

Michael Coveney

Writer - non-fiction

Theatre critic Michael Coveney has won the inaugural Architectural History Book of the Year award for his 2022 publication of *MASTER OF THE HOUSE: THE THEATRES OF CAMERON MACKINTOSH*.



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Publications

Non-Fiction

Publication Details	Notes
QUESTORS, JESTERS, AND RENEGADES 2020 Bloomsbury	This is the vital story of the amateur theatre as it developed from the medieval guilds to the modern theatre of Ayckbourn and Pinter, with a few mishaps and missed cues along the way. Michael Coveney - a former member of Ilford's Renegades - tells this tale with a charm and wit that will have you shouting out for an encore. Between the two world wars, amateur theatre thrived across the UK, from Newcastle to Norwich, from Bolton to Birmingham and Bangor, championed by the likes of George Bernard Shaw, Sybil Thorndike, and J B Priestley. Often born out of a particular political cause or predicament, many of these theatres and companies continue to evolve, survive and even prosper today. This is the first account of its kind, packed with anecdote and previously unheard stories, and it shows how amateur theatre is more than a popular pastime: it has been endemic to the birth of the National Theatre, as well as a seedbed of talent and a fascinating barometer and product of the times in which we live.

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LONDON THEATRES 2017 Frances Lincoln	<p>London is the undisputed theatre capital of the world. From world-famous musicals to West End shows, from cutting-edge plays to Shakespeare in its original staging, from outdoor performance to intimate fringe theatre, the range and quality are unsurpassed. Leading theatre critic Michael Coveney invites you on a tour of forty-five theatres that make the London stage what it is. With stories of the architecture, the people and the productions which have defined each one, alongside sumptuous photographs by Peter Dazeley of the public areas, auditorium and backstage, this illustrated overview of London's Theatres is a book like no other. A must for fans of the stage! Foreward by Mark Rylance.</p>
MAGGIE SMITH: A BIOGRAPHY 2015 Weidenfeld & Nicolson	<p>No one does glamour, severity, girlish charm or tight-lipped witticism better than Dame Maggie Smith, one of Britain's best-loved actors. This new biography shines the stage-lights on the life and work of a truly remarkable performer, one whose career spans six decades.</p>
KEN CAMPBELL: THE GREAT CAPER 2011 UK: Nick Hern Books	<p>Ken Campbell, who died aged 66 in 2008, was one of the true originals in post-war British theatre; a maverick, visionary and outrageously demanding director. His career began with his Road Show and two great epic plays, both produced on shoestring budgets - the nine-hour <i>Illuminatus!</i>, which opened the National Theatre's smallest auditorium in 1977, and the 22-hour hippie acid trip <i>The Warp</i>, which defined this era of fringe theatre.</p> <p>Campbell, well known as an actor for his television appearances in <i>G F Newman's Law and Order</i>, <i>Fawlty Towers</i> and as Warren Mitchell's neighbour in <i>In Sickness</i> and <i>In Health</i>, represented the unofficial vitality of British theatre in all its raucous traditions of Shakespeare and the Jacobians, the music hall, modern improvisation and Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop. In his later years he produced and performed in a series of brilliant, quasi-autobiographical monologues that stand comparison with any one-man shows of their time.</p> <p>Michael Coveney has been given unconditional access to Campbell's private papers, notebooks and unpublished work, and has talked to many of his friends and colleagues, including Bill Nighy, Jim Broadbent, Bob Hoskins, Sylvester McCoy, Nina Conti, Prunella Gee, Bill Drummond, Richard Eyre, Simon Callow and John Sessions. His is an authoritative, often hilarious, critical biography of an amazing spirit and a remarkable talent.</p>