

The Routledge Companion to Jacques Lecoq



Edited by Mark Evans and Rick Kemp
Foreword by Geoffrey Rush

THE ROUTLEDGE COMPANION TO JACQUES LECOQ

The Routledge Companion to Jacques Lecoq presents a thorough overview and analysis of Jacques Lecoq's life, work and philosophy of theatre. Through an exemplary collection of specially commissioned chapters from leading writers, specialists and practitioners, it draws together writings and reflections on his pedagogy, his practice, and his influence on the wider theatrical environment. It is a comprehensive guide to the work and legacy of one of the major figures of Western theatre in the second half of the twentieth century. In a four-part structure over forty-five chapters, the book examines:

- The historical, artistic and social context out of which Lecoq's work and pedagogy arose, and its relation to such figures as Jacques Copeau, Antonin Artaud, Jean-Louis Barrault, and Dario Fo.
- Core themes of Lecoq's International School of Theatre, such as movement, play, improvisation, masks, language, comedy, and tragedy, investigated by former teachers and graduates of the school.
- The significance and value of his pedagogical approaches in the context of contemporary theatre practices.
- The diaspora of performance practice from the School, from the perspective of many of the most prominent artists themselves.

This is an important and authoritative guide for anyone interested in Lecoq's work.

Mark Evans is Professor of Theatre Training and Education and Associate Dean (Student Experience) in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at Coventry University. His research focuses on the work of Jacques Copeau, Jacques Lecoq, and movement training for the modern actor. He recently edited *The Actor Training Reader* (Routledge, 2015) and is an Associate Editor of the *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training* journal.

Rick Kemp is Professor of Theatre and Head of Acting and Directing at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and the author of *Embodied Acting* (Routledge, 2012). He has worked internationally as an actor and director with companies and theatres such as Commotion, Complicite, Almeida, Teatr Polski and the Bouffes du Nord and is a Fellow of The Salzburg Global Seminar on Neuroscience and Art.

THE ROUTLEDGE
COMPANION TO
JACQUES LECOQ

Edited by
Mark Evans and Rick Kemp

First published 2016
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2016 Mark Evans and Rick Kemp

The right of Mark Evans and Rick Kemp to be identified as the authors of the editorial material, and of the authors for their individual chapters, has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Names: Evans, Mark, 1957– editor of compilation. | Kemp, Rick, 1958– editor of compilation.

Title: The Routledge companion to Jacques Lecoq / [edited by] Mark Evans and Rick Kemp.

Other titles: Jacques Lecoq

Description: Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY : Routledge, 2016. |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2016000849 | ISBN 9781138818422 (hardback) |

ISBN 9781315745251 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Lecoq, Jacques—Criticism and interpretation. |

Acting—Philosophy.

Classification: LCC PN2638.L349 R68 2016 | DDC 792.028092—dc23

LC record available at <http://lcn.loc.gov/2016000849>

ISBN: 978-1-138-81842-2 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-315-74525-1 (ebk)

Typeset in Goudy
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

This book is dedicated to the memory of Jacques Lecoq.



Printed and bound in Great Britain by
TJ International Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall

CONTENTS

<i>List of figures</i>	<i>xii</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>xiv</i>
<i>Foreword by Geoffrey Rush</i>	<i>xv</i>
<i>Notes on contributors</i>	<i>xvi</i>
 General introduction	 1
<i>Mark Evans and Rick Kemp</i>	
 PART I	
Influences and antecedents	7
 Introduction	 9
<i>Mark Evans</i>	
 1 The French theatrical avant-garde	 12
<i>Nigel Ward</i>	
 2 Mime, 'mimes' and miming	 19
<i>Vivian Appler</i>	
 3 The rediscovery of the mask	 27
<i>Gillian Arrighi</i>	
 4 Jacques Lecoq and the challenge of Modernist theatre, 1945–1968	 35
<i>Bruce McConachie</i>	

5 Jacques Lecoq and the studio tradition <i>Tom Cornford</i>	43
6 Bachelard, Jousse and Lecoq <i>Claudia Sachs</i>	51
7 Space and mimesis <i>Jon Foley Sherman</i>	59
8 Movement made visible: Marey and Lecoq <i>Clare Brennan</i>	67
9 Literature, Lecoq, and the 'nouveau roman' <i>Pardis Dabashi</i>	79
10 The body voice of satire: Jacques Lecoq and Dario Fo <i>Gloria Pastorino</i>	87
PART II Inspirations and evolutions	97
Introduction <i>Rick Kemp</i>	99
11 The influence of sports on Jacques Lecoq's actor training <i>Mark Evans</i>	104
12 What works and what doesn't work: On play <i>Paola Coletto and Jennifer Buckley</i>	112
13 Neutral mask – a life's journey <i>Dody DiSanto</i>	119
14 The mimo-dynamics of music, poetry, and short story: Lecoq on Bartók <i>Jennie Gilrain</i>	127
15 Full-face masks, pantomime blanche and cartoon mime <i>David Gaines</i>	135
16 Commedia dell'arte and <i>Comedie Humaine</i> <i>Giovanni Fusetti</i>	142
17 The Chorus <i>Shona Morris</i>	150

18 Bouffons and the grotesque <i>Bim Mason</i>	157
19 Auto-cours, enquêtes, commandes: A theatre practitioner's perspective <i>Carlos García Estévez, Assisted by Paige Allerton</i>	165
20 Lecoq's clown and its application to playing Shakespeare's clowns <i>Sara Romersberger</i>	171
21 Laboratory of Movement Study <i>Ismael Scheffler</i>	179
PART III Ricochets and reverberations	193
Introduction <i>Mark Evans</i>	195
22 Lecoq, emotion and embodied cognition <i>Rick Kemp</i>	199
23 Lecoq's influence on UK drama schools <i>Vladimir Mirodan</i>	208
24 Moving medicine <i>Suzy Willson</i>	218
25 British movement directors <i>Ayse Tashkiran</i>	227
26 Contemporary circus <i>Mitch Mitchelson</i>	236
27 Lecoq training and Asian theatre practice <i>Anna Thuring and Maya Tångeberg-Grischin</i>	244
28 Locating the body in English language teaching <i>Nikole Pascetta</i>	251
29 Language and the body <i>Maiya Murphy</i>	260
30 Lecoq and Shakespeare <i>Darren Tunstall</i>	268

31 Lecoq, neuroscience, and Acadian community theatre <i>Susan Knutson and Normand L. Godin</i>	275
32 Lecoq and architecture <i>Laura Gioeni</i>	284
33 <i>Dear Jacques . . .</i> Lecoq in the twenty-first century <i>Simon Murray</i>	292
PART IV	
Voyages and diaspora	301
Introduction <i>Rick Kemp</i>	303
34 Jacques Lecoq, Ariane Mnouchkine and the Théâtre du Soleil <i>Helen Richardson</i>	307
35 <i>The Magic Flute</i> and L'École Jacques Lecoq: A conversation between William Kentridge and Simon McBurney <i>Catherine Alexander, William Kentridge, and Simon McBurney</i>	316
36 Lecoq and Complicite <i>Richard Cuming</i>	323
37 Theatre Ad Infinitum and Jacques Lecoq <i>Vanessa Ackerman</i>	330
38 Lecoq practitioners in the UK <i>Emily Kreider</i>	337
39 The actor/creator and three American ensembles <i>Susan Wright Thompson</i>	347
40 Pig Iron: Disponibilité and observation <i>Gabriel Quinn Bauriedel</i>	356
41 The Toronto connection: Lecoq and English Canada <i>Martin Julien</i>	363
42 La Mancha Theatre Company and School, Chile <i>Ellie Nixon</i>	372

43 From Paris to Cape Town: Lecoq and the life of Magnet Theatre <i>Jennie Reznick</i>	380
44 Clown – trial by errors <i>Rick Kemp</i>	388
45 Lecoq and film <i>Mark Evans</i>	398
Index	409

FIGURES

I.1	Lecoq demonstrating movement exercise.	2
8.1	Moving parts: performers in Etienne Decroux's man-as-machine performance, <i>L'Usine</i> (circa 1948).	69
8.2	Demonstration of movement: Jacques Lecoq, circa 1958.	70
8.3	Geometric chronophotograph: jump with bent knees.	70
8.4	Lines of action: Marey's transcription of geometric chronophotographs of a figure jumping from a chair, with legs flexed to absorb the shock of landing.	71
8.5	Discus thrower: Marey's chronophotograph of a discus thrower. Beaux-arts de Paris.	73
8.6	Discus thrower: drawing from the author's notes when a student at L'École Jacques Lecoq.	74
11.1	Lecoq teaching physical exercise during his early career as a sports therapist and instructor.	105
15.1	Jacques Lecoq with an expressive mask.	138
16.1	Lecoq and Capitano mask.	146
21.1–21.5	Images illustrate the work of the LEM, where students work with structure, space, colour, and movement.	188
26.1	The Lecoq clown returns to the circus. <i>Smog</i> directed by Mitch Mitchelson.	241
31.1	Acadian exiles wandering in the British colonies of America. Excerpt from <i>Évangéline</i> , drame musical, performed by Les Araignées du boui-boui, Pointe-de-l'Église, Nova Scotia. 2004.	278
34.1	A Théâtre du Soleil workshop at the Cartoucherie, Paris, including actors of the company and workshop participants, 2009.	308
34.2	In <i>Les Clowns</i> , 1969, the Théâtre du Soleil used clowning to transpose the character's inner tension between aspiration and inertia into a heightened physicality.	310
34.3	<i>La Cuisine</i> , 1967, theatricalized the hectic world of a busy kitchen staff juggling work and personal life, transposing the day-to-day into a poetic expression of a workplace out of control.	312

43.1	<i>Every Year, Everyday I Am Walking</i> . Magnet Theatre.	385
44.1	Lecoq with clowns.	390
44.2	Lecoq teaching clown.	392
44.3	Gaulier and Pagneux Workshop in London, 1984.	394

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editors would like to thank the many colleagues who have assisted in the creation of this volume. Thanks in particular go to Talia Rodgers at Routledge for her support in the early stages of this project, and to Harriet Affleck, Ben Piggott and Kate Edwards for their support along the way.

Mark Evans would like to thank Coventry University for research funding to support his work on this project, as well as Katy Morrison and Laura Grimes for their assistance with the transcription of interview material. Rick Kemp thanks the Research Institute and the Dean's Office of the College of Fine Arts at Indiana University of Pennsylvania for research funding for this project.

Special thanks go to Pascale and Richard Lecoq for their advice and support throughout this project, and for permission to use images from the École Internationale de Theatre Jacques Lecoq's collection. We also wish to thank the international community of Lecoq graduates, and in particular Dody DiSanto, for their kind support.

A special acknowledgement goes to Vanessa Oakes and Diane Ralston Kemp for their love, wisdom and patience.

FOREWORD

Jacques Lecoq taught me how to fall over, get slapped and be a failure. As an impoverished student, I handed over a fair sum of money for him to do this. I couldn't even question him about it at the time because my French was so lousy.

He also, I should add, taught me how to get up and stand, simply stand, and be with myself, and be with an audience.

And how to fly . . .

. . . how to drop my jaw to the floor when he reduced the Boatman to a breath

. . . how wide my eyes could pop when he glorified the Discus Thrower and then reduced him to a giggle.

I mixed a cocktail in 134 movements, I understood galloping, that fire could be laughter, that the Commedia groin speaks volumes.

For two exhilarating years we danced, flipped, worried, yielded, basculed.

We climbed that mountain, surveyed the view, and have been running wildly down the other side ever since. I am one of 5,000 adults that Jacques coaxed into a state of play. To be 'disponible'.

My French is still lousy, and even in my native tongue I find it hard to express my gratitude for his inspiration and my sorrow at his passing. He expanded my ignorant and rigid sense of creativity to such a magnitude that his influence on my life still reverberates, spiraling upwards and outwards.

We are bonded today by powerful memories of a man who was our teacher.

Farewell, Neutral Man, and thank you, Jacques, for sharing your Grand Voyage. You said the modern hero didn't really exist. I think you were wrong.

Geoffrey Rush
Melbourne
Australia
April 23, 1999

The original text of this tribute was read by Joan Paris (Dody DiSanto) at the funeral of Jacques Lecoq in 1999.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Vanessa Ackerman trained at LAMDA (London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art) and holds an MA from the Shakespeare Institute, where she is pursuing a PhD in contemporary Shakespearean performance. As an actress, Vanessa's credits include leading roles for companies such as the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Royal Court, and Howard Barker's Wrestling School, as well as on television and radio for the BBC. She has also worked as a director, a translator, and with emerging playwrights across new writing venues. She co-founded Frontier Theatre, which sources, translates and develops new European playwriting. She currently teaches in the MA program in Modern Literature for the Sorbonne University.

Catherine Alexander studied Drama at Manchester University and trained at L'École Jacques Lecoq. She is the Artistic Director of Quiconque and an Associate Director for Complicite (*The Master and Margarita*, *A Disappearing Number* and *The Elephant Vanishes*). Directing credits include *The Gypsy Bible* (Opera North), *Touching Space* (Royal Academy of Art) and *The Boy from Centreville* (Pleasance). Other work includes *Wild Oats* (Bristol Old Vic) and *Coram Boy* (National Theatre). Catherine won the Jerwood Prize in 2006 and the Amnesty International Freedom of Expression Award in 2011. She currently runs the BA (Hons) Acting CDT at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

Vivian Appler is an Assistant Professor of Theatre at the College of Charleston. She was a 2010 Fulbright fellow at the Dimitri Clown School in Verscio, Switzerland. She has taught at the College of William and Mary and has acted, directed, devised and designed puppets in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and the San Francisco Bay area. Her research interests include science and performance, practice-based research and activist theatre. She earned her PhD at the University of Pittsburgh and her MA in performance studies from Queen Mary, University of London. She holds a certificate from the Dell'Arte International Physical Training Program.

Gillian Arrighi is Senior Lecturer at the University of Newcastle (Australia), where she teaches acting and performing, contemporary performance making and performance histories. Her research in the field of popular entertainments of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries has been widely published in journals and edited collections. She is

associate editor of the scholarly e-journal, *Popular Entertainment Studies*; co-editor of the book *Entertaining Children: The Participation of Youth in the Entertainment Industry* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); and author of the monograph *The FitzGerald Brothers' Circus: Spectacle, Identity and Nationhood at the Australian Circus* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2015).

Gabriel Quinn Bauriedel is co-founder and Co-Artistic Director of two-time Obie Award-winning Pig Iron Theatre Company, based in Philadelphia. He has performed, directed and designed for the company since its inception in 1995. Quinn has performed and taught workshops in sixteen countries on four continents. He also directs the UArts/Pig Iron School MFA & Certificate Programs in Devised Performance. Quinn is a 2016 Eisenhower Fellow and has received a USA Knight Fellowship, a Pew Fellowship, an Independence Foundation Fellowship and a Fox Fellowship. He was also a Luce Scholar in Bali, Indonesia. Quinn graduated from L'École Jacques Lecoq and Swarthmore College.

Clare Brennan is a journalist and theatre practitioner. She reviews theatre for the *Guardian/Observer*, and is a member of the Critics' Circle and a judge for the UK Theatre Awards. After gaining an MA in English Language and Literature from the University of Edinburgh (specialization: world drama, past and present), she trained for two years at L'École Jacques Lecoq in Paris, and subsequently, with Philippe Gaulier and Monika Pagneux. A member of Equity, she works as a director, dramaturg, writer, deviser and trainer with professional companies in the UK and beyond; she also teaches physical theatre in schools, colleges and universities.

Jennifer Buckley is Assistant Professor of English and Rhetoric at the University of Iowa, where she teaches courses on drama and on rhetorics of movement and gesture. Her essays and reviews have appeared in *Theatre Survey*, *Modernism/modernity*, *Comparative Drama*, *SHAW: The Annual of Bernard Shaw Studies*, and *Theater*. Buckley is now completing her first monograph, *Beyond Text: Theatre and Performance in Print*, while beginning her second, *Act without Words: Mime and Modernism*.

Paola Coletto, originally from Padua, Italy, is a graduate of the École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq in Paris. She is one of forty students in the school's fifty-year history to receive the Master's Certification in Theatre Pedagogy under Lecoq's direction. In Italy, she co-founded Kiklos Teatro, an international school with a two-year program for theatre artists. Once relocated to Chicago, she founded The School for Theatre Creators, a nine-month professional program in Devising Theatre and Performance, where she leads a team of teachers with a wide diversity of experience in acting, directing and writing.

Tom Cornford is a Lecturer in Theatre and Performance at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London, and a director and dramaturg. He was previously Lecturer in Theatre at the University of York and has taught acting and directing in the UK, the US and Germany. He is currently completing his first monograph, *Theatre Studios: Practices, Philosophies and Politics of Ensemble Theatre Making*.

Richard Cuming is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Performing Arts at the University of Winchester. His teaching and research is in physical and visual performance and the synthesis of different forms. He was a founder of clown troupe Zippo & Co, and from 1986–2001 ran his company fishproductions, which was dedicated to performance in non-theatre spaces.

He is an artistic associate of Platform 4 Theatre and an associate editor of *Total Theatre* magazine. He frequently performs with Fuse Performance and was their dramaturg on their real/fake performance *The Village Fete*.

Pardis Dabashi is a doctoral candidate at Boston University in the department of English and American Literature. She works on the problem of eventlessness in modernist literature and film. She graduated from Columbia University with a bachelor's degree in English and Comparative Literature in 2008, whereupon she moved to Paris to study at the Jacques Lecoq and Philippe Gaulier schools. There she formed a troupe with four other members of the Lecoq school, and toured Provence and Brittany with a show they devised called *Le Grand Départ*. The show included marionettes, masks, acrobatics, music, and Lecoq- and Gaulier-style clowns.

Dody DiSanto is the director of The Center for Movement Theatre in Washington, DC. An esteemed protégé of the late Jacques Lecoq, she teaches actor preparation of the body, the imagination and the art of collaboration. She is a faculty member in the MFA programs at The Shakespeare Theatre's Academy for Classical Acting, at The George Washington University and at The Catholic University of America. She has a practice in therapeutic bodywork and also created, owned and managed the internationally acclaimed music venue Nightclub 9:30 in Washington, DC, from 1980–87.

Carlos García Estévez is an international artist based in Paris. He is an actor, stage director, pedagogue and theatre researcher. He is a specialist in contemporary Commedia dell'arte, mask performance and devised theatre. Carlos is an associate artist at the LEM (Laboratory for the Study of Movement – L'École Jacques Lecoq); and with his theatre laboratory Manifesto Poetico, he is performing, devising shows and teaching internationally. Recently he has been working as an actor with Simon McBurney. He directs, together with François Lecoq, the project *Manifesto In Action*. He has been a collaborator of Donato Sartori as a movement teacher and an actor.

Mark Evans is Professor of Theatre Training and Education, and Associate Dean (Student Experience) in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at Coventry University. He trained in theatre and movement in Paris, with Jacques Lecoq, Philippe Gaulier and Monika Pagneux. He has taught movement for over twenty years, and has written on Jacques Copeau, Jacques Lecoq and movement training for actors. He recently edited *The Actor Training Reader* (Routledge, 2015). He is currently writing a new book on performance, movement and the body (Palgrave Macmillan).

Giovanni Fusetti works internationally as a teacher, director and process facilitator, exploring theatre in training, performance, education, healing and environmental and political action. In the 1990s, he trained at the École Internationale de Theatre Jacques Lecoq, where he later returned as a pedagogic student and improvisation teacher. He has been the founding pedagogical director of two international schools of movement-based theatre creation in Italy: KIKLOS in Padua and HELIKOS in Florence. His background includes a BA in Agriculture and Ecology, and trainings and practice in Theatre of the Oppressed, Gestalt Therapy, Reichien Analysis, Process Work and Permaculture. Website: www.giovanifusetti.com

David Gaines is a graduate of, and former teacher at, the École Jacques Lecoq in Paris. He is a founding member of Moving Picture Mime Show – a much-lauded physical theatre company based in London from 1978–88. In addition to his own performances, he teaches acting at George Mason University and works for Big Apple Circus as a clown in children's hospitals in Washington, DC and Baltimore. His two most recent solo performance pieces are *A Little Business At the Big Top* and *7 (x 1) Samurai*, which has toured from Vancouver to Tel Aviv and won many awards.

Jennie Gilrain graduated from the Lecoq International School of Theatre and the Laboratory for the Study of Movement (LEM) in 1992 and completed the Lecoq pedagogy course in 1995. She worked for twenty years as an actor, director and teacher with Touchstone Theatre and ten years as adjunct professor with the Lehigh University Department of Theater. Gilrain holds an undergraduate degree in occupational therapy from Western Michigan University and a masters degree in education from Lehigh University. She began teaching children full-time in 2006. Gilrain continues to work collaboratively as a theater artist, most recently with the Bach Choir of Bethlehem.

Laura Gioeni is an architect, philosopher, independent researcher and lecturer. She initially trained at the School of Mimodrama in Milan, experiencing Lecoq's pedagogy with Marina Spreafico and Kuniaki Ida. For over twenty years, she has worked as an architect in the field of both conservation and design, and as adjunct professor at the Polytechnic of Milan. The author of various books and essays, she is currently engaged in theoretical research on the philosophy of architecture, embracing a phenomenological and pragmatic approach, and promotes projects and workshops aimed at introducing mimodynamical methods in architectural education. She also practices traditional Western Africa dance.

Normand L. Godin is Professor Emeritus of French Literature at Université Sainte-Anne, Pointe-de-l'Église, Nova Scotia, Canada. He authored, adapted, translated, directed and produced several plays during his tenure as artistic director of Les Araignées du Boui-Boui community theatre from 1972 to 2006; *Tristan et Iseult*, *Joko fête son anniversaire* (Topor), and *Wang-Fô* (Yourcenar), among others, reflect Lecoq's influence. His plays were toured and won awards at international festivals in Europe, South America, English Canada and Quebec. *Évangéline*, a musical drama, ran for eleven summers and was the crown jewel of the company. Godin studied at Lecoq's school in Paris in 1989–90.

Martin Julien is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies in the University of Toronto. He has also worked as a Toronto-based actor and theatre deviser for over thirty years. As a scholar, his writing has been published by TDR (*The Drama Review*), *Canadian Theatre Review*, *Journal of Stanislavski Studies*, and *Cambridge Scholars*. He is the editor of the upcoming *Theatre Passe Muraille: 50 Years: A Collective History*, to be published by Playwrights' Canada Press in the fall of 2017.

Rick Kemp (aka Zoltowski) has over thirty years of award-winning experience gained in the UK, Europe, and the US. The co-founder and Co-Artistic Director of London's Commotion Theatre, he has worked with companies such as the Almeida, Complicité, Quantum, the Pittsburgh Playhouse, 404 Strand, Squonk Opera, Teatr Polski, and the Bouffes du Nord. He holds an MA from Oxford University, and an MFA and a PhD from the University of

Pittsburgh. He is Professor of Theatre and Head of Acting and Directing at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, a Fellow of the Salzburg Global Seminar, and the author of *Embodied Acting: What Neuroscience Tells Us About Acting*.

William Kentridge was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 1955 and is best known as a fine artist for his drawings, prints and animated films. He attended the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, and the Johannesburg Art Foundation, and studied at L'École Jacques Lecoq, Paris. Kentridge has had major exhibitions at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. His opera and theatre works, often produced in collaboration with Handspring Puppet Company, have appeared at the Brooklyn Academy of Music; the Standard Bank National Arts Festival, Grahamstown, South Africa; and Festival d'Avignon, France.

Susan Knutson is Professor of English at Université Sainte-Anne. Recently, she edited *Rivering: The Poetry of Daphne Marlatt* (WLUP, 2014), and published chapters in *Nicole Brossard: L'inédit des sens* (Remue-ménage, 2013) and *Africadian Atlantic: Essays on George Elliott Clarke* (Guernica, 2012). She edited *Canadian Shakespeare*, Critical Perspectives on Canadian Theatre in English (CPCTE) Vol. 18 (Playwrights Canada Press, 2010); was founding editor of *Port Acadie: An Interdisciplinary Review in Acadian Studies*; and published one monograph, *Narrative in the Feminine: Daphne Marlatt and Nicole Brossard* (2000). For eleven happy summers, Susan was an actor/musician in Les Araignées du Boui-Boui under the artistic direction of Normand Godin.

Emily Kreider is a graduate of L'École Jacques Lecoq, Paris (2003–05). As Co-Artistic Director of Jammy Voo, she has toured nationally and internationally with the company for many years. Their last show, *Birdhouse*, was nominated for a Total Theatre Award in 2013 for Innovation and Playing with Form. Emily has also performed with the French stilt-walking company Friche Theatre Urbaine. Other projects include *My Dad is Jim* with Pachamama Theatre, *Catherdra900* with multimedia artist Mark Ware, and Tony Lidington's *The Raree Man's Peepshow* for the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter. Emily is a lecturer at the University of Exeter.

Bim Mason is the co-founder and co-director of Circomedia, Centre for Contemporary Circus and Physical Performance. He trained with Jacques Lecoq (1983–85) and with Philippe Gaulier (1992). His early performing was with the first UK circus-theatre group Kaboodle, his own Mummer&dada (1985–90), and solo shows. Shows he directed have won three Edinburgh Fringe First Awards and the Herald Angel Award. He has also directed for Welfare State International, Peepolykus and Ockham's Razor. An accomplished mask-maker, he created the international walkabout piece, *The Bigheads*. His published work includes *Street Theatre* (1992), *Provocation in Popular Culture* (2015) and chapters on Lecoq, popular theatre and circus. Website: www.bimmason.com

Simon McBurney was born in Cambridge, England, in 1957 and is a theatre and opera director, actor and writer. He studied at Cambridge University and L'École Jacques Lecoq, Paris. He is co-founder and Artistic Director of Complicite, for which he has created many award-winning international theatre productions, including *The Street of Crocodiles*, *The Three Lives of Lucie Cabrol*, *Mnemonic*, *A Disappearing Number* and most recently, *The Encounter*.

Bruce McConachie, Professor of Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Pittsburgh, has written widely on theatre history and cognitive studies in performance. His recent books include *Engaging Audiences: A Cognitive Approach to Spectating in the Theatre* (2008); *Theatre Histories: An Introduction* (2nd edition, 2010, with Zarrilli, McConachie, Williams and Sorgenfrei); *Theatre and Mind* (2013); and *Evolution, Cognition, and Performance* (2015).

Vladimir Mirodan is Professor of Theatre and Research Leader, Drama and Performance/Drama Centre, Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London. He has directed over fifty productions and has taught in most leading drama schools in the UK. He was Director of the School of Performance at Rose Bruford College, Vice-Principal and Director of Drama at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and Principal of Drama Centre London. He was Chairman of the Conference of Drama Schools and a Deputy Chair of the National Council for Drama Training. He is currently the Chair of the Directors Guild of Great Britain Trust.

Mitch Mitchelson is an international teacher, director and performer. He worked with the community arts company Bath Arts Workshop and was a founding member of Original Mixture, the suitcase circus and street arts company. A long involvement with Circus Space led to him becoming Head of Performance for five years. He continued his practice with educational departments at the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Royal National Theatre; St Mary's University, London; East 15 Acting School; and Stageworks Summer School, Ireland. He has directed for Actors of Dionysus, Fourth Monkey Theatre Company, and the circus theatre company Osborne & What.

Shona Morris is a movement director, teacher and actor, and has been working professionally since 1978. She trained at Jacques Lecoq (1976–78) after taking a degree in drama and English at Bristol University and studying ballet in London. Her movement directing credits include six seasons at the Stratford Festival Ontario, where she was Head of Movement (2010–15). She is currently a creative associate at Watford Palace Theatre and Lead Movement Tutor at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA). Her recent credits include *Coming Up* and *Jeffersons Garden* (Watford Palace); and *Hamlet*, *The Country Wife*, *King John*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Mother Courage*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Peter Pan* (Stratford Festival).

Maiya Murphy is a scholar, teacher and artist interested in the intersection of physical theater practices, cognitive science and philosophy. She contributed chapters to *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and Theater* (Nadine George-Graves, ed.) and *Collective Creation in Contemporary Performance* (Kathryn Mederos Syssoyeva and Scott Proudfit, eds.). She was the founding Administrative Director for Naropa University's MFA Theater program. She received her PhD at University of California, San Diego, and her BA from Yale University, and she studied Lecoq-based training at the London International School of Performing Arts (LISPA). Maiya is an Assistant Professor in the Theatre Programme at the National University of Singapore.

Simon Murray teaches theatre studies and contemporary performance at the University of Glasgow. In the mid-1980s, he spent a year in Paris training with Philippe Gaulier and Monika Pagneux. His writing, teaching and research embrace diverse interests provoked by his original training as a sociologist. He has written the only full-length monograph on Jacques Lecoq (2003) and various related essays on Lecoq, Gaulier and Pagneux. In addition, he has written on physical theatres, lightness and collaboration, and on the association between the

fictions of W.G. Sebald and contemporary performance. He is also co-founder/editor of the *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training* journal.

Ellie Nixon is subject leader for BA Acting at Bath Spa University. She has extensive international experience as a theatre director, actor-creator and teacher. After graduating from Middlesex University, she studied at the Jacques Lecoq International Theatre School (1987–89). Ellie co-founded the La Mancha International Theatre Company with Rodrigo Malbrán and continues to be its UK Artistic Director. La Mancha has produced over twenty-five theatre projects, performing throughout the UK, Europe, Scandinavia, and Central and South America. In 1995 she co-founded the La Mancha International School of Image and Gesture in Santiago, Chile, which specialises in contemporary theatre practice.

Nikole (Nikki) Pascetta is a graduate of L'École Jacques Lecoq (1990–92) and is the lone Canadian PhD of Lecoq's work. Her doctorate and masters (York University) research is on the foundations of L'École's physical performance training in relationship to meaning-making (corporeal consciousness) and knowledge construction (epistemology). Nikki's return to academe comes after two decades as an actor/artist educator. Upon graduating from L'École, she was a core member of Théâtre de la Jacquerie (1993–99). Other international movement/theatre training includes Philippe Gaulier (France); 'Commedia dell'arte/mask' with Fabio Mangolini, Antonio Fava and Donato Sartori (Italy); Gina Kapetanaki (National Theatre of Greece); and Strasberg's Actors' Studio (New York).

Gloria Pastorino is Associate Professor of Italian and French at Fairleigh Dickinson University, where she also teaches English literature and drama. For her PhD from Harvard University, she wrote a dissertation on Dario Fo's stage language, now in the process of becoming a book. She has worked on- and off-stage with Dario Fo and has translated several Italian and Spanish authors for stage productions and readings. Her publications include articles on migration, Italian cinema, masculinity, and translations for American productions of plays by Dario Fo, Luigi Pirandello, Mariangela Gualtieri, Romeo Castellucci and Lella Costa e Juan Mayorga.

Jennie Reznick, BA, Perf. Dip. (speech & drama) (University of Cape Town, UCT), Diploma École Jacques Lecoq (Paris), and MA (UCT), is an actress, director and teacher. Jennie is a founding member of Magnet Theatre and runs the bulk of the workshop and performance program of the company. She is an award-winning actress and has created twenty-seven new pieces of physical theatre that foreground the language of the body and which respond to the South African archive. Her longest running show, *Every Year Every Day I am Walking*, about refugees in Africa, has garnered praise and awards nationally and internationally and has had twenty-four international tours.

Helen Richardson is Director of Performance and Interactive Media Arts MFA, Brooklyn College (<http://wp.pima-mfa.info>). Helen is a theatre director specializing in collaborative creation/social engagement, and formerly the Artistic Director of Stalhouderij Theatre, Amsterdam, an international ensemble creating new works that was recognized for the best productions of the year in the Netherlands on themes exploring the encounter between the 'old' and 'new' world, gender and economic disparity. She was Producer/Dramaturg for Global Theatre Ensemble's project on *Eliminating Violence Against Women* commissioned by the United Nations. She has authored various chapters on Théâtre du Soleil for Routledge and written a contemporary adaptation of Jarry's UBU trilogy published by Samuel French, Inc.

Sara Romersberger is Associate Professor of Theatre/Movement, Southern Methodist University. Sara holds an MA in dance from the University of Illinois and a Certificate from L'École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq, Paris. A past President of the Association of Theatre Movement Educators, nationally she choreographed fights and dances and created physical comedy for musicals, drama (specializing in Shakespeare) and operas, and devised, directed and performed her own brand of movement theatre off-Broadway in New York at The Mint Theatre and Primary Stages. Her international production credits include *Hangman*, *Hangman* and *The Town of Greed* (world premieres), *Teatro de la Zarzuela* (Madrid) and *Gran Teatre del Liceu* (Barcelona).

Claudia Sachs is an actress, director and professor. She trained in Paris with Jacques Lecoq in 1992–93 and she's been researching Lecoq's pedagogy since then. Her master's work is titled 'Lecoq's Methodology: A Conceptual Study' and her thesis is 'The Imagination is a Muscle: The Contribution of Lecoq's Pedagogy for the Actor,' establishing relationships between philosophical approaches and this practice. She's acted, taught and published about *bouffons*. She's currently developing a post-doctorate research project called 'Painting in Lecoq: Composition From the Body in Movement' at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. She's assistant editor of the journal *Cena*.

Ismael Scheffler is an actor and director, and Professor of Theatre and Scenography, at the Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná in Brazil. His doctoral thesis is entitled 'O Laboratório de Estudo do Movimento e o percurso de formação de Jacques Lecoq' ['The Laboratory of Movement Study and Jacques Lecoq's scholarly and artistic journey'], presented at the Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina (Brazil). He also studied at LEM (Laboratory of Movement Study) with Krikor Belekian and Pascale Lecoq (2010–11).

Jon Foley Sherman is the author of *A Strange Proximity: Stage Presence, Failure, and the Ethics of Attention* (Routledge, 2016) and co-editor of *Performance and Phenomenology* (Routledge, 2015). Jon's articles on contemporary theatre and dance appear in *Performance Research* and *New Theatre Quarterly*. He has written previously on Lecoq in an article for *Theatre Topics* and a chapter in *Collective Creation in Contemporary Performance* (Palgrave, 2013). An award-winning actor and deviser, Jon was one of Lecoq's last students and has performed and directed in New York, Washington, DC, Switzerland, Chicago, and Philadelphia. You can find his work at jonfoleysherman.com.

Maya Tångeberg-Grischin is a Doctor in Theatre Arts, theatre director, mime performer and pedagogue with a diploma from Jacques Lecoq's school in Paris. Her practice-based, artistic doctoral thesis 'The Techniques of Gesture Language – a Theory of Practice' was completed at Theatre Academy Helsinki in 2011. Originally from Switzerland, she has worked as a director, performer and pedagogue in Germany, Sweden, Finland and India, where she has studied kathakali and kudiattam for many years. Since 2012, she has conducted post-doctoral research on the female acting techniques of kunju and jingju at the National Academy of Traditional Theatre Arts in Beijing, China.

Ayse Tashkiran is a movement director and teacher. After completing a degree in drama at Bristol University, she trained with Lecoq from 1990–92. Her performance work included creating and touring *Voyageur Immobile* for Cie Philippe Genty. Her movement direction includes *Hecuba*, *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, *The White Devil* and *As You Like It* for the Royal

Shakespeare Company; *Ssh Bang* for *Peut Etre*; and *Wildefire* for Hampstead Theatre. Ayse co-leads the MA/MFA Movement: Directing and Teaching at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, where she also curates the International Centre for Movement. She is currently researching the history and contemporary practices of movement directors in Britain.

Susan Wright Thompson is a Boston-area theatre artist and teacher. She completed the two-year program at the Laboratory of Movement Study (LEM) in Jacques Lecoq's International School, and her PhD at Tufts. Her dissertation followed the influence of Lecoq on three ensembles: Jeune Lune, Touchstone and UMO. Her publications include 'Freedom and Constraints: Jacques Lecoq and the Theater of Ensemble Creation' in *Encountering Ensemble* (Methuen, 2013) and her play *The Wild Place* (co-authored with Jon Lipsky, Smith and Kraus, 2015). She has been a core member of Pilgrim Theatre since 1990 and currently tours her play *Unforgettable: Letters from Korea*, based on archival letters from the Korean War.

Anna Thuring (formerly Kurkinen) has a PhD in theatre research from the University of Helsinki, although a great part of her research activity has taken place in the UK, France and the US. Currently she is an Affiliated Researcher at Theatre Academy Helsinki. Her research focuses mostly on Western physical theatre and cultural flows between Asian and Western performance and performance training. In her methodology, she fuses practical training that is based both on her own experiences and observation and interviews of professional performers with academic theoretical and historical approaches.

Darren Tunstall read English at Cambridge. He was an actor, director, movement director and writer for twenty years, working for the Royal Shakespeare Company, BBC, Film Four, ITV and many West End repertory and touring theatres, and was deeply involved in the 'physical theatre' movement in the 1990s. He is now a full-time lecturer at Guildford School of Acting, University of Surrey. He has published in *The Routledge Companion to Actors' Shakespeare*, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, and *The Journal of Adaptation in Film and Performance*, and his book *Shakespeare and Gesture in Practice* will be published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2016.

Nigel Ward, after taking a degree in English at Oxford University, trained as a director at Drama Studio London, and he worked professionally running fringe theatre companies and as an assistant director at the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC). On completing his PhD at Warwick University, he began working professionally as a theatre director for the British Council and as an assistant director at the RSC. He has taught in a range of institutions, including Sheffield University and Central School of Speech and Drama, where he ran the MA in Performance Studies. He is currently Principal Lecturer in Drama and Deputy Head of Department at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge.

Suzy Willson is Co-Artistic Director of Clod Ensemble, an award-winning performance company based in London, which she cofounded with musician Paul Clark in 1995. She has directed all of Clod Ensemble's productions to date, including *Zero* (Sadler's Wells, 2013), *Silver Swan* (Tate Modern Turbine Hall, 2012) and *Red Ladies* (Southbank Centre, 2014). She also leads the company's Performing Medicine project and is an Honorary Senior Lecturer at Barts and The London School of Medicine. See: www.clodensemble.com and www.performingmedicine.com

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Mark Evans and Rick Kemp

Nothing can substitute for the lived experience of Jacques Lecoq's training. This book captures the significance of that lived experience in the working lives of graduates of his school and many of the people who have been affected by his pedagogy in different ways. It also places the training in a wider context of influences and theatrical trends. Corporeal, dynamic, detailed, evocative and both disciplined and playful, his teaching has had a profound and extensive influence on Western theatre in the second half of the twentieth century and the early part of the twenty-first century.

Born in 1921, Lecoq founded his school of theatre in Paris in 1956, and continued to teach there until a few days before his death in 1999. His influence continues to grow as family members and former students carry on his teaching at the school, while practitioners and teachers who trained there spread his ideas around the world. The significance of this influence is evident in the stature, variety and numbers of practitioners who base their work on his teachings: Ariane Mnouchkine, founder and director of Le Théâtre du Soleil; playwright Yasmina Reza; film actors Sergi López, Geoffrey Rush and Toby Jones; director and actor Simon McBurney; directors Julie Taymor, James McDonald and Luc Bondy, to name a few; also companies such as Moving Picture Mime Show, Footsbarn, Mummenschanz, Complicite, Commotion, Peepolykus, Clod Ensemble, Theatre O, Theatre de la Jeune Lune, Umo Ensemble and Pig Iron, among many others. Schools founded on his principles include The School of Physical Theatre in London, the London International School of Performing Arts, Lassaâd Saïdi's École Internationale de Théâtre LASSAAD in Brussels, Antonio Fava's International School of the Comic Actor in Italy, Dell'Arte School of Physical Theatre in California, The Burlesk Centre in Switzerland, the Scuola Teatro Arsenale in Milan, La Mancha International School of Image and Gesture in Chile, Escuela Internacional de Teatro in Barcelona and The Pig Iron School of Advanced Performance Training in Philadelphia. Additionally, many studios are run by individual graduates around the world – Dody DiSanto in Washington, DC, Mar Navarro in Madrid, Paola Coletto in Chicago and Richard Crawford in New York, for example. Beyond the direct application of Lecoq's ideas by former students is the effect of his work on those who came into contact with it in other ways. Peter Brook, for example, has a close association with the School, dropping in to watch classes and presentations; engaging Monika Pagneux, one of the school's teachers, as his Movement Director; and casting graduates in his shows.¹ At the time of this writing (2015), Brook's association with

the school continues, a recent example being a work-in-progress presentation of *Battlefield* for feedback from students on summer courses before the piece opened at his Bouffes du Nord theatre in September 2015. Both of us have studied within the Lecoq tradition, either at the School itself and/or with former teachers from the School, and part of our own motivation for embarking on this project is a belief in the need for much better recognition of both the global

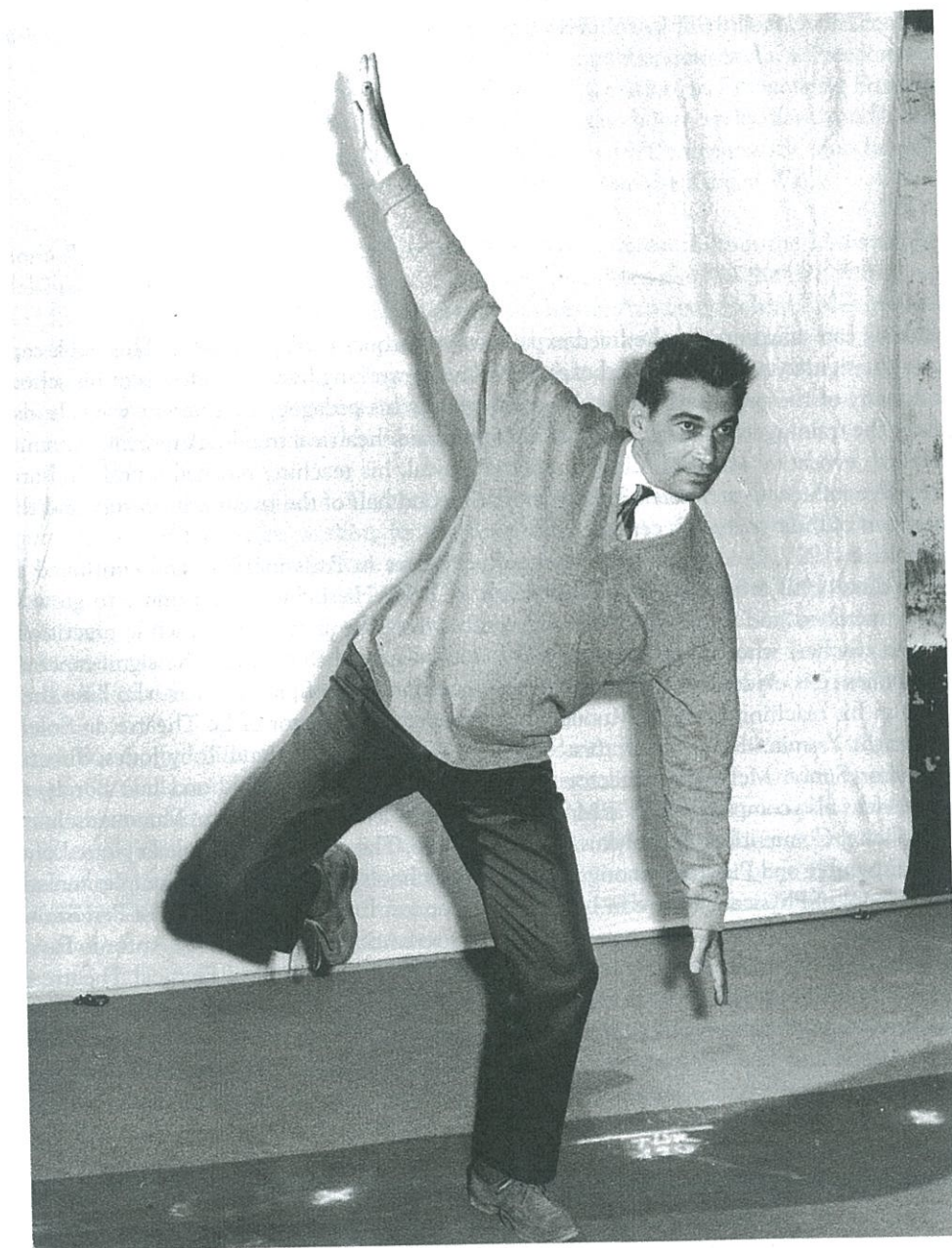


Figure I.1 Lecoq demonstrating movement exercise. © DR.ÉcoleJacquesLecoq.

significance of Lecoq's School (with students from at least eighty-four different countries over the last sixty years) and the value of its pedagogical approach.

Originally a teacher of physical education and a physical therapist, Lecoq developed a physical method of actor training, one that came from a tradition of movement work that incorporates Antonin Artaud, Jean-Louis Barrault and Jacques Copeau, and that draws inspiration from Lecoq's extensive experience of movement through sport. In contrast to the way in which Stanislavski's System tends to be associated with the single style of psychological realism, Lecoq's approach was drawn from an engagement with and exploration of multiple styles such as Greek tragedy, Commedia dell'arte, improvisation, melodrama, clown, *bouffons*, and masks of various types. His analysis of performance was founded on his rigorous understanding of anatomy and movement, and a recognition that the medium of theatre is embodied action, and only subsequently language. While this may sound like a self-evident truth in the early twenty-first century, it was a radical concept in a period in which theatre was dominated by scripted plays. It originated not only in Lecoq's professional sports training, but also in his experience as a performer, director and choreographer in France, Italy and Germany in the decade immediately following WWII.

Following France's liberation in 1944, Lecoq became a member of Jean Dasté's theatre company, the 'Comédiens de Grenoble'. Here he was introduced to Japanese Noh Theatre,² and discovered masks, in particular Dasté's 'noble' mask, which was the forerunner of Lecoq's own neutral mask, designed in collaboration with the Italian sculptor and mask-maker Amleto Sartori.³ The ideas of Copeau, who was Dasté's father-in-law and had been his teacher, became a reference point for Lecoq's own explorations, in particular a desire to create 'theatre that spoke simply and directly to unsophisticated audiences'.⁴ This interest led to an eight-year sojourn in Italy during which he researched Commedia dell'arte, participated in setting up the Piccolo Teatro in Milan, and worked with practitioners such as Dario Fo and Giorgio Strehler.

On his return to Paris in 1956, Lecoq opened his School of Mime and Theatre and began the training system for which he has become famous. It is important to note that for Lecoq, the word 'mime' did not connote the 'mime corporel' or 'pantomime blanche' of Etienne Decroux and Marcel Marceau, but a broader concept of physical expression and its role within our engagement with the world. This involved rigorous investigation of the principles of human movement, which for Lecoq were synonymous with the principles of theatre. Movement analysis is one of the three main pillars of the pedagogical structure that Lecoq developed for his School. The other two are improvisation and collective creativity, which Lecoq considered to be the main goal of the school. This aspect was affirmed when, after the Paris student riots of 1968, he gave his own students more autonomy in their learning process by instituting the *auto-cours*, sessions in which groups of students worked independently of their teachers to create short performances on given themes that they presented to the rest of the school on a regular (usually weekly) basis. This was one of the features of his teaching that led to the profusion of devised theatre companies that had their origin in his school. Another significant factor was that Lecoq, in contrast to others of the same period, did not seek to create a signature style. While his approach was rigorous and systematic, its purpose, as Lecoq often reminded his students, was to give them the tools to create a theatre that did not yet exist.

The second year of study is by invitation only – generally only one-third of the first-year students move on to the second year. The pedagogy in this year begins with an exploration of the 'gestural languages' of pantomime, figurative mime and cartoon mime to create a common vocabulary of gesture. The students then progress to explore five 'dramatic territories': Melodrama, Commedia dell'arte, *Bouffons*, Tragedy and Clowns. In Lecoq's view,

these different styles engage with different aspects of emotion, of spatial dynamics, and of dramatic expression, with specific and distinguishable physical traits in each style. In addition to these two years of training, students of the School and others with a general interest can enroll in the Laboratoire d'Étude du Mouvement (The Laboratory of Movement Study, LEM) to explore 'the relationship between scenography, theatre, and their plastic representation' (according to the School's online brochure). A final aspect of the training was available only to a very select, invited group – the third year of pedagogy, in which a student would become an assistant teacher and develop a more profound understanding of the School's pedagogical approach. During the time that Lecoq taught at the school, approximately forty students progressed through this stage, with some subsequently becoming employed as teachers at the School.

The School's training has formed practitioners who represent a wide range of accomplishments and styles, from playwriting to devised theatre, and from movie naturalism to expressive movement and fine art. This suggests that there are elements of Lecoq's work that are foundational to acting and theatre, allowing those who have experienced his training to use it as a springboard for their own creativity. This analysis is supported by the synchrony of Lecoq's approach with recent discoveries of cognitive science about the relationship between action, thought and language. Movement and other physical experiences in the material world are the sources of metaphors that shape our conceptual thought. As thoughts are expressed in language, they use the neural mechanisms of the sensorial experience that are the source of the metaphor, evoking the original physical experience. Lecoq's intuitive development of an approach that is in tune with cognitive developmental patterns is expressed with almost uncanny prescience:

[T]he laws of movement govern all theatrical situations. A piece of writing is a structure in motion. Though themes may vary (they belong to the realm of ideas), the structures of acting remain linked to movement and its immutable laws.⁵

His fascination with and analysis of movement enabled him to develop a highly sophisticated repertoire of physical exercises. Given the foundational nature of sensorimotor experience to thought and language, it is evident that such a repertoire is more than a simply physical experience for the actor, and provides a rich resource for the embodied expression of thought through gesture, image, movement and space. For students at the School, the experience of this training is often profound. Its personal legacy is a reservoir of creative inspiration; of the inter-relationship between improvisation, movement and space; of physical engagement with the world of elements, colours, materials, objects, animals and characters; and of playful theatrical collaboration and invention.

This book places Lecoq in context by describing his antecedents, influences and practice; giving first-hand accounts of how key aspects of his pedagogy have inspired graduates of the school; considering his influence within performance trends of the period; and reporting on the wide and vibrant diaspora of companies, practitioners and teachers who have put his principles into practice. The chapters are written by a wide range of teachers, practitioners and scholars from many countries, who speak in many voices. We have deliberately sought to allow each author to find the style of writing that best captures the nature of their subject matter and the quality of their experience of Lecoq's work. We hope that this variety will prove as inspiring to read as it has been to curate.

Notes

- 1 Former graduates Jos Houben and Marcelo Magni have both performed in productions directed by Brook, including *Fragments*, a selection of short plays by Samuel Beckett.
- 2 Dasté was a student at the École du Vieux-Colombier, run by Copeau and his assistant, Suzanne Bing. Bing was responsible for a period of highly influential work on the Japanese Noh Theatre, including a student production of the play *Kantan*. Lecoq refers to his own fascination with Noh Theatre in Lecoq, J. (2000: 4), *The Moving Body: Teaching Creative Theatre*, London: Methuen.
- 3 The workshop set up by Amleto Sartori (1915–1962) is now run by his son Donato as the Centro Maschere e Strutture Gestuali in Padua.
- 4 Lecoq, J. with Carasso, J. G., Lallias, J. C., trans. David Bradby (2001: 5). *The Moving Body*. Abingdon & New York: Routledge.
- 5 Ibid.: 21

PART I

Influences and antecedents

INTRODUCTION

Mark Evans

The aim of Lecoq's School has always been 'to produce a young theatre of new work, generating performance languages which emphasise the physical playing of the actor' (Lecoq, 2000: 16); however, despite the School's emphasis on the theatre of the future, it also recognizes important historical roots for its work that ground the students' experiences within fundamental aspects of the relationship between our bodies, what we express with them, and how we express it.

The chapters within this section seek to explore the historical context surrounding and supporting the evolution of Lecoq's teaching. They explore the ways in which Lecoq drew on the intellectual and philosophical environments within which he lived.

Born in Montmartre in 1921, Lecoq's childhood spanned the years between the two great cataclysmic events of European history, the two World Wars. Paris was, at this time, one of the intellectual and artistic hubs of European culture. Lecoq's early interest in sport echoes the general interest in fitness, dance and the liberation of the expressive body that took place over the early decades of the twentieth century. This was the period of Georges Hébert's natural gymnastics, Emile Jaques-Dalcroze's eurhythmics, Laban's tanztheater, Isadora Duncan's focus on natural movement, as well as the revival of interest in Greek dance and in the movement work of Francois Delsarte.¹ For Lecoq, sport provided an early model of a form of physical poetry, his own response to the ways that both sport and dance were emerging not just as techniques but as ways of engaging with the much wider challenges and possibilities of what it means to be a body in the twentieth-century world.

Lecoq's interest in sport would lead him to become involved in a couple of groups whose work enabled him to make this crossover between sport and performance – L'Education par le Jeu Dramatique and L'Association Travail et Culture. These groups also brought him into closer contact with the theatrical avant-garde of the time. He would have become increasingly aware of the work of Jacques Copeau, Antonin Artaud, Jean-Louis Barrault and Charles Dullin. In *The Moving Body*, he describes in detail the journey that finally led him to work with Jean Dasté (Copeau's son-in-law) and then to travel to Italy, where he worked and taught at the Piccolo Teatro in Milan² and then collaborated with the young actor Dario Fo on a number of satirical shows.

The chapters in Part I explore the aspects of theatre history that help to throw light on the context in which Lecoq was working as well as discussing the intellectual climate in which Lecoq was working.

Nigel Ward's chapter looks at the development of the theatrical avant-garde in France. The spirit of innovation, experimentation and rejuvenation that swept through European theatre during the first half of the twentieth century provides a fascinating backdrop against which to understand Lecoq's teaching. Lecoq himself acknowledged the influence of Copeau and Artaud on his work, and Ward's chapter gives a general overview of this context, enabling the reader to get a sense of the theatrical milieu of the time. Vivian Appler and Gillian Arrighi's chapters then look more specifically at the emergence of mime and maskwork as theatrical forms during the first half of the century. Mime drew together the *pantomime blanche* of the French Pierrot tradition (see Evans, 2015), with the Modernist fascination with form, abstraction and technique. Appler discusses the relationships between the work of Etienne Decroux, Jean-Louis Barrault and Lecoq, and examines Michel Carné's film *Les Enfants du Paradis* (1945) as an example of the significance of the development of French mime during the period of German occupation. Although Lecoq was always much more than a mime teacher, it is important to recognize his importance within this field and within the role of Paris as a centre for mime teaching during the twentieth century. Arrighi describes how Copeau's early work with masks helped to rejuvenate the mask not just as a symbolic object, but also as a tool for the actor. She indicates the importance of Edward Gordon Craig and Antonin Artaud in the promotion of the power of the mask. The significance of oriental masks, such as those of the Japanese Noh Theatre, is also highlighted – Lecoq had a lifelong interest in the masks of the Noh Theatre and, like Copeau, recognized their combination of tranquility and theatrical power.

Lecoq's School can also be understood in the context of a tradition of theatre studios. Tom Cornford's chapter draws comparisons between Lecoq's School and the early twentieth-century studios of Stanislavski and Meyerhold, as well as Copeau's creation of spaces and groups within which he could experiment and explore. The notion of the studio links to the work of Lecoq's contemporaries, Jerzy Grotowski and Peter Brook, two other very important figures in the history of twentieth-century theatre training and practice. Though formally a school rather than a studio, L'École Jacques Lecoq in Paris is comparable in its emphasis on constant learning through experience (and sometimes failure) and on the role of the students in creating and sustaining their own learning through the *auto-cours*.

Bruce McConachie places Lecoq's work within the broader and overarching context of twentieth-century Modernism and the philosophical positions that underpin it. In particular, he explores the relationship between text and performance, and the extent to which Modernism was torn between the possibilities of language and the possibilities of the body in performance.

The following four chapters throw light on the philosophical, cultural and literary ideas that were part of the intellectual climate in France before and during Lecoq's life – ideas that he was aware of and that informed the development of his ideas and practices. Claudia Sachs and Jon Foley Sherman examine, in their respective chapters, the ways in which a reading of the work of the anthropologist Marcel Jousse, of the philosophers Gaston Bachelard and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and of the critic and sociologist Roger Caillois, can contribute to an understanding of elements of Lecoq's pedagogy. In particular, Sherman and Sachs demonstrate how Jousse's ideas on what he called *mimisme* (or the reception, playing and replaying of experience through movement) were very influential on the development of Lecoq's

teaching, and how Bachelard's theories of the relationship between human imagination and the four elements inform some key aspects of Lecoq's pedagogy. Clare Brennan's chapter offers an insight into the relationship between early attempts to capture and analyse movement, such as the work of Etienne Marey, and Lecoq's own analysis of movement and its qualities. Lecoq's teaching is often mistakenly viewed as anti-intellectual; however, these chapters illustrate the ways in which his work was grounded in a profound understanding of the work of key thinkers of his time. Pardis Dabashi, in the last of this sequence of chapters, examines the relationship between Lecoq's notions of neutrality/the neutral mask and the ideas underpinning the literary movement that became known as the *nouveau roman*. By comparing Lecoq's ideas with those of Alain Robbe-Grillet, Dabashi (Chapter 9) seeks to explore the significance of an aesthetic position that sought to 'respect the autonomy of the object independent of human systems of reference'.

Part I finishes with Gloria Pastorino's chapter on Lecoq's years in Italy, a profoundly formative period for Lecoq that led directly to his return to Paris to found his school in December 1956. In particular, Pastorino examines Lecoq's work with the Italian actor and writer Dario Fo, and his participation in a number of satirical revue companies operating in Italy at this time. The chapter gives some context to Lecoq's fascination with Commedia dell'arte and with theatre of satire and parody, both styles or forms of theatre that he would go on to explore further in his School, and sets his early theatrical career within the context of post-war European cultural and political developments.

In order to provide a rich and general context for the reader's understanding of Lecoq's work, this part has included chapters by authors with a wide range of subject knowledges. There are chapters written by former students of Lecoq, as well as by theatre academics from other backgrounds. We hope that the chapters provide you with material that enriches your appreciation of the ways in which Lecoq drew together a remarkable variety of ideas and influences in his quest to create a space for his students to explore the theatre of the future.

Notes

- 1 Francois Delsarte (1811–1871) became famous as the inventor and teacher of a codified system of expression through voice and movement. Based on a theory of the connection between gesture and emotion, his system became very popular in several countries, including the US. His work influenced a number of early twentieth-century dance practitioners, but it has now faded to near obscurity.
- 2 The Piccolo Teatro was established by Giorgio Strehler, Paolo Grassi and Nina Vinchi in 1947. It was the first public Italian theatre to be built in Italy. One of its most famous productions was Strehler's revival of Goldoni's *Harlequin Servant of Two Masters*, which generated a significant revival of interest in Commedia dell'arte as a theatrical form.

References

- Evans, Mark (2015) 'The Myth of Pierrot', in Chaffee, J. & Crick, O. (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Commedia dell'Arte*, London & New York: Routledge.
- Lecoq, J. (2000) *The Moving Body: Teaching Creative Theatre*, London & New York: Routledge.

1

THE FRENCH THEATRICAL AVANT-GARDE

Nigel Ward

Revolutions in the arts rarely begin at a precise moment. They are the gradual consequence of a series of events, the influence of new ideas, the shifting of opinions, the arrival on the scene of new generations of artists with new ideas. But if the theatrical *avant-garde* in France could be said to have begun at a single instant, it would be the 10th of December, 1896, at the *Théâtre de l'Œuvre* in Paris, at the opening night of Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi*.

More precisely, it could be said to have happened with the speaking of a single word.

That night, the actor Fermin Gémier tottered onto the stage in the person of Père Ubu, a bloated figure based on Jarry's own drawings for a puppet. With movements and voice modelled on those of the playwright himself, Gémier uttered a single word. The word was an obscenity – lightly transformed by Jarry's linguistic playfulness. *Merdre*.

The outrage produced by this single word brought the performance to a temporary halt as the audience erupted into mayhem. Something was happening on stage that caused offence and confusion. It was the birth of a new way of making theatre.

This was not simply a case of polite society being offended at the use of bad language. '*Merdre*' was the opening word for a theatre which would transgress and shock. It was matched by the absurd and disturbing sight of the bloated, vulgar figure of Ubu himself. This was a theatre in which the old conventions were not simply to be challenged, but to be openly and deliberately violated. On the brink of a new century, Paris was witnessing the first stirrings of an artistic revolution, preparing itself to become the capital of that revolution. And everything on stage that night spoke of this change.

The set had been designed by artists Pierre Bonnard, Édouard Vuillard and Toulouse-Lautrec. They jumbled images whose effect was crude and confusing, depicting a strange mixture of locations as though drawn by a child. The actors moved and spoke awkwardly – the play had been written for puppets, and Jarry wanted the actors to be masked. The narrative was crude and fragmented. The writing deliberately snubbed conventional notions of decorum and of the beautiful.

Two years later, Stanislavsky's production of *The Seagull* would usher in a new theatre based on Realism. But Jarry was already looking beyond that to a theatre freed from the limitations of psychology and mimesis. This would be a theatre of the imagination, offering to take its audience to worlds beyond their experience.

W.B. Yeats gave the most famous description of the evening. He had been a vocal supporter of Jarry on the night, but this experience nevertheless troubled him as he recorded the experience afterwards:

I go to the first performance of Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi*, at the Théâtre de l'Œuvre . . . Feeling bound to support the most spirited party, we have shouted for the play, but that night at the Hotel Corneille I am very sad, for comedy, objectivity, has displayed its growing power once more. I say, 'After . . . our own verse, after all our subtle colour and nervous rhythm . . . what more is possible? After us the Savage God'.

(Yeats, 1922: 222)

Overnight, a polite, decorous theatre of civilized values and elevating principles had been replaced. This new theatre would be less predictable, less rational. It would appeal to the senses as much as to the mind, focus on the body as much as on language, and challenge convention rather than reinforcing the status quo.

Jarry himself was to be remembered long after his premature death; his influence was the spark that lit the fuse for a new generation of theatre makers. In the audience of *Ubu* was the young Jacques Copeau, who would be central to the revival of mime and commedia in French theatre. Another passionate advocate of Jarry would be Antonin Artaud, who named his company *Théâtre Alfred Jarry* and who would dedicate his life to the idea of a theatre in which visual language was primary. The body of the actor, rather than the words of a playwright, were to be central to this new kind of theatre. Artaud's passionate disciple, Jean-Louis Barrault, would translate these ideas into his own explorations of the body in performance.

A new tradition was being born. This was the tradition that made possible the work of Jacques Lecoq.

When he wrote that 'I came to theatre by way of sports' (Lecoq, 2000: 3), he was describing a theatre made possible by *Ubu*. His first inspiration, physical trainer Jean-Marie Conty, had been friends with Artaud and Barrault, and was interested in the connection between physical training for sport and its possible implications for theatre. Later, Copeau's daughter, Marie-Hélène, and her husband, Jean Dasté, invited Lecoq to join their company, *Les Comédiens de Grenoble*, teaching him the principles of mime and mask work that they had developed with Copeau.

The logocentric theatrical tradition had been radically challenged. Theatre was shaking off its reliance on the spoken word. But perhaps Yeats' fears were misplaced. In place of the poetry of language, a new poetry was being made, a '*corps poétique*'.

This was the Savage God that had been released upon the stage.

* * * *

As the twentieth century began, the theatre was reinventing itself. Traditions of acting, writing and stagecraft were all being challenged in an effort to revive a form that had begun to feel stale and mannered. Playwrights like Ibsen and Strindberg turned to Naturalism, a style of writing pioneered in the novels of Zola. And even though this was a style with firm literary roots, its adaptation into the theatre began to beg questions about the role of language and the possibilities of the physical body of the performer. In his famous preface to *Miss Julie*, Strindberg explores the possibilities of making a performance that goes beyond language: 'Where

Pages have been omitted from this book preview.

The Routledge Companion to Jacques Lecoq presents a thorough overview and analysis of Jacques Lecoq's life, work and philosophy of theatre. Through an exemplary collection of specially commissioned chapters from leading writers, specialists and practitioners, it draws together writings and reflections on his pedagogy, his practice, and his influence on the wider theatrical environment. It is a comprehensive guide to the work and legacy of one of the major figures of Western theatre in the second half of the twentieth century. In a four-part structure over forty-five chapters, the book examines:

- The historical, artistic and social context out of which Lecoq's work and pedagogy arose, and its relation to such figures as Jacques Copeau, Antonin Artaud, Jean-Louis Barrault, and Dario Fo.
- Core themes of Lecoq's International School of Theatre, such as movement, play, improvisation, masks, language, comedy, and tragedy, investigated by former teachers and graduates of the School.
- The significance and value of his pedagogical approaches in the context of contemporary theatre practices.
- The diaspora of performance practice from the School, from the perspective of many of the most prominent artists themselves.

This is an important and authoritative guide for anyone interested in Lecoq's work.

Contributors: Vanessa Ackerman, Catherine Alexander, Vivian Appler, Gillian Arrighi, Gabriel Quinn Bauriedel, Clare Brennan, Jennifer Buckley, Paola Coletto, Tom Cornford, Richard Cuming, Pardis Dabashi, Dody DiSanto, Carlos García Estévez, Mark Evans, Giovanni Fusetti, David Gaines, Jennie Gilrain, Laura Gioeni, Normand L. Godin, Martin Julien, Rick Kemp, William Kentridge, Susan Knutson, Emily Kreider, Bim Mason, Simon McBurney, Bruce McConachie, Vladimir Mirodan, Mitch Mitchelson, Shona Morris, Maiya Murphy, Simon Murray, Ellie Nixon, Nikole (Nikki) Pascetta, Gloria Pastorino, Jennie Reznick, Helen Richardson, Sara Romersberger, Claudia Sachs, Ismael Scheffler, Jon Foley Sherman, Maya Tångeberg-Grischin, Ayse Tashkiran, Susan Wright Thompson, Anna Thuring, Darren Tunstall, Nigel Ward, Suzy Willson

Mark Evans is Professor of Theatre Training and Education and Associate Dean (Student Experience) in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at Coventry University. His research focuses on the work of Jacques Copeau, Jacques Lecoq and movement training for the modern actor. He recently edited *The Actor Training Reader* (Routledge, 2015) and is an Associate Editor of the *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training* journal.

Rick Kemp is Professor of Theatre and Head of Acting and Directing at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and the author of *Embodied Acting* (Routledge 2012). He has worked internationally as an actor and director with companies and theatres such as Commotion, Complicite, Almeida, Teatr Polski and the Bouffes du Nord and is a Fellow of The Salzburg Global Seminar on Neuroscience and Art.

THEATRE & PERFORMANCE STUDIES

Cover image: ©H Scott Heist 2015 / SplinterCottage.com from the Essay Jacques Lecoq: The Hand of the Master

an informa business

ISBN 978-1-138-81842-2



9 781138 818422

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
www.routledge.com

Routledge titles are available as eBook editions in a range of digital formats