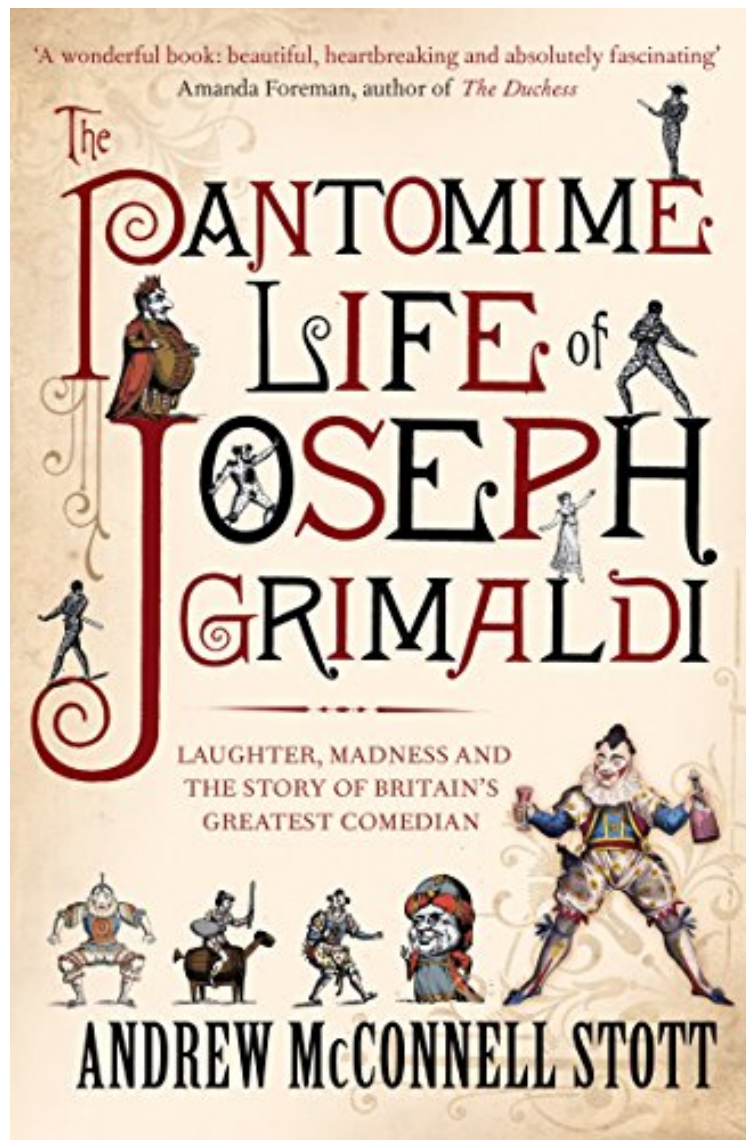


[Download] The Pantomime Life of Joseph Grimaldi: Laughter, Madness and the Story of Britain's Greatest Comedian

The Pantomime Life of Joseph Grimaldi: Laughter, Madness and the Story of Britain's Greatest Comedian

Andrew McConnell Stott

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Andrew McConnell Stott : The Pantomime Life of Joseph Grimaldi: Laughter, Madness and the Story of Britain's Greatest Comedian before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Pantomime Life of Joseph Grimaldi: Laughter, Madness and the Story of Britain's Greatest Comedian:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. There's No Business like Show Business.....By WordsMusicNot to

put too fine a point upon it: one of the best books ever written about the world of the theatre. A wonderful introduction to the ribald, sleazy, corrupt, energetic and wholly unpredictable Regency. Impeccable research, terrific editing instincts and an eye for the telling anecdote, and at the same time, a sense of pathos, this book chronicles the life and times of Joseph Grimaldi, 1788--1837, the clown who gave his name, Joey, to the practice and profession of clowns ever since. Grimaldi's life has long fascinated this reader; in some ways I have longed for this book for ten years and it did not disappoint. Moreover, the author's skillful, readable weaving of the influence of current events (it was not then history; they lived it) on the lives of the many characters here, on the theatre itself, on the life and more to the point, the livelihoods of troupes of actors, musicians, clowns who broke their hearts and occasionally their very backs to bring entertainment to a hungry and passionate public. The author's own background as a comic and not a mere academic infuses the narrative with a deep vein of understanding. Even if you care nothing for the Regency, read it as an antidote to Jane Austen's Regency. This book will take you far away and fill you with both delight and sadness. A gem.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fantastic

By Vidalia11 Most biographies are so boring and dry. I don't mind scholarly books but I do mind boring books. But this book is excellent. I was so moved by the story of Joe Grimaldi. He was such a likeable person. The book made me long to see him perform. He sacrificed his life for his craft by punishing his body with falls and stunts until he couldn't even stand up. His last performance (he was only in his late 40s) was done from a chair. He sang his "hit song," Hot Codlins. Oh, how I wish I could have been there. I'm grateful that he got a rousing and cheering send-off from the audience. Andrew Stott tells a fascinating story here. I knew zero about pantos. And he really made me fall in love with Joey Grimaldi. P.S. I also recommend the Dickens' edited version of Grimaldi's memoirs.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Excellent!

By N. Lowe This truly is an entertaining read - Not only does the book chart the biography of one of England's theatrical inventors but it lays out the history of modern English theater. Grimaldi's story crosses almost half a century and with it we get an insight into how audiences behaved, into the importance of theater as a public space and free speech and also the regulations imposed upon theater as the site of public opinion. Reading this volume alongside the biography of Grimaldi by Charles Dickens shows two related sides of the story. A great read!

The son of a deranged Italian immigrant, Joseph Grimaldi (1778-1837) was the most celebrated of English clowns. The first to use white-face make-up and wear outrageous coloured clothes, he completely transformed the role of the Clown in the pantomime with a look as iconic as Chaplin's tramp or Tommy Cooper's magician. One of the first celebrity comedians, his friends included Lord Byron and the actor Edmund Kean, and his memoirs were edited by the young Charles Dickens. But underneath the stage paint, Grimaldi struggled with depression and his life was blighted with tragedy. His first wife died in childbirth and his son would go on to drink himself to death. In later life, the extreme physicality of his performances left him disabled and in constant pain. The outward joy and tomfoolery of his performances masked a dark and depressing personal life, and instituted the modern figure of the glum, brooding comedian. Drawing on a wealth of source material, Stott has written the definitive biography of Grimaldi and a highly nuanced portrait of Georgian theatre in London, from the frequent riots at Drury Lane to the spectacular excess of its arch-rival Sadler's Wells; from stage elephants running amok to recreations of Admiral Nelson's sea battles on flooded stages at the height of the Napoleonic Wars. Joseph Grimaldi left an indelible mark on British theatre and the performing arts, but his legacy is one of human struggle, battling demons and giving it his all in the face of adversity.