

Medieval Theatre

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- 1 Hello everyone and welcome to Theatre Talk radio! Today's topic is:
- All Medieval Theatre!
- 2-5 What's so great about Medieval Theatre?
- 1 Well, in the Dark Ages, from about 600-1000 AD, there was barely any theatre at all.
- 6-10 Oh No! (Gesture)
- 2-5 But it came back, right?
- 1 Oh yes, and it was used to teach people about Christianity.
- 3 Oh yeah! (Sound effect) The plays were called Liturgical Dramas!
- 4 The priests did the acting in their church garments (Gesture)
- 2 And the plays were about the Christmas and Easter holidays.
- 5, 6 Were the plays performed in theatres?
- All (Sound effect) No! They were performed in churches!
- 7 They used small structures called mansions as their set pieces.
- 8 And the space where the actors performed was called the platea.
- 9 Were the plays always done in the church?
- 1 No, by 1300 the plays were performed in the town streets on moveable pageant wagons.
- 2 That's when regular people like merchants started acting!
- 3, 4 But were the plays still done for religious purposes?
- All Yes! The church still had to approve the plays.
- 1 And although the plays were originally performed in Latin, they eventually started using the vernacular language that everyone could understand.
- 6, 7 What different kinds of religious plays did they do?
- 1 Well, there were three different kinds:
- All Mystery plays! (Gesture)
- 5 About Jesus and the Old Testament of the Bible.
- All Miracle plays! (Gesture)
- 8 About the saints.
- All And Morality plays! (Gesture)
- 2 Which were allegories about man's struggle for salvation.
- 1-5 Evil was always punished. (Sound effect)
- 6-10 And good was rewarded! (Sound effect)
- 4 Were there any cool innovations used in medieval theatre?
- All Of course! (Gesture)
- 1 They used trap doors for characters to descend to Hell, and the fly system was used to send characters up to heaven.
- 7-10 So basically, medieval theatre was used to teach people about Christianity?
- 3 Yes! It made it easier to learn the bible stories when they were performed.
- 2-10 So what happened to medieval religious plays?
- 1 Well, unfortunately, Queen Elizabeth outlawed religious plays.
- All (Sound effect) Oh no!
- 9,10 But its decline made way for the rise of professional theatre!
- All (Sound effect) Professionals! Yay!