

The Wittenberg Times

1526-1550



All the news that's fit to print with some editorializing by Martin Luther
Editor: Hank Bitten

1545 *Stage Comedians Create Improvised Entertainment in Italy*

We are seeing a new style of entertainment appearing with minstrels and standup comedians gaining popularity with the general population. This new entertainment is secular and an embarrassment to those who value the spiritual or religious context of serious drama.

Our reporters give brave reviews to the performances of the private company, *Commedia dell'Arte*. They are popular in Italy's cities and remind us of how the Church has lost its monopoly on spiritual subjects in the theatre. These street plays are brilliant and fresh and sometimes the actors integrate juggling, acrobatics, and wrestling into their scenes.

The subjects of these new plays include risqué scenes. The one we saw in Florence was of a father and son who fell in love with the same girl – and the young girl appeared naked. These actors have many clever tricks, and some actors wear masks.

We interviewed the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther who vehemently stated, 'these plays are the work of the devil. They are uncivil, use the foulest language on earth, and encourage the deadly sins of theft, adultery, gossip, exaggeration, and lies. We compete for the same audiences to attend the church and the theatre. Unfortunately, the devil may be winning!'



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1545 June 29 - Botanical Gardens Open in Padua

The world's first botanical garden, *Orto Botanico*, opened today in Padua. The circular design surrounded by a ring of water symbolizes the world. We interviewed Andrea Moroni, one of the architects who explained, 'the four squares or quarters are the basis for the geometric shapes of the flowerbeds. The trapezoidal shape gives the design a display of elegance with the different shades of color and a fountain in the middle of each tier.'

The primary purpose of the garden and greenhouses is for scientific research. Many of the plans include precious medicinal plants. The city of Padua has a rich legacy of interest in the sciences.



