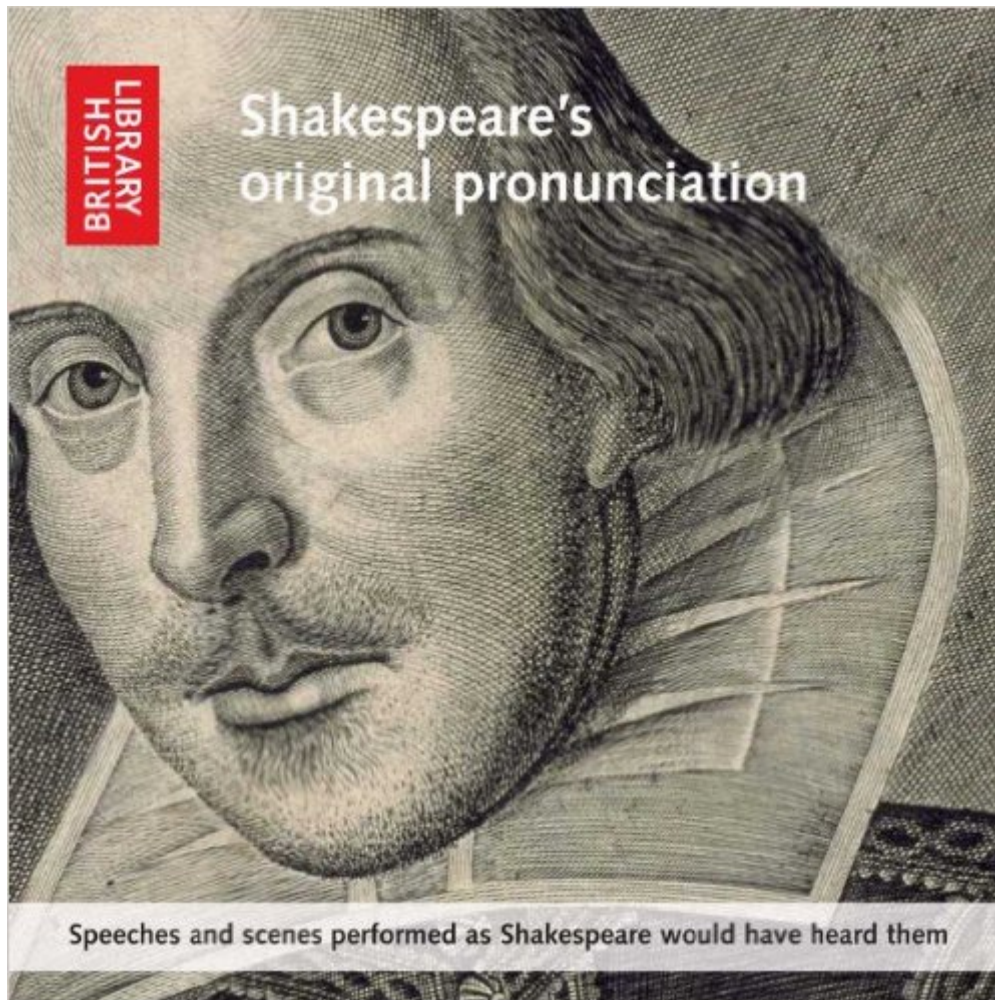


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# Shakespeare's Original Pronunciation



## Synopsis

How did Shakespeare sound to the audiences of his day? For the first time, this disc offers listeners the chance to hear England's greatest playwright performed by a company of actors using the pronunciation of his time. Under the guidance of Ben Crystal, actor, author of *Shakespeare on Toast*, and an expert in original Shakespearean pronunciation, the company performs some of Shakespeare's best-known poems, solo speeches, and scenes from the plays. Hear new meanings uncovered, new jokes revealed, poetic effects enhanced. The CD is accompanied by an introductory essay by Professor David Crystal. An essential purchase for every student and lover of Shakespeare.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (13 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

It takes getting used to, but this reading of Shakespeare is a marvel. The recording is a help if you are locked in by stereotypes of what Shakespeare is supposed to sound like: elevated, grand English and swelling, stately pronunciation in modern English accents, sonnets and plays read only as literature/academic exercises--as texts with eye. But if you want to try and get to a lively reading that wakes up your ears, try this recording. It's not just a matter of "now I know an actor in the 16th century might have pronounced a word." The changes in pronunciation often change the rhythm of a passage, the rhyme, the way sounds "open up" in poetry. The research that must have gone into this recording is impressive, but much much more impressive is the ability of the readers to "put on" the accents of 16th century English and speak the lines with feeling. Four stars only because I wanted longer passages and the Henry V speech was a bit too roaring and ranting for my taste. I

hope, one day, we'll be able to see whole plays performed like this.

Having worked with Ben Crystal on his original pronunciation production of Hamlet, and with his father, David Crystal, on our OP production of A Midsummer Night's Dream at the University of Kansas, I was pretty sure this was going to be good. Ben and company exceeded expectations! Anyone interested in dialects, Shakespeare, and Early Modern English will simply HAVE to have this CD. Paul Meier Author of Accents and Dialects for Stage and Screen (includes 12 CDs)

I bought this for my granddaughter, a theater major specializing in Shakespeare. She not only found it extremely valuable but is sharing it with other theater majors. I admit to listening to it first, because as a poet I am very interested in sounds of language and how they affect the experience of a poem. Thank you for bringing this important CD to my attention!

Utterly fascinating and illuminating to hear how far away we've come from English pronunciation in the Elizabethan age! Any actor should get their hands on this to clarify that sounding like a British movie from the 1930's, or what we today consider "proper" English, is completely unnecessary!

This attempt to recapture the sound of Shakespeare's original English was enjoyable and interesting. The selections include the familiar and some less so. They are a delight to listen to, but one wonders how reliable the accents are, and surely London of the Bard's day had a variety of accent as foreigners and bumpkins from all over congregated not only to hear, but also to act, the plays.

This is a really interesting look at the original language of Shakespeare. The performances are far more engaging than a lot of readings. I wish I could get full recordings of these OP productions to use in my English classes.

We discover the visceral intensity and liveliness of Shakespeare's original pronunciation. Instead of the highly refined spoken language we're used to when listening to a production of Shakespeare, this recording allows us to experience the passionate, embodied and often guttural sounds of Elizabethan England. Puns and double meanings come alive! We experience Shakespeare anew as we hear the full-bodied force of these spoken words.

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