

Amanda Eubanks Winkler. *Music, Dance, and Drama in Early Modern English Schools*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp 258. Hardback £75. ISBN: 9781108490863. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108858984>.

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What role did pedagogical performance play in the lives of early modern boys and girls? How might musical instruction construct social relations, or didactic theatrical performance rehearse power structures? And, are we ever truly wise to encourage children to box one another's ears and draw swords, even in the context of a play? Amanda Eubanks Winkler addresses these questions and many more in an important new study, shedding light on a neglected area of early modern performance history. Moving from psalm singing to early opera via public oratory, classical drama, musical instruction, and even the performativity of the classroom itself, *Music, Dance, and Drama* is rich with fresh archival discoveries as well as new ways of thinking about gender, education, and performance in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

From the outset, Eubanks Winkler acknowledges and even embraces the methodological challenges of historical performance studies, asking, 'How does one study what has disappeared or survives in incomplete form?' (3). This is a question exercising scholars across the early modern sub-disciplines just now, from recent work associated with the Lost Plays Database to Eubanks Winkler's own co-edited volume on the early modern circulation of music.¹ Eubanks Winkler's answer, in *Music, Dance, and Drama*, is to seek 'a hermeneutic comfortable with the "perhaps", the "maybe"' (3), working from school archives, musical notation in manuscript and print, and a range of other sources to consider 'how the embodied acting, singing, dancing, and playing of early modern children might have disrupted or altered meaning' (5). Rather than pursuing a totalizing master narrative or offering a chronological history, then, Eubanks Winkler uses case studies to respond more nimbly to the evidence available. The result is productively eclectic, moving from thick description of extant documents to informed reimaginings of embodied experience; attending both to the proscriptions of school statutes and pedagogy manuals, and to archival glimpses of resistance to such cultural scripts — such as the fight that broke out at the 1693 Spital Sermon between the Christ's Hospital boys and the Bridewell boys, with insults including 'Clowns', 'numskulls', 'loggerheads', and 'Bridewell dogs' turning the air blue (62). Readers who embrace the volume's approach of qualified, considered, and self-conscious

speculation when faced with archival gaps and limitations will be rewarded with insights, suggestions, and possibilities beyond those accessible through other methodologies.

The book is organized into six substantial chapters framed by an introduction and a short concluding chapter on performance and memory: 'The Specter of the Schoolroom'. The first chapter, 'Situating Pedagogical Performance', offers a fresh account of classroom practice, foregrounding many elements that we would today recognize as performative, and emphasizing opportunities for girls to participate in such activities that have not always been fully acknowledged in prior scholarship. The chapters that follow each focus on a particular category of performance, investigating 'Piety', 'Prestige', 'Accomplishment', 'Vice', and 'the Professional'. This structure is once again responsive to its materials rather than rigidly imposed: 'Performing the Professional' thinks through the implications of young people's personal relationships with professional performers and instructors, for instance, whilst 'Performing Vice' reflects on how the subject matter of masques, operas, and drama staged in schools can be reconciled (or otherwise) with the orthodoxies of the period's pedagogical theory.

The sequence of the title — *Music, Dance, and Drama* — reflects something of the emphasis of the book, insofar as its examples are drawn a little more substantially from musical performance modalities than from dramatic ones. Those *Early Theatre* readers brought up on Shakespearean stage histories may find themselves in unfamiliar territory as Purcell rubs shoulders with Elizabethan psalm-singing. Yet even to note this is perhaps to miss the point: the volume invites the reader not to stay within disciplinary boundaries, but rather to think about performativity across forms, and it rewards engagement with its full scope, rather than selective reading. *Music, Dance, and Drama's* impressive breadth, both chronologically and in the range of performance arts it considers, sets it apart from prior studies. Of course, in the century and more that the book addresses, both educational provision and wider performance culture transformed immeasurably. Yet for every instance in which new or metamorphosed pedagogical performance practices emerge in the later seventeenth century, there is another in which Eubanks Winkler traces unexpected connections and continuities across this wide cultural landscape, offering insights that simply would not be possible within the confines of a narrower periodicity.

One of the book's most prominent concerns is with the tension between performance content and the period's typically moralizing rationales for including such performance in the curriculum in the first place. The study returns repeatedly to the idea that 'the dictates of the ancient rhetoricians regarding effective

oration' — which require students 'actually to feel' the 'affections' of their character — made it especially problematic when the performance involved the likes of violence and aggression, hatred of obedient classroom attendance, or erotic desire (177). The book explores examples of all these emotional scenarios, pinpointing a clear gap between theory and practice; such subject matter is a far cry from Quintilian's warning that 'drunkenness', 'cringing manners', and 'the emotions of love, greed, or fear' should not be performed by children, since 'frequent imitation develops into habit'.² Eubanks Winkler moots the prospect of school-children entirely inhabiting their characters' fantasies, 'need[ing] actually to feel erotic desire ... for a classmate', for example, in accordance with the fiction they are performing together (177). Early modern rhetorical theory perhaps allowed for alternative approaches too, since one acknowledged method for evoking passion was to draw upon relevant emotional experience external to the immediate situation. Thomas Wright offers advice on how best to select emotional memories in this way, recommending matters other than a 'priuat quarell or reuenge' when evoking 'ire and indignation', for instance, and advocating the avoidance of excessively 'vile and abiect' memories when seeking to convey 'feare and sadnesse'.³ Yet even if the requisite memories were drawn from elsewhere, the texts explored in *Music, Dance, and Drama* would nonetheless still require their child performers to experience proscribed and potentially problematic feelings, if they remained committed to Ciceronian principles. Whether students indeed revelled in officially forbidden emotions, or simply found other ways to negotiate the demands of performance in practice, these examples reveal how lived experience rarely aligns exactly with the ideals and abstractions that are often the best-preserved remnants of a past cultural practice. In highlighting this gap, Eubanks Winkler allows us to glimpse more equivocal, complex, and even contradictory relationships between a period's theories and its subjects' lived experiences.

Music, Dance, and Drama makes a particularly significant contribution to the scholarly picture of girls' education, with implications in turn for early modern female engagement with performance culture beyond the classroom. Eubanks Winkler's archival research builds on the scholarship of Rosemary O'Day and Kenneth Charlton to reveal fresh evidence of girls enrolled at grammar schools, for instance, challenging the all-too-common Shakespearean assumption that grammar school education was an exclusively male privilege. The implications of this new research may be far-reaching. Eubanks Winkler is also productively attentive to the ways in which gender roles and social status intersect in the period. Whilst a masque such as *Cupid's Banishment*, performed before Queen Anna herself, involved girls of the very highest social echelons, the 'yong Ladies' of

Christ's Hospital who performed Thomas Jordan's *Cupid His Coronation* in 1654 are likely to have had gender- and class-based identities that intersected rather differently, simultaneously highlighting the importance of considering cultural privilege in the round, and demonstrating that even those doubly marginalized by gender and class can still be glimpsed participating in the seventeenth century's ubiquitous culture of pedagogical performance. Here, as elsewhere, *Music, Dance, and Drama* is a significant and seminal book, not only for the contribution it makes to the current scholarly picture, but for the future work that it will surely inspire.

Notes

- 1 David McInnis, *Shakespeare and Lost Plays: Reimagining Drama in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108915250>; David McInnis and Matthew Steggle, eds, *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England* (London, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137403971>; Linda Phyllis Austern, Candace Bailey, and Amanda Eubanks Winkler, eds, *Beyond Boundaries: Rethinking Music Circulation in Early Modern England* (Bloomington, IN, 2017).
- 2 Marcus Fabius Quintilian, *The Orator's Education*, trans. and ed. D.A. Russell, Loeb Classical Library, 124 (Cambridge, MA, 2001), i.xi.1–3.
- 3 Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (London, 1604; STC: 26040), 177–8.