

Chan 3003



David Parry

LEONCAVALLO

Pagliacci

CHANDOS
OPERA *IN*
ENGLISH

Dennis O'Neill
Rosa Mannion
Alan Opie
William Dazeley
Peter Bronder

London Philharmonic Orchestra
David Parry

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION



AKG

Ruggero Leoncavallo

Ruggero Leoncavallo (1857–1919)

Pagliacci (The Touring Company)

Opera in a prologue and two acts

Libretto by Leoncavallo

English translation by Edmund Tracey

Tonio (in the play, *Taddeo*), a clownAlan Opie *baritone*
Canio (in the play, *Pagliaccio*), leader of the playersDennis O'Neill *tenor*
Beppe (in the play, *Harlequin*)Peter Bronder *tenor*
Nedda (in the play, *Columbina*), wife of CanioRosa Mannion *soprano*
Silvio, a villagerWilliam Dazeley *baritone*
Two localsPaul Parfitt *bass-baritone* • Peter Hall *tenor*

Geoffrey Mitchell Choir

The Peter Kay Children's Choir

London Philharmonic Orchestra

Brad Cohen assistant conductor

David Parry conductor

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21	'Arlecchin!' 'Columbina' <i>Columbina, Harlequin, Taddeo</i>	1:57 [p. 63]
22	'Pour the potion in his glass at midnight' <i>Harlequin, Columbina (Nedda), Pagliaccio (Canio), Tonio</i>	3:04 [p. 64]
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Ruggero Leoncavallo: *Pagliacci*

Another composer's success and a court case were, in a very real sense, the progenitors of Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*. Had it not been for Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* (already available on Chandos' Opera in English series on CHAN 3004), produced in 1890, it is doubtful whether the publisher Sonzogno would have accepted Leoncavallo's work or whether the composer would have even taken it to him.

The story of the court case goes back to the composer's boyhood. His father was a judge, and Leoncavallo vividly recalled the trial of an actor who, seized with jealousy, murdered his wife at the end of a performance. The prisoner, apparently a figure of tragic power, faced up to the accusation, grief-stricken yet unbending. Leoncavallo remembered years later the man's rough voice echoing through the court. This awesome figure, a model for Canio, arose in his mind as a subject for a short, taut drama after *Cavalleria rusticana* had been produced. He completed his own libretto and its setting in five months. Sued later for plagiarism, he had only to tell the true story for the irate author to drop his case.

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Leoncavallo's *verismo* technique is not unexpected from a man with Leoncavallo's biographical and musical background. His father, as we have seen, was a judge, his mother a painter, famous at the time at Naples, where the composer was born on 8 March 1857. He studied with various piano teachers before entering the Naples Conservatory. While a student he heard *Tannhäuser* at Bologna, an experience that made a deep impression on him. A meeting with Wagner in the town shortly after made an even deeper impression. Apparently Wagner said to him: 'Voyez, je lutte encore' (See, I'm still struggling). The memory of those words cheered Leoncavallo during his own years of struggle to gain recognition. Shortly after completing his studies, when he was eighteen, he wrote his first opera *Chatterton*, but efforts to get it produced proved abortive.

While earning his living by playing the piano he began composing a Wagner-inspired trilogy entitled *Crepusculum*, dealing with the Renaissance in Italy. At one point, while touring in the Middle East (1882), he was offered the post in Cairo as chief of military bands, which he might have accepted had the

activities of the British Army not forced him to flee to Ismaila disguised as an Arab!

Next he completed *I Medici*, part of his trilogy, but though Ricordi had signed a contract for the work, he did not see fit to publish it, more impressed with Leoncavallo as a poet of the theatre than as a composer. After three years attempting to get *I Medici* performed, he wrote *Pagliacci*, which he gave to Ricordi's great rival Sonzogno. It proved an almost immediate success when produced at the Teatro dal Verme on 21 May 1892, conducted by Toscanini. So successful was it that the following year *I Medici* was at last staged – in the same theatre. As it proved a failure, Leoncavallo did not pursue the remaining parts of the trilogy, *Savonarola* and *Cesare Borgia*, but *Chatterton* was eventually produced (1896) and then his version of *La bohème* (1897), which suffered virtual eclipse in view of Puccini's more inspired setting of Murger's novel. *Zazà* came next (1900) and these are the only works of the composer's still seen in Italy today other than *Pagliacci*.

He continued to write until his death in 1919. His later works include such curiosities as *Der Roland von Berlin*, (1904), composed on an express commission from Kaiser Wilhelm II, and *Are You There?*, an operetta written for London in 1913. Leoncavallo had already been

in London in 1911 to conduct *Pagliacci* and *Zazà* at the Hippodrome and returned the following year to conduct a new piece, *Zingari* (The Gypsies), written specially for that theatre. He sought in vain to repeat the overwhelming success of *Pagliacci*, and his reputation will continue to depend on the survival of his most noted work.

What is its fascination and worth? Let's first look at some contemporary opinions. Hermann Klein, a leading critic of the time, wrote in his memoirs of its first London performance in May 1893 (when the composer was present): 'The fame of Leoncavallo's sensational opera had preceded it, and the public expected something remarkable. They were not disappointed. I have rarely seen an audience so breathless with excitement over the development of an opera plot.' He then goes on to describe and praise the cast, Fernando de Lucia as Canio, Melba as Nedda and Mario Ancona as Tonio, adding that, 'Leoncavallo, modest and unassuming, waited quietly in the background till the end, and then had to be forced on to the stage by the artists to acknowledge the ovation that awaited him... I found him to be a man of great culture and strong intellect. He is a poet as well as a musician, and in both arts he reveals the grasp of a profound thinker.'

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Praising the work's *verismo* (reality), the *Daily Telegraph* opined: 'We appear to have done for the present with legendary heroes and cloudy myths' – a sally, of course, at Wagner – 'Their personages are too far removed; they are not flesh of our flesh and bone of our bones. Nowadays the demand is for Human Documents, for characters in tale and drama that are our kin, not our exaggerated selves.' More recently, more succinctly the critic Spike Hughes wrote that Leoncavallo was fulfilling 'A Long Felt Want'. Here were no longer the conventional romantic hero, nor yet again figures from Norse saga, but real people – earthy, passionate, full of life.

Of course, the tale of the clown whose heart is breaking but must go on playing out his comic part is not new; nor is the device of a play within a play. Leoncavallo's skill was to clothe these devices in music that was touching, immediately accessible and attractive, tuneful without being tawdry. He was an accomplished librettist and by adhering to the Aristotelian unities of time and space, his scenario is at once credible and swift-moving. His characterization may not run very deep, but it is convincing enough to make us believe that these are real people.

For his score, Leoncavallo took just as much as he needed from Wagnerian methods. There

is a rudimentary use of *Leitmotiv*, and neither the harmony nor orchestration could have been as it is had Wagner never existed. However, the work as a whole has a recognizably Italian flavour: the choral passages, for instance, place the action unmistakably in Southern Italy and, whether the composer is being unpretentiously and sensuously tuneful as in Beppe's (Arlecchino's) Serenade or Nedda's Ballatella, or strongly impassioned, as in the 'Ridi, Pagliaccio' (Make it amusing) theme of 'Vesti la giubba' (Put on your costume), the music evinces a transalpine lyricism. These and other set pieces, such as the erotic duet for Nedda and Silvio, are fully integrated into a unified structure in the manner of Verdi's late masterpieces.

Leoncavallo brings off a brilliant *coup de théâtre* with the Prologue in which Tonio pokes his head through the curtain, then comes out to tell the members of the audience directly that even the actors are men and women like themselves, passionate, rejoicing, suffering. The play within a play, somewhat reminiscent of that in *Hamlet* in its relevance to the main action, is another effective contrivance calling forth delightful *commedia dell'arte* music from the composer.

In performance, *Pagliacci* stands or falls by the writing for, and interpretation of the role

of Canio. In three moving passages, Leoncavallo reveals an honest man felled by jealousy and remorse, a fitting successor to Verdi's *Otello*, and requiring a heroic tenor of like mettle. In 'Un tal gioco, credetimi' (If he tried it, I promise you), the tone of menace, a warning unheeded by Nedda, shows us a powerful man, one not to be trifled with. In 'Vesti la giubba' (Put on your costume), after Nedda's infidelity has been confirmed, a great soul is racked with torment as the clown unburdens his feelings, heartache mingled with nobility of expression. Finally, in 'No, Pagliaccio non son' (No, we're not in a play), Canio reproaches his unfaithful wife, pouring out all his grief in the most eloquent passage Leoncavallo ever penned, beginning 'Sperai, tanto il delirio accecato m'aveva' (I hoped, so blind was I, so deluded with passion) and rising at the climax to a top B. If it pierces the heart, as it should, it raises the last pages of the opera from melodrama to true tragedy.

Tonio is also an interesting creation. Again there is a dichotomy, this time between the fool, Taddeo, who makes love to Nedda as Colombina in the play, and the deformed, pathetic figure who has his love cruelly beaten down by her in real life. Nedda is an unthinking woman swayed by her basic desires, little else. Beppe is the lighthearted,

peace-making member of the troupe. Silvio is something of an operatic cipher though Leoncavallo grants the handsome lover some of his most grateful music to sing. All play their part in a piece whose dramatic conviction never fails to move an audience.

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Synopsis

The action takes place in a Calabrian village on the eve of the Feast of the Assumption. The opera opens with a prologue when Tonio steps in front of the curtain and addresses the audience, reminding them that the actors are real people and that the story should not be dismissed as fiction.

Act I

The villagers are celebrating the Feast of the Assumption, and when they see that the players have arrived in the village rush to greet them. Canio, the leader of the troupe, comes forward and tells the assembled villagers that the performance will take place that evening. Tonio tries to help Canio's wife, Nedda, out of the cart she has been riding in, but Canio pushes him out of the way and boxes his ears. A few of the villagers comment that maybe Tonio and Nedda should not be left alone together. Canio is angry and says that while in

a play such a thing may be classed as comedy, in real life the outcome would be very different. When he has calmed down he and Beppe go into the village, and the villagers go to vespers.

Left alone, Nedda becomes worried about Canio's outburst, but she soon relaxes in the evening sunshine. Tonio appears and after she has finished her song he approaches her and declares his love. But Nedda laughs at him, and he gets more and more angry. She is eventually forced to protect herself by striking him in the face with a whip. He leaves, but swears revenge.

Just after he has gone, Nedda's lover, Silvio, appears. He urges her to run away with him after that night's performance. At first she does not agree, but when Silvio questions her love she relents. Tonio overhears part of their conversation and he goes to fetch Canio, who arrives just in time to hear her calling out to Silvio who has disappeared over the wall. Nedda refuses to tell Canio her lover's name. Canio, racked with jealousy, dresses for his part in the comedy. He is sure that her lover will be at the play that evening.

Act II

The audience (including Silvio) is assembled and Nedda collects their money. The play begins. *Columbina* (Nedda) is waiting for her

lover *Harlequin* (Beppe), as her husband *Pagliaccio* (Canio) has gone away for the night. Outside *Harlequin* serenades her. *Taddeo* (Tonio) enters and declares his secret love for her, but she scorns him and he leaves when *Harlequin* enters. *Harlequin* and *Columbina* sit down to eat and but *Pagliaccio* returns unexpectedly and *Harlequin* escapes through the window. Her farewell words to *Harlequin* remind Canio of Nedda's farewell to her secret lover earlier that evening. Canio finds it hard to keep in character and demands of *Columbina*/Nedda her lover's name. Nedda desperately tries to keep in character, but Canio becomes more and more angry. The spectators become nervous, and Nedda tries to escape. But Canio manages to grab her and he stabs her. Silvio rushes to try to save her, but he too is stabbed. As Canio stands shocked, he announces to the audience that the play is over.

Alan Opie was born in Cornwall and studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the London Opera Centre. His career began with English National Opera (then Sadler's Wells) where he has appointed principal baritone while still a student. Among the roles he has performed there include the title roles in *The Barber of Seville*, and Busoni's

Dr Faust, Germont (*La traviata*), Eisenstein and Falke (*Die Fledermaus*), Sharpless (*Madam Butterfly*), Papageno (*The Magic Flute*), Sancho Panza (*Don Quixote*) and Taddeo (*The Italian Girl in Algiers*).

He has combined his work at English National Opera with performances for the other major UK opera companies (such as *Luisa Miller* for Opera North), while his international career has taken him to Bayreuth (Beckmesser), and the opera houses of Chicago, Santa Fé, Paris, Amsterdam, Vienna, Brussels and Berlin. His many recordings include the *Grammy* Award-winning *Peter Grimes* (for Chandos), *Gloriana*, *The Rape of Lucretia*, the title role in Dallapiccola's *Ulisse*, and *The Barber of Seville* and *Pagliacci* (for Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation).

Born in Wales of Irish and Welsh parents, **Dennis O'Neill** is one of the world's leading tenors and a specialist in the works of Verdi. He has enjoyed a long association with the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, where his roles have included Rodolfo (*La bohème*), the Duke (*Rigoletto*), Pinkerton, Edgar (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Macduff (*Macbeth*), Gustave (*Un ballo in maschera*), Foresto (*Attila*), Otello, Don Carlos, Radames (*Aida*) and Jacopo (*I due Foscari*). He has appeared in the United States

with the Metropolitan Opera and Chicago Lyric Opera, and has given many concert performances there.

A frequent guest at the Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich, his debut in *Un ballo in maschera* was followed by a new production of *Il trovatore* with Giuseppe Sinopoli, and appearances in *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Tosca*, *Simon Boccanegra* and *Aida*. Dennis O'Neill is also a busy concert artist and has sung throughout Europe with conductors including Riccardo Muti, Sir Colin Davis and Simon Rattle. Recordings include *Tosca* and *Cavalleria rusticana* (both for Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation), *Der Rosenkavalier* under Georg Solti, *Die Fledermaus*, *Macbeth*, and *La fanciulla del West*.

Peter Bronder was born in Hertfordshire of German/Austrian parentage and studied at the Royal Academy of Music and the National Opera Studio. After a season with Glyndebourne he was principal tenor for Welsh National Opera from 1986–90, where his repertoire included main roles in *La bohème*, *La traviata*, *I puritani*, *La sonnambula*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Così fan tutte*, *The Magic Flute* and *Eugene Onegin*. He has also appeared with English National Opera (Italian Tenor in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Almaviva in

The Barber of Seville), Opera North (Prunier in *La rondine*, the Captain in *Wozzeck*), Scottish Opera (Leicester in *Mary Stuart*), and The Royal Opera (Cassio in *Otello*, First Jew in *Salome*, Apparition of Youth in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*).

Recordings include Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Janáček's *Fate*, *Il turco in Italia*, *La traviata*, *Un ballo in maschera* and *The Rake's Progress*.

Rosa Mannion was born in Liverpool and studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, and currently studies with Gerald Martin Moore. She made her Covent Garden debut as Pamina in 1993, and has sung with all the major British companies in roles such as Constanze (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), Cordelia (Albert Reimann's *Lear*), Sophie (*Werther*), Sophie (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Atalanta (*Xerxes*), Countess (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Magnolia (*Showboat*), Violetta (*La traviata*), the four soprano roles in *The Tales of Hoffmann* and the title role in *Manon*.

Rosa Mannion also has a busy concert career and has appeared with the Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra, London Mozart Players, City of London Sinfonia, and the Nash Ensemble, working with conductors such as John Eliot Gardiner,

Richard Hickox, Neville Marriner, Charles Mackerras, William Christie and Neeme Järvi. Her recordings include *Così fan tutte* with John Eliot Gardiner, *Die Zauberflöte* and *Orlando* with William Christie, Vaughan Williams's *Serenade to Music* and Third Symphony, and Beethoven's *Missa solennis*.

William Dazeley is a graduate of Jesus College, Cambridge, and he studied singing at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Prizes include the Decca–Kathleen Ferrier Prize, the Richard Tauber Prize and the Walther Gruner International Lieder Prize. His extensive operatic repertoire includes the title roles in *Don Giovanni*, *Owen Wingrave*, *Billy Budd* and *Eugene Onegin*, Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*), Pelléas, Mowgli (Berkeley's *Baa Baa Black Sheep*), Danilo (*The Merry Widow*) and the Count and Rudolph (*Der ferne Klang*). He has appeared with The Royal Opera, Opera North, Glyndebourne Touring Opera, Teatro Regio Turin, Opera de Lyon and New Israeli Opera. Recordings include *Baa Baa Black Sheep*, Britten's *The Rescue of Penelope* and Busoni's *Faust*.

Geoffrey Mitchell's singing career encompassed a remarkably wide repertoire from early to contemporary music. This resulted in

conducting invitations from the BBC and subsequently to a wider involvement with his own singers and this led to the establishment of the **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir**. Early recordings resulted in the choir's long-term involvement with Opera Rara for whom they have recorded 15 operas, and it is currently enjoying a growing reputation with further work from the BBC and international recording companies.

The **Peter Kay Children's Choir** provides young singers with opportunities in opera, concerts, commercials (TV and Radio), charity events, festivals and theatre productions in UK, France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Spain and the USA. Its membership is by invitation and audition, drawing participants from those already experienced in singing performance, at English National Opera where Peter Kay is Children's Adviser, Finchley Children's Music Group, New London Children's Choir, The Jennifer Lilleystone Singers and schools all over London and the south of England.

The **London Philharmonic Orchestra** was formed in 1932 by Sir Thomas Beecham. Over the years it has attracted an unmatched series of Principal Conductors, including Sir Adrian

Boult, Sir John Pritchard, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti and Klaus Tennstedt. Its current regular conductors include Music Director Franz Welser-Möst, and President Bernard Haitink.

Since 1964, it has been resident symphony orchestra at Glyndebourne Festival Opera and, in 1992, the orchestra became resident symphony orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall. It also tours extensively, being the first British orchestra to visit the USSR and China, and its recordings have won many major awards.

David Parry studied with Sergiu Celibidache and began his career as Sir John Pritchard's assistant. He made his debut with English Music Theatre and went on to become a staff conductor at Städtische Bühnen Dortmund and at Opera North. He was Music Director of Opera 80 from 1983 to 1987, and since 1992 has been the founding Music Director of the contemporary opera festival Almeida Opera.

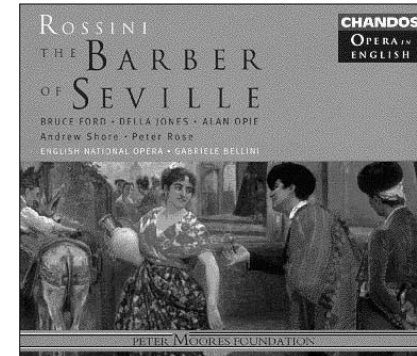
He pursues a busy career both in opera and in concert. His repertoire extends from Mozart and early nineteenth-century Italian opera to Janáček, Britten and contemporary music. In England he has appeared regularly at English National Opera and in concert with the Philharmonia. In 1996 he made his debut at the Glyndebourne Festival with *Così fan tutte*.

He is a frequent visitor to Spain where he has appeared with most of the opera companies and symphony orchestras. He gave the Spanish premiere of *Peter Grimes* in Madrid, and in 1996 he conducted the first Spanish production of *The Rake's Progress*, inaugurated two new concert halls with Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and a new opera house with *Carmen*. He has also appeared in Italy, where he conducted *Ricciardo e Zoraide* in the Rossini Opera Festival at Pesaro, in France, Germany, Belgium, Holland, and in Sweden where he conducted an acclaimed production of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Outside Europe David Parry has appeared at the Hong Kong International Festival, with the UNAM Symphony Orchestra at Mexico City, with a tour of *Carmen* in Japan and, in 1996, conducting a new production of *Katya Kabanova* for the New Zealand Festival.

He has recorded extensively for the Opera Rara label, the most recent issue being Donizetti's *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra*, which won the Prix Cecilia in Belgium and for Chandos he conducted the award-winning recording of *Tosca*, recording of operatic arias with Bruce Ford, *Cavalleria rusticana* and *La bohème*.

Opera in English on Chandos



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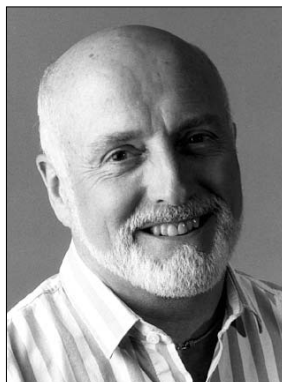
PETER MOORES, CBE, DL

Peter Moores was born in Lancashire in 1932, son of Sir John Moores, founder of the giant Littlewoods mail order, chain store and football pools group. He was educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford, where he read Modern Languages. He was already fluent in German and Italian. It was opera which was his great love, however. He had worked at Glyndebourne before going up to university, and at the end of his second year he left Oxford to become a production student at the Vienna State Opera. He was required to attend morning rehearsals and evening performances, but the afternoons were free, so he enrolled as well for a four-year course at the Viennese Academy of Music and Dramatic Art.

By the end of his third year Moores had produced the Viennese premiere of Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, had worked as Assistant Producer at the San Carlo Opera House, Naples, the Geneva Festival and the Rome Opera, and seemed set for a successful operatic career. At this point he received a letter from his father asking him to come home as he was needed in the firm. Family loyalty was paramount and he returned to Liverpool immediately.

By 1977 he was Chairman of Littlewoods. Three years later he stepped down from the post, although still remaining on the Board, and was director of a merchant bank. From 1981 to 1983 he was a Governor of the BBC, and a Trustee of the Tate Gallery from 1978 until 1985. In May 1992 he became a Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire. And in the New Year's Honours List for 1991 he was made a CBE for his charitable services to the Arts.

He had started his early twenties giving financial support



Christina Burton/PMF

Peter Moores, CBE, DL

to various young artists, several of whom – such as Geraint Evans, Joan Sutherland and Colin Davis – have since become world-famous. Moores has always been astute in his recognition of potential quality. In 1964 he set aside a large slice of his inheritance to found the Peter Moores Foundation, a charity designed to support those causes dear to his heart: to make music and the arts more accessible to more people; to give encouragement to the young; to fight discrimination and to improve race relations. 99% of the Foundation's money has come from Peter Moores's own pocket – so far about £33 million in today's money.

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

In the field of music, the Peter Moores Foundation awards scholarships to promising young opera singers through the Royal Northern College of Music. Financial help may be given also to enable a singer to study abroad, or to work on a new role with an acknowledged expert in the repertoire.

In the last twenty years the Foundation has supported the recording of thirty-nine operas. Many are sung in English, in translation, because Moores believes that in the popular repertoire, 'what people want is to be able to follow the plot of an opera and understand what is going on'. Others are of interesting but unperformed Italian operas from the early nineteenth century (the age of *bel canto*), which are otherwise only accessible to scholars. Accessibility is the key word.

The same criterion holds where live opera is concerned. So the Foundation may sponsor Welsh National Opera, performing for a week at the Liverpool Empire and charging only £2.50 per ticket – the provision being that each ticket holder must be a first-time opera visitor – or it may fund the production at Glyndebourne of *Ermione*, a *bel canto* opera never before performed in England.

The aim is always the same: availability. 'Share and enjoy' is his philosophy.

Ruggero Leoncavallo: Pagliacci

Der Erfolg eines anderen Komponisten und ein Rechtsfall waren – im wahrsten Sinne des Wortes – für die Entstehung von Leoncavallos *Pagliacci* verantwortlich. Hätte es nicht schon Mascagnis Oper *Cavalleria rusticana* gegeben (bereits erschienen als CHAN 3004 in der Reihe Chandos' Opera in English), die 1890 zuerst aufgeführt wurde, so wäre zu bezweifeln, ob der Verleger Sonzogno Leoncavallos Werk angenommen oder ob der Komponist es ihm überhaupt angeboten hätte.

Die Geschichte des Rechtsfalls reicht in die Kindheit des Komponisten zurück. Sein Vater war Richter, und Leoncavallo erinnerte sich lebhaft an den Prozeß gegen einen Schauspieler, der am Ende einer Aufführung in einem Eifersuchtsanfall seine Frau ermordete. Der Gefangene, offensichtlich eine Figur von tragischer Größe, stellte sich der Anklage – verzweifelt, doch ohne Reue. Noch Jahre später erinnerte sich Leoncavallo daran, wie die rauhe Stimme des Mannes durch den Gerichtssaal tönte. Diese großartige Gestalt, ein Vorbild für Canio, kam ihm nach der Produktion von *Cavalleria rusticana* als Thema für ein kurzes, straffes Drama in den Sinn. Innerhalb von fünf

Monaten schrieb er sein eigenes Libretto und komponierte die Musik dazu. Auf einen späteren Plagiatsvorwurf antwortete er, er habe nur eine wahre Geschichte erzählt, und der erzürnte Autor ließ seine Anklage fallen.

Leoncavallos *Verismo*-Technik überrascht bei einem Mann mit seinem biographischen und musikalischen Hintergrund kaum. Sein Vater war, wie bereits erwähnt, Richter, seine Mutter eine seinerzeit berühmte Malerin in Neapel, wo Leoncavallo am 8. März 1857 geboren wurde. Nachdem er bei verschiedenen Lehrern Klavierunterricht genommen hatte, studierte er am Konservatorium seiner Heimatstadt. Während seiner Studienzeit hörte er in Bologna den *Tannhäuser* – ein Ereignis, das ihn zutiefst bewegte. Als es wenig später in der Stadt zu einer Begegnung mit Wagner kam, beeindruckte ihn dies noch mehr. Anscheinend sagte Wagner zu ihm: "Voyez, je lutte encore" (Sehen Sie, ich kämpfe immer noch). In den folgenden Jahren, in denen Leoncavallo selbst um Anerkennung rang, sollte ihn die Erinnerung an diese Worte trösten. Kurze Zeit nach Abschluß seines Studiums – er hatte mittlerweile sein 18. Lebensjahr erreicht –

schrieb Leoncavallo seine erste Oper, *Chatterton*, doch alle Versuche, sie zur Aufführung zu bringen, waren vergeblich.

Leoncavallo verdiente nun zunächst seinen Lebensunterhalt durch Klavierspielen und begann mit der Komposition einer von Wagner inspirierten Trilogie mit dem Titel *Crepusculum*, die in der italienischen Renaissance spielt. Auf einer Reise durch den Nahen Osten (1882) wurde ihm in Kairo eine Stellung als Leiter der Militärkapellen angeboten, die er vielleicht auch angenommen hätte, wäre er nicht durch die Aktivitäten der britischen Armee gezwungen worden, als Araber verkleidet nach Ismailia zu fliehen!

Als nächstes vollendete er *I Medici* als Teil der Trilogie, doch obwohl Ricordi für das Werk einen Vertrag unterzeichnet hatte, hielt er es nicht für zur Veröffentlichung geeignet, da er von Leoncavallo eher als Librettist denn als Komponist überzeugt war. Nachdem Leoncavallo sich drei Jahre vergeblich um eine Aufführung bemüht hatte, schrieb er *Pagliacci* und bot diese Oper Ricordis großem Rivalen Sonzogno an. Das Werk wurde zuerst am 21. Mai 1892 im Teatro dal Verme unter Toscanini aufgeführt und war fast unmittelbar ein Erfolg. Dieser Erfolg war so durchschlagend, daß im darauffolgenden Jahr endlich auch *I Medici* zur Aufführung kam – ebenfalls im Teatro de

Verme. Da *I Medici* aber durchfiel, sah Leoncavallo davon ab, die anderen beiden Teile der Trilogie, *Savonarola* und *Cesare Borgia*, noch zu komponieren; doch 1896 wurde endlich *Chatterton* produziert, und 1897 seine Fassung von *La bohème*, die jedoch von Puccinis wesentlich inspirierterer Vertonung von Murgers Roman völlig in den Schatten gestellt wurde. Als nächstes kam *Zazà* (1900), und damit wären alle Werke des Komponisten genannt, die neben *Pagliacci* heute noch in Italien zu sehen sind.

Bis zu seinem Tod im Jahr 1919 komponierte Leoncavallo weiterhin für die Oper. Zu seinen späteren Werken gehören Kuriositäten wie *Der Roland von Berlin* (1904), als dringendes Auftragswerk für Kaiser Wilhelm II. entstanden, und *Are You There?*, eine 1913 für London geschriebene Operette. Leoncavallo war bereits 1911 in London gewesen, um dort *Pagliacci* und *Zazà* im Hippodrome zu dirigieren, und kehrte im folgenden Jahr in die Stadt zurück, um ein neues, speziell für dieses Theater komponiertes Stück, *Zingari* (Die Zigeuner), aufzuführen. Er bemühte sich jedoch vergeblich, den überragenden Erfolg von *Pagliacci* zu wiederholen, und sein Ruhm wird weiterhin von der Rezeption dieses seines bekanntesten Werks abhängen.

Worin liegen die Faszination und Bedeutung von *Pagliacci*? Hierzu zunächst einige zeitgenössische Äußerungen. Hermann Klein, ein führender Kritiker der Zeit, schrieb in seinen Memoiren von der ersten Londoner Aufführung im Mai 1893 (bei der der Komponist anwesend war): „Der Ruhm von Leoncavallos sensationeller Oper war dem Werk vorausgeeilt, und die Öffentlichkeit erwartete etwas ganz Besonderes. Sie wurde nicht enttäuscht. Ich habe selten ein Publikum so atemlos von der Entwicklung eines Opernplots erregt gesehen.“ Klein fährt fort mit einer Beschreibung und lobenden Würdigung der Sänger, Fernando de Lucia als Canio, die Melba als Nedda und Mario Ancona als Tonio; er fügt hinzu: „Leoncavallo, zurückhaltend und bescheiden, wartete bis zum Schluß ruhig im Hintergrund und mußte dann von den Künstlern auf die Bühne gezwungen werden, um die ihn erwartenden Ovationen entgegenzunehmen... Ich lernte ihn als einen Mann von großer Kultiviertheit und starkem Intellekt kennen. Er ist Dichter ebenso wie er Musiker ist, und in beiden Künsten zeigt er den Zugriff eines originären Denkers.“

Den *Verismo* des Werks preisend bemerkte der *Daily Telegraph*: „Wir scheinen vorerst auf legendäre Helden und nebulöse Mythen

verzichten zu wollen“ – natürlich ein Seitenhieb gegen Wagner. „Solche Persönlichkeiten sind zu entrückt, sie sind nicht Fleisch von unserem Fleisch, nicht Blut von unserem Blut. Heutzutage verlangt man nach dramatischen Geschichten aus dem wirklichem Leben, nach Charakteren, die uns gleich sind und nicht überhöhte Versionen unserer selbst.“ In jüngerer Zeit schrieb der Kritiker Spike Hughes pointierter, Leoncavallo erfülle „ein schon lange bestehendes Bedürfnis“. Hier sei nicht länger der konventionelle romantische Held, noch Gestalten aus nordischen Sagen, sondern wirkliche Menschen, erdverhaftet, leidenschaftlich, voller Leben.

Natürlich ist die Geschichte vom Clown, dessen Herz zerbricht und der doch seine komische Rolle weiterspielen muß, nicht neu; noch ist es der Kunstgriff eines Spiels im Spiel. Leoncavallos Talent war es, diese Dinge in Musik zu kleiden, die anrührte, unmittelbar attraktiv und eingängig war, melodios ohne abgegriffen zu sein. Er war ein versierter Librettist und vermochte es, seine Szenerie durch Beachtung der Aristotelischen Einheit von Zeit und Raum zugleich glaubwürdig zu gestalten und zügig zu entwickeln. Seine Charakterisierungen mögen nicht sehr tiefgehend sein, doch sie sind überzeugend

genug, uns glauben zu machen, daß es sich um wirkliche Personen handelt.

Für seine Vertonung verwendete Leoncavallo gerade nur so viel von Wagners Methoden wie er benötigte. Es findet sich ein rudimentärer Gebrauch der Leitmotivtechnik, und weder Harmonik noch Orchestrierung wären ohne Wagners Vorbild denkbar. Insgesamt jedoch ist das Werk dezidiert italienischer Prägung: Die Chorpassagen zum Beispiel siedeln die Handlung unverkennbar im südlichen Italien an, und die Musik zeigt eine transalpine Lyrik, ganz gleich ob der Komponist unprätentiös und sinnlich melodios ist wie in Beppe (Arlecchinos) Serenade oder Neddas Ballatella, oder überaus leidenschaftlich wie in dem „Ridi, Pagliaccio“ (Make it amusing)-Thema von „Vesti la giubba“ (Put on your costume). Diese und andere Versatzstücke, wie etwa das erotische Duett für Nedda und Silvio, sind nach der Art von Verdis späten Meisterwerken vollkommen in eine einheitliche Struktur integriert.

Ein brillanter *coup de théâtre* gelingt Leoncavallo mit dem Prolog, in dem Tonio seinen Kopf durch den Vorhang steckt, um sodann herauszukommen und dem Publikum zu erklären, daß selbst die Schauspieler Männer und Frauen wie sie selbst sind, leidenschaftlich, voller Freude, voller Leid. Das

Spiel im Spiel erinnert in seiner Relevanz für die Haupthandlung an den gleichen Kunstgriff in *Hamlet* und bietet dem Komponisten eine weitere wirkungsvolle Gelegenheit, wundervolle *commedia dell'arte*-Musik zu schreiben.

In der Aufführung steht und fällt *Pagliacci* mit der Rolle des Canio und ihrer Interpretation. In drei bewegenden Passagen enthüllt Leoncavallo einen ehrlichen Mann, der von Eifersucht und Reue zerstört wird – ein würdiger Nachfolger von Verdis Otello, der auch nach einem Helden Tenor gleichen Kalibers verlangt. In „Un tal gioco, credetimi“ (If he tried it, I promise you) verrät der bedrohende Ton, den Nedda nicht als Warnung erkennt, einen kraftvollen Mann, mit dem nicht zu spaßen ist. Nachdem sich in „Vesti la giubba“ (Put on your costume) Neddas Untreue bestätigt hat, wird die Qual einer großen Seele enthüllt, als der Clown seine Gefühle ausschüttet und dabei seine Herzenspein mit noblem Ausdruck vermischt. In „No, Pagliaccio non son“ (No, we're not in a play) schließlich macht Canio seiner treulosen Frau Vorwürfe und schüttet seinen ganzen Kummer aus in der beredtesten Passage, die Leoncavallo je schrieb; sie beginnt mit den Worten „Sperai, tanto il delirio accecato m'aveva“ (I hoped, so blind was I, so deluded

with passion) und erreicht ihren Höhepunkt auf dem hohen B. Wenn diese Stelle so ins Herz sticht wie es der Komponist beabsichtigt hat, so erheben sie die letzten Seiten der Oper vom Melodram auf die Höhe echter Tragödie.

Auch Tonio ist eine interessante Gestalt. Wiederum gibt es eine Zweiteilung, diesmal zwischen dem Narren, der im Spiel Nedda in der Gestalt der Colombina den Hof macht, und der deformierten jämmerlichen Figur, die er im wirklichen Leben abgibt und dessen Liebe grausam zurückgewiesen wird. Nedda ist eine gedankenlose Frau, von kaum etwas anderem getrieben als ihren niederen Instinkten. Beppe ist das heitere, friedliebende Mitglied der Truppe. Silvio erfüllt in dieser Oper die Rolle eines bloßen Versatzstücks, obwohl Leoncavallo den schönen Liebhaber einige seiner dankbarsten Partien singen läßt. All diese Charaktere haben ihre Rolle in einem Stück, dessen dramatische Überzeugung noch jedes Publikum bewegt hat.

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Synopse

Die Handlung spielt in einem kalabrischen Dorf am Vorabend des Fests Mariae Himmelfahrt. Die Oper beginnt mit einem Prolog, in dem Tonio vor den Vorhang tritt und

zum Publikum spricht; er erinnert die Zuhörer daran, daß es sich bei den Schauspielern um wirkliche Menschen handelt und daß die Geschichte nicht als fiktiv abgetan werden sollte.

I. Akt

Die Dorfbewohner feiern das Fest Mariae Himmelfahrt; als sie sehen, daß die Schauspieler im Dorf angekommen sind, eilen sie ihnen zur Begrüßung entgegen. Canio, der Leiter der Truppe, tritt hervor und teilt den Dorfleuten mit, daß die Aufführung am Abend stattfinden wird. Tonio versucht, Canios Frau Nedda beim Aussteigen aus ihrem Karren behilflich zu sein, doch Canio stößt ihn zur Seite und verpaßt im eine Ohrfeige. Einige der Dorfleute bemerken, daß man Tonio und Nedda vielleicht besser nicht alleine zusammenlassen sollte. Canio ist wütend und sagt, daß so etwas in einem Schauspiel als Komödie gelten möge, im wirklichen Leben jedoch hätte es andere Konsequenzen. Nachdem er sich wieder beruhigt hat, geht er mit Beppe ins Dorf, während die Dorfbewohner den Vespertagesdienst besuchen.

Nedda bleibt alleine zurück; sie macht sich Sorgen über Canios Ausbruch, doch bald entspannt sie sich in der Abendsonne. Tonio erscheint, und nachdem Nedda ihr Lied

beendet hat, spricht er sie an und erklärt ihr seine Liebe. Doch Nedda lacht ihn aus, und er wird immer wütender. Sie sieht sich schließlich gezwungen, ihn mit einer Peitsche ins Gesicht zu schlagen, um sich selbst zu schützen. Er läßt sie allein, schwört jedoch, sich zu rächen.

Unmittelbar nach seinem Abgang erscheint Neddas Liebhaber Silvio. Er drängt sie, nach der Vorstellung am Abend mit ihm davonzulaufen. Sie sträubt sich zunächst, gibt jedoch nach, als Silvio ihre Liebe in Frage stellt. Tonio belauscht einen Teil ihrer Unterhaltung und holt sogleich Canio, der gerade rechtzeitig hinzukommt, um zu hören, wie Nedda dem hinter einer Mauer verschwundenen Silvio etwas zuruft. Nedda weigert sich, Canio den Namen ihres Liebhabers zu verraten. Canio packt die Eifersucht, doch er muß sich für seine Rolle in der Komödie kostümieren. Er ist sich sicher, daß Neddas Liebhaber dem Schauspiel am Abend beiwohnen wird.

II. Akt

Das Publikum (darunter auch Silvio) ist versammelt, und Nedda kassiert das Eintrittsgeld. *Columbina* (Nedda) erwartet ihren Liebhaber *Harlequin* (Beppe), da ihr Ehemann *Pagliaccio* (Canio) über Nacht fortgegangen ist. Von draußen bietet ihr

Harlequin eine Serenade dar. *Taddeo* (Tonio) tritt ein und eröffnet ihr seine heimliche Liebe, doch sie weist ihn zurück; er geht, als *Harlequin* erscheint. *Harlequin* und *Columbina* setzen sich zu einer Mahlzeit nieder, doch unerwartet kehrt *Pagliaccio* zurück und *Harlequin* muß durch das Fenster fliehen. *Columbinas* Abschiedsworte an *Harlequin* erinnern Canio an Neddas Abschied von ihrem heimlichen Liebhaber früher am Abend. Canio fällt es schwer, in seiner Rolle zu bleiben, und er verlangt von *Columbina*/Nedda, den Namen ihres Liebhabers preiszugeben. Nedda versucht verzweifelt, ihre Rolle weiterzuspielen, doch Canio wird immer wütender. Die Zuschauer werden unruhig, und Nedda versucht zu entfliehen. Doch es gelingt Canio, sie zu ergreifen, und er ersticht sie. Silvio eilt herbei und versucht sie zu retten, doch auch er wird erstochen. Schockiert von seiner Tat verkündet Canio dem Publikum, daß das Schauspiel vorbei ist.

Übersetzung: Stephanie Wollny

Alan Opie wurde in der englischen Grafschaft Cornwall geboren und an der Guildhall School of Music and Drama sowie am London Opera Centre ausgebildet. Seine Karriere begann bei der English National Opera (damals noch:

Sadler's Wells), wo er noch vor Abschluß seines Studiums als Baritonsolist beschäftigt wurde. Zu den Partien, die er gesungen hat, zählen die Titelrollen im *Barbier von Sevilla* und im *Doktor Faust* von Busoni, Germont (*La traviata*), Eisenstein und Falke (*Die Fledermaus*), Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*), Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*), Sancho Panza (*Don Quixote*) und Taddeo (*Die Italienerin in Algier*).

Er hat seine Arbeit an der English National Opera mit Auftritten für die den anderen führenden Operntruppen Großbritanniens verbunden (z.B. in *Luisa Miller* für die Opera North), und seine internationale Karriere hat ihn sowohl nach Bayreuth geführt (als Beckmesser) als auch an die Opernhäuser von Chicago, Santa Fé, Paris, Amsterdam, Wien, Brüssel und Berlin. Unter seinen vielen Aufnahmen auf Tonträger befindet sich der mit einem "Grammy" ausgezeichnete *Peter Grimes* (für Chandos), *Gloriana*, *The Rape of Lucretia*, die Titelrolle von Dallapiccolas *Ulisse* sowie *Der Barbier von Sevilla* und *Pagliacci* (für Chandos und die Peter Moores Foundation).

Dennis O'Neill, geboren in Wales als Sohn irischer und walisischer Eltern, ist einer der führenden Tenöre der Welt und obendrein Verdi-Spezialist. Er blickt auf eine lange

Zusammenarbeit mit dem Royal Opera House Covent Garden zurück, wo er unter anderem Rodolfo (*La bohème*) gesungen hat, den Herzog (*Rigoletto*), Pinkerton, Edgar (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Macduff (*Macbeth*), Gustave (*Un ballo in maschera*), Foresto (*Attila*), Otello, Don Carlos, Radames (*Aida*) und Jacopo (*I due Foscari*). Darüber hinaus hat er in den USA an der Metropolitan Opera und an der Chicago Lyric Opera gastiert und zahlreiche Konzertdarbietungen gegeben.

Sein Debüt an der Bayerischen Staatsoper in München, wo er häufig zu Gast ist, erfolgte in *Un ballo in maschera*, gefolgt von einer Neuinszenierung von *Il trovatore* mit Giuseppe Sinopoli und Auftritte im *Rosenkavalier*, in *Tosca*, *Simon Boccanegra* und *Aida*. Dennis O'Neill ist außerdem ein vielbeschäftigter Konzertsänger und ist in ganz Europa mit Dirigenten wie Riccardo Muti, Sir Colin Davis und Simon Rattle aufgetreten. Zu seinen Aufnahmen auf Tonträger zählen *Tosca* und *Cavalleria rusticana* (beide für Chandos und die Peter Moores Foundation), *Der Rosenkavalier* unter der Leitung von Georg Solti, *Die Fledermaus*, *Macbeth* und *La fanciulla del West*.

Peter Bronder wurde in Hertfordshire als Kind deutscher und österreichischer Eltern geboren.

Er studierte an der Royal Academy of Music und am National Opera Studio. Nach einer Spielzeit in Glyndebourne war er von 1986–1990 erster Tenor der Welsh National Opera; sein dortiges Repertoire umfaßte Hauptrollen in *La bohème*, *La traviata*, *I puritani*, *La sonnambula*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Der Barbier von Sevilla*, *Così fan tutte*, *Die Zauberflöte* und *Eugen Onegin*. Er trat außerdem in der English National Opera auf (Italienischer Tenor in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Almaviva in *Der Barbier von Sevilla*), ferner in der Opera North (Prunier in *La rondine*, Hauptmann in *Wozzeck*), der Scottish Opera (Leicester in *Maria Stuarda*) und der Royal Opera (Cassio in *Otello*, Erster Jude in *Salome*, Erscheinung der Jugend in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*).

Seine Diskographie umfaßt Beethovens Neunte Sinfonie, Janáčeks *Osud* (Das Schicksal), *Il turco in Italia*, *La traviata*, *Un ballo in maschera* und *The Rake's Progress*.

Rosa Mannion wurde in Liverpool geboren und studierte an der Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama; zur Zeit ist sie Schülerin von Gerald Martin Moore. 1993 gab sie ihr Covent Garden Debüt als Pamina; seither ist sie in allen führenden britischen Opernhäusern aufgetreten. Ihr Repertoire umfaßt die

Constanze in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, die Cordelia in Albert Reimanns *Lear*, die Sophie in *Werther*, die Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*, die Atalanta in *Xerxes*, die Gräfin in *Die Hochzeit des Figaro*, die Magnolia in *Showboat*, die Violetta in *La traviata*, die vier Sopranrollen in *Hoffmanns Erzählungen* sowie die Titelrolle in *Manon*.

Rosa Mannion verfolgt daneben eine intensive Konzertkarriere; sie trat mit dem Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra, dem English Chamber Orchestra, den London Mozart Players, der City of London Sinfonia und dem Nash Ensemble auf und sang unter Dirigenten wie John Eliot Gardiner, Richard Hickox, Neville Marriner, Charles Mackerras, William Christie und Neeme Järvi. Ihre Diskographie umfaßt *Così fan tutte* unter John Eliot Gardiner, *Die Zauberflöte* und *Orlando* unter William Christie, ferner Vaughan Williams *Serenade to Music* und dessen Dritte Sinfonie sowie Beethovens *Missa solennis*.

William Dazeley ist Absolvent des Jesus College in Cambridge und hat an der Guildhall School of Music and Drama Gesang studiert. Unter seinen Auszeichnungen sind der Decca–Kathleen-Ferrier-Preis zu nennen, der Richard-Tauber-Preis und der internationale Liedpreis Walther Gruner.

Sein umfangreiches Opernrepertoire schließt die Titelrollen von *Don Giovanni*, *Owen Wingrave*, *Billy Budd* und *Eugen Onegin* ein, Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*), Pelléas, Mowgli (Berkeleys *Baa Baa Black Sheep*), Danilo (*Die lustige Witwe*) sowie den Grafen und Rudolph (*Der ferne Klang*). Er ist an der Royal Opera, der Opera North und der Glyndebourne Touring Opera aufgetreten, am Teatro Regio in Turin, an der Opéra de Lyon und der New Israeli Opera. Er hat unter anderem *Baa Baa Black Sheep*, Britten's *The Rescue of Penelope* und Busonis *Faust* auf Tonträger aufgezeichnet.

Geoffrey Mitchell hat im Lauf seiner Gesangskarriere ein erstaunlich umfangreiches Repertoire erschlossen, von alter bis hin zu zeitgenössischer Musik. Daraus ergaben sich erst Dirigieraufträge von der BBC, dann eine ausgedehntere Zusammenarbeit mit seinen Sängern, die wiederum zur Gründung des **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir** führte. Frühe Schallplattenaufnahmen hatten zur Folge, daß der Chor langfristige Beziehungen zu Opera Rara einging, für die er 15 Opern aufgezeichnet hat. Derzeit genießt er dank weiterer Verpflichtungen für die BBC und internationale Schallplattenfirmen wachsendes Ansehen.

Der Kinderchor **Peter Kay Children's Choir** bietet jungen Sängern Gelegenheit, in Opern und Konzerten aufzutreten, in Werbespots (TV und Radio), bei Wohltätigkeitsveranstaltungen, auf Festivals und in Bühnenproduktion in Großbritannien, Frankreich, Belgien, den Niederlanden, Deutschland, Spanien und den USA. Neue Mitglieder werden auf Einladung und durch Vorsingen gewonnen, deren Teilnehmer bereits Erfahrungen mit Gesangsauftritten gemacht haben, und zwar an der English National Opera, wo Peter Kay als Children's Adviser – Kinderberater – tätig ist, in der Finchley Children's Music Group, im New London Children's Choir, bei den Jennifer Liljestone Singers und an Schulen überall in London und im Süden Englands.

Seit seiner Gründung im Jahr 1932 durch Sir Thomas Beecham hat das **London Philharmonic Orchestra** unter der Leitung unzähliger prominenter Chefdirigenten gestanden, darunter Sir Adrian Boult, Sir John Pritchard, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti und Klaus Tennstedt. Im Augenblick zählen zu seinen regulären Dirigenten der Musikdirektor des Orchesters, Franz Welser-Möst und der Präsident, Bernard Haitink.

Seit 1964 ist das London Philharmonic

Residenzorchester bei der Glyndebourne Festival Opera und seit 1992 an der Royal Festival Hall. Es unternimmt zahlreiche Konzertreisen und besuchte als erstes britisches Orchester die UdSSR und China. Seine Platteneinspielungen sind vielfach preisgekrönt worden.

David Parry studierte bei Sergiu Celibidache und begann seine Laufbahn als Sir John Pritchards musikalischer Assistent. Er debütierte mit dem English Music Theatre und wurde Kapellmeister an den Städtischen Bühnen Dortmund sowie an Opera North in Leeds. Von 1983 bis 1987 fungierte er als Musikdirektor für Opera 80 und seit 1992 ist er der Musikdirektor (und Gründer) des zeitgenössischen Opern-Festivals Almeida Opera.

Parrys Tätigkeitsbereich ist nicht nur das Opernhaus, sondern auch der Konzertsaal. Sein Repertoire erstreckt sich von Mozart und der italienischen Oper des frühen 19. Jahrhunderts bis zu Janáček, Britten und zeitgenössischer Musik. In England dirigiert er regelmäßig an der English National Opera und konzertiert mit dem Philharmonia Orchestra, 1996 machte er mit *Così fan tutte* sein Debüt bei dem Glyndebourne Festival.

David Parry gastiert häufig in Spanien, wo er bereits mit den meisten Opernkompanien und Sinfonieorchestern aufgetreten ist. Die spanische Premiere von *Peter Grimes* fand unter seiner Leitung in Madrid statt; 1996 dirigierte er die erste spanische Inszenierung von *The Rake's Progress* (Strawinsky) und weihte zwei neue Konzertsäle mit der Neunten Sinfonie von Beethoven sowie ein neues Opernhaus mit *Carmen* ein. In Italien leitete er *Ricciardo e Zoraide* bei dem Rossini-Festival in Pesaro. Er tritt in Frankreich, Deutschland, Belgien, den Niederlanden und Schweden auf, wo er eine gefeierte Inszenierung von Britten's *Midsummer Night's Dream* dirigierte.

Außerhalb Europas ist David Parry bei dem Hongkong International Festival und mit dem UNAM Symphony Orchestra in Mexico City aufgetreten, war mit *Carmen* in Japan auf Tournee und leitete eine Neuinszenierung von *Katja Kabanova* für das Festival in Neuseeland.

Parry hat zahlreiche Werke für das Label Opera Rara eingespielt, zuletzt *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* von Donizetti, das in Belgien mit dem Prix Cecilia ausgezeichnet wurde; für Chandos hat er eine preisgekrönte *Tosca*, eine Aufnahme operatischen Arien, *Cavalleria rusticana* und *La bohème* aufgenommen.

Ruggero Leoncavallo: Pagliacci

C'est au succès d'un autre compositeur et à un procès que le *Pagliacci* de Leoncavallo doit d'exister. Sans *Cavalleria rusticana* de Mascagni (disponible chez Chandos dans la série Opera in English – CHAN 3004), qui fut mise en scène en 1890, il est peu probable que l'éditeur Sonzogno eût accepté l'œuvre de Leoncavallo ou même que le compositeur la lui eût présentée.

L'histoire du procès remonte à l'enfance du compositeur. Son père était juge et Leoncavallo se rappelait très nettement – ce qui n'est guère surprenant – du procès d'un acteur qui, saisi de jalousie, avait tué sa femme à la fin d'une représentation. Le prisonnier, apparemment un personnage aux dimensions tragiques, fit face à l'accusation, accablé de douleur et pourtant inflexible. Des années plus tard, Leoncavallo se rappelait encore de la voix rude de l'homme, qui résonnait dans le tribunal. Il lui vint à l'esprit, après la mise en scène de *Cavalleria rusticana*, que cette silhouette impressionnante, le modèle de Canio, pourrait faire le sujet d'un court drame poignant. Il en écrivit le libretto et la mise en musique en cinq mois. Lorsqu'il fut plus tard poursuivi pour plagiat, il lui suffit de

raconter que c'était une histoire véridique pour que l'auteur courroucé abandonne toute poursuite.

La technique vériste de Leoncavallo ne surprend guère de la part d'un homme ayant ses antécédents familiaux et musicaux. Comme nous l'avons vu, son père était juge, sa mère un peintre qui jouissait alors d'une certaine réputation dans la ville de Naples où le compositeur était né le 8 mars 1857. Il fut l'élève de plusieurs professeurs de piano avant d'entrer au conservatoire de Naples. Pendant ses années estudiantines, il entendit *Tannhäuser* à Bologne et en fut très impressionné, mais, peu après, une rencontre avec Wagner dans cette ville l'impressionna encore davantage. Wagner lui aurait apparemment dit: "Voyez, je lutte encore." Le souvenir de ces paroles apporta du réconfort à Leoncavallo durant les années où il dut lui-même lutter pour être reconnu. Peu après avoir achevé ses études, à l'âge de dix-huit ans, il écrivit son premier opéra *Chatterton*, mais, en dépit de ses efforts, ne parvint pas à le faire jouer.

Tandis qu'il gagnait sa vie en jouant du piano, il se mit à composer une trilogie

d'inspiration wagnérienne, intitulée *Crepusculum*, qui avait trait à la Renaissance en Italie. A un moment donné, au cours d'une tournée au Moyen-Orient (1822), il se vit offrir un poste de chef de musique militaire au Caire. Peut-être aurait-il accepté si les activités de l'armée britannique ne l'avaient pas forcé à s'enfuir à Ismaïlia déguisé en Arabe!

Il acheva ensuite *I Medici*, une partie de sa trilogie, mais bien que Ricordi eût signé un contrat pour l'œuvre, ce dernier ne jugea pas utile de la publier, étant plus impressionné par les dons de poète lyrique de Leoncavallo que par ses dons de compositeur. Après avoir passé trois années à tenter de faire jouer l'œuvre, le compositeur écrivit *Pagliacci* qu'il présenta à Ricordi, le grand rival de Sonzogno. L'opéra fut créé au Teatro dal Verme, le 21 mai 1892, sous la direction de Toscanini, et remporta un succès quasi-immédiat. Ce succès fut tel que l'année suivante *I Medici* parvint enfin à être joué – dans le même théâtre. Ce fut un échec, et Leoncavallo ne chercha pas à faire jouer les autres parties de la trilogie, *Savonarola* et *Cesare Borgia*, toutefois *Chatterton* finit par être mis en scène (1896), suivi par une version de *La bohème* (1897), d'ailleurs quasiment éclipsée par la mise en musique plus inspirée que fit Puccini du roman de Murger. *Zazà* vint ensuite (1900), et ce sont là toutes les œuvres

du compositeur continuant à être représentées de nos jours en Italie, en plus de *Pagliacci*.

Il continua d'écrire jusqu'à sa mort en 1919. Ses dernières œuvres incluent des compositions étonnantes comme *Der Roland von Berlin* (1904), écrite sur la commande expresse du Keiser Guillaume II, et *Are You There?*, opérette écrite pour la scène de Londres en 1913. Leoncavallo qui s'était déjà rendu à Londres en 1911 pour diriger *Pagliacci* et *Zazà* à l'Hippodrome, y retourna l'année suivante pour diriger une nouvelle composition, *Zingari* (Les bohémiens), écrite spécialement pour ce théâtre. Ses efforts pour réitérer l'énorme succès de *Pagliacci* se montrèrent vains, et sa réputation continue d'être assise sur la survie de son œuvre la plus célèbre.

En quoi l'œuvre nous fascine-t-elle? Que vaut-elle? Examinons d'abord quelques opinions contemporaines. Hermann Klein, grand critique de l'époque, relata dans ses mémoires la première à Londres de l'opéra qui eut lieu en mai 1893 (en présence du compositeur): "La renommée du sensationnel opéra de Leoncavallo l'avait précédé, et le public s'attendait à voir quelque chose de remarquable. Il ne fut pas déçu. J'ai rarement vu une salle tenue en haleine de la sorte par le développement d'une intrigue d'opéra." Puis il décrit les participants et en fait l'éloge,

Fernando de Lucia en Canio, Melba en Nedda et Mario Ancona en Tonio, ajoutant: “Leoncavallo, modeste et sans prétentions, attendit tranquillement dans l’ombre jusqu’à la fin, puis les artistes durent le faire entrer de force sur la scène pour répondre à l’ovation qui l’attendait... J’ai trouvé que c’était un homme fort cultivé et d’une grande intelligence. Il est à la fois poète et musicien, et dans ces deux arts, il montre l’emprise d’un penseur accompli.”

Vantant le vérisme de l’œuvre, le *Daily Telegraph* émit l’opinion suivante: “Il semble que, pour le moment, nous en ayons fini des héros légendaires et des mythes nébuleux” – ce qui était bien sûr une pointe envoyée à Wagner – “Leurs personnages sont bien trop éloignés de nous: ils ne sont ni de notre chair ni de notre sang. De nos jours, on exige des documents authentiquement humains, des personnages de récits et de théâtre qui sont comme nous, et non pas l’exagération de nous-mêmes.” Plus récemment et de façon plus succincte, le critique Spike Hughes écrivit que Leoncavallo avait satisfait “un besoin longtemps ressenti”. On ne se trouvait plus en présence d’un héros romantique conventionnel, ni même du retour persistant de personnages issus des sagas nordiques, mais de personnages authentiques, terre à terre, passionnés, pleins de vie.

L’histoire du clown dont le cœur est brisé mais qui doit continuer à jouer son rôle comique jusqu’au bout n’est bien sûr pas nouvelle; pas plus que le procédé qui insère une pièce à l’intérieur d’une autre pièce. L’art de Leoncavallo fut de revêtir ces procédés d’une musique à la fois touchante, immédiatement accessible et agréable, mais mélodieuse sans être vulgaire. C’était un librettiste accompli, qui en respectant les unités de lieu et de temps aristotéliques produisit un scénario immédiatement crédible et dépourvu de lenteur. Il se peut qu’il ait campé ses personnages sans grande profondeur, mais il les a rendus suffisamment convaincants pour nous faire croire qu’ils sont réels.

Pour sa partition, Leoncavallo n’emprunta que le nécessaire aux méthodes wagnériennes. On y trouve une utilisation rudimentaire du *Leitmotiv*, et certainement l’harmonie et l’orchestration n’auraient pu être les mêmes si Wagner n’avait jamais existé. Toutefois, il se dégage de l’ensemble de l’œuvre une saveur bien italienne: les passages choraux, par exemple, situent l’action en Italie du sud, et, que le compositeur écrive des passages d’une beauté voluptueuse et sans prétention comme dans la sérénade de Beppe (en Arlequin) ou la ballatella de Nedda, ou des morceaux passionnés comme dans le thème “Ridi,

Pagliaccio” (Make it amusing) de “Vesti la giubba” (Put on your costume), la musique exhale un lyrisme transalpin. Ces passages et d’autres, comme le duo érotique de Nedda et Silvio, sont pleinement intégrés dans une structure unifiée à la manière des derniers chefs-d’œuvre de Verdi.

Leoncavallo réussit un brillant coup de théâtre avec le Prologue dans lequel Tonio passe la tête entre les rideaux, puis s’avance pour raconter directement aux membres du public que les acteurs eux-mêmes sont des hommes et des femmes comme eux, avec leurs passions, leurs joies et leurs souffrances. La pièce insérée dans l’autre pièce, rappelant en quelque sorte celle d’*Hamlet* par le rapport qui la lie à l’action principale, est une autre invention efficace qui inspire une délicieuse musique de *commedia dell’arte* au compositeur.

Sur scène, la réussite de *Pagliacci* repose sur l’écriture et l’interprétation du rôle de Canio. À l’aide de trois passages émouvants, Leoncavallo dépeint un honnête homme abattu par la jalousie et le remords, digne successeur de l’Otello de Verdi, et nécessitant un ténor héroïque de même envergure. Dans “Un tal gioco, creditimi” (If he tried it, I promise you), le ton de la menace, avertissement ignoré par Nedda, nous montre un homme plein de puissance, à ne pas traiter à la légère. Dans

“Vesti la giubba” (Put on your costume), après que l’infidélité de Nedda soit confirmée, nous voyons une âme noble assaillie par le tourment tandis que le clown déverse ses sentiments, le chagrin se mêlant à la noblesse d’expression. Finalement, avec “No, Pagliaccio non son” (No, we’re not in a play), Canio fait des reproches à son épouse infidèle, donnant libre cours à son chagrin dans le passage le plus éloquent jamais écrit par Leoncavallo, commençant par “Sperai, tanto il delirio accettato m’aveva” (I hoped, so blind was I, so deluded with passion) pour atteindre un sommet en si aigu. Si ce passage perce le cœur, comme de juste, il fait passer les dernières pages de l’opéra du mélodrame à la vraie tragédie.

Tonio est aussi une création intéressante. On se trouve à nouveau en présence d’une dichotomie, cette fois entre le bouffon courtisant Nedda en Colombine dans la pièce, et la silhouette difforme et pathétique voyant dans la réalité son amour pour la jeune femme cruellement repoussé à coups de fouet. Nedda est une femme sans discernement, qui ne semble guidée que par ses désirs instinctifs. Beppe est l’aimable membre pacificateur de la troupe, tandis que Silvio fait en quelque sorte figure de nullité opératique, bien que Leoncavallo donne à cet amant de belle mine une de ses musiques les plus élégantes. Tous

jouent leur rôle dans cette composition si convaincante sur le plan dramatique qu'elle ne manque jamais d'émouvoir son public.

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Traduction: Marianne Fernée

Argument

L'action se déroule dans un village de Calabre à la veille de la fête de l'Assomption. L'opéra débute par un prologue durant lequel Tonio apparaît devant le rideau et s'adresse au public, lui rappelant que les acteurs sont des personnes réelles et que l'histoire ne doit pas être considérée comme une fiction.

Acte I

Les villageois célèbrent la fête de l'Assomption et lorsqu'ils voient les comédiens pénétrer dans le village, ils se précipitent pour les accueillir. Canio, le chef de la troupe, vient au devant d'eux et déclare à l'assemblée des villageois que la représentation aura lieu le soir même. Tonio tente d'aider l'épouse de Canio, Nedda, à descendre de la charrette dans laquelle elle est arrivée mais Canio le repousse et lui donne une gifle. Quelques villageois observent qu'il ne faudrait peut-être pas laisser Tonio et Nedda se retrouver seuls. Canio est en colère et dit que dans une comédie ce genre d'incident pourrait

passer pour drôle mais que dans la réalité les événements risqueraient de prendre une tournure bien différente. Lorsqu'il s'est calmé, lui et Beppe se rendent au village et les villageois vont aux vêpres.

Restée seule, Nedda s'inquiète de l'éclat de Canio, mais bientôt le crépuscule exerce sur elle son effet apaisant. Tonio apparaît et à la fin de sa chanson, il s'approche d'elle et lui déclare son amour. Mais Nedda se rit de lui, ce qui excite sa colère. Elle doit finalement se défendre en le frappant au visage avec son fouet. Il s'en va tout en jurant de se venger.

Peu après son départ, l'amant de Nedda, Silvio, fait son apparition. Il la presse de s'enfuir avec lui après la représentation du soir. D'abord, elle n'accepte pas, mais lorsque Silvio l'interroge au sujet de son amour pour lui, elle se laisse fléchir. Tonio entend une partie de leur conversation et s'empresse d'aller chercher Canio qui arrive juste à temps pour l'entendre appeler Silvio qui a disparu derrière le mur. Nedda refuse d'avouer à Canio le nom de son amant. Canio, rongé par la jalousie, revêt son costume de scène. Il est persuadé que l'amant assistera à la représentation de la soirée.

Acte II

Le public (y compris Silvio) est réuni et Nedda collecte leur argent. La pièce commence.

Colombine (Nedda) attend son amoureux *Harlequin* (Beppe), car son mari *Pagliaccio* (Canio) est absent pour la nuit. Dehors, *Harlequin* lui donne la sérénade. *Taddeo* (Tonio) entre et déclare son amour secret pour elle mais celle-ci le dédaigne et il s'en va au moment où arrive *Harlequin*. *Harlequin* et *Colombine* s'asseoient et mangent mais *Pagliaccio* revient à l'improviste et *Harlequin* s'échappe par la fenêtre. Ses mots d'adieu à l'intention d'*Harlequin* rappellent à Canio l'adieu de Nedda à son amant mystérieux un peu plus tôt dans la soirée. Canio parvient difficilement à demeurer dans le strict cadre de son personnage et exige de *Colombine*/Nedda qu'elle lui avoue le nom de son amant. Nedda essaie désespérément de s'en tenir à son rôle mais Canio entre dans une colère de plus en plus noire. Les spectateurs s'impatientent et Nedda tente de s'échapper. Mais Canio parvient à l'empoigner et la poignarde. Silvio accourt pour la sauver mais il est poignardé à son tour. Canio complètement sous le choc, annonce à l'assistance que la représentation est terminée.

Traduction: Karin Py

Né en Cornouailles, **Alan Opie** a fait ses études à la Guildhall School of Music and Drama de Londres et au London Opera Centre. Il

commença sa carrière avec l'English National Opera (alors Sadler's Wells) où il fut nommé bariton principal alors qu'il était encore étudiant. Il y a chanté les rôles titres du *Barbier de Séville* et du *Dr Faust* de Busoni, et ceux de Germont (*La traviata*), Eisenstein et Falke (*La chauve-souris*), Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*), Papageno (*La flûte enchantée*), Sancho Pancha (*Don Quichotte*) et Taddeo (*L'italienne à Alger*).

Parallèlement à ses activités avec l'English National Opera, il s'est produit avec d'autres grandes compagnies britanniques (notamment dans *Luisa Miller* avec l'Opera North). Sur le plan international, il fut invité à chanter à Bayreuth (Beckmesser), et aux opéras de Chicago, Santa Fé, Paris, Amsterdam, Vienne, Bruxelles et Berlin. Ses nombreux enregistrements incluent *Peter Grimes* (pour Chandos) qui a reçu un *Grammy Award*, *Gloriana*, *The Rape of Lucretia*, le rôle titre de *Ulysse* de Dallapiccola, *Le barbier de Séville* et *Pagliacci* (réalisé par Chandos et la Peter Moores Foundation).

Né au Pays de Galles de parents gallois et irlandais, **Dennis O'Neill** est l'un des plus grands ténors de notre temps, et un éminent spécialiste des œuvres de Verdi. Il a longtemps travaillé avec la Royal Opera House de Covent Garden où il a chanté les rôles de Rodolfo

(*La bohème*), le Duc (*Rigoletto*), Pinkerton, Edgar (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Macduff (*Macbeth*), Gustave (*Un ballo in maschera*), Foresto (*Attila*), Otello, Don Carlos, Radames (*Aida*) et Jacopo (*I due Foscari*). Aux États-Unis, il s'est produit au Metropolitan Opera de New York et au Lyric Opera de Chicago, et a donné de nombreux concerts.

Régulièrement invité par le Bayerische Staatsoper de Munich, ses débuts dans *Un ballo in maschera* furent suivis d'une nouvelle production de *Il trovatore* sous la direction de Giuseppe Sinopoli. Il y a également chanté dans *Le chevalier à la rose*, *Tosca*, *Simon Boccanegra* et *Aida*. Dennis O'Neill donne de nombreux concerts, et s'est produit à travers toute l'Europe sous la direction de chefs tels que Riccardo Muti, Colin Davis et Simon Rattle. Ses enregistrements comprennent *Tosca* et *Cavalleria rusticana* (tous deux réalisés par Chandos et la Peter Moores Foundation), *Le chevalier à la rose* sous la direction de Solti, *La chauve-souris*, *Macbeth* et *La fanciulla del West*.

Peter Bronder est né à Hertfordshire de parents d'origine allemande et autrichienne. Il fit ses études à la Royal Academy of Music ainsi qu'au National Opera Studio à Londres. Après une saison à Glyndebourne, il devient le premier ténor de l'Opéra national du Pays de Galles de

1986 à 1990, où son répertoire comprenait des rôles principaux dans *La bohème*, *La traviata*, *I puritani*, *La sonnambula*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Le barbier de Séville*, *Così fan tutte*, *La flûte enchantée* et *Eugène Onéguine*. Il a également fait des apparitions à l'English National Opera (Ténor italien dans *Le chevalier à la rose*, Almaviva dans *Le barbier de Séville*), à l'Opera North (Prunier dans *La rondine*, le Capitaine dans *Wozzeck*), à l'Opéra Ecossais (Leicester dans *Marie Stuart*) ainsi qu'à l'Opéra Royal (Cassio dans *Otello*, le premier Juif dans *Salomé*, l'apparition de la Jeunesse dans *La femme sans ombre*).

Ses enregistrements comprennent la Neuvième symphonie de Beethoven, *Le destin* de Janáček, *Le turc en Italie*, *La traviata*, *Un ballo in maschera* ainsi que *The Rake's Progress*.

Rosa Mannion est née à Liverpool et étudia à la Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, et elle poursuit actuellement sa formation auprès de Gerald Martin Moore. Elle fit ses débuts à Covent Garden dans Pamina en 1993 et elle chanté avec les plus grandes compagnies britanniques dans des rôles tels que Constance (*L'enlèvement au Sérail*), Cordélia (*Lear* de Albert Reimann), Sophie (*Werther*), Sophie (*Le chevalier à la rose*), Atalanta (*Xerxes*), La comtesse (*Les noces de Figaro*), Magnolia

(*Showboat*), Violetta (*La traviata*), ainsi que les quatre rôles de soprano dans *Les contes d'Hoffmann* et le rôle titre dans *Manon*.

Rosa Mannion exerce une carrière de concertante très suivie et est apparue aux côtés du Chœur et de l'Orchestre Monteverdi, de l'English Chamber Orchestra, des London Mozart Players, du City of London Sinfonia et du Nash Ensemble, travaillant en compagnie de chefs tels que John Eliot Gardiner, Richard Hickox, Neville Marriner, Charles Mackerras, William Christie et Neeme Järvi. Ses enregistrements comprennent *Così fan tutte* avec John Eliot Gardiner, *La flûte enchantée* et *Orlando* avec William Christie, la *Serenade to Music* de Vaughan Williams ainsi que la Troisième Symphonie et la *Missa solennis* de Beethoven.

William Dazeley est diplômé du Jesus College de Cambridge, et a étudié le chant à la Guildhall School of Music and Drama de Londres. Il est lauréat du Decca-Kathleen Ferrier Prize, du Richard Tauber Prize et du Walther Gruner International Lieder Prize. Son vaste répertoire inclut les rôles titres de *Don Giovanni*, *Owen Wingrave*, *Billy Budd* et *Eugène Onéguine*, Papageno (*La flûte enchantée*), Pelléas, Mowgli (*Baa Baa Black Sheep* de Berkeley), Danilo (*La veuve joyeuse*) et le Comte et Rudolph (*Der ferne Klang*). Il s'est produit au

Royal Opera de Covent Garden, à l'Opera North, avec le Glyndebourne Touring Opera, au Teatro Regio de Turin, à l'Opéra de Lyon et au New Israeli Opera. Parmi ses enregistrements figurent *Baa Baa Black Sheep*, *The Rescue of Penelope* de Britten et *Dr Faust* de Busoni.

La carrière de chanteur de Geoffrey Mitchell a couvert un répertoire d'une remarquable étendue allant de la musique ancienne à la musique contemporaine. Elle prit son essor à la suite de plusieurs invitations à diriger que lui offrit la BBC, et à une collaboration plus étroite avec ses propres chanteurs. C'est ainsi qu'il fut amené à fonder le **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir** avec lequel il a enregistré quinze opéras pour Opera Rara. Jouissant d'une réputation grandissante, ils ont d'autres projets avec la BBC et des maisons de disques internationales.

Le **Peter Kay Children's Choir** offre à de jeunes chanteurs la possibilité de se produire à l'opéra, au concert, à la télévision, à la radio, lors de galas de bienfaisance, dans des festivals et des productions théâtrales en Grande-Bretagne, en France, en Belgique, aux Pays-Bas, en Allemagne, en Espagne et aux États-Unis. Ses membres sont recrutés sur invitation et sur audition, attirant des participants possédant déjà une expérience de la scène, à

l'English National Opera où Peter Kay est conseiller pour enfants, avec le Finchley Children's Music Group, le New London Children's Choir, les Jennifer Lilleystone Singers, et dans des écoles de Londres et du sud de l'Angleterre.

L'**Orchestre philharmonique de Londres** qui a été formé par Thomas Beecham en 1932 a attiré au fil des années une série inégalable de premiers chefs, dont Adrian Boult, John Pritchard, Bernard Haitink, Georg Solti et Klaus Tennstedt. Parmi les chefs qui le dirigent régulièrement à l'heure actuelle se trouvent son directeur musical, Franz Welser-Möst, et son président, Bernard Haitink.

L'orchestre qui est depuis 1964 l'orchestre symphonique en résidence au Glyndebourne Festival Opera est devenu en 1992 l'orchestre symphonique en résidence au Royal Festival Hall. Il effectue aussi de vastes tournées – il a été le premier orchestre à se rendre en URSS et en Chine – et ses enregistrements ont remporté maintes récompenses prestigieuses.

David Parry étudia avec Sergiu Celibidache et commença sa carrière comme assistant de Sir John Pritchard. Il fit ses débuts avec l'English Music Theatre et devint plus tard chef appointé du Städtische Bühnen Dortmund et

d'Opera North. Directeur musical d'Opera 80 de 1983 à 1987, il est depuis 1992 le directeur musical fondateur du festival d'opéra contemporain Almeida Opera.

Il poursuit une carrière très active à l'opéra et dans les salles de concert. Son répertoire va de Mozart et de l'opéra italien du début du XIXe siècle à Janáček, Britten et à la musique contemporaine. En Angleterre, il a fait des apparitions régulières à l'English National Opera et lors de concerts avec le Philharmonia. En 1996, il a fait ses débuts au Festival de Glyndebourne avec *Così fan tutte*.

Il se rend fréquemment en Espagne où il s'est produit avec la plupart des troupes d'opéra et des orchestres symphoniques. Il a donné la première espagnole de *Peter Grimes* à Madrid et, en 1996, a dirigé la première mise en scène espagnole de *The Rake's Progress*. Il a aussi inauguré deux nouvelles salles de concert avec une interprétation de la Neuvième symphonie de Beethoven et un nouvel opéra avec *Carmen*. Il s'est également produit en Italie où il a dirigé *Ricciardo et Zoraide* au Festival d'opéra de Pesaro (consacré à Rossini), mais il s'est aussi rendu en France, en Allemagne, en Belgique, en Hollande, et en Suède où il a dirigé une mise en scène très applaudie du *Songe d'une nuit d'été* de Britten.

Hors d'Europe, David Parry s'est produit au

Festival international de Hong Kong, a dirigé l'UNAM Symphony Orchestra à Mexico, a fait une tournée consacrée à *Carmen* au Japon, et, en 1996, a dirigé une nouvelle mise en scène de *Katya Kabanova* au Festival de Nouvelle-Zélande.

Il a réalisé un grand nombre

d'enregistrements pour le label Opera Rara, le plus récent étant *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* de Donizetti, qui a remporté le prix Cecilia en Belgique, et c'est chez Chandos qu'il a dirigé son enregistrement primé de *Tosca*, une disque d'aires opératiques avec Bruce Ford, *Cavalleria rusticana* et *La bohème*.

Ruggero Leoncavallo: Pagliacci

Il successo di un altro compositore ed un processo in tribunale furono, in senso assai reale, i progenitori di *Pagliacci* di Leoncavallo. Se non fosse stato per *Cavalleria rusticana* di Mascagni (che già appare nella serie discografica Opera in English, di Chandos, cat. n. CHAN 3004), rappresentata nel 1890, c'è da chiedersi se l'editore Sonzogno avrebbe accettato l'opera di Leoncavallo o se il compositore gliela avrebbe persino portata.

La storia del processo risale all'infanzia del compositore. Suo padre era magistrato e non sorprende che Leoncavallo abbia conservato vivida memoria del processo di un attore che, in un attacco di gelosia, aveva ucciso la moglie alla fine di una rappresentazione. L'accusato – a quanto pare una figura di tragica potenza – aveva fatto fronte all'accusa, accasciato dal dolore ma con irrimovibile fermezza. Anni dopo Leoncavallo ricordava la ruvida voce dell'uomo che risonava attraverso il tribunale. Questa temibile figura, modello per Canio, gli balzò alla mente quale soggetto per un dramma breve e conciso dopo la rappresentazione di *Cavalleria rusticana*. Scrisse il libretto e compose la musica in cinque mesi.

Citato in seguito per plagio, bastò che rivelasse la vera storia perché l'irato autore ritirasse l'accusa.

La tecnica verista di Leoncavallo non è inaspettata in un uomo con i suoi precedenti biografici e musicali. Suo padre, come si è visto, era magistrato, sua madre una pittrice a quel tempo famosa a Napoli, dove il compositore era nato il 8 maggio 1857. Leoncavallo studiò con vari maestri di piano prima d'isciversi al Conservatorio di Napoli. Mentre era studente assistette ad una esecuzione del *Tannhäuser* a Bologna, un'esperienza che gli fece una profonda impressione. Un incontro con Wagner nella stessa città poco dopo lo colpì ancora più profondamente. A quanto pare Wagner gli disse: "Voyez, je lutte encore" (Vedete, mi batto ancora). La memoria di quelle parole rincuorò Leoncavallo durante gli anni in cui lui stesso si batteva per farsi apprezzare. Poco dopo aver finito gli studi, quando aveva diciotto anni, compose la sua prima opera, *Chatterton*, ma gli sforzi per farla rappresentare rimasero futili.

Mentre si guadagnava da vivere suonando il

piano cominciò a comporre una trilogia d'ispirazione wagneriana, intitolata *Crepusculum*, ambientata nell'Italia rinascimentale. Ad un certo punto di un suo viaggio nel Medio Oriente (1882) gli venne offerto al Cairo l'incarico di dirigente delle bande militari, impiego che forse avrebbe accettato se le attività dell'esercito britannico non lo avessero costretto a rifugiarsi ad Ismaila travestito da arabo!

I Medici, parte della sua trilogia, venne successivamente completata ma sebbene Ricordi avesse firmato un contratto per l'opera non ritenne opportuno pubblicarla, avendo una migliore opinione di Leoncavallo come poeta del teatro che come musicista. Dopo aver tentato per tre anni di farla eseguire, Leoncavallo scrisse *Pagliacci* che diede a Sonzogno, grande rivale di Ricordi. L'opera ebbe quasi immediato successo allorché venne rappresentata al Teatro dal Verme il 21 maggio 1892. Tale fu il successo che l'anno dopo *I Medici* venne finalmente messa in scena – nello stesso teatro. Poiché fece fiasco Leoncavallo non persistette con le parti rimanenti della trilogia, *Savonarola* e *Cesare Borgia*, ma *Chatterton* finì per essere rappresentata nel 1896; fece seguito la sua versione de *La bohème* (1897), che venne virtualmente eclissata dalla più ispirata versione

di Puccini del romanzo di Murger. Venne poi *Zazà* (1900), e queste sono le uniche composizioni di Leoncavallo che ancora appaiono in Italia, oltre *Pagliacci*.

Leoncavallo continuò a scrivere fino alla sua morte nel 1919. Le sue più tarde composizioni includono certe curiosità come *Der Roland von Berlin* (1904), composta su espressa commissione del Kaiser Wilhelm II, e *Are You There?*, un'operetta scritta per Londra nel 1913. Leoncavallo era stato a Londra nel 1911 a dirigere *Pagliacci* e *Zazà* all'Hippodrome e vi tornò l'anno seguente a dirigere un nuovo pezzo, *Zingari*, scritto espressamente per quel teatro. Invano tentò di ripetere lo schiacciante successo di *Pagliacci*, e la sua reputazione continuerà a dipendere dalla sopravvivenza della sua opera più famosa.

Qual'è il suo fascino e quale il suo valore? Consideriamo anzitutto alcune opinioni contemporanei. Hermann Klein, un influente critico dell'epoca, scrisse nelle sue memorie della prima esecuzione di *Pagliacci* a Londra nel maggio 1893 (alla quale fu presente il compositore). "La fama della sensazionale opera di Leoncavallo l'aveva preceduta, e il pubblico si aspettava qualcosa di eccezionale. Non fu deluso. Raramente ho visto un pubblico trattenere a tal punto il fiato per l'eccitazione allo svolgimento della trama di

un'opera." Continua poi a descrivere e a lodare gli interpreti: Fernando de Lucia (Canio), Melba (Nedda) e Mario Ancona (Tonio), aggiungendo che "Leoncavallo, modesto e schivo, ha aspettato in silenzio nello sfondo fino alla fine, e poi gli interpreti hanno dovuto costringerlo a presentarsi sulla scena per ricevere l'ovazione che l'attendeva... L'ho trovato uomo di grande cultura e forte intelligenza. È un poeta, oltre che un musicista, e in ambedue le arti rivela la percettività di un profondo pensatore."

Nel lodare il verismo dell'opera il *Daily Telegraph* stimò che "Ci sembra che ne abbiamo abbastanza, per il momento, di eroi leggendari e di miti fumosi" – una stoccata, naturalmente, a Wagner. "I loro personaggi ci sono troppo distanti; non sono carne della nostra carne e ossa delle nostre ossa. Il nostro tempo vuole Documenti umani, personaggi che nella storia e nel dramma sono nostri consanguinei, non un'esagerata espressione di noi stessi." Più recentemente, più succintamente, il critico Spike Hughes scrisse che Leoncavallo appagava "Un desiderio da tempo avvertito". Qui non c'era più il convenzionale eroe romantico, ne venivano riproposte figure delle saghe nordiche, ma personaggi veri, terreni, appassionati, pieni di vita.

Naturalmente, la storia del clown dal cuore infranto, che però deve continuare a recitare fino in fondo la commedia, non è nuova; né è nuova la trovata di un dramma all'interno del dramma. L'abilità di Leoncavallo sta nell'aver dato a questi espedienti una veste musicale capace di commuovere, immediatamente accessibile ed attraente, melodiosa senza cattivo gusto. Valente librettista, e rispettoso delle unità aristoteliche di tempo e spazio, egli riuscì a creare un canovaccio che è al contempo credibile e agile. La sua caratterizzazione può non penetrare molto in profondità, ma è abbastanza convincente da indurci a credere che queste persone siano reali.

Per la sua partitura Leoncavallo prese giusto quanto gli occorreva dai metodi wagneriani. C'è un uso rudimentale del *Leitmotiv*, e né l'armonia né la strumentazione avrebbero potuto essere come sono se Wagner non fosse mai esistito. Peraltro, il lavoro, nel suo insieme, ha un riconoscibile gusto italiano: i passaggi corali, per esempio, pongono l'azione inequivocabilmente nell'Italia Meridionale, e sia che il compositore appaia spontaneamente e sensualmente melodioso, come nella Serenata di Beppe (Arlecchino), o nella Ballatella di Nedda, oppure frenetico come nel tema di "Ridi, Pagliaccio" (Make it amusing), in "Vesti la giubba" (Put on your costume), la musica

manifesta un lirismo transalpino. Questi, ed altri numeri vocali, come l'erotico duetto di Nedda e Silvio, sono pienamente integrati in una struttura unificata alla maniera dei capolavori del tardo Verdi.

Leoncavallo realizza un brillante *coup de théâtre* con il Prologo, in cui Tonio caccia la testa fuori del sipario e poi esce a dire direttamente agli spettatori che anche gli attori sono uomini e donne come loro, soggetti alla passione, alla gioia, al tormento. Il dramma all'interno del dramma, che abbastanza ricorda quello dell'*Amleto* nella sua pertinenza all'azione principale, è un'altra invenzione d'effetto che ispira al compositore deliziosa musica da commedia dell'arte.

Nell'esecuzione *Pagliacci* si regge interamente sulla scrittura e sull'interpretazione della parte di Canio. In tre toccanti passaggi Leoncavallo rivela un uomo onesto, distrutto dalla gelosia e dal rimorso, legittimo successore dell'*Otello* verdiano, che richiede un tenore eroico dello stesso stampo. In "Un tal gioco, credetemi" (If he tried it, I promise you) il tono è di minaccia, un avvertimento che Nedda non raccoglie; ci mostra un uomo di carattere fermo, con il quale non si scherza. In "Vesti la giubba" (Put on your costume), dopo che l'infedeltà di Nedda è stata confermata, un'anima grande è

torturata dal tormento: nello sfogo del pagliaccio lo sconforto si mischia alla nobiltà d'espressione. Infine, in "No, Pagliaccio non son" (No, we're not in a play) Canio rimprovera la moglie infedele, scaricando tutta la sua angoscia nel più eloquente passaggio che Leoncavallo abbia mai scritto, cominciando con "Sperai, tanto il delirio accecato m'aveva" (I hoped, so blind was I, so deluded with passion), e salendo al culmine fino ad un *si* acuto. Se trafigge il cuore – come dovrebbe – trascina le ultime pagine dell'opera dal melodramma alla vera tragedia.

Tonio è anche lui una creazione interessante. Anche qui c'è una dicotomia, questa volta fra il semplicione che fa all'amore con Nedda – Colombina – nella commedia, e la figura patetica e deforme che vede il suo amore crudelmente calpestato da lei nella vita reale. Nedda è una donna scervellata dominata dalle sue voglie elementari e nient'altro. Beppe è il membro spensierato, il paciere della troupe. Silvio è una specie di nullità operistica, anche se la musica accordata da Leoncavallo al bell'amoroso è fra le più gradite da cantare. Tutti i personaggi sostengono la loro parte in un pezzo la cui convinzione drammatica non manca mai di appassionare il pubblico.

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La trama

L'azione si svolge in un paesino della Calabria alla vigilia della Festa dell'Assunzione. L'opera comincia con un prologo nel quale Tonio si presenta alla ribalta e si rivolge al pubblico, ricodandogli che gli attori sono persone vere e che la storia non andrà presa superficialmente come una drammatica finzione.

Atto I

Gli abitanti del paese stanno festeggiando l'Assunzione e quando vedono che sono arrivati in paese i commedianti si affrettano ad andare a salutarli. Canio, il capocomico, si fa avanti e dice agli astanti che la recita avrà luogo la sera stessa. Tonio cerca di aiutare Nedda, la moglie di Canio, a scendere dal carro sul quale è arrivata, ma Canio lo respinge e lo schiaffeggia. Alcuni paesani commentano che forse sarebbe meglio non lasciare Tonio e Nedda soli insieme. Canio s'infuria e dice che sebbene certe cose possano essere classificate come una commedia in una recita, nella realtà il risultato potrebbe essere ben diverso. Quando si è calmato va in paese con Beppe e i paesani vanno ai vesperi.

Rimasta sola Nedda si preoccupa della sfuriata di Canio ma non tarda a rilassarsi al sole pomeridiano. Appare Tonio e quando Nedda ha finito la sua canzone le si avvicina e

le dichiara il suo amore, ma Nedda lo deride e lui si fa sempre più irato. Alla fine ella è costretta a difendersi colpendolo al viso con la frusta. Tonio parte giurando vendetta.

Partito Tonio arriva l'amante di Nedda, Silvio, che l'esorta a fuggire con lui quella sera dopo la recita. Dapprima Nedda non acconsente, ma quando Silvio mette in dubbio il suo amore ella cede. Non visto, Tonio ha ascoltato parte della loro conversazione e va a prendere Canio che arriva guisto in tempo per sentire Nedda rivolgersi a Silvio mentre egli sparisce al di là del muretto. Nedda si rifiuta di svelare a Canio il nome del suo amante. Roso dalla gelosia Canio si veste per la parte che reciterà nella commedia. È sicuro che l'amante della moglie sarà presente quella sera alla recita.

Atto II

Il pubblico (che include Silvio) si è radunato e Nedda va in giro raccogliendo i denari dei biglietti. Comincia la commedia. *Colombina* (Nedda) sta aspettando il suo amante *Arlecchino* (Beppe) giacché il marito, *Pagliaccio* (Canio), passa la notte via da casa. Fuori, *Arlecchino* le fa la serenata. *Taddeo* (Tonio) entra e le dichiara di amarla in segreto, ma lei lo respinge e lui parte mentre entra *Arlecchino*. *Colombina* e *Arlecchino* si siedono a mangiare, ma d'improvviso arriva, inaspettato, *Pagliaccio*

e *Arlecchino* scappa dalla finestra. L'addio di *Colombina* ad *Arlecchino* ricorda a Canio quello di Nedda al suo amante segreto poco prima nel pomeriggio. Canio stenta a continuare a recitare la sua parte ed esige da Nedda/*Colombina* il nome del suo amante. Nedda tenta disperatamente di continuare la comedia, ma Canio s'infuria sempre più. Il pubblico s'innervosisce e Nedda cerca di fuggire, ma Canio riesce ad afferrarla e la pugnala. Silvio accorre a difenderla ma anche lui viene colpito. Canio, impetrato dallo shock, annunzia al pubblico che la commedia è finita.

Traduzione: Marcella Barzetti

Alan Opie è nato in Cornovaglia e ha studiato alla Guildhall School of Music and Drama e presso il London Opera Centre. Ha iniziato la sua carriera con la English National Opera (allora Sadler's Wells) dalla quale fu ingaggiato quale primo baritono quando era ancora studente. Fra i ruoli che ha cantato per questa compagnia si citano: la parte di protagonista nel *Barbiere di Siviglia* e nel *Dr. Faust* di Busoni; Germont (*La traviata*); Eisenstein e Falke (*Die Fledermaus*); Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*); Papageno (*Il flauto magico*); Sancho Panza (*Don Chisciotte*) e Taddeo (*L'italiana in Algeri*).

Contemporaneamente alla sua attività con la

English National Opera, Alan Opie ha preso parte alle rappresentazioni di altri principali teatri britannici (fra le quali, *Luisa Miller*, per Opera North), mentre la sua carriera in campo internazionale lo ha portato a Bayreuth (Beckmesser) e si è estesa alle stagioni liriche di Chicago, Santa Fe, Parigi, Amsterdam, Vienna, Bruxelles e Berlino. I suoi numerosi dischi includono *Peter Grimes* (per Chandos, vincitore del premio *Grammy Awards*), *Gloriana*, *The Rape of Lucretia*, il ruolo di protagonista nell'*Ulisse* di Dallapiccola e il *Barbiere di Siviglia* e *Pagliacci* (per Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation).

Nato nel Galles da genitori irlandesi-gallese, **Dennis O'Neill** è tenore di fama mondiale e specialista del repertorio verdiano. Da anni è legato alla Royal Opera House Covent Garden dove i suoi ruoli hanno incluso Rodolfo (*La bohème*), il Duca (*Rigoletto*), Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*), Edgar (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Macduff (*Macbeth*), Gustavo (*Un ballo in maschera*), Foresto (*Attila*), Otello, Don Carlos, Radames (*Aida*) e Jacopo (*I due Foscari*). Negli Stati Uniti ha cantato per la Metropolitan Opera e la Chicago Lyric Opera e in numerosi concerti.

È spesso ospite della Bayerische Staatsoper di Monaco di Baviera dove il suo debutto nel

Ballo in maschera è stato seguito da un nuovo allestimento de *Il trovatore* con Giuseppe Sinopoli, e dalla sua partecipazione a *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Tosca*, *Simon Boccanegra* e *Aida*. Dennis O'Neill conduce inoltre un'intensa attività concertistica ed ha cantato in tutta l'Europa con direttori quali Riccardo Muti, Sir Colin Davis e Simon Rattle. La sua discografia include *Tosca* e *Cavalleria rusticana* (ambidue per Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation), *Der Rosenkavalier*, diretta da Georg Solti, *Die Fledermaus*, *Macbeth* e *La fanciulla del West*.

Peter Bronder è nato nello Hertfordshire da genitori austro-tedeschi ed ha studiato alla Royal Academy of Music e al National Opera Studio. Dopo una stagione con la Glyndebourne Opera è stato primo tenore con la Welsh National Opera dal 1986 al 1990. Il suo repertorio per questa compagnia ha incluso ruoli principali in *La bohème*, *La traviata*, *I puritani*, *La sonnambula*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Così fan tutte*, *Il flauto magico* e *Eugene Onegin*. Ha cantato inoltre con la English National Opera (il Tenore Italiano ne *Der Rosenkavalier*, Almaviva nel *Barbiere di Siviglia*), Opera North (Prunier in *La rondine*, il Capitano in *Wozzeck*), Scottish Opera (Leicester in *Maria Stuarda*), e la Royal Opera (Cassio in *Otello*,

Primo Ebreo in *Salome*, Apparizione della gioventù nella *Donna senz'ombra*).

La sua discografia include la Nona Sinfonia di Beethoven, *Fate de Janáček*, *Il turco in Italia*, *La traviata*, *Un ballo in maschera* e *La carriera di un libertino*.

Rosa Mannion è nata a Liverpool ed ha studiato alla Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama; attualmente studia con Gerald Martin Moore. Ha debuttato al Covent Garden nel 1993 nella parte di Pamina, ed ha cantato con tutte le principali compagnie britanniche nei ruoli di Constanze (*Il ratto dal serraglio*), Cordelia (*Lear* di Albert Reimann), Sophie (*Werther*), Sophie (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Atalanta (*Xerxes*), la Contessa (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Magnolia (*Showboat*), Violetta (*La traviata*), i quattro soprani nei *Racconti di Hoffmann* e la parte di protagonista in *Manon*.

Rosa Mannion svolge inoltre un'intensa carriera concertistica ad ha cantato con la English Chamber Orchestra, Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra, London Mozart Players, City of London Sinfonia e il Nash Ensemble, sotto la direzione di John Eliot Gardiner, Richard Hickox, Neville Marriner, Charles Mackerras, William Christie e Neeme Järvi. I suoi ruoli includono *Così fan tutte* con John Eliot Gardiner, *Il flauto magico* e *Orlando* con

William Christie, la *Serenade to Music* e la Terza sinfonia di Vaughan Williams e la *Missa solennis* di Beethoven.

William Dazeley si è laureato presso Jesus College, Cambridge, e ha studiato canto alla Guildhall School of Music and Drama. I premi da lui conseguiti includono il Decca-Kathleen Ferrier Prize, il Richard Tauber Prize e il Walther Gruner International Lieder Prize. Il suo esteso repertorio lirico comprende la parte di protagonista in *Don Giovanni*, in Owen Wingrave, in *Billy Budd* e in *Eugene Onegin*, Papageno (*Il flauto magico*), Pelleas, Mowgli (*Baa Baa Black Sheep* di Berkeley), Danilo (*La vedova allegra*) e il Conte e Rodolfo (*Der ferne Klang*). Ha cantato per la Royal Opera, Opera North, Glyndebourne Touring Opera, Teatro Regio di Torino, Opera de Lyon e New Israeli Opera. I suoi dischi includono *Baa Baa Black Sheep*, *The Rescue of Penelope* di Britten e il *Faust* di Busoni.

La carriera vocale di Geoffrey Mitchell si distingue per il repertorio eccezionalmente ampio, che va dalla musica antica a quella contemporanea. Tale fatto gli ha fruttato numerosi inviti della BBC ad esibirsi nel ruolo di direttore e, in seguito, un'attività più impegnativa in sintonia con propri cantanti

nonché la conseguente formazione del **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir**. Dopo le prime registrazioni su disco il complesso ha potuto stabilire regolari rapporti di lavoro con la compagnia Musica Rara, per la quale ha registrato ben 15 opere. Attualmente gode di crescente reputazione grazie agli ulteriori incarichi ricevuti dalla BBC e dalle case discografiche internazionali.

Il **Peter Kay Children's Choir** (Coro di fanciulli) offre ai giovani cantanti buone prospettive in materia di opera lirica, concerti, annunci pubblicitari televisivi e radio, attività di beneficenza, festival e produzioni teatrali, in Gran Bretagna, Francia, Belgio, Olanda, Germania, Spagna ed USA. I suoi membri sono stati prescelti tra adolescenti con esperienza di esecuzioni corali, previo invito ed audizione presso l'English National Opera, di cui Peter Kay è consulente, il Finchley Children's Music Group, il New London Children's Choir, The Jennifer Lilleystone Singers, nonché varie scuole di tutta Londra e dell'Inghilterra meridionale.

La **London Philharmonic Orchestra**, costituita nel 1932 da Sir Thomas Beecham, ha attratto nel corso degli anni una successione incomparabile di primi direttori, tra cui

Sir Adrian Boult, Sir John Pritchard, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti e Klaus Tennstedt. Attualmente si alternano periodicamente sul podio il Direttore musicale Franz Weiser-Möst ed il Presidente Bernard Haitink.

Dal 1964 questo complesso è l'orchestra sinfonica stabile della Glyndebourne Festival Opera (Compagnia lirica del Festival omonimo) e dal 1992 del Royal Festival Hall. Inoltre, ha effettuato tournée in ogni parte del mondo ed è la prima orchestra britannica ad esibirsi nell'URSS e in Cina. Le sue registrazioni discografiche le hanno meritato numerosi importanti premi.

David Parry ha studiato con Sergiu Celibidache ed ha iniziato la sua carriera come assistente di Sir John Pritchard. Ha fatto il suo debutto con l'English Music Theatre ed è poi diventato direttore stabile della Städtische Bühnen Dortmund e di Opera North. Dal 1983 al 1987 è stato direttore artistico di Opera 80 e dal 1992 Direttore Musicale fondatore del festival di opera contemporanea dell'Almeida Opera.

Svolge un'intensa attività sia nel teatro lirico sia in campo sinfonico. Il suo repertorio da va Mozart e l'opera italiana del Settecento a Janáček e Britten e la musica contemporanea. In Inghilterra ha diretto frequentemente alla

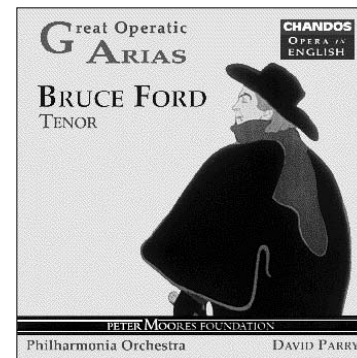
English National Opera ed in concerti sinfonici con la Philharmonia. Nel 1996 ha debuttato al festival di Glyndebourne con *Così fan tutte*.

Dirige spesso in Spagna nella maggior parte dei teatri lirici e con orchestra sinfoniche. Ha diretto la prima spagnola di *Peter Grimes* a Madrid e nel 1996 il primo allestimento spagnolo della *Carriera di un libertino*, ha inaugurato due nuove sale di concerti con la Nona sinfonia di Beethoven ed un nuovo teatro lirico con la *Carmen*. Altre tournée l'hanno portato in Italia, dove ha diretto *Ricciardo e Zoraide* al Festival Rossini di Pesaro, in Francia, Germania, Belgio, Olanda, e Svezia dove ha diretto con grande successo *Il sogno di una notte di mezza estate* di Britten.

Fuori d'Europa David Parry si è esibito al festival internazionale di Hong Kong, con l'orchestra sinfonica UNAM a Città del Messico e in una serie di rappresentazioni della *Carmen* in Giappone. Nel 1996 ha diretto *Katya Kabanova* in un nuovo allestimento per il festival della Nuova Zelanda.

Ha inciso numerosi dischi per Opera Rara, fra questi il più recente è quello di *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* di Donizetti, che ha vinto il Priz Cecilia in Belgio; per Chandos ha diretto l'acclamato disco della *Tosca*, un disco di grandi arie operistiche, *Cavalleria rusticana* e *La bohème*.

Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3006



CHAN 3004

Prologue

Tonio

[1] Hello...Hello...
Dear ladies and gentlemen, you'll pardon me.
for this solo performance.
I am the Prologue.
Our author has decided
we'll all wear masks again
as in the old days,
and, since he is reviving
all these ancient customs
he sends me to raise the curtain.
But not to say, as in the past:
'These actors pretend to be sad...
they're weeping...
they're in agony
but it's not like real life...
don't be upset by them.'
No! No! The author will show you,
here in our theatre,
a slice of life as we live it.
He has a theory that man
and the actor are one,
and that our work is done only for people.
We just to show them the truth in life.
He weaves his timeless story,
made up of memories,
made up of passion.
He wept as he wrote it,
real tears of sorrow,
and his sobbing
inspired these brooding melodies.

So then, his tale of love
is just the same as
the love of real people;
it tells of love
and its gloomy outcome,
of the pangs a lover feels,
and that if rage consumes them
men can be cynical.
Dear public, remember,
that when we're performing
in our costumes and our make-up,
we have feelings too,
we have all suffered,
for we are flesh and blood,
our hearts beat as yours do,
and that in this world
full of sorrows
like you we all fight for survival!
Now you know what we're here for...
I think you'll find the story will grip you.
Come on, bring up the curtain!

Act I

Scene 1

Scene. The entrance of a village, where two roads meet. On the right a travelling theatre. As the curtain rises, sounds of an out-of-tune trumpet and a drum are heard; laughter, shouting, whistling, voices approaching. Enter villagers in holiday attire. Tonio looks up the road on the left. Then, worried by the crowd which stares at him, he lies down in front of the theatre. The time is 3 o'clock. There is bright sunlight.

(The curtain rises.)

Chorus

[2] Hey!
They're back! they're back!
They've all come back...
The leading man...
His pretty wife...
and all their company.
You hear the laughter
he'll tell a story
and make a joke.
And look at that one...
bowing so formally, isn't he funny!
He's pulling faces, isn't he funny!
The lads all cheer with excitement.
They're going mad as they cheer.

Boys

Now then, here is our
favourite comic!

Canio (from behind)

Go to the devil, you!

Beppe (from behind)

Stop! Stop, you little bastard!

(Boys whistle and shout behind, and then enter running.)

Chorus and boys

They've got their costumes,
and make-up...
Just look at that one...
They're wonderful...
Aren't they a sight to see.

There's the comic, the leading actor!
Give him a welcome.
You are our favourite star,
our favourite actor!
You're welcome!
Now make us laugh again
with your performance!
Come on, come on,
we're ready to applaud you.
Just look... Just look...
The sad one, he's so funny!
Just look, the sad one,
isn't he funny!
We want to laugh! Come on!

Canio

Thank you! Thank you! And now...

Chorus and boys

Give us a play tonight!

Canio (beating the drum to drown the voices of the crowd)

Listen to me.

Chorus and boys

Oh, please stop it!

You'll drive us mad!

Canio

Now will you let me speak?

Chorus and boys

Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

He's right.

That's enough of that,
we'll listen and let him speak.

Canio

³ Your most humble servant
has written a new play...
Tonight you may see it
but only if you pay!
You'll like the new tale
with its comedy touches:
you'll see me prevail
with a handsome young duchess!
(*He indicates Nedda.*)
The tragical Tonio
will surely amuse you,
and then he'll confuse you,
there'll be a surprise!
Come here, won't you honour us
dear friends with your presence
at half past eleven.

Chorus

So long as you make us laugh,
that's all that we ask for:
at half past eleven.

(*Tonio advances to help Nedda down from the cart,
but Canio, who has already alighted, boxes his ears.*)

Canio (*knocking Tonio aside and helping Nedda
down*)

Let her go!

Chorus (*laughing*)

Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!
That surprised you, handsome lover!

Boys (*making fun*)

Handsome lover!

(*Beppe drags off the cart. Tonio chases the boys away.*)

Tonio (*aside, as he goes*)

One day I'll get you, you bastard!

(*Tonio enters the theatre. A group of locals goes up
to Canio.*)

A Local (*egged on by the others*)

Friend, now will you have a drink?

We'll all invite you if you'd like to join us.

Please, say yes.

Canio

Yes, I'd like to.

Beppe (*joining them*)

What a good idea...

I won't be long.

(*Canio passes towards the theatre. Beppe throws his
whip in front of the theatre and goes in to change
his clothes.*)

Canio (*calling*)

Hey Tonio!

Come and join us.

Tonio (*from within*)

The lights will need some fixing...

Set one up for me.

Another local (*joking*)

You should be careful.

He only wants to stay here

to be alone with Nedda!

Canio (*smiling, with a frown*)

Eh! Eh! You think so?

⁴ If he tried it, I promise you
he'd find he had to reckon with me,
I mean it.

Let Tonio and all of you remember:

(*gesturing around him*)

Here is life, there the theatre...

the two are very different.

If, in a play the husband
surprises his fair lady
embraced by some young officer,

he'll preach a funny sermon,

full of outrage, and the officer

will give him such a thrashing!

Then the public applaud him

and you all laugh your heads off!

But if Nedda deceived me

and betrayed me,

I can tell you there'd be tears

instead of laughter,

and the ending would be tragic!

If she tried it, I promise you,

she'd certainly regret it!

Nedda (*aside*)

Has he found out?

Chorus

O come now,

do you mean what you're saying?

Canio

Me? I'm joking... I made it up!

I love my darling Nedda.

(*Canio approaches Nedda and kisses her forehead.*)

Boys and women (*rushing to the left and looking
off*)

⁵ You hear them playing?

Men

It's time for church.

We'd better be going.

Sweet is the sound

of their musical piping,

deep is the note

of the Vesper bell chiming!

Let's be going.

Come on.

We're going to service.

Women

Ah! Come on!

Hear the bells ring...

They call us to service.

Canio

As long as you're there tonight
at half past eleven.

(*Canio smiles and nods to those who have invited
him, and disappears behind the theatre. The pipers
enter with young and old villagers in couples,
addressing those who are on the stage.*)

Chorus

Come on! Come on!

(*Both groups join and form in couples.*)

Ding dong, do you hear the bells?

Young lovers, come on!

We go to Vespers, hand in hand.

As the sunset glows
so bright and so fair,
our mothers are watching us,
so better take care!
All the world is bright with
youth and with love:
but the old eyes are watching us,
they do not approve!
Ding dong, the bells ring out their song
and all the world is bright
with youth and love.

(The couples go off by road at the back. The chorus goes out and is heard singing in the distance. Canio and Beppe, now in their street clothes, leave with the locals. Nedda is left alone.)

Scene 2

Nedda (*musings*)

- [6] The ugly look he gave me!
I turned away,
so afraid that he might read
in my eyes
the secret I'm hiding.
If ever he discovered,
he'd beat me like a dog.
I'm crazy... forget him!
It's just his jealousy
that makes me frightened.
Oh, how enchanting the summer sun is!
I feel life pulsing through me
and everything within me
seems to burn with desires

I cannot fathom.
(looking to the sky)
Ah, the swallows are flying...
Just watch them diving
and soaring... but for what?
Who knows? My mother knew,
she could see in the cards what would happen...
and she knew what the birds sang...
now I remember
the song she sang me...
Ah! Ah!

- [7] Swallow, fly away,
no one can catch you,
spread out your wings,
fly up in the ocean of blue.
But swallow have a care now,
the sun will scorch you,
you're soaring, soaring,
you are lost to view!
Fly up higher and higher,
fast as an arrow,
thirsty for the sunlight
and thirsty for heaven's blue:
follow your true love,
your dream of flying together...
You're soaring, soaring
you are lost to view.
Winds may pursue you,
and storms may blow around you,
fly little swallow, defying them all.
Though sheets of lightning
in a flash surround you,
you're soaring, soaring,

you are lost to view.
Soaring on high
to find an airy heaven,
seen in your dreams,
but forever denied.
Ever higher you fly,
drawn by the power
that rules over your spirit.
On high, on high, on high.

(During her song, Tonio comes out from behind the theatre and stands listening in rapture. At the end of her song, Nedda turns and sees him.)

Nedda (*sharply*)

- [8] It's you!
I thought that you had gone with Canio.

Tonio

Your song gave me such pleasure,
and just to hear you made me feel happy.

Nedda (*laughing mockingly*)

Ha! Ha! What an inspiration!

Tonio

Don't mock me Nedda!

Nedda

Why? Don't you deserve it?

Tonio

I'm not tall and handsome,
I know you despise me,
I know I arouse
only hatred in you...

And yet I am human,
I long to be happy,
I have a heart too.
But when you ignore me
and don't even see me,
I try to keep quiet
and not show my grief:
believe what I tell you...
to me you're an angel,
I've fallen in love!
(approaching her)
Allow me, I beg of you, to tell you...

Nedda (*breaking in and bursting into laughter*)

You love me! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!
(elegantly, taking up a fan)
There's time for your words of love.
This evening I'll hear them.

Tonio

Nedda!

Nedda

This evening you'll tell
me the story on stage,
on stage and in costume.

Tonio

Don't mock me Nedda.

Nedda (*bowing theatrically*)

There's time then! You'll tell me
the story, on stage.
Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

Tonio

Believe what I tell you,
to me you're an angel!
Don't mock me, no!
Don't mock me!

Nedda

Don't bother.
Don't bother, you're wasting my time.

Tonio

To me you're an angel,
I've fallen in love!
Nedda!
No, I'm here and I must tell you now.
You've got to stay and listen!
I love you, I'm going mad for you.
I've got to have you, I've got to!

Nedda (*with studied insolence*)

Oh, really master Tonio.
Your hunchback isn't the trouble.
Or should I give you a thrashing
for you to satisfy your lust?

Tonio

You're laughing... you despise me!
Now, as God is my witness Nedda!
I swear that you'll be sorry!

Nedda

I'll show you...
Wait till Canio hears the story!

Tonio (*moving towards her*)

But not before I kiss you!

Nedda (*drawing back*)

Watch out!

Tonio (*rushing to catch her*)

I'll take you if I have to!

Nedda (*picking up the whip, and striking Tonio in the face*)

Don't you dare touch me!

Tonio (*screaming and drawing back*)

Now I take an oath
by all that's holy,
Nedda I'll get you
and I'll make you suffer!

Nedda (*motionless, watching him as he goes off*)

Viper! Go!
I see now what you're made of!
Oh, how I loathe you...
the sight of you!
You're twisted in your mind and body...
filthy!

Scene 3

Silvio (*appearing on the wall*)

^[9] Nedda!

Nedda

Silvio!
Here so early?
This is madness.

Silvio (*laughing*)

So what! Don't worry,
I'm certain no one saw me.

54

Canio and Beppe
are drinking with their cronies...
I saw them going, I promise!
Don't be frightened...
I was longing to see you...
I just had to.

Nedda

We must be careful...
and Tonio might have seen you.

Silvio (*laughing*)

Oh, scared of Tonio?

Nedda

That Tonio is a monster!
He loves me and just now he tried to...
to have his way...
and to make love...
he tried to kiss me...
He was like some wild beast!

Silvio

My God!

Nedda

Oh, he'll regret it...
I tamed him nicely...
I gave him a beating!

^[10] **Silvio** (*approaching Nedda sadly and tenderly*)

Why do you go on
with this tormented life?
Nedda, Nedda!
(*He takes her hand and leads her down-stage.*)
You will decide my fate.

Nedda! Nedda, don't leave me!
Tonight the show will end,
you will have gone tomorrow.
Nedda! Nedda!
When you have gone away
and left me lonely, ah then,
what shall I do?
My life will be over!

Nedda (*moved*)

Silvio!

Silvio

Nedda, Nedda I beg of you...
You don't love Canio.
You have never loved him,
you told me how you hated
your cheap and false way of life in the theatre.
If you love me so much,
if you mean all you say,
come away with me now.
Nedda, be mine!

Nedda

^[11] I must be strong,
do not tempt me, do not destroy me!
Silvio, Silvio,
no, no you are dreaming... it can't be!
Trust and believe what I say...
I live for you alone!
Don't spoil this love of ours,
don't wreck the joy we've known!
I must be strong, I must be strong
I love you so!
I must be strong, I love you so!

55

And yet who knows?
Sometimes I like this sort of life.
Fate decides what's to be...
our words can't help at all!
But still my love is true,
I cannot tear it from me...
It lives here in my heart
this sweet love you awakened!

Silvio

Ah! Nedda, my love!
Nedda don't leave me.
But what am I to do,
How can I live without you?
Don't go! Nedda!
My love, my love.
(*Tonio appears from the back.*)
Ah, stay here with me, my love!
No, you don't love me!

Tonio (*choking*)

Ah! I've got you, you vermin!
(*He hurries off by the path, threatening.*)

Nedda

What!

Silvio

You don't love me!

Nedda

Ah, yes I love you!

Silvio

Then stay here, do not leave me!

^[12] How can you tell me
you ever loved me,

how can you go
and leave me to die?
Why did you kiss
and why did you hold me,
were all your kisses
of love a lie?
Have you forgotten
long hours of loving?
I can't forget them,
and long for more.
I want to hold you,
I want to kiss you.
I want to love you for evermore!

Nedda (*overcome and yielding*)

Never forget
and never reproach me...
Can you not see in my eyes
how much I love you?
Let me stay close
beside you, your arms around me,
one sweet lifetime of love
we two together!
You are my master,
I am yours forever.
Take me and hold me,
I'll follow and obey you,
never to part.

Silvio

Never to part.

Nedda and Silvio

How I've longed for this moment of passion.

Nedda

Take me away with you, we cannot part now.

Silvio

I'll take you away with me, we cannot part now.
You'll come?

Nedda

Yes, kiss me!

Nedda and Silvio

Yes, I'll love you for ever!

Scene & Finale

(*Tonio and Canio appear.*)

Tonio (*holding Canio back*)

^[13] Be very careful,
and then we can surprise them.

Silvio (*half over the wall and holding to it*)

At dead of night,
I'll hide over there!
(*leaping over*)
Don't let them see you.
Come down and you will find me.
(*He disappears.*)

Nedda (*to Silvio*)

Yes tonight,
and forever I'll be yours.

Canio (*from where he is standing he overhears the words and shouts*)

Ha!

Nedda (*turning at the shout and seeing Canio, calls towards the wall*)

Hurry!

(*Canio rushes to the wall, but Nedda bars his way. There is a short struggle. He pushes her aside and jumps over the wall.*)

Nedda (*listening anxiously*)

Dear God,
protect him now!

Canio (*off-stage*)

Coward, I'll get you!

Tonio (*laughing comically*)

Ha! Ha! Ha!

Nedda (*turning to Tonio*)

Well done, my clever Tonio!

Tonio

Part of the service!

Nedda

You like to stir up trouble.

Tonio (*bowing*)

I can do even better,
don't you worry.

Nedda

You disgust me. I hate you!

Tonio

Oh, don't you know yet,
that's what I like!

(Canio re-enters, from over the wall, out of breath and mopping his forehead.)

Canio *(with suppressed anger)*
What a fool they've made me!
Lost him! It's clear
that he knows his way around.
(furiously to Nedda)
I shall find him:
the lover who just left you...
Tell me his name.

Nedda *(turning)*
Who?

Canio
You! God is my witness.
And I'll tell you the reason
(drawing a dagger from his belt)
why I haven't
cut your throat.
It's because, before I plant it
in your treacherous bosom,
you shameless harlot,
I'll make you tell me
who is your lover, tell me!

Nedda
Your threats are useless.
I swear I'll tell you nothing.

Canio *(shouting)*
Who is it? Who is it?
Spit it out, you wretched woman!

Nedda
No! I would rather die!

(Beppe appears from the left.)

Canio *(Rushing on Nedda, Beppe holds him back, snatches the knife from him and throws it away.)*
Damn you, I'll kill you!

Beppe
Oh, what is this?
Let her be, I tell you.
It's time for the performance.
Any moment now they'll all be coming...
Now listen, just control yourself!

Canio *(struggling)*
Don't try to stop me!
Who is he? Who is he?

Beppe
Tonio,
help me to hold him.

Canio
Who is he?

(Tonio, seizing him by the arm, leads him down left.)

Beppe
Come on now... you mustn't shout so loud!
Here comes the public.
(to Nedda)
And Nedda, get away from him,
it's time to go and dress.
(pushing her towards the theatre)

We all know
Canio has a temper.
It'll pass.

Canio *(holding his head in his hands)*
I hate her, I hate her!

(Beppe goes with Nedda into the theatre.)

Tonio *(softly to Canio pushing him down to the front)*
Calm down a bit...
Stop shouting...
Pretend it's all a joke.
Her lover will come back,
then we will find a way!
I will observe her...
You do the show as usual.
Who knows maybe he'll come
to see her act tonight...
and he'll betray himself.
Calm down...
You must deceive them both
to get your way.

(Beppe comes from the theatre. Tonio goes up.)

Beppe
We're waiting Canio,
Your costume's here...
get ready.
(to Tonio)
And you, give us a drum roll Tonio.
(Both go off behind the theatre.)

Canio

¹⁴ Go on stage...
and my life broken in pieces...
I won't know what I'm saying...
how can I do it?
But no, you have to... Force yourself!
Well!
(angrily)
Call yourself a man!
(mocking)
Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!
You're just an actor!
(taking his head in his hands in despair)

¹⁵ Put on your costume
and your wig and your make-up.
They pay their money,
and you must make them laugh.
If, in the play,
your lady takes a lover,
make it amusing,
be sure to raise a laugh.
You turn to laughter your pain
and betrayal,
you tell a story,
pull faces, play the part.
Ah! Make it amusing,
though your life has been shattered.
Who wants to know
that grief has poisoned your heart.

(He moves slowly towards the theatre weeping, pushes the curtain roughly as if not wishing to enter, then begins to weep again. He takes his head in his

hands and hides his face, takes a few steps towards the curtain. He enters and disappears.)

16 Intermezzo

Act II

(Beppe comes from behind, blowing a trumpet; Tonio follows, beating the big drum, and goes to take up his position on left of theatre. Meanwhile, people come from all directions to the play and Beppe places the benches for the women.)

Scene 1

Women and men *(from behind the scene)*

17 Oh! Oh!

Quickly! Hurry!
Let's get a move on!
Hurry along with you,
come on, look lively!
Let's get a move on,
don't waste time!

Tonio *(beating a drum)*

Come on, be quick,
we're nearly starting!

Chorus

Hurry along with you,
or they'll have started!
Don't be impatient!
Will you stop pushing me...
If you don't move now
we'll miss the start!

Tonio

We're nearly ready!
We're nearly ready, quickly, quickly!

Men

Just look around, those pretty girls
are so attractive,
aren't they attractive!
Oh Lord what a crush!
Come here and sit by me
you lovely creature!
I'll tell you the story!

Women

I hate the way they push!

Tonio

Get to your places!
Come on!
Hurry along! Sit down!

Women and men

Down in the front row!
Down in the front row!
Hurry along with you
or they'll have started.
Aren't there a few more seats
down in the front there?
Well, here we are.
Come, we are ready now,
we want some action.
Why do we have to wait?
We want some action!
Give us the play!

Tonio

Come on, be quick,
we're nearly starting.

(Tonio exits behind the theatre, carrying away the drum. Beppe goes to settle the women who are quarrelling about their seats.)

Women

Will you stop pushing me!
I wasn't pushing you!
Stop pushing! You're crazy!
Stop! Who?
Stop! Oh Beppe, lend a hand.
I'm so exhausted.

Men

Sit down along the side here!
See they have come to blows!
Will no one stop them!
Sit down and stop that dreadful noise.
Stop all that shouting there!

(Silvio passes on the right seeing Nedda going round with plate for the money, and approaches her.)

Beppe

Sit down and
don't make such a noise!

Silvio

Nedda!

Nedda

Be careful!
Don't let him see you!

Silvio

I shall be waiting
after the show.

Women and men

Let's start, we're ready now.
Why are we waiting? Let's start!
We want to see some action!
Let's start! Let's start!

Beppe

Stop shouting! Damn it all!
Some haven't paid yet!
Give it to Nedda!

Women and men

I've paid! I've paid!
It's time to start! Come on
why are we waiting?
It's time to start! Come on
ring up the curtain!
We'll make a scene
yes, yes, we'll all start yelling!
You know quite well
it's gone half past eleven.
(A bell is heard being rung.)
Ah! They must be starting!
No shouting, no yelling, they're starting!
We're ready! Hoorah! Hoorah! Hoorah!

The Play

Scene 2

The curtain of the theatre is drawn aside. The scene, roughly painted, represents a little room with two side doors, and a practicable window at the back.

There is a table and two common chairs on right. Nedda is dressed as Columbina.

(As the curtain opens, Columbina is seated near the table; from time to time she looks anxiously to the door on right. She rises, goes to look out of the window, and then returns to the front, walking about restlessly.)

Columbina

- [18] Pagliaccio, that's my husband,
dines out this evening... won't be home till late.
(Columbina sits down again impatiently. She gets up and comes down stage.)
That idiotic servant,
old Taddeo,
why on earth is he so late?
(Columbina, hearing the sound of a guitar off-stage, rushes to the window with a cry of joy, but does not open it.)

Harlequin *(off-stage)*

Columbina, faithful
Arlecchino's near.
Can you not hear?
With love he's sighing,
maybe dying
if you don't appear!
Won't you let me kiss
your pretty lips my dear...
Do not delay.
How I adore you,
here I implore you:
one loving kiss
and then I'll go away.

- [19] O Columbina, let our
love affair begin.
Poor Arlecchin...
With love I'm sighing,
maybe I'm dying.
Ah, won't you let me in!

Columbina *(coming down-stage)*

I'll give the signal
in a moment... he's waiting... he'll see it
and then we'll be together.

(Columbina sits again at table. Tonio, dressed as Taddeo, peeps through door and watches Nedda.)

Taddeo *(in mock tragic style)*

- [20] She's waiting.
(lifting his hands and the basket upwards)
She is a goddess!
(The audience laughs.)
I long to woo her,
I long to tell her
of my love...
If she spurns me I'll compel her!
Gone is the husband,
and there's my angel.
Why won't she see me?
There's no one by to catch us.
Oh turn and kiss me. Ah.

Columbina *(turning without rising)*

You're there, numbskull!

Taddeo *(without moving)*

I am here, yes!

Columbina

Has Pagliaccio come home yet?

Taddeo

Oh no, not yet!

Columbina *(aside)*

I'd really like to kick him!
(to Taddeo)
Now did you buy a chicken?

Taddeo

Here you are, goddess from heaven!
(He kneels down and offers his basket.)
My lady, I and the chicken
implore your favour.
Fate has chosen this moment
for me to tell you
of the love in my heart.
See, I am your slave,
my queen.

Columbina *(interrupting)*

I hope you didn't spend much money?

(Columbina snatches the basket from him, places it on table, then goes to the window, opens it and makes a signal.)

Taddeo

Nothing to speak of...
Oh my queen, how I love you!

Columbina *(close to the table)*

Leave it here and be off!

Taddeo

I know you're faithful,
you'd not deceive your husband...

(sneering)

so honest, you'd not deceive him!

(Meanwhile Harlequin jumps in through the window, puts down a bottle and goes cautiously behind Taddeo.)

And, though you'd spurn me,
spurn me so harshly,
You'll never force me to forget you.
No, never!

Harlequin *(taking Taddeo by the ear and kicking him)*

Off with you quickly!

Taddeo

Heavens! A lover!
I do as you command, sir,
and give my blessing.
(retreating to the door)
Yes, I'll keep a lookout,

(Taddeo exits and the spectators laugh and applaud. Columbina and Harlequin watch each other with exaggerated looks of love.)

Columbina

- [21] Arlecchin!

Harlequin

Columbina! You must surrender
to my undying love!

Columbina

Oh I'm so hungry!

(Columbina takes knives, forks and spoons for two, and places the chicken on table, while Harlequin takes up the bottle which he left on the ground.)

You see, my love,
this tasty dish:
I hope it will excite you.

Harlequin

Why yes, my love,
and here's a glass
of wine that will delight you!

Columbina and Harlequin

My appetite is keener
when I take wine at dinner!

Harlequin

My greedy Columbina!

Columbina

Oh pour me out another!

Harlequin

Columbina!

(He takes a little phial which he has concealed about him.)

Here's a potion that I've prepared;
Give it to Pagliaccio:
It will make him drowsy,
and then we'll run away!

Columbina

Oh, lovely!

Taddeo *(He enters with mock alarm.)*

I warn you...
Pagliaccio is here... He's in a passion...
He's got a weapon!

He will kill you.
I'll hide behind this curtain!
(Spectators laugh.)

Columbina *(to Harlequin)*
Hurry!

Harlequin *(as he leaps out of the window)*
[22] Pour the potion in his glass at midnight!
(Canio, dressed as Pagliaccio, enters.)

Columbina *(at the window)*
Yes, tonight...
And forever I shall be yours.

Canio *(aside)*
Just the same promise
that she gave to her lover!
(advancing to play his part)
God help me!
(aloud)
I heard another voice.

Nedda
What nonsense!
You've been drinking?

Canio *(restraining himself with difficulty)*
Been drinking?
Yes! *(eyeing her with meaning)* All evening!

Nedda
You're home so early.

Canio *(pointedly)*
Too early?
You're trembling,
my little darling.

(still trying to restrain himself)
Ah! What about the table:
there are places for two.

Nedda

I sat there
with Taddeo.
In fright he hid behind the curtain.
(going towards the door)
Come out! Tell him!

Tonio *(from behind, pretending to be afraid)*
Believe her, sir. She is faithful!
She'd never tell a lie,
she'd not deceive you.
(The audience laughs loudly.)

Canio *(fiercely, to the audience)*
Stop your laughing!
(softly, to Nedda)
I mean it! I have the right,
the right of every husband...
What is his name?

Nedda
But who?

Canio
Tell me now. I want to know his name...
the handsome lover
who embraced and kissed you.
Oh, I could kill you!

Nedda *(joking)*
Pagliaccio! Pagliaccio!

Canio

[23] No, we're not in a play!
You see how pale I am,
well that's from horror
and shame that you betrayed me.
See, the actor is human,
you know his broken heart
is bleeding, he must have vengeance!
No! We're not in a play!
Have you forgotten me,
how I nursed you
to health and fed and clothed you.
You were helpless and starving...
I even married you
and gave you love
like some stupid old madman!
(He falls overwhelmed on the chair by the table.)

Groups of women

Great acting... he has made me cry.
You'd think he really meant it.

Groups of men

Will you shut up!
Stop talking there!

Silvio *(aside)*

If I could only help her!

Canio

I hoped so blind was I,
so deluded with passion,
that you'd be kind and pity me.
I gave everything up for you
to keep you happy.

I believed like a blind man,
that you were true to me.
But no, you are possessed
in heart and soul by evil:
you don't care about me,
you have no sense of shame!
You deserve no remorse,
you worthless little peasant.
I long to wipe your
loathsome presence from the world.

Women and men

Bravo!

Nedda (*calm and serious*)
Enough! You've decided
I'm not worth keeping,
so kick me out this minute.

Canio (*laughing*)
Ha! Ha! That's just exactly
what you'd like
so you could turn
to see your lover.
You'd like that.
No! By God. You're going nowhere
until I know your lover.
What's his name?

Nedda (*trying to resume the play, with a forced smile*)
You really mean to frighten me,
I'd never have believed it!
We're only playing comedy.
(*going towards the door*)

Don't be so fierce and tragic.
It's true I had a caller...
I offered him some supper...
His name... It was only,
that boy Arlecchino!

(*laughter in the crowd, immediately checked at Canio's attitude*)

Canio (*violently*)
Ah, you're still playing...
You haven't understood me.
Give me your answer.
Who is he? Who is your lover? Who is he?

Nedda (*bursting out*)
No! No! You can kill me!
You want to, I can see it...
Why don't you do it?
I'm not afraid to die!

Men and Women
This isn't acting.
Sounds like they mean it.
Will you shut up!
Can it be true, they mean it?

Silvio
If only I could help...
Oh my God, what will happen!

Beppe
Go in and stop them, Tonio.

Tonio (*holding Beppe*)
Let them finish!

Beppe
I am frightened.

Nedda
You shout and threaten...
Nothing can stop my loving...

Canio
Ah!

Nedda
I will not say!
No! I swear it, I will die first!

Canio
Who is he?

Nedda (*defiantly*)
No!

Canio
Who is he?

The Crowd
Ah!

Silvio (*drawing his dagger*)
Look at the knife he has!
He'll kill her!

(*Some of the women run away, and some of the men hold Silvio, not understanding his excitement. Nedda tries to escape towards the spectators, but Canio seizes her, and strikes her with his knife.*)

Chorus (*all rising to their feet, general confusion*)
Dear God!

Canio (*to Nedda*)
Take that you slut!

Chorus and Beppe
Stop him! Oh help!

Canio
And as your blood is choking you,
say his name.

Nedda (*shreiking*)
Ah!
(*Nedda falls, making a gurgling sound in her throat.*)
Where are you (*with a last effort*) Silvio?

Silvio
Nedda!

(*Canio turns at the voice of Silvio, rushes toward him, and stabs him in the heart.*)

Canio
Ah! It's you! You're welcome!

(*Silvio falls as if struck by lightning.*)

Men
Arrest him!

Women
Heaven forgive them!

(*The crowd tries to disarm Canio.*)

Tonio (*to the spectators*)
Our comedy is over!

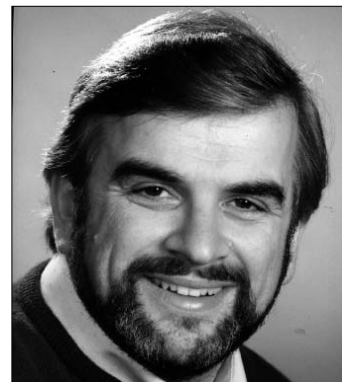
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Rosa Mannion



Dennis O'Neill



Alan Opie

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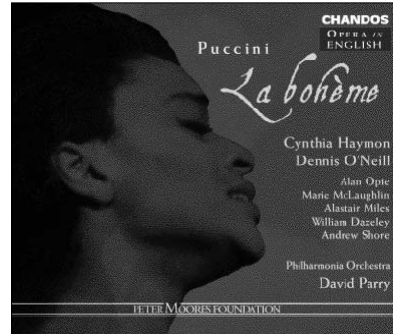


William Dazeley

Opera in English on Chandos



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LEONCAVALLO: PAGLIACCI - Soloists / LPO / Parry



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Ruggero Leoncavallo (1857–1919)

Pagliacci (The Touring Company)

Opera in a prologue and two acts

Libretto by Leoncavallo

English translation by Edmund Tracey

Tonio (in the play, *Taddeo*), a clown Alan Opie *baritone*

Canio (in the play, *Pagliaccio*), leader of the players Dennis O'Neill *tenor*

Beppe (in the play, *Harlequin*) Peter Bronder *tenor*

Nedda (in the play, *Columbina*), wife of Canio Rosa Mannion *soprano*

Silvio, a villager William Dazeley *baritone*

Two locals Paul Parfitt *bass-baritone* • Peter Hall *tenor*

TT 79:45

Geoffrey Mitchell Choir

The Peter Kay Children's Choir

London Philharmonic Orchestra

Brad Cohen assistant conductor

David Parry conductor

(DDD)

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