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The Globe Theatre

- Archives du Blog - Année 2014-2015 - Voyage en Angleterre (Cambridge, Londres) -



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Lycée George-Sand La Châtre - Tous droits réservés

During our trip in England, we visited the famous Globe Theatre where many of Shakespeare's plays were performed. The original Globe was built in 1599 by Richard Burbage. Its modern reconstruction opened in 1997. When we were in the theatre we saw that it was circular like an Elizabethan's theatre but we already knew about this particular shape thanks to the film Shakespeare in Love. The Elizabethan theatre has lodges behind the scene but we didn't visit them.

We noticed that there was a gallery all around in the theatre, it was for the rich because they wanted to be sitting and to be sheltered. But the center of this place didn't have seats, this place was just for the poor and unwashed, also called " penny-stinkers" because of their pungent body odor !

For the play, the costumes were only for men because women were forbidden to act in the theatre. Those were old discarded clothes donated by rich people or noble patron of the arts, and the actors took them to have costumes. It was the only way for common people to have access to beautiful and expensive clothes which did not correspond to their social class, because except on the stage, one was not allowed to dress as a noble person unless they were actually noble.

As women didn't act in theatres, feminine roles were played by men who wore corsets laced from the bottom up to top in order to look more buxom. For rich or noble women it was the contrary. Their buttocks were put in evidence because having large buttocks was a sign of wealth and good health and wide hips were a sign that you could deliver babies give birth to babies more easily.

[http://lyc-george-sand-la-chatre.tice.ac-orleans-tours.fr/eva/sites/lyc-george-sand-la-chatre/local/cache-vignettes/L226xH400/costume_for_noble_women-86533.jpg] Costumes for noble women</img8228|center>

The plays were very long, up to 4 hours sometimes, so the spectators were very noisy. Also, the poor at the center peed, so the smell was very horrible.

[http://lyc-george-sand-la-chatre.tice.ac-orleans-tours.fr/eva/sites/lyc-george-sand-la-chatre/local/cache-vignettes/L400xH225/stage_where_the_plays_were_performed-fea14.jpg] Scene where Shakespeare plays are acted</img8230|center>

The poor spectators were standing in front of the stage. Due to the length duration of theater plays and the low class persons not wanting to leave their site, the floor was covered with nutshells to cover up the mess when they had to go to the toilets on the floor (really disgusting !).

The seats allocated to the rich people were in a balcony above and on each side of the stage because for them, the most important wasn't to see the play but to hear the dialogues and be seen. The balcony could also be used for plays (for instance for the famous balcony scene in Romeo and Juliet)

[http://lyc-george-sand-la-chatre.tice.ac-orleans-tours.fr/eva/sites/lyc-george-sand-la-chatre/local/cache-vignettes/L400xH225/model_of_the_theater-b3c23.jpg] Model of the actual theatre</img8229|center>

The Globe Theatre

[http://lyc-george-sand-la-chatre.tice.ac-orleans-tours.fr/eva/sites/lyc-george-sand-la-chatre/local/cache-vignettes/L374xH280/the_globe_s_gate-38e02.png] Today, the representation of the globe is like that.

It was rebuilt on the model of 16th century Elisabethan theatres. As it is an open airSometimes, plays are performed only during the warm season.</img8231|center>

The visit of the theatre was really interesting, because our great guide told the funniest anecdotes about the Globe. The scene, we had seen a balcony which was used for the balcony scene in the famous romance play « Romeo and Juliet ».

The stage was beautiful, colored and very impressive as the whole architecture. We wished we could have attended one of the original performances of actors as in the 17th century.