

Jacques Copeau: Pioneer of Modern Theatre

Jacques Copeau (1879-1949) was a French theatre director, actor, and pedagogue who is considered one of the most important figures in the history of modern theatre.

Early Life and Career

Copeau was born in Paris in 1879. He began his career as an actor in the early 1900s, but soon turned to directing. In 1913, he founded the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier in Paris, which became a center for the development of new theatre practices.



Jacques Copeau (Routledge Performance Practitioners) by Mark Evans

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Copeau's work was influenced by a number of different sources, including the work of Russian director Konstantin Stanislavski and the ideas of the Symbolist movement. He believed that theatre should be a collaborative art form, and that actors should be trained to create truthful and believable performances.

The Vieux-Colombier

The Vieux-Colombier was a small, intimate theatre that was designed to create a close relationship between actors and audience. Copeau used a variety of techniques to create a sense of realism on stage, including the use of simple sets, natural lighting, and everyday costumes.

The Vieux-Colombier was a critical and commercial success, and it quickly became one of the most important theatres in Paris. Copeau's work had a major influence on a number of other directors, including Bertolt Brecht and Peter Brook.

The Compagnie des Quinze

In 1924, Copeau founded the Compagnie des Quinze, a touring company that performed in France and abroad. The company was made up of a group of young actors who had been trained by Copeau at the Vieux-Colombier.

The Compagnie des Quinze was a critical success, and it helped to spread Copeau's ideas about theatre to a wider audience. The company toured for several years, performing in a variety of venues, including prisons, schools, and factories.

Actor Training

Copeau was also a renowned teacher of acting. He believed that actors should be trained to develop their physical and vocal skills, as well as their imagination and creativity.

Copeau's acting exercises were designed to help actors create truthful and believable performances. He also emphasized the importance of

improvisation and rehearsal in the development of a performance.

Theatre Education

Copeau was also a strong advocate for theatre education. He believed that theatre should be accessible to everyone, regardless of their age or background.

In 1929, Copeau founded the École du Vieux-Colombier, a theatre school that was dedicated to training actors and directors. The school was a major success, and it helped to train a number of actors and directors who went on to become leading figures in the theatre world.

Legacy

Jacques Copeau is considered one of the most important figures in the history of modern theatre. His work had a major influence on a number of other directors, including Bertolt Brecht and Peter Brook.

Copeau's ideas about theatre are still relevant today. His emphasis on collaboration, realism, and actor training continue to be essential elements of modern theatre practice.

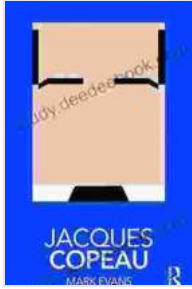
Further Reading

* Jacques Copeau: Routledge Performance Practitioners by Laurence Connor * Jacques Copeau by George Wilson * Jacques Copeau by David Bradby

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