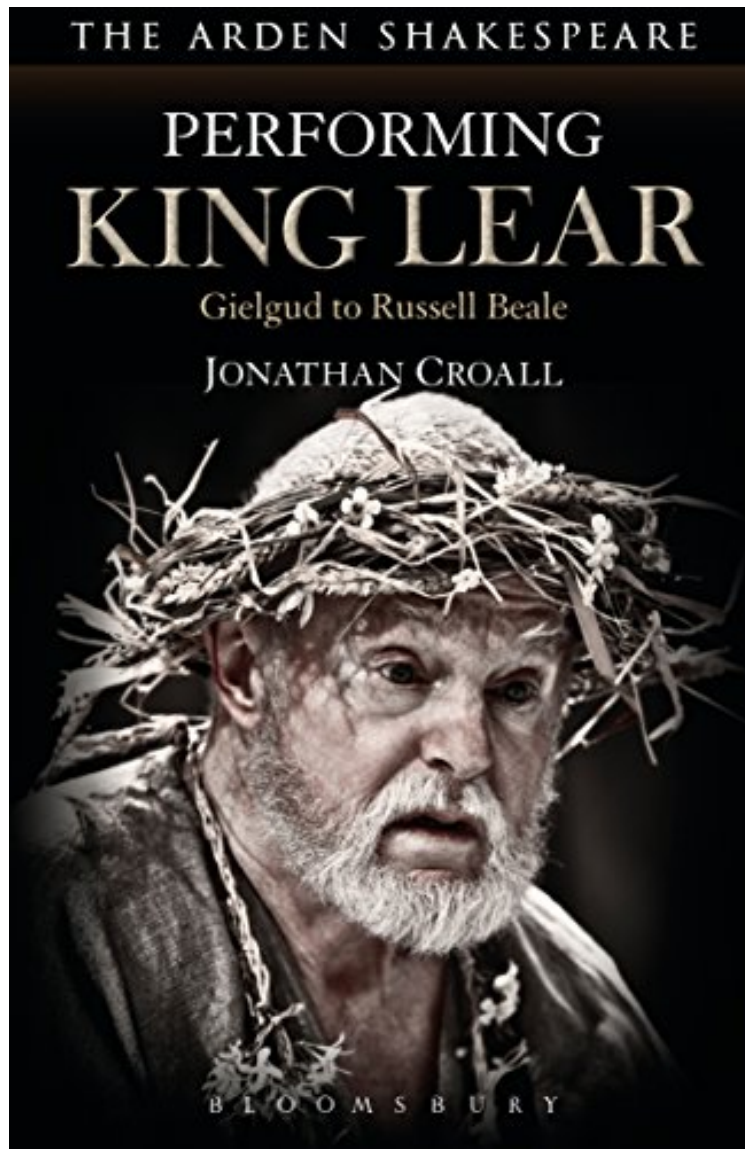


[Download] Performing King Lear: Gielgud to Russell Beale

Performing King Lear: Gielgud to Russell Beale

Jonathan Croall

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Jonathan Croall : Performing King Lear: Gielgud to Russell Beale before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Performing King Lear: Gielgud to Russell Beale:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. ... a deep consideration of the bottomless mysteries of the greatest play in the English languageBy Jim EigoPerforming King Lear is not a book to turn to for a deep consideration of the bottomless mysteries of the greatest play in the English language. The book does not pretend to be that. It is instead a lively, thoughtful consideration of dozens of the most prominent English-language productions of Shakespeare's King Lear from the first "modern" realization of the King by John Gielgud in 1931 through recent stagings on both sides of

the Atlantic in 2013 and 2014. Each short section is devoted to a particular production. The author does not evaluate a production, though he does present a cross section of contemporary critical reception. Each section instead focuses on the actor playing Lear and on the director of the production, almost always through direct quotation from available source material or from interviews that the author conducted with a score of the principal players. For most productions, many other voices, most often of actors playing supporting roles and members of the production's creative team, frequently chime in as well. If you love this play and if you believe, like me, that a play is only really truly itself—or rather, one of its numberless selves—as it is given bodily form by living, breathing actors, then this book is indispensable to you. Very trim but complete sourcing will point you down the path to further investigation into the particular productions of Lear that have captured your imagination. There are eight photographs in the book—far fewer than the number of productions chronicled. But if you read the book with a computer or a mobile device at hand, you will be able to summon up shots for most of the productions the book considers, and clips for many of the more recent stagings. The author keeps his opinions to himself. But after I finished reading the book, I wanted to interview him. I would love to know which of the many productions that he has researched or has experienced himself have gripped him the most, or amused him, enlightened him, baffled him and, yes, wounded him. King Lear is just that kind of play.

King Lear is arguably the most complex and demanding play in the whole of Shakespeare. Once thought impossible to stage, today it is performed with increasing frequency, both in Britain and America. It has been staged more often in the last fifty years than in the previous 350 years of its performance history, its bleak message clearly chiming in with the growing harshness, cruelty and violence of the modern world. Performing King Lear offers a very different and practical perspective from most studies of the play, being centred firmly on the reality of creation and performance. The book is based on Jonathan Croall's unique interviews with twenty of the most distinguished actors to have undertaken this daunting role during the last forty years, including Donald Sinden, Tim Pigott-Smith, Timothy West, Julian Glover, Oliver Ford Davies, Derek Jacobi, Christopher Plummer, Michael Pennington, Brian Cox and Simon Russell Beale. He has also talked to two dozen leading directors who have staged the play in London, Stratford and elsewhere. Among them are Nicholas Hytner, David Hare, Kenneth Branagh, Adrian Noble, Deborah Warner, Jonathan Miller and Dominic Dromgoole. Each reveals in precise and absorbing detail how they have dealt with the formidable challenge of interpreting and staging Shakespeare's great tragedy.

[An] illuminating survey of modern approaches to the play in performance ... [providing] succinct accounts of nearly 50 performances over the last half-century. *The Guardian* There are about 40 living actors who've tackled the role. Read this book, all ye students, and find out as much as you can about how it's been done in the recent past. *The Stage* [Performing King Lear] contains detailed critical and personal accounts of nearly 60 productions, some successful, some not ... Croall draws on published memoirs and frequently rueful interviews conducted with actors and directors for this project, to give the reader some sense of what the Lear experience is like from within. Chapters devoted to the exertions of Gielgud, Charles Laughton and an ill-fated production starring Nigel Hawthorne make for compelling reading. *The Sydney Morning Herald* About the Author Jonathan Croall is a distinguished biographer and theatre historian. He is the author of twenty books, notably the acclaimed biographies *John Gielgud: Matinee Idol* and *Movie Star* (Methuen Drama) and *Sybil Thorndike: A Star of Life*.