

Commedia dell'Arte

6th Century BC:
Ancient Greek
Theatre

9th Century:
Medieval Theatre

16th Century:
Commedia dell'Arte

16th Century:
Elizabethan Theatre

19th Century:
Melodrama

19th Century:
Naturalism

20th Century: Epic
Theatre

Commedia dell'Arte is an improvised comedic theatre form.



The origins and the history of Commedia dell'Arte:

Where did it begin?

It began in Italy in the early 16th century before quickly spreading through Europe. The exact origins of Commedia dell'Arte are unknown as there is not much documented previous to the 16th century. The term itself (Commedia dell'Arte) wasn't put to common use until the 18th century. It is generally acknowledged that the form began in Italy in the 1550's and reached its peak in the 1650's.



Where is Italy?

Main features of Commedia dell'Arte:

- **Stock characters** – the characters were always the same, only the situations changed. Fixed types: the servants, the masters and the lovers.
- **Half masks** – the masks defined the characters.
- **Grammelot** - a babel of sounds which, nonetheless, manages to convey the sense of speech.
- **Improvisation** – actors worked off a scenario and made up their lines. These scenarios mostly revolved around the **themes of love, money or food**.
- **Lazzi** – short comedic physical moments were included.
- Lots of **humour**. Including **slapstick** moments (slip, trip and collision) and the rule of three.
- **Mime, acrobatics** and **music** were featured too.

Use of half masks:

Most of the characters wear half masks, but even those without masks (e.g. the Lovers) treat their personas as masks. In Commedia dell'Arte, the characteristics of a character (such as a walk, a pose, or a gesture) are just like wearing a mask.

The meaning of Commedia dell'Arte:

Literally Commedia dell'Arte translates to the comedy of professional artists.

Lazzi:

A lazzi is a physical comedic moment in the middle of the play, unrelated to the plot but linked to the themes of love, money and food in the extreme. They are acrobatic, exaggerated, and sometimes obscene.

Creating humour - slapstick and the rule of three:

Slapstick comedy involves exaggerated physical activity, involving slips, trips, collisions, and it may involve violence. The rule of three involves establishing a pattern and then ending with something different, 'establish, reinforce, surprise.'

Stock Characters: characters that remain the same. They have the same attitude, the same look, the same drive, the same physical action which makes them recognisable by how they move, what they wear, and how they act. The masters are usually foolish greedy old men, and the servants are hungry and mischievous.

The Servants	The Masters
 <p>Zanni: Lowest servant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads with his nose. • Feet come up and arms are involved with this. • Can be compared to a pigeon. • He is a peasant, everything is extraordinary to him, and he is curious and enthusiastic. • He wants to please everyone. 	<p>Magnifico: Top master.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads with his forehead. • Eagle, looks down on everything. • The most powerful character. 
 <p>Arlecchino: Stupid servant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads with his knees. • Open loose hips. Playful. Hands on hips. • Cheeky chap, likes to play practical jokes on people and keeps low down when he has been up to something! • He is acrobatic. 	<p>Pantalone: Old mean master.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads with his forehead. Hunched over. • Scowl on his face. • Bent knees, chin stuck out and leading the movement. • He has lost his teeth. • Very money orientated, constantly holds onto a bag full of money hanging from his belt. 
 <p>Brighella: Cunning servant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walks more on his heels, placing weight on a bent leg. The other leg is extended lightly touching the ground. • Whether or not he is moving, his feet are constantly moving, dancing back and forth. • He plays tricks and pranks on others. 	<p>Il Dottore / The doctor: A master.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large character, leads with his stomach. • Light on his feet. • A man of learning. He waffles about what he knows but never really makes a point. 
 <p>Columbina: Quick witted servant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads with her hips. • She stands with a hip cocked to the side, hands on hips. • She moves with quick, strong steps. • Vain and spiteful. 	<p>Il Capitano / The captain: A master.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads with his knees, stands tall. • Full of swagger but in reality would do anything to avoid a fight. 

Year 8 Dance Term 1 Knowledge Organiser – Street Dance

Key vocabulary – Physical & Performance Skills

Extension	The lengthening of body parts outwards. E.g. Straight arms and pointed toes
Flexibility	The range of movement possible in the joints/muscles
Coordination	The ability to use different parts of the body together smoothly and efficiently.
Posture	The way the body is held
Stamina	Ability to maintain physical and mental energy over periods of time.
Timing	Performing the correct movement at the correct time. This should be in time with your group
Musicality	How in time you are with the music
Energy	How much physical effort you apply to the performance
Facial Expressions	Animating the face to engage with your audience/communicate the theme of your performance
Projection	Projecting your movements outwards into the space with appropriate energy.
Dynamic Awareness	Noticing and applying the correct quality to each movement. For example: sharp, soft, fluid etc.

Key questions

Key question	Answer
What is Street Dance?	Street dance is an umbrella term – this means that it encompasses a wide range of styles and has many influences, it is not one independent style of dance. Street dance has evolved in urban open spaces such as streets, dance parties, parks, school yards, and nightclubs. Street dance is a vernacular dance , vernacular dances are often <u>improvised</u> and <u>social</u> in nature. This encourages interaction with spectators and other dancers.
What is a vernacular dance?	Vernacular dances are dances which have developed 'naturally' as a part of 'everyday' culture within a community.
What influenced the development of street dance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hip Hop Culture in New York in the 1970's • 'Funk' styles of dance in California • Jazz Dance
What are choreographic devices?	Choreographic devices are the tools that we use to make our choreography more original and interesting.

Fundamental/Topic specific knowledge:

Waacking:

Waacking is a form of dance created in the LGBT clubs of Los Angeles, during the 1970's disco era. Waacking consists of moving the arms to the beat of the music, typically by moving the arms over and behind the shoulder.

Key Features/Movements:

- Circular motions
- Fast paced
- Sharp dynamics
- Posing
- Moving the arms to the beat of the music
- Musicality

Break Dance:

Breaking, also called Breakdancing or b-boying, is an athletic style of street dance.

Breakdancing was invented in the early 1970's by inner-city youths in the Bronx in New York City. Breakdancing uses different body movements, spins, arm movements, leg movements, all of which are done to the rhythm of hip-hop music.

Key Features/Movements:

- Freezes
- Toprocks
- Downrocks
- Power Moves
- Physically demanding

Year 8 Dance Term 1 Knowledge Organiser – Street Dance

Key vocabulary - Choreographic Devices:

Canon	Performing the same movement one after another.
Unison	Performing the same movement at the same time
Formation	The position you stand in to perform.
Levels	The height at which you perform your movement
Repetition	Repeating the same movement or phrase more than once
Accumulation	Gaining dancers as a phrase is performed
Juxtaposition	Showing a contrast on stage. This can be applied using speed or style etc
Fragmentation	Dividing the dance into smaller chunks and reordering this to create a new phrase

Key questions

Key question	Answer
What are the sub genre's of street dance?	
Where did Street Dance develop?	Street Dance originated in New York in the 1970s. Evolving on the streets of Manhattan and the Bronx, it was developed as an improvised, social dance form, reacting against traditional, high-art dance styles

Fundamental/Topic specific knowledge:

Commercial Dance:

Commercial refers to dancing done in the media for example concerts, live shows, music videos, films, and adverts.

Many different styles of dance are used in the commercial category such as hip hop, jazz, locking, popping, breakdancing, krumping, and contemporary dance.

Key Features/Movements:

- Expressive style of dance
- Always combines a variety of styles
- Usually performed in large groups
- Used for a commercial purpose

House Dance:

House dance is a social dance that is primarily danced to house music. It has roots in the clubs of Chicago and of New York. House dance is an amalgamation of the dance styles seen in the post disco era. It is often improvised and emphasizes fast and complex footwork combined with fluid movements in the torso.

Key Features/Movements:

- Jacking
- Lofting
- Floorwork
- Energetic
- Fluid movements

Y8 Theatre Styles

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Naturalism



NATURALISM was created by Konstantin Stanislavski and is a theatrical style that attempts to resemble real-life on stage.

Stanislavski developed a performance process, allowing actors to use their personal histories to express real emotion when playing a character. This process helps an actor create the illusion of reality – a naturalistic character.

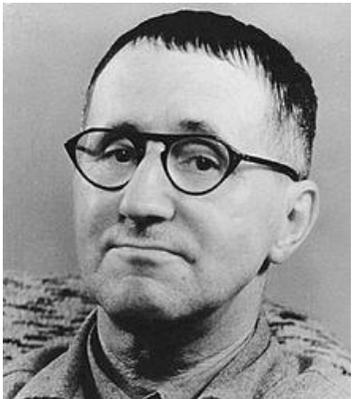
In a Naturalistic play expect to see:

- Accurate characterisation skills, including accent, physicality, voice.
- A performance that involves real life issues and topics. Audience made to sympathise/empathise with characters.
- Full costume, appropriate for the situation, context and character.
- Full set used for each scene. Lots of props that would be in that particular moment.

Stanislavski's rehearsal techniques included:

- **Emotional Memory:** This requires actors to call on the **memory** of details from a similar situation (or with similar **emotions**) and apply those feelings to their character.
- **Method of Physical Action:** This requires actors to consider the **inner-incentives** of the character. Question **why** they are acting a particular way.
- **Identifying subtext:** This is an underlying theme or idea that is hidden within what is happening or what is being said. Subtext can be portrayed by the way a line is said or the actions performed.
- **The Magic 'if':** This is when an actor starts to ask themselves 'if' questions about the character that they are playing. In doing this they can discover whole new elements. Asking 'if', unleashes the imagination and encourages the actor to believe in what they are doing, and stimulates creativity.

Epic Theatre



Epic Theatre was created by Bertolt Brecht and is a theatrical style that completely contracts and opposes naturalistic theatre.

Epic theatre often has a **fractured narrative** that is non-linear and jumps about in time. Epic theatre also shows an argument, a clear **political statement**. Standing outside of the action emotionally, the audience remains objective and watches a **montage** or a series of scenes.

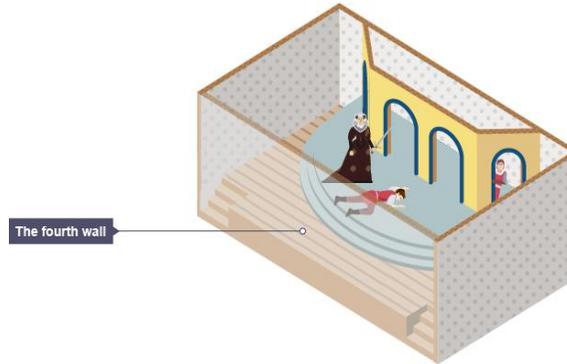
Brecht changed the rules of theatre, by **distancing the actors and audiences** from the events being portrayed. He basically wanted his audiences to be reminded they were watching a play at all times and leave **thinking** and **questioning** the action.

Verfremdungseffekt = The Alienation Effect.

This term means to perform in a way that the audience is stopped from simply identifying themselves with the characters in the play. Brecht wanted his audience to consider the social actions of the characters in order to learn from them, rather than sympathise/empathise with them.

Lehrstucke = Learning Plays

Brecht wanted his audience to take something away and have learned something from the play – not just feel emotions.



What techniques did Brecht use to make his audience THINK?

- Breaking the fourth wall
- Actors stepping in and out of character
- Direct address
- Third person narration
- Non-linear narrative
- Multi-rolling
- Placards

Verbatim Theatre

Verbatim theatre is a form of documentary theatre which is based on the spoken words of real people. Verbatim theatre-makers use real people's words exclusively and take this testimony from recorded interviews. As a director/actor you are unable to change anything about a verbatim play without asking for permission from the playwright themselves, this is to ensure that the complete true story is told by the performers on stage.

As an actor this can be a challenging to perform as you have a responsibility to ensure you are performing the characters in the correct way. Actors will spend lots of time listening to the words of the real people in order to understand their stories on a personal level.

Missing Dan Nolan by Mark Wheeler

This play is based on the real events of Dan Nolan, a teenage boy who went missing on 1st January 2002. Over a year later it was confirmed that Dan had died when they found human remains on a beach miles away. The playwright uses the words of Dan's family and friends to explore the mysteries of Dan's disappearance.

Verbatim Theatre Material could be:

- A news article
- An interview
- A famous speech
- A recorded phone call
- A transcript

The Actor's Body Scan

