**History**
- In 1629, women were banned from the Japanese stage to help lessen issues of prostitution.
- The *onnagata* were created, which were male actors who specialized in female roles.

**Onnagata**
- The goal of *onnagata* was to portray the ideal woman.
- *Onnagata* devoted their lives to portraying female roles.
- Actors were not identified by a unique name unless they brought something new to *onnagata*.
- Competition among actors to create names for themselves led to more detailed portrayals of the ideal woman.

**Gender**
- As the competition increased among *onnagata* actors, the image of the ideal woman became more detailed and heightened.
- The *onnagata* began to influence how women were expected to behave and look in everyday society.
- The *onnagata*’s goal was not to accurately portray women, but to construct an idyllic gender.
- Female *onnagata* were expected to follow the male portrayals that created this heightened gender.

**Findings**
- Theater and the media can have a huge influence on how cultures view gender.
- The *onnagata* offer a chance to see how gender can be constructed.

**References**

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