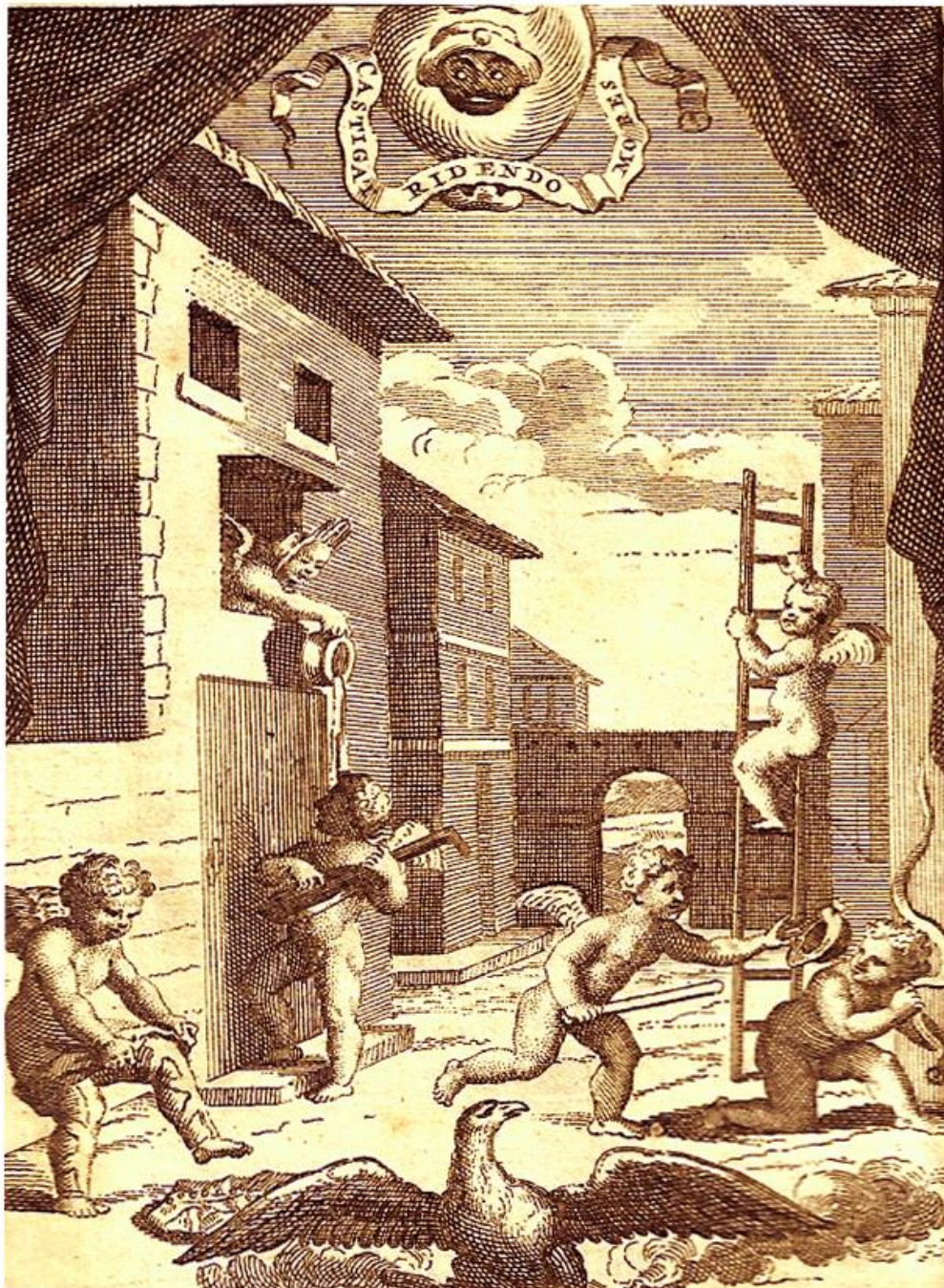




ZANNIZINE

A QUARTERLY ON-LINE MAG DEVOTED TO COMEDIA





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Contributions to the mag are welcome from all interested in things Commedia – please enquire or send material for consideration to either of the editors:

Barry Grantham at brrgrantham@gmail.com

or Bill Tuck at bill.tuck@chalemie.co.uk

INTRODUCING ISSUE 3 OF ZANNIZINE

Welcome to Zannizine's third appearance - our Autumn Issue.

We cannot say that it is particularly autumnal though, like the season, it brings a bumper harvest of items on all aspects of Commedia. We have pleasure in welcoming to our pages John Rudlin, author, dramaturg and workshop leader; David Drummond, actor, clown, and authority on popular theatre; and from Holland, Rein Van Schagen, actor, writer, television director and much-loved portrayal of Pantalone. Regular contributor Oliver Crick and co-editor Bill Tuck discuss the emergence of a new mask, *The Witch*, and I have introduced a 'Thought Map' -- a form ideally suited to Commedia -- on the development of the Arlecchino / Harlequin Costume. In addition, we have gone to town with our Christmas Supplement, included with the Autumn Issue. And why not? Is not Harlequin a very symbol of the season?

Zannizine is intended to be a periodical carrying articles about various aspects of Commedia dell'Arte. These articles will be published in the form of a **pdf** document which may either be read on-screen or downloaded. Each issue will be collected under the heading Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter. In this way the file will serve as a cumulative record of all the holdings.

CommediaZannizine.co.uk is the website host for our magazine. Besides providing access to all issues of the magazine, it will carry short abstracts of articles that will appear in later or previous issues, along with announcements of events within the Commedia World, such as performances, festivals, films, book reviews, etc.

Our cover illustration

One of our interests in creating this Zannizine is to show the extraordinary variety of illustrations that have incorporated the commedia characters. Many, of course, are familiar, but many are quite obscure. They all tell an interesting story, yet often one that is difficult to penetrate at first glance. This is particularly true of the present cover illustration, which shows the frontispiece of *Le Theatre Italien de Gherardi* (Vol 2, Amsterdam, 1701) the mysteries of which will be revealed in a later article by Barry Grantham.

“Zannizine is for the now – Gathering inspiration from the past, fostering experiment and collaboration in the present and securing a future for the Commedia dell’Arte” Barry and Bill

CENTRE SELAVY

JOHN RUDLIN

In the last 'ish' of Zanzazine Cheryl mentioned Centre Sélavy as one of her influences and it has been suggested that I might tell it as it was for those who missed out between 1992 and 2002. What's in a name? Well, 'Centre' because it was situated half-way between Poitiers and Angouleme, more or less exactly in the North-South centre of Europe and being European seemed important at the time. (Although retired, it still seems that way to me today!) In 1921 Marcel Duchamp had the same anti-nationalist idea when he descended his staircase and set forth for New York in search of a new artistic identity in company



Devon Youth Theatre in a Commedia rehearsal

with photographer Mann Ray. There he started cross-dressing and calling himself Rose Sélavy. No, nothing to do with 'C'est la vie, Archie': it was a homophone, but for 'Arroser la vie', i.e. in polite company 'to water life', and they produced a bottle of toilet water with Duchamp's imposture on the label, calling it 'La Belle Haleine' – nothing to do with the face that launched a thousand ships, 'Beautiful Halitosis' being the correct translation. And, in fact, the correct translation, in vulgar society at least, of 'Arroser la vie' is 'to piss on life'. I think they were trying to tell the Americans that they were Dadaists...

At Sélavy we set out to investigate (in a celebratory way) other arts of outdoor performance via what the French call *stages*, 'workshops' in English – which tells you something about the difference in weather, although we did have two large barns converted into studios, one with a sprung dance floor. *Stages*, in a variety of genres, usually lasted two weeks and my favourite was African Dance which had the whole village rocking to the sound of Djembes (I was in the kitchen, I hasten to say). I came out of there, of course, to lead *stages* in Commedia, ably aided by Amanda Speed and Olly Crick. Also companies would come to rehearse in a distraction-free holistic environment, notably *Ophaboom*, in Commedia terms, although their inspiration did not always tally with mine – rubber chicken, indeed! I say 'holistic' because we grew our own, with help from 'Woofers' (Willing workers on organic farms) under the supervision of Alison Smith, our resident herbalist. We also kept real chickens, geese, ducks, pigs and, at different times, sheep and goats, thus having no difficulty in separating them.



Studio One at a moment in performance

I know, I'm supposed to be writing about *commedia dell'arte*. For a start, I don't call it that any more, having converted to *commedia all'improvviso* (note the two vees) because, and I quote

It is now generally understood by anglophones that 'Arte' means 'professional artiste', not 'arty'. However, the phrase, seemingly coined by Luigi Riccoboni in his 1728 *Histoire du Théâtre Italien*, would not have endured but for its next use – by Carlo Goldoni in his three act play *Il Teatro Comico*, written in Venice in 1750, i.e. some two hundred years after what might be considered the birth of the genre. His play constitutes a kind of manifesto for the authored comedy with which he was proposing to replace the tired old *commedia all'improvviso* (performances based on improvisation, though not necessarily consisting of it), whose actors were no longer the creative artistes of the 'golden years'. It is Placida, the prima donna of the company (actually Goldoni's own) as portrayed in *Il Teatro Comico*, who says she does not want to have anything more to do with *commedia dell'arte*. The term was thus used pejoratively to describe the slough that the professional form had fallen into, and should not, in my now considered opinion, be used as a portmanteau word to include the preceding two centuries. [From my forthcoming *The Metamorphoses of Commedia dell'arte*]

Me (to student playing Il Dottore 'Pork Scratchings' Gratiano): Try taking smaller steps with your weight further back on your heels and gesturing with your fingers split in a V formation. Student: Why? Me: You know where we keep the pigs (in the open with a shed and a wallow)? Student: Yes? Me: come back in an hour and you show me the answer. Another student: You say Il Capitano struts like a cockerel? – You get the idea! Although I didn't get the *caprices* of Pantalone until I milked a goat every morning.

Sélavy Commedia *stages* used masks made by Antonio Fava. They were swapped around carefully but thoughtlessly from student to student, with perhaps the occasional wipe. Yesterday Antonio emailed me that for CoVid reasons he has just finished making a complete set of masks for each of the 30 students who will attend his Summer School this year. Phew!



Studio Two during a Mali women's dance workshop

Like Fava, we always finished a *stage* with an open performance and it was my task to write short scenarios which gave equal opps to each mask (each student having specialised towards the end). All are still available on line from www.commediahandbook.com. At first glance they may seem to range from the 'mock-traditional' to the 'modernised', but closer examination will show that the ones that seem to be set 'then' have a deal of contemporaneity in them, and those set in the 'here-and-now' are nevertheless dependent on traditional form. Here is one of the latter, as perhaps a fitting way to end this contribution:

THE PRESIDENT

IL MAGNIFICO
FRANCESCHINA

BRIGHELLA
ARLECCHINO

1. Outside a polling booth. IL MAGNIFICO calls BRIGHELLA and tells him that the election is coming up and he wants him to fix it for him so that he can stay in power. *Exit* IL MAGNIFICO.

2. BRIGHELLA calls ARLECCHINO and tells him he's got to fix the election. ARLECCHINO can't think how to do it, so BRIGHELLA makes some suggestions – i.e. close all the polling booths but one, use faulty counting machines, arrest the leaders of the opposition, etc. *Exit* ARLECCHINO.

3. *Enter* FRANCESCHINA. They reminisce over the good times before Il Magnifico came to power. BRIGHELLA tells her she's got to fix the President – he's getting too big for his boots. *Exeunt*.

4. *Enter* ARLECCHINO in disguise (#1). He votes x 1. *Exit*.

5. BRIGHELLA & IL MAGNIFICO *appear above*. BRIGHELLA says his men are fixing the poll right now – they *eavesdrop* as ARLECCHINO in disguise (#2) votes x 10. *Exit*.

6. BRIGHELLA says he thinks it's time IL MAGNIFICO had a new private personal secretary – and FRANCESCHINA appears below. They go down to her. BRIGHELLA introduces her to her new boss and tactfully leaves them alone. IL MAGNIFICO says he hopes she doesn't mind working late while the election is on. FRANCESCHINA says she doesn't mind working late any time. *Exeunt*.

7. ARLECCHINO enters in disguise (#3 – female) and votes x 20.

8. BRIGHELLA *enters* with a camera and says stand back – the President is about to cast his vote. The curtain opens to reveal FRANCESCHINA on her knees in a compromising position. BRIGHELLA takes flash photos. IL MAGNIFICO enters with his trousers still down and casts his vote. ARLECCHINO says your trousers are down. IL MAGNIFICO says never mind, I'm still President. ARLECCHINO says wait till the votes are counted. IL MAGNIFICO says that won't be a problem – the people have voted for me – whether they like it not. He orders BRIGHELLA to count the votes, which he does – 50/50 for The President and Arlecchina. Who is this Arlecchina, says IL MAGNIFICO. Me, says ARLECCHINO – Arlecchina, leader of the WPPPP – the Women's Popular People's Polygamous Party. Wait a minute, says, FRANCESCHINA, I haven't voted yet – did you say Polygamous? And she votes for Arlecchina. Cheering from BRIGHELLA and FRANCESCHINA as ARLECCHINO makes a triumphal exit leaving IL MAGNIFICO with his trousers down.

Plus ça change...

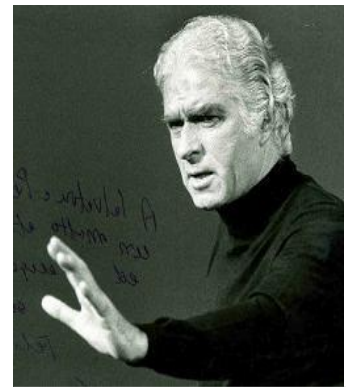
JOHN RUDLIN

Enter the Witch

(Probably to thunder and lightning, depending on the budget)

By Olly Crick

One of the first things everyone finds out about Commedia dell'Arte is the names of its stock characters, and, whether you are a performer or theatre historian, these names seem to stick with us and become anything from a theatrical shorthand to describe universal human behaviour or characteristics, to blueprints or models for extreme 'comedy' characters. Their survival from 'then' 'til 'now' can be seen as a testament of how successful, universal and durable these character types are. When we reach the C20th, some reinvention and a lot of recreation was required. The Piccolo Theatre of Milan, under the direction of Giorgio Strehler (1921–1997) adapted the model derived from Carlo Goldoni's play 'The Servant of Two Masters' and Giovanni Poli (1917–1979) focused on the servant or Zanni role and based his recreated role on the historical engravings of Jacques Callot (1623). Carlo Boso (1946–), an alumnus of the Piccolo Theatre, also worked with Giovanni Poli, and in his teaching borrowed from both (new) traditions. Instead of the servants being a double act (for Arlecchino and Brighella, read Abbot and Costello, Laurel and Hardy et al.) they could be expanded to a triple act of Brighella, Arlecchino and Zanni) which also functions well dramatically (for example the Crazy Gang, the Three Stooges and The Marx brothers). This adaptation worked because, I suppose, there are always more idiots around than one suspects. It is only a small step to introduce 'new' characters, mirroring today's realities.



Giorgio Strehler



Eleonora Fuser

In 1983, Carlo Boso started a fruitful relationship as director of TAG Teatro di Venezia and, during workshops and rehearsals, somewhere between the company, him, and performer Eleonora 'Nora' Fuser, the Mask of The Witch was born. Boso, in his workshops, introduces the Witch as "a very old and traditional commedia character which I have just invented". Fuser has a different memory of the role's genesis, however: Nora, in a web broadcast in May 2020, when interviewed by Michele Modesto Casarin of Venice-based Pantakin theatre, talked about her work and the genesis of this mask. For her, a mask "has always carried the role of an instrument that channelled ancient knowledges of the original man as actor/actress: a sort of infinite possibility to 'promote' diversity, the other, the 'archaic', the origin" (Interview, 2020). Fuser's previous training with Odin Teatret had opened her up to what physicality was required to play a mask: "signs, actions, drama, work, anthropomorphism and 'animality' ". She recalls that there was opposition to women wearing masks, from both Boso and other

(male) actors. However, eventually the penny (or lire) dropped, and Stefano Perocco created a mask. Once again, in her words:

"I was constantly researching etc. ... and, adding to that, these were times of consciousness-building, feminism, female emancipation, so there was an ideology at its basis in that period; we were coming out of the 1970s: it was a form of revolution, if you like. After many discussions, the mask jumped out at us... to be differentiated from the others, was light, it was made white, this was something that was much discussed, because this resulted, in the end, as a neutral white, so the body under the mask became the

absolute protagonist; the character worked low, bended towards the ground with circular movements, not edgy in the way Arlecchino is, or other masks can be, like a Zanni” (interview, 2020).

The witch fits into the commedia mask ‘set’ because we all recognise her from folktales. Like the other roles, she becomes instantly recognizable to an audience, and, as we all know, is the somewhat unpredictable bearer of ancient wisdom, both beneficial or fatal, depending on how we treat her. The traditional Italian Christmas witch, or Befana, either brings rewards or punishments. The witch is, to précis Boso, needed by everyone (for her wisdom) but scorned by all. Gerrit Berenike Heiter, in an MA thesis on Boso, notes further developments of Fuser’s mask:

“The white mask represents the evillest witch. The wicked witch thinks primarily of themselves and ruthlessly pursued her goal. She uses either power or money to win the love of a man. To reach their goal, they make mischief and confusion. But such a witch needs to die at the end of the scenario unless it has declared its willingness to turn things around and help the cause of true love.

The grey mask symbolizes an old woman. This type of witch can be both good and evil, in general it is a picture of misery and very pitiful, since they no longer have any economic power, and is dependent on alms. You can also have a son or daughter, of course, to care for their poor old witch mother. The third mask is dark brown and corresponds to the Madame Pantalone, a female Pantalone with exactly the same characteristics as the male figure of Pantalone.

The appearance of the witch is always very spectacular, because it leads the dimension of the supernatural, the inhuman and the impossible.” (Heiter 2008).

The witch, then, has been mistakenly referred to as a traditional commedia character and, in a sense, she is, but only since 1983, and is more properly part of the new tradition of reinvented commedia, despite her folkloric echoes.

Olly Crick



TAG Teatro di Venezia, 1983, Cast of *Il Falso Magnifico*: which mask is the Witch?

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Tag Teatro di Venezia (1983) dir. Carlo Boso, *Il Falso Magnifico* :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RI0U2U0Obgo>

Thanks to Francesca Bernardi for translating Ms Fuser's Italian, and Joyce Crick for translating Ms Heiter's M.A. thesis from the German.

THE 'DAMES' OF BURNACINI

Lodovico Ottavio Burnacini (c.1636 – 1707) was an Italian architect, and theatrical stage and costume designer. Although his reputation stands primarily on the theatre set designs he created during his 55 years' service at the imperial court of Vienna, amongst the Commedia fraternity he is more famous for his startling collection of pictures illustrating 'grotesques', along with his detailed studies of stock Commedia characters. Most of these are now housed in the [Theatermuseum](#) in Vienna, which recently mounted a full exhibition of these works under the title: GROTESKE KOMÖDIE.



Nurse with kittens

Although the exhibition has now ended, the lavishly illustrated catalogue (in German) of the show may still be available (from Amazon). A selection of illustrations (downloadable in high resolution) can also be found online at [Theatermuseum: Lodovico Ottavio Burnacini](#). Much of the contents of this book is devoted to illustrations of Commedia characters – not only by Burnacini, but also by other illustrators whose work may have influenced him. There are also extensive and learned essays by Rudi Risatti on the historical background to these illustrations and to the characters they represent.



Nurse with Pulcinella's children

Among the chapters is one entitled: "Von Männern gespielten Frauenfiguren". Along with a collection of rather spectacular 'grotesques', the chapter gives a detailed study of the 'Dame' role as it appeared in the Commedia dell'Arte of Burnacini's time. It also covers much of the earlier period in which men typically played the role of women on the stage. Although a number of Burnacini's grotesques do look as if they might have witch-like magical powers, there is nothing in the text that would suggest that they ever played the 'sorceress' role in Burnacini's Commedia.



Brighella & Arlecchino with voracious 'Dame'

FROM WITCH TO DAME (& BACK AGAIN?)

Following on from Olly Crick's piece on the adoption of the 'Witch' character as a mask in the Commedia dell'Arte it seems worth while to explore other links between Commedia and this well-known figure in the pointy hat. As the piece by Olly Crick points out, there does not seem to be any character corresponding to our modern notion of Witch in the pantheon of Commedia characters of the 16/17th century. But there are, as has been noted in the Burnacini collection discussed elsewhere, any number of 'Dame' figures --- grandmothers, wet-nurses, courtesans, serving wenches, etc.

One such connection between 'dame', 'witch' and commedia -- not generally recognised -- is to be found in that evergreen (pun intended) beanstalk tale of *Jack and the Giant*. The origins of this familiar pantomime are often stated to lie in a story within a little-known chapbook of the 1740s entitled "Round about our Coal Fire; or, Christmas Entertainments". In this little book are recounted a number of tales, including "Enchantment demonstrated in the Story of Jack Spriggins and the Enchanted Bean; giving a particular Account of Jack's arrival at the Castle of Gogmagog; his rescuing ten Thousand Ladies and Knights from being broiled for the Giant's Breakfast; jumping through Key-holes; and at last, how he destroyed the Giant and became Monarch of the Universe."



John Rich - "Lun" - as Harlequin.
Garret Club Collection

Although this differs in many respects from the Victorian version familiar to us today, the basic plot is the same. Jack unwittingly plants a bean acquired through some magical agency. The resulting beanstalk grows with alarming rapidity and leads Jack through various adventures to arrive finally at the giant's castle. Love, fame and fortune follow as he defeats the fearful giant.

The dedication of the booklet is to "The Worshipful Mr Lun, complete Witchmaker of England and Conjuror-General of the Universe at his Great House in Covent Garden". This refers to the famous impresario, Harlequin and theatre manager John Rich, whose stage name was Ned Lun and whose theatre in the 1740s was in Covent Garden. It was Rich who is generally credited with the invention of English Pantomime. Although the term itself was employed earlier by the Dancing Master John Weaver (of the rival Drury Lane Theatre) to describe a rather more serious "Entertainment in Music and Dancing in imitation of the pantomimes of the Ancient Greeks and Romans", it was Rich who recognised the comic (and economic) potential of this new art

form. Unlike the Victorian version it was not targeted at children, nor restricted to the Christmas season, but provided a general medium for a variety of entertainments, including the serious dance of the pre-Romantic ballet. In addition, most 18th century pantomimes included English versions of the Commedia dell'Arte characters – Harlequin, Pantalone, Columbine, Capitano, etc. – although these do not appear in the original text of the beanstalk story.

Apart from Jack, the central character in the tale is his Grandmother -- referred to as "an old Enchantress" or, in common parlance, a 'witch', though not necessarily evil. The Grandmother is guardian of the magic bean, but her equally 'magical' Cat betrays its location amid the ashes of the fireplace to young Jack. The

ever-opportunistic lad who "ever loved Beans and Bacon", promptly plants the bean, which immediately sprouts and grows furiously. It is at this point that the Grandmother demonstrates her 'witch' character by chasing Jack up the beanstalk with the intention of rewarding his intransigence with a severe beating. But her ire is actually motivated by the fact that, as she says: "I now have only time to tell you that my enchantment will be broke in an hour's time, I know it, you have got my bean, and this impertinence of yours will occasion my being transformed; yet if I am able I will sufficiently thrash your jacket." This occasions the escape of Jack up the beanstalk, pursued by his Enchantress Grandmother, intent on giving him a beating: But, "through her vengeance and ill-nature, not being able to reach the Boy, she fell down in a fit for a time, and as soon as her hour was out was turned into a monstrous Toad, and crawled into some neighbouring Mud or Cellar, in her way to the Shades."



'Granny Spriggins' in a woodcut from *Round about our Coal Fire*, 1740



Barry Grantham as Granny Spriggins in Chalemie's production of *Jack Spriggins and the Enchanted Bean*

From this point on, the Grandmother/Witch disappears from the story, which then proceeds in much the same way as its more familiar pantomime version: Jack goes through a number of magical scenes as he climbs the beanstalk, finally emerging to confront and slay the giant in his castle. From our point of view, the interesting aspect of this story is its conflation of the two characters 'Dame' and 'Witch'. While the Witch has largely been dropped from modern versions of the story -- or rather set apart as perhaps, the purveyor of magical beans in exchange for a cow -- the Dame/Grandmother figure becomes central. This dissociation may have been motivated by the need to make the character more acceptable to children as the pantomime moved from something primarily designed to entertain adults, to a Christmas-time entertainment for children. It's all about negative publicity: Children do not willingly accept that Grandmothers have witch-like characteristics.

From the original 1740 story, the Chalemie Commedia Company created a pantomime in the imagined 18th century style of John Rich. This was performed on a number of occasions between 2000 and 2010, including a memorable performance in the Purcell Room of the South Bank Centre. The episodic nature of the plot allowed for numerous short scenarios as Jack made his way up the ever-expanding beanstalk, including a restaurant scene with two rather batty and incompetent waiters, a Sultan's harem where the waiters are transformed into an even less competent imperial guard. These are both essentially Zanni roles. While the conventional Commedia characters are largely absent from the plot, there is an 'Arlecchino' in the form of a fiddle-playing Cat, a magical trickster responsible for most of the mischief, and an over-bearing 'Pantalone' forever complaining about the low quality and high cost of everything. Jack and the Princess

are, of course, the lovers, thwarted by the interference of the other characters but united at the end. A sample of the 'Zanni' element can be seen on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/lrmpka1WYfs>

In Chalemie's version, as in most modern reincarnations, the Witch/Grandmother figure of the original is largely replaced by a division between a mysterious crone that sells magic beans and a rather benign if occasionally crotchety Grandmother/Dame figure (played with great skill and understanding by Barry Grantham – see picture above). As in the original, the Witch figure is central to the instigation of the plot, but has no continuing role throughout the proceedings. Given that John Rich may have been responsible for writing the story in the first place, it would be interesting to see if a true 'Witch' figure can be found in any of his other pantomime scenarios.

So the Witch figure seems to have loitered on the fringes of Commedia for some time, never actually taking on a central role, but sometimes, as in the original Jack and the Beanstalk tale, being the agent that initiates the magic. This is, of course, similar to the witches in Shakespeare's Macbeth, where the three sisters have only fleeting but significant appearances.

Pantomime, it could be argued, was the principal driver of theatre on the London stage throughout the 18th century – it was this that brought in the audience and the revenue that allowed other forms of theatre to flourish. Not only Rich and Weaver, but Garrick, Cibber and many other theatre managers created pantomimes, and in so doing exploited the traditional characters of the Commedia, albeit in a very 'English' and largely silent form. Towards the end of the 18th century and into the 19th, English pantomime moves away from its roots in Commedia and adopts the 'fairy tale' as the basis of its plot: Babes in the Wood, Cinderella, Aladdin, etc. A 'Witch' character is frequently the agent of change, rather than 'Arlecchino'; but the 'Dame', begins to take on a more prominent role. It is usually played by a male actor and the range of grotesque appearances bear remarkable likeness to the Dame figures in Burnacini. This is also the transformation that seems to have taken over the Christmas Witch, Befana -- a very genial witch, more akin to a pantomime Dame character: the 'Befana' is a traditional Italian Christmas witch who, like St Nick, brings rewards to good kids, or a lump of coal to bad kids... so it kind of fits into both a modern and a folkloric way of looking at commedia.



Befana – the Italian Christmas Witch



The modern period, from the 1940s on, sees a return of the Witch to a central role in pantomime. The most well-known example is, of course, the Wicked Witch of the West in the Wizard of Oz, created as a film in 1939 but based on an American children's novel written by author L. Frank Baum and illustrated by W. W. Denslow and published in 1900. This theme has been reincarnated numerous times since then, most recently in the musical Wicked.

Bill Tuck

Sources: Bill Tuck, Experiments in the reconstruction of early 18th century English pantomime, Mummers Unconvention, Bath, 2011. (<https://folkplay.info/sites/default/files/papers/201111/Tuck2011.pdf>)

INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO THE COSTUME THOUGHT MAP

Perhaps I should offer a word for anyone unfamiliar with the idea of *Thought or Mind Mapping*. It is merely a way of gathering and imparting information that is primarily visual and more fluid than the linear written word. The book or magazine form starts with the author communicating his knowledge to the reader. The 'designer' of the thought map doesn't necessarily know all about the subject under scrutiny and he learns by gathering and loosely connecting facts and images. In the present case I learnt, among other things, that there are not an endless variety of patterns and that most images conform to the 'four triangles in a square' established by Gherardi around 1680 - even those on a biscuit tin or a Christmas card. Please take a quiet half-hour to follow the story and enjoy the pictures and I promise you that you will know as much as I do on the subject and more than many an expert!



Arlecchino/Harlequin Costume – Thought Map – Barry Grantham September 2021



It is generally agreed that Arlecchino (and therefore Harlequin) derive from an unspecified Zanni – Does the costume bear this out?

There is an alternative proposal that he developed from a mediaeval comic demon

The costume analyses seem to make this unlikely

Universal Zanni Costume
Homespun jacket laced down the front. Loose trousers, belt with pouch and knife.



Some early Zanni
c. 1600



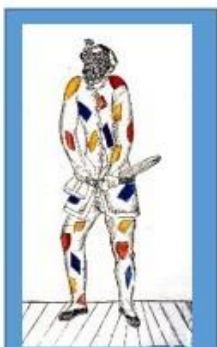
Francatropa, a typical Zanni from the Recueil Fossard.

This Zanni, our proto Arlecchino is made by removing the patches from an early Arlecchino

Right from the start Arlecchino's 'sword' is shown Erect

This figure is from the Recueil Fossard. A series of 16th cent engravings compiled for Louis XIV (See Duchartre 'The Italian Comedy')

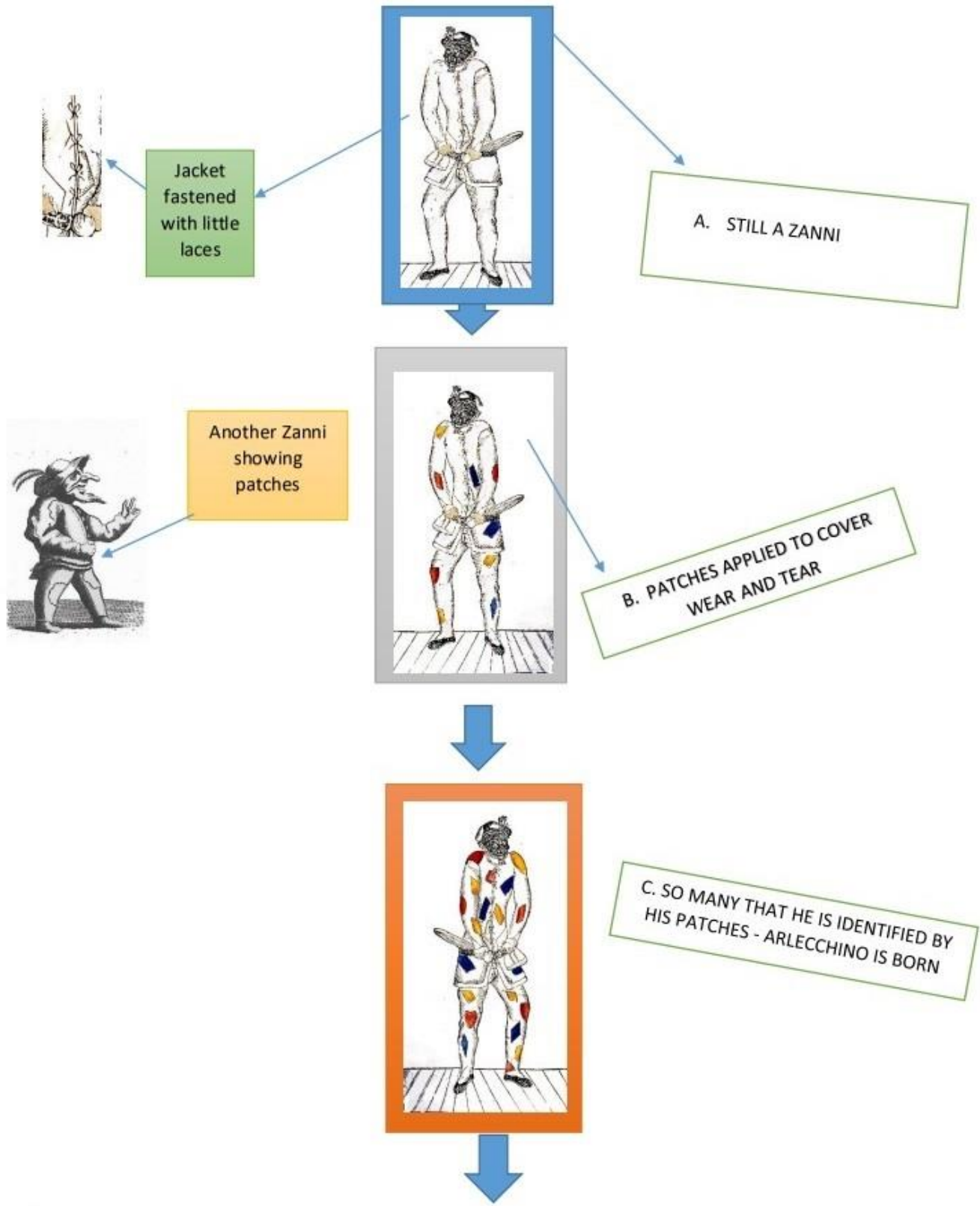
A self-portrait of TRISTANO MARTINELLI 1558-1630



Patches coloured for our MINI COMMEDIA FESTIVAL LOGO

The following page is conjecture

But very likely



Now we are back on firm ground. Compare these two engravings, both from *Fossard*

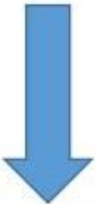


Tristano Martinelli

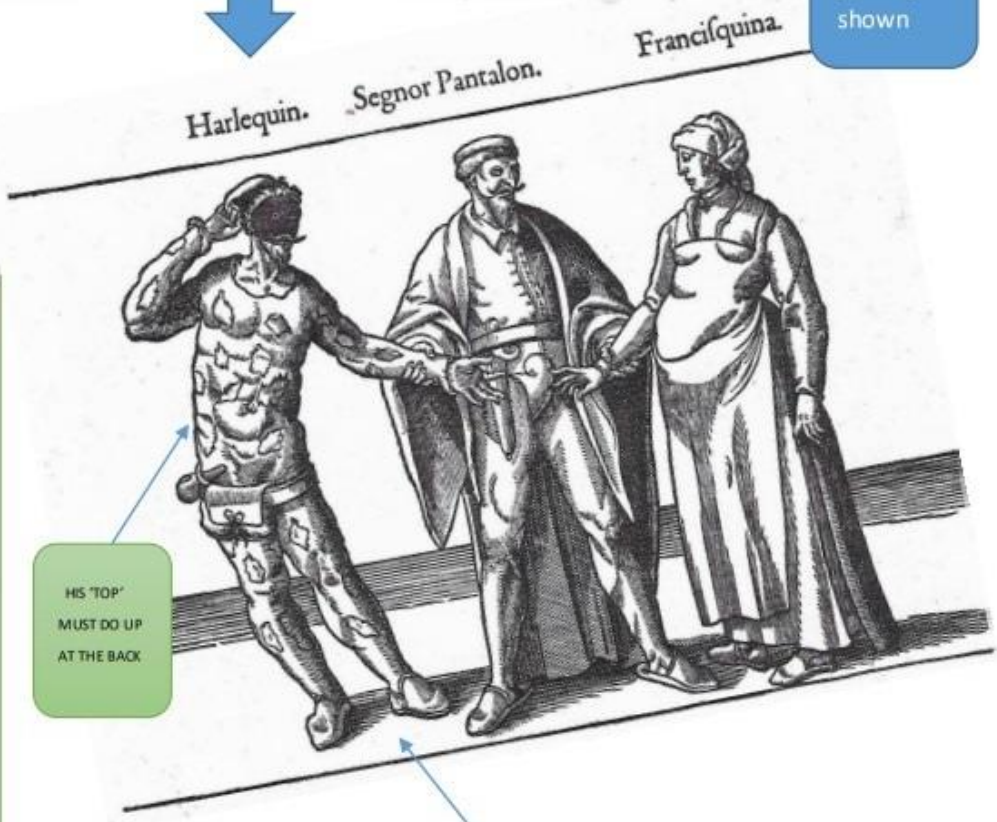


Humanist Drawing

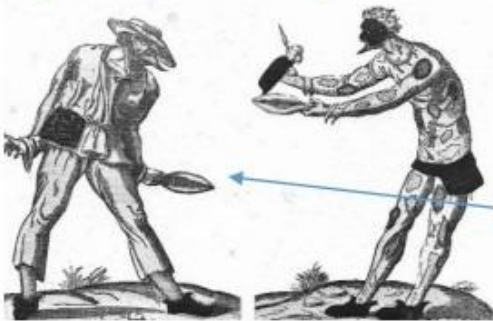
The skirt of the jacket just shown



A fundamental change has occurred from the pre-renaissance. God oriented mode to the Man oriented HUMANIST style.



HIS TOP MUST DO UP AT THE BACK



Here with Pantalone Observe their fine masculine figures, Franceschina doesn't come out so well
Here again with a Zanni full of testosterone

Difference between Zanni and Arlecchino now clear

Here we see the early stylization of the patches, whether it comes from the skill of the costumer or the invention of the painter is hard to tell

If you want to learn the dance see Barbara Segal

Arllecchino or not, he is seen in the iconic pose touching his cap. See the 'Chacon' from Beaumont's History of Harlequin



This is Domenico Locatelli in the role of Trivellino

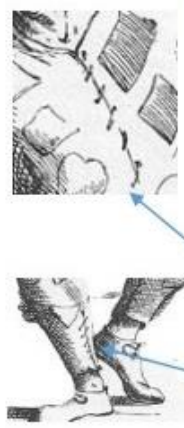
Trivellino appears to be an alternative name until the dominance of Biancolelli toward the end of the century

WHAT, NOT ARLECCHINO?

Domenico Locatelli 1613-1673 Came to France 1644

Here we continue with the stylization of the Patches

It seems Arlecchino was sewn or laced into his costume



This splendid engraving is by G M Matelli and is dated 1678. Sadly we don't know the actor

This engraving is particularly interesting from a movement perspective. The angular right arm indicating the Comic/Grotesque Dance and the feet in 'third', with knees bent one heel up. See Barry G, 'Playing Commedia'.

IS THIS DOMONIQUE BIANCOLELLI? 1640-1688. Costume wise it seems to be out of sequence. Molinari



Giacomo Oreglia –The Commedia dell'Arte
Cesare Molinari – La Commedia dell'Arte

Everisto Gherardi 1663-1700

The great Biancolelli died in 1688. After a period of mourning, the role was taken over by Mezzetino who played the part, without a mask for 2 years, after which Gherardi took over till the dismissal of The Italian players in 1697



The 'baton' in this picture of Gherardi at the time of the 'banishment' 1697 can be seen to be double – in fact a slapstick



Gherardi's costume is well tailored with brass buttons down the front and at the ankles. Even his socks have the pattern



It looks like crosses but is 4 triangles within a square

This was to become the dominant; 'The Correct' motive from now on, rivalled by *Diamond* - and the *Elongated* to be discussed next




The engraver does his best to suggest pattern




This is still Gherardi; this time in *La Famme Vange*, given by His Majesties troupe of Italian Players at the Hotel de Bourgogne 1669. Gherardi had been very popular and after the dismissal (1697) did his best to get the order rescinded, without success. Instead he devoted himself to writing the 12 volumes of the *Theatre de Gherardi*

There doesn't seem to be a full-length picture of Thomassin from this that he is dressed in the new *Elongated* design

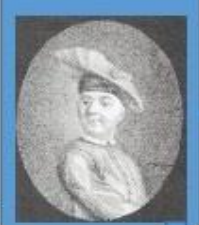



Tommaso Visentini, known as-Thomassin 1682-1739 Born in Vicenza, he came to Paris in 1716 and joined the Regent's Company after the return of the Italian Players in 1715

Here is a great picture of Carlin in performance. By carrying a lantern he shows that the scene is set at night. A convention shared with many forms of popular theatre,




Carlo Bertinazzi known as Carlin 1710-1783. Born in Turin he made his debut in Paris in 1741 in *Harlequin Mute by Necessity*. In later shows he did speak!





Now we need to consider Claude Gillot 1673 -1722 painter and engraver; the master of Watteau. We are most familiar with a series of engravings in which he emphasises Arlecchino's expressive gesture rather than the costume he is wearing, but they do appear to conform to the Gherardi pattern and the dates make it most likely that he was the actor portrayed


THE ELONGATED STYLE 18TH CENT




Maurice Sand an 18th cent. Arlecchino painted 1850



Watteau c.1720 Elongate



Here is the Elongated style in an early example by Joulain from Riccoboni's 'Histoire de l'ancien Theatre Italien 1728



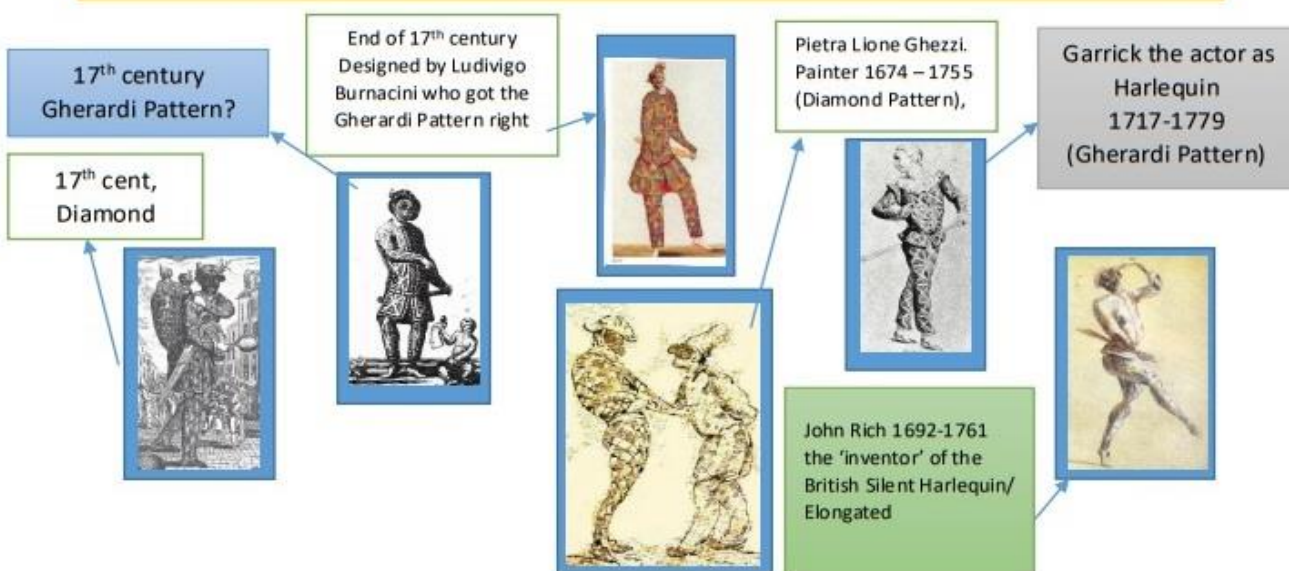
This extraordinary figure is by none other than Claude Gillot whom we know so well from the engravings in the Gherardi style.

With Thomassin and Carlin the great days of Arlecchino come to an end.
 = The future belongs to Harlequin

But first the mystery of Arlecchinos with the *Elongated Pattern*. There is a story that Watteau only knew of Commedia from the costumes he found in Gillot's studio. A suit in the *Elongated* style may well have been among them. I found this delightful picture by Claude Gillot, with two Arlecchinos for good measure. I think it's a first for Zannizine so we have given it some space. In any case the style appears to have died out in the first years of the 19th century, while the *Gherardi* style prevailed.



BEFORE REACHING THE APOGEE OF THE VICTORIAN HAREQUIN COSTUME LET'S LOOK AT A FEW ODDITIES



APOGEE + ZENITH + PINNACLE + THE + VICTORIAN + HARLEQUIN



His pupil Barry in the same leap

From such excess there can only be simplification Idzicowski in a design by Bakst.

. I don't mean that the Victorian Harlequin was the summit of the story. In fact it was a decline from the Arlecchino of the 17th century – merely of the costume. Hope you have enjoyed the journey and learnt something. I learnt a lot. It is not a final version. If you have anything to add, to correct or comment on please let me know and I will include it in an editable form, available from our website. Barry

COMMEDIA IN PARIS

number one:

- learning to make masks and wear them

In terms of mask making, your main man is Stefano Perocco, who has had a workshop here making leather masks for over 20 years and regularly takes apprentices who then go on to be mask makers in their own right. How do you become an apprentice? You get in touch with him and if you get on well, he'll



find a place for you. Budding apprentices take note - nowadays, Stefano divides his time more between Paris and Venice so if you want to learn from him, better be prepared to travel. And eat lots of pasta. If you are thinking of working with him I would say go for it - in five years' time the place where he has a workshop will be demolished and he'll probably not look for another one in France.



Stefano Perocco in his workshop

I should of course give a plug for the national organisation "Les Créateurs de Masques" (disclosure - of which I am vice-président), which organises Rencontres every year and has a database of its members on its website. The Rencontres this year are the 6th and 7th of November at the Mouffetard in Paris , and the theme is Mask and Carnaval. The Rencontres are always one third talking presentation, one third demonstration and one third questions, so more a professional exchange than a conference. Commedia is only one part of mask activity in France but most mask creators make commedia masks, and you can see photos of different people's work on the website.

There are several major influences on commedia teaching in Paris - the ones I'm most aware of are Carlo Boso and his school in Versailles, the teaching of Mario Gonzalez who worked with Ariane Mnouchkine and the Theatre du Soleil, and the approach of the Lecoq School.

Carlo is the one I know best, arriving here in the nineties fresh from the Tag Teatro of Venice, and working with the Compagnie du Mystère Bouffe, where I met him. He then started his own school, the Académie International des Arts de Spectacle, which started in Montreuil and moved to Versailles, where there's a big festival with a lot of commedia-influenced work in it in May and June, the "Mois Molière". Molière was, as many of you know, heavily influenced by commedia and the troupe of Tiberio Fiorelli, and there are often French productions of "Molière with masks" using commedia archetypes. His work is developed from the Piccolo Teatro of Milan and from Poli.



Ariane Mnouchkine and the Theatre du Soleil

If Carlo Boso could be said to use an archetype based approach, Mario Gonzalez is completely different. Before working with the Theatre du Soleil he was a puppeteer and then became a mask specialist in the 70's with Ariane Mnouchkine. He's the one playing Pantalone in her film of the 1975 show "L'age d'Or" where she reinvented the commedia characters. His approach to commedia and mask work is more about trying a mask and creating a personal character through



Mario Gonzalez and 'pig mask'

guided improvisation, like "find your inner clown" workshops. Mask shows by people who've worked with him tend not to use "commedia situations" but are more often mask applied to existing text or completely original clown-type creations.



Carlo Boso giving a workshop on Commedia

The Lecoq school teaches commedia to all its pupils, with an approach more like the Piccolo Teatro - not surprising, as Jacques Lecoq was one of its founders in the 1950's before creating his own school. The goal of commedia within the teaching is to get the pupils to create character from the engagement of the body, and there is not so much emphasis on writing commedia, which is perhaps why not many Lecoq pupils go on to use commedia masks in their shows. A notable exception is the compagnie Varsorio and their "Espace Culturel des Arts de Masque" embedded in one of the poorer areas in Paris.

I've surely left people out, and I've not even started on commedia shows, so if any readers think of things I should mention, please contact me (at anna@ouvriersdejoie.org) À bientôt !

Anna Cottis
Paris



Poster from 2019 Rencontre of the *Createurs de Masques*

Memories . . .

Rein van Schagen, the much admired Pantalone of the Mini Commedia Festivals, has sent us some recollections of working with Barry, Olly and Mitch way back in the 1980's. We are now all contributors to Zannizine and a study on 'Masks and the paintings of Goya' by Rein will appear in our Winter Issue.



Rein as Pantalone with Barry as Arlecchino (2019)

Memories . . .

Having left the drama school of Maastricht in 1980, I started to do street theatre. Johnny Melville, at that time quite famous in Holland, suggested I attend Desmond Jones Mime School to brush up my mime technique. So I did; I took the boat to



Rein as Brighella at the Oval



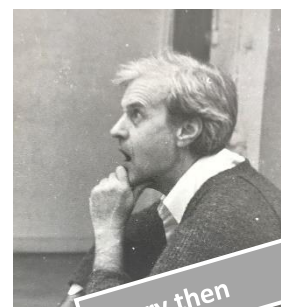
The Duchess Mislaid



Tim & Rein in rehearsal

London and started a two-year stay there. I enrolled at Desmond's school, doing his classes in the mornings. I started to look for theatre workshops for the rest of the day. I found the City Lit and the Oval House, both institutions which provided a wide range of workshops devoted to theatre. One of them was led by Barry Grantham, wonderfully accompanied by Joan on the piano. It was my introduction to and my lifetime commitment to Commedia dell'Arte.

From the first lesson onwards I felt thrilled. The lessons fitted me like a glove. They inspired me to explore my comedy talents to the full. The preciseness and different directions of the moves, the way the characters travelled on stage, it was and still is a solid ground to dig into. The exaggerated characterisations, the characters being led by their emotions, being victim of them. And changing their emotions in a split second, is an important part of Commedia. At the same time you try to be as expressive, sincere and convincing as possible. And of course the mask is helpful. Once you are used to wearing one, it helps you transform easily. Just accept the mask and let it take over and you just have to follow. The classes eventually led to my participation in a large and international cast for two performances: *The Duchess Mislaid* at the Oval Theatre and *The False Turk* at the lovely Bear Theatre.



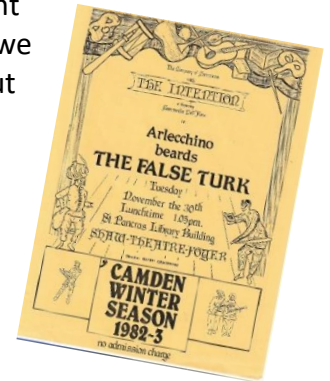
Barry then

At that time (I was 27) Barry asked me to do the role of the malicious Brighella, which I enjoyed a lot. In the plays I had many scenes with Tim Jones, who played Torolino and Olly Crick who played Pedrolino.



The Duchess cast

After two great years in London I went back to Holland, but using the skills we had both learnt, Tom Jones and I put together a comedy duo, *Foreign Bodies*, which we played with success for the next two years, until my career as scenario-writer and television director took over. Whether I

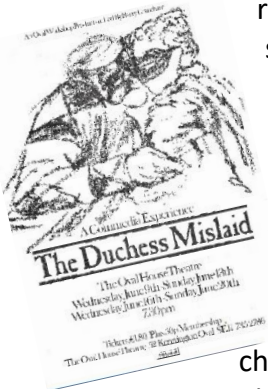


directed drama or comedy, I have always used

the preciseness and the basics of Commedia to explore the scenes and build the characters together with the actors. And still, whether I write or take up performing myself, I fall back on the technics of Commedia. All thanks to Barry, but little thinking that a day would come when I would work with him again.

I knew that Barry was still working in London and heard that he was holding a Commedia weekend workshop at Sands Films Studio. My wife learning of this not only suggested that I should go, but said that she would pay all the expenses for me and my eldest daughter to attend: the fees, the flights, the accommodation.

Great to meet up with Barry and friends from the early days like Olly Crick and Mitch Michelson. Taking part in his classes together with a group of young students was a wonderful experience and a renewed encounter. It was also like having a déjà vu. The circle had closed. I had started in theatre and after a career in television I had come back to my theatre roots. We had so much fun that

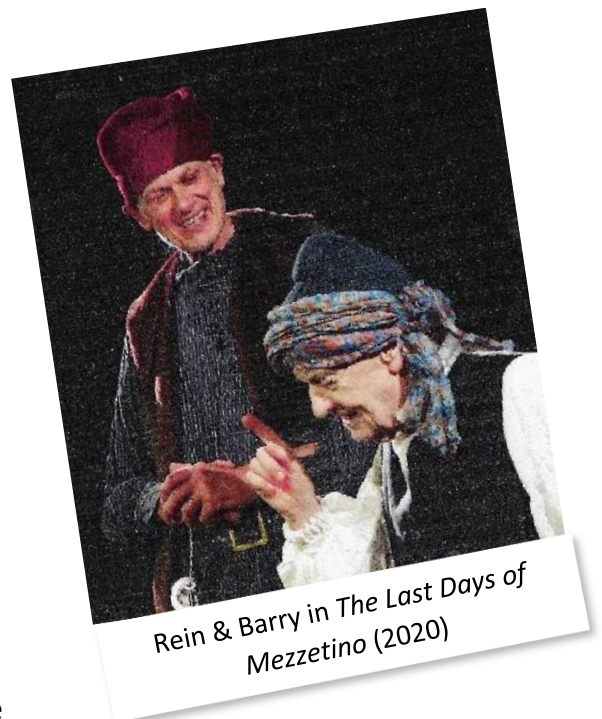


since then I have been at the Mini Commedia festivals every year. Doing scenes with Barry playing Arlecchino and me this time as his master Pantalone di Bisognose; the wonderful

character who can be volatile and angry, visible in all his physics at one moment, and the next, once Franceschina, the servetta, passes by, his emotions turning in a split second to lust, completely changing his bodily moves and forgetting what he was doing a moment ago.

My cooperation with Barry finally resulted in a dramatized extract from his novel *The Last Days of Mezzetino*. Barry playing Mezzetino and me as his jailor. A wonderful partnership.

Hopefully we will meet up again next year, for the 2022 Live Mini Commedia Festival, (25th to 27th February 2022)



Rein & Barry in The Last Days of Mezzetino (2020)

Rein van Schagen

ENDS AND ODDS

THE ZANNIZINE ON-LINE DISCUSSION

AUTUMN ISSUE -OCTOBER 2021

SUBJECT: 'INTRODUCING LESSER KNOWN MASKS'

For most Commedia productions, scripted or improvised, we can count on 'The Famous Six': the three comic 'Masters' - Pantalone, Il Dottore and Il Capitano, and their 'Servants' - Arlecchino, Brighella, and Pierrot (Pedrolino). Add a pair or two pairs of lovers and you have enough for a hundred scenarios. But just occasionally we may wish to broaden the scope by introducing another mask, and there are plenty without inventing a new one. Allardyce Nicoll, in his monumental *'Masks, Mimes and Miracles'*, lists some three hundred - many are just names or variants, like *Trivellino* who is just another name for Arlecchino. But there are still dozens who can be brought back to life.



Three that I have found useful, and whose company I enjoyed were Tartaglia, Rotalinda and, best of all, Burattino. Tartaglia, the stutterer; there are a number of variants. The one I chose was the pompous official, a sort of lawyer or alternative to the Doctor. Rotalinda a masked female figure. A more mature *Servetta* or the troublesome wife to Pulcinella or even Pantalone. And Jack of all Trades, Burattino: Landlord, Cook, Shop keeper, Funeral Director. He frequently appears in the Scala scenarios. I have his costume from a Covent Garden production of *'Love of Three Oranges.'* Instead of the Arlecchino patches he has little bows! You may think it looks like the Queen Mother, but no it works well. 'My' Burattino has a lighter mask than the illustration.

Your choices and experiences please - Barry G

Biographies of the New Contributors

John Rudlin

John studied Drama and French at Bristol University where he became very involved in the practical aspects of performance – acting, writing and directing. These activities continued after graduation and led eventually to a post at the Exeter University organising their degree course on drama, in which the central activity was to be in the actual practice of these arts, rather than just writing about them. Nevertheless, as most of his practical work had been based on that of the French director Jacques Copeau he wrote a monograph on him for the Cambridge series 'Directors in Perspective' and subsequently co-authored *Jacques Copeau: texts on theatre* for Routledge.



His work at Exeter continued for a number of years until changes to the funding of English Universities in the early nineties convinced him as Head of Department that they would either have to expand or close. Unwilling to compromise with the idea that 'small is beautiful' this led to the closure of the Drama department, along with several others. Emulating Copeau, John then emigrated to France, setting up a small rural centre for performance research, Centre Sélavy. This ran for ten years between 1992 and 2002 and attracted students from all over the world. It was there that he was at last able to devote the time and attention to *commedia dell'arte* that the form demands. Now theoretically retired he is still writing books and plays and taking workshops and role-playing in learning environments.

David Drummond

After training at the RADA David Drummond's acting career started in 1950 with many regional tours and in repertory. Television appearances began in 1952. A side-line as an antique dealer led to his opening a bookshop in the West End of London in 1967 London called "Pleasures of Past Times". Specialising in theatre, this ran from 1967 until his retirement in 2015.

His interest in the history of pantomime led to his amassing a huge collection of books, posters, prints, and ephemera relating to this subject, of which he became an acknowledged expert. on the subject. After several exhibitions - one of which in 1978 celebrated the 200th anniversary of Grimaldi's birth - this is now held in Special Collections of the University of Kent and spans four centuries of British pantomime history. An exhibited clown costume worn at



the annual Grimaldi service led to him joining "Clowns International" later becoming its chairman. A board member of The Greenwich Theatre for ten years he also chaired its support group where in "Suppers with Speakers" over seventy theatrical practitioners spoke for their supper. Sixteen years ago he founded The Max Wall Society whose latter career owed much to his Greenwich Theatre performances. David's twilight years include completing an oft requested record of an eventful life.

Anna Cottis

Anna Cottis spent her youth between the London punk scene and various youth theatres before running away to France, where she studied with Gaulier, Pagneux and Annie Fratellini. After some years as a circus clown, she found her way back to theatre through commedia dell'arte which seemed like home. In more recent years, she has explored other forms of mask and studied Feldenkrais, and become to all outward appearances more serious. She currently has two shows playing in theatres in Paris.



Rein van Schagen

Rein attended Maastricht Acting School, Holland, Desmond Jones Mimeschool and a variety of theatre workshops at City Lit and the Oval House, London, where he studied and performed with Barry for two years. With Tim Jones he formed comedyduo Foreign Bodies and toured throughout Holland, Belgium and Denmark with great success. Rein also taught Commedia dell'Arte and physical comedy, and directed youth theatre.

Writing a sitcom episode brought him to a television career which spanned over 25 years: Writing and directing drama and comedy, art and history programs. In 2015 he retired from television and returned to the theatre to act, write and direct.

A long line of comedians influenced Rein, from Laurel & Hardy up to Monty Python. Comedy with a strong base in a physical approach. It is therefore that commedia dell'arte has also been so much at the core of his work. His own style developed from pure slapstick to which has been his favourite style for a long time now: tragicomedy, to touch the heart by laughter and emotion.



Announcement of the dates of the next Mini-Commedia Festival:

The Next Edition of the Mini-Commedia Festival will be held over the weekend of 25 to 27 February, 2022 at Sands Films Studio in Rotherhithe

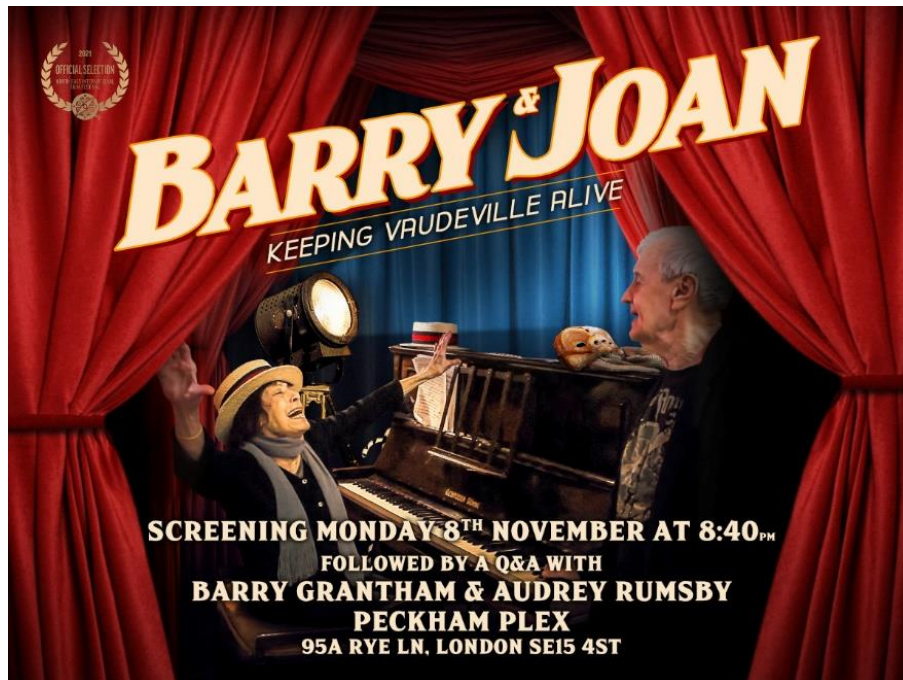
Request for Contributions to Fund the Festival:

Sands has played a critical role in the running of these Festivals and it is hoped that they will continue to do so into the future. We will shortly be organising a Support Fund for this work. In the meantime, you may best contribute to our work by patronising Sands through the merchandise available from their online shop at:

<https://www.sandsfilms.co.uk/shop-1.html>

ANNOUNCING A GRAND FILM PREMIERE!

On Monday 8 November, the Premiere of the film *BARRY & JOAN* will be held at 8:40 pm in the Peckham Plex cinema, 95a Rye Lane, Peckham, London SE15 4ST.



Created by Director Audrey Rumsby with Editor/Producer Eric Pomert, this new film gives a joyful insight into the creative world of Barry and Joan Grantham, who have devoted their lives to two theatrical traditions: the ancient one of the Commedia dell'Arte and the more recent one of Vaudeville, and the film tells of the differences and similarities. The film also features some delightful cartoons of the Commedia Masks.

Breaking News:

Rare 18th-Century Drawing by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo discovered in English Estate's Attic:



Pulcinelli at the Gnocci Feast
by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696 – 1770)

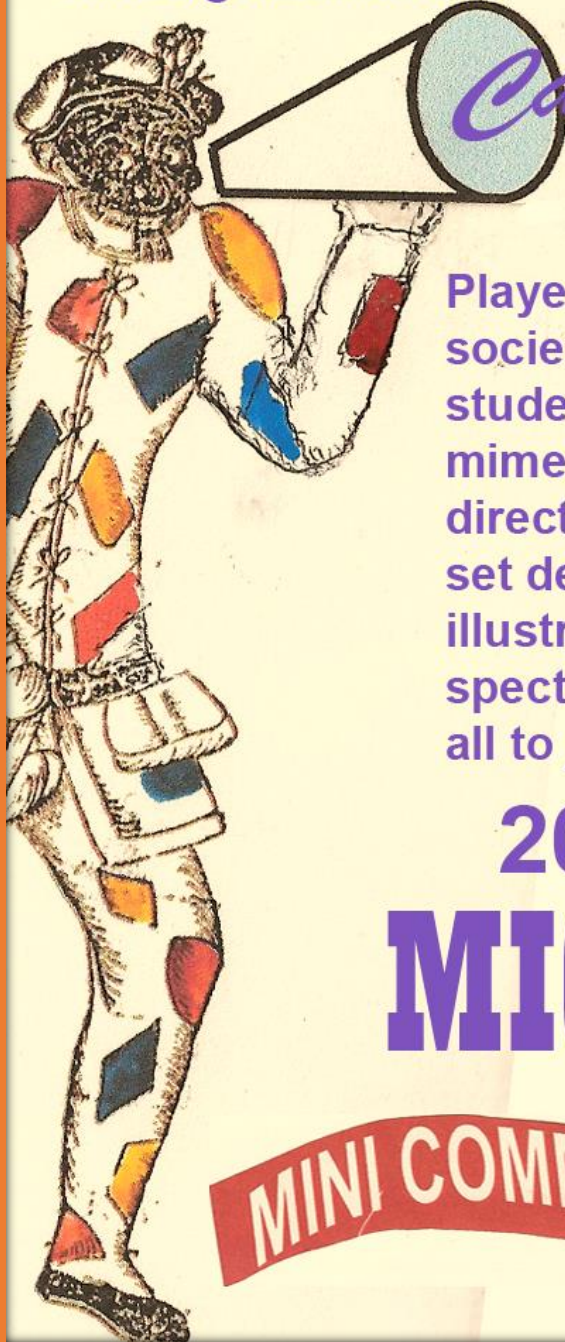
A member of the wealthy Sitwell family purchased a whimsical 18th-century Italian drawing in 1936. The work of art was tucked away and forgotten in one of the many rooms at Weston Hall, the family's grand estate in Northamptonshire. Long forgotten, the artwork had collected dust in one of Weston Hall's nine attics for decades. It is now included in next month's auction by Dreweatts of the contents of Weston Hall.

Drawn by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696–1770) -- the more famous father of Domenico Tiepolo, the subject of a previous essay -- the small ink drawing depicts a boisterous group of Pulcinelli celebrating and eating gnocchi. Readers will recall that in our first issue (Spring 2021) we argued the case for Pulcinella being a committed Pastafarian. This rare item is further proof of his dedication to those sacraments.

After collecting dust for decades, the drawing will serve as a star lot in Dreweatts' auction, 16th & 17th November. Further details at: <https://www.dreweatts.com/lot-309-giovanni-battista-tiepolo-italian-1696-1770-a-large-group-of-punchinelli/>

news! Barry Grantham & Bill Tuck have booked Sands Theatre for Friday 25th, Saturday 26th, and Sunday 27th of February 2022 to celebrate World Commedia Day. Please let Bill know if you would like to take part.

bill.tuck@chalemie.co.uk



*Calling all
Commedia*

Players, companies, groups
societies, classes, teachers
students, actors, dancers,
mimes, clowns, musicians
directors, writers, historians,
set designers, mask makers
illustrators, jugglers, acrobats
spectators & sword swallowers
all to join us to help make . . .

2022 a
MIGHTY

MINI COMMEDIA FESTIVAL

ZANNIZINE

Christmas 2021



LIEBIG COMPANY'S
FLEISCH-EXTRACT UND -PEPTON.

Gesetzlich geschützt.

Siehe Rückseite.

Dear Zannophile (That's you)

May I ask you to pause, and look once again at the cover of our Christmas Supplement? Let's show it again to save you turning back. It is a pretty picture is it not? Appropriate for the season and on a Commedia theme. Well painted, see how the snow clings to the urn and see that the feet of the 'Serenader' are half covered with snow. We call him the 'Serenader' because we know that the picture comes from a series with that title. We note that his lute is just visible, but who is he? The Captain? More likely Lelio or another Innamorato.



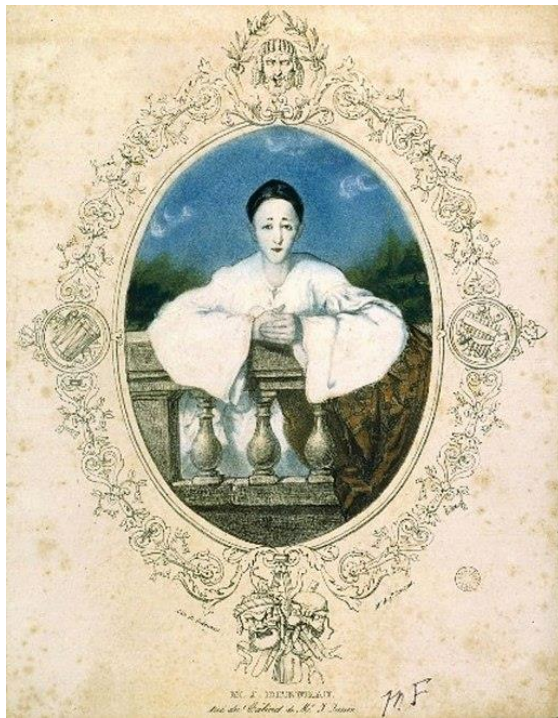
We have said that it is a pretty picture but it is also piece of 'Theatre'. See how everything is stacked against the protagonist; the high walls and that impenetrable wrought iron gate. To make matters worse, Harlequin has just arrived on the scene. He would wouldn't he? Though his baton is raised it doesn't seem aggressive, more 'Can I join in?' Now look to the window; one would expect the beautiful Isabella leaning out, eager to hear his song. But no surely, it's a man. An irate Pantalone? No not that, just some chap. Can this be, in that age of Homophobia, a gay affair? Wouldn't that be a fun?

And finally to the lower left corner – What on earth is that? It's a tin of meat extract – or corn beef – The entire picture was an advertisement for the German branch of Fray Bentos. I hope your glad you stayed with me!



Into the Christmas Supplement – On tip toe please

GLIMPSES OF DEBURAU with Barry Grantham

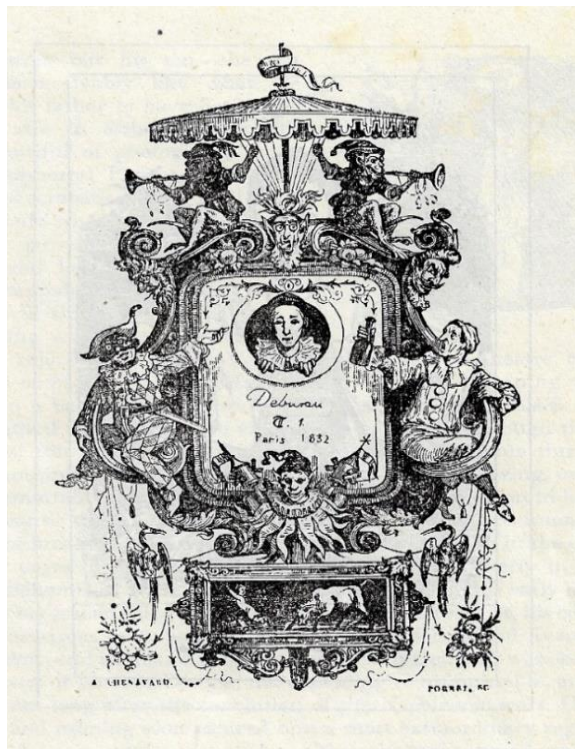


The main reason for this brief account of the great mime Jean-Gaspard (Baptiste) Deburau is to decorate our Christmas Supplement with a series of delightful and little seen engravings.

They first appeared in a small book, *Histoire du Théâtre à 4 sous* published in a limited edition in Paris in 1832. Four of them including our first picture, are engraved from drawings by A Bouquet, an amateur artist from Lyons, who depicts Pierrot much as we have come to know him; the white face, the black cap, the big sleeves of the collarless shirt, and, is that a crucifix round his elegant neck? It is a moonlit moment arrested in time; an icon of the new *Romantic Movement*. It is melancholic, beautiful, and androgynous. How did it come about?

‘He powdered the shine of his greasepaint to a perfect white and dullness. Something was lacking in this mask. What? The eyebrows and the eyes accentuated with black. That was better, already captivating. What more? Some rouge on the lips to offset the white. Better and better, and yet it wasn’t complete. What had to be added? Ah, the black skullcap of Harlequin. Oh! A Miracle! Pierrot was born. The spirit of the ‘*Mimus albus*’ of Rome had passed into Deburau.’ⁱ

Now take a look at the triumphant tribute to Deburau on our left. It was designed by A. Chenavard, an ornamental and decorative painter, also from Lyons. At the far side we find a friendly, even cuddly Harlequin, dressed in the style of the time. On the right Deburau himself, lean, mean, and masculine. You are going to have a job refusing the drink he offers you. Centrally, him-self again looking through a porthole, his signature (?) and the date 1832. Above that he is shown with ‘Spock’ ears, his tongue sticking out, and it seems flames issuing from the top of his head. Lower down one more likeness in Phrygian cap, and cartwheel ruff between two (?) fireworks and below that, a representation of someone running from a Bull. – I could only think of Europa and Jupiter up to his tricks’ until I learnt from the excellent Mr Storey that the *Bœuf Enragé* was the title of a ‘Pantomime’ in which Deburau had had an early success.



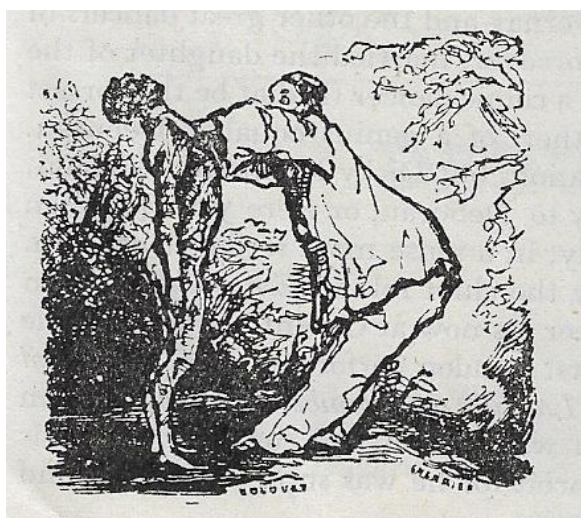
← Here we see Deburau as gourmet. No ‘Vie de Bohème’ this one; a three tier jelly, a bowl of fruit. Something in aspic, some gnawed-upon bones and at least three bottles of wine. As Théophile Gautier tells us, ‘It was the fashion among painters and men of letters to frequent a little theatre on the Boulevard du Temple, where a celebrated clown attracted the crowd. We habitually occupied a ground-floor stage-box, and Pierrot was so accustomed to see us that he never sat down to a single banquet



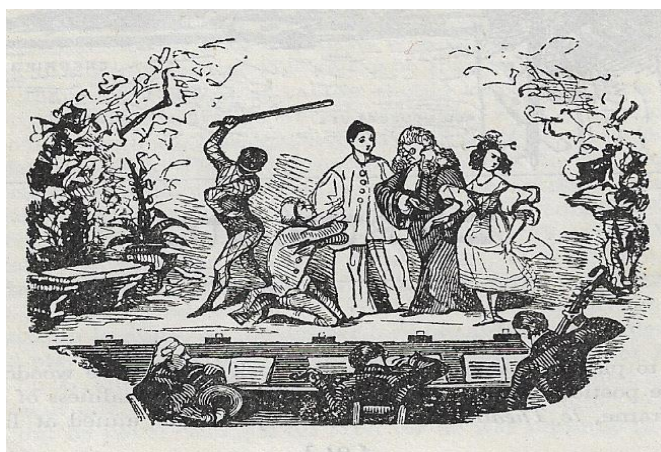
on the stage without giving us our portion of it. What slices of bread smeared with grape jam he cut for us. Those were wonderful times. The times of the *Bœuf Enragé* and *Ma Mère l'Oie*. . . What plays! But then what a theatre. . . and above all, what spectators!

Still feeling a bit hazy about Deburau? Think *Enfants du Paradis* with Jean-louis Barrault as Baptiste (Deburau!). The title refers to the occupants of the gallery, a class to be reckoned with as much as the 'Gods' of the London Music Halls. . . You haven't seen it? I urge you to; it's certainly one for the bucket list. You haven't seen it in ages? Neither had I. I just watched it through twice. You can learn a lot about Deburau's time and even more about the 1940/50's. We were just learning to drink coffee, and hurrying to the Hampstead Everyman and the Mayfair Curzon to watch European films; *Bicycle Thieves*, the *Seventh Seal*, *Wild Strawberries*, and *Enfants du Paradis*.

If the set pieces devised by Etienne Decroux are not quite as good as we thought they were, the 'Stolen Watch' on the parade still qualifies as an outstanding example of French mime. Differing in tone from the other rather 'coy' scenes is the *Marchand d' Habites* in which Baptiste, in love with a high born lady, kills a seller of second hand clothes for the resplendent uniform which will give him access to the ball to meet her. He is punished by the ghost of the old clothes man dancing among the guests. This seems to fit with the image we get from the engravings. Oddly enough it is almost certain that Deburau never appeared in this pantomime, his place being taken by an understudy, Paul Legrand. It was not a success with the habitués of the Theatre in the Boulevard du Temple. The film was made in 1943/44 in German occupied France and the large crowds demanded by Marcel Carne gave employment to many old pros and certainly saved some from the concentration camps.



← Here Deburau is shaking Harlequin (or is he strangling him?) In either case as his arms are bent his position is impossible

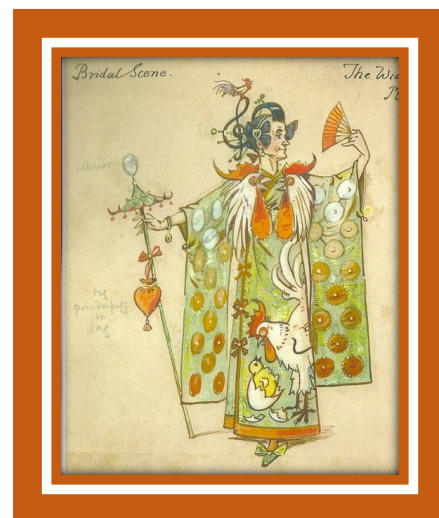


PLUM PUDDING FOR PANTOMIME By DAVID DRUMMOND

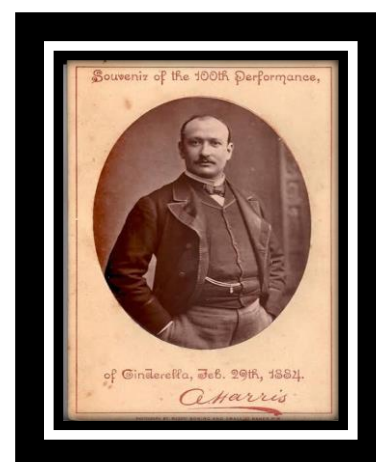
I love Pantomime, I am plum pudding for Pantomime. I have always received enjoyment even from a second-rate production. The assortment of summer show talent performing their customary routines slipped into pantomime story by the flimsiest of means or no means at all. How delighted one is to hear Cinderella say: "All alone. I think I'll play my xylophone?" One just loves the incongruity of it all. It doesn't matter if it is the Jafar or Baron Hardup who involves the children in his conjuring act or that the Principal Boy's song 'On Moonlight Bay' doesn't quite suit the occasion and that the company is enlarged by the tallest teenagers from the local dance school. A great plum pudding with everything thrown in, with a minimum of rehearsal and presented under a fairy-tale title, be it Aladdin or Little Red Riding Hood (probably chosen because the scenery and most of the costumes were available).

My first pantomime? Shrouded in antiquity my memory recalls an ensemble of twenty-four girls, half of them male attired, joyfully dancing and sort of singing the opening chorus, soon to be joined by the shapely Patricia Burke as Principal Boy. Another time a joyous visit to Red Riding Hood at the Adelphi Theatre, where I revelled in the antics of Nervo and Knox in the Broken Mirror routine. Then there was the annual visit to The Streatham Hill Theatre. Here Emile Littler ensured pantomime magic with his superb productions led by the likes of Arthur Askey and Tommy Trinder. As a young adult my acting career frequently took me on tour, thus presenting the opportunity of witnessing regional attractions. Those in Scotland never disappointed, leading to special seasonal visits in later years to enjoy the much loved comedians and fine production values. Sensing my love of pantomime's Plum Puddingness (its tasty ingredients) the Zannizine invited me to reflect on Victorian pantomime as a contrast to what memory had conjured.

Theatre Royal Drury Lane: Here, in 1888 I find that "*Puss in Boots surpassed all former productions in its magnificence.*" Sir Augustus Harris, soon to be recognised as the uncrowned King of Pantomime was at the helm. He revelled in processions and he ensured that no pantomime of his would pass without one or more great procession, no matter how slender its justification. In the production of 1888, he permits the story of a clever cat who, through various deceptions enriches his impoverished young master (Lily Wadman) to pass himself off as the Marquis of Carabas and marry a princess. He submerges this story in a welter of extravagance in the shape of elaborate settings, with the enormous stage filled to the flies and the theatre's famed stage machinery fully employed. Hundreds of supers then bring to life the imaginatively designed costumes of Charles Wilhelm. During the procession, leading to celebrations of the Silver Wedding of the King (Herbert Campbell) and Queen (Harry Nicholls) there is an accident



Dan Leno



Augustus Harris



Dame by Wilhelm

to the Royal Carriage and they must continue their journey by donkey and cart borrowed from an ancient costermonger and son, played by the knockabout duo of the Brothers Giffiths. This provided a comedic interlude to be enjoyed by the younger element of the audience who may have found processions tedious.

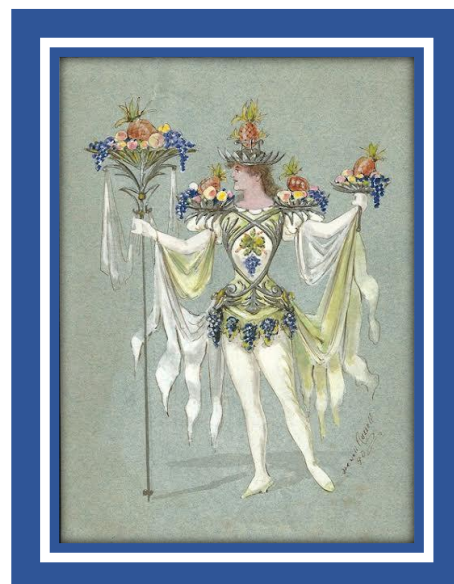
Another procession in the same show is a multiple one as each of the suitors for the hand of the Princess (Letty Lind) have their own retinue, featuring the ladies of the court, accompanied by their knights, squires and heralds. The Renaissance style costumes are made of the richest velvets, satins and brocades. A panorama created by the master of projected illusion, William Beverley, represents the newly acquired estate of the Marquis of Carabas and his talented cat. This shows the park and vineyards and a cornfield where children dance *'The Haymakers Ballet'*. On reaching the castle in its Pavilion of Chivalry, there is a grand parade of knights in burnished armour - some mounted. After the Wedding Breakfast comes "The Golden Honeymoon" wherein the coryphées representing lilies and other white flowers play a conspicuous part.

It is relief to his audiences that Sir Augustus reduced the spectacle in order to accommodate the leading lights of the Music Hall to spice up the comedy. The heavy-weight Hubert Campbell, popular at the Surrey Theatre in Southwark, had already been with him for some years and later he is hugely impressed by the current star of the 'Surrey' - Dan Leno - and attracts him with a contract that lasts for sixteen years. Leno's comic monologues and songs and the comedy shared with the rotund Campbell are more fun than processions and never failed to keep the children awake. The male element in a family party had the added attraction of a glamorous 'Principal Boy', whose attraction was that they did not in the slightest look like boys and, conforming to the fashion of the time, curvaceous limbs were amplified by padding.

Coming at the end, the Harlequinade, though no longer part of pantomime's plot, still flourished led by Harry Payne one of the last notable clowns. It was possibly a child's most enjoyable part of the evening, particularly when a giant cracker was pulled to disgorge hundreds of sweets to squeals of delight. One commentator observed they might have been happier had such fun been placed before the spectacular processions.

In 1886 these, however, were being emulated elsewhere in the provinces: "Laughter is sacrificed for scenery and a general dullness is the result of an ambitious nature to please the eye." To the child performers, Dan Leno was known to have shown particular kindness as he knew too well that this was probably their happiest experience, before returning to a home far removed from that of the Fairy Palace.

David Drummond



Design by Wilhelm



Dan Leno



Tom Matthews

„PAGES FROM THE ART OF AMUSING 1871



Hogarth's representation of the Talking Hand.

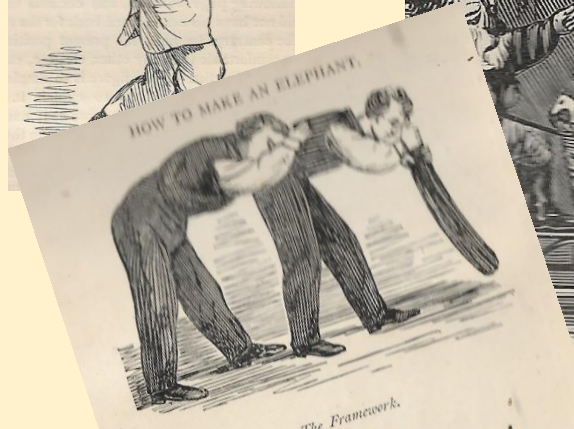


32 THE LONG-NOSED NIGHT-HOWLER.
among the audience once or twice, the Vulgaris

Pueris retired behind the curtain. The accompanying sketch will explain how the Night-Howler is



boy and the boots and the that is wanted is a rough. The howl is produced by instruments, into the construction a future chapter initiate of these instruments the



HOW TO MAKE AN ELEPHANT.

The Framework.

"All work and no play,
Makes Jack a dull boy."



The Living, Walking Reality—see p. 118.
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CHRISTMAS 1845



PANTALOON - THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

COLUMBINE - QUEEN VICTORIA

HARLEQUIN - MR GLADSTONE

CLOWN - MR PALMERSTON

CHRISTMAS 2021

To wish all Commedia professionals, students, historians, critics and spectators .

**A HAPPY CHRISTMAS
& A PRODUCTIVE NEW YEAR**

FROM THE ZANNIZINE

*Jackie Lee - Christmas 2021 - Feb 21
The Zannizine - 2021-22 Feb
Chelmsford Street School 4th - 9th April 2018*

