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11

Shakespeare the Balladmonger?

*Tiffany Stern**

This chapter is on the strange and complicated connections between ballads and the plays of Shakespeare. It considers, on the one hand, Shakespeare's explicit use of ballads both in performance and as printed texts in his plays; on the other the 'play ballads' for which he may or may not have been responsible, that tell the stories of bits of, and sometimes the entirety of, his plays. Asking whether Shakespeare promoted links between ballads and plays, or simply used them when they were there, it raises questions about the form and nature of theatrical marketing. How and why did plays batten on ballads? Did Shakespeare, or his theatre, ever market ballads to market plays?

Shakespeare, ballads and print

As is well-known, Shakespeare had a deep interest in producing what have come to be called 'art songs': coterie ditties – like 'Full fathom five' (*The Tempest*, 1.2.397) – that he wrote as

'gifts' for the audience of specific plays and that seem to have been intended, at least from 1603, when his company became The King's Men, to be set to music by specific, often royal, composers.¹ But throughout his writing career, Shakespeare also made repeated use of songs with a different range and register: ballads.

Ballads are hard to define as texts. They are narrative songs, sometimes said to be identifiable by their 'ballad meter' – alternating tetrameter and trimeter iambic lines in an a.b.c.b. rhyme scheme – though many ballads of the early modern period do not actually take that metrical form. They are also said to be characterized by their well-known popular tunes, which often include a repeating chorus in which listeners can join, muddying the distinction between performer and audience. Yet ballads of the time regularly introduce new tunes as well as being set to old ones, and not all of them have a chorus or 'burden'.² The most consistent main 'ballad' indicator at the period was, perversely, not its form at all, but its dissemination. Unlike an 'art' song, which was play-specific, and was a gift for a specific audience (though not a gift that could be taken home), a ballad – in a play, about a play, or about anything else – was sung and sold from a published text. Ballads therefore were widely and easily available, had a clear, visual, print form, as well as an aural one, and could be acquired, carried home, owned, and (re)performed by anyone prepared to pay for the privilege.

'Broadside' or 'broadsheet' ballads, as they are called, consisted of folio-sized pages: they were large enough to be held up for communal performance and, as they were printed on one side only, they could also be pinned onto walls as singable texts that doubled as decoration. Their typical content was: a title; the name of the tune (using the formula 'to the tune of': no musical notation was supplied); one or a row of woodcuts; and, typically in black letter, the lyrics. Providing, then, sound, poetry and image on one single paper, ballads were multimedia print texts; but as they also brought singing about, they were oral, performance texts too. They were the

most prominent bulk-selling texts on the market, and, at a penny or less, were also the most commercially viable.

Shakespeare's own interest in ballads may have stemmed from sales. Ballads covered the same range of topics that plays did – history, religion, contemporary politics, domestic drama; and took the same variety of approaches – tragical, comical, historical, pastoral (satirical, romantic, etc.). Like plays, they were often, but not always, anonymous; reliant on poetry; and did not have to be good to be popular. They even used the same lures – ‘excellent’, ‘lamentable’, ‘true’ – that were to be found on printed plays (plays may, indeed, have acquired their vocabulary from ballads). Moreover, ballads, like plays, gathered an audience to make money and relied upon performance for sales, as ballad-singer/sellers marketed their wares by singing them. What differentiated ballads from plays, however, was that their performances were designed to lead to print sales, while their print sales were designed to lead to further performances, as the purchaser of a ballad usually sang the text. Ballads may have seemed, then, a model for what plays could be: they sold excellently both as performance and print, without letting the one ever fully give way to the other.

The reach and coverage that print ballads offered, which extended well beyond London, seems to have fascinated Shakespeare. When Mopsa in *Winter's Tale* learns that Autolycus is selling ballads – nowhere near the town that will have generated them – she instantly declares both her familiarity with the form and her ‘love’ for it, specifically for ‘a ballad in print’ because ‘then we are sure they are true’ (*Winter's Tale*, 4.4.260–1). That observation, which on one level highlights her naivety, also witnesses the authority, and linked pleasure, the print form itself had for the buyer, ‘love’ not being a word Shakespeare used casually. As Mopsa's next request is that the Clown ‘buy’ her a ballad – and as she then sings one – so she, and behind her, Shakespeare, indicates how the fact of print ballads generated performances and sales far away from the site of origin.

A sizeable part of the rest of the scene is given over to the sale of one particular ballad. The thief-pedlar-balladmonger Autolycus presents *Get you Hence for I must Go*, and, as a routine part of his sales pitch, sings it; Mopsa and Dorcas join in. In terms of the fiction of *Winter's Tale*, the song's narrative, about two women who lay claim to one man, highlights the themes of fidelity, love and faith that are the focus of the rest of the play. But Autolycus, as he sings and sells in the fiction, also teaches the ballad's tune to the play's real audience, just as a genuine balladmonger would do (when a ballad was set to a new rather than old tune, it had to be learned from the singer). Here, the play may be teasingly parading a King's Men's inaccessible 'art song' as though it is a ballad – *Get you Hence* was, it seems, written by Shakespeare to music by Robert Johnson.³ Alternatively, 'Autolycus', who on stage sings from a printed ballad text, is marketing the theatre's actual ballad, fictionally to Mopsa and Dorcas, and factually to us. We have paid for Shakespeare's play and for Autolycus' ballad, so we are already an extension of the naïve Mopsa and Dorcas. But are we even closer to them than we might care to think – taught a ballad that we are then, at the playhouse, given the opportunity to buy? If so, then 'ballads' can 'play' themselves (or, if not so, other ballads can enact them) in the complex way that books are shown to do in Wall-Randell's chapter in this volume.

To know whether Shakespeare was, in *Winter's Tale*, marketing an actual ballad sheet would require knowing whether *Get You Hence* really existed as a broadside. But here we come up against the problem that dogs all researchers of ballads. Ballads were ephemeral, and of the 4,000 ballads probably published before 1600 only about 260 survive.⁴ Most ballads, that is to say, are lost. And, though some lost ballads can be learned about from the Stationers' Registers, remarkably few, proportionately, are to be found there: as it seems, many publishers simply did not register their ballads (or registered them without paying the additional charge for entrance). That means that this chapter is dependent on the

few records in the Stationers' Registers, for which, often, no broadside survives, and the broadsides that are extant, for which, often, there is no trace in the Stationers' Registers. As a result, dating ballads is difficult: even if one can date a specific iteration of a ballad, whether it is a first edition or a reissue is often impossible to know, making it hard to assess whether plays adopt old ballads or introduce them for the first time. What has revolutionized ballad research, however, and made this chapter possible, is the brilliant *English Broadside Ballad Archive* (EBBA) website, which, over the years, has made surviving ballads gathered from different places publicly available online.⁵ EBBA does not, alas, include *Get You Hence* and nor do the Stationers' Registers – but that does not mean that the song never existed as a broadside, or, of course, that it did. To trace Shakespeare's relationship to ballad sales, then, requires a closer analysis, both of the use he definitely made of them in performance, and of the use he may have made of them in print.

Ballads and performance

Many of Shakespeare's characters, including Falstaff, Sir Toby Belch, Mercutio, Edgar, Iago and Moth sing snatches and quotations from ballads as an aspect of their characterization.⁶ That makes dramaturgical sense, both because the audience are likely to have associations with the lyrics, and because they are likely to have associations with the tune: tune, indeed, lodges in an audience's minds more powerfully than words, and using it is an easy way to change or shape mood.

Several Shakespeare plays, however, rely not on brief, haunting or delightful references to snatches of words and tune, but on sustained ballad performances.

In *Merry Wives*, the Welsh parson Sir Hugh Evans, thinking that he is going to have to fight a duel, tries to cheer himself up by singing lines from a ballad: 'pless my soul, how full of cholers I am, and trempling of mind . . . How melancholies I

am! . . . To shallow rivers, to whose falls / Melodious birds sings madrigals –' (*Merry Wives*, 3.1.11–17). Evans eventually sings bits of two stanzas from what is called in broadsheet form *A most excellent Ditty of the Lovers promises to his beloved*.⁷ What is seldom addressed, however, is that this passage of *Merry Wives* marks the earliest known outing as a *ballad* of what is often thought of as a pastoral poem, 'Live with me and be my love' (first published in *The Passionate Pilgrim* [1599] as a Shakespeare text, though it is attributed to Christopher Marlowe now).⁸ In fictional terms, Evans's song brings out the play's theme of misplaced eroticism, while its reference to 'shallow rivers' jokily prepares the way for Justice Shallow, who then enters. In factual terms, however, *Merry Wives* features a ballad so new that, though sung in the play's first publication (1602), it was not to enter the Stationers' Register as a ballad until the next year (11 June 1603: showing that even entrance in the Stationers' Register is not always useful for dating). Perhaps 'Live with me' was always a ballad – it is, after all, listed as a 'song' in *Passionate Pilgrim* – Marlowe (or Shakespeare) emerging as a sometime ballad-writer; perhaps the lyric circulated in two forms, song and poem. Either way, as the surviving broadside ballad text (a reissue from c. 1619–29) shows that the song had a specific tune written for it – 'to a sweet new tune called, *Live with me and be my Love*'⁹ – the play may well have taught the tune to its audience as, it has been suggested, Autolycus did; an obvious way of promoting a broadsheet, of course, or of heralding one in advance of publication.

Another play that relies deeply upon the performance of a ballad – and, in this instance, one seemingly already in print – to make its point is *Othello*. In the Folio version of *Othello* there is a moment in which Desdemona recalls her mother's maid's unhappiness in love and how it found expression in an 'old' song; Desdemona sings the same song, which is later to be echoed by her own maid, Emilia.¹⁰ The song, then, is a 'female lament', conveying women's shared sorrow over time and class:

DESDEMONA

My mother had a maid called Barbary,
 She was in love, and he she loved proved mad
 And did forsake her. She had a song of 'willow',
 An old thing 'twas, but it expressed her fortune
 And she died singing it. . . .

[Sings.]

The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,
 Sing all a green willow:
 Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,
 Sing willow, willow, willow.

(4.3.24–42)

The ballad that Desdemona sings survives in various manuscript witnesses as well as a printed broadsheet of the time, where it is called *A Lovers complaint being forsaken of his Love* and advertised as sung 'To a pleasant new tune' – another tune, then, that may need to be learned from a ballad-singer/seller or onstage.¹¹ The print text is both similar to and strikingly different from Desdemona's song, however. Though the words are almost the same in play and ballad, the subject of the ballad song is not a woman let down by a man, but a man let down by a woman:

A poore soule sat sighing under a Sycamore tree
 O willow, willow, willow,
 With his hand on his bosome, his head on his knee,
 O willow, willow, willow.

For an audience who know the ballad, the changed sex of the hero allows Desdemona's song of female lamentation to gather up men's too: in 'The Willow Song', Desdemona's and Othello's unhappy fates are, to the initiated, conjoined. But to what extent did Shakespeare expect his audience to know the original ballad? Seemingly pretty well, for his text expects recognition of the ballad's words up to the seventh stanza, which Desdemona starts to sing and then makes a point of

saying she has misremembered: '*Let nobody blame him, his scorn I approve* – / Nay, that's not next' (4.3.51–2, my italics). In so doing, she shows how 'conscious of the presence of a fixed (that is, printed) text' she is, as Porter points out.¹² But she also seems to ask those in the know to summon up the correct line, 'Let no body blame me, her scorn I do prove / She was borne to be faire, and I die for her love', a line that eerily foreshadows the play's end. Once again, this seems to be a Shakespeare who anticipates an audience with, or with close access to, a broadside.

Another play seemingly reliant on broadside knowledge is *Hamlet*. In all three surviving texts of *Hamlet*, variant in so many ways, Hamlet recites, or perhaps sings, sections of *Jephthah Judge of Israel*: 'One fair daughter and no more, / The which he loved passing well', 'as by lot, / God wot', 'It came to pass, / As most like it was' (*Hamlet*, 2.2.343–56). He too seems to expect detailed knowledge of the ballad's whole first verse:

I Read that many yeares agoe,
 when *Jepha* Judge of *Israel*,
 Had one faire daughter and no moe,
 whom he beloved passing well:
 And as by lot God wot,
 It came to passe most like it was,
 Great Warres there should be,
 and who should be the chiefe but he, but he.¹³

The many prompts that Hamlet gives seem designed to position Polonius as Jephtha, bad judge, and misguided chief in a war – the 'war', in *Hamlet* terms, being the brewing conflict between Claudius and Fortinbras, or the local battle between Claudius and Hamlet. And, as Jephtha, in ballad (and bible, of course) promised to pay for his victory by sacrificing the first living thing he comes across – only for it to be his virgin daughter – so Polonius, the parallel suggests, will end up sacrificing Ophelia. This seemingly marked and insistent use of intertextuality to enrich subtext, however, only works if the

audience have comprehensive knowledge of – and perhaps easy access to – the ballad text itself.

Hamlet is, of course, a ballad-focused play. In it, mad Ophelia also performs well-known ballads, singing popular songs that reflect on the death of her father ('They bore him bare-faced on the bier') and the frustrations of her relationship with Hamlet ('I a maid at your window / To be your valentine') (4.5.48–161). The shattered heroine also asks the characters onstage to join her in singing the chorus, 'You must sing "a-down a-down", and you . . . "a-down-a"' (4.5.165–6), prompting the play's audience, too, to 'join in' the choruses, at least in their heads. She too advertises or extols particular ballads: her ballad references enhance our understanding of the text and, by sharing familiar tunes with us, she deepens our relationship with her while showing how permeable the distinction is between what is fictional and what is real.

Some plays seem particularly focused on selling ballads. In *The Tempest*, the drunken Stephano attempts to sing a song, 'Flout 'em and scout 'em', but gets the tune wrong; he is 'corrected' by the invisible Ariel, who, according to the stage direction, '*plays the tune on a tabor and pipe*', typical instruments for accompanying a ballad (3.2.121–4). As Ariel cannot be seen, however, the onstage characters are not able to determine the source of the music:

STEPHANO

What is this same?

TRINCULO

This is the tune of our catch, played by the picture of
Nobody.

(3.2.125–6)

This reference, not just to 'nobody' – Ariel's invisibility – but to 'the picture of Nobody', is to a specific, purchasable, image. On 8 January 1606, the publisher John Trundle entered 'The picture of No bodye' in the Stationers' Register; three months later, on March 12 1605/6, he marketed the anonymous play

FIGURE 11.1 Anon, *No-body, and some-body* (1606), title page. By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

that had made it famous, *Nobody and Somebody* with, on its title-page, the 'Nobody' picture; he also took to trading, as the title-page of *Nobody and Somebody* makes clear, at 'the signe of No-body'.¹⁴ The pull of the *Nobody* picture is that, in a language-dependent joke, 'Nobody' has 'no body': just breeches from his neck downwards.

As the ballad *Nobody his Counsaile to chuse a wife*, featuring 'Nobody' and his ideal wife (a woman with no body, only a skirt) suggests, Trundle extended his 'Nobody' franchise into ballads.¹⁵ *The Tempest's* reference, then, to 'the picture of Nobody', seems to tell the audience that the ballad of the song is printed by Trundle. If so, then Shakespeare's only staged reference to a publisher, and one who printed playbooks, is in his ballad-making capacity – indeed, Shakespeare seems here to be promoting Trundle's ballad sales.

Whether 'Nobody' is a direct reference, or a hint, or a suggestion, Shakespeare was obviously intrigued by all print aspects of the ballad form. So, too, was Ben Jonson, whose *Caveat for Cut-purses*, the ballad for *Bartholomew Fair*, does survive as a broadside; woodcut images for other Jonson ballads, originally for masques but seemingly also sold as regular broadsides, are also extant.¹⁶ In none of these instances is it clear who 'releases' the ballad as a broadsheet – author, company, no-one (a stage ballad could be 'taken' and expanded by ballad-printers instead). But given that Shakespeare often used ballads, and sometimes apparently wrote them, and given that all such ballads if printed would double as souvenirs and advertisements – while also making money in their own right – it is worth exploring further whether the theatre-ballad link might have been an intentional aspect of playhouse marketing.

Shakespeare play ballads

One reason why Shakespeare was partial to ballads will have been that he, and his company, participated in ballad culture. It was usual for plays of the period to close on a 'jig': a playlet

in dance form ('jig' signifies a dance in a circle), typically set to one or several ballad tunes – indeed, as 'ballad' comes from 'ballare', to dance, the jig was the ultimate ballad. As a result, most plays in most theatres, until 1612 (when Middlesex magistrates attempted to suppress jigs, not necessarily successfully) ended with ballads, and most playgoers' final theatrical experience was a tune.

Because of jigs, Shakespeare's company, like all companies, needed ballad writers. Surviving music to 'Kemps Jegg' – i.e. music by William Kemp, the company's clown up to 1600 – together with Stationers' Register entrances for other Kemp jigs and ballads, suggests that clowns, who danced the jigs, sometimes 'wrote' them (see Preiss, in this volume).¹⁷ Kemp's replacement, the 'wise fool' Robert Armin, meanwhile, is often linked with the ballad-writers Thomas Deloney, Philip Stubbs and William Elderton, and may even have been a professional ballad writer before becoming an actor.¹⁸ Shakespeare, too, seems to have written jigs; one, 'When that I was and a little tiny boy', is latched to the end of *Twelfth Night* (5.1.382). 'When that I was' provides a narrative of the life of its clown-singer that supplies his own ironic take on marriage ('when I came, alas, to wive', 390). Raising questions about the happy ending of the play we have just watched, 'When that I was' seems the culmination of all the songs by Feste in the play, which, collectively, may tell the story of a man brought down by love, and ruined by marriage – thus offering a counter-narrative to the play.¹⁹ This 'Shakespeare' or 'company' jig (it need not be by Shakespeare himself) shows plays and ballads to be performed in the same places for the same audience – and perhaps written by the same people too.

The fact that the company contained ballad writers may (but may not) explain the existence of another kind of ballad: one that told the story of the play. There is, for instance, an entrance on the Stationers' Register on 6 August 1596 for 'A newe ballad of Romeo and Juliett'. Though that ballad is lost, it was presumably inspired by Shakespeare's the bullard of *Romeo and Juliet*, in performance at the time, but not published

as a playbook until the following year. By design or circumstance, the ballad of *Romeo and Juliett* will have advertised the play in performance, and potentially constituted one of its mementos. Ballads might equally advertise books. There is a double entrance on the Stationers' Register of 6 February 1594 for John Danter who records not just 'a booke intituled a Noble Roman Historie of TYTUS ANDRONICUS' –Shakespeare's play – but 'the ballad thereof'. He intends to publish both together, apparently expecting playbook and ballad to co-advertise one another. That gives evidence, then, of ballads printed apparently to advertise (or batten on) performance; and ballads printed to advertise (or batten on) a printed text. The issue is more complicated yet, however. The *Titus* ballad survives and in more than one

FIGURE 11.2 Anon, *A Ballad of the Lamentable and Tragical History of Titus Andronicus* (c. 1660), Huth 50 (69). By permission of the British Library.

version; some broadsheets for it contain a ballad-specific picture supplying highlights from the play/ballad – Lavinia writing her name in the sand; Aaron buried and lamenting; Lavinia and Titus cutting the throats of Chiron and Demetrius; Tamora and Saturninus getting ready to eat ‘son’ pie (the story is told out of sequence).

In its top right-hand corner is a depiction of a city which has, as its focal point, a large round theatre with its flag raised for performance. This picture seems, then, to refer not so much to Rome, the fictional city in which *Titus Andronicus* is located, as the factual city in which *Titus* can be seen as a play, London. That suggests that Danter, who may have published the ballad to help sell a playbook, or as an alternative text to a playbook, also ensured (or his successor ensured) it equally sold, reflected upon, or could be a memento of, performance. As Danter published, by my count, at least nine other ‘play ballads’ in the 1590s, for a range of authors and companies – the Stationers’ Registers contain entrances from him for the ballads of ‘the storye of tamburlane the greate’, ‘the murtherous life and terrible death of the riche jew of malta’, ‘a knacke howe to knowe an honest man from a knave’, amongst others – he may have exploited theatre performances as an ‘advertiser’, or he may even have been paid by companies to produce texts that promoted, provided plot-summaries for, or were souvenirs of their productions.

The issue is only made more complicated by looking at other surviving ‘Shakespeare’ play ballads. There is the *Lamentable Song of the Death of King Leare*, gathered into Richard Johnson’s *Golden garland of princely pleasures and delicate delights* (1620, but seemingly from an earlier broadsheet). But there are also ballads with a hazier connection to his dramas which, because hard to date, may be sources, reflections, fan-fiction-style extensions, or simply different versions of stories that Shakespeare told. *The Frolicksome Duke* tells the ‘frame’ story of *The Taming of the Shrew*: ‘*The Tinker’s good Fortune. Who being found Dead Drunk, was conveyed to the Duke’s Palace, . . . the next day being honour’d*

as the real Duke till they made him as Drunk as before, and then left him where they first found him'.²⁰ But how does it relate to Shakespeare's play, and how to the play that may be source or reflection of it, *Taming of a Shrew*? The ballad '*shewing the crueltie of Gernutus a Iew, who lending to a Marchant a hundred Crownes, would haue a pound of his Flesh, because he could not pay him at the day appointed*' must relate to *The Merchant of Venice* – but, again, how, exactly? And then there is *Pyramus and Thisbe: or Love's Master-Piece*. Does that borrow from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, give to it, or simply, as the play does, retell in somewhat jokey form a well-known story from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Given the number of 'play ballads' that survive for a range of texts, by Shakespeare and others, Bruce Smith concludes that some ballads were designed to perpetuate stage performance 'in another medium' as 'commercially produced residuals', the predecessors to today's marketing campaigns.²¹ It is certainly the case that the topics picked by Shakespeare for his plays often had or forged ballad-relationships, seeming in some instances to be inspired by them, and in others to inspire them (there are several Robin Goodfellow and Poor Tom ballads that have the same 'tone' of the Shakespearean characters) – a fact that is hardly surprising given how ballad-conscious Shakespeare was throughout his writing career.

Ballads in the playhouse

That brings us to the heart of this chapter, and also its most speculative aspect: the relationship that Shakespeare and/or the Chamberlain's/King's Men and/or all theatres had commercially with the ballad trade. Were ballads, for instance, specifically sold in the playhouse?

As ballad-singer/sellers could set up anywhere they wanted – they did not need 'shops' – and were found wherever crowds gathered, they are likely to have stationed themselves around theatres. And, indeed, Robert Greene in 1592 writes of ballad-

singer/sellers and their 'unsufferable loytring qualitie, in singing of Ballets and songs at the doors of such houses where plaies are used';²² while years later, William Cartwright, follower of Ben Jonson and so-called 'son of Ben', in his university play *The Ordinary* has Catchmay and Sir Christopher trade insults:

SIR CHRISTOPHER

Thou'lt be . . . a Balladmonger.

CATCHMAY

I shall live to see thee

Stand in a Play-house doore . . . and cry small Books.²³

The playhouse door of entrance is, of course, an obvious place for salespeople of all kinds, but particularly ballad-singer/sellers, to congregate: it is where queues form, both before and after plays, made up of people who have chosen to spend their money on entertainment and hence are natural ballad purchasers. But if, as these quotations may suggest, ballad-singer/sellers touted their wares around theatre doors as a matter of course, then an audience's experience of visiting a theatre was potentially bracketed at the start *and* end by ballads. The liminal nature of the space of sale, however, raises questions of its own. Did ballad-seller/singers only sometimes choose to station themselves around playhouses, or could they be relied on to be there, a daily part of the daily play? When there, did they have the theatre's tacit blessing or active encouragement? Or did they pay for – or alternatively were they paid for – access to the theatre's audience?

It is worth thinking about the role of ballads in the context of broader playhouse finances. The playhouse was a space in which not only plays, but linked entertainments – food, drink, books – were marketed.²⁴ At least some of these were sub-contracted as concessions: Henslowe in 1587 'will not permit . . . any person . . . other than . . . John Cholmley . . . to utter, sell or put to sale in or about the . . . playhouse . . . any bread or drink';²⁵ while at Whitefriars 1607/8 'if any . . . profit can or may be made in the said [play]house either by wine,

beer, ale, tobacco, wood, coals, or any such commodity, . . . Martyn Slater . . . shall have the benefit thereof'.²⁶ And, looking forward in time, by the eighteenth century, theatres were offering concessions to the 'fruit women' who sold not only fruit and 'nonpareils' (candied sweetmeats), but also playbills and play songs.²⁷ Might sales of ballads always have been a purchasable concession? Alternatively (or, as well) might the theatre – which had, of necessity, a link to the print trade (the playbills that advertised performances were printed texts, and James Roberts, playbill-printer c. 1594–1606, was also a well-known ballad-printer) – have put money into the production of ballads, just as, by the eighteenth century, the theatre arranged for the publication of some of its songs?²⁸ On one level, it all depends on how 'knowing' the theatre was about marketing practices, like 'residuals', in the early modern period; on another, it depends on how 'knowing' Shakespeare himself was.

Shakespeare certainly seems to make regular, seemingly pointed attempts, to market ballads as shown by this chapter. Other examples seemingly of his pushing ballads include *Antony and Cleopatra*, in which Cleopatra, now Caesar's captive, has two concerns. One is that 'The quick comedians / Extemporally will stage us . . . [and] I shall see / Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness', a fear that is metatheatrically underlined by the fact that that is indeed happening; another that 'scald rhymers [will] / Ballad us out o' tune' (5.2.214–6). Metatheatrically – metaballadically – the second worry only makes sense if such a ballad is available, ideally where the very squeaking Cleopatra is performing. Likewise, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Bottom 'awaking' from his extraordinary encounter with Titania, determines to 'get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream. It shall be called "Bottom's Dream and I will sing it in the latter end of a play"' (MND, 4.1.212–15). This too seems to herald a ballad, perhaps to be sung as a jig, maybe in the form of a burgomask, at the end of *Midsummer Night's Dream* – but, again, the promotion seems pointed: might it too have been purchasable as a souvenir?

When Falstaff, in 2 *Henry IV*, says that if his bravery is not 'booked' (he wants it recognized textually), he will have his capture of Sir John Coleville printed in 'a particular ballad . . . with mine own picture on the top on't, Colleville kissing my foot' (2 *Henry IV*, 4.2.47–8), he jests, but does he also build an interest in acquiring his outrageous song? After all, *The Winter's Tale's* acknowledgement that its actual story is too complicated for a 'play ballad' – 'such a deal of wonder is broken out within this hour that ballad-makers cannot be able to express it' (5.2.23–5) – could potentially be seen as an explanation for the absence of a play ballad, and the existence of *Get You Hence* as the play's (only) memento.

These examples *may* show Shakespeare, individual in so many other ways, having a private, individual relationship with ballad publishers and/or singers, that involved channelling work to them – which he had sometimes also written – himself. Alternatively, as he was financially invested in the success of his company – he became one of its 'sharers' in 1594, and a 'housekeeper' in its buildings from 1599 – it may show him exploiting and teaching the use of ballads as pre-play publicity, plot summaries, or/and as post-play souvenirs.

Given that ballads linked to plays could serve as direct marketing, advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and publicity – said to be five quintessential elements of sales promotion – they certainly provided in their natures all the elements of a powerful marketing campaign. And, in view of the fact that a host of plays of the period employ ballads – Ross Duffin, writing just on English Renaissance comedies up to 1625, identifies over 600 such ditties – and many plays of the period also have 'play ballads' written about them (my researches have so far revealed over 60 play ballads), could it be that that ballads were a potential extension of the 'playbill' and that all companies used them on occasion?²⁹

Whatever is the case, as the word 'balladmonger' ('monger' meant 'trader') in the period sometimes indicated a ballad-seller and sometimes ballad-writer, Shakespeare emerges as at least one form of balladmonger, and perhaps both. That raises

questions about how to interpret ballads 1) in plays and 2) about plays. As the only published bits of play generally available at the time of performance are ballads – in and about plays – are they a part of theatrical marketing or cross-marketing? Or are they sometimes, or always, neglected textual extensions of plays themselves? Perhaps, they are intermediate: part of the play if to hand and not if not, in a confusion of permanence and impermanence, print and performance, peritext and epitext, that mirrors the complex life of early modern plays, and Shakespeare's ambiguous role in their popularity and survival. Whatever is the case, Shakespeare seems to have used ballad performances to make points that extended beyond interpretation into the confusing world of shared experience that joined fictional characters and audience. He revered, referenced – and on occasion expected access to – broadside ballads. This chapter has suggested reasons as to why that may be.

Notes

- * This chapter is dedicated to the memory of brilliant, passionate, kind, thoughtful, driven, wonderful Stephanie Dumke (1981–2018).
- 1 Discussed in William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2011), 18–19, where the musical setting is also reproduced. All subsequent Shakespeare references are to Arden 3 editions. That the company regularly used the royal composer is suggested by Tiffany Stern in *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 149.
- 2 Different definitions of ballad in the period are discussed in David Lindley, *Shakespeare and Music* (London: Thomson Learning, 2006), 70–76.
- 3 A manuscript of theatre songs c. 1630 survives, many of which are by Robert Johnson. It is discussed in 'Music and Song' in

- The Winter's Tale*, ed. John Pitcher (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2010), 389.
- 4 Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 170.
 - 5 *The English Broadside Ballad Archive* (EBBA), ed. Patricia Fumerton (<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu>; accessed 19 July 2018). All broadsides quoted in this chapter are from this website (but with i/j and u/v regularized for ease of reading).
 - 6 For a full list of ballads referred to in Shakespeare's plays, see Helen Sewell, 'Shakespeare and the Ballad: A Classification of the Ballads Used by Shakespeare and Instances of Their Occurrence', *Midwest Folklore*, 12 (1962), 217–234. For their musical settings, certain and conjectural, see Ross Duffin, *Shakespeare's Songbook* (London: W. W. Norton, 2004).
 - 7 British Library, Roxburgh, EBBA 30141 (1619–1629?).
 - 8 The book is attributed in its entirety to Shakespeare, though many of its poems – which seem to have been collected together by the publisher William Jaggard – are apparently by other people. When 'Live with Me' is reprinted in a year later in John Bodenheim's *England's Helicon* (1600), it is longer; has a new first word 'come'; a new title, 'The passionate Sheepeheard to his loue'; and a new attribution, 'Chr. Marlow'. It is that version, and that authorship, that is generally accepted now – though Shakespeare's use might give us pause.
 - 9 A musical setting for the song survives in William Corkine's *Second Book of Aires* (1612).
 - 10 The ballad is prepared for, but not sung in the Quarto, probably because of vocal issues in the playhouse. See *Othello*, ed. E. A. J. Honigsmann (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, rev edn with new introduction by Ayanna Thompson, 2016), appendix one, 349–356.
 - 11 Magdalene College, Pepys, EEBA 20167 (1615?).
 - 12 Gerald Porter, 'Telling the Tale Twice Over: Shakespeare and the Ballad', in *Ballads into Books: The Legacies of Francis James Child*, ed. Tom Cheesman and Sigrid Rieuwerts (Bern: Peter Lang, 1997), 171.

- 13 [A proper new ballad, intituled], *When Jephthah Judge of Israel*; Manchester Central Library, EBBA 36107 c. 1620.
- 14 All references to the Stationers' Register are quoted from Edward Arber, *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London*, 5 vols (London: 1875–1884).
- 15 Magdalene College, Pepys, EBBA 20177. Printed in c. 1622, this is apparently a later iteration of a Trundle text.
- 16 British Library, Roxburgh, EBBA 30274 c. 1647; pictorial traces from Jonson broadside ballads from masques are discussed in John P. Cutts, 'Seventeenth-Century Illustrations of Three Masques by Jonson' *Comparative Drama*, 6 (1972), 125–134.
- 17 For more on this subject, see Roger Clegg and Lucie Skeaping, *Singing Simpkin and Other Bawdy Jigs* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 2015), 21–23.
- 18 Thomas Nashe, *Strange Newes* (1592), D4v.
- 19 Tiffany Stern, 'Inverted Commas around the "Fun": Music in *Twelfth Night*', *Twelfth Night: A Critical Guide*, ed. Alison Findley and Liz Oakley-Brown (London: Methuen, 2013), 166–188, 175.
- 20 Magdalene College, Pepys, EBBA 21895 (c. 1664–1703).
- 21 Bruce R. Smith, 'Shakespeare's Residuals,' in *Shakespeare and Elizabethan Popular Culture*, ed. Stuart Gillespie and Neil Rhodes (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006), 194–195.
- 22 Robert Greene, *The third and last part of conny-catching* (1592), B1v.
- 23 William Cartwright, *The ordinary* (1651), 51–52.
- 24 See Tiffany Stern, '"Fill thy Purse with Money": Shareholders, Shakespeare and Theatrical Finance', *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 150 (2014), 65–78.
- 25 Dulwich, Mun.16, *English Professional Theatre, 1530–1660*, ed. Glynne Wickham, Herbert Berry and William Ingram (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 425.
- 26 PRO, C2 Jas.I/A6/21, transcribed in *English Professional Theatre, 1530–1660*, 270.
- 27 Valerie Fairbrass, '"Books of the Songs to Be Had at the Theatre": Some Notes on Fruit Women and Their

Contribution to Theatre Finances', *Theatre Notebook*, 66 (2012), 66–84.

- 28 See Tiffany Stern, 'Playbills and Title-Pages', in *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 36–62; and Fairbrass, *passim*.
- 29 Ross W. Duffin, *Some Other Note* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).