

KENTUCKY OPERA

Proudly Presents

Cavalleria Rusticana
by
Pietro Mascagni
Featuring

I Pagliacci
by
Ruggiero Leoncavallo
Featuring

Turridu (a young soldier)
Tenor
Alfio (the village carter)
Baritone
Lola (Alfio's wife)
Mezzo-Soprano
Mamma Lucia (Turridu's mother)
Contralto
Santuzza (a village girl)
Soprano

Canio (Pagliaccio)
Tenor
Nedda (Columbina)
Soprano
Tonio (Taddeo)
Baritone
Beppe (Harlequin)
Tenor
Silvio, a villager
Baritone

Cavalleria Rusticana—the synopsis

Just 26 years old when he composed *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Mascagni won the Sonzogno (a Milan publisher) competition and was catapulted to fame. However, he was never able to reach the same level of success compositionally.

Because it is a one-act, *Cavalleria Rusticana* is most often paired with *I Pagliacci*, although other one-acts like parts of Puccini's *Il Trittico* (*Il Tabarro*, *Gianni Schicchi* and *Suor Angelica*), can also be effective counterparts.

CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA (Rustic Chivalry)

Music by Pietro Mascagni

Libretto by Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti and Guido Menasci based on the story and play by Giovanni Verga

Place: A village in Sicily

Time: An Easter Sunday in the 1890's

Act I - A public square in a Sicilian village on Easter morning.

As church bells ring, the villagers are seen going to church. Santuzza is upset and approaches Mamma Lucia's house. Mamma Lucia appears and Santuzza asks for Turiddu, but his mother tells her that he has gone to fetch wine for the tavern. Santuzza tells Mamma Lucia that she has been seduced by Turiddu and is now pregnant. Their conversation is interrupted by Alfio. Alfio brags of his career as a carrier and the beauty of his wife Lola (*Il cavallo scalpita*). Alfio also asks for Turiddu and is told that Turiddu is fetching wine. Alfio comments that he saw Turiddu that morning near his own cottage. Alfio leaves and the villagers sing the Easter hymn (*Innegiamo, il Signor non e morto*).

Mamma Lucia asks Santuzza to explain Turiddu's appearance near Alfio's cottage. Santuzza tells her that Lola was once Turiddu's lover, but when he left to join the army, she married Alfio. When Turiddu returned, he and Santuzza began their affair and she became pregnant. Now Turiddu is now seeing Lola again during her husband's many absences. Santuzza feels that she has sinned and is unable to go into the church. Mamma Lucia feels sorry for Santuzza and will pray for her.

Turiddu enters and Santuzza accuses him of lying about his whereabouts. Turiddu admits that he'd be in trouble if Alfio found out about his trysts with Lola. Santuzza is upset. Lola enters (*Fior di giaggiolo*), makes fun of Santuzza and enters the church. Turiddu follows her in spite of Santuzza's entreaties.

Alfio arrives looking for Lola. Santuzza tells him of Lola's faithlessness (*Turiddu mi tolse l'onore*). Alfio is furious. He and Santuzza leave.

The congregation leaves the church including Turiddu and Lola. Turiddu invites his friends to come to his mother's tavern for drinks (*Viva il vino spumeggiante*). Alfio reappears and Turiddu offers him a drink, which is refused. The women feel there is trouble brewing and leave, taking Lola with them. Alfio challenged Turiddu to a duel. Turiddu tells his mother that he's going away (*Mamma, quel vino e generoso*) and he asks her to look after Santuzza. Turiddu leaves a crying Mamma Lucia who is being comforted by Santuzza.

It is reported that Turiddu has been murdered (*Hanno ammazzato compare Turiddu*) and as Mamma Lucia is supported by the women, Santuzza faints.

I Pagliacci—the synopsis

Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci* has its style origins in the world of Italian commedia dell'arte. Each specific character has a role and a mask to play on stage. The Harlequin (Arlecchino), the Columbine (Columbina) and the Pedrolino (Pierrot or Pagliaccio) (more specifics in the section on commedia dell'arte).

Like *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *I Pagliacci* was written as a one act in the *verismo*, or realism, style that became popular in the late 19th century. Instead of fantastic or mythological characters, *verismo* focuses on real people.

Music and libretto by Ruggiero Leoncavallo after a newspaper crime story

First performed on May 21, 1892 in Milan

Place: Montalto, in Calabria

Time: Between 1865-70 during the Feast of the Assumption (August 15)

Prologue

Tonio announces that this story is about real people (*Si puo? Signore Signori*).

Act I – The village square

Celebrations are underway for the Feast of the Assumption. A travelling group of actors has arrived and are preparing for their performance. Canio, the leader of the troupe, invites the entire village to attend their performance at eleven o'clock. Tonio tries to help Nedda (Canio's wife) from the travelling wagon, but Canio pushes him aside. One of the villagers jokes that Tonio is in love with Nedda. Canio replies that he would kill Tonio if that were true (*Un tal gioco*).

Alone, Nedda is concerned about her husband's behavior. She hears the birds sing and she reflects on their freedom and her childhood (*Oh! che volo d'augelli*). The lovesick Tonio enters the wagon and tries to kiss Nedda. She slaps him across the face and he leaves muttering that he will get revenge.

Silvio (Nedda's lover) enters and tells Nedda that they are safe since Canio is drinking at the local inn. He asks her to elope with him that evening. They agree to meet that evening after the play (*E allor perche, di', tu m'hai stregato*). Tonio has been eavesdropping on their conversation and he leaves to get Canio. Canio appears just as Nedda calls after Silvio. With knife in hand, Canio rushes to kill Nedda's lover, but Nedda blocks his path and Silvio gets away. Canio demands to know his name, but Nedda refuses. Tonio and Beppe stop Canio from stabbing Nedda telling him that Nedda's lover will be at the play tonight and he should wait. Canio dresses in his clown costume and sings of his pain (*Vesti la giubba*). He sings that the clown must make others laugh, even though he is in pain.

Act II – The village square

The play begins. Colombina's (Nedda) husband Pagliaccio (Canio) is away. Taddeo (Tonio) is away at the market and she is waiting for her lover Harlequin (Beppe). Harlequin arrives and sings to Colombina (*O Colombina, il tenero fido Arlecchin*). Taddeo returns and tries to seduce Colombina. Colombina orders Harlequin to throw out Taddeo. Harlequin has brought a sleeping potion for Pagliaccio. Taddeo rushes in and tells them that Pagliaccio is on his way, furious with Colombina. Harlequin escapes through the window, instructing Colombina to pour the sleeping potion into Pagliaccio's drink. The furious Pagliaccio enters and Colombina swears she is alone, except for Taddeo who is hiding in the cupboard. Canio is losing control and loses his character, demanding to know who Nedda's lover is. Nedda tries to maintain the play but Canio becomes more insistent. Frustrated, Canio grabs a knife and demands the lover's name. Nedda rushes into the crowd, but Canio catches her and stabs her. Silvio rushes to her aid, but Canio kills him as well. Canio remarks that the comedy is over (*La commedia e finita*).

Pietro Mascagni 1863-1945



Pietro Mascagni was born in 1863 in Livorno, Italy (the Tuscany region) as the second son of a baker and his wife. He studied music in Milan and composed several pieces by his late teens. He also had the opportunity to meet many of the giants in Italian opera including Arrigo Boito (librettist for *La Gioconda* and composer of *Mefistofele*), Amilcare Ponchielli (composer of *La Gioconda*) and Giacomo Puccini (*Tosca*, *La Boheme*, *Madame Butterfly*).

Mascagni toured as a conductor but continued to compose. In July of 1888, Casa Sonzogno (a Milan publisher) announced its second competition for one act operas. In February 1889, at the age of 26, Mascagni married and by May had turned in his composition of *Cavalleria Rusticana*. In February 1890, Mascagni was summoned to Rome to premiere his opera that ultimately won the competition. Almost single-handedly, Mascagni ushered in the era of *verismo* or realism in opera. This isn't to say that a *verismo* opera is realistic in terms of characters as the libretti can often be overly dramatized or even lurid and violent. It does mean that the characters are not fantasy, royalty or mythological in nature. They were real people with real problems and real emotions.

In 1892, Mascagni premiered his second opera *L'amico Fritz* that met with relative success but nothing that matched *Cavalleria*. In fact, he wrote seventeen operas and operettas with none achieving the same status within the operatic repertoire as *Cavalleria*.

Throughout the early 1900s, Mascagni toured the world as a composer and conductor. He had a brief falling out with Puccini and Leoncavallo but the relationships were repaired within a few years.

In 1940, Italy celebrated the 50th anniversary of *Cavalleria Rusticana* with Mascagni conducting productions throughout the country. He also recorded a special introduction for EMI when they recorded *Cavalleria*.

Mascagni died on August 2, 1945 at the age of 81.

Ruggiero Leoncavallo

1858 - 1919



Ruggiero Leoncavallo was born in Naples on March 5, 1858. He trained at the Naples Conservatory and earned a living by playing in various cafes and composing operas (although most of his operas went unnoticed by critics and audiences). The success of Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* in 1890 spurred Leoncavallo on to create a verismo style opera of his own with *I Pagliacci* in 1892. *Pagliacci* premiered at the Teatro dal Verme in Milan, with Toscanini as conductor to rave reviews and Leoncavallo had his first (and only) operatic success. Leoncavallo's libretto was based on Catulle Mendès' play *La Femme de Tabarin* (1887), although Leoncavallo's version of how he came to his libretto was more colorful. He claimed it was based on an incident he witnessed as a child. Apparently, he was taken to see a troupe of comedians in Calabria when a man was stabbed by the head of the troupe after being caught with the man's wife.

Because *I Pagliacci* was a one-act opera, it was often paired with other one acts including the opera that sparked *Pagliacci*'s composer, *Cavalleria Rusticana*. As early as December 1893, the Cav/Pag pairing began and remains the most popular of the pairings. For both composers, each opera represented their only successes.

In 1897, Leoncavallo premiered *La Bohème* which is one of his finest works, and even though Leoncavallo's version followed Henri Mürger's story more closely than Puccini's, it was completely eclipsed by the success of Puccini's version which premiered in 1896.

Leoncavallo wrote another 13 opera and operettas, all of which have been forgotten.

Leoncavallo died in Montecatani on August 9, 1919.

Where in the World?



"Italy." *Infoplease Atlas*.

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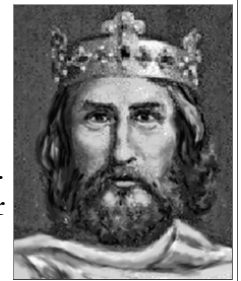
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<<http://www.infoplease.com/atlas/country/italy.html>>.

Italy's history has its origins as early as 2.5 million years ago. The regions of Italy (north and south) developed differently based on immigration and climate. The southern region was largely agricultural and had some metalworking skills brought by immigrants. Northern Italy tended towards the culture of northern Europe with wooden villages, bronze working and cremation ceremonies. The Iron Age brought immigrants from Greece (in southern Italy) and the Etruscans (in central Italy and Po Valley).

The city of Rome was founded in 753 B.C. but the real power came during the Roman Empire in the final century prior to AD. After the death of Julius Caesar, and the defeat of Marc Antony by Caesar's son Octavian (later known as Augustus), Rome was the center of a huge empire that expanded throughout Europe and parts of Africa. Rome came under control of a variety of groups including Germans, Goths, Lombards and Byzantines. Italy was becoming a center for the growing Christian population. Italy was not a unified country at this time, it was a collection of city states. Emperor Constantine had moved to Constantinople which later became known as the Rome of the East.

The 5th through 7th centuries saw Italy under the influence of the Lombards. The Popes of the time resisted the Lombard rule and held lands that later became the Papal states.



Charlemagne

Another Germanic group, the Franks, in-

vaded Italy in the late 8th century and Italy came under the rule of Charlemagne. Italy was a battle ground between the Franks, Byzantines and Saracens (from North Africa). By the 11th century, the rise of the city states became the primary form of government. The larger cities of Italy including Florence, Genoa, Milan and Venice had a burgher government system (the burghers were a wealthy merchant class) and were powerful city states. The southern part of Italy was changing and by the 12th century there was a king in Sicily (Roger II). For northern cities, there was still the struggle between the Holy Roman Empire and the Catholic Church. The Popes' had a tremendous amount of power and influence and this led to conflict with the Holy Roman Emperors. The city states had powerful families ruling them including the Viscontis in Milan, the Medicis in Florence and the Estes in Ferrara. During the Renaissance, these families were the patrons of the arts in their respective cities. In particular, the Medicis made Florence the cultural center of Italy with their support of the arts.

By the mid 16th century, Italy was under new control with the Habsburgs (Charles V) and eventually came under Spanish control. The 18th century saw the end of the Renaissance in Italy and some independence of kingdoms including Sardinia and the Two Sicilies. The century also saw a series of wars throughout Europe including the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. In the early 19th century, Napoleon invaded Italy but by 1814 had to withdraw. In 1815, Italy consisted of several city states, some were independent (Sardinia, Two Sicilies, Papal States, Tuscany) while others were controlled by Austria (primarily in north and central Italy). The control of parts of Italy led to the unification movement (Risorgimento). In 1859, Camillo Benso (with the support of France and England) took control of Lombardy and in 1860, all of Italy that was north of the Papal States (except Venice) was added to the Kingdom of Sardinia. Giuseppe Garibaldi and his "red shirts" took control of the southern part of

Italy. In 1861, the Kingdom of Italy was official. Only Venice and Rome were not part of the new kingdom although within 9 years they would be. The Pope was furious (he had lost both Rome and a large amount of land) and he refused to recognize the new country.

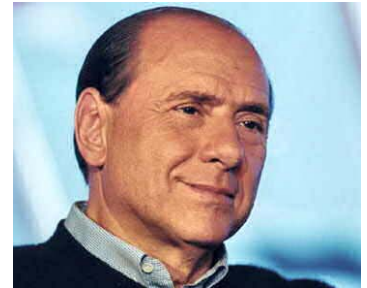


Mussolini & Hitler

Italy's expansionist ideas included unsuccessfully trying to conquer Ethiopia and Turkey. They joined with Germany and Austria in 1882 to increase their influence. By the early 20th century, much of Europe was involved in World War I with Italy remaining neutral until 1915 when they joined the Allied forces only because they had been promised land that they considered part of Italy. They were only granted a small portion of the land they had hoped for. By the end of World War I, Italy was in desperate financial straits. In 1919, Benito Mussolini began a new political movement called Fascism. By 1922, Mussolini had been named Prime Minister by King Emmanuel III and within four years, Mussolini was Italy's dictator (or later called "duce"). Mussolini wanted to expand Italy's territories and influence which led to conquering Ethiopia in 1936 and supporting Franco's efforts in the Spanish Civil War. By the late 1930's, Mussolini allied himself with another fascist dictator, Adolf Hitler of Germany, and together they created the

Rome-Berlin Axis. World War II began with Germany's blitzkrieg across Europe and Italy was solidly on Germany's side of the war. Mussolini did not fare well during the war. Mussolini was ousted by his own leadership and escaped to northern Italy. The king and the southern part of Italy surrendered to the Allies and joined in the fight against their former allies, Germany. In 1945, the Germans were out of Italy and Mussolini was caught and executed.

After World War II, by popular election, the monarchy was ended in Italy and a new republic with a constitution was created. Along with help from the United States, Italy recovered economically from World War II and joined NATO. The latter half of the 20th century in Italy was marked with prosperity, struggle, inflation, unemployment and surges of violence from extremist groups. The Italian government has often been plagued with scandal and, at times, left Italy in chaos. The current President is multi-millionaire Silvio Berlusconi.



I Pagliacci—Commedia dell'arte

Commedia dell'arte (comedy of the art) is also known as Italian comedy. Theatrical troupes performed throughout Italy primarily during the Renaissance and reached its height of popularity during the 16th and 17th centuries. And though this particular art form existed for more than 400 years, the style of commedia dell'arte still pervades modern theater and entertainment. Commedia dell'arte did not limit itself to Italy alone – both French pantomime and English Harlequinade are loosely based on this style of theater.

The stories told through commedia dell'arte were primarily comedies that included music, dance and witty dialogue as well as physical humor. Since these troupes traveled, the settings and props for commedia dell'arte performances were minimal, relying more on existing settings (the town square) and props like animals, food and furniture that were readily available anywhere they toured. Some props still used today have a history in commedia dell'arte. The character, Arlecchino, carried two sticks tied together that make a loud sound when struck (“slapstick”).

The appearance of a commedia dell'arte performance may have seemed haphazard, but the troupe was highly trained and disciplined. The troupe had pre-arranged scenarios (*lazzi*) as well as improvised scenes, musical pieces and dialogue to give the illusion of complete improvisation. And while the specific characters had masks and costumes that identified them, the actors relied on their physical actions to convey emotions. This included almost gymnastic moves (leaps and tumbles) as well as physical humor (obscene gestures, pratfalls, etc.).

The characters portrayed in commedia dell'arte fell into specific categories and each had masks and/or clothing as well as a social status that represented them. Typically these characters included silly old men, blustering soldiers, mischievous servants and pompous doctors. The characters below represent specific characters portrayed by the troupe in *I Pagliacci*. It's interesting to note the similarities between the characters they play and their actions in “real life”.



Arlecchino

The most famous character in commedia dell'arte is Arlecchino or The Harlequin. He was typically a servant who was often portrayed as not very bright and a bit greedy. It was easy to identify Arlecchino by his costume; typically a black leather mask and a patchwork, highly colorful jacket and trousers. He was very acrobatic and used the slang common for the day.

Arlecchino's girlfriend was also a servant called Columbina. Unlike Arlecchino, Columbina was usually very smart, witty and rather scheming. The female characters in commedia dell'arte did not always have masks, but their clothing displayed their social standings and sometimes identified them with a counter part (sometimes Columbina wore a similar patchwork dress to that of Arlecchino's jacket/trousers).



Columbina



Pierrot/Paliacchio

Pedrolino (Pierrot and/or Pagliaccio) was the clown (*zanni*) and always appeared in white face. This character usually wore very loose clothing, especially long sleeves and shin length pants. He also wore a pointed hat.

Shakespeare and Moliere both took inspiration from commedia dell'arte, using characters, names and “plots”. Even into the 20th and 21st centuries, slapstick and physical humor all have their origins in commedia dell'arte. Entertainers including the Keystone Kops, the Marx Brothers, Chevy Chase, and the cast of *Seinfeld* have all be inspired by commedia dell'arte.

I Pagliacci—The Feast of the Assumption



The Assumption of the Virgin Mary by El Greco

The Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (mother of Jesus) is a very important day in the Catholic religion. This feast celebrates Mary's death and her assumption into heaven. Note that "assumption" is not "ascension". This is an important distinction. Assumption means to be taken up or assumed into heaven by God. Ascension means going up to heaven through personal power (not through God directly) as Jesus did.

There are no records that give a formal date or location of Mary's death. Some believe she died in the presence of the Apostles. No official tomb has been found, although there are several sites and cities that claim they have her temporary tomb (since she was assumed into heaven, her body would no longer be on earth).

August 15th is the official holiday.

I PAGLIACCI takes place specifically on August 15th sometime between 1865 and 1870.

Verismo—the realism movement

The New Grove Dictionary of Opera defines **verismo** as "a movement in Italian literature, and subsequently in opera, which developed in the 1870s as a result of the innovatory drive of the *Scapigliatura* (similar to the French bohème or bohemian referring to a group of artists) and the influence of French naturalism." Primarily centered in Milan, verismo in literature began with Giovanni



Giovanni Verga

Verga, the author of *Vita dei Campi* (a series of short stories including *Cavalleria Rusticana*). Verga was able to capture the precise vernacular of his subjects, many from the lower classes of Sicilian society. This new literary prose was a sensation and also revived the Italian theatre scene as these short stories were translated to one-acts on stage. This opened up a new acting style to portray these rustic characters.

Cavalleria Rusticana became the first of these texts to translate to opera, even though much of the original flavor was lost in the translation to the libretto. But the instant popularity of the opera gave rise to a new genre

within the art form, not only as subjects for the libretti but also the style of the musical drama. By the 1890s, veristic operas were enjoying success not just in Italy but throughout Europe. Umberto Giordano's *Mala vita* (1892) continued the gritty tradition with a subject dealing with prostitution but found greater success four years later with his *Andrea Chénier*, based on the life of French poet André Chénier.



Ragazza sul lago (The Girl by the Lake) by Pietro Troubetzkoy (1889)

By the early 20th century, veristic operas were on the decline and even the word itself became misleading and applied to such a variety of genres as to become meaningless. Ultimately, the operatic movement was a late 19th century trend towards dramatic continuity between the music and the text.

// *Tabarro* and // *Pagliacci* Activities

Elements of *Cavalleria Rusticana* & *I Pagliacci* include settings in Sicily and Montalto, Italy, and composers from Italy (Livorno and Naples). See if you can locate Italy and these cities on a map.

Create your own instruments

Things you will need: empty containers (oatmeal containers, Pringles cans, milk jugs, 2-liter pop bottles), toilet paper or paper towel cores, wax paper, rubber bands, empty Kleenex boxes, glue, paint, string, glitter, dried beans/peas/macaroni/ rice, empty glass bottles and water.

DRUMS AND SHAKERS: Clean out emptied containers. Make sure each container has a lid of some kind. Add dried beans, peas, macaroni, rice and shake. Decorate outside of container with paint or glitter.

KAZOOS: Toilet paper/paper towel cores: cover each end of the core with the wax paper and rubber bands. Cut a slit in the wax paper at both ends of the core. Decorate core with paint. Blow into one end like a kazoo.

GUITARS: Empty Kleenex boxes (best types are the ones that dispense from the top only): decorate box as desired. Glue several strings across the opening of the box.

WATER XYLOPHONE: You can make this with some empty glass bottles and water. Fill each bottle with different amounts of water. You can either blow over the top to get a different sound or you can make small mallets using dowel rods and wooden beads. Line up your bottles according to their pitches and then have fun playing *Mary Had a Little Lamb* or *Twinkle Twinkle*. The more bottles, the more pitches you'll have to play with.

What to listen for in *Cavalleria Rusticana* & *I Pagliacci*

Cavalleria—Santuzza's famous aria *Voi lo sapete* (Don't you remember) when she tells Turridu's mother about his love for Lola and how he turned to Santuzza for comfort.

Cavalleria—the Intermezzo is one of the more famous orchestral pieces in opera.

Pagliacci—Nedda/Columbina hears the birds sing and she reflects on their freedom and her childhood (*Oh! che volo d'augelli*)

Pagliacci—Canio/Pagliaccio sings *Vesti la giubba* about his grief at learning his wife is unfaithful and how he must continue to play the clown and make people laugh even when he is in pain.

Learn some Italian

Here are some words to listen for:

Amore (ah-MOH-ray)	Love
Andiamo (ahn-dee-AH-moh)	Let's go
Aprite (ah-PREE-tay)	Open up
Chiave (kee-AH-vay)	Key
Come (KOH-may)	How
Dove (DOH-vay)	Then, so
Farfallone (fahr-fahl-LOH-nay)	Butterfly
Giardino (geeahr-DEE-noh)	Garden
Giorno (GEEORH-noh)	Day
Madre (MAH-dray)	Mother
Padre (PAH-dray)	Father
Per carita (PEHR kah-ree-TAH)	Please. Have pity!
Perche (pehr-KAY)	Why? or Because
Perdono (pehr-DOH-noh)	Pardon
Spilla (SPEEL-lah)	Pin
Venite (vay-NEE-tay)	Come

Where did they come from?

Opera singers come from all over the world. See if you can figure out which singer comes from which country (answers at the bottom)

Singers	Countries
a) Placido Domingo	1) United States
b) Luciano Pavarotti	2) Spain
c) Jose Carreras	3) Italy
d) Leontyne Price	4) Australia
e) Jussi Bjorling	5) Sweden
f) Jon Vickers	6) Canada
g) Samuel Ramey	7) Norway
h) Kiri te Kanawa	8) Wales
i) Kirsten Flagstad	9) New Zealand
j) Joan Sutherland	
k) Bryn Terfel	

a) 2; b) 3; c) 2; d) 1; e) 5; f) 6; g) 1; h) 9; i) 7; j) 4; k) 8