



LIVERMORE
VALLEY *Opera*

The Housekeeper Becomes the Wife

Opera Vocabulary

The **opera** *The Housekeeper Becomes the Wife* is a story about Serpina, a maid, who marries her boss, Uberto. This opera was composed by Giovanni **Pergolesi** in 1733 and is called *La Serva Padrona* in its original Italian language. *La Serva Padrona* takes stereotypical characters from a theater tradition called **Commedia**.

During the **Baroque** period, *Commedia* plays were very popular because they were funny and you could see the same people as characters in different funny stories - similar to modern day TV shows like *Saturday Night Live*. In *La Serva Padrona*, these characters tell the story through their singing. The **actors** are played by a **soprano** (Serpina) who sings with a high voice, and a **baritone** (Uberto) who sings with a low voice.



You can learn a lot about the characters and the story just by listening to the singers and the **accompaniment**. The music helps us figure out the mood - such as something that is **allegro** - which means “happy” - we can feel the music moving quickly and joyfully. The **composer** decides how to make the audience feel through his or her music writing. Sometimes a character will sing an **aria** by themselves, or they will sing together in a **duet**. Serpina sings one aria that has two different styles. Serpina tries to make Uberto feel sad in the **largo** section of her aria, and then tells us about her trick during the **minuet** section, which was a very popular style of dancing in the Baroque period. Uberto reacts with his aria that he sings very loudly, or **forte**. When singing to themselves or telling a secret, they will sing with a **piano** dynamic. Listen carefully to your music and you will learn many new things!

Word Bank:

Largo	Composer	Minuet
Commedia	Duet	Baroque
Pergolesi	Baritone	Opera
Actor	Soprano	Piano
Forte	Allegro	Aria