

Commedia Dell' Arte

Commedia dell' Arte is an improvised style of popular comedy that originated in Italy in the 16th–18th centuries. It is based on stock characters. Actors adapted their comic dialogue and action according to a few basic plots (commonly love intrigues) and to topical issues.



Different masks are used in Commedia dell' Arte. Here are some examples of the masks used.

Each character is performed with a different part of the body leading how you walk. This diagram not only shows this but also the status of the characters.



Commedia dell' Arte

Commedia performances must:

- Have a Lazzi
- Use improvisation
- Use stock characters

Commedia stock characters must:

- Be exaggerated
- Talk in gibberish
- Exaggerate status
- Wear masks

Where does Commedia dell' Arte come from?

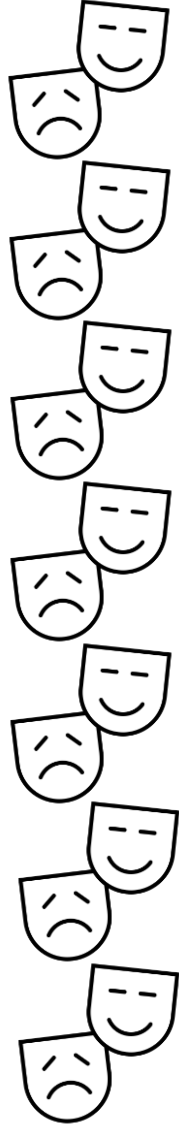


Key Command Words:

Describe: Tell me what you see or do

Explain: Tell me why you did it or why they did it

Evaluate: Tell me how it could be improved or what was good about it.



Lazzi Rules

- A Lazzi is a **short comic break** in the action.
- They usually involve the **low status characters** and involve lots of foolery.
- They are inspired by the action but do not further it in any way.

I'm more powerful than you; therefore, I have a high status.



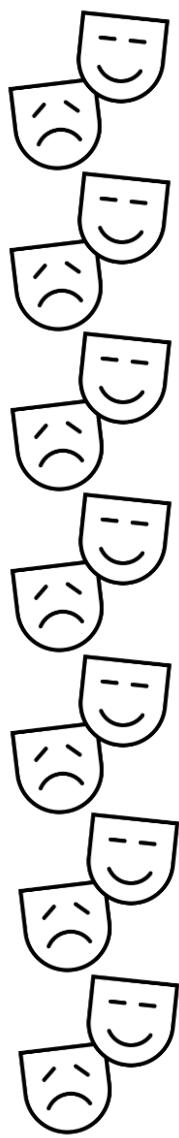
I'm less powerful than you; therefore, I have a low status.

Useful Revision:

A historical overview of Commedia dell' Arte:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqlfTG40RUI>

The world of Commedia dell' Arte:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_OTAXWt8hY&t=222s

How to create commedia dell' Arte characters:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJEwuurzDe4>



Vocal Skills	Definition	Example
P - Pitch	How high or low you voice sounds.	High squeaky voice or low deep voice.
I – Intonation	How clearly you speak	Mumbling or saying every word clearly
P - Pace	The speed in which you speak	Fast or slow
E – Emphasis	The importance you put on certain words	Using volume or pause to highlight a word. I <i>(pause)</i> AM right!
D - Dynamics	The volume that you are speaking at.	Loudly or quietly
B – Breath Control	How many breaths you take in a sentence.	Do you take lots of breaths or none at all
A - Accent	The way you pronounce words	America, Australian, Jamaican, British
P - Pause	How many breaks you take	I am <i>(pause)</i> NOT going to see you again

Physical Skills	Definition	Example
P - Posture	The way you hold yourself	Hunched back, straight back
E – Eye Contact	Where you are looking	Staring, looking at the floor, quickly looking
T - Tension	How tight or relaxed your body is	Clenched fists, locked knees
F – Facial Expression	How you are modifying your face	Closed Eyes, Wide open mouth
L - Levels	The heights used within the performance.	Standing on toes, crawled up in a ball
A - Action	Movements that have specific meanings	Thumbs up, waving, peace sign
G - Gait	The way you are walking	Skipping, stomping, floating
S - Space	The area that you are using	Are you standing close or far away