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THE BLUE MONSTER

(*Il Mostro Turchino*)



A FAIRY PLAY IN FIVE ACTS

BY

CARLO GOZZI

Translated

with an introduction

BY

EDWARD J. DENT

CAMBRIDGE

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CARLO GOZZI AND HIS FAIRY PLAYS



ITALIAN drama is a subject unfamiliar to English playgoers, even to those who have some acquaintance with the classical drama of France and Spain; the only name they are likely to know is that of Carlo Goldoni (1707–93), a few of whose sixty comedies have occasionally been acted in this country. Count Carlo Gozzi (1720–1806), Goldoni's contemporary in Venice and his embittered rival, is little known even to Italians at the present day unless they are serious researchers into theatrical history. Both of these two dramatists were described by Vernon Lee as far back as 1881 in her *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy* (second edition, 1907), a book which can still be read with delight for its wonderful charm and imaginative insight; but modern research has shown it to be not altogether reliable on factual details. No play by Gozzi was ever acted in English until the Young Vic produced *The King Stag* in the autumn of 1948; but the English version used was made from a free French adaptation, and the present version of *The Blue Monster* is the first which has been made direct from the Italian.

The conflict between Gozzi and Goldoni arose from their fundamentally different attitudes towards the theatre, and more especially towards the *Commedia dell'Arte*, generally called in English the Comedy of Masks. Goldoni made it his life-work to destroy it; Gozzi adored it and was the last Italian playwright who succeeded in keeping it alive. The Comedy of Masks, which dominated the Italian theatre for some three and a half centuries

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and at a quite early date spread from Italy to Germany, France, Spain and England, survives still on our own stage, though in forms far removed from the original—the harlequinade of our christmas pantomime and the sophisticated affectations of certain modern ballets. Current criticism often talks vaguely about it, but most writers seem to have derived their knowledge from French sources instead of Italian ones.

The mediaeval drama in Italy as in other countries was acted by amateurs. It had begun with liturgical plays acted by clergy in churches; the first recorded in Italy took place at Padua in 1244, a Resurrection play, probably in Latin, although it was acted out of doors. But the favourite type of religious play in Italy, especially at Florence, was the *sacra rappresentazione* dealing with the life of some saint. As time went on these plays became more elaborate; they were acted in Italian and eventually, in the fifteenth century, with quite grandiose scenery designed by famous architects of the Renaissance. The actors were still amateurs, lay members of trade guilds and pious confraternities; the basis of the plays remained always fundamentally devotional and serious, but comic characters appeared episodically and were perhaps acted by professionals. There was much music, and the musicians were very likely paid, as the musicians of the Middle Ages were the first ‘entertainers’ to organize themselves into a respected profession.

The professional entertainers of the Middle Ages—we cannot yet call them ‘actors’—were a miscellaneous vagabond crowd of acrobats, dancers, jugglers, singers, fiddlers, pipers and vendors of quack medicines; these last must not be forgotten, for they were often associated with the other types, as we see in Ben Jonson’s *Volpone*, and our word ‘mountebank’ is the same as the Italian *saltimbanco*, the man who mounted a bench to cry his wares. About the beginning of the sixteenth century these entertainers or mountebanks were gradually becoming organized

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into companies, generally under the protection of some prince or nobleman; the lucky ones among them had already found employment in princely houses as regular jesters. The first extant description of a play, such as they acted, dates from 1568, but it was a play got up at short notice, as a jest, at a German court, and acted mostly by Italian amateurs in imitation of the professional comedians.

How their plays began we have no knowledge; but about the same date there were published, mostly at Bologna, quantities of roughly printed little chapbooks containing rhymes, riddles, songs, monologues and duologues of all sorts, some attributed to the comic poet Giulio Cesare Croce, but probably material of much older origin, written down perhaps by him, after having been passed on orally from one comedian to another for some generations. A solitary entertainer might recite a monologue; if he had a partner, they could produce something like the back-chat of our own music-hall comedians, but one could hardly call that a play or comedy.

It is impossible to say at what date the name *Commedia dell'Arte* first came into use—perhaps not until the eighteenth century; but the title certainly means nothing more than ‘the professional theatre’—*arte* signifying exactly the same thing as ‘craft’ in old English, the craft or trade guild of the masons, weavers or shoemakers and the rest. It never set out to be artistic, still less to be ‘arty’, as it has now become; its one aim was laughter, and that more often by foul means than fair.

With the beginning of the Renaissance and the revival of learning came a simultaneous movement for amateur acting in schools, at the universities and at the highly cultivated courts such as those of Mantua, Ferrara and Florence. These had for some time celebrated their weddings and other family occasions with pageants and shows on the most sumptuous scale, and the young amateurs often contributed an item in the shape of a play.

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At first these were the plays of Plautus and Terence, acted in Latin; later they were translated into Italian and followed by original Italian imitations of the old Roman comedy. Among the authors of these were Ariosto, Macchiavelli and Bernardo Dovizi, afterwards Cardinal Bibbiena. The professional entertainers became acquainted with these plays and adapted them roughly to their own use; it is at this point that the Comedy of Masks really begins.

The *Commedia* was not one definite play, or even a literature of plays; it was simply a system of acting invented by actors of the humblest rank for equally humble audiences—the ‘wild garden’ of the theatre, in which flowers and weeds were indistinguishable.

THE COMEDY OF MASKS

The Comedy of Masks has two notable peculiarities, the reason for which has never been satisfactorily explained; the most learned historians seem always to have just taken them for granted. The first was that from beginning to end the actors invariably improvised their parts all the way through. The most obvious reason to suggest is that most of them, at any rate in early days, were unable to read or write. To an Italian scholar this would perhaps be so obvious as to need no statement; the actors were recruited from vagabond entertainers of the lowest class, and printing did not become reasonably cheap until after the middle of the sixteenth century. The continuance of the practice down to the days of Goldoni and Gozzi need not surprise us. Even Goldoni had to train a company collected from acrobats and mountebanks; the majority of actors were ill-educated and they acted for ill-educated audiences. Modern English actors tend to act with their voices alone; the Italian naturally gesticulates freely and acts with his whole body. The Comedy of Masks was always a theatre for actors, not a theatre

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for authors; all that it needed was a skeleton synopsis, scene by scene, of the plot. Over six hundred of these synopses, mostly of the seventeenth century, have come down to us; the plots are often taken from printed plays of various types. Some ‘author’ had to make these; the director, sometimes called the *choragus*, explained them to the actors and planned their entrances and exits. It was quite easy to make up the talk; much of it soon became stereotyped, and the comic ‘business’ (technically called *lazzi*, probably derived from *le azioni*, the actions) too.

All through the seventeenth century poets were writing complete plays, tragedies, comedies and pastorals, but most of them more literary than dramatic; Spanish companies came to Italy, and a fashion set in for romantic plays in the Spanish style. Along with these opera was developing rapidly and soon became a powerful counter-attraction to spoken drama. Even today opera in Italy receives far more attention than drama, and is far better organized. The Italians, as a nation—so says a modern Italian historian of the theatre—are fundamentally ‘anti-tragic’; they go to the theatre for amusement, and what stands out most clearly from all the vast assemblage of historical documents is that the main attraction of the Comedy of Masks, for all classes from princes and cardinals to the humblest of the people, from its earliest beginnings to the end of the eighteenth century, was its indecency. Obscenity was the one thing that brought all social classes into a universal brotherhood. About 1580 Cardinal Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan (canonized 1610 as St Carlo Borromeo), made strenuous efforts to suppress the Comedy altogether on account of its immorality, but it was loyally supported by the princes and by the civic authorities too, and he was told that several cardinals in Rome gave their enthusiastic patronage to it. The Archbishop wrote to the pope; His Holiness discreetly replied that he knew nothing about it. All Borromeo could do was to demand that the plays be submitted to censorship; but

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that was futile, for they were not written out, and consisted only of the barest skeleton synopses. The system was a useful defence against persecution, and another advantage was that it allowed new plays to be produced with the minimum of rehearsal. We learn from Goldoni that the actors hated having to study parts and complained that they cramped their personal style.

In 1574, Henri III of France saw one of the best companies in Venice, and immediately invited them to Paris, where they were treated on terms of close familiarity by the court and the aristocracy, although some of the clergy protested against their immorality. They visited England and Spain, and the Italian actors remained in Paris with few interruptions until 1677, when they were expelled by Louis XIV for satirizing Madame de Maintenon; they were brought back by the Regent in 1716, but as few people in their new audience understood Italian they gradually became more and more French and were merged in the Opéra-Comique in 1779. Some of the Italians, finding speech useless, took to acting entirely in silent mime, and mime-drama was carried on in Paris for many years afterwards. The Italian Comedy in France has an important place in the history of the French theatre, but with the theatre in Italy it has practically no connection at all.

THE MASK CHARACTERS

The first step towards a play was the duologue, and the oldest of the duologues was that which contrasted wealth and poverty, age and youth, learning and stupidity, master and servant. Since the majority in any audience consisted of young people, their sympathies were always on the side of the humbler character, and the senior partner was always made ridiculous. At this date the rich old man was called the Magnifico and the servant the Zanni. Zanni is a local diminutive of Giovanni (John) and the name very soon took on the sense of its English derivative

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‘zany’. Another type of old man was the Doctor, at first called Gratian after a famous mediaeval jurist. As soon as the early comedians came into contact with the revival of Plautus, they found plots ready to hand; most of the Latin comedies turn on the love-affairs of two young people whose parents disapprove. The mainspring of the play is the astute comic servant. Another Plautine character adopted by the Comedy of Masks was the *Miles Gloriosus*, who became the Spanish Captain, Italy being at that period overrun with Spaniards. From Plautus too came the favourite type of plot ending happily with the discovery of a long-lost son or daughter. We of today are at once reminded of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, but in remoter centuries the loss or exchange of a baby was a fairly common occurrence in real life. It was certainly quite conventional in the plays of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but it was an easy way of bringing a play to an end with a great display of family emotion, always attractive to an Italian audience. And a practical method of ending was indeed a necessity, for soliloquies and duologues might be strung together *ad infinitum* and there was no real reason why any improvised play should ever come to an end.

The Mask characters soon became standardized and acquired permanent names, the most important being Pantalone, the Doctor, Harlequin and Brighella. Pantalone is the original Magnifico, now stabilized in Venice. The source of his name is uncertain; some derive it from *pianta-leone*, the colonizers of the Venetian empire who ‘planted the Lion of St Mark’ in the surrounding territories, others, with more probability, say that Pantalone (after St Pantaleon, a favourite saint in Venice) was a common Venetian christian name. Pantalone is old and rich; in the earlier plays he is always running after loose women and always made a fool of. He is often stingy and therefore represented as thin; he is dressed in red, with red Turkish slippers (said to symbolize his trade with the East) which he often uses to

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beat his servant with. Over his dress he wears a furred gown like an alderman's. He always talks the Venetian dialect.

The Doctor comes from Bologna, where he has taken his degree in law (he is seldom a doctor of medicine); he stands for learning, and is constantly talking Latin, but he is more at home in his native Bolognese and makes a ludicrous mess of the classical language. He is dressed in black, with a black academic gown.

Harlequin (Arlecchino) is not really an Italian character at all; he was picked up in France by the comedians who went to Paris under Henri III, and is a mediaeval northern devil with a shaggy animal head, mentioned as far back as 1291 by the name of Herlichinus and possibly descended from Hercules. After he was brought to Italy he was naturalized as a Bergamask and became indistinguishable from the rest of the Zanni tribe. The Zanni are innumerable and all more or less the same. They come from the hill country behind Bergamo; most of them have been charcoal-burners and chimney-sweeps, so they have black faces. They were well known in Venice in real life; they were porters and odd-job men, only too happy to find employment as gentlemen's servants. They were short and tubby, tough and strong, with insatiable appetites; hence they are mostly nicknamed (in the plays) after things to eat. They may be knaves or fools, but more often both. They originally wore loose jackets and trousers of coarse sacking, sometimes irregularly patched; the conventional Harlequin dress with tight trousers and formal diamond patches is a later stylization, probably influenced by court dress in Paris. They have large felt hats with a rabbit's tail stuck in them, and carry a lath (originally a rake) which became a wooden sword. Their talk was originally Bergamask, but often became Venetian.

One of the Zanni, Pedrolino, became Pierrot in France and developed ultimately into quite a different character; the moon-

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faced melancholy Pierrot in white of modern ballet would be quite inconceivable in cheerful Italy. Truffaldino (from *truffare*, to cheat) was a frequent alternative to Arlecchino. Goldoni seldom employed him, but gave him a wonderful part in his early play, *The Servant of Two Masters*, where he directs the entire action of the plot; he more often made use of Arlecchino, whereas Gozzi never brought in Arlecchino and always preferred Truffaldino.

Brighella is also a Bergamask, and often indistinguishable from the other Zanni; in Gozzi's plays he is more individualized, and rather resembles Shakespeare's Pistol, often a soldier and something of a ruffian, but always a jovial and amusing character. Gozzi perhaps intended him to take over something of the Spanish Captain, who seems to have become extinct by about 1680.

All these Masks belong to North Italy, but there was a Comedy at Naples too, the principal character of which was Pulcinella (little chicken, so called from his squeaky voice), who is the origin of our own Punch. But there was little contact between the Neapolitans and the North, and the Neapolitan Comedy is a study by itself. Gozzi, however, introduces a Neapolitan Mask into all his plays—Tartaglia, the stammerer (hence his name). About Tartaglia's origins there is very little information, but we find him in Venetian operas about 1640, with his stammering written out in notes, and Pantalone often stammers too in the comic madrigals of the sixteenth century. Gozzi's Tartaglia seems to be entirely his own invention, so we may leave him until we discuss *The Blue Monster* by itself.

THE MASKS

The second peculiarity of the Comedy is the use of masks to cover the face. The history of these is obscure. Some writers, especially the earlier ones who were under the influence of classical learning, have said that they were descended unbrokenly

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from the actors' masks of the ancients, but modern Italian scholars deny this. The masks of the Comedy do not resemble the classical masks in the least. A mask may serve two distinct purposes: it may simply conceal the face and destroy identity, as with modern criminals, or it may create a false face and a new personality. During the whole period of the Comedy it was quite usual for ordinary people to wear masks at public assemblies; the mask did away with the etiquette of class-distinctions and allowed pretty complete liberty of manners and speech. Ladies could go in masks to places where it would have been scandalous for them to be identified. For the actors the mask was primarily the equivalent of modern 'make-up', and as modern grease-paints were unknown, a mask of leather, canvas or *papier-mâché* was more convenient. To strolling players without dressing-tables and mirrors elaborate face-painting would have been impossible, and we know that for a long time flour and soot were the usual make-up materials. The Comedy needed only two main types of mask, the old man with a hook nose and a beard, and the servant, who being a collier from Bergamo, had a black face. In the sixteenth century beards were in fashion and no false ones were needed; even the servants wore beards, as we see from contemporary pictures. Later, the beard is attached to the mask, and before nose-paste was invented, a complete mask would be the most practical way of making large false noses and chins. The masks and the costumes for each character became traditional, but we can see that they were gradually altered in detail in relation to normal fashions. We cannot suppose that the average Italian actor in a provincial town wore the same sort of clothes that the French Regent's company wore at the court of Paris; but it is the French prints and pictures of the eighteenth century which have given most modern readers their ideas of the Italian Comedy.

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GOLDONI AND GOZZI

The old Italian writers who set out either to defend the theatre against its clerical persecutors or to give instruction to actors leave us in no doubt that although there had been a few individual actors and actresses of serious culture and high artistic ideals at the top of the profession the licentiousness of the average and lower companies certainly needed some restraining. The specimen dialogues offered as models for various types of scenes are mostly very stilted and tedious. At the beginning of the eighteenth century there was a general movement throughout Europe towards French elegance and refinement of manners. Goldoni set himself to reform the theatre in Italy. He was a man of the middle classes and a lawyer by profession, with a modern outlook on life. In his first comedies he had to accept the Masks and leave certain scenes at any rate to be improvised, but (like Ibsen) he was always aiming at naturalism, and he gradually persuaded his actors to take off their masks and be real human beings. His Pantalone and Doctor are still Venetian and Bolognese, but they cease to be grotesque and become ordinary fathers of families. Goldoni is always scrupulously clean in his language. He satirizes the follies of society rather than its vices; a few of his ladies get themselves 'talked about', but they never get into serious trouble. In some of his plays he gives us wonderful pictures of the humbler classes of Venice, gondoliers, washerwomen and fisherfolk.

Gozzi came of an impoverished noble family; he hated all that was modern, and especially Goldoni's plays of the middle and working classes. He loved the old Masks because they were traditional, and above all others he loved Pantalone, whom he made the embodiment of all the old-fashioned Venetian attitude to life. He persistently attacked Goldoni in satirical verses, which Goldoni took quite good-humouredly, remarking merely that at

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any rate his plays drew large audiences. Gozzi replied scornfully that if that was all that mattered Truffaldino and a dancing bear would be enough, and that he himself could fill the house with a play on stories such as nurses tell to little children. He did so, in fact, in 1762, with *The Love of the Three Oranges*, based on a story from Basile's *Pentameron*, a famous book of fairy stories in Neapolitan dialect first printed in 1600. Goldoni was at the height of his fame; Gozzi was forty-one, but had never written a play before. The *Three Oranges* exists only in synopsis form; its main object was satire on Goldoni and his other rival Chiari; it was an improvised absurdity which Gozzi never intended to repeat. But its success was so enormous that Sacchi, the leader of the company, insisted on Gozzi writing more plays of this kind, and he produced another nine. These, based largely on the *Arabian Nights*, are more carefully constructed, and were almost entirely written out; even the synopses for the Masks are so detailed that it is not difficult to turn them into direct speech. *The Blue Monster*, which is very like *Beauty and the Beast* in its main theme, came out in 1764; Gozzi's last play was *Zeim, King of the Djinns* (1765).

In Italy Gozzi was very soon forgotten, although his plays were printed at Venice in 1772 and again in 1802. But they were translated into German in 1777 and had a great influence on the German Romantics, especially Schiller and E. T. A. Hoffmann. They are the original models for the popular musical plays acted at Vienna, and many traces of Gozzi can be found in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. The Italian Romantics despised Gozzi, but a modern reprint of his plays was instigated by Carducci.

Gozzi indeed is not a poet to be read. From the earliest ages there has been an eternal conflict between the author and the actor, of which the Comedy of Masks is one phase. Goldoni was on the side of the authors, Gozzi on that of the actors, so that we cannot appreciate his plays unless we visualize them in perfor-

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mance. They are not ‘literature’ but ‘theatre’. The *fiaba* (fairy-tale) type of play may have been new to Venetian audiences of 1762, but its principle goes back to the *sacre rappresentazioni*—a tale of mystery and legend with comic episodes. Many operas and play-synopses of the seventeenth century had combined an Eastern background and magical effects with scenes for the Masks, and the Italian actors at the Foire St Laurent in Paris had discovered the *Arabian Nights*, which reached Europe in a French translation early in the eighteenth century. The originality of the *Three Oranges* lay in its satire and parody; what attracted the public was the theatrical spectacle. Gozzi’s later plays depend more on drama than on parody; modern readers find *The Little Green Bird* (1765) the best of them because of its caricature of ‘modern philosophy’. Gozzi was even more of a moralist than Goldoni. Courage, loyalty, steadfastness, patience in suffering, gratitude, self-sacrifice—to Gozzi these ideals are sacred, and he never for a moment makes fun of them. Goldoni believed in them no less, but in the social world of easy colloquial prose they cannot be talked about; Gozzi needed verse and legend to present them without embarrassment. Even Pantalone becomes a moralist, however grotesquely he may express himself; he is Gozzi himself, upholding the traditions of Venice in her greatness against the decadence and frivolity of Venice on the verge of final collapse. Gozzi’s brother, Gasparo, explained the *Three Oranges* as an allegory of Venice; in *The Blue Monster* we can see the old king Fanfùr as the symbol of Venice in decrepitude.

THE BLUE MONSTER

Zeloù, a mighty Djinn, having offended the Gods, has been transformed into a Blue Monster as a punishment, and he cannot regain his liberty until he meets a pair of truly faithful lovers. He finds them in Taèr and Dardanè, but he is obliged to make

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them undergo painful trials as proof of their fidelity. He transforms Taèr into his own horrible form, and Dardanè into the semblance of a young man under the name of Achmed; but although Taèr can always recognize Dardanè, Dardanè is always under the impression that Taèr is Zeloù, the cruel cause of all her miseries. Taèr is forbidden to reveal himself, and the main trial of the lovers is whether he can induce her to love him in his monstrous shape. She is repelled not only by his hideousness but also by his supposed cruelty, and all that he can do is to help her in her other trials in the hopes that she may come to love him through gratitude. The wicked queen Gulindì, finding her advances rejected by the handsome page Achmed (i.e. Dardanè), sends him to slay two other monsters who are devastating the kingdom; he does so and also brings in Taèr (as a third monster) in chains; but Gulindì persuades the feeble old King Fanfùr to have him beheaded. At the last moment Taèr, ready to die himself for Dardanè, reveals that she is a woman, and the bride of the King's own son; he too is at the point of death because she refuses to love him, but Dardanè, now become a woman again, suddenly realizes that the monster is not Zeloù but Taèr in disguise. She proclaims her love, he recovers life and his natural shape, and all ends happily.

The real drama turns on the mental agony of Taèr, forbidden to reveal his true identity and knowing that he must die unless Dardanè will love him, and that of Dardanè, facing a series of mortal dangers, and gradually overcoming her repugnance to the Monster through gratitude, until her final release through the devotion of her love. The other characters are mainly episodic.

For presentation to an English, and perhaps juvenile, audience, the play has been shortened and compressed. The wickedness of Gulindì (modelled on that of Potiphar's wife), and also her horrible death, have been somewhat reduced and modified.

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NOTES ON PRODUCTION

The characters are distinguished by three different levels of speech; Zeloù, the King and Queen, Taèr and Dardanè always speak in verse, the others in prose. Pantalone and Tartaglia have fully written parts, Pantalone always in Venetian dialect; Brighella and Smeraldina sometimes have written parts, and sometimes improvise. Truffaldino always improvises. In this English version all the parts have been written out, and dialect has been ignored as it is not representable in English.

The verse characters must remember that they invariably speak in verse, even when they have only single lines, or broken lines, in conversation with prose characters. The verse parts must be taken quite seriously and romantically, and on no account made deliberately ridiculous, even if the audience is sometimes tempted to laugh at the high-flown sentiments. If these parts are ‘guyed’ the comic parts of the prose characters will lose their effect of contrast, all the more because the contrast is often very sudden and intentionally incongruous.

Zeloù requires an impressive and commanding voice, as his real face is never seen until the very end. Although at times severe, he is always benevolent, but he is a supernatural figure remote from mortal humanity. The beauty of his voice must compensate for the horror of his appearance.

Fanfùr cannot help being a comic figure, but he is pitiable in his decrepitude rather than ludicrous. He is always doing his best to maintain his royal dignity and at certain moments achieves it, and even shows a sardonic humour. The actor must take care to distinguish him from Pantalone; Fanfùr never forgets that he is a King.

Taèr, in his natural shape, is young, ardent and chivalrous to exaggeration; he is a prototype of Mozart’s Tamino. After he becomes a monster, he is dependent to some extent on gesture,

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but most of all on the expressive quality of his voice; his part must always be kept up to a high romantic level.

Dardanè, who has a much more arduous part than Mozart's Pamina, has to alternate her natural unaffected womanliness with her supposed character as a young man; she must carefully avoid any suggestion of the 'principal boy' of pantomime both in costume and in deportment.

Gulindi is the one really evil character in the play. She ought to be made excessively beautiful and voluptuous in an oriental style. She is sensual, capricious, unscrupulous and untruthful—an exaggeration of femininity. Her speech ranges from romantic to colloquial, with quick changes of mood; her lines are therefore liable to become free in metre, but must always be spoken as verse.

The Mask characters always speak in prose, except for a few lines caricaturing the grand heroic manner. They are quite unromantic and represent the normal world of materialist humanity.

Pantalone is old, seventy or more, but not at all decrepit. As he is a Venetian he is a voluble chatterer, but he has an element of seriousness; he is very definitely a *gentleman*, of sincere fine feelings, and not a caricature of puffed-up aristocracy. He represents the social and moral standards of a bygone age. He is tall and thin, with an aquiline nose and a pointed grey beard.

Tartaglia provides a strong contrast to Pantalone. He is a Neapolitan and takes a cheerfully cynical view of life. He may well be rather short and fat. By tradition he stammers, but Gozzi does not indicate this in print, and the impediment may be left to the actor's discretion. There appears to be no very well-defined costume for him; the essential is that he should contrast with Pantalone in appearance, manner and way of speaking.

Brighella comes from Bergamo and is the long-lost brother of Smeraldina. He is a good-hearted ruffian, and has in this play

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acquired some remainder of the style of the early Spanish Captain. He is always a comic figure, and even his expressions of brotherly love and soldierly devotion to duty should be caricatured.

Smeraldina is not strictly a Mask character, but she belongs to the family of the Zanni. She is not an urban *soubrette* but a peasant girl from the country—rustic and even uncouth in manner, with a violent temper.

Truffaldino's part was all left to improvisation, and in this English version he has been made to express himself more in mime and gesture than in speech. Like Smeraldina he is rustic and natural; he must on no account be made into a Dresden china Harlequin or a modern ballet dancer, but as he is always on the move he needs some experience of dance technique. In figure he is tubby and tough, with a swarthy complexion.

Scenery and costumes must be left to the designer's fancy; the general picture is a quite imaginary China. Gozzi directs that Truffaldino and Smeraldina should wear Chinese dress on their first entry, but it is important that all the Mask characters should stand out incongruously against the others as *foreigners*, if not clearly as Italians. Face-masks may be discarded, as most English actors find them a hindrance, and most English audiences too; but the traditional Mask costumes should be suggested, even if not copied in detail. If the Giant Knight in Armour is made mediaeval European, and the Hydra classical Greek, their incongruity will be all the more in the spirit of Gozzi.

The transformations and other magical effects must be left to the ingenuity of the producer and technicians. They must on no account be evaded or skimmed, as they are essential to Gozzi's style and occur in almost every one of his plays. In some of them he tells us how they were done, but not in this play, though he says that the break-up of the Knight's armour and the Knight's total disappearance may seem impossible, but were marvellously well accomplished by Sacchi's company. It may be taken for

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granted that all transformations were accompanied by Gozzi's usual 'darkness, earthquake, thunder and lightning'.

Gozzi occasionally asks for music, but both his plays and his autobiography suggest that he was not very musical himself. His theatre no doubt provided a plentiful hotchpotch of the popular tunes of the day and anything else that was in stock.

The names of the characters should be pronounced as in Italian: Zay-lóo, Fahn-fóor, Goo-lin-dée (not *gew*), Tah-(y)air Dar-da-náy—all these are accented on the last syllable. Pan-ta-ló-neh (four syllables), Tar-táh-(g)lyah (three syllables, the *g* hardly heard, and *ia* as one syllable, *yah*), Bree-gél-lah (the Italian *gh* is hard *g* as in *get*), Troof-fal-dée-no (short *oo* as in *book*), Smeh-rahl-dée-na. Bérghamo (*Ber* as *bear*) has the accent on the first syllable, and the second short.

If it is desired to perform *The Blue Monster* in three acts instead of the original five, Acts I and II should form the first (about 45 minutes), Acts III and IV as far as the end of Scene 5 the second (about 35 minutes) and the remainder of Act IV, beginning with Scene 6, and Act V the third (about 30 minutes).

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