



THE UNIVERSITY OF
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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to offer my enthusiastic support for the enterprising theatre group Shakespeare WA in its innovative and adventurous approach to performing Shakespeare for modern audiences. The director, Paige Newmark, is not only highly skilled in theatre management and creating entertaining productions, but he is also very scholarly in his approach to the plays, having deeply researched Shakespeare as an academic. This gives his productions an informed educational mission as well as an often startling sense of spectacle and impact.

Having seen Shakespeare WA's recent production of *Romeo and Juliet* for 'Shakespeare in the Park' I am mightily impressed by the quality of the company's output, and it was certainly very well received by the largely young audience on the night I attended. The Centre for the History of Emotions to which I belong collaborated in mounting one performance specifically with a deaf audience in mind, and this was entirely Paige's initiative and shows his commitment to theatre as a fully inclusive experience to be enjoyed by all. I understand that the next production, *The Tempest*, will be similarly planned with a blind audience in mind. It will also be tailored very intelligently to an Australian context, with Aboriginal actors playing Caliban and Ariel. This will draw upon and test out some of the more challenging post-colonial interpretations of this play in an immediately meaningful and topical context. It will add a unique dynamic to the production that gives it special, historical relevance today in Australia, in the light of contemporary problems of social exclusion, claims to ancient ownership of land, European-caused alcohol abuse – all of which are present as latent themes in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* but are glossed over in more conventional productions. I know the play will be mounted with great integrity, attention to detail, and fresh insight into the play.

I strongly support Shakespeare WA in its necessary applications for funding which makes such events possible, and look forward to entertaining, thoughtful and original productions over the coming years.

Bob White
Winthrop Professor of English, UWA,
Programme Leader ARC Centre of Excellence in the History of Emotions