THE WORK OF MONIKA PAGNEUX

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

This thesis does not contain material which has been accepted for any other degree in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by any other person, except where due reference is given in the text.

Signature: Helen V. Sanderson
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ABSTRACT

In the last fifty years, there has been a concern in the theatre world especially in Europe, about how to train actors to be open and responsive. One of the most respected and well-known teachers in this area is Monika Pagneux who taught for many years in Paris and now aged in her seventies, works as a freelance artist around the world. Her area of expertise is movement for actors. The aim of her work is to develop not only a responsive body but also an open and alive actor who is able to be creative in a disciplined yet risk-taking manner.

This thesis is an investigation of the work of Monika Pagneux, including her fundamental principles and platforms of teaching movement for actors. A portrait of her work will be drawn and her influence on other performing arts practitioners. The data comes from three sources: my own field notes based on six weeks of classes in Australia and Paris, additional class notes by a movement expert and ten responses to an open ended questionnaire by former students. Their answers provide insights into the impact of her teaching professionally, in their lives and how they were transformed by her practice.

Her method of teaching is a part of the European theatre training performance culture. In order to put her work in context, the significant director/teachers who have contributed to her development, such as Moshe Feldenkrais, Jacques Lecoq and Peter Brook will also be discussed.
This thesis examines the qualities of the master teacher/artist, and argues that Monika Pagneux fulfils this description or model. Her work has had little formal recognition or documentation. This study attempts to record some of the main aspects and qualities of her teaching.