

Iain Mackintosh short biography prepared for OISTAT Calgary August 2022

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 including 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 guided his change of profession in 1973 to that of theatre design consultant with Theatre Projects where he stayed for over 30 years. Another factor was an interest in early theatre forms. 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*.

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 Jones's 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 opened in 1985. The USITT held a well-attended meeting here in 1989. This was reported in a 12 page article in the *Theatre Design & Technology* of Summer 1990 titled *The Courtyard Theatre: Philosophies and Practicalities*.

One of the best known of Mackintosh's theatre spaces was the result of the user client instructing an already appointed architect to follow a fresh initiative for the NT's third theatre space, the courtyard Cottesloe, opened in 1977 and now named the Dorfman. But more often his best theatre spaces were the result of enjoyable design collaborations with distinguished architects with little theatre experience. Such were the Martha Cohen 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. All these, save the rectangular Cottesloe, shared the apsidal form with superimposed half circles of seating that 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:

Theatre Spaces 1920-2020 *Finding the Fun in Functionalism* A memoir by Iain Mackintosh

Iain Mackintosh 15 July 2022