Meera Syal at the Shakespeare Institute

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Award-winning actress, writer and television personality Meera Syal visited the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford today to discuss her performance as Beatrice in the RSC's current production of Much Ado About Nothing. The University of Birmingham's unique research centre for the study of Shakespeare's works, times and influence is this week hosting and co-running the 65th RSC Summer School; earlier in the week the Director of the Institute, Professor Michael Dobson, interviewed Much Ado's director Iqbal Khan, who has relocated the play's action to contemporary Delhi.

Other highlights of the Summer School include a session with Jonjo O'Neill, the RSC's current Richard III (seen here with the Institute's ceramic figurine of the eighteenth-century star David Garrick playing the same role); lectures by leading Shakespearean scholars including Carol Rutter, Robert Maslen and Jane Kingsley-Smith; a discussion by Michael Dobson of Shakespeare's place in world culture as dramatized by the current World Shakespeare Festival; interviews with actors Jonathan Slinger, Kirsty Bushell and Pippa Nixon; and practical sessions with RSC personnel Michael Corbidge, Tracy Irish and Simon Ash.

'When the Institute was established in 1951,' explained Dobson, 'it was always intended that as well as serving the university it would act as a laboratory, library and living database for Stratford's great Shakespearean theatres. We are absolutely delighted to continue to collaborate on the RSC's summer school, and with the RSC's participation in our new suite of courses on Shakespeare and Creativity we look forward to working ever more closely with the company over the coming years.'

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