



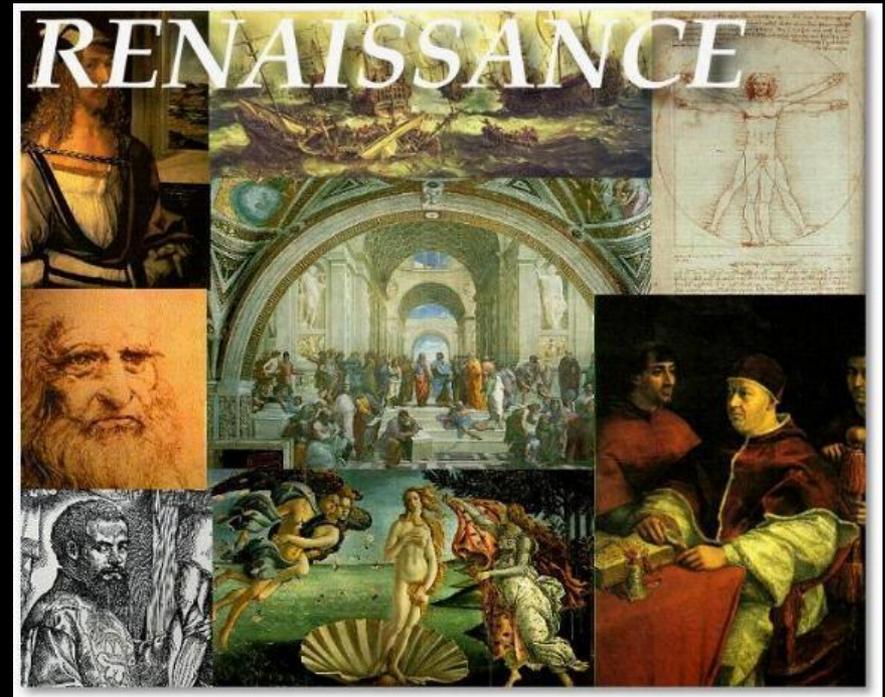
Renaissance Theatre

1450-1649



Renaissance Drama

- Renaissance means rebirth of classical knowledge.



Italy:

- Known more for stage equipment and scenery than great plays.
 - Ideas from Greek and Roman period blended to develop perspective paintings and colored lights.





Continued...

- **Street comedy started**
 - (Commedia Dell'Arte: improvised comedy: no script.)
 - **Troupes:**
 - Acting companies traveled from town to town presenting these comedies.
 - **Had fixed or stock characters:**
 - Identified by costumes and masks (doctor, maid, clown, male servants).
 - **Harlequin:** diamond-patterned costume.
 - **Pantalone:** old man: wears black coat with long sleeves and red vest.
- **15th and 16th Centuries developed interludes: one act farces.**



Magnifico



Capitano



Pulcinella

Neutral Mask



Arlecchino



Brighella

The Male Lover



Pantelone



Tartaglia



The Women



il Dottore

France (late 1600s):

- **Returned to ideas of Aristotle:**
 - Greek philosopher (*considered first literacy critic*).
 - Three unities:
 - -One action
 - -One day
 - -One place
- **Plays portraying heroes were popular.**
- **After French Revolution, Commedia Francaise established (comedies and farces).**
 - Led to the development of French professional theatre.
 - Theatre further developed by the government under direction of Louis XIV (great supporter of the arts).
- **Famous playwrights:**
 - Moliere and Racine



P. Mignard, « Portrait de Molière ». (Peinture, 1671.
Musée Condé, Chantilly. Ph. H. Josse © Arch. photob.)

Moliere



Racine

English Monarchy: The Tudors (1485-1603)



Henry VII
(1485-1509)



Henry VIII
(1509-1547)



Edward VI
(1547-1553)



Mary I
(1553-1558)

Elizabeth I
(1558-1603)



Lady Jane Grey
(1553)





Queen Elizabeth I

England: Elizabethan Age (1550-1650 CE):

One of the most important periods. Height of change in drama; it becomes very expressive and a force in the lives of people.

- **Morality play continued as farces.**
- **Plays done in taverns:**
 - People throw food at actors.
- **NO real scenery yet**
- **All men...men even played women!**
- **1st English public playhouse:**
 - 1576- built by James Burbage.



London Bridge in the Renaissance

Continued...

■ Famous playwrights

■ Christopher Marlowe:

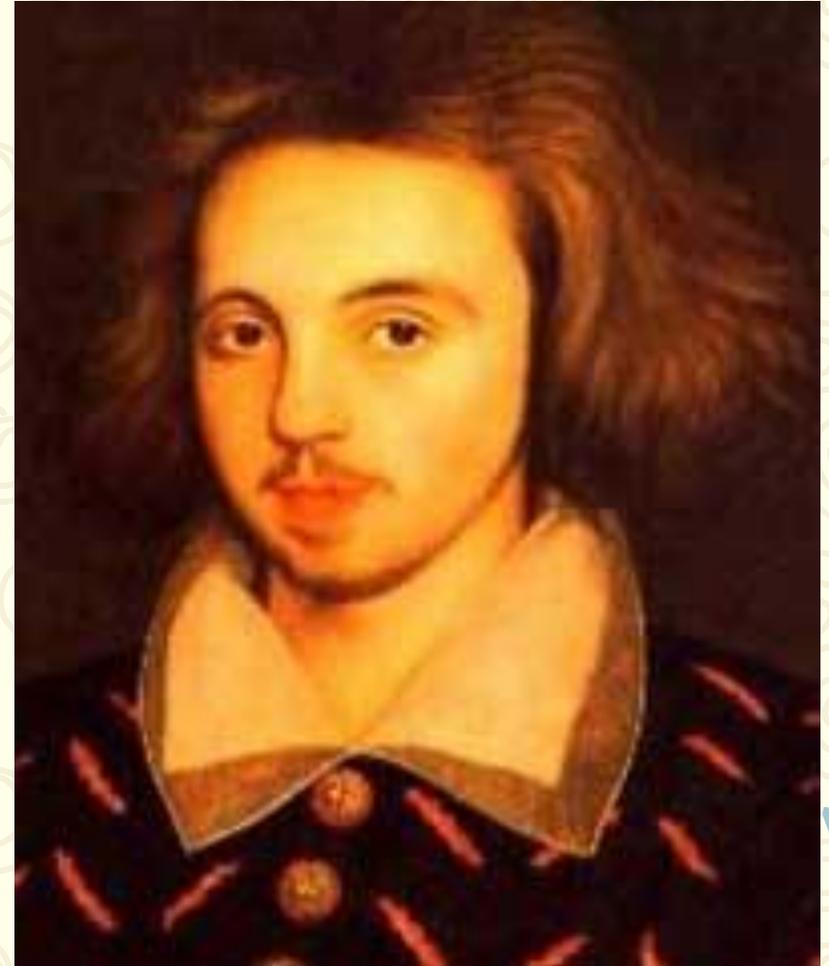
- Known for use of language and exciting plots.
- Doctor Faustus.

■ Ben Jonson:

- First master of English comedy.
- Made personality traits and weaknesses a cause for laughter.
- Volpone

Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593)

- ❑ Part of the “university wits” who set a standard for dramatic structure
- ❑ Dramatic poetry
 - “The Mighty Line”
 - Iambic pentameter
- ❑ *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (1588)
 - A good angel and a bad angel attempt to influence Faustus to sell his soul to the devil
- ❑ Produced plays in The Rose
- ❑ Stabbed in a brawl in 1589





Christopher Marlowe



Inquisition into the death
of Christopher Marlowe

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

- ❑ Born in Stratford-Upon-Avon in 1564
- ❑ Chose not to follow Italian neoclassic rules
 - Episodic structure, subplots, comic scenes to emphasize serious
- ❑ Wrote *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *King Lear*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and many others
- ❑ Produced plays in The Globe Theater
- ❑ Retired in 1613 to Stratford and died in 1616



Continued...

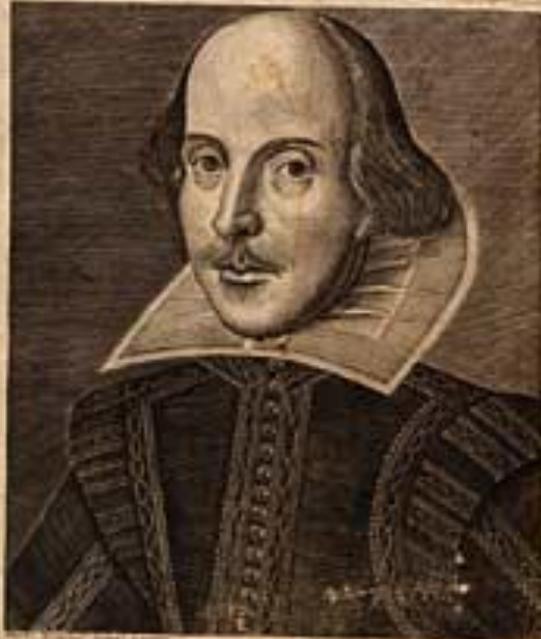
■ **William Shakespeare:**

- Greatest dramatists of all time.
- Successful because his plays appealed to everyone.
- Considered a master of characterization:
 - Characters are well defined and the center of interest.
 - Characters are moved by emotions: love, jealousy, and grief.
- No Woman: female roles played by boys.
- Globe theatre: Burbage managed later.



Mr. WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARES
COMEDIES,
HISTORIES, &
TRAGEDIES.

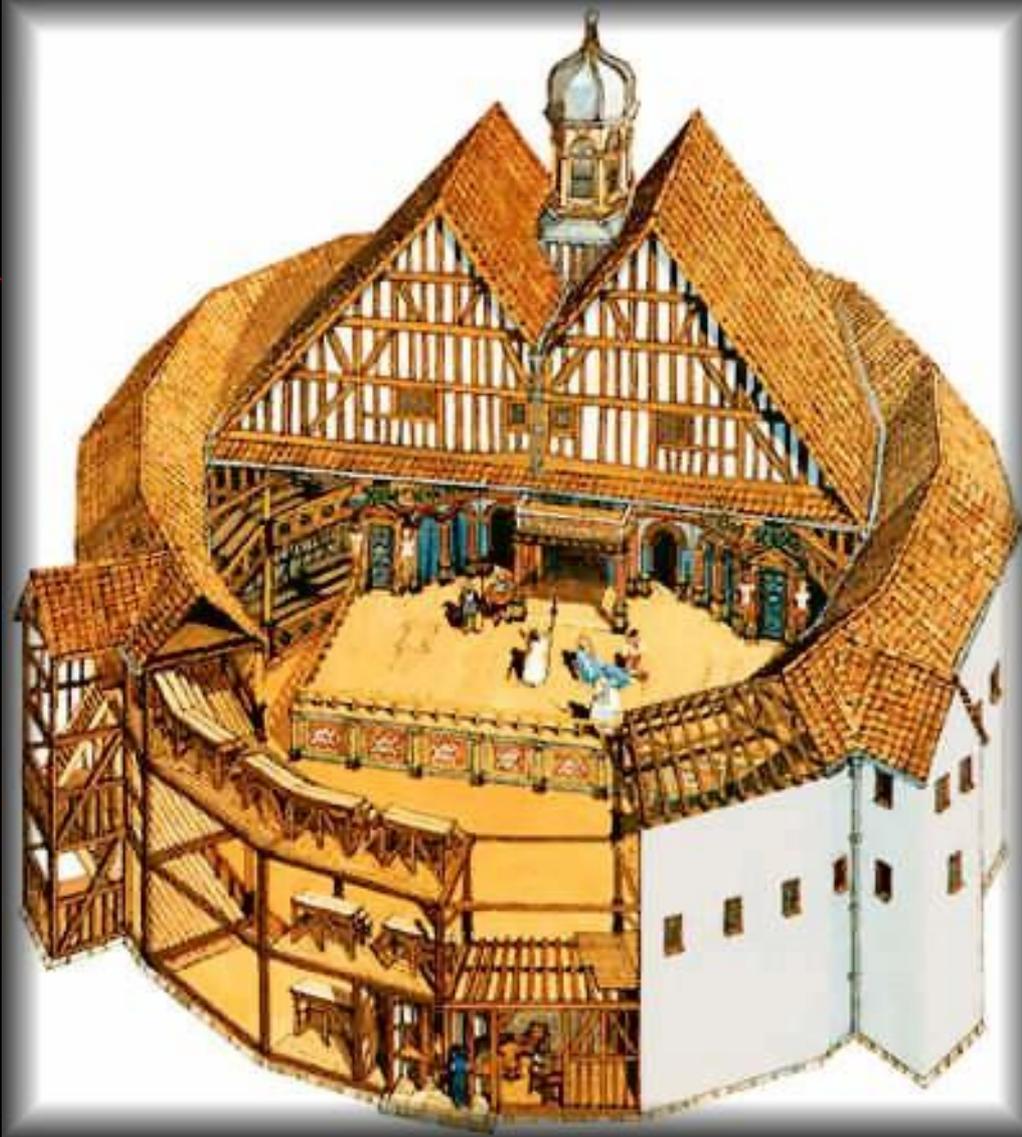
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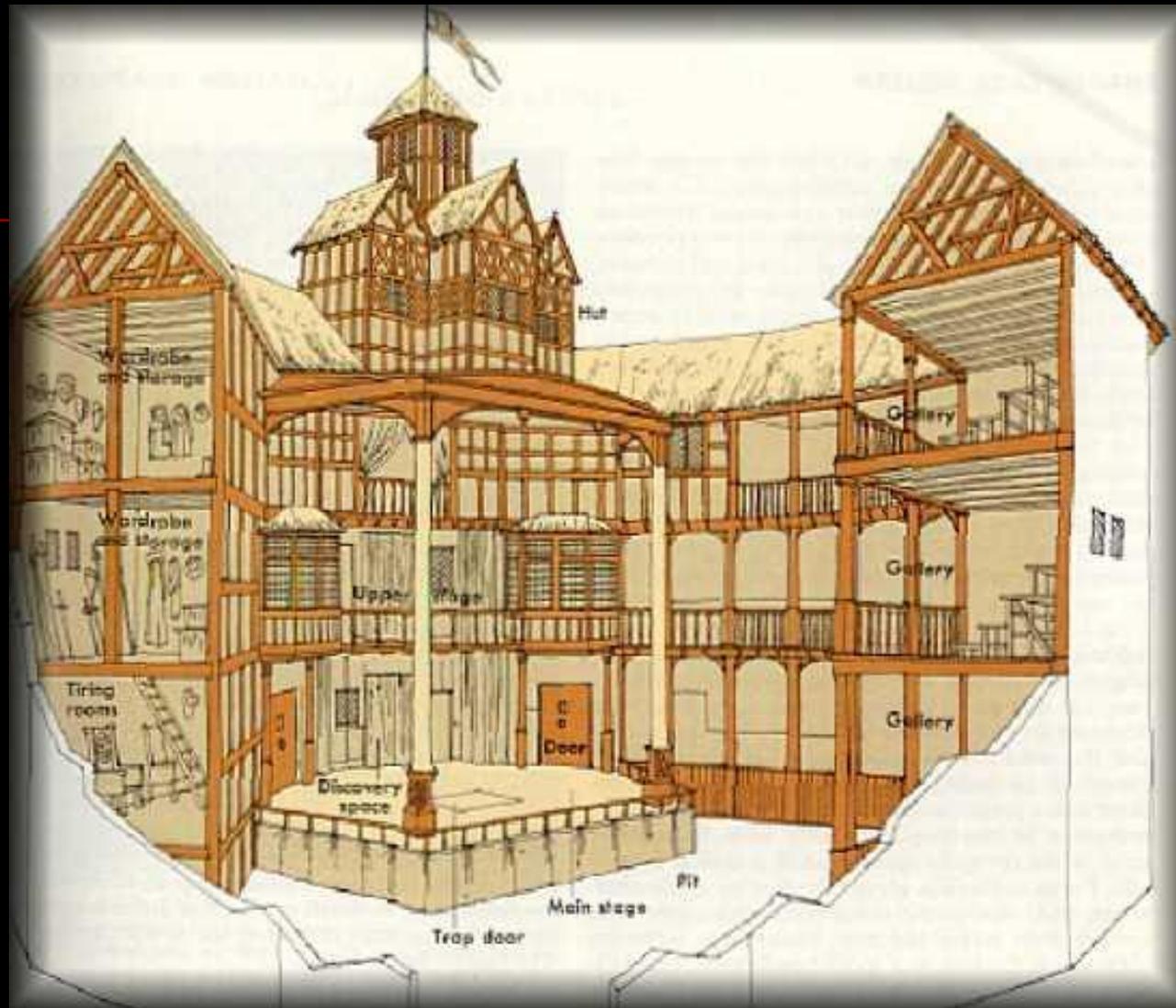
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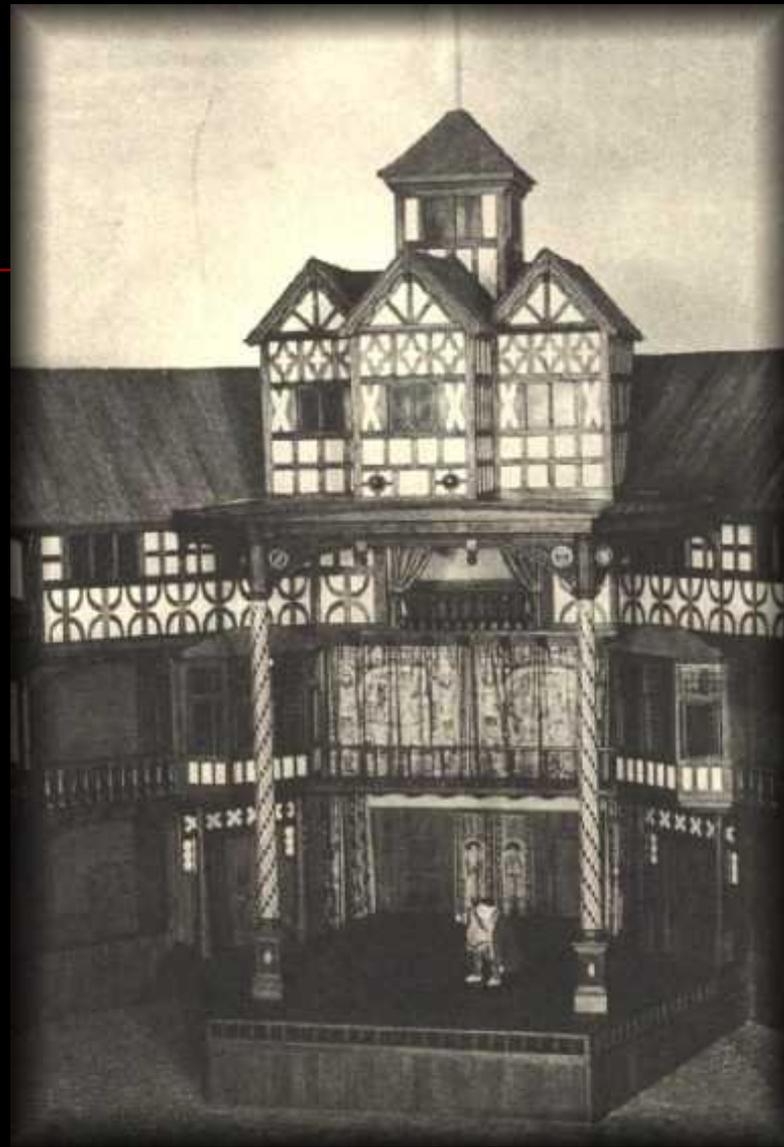




The Globe
of 1599



Cross
Section
View of
The Globe











Continued...

- Plays were written to be seen, not read, by loud audiences. Used to be shouting approval and displeasure so plays had to be exciting, humorous, and moving to maintain interest.
- **Typical Shakespearean devices:**
 - **Couplet:**
 - Two rhyming lines that signal the end of a scene.
 - **Soliloquy:**
 - Character speaks directly to the audience; explained action or described characters (no programs).

Continued...

- **Famous Shakespeare plays (Shakespeare is credited with writing 37 plays, as well as poems and sonnets):**
 - Romeo and Juliet
 - Julius Caesar
 - Hamlet
 - Macbeth
 - King Lear
 - A Midsummer Night's Dream
 - Much Ado About Nothing

Romeo and Juliet



Julius Caesar





Hamlet

William Shakespeare

Macbeth



King Lear





A Midsummer Night's Dream

Much Ado About Nothing



Playhouses



- Multi-sided open-air theaters built outside city limits of London
 - City forbade theater on moral grounds
 - However, Queen Elizabeth and other nobles supported theatre financially, so it flourished

Audience Seating

■ Seating had three tiers

– Part of one tier was divided into boxes called lords' rooms which were rented by wealthy

■ Ground floor was called the *yard*

– Lower-class spectators stood here and were called *groundlings*





Stage and Tiring House

- Raised platform surrounded on three sides by audience
- Trapdoors led to below the stage
- *Tiring House* similar to Greek skene
 - At least two doorways; possibly a center door for a reveal space
 - Second story for an “inner above” playing area
 - Third story for musicians’ gallery
 - Roof covered stage; called *the heavens*





Private Theaters

- ❑ Private meant they were indoors, not that they excluded people
 - Admission was more expensive, so poorer class would be excluded only because they couldn't afford it
- ❑ Staged productions in winter months or nighttime
- ❑ Smaller than public theaters
- ❑ Stage probably extended to side walls
- ❑ Pit seating faced one direction; galleries and boxes faced three sides

Scenery and Costumes

- Neutral stage that did not represent a specific location
 - “Spoken décor” or characters’ lines were used to establish location
 - Minimal props to also suggest location
- Costumes were not historically accurate to time of play
 - Wore contemporary fashion
 - Traditional costumes to indicate antiquity, supernatural characters or racial groups were worn over Elizabethan clothing

Acting Companies

- All plays had to be licensed by master of revels
- All troupes had to be sponsored by a patron, a nobleman above rank of Baron
 - The Lord Chamberlain's Men – performed at Globe and performed Shakespeare
 - The Lord Admiral's Men – performed at the Rose and performed Marlowe

Companies

- Each company had about 25 members organized on a sharing plan
 - Shareholders: elite members who bought a percentage of the company and received profits as payment; played major roles
 - Hirelings: actors contracted for specific period of time and specific salary; usually minor roles
 - Apprentices: assigned to shareholders; received training, room and board in hopes they would become shareholders
 - Householders: star members who part owned the theater building as incentive to stay with company
- Playwrights hired under contract
 - Plays performed once a week for a few weeks and several times later in the season if it was popular

How to act in Elizabethan England...

Against realism

- Female roles played by boys
- Doubling or tripling of roles
- Lines learned roughly or poorly
 - Given *sides*, or only their lines and cues and not the full script
- Rehearsal time was minimal
 - Stylized movements and gestures
 - Improvisation must have been used frequently



Jacobean and Caroline Drama



- New rulers in England:
The Stuarts
 - James I (Jacobean) and later his son Charles I (Caroline)
- Bad relations with Parliament
 - Civil war in 1642 when Puritans took control of Parliament and beheaded Charles I in 1649
 - Commonwealth created by Oliver Cromwell

Ben Jonson (1572-1637)

- Followed neoclassic principles
- Developed “Comedy of Humours” where each principal character had excess of one trait, or humour
- Wrote *Volpone* about a man who dupes old men out of their riches by pretending he is about to die



Beaumont and Fletcher

- Mixed serious and comic elements
 - Serious themes with a happy ending
 - Wrote in an artificial, superficial style
- Wrote plays
 - *Philaster* (1610)
 - *A King and No King* (1611)
- Partnership broke up when Beaumont married in 1613
 - Fletcher collaborated with Shakespeare on *Two Noble Kinsmen* (1613) and *Henry VIII* (1613)



Court Masques

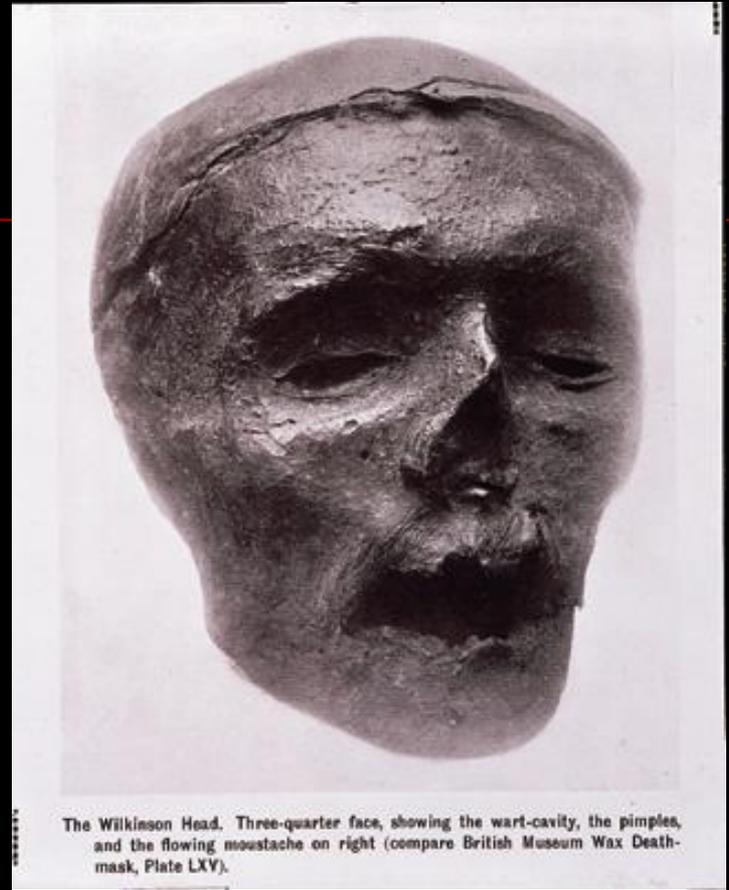
- ❑ Elaborate entertainment presented at court
 - Created to honor the King or member of the royal family
- ❑ Flourished under reigns of James I and Charles I
- ❑ Emphasis on music and dance with elaborate backdrops and moving equipment
- ❑ Performers were amateur members of the court
 - Incorporated mythological and allegorical figures to tell a story where the monarch proved to be the hero in the end
- ❑ Introduced Italian scenic practices in England

End of an Era

- From 1649-1660, England was controlled by Puritans
- Puritans were violently opposed to theatre
 - Believed that theatre was a den of iniquity and taught immorality
 - Outlawed all theatrical activities

The Reformation 1642-1660

- Puritans, under direction of Oliver Cromwell, come into existence.
- Puritan- wanted to “purify” the Catholic Church. (Aka. Pilgrims...you know... the Mayflower, Thanksgiving, Squanto?)
- Wanted Church of England to be stricter about morals.
- Killed theatre for 18 years.
- Puritan Rebellion 1642-1660.



The Wilkinson Head. Three-quarter face, showing the wart-cavity, the pimples, and the flowing moustache on right (compare British Museum Wax Death-mask, Plate LXV).

Oliver Cromwell



Restoration England: During reign of Charles II (1660-1737)

- **Theatre monopoly granted to one group to serve all of London.**
 - Most plays performed in only:
 - Drury Lane Theatre
 - Convent Garden Theatre
 - Lead to “legitimate theatre”: refers to professional stage plays.
- **Actors wore dress of the day:**
 - No historical costuming.
- **Acting monopolies connected to rich landowners and did shows and performances for them only.**
- **Women were allowed to play female roles.**
- **Elaborate scenery more widely used.**



Charles II

