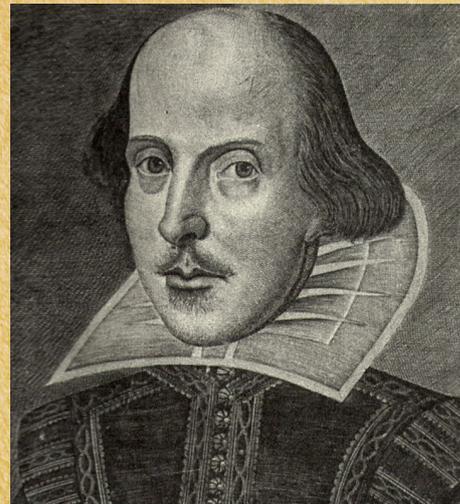




A Midsummer Night's **DREAMING** Under the Southern Bough

**William Shakespeare and Tang Xianzu:
celebrating a 400 year legacy**



To mark the 400th anniversary of the deaths of William Shakespeare and the Chinese playwright Tang Xianzu, the University of Leeds Staging China International Research Network, the Business Confucius Institute at the University of Leeds and stage@leeds are responsible for managing a practice-led research project in cooperation with the University of International Business & Economics in China.

A Midsummer Night's DREAMING Under the Southern Bough will see two theatre companies, one in China and one in the UK, create a new piece of performance honouring the 400 year legacy of the life and work of William Shakespeare and Tang Xianzu. With the two texts and the overarching theme of 'dreaming', students and staff from two universities will create a new work. The creative team at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing are working on a piece inspired by the mechanicals and fairies in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* while students and staff at the University of Leeds are working on a contemporary response to Tang Xianzu's *A Dream under the Southern Bough*. Both pieces are set in the same woodland location with characters and stories entwining and overlapping. Each story can be performed individually but *A Midsummer Night's DREAMING Under the Southern Bough* will only be fully appreciated when viewed as a single piece of theatre. Our 'dreaming' brings together Shakespeare and Tang Xianzu, Britain and China.

A Midsummer Night's DREAMING Under the Southern Bough follows the model of the internationally successful project *The Sun is Not for Us* in 2011 and 2012, a theatrical work devised by renowned theatre director David Jiang and students from the University of Leeds to celebrate the centenary of legendary Chinese playwright Cao Yu.

The individual works created as part of the Shakespeare-Tang project will be presented initially in their host Universities before being performed 'back-to-back' at festivals in Leeds (the opening of the 2016 Leeds Intercultural Festival), Edinburgh (Festival Fringe), Beijing, Shanghai, and in Tang's hometown of Fuzhou during the Tang Xianzu Memorial Festival. The Shakespeare-Tang project, supported by the Schools of English; Languages, Cultures and Societies; Performance and Cultural Industries; Leeds Special Collection; Leeds International Summer School and Leeds Language Centre, will invite leading practitioners and researchers to offer a series of workshops, lectures and seminars at the University of Leeds. These research activities will also take place in Edinburgh, Beijing, Fuzhou and in Shanghai. The theatrical practice of Shakespeare-Tang offers an opportunity for practitioners, researchers, students, teachers and public audiences to consider and question:

- The value and relevance of classic plays to contemporary societies and audiences and how theatre practitioners should approach cultural heritage.
- How the cross-cultural performance of a classic play impacts on both the originating and receiving cultures.
- The factors of translation and transmission that influence the production and reception of classic plays.
- How young people engage with classic drama from their own and other cultures.

William Shakespeare and Tang Xianzu: celebrating a 400 year legacy, is a partnership project between the University of Leeds and Beijing's University of International Business and Economics, sponsored by commercial partners, Bank of China and China Eastern Airlines.

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