



Commedia dell' Arte

Style

Commedia dell' Arte was an early form of professional theatre which originated in Italy that became popular throughout Europe in the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Commedia was characterised by masked 'types' (stock characters) with improvised sketches being based on scenarios. A special characteristic of the Commedia was a 'lazzo' - a loosely scripted joke or 'something foolish and witty'. Another characteristic of Commedia is pantomime often used by Arlecchino, better known today as the Harlequin. Commedia was often performed outside on platforms or in the piazza, attracting a street audience. It was popular theatre that appealed to all - allowing masters to laugh at their servants and servants to laugh at their masters! You will learn the importance of physical skills and comedic exaggeration or 'clowning!'

Sequence:

What you have done: You will be using your knowledge of 'stock characters' from Year 7 Melodrama for the Commedia genre. Your knowledge of Greek Theatre masks will also help here because Commedia actors also wore masks.

What you will go on to do: We will move on to masks and mask design next term. You will develop your devising skills in this unit which will help in our summer devising topic. We will also see some links between the Commedia style and Shakespeare in Term 4.



Cross-Curricular Links:

English Literature: Shakespeare's plays draw upon the conventions of Commedia. 'Twelfth Night' is an example.

MFL: In France, Moliere did the same!...

History: theatre history, Europe at the time of Louis XIV.

PE: Balance, coordination, movement.

Plot:

You will learn how to structure a narrative to the Commedia 'story formula', using the key themes of love, money, status, mistakes and misunderstandings as well as learning about how stock master and servant characters interact with these themes and with each other. We will examine how comic dialogue adds to a performance and you can devise your own variations on the stock characters and formula stories. We will also explore Paul King's script 'A Lot A Chocolate' (a modern imitation of a Commedia play). In this play Isabella believes that her fiancé Silvio no longer loves her because he has stopped sending her chocolates every day! In fact, his servant has been eating them rather than delivering them. Isabella's servant, Columbina, helps her concoct a plan to make Silvio jealous.

Drama Star Skills



R

A

G

Creativity

Teamwork

Resilience

Leadership

Performance skills

Evaluation

Magic 5 Skills

Vocal skills: Pitch, Pace, Pause, Projection, Tone, Accent

Physical skills: Movement, Facial Expression, Gait, Posture, Gesture, Body Language

Space and Interaction: Use of Space, Use of Set, Stage Position, Interaction with other Actors

Directing: Stage Directions, Blocking, Dialogue, Subtext, Message of the play, Dramatic Intention

Design: Lighting, Sound, Costume, Set, Props, Puppetry, Setting & Context

