

BOOKFILTER'S SEPTEMBER 2020 PICKS OF THE MONTH

MICHAEL GILTZ | SEPTEMBER 8, 2020

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BookFilter picks the best new theater book, exclusively for Broadway Direct readers.

This month, we've got two books to highlight:

Eubie Blake: Rags, Rhythm, and Race

By Richard Carlin & Ken Bloom
\$35, Oxford University Press
Out now

Magic Time

By Edwin Wilson
\$29.95, Smith & Kraus
Out now

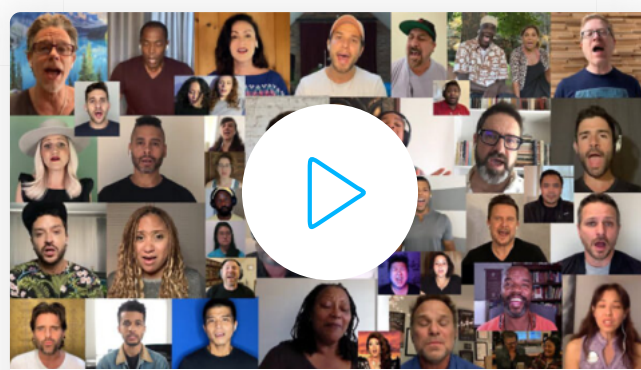
The theater will be back. You need no more proof than two new books detailing its long, indomitable history. Eubie Blake set Broadway on fire with the ground-breaking musical *Shuffle Along*, the show that helped launch Josephine Baker among others. Then he faded from view...only to get his due late in life. And of course, *Shuffle Along* was reimagined as one of the great new musicals of the 21st century. Richard Carlin and Ken Bloom cover the making of that original landmark in-depth in this biography. But they also cover Blake's entire life and the world he fought and flourished in. It's a serious work of scholarship worthy of his impact.

And if you think you miss theater, you've got nothing on critic and scholar Edwin Wilson who misses both current theater and the grander, better theater he covered for decades as the critic for the *Wall Street Journal*. Wilson is a mainstay of college courses where his textbook *The Theater Experience* is in its 14th edition. Wilson offers up a grab bag of material here, from a memoir detailing his lifelong passion for dramatics to how he stumbled into that job at *WSJ* (we should all be so lucky), some kvetching (why don't people dress up for shows anymore, he harrumphs) and a collection of some of his most insightful reviews. Wilson has done it all and interviewed everyone, so whether you know him via a college elective or found him on YouTube where Wilson's long-running PBS show *Spotlight* can be found, *Magic Time* fills in the rest of his enviable career.

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