

COMMEDIA HAMBURG SPRING 2025

FRI 21 -SUN 23 MARCH 2025

Discover Commedia dell'Arte: A Weekend Workshop

A dynamic introduction to the art of mask, improvisation, and physical theatre

Join Dr. Chiara D'Anna—one of the UK's leading practitioners and scholars of Commedia dell'Arte—for an exciting weekend workshop exploring the timeless world of Commedia dell'Arte. This hands-on course is designed for drama students, emerging actors, and aspiring theatre-makers eager to expand their performance skills through physical comedy, improvisation, and ensemble work.

Why Take This Course?

This workshop is a unique opportunity to learn fundamental skills that apply to any theatrical setting. From building physical and vocal stamina to mastering comic timing and space awareness, participants will gain practical tools to create bold, dynamic characters and perform with confidence. Commedia's traditional masks serve as an excellent starting point for discovering new ways to embody character, explore physical storytelling, and interact with an audience.

What You'll Learn:

- **Grotesque Characterisation:** Learn how to build exaggerated physical and vocal characters.
- **Mask Work:** Explore the postures, gestures, and voices of iconic Commedia masks like the Servants, Masters, and Lovers.
- **Improvisation Skills:** Develop confidence in spontaneous performance and audience interaction.
- **Ensemble Performance:** Practice working as part of a group to create dynamic, collaborative scenes.
- **Commedia *canovacci*:** Devising short, comic scenes inspired by traditional Commedia dell'Arte scenarios (i.e. *canovacci*)

Who Should Attend?

This workshop is ideal for drama students (17+), emerging actors, drama teachers, and aspiring directors interested in physical theatre, improvisation, and comedy. No prior experience is required—just curiosity and a willingness to play!

What to Bring?

Wear comfortable clothing for physical movement. Bring water, a notebook, and lots of energy!

What Makes This Workshop Unique?

This workshop offers a fresh, dynamic approach to Commedia dell'Arte, blending tradition with contemporary theatre-making. Chiara D'Anna brings decades of teaching and performing experience, alongside a PhD exploring the legacy of Commedia in contemporary devised theatre.

Her workshops focus on unlocking creativity through play, physicality, and improvisation, offering participants tools to expand their theatrical vocabulary. Her unique approach to Commedia focusses in finding ways to apply its masks, characters, and techniques to create original, relevant work for today's stage. This makes her work accessible, adaptable, and exciting for theatre-makers interested in both traditional and contemporary performance.

As both an academic and a working artist, Chiara's teaching is deeply informed by years of professional experience in theatre, opera, and film. This rare combination of academic rigour and artistic practice sets Chiara apart as one of the most innovative Commedia practitioners working today. Her theatre practice spans from opera and devised theatre to cinema (*Berberian Sound Studio*, *The Duke of Burgundy*), and her acclaimed solo show, *Don't You Dare!*, has toured internationally since 2018 addressing the silencing of women's voices with a dynamic blend of Commedia, physical theatre, and biting political satire.

How to Register?

Registration by email to info@jbraun.eu

After your email you will receive a registration confirmation and further informations about the transfer of the course fee.

Course Fee:

Students:	180,-€
Early Bird:	249,-€ (until 31 January)
Late Bird:	299,-€

A Cooperation between Sound of Soma Hamburg, Johannes P. P. Braun **and** ExpatImprov Köln, Albert Schimmel.



PROGRAMM OVERVIEW

FRI, 21 MARCH [4 – 8pm]

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

4 – 6 pm **Light Historical Context:** A brief, engaging introduction to the origins and legacy of Commedia dell'Arte.

Ensemble Games and Playful Exercises: Activities to build trust, energy, and a sense of collaboration among participants.

6.30 – 8pm **Grotesque Character Exploration:** Introduction to the idea of physical and vocal transformation through animalistic qualities. Participants will begin experimenting with exaggerated movement and sound to build unique characters.

Meet the Zanni: An introduction of Commedia's iconic long-nose Servant Zanni! Explore their postures, walks, and gestures.

SAT, 22 MARCH [11am – 6pm] **MASTERING THE MASKS**

11am - 1pm **The Servants of Commedia:** Deepen your understanding of the big family of Servants: *Zanni*, *Arlecchino*, *Pulcinella*, *Brighella* and *Servetta*, the clever maid often called Colombina, Franceschina or Smeraldina. Explore their driving forces, physicality, and vocal qualities.

2 - 4pm **The Masters of Commedia:** Discover the hilarious and powerful Masters *Pantalone* from Venice and *Dottore Balanzone* from Bologna: an exploration of their physical stances and comedic personas.

4 - 6pm **Improvisations with Mask Techniques:** clocking (“colpo di maschera”), entrances/exits, repetitions, motifs, asides and counter scenes
Simple scenes and interactions in pairs or trios. Develop confidence in working with masks, rhythm, and comic timing.

SUN, 23 March [11am – 6pm] **CREATING STORIES AND SCENES**

11am - 1pm **The Lovers and Capitano:** postures, gestures, walks, voice and sound of *gli Innamorati* (Female & Male Young Lovers) and *il Capitano* (The Captain).

2 - 4pm **Commedia Canovacci:** Introduce participants to the backbone of Commedia storytelling. Work on devising short scenes (max 2mins) using *lazzi* (comic gags), soliloquy, simple dialogues, and asides.

4.30 – 6pm **Performance Sharing:** Bring everything together in a playful final sharing. Participants will apply their newfound skills to perform devised scenes, showcasing their mastery of character, improvisation, and audience interaction.

Conclusion with Open Feedback and Q&A