The Theatre of Ambiguity

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INTRODUCTION

As is widely known, male actors, most of whom were adults, exclusively composed the professional theatre companies of Elizabethan England. What is less widely known is how these companies expanded the roles of their performers. Boy-actors were often cast in roles that were traditionally assumed by women. For example, in Shakespeare's "Hamlet," the character of Ophelia is played by a young boy-actor. The use of boy-actors allowed for greater flexibility in casting and helped to fill the demand for more realistic and dynamic performances. The boy-actors were able to bring a level of authenticity to the roles they played, as they were often able to relate to the experiences of the characters they portrayed. This is evident in the character of Viola in Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night," who is played by a boy in many productions. The boy-actor's ability to play both male and female roles allowed for greater variety in the types of productions that could be staged. Boy-actors were also able to bring a level of freshness and youth to the performances, which helped to keep the audiences engaged and interested. Overall, the use of boy-actors was a significant factor in the success of Elizabethan theatre companies, and it played a key role in the development of the theatre industry as we know it today.

REFERENCES


