Chris Vervain

Performing Ancient Drama in Mask: the Case of Greek New Comedy

Chris Vervain is a mask maker who has for a number of years trained and directed in performing masked drama. On the basis of research she has undertaken, using her own masks, on how to perform the ancient Greek plays, in this article she questions some of the modern orthodoxies of masked theatre, drawing specifically on her experience with Menander's New Comedy. With David Wiles, she contributed 'The Masks of Greek Tragedy as Point of Departure for Modern Performance' to NTQ 67 (August 2001) and, with Richard Williams, 'Masks for Menander: Imaging and Imagining Greek Comedy' to *Digital Creativity*, X, No. 3 (1999). Some of her masks can be seen at www.chrisvervain.btinternet.com. She is currently working towards a doctorate on masks in Greek tragedy at Royal Holloway, University of London.

THE THEATREGOING PUBLIC of recent years is familiar with the idea of modern performances of ancient Greek drama, and even masked productions are no longer wholly surprising in the UK, thanks in large part to the work of Peter Hall.[1] Despite this, mask in performance is still seen as an alien and alienating device and for many actors the thought of performing in mask is full of foreboding and negative expectations.[2] Practitioners and others speaking about masks have done little to dispel such fears, often leaving a perception of mysterious entities which require a particular approach and demand a specific type of performance, wholly different from – even at odds with – actor training and practice in the West.

Masks and Modern Perceptions

Moreover in the twentieth century mask was seen very much in the context of improvised work and physical/visual theatre, an element inappropriate in highly verbalized and prescripted drama. My own experience of making masks, training performers for mask work, and directing mask theatre led me to ask whether these ideas reflect properties inherent in the mask or were specific to a modernist mode of thought. What we know of ancient theatre practice is also highly suggestive, as it combined masked performance with scripts of verbal complexity.

It is with these ideas in mind that I have been running a series of workshops with masks and actors working on scenes from the ancient repertoire. We aim to produce lively pieces of theatre while asking questions concerning approaches to mask and text, and also the compatibility and possible benefits deriving from the actor's (broadly Stanislavskian) background and practice .

While some workshops have concentrated on fifth-century tragedy, others explored the fourth-century New Comedy of Menander, and the latter is the main topic of this article. Today there is considerable interest in Greek tragedy, but Menander is known (in the UK at least) primarily to classical scholars, who sometimes present his work as an antique curiosity unsuitable for modern performance. In part this is due to the fragmented nature of the extant material.[3] His humour, though, has been described as weak compared with the lively plays of Plautus in the Roman era, or for that matter, the surreal and politically satirical Old Comedy of Aristophanes in fifth-century Athens.[4] This modern attitude is strange, as New Comedy like the fifth-century tragic plays had a popularity in the ancient world lasting for many centuries after their original performances. Even more

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than tragedy, New Comedy generated a vast industry in theatrical mementoes featuring characters, masks, and scenes in a variety of media.

I have used some of this material as a source of inspiration to make my own set of New Comedy masks for performance. I have not attempted to make exact replicas of any particular artefact, and some adjustments have been made for aesthetic and other reasons, for it was not my intention to engage in theatrical archaeology and replicate ancient performance conventions or styles. Rather, I wanted to translate something of the original plays into a medium that could be appreciated by audiences today. In designing these masks, as in my approach to mask performance, I have been concerned to facilitate actors' engagement with masks and scripts.[5]

Overall I aim to explore ways of integrating modern approaches to acting and mask performance in order to bring alive Menander's plays in a way that does justice to the subtlety of his writing and the beauty of contemporary masks (as revealed by some of the ancient artefacts). This work with professional actors has largely been unfunded, save for an intensive workshop carried out in conjunction with the University of Glasgow New Comedy project, funded by the AHRB.[6]

Approaches to Mask: a Modern Orthodoxy

A modern 'tradition' of mask theatre practice has grown up in the West emanating, in large part, from the pioneering work of Copeau. Today the work of influential figures such as Jacques Lecoq and Michel Saint Denis has led to distinctive approaches to mask. All are generally in agreement that theatre masks (unlike those used in carnival) are not worn by actors like a piece of costume: rather, there has to be a fusion such that the audience sees actor and mask as some integrated whole. Without such an integration the mask cannot come to 'life', and this vital embodiment is seen as an essential ingredient for successful mask theatre.

For some practitioners the way performers approach mask is crucial. They often speak of the need not to 'impose on a mask' or 'force it', so that the mask or rather the fusion of mask and performer is seen as an entity that is somehow more than the performer taking on a (mask) role. An example of the sort of 'abuse' they have in mind would be if a performer were to start by working on a script and then, with no further preparation, put on an unknown mask and perform the prepared text. Some practitioners would go further, and argue that, even if a performer had spent time relating to a particular mask, 'you can't direct masks'.[7] With this sort of approach, particular practices such as masked performers speaking in their own voices[8] or reading from scripts are thought to constitute a challenge to the mask and a lack of integration, and so are proscribed. It is the masks that are seen as the initiators of action, and performers should not try to 'control' them.

The idea of the performer being possessed by their mask is a related area of discussion. The term 'possession' is used to describe a variety of behaviours, but it seems to me that the important distinction is whether or not the normal boundaries by which actors monitor their own performances have been breached. (This is the monitoring that enables a performer to play his/her part as agreed, and with due concern for safety.) While mask practice in the Lecoq school respects these boundaries, they are clearly broken in the work of Keith Johnstone, who describes, for instance, the masked Roddy Maude-Roxby 'throwing chairs about'. Johnstone gives an account of how he, together with William Gaskill, had been influenced by George Devine (a pupil of Michel Saint-Denis). It is clear from his account, however, that their approach differed significantly from that of Devine.[9] Further discussion of this complex topic is beyond the scope of this paper.

Most practitioners advocate some sort of preliminary engagement by performers with any mask in which they are to perform. This involves a study of the mask and the performer's relationship with it. The work can be undertaken individually, or with an unmasked partner, or in a small group. The result of such exploration may be the emergence of a 'mask character', seen in psycho-

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logical terms, which has a characteristic physicality[10]. The latter is visually manifest in a particular stance and way of moving and habitual gestures and modes of expression.[11] During this preparation actors can receive feedback by watching themselves in a mirror; this, seen as an essential element by some practitioners, is limited or wholly forbidden by others. Instead of a mirror, feedback can be given by an unmasked partner acting as an 'external eye' (which is my preference).

There is an emphasis on exploration and freedom for masks to engage (like children) in unstructured play. Peter Hall, with considerable rehearsal time available,[12] describes a sort of childhood development process with masks taking anything up to three weeks to 'grow up' and start speaking.[13]

The thinking behind many of these approaches is to prepare performers for improvisation or work to be devised, based on the spontaneous interaction of the newly discovered mask characters. However, if the play to be performed is already written, as is the case with New Comedy, this type of initial mask exploration can be potentially problematic – if, for example, the emerging characters are not relevant to the play. The problems that arise when performing the ancient drama (i.e. how to integrate the different elements of mask, playscript, and performer) are not adequately addressed.

The reason for this bias is very much an accident of modern theatre history, with the development of schools of Physical Theatre (in which most modern mask work has developed) as an alternative to the type of actor training offered in the 'mainstream' drama schools. In the latter the focus is on text work, good vocal delivery, and some form of 'Stanislavskian' actors' training.[14] In contrast, Physical Theatre takes as its starting point the physical presence of the performer[15] and is often seen as an essentially visual medium with a bias against the spoken word, particularly where any degree of complexity is involved.

My own attempts to stage the ancient drama in masks have led me to question some of this modern 'orthodoxy' of mask practice and to wonder whether the various skills needed to perform the plays are today separated out into different areas of specialization, with wholly different philosophies of performance.

My work on Greek drama did not initially emerge from a background in theatre, although I have received both physical theatre and more conventional actor training (from various practitioners) on the way. Instead, I started as a visual artist, interested in mask, dance, and performance art. My growing interest in theatrical masks and their possibilities (alike from the perspectives of mask maker, performer, director, and deviser) led me into a study of ancient drama and finally into practice-based academic research. This somewhat eclectic background has given me a certain detachment from any given orthodoxy and allowed me the freedom to question, to pick and choose between the options available, and to try out new techniques and attempts at synthesis.

I have described above some modern ideas on approaches to this work and have been following the usual convention in referring to 'the mask' as though masks were homogenous entities. This, however, is another usage with which I take issue, as theatrical masks are of various different kinds and considering the type of mask and the context in which it is to be used are of fundamental importance.

Theatrical Masks

Masks vary, amongst other things, in size, shape, and the degree to which they cover the performer's face, head, and body. Perhaps the most familiar in performance today are the comic half-masks of the *commedia dell'arte* (covering the upper part of the performer's face and leaving the mouth and jaw free and visible to the audience). Traditionally, *commedia* masks portray the stock character types of this genre, each of whom has a distinct physicality that is already a 'given'. (Modern performers often find their own individual way of playing with these masks. However, a more 'authentic'-looking style requires the performer to learn a set of given physical forms).

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Many people will also have seen half- or full-faced character masks. These are often conceived as allowing more rounded individuality (as compared with the stereotyped characterization of a genre like *commedia*). Using the techniques of the modern mask tradition, performers discover the more complex make-up of their character through an exploration of 'counter-mask', which comes into play after performers have been working with a mask for a while and have found a characteristic physicality and perhaps the prevailing temperament of their mask character. At some point, behaviour that is in complete contrast to this will become manifest – for example, the suppressed sinner that lurks behind every saint will suddenly emerge; or, in a more abstract example, the flowing graceful physicality of a character might be interrupted by some harsh jerky movements. According to practitioners who make use of this technique, it is only viable for masks that have within their form enough contrasting elements. (The sort of structural features that give rise to such contrasts are asymmetries in the mask face; the inclusion of both straight and curved edges; lines and planes; smooth and textured surfaces; contrasting colours.)

The Lecoq 'neutral' mask, well known amongst Physical Theatre performers as a training mask, is deemed unsuitable for performance precisely because it lacks this sort of variation in form. Lecoq describes a good performance mask as being one 'which changes in expression when it moves. If it stays the same when the actor changes posture and situation, it is a dead mask.'[16]

I have been speaking about modern theatrical masks. When we come to consider the dramatic masks of ancient Greece we need to take into account the very different social context in which they were produced. There is in the aesthetic criteria of classical Greece a clear distinction between an idealized realization of the human form (the beautiful people) on the one hand, and on the other a base, earthy version of lesser beings. The tragic plays performed in fifth-century Athens were probably peopled, in large part, by the former, and the masks would have reflected the beauty of classical sculpture.[17] (The idea of tragic masks with large distorted faces, gaping down-turned mouths, and wide, staring eyes results from confusing later Hellenistic and Roman types with those of the fifth century.)

Mask and Character

In the view of some commentators,[18] the tragedies did not feature 'characters', since the focus of the drama was not an exploration of individual psychology in the manner of much modern drama. Anyway, there is good reason to believe that the tragic masks lacked distinctive characterization and were rather socially defined types, whose features distinguished them only by age, sex, and perhaps also status.

The nature of fifth-century tragic masks helps to inform our understanding of the masks of the fourth-century New Comedy, which, although a comic genre, can be seen

Menandrian 'tragic' recognition scene: father and long-lost daughter reunited. From *Perikeiromene* (*The Rape of the Locks*), Act Four. Masks by Chris Vervain.

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to have derived, in part, from the tragedies and to contain scenes tragic in theme and tone. A recognition scene, full of pathos, between a father and his long lost daughter (opposite page) is a typical example. Moreover, some of the artefacts thought to depict New Comedy masks have an idealized beauty that can be seen to refer back to classical models.

New Comedy artefacts in general, though, have highly characterized features that make them distinct from the more 'character neutral' tragic masks of the fifth century. While some modern commentators[19] have interpreted them as stock character types of the day, others have argued that part of Menander's subtlety was that he eschewed writing stereotypical parts, preferring to depict characters behaving 'against type' – a sensitive 'braggart soldier', for example. The nature of New Comedy characters, masks, and plays thus remains an area of debate.[20] What emerges is the idea that Menander's plays are peopled by figures of some complexity – neither mere stereotypes nor exhibiting the idiosyncratic detailed psychology of characters in modern drama.

The beauty of Menander's language was acclaimed in the ancient world, and commentators today find a degree of subtlety and psychological insight in his portrayal of characters and their interactions.[21] It seems that there is sensitivity to be found in this work, and again this appears to be reflected in some of the ancient artefacts in which we can see even the far-from-ideal character types depicted with a certain fineness. It is true that this is also a genre of (to us) gross humour and apparently incongruous elements and inconsistency of characterization. However, this does not alter the fact that the masks required to do justice to Menander's writing need to have within them the ability to portray its higher as well as its baser aspects.

The subtlety and complexity of the masks means that they can play many parts – within certain limits. A slave mask could not portray a young woman, for instance, but could be used for many different slave parts. So, for example, the same mask might be used to play a slave with an underlying dishonest disposition, but in a different role could display loyalty and trustworthiness.[22]

The masks of fifth-century tragedy and fourth-century New Comedy were, as far as we know, designed to cover the whole face and head (so called 'helmet' masks). They were only a little larger than the human head and were made out of materials such as linen and plaster. Worn by a performer together with an appropriate costume, they would have constituted a complete disguise. (This included painted mask eyes, with the actor seeing through holes corresponding to the pupils.) Moreover, mask faces and features would have been painted to resemble real-life faces. Even slave masks, with distorted, almost subhuman features, had colouring that was recognizably human.[23]

In all, the masks of these two ancient genres have much in common. They were distinct from more modern masks, a factor that should be remembered when attempts are made to reconstruct them. For example, it is a mistake to imagine that the stock characters of New Comedy and *commedia* are somehow analogous. The leather, single tone (black, brown, or red) half-masks of *commedia*, which when worn leave part of the performer's face visible (including the eyes), are from a wholly different world. The stock characters that they portray are simple and predictable.[24]

New Comedy in Modern Performance

There have been some modern masked productions of Menander. Bernabò Brea, as curator of the museum in Lipari, site of many of the New Comedy finds, commissioned a production of the *Samia* (*The Woman from Samos*), but the masks, though based on ancient representations, were poor in appearance.[25] In London, Chloe Productions, an amateur company playing masked Greek drama based at the University of London, presented the *Dyskolos* (*The Grouch*) in 1997, following an earlier compilation of New Comedy in 1995 entitled *The Cook, the Miser, His Tart, and Her Mother*.[26] However, the masks they used were half-masks, not intended to resemble or draw

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any information in their design from the ancient artefacts. Kachler produced a masked *Dyskolos* in Basle in 1960, but again, his masks were modern rather than ancient in conception: bold, artistic designs but lacking the sort of sensitivity I have been discussing.[27]

In designing my own versions of the masks it has been my aim to convey something of the spirit of the originals in a way that can be appreciated by modern audiences, coming as they do from a very different social context than that of the ancient world. This does not rule out the presentation of 'exotic' elements, but does mean these need to appear in a form that is meaningful today. (It is the concern to communicate something vital to an audience that distinguishes true theatre from other apparently related activities such as performance reconstruction.) My approach is perhaps analogous to that of a translator of the playtexts, concerned to follow the original closely, but not so literally that it then becomes dead and obscure.

In my attempt to reconstruct the ancient New Comedy masks for dramatic performance I have referred to a number of sources. Some idea of the visual appearance of a number of the mask types is given by the archaeological finds of New Comedy material. This takes various forms, and includes figurines, terracottas thought to depict the faces of the mask characters, mosaics, plaques, and wall paintings. This material, though, should be interpreted with the needs of the plays in mind. Reference to an ancient catalogue of comic masks compiled by Julius Pollux in the second century AD may further clarify the mask types and the distinctions between them.[28] I have also found it instructive to compare the New Comedy material with Greek sculpture from the classical period onwards.

An examination of the New Comedy artefacts[29] suggests that the original masks were designed to change expression depending on the angle at which they were viewed. Some of the effects are very subtle. At one extreme there are terracottas representing beautiful female masks that at first glance appear 'neutral' in expression. Slight asymmetries in the overall composition of the face,[30] in the corners of the mouth (one side just perceptibly turned up and the other side slightly down), and a different focus for each eye are ways in which these masks may have had the ability to change expression.

Terracotta from Lipari depicting female face, approx. 3 x 2 inches, *c.* early third century BC, now in the Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow. Drawing by Chris Vervain.

At the other extreme are masks with exaggerated characterization, such as those of slaves and some of the old men. These

Terracotta mask of 'leading' slave, near life-sized, *c.* second century BC, now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Drawing by Chris Vervain.

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Mask of slave with 'twisted gaze'. Made by Chris Vervain, inspired by a terracotta, approx. 3 x 2 inches, from the Petrie Museum, University College London.

again display asymmetries and features that cause changes in expression even before the masks are worn by performers. The illustrations above show how, viewed at different angles, one of the slave masks (with characteristic crossed eyes or 'twisted gaze') seems to change its expression from one that is 'scheming, prying, and shifty' to 'smiling' and 'anguished'.[31] These changes in expression incorporated into the mask, allow it to 'live' in performance in the way that Lecoq describes.

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In designing my own masks I have incorporated elements from a number of related ancient examples rather than trying to exactly reproduce any single one. A simple scaling up of any particular artefact would anyway not result in a mask that fitted well over a performer's face and head. Adjustments are necessary to achieve a good fit, especially if a complete disguise is to be achieved. Other factors have also caused me to introduce certain modifications. In order to achieve the variation and life desired by Lecoq, I have sometimes improvised with particular features. I have also employed interpolation when referring to damaged artefacts, and have opened some of the mouths of ancient mask faces whose lips are sealed.

Mask of comic old man, made by Chris Vervain, worn in performance as Nikeratos in the *Samia.*

Aesthetic considerations have sometimes resulted in (subtle) adjustments. For example, I have introduced an element of asymmetry into the hairline of certain slave masks to achieve a livelier, more appealing effect. This alteration, in replacing the 'pudding basin' uniformity of the originals, introduces a certain 'jauntiness' and is artistically satisfying in that it echoes the other facial asymmetries that are a feature of the type.

In focusing on the sensitivity, humanity. and beauty of the masks I have hoped to find a visual language that will communicate well today. Even with those mask types where exaggerated characterization is manifest in distorted features, most notably, slaves and old men, my masks have a certain human vulnerability that may help to give them universal appeal (see illustration alongside).

The Harp Girl and the Slave

As a demonstration of how this might work in practice I turn now to a scene from Menander and the way I approached it with actors and attempted to bring it to life using my New Comedy masks. In *Epitrepontes* (*The Arbitration*) there is a scene between Habrotonon, the 'harp girl' (a high-class courtesan who provided musical and other services at male parties), and Onesimos, the main slave of an adjacent household. He shows her a ring that has been found with an abandoned baby and that he also recognizes as belonging to his master. The girl gives an account of how she saw the same ring at a festival the previous year when it had been given to another girl by the man who had just raped her.

Habrotonon devises a plan to go with the ring and confront Onesimos' master, pretending to be the girl who had been raped. In reading, this is a wordy scene, mildly amusing if repugnant to modern sensitivities in its callous treatment of the rape and abandoned baby themes. As soon as the actors under my direction tried playing the scene in mask the

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physical disparity between the two characters, together with some of Onesimos' words towards the end, suggested that there was more going on between the pair than the mere conveying of factual information.

It occurred to us that we might be able to construct some sort of sub-text,[32] so we considered *why* the characters might be saying the things that they were and what were their *intentions*. We found answers, and they gave us highly satisfying insights into something about these *characters*. Our Habrotonon was a sweet-natured but lively and charmingly flirtatious girl, gently teasing the slave whilst he was hopeless in his infatuation for a creature beautiful beyond his dreams (see illustrations on page 255).

Studying as much of the play as possible for clues to character can also be fruitful. For example, we discovered Habrotonon's nature not only from the reactions of the slave but also from something she says earlier in the act. She is offended because Onesimos' master, who has hired her for the evening, has not made advances towards her; she is clearly a girl who wants to be (sexually) admired. The lack of concern, often observed, in the ancient playwrights for drawing 'consistent characters' shouldn't, it seems, lead us to abandon the search altogether.

Focusing on Interaction

The terms I have italicized above are those more usually associated with text-based approaches to theatre and broadly Stanislavskian principles, which have recently become suspect in the context of performing the ancient plays. For example, Peter Hall has spoken of his realization that his company had been 'wasting their time talking about motivation' and that 'the actor can tell the story (as opposed to acting a character) because his character is expressed by the mask.'[33]

It is true that he was referring to tragedies, but there remains a vague feeling amongst many commentators that using these tools from standard actor training will result in inappropriately 'psychologized' interpretations of the ancient plays, New Comedy included. In my own work with performers, however, we felt it our business to consider *what* was going on in the relationship between the two characters present (as well as the story they were helping to tell).

Focusing on the interaction taking place before the audience's eyes is what brings the scene to life. On the page Onesimos might be mistaken for a rubber stamp, continuously agreeing with the girl. His (extraordinary) agreement to a plan so little to his immediate advantage, and laying him open to betrayal, could give the impression that he is merely there as a dramatic device – someone to whom the girl can tell the story and with whom she can make her plan, rather than a character interesting in his own right. Playing the scene with the benefit of mainstream actorly approaches to script gave us an interesting Onesimos – a character who would do anything for this girl and, most heart-rending of all (we found ourselves really caring about him), who knows he's acting like a gull. After Habrotonon has gone in to his master to carry out her scheme Onesimos observes that she is 'one smart little girl' and then, as realization dawns:

> But me, I'll stay a slave for ever, drivelling and paralytic, quite incapable of a scheme like this. Still, if she pulls it off, perhaps something will come my way too. Well, it would only be fair. . . . You fool, Onesimos, expecting gratitude from a woman.[34]

There is a subtle psychological dimension to this portrayal of an inferior being with a degree of self-knowledge. Moreover, his chain of thought is realistically and movingly depicted, vacillating as it does between hope and despair.

The part played by masks in this needs clarification, as there has been a tendency by practitioners to dissociate these mainstream approaches to scenes and character from the performance of mask roles. The mask is often seen as having primacy, being the element from which the 'character' emerges. This is very limiting, and it is not clear how mask work and script are to be integrated. In my own work with actors, the characters and form of the action emerge simultaneously by

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means of an interplay between text work and trying things out in mask. (I describe this in more detail below.)

Some commentators also hold the view that masks in themselves preclude a psychological reading;[35] and the idea that masks are by nature about surface reality, and unable to represent figures with an inner life, is pervasive in recent classical scholarship. John Jones's comment on mask is often quoted in this context: 'It has – more important, it is known to have – no inside. Its being is exhausted in its features.'[36] This formulation conveys the idea of mask as an object that is all exteriority. However, it fails to take proper account of the life that the audience projects onto it, and what the audience sees when the mask worn by a performer appears as an integral part of a whole fictive being.

Masks with sufficient sensitivity are no barrier but rather lend themselves to the sort of subtle psychological reading I have described of the scene above. Moreover, they provide a strong visual and physical contrast between the two characters that makes their interaction delightful and renders the predicament of the physically inferior slave so poignant.

Whilst in my own work I have made considerable use of the sort of script work and broadly Stanislavskian techniques brought by actors with a standard training, I have also employed the specific techniques of mask theatre. I give an account of these now in an attempt to map out some basic practice essential to good mask theatre.[37]

Physicalizing the Action

Mask theatre is above all visual[38] (even when there is also a script) and the audience needs to *see* the action unfolding in a way that is quite different from naturalistic theatre. In order for this to happen the action needs to be broken down into a series of discrete sub-actions, each of which is conveyed visually by an appropriate move or gesture. The visible action is, in effect, like a series of still photographs with transitions between them (although the 'stills' may be almost imperceptible). To operate in what is essentially a dance-like mode the performers need to learn precision of movement. Together with their director they also need to find an economy of physical expression to produce a clear communication. Unnecessary moves will confuse an audience. Attention must also be paid to maintaining audience interest and for this there must be variety in the pattern of rhythms and forms employed.[39] To execute a (British army) salute, for example, the arm takes the 'longest way up', then the 'shortest way down', and between the two moves there is a moment of held tension – in all, promising material for visual/physical theatre.

Many practitioners believe that movement should start from the mask or the (masked) head. It is certainly important for the performer to be aware of the way the mask is being used and of the effect of the various tilts, movement sequences, and rhythms performed by the (masked) head, and of these in relation to the rest of the body. (Examples of such movements might be: moving the head slowly in an arc from one side to the other; moving it up to the right, across to the left, down to the left and over to the right; making small, sharp moves in various directions as though seeing an insect; and so on.)

From my own experience, while the masked head often leads, there are also instances where a move starts in another part of the body. The little shock of surprise, for example, when a character sees something unexpected (like a lost ring) may well emanate from the chest (the breast bone); logically this then takes the whole body in a backwards movement *before* the masked head moves to register surprise. This head movement might place the mask into full-frontal presentation to the audience (usually the most compelling position). In this move the surprise of the mask character is shared with the audience.

As with the masked head, the whole body or isolated parts of the body can also perform analogous types of stylized movement patterns. Understanding how and when to execute these is an important way of finding what Eugenio Barba has called the 'extra-daily' body.[40] This is vital, since the effect in mask of ordinary use of the body or 'naturalism' is a flat, unanimated performance.

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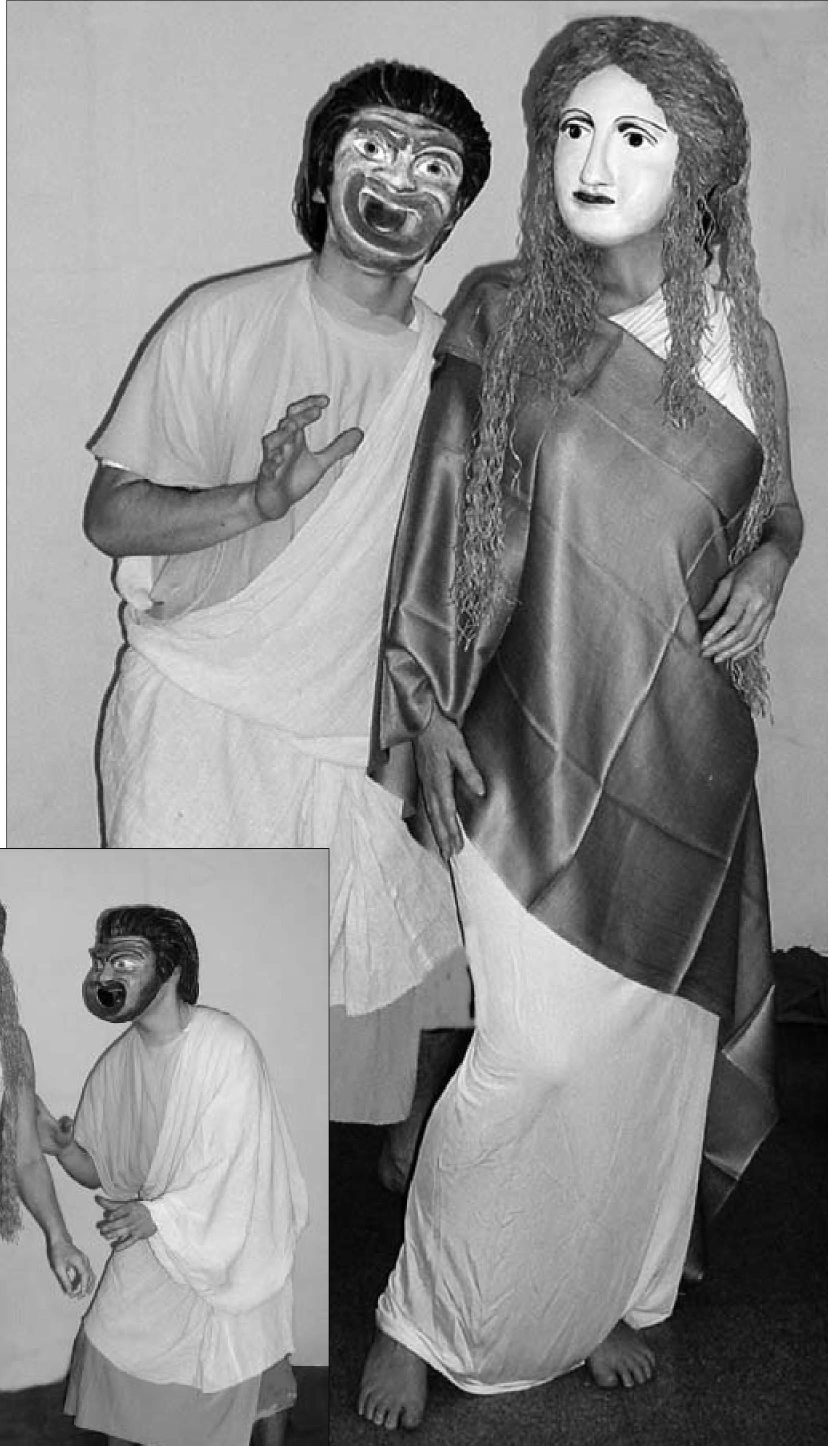

The Harp Girl and the Slave: Habrotonon and Onesimos from *Epitrepontes,* Act Three. Masks by Chris Vervain.

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The Range of the Mask

A basic exercise and one of the first that I give to actors new to mask work, is to find the central, full-frontal presentation of the mask and from this point to explore the different angles of presentation through the vertical and subsequently the horizontal planes that still 'work' or keep the mask 'active' for the audience. (There is a limit beyond which, if it is turned too far to the right or left or tilted too far up or down, the audience will 'lose the mask' – it no longer gives them a sense of the character or being that they saw when the mask *was* in range.)

In the theatre of naturalism the audience has no problem focusing on characters when they have lost contact with the performer's face – as in a 'realistic' conversation, when actors face one another or even have their backs to the audience. For mask theatre such realism does not work, and performers have to use their knowledge of a mask's range to maintain contact with the audience. Although this concept seems simple, it becomes complicated in practice when the viewpoint of the audience is variable.

In the large ancient Greek theatres, audiences were seated around three-quarters of the circular orchestra and in ascending tiers to a considerable height up the hillside. The action of fourth-century New Comedy would have been performed on a high narrow stage in front of the *skene* building, so that there would have been less variability in audience viewpoint on the horizontal plane compared with fifth-century performances, when it seems likely that the *orchestra* would have been the main performance area. There would still, though, have been considerable vertical variation.

Perhaps the key to performing in such spaces is for the actor to keep a sense of contact between the mask and every part of the audience, ensuring that no part is neglected for too long. It is perhaps also relevant to consider who would have occupied the advantageous central front row positions. (In fifth-century Athens this would have been the god Dionysus – in the form of his cult statue, for whose benefit the performances took place – together with his priests and other city dignitaries.)

In my own work creating masked New Comedy for a modern audience I have tended to work with a fixed audience viewpoint in mind. The fact that the material was being videoed and/or performed in intimate spaces has been one reason for this.[41] I also want to use modern mask theatre techniques that result in a precise and clear action, with powerful visual images and stage configurations. These techniques are not wholly incompatible with a more variable audience viewpoint, but rather need to be adapted for a more complex situation. (Given limitations in time and the need to train actors in basic mask techniques, taking on additional complexity was beyond the scope of the projects described here.)

Mask theatre can be played with a 'presentational' style directly *to* the audience, and there are times in Menander's plays when the audience does appear to be directly addressed.[42] This style is not essential for mask theatre, and if it is used continuously it can become wearying for the audience. It also tends to preclude a more subtle portrayal of character and situation. However, even when the audience is not directly addressed, they need to feel contact with the mask. To achieve this, performers have to use their knowledge of range, and at times the mask must be seen by the audience in its strongest position (usually full-frontal), a position which resembles that of the 'presentational' mode. Audiences can, though, sense the difference between this and a character engaging in an audible internal monologue.

With mask theatre all the action must be opened up and shared with the audience. For example, in a conversation between two characters a useful convention to employ is to have the speaker facing (mask full-front) towards the audience. S(he) talks to the other character but *for* the audience.

Focus and Clarity of the External Form

To attain clarity in mask theatre the audience's attention at any moment needs to be directed to one point of focus. There are

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Drawing by Chris Vervain after wall painting from Pompeii of New Comedy scene: slave and young couple.

various ways of doing this. One is for the performer in focus to present their mask frontally while the others reinforce this by looking at that person. In the example given above of a typical conversation between two mask characters, the person speaking faces the audience whilst the second person looks at the first. The first speaker then looks at the second, giving them focus for their reply. (For actors trained in naturalism this feels perverse!) This, however, is a good practice with which to become familiar rather than constituting a fixed principle of staging.[43]

While it is often important for the audience's attention to be mainly on the person speaking, at other times a character's reaction to the speaker is highlighted. A clear visual depiction of action and reaction, together with the characters' thought processes, are what bring masked comedy, notably New Comedy, to life. A wall painting from Pompeii depicting a New Comedy scene clearly shows that these principles were understood in the ancient theatre. In it a slave is speaking, and his gesturing hand leaves this in no doubt. His mask is in the full-frontal position in relation to the viewer and his focal position is reinforced by the two other characters who look at him so that their masks are seen in profile (see illustration above).

Action that is clearly depicted in visual terms together with a distinct focal point

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should show the audience which masked character is speaking at any moment, even if the speaker's moving mouth is invisible. (The full-faced masks in Peter Hall's productions have been blamed for difficulty in locating the speaker,[44] but clarity could have been increased by adopting these techniques.)[45]

In this sort of careful staging, precision and timing are crucial. The exact position of characters in the performance space at any time is more important than in naturalistic plays. When characters talk to one another, or see something happening, they need to be in a position where this appears plausible but also enables the audience to see the mask, when this is relevant. This means that the external forms, including emotional responses, need to be choreographed. There is some evidence that ancient mask productions were conceived and performed in this way. Descriptions by the Roman commentator Quintilian indicate 'the meticulous care paid by actors to voice and movement', including 'inclinations of the head in different directions'.[46]

Conveying Emotion

I have earlier described how the faces of New Comedy masks were designed with certain asymmetries to make them appear to change expression as the mask moves. However, it is simplistic to speak of the mask portraying different emotions at different angles. Rather, the total physical presence of the masked performer in the scene being played produces the communication by which the audience read various emotions in the mask face.

Moreover, there are external and internal dimensions to the way that the performer can portray emotion. One approach is concerned predominantly with external form, and is particularly relevant to a genre of stock characters lacking psychological depth. The other starts from an exploration of emotion within the actor and leads to the discovery of a suitable form. Both techniques are relevant to the hybrid genre of New Comedy.

Following the first, performers start by finding the typical physicality of their character: the way they stand, walk, and perform simple actions, and their characteristic gestures. They then imagine situations in which their character feels a specific emotion and find a fitting form. The initial work on the characters' typical stance and gestures may suggest a predominant emotion in their basic make up, but this does not prevent them experiencing the full range of emotions. For example, a character whose body language suggests a basic sadness (tending to close in, head drooping, gazing down, shoulders up, etc.) can none the less be happy in the present moment, but in a manner different from one whose body language suggests an underlying carefree nature, while the latter being temporarily sad will be quite different from the former.

This approach to portraying emotion, starting from the outside, may initiate internal changes within the performer, and so can be seen as an 'outer-to-inner' exploration. The other approach to portraying emotion is an 'inner-to-outer' process. Working individually, actors imagine a situation in which they felt a particular emotion and then internally relive their experience of it, making note of how it affects the body. This observation can be fairly detailed, and include the breath, gaze, taste in the mouth, space under the armpits, any tightening of the buttocks, and so on.

The next stage is to allow these physical changes into the body and then selectively to transform them by, for instance, scaling them up. By these means an external form is found for each emotion that is based on real experience even though it has become removed from 'reality' through a process of stylization. The audience will sense the 'truth' if the stylized form is appropriately linked to the original emotion.

With both approaches the body architecture found can be analyzed in terms of: overall body shape (the side-view silhouette can be crucial), zones of tension and relaxation, whether the body is closing in or opening out, and the rhythms of movement (including the breath). Also with both approaches an 'external eye' is essential to refine the discovered external forms.

I have spoken of an inner dimension to this work. The question of the extent to

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The actor's feelings made visible on the face of the mask: terrified actor (left) becomes flying god.

which the performer needs to feel a real emotion is one that has, over the years, excited much discussion and debate.[47] In both of the two approaches described here it is possible to portray emotion with only the external form (if this has been well enough observed). Extreme emotions such as grief together with real-life tears would anyway make effective mask performance impossible. On the other hand, mimicking the rhythmical breath and the spasmodic rising and falling of the chest that accompanies weeping can be utterly convincing, if well done.

There are, of course, intermediate positions between entire and no emotion. Moreover, in my experience, when actors' imaginations are engaged and they have a clear image in their mind, it can seem as though their thoughts and feelings are visible on the surface of the mask face (see pictures above).[48]

I have described here some special techniques which together constitute a very basic movement vocabulary. They are basic in the sense that they can be applied in conjunction with a number of different performance styles. Acquiring mastery in these techniques is the focus of much training in physical theatre schools. However, performers tend to practise them in relation to a few specific genres, and this creates habitual modes of physical practice that are often hard to break. An analogous situation pertains in the dance world – dancers trained in one of the oriental dance theatres, for example, operate from a lower centre of gravity than do western ballet dancers. This produces a wholly different quality of movement.

Initiating an approach to New Comedy through the mask, especially with physical theatre performers, carries with it the danger of anachronistic and insensitive interpreta-

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tions of the plays. The highly asymmetric nature of some of the masks (particularly those of slaves and some old men) can easily result in a gross type of physical comedy in styles appropriate to genres already familiar to these performers, but that do little to enhance our understanding or enjoyment of the New Comedy plays. (The design and facture of the masks is also important, as a crude mask will call forth a correspondingly crude performance). The production of the *Samia* mentioned above, commissioned by Brea, with actors trained in *commedia dell'arte*, is a case in point.[49] The over-large masks, whose effect was to 'pull the play towards farce', led to a distorted interpretation of the genre.[50]

In my own work I have looked for a reading of the plays that brings out their humane qualities and subtlety of understanding. For this reason I have tended to work with mainstream actors who bring with them no preconceptions or habits concerning masks or physicalization and who are able to find in the texts the qualities I want to emphasize. The way in which their broadly Stanislavskian techniques can be integrated with the mask is the question I shall now address.

A Synthesis of Modern Approaches

Most mainstream drama schools today teach what may be loosely described as a 'Stanislavskian' approach. More flexible than Method acting, it gives actors, amongst other things, a sort of toolkit for approaching scripts.

During an intensive New Comedy workshop I asked the group of mainstream actors with whom I was working whether their training conflicted with performing in mask. (I had included on the project a basic training in the mask and physical theatre techniques relevant to masked New Comedy.) Their response was that they still found a 'truth in performance' and they found characters with objectives in the plays. The fact that these were to be played in mask and were 'mask characters' did not alter this.

Wearing their mask fairly early in the process actually helped them to find and keep a sense of their character by providing a clear visual and physical basis for their character exploration. Utilizing their Stanislavskian training, they still found it relevant to think about the given circumstances of the world of the play, in particular the 'W-questions' (questions concerning 'Who?, What? Where?, and Why?'). They needed additional background information on social context to clarify some otherwise obscure passages of dialogue, and also on ancient ways of thinking about different character types, but this was in keeping with their training and deepened their understanding of the masks.

When the question of sub-text arose, they agreed that whilst Menander lacked the complex psychology to be found in Ibsen or Chekhov, it was nevertheless possible at times to find layers of meaning or interaction beneath the surface of the spoken lines which, applied in the performances, brought to life some otherwise apparently overlong and pointless scenes.

The main conflict – or rather difference, since their training had made them prepared to be very flexible – was that performing with mask introduced a particular set of technical issues affecting the realization in terms of style and staging (the 'How?') of performance. A major difference here concerned the portrayal of emotion. A revolutionary feature of Stanislavsky's thought was that the actor should not attempt to portray emotion but should rather focus on the objectives of their character. Emotion would then be communicated but with greater clarity and truth. In the type of mask training that I give performers, clarity of visual form is essential, and this means that it is often useful to deliberately portray the physical form of a particular emotion rather than allowing it to emerge as a by-product. This is an important difference, but the actors were not overly concerned so long as the emotion to be portrayed made sense (rang true) in terms of the objectives of the characters.

Concerning the plays, the actors were initially puzzled by the mixed nature of the genre and its juxtaposition of farce and tragedy, of subtle and grossly drawn characters. They also saw that at times the script seemed to call for a presentational style of

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Moschion and his baby son, from the *Samia*, Act One. Masks by Chris Vervain.

performance with a direct address to the audience and that at other times the dramatic frame apparently remained intact. However, they found that the masks helped them to reconcile these otherwise disparate elements. They were also able to use their Stanislavskian training in a pragmatic fashion, adopting or discarding it as needed.

Where the characters were more finely drawn, the actors' ability to immerse themselves imaginatively in their parts worked together with the possibilities for subtle play in the masks. One example of this occurred in a scene from Menander's *Samia* when an actor playing the young father of an illegitimate baby brought an unexpected depth to the part by expressing a wish to hold his child (see above). At other times when this sort of 'in-depth' work was inappropriate, the actors were happy not to use it.

'Charging the Mask'

I have tried out various approaches to masks with my actors. Sometimes they have seen the scripts in advance of donning the masks, sometimes not. In the latter case, I used a truncated version of the sort of 'in-depth' individual exploration of a particular mask described earlier. However, among all the approaches tried, one called 'Charging the Mask' has proved universally popular. This exercise enables actors to find, very quickly, a fully physicalized mask character able to speak the lines given by the play (providing some script work has been done first). It

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bypasses a relatively long (and potentially tedious) process and allows a number of useful options that are particularly relevant to theatrical performance.

In this exercise the performer finds an integration with his/her mask through the medium of an unmasked partner. The pair stand facing one another and the latter starts by reacting physically (with moves and gestures but no sound initially) to what (s)he sees in the other and feels is needed, knowing the part to be played. The masked actor responds in turn, and they play off each other for a while, having a sort of dance-like 'conversation'. When the moment seems right, the unmasked partner introduces sound and subsequently words and finally text from the part to be played.

One of the many positive features of this ingenious exercise is that it helps to achieve an integration of mask and performer relevant to the part to be played. The latter is able to feel this 'from the inside' without the need to process verbal feedback (it is difficult for a performer to maintain spontaneity when a partner is telling rather than showing them how it looks). The unmasked person is in a sense 'acting as a mirror', but the effect is more subtle and less distorting than work with an actual mirror.

As its name suggests, the exercise also energizes performers, but by putting them into a playful, relaxed, and outgoing mode (very important, since some other 'in-depth' explorations with mask can encourage inward focus by performers which is arguably unhelpful when preparing for the ancient plays). All these elements – energy, play, relaxation, connectedness (within the performer and between the performer and others, the audience and the space) – are essential to effective mask theatre. Moreover, during the course of the exercise the unmasked partner can place him/herself in the position of an audience member, if necessary going some distance from the mask. All too often when performers work in response to the visual cues of the mask they are only regarding it close to, whereas a mask will appear quite differently when viewed from a distance – a significant factor in large-scale theatres.

There is a widespread feeling amongst mask practitioners that bringing a mask to life in the theatre is essentially to do with the performer's relationship with their mask; and that this in turn is affected by the way mask has been approached. In my experience, these factors, while important, are not the whole story. The performers also need to feel secure with their parts (which includes knowing their lines and moves).

As with unmasked performance, actors' abilities to engage with their parts pass through various stages in the rehearsal process. Whilst lively work may emerge in preliminary exercises with the mask, when an attempt is made to integrate the script there is usually a dropping off in engagement with the mask. If a small group has prepared a scene for an initial showing to other workshop participants, then the energy may pick up again at this point, only to fall off once more when the scene is undergoing further refinement. (After groups have worked on their own and shown the results, I usually take over direction of the scene with the aim of shaping it into a plausible and hopefully stunning piece of mask theatre.)

Ideally, at the end of this process everything comes together, the performers are secure in what they are doing and saying, and are able to become sufficiently energized and connected with their mask to impart life to it.

Conclusion

In this paper I have given some account of a modern 'orthodoxy' of mask practice, pointing to a bias towards improvised and nonverbal performance. This is followed by a brief discussion of theatrical masks, in particular the way those most commonly seen in the West today differ from those of ancient Greece. I argue that the particular nature of the New Comedy archaeological finds and of Menander's plays calls for a certain type of mask, and describe some of the thinking behind my own mask reconstructions for the genre.

How the masks might work in practice is illustrated by describing my work with actors

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on a scene from one of Menander's plays. The usefulness of standard Stanislavskian actor training emerges here, although in the context of the particular needs of mask theatre. Accordingly, I then describe some of the special techniques of mask theatre and their use in enacting scenes. Finally, I consider the possibility and advantages of finding a synthesis between mainstream and physical theatre approaches in performing masked Menander.

It is an accident of history that the different skills needed successfully to perform the ancient drama in mask are today distributed between separate camps with opposed philosophies of performance. This makes it difficult to find actors with the full range of appropriate training and approach to mask and script. Moreover, masked comedy is frequently associated with broad comic genres such as *commedia dell'arte*. Attempts to act New Comedy with performers from this background can result in very distorted modern readings of Menander's plays. The masks employed in these productions have also been disappointing, lacking the fineness and sensitivity that can be seen in many of the ancient artefacts that suit the needs of New Comedy. With very limited resources, I have tried to show that a fuller integration of the spirit of the original plays and masks, with today's performance techniques, is possible.

There is therefore considerable scope for more work in this area: firstly in researching the ancient masks and producing good quality reconstructions; and secondly working with a company of suitable actors over a sufficiently long period to give them training in the disparate skills needed to produce good masked versions of the ancient plays today.

Notes and References

1. I am greatly indebted to David Wiles for his encouragement and helpful suggestions in writing this paper.

2. For example, Judi Dench is reported as saying that she wished she had been part of Hall's *Oedipus* production 'until she remembered the masks and felt profoundly releved she wasn't'. Quoted in Georgina Brown, 'Behind the Ironic Mask', *The Independent*, 14 August 1996.

3. One entire play survives, along with fragments (some of them substantial) of others.

4. For example, J. M. Walton speaks of the 'disappointment' of scholars with the first substantial discovery of Menander's work in the 1950s in Kenneth McLeish and J. M. Walton, 'Aristophanes and Menander', *New Comedy* (Methuen, 1994), p. xxiii. S. M. Goldberg suggests that the plays, 'especially when read in translation, sometimes seem flat and predictable', in *The Making of Menander's Comedy* (London: Athlone Press, 1980), p. 12.

5. Accounts of Peter Hall's mask induction sessions which speak of 'liberating' actors into a manifestation of 'primitive' behaviours sound traumatic and potentially damaging (see, for instance, Georgina Brown, op. cit.). Such an approach to mask is unnecessary.

6. This was in August 2001. Since that date I have had no involvement in the ongoing research of the Glasgow University project.

7. Peter Hall, platform discussion, Olivier Theatre, 21 September 1996.

8. For example, Keith Johnstone declared himself 'shocked' at George Devine 'allowing actors to talk as themselves whilst actually wearing the Masks'. See K. Johnstone, *Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre* (Methuen Drama, 1979), p. 144.

9. See, for example, Keith Johnstone's section on 'Masks and Trance', ibid.

10. Recently, detailed mask work programmes have appeared in published form, notably Sears A. Eldredge, *Mask Improvisation for Actor Training and Performance: the Compelling Image* (Northwestern University Press, 1996).

11. An alternative formulation that avoids a psychological interpretation speaks of the performer finding a particular 'body architecture' that relates to the form of the mask – e.g., the dynamic properties of its interacting planes and linear elements, its colour(s), etc.

12. For Hall's *Oedipus* plays there were eleven weeks of 'full rehearsals' in addition to a four-day preliminary 'workshop'. See Peter Reynolds, *Unmasking Oedipus* (National Theatre, 1996).

13. Peter Hall, *Exposed by the Mask* (Oberon Books, 2000), p. 35–6.

14. A good account of the principles involved in terms of actual theatre practice is given by Richard Hornby in *The End of Acting: a Radical View* (Applause Theatre Books, 1992).

15. John Wright, a leading practitioner, sees 'Physical Theatre' as 'any form of theatre that puts movement and action before voice and text', *Total Theatre*, XII, No. 2 (2000), p. 20.

16. Jacques Lecoq, cited by David Wiles, *The Masks of Menander* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 104, note 15.

17. Depictions of the masks on fifth-century vase paintings suggest that this was the case.

18. See, for example, John Jones, *On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy* (London: Chatto, 1962).

19. See, for example, W. G. Arnott, *Menander, Vol. 1* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Loeb, 1979); T. B. L. Webster, in *An Introduction to Menander* (Manchester, 1974), p. 89–94, makes a similar point.

20. See Wiles, *The Masks of Menander*, Ch. 3.

21. See, for example, Norma Miller's introduction to Menander, *Plays and Fragments* (London: Penguin, 1987), p. 7–9, 12, 14; also the more detailed analysis by writers such as Netta Zagagi, in *The Comedy of Menander: Convention, Variation and Originality* (London: Duckworth, 1994), and Goldberg, *The Making of Menander's Comedy*.

22. This ability of a mask to play many different parts is perhaps related to the idea of 'counter-mask'.

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23. David Wiles in *The Masks of Menander* argues that in the system of New Comedy masks, 'The slave was constructed as a negative (of) the ideal Greek male' (p. 157). However, despite these distorted facial features, complexion and hair would have correlated to some extent with their racial origins (p. 171).

24. The distinction between the two genres is also articulated by Mario Prosperi, in 'The Masks of Lipari', *The Drama Review*, XXVI, No. 4 (Winter 1982), p. 36.

25. Photographs appear in Mario Prosperi, ibid.

26. This included scenes from Plautus and Terence as well as Menander.

27. Illustrations and details of the productions can be seen in Karl Gotthilf Kachler, *Maskenspiele aus Basler Tradition, 1936–74* (Basel: Christoph Merian Verlag, 1986).

28. Commentators generally agree that it is an epitome of an earlier work, although its exact nature is unknown.

29. I am grateful to the Kelvingrove Museum in Glasgow, the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, and the Petrie Museum at University College London for allowing me a close inspection of their New Comedy artefacts; also to Richard Williams for drawing my attention to this material. It was his enthusiasm for Menander that first alerted me to its dramatic possibilities.

30. These subtle asymmetries can also be found in the faces of Greek sculpture.

31. See Wiles, *The Masks of Menander*, p. 116–68, and videos of a demonstration on Didaskalia (http://didaskalia.open.ac.uk/issues/vol5no1/Williams/williamslar01.html).

32. Jean Benedetti, in *Stanislavski: an Introduction* (Methuen, 2000), p. 46–7, usefully discusses this term, pointing out firstly Stanislavski's realization that 'dialogue is situational' and also that 'the printed words do not contain the full meaning' but 'depend on what lies beneath them, on the sub-text'.

33. Reported by Heather Neill, *The Times*, 14 May 2002.

34. In the translation by Norma Miller to Menander, *Plays and Fragments*, p. 94.

35. In Oliver Taplin's view the masks 'de-psychologized' Hall's *Tantalus* production of 2000. See his 'Masks in Greek Tragedy and *Tantalus*', 2001 (www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/people.ottantalus).

36. Jones, *On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy*, p. 45.

37. This has been gleaned over a number of years from a variety of practitioners and approaches to mask and physical theatre who have come out of the modern western 'tradition', and also from the older eastern traditions, particularly Noh theatre. (These latter have in any case influenced modern western mask practice.) I am particularly indebted to the teaching of Lorna Marshall.

38. This does not downgrade the status of the text, nor even preclude psychological interpretation; rather, it affects *how* information is conveyed to the audience.

39. There are also other patterns that performers need to understand, such as the comic rule of three, when and how to build to a climax, etc.

40. Eugenio Barba and Nicola Savarese, *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: the Secret Art of the Performer* (London; New York: Routledge, 1991).

41. Mostly the videoing is for my own research, but my masks and performers will also feature in the *Discovery* documentary series, 'The Seven Wonders of Ancient Greece,' scheduled for transmission in the summer of 2004.

42. See David Wiles, *The Masks of Menander*, op. cit., p. 30.

43. There are times when it is not convenient to use this convention, e.g. when a character is looking down. Conventions also need to be broken from time to time lest they become, and are perceived as, easy and boring formulae.

44. For example, Martin Esslin, writing in *Plays and Players*, Jan. 1982, and in *Plays International*, Nov. 1996.

45. Hall on the one hand insists that 'Full masks do not look at one another' and that the protagonist masks, of necessity, are 'always presented to the audience, telling the story of the character'; but also, somewhat confusingly, that the protagonists 'never speak to the audience'. Hall, *Exposed by the Mask*, p. 34, 32.

46. Wiles, *The Masks of Menander*, p. 197–8.

47. In the modern era, Denis Diderot's essay *Le Paradoxe sur le comedien*, published posthumously in 1830, initiated the debate between the validity of 'external' as against 'internal' theories of acting. A useful discussion appears in Hornby, *The End of Acting*.

48. We see this effect because the mask is worn by a performer and is not an object operating in isolation. For this reason it is wrong to equate mask only with the underlying disposition or *ethos* of a character, not expressing their transient thoughts and feelings. See Wiles, *The Masks of Menander*, op. cit., p. 94. The mask in performance will seem to express both.

49. The recent work of the University of Glasgow New Comedy project, constructing crudely conceived masks based as far as possible on specific ancient artefacts and employing performers from the *commedia* tradition, repeats some of the same mistakes.

50. Review by François Jouan of a revival of the production in 1989 cited in Wiles, *Masks of Menander*, p. 109

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