



Photos by Alexander Iziliaev.

## Story

### **Act I, The Market**

Teresina's mother Veronica, who does not want her to marry a poor fisherman named Gennaro, introduces her to two other suitors. These are two older but wealthy men named Peppo and Giacomo. Teresina, much to her mother's distress, refuses them both and instead goes off to wait for Gennaro. When Gennaro arrives back at port, he and Teresina go to find Veronica and try to convince her that they should wed. Luckily for them, this task proves relatively easy once she sees how true the young couple's love is. Full of happiness and possibility, Teresina and Gennaro sail off together.

Meanwhile a group of entertainers come and put on a show for the townsfolk. However, a violent storm begins and the festivities come to an abrupt end. When the storm ends, Gennaro is found, but Teresina is not. Thinking she has drowned, Veronica openly mourns for her daughter and blames Gennaro for her death. So stricken by this turn of events, Gennaro becomes lost in despair but regains hope when he sees a statue of the Madonna. Soon Fra Ambrosio, the local monk, appears and gives him a picture of the Madonna, telling him to go and find Teresina.

### **Act II, The Blue Grotto**

Gennaro looks everywhere for Teresina and eventually finds her in The Blue Grotto, a magical place ruled by the sea spirit Golfo who has turned Teresina into a Naiad (Fairy of the Sea). Because of the transformation, Teresina no longer remembers Gennaro. However, through faith and love, Teresina is changed back into a human and has her memory restored. Quickly, Gennaro and Teresina leave the Grotto to return to Naples.

### **Act III, The Wedding**

When Teresina and Gennaro return, the townsfolk are suspicious because they had thought Teresina was dead. Peppo and Giacomo even try to convince everyone that Gennaro is in league with evil forces. This rumor is soon disproved and the wedding celebration can begin. The act closes with a bubbling series of dances: pas de six, solos, duets and trios, a tarantella (a lively folk dance) and finale.

## The Music of Napoli

**Contributors:** Edvard Helsted & Holger Simon Paulli (*Acts I and III*), Niels W. Gade (*Act II*), Hans Christian Lumbye (*selections*)

**Nationalities:** Danish

**Style/Period:** Romantic Period

### **An interesting collaboration:**

- Choreographer August Bournonville recounts in his memoirs how, during a monotonous carriage journey, he spent hours humming what became the first three sections of the tarantella in Act III.
- The tarantella became Bournonville's inspiration for the creation of the ballet.
- In Act I, Rossini's slander aria from *The Barber of Seville* is used as the basis for Peppo's slander scene
- The folk tune *Te voglio ben assai* is used in Act I to highlight the young lovers' feelings
- The Latin hymn *O Santissima* is used in Act II to underscore the power of Christianity over Golfo's demonry
- The ballet was choreographed after Bournonville had visited Naples, where he had been impressed by the local colour and the vibrancy of a city in constant movement. He strove to include the "brightness and dynamism" of the city in the work, ending the final act with a lively tarantella

## Take-Aways

- What is the story of *Napoli* about? What is it that the main character wants? How is she going to get it? Was she successful?
- Why is everyone angry with Gennaro when he returns with Teresina? What is your opinion about this issue? Do you think the people should have been more forgiving?
- Describe Gennaro's actions in the story. How do his actions affect the story's ending?
- In this version of *Napoli*, Gennaro and Teresina get married and the town forgives Gennaro. Break up into groups and use the synopsis of the ballet to create your own alternate ending to the story and show your version to the class. Discuss the reasons for your choices and compare and contrast the reasons of others in the class.