LOUREVIEWS

Press Kit | 2026

Independent arts criticism, reviews and interviews

Theatre · Film · Music · Books · Exhibitions

Website: loureviews.blog

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1. About LouReviews

LouReviews is an independent arts and culture publication founded by Louise Penn, covering theatre, film, music, books and exhibitions through reviews, interviews, features and cultural commentary.

Louise began reviewing with the London Theatre Bloggers in 2011 and relaunched LouReviews as a professional arts blog in 2019. The publication brings together coverage of major productions, independent artists, fringe theatre, contemporary releases and cultural retrospectives.

Reviews sit alongside interviews with performers, writers, directors, musicians and other creatives, offering readers both critical perspectives on the work and insight into the people behind it.

LouReviews has a particular interest in live performance, new writing, musicals, underrepresented voices, cultural history and the relationship between artists and audiences. Its coverage extends from London's West End to independent venues, festivals, digital productions and immersive experiences.

2. About Louise Penn

Louise Penn is a London-based arts critic, reviewer and published writer, and the founder and editor of LouReviews. She became a member of the Critics' Circle in 2025

and brings a broad cultural perspective informed by her background in academic libraries and academic journal publishing.

Her work includes reviews, interviews and features across theatre, film, music and the wider arts. Alongside LouReviews, she has contributed to BroadwayWorld UK, Plays International & Europe, The Reviews Hub, North West End UK, Musicals Magazine and MyTheatreMates.

Louise's interests include new writing and revivals, fringe and experimental performance, musical theatre, classic cinema, archive television, music history and the stories behind creative work.

Professional profiles

- Louise Penn on Muck Rack
- Published portfolio
- Female Theatre Reviewers Project: Louise Penn

3. Theatre

Theatre is at the heart of LouReviews. Coverage ranges from West End productions and touring shows to fringe theatre, festivals, musicals, children's theatre, circus, cabaret and experimental performance.

Reviews consider acting, direction, design, storytelling and the ideas underpinning each production. Alongside established titles and major venues, LouReviews supports emerging companies and independent artists, with particular interests in female-led and queer-led work, new writing and adaptations.

Selected reviews

West End drama

The Cherry Orchard — Harold Pinter Theatre

Conor McPherson's adaptation of Chekhov's classic, directed by Ian Rickson and starring Kristin Scott Thomas. The review explores the production's themes of family, money, privilege and social change.

Fringe theatre

The Unseen — Riverside Studios

Craig Wright's drama about two prisoners held in separate cells examines isolation, repression and the resilience of the human spirit. Louise has identified this as one of her own strongest reviews, making it a particularly useful portfolio example.

Children's and family theatre

Venus and Adonis — Barbican Pit

A visually imaginative interpretation of Shakespeare's poem, combining narration and puppetry. The production illustrates LouReviews' interest in family-accessible performance and creative adaptations of classic texts.

Circus and cabaret

Giffords Circus: Waterfield — Chiswick House & Gardens

Cal McCrystal's family circus combines acrobatics, aerial performance, clowning, live music and elaborate costumes in a show inspired by the natural world. The review celebrates the skill, spectacle and family appeal of contemporary circus.

New musical

Dark of the Moon — Charing Cross Theatre

A musical inspired by an Appalachian-set play and the traditional ballad "Barbara Allen". The review considers the challenges of adapting an older work for a contemporary musical theatre audience.

Further musical theatre reviews

- *Flyology* — Union Theatre — a female-led musical bringing together Ada Lovelace, Ethel Smyth and Emmeline Pankhurst in a story about women, technology and artificial intelligence.
- *The Harder They Come* — Stratford East — a reggae musical exploring ambition, corruption and the music industry in Kingston, Jamaica.
- *Kinky Boots* — London Coliseum — a vibrant revival of the musical featuring music and lyrics by Cyndi Lauper.
- *Heated Rivalry* — Underbelly Boulevard Soho — a queer musical parody combining camp humour, romance and irreverent songwriting.

Explore: All LouReviews theatre coverage

4. Film

LouReviews covers contemporary cinema, independent releases, documentaries, animation, classic films, archive television and filmed theatre. Louise also contributes film criticism to The Reviews Hub.

Coverage considers performance, filmmaking, narrative and cultural context, with an interest in independent productions and films that bring overlooked subjects and perspectives to the screen.

Selected reviews

***Hadestown* — filmed stage production**

A review of the filmed production of Anaïs Mitchell's musical, exploring how a theatrical experience translates to the screen.

The Midway Point

An independent coming-of-age film exploring neurodiversity, connection and the experience of not belonging.

***Dancing on the Elephant* — Cinequest Film Festival 2026**

An independent Canadian film addressing ageing, care and the relationships that shape later life.

***La Bohème* — Finite Films**

A modern London-set screen adaptation of Puccini's opera, connecting Louise's interests in cinema, opera and adaptation.

Explore: Louise Penn's film review index

5. Music

Music coverage spans classical concerts, opera, jazz, rock, musicals and popular music. Reviews explore live performance, musicianship, repertoire and the historical and cultural associations that shape the audience experience.

LouReviews also covers productions that bring music into conversation with theatre, technology and visual art.

Selected reviews

***From the Heart* — Garrick Theatre**

A concert revue celebrating lyricist Don Black and the songs that have defined his career.

ABBA Voyage

A review of the innovative concert experience combining live performance, digital avatars and the enduring appeal of ABBA's music.

***Total Eclipse* — London Coliseum**

A symphonic celebration of composer Jim Steinman's music, including songs associated with Meat Loaf and Bonnie Tyler.

***Playing With Fire* — Southbank Centre**

An immersive virtual-reality musical experience combining piano performance and digital imagery.

Music interviews

LouReviews' interview programme also features conversations with musicians and artists about their careers, influences and creative work.

- **Ian Gillan — *Music, Memory and A Life in Rock*.** A conversation with the Deep Purple frontman about music and a life in rock.
- **Martha Reeves — *Back in the Groove*.** An interview exploring the Motown singer's musical legacy and continuing creative life.

Explore: LouReviews interview archive.

6. Books

LouReviews covers books connected with theatre, film, music, performance and cultural history, alongside selected fiction and genre writing.

Reviews consider the author's approach, the ideas and research underpinning a book, and the ways literature contributes to our understanding of artists, productions and wider cultural movements.

Selected reviews

New British Drama in 15 Scenes

Aleks Sierz's exploration of British drama from 2010 to the beginning of the pandemic. The review considers the book's discussion of playwrights, directors and the development of contemporary theatre.

***Seething Lane* — Jack Jewers**

A historical novel featuring Samuel Pepys, reflecting Louise's interest in cultural history and literary storytelling.

LouReviews welcomes review copies of arts-related nonfiction, biographies, theatre and film history, music books, cultural criticism and selected fiction.

Explore: Louise Penn's book review index

7. Exhibitions

LouReviews extends its cultural coverage to exhibitions, museums and immersive experiences, exploring the stories behind the objects, artists and cultural movements on display.

Coverage includes music history, memorabilia, interactive experiences and exhibitions that bring audiences closer to the lives and legacies of major artists.

Selected reviews and features

Elvis – Direct from Graceland

A review of the London exhibition presenting more than 400 objects associated with Elvis Presley, including costumes, jewellery, personal possessions, vehicles and memorabilia. The article explores how the collection illuminates the artist's life, career and enduring cultural significance.

Elvis: Exclusive VIP Curator Talk & White Glove Experience

A follow-up feature covering a special VIP experience with Angie Marchese, Vice President of Archives & Exhibits at Graceland. The article explores the stories behind selected artefacts, the expertise involved in preserving Elvis's legacy and the appeal of specialist, hands-on exhibition experiences.

LouReviews welcomes opportunities to cover museum and gallery exhibitions, artist retrospectives, photography, design, music and performance exhibitions, cultural heritage displays and immersive experiences.

8. Interviews and artist features

Interviews are an important part of LouReviews, providing an opportunity to explore the people, ideas and creative processes behind productions and cultural projects.

Louise interviews performers, writers, directors, producers, musicians, comedians and other artists. Conversations may focus on a particular production, a creative career, an artistic movement or the challenges of making work for contemporary audiences.

Selected interviews

Stockard Channing on *Krapp's Last Tape*

A telephone interview with the actor and director about Samuel Beckett's play, her collaboration with David Westhead and bringing the production to the stage.

Kirsty Patrick Ward on *Manic Street Creature*

A conversation with the director about the show's staging at Kiln Theatre, its music and its exploration of co-dependency and mental health.

Jules Coyle on *Managed Approach*

An interview with the writer and co-lead of a semi-verbatim play exploring the UK's first legalised red-light district and the lives affected by it.

Stoness on *That Song From Rocky Horror*

A conversation with performer Stoness Verda as part of Camden People's Theatre's SPRINT festival, exploring performance, intimacy and community.

Yuya Sato on *Net Cafe Refugee 2.0*

An interview with the actor, playwright and producer about a work centred on social isolation and life on the margins in Tokyo.

Adrien Rosza on *The Bitter Pill*

A conversation with the writer and producer of a queer-themed musical about its development and staging.

Festival interviews

LouReviews has developed an extensive interview programme around the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, introducing readers to artists and productions across a wide range of genres.

The 2026 interview programme includes more than 160 conversations with creatives, spanning theatre, comedy, cabaret and independent performance.

Louise also covers other festivals and showcases, including SPRINT, Camden Fringe, Brighton Fringe, Peckham Fringe and Voila! Festival.

Browse: The full LouReviews interview archive

LouReviews welcomes interview proposals from performers, writers, directors, musicians, producers, visual artists, venues and arts organisations. Interviews can be conducted by email or telephone, subject to availability.

9. Other publications and professional experience

In addition to editing LouReviews, Louise Penn has contributed to a range of arts and entertainment publications.

- **BroadwayWorld UK** — theatre and concert reviews.
- **Plays International & Europe** — theatre criticism and related coverage.
- **The Reviews Hub** — film reviews.
- **North West End UK** — previous contributor.
- **Musicals Magazine** — previous contributor, including paid reviewing.
- **MyTheatreMates** — previous contributor and member.

Louise's earlier professional experience includes academic library work and writing for academic journals. She joined the Critics' Circle in 2025.

Further information: Muck Rack profile · Published portfolio

10. Audience and online presence

LouReviews has reported approximately 15,000 website hits per month in 2026. Website hits represent page activity and should not be interpreted as unique visitors.

The publication also maintains a presence across social media platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, Threads, Bluesky, Mastodon, YouTube, TikTok, LinkedIn and X.

Find LouReviews: Website · Linktree

Updated audience analytics and platform statistics can be supplied where required.

11. Press, review and interview enquiries

LouReviews welcomes approaches from theatre press offices, production companies, film distributors, music promoters, publishers, galleries, museums, festivals and independent artists.

Please include the title of the work or event, venue or platform, relevant dates, press materials and any applicable deadlines.

Reviews and interviews are arranged according to editorial interest, availability and practical considerations. An invitation does not guarantee coverage.

Louise Penn

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LouReviews — celebrating performance, exploring culture and keeping the conversation going.