

Marilyn I. Walker
School of Fine &
Performing Arts

Department of
Dramatic Arts
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SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

A Special Invitation to bring your students for innovative and energizing theatre experiences presented by the Department of Dramatic Arts at Brock University!

Pantalone's Palace

Written and Directed by our own Mike Griffin
Friday, November 3rd, 2017 at 11:30 am.

Group tickets start at \$12 each, discounts available.

Twice a year our faculty and students present Mainstage productions in The Marilyn I. Walker Theatre. Directed and designed by faculty and guest artists, performed and produced by students in our Honours BA program, these productions offer you an affordable opportunity to engage your students with original performances that examine provocative thematic ideas. Stimulating course-related content will animate and enrich your teaching curriculum. Our faculty and students bring you the very best of their work in professional-level productions distinguished by their verve and energy. This is a great opportunity to enhance your teaching and to bring excitement to your classroom with a visit to our theatre. Join us at the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts located in downtown St. Catharines at 15 Artists' Common.

Pantalone's Palace

Written and Directed by Mike Griffin

Set & Costume Design by: Kelly Wolf

Lighting Design by Chris Malkowski

Sound Design by: James McCoy

Assistant Direction by: Helena Ciuciura

Mask Maker: Gina Bastone

Friday October 27th at 7:30

Saturday October 28th at 7:30

Sunday October 29th at 2:00

Friday November 3rd at 11:30 - STUDENT MATINEE

Friday November 3rd at 7:30

Saturday November 4th at 7:30



Love and power collide in this fun-filled, fast paced physical comedy.

Plot Summary

Hardworking Columbina just wants to enjoy the majestic Wooers' Woods in peace after a long days work, but the greedy business tycoon Pantalone is scheming. When Columbina discovers his plot to build the biggest casino in the world, she knows she must take action. Armed with her wits and her lovesick friends, she aims to set things right in this fun-filled, fast paced, physical comedy that explores the meeting of contemporary life and classical Commedia dell'Arte.

Commedia dell'Arte

Commedia dell'arte was abundant in Italy from the early 1500s until around 1750 but it is still quite alive in various ways throughout the world today. Commedia is a form of Italian Comedy that is categorized by three things: fixed types of characters, masks, and improvisation. In traditional Commedia, there are four types of characters: the Lovers (Innamorati), the Old Men (Vecchi), the Servants (Zanni), and Capitano. Each of these fixed types are distinguished with a specific set of gestures and, except for the unmasked Lovers, each type had a particular mask. Each of these types also reflects people that were living and breathing in Italian cities like Venice and Bergamo in the 16th and 17th Centuries.



Members of the cast during our training Intensive for *Pantalone's Palace*.

Commedia dell'Arte means *Company of Professional Players*, indicating that historically the actors in Commedia were trained professionals, not simply amateurs. Each actor usually played the same character for their entire career. The plays were highly improvised which meant that they did not have scripts; however, there were elements like speeches and lazzi, physical comic inventions, that were specific to each character and were reused in performances.

Commedia troupes would put up their stage in any square or open area that would allow them an audience. In busy squares, before their shows started, they would often have to attract their audiences through different means: music, magic, acrobatics, or a quack doctor with sexy assistants etc. Because they relied on their audience so much they also had to create a strong relationship with them throughout the play in order to keep the audience interested. Therefore, in Commedia there is a direct need to talk to the audience, connecting to them with every new fact, pleading to them for advice or help, and using them as confidants.



Members of the cast during our training Intensive for *Pantalone's Palace*.

Artistic Direction, with notes from the Director, Mike Griffin

For the last decade, or so, I have been incredibly passionate about Commedia dell'Arte. It is a style that excites me and challenges me. No other form of theatre can make me laugh, think, and reflect on the world I live in all in one evening. However, even though I am constantly entertained by Commedia, I continually question its relevance to today's society. How can a 16th Century style speak to today's audiences, today's issues? How does Commedia affect today and how does today affect Commedia? These questions have driven my desire to write *Pantalone's Palace*.

The traditional archetypes are still very present as we look around us today. It is hard not to find an example of the miserly Pantalone in the corporate world, the pedantic Dottore in academia, or the braggart Capitano at the gym or bar etc. And these characters still reflect as much about our society and humanity as they did back then. So in this production we really play with the merging of the classical world with the contemporary. We mix cell phones with chastity belts, three-piece suits with codpieces etc. And each character blends the past and present to create a unique take on each character type.

At the heart of Commedia is a revolutionary spirit. It was, by nature, a style of subversion, an opportunity to critique existing power relationships through comedy. And though many of Commedia's themes are very universal: love, hunger, power etc., in finding a blend of classical and contemporary we shed a more focal light on some important topics of today including workplace conditions, gender equality, and sexuality. This production truly is a unique blend of classical elements shaken up and reframed to make sense in our ever-evolving world.



Costumes renderings for Pantalone and Brighella designed by Kelly Wolf.

Come see the style of theatre that invented slapstick comedy, that put improvisation on the map, that has influenced comedy and other forms of theatre for generations... Commedia dell'Arte! With a full cast of our favourite classic Commedia dell'Arte characters (Arlecchino, Capitano, Pantalone, Dottore, and more...), acrobatics, live music, and physical hijinks, this is sure to be a fun trip to the theatre. The Department of Dramatic Arts is proud to present this exciting new play written and directed by faculty member, Mike Griffin.

Curriculum Ties

This production of *Pantalone's Palace* is suitable for high school-age audiences and provides an opportunity to enjoy an exciting mix of Commedia dell'Arte, physical theatre, mask, classical theatre, slapstick comedy, acrobatics and more. Commedia is an incredible style for training performers at any level. The show is strongly recommended for any performance-based theatre, drama, or English classes.

"...the first question we are led to ask is why do we teach Commedia dell'Arte? What are the teaching and learning outcomes to be achieved by bringing this 16th century theatrical form into our classrooms and programs? Some of these outcomes might include: physical and vocal freedom; expansiveness and expressiveness; stimulation of the imagination; fostering a playful, inventive spirit; a sense of discovery; the ability to achieve size (physically, psychologically, emotionally) that is grounded in truth; collaboration, connection and complicity with an audience; ensemble playing; giving and receiving; listening and responding; developing trust and confidence in one's self and others; availability, readiness and presence, to name a few." *Chaya Gordon-Bland in The Routledge Companion to Commedia dell'Arte.*

Curriculum connections include the Arts, Literature, World Studies, Classical and International Literature, English, Social Sciences and Humanities, Gender studies, and Drama Studies.

School Outreach

We are pleased to offer a talkback and Q & A after the matinée on November 3rd with the actors and creative team. Should you be interested, contact us for more information.

Student Matinée Booking

The performance of *Pantalone's Palace* appropriate for high school and Jr. High audiences. Please note that it contains mature situations, stage violence (slapstick), and sexually suggestive scenes.

The student matinee for *Pantalone's Palace* is Friday, November 3rd at 11:30 am, held in the Marilyn I. Walker Theatre at the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts. Tickets for the student matinee start at \$12 for each student and teacher.

Prices:

Single Student rate: \$12
Group rates are available:
10-20=\$12.00 ea;
20-30=\$11.00 ea;
30-40=\$10.00 ea;
40-50=\$9.00 ea;
over 50=\$8.00 ea.

To book your school, please telephone the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre Box Office, 905.688.0722, by email at boxoffice@firstontariopac.ca or in person:

FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre
250 St. Paul Street
St. Catharines, ON
L2R 3M2



Open Monday to Friday, 10 am to 6 pm; Saturday, 10 am to 2 pm.

The deadline for reservation by telephone is **Friday, October 24th**. Once you have made your booking through the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, we will confirm your reservation by telephone by Monday, November 7th, 2016.

Don't delay, seating is limited.

Audience Maximum is 200 for this production.

The Marilyn I. Walker Theatre is situated at the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts, located at 15 Artists' Common in downtown St. Catharines, L2R 0B5. We are adjacent to the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre and the Meridian Centre.

See our website for maps and contact information:
brocku.ca/miwsfpa/dramatic-arts/contact/

