Early opera took a peculiar turn in the 17th century. Bowing to the demands of paying customers, more and more superfluous comical elements were layered upon the fates of great heroic characters. At some point there was a backlash, and the *opera seria,* where only noble figures are found, came into being. Episodes of slapstick were set apart from the opera and played in front of the curtain between acts to entertain the audience. The two most renowned of these intermezzos, Giovanni Battista Pergolesi's *Serva padrona* and *Livietta e Tracollo*, were recorded by the Boston Early Music Festival in Bremen last autumn after several live performances. These two capriccios were real "hits" during the composer's (very short) lifetime and still keep their Neapolitan charm and wit even today. Two irresistible stories are featured – a maid who uses clever sophistication to conquer the heart of her master and the turbulent "robber story" of a cunning peasant girl who puts a villain on the right path to marriage.