

Early Theatre

2023 Prize for Best Theatre History Essay, Volumes 24-25

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‘M[aster] Monkesters schollars’: Richard Mulcaster, Physical Education,
and the Early Modern Boy Companies’

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McCarthy’s article delves into the historical archive and the early modern English performance repertoire to provide new insights that challenge the primacy of text and oration both in classical education and on the early modern stage. McCarthy astutely argues that the teaching methods of Richard Mulcaster, which incorporated a broad range of physical methodologies and skills that Mulcaster believed were central to effective pedagogy, translated to the stage in Elizabethan boys’ companies, allowing the stage to function as a space to showcase the fruits of physical education. This article has far-reaching impact for studies of both early modern pedagogical practices and early modern performance. We commend McCarthy for the depth of his archival research, the clarity of his prose, and the nuance of his argument in an article that is sure to become a mainstay in the field.