were generally weak. Mildred Kuner, in her season review "The New York Shakespeare Festival, 1966" even went as far to challenge the very existence of the Festival:
Is it better to present a bad production rather than none at all? As a means of giving some pleasure to people who would otherwise have no opportunity to see Shakespeare, perhaps such performances are valuable; it is to be hoped that money may yet be found to ensure quality in production as well as quantity in audience.41

Criticism ranged from the failure of Macbeth to convey the power of tragedy, inconsistency in approach (Measure for Measure), and a poor attempt at Theatre of Cruelty (All's Well That Ends Well). The NYSF, not unlike other American Shakespeare festivals, fell victim to uneven and unsatisfying acting. The summers of 1965-1970 resulted in a mixed season for the NYSF. Nevertheless, Joseph Papp and the NYSF have waged a never ceasing battle for artistic integrity; this has been his constant concern.

The festival impulse: spin-offs and new directions. Characteristic of many Shakespeare festivals is the ability to regenerate in the form of satellite activities and second seasons. Shakespeare-in-the-Park had become a New York tradition. While facing economic problems from time to time, its place in the community was won. Now Papp decided to expand the scope of the NYSF. He "felt that the plans for a season of plays in an essentially private playhouse would give the Festival the characteristics of continuity, and that critical approval of the contemporary presentations would encourage new foundation support."42 The second season quickly became a reality when on January 5, 1966 the NYSF announced acquisition of the Astor Library at 425 Lafayette Street in Lower Manhattan as a permanent home for the Festival. The Astor underwent extensive renovation and emerged as the Festival's Public Theatre with the multiple facilities of the Newman
Theatre, Anspacher Theatre, Martinson Hall, The Other Stage, and South Hall. Additional space was provided for administrative offices, exhibition hall, lobby, technical and work rooms, and recital and rehearsal space. With a new permanent winter home (later to operate twelve months a year—all five theatres) the Festival had an opportunity to achieve continuity in programming.

There was multiple significance in the acquisition of this new theatre. It served as the model for an effective solution to building million dollar cultural centers. Characteristic of the 1960's and the myth of the Cultural Boom was the construction of the multi-million dollar cultural complex. Such centers have frequently been arbitrarily superimposed on a community without first carefully assessing community needs. And after the novelty of glass, steel, and bricks wears off, community support diminishes. Ada Louis Hutable of The New York Times discusses this point in regard to the NYSF's winter home. She states: "Many planners believe that dispersal of cultural facilities can do more to revitalize ailing neighborhoods than the concentration of a monolithic performing arts center in one place." The Public Theatre was to prove to be an effective means of improving the community's cultural facilities.

The Public Theatre soon adapted a philosophy to go beyond merely supplementing Shakespeare; it provided the NYSF with a theatre totally committed to modern drama. Papp never negated the fact that Shakespeare can speak to modern man, but he wanted also to stage contemporary plays. He is quoted as saying "I wanted a theatre that was doubting, questioning, grey not pink, that took on a social character."
At a time when Broadway has been described as suffering from the "blahs" (according to *Time Magazine*, July 3, 1972), Papp's Public Theatre (1971) was producing David Rabe's *Sticks and Bones*, Jason Miller's *That Championship Season*, and Richard Weley's *The Black Terror*. The downtown complex of five theatres produces eleven new productions a year. At this new home Joseph Papp had an opportunity to go beyond the canon of Shakespeare and produce highly innovative drama for a select audience. After spending over a decade building a popular, wide base audience, Papp decided to provide a specific form of contemporary drama for a smaller group, described as "people who are concerned with the human condition, who are concerned with drama as a platform for ideas, who are interested in the theatre." Following the practice of the Royal Shakespeare Company, Papp was convinced that "theatre today, in order to really survive, cannot repeat itself or live on the basis of a single playwright. Shakespeare wouldn't have wanted it himself."

It is difficult to make a definite final assessment of the importance of the NYSF and Joseph Papp; the two are now interchangeable institutions. But both share one most important element in common, an element important to American theatre of the 1970's; it is the raw energy and enthusiasm the festival impulse creates. Having founded multiple theatres (Shakespeare-in-the-Park at the Delacorte Theatre, contemporary playwrights at the Public Theatre, popular drama touring the city with a Mobile Theatre), Papp has proven their importance and worth to the Greater New York community. Even now he is reaching out for new and greater vistas. As a populist, imperialist, and impresario,
Papp wants to bring his idea of theatre as a "very powerful, masculine kind of thing" to people across America. This new theatre movement of new playwrights and decentralized locations throughout America is described as follows:

He [Joseph Papp] wants Washington to establish what he calls a National Theatre Services Agency to ladle out the money, about $15 million a year for openers, with $10 million from the Federal Government and the other $5 million from private sources. 'Eventually this would run to lots of money,' he says, 'but you'd be producing new playwrights and conserving the ones you have. Writers are an important national resource.'

The NYSF and Joseph Papp collectively have brought Free Shakespeare to a truly popular audience, and have created an alive, vital, pulsing institution that made itself felt as an important force in the whole cultural movement of America. An appropriate conclusion to a discussion of the importance of the NYSF is provided in a quote from the heavily used Newman M.A. thesis "S.R.O. Culture: The Development of the New York Shakespeare Festival." Newman states:

If it were necessary to answer the question, 'Has the Festival been a success?' that answer would have to be an unqualified 'Yes—so far.' Papp's original philosophy was built around providing Shakespeare for a 'dispossessed audience': those who had never attended the theatre, and those who had been 'priced out' of it. The latter group, it seems, can well be accommodated at the Delacorte. At the park playhouse, the productions seem to be 'fine for what they are': free-admission, open-air presentations of the work of the world's greatest playwright, presented in a city-owned and maintained amphitheatres, and supported by municipal funds and tax-deductible private contributions....Papp has succeeded in this venture, in 'reducing the ritual of theatre-going to an uncomplicated walk in the park.'

The New York Shakespeare Festival is now an institution belonging to the people of the City of New York— it began from scratch and has
attained remarkable prominence.

II. American Shakespeare Festival Theatre

Lawrence Langner's dream. The desire to produce Shakespeare in a festival setting has been the dream of several men, men who felt that Shakespeare could play a vital role in the theatre of America. Lawrence Langner was another such man. Before "coming to" Shakespeare, Langner, an Englishman who moved to America as a young man, was responsible for founding both the Washington Square Players in 1919 and later the Theatre Guild: each production group proved innovational in American theatre. Later, in Connecticut, Langner became owner and operator of the Westport Country Playhouse, which became one of the finest summer theatres in America. He is one of those Renaissance men capable of successfully carrying on multiple careers: while interested in theatre as producer and playwright—he has written some twenty plays, several being produced on Broadway with moderate success—his actual profession is that of a rather successful international patent lawyer.

As President of the Theatre Guild he visited the Memorial Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon, England. Here he was most impressed with the dedication with which the theatre produced Shakespeare's plays, and the enthusiasm of the large audience which came from all over England to see them. Upon learning that Americans had contributed $800,000 to the Memorial Theatre for the production of Shakespeare, he reasoned that perhaps they would do so for a Shakespearean center in the United States. Nancy Webb, writing in Will Shakespeare and His
America, describes Langner's desire to create an American center for Shakespeare:

Langner's dream crystallizing into determination, was to create in the United States a center where Shakespeare could be performed and Shakespearean actors could be trained in techniques far different from those of the 'realistic' commercial stage. In 1952, a year before Canada's Stratford Festival was launched, he made his idea into at least a corporate reality. Connecticut's State Legislature had passed an act chartering The American Shakespeare Festival Theatre and Academy.

The charter, signed by the governor of Connecticut as Special Act Number 227, specifically outlined five aims of the new Shakespeare Festival:

1. The presentation of theatrical production of the highest type and especially the plays of William Shakespeare. 2. The stimulation of public interest in the drama as an art belonging to both the theatre and to literature and thereby enjoyed both on the stage and in the study. 3. The advancement of interest in the drama throughout the United States of America by furthering the production of the best plays; interpreted by the best actors at minimum cost. 4. The further development of the study of drama of the present and past in our universities, colleges, schools and elsewhere. 5. The sponsoring, encouraging and developing of theatre and technique of theatre.

Once a charter was granted, a formal fund-raising program lasting three years was initiated. Langner first gained the enthusiastic support of many respected community leaders who, in turn, attracted financial support from various foundations. Albert Peralton describes this "million dollar" support as follows:

The Festival gained international prestige and enhanced its fund raising potential when Lewis W. Douglas, former ambassador to Great Britain, consented to become the Festival's national chairman. Helen Menken in New York and Marienne Chatin of Greenwich, Connecticut formed working committees to raise funds. There were also committees in Boston, Wilmington, Baltimore and Washington...With Lewis W. Douglas' endorsement of the
Festival, the Rockefeller Foundation promised to donate $200,000, provided an equal sum was raised from other sources....Altogether foundations granted over three quarters of a million dollars towards the Festival... other gifts included shrubs, trees, electrical equipment, rent-free premises in New York, paintings, and an international endorsement of the Festival by the French government with a gift of thirty thousand feet of Guinea teakwood for planking the outside of the theatre building.52

Lawrence Langner's vision for an American center for Shakespeare was not only to build a playhouse and an annual season of plays, but also to establish "an academy of acting which will specialize in Shakespearean training and will attempt to restore good spoken American English as part of the living language."53 Jack Landau, director of the school, explained its aims in its first season: "Shakespeare is the bible, although we teach other fundamental texts and techniques, too."54 Over the next decade Langner's dream was actualized in part, but not without serious criticisms and self doubt which bore comment on the entire American Shakespeare festival movement.

The American Shakespeare Festival Theatre: 1955-1971; lack of artistic direction and loss of a singular leader. Lawrence Langner's initial conception of the American Shakespeare Festival Theatre was one of integrity. He stated:

The theatre that will be built to house Shakespeare's plays will be patented after the Old Globe Theatre in London, and will have approximately 1,600 seats. It will, however, include every appropriate improvement that has been developed since, making it possible to adapt it to any kind of production--Elizabethan or modern.55

Both the playhouse and early seasons proved disappointing. What
appears in Figure 12 looks to be a modern Globe facsimile—at least it is octagonal in exterior shape. But the interior of the playhouse soon reveals numerous disappointments.

The Festival theatre—originally thought to house opera, ballet, and concerts in the winter months—was constructed in the conventional proscenium manner at the very time the trend in stage architecture favored the thrust or open stage. Unlike the intimate, yet larger Stratford Ontario Festival theatre which seats almost 2,000, this theatre, seating 1,550, forces actors to declaim in order to project even their quieter speeches to the rear of the theatre. In addition, sight lines from balcony and mezzanine (see Figure 13) result in distortion and disillusion. Lawrence Langner's initial conception of the Festival theatre was to patent it after the Old Globe in London: it was to seat 1,600 and be adaptable to any kind of production from Elizabethan to modern. In fact, the only actual resemblance it possessed in finished form, after five complete sets of plans for the theatre had been revised by architect Edwin Howard to adapt to changing sites, was the octagonal shape of the auditorium. Both stage house and stage were traditionally proscenium oriented. The unusually wide playing area in front of the curtain was ninety-two feet. And with a very wide and shallow forestage the effect was directly opposite to that of the Elizabethan stage. Instead of a flexible vertical stage there appears a single horizontal plane. Improvements were obviously necessary: in 1956 a raked platform was installed (see Figure 14) and in 1957 movable wagons were added. And while the stage and theatre were new, they were certainly not exciting
Figure 12: The American Shakespeare Festival Theatre—exterior
Figure 13. The American Shakespeare Festival Theatre—conventional auditorium
Figure 14. The American Shakespeare Festival Theatre--raked proscenium stage.
or venturesome.

A large part of the excitement aroused in attending the San Diego National Shakespeare Festival and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival has been attributed to their facsimile Elizabethan playhouses. Even the NYSF's Delacorte Theatre, while not a "complete" playhouse, still has an emphasis on a thrust stage production policy. This initial compromise of the ASFT—a proscenium theatre—was to repeatedly handicap Festival productions. In 1955 Alice Griffin, reviewing the inaugural season, stated:

The building, erected at a cost of a million dollars, is an imposing one, but to a large extent it epitomizes what can only be described as a spirit of caution and compromise that seems to permeate the festival. Shakespearean features are superimposed upon what is actually the familiar nineteenth-century proscenium stage.56

Fifteen years later Peter Smith, reviewing the 1970 season at Stratford, raised criticism of this same stage. He wrote:

If there is one thing that is fundamentally wrong it is something that Mr. Kahn (the director) has no control over—the design of the theatre. Again and again the drawbacks of the stage were apparent...Whoever designed it must have hated actors, wanting to make them tiny and insignificant in comparison with the structure, wanting to make exits and entrances absurdly difficult and unnatural, and at the same time forcing scene designers to spend valuable money on filling useless space.57

The Festival was to be plagued by additional problems, all with serious implications.

From the very first season the ASFT experienced disappointment. The inaugural season's performances of Julius Caesar and The Tempest (the playhouse opened July 12, 1955 with Julius Caesar), proved
somewhat anachronistic; at a time when Shakespearean productions in England were emphasizing ensemble playing, integrated use of acting, scenery, and spectacle, and clarity of verse, the ASFT chose to place its emphasis on the star-system of Hollywood and Broadway. Famous stars appeared to contribute little to the critical success of the shows. Performances of "stars" Raymond Massey and Jack Palance during the first season were severely criticized. And this attempt to make Shakespeare more generally palatable via "stars and spectacles" was an ill-fated, and unfortunately lingering, aspect of ASFT policy.

Both the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and New York Shakespeare Festival, to name only two American festivals, enjoyed the stability of streamlined singular leadership. Each of these festivals could claim one man who served as founder, producer, and director. The festivals were more attuned to the hand and mentality of a singular administrative and artistic director. The first five years of the ASFT, and even later years, were characterized by scant visible continuity and lack of artistic direction. Why one Shakespeare festival can achieve solid critical appraisal and another--the ASFT--meander for a five year period deserves consideration.

The first season, 1955, ended in a rather uncertain atmosphere. Both playhouse and productions were characterized by a sense of the second best. Certainly the high artistry of Stratford, England and Stratford, Ontario was missing: the theatre was still under completion as performances began, the actors were underrehearsed, and the productions overproduced. The emphasis has been on stars and spectacle instead of the ensemble, integrated theatrical elements of the English
counterparts which initially inspired Langner. Even after the "star system" was suspended, much of this mediocrity continued for the next five years.

Albert Pertalion, in the preface to his M.A. thesis, "The New York Critics' Views of the Production Aspect of The American Shakespeare Festival Theatre, in 1955-60" sought to do just what the title indicates: to analyze the New York critics' views of the production aspect of all plays produced by the ASFT during the regular summer seasons at Stratford, Connecticut from its inception in 1955 to 1960. He referred to the seven New York daily papers which were still being published at that time, as well as numerous trade journals and magazines. His evidence leaves little doubt that the ASFT failed to achieve artistic success of note during the first five years. He states:

In the seventeen productions of the Festival from 1955 to the end of 1960, seven were critical failures, five were only moderately successful, there were four productions with only one negative criticism, and just one production had no significant negative criticism...The directors of the Festival appeared unable to stride the middle line that exists between good pacing of a show and too much concern over Shakespeare's poetry.

During the first five years the Festival made little consistent progress toward quality productions. While one season or one show was moderately more successful than another, the Festival's quality curve appeared to be on a downward trend at the conclusion of Pertalion's study in 1960.

Once again, five years later Bernard Beckerman commented on the over-all lack of artistic direction:
Lacking is a sufficiently commanding approach towards the staging of Shakespeare's plays. Instead, a loose eclecticism prevails. Each production goes its own way, unable to draw strength from a store of common purpose.... Though the productions are often tasteful and occasionally stirring, they do not create unforgettable images, they do not give fresh voice to Shakespeare's enduring eloquence.59

While the ASFT had an unusually qualified company of players and administrative and artistic staff, it seemed to lack a direct line of command; instead of a single captain at the helm of his own ship, it had two lieutenants. Executive Producer Joseph Verner Reed had served as United States Ambassador to France and Chairman of the Connecticut Commission of the Arts. Artistic director John Houseman (1956-1959) had demonstrated his skills with the Theatre Guild, Mercury Theatre, Hollywood, and television. And yet "From year to year, the resident company maintains scant visible continuity. It is, [Says Time Magazine's T. E. Kalem], more like a pickup band that has mislaid, or never had its instruments."60

There was never any doubt that the ASFT held promise, or that it could serve as a vital force in bringing American theatre to its maturity. But there can be no question that a realization of the educational aims outlined in the Festival's charter was slow in coming. The Festival had a theatre, an academy, chartered aims and ideals, even box office success and foundation support; but it lacked quality productions, consistency of acting, plus cohesive policy and personal relationships. Yet it did have an energy level that enabled it to gain in importance at the very moment it experienced artistic disappointment. This study seeks not to measure the "success" or "failure" of American Shakespeare festival theatres by evaluating
the number of quality productions of the plays of William Shakespeare which have been mounted. Rather, it is concerned with appraising the "importance" and "significance" of the over-all thrust of the festival. And the American Shakespeare Festival Theatre earned its place in the American festival tradition.

On the banks of the Housatonic: attendance, funding, educational tie-in. At no time during the eighteen year history of the ASFT—eighteen years of mixed reviews and lack of cumulative artistic direction—did the lack of critical appraisal cause public appeal to diminish. While Pertalion concludes in his thesis that the years 1955-1960 brought little consistent artistic progress (if anything the Festival's "quality curve" appeared to be on a downward trend in 1960), the Festival nevertheless enjoyed tremendous box office support. The attendance at Stratford moved from 65,000 in 1955 to sold-out houses of over 200,000 in 1960. And five years later in the 1965 Autumn issue of Shakespeare Quarterly, Beckerman was able to describe the continued enthusiasm of the box office:

Attendance figures confirm the popularity of the offerings. A member of the festival reported that ticket sales during the summer of 1965 exceeded all previous records. At the last moment extra performances were added to satisfy the demand for seats, particularly Lear....From such evidence [audience's applause] an experienced playgoer would have known that Stratford audiences enjoyed the recent season immensely.61

By 1967 the Festival season, as reported in the 1966 Program, "ran a total of thirty two weeks and had an attendance of three hundred and fifty thousand. A seven hundred percent increase in the use of the original building."62
Just why did audiences grow, continue to pay money for tickets, and often travel long distances if critical praise was lacking? Somehow the curious combinations of "lure ingredients" of the ASFT, as many of its sister festivals, appealed to the public. People enjoyed coming to Stratford and people enjoyed the productions. There is some added excitement and anticipation at the Housatonic playhouse. Joseph Verner Reed, Executive Producer, writing a welcome note in the 1966 season program, drew a parallel between going to the Globe and coming to the ASFT:

In Shakespeare's day when the white flag was rung up high over the Globe Theatre it meant: 'Citizens all—there will be a play this afternoon. The weather's fine, so come one, come all.' And they did. They came in droves from London by foot, on horseback, in carts, over bridge and in skiffs across the Thames. We don't ring up that kind of flag any more—its place has been taken by newspaper ads and radio announcements. But the message is the same: The shows are on at the Shakespeare Festival Theatre and to borrow Shakespeare's own words, we welcome you and...
your humble patience pray, gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play.63

The tone of this welcome, embracing the flavor of the Elizabethan moment, is in part a reflection of the excitement, the sense of anticipation of going to Stratford. Modern audiences can arrive by train, car, bus, or even boat (docking facilities are available near the theatre which is located on a twelve-acre site at the mouth of the Housatonic River). The theatre and its extensive grounds (see Figure 15) are well landscaped, and add excitement and convenience of "going to the theatre."

There are other reasons the ASFT has enjoyed popular support: the Stratford festival boasts one of the largest and most well organized student audience programs. It has responded to the numerous
Figure 15: The American Shakespeare Festival Theatre--twelve acre site.
requests of educational institutions throughout Connecticut as well as other states. Over 150,000 students from twelve states have the opportunity to see mainstage Shakespearean productions. The busloads of students who find Stratford easily accessible (it's only fifty-seven miles from New York City) are provided with study materials sent out in advance by the Festival and have opportunities for informal question-and-answer sessions with the actors. A newsletter and other publications by the Shakespeare Student Guild sustain interest in Shakespeare and the ASFT after the visit.

Such an ambitious Student Audience program is not a casual accident. It is the result of carefully delineated Festival priorities and the guidance of the Festival’s Director of Educational Projects Mary Hunter Wolf. Mrs. Wolf is not only a member of the Connecticut Commission on the Arts, but director of the Center for Theatre Techniques in Education for which she plans and administers federal and state grants for Title III (ESEA). She has been connected with the Festival since its inception, and is responsible for innovative workshops for teachers, students, and community organizations. Another form of student-audience program is the Festival sponsored Shakespeare Institute run in conjunction with the faculty of the University of Bridgeport, College of Arts and Sciences. A statement of intent describes this intensive five week program of studies, under the direction of Dr. Allan Lewis, in the 1966 Souvenir Program:

The Shakespeare Institute was established in the spring of 1965. Its joint auspices, underline the central aim—to provide a graduate study center which combines the resources of a professional theatre and academic institution.
Concentration each year will be on the works selected for production by the Festival Theatre. As one of the larger, fully incorporated festival theatres the ASFT enjoys the endorsement and economic support of a parent organization, The American Shakespeare Festival Guild. As the Festival's national supporting organization it helps finance the activities of the Festival's theatre, academy, and cultural center. The Guild's main function is to help provide reduced rates for their annual student audience of 150,000.

**Importance of the ASFT.** The importance of the ASFT can be measured on a number of levels. First, while there have been mixed reviews and varying critical appraisals of festival productions, the Festival has continually demonstrated a concern for producing quality productions. Fifteen years after it opened its doors (1969), the ASFT achieved its first truly artistically successful season. Reviewer Elliot Norton described the 1969 season: "This is the year of the American Stratford!" No other year in its history of production did the Festival receive the accolades of this season. Peter D. Smith's review in *Shakespeare Quarterly* summarizes this artistic phenomenon:

> I find myself aware of the fact that the American company, with all its faults, 'got to me' in a way that the Canadian company, with all its virtues, did not. The Ontario productions were as intelligent as ever, the use of that remarkable stage assured and imaginative, were typically magnificent. And yet, and yet, in Connecticut, I felt theatre history was being written.

Perhaps the continuous striving towards artistic excellence is one mark of this Festival's importance.
But another means of evaluation must be considered. What can a festival do, a Shakespeare festival, that a Broadway production cannot do? The ASFT has a festival impulse that has influenced all of Stratford, Connecticut. "Going to Stratford," means just that; the entire community prospers one way or another. Restaurants, motels, and businesses all have been affected. Just one example appeared in a Business Week article entitled "The Bard Gives Business a Hand:"

In Stratford, Connecticut, the American Shakespeare Festival and Academy, with Eugene R. Black of the World Bank as president, also has brought summer prosperity to the town, although the Festival itself is a money loser....The Stratford Motor Inn, a $1.5 million location opened in 1961 by Restaurant Associates, Incorporated...is now expanding from ninety-six to one hundred and sixty units.67

The Stratford Motor Inn prides itself on giving out a copy of Shakespeare with the Golden Bible. One of their advertisements for the Mermaid Tavern, part of the motor inn complex, reads "You are just a short drive from the lusty Elizabethan food and brew of the Mermaid Tavern and the music and merriment of The Pub."68 The Shakespeare Arms Restaurant, and The Bard Restaurant are two additional examples of the Elizabethan environment of the community of Stratford, Connecticut.

The Stratford theatre can boast of statewide tie-ins with not only popular audiences, schools, and local businesses, but industry as well. In 1966 The Industrial Council of the ASFT was formed in an attempt "to link Connecticut's industrial growth with its cultural growth."69 Mutually beneficial working relationships between business and the arts are presently being encouraged; companies have been
provided with the opportunity of demonstrating their interest in the
cultural advancement of the community.

The American Shakespeare Festival Theatre and Academy is now
eighteen years old. What was the dream of one man has become an
institution for an entire state. It is formally chartered by the
State of Connecticut, partially supported by foundations and private
contributions, and embraced by enthusiastic--and ever increasing--
audiences. John Dempsey, Governor of the State of Connecticut,
greeted the patrons of the ASFT with the following letter appearing in
the 1970 Souvenir Program. The letter, in part, best concludes this
discussion of the American Shakespeare Festival Theatre:

"Ladies and Gentlemen:

"The river nearby is the Housatonic, not the Avon, but the
town is Stratford, named for William Shakespeare's birth-
place in England, and every effort has been made here to
re-create the atmosphere in which Shakespeare's immortal
dramas first were presented more than three and a half
centuries ago.

"The American Shakespeare Festival Theatre and Academy is
an institution of culture and entertainment of which we
in Connecticut are very proud.

"John Dempsey"70
CHAPTER V: FOOTNOTES


4 Newman, op. cit., p. 4.

5 Ibid., p. 5.  6 Ibid., p. 7.

7 Ibid., p. 9.  8 Ibid., p. 14.

9 New York Shakespeare Festival Report (Published by the New York Shakespeare Festival, New York City, New York, 1971), p. 18.

10 Newman, op. cit., p. 23.


12 Ibid., p. 276.


15 Griffin, op. cit., p. 518.


17 Ibid., p. 21.


Ibid., p. 194.

"Joe Papp: Populist and Imperialist," op. cit., p. 70.


Ibid., p. 35.

And Then There's Free Shakespeare in the Park (Published by the New York Shakespeare Festival, New York City, New York), p. 3.


Ibid., p. 18.

Ibid., pp. 79-80.

And Then There's Free Shakespeare in the Park, op. cit., p. 1.

Webb, op. cit., p. 278.


Ibid.

Ibid., p. 8.

Ibid.


Newman, op. cit., p. 31.

Ibid., p. 127.

45 Newman, op. cit., p. 129.

46 Ibid., p. 129.

47 "Joe Papp: Populist and Imperialist," op. cit., p. 70.

48 Ibid., p. 70. 49 Newman, op. cit., p. 143.

50 Webb, op. cit., p. 264.


52 Ibid., pp. 8-9.

53 Griffin, op. cit., p. 441.

54 Webb, op. cit., p. 265.

55 Pertalion, op. cit., p. 6.

56 Griffin, op. cit., p. 442.


58 Griffin, op. cit., p. 442.


60 "0 for 2," Time Magazine (July 5, 1971), p. 57.

61 Beckerman, op. cit., p. 329.

62 1968 Program, Published by The American Shakespeare Festival Theatre and Academy, Stratford, Connecticut, 1968, p. 3.

63 1966 Program, Published by The American Shakespeare Festival Theatre and Academy, Stratford, Connecticut, 1966, p. 3.

64 1966 Souvenir Program, Published by The American Shakespeare Festival and Academy, Stratford, Connecticut, 1966, p. 29.


66 Ibid.


69. Ibid., p. 4.

70. 1971 Souvenir Program, Published by The American Shakespeare Festival Theatre and Academy, Stratford, Connecticut, 1971, p. 4.
American Shakespeare festival theatres have experienced consistent growth during the last fifteen years. Differences in leadership, varieties of playhouses, and varying means of financial support have not diminished either their collective importance or the evidence of the festival impulse they manifest. It is this festival impulse which serves as a major constant.

This chapter will conclude the discussion of the seven American Shakespeare festival theatres selected for study. One basis for selection has been the ability of each of these festivals to sustain production activity for a decade or more; and each is still active today. Yet, because a festival no longer exists does not make it a failure. One festival in this category, the now defunct Antioch Shakespeare Festival, deserves discussion in the conclusion of this chapter to illustrate this point.

1. Colorado Shakespeare Festival Theatre

A Shakespeare festival and a creative arts program. By the year 1958, the American Shakespeare festival movement was well under way. Festivals in California, Oregon, New York, and Connecticut had become traditions, enjoying the support of enthusiastic and ever increasing audiences. The University of Colorado had requested funds to subsidize
a coordinated Creative Arts Program. As described in the Colorado Shakespeare Festival 1966 Souvenir Program in an article entitled "Nineteen Years of Creative Arts":

The main objectives were to stimulate the intellectual-cultural climate of the campus during the summer months and to combine the artistic efforts of the departments of speech and drama, fine arts, women's physical education, and the College of Music.

The interdisciplinary program enjoyed continuous growth; eminent musicians and dancers, operas and Broadway musicals had become part of the Creative Arts Program. And in 1958 as another part of this program the Colorado Shakespeare Festival was introduced, after five years of planning. It utilized the outdoor Mary Rippon theatre, built in 1939, and George F. Reynolds, Professor Emeritus, served as the founder and director.

Generations of undergraduates at the University of Colorado had been charmed by Reynolds as a teacher. Indeed, Robert L. Perkins, writing of the Festival's first season in 1958, in "Shakespeare in the Rockies: A Happy Beginning," states, "No one person has done as much to cultivate a regional appreciation and hunger for Shakespeare as Dr. Reynolds himself." It was he who collaborated with University architects in 1939 to design the Mary Rippon Theatre, named after the first woman to teach at the university. A flexible outdoor theatre with a seating capacity of 983, it seemed especially effective for Shakespearean production—although no attempt had been made to duplicate Shakespeare's theatre. Perkins provides a detailed description of the theatre (see Figures 16, 17, 18) in Shakespeare Quarterly:
Figure 16. The Mary Rippon Theatre—
aerial view of amphitheatre.
Figure 17. The Mary Rippon Theatre--
panoramic view of stage area.
Figure 18: The Mary Rippon Stage--
view of downstage semicircular thrust.
The theatre is held in the 'U' between two wings of one of the principal classroom buildings. Beyond a walkway arched at either side, a second building, also in the University's dominant style of native pink sandstone and red tile, forms a backdrop. The playing area has two wide, deep grassed levels and a smaller semi-circular apron at the foot of the gently rising tiers of stone benches occupied by the audience. A low flagstone wall separates the apron 'pit' from the first level, and a graceful flight of steps rises to the ornamental doors of the backdrop building. Wings are provided by permanent shrubbery and trees, and by two half-height sandstone quarter-circles topped by woodbine at left and right. The stage is easily seventy-five feet in breadth, and its depth equals that of the 'house' itself.

Although the theatre had been in use for almost two decades for varying purposes before the Colorado Shakespeare Festival was formed, from the very first season productions effectively took advantage of the beauty of this handsome outdoor setting. The generous space complemented the pageantry and color of Elizabethan staging—a characteristic to be disputed by critics. "Actors played up and down, over and under the low wall, carrying the action to the front row of the audience and even a step or two up the aisles. For the most part, they made prodigious distances with poise and agility."

Both the stage and amphitheatre were designed to complement the architecture of surrounding buildings. Shrubbery, trees, and vines highlight the acting area and mask entrances. Robert Perkins wrote enthusiastically of such natural effectiveness:

Nature was more than kind to the first Colorado Shakespeare Festival, which opened August 2, a pleasant mile-high summer's evening, in the Mary Rippon Theatre on the campus of the University of Colorado in Boulder....Nature... proved so personal a presence that she actively and graciously participated, on cue, in the undertakings.... Sleepy sparrows hidden in the branches of one of the...
big Colorado blue spruces which grow upon the stage
remained courteously silent before and after, but
bestowed a rustling, chirping grief on Ophelia's
madness so appropriately that some playgoers sub­
sequently inquired if these could have been off­
stage sound effects...Nature deserved a listing
with the cast, or, at minimum, program credits.5

A unique addition was made in the spring of 1970 when Astroturf was
used to surface the mainstage, and pink concrete was added to other
stage areas.

**Formal educational tie-in.** From the very first, the CSF was
clearly delineated as an extension of the summer Creative Arts Program.
Over the next fifteen years this intent was to be refined and expanded.
Faculty members and students have served as directors, actors, and
staff. As a member of the University Resident Theatre Association,
the CSF has sought to bring in guest directors and actors to encourage
an interchange of skills and ideas between the University campus and
other schools. The fact that at the Colorado Shakespeare Festival
recipients of festival scholarships are required to enroll in summer
studies is notable. A 1971 festival flyer describes this tie-in:

Twenty cash grants from $300-500, lodging, a four-hour
tuition waiver, fees, and Blue Cross insurance will be
awarded to qualified actors on the basis of their
applications, recommendations, and auditions....
Recipients will be expected to attend the summer
session and may carry up to four hours of graduate or
undergraduate study.6

The summer Creative Arts Program offers courses in theatre, music,
dance, and fine arts with specific theatre and drama subjects being
offered by the Department of Communication and Theatre and the Depart­
ment of English. Special instruction in Elizabethan subjects
(costuming, fencing, drama) are of special interest to company members. The role of CSF in the overall University of Colorado picture is, in part, clarified by this statement of Eugene H. Wilson, President of University of Colorado:

As university after university is forced to examine its curriculum for relevance to the things which are happening in today's world, Shakespeare quickly establishes his universality once again. Perhaps it is only coincidence, or perhaps the major problems confronting civilizations are always the same, but our concerns for war, religion, politics, and the rights of man were issues which the Elizabethan society also faced.... And so the issues in Shakespeare's plays are our issues as well; and he speaks to us in terms we can understand.

The seasons 1965-1970: stability of production and modest growth. From the start, the CSF dealt with bold strokes. With its inaugural season in 1958 it employed the first repertory company in the entire Rocky Mountain region, chose ambitiously from the canon (Hamlet, Julius Caesar, The Taming of the Shrew), and staged three productions alternately in repertory for two weeks. (Although plans for future seasons included expanding the Festival to four or five weeks, this scheme never materialized.) Festival policy de-emphasized producing the entire Shakespearean canon in favor of stressing the generally popular single plays of the playwright. The staff was composed of experienced college theatre directors: J. H. Crouch, University of Colorado; Hal J. Todd, Idaho State College; and Gerald Kahan, Reed College.

The total attendance for the two-week premiere season was 7,000 persons. By 1965 it had grown to 11,695. Still, both the
Boulder and university communities did not seem to embrace the festival totally. In 1966 the three-play season was attended by 11,363, a small drop. But audience size could not go unnoticed the next season when in 1967 only 8,843 persons attended the season's fourteen performances. Ronald Willis, writing in *Shakespeare Quarterly* in an article entitled "Shakespeare in the Rockies," states:

> This reduction in audience size is disappointing for, whatever minor faults can be pointed to in the performances, it is abundantly clear that the Festival is doing consistently good work which deserves the attention of general theatre audiences as well as Shakespeare enthusiasts.

However the statistics began to take an encouraging turn, and in 1969 attendance had increased by almost a thousand from the 1967 slump. Further, the next season, 1970, claimed record attendance.

Why did audience attendance fluctuate so? Perhaps it could be a matter of the festival impulse—or lack of it. For, according to critics Ronald Willis, J. H. Crouch (a former director of the Festival), and John Willcoxon, writing in *Shakespeare Quarterly* and *Educational Theatre Journal* respectively, productions between the years 1966-1970 ranged from moderate to excellent, with few failures. Yet as any student of theatre is aware, productions of quality do not insure enthusiastic support, and less professionally polished presentations do not necessarily dissuade audience attendance. In fact other festivals, certainly the American Shakespeare Festival Theatre for one, have been able to increase audience size at the very moment their productions were the weakest critically. Obviously the populace finds something in well attended festivals worthy of their support; again,
the festival impulse.

The Colorado Shakespeare Festival appears to miss the very concept of a "total Shakespeare festival." While its amphitheatre is in an ideal climate for outdoor entertainment, it fails to capture any trace of the Elizabethan playhouse. Its stage encompasses an area over eighty feet in depth and more than a hundred feet across. Unlike the exciting multiple levels of the Globe's vertical design, the CSF's Mary Rippon Theatre is one of the most horizontal and visually unstimulating of festival stages despite its minimal levels and stairs. Secondly, and perhaps a natural outgrowth to the absence of an Elizabethan playhouse, is the absence of pre-play activities. There is no Dancing-on-the-Green, no strolling minstrel singers, no banbury tarts or spiced tea. Thirdly, there is an absence of a single leader or energy force. The CSF has enjoyed the support of a founder, George F. Reynolds, numerous visiting directors from universities across the country, as well as directors who are members of the school's faculty. It has also enjoyed the leadership of a producing director, Richard K. Knaub (1965-1972). But reviews of seasons in Shakespeare Quarterly and the Educational Theatre Journal, and evaluation of Festival Souvenir Programs and flyers indicate the absence of one figure, a singular leader, as commanding as a Joseph Papp or as confident as an Angus Bowmer.

A final factor which has perhaps most seriously handicapped the festival impulse of this festival theatre is its inability to actively involve the community at large. The search for a democratic audience has frequently begun with a student-audience program. And yet
the Colorado Shakespeare Festival's educational tie-in has been limited to the campus itself, its own host school. Both in its production philosophy and intent, and in festival flyers and programs, there is no mention of a concern to initiate high school students into festival activity. In regard to the community of Boulder, Colorado, there is an absence of the banners and buntings of Ashland, Oregon—a similar community. These factors—absence of a facsimile Elizabethan theatre, satellite activities, a singular leader, and community and educational tie-ins—make this, at least by comparison with other festivals, a weak example of true festival impulse.

The Colorado Shakespeare Festival still appears to lack the initiative of a three-dimensional festival impulse. Perhaps this following proclamation, appearing in the 1970 program book, can serve to kindle the sense of occasion and festivity which appears to be indigenous to the success of other American Shakespeare festival theatres. Governor John A. Love proclaims:

Whereas, the Colorado Shakespeare Festival has been an outstanding summer attraction sponsored by the Creative Arts Program of the University of Colorado for the past twelve years; and
Whereas, the Festival brings honor to the State of Colorado because of its contribution to the cultural life of the State, because of its educational value and because it has become an outstanding tourist mecca...; and
Whereas, three plays by William Shakespeare will again be presented in repertory in the Mary Rippon Theatre Under the Stars commencing on July 31 and continuing through August 16 of this year;
Now, therefore, I, John A. Love, Governor, do hereby proclaim the period of July 31 and continuing through August 16, 1970, as Colorado Shakespeare Festival Days.

II. The Champlain Shakespeare Festival

A deviant from a common denominator. As the conclusions of
this study will indicate, the American Shakespeare festival movement—
certainly as characterized by the representative operations selected
for this study—share a basic common denominator: a fundamental
festival impulse. The two festivals which deviate most significantly
from this festival thrust are, for some curious reason, connected with
universities: the University of Colorado and now the University of
Vermont.

The Champlain Shakespeare Festival was founded in 1959, just
one year after the Colorado Shakespeare Festival. It is the most
difficult to evaluate for there are no souvenir programs or photo­
graphs available from the Festival's publicity service. There are no
books or theses written about its history, as there are for other
festivals examined in this study. Even reviews of seasons appearing
in professional journals are modest in number. Although primary
sources—visits to the Festival and interviews with key personnel—
would have been a most helpful additional research tool, an adequate
discussion of the festival impulse, sense of occasion—or absence of
it--, and related subjects can be made; discussion will be modest and
conjecture limited.

The CSF: the smallest of the major festivals. Each festival
theatre discussed appears to have a built-in ceiling in terms of
where it could go with future growth. The "miniature" Globe of the
San Diego National Shakespeare Festival, seating 419, has been shown
to be the source of chronic box office problems; no matter how many
"S.R.O." performances they can claim they cannot meet the cost of
production. The Champlain Shakespeare Festival produced by the University of Vermont in Burlington, can claim an even smaller and more limiting theatre. The CSF employs a 250 seat, three-quarter-round arena stage housed in the University's Fleming Museum. This theatre, although lacking in all the extra attractions of the other festival theatres—e.g., the outdoors, Elizabethan facsimiles, park settings—has apparently proven an effective playhouse for productions, at least on a modest scale. While the production of Shakespeare's plays has not been advanced, in terms of the sense of the occasion factor, it has not been hampered.

Two different writers describe the theatre's effectiveness. Bandel, writing in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, states:

The festival theatre, with audience on three sides, makes use of a raised playing-area at the remaining end of the rectangle, with platforms leading down into a shallow hexagonal pit where much of the action takes place. Since there are only four tiers of seats, and since entrances are made down aisles between the onlookers, intimate theatre provides both opportunities and dangers.

Don Wilmeth, writing in the *Educational Theatre Journal* (October, 1969), describes this stage "in-action" during the 1969 summer season. He writes:

Each production utilized a permanent setting of platforms, providing several levels. At one end of the stage a scenic facade pierced by three openings was used principally to establish the tone or style of productions....Each production was quite traditional, but nevertheless solid, with clean-cut interpretations.

Finally, in the summer of 1970 a new permanent multi-level set, designed by W. M. Schenk, a M.A. from the Department of Speech (later to become the Department of Theatre) of The Ohio State University, was
utilized; it proved to be extremely workable and flexible.

Although lacking an exciting festival playhouse, the Champlain Shakespeare Festival has its compensatory features. Uniquely, the Champlain Festival boasts one of the few Equity companies playing in Vermont; the 1969 company consisted of twelve Equity performers, seven non-Equity actors, and eleven apprentices. Festival policy allows young actors, some of whom have previously played in other festivals in Oregon, Ohio, New York, and Connecticut, to essay major Shakespearean roles. The experiences of the play's directors are also varied: for the 1969 season Anthony Wiles, director of the Theatre Royal, Windsor, England, directed Richard the Third; William Davis, artistic director for the National Theatre Schools of Canada, directed The Winter's Tale; and Gerald E. Moses, assistant professor of drama at Syracuse University, served as the festival's artistic director and directed Othello.

Other production staff members—designers of scenery, lighting, and costume—have demonstrated a high level of achievement. A review of the summer 1969 season in Shakespeare Quarterly summarizes their joint efforts:

W. M. Schenk, scenic designer and technical director, who is also an assistant professor of theatre at the University of Vermont, achieved a remarkably effective setting for The Winter's Tale by constructing slender Gothic arches of iron around the playing area, arches through which the players passed as they moved from scene to scene. Much of the success of such a theatre must depend upon color, and Timothy Miller as costume designer and John Urban as lighting designer did much to bring the necessary color to the productions. The costumes, suggestive of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries without being historically exact, used deep, rich colors
and textures that, under proper lighting, gave variety and beauty to the plays.\textsuperscript{12}

Production policy and the Elizabethan Institute. The Champlain Shakespeare Festival, as the Colorado Shakespeare Festival, appears to be another example of "Shakespeare-in-the-university" as an extension of a university summer activity, disciplined by a definite working philosophy. Associate Professor Edward J. Feidner, currently the director of drama at the University of Vermont, has also served for a number of years as producer of The Champlain Shakespeare Festival, proving instrumental in carrying out festival policy. Betty Bandel, reviewing the 1969 season (\textit{Othello}, \textit{The Winter's Tale}, and \textit{Richard the Third}), summarized this production policy:

The University of Vermont's Champlain Shakespeare Festival conducted its eleventh season, adhering to its customary policy of attempting to present the plays of Shakespeare as Shakespeare himself, were he alive today, might want them to be presented. This is a policy which does honor to the Festival, to its audience, and to William Shakespeare. The assumption is that Shakespeare has something of lasting importance to say about our common human nature, and that an attempt to find out what he has to say, and how best to allow him to say it in a theatre, will permit directors and young professional actors to add a cubit to their stature.\textsuperscript{13}

Another element of the festival's policy is its provision to involve educators of the secondary grades. The CSF, together with its host school the University of Vermont, has conducted an Elizabethan Institute for high school teachers of English. Betty Bandel, writing in the \textit{Shakespeare Quarterly}, describes its nature:

The purpose of the Institute is to allow such teachers, under federal grant, to study Elizabethan arts other than literature, and to observe a professional company while it is rehearsing and performing Shakespeare.
Authorities on the various Elizabethan arts come from London, Washington, New York, and elsewhere to lecture on their specialities during the Institute, which is attended by about sixty teachers.

Production activity and audiences. A typical bill of plays selected for the six-week season at the CSF attempts to provide varied offerings: a tragedy, a comedy, and a history. Distinguished guest directors and Equity actors supplement personnel available from the University. Ghita Picoff describes the effectiveness of such a company during the 1970 season (Twelfth Night, Troilus and Cressida, Christopher Marlowe's Edward the Second). She states:

Each of the three productions came alive upon the Arena Theatre stage with a distinct and viable personality.... For each production effectively articulated a personality and reflected the talents of a skilled company and able directors.

Although the Festival has experienced artistic inconsistencies of success from one season to the next, the general level of artistic support from directors, actors, and designers strongly suggests integrity and a sense of direction. Betty Bandel reports that the Festival, drawing audiences from northern New England and adjacent areas of Canada, has enjoyed audiences filling the 250 seat theatre to ninety seven percent capacity.

A partial appraisal. The data available on this Festival are limited. The Champlain Shakespeare Festival has produced Shakespeare in a university setting for fourteen years. Its Equity based company—the only one in the state—stages three shows in six weeks in a rather small indoor 250 seat arena theatre. And although productions may vary in critical appraisal, audience attendance appears
consistently strong.

But it is difficult to accept the fact that this festival has, much like its sister university festival Colorado, done so little with the festival impulse. The absence of an outdoor theatre, a facsimile Elizabethan playhouse, satellite activities, pre-play entertainment and a total Burlington community involvement is unfortunately apparent. It would be interesting to re-evaluate the Festival's activities, personnel, and facilities in another few years in an effort to see if new directions have been explored. The Champlain Shakespeare Festival has maintained a thirteen year constant of artistry, purpose, and integrity; this itself is an achievement of worth in a decade of performing arts uncertainty.

III. The Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival

Lakewood, Ohio: the desire to produce Shakespeare. Located in a west-side suburb of Cleveland, Ohio, the town of Lakewood possesses an excellent school system, an old established social order, and an involved citizenry. Yet members of the community, in the early 1960's, were aware of its isolation from the more sophisticated cultural activity of Cleveland's East Side. The idea of using their huge, air-conditioned civic auditorium to fuller cultural potential was suggested by members of the community, and when the conservative faction rejected the idea of booking commercial road shows of 'warmed-over Broadway' into the theatre, some suggested the idea of developing a summer Shakespearean repertory season. Approval of the proposal was immediate, and the selection of a "singular leader" was
the next topic to be explored.

The name of Arthur Lithgow was mentioned, who had been responsible for producing the entire canon of Shakespeare in Ohio several years earlier at Antioch College's "Shakespeare-Under-the-Stars" program. As Lithgow was now, 1962, a lecturer in English at Princeton University and an Associate Producer of its McCarter Theatre, few members of the Lakewood community advisory committee thought he would have enough time to launch the Lakewood festival for the coming summer. Yet, somehow between Lithgow's first visit in the spring of 1962, and July 11, when the first play opened, community support was engaged, and the same widespread enthusiasm which encouraged the Stratford Ontario Festival to become a reality enabled massive amounts of work to be accomplished. With sheer determination, numerous committees overcame the complexities of festival management; and with Lithgow's leadership as Executive Director, an experienced company of Equity actors, many of whom had worked with Lithgow before, was assembled, emerging a few months later with a full season of plays (As You Like It, Othello, Henry IV, Parts I and II, and The Merchant of Venice.)

Most exciting was the way in which the community rallied to support the festival concept. A Great Lakes Shakespeare Association was formed with a membership unusually broad in its base. Not only were a Board of Trustees, Benefactors, Sponsors, Patrons, and Sustaining Members involved, but a most extensive Women's Committee was established. The duties of this committee ranged from ushering,
preparing opening night celebrations, and fund raising, to arranging a speaker's bureau and promoting ticket sales. It is not surprising that with this supportive machine ten local businessmen guaranteed an equity bond for the $55,750 needed to set the first season's budget. The 1971 Festival Program listed, among its many sponsors, the Lakewood Board of Education and Staff, the Lakewood Chamber of Commerce, the Ohio Arts Council, and numerous banks and loan institutions of Greater Cleveland. The endorsement of the Festival also included the Cleveland drama critics. Robert G. Shedd, former faculty member of The Ohio State University, writes of this in the Autumn, 1962 issue of Shakespeare Quarterly:

When the Lakewood Festival was first announced, Cleveland's drama critics greeted the news with a genuine enthusiasm tempered with incredulity that a 'cultural activity' could find sponsorship on Cleveland's West Side. This split between East Side where most of the city's cultural activity is centered, and the West Side is a fact of life in the Greater Cleveland area, and it was clear that much of the new Festival's success was dependent on publicists' effectiveness in attracting playgoers from outside the West Side suburban community.  

After Arthur Lithgow, as the singular leader, attracted a large potential audience from all areas of the community and recruited sound financial backing, he directed productions "that proclaimed his essential faith in the Shakespearean text," 17 and brought the Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival "from a promising venture to a reality." 18

In pursuit of the Elizabethan. Having conquered the problems of festival planning and community support, Lithgow was then faced with the problems of the Lakewood Civic Auditorium itself. Unlike his previous Shakespearean setting of Elizabethan intimacy in Antioch, the
Civic Auditorium was designed for a full symphonic orchestra; while acoustically perfect, it possessed a barnlike emptiness. Even when part of the auditorium was masked by draperies (partly to keep within Equity regulations relating to theatre size and actors' salaries), the platform arrangement of the stage proved unsatisfactory; scene shifting and entrances were awkward and long. A more effective stage would be needed for the next season.

It is not surprising that the scenic effects for the first season were relatively simple: a variety of platforms and levels and a large scrim backdrop. This arrangement was used for two reasons: first, Lithgow never liked elaborate scenic effects for Shakespeare, and second, the first season had to operate on a shoestring budget. In any event, the large concert-hall Civic Auditorium overpowered, at least scenically, productions requiring more intimate staging, creating an obvious psychological gulf between audience and actor.

The following season, 1963, Lithgow applied himself to resolving the limitations of the Festival's Civic Auditorium. Two immediate decisions resulted: more sophisticated lighting equipment was purchased and installed, and plans were made to design a "more flexible and aesthetically more satisfying superstage for the auditorium's yawning proscenium." Shedd describes in detail the unique quality of the new "Elizabethan" stage constructed in this oversized Civic Auditorium:

Whereas the unsatisfactory first-year efforts to use this stage had stressed horizontal lines by mounting large platforms on steel pipes, the new—我希望 permanent—superstage stressed the verticals. Essentially, the stage
is a reconstruction, slightly adapted for its new surroundings, of the superb skeletal-Globe framework which was used with such success in Yellow Springs, Ohio, for the Antioch Shakespeare Festival. Or, to put it another way, it is very like the stage which audiences have come to know so well in Stratford, Ontario....One gain with the new superstage was a combination of flexible open-staging with old-fashioned two-dimensional blocking required by the proscenium arch.

Figures 19 and 20 show two views of the modified 'Elizabethan' stage in use.

Audiences and a sense of occasion. At this point the Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival could boast of its singular leader, community support, and a modest Elizabethan facsimile stage. It remained to be seen if such composites could attract an audience representative of the Greater Cleveland Area. Robert G. Shedd summarizes the appeal of the ambitious opening season (Othello, Richard II, Henry IV, Parts I and II, and The Merchant of Venice):

There are no official statistics on the composition of the Festival's audience, but it is clear that many people from the East Side made their first journey to Lakewood in order to find trustworthy productions of Shakespeare. The parochialisms of Cleveland suburbs were healthily jolted by the Festival's level of excellence, and Lakewood's on the map at last, a fact that Lakewood's civic leaders are not likely to ignore in the future planning for the Festival.

Following the path of Joseph Papp and his New York Shakespeare Festival, Lithgow drew upon the potential of television and of the schools as a source of audience expansion. Shedd continues:

Before the Festival ended (September 9), substantial portions of two of its productions (Othello and As You Like It) had been taped by KYW, one of Cleveland's television stations....During the Festival's final
Figure 19: The Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival—panorama view of stage.
Figure 20: The Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival--tight view of stage.
week, Lakewood public schools reopened with special arrangements for 211 senior high school students to see Othello, and 1900 junior high students to see The Merchant of Venice.

As all this was accomplished in the first season, it is obvious that the Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival had moved swiftly in building its tradition of community support. It continued to refine areas of policy and build a wide-base audience. First, the student-audience program received especial attention. By the end of the inaugural season in 1962, special performances had been made available to approximately 4,000 Cleveland students who were sought as potential theatregoers. In the 1963 season over 20,000 students were reached. Secondly, plans to enlarge the audience base, to include the entire Greater Cleveland Area became a major "success" of the 1962 and 1963 seasons. Robert Shedd, writing "The Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival: Consolidation and Expansion," stated:

In its first year, the festival, which is housed in the Cleveland suburb of Lakewood, won most of its ardent support from the Greater Cleveland community. Lakewood's local planners recognized that it would be a mistake to adhere to any narrowly parochial insistence that the festival was to be uniquely Lakewood's responsibility. One important key to the successful management of the 1963 festival was, therefore, the decision to encourage a wider base of operation by soliciting support from outside Lakewood.

By 1971 the Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival had won its audiences. A total of sixty-nine schools from the Greater Cleveland area attended student performances of The Taming of the Shrew and Henry IV, Part I. The sense of occasion in attending the theatre at the GLSF includes numerous extra-dramatic activities. One example appears in the 1971 Festival Program. An advertisement reads: "Bring your family and
friends to the pre-theatre dinner and pre-curtain talks at the Rose Crown Inn (adjacent to the Auditorium). In addition to enjoying a buffet dinner, the participant has an opportunity to listen to lectures on given festival productions by critics, directors, and teachers. Another announcement encouraging "total participation" in the festival reads: "The Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival Woman's Committee proudly announces 'A Fun Affaire' at the beautiful West Side Market...Come One, Come All." Pre-play curtain talks and Fun Affairs, although perhaps not as exciting as "Dancing-on-the-Green" and strolling minstrels, does show evidence of a form of excitement and anticipation that is a component of the sense of occasion.

A change of singular leaders and continued seasons. A most important characteristic of the Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival is the clarity and force of its administrative machine. Within a matter of months of Arthur Lithgow's appointment as Executive Director of the Festival in 1962, he created a summer Shakespeare festival of five plays in a ten week season. In the first year he served in the time-consuming roles of producer, director, fund-raiser, and publicity chairman. By 1963 the singular leader enjoyed the support of a full-time publicity director and finance chairman. As theatre management procedures were reorganized and the Woman's Committee assumed more duties, a clearly structured festival machine was established. It is not surprising that, when Lawrence Carra took over as Producer-Director in 1966, the thrust of this festival--the desire to produce Shakespeare--successfully continued. Perhaps a main reason for a
smooth transition from one Producer-Director to another, mid-stream in the development of this festival, was that both men (Lithgow and Carra) were well-qualified, proven men of the theatre. Each man had previously demonstrated his effectiveness as a producer and leader.

The 1971 Festival Program describes Lawrence Carra's credentials:

He produced the famed Pulitzer Prize Playhouse of one-hour drama for ABC-TV in New York. A graduate of Harvard with a master's degree in drama from Yale, he has taught directing at the University of Texas, Northwestern, Stanford, and Columbia. Presently he is Professor of Drama at Carnegie-Mellon University.26

Over a decade of Shakespeare. Each of the American Shakespeare festival theatres discussed in this study enjoy a most important similarity; they have continued to produce the plays of Shakespeare in a summer festival setting for a decade or longer. A certain raw energy and integrity has certainly characterized the activities of this, the Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival. The five plays of the 1962 inaugural season were followed by six, in ten weeks, the following season: The Comedy of Errors, Romeo and Juliet, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Henry V, Julius Caesar, and Measure for Measure.

During the seasons 1965-1970, the GLSF continued to grow and develop. In 1965, the Festival's well-structured administrative machine enjoyed the addition of a newly appointed General Manager, Norman Israel, who assumed all responsibility for box office matters. Now with an "air of total professionalism" Lithgow became the Festival's Artistic Director, staging three productions himself and acting in others. Moreover, taking advantage of his position of Executive Director of Princeton's McCarter Theatre, Lithgow formed an interesting
cooperative production program between Lakewood and Princeton.

Robert Shedd describes the nature of this program:

Through a closer relationship between Princeton's McCarter Theatre and the Lakewood festival, only three of this year's six productions were rehearsed entirely here. Macbeth (the opener) and the two non-Shakespearean programs were transferred from the McCarter's spring season; the other three productions (Henry VI, Coriolanus, and A Midsummer Night's Dream) were mounted here and polished for possible transfer to McCarter's autumn repertory. While the sharing of production costs is a great asset, the most important gain is the increase in productive rehearsal time.27

The year 1965 also witnessed the debut of non-Shakespearean drama. Planners, strongly influenced by the Stratford, Ontario Festival's increasing reliance on non-Shakespearean drama, added Molière's The School for Wives and Chekhov's A Marriage Proposal (as a double bill), and Sheridan's The Rivals to the season. Their ensuing success indicated "that future festivals will build around Shakespeare, rather than concentrate on his works exclusively."28 In the following seasons, 1966-1971, over thirty productions were mounted with the plays of Shakespeare obviously dominating.

The Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival has emerged as a cooperative enterprise, a community resource of and for the people of Lakewood and the Greater Cleveland Area. Now in its eleventh season, the Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival can look back at its history of over a decade. Such a retrospective appraisal was made in the 1971 pre-season flyer:

This season marks the tenth anniversary of the Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival. Since 1962, when the Festival began, the people of Greater Cleveland, northeastern Ohio, and surrounding areas have generously given the support that has enabled the Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival not only
to continue, but to grow to the stature of one of the
major Shakespearean events in the United States. Our
appreciation, however, will not be shown by looking
back at past success, but by looking forward to what
we hope will be the best season to date. 29

IV. The Antioch Shakespeare Festival

The Antioch moment. In an earlier chapter, "A Basic Concern,"
two moments of theatre history were discussed: the Athenian and
Elizabethan. These moments were characterized by a high level of
artistic achievement, community involvement, stability, and a general
mood of excitement for productions. With such a definition in mind,
the theatre activity of the Antioch Area Theatre at Yellow Springs,
Ohio, between the years 1952-1957 comes very close to meriting the
label of a "moment" of theatre history. The initial significance,
the subsequent expansion and achievement, and a final appraisal of the
Antioch Shakespeare Festival will occupy the following pages.

Initial significance. The Antioch Area Theatre's "Shakespeare-
Under-the-Stars" established its importance in its very first season,
1952. Louis Marder's appraisal of this season appeared in
Shakespearean Quarterly article (January, 1953) entitled "History
Cycle at Antioch College." He writes of Antioch's grand repertories:

English history as only Shakespeare could write it came to
thrilling life last summer when the Antioch Area Theatre at
Yellow Springs, Ohio, in conjunction with Antioch College,
presented the completed cycle of history plays. For eight
weeks the plays were presented in repertory form, but in
the two final weeks of the ten-week season (July 1 to
September 7) the great significance of the impressive
cycle was revealed. In two Grand Repertories the eight
plays--three parts of Henry VI had been fused into one
play--were staged in chronological order in six evenings
and two matinee performances. Never in the United States
and only once in England under Frank Benson in 1906 at Stratford, had the plays been so presented; and Benson did only the two tetralogies, excluding King John and Henry VIII. 30

Impressively, the budget averaged a mere $300 per play.

This true Grand Repertory was the result of close cooperation of three men working together. Professor Arthur Lithgow of Antioch College conceived the idea of presenting the cycle in successive performances and was assisted by Professors Meredith Dallas and Paul Treichler. To accomplish the aim—which demanded a production schedule in which as one play was being performed, another was being rehearsed, and lines for a third were being memorized—required an atmosphere of general production agreement, which Marder describes:

By working closely with each other, they achieved a notable unity of conception. The plays were presented not only as individual dramas but also as a historical sequence reflecting what was apparently Shakespeare's intention. Through contrast of rise and fall, usurpation and retribution, divine right and honest strength, we saw a continuity of life and monarchy that was above and beyond the death of the individual kings. 31

The results of this rapport among artistic directors resulted in maximum benefits to the festival, to individual productions, the audience, and certainly to the cause of Shakespearean revival. Further, the logistics of mounting the cycle in grand repertory encouraged true Elizabethan staging. With the exception of a single decorated scrim for the upper stage in Henry VIII, a few curtains for inner and upper stages, and basic chairs, tables, and thrones, no scenery was employed on the outdoor stage. Marder says of this,

"Shakespeare gains a great deal in significance from such performances,
and for producers to declare that audiences want spectacle is to say that the performances at Antioch...are failures, which they decidedly are not.32

**Festival impulse: enthusiastic expansion and achievement.**

The first season of Antioch's "Shakespeare-Under-the-Stars" was in itself a most significant achievement, with its grand repertory of eight histories in ten weeks, but each of the next few years contributed to the Festival's record of expansion and achievement. Omar Ranney's appraisal, "Antioch Shakespeare Festival," of the early years of the Antioch Festival appeared in the Summer, 1955, issue of Shakespeare Quarterly. Among the number of conclusions he reached about the festival, then in its third year, was that it was a success both economically and artistically. He stated:

The festival has been eminently successful, both from the attendance standpoint and from the measure of its artistic achievement. It is professional and self supporting. All major speaking roles are handled by professional actors, most of whom have extensive off-Broadway, stock, radio, and TV credits....During the past summer, this entire company, including the apprentices, was paid.33

Antioch College sponsored the Festival by guaranteeing the payment of its expenses; and the Festival soon emerged as a successful investment. Ranney states:

At the outset in 1952, the college advanced some preliminary funds, all of which were paid back at the end of the season. Again in 1954, Antioch invested $18,000 in staging, equipment, and grandstands. The loan was to be retired out of theatre income during the remaining three seasons. However, a seventy-eight percent increase in attendance made it possible to repay the entire amount at the close of the 1954 series. During the past summer, the festival broke even.34
Perhaps of greatest importance in discussing the Antioch Shakespeare Festival is the coming together of faculty, audience, and community, resulting in strong and enthusiastic attendance and participation. Omar Ranney observes that:

Arthur Lithgow, associate professor of English at Antioch, has been managing director of the festival since its start, providing the basic continuity of the undertaking. At some time or other almost every member of the college faculty has taken part in Shakespeare mob scenes. It is not unusual to see a full professor carrying a spear.

In addition to the participation of Antioch faculty members, early Festival productions encouraged the appearance of local shopkeepers, clerks, and gentlemen farmers. The interest in both the Festival and Shakespeare resulted in a total attendance of 37,652 spectators in the summer of 1955, more than double the first season's attendance of 15,000.

Not to be neglected is the unique quality of the flexible Antioch stage, and the ambitious repertory. Ranney gives concise descriptions of each; first the stage:

The plays are given outdoors on the college campus on a multi-level stage which has been erected against the backdrop of 100-year-old Antioch Hall. The stage is sixteen feet high, sixty feet wide, and about thirty feet deep. The audience sits on three sides of the front apron stage in a semi-arena arrangement. Seating is provided for 950, and capacity crowds are the rule, although the community of Yellow Springs has a population of only 2,500.

Second, the repertory, an accomplishment unequalled by any other Shakespeare festival:

The first year of the festival, the theatre did the Chronicle Plays (King John, Richard II, Henry IV, Parts One and Two, Henry V; three parts of Henry VI
condensed into one play, Richard III and Henry VIII). In the second year they followed with the Greek and Roman plays (Andronicus, Julius Caesar, and Anthony and Cleopatra). In the 1954 season, the Romantic Comedies and Tragedies were staged—Taming of the Shrew, Two Gentlemen of Verona, Romeo and Juliet, Midsummer Night's Dream, Merchant of Venice, Othello, and The Tempest. For the next summer the festival has planned the completion of its five-year plan with staging of the Rationalistic or Stylistic Plays—Comedy of Errors, Love's Labour's Lost, Much Ado About Nothing, Hamlet, All's Well That Ends Well, Measure for Measure, and King Lear.

This unique Antioch "experiment" is in certain ways superior to others; in a five year period, 1952-1957, the entire canon of Shakespeare was produced. The experience is appraised by Robert G. Shedd in "Shakespeare at Antioch, 1957: Past Record and Present Achievement:"

Many lessons were to be learned during this period, not only by actors and directors, but by audiences as well. Indeed, a pervasive sense of discovery gave those first years a special excitement felt by everyone who found his way to this small Ohio town.... Every season we learned anew the strengths and weaknesses of repertory companies. Watching promising newcomers learning from more experienced hands in a breathtaking variety of roles, hearing actors achieve a feeling for Shakespeare's lines, Antioch audiences learned how Elizabethans undoubtedly followed Shakespeare and his acting fellows.... Most important everyone ultimately grasped the coherence amidst complexity which the entire canon represents.

The experiments ends: the moment disappears. The successful production of all of Shakespeare's plays may be a common ambition, but the accomplishment is rare. Once achieved, however, participants may feel new directions must be then explored. By 1956 the challenge of the canon had been met at Yellow Springs, Ohio, and the Festival embarked on a more modest, and perhaps disappointing schedule. Robert
G. Shedd describes this in detail:

That the experiment would one day end may have crossed audience's minds those first years, but full realization hit only when the Festival staff last year (1956) began polling for suggested Festival futures. Proposals ranged widely: from repeating the canon chronologically or repeating particular seasons...to embarking on the complete Sophocles or Moliere or Shaw. 39

Briefly, what resulted appeared a compromise: a "new Lyric Company would offer 'music dramas' by Britten, Stravinsky, Weill, and Bernstein; a Shakespeare Company would produce four popular successes from the first four seasons--plays which the Festival had not yet presented in Toledo." 40 (Toledo was the second location of the expanded Antioch Festival.) Directorial assignments were restructured: Lithgow was to direct the Lyric Theatre, and Ellis Rabb would serve as Artistic Director of the Shakespeare Company. Although the company and the directors remained of fine caliber, the character of Antioch productions, albeit still high in quality, began to change. By the end of the 1957 season, the Festival appeared to be drifting; further, Arthur Lithgow announced his plans to leave Antioch College and join the English Department of Princeton University.

"Shakespeare-Under-the-Stars" was no longer a working philosophy, a festival impulse. Yet its five years of existence offered unique theatre and definite community support under the leadership of Arthur Lithgow. Its outdoor stage, Elizabethan production style, and scope of accomplishment excited the populace of this century as Shakespeare himself did many centuries before. The Elizabethan moment had been revisited.
CHAPTER VI: FOOTNOTES


3. Ibid., p. 556.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p. 555.


13. Ibid., p. 469.


17. Ibid., p. 559.

18. Ibid., p. 560.

Ibid., p. 456.


Ibid.

Shedd, *op. cit.*, p. 455.


Ibid.

Ibid., p. 2.


Ibid.

"Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival Tenth Season." Brochure published by the Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival, Lakewood, Ohio, 1971.


Ibid.

Ibid., p. 58.


Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 454.

Shakespeare in America: a festival setting. As the American Shakespeare festival theatre movement gained momentum in the 1950's, the playwright himself provided the dominant constant. His plays and his playhouse, perhaps on varying levels of fidelity and interpretation, continue to color the festivals with a specific character and focus. Robert Whitehead, in his article "American Festival Fundamentals," appearing in the June, 1960 Theatre Arts, observed:

Festivals are generally shaped by what is happening in the professional theatre, and because Shakespeare, more than any other writer who ever lived, possesses all the elements the professionals wanted to blend--lyricism, classicism, vitality and emotional honesty--the emphasis on his works was another logical consequence.

As the American Shakespeare festival movement continued to gain force, American theatre audiences demonstrated their enthusiasm. Articles appearing in popular magazines bore such titles as "The Bard's Back" (Newsweek), "Shakespeare Explosion; Summer Events" (Reader's Digest), "Summer Circuit; Riding with Shakespeare" (Newsweek), and "Grand Season for Shakespeare" (Life). And in increasing numbers, new entries have continued to appear and disappear. Festivals are no longer limited to cities such as Stratford, New York, or Ashland, but have in recent years appeared in places such as Cedar City, Utah; Phoenix, Arizona; Lawrence, Kansas; and Washington, D.C.
Importance of festivals: new audiences. What methods may be used to measure the importance and significance of American Shakespeare festival theatres? Perhaps one method is to examine the objectives of each of the seven festivals selected for discussion in this study:

American Shakespeare Festival Theatre

To bring the American public the plays of Shakespeare and other classic authors produced under the highest possible professional standards with the fine ensemble playing of a continuing repertory company.²

Champlain Shakespeare Festival

To give young actors the opportunity of appearing in major Shakespearean roles over an extended period; to present Shakespeare's plays in honest, straight-forward manner.³

Colorado Shakespeare Festival

To present a comedy, a history, and a tragedy each season on an open stage and in costumes appropriate to the period in a manner best for the poetry and the drama.⁴

Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival

To produce the current repertory of Shakespearean plays on a presentational, multi-level platform unit, with a unity of costuming and decorative design not in exact period detail, but in an artistic concept intended to enhance the force of the text.⁵

New York Shakespeare Festival

To make the classics psychologically understandable to contemporary audiences within the style of the writing.⁶

Oregon Shakespeare Festival

To present Shakespeare's plays in the manner their writer intended, on the type of stage for which he wrote.⁷
San Diego National Shakespeare Festival

To present the finest performances of the plays of William Shakespeare in the world in the only functioning replica of the original Globe Playhouse.

While differing individually in their objectives, the festivals collectively make a statement of significance. As "permanent" institutions—ten, twenty, and even thirty years in the making—they all share the same overriding concern: the desire to produce Shakespeare in a festival setting. That this goal has been fulfilled cannot be disputed. Henry Hewes could boast in an April 4, 1964 article in the Saturday Review that "more people will see Shakespeare performed during his 400th anniversary year than saw his plays during his entire lifetime."

It is this popular audience that emerges as the single most important characteristic of the American Shakespeare festival movement. Shakespeare was a "public dramatist, addressing himself to the demands of a widely representative audience." He apparently continues to so address himself in the twentieth century, in the middle of a performing arts dilemma in which general contemporary theatre has captured only three per cent of the population of its audience. Robert Whitehead treated the factor of the audience composition:

Another truth that must be grasped by those who would establish a festival, and keep it in operation, is that there can be no festival without an audience. The prime object of a festival cannot be to see how cultured, how poetic, how beautiful one can be, any more than one can conceive a successful program by thinking solely in terms of financial statements....No theatre or festival ever achieved success because a few people decided to be serious or cultivated. The first task is to put on an excellent program that will attract an audience."
The festivals' success in winning this democratic audience is demonstrated by the support of the foundations.

Chapter 10, "Building Greater Appreciation," of the Rockefeller Panel Report concerned itself with the need for the performing arts to "assume greater responsibility for building appreciation of the arts among youth." Both the New York Shakespeare Festival and the American Shakespeare Festival Theatre are praised for building youth audiences, the basic starting point for luring a popular audience. Whereas methods of financial support vary among American Shakespeare festival theatres, it remains true that the larger festivals profit not only by winning their audiences through subscription campaigns, but also as recipients of foundation support. Between the years 1956-1965 the Ford Foundation awarded a total of $699,800 to the American Shakespeare Festival Theatre; and the student audience program was one of the major reasons for this grant.

Festival fundamentals: why have festivals worked. The Athenian and Elizabethan moments shared in common similar characteristics; theatre-going was an enjoyable, important, community experience. To the Greek or Elizabethan citizen, theatre was not a social appendage, extraneous and dispensable; rather, it was an organic extension of his life, thought, and sense of community. The audience was truly heterogeneous simply because the theatre experience was pleasurable, important, and thought provoking. Qualities indigenous to the Athenian and Elizabethan moments are: celebration, community, festival, ritual, and a sense of occasion.
Centuries later, similar qualities began to appear when the "festival impulse" began to be evident in the activities of English and Canadian Shakespeare festival precursors. Those attributes might be labeled "festival fundamentals," a phrase used by Robert Whitehead in his 1960 *Theatre Arts* article. First, in each case a community demonstrated the desire to celebrate a man, namely William Shakespeare, and his dramas, as the classic theatre of the English-speaking world. Second, each American Shakespeare festival theatre has had its singular leader. As England has had a David Garrick, Charles Edmond Flower, and F. R. Benson, most American festival theatres have had a Joseph Papp, Angus Bowmer, or Arthur Lithgow. Third, the successful search for a democratic audience has been a remarkable accomplishment of American Shakespeare festivals. Their audience—as that of the Athenian and Elizabethan moments—was and is representative of the entire community. Certain Shakespeare festival theatres continued to attract audiences even when critical acclaim for productions was lacking. For some curious reason, audiences still went to the festival theatre.

Not all American Shakespeare festival theatres have had facsimile Elizabethan playhouses, nor foundation support, nor in some cases a dominant singular leader. But in almost every case, the festival theatres have had the presence of the fourth element of the festival impulse—community involvement, and involvement going beyond the specific concern of actors and directors and intellectuals. Robert Whitehead wrote of such community involvement:
Of course there are other groups besides the theatre professionals who are involved in the inception of a festival. The idea of a summer theatre festival has a variety of appeals. There are local businessmen, for example, who think that a festival will bring money. To some proponents, the appeal of such a festival is its intellectual glamour and social elevation. Each of the groups has a definite point of view, which is seldom shared—or even understood—by others. But it is amazing how they finally get together when the chips are down. \[13\]

The community similarly appears to enjoy not only planning for the festival but also partaking of the festival's multiple appeals in final form. Although not all the festivals offer the diversities of "Dancing-on-the-Green," strolling minstrels, banbury tarts, or other pleasant trappings of Merrie Olde England, each does conjure a sense of occasion, a special element lacking in general theatre activity. Once such element is the excitement aroused by watching theatre amidst parks and greenery, the outdoors and summer. Five of the seven festivals examined in the study could be characterized by this description Julius Novick presents of three summer festivals in his article "Much Ado About Shakespeare," appearing in Harper's magazine:

Among these theatres, several base the activities upon a momentous discovery first made, perhaps, at Stratford-upon-Avon in England. It has been found there that the desire of men and women for greenery and fresh air in the hot months can be conveniently yoked with their desire for dramatic art, by means of classically oriented theatres pleasantly located amidst trees and lawns. This discovery, combined with Shakespeare's position as the greatest and most popular of dead dramatists, has resulted in the summer Shakespeare festivals— notably the NYSF in Central Park, Manhattan; and the ASFT, and Academy at Stratford, Connecticut; and the Stratford Shakespearean Festival Foundation of Canada at Stratford, Ontario. \[14\]

Perhaps it is upon such basic bedrock as a universal enjoyment of the
outdoors that festival success is in part founded.

Festivals revisited: other studies. An attempt has been made to step back and take a broad macrocosmic view of American Shakespeare festival theatres, and, more specifically, to consider why they have appeared to attract audiences, expand facilities and repertory at the very time the performing arts have experienced a dilemma in audience recruitment and funding. In simplest terms the festivals appear to possess a certain composite of several elements comprising the festival impulse, which enables them to emerge as vital community resources.

A sincere appreciation of the materials of academic research forces this writer to recognize certain limitations inherent in the present study. By selecting festivals as distantly located as Oregon, Vermont, California, New York, Connecticut, and Ohio, a certain dimension is lost as modest amounts of time and money prevented visits to all. Research relied heavily on information available in books, journals, and periodicals. The larger festivals were most helpful in supplying extensive festival materials including souvenir programs, brochures, and photographs.

There are at least four other tangential studies that could be developed from this study. In order of their importance they are:

1) an analysis of the methods of festival financial support using more sophisticated business management techniques (i.e., considering major contribution sources, major foundation support, cost and income of subscription campaigns, deficits, and expenses of property
maintenance); (2) an in-depth analysis of the general assignments and composition of production and administrative staffs, considering names, numbers, profiles of artistic directors, production directors, designers, actors, general managers, public relation teams, and directors of publicity; (3) an evaluation of the repertory and activities, considering seasons, relationship of Shakespearean to non-Shakespearean productions, and satellite events of concerts, exhibits, lectures, dates and number of performances; and lastly, (4) a detailed iconographic study of theatres considering architects, equipment, seating capacities, and general stage characteristics.

It is difficult to bring this study to a close, because it has lit this writer's spark of enthusiasm and respect for many singular leaders and festival communities. However, in each case William Shakespeare--his theatre and his plays--upstages all else. Robert Whitehead shares this enthusiasm for the definitive figure of the American Shakespeare festival movement. Let this, his statement, be the study's closing comment:

What may seem remarkable, however, is the predominance of festivals based on, or devoted to Shakespeare. Up and down the eastern part of North America, at Stratford, Ontario, and Stratford, Connecticut, at the Champlain Shakespeare Festival in Vermont and in Central Park in New York City, across the country in Arizona, at the Phoenix Little Theatre Shakespeare Festival, at San Diego's National Shakespeare Festival and in Ashland, Oregon, where the Oregon Shakespeare Festival has reached its twentieth season, a great playwright, dead these three and a half centuries, is the festival's focal point.
CHAPTER VII: FOOTNOTES


3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., p. 19.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.


11 Whitehead, op. cit., p. 63.


13 Whitehead, op. cit., p. 51.


15 Whitehead, op. cit., p. 52.
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