FOREWORD

This book is addressed first to actors and their needs for expressive bodies, ability to play in heroic dimensions, simplicity and economy in movement, and freedom in assuming roles.

Masks, though, can offer everyone a certain self-knowledge; through a false face one can find a true face.

Masks are not an end in themselves, but simply a learning tool for anyone who responds to them, and for actors who most of the time will play without masks. The benefits of mask work can be achieved without an actual mask, by letting the face become the mask, but the physical object, through its associations with metamorphosis, magic, and identification, make the way infinitely easier.
PREFACE

per•son•na [Latin persona, mask, PERSON]
(a)person / mask / person(a) person / mask / role

A mask is a role: many faces, many facets.

A mask effaces who we are, to show who we want to be.

A mask hides, and reveals that which it hides.

A mask is oneself, the realization of the inner spirit, and A mask is the “other”: person, animal, god . . .

A mask can be voluntary, and A mask can be involuntary.

A mask can aid communication, and A mask can hinder communication.

A mask permits all, and A mask imprisons in the fixed role.

A mask confers immortality, and A mask confers death.

A mask offers solitude, and A mask offers participation.
A mask is a medium of truth, for even when it is meant to lie, its very use to hide or cover reveals the subterfuge.

A mask is a link with what we cannot otherwise touch: the spirit of the god, the dead, the other.
A mask is the instrument of metamorphosis, a way to reach the powers to which it appeals; the wearer is the channel to the god, then becomes the channel through which its response is passed to the members of the tribe.

If the body is dull, if the mind is dull, the mask is meaningless.

The mask which an actor wears is apt to become his face.  
– Plato

We adopt the mask, live with the mask, and finally become the mask.  
– Paul Valery

Masks cannot be put on or taken off in public, since putting on a mask turns a person into a spirit, and lends him supernatural qualities.  
– Masked Rituals of the Afikpo

The artist flows into the mask the poet offers him; only so will the god possess him.  
– Mary Renault

Masks are dreams caught and fixed.  
– Georges Buraud

I wonder if a mask, being universal, enhances our relations with others more than does the naked face?  
– Kobo Abe
“Persona” also means “character”; “character” and “stage personage” have often been synonymous. In effect, one is or one has a character only in relation to others, one shows it, represents it. It is a kind of mask, but it also what we are.

– Alessandro Pizzorno
Behind the Mask