Output: Live theatre production as co-director and adaptor, performed in central London.

Short title:  Production of The Handan Dream, a composite performance of work by Shakespeare and his contemporary Chinese playwright Tan Zianzu

Dissemination: Performed at St Paul’s Church theatre, London. Filmed and edited and distributed to institutions in China. Presentation at Symposium at SOAS. Contribution to book published in China. Creation of short promotional video.

The research project revolved around bringing together the work of Shakespeare and his contemporary Tan Zianzu of the Ming Dynasty. In China this playwright is considered the finest writer of his time within the genre of Chinese opera, Kunqu. The research question explored how a theatre director can draw from each of these two historically concurrent yet stylistically contrasting sources to develop a new form of intercultural performance. The project involved my directing UK actors in collaboration with a distinguished traditional Kunqu opera company in Nanjing, China. A script was co-created by me and the director/leading actor of the Chinese company, Ke Jun. Within it we used a base play by Tang Zianzu, “The Handan Dream”, edited it into 4 key scenes and then paralleled various extracts from different Shakespeare plays looking for connections of theme/tone/narrative/situation and character, focusing on commonality of shared universal human experiences. The research into performance style aimed to maintain the distinctive qualities of the two performance traditions, whilst seeking new hybridised methods of performance to create a shared language across both traditions accessible for contemporary audiences in both the UK and China. Alongside text, a key directorial strategy was to utilise performative elements within both forms, such as dance, music and stage combat, and this development of a shared performance text facilitated wider transcultural and intercultural exploration of theatre traditions, cultural histories, and contemporary practices. The project was rehearsed in Nanjing and London and was performed in central London in 2016. Documentation and the film of the production has been distributed to institutions in China.