Commedia Dell Arte An Actor S Handbook

This book explores the commedia dell'arte: the Italian professional theatre in Shakespeare's time. The actors of this theatre usually did not perform from scripted drama but instead improvised their performances from a shared plot and thorough knowledge of individual character roles. Robert Henke closely analyzes hitherto unexamined commedia dell'arte texts in order to demonstrate how the spoken word and written literature were fruitfully combined in performance. Henke examines a number of primary sources including performance accounts, actors' contracts, and letters, among other documents.

Commedia Dell'Arte: An Actor's Handbook

In this classic study of the Commedia dell'Arte, printed in several editions and languages since its first publication in 1963, one of Allardyce Nicoll's chief concerns is to show how and why the figure of Harlequin came to predominate among recognised stage types. Tracing the history and influence of the Commedia, he also focuses on the characters of Punch, Pantaloon, Zany, Pierrot, Columbine, and Scaramouche. A companion to John Rudlin's best-selling Commedia dell'Arte: A Handbook for Actors, this book covers both the history and professional practice of commedia dell'arte companies from 1568 to the present day. Indispensable for both the beginner and the professional, it contains historical and contemporary company case histories, details on company organisation, and tips on practical stagecraft. Essential for students and practitioners, this book enables the reader to understand how successful commedia dell'arte companies function, and how we can learn from past and current practice to create a lively and dynamic form of theatre. Includes tips on: * writing a scenario * mask-making * building a stage * designing a backdrop * costume * music.

Commedia dell'Arte, its Structure and Tradition chronicles a series of discussions between two renowned experts in commedia dell'arte – master practitioners Antonio Fava and John Rudlin. These discussions were recorded during three recent visits by Fava to Rudlin’s rural retreat in south west France. They take in all of commedia dell'arte's most striking and enduring elements – its masks, its scripts and scenarios, and most outstandingly, its cast of characters. Fava explores the role of each stock Commedia character and their subsequent incarnations in popular culture, as well as their roots in prominent figures of their time. The lively and wide-ranging conversations also take in methods of staging commedia dell'arte for contemporary audiences, the evolution of its gestures, and the collective nature of its theatre-making. This is an essential book for any student or practitioner of commedia dell'arte – provocative, expansive wisdom from the modern world's foremost exponent of the craft.

Theatre of the English and Italian Renaissance studies interrelationships between English and Italian Theatre of the Renaissance period, including texts, performance and performance spaces, and cultural parallels and contrasts. Connections are traced between Italian writers including Aretino, Castiglione and Zorenzo Valla and such English playwrights as Shakespeare, Lyly and Ben Jonson. The impact of Italian popular tradition on Shakespeare's comedies is analysed, together with Jonson's theatrical recreation of Venice, and Italian sources for the court masques of Jonson, Daniel and Campion. There has been an enormous revival of interest in Commedia dell'arte. And it remains a central part of many drama school courses. In Commedia dell'arte in the Twentieth Century John Rublin first examines the orgins of this vital theatrical form and charts its recent revival through the work of companies like Tag, Theatre de Complicite and the influential methods of Jacques Lecoq. The second part of the book
provides a unique practical guide for would-be practitioners: demonstrating how to approach the roles of Zanni, Arlecchion, Brighella, Pantalone, Dottore, and the Lovers in terms of movement, mask-work and voice. As well as offering a range of lazzi or comic business, improvisation exercises, sample monologues, and dialogues. No other book so clearly outlines the specific culture of Commedia or provides such a practical guide to its techniques. This immensely timely and useful handbook will be an essential purchase for all actors, students, and teachers.

The original commedia dell'arte in late sixteenth-century Italy was performed by traveling players who improvised their plays around a basic plot or scenario. The best known commedia characters were the comic servants like Harlequin and Pierrot who have become almost household names. The commedia dell'arte players soon moved to other European countries, and the genre was transformed in the process, particularly in France. Over the centuries the commedia has been adapted to suit the needs of successive cultural movements, and has become a symbolic theme not only in drama, but also in other branches of literature, as well as in art and music. This book examines manifestations of the commedia dell'arte from Shakespeare to Dario Fo. The emphasis is on the variety and richness of the commedia, and includes discussion of music and poetry as well as drama, popular culture and the avant garde. Another feature of the book is its comprehensive and integrated coverage of the cross-cultural nature of the commedia: it draws together a collection of experts in major European Languages and literatures (including Latin American literature) and provides a new angle for discussion of a phenomenon until now covered mainly from the viewpoint of the drama historian.

From Commedia dell'Arte came archetypal characters that are still with us today, such as Harlequin and Pantalone, and the rediscovered craft of writing comic dramas and masked theatre. From it came the forces that helped create and influence Opera, Ballet, Pantomime, Shakespeare, Moliere, Lopes de Vega, Goldoni, Meyerhold, and even the glove puppet, Mr Punch. The Routledge Companion to Commedia dell'Arte is a wide-ranging volume written by over 50 experts, that traces the history, characteristics, and development of this fascinating yet elusive theatre form. In synthesizing the elements of Commedia, this book introduces the history of the Sartori mask studio; presents a comparison between Gozzi and Goldoni’s complicated and adversarial approaches to theatre; invites discussions on Commedia’s relevance to Shakespeare, and illuminates re-interpretations of Commedia in modern times. The authors are drawn from actors, mask-makers, pedagogues, directors, trainers and academics, all of whom add unique insights into this most delightful of theatre styles. Notable contributions include: • Donato Sartori on the 20th century Sartori mask • Rob Henke on form and freedom • Anna Cottis on Carlo Boso • Didi Hopkins on One Man, Two Guv'nors • Kenneth Richards on acting companies • Antonio Fava on Pulcinella • Joan Schirle on Carlo Mazzone-Clementi and women in Commedia • and M.A. Katritzky on images Olly Crick is a performer, trainer and director, having trained in Commedia under Barry Grantham and Carlo Boso. He is founder of The Fabulous Old Spot Theatre Company. Judith Chaffee is Associate Professor of Theatre at Boston University, and Head of Movement Training for Actors. She trained in Commedia with Antonio Fava, Julie Goell, Stanley Allen Sherman, and Carlos Garcia Estevez.

This thesis will explore the application of comedia dell'arte technique to a contemporary performance. UCF’s spring 2005 production of Molière's The Trickeries of Scapin will serve as a resource in both comedia dell'arte's ability to resonate with a modern audience as well as an analysis of the actor's process in fusing elements of comedia dell'arte and contemporary acting techniques. Illustrated history of the beginnings, growth and influence of the commedia dell' arte. Describes improvisations, staging, marks, scenarios, acting troupes, and origins.
The commedia dell'arte, the improvised Italian theatre that dominated the European stage from 1550 to 1750, is arguably the most famous theatre tradition to emerge from Europe in the early modern period. Its celebrated masks have come to symbolize theatre itself and have become part of the European cultural imagination. Over the past twenty years a revolution in commedia dell'arte scholarship has taken place, generated mainly by a number of distinguished Italian scholars. Their work, in which they have radically separated out the myth from the history of the phenomenon remains, however, largely untranslated into English (or any other language). The present volume gathers together these Italian and English-speaking scholars to synthesize for the first time this research for both specialist and non-specialist readers. The book is structured around key topics that span both the early modern period and the twentieth-century reinvention of the commedia dell'arte. This book considers the relationship between commedia dell'arte and early operatic forms, from the court operas of the first years of the seventeenth century, through semi-private productions in Rome, to the public stages of Venice over fifty years later. While musicology has largely ignored the commedia dell'arte, except in cases of specifically comic opera characters, this book offers a corrective. The importance of serious commedia characters and situations for the development of opera is articulated, with particular attention given to the prime donne innamorata and the use of lament. Through a series of case studies that situate side by side commedia dell'arte plays, pedagogical texts on acting, and some of the century's best-known operatic works, the book illustrates how sound itself functioned as a crucial and influential component of commedia dell'arte dramaturgy. Furthermore, it argues that the aural epistemology of the commedia dell'arte theatre in which the gender, class, geographic origins, motivations and predilections of each character were audible in their voice trained Italian audiences in habits of listening that rendered the musical drama of opera verisimilar according to existing dramatic norms, thus underwriting the success of the genre. Vincenzo Galilei's 1581 exhortation for composers to listen to the speech of the commedia actors for inspiration on how to make their music expressive is used to contextualize the link between the sound of the commedia dell'arte and that of early opera. The first chapter introduces commedia dell'arte and its stock characters, with particular attention paid to the sound of the genre as a whole and the use of music within spoken dramatic performances. Subsequent chapters examine Monteverdi's early opera "L Arianna" (of which only the famous lament survives) and his "Il Ritorno d Ulisse" and "L incoronazione" "di Poppea," as well as some of the first operas in the comic vein, often written by commedia practitioners such as Giovan Battista Andreini. The conclusion looks at how the new genre of opera, both serious and comic, comes to fruition in Cavalli's large-scale Venetian operas of the 1650s. Throughout, the book articulates the productive overlapping of the worlds of commedia dell'arte and early opera, from shared audiences and performing venues, to shared actors/singers (especially female, such as the first Arianna, the actress and Giovan Battista's wife, Virginia Ramponi Andreini), who brought their spoken-theater prowess to their impersonation of operatic characters and helped disseminate the new genre on the Italian stage and beyond. 

Performing Commedia dell'Arte, 1570-1630 explores the performance techniques employed in commedia dell'arte and the ways in which they served to rapidly spread the ideas that were to form the basis of modern theatre throughout Europe. Chapters include one on why, what, and how actors improvised, one on acting styles, including dialects, voice and gesture; and one on masks and their uses and importance. These chapters on historical performance are followed by a coda on commedia dell'arte today. Together they offer readers a look at both past and present iterations of these performances. Suitable for both scholars and performers, Performing Commedia dell'Arte, 1570-1630 bears on essential questions about the techniques of performance and their utility for this important theatrical form.

Shakespeare and Commedia dell'Arte examines the ongoing influence of commedia dell'arte on Shakespeare's plays. Exploring
the influence of commedia dell’arte improvisation, sight gags, and wordplay on the development of Shakespeare’s plays, Artemis Preeshl blends historical research with extensive practical experience to demonstrate how these techniques might be applied when producing some of Shakespeare's best-known works today. Each chapter focuses on a specific play, from A Midsummer Night’s Dream to The Winter’s Tale, drawing out elements of commedia dell’arte style in the playscripts and in contemporary performance. Including contemporary directors’ notes and interviews with actors and audience members alongside Elizabethan reviews, criticism, and commentary, Shakespeare and Commedia dell’Arte presents an invaluable resource for scholars and students of Renaissance theatre.

A groundbreaking, cross-cultural reference work exploring the diversity of expression found in rituals, festivals, and performances, uncovering acting techniques and practices from around the world. * A–Z entries span every region of the world and cover diverse topics from Ireland's Abbey Theatre to China's Zhang Mu (rod-puppet theater) * Beautiful illustrations include masks used in classical Greek dramas, an advertisement for a performance of Punch and Judy, the humorous puppet characters, and photographs of actors, performances, and ceremonies from Monty Python to young Balinese dancers performing the Legong dance

"An important addition to the literature on Italian Commedia dell'Arte."--Choice This best-selling PAJ volume presents over 250 comedy routines used by commedia performers in Europe from 1550 to 1750. Includes an introduction, two complete commedia scenarios, and a glossary of commedia characters.

This 1699 Italian acting treatise includes chapters on all kinds of staged productions, scripted or improvised, sacred or secular, tragic or comic. It also addresses enunciation, diction, memorization, gestures, and stage comportment, and it describes the details important to a successful commedia dell'arte performance.

This is a translation with detailed commentary of 30 commedia dell'arte scenarios first published in 1611 by Flaminio Scala. It aims principally to demonstrate the methodology of Italian improvised theater and the constant interchange of plot, characterization, and scene structure between scripted and improvised comedy.

A history of Italian theatre from its origins to the the time of this book's publication in 2006. The text discusses the impact of all the elements and figures integral to the collaborative process of theatre-making. The distinctive nature of Italian theatre is expressed in the individual chapters by highly regarded international scholars.

This book establishes a Mannerist context for the early "commedia dell'arte" during its advent in the latter half of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century. The geographical area is based in Italy, with consideration of "commedia dell'arte" influences in other European countries. The "commedia dell'arte" is linked to "maniera," the word from which Mannerism is etymologically based, and other concepts such as "disegno interno, licenzia, " and "gusto." Utilizing a synchronic methodology, Castagno explores the link between the Mannerist "pittore vago" (-wandering painters-) and the itinerant performers of the "commedia dell'arte." By way of conclusion, Castagno demonstrates how Mannerist terms can be applied to the salient
performance features of the " commedia dell'arte," establishing this theatrical form and practice within a Mannerist context."

MASKS AND MARIONETTES BY JOSEPH SPENCER KENNARD NEW YORK THE MACMILLAN COMPANY 1935

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DOCTOR OF THE SORBONNE, PARIS TO 3. P. H. IN MEMORIAM CONTENTS MASKS I. ORIGIN OF THE

COMMEDIA DELUARTE . . . The Commedia deHArte is Art and it is Psychology It is a theatre of music, dance, colour and light It depicts human frail ties, parodies human foibles Italian Commedia delFArte is of Roman, Greek and Etruscan origin In Italian Commedia dell Arte, dialects are spoken, masks are used and realism and obscenity are common I

Gelosi, the most famous of all the Commedia dellArte Companies, arrives in Florence. II. FAMOUS PLAYERS AND FAMOUS COMPANIES ., 18 Angela Beolco, surname d Ruzzante the Joker born 1502 was an early and famous actor in Commedia dell Arte He shared in the revival of Italian Comedy, and its use of dialects Giancarli of Rovigo was another actor famous in Commedia dell Arte In 1570 the Italian Art Theatre came to Paris and there remained popular for over two hundred years Francesco Andreini and his wife, Isabella, his son and sons wife Florinda, Tabarino and Flaminio Scala were among the most famous actors in Com media deiArteThe Confidenti, Accesi, and Desiosi were among the most famous Art Theatre Companies The Com media dellArte not only was an institution in France but exerted an important influence upon English Comedy. III. COMPOSITION OF THE DRAMATIC COMPANIES - JOYS AND SORROWS OF THE ACTORS ... 38 A Commedia dellArte Company consisted, usually, of three women and seven men Pant alone, Arlechino, Pulcinella, and Brighella are basic types Joys and sorrows of Commedia dell Arte actors Today they live in luxury, tomorrow they are cold and hungry Pride, scandal, jealousy and immorality of the actors Insults, decrees, regulations and punishments are their portion. Improvised Comedy reached its zenith about 1650. vii viii CONTENTS IV. THE PLOT-THE SCENARIO-IMPROVISATION ZIBALDONI 46 Improvised and Studied Comedy had many types and subjects in common The ludicrous interpolations in a play are called lazzis Playing impromptu adds vivacity to the acting In the Art Theatre each actor had his own commonplace-book or Zibal done a collection of jests and speeches adapted to his part in the play The Commedia delFArte deliberately chose the ob scene and the absurd In the Commedia delFArte Isabella is a coquette, the Doctor an erudite ass and crooked-nosed Pulcinella makes absurd gestures and - funny speeches Brighella is a - fawn ing scoundrel, a thief and liar Capitano is a coward, a bully and a ridiculous soldier-lover Pedrolino and Pierrot are the same He is a cunning ruffian The Colombina soubrette is beautiful, charming and frequently virtuous. V. FURTHER SCENARIOS AND MASKS OF THE COM MEDIA DELUARTE 66 The Plays of Flaminio Scala The Dentist Actors used their stage-names in private life Pant alone and Doctor Graziano are the
two old men of the Commedia dell'Arte plays Arlecchino is a liar, swindler and sometimes thief, but he is a most amusing character. Biancolelli Dominique was perhaps the greatest and Gherardi was another famous Arlecchino. VI. GOLDONI AND GOZZI-DECAY AND DEATH OF THE COMMEDIA DELUARTE 76 Goldoni is the greatest author of the Commedia dell'Arte. His plays reveal every aspect of life. Le Gortesan, Colombina and Corralina are among his most charming characters. His immortal Pantalone is Goldoni's mouthpiece and the central figure in the Goldonian Comedy. Carlo Gozzi was Goldoni's jealous rival. His Fiabe are often vulgar caricatures but attained popularity. The Little Green Bird is Gozzi's best play. Gozzi's quarrel with Goldoni, his Fiabe, his love for Teodora Ricci and his Memoirs, sum up his life. ITALIAN MARIONETTES I. ORIGIN OF ITALIAN MARIONETTES ...... 

When Mina joins a troupe of travelling actors, her aim is to find her missing brother, but her search unlocks a series of secrets that will change the world she knows forever. Tarya, the mystical realm spoken of in tales, is real, and her gift for storytelling opens a way to it. But Tarya has a shadow side, and someone in the troupe of actors is using it to harm people. Mina soon realises she may be the only one with the power to stop them. Harlequin's Riddle is the first book in a Young Adult fantasy trilogy about the gift of creativity and where it can take you.

This book discusses the evolution of Commedia dell'Arte in the Asia-Pacific where through the process of reinvention and recreation it has emerged as a variety of hybrids and praxes, all in some ways faithful to the recreated European genre. The contributors in this collection chart their own training in the field and document their strategies for engaging with this form of theatre. In doing so, this book examines the current thoughts, ideas, and perceptions of Commedia – a long-standing theatre genre, originating in a European-based collision between neo-classical drama and oral tradition. The contributing artists, directors, teachers, scholars and theatre-makers give insight into working styles, performance ideas, craft techniques and ways to engage an audience for whom Commedia is not part of their day-to-day culture. The volume presents case studies by current practitioners, some who have trained under known Commedia 'masters' (e.g. Lecoq, Boso, Mazzone-Clementi and Fava) and have returned to their country of origin where they have developed their performance and teaching praxis, and others (e.g. travelling from Europe to Japan, Thailand, Singapore and China) who have discovered access points to share or teach Commedia in places where it was previously not known. This book will be of great interest to students and scholars in Performing arts, Italian studies, and History as well as practitioners in Commedia dell'Arte.

The Venetian Origins of the Commedia dell'Arte is a striking new enquiry into the late-Renaissance stirrings of professional secular comedy in Venice, and their connection to the development of what came to be known as the Commedia dell’Arte. The book contends that through a symbiotic collaboration between patrician amateurs and plebeian
professionals, innovative forms of comedy developed in the Venice region, fusing ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture in a provocative mix that had a truly mass appeal. Rich with anecdotes, diary entries and literary – often ribald – comic passages, Peter Jordan's central argument has important implications for the study of Venetian art, popular theatre and European cultural history.

Focusing on Commedia Dell'Arte, this work provides a historical and critical commentary of the Commedia. It highlights common factors between this genre and that of the Japanese Noh theatre. The author proposes six similarities: characters familiar to their audience and masked, minimal properties and scenery with the focus on the actor, the "families" of performers, a sharp mind as well as an agile body, a professional living on these skills and patronage, and a knowledgeable audience. Complementing this book is the play "Please Be Gentle" which explores the various tricks and devices of Commedia Dell'Arte acting.

This book covers both the history and professional practice of commedia dell'arte companies from 1568 to the present day.

"The mask - as object, symbol, character, theatrical practice, even spectacle - is the central metaphor around which Fava builds his discussion of structure, themes, characters, and methods. His book combines historical fact, personal experience, philosophical speculation, and passionate opinion. Including period drawings, prints, and color photographs of leather masks made by Fava himself, The Comic Mask in the Commedia dell'Arte is a rich work of singular insight into one of the world's most venerable forms of theater." --Book Jacket.

Drawing on published collections and also manuscripts from Mantuan archives, Commedia dell' arte and the Mediterranean locates commedia dell' arte as a performance form reflective of its cultural crucible in the Mediterranean. The study provides a broad perspective on commedia dell'arte as an expression of the various cultural, gender and language communities in Italy during the early-modern period, and explores the ways in which the art form offers a platform for reflection on power and cultural exchange. While highlighting the prevalence of Mediterranean crossings in the scenarios of commedia dell'arte, this book examines the way in which actors embodied characters from across the wider Mediterranean region. The presence of Mediterranean minority groups such as Arabs, Armenians, Jews and Turks within commedia dell'arte is marked on stage and 'backstage' where they were collaborators in the creative process. In addition, gendered performances by the first female actors participated in 'staging' the Mediterranean by using the female body as a canvas for cartographical imaginings. By focusing attention on the various communities involved in the making of theatre, a central preoccupation of the book is to question the dynamics of 'exchange' as it materialized within a spectrum inclusive of both cultural collaboration but also of taxation and coercion.
Artists such as Luigi Pirandello, Edward Gordon Craig and Max Reinhardt sought liberation from formal literary drama through commedia. This text explores this movement within a number of European countries as well as Russia and the United States.

Commedia dell'Arte Scenarios gathers together a collection of scenarios from some of the most important Commedia dell'Arte manuscripts, many of which have never been published in English before. Each script is accompanied by an editorial commentary that sets out its historical context and the backstory of its composition and dramaturgical strategies, as well as scene summaries, and character and properties lists. These supplementary materials not only create a comprehensive picture of each script's performance methods but also offer a blueprint for readers looking to perform the scenarios as part of their own study or professional practice. This collection offers scholars, performers and students a wealth of original performance texts that bring to life one of the most foundational performance genres in world theatre. This book consists of practical games and exercises to introduce actors, directors, and teachers to the skill, characters, and history of Commedia dell'Arte.

Italian comedians attracted audiences to performances at every level, from the magnificent Italian, German and French court festival appearances of Orlando di Lasso or Isabella Andreini, to the humble street trestle lazzis of anonymous quacks. The characters they inspired continue to exercise a profound cultural influence, and an understanding of the commedia dell'arte and its visual record is fundamental for scholars of post-1550 European drama, literature, art and music. The 340 plates presented here are considered in the light of the rise and spread of commedia stock types, and especially Harlequin, Zanni and the actresses. Intensively researched in public and private collections in Oxford, Munich, Florence, Venice, Paris and elsewhere, they complement the familiar images of Jacques Callot and the Stockholm Recueil Fossard within a framework of hundreds of significant pictures still virtually unknown in this context. These range from anonymous popular prints to pictures by artists such as Ambrogio Brambilla, Sebastian Vrancx, Jan Bruegel, Louis de Caulery, Marten de Vos, and members of the Valckenborch and Francken clans. This volume, essential for commedia dell'arte specialists, represents an invaluable reference resource for scholars, students, theatre practitioners and artists concerned with commedia-related aspects of visual, dramatic and festival culture, in and beyond Italy.