



# Ngaio Marsh: The Woman and Her Work

*B. J. Rahn*

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In 1934, Ngaio Marsh's first novel, *A Man Lay Dead*, was published to critical acclaim. For the next fifty years, Marsh wrote more than 30 English detective novels, while simultaneously building a reputation as a distinguished director of Shakespearean theatre. She received the Crime Writers Association's Red Herring Award in 1955 and was made a Grand Master by the Mystery Writers of America in 1978. In 1948 Marsh was awarded an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to literature and the theatre, and in 1967, she was created a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire (DBE). As a New Zealander, Marsh was the only colonial writer to be ranked with Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers, and Margery Allingham as one of the grande dames of the Golden Age.

*Ngaio Marsh: The Woman and Her Work* is a collection of essays celebrating this multifaceted talent—painter, playwright, director and detective novelist. Originally created to celebrate the centenary of Marsh's birth, this comprehensive profile addresses various aspects of this remarkable woman's personality, life, and work.

Her official biographer, Margaret Lewis, her cousin John Dacres-Mannings, and two fellow Detection Club members—H.R.F. Keating and Julian Symons—pay tribute to Marsh as a person and a colleague. Marsh's career in the theatre is traced by Paul R. Bushnell, and its influence on her detective writing is assessed by Marilyn Rye and Catherine Aird. Her contribution as a novelist of manners is addressed by Alzina Stone Dale, Kathryn S. McDorman, B.A. Pike, and Susan Oleksiw, while her accomplishments in short fiction are discussed by Douglas G. Greene and Bruce Harding.

In addition to the thirteen essays, this volume contains a chronology of Marsh's plays, as well as a bibliography of her novels and short stories. Nominated for both an Agatha Award for Best Nonfiction and an Anthony Award for Best Critical Work, this book is a fitting tribute to an extraordinary woman who captured international acc

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