Declaring himself the jongleur of the proletariat, Nobel Prize-winning playwright Dario Fo’s self-perception as a comedian-activist has long drawn unabashedly on tropes drawn from his extensive research into medieval comic entertainment. Fo’s lauded 1969 Mistero Buffo: The Comic Mysteries, which reworked medieval mystery plays to address contemporary politics, is arguably his most overt use of medievalist theatricality to serve his satiric purposes. This paper focuses on Mistero Buffo – both the text and the play’s performance history – as a fascinating instance of performance founded on an equation of populist humour and medievalism. This paper will examine how Fo’s own distinctive, radical buffoonery was developed directly out of his conception of a Middle Ages in which anarchic humour had the power to expose the abuses and hypocrisies of those in power. Dwelling closely on his attempt to reanimate the peripatetic figure of the medieval guillare, which he saluted as the original anti-authoritarian humourist, the paper will argue for Fo’s medievalism as a key weapon in his satiric armoury against the violence of Italian fascist politics and his country’s corrupt government. It will also consider the vital role of Fo’s intensely physical comedy, and in particular his adaptation of farce as an historical form, as an instrument of his satiric agenda. Fo’s depiction of subversive medieval humour will also be read comparatively alongside Mikhail Bakhtin’s mid-twentieth-century formulation of the carnivalesque Middle Ages, exploring their corresponding emergence out of contexts of social unrest and totalitarian rule.