



Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance

William B. Worthen

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How do our ideas about Shakespeare inform our understanding of the limits of performance? This stimulating book asks how both text and performance are construed as vessels of authority. The author finds that our understanding of Shakespearean performance retains a surprising sense of the possibility of being 'faithful' to Shakespearean texts, and so to 'Shakespeare'. After an opening theoretical chapter, Worthen examines the relationship between text and performance in directing, acting, and scholarship. He considers how some prominent theatre directors articulate their role as régisseur under the sign of Shakespeare. Next he looks at how actors read Shakespeare's plays, and in the final chapter he inspects performance-oriented criticism of Shakespeare since the 1960s. This undogmatic and exploratory book contributes to the scholarly study of acting and directing, and to the wider discourse of performance studies.

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