

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Keith Johnstone, internationally recognized pioneer of improvisation, creator of Theatresports, and co-founder of the Loose Moose Theatre, dies at 90

Calgary, Alberta, Canada – Keith Johnstone passed away on Saturday, March 11, 2023, at The Rockyview Hospital.

Keith Johnstone was a titan of the international improvisational theatre world. A master teacher, creator, director, and writer who, over half a century, inspired students with his unique impro system of training. His book *Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre* (1979) has been translated into numerous languages, is often called “the improviser’s bible,” and continues to be included on recommended reading lists as one of the greatest books on creativity and spontaneous collaboration for theatre makers and professionals working in disciplines as diverse as education, social science, and business.

Keith began developing his methods at the Royal Court Theatre (1956-1966) where he was a playwright, head of the script department, a director, influential member of the famous Writers’ Group, expert on Samuel Beckett, and head of the RCT Studio for professional actors. Around 1965, Keith began directing “demonstrations of improvised comedy” at RCT, in schools, and on London stages. Remarkable because, until the Theatres Act of 1968 brought censorship to an end, improvisation performances in public were illegal.

At the RCT Studio, Keith discovered the actors that would become The Theatre Machine (1967), Britain’s first pure improvisational troupe. Under Keith’s direction, Theatre Machine toured throughout Europe amassing large numbers of fans. Keith also taught at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (1966-‘71) and was invited to teach and direct internationally almost every year over the next five decades.

Keith left London for Canada in 1972 and began a long tenure teaching at the University of Calgary, retiring as professor emeritus in 1995. He co-founded The Loose Moose Theatre Company in 1977, the company that launched Theatresports, the format that took Keith’s impro all over the world, and the careers of a generation of actors, comics, and writers. Keith served as artistic director of Loose Moose until 1998.

Keith continued teaching internationally up until 2018 and is considered by many as one of the greatest innovators and teachers of contemporary theatre practices used worldwide.

For further resources (e.g., names of notable alumni around the world, high-resolution images, biographical or archive info, etc.), please contact:

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