



CHECK OUT THE BEST THEATER BOOKS OF THE MONTH FOR APRIL 2023

MICHAEL GILTZ | APRIL 21, 2023

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Broadway Direct spotlights the best theater books of the month, just for you.

Shakespeare’s Book: The Story Behind the First Folio and the Making of Shakespeare

By Chris Laoutaris
\$35, Pegasus Books

Chita: A Memoir

By Chita Rivera with Patrick Pacheco
\$29.99, HarperOne

Enough: Scenes From Childhood

By Stephen Hough
\$26.95, Faber & Faber

It’s a new month, and with it three new biographies and memoirs (of a sort) to keep you company while waiting for the curtain to rise on whatever marvelous new show you’re about to see (or appear in!).

First, we have *Shakespeare’s Book*. You might call it *Shakespeare’s Greatest Hits*, or *The Plays That Shakespeare, or, Rather, His Friends and Admirers Collected Together to Say to the World, “This Is Shakespeare!”* The Folio contained almost 30 plays, 18 of them published for the first time. Nearly 400 years later, its effect is still being felt. Author Chris Laoutaris — who scored a palpable hit with his revealing and amusing work *Shakespeare and the Countess* —tells the behind-the-scenes story of how the Folio came to be. Amazingly, we still have much to learn about the Bard of Avon.

We can never learn enough about the iconic and groundbreaking talent of Chita Rivera. Perhaps it would have been redundant for such an exuberant, larger-than-life personality, but we keep wanting to call her memoir *Chita!* because surely if anyone deserves an exclamation point, it’s this three-time Tony winner. If you can’t help but love her, you can’t help but love her memoir, which tells it all, from her childhood to the roles of a lifetime, from *West Side Story* to *Chicago* to *Kiss of the Spider Woman*. She didn’t survive — she flourished.

You may be less than familiar with acclaimed pianist Stephen Hough. But no less an authority than author Philip Pullman (of *His Dark Materials* fame) cheers this memoir as especially gripping. Hough shares funny, painful, and intimate details from his awkward, eccentric childhood, early success as a pianist, the breakdown in his teens, a near escape into religion as a priest, and then a genuine and profound new respect for his craft, leading to an international career. Like many recent memoirs, it mines the years before his big success to share a story that will be universal and speak to anyone struggling to find themselves. And when we want to escape, aren’t the arts the perfect place to do it?

Michael Giltz is the cohost of the weekly entertainment podcast Showbiz Sandbox. He covers all areas of entertainment as a journalist, critic, feature writer, and analyst, contributing to numerous outlets, including the New York Daily News, New York Post, New York Magazine, the Los Angeles Times, Huffington Post, Entertainment Weekly, and The Advocate. When Michael's not attending the theater, he's reading about it.

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