

# **Pazzi Lazzi**



**A Boston based Commedia dell' Arte troupe**

## *About Pazzi Lazzi*



**Pazzi Lazzi** is a **Commedia dell'Arte** troupe based in Boston under the artistic direction of Chiara Durazzini. The company strives to entertain and to educate its audiences. All members of the troupe play several characters, of both genders. Commedia dell'Arte is a very demanding performance art. It requires that all actors are in excellent physical shape and can easily move from walking with a hunch to doing somersaults on stage.

Pazzi Lazzi performs and teaches in theatre schools, universities (mainly in the Departments of Theatre, Italian, Dance and Movement, Music, History and Gender and Women's Studies) and cultural organizations. In fact, the troupe has had the pleasure to perform shows and demonstrations and to teach workshops for organizations such as New York University, Harvard University, Boston University, Northeastern University, Brandeis University, University of Vermont, Wellesley College, Indiana University-Bloomington, Skidmore College, Dartmouth College, Middlebury College, the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts in Washington DC, The Clark Institute Museum, The Italian Cultural Institute in Washington DC and Dante Alighieri Society of Massachusetts Cultural Center, among others.

Commedia dell'Arte is a traditional street theatre based on classic character archetypes. Although it is an old form of theatre, the themes it focuses on - greed, power, lust, social hierarchies, and other typical human weaknesses - are as relevant to our daily lives just as they were at the time the art form was first created.

Commedia dell'Arte features the use of masks, unique gestures and presents characters that can be recognized in cultures around the world. Commedia began in Italy in the 16th century and is considered by historians to be the first professional theatre. It was also responsible for the introduction of female actresses.

While Commedia itself is improvised, Pazzi Lazzi writes many of its own scenarios based on ancient scripts, also called *canovacci*, and contemporary events. "Lazzi" (jests, gags, tricks or comic routines) are written by the performers based on their improvisational work.

## OUR SHOWS

### *Isabella Unmasked – The Legacy of an Italian Renaissance Woman. One Actress, Ten Characters. One Musician, Ten Instruments.*

With one actress and one musician. The show is a tribute to the life and art of one of the first professional actresses, Isabella Andreini, who lived in the late 1500's and performed with the Compagnia De' Comici Gelosi. She is a notable historical figure, who became well-known in her time not only for her acting talent as the *primadonna innamorata*, but also as an intellectual and a poet.



In the show, the audience is brought back to the 13<sup>th</sup> of May 1589 in Florence for the celebration of the wedding between Ferdinando I De' Medici and Christine of Lorraine, when Isabella Andreini and her troupe performed their most successful show "The Madness of Isabella". The show is co-written by Chiara Durazzini and Walter Valeri and it narrates the original plot with its

numerous stock characters, such as Isabella, the nobleman Orazio, Arlecchino, Pantalone, Ricciolina, Dottore, all played by Ms. Durazzini with musical accompaniment by the multi-instrumentalist Dan Meyers, director of the Renaissance music ensemble *Seven Times Salt*.

The show can be in English or in Italian and runs about 1 hour and 15 minutes.

***Aria di Commedia*** – *An Evening of Commedia dell'Arte and Italian Renaissance Music*

With three actors and two musicians. It is a full length show based on the idea of recreating the atmosphere of a day in an Italian Piazza where a small troupe of Commedia performers would entertain the passers-by with comic scenes and period music.



The show contains two or three independent original scenes inspired by classic Commedia scenarios. Some titles are:

*“Two Gentlemen and a Sausage”* (duration: about 25 min. PG-13)

*“Lady of the Rings”* (duration: about 30 min.)

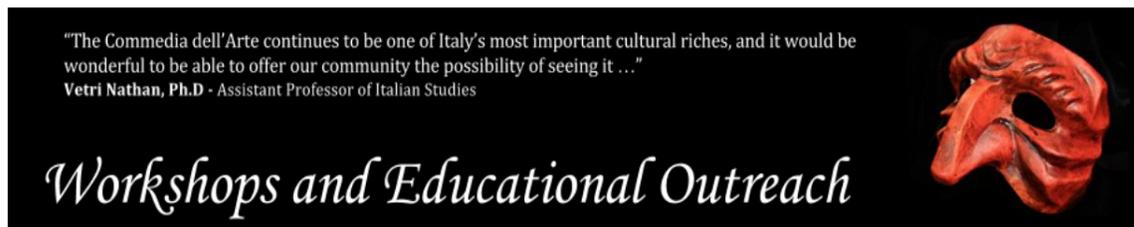
*“Law and Order – The Trial of Arlecchino”* (duration: about 30 min.)

*“Hunger Pains - La fame di Arlecchino e i rimedi del Dottore”* – (duration: about 25 min.)

The choice of the scenarios is based on the type of audience and venue. In each scene, the actors interpret famous Commedia stock characters such as Arlecchino, Pantalone, Pulcinella, Dottore Balanzone, Noblewoman Flaminia and Colombina and incorporates all their comedic troubles resulting from typical human weaknesses like envy, lust and greed. Through a series of sketches and skits, Pazzi Lazzi brings to life characters and themes reminiscent of the traveling-theater-troupe era. Italian Renaissance music is played live both during and between the scenarios. The music is provided by the renowned music ensemble *Seven Times Salt* ([www.seventimesalt.com](http://www.seventimesalt.com)).

**The different Commedia scenes, workshops and demonstrations can be mixed, combined and tailored according to budget and preferences.**

WE ALSO OFFER CHILDREN AND SCHOOL VERSIONS.  
SHOWS ARE IN ENGLISH WITH SOME ITALIAN.



Workshops, lectures and demonstrations are an excellent way to learn not only about Commedia dell'Arte but also as an introduction to physical theatre and Italian culture.



*Actors and non-actors alike are introduced to the fascinating world of Commedia dell'Arte*

Chiara Durazzini, a native of Florence living in Boston since 2000, leads workshops and demonstrations, with the collaboration of musician Daniel Meyers director of the Renaissance music ensemble *Seven Times Salt*. The material can be altered to suit a wide range of ages.

The teacher leads students in understanding the physicality of the most famous characters of Commedia (Pantalone, Arlecchino, Colombina, the Innamorati and so on), demonstrating how each exaggerated and stylized body characteristic represents a corresponding emotional and personality trait and how the performer's entire body becomes the "mask" of the stock character, by learning his/her positions, walks and gestures.

Depending on the time available, workshops can include an introduction to the history and characteristics of Commedia dell'Arte, a demonstration scene, improvisations with masks, and a final dance.

**Workshops vary in length and can be taught in English or Italian.**

## VIDEOS and REVIEWS

The article about Chiara Durazzini on the magazine *Bostoniano* can be found here:

<http://www.bostoniano.info/italiani/theatrical-life-chiara-durazzini/>

A trailer of "*Isabella Unmasked – The Legacy of an Italian Renaissance Woman*" can be found here: <https://youtu.be/j-vkL2Tj6xw>

The video of "*Aria di Commedia*" with introductory lecture at Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimo', NYU, can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0o1Jup77oGA>

Pazzi Lazzi on Rai Italia for the program "Community" can be seen at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aR5uOPTGST0>

The video of "*Aria di Commedia – Family Version*" performed at the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts in Washington DC can be seen here: [www.kennedy-center.org/video/index/M6521](http://www.kennedy-center.org/video/index/M6521)

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*"Boston-based Commedia dell'Arte company Pazzi Lazzi Troupe puts its twisted take on envy, gluttony, and lust..." (The Boston Globe)*

*"Commedia dell'Arte cuts through the clutter of today's theatrical buzz as it brings people back to a more intimate time in the history of theater." (Small Theatre Alliance of Boston)*

*"Chiara Durazzini is an amazing teacher... We laughed, we learned, we moved, we sweated". (Prof. Cristina Mazzoni - University of Vermont)*

*In "Isabella Unmasked", Chiara Durazzini displays all her virtuosity as a Commedia dell'Arte artist by playing simultaneously the parts of Isabella, the character, and Isabella Andreini, a professional female actress and poet of the Italian Renaissance. Performed in English, and accompanied by the textured Renaissance tunes played by musician Dan Meyers (who manages to move seamlessly from one instrument to the next,*

including recorders, bagpipe and harp), this play continues the tradition of the Italian Commedia dell'Arte with its well-known stock characters and its distinctive humor.

*"Isabella Unmasked"* is guaranteed to be successful on all stages, particularly in theaters of colleges and universities, a must-see for students of Italian, Women's Studies, English and Theater. (**Daniela Bartalesi-Graf, Department of Italian Studies - Wellesley College**)

*"The Pazzi Lazzi troupe has the power to transport the audience to a 16th century Italian piazza. The skits have the Commedia dell'Arte's traditional bright comedy without leaving out references to the modern world. With great stage presence, charisma, and comedic timing, the three actors create an absolutely unique and fun performance. They use biting wit and notable mimicry. From Arlecchino to Pantalone, to Colombina and Pulcinella, you are in for a bunch of laughs!"*

(**Stefano Marchese, Musician and Actor**)

*"Boston's own Commedia dell'Arte troupe made its fabulous debut... The professional actors took the stage under several different guises, ranging from the crafty Arlecchino to pompous Dottor Balanzone, accompanied by music of the times."* (**Nicola Orichuia, I AM Books, Boston**)

*"I had fun at the Commedia dell'Arte event. The presenter and teacher is incredible. She was so small and powerful and very funny. I appreciated a lot the acquisition of the basic knowledge and then to try the characters ourselves. It was very interesting to learn how the body posture can influence the role you are interpreting".* (**Student of Italian at University of Vermont**)

For more information visit our website at [www.pazzilazzitroupe.com](http://www.pazzilazzitroupe.com)  
and our blog at [www.pazzilazzitroupe.wordpress.com](http://www.pazzilazzitroupe.wordpress.com)

