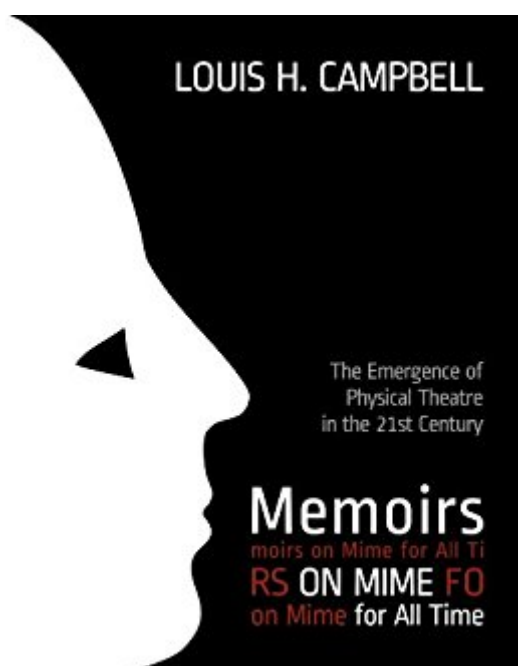


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# Memoirs On Mime For All Time: The Emergence Of Physical Theatre In The 21st Century



## Synopsis

In this remarkable compilation are the unique experiences of the author who was privileged to have been placed at an auspicious time in history with preordained opportunities to meet, engage, learn, apply and celebrate with personalities whose lives and careers left their footprints on the extraordinary subject of mime and pantomime. This book is a culmination of nearly fifty years of experiences with mimes, actors, clowns and dancers all of which have direct influence on the current activity known as Physical Theatre. This book is a documentation of that history, a textbook summary of techniques consolidated and a collection of photographs of historical significance to this age.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Dr. Louis Campbell is a teacher and theatrical director who has published about eighteen other books "all except one outside the field of physical theatre. Dimitri Mueller's death at the age of 80 was my main impetus for undertaking this review. I acquired a previous version of this book in the 2000s and promised to write about it. Some very positive theater-related travel interfered with completing the project. The experience of writing my own book also modified my point of view

of what it takes to publish these sorts of things. Reviewer's Random Thoughts My own definition is simple "Mime is the visual aspect of theater," which even includes radio dramas. One needs to make decisions about what to say when there is nothing to see! The use of labels can help, or not help, but the decision is really up to people who are putting themselves on the line for their art. Dr. Campbell's book relies on dozens of names. I've chosen to review it according to its overall structure, keeping these metaphorical eggs in their cartons, and making the context clear. However I'm beginning this review with Chapters Eight and Seven:

**Joshua Squad (Chapter Eight)** This chapter seems to come right from Dr. Campbell's heart, and delightfully so! There are forty-two pages of illustrations and descriptions of an international performing company (Joshua Squad) that put Dr. Campbell's ideas and aesthetics into practice onstage. *Commedia Dell'Arte* seems to be their point of departure, but they look timeless rather than archaic. This is a book within a book with some early explanations, outlines, and policies constituting a de facto manifesto. It expresses so much in visual terms with lovely photographs from as late as 2011. Chapters Eight and Nine seem to be the soul of the book to me.

**Commedia Dell'Arte Overview** "Timeline and Characters (Chapter Seven)" This book starts getting personal as Dr. Campbell expounds about the rich history of these Italian stock characters. They still haunt the backgrounds of innumerable books, movies, and stage works, though! This chapter is illustrated with classic prints of major zany archetypes, and provides a graceful transition into Campbell's most personal chapter of all.

**The rest of the chapters, in order:**

**Diversity in Mime Terminology** This chapter has only six pages but many viewpoints. It features a lot of names and matches them with quotes and concepts, so we might as well start this review with a baker's dozen personalities encountered in the book: Etienne Decroux; Ladislav Fialka; Louis Dezseran; Yass Hakoshima; James Donlon; Claude Kipnis; Bob Francesconi; Tony Montanaro; Jacques Lecoq; Mamako Yoneyama; Adrian Pecknold; Richmond Shepard; Bari Rolfe; David Alberts; Antonin Hodek; and Geoffery Buckley, who states: "Mime is a very loose word."

**Major Influences and Solo Acts** Substantial historical sketches make this section a valuable resource on its own. There are also quotes, explanations, and anecdotes galore, along with a few references to other theatrical figures including: Isabella Canali Andreini (1562-1604); Joseph Grimaldi (1779-1837); Jean Gaspard Debarau or Debureau (1796-1846); François Delsarte (1811-1871); Jacques Copeau (1879-1949); Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874-1940); Charles Dullin (1885-1949); Jean-Louis Barrault (1910-1994); Etienne Decroux (1898-1991); Jacques Lecoq (1921-1999); Jerzy Grotowski (1933-1999); Marcel Marceau (1923-2007); Geoffrey Buckley (of England); Ctibor Turba (1944-); Adrian Pecknold (1920-2000);

and Sigfido Aguilar (of Mexico). Clown Dimitri A Major Force in Physical Theatre This chapter starts with a short professional biography, and an appreciative quote by theatrical director Max Frisch. It continues with an outline of the curriculum at Dimitri's own school in Ticino, Switzerland, told in clear colloquial English by the great man himself. A coda of appreciation finishes the chapter, with a few more quotes from Dimitri and his fellow performers.

Specialty Acts These dozen pages include the great Swiss performing company Mummenschanz, plus educators such as Hovey Burgess and Carlo Mazzone-Clementi. These pages embody the theme of Emergence of Physical Theatre in the title of the book. Other performers and their philosophies are described in this chapter, along with a mix of color and monochrome photos. They include: Avner Eisenberg; Mamako Yoneyama; Lotte Goslar; Ladislav Fialka; Charles E. Weidman; and Tom Leabhart.

Exploratory Glossary of Terms These twelve pages contain innumerable quotes and reflections by practitioners introduced in the previous chapters. They are applied to seven subjects: The Value of Mime to the Actor; Techniques of Character Development; Circus Techniques in Mime Training; Commedia Dell'Arte in Relationship to Mime; Improvisation, and Mime and Dance in Physical Theatre. It barely touches on subjects that could make a whole shelf of books, but agreements and disagreements are stated, plus personal theories are expounded by various artists.

Forms of Mime This is a chapter about hair-splitting. It is also a sincere attempt to articulate, in words, a visual art form that is supposed to be independent of words. Quite challenging, to say the least! There are more quotes and cross-references from most of the other practitioners found in the book, and Dr. Campbell tries hard to have the many artists speak for their own artistic practices.

Mask This is a short essay about a vast subject, where the various dramatic functions of masks are bravely outlined in Dr. Campbell's own voice.

The Ultimate Gesture This chapter is an amalgamation of a workbook, more definitions, written exercises, a review of the previous material. There is a deeply personal essay about the International Mime Festival and Institute in 1974, with lots of names and stories about contacts with important individuals. Mary Wigman is mentioned, along with her association with important movement master, Rudolph Laban... like Laban, Dr. Campbell suggests drills of his concepts, and summarizes his interpretations of the work of Geoffrey Buckley, Robert Shields, Ladislav Fialka, Marcel Marceau, Charles Weidman, Antonin Hodek, Carlo Mazzone-Clementi, Mummenschanz, Lecoq, and Mamako.

More Photos The final chapter consists mostly of pictures taken at the International Mime Festival and Institute in 1974. I saw a number of these artists myself. It is enjoyable to see these images, along with pictures of performances I missed. Some of this material was previously printed in a small hardback called: "Mime and Pantomime in the Twentieth Century" History Theory and

Techniques by Dr. Lou Campbell in 2008. The Foreword by Jewel Walker is much longer, with a separate Preface by Campbell. There were a couple of paragraphs about Leonard Pitt in Chapter One which aren't in *Memoirs*, and the chapter *Mask* was not present at all. The content is almost identical through the first six chapters, except for some textual errors, as Campbell said to me. The quantity and quality of photos and illustration is much superior in *Memoirs of Mime for All Time*. The larger physical size of the second book is much friendlier to visual content, and Campbell's wonderful personal chapters at the heart of the bigger book simply outdo the smaller volume.

This is a wonderful history and informational book about mime and the people in physical movement and theatre! I loved it.

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