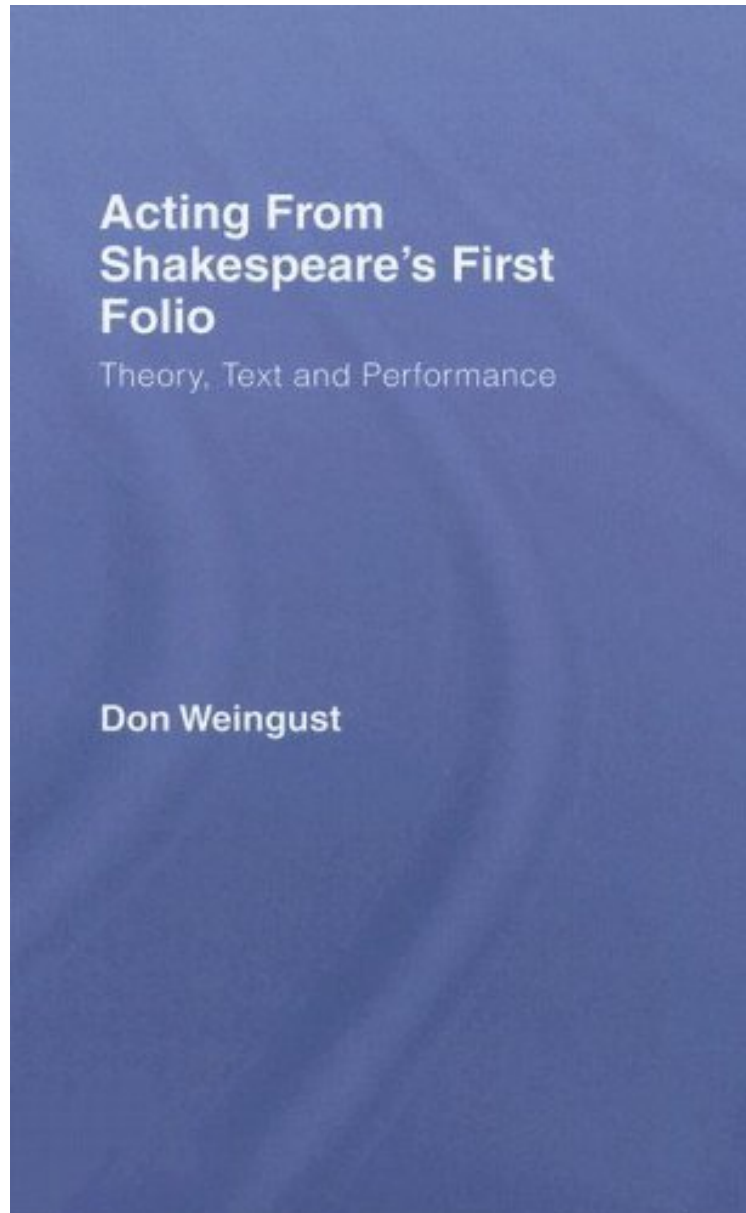


(Ebook pdf) Acting from Shakespeare's First Folio: Theory, Text and Performance

Acting from Shakespeare's First Folio: Theory, Text and Performance

Don Weingust

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Don Weingust : Acting from Shakespeare's First Folio: Theory, Text and Performance before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Acting from Shakespeare's First Folio: Theory, Text and Performance:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Important explanation of original practices Shakespeare and cue

script technique

By Vince Emery

Since 1995, when the Shenandoah Shakespeare Express (now the American Shakespeare Center) first conducted its 6-week Center for Renaissance and Shakespeare Staging, and 1997, when Queen Elizabeth II opened the new Globe Theatre in London, the topics splashing the biggest waves in the Shakespearean sea have been those dealing with original practices theatre--the methods by which plays were originally written, rehearsed, staged, and acted in Shakespeare's time. Developments in original practices have impacted historical and biographical research, the editing of Shakespeare's texts (and those of his contemporaries), classroom techniques, and especially the staging, direction, and acting of Shakespeare's plays today. The original practices pioneered by the American Shakespeare Center, Shakespeare's Globe, and the Original Shakespeare Company have spread around the world. Now teachers use original practices strategies in dozens of graduate, undergraduate, and high school courses, and more than thirty companies have performed hundreds of productions using original practices techniques.

Don Weingust is an actor, director, writer, professor of drama, and the director of the Center for Shakespeare Studies. He was given complete access to preparations and performances by the Original Shakespeare Company and was also given access to Shakespeare's Globe, and supplemented his experiences with research into the origins of original practices to create this book for scholars, students, directors, actors, and lay-readers who would like to deepen their appreciation of Shakespeare's works. This is an important book because Weingust provides the only authoritative overview of the origins of the original practices movement, the controversies it generated, and the reasons for its fast-spreading success. He begins with historical background, giving scant coverage of pioneer William Poel, but the best summary I have found of the observations of Richard Flatter in his controversial 1948 book *Shakespeare's Producing Hand* and of the near-hysterical reactions of Flatter's critics. Weingust then shows how Flatter's work influenced Neil Freeman and Patrick Tucker, and how Freeman, Tucker, and the new Globe Theatre in turn influenced other scholarly and theatrical projects, leading to a greater reliance on play texts from the First Folio and a lesser use of the revised play texts provided by current editions of the plays. The final third of Weingust's book is titled "First Folio techniques in performance: The Original Shakespeare Company and the International Shakespeare's Globe Center." It covers the late-1990s production of plays using original practices and the cue script technique, reviewing unexpected problems and successes, and discussing the results achieved and using them to draw conclusions applicable for other productions. Though Weingust mostly focuses on the careful review of First Folio texts to uncover implied staging and acting directions, he also discusses other aspects of original practices: rehearsals, staging, prompting, and audience interaction. Although Weingust's book can be useful to directors and actors, he is not trying to write a how-to book. (If you are looking for an original practices/cue script technique how-to book, I recommend Patrick Tucker's *Secrets of Acting Shakespeare: The Original Approach*.) Weingust aims for readers to understand the origins, successes, and controversies of the original practices movement, and he succeeds. He also attempts to persuade readers that original practices--especially careful use of First Folio texts--can provide great value to scholars, teachers, actors, and readers of Shakespeare. I believe he succeeds in this goal as well, and recommend this book to anyone who wants gain insight into Shakespeare's works. The book includes a list of works cited and a commendable, thorough index.

Acting from Shakespeare's First Folio examines a series of techniques for reading and performing Shakespeare's plays that are based on the texts of the first volume of Shakespeare's works: the First Folio of 1623. Do extra syllables in a line suggest how it might be played? Can Folio commas reveal character? Don Weingust places this work on Folio performance possibility within current understandings about Shakespearean text, describing ways in which these challenging theories about acting often align quite nicely with the work of the theories' critics. As part of this study, Weingust looks at the work of Patrick Tucker and his London-based Original Shakespeare Company, who have sought to discover the opportunities in using First Folio texts, acting techniques, and what they consider to be original Shakespearean performance methodologies. Weingust argues that their experimental performances at the Globe on Bankside have revealed enhanced possibilities not only for performing Shakespeare, but for theatrical practice in general.

'Acting from Shakespeare's First Folio is essential reading for anyone interested in the transmission of his plays from the 17th to the 21st century and the problem of staging "authentic" performances.'

— British Theatre Guide

About the Author

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