

# Commedia Dell'Arte



## Slapstick

The Harlequin-like character Arlecchino literally used a stick to whack others in a performance.

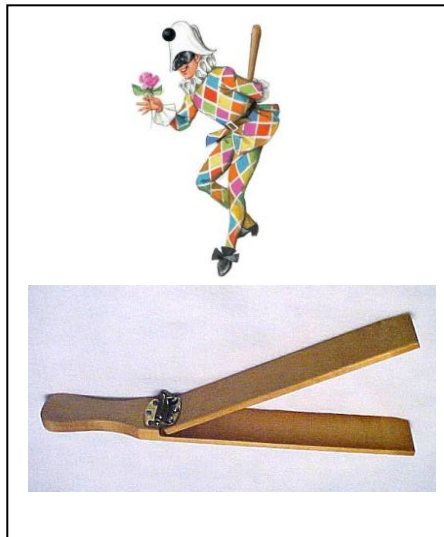
The slapstick was merely a paddle – two sticks tied together at one end designed to make a loud noise. Eventually the name stuck, but the stick disappeared, so today we rarely see the slapstick itself.

Instead, modern slapstick asks for tripping on banana peels, accidentally walking into unseen objects and banging heads together. It is often a violent form of comedy, with the violence being an integral factor in its success.

## Key Features of Commedia Dell'Arte

**Acting Style:** Exaggerated (non-naturalistic)  
Use of physical comedy that is exaggerated, with clumsy actions and reactions.

- Commedia Dell'Arte means '**The Art of Comedy**'.
- It is where physical comedy originates.
- Came from Italy in the 1500s-1600s.
- It was performed as street theatre and toured all over Europe.
- '**Lazzi**' are stock comedic routines.
- A '**Lazzo**' is a joke or 'something foolish and witty'.
- Each character has a distinct costume or mask that helps the audience understand who the character is.



## Tier 2 Vocabulary

Conventions/Key Features  
Organisation  
Assessment  
Collaboration  
Participation  
Devising  
Interrelationships  
Spontaneous  
Prepared  
Evaluate  
Linking  
Interaction  
Improvise  
Listening  
Discussion

## Tier 3 Vocabulary

Facial Expressions  
Stance  
Gestures  
Stock Characters  
Body Language  
Staging  
Genre  
Commedia dell'Arte  
Silent Movies  
Slapstick  
Lazzi  
Lazzo  
Intertitles  
Still Image  
Slow Motion  
Mime

## Stock Characters

- Arlecchino
- Pantalone
- Columbina
- Il Capitano
- Il Dottore

## Lazzi

- Ha!
- Glee
- Putting on a happy face
- Harlequin's Listening Stance
- Invisibility Lazzo