

BBC

SHAKESPEARE ON TRIAL!

A MUSICAL PLAY FOR SCHOOLS
CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND WORKS
OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

BY
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MUSIC BY BARRY GIBSON



CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE:

Scene 1

JUDGE 1 (F)
JUDGE 2 (M)
JUDGE 3 (F)
USHER (M)
SHAKIE (M)
'WAYNE' [or other name] (M)
'CHERYL' [or other name] (F)

Scene 4

ANTONIO (M)
SHYLOCK (M)
PORTIA / BALTHAZAR (F)
ATTENDANTS (M/F, non-speaking)

Scene 5

JOHN SHAKESPEARE (M)
MARY ARDEN-SHAKESPEARE (F)

Scene 6

YOUNG SHAKESPEARE (M)
TEACHER (M/F)

Scene 8

ANNE HATHAWAY (F)

Scene 9

QUEEN ELIZABETH I (F)

Scene 10

VENDORS (M/F, non-speaking)
ACTORS (M/F, non-speaking)

Scene 11

KING RICHARD II (M/F)
KING HENRY IV (M/F)
KING HENRY V (M/F)
KING HENRY VI (M/F)
KING RICHARD III (M/F)

Scene 12

FOOTBALLER (M)

Scene 13

ROBERT GREEN (M)
FRANCIS MERES (M)

Scene 14

MACBETH (M)
LADY MACBETH (F)

Scene 15

PUBLIC EXECUTIONER (M/F)

Scene 16

PLAGUE VICTIM 1 (M/F)
PLAGUE VICTIM 2 (M/F)

Scene 17

TITANIA (F)
OBERON (M)
BOTTOM (M)

Scene 18

WITCH 1 (F/M)
WITCH 2 (F/M)
WITCH 3 (F/M)

Scene 19

PROSPERO (M)
ARIEL (F)

Scene 20

KING JAMES I (M/F)

SHAKESPEARE ON TRIAL!

The script is written for a set which has a 'stage', in front of which is a 'performance space'. The 'stage' should be thought of as being in two sections: upstage and centre-stage comprise the courtroom; downstage 'another world' in which excerpts from Shakespeare's plays are performed.

During these excerpts the 'performance space' fills with the standing theatre-goers, known as 'groundlings'. At other times the space will be used for songs and / or movement elements.

Although not essential, it would add to the staging if the courtroom, downstage and the performance area could be separately lit. Some lighting effects are suggested. In keeping with Shakespearian tradition, stage directions are fluid - more hints than directions! Entrances could be as indicated, or by having characters come up on to stage from the Ensemble.

Costumes can be as simple or as complex as desired - likewise props. The script details only the elements which are essential.

Scene 1: The Celestial Courtroom

The courtroom has three seats on a raised dais, upstage centre. These will be occupied by the three JUDGES throughout the play. In front of them is a bench (trestle table) upon which they rest their reports. Centre-stage right are two lecterns (music stands), used by SHAKESPEARE ('SHAKIE') and PORTIA during the play. SHAKIE's lectern has a small bell on it. Centre-stage left is another lectern, used by 'witnesses'.

Blackout. Then the sharp crack of a judge's gavel.

USHER: Silence in the Celestial Court!

AUDIO CUE 1: THE CELESTIAL COURTROOM

Lights up on the dais. JUDGES 1, 2 and 3 enter and take their seats. Their ethereal nature is suggested by their white capes and white hats. At the side, upstage left is the scruffy, dishevelled USHER. As the music ends...

JUDGE 1: Call William Shakespeare!

USHER: (*Echoes, for show*) Call William Shakespeare!

Broaden lighting to show SHAKIE lying on the floor downstage, hands together as if in prayer; a quill is between them.

SHAKIE: (*Awaking from 400-year sleep*) Er ... ooh. That's me.

JUDGE 1: William Shakespeare! You have now been dead for four hundred years.

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SHAKIE: As long as that? I don't believe it!

JUDGE 2: That was no lie! You're not being tricked!

JUDGE 3: In sixteen-sixteen the bucket you kicked!

SHAKIE: And ... you woke me up to tell me that?

JUDGE 1: No. We woke you up to put your work on trial! Place the defendant in the dock!

USHER bustles forward, helps SHAKIE to his feet and leads him across to one of the lecterns centre-stage right.

JUDGE 1: William Shakespeare, four hundred years after your death your work is accused of being boring and out of date. How do you plead?

SHAKIE: Not guilty!

JUDGE 2: Innocent, you say? *(To Judge 1)* Hah! He wants us to know...

JUDGE 3: That he's as pure as the driven snow!

SHAKIE: Yes, I am! And by the way *(Jangles bell loudly)* 'Pure as the driven snow' is one of my lines. I used it in my play *Hamlet*. And *The Winter's Tale*.

JUDGE 1: Quiet, Shakespeare! *(To Judges 2 and 3)* Would you believe he's as dead as a doornail?

SHAKIE: *(Bell, quieter but loud enough to be heard clearly)* 'Dead as a doornail'. Mine. *Henry the Sixth*...

JUDGE 1: *(Ignoring him)* Enough!

SHAKIE: All right, but who says my work is boring and out of date?

JUDGE 1: *(Points at audience)* Apart from a lot of them? *(Points at WAYNE and CHERYL as they enter)* They do.

WAYNE and CHERYL enter the enactment space, downstage left. Use alternative names for the two pupils as you wish. They are wearing school tops, and carry copies of Shakespeare's plays which they open with an exaggerated sigh. They also have mobile phones in their pockets.

CHERYL: *(Sighs)* Shakespeare homework.

WAYNE: *(Groans)* Don't remind me.

CHERYL: Maybe there's a web site that will help.

WAYNE: Oh, I do hope so...

They pull out their phones and begin to use them. Following dialogue as they do so...

CHERYL: Shakie...

WAYNE: Shakie...

CHERYL: Is it us?

WAYNE: Or is it you?

CHERYL: What's it all about?

BOTH: We haven't got a clue!

The opening instrumental to the song 'Shakie! Shakie!' begins, WAYNE and CHERYL, still looking at their phones, move to the performance area to join the ENSEMBLE.

Scene 2: Song - 'Shakie! Shakie!'

AUDIO CUE 2: BACKING TRACK FOR 'SHAKIE! SHAKIE!'

During the opening instrumental the ENSEMBLE march in to the performance area. If later costume changes are possible, then the members of the ensemble will all be dressed as modern pupils, in school tops. If not, they'll be in costume. They sing the chorus for the first time while on the move, but are in their final positions for the start of the song proper.

*Shakie! Shakie! Is it us or is it you?
What's it all about? We haven't got a clue!
Shakie! Shakie! Is it us or is it you?
What's it all about? We haven't got a clue!*

*William Shakespeare -
He wrote a lot of plays...
But should they leave us
Feeling in a daze? (Mime: shaking of head)*

*Shakie! Shakie! Is it us or is it you?
What's it all about? We haven't got a clue!
Shakie! Shakie! Is it us or is it you?
What's it all about? We haven't got a clue!*

*Some were hist'ries
With kings of yester-year...
But should they leave us
Bored and full o' tears? (Mime: crying)*



*Shakie! Shakie! Is it us or is it you?
What's it all about? We haven't got a clue!
Shakie! Shakie! Is it us or is it you?
What's it all about? We haven't got a clue!*

Sad plays, funny plays
Romances as well...
But should they leave us
Praying for the bell? (*Mime: praying*)

*Shakie! Shakie! Is it us or is it you?
What's it all about? We haven't got a clue!
Shakie! Shakie! Is it us or is it you?
What's it all about? We haven't got a clue!*

*Shakie! Shakie! Is it us or is it you?
What's it all about? We haven't got a clue!
Shakie! Shakie! Is it us or is it you?
What's it all about? We haven't got a clue!*

During this final rendition of the chorus the ENSEMBLE should begin moving again, ending in their final positions in the performance space in front of the stage.

Closing instrumental. ENSEMBLE turns to face the stage.

*Ba ba ba ba, Ba ba ba ba,
Ba ba ba ba, Ba ba ba ba,*

Shakie! Shakie! And it's true!

ENSEMBLE sits.

Scene 3: The 'Bore-o-Meter'

SHAKIE: (*To Judges*) So who is going to decide if my work is boring and out of date? You three?

JUDGE 1: No. (*Points out at the audience*) Them!

JUDGE 2: And this.

JUDGE 3: Bring in the Bore-o-Meter!

The USHER brings in an essential prop: a Bore-o-Meter. (It will help with movement if it's on wheels). This Bore-o-Meter is a tall graduated measure, like the sort of thing used to indicate progress in raising funds towards some target. Instead of numbers, however, it has graduations clearly marked – from bottom to top – SNORE, YAWN, SIGH, SO-SO, NOT BAD, HEY! COOL! WOW! A large sliding arrow indicates position. It is pointing at the very bottom, just below 'Snore'. It will be operated by the scruffy USHER.



SHAKIE: A Bore-o-Meter? I've heard of a barometer, but what is a Bore-o-Meter?

JUDGE 1: A barometer measures the level of barometric pressure.

JUDGE 2: A Bore-o-Meter measures the level of boredom.

JUDGE 3: And as of now, you're down at er...

USHER: (*Points at the arrow*) Snoredom!

USHER moves the Bore-o-Meter upstage. It will be moved down whenever its reading is changed.

SHAKIE: Boredom? Snoredom? I want to call a witness for the defence! Three witnesses, in fact.

JUDGE 1: Permission granted.

SHAKIE: From my play, *The Merchant of Venice* - call Antonio, Shylock and Balthazar!

USHER: Call Antonio, Shylock and - who?

SHAKIE: Balthazar!

USHER: Call Bat -, Baz -, er ... and the other one!

Scene 4: The Merchant of Venice

ANTONIO, SHYLOCK and PORTIA (aka BALTHAZAR) enter centre-stage left. Simple 'Venetian-style' dress, but PORTIA must have a moustache and wear a lawyer's hat or wig (both of which she will remove later). ANTONIO and SHYLOCK move directly downstage. PORTIA goes to the witness lectern. JUDGES 1, 2 and 3 read from summary reports in front of them as indicated by the text.

JUDGE 1: According to our reports on this play, Master Shakespeare, (*Reads*) Shylock does not like Antonio.

SHYLOCK: I hate you, Antonio.

JUDGE 2: And Antonio is no friend of Shylock.

ANTONIO: I hate you, Shylock! Er ... even so, will you lend me some money?

SHYLOCK: I might.

ANTONIO: It won't cost me an arm and a leg, will it?

SHYLOCK: Oh no, not as much as that...

JUDGE 3: So Antonio signs a bond saying that if he can't pay the money back then Shylock can take a pound of his flesh.

SHAKIE: And what happens?

ANTONIO I can't pay your money back!

Two ATTENDANTS enter downstage left with a chair and rope. One drags ANTONIO across to the chair, while the other ties him to it with rope. They retreat, standing guard. SHYLOCK moves to stand menacingly in front of ANTONIO.

PORTIA: Only I, Balthazar - a Doctor of Laws - can save him...

PORTIA moves from the witness stand in to the scene.

AUDIO CUE 3: SOUNDSCAPE - THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

This specific musical effect introduces any section in which the action uses original Shakespearian text. Ideally hold it under throughout and use the closing element to indicate to the audience that we are returning to 'our' playscript.

PORTIA *(To Shylock)* Be merciful!

SHYLOCK: On what compulsion must I? Tell me that.

PORTIA: The quality of mercy is not strain'd;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes...

SHYLOCK: I crave the law! The penalty and forfeit of my bond...

PORTIA: The law allows it and the court awards it...

SHYLOCK: Most learned judge! A sentence! Come, prepare...

SHYLOCK produces an outrageously large - fake - carving knife, which he begins to sharpen. ANTONIO'S horror and the gasps from the ENSEMBLE should be real enough, though, when SHYLOCK finishes and approaches Antonio to do the deed...

PORTIA: Tarry a little! There is something else.
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood:
The words expressly are 'a pound of flesh' ...
Therefore...
Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more
Than just a pound of flesh...
If the scale do turn
But in the estimation of a hair -
Thou diest.

AUDIO CUE 4: END SOUNDSCAPE - THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

SHYLOCK storms off. ATTENDANTS untie ANTONIO and they exit, with the chair. PORTIA moves to the other lectern centre-stage right, at SHAKIE'S side. The ENSEMBLE applauds loudly. Cries of 'bravo!'

JUDGE 1: Usher. Adjust the Bore-o-Meter to 'Yawn'.

USHER wheels the Bore-o-Meter forward, adjusts it to 'YAWN' with a ridiculous amount of preening, then pushes it back to its place upstage.

SHAKIE: Is that all? Wasn't that dramatic enough?

JUDGE 2: Nothing actually happened, did it? At the end of the day...

JUDGE 3: There was no foul play!

SHAKIE: *(Rings bell angrily)* 'Foul play'! Mine! *Love's Labours Lost!*

PORTIA: It looks as though your defence needs strengthening, Master Shakespeare. You can count on me. *(To JUDGES)* Your honours - kindly read details of my client's early years for the benefit of all.

Scene 5: The Early Years

JUDGE 1: William Shakespeare. You were born in Stratford-upon-Avon, in Warwickshire in the year fifteen sixty-four (1564).

JUDGE 2: Your father was John Shakespeare.

JUDGE 3: And your mother was Mary Shakespeare, formerly Mary Arden.

JUDGE 1: They had eight children in all. You were number three...

JOHN SHAKESPEARE and MARY SHAKESPEARE enter downstage. Mary is holding a baby.

MARY: What shall we call our little bundle of joy?

JOHN: How about Gladys?

MARY: This one's a boy! I was thinking of Toby.

JOHN: Hmm. Toby, or not Toby? That is the question...

MARY: Or William. How about William?

JOHN: William Shakespeare. Not very exciting, but I'm happy with it.

MARY: That's agreed, then.

JOHN: Yes. All's Will that ends Will!



MARY: I wonder what he'll be when he grows up.
 JOHN: He'll take after me, of course!
 MARY: What - make gloves for a living?
 JOHN: And why not? Everybody needs a pair of gloves. That's why it's such a handy profession!
They exit.

Scene 6: Grammar School

JUDGE 1: There is very little evidence concerning William Shakespeare's schooling.
 JUDGE 2: The assumption is that he went to the Grammar School in Stratford. Is that so, Master Shakespeare?
 SHAKIE: I can't remember.
 JUDGE 3: Can't remember! Who can forget their schooldays?
 SHAKIE: It's easy, if you've been dead for four hundred years!
 JUDGE 1: There is, however, evidence about what pupils were taught at Grammar Schools in the fifteen-seventies (1570's)...
 YOUNG SHAKIE *enters downstage left, carrying a chair. He sits down.* TEACHER *(academic gown) enters downstage right. YOUNG SHAKIE stands up politely and is waved down again.*
 TEACHER: Welcome to the first day of the Autumn term, in the Year of Our Lord fifteen-eighty (1580).
 YOUNG S: *(Puts hand up)* What are we doing this term, Sir?
 TEACHER: This term, Shakespeare, you are going to study Latin, Greek, more Latin, a bit more Greek, even more Latin and loads of ancient writings by dead writers who wrote in - guess what - Latin and Greek.
 SHAKIE: *(To JUDGES)* Now that's what you call boring!
 YOUNG S: Anything else, Sir?
 TEACHER: English grammar, of course. *[Exits downstage right]*
 YOUNG S: Bah. English hasn't got enough words for me. I'm going to invent some of my own! *[Exits downstage left]*

PORTIA: And William Shakespeare did just that. It has been estimated that my client invented at least one thousand seven hundred new words - words that are still in use today...

Scene 7: Song - 'Words, Words, Words'

ENSEMBLE stands and turns away from stage towards audience. Although they sing in situ, some of the words could be mimed; possibilities are underlined.

AUDIO CUE 5: BACKING TRACK FOR 'WORDS, WORDS, WORDS'

Shakie's head was a-buzzin'
 With new words by the dozen
 They just flocked into his head like birds
 His inventive inventions
 Still command our attention
 Lots of words, words, words

Shakespeare's words, words, words!
Shakespeare's words, words, words!

Some are really surprising,
 How about 'advertising'?
 Or 'luggage' - and 'leapfrog' makes a third
 Not to mention 'amazement',
 'Zany', 'rant' and 'excitement'...
 They're his words, words, words

Shakespeare's words, words, words!
Shakespeare's words, words, words!

What with blanket' and 'undress'
 'Bare-faced', 'madcap' and 'countless'
 You might think that Shakie was a nerd
 But we still use 'majestic'
 And 'elbow' and 'epileptic'...
 All his words, words, words

Shakespeare's words, words, words!
Shakespeare's words, words, words!

Birthplace, Champion, Deafening
 Hobnob, Buzzer, Laughable
 Green-eyed, Lonely, Lacklustre
 Scuffle, Courtship, Discontent
 Tranquil, Swagger, Mountaineer

Shakespeare's words, words, words!
Shakespeare's words, words, words!
 Words ... words ... words...



The ENSEMBLE turns to sit facing the stage.

Scene 8: Marriage and Leaving Stratford

AUDIO CUE 6: SFX - WEDDING BELLS

JUDGE 1: In fifteen eighty-two (1582), Master Shakespeare, when you were just eighteen, a wedding took place in Stratford.

ANNE HATHAWAY enters, downstage left. She wears a white dress.

SHAKIE: She looks familiar.

JUDGE 2: A wedding between Anne Hathaway...

JUDGE 3: And you!

SHAKIE: I thought she looked familiar!

The wedding bells cease.

JUDGE 1: By fifteen eighty-five (1585) you had three children together, a daughter Susannah and twins, Hamnet and Judith.

JUDGE 2: But by fifteen ninety-two (1592) you were in London.

ANNE HATHAWAY waves a handkerchief. MARY AND JOHN SHAKESPEARE enter downstage left to join in with the waving.

ANNE: Good luck, husband! Don't forget to write!

MARY: (Tearful) Our little boy! Leaving home! (Bawls)

JOHN: Dear me. I'd have expected a woman who'd had eight children to be more sensible.

MARY: If I'd been more sensible, I wouldn't have had eight children!

MARY stalks off, followed by JOHN and ANNE.

JUDGE 3: Did you run out on them, you knave? Your wife, your children, your parents?

PORTIA: No, my client did not. He went to London because the top theatre companies were there.

JUDGE 1: He didn't just vanish into thin air, then?

SHAKIE: (Bell) 'Into thin air'. Mine. *The Tempest*. And no, I didn't.

PORTIA: Master Shakespeare would later buy a very expensive house – in

Stratford. But London was where the important people were.

JUDGE 2: Such as?

PORTIA: Call Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the First!

Scene 9: London

AUDIO CUE 7: SFX - ROYAL FANFARE

QUEEN ELIZABETH I sweeps on, centre-stage left. She does a regal tour of the courtroom before arriving at the witness lectern. During this, the JUDGES fall off their chairs on to their knees. USHER prostrates himself and PORTIA and SHAKIE bow deeply. The ENSEMBLE cries, 'Oooh!'

QUEEN: Arise, arise! I'm only human, after all.

They all get up.

QUEEN: (To USHER) Not you, peasant! You stay on your knees. (To the JUDGES) One false move and off with his head!

SHAKIE: (Bell, timidly) 'Off with his head'. Mine. *Henry the Sixth, Part Three*.

PORTIA: Your Majesty, Master Shakespeare's work has been accused of being boring. Do you agree?

QUEEN: One does not! That would have seen the Lord Chamberlain lose his head!

PORTIA: Could you explain that, please?

QUEEN: (Tuts) One of the Lord Chamberlain's jobs was to arrange entertainments for the royal court. Master Shakespeare wrote and took part in plays performed by his group of players - known as (Severely) - please concentrate, I do not like repeating myself - 'The Lord Chamberlain's Men'.

JUDGE 1: Our reports say that this group put on plays at a theatre called, er ... 'The Theatre'.

QUEEN: Not exactly a snappy name, but true.

JUDGE 1: And later at a theatre called 'The Globe'.

QUEEN: Another unsnappy name. A good job their plays were snappier or they'd have all lost their heads!

PORTIA: One last question, Your Majesty. Did you think that the theatre in your time was a good thing?



QUEEN: It was a wonderful thing! All my subjects went to the theatre, whatever their rank. In the audience you might find somebody as low as him (*Points at still-kneeling USHER*) and almost as high as me! A visit to the theatre was an occasion. Watch!

QUEEN ELIZABETH I sweeps off imperiously, downstage left.

Scene 10: Song - 'Going to the Play'

During this song the ENSEMBLE will ideally move around the performance area as indicated. If this is not practical then marching on the spot is an alternative.

AUDIO CUE 8: BACKING TRACK FOR 'GOING TO THE PLAY'

Instrumental introduction. ENSEMBLE stands and turns side-on to the stage but looking out at the audience. Verse 1 is sung in situ.

We're going to the play
It's been a busy day
This morning there was some poor wretch
Whose neck the axe-man's axe did catch...
Now we're going to the play!

Instrumental. ENSEMBLE now marches purposefully in straight lines across the performance space. By the end of the verse they should be back where they started, side-on in front of the stage, looking out at the audience.

We're heading for The Globe
But there we'll not disrobe
It's open-air, and we will stand
In hope the rain-drops will not land...
Oh, we're heading for The Globe!

Instrumental. ENSEMBLE sing the next verse pointing up at the stage and/or buying refreshments from a couple of VENDORS wandering amongst them.

We're here at the the-ay-tre
There's Shakespeare! Play creator!
His words'll keep our mouths agog
When they aren't full of nuts and grog...
We're here at the the-ay-tre!

Extended instrumental. During the extended instrumental the ENSEMBLE turns towards the stage. A couple of ACTORS are miming, waving their arms around in theatrical fashion. At defined moments ENSEMBLE might shout 'Hooray!' or 'Boo!' at them. At the end of the extended instrumental the ENSEMBLE turns side-on again, facing the audience as they sing the next verse.

The play is nearly done
We've had a lot fun
The finest actors made us roar...
The bad ones got an apple core!
Yes, the play is nearly done!

Instrumental. ENSEMBLE marches in straight lines across the performance space as before. Again, by the end of the verse they should be back where they started, in front of the stage; this time, though, they face the audience for the final line.

We're going home again
All thoroughly entertained!
The rich, the poor, ladies and gents
A bargain price – just a few pence!
Now we're going home again!

Short closing instrumental.

We're home!

ENSEMBLE turn back to face the stage and sit down.

Scene 11: St Crispin's Day

PORTIA: Call their majesties Richard the Second, Henry the Fourth, Henry the Fifth, Henry the Sixth and Richard the Third!

USHER: Call ... er ... two Richards and three Henrys!

Kings RICHARD II, HENRY IV, HENRY V, HENRY VI and RICHARD III enter centre-stage left as their names are called. All are wearing crowns, of course, and wear large name badges as per TV game shows. They might each carry a folder with the title of Shakespeare's play about them on the cover. JUDGES, SHAKIE and PORTIA bow, USHER falls to his knees as before.

USHER: Here we go again!

PORTIA: Your majesties - please introduce yourselves.

The kings step forward in turn, forming a line centre-stage.

RICHARD II: I am King Richard the Second. William Shakespeare wrote a play about me ... and how he (*Points angrily at Henry IV*) steals my throne and sends me to the Tower of London. It ends with me being murdered!

HENRY IV: (*Smiles*) True! I also had two plays written about me, so there! They both tell how I crush rebellions and then hand over the throne to my son...



HENRY V: Me! Heroic Henry. In my play, Master Shakespeare tells of my battles against the French, especially a famous one at a place called Agincourt. After I die, my son takes over...

HENRY VI: Me. I lived in such turbulent times that I had *three* plays written about my family's fight to hang on to the throne against (*Points angrily at RICHARD III*) his family!

RICHARD III: Oh, yes! I was a meanie all right. My play tells how I bump him off (*Points at HENRY VI*), then a few other people, to become King Richard the Third - until I'm killed in a battle with Henry the Eighth's father.

JUDGE 1: And according to our reports, Richard the Third, your bones ended up under a car park in Leicester!

JUDGE 2: Huh! If that's being royal, you can stick it!

JUDGE 3: Yes - but at least he didn't get a ticket!

PORTIA: The point is, your honours, one of the few ways in which the common people learned about history was through my client's plays.

JUDGE 1: Well done on writing them then, Master Shakespeare. But did you have to make them so hard to read?

SHAKIE: I didn't write them to be read. I wrote them to be spoken aloud. Show them, Henry.

All three HENRYs step downstage...

HENRY V: I think he means me.

HENRY IV and HENRY VI step back again.

AUDIO CUE 9: SOUNDSCAPE - KING HENRY V

Lights down, spotlight on HENRY V. He reads from his play, reciting the first line. Lighting broadens and increases as other kings move downstage to join in as indicated. All can read from their folders or from crib cards in the case of the ENSEMBLE, who stand to turn and face the audience. The whole company should be engaged in the speech by 'we few, we happy few...'

HENRY V: This day is called the feast of Crispian;
 + HENRY IV: He that outlives this day and comes safe home,
 + HENRY VI: Will stand a tip-toe when this day is named,
 + RICHARDS: And rouse him at the name of Crispian...

+ OTHERS: And Crispin Crispian will ne'er go by,
 ad hoc... From this day to the ending of the world,
 until... But we in it shall be remembered.

ALL: We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
 For he today who sheds his blood with me,
 Shall be my brother...
 And gentlemen in England now a-bed
 Shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here,
 And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
 That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

AUDIO CUE 10: END SOUNDSCAPE - KING HENRY V

HENRYs and RICHARDs exit downstage left. USHER wheels Bore-o-Meter forward and moves the pointer up another notch, to 'SIGH'.

Scene 12: The Footballer

PORTIA: (*Reacting*) In the modern day, rousing speeches such as that have been used to inspire England's football and rugby teams!

JUDGE 2: It wouldn't have worked in Scotland, Ireland or Wales!

JUDGE 3: And it didn't stop England's regular fails!

USHER slides the pointer down to rock-bottom.

PORTIA: Objection! Master Shakespeare can't be blamed for the performance of the England football team.

JUDGE 1: Sustained. Move the pointer back up to 'SIGH'.

USHER is about to do so when FOOTBALLER, wearing an England football shirt, rushes on and does the job for him.

FOOTB'R: 'Sigh' sounds about right! [*Exits*]

JUDGE 2: Never mind the football...

JUDGE 3: One good speech isn't the...

JUDGES: Be all and end all!

SHAKIE: (*Bell*) 'Be all and end all'. Mine. *Macbeth*.



Scene 13: Miserable Greene and Cheerful Meres

JUDGE 1: Master Shakespeare: according to our reports you were not always popular even in your own day.

JUDGE 2: Call Robert Greene!

USHER: Who?

JUDGE 3: Robert Greene!

USHER: Never heard of him.

JUDGE 1: Just call him!

USHER: Call Robert Greene, who nobody's ever heard of!

ROBERT GREENE enters centre-stage left and goes to the witness lectern. He carries a quill or something to mark him out as a writer and looks thoroughly miserable.

JUDGE 1: Robert Greene was also a playwright at the time of William Shakespeare and something he wrote to his fellow playwrights is believed to be the earliest known reference to him...

GREENE: 'There is an upstart crow that supposes he is as well able to bombast out blank verse as the best of you; and is, in his own conceit, the only Shake-scene in the county!'

PORTIA: And did you write anything else about my client afterwards, Master Greene?

GREENE: No, I died. I've been dead even longer than he has! *[He exits]*

PORTIA: Call the Elizabethan author - Francis Meres!

USHER: *(Looks ready to query again, but doesn't bother)* Call Francis Meres - another one who nobody's ever heard of!

FRANCIS MERES enters centre-stage left and goes to the witness lectern. Also carrying a quill, in complete contrast to Robert Greene he looks jolly and cheerful.

PORTIA: Francis Meres, you wrote the first account of William Shakespeare's early plays and poems. What did you say?

MERES: I compared him to famous ancient authors and said, 'For comedy and tragedy ... Shakespeare is the most excellent in both kinds.'

PORTIA: Thank you, Master Meres.

MERES: And I lived for fifty years afterwards - which shows what being cheerful instead of miserable does for you! *[He exits]*

SHAKIE: *(To JUDGES)* Did you hear that? I was excellent at tragedies and comedies. And he didn't mention romances. I wrote them all - not just history plays.

PORTIA: Check your reports, your honours. Check your reports!

Scene 14: Song - 'H, C, T and R'

The ENSEMBLE stands to face the audience. This song will be sung in situ. Gestures and facial expressions could be employed as appropriate, but they will need to be carefully co-ordinated with the JUDGES' counterpoint recitations of the titles of Shakespeare's plays - if used. These recitations could, of course, be abbreviated or omitted entirely.

AUDIO CUE 11: BACKING TRACK FOR 'H, C, T AND R!'

[Marching, military pace]

[Spoken counterpoint: JUDGES]

Histories	<i>King John</i>
Intrigues and can-it-be's	<i>Henry Four</i>
Moody monarchs, plotting to strengthen their reigns	<i>Richards Two and Three</i>
Battle cries	<i>Henry Five</i>
Traitors and bare-faced lies	<i>Henry Six</i>
Coronations, with crowns that carry blood stains	<i>Not forgetting Henry Eight!</i>

*Shakespeare wrote them and people still quote them!
Shakespeare wrote them and people still quote them!*

[Bright and cheery]

Comedies!	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>
Laughter and jollities	<i>Comedy of Errors</i>
Girls playing boys, which they keep nicely concealed	<i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i>
Faerie queens	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
Nothing's quite what it seems	<i>As You Like It</i>
Happy endings, once all the fun is revealed	<i>Not forgetting Twelfth Night!</i>

*Shakespeare wrote them and people still quote them!
Shakespeare wrote them and people still quote them!*

[Funereal!]

Tragedies!	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
Murder and miseries	<i>Hamlet</i>
Wicked villains, and lessons they never learn	<i>Anthony and Cleopatra</i>
Full of gloom	<i>Macbeth</i>
Lots of impending doom	<i>Othello</i>
Bloodied weapons, and evil each way you turn	<i>Not forgetting King Lear!</i>



*Shakespeare wrote them and people still quote them!
Shakespeare wrote them and people still quote them!*

[With passion]

Romances!	Aah!
Kisses and ecstasies	Aah!
Would-be lovers, disaster one step away	<i>The Winter's Tale</i>
Hope and fear	<i>Pericles</i>
Magical voices hear	<i>Cymbeline</i>
Sins forgiven, love wins by close of the day	And finally <i>The Tempest!</i>

*Shakespeare wrote them and people still quote them!
Shakespeare wrote them and people still quote them!*

[Sung to reprise of the chorus]

Shakespeare wrote them and people still quote them ... today! TODAY!

ENSEMBLE turns to face stage and sit down.

Scene 15: Macbeth

PORTIA: So, Master Shakespeare, your plays weren't just about history? They covered all sorts of subjects?

SHAKIE: Oh, yes. Writing was meat and drink to me. *(Bell)* Heh-heh. 'Meat and drink to me'. Mine. *As You Like It*.

PORTIA: Can you give the court an example - of a tragedy, perhaps?

SHAKIE: Certainly. Call Macbeth and Lady Macbeth!

USHER: Call ... er, him and her!

MACBETH and LADY MACBETH enter centre-stage left and go to the witness lectern. They could wear identikit outfits, or LADY MAC could be wearing an outfit that doubles as a nightdress. They scowl at each other and stand as far apart as sensible.

MACBETH: My name is Macbeth. Three witches have told me that I will become King of Scotland. But for that to happen I'll need to murder the current King, Duncan - which I don't really want to do.

LADY MAC: Men! So I have to talk him into it...

They step downstage into...

AUDIO CUE 12: SOUNDSCAPE - MACBETH

MACBETH: We will proceed no further in this business.

LADY MAC: Wouldst't thou ... live a coward in thy own esteem, letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would'?

MACBETH: Prithee, peace. I dare do all that may become a man...

LADY MAC: ...When you durst do it, then you were a man...

MACBETH: If we should fail?

LADY MAC: We fail! But screw your courage to the sticking-place and we'll not fail.

MACBETH exits downstage left. Hold the soundscape under the next speech, then return to it.

SHAKIE: And so the murder is committed. It's followed by yet more murders - until the guilty feelings drive Lady Macbeth mad...

LADY MACBETH is sleepwalking and rubbing her hands in a washing motion.

LADY MAC: Yet here's a spot ... Out, damned spot! Out, I say! ... Will these hands ne'er be clean? ... Here's the smell of blood still. All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.

AUDIO CUE 13: END SOUNDSCAPE - MACBETH

Scene 16: The Axe-Man Cometh!

USHER wheels the Bore-o-Meter forward and adjusts the pointer upwards to 'SO-SO' before wheeling it back into its place.

JUDGE 1: You're making progress, Master Shakespeare. But - murder? Blood?

JUDGE 2: Was that sort of play a real winner?

JUDGE 3: 'Cos it would put me right off my dinner!

PORTIA: William Shakespeare's tragedies were very popular. Especially the nasty bits. My next witness will explain why. Call the Public Executioner!

USHER: What? Not likely!

PORTIA: You heard. Call the Public Executioner!

USHER doesn't get a chance to call before PUBLIC EXECUTIONER strides in centre-stage left and goes to the witness lectern. He wears a mask and carries a fearsome-looking axe.



PUB EXEC: *(Jolly)* Once is enough! None of my customers got to call me twice!

PORTIA: Public Executioner - what was your job in Master Shakespeare's day?

PUB EXEC: Making sure traitors and criminals never saw another day! And I was a very busy boy.

PORTIA: Can you - er...

PUB EXEC: Give you all the gory details? Certainly! Usually I just chopped off heads, but sometimes I chopped off other parts as well. After which, all the parts would be put on show round London - in all parts, you might say! Ha-ha!

PORTIA: So ... the public were used to seeing - er ... blood?

PUB EXEC: Of course! Executions were always carried out in public. I'd draw very big crowds for my performances. People were quite happy with all the blood, y'see - just so long as it was somebody else's!
[Exits]

Scene 17: Song - 'Blood and Guts and Gore'

ENSEMBLE stands and turns away from stage towards audience. They sing in situ. There are ample opportunities for gruesome actions to accompany the words!

AUDIO CUE 14: BACKING TRACK FOR 'BLOOD AND GUTS AND GORE!'

In Tudor times, life ain't so nice
With traitors losing their heads in a trice
The executions are public shows
They entertain us with blood that flows!

*Blood and guts and gore, you say?
Oh, we will see the stuff every day!
Blood and guts and gore are fine
So long as I'm safe and none of it's mine!*

So Shakespeare's plays tell things as they were
With battles and plots and gruesome murder!
We pay a few pence to see blow for blow
Which means we're expecting some blood to flow!

*Blood and guts and gore, you say?
Oh, we will see the stuff every day!
Blood and guts and gore are fine
So long as I'm safe and none of it's mine!*

Macbeth and Hamlet and Richard Three
Knife-wielders each, I'm sure you'll agree!
So off to the theatre we happily go
To see how they're causing that blood to flow!

*Blood and guts and gore, you say?
Oh, we will see the stuff every day!
Blood and guts and gore are fine
So long as I'm safe and none of it's mine!*

*Blood and guts and gore, you say?
Oh, we will see the stuff every day!
Blood and guts and gore are fine
So long as I'm safe and none of it's mine!*

So long as I'm safe and none of it's mine!

The ENSEMBLE turns to face the stage and sits.

Scene 18: The Plague

JUDGE 1: Our reports do say that Elizabethan London was a very violent place.

JUDGE 2: Everybody carried a sword or a dagger.

JUDGE 3: Cop one of those and you'd stagger!

JUDGE 1: And, of course, there was always the chance of catching the plague...

PLAGUE VICTIM 1 *enters downstage left*, PLAGUE VICTIM 2 *downstage right*.
They cross slowly, not stopping.

VICTIM 1: Morning! How are you?

VICTIM 2: Not so bad. How are you?

VICTIM 1: Can't complain.

JUDGE 2: If you caught the plague it acted very quickly.

VICTIM 1 collapses.

JUDGE 3: And it was very contagious...

VICTIM 2 collapses.

Both VICTIMs are removed by ATTENDANTS with handkerchiefs over their faces.



Scene 19: The Sonnets

- JUDGE 1: Whenever the plague struck London's theatres had to close.
- JUDGE 2: Actors couldn't act.
- JUDGE 3: And playwrights couldn't, er - play write. What did you do, Master Shakespeare?
- SHAKIE: When plague struck in the early fifteen-nineties (1590's), I spent some of my time writing sonnets. Here's the start of the most famous...

SHAKIE steps forward into centre stage. USHER trundles the Bore-o-Meter forward. In the short excerpt which follows, instead of speaking to the audience, SHAKIE addresses USHER!

AUDIO CUE 15: SOUNDSCAPE - SONNET 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;

AUDIO CUE 16: END SOUNDSCAPE - SONNET 18

USHER, flustered and embarrassed in equal measure, pushes the Bore-o-Meter up to 'HEY!'

- JUDGE 1: Down to 'NOT BAD', if you please!

USHER reluctantly adjusts the Bore-o-Meter and pushes it back upstage to its home.

Scene 20: Titania, Oberon and Bottom

- JUDGE 1: The plague plagued London throughout much of the fifteen-nineties (1590's). It came back again in sixteen-oh-three (1603).
- JUDGE 2: During these periods, The Lord Chamberlain's Men left London and toured the country, visiting different towns.
- JUDGE 3: And cheering people up, I hope. Do any of Master Shakespeare's characters have a sense of humour?
- PORTIA: Indeed they do. Call Titania, Oberon and Bottom!
- USHER: Er ... say again?

- PORTIA: Titania, Oberon and Bottom! Queen Titania, King Oberon and Bottom the Weaver.

- USHER: Call Queen Titania, King Oberon and (*Trying not to laugh*) Bottom the Weaver!

TITANIA, OBERON and BOTTOM enter centre-stage left, going first to the witnesses' lectern. TITANIA is all lacy and fairy-like. OBERON could wear a chain of office or similar and a crown. BOTTOM, if not with a full ass's head, has at the least a pair of donkey ears.

- JUDGE 1: Queen Titania. Do you have a sense of humour?
- TITANIA: I'm a faery queen! I can have anything I want.
- JUDGE 2: How about you, King Oberon?
- OBERON: Me? I'm full of practical jokes!
- JUDGE 3: How about your friend?
- OBERON: He's not my friend. He's the queen's friend.
- TITANIA: My friend? A humble weaver? And a human! Per-lease!
- JUDGE 1: How about you, Bottom? Do you have a sense of humour?
- BOTTOM: (*Glumly*) You have to have a sense of humour if your name is Bottom. (*Waggles ears*) And an even bigger sense of humour if you have a magic spell done on you and end up wearing this / these!
- JUDGE 2: (*To JUDGE 3*) He's definitely right...
- JUDGE 3: (*To JUDGE 2*) He is a sorry sight!
- SHAKIE: (*Bell*) 'Sorry sight.' Mine. *Macbeth*.
- BOTTOM: And all your fault, Master Shakespeare!
- SHAKIE: True. I'll explain...

Scene 21: A Midsummer Night's Dream

AUDIO CUE 17: SOUNDSCAPE - A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

TITANIA moves downstage and curls up on the ground. OBERON and BOTTOM move downstage when required.



SHAKIE: (Voice over soundscape) Titania and her husband Oberon have argued. So, when she's asleep, he puts a magic potion on her eyelids...

TITANIA is sleeping. OBERON enters and squeezes a flower over TITANIA'S eyelids.

OBERON: What thou seest when thou dost wake,
Do it for thy true-love take...
In thy eye that shall appear
When thou wak'st, it is thy dear.

OBERON exits.

SHAKIE: (Voice over) And that's when Bottom arrives. His little acting company are rehearsing in that very wood and Puck, a mischievous fairy on Oberon's side, has magically given him an ass's head...

BOTTOM enters, humming randomly. TITANIA wakes up.

TITANIA: What angel wakes me from my flow'ry bed? ... I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again. Mine eye is much enamoured of thy note; so is mine eye enthralled to thy shape ... On the first view, to say, to swear, I love thee.

BOTTOM: Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that. And yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together nowadays.

TITANIA: Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

AUDIO CUE 18: END SOUNDSCAPE - A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Scene 22: Song - 'Supernaturally!'

JUDGE 1: You had magic in your plays, Master Shakespeare? Four hundred years ago?

SHAKIE: Yes, there I do plead guilty. I'm sure that stories containing magic must be out of date nowadays.

JUDGE 2: Not so! Magic-filled stories are still a great joy...

JUDGE 3: Especially ones starring a wizardly boy!

PORTIA: Master Shakespeare's plays include witches, wizards, ghosts and predictions!

SHAKIE: Well, to be honest, I couldn't have left them out. In my day people really believed in all of those things...

The ENSEMBLE stands and fans out to occupy the performance space. All turn towards the audience. No movement is needed, but plenty of mime and vocal sound effects!

AUDIO CUE 19: BACKING TRACK FOR 'SUPERNATURALLY!'

Opening instrumental, during which the ENSEMBLE fans out into position. Instrumental leads to heavy drum-beat:

Dum-ba, dum-ba, dum-ba, dum-ba, dum-ba, dum-ba, dubba-dubba-dum!

For people in Will Shakespeare's time
Ghosts were real
Ghosts were true
Ghosts could haunt and frighten you!

Instrumental link, during which the ENSEMBLE makes ghostly actions and mooaaaaans a lot! Leads to:

Dum-ba, dum-ba, dum-ba, dum-ba, dum-ba, dum-ba, dubba-dubba-dum!

For people in Will Shakespeare's time
Witches lived
Witches flew
Witches' spells could do for you!

Instrumental link, during which the ENSEMBLE makes swishing actions and cackles a lot! Leads to:

Dum-ba, dum-ba, dum-ba, dum-ba, dum-ba, dum-ba, dubba-dubba-dum!

For people in Will Shakespeare's time
Monsters roamed
Monsters grew
Monsters ate kids just like you!

Instrumental link. On the final line of the verse the ENSEMBLE has pointed at each other, or at children in the audience. They now act monstrously and growl a lot! Leads to:

Dum-ba, dum-ba, dum-ba, dum-ba, dum-ba, dum-ba, dubba-dubba-dum!

For people in Will Shakespeare's time
Magic worked
Magic was true
Magic was as real as you!



Instrumental link, during which the ENSEMBLE crouches - gunfighter fashion - and looks warily - and silently - from side to side. Leads to:

Dum-ba, dum-ba, dum-ba, dum-ba, dum-ba, dum-ba...

Abracadabra!

...Dubba-dubba-dum!

The ENSEMBLE returns to their positions in front of the stage.

Scene 23: The Three Witches

JUDGE 1: Master Shakespeare ... *(Turning over written notes)* Master Balthazar said a little earlier that your plays also featured 'predictions'. You mean fortune telling?

SHAKIE: Yes. I know. Guilty as charged! You're going to tell me that fortune telling is out of date nowadays, aren't you?

JUDGE 1: Er - no. It's not, actually.

JUDGE 2: Horoscopes still go down well -

JUDGE 3: With those who think the stars foretell!

PORTIA: In that case, your honours, I suggest we see my clients' three witches in action!

AUDIO CUE 20: SOUNDSCAPE - THE THREE WITCHES

A cauldron is brought on downstage left. The WITCHES enter stage right. They crouch around the cauldron, actions as necessary.

WITCH 1: Round about the cauldron go;
In the poison'd entrails throw...

ALL: Double, double, toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble...

WITCH 2: Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog...

ALL: Double, double, toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble...

WITCH 3: Ditch-deliver'd by a drab -
Make the gruel thick and slab

ALL: Double, double, toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

Maintain soundscape under the following.

JUDGE 1: Yes, cookery programmes are very popular too, Master Shakespeare, but I thought we were talking about predictions!

SHAKIE: We are. Watch. Call Macbeth again!

Enter MACBETH to join the scene.

MACBETH: Speak, if you can. What are you?

WITCH 1: All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!

WITCH 2: All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor

WITCH 3: All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be King hereafter!

Astonished reaction from MACBETH. He punches the air and rushes off excitedly. WITCHES exit.

AUDIO CUE 21: END SOUNDSCAPE - THE THREE WITCHES

JUDGE 1: And the witches' prediction about Macbeth being king come true?

SHAKIE: He made sure it did. In my play he kept on murdering people until he was the only one left!

Scene 24: Call Wayne and Cheryl - Part 1

USHER trundles the Bore-o-Meter forward and adjusts it slightly upwards, between NOT BAD and HEY! After a little posing, he trundles it back.

JUDGE 1: Slow progress, Master Balthazar! But do you have any witnesses lined up who are really going to get your client top marks with Wayne, Cheryl and classmates?

SHAKIE and PORTIA confer. As they do, WAYNE and CHERYL enter the performance space, downstage. They are still working on their mobile phones. As they cross the stage, the conference between SHAKIE and PORTIA ends.

PORTIA: Yes, we do. Call the twenty-first century pupils, Cheryl and Wayne!

USHER: Call Werril and Shane! I mean, Cheryl and Wayne!

They all watch, surprised, as WAYNE and CHERYL simply continue across the stage before joining the ENSEMBLE in the performance area.



SHAKIE: Wha - wha ... they were called! Why haven't they come to the court?

JUDGE 1: This is a celestial court, Master Shakespeare. They are earthly beings. You will need control over the living to bring them here.

SHAKIE: Control over the living? Right, in that case, call Prospero and Ariel, from my play *The Tempest*!

USHER: Call Prosper - ohhhh!

USHER reacts as the lights go out and a cymbal crashes. When the lights come on again, PROSPERO and ARIEL are at the witness stand. PROSPERO wears some sort of full-length robe; ARIEL is dressed in something white and wispy. S/he has ribbons attached to each wrist.

Scene 25: Prospero, Ariel and 'Full Fathom Five'

SHAKIE: Prospero, you're the most powerful sorcerer I ever devised. I need you to issue a magical summons, just as you did at the start of *The Tempest*.

PROSPERO: But I've given up magic, Master Shakespeare, you know I have. It was you who had me throw my books of spells into the sea at the end of the play.

ARIEL: And made me - Ariel - a free spirit! (*Points at PROSPERO*) I don't have to take orders from him any more, y'know!

SHAKIE: Please, Prospero! You must remember the basics. Can't you see the spells in your mind's eye? Oops. (*Bell*) 'Mind's eye.' One of mine. *Hamlet*.

PROSPERO and ARIEL look at each other and shrug-cum-nod reluctantly.

PROSPERO: Very well. We'll do our best. We'll need to have a little practice first, though.

ARIEL: Do the start of *The Tempest* then. That was fun!

PROSPERO: Good idea. Remember why I did it?

ARIEL: Your brother had stolen your title and sent you to a lonely island. Years later, when he and his friends were sailing by in a ship, you made it sink so that they'd have to swim ashore and face you again!

PROSPERO: Very good, Ariel. Right ... get ready...

During the following, PROSPERO will remain passively, but looking magically powerful, downstage centre. ARIEL, however, will be constantly on the move amongst the ENSEMBLE. The ribbons fluttering at her wrists will be symbolic of the spell Prospero is weaving.

AUDIO CUE 22: SOUNDSCAPE - THE TEMPEST

Lights off on the stage. Low-key, atmospheric lighting across the performance area.

Throughout this part of the soundscape the ENSEMBLE stand and mime the pitching and rolling of a ship in a storm. As the storm reaches its peak...

ENSEMBLE: We split! We split!

The storm peaks. As it fades, the ENSEMBLE mime sinking slowly to the seabed.

The soundscape softens. ARIEL, on his / her feet, should be in the centre of the performance area. Lyrical musical introduction leads in to the following song. ARIEL can either sing this solo, or just the first line before being joined by the ENSEMBLE.

AUDIO CUE 23: BACKING TRCK FOR 'FULL FATHOM FIVE'

Full fathom five thy father lies
Of his bones are coral made
Those are pearls that were his eyes
Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange...

Full fathom five thy father lies
Of his bones are coral made
Those are pearls that were his eyes
Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange...

Sea-nymphs hourly...
Ring his knell...
Ding-dong...
Hark! Now I hear them...
Ding-dong...
Bell...

AUDIO CUE 24: MORE CRASHING OF LIGHTNING AND THUNDER

Scene 26: Call Wayne and Cheryl - Part 2

As thunder crashes, lights on stage as well as performance area. The ENSEMBLE turns back towards the stage and sits down - except for CHERYL and WAYNE who remain standing. They are still checking their mobile phones.



PROSPERO: (To SHAKIE) Yes, it all comes back to me now!

SHAKIE: Then what are you waiting for?

PROSPERO attracts ARIEL's attention and points at CHERYL and WAYNE.

PROSPERO: (With appropriately magical gestures) Call the twenty-first century pupils, Cheryl and Wayne!

AUDIO CUE 25: MUSIC - ARIEL

As the music plays ARIEL dances around WAYNE and CHERYL, slowly leading them from the performance area and up on stage to the witness stands. This done, PROSPERO and ARIEL both move centre-stage, bow deeply to SHAKIE and exit. JUDGES, USHER, SHAKIE and PORTIA now all look expectantly at WAYNE and CHERYL, who finally look up from their mobile phones and gaze around.

CHERYL: Wow! This celestial courtroom game that suddenly popped up on our mobiles is great, isn't? I feel like I'm, like, really in it.

WAYNE: Yeah, me too!

PORTIA: Cheryl and Wayne. This is William Shakespeare.

CHERYL: Oh, no!

WAYNE: Play along with it, Cheryl. It's only a game, remember. Pleased to meet you, Shakie - er - Mister Shakespeare.

PORTIA: Cheryl. Wayne. Master Shakespeare would like to hear your thoughts on his work.

CHERYL: Right. Well ... no disrespect, but ... your stuff is really hard to follow. Y'know, all the thee's and thou's and thing-ests. I'm, like - huh?

PORTIA: Ye-es. How about you, Wayne?

WAYNE: It's not exactly your everyday language, is it? I mean, you don't hear people talking like that do you? Not nowadays.

JUDGE 1: What is your defence against that argument, Master Shakespeare?

SHAKIE: I don't have one.

JUDGE 2: (Shocked) Can I believe my ears?

JUDGE 3: This is all going to end in tears!

SHAKIE: My plays aren't written in everyday language. I don't think they'd sound right if they were. (Gets and idea and begins scribbling furiously on a sheet of paper. As he writes...) Cheryl, Wayne. Try it for yourselves!

Scene 27: Romeo and Juliet – Ancient and Modern

SHAKIE: This is a tiny part of the balcony scene from my play *Romeo and Juliet*.

PORTIA: Ah! One of the most famous scenes my client has ever written.

SHAKIE: Well, I've just updated it. I'll read the new version as you perform the original - and let's see what you think.

CHERYL: (To Wayne) Role-playing as well. What a neat game this is! (She moves towards the judges' dais) Er - excuse me. I need this for a balcony.

JUDGES move completely away from their dais, which will act as the balcony. CHERYL sits in JUDGE 1's chair. WAYNE crouches down beside the witness lectern. It might be nice if they've put on appropriate headgear to show they've moved from 'modern' to 'ancient'.

SHAKIE: (Announces) An excerpt from *Romeo and Juliet* - with updated and original versions!

We hear SHAKIE in voice-over, but lighting focussed on WAYNE and CHERYL as they act the scene.

AUDIO CUE 26: SOUNDSCAPE - ROMEO AND JULIET

SHAKIE: Hey! There's Jules!

ROMEO: But, soft! What light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun...

SHAKIE: Why did you have to be Romy?

JULIET: O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou, Romeo?

SHAKIE: Pretend your name isn't what it is and I'll stop calling myself Capulet.

JULIET: Deny thy father and refuse thy name... And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

SHAKIE: Shall I carry on listening, or let her know I'm here?

ROMEO: Shall I hear more? Or shall I speak at this?



SHAKIE: So, you're a Montague. Names don't matter, do they?

JULIET: What's Montague?
What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet.

SHAKIE: Right, you're on. Be mine and I'll call myself something else!

ROMEO: I take thee at thy word:
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptiz'd;
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

AUDIO CUE 27: END SOUNDSCAPE - ROMEO AND JULIET

Lights up on stage. JUDGES applaud WAYNE and CHERYL'S performance. They look pleased with themselves. WAYNE and CHERYL leave their positions and move to downstage centre as USHER begins to wheel out the Bore-o-Meter.

WAYNE: (To SHAKIE) I'm beginning to see what you mean, Mister Shakespeare.

CHERYL: Me too. (To WAYNE) Wayne, this is such a cool game!

To emphasise her remark she moves the Bore-o-Meter marker up to 'COOL'. USHER looks as if he's going to object at having his job done for him, then trundles the device back to its spot.

WAYNE: I wonder what's going to happen next?

CHERYL: Well - there's one sure way to find out.

WAYNE: What? You mean...

BOTH: Join the judges!

Scene 28: Elizabeth Out, James In

JUDGES return to their seats, making room for CHERYL and WAYNE either side of JUDGE 1.

JUDGE 1: After being on the throne since fifteen fifty-eight (1558) Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the First was reaching the end of her long reign.

QUEEN ELIZABETH I enters downstage left assisted by the ATTENDANTS. She shuffles painfully across to centre stage.

QUEEN: One doesn't feel very well!

QUEEN ELIZABETH I starts moving again, assisted by the ATTENDANTS, to exit downstage right.

JUDGE 1: And on the twenty-fourth of March, sixteen-oh-three (1603), she died.

QUEEN: (*Reappearing*) I told you one didn't feel very well! (*Now she does exit!*)

JUDGE 1: She was succeeded as monarch by King James the Sixth of Scotland - otherwise known as King James the First...

JAMES enters and crosses to downstage centre. SHAKIE steps out of courtroom to him.

SHAKIE: (*Bows*) Your Majesty.

JAMES: Master Shakespeare. I have made a decision. The Lord Chamberlain's Men are to be no more.

SHAKIE: But - why not? We're successful! I've made pots of money! I've bought a big house in Stratford. We can't stop now!

JAMES: You're not going to stop. You're going to work for me. You're going to be called 'The King's Men'!

SHAKIE: Oh! Wonderful!

JAMES: That's settled, then. Any questions?

SHAKIE: Er ... only one, Your Majesty. I have a lot of female roles in my plays. Will you be allowing girls to become actors in future?

JAMES: Girls? On stage? Certainly not! Ridiculous idea!

JAMES exits downstage left.

Scene 29: Boys Will Be Girls...

WAYNE: What? Seriously?

JUDGE 1: That was the ruling of the age...

JUDGE 2: They might be on the page...

JUDGE 3: But no girls allowed on stage!

CHERYL: Well - it leaves me in a rage!

PORTIA: And what was your solution, Master Shakespeare?

SHAKIE: Simple. We employed apprentice boys to act as girls!

AUDIO CUE 28: BACKING TRACK FOR 'BOYS WILL BE GIRLS'



ENSEMBLE stands to face the audience. The song is sung in situ. Though not essential - and the potential for embarrassment might render it impossible - it would be nice for a 'JULIET', a 'LADY MACBETH' and a 'TITANIA' to appear on stage at their respective mentions in the song, revealing at the appropriate moment that they are males in disguise.

Fair Juliet, oh thou beauteous one,
Gliding on stage like an elegant swan,
Radiant maid, Romy's pride and joy...
Who would believe underneath you're a boy! *Oh...*

*Boys could star as boys,
But girls could not impress
In Shakie's plays for female roles...
A lad would wear the dress!*

Lady Macbeth, oh thou schemer supreme,
Gliding on stage, in a sleep-walking dream,
Wicked woman, whose sharp knife is no joke...
Who would believe underneath you're a bloke! *Oh...*

*Boys could star as boys,
But girls could not impress
In Shakie's plays for female roles...
A lad would wear the dress!*

So to Titania, of fairy grace,
Gliding on stage, in her wispy lace,
Queenly and proud, Oberon cannot quell her...
Who would believe underneath she's a fellow! *Oh...*

*Boys could star as boys,
But girls could not impress
In Shakie's plays for female roles...
A lad would wear the dress! Oh...*

*Boys could star as boys,
But girls could not impress
In Shakie's plays for female roles...
A lad would wear the dress! Yes...*

*(Rising to soprano/falsetto) In Shakie's plays for female roles...
(Descending as deep as possible) A lad would wear the dress!*

Scene 30: ...And Girls Will Be Boys

JUDGE 1: Master Shakespeare, didn't your audience find this...

JUDGE 2: Confusing!

JUDGE 3: Bemusing!

CHERYL: No, it sounds...

WAYNE: Really amusing!

PORTIA: Cheryl and Wayne are right, the audiences loved it. They also loved the plays in which my client had girls pretending to be boys!

JUDGE 1: *(Shakes head in bewilderment)* Are you telling me, learned Balthazar, that Master Shakespeare had boys...

JUDGE 2: Playing girls...

JUDGE 3: Pretending to be boys?

PORTIA: Certainly. In *Twelfth Night*, *All's Well That Ends Well* and...

JUDGE 1: *(Interrupting)* Ridiculous! Usher, reduce the Bore-o-Meter setting! *(To SHAKIE)* Master Shakespeare, in the twenty-first century, girls do not have to pretend to be boys to be successful!

CHERYL: *(To JUDGE 1)* You said it!

SHAKIE: *(Raises voice)* ...And in *The Merchant of Venice*! Call the Lady Portia!

USHER: Call the Lady Portia from *The Merchant of Venice*!

All eyes turn centre-stage left, to the entrance all other witnesses have used. Nobody enters, of course. After a short pause, PORTIA slowly crosses the stage from her place beside Shakie to the witness stand. USHER, who has been wheeling the Bore-o-Meter forward and adjusting it downwards, reacts.

USHER: Oy! You're not the Lady Portia. You're Bal- Baz - ... whatever it was!

SHAKIE: Balthazar. Who in my play is really the Lady Portia, disguised as a man.

PORTIA / BALTHAZAR peels off her moustache and takes off her cap.

PORTIA: It has been suggested that William Shakespeare's work uses language that is difficult to understand. And yet many of his words and phrases are still in use today. It has been suggested that his plays are out-of-date. And yet they contain all the drama, the comedy, the magic, the heroes and villains so popular today. Last, but not least, I ask the court to remember that William Shakespeare lived in a man's world - a world in which women were second-best. And yet his plays are filled with wonderful women...

JUDGE 1: Pretending to be men!

PORTIA: And thereby showing that anything a man can do, a woman can do equally well!



WAYNE: (To CHERYL) And she said it even better!

CHERYL: Yes, she did!

JUDGES 1, 2 and 3 confer briefly.

JUDGES: Our considered verdict is: Wow!

AUDIO CUE 29: MUSIC AND SFX - CELEBRATIONS AND FIREWORKS

PROSPERO and ARIEL enter, with PROSPERO giving a clear indication that he's causing all this celebratory noise. ARIEL flutters about in front of CHERYL and WAYNE. They stand and follow her, firstly to centre-stage where they adjust the Bore-o-Meter to its 'WOW!' setting with a flourish. ARIEL then leads them - magically! - off stage and back to the ENSEMBLE. PORTIA bows to SHAKIE and exits. Stage lights dim. Lights up on performance area.

Scene 31: For All Time

The ENSEMBLE stands to face the audience and sings reflectively and a capello to the tune of 'Shakie! Shakie!'

CHERYL: Shakie! Shakie!

WAYNE: Is it us or is it you?

ENSEMBLE: What's it all about?
You've given us a clue...

JUDGE 1: William Shakespeare died on the 23rd April 1616, at his home in Stratford-upon-Avon.

SHAKIE either exits or turns his back on the audience.

JUDGE 2: Seven years later, in sixteen twenty-three (1623), all of William Shakespeare's plays were published in a large book, now known as the 'First Folio'.

JUDGE 3: At the front of the book were words of introduction from Shakespeare's friends: John Heminge, Henry Condell and Ben Johnson...

JUDGES open copies of the book as the introduction to the final song begins. They will read them over instrumentals as indicated

AUDIO CUE 30: BACKING TRACK FOR 'FOR ALL TIME'

JUDGE 1: 'We have collected them ... to keep the memory of so worthy a friend and fellow alive...'

Is Shakespeare's memory alive?
Do we think of him still?
Well, we've just spent an hour here
In celebrating Will
Go figure it out...
There's surely no doubt...
Shakespeare's memory's alive!

JUDGE 2: 'Read him, therefore: again, and again...'

Read Shakespeare's words again and again?
Do his lines matter now?
We often quote them day-by-day
Not realising quite how!
If you think it through...
And read him anew...
Yes - again and again!

JUDGE 3: 'Thou art ... alive still, while thy book doth live...'

Does Shakespeare's book still live on?
Are his plays still on the stage?
Yes, they are still best-sellers
When performed, or on the page
Just look up his name...
And confirm his fame...
Yes, his book still lives on!

JUDGES x 3: 'He was not of an age, but for all time!'

Was Will for then or for all time?
Just check out his CV,
His poems, films and theatre
And the versions on TV
Of writers there's few...
Who've met Doctor Who!
Is he for all time?

Yes, he's for all time!
Yes, he's for all time!
Yes, he's for all time!
For all time!

Yes, he's for all time!
Yes, he's for all time!
Yes, he's for all time!
For all time!

For all time!



Scene 32: Good Night, Master Shakespeare

ENSEMBLE exit. Lights off on performance area. Lights up on stage. Setting now as for opening scene, with JUDGES seated. SHAKIE now faces the front.

SHAKIE: Can I go back to sleep, then?

JUDGE 1: Yes, you can, Master Shakespeare.

SHAKIE: And you won't bother me again?

JUDGE 2: No - about that you can have no fears.

JUDGE 3: Well - perhaps in another hundred years!

SHAKIE, with his bell, moves centre-stage and lies down.

SHAKIE: Good night, then.

Lights begin to go down.

JUDGE 1: Rest easy, Master Shakespeare. It would seem that your works will live on for ever and day...

SHAKIE: *(Dreamily)* 'For ever and a day', eh? Ha-ha. Mine... *(The bell slips from his fingers as he falls asleep, ringing for a final time)*

Blackout.

THE END

ONLINE RESOURCES:

All the online resources to support your performance of Shakespeare on Trial! can be found on the BBC website here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p03n15f7>

The resources include all the backing tracks, sound effects and incidental music that are indicated in the script as the 'Audio cues'. Here is a guide to help you locate each of these resources and the videos of each song that can be used to help learn them:

Song 1: 'Shakie! Shakie!'

Song video = <http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/playlist/XXXXXX>

Backing track audio = http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/shakespeare_on_trial/audio_cue_2.mp3

Full-vocal audio = http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/shakespeare_on_trial/01_shakie_shakie.mp3

Song 2: 'Words, Words, Words'

Song video = <http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/playlist/XXXXXX>

Backing track audio = http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/shakespeare_on_trial/audio_cue_5.mp3

Full-vocal audio = http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/shakespeare_on_trial/02_words_words_words.mp3

Song 3: 'Going to the Play'

Song video = <http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/playlist/XXXXXX>

Backing track audio = http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/shakespeare_on_trial/audio_cue_8.mp3

Full-vocal audio = http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/shakespeare_on_trial/03_going_to_the_play.mp3

Song 4: 'H, C, T and R!'

Song video = <http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/playlist/XXXXXX>

Backing track audio = http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/shakespeare_on_trial/audio_cue_11.mp3

Full-vocal audio = http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/shakespeare_on_trial/04_H_C_T_and_R.mp3

Song 5: 'Blood and Guts and Gore'

Song video = <http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/playlist/XXXXXX>

Backing track audio = http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/shakespeare_on_trial/audio_cue_14.mp3

Full-vocal audio = http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/shakespeare_on_trial/05_blood_and_guts_and_gore.mp3

Song 6: 'Supernaturally!'

Song video = <http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/playlist/XXXXXX>

Backing track audio = http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/shakespeare_on_trial/audio_cue_19.mp3

Full-vocal audio = http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/shakespeare_on_trial/06_supernaturally.mp3

Song 7: 'Full Fathom Five'

Song video = <http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/playlist/XXXXXX>

Backing track audio = http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/shakespeare_on_trial/audio_cue_23.mp3

Full-vocal audio = http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/shakespeare_on_trial/07_full_fathom_five.mp3

Song 8: 'Boys Will Be Girls'

Song video = <http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/playlist/XXXXXX>

Backing track audio = http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/shakespeare_on_trial/audio_cue_28.mp3

Full-vocal audio = http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/shakespeare_on_trial/08_boys_will_be_girls.mp3

Song 8: 'For All Time'

Song video = <http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/playlist/XXXXXX>

Backing track audio = http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/shakespeare_on_trial/audio_cue_30.mp3

Full-vocal audio = http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/shakespeare_on_trial/09_for_all_time.mp3

