

## QCDA MEDIA INFORMATION

Wednesday 10 March 2010

### ACTIVE SHAKESPEARE: STUDENTS ACT UP TO LEARN THE BARD

**New Shakespeare assessments for 11-14 year olds have been launched today at the world famous Shakespeare's Globe Theatre.**

This new teaching and assessment initiative, launched by The Qualifications & Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) and Schools Minister, Diana Johnson, is called **Active Shakespeare: Capturing Evidence of Learning**.

Shakespearean and television actress Siobhan Redmond teamed up with Globe Education and the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) to endorse this approach, which will help young people engage with selected texts of the Bard's work in a meaningful and interesting way.

An example of this practical learning will be demonstrated by an enthusiastic group of school children from Rye College, Sussex, who helped pilot some of the activities. The plays are Romeo & Juliet, The Tempest and As You Like It and the themes covered in the materials include aspects such as Understanding The Character, Directing and Performance.

Diana Johnson, Schools Minister, said:

*"Shakespeare should be a central part of every young person's education. Developing a love of Shakespeare at a young age often leads to a lifelong passion for literature and theatre and helps to improve a child's reading and writing. Shakespeare is also part of our heritage and his themes and lessons on human nature are as relevant today as ever.*

*"These assessment materials will help bring Shakespeare to life for young people, allowing them to actively engage with the plays and the characters in the way that actors do in the rehearsal room. Teachers will now have a resource of fun, imaginative and challenging activities they can use to inspire young people and share with them the fantastic works of Shakespeare."*

Jacqui O'Hanlon, RSC Director of Education said:

*"We know young people get the most out of Shakespeare when they explore the plays as actors do, when they are up on their feet and confidently exploring the language and characters. Then the texts come alive for students. We are delighted to have been part of a project that assesses a student's understanding of Shakespeare through these kinds of active approaches which are all inspired by current rehearsal room practice. We hope that teachers and students across the country will enjoy trying out these activities and that they contribute to an ongoing and meaningful engagement with Shakespeare's plays at KS3."*

Fiona Banks Head of Learning at Globe Education, Shakespeare's Globe, said:

*"Active, practical exploration of Shakespeare's plays is the best way for young people to engage with their stories, characters and ideas, while developing their own. Practical exploration and academic discovery exist side by side in our rehearsal rooms. Globe Education and the RSC are delighted to have been part of creating 'Active Shakespeare' which will embed this ethos of active learning through play and playing in our KS3 curriculum. We hope that students will enjoy working through the same processes as Globe Actors and that this way of learning will enrich their studies at KS3 and beyond."*

Paul Wright, QCDA English programme manager, said:

*"In these materials pupils use methods employed by actors in a rehearsal to explore Shakespeare's characters and ideas and develop their own responses and interpretations. They trace how different aspects of the characters develop throughout the play, examine the impact of Shakespeare's language and reflect on how the audience comment on how the audience's reactions change as the play develops."*

The materials will support and strengthen the teaching and learning of Shakespeare at key stage 3 and ensure assessment of Shakespeare continues to be integral part of teachers' ongoing assessment of pupils. It will encourage lively and active approaches to teaching and learning that will involve the study of the whole text, engage with the text as something to be performed and consider Shakespeare as relevant in a wider cultural and literary context.

The QCDA guidance materials; Active Shakespeare: Capturing Evidence of Learning, are downloadable from <http://qcdastaging/27406.aspx>

## ENDS

**For further information contact Steven Brassey on 0300 303 3017/ 07545 423 062 or email [steven.brassey@qcda.gov.uk](mailto:steven.brassey@qcda.gov.uk) or Susan Wilkinson on 0207 227 5188 / 07771 339 193**

### Notes:

**The RSC** has recently launched its own publication aimed at KS2 and KS3 teachers called The RSC Shakespeare Toolkit for Teachers. Focusing on three of Shakespeare's most popular texts, *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the toolkit adapts RSC rehearsal room approaches for use in the classroom. It is part of the ongoing legacy of the RSC's Stand Up For Shakespeare campaign which aims to get more children and young people Seeing Shakespeare Live, Starting Shakespeare Earlier and Doing Shakespeare on their Feet.

**Globe Education** was founded in 1989 and is one of the largest Arts educators leading creative learning, research, and events. *Playing Shakespeare with Deutsche Bank* is Globe Education's flagship education project for London schools, providing over 14,000 free tickets for Year 9 students to experience a full-scale, especially-produced production of *Macbeth* at the Globe in March. The project also provides access to a free online resource, in-school workshops and CPD programmes for participating teachers. In addition, Globe Education is conducting a three-year research project into active approaches to teaching Shakespeare at Key Stage 3. The results of the survey will be available later this year.

**QCDA** is the government agency for the development of curriculum, delivery of assessments and reform of qualifications. We work with the education, skills and business communities to develop effective and innovative ways to help children and adults to progress, achieve their full potential and to demonstrate that achievement to others.  
[www.qcda.gov.uk](http://www.qcda.gov.uk)

### **SIOBHAN REDMOND - Biography**

**RSC:** *The Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Dunsinane*.

**Shakespeare's Globe:** *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

**Trained:** Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.

**Theatre includes:** *House of Bernada Alba*, *Mary Stuart* (National Theatre of Scotland); *Dido, Queen of Carthage* (National Theatre); *The Lunatic Queen* (Riverside Studios); *U.S. and Them* (Hampstead); *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (Lyceum, Edinburgh); *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (PW Productions); *Perfect Days* (Traverse/Hampstead/tour/West End); *An Experienced Woman Gives Advice* (Royal Exchange); *The Trick is to Keep Breathing* (Tron/Toronto/Royal Court); *Sex Comedies* (London/Glasgow); *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *King Lear*, *Look Back in Anger* (Renaissance Theatre Co.).

**Television includes:** *Mindaway*, *Boy Meets Girl*, *Lift*, *The Catherine Tate Show*, *EastEnders*, *New Tricks*, *The Smoking Room*, *Sea of Souls*, *Holby City*, *Every Woman Knows a Secret*, *In the Red*, *Wokenwell*, *Throwaways*, *Deacon Brodie*, *Nervous Energy*, *Relative Stranger*, *Sorry About Last Night*, *The High Life*, *Rab C Nesbitt*, *Between the Lines*, *Dad on Arrival*, *At the End of Alex Cording*, *Taggart*.

**Film includes:** *Beautiful People*, *Karmic Mothers*, *Captives*, *Duet for One*.