

Auditions!

Auditions for *The King Stag (Il Re Cervo)* will be held August 19-21. This is a play in the Commedia Dell 'Arte tradition, which is the oldest theatre form still used today. You may be unfamiliar with the title or with Commedia, so I encourage you to keep reading. And when you're done reading, start Googling. *The King Stag* is a fairytale that will have elements of magic, comedy, sword fights, mistaken identities, and in this version, some heavy metal music. There are several characters which form a tight-knit ensemble cast, and all the characters are based on Commedia stock characters. You may be asking, What is Commedia and why is it so important? Well, Commedia Dell 'Arte starting in the 17th Century, with traveling actor troupes. Each actor in the troupe played a "stock" type, which acted and dressed a certain way. Most plays used masks, and the mask for each character was uniform. So anytime a Commedia troupe entered a town and began performing, the audience already knew who was who and basically what to expect. These plays were improvised based on a scenario. You could say it was like Saturday Night Live, outdoors, in Medieval Times. *The King Stag* is an important piece because it's one of the only Commedia scripts that was fully written and realized, and still around today.

You can see Commedia elements everywhere. Most of Shakespeare's plays were based on Commedia scenarios, and many of the characters were based on stock characters. For instance, Polonius from *Hamlet* is a great example of the stock character, Pantalone. You can also see elements of Commedia in opera and even in modern movies. Anyone seen *Love, Actually*?

For our adaptation, we will use limited mask work, however, physicality is still very important to the style. You are accustomed to doing a language-heavy play in the Fall. This play puts as much emphasis on physical characterization as past Fall-productions have on verbal characterization. Keep that in mind as you prepare.

Audition Requirements:

1. Monologue

The first step of your audition process is a 1 to 2 minute monologue. This can be from any play, in any time period. Just keep in mind what suits you as an actor and what character you are auditioning for, and find something appropriate. If you already have a monologue, feel free to use it. If you don't already have one, start reading plays for some good material. Find characters whose descriptions match you. Or find a monologue book and start from there. I suggest looking at plays by Arthur Miller, Oscar Wilde, Thornton Wilder, Tennessee Williams, or go with classics like Shakespeare, Moliere, etc. They are easy to find at libraries, bookstores, and even Half Price Books. If you need help beyond these suggestions, email me at mthompson@southwestchristian.org.

2. Physicality: Mask Workshop

After monologues are done, we will have a brief mask workshop. You do not have to bring your own mask. This is to learn the basics of embodying a character. To prepare, read the character descriptions below and come up with some physical characteristics for them. Example: a stooped back for an old man; a walk for a shady person; differences in postures between a maid and a princess. You will also be asked to show emotions physically, without using your face. Work on this in the mirror, and start observing people while you are out. What physical mannerisms do people have without thinking about it? Now exaggerate it.

3. Callbacks:

The following day will be callbacks. You will read scenes with scene partners assigned to you. Please be familiar with the attached cuts, or “sides” before you come. They do not need to be memorized, but the more familiar you are with the lines, the more you can play with them.

Character Breakdown

The Nobility:

Periglio: The villain of the play. Prime minister of Serendipity. Proud and envious. He hopes to install his daughter Larissa as Queen and take Angelica for himself. His distinctive mannerisms and favorite words need emphasis. Periglio corresponds to the traditional ambitious stock character, Tartaglia. (Stammer, or stutter) He has a problem with his “P’s”

King Seren: This modest, fair King doubts someone could love him as a man rather than as a King. Refined and romantic by nature, the King often speaks in verse. The actor who plays the King must do a sharp transformation when the spirit of Periglio is housed in the King’s body. If auditioning for the King, take note of Periglio’s traits and scenes as well.

Professor Magico/Parrot: a very able and stylish magician. This famous wizard is a bit smug and vain about his gifts and accomplishments. Later, he is turned into a parrot, which will probably include some mask work.

Maxim: A version of the classic Pantalone, the good-natured bumbling old man full of wise words and counsel, maybe too much of it. He is in the King’s court and is a nobleman. Shakespeare’s Polonius is a good model.

Angelica: Maxim’s beautiful, regal daughter. She is romantic but forthright. Strong-willed but sweet. She genuinely loves the King for who he is.

Larissa: Periglio’s daughter, who both loves and fears her father. In love with Maxim’s son, Leandro, and has no interest in King Seren. She is torn between her love of Leandro and her father’s wishes for her to be Queen.

Leandro: Maxim’s son, in love with Larissa. A young, handsome gentleman with pure motives.

The Servants:

Briggi: from the stock character, Brighella. Self-seeking underling. In this script, she is Head Housekeeper rather than the Butler. Ambitious for herself, and risen above her origins, Briggi hopes to promote her niece, Emmi.

Emmi: Despite pretensions to refinement, this saucy young maid retains her country accent. Emmi corresponds to the stock character, Smeraldina (Emerald), the classic, rustic soubrette. There is a very funny physical-comedy scene for callbacks. For this scene, think trailer trash in a ballgown...but she is no Cinderella.

Truffles: The court Bird-Catcher. Corresponds to Truffaldino (Trickster) and will have elements of Arrlequino (Harlequin, or jester). He is a merry, acrobatic buffoon. This rustic clown sings, whistles, and cavorts. For the physical part of the audition, be prepared with your “bag of tricks”, i.e. juggling, tumbling, sommersaults, etc.

Kovar and Keno: Head Guard and Assistant. There is some good-natured competition between them. For these two, think “rent-a-cop” types. For a good reference, watch the movie, Much Ado About Nothing, and observe Michael Keaton’s character. Depending on turn-out, this could be only one person or several people.

Old Man: a feeble old peasant. He has lost his hearing and vision and speaks with an uneducated, country accent. The Old Man’s body eventually houses the King’s spirit, so for auditions, look at the King stuff, and prepare physically for the two very different characters.

The Fantasy Characters:

Mistress or Master of Shadows: A giant supernatural figure, mysterious and powerful, with a strong, booming voice. Appears out of the shadows. May be on stilts or a ladder. Must be able to move and project from heights.

Magic Statue: A gift to the King from Professor Magico. This Statue has the amazing ability to smile when anyone tells a falsehood. Also laughs silently with a sound cue, so actors should prepare different, specific physicalities: the still statue, the broad smile, and the silent laugh, then the silent hysteric laugh. It is beneficial that this person also be a dancer, as they might double as King Stag.

Stags: Both dancers or good movers. Dressed in leotards, tights, and antlers. The King Stag is marked with a “K”. The Second Stag is the smaller of the two. Both bound gracefully across the stage. Possible mask work.

The King Stag
Audition Sides

Professor Magico and King

Professor: (addressing audience, showing book) My book – the most powerful volume of Magical Science ever created – full of spells, charms, dangerous inventions. A book which I alone possess!

(bows) At your service – the world's one and only –

(King enters)

King: Professor Magico! Farewell! You must visit again, and soon!

Professor: My thanks to you, King Seren, for your generous hospitality.

King: No, we are in your debt, dear Professor Magico! The whole Kingdom of Serendipity will be forever grateful.

Professor: (smugly) Think nothing of it.

King: Your gift of this Magic Statue solves my dreadful predicament.

Professor: I am certain of that, Your Highness.

King: For years, I sought to choose a Queen, but I was apprehensive.

Professor: (grandly) And now your fears are over. With this statue, you will know the very moment someone speaks falsely.

King: Professor, I am eternally grateful – for both secrets. The Magic Statue and the Magic Mantra.

Professor: (hesitant) Oh yes....The Magic Mantra...

King: The words of the spell are so simple! Yet they truly perform miracles?

Professor: I swear! It is indeed MAGICAL! But very dangerous. In truth, I should never have revealed the Magic Mantra. Your Highness, please swear to me never to....

King: Have no fear, I shall be exceedingly careful. Farewell, Professor. May fortune follow you.

Professor: Until we meet again. (Exits with great flourish)

Mistress/Master of Shadows and Professor

MoS: Professor Magico! Halt! Not another step! (Professor freezes)
Not another step!

Professor: (bows in reverence) Mistress of Shadows!

MoS: (Enraged) You revealed the secret of the Magic Statue! That astonishing device. And even worse, you revealed the Magic Mantra! The most perilous spell in the whole encyclopedia of Magical Science, which I bestowed upon you only. You presume to abuse the power of...

Professor: But think of the future of Serendipity....

(MoS glares and advances, no words are necessary to stop Professor's talking)

Professor: Yes, I confess. I was arrogant of my power, my knowledge...

MoS: I warned you of talking too much! Using knowledge foolishly, with no regard for the consequences – such actions prove dangerous. Soon...perhaps this very day...many will suffer.

Heed my words. Undo the evil springing forth from the Magic Mantra! Make yourself worthy

Emmi and Briggi

Briggi: Look at all those feathers! The King wants a wife, not a peacock!

Emmi: (Parading around) Just wait, Aunt Briggi. Every great lady will copy me style.

Briggi: Your style will be copied! By every bird in the Serendipity Zoo! Hurry up, now. Let me be hearin' that speech.

Emmi: (Nasal voice, affected diction) Your Majersty, words cannot express the great horror I feel – I mean the great honor I feel (exaggerated curtsy)

Briggi: Ohhh, with that performance I'll be scrubbin' floors for the rest of me born days. 'Cause 'a your bumblin'.

Emmi: (Parading) Ain't this better?

Briggi: No! Head up! Chin High! Hands clasped! Now walk....Not like a soldier! Ohhhh....

Emmi: The King is so elegant and refinerated. Like me.

Briggi: (fussing over her) If you must know, I have ambitions too. If you was Queen, I'd have servants of me own to boss around.

Emmi: Auntie dear, I been practicin' for three whole days. I can sigh (huge sigh) I can faint (staggeres and falls) and I can laugh daintily. (laughs decidedly un-daintily)

King and Emmi

King: Tell me frankly, Emmi

Emmi: Emerelda. Means "emerald". Thou art looking at a rare and precious gem!

King: Tell me, precious gem, do you love me?

Emmi: (on knees) Oh, wicked, wicked tyrant! 'Tis me you've conquered! Without you – the world is naught but – uh – veil of tears!

King: What is something were to happen and you were left alone?

Emmi Oh cruel destiny! I faints! I dies! (does her interpretation of both)

King: Oh, sweet, sensitive soul. I'll call for help.

Emmi: (jumps up) Don't' bother. (giggles daintily) I'm much improved, ain't I?

King: No one has given me so much pleasure as you, my jewel.

Emmi: Farewell, love. (exits King's chamber) I caught him! Like a bird in a cage! Call me Queen! (trips and falls)

Leandro, Larissa, and King

Leandro: (seized her hand) Where are you going?

Larissa: To the King.

Leandro: (Kneels) Please, please, please, Larissa. I ask you on bended knee. Don't go.

Larissa: Leandro, I must. I am the first appointment today.

Leandro: No! We can run away together.

Larissa: It would not work.

Leandro: King Seren could never love you as I do. Never! Larissa...

Larissa: I have no choice. It is the King's command. And my father's..

Leandro: Please, Larissa....

Larissa: (Breaking away) I'm late. I must hurry to King's chamber.

(Leandro exit. Larissa enters King's chamber, King is seated)

King: Larissa, I must know if you – daughter of my esteemed Prime Minister – wish to be my bride.

Larissa: Many a young girl dreams of marriage to a King...so...illustrious.

King: But I must know your true desire.

Larissa: A girl would be...foolish indeed...not to seek such good fortune.

King: Your answers are so vague! Larissa, tell me the simple truth: Do you wish you marry me? Yes or no?

Larissa: Yes, my beloved King.

King: Sweet Larissa, answer one final question. Answer sincerely, without fear or flattery. Are you in love with someone else?

Larissa: No...my King....I love...only...you.

King and Angelica

Angelica: I am here, Your Majesty, only because you order it.

King: I feared you might not wish to come today.

Angelica: I most certainly did not, my lord.

King: Angelica, though I am your sovereign, speak freely. Still, you do not seem to be lacking in courage.

Angelica: I thank you for the compliment

King: Perhaps...you are in love with someone.

Angelica: Yes.

King: Then he is indeed the most fortunate of men

Angelica: Your majesty, hundreds have suffered your rejection. Many have entered this chamber full of dreams and left in despair, dismissed at your whim. And where is the justice that brings me here against my will? I urge you to stop this search! Forgive me, my King. You gave me leave to speak freely.

King: If only you knew, Angelica. I long to find a wife who might genuinely love me. Serendipity is without a Queen. I continue this search until I find her. But all in vain, I fear.

Angelica: You considered more than a hundred fine young ladies and found no one suitable? How can you be so certain?

King: Alas, I am certain.

Angelica: But Your Majesty. There is someone who loves you. Though would to heaven I did not! Please – my lord – spare me the pain of your refusal. My poor heart is breaking.

King: Do my eyes deceive me? For pity's sake, Angelica. If you love me, say it. Do not torment me.

Angelica: It is you who torments me. Let me go, I beg you.

King: Cry no more, beautiful soul! Angelica, my angel, my Queen.

Truffles and Emmi

Truffles: I'm run down, run over, and wrung out. Raced through the Royal Forest all afternoon. Busier than a bee in a bottle! And what do I be catchin'? Nothin' but a few tail feathers! Might as well be spittin' into the wind

(Emmi runs on, runs into him, they fall together, with Emmi landing on top of Truffles)

Truffles: Get this thing off me! Oh, miss High and Mighty!

Emmi: Truffles – love of me life. I'll follow you to the ends of the earf.

Truffles: This mornin' I weren't good enough for the likes o' you.

Emmi: It were Aunt Briggi's fault. She wanted to get me permoted.

Truffles: Well this afternoon, you ain't good enough for me! If I had to marry you, I'd draw straws and marry the straw!

Emmi: (tickling him) Oh Truffles, I just loves it when you're angry.

Truffles: Honest? (puckers to kiss) No, you'll only make a fool of me again. (spots Parrot) Polly! I'll catch you yet. (runs off)

Emmi: And I'll catch you yet! (runs after him)

King and Periglio

King: This is indeed a lovely grove.

Periglio: (scheming) Yes, p-perfect!
I am surprised to find you here alone. Where are the hunters?

King: Far off, near the lodge. I followed two Stags, they led me here.

Periglio: Yes, they disappeared into those trees. (when King's back is turned, Periglio mimes shooting an arrow at his back. King turns around and Periglio is almost caught.)

King: Handsome animals, indeed. I shall present the best one to Angelica as a trophy. (behind King's back, Periglio reaches out to strangle him, as King turns around) You seem nervous today. What troubles you, my friend?

Periglio: Your Majesty, for years I have served you loyally. And what is my reward? Humiliation! The fact is, you no longer trust me.

King: How can you say that, Periglio, friend?

Periglio: You learned two secrets from P-Professor Magico, and kept them hidden from me! An insult! If you have so little faith, then find another P-Prime Minister.

King: How can I prove I do trust you?

Periglio: Reveal the Magic Mantra to me

King: NO, I promised Professor Magico

Periglio: Of course! See? You are loyal to him but not to me!

King: Periglio, how distressed you are. Perhaps I should...

Periglio: Trust me, Your Majesty.

King: Alright, here is the formula: My spirit takes a form so strange. Into this creature I now must change...Dog, deer, whatever animal or person. Now. Never again say I do not trust you.

Periglio: What is my reward? P-Poetry! Confound it!

King (as Periglio) and Old Man

King (as Periglio)

(Laughs) What p-power! Now I, P-Periglio, hidden in King Seren's body, will seize Angelica and the kindom of Serendipity. Who will know the difference? No one! But what if the King Stag finds my old body? That could be dangerous! (drags Periglio's body offstage) Into the bushes with you. Sleep well, friend. P-Periglio, get rid of the King Stag and your p-problems are over! Old Man, which way did the Stag go?

Old Man: What's that y'say, sir? This ear don't be hearin' much. T'other one don't be workin' a'tall.

King: Confound it! You were there, moments ago!

Old Man: Sorry, sir. These old eyes don't be seein' good anymore. Been feelin' sickly too. All wore out I fear. Not long for this world.

King: This Royal Forest is p-private p-p-property. You do not belong here.

Old Man: Must o' lost m path in the woods, sir.

King: Out of my way, stupid old fool! What good are you anyway? (angrily lunges at Old Man)

Old Man: Lord o'mercy! (falls down dead)

Old Man and Angelica

Old Man: Do not be afraid of me, I beg you.

Angelica: How dare you! What are you doing here? I'm calling the guards!

Old Man: Oh, do not shield your eyes from me. For I am not what I appear to be. Angelica, don't you know me? I am Seren. You must believe me.

Angelica: What madness! Have you lost your wits, old fellow?

Old Man: I must be mad if I try to convince you. But tell me this:
Is not the King's behavior strange?
Have you observed a dreadful change?

Angelica: Who sent you? Why are you spying on me? None of this makes sense.

Old Man: Inside this worn out shell dwells your true King. Inside Sren's body, the hideous spirit of Periglio lives and rules.

Angelica: That would explain...No! Not possible! You expect me to believe this?

Old Man: Angelica, the truth is more fantastic than any fairy tale.

Angelica: I've heard enough. I'm calling the guards. They will throw you into prison.

Old Man: Let them take me. Nothing else matters anymore

Maxim, Periglio, Angelica, Leandro

Maxim: Leandro! Angelica! Come, come children. Greetings to you, Periglio. A fine morning, is it not? A morning such as this is to be.....For, in the words of the great philosopher....hmmm...what were his words? Well, in mornings such as these...

(Angelica and Leandro enter)

Periglio: Angelica, more beautiful than ever! (tries to kiss her hand, she pulls away)

Angelica: You are...most kind, sir.

Leandro: Why are we summoned? Mater Periglio, surely you know?

Maxim: Is it a matter legal or a matter regal? Perhaps a royal announcement? Or a judicial appeasement. Or a legal annulment. Or merely governmental? Perhaps a royal, judicial, governmental...

Angelica: Celebration! I hear music!