



Synopsis

Characters

Don Pasquale	Bass
Doctor Malatesta	Baritone
Norina	Soprano
Ernesto	Tenor

ACT I

Don Pasquale is furious at his nephew Ernesto for refusing to marry the woman Pasquale had chosen for him. Deciding to disinherit Ernesto for becoming engaged to the beautiful but poor widow Norina, Pasquale has asked his friend Dr. Malatesta to help Pasquale find a wife so he may have a child to inherit his fortune.

Malatesta, both aware and supportive of Ernesto and Norina's relationship, devises a plan to change Pasquale's mind. He tells Pasquale that he has a sister-- Sofronia -- raised in a convent, who would be the perfect bride. In reality, he plans to have Norina only pose as the bride-to-be. Pasquale informs Ernesto of his plans to marry and to disinherit him and orders him out of the house. Ernesto sadly decides to break his engagement to Norina, rather than submit her to his new life of poverty.

Norina is delighting in her own skills at flirtation, when a note from Ernesto changes her mood entirely: Ernesto relates his uncle's plans and his own resolve to give her up. Dr. Malatesta enters and, after reading the letter, calms Norina and shares his scheme to fool Pasquale. She agrees to play along, and they rehearse how she will act when she meets Pasquale.

ACT II

Ernesto, miserable, prepares to leave. Meanwhile, Malatesta presents the veil-clad "Sofronia" -- Norina in disguise -- to Pasquale. He is thrilled and particularly pleased when she tells him that her main interests are sewing and tending to the home. When she removes the veil, Pasquale is totally smitten and calls immediately for a lawyer to perform the ceremony. Malatesta has conveniently arranged for a Notary -- actually his cousin -- who he ushers in to seal the deal. As part of the marriage settlement, Pasquale agrees to bequeath half of his property to his wife. Ernesto, still unaware of the scheme unwittingly interrupts the ceremony to say good-bye to his uncle. Outraged when he sees Norina dressed as the bride, Ernesto almost gives away her

identity, but Malatesta manages to whisper just enough of their plans to calm him down. Ernesto, although very unwilling and still suspicious, signs the contract as a witness.

As soon as the deal is signed, Norina immediately switches character. She assumes a willful manner and insults Pasquale, announcing that, from now on, she will be the boss in their household. She doubles the major-domo's wages, orders him to hire more servants, and then moves on to describing her grand plans for horses, new furniture, and expensive jewelry. She even employs Ernesto, who by now has figured out the scheme, as her escort. Pasquale is overcome with shock, and must be helped out by Malatesta, who warns the lovers to be careful.

ACT III

Pasquale, in a rage, is tallying up the Norina's bills. He resolves to tame Norina or die in the effort. Norina enters hurriedly and announces she is going out to the theater for the evening alone. He objects and an argument ensues, at the height of which Norina slaps his face, which she immediately regrets. Pasquale, deeply shamed by her slap, resolves to end his foolish marriage. Norina, who feels sorry for him, suggests that he get a good night's sleep and leaves, intentionally dropping a note on the way which Pasquale picks up and reads. Stunned, Pasquale learns that she has made a date to rendezvous with a lover that evening in the garden. He summons Malatesta to help him disclose her infidelity. Malatesta, meanwhile, still orchestrating the plot, has briefed Ernesto for his role in the upcoming rendezvous.

Ernesto is serenading Norina in the garden. When she joins him, Pasquale, as planned, observes their tryst, becoming furious at what he sees. Malatesta calms his friend and, revealing the truth, convinces him that he should allow the two young people to marry. Too relieved by the prospect of being free of his troublesome "wife" to be angry, Pasquale gives them his blessing.