

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88213-2 - Shakespeare's Women: Performance and Conception

David Mann

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

SHAKESPEARE'S WOMEN

David Mann examines the influence of the Elizabethan cross-dressed tradition on the performance and conception of Shakespeare's female roles through an analysis of all 205 extant plays written for the adult theatre. The study provides both a historical context, showing how performance practice developed in the era before Shakespeare, and a comparative one, in revealing how dramatists in general treated their female characters and the influence their characterisation had upon Shakespeare's writing. The book challenges current views of the sexual ethos of Elizabethan theatre, offering instead a picture of Shakespeare which pays less attention to his supposed gender politics and more to his ability to exploit the cross-dressed convention as a dramatic medium. The late-adolescent performer identified here, more capable of empathy, perhaps, than the received version of the 'boy actress' but often mockingly satirical, was ultimately, Mann argues, disengaged from the roles he played and a spokesman for the male point of view.

DAVID MANN has directed, designed and acted in many theatrical productions and was in charge of Drama and Theatre Studies at Huddersfield University. He is the author of *The Elizabethan Player: Contemporary Stage Representations* (1991) and has also published several articles and reviews.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88213-2 - Shakespeare's Women: Performance and Conception

David Mann

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

SHAKESPEARE'S WOMEN

Performance and Conception

DAVID MANN



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-88213-2 - Shakespeare's Women: Performance and Conception
David Mann
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo
Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521882132

© David Mann 2008

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2008

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-521-88213-2 hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for
the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or
third-party internet websites referred to in this book,
and does not guarantee that any content on such
websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88213-2 - Shakespeare's Women: Performance and Conception

David Mann

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

To my wife Carole and daughters Miranda and Eleanor

Contents

<i>List of tables and illustrations</i>	<i>page</i>
	ix
Preliminary: the persistence of all-male theatre	I
‘Playing the woman’s part’	4
Introduction: the significance of the performer	9
Shakespeare and the critics	9
Shakespeare and the performers	24
1 Age and status	3I
The argument for juvenile performers	33
The argument for young adults	43
Conclusion	58
2 Erotic ambience	59
The charge of homosexuality	59
The social construction of eroticism	77
Neo-platonism	9I
3 Stage costume and performer ethos	102
4 Male didacticism and female stereotyping	122
The negative consequences of stereotyping	123
Models and warnings	130
Heywood’s innocent adulteresses	144
Shakespeare and received character conventions	149
5 Dramatic empathy and moral ambiguity	160
The stage whore	162
The multi-dimensional female character	179

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-88213-2 - Shakespeare's Women: Performance and Conception
David Mann
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

viii	<i>List of contents</i>	
6	Sexual violence	186
7	Positive representations of young women	208
	Breeches roles and gender construction	223
	<i>Appendix: female characters in the adult repertory, 1500–1614</i>	241
	<i>Notes</i>	246
	<i>Bibliography</i>	266
	<i>Index of adult repertory</i>	280
	<i>General index</i>	285

Tables and illustrations

Tables

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 1. Numbers of female speaking roles | <i>page</i> 32 |
| 2. Ages of known performers of female roles, 1625–47 | 47 |

Figures

- | | |
|--|----------|
| 1. Male fashion c.1410 | 83 |
| 2. Fashion c.1470 | 84 |
| 3 and 4. Final designs for Queen's costume for <i>Chloridia</i> | 89, 90 |
| 5 and 6. Jealousy and Disdain from <i>Chloridia</i> | 105, 106 |
| 7. The wife of an old-fashioned gentleman from <i>Salmacida Spolia</i> | 107 |
| 8. Cupid from <i>Chloridia</i> | 108 |
| 9. The farthingale | 113 |
| 10. The peascod belly | 114 |
| 11. Male costume design from <i>The Shepherd's Paradise</i> | 115 |

(Figures 3–8 and 11 by Inigo Jones from the Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth, reproduced by permission of the Duke of Devonshire and the Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement. Photographs: Photographic Survey, Courtauld Institute of Art. Figures 1 and 2, 9 and 10 by Carole Mann)