
Walk a Mile in My Shoes: Reclaiming Peoples Temple
Monica Cortés Viharo

The closing number of The People's Temple (2005) is a distillation of the production's goals: "And before you abuse, criticize, and accuse, walk a mile in my shoes." Commissioned for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the mass murder/suicide in "Jonestown," Guyana, The People's Temple destabilized the accepted narrative of Jonestown. Directed by Leigh Fondakowski, this devised documentary theater piece is a form of performative historiography that shifts the gaze from Jim Jones to the "people" of Peoples Temple. Through verbatim testimony from the dead and survivors, and songs from Peoples Temple's gospel album the audience learns that before they were labeled a cult, this multiracial congregation with a large African-American population was respected for living their socialist and utopian ideals. The play expands the archive, offers a nuanced exploration of the tragedy, and facilitates deferred conversations; ones that cannot conveniently be summed up by the cultural catch phrase, "drinking the Kool-Aid."

And before you abuse, criticize, and accuse
Walk a mile in my shoes

—"Walk A Mile In My Shoes"

Jonestown. The very word evokes a series of volatile images: Kool Aid, the jungle, hundreds of dead bodies—the eyes of Jim Jones hidden behind his omnipresent sunglasses. . . .

—Production Program, *The People's Temple*

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Introduction

The first of the two epigraphs above appeared in the program of the 2005 world premiere of *The People's Temple*, a play about the 1978 mass murder/suicide in "Jonestown," Guyana, written by Leigh Fondakowski, Greg Pierotti, Stephen Wangh, and Margo Hall. Berkeley Repertory Theatre's artistic director Tony Taconne invoked these images to capture the collective memory of People's Temple and the Jonestown tragedy. He goes on to state in the program that the production was an attempt to question these images by bringing new voices and information to the stage and troubling any singular or decisive understanding of the Temple and its demise ("People's Temple," Berkeley Rep). The lyrics of the closing number are a compelling distillation of the production's goals: "And before you abuse, criticize, and accuse," the song invites the audience to "Walk a mile in my shoes." Through the closing song and various artistic choices, the production successfully destabilized the accepted narrative of Jonestown—as a cult blindly following the tyrant who wiped them out completely in a tragic massacre—through performative historiography. Performance scholar Scott Magelssen defines performative historiography as "enunciating a particular selection and arrangement of records and reifying a carefully curated view of the past" (Magelssen 19). In addition to curating a view of the past, as is the case with any work of documentary theatre, this piece expands and even questions conventional explanations by pairing the expected with new or less circulated information, images, and sounds. Film scholar Anna Siomopoulos describes performative historiography projects that display historic silent films with contemporary music and prose as a means of "destabilizing film text, reanimating film reception, and complicating film spectatorship through music, spoken word, and multiple voices" (Siomopoulos and Zimmerman 11). Doing so can foster a historical understanding of these films in a more complex way than simply watching the films alone would allow. I assert that *The People's Temple* does something similar with documentary theatre. As a form of performative historiography, the play is a rich case study of theatre used to destabilize, reanimate, and complicate what we think we know about this traumatic event. By attending the words and music of Temple members and their families and re-imagining well known moments in this history, the audience learns so much more than they would by simply being presented the documentary evidence.

As a form of performative historiography, documentary theatre utilizes, as Diana Taylor would have it, the *archive*, through in-depth research of documents akin to journalism and historiography, and what Taylor refers to as the *repertoire*, through the performance of interviews, gestures, music, and dance (Taylor 19). Similar to Taylor's critique of the archive as being

informed by entrenched forms of power, Carol Martin critiques documentary theatre by labeling the archive it uses as an "operation of power," and posing the question "who decides what is archived and how?" (Martin 10). *The People's Temple* responds to Martin's critique by adding over 300 hours of new interviews to the Peoples [sic] Temple archive and expanding its repertoire to now include this play and several books inspired, and in some cases, generated through the devising process (Kaufman and Pitts McAdams 276). Fondakowski highlights the need for books that augment the information presented in the play by writing, "In the play we used about 10 percent of what we collected" (Fondakowski 315). That wealth of material created for this production is now housed at the California Historical Society and includes the largest collection of interviews to date on Peoples Temple (Fondakowski xx).

Tapping into the richness of the Temple's archive and repertoire, the play accesses and amplifies the faint voices of the *people* of Peoples Temple. Through the testimony of the deceased and survivors, the audience learns lesser-known or forgotten facts about Peoples Temple. They see and hear that the congregation was multiracial, with a large African-American population, and that in the 1970s Reverend Jim Jones was a respected religious and civic leader as well as a powerful force in Bay Area progressive politics. Most importantly, they learn that there were survivors, and among the living and the dead, there were many members who remained with the Temple out of their devotion to each other and not just to Jones. *The People's Temple* expands the Peoples Temple archive and repertoire while it troubling the doxa, or common beliefs and popular opinions of the Jonestown tragedy.

By telling the story through a newly expanded archive of testimony and music, the local community is asked to reckon with the massacre in Guyana, the valorization of Jones prior to the massacre, and the lack of attention paid to survivors and their families in the intervening years. Fondakowski provided a rationale for Berkeley Rep's "extensive community collaboration" on this production by stating, "It is fitting to premiere this play at Berkeley Rep because the movement has such presence in the Bay Area. . . . [W]ith the sudden murders of San Francisco mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk nine days after the Jonestown tragedy, all real dialogue about Peoples Temple ceased" ("People's Temple," Berkeley Rep). Therefore, in the tradition of *The Laramie Project* (Kaufman) and *Twilight—Los Angeles 1992* (Smith), *The People's Temple* utilizes verbatim interviews, letters, and recordings to add a nuanced understanding of this tragedy and facilitate deferred community discussions. By expanding the Peoples Temple archive to include this play as well as new interviews conducted during the devising process, these artists help foster

more complex conversations about Jonestown in the future; ones that cannot conveniently be summed up by the cultural catch phrase, "drinking the Kool-Aid."

Peoples Temple

Names are of particular importance throughout this project. The legal name of the Jones's religious organization was Peoples Temple of the Disciples of Christ. While founded as part of the Christian denomination of the Disciples of Christ, as the group grew in popularity and engaged in greater political activism it became known colloquially as Peoples Temple, without an apostrophe (Fondakowski 319). The absence of the apostrophe makes what otherwise would be a possessive noun into an adjective. My research and the play itself do not explain this grammatical choice, but in fact for many years there was no physical temple, just people.

To differentiate it from the organization, the makers of the play named their work *The People's Temple*, adding the article and the apostrophe (319). In so doing they center the story on "the people" of Peoples Temple, not Jones. A discussion of the Temple's name, its chronology, and newly obtained information were listed in the production program to arm the audience with the context for embodied acts on stage ("People's Temple," Berkeley Rep).

The People's Temple

Crafted and performed to shift the gaze from Jones to the congregation, *The People's Temple* script features fifty-nine characters, twenty-four described as African-American, thirty-four described as Caucasian, and two without ethnic designation. Characters include living and deceased Temple members, their families, as well as journalists and government officials who had direct dealings with the Temple (Fondakowski et al.). Actor and director Margo Hall, the only African-American on the writing team, explained that the team wanted to include as many actual people as possible in order to distance their piece from docudrama, which often creates fictional composite characters based on real people (Hall). The team wanted the audience to understand that what they were hearing were the actual words of Temple members and their families. In so doing the production could build credibility with the audience who might believe new or unknown information or assume that various details were added sensationalizes the story. Characters are listed in alphabetical order—therefore, Jones is not the first character listed, but the twentieth, and has no dialogue until page fourteen. This is another tactic employed to focus the story on Temple members. The ensemble of ten actors—six Caucasian and four

African-American, six women and four men—perform multiple characters, to highlight the ethnic and cultural diversity of the congregation (Fondakowski et al. 2–3).

The first character to appear on stage is simply named an Archivist. This character reappears throughout the show to introduce each new character to the audience and is played by every member of the ensemble. The Archivist is named in the script but not listed in the program; therefore the audience is unaware that their guide through the play has a title. With the exception of the Archivist, every character portrayed is an actual person (Fondakowski et al.). It is fitting that the Archivist has a role to play in this story. The archive and its importance is not just denoted by a physical space, but also personified through an embodied presence. Audience members are reminded that for better or worse, people decide what is archived, who can access it, and which items enter the public consciousness. In my interview with cast member Velina Brown, she confirmed that the cast had the opportunity to interact with actual artifacts and doing so inspired various scenes. She notes that finding the choir robe in a box of archival materials was a pivotal point in the devising process. Unlike sunglasses worn by Jim Jones or the tubs that held cyanide laced punch, this item pointed to the quality of temple member's lives and not just the circumstances of their deaths (Brown).

By starting in the archive the play enacts what Richard Schechner labels "showing doing" by re-creating, in a highly performative manner, this moment in the devising process and the meaning this article of clothing might have had to a member of the Temple community (Schechner 28). Therefore, the first item revealed to the audience from one of the archival boxes is a choir robe—a symbol of performance, but there is no singing in the archive, no sound, no music, no performance (Fondakowski et al. 4). In the archive there are only words. So the Archivist must conjure the music from his memory. Stage directions for the opening scene read:

An open space lined with lots of shelves with boxes. An Archivist enters with a box. He opens the box and reveals a choir robe. He begins to hum the tune of "He's Able." The robe conjures a memory: Upstage from the shelves a WOMAN begins to sing "He's Able," crossing DS [down stage] near the archivist who holds the robe with his eyes closed. As the sound builds, the rest of the company enters, joining the singing. (4)

Through the embodied act of remembering, the Archivist brings music and more voices into the archive. The singing woman who represents this memory is positioned upstage, outside of the archive. As she moves down stage and closer to the archive, the strength of the sound builds as additional singers join the space. The singing shows the audience the work the

choir robe is doing inside the archive. Singing blends the archive (written word) and the repertoire (embodied act) and actualizes the role of music and oral history to function as “vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity” (Taylor 16). Music and the communal act of singing were integral parts of the Peoples Temple—so much so that they produced an album.

Songs from People’s Temple’s little-known gospel album *He’s Able* frame the show, which is presented as a collection of monologues and dialogues created from new interviews, and archival sources such as letters, recordings, and oral histories by and about Temple members (Peoples Temple Choir). Having the cast sing gospel and pop songs from *He’s Able* juxtaposes the horror of the congregation’s deaths with the joy and fellowship of their lives. The audience hears voices in harmony with each other, not Jim Jones.

Monologues in act 1 explain the Temple’s history, growth, and the circumstances under which members met Jones and/or joined the Temple. Phil Tracy, one of the earliest Temple members, explains that Jones came to California after being ostracized in his home state of Indiana for establishing an integrated congregation (Fondakowski et al. 6). Then members including disenfranchised African-Americans, runaway teenagers, and Vietnam veterans share their journey to the Temple and how they established families and lifelong relationships in this community (4–39). In act 2 the audience learns that despite the Temple’s powerful role in San Francisco and California politics, questions from journalists and concerned family members pressured Jones to move the group to Guyana to build a post-racial, socialist utopia (40–83).

Designed by Sarah Lambert, *The People’s Temple’s* set consisted of shelves filled with some 1,000 boxes underneath two steeples. Each box contained replicas of the actual belongings of Temple members (Fondakowski 319). Velina Brown clarified that each box on stage represented a person who died in Jonestown and contained an approximation of their belongings. Brown describes the impact of the lights coming up and the audience seeing the almost 1,000 boxes, which illustrated the magnitude of the loss (Brown). In act 2 the actors physically converted the “archive” to create a space that alluded to the open-air pavilion that served as the main communal gathering place in Jonestown and the location where many members died (Kaufman and Pitts McAdams 277).

During the course of the play actors attached over-sized passport photos of Jonestown victims to each box, “so that by the end of the play most of the boxes were adorned with the faces of the people” (Fondakowski 319). Fondakowski recalls the audience’s reaction to this element of the set:

After each performance, many audience members were drawn toward the front of the house, making their way onto the stage to walk among the shelves, to reflect and view the photos. The set . . . had become an accidental, yet powerful, art installation. As artists, we were very pleased when Becky Moore (a family member of several Jonestown victims) pointed out, “You let us see their faces, not just their bodies lying facedown in the jungle. Their faces were upright.” (319)

Through a set piece/art installation, these items did the important work of restaging the final picture of the people of Peoples Temple. This re-imaging of the final image of the deaths in Jonestown, is an act of adaptation that attempts in Rebecca Snider’s words, “the touching of time” through recreations that are fully aware of their deliberate failure or slippage (Schneider 31). Instead of remembering them through the highly circulated images of nameless victims lying facedown in Jonestown, audience members were able to revisit this moment in history and see the faces of distinct individuals who were also members of a community.

Another re-creation is the final scene in which characters walk onto the stage describing the last evening of Jonestown while placing clothing of deceased Temple members on stage. The show ends with the entire cast on the stage. While the ensemble sings “Walk a Mile in My Shoes” from the Peoples Temple’s gospel album, the clothing on stage ghosts Temple members’ dead bodies. The show’s finale is simultaneously an artistic retelling of the deaths and a moving celebration of their lives in song.

The sound design was just as critical as the set design in this final moment. By contrasting the energetic gospel and pop music of the Temple’s choir with the clothing of dead bodies on stage, the actors encouraged the audience to question what they think they know about Peoples Temple. Audience members may have considered the incongruity of what they saw and heard. Would people filled with joy and fellowship, for instance, take their own lives rather than continue their lives outside this community? They might have also wondered if the music became a false representation of happiness to others in the final days of the Temple. Or was music making an act of agency that expressed the congregation’s commitment to the collective despite the outside world’s focus on an individual figurehead? Through singing the show performs and shares the Temple’s little-known repertoire and in so doing troubles accepted notions of the quality of Temple members’ lives and commitment to one another.

Devising *The People’s Temple*

This 2005 production began in 2002 when Berkeley Rep, in collaboration with Z Space Studio, both prominent theatres in the San Francisco Bay

Area, commissioned Fondakowski to create a piece to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Jonestown tragedy. David Dower, then the artistic director of Z Space, and his wife Denise Stephenson, who would become the project's lead researcher, were good friends with the Reverend John Moore and his wife Barbara, who appear as characters in the play. The Moores lost their two daughters and their grandson in Jonestown ("Ghastly Peoples Temple Deaths"). Margo Hall lost four family friends in Jonestown and would go on to portray one of them, Marthea Hicks, in the piece (Fondakowski et al.). Fondakowski had previously collaborated with Berkeley Rep on the west coast premiere of Tectonic's *The Laramie Project*, allowing these Bay Area artists to feel comfortable placing this extremely personal exploration in her hands.

In order to disrupt conventional understandings of the Jonestown tragedy, the production conveyed the unknown or forgotten facts about Peoples Temple. The play reminded viewers that before the Temple was labeled as a *cult*, it was a well-regarded, politically progressive, Christian church serving primarily marginalized citizens. The play makes the argument that if indeed temple members were fooled by Jones, so were powerful political and cultural leaders who appointed him to the San Francisco Housing Authority, the Human Rights Commission, and welcoming delegations for visiting dignitaries, such as then vice presidential candidate Walter Mondale, and later First Lady Rosalyn Carter (Fondakowski et al. 40–44). Jones, in other words, fooled us all.

In her book *Stories From Jonestown*, an expanded collection of the interviews conducted for the play, Fondakowski notes the need to use performance to revisit and reconsider this moment in history. She writes,

[W]hy can't history hold on to what has been discovered since that day, for example, that many people in Jonestown did not actually die at their own hand. Both murder and suicide took place that day in 1978—the cyanide mixture was injected as well as ingested—and the decision to die was not made by Jim Jones alone. (Fondakowski xix)

Through performance, Fondakowski and her collaborators added and shared new information and layers to the story of Peoples Temple. Audience members then encountered this dynamic piece of history as well as new information in a memorable and visceral form.

Margo Hall expressed a need to expand the Temple's archive by stating that "Most of the archival information was about Jones. We knew that the temple was 80% African-American. We were constantly trying to get more minority voices, but those were the ones that were missing because those were the ones that died" (Hall). Therefore one of the purposes of the play—and much of documentary theatre—is to expand the archive. As Carol

Martin describes it, documentary theatre can "create additional historical accounts," and "at its best, it offers us a way to think about disturbing contexts and complicated subject matter while revealing the virtues and flaws of its sources" (Martin 12). Given this description, documentary theatre was the ideal genre for *The People's Temple*, whose creators wanted to facilitate community dialogue rather than produce a definitive narrative. In interviews and press releases, the creators and cast embraced the ethnically diverse, politically progressive, and class conscious perspective of the show and its genre, or as Martin describes, "as staged politics, specific instances of documentary theatre construct the past in service of a future the authors would like to create" (10). So while the play walks the fine line of valorizing the Temple's socialist ideals as espoused by Jones, it doesn't shy away from presenting the quest for utopia as part of the Temple's downfall ("People's Temple," Berkeley Rep).

Like many works of documentary theatre, *The People's Temple* does not focus on why or how the tragedy occurred, but rather the implications, themes, impacts, and lost moments of the event. The goals of the project were to "create a conversation between the living and the dead," and to "find healing in the process . . . with the candor only hindsight can provide" ("People's Temple," Berkeley Rep). Fondakowski writes, "The question could not be 'What needs to be told?' However ethically bound we felt to history, the question had to multiply and become 'What do we as artists want to share? What do we have to contribute to the conversation and canon of Jonestown?'" (Fondakowski 318). To that end, the play is a loose chronology, told in a series of monologues, sometimes intercut with other monologues to create a dialogue, or what the Tectonic Theatre Project calls a *moment*. Moments are "individual, self-contained theatrical units" that can be sequenced into "theatrical phrases or sentences that will eventually become a play" (Kaufman and Pitts McAdams 29). These moments were formed exclusively from interviews, letters, newspaper articles, and other archival materials and then augmented with slides indicating time and location, as well as film clips and audio recordings from the Peoples Temple archive ("The People's Temple, on Stage").

Engaging with History On and Off Stage

Actors experienced the ghost of Jonestown on and off the stage. In addition to post-play and community discussions, actors often found themselves in informal conversations with playgoers. Velina Brown stated that audience members frequently approached her on her train ride home from the theatre. In fact, one evening a doctor spoke to her about Jim Jones's mother, Lynetta Putnam, whom he had treated before she left for Guyana. He expressed guilt and regret to Brown as he wondered if there was some-

thing he could have done to stop Putnam from going (Brown). This incident provides an example of how the play encouraged community members to engage with these incidents inside as well as outside of the theatre.

To further help the public grapple with this chapter of their shared local history, Berkeley Rep organized educational projects and civic conversation throughout the run of *The People's Temple*. Berkeley Rep's Performance Lab, part of its education programs, produced an educational guide for schools to "help teachers meet the arts requirement by using Berkeley Rep productions as a framework for study" (Lee). As stated in the educational guide, "In performance lab students learn, create, and perform an original piece based on TPT (*The People's Temple*) in residence at 5 Bay Area high schools" (Lee). Utilizing information and activities from the educational guide and attending student matinees of *The People's Temple*, high school students were also charged with creating their own documentary theatre piece. In fact Sarah Leonard, Berkeley Rep's literary manager, recalls attending the play as a high school student. While she doesn't remember specific moments from the play or school activities associated with it, she does recall feeling moved by the performance and shocked by a history she had never known (Leonard).

Several performances of *The People's Temple* were followed by post-play discussions. Ten community discussions about the Peoples Temple, media, religious extremism, and the play itself were led by local artists, scholars, and community leaders in Berkeley, San Francisco, Santa Rosa, and Ukiah; all cities with strong ties to Peoples Temple ("Ghastly Peoples Temple Deaths"). Berkeley Rep also offered a free docent program for groups who wanted a "trained docent" to lead a one-hour discussion either before or after the show. Groups of fifteen or more could receive discounted tickets as well as the opportunity for a private post-play discussion, tour, or reception ("People's Temple," Berkeley Rep).

Through these events and education projects, these Bay Area artists used *The People's Temple* to creating a site for deferred discussions of the tragedy. As stated earlier, the murder of San Francisco's mayor, George Moscone, and the first openly gay member of the Board of Supervisors, Harvey Milk, at the hands of a fellow city official only nine days after the events in Jonestown left the Bay Area reeling. Donnerter Lane, leader of the Council of San Francisco Churches in 1978 and of the effort to bring victims' bodies from Guyana to United States, described that period as "chaos." In her interview for *The People's Temple*, she proclaimed "There was a political war going on in the city" (Fondakowski 300). Indeed, the trial of Milk's and Moscone's murder, former Supervisor Dan White, his infamous "twinkie" defense, and his controversial manslaughter conviction fueled political tensions and dominated public discourse. ("The People's

Temple, on Stage"). Interestingly, this moment in history was the subject of Emily Mann's *Execution of Justice*, another work of documentary theatre (Mann).

Critical Reception

The People's Temple was a critical success at Berkeley Rep and also received laudatory reviews when the production moved to Perseverance Theatre in Juneau, Alaska and the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The review of the Berkeley Rep production that appeared in *Variety* on 9 May 2005 reads:

Indeed, "The People's Temple's" most striking achievement may be its vivid evocation of Jones' and the church's magnetism. Their utopian vision for a new American society seemed so genuine that the majority of converts were African-Americans whose ongoing civil-rights struggles might well have rendered suspect any other gift given by a white man. (Harvey)

An equally positive review of the Guthrie Theater production was published on backstage.com in January 2006:

Yet *The People's Temple* always comes back to the people, and its dozen performers bring each of the more than 30 characters to full-dimensional life. That's important. While the show's first production at Berkeley Repertory Theatre in California could connect to an audience for whom the events of Jonestown were arguably more immediate, productions in the rest of the country need to rely on the sections of the material that are universal: the quest for the spiritual, for a community, for a better life. This comes through in nearly all the characters as we learn why they joined with Jones and why—even when things went horribly wrong—they remained. We are reminded that many of these vibrant characters on stage will soon be reduced to memories, to a few stray items in a white cardboard box. (Huyck)

These two reviews provide an accurate representative sample of the critical assessment of the original production. Some reviews noted minor flaws with the play such as its two hour and 50 minute running time, the repetition of certain facts about the Temple by various characters, and the use of joyful music to shy away from the most difficult aspects of the story. But overall the reviews consistently noted the wealth of "distinct" and "dimensional" characters portrayed and the cast's ability to capture the energy of Temple life. By presenting a myriad of stories from Jonestown, the productions represented the

diversity of the congregation, gave identities to otherwise nameless victims, and provided a window into the lure of Peoples Temple.

In addition to the Berkeley Rep production and tour with the majority of the original cast, Fondakowski directed a 2008 production of *The People's Temple* with an entirely new cast at American Theater Company in Chicago ("People's Temple," *Theatre in Chicago*). The Puzzle Piece Theatre in Ferndale, Michigan produced the play with a new cast and director during their 2017 season ("People's Temple," *Puzzle Piece*). While these productions have added to the Peoples Temple repertoire, two books from this project have added to its archive. In 2005 Denise Stephenson, lead researcher on the Berkeley Rep production, published *Dear People: Remembering Jonestown*, a collection of new and previously collected letters, photos, personal histories, and documents (Stephenson). The aforementioned *Stories from Jonestown* by Fondakowski was published in 2013 and contains long-form transcriptions of interviews conducted for the play as well as her insights on the development of the project (Fondakowski). Most recently, Fondakowski discusses writing *The Peoples Temple* in a section of the 2018 book *Moment Work: Tectonic Theater Project's Process of Devising Theater* by Moisés Kaufman and Barbara Pitts McAdams (Kaufman and Pitts McAdams). These new documents point to the cyclical nature of documentary theatre. Documents are gathered and used to create art. The art itself not only became a document added to the archive, but also inspires the creation of new documents that continue this process. In fact, in the introductory section of *Stories from Jonestown* Fondakowski describes the book as "an extension of the life of the play" (Fondakowski xx). However, since the script has not been published, subsequent productions have not happened; hence its life has been cut short.

Conclusion

Documentary theatre, as a form of performative historiography, uses the archive and the repertoire simultaneously to disrupt accepted narratives, expand the archive, and occasionally facilitate much-needed and long-deferred community conversations. While documentary theatre is not an ideal term because it connotes *truth* or a telling of *the real story*, the genre offers a vehicle for examining many versions of a story and the archival and repertoirc sources that generate each version. *The People's Temple* is an example of theatre used to revisit the past and complicate the convenient explanations we tell ourselves. The play and its devising process expand the archive by capturing diverse and hidden voices. Lastly, the show and the associated educational and civic events demonstrate how performance can facilitate difficult but healing discourse. In *The People's Temple*, the character of Dick Tropp, a Temple member who collected oral histories for

the group, reiterates the need to continue to reencounter the past, especially the most painful and inexplicable moments. He reads an anonymous letter written in Jonestown on the evening of 18 November 1978, "Collect all the tapes, all the writings, all the history. The story of this movement, this action, must be examined, over and over" (Fondakowski et al. 74). □

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"Artisanal" Shakespeare:
"Original Practices" from Brand to Broadway

Valerie Clayman Pye

"Original Practices," the practice of exploring and recreating "original" staging elements from Shakespeare's theatre, has been an expanding subset of Shakespearean performance over the last three decades, especially for theatre companies whose brand identity commodifies the possibility of an "authentic" experience of, and with, Shakespeare. Through theories of authenticity, this essay interrogates the complexities surrounding "Original Practices" authenticity, examines how it is sold to consumer audiences, and demonstrates how it has transformed from a form of performance-based practice-as-research to the largest of commercialized theatrical venues: Broadway. Pye illuminates the ways in which the revival of the Shakespeare's Globe "Original Practices" production of Twelfth Night creates a microcosm of the "Original Practices" performance conditions at Shakespeare's Globe that parallels a traveling museum exhibition.

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What does it mean to be *original*?

Although the Oxford English Dictionary Online offers nearly forty nuanced answers to that question, "[of] or belonging to the period in which a work of art was first produced; . . . period, authentic" most closely aligns with the notion of "Original Practices" Shakespeare. If Shakespeare is—as Jan Kott famously coined—"our contemporary," then how do contemporary explorations of "Original Practices" create niche performances that

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