



Press Release: 1 March 2010

**Who Wrote Shakespeare?  
James Shapiro launches new book *Contested Will* at  
Shakespeare's Globe**

James Shapiro, bestselling and prizewinning author of *1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare* will launch his new book *Contested Will* at Shakespeare's Globe on Wednesday 24 March.

At the event, James Shapiro will introduce his new book, which revisits the authorship controversy but from an entirely original perspective. Rather than ask *who* wrote the plays and list the various candidates that have been put forward over the years, he explores *why* and *when* so many people began to question whether or not Shakespeare wrote the plays (among them such leading writers and artists as Sigmund Freud, Henry James, Mark Twain, Helen Keller, Orson Welles and Sir Derek Jacobi).

Shapiro's fascinating search for the source of this controversy retraces a path strewn with fabricated documents, calls for trials, false claimants, concealed identity, bald-faced deception and a failure to grasp what could not be imagined.

James Shapiro commented "*If Contested Will does not end the authorship question once and for all, it will nonetheless irrevocably change the nature of the debate by confronting what's really contested: are the plays and poems of Shakespeare autobiographical, and if so, do they hold the key to the question of who wrote them?*"

*"And there's no better place to argue the case for Shakespeare's authorship than the Globe Theatre. For it was near this site 400 years ago that Shakespeare - as actor, shareholder, and dramatist - wrote plays that only could have been penned by someone so intimately involved with his fellow actors and the business of playing".*

A limited number of tickets to the launch event at Shakespeare's Globe are available to the public.

*Contested Will* is published by Faber on 1 April 2010.

**ENDS**

## Listings information

### Book Launch: *Contested Will* by James Shapiro

**Venue:** Shakespeare's Globe

**Date:** Wednesday 24 March, 2010 **Time:** 6pm

**Tickets:** £10 (£8 Concessions/Students/Friends of Shakespeare's Globe) including glass of wine or juice

**Box Office:** 020 7401 9919 or [www.shakespeares-globe.org](http://www.shakespeares-globe.org)

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**Further information** from Chris Adams at Shakespeare's Globe Press Office on +44 (0)20 7902 1468, [chris.a@shakespearesglobe.com](mailto:chris.a@shakespearesglobe.com)

**Images** of Shakespeare's Globe, James Shapiro and the book cover, as well as other media resources, are available online at [www.shakespeares-globe.org/press](http://www.shakespeares-globe.org/press) or from Chris Adams (above).

**James Shapiro** will be in the UK from 24 - 26 March 2010 and is available for interview and feature writing. For further info please contact Alex Holroyd at Faber on +44 (0)20 7927 3885 or [alexh@faber.co.uk](mailto:alexh@faber.co.uk)

## Notes to Editors:

- **Globe Education** presents a programme of workshops, lectures, events and staged readings all year round. For more information about Globe Education's work, visit [www.globe-education.org](http://www.globe-education.org)
- **Professor James Shapiro**, who teaches at Columbia University in New York, is the author of *Rival Playwrights*, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, and *Oberammergau: The Troubling Story of the World's Most Famous Passion Play*. *1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare* won the BBC FOUR Samuel Johnson Prize in 2006.
- *Contested Will* is published on 1 April 2010 by Faber (£20 hardback).
- **Praise for James Shapiro's 1599:**  
'An unforgettable illumination of a crucial moment in the life of our greatest writer' - *Observer*  
'A breathtaking feat of literary detection' - *Mail on Sunday*  
'Gripping and illuminating' - *Daily Telegraph*  
'Fascinating and entirely believable' - *Guardian*
- **Shakespeare's Globe Theatre** The 2010 Theatre Season is entitled 'Kings and Rogues', and includes *Macbeth*, *Henry VIII*, *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Anne Boleyn* by Howard Brenton and *Bedlam* by Nell Leyshon. Two small-scale tours of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Comedy of Errors* will visit venues across UK and Europe between April and September. Box office: 020 7401 9919 or online at [www.shakespeares-globe.org](http://www.shakespeares-globe.org)
- **Shakespeare's Globe on film** - Three productions from Shakespeare's Globe's 2009 theatre season will be screened in cinemas and available on DVD and Blu-ray this spring and summer, as part of its new partnership with Opus Arte. For more information visit [www.shakespeares-globe.org/onfilm](http://www.shakespeares-globe.org/onfilm)
- **Shakespeare's Globe Exhibition and Theatre Tour** is open daily - Oct to Apr from 10am to 5pm. May to Sep 9am - 5pm. Admission includes a guided tour of the Theatre. For further information, telephone 020 7902 1500.
- **Shakespeare's Globe Shop** stocks a variety of products, including season specific merchandise. Items can be bought at the on-site shop or on-line at [www.globe-shop.com](http://www.globe-shop.com).
- **Capital Campaign** - Shakespeare's Globe is currently fundraising for a major development project. The first part of the campaign - to develop a Globe Education and Rehearsal Centre - is underway. To find out more visit [www.shakespeares-globe.org/thesecondstage](http://www.shakespeares-globe.org/thesecondstage)
- **The Shakespeare Globe Trust** is a registered charity No.266916. **The Globe receives no public subsidy.**