

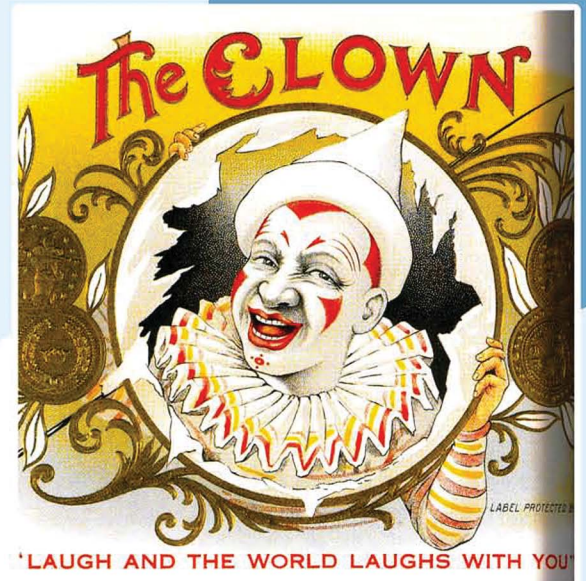
Costume & make-up

The character of Pierrot originates from Pedrolino in the 'Commedia D'ell Arte' or Italian Comedy – an outdoor, itinerant performance form that toured throughout Europe from medieval times.



The familiar black pom-poms and skull caps, come from adaptations made by Jean-Gaspard Debureau and other mime artists in France during the 19th century.

The Italian and French pierrot characters wore white, large-brimmed hats, but the English pierrots adopted the conical, short-brimmed hats that were familiar to the Victorian Pantomime and circus clowns.



Their white make-up was made from a compound of animal fat and zinc oxide – an unfortunate combination that was uncomfortably sticky and could even cause skin cancer!

The make-up and flowing costumes provided an informal uniformity to the troupes and the monochrome look made a delightful contrast with the seaside's blue-green skies and ocean. The pierrots' visual image was essential to their success.



When the vogue for the pierrot costumes waned after the 1st World War, they started to be replaced by what was called the "costumed concert party" – which might feature top hats & tails like the 'Fol-de-Rols', or more exotic versions like 'The Vagabonds' or 'The Scottish Gems'.



The Vagabonds',
Clacton 1908'



The Scottish Gems'