



My Life in Pieces: An Alternative Autobiography

Simon Callow

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An alternative autobiography of the well-loved actor and man of the theatre.

In *My Life in Pieces* Simon Callow retraces his life through the multifarious performers, writers, productions and events which have left their indelible mark on him.

The story begins with *Peter Pan* – his first ever visit to the theatre – before transporting us to southern Africa and South London, where Callow spent much of his childhood. Later, he charms his way into a job at the National Theatre box office courtesy of his hero, Laurence Olivier – and thus consummated a lifetime's love affair with theatre.

Alongside Olivier, we encounter Paul Scofield, Michael Gambon, Alan Bennett and Richard Eyre, all of whom Callow has worked with, as well as John Gielgud, Ralph Richardson and Alec Guinness, David Hare, Simon Gray and many more.

He writes too about figures he did not meet but who greatly influenced his life and work, figures such as Stanislavsky, Nureyev and Cocteau, as well as Charles Laughton and Orson Welles. And he even makes room for not-quite-legit performers like Tony Hancock, Tommy Cooper, Frankie Howard – and Mrs Shufflewick.

The result is a passionate, instructive and beguiling book which, in tracing Simon Callow's own 'sentimental education', leaves us enriched by his generosity and wisdom.

'an engaging passionate book which will augment Callow's growing status as a national treasure.'

Guardian

'...not simply a terrific actor who happens to write. You could as well call him a terrific writer who happens to act' *The Times*

'essential... a gift for transforming personal experience into blazingly intelligent, objective, critical appreciation' *Observer*

'first rate... the best writer-actor we have' David Hare

'Simon Callow combines zest, originality and passion and has elegantly turned his views and life in the theatre into an astonishing memoir' Richard Eyre

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