

Child Actors, Shakespeare, and Skill: Enskilling Child Actors in Elizabethan England

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The enskillment of child actors was embedded in various productions—both theatrical and civic—over the Elizabethan era. This paper focuses on two methods of enskillment—scaffolding and shepherding—and traces their appearance across the Elizabethan and early Jacobean periods, specifically in: the entertainments performed for Elizabeth in Norwich in 1578; Marlowe's *Edward II*, and Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet*. This paper lays the groundwork for future research into boy actors by arguing that boy actors in civic entertainments, and those in theatrical productions, complemented and reinforced each other's skill.