



Paul Baker and the Integration of Abilities

Edited by Robert Flynn, Edited by Eugene McKinney



Irritating, arrogant, nuts - and a genius, That's what Charles Laughton said of Paul Baker. He also said, Paul Baker is one of the most important minds in the world theater today. He seems to have invented new ways of doing things, and I think something big will come out of it. Something big did come out of it. Stage productions such as Othello, Hamlet and A Cloud of Witnesses brought critics including Henry Hewes of Saturday Review and photographers such as Eliot Elisofon of Life magazine to Baylor Theater in Waco. Bakers production of Eugene McKinneys A Different Drummer received an invitation from CBS TVs cultural program. Omnibus, to present the play live from their New York studio. Bakers production of As I Lay Dying, Robert Flynns adaptation of William Faulkners novel, brought an invitation to present the play at the Theater of Nations in Paris, the first non-Broadway production to compete there, where it won a Special Jury Award. That was Paul Baker the theater director. Equally important was Bakers role as teacher and mentor in the arts. Architect Arthur Rogers stated, No single person has contributed more to (theater architecture) development than Paul Baker. Bakers architectural visions at Baylor Theater, the Dallas Theater Center, and Trinity Universitys Ruth Taylor Theater have inspired similar constructions not only in the United States but in unexpected places such as Manila and Seoul. Bakers teaching philosophy, based on his famous class. The Integration of Abilities, has been inspirational. In education Baker has been founder, mentor, or director of childrens theaters where children are the creators of the drama, of the Booker T. Washington School of the Learning About Learning Foundation, a retail line of interactive kits that included books and toys and dozens of creative programs for children, parents, and educators. In Paul Baker and the Integration of Abilities Baker tells how a summer in Paris gave him a new way of looking at theater. Eugene McKinney describes Bakers development of writers, and Glenn Allen Smith demonstrates the use of the elements in creating a play. In other chapters on acting, directing, speech, and design, Bakers ideas gave roots and wings to his students and colleagues. Despite invitations from theaters in other places including Austria, Germany, Yugoslavia and New Zealand and offers of positions at other universities Baker chose to remain in Texas where he was born and where he lives today.

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