

London Project - The Globe Theatre - Sam Wanamaker and Mickey Mouse

Sam Wanamaker



One name but many questions. Who is Sam Wanamaker? What has he to do with Shakespeare's Globe Theatre? What intentions did he have? We went to London to find all these things out.

Samuel Wanamaker was born on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1919 and he died on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1993. He was an American film director and actor. He is the person who is most responsible for the recreation of the modern Shakespeare's Globe Theatre.

He was the son of Ukrainian Jewish immigrants. He trained at the Goodman theatre in Chicago and began working with summer stock theatres in Chicago and northern Wisconsin where he built the stage of the Peninsula Players Theatre in 1937.

His acting career began in travelling shows and later on Broadway. He married Charlotte Holland she was a Canadian radio soap star in 1940. He died of prostate cancer in London in 1993 at the age of 74. The Globe Theatre finished three years after his death.

In 1957 he was the director of the New Shakespeare Theatre in Liverpool and in 1959 he was a part of the actor team for the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon to play opposite Paul Robeson's "Othello" in Tony Richardson's production. This was the first time that Sam Wanamaker came in contact with Shakespeare.

In the 1970's Wanamaker gets the "Shakespeare Globe Trust" to rebuild the Globe Theatre in London.

An excerpt from a report:

According to Karl Meyer of the New York Times:

"The Shakespeare project helped Mr. Wanamaker keep his sanity and dignity intact. On his first visit to London in 1949, he had sought traces of the original theater and was astonished to find only a blackened plaque on an unused brewery. He found this neglect inexplicable, and in 1970 launched the Shakespeare Globe Trust, later obtaining the building site and necessary permissions despite a hostile local council. He siphoned his earnings as actor and director into the project, undismayed by the skepticism of his British colleagues."

## Sam Wanamaker and the Globe Theatre



### The Rebuilding:

When Sam Wanamaker came to London in 1949 to visit the old Globe, he immediately felt enthusiasm for the theatre but he also found it atrocious that the Globe no longer existed and no one knew exactly where it had stood. Because of his respect for Shakespeare and his works, he saw it as his task to rebuild the Globe.

The new Globe Theatre was to look exactly like the old one. The only difference was that it was not to stand in original place but a road on.

However there were some problems. An exact reconstruction was impossible because the whole Globe theatre was made of oak and there is a high danger of fire. But Sam Wanamaker made it possible. He also used the oak for the reconstruction and because of the wood the rebuilding took twenty years.

Sam Wanamaker wouldn't do anything alone. He had a designer team of four people. They were called John Orell , Theo Crosby, Buro Happold and Peter McCurdy.

John Orell based the design on the historical researches of the Globe. Theo Crosby was an architect of Pentagram. Buro Happold did the structural and services engineer part and the construction was undertaken by Peter McCurdy.

The new Globe was opened under the name "Shakespeare's Globe Theatre".

Sam Wanamaker no longer lived through the event no longer but his dream came true.

The Globe is very successful today and many plays of Shakespeare are staged in summer.

Overall you can say that a man called Sam Wanamaker made Shakespeare and his works alive because of his life task to rebuild the Globe Theatre. Sam Wanamaker supported the

fact that Shakespeare is a legend for us and I think that Shakespeare would be thankful for that.

My personal opinion about Sam Wanamaker and the Globe:

When I visited London I was most happy to see Shakespeare's Globe. We had edited the Globe already in class but when I saw it in real life it exceeded my expectations.

When you see it you'll be put right back into Shakespeare's time because it really looks the same as it used to before the great fire.

From the outside it is already huge and from the inside it is like a dream with all the decorations and patterns.

I think Sam Wanamaker's enthusiasm for the Globe is right and I have great respect for him because of the fact that he makes the Globe shine again in all its glory.

It must have been a lot of work to make something like this possible. But you can see from these examples that you can manage to make dreams come true.

Very sad for me is that Sam Wanamaker wasn't alive when the Globe was completed.

But one question remains. Why did Sam Wanamaker do all this? Only because of his enthusiasm for theatre? This is actually unbelievable.

Finally I think that Shakespeare would be very grateful to Sam Wanamaker for doing this. I hope that I can see one day a Shakespearean play at the Globe theatre.