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LEONG, DAVID STUART. A Children's Theatre Production of William Glennon's The Adventures of Harlequin. (1975) Directed by: Mr. Thomas Behm. Pp. 146.

Many people who are not familiar with the commedia dell'arte have enjoyed flipping through the pages of an Italian Renaissance book and laughing at the antics of the patchwork costumed clowns or the crooked nosed hunchback who literally stumbled over his own feet. Perhaps they have watched a Mardi Gras carnival take shape and applauded the advent of the black masked characters who so often amaze and bewilder the public with their tricks. Whether we spend an afternoon looking at a picturesque book of the seventeenth century or roaring at a Punch and Judy show, we are experiencing traces of what was once Italy's most popular dramatic form--the commedia dell'arte.

William Glennon's The Adventures of Harlequin is a delightful play based on a folktale about a young lad and his adventures as a member of a commedia dell'arte troupe. Within the contents of this thesis, the author purports to present a pre-production analysis of the play, a director's prompt book as a record of the production and a post-production evaluation and summary.

Included in Chapter One are: (1) an analysis of the form, birth, and decline of the commedia dell'arte, (2) a brief report on the nature of Harlequin's name, costume, and mask, (3) a discussion on the life and style of the

M

playwright, and (4) an explanation of the director's pre-production plans in terms of concept, style and form.

Chapter Two contains the prompt book for the production, performed April 20 through April 27, 1975, in W. Raymond Taylor Theatre at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Notations included are: (1) movement, composition, and picturization, (2) details of characterization, (3) stage business, (4) rhythm and tempo, (5) lighting cues, and (6) music cues. Three production photographs and five diagrams showing movement patterns and composition are included. A rehearsal schedule comprised of dates, times and director's objectives completes this chapter.

Chapter Three contains the director's introspective criticism of the production through the discussions of four areas: (1) achievement in the interpretation for the production, (2) actor-director relationships, (3) audience reaction, and (4) personal observations.

A CHILDREN'S THEATRE PRODUCTION
OF WILLIAM GLENNON'S
THE ADVENTURES OF HARLEQUIN

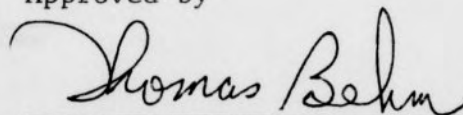
by

David Stuart Leong

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Fine Arts

Greensboro
1975

Approved by



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APPROVAL PAGE

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Grateful acknowledgment is made to my thesis committee for their constructive criticism--especially to Thomas Behm for his encouragement as the thesis adviser; to my wife who graciously devoted her time and effort to the completion of my thesis.

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CHAPTER I

PRE-PRODUCTION ANALYSIS

The Commedia dell'Arte: An Analysis of Its
Form, Its Origin, and Decline

CHAPTER I

PRE-PRODUCTION ANALYSIS

The commedia dell'arte, a form of drama which has its origin in the Italian city of Venice, is one of the most important and most interesting phenomena in the history of European drama. It is a form of drama which has been the source of inspiration for many of the great dramatists of the world, and it is a form of drama which has been the source of inspiration for many of the great comedians of the world.

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The commedia dell'arte, as we have discovered, has its lines of generality spread so far that it is not surprising to find it in many of the great comedies of the world. This section of Chapter I will trace the form of this theatrical art from its rise in Italian comedy to its decline.

Figure 1
Figure 2
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CHAPTER I

PRE-PRODUCTION ANALYSIS

The Commedia Dell'Arte: An Analysis of Its
Form, Its Birth, and Decline

Commedia dell'arte, professional comedy or comedia all'improvviso as it was sometimes called, is not to be confused with the literary comedy of the day known as commedia erudita, or learned comedy. Characteristics of the commedia dell'arte were the comic and serious players who followed a soggetto, or scenario, in determining the events of the play. In contrast to the improvisational technique, the commedia erudita was a "learned comedy" presented by amateur actors at courts and academies. The gaiety and rollicking temperament of the Italian people leave no one wondering which type of comedy was preferred. This rustic and bawdy group of individuals, traveling from one town to another performing anywhere from market streets to great architectural monuments, dominated the popular stage of Western Europe for more than two hundred years.

The commedia dell'arte, as we have discovered, has its lines of generality spread so far that it sometimes confronts us without our knowing it. This section of Chapter I will trace the form of this theatrical art from its rise in Italian theatre to its decline.

The Meaning of the Term

Many individuals believe that the phrase (*commedia dell'arte*) did not appear before the eighteenth century, when it was commonly referred to as "professional comedy." According to Allardyce Nicoll, ". . . arte means the special art of playing these pieces, just as the phrase 'profession' is used in theatrical parlance today to signify the special profession of acting."¹ In earlier times, the words commedia all'improvviso or commedia a soggetto were employed to designate this type of theatrical art.²

The *commedia dell'arte* was a form of theatre unlike any other. *Commedia dell'arte* existed in France by the term comedia a l'improptu and also comédie improvisee. In England and Spain the term *commedia dell'arte* was the same. The term *commedia dell'arte*, according to Dr. Michele Scherillo, means: "A form of comedy which in distinction to the written comedies, was not and could not be, performed except by professional actors, while Maurice Sand spoke of it simply as being the perfection among plays."³

However we define this distinguished art form, regardless of the country we are in, we can assume that the

¹Allardyce Nicoll, Masks, Mimes and Miracles (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1963), p. 215.

²Constant Mic, La Commedia dell'arte (Paris: J. Schiffman, 1927), p. 208.

³Pierre Louis Decharte, The Italian Comedy (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), p. 19.

actors were strictly professional; improvised their words from a plot, outline, or theme; and were extreme perfectionists in their art.

Theories of Origin--The Birth of the
Commedia dell'arte

The origin of the commedia dell'arte has been the subject of much fascinating but barren speculation.⁴ The middle of the seventeenth century brought about the discovery of a grotesque statuette representing a beak-nosed, hunchbacked individual who, resembling the character of Pulchinella, was identified with Maccus, a character of the Atellan farces. Thus emerges the possibility of linking the commedia dell'arte with classical antiquity. A second theory, commonly thought to be accurate, is the influence of the Roman or Byzantine Mime. These two theories, being the oldest and most respected, will begin the discussion of origins.

Atellan Farces

"In the ancient city of Atella, known today as Aversa, and situated somewhere between Naples and Capua, there existed a type of comedy generally supposed to resemble very closely what is known in modern times as the "commedia dell'arte."⁵ When these plays were performed in Rome, they were called Atellanae.

⁴K. M. Lea, Italian Popular Comedy, 2 vols. (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1962), 1:223.

⁵I. A. Schwartz, The Commedia Dell'Arte (Paris: Librairie H. Samuel, 1933), p. 31.

The Atellanae were improvised from scenarios, and enjoyed such success in Rome that they completely eclipsed the regular classic theatre.⁶ At that time the Roman people had become wearisome of Greek tragedies and welcomed any new form of theatre with a sigh of relief.

"Atellan farces were believed to have been very short, 300-400 lines and to have served as a sort of afterpiece to the regular drama."⁷ The subject matter was found frequently to involve cheating, gluttony, fighting, and sexual exploits. The characters who were known as "stock" types consisted of: Bucco, a vivacious, boisterous braggart; Pappus, a comic old man, Maccus, a gluttonous fool; and Dossenus, a hunchback of frightening appearance. There is a common belief that the boisterous braggart Bucco evolved into our witty, yet sometimes stupid, Harlequin; Pulchinella emerged from Maccus and Bucco; and Pantelone, the miserly, comic old man, finds his ancestry in Pappus.

The final similarity that closely associates the *commedia dell'arte* and the Atellan farces is the act of wearing masks. In both instances, masks were used to help delineate and characterize the performers.

There exists adequate reason to understand why many historians link the *commedia dell'arte* to the Atellan farces. With such similarities as character types, improvisation

⁷Oscar G. Brockett, History of the Theatre (London: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1974), p. 56.

based on scenarios and the wearing of masks, it leads us to believe that Atellan farce was the ancestor of the commedia dell'arte.

Byzantine Mimes

The second theory of origin believed to be valid is that of the influence of the Byzantine Mime. "It is said that after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Byzantine mime migrated to Italy and combined with whatever the Middle Ages had preserved of the Roman Mime generated the Commedia Dell'arte."⁸ The Mimes utilized many elements in their performance that were later found in the commedia dell'arte. The Roman Mime contained spoken dialects, masks, and they used as their plot, stories referred to as rank realism and obscene. With the vast source of material written on the Byzantine Mime, it is surprising that only a few of its characteristics are found in the rebirth in the commedia dell'arte. For this reason the theory supporting the influence of the Byzantine Mime is considerably weaker than that of the Atellan farce.

Sixteenth Century Influences

"Instead of ancestor-hunting in imperial Rome or in the middle ages, the commedia dell'arte might better try to account for itself by looking about in the sixteenth century

⁸Lea, Italian Popular Comedy, 1:224.

where it comes to consciousness."⁹ The recent hypothesis that Italian popular comedy emerged from its own era is rapidly becoming a major theoretical contribution.

The resurgence of human interest which characterized the sixteenth century facilitated the growth of the *commedia dell'arte*. The Renaissance in Italy was a period of "reflorescence" in arts and letters. The theatre was free to develop in all directions.¹⁰ The Italian people, overflowing with life, alternately shouting and tumbling with vulgar strength and posturing and singing with exquisite grace, expressed themselves through the drama freely and vicariously.¹¹ Consequently, wit and genius were given free play in the development of a drama that took two directions: written plays or *commedia erudita*, and the theatre of the improvisers known as the *commedia dell'arte*.

The relationship of these two theatrical art forms must be considered before venturing further into the sixteenth century influences. Generally speaking, the actors of the *commedia dell'arte* took old plots or written plots and introduced a new method of presentation. The *commedia dell'arte* would have emerged as a different art form had the *commedia erudita* not existed. Conversely, the tradition

⁹Winifred Smith, The Commedia Dell'Arte (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1964), p. 28.

¹⁰Schwartz, The Commedia Dell'Arte, p. 34.

¹¹Smith, The Commedia Dell'Arte, p. 28.

of neo-Classical drama would have perished sooner but for the popularity of the professional companies. The commedia dell'arte did not exist as an independent body of drama. "The practice of improvisation is not absolute, but varies in quality and degree according to the skill of the actors for whose convenience it was gradually evolved."¹²

As we have noted thus far, the Italian people, interested in new and different art forms, were seeking ways to amuse themselves. From the streets of Italy we find mountebanks, charlatans, and jugglers, wandering gypsy-like families setting up their temporary stages wherever they might hope for a few pennies from a crowd. Carnival dances, folk plays, and courtly spectacles all fulfilled the general demands for the public's amusement. Winifred Smith describes the process in this manner: "Gradually individuals interested in acting formed themselves into guilds and made their way into noble households that protected and nurtured their development. Once their attachment became evidently clear, they ventured to discover something bolder than the mere representations of bold facts."¹³ Cyril Beaumont, another dedicated writer of the commedia says, "Probably at first a few people--mountebanks, acrobats and comic actors--formed themselves into a company and set up a simple stage

¹²Lea, Italian Popular Comedy, 1:224.

¹³Smith, The Commedia Dell'Arte, p. 28.

or enclosure at the larger booths and fairs, where they presented an elementary form of play."¹⁴ Here again, whoever they were, mountebanks, charlatans, or jugglers, they performed realistic farces depicting the life style of the commoner.

The Italian professional comedy as played by the traveling companies and stock characters was a composite of popular and literary elements. The mountebanks and charlatans who played these farces to fulfill the needs of the public together with the literary figures who supplied the actors with plots to follow, unsuspectfully coordinated their efforts and brought upon this everlasting theatrical art form, the *commedia dell'arte*.

The Commedia Dell'Arte and Its Style

"If only the beggardly and base stages of public theatres had been open to professional actors, the *commedia dell'arte* would never have advanced to the complicated form that we know."¹⁵ The theatrical form we readily associate as improvised comedy has several qualities that distinguish it from any other drama. (1) Improvisation based on a plot, theme, or scenario was played by a group of (2) stock characters who used (3) *lazzi* as a form for amusing the audience when the scene began to drag.

¹⁴Cyril Beaumont, The History of Harlequin (London: By the Author, 75 Charing Cross Road, 1926), p. 27.

¹⁵Smith, The Commedia Dell'Arte, p. 67.

The Masks: The Comic and the Serious

Evidence from documents of the Renaissance period reveal an endless list of names given to the characters of the *commedia dell'arte*. Yet, after they have all been sorted over, we find a limited number of fundamental types to which each actor, each locality, and the customs of each period made a special contribution.¹⁶

The Captains, Pulchinella, Pantelone, Dottore, and the two zannis, Harlequin and Brighella are classified as the comic types. The serious characters, the lovers, or the Innamorato as they were called, consisted of names such as Flavio, Silvio, and Lelio. Their female counterparts, the Innamorata, held names such as Isabella, Flammia, Flavia, or Angeliea.

All actors except the lovers wore masks or some corresponding makeup. Each actor took the freedom to adapt the mask to his individual liking. This mask was the best and simplest way for the actor to give his character an illusion of permanency.

K. M. Lea describes with excellence the meaning of the mask.

Masked actors make no attempt to show the development of individual characteristics but depend for their success upon their immediate recognition as types. They are not people but personages. The fixity of expression symbolizes the self-appointed limitation. . . . the character of a personage in masked improvised drama exists as a potentiality.¹⁷

¹⁶Ducharte, The Italian Comedy, p. 20.

¹⁷Lea, Italian Popular Comedy, 1:17.

The masks, made of thin leather and lined with linen, were moistened and closely molded to the lines of the face. Because of the constrictions a mask would put on an actor's face, each character needed to possess a high degree of experience in the art of pantomime. These pantomimic gestures became fixed with each character; so much so, that an audience member could depict each character with a brief glance.

The Comic Masks

Pantelone

Il Magnific, as he is nicknamed, is one of the two old men in the commedia troupe. This greedy merchant, miserly with every conceivable object that has value, originated from the streets of Venice. He is never to be seen without his long red legs, a loose black cape, a straggly beard, Turkish slippers, and a red woolen bonnet. In addition to this attire, he is ornamented with a phallic symbol resembling that of the ancient mimes, only smaller.

If he is married, his wife is always young and never misses an opportunity to deceive him. He is essentially a man of gentle nature, yet when blows are distributed on stage, it is he who usually happens to be in the way.

Dottore

Not only is Dottore similar to Pantelone in age, but he is also the victim of the pranks of his servants. Often

appearing under the name of Doctor Gratiano, his birthplace is known to be the university town of Bologna. He has an established position in society, being a doctor or lawyer, but unlike Pantelone, he never achieves his ambition, whatever that may be. "His speech, of which the vernacular portion is cast usually in the Bolognese dialect, is interlarded with many Latin words and phrases, and he does not mind talking pedantically above the heads of his companions who jeer openly at his academic excesses."¹⁸

Pulchinella

As stated in the discussion of "theories of origin," Pulchinella finds his mastery in the Atellan farces. He inherits his hooked nose and his hump from Maccus while his thievery and boastfulness claim themselves to Bucco. Normally credited as a Neapolitan, Pulchinella was usually seen as a valet or servant. His costume consisted of a long, pointed cap, sleeves that were almost floor length, and a black mask. While he possessed a great deal of wit, his chief weapon of defense was to feign stupidity.¹⁹

The Zanni types: Harlequin and Brighella

The term Zanni can be used both in a general and a restricted sense. In its general form Zanni was often the

¹⁸Nicoll, Masks, Mimes and Miracles, p. 257.

¹⁹Ducharte, The Italian Comedy, p. 215.

name of a character type. With this in mind, the Zanni usually possessed one of two qualities: (1) the clever Zanni depicted by Harlequin or, (2) the stupid Zanni as demonstrated by Brighella. The restricted term "Zanni" was used when the individual name "Zanni" was given to a representative of the type. In any case, the Zannis were comic servants who were expected to amuse the audience by simply moving a finger.

Arlecchino, from which Harlequin is derived, was immediately one of the most popular of the clowns, and in a short time became one of the leading players.²⁰ Claiming Bergamo as his home, his character is usually defined as a mixture of ignorance, naivete, and wit.

His character is that of an ignorant valet, fundamentally naive, but nevertheless making every effort to be intelligent, even to the extent of seeming malicious. He is a glutton and a poltroon, but faithful and energetic. Through motives of fear or cupidity he is always ready to undertake any sort of rascality and deceit. He is a chameleon which takes on every colour. He must excel in impromptu, and the first thing that the public always asks of a new Harlequin is that he be agile, and that he jump well, dance, and turn somersaults.²¹

The other characteristic type of Zanni assumed the name of Brighella. Often called the Intriguer, Brighella exhibits more characteristics of a cat than he does of a man. His nimbleness of mind and body make him the most vigilant watchman. As Bergamo prides itself on the ancestry of Harlequin, it would rarely admit that it produced such a deceiver as Brighella.

²⁰Thelma Niklaus, Harlequin (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1956), p. 32.

²¹Ducharte, The Italian Comedy, p. 133.

The Capitano

The Capitano is sometimes considered a link between the comic servants or comic old men to the serious characters, the lovers. In some scenarios, the part of the Capitano is played by one of the Innamorato. Wearing a flesh-colored mask, and carrying a sword (usually half his size), he strolled the countryside boasting of his killings, his illegitimate children and his unwed mothers. His braggardly acts of bravery were destroyed on the moment if anyone dared to challenge him.

The serious type: The Lovers

Unlike the comic stock characters, the names of the lovers bear no reference to nature or personality. They generally assume the characteristics appropriate to the particular plot. Other than being ridiculous in their eloquent speech, they had no character trait except that of being in love. The most famous name appearing in the scenarios is that of Isabella.

Isabella was the daughter of a Venetian who married Francesco Andreine in 1578. She was assumed to be a woman, ". . . beautiful of name, beautiful of body and most beautiful of mind."²²

²²Nicoll, Masks, Mimes and Miracles, p. 237.

The Technique of the Improvisators

The Lazzi

Each character of the commedia dell'arte was known to possess distinct qualities. Masks, dialects, and gestures were the elements that distinguished one character from another. The other two elements that a player could rely to aid him in his action were the lazzi and improvisation. The characteristic lazzi that each actor would perform is the second quality of commedia dell'arte that no other theatrical form possesses.

"The lazzi were simply stage tricks designed to evoke laughter and were altogether extraneous to the plot."²³ The theory supporting the origin of the word believes lazzi to be a popular form of l'azzo or l'azione meaning "action" or "stage business." One example of a lazzi is: Harlequin pretending to catch flies in the air, to tear off their wings and eat them with pleasure.

Improvisation based on a Scenario or Sogetta

The actors of the commedia dell'arte were not foreigners to improvisation. Each actor played a specific role for his or her entire life. It is sighted in Ducharte's book, The Italian Comedy, that "Sacramondo who, at eighty-three years of age, could box his fellow-actor's ear with his foot

²³Schwartz, The Commedia Dell'Arte, p. 10.

without the slightest difficulty."²⁴ Throughout their life, they would fill notebook after notebook with stock speeches and stock phrases, that would fit appropriate situations on stage. This enabled an actor to store up a variety of material which he could exploit at will, whether it be sorrow, jealousy, or despair. From this we can estimate that complete and absolute improvisation was unlikely.

Productions were supervised by a leader or most respected member of the group.²⁵ Prior to each production, it was his responsibility to explain the characters, mark out entrances and exits and clarify the action. Immediately following this, the scenario would be posted on the sides for any actor who needed to refresh his memory.

Approximately seven hundred of these Italian scenarios are known to exist presently. While we cannot guess how many other scenarios existed, we can estimate the success of the improvised comedy and why it lasted for nearly three hundred years. "The success of the commedia dell'arte can be explained in a large measure by the quality of men and women who have contributed to its development. We find among the various troupes, persons of unusual versatility, intelligence and talent."²⁶ Winifred Smith sums it up by stating:

²⁴Ducharte, The Italian Comedy, p. 36.

²⁵Brockett, History of the Theatre, p. 133.

²⁶Schwartz, The Commedia Dell'Arte, p. 39.

The professional actors had moreover the readiness that came from acquaintance with the world; they knew city squares and country commons in their own land and many others, for they were always on the road from place to place . . . they were also trained from childhood to please all kinds of spectators; they had on their tongues' end language for every situation. They delighted everyone save an occasional over-squeamish moralist; the academic purists found their own creations reflected with a difference for gaiety; fashionable Platonizers found their favorite themes woven into the more serious scenes; aristocrats and parvenus greedy of splendor were beguiled with spectacle and costumes: last and perhaps most important, the universal liking for the lively jest that stirs the most unthinking laughter, would be fed to the full--for who could censure lazzi of the broadest in amusements confessedly so farcial and free?²⁷

The Decline of the Commedia Dell'Arte

The peak of the commedia dell'arte occurred in the mid-seventeenth century. When the theatrical form waned, the masks of Pantelone, Harlequin, Pulchinella, and the Dottore still represented the qualities and costumes of the ancient Italian people. Unfortunately, the characters and costumes were all that remained, and even they were only a mere representation of the spectacle that dominated the western world.

The improvised comedy in its heyday existed only as a form of entertainment. There no problems or solutions to work out, there was nothing the actors could say that would remain in the hearts and minds of the spectators.

The Church, which had regarded the commedia dell'arte highly from its birth, soon developed a disrespectful attitude toward this form of drama. The use of masks and the

²⁷Smith, The Commedia Dell'Arte, p. 101-102.

circumscribed roles of the characters tended to become monotonous. After years of repertory, jokes and business failed to raise the eyebrow of a single passerby. Finally, the emergence of a great playwright, Carlo Goldoni, brought about the death of a once great art. With him he brought a substitute: that of charmingly written comedies based on the average individual. He writes: "The comic theatre of Italy for more than a century past has become a disgusting object of general abhorrence . . . eventually everyone knew what Harlequin or Pantelone was going to say before he opened his lips."²⁸

Analyzing the improvised comedy of the Renaissance period helps us to understand the reasons for its popularity. The combined efforts of the Italian people who sought to amuse themselves, and individuals who answered this call by organizing themselves into acting guilds brought instant success to a new art form. The reflourishing of the arts also prepared the road for further advancements.

In the Twentieth Century society individuals often feel a need to release themselves from their humdrum activities. The same urge inspired the Italian people to give rise to the unique theatrical form of drama--the *commedia dell'arte*.

²⁸Beaumont, The History of Harlequin, p. 83.

The Nature of the Costume, Mask
and Name of Harlequin

Of all the characters in the commedia dell'arte, Harlequin remains the most important and picturesque. A brief study of Renaissance paintings will convince any observer that Harlequin was an extremely popular subject. During the four hundred years of his existence, the variety in his costumes was surpassed only by the number of somersaults he turned in performance.

The Costume

Scholars who support the theory of the commedia dell'arte emerging from the Roman mimes believe that the patches of Harlequin's costume have their origin in the tiger skins worn by ancient actors who played the part of satyrs.

The early days of Harlequin show a minor resemblance to what we are presently accustomed to. "There were varicoloured patches, darker than the background of the costume, sewn here and there on the breeches and a long jacket laced in front. A bat and a wallet hung from his belt. His head was shaved in the same manner as the ancient mimes."²⁹

It was not until the eighteenth century that the patches took the form of blue, red, and green triangles which were arranged in a symmetrical pattern and joined

²⁹Ducharte, The Italian Comedy, p. 133.

together by a yellow braid. By now, the tunic had become shortened and the white trousers were close-fitting.

The Mask

The mask of Harlequin as depicted in the eighteenth century consisted of a black leather half mask and a black chin piece. The soft cap worn on his head was decorated with the tail of a rabbit, hare, fox or sometimes with a tuft of feathers. The forehead was strongly lined with wrinkles which highlighted the busy eyebrows. The eyes were tiny holes beneath these eyebrows and the mask as a whole suggested an air of craftiness, devilry, mockery, and astonishment. The black color of the mask (some say that the color comes from African slaves who played clownish parts in ancient theatre), a huge wen under the eye, and a wart complete the expression of the mask. Again we resort to the "stock" characters in the Atellan farces for an answer to the origins of the mask. It is believed that Dossenus had a gigantic wart on his mask and Roman mimes daubed their masks with soot.

The purpose of the wooden stick still remains to be discovered. Maurice Sand feels the bat is a modification of the curved stick of the peasants of the Greek theatre, the attribute of comedy. Cyril Beaumont says, "We suggest that it was thrust into his belt because nearly every peasant of that time carried a stick as a companion and a measure of self-defense, while on the stage such a 'property'

offered countless opportunities as a factor in creating numerous incidents and byplay."³⁰

Harlequin's Name

Several authorities have maintained that the name of Harlequin originated as a nickname or an assumed name of an actor. "It is said that a leader of Parliament named Hachille du Harlay became the patron of one of the actors in an Italian troupe, who was thenceforth dubbed Harlayquino. According to others, the name is supposed to be the diminutive of harle, or herle, a waterbird with variegated plumage."³¹

The spelling of the name varies from one place to another. In Italy it was written "Harlequino," "Arlachino," and "Harlechino." Oftentimes it is spelled "Arlequin" or "Arlechin," and in some memoirs, both forms of the spelling appear on the same page.

The Life of William Glennon

William Glennon, the author of The Adventures of Harlequin, was born in Beaver, Pennsylvania, a small town near Pittsburg. Throughout his youth he was exposed to many theatrical activities: puppet plays, skits in his own basement, constant movie goings and matinee performances at the

³⁰Beaumont, The History of Harlequin, p. 83.

³¹Ducharte, The Italian Comedy, p. 137.

professional Nixon Theatre. During his high school years he began to develop his own talents, and throughout this period, he was chosen "best actor" in every school production.

At the same time, Glennon's cousin was studying at the Carnegie-Mellon University. Periodic visits to view student productions at this school became an additional factor in further developing his interest in theatre.

After high school, Glennon attended Duke University where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree. During his work at the University, his interests included writing, in addition to acting and directing. Shortly after college, in 1948, he was hired as a writer at Radio Station WSYB in Durham, North Carolina, and his time was divided between radio work and retailing. Three years after his radio work, Glennon was employed by the Pittsburg Playhouse where he felt he had found a home. For the next fifteen years, he was to act, stage manage, direct and write.

More by chance than design, Glennon worked with the children's theatre as well as the adult theatre and in 1955 when the children's theatre director retired, he assumed the position. Each season he directed five or six children's plays and as the years passed it became increasingly difficult to find good scripts, so he turned to writing his own.

William Glennon currently has ten published children's plays, all with the Pittsburg Press. Among his originals

and adaptations are such titles as "Hansel and Gretel," "Alice in Wonderland," "The Adventures of Harlequin," "The Pied Piper," "My Friend the Fox," and "Beauty and the Beast."

His professional work aside from the Pittsburg Playhouse has brought him to many opera playhouses and musical theatres in Pennsylvania, New York, and the New England states. He has served as the editor for the Pittsburg Playhouse Press and has written and directed for commercial and educational television.

The more recent years in William Glennon's career have brought about a great change. In 1967, he began to feel that something was wrong in his life. "Hemmed in creatively by the limitations and demands imposed on him by publishers, directors and audiences, he began searching for a more immediate and spontaneous arena for his talents. He wound up in the elementary classrooms in Maine."³²

Presently William Glennon resides in Wiscasset, Maine. As the director of "Treasure Hunts Associates," he has had to transform himself from a singular actor and writer, to a leader and guiding participant of elementary school classrooms in Maine. With a grant from Title III and community support, "Treasure Hunts Associates" is designed to improve the quality of education in the State of Maine. Through "Treasure Hunts Associates," various individuals professionally trained in music, puppetry, folklore, and sculpture,

³²State of Maine, Maine Catalog (Bangor Maine: State of Maine Publishing Co., 1973), p. 18.

offer their services and conduct workshops with and for children and teachers.

The response to William Glennon's workshops appears to be overwhelming. "Teachers see his direction as a chance to tap the imaginative and creative sources in their students with at least two major results: the children grow well as human beings in relation to one another and, they take a greater interest in the subjects taught."³³

One child who was involved in Glennon's programs enthusiastically remarked, "Thank you for helping us. I learned they use magic in the theatre."³⁴

The Author's Style

Examining the works of William Glennon leaves one wondering how an individual could take an interest in such a wide variety of activities. His writing credits contain sixteen children's plays (musical and nonmusical), three musical revues, special programs for the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, and various programs for radio and television.

Glennon's original and adapted children's plays include some sort of audience participation. In many of his plays, a character in the script performs a special function in that he helps carry the story line by speaking directly to the children. According to Glennon, the reason for this is to help deliver the exposition and give the audience a sense of involvement.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

The writings of William Glennon do not bring any specific style to mind. Glennon himself says: "I never thought about children when I was writing a play. I just thought about writing the play and tried to get something down on the blank paper that pleased me . . . or the child in me."³⁵

The Birth of the Adventures of Harlequin

The Adventures of Harlequin was born between 1955 and 1965 while Glennon was director of the children's theatre at Pittsburg Playhouse. At that time, he had a professional company eager to perform something with a theatrical flavor. Engaging in research, he decided upon the commedia dell'arte.

While searching for ideas, Glennon stumbled across a book that contained a tale about two boys competing for a position with a band of players. Writing began immediately following this. Upon further discovery, he read that Harlequin's patches were given by friendly people who enjoyed his clowning. Finding this to be a suitable core for a light, amusing play, he continued to write the "framework" of what would eventually be The Adventures of Harlequin. When that was finished, the staging of the play began.

Glennon was insistent on lavish costumes and no scenery. He also felt that platforms with several arrangements of steps and levels would suit the mode of production

³⁵William Glennon, personal letter, November 11, 1974.

(simplicity), and allow the actors a wide variety of movement possibilities.

The entire performance had the feeling of spontaneity, only because we carefully worked out intricate movement for everyone with the precision of a drill master. What seemed forced, strained and uncomfortable at first became easy, airy and great fun to watch and gave the whole play a commedia flavor. We did the contest in true commedia style, in rehearsal, letting everyone try things, make suggestions, criticize, etc. . . . and then from a wealth of suggestions we formed the final project. I guess the heart of the play was the tremendous concern for Quino and the rest was fun and games.³⁶

The Adventures of Harlequin: Choice of Script

The director's first important decision is the selection of an appropriate script. Jed Davis, in his book, Children's Theatre, states that the primary requisite of a children's theatre script is that it exemplify the qualities of theme, plot, character, and dialogue. In accord with Davis' statement, the director feels that The Adventures of Harlequin contains a substantial plot and theme with sincere characters and dialogue to suit the vocabulary of many age levels of children.

According to Moses Goldberg "variety" is necessary in a script chosen for a child audience.

Variety may be the spice of life for an adult but it is more like bread for the child. His short attention span and ever-expanding curiosity make it essential that he continually seek new stimulation. . . . This means the staging of a play which includes a large variety of

³⁶Ibid.

activities: song, dance, mime, puppetry, acrobatics, juggling and magic.³⁷

The Adventures of Harlequin contains song, dance, and mime. The lavish period costumes worn by the players offer the children an additional visual stimulus. The movement and costumes together provide the child audience with the visual interpretations they need to help them understand and enjoy the play.

Production of The Adventures of Harlequin in the W. Raymond Taylor Drama and Speech Building at The University of North Carolina--Greensboro is quite feasible. Adequate stage space and necessary equipment is accessible to the graduate designers for building and producing the play in a professional manner. A staff of graduate and undergraduate designers is available to collaborate with the director and designer in planning and staging the play.

Finally, in choosing a play, the director's personal feeling should be of major concern. This director finds the plot and theme to be enchanting, magical and yet sincere in its effort. The great amount of dance, mime, and movement, in addition to the problems inherent in any period play, present a challenge to any director.

Summary of the Script

The play opens with a young lad, Quino, who is executing a dance pantomime while pretending to be a servant. Quino is practicing so that he may some day become an actor

³⁷Moses Goldberg, Children's Theatre (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1974), pp. 142-143.

with the strolling players. Caught by his family and friends in the act of pretending, Quino goes about trying to convince his mother that his efforts are worthwhile. In the middle of another dance pantomime, the Commedia troupe, in all its splendor, enters. Needing another player in the company, that of a servant, the players offer Quino the chance to perform for them. Taken aback by the sudden opportunity, Quino stands as quiet and still as a statue. The players then decide to approach the Duchess of the town with the hope of filling the vacancy in their company. The Duchess, a great woman of ignorance and wealth, brings forth the idea of her son Daniello taking the role. Daniello, a boy of extreme wealth, feels that he would be the most suitable person since he can scream, cry, and scare people. Having built up his courage Quino demonstrates his skill by dancing and singing for everyone. The Duchess, having mixed feelings about the decision, announces that the contest between the two lads will take place in two weeks at the Mardi Gras with her (since she is the Duchess), as the judge.

Act II begins with Luigi, Quino's best friend, expressing his discontentment toward the Duchess and Daniello for their unfair tactics in staging the contest. The action now shifts to a deep concern for Quino's costume. With no money to buy fabric for a new costume, Tina and Renato, Quino's sister and brother, go out into the village to ask their friends for extra material. Ashamed and

embarrassed that they could gather only scraps of cloth, Mama assures them that by Mardi Gras, Quino will have the finest costume in Italy.

Two weeks pass and the Mardi Gras arrives. With as much excitement as a masquerade party, the players and the Duchess anxiously await the arrival of Quino. Silence occurs as Quino enters dressed in a costume lavishly made from the fabric of his friends.

The contest begins with Quino, dressed in all his splendor, singing and dancing circles around Daniello. With the use of acrobatics, pantomime, and trickery, Quino proves that he is the one most suited to become an actor. The contest ends, the Duchess declares Quino the winner, and Daniello is marched off by his mother, who tells him that he is a good-for-nothing loud-mouth. The players give Quino the name of Harlequin and they depart to another place to play to the hearts of many people, young and old.

Several changes in the script have been made to accommodate the needs of the children, the costume budget, and the director.

Three characters in the original script, Maria, Marco, and Anna are very insignificant and bear the costume designer the strain of making six additional costumes. (Each character has two costumes: one for everyday life and an additional costume for the Mardi Gras.) Because of this, these roles have been deleted from the script.

One other change is worthy of special mention. The role of the Mayor has been changed to that of a Duchess. The need for this arose due to a lack of available male actors. The change from a Mayor to a Duchess provides the director an additional challenge--that of establishing a conflict between Quino's mother and that of Daniello's mother, the Duchess. The director feels that this relationship can be more interesting than the original.

Debra Overton, a senior music major, is composing both incidental music and music for the dances. By doing so, the director feels that a "flavor" of Renaissance music will be consistent with that of the style of the play.

Interpretation of the Script

"William Glennon's play is an attempt to recapture for children the wit and style of the Renaissance commedia dell'arte, a unique style of theatre"38

In staging the play this director will adhere to the playwright's original intent. The director plans to direct a contemporary play with actors who will play a current theme with "hints" or "touches" of the commedia. It is the intention of the director to provide the child audience with a play consisting of character types rather than true to life individuals.

³⁸William Glennon, The Adventures of Harlequin, with an introduction by R. Allen (Pittsburg: The Coach House Press, Inc.), Introduction.

Keeping in mind that a major objective in staging a play is to entertain the audience, the director plans to offer the children several learning opportunities within the content of the play. They can learn (1) materialistic goods such as "money cannot always solve problems"; and (2) by working hard at something, "your efforts can succeed."

The Adventures of Harlequin: The Characters

The characters in The Adventures of Harlequin are divided into three categories based on their social and economic background. There are (1) the low life characters or peasants: Luigi, Harlequin, and his family members; (2) the strolling players: Pantelone, Dottore, Isabella and Capitan, and (3) the royal characters of Daniello and the Duchess. Each and every character needs to be analyzed both historically and as each appears in Glennon's script before the director and actors stage the play. Because historical accounts of the stock characters have been previously recorded, this section is devoted to the characters within the script.

The role of Quino is that of a boyish, charming, innocent and skillful figure who appears both whimsical and unfailingly clever. In his adventures, he transforms himself into whatever qualities are needed at the time. If the situation calls for trickery as in the contest, Quino will supply it. The humor displayed in Quino is so abundant that the saddest of all hearts can be lifted. Above all,

the sincerity shown by Quino in every movement is very evident. Behind every move he makes there is a warm and justified thought.

Tina, Quino's younger sister, always shows a great deal of concern for the welfare of her brother. Still in her younger childhood days, she looks up to and shows a great deal of pride in Quino. She supports Quino in whatever he does and goes so far as to volunteer to do his chores so that he may be able to practice.

Renato, being about the same age as Harlequin (middle teens), is more of a "pal" than a brother. Through his concern and support, Quino succeeds in his becoming a member of the strolling players. His thoughtfulness toward Quino is shown by his sorrow when he realizes he has brought home only scraps of cloth from the village.

Mama, the head of the household in Quino's family, is stern yet gentle. She is all heart. Being the dominant and driving force in the family, it is she who finally succumbs to Quino's hope in becoming an actor and encourages him to practice. Her greatest concern is for Quino's life to be filled with happiness.

Quino's best friend in the village is Luigi. Luigi stands beside Quino from beginning to end. His love of friendship is shown by the anger he displays toward the Duchess and Daniello. Luigi functions as a gap between the children and the actors. His narration to the audience

serves as a "live" means of relating events that have already occurred.

Daniello, as depicted by Glennon, appears to be the only character in the play who is not striving or reaching for something. Using wealth and royalty as an aid in his deceitfulness, he lies and cheats his way through everything imaginable. His prissy and bullyish qualities could only have come about by his overabundance of money and lack of an honest and loving mother.

The governing body of the village is totally controlled by one person, the Duchess. She is similar to her son, Daniello, in that she thrives on money and power. As egocentric as her son, her main concern is to further her social status in life. She feels that the lack of love for her son has been made up by her financial support of him.

In contrast to the historical character, Glennon's Pantalone shows more generosity. His attention is focused upon the players' finding a new actor. In many ways he seems to play the straight man. Throughout the play, he and Isabella act as the spokesmen for the strolling players.

Isabella displays much of the charm and skill she is credited with having in her Renaissance days. Her movement is graceful and her vocal qualities are pleasant to the ear. Aside from her pleasing and gentle qualities, she sometimes exhibits an earthy quality. The humor in her character lies in this incongruity that she displays.

Often visualized as Pantelone's rival, Dotorre is a bumbling pedant whose ostentatious misuse of Latin phrases and nonsensical jargon reveal him to be a doctor of medicine. His constant bragging about medicinal knowledge can only be challenged by Capitano.

The boasting, bragging soldier who has the roar of a lion and the heart of a mouse is Capitano. Always searching for battles to be fought and worlds to be conquered, it is he that can never manage to pull the sword from his sheath when the need arises. Using a rocking horse for his steed, he continues to search for the unexpected.

The Adventures of Harlequin: The Setting

Within the basic interpretation of the play, the narrative requirements, and the graphic communication of the accompanying visual atmosphere, the designer must find a means of holding attention through the use of a variety of artistic elements--all contributing to a unified result.

The concept of the active set is useful Obviously, lighting plays a key role in changing the facets of an environment, but other things can contribute: differing treatments on the set, use of levels or varied surfaces, the actual movement of parts of scenery.³⁹

This director also plans to utilize various levels and steps in order to emphasize the actor. Lavish costumes set against a form of space staging are to be used to suggest the theatrical flavor which the commedia dell'arte so carried.

³⁹Goldberg, Children's Theatre, p. 179.

Another reason for the director's choice of platform staging is the necessity for ample space for actor movement. The number of characters that are frequently on stage presents the director with a great challenge. Only by various levels of platforms can the process of staging be made easier. Jed Davis believes that platforms are almost essential for scenes involving many characters or pageantry sequences, in order to keep groups separated as forces and yet provide for focus upon principals.⁴⁰

The director believes that the various levels are a convenient method of staging, particularly when a script contains many scenes. The rapid scene changes required in The Adventures of Harlequin are to be shown by various three dimensional set pieces shifted from place to place on the set.

The method of scenic form chosen for staging the play The Adventures of Harlequin is three-sided arena. Several reasons for this choice are of significance. (1) The director strongly believes that the theatrical flavor desired can best be achieved by this method of staging, and (2) due to the shortage of time to make any drastic changes, The Adventures of Harlequin will utilize a similar arrangement to the previous play, And Miss Reardon Drinks A Little by Paul Zindel.

⁴⁰Jed Davis, Children's Theatre (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1960), p. 156.

The mood prevalent throughout the play is light and amusing. Therefore, soft, curvy lines are to be used throughout the set. From the opening of the play to the final scene, the mood should be one of happiness and gaiety.

The Adventures of Harlequin:

Teacher's Study Guide

The director who supplements the production with a teacher's study guide is making the theatre experience more worthwhile for the children. The study guide which follows has been composed by this writer for use with the Theatre for Young People's Production of The Adventures of Harlequin.

Theatre for Young People Study Guide

Introduction

William Glennon's The Adventures of Harlequin is an attempt to recapture for children the wit and humor of the Renaissance commedia dell'arte, a unique style of theatre which was born in Italy in the early part of the sixteenth century and dominated the popular stage of Western Europe for more than two hundred years. This delightful play, based on a folk tale about a young lad and his mischievous adventures combines lavish costumes, slapstick, and spirited music in providing an excellent opportunity for the child audience to experience the style of the Renaissance. The freedom and spirit of Harlequin and his clownish antics is a perpetual symbol of the fantasy life that all of us would like to live.

The Characters and the Play

The Adventures of Harlequin is a play full of action. Its plot follows the simple outline of a boy, Harlequin, and his attempt to become an actor with the strolling players. Together with his mother, Mama, sister Tina, and brother Renato, the charming and skillful actor and acrobat, Harlequin competes against the son of the leading official of the town, the selfish and arrogant Duchess. Her son Daniello, a spoiled brat and bully, loses in a talent contest as his skill proves too little against the clownish Harlequin. The strolling players who aid Harlequin in defeating the Duchess's son include: Capitano, the bragging soldier who boasts of his valor but flees in an instant at the first sign of a fight; the beautiful and graceful Isabella; the greedy merchant and old miser Pantelone who considers money his first love; and Dotorre, the bumbling pedant who knows a little about everything and a lot about nothing. Such players improvise and pantomime (with great exaggeration) each time they present a play.

Why Should Children Attend The Adventures of Harlequin?

The purpose of children's theatre is to provide dramatic productions which will do several things for the child audience. Some of these are: (1) Give children the joy of watching a story come alive; (2) Develop standards of taste; (3) Develop appreciation of the art of theatre; (4) Encourage

raising standards for their own creative dramatic experience;
(5) Intensify understanding of life values by relating human experiences seen on stage to their own.

The Adventures of Harlequin provides an excellent opportunity for child audiences to fulfill all the above needs while they are being delightfully entertained. The experience can be much richer, more meaningful; and longer lasting for them if it is prefaced by innovative activities related to the story, characters, and/or meaning of the play.

The suggested activities which follow should be of help to each teacher in planning and executing worthwhile classroom activities for use before the play and particularly to use in enlarging and enriching the child's experience after the play.

Language Arts and Creative Writing

Before the play

Read to the class any tale based on Harlequin. The following sources contain stories about Harlequin:

Charlip, Remy. Harlequin and the Gift of Many Colors.

Parents Magazine Press, 1973.

Robbins, Ruth. Harlequin and Mother Goose. Pamascus

Press, 1965.

Rose, Laura Mincelle. Harlequin. New York: Alfred

A. Knopf, 1968.

Create as a class an adventure that Harlequin might participate in.

Discuss the clownish antics of Harlequin and compare them to those of modern day clowns.

After the play

Ask the children to write short stories, poems or letters recounting one of the episodes in the play.

Ask the children to write news stories about the play, its characters or its events.

Have the children write a review of the play, noting the parts they liked or disliked.

Art

Before the play

After reading the story about Harlequin, ask the children to draw pictures to tell the story.

After the play

Encourage the children to make puppets to represent the characters in the play. Several types of puppets can be easily constructed. (1) Have the children draw their favorite character's face on a paper bag. Stuff the small paper bag to form a puppet head. Insert a cardboard tube into the open end of the bag for the puppeteer's fingers. Make a costume out of scraps of fabric or paper and attach to the tube. (2) Have the children draw the face of their favorite character on a pie plate and attach a popsicle stick to it. They now have a rod puppet with which they can recreate their favorite scenes.

Encourage the children to draw their favorite scenes from the play.

Just as Harlequin's costume was made from scraps of fabric donated by his friends, have the children bring in fabric from home to create a collage

Music and Creative Dramatics

Before the play

Discuss the characteristics of the people in the play--the way they talk, walk, look, etc. Allow the children to become one of the characters in the play. Play light and amusing music while they move in their characters.

Play carnival or circus music and have the children act like clowns as Harlequin does.

After the play

Have the children act out their favorite scenes in the play. Encourage the children who made puppets to recreate some of the scenes or make up new ones into a puppet play.

Social Studies

The Adventures of Harlequin takes place during the Renaissance era, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Various topics for discussion can bring about a greater awareness of our modern day mode of living. Several topics are: (1) How did peasants live and what was their social

standing? (2) Compare the difference of modern day dress to that of the sixteenth and seventeenth century; (3) How does our present government differ from that of the sixteenth and seventeenth century? (4) Have the children compare Harlequin's family to that of their own.

CHAPTER II

PROMPT BOOK FOR THE ADVENTURES OF HARKLEIN

THE DANCE BEING AS THE LIGHTS RISE TO REVEAL A SET CONSISTING OF TWO PLATFORMS WITH THREE SIX-INCH HIGH STEPS AT THE REAR. ABOVE THE STEPS ARE A ROW OF FIVE HANGING VERTICALLY TO THE FLOOR AT VARIOUS LEVELS. THREE TRIANGLES HANG IMMEDIATELY BEHIND THE STEPS. LIGHT ENTERS FROM 5:00 AISLE, SPOTS ENTER FROM 7:00 AISLE. THEY SHOUT TO EACH OTHER. HARK AND TINA ENTER IN SAME MANNER. THEY CLIMB TO REAR AND LIGHT AND ALL BEGIN DANCING. HARKLEIN AND ISABELLA ENTER 11:00 AND JOIN THE DANCE. SPOTS AND HARKEN ENTER FROM 13:00 STEP AND DANCE ON THE TWO IN FRONT (FIGURE 11) MUSIC ENDS.

CHAPTER II
PROMPT BOOK

A BOY ENTERS, DRESSED AS AN URBAN FASCIST OF THE THIRTIES PERIOD. HE PLACES A HAT ON HIS HEAD AND ADJUSTS HIS COAT. WHAT HE LACKS IN INTELLIGENCE HE MAKES UP WITH HIS AGILITY AND SWAGGING GAIT. ALL WAY TO HIS AID TO ASSISTANCE AND SCIT. HARKLEIN: "WELL, NOW IT'S TIME TO PRETEND!" HE VOUCHES A PANTOMIME PRETENDING TO BE A SERVANT. AT FIRST, HE IS ASLEEP, THEN WAKENS SUDDENLY WHEN HE HEARS A THUNDER. HE RUNS TO GET A TRAY OF FOOD FOR HIS IMAGINARY MASTER, APPROACHES, CARRYING THE HEAVILY LOADED TRAY AND WHEN ABOUT TO SWEEP IT, DROPS IT. AS HE IS TRYING TO APOLOGIZE FOR HIS CARELESSNESS AND AT THE SAME TIME ATTEMPTING TO PICK UP THE FOOD, HE RECEIVES A "SERVICED" STICK FROM HIS "MASTER" WHICH SENDS HIM STRAWLING. AGAIN HE TRIES TO REtrieve THE FOOD AND ALSO AVOIDS FURTHER BLOWS. ATTEMPTING TO APPEASE HIS ENRAGED EMPLOYER, HE WHOLELY VOUCHES "THANKS" OBVIOUSLY DROPPING THEM AND SHAKING THEM. HE IS NO AWARE. AT THIS POINT LIGHT ENTERS FROM 7:00 AISLE, STOPS AS HE SEES HARKLEIN SO DISGAYED. HE WATCHES FOR A MOMENT.)

LIGHT

What are you doing, Harkle?

HARKLEIN SHOWS NO PARTICULAR REACTION. HE "SHUTS" LIGHT AND STARTS THE SAME SCENE AGAIN, FALLING ASLEEP, HEARING HIS MASTER CALL, TAKING THE TRAY, ETC. LIGHT WATCHES WITH INTEREST AND BEGINN TO COMMENT.)

LIGHT

(CROSS TO CENTER.) You're asleep? I see. Somebody calls you. Your master? Oh, you're a servant. He's hungry. Very hungry. So you take him some food, eh? Oh-oh, too bad, too

CHAPTER II

PROMPT BOOK FOR THE ADVENTURES OF HARLEQUIN

(THE OVERTURE BEGINS AS THE LIGHTS RISE TO REVEAL A SET CONSISTING OF TWO PLATFORMS WITH THREE SIX-INCH STEP UNITS AT THE REAR. ABOVE THE STEP UNITS ARE A ROW OF POLES HANGING VERTICALLY TO THE FLOOR AT VARIOUS LEVELS. THREE TRIANGLES HANG IMMEDIATELY BEHIND THE POLES. LUIGI ENTERS FROM 5:00 AISLE, RENATO ENTERS FROM 7:00 AISLE. THEY BOW TO EACH OTHER, MAMA AND TINA ENTER IN SAME MANNER. THEY CURTSY TO RENATO AND LUIGI AND ALL BEGIN DANCING. PANTELONE AND ISABELLA ENTER 11:00 AND JOIN THE DANCE. DANIELLO AND DUCHESS ENTER FROM 12:00 STEP AND DANCE ON TWELVE-INCH PLATFORM [FIGURE 1] MUSIC ENDS.

(A BOY ENTERS, DRESSED AS AN ITALIAN PEASANT OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY. HE PLACES A STOOL OFF CENTER AND ADJUSTS HIS COSTUME. WHAT HE LACKS IN INTELLECT, HE MAKES UP WITH HIS AGILITY AND ENGAGING WIT. ALL BOW TO HIM AND TO AUDIENCE AND EXIT. HARLEQUIN: "WELL, NOW, ITS TIME TO PRETEND!" HE EXECUTES A PANTOMIME PRETENDING TO BE A SERVANT. AT FIRST, HE IS ASLEEP, THEN WAKENS SUDDENLY WHEN HE HEARS A SUMMONS. HE RUSHES TO GET A TRAY OF FOOD FOR HIS IMAGINARY MASTER, APPROACHES, CARRYING THE HEAVILY-LADEN TRAY AND WHEN ABOUT TO PRESENT IT, DROPS IT. AS HE IS TRYING TO APOLOGIZE FOR HIS CARELESSNESS AND AT THE SAME TIME ATTEMPTING TO PICK UP THE FOOD, HE RECEIVES A TERRIFIC KICK FROM HIS "MASTER" WHICH SENDS HIM SPRAWLING. AGAIN HE TRIES TO RETRIEVE THE FOOD AND ALSO AVOID FURTHER BLOWS. ATTEMPTING TO APPEASE HIS ENRAGED EMPLOYER, HE JUGGLES VARIOUS "ITEMS"--OBVIOUSLY DROPPING THEM AND BREAKING THEM. HE IS NO AMATEUR. AT THIS POINT LUIGI ENTERS, FROM 7:00 AISLE, STOPS AS HE SEES HARLEQUIN SO ENGAGED. HE WATCHES FOR A MOMENT.)

LUIGI

What are you doing, Quino?

(HARLEQUIN SHOWS NO PARTICULAR SURPRISE. HE "SHH'S" LUIGI AND STARTS THE SAME SCENE AGAIN, FALLING ASLEEP, HEARING HIS MASTER CALL, TAKING THE TRAY, ETC. LUIGI WATCHES WITH INTEREST AND BEGINS TO COMMENT:)

LUIGI

(CROSS TO CENTER.) You're asleep? I see. Somebody calls you. Your master? Oh, you're a servant. He's hungry. Very hungry. So you take him some food, eh? Oh-oh, too bad, you

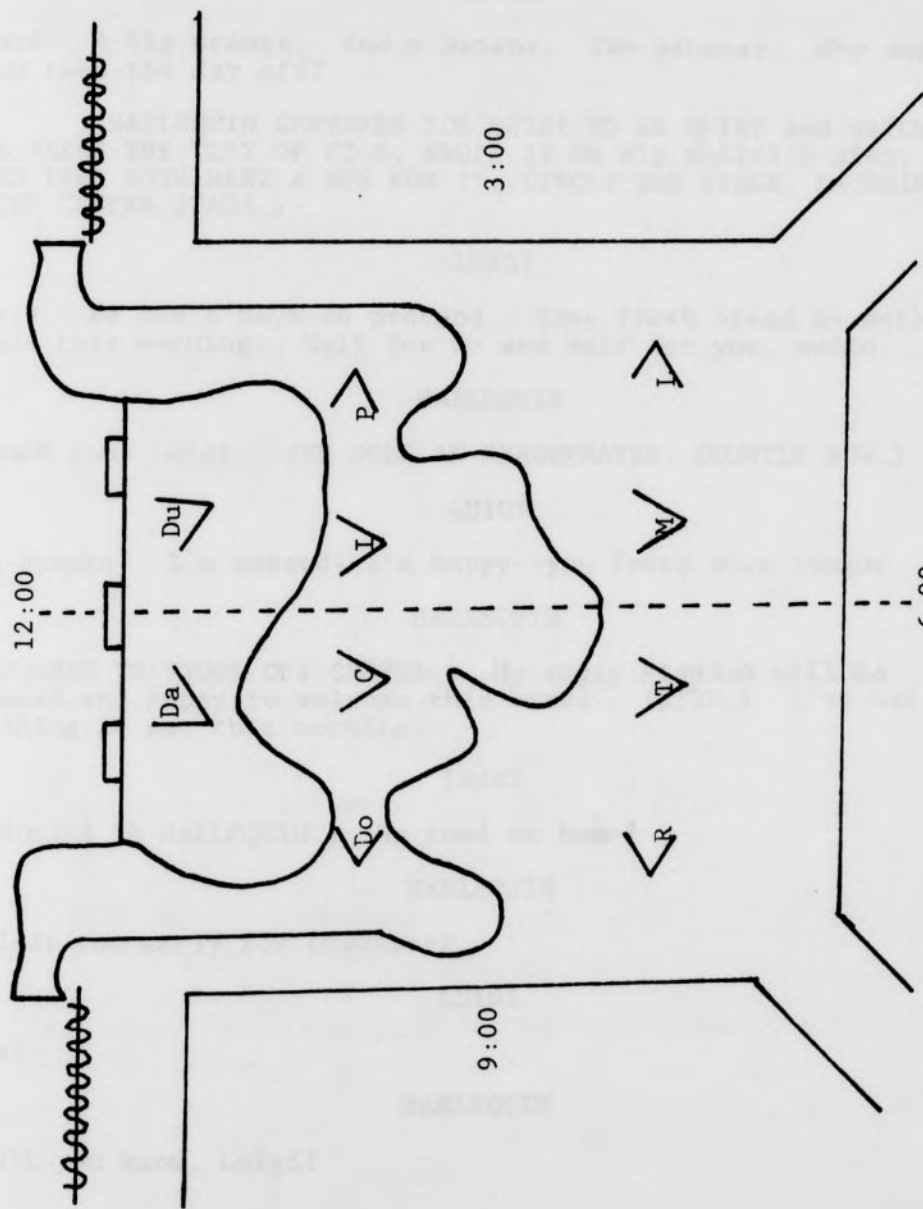


Figure 1

The Adventures of Harlequin
 Scale: $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$

dropped the tray. I'll bet he's going to . . . ugh--he did! He's not what I'd call a very kind master, kicking you that way. Are you all right? Here, let me help. (TOGETHER THEY PANTOMIME RESTORING THE VARIOUS ITEMS TO THE TRAY.)

LUIGI

Here. A big orange. And a banana. Two bananas. Why don't you take the day off?

(HARLEQUIN GESTURES FOR LUIGI TO BE QUIET AND WATCH. HE TAKES THE TRAY OF FOOD, DROPS IT ON HIS MASTER'S HEAD, AND THEY BOTH MAKE A RUN FOR IT, CIRCLE THE STAGE, LAUGHING, STOP CENTER STAGE.)

LUIGI

Here. We don't have to pretend. Some fresh bread my mother made this morning. Half for me and half for you, amico.

HARLEQUIN

Thank you, Luigi. (HE DOES AN EXAGGERATED, COURTLY BOW.)

LUIGI

He speaks! I'm amazed--I'm happy--you found your tongue.

HARLEQUIN

(CROSSES TO STOOL OFF CENTER.) My empty stomach will be amazed and happy to welcome this bread. (SITS.) I've had nothing to eat this morning.

LUIGI

(CROSSES TO HARLEQUIN.) No food at home?

HARLEQUIN

I left too early for breakfast.

LUIGI

Why?

HARLEQUIN

Don't you know, Luigi?

LUIGI

To be alone--so you can pretend?

HARLEQUIN

(JUMPS UP.) More than that. (CROSSES TO 5:00 DREAMING.)
More than pretending. Working, practicing, learning.

LUIGI

You pretend you're a servant boy and you take a make-believe
tray of food to a master who isn't really there, and you call
that working?

HARLEQUIN

(TURNS TO LUIGI.) Yes, working. (CROSSES TO 8:00.) Hard
work, but great fun, too.

LUIGI

Fun? Yes. Work? No. Eat the bread.

HARLEQUIN

Work, yes! Umm, bread's good.

LUIGI

Tell me, all this secret work you do so early in the morn-
ing. Where will it lead you?

HARLEQUIN

(STARING AND DREAMING.) To fame and fortune.

LUIGI

Oh? (CROSSES TO HARLEQUIN.)

HARLEQUIN

And happiness. But, not just for me. (CROSSES TO 5:00
AISLE.)

LUIGI

No?

HARLEQUIN

I'm going to be an actor, Luigi. (TURNS TO LUIGI.)

LUIGI

An actor?

HARLEQUIN

Yes, with the strolling players.

LUIGI

Uh-huh.

HARLEQUIN

(SPINS AROUND.) I'll help them give shows all over Italy.

LUIGI

And that's going to make you and everyone happy?

HARLEQUIN

Everyone happy!

LUIGI

Including your Mama?

HARLEQUIN

My mama well (BECOMES GUILT RIDDEN.)

LUIGI

(CROSSES TO HARLEQUIN.) Yes, your Mama, and your sister, and your brother Will they be happy if you leave them to become an actor with the strolling players?

HARLEQUIN

Well, I'm not sure

LUIGI

Oh?

RENATO

Mama, what are you going to do when you find him?

MAMA

You'll see!

TINA

Running off before breakfast.

HARLEQUIN

Oh, oh. It's my Mama. She's come looking for me.

LUIGI

Don't worry. I'll take care of things. (THEY BOTH RUN OUT
5:00 AISLE.)

MAMA

(RUNS IN.) The idea--and it's not the first time.

RENATO

(CROSSES TO 1:00, LOOKING FOR HARLEQUIN.) I had to do his
chores this morning.

MAMA

You're a good boy, Renato.

TINA

I did them yesterday. (LOOKING FOR HARLEQUIN.)

MAMA

You're a good girl, Tina.

LUIGI

(RUNNING IN FROM 5:00 AISLE.) I'll do them tomorrow.

MAMA

You're a good boy . . . Who said that?

LUIGI

I did. (CHECKS TO SEE IF HARLEQUIN IS SAFELY HIDDEN.)

MAMA

Luigi! Have you seen that boy?

LUIGI

That boy? (CROSS TO CENTER.)

MAMA

Yes. That boy. My boy.

LUIGI

Well . . . (TURNS TO MAMA IN OPPOSITE DIRECTION FROM 5:00 AISLE.)

MAMA

You just wait till I find him. Just wait.

RENATO

What are you going to do, Mama? (CROSS TO MAMA.)

TINA

Yes, what, Mama? When you find him . . . what will you do?

MAMA

Why, I'll . . . I'll . . . (GETTING FLUSTERED.)

HARLEQUIN

(RUNNING IN FROM 5:00 AISLE.) It's my Mama, my beautiful, beautiful Mama!

MAMA

(COMPLETELY MELTED AND OVERCOME WITH WARMTH.) It's my boy! My beautiful, beautiful, boy!

(THEY RUSH TOGETHER AND MEET CENTER STAGE WITH A WILDLY EMOTIONAL EMBRACE. THEY CARRY ON AS THOUGH YEARS, NOT MINUTES, HAVE SEPARATED THEM. LUIGI MOVES TO ONE SIDE, FIRST AMAZED, THEN AMUSED. TINA AND RENATO RUN TO HUG HARLEQUIN. THOUGH HARLEQUIN MAY HAVE STARTED THE GREETING WITH

MOCK EMOTION, WHAT HAPPENS IS ABSOLUTELY GENUINE AND THEY ALL ENJOY THE MOMENT.)

MAMA

Now, tell me, where have you been?

RENATO

It doesn't matter, Mama, all the chores are done!

MAMA

(CROSS TOWARD 9:00.) I want to know. Where have you been? When I wake up, I go to see if my three little angels are still fast asleep. I peek in the room. (CROSSES TO TINA.) And there, Tina, my little angel, sound asleep--dreaming nice dreams. She is smiling, so I smile too. And then I peek again. There (CROSSES TO RENATO, HUGS HIM.) My fine big angel, Renato, sleeping quietly. And in his sleep he sighs. I sigh too. And then I peek once more. My dear, sweet Quino? That devil! He is gone. (HARLEQUIN CROSSES TOWARD 7:00 AISLE.) And I scream. "Where are you, you devil? Off playing again?"

RENATO

She woke us up.

TINA

She screamed so loud I fell out of bed.

MAMA

(CROSSES TO HARLEQUIN.) So tell me, where were you? Where were you when you should have been sleeping? When you should have been doing the chores with your brother and sister? Huh?

HARLEQUIN

I got up early and left the house . . . (BACKS AWAY FROM MAMA.) So I could work.

MAMA

So you could work. What kind of work? (CROSSES TO HARLEQUIN.)

HARLEQUIN

(BACKS AWAY, AGAIN.) Learning how to dance and sing and act . . . like the strolling players!

MAMA

Dancing and singing and acting, eh? This is work?

HARLEQUIN

Yes, work.

MAMA

(TAKES HIS ARM AND CROSSES TOWARD 7:00 AISLE.) Well, suppose we go home and play some games. Like chopping the wood and milking the cow, and sweeping the floor.

TINA

Mama, we've done all the chores.

MAMA

No! (TURNS TO TINA AND RENATO.) My poor little boy has been working since sunup. I must see that he plays for awhile. A brand new game. I call it "Mending clothes to earn money for food." Come along! (GRABS HARLEQUIN'S HAND AND BEGINS TO EXIT 7:00 AISLE.)

HARLEQUIN

Mama, look! (POINTS TO 9:00.)

MAMA

Huh?

HARLEQUIN

An old lady with clothes to mend. See?

MAMA

No, I don't see an old lady with clothes to mend. I don't see anyone. (LOOKS IN DIRECTION OF 9:00.)

HARLEQUIN

(PICKS UP STOOL, CROSSES TO 3:00, SITS. PULLS CAPE OVER HEAD AND USES OLD LADY VOICE.) "This tattered shawl needs mending. 'Twas once so nice and new. Please use your magic needle and I'll give some coins to you!"

MAMA

Here, now, you

RENATO

Bravo!

TINA

Wonderful, Quino!

MAMA

Don't encourage him.

HARLEQUIN

(CROSSES TO MAMA.) "Needle running in and out, zippity, zippity, zip . . . Patching up each little hole, each little tiny rip." (CROSSES BEHIND MAMA.)

MAMA

(BEGINNING TO MELT AGAIN.) Zippity, zippity, zip . . .

HARLEQUIN

"Pray, lady fair, take the thread, and find the needle's eye . . ."

MAMA

Maybe he knows more about sewing than I do, huh?

HARLEQUIN

(HIMSELF AGAIN.) You're the greatest seamstress in all of Italy, Mama. (TOSSES CAPE FROM HIS HEAD.)

MAMA

Well. . .

HARLEQUIN

Just as I'll be the greatest actor. You'll see. (CROSS TO 3:00.)

MAMA

And I'll see that you stop all this foolishness and get to work.

HARLEQUIN

I made up a new dance this morning. Watch. (CROSS TO STOOL.)

MAMA

I am not going to waste any more time here, not another minute, and neither are you. (CROSS TOWARD HARLEQUIN.)

HARLEQUIN

The dance tells a story about a little boy . . . (PICKS UP STOOL, CROSSES TOWARD 9:00, PUTS STOOL DOWN.)

MAMA

Who'd better get himself home, pronto.

HARLEQUIN

About a little boy who finds some gold . . .

MAMA

How much? (CROSSES TOWARD 4:00.)

HARLEQUIN

A pot full of it.

MAMA

Where? Where does he find it?

HARLEQUIN

At the end of the rainbow.

TINA

What does he do with the gold?

HARLEQUIN

I'll show you.

MAMA

The end of the rainbow. Don't bother to show me . . .

TINA

Please, Mama.

MAMA

No.

RENATO

Pretty please?

MAMA

No.

HARLEQUIN

Pretty please, with sugar on it? (CROSSES TO CENTER.)

MAMA

No.

LUIGI

(CROSSES TO MAMA.) Pretty please, with sugar and cream and strawberries on it?

MAMA

Show us.

(THEY ALL LAUGH. MUSIC IS HEARD, AND HARLEQUIN BEGINS THE PANTOMIME. HE CROSSES TO 12:00, FIXES HIS COSTUME AND CIRCLES THE STAGE. AS THE MUSIC BUILDS HE RUNS IN SEARCH OF SHELTER. FINDING SHELTER, HE RUNS TO IT AND PANTOMIMES DRYING OFF. HE SEES A RAINBOW, CROSSES TO THE STOOL AND PICKS UP AN IMAGINARY POT OF GOLD.)

MAMA

He's out for a walk.

ALL

Sshhh.

TINA

It started to rain.

ALL

Sh!

LUIGI

He's found shelter.

ALL

Sh!

RENATO

He's all wet.

ALL

Sh!

MAMA

Must have stopped raining. Hmmm, quick storm.

ALL

Sh!

TINA

There's the rainbow. See

MAMA

No, where?

RENATO

There. Up there.

MAMA

Such eyes my children have.

LUIGI

You've got to use your imagination.

MAMA

I must have left it at home.

TINA

He's found it.

MAMA

What?

TINA

The gold, the gold at the end of the rainbow.

MAMA

He has, huh?

RENATO

Yes.

MAMA

Well, let's see what he's going to do with it. (ALL CROSS TO 7:00 AISLE.)

TINA

He's giving it away!

MAMA

All of it?

(HARLEQUIN PANTOMIMES GIVING THEM EACH SOME OF THE GOLD AND THEY ALL LAUGH.

(THE STROLLING PLAYERS, THEATRICALY DRESSED, ENTER FROM 1:00 ENTRANCE. PANTELONE AND DOTORRE ARE CARRYING A TRUNK. ISABELLA CARRIES A LARGE DAISY. DOTORRE STOPS, DROPS TRUNK ON PANTELONE'S FOOT. HE HOBBLER TO 11:00.)

PANTELONE

We have competition, Dotorre, see?

DOTORRE

It must be a new band of players!

ISABELLA

A new band? What's the big idea? We're the only players in this town. You, up there! What do you think you're doing?

(THOSE ON STAGE STOP AND LOOK WITH WONDER. CAPITANO ENTERS, NOT SEEING STEP FALLS ON HIS KNEES, LEANS AGAINST TRUNK.)

MAMA

Are you talking to us?

PANTELONE

Yes, madam, we are!

DOTORRE

(CROSSES TO 6:00.) Are you head of the troupe?

ISABELLA

Of course she is. She's a woman!

CAPITANO

(STANDS.) Ha! I suppose you think you're head of this troupe?

ISABELLA

I don't think I am--I am! (BLOWS CAPITANO OVER, HE LANDS ON TRUNK.)

DOTORRE

You need your head examined. I, Dotorre, will do it.

HARLEQUIN

Mama! It's the players! The strolling players!

PANTELONE

You hear that? The boy knows who we are.

ISABELLA

Of course he does. Everyone knows the strolling players.
(MUSIC BEGINS.)

PANTELONE

(RECITING IN AN ELEGANT MANNER.)

Pantelone at your service; a dottering fool sometimes,
A creature of mirth, of wealth and of worth, and
A stopper of terrible crimes.

DOTORRE

(CROSSES TO CENTER.) A stopper of terrible crimes? What rot!
He stops me from having fun!
It's easy to see, he's jealous of me,
Dotorre! The talented one.

ISABELLA

(CROSSES TO 5:00.) His talent is all in his bottles
With medicines filled up each day.
He thinks he's so smart, but he knows
in his heart
Isabella's the star of the play.

CAPITANO

(CROSSES TO HARLEQUIN'S FAMILY.)
I, Capitano, am the greatest of all,
So brave and courageous and daring,
My enemies flee like a eat up a tree
When they see what a great sword I'm wearing.
(HE TRIES IN VAIN TO GET THE SWORD OUT OF THE SCABBARD.)

MAMA

You want to be one of them?

HARLEQUIN

Yes, Mama, I do, more than anything in the world.

PANTELONE

One of us? Then you are not already strolling players, eh?

MAMA

Do I look like a strolling player? I'm a poor widow, a
seamstress, and I must work for my living. Not play. I have
three fine children to support.

HARLEQUIN

May I present them?

MAMA

Never mind.

PANTELONE

Please! We would be delighted.

DOTORRE

But we haven't much time. I've got to prepare many marvelous medicines before tonight's performance.

PANTELONE

That's right. We've got to see the Duchess . . . at once.

CAPITANO

(CROSSES TO DOTORRE.) Best we should see a general. A Duchess is only a petty official, no army at his command, no horses, no swords . . .

DOTORRE

A general? We should see a man of science--a doctor, like me.

ISABELLA

Hush, you two, the Duchess is the one we've got to see.

DOTORRE

I don't see why. Can she operate, amputate, conglomerate? She's just the head of the town.

CAPITANO

And I'm head of the world's greatest army. My forces do not know the meaning of the word "fear," and neither do I. Together, we will fight valiantly, bravelessly, fearfully.

DOTORRE

Quiet, or you'll have a case of bumble-bee-itis of the lower blah-blah--and I'll have to operate.

CAPITANO

What is bumble-bee-itis of the lower blah-blah?

DOTORRE

(CIRCLES AROUND AND AROUND CAPITANO MAKING HIM DIZZY. HE FALLS TO HIS KNEES.) Every time you talk too loud--or tell a fib--or eat raw onions--your eyes will water and you'll get a gurgle in your lower blah-blah. And I, Dotorre, the greatest doctor in the world, will have to operate. (HE EXAMINES CAPITANO'S HEAD WITH A STETHESCOPE.) Hmmm. No brains at all.

(HE PEERS IN CAPITANO'S EAR. CAPITANO COVERS AND UNCOVERS HIS OTHER EAR WITH HIS HAND. AS HE DOES, DOTORRE SAYS:) Daylight, darkness. Daylight, darkness. Daylight, darkness. Oh, you're a sick man, Capitano.

ISABELLA

Oh, you two act better off-stage than during the plays. Go ahead, boy, present your family.

HARLEQUIN

Presenting--(CROSSES TO STOOL AND HOPS ON IT. HIS PRESENTATION OF HIS FAMILY IS IN THE SAME MANNER AS THE PLAYERS USED, BUT NOT NEARLY SO PRECISE OR A WELL-REHEARSED: BUT EVEN MAMA ENTERS INTO THE SPIRIT OF THE THING.) [FIGURE 2]

HARLEQUIN

. . . My Mama, so modest, so gay--In every conceivable way. She'll patch up your pants--So they're fit for a dance . . .

MAMA

(CROSSES TO HARLEQUIN.) . . . Cause I work while the rest of you play! (A CHEER FROM THE OTHERS.) My daughter's as pretty as spring--Like a birdie she's learned how to sing. Now Tina, my sweet, let your song be our treat . . .

(TINA RESPONDS WITH A GHASTLY, BUT BRIEF, SOLO.)

RENATO

(CROSSES TO TINA.) . . . Like a vulture who's injured one wing. (TINA KICKS HIM.)

RENATO

(CROSSES TO CENTER.) I may not have talent like that--But you'll love me wherever you're at. At the end of the show--When you've bowed very low--It's my money that fills up your hat!

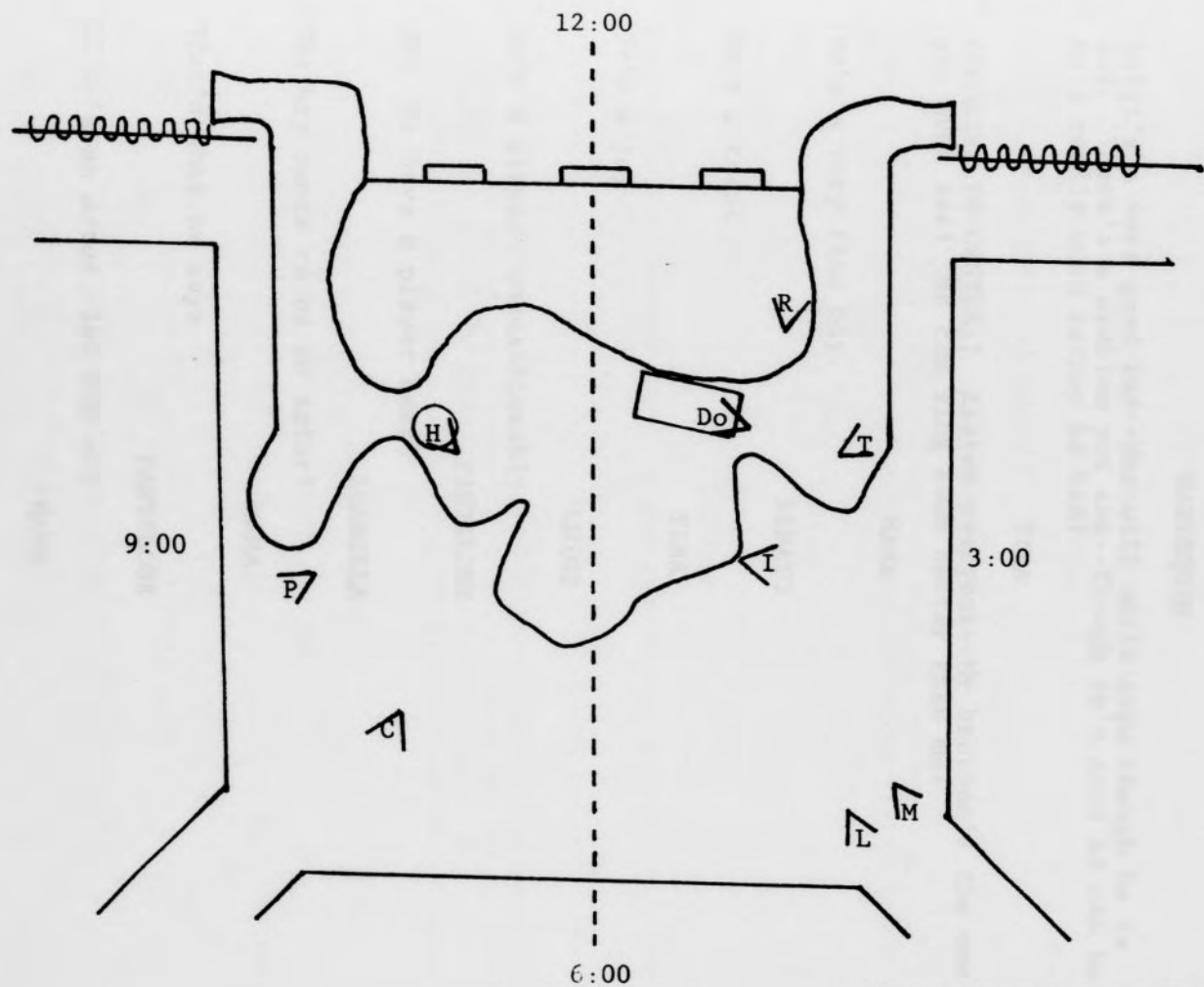


Figure 2

The Adventures of Harlequin
 Scale: $\frac{1}{2}'' = 1'$

PANTELONE

Indeed we love you.

HARLEQUIN

Luigi's a very good lad--Who will smile even though he is sad. There's a problem you see--Though he's good as can be He'd really much rather be bad!

TINA

(CROSSES TO CENTER.) Listen everyone--My brother's the one you must see! He can sing even better than me!

MAMA

He's a very fine boy.

RENATO

He's a treat.

TINA

He's a joy.

LUIGI

He's a player, unquestionably.

PANTELONE

So! We have a player here?

ISABELLA

The boy wants to be an actor?

MAMA

That's what he says.

PANTELONE

If he's an actor, let him act.

MAMA

Now?

PANTELONE

Now. We're looking for an actor.

ISABELLA

Hush, Pantelone, we must first see the Duchess.

LUIGI

You're looking for an actor?

PANTELONE

(CROSSES TO MAMA.) We were on our way to see the Duchess when we stopped here. We want to ask her advice. Seek her help . . .

MAMA

What about?

DOTORRE

About finding someone to join our troupe--to help me with my potions--my medicines.

LUIGI

Quino! Your chance. They need an actor! Search no further. You need not go to the Duchess for help. Your answer is here. (PULLING HARLEQUIN TO CENTER.) Presenting my good friend--the talented, lovable, laughable, the greatest actor in town--Quino!

PANTELONE

Not a very good name for an actor, is it?

ISABELLA

Very bad.

PANTELONE

Well, what harm can it do to see what the boy's like?

CAPITANO

Is he brave and courageous and daring?

MAMA

Yes.

DOTORRE

Is he intelligent, learned, and profound--like Dotorre?

MAMA

Show them, Quino.

PANTELONE

Yes, let the performance begin. What can we lose?

MAMA

Nothing, my friend, nothing at all. You'll see. (CROSSES TO CAPITANO.) My son can sing and dance and act as good as any of you. (CROSSES TO PANTELONE. SHE BEGINS PESTERING THE PLAYERS WITH HER TALK.)

HARLEQUIN

Mama, please. . . .

MAMA

Why, he's up every morning before the birds, working . . .

HARLEQUIN

Mama, perhaps it might be better . . . (HARLEQUIN IS THOROUGHLY EMBARRASSED.)

MAMA

(CROSSES TO ISABELLA.) . . . Working and working to learn everything the Strolling Players do. Practicing his singing, making up dances. . . .

HARLEQUIN

Mama . . .

MAMA

(CROSSES TO HARLEQUIN.) So you just show them, Quino. You just show them how good you are.

LUIGI

Yes, show them.

TINA

He's going to be the greatest actor in Italy.

RENATO

Maybe even the world!

MAMA

The world!

(THEY ALL MOVE TO THE EDGE OF THE STAGE, EXPECTING TO SEE HARLEQUIN PERFORM, BUT HE STANDS MUTE AND STILL. THIS UNEXPECTED OPPORTUNITY HAS PARALYZED HIM AND HE CAN DO NOTHING BUT SUFFER IN SILENCE.)

PANTELONE

Well? We're waiting.

ISABELLA

Give the lad a chance.

CAPITANO

Let's see you fight a duel, or lead an army to battle.

DOTORRE

If he's going to play a servant, he needn't know that. He should know how to make potions and medicines and . . .

CAPITANO

(CROSSES TO DOTORRE.) My army is full of servants.

DOTORRE

And you're full of prunes.

CAPITANO

(LEANS OVER DOTORRE.) Say not so. Say not so. Unless you care to defend yourself against my anger.

DOTORRE

Better watch your blah-blah. (REMOVES STETHOSCOPE AND USING IT AS CLIPPERS, PINCHES CAPITANO'S NOSE.)

ISABELLA

Quiet, you two. Well, boy?

MAMA

Go on. Show them how you found the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

LUIGI

Or how you serve your master's breakfast.

TINA

Or how you sing . . .

RENATO

And dance

HARLEQUIN

I . . . I can't. (LOOKS AROUND, SEES EVERYONE STARING.)

MAMA

Huh?

HARLEQUIN

I can't. I just can't.

MAMA

You can't? Why not?

HARLEQUIN

I'm scared. That's why.

(HE RUNS OUT 7:00 AISLE. LUIGI GUNS TO EDGE OF SAME AISLE. THERE FOLLOWS A MOMENT OF SILENCE.)

LUIGI

(TURNS TO GROUP.) He . . . he really is very good. When he's not scared, I mean.

MAMA

He's only scared of not being good enough.

ISABELLA

I understand.

PANTELONE

I like the boy, and I'd like to help him. But, well, we would have to see him perform.

MAMA

You will. Someday.

ISABELLA

I hope so. I really do. (PLAYERS BEGIN TO LEAVE. DOTORRE AND CAPITANO PICK UP TRUNK AND EXIT 5:00 AISLE.)

MAMA

(CROSSES TO PANTELONE.) Maybe you'll give my boy another chance? Later on?

PANTELONE

Maybe. But for now, farewell--The Players must be on their way! May we meet again some day! (PANTELONE BOWS AND HE AND ISABELLA EXIT 5:00 AISLE.)

(THERE ARE AD-LIBBED GOODBYES FROM THOSE ON STAGE, THEN SILENCE. THEY ALL TURN AND LOOK AS HARLEQUIN ENTERS 7:00 AISLE VERY SHEEPISH AND ASHAMED. HE CROSSES TO 5:00 AISLE LOOKING TO SEE IF THE PLAYERS HAVE GONE. THERE IS AN AWKWARD MOMENT. FINALLY MAMA BREAKS THE GLOOM:)

MAMA

Well, all I can say is, I'm certainly glad you didn't bother to show those silly players how good you are! (SHE IS ALL HEART, A MILE WIDE.) No, my boy has more talent in his little finger than all of them put together. And you were right--I could see that immediately. Why waste your

talent on them? You wait for a really good troupe of strolling players to come through town, then show what you can do. He's smart, he is, just like his mama!

HARLEQUIN

(TURNS TO HER.) Mama, they're the best strolling players I've ever seen.

MAMA

The best! They can't be.

HARLEQUIN

Why not?

MAMA

They haven't got you.

(HARLEQUIN LOOKS AT HER, THEN RUSHES TO HER OUT-STRETCHED ARMS. THEY COMFORT EACH OTHER. LUIGI STEPS OUT OF THE SCENE AS THEY "FREEZE.")

LUIGI

This family! (FACES 3:00.) They have been my friends since . . . well, since I can remember. They fight, they laugh, and they love each other so much, it does your heart good just to be near them. Quino has always been my best friend. (CROSSES TO 6:00.) In fact, he's "best friend" to most of the people in this part of the village. He plays tricks on you, and before you have a chance to be angry, you find yourself laughing. Yes, he carries laughter around with him in his pockets the way some people carry money. And he's always giving it away. (CROSSES TO 9:00.) Now I'm not really worried because he couldn't show the Players how good he is just now. I've been frightened at times myself. If I know his family, and I do, well, I'm sure they'll think of something.

MAMA

(BREAKING THE MOOD WITH FINE GUSTO.) Well, enough of this.

HARLEQUIN

I'm sorry, Mama. I'm sorry I couldn't perform.

MAMA

Nonsense. You've nothing to be sorry for.

TINA

Of course not.

HARLEQUIN

But I want to be an actor, and I missed my chance.

MAMA

Tell me, how do you know which end of the rainbow has the pot of gold? Come along, we're going now. (CROSSES TO 7:00 AISLE.)

RENATO

Home?

MAMA

Home can wait. We're going to the home of the Duchess.

TINA

What for?

MAMA

What for? Well, maybe we'll find the pot of gold there. (THE FAMILY EXITS 7:00 AISLE.)

LUIGI

See? I knew they'd think of something.

(PICKS UP STOOL AND EXITS AT 1:00. BLACK OUT OCCURS.)

(AS THE SCENE BEGINS, PANTELONE AND ISABELLA ARE STANDING NEAR THE 3:00 STAGE AREA. DOTORRE AND CAPITANO ARE AT THE 9:00 STAGE AREA. THE PLAYER'S TRUNK IS ALSO HERE. THE DUCHESS IS SITTING IN HER THRONE AT 12:00 AND THERE ARE TWO CUBES TO HER LEFT AND RIGHT. [FIGURE 3].)

PANTELONE

Once more. Three rousing cheers for the Duchess. (THEY CHEER.) And three more for her son. (THEY CHEER.)

Figure 3



DUCHESS

So! One of your actors has left you, eh?

PANTELONE

Yes, good Duchess. The one who plays the foolish servant.

DUCHESS

And you have come to me for help?

PANTELONE

Yes, good Duchess. You know the people of this village better than we do. Surely you know of someone who can join our troupe. A talented, versatile, captivating performer--like me?

ISABELLA

Ha!

DUCHESS

Well, now this presents a problem. a serious problem. I must think, and ponder, and meditate.

(HER SON, DANIELLO, AN ELEGANTLY-DRESSED LAD, WHOSE FINE GARMENTS UNFORTUNATELY HIDE THE REAL BULLY, HAS WANDERED NEAR CAPITANO. HE IS "INSPECTING" THE STAGE SWORD.)

PANTELONE

Think . . .

ISABELLA

And ponder . . .

DOTORRE

And operate. Oh, I mean--meditate.

DUCHESS

Yes.

DANIELLO

Look, Mummy.

DUCHESS

What is it, Daniello?

DANIELLO

His sword is made of wood. What kind of a soldier is this?
(LAUGHS AT CAPITANO.)

DUCHESS

Now, son, he's an actor. He isn't supposed to have a real sword.

DANIELLO

(TAKES THE SWORD AND BEGINS TO TEASE CAPITANO.) Look out! My great sword will run you through. A wooden sword. Ha, ha, ha . . . ! (CHASES CAPITANO AND DOTORRE AND ENDS NEAR 5:00 AISLE.)

CAPITANO

Stop it . . . Stop it . . . Give me my sword.

DANIELLO

Try and get it. (CAPITANO REACHES FOR IT, DANIELLO SHOUTS "BOO!" SCARES CAPITANO WHO FALLS TO HIS KNEES, DANIELLO SLAPS HIS REAR WITH SWORD.)

DUCHESS

Do be quiet, dear boy, I'm trying to think.

DANIELLO

You don't have to, Mummy.

DUCHESS

Don't have to think? But I must. The players have a problem, and I must help them solve it. They are looking for an actor to join their troupe.

DANIELLO

I'll join them. Their problem is solved.

DUCHESS

What?

DANIELLO

I said I'll join them. I'll be the new actor. Daniello the great! Daniello the daring. . . . (RUNS FROM 3:00 to 9:00.)

PANTELONE

But can you sing?

ISABELLA

And dance?

DOTORRE

And mix medicines?

ISABELLA

And act?

DANIELLO

Well, if you can do it, so can I.

PANTELONE

But we've been doing it for many years--and before that, we worked just as long and very hard to learn how.

DANIELLO

(CROSSES TO DUCHESS.) It might be fun, Mummy.

DUCHESS

Well, now, I don't know.

PANTELONE

Neither do I.

DANIELLO

What do you mean, you don't know? (CROSSES TO PANTELONE.)
Listen, I'm the son of the Duchess.

(HARLEQUIN'S FAMILY ENTERS 5:00 AISLE AND LISTENS.)

PANTELONE

Yes, we are aware of that.

CAPITANO

Painfully aware.

DANIELLO

And I get what I want, see?

DUCHESS

Now, now . . . mustn't be headstrong.

DANIELLO

(CROSSES TO CENTER) And I've decided I want to be an actor.

PANTELONE

Good Duchess, I appreciate your son's ambition, but we came to you, hoping to find someone with experience and training.

DANIELLO

(CROSSES TO DUCHESS.) And you found me. Well?

(THERE IS A SLIGHT PAUSE. THEY ALL LOOK TO THE DUCHESS FOR HELP.)

DUCHESS

Well, now, you know something? (SHE RISES WITH THE HELP OF DANIELLO.) I've always felt my boy had a great deal of natural talent. And frankly, I've been wondering about his future. (CROSSES RIGHT OF HER THRONE.) It might be good for him to join your troupe, go out and see the world, so to speak.

PANTELONE

(URGED ON BY THE OTHERS.) But, good Duchess, I don't think

DANIELLO

Listen, Mummy's right. I've got a lot of natural talent. You should see me scare people. (CROSSES TO CENTER.)

CAPITANO

I'll bet.

DOTTORE

(TURNING BACK TO DANIELLO.) I can see the audience running away now.

DANIELLO

(CROSS TO 3:00) And I can fight, and throw rocks at people . . .

PANTELONE

But the strolling players don't try to frighten people or fight with them or throw rocks at them. We try to entertain them.

DUCHESS

Well, I do think you might give the boy a chance.

PANTELONE

May we discuss this among ourselves?

DUCHESS

If you wish. (PANTELONE CROSSES TO ISABELLA.)

DANIELLO

And I'll bet I can shout louder than any of you. (CROSSES TO PANTELONE AND ISABELLA AND SCREAMS IN THEIR EARS. THEY RUN ACROSS STAGE TO CAPITANO AND DOTORRE AND GATHER AROUND THE TRUNK.)

CAPITANO

If he comes, I go.

ISABELLA

Whose idea was it to ask the Duchess for help?

PANTELONE

I didn't know she had a boy.

CAPITANO

He's not a boy. He's a beast.

DOTORRE

Well, what are you going to do now? We're worse off now than we were before. I'll have to mix a special rhubarb potion, or we'll all be ill.

(THEY CONTINUE IN PANTOMIME THEIR DISCUSSION AND FOCUS SHIFTS TO THE OTHER SIDE--TO HARLEQUIN AND HIS COMPANY.)

LUIGI

Did you hear that?

TINA

The Duchess's son. Surely they won't take him.

RENATO

They might have to. Maybe they won't have any choice.

MAMA

Well, suppose we give them a choice.

HARLEQUIN

What do you mean, Mama?

MAMA

(BRINGS HARLEQUIN TO CENTER STAGE.) Now listen to me, son. Listen well. Both ears.

HARLEQUIN

Yes?

MAMA

Since we lost your Poppa, I have watched over you, cared for you, and loved you enough for two people. And I want you to be happy. Do you think you could be happy if you joined these Strolling Players?

HARLEQUIN

Oh, yes, Mama, I know I could.

MAMA

And if you had another chance to perform for them, would you be frightened again?

HARLEQUIN

No.

MAMA

Well, then, I think we'd better get started. (SHE LEAVES THE BEWILDERED CHILDREN AND CROSSES TO PLAYERS.) Excuse me!

(THE PLAYERS DON'T HEAR.)

MAMA

I beg your pardon! (CROSSES AROUND THEM. THEY CONTINUE TO ARGUE.)

MAMA

If I could have your attention for a moment . . .

(NO RESPONSE. CROSSES TO CENTER AS AN IDEA STRIKES HER.)

MAMA

You are the best strolling players in Italy!

(INSTANT RESPONSE AND A BOW FROM PLAYERS.)

PLAYERS

(TOGETHER.) Thank you very much.

MAMA

I'm learning. Now then, you said maybe you'd give my boy another chance . . . later on. Is this later-on enough?

PANTELONE

(CROSSES TO MAMA.) Please don't think me rude, but right now we're rather busy. (CROSSES BACK TO PLAYERS.)

MAMA

A little entertainment might help you solve your problem.

ISABELLA

She's right, Pantelone, it might.

MAMA

Well?

PANTELONE

This is indeed "later-on-enough." Proceed!

DUCHESS

(CROSSES TO CENTER.) Just a moment, what's going on here?

DANIELLO

Some stupid peasants from the lower village. They don't matter, Mummy.

MAMA

Oh, no? Ready, son?

HARLEQUIN

(WITH EXCITEMENT SHARED BY OTHERS.) Yes, Mama, I'm ready!

(EVERYONE SETTLES DOWN TO WATCH; AND HARLEQUIN CROSSES TO CENTER, THIS TIME WITH CONFIDENCE.)

HARLEQUIN

(SINGS TENDERLY WITH GREAT CHARM AND STYLE.)
 If I were a player, I'd dance and I'd sing.
 And I'd try very hard to be good.
 I'd whistle a tune,
 Or I'd bay at the moon,
 Or I'd go around knocking on wood.

(CROSSES TO MAMA.)

If I were a player, I'd reach for the sky
 And touch all the stars with my hand,
 Then sprinkle their light
 Through the darkness of night
 Like the dawn sprinkles dew on the land.

For I know each player is able to do
 (CROSSES TO PLAYERS)

A thousand impossible things;
 Perhaps they can't fly
 But still they must try
 The Players are people with wings.

If you see a player, who's trying his wings
 (CROSSES TO DUCHESS)
 Whose antics are fun from the start,
 Please give him a smile--
 Or a coin is worthwhile--
 But first of all, give him your heart.

(THE MUSIC RISES IN THE BACKGROUND AND HARLEQUIN BOWS. THE SHEER JOY OF THE PERFORMANCE SEEMS TO AFFECT EVERYONE; EXCEPT, OF COURSE, THE DUCHESS AND HER SON. AND SOON THEY ALL JOIN IN CHEERING AT THE CONCLUSION.)

PANTELONE

Well, well, well! Not bad, not bad at all!

MAMA

Pretty good, huh?

ISABELLA

Yes, pretty good. The boy does have talent.

MAMA

Yes.

DUCHESS

(CROSSES TO HARLEQUIN.) Just one moment.

DANIELLO

(FROM BEHIND THE DUCHESS.) Stand aside, we've had enough of this!

DUCHESS

Yes, and if I may remind you, we were discussing the possibility of your taking my dear son, Daniello, as a player. Well?

PANTELONE

True, good Duchess, we were. But now I think . . . well . . .

DUCHESS

(CROSSES TO PANTELONE.) Perhaps I can help you, and I think you should take him.

PANTELONE

But . . .

DUCHESS

And I'm the Duchess.

LUIGI

(STEPPING IN TO THE CENTER.) What about Quino?

DUCHESS

Who?

LUIGI

Quino. (PULLING HARLEQUIN TO CENTER.)

DANIELLO

So that's your name. It's as silly as you are.

LUIGI

Watch what you're saying.

DANIELLO

Look, I'm the son of the Duchess. So you watch what you're saying. Well, is it decided then? I'm to join the troupe?

PANTELONE

Perhaps you can show us what you can do. (DANIELLO TURNS TO THE DUCHESS.)

DOTORRE

Yes, we don't want to get a pig in a poke.

(THEY ALL LAUGH. DANIELLO TURNS AROUND, CROSSES TO CENTER.)

DANIELLO

What's that?

PANTELONE

Just a bit of dancing, singing . . . to give us an idea.

CAPITANO

I've already got an idea. (LOOKS AT HIS SWORD.)

DUCHESS

Well, if you insist.

DANIELLO

Huh?

DUCHESS

Go ahead, son. Sing for them. Do a little dance.

DANIELLO

No. (CROSSES BACK TO DUCHESS. HE FEARS EMBARRASSMENT.)

PANTELONE

Quino wants to be an actor, and he proved it my performing for us. Suppose you prove you want to be an actor too.

DANIELLO

But I haven't had a chance to practice.

DUCHESS

That's true. This other boy--this what's his name, obviously has had a chance to prepare himself. My poor son has been taken unaware. Is that quite fair?

PANTELONE

How much time do you need?

DANIELLO

Well (SITS ON CUBE WITH FOLDED ARMS.)

LUIGI

(A SUDDEN IDEA.) Why not hold a contest?

DUCHESS

What?

LUIGI

A contest. Let Quino and your son compete for the chance.

DUCHESS

That sounds interesting. (DANIELLO SHAKES HIS HEAD TO SAY "NO.")

LUIGI

Your son could have a chance to . . . prepare himself, and everyone could see which boy--your son or Quino--really deserves the opportunity.

DANIELLO

(HOPS UP AND STAMPS FOOT.) I'm the son of the Duchess--I deserve it!

LUIGI

(CROSSES TO DANIELLO.) You mean you're not willing to compete with a peasant boy called Quino? I should think you'd seize the opportunity to show everyone how much better you are. (DANIELLO BACKS AWAY.)

DUCHESS

We will hold a contest!

DANIELLO

But, Mummy . . .

DUCHESS

And see which boy is better. That's the fair way!

(GENERAL AD LIBS--DANIELLO TRYs TO CHANGE THE DUCHESS'S MIND.)

DANIELLO

(APPROACHING HARLEQUIN.) So, I'm to compete with you, eh? Well, I'm glad. You don't have a chance. Not a chance. (CROSSES BACK TO THE DUCHESS.)

PANTELONE

That remains to be seen. When will you hold the contest?

DUCHESS

When? Well, let's see. I'll have to

TINA AND RENATO

. . . Think--

PLAYERS

--Ponder--

DUCHESS

(BEATING THEM TO IT.) And meditate!

ISABELLA

What about Mardi Gras?

PANTELONE

Mardi Gras?

ISABELLA

(CROSSES TO CENTER.) Yes, in two weeks we celebrate Mardi Gras. Why couldn't the contest be part of the celebration?

DUCHESS

Yes. A very good idea.

ISABELLA

That is, if two weeks is enough time for your son to practice.

DUCHESS

Is it?

DANIELLO

I guess so. Two days would be enough. (CROSS TO CUBE LEFT OF THRONE AND SITS.)

DUCHESS

(SHUFFLING BACK AND FORTH IN FRONT OF THE THRONE.) Then it's settled. We hold the contest two weeks from now, as part of our Mardi Gras celebration.

DANIELLO

(EYEING HARLEQUIN.) Fine. I'll wear a new costume. The Players all wear very fancy costumes, don't they?

PANTELONE

Yes, they do, but--(DANIELLO CROSSES TO THEM.)

DANIELLO

And they have to provide their own, don't they?

PANTELONE

Well, yes, I suppose they do . . . (DANIELLO RUDELY INTERRUPTS THEM.)

DANIELLO

(CROSSES TO HARLEQUIN.) What kind of a costume will you wear, Quino? Something very fancy, I'll wager. Will it be made of silk or brocade or fine, rich satins?

MAMA

We'll surprise you.

DANIELLO

I'm sure you will.

DUCHESS

(STARTS TO EXIT AT 11:00.) Come along, my boy, I've work to do, and you'd better start practicing. I want to be proud of you.

DANIELLO

Oh, you will be, Mummy. Very proud.

DUCHESS

We meet again in two weeks. On the eve of Mardi Gras! Until then, my friends, farewell. (EXITS AT 11:00.)

(GENERAL AD LIBS AS THE DUCHESS GOES OUT.)

DANIELLO

(CROSSES TO HARLEQUIN AND POKES FUN AT HIM.) You'd better practice, too, peasant boy. I'm really worried about you. You and your splendid costume may outshine me! (HE LAUGHS AND EXITS AT 11:00.) Mummy wait a minute. You forgot something. (HE IS GONE.)

MAMA

This costume? Does he have to have one? (CROSSES TO PLAYERS.)

PANTELONE

Well, generally, the new players do provide their own costumes, but--

ISABELLA

But that's not the most important thing.

HARLEQUIN

We can't afford a costume, can we, Mama?

MAMA

Of course we can't. But that doesn't mean you won't have one. (CROSSES TO HARLEQUIN.)

HARLEQUIN

But where will it come from? You can't make a costume out of thin air.

MAMA

I'm so proud of you, my boy, I almost think I could.

LUIGI

(CROSSES TO TINA AND RENATO.) I expect everyone will have a new costume for the Mardi Gras.

TINA

Except Quino.

LUIGI

Wait a minute. I think I have the answer to our problem. Tina, you and Renato go out into the village to see what friends you can find. Since everyone is busy making their costumes for the Mardi Gras maybe they'll have enough material leftover to make a costume for Quino.

HARLEQUIN

(CROSSES TO LUIGI.) Good old Luigi. Always helping.

RENATO

Look! Here comes the Duchess again.

PANTELONE

And her dear son. What do you suppose they want?

ISABELLA

I'm afraid to guess. (LUIGI, TINA, AND RENATO CROSS TO 5:00 AISLE.)

DANIELLO

(RUNNING IN.) Oh! My dear friends, I'm so happy you're still here. My Mummy has something to tell you. Don't you, Mummy.

DUCHESS

(WHO HAS FOLLOWED HIM IN.) Yes, silly of me to forget. Good thing I have such a wise son. Well, now. Guess what we forgot?

ALL

Forgot? About the contest?

DUCHESS

Yes, the contest. We completely forgot something.

ALL

The time of day we'll hold it?

DUCHESS

Of course not. I said the eve of Mardi Gras, didn't I?

ALL

So you did.

DUCHESS

Guess again . . . No guesses?

DANIELLO

They're not very bright, are they?

DUCHESS

Well, now, if we're going to have a contest then we most certainly need a judge, don't? (CROSSES TO 3:00.)

PANTELONE

Certainly. But I assumed if the two boys were competing for a place with the Players, then naturally we should be the ones to . . .

DUCHESS

(CROSSES TO 10:00.) NOT SO. That doesn't sound fair at all. Not to me, it doesn't. We have to have someone with an official capacity, someone with a learned background. So I've decided to judge the contest myself. (ALL REACT IN AMAZEMENT.)

PANTELONE

But you're the mother of one of the contestants.

DUCHESS

My dear sir, as an official of the town--the leading official, I might add--I have never--not once--let my own personal feelings come between me and my job. I assure you that I shall judge the contest impartially--not as the boy's mother--but as Duchess of the Town. And I believe that's all we really have to say, eh son? (TURNING HER BACK ON EVERYONE.)

DANIELLO

Yes, that's all. (A CYNICAL SMILE APPEARS ON HIS FACE.)

DUCHESS

Well, once more I bid you farewell, and I shall certainly look forward to seeing all of you in two weeks. Mardi Gras is always so much fun, and this year I'm sure will be the best celebration of all. (SHE EXITS AT 11:00.)

DANIELLO

(LOOKS AT THEM FOR A MOMENT SMILING.) Silly of my mummy not to remember we'll need a judge. Good thing I reminded her, isn't it? Well, I guess we'd all better get to work. See you in two weeks, Quino. (MAKES A FUNNY FACE AT HARLEQUIN AND EXITS AT 11:00.)

(THEY ALL STAND SILENT.)

MAMA

That's not fair.

PANTELONE

Of course it isn't. But she's the Duchess, what can we do?

LUIGI

Well, one thing, you're going to have a costume, we'll see to that!

TINA

What good will a costume be . . . now?

(THEY ALL SIGH. THE MOOD IS HEAVY. THEN SUDDENLY HARLEQUIN SPRINGS INTO ACTION. HE CROSSES TO CENTER.)

HARLEQUIN

Well, I haven't lost yet. Costume or no costume--judge or no judge, I haven't lost yet. "Perhaps I can't fly--but still I must try. The players are people with wings." Come on, laugh with me. I know I'm trying to reach out for a star, but who knows? I just might make it!

(ALL RUN TO HARLEQUIN AS LIGHTS FADE TO BLACKOUT. BRIDGE MUSIC BEGINS AS THE SET CHANGES AND ACTORS MOVE TO THEIR APPROPRIATE POSITIONS FOR ACT II. THE THRONE AND ONE CUBE ARE REMOVED FROM THE TWELVE-INCH PLATFORM. THE PLAYERS CROSS STAGE WITH THE PROP TRUNK AND SET IT NEAR 4:00.

(AS LIGHTS ARE UP, WE SEE THREE GROUPS ON STAGE: THE DUCHESS AND DANIELLO AT THE CENTER OF THE TWELVE-INCH PLATFORM, THE PLAYERS GATHERED AROUND THE PROP TRUNK WHICH IS AT 4:00 AND, HARLEQUIN'S FAMILY IN THE 7:00 AISLE. A SMALL CUBE DRAPED WITH SCRAPS OF FABRIC SITS AT 12:00.

(LUIGI IS BY HIMSELF. THEY ARE ALL CAUGHT IN A PICTURE-LIKE POSE, ENGAGED IN PREPARING FOR THE MARDI GRAS. THE DUCHESS AND HER SON ARGUE OVER A SUITABLE FABRIC FOR A MARDI GRAS COSTUME. THE PLAYERS ARE FIXING THEIR PROPS AND, HARLEQUIN'S FAMILY IS MEASURING HIM FOR A COSTUME. AS LUIGI SPEAKS MUSIC FADES OUT.)

LUIGI

Well, everyone in our village is really busy--rich and poor--old and young. All year long, we're a very quiet people. We spend the days exchanging what little money we have. I give

my coins to the farmer for food; then he gives them back to me when I gather wood for his stove. And so it goes. But once a year, we all dress up in a fancy costume and dance and shout and sing and celebrate . . . Well, you just wouldn't know the place--loud, noisy and exciting. Mardi Gras, like all your birthday parties rolled into one! Watch!

THE SCENE COMES VIVIDLY TO LIFE, EACH CHARACTER BUSY AT SOME TASK; SEWING, MAKING COLORFUL PROPS, TRYING ON PART OF A COSTUME, ETC. . . . AND ALL EXCEPT DANIELLO LAUGHING HEARTILY. AS LUIGI APPROACHES THE DUCHESS AND HER SON, THE OTHERS "FREEZE.") [FIGURE 4].

LUIGI

Greetings! (CROSSES TO 1:00, PUTS ONE FOOT ON TWELVE-INCH PLATFORM AND LEANS IN.)

DUCHESS

(NOT HEARING HIM.) But my dear boy, you've got to decide soon. There isn't much time. Why not be blue? (HOLDS UP A SAMPLE OF BLUE CLOTH.)

DANIELLO

No, I think it should be silver or gold. (CROSSES TO 10:00.)

DUCHESS

Oh dear, If you don't decide soon, there isn't going to be time to have the costume made.

DANIELLO

You're the Duchess, you can have it done. (SITS ON EDGE OF TWELVE-INCH PLATFORM.)

LUIGI

Troubles?

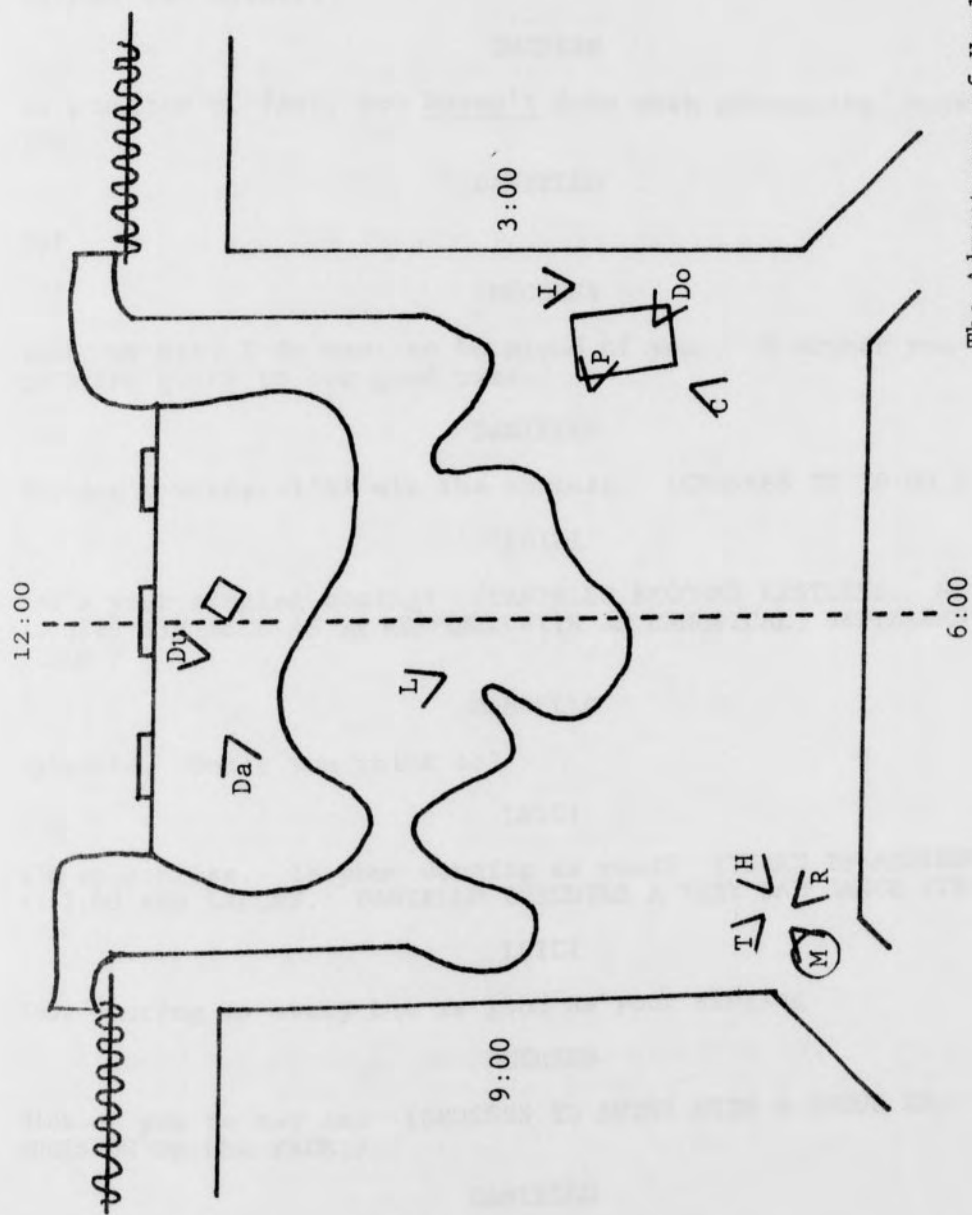
DANIELLO

None of your business. (TRYS TO IGNORE HIM.)

LUIGI

Been practicing for the contest?

Figure 4



The Adventures of Harlequin
 Scale: $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$

DANIELLO

Listen. (JUMPS UP AND CROSSES TO DUCHESS.) You just tend to your own affairs.

DUCHESS

As a matter of fact, you haven't done much practicing, have you?

DANIELLO

So?

DUCHESS

Well, my boy, I do want to be proud of you. I expect you to bring glory to our good name.

DANIELLO

Oh, don't worry--I'll win the contest. (CROSSES TO 10:00.)

LUIGI

How's your singing coming? (DANIELLO BECOMES RESTLESS. HE ADJUSTS HIS NECK AS HE RESPONDS WITH AN UNMUSICAL, UNPLEASANT SCALE.)

DANIELLO

Splendid. Don't you think so?

LUIGI

I'm speechless. Is your dancing as good? (TURNS TO AUDIENCE AT 2:00 AND LAUGHS. DANIELLO EXECUTES A VERY BAD DANCE STEP.)

LUIGI

Your dancing is every bit as good as your singing.

DUCHESS

Nice of you to say so. (CROSSES TO LUIGI WITH A PROUD EXPRESSION ON HER FACE.)

DANIELLO

He's not being nice, he's laughing at me--and you.

DUCHESS

Really? (BECOMES STUNNED.)

DANIELLO

But it doesn't matter--not at all. (CROSSES TO LUIGI AND POINTS TO THE AUDIENCE.) They'll stop laughing when I win the contest. You'll see.

LUIGI

Not when you win the contest. If you win!

DANIELLO

Aren't you forgetting something, peasant boy? (CROSSES BEHIND THE DUCHESS.)

LUIGI

That you're the Duchess's son?

DANIELLO

Yes.

DUCHESS

He is, you know. He's my son, and I'm his mother.

LUIGI

And you're the Duchess, and if you ask me, I think you've been a much better Duchess than a mother.

DUCHESS

(ASTONISHED.) What's that?

LUIGI

(CROSSES TO THE DUCHESS AND FORCES HER TO MOVE BACK.) Yes. Strange that a woman who has been loved by all the people of the town for so many years could have a son so mean, so conceited, so unpleasant, so . . .

DANIELLO

Wait a minute . . . (RUNS BEHIND THE DUCHESS.)

DUCHESS

Yes, you go too far . . .

LUIGI

(PRESSES ON FURTHER.) And it might be good for you to remember that unless an absolutely fair decision is made at the contest, you just might find yourselves in a lot of trouble. I, for one, would not care to face the anger of everyone in town. No. (CROSSES TO 9:00.) (THE DUCHESS IS TOO STUNNED BY THIS OUTBURST TO SPEAK.)

LUIGI

Well, I hope you'll find a suitable piece of cloth for your costume. The color really should match your personality--black. See you at the Mardi Gras. (TURNS TOWARD 9:00, DANIELLO LUNGES AFTER HIM BUT IS RESTRAINED BY THE DUCHESS.)

DANIELLO

Why, you . . .

DUCHESS

No, son. Let him go.

DANIELLO

After what he said about us?

DUCHESS

He's started me thinking . . . (CROSSES TO CUBE.)

DANIELLO

What about?

DUCHESS

You'd better get home and practice. (PICKS UP FABRIC.)

DANIELLO

Why? That's just a waste of time. (CROSSES TO 1:00 KICKING THE FLOOR.)

DUCHESS

GET HOME AND PRACTICE!!!!

DANIELLO

Huh?

DUCHESS

YOU HEARD ME! (WHACKS HIM WITH THE BOLT OF FABRIC.)

DANIELLO

Yes, Mummy. (HE RUNS OUT FOLLOWED BY THE DUCHESS.)

LUIGI

(TO THE AUDIENCE.) Sometimes it's good for you to speak your mind. Well, let's see what the Players are up to.

LUIGI

(CROSSES TO PLAYERS.) Tell me, how are you going to hold the contest? (HARLEQUIN'S FAMILY EXITS AT 7:00.)

PANTELONE

How? The fair way. Give each boy an equal chance.

LUIGI

And what parts will the boys play?

PANTELONE

That depends on the play. We plan to surprise them.

LUIGI

Which do you think will win?

(THEY ALL PAUSE.)

LUIGI

Perhaps it isn't fair of me to ask. (CROSSES TO 11:00 WITH HEAD DOWN.)

PANTELONE

We can only wait and see. And now there's work to be done. My costume needs mending . . . (FIDGETS WITH COSTUME.)

ISABELLA

I've got to dress my wig (PRIMPING HERSELF.)

DOTORRE

I must mix a green potion to make people fall in love . . .

CAPITANO

If I can't have a real horse . . . (CROSSES TO TRUNK.)

ISABELLA

And you can't.

CAPITANO

Then, I'll make a wooden one! (PICKS UP END OF TRUNK,
PANTELONE PICKS UP OTHER END.)

LUIGI

(CROSSES TO 7:00 AISLE.) I'll see you at the Mardi Gras!
(EXITS.)

PLAYERS

At the Mardi Gras. (THEY EXIT THROUGH 5:00 AISLE. LIGHTS
FADE TO BLACKOUT.)

(HARLEQUIN ENTERS CARRYING A BROOM, SCRUB BUCKET AND
BRUSH AND BEGINS TO SWEEP AT CENTER STAGE. LIGHTS FADE IN.)

MAMA

(RUSHES IN FROM 5:00.) No time for work. Practice and play.
(TAKES BROOM FROM HIM AND EXITS THROUGH 1:00 AISLE.)

LUIGI

(RUNS IN FROM 5:00.) How goes it, friend?

HARLEQUIN

(WITH HUMOR.) Very strange. Mama won't let me do anything
but play. Watch! (HE RAISES HIS VOICE A LITTLE.) Well,
I think I'll scrub this walk. (HE GETS A BUCKET AND BRUSH
AND HOLDS THEM IN HIS OUT-STRETCHED ARM. MAMA COMES BARREL-
ING IN FROM 1:00.)

MAMA

What's this? Quino, stop it. How many times did I have to
tell you? (CROSSES TO HARLEQUIN.) You help yourself.

Practice for the contest. (TAKES BUCKET, PUT IT DOWN ON FLOOR.) Isn't that right, Luigi?

LUIGI

Yes, of course.

TINA

(RUNNING IN FROM 5:00 AISLE. RENATO FOLLOWS HER.) Sorry we're so late.

RENATO

There's still enough time, isn't there?

TINA

Anna said she'd have to wait and see if she'd have any material left over from her costume. She just finished it today.

RENATO

Marlo's mother used up almost all of the material she bought, too. All but this. (HOLDS UP A TINY PIECE OF FABRIC AND SEVERAL PIECES OF RIC RAC.) It isn't very much, is it?

MAMA

(CROSSES TO HARLEQUIN.) Such a good heart you have, Renato. Let's see. (SHE TAKES THE MATERIAL AND LOOKS AT IT.) My, look at the color! And this will make a fine trim. (SHE HOLDS IT UP AGAINST HARLEQUIN. IT IS, OF COURSE, PITIFULLY SMALL. THE OTHERS TAKE OUT EQUALLY SMALL PIECES OF MATERIAL AND LOOK AT THEM.)

RENATO

(CROSSES TO 7:00 AISLE.) There . . . there isn't even enough to make a handkerchief.

HARLEQUIN

(CROSSES TO RENATO.) A costume isn't that important. It really doesn't matter.

LUIGI

I'm sorry, Quino. I thought maybe one of us would have enough material left over to make a fine, new outfit.

LUIGI

(CROSSES TO 5:00 AISLE.) Sometimes my good ideas are very bad.

MAMA

Wait! Wait a minute. I've got an idea! How many pieces of material do you have?

TINA

Quite a few . . .

RENATO

Me, too.

TINA

But they're all so small . . .

RENATO

And not even the same colors

MAMA

That doesn't matter. You just give them to me. (CROSSES TO RENATO.) Then, at Mardi Gras, you'll see . . . you'll see what I can do. Someday Quino will be the best actor in Italy . . . but I'm already the best seamstress!

TINA

I feel so ashamed and so silly, thinking these little pieces of material could make a costume.

MAMA

They will. Wait and see! Now! I've got to get to work. Mardi Gras will be here before we know it. (EXITS 7:00 AISLE FOLLOWED BY RENATO AND TINA.)

LUIGI

Yes. The time will fly. Mama is right, as usual. Mardi Gras will be here before we know it. As a matter of fact, I wouldn't be at all surprised if the days go by like minutes. Oh, just a moment I want to show you something. (HE CROSSES TO EDGE OF TWELVE-INCH PLATFORM, REACHES BEHIND

STEP UNIT AND COMES BACK CARRYING HIS MARDI GRAS COSTUME. IT IS A COSTUME RESEMBLING A CATERPILLAR.) See? My costume for Mardi Gras. (STARTS PUTTING IT ON.) Oh, it's not a new one . . . I'm as poor as Quino. This is one I've had for quite a while. I'm afraid it's a little tight for me, but I still think it's quite splendid, and I'll have to admit I like to get it out and wear it once a year. There! And guess what? The days have slipped by like minutes, and here it is, the eve of Mardi Gras! (LIGHTS FADE TO BLACKOUT AS JOYOUS MUSIC BEGINS AND THE COMPANY ENTERS.)

(DURING THE BLACKOUT, THE THRONE IS SET AT THE 12:00 POSITION ON THE TWELVE-INCH PLATFORM BY LUIGI. RENATO SETS BOTH CUBES OPPOSITE TO EACH OTHER ON THE SAME PLATFORM. SIX PIRADAS ARE LOWERED INTO POSITION TEN FEET ABOVE THE STAGE FLOOR.

(LIGHTS FADE IN AS ALL TAKE PLACES FOR THE SCENE. THE DUCHESS SITS ON HER THRONE WITH DANIELLO TO HER RIGHT. THE PLAYERS ARE GATHERED AROUND THE PROP TRUNK SET IN THE 8:00 STAGE AREA. NEAR THE PROP TRUNK IS A STOOL ONE FOOT HIGH. MAMA SITS ON A STOOL IN 5:00 AISLE WITH TINA AND RENATO KNEELING TO HER RIGHT AND LEFT. LUIGI STANDS BESIDE RENATO. [FIGURE 5]. MUSIC FADES OUT AS LUIGI SPEAKS. HE IS LOOKING FOR HARLEQUIN.)

LUIGI

Wait a minute! Where is Quino?

MAMA

He's not here yet. But he will be, soon.

TINA

And wait until you see his costume.

RENATO

Yes, just wait.

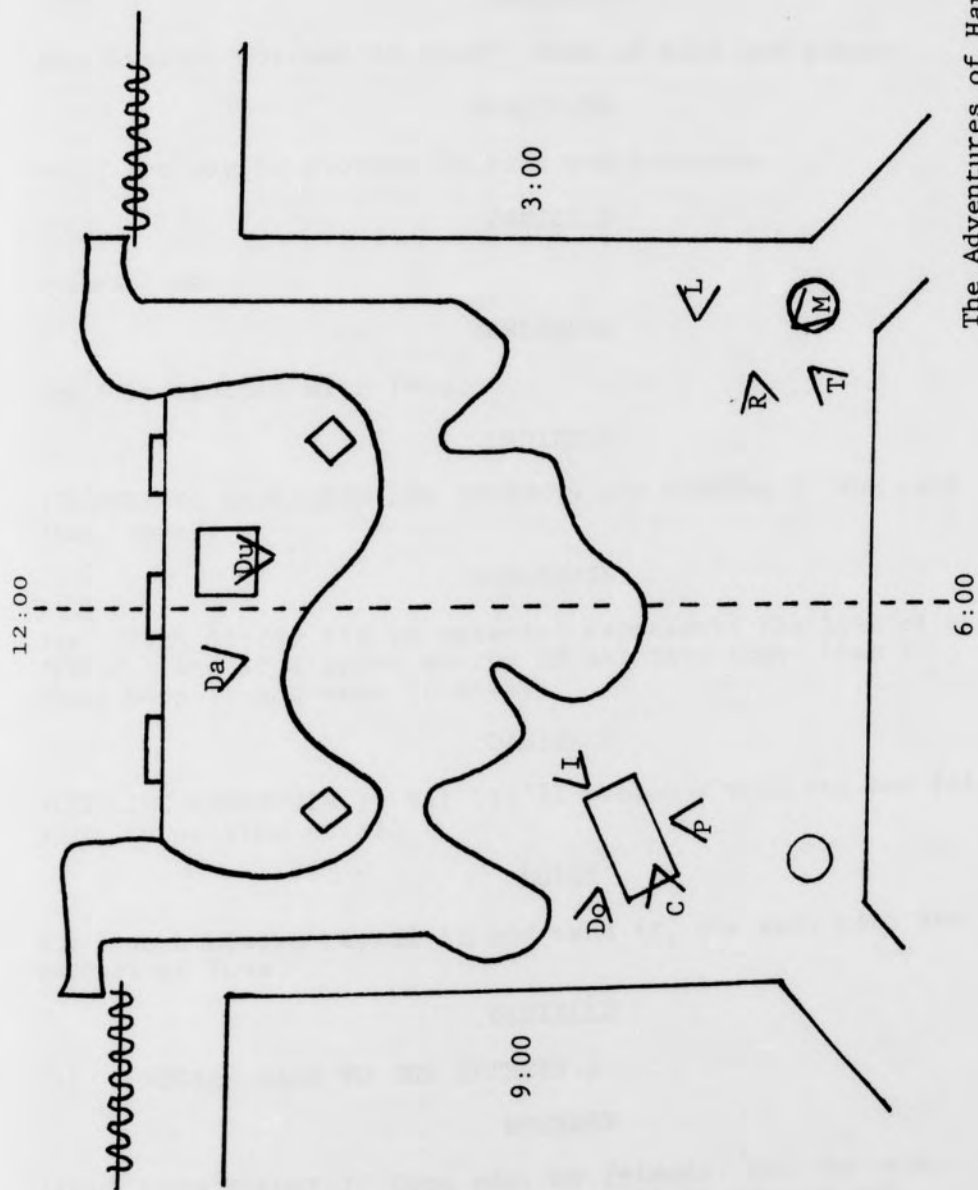
LUIGI

Look! Here he comes now. Quino, come on!

HARLEQUIN

(DASHING DOWN THE AISLE.) Coming!

Figure 5



The Adventures of Harlequin
 Scale: $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$

(HARLEQUIN RUNS IN FROM 5:00 AISLE. HE IS DRESSED IN A "BUTTERFLY" COSTUME MADE FROM A SIMILAR MATERIAL TO THAT OF THE PREVIOUS SCENE.)

DANIELLO

What kind of costume is that? Made of bits and pieces.

HARLEQUIN

Well, you may be clothed in silk and brocades . . .

DANIELLO

Indeed I am.

HARLEQUIN

But I am clothed with love.

DANIELLO

(CROSSES TO HARLEQUIN AND INSPECTS HIS COSTUME.) You call that "love"?

HARLEQUIN

Yes. Each little bit of material represents the love of a friend. And if I prove worthy of all this love, then I shall keep it and wear it always.

DANIELLO

(CIRCLING HARLEQUIN.) Ha! It'll probably wear out and fall apart in no time at all.

LUIGI

But he can always repair it and mend it, you see, with new patches of love.

DANIELLO

Ha! (CROSSES BACK TO THE DUCHESS.)

DUCHESS

(RISES FROM THRONE.) Come now, my friends, let the celebration begin. Let me welcome you--all of you--to our Mardi Gras and the special events: a contest between my dear son, Daniello, and this other boy, uh

LUIGI

Quino

DUCHESS

Yes . . . (CROSSES BACK AND FORTH IN FRONT OF THRONE.) to determine which of these lads is best-suited to join the strolling players. And a fair contest it will be--as I have promised. If my son, Daniello, happens to be the winner--I shall, as a mother and a duchess--be doubly proud. He'll be able to travel all over the country and study how our great cities are governed, so that some day he can better fill my shoes as the mayor of this town.

PANTELONE

(CROSSES TO DUCHESS.) If he wins, good Duchess, he'll be an actor--a player--not a town official.

DUCHESS

Well . . . I never thought of that. (SHE CROSSES AND SITS ON HER THRONE.)

PANTELONE

(BREAKING THE MOOD WITH EXCITEMENT.) We are met! So the performance will begin. (DRUM ROLL IS HEARD. THE CYCLORAMA CHANGES COLOR. PLAYERS BOW TO EACH OTHER AND TO ONSTAGE AUDIENCE.)

DOTORRE

(CROSSES TO DUCHESS.) Tonight's play will be the story of--

CAPITANO

A brave soldier who is forced to--

ISABELLA

(MUSIC BEGINS.) Quiet down and listen to the song of a lovely young lady. (SINGS.)
 When the daisies start blooming (CROSSES TO DOTORRE.)
 My heart gives a leap
 And I sigh "What a wonderful thing
 That the daisies remember to bloom every year."
 (CROSSES TO PANTELONE.)
 But how do they know that it's Spring?

(MEN REPEAT LAST LINE.)

How can they tell when they're under the ground
(STEPS ON TRUNK.)

That the sky's getting bluer each day?
How do they know when they can't hear a sound
That everyone's shouting: "It's May!"

(REPEAT AGAIN.)

Now I have a theory--I've reasoned it out
(CROSSES TO DUCHESS.)

And I hope you're inclined to agree;
Daisies must know when there's love in the air

(TEASES DANIELLO.)

And they're anxious to help you and me.

(REPEAT LINE AGAIN.)

How else can we know if our love's true or false?

(CROSSES TO CENTER.)

Without daisies we'd be up in a tree:

Now watch and I'll show you . . .

(BUSINESS OF EACH PICKING PETALS OFF FLOWERS AND MURMURING
"LOVES ME," "LOVES ME NOT.")

Ah, yes. My true love loves me!

(HOPS ON TRUNK.)

CAPITANO

(THE SOLDIER SUDDENLY.) But see! (RUNS TO TRUNK, PUSHES
ISABELLA OFF.) The foes of this young lady advance! By
the hundreds they advance! Fear not, fair lady. Away,
enemy! Away, fiend! Away! I say. (HE CIRCLES STAGE,
TRYING TO PULL HIS SWORD OUT OF THE SCABBARD.)

DOTORRE

She's wounded! I must operate. Immediately. Poor dear,
her life is ebbing slowly away. Oh, alas, alas, alas!

CAPITANO

Wounded? How can that be? The enemy hasn't even attacked
yet.

DOTORRE

Really? Well, then, she's been poisoned. Yes, that's it.
She must be poisoned. Now then. (CROSSES TO ISABELLA.)
Stick out your tongue. Oh, too long. We'll have to cut
it off. Let me see your thumb. On, no expression at all.
Ah, yes, it's quite plain.

CAPITANO

It is?

DOTORRE

Yes. (BEGINS CIRCLING THE STAGE WITH CAPITANO FOLLOWING HIM.) She's got a horrible swiggle in her middle frim-fram, and the gazzle in her goopety-goop-goop has turned purple-green--which indicates a hush-hoop in the whim-wham of the terrestrial tweet-tweet. (CAPITANO BUMPS INTO HIM.) Stick out your tongue. (CAPITANO STICKS OUT HIS TONGUE. DOTORRE TRYS THREE TIMES TO GRAB IT AND FINALLY KNOCKS HIM OVER.)

ISABELLA

What about me?

DOTORRE

Oh, yes, you. You're--ah, oh--you're poisoned.

CAPITANO

Is it serious? (CAPITANO AND DOTORRE CROSS TO ISABELLA.)

DOTORRE

No. One whiff of left-handed cabbage soup. One drop of pink smoke. And she'll be good as new.

CAPITANO

Left-handed cabbage soup? Do we have any?

DOTORRE

No, but we will have. (CAPITANO CROSSES TO TRUNK. HE GETS A RUBBER LEFT HAND, HOLDS IT IN HIS SLEEVE AND CROSSES TO DOTORRE.)

DOTORRE

Now, while I'm preparing my potion, you'd better turn your eyes inside out and look at your liver spots. If they're all blue, you need have no fears. If they're orange--well--that's a different story. (CAPITANO KNOCKS ON DOTORRE'S HEAD.)

CAPITANO

Excuse me, did you say left-handed cabbage soup?

DOTORRE

Yes. (CAPITANO GIVES HIM THE FAKE LEFT HAND.) Thank you. (REALIZES WHAT IT IS AND HITS HIM ON HEAD WITH IT.)

PANTELONE

Cease

DOTORRE

Cease? Why?

PANTELONE

Simply because I have something to say.

DOTORRE

I see.

CAPITANO

May we listen?

PANTELONE

Please do.

DOTORRE

We shall.

(PANTELONE CROSSES TO 7:00 AISLE AS IF TALKING TO HIMSELF.
HE PAUSES.)

PANTELONE

Thank you.

DOTORRE

Thank you.

CAPITANO

Thank you.

PANTELONE

Thank you.

DOTORRE

Thank you.

CAPITANO

Thank you.

PANTELONE

Thank you.

DOTORRE

Thank you.

CAPITANO

Thank you.

ISABELLA

You're all welcome.

PANTELONE

And now it's time to start the contest. Time to add another actor to our band of players. Step forward, young men, into the light. May it shine brightly on one of you for years to come. These boys will act in a play . . .

DANIELLO

What kind of play? (CROSSES TO CENTER.)

PANTELONE

That is for you to decide.

DANIELLO

Me?

PANTELONE

Do you mind Quino? (GESTURES TO HARLEQUIN.)

HARLEQUIN

No, let him decide.

DUCHESS

Isn't that nice? Well, dear boy, what kind of a play shall it be?

DANIELLO

Well, I don't know for sure. Except I should have the most important part.

PANTELONE

As you wish.

DANIELLO

(TAKING OVER.) Well, let's see. (PAUSES CENTER STAGE.) I'll be the master of a great house--a castle--and you'll all be my servants--especially you! (CROSSES TO HARLEQUIN.)

HARLEQUIN

Good master. (STARTS TO MOCK HIM.)

DANIELLO

I'm not a good master. I'm a horrible master. I beat you all the time. That'll be fun.

HARLEQUIN

(STILL MOCKING HIM. RUNS CIRCLES AROUND HIM.) Still, I say, "Good Master?" To your face, that is. But behind your back, I'll mock you and poke fun at all the things you say and do.

DANIELLO

You will not. You'll get another beating.

HARLEQUIN

Good master.

DANIELLO

Stop that! The play hasn't even begun yet. (RUNS BACK TO DUCHESS.)

PANTELONE

Ah, but it has.

(HARLEQUIN CROSSES TO TRUNK, TURNS IT AROUND AS OTHERS WATCH.)

DANIELLO

What do you think you're doing?

HARLEQUIN

Preparing your breakfast, good master.

PLAYERS

Ah! (THEY RUN TO CENTER, FORM A HUDDLE AND SHOUT "BREAKFAST!" DOTORRE CROSSES TO 2:00 STAGE AREA AND PANTOMIMES SETTING A TABLE WHILE DANIELLO LOOKS ON. HE FEELS LEFT OUT. THE OTHER PLAYERS CROSS TO TRUNK AND PANTOMIME COOKING. ONE AT A TIME, EACH OF THE PLAYERS BRINGS A SPECIAL SERVING OF FOOD TO DOTORRE WHO PLACES IT ON THE TABLE. DANIELLO CROSSES TO THE TABLE.)

DANIELLO

I don't see anything!

DOTORRE

I'll give you something to see. (HE HITS DANIELLO OVER THE HEAD WITH HIS STETHOSCOPE.) What about the dessert?

(PLAYERS RUN TO TRUNK AND OPEN IT. PANTELONE LIFTS AN IMAGINARY CAKE OUT OF THE TRUNK AND EVERYONE GASPS. HARLEQUIN TAKES IT FROM HIM AND CARRIES IT TO TABLE PRE-TENDING TO DROP IT. AS HE REACHES THE TABLE, HE TRIPS AND HIS FACE FALLS IN THE CAKE. WIPING IT OFF, HE CROSSES TO DANIELLO WHO IS CENTER STAGE. HE CLEANS HIS FACE AND PUT IT ON DANIELLO'S NOSE. ALL LAUGH, INCLUDING DANIELLO WHO DOESN'T QUITE UNDERSTAND.)

HARLEQUIN

(BOWING.) At your service, good master.

DANIELLO

Mummy, what'll I do. (CROSSES TO DUCHESS.)

DUCHESS

If you're the master, and they're the servants, have them sing and dance a little.

DANIELLO

Sing and dance a little.

PLAYERS AND HARLEQUIN

Sing and dance a little? (MUSIC IS HEARD, PLAYERS AND HARLEQUIN DO A BRIEF TAP STEP.) Anything else, good master?

DANIELLO

(TURNING TO DUCHESS AGAIN.) Mummy, what'll I do now?

DUCHESS

Oh, er . . .

DANIELLO

(TO PLAYERS.) I don't think that was long enough.

HARLEQUIN

(WITH A LOUD CRY, CLUTCHES HIMSELF AND FALLS TO THE FLOOR.)

DOTORRE

(CROSSES TO HARLEQUIN, EXAMINES HIM.) He's a sick boy. Yes, he's a very sick boy. I'll have to operate!

DANIELLO

No. Don't operate on him. Operate on me!

DOTORRE

Operate on you? With pleasure.

(CAPITANO AND PANTELONE CROSS TO DANIELLO, LIFT HIM UP AND CARRY HIM TO TRUNK. DOTORRE PULLS WOODEN SAW OUT OF TRUNK AS ISABELLA MOVES TRUNK TO 9:00 STAGE AREA. DANIELLO IS PUT ON TRUNK AND HELD DOWN BY PLAYERS AS DOTORRE PRETENDS TO SAW HIM IN HALF.) [FIGURE 6]

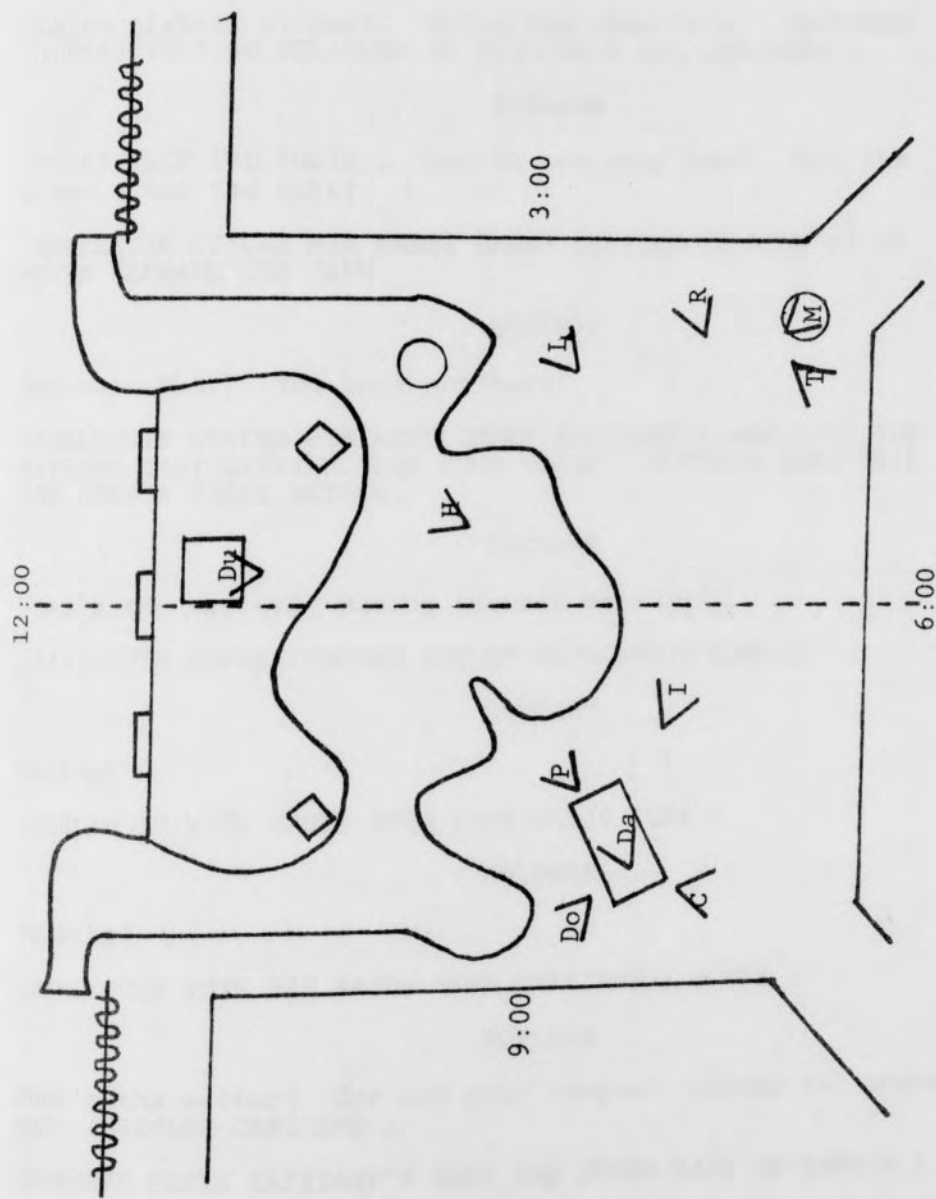
DANIELLO

You get your dirty hands off my brand new costume!

DOTORRE

(FORGETTING DANIELLO, PUTS STETHESCOPE TO CAPITANO'S CHEST AND GASPS.) Take a deep breath. And another. And another. (AS CAPITANO DOES THIS.) Poor old Capitano! He's going fast! (CAPITANO FALLS TO HIS KNEES.)

Figure 6



The Adventures of Harlequin
 Scale: $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$

HARLEQUIN

We must save him.

DOTORRE

You're right! We must! Bring him over here. (DOTORRE
CROSSES TO 7:00 FOLLOWED BY HARLEQUIN AND CAPITANO.)

DOTORRE

(PACES BACK AND FORTH.) Let me see your hand. Now the
other. And the other.

(HARLEQUIN STICKS HIS HANDS UNDER CAPITANO'S ARMS AS HE
MOVES BENEATH HIS CAPE.)

DOTORRE

Now the other. You have any more?

(HARLEQUIN STICKS HIS HAND UNDER CAPITANO'S ARM. IT NOW
APPEARS THAT CAPITANO HAS FOUR HANDS. DOTORRE SEES THIS
AND DOES A VOCAL RETAKE.)

DOTORRE

What's the matter? Having trouble hearing?

(HARLEQUIN TAKES FINGERS OUT OF CAPITANO'S EARS.)

DOTORRE

Seeing?

(HARLEQUIN PUTS HANDS OVER CAPITANO'S EYES.)

DOTORRE

Talking?

(HARLEQUIN PUTS HIS HANDS OVER CAPITANO'S MOUTH.)

DOTORRE

What's the matter? Cat got your tongue? Answer me, answer
me! (CIRCLES CAPITANO.)

(DOTORRE FEELS CAPITANO'S HEAD AND JUMPS BACK IN HORROR.)

DOTORRE

I suggest you say your prayers.

(CAPITANO CLASPS HANDS AND PRAYS. HE KNEELS. HARLE-
QUIN CLASPS HAND OVER CAPITANO'S HEAD.)

DANIELLO

I want to do that!

DOTORRE

Are you sure you want to do it?

DANIELLO

Yes!

DOTORRE

(STEPPING BACK AND MOTIONING FOR DANIELLO TO SIT.) Very
well. Step into my office.

(DANIELLO SITS. DOTORRE MOVES CHAIR AND DANIELLO
FALLS.)

DOTORRE

He's wounded. I must operate. (CAPITANO CROSSES AND LIFTS
HARLEQUIN ONTO STOOL.)

(ISABELLA CROSSES TO TRUNK AND PULLS OUT A BUCKET OF CON-
FETTI AND A PARASOL. SHE PASSES THE BUCKET TO HARLEQUIN
WHO HANDS IT TO CAPITANO.)

DUCHESS

(WARNING HER.) Ah, ah, ah, ah.

(CAPITANO GIVES BUCKET TO DOTORRE.) [FIGURE 7]

DOTORRE

Ah, ah, ah, ah, yourself. (DUMPS BUCKET OF CONFETTI ON
DANIELLO.)

DANIELLO

(CROSSING TO DUCHESS.) Mummy, they're not giving me a
chance. (PANTELONE GETS SLAPSTICK FROM TRUNK.)

DUCHESS

(CROSSES TO TRUNK.) Well, dear boy, why don't you pretend
to fall in love?

Figure 7



DANIELLO

Love?

DUCHESS

Ah, yes (SIGH)--love.

DANIELLO

Love?

DUCHESS

Ah, yes (SIGH)--love.

DANIELLO

(TURNING TO PLAYERS.) I'm gonna fall in love.

HARLEQUIN

In love, good master? I sigh for you! (CROSSES TO CENTER.)

(HARLEQUIN DOES VERY DEEP BOW, LEAVING LARGE PORTION OF HIS DERRIERE VULNERABLE. PANTELONE CROSSES TO HARLEQUIN AND WHACKS HIM. ALL LAUGH.)

DANIELLO

What's so funny?

ISABELLA

Going to fall in love, eh? Why not with me? (SITS ON TRUNK AND OPENS HER PARASOL.)

DUCHESS

Yes, dear boy, why not with her?

(HARLEQUIN CROSSES TO 7:00 AISLE AND DANIELLO CROSSES TO ISABELLA.)

DANIELLO

I'm in love with you.

ISABELLA

Come closer, my ear is delicate. (HER PARASOL KEEPS HIM FROM SEEING HER.)

DANIELLO

(BENDS OVER PARASOL.) I'm in love with you.

(AS HE IS BENDING OVER, TRYING TO SPEAK TO ISABELLA, THROUGH THE PARASOL, PANTELONE CROSSES DOWN AND BELTS HIM WITH SLAPSTICK. DANIELLO WHEELS.)

PANTELONE

(PRETENDING HE HAS MADE A BIG MISTAKE.) I beg your pardon!

(BUSINESS IS REPEATED TWICE MORE AS DOTTORE AND CAPITANO SMACK HIM AFTER HE REPEATS "I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU." AS DANIELLO TURNS TO CAPITANO, ISABELLA AND HARLEQUIN SWITCH PLACES UNDER THE PARASOL.)

ISABELLA

What did you say?

DANIELLO

I said, "I'm"

(HE JUMPS AND TURNS AROUND ANTICIPATING ANOTHER SMACK.)
in love with you."

HARLEQUIN

(JUMPS UP ON STOOL, REVEALING HIMSELF FROM BEHIND PARASOL AND SAYS IN A VERY DEEP VOICE.) How nice!

DANIELLO

(TO DUCHESS.) They're not giving me a chance.

DUCHESS

Tut, tut, my boy, it's really rather funny!

DANIELLO

Mummy! (STAMPS FEET, JUMPS UP AND DOWN.)

PANTELONE

Perhaps we are not being fair, and fairness is part of our tradition. We are sincerely at your service. (PLAYERS BOW.)

HARLEQUIN

(LOOKS AT PLAYERS--REALIZING THAT MAYBE HE SHOULDN'T BE WITH THEM--RISES--CROSSES AND SPEAKS TO DANIELLO.) And I, too, am sincerely at your service.

DANIELLO

(STARTING TO "PERFORM") If I were a player, I'd wear all the best costumes. (CROSSES TO CENTER.)
 And everybody would like me
 Because I'm good looking
 And the Duchess's son besides.

DUCHESS

That's very nice, but it doesn't rhyme.

DANIELLO

If I were a player (CROSSES TO HARLEQUIN WHO HAS SAT ON THE PROP TRUNK.)
 I'd get a lot of money
 Because my talent is so fine
 Like sunshine!
 That rhymes (SHOUTS IN HARLEQUIN'S EAR.)

(THE DUCHESS IS THE ONLY ONE THAT APPLAUDS AT FIRST, BUT THERE IS FINALLY SOME SCATTERED, WEAK APPLAUSE FROM STAGE AUDIENCE WHEN THEY REALIZE THEY SHOULD BE POLITE.)

DANIELLO

Now, I'll sing. (HE SINGS, WEAK APPLAUSE.)

DANIELLO

Now, I'll dance. (HE DANCES. WEAK APPLAUSE.)

PANTELONE

(INDICATING HARLEQUIN AND DANIELLO.) And now, together.

(HARLEQUIN, IN RAPID SUCCESSION, EXECUTES A BRIEF PANTOMIME CENTER STAGE. DANIELLO TRIES TO IMITATE HIM BUT CAN'T.)

DANIELLO

I could do that, but I don't want to get my new costume dirty. I'm a big, brave soldier on my hobby horse. (GRABS STOOL, PUTS IT ON TRUNK AND CLIMBS ON IT. HARLEQUIN TRIES TO JOIN HIM BUT DANIELLO PUCHES HIM OFF AND MOVES AS IF TO FIGHT HIM. HARLEQUIN FACES AUDIENCE WITH MOCK FEAR.)

HARLEQUIN

Boo, hoo, hoo, hoo. (CROSSES TO DUCHESS, THEN TO MAMA.)

ISABELLA

Boo hoo, hoo, hoo? Ha, ha, ha, ha.

(HARLEQUIN TURNS TO DANIELLO AND LAUGHS AT HIM.)

PANTELONE

Hahahahahahaha! (HARLEQUIN, ISABELLA, DANIELLO REPEAT.)

CAPITANO

Ho ho ho! (OTHERS REPEAT IN TURN.)

(DANIELLO DOESN'T KNOW WHAT IS FUNNY BUT HE LAUGHS ANYWAY.)

DOTORRE

Tee hee hee! Tee hee hee hee!

(DANIELLO PUNCHES HARLEQUIN AND CROSSES TO DUCHESS.)

PANTELONE

Have you finished, Daniello? (HE NODS.) Quino? (HE NODS.)
Then the contest is officially over.

(THE CONTEST ENDS AMID GENERAL AD LIBS. FINALLY
THEY QUIET DOWN AND TURN TO LOOK AT THE DUCHESS, WAITING FOR
HER DECISION. SHE LOOKS PUZZLED.)

PLAYERS

Well, good Duchess.

PANTELONE

You are the judge. Tell us, which boy is the winner?

ISABELLA

Yes, do you think Quino or Daniello should join our troupe?

DUCHESS

Well, now . . .

DANIELLO

Go on, Mummy, tell them. (URGING HER ON.)

DUCHESS

Well, now . . . (SHE STANDS WITH THE HELP OF DANIELLO.)

DANIELLO

Tell them how foolish it is for a peasant boy to compete with the son of the Duchess.

DUCHESS

Well . . . (FLUSTERED.)

DANIELLO

Think what it would mean for the players if they could say they have Daniello, the Duchess's son, with their troupe.

DUCHESS

He's got something there, you know. Might be very good for your business. (CROSSES BACK AND FORTH BEFORE HER THRONE.)

PANTELONE

His name means nothing.

DUCHESS

Nothing?

PANTELONE

Nothing. You see, we all take new names when we join the Players. I was Guiseppi before I joined.

ISABELLA

I was Maria . . .

DOTORRE

I was--great day, I forget who I was!

CAPITANO

I've got a feeling I was always Capitano.

PANTELONE

We're not interested in what he's called. It's what he can do. The contest, I believe, was fair . . .

DUCHESS

Yes . . .

PANTELONE

Your boy had an equal opportunity with Quino.

DUCHESS

Yes

PANTELONE

So, what is your decision?

DUCHESS

Well, now, this what's-his-name is fairly good . . .
(CROSSES TO PANTELONE.)

ALL

Yes?

DUCHESS

But, (CROSSES TO ISABELLA.) you'll have to admit that my boy is--well--loud!

ALL

Yes.

DUCHESS

What's-his-name is rather amusing . . . (CROSSES TO DOTORRE.)

ALL

Yes?

DUCHESS

But my boy is--well--loud. (CROSSES TO MAMA.)

ALL

Yes.

DUCHESS

Now, what's-his-name is able to entertain . . . (CROSSES TO CENTER.)

ALL

Yes?

DUCHESS

But there's no getting around the fact that my boy is--well--loud. (CROSSES TO 7:00 AISLE.)

ALL

Yes.

DUCHESS

Which reminds me of a story I heard some time ago . . .

PANTELONE

Good Duchess, we haven't such time. We must leave in a few minutes . . .

DUCHESS

In a few minutes? (SUDDENLY REALIZES SHE MAY NEVER SEE HER SON AGAIN.)

PANTELONE

Yes--to the hills for the night. Then on to the next town tomorrow.

DANIELLO

You sleep in the hills at night?

PANTELONE

We do. Attended by ghosts. (PLAYERS ALL "BOO.")

DANIELLO

Ghosts?

PANTELONE

The ghosts of other players, friendly ghosts. So you see, good Duchess, we must be off.

DUCHESS

Yes. Well now. (CROSSES TO DANIELLO.) I'll admit this what's-his-name is able to sing and dance and entertain but my dear boy . . . (LOOKS AT HIM. DANIELLO SMILES.) my dear boy--is a lazy, good-for-nothing loud mouth!

DANIELLO

Mummy! (GOES INTO A TANTRUM.)

DUCHESS

A lazy, good-for-nothing loud mouth. But, don't worry, I intend to see that he changes his ways.

PANTELONE

Good for you!

(DOTORRE GIVES THE DUCHESS THE SLAPSTICK.)

DUCHESS

(WAVING THE PADDLE.) Come along, dear boy.

DANIELLO

But--but I'm the son of the Duchess.

DUCHESS

More's the pity. Because I'm the Duchess! MARCH!
(STARTS TO EXIT.)

PANTELONE

Good Duchess?

DUCHESS

What is it? And do be quick. We've got a great many things to do.

PANTELONE

The contest? Who wins?

DUCHESS

What a silly question. What's-his-name, of course.
 (SHE PULLS DANIELLO OFF BY HIS RIGHT EAR AS THEY EXIT AT
 11:00. ALL CHEER AND AD LIB CONGRATULATIONS TO HARLEQUIN.)
 [FIGURE 8]

PANTELONE

Come along now. Our ghosts are waiting. (CROSSES TO 7:00.)

ISABELLA

His name! (REMEMBERING THAT HARLEQUIN NEEDS A NEW NAME.)

PANTELONE

His name?

ISABELLA

His new name. What shall he be called?

PANTELONE

Quino?

MAMA

Quino is just a pet name. His real name is Arlecchino.

PANTELONE

Arlequino?

ALL

Hmmmm . . .

PANTELONE

Well . . .

ISABELLA

Arlequino . . . Arlequin?

PANTELONE

Arlequin?

Figure 8



ALL

Hmmm . . .

PANTELONE

Well . . .

DOTORRE

Lechino?

PANTELONE

Lequino?

ALL

Hmmm . . .

PANTELONE

Well . . .

CAPITANO

Harlequeen?

PANTELONE

Harlequeen?

ALL

Hmmm

PANTELONE

Well . . .

ISABELLA

Har . . . harle . . .

PANTELONE

Harlequin!

ALL

HARLEQUIN! Yes.

MAMA

Harlequin! Not a bad name for an actor, is it?

PANTELONE

Not bad . . . of course, it all depends on him.

MAMA

You see you make a good name of it, eh? (CROSSES TO CENTER.)

HARLEQUIN

I'll do my best, Mama. (CROSSES TO MAMA.)

LUIGI

(HOPS ON STOOL NEAR 5:00 AISLE.) Well, that's how they took Harlequin from us . . .

MAMA

. . . and gave him to you.

CAPITANO

Into the fray! (JUMPS ON TWELVE-INCH PLATFORM.)

(HE PULLS HIS SWORD, AND FOR THE FIRST TIME DURING THE PLAY, IT LEAVES THE SCABBARD EASILY. HE IS STUNNED. THEY ALL BEGIN LAUGHING, AND HE JOINS IN. LIGHTS FADE TO BLACKOUT AND CURTAIN CALL MUSIC IS HEARD. ALL BOW AND OUT.)

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE FOR THE ADVENTURES OF HARLEQUIN

January	13	M	Tryouts
	14	T	Tryouts and Cast List Posted
March	17	M	7:30 Production Meeting
	18	T	7:30 Harlequin: Opening Pantomime
	19	W	7:30 Harlequin and Luigi: Opening Pantomime
	20	Th	7:30 Block Act I, pages 1-15
	21	F	7:30 Block Act I and II, pages 16-30
	23	S	1:00 Music--Everyone
	24	M	7:30 Block Act II, pages 31-40
	25	T	7:30 Dance--Everyone
	26	W	7:30 Block Act II, pages 41-43
	27	T	7:30 Block Act II, pages 44-47
	28	F	7:30 Entire Show, Check for Blocking
	31	M	7:30 Detail Act II, pages 37-45
April	1	T	7:30 Music--Everyone
	2	W	7:30 Entire Show with Music
	3	Th	7:30 Detail Act I, pages 1-15
	4	F	7:30 Detail Act II, pages 30-45
	6	S	7:30 Detail Act I and II, pages 16-29
	7	M	7:30 Entire Show (No Books)
	8	T	7:30 Detail Entire Show
	9	W	7:30 Entire Show
	10	Th	7:30 Entire Show (Work on Problems)
	11	F	7:30 Entire Show

April	13	S	2:00 Entire Show
	14	M	7:30 Entire Show
	15	T	11:00 Move Set on Taylor Stage
	16	W	7:30 Technical Rehearsal
	17	T	8:00 Technical Rehearsal
	18	F	8:00 Dress Rehearsal
	19	S	2:00 Final Dress Rehearsal
	20	S	2:00 and 4:00 Performance
	21	M	9:30 Performance
	22	T	9:30 Performance
	23	W	9:30 and 4:00 Performance
	24	Th	9:30 and 4:00 Performance
	25	F	4:00 Performance
	26	S	10:00, 1:00, and 3:30 Performance
	27	S	2:00 and 4:00 Performance and strike

CHAPTER III CRITICAL EVALUATION

Interpretation of Interpretation for the Production

As the director indicated in Chapter I, William
 Chase's The Measurement of Herwig's is an attempt to re-
 create the children's wit and style of the 19th century
 which will give the children the same kind of pleasure
 that the author intended to give them. The director's
 intention was to give the children the same kind of
 pleasure that the author intended to give them. The
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CHAPTER III
CRITICAL EVALUATION

The four areas of evaluation included in Chapter III are as follows: (1) the relationship of interpretation to the actual performance, (2) the evaluation of actor-director relationships through analyzing specific problems which occurred in rehearsal and during performance, (3) the evaluation of the audience reaction to the total production, and (4) the evaluation of the total production based on observations by the director.

Achievement of Interpretation for the Production

As the director indicated in Chapter I, William Glennon's The Adventures of Harlequin is an attempt to recapture for children the wit and style of the Renaissance commedia dell'arte. To achieve this interpretation the director utilized costumes and characters similar to that of commedia dell'arte but did not insist on precision with such characteristics as masks and lazzi. The director believes The Adventures of Harlequin is a script with the suggestion of commedia dell'arte and any use of masks would be inconsistent with the author's intentions.

Since many of the actors were unfamiliar with the nature of creating a role for a children's play, and only slightly familiar with the historical background of commedia

dell'arte, the director held conferences with the cast to assist them in interpreting their roles. The conferences included a discussion of acting for children, the director's interpretation of the play, and the nature and style of commedia dell'arte. A bibliography consisting of what the director believes to be the most authoritative sources on commedia dell'arte was distributed among the cast and was highly recommended for complimentary research. As a result of these meetings, all prior to the first rehearsal, the actors appeared to be well informed with the style of the play when rehearsals began.

Stylistically, the play is presentational in its form of playing, and consists of a high degree of theatricalism. The theatricalistic approach was used throughout the play in make-up, costumes, scenery, stage movement, and musical numbers. In all instances, the actors were reminded that a great amount of sincerity was of utmost importance, but that the characters they represented were types, and not fully developed characters. In effect, the actors were individuals acting the part of a commedia dell'arte character, in full view of an audience. Some actors had lines in their dialogue that were to be delivered completely to the audience. Two characters in particular, because of the nature of their roles, made much use of presentationalism: Luigi and Daniello. Whenever the character Luigi spoke to the children, the actors on stage froze as the lights dimmed on

them, leaving Luigi the focal point of the scene. The director found this method of lighting very successful and feels that it should have been used in similar instances where a lack of focus occurred.

During the contest between Harlequin and Daniello, the actor playing Daniello often spoke to the audience. The negative reactions received from them provided the actor with additional stimuli and assisted him in increasing his bully-like characteristic.

The mood desired by the director was one of delight, gaiety, and happiness. The director believes this was achieved successfully in all technical areas. The soft, curvy lines exhibited in the scenery were carried out through the actors' movement. All characters, with the exception of Daniello, displayed circular, smooth movements. In contrast to this, the antagonist of the play, Daniello, was characterized by short, sharp, acute movements. The director was very pleased with this contrast in movement patterns.

An element of the production which appeared to contradict the desired movement patterns in the play was the choreography of the opening number. The original intent of the director was to begin the play with music containing a Renaissance flavor and to bring the company of actors in front of the audience; in short, a brief introduction of the characters appearing in the play. During dress rehearsals, the director became aware of several problems

with the opening musical number. (1) The side to side movements of the actors during the dance created many unpleasing straight lines. (2) The music, though appropriate, was too monotonous. (3) The length of music was considerably longer than necessary. The director now feels that the opening scene in the play would have been more interesting if the musical number had been cut.

The music for the production was composed by a senior music major. Several songs were written for the production to enhance the pleasant mood desired by the director. Additionally, music was used during scene changes and as background. In many instances, the melodic tune and rhythmic beat caused the audience to clap to the music as the scene changed.

The major concern of the director, in the use of picturization and composition was the sightline problem during the contest scene. Harlequin's family remained seated during the contest as they cheered him to victory. No member of the family had written dialogue during this scene. This inactivity did not provide the family with sufficient motivation to move from one area to another, thus sightlines were blocked. To alleviate the problem, the actors changed levels and body positions whenever possible. The director believes the sightlines improved to some extent, but that the form of staging prevented total elimination of the problem.

The director believes the costuming was one of the most successful aspects of the production. Weekly conferences with the costume designer brought about concrete ideas concerning the concept of the costume design.

The costumes complimented the style of the production and heightened each character's physical appearance. The director was pleased with all costume designs except two; the Duchess's hat, and Harlequin's Mardi Gras costume. The Duchess's headpiece was found to be so large that it was difficult for the actress to wear comfortably. Whenever the Duchess walked downstage, the bulkiness of her hat obstructed the vision of many people in the audience. Much of the problem, however, was alleviated by keeping the Duchess near her throne, situated upstage. This provided the Duchess with two new characteristics: insecurity and laziness.

Harlequin's Mardi Gras costume was even more inappropriate than the Duchess's hat. The audience was led to believe that the costume Harlequin would wear during the contest would be made of scraps of fabric. The costume he actually wore was unlike that described in the dialogue of the play. Harlequin's Mardi Gras costume was a cape, painted and covered with glitter to resemble a butterfly. Many audience members appeared confused because the cape did not look as though it were made from scraps of fabric.

The director of a children's play must place a considerable amount of emphasis on rhythm, tempo, and pace, since the attention span of a child audience is short. The director must keep the plot moving and keep the audience interested through the entire play without an intermission. Many rehearsals were focused solely on establishing the appropriate rhythm, tempo, and pace for each scene. The director assisted the actors, particularly in the contest scene, in establishing the variety of pace needed. Extra rehearsals with the actor playing Harlequin consisted of varying the rhythm, tempo, and pace of every pantomime so that each one contained the needed element of surprise. The slower tempo of Luigi's speeches were thought to be extremely long and monotonous. However, it became evident during performances that these scenes were among the most interesting because the children thought themselves a part of the play.

The director feels that his interpretation was successfully executed with minor problems by all cast and crew members. The combination of scenery, costumes, make-up, lighting, music, movement and rhythm, tempo and pace complimented each other to provide the audience with a delightful, amusing play.

Actor-Director Relationships

The relationships between the director and his cast were very pleasant and satisfying. No serious problems ever

developed and the cooperative effort was quite pleasing to the director. Several times minor difficulties arose due to actors being cast in more than one production. The director feels that problems such as these are unavoidable in educational theatre.

The cast was composed of eight graduate students, and three undergraduates, all drama majors. The number of graduate students participating in the production was very gratifying to the director.

In addition to general cast meetings to assist the actors with historical research and appropriate style, individual conferences were held with each cast member as rehearsals progressed. The meetings consisted of a discussion of strengths and weaknesses of the person's acting in relation to their role, and methods for furthering their growth in the process of creating their character. The actors were extremely open-minded about these sessions and many conferences were initiated at their request.

The director believes the actors portrayed their roles successfully and created believable character types. The contrast in the life styles of the commedia players, the royalty of the Duchess, and the peasant life of Harlequin's family, provided the audience with exciting character relationships.

The commedia players, Pantelone, Dotorre, Capitano, and Isabella, wore luxurious costumes and filled the stage

with energy and color. The actor playing Pantelone created a generous and kind old man. This interpretation strayed from historical accuracy. Since the script depicts Pantelone as the primary spokesman for the troupe, this type of character seemed appropriate. Pantelone's counterpart, Dotorre, was played by a talented and imaginative graduate student. His flair for spontaneity brought an absurd and pedantic quality to focus.

The actor who played Capitano overplayed his character during the early steps of rehearsal. To compensate for this, the director encouraged the actor to strengthen his role by making his movements more subtle and by decreasing the volume of his voice. The director believes he may have stressed the subtlety of his playing to the extent that the role was underplayed.

Isabella, the only female in the commedia troupe, was played by a graduate student who chose to use her role for an acting thesis. The seriousness she expressed in creating her role was pleasing to the director. The major difficulty she encountered was singing a solo musical number with no previous vocal experience. The director realizes the number should have been cut; however, he believes it was a beneficial learning experience for the actress.

The Duchess and her son were played by two talented graduate students. The actress who played the Duchess,

a Master of Fine Arts candidate in Child Drama, was very helpful in providing information concerning the nature of a child audience. However, her ad libs were too numerous and her stage voice was sometimes inaudible.

The director feels the actor who played the son of the Duchess developed the most complete character of all cast members. His constant work and determination to achieve the correct movements and gestures desired by the director created a character that all audiences remembered.

Harlequin's family was comprised of sincere and honest characters. The actor who portrayed Harlequin had played several leads in other children's plays. The agility and quickness of wit displayed by him gave the audience a thrill whenever he engaged in a pantomime. Harlequin's mother was depicted as an emotionally strong and stable figure. His sister Tina, played by a graduate student in Child Drama, seemed to lack energy both off and on stage during rehearsals and performances. The director did not become aware of this until rehearsals had begun and felt that the problem was beyond his control.

The director encountered the most difficulty in coaching the actor playing the part of Renato. The actor was a first-year drama student with relatively little acting experience. Throughout rehearsals, the actor lacked concentration in the task at hand and confidence in his ability. Periodic conferences with him brought about

greater concentration because the director provided the actor with ideas to concentrate on while performing.

The actor playing Luigi began rehearsals with an extreme nasal sound in his voice. Extra rehearsals with the assistant director who had had a strong background in vocal training brought about a considerable improvement. A tape recorder used in rehearsals to record his speeches increased the actor's self-awareness in terms of his voice and was found to be a major asset in alleviating his vocal problem. By the opening performance, the actor had eliminated the excessive nasality in his stage voice.

The director anticipated two problems with his cast of actors; agility of stage movement, and the adjustment of acting in a three-sided arena. Fortunately these problems never materialized. The director had been skeptical about many actors who had had little or no movement training being able to execute the large, physical movements required of a commedia dell'arte character. While several actors sustained minor injuries, they quickly learned the correct method for falling and hitting.

The cast members adjusted equally as well to acting in a three-sided arena. Students who had had experience acting in arena staging were more than happy to help other cast members.

Overall, the director was very pleased with his relationship to the cast. The director expressed the utmost

enthusiasm toward each cast member and made it quite evident that each opinion was very important. The openness which was felt during rehearsals existed because each cast member felt part of a larger body, that of an ensemble.

Audience Reaction

The Adventures of Harlequin was given ten public performances in the W. Raymond Taylor Drama and Speech Building April 20 through 27, 1975, to an average audience of 250. Four private performances were given on the mornings of April 21 through April 24 to a capacity audience of 400. The production was so favorably received by these audiences that many letters were written from children to cast members as well as to the director.

Jerry Kenion, staff writer for The Greensboro Daily News, wrote in her review: "Though commedia dell'arte is quite a mouthful for a preschooler, the youngsters at Sunday's opening performance of The Adventures of Harlequin had no trouble at all appreciating the slapstick humor characteristic of the Sixteenth Century strolling Italian players."¹ Ms. Kenion further stated, "Directed by MFA candidate David Leong, the TYP production is well paced with never a dull moment for wiggle-prone young audiences."²

The audience was attentive and responsive with many outbursts of laughter and shouts of approval and rejection

¹Jerry Kenion, "Harlequin Wins Young Hearts," The Greensboro Daily News, 22 April 1975, sec. B, p. 2.

²Ibid.

as the contest progressed. The screams of joyousness when Harlequin sang or played a trick convinced the director that the audience thoroughly enjoyed the production.

Attentive moments occurred whenever Luigi spoke to the audience. As stated previously, the children for the first time felt a sense of involvement in the play. Ms. Kenion stated: "There is a sense of immediacy and intimacy with the audience seated on three sides of the players, and the actors pull the youngsters into the show with judicious use of asides to audience members."³

Personal Observations

The director feels the overall production was a successful achievement. The bulk of obstacles, unforeseeable prior to rehearsals, lay in the weakness of the script. The Adventures of Harlequin is a play full of song, dance, mime, and slapstick. In this director's opinion, variety must be present in children's plays; however, it should be secondary to a strong plot.

The lack of depth in the story line became more evident to the director as rehearsals progressed. During the run of the show, the director learned that the slapstick and physical humor caused the audience to laugh rather than amusing events within the plot. As a result of this experience, the director is firmly convinced that the

³Ibid.

major concern in choosing a children's play is that it contains a strong story line.

Despite weaknesses of the script and the usual minor problems, the director considers the production a substantial learning experience and a worthwhile achievement. The challenge a director faces when producing or directing a period play are limitless. The addition of music and dance places an even greater responsibility on the director. With this in mind, the director believes all cast members, designers, and crew members combined their efforts to produce a fine commedia dell'arte play for children.

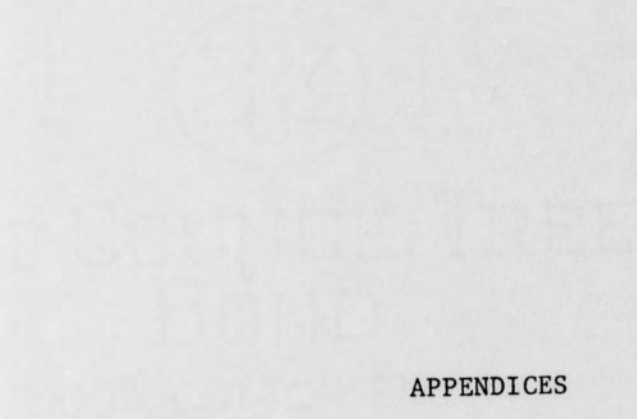
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A



Sixteenth-Century Slapstick Spans Ages

'Harlequin' Wins Young Hearts

BY JERRY KENION

ally news staff writer
"The world needs clowns!"

That line from "The Adventures of Harlequin" is one of the reasons that the current Theatre for Young People production is such a success with both youngsters and their parents.

Not only are the actors from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro filling the need for clowns, but they are doing it quite well and with ease, exhibiting marvelous timing and an almost measure of physical dexterity.

Though commedia dell'arte is quite a beautiful art form, it is a pity that the youngsters at Sunday's opening performance of "The Adventures of Harlequin" had no trouble at all appreciating the slapstick humor characteristic of the sixteenth-century strolling Italian players. A pear fell a fluke of conflict, an unagitated pie in the face of an honest-to-goodness wooden stick stick six the same in any language, and victory.

Directed by MFA candidate David Leong, the TVP production is well-paced, with never a dull moment for wiggle-prone young audiences. The cast of 11 players moves well in the small arena provided for their very physical comedy. There is a sense of immediacy and intimacy with the audience seated on three sides of the players, and the actors pull the youngsters into the show with judicious use of asides to audience members.

Against a simple, but lovely lavender lighted backdrop, the period costumes of the actors (designed by Joseph Conger) provide all the scenery necessary for the story. Repeating motifs used in the earth-toned clothes of Harlequin and his family and on the rich and sometimes outrageous garb of the band of players make the characters easy to identify. The rich and funny costumes for the Duchess should be a pity winner in some sort of contest. Her

A Review

headpiece, shaped much like an upside-down basket, seemed to defy gravity and added to the fun and stature of the character.

Michael N. Allen, in the title role, was outstanding in his use of intone and falls. Even some adults held their collective breath when it appeared that Harlequin would really fall and get hurt. He never did.

As Harlequin (Quino) sets out to join a band of players, he is at first chastised and then encouraged by his mother Susan Metz (a good Mama, fussing

at her son when he disappointed her, but remaining warm and supportive of him and his dream).

The players, stock commedia dell'arte figures, were all marvelous. Isabella (Sheila Nassif), the "beautiful heroine", was lovely, exaggerating her obvious charms with eye-balling and coy looks, and lapsing into loud-mouth tendencies for added comedy. Capitano (David Grapes), the "bragging but cowardly soldier," was an audience favorite, an underdog with his wooden sword and "head made of dreams." Even the little folk wanted to help this underdog who sounded like the Cowardly Lion.

More "bad guys" than the other players, Pantalone (Tony Clay) and Dottore (Alexander Nazarko) used very successfully a louder, more aggressive form of humor in their characterizations, bringing to mind some of the old vaudevillians.

As the Duchess, Carole McGee was very convincing in her change from the original stage mother to a fair city official who revamped her child-rearing methods. As Danilo, Michael Childers was the brattiest son of a Duchess ever to grace a stage. His spider and web costume was most eloquent.

ounding out the cast were Thomas McClary as Quino's friend Luigi, David Fitzsimmons as Renato and Martha Carlson as Tina, brother and sister of Quino.

A particular treat for this production was the music, composed and directed by Debbie Overton and performed by David Wells on drums and a piano player not named on the program.

"The Adventures of Harlequin" will be presented in Taylor Theatre Wednesday through Sunday. Single tickets are available for a few performances, and reservations can be made by calling the TVP box office at UNCG.

E. J. KENNEDY