**Advice to Actors Playing Shakespeare**

The best guide to an actor who wants to play Shakespeare comes from Shakespeare himself who, though remembered as a playwright, was also an actor himself. In his play Hamlet, the main character gives the following advice to a group of performers before a production:

Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue. But if you mouth it as many of our players do, I had as life the town crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air to much with your hand, thus. But use all gently. For in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness… Be not too tame, neither. But let your own discretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you o’erstep not the modesty of nature… For anything so o’erdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is to hold, as t’were the mirror up to nature.

*-- Hamlet*, Act III, Scene ii