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# Politics and Pergolesi

## Examining How Eighteenth-Century Italian Politics Influenced the Growth of Pergolesi's Neapolitan Style, and Opera Itself

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Giovanni Battista Pergolesi transplanted his reactions to changes in Italian socio-political structures to the stage in *La Serva Padrona*. Through a contextual analysis of events contemporaneous to Pergolesi's time, and by reflecting upon written sources and musical examples, this paper examines how both *La Serva Padrona*, and Pergolesi himself were affected by growing class divisions between the opera going public, the royal courts' inability to properly govern, and the decentralization of Italian politics.

In this paper, I pursue the development of Pergolesi's Neapolitan style, and examine the cultural, economic and political settings which surrounded *La Serva Padrona*. Resulting from Italian decentralization, I explore how the cultural growth of Naples caused it to become isolated from the rest of Italy, allowing its conservatory students, such as Pergolesi, to develop a distinctive intermezzo style. I examine how Italy prospered from large revenues generated by exporting their unique culture to foreign markets, resulting in larger budgets, which Pergolesi and his contemporaries were able to utilize. I investigate how a substantial amount of public funding and interest was provided by the politically-weakened administration associated with King Charles VII of Naples, which protected the aristocracy's wealth.

Through the examination of these contexts, I bring together themes of Italian culture, economy and politics to identify the environments in which *La Serva Padrona* thrived, failed, and caused international reform.