



VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS | CRITICAL ESSAY

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David Roy^{1*}

Abstract: Through the mask, the individual has the potential to challenge the understanding of who they are through their body now being separated from the visual identifier of their face. From earliest records of performance, masks have been engaged with as both a performative object and more importantly as a tool for performance skill development. Through looking at the historical context of masks and the application by theatrical practitioners of the last 100 years, this paper argues to the importance of masks as tool for rehearsal and preparation of actors at both tertiary and secondary education levels, to help theatre remain relevant in the twenty-first century performance and entertainment world.

Subjects: Arts; Drama; Drama Education & Drama Therapy; Education; History of Performance; Performance Theory; Practice & Practitioners; Teaching & Learning; Theatre & Performance Studies; Theatre History

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Through the mask, the individual has the potential to challenge the understanding of whom they are through their body now being separated from the visual identifier of their face. This challenge can be personal or with the audience. The definitions of mask demonstrate this, from the Arabic *maskhahra*: to falsify or transform to the English form of mask to conceal. The human mind focuses clearly on the face of the individual, and thus through the concealment of this core identifier, the mask allows the individual to be separated from their “id” and their movements to be interpreted as separate to the individual.

They serve to liberate the wearer from the inhibitions, laws and niceties of a seemingly well-ordered everyday life but are also a reminder that chaos and destruction and mutability are always with us. (Foreman, 2000, pp. 27–29)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Roy is a tenured lecturer in Drama and Arts Education at the University of Newcastle. He has been part of examination teams in Scotland, Australia and for the International Baccalaureate. He is the author of eight texts, and was nominated for the 2006 Saltire/TES Scottish Education Publication of the Year and won the 2013 Best New Australian Publication for VCE Drama and/or VCE Theatre Studies. His most recent text is “Teaching the Arts: Early Childhood and Primary; 2e” (2015) published by Cambridge University Press. His current research interests are masks, pedagogy, drama and arts learning, dyspraxia and inclusion in education.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Masks are one of the first images we think of in relation to theatre, drama and acting, yet rarely do we nowadays find masks in the theatre being used, or in classrooms or actor training institutions. This article revisits the history of masks as they have been used by leading practitioners in theatre and acting, arguing that masks should once again be placed at the centre of performance.



David Roy

1. Masks and theatre

The mask is an iconic theatrical symbol from the times of Socrates to Modern Western theatres. Simply put, masks symbolise the adoption of a role and hold a central place in drama across time and culture; in both ritual and performance and yet current theatre and drama training preparation makes scant reference to the mask as a key tool and foundational element in performance training.

It was in the twentieth century that masks became a specific tool for learning, initially starting with actor training. Masks usage with actors and training disassociated the performer from his own personal id, thus both releasing the performer into being the “other” similar to the shaman role. Through the disassociation, allowing objectivity the performer was also able to gain a deeper understanding of a sense of self.

But there is another way of giving the face an extra-daily dimension: the mask. When performers put on a mask, it is as if their body has suddenly been decapitated. They give up all movement and expression of facial musculature. The face’s extraordinary richness disappears. There is such a resistance created between the provisional face (*kamen* in Japanese) and the performer that this conversion of the face into something apparently dead can actually make one think of a decapitation. This is in fact one of the performer’s greatest challenges: to transform a static, immobile, fixed object into a living and suggestive profile. (Keefe & Murray, 2007, p. 136)

What becomes more apparent in any study of masks is the interconnected aspects of the forms of knowledge which they encompass. When moving from Ritual to Performance and Theatre Anthropology, all could be defined as being encompassed by Physical Theatre. Theorists/practitioners such as Brecht, Lecoq, Grotowski and Brook, as well as Favio, Fo and Barba cannot be ignored nor Meyerhold.

There is a core difference to what masks do and how a mask is used. Research into what masks do in itself can be subdivided into the effect of mask usage upon the spectator and the effect of mask usage upon the masker. This is separate to the functionality of masks. Functionally, masks can be representational, emotive and indexical and disguise. This functionality purpose is separate to the effect of upon the spectator. Anthropologically, the mask works as a metaphor or signifier for the spectator to separate the individual performer, and distance that perception to allow an alienation effect. In simplistic terms, through forcing the spectator to accept the necessity for the suspension of disbelief, the spectator can willingly immerse themselves in the message and meaning of the spectacle and performance, creating their own meaning.

Elizabeth Tonkin sees the mask as a means to articulating power, the power of the individual to transform and become “other”, and the power of the spectator to take cognitive control and to accept experiences (Tonkin, 1979). This analysis appeals to the psychological and cognitive processes but as Pollock suggests, this analysis limits an understanding in that “one must interpret this as the work masks do rather than how they do it” (Pollock, 1995, pp. 581–597). Pollock further develops the concept of what a mask does.

The mask works by concealing or modifying those signs of identity which conventionally, represent the transformed person or an entirely new identity. Although every culture may recognize numerous media through which identity may be presented, masks achieve their special effect by modifying those limited number of conventionalized signs of identity. (Pollock, 1995, p. 584)

Pollock’s concepts, which could be further researched in multiple academies of thought, can be identified as having recognised inadvertently applied twentieth-century theatre practice. The use of masks as a rehearsal tool is not a new concept but one that appears to be lacking in reference in twenty-first century theatre practice.

The concept of the mask as a modifier of conventional signs of identity can be seen in Bertolt Brecht's use of masks, as a deliberate act of alienation of the spectator. Derived in part from Vsevolod Meyerhold and Edwin Piscator, it was used to allow the audience to be conscious participants within a spectacle. This is different to the effect of the masks upon the spectator as has been theorised in relation to Greek Theatre, which in part is accounted for within the cultural basis for the society and the pragmatic requirements for performance.

Importantly, when viewed in an open-air space, the mask was an effective way of instantly establishing a sense of theatricality. The wearer of the mask is immediately separated from the spectators, and as the vase paintings show, just the simple act of donning a mask indicates that a performance is about to take place. Lastly, in an open-air space that allowed the external environment to inform the aesthetic experience of watching drama, the mask provides a visual focus for emotional communication, and is able to stimulate a deeply personal response from the spectators. The mask demands to be watched. (Meineck, 2011, p. 121)

2. Greek theatre

Greek theatre originated from a festival in honour of Dionysus; the god of wine, ritual madness and ecstasy. Masks were used in performance to exaggerate and accentuate the characters' features, as well as to make the actors more visible to the audience. Greek theatre was performed in the open air in large auditoriums with excellent acoustics that allowed all the audience to hear clearly, no matter how far away they were. However, this necessitated the movements to be bold and highly stylised. Actors performed with full-face masks and with very little in the way of sets or props. One of the key reasons that masks were used was due to the size of the theatres and the distance the actors had to the audience. Mask usage was also applied to allow the three actors to adopt a variety of roles. Originally, it involved only one actor and the chorus, but over time it began to involve three actors and the chorus.

Greek theatre used full-face masks, but they were not neutral. They had fixed, exaggerated expressions and the actors (including the chorus) used very clear and precise movements. The chorus moved and spoke in unison, and so created a very large visual style that could be compared to dance.

David Wiles, who has written extensively on Greek theatre and masks furthers the idea that more than a pragmatic idea for performance, the concept of ritual and respect for the context of Greek Tragedy ideas, gave the mask a purpose which links the dramatic to the anthropological.

To find new words for traditional heroic figures was precisely the ritual requirement. It was the mask which gave to the tragic figure its quality as a monument. (Wiles, 2007, p. 252)

The mask meaning also shielded the performer and spectator from direct identification with any political ramifications from performances, as it did with Commedia dell'arte, allowing the performer and spectator to feel safe and immune from the performance.

The mask prevents audience identification by establishing a barrier or creating an aesthetic distance between the character and the spectator just as it separates the actor from the spectator. The object is to deny the spectator a sympathetic or emotional response and to push him into being an analytical and rational observer. (Smith, 1984, p. 183)

Chris Vervain has argued that the Aristotelian concept of character being subsidiary to action, suggests that there were six basic mask types, easily identifiable by the spectators. Similarly, David Griffiths has recognised Noh and Commedia dell'arte used masks as identifiable in the audiences' minds as character types.

As with Noh, the characters introduce themselves through their masks and their costumes. They are instantly recognizable. Who and what they represent are seen before they are heard. (Griffiths, 2004, p. 2)

3. Commedia dell'arte

Commedia dell'arte originates from 1500s Italy. Similar to the traditions of many Asian Theatre performers, Commedia actors would play one role only, and develop their skill in that role to a heightened level. Storylines would remain similar with stock characters, thus the villages that hosted the touring troupes of performers would understand the nature and conventions of the performances allowing the troupe to add satirical references to events and people that the audience would understand, keeping performances fresh. In "Navigating Drama", Baines and O'Brien simplify the performance.

In Commedia, there is no complex characterisation, no tragedy, no character development and no psychological realism. Just basic comedy. (Baines & O'Brien, 2005, p. 64)

Practitioners in Commedia dell'arte such as Antonio Fava, John Rudlin and Dario Fo disagree that there is no depth in the performance of Commedia dell'arte.

Commedia dell'arte is full, complete, total theatre, which includes all the techniques and disciplines of the varied forms of theatre. But Commedia remains an absolutely autonomous and independent genre. In Commedia, psychology is everywhere present ... The result will be true to the universality of tradition and, at the same time, the immediate moment of performance when the artist communicates with the real, living, present audience, with whom that artist shares culture and rhythms of expression, mutual understanding, and complicity. (Fava, 2004, pp. 14–15)

Masked Italian Commedia dell'arte actors used half-masks to portray stock characters—characters all the audience knew, thus separating the performer's individuality from the role. The features of the masks highlighted the comic aspects of these characters. In Commedia dell'arte, there are several key characters that appear in the different stories. The masks reflect the characters, e.g. in the colour of the mask and the shape of the nose. These colours and shapes were based on the Four Temperaments of Galen, a Greek philosopher and doctor. Sanguine, red, was indicative of energetic individual whom was rationale, even confident. Yellow represented Choleric, angry, mean spirited and suspicious. The blue Melancholic was over introspective, dissatisfied and a perfectionist; often viewed as an "uptight" character, whilst green symbolised a Phlegmatic nature being unemotional, lazy and resistant to change yet with an element of dependability (Boardman, Griffin, & Murray, 1988, p. 434).

4. Meyerhold

It was Vsevolod Meyerhold who re-habilitated the mask in modern theatre, both as a performative object, but also a training pedagogy for his actors. Vsevolod Meyerhold was a major theatre practitioner in Bolshevik Russia, a student of, competitor and collaborator with Constantin Stanislavski, who whilst disagreeing with Meyerhold also offered opportunities for Meyerhold's ideas to be developed. After Stalin's order for his death in the late 30s and since his gradual rehabilitation into Russian culture since the 70s, Meyerhold has been widely included in many international curricula and is referenced as a major influence recognised by theatre practitioners, alongside Jacques Lecoq and Étienne Decroux. His development initially started as an actor in Stanislavski's company, led to an exploration of mask and Commedia dell'arte, through to the development of stage design, audience relationship, music, political and didactic theatre, montage, authorship and finally the physical theatre style termed biomechanics (Bradshaw, 1954).

It is this isolation of the body and the desire to create something new through biomechanics, yet also develop physical control which intrigued Vsevolod Meyerhold in his initial desires to create a semiotic of performance. Meyerhold, through his dissatisfaction with what he saw as Stanislavski's

focus on the psychological imperative of performance, led himself to re-discover the performances of Commedia dell'arte (Braun, 1995). He applied the grotesque characters and scenarios and developed experimental and challenging performances. In "Meyerhold's Theatre of the Grotesque (Symons, 1973)", the focus on Meyerhold's work is not biomechanics and the études from which many texts refer, but rather on many of the performances he developed which led to this, namely Meyerhold's exploration of the grotesque through Commedia dell'arte. Biomechanics, the foundational theory that Meyerhold is most closely associated with, stems from the applied practice of mask usage he undertook to develop a new paradigm for performance, theatre and drama.

It is important to understand that Meyerhold's interest in theatre contained a deeply political desire to effect change in society, and his belief in the social impact of theatre upon the whole of society, something somewhat lost in many twenty-first century Western nations. Meyerhold recognised the role Commedia dell'arte had politically in society, which matched his own political aspirations for change. It was through the satirical mocking of the establishment and appealing to the poorer working peasant class of the Russia, similar to the peasant class of fifteenth-century Italy, that also drew him to engage with the grotesque elements of Commedia dell'arte, but adapt it for the burgeoning twentieth-century theatre movement (Hoover, 1988). Satire as a tool for reform has often been used with a political system that is authoritarian.

Meyerhold's adoption of the grotesque was most prominent in his productions from *The Magnificent Cuckold* through *The Death of Tarelkin* (a Russian classic reintroduced by Meyerhold though in his style) to *The Court Rebellions*. Meyerhold's awareness of the role of the mask in performance and increasing underlying desire to explore the "grotesque" of the inner person that the mask represents was explored in detail. Quoted as the height of Meyerhold's achievement, it was a pinnacle that Meyerhold would never achieve again. Although Meyerhold later moved from his mask work into an exploration of the physical performance alone through his études and biomechanics; as a study in application of the power that masks can have in the development of a performance, we cannot ignore pieces such as *The Fairground Booth* and the impact upon actor training and performance pedagogy. Further exploration of the engagement of early twentieth-century Russian Theatre and Meyerhold with Commedia dell'arte can also be found in the "Pierrot in Petrograd" (Clayton, 1994) and others.

5. Brecht

Brecht's engagement with masks was as a tool for alienation and through the audience distancing themselves from the action, what he termed the *Verfremdungseffekt*. This was building upon the "deautomatization of aesthetic perception" (Kiebuszinska, 1988, p. 78) of Meyerhold. Whilst masks are used in Brecht's plays, it was in the *Caucasian Chalk Circle* that this was most apparent through the use of gestic masks. Gestic masks are used to move from facial expression to a greater reliance by the performer, upon physical movement to communicate an objective. Brecht focussed less upon the pedagogical potential of masks, than upon the performer and more upon its application as a performance tool to elicit a response from the audience.

6. Copeau

Performer trainers, who developed in Europe and promulgated the concept of physical actions as a rehearsal practice can clearly trace their roots to the establishment of Vieux-Colombier as a training school and work of Jacques Copeau (Evans, 2006). Copeau exemplified Meyerhold's desire to seek out new frames of reference for performance training in the development of actor training in the west. The North American system of actor training often studies the psychological truth to inform the performance; which can be seen to be derived from Stanislavskian ideas and taken through the Method system by practitioners such as Uta Hagen (2008) and Rudolf Steiner. What could be termed as a more Euro-centric system has an emphasis on physicality and control, such as developed by Grotowski and Michel Saint-Denis.

Major exponents of physical theatre and mask work such as Étienne Decroux, Jean-Louis Barrault, Jacques Lecoq and Michel Saint-Denis all studied under Copeau. In addition, there is a catalogue of who's who in early twentieth-century Theatre that have worked with Copeau such as Jean and Marie-Helene Daste, Jean Dorcy, Charles Dullin, Louis Jouvet and Marcel Marceau. For Copeau, the mask was an essential tool in improvisation and thus actor training. He saw the mask as means of allowing the individual to hide behind their own reality and thus transform beyond their own inhibitions. The mask became a tool for the actor/performer to explore the psychology of the performance. Within this, the mask was seen as having a dual purpose; as a psychological and physical tool for the performer as well as a visual semiotic for the audience. He felt that the mask forced the performer to move beyond the use of the face as an expressive force and rely upon the physical body as a means of communication. Similar to Meyerhold, the notion of rhythm and concept of Eurythmics, as developed by Appia and Dalcroze became core to his philosophy (Braun, 1982).

Copeau's journey for theatrical reform arose from his desire to stem "the detrimental effects of the star system and its basis in commercial exploitation" (Hodge, 2010, p. 43). His desire was to return actors to the foundations of performance and remove facile artifice. Alison Hodge succinctly reveals Copeau's deeper reasoning for focus on movement and rhythm that led to his adoption of masks work as a training tool.

He (Copeau) sometimes stayed behind after rehearsal to watch carpenters working on stage. What they did seemed purposeful, rhythmic, incidentally sincere. Whereas the actions of the actors in rehearsal had been unnatural and forced—lacking in a sure tradition of craftsmanship. (Hodge, 2010, p. 46)

Copeau used his training school to further develop his ideas. Initially starting with only six students, his aim was to train both young and old. In many ways Vieux-Colombier could be seen as an early model for Drama education with the focus was being on process as well as product. With training now based at Château de Montreuil and the company being titled Les Copiaus, the performances used Commedia dell'arte masks. In training his actors focussed on certain aspects of technique: breathing, rhythm and physicality. Many of these ideas were adopted as part of Lecoq's training method.

Copeau became aware of the potential of the mask, both in actor training and ultimately, in performance, during his visit to Craig (Edward Gordon). It made his appearance in his work by accident—whilst rehearsing a scene at the Vieux-Colombier he despaired of an actress who found herself repeatedly blocked during a scene and unable to move—a literal freezing of the blood. Copeau took his handkerchief and covered her face, noting that her body was immediately released as an expressive instrument. It was her face that had been making all the effort. This experiment was immediately put to work in the School, using stockings as well as pieces of cloth. (Hodge, 2010, p. 57)

Copeau used the mask as a means to release the actor to control the physicality of the performance. He used games and play, foreshadowing the work of Keith Johnstone. Copeau's development of the noble mask became the forerunner for the use of the neutral mask that Lecoq became synonymous with. All of these concepts helped form the basis for Michel Saint-Denis' transformation of the English tradition of acting that to this day remains at the core foundation of actor training such as the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) and the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA).

7. Lecoq

Jacques Lecoq equally complemented Copeau's influence on actor education and the use of the mask.

The teaching of Jacques Lecoq has over the past fifteen years made a significant impact on acting, directing, and writing in France and Britain. By an irony of history, the enormous success of Lecoq-inspired companies like the Theatre de Complicité in London in the 1980s and 1990s has helped to reintroduce the radical aspects of Copeau's practice into British

training in a way Michel Saint-Denis had not fully managed to achieve in the 1950s and 1960s. Lecoq himself learned Copeau's methods from various teachers who had been trained by members of the Vieux-Colombier or Compagnie des Quinze. (Gordon, 2006, p. 168)

Lecoq saw the mask as a tool to distance the actor from a false naturalism, allowing them to explore the grotesque or the real. The core was that the performer was to remain conscious of their very nature that they were performing. Similar to the more current ideas of Suzuki and Peter Brook, Lecoq wanted to reengage the actor in an elemental organic nature of who they were rather than an abstract experiential form. One of the first areas of training that Lecoq introduced his students to was the neutral mask, as a methodology and pedagogy in improvisation and "play".

Essentially the mask opens up the actor to the space around him. It puts him in a state of discovery, of openness, of freedom to receive. It allows him to watch, to hear, to feel, to touch elementary things with a freshness of beginnings. You take on the neutral mask as you might take on a character, with the difference that here there is no character, only a neutral generic being. (Gordon, 2006, p. 38)

Lecoq's use of the neutral mask was the core of his pedagogy. Lecoq and Amleto Sartori's experiments with leather mask making developed the neutral mask which is an important mask training tool today. Their work together also helped revive the art leather mask making and a new supply of commedia masks which are also used in actor training today. It allowed the actor to gain knowledge through movement that informs the psychological. Lecoq's ideas echo those of Meyerhold. Until his death, Lecoq was known mainly through Paris but not internationally until academic writings started appearing, as well as his own.

Jacques Lecoq's influential approach can be seen as a linkage between movement training and improvisational approaches as exemplified further by Keith Johnstone and Lynn Pierse with her work in Australia of Theatre Sports. It is his use of the mask and its impact on training that has influenced so many. Similar to Saint-Denis, what he termed as "Applied technique" (Lecoq, 2000, p. 14) closely resembles Laban's praxis although there is no evidence to suggest that Lecoq had an awareness of Laban's theories as he developed his own. Lecoq founded the L'École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq after having spent eight years experimenting with Commedia dell'arte performances.

Lecoq's techniques being similar to those of Laban are not surprising, given his initial beginnings as a sports teacher, before joining the Association Travail et Culture as a performer. Politicised in Italy after the Second World War (WWII) with an explicit anti-fascist philosophy, whilst developing his skills in mask, he returned to Paris in 1956 to open his first school. Students such as Philippe Gaulier and Monika Pagneux trained with him, with Pagneux going on to work with Peter Brook at the CIRT and also with Complicité. All three as practitioners developed the focus on play and body control, including the role feet and stance play. Suzuki (1986) has since also moved in this direction from his initial rejection of Kabuki with a focus on feet. Lecoq's continued influence, along with Copeau and Meyerhold, and indeed many others are at the heart Physical Theatre, as opposed to physicality in theatre.

Lecoq, Pagneux and Gaulier have proposed an alternative model of "training" from the paradigm of "Method", "System" and their attendant preoccupations with psychology and motivation: a paradigm which remains dominant—but not understood—throughout the West. (Keefe & Murray, 2007, p. 234)

8. Ariane Mnouchkine and Julie Taymor

The work of Ariane Mnouchkine and Julie Taymor (whom both studied at L'École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq) are testament to the embodiment of recent performance and training methods with the mask. Taymor's work incorporates aesthetic images, with masked and ritualistic performances exemplified in her most publically successful work *The Lion King*. Taymor's work is

reminiscent of Meyerhold and Brecht, through a deliberate constructivist style with the artifice being accepted by the audiences and embraced by the critics.

Taymor asked for a presentational set that did not hide the way the mechanised set pieces or puppets functioned but revealed the ways in which theatrical magic was created. (Wainscott & Fletcher, 2010, p. 144)

Mnouchkine recognises the influence of Lecoq, Copeau and Meyerhold whilst using grotesque and commedia styles in performance through her work as the director of Théâtre du Soleil in performances such as “1789”.

Throughout her career Mnouchkine has sought to regenerate the dynamic interchange between performer and audience, while exploring socially relevant and compelling themes. (Hodge, 2010, p. 250)

Mnouchkine’s work has been informed by looking towards performance origins, telling a story about people through theatricality. In this respect, Mnouchkine demonstrates similarities in motive for performance ideals similar to Barba, Brook and Grotowski, and like them, Mnouchkine has been influenced by the physicality of *commedia dell’arte* and World Theatre practice. More than most Mnouchkine places mask work at the heart of her theatrical pedagogy.

Mnouchkine’s development of performances can take months as actors develop precise movements and physical strength for the roles they will adopt. In many respects, Mnouchkine has synthesised the use of *Commedia dell’arte* masks and the physical laboratory ideas of Grotowski and Meyerhold into one.

For ... Mnouchkine in particular, there was a commitment both rhetorically, and to a greater or less extent in practice to: ... Explorations in devising; theatre as a visual, physical and visceral experience rather than a purely literary one ... theatre forms which were at once both “popular” and political; popular styles of acting and performing such as masks, clowning and circus skills. (Murray & Keefe, 2007, p. 94)

She initially explored mask work in her early production *Capitain Fracasse*, using *Commedia dell’arte* masks and later with *L’Age d’Or* where the left-wing politics she promotes, commented on émigrés in France using traditional *commedia* characters. Mnouchkine’s inspiration from Meyerhold and his production of *The Fairground Booth* meant she included not only the elements of the grotesque but also innovative use of theatre spaces. Whilst experimenting with various other forms of mask in performance such as *Sihanouk* and *The Oresteia* in the late 1980s and early 1990s, it is in rehearsal rather than performance that the mask is a core device for Mnouchkine.

In workshops and improvisational scenes, Mnouchkine offers actors a choice of mask that once they connect with, informs the movement and costume they will explore as a character. Individuals using the masks form groups to develop scenes involving their mask character on themes directed by Mnouchkine.

Mnouchkine blended the linking of Western and Eastern cultures with productions of *Twelfth Night* and *Les Atrides*. Brook and Barba have also explored these connections to critical acclaim and influence. Whilst Barba studied Kathakali and immersed himself in Asian and world theatre practices, once again including embedded mask practices (Fischer-Lichte, 2008), Brook explored intercultural concepts in *The Conference of “The Birds”* and *“The Mahabharata.”* It could be argued that rather than intercultural ideas, these performances were more cultural appropriation by a colonial Westerner using the excuse of performance studies. By appropriating or engaging with culturally specific traditions of performance, there could be a critique offered that by such appropriation creates a facile representation. However, the recognition of multiple cultural traditions and in particular mask engagement within these performances, has also been seen as creating a recognition of

validity to non-Western traditions that allowed for a wider conversation about the relationship between self and other (Barba & Savarese, 2006). Using multiple forms of the mask for a variety of cultural sources opens up potentials for the actor and the audience self-reflection. Within this, through the use of masks and physicality in rehearsal and performance, all of the stated directors were critically successful and influential in both process and product.

It is clear that leading and innovative practitioners continually demonstrate that masks not only have a relevance to modern actor training, but also enhance training. If theatrical practice is to be relevant in the twenty-first century with continuing pressures of other media and entertainment forms impinging, it is in looking to the past that we may find a way to the future, to continually revitalise and progress theatrical innovation. Masks are a method to allow this to happen. Jonathan Pitches, Mel Gordon and other key writers on physical theatre have been collected together by John Keefe and Simon Murray in their companion text on physical theatre, "Physical Theatres: A Critical Reader". It is interesting that many of the articles focus on the students of Copeau and Lecoq or exponents of the mask as an actor training tool with the mask still viewed as a key form of performance as well as training.

Where though, is there a depth or application of the potential for the mask as a tool for training, let alone performance in the twenty-first century? Given that the many of influential practitioners of the twentieth century have used the mask for performative and training purposes, it is posited that now it is a prescient time for the next generation of theatre practitioners, and indeed secondary and tertiary institutions, to reposition and apply the mask as a tool and a performative object for a innovative and challenging theatre in the twenty-first century.

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