Not Quite The Ingenue: The Development Of The Middle-aged Female Character In Musical Theatre

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Keywords
Theatre, Music, Musical Theatre, Women's Studies, Middle-Aged Female Characters, "Baby", Socio-Economic Influences, Types/Stereotypes, Arlene MacNalley, Aunt Eller, Dolly Levi

Abstract
Not Quite the Ingenue: The Development of the Middle-Aged Female Character in Musical Theatre is an exploration of the influences which have defined the function of middle-aged female characters within the musical theatre genre. This author was cast in the role of Arlene MacNalley, a forty-three year old woman, in the University of Central Florida's fall 2006 production of the musical Baby. Preparation for performance of this thesis role required identification of the traits and factors which would be vital for a realistic and relevant portrayal of Arlene. This document provides the reader with a working definition of middle age. It also furnishes a sampling of types, or stereotypes, of middle age female characters in musicals. The major thrust of the document emphasizes researching and understanding the importance of key socio-economic events' influence on the creation, direction, or depiction of middle-aged female characters. Three distinct characters are used to develop this theory, Aunt Eller in Oklahoma!, Dolly Levi in Hello, Dolly! and Arlene MacNalley in Baby. Further analysis within the thesis details essential differences between the original version of Arlene and the updated 2006 version of Arlene portrayed in the University of Central Florida's production of Baby. Conclusions drawn from the research, performance and writing processes indicate an increasing significance for the middle age female character as the genre of musical theatre continues to develop.

Notes
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Graduation Date
2007

Semester
Summer

Advisor
Chicurel, Steven

Degree
Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.)

College
College of Arts and Humanities

Department
Theatre

Degree Program
Theatre

Format
application/pdf

Identifier
CFE0001714

URL
http://purl.fcla.edu/fcla/etd/CFE0001714

Language
English
Medieval theatre refers to theatrical performance in the period between the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century A.D. and the beginning of the Renaissance in approximately the 15th century A.D. Medieval Theatre covers all drama produced in Europe over that thousand-year period and refers to a variety of genres, including liturgical drama, mystery plays, morality plays, farces and masques. Beginning with Hrosvitha of Gandersheim in the 10th century, Medieval drama was for the most part These dramatic performances with music were very pleasing and were played till the end of the 17th century. Soon the plays became complicated. Professional actors travelled from town to town performing in inn yards. The first playhouse in London was built in 1576. It was called "The Theatre". A more famous theatre was 'The Globe', built in 1599. It was like the old inn yard open to the sky. Galleries and boxes were placed round the yard. The stage was in the middle of it. There was no scenery. The place of action was written on a placard, e.g., a palace, London, etc. There was no c She is the first recorded female playwright. She is also wrote the first identified Western dramatic works of the post-classical era. Her works were first published in 1501 and had a large influence on religious drama on the sixteenth century. Theater in the Middle and Late Medieval Period. Liturgical dramas spread across Europe and Russia throughout the Middle Ages. Muslim-occupied Spain was the only area in which liturgical dramas were not present. However, though there is a large presence of surviving liturgical dramas, most churches only performed one or two per year. An important milestone in the development of comedy was the Feast of Fools. The Feast of Fools was a festival in which the lower clergy were allowed to mock the higher clergy as well as church life.