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Mascagni's
Cavalleria Rusticana
(“Rustic Chivalry”)

Leoncavallo's
I Pagliacci
(“The Clowns”)

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a Prelude.....
to OPERA CLASSICS LIBRARY's
“Cav” and “Pag”

Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci* are the fountainheads of Italian opera's short-lived verismo genre: it is said that “Cav” is its flesh and bones; “Pag” its soul.

OPERA CLASSICS LIBRARY explores each of these masterful verismo operas. The text includes a *Commentary and Analysis* that provides insightful drama and character analysis, together with the *Principal Characters*, *Brief Story Synopsis*, and *Story Narrative with Music Highlight Examples* of each opera.

The *Libretto* for each opera has been newly translated by the Opera Journeys staff with specific emphasis on retaining a literal translation, but also with the objective to provide a faithful translation in modern and contemporary English; in this way, the substance of each opera becomes more intelligible. To enhance educational and study objectives, the *Libretto* contains music highlight examples interspersed within each drama's exposition. In addition, the text includes a selected *Discography*, *Videography*, and a *Dictionary of Opera and Musical Terms*.

The opera art form is the sum of many artistic expressions: theatrical drama, music, scenery, poetry, dance, acting and gesture. In opera, it is the composer who is the dramatist, using the emotive power of his music to express intense, human conflicts. Words evoke thought, but music provokes feelings; opera's sublime fusion of words, music, and all the theatrical arts provides powerful theater, an impact on one's sensibilities that can reach into the very depths of the human soul.

“Cav” and “Pag” are magnificent operatic inventions, towering tributes to the art form as well as to their ingenious composers.

Burton D. Fisher

Editor

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Verismo Truth and Realism

Verismo is an opera genre that evolved in Italy during the latter part of the nineteenth century: verismo is synonymous with realism and truth. (In France, an earlier antecedent of realism was depicted in Bizet's *Carmen* (1875): verismé.) Verismo began as a literary movement, exemplified in Italy by the novels and plays of Giovanni Verga, that were analogous in theme and spirit with the naturalism of the French writers, Émile Zola and Guy de Maupassant. The landmark Italian veristic opera, Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* (1890) is based on a short story by Verga.

The veristic operas that followed, such as Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci* (1892), Giordano's *Mala Vita* (1892), and Puccini's *Il Tabarro* (1918), all share common characteristics. Conceptually, they advocated an accurate representation of natural or real life conflicts and tensions, but without idealization; its primary focus was to present reality, and therefore it rejected visionary or sentimental subjects. To achieve realism, the verists often placed their characters in contemporary dress and used plots portraying humble people, generally rural and impoverished society rather than aristocrats. But more importantly, the verismo passions they portrayed were extremely profound, violent, and even savage; in both action and music, verismo portrayed a heightened emotionalism rather than subtlety, a tendency to blend the sordid with the sensational.

The Romantic era preceded verismo, dominating most of nineteenth-century art. Romanticism itself was a backlash against the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. The Enlightenment was a monumental battle for the soul of humanity: its ideals espoused freedom and human dignity, and were a force against centuries of social and political injustices. Those Enlightenment ideals were most eloquently embodied in the literary works of Rousseau, Voltaire, Locke, and Jefferson. Their ideology eventually became the fuel that fired the American and French Revolutions, perhaps the most momentous transitional events in modern Western history.

Underlying Enlightenment principles was a passionate opposition to the powers of Europe's theocracies and autocracies. And, Enlightenment principles and ideals represented a philosophical path to universal truth that ennobled man's great gift of logic and reason rather than blind faith. In music, Enlightenment ideals were reflected in the Classical era, a period that had its tentative beginnings in Italy in the early eighteenth century and extended through the early nineteenth century. (The Classical era succeeded the Baroque era and preceded the Romantic era.)

The underlying principles of the Classical era art were synonymous with Enlightenment principles of logic and reason. Its characteristics emphasized an adherence to poise, balance, proportion, simplicity, clarity, formal disciplines and structural formulae, and universal and objective expression. The great practitioners of Classicism were Scarlatti, Metastasio, Gluck, and the late Classicists, Haydn and Mozart.

Romanticism erupted as a pessimistic counterforce against Classicism. Enlightenment and Age of Reason optimism had projected a new world of freedom and civility, but Romanticists viewed those noble ideals of egalitarian progress as a mirage and illusion, elevated hopes and dreams for human progress that had dissolved in the Reign of Terror (1792-94); that despair was reinforced by Napoleon's preposterous despotism, the subsequent carnage and devastation of the Napoleonic wars, the post-Napoleonic return to autocratic tyranny and oppression, and the economic and social injustices nurtured by the Industrial Revolution.

Like the Holocaust of the twentieth century, those bloodbaths, particularly the Reign of Terror, shook the very foundations of humanity by invoking man's deliberate betrayal of his highest nature and ideals; Schiller was prompted to reverse the idealism of his exultant "Ode to Joy" (1785) (later set by Beethoven in the Ninth or Choral Symphony), by concluding that the new century had "begun with murder's cry." Others concluded that the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror had ushered in a terrible new era of unselfish crimes in which men committed horrible atrocities out of love not of evil but of virtue. Like Goethe's Faust, who represented two souls in one breast, man was considered a paradox, simultaneously the possessor of great virtue and wretched evil. To those pessimists — the Romanticists — the drama of human history was approaching doomsday, and civilization was on the verge of vanishing completely.

Romanticists sought alternatives to what had become their failed notions of human progress, and sought a panacea to their loss of confidence in the present as well as the future. As such, Romanticists developed a growing nostalgia for the past by seeking exalted histories that served to recall vanished glories: writers such as Sir Walter Scott, Alexandre Dumas, and Victor Hugo, penned tributes to past values of heroism and virtue that seemed to have vanished in their contemporary times. They concluded that intellectual and moral values had declined, and that modern civilization had transformed into a society of philistines, in which the ideals of refinement and polished manners had surrendered to a form of sinister decadence. Those in power were considered deficient in maintaining order, and instead of resisting the impending collapse of civilization and social degeneration, they were deemed to have embraced the decline feebly and without vigor.

Romanticism signified freedom from the Classical tradition, opposing Classicism's rigor with ideals expressing individual creative imagination, and even the fantastic. German Romanticists, arising in the late eighteenth century, possessed an almost mystical conception of any work of art as well as the creative artist; art provided entry into a transcendent spiritual world, indefinable and infinite, and beyond the ordinary human sphere.

Because the artist's primary obligation was to be true to his inner creative inspirations, Romanticism encouraged the destruction of existing traditions of subject matter that were so fundamental to the Classics traditions: Romanticism advocated freer artistic expression. So in their search for new truths, Romanticists became preoccupied with the conflict between nature and human nature. They considered industrialization and modern commerce the despoilers of the natural world: steam engines and smokestacks were viewed as dark manifestations of commerce and veritable images from hell. But natural man, uncorrupted by commercialism, was ennobled. Thus, Romanticism sought escapes from society's horrible realities by appealing to strong emotions, the bizarre and the irrational, the instincts of self-gratification, pleasure and sensual delight. Ultimately, Romanticism's ideology posed the antithesis of material values by striving to raise consciousness to more profound emotions and aesthetic sensibilities.

Romanticists were also seeking an alternative to the Christian path to salvation. The philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) strongly influenced early German Romanticism when he scrutinized the relationship between God and man, ultimately concluding that man — not God — was the center of the universe. Following Kant, David Friedrich Strauss wrote the extremely popular *Life of Christ* that deconstructed the Gospel. And finally, Nietzsche, the ultimate cultural pessimist, pronounced the death of God. Theologically and philosophically, Romantics — and particularly German Romantics — believed in the existence of God, but they were not turning to Christianity's Heaven for salvation and redemption, but rather, to the spiritual bliss provided by a passionate sense of human feeling and love; for the Romanticists, the spiritual path to God and human salvation could only be achieved through idealized human love, compassion and freedom. So the

essence of Romanticism was idealized love and the nature of love, a glorification of sentiments and virtues, a sympathy and compassion for man's foibles; and in the human tension between desire and fulfillment, an exaltation of the redeeming power of sacrifice.

The French champion of the human spirit, Jean Jacques Rousseau, aptly expressed Romanticism's acute sense of freedom and feeling: "I felt before I thought." Likewise, the German writer, Johann Wolfgang van Goethe, espoused his conception of Romanticism in his *Sorrows of Young Werther*, an intensification of sentiment to justify suicide as an escape from unrequited love.

In music, Romantic forms often embodied an emphasis on the indefinable and the infinite, weakening Aristotelian concepts of beginning, middle, and end. Works were often intentionally given the character of a fragment or an improvisation. At times, music reached new extremes of lengthiness, and at times brevity, the latter often found in the newly prominent genres of short piano pieces or art songs. The exploration of distant harmonic and tonal relations (previously used with great caution) and new kinds of texture and instrumental sonority contributed to the creation of new Romantic effects. Performers were no longer encouraged to add creatively to a composition through improvisational ornamentation, but became the conveyors and interpreters of the composer's true intentions.

Music was placed much higher in the Romantic hierarchy of the arts than in the Classical tradition, the indefinable nature of its language making it quintessentially transcendent. Music was thus freed from the notion prevalent earlier that it had no intrinsic meaning; in that context, Romantic music became tied even more closely than before to literature and other extra-musical elements because it was believed that music could express an indefinable or transcendental essence. This belief led to such typically Romantic musical genres as the symphonic poem (Liszt), the program symphony (Berlioz), and Wagner's later music dramas. The great Romantic music composers were Weber (1786-1826), Schubert (1797-1828), Berlioz (1803-1869), Mendelssohn (1809-1847), Chopin (1810-1849), Schumann (1810-1856), and Liszt (1811-1886).

One of the first Romantic operas was Beethoven's "rescue" opera, *Fidelio* (1805), which expressed an idealized freedom from oppression; it portrayed a deep sense of human struggle and triumph over tyranny that the composer seems to have musically hammered into every note. And by the mid-nineteenth century, the towering icons of opera Romanticism, Verdi and Wagner, epitomized the "Golden Age of Opera" with monumental works that contained underlying political, social and philosophical messages that expressed their idealistic vision of a more perfect world.

While Romanticism flourished during the first half of the nineteenth century, many conflicting cultural, political, and social forces were kindling revolutions against European autocracy: society was demanding the fulfillment of its utopian dreams that included the promise of democracy and human progress. Dramatic ideological and scientific discoveries — Marx, Darwin, and Freud — were transforming previously held perceptions, and as the Industrial Revolution flowered to maturity, society faced paradoxes which confounded the old order: colonialism, socialism, and materialism.

As the second half of the nineteenth century unfolded, the old foundations of society became suspect, if not incomprehensible and irrational. Perhaps the final blow to those dreams for social progress occurred in December 1851 when Louis Napoleon, nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte and son of Napoleon's brother, transformed France's pseudo-democracy into a dictatorship, capitalizing on most Frenchmen's desire to restore order after they experienced frenzied public disturbances in 1848. After Napoleon was elected President of France, he eloquently expounded the ideals of liberty, swore to uphold the constitution, and

ingeniously created the illusion that the masses participated in his government through universal suffrage. Nevertheless, from the outset, Napoleon planned to overthrow the Republic and create a new empire. With one stroke of Napoleon's pen, France's Second Republic was transformed into a presidential dictatorship, in which Napoleon was granted full powers to institute martial law and dominate legislative matters: Prince Louis Napoleon became Napoleon III, the totalitarian dictator of France's Second Empire.

Louis Napoleon's coup d'état represented the final destruction of the optimism of Enlightenment as well as Romanticist ideals. As a result, society's dreams of future social and political progress transformed into resignation, despair, skepticism and pessimism; to many, existing society and its political institutions were unconscionably evil, unjust — and beyond salvation. At mid-century, Richard Wagner became consumed by moral outrage and protest: his *cri de coeur* became an impassioned artistic gospel that would portray the political and social horrors of his contemporary society: the music drama, *The Ring of the Nibelung*.

As the nineteenth century approached its close — the *fin de siècle* — the times became even more spiritually unsettled; man became self-questioning and acutely aware of a cultural decadence that was pervading society. Nietzsche, pontificating his obsessive cultural pessimism, said it was a time of “the transvaluation of values,” in effect, his recognition of society's spiritual deterioration and decadence.

Artistic genres expressed this malaise by turning to an acute sense of realism: the time had arrived to peer into humanity's soul and seek truth. Romanticism had dominated most of the nineteenth century, but its artificial sentiment and idealism began to be viewed as a contradiction of universal truth. So art shifted its focus to a more realistic portrayal of common man and his everyday, personal life drama — and even his degeneracy.

That new truth was portrayed in opera by the Italians in the *verismo* genre: *verismé* by the French. It was an artistic style that championed the concept that in art and literature, ugly and vulgar aspects of humanity earned their right to representation based upon their inherent truthful values. Conceptually, during the last thousand years of western history, civilization had progressed from the god-centered Middle Ages, in which man lived on the precipice between hell and damnation, to Enlightenment reason, to Romanticism's sense freedom and feeling, to realism. But in realism, the conclusion became the antithesis of reason; that man was merely a creature of instinct.

Realism began in literature as naturalism, a genre that probed deeply into every aspect of the human experience. In 1845, in France, Prosper Mérimée wrote his novella, *Carmen*, a short story immortalized in Bizet's opera, which dealt with extreme passions involving sex, betrayal, rivalry, vengeance, and murder. Mérimée perfectly captured the essence of naturalism (realism) when he commented: “I am one of those who has a strong liking for bandits, not that I have any desire to meet them on my travels, but the energy of these men, at war with the whole society, wrings from me an admiration of which I am ashamed.”

Mérimée, like so many of his French contemporary naturalist writers, turned to exotic locales for artistic inspiration. Spain, a close neighbor just to the southwest, bore a special fascination, particularly the character of its arcane gypsy culture. Those gypsies, considered sorcerers, witches, and occultists, were the traditional enemy of the church, and were almost always stereotyped as an ethnic group of bandits and social outcasts dominated by loose morality. From the comfort of distance, Mérimée told fascinating picaresque tales about gypsy ethos and culture, in a moralistic sense, using their presumed evils, loose morals, and bizarre idiosyncrasies, to imply to the reader a spiritual decadence that was to serve as a moralistic guide to renewal and redemption.

Mérimée's particular verisme was his obsession with man's propensity for extreme and violent passions that are irreconcilable and ultimately became fatal. In his tragedy of *Carmen*, he presents those forces of violence, cruelty, immorality, irrationality, and erotic love, as sinister fatal powers: in Mérimée's verisme, man is a crazed brute, and certainly, good does not necessarily triumph over evil.

Bizet himself found his muse and inspiration for *Carmen* in realism's truthful representation of humanity. He commented: "As a musician, I tell you that if you were to suppress hatred, adultery, fanaticism, or evil, it would no longer be possible to write a single note of music."

Almost simultaneously, Émile Zola, recognized by many as the founder of literary naturalism, wrote novels that portrayed the underbelly of life. Zola brought human passions to the surface and documented every social ill, every obscenity, and every criminality, no matter how politically sensitive: *The Dram Shop* (1877) about alcoholism; *Nana* (1880) about prostitution and the demimonde. Similarly, Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1857) portrayed the romantically motivated adulteries of a married woman whose pathetically overblown love affairs end in her suicide. And in England, Charles Dickens presented the problems of the impoverished in his portrayal of moral degeneracy in the new industrial age slums.

Realism essentially had no philosophical foundation: its object was simply to portray the human condition without superficiality. As such, human passions became the subject of the action: no subject was too mundane; no subject too harsh, and no subject too ugly. As the antithesis of Romanticism, realism avoided artificiality and sentimentalism, and averted affectations with historical personalities, those romantic portrayals of chivalry and heroism.

Realism's objective was to search for the underlying truth in man's existence, and thus, reveal man's true nature. As such, it brought violent and savage passions to artistic expression and representation, becoming obsessed with violence, passion, and death. Realism portrayed human nature in the raw, the barbarian side of man, yet man possessing uninhibited spontaneity, courage, energy and vitality: in effect, the latent animal within the human soul — the "noble savage." So realism ennobled primitive and unspoiled man because he was true to his natural inclinations, and not stifled by the hypocrisy of society's conventions and the presumptions of civilized values, behavior previously justified by reason and morality. Realism perceived that beneath that veneer and facade called civilization, lurk dark, irrational mysterious forces that become manifested in brutal and cruel human passions, acts of violence, and bestiality: those forces of unreason and violence are sinister and fatal powers that became equated with death; in Realism, death became the supreme consummation of desire.

In Italy, verismo was partly inspired by the public's disgust with Romanticism's sentiment and idealization. But verismo also evolved from the volatile political and social perplexities of the times. During that last decade of the nineteenth century, Italy was experiencing political and economic crises.

The Risorgimento (1860-61) had ostensibly fulfilled Italy's dream of liberation from the foreign rule of Austria and France, initially unifying the country under a democratic political system. But by the end of the century, none of those lofty dreams of democracy and political stability had been achieved: chaos and anarchy loomed on the horizon. Italy lacked the resources for rapid social and economic development, and the dream of a "second Rome" did not emerge. The veneer of political union could not disguise the reality of a divided country: in the south, from Naples through Sicily, the social and economic structure was virtually medieval, an illiterate peasantry living in grinding poverty under primitive feudal

institutions that lacked the infrastructure to execute law and order; the only effective escape from squalor was emigration. But in contrast, the north thrived, developing industrially and progressing economically.

During the first generation after unification, moderate liberals of the north led the government, but those leaders were upper and middle class representatives who distrusted democracy. In the 1870s and 1880s more liberal factions of the upper middle-class oligarchy emerged, maintaining political stability by developing personal cliques and petty interest groups that they held together with pork-barrel deals; in the end, every opposing faction in Italy was compromised in one way or another through political favors.

The slow expansion of the nation's economy caused continuing internal discontent; in the 1890s there were peasant revolts, and disorders were provoked by anarchists and disenchanted factions. The political climate was sensitive, insecure, and vacillating; it was heroic — if not fatal — to express outrage and criticism of the country's chaotic condition. These were volatile times, an era in which regicide and nihilism were virtually everyday topics, and there was much political agitation and social unrest: the Socialist Party that had been agitating for change and progress was outlawed, causing rioting to erupt in the larger cities. And in 1900, King Umberto was assassinated by anarchists.

A host of political ideologies and movements emerged, each with its own agenda to establish order; some advocated a sinister new form of supernaturalism that demanded more aggressive action. Ultimately, political and social unrest was repressed by energetic government police action. But the political chaos set the stage for emerging authoritarianism and fascism, a complete control of intellectual and political thought that advocated militarism, irrationalism, scorn for the rule of law and ethics, discipline and total devotion to duty, and the supreme and absolute sovereignty of the state. The Italian slogan “to believe, to obey, to combat,” became emerging fascism's antithesis to the French Revolution's “liberty, equality, fraternity.”

Thus, during the last decade of the nineteenth century, Italy's political and social climate was chaotic, and the country seemed to be evolving toward the same despotism and tyranny of Robespierre's Reign of Terror. Those fears inspired the renowned poet Luigi Illica to write the libretto for *Andrea Chénier*, Umberto Giordano's verismo opera (1896), which was intended as a warning to his Italian compatriots; beware of the ominous clouds that were gathering on their political horizon, because the dark history of the French Revolution's Reign of Terror could very well repeat itself in Italy. In Italy, verismo officially arrived to the opera stage with Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* (1890), followed by Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci* (1892).

Nevertheless, there were many precursors to verismo that were simmering even at the midpoint of the nineteenth century.

During his career, Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) had virtually monopolized Italian opera, dominating the lyric stage for most of the nineteenth century. As the 1850s unfolded — Verdi's “middle period” — his genius arrived at a turning point in terms of its artistic maturity. He was satisfied that he had achieved his patriotic objectives for the unification of Italy, so he decided to abandon the heroic pathos and nationalistic themes of his early operas: Italian independence and unification seemed to be a fait accompli on the political horizon.

Verdi began to seek more profound operatic subjects: subjects that would be bold to the extreme; subjects with greater dramatic and psychological depth; subjects that accented spiritual values, intimate humanity and tender emotions. From the 1850s onward, Verdi would be ceaseless in his goal to create an expressiveness and acute delineation of the human soul that had never before been realized on the opera stage.

During that defining moment in his career, Verdi's operas began to contain heretofore-unknown dramatic qualities and intensities, profound characterizations, as well as an exceptional lyricism. In the process of his artistic evolution and maturity, Verdi may have inadvertently established the precursors for the Italian verismo genre that would officially flower two generations later: two of his most memorable characterizations were the ambivalent, hunchbacked title character in *Rigoletto* (1851), and the haggard, avenging gypsy mother, Azucena, in *Il Trovatore* (1853).

The Rigoletto character was adapted from Victor Hugo's play *Le Roi s'amuse*. Hugo had conceived a new type of character for the stage, what he labeled "grotesque" characters. Rigoletto, the court jester, became one of those quintessential "grotesque" characters: he is complex, ambivalent, and possesses two souls; on the one hand, he is physically ugly and deformed, morally evil, sadistic and wicked, but simultaneously, he is kind, gentle, and an intensely compassionate man when he is showering unbounded love on his beloved daughter, Gilda. If the essence of verismo was to portray the truth in man's natural propensity for violence and brutality, the Rigoletto character was indeed one of its most prominent ancestors, if not its forbear.

Likewise, in Verdi's *Il Trovatore* (1853), the opera could not exist without its keystone character, the haggard and bizarre old gypsy, Azucena. She represents the engine of vengeance, driving the story with her two great passions: her filial and maternal love for her surrogate son, Manrico, and her obsession to avenge her mother's execution. Azucena is an ominous, evil character, frightening as she recounts the vivid horror of her mother's brutal execution: she is another forbear of the true verismo character, relentless and consumed by her obsession for vengeance.

Azucena is the counterpart of Rigoletto: both are physically grotesque and repulsive outsiders. In many respects, they were shocking forces to Verdi's nineteenth century audiences, who, in the tradition of Romanticism, demanded beautiful heroines and handsome heroes on stage: villains could be ugly, but they were expected to be presented as secondary figures. Nevertheless, Verdi was willing to go quite far in his search for the bizarre, and insisted on making Rigoletto and Azucena protagonists: they were verismo-type characters in their time.

In both characters, the mocked, cynical, hunchbacked jester Rigoletto, and the reviled, stereotypically ugly gypsy Azucena, the mainsprings of their actions involve violence: Rigoletto is obsessed with revenge, which unwittingly and tragically brings about the death of his own daughter, stabbed by the assassin he hired to murder the Duke. And similarly, Azucena's avenging obsessions cause the death of Manrico, the surrogate son she adores, first by claiming under torture that she is his mother, and secondly and more importantly, by hiding from her enemy, Count di Luna, the fact that he and Manrico are actually brothers.

In this verismo context, Rigoletto and Azucena are the male and female faces of revenge that become defeated: ironically, their violent passions for revenge become unfulfilled and ultimately bring about fatal injustice and tragedy. The final horror for both Rigoletto and Azucena is that they believe they are striking a blow for justice. Rigoletto proclaims: "Egli è Delitto, Punizion son io" ("He is Crime, I am Punishment.") Azucena repeatedly pronounces her dying mother's command: "Mi vendica" ("Avenge me.") Nevertheless, in these tragedies, which are driven by possessed and consumed characters, both protagonists see their treasured children lying dead; Rigoletto may live on in his agony, but Azucena will surely die at the stake, as did her mother.

Rigoletto and Azucena were not by any stretch of the imagination Romanticism's typical lofty historic personalities. These protagonists were new types of characters who portrayed the extremes of human passion, a "truth" Verdi introduced to his opera stage almost a half-century before Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*.

So in 1890 Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* officially introduced verismo to the Italian opera stage: the genre flourished at a time when Italian opera was perceived to be in decline and degeneration; its portrayal of real, earthy people who expressed vigorous passions was intended to rejuvenate the opera art form.

Verismo nurtured a new school of avant-garde composers: the "giovane scuola," or "young school," first represented in full force by Mascagni, and followed, among the many, by Ruggiero Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci* (1892), Umberto Giordano's *Andrea Chénier* (1896) and *Fedora* (1897), Francesco Cilea's *Adriana Lecouvreur* (1902), and eventually, Puccini's *Tosca* (1900) and *Il Tabarro* (1918).

Nevertheless, the archetypes of Italian verismo have become those two Siamese twins of opera, affectionately known as "Cav" and "Pag": it is said that "Cav" is the "flesh and bones" of verismo; "Pag" is its "soul." Together, they are the fountainheads of the short-lived verismo genre of Italian opera.

Their plots indeed run in parallel grooves and share many similarities. Both operas are set in villages in the latter part of the nineteenth century in the southern part of Italy: *Cav* in Sicily, and *Pag* in Calabria. Both music dramas feature a blatant irony, made even more profound because their stories take place on Christian holy days, respectively Easter Sunday and the Feast of Assumption.

But the underlying essence of these verismo operas highlights how quickly love can be transformed into violent hatred. Both opera stories involve a love triangle, in which one side of the triangle is betrayed, leading to fatal death. In *Cav* the triangle involves two women, the spurned Santuzza and the coquettish Lola, both in love with the young dandy, Turiddu; the fourth character is Alfio, Lola's cuckolded husband, whose betrayal and loss of honor drives him to murderous revenge. In *Pag* the triangle involves Nedda, her lover Silvio, and her cuckolded husband Canio; the fourth character is Tonio, spurned by Nedda. In each opera, the spurned lover (Santuzza in *Cav* or Tonio in *Pag*), becomes the informer or instigator of the ultimate tragedy, the character who incites the betrayed lover to avenge the crime of betrayal: in *Cav*, Santuzza, spurned by Turiddu, incites Alfio to become her instrument of revenge; in *Pag*, it is the hunchbacked clown, Tonio, rejected by Nedda, who instigates Canio to murderous revenge. And similarly, Puccini's masterpiece verismo opera, *Il Tabarro*, portrays the violent passions of revenge that are aroused by jealousy, betrayal and adultery: Michele's brutal murder of his wife Giorgetta's lover Luigi.

The essence of these verismo operas is the portrayal of exploding human passions resulting from jealousy spawned by adultery. In verismo, the cuckolded lovers are inspired to revenge and justice through murder. As such, the underlying essence of verismo is that raw human nature and primitive instincts erupt into brutal, violent and cruel actions.

In verismo, death is the consummation of desire.

Cavalleria Rusticana

“Rustic Chivalry”

Opera in Italian in one-act

Music

by

Pietro Mascagni

Libretto by Guido Menasci

and Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti,

after a short story by Giovanni Verga (1880)

Premiere: Teatro Costanzi, Rome, 1890

Principal Characters in Cavalleria Rusticana

Santuzza, fiancée of Turiddu	Soprano
Turiddu, Mamma Lucia's son and fiancé of Santuzza	Tenor
Mamma Lucia, Turiddu's mother	Soprano
Alfio, a carter	Baritone
Lola, Alfio's wife	Soprano

TIME: Late 19th century

PLACE: A village in Sicily on Easter Sunday.

Brief Story Synopsis

In *Cavalleria Rusticana*, personal jealousy and betrayal explode on an Easter Sunday, an irony in which the holy Christian celebration of the Passion of Christ is transformed into primitive, fatal justice. In this tragedy, the conflicts of a love triangle lead to murder. Two women, Santuzza and Lola, are rivals for Turiddu, a vain and foolish local dandy. The triangle becomes squared when Alfio, Lola's cuckolded husband, learns of his wife's infidelity with Turiddu: to restore his honor, Alfio challenges Turiddu to mortal combat and kills him.

Certain events leading to this Easter Sunday tragedy occurred before the curtain rises on *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Turiddu and Lola were in love with each other. After Turiddu returned from his compulsory army conscription, he turned to despair when he learned that Lola married Alfio, the local carter. Wounded in pride and vanity, he seduced the love of Santuzza. But Lola still loved Turiddu and became exasperated that he was pursuing another woman: Lola lured her ex-lover back, but this time their love affair was adulterous.

As the curtain rises, Santuzza suspects that Turiddu has betrayed her, catching sight of him near Lola's house early in the morning: she becomes crazed with jealousy. But Santuzza is also ridden with guilt, sin, shame and dishonor; she is pregnant with Turiddu's child out of wedlock.

Santuzza is relentless to win back Turiddu's love. She pleads with Turiddu to reject Lola, but he spurns her. Sulking in defeat, she curses Turiddu and craves revenge: she manipulates Lola's cuckolded husband Alfio as her weapon of revenge against both Turiddu and Lola. Santuzza inflames Alfio's jealousy and dishonor by exposing Lola's infidelity. Alfio, now seized by jealousy and betrayal, vows to restore his honor by killing Turiddu. He challenges Turiddu to a duel with knives and kills him.

On this Easter Sunday, *Cavalleria Rusticana's* geometry of impassioned relationships progress without regard to their fatal consequences. Each of the characters expresses instinctive and primitive passions for lethal revenge: death alone can redeem their need for justice and the restoration of their honor; death becomes the consummation of desire.

Story Narrative with Music Highlight Examples

Cavalleria Rusticana's Prelude provides a musical portrait of warmth and naturalness, an atmosphere of serenity in a Sicilian village at dawn on Easter Sunday.

Prelude:



The music quickly animates, a suggestion of the rash emotions and passions that will transform a holy day of celebration into a day involving fatal, human tragedy.

The tranquil opening theme suddenly yields to music that will later underscore the bitter and tempestuous confrontation between the spurned and jealous Santuzza, and the cruel and dispassionate Turiddu.

Santuzza's passion:



The Prelude is interrupted by Turiddu, singing a serenade: the *Siciliana*, its words in Sicilian dialect to convey a sense of realism.

One must imagine that Turiddu and Lola have secretly met that evening, consummating their passionate love during the absence of Lola's husband, Alfio. Lola languishes, intoxicated by recollections of her tryst with Turiddu.

From a distance, the departing Turiddu's serenade attests to Lola's beauty and his eternal love for her. But he also warns that their adulterous affair could endanger and threaten them. In his serenade, Turiddu vows that if death awaits him, he would refuse to enter Heaven if Lola was not present there.

“Siciliana”**Andante
TURIDDU**

The Prelude resumes with another suggestion of Santuzza's agony. Santuzza was wandering the fields at dawn and saw Turiddu near Lola's house, arousing her suspicions, doubts, and distrust of him. She becomes terrified, instinctively and intuitively sensing that he has returned to Lola and betrayed her: she becomes bitter and anguished, suddenly seized by passions of jealousy.

Santuzza's jealousy:**Andante**

As the curtain rises, church bells awaken the Sicilian village, announcing Easter morning. A carefree crowd in a mood of holiday joy gathers in the square outside the church awaiting Easter Mass. In the distance, villagers sing of the joys of Easter. They arrive in the square and join other villagers, some entering the church while others disperse through the village.

Villagers arriving at the square:**Allegro giocoso**

The square becomes deserted except for Santuzza, appearing visibly agitated and apprehensive. She rushes toward the tavern opposite the church, the tavern of Mamma Lucia, Turiddu's mother.

Santuzza's agitation:**Largo**

Santuzza anxiously implores Mamma Lucia to know Turiddu's whereabouts; she saw him near Lola's house in the morning, suspects his betrayal, and is eager to talk to him. Mamma Lucia responds evasively, attempting to avoid any involvement in her son's quarrelsome affairs. Nevertheless, Santuzza conveys a sense of urgency, compelling Mamma Lucia to reveal that Turiddu went to Francofonte to fetch wine for the tavern.

But Santuzza boldly refutes her, revealing that she saw Turiddu in the village this very morning. Mamma Lucia intuitively senses Santuzza's despair and shows compassion for the distraught woman. She invites her into the tavern but Santuzza refuses, explaining that she cannot cross her threshold: she is an outcast, excommunicated as a sinner.

Just as Santuzza is about to reveal to Mamma Lucia the underlying reasons for her torment, sounds of beating whips and jingling bells interrupt them: they are the familiar sound of the village's jolly carter, Alfio.

"Il cavallo scalpita"

Allegretto
ALFIO



Il ca- vallo scalpi - ta, i sonagli squillano, schiocchi la frusta. Ehi là!
The horse paws the ground, bridle bells jingle, the whip cracks.

Alfio boasts with pride about the joys of his trade. He further describes his high spirits on this Easter morning because he is about to return home to his beloved wife, Lola, who awaits him with love, comfort, and fidelity: "M'aspetta casa Lola" ("Lola awaits me at home"); Alfio's praise of Lola's virtues are voiced ironically against sinister sounding musical harmonies.

The villagers disperse, some leaving the square, others entering the church. Alfio greets Mamma Lucia and requests some of her fine wine to celebrate the holiday, that excellent vintage that Turiddu gets from a neighboring village. Lucia advises Alfio that at this very moment Turiddu is in Francofonte to fetch a fresh supply of wine. Alfio becomes perplexed and bewildered, confounded because he saw Turiddu this morning near his home. Mamma Lucia duly expresses surprise and is about to inquire further, but Santuzza signals her to be silent. Alfio departs in skepticism and confusion, his suspicions aroused.

From inside the church, organ music accompanies a choir heard singing the devotional hymn "Regina Coeli" ("Queen of Heaven").

"Regina Coeli"

Moderato assai

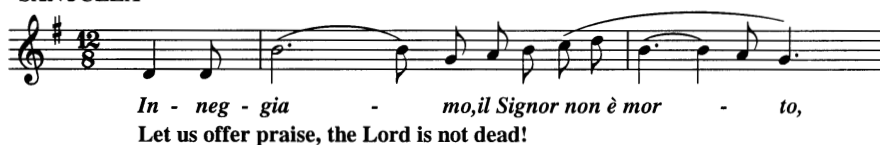


Re - gi - na Coe - li, lae - ta - re
Queen of Heaven, rejoice!

Outside the church, villagers join in singing the hymn, echoing their praise with “Hallelujahs.” All kneel in prayer and join Santuzza in a hymn extolling the Resurrection: “Innegiamo, il Signor non è morto” (“Let us offer praise, the Lord is not dead”): the ecstasy and powerful spiritual promise of the Easter prayer represents an ironic and stark contrast to the brutal and violent passions that are poised to explode.

“Innegiamo, il Signor non è morto”

Largo maestoso
SANTUZZA



The remaining villagers enter the church for Easter Mass.

Mamma Lucia and Santuzza remain together. Mamma Lucia asks Santuzza why she urged her to silence when Alfio mentioned that he had seen Turiddu near his home. Santuzza explains that she was exercising judicious caution: if she revealed the truth, Alfio would become alarmed, distressed and suspicious of Lola and Turiddu.

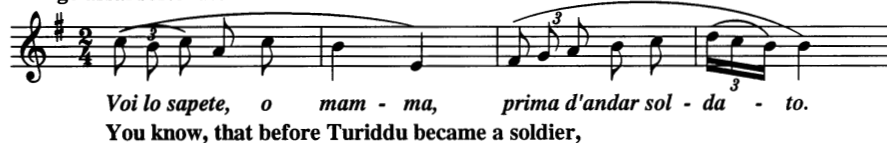
Santuzza reveals her inner torment to Mamma Lucia. She reminds Lucia that Turiddu was engaged to Lola before he went into the army, but Lola did not wait for his return and married Alfio; when Turiddu learned that she had betrayed him, he turned to despair. To console his anguish and grief, he wooed Santuzza and seduced her with a solemn promise of marriage. Santuzza, enraptured by her new love, surrendered her virtue.

But Turiddu betrayed Santuzza and once more got himself caught in the net of the wicked Lola, who was not only tired of Alfio, but lured him back because she was jealous and envious of Santuzza; during Alfio's frequent absences, their adulterous affair blossomed.

As Santuzza finishes her sad story, she explodes into shrieks of agonized despair: Lola stole Turiddu from her, and she is now a grieving, abandoned woman, accursed, betrayed, and disgraced.

“Voi lo sapete, o mamma”

Largo assai sostenuto



Mamma Lucia, visibly shocked and disturbed by Santuzza's anguished revelations, senses omens of evil, a paradox on this holy Easter Sunday.

Santuzza implores Mamma Lucia to go to Mass, pray for her soul, and beg Turiddu to be faithful to her.

Turiddu arrives, surprised to find Santuzza waiting for him in his mother's tavern. Santuzza, jealous and enraged, confronts him and asks him where he has been. He explains that he went to Francofonte to fetch wine, but Santuzza refutes him and accuses him of lying; she saw him early this morning coming from Lola's house. Santuzza then explodes into a jealous rage and accuses Turiddu of betraying their love by returning to Lola. She further cautions Turiddu that if Alfio discovers their adulterous affair, he will kill him.

Turiddu denies Santuzza's accusations, screaming in defiance that he will not be a slave to her foolish jealousy. Santuzza, her tears mixed with love and despair, offers to forgive Turiddu if he gives up Lola and returns to her.

Suddenly, during the full flood of Santuzza's entreaties and Turiddu's protestations, their quarrel is interrupted by the voice of Santuzza's rival, Lola, the heartless coquette singing a folk song about love as she makes her way to attend church.

"Fior di giaggiolo"

Allegretto

LOLA



Lola's words quickly fade when she sees Turiddu and Santuzza. She is hypocritical and cynical: at first she asks Turiddu if he has seen Alfio, and then comments maliciously that Santuzza seems to be praying in the street rather than in church. She taunts Santuzza contemptuously, the two rivals exchanging hostile words imbedded with irony and innuendo. Lola invites Turiddu to join her in church, but he hesitates. Then she jeers Turiddu, sarcastically suggesting that he might possibly prefer to remain with Santuzza. Turiddu, unable to control his instincts, starts to follow Lola, but Santuzza forcefully blocks his way. Lola departs, flirtatiously throwing Turiddu a rose before entering the church.

Santuzza and Turiddu resume their quarrel: it now erupts with renewed vigor and uncontrollable frenzy. Santuzza, raging with bitterness and anguish, pleads with Turiddu not to abandon her; that he should return to her with love. Turiddu, suffocating from her possessiveness, tries to flee from her, but Santuzza implores him to remain.

"No, no! Turiddu, rimani, rimani ancora"

Andante appassionato

SANTUZZA



Turiddu savagely hurls Santuzza to the ground and violently denounces the stupidity of her obsessive jealousy. He leaves in defiance, rushing off to join Lola in the church.

Santuzza, embittered, rejected and despairing, furiously curses Turiddu as he departs: “Una mala Pasqua” (“A cursed Easter.”)

Alone, dazed and helpless, Santuzza sobs frantically: she has been repudiated, spurned, and she has lost her honor. Her passions of love for Turiddu have now transformed into violent hatred. She has now become obsessed with vengeance and decides to expose Turiddu’s affair with Lola to Alfio; he will become her instrument for revenge.

Alfio appears. Santuzza pours out her demented soul to him, explaining that Turiddu abandoned her, and destroyed her honor.

“Turiddu mi tolse”

Largo
SANTUZZA



Immediately and impetuously, Santuzza plants the seeds of jealousy in Alfio, telling him that Lola has just gone into the church with Turiddu, and that he will soon see them both leave the church together; she declares that Alfio is a cuckolded husband, his wife faithless and carrying on an adulterous affair with Turiddu.

Alfio swears that if Santuzza is lying to him he will cut her heart out. But Santuzza has been convincing, and Alfio accepts her revelation as the absolute truth. Alfio, his honor ravaged, explodes into rage and savagely vows revenge: he will kill his rival before the close of this very day.

The Passion celebrating the sorrow of Christ on this Easter Sunday has transformed into passions of violent hatred and revenge. Santuzza and Alfio, both spurned, betrayed and dishonored lovers, have become allies in vengeance, obsessed with retribution and justice. But Alfio’s transformation into savage hatred has caused Santuzza to become fearful; she becomes overcome with remorse and torn by guilt, and she is powerless to stop the raging Alfio, who storms away shrieking “Vendetta!” (“Vengeance!”)

Intermezzo

Andante sostenuto



An Intermezzo, peaceful and tranquil, conveys the spirituality and holiness of this Easter Sunday. Its music recalls the hymn, *Regina Coeli*, an ironic contrast to the seething, violent passions that have been aroused on this Easter Sunday.

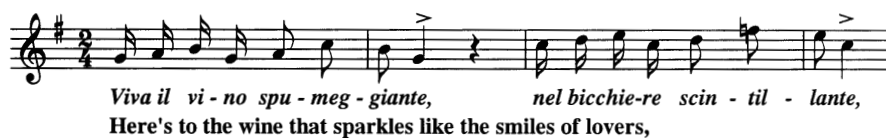
The Intermezzo's devotional music intensifies and becomes more fervent, suggesting that the tensions of the conflicted characters are eased. But greater tensions are forthcoming as the music rises to suggest that furious passions are brewing; the serenity of this holy day of celebration will be consumed by brutality and violence.

The villagers emerge from the church and seem content that their religious duties have been fulfilled, their thoughts immediately turning to the pleasures that await them at home. Some villagers cluster about the square, while others assemble before Mamma Lucia's tavern.

Turiddu exits the church arm-in-arm with Lola. In a recklessly gay mood, he invites friends to drink with him at his mother's tavern, his infectious invitation invoking the magical wonders of sparkling wine.

"Viva il vino spumeggiante"

Larghetto
TURIDDU



Alfio arrives. He is greeted cordially by the crowd, but is aloof and unfriendly, visibly fuming with inner rage. Turiddu, warm and hospitable, offers Alfio a drink, but he angrily and gruffly refuses, snarling vehemently: "I would rather not. I might be poisoned!" Turiddu responds, "At your pleasure," and empties the glass to the ground. Lola, observing their bitter interchange, becomes overcome with fear; some of the women, equally sensing that danger and trouble is brewing, lead her away.

Turiddu and Alfio exchange harsh and hostile insults. Turiddu confesses that he has been wrong. Alfio is unable to suppress his rage, and immediately accuses Turiddu of adultery. Alfio challenges Turiddu to a duel with knives. Turiddu laments Santuzza's fate if he should be killed, but does not hesitate to remind Alfio that he intends to plunge his knife into Alfio's heart; he must live to attend his mother's hens. Alfio and Turiddu follow ancient Sicilian customs of chivalry to challenge each other to a duel: they embrace, and Turiddu accepts the challenge by viciously biting Alfio's right ear. The villagers, sensing horror, disperse. Alfio coldly retorts that he will await Turiddu in the orchard, and then leaves.

Turiddu remains alone, suddenly overcome with fear and remorse; he is repentant and tearful. He has drunk too much wine and feels slightly inebriated, overcome by anxiety and angst. He calls for his mother and pours out his love for her. He begs her blessing, as on that morning when he left her to be a soldier. In a voice broken with sobs, he implores her that if he should not return, she must care for Santuzza as if she were her daughter.

Lucia is distracted and asks him the meaning of all his incomprehensible ranting. He tries to persuade her that it is the wine; he has been drinking too much and it has affected him.

“Per me pregate Iddio!”

Con anima

TURIDDU



Turiddu tries to conceal from Lucia that a fight to the death with Alfio is about to take place. Sobbing, he kisses her frantically, bids her a distracted farewell, and runs off for his duel with Alfio.

Mamma Lucia, bewildered, confused, and sensing disaster, calls out to him in desperation, but it is in vain.

The square in front of the church fills with villagers, the crowd murmuring nervously and anxiously. A woman's shrill cry is heard in the distance: "Hanno amazzato compar Turiddu" ("They have killed Turiddu.")

Santuzza shrieks wildly with anguish and then collapses. Women rush to Mamma Lucia, who has fainted, traumatized in disbelief and despair. The crowd stands in silence, stupefied and horrified by Turiddu's murder, a grim and tragic conclusion to an Easter Sunday in a Sicilian village.

Alfio has redeemed his honor, succeeding in exacting justice and retribution: "Rustic Chivalry."

Commentary and Analysis

Pietro Mascagni was born in Leghorn, Italy, in 1863; he died in 1945. As a youth, he yearned for a career in music, but his parents wanted him to become a lawyer: the family friction was resolved, when unable to subdue his passion, he studied music secretly. Subsequently, together with the intervention of a sympathetic uncle and sponsorship from a wealthy amateur musician, Mascagni was enrolled at the Conservatory of Milan: his promising talents were nurtured by his renowned teacher, Amilcare Ponchielli, the composer of *La Gioconda* (1876). Nevertheless, he was discontent at the Conservatory, unable to cope with scholastic disciplines and the required studies of harmony and counterpoint: he discontinued his studies and ran away from school. Afterwards, Mascagni married and settled down in Cerignola, Italy, earning a living as a music teacher and occasionally as a conductor.

Mascagni learned that the enterprising music publisher, Edoardo Sonzogno, was sponsoring a one-act opera competition which offered a substantial prize: he began composing *Cavalleria Rusticana*, based on Verga's poignant story about passionate conflicts in the lives of nineteenth century Sicilian peasantry. It was Sonzogno's second one-act competition: in the first, Puccini had entered *Le Villi*, which failed to gain even honorable mention.

Mascagni was insecure and dissatisfied with the quality of his *Cavalleria Rusticana* score. He sent it to Giacomo Puccini, his best friend and former roommate at the Conservatory of Milan, who quickly denounced it and concluded that it did not have one iota of a chance to win the competition. But in a friendly gesture, Puccini sent the score to Ricordi, his own publisher and Sonzogno's rival: it was likewise rejected as worthless; "Non ci credo" ("I do not believe in it.") However, Mascagni's wife had stronger faith in the score than its composer: she secretly mailed it to Sonzogno and it was immediately accepted and entered into the competition. In 1890, at the age 27, Mascagni's one-act opera, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, decisively won first prize over 72 rivals in Sonzogno's competition.

Cavalleria Rusticana achieved an unbelievable and immediate success. The opera not only reaped a fortune for Sonzogno's publishing firm, but it also catapulted both composer and opera to overnight fame: medals were struck in Mascagni's honor; the city of Cerignola greeted Mascagni with torchlight processions; and the King bestowed the Order of the Crown of Italy upon him. More importantly, a young, unknown composer had suddenly emerged to the forefront of Italy's avant-garde, the "giovanni scuola" or "young school" of verismo composers. And Mascagni's rise unveiled a new chapter in Italian opera, the advent of the new verismo genre of opera that combined rich melody with pulsating and extremely dramatic passions: sex, adultery, betrayal, revenge, and murder.

Mascagni never composed an opera remotely approaching this first success: 14 more operas followed, each with minor acclaim. Among the more popular today are *L'Amico Fritz* (1891), *Iris* (1898), and *Isabeau*, (1911), the latter the story about Lady Godiva, but the heroine's naked ride through the streets was incapable of redeeming the opera. Mascagni himself commented sadly, "It was a pity I wrote *Cavalleria Rusticana* first": the composer never looked back, but never looked forward either; the spirit of his unrepeatable masterpiece haunted him for the rest of his life.

Mascagni spent most of his career as a conductor, succeeding Toscanini at La Scala in 1929, and later composing music scores for silent films. Before World War II, he became an ardent fascist, composing the opera, *Nerone* (1935), a historic pageant glorifying Mussolini and fascism. After the war, he was held in contempt by his countrymen for his avowed fascist sympathies and spent his last years in obscurity, poverty and disgrace.

The libretto for Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* evolved from a story by Giovanni Verga (1840-1922). Verga was an influential late nineteenth century Sicilian novelist, a short-story writer and playwright, who — perhaps following the guidelines of Émile Zola in France — introduced the naturalism movement to Italian literature and theater.

Verga's childhood and youth coincided with major historical changes in Italy: the transfer of power from the Bourbon to the Savoy monarchy. In 1860 Sicily was annexed to Italy, and one year later Garibaldi led an army that created the new Kingdom of Italy under Victor Emmanuel II of Savoy. Verga, then 20 years old, enrolled in the Catania National Guard, which became engaged in suppressing both counterrevolutionary movements and uprisings against the bourgeoisie. In his short story *Freedom*, Verga would later recall the mob violence and executions that he witnessed.

In post-Risorgimento Italy, a mood of disillusionment developed after Italy achieved its political dream of unification, which served to inspire the birth of the literary movement of verismo. It was strongly influenced by the French novelists, Balzac and Zola. Verga—together with the writer Luigi Capuana—became the Italian counterparts of French naturalism, a genre in which the writers concerned themselves with the spontaneous representation of nature and the day-to-day affairs of ordinary people. These writers did not engage in wordy descriptive passages and lengthy narrations dealing with moral concerns and ideals that had characterized the works of the earlier Romantic novelists. For them, the narrative was to be conveyed through dialogue, and the story was to be told exclusively through the characters. Verga remained true to these veristic principles. He expressed no opinion of the social injustices that he was depicting, and was content to merely view it through the eyes of his characters, whose opinions were conveyed through action and dialogue.

Temperamentally, Verga was opposed to the repression of the underprivileged as well as the corrupt society that he observed around him; that ideology became the engine that drove his writing. In many of his novels, he addressed themes such as the conflicts of human love, and the inexorable destructive forces of life itself, forces of survival in which humanity was impotent and hopelessness. In *Nedda*, he portrayed the pathetic story of a Sicilian peasant girl's struggle against sickness and poverty, the catastrophes that overcome her, and the inevitability of defeat in her pursuit of happiness. Two of his major novels are considered masterpieces: *I Malavoglia* ("The House of the Medlar Tree") (1881) explores the fruitless human struggle for immortality; *Mastro-don Gesualdo* (1888) is a myth about property, in which a social climbing peasant amasses a large fortune, but finds himself despised by the society into which he has aspired to. The church and the law are prominent elements in several of his tales — *The Reverend, Don Licciu Papa*, and *Bigwigs* — and more often than not fiercely satirical portraits of the church and legal authorities are portrayed as adversaries of the poor.

In many respects, Verga's stories represent an invaluable record of social conditions at a critical stage of modern Italian history. But Verga was a realist who harbored no illusions about human society. He was acutely aware of the comic side of daily life, and even in the midst of catastrophe his characters never lose their capacity to smile at their misfortunes. In that sense, he was a master at stirring the reader's compassion by inspiring them to participate in his characters' joys and sorrows: Verga aroused compassion while avoiding all traces of sentimentality; he presented life in its true realism, free from any distortions or idealism.

Verga lived most of his life in Catania, Sicily. A regular feature of his narratives was his portrayal of the lives and aspirations of his Sicilian compatriots. His stories depicted with uncanny accuracy the raw, earthy lives, manners and temperament of poor Sicilian peasants and fishermen, a culture attached almost inevitably to its primitive, traditional way of life. He portrayed his fellow Sicilians with outstanding narrative power and a rich and versatile prose, at times excessively dramatic, violent and brutal, but at all times starkly realistic. His stark descriptions

were enhanced by his concise writing style. D.H. Lawrence, an admirer and translator of Verga's works, commented: "we are here just a bit too much aware of the author and his scissors. He has clipped too much away. The transitions are too abrupt. All is over is a gasp..."

Verga's short novel, *Cavalleria Rusticana* (1880), was transformed into a stage play in 1884. The play featured the renowned Italian actress of the era, Eleonora Duse, the play expanding the character of Santa (now Santuzza) to accommodate Duse. (The actress is also known for her portrayal of another verismo role, Sardou's *La Tosca*, later adapted by Puccini for his opera.) Although Verga remains the man who wrote the original *Cavalleria Rusticana* story, the libretto for Mascagni's celebrated one-act opera was written not by Verga, but by Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti and Guido Menasci, who based their text closely on Verga's one-act play rather than the short story.

The characterizations in Verga's story — and the Mascagni opera — are in profound conflict with each other; true verismo characters who explode with uncontrolled, savage passions. Nevertheless, Verga recommended that his characters demonstrate restrained behavior, pointing out to a German producer that Sicilians, like Orientals, are outwardly passive and calm, and therefore, not apt to show raw, extroverted emotion. In particular, Verga cited that when the cuckolded Alfio learns about his wife's infidelity, he should not display visible emotion. Nevertheless, Mascagni transformed Verga's intentions to blood-and-thunder verismo, his musical characterizations emphasizing their relentless fortissimo passions.

Verga's story is notable for its structural compactness and the precision and clarity of its narrative detail. From its very beginning, it is absolutely clear that the theme of the story is adultery and the satisfaction of honor. Considering its brevity, it is remarkable the way the main characters emerge with such clearly defined and distinctive personalities. But Verga skillfully creates an atmosphere of tragic inevitability before plunging the narrative into the final, starkly uncompromising encounter between Turiddu and Alfio. (The name Turiddu is the Sicilian diminutive of Salvatore.)

Verga describes Turiddu as a young dandy, a local playboy swaggering about the village on Sundays in his military uniform. In the Penguin Books translation (1999), Turiddu "...strutted around the piazza every Sunday in his sharpshooter's uniform and his red forage-cap, as though he were the fortune-teller setting up stall with his cage of canaries. The girls couldn't take their eyes off him as they went along to Mass with their faces half hidden in their mantillas, and the little boys buzzed around him like flies. He had even brought back a pipe carved with a lifelike image of the king on horseback, and he would strike matches on the seat of his pants, raising his leg as if to take a kick at something."

Turiddu was pursuing Lola, but while he was serving his army conscription, she went ahead and married Alfio, a successful and enterprising cart-driver. Verga's narrative about Lola continues: "...on Sundays she would stand on her veranda with her hands across her belly to show off all the big gold rings her husband had given her." But the rejected Turiddu continued to pass by Lola's house, seemingly with an air of indifference, however, deep inside he was distraught, envious of Lola's husband's wealth, and vengeful again Lola for spurning him for Alfio.

Turiddu then pursued Santa, the daughter of a wealthy wine grower, and the possessor of a considerable dowry. But when Alfio was away, Lola pursued Turiddu; they began an adulterous love affair that became the town's major gossip, and the betrayed Santa became obsessively jealous. In a fit of rage, Santa revealed to Alfio the adultery that was taking place in his absence. Alfio immediately concluded that the two men must settle the issue in the

approved manner of rustic chivalry, a fight to the death in Southern Italian style: "...they exchanged the kiss of the challenge. Turiddu took the tip of the cart-driver's ear between his teeth and bit it, by way of a solemn promise to keep the appointment."

As Turiddu and Alfio walked down the road together, Turiddu told him "...as God is my witness I know I did wrong and I'd be glad to let you kill me. But before coming to meet you I caught sight of my old mother, who had got up to see me leaving with the excuse of cleaning out the chicken run, looking as though her heart was breaking, and as God is my witness I'm going to kill you to stop my mother shedding any tears."

"They both knew how to use a knife. Turiddu took the first blow, stopping it with his arm just in time. He gave back as good as he'd got, striking Alfio in the groin."

"Ah, Turiddu! So you really want to kill me!"

"Yes, I already told you. After seeing my old mother with the chickens, my eyes can see nothing else."

"Open them wide, those eyes of yours!" roared Alfio, "and I'll give you something to do them a bit of good."

"Keeping up his guard, hunched in pain, clutching his wound with his left hand, and crawling over the ground with the use of his elbow, he suddenly grabbed a handful of dust and hurled it into the eyes of his opponent."

"Ah!" yelled Turiddu, blinded by the dust. "I'm a dead man."

"He tried to escape, leaping backward in desperation, but Alfio struck him another blow in the stomach and a third in the throat."

"That's three! For dressing up my home. Now your mother can stop bothering about the chickens!"

"Turiddu pawed the air for a while amid the cactuses, then dropped to the ground like a stone. The blood foamed up with a gurgling sound into his throat, and he couldn't even get out the words. "Ah, mamma mia!"

Verga's stage play portrayed the savage and brutal fight between Turiddu and Alfio — it occurs offstage in the Mascagni's opera, replaced by the announcement by a village woman of its fatal outcome: "Hanno ammazzato Comare Turiddu!" ("They have killed Turiddu!")

The title of the opera, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, literally means "rustic chivalry," more specifically, "rustic honor." The central core of the story concerns defeated honor, pride, and the loss of dignity; Santuzza and Alfio are the story's victims, both betrayed, shamed, and dishonored by the faithlessness of their respective lovers, Turiddu and Lola.

The underlying story presents an irony in its interplay of passions. The overpowering symbol in the melodrama is the church, and specifically, Easter Sunday, the celebration of the Passion of Christ, that essentially represents the core of the Christian faith: Christ's sufferings that redeemed mankind, and the basic tenet of forgiveness followed by a sense of a new beginning.

However, juxtaposed against the Passion of Easter is human passion, a portrayal of characters who become consumed by uncontrollable irrational forces of betrayal and revenge that lead to fatal and tragic murder. In this story, the sacred and the profane collide, continuously alternating and throbbing back and forth. Then, they explode into incomprehensible disaster, a chiaroscuro that blurs the line between lightness and darkness, between good and evil.

The Prelude immediately exposes the passions of the drama: the Easter Passion, Turiddu's passion for Lola, Santuzza's passion for Turiddu and his betrayal of her; Santuzza (literally "little saint") is the central protagonist of the story. The Prelude begins with a musical portrait of the tranquility in the village on a sacred Easter morning, but that sense of elevated spirituality quickly transfers to the mundane world; a musical theme is introduced that is associated with Santuzza's passion for Turiddu and her jealousy, a pleading motive that later underscores Santuzza's battle with the dispassionate Turiddu to give up his love for Lola and return to her.

The Prelude suddenly switches gear. Turiddu is heard serenading Lola with the “*Siciliana*,” a song whose words express his eternal love for her, and his wish to die if he cannot love her. And then again, another musical theme associated with Santuzza’s agony is introduced, music that will again reappear and underscore the impassioned duet between Turiddu and Santuzza, the moment in which his rejection of Santuzza catalyzes her obsession for revenge.

The dark and ominous expositions of the Prelude suddenly transform to lightness as villagers arrive in the square, all of them happily anticipating the Easter celebration. But after they disperse, Santuzza appears, agonized and agitated; she has seen Turiddu in the early morning near Lola’s house, and now suspects that he has betrayed her by resuming his love for Lola. But again, dark omens transform quickly to high spirits with the appearance of the returning Alfio, happily — and ironically — announcing that his wife Lola awaits him on this Easter Sunday, although ominous music suggests infidelity, a contradiction of his thoughts.

Santuzza is obsessed to learn Turiddu’s whereabouts from his mother, Mamma Lucia, but their conversation is interrupted by the devotional “*Regina Coeli*” hymn heard from inside the church: from outside, the excommunicated Santuzza joins the prayer; “*Innegiamo Signor*.” For one short moment, Santuzza’s inner conflicts have surrendered to spiritual comfort. But afterwards, she pours out her soul to Mamma Lucia, “*Voi lo sapete, o mamma*” (“You know, that before Turiddu became a soldier”), her exposition that she has been betrayed, abandoned and disgraced by Turiddu, the underlying theme of the entire opera: “*Priva dell’onor mio, dell’onor mio rimango*” (“I have been robbed of my honor.”)

The centerpiece of the opera is the ensuing duet between Santuzza and Turiddu, a vigorous and violent battle in which Santuzza pleads unsuccessfully for Turiddu to abandon Lola and return to her. But ironically, in the middle of their quarrel, Lola herself appears, Santuzza’s coquettish rival inflaming her with sarcasm, cynicism, and seductive allusions intended to rouse Turiddu. After Lola departs for church, the quarrel resumes, a raging Santuzza continuing her pleas for Turiddu to stay with her: “*No, no! Turiddu, rimani, rimani ancora*” (“Stay with me, Turiddu. Do you want to abandon me?”) In the end, Turiddu perceives Santuzza as possessive and savagely throws her to the ground, violently denouncing her stupidity and obsessive jealousy. He flees to join Lola in church, the embittered and despairing Santuzza furiously cursing him as he departs: “*Una mala Pasqua*” (“A cursed Easter!”)

Santuzza remains alone in agony and torment. But suddenly Alfio appears, and she quickly exposes her torment to him: “*Turiddu mi tolse*” (“Turiddu took my honor.”) But Alfio now becomes Santuzza’s instrument for revenge: she advises Alfio that he has been dishonored, a cuckolded husband who is the victim of an unfaithful wife who is carrying on an adulterous affair with Turiddu. Alfio, like Santuzza, vows revenge: “*Vendetta!*” (“Vengeance!”)

An *Intermezzo* momentarily reduces the mounting tension, its music returning to the “*Regina Coeli*” devotional hymn, but like the Prelude, Mascagni adds musical themes that collide with spirituality and reveal the conflicted passions of the characters.

The villagers emerge from the church, their gaiety heightened by Turiddu, who leads them in a drinking song. But quickly, the essential conflict of the drama returns when Alfio appears, unabashedly determined to destroy the man who has dishonored him: it is Alfio who has been dishonored; Lola’s infidelity is not addressed.

Alfio and Turiddu challenge each other to settle their differences in a duel with knives. Turiddu, alone with his mother, becomes remorseful — and fearful. Nevertheless, he speeds off for his fight with Alfio. A village woman comes forward to announce the final agony — the final passion — of this Easter Sunday in a Sicilian village: the death of Turiddu. And the orchestra, resounding at its full power, recalls the music associated with Santuzza’s agitation and agony; she, like Mamma Lucia, is another victim of the tragedy.

The entire plot of *Cavalleria Rusticana* is driven by Santuzza and Alfio, both dishonored and possessed by vengeance: in verismo, their obsession for revenge prompts explosions of unbridled passions, all of which lead to unabashed violence. Above all, in verismo's "truth" human character is irrational because reason has failed and man is overcome by emotion and passion, now a victim of uncontrollable forces that drive him to cruelty, brutality, and violence.

The loss of honor is *the* theme of the story. Its loss demands immediate justice and retribution: it is ironic that on this holy day of celebration, there is no sense of Christian forgiveness, and no turning of the other cheek; *Cavalleria Rusticana*'s world is an eye-for-an-eye, the implementation of "frontier justice" that has been transplanted to the Sicilian outback, a blatant contradiction to Easter Sunday's sacred spirituality that haunts the ambience of this story. There is no reconciliation because in this irrational world, the resolution of the human conflict can only be manifested through violence and murder. In *Cavalleria Rusticana*, the profane conquers the sacred: irrational man overpowers reasonable man because man is protean, primitive, nihilistic, and instinctive, his savage and fatal passions erupting into madness.

Cavalleria Rusticana is a melodrama about honor, and the savage form of reconciliation that restores honor. Pietro Mascagni, the dramatist of this brutal story, used the power of his musical inventions to breathe life into its stark and cruel story. His opera became the precursor of the Italian verismo genre that dominated the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As an opera genre, verismo was short-lived, only a few composers achieving everlasting success with their works. But a century after its premiere, *Cavalleria Rusticana* continues to dominate the stages of every opera house in the world; audiences continue to be mesmerized by its portrayal of dark passions that pervade the human soul, uncontrollable passions that rest in the deep recesses of the human psyche; passions that can turn man to evil.

Libretto

A Prelude conveys the serenity of a Sicilian village at dawn on Easter Sunday.

Andante sostenuto



From afar, Turiddu is heard serenading Lola: the Siciliana

**Andante
TURIDDÙ**



Turiddu:

O Lola ch'ai di latti la cammisa
Si bianca e russa comu la cirasa,

Quannu t'affacci fai la vacca a risa,
Biato cui ti dà lu primu vasu!
Ntra la porta tua lu sangu è sparsu,
E nun me mporta si ce muoru accisu.

E s'iddu muoru e vaju mparadisu
Si nun ce truovo a ttia, mancu ce trasu.
Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!

Turiddu: *(from behind the scene)*

Lola, your dress is white as milk,
Your smile, as you look through the window,
is red and white like a cherry.

Blessed is the one
who gives you the first kiss,
Your threshold is sprinkled with blood,
and I would not mind if I were killed there.

And if I died, I would not want to go to
Paradise unless I found you there.
Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!

*A village square in Sicily. In the background, a church.
At the side, the Inn and dwelling of Mamma Lucia.*

*It is Easter morning. Peasants, villagers, and children enter the square.
The church doors open, and many of the people enter;
others continue strolling through the square.*

Donne:

Gli aranci olezzano sui verdi margini,
cantan le allodole tra i mirti in fior;
tempo è sì mormori da ognuno il tenero canto
che i palpiti raddoppia al cor.

Uomini:

In mezzo al campo tra le spiche d'oro
giunge il rumor delle vostre spole,
noi stanchi riposando dal lavoro
a voi pensiam, o belle occhi di sole.

O belle occhi di sole, a voi corriamo,
come vola l'augelo al suo richiamo.

Donne:

Cessin le rustiche opre,
la Vergine serena allietasi del Salvator;
tempo è sì mormori da ognuno il tenero canto
che i palpiti raddoppia al cor.

Women: *(as they arrive in the square)*

The scent of oranges fills the air,
larks sing among the flowering bushes;
now is the time for everyone to sing the tender
songs that quicken the heart.

Men: *(as they arrive in the square)*

While we work in fields of golden corn,
we can hear the sounds of your labor,
we rest from our work,
and think of you, beautiful sparkling eyes.

Oh beautiful sparkling eyes, we hurry back to
you like a bird flying to the call of its mate.

Women:

The work and toil is finished,
the happy Virgin holds the Savior;
now is the time for everyone to sing the tender
songs that quicken the heart.

*Santuzza arrives in great agitation. She approaches Mamma Lucia's tavern,
and meets Lucia outside.*

Largo**Santuzza:**

Dite, mamma Lucia.

Santuzza:

Tell me, Mamma Lucia.

Lucia:

Sei tu? Che vuoi?

Lucia:

What do you want?

Santuzza:

Turiddu ov'è?

Santuzza:

Where is Turiddu?

Lucia:

Fin qui vieni a cercare il figlio mio?

Lucia:

Have you come here to look for my son?

Santuzza:

Voglio saper soltanto, perdonatemi voi, dove trovarlo.

Lucia:

Non lo so, non lo so, non voglio brighe!

Santuzza:

Mamma Lucia, vi supplico piangendo, fate come il Signore a Maddalena, ditemi per pietà dov'è Turiddu.

Lucia:

È andato per il vino a Francofonte.

Santuzza:

No! L'han visto in paese ad alta notte.

Lucia:

Che dici?

Se non è tornato a casa!

Santuzza:

Forgive me, I just want to know where to find him.

Lucia:

I don't know, and I don't want trouble!

Santuzza:

Mamma Lucia, I beg you to treat me as Our Lord did Mary Magdalene. For pity's sake tell me where Turiddu is.

Lucia:

He's gone to Francofonte for wine.

Santuzza:

No! He was seen near here late last night.

Lucia:

What are you saying?

Why hasn't he returned home?

Mamma Lucia tries to lead Santuzza into the tavern.

Entra!

Come in!

Santuzza:

Non posso entrare in casa vostra, sono scomunicata!

Santuzza: (desperately)

I can't come inside your house, I'm excommunicated!

Lucia:

E che ne sai del mio figliolo?

Lucia:

What do you know about my son?

Santuzza:

Quale spina ho in core!

Santuzza:

What a thorn I have in my heart!

*From the distance, the cracking of whips and the jingling of bells are heard;
then Alfio, the carter, arrives in the square.*

Allegretto**ALFIO**

Il ca- vallo scalpi - ta, i sonagli squillano, schiocchi la frusta. Ehi là!

Alfio:

Il cavallo scalpita, i sonagli squillano,
schiocchi la frusta. Ehi là!
Soffi il vento gelido, cada l'acqua o nevichi,
a me che cosa fa?

Coro:

O che bel mestiere fare il carrettiere
andar di qua e di là!

Alfio:

M'aspetta a casa Lola che m'ama e mi
consola, ch'è tutta fedeltà.
Il cavallo scalpiti, i sonagli squillino,
È Pasqua, ed io son quà!

Alfio:

The horse paws the ground, bridle bells jingle,
the whip cracks.
An icy wind blows, rain or snow falls, but
why should I care?

Chorus:

It's a good profession to be a carter, travelling
here and there!

Alfio:

Lola waits for me at home, full of love,
comfort, and fidelity.
The horse paws the ground.
It's Easter, and I'm here!

Some villagers enter the church, others scatter about the square.

Lucia:

Beato voi, compar Alfio, che siete sempre
allegro così!

Alfio:

Mamma Lucia, n'avete ancora di quel
vecchio vino?

Lucia:

Non so; Turiddu è andato a provvederne.

Alfio:

Se è sempre qui! L'ho visto stamattina vicino
a casa mia.

Lucia:

Come?

Santuzza:

Tacete!

Lucia:

Good friend Alfio, you're always so jolly and
happy!

Alfio:

Mamma Lucia, do you still have some of the
old wine?

Lucia:

I don't know. Turiddu has gone to get some.

Alfio:

But he's still here! I saw him near my house
this morning.

Lucia: (surprised)

What?

Santuzza: (to Lucia)

Don't say anything!

From the church, a chorus is heard singing prayers.

Alfio:

Io me ne vado, ite voi altre in chiesa.

Alfio:

I'm leaving. Everyone go to church!

As Alfio departs, the chorus from inside the church is heard singing the Regina Coeli.

Moderato assai**Coro:**

Regina coeli laetare. Alleluja!
 Quia quem meruisti portare. Alleluja!
 Resurrexit sicut dixit. Alleluja!

Chorus:

Queen of Heaven, rejoice!
 Your Son has risen from the dead
 as He promised. Rejoice!

Largo maestoso**SANTUZZA****Coro, e poi Santuzza:**

Inneggiamo, il Signor non è morto,
 ei fulgente ha dischiuso l'avel,
 inneggiam al Signore risorto
 oggi asceso slla gloria del Ciel!

Chorus, and then Santuzza:

Let us offer praise, the Lord is not dead!
 And in shining glory the tomb has opened.
 Let us praise the risen Lord, ascended today
 to the glory of Heaven!

All enter the church except Santuzza and Lucia.

Lucia:

Perchè m'hai fatto segno di tacere?

Lucia:

Why did you tell me to be quiet?

Largo assai sostenuto**Santuzza:**

Voi lo sapete, o mamma, prima d'andar
 soldato, Turiddu aveva a Lola eterna fê giurato.

Santuzza:

You know that before Turiddu became a
 soldier, he was betrothed to Lola.

Tornò, la seppe sposa; e con un nuovo amore
 volle spegner la fiamma che gli bruciava il core.

He returned, and she had married Alfio. He
 tried to extinguish the flame in his heart with
 a new love.

M'amò, l'amai, l'amai, ah! l'amai.
 Quell'invidia d'ogni delizia mia, del suo
 sposo dimentica, arse di gelosia.
 Me l'ha rapito. Priva dell'onor mio rimango:
 Lola e Turiddu s'amano, io piango, io piango!

He loved me, and I loved him.
 Lola was jealous of my happiness, and forgot
 about her husband.
 She stole him from me. I've lost my honor
 and weep: Lola and Turiddu love each other!

Lucia:

Miseri noi, che cosa vieni a dirmi in questo santo giorno?

Santuzza:

Io son dannata. Andate o mamma, ad implorare Iddio, e pregate per me. Verrà Turiddu, vo' supplicarlo un'altra volta ancora!

Lucia:

Aiutatela voi, Santa Maria!

Lucia:

What a terrible thing you've told me on this holy day!

Santuzza:

A am accursed. Go and pray to the Lord for me. Turiddu will be coming, and I want to plead with him again!

Lucia:

Holy Mary, help her!

Lucia enters the church. Santuzza remains alone, and then Turiddu arrives.

Turiddu:

Tu qui, Santuzza?

Turiddu:

You here, Santuzza?

Santuzza:

Qui t'aspettavo.

Santuzza:

I was waiting for you.

Turiddu:

È Pasqua, In chiesa non vai?

Turiddu:

It's Easter. Aren't you going to church?

Santuzza:

Non vo. Debbo parlarti.

Santuzza:

I'm not going. I must talk to you.

Turiddu:

Mamma cercavo.

Turiddu:

I'm looking for my mother.

Santuzza:

Debbo parlarti.

Santuzza:

I must talk to you.

Turiddu:

Qui no! Qui no!

Turiddu:

Not here! Not here!

Santuzza:

Dove sei stato?

Santuzza:

Where have you been?

Turiddu:

Che vuoi tu dire? A Francofonte!

Turiddu:

What do you mean? To Francofonte!

Santuzza:

No, non è ver!

Santuzza:

It's not true!

Turiddu:

Santuzza, credimi.

Turiddu:

Santuzza, believe me!

Santuzza:

No, non mentire; ti vidi volger giù dal sentier.
E stamattina, all'alba, t'hanno scorto presso
l'uscio di Lola.

Turiddu:

Ah! Mi hai spiato?

Santuzza:

No, te lo giuro. A noi l'ha raccontato compar
Alfio il marito, poco fa.

Turiddu:

Così ricambi l'amor che ti porto?
Vuoi che m'uccida?

Santuzza:

Oh! Questo non lo dire.

Turiddu:

Lasciami dunque, lasciami; invan tenti sopire
il giusto sdegno colla tua pietà.

Santuzza:

Tu l'ami dunque?

Turiddu:

No.

Santuzza:

Assai più bella è Lola.

Turiddu:

Taci, non l'amo.

Santuzza:

L'ami. Oh! Maledetta!

Turiddu:

Santuzza!

Santuzza:

Quella cattiva femmina ti tolse a me!

Turiddu:

Bada, Santuzza, schiavo non sono di questa
vana tua gelosia!

Santuzza:

Don't lie. I saw you turn off the road.
And at dawn this morning you were seen near
Lola's house.

Turiddu:

You were spying on me?

Santuzza:

No, I swear to you. Her husband, Alfio, just
told us a little while ago.

Turiddu:

Is this how you repay my love?
Do you want him to kill me?

Santuzza:

Don't say that.

Turiddu:

Then leave me alone. Don't try to placate my
anger with your pity.

Santuzza:

So you love her?

Turiddu:

No.

Santuzza:

Lola is more beautiful.

Turiddu:

Be quiet! I don't love her.

Santuzza:

You do love her. Damn her!

Turiddu:

Santuzza!

Santuzza:

That wicked woman has taken you away
from me!

Turiddu:

Be careful, Santuzza. I won't be a slave of
your jealousy!

Santuzza:

Battimi, insultami, t'amo e perdono, na è troppo forte l'angoscia mia.

Santuzza: *(with anguish)*

Beat me, insult me, I love and forgive you, but my anguish is too strong to bear.

Lola is heard approaching from the distance.

Allegretto**LOLA****Lola:**

Fior di giaggiolo, gli angeli belli stanno a mille in cielo, ma bello come lui ce n'è uno solo.

Lola:

Radiant iris flowers, thousands of angels in Heaven, but none so handsome as he.

Lola arrives and confronts Turiddu.

Oh! Turiddu. È passato Alfio?

Oh! Turiddu. Has Alfio been here?

Turiddu:

Son giunto ora in piazza. Non so.

Turiddu:

I've only just arrived. I don't know.

Lola:

Forse è rimasto dal maniscalco, ma non può tardare. E voi sentite le funzioni in piazza?

Lola:

Perhaps he's gone to the blacksmith. Are you listening to the service in the square?

Turiddu:

Santuzza mi narrava.

Turiddu:

Santuzza was just telling me.

Santuzza:

Gli dicevo che oggi è Pasqua e il Signor vede ogni cosa!

Santuzza:

That today is Easter Sunday and the Lord sees everything!

Lola:

Non venite alla messa?

Lola: *(to Santuzza)*

Are you coming to Mass?

Santuzza:

Io no, ci deve andar chi sa di non aver peccato.

Santuzza:

No, I'm not. Only those who know they have no sins should go.

Lola:

Io ringrazio il Signore e bacio in terra.

Lola:

I thank the Lord and kiss the ground.

Santuzza:

Oh, fate bene, Lola!

Santuzza: *(bitterly)*

Well done, Lola!

Turiddu:

Andiamo, andiamo! Qui non abbiám che fare.

Lola:

Oh! Rimanete!

Santuzza:

Sì, resta, resta, Ho da parlarti ancora!

Lola:

E v'assista il Signore: io me ne vado.

Turiddu: *(to Lola, slightly embarrassed)*

Let's go, let's go! There's no point in staying here.

Lola: *(ironically)*

Oh! You stay here!

Santuzza: *(to Turiddu, firmly)*

Yes, stay here. I've something else to say!

Lola: *(with irony)*

The Lord assist you! I'm going.

Lola enters the church, leaving Santuzza and Turiddu alone.

Turiddu:

Ah! Io vedi, che hai tu detto?

Turiddu: *(ironically)*

What have you said?

Santuzza:

L'hai voluto, e ben ti sta.

Santuzza:

You asked for it, and it serves you right.

Turiddu:

Ah! Per Dio!

Turiddu: *(threateningly)*

Ah! For God's sake!

Santuzza:

Squarciami il petto!

Santuzza:

My heart is broken!

Turiddu:

No!

Turiddu: *(approaching)*

No!

Santuzza:

Turiddu, ascolta!

Santuzza: *(anxiously)*

Turiddu, listen!

Turiddu:

No!

Turiddu:

No!

Andante appassionato**SANTUZZA**

Stay with me, Turiddu.



Do you want to abandon me?

Santuzza:

No, no, Turiddu, rimani ancora.
Abbandonarmi dunque tu vuoi?

Turiddu:

Perché seguirmi, perché spiarmi sul limitare
fin della chiesa?

Santuzza:

La tua Santuzza piange e t'implora; come
cacciarla così tu puoi?

Turiddu:

Va, ti ripeto Va non tediarmi, pentirsi è vano
dopo l'offesa!

Santuzza:

Bada!

Turiddu:

Dell'ira tua non mi curo!

Santuzza: (pleading)

Stay with me, Turiddu.
Do you want to abandon me?

Turiddu:

Why do you follow me, spy on me, even
outside the church?

Santuzza: (in supplication)

Your Santuzza implores you. How can you
drive her away like this?

Turiddu:

I'll say it again. Don't bother me! It's no good
being sorry after the event!

Santuzza: (menacingly)

Shut up!

Turiddu:

I don't give a damn for your anger!

Turiddu throws her down to the ground, and then flees to the church.

Santuzza:

A te la mala Pasqua, spergiuro!

Santuzza: (in heightened anger)

I curse your Easter, I swear it!

Santuzza lies on the ground, desperate and full of anguish. She collects herself as Alfio arrives.

Santuzza:

Oh! Il Signore vi manda compar Alfio.

Santuzza:

The Lord has sent you, Alfio.

Alfio:

A che punto è la messa?

Alfio: (calmly)

How far on is Mass?

Santuzza:

E tardi ormai, ma per voi Lola è andata con
Turiddu!

Santuzza: (with intension)

It's too late to go in, but Lola went in with
Turiddu instead of you!

Alfio:

Che avete detto?

Alfio: (surprised)

What did you say?

Santuzza:

Che mentre correte all'acqua e al vento a
guadagnarvi il pane, Lola v'adorna il tetto in
malo modo!

Santuzza:

That while you drive through wind and rain
to earn a living, Lola makes a cuckold of you!

Alfio:

Ah! Nel nome di Dio, Santa, che dite?

Alfio:

In the name of God, Santa, what did you say?

Largo**SANTUZZA****Santuzza:**

Il ver. Turiddu mi tolse l'onore, e vostra moglie lui rapiva a me!

Santuzza: (*impassioned*)

The truth. Turiddu has robbed me of my honor, and your wife has stolen him from me!

Alfio:

Se voi mentite, vo' schiantarvi il core!

Alfio:

If you're lying, I'll tear out your heart!

Santuzza:

Uso a mentire il labbro mio non è! Per la vergogna mia, pel mio dolore la triste verità. Vi dissi, ahimè!

Santuzza:

My lips are not accustomed to lying! To my shame and sorrow I've told you the sad truth. I've told you all!

Alfio:

Comare Santa, allor grato vi sono.

Alfio:

Then I'm grateful to you neighbor.

Santuzza:

Infame io son che vi parlai così!

Santuzza:

How wicked I am talking to you like that!

Alfio:

Infami loro: ad essi non perdono; vendetta avrò pria che tramonti il di. Io sangue voglio, all'ira m'abbandono, in odio tutto l'amor mio finì.

Alfio:

They are the wicked ones, and I'll not forgive them. I'll have vengeance today before sunset. I long for blood. All my love has turned to hate.

Alfio departs. Villagers exit from the church. Lucia enters her tavern.

Uomini:

A casa, a casa, amici, ove ci aspettano le nostre donne, andiam. Or che letizia rasserena gli animi senza indugio corriam.

Men:

Friends, let's hurry home, our women are waiting. Now that happiness uplifts our hearts, let's go home without delay.

Donne:

A casa, a casa, amiche, ove ci aspettano i nostri sposi, andiam. Or che letizia rasserena gli animi senza indugio corriam.

Women:

Friends, let's hurry home, our men are waiting. Now that happiness uplifts our hearts, let's go home without delay.

Lola exits from the church. Turiddu follows her.

Turiddu:

Comare Lola, ve ne andate via senza nemmeno salutare?

Turiddu:

Lola, are you going out without even a greeting to me?

Lola:

Vado a casa: non ho visto compar Alfio!

Lola:

I'm going home. I haven't seen Alfio!

Turiddu:

Non ci pensate, verrà in piazza.

Turiddu:

Don't worry, he'll come to the square.

Intanto amici, qua, beviamone un bicchiere!

Turiddu addresses the villagers

Friends, come here!. Let's have a drink!

*All the villagers approach the tavern and take cups of wine.***Larghetto****TURIDDU**

Viva il vino spumeggiante nel bicchiere
scintillante, come il riso dell'amante mite
infonde il giubilo!

Viva il vino ch'è sincero che ci allieta ogni
pensiero, e che annega l'umor nero,
nell'ebbrezza tenera.

Here's to the wine that sparkles like the
smiles of lovers and instills the lovers with
happiness!

Here's to the honest wine that makes us
happy and drowns our melancholy with its
intoxicating tenderness!

Coro:

Viva il vino spumeggiante...

Chorus:

Here's to the wine that sparkles...

Turiddu:

Ai vostri amori!

Turiddu: *(to Lola)*

Here's to your loves!

Lola:

Alla fortuna vostra!

Lola: *(to Turiddu)*

To your good luck!

Turiddu:

Beviam!

Turiddu:

Let's drink!

Coro:

Beviam! Viva il vin!

Chorus:

Let's drink!

*Alfio arrives at the square.***Alfio:**

A voi tutti salute!

Alfio:

Greeting to you all!

Coro:

Compar Alfio, salute.

Chorus:

Greetings, neighbor Alfio!

Turiddu:

Benvenuto! Con noi dovete bere:
Ecco, pieno è il bicchiere.

Alfio:

Grazie, ma il vostro vino Io non l'accetto.
diverrebbe veleno entro il mio petto.

Turiddu:

A piacer vostro!

Lola:

Ahimè! Che mai sarà?

Alcune Donne:

Comare Lola, andiamo via di qua.

Turiddu: (*fills a glass for Alfio*)

Welcome! You must drink with us.
Here, have a full glass.

Alfio: (*refusing*)

Thanks, but I can't accept your wine.
It would turn to poison inside me.

Turiddu: (*spills the wine to the ground*)

At your pleasure!

Lola:

What is going to happen?

Some Women: (*to Lola*)

Lola, let's get away from here.

Some women exit, accompanying Lola with them.

Turiddu:

Avete altro a dirmi?

Alfio:

Io? Nulla!

Turiddu:

Allora sono agli ordini vostri.

Alfio:

Or ora?

Turiddu:

Or ora!

Turiddu:

Have you anything else to say?

Alfio:

No, nothing!

Turiddu:

Then I'm at your service.

Alfio:

Now?

Turiddu:

And now!

Alfio and Turiddu embrace. Turiddu viciously bites Alfio on his right ear.

Alfio:

Compare Turiddu, avete morso a buono,
c'intenderemo bene, a quel che pare!

Turiddu:

Compar Alfio! Lo so che il torto è mio: e ve lo giuro nel nome di Dio che al par d'un cane mi farei sgozzar, ma s'io non vivo, resta abbandonata. Povera Santa! Lei che mi s'è data.

Vi saprò in core il ferro mio piantar!

Alfio:

Neighbor Turiddu, you have made a good challenge. It seems we understand each other!

Turiddu:

Neighbor Alfio! I know I'm to blame, and I swear I'd let you slaughter me like a dog, but if I die, poor Santa will be left abandoned. She gave herself to me. Poor Santa, she'll be left abandoned!

I'll have to plunge my blade into your heart!

Alfio:

Compare, fate come più vi piace; io v'aspetto
qui fuori dietro l'orto.

Alfio: (*coldly*)

Neighbor, do as you please. I'll wait for you
behind the orchard.

Alfio and all the villagers depart. Turiddu and Mamma Lucia are alone.

Turiddu:

Mamma, quel vino è generoso, e certo oggi
troppi bicchieri ne ho tracannati
Vado fuori all'aperto.
Ma prima voglio che mi benedite come quel
giorno che partii soldato.

Turiddu: (*calling to Mamma Lucia*)

Mamma, this wine is heavy. I've drunk too
many glasses of it today.
I'm going out into the fresh air.
But first I want you to bless me as you did the
day I went away as a soldier.

E poi, mamma, sentite, s'io non tornassi, .
voi dovrete fare da madre a Santa, ch'io le
avea giurato di condurla all'altare.

And Mamma, listen, if I don't return, you
must be a mother to Santa. I had promised to
lead her to the altar.

Lucia:

Perché parli così, figliuol mio?

Lucia:

Why are you talking like this?

Turiddu:

Oh! Nulla! È il vino che mi ha suggerito!

Turiddu:

It's nothing, just the wine!

Con anima**TURIDDU**

Per me pregate Iddio! Un bacio, mamma, un
altro bacio, addio!

Pray to God for me!
A kiss, Mamma, farewell!

Turiddu embraces Mamma Lucia and exits precipitously.

Lucia:

Turiddu?! Che vuoi dire?
Turiddu? Turiddu? Ah!

Lucia: (*in desperation*)

Turiddu, what do you mean?
Turiddu? Turiddu? Ah!

Santuzza arrives

Santuzza!

Santuzza!

Santuzza:

Oh! Madre mia!

Santuzza: (*embraces Mamma Lucia*)

Oh mother!

Confused murmurs are heard in the distance. Villagers arrive in the square in great agitation.

Donne:

Hanno ammazzato compare Turiddu!

A Woman: (*agitated and crying*)

Turiddu has been killed!

Santuzza and Lucia faint. All the villagers are silent and terrified.

End of Opera

I Pagliacci

(“The Clowns”)

**Music drama in Italian
with a prologue and two acts**

**Music
by
Ruggero Leoncavallo**

Libretto by Ruggero Leoncavallo

**Premiere:
Teatro Dal Verme, Milan, May 1892**

Principal Characters in I Pagliacci

Canio, leader of a traveling company of actors	Tenor
Nedda, Canio's wife	Soprano
Tonio, a hunchbacked actor in the company	Baritone
Silvio, a local villager and secret lover of Nedda	Baritone
Beppe, an actor in the company	Tenor

Clowns in the company and villagers

TIME: Late 19th century. The Holiday of the Feast of the Assumption.

PLACE: Calabria, Italy.

Brief Story Synopsis

A traveling troupe of acting-clowns arrives at a small village in Calabria, Italy, to perform a commedia dell'arte play: it is the holiday celebrating the Feast of the Assumption.

In a Prologue, Tonio, a hunchbacked actor in the troupe, appears before the curtain to advise the audience that the play they are about to witness may appear to be theatrical illusion, but they should not be deluded: the play will portray realistic human conflict, and it will be performed by actors who will reveal their inner souls; the play will be a fusion of life and art, or illusion and reality.

Canio, leader of the troupe, advises the villagers that the play begins that evening at 11 o' clock. Canio and another player, Beppe, accept the villagers' invitation to join them for a drink at a tavern. Tonio remains behind and confronts Canio's wife, Nedda, pleading vainly for her love. She rejects him, curses him, and lashes him with a whip: Tonio swears revenge.

Nedda has a rendezvous with her secret lover, Silvio, a local villager. While they are engaged in an ecstatic moment of romantic passion, Tonio, seeking revenge for Nedda's rejection of him, brings Canio to witness his wife's infidelity. Canio surprises the lovers, but Silvio escapes. Canio demands that Nedda reveal the name of her lover, but she refuses. Brokenhearted and despairing, he dresses for the performance that evening.

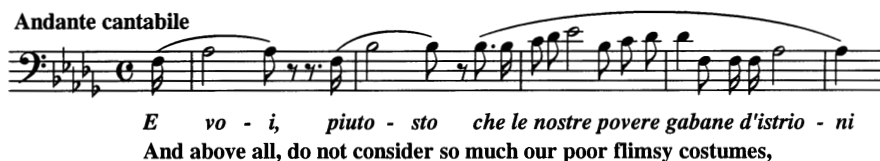
In the second act, the troupe's commedia dell'arte play is performed; its scenario mirrors the exact real-life events that took place earlier. In the play, Beppe (Harlequin) romances Nedda (Columbine) and is caught unexpectedly by the returning Canio (Pagliaccio), the exact same incident that occurred in Act I when Canio caught Nedda with her lover Silvio.

The play breaks down as illusion quickly transforms into reality: Canio, insane with jealousy, murders Nedda, and then her lover, Silvio.

Tonio admonishes the audience not to separate art from life: they will witness actors' emotions, sighs and tears, and grief and sorrow; real human passions, not make-believe illusions.

"E voi, piuttosto"

Andante cantabile



He begs the audience to feel the actors' pain, because it reflects the anguish of all humanity: he begs the audience to suffer with them and not consider their costumes, but only their souls. Tonio concludes, satisfied that he has prepared the audience for an evening of realism rather than illusion: "E voi. Incominciamo!" ("So let's go on with the show!")

Act I: A village in Calabria, Italy, on the holiday of the Feast of Assumption.

It is 3 o'clock on a bright, sunlit afternoon. A makeshift stage has been erected. Villagers, dressed for the holiday, congregate excitedly around the arriving troupe of actor-clowns, and welcome the "I Pagliacci" ("The Clowns"), who have come to entertain them: among them is Canio, the leader of the troupe, his wife Nedda, Beppe, the drum playing clown, and the hunchback, Tonio.

Canio, standing before the outdoor theater, urges the villagers to attend their performance that evening, announcing that it will begin at 11 o'clock. The villagers are in cheerful holiday spirits, and invite the "Pagliacci" to drink with them at a local tavern. Canio bids Tonio join them, but he excuses himself, explaining that he must remain behind to rubdown the donkey. With presumed jest, a villager suggests that Tonio is being deceptive, preferring to remain behind so he can make love to Canio's beautiful wife, Nedda.

Canio's jovial mood suddenly turns anxious, menacing and sinister. He responds to the villager's innuendo with feigned respect, and then delivers a candid lecture about marital infidelity: his words — and the underlying music — become profoundly grave and cautioning: "Un tal gioco, credetemi" ("Believe me, it's better not to play such a game with me.")

Canio explains that a play is illusion, but life is reality: in the humor of their commedia dell'arte play, he will surprise his adulterous wife, thrash her lover, and the audience will laugh. But life is not art, nor is it comedy: if anyone should covet his wife Nedda, he had better beware because he will become the victim of his vicious retribution. Canio concludes his sermon, kisses Nedda, and departs to join the villagers at the tavern. As he leaves, he and Nedda exchange threatening looks, indications of suspicion and mistrust between them.

"Un tal gioco, credetemi"

Adagio molto

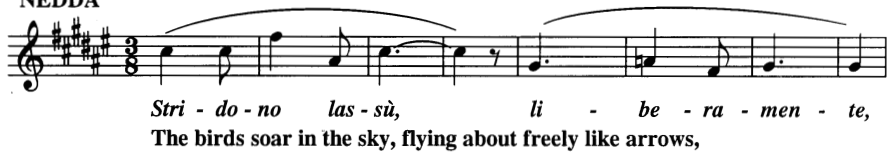


Nedda has just witnessed a jealous fire in her husband's eyes. She becomes fearful and seized by anxiety: What if Canio discovers her adulterous affair with Silvio? Nedda shudders, realizing that she would become a victim of his rage, a murderous and savage fury that would transform into brutality and violence.

Nedda is an unhappy woman, caged and trapped by her life-style, and yearning to be free. She looks to the sky and watches with envy as birds fly in freedom and with complete abandon. The birds are a metaphor of Nedda's life, the symbol of freedom and her longing to escape from her prison to follow her inner desires.

"Stridono lassù, liberamente"

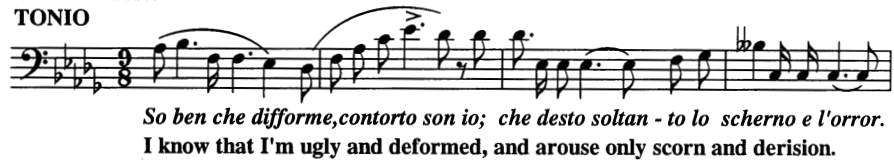
Vivace
NEDDA



Tonio, the crippled, hunchbacked clown of the troupe, has been hiding, all the while overhearing Nedda reveal her yearnings and secret desires. Tonio confronts Nedda and immediately expresses his lust for her, a beautiful dream that provides his escape from a world of harsh and ugly reality. He explains that he may be a warped and deformed hunchback, perhaps even sexually repulsive to her, but he is human and also has desires and yearnings. Tonio cannot control his passion for Nedda, but cautions her not to ridicule him: yes, he is indeed a deformed clown, a freak and object of laughter, but inside his soul, he is human, and like her, he craves love.

"So ben che difforme"

Cantabile sostenuto
TONIO



Tonio, overcome by his lechery, attempts to seduce Nedda. He begs her for a kiss. Nedda is repulsed by him; she derides him, mocks him, and orders him to go. But Tonio is unrelenting in his lust for her. When he attempts to clutch her, Nedda grabs a whip and lashes him across the face. Tonio screams in pain and agony, curses her, and as he departs, swears revenge.

Tonio's Revenge:



Silvio arrives, a local villager whom Nedda met when the troupe previously visited the town. Since then, Nedda and Silvio have become secret lovers. Nedda becomes fearful that they might be seen, but Silvio assures her that there is no danger, because Canio and Beppe are far away, drinking with the villagers at the tavern.

Nedda is agitated because of her encounter with the impetuous Tonio. She relates the details to Silvio, explaining that Tonio accosted her and became crazed with passion and desire for her, but that she calmed his passions by lashing him with a whip. Silvio eases her anxiety with earnest and powerful expressions of his love for her. He begs her to flee with him that very night, start a new life with him, and free herself from her unhappiness with Canio and her vagabond life as an actor.

"Nedda, Nedda, rispondimi"

Con anima

SILVIO



Ned-da, Nedda, ri - spondimi: s'è ver che Canio non a - masti ma - i,
Nedda, Nedda, answer me: if it's true that you no longer love Canio,

Nedda becomes equally impassioned, but fears that Canio would become violent and vengeful. Nevertheless, she admits her weakness and vulnerability, and implores Silvio not to tempt her to flee.

"Non mi tentar"

Andante appassionato

NEDDA



Non mi ten - tar! Vuoi tu perder la vi - ta mia?
Don't tempt me! Do you want me to lose my life?

Silvio and Nedda forego discretion and yield to their passions and the bliss of the moment. In a moment of ecstatic rapture they embrace. But they are unaware that Tonio has been spying on them, watching them, and overhearing their words of love. Tonio, seething with revenge against Nedda for spurning and lashing him, goes to fetch Canio.

Meanwhile, Nedda and Silvio dream of their future together, and invoke their farewell to past unhappiness.

"Tutto scordiam"

Largo assai

NEDDA and SILVIO



Tut - to scor - diam!
Let's forget everything!

Tonio has retrieved Canio and brought him to witness the lovers in their tryst. Canio overhears their parting words as Silvio and Nedda plan to escape that night: “Ad alta notte laggiù mi terrò. Cauta discendi em mi ritroverai” (“I’ll wait there for you at midnight. Go carefully and you’ll find me waiting.”)

Nedda responds to Silvio with eager anticipation: “A stanotte e per sempre tua sarò” (“Till tonight: I’ll be yours forever.”)

Canio transforms into horror and shock when he hears Nedda and her lover, shrieking furiously as he emerges from hiding. Silvio is stunned and flees. Canio begins to pursue him, but Nedda attempts to block his way. She struggles with him, and then Canio pushes her aside. As he pursues her lover, Nedda shouts at him scornfully: “May Heaven protect him!”

Canio returns, unsuccessful in apprehending Nedda’s secret lover. He is physically exhausted and trembling with anger and outrage. Tonio laughs cynically; by bringing the cuckolded Canio to the scene, he has triumphed and achieved his revenge against Nedda. Nedda, fearful of what Canio might do to her now that he has discovered her secret love affair, stands dumbfounded, shaken and distraught.

Canio, raging with jealousy and inflamed with fury, has transformed into a savage killer. He lunges at Nedda with drawn knife, insults her, curses her infidelity, and demands that she reveal her lover’s name. Nedda remains stoic and defiant, refusing to divulge his name.

Beppe restrains Canio and snatches the knife from him. He admonishes him that the show must go on: the villagers are leaving the church and it will soon be time for their performance. Beppe leads Nedda to the theater, while Canio fumes in disgrace and dishonor. Tonio urges him to be calm, assuring him that he will have his opportunity for revenge because Nedda’s lover will surely return, and then they will succeed in discovering him.

Consumed with jealousy, betrayal and revenge, Canio considers his horrible fate. In agony, he laments: “Recitar! Mentre preso dal delirio non so più quell che dico e quell que faccio!” (“I must perform, while I’m so delirious that I don’t know what I’m saying or what I’m doing!”)

With heartrending pathos, Canio addresses his dilemma: he must act as a clown tonight, heartbroken, anguished and overcome with grief. He must laugh on the outside, but inside, his soul cries in agony.

“Vesti la giubba”

Adagio
CANIO



Act 2: Evening, the same day.

The second act of *IPagliacci* presents the play-within-a-play, a traditional *commedia dell'arte* play performed by Canio's acting troupe. Their play is a humorous and satirical story about a cuckolded husband who surprises his adulterous wife and her lover. The play is theatrical illusion, but its action ironically recalls all of the real-life events that had just transpired earlier in the day: in Act I. As the *commedia dell'arte* play progresses, it will collapse, its intended illusion transforming into harsh reality.

Nedda acts the part of Columbine, the unfaithful wife. She is alone, nervously awaiting her secret lover, Harlequin. She assures the audience that their tryst is not in danger of being discovered because her husband will not return home until late that evening.

Harlequin, portrayed by the clown Beppe, serenades Columbine.

Harlequin's Serenade:

Allegretto un poco moderato

HARLEQUIN (Peppe)



O Col-om-bi-na, il te-ne-ro fi-do Arlecchin è a te vi - cin!

Columbine, your faithful Harlequin waits for you, sighing and crying!

Harlequin's romantic serenade is interrupted by the grotesque servant Taddeo, acted by Tonio, who, with comic buffoonery, pretends to romance Columbine, who is pure as the driven snow, an uncanny reminiscence of Tonio coveting Nedda in Act I, which Nedda derided. Harlequin interrupts Taddeo's amorous adventure, grabs his ear, and leads him away.

The *commedia dell'arte* lovers, Harlequin and Columbine, romance each other, accompanied by a stylized gavotte. Harlequin and Columbine plan to escape together — reminiscent of Silvio and Nedda in Act I — and he gives Columbine a vial to drug her husband, Pagliaccio.

Gavotte: "Guarda, amor mio"

Tempo di Gavotta

COLUMBINE



Guar-da, amor mio, che splen-di - da ce - net - ta pre - pa - ra-i!

Look, my love, at the splendid little supper I have prepared!

Taddeo rushes in with an air of mock terror and warns the lovers: "Be careful, Pagliaccio is coming and he is raging." Her husband has discovered their affair and is insane with rage. As Harlequin leaps out of the window, Columbine utters her farewell to him, the very same words that Nedda expressed to Silvio when they parted in Act I: "A sta notte e per sempre tuo sarò" ("Till tonight: I'll be forever yours.")

Pagliaccio (Canio) arrives and hears those haunting words. He shudders; confused by the similarity of the play's illusion and the horrible realities he experienced earlier, and has

difficulty mastering his emotions: “Nome di Dio! Quelle stesse parole!” (“My God, those very same words!”) Pagliaccio hesitates, builds his courage, and makes his entrance in the play.

Pagliaccio reveals to Columbine: “A man was with you!” Pagliaccio seeks the man’s name, but Columbine replies that no one has been with her, diverting his questioning by accusing him of being drunk. Pagliaccio persists, but this time Columbine admits that Taddeo (Tonio) was dining with her. Taddeo responds to Pagliaccio with embittered irony as he attests to Columbine’s credibility and faithfulness: “Believe her! She is faithful! Those pious lips could not lie!”

The audience has been privy to Columbine’s deceit and erupts into knowing laughter, causing Pagliaccio to lose control of himself. He no longer wants to act and wants to be Canio; he vehemently demands Columbine’s lover’s name, but in reality, he is asking for the name of Nedda’s lover. Nedda, boldly continuing her role as Columbine, replies with impertinence: “Whose name?” Canio/Pagliaccio becomes infuriated and claims his right to know her lover’s name, but Nedda again refuses, jokingly ridiculing him: “Pagliaccio, Pagliaccio” (“Clown, clown.”)

Canio/Pagliaccio becomes outraged, overcome with anger and jealousy. He departs from the illusion of the play and unmask himself. He is no longer the play’s Pagliaccio, the clown who is a cuckold, but Canio, the real-life husband who has been betrayed. He seethes with revenge: “No Pagliaccio non son” (“No! I’m not Pagliaccio. If my face is pale, it’s from shame and my craze for vengeance!”)

“No! Pagliaccio non son”

Allegro moderato
CANIO



No! Pagliaccio non son; se il viso è pallido, è di vergogna, e smania di vendetta!
No! I'm not Pagliaccio. If my face is pale, it's from shame and my craze for vengeance!

Canio becomes emotional, horror-struck by his dilemma: his face has actor’s makeup but it is pallid from shame. His features are twisted from the agony of vengeance, his heart broken, and his honor ravaged. He condemns himself for rescuing Nedda from poverty and hunger; that he was insane to have given her his ardent love; and that he sacrificed his life for a worthless woman, placing more faith in her than in god. He was blind to the evil dwelling in her soul, a perfidious woman who is now unworthy of his grief. But Canio, overcome with jealousy, shame, and dishonor, craves vengeance.

The audience, unaware that the make-believe illusion of the play has transformed into stark reality, becomes moved to tears by Canio’s convincing and realistic acting: they shout their “Bravos.”

Nedda is also unable to control her emotions. She unmask herself and tells the agitated and fuming Canio that if he believes that she is vile, then he should send her away. Canio refuses to free her so that she can be with her lover. Again, he demands her lover’s name.

As the gavotte music plays again, Nedda, with forced smile, tries to resume the play. She assures Canio/Pagliaccio that the man who was with her was only the harmless Harlequin. The audience laughs, but eerily senses that Canio/Pagliaccio’s savage fury seems too realistic to be make-believe theatrical illusion.

Canio, now even more crazed with anguish and jealousy, again demands the name of Nedda's lover. But now Canio vows that if she does not tell him, he will kill her. Nedda stands firm against his threat, boldly declaring that although she may be a faithless wife, she is not a coward, nor is she fearful. She reveals that her heart has become emboldened by her new lover: "I will not speak, not even if you kill me."

However, Nedda indeed becomes fearful as she senses Canio's increasing fury and frenzy. She jumps off the stage and escapes into the audience. Canio chases her, seizes her, and in a violent impulse, plunges a dagger into her heart. With her last breath, she cries out "Help me, Silvio." Silvio comes forward, realizing the tragic turn the play has taken. Finally, Canio has discovered his wife's secret lover. Canio lunges at Silvio with his dagger and murders him. Stupefied by his incredulous act of passion, Canio lets the weapon fall. He stands before the two corpses, frozen and motionless.

Tonio, the "prologue" of the tragedy, becomes its "epilogue": he addresses the spectators with bitter irony: "La commedia è finita." ("The play is over.") The orchestra explodes in a thunderous fortissimo, the music that underscored Pagliaccio's grief at the end of the first act: "Laugh at your broken love, and the grief that poisons your heart!"

Commentary and Analysis

Ruggero Leoncavallo (1857-1919), began his musical education at the age of nine with studies in piano and composition, eventually enrolling in the Conservatory in Naples, and later, in the Bologna University where he received a doctorate in literature.

Chatterton (1877) was Leoncavallo's first youthful attempt at opera composition, a work for which he wrote both music and libretto; in style it echoed strong Wagnerian influences. An attempt to produce the opera in Bologna failed because the impresario absconded with the funds, leaving the budding composer nearly penniless. Subsequently, he managed to survive by touring the Near East as a pianist, ending up in Egypt where an uncle was a government official, which enabled him to give recitals and receive government support and employment. The Anglo-Egyptian War (1882) caused him to flee the country, first to Marseilles, and then Paris; he earned a living playing piano in cafes, teaching, and writing songs. As a vocal accompanist, he met the noted opera-singer, Victor Maurel, who recommended him to the powerful music publisher, Giulio Ricordi. At first, Ricordi envisioned Leoncavallo's primary talents as those of a librettist, and assigned him to work on *Manon Lescaut* (1894) for Puccini.

Leoncavallo's ultimate dream was to compose an Italian opera epic similar to Wagner's *The Ring of the Nibelung*; it would be a trilogy based on the history of the Renaissance Medici family of Florence (*Crepusculum*). However, the first installment, entitled *I Medici*, was rejected by Ricordi. Frustrated by Ricordi's lack of enthusiasm in him after the debacle of *I Medici*, in a customary fit of temper and desperation, he transferred his allegiances to Sonzogno, Ricordi's music publishing rival. Leoncavallo's betrayal of Ricordi was virtually ignored by the publisher; there was little love lost between them after their stormy quarrels during the time when Leoncavallo was part of Puccini's original *Manon Lescaut* libretto team.

Leoncavallo was extremely impressed and inspired by the sensational triumph of Mascagni's one-act verismo opera, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, the winner of Sonzogno's 1890 competition. He had written a two-act opera in the genre, *I Pagliacci*, a work that so overwhelmed Sonzogno that he immediately accepted it for his 1892 competition, even though its two-act structure made it technically ineligible for the competition. *I Pagliacci* ultimately won first prize. It was produced shortly thereafter, conducted by Toscanini, and with Victor Maurel as Tonio. Sonzogno, Ricordi's rival, found himself in possession of two of the biggest box office attractions of modern times: *I Pagliacci* and *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Ever since, *I Pagliacci* has been one of the most popular operas in the standard repertory, a mainstay on international stages.

Sonzogno arranged for the premiere of *I Medici* (1893), which was initially successful, but after being damned by the critics, there were few further productions. The work was such a failure that Leoncavallo never had the heart to complete the two other segments of the trilogy, which were to have dealt with Savonarola and Cesare Borgia respectively. Likewise, a revised *Chatterton* was produced in 1896 and was also a failure.

Leoncavallo's only other operas performed with occasional frequency are *La Bohème* (1897) and *Zazà* (1900). His *La Bohème*, like Puccini's *La Bohème*, which premiered one year before Leoncavallo's version in 1896, was based on Murger's novel, *Scènes de la vie de Bohème* ("Scenes from Bohemian Life.") The simultaneous composition of operas based on an identical story not only kindled a bitter rivalry between the two composers, but in the end, Leoncavallo became chagrined and disappointed when his opera became totally eclipsed by the superior quality of the Puccini version, a criticism that has been severely disputed by musicologists to this day.

Nevertheless, the Kaiser so admired *I Medici*, that he commissioned Leoncavallo to compose a German opera: *Der Roland von Berlin* (1904); it succeeded in Berlin but nowhere else. His later operas aroused little attention: *Maià* (1910), *Zingari* (1912), and the posthumous *Edipo Re* (1920). Leoncavallo composed some ten operas, plus many operettas and musical comedies, and the very popular song, *Mattinata* (1904), written to be recorded by Caruso. After the assassination of King Umberto (1900), he received a government commission for a Requiem, but the work could not be performed in church because it was scored for female voices.

In retrospect, *I Pagliacci* became Leoncavallo's singular opera success. It made him rich and famous, but it remains the sole testament of the composer's operatic legacy.

Leoncavallo's father, Vincenzo, was a traveling Italian circuit court judge, and the underlying *I Pagliacci* story had its genesis from profound impressions made on his young son when he was a spectator in his father's court. In 1865, his father presided at the trial of an actor, Allesandro, in the Calabrian village of Montalto. The actor had become crazed with jealousy after he discovered his adulterous wife with her lover, and in a tempestuous crime of passion, murdered both his wife and her lover.

Surprisingly, Vincenzo Leoncavallo was sympathetic to the accused and seriously considered acquitting him. However, his magnanimity was thwarted after the defendant, in an explosive outburst of passion, came forward before the court and vowed that if the opportunity presented itself again, he would not hesitate to commit murder. Allesandro was committed to a four year jail term. After his parole, he became a gardener for a wealthy countess whom he later married, and for the rest of his life, he lived in affluence.

After *I Pagliacci*'s premiere, Catulle Mendès, a French playwright, filed a lawsuit against Leoncavallo, alleging that the composer's opera story plagiarized his play, *La Femme du Tabarin* (1887): Mendès even secured a legal injunction to stop performances of the opera. No doubt, Leoncavallo was familiar with the Mendès drama, but it is more likely that Mendès's plot owes its provenance to theatrical trends of the era, a time when violent criminal acts evolving from jealousy and betrayal were being portrayed in the new verismo genre: *Carmen* (1875), *Cavalleria Rusticana* (1890), and even Verdi's great music-drama, *Otello* (1887). However, after the facts of the Montalto case were established, Leoncavallo's defense satisfactorily proved that his source story more likely emanated from the well-documented and publicly aired case he had witnessed in his father's courtroom. Ultimately, Mendès's litigation was withdrawn.

I Pagliacci's dramatic uniqueness evolves from its structure as a play-within-a-play: its second act is the presentation of a traditional commedia dell'arte play by Canio's traveling troupe of clown-actors that faithfully mirrors the real-life events of the first act.

The commedia dell'arte, literally "comedy of masks," was an old theatrical convention that strolling groups of players had performed for centuries throughout Italy, achieving overwhelming popularity during the Renaissance. They used satire, irony, and clowning and ridiculed every aspect of society and its institutions, particularly their hypocritical surrounding world. Much of their satire characterized cunning servants outwitting their masters, and scheming doctors and lawyers. The genre originated outdoors where it was performed in streets and marketplaces: actors traditionally wore exaggerated and comical costumes in order to draw attention to themselves, but donned masks to conceal their identities and protect themselves against punishment. In Italy, the commedia dell'arte characters became affectionately known as "zanni," an apt description of their silliness and clowning buffoonery.

The commedia dell'arte and the Intermezzi, the latter performed between acts of dramas, were enormous influences on the development of the populist genre of opera buffa, or comic

opera. The first great opera buffa was Pergolesi's *La Serva Padrona* ("The Maid as Mistress") (1733), and the most acclaimed in the genre remains Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* (1816).

The most popular commedia dell'arte character was Arlecchino (Harlequin), a clown who was the master of disguises, extremely agile and acrobatic, and a master of slapstick as well as cunning and wit. The character Pulchinello, interchangeable with the Pagliaccio, was generally the clown or buffoon, a selfish, schizoid rascal with a dual personality, who would combine folly with cruelty. At times he was quick witted and intelligent, but he was also coarse, vulgar, obscene, dishonest, and debauched, a character without morals or scruples who would concoct outrageous schemes to satisfy his animal-like lust and gluttony. Columbine was the character often portrayed as a flirtatious and mischievous wench, not always the mirror of virtue, but charming; almost always, she was the object of Arlecchino's romantic adventures.

In the traditional commedia dell'arte plot, a cuckolded husband surprises his adulterous wife and punishes her with a thrashing, his outbursts of raging revenge full of comedy and humor. *I Pagliacci*'s plot similarly deals with adultery, but it is saturated with irony. The first act deals with real-life events in which Canio transforms into anguish and torment after he discovers Nedda's infidelity. But the second act is the commedia dell'arte play: theatrical illusion. In the play, the husband likewise discovers his wife's infidelity, however, the play breaks down, and life and art become blurred as reality and illusion become fused. Canio — as the clown Pagliaccio in the play — confronts the identical adultery in the play that he had encountered in the real life events of Act I. The pathetic reality of Nedda's betrayal overcomes him with real emotions: the play collapses and the acting stops; the commedia dell'arte plot becomes a bloody tragedy in which illusion transforms into the brutal reality of a crime of passion.

I Pagliacci is a realistic drama about deep-seated human emotions and affairs of the heart: it is a tragedy about clowns who laugh externally, but cry within their inner souls.

In the Prologue, Tonio appears before the curtain rises to anticipate and introduce the drama. Tonio admonishes the audience to separate illusion from reality, the underlying theme of the opera. He announces that the play is make-believe, but under its surface, its story is about real life; the actors may wear makeup and flimsy costumes, but beneath their masks are real flesh and blood humans, people who possess real emotions and passions, feelings of love, anger, hatred, jealousy, rage and violence. Tonio promises that the play will present "uno squarcio di vita" ("a realistic slice of life"); he wants the audience to feel the actors' pain.

The engine that drives the opera is the conflict between illusion and reality, and between the make-believe world of the theater and real life. Leoncavallo, the narrator and dramatist of the opera, utilized his magnificent musical inventions to translate those ambivalent conflicts and tensions into a truth within the human equation: the essence of verismo, or realism.

But the *I Pagliacci* story is embedded in irony: its dramatic action continually alternates and throbs between illusion and reality. Likewise, its music score portrays those contrasts; at times the music is lighthearted to convey the make-believe world of illusion, and at times it is sizzling and spine-tingling music that truthfully expresses the hyper-passions of verismo.

In the first act, Canio and the actors are invited to drink with the local villagers, but Tonio opts to stay behind, presumably to wash down a donkey. A villager suggests that Tonio has ulterior motives; he wants to remain behind so he can woo Canio's wife, Nedda. Canio responds with a sermon about marital fidelity: "Un tal gioco credetemi" ("Do not play such a joke, believe me.")

Canio's true feelings are dramatically translated by the underlying music. He explains that the theater is illusion and make-believe, so in their commedia dell'arte play, when the

clown-actor catches his wife in adultery, he thrashes her lover with comic adroitness: that part of Canio's sermon is accompanied by light and humorous dance-type music, confirming that at this moment he speaks about a capricious world of unreality and illusion. But then Canio speaks about infidelity in real life; it is a grave transgression. Underscoring his weighty words, the music turns profound and solemn. At this moment, Canio unmasks himself, Leoncavallo's music translating that contrast between the comic world of illusion and make-believe, and the starkness of a real life betrayal.

A similar musical contrast occurs when the deformed Tonio pours his heart out to Nedda, his lovesick brooding accompanied by music conveying genuine passion: "So ben che difforme" ("I know well that I am deformed.") For Tonio, in spite of his uncouthness, or perhaps because of it, his love for Nedda is his only escape from a world of harsh and ugly reality into one of beautiful dreams. Nedda laughs him off and urges him to save his passions for their evening performance; her rejection of Tonio is cruel and callous, but when she refers to the play the music bears a comic lightness: "Hai tempo ridirmelo stasera, se brami" ("You will have time to embrace me tonight.") The dramatic contrast, the blend of the serious with the comic, is narrated to the audience by the music.

In Act II's *commedia dell'arte* — the play-within-a-play — the music again provides magnificent contrasts, the light minuet and charming gavotte quite naturally suggesting a harmless comedy. But when Canio bursts in, his voice trembling and explosive, the music quickly changes, emphasizing that profound contrast to the quaint elegance of the gavotte. And then Pagliaccio can no longer pretend, overcome by his agonizing inner torment that transforms him into blind fury and rage: "No! Pagliaccio non son!" ("No I am no longer a clown"), an outburst of anguish from a man driven to insanity by jealousy and dishonor.

Nedda tries to calm Canio/Pagliaccio, her accompanying light gavotte music underscoring her attempt to return to the *commedia dell'arte* scenario, a return to the world of make-believe and illusion. Nedda fails, and the play transforms to reality, that irrational verismo world in which instinctive, cruel, and savage emotions overpower reason.

I Pagliacci is a sublime prototype of the verismo genre, in which a horrible truth in man's soul is revealed: his capacity for evil and brutality when stirred by incomprehensible passions. In verismo, man is irrational, a creature of instinct whose torment is irreconcilable: death becomes the consummation of his desires.

Leoncavallo never succeeded in duplicating the success of *I Pagliacci*, his singular masterpiece. The irony for the composer is that the infamous words concluding this music drama, "la comedia è finita" ("the play is over"), became an ominous forecast of the composer's own career: *I Pagliacci* became Leoncavallo's sole claim to operatic immortality.

Libretto

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Calabria, Italy, near the town of Montalto. The Feast of the Assumption is being celebrated.

Prologue

Tonio puts his head through the curtain, looks at the audience, advances before the footlights, and bows to the audience.

Tonio:

Si può? Si può? Signore! Signori!
Scusatemi se da sol me presento.
Io sono il Prologo.

Poiché in iscena ancor le antiche maschere
mette l'autore, in parte ei vuol riprendere le
vecchie usanze, e a voi di nuovo inviami!

Ma non per dirvi come pria: "Le lacrime che
noi versiam son false! Degli spasimi e de'
nostri martir non allarmatevi!"

No! No. L'autore ha cercato invece pingervi
uno squarcio di vita. Egli ha per massima vol
che l'artista è un uom e che per gli uomini
scrivere ei deve. Ed al vero ispiravasi!

Un nido di memorie in fondo a l'anima
cantava un giorno, ed ei con vere lacrime
scrisse, e i singhiozzi il tempo gli battevano!

Dunque, vedrete amar sì come s'amano gli
esseri umani; vedrete de l'odio i tristi frutti.
Del dolor gli spasimi, urli di rabbia, udrete, e
risa ciniche!

Andante cantabile



E vo - i, piuto - sto che le nostre povere gabane d'istrìo - ni

E voi, piuttosto che le nostre povere gabbane
d'istrioni, le nostr'anime considerate, poiché s'iam
uomini di carne e d'ossa, e che di quest'orfano
mondo al pari di voi spiriamo l'aere!

Il concetto vi dissi. Or ascoltate com'egli è
svolto.
Andiam. Incominciate!

Tonio:

May I? May I? Ladies! Gentlemen!
Forgive me for presenting myself alone.
I am the Prologue.

Once again, the author wants to revive the
ancient plays, partly to revive the ancient
tradition, and we invite you!

But I'm not here to tell you as before: "That
our tears are false! And don't take our sighs
and anguish seriously!"

No! No. The author has tried to paint a
picture of real life. He believes first that the
artist is a man, and that he must write for
men. And that truth has inspired him!

A host of memories filled his innermost soul,
and he has written them with real tears,
and his sobs are marking the beat!

Therefore, you'll see love as real people love,
you'll see hate and its anguished fruits.
You'll hear cries of rage, and its cynical
laughter!

And above all, do not consider so much our
poor flimsy costumes, but consider our hearts,
because we are men of flesh and bone. Like
you, we breathe the air of this lonely world!

I've explained the concept. Now hear how
the plot unfolds before you.
Come! Let's begin!

Act I

*It is 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon. The sun is bright.
On the outskirts of the village where two roads converge, there is a travelling theater.
The sound of an out-of-tune trumpet is heard, also a drum.
Villagers dressed in holiday attire approach, laughing, shouting and whistling.*

Ragazzi:

Eh!

Coro di contadini e contadine:

Son qua! Ritornano!

Pagliaccio è là!

Tutti lo seguono, grandi e ragazzi, ai motti, ai lazzi applaude ognun. Ed egli serio saluta e passa e torna a battere sulla gran cassa.

Ragazzi:

Ehi, sferza l'asino, bravo Arlecchino!

Contadini e Contadine:

In aria gittano i capelli!

Canio:

Itene al diavolo!

Beppe:

To! To! Birichino!

Contadini, Contadine e Ragazzi:

I lor cappelli diggià. fra strida e sibili diggià.

La Folla:

Ecco il carroto. Indietro. Arrivano.

Che diavolerio! Dio benedetto!

Boys:

Hey!

Chorus of Villagers: *(arriving slowly)*

They're here! They've returned.

Pagliaccio and the clowns are here!

Let's all follow their jokes and buffoonery, and every one applaud. See how seriously he bows and turns to bang on his big drum.

Boys:

Hey, whip that donkey, terrific Harlequin!

Chorus of Villagers:

Like the air of a gypsy!

Canio: *(from a distance)*

Go to the devil!

Beppe:

Take that you rascal!

Villagers and boys:

They fling their caps, hoot and whistle.

The Crowd:

Here's the wagon. Stand back. They're arriving.

What fiendish noise! Lord have mercy!

*A picturesque cart arrives, painted in various colors.
It is pulled by a donkey that is guided by Beppe, dressed in Harlequin's costume.
Nedda lies on the cart. There is a gypsy and an acrobat performing.
Behind Nedda is the big drum. Canio walks behind the cart, in the costume of a clown, holding a trumpet in one hand, and in the other the stick for the big drum.
The villagers surround the cart excitedly.*

La Folla:

Viva Pagliaccio, viva Pagliaccio. Evviva! Il principe sei dei pagliacci! I guai discacci tu co' l lieto umore! Ognun applaude a' motti, ai lazzi. Ed ei, ei serio saluta e passa.
Viva! Viva Pagliaccio! Evviva Pagliaccio, t' applaude ognun!

Canio:

Grazie!

La Folla:

Evviva!

Canio:

Grazie!

La Folla:

Bravo!

Canio:

Vorrei...

La Folla:

E lo spettacolo? E lo spettacolo?

Canio:

Signori miei!

La Folla:

Uh! ci assorda! Finiscila!

Canio:

Mi accordan di parlar?

La Folla:

Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Con lui si dee cedere, tacere ed ascoltare!

Canio:

Un grande spettacolo a ventitré ore prepara il vostr'umile e buon servitore!
Vedrete le smanie del bravo Pagliaccio; e com'ei si vendica e tende un bel laccio.

Vedrete di Tonio tremar la carcassa, e quale matassa d'intrighi ordirà.
Venite, onorateci signori e signore. A ventitré ore! A ventitré ore!

The Crowd:

Hurray for the prince of clowns! You drive away our woes away with fun and laughter! Everyone cheer for jest and laughter. And he, he bows seriously as he passes.
Hurray for Pagliaccio! Everyone cheer for Pagliaccio!

Canio:

Thank you!

The Crowd:

Long life!

Canio:

Thank you!

The Crowd:

Terrific!

Canio:

I'd like...

The Crowd:

What about the play?

Canio: *(beating the drum to quiet the crowd)*

Gentlemen, please!

The Crowd: *(covering their ears)*

Huh! Stop it! You're deafening us!

Canio: *(making a comic salute with his hat)*

May I speak now?

The Crowd: *(laughing)*

Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Let him have his way! Be still and listen!

Canio:

Your humble servant has prepared a wonderful show for you this evening!
You'll see brave Pagliaccio suffer, and get his revenge with a trap.

You'll see Tonio shaking, and the intrigues he weaves.

So come and honor us ladies and gentlemen.
At eleven o' clock!

La Folla:

Verremo, e tu serbaci il tuo buon umore. A ventitrè ore!

Canio:

A ventitrè ore!

La Folla:

A ventitrè ore! Verremo!

The Crowd:

We'll see you there, and we're sure it's your best play: at eleven o'clock!

Canio:

At eleven o'clock!

The Crowd:

At eleven o'clock! We'll see you!

Tonio tries to help Nedda descend from the cart, but Canio, who has already jumped down, boxes Tonio's ear.

Canio:

Via di lì!

Canio:

Get away from here!

Canio takes Nedda into his arms and brings her to the ground.

La Folla:

Ah! Ah! Ah!

The Crowd: (laughing at Tonio)

Ha! Ha! Ha!

Contadine:

Prendi questo, bel galante!

Villagers: (ridiculing Tonio)

How does that suit you, Mister lover?

Ragazzi:

Con salute!

Boys: (whistling at Tonio)

Here's to you!

Tonio shows his fist to threaten the boys. They grumble and quickly run away, disappearing behind the travelling theater.

Tonio:

La pagherai! Brigante!

Tonio: (aside)

I'll have my revenge! Bandits!

Beppe takes Tonio and the cart toward the theater. Some villagers approach Canio.

Un Contadino:

Di', con noi vuoi bere un buon bicchiere sulla crocevia? Di', vuoi tu?

A Villager: (to Canio)

Say, would you like to have a drink with us at the corner tavern? Say you will?

Canio:

Con piacere.

Canio:

With pleasure.

Beppe:

Aspettatemi. Anch'io ci sto!

Beppe:

Wait for me. I want a drink also!

Canio:

Di', Tonio, vieni via?

Canio: (shouting toward Beppe)

Hey Tonio, are you coming?

Tonio:

Io netto il somarello. Precedetemi.

Tonio: (*from inside*)

I'm busy cleaning the donkey! You go on.

Un altro Contadino:

Bada, Pagliaccio, ci solo vuol restare per far la corte a Nedda!

Another Villager: (*jestingly*)

Careful Pagliaccio, he's only staying behind so he can court Nedda!

Canio:

Eh! Eh! Vi pare?

Canio: (*smiling but annoyed*)

Hey! Do you think so?

Adagio molto

Un tal gioco, credetemi, è meglio non giocarlo con me, miei cari; e a Tonio, e un poco a tutti or parlo!

Believe me, it's better not to play such a game with me, my friends; and I say it to Tonio and to all of you!

Il teatro e la vita non son la stessa cosa; no, non son la stessa cosa!
E se lassù Pagliaccio sorprende la sua sposa col bel galante in camera, fa un comico sermone, poi si calma od arrendesi ai colpi di bastone!
Ed il pubblico applaude, ridendo allegramente!

Life and the theater are not the same thing!
No, they're not the same thing!
If on the stage Pagliaccio surprises his wife in bed with a lover, he preaches a comic sermon, and then calms down, or allows himself to be beaten!
And the crowd applauds, laughing heartily!

Ma se Nedda sul serio sorprendessi, altrimenti finirebbe la storia, com'è ver che vi parlo! Un tal gioco, credetemi, è meglio non giocarlo!

But if I should surprise Nedda like that in real life, the story would have a different ending! Believe me, it's better not to play such a game with me!

Nedda:

(Confusa io son!)

Nedda: (*aside*)

(I'm confused!)

Contadini:

Sul serio pigli dunque la cosa?

Villagers:

Did you think we were serious?

Canio:

Io!? Vi pare! Scusatemi!
Adoro la mia sposa!

Canio: (*moved*)

I? Of course not! Forgive me!
I adore my wife!

*Canio approaches Nedda and kisses her on the forehead.
The sound of bagpipes is heard in the distance.*

Monelli:

I zampognari!

Contadini e Contadine:

I zampognari! Verso la chiesa vanno i compari.
Essi accompagnano la comitiva che a coppie al vespero sen va giuliva. Le campane. Ah! Andiam. La campana ci appella al Signore!

Canio:

Ma poi, ricordatevi! A ventitrè ore!

Boys: (shouting)

Here come the bagpipes!

Villagers:

The bagpipers! The villagers are going toward to the church.

See how the couples go to the church all jolly and hearty. The churchbells! Let's go! The bell calls us to worship!

Canio:

But don't forget! At eleven o'clock!

Canio disappears behind the theater. The bagpipers arrive in holiday attire with vivid colored ribbons and flowers on their pointed hats. The villagers exchange greetings and smiles.

Contadini e Contadine:

Andiam! Andiam!
Don, din don, din don, . din don, suona vespero, ragazze e garzon, din don! A coppie al tempio ci affrettiam!

Din don, diggià i culmini il sol vuol baciare. Le mamme ci adocchiano, attenti, compar! Din don, tutto irradiasi di luce e d'amor! Ma i vecchi sorvegliano gli arditi amador! Din don, suona vespero, ragazze e garzon, din don.

Villagers:

Let's go! Let's go!
Dong, ding dong, ding dong, ding dong, the vesper bell rings, and pipers accompany us to church. Let's hurry to church in pairs!

Ding dong, see the setting sun on the chimney tops. Be careful, our mothers are keeping a sharp look out! Ding, dong, now the world is aglow with love! Ding dong, the vesper bell sound. Come along boys and girls.

The couples disappear down the road. Canio, after changing from his clown costume, returns. He smiles at Nedda and signals goodbye. Nedda. He leaves with Beppe and several villagers. Nedda is left alone.

Nedda:

Qual fiamma avea nel guardo!
Gli occhi abbassai per tema ch'ei leggesse il mio pensier segreto!
Oh! S'ei mi sorprendesse, bruttale come egli è!
Ma basti, orvia. Son questi sogni paurosi e fole!
O che bel sole di mezz'agosto!
Io son piena di vita, e, tutta illanguidita per arcano desio, non so che bramo!

Nedda: (profoundly)

What fire there was in his eyes!
I looked away in case he read my secret thoughts!
Oh! If that brutal should surprise me!
But enough! No more! These are foolish dreams!
Such a bright sun in mid-August!
I'm so full of life, weakened by mysterious desire! I don't know what I yearn for!

Nedda looks toward the sky.

Oh! Che volo d'augelli, e quante strida!
 Che chiedono?
 Dove van?
 Chissà! La mamma mia, che la buona ventura
 annunciava, comprendeva il lor canto e a me
 bambina così cantava.
 Hui! Hui!

Oh, so many birds, so many voices!
 Why are they seeking?
 Where are they going?
 Who knows! My mother understood their
 song and used to sing to me when I was a
 child.
 Ah, ah! Ah, ah!

Vivace
NEDDA



Stridono lassù, liberamente lanciati a vol, a
 vol come frecce, gli augel.
 Disfidano le nubi e'l sol cocente, e vanno, e
 vanno per le vie del ciel.
 Lasciateli vagar per l'atmosfera, questi
 assetati d'azzurro e di splendor: seguono
 anch'essi un sogno, una chimera, e vanno, e
 vanno fra le nubi d'or!

The birds soar in the sky, flying about freely
 like arrows.
 They defy clouds and the fierce burning sun,
 as they travel across the sky.
 They wander through the air, longing for blue
 sky and light.
 And they pursue a dream as they fly through
 the golden clouds!

Che incalzi il vento e latrì la tempesta, con
 l'ali aperte san tutto sfidar; la pioggia i lampi,
 nulla mai li arresta, e vanno, e vanno sugli
 abissi e i mar.

The wind may blow, and the storm may howl,
 but they defy all the elements; not even rain
 or lightning can stop them as they fly over
 land and sea.

Vanno laggiù verso un paese strano che
 sognan forse e che cercano in van. Ma i
 boèmi del ciel, seguon l'arcano poter che li
 sospinge, e van! E van! E van! E van!

They fly toward a land of dreams which
 perhaps they seek in vain. But these gypsies
 of the sky follow a secret power that drives
 them, and they go on! They go on!

*While Nedda has been dreaming, Tonio has been listening to her from hiding.
 Just as Nedda is about to reenter the theater, she notices him.*

Nedda:
 Sei là? Credea che te ne fossi andato!

Nedda: (*sharply to Tonio*)
 You here? I thought you'd gone to the tavern!

Tonio:
 È colpa del tuo canto. Affascinato io mi
 beava!

Tonio: (*laughing*)
 The fault is your singing! I became entranced
 and it filled me with rapture!

Nedda:
 Ah! Ah! Quanta poesia!

Nedda: (*laughing mockingly*)
 Ha, ha! Just like a poet!

Tonio:
 Non rider, Nedda!

Tonio:
 Nedda, don't laugh!

Nedda:

Va, va all'osteria!

Nedda:

Go away! Go to the tavern!

Cantabile sostenuto**TONIO***So ben che difforme, contorto son io; che desto soltan - to lo scherno e l'orror.***Tonio:**So ben che difforme, contorto son io; che
desto soltanto lo scherno e l'orror.Eppure ha'l pensiero un sogno, un desio, e un
palpito il cor!Allor che sdegnosa mi passi d'accanto, non
sai tu che pianto mi sprema il dolor!Perché, mio malgrado, subito ho l'incanto,
m'ha vinto l'amor!

Oh! lasciami, lasciami or dirti...

Tonio:I know that I'm ugly and deformed;
that I arouse only scorn and revulsion.But I too have dreams, desires, and a beating
heart!When you turn away from me in disdain,
you don't know how much it hurts me!Because, in spite of my sorrow, I'm
bewitched. Love has conquered me!

Let me, let me tell you...

Nedda:

Che m'ami? Ah! Ah! Ah!

Hai tempo a ridirmelo stasera, se brami!

Nedda: (*deriding him*)

That you love me? Ha! Ha! Ha!

There's time to tell me tonight!

Tonio:

Nedda!

Tonio:

Nedda!

Nedda:Stasera! Facendo le smorfie colà, colà, sulla
scena!**Nedda:**Tonight! When you'll be acting the fool, up
there, on the stage!**Tonio:**

Non rider, Nedda!

Tonio:

Nedda, don't laugh!

Nedda:

Hai tempo Facendo le smorfie colà!

Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!

Nedda:There's plenty of time, when you're acting
the fool up there! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!**Tonio:**Non sai tu che pianto mi sprema il
dolore! Non rider, no! Non rider! Subito ho
l'incanto, m'ha vinto l'amor!**Tonio:**You don't know how my pain moves me to
tears! Don't laugh! Don't laugh! I'm
enchanted, love has conquered me!**Nedda:**

Per ora tal pena, ah, ah!

Nedda:

Now it is painful, ha, ha!

Tonio:

Nedda!

Tonio: (*sadly and imploring*)

Nedda!

Nedda:
Ah! Ah!

Nedda:
Ha! Ha!

Tonio:
Nedda!

Tonio:
Nedda!

Nedda:
Tal pena ti puoi risparmiar!

Nedda:
You can save your sorrow!

Tonio:
No, è qui che voglio dirtelo, e tu m'ascolterai,
che t'amo e ti desidero, e che tu mia sarai!

Tonio: (*raving and impetuous*)
No, I want to tell you, and you'll listen to me.
I love and desire you, and you'll be mine!

Nedda:
Eh! Dite, mastro Tonio! La schiena oggi vi
prude, o una tirata d'orecchi è necessaria al
vostro ardor?

Nedda: (*beating him off with a stick*)
Hey! Tell me, Master Tonio! Does your back
itch for a beating, or do you need a boxing on
your ears to tame your passion?

Tonio:
Ti beffi? Sciagurata! Per la croce di Dio!
Bada che puoi pagarla cara!

Tonio:
Are you mocking me? By the cross of God!
Careful or you'll pay for this dearly!

Nedda:
Minacci? Vuoi che vada a chiamar Canio?

Nedda:
Threatening me? Do you want me to call Canio?

Tonio:
Non prima ch'io ti baci!

Tonio: (*moving toward Nedda*)
Not before I've kissed you!

Nedda:
Bada!

Nedda: (*drawing back*)
Get back!

Tonio:
Oh, tosto sarai mia!

Tonio: (*trying to seize her*)
One day you'll be mine!

Nedda sees the whip left by Beppe, and lashes Tonio across his face.

Nedda:
Miserabile!

Nedda:
You wretch!

Tonio:
Per la Vergin pia di mezz'agosto, Nedda,
giuro, me la pagherai!

Tonio: (*screaming in agony*)
By Our Lady of the Assumption,
I swear you'll pay me for this!



Tonio departs, threatening revenge.

Nedda:

Aspide! Va! Ti sei svelato ormai Tonio lo scemo! Hai l'animo siccome il corpo tuo diforme, lurido!

Nedda: (*motionless, watching him leave*)

Scorpion! Go! At least you've revealed your true self as Tonio the idiot! Your soul is as deformed and twisted as your body.

Silvio appears, after climbing over a wall.

Silvio:

Nedda!

Silvio:

Nedda!

Nedda:

Silvio! A quest'ora che imprudenza!

Nedda: (*running to him*)

Silvio! How foolish to come at this time!

Silvio:

Ah bah! Sapea ch'io non rischiavo nulla. Canio e Beppe da lunge a la taverna, a la taverna ho scorto! Ma prudente per la macchia a me nota qui ne venni.

Silvio:

Bah! I knew it was no risk. I accompanied Canio and Beppe to the tavern, miles away! Then I came back through the woods, on a path I remembered.

Nedda:

E ancora un poco in Tonio t'imbattevi!

Nedda:

Earlier, you'd have bumped into Tonio!

Silvio:

Oh! Tonio il gobbo!

Silvio: (*laughing*)

Oh! Tonio that hunchback!

Nedda:

Il gobbo è da temersi! M'ama. Ora qui mel disse, e nel bestial delirio suo, baci chiedendo, ardia correr su me!

Nedda:

The hunchback is dangerous! He loves me. Just before, in a burst of wild desire, he told me he wanted to kiss me and throw himself on me!

Silvio:

Per Dio!

Silvio:

My God!

Nedda:

Ma con la frusta del cane immondo la foga calmai!

Nedda:

But I calmed the filthy dog's passion with the whip!

Silvio:

E fra quest'ansie in eterno vivrai?!
Nedda! Nedda! Decidi il mio destin, Nedda!
Nedda, rimani!
Tu il sai, la festa ha fin e parte ognun domani.
Nedda! Nedda! E quando tu di qui sarai partita, che addiverà di me della mia vita?!

Silvio: (*approaching Nedda tenderly*)

Do you want to continue living in this anguish?
Nedda! Nedda! Nedda, decide my fate, and stay here with me!
The holiday ends tomorrow, and everyone is leaving. Nedda! You'll be gone from here.
What will become of me and my life?

Nedda:

Silvio!

Nedda: (*moved*)

Silvio!

Con anima
SILVIO

Ned-da, Nedda, ri - spondimi: s'è ver che Canio non a - masti ma - i,

Silvio:

Nedda, Nedda, rispondimi: s'è ver che Canio non amasti mai, s'è ver che t'è in odio, il ramingar e'l mestier che tu fai, se l'immenso amor tuo una fola non è questa notte partiam! Fuggi, fuggi con me!

Silvio:

Nedda, Nedda, answer me: if it's true that you no longer love Canio, and you hate him and this vagabond life; if your love for me is not just a passing fancy, let's run away together tonight! Escape with me!

Andante appassionato
NEDDA

Non mi ten - tar! Vuoi tu perder la vi - ta mia?

Nedda:

Non mi tentar! Vuoi tu perder la vita mia?

Nedda:

Don't tempt me! Do you want me to lose my life?

Taci Silvio, non più. È deliro, è follia!
Io mi confido a te, a te cui diedi il cor!

Quiet Silvio, no more. It's madness, it's folly!
I confide in you, and I've given you my heart!

Non abusar di me, del mio febbrile amor!
Non mi tentar! Non mi tentar!
Pietà di me! Non mi tentar! E poi.

Don't abuse my burning love!
Don't tempt me! Don't tempt me!
Have mercy on me! Don't tempt me!

Chissà! Meglio è partir. Sta il destin contro noi, è vano il nostro dir! Eppure dal mio cor strapparti non poss'io, vivrò sol de l'amor ch'hai destato al cor mio!

Perhaps it is best that I'm leaving.
Destiny has come between us, and our words are in vain! Yet I can't tear myself away from you. I live with that love you have awakened!

Silvio:

Ah! Nedda! Fuggiam!

Silvio:

Ah! Nedda! Let's escape!

Nedda:

Ah! Non mi tentar!

Nedda:

Ah! Don't tempt me!

Silvio:

Nedda rimani! Che mai sarà per me quando sarai partita? Riman! Nedda! Fuggiam!

Silvio:

Nedda, stay here! But what will happen to me after you have gone? Stay! Nedda! Let's escape!

Silvio:

No, più non m'ami!

Silvio:

No, you don't love me anymore!

Tonio:

Ah! T'ascolta, squaldrina!

Tonio: (*appearing in the background*)

Ah! I've caught you, you slut!

Nedda:

Che!

Nedda:

What!

Silvio:

Più non m'ami!

Silvio:

You don't love me anymore!

Nedda:

Sì, t'amo! T'amo!

Nedda:

Yes, I love you! I love you!

Silvio:

E parti domattina?

E allor perché, di', tu m'hai stregato se vuoi lasciarmi senza pietà?

Quel bacio tuo perché me l'hai dato fra spasmi ardenti di voluttà?

Se tu scordasti l'ore fugaci, io non lo posso, e voglio ancor, que' spasmi ardenti, que' caldi baci, che tanta febbre m'han messo in cor!

Silvio:

And you're leaving tomorrow morning?

Why did you bewitch me if you're going to leave me?

Why have you given me your kiss in moments of passion?

You may have forgotten those fleeting hours, but I cannot; those passionate moments, those feverish kisses implanted in my heart!

Nedda:

Nulla scordai, sconvolta e turbata m'ha questo amor che ne'l guardo ti sfavilla!

Viver voglio a te avvinta, affascinata, una vita d'amor calma e tranquilla!

A te mi dono; su me solo impera. Ed io ti prendo e m'abbandono intera!

Tutto scordiam! Negli occhi mi guarda!

Baciami, baciami! Tutto scordiamo!

Nedda: (*overcome and yielding*)

I've forgotten nothing, but I'm confused and overwhelmed by your love!

I want to live with you - a life of calm and peaceful love!

I give myself to you. You're the one who rules me! I surrender to you!

Let's forget everything! Look into my eyes!

Kiss me, kiss me! Let's forget everything!

Largo assai**NEDDA and SILVIO**

Nedda

Silvio

Tut - to scor - diam!

Tut - to scordiam!

Let's forget everything!

Silvio:

Tutto scordiam!

Ti guardo, ti bacio! Verrai?

Silvio: (*embracing Nedda*)

Let's forget everything!

I look at you, I kiss you! Will you go with me?

Nedda:

Si. Baciarmi! Sì, mi guarda e mi bacia!
T'amo, t'amo.

Silvio:

Sì, ti guardo e ti bacio!
T'amo, t'amo.

Nedda:

Yes, kiss me! Yes, look at me and kiss me!
I love you, I love you.

Silvio:

Yes, Look at me and kiss me!
I love you, I love you.

While Nedda and Silvio are embraced rapturously, Canio and Tonio approach.

Tonio:

Cammina adagio e li sorprenderai!

Tonio: *(restraining Canio)*

Move quietly and you'll surprise them!

Canio advances cautiously, but he is unable to see the lovers.

Silvio:

Ad alta notte laggiù mi terrò. Cauta discendi e
mi ritroverai.

Silvio:

I'll wait there for you at midnight. Go
carefully and you'll find me waiting.

Nedda:

A stanotte e per sempre tua sarò.

Nedda:

Till tonight: I'll be yours forever.

Canio:

Ah!

Canio: *(discovering the lovers)*

Ah!

Silvio runs away and flees.

Nedda:

Fuggi!

Nedda:

Escape!

*Canio tries to rush after Silvio. Nedda tries to bar his way.
After a short struggle, Canio pushes her aside and pursues Silvio.
Tonio remains, staring at Nedda in triumph.*

Nedda:

Aitalo, Signor!

Nedda:

May Heaven protect him!

Canio:

Vile! t'ascondi!

Canio: *(from the distance)*

The coward is hiding!

Tonio:

Ah! Ah! Ah!

Tonio: *(laughing cynically)*

Ha! Ha! Ha!

Nedda:

Bravo! Bravo il mio Tonio!

Nedda: *(turning to Tonio)*

Bravo! Well done, Tonio!

Tonio:
Fo quel che posso!

Nedda:
È quello che pensavo!

Tonio:
Ma di far assai meglio no dispero!

Nedda:
Mi fai schifo e ribrezzo!

Tonio:
Oh non sai come lieto ne son!

Tonio:
I did all that I could do!

Nedda:
That's what I expected!

Tonio:
Don't despair, I'll do better in the future!

Nedda:
You disgust me!

Tonio:
You don't know how happy that makes me!

Canio returns, out of breath.

Canio:
Derisione e scherno! Nulla! Ei ben lo conosce
quel sentier.

Fa lo stesso; poiché del drudo il nome or mi
dirai.

Nedda:
Chi?

Canio:
Tu, pel padre eterno!

E se in questo momento qui scannata non
t'ho già gli è perché pria di lordarla nel tuo
fetido sangue, o svergognata, codesta lama, io
vo' il suo nome! Parla!

Nedda:
Vano è l'insulto. È muto il labbro mio.

Canio:
Il nome, il nome, non tardare, o donna!

Nedda:
No! No, nol dirò giammai!

Canio:
Per la madonna!

Canio: *(with rage)*
Derided and scorned! Nothing! He knows the
path too well.
(turning furiously to Nedda)
But no matter, because instead, you'll tell me
your lover's name.

Nedda: *(disturbed)*
Who?

Canio: *(becoming frenzied)*
You! By the Eternal Father!

(Canio takes out a knife)
The only reason why I haven't cut your throat
yet is that I want his name before I dirty this
knife with your blood. I want to know his
name! Tell me!

Nedda:
Insults are useless. My lips are sealed.

Canio: *(shouting)*
His name, don't hesitate, wretched woman!

Nedda:
No! No, I'll never tell!

Canio:
By the Virgin!

Canio rushes toward Nedda. Beppe restrains him, snatches the knife from him, and throws it to the ground.

Beppe:

Padron! che fate! Per l'amor di Dio! La gente esce di chiesa e a lo spettacolo qui muove!
Andiamo, via, calmatevi!.

Beppe:

Master! What are you doing! For the love of God! The people are coming out of church to come to our performance! Let's go, come on, calm yourself down!

Canio:

Lasciami Beppe! Il nome! Il nome!

Canio: (*struggling with Beppe*)

Leave me alone, Beppe! His name!

Beppe:

Tonio, vieni a tenerlo!

Beppe:

Tonio, come here and hold him!

Canio:

Il nome!

Canio:

His name!

Beppe:

Andiamo, arriva il pubblico! Vi spiegherete!

Beppe:

Let's go, the audience is arriving! Wait until later!

Tonio seize Canio by the arm. Beppe turns to Nedda.

E voi di lì tiratevi. Andatevi a vestir. Sapete, Canio è violento, ma buon!

And you, go and dress yourself. You know Canio is violent, but he's a good man!
(*Beppe pushes Nedda toward the theater*)

Canio:

Infamia! Infamia!

Canio: (*holding his head in his hands*)

Disgrace! Disgrace!

Tonio:

Calmatevi padrone. È meglio fingere; il ganzo tornerà. Di me fidatevi! Io la sorveglio.
Ora facciam la recita.
Chissà ch'egli non venga a lo spettacolo e si tradisca! Or via. Bisogna fingere per riuscir!

Tonio:

Calm yourself, master. It's better to pretend. The lover will return. Trust me! I'll watch her. Now let's give the performance. Perhaps he'll come to the show and give himself away! Pretend in order to succeed!

Beppe:

Andiamo, via, vestitevi padrone.

Beppe: (*as he leaves*)

We'd better go. Let's get dressed.

E tu batti la cassa, Tonio!

(*to Tonio*)

And you Tonio, beat your drum.

Both Tonio and Beppe depart. Canio remains alone, depressed and despairing.

Canio:

Recitar! Mentre presso dal delirio non so più
quel che dico e quel che faccio!

Eppur è d'uopo, sforzati! Bah! Sei tu forse un
uom? Tu se' Pagliaccio!

Adagio
CANIO



Vesti la giubba e la faccia infarina. La gente
paga e rider vuole qua. E se Arlecchin
t'invola Colombina, ridi, Pagliaccio, e ognun
applaudirà!

Tramuta in lazzi lo spasmo ed il pianto; in una
smorfia il singhiozzo e'l dolor.

Ah! Ridi, Pagliaccio, sul tuo amore in franto!
Ridi del duol t'avvelena il cor!

Canio:

I must perform, while I'm so delirious that I
don't know what I'm saying or what I'm doing!

Be strong! Aren't you a man?
You're Pagliaccio, the clown!

Put on the clown costume and the makeup.
The people pay and they want to laugh. And if
Harlequin steals your Columbine, laugh
Pagliaccio, and every one will applaud!

Turn your tears and anguish into laughter, and
your face into a grimace and sorrows.

Laugh at your broken love, and the grief that
poisons your heart!

Weeping, Canio moves slowly toward the theater. He reaches the curtain, pushes it roughly, and recoils in fury. Then he is seized by sobbing and buries his face in his hands. He moves toward the curtain again, enters, and disappears inside the theater.

Act II

*The play is about to begin. Beppe blows a trumpet, and Tonio beats the big drum.
Villagers arrive from all directions. Beppe places benches for the women.*

Contadini e Contadine:

Ohé! Ohé! Presto! Presto! Presto
affrettiamoci, svelto, compare!

Tonio:

Avanti, avanti, avanti, avanti!

Contadini e Contadine:

Chè lo spettacolo dee cominciare. O Dio che
correr per giunger tosto!

Villagers:

Oh! Oh! Hurry! Hurry! Come on neighbors,
we've got to hurry!

Tonio: (striking the drum)

Come on, come one, come on, come on!

Villagers:

The performance is about to begin. Oh God,
what a struggle to get here!

Tonio:

Si dà principio!

Contadini e Contadine:

Presto compari, ci affrettiam. Dee lo spettacol
cominciar.

Tonio:

Si dà principio, avanti, avanti!

Contadini:

Veh, come, come corrono le briconcelle!

La Folla:

Che correre mio Dio!

Contadini:

Accomodatevi comari belle!

Contadine:

Per giunger tosto qua.

Tonio:

It's going to start soon!

Villagers:

Hurry friends, let's hurry up! The
performance is about to begin.

Tonio:

It's beginning, come on, come on!

Village men:

Say, look how the girls are scrambling!

The Crowd:

Good Lord, what rushing!

Village men:

You'll find some places here, pretty ladies!

Village ladies:

Well, we must be on time.

Silvio arrives, nods to friends, and takes a seat in the back.

Tonio:

Pigliate posto!

La Folla:

Cerchiamo posto!

Tonio:

Pigliate posto!

La Folla:

Ben sul davanti. Cerchiam di metterci ben sul
davanti, chè lo spettacolo dee cominciare.

Tonio:

Avanti!

La Folla:

Spicciatevi!

Tonio:

Pigliate posto! Su!

La Folla:

Via su spicciatevi, incominciate. Perchè
tardate mai? Perchè tardate? Siam tutti là!

Tonio:

Take your places!

The Crowd:

Let's find a seat!

Tonio:

Take your places!

The Crowd:

It's better up front. Let's try to find seats up
front. The performance is about to begin.

Tonio:

Come on!

The Crowd:

Hurry up!

Tonio:

Take your seats!

The Crowd:

Come on, hurry up and begin. What are you
waiting for? Why so late? We're all here!

Tonio:

Avanti, avanti, avanti, avanti!

Tonio:

Come on, come on, come on, come on!

Tonio exits behind the theater, carrying away the big drum.

Beppe goes to settle some of the women, who are quarreling about their seats.

Contadine:

Ma non pigiatevi, fa caldo! Su, Beppe, aiutaci! Beppe!

Villagers:

Stop pushing, it's so hot! Get up, Beppe, help us! Beppe!

Contadini:

Veh! s'accapigliano! chiamano aiuto! Sedete, via, senza gridar!

Village men:

Look, they're tearing their hair out! They're calling for help! Sit down, and stop shouting!

Contadine:

Su, v'è posto accanto! Su, Peppe, aiutaci! Ma non pigiatevi, fa caldo tanto!

Village ladies:

Up, there's a seat on the side! Up, Beppe, help use! Stop pushing, it's so hot in here!

Contadini:

Ma via sedetevi! Sedete, via, senza gridar!

Village men:

Sit down right away, and stop shouting!

Beppe:

Sedete, via, senza gridar!

Beppe:

Sit down, and stop shouting!

Nedda, dressed a Columbine, goes around the audience with a plate to collect money.

Silvio approaches her.

Silvio:

(Nedda!)

Silvio: *(while paying for his seat)*

(Nedda!)

Nedda:

(Sii cauto! Non t'ha veduto!)

Nedda:

(Be careful! Don't let him see you!)

Silvio:

(Verrò ad attenderti. Non obliar!)

Silvio:

(I'll come and wait. Don't forget!)

La Folla:

Suvvia, spicciatevi! Perché tardate? Incominciate! Perché indugiate?

The Crowd:

Go on! Begin! Why so late? Begin! Why the delay?

Beppe:

Che furia! Diavolo! Prima pagate, Nedda incassate!

Beppe:

What anger! Devil! First pay. Nedda take the payment!

After Nedda collects the money, she enters the theater with Beppe.

La Folla:

Di qua! Di qua! Incominciate! Perchè tardar?
Spicciate, incominciate. Perchè tardar?
Suvvia questa commedia! Facciam rumor, sì,
sì, facciam rumore! Diggià, diggià, suonar
ventitré ore! Facciam rumor! Facciam rumor!
Allo spettacolo ognun anela! Ah!

The Crowd:

Here! This way! Let's begin! Why so late?
Let's begin. Why so late? Begin the play!
Let's make noise, yes!
He said eleven o' clock! Let's make noise!
Everyone want to be entertained!
Everyone's waiting for the performance!

A bell rings loudly from inside the theater. The crowd responds with satisfaction.

S'alza la tela! Silenzio! Silenzio! Olà! Olà!

Ah! The curtain rises! Quiet! Be still!

The Play

The small theater curtain rises. The scene is a small room,, roughly painted, with two side doors, and a window at the back. There is a table and two chairs. Nedda is dressed as Columbine, and is seated near the table. From time to time she looks anxiously at the door. Then she rises, goes to look out the window, and then returns, pacing about restlessly.

Colombina:

Pagliaccio mio marito a tarda notte sol
ritornerà.
E quello scimunito di Taddeo perché mai non
è ancor qua?

Columbine:

Pagliaccio, my husband, is coming home late
tonight.
And as for that idiot Taddeo, why isn't he
here yet?

Columbine hears the sound of a guitar. She rushes to the window with a cry of joy.

Allegretto un poco moderato

HARLEQUIN (Peppe)



Arlecchino:

O Colombina, il tenero fido Arlecchin è a te
vicin! Di te chiamando, e sospirando aspetta il
poverin!

Harlequin: (from outside)

Columbine, your faithful Harlequin waits for
you, sighing and crying!

La tua faccetta mostrami, ch'io vo' baci-
ar senza tardar. La tua boccuccia. Amor mi
cruccia! Amor mi cruccia e mi sta a
tormentar! Ah! E mi sta a tormentar!

I long to kiss your little mouth. Don't delay.
Love torments me! Love provokes me and I
am tormented!
Ah! I am tormented!

O Colombina, schiudimi il finestrin, che a te
vicin di te chiamando, e sospirando è il povero
Arlecchin! A te vicin è Arlecchin!

Colombina:

Di fare il segno convenuto appressa l'istante,
ed Arlecchino aspetta!

Columbine, open the window for your poor
Harlequin, who is near and calls you,
your poor sighing Harlequin!

Columbine: (*anxiously*)

It's time to give the signal we agreed upon,
that Harlequin awaits!

Columbine sits down at the table.

Tonio, dressed as the servant Taddeo, peeps through the door and watches Nedda.

Then he addresses her in mock-tragic style.

Taddeo:

È dessa! Dei, come è bella!

Taddeo:

She is so lovely!

He raises the bread basket aloft.

La Folla:

Ah! Ah! Ah!

The Crowd: (*laughing*)

Ha! Ha! Ha!

Taddeo:

Se a la rubella io disvelassi l'amor mio che
commuove fino i sassi! Lungi è lo sposo.
Perché non oso? Soli noi siamo e senza alcun
sospetto! Orsù. Proviamo!

Taddeo:

I shall tell her how much I love her, a love
that could move rocks! Her husband is away,
so why not? We're alone, without suspicion,
so let's try!

Taddeo expresses a long, exaggerated sigh. The spectators laugh.

Colombina:

Sei tu, bestia?

Columbine: (*without turning or rising*)

Is that you, beast?

Taddeo:

Quell'io son, sì!

Taddeo: (*without moving*)

It is I, yes!

Colombina:

E Pagliaccio è partito?

Columbine:

Has Pagliaccio gone?

Taddeo:

Egli parti!

Taddeo:

He has gone!

Colombina:

Che fai così impalato?
Il pollo hai tu comprato?

Columbine:

What are you doing there?
Did you buy the chicken?

Taddeo:

Eccolo, vergin divina! Ed anzi, eccoci
entrambi ai piedi tuoi! Poiché l'ora è suonata,
o Colombina, di svelarti il mio cor!
Di', udirmi vuoi? Dal di...

Taddeo:

Look at it, a divine maid!
We're both at your feet! The hour has struck
for me to reveal my heart! Columbine, do you
want to hear? Since the first...

Colombina:

Quanto spendesti dal trattore?

Columbine:

How much did you spend at the tavern?

Taddeo:

Una e cinquanta. Da quel dì il mio core, il mio core...

Taddeo:

Fifty one. Since then, my heart has grown fond of you....

Colombina:

Non seccarmi Taddeo!

Columbine: (close to the table)

Don't bore me, Taddeo!

Columbine snatches the basket from him, places it on the table and then goes to the window, opens its, and makes a signal to Harlequin.

Taddeo:

So che sei pura, so che sei pura! sei pura e casta al par di neve! Sì, casta! Al par di neve! E ben che dura, dura ti mostri, dura, ad obliarti non riesco no! Non riesco!

Taddeo: (to Columbine, with intension)

I know that you are pure. You and pure and chaste like driven snow! And although you seem cold, I cannot forget you!

Arlecchino:

Va a pigliar fresco!

Harlequin: (interrupting Taddeo)

Get some fresh air!

Taddeo:

Numi! s'aman! M'arrendo ai detti tuoi. Vi benedico! Là veglio su voi!

Taddeo:

Heavens! They're in love! I give me blessing! I'll keep watch!

Harlequin jumps through the window, takes out a bottle and puts it down. Then he goes cautiously behind Taddeo, who pretends not to see him.

Colombina:

Arlecchin!

Columbine:

Harlequin!

Arlecchino:

Colombina! Alfin s'arrenda ai nostri prieghi amor!

Harlequin:

Columbine! At last, love has answered our prayers!

Colombina:

Facciam merenda.

Columbine:

Let's have supper.

Taddeo exits. The audience laughs and applauds. Columbine and Harlequin gaze at each other with exaggerated fondness.

Columbine arranges the table with knives, forks and spoons for two. She places the fowl on the table, while Harlequin retrieves the bottle he left on the ground.

Tempo di Gavotta**COLUMBINE**

Guar-da, amor mio, che splen-di - da ce - net - ta pre - pa - ra-i!

Colombina:

Guarda, amor mio, che splendida cenetta
preparai!

Arlecchino:

Guarda, amor mio, che nettare divino
t'apportai!

A due:

L'amore ama gli effluvii del vin, de la cucina!

Arlecchino:

Mia ghiotta Colombina!

Colombina:

Amabile beone!

Arlecchino:

Prendi questo narcotico; dallo a Pagliaccio
pria che s'addormenti, e poi fuggiamo insieme!

Colombina:

Sì, porgi!

Taddeo:

Attenti! Pagliaccio, è là, tutto stravolto, ed
armi cerca!. Ei sa tutto.
Io corro a barricarmi!

Colombina:

Via!

Arlecchino:

Versa il filtro ne la tazza sua!

Colombina:

A stanotte. E per sempre io sarò tua!

Canio:

(Nome di Dio! quelle stesse parole!)

Columbine:

Look, my love, at the splendid little supper I
have prepared!

Harlequin:

Look, my love, at the divine nectar I have
brought you!

Both:

Love enjoys a feast of food and wine!

Harlequin:

My gluttonous Columbine!

Columbine:

My loving drunkard!

Harlequin: *(taking a vial from his tunic)*

Take this sleeping draught. Give it to
Pagliaccio before he goes to sleep, and then
we'll run away together!

Columbine:

Yes, give it to me!

Taddeo: *(exaggerating with mock alarm)*

Look out! Pagliaccio is here, trembling, and
seeking weapons! He knows everything.
I'm running to seek cover!

Columbine: *(to Harlequin)*

Get out of here!

Harlequin: *(Leaping out of the window)*

Empty the drug in his cup!

Columbine: *(at the window, to Harlequin)*

Till tonight: I'll be yours forever!

Canio: *(places his hand on his heart)*

(My God, the very same words!)

Canio enters, in the costume of Pagliaccio.

Coraggio!

Un uomo era con te!

Courage!

A man was with you!

Nedda:
Che folle! Sei briaco?

Canio:
Briaco! Sì, da un'ora!!

Nedda:
Tornasti presto.

Canio:
Ma in tempo!
T'accora? T'accora! Dolce sposina!

Ah! Sola io ti credea e due posti son là!

Nedda:
Con me sedea Taddeo, che là si chiuse per paura!

Orsù. Parla!

Nedda:
What nonsense! Are you drunk?

Canio: (*restraining himself*)
Drunk! Yes, for about an hour!

Nedda: (*resuming the play*)
You returned rather early.

Canio: (*intensively*)
But just in time!
Are you sorry? My sweet little wife!

I thought you were alone, but there are two places here!

Nedda:
Taddeo was sitting with me, but he's shut himself up because he's frightened!

Come out! Speak up!

Taddeo comes forward, playing his part.

Taddeo:
Credetela! Credetela! Essa è pura!! E abborre dal mentir quel labbro pio!

La Folla:
Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!

Canio:
Per la morte! Smettiamo!
Ho dritto anch'io d'agir come un'altr'uomo.
Il nome suo?

Nedda:
Di chi?

Canio:
Vo' il nome de l'amante tuo, del drudo infame a cui ti desti in braccio, o turpe donna!

Nedda:
Pagliaccio! Pagliaccio!

Taddeo: (*pretending fear*)
Believe her! Believe her! She is faithful!
Those pious lips could not lie!

The Crowd: (*laughing*)
Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

Canio: (*fiercely to the audience*)
For God's sake, that's enough!
I also have a right to act like a man.
Tell me his name?

Nedda: (*coldly and laughing*)
Of whom?

Canio:
The name of your lover, the wretched scoundrel I surprised in your arms, you shameless woman!

Nedda: (*maintaining the play and joking*)
Pagliaccio! Pagliaccio!

Allegro moderato
CANIO



No! Pagliaccio non son; se il viso è pallido, è di vergogna, e smania di vendetta!

Canio:

No! Pagliaccio non son; se il viso è pallido, è di vergogna, e smania di vendetta!

L'uom riprende i suoi dritti, e'l cor che sanguina vuol sangue a lavar l'onta, o maledetta!

No, Pagliaccio non son! Son quei che stolido ti raccolse orfanella in su la via quasi morta di fame, e un nome offriati, ed un amor ch'era febbre e follia!

Contadine:

Comare, mi fa piangere! Par vera questa scena!

Contadini:

Zitte laggiù! Che diamine!

Silvio:

(Io mi ritengo appena!)

Canio:

Sperai, tanto il delirio accecato m'aveva, se non amor, pietà, mercè!
Ed ogni sacrificio al cor lieto, imponeva, e fidente credeva più che in Dio stesso, in te!
Ma il vizio alberga sol ne l'alma tua negletta; tu viscere non hai sol legge e'l senso a te!
Va, non merti il mio duol, o meretrice abietta, vo' ne lo sprezzo mio schiacciarti sotto i piè!

La Folla:

Bravo!

Nedda:

Ebben! Se mi giudichi di te indegna, mi scaccia in questo istante.

Canio:

No! I'm not Pagliaccio. If my face is pale, it's from shame and my craze for vengeance!

A man has rights, and a bleeding heart needs blood to wash away the shame, you cursed woman!

No, I'm not Pagliaccio! I'm the fool who took you off the streets, as a starving orphan. I offered you a name, and a passionate, foolish love!

Village Women:

Oh Lord, he's made me cry! The play is so true to life!

Village Men:

Quiet down there! What devils!

Silvio: (aside)

(I can hardly bear it!)

Canio:

I hoped, if not for love, at least for pity and compassion!
I was happy to sacrifice my heart, and I trusted you more than God!
But your careless spirit has no heart. You are ruled by your senses.
You are unworthy of my grief. I want to crush you beneath my foot in disgust.

The Crowd: (enthusiastically)

Bravo!

Nedda: (seriously, pretending to be calm)

Well! If you've judged me to be unworthy, then send me away at once.

Canio:

Ah! Ah! Di meglio chiedere non dèi che correr tosto al caro amante. Se' furba! No! per Dio! Tu resterai, e il nome del tuo ganzo mi dirai!

Nedda:

Suvvia, così terribile davver non ti credeo! Qui nulla v'ha di tragico. Vieni a dirgli o Taddeo, che l'uom seduto or dianzi, or dianzi a me vicino era il pauroso ed innocuo Arlecchino!

Canio:

Ah! Tu mi sfidi! E ancor non l'hai capita ch'io non ti cedo? Il nome, o la tua vita! Il nome!

Nedda:

Ah! No, per mia madre! Indegna esser poss'io quello che vuoi, ma vil non son, per Dio!

Contadini e Contadine:

Fanno davvero? Seria è la cosa? Zitti laggiù! Seria è la cosa e scura!

Silvio:

Io non resisto più!
Oh la strana commedia!

Beppe:

Bisogna uscire, Tonio. Ho paura!

Tonio:

Taci sciocco!

Nedda:

Di quel tuo sdegno è l'amor mio più forte!
Non parlerò! No! A costo de la morte!

Canio:

Il nome! Il nome!

Nedda:

No!

Silvio:

Santo diavolo! Fa davvero.

Canio: *(laughing)*

Ha! Ha! And let you run to your dear lover? How cunning you are! No! You'll stay here and tell me your lover's name!

Nedda: *(trying to resume the play)*

I didn't know you could be so frightening. Nothing tragic has happened here. Come Taddeo, answer him. Tell him that the man sitting here with me just a short while ago was the innocent little Harlequin!

Canio: *(halting the audience's laughter)*

Ah! You still defy me! Don't you understand? I have not yielded? I want his name, or your life!

Nedda: *(bursting out)*

Ah! I swear by my mother! If you want, call me faithless, but I'm not vile!

Villagers:

Is this reality? Is this serious? Quiet down there! They must surely mean it!

Silvio: *(aside)*

I can't hold back any longer!
What a strange performance!

Beppe: *(restrained from leaving by Tonio)*

We must get out of here, Tonio. I'm afraid!

Tonio:

Quiet, you idiot!

Nedda:

I'm not a coward. My love is stronger than your anger! No! Not even if you kill me!

Canio: *(Tonio gives Canio a knife)*

His name! His name!

Nedda: *(defying Canio)*

No!

Silvio: *(drawing his knife)*

Hell and damnation! He means it.

La Folla e Beppe:
Che fai! Ferma! Aita!

Canio:
A te! A te! Di morte negli spasimi lo dirai!

Nedda:
Soccorso! Silvio!

Silvio:
Nedda!

The Crowd and Beppe:
My God! Stop! Help!

Canio: (*throwing Nedda to the ground*)
For you! Perhaps in death's last agony you'll speak!

Nedda: (*falls, choking*)
Help! Silvio!

Silvio:
Nedda!

Nedda tries to escape toward the audience, but Canio seizes her, and stabs her with his knife. Then he sees Silvio, who has come forward to help Nedda.

Canio:
Ah! Sei tu? Ben venga!

Canio:
Ah! So it is you! It is well you came!

Canio turns toward Silvio and stabs him in the heart. He falls, as if struck by lightning.

La Folla:
Arresta! Gesummaria!

The Crowd: (*shrieking*)
Arrest him! Merciful Heaven!

Canio:
La commedia è finita!

Canio:
The play is over!

Canio is stupefied, and lets his knife fall. Several villagers advance toward him to arrest him.

End of Opera

Discography

Cavalleria Rusticana:

- 1916 Ermolli (Santuzza); Tumminello (Turiddu); Perna (Alfio); Rabelli (Lola);
La Scala Chorus and Orchestra; Sabajno (Conductor)
- 1937 (In English)
Blyth (Santuzza); Nash (Turiddu); Williams (Alfio); Parry (Lola); Griffiths (Lucia);
British National Opera Chorus and Orchestra;
Buesst (Conductor)
- 1929 Sanzio (Santuzza); Breviario (Turiddu); Biasini (Alfio); Pantaleoni (Lola); de Franco (Lucia);
La Scala Chorus and Orchestra; Sabajno (Conductor)
- 1930 Arangi-Lombardi (Santuzza); Melandri (Turiddu); Lulli (Alfio); Castagna (Lola);
Mannarini (Lucia);
La Scala Chorus and Orchestra; Molajoli (Conductor)
- 1940 Bruna Rasa (Santuzza); Gigli (Turiddu); Bechi (Alfio); Marcucci (Lola); Simionato (Lucia);
La Scala Chorus and Orchestra; Mascagni (Conductor)
- 1943 (In German)
Scheppan (Santuzza); Hopf (Turiddu); Hann (Alfio); Beilke (Lola); Waldenau (Lucia);
German Opera Chorus/Berlin Radio Orchestra; Rother (Conductor)
- 1952 Simionato (Santuzza); Braschi (Turiddu); Tagliabue (Alfio); Cadoni (Lola);
Pellegrino (Lucia);
Turin Radio Chorus and Orchestra; Basile (Conductor)
- 1952 Petrova (Santuzza); Ruhl (Turiddu); Petroff (Alfio); Benucci (Lola); Melani (Lucia);
Florence Festival Chorus and Orchestra; Ghiglia (Conductor)
- 1953 Milanov (Santuzza); Björling (Turiddu); Merrill (Alfio); Smith (Lola); Roggero (Lucia);
Shaw Chorale/RCA Victor Orchestra; Cellini (Conductor)
- 1953 Nicolai (Santuzza); del Monaco (Turiddu); Protti (Alfio); Didier (Lola); Anelli (Lucia);
Milan Chorus and Orchestra; Ghione (Conductor)
- 1953 Callas (Santuzza); di Stefano (Turiddu); Panerai (Alfio); Canali (Lola); Ticozzi (Lucia);
La Scala Chorus and Orchestra; Serafin (Conductor)
- 1953 Harshaw (Santuzza); Tucker (Turiddu); Guerrera (Alfio); Miller (Lola); Votipka (Lucia);
Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra; Cleva (Conductor)
- 1954 Apolei (Santuzza); Spruzzola (Turiddu); Campolonghi (Alfio);
Geri (Lola); del Ol (Lucia);
La Fenice Chorus and Orchestra; Sebastien (Conductor)
- 1955 Simionato (Santuzza); di Stefano (Turiddu); Guelfi (Alfio);
La Scala Chorus and Orchestra; Votto (Conductor)
- 1958 Tebaldi (Santuzza); Björling (Turiddu); Bastianini (Alfio);
Danieli (Lola); Corsi (Lucia);
Florence Festival Chorus and Orchestra; Erede (Conductor)

- 1958 Zanelli (Santuzza); Visetti (Turiddu); Campo (Alfio); Castro (Lola); Ferrari (Lucia); Lombard Promenade Chorus and Orchestra; Falco (Conductor)
- 1959 Mancini (Santuzza); Poggi (Turiddu); Protti (Alfio); Lazzarini (Lola); Cattelani (Lucia); San Carlo Chorus and Orchestra; Rapalò (Conductor)
- 1960 Simionato (Santuzza); del Monaco (Turiddu); MacNeil (Alfio); Satre (Lola); di Stasio (Lucia); Santa Cecilia Academy Chorus and Orchestra; Serafin (Conductor)
- 1962 de los Angeles (Santuzza); Corelli (Turiddu); Sereni (Alfio); Lazzarini (Lola); Voza (Lucia); Rome Opera Chorus and Orchestra; Santini (Conductor)
- 1965 Cossotto (Santuzza); Bergonzi (Turiddu); Guelfi (Alfio); Martino (Lola); Allegri (Lucia); La Scala Chorus and Orchestra; Karajan (Conductor)
- 1966 (In German)
Hillebrecht (Santuzza); Schock (Turiddu); Wächter (Alfio); Jasper (Lola); Oelke (Lucia); German Opera Chorus and Orchestra; Hollreiser (Conductor)
- 1967 Souliotis (Santuzza); del Monaco (Turiddu); Gobbi (Alfio); Malagù (Lola); di Stasio (Lucia); Rome Opera Chorus and Orchestra; Varviso (Conductor)
- 1967 (In Hungarian)
Dunst (Santuzza); Simandy (Turiddu); Radnai (Alfio); László (Lola); Barlay (Lucia); Hungarian State Opera Chorus and Orchestra; Lukács (Conductor)
- 1968 Bumbry (Santuzza); Bergonzi (Turiddu); Mastromei (Alfio); Teatro Colón Chorus and Orchestra; Martini (Conductor)
- 1976 Varady (Santuzza); Pavarotti (Turiddu); Cappuccilli (Alfio); Gonzales (Lola); Bormida (Lucia); London Opera Chorus/National Philharmonic Orchestra; Gavezzini (Conductor)
- 1978 Scotto (Santuzza); Domingo (Turiddu); Elvira (Alfio); Jones (Lola); Kraft (Lucia); Ambrosian Opera Chorus/National Philharmonic Orchestra; Levine (Conductor)
- 1979 Caballé (Santuzza); Carreras (Turiddu); Manuguerra (Alfio); Hamari (Lola); Varnay (Lucia); Ambrosian Opera Chorus/Philharmonia Orchestra; Muti (Conductor)
- 1981 Arroyo (Santuzza); Bonisolli (Turiddu); Weigl (Alfio); Budai (Lola); Falk (Lucia); Bavarian Radio Chorus/Munich Radio Orchestra; Gardelli (Conductor)
- 1985 Obratzsova (Santuzza); Domingo (Turiddu); Bruson (Alfio); Gall (Lola); Barbieri (Lucia); La Scala Chorus and Orchestra; Prêtre (Conductor)
- 1989 Baltsa (Santuzza); Domingo (Turiddu); Pons (Alfio); Mentzer (Lola); Baniewicz (Lucia); Royal Opera House Chorus/ Philharmonia Orchestra; Sinopoli (Conductor)
- 1990 Norman (Santuzza); Giacomini (Turiddu); Hvorostovsky (Alfio); Senn (Lola); Laghezza (Lucia); Paris Chorus and Orchestra; Bychkov (Conductor)

- 1990 Verrett (Santuzza); Johansson (Turiddu); Nova (Alfio); Marcucci (Lola);
Ruse Philharmonic; Ruse (Conductor)
- 1997 (In English)
Miricioiu (Santuzza); O'Neil (Turiddu); Joll (Alfio);
London Philharmonia Orchestra; Parry (Conductor)
- 2003 Monti (Santuzza); De Palma (Turiddu); Buda (Alfio); Vespasiani (Lucia);
Della Capitanata; Maschio (Conductor)

I Pagliacci:

- 1907 Huguet (Nedda); Barbaini (Canio); Cigada (Tonio);
Badini (Silvio); Pini-Corsi (Beppe);
La Scala Chorus and Orchestra; Sabajno (Conductor)
- 1917 Conti (Nedda); Mullings (Canio); Montanelli (Tonio); Badini (Silvio); Prat (Beppe);
La Scala Chorus and Orchestra; Sabjano (Conductor)
- 1927 (In English)
Licette (Nedda); Mulliongs (Canio); Williams (Tonio); Noble (Silvio); Nash (Beppe);
British National Opera Chorus and Orchestra; Goosens (Conductor)
- 1929 Saraceni (Nedda); Valente (Canio); Granforte (Tonio); Basi (Silvio); Palai (Beppe);
La Scala Chorus and Orchestra; Sabajno (Conductor)
- 1930 Pampanini (Nedda); Merli (Canio); Galeffi (Tonio); Vanelli (Silvio); Nessi (Beppe);
La Scala Chorus and Orchestra; Molajoli (Conductor)
- 1934 Pacetti (Nedda); Gigli (Canio); Basiola (Tonio); Paci (Silvio); Nessi (Beppe);
La Scala Chorus and Orchestra; Ghione (Conductor)
- 1943 (In German)
Scheppan (Nedda); Roswaenge (Canio); Hann (Tonio); Schmitt-Walter (Silvio);
Wessely (Beppe);
Berlin Radio Chorus and Symphony Orchestra; Rother (Conductor)
- 1949 Fineschi (Nedda); Masini (Canio); Gobbi (Tonio);
Rome Opera Chorus and Orchestra; Morelli (Conductor)
- 1950 Malagrida (Nedda); Poggi (Canio); Bersellini (Tonio); Lamacchia (Silvio);
Castagnoli (Beppe);
Bologna Teatro Comunale Chorus/San Remo Philharmonic Orchestra;
Gavarini (Conductor)
- 1951 Amara (Nedda); Tucker (Canio); Valdengo (Tonio);
Harvuot (Silvio); Hayward (Beppe);
Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra; Cleva (Conductor)
- 1952 Gavazzi (Nedda); Bergonzi (Canio); Tagliabue (Tonio);
Rossi (Silvio); di Tommaso (Beppe);
Turin Radio Chorus and Orchestra; Simonetto (Conductor)
- 1952 La Pollo (Nedda); Sarri (Canio); Petroff (Tonio); Donato (Beppe);
Florence Festival Chorus and Orchestra; Ghiglia (Conductor)
- 1953 Petrella (Nedda); del Monaco (Canio); Poli (Tonio); Protti (Silvio); Palma (Beppe);
Santa Cecilia Academy Chorus and Orchestra; Erede (Conductor)
- 1954 de los Angeles (Nedda); Björling (Canio); Warren (Tonio);
Merrill (Silvio); Franke (Beppe);
Shaw Chorale/RCA Victor Orchestra; Cellini (Conductor)

- 1954 Callas (Nedda); di Stefano (Canio); Gobbi (Tonio); Panerai (Silvio); Monti (Beppe);
La Scala Chorus and Orchestra; Serafin (Conductor)
- 1956 Petrella (Nedda); di Stefano (Canio); Protti (Tonio);
La Scala Chorus and Orchestra; Sanzogno (Conductor)
- 1960 (In German)
Műszely (Nedda); Schock (Canio); Metternich (Tonio); Cordes (Silvio); Schmidt (Beppe);
German Opera Chorus and Orchestra; Stein (Conductor)
- 1960 Beltrami (Nedda); Poggi (Canio); Protti (Tonio); Monachesi (Silvio); Nobile (Beppe);
San Carlo Opera Chorus and Orchestra; Rapalò (Conductor)
- 1960 Tucci (Nedda); del Monaco (Canio); MacNeil (Tonio); Capecchi (Silvio); Palma (Beppe);
Santa Cecilia Academy Chorus and Orchestra; Molinari-Pradelli (Conductor)
- 1961 Amara (Nedda); Corelli (Canio); Gobbi (Tonio); Zanasi (Silvio); Spina (Beppe);
La Scala Chorus and Orchestra; Matacic (Conductor)
- 1961 (In Russian)
Yakovenka (Nedda); Uzunov (Canio); Zacharov (Tonio);
Lisitsian (Silvio); Pihkaev (Beppe);
Moscow Radio Chorus/Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra; Samosud (Conductor)
- 1961 (In French)
Castelli (Nedda); Finel (Canio); Dens (Tonio); Cales (Silvio); Corazza (Beppe);
Paris Opéra-Comique Chorus and Orchestra; Dervaux (Conductor)
- 1964 (In Hungarian)
Orosz (Nedda); Simandy (Canio); Radnai (Tonio); Palócz (Silvio); Réti (Beppe);
Hungarian State Opera Chorus and Orchestra; Komor (Conductor)
- 1965 Carlyle (Nedda); Bergonzi (Canio); Taddei (Tonio); Panerai (Silvio); Benelli (Beppe);
La Scala Chorus and Orchestra; Karajan (Conductor)
- 1967 Lorengar (Nedda); McCracken (Canio); Merrill (Tonio);
Krause (Silvio); Benelli (Beppe);
Santa Cecilia Academy Chorus and Orchestra; Gardelli (Conductor)
- 1968 Carlyle (Nedda); Vickers (Canio); ManNeil (Tonio);
Teatro Colón Chorus and Orchestra; Martini (Conductor)
- 1971 Sighele (Nedda); Tucker (Canio);
Florence Maggio Musicale Chorus and Orchestra; Muti (Conductor)
- 1972 Caballé (Nedda); Domingo (Canio); Milnes (Tonio);
McDaniel (Silvio); Goeke (Beppe);
Alldis Choir/London Symphony Orchestra; Santi (Conductor)
- 1976 Freni (Nedda); Pavarotti (Canio); Wixell (Tonio); Saccomani (Silvio); Bello (Beppe);
National Philharmonic Orchestra; Patané (Conductor)
- 1979 Scotto (Nedda); Carreras (Canio); Nurmela (Tonio); Allen (Silvio); Benelli (Beppe);
Ambrosian Opera Chorus/Philharmonia Orchestra; Muti (Conductor)

- 1983 Popp (Nedda); Atlantov (Canio); Weigl (Tonio); Brendel (Silvio); Ionita (Beppe);
Tölz Boys Choir/Munich Radio Chorus and Orchestra; Gardelli (Conductor)
- 1983 Stratas (Nedda); Domingo (Canio); Pons (Tonio); Rinaldi (Silvio); Andreolli (Beppe);
La Scala Chorus and Orchestra; Prêtre (Conductor)
- 2000 Frittoli (Nedda); Cura (Canio); Alvarez (Tonio);
Netherlands Radio Chorus/Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra; Chailly (Conductor)

Videography

Cavalleria Rusticana **Page 107**

I Pagliacci **Page 109**

Cavalleria Rusticana:

PHILLIPS/DG (1982)

Obraztsova (Santuzza); Domingo (Turiddu); Bruson (Alfio);
Gall (Lola); Barbieri (Lucia);
La Scala Chorus and Orchestra; Prêtre (conductor)
A film directed by Franco Zeffirelli

VAI DVD (1990)

Verrett (Santuzza); Johannson (Turiddu); Nova (Alfio);
Orani (Lola); Vespasiani (Lucia);
Chigi Academy Chorus/Philharmonia Orchestra of Russe; Podic (Conductor);
Monicelli (Director); Goldfarb (Video Director)

Kicco DVD (2003)

Monti (Santuzza); De Palma (Turiddu); Buda (Alfio); Vespasiani (Lucia);
Della Capitanata; Maschio (Conductor)

I Pagliacci:

(1949)

Fineschi (Nedda/acted by Gina Lollabrigida); Masini (Canio/acted by A. Poli);
Tonio (Gobbi); Silvio (Gobbi); Sinimberghi (Beppe);
Rome Opera Chorus and Orchestra; Morelli (Conductor);
A film directed by Mario Costa

Hardy DVD (1954)

Micheluzzi (Santuzza); Corelli (Canio); Gobbi (Tonio);
RAI Milano; (Conductor)

(1955)

Likova (Nedda); Vickers (Canio); Savoie (Tonio);
Quilico (Silvio); Boutet (Beppe);
Radio-Canada Montreal Chorus and Orchestra; Mueller (Conductor)

Philips DVD (1982)

Stratas (Nedda); Domingo (Canio); Pons (Tonio);
Rinaldi (Silvio); Andreolli (Beppe);
La Scala Chorus and Orchestra; Prêtre (Conductor)
A film directed by Franco Zeffirelli

DICTIONARY OF OPERA AND MUSICAL TERMS

Accelerando - Play the music faster, but gradually.

Adagio - At a slow or gliding tempo, not as slow as largo, but not as fast as andante.

Agitato - Restless or agitated.

Allegro - At a brisk or lively tempo, faster than andante but not as fast as presto.

Andante - A moderately slow, easy-going tempo.

Appoggiatura - An extra or embellishing note preceding a main melodic note. Usually written as a note of smaller size, it shares the time value of the main note.

Arabesque - Flourishes or fancy patterns usually applying to vocal virtuosity.

Aria - A solo song usually structured in a formal pattern. Arias generally convey reflective and introspective thoughts rather than descriptive action.

Arietta - A shortened form of aria.

Arioso - A musical passage or composition having a mixture of free recitative and metrical song.

Arpeggio - Producing the tones of a chord in succession rather than simultaneously.

Atonal - Music that is not anchored in traditional musical tonality; it does not use the diatonic scale and has no keynote or tonal center.

Ballad opera - Eighteenth-century English opera consisting of spoken dialogue and music derived from popular ballad and folksong sources. The most famous is *The Beggar's Opera*, which is a satire of the Italian opera seria.

Bar - A vertical line across the stave that divides the music into measures.

Baritone - A male singing voice ranging between bass and tenor.

Baroque - A style of artistic expression prevalent in the 17th century that is marked by the use of complex forms, bold ornamentation, and florid decoration. The Baroque period extends from approximately 1600 to 1750 and includes the works of the original creators of modern opera, the Camerata, as well as the later works by Bach and Handel.

Bass - The lowest male voice, usually divided into categories such as:

Basso buffo - A bass voice that specializes in comic roles: Dr. Bartolo in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*.

Basso cantante - A bass voice that demonstrates melodic singing quality: King Philip in Verdi's *Don Carlos*.

Basso profondo - the deepest, most profound, or most dramatic of bass voices: Sarastro in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.

Bel canto - Literally, "beautiful singing." It originated in Italian opera of the 17th and 18th centuries and stressed beautiful tones produced with ease, clarity, purity, and evenness, together with an agile vocal technique and virtuosity. Bel canto flourished in the first half of the 19th century in the works of Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti.

Cabaletta - A lively, concluding portion of an aria or duet. The term is derived from the Italian word "cavallo," or horse: it metaphorically describes a horse galloping to the finish line.

Cadenza - A flourish or brilliant part of an aria (or concerto) commonly inserted just before a finale. It is usually performed without accompaniment.

Camerata - A gathering of Florentine writers and musicians between 1590 and 1600 who attempted to recreate what they believed was the ancient Greek theatrical synthesis of drama, music, and stage spectacle; their experimentation led to the creation of the early structural forms of modern opera.

Cantabile - An indication that the singer should sing sweetly.

Cantata - A choral piece generally containing Scriptural narrative texts: the *St. Matthew Passion* of Bach.

Cantilena - Literally, "little song." A lyrical melody meant to be played or sung "cantabile," or with sweetness and expression.

Canzone - A short, lyrical operatic song usually containing no narrative association with the drama but rather simply reflecting the character's state of mind: Cherubino's "Voi che sapete" in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Castrato - A young male singer who was surgically castrated to retain his treble voice.

Cavatina - A short aria popular in 18th and 19th century opera that usually heralded the entrance of a principal singer.

Classical Period - A period roughly between the Baroque and Romantic periods, the late 18th through the early 19th centuries. Stylistically, the music of the period stresses clarity, precision, and rigid structural forms.

Coda - A trailer added on by the composer after the music's natural conclusion. The coda serves as a formal closing to the piece.

Coloratura - Literally, "colored": it refers to a soprano singing in the bel canto tradition. It is a singing technique that requires great agility, virtuosity, embellishments and ornamentation: The Queen of the Night's aria, "Zum Leiden bin ich auserkoren," from Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.

Commedia dell'arte - A popular form of dramatic presentation originating in Renaissance Italy in which highly stylized characters were involved in comic plots involving mistaken identities and misunderstandings. Two of the standard characters were Harlequin and Colombine: The "play within a play" in Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*.

Comprimario - A singer who performs secondary character roles such as confidantes, servants, and messengers.

Continuo, Basso continuo - A bass part (as for a keyboard or stringed instrument) that was used especially in baroque ensemble music; it consists of an independent succession of bass notes that indicate the required chords and their appropriate harmonies. Also called *figured bass*, *thoroughbass*.

Contralto - The lowest female voice, derived from "contra" against, and "alto" voice; a voice between the tenor and mezzo-soprano.

Countertenor - A high male voice generally singing within the female high soprano ranges.

Counterpoint - The combination of two or more independent melodies into a single harmonic texture in which each retains its linear character. The most sophisticated form of counterpoint is the fugue form, in which from two to six melodies can be used; the voices are combined, each providing a variation on the basic theme but each retaining its relation to the whole.

Crescendo - A gradual increase in the volume of a musical passage.

Da capo - Literally, "from the top"; repeat. Early 17th-century da capo arias were in the form of A B A, with the second A section repeating the first, but with ornamentation.

Deus ex machina - Literally "god out of a machine." A dramatic technique in which a person or thing appears or is introduced suddenly and unexpectedly; it provides a contrived solution to an apparently insoluble dramatic difficulty.

Diatonic - A major or minor musical scale that comprises intervals of five whole steps and two half steps.

Diminuendo - Gradually becoming softer; the opposite of crescendo.

Dissonance - A mingling of discordant sounds that do not harmonize within the diatonic scale.

Diva - Literally, “goddess”; generally the term refers to a leading female opera star who either possesses, or pretends to possess, great rank.

Dominant - The fifth tone of the diatonic scale; in the key of C, the dominant is G.

Dramatic soprano or tenor - A voice that is powerful, possesses endurance, and is generally projected in a declamatory style.

Dramma giocoso - Literally, “amusing (or humorous) drama.” An opera whose story combines both serious and comic elements: Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*.

Falsetto - A lighter or “false” voice; an artificially-produced high singing voice that extends above the range of the full voice.

Fioritura - It., “flowering”; a flowering ornamentation or embellishment of the vocal line within an aria.

Forte, fortissimo - Forte (*f*) means loud; mezzo forte (*mf*) is fairly loud; fortissimo (*ff*) is even louder; additional *fff*’s indicate greater degrees of loudness.

Glissando - Literally, “gliding.” A rapid sliding up or down the scale.

Grand opera - An opera in which there is no spoken dialogue and the entire text is set to music, frequently treating serious and tragic subjects. Grand opera flourished in France in the 19th century (Meyerbeer); the genre is epic in scale and combines spectacle, large choruses, scenery, and huge orchestras.

Heldentenor - A tenor with a powerful dramatic voice who possesses brilliant top notes and vocal stamina. Heldentenors are well suited to heroic (Wagnerian) roles: Lauritz Melchior in Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*.

Imbroglia - Literally, “intrigue”; an operatic scene portraying chaos and confusion, with appropriate diverse melodies and rhythms.

Largo or larghetto - Largo indicates a very slow tempo, broad and with dignity. Larghetto is at a slightly faster tempo than largo.

Legato - Literally, “tied” or “bound”; successive tones that are connected smoothly. The opposite of legato is staccato (short and plucked tones.)

Leitmotif - Literally, “leading motive.” A musical fragment characterizing a person, thing, feeling, or idea that provides associations when it recurs.

Libretto - Literally, “little book”; the text of an opera.

Lied - A German song; the plural is “lieder.” Originally, a German art song of the late 18th century.

Lyric - A voice that is light and delicate.

Maestro - From the Italian “master”; a term of respect to conductors, composers, directors, and great musicians.

Melodrama - Words spoken over music. Melodrama appears in Beethoven’s *Fidelio* and flourished during the late 19th century in the operas of Massenet (*Manon* and *Werther*).

Mezza voce - Literally, “medium voice”; singing with medium or half volume. It is sometimes intended as a vocal means to intensify emotion.

Mezzo-soprano - A woman’s voice with a range between soprano and contralto.

Obbligato - An accompaniment to a solo or principal melody that is usually played by an important, single instrument.

Octave - A musical interval embracing eight diatonic degrees; from C to C is an octave.

Opera - Literally, “work”; a dramatic or comic play in which music is the primary vehicle that conveys its story.

Opera buffa - Italian comic opera that flourished during the bel canto era. Highlighting the opera buffa genre were buffo characters who were usually basses singing patter songs: Dr. Bartolo in Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville*; Dr. Dulcamara in Donizetti’s *The Elixir of Love*.

Opéra comique - A French opera characterized by spoken dialogue interspersed between the musical numbers, as opposed to grand opera in which there is no spoken dialogue. Opéra comique subjects can be either comic or tragic.

Operetta, or light opera - Operas that contain comic elements and generally a light romantic plot: Strauss’s *Die Fledermaus*, Offenbach’s *La Périchole*, and Lehar’s *The Merry Widow*. In operettas, there is usually much spoken dialogue, dancing, practical jokes, and mistaken identities.

Oratorio - A lengthy choral work, usually of a religious nature and consisting chiefly of recitatives, arias, and choruses, but performed without action or scenery: Handel's *Messiah*.

Ornamentation - Extra embellishing notes—appoggiaturas, trills, roulades, or cadenzas—that enhance a melodic line.

Overture - The orchestral introduction to a musical dramatic work that sometimes incorporates musical themes within the work. Overtures are instrumental pieces that are generally performed independently of their respective operas in concert.

Parlando - Literally, “speaking”; the imitation of speech while singing, or singing that is almost speaking over the music. Parlando sections are usually short and have minimal orchestral accompaniment.

Patter song - A song with words that are rapidly and quickly delivered. Figaro's “Largo al factotum” in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* is a patter song.

Pentatonic - A five-note scale. Pentatonic music is most prevalent in Far Eastern countries.

Piano - A performance indication for soft volume.

Pitch - The property of a musical tone that is determined by the frequency of the waves producing it.

Pizzicato - An indication that notes are to be played by plucking the strings instead of stroking the string with the bow.

Polyphony - Literally, “many voices.” A style of musical composition in which two or more independent melodies are juxtaposed; counterpoint.

Polytonal - Several tonal schemes used simultaneously.

Portamento - A continuous gliding movement from one tone to another through all the intervening pitches.

Prelude - An orchestral introduction to an act or a whole opera that precedes the opening scene.

Presto, prestissimo - Vigorous, and with the utmost speed.

Prima donna - Literally, “first lady.” The female star or principal singer in an opera cast or opera company.

Prologue - A piece sung before the curtain goes up on the opera proper: Tonio's Prologue in Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*.

Quaver - An eighth note.

Range - The span of tonal pitch of a particular voice: soprano, mezzo-soprano, contralto, tenor, baritone, and bass.

Recitative - A formal device used to advance the plot. It is usually sung in a rhythmically free vocal style that imitates the natural inflections of speech; it conveys the dialogue and narrative in operas and oratorios. *Secco*, or dry, recitative is accompanied by harpsichord and sometimes with other continuo instruments; *accompagnato* indicates that the recitative is accompanied by the orchestra.

Ritornello - A refrain, or short recurrent instrumental passage between elements of a vocal composition.

Romanza - A solo song that is usually sentimental; it is shorter and less complex than an aria and rarely deals with terror, rage, or anger.

Romantic Period - The Romantic period is usually considered to be between the early 19th and early 20th centuries. Romanticists found inspiration in nature and man. Von Weber's *Der Freischütz* and Beethoven's *Fidelio* (1805) are considered the first German Romantic operas; many of Verdi's operas as well as the early operas of Wagner are also considered Romantic operas.

Roulade - A florid, embellished melody sung to one syllable.

Rubato - An expressive technique, literally meaning "robbed"; it is a fluctuation of tempo within a musical phrase, often against a rhythmically steady accompaniment.

Secco - "Dry"; the type of accompaniment for recitative played by the harpsichord and sometimes continuo instruments.

Semitone - A half step, the smallest distance between two notes. In the key of C, the half steps are from E to F and from B to C.

Serial music - Music based on a series of tones in a chosen pattern without regard for traditional tonality.

Sforzando - Sudden loudness and force; it must stand out from the texture and be emphasized by an accent.

Singspiel - Literally, "song drama." Early German style of opera employing spoken dialogue between songs: Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.

Soprano - The highest range of the female voice ranging from lyric (light and graceful quality) to dramatic (fuller and heavier in tone).

Sotto voce - Literally, “below the voice”; sung softly between a whisper and a quiet conversational tone.

Soubrette - A soprano who sings supporting roles in comic opera: Adele in Strauss’s *Die Fledermaus*; Despina in Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*.

Spinto - From the Italian “spingere” (to push); a singer with lyric vocal qualities who “pushes” the voice to achieve heavier dramatic qualities.

Sprechstimme - Literally, “speaking voice.” The singer half sings a note and half speaks; the declamation sounds like speaking but the duration of pitch makes it seem almost like singing.

Staccato - Short, clipped, detached, rapid articulation; the opposite of legato.

Stretto - Literally, “narrow.” A concluding passage performed in a quick tempo to create a musical climax.

Strophe - Strophe is a rhythmic system of repeating lines. A musical setting of a strophic text is characterized by the repetition of the same music for all strophes.

Syncopation - A shifting of the beat forward or back from its usual place in the bar; a temporary displacement of the regular metrical accent in music caused typically by stressing the weak beat.

Supernumerary - A “super”; a performer with a non-singing and non-speaking role: “Spear-carrier.”

Symphonic poem - A large orchestral work in one continuous movement, usually narrative or descriptive in character: Franz Liszt’s *Les Preludes*; Richard Strauss’s *Don Juan*, *Till Eulenspiegel*, and *Ein Heldenleben*.

Tempo - The speed at which music is performed.

Tenor - The highest natural male voice.

Tessitura - The usual range of a voice part.

Tonality - The organization of all the tones and harmonies of a piece of music in relation to a tonic (the first tone of its scale).

Tone poem - An orchestral piece with a program.

Tonic - The principal tone of the key in which a piece is written. C is the tonic of C major.

Trill - Two adjacent notes rapidly and repeatedly alternated.

Tutti - All together.

Twelve-tone - The twelve chromatic tones of the octave placed in a chosen fixed order and constituting, with some permitted permutations and derivations, the melodic and harmonic material of a serial musical piece. Each note of the chromatic scale is used as part of the melody before any other note is repeated.

Verismo - Literally “truth”; the artistic use of contemporary everyday material in preference to the heroic or legendary in opera. A movement particularly in Italian opera during the late 19th and early 20th centuries: Mascagni’s *Cavalleria rusticana*.

Vibrato - A “vibration”; a slightly tremulous effect imparted to vocal or instrumental tone to enrich and intensify sound, and add warmth and expressiveness through slight and rapid variations in pitch.

