Lavinia's Voice: Verbal And Nonverbal Expression In Shakespearean Performance.

Kelly Kilgore, University of Central Florida

Keywords
Shakespeare, titus andronicus, lavinia

Abstract
For my MFA internship requirement, I currently serve as an acting intern at the Orlando Shakespeare Theater in Partnership with UCF. I was cast as Lavinia in OST's spring production of Titus Andronicus, and I will use this as my thesis role. It will be the very last show of my MFA career, and it will provide an exceptional opportunity for me to utilize all the skills learned during my three years of MFA classes and training. Jim Helsinger, Artistic Director at the Orlando Shakespeare Theater and Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Central Florida, will direct the production. I intend to approach this role in a manner very similar to my MFA coursework: through vocal work, physical work, and research. Lavinia is a Shakespearean character; Shakespeare is immediately associated with language. However, Lavinia is interesting because the role's vocal work will require both verbal and non-verbal experimentation. I will be able to utilize the various language tools and techniques I have learned in my MFA voice classes to approach Shakespeare's text; but Lavinia has her tongue cut off halfway through the
show, so I anticipate additional vocal, non-verbal contributions to make the role unique. Physicality will also play a large part of my acting work in this particular role, perhaps, than in a typical Shakespearean ingénue. Because Lavinia is verbally silenced, her body must also speak. No approach to a Shakespeare role without character work, and research will play a large part of it.

Helsinger encourages his interns to watch other productions of the same character and to perform visual research from which to pick iv and choose. I also plan to do research on violence against women and its significance in both the play and real life in order to better inform my vocal and physical choices. By delving into the character of Lavinia, I plan to explore several questions. What exactly makes up the voice, as heard or interpreted by an audience, of a Shakespearean character? How has my graduate study prepared me for this role? What techniques work for my own personal process of voice, mind, and body combine to inform a character’s arc, and prove most powerful to an audience’s understanding of that character? Is it possible to retain the audience’s attention in a Shakespearean, text-oriented, production without using words? I hope to answer these questions through combining, in one character, all of the aspects of my MFA jou

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