

William Poel (1852 – 1934).

English actor, theatre manager and producer, Poel revolutionized modern Shakespearean productions by returning to an Elizabethan-like staging.



After working for a time as an actor, stage and theatre manager, he founded the Elizabethan Stage Society (1894), which by holding performances free of scenery and modern staging approximated the theatrical conditions under which Shakespeare wrote. Using largely amateur casts, no scenery, and an Elizabethan open-platform stage, Poel's productions were distinguished by swift and musical speech, continuity of action in non-localized scenes, and a more intimate relationship between the actors and the audience.



Measure for Measure by William Shakespeare,
directed by William Poel, London, 1893

In April 1897, Poel sketched plans for a 1:24 scale model of the Globe, intending it as a maquette [i.e., small model of an intended work] for a full-scale reconstruction which, he hoped, would be adopted as the venue of the National Theatre, a project then under discussion. This ambition was never realised...



