



La serva padrona is a much slighter work in every way, as one might expect. It's the story of a servant girl, Serpina, who conspires with her fellow servant, Volpone, to trick her master, Umberto, into marrying her by pretending to be engaged to a choleric officer. Since Umberto is clearly (a)in love with her and (b)completely under her thumb, this doesn't prove too hard. The music is light and tuneful but not terribly interesting.



Brockhaus sets the piece in a circus. Umberto turns out to be a lion tamer and Serpina, we suppose, some sort of acrobat. Volpone is a clown and there's a brief bit

with animal costumed dancers which is the only place where Umberto is cracking the whip rather than Serpina. Both principals; Alessandra Marianelli as Serpina and Carlo Lepore as Uberto are pretty good. They both sing well and are convincing in their respective roles. Jean meningue clowns it up in the silent role of Volpone. Video direction here is pretty straightforward and undistracting and the technical details are as for *Il prigionier superbo*.



All in all, a worthwhile recording of comparative rarities. One day i might try watching it, as intended, with the intermezzo in between the acts.

It's a typical power struggle/love polygon/revenge drama. Metalce is a Goth prince who has defeated and imprisoned Sostrate, king of Norway. He intends to marry Rosmene, Sostrate's daughter, to cement his hold on the crown. To do so he must give up Ericlea, a Goth princess and apparently heir to the throne of the Goths. She is not pleased. Meanwhile Viridate, Metalce's chief ally and heir to the Danish throne, had planned on marrying Rosmene and is not pleased by this turn of events. Micisde, queen of Norway, is also involved. Anyway, after three acts of threats, blusterings and misunderstandings everyone gangs up on Metalce and the status quo ante is restored. metalce will marry Hericlea and, ultimately, one assumes, become king of the Goths. Sostrate is restored to his throne and Viridate will marry Rosmene, ultimately uniting the thrones of Norway and Denmark.



It's quite interesting to look at and very decent musically. To my ear it compares favourably with Handel. Some of the big numbers are rather beautiful; *Del mio valore al tempo*, sung by Viridate in the second act is a good example. The singing of all of the women is very good; stylish and easy on the ear. The tenor, Antonio Lozano, playing Sostrate, is a bit rough though. The standouts among the women are probably the two trouser roles. Marina Comparato, playing the higher role of Viridate, is superb throughout. A real pleasure to listen to. Mezzo Marina de Liso, tricked out as a goth (in the modern sense, geddit?) is also very good in the demanding lower role of Metalce. The ladies qua ladies are also good. Marina Rodriguez Cusi sings the contralto role of Rosmene with pathos and dramatic intensity. Her role has to carry all the "weakness of women" elements in the plot even though she might be the most honest and steadfast of any of the characters. Decent work too from Ruth Rosique as Ericlea and Giancita Nicotra in the comparatively small role of Micisda. The band, on period instruments, is very good and Rovaris never lets things drag.



Tiziano Mancini is the video director and does a reasonable job of the rather difficult task of small scale action happening simultaneously on different parts of the stage. He does get a bit cute towards the end though with rather an excess of superpositions and dissolves in the final scene. The video and Dolby surround sound quality are good modern DVD standard (there's also a Blu-ray version with HD audio available). The booklet has a track listing and an essay but no synopsis, which would have been helpful. Subtitle options are Italian, English, German, French, Spanish and Korean.





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