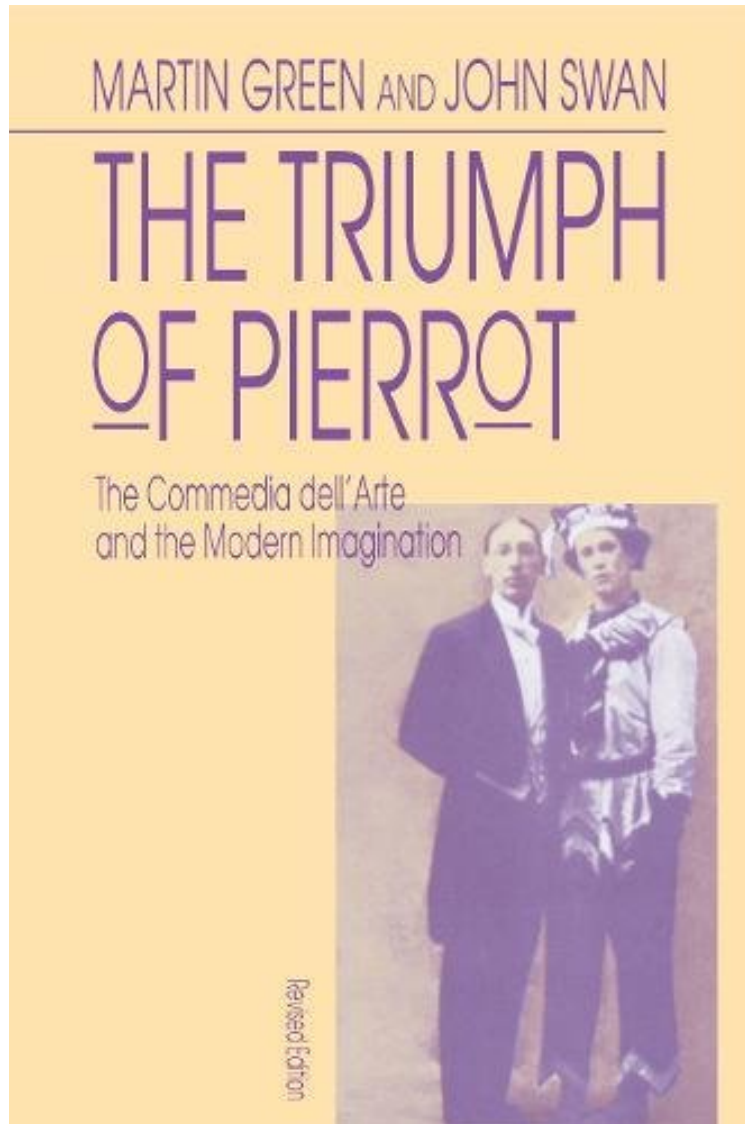


(Online library) The Triumph of Pierrot: The Commedia dell'Arte and the Modern Imagination

The Triumph of Pierrot: The Commedia dell'Arte and the Modern Imagination

Martin Green, John Swan

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Martin Green, John Swan : The Triumph of Pierrot: The Commedia dell'Arte and the Modern Imagination before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Triumph of Pierrot: The Commedia dell'Arte and the Modern Imagination:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Great book By James Fisher This is an important book on an important subject. Green and Swan have identified and vividly explore the relationship of commedia dell'arte figures

(and the French derivative, Pierrot) on a vast range of modernist art, literature, and performance. The result is a rich revelation of both the commedia (or commedic, as Green and Swan say) and modern culture. From Picasso and Stravinsky to the Bread and Puppet Theater, Green and Swan miss few of the major artists and writers profoundly influenced by the imagery, improvisatory style, and art of commedia. This book would be an excellent companion for a course on the subject and it opens to scholars a diverse terrain of topics for further and deeper study. Aside from all that, readers of this book will never view modern culture in quite the same way -- and the seemingly lost art of commedia is brought to life in Green and Swan's illumination of its components in the work of the greatest late nineteenth/early twentieth century artists. A must read.5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Pretty coolBy allie catThis history was really interesting. The organization is strange; it's topical rather than chronological. I've used it for a reference project, but I think it's awesome enough for leisure reading. Green and Swan discuss how history, visual arts, music, literature are all related to the commedia in the 20th century. It's been great for my research, but it's a great, accessible history book. I rate it 4 because occasionally statements contradict each other, and of course, the organization is weird because Green wrote 4 chapters or so and Swan wrote the other 4.

What do Stravinsky, Degas, Chaplin, Isak Dinesen, Meyerhold, Monty Python, and T. S. Eliot have in common? What do such disparate work as Picasso's Family of Saltimbanques," Bergman's "Sawdust and Tinsel," Waugh's "Put Out More Flags," and Pirandello's "Six Characters in Search of an Author" share? As [Green and Swan] persuasively argue in their new book, all have been influenced by the Italian commedia dell'arte. . . . Exaggeration, artifice, and a self-conscious theatricality are commedia's hallmarks; impertinence, mockery, and irony its weapons against the serious threats of the real world. No wonder, then, that commedia (along with the archetypes it supplies) exerted a fierce hold on the modernist imagination, and according to [the authors] left its imprint on virtually every area of Western culture from 1890 to 1930."-Michiko Kakutani in The New York Times"Green and Swan have given us an extraordinary interdisciplinary work. Using Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, the saltimbanque paintings of Picasso and Schoenberg's musical experiments as the starting point, they examine the modernist consciousness, which evolved from the 16th-century concept of the commedia dell'arte character of Pierrot, the original free-spirited revolutionary of European improvisational theater. Green and Swan are sweeping and occasionally breathtaking as they link the masters of modern literary culture to the tragicomic, grotesque traditions of the Harlequin: in literature, Rilke, Kafka, Brecht, and Weill; in art, Chagall and Rouault; in music, Stravinsky and Ravel; in film, Keaton, Chaplin, and the German expressionist montage of Lang and Wiene. From commedia to Caligari, the theme of this enormously provocative book is revolt and the modern spirit. . . . an intellectual tour de force."-Choice

From Publishers WeeklyWhy did modernists such as Picasso and Stravinsky ransack the commedia dell'arte, a lowbrow popular entertainment form of the 16th century, for images of harlequins, acrobats and clowns? While London music halls kept alive the commedia's rowdy spirit, 20th century painters, poets, composers and filmmakers drew on the medieval Italian spectacle for inspiration to challenge society's "respectable" values. Green (Children of the Sun and Swan, an Indiana librarian, track down images of Pierrot, Columbine and Harlequin, or traces of their rebel spirit, in the antics of Chaplin and the Keystone Kops, in Garbo's screen persona, paintings by Rouault and Hockney, Evelyn Waugh's novels, films by Fellini and Bergman, and in Monty Python, The Rocky Horror Show and the "impassive yet soulful Pierrot face" of rock stars David Bowie and Juice Newton. Focusing primarily on the period from 1890 to 1930, this intriguing study shows that the commedia dell'arte's influence has been much greater than many people suspect. The authors frequently stretch the evidence, however; the "blatant staginess" of The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari does not, as they argue, necessarily establish a link to "commedia modernism." Copyright 1986 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalThis study argues that the spirit of com media pervaded much art from 1890 to 1930 and beyond, especially the move ments of Symbolism and Modernism. The authors attempt to prove their point by examining major innovations of composers, choreographers, paint ers, poets, playwrights, and novelists for inspiration by the myth of comme dia. This is a seductive idea, as the commedia spirit recurs regularly in art, fashion, and decoration in both good and bad taste. The book is most con vincing when it discusses Diaghilev, Stravinsky, the Sitwells, Meyerhold, Pirandello, the absurdists, silent film comedy, Fellini, Picasso, and Cocteau. For some artists the argument is strained, e.g., Hemingway, Brecht, and Bergman. On the whole, however, a valuable, well-written, well-researched study. Thomas E. Luddy, English Dept., Salem State Coll., Mass.Copyright 1986 Reed Business Information, Inc. What do Stravinsky, Degas, Chaplin, Isak Dinesen, Meyerhold, Monty Python, and T. S. Eliot have in common? What do such disparate work as Picassos Family of Saltimbanques," Bergmans Sawdust and Tinsel, Waughs Put Out More Flags, and Pirandellos Six Characters in Search of an Author share? As [Green and Swan] persuasively argue in their new book, all have been influenced by the Italian commedia dell'arte. . . . Exaggeration, artifice, and a self-conscious theatricality are commedias hallmarks; impertinence, mockery, and irony its weapons against the serious threats of the real world. No wonder, then, that commedia (along with the archetypes it supplies) exerted a fierce hold on the modernist imagination, and according to [the authors] left its imprint on virtually every area of Western culture from 1890 to 1930.Michiko Kakutani, in The New York TimesGreen and Swan have

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