



GOOSEFEATHERS!

A musical commedia

Book by Steve Seyfried
Music and lyrics by Charlie Gilbert

Goosefeathers! is a musical for family audiences by Steve Seyfried and Charlie Gilbert. This high-energy farce is inspired by the characters, the situations and the *lazzi* (gags) of the Italian commedia dell'arte: the clever servant Pedrolino, his bumbling fellow-servant Arlecchino, his surly master Pantalone, the boastful Captain Braggadocio, and so on. This farcical tale of a ruby ring, a gold coin and a gaggle of geese is made even more hilarious by a special bit of theatrical magic: all seven characters in this fast-paced comedy are played by only three actors, which means that the frantic onstage action is complemented by some fancy quick-change action in the wings.

Synopsis

"Some puns, some jokes/Some very funny folks..." What else would you expect from Italy's classic commedia dell'arte? ask the two players who introduce *Goosefeathers!* in its opening number, "Viva La Commedia!" They display the masks and costumes they will use to portray seven different characters: the clever servant, Pedrolino; his bumbling fellow-servant, Arlecchino; their respective masters, Pantalone and Zanni; the swaggering Captain Braggadocio; Columbina, the lovely (if rustic) geese seller; and the absent-minded Countess whose wild goose chase threads through the entire story.

News of the Countess's impending arrival for dinner sets the wheels of *Goosefeathers'* farcical action turning. Zanni, the nervous host, dispatches his servant Arlecchino to the market with a gold coin to buy geese ("The Goose Song"), while Pantalone, also invited to the dinner, sends his servant Pedrolino to fetch his ruby ring from the jewelers, where it has been cleaned and repaired. Arlecchino, a would-be magician, tries to impress his friend Pedrolino with a disappearing coin trick, but after making Zanni's gold coin disappear, Arlecchino is unable to bring it back. At a loss as to how he will buy the geese for the countess's dinner, Arlecchino turns to Pedrolino for help, and Pedrolino hatches a clever plan ("Pedrolino!"). He decided to sell Pantalone's gold ring to the boastful Captain Braggadocio, who insists on regaling Pedrolino with tales of his brave exploits ("A Moment Of My Time"). Having sold the ring for one gold coin, Pedrolino deftly steals the ring back from its new owner, leaving him in possession of both the ring and the gold.

The Countess continues to search for Zanni, confiding that she is eager to be reunited with her long-lost love ("Making My Way Back To You"). Arlecchino, meanwhile, has been to the market, and one sight of the geese seller, Columbina, has left him smitten by Cupid's dart. He takes the Captain's gold from Pedrolino, and pleads with him to loan him the ring as well, hoping to impress the new object of his affections. At the market, however, Columbina takes more of a fancy to the ring than to its wearer ("Going To Be Mine"), and Arlecchino manages to lose the ring, believing that one of the gaggle of geese he has just bought has eaten it.

Pedrolino suggests they cook and eat the geese; surely the ring will turn up, he tells his distraught friend. Twelve geese later, they are left with no ring, no gold coin, no geese, and only a stomachache to show for their efforts. Meanwhile, their masters, Pantalone and Zanni, voice their growing vexation with their servants' ineptitude in "The Masters' Song."

As Zanni continues to prepare for the arrival of the Countess, the two characters appear in two separate locations to sing a duet ("Will There Be Fireworks?"), expressing their excitement and their apprehension as the time of their meeting draws closer.

Drawing once more upon his wits, Pedrolino decides to disguise himself as a dentist; he presents himself to Pantalone and offers to pull his rotten tooth for one gold coin ("Smile!"). Pantalone spurns the proffered extraction, leaving Pedrolino empty-handed just as the Captain returns to demand the return of his gold coin in repayment for the missing ring. A chase ensues ("Our Goose Is Cooked"), with the three players swapping costumes feverishly as they chase one another through the village square as a variety of characters.

How does Arlecchino retrieve the gold and Pedrolino retrieve the ring? Will the Countess ever find Zanni's house in time for dinner? And just how many geese are in a gaggle? All it takes is a little bit of theatrical magic to resolve this farcical tale and deliver the audience their promised happy ending. *Viva la commedia!*

The characters

Pedrolino (Actor 1) - quick witted and clever, Pedrolino is servant to Pantalone

Arlecchino (Actor 2) - good-natured but a bit of a bumbler, an amateur magician whose tricks often misfire. Servant to Zanni

Pantalone (Actor 2) - rich, old and irascible, unkind to his servant Pedrolino

Zanni (Actor 3) - aging and beset by worries, he demands a lot from his servant Arlecchino

Captain Braggadocio (Actor 3) - boastful and boisterous, full of interminable stories about his heroic exploits

The Countess (Actor 2) - elegant and refined, easily confused

Columbina (Actor 1) - sells geese in the marketplace, earthy and voluptuous, a barnyard diva

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

CHARLIE GILBERT is a writer, composer and theater maker currently living in southern Delaware. For over thirty years, he taught musical theater at the University of the Arts. His 1979 musical "Assassins" was the source of the idea of the award-winning musical of the same name by Sondheim and Weidman, and he wrote the songs for "Gemini the Musical" (Prince Music Theater, 2004, NYMF, 2007), working with playwright Albert Innaurato to adapt his hit comedy for the musical stage. Other works include "Leading Lady," the story of legendary Philadelphia actress Mae Desmond; "A Tiny Miracle," a holiday oratorio based on Richard Wainwright's beloved book; and "Harold and the Purple Crayon," one of many works he created as composer-in-residence for Enchantment Theatre Company. www.chasgilbert.com

STEVE SEYFRIED is a playwright, director, actor and teacher who has created more than twenty original plays and musicals for young audiences. His 50-year career in the theater has covered a lot of territory: teaching in high school and summer camps; acting gigs in summer stock, dinner and regional theater; numerous appearances on film, in commercials and in promotional print. His extensive work with youth led to the founding (along with his wife, Elise) of two theater companies, Family Stages in 1980 and the Rehoboth Summer Children's Theatre in 1982.