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Pacariem, Shech, ed. Shakespeare in the Philippines: A Digital Archive of Research and Performance. Other

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MIT Global Shakespeares), these works in the Taiwan Shakespeare Database provide essential background study for Taiwan's intercultural theatre.

Finally, the database is also a valuable teaching tool, as I have learned in person whenever I teach Shakespeare. It is always the first website I introduce to students while discussing the possibility of contemporary Shakespeare productions, especially in the social contexts of Taiwan. Shakespeare may still sound foreign to many young Taiwanese students, yet the traditional Chinese version of the website helps to overcome the cultural gap. Performance recordings in the database, particularly those adapted into contemporary contexts, also make the study of the Renaissance text less distant. Given the recent surge of Shakespeare adaptations in Taiwan, I hope more productions will be included in the database, which will enrich our understanding of Shakespeare's contemporary relevance, and how different societies utilize and respond to his legacies.

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Pacariem, Shech, ed.

Shakespeare in the Philippines: A Digital Archive of Research and Performance. Other.

Quezon City: University of the Philippines Diliman, 2016. Accessed 17 December 2020.

archivingshakespeare.wordpress.com.

Shakespeare in the Philippines: A Digital Archive of Research and Performance was launched by Shech Pacariem in 2016 as part of a graduate school project undertaken at the University of the Philippines Diliman. The site gives its users a look at Shakespeare productions that have been staged by various Philippine theatre companies in the last decade. It began as a general survey of Shakespeare performances and projects in the Philippines and an attempt to collate what materials could be found and accessed, and it continues to function in this manner.¹ Apart from captions and short introductions containing important

1. Shech Pacariem, e-mail interview conducted by Michaela Atienza (10–14 December 2020).

contextual information, the site veers away from more overt commentary or interpretation.

From the home page, which currently features the name of the site and a search bar, visitors can use the navigation options in the header to browse three main categories: “Bibliography,” “Performance,” and “Others.” Under “Performance,” entries covering different productions are organized according to theatre company. The page for each performance includes production photos and information about the cast and crew. In addition, each page compiles pull-quotes from and links to reviews from news outlets, blogs, and school publications like Ateneo de Manila University’s *The Guidon* and *Ang Aninag Online*, the official blog of the University of the Philippines Integrated School (UPIS) Media Center. There are still gaps in the collection, and Pacariem hopes to be able to explore the archives of more institutions outside Metro Manila at some point.² However, there is a considerable amount of valuable material here. Many performance pages include promotional materials like posters and programs. Some include videos: trailers, highlights, interviews, news coverage, and in the case of Tanghalang Ateneo’s *Sintang Dalisay*, a lecture given by the play’s director, Ricardo Abad, and its choreographer, Matthew Santamaria. The entry for *William*, a rap musical staged by the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) in 2011, even includes Soundcloud clips from the soundtrack. Several entries provide links to further photo galleries or collections, and to the productions’ official Facebook pages. Many pages also contain a subsection labelled “Elsewhere” which collates social media posts from cast, crew, and audience members. The social media section of Dulaang UP’s 2015 production of *Haring Lear*, for instance, presents fragments of a performance: an Instagram post shared by one of the actors features Edgar and Edmund in an opening night rehearsal; another post features a photo of the cast and crew on a fully lit stage; a couple of tweets document the reactions of audience members. Meanwhile, the “Elsewhere” of *Pangarap sa Isang Gabi ng Gitnang Tag-araw*, Tanghalang Pilipino’s 2016 production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, includes both rehearsal and production photos of what appears to be the confrontation between Hermia, Lisandro, Helena, and Demetrio, shared on Instagram by one of the actors in a “#Throwback sa isa sa pinakanakapagod na eksena sa history of mankind!” (“#Throwback to one of the most exhausting

2. Pacariem, e-mail interview.

scenes in the history of mankind!”).³ These subsections allow users to follow the cast and crew as they go on tour and attend script readings and rehearsals. We are given glimpses of scripts and scores, of costumes and sets in the quiet moments before and between performances, and of the celebrations that occur afterwards. However, mapping out a shared and shareable “Elsewhere” brings its own set of challenges. The digital landscape restructures itself constantly. Practically speaking, this means that links cease to function; posts are deleted; social media accounts disappear or are removed from public view. As Pacariem has pointed out, tracking the production, marketing, documentation, and reception of Shakespeare becomes even more challenging in such conditions, and researching older performances not documented or promoted using social media becomes more difficult. In this case, to do archival work is to accommodate and adjust to such shifts, learning to track Shakespeare through a volatile, rapidly changing world. That Shakespeare in the Philippines might overlap significantly with Shakespeare “Elsewhere” is nevertheless an intriguing proposition, and one that is worth exploring further in the context of a country with one of the highest social media usage rates in the world.⁴

In the “Bibliography” section, the user will find a list of academic articles, book chapters, monographs, and conference presentations on Shakespeare written by Filipino academics. This section also includes a list of translations of Shakespeare’s plays, and a list of reviews of various productions. Because it is so prominently featured (a user proceeding through the main categories in order will likely end up in “Bibliography” first), this section positions the site as a scholarly project. These lists contain many useful resources, although researchers, students, and teachers will likely benefit from a more fleshed-out bibliography that correlates through links, tags, or cross-references to the other sections of the site. Writer and translator Guelan Varela-Luarca, for instance, appears in several of the performance pages, but does not feature in the Bibliography’s list of translations. Such optimizations hopefully lie in the site’s future. A digital archive with an extensive scholarly apparatus and explicit links between its research and performance components would not only illustrate the richness of Philippine Shakespeares on stage, but would also give its users a sense

3. My translation; JV Ibesate, Throwback photo, Instagram, 19 October 2017, [instagram.com/p/BaadLjRlzXd](https://www.instagram.com/p/BaadLjRlzXd).

4. We Are Social, “Digital 2020: Global Digital Overview,” *Digital in 2020* (January 2020), wearesocial.com/digital-2020.

of Filipinos' scholarly engagement with Shakespeare, as well as the many areas of overlap between academics and creative practitioners. Finally, the "Others" section gathers posters, videos, and photos from Shakespeare conferences, workshops, and lectures that have been held in Manila in the last decade. Much more than an afterthought, this section suggests that Shakespeare in the Philippines has a slightly broader scope than its name suggests. While the site focuses primarily on Shakespeare in performance, it also highlights events that cater to primary and secondary school students. In doing so, it acknowledges that Shakespeare has a wider range of stakeholders that extends beyond researchers and performers. In this manner, the site highlights "Philippine Shakespeare" in both performance and scholarship, without confining itself to either of these spheres.

Shakespeare in the Philippines is an evolving archive. Currently, the main obstacles to the site's usability seem mostly to be a matter of organization—in particular, the need for a clear and consistent hierarchy of information that runs across categories. WordPress is a platform that suits archival projects of this scale. On the creator's end, it provides ready-made templates that make plugging in data or material relatively simple. On the user's end, a blog format by which text and images can be arranged into an organic sequence makes the material accessible and pleasing to read. Ideally, this free-flowing quality would be offset by more clearly defined headings and subheadings arranged in a sequence that remains consistent across the different entries. This should also extend to quotations. For the most part, cited material is properly attributed; in a few places, however, source titles are not formatted in a manner that clearly distinguishes them from the quoted passages, and these risk being overlooked. It would be helpful if users could know at a glance which category, section, or subsection they were currently navigating. In addition, the site's overall goals, the principles or rationale behind its hierarchy, and how it organizes and tags its entries could be foregrounded and made more explicit. It must be noted, however, that the site presents itself as a work in progress. In the current climate, gathering materials and building a collection with a more powerful search function poses considerable challenges, particularly since Pacariem hopes to explore both digital and physical collections. However, as others have pointed out, no archive is complete. Christy Desmet, for instance, emphasizes "the archive's necessarily incomplete state—its failure to perfect and stabilize

memory.”⁵ This particular archive’s potential, in the sense that it may add to the wealth of material it has already collected, is rather self-evident. There is indeed an impressive range of materials gathered here, especially considering that this is an entirely student-run project, much smaller in scale than other Shakespeare performance archives. It gives us intimate, behind-the-scenes glimpses at the plays in production, performance, promotion, and reception, as well as a broad sense of how performances of Shakespeare in the Philippines are situated within wider international and institutional networks. By shining a light on the different ways in which Shakespeare is staged, studied, and taught by Filipinos, the project could serve another purpose, providing an ideal starting point for those hoping to increase the visibility of—and initiate more conversations around—traditions currently underrepresented at international festivals and conferences, in publications, and in larger databases and archives. But one could also argue that its great potential lies in its framework, still raw but extremely promising as a means of mapping out Philippine Shakespeares that are not always monolithic, that are not confined to the stage, and that exist in a rapidly evolving elsewhere.

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London: Shakespeare’s Globe, 2015. Accessed 19 August 2020.
globeplayer.tv.

Theatre is one of the most transient of arts. Live performance is writ in water, and part of its appeal for aficionados is the unique experience of sharing with a particular audience at a particular moment in time a performance that, even when repeated the next night, will not be exactly the same. Yet theatres and theatre artistes have always sought to impart a greater degree of permanence to

5. Christy Desmet, “The Art of Curation: Searching for Global Shakespeares in the Digital Archives,” *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation* 11.1 (2017), borrowers.uga.edu/783934/show.