

DRAMA *at home*

with Out of the Box

COMEDIA DELL'ARTE

This form of Comedy originated in Italy in the early 1500's. It is exaggerated and "over the top". It has influenced Comedy today. Actors of the day were skilled in Improvisation. We will explore some activities in this performance style today.

EXERCISE ONE

- I** Research information about The Commedia dell'Arte and find out about:
- The Stock Characters
 - The Servant and Master Relationships
 - The Half Masks
 - The Acting Style
 - The Plots of their Plays

TIP! Watch YouTube videos and Commedia Acting Groups performing in this style.

- 2** Record your findings in a Drama Journal. If you don't have a Drama Journal, this is a project to start.

EXERCISE TWO

- I** Improvise a scene where you are alone at home with a box of chocolates. Your emotions must change from one extreme to the other. As your emotion rises to joy, so does your body. When your emotion falls to sadness, your body will lower towards the ground.

Example: "Ah, goody, all alone and a whole box of chocolates all to myself (body upwards). But, think of how unhealthy I will become, I could become very ill (body downwards). Silly me, I can start a healthy eating plan tomorrow (body upwards).

EXERCISE THREE

- I** These scenes are performed in pairs. One performer is a Master Character (High Status) and the other is a Servant Character (Zanni) (Low Status). The Master asks the servant why they have not performed a task that he has requested. The Servant provides an excuse. The Master listens to the excuse but responds with "No, you didn't". At this, the Servant reinvents the excuse, making it more elaborate and more unbelievable. Remember to physically act out the excuse when relating it.

EXERCISE FOUR

- I** The idea in these Improvisations is that each performer must produce the opposite reaction to the expected one.

Example:

Performer 1: Hello there! How are things going?

Performer 2: Not too great. I have just failed my exam.

Performer 2: Lucky you!

Create as many scenes as you wish using this concept, in pairs or in small groups.

USE YOUR IMAGINATION AND HAVE FUN!