

# The Commedia Dell'Arte: Forms of Drama

The Commedia dell'Arte is a form of theatre that originated in Italy in the 16th century. It is characterized by its use of masks, stock characters, and improvisation. The Commedia dell'Arte has been a major influence on the development of modern theatre, and it continues to be performed around the world today.



## The Commedia dell'Arte (Forms of Drama) by Radim Malinic

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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## Forms of Commedia dell'Arte Drama

There are three main forms of Commedia dell'Arte drama:

1. **Commedia dell'arte all'improvviso:** This is the most traditional form of Commedia dell'Arte. It is characterized by its use of improvisation. The actors perform a scenario, or outline of the plot, but they are free to improvise the dialogue and actions. This form of Commedia dell'Arte is often performed in small, intimate settings.
2. **Commedia dell'arte all'italiana:** This form of Commedia dell'Arte is more formalized than the *commedia dell'arte all'improvviso*. It is

characterized by its use of written scripts and more elaborate costumes and sets. This form of Commedia dell'Arte is often performed in larger theatres.

3. **Commedia dell'arte alla francese:** This form of Commedia dell'Arte is a hybrid of the commedia dell'arte all'improvviso and the commedia dell'arte all'italiana. It is characterized by its use of both improvisation and written scripts. This form of Commedia dell'Arte is often performed in large theatres.

## **The Masks of Commedia dell'Arte**

The masks of Commedia dell'Arte are one of its most distinctive features. Each mask represents a different stock character. The most common masks include:

- **Arlecchino:** The clown
- **Brighella:** The servant
- **Colombina:** The maid
- **Dottore:** The doctor
- **Pantalone:** The old man
- **Pulcinella:** The hunchback

The masks are used to create a sense of anonymity and to allow the actors to explore different characters. They also help to create a sense of humor and to add to the physical comedy of the Commedia dell'Arte.

## **The Stock Characters of Commedia dell'Arte**

The stock characters of Commedia dell'Arte are another important feature of this form of theatre. Each stock character has its own unique personality and set of characteristics. The most common stock characters include:

- **The Lover:** The young man or woman who is in love
- **The Servant:** The clever and resourceful servant who helps the lover
- **The Old Man:** The wealthy and miserly old man who is often the object of the lover's affections
- **The Doctor:** The pompous and incompetent doctor who is often the butt of jokes
- **The Capitano:** The braggart soldier who is always getting into trouble

The stock characters are used to create a sense of familiarity and to allow the audience to identify with the different characters. They also help to create a sense of humor and to add to the physical comedy of the Commedia dell'Arte.

### **Improvisation in Commedia dell'Arte**

Improvisation is an essential part of Commedia dell'Arte. The actors are given a scenario, or outline of the plot, but they are free to improvise the dialogue and actions. This allows for a great deal of creativity and spontaneity. Improvisation also helps to keep the performances fresh and exciting.

The Commedia dell'Arte has been a major influence on the development of modern theatre. Its use of masks, stock characters, and improvisation has been adopted by many other forms of theatre. The Commedia dell'Arte

continues to be performed around the world today, and it remains a popular and entertaining form of theatre.



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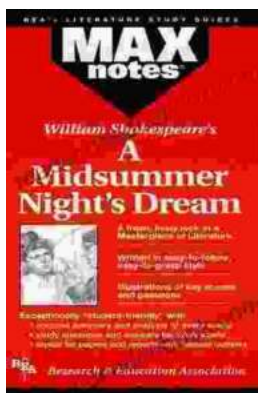
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