

Theatre Virtual Learning

Acting 3 & 4 Commedia dell'arte

April 28, 2020



Adv. Acting Lesson: [April 28]

Objective/Learning Target:
The student will explore the acting style,
Commedia dell'arte.



Let's Get Started / Warm Up Activities:

What comes to mind when you hear the word improvisation?
Watch the video, and enjoy one example of improvisation!

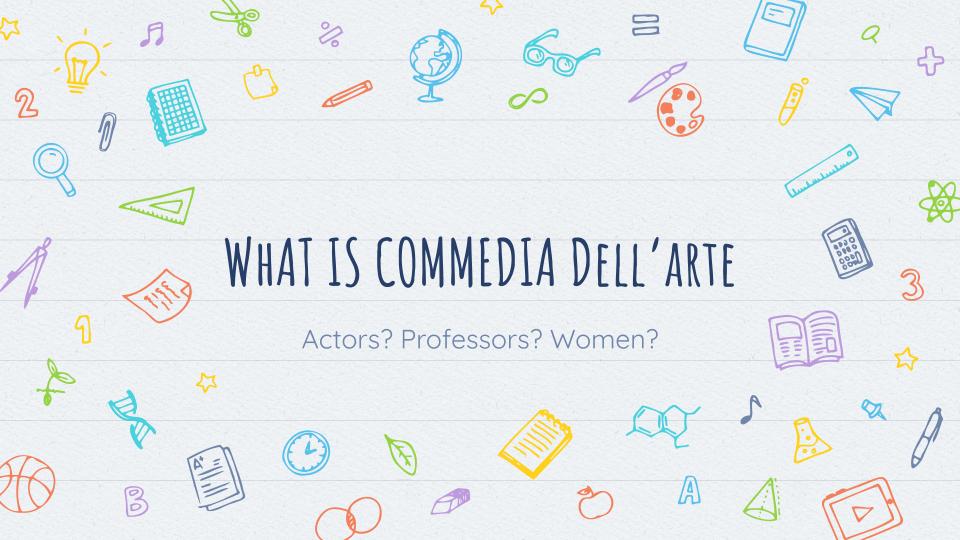






Lesson Steps:

Today, you will go through information about Commedia dell'arte. As you go through, you will be asked to stop and reflect periodically. At the end of the lesson you will do a character activity.



WHAT IS COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE?

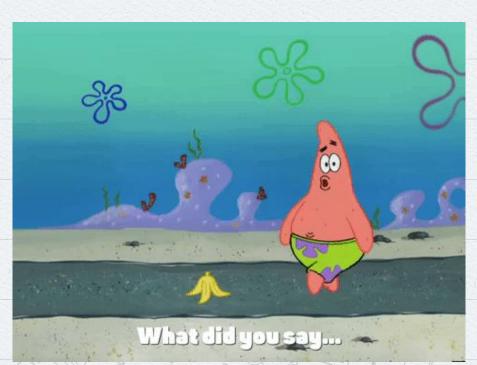
Commedia Dell'Arte is a semi-scripted Improvised Play that uses stock characters and humor to tell a story.

- Commedia Dell'Arte translates to Comedy of Art in English.
- Actors wore masks to portray the different 'stock characters.

Commedia originated in Italy.

- Commedia troupes began their performances in the 16th century.
- Commedia continued to be popular well into the late
 18th century.
- Commedia spread all over Europe and still has a lasting impression on our current comedy.

STOP & REFLECT IN THE NAME OF HUMOR...



Now you know that you are learning about an early comedic style! What makes you laugh?



TRAVELING ACTING TROUPES (USUALLY 10-12
PEOPLE) TRAVELED FROM TOWN TO TOWN, SHARING
FINANCES AND PETITIONING TO PERFORM.
THEY GENERALLY SOUGHT OUT UNRECOGNIZED
TALENT TO JOIN THEIR TROUPES, THOSE OF WHICH
INCLUDED...



COMMEDIA ACTORS

- * Acrobats
- * Street Performers
- Educated Actors/Scholars
- x Women?

This was the first time women were truly allowed to act and perform on stage. In England women wouldn't be allowed to perform until 1660, 50 years after Shakespeare's death. Troupes usually had 7-8 men and 3-4 women.

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STOCK CHARACTERS

Stock Characters

The Commedia plays were focused on interactions between different social types. These different social types were called 'Stock Characters'. They were very over exaggerated stereotypes of different personality traits.





MASKS WORN BY CHARACTERS

Masks

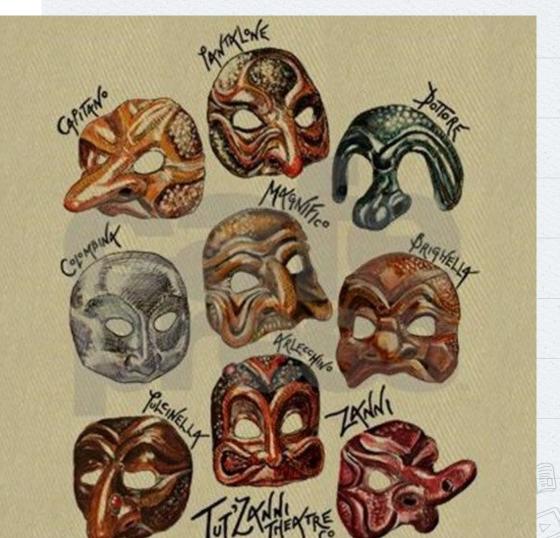
Each stock character wore a special mask to accentuate their emotions and features.

The only two characters to not wear masks were The Lovers.

The masks also helped the audience immediately know which personality that actor was portraying.

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STOCK CHARACTER TYPES

All Commedia characters can be broken down into 4 categories!.

The Servants (Zanni)	Old Men	The Lovers	Captains
The servants were used to move the plot along by always	The old men like to show off their knowledge and try to	These two characters spend most of the play trying to marry each	These characters are strong and loud. They like to show off their
messing things up. Most servants are	seduce young women. Usually seen eating	other, but the antics of the other actors	power over the zanni. Many times were
dumb, but a few are	lots of food and	usually stops them along the way.	braggarts who were really afraid of their
sneaky and coy.	drinking lots of wine.	Giorig tile wag.	own shadow.
			Agile characters.

STOP & REFLECT...



In Commedia dell'arte stock characters are a major part of the style. First, in your own words describe a stock character. Then, consider a character from a show, movie, videogame, etc. that you enjoy that could fit into one of the stock character categories.





HARLEQUIN

A trickster character that uses his quick wit and slapstick to thwart his masters plans and woo Colombina.

A slapstick is two wooden boards tied together, when you hit someone with it, it makes a loud smack! Wore a black ½ mask.

He is also known as Arlecchino or Truffaldino in different scripts.

Modern: Picture on Harlequin Romance Novels.



COLOMBINA

The gossip of the plays. She knew everyone's business and used that information to get what she wanted. A high-spirited flirt.

She and Harlequin often fell in love during the play.

Sometimes called Fontasca or Arlecchina.



BRIGHELLA

Brighella is extremely greedy and is always looking for a way to take advantage of others.

Though he is a servant character, he often represents the middle class, but despises those below him.





PANTALONE

Extremely wealthy and materialistic. He is greedy and is often seen as the most important character. He tries to seduce all the women but always fails.

Harlequin and Colombina are often his servants and Isabella is his daughter.

This is where we get the word pantaloon and he is the predecessor of Polonius in Hamlet.



IL DOTTORE

The doctor is one of the most scholarly characters, he often speaks multiple languages and is always trying to outsmart everyone.

He thinks that he is smarter than everyone and walks with his nose up.

Often a friend or rival of Pantalone.





ISABELLA

Isabella is one of the lovers, her and Flavio want to be together but the old men characters are always trying to stop them.

Despite this, Isabella is strong willed and witty and stands up for what is right.



FLAVIO

safe.

Flavio is over dramatic and won't let anyone stand in his way of Isabella. He is often shown throwing himself at danger if it means Isabella will be







IL CAPITANO

The captain is boastful and full of himself. He thinks of himself as the hero but often makes situations worse for others.

He is usually from Spain and likes to tell tall tales from his days of battles.



PRACTICE...

For each of the stock character categories do one of the following:

- 1. Think of a character from a cartoon, movie, videogame, or television show that you think fits that category and explain why.
- 2. Draw a picture or find a picture of a character image that you feel fits that category and explain why.