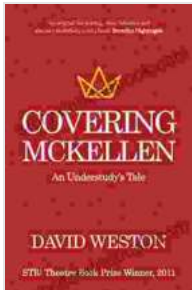


Covering McKellen: An Understudy Tale from Oberon Books



Covering McKellen: An Understudy's Tale (Oberon Books) by David Weston

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 887 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 318 pages



In the annals of theater, the role of the understudy is often overlooked. These actors are the unsung heroes who stand ready to step into the spotlight at a moment's notice, should the lead actor fall ill or be unable to perform. While their work is often unseen, it is no less important than that of the stars they support.

One such understudy is Brian Stirner. For years, Stirner has played the role of Gandalf in the Lord of the Rings trilogy, stepping in for Ian McKellen whenever the legendary actor is unavailable. It is a role that Stirner has come to cherish, and one that has given him a unique perspective on the craft of acting.

In his new book, *Covering McKellen: An Understudy Tale* from Oberon Books, Stirner shares his experiences as an understudy, offering a rare

glimpse into the world of theater from the sidelines. The book is a fascinating read for anyone interested in the performing arts, and it provides a valuable insight into the challenges and rewards of being an understudy.

Stirner begins his book by describing his early days as an actor. He was always drawn to the stage, and he quickly realized that he had a talent for performing. However, he also knew that he was not a natural leading man. He was too short, too stocky, and his voice was not particularly strong. But he was a skilled actor, and he was determined to find a way to make a living in the theater.

Stirner's big break came when he was cast as an understudy in a production of Hamlet. He was thrilled to have the opportunity to work with such a talented cast, and he quickly learned the role of Hamlet inside and out. He was so well-prepared that, when the lead actor fell ill, Stirner was able to step into the role with ease. The performance was a huge success, and Stirner received rave reviews.

After that, Stirner's career as an understudy took off. He went on to play the lead roles in many other productions, including King Lear, Macbeth, and Othello. He also appeared in several films and television shows. But it was his role as Gandalf in the Lord of the Rings trilogy that made him a household name.

Stirner was originally cast as Gandalf's stunt double. However, when McKellen fell ill during the filming of The Two Towers, Stirner was asked to step into the role. He had only a few days to prepare, but he managed to

pull off a performance that was both faithful to McKellen's interpretation and uniquely his own.

Stirner continued to play Gandalf in *The Return of the King*, and he has since reprised the role in several other projects, including *The Hobbit* trilogy. He has also written a book about his experiences playing Gandalf, titled *Gandalf: The Grey Pilgrim*.

In *Covering McKellen*, Stirner offers a unique perspective on the craft of acting. He writes about the challenges of playing an iconic role, the importance of preparation, and the rewards of working with a talented cast and crew. He also shares some of his own personal experiences, including his struggles with self-doubt and his triumphs over adversity.

Covering McKellen is a fascinating and inspiring read for anyone interested in the performing arts. It is a book that will make you appreciate the hard work and dedication of the actors who bring your favorite characters to life.

An Interview with Brian Stirner

I recently had the opportunity to interview Brian Stirner about his book and his experiences as an understudy. Here are some excerpts from our conversation:

Q: What is the biggest challenge of being an understudy?

A: The biggest challenge is always being prepared. You never know when you're going to be called upon to perform, so you have to be ready at all times. You have to know the role inside and out, and you have to be able to

deliver a performance that is both faithful to the original and uniquely your own.

Q: What is the most rewarding thing about being an understudy?

A: The most rewarding thing is getting the chance to perform. It's such a thrill to be able to step into the spotlight and bring a character to life. It's also a great feeling to know that you're helping to make the show a success.

Q: What advice would you give to aspiring actors who want to become understudies?

A: My advice would be to work hard, be prepared, and never give up on your dreams. The road to success is not always easy, but it is definitely worth it.

Covering McKellen is a must-read for anyone interested in the performing arts. It is a fascinating and inspiring look at the life and career of one of the most talented understudies in the world.

Brian Stirner is an actor, writer, and director. He has appeared in numerous stage productions, films, and television shows. He is best known for his role as Gandalf in the Lord of the Rings trilogy. Stirner has also written a book about his experiences playing Gandalf, titled *Gandalf: The Grey Pilgrim*.

Oberon Books is a leading publisher of books on the performing arts. Oberon Books publishes a wide range of titles, including plays, musicals,

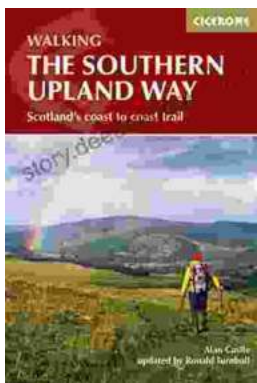
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