



## COLLEGE STUDENTS WORK WITH COMEDY SPECIALIST

Lucky BTEC National Performing Arts students had the privilege of working with internationally renowned physical comedy specialist **Antonio Venturino** for a week.

Venturino, founder of Coup de Masque, has worked with the renowned Italian satirist Dario Fo and taught leading companies around the world. Fo, also a playwright and theatre director, received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1997. Venturino, who collaborated with Fo to produce a version of the one man show **Mistero Buffo** in Sicilian dialect, has been hailed by critics as a performer of rare and sublime qualities.

Venturino worked closely with the Upper Sixth students at the College, helping them to develop their skills and confidence.

Student Rebecca Cutbush (ex Sanders Draper) said: "I have really enjoyed working with Antonio, he is an amazing Commedia actor and is inspiring to watch, so to have the chance to be taught by him and work with him is a once in a lifetime chance. I've found parts of the work really challenging as I have never worked with Commedia dell'Arte before and it is totally out of my comfort zone, but I have had a lot of fun learning the techniques of the art, and it is a fantastic skill to have to take with us into the profession for the future. "

Thomas Woodards (ex Brampton Manor) agreed: "Our week has been full of excitement and stress at times. Antonio is an amazing performer who makes a difficult job look easy and so fun to work with. He is considerate to the fact that we are trying to learn Commedia dell'Arte in three days, when actually it can take at least five years to get to grips with it. However he has still pushed us to believe in ourselves and trust our bodies and geared us towards a respectable performance on Thursday night. This has been a once in a life time opportunity and I am so grateful that I am part of it."

Zoe Frost (ex Marshall's Park) was also enthusiastic about the experience: "Working with Antonio was such an amazing experience and although it may have been extremely challenging, his enthusiasm and passion for performing really gave me the incentive to want to impress and succeed. One of the things I really admired about Antonio was how honest he was, since I am a huge believer in learning through mistakes. There were many points throughout the workshops in which I was told directly I was doing something incorrectly, but instead of leaving me with the wrong action, I could immediately try again. I also really liked the way in which he was not

afraid to give demonstrations of the characters we were portraying. This not only increased my pleasure in learning but also gave me an example to work from. "

The week culminated in an evening of performance on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March at 7pm in the College Theatre. The evening consisted of a performance by the Performing Arts students, followed by an exclusive performance of *Mistero Buffo* by Venturino. This show has been described as " *a hilarious, irreverent spectacle of physical comedy and improvisation at its best*".

This was a rare opportunity to see a world-class performer and students and staff were delighted with the whole event.