CHILDREN OF THE QUEEN’S REVELS

This is the first book-length study of the Children of the Queen’s Revels, the most enduring and influential of the Jacobean children’s companies. Between 1603 and 1613 the Queen’s Revels staged plays by Francis Beaumont, George Chapman, John Fletcher, Ben Jonson, John Marston and Thomas Middleton, all of whom were at their most innovative when writing for this company. Combining theatre history and critical analysis, this study provides a history of the Children of the Queen’s Revels, and an account of their repertory. It examines the ‘biography’ of the company – demonstrating the involvement in dramatic production of dramatists, shareholders, patrons, audiences and actors alike, and reappraising issues such as management, performance style and audience composition – before exploring their groundbreaking practices in comedy, tragicomedy and tragedy. The book also includes five documentary appendices detailing the plays, people and performances of the Queen’s Revels Company.

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To the memories of my mother, Cheryl Munro, and my grandmother, Valerie Evans
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This book focuses on the Jacobean career of the company variously known as the Children of the Queen’s Revels, the Children of the Revels, the Children of Blackfriars and the Children of Whitefriars. Established as the Children of the Chapel in 1600, the Queen’s Revels were the most prominent, politically contentious and dramatically experimental of the early seventeenth-century children’s companies. In focusing on the Jacobean period, I potentially create a problematic divide between the careers of the Children of the Chapel and the Children of the Queen’s Revels. However, after 1603 the patronage of Queen Anna of Denmark, the appointment of Samuel Daniel as licenser, the involvement of John Marston as shareholder and the increased experience of the performers take the company in new directions. In addition, the repertory of 1600–3 is affected to a large degree by the specific theatrical environment of the ‘War of the Theatres’ or poetomachia, in which the Chapel plays Cynthia’s Revels and The Poetaster are usually thought to have been involved. The ‘war of the theatres’ has recently been analysed in detail (with widely divergent approaches and conclusions) by Matthew Steggle, Roslyn Lander Knutson and James P. Bednarz, and I have therefore chosen to focus on other aspects of the Blackfriars repertory. ¹ Since it would be impossible to take into account the full complexities of the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean theatrical and cultural milieus in one book, I have (reluctantly) decided to focus on the Jacobean period. However, I include in Chapter One an account of the events of 1600–3 and discussion of plays performed in those years, some of which may have been revived after 1603. Data relating to the Elizabethan period has also been included in the documentary appendices. A note on the texts used in this study. Some of the works on which I draw here have been extensively edited; others have received little or no editorial attention. I have decided, therefore, that a fairer impression will
be given by my using early modern texts as far as possible. Any emendations to quotations are indicated by square brackets; long ‘s’ has been regularised, and black-letter has been converted to roman type. To facilitate cross-referencing, line or page references have been supplied from modern editions. For citations from manuscripts, in most cases references are provided to an archival source and a modern transcript. Where possible I have checked the transcript against the original; in the few cases where I have been unable to consult a manuscript personally, the transcript is cited before the archive details.

Following the practice of a number of modern historians, for some personal names I have chosen to use the version the bearers themselves preferred. Thus I refer to the Queen Consort of James I as ‘Anna’, rather than ‘Anne’, and to his cousin as ‘Arbella Stuart’ rather than ‘Arabella’. Dates are given old-style, with the year assumed to begin on 1 January. Unless stated otherwise, dates of plays given in the text are those of first performance. Names of companies are generally given with the first citation.

This study has its origins in my King’s College London PhD thesis, submitted in 2001, and it has taken a while to reach its final form. I have, therefore, a few people to thank. My greatest debt is to my PhD supervisor, Gordon McMullan. His support, belief and advice have been invaluable (as has his regular nagging about the merits of structure); he has been a good friend and a superb academic example. Kate McLuskie and Kiernan Ryan were stimulating and humane examiners, and I am extremely grateful for their detailed comments and advice. I would also like to thank the readers for Cambridge University Press for their informed criticism, in particular the readers of sample material and the anonymous reader of the penultimate draft. At Cambridge I would like to thank Sarah Stanton for her faith in the project and Rebecca Jones for her help with the final typescript.

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Family and friends have been hugely supportive, especially my dad, George Munro, my brother, Duncan, and flatmates who had to live with this work at various stages: Jess Leupolz, Julia Roberts and Jo Upton. I would also like to thank Sara Ayech, Amanda Beale, Ben Clancy, Liz Hampson, Clare Wadd and Clare Wiggins for tolerance and distractions. Above all, I thank Matt Haynes for emotional, spiritual and grammatical support.

## Abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>British Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSP Venetian</td>
<td>R. Brown <em>et al.</em>, eds., <em>Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Relating to English Affairs, Existing in the Archives of Collections of Venice and in Other Libraries of North Italy</em>, 38 vols. (London: Historical Manuscripts Commission, 1864–1947)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELH</td>
<td>English Literary History</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELN</td>
<td>English Language Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELR</td>
<td>English Literary Renaissance</td>
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<tr>
<td>GL</td>
<td>Guildhall Library</td>
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Greg, Bibliography


HSS


JCS


MRDE

Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England

MSC

Malone Society Collections

MSC 6

David Cook and F. P. Wilson, eds., ‘Dramatic Records in the Declared Accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber 1558–1642’, MSC 6 (1961), 1–175

MSC 13


NA

National Archives, Kew (formerly the Public Record Office)

N&Q

Notes and Queries

RD

Renaissance Drama

REED

Records of Early English Drama

RES

Review of English Studies

RORD

Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama

SBP


SEL

Studies in English Literature

ShS

Shakespeare Survey

SP

Studies in Philology

SPC


SQ

Shakespeare Quarterly

STC


TLS

Times Literary Supplement

TN

Theatre Notebook