

The Shock of Presence Peter Brook & Jerzy Grotowski-The Reinvention of Australian Theatre.

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Abstract: Peter Brook and Jerzy Grotowski were

seminal influences upon the Australian performance revolution in the 1970s and into the 1980s through the methodologies and concepts of theatre practice outlined in their respective texts: *The Empty Space* and *Towards a Poor Theatre*. These manifestos served as a blue print for a theatrical groundswell emerging from Melbourne in the early 1970s in Carlton at both La Mama and Australian Performance Group (APG) at the Pram Factory, and at the same time in Sydney with the Nimrod theatre and Rex Cramphorn's Performance Syndicate. An examination reveals these Directors shared spiritual and traditional sources from Eastern European backgrounds (Brook being of Russian Jewish heritage and Grotowski Eastern Orthodox Catholic), the approach of Constantin Stanislavski (particularly for Grotowski), and their mutual reverence for the teachings of Armenian mystic, George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff. An analysis of key moments and how Brook and Grotowski were central figures in the initiation of an Australian performance revolution of the 1970s; and the performance renaissance which emerged from women's theatre as a reaction to the male-centric 'ocker' sensibilities at the time during a movement in which Brook and Grotowski figured prominently. How Brook and Grotowski's methodological ideas uncovering meaning in tradition and deeper levels of performance enquiry were sidelined, and eventually marginalized to all but a few fringe groups as a result of mainstream performance concerns with aesthetic considerations, and the globalization of economic rationalism is observed.

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