



## **President's report: 2020**

A number of activities planned for this year by regional branches of the Society were, inevitably, cancelled or postponed until 2021. At national level, a handful of digital projects commenced or continued under the banner of Shakespeare ZA (<http://shakespeare.org.za>).

Foremost among these was the #lockdownshakespeare campaign, in which some sixty performers participated by filming and submitting monologues. Thanks to a Supporting Grant from Business and Arts South Africa, awarded on the basis of our prior sponsorship by CN&CO, we were able to provide modest financial support to theatre makers affected by the Covid-19 lockdown, paying R1000 each to forty entrants (a number of actors kindly offered their performances pro bono). Almost fifty videos have been added to Shakespeare ZA's Resources pages. The #lockdownshakespeare project benefited from very positive social media coverage, as well as [news articles](#) and [blog posts](#). A review is forthcoming in *Shakespeare Bulletin*.

An ongoing online venture is the translation digitisation project, through which (in collaboration with Wits University and the Mellon African Programme in Digital Humanities, AfriDig) we hope to create an easily accessible archive of translations of Shakespeare's plays into South African languages. Four texts have been [published digitally](#) thus far.

This project is complemented by the Society's partnership with the Shakespeare Schools Festival (SSF-SA), which has thus far yielded eleven 30-minute scripts for performance by school learners in isiXhosa, isiZulu and Afrikaans. In 2020, SSF-SA celebrated its tenth anniversary in two remarkable ways: firstly, with a fortnight of performances at the Fugard Theatre in March, and then with a virtual festival in September. SSOSA continues to value its partnership with this vibrant organisation.

Volume 33 (2020) of the journal *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* has the theme "Shakespeare and Social Justice in South Africa", and contains articles developed from papers prepared for the "Shakespeare and Social Justice" conference during the Society's triennial congress held in Cape Town in May 2019.

**Chris Thurman (President)**

**November 2020**