

# The libretto in brief

Traduzione di Chris Owen

The action is set in Vietri, near Salerno. In front of Col'Agnolo's barber's shop, Ciccariello, the errand boy, is sweeping the pavement and singing a song, while Ciomma Palummo, or Ciommetella, is intent on her lacework. The ageing barber is in love with her and courts her, but to no avail. In the distance, Carlo Celmino, a gentleman from Sorrento, is out for a stroll. He has previously abandoned his former love, Belluccia, the daughter of Federico Mariano, the captain of a Sicilian galley. For fear of her father's reaction, Carlo has fled Sorrento, seeking safety in Vietri, where he has fallen in love with the beautiful Ciommetella, but is in despair since his love is unrequited. In the meantime, Belluccia, who is still in love with Carlo, has abandoned her father's house and has come to Vietri in search of her beloved; she hopes to rekindle the old flame and to regain her lost honour. She dons men's clothing and assumes the false identity of Peppariello. In this disguise, she causes Ciommetella, who believes her to be a man, to fall in love with her. Then, Belluccia, dressed as a man, also becomes the object of the attentions of an elderly relative of Ciommetella's, Meneca Vernillo, who is not resigned to her advancing years and still feels certain romantic urges. The situation is further complicated by Meneca's son, Titta Castagna, who also falls vainly in love with Ciommetella. Belluccia comes across her beloved Carlo and recognises him immediately; he, however, believes her to have died after his abandonment of her and

fails to see through her male disguise. Belluccia, seeing that he has fallen for Ciommetella, does not reveal her identity to him. Meanwhile, Federico Mariano, Belluccia's father, has brought his galley to the Bay of Salerno to take shelter from a storm, and he has come ashore at Vietri. Federico, accompanied by Assan, his trusted Turkish slave, meets and recognises both Carlo and his daughter, Belluccia. He threatens to kill Carlo to avenge the insult of his daughter's abandonment, but Belluccia generously intercedes for her lover, telling her father that the gentleman has officially promised to marry her. The two young people receive Federico's forgiveness and board his ship to return home and celebrate their marriage. And so, they leave the place with the memory of a betrothed couple "on the galley".