

Question 28

Does Shakespeare's dramatic verse seem to be different to Marlowe's?

Antony Sher

As an actor, you get to taste the language of different playwrights – taste it, literally in the mouth. Shakespeare is full of subtle, complex, delicate flavours; Marlowe is rougher, more raw. And then there's their use of the iambic pentameter. Marlowe's mighty lines have a thumping regularity to them. Shakespeare is like a master jazz musician, both keeping to the beat and jamming round it. So to those people who suggest Marlowe that wasn't killed but went on to write all of Shakespeare, I believe it's simply impossible. Shakespeare couldn't be Marlowe - or anyone else.