



PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT

'CLOSE-UP MAGIC' 40 Years at the Bush Theatre

Edited by Neil Burkey

Published 4th November 2011

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You hold in your hands a living history of a small theatre and its mammoth impact, a book which traces the treacherous and thrilling path through famine, feast and fire. It never should have worked: a makeshift theatre above a pub far west of the West End in the dark days of the early 1970s, with no funding beyond its (initially) meagre box office takings. It certainly never should have kick-started the careers of the likes of Catherine Johnson or Julie Walters, Conor McPherson or Simon Callow. It shouldn't have worked. And yet it did.

The origins of the Bush Theatre, for those who know it, have entered into the realms of the mythical: Brian McDermott standing on a beer crate at Speakers' Corner flogging the latest show; the battles against de facto censorship; the struggles for survival; and most importantly, setting the tone for the future, those first few productions – wild, brilliant magnets of controversy – 90-minute packets of theatre at its best. This book captures it all and beyond: the guts, the gore and the glory of 40 years at the Bush.

Why do we love the Bush so? Maybe Terry Johnson puts it best when he writes:

"The reason for this fondness, this unquestioned regard for the place, is quite simply that it represents the pursuit of excellence. It is, of course, not alone in such theatrical ambitions, but there's something about that crowded, hot, intense little space that makes excellence imperative. By virtue of its concision and focus, it teaches new writers the necessity of both. And by virtue of its limitations, it teaches them the limitless possibilities of their work."

"These are great times for the Bush Theatre ... the new building already looks like a winner." Charles Spencer [from the back cover]

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Title: 'Close-up Magic': 40 Years at the Bush Theatre

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The editor, **Neil Burkey**, is an author, editor, gun for hire and general roustabout. He has recently completed a collection of short stories and is working on a novel set in southern Illinois, where he was born and raised. He lives with his wife in London.

The Publisher: Third Millennium Publishing specializes in producing illustrated books of the highest quality celebrating notable institutions in the UK and elsewhere, including cathedrals, universities, colleges and schools. This book marks its first foray into the world of theatre.

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