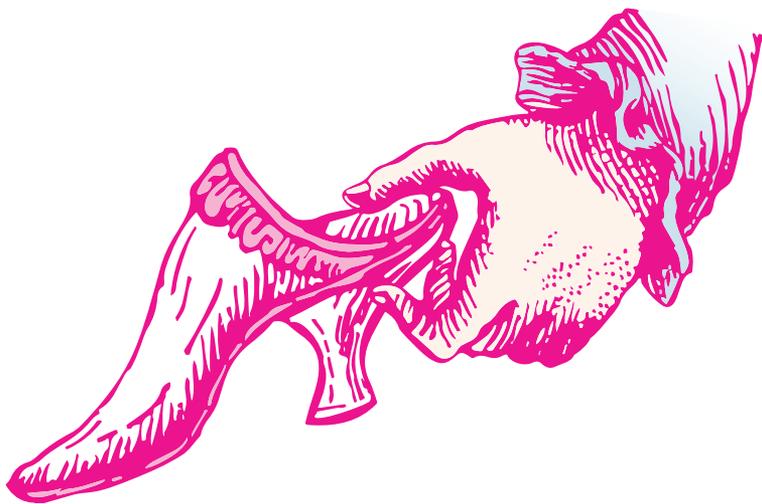


The  
Commedia  

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Cinderella

By Lane Riosley



# The Commedia Cinderella

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# THE COMMEDIA CINDERELLA

By LANE RIOSLEY

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

	<u># of lines</u>
COLUMBINE.....common girl, but very clever and good at dance and tumbling; the troupe leader	157
ARLEQUIN.....mischief-maker; clever, athletic and funny	122
PUNCHIN.....bombastic and proud with a big nose	113
ROSETTA.....fancies herself a lady, but is also funny and a good dancer	117

## SETTING

Time: Now.

Place: Anywhere.

The stage is bare except for a chest on wheels and a cloth bag for props. Other sets and props are brought in by the players. The players have made all the props and their costumes from found objects.

There is a central acting area the troupe uses, and when stage directions advise “enter” or “exit,” it means the central area. Once the performers ENTER, they remain ONSTAGE at all times.

## AUTHOR’S NOTE

In considering the staging of the commedia style, it is a helpful shortcut to remember the most famous twentieth-century artists of the commedia, the Marx Brothers.

## THE COMMEDIA CINDERELLA

1 LIGHTS UP: The TROUPE ENTERS—ROSETTA, dressed in ragged finery and affecting manners; ARLEQUIN, wearing a patched suit and peaked hat; COLUMBINE, the troupe leader; PUNCHIN, with his large nose (which would make wearing masks a real trick if not for the fact that it is a false nose because he believes all great men have great noses).  
5 The PLAYERS are chanting and dancing, as if they are in a parade. COLUMBINE carries a tambourine, and ROSETTA plays bells that she shakes in time to the chanting.

They circle the stage and greet the AUDIENCE. Vying for attention,  
10 ARLEQUIN and PUNCHIN tend to step out in front of ROSETTA and COLUMBINE, who push them back. ARLEQUIN carries a painted cardboard clock face. He makes it, and himself, as annoying as possible. PUNCHIN has a cloth props bag and rolls out a small chest on wheels.

**ALL:** La Cenerentola!

15 **COLUMBINE/ROSETTA:** Mop the floors and do the wash!

**PUNCHIN/ARLEQUIN:** (*Pointing to the clock face.*) Tick-tock, tick-tock...

**COLUMBINE/ROSETTA:** Go and tend the fire!

**ALL:** La Cenerentola!

**COLUMBINE/ROSETTA:** Sisters tell you what to do!

20 **PUNCHIN/ARLEQUIN:** Tick-tock, tick-tock...

**COLUMBINE/ROSETTA:** Won't go to the ball!

**ALL:** La Cenerentola!

**COLUMBINE/ROSETTA:** Cinderella, watch the clock!

**PUNCHIN/ARLEQUIN:** Tick-tock, tick-tock...

25 **COLUMBINE/ROSETTA:** Pumpkin time is near! (*ARLEQUIN steps out of line.*)

**ROSETTA:** Arlequin! Get back in line!

**ALL:** La Cenerentola!

**COLUMBINE/ROSETTA:** Find the girl to fit the shoe!

30 **PUNCHIN/ARLEQUIN:** Tick-tock, tick-tock...

**COLUMBINE/ROSETTA:** The prince will soon be here! (*PUNCHIN gets out of step.*)

**COLUMBINE:** Punchin, look out!

**PUNCHIN/ARLEQUIN:** Tick-tock, tick-tock...

35 **ALL:** La Cenerentola!

**COLUMBINE:** Players, ho! Players, players, ho! (*They applaud each other, and ARLEQUIN steps forward.*)

**ARLEQUIN:** Attenzione! Attenzione!

1 **COLUMBINE:** Arlequin!  
**ARLEQUIN:** Attenzione! I, Arlequin, I have annuncio...  
**COLUMBINE:** Announcement.  
**ARLEQUIN:** Announcement!

5 **COLUMBINE:** Announcement?!  
**ARLEQUIN:** Sì! I, Arlequin, have been taking acting lessons. (*EVERYONE gasps, he nods.*) Sì! Acting lessons! From the great metodo actor, Marloni Brandini! Ecco! Observe! (*Walks to the center of the stage and reaches into his jacket, removing a torn white undershirt, which*  
10 *he pulls on over his costume.*) Wait a minute, I have to feel this part here. I have to search into my emotional memory... (*Searches, then with enormous preparation and vast depths of emotion.*) Perché? A cosa serve? When, where, what, why? Where is the library? (*Weeps.*) This is my aunt's pen!

15 **COLUMBINE:** Arlequin...  
**ARLEQUIN:** (*A roar.*) Where is the bathroom?!  
**COLUMBINE:** ARLEQUIN!  
**ARLEQUIN:** Sì?  
**COLUMBINE:** No acting!

20 **ARLEQUIN:** No acting?  
**COLUMBINE:** No acting, and that is final! We will have no acting here, please!  
**ARLEQUIN:** Just a little acting?  
**COLUMBINE:** No!

25 **ARLEQUIN:** Poco?  
**COLUMBINE:** No! No acting here! We are players! We play. Play! Understand?  
**ARLEQUIN:** (*Pause, then with great indignation.*) Punchin, he acts!  
**COLUMBINE:** I had better not catch him at it!

30 **ARLEQUIN:** He acts the tragedy when no one is looking! Today at lunch I saw him stab himself to death many times with the breadsticks!  
**PUNCHIN:** I could have been a great actor! I could have died magnificently five times a week and twice on Sunday! En garde! (*Pulls out two breadsticks, hands one to ARLEQUIN, and they fence outrageously.*) Aha! Aha!

35 **ARLEQUIN:** Please direct me to the bus stop! Aha! Aha! I prefer water with my lunch! Aha! (*His breadstick breaks.*) Oops!  
**PUNCHIN:** Now! Have you! (*Bends over to stab ARLEQUIN, but COLUMBINE grabs him by the scruff of the neck and shakes him.*) Yaaa!

40

- 1 **COLUMBINE:** You behave, now, both of you! We have a play to perform! We have an audience! (*Turns PUNCHIN to the AUDIENCE, and he gapes.*)
- ROSETTA:** We are going to do the story of Cinderella!
- 5 **ARLEQUIN:** Cenerentola?
- PUNCHIN:** Cinderella!
- COLUMBINE:** Yes, and there is a part for a handsome prince.
- PUNCHIN:** A handsome prince?
- ROSETTA:** A very handsome, very rich prince...
- 10 **PUNCHIN:** ...with a handsome, great nose! (*Strikes a pose.*)
- COLUMBINE:** ...who will be played by Arlequin!
- ARLEQUIN:** Certainly!
- PUNCHIN:** What?!
- COLUMBINE:** You must play the more important part, Punchin.
- 15 **PUNCHIN:** The more important part?
- COLUMBINE:** Yes. The part of the wicked stepmother!
- PUNCHIN:** (*Laughs.*) I thought for a minute you said wicked stepmother! (*Laughs.*)
- COLUMBINE:** I did! (*His laughter stops, but ARLEQUIN begins to giggle.*)
- 20 **PUNCHIN:** You are not serious!
- COLUMBINE:** Yes! There must be a handsome prince, a wicked stepmother... (*ARLEQUIN giggles, ROSETTA shushes him.*) ...two horrible and vain stepsisters, a servant... (*PUNCHIN, at his limit, swats ARLEQUIN, and there is a brief slap fight until COLUMBINE breaks it up.*)
- 25 **ARLEQUIN:** Wicked stepmother, tralalalala! Punchin, I think you would look good in a PINK dress!
- PUNCHIN:** I cannot believe this! What an insult!
- COLUMBINE:** We are players, and we will play the parts in the story! Sì?
- 30 **ARLEQUIN:** (*Agreeable.*) Sì.
- PUNCHIN:** (*Resigned.*) Sì.
- COLUMBINE:** Rosetta! Get the big book of stories!
- ARLEQUIN:** I am an actor! I am an ac— (*Gets the evil eye from COLUMBINE.*) I am the handsome prince, I play the handsome prince! (*Picks up a bed sheet and drapes it over his shoulders.*) My crown, please! (*ROSETTA brings him a crown, places it on his head and gives him a clip, which he uses to make the sheet into a cape.*) I am the prince... (*Points to PUNCHIN.*) ...and you are not! I have
- 35

1 many fine medals and carriages and lots of money... (*Points to PUNCHIN.*) ...and you don't!

**PUNCHIN:** What a rude person you are!

**ARLEQUIN:** I am the prince, and I am very handsome and very rude!

5 (*Goes and sits beside an AUDIENCE MEMBER.*) Hello, there! I am the handsome, rude prince! How are you today? Very well? Do you want to touch my crown?

**COLUMBINE:** ARLEQUIN!

**ARLEQUIN:** Excuse me! This very rude woman is calling me! (*Goes back ONSTAGE.*) Rosetta?

10 **ROSETTA:** (*Reads.*) "Once upon a time, there was a very handsome prince—"

**ARLEQUIN:** (*Waves.*) Hello!

**ROSETTA:** (*Continues.*) "—who lived in a great and beautiful castle on the hill."

15 **ARLEQUIN:** A beautiful house with a big swimming pool—

**ROSETTA:** (*Continues to read; aggravated.*) "He was a wise prince—"

**ARLEQUIN:** Punchin, go clean the pool! Quickly! (*PUNCHIN swats him, and there is another brief swat fight that ends in a draw.*) Peasant!

20 **COLUMBINE:** (*Starts reading over ROSETTA'S shoulder.*) "—and the great swimming pool had many huge sharks in it."

**ARLEQUIN:** Eh?

**COLUMBINE:** "And the prince went swimming one day, and the sharks ate him, and that is the end of this prince!"

25 **ARLEQUIN:** What? You can't do this!

**COLUMBINE:** Give the cape and the crown to Punchin if you can't play the prince!

**ARLEQUIN:** What?

**COLUMBINE:** We have a NEW prince now. New and improved.

30 **ARLEQUIN:** No! (*ROSETTA takes the cape and the crown and gives them to PUNCHIN, who is very happy. PUNCHIN smiles broadly at ARLEQUIN, who isn't.*) That isn't fair!

**COLUMBINE:** And YOU, Arlequin, you naughty ACTOR, you will play the servant to the prince, and his name is Grovel!

35 **ARLEQUIN:** That is a terrible name!

**COLUMBINE:** Grovel the servant!

**ARLEQUIN:** Awww! (*ROSETTA gives ARLEQUIN a torn, ratty poncho to cover his clothes.*) Yick! (*Smells the poncho.*) Yuck!

**ROSETTA:** (*Resumes reading.*) "The handsome and noble prince was walking in his gardens one day with his completely disgusting

40

- 1 servant, Grovel, when he thought how lonely he was, all alone in the big, beautiful castle.”
- PUNCHIN/PRINCE:** Grovel, my disgusting servant, I am so alone in this big, beautiful castle. I believe I should have some company.
- 5 **ARLEQUIN/GROVEL:** Harrr, sire, shall I bring in the pigs and horses and chickens from the barn? Harrr? (*Grovels.*)
- PUNCHIN/PRINCE:** No! That would make a terrible mess! No, I thought I should have a wife.
- ARLEQUIN/GROVEL:** Whose wife, Majesty?
- 10 **PUNCHIN/PRINCE:** MY wife, you stupid, dirty person!
- ARLEQUIN/GROVEL:** I didn’t know you had a wife, Majesty! Where is she? (*Skitters, cockroach-like, from one end of the stage to the other.*) I’ll go get her, and then you won’t be lonely! When did you marry? Why didn’t you invite your loyal but repulsive servant to the
- 15 wedding? Harrr!
- PUNCHIN/PRINCE:** I HAVEN’T married, and I DON’T have a wife yet! I’m going to marry.
- ARLEQUIN/GROVEL:** Who will you marry, sire?
- PUNCHIN/PRINCE:** I don’t know, yet.
- 20 **ARLEQUIN/GROVEL:** Harr! Why don’t you have a great ball and invite all the fair young women of the land and pick the one you like the best?
- PUNCHIN/PRINCE:** Don’t be stupid! What a stupid idea! What a stupid servant you are! Why do I keep you?
- 25 **ARLEQUIN/GROVEL:** I was a Christmas present from your Uncle Alfredo! Harr!
- PUNCHIN/PRINCE:** Christmas—that’s it! I will have a Christmas ball, a great party, and I will invite all of the fair young women of my kingdom! I will marry the one I like the best!
- 30 **ARLEQUIN/GROVEL:** Harr—? (*Scratches.*) Good idea, sire! That’s why you’re the prince, I never would have thought of that!
- PUNCHIN/PRINCE:** Of course you wouldn’t have, you infinitely stupid malodorous creature! Quickly! Call my servants! Call my publicity man! Call my mother and invite her!
- 35 **ROSETTA:** (*Reads.*) “So the prince decreed a Christmas ball of exceptional splendor!” (*ARLEQUIN tacks up a notice that reads “Christmas ball at the Prince’s castle—fair young women only—others need not apply.”*) “Everyone in the kingdom was talking about it!” Well, almost everyone.
- 40 **COLUMBINE/OLD WOMAN:** (*Throws on an old woman’s shawl and goes to PUNCHIN, who has put on a big women’s hat.*) Eh-h-h? (*Holds*

1     *up an ear trumpet.*) What fall? Why are they all talking about the Christmas fall? Christmas isn't in the fall, it's in the winter!

**PUNCHIN:** BALL! They are talking about the Christmas BALL!

5     **COLUMBINE/OLD WOMAN:** Of course we have to have Christmas balls to hang on the tree! Very festive! What else should we hang on the tree, Christmas squares or triangles? *(Cackles with laughter.)*

**PUNCHIN:** *(Sighs.)* Christmas ball! Dance! Celebration!

10    **COLUMBINE/OLD WOMAN:** I celebrate every Christmas with my family! Except for my little grand-nephew, Edwin, who always tries to ride the pig, and it just—

**PUNCHIN:** THE PRINCE IS HAVING A CHRISTMAS BALL, A DANCE, A CELEBRATION TO FIND A BRIDE!

**COLUMBINE/OLD WOMAN:** Mercy! Died? Who died? How can you think about a celebration at a time like this?

15    **ROSETTA:** *(Reads.)* “Some people were more excited about the ball than others. One who was very excited was Lady Sneer Uppity...” *(COLUMBINE dresses ARLEQUIN as Sneer with some difficulty, for PUNCHIN is laughing and pointing all the while.)* “...for she had two daughters whom she considered to be very fair and graceful women. As far as the rest of the kingdom was concerned, they were women, and that was about all that could be said of them.” Oh! She also had a stepdaughter, Cinderella, but you'll see.

20    **ARLEQUIN/SNEER:** A Christmas ball! What a very good idea! *(ROSETTA pounces on PUNCHIN and stuffs him into the stepsister's costume, then puts the other one on herself.)* I will be the mother of the next royal princess! No doubt about it! No other girls in the kingdom can compare with my two daughters for breeding, grace, intelligence and beauty! *(Sneers.)* And if any of them try, I will take care of them! *(Swats hand with fan.)* Now, I will call my daughters to me!  
30    Dither! Oh, Dither! Simper! Come now! Come, come! Your mama calls you! Come, my little rosebuds! Come, my little dewdrops! Come, my little angel wings!

**PUNCHIN/DITHER:** I come, Mama! *(Dithers with his costume.)*

**ROSETTA/SIMPER:** I come, too, Mama! *(Curtseys and simpers.)*

35    **ARLEQUIN/SNEER:** Now, pay attention! *(PUNCHIN dithers, ARLEQUIN swats him with fan.)* Stop that! The prince has declared a Christmas ball! *(COLUMBINE, dressed as Cinderella, carrying a broom, walks sadly up to the notice and reads it.)*

40    **PUNCHIN/DITHER:** But, Mama, we have Christmas balls every year, on the Christmas tree! *(Laughs at his joke, a snorty, honking laugh.)*

- 1 **ARLEQUIN/SNEER:** This is a dance, a royal gala! We will all three attend!  
**COLUMBINE/CINDERELLA:** Excuse me, Stepmother.  
**ARLEQUIN/SNEER:** WHAT did you call me?  
**COLUMBINE/CINDERELLA:** Oh! I beg your pardon. Excuse me,  
5 Wicked Stepmother.  
**ARLEQUIN/SNEER:** That's better.  
**COLUMBINE/CINDERELLA:** Will I be allowed to go to the ball, too?  
(*There is a brief pause in which all the OTHERS stare at her blankly.*)  
**ARLEQUIN/SNEER:** Now. (*Holds up a finger, and they ALL laugh*  
10 *uproariously.*) Cinderella, why would you want to go to the ball? So  
everyone can make fun of you in your tattered clothes? Your face  
all smudged with soot from the chimney? No! I will not have you  
disgrace us that way! You will stay home and watch the house and  
tend the fire!
- 15 **COLUMBINE/CINDERELLA:** But—  
**ARLEQUIN/SNEER:** Do not argue with me, you ungrateful girl! Do I not  
give you a home in this house with my own two lovely daughters?  
Do I not give you clothes—  
**COLUMBINE/CINDERELLA:** Old clothes you were going to throw out.  
20 **ARLEQUIN/SNEER:** —and a place to sleep at night?  
**COLUMBINE/CINDERELLA:** You let me sleep on the kitchen table.  
**ARLEQUIN/SNEER:** There you are! Such generosity! And you plan to  
repay me for the bounty of my regard by going to this ball and  
making us a laughingstock? I think not!
- 25 **COLUMBINE/CINDERELLA:** But, I—  
**ARLEQUIN/SNEER:** Where would you get a gown? And fine combs for  
your hair? And fine shoes! Look at your shoes! And jewelry! Eh?  
Perhaps you could just go like that and hope to win the prince  
with your sparkling personality! (*Laughs, as do the STEPSISTERS,*  
30 *quite disgustingly.*) No, no, the prince wants beauty, refinement,  
elegance! Not soot! Now go! Clean the carriage! (*COLUMBINE*  
*stands behind them and mocks them.*) Inside and out! I want  
it sparkling! My daughters and I will go to town and select our  
fine fabrics for the gowns that you will sew for us! And when we  
35 return, you will style our hair—we need coiffures of great style and  
elegance! Now go to work!
- PUNCHIN/DITHER:** Good-bye, Cinderella!  
**ROSETTA/SIMPER:** Good-bye, Cinderella! (*The THREE of them go to*  
*the trunk and change, PUNCHIN into the prince, ARLEQUIN into*  
40 *Grovel and ROSETTA into the Fairy Godmother.*)

- 1 **COLUMBINE/CINDERELLA:** Ah, me! What a terrible fate, to have to cook and clean and sew and never have any fun at all!
- ARLEQUIN/GROVEL:** Make way for Prince Profile the Fourth! Make way! Make way!
- 5 **PUNCHIN/PRINCE:** Ah, Grovel, you loathsome brute, what a beautiful day this is! What a lovely afternoon! Oh! But give me my traveler's cloak and hood, no one must know I am the prince, or they will all want my autograph or want to marry me or something!
- ARLEQUIN/GROVEL:** *(Gets cloak and hood from the chest.)* Harr! Here you are! *(Puts the cloak and hood on PUNCHIN, making faces and mocking the prince the while.)*
- 10 **PUNCHIN/PRINCE:** Excellent. You know, for a repugnant individual, you at least respect me, Grovel. I appreciate that.
- ARLEQUIN/GROVEL:** Harr, Your Highness!
- 15 **PUNCHIN/PRINCE:** Let's walk over into that wood there.
- ROSETTA/FAIRYGM:** *(Dances past them.)* Ahhh, good afternoon! What a lovely day!
- PUNCHIN/PRINCE:** Lovely day!
- ARLEQUIN/GROVEL:** Harr! What a strange sight!
- 20 **PUNCHIN/PRINCE:** Just a lady dancing through the forest.
- ARLEQUIN/GROVEL:** Why, that was a Fairy Godmother if ever I've seen one!
- PUNCHIN/PRINCE:** Don't be an oaf! I've never seen a Fairy Godmother, and neither have you! Now, come along!
- 25 **COLUMBINE/CINDERELLA:** Ah, me!
- ROSETTA/FAIRYGM:** Hello, Cinderella!
- COLUMBINE/CINDERELLA:** Oh! Do I know you? Of course not, I don't know anyone! Only my wicked stepmother and my two irritating stepsisters. Who are you?
- 30 **ROSETTA/FAIRYGM:** I am your Fairy Godmother.
- COLUMBINE/CINDERELLA:** Uh-huh. I didn't know I had a Fairy Godmother.
- ROSETTA/FAIRYGM:** You had no need for me until now!
- COLUMBINE/CINDERELLA:** I have been cleaning and cooking and slaving and wearing rags and living by the cinders on the hearth and sleeping on the kitchen table, and you say I have had no need of you until now?
- 35 **ROSETTA/FAIRYGM:** Oh! Have I been tardy? Time is such a variable thing in Fairy Land! I came right away to help you as soon as you were born!
- 40

## PRODUCTION NOTES

### PROP LIST

Small chest on wheels	Ostentatious gowns for stepmother and step-sisters
Cloth prop bag	Beautiful skirt and top
Two breadsticks	Wig and hair combs
Large storybook	Plastic pumpkin containing thin, pumpkin-colored fabric
Crown	Cage with two black mice
Clip to pin sheet as cape	Rib sections for covered wagon effect
A bed sheet	Two horse-head masks
Torn, ratty poncho	Ropes for reigns
Tack	Two lizard puppets
Notice	Puppet coachman rat with little whip
Old woman's shawl	Herald's halberd and hat
Big hat	Tambourine and kazoos
Ear trumpet	Goblet
Stepmother and stepsister costumes	Bonnet
Broom	Bell
Lady's fan	Cutout cloud, bird puppet
Fairy Godmother costume (with a pair of "glass" slippers in the pocket)	Black cape, sword and mask
Cloak and hood	Royal cloak and washcloth
Scrub brush	
Cup	

### COSTUMING

The troupe's costumes are partly handmade and partly inherited from wealthier people who either tired of that fashion or thought better of it. The commedia diamond pattern is, of course, always evident.

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