



# Shakespeare Observed: Studies in Performance on Stage and Screen

*Samuel Cowl*

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## **Shakespeare Observed: Studies in Performance on Stage and Screen** Samuel Crowl

In this lively study of both modern film and stage productions of Shakespeare, Samuel Crowl provides fascinating insights into the ways in which these productions have been influenced by one another as well as by contemporary developments in critical approaches to Shakespeare's plays.

Crowl's study demonstrates the surprising resonances between Roman Polanski's 1971 film of *Macbeth* and Adrian Noble's heralded recent production of the play for The Royal Shakespeare Company; argues that Orson Welles's films of *Othello* and *Cabins at Midnight* are not only brilliant remaining of Shakespeare in another art form but make a powerful contribution to our contemporary understanding of performance as interpretation; and chronicles the impact of Peter Hall's creation of the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1960 on performance approaches to Shakespeare in the past thirty years.

*Shakespeare Observed* provides full interpretative readings of key recent Shakespeare productions in England and includes an intimate behind-the-scenes glimpse into the rehearsal process which produced Ron Daniels's emotionally charged version of *Romeo and Juliet* for the RSC in 1980. The final chapter uses Kenneth Branagh's highly successful film of *Henry V* as a summary example of the trends and influences Crowl's study traces, seeing the film as gathering its interpretative energies from both Olivier's famous film version of the play and Adrian Noble's stage production featuring Branagh as the king.

Written in a style which places a premium on capturing the vivid and often dazzling moments of stage and film performances of Shakespeare, Crowl's study will be of interest to the avid film and theatergoer as well as to the scholar and student. *Shakespeare Observed* joins a growing list of recent critical works which have significantly expanded and redefined the boundaries of Shakespeare studies in our time.

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