

## Intro to Commedia dell'Arte: 6 Sessions (45mins each)

Format: Digital (Zoom), Google Drive or Email for handouts

### **Workshop Series Goals (from school):**

- Ensemble building [& Ensemble creation]
- A space to implement different learning styles (writing, improv, performing) and the skills to understand a historical concept from different lens

### **Workshop Series Goals (from Tut'Zanni):**

- Introduce students to the form (especially character-building & physically-informed characters) and get them excited about it.

### **Session Topics**

Session 1: Commedia, it's contemporaries and Tut'Zanni

Session 2: Mask into a physical character, with voice

Session 3: Characters - Servants, Masters, and Outliers

Session 4: Physical masked performance - The Canovaccio

Session 5: Physical masked performance - Lazzi

Session 6: Final Performance

## SAMPLE LESSON PLAN 1

### Session 1: Commedia, it's contemporaries and Tut'Zanni

**Length:** 45 minutes

**Number of Students:** 11-15 (Section 1 - 15; Section 2 - 11)

**Lesson goals:**

- Introduce students to Tut'Zanni's teaching style
- Introduce students to the history of commedia and terms that will be used through the sessions
- Introduce students to the basics of Tut'Zanni's form
- Get to know where the students are at in their understanding of Commedia & Tut'Zanni

**Space:** Classroom

**Needs:**

Video: General History of Commedia dell'Arte

Archetype Profile & Archetype Encyclopedia

Character Sheet

Video: Modern Examples

**1 minute** Introduction of teachers & Tut'Zanni

**4 minutes** Introduction to lesson - sunrise

Breathing. 6 deep breaths with side coaching  
Physical. Keep breathing and side coaching to go from toes to top

### **12 minutes** A general history of commedia

**CHECK-IN:** Before we begin - one word to let me know how much you know about Commedia?

**Protocol:** If you have any questions put them in the chat and we will try to get to them during the lesson or send answers in the follow-up?

### **WATCH A VIDEO (8 minutes)**

General History of Commedia dell'Arte  
Let's talk about CLASS [how commedia breaks it down]

### **3 minutes** Let's translate to Tut'Zanni

The building blocks of OUR commedia:

1. Characters (from Archetypes)
2. Masked Performance Form (very physical)
3. Canovaccio (Character-driven, Plot & Lazzi)
4. Improv & Interaction

Within these there are keys to success - like external-to-internal, generosity, economy of movement and language, focus, imagination, call-backs, social commentary, character-driven, pop culture, and more.

**CHECK-IN:** Any questions or comments. [as teachers we often check-in, it is not necessary to comment, but if you have something that you need answered or a statement that needs to enter the space, there is room for it. Economy of language is very important to commedia, so keep that in mind as we check-in]

### **10 minutes** Intro to Archetypes (for next session)

What is an archetype? How are they different from a character and a stereotype?  
Commedia had a couple dozen archetypes and HUNDREDS of characters.  
An archetype is a tool for building a character.

There is a place that archetypes can become dangerous. In commedia, archetypes often have specific jobs, characteristics, etc. A stereotype is when a characteristic has been used too much or too often connected to a specific group. It has made one story the whole story for a group of people. That's when it is not good.

We are always checking in on our profile/formula's to make sure that they are not unknowingly stereotypical. Sometimes we will lean into a stereotype to make a statement, but that is knowingly using it to complicate that notion.

**HANDOUT: Archetype profile.**

What is included in an archetype profile? Let's look at one.  
Name, Drive/Need, Class, Etc.

**10 minutes** Contemporary Ties

Commedia died. But its influence lives on today. EVERYWHERE.

Examples: **WATCH A VIDEO.**

- Mr Burns. (Pantalone) from Simpsons
- [Lucille Bluth (Pantalona - or her own Archetype?) from Arrested Development]
- Titus A. (Capitano) from Kimmy Shmidt
- Andy D. (Zanni) from Parks & Rec.
- Dwight S. (Brighella) from the Office
- David & Alexis (Innamorati) from Schitts Creek
- [Pierce (Dottore) from Community]
- Pepper (Colombina) from Iron Man (series)

**HANDOUT: Archetype Encyclopedia**

For next class, for your favorite sitcom character - see if they are coming from a commedia archetype. Don't worry if you are unfamiliar with the "commedia" specific archetypes - just pick your character and see if you can boil them down to a type.

**If Time: Answer any questions from chat**

**5 minutes** Sunset

Reconnect to your breath.

One word for today's lesson & how you are feeling about it.

**Journal focus: Connect your favorite TV/Movie character to an archetype.**

**HOMEWORK RECAP: Journal.**