



La serva padrona: **Characters and Voice Types**

CHARACTERS IN *LA SERVA PADRONA*

CHARACTER NAME	PRONUNCIATION	DESCRIPTION	VOICE TYPE
Uberto	oo-BEHR-toh	An elderly gentleman	Bass
Serpina	sehr-PEE-nah	Uberto's servant	Soprano
Vespono	ves-POH-neh	Another servant	Silent role

VOICE TYPES

Just as each person's speaking voice has a certain range and sound, each singer's voice falls within a certain range and possesses a unique tone or quality. In the same way that no two people are physically identical, no two voices sound the same. There is a tremendous variety within each vocal range.

Female Voices

Soprano:

Highest vocal range, usually female (or unchanged male voice.) Sopranos have been an integral part of classical opera from its inception. They usually sing the ingénue or lead female. *Example: Serpina.*

Mezzo-soprano:

Voice type whose range falls below that of a soprano. Rose to popularity in opera around the 19th century when counter-tenor voices were used less frequently. It is during this period that pant-roles (male role played by a female mezzo-soprano) came into fashion. Although not usually the leading voice type, several roles have been written with this voice type in mind. *Example: Carmen.*

Contralto:

The lowest female voice whose range falls below that of a mezzo-soprano and overlaps that of a tenor. Contraltos are often cast as older female characters.

Male Voices

Countertenor:

Covering a similar range to a contralto, a countertenor is the highest of male voices. This voice type is more common in European sacred music.

Tenor:

Male voice whose range falls below that of a contralto. In traditional opera, the tenor voice connotes a sense of youth and the role of the hero is often played by a tenor.

Baritone:

This voice type falls below that of a tenor and was used a great deal in 18th century opera. Composers such as Mozart, Wagner, and Verdi wrote major roles for baritones.

Bass:

Lowest of the male voices, a bass is typically cast as an older character. One example is Pergolesi's Uberto.

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