

Your guide to the newest and best theater books of 2020. How to put this? The year 2020 was...not the best for theater lovers. Performances were shut down and live theatre was unavailable. Zoom readings and the like are fun and we've

watched them all. But they are unfortunately not live theater and what's a holiday without

a live performance? There won't be pantomimes in London nor A Christmas Carol at the

Maybe you can't give your friends (or yourself) tickets to that touring production or that

take our advice. When the stages are dark, turn to books about theater and bring it all

new Broadway hit for a performance anytime soon. But that stocking won't be bare if you

back to life. We've got coffee table books, memoirs, hit fiction, picture books for kids, titles

perfect for the would-be Broadway baby, mysteries set in the world of theater, and more!

2020 HOLIDAY BOOK GUIDE FOR THEATER LOVERS

MICHAEL GILTZ | NOVEMBER 24, 2020

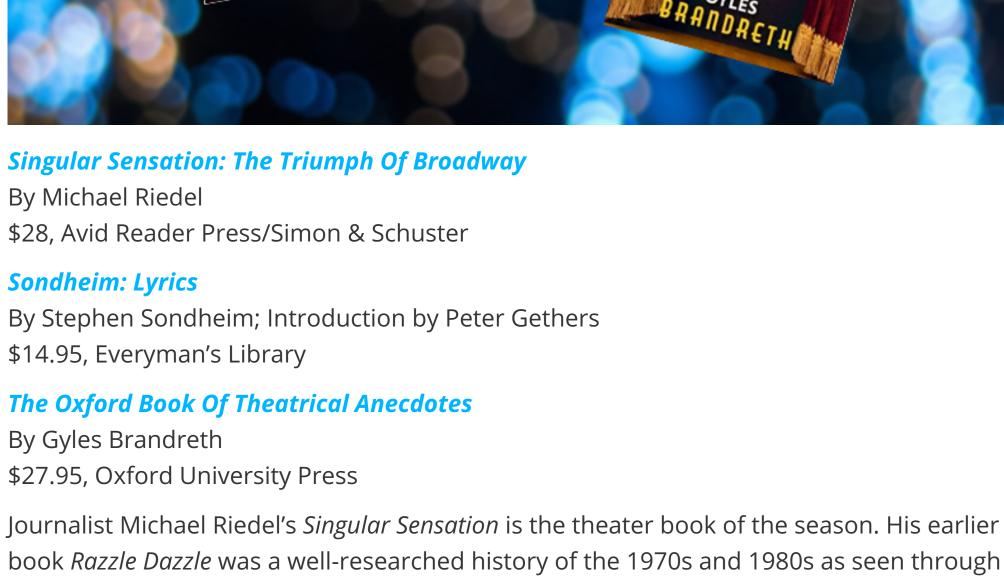
local high school this year.

SHARE

Whether it's a way to keep yourself sane or a treat for a friend or loved one missing their dramatic fix, we've got a roundup of the latest and best theater books for 2020.

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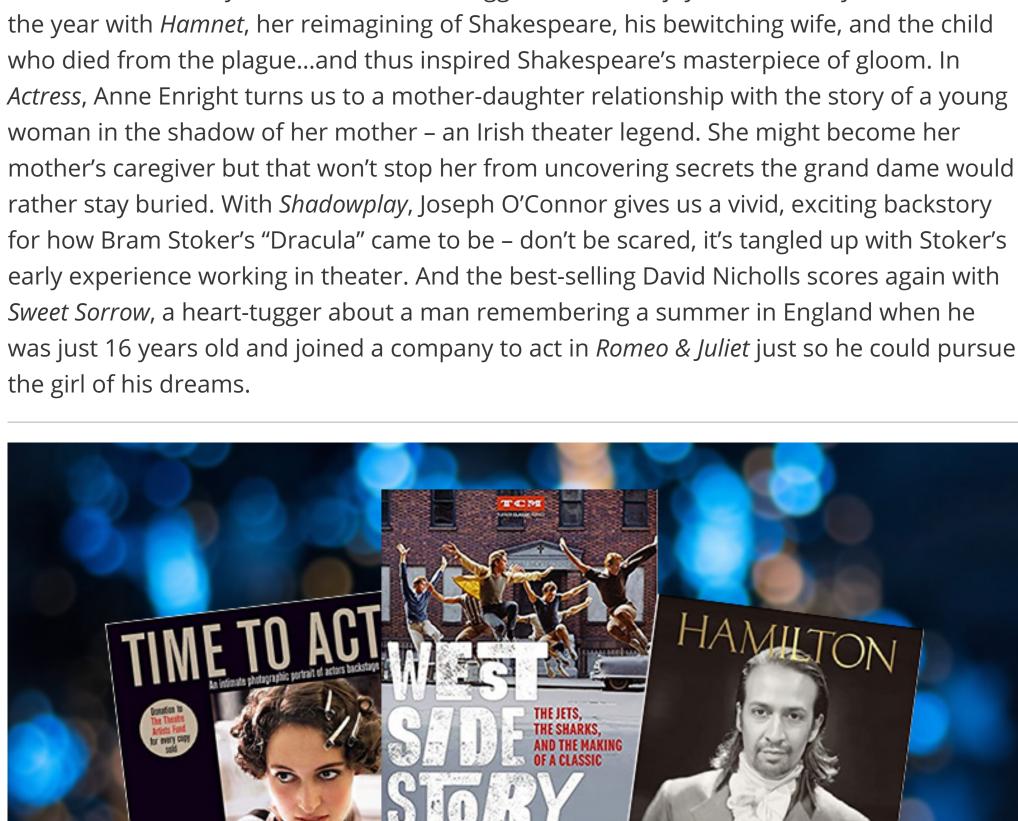
BROADWAY SONDHEIM



the like from Oxford lets you pretend it's edifying rather than a dishy delight.

HAMNET

ANNE ENRIGHT



Rizzon

MOZART

THE REIGN OF LOVE

JAN SWAFFORD



By Josh Lehrer, Preface by Thomas Kail, Foreword by Lin-Manuel Miranda

Coffee table time! Have you ever wondered what it's like backstage before, during, and

after a performance? Photographer Simon Annand captures that rarely seen world in his

new book that's both beautiful and revealing. Turner Classic Movies puts its stamp on a

series of books about classic Hollywood and this new release covers the making of the

\$28, Grand Central Publishing This Is Not My Memoir By Andre Gregory and Todd London \$27, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux Me

the other two books, it's ideal for kids of all ages.

\$45, Harper Triple-threat Rachel Bloom has popped into the Tony Awards but has not yet been a star on Broadway. Surely that will change soon for the creator and star of the musical comedy series Crazy Ex-Girlfriend. Until then, enjoy her honest and funny memoir about Bloom's

no, he won't deliver a copy of the book to you in person. We tried. Director-choreographer

Bob Avian has done it all, from his work on A Chorus Line to Dreamgirls to teaching

typically self-effacing style, it is his celebration of the talent he worked with you'll

Katharine Hepburn how to sing and dance. He tells his story in Dancing Man, but in a

remember best. Those who dive into classical music and opera will want to dive into

Mozart, a major new biography of the genius that spends as much time analyzing his

The Great Hotel Murder

> VINCENT STARRETT

> > Stanley Wells

immense body of work as retelling his life. And really, isn't the work what matters?

author of The

By Vincent Starrett, Introduction by Lyndsay Faye

Murder At The Playhouse

The Great Hotel Murder

\$15.95, American Mystery Classics

By Helena Dixon

\$10.99, Bookouture

KEN DAVENPO

Cast Of Mentors: Volume 1

\$35, Producer's Perspective

By Ken Davenport

This Is Shakespeare

By Emma Smith

producer Ken Davenport offers up the most inspiring stories and nuggets of wisdom from artists like Kathleen Marshall, Terrence McNally, Dominique Morisseau, and dozens more who joined him on his podcast called *The Producer's Perspective*. Davenport calls them his

mentors because their insights have inspired him so much and now he believes they'll inspire anyone pursuing their dream. Emma Smith's This Is Shakespeare positively revels in the contradictions and confusions that arise when you really dive into the work of the Bard. Consider her book the master class you never had in all things William S. And really, if you're going to take theater or poetry or life and love seriously, shouldn't you soak up Shakespeare's sonnets at some point? All the Sonnets collect them all in chronological order, including the ones embedded in plays, and offer up some pithy insights via footnotes and the like. Finally, the rise of so many diverse playwrights means actors looking for something new to perform have many riches to choose from. In The Kilroys List, the 67(!) monologues and scenes on tap here are created by women and nonbinary playwrights. We Came Here to Shine RANDALL Here BLACK BOTTOM SUSIE ORMAN SCHNALL Graham Swift Author of The Subway Girls

with her eye on Hollywood finds herself at the 1939 World's Fair in New York City starring in one of those ridiculous water spectacles of synchronized swimming. Hey, you never know who might be in the audience! And English novelist Graham Swift (Waterland, Last Orders) enjoyed some of the best reviews of his career with the gem Here We Are. It revels in the invariably seedy setting of vaudeville, in this case, the fading world of Brighton Beach seaside performers. Three friends - one in a variety act, another a comic, and the

Best Musical Theater Album Listen Now: New Track Grammy 2021 Nominations "Wear Your Crown" from Announced The Prom Released **SEE ALL NEWS**

BROADWAY DIRECT ?

ACCEPT AND CONTINUE

Broadway Songs to Feel

Thankful For

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THE KILROYS LIST

the story of the Shuberts. But now he covers the 1990s, and since Riedel was actually there covering the theater world, his writing has an immediacy and detail not seen before. It's juicy, opinionated fun. A pocket-sized book of Sondheim lyrics is always the perfect stocking stuffer, and a collection of backstage gossip, onstage triumphs and tragedies, and

Hamnet By Maggie O'Farrell \$26.95, Knopf **Actress** By Anne Enright \$26.95, W.W. Norton & Company

Shadowplay By Joseph O'Connor \$26, Europa Editions **Sweet Sorrow** By David Nicholls \$27, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Four acclaimed, very successful novels. Maggie O'Farrell enjoyed the literary breakout of

Time To Act: An Intimate Photographic Portrait Of Actors Backstage By Simon Annand, Foreword by Cate Blanchett \$50, Lannoo Publishers West Side Story: The Jets, The Sharks and the Making Of A Classic By Richard Barrios \$28, Running Press Hamilton: Portraits Of The Revolution

\$35, Universe

SIMON ANNAND

Tallulah Plays The Tuba By Tiffany Stone, Illustrations by Sandy Nichols \$18.95, Annick Press William Shakespeare's The Tempest By Georghia Ellinas; Illustrations by Jane Ray \$17.99, Candlewick Nonsense! The Curious Story Of Edward Gorey By Lori Mortensen; Illustrations by Chloe Bristol \$17.99; Versify It's never too soon to introduce kids to the idea of the performing arts and these three picture books are a great way to start. Tallulah Plays The Tuba is a sweet tale of a little girl who wants to play a big tuba and uses her brains and the help of friends to make it happen. The Globe in London may be on hiatus but you can support their marvelous work by savoring The Tempest, a beautifully illustrated spin on the classic play. And kids with any sort of imaginative spark will appreciate Edward Gorey, the man who created brilliant sets for Broadway shows when not sharing his ghoulish humor via books and comic panels for The New Yorker. This bio-picture book captures his wicked world with panache and just like

I Want To Be Where The Normal People Are By Rachel Bloom

Rachel Bloom

[Want to Be Where the Normal

Shakespeare For Squirrels By Christopher Moore \$28.99, William Morrow If you love theater and mysteries, we're sure you're as bummed as we are that the reopening of Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap* in the West End had to be delayed. Until then, enjoy these three delicious tales of a crime set in the world of the theater. In Murder At The Playhouse, Kitty Underhay is sparring with her rather dashing ex-captain, ex-boyfriend Matthew Bryant. But that won't stop the amateur sleuth from jumping into action when he's (wrongly!) accused of murder in this 1933-set romp. The Chicago theater scene gets its due in a reissue of *The Great Hotel Murder*, in which theater critic and amateur sleuth Riley Blackwood must sort through a pile of bodies and missing suspects to solve a puzzle. The novel was turned into a film in 1935 but has been wrongly forgotten since then. And for sheer nuttiness, you can't beat the comic insanity of Christopher Moore's *Shakespeare For* Squirrels. The hero Pocket and his sidekick Drool (not to mention a pet monkey Jeff) storm their way through a retelling of A Midsummer Night's Dream by way of Dashiell Hammett. If that sounds at all appealing, don't hesitate.

Black Bottom Saints By Alice Randall

\$26.99, Amistad

\$16.99, Griffin

Here We Are

\$22.95, Knopf

By Graham Swift

We Came Here To Shine

By Susie Orman Schnall



third in a magic act - come together, fall apart, and wonder where it all went wrong. **KEEP READING:**

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\$28.95, Pantheon All The Sonnets Of Shakespeare Edited by Paul Edmondson and Stanley Wells \$17.95, Cambridge University Press The Kilroys List Vol. 2: 67 Monologues and Scenes By Women and Nonbinary Playwrights Edited by Anna Feinberg and Gina Young, Foreword by Lynn Nottage \$16.95, Theatre Communications Group Four books for those who want to tackle a career in the theater. Tony-winning Broadway

Finally, a love of performing can begin (or end) anywhere. In Alice Randall's acclaimed novel Black Bottom Saints, a Detroit neighborhood as rich in talent as Harlem springs to life via the death-bed memories of a nightclub emcee. Joseph "Ziggy" Johnson rubbed elbows with everyone from Dinah Washington to Count Basie when not founding his own Ziggy Johnson School Of Theatre. Think Ragtime crossed with The Cotton Club. And if you've got the acting bug, you'll perform anywhere. In We Came Here To Shine, that's how an actress

\$19.99, Griffin Dancing Man: A Broadway Choreographer's Journey By Bob Avian with Tom Santopietro \$28, University Press Of Mississippi Mozart: The Reign Of Love By Jan Swafford messy, fulfilling life. While Bloom looks forward to Broadway, director and talent Andre Gregory looks back on a life in the avant-garde world of theater with the wit, charm, and storytelling ability you expect from a star of the classic film My Dinner With Andre. Quick! Who has major credits on three of the 75 most successful musicals of all time? That's right: Elton John with Billy Elliot, Aida, and The Lion King. So his soul-baring memoir Me is a mustread for theater fans. Yes, Taron Eggerton of Rocketman appears on the audiobook, and

By Elton John