

Iain Mackintosh

After two years National Service in the army, mainly in Hongkong, and three at Worcester College Oxford studying Politics, Philosophy and Economics Iain Mackintosh joined the theatre in 1960 as Resident Stage Manager of the Oxford Playhouse. There he co-founded the homeless Prospect Theatre Company and over the next 13 years took 75 productions to 125 theatres in 21 countries as well as arranging six London seasons. Thereby he began to understand why it was that the same production would play well in some theatre spaces and not at others. This experience was central to his change of profession in 1973 to that of theatre design consultant with Theatre Projects where he stayed for nearly 35 years. Another factor of his change to a profession for which he was unqualified was an interest in both 17th and 18th century theatre. In 1963 he presented the first play for a century in the newly restored 1788 Georgian Theatre Royal Richmond Yorkshire and in 1975 a major exhibition, *The Georgian Playhouse 1730-1830* at the Hayward Gallery to herald the opening next door of Britain's National Theatre. In 1965 Mackintosh advised on the reopening of a Regency theatre in Suffolk which had an apsidal formed auditorium. He was invited by the National Trust to write *Pit Boxes & Gallery: The story of the Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds, 1819-1976*.

All this is relevant to the design of the similarly shaped Martha Cohen Theatre Calgary as indeed was the Inigo Jones design for an apsidal courtyard theatre space revealed at the London exhibition of 1973 on the four hundredth anniversary of his birth. With historian John Orrell (1934-2003) of the University of Alberta he persuaded Sam Wanamaker (1919-1993) to add to the recreation of Shakespeare's Globe the Inigo Jones theatre as drawn by John Webb which was named the Wanamaker Playhouse on its completion in 2014.

Calgary is the site for an OISTAT meeting in August 2022. A session will take place in the Martha Cohen Theatre completed in 1985. Four years later USITT had held a well-attended meeting which Mackintosh chaired. This was reported in a 12page article in the *Theatre Design & Technology* of Summer 1990 titled *The Courtyard Theatre: Philosophies and Practicalities*.

One of Mackintosh's favourite theatre spaces was the result of the user client instructing an already appointed architect to follow a fresh initiative as happened in 1977 with the NT's third theatre space, the Cottesloe (now the Dorfman). But more often his best theatre spaces were the result of enjoyable design collaborations with distinguished architects who happened to build either few other theatres or none at all. Such were the Martha Cohen Theatre Calgary with Joel Barrett (1930-2015) in 1985, Westminster School Connecticut with Graham Gund in 1989, the Glyndebourne Opera Sussex with Michael Hopkins in 1994, the Quays Theatre at the Lowry Salford England with Michael Wilford and the Vanbrugh Theatre RADA London with Bryan Avery (1994-2017) both of which were completed in 2000. Then there is the one with which I was not involved but which we all admire, the Swan Theatre Stratford-upon-Avon which Michael Reardon created in 1986 within the apsidal shell of the 1879 Memorial Theatre. All these theatres, save the rectangular Cottesloe, shared the apsidal form with superimposed half circles of seating which are such a feature of the surprisingly flexible Martha Cohen.

Bloomsbury/Methuen is publishing his book in Spring 2023 in association with the Society for Theatre Research. There are 140 illustrations and two indices of theatre people and of theatres plus three bibliographies of works cited, of relevant articles and of further reading.