

**STUDY GUIDE
2007-2008 SEASON**

CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA
by
Pietro Mascagni

**Libretto by Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti and Guido Menasci
after a short story and play by Giovanni Verga**

CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA
Premiere

First performance at Teatro Constanzi on May 17, 1890, in Rome, Italy.

Cast of Characters

Santuzza, a peasant girl.....	Soprano
Mamma Lucia, Turriddu's mother.....	Mezzo Soprano
Alfio, a carter.....	Baritone
Turriddu, a youngsoldier.....	Tenor
Lola, Alfio's wife.....	Mezzo Soprano
Villagers and peasants.....	Chorus

Brief Summary

Setting: A Sicilian village, turn of the century

It is Easter Sunday and the villagers are gathering for mass. Santuzza arrives asking Mamma Lucia about her son Turriddu. She is upset because she feels abandoned by him after he promised to marry her. After the villagers enter the church Santuzza tells Lucia hersad story. Turriddu is having an affair with Lola, his former fiancé, who married Alfio while Turriddu was away on military duty. Now Turriddu is ignoring Santuzza even though she is pregnant. She confronts Turriddu as he follows Lola into the church, but is angrily rebuffed. In a fit of jealousy and anger she denounces Turriddu to Lola's husband Alfio.

Alfio vows vengeance and Santuzza feels remorseful. After the Easter mass Turriddu invites the crowd into his mother's wine shop and they all enjoy a rousing song. The happy mood changes when Alfio enters the shop. The two men confront each other and exchange sharp words. Alfio challenges Turriddu in the traditional Sicilian manner. After Alfio leaves for their fight, Turriddu asks for his mother's blessing and requests that she take care of Santuzza if he does not return. He emotionally begs for his mother's kiss and runs off. Santuzza rushes in and embraces Lucia. With rising tension they await the outcome. Suddenly a woman runs in and shrieks that Turriddu has been murdered. Mamma Lucia cries out and Santuzza falls fainting to the ground.

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Full Plot Synopsis and Musical Highlights

Prelude

The opening prelude introduces several musical themes which will recur throughout the opera and establishes the contrast between the peaceful religious atmosphere of Easter Sunday and the dark violent passions that are simmering beneath the surface. The gentle music of the Easter hymn is followed by an ominous theme representing Santuzza's jealousy, and finally the tender, passionate music of Santuzza's plea for Turriddu's love is introduced. The orchestral introduction is interrupted by Turriddu's voice singing the "Siciliana," a serenade to Lola, pledging his undying love.

It is written in the style of a traditional Sicilian folk song and sung to a simple harp accompaniment, suggestive of a guitar, the instrument most used in a serenade. The use of a human voice in the prelude of an opera was very unconventional. After the serenade the orchestra returns to the musical themes previously introduced. The prelude ends peacefully, as it began.

Act I

With the sound of church bells the curtain rises on a village square in Sicily. It is dawn. Two structures dominate the square, the massive church and the wine shop and tavern of Mamma Lucia. The villagers enter the square singing of the beauties of springtime and love, accompanied by gay, festive music. Some go into the church while others go about their business. The mood changes abruptly as the music grows somber with a note of impending tragedy. Santuzza enters and approaches Mamma Lucia anxiously asking after Turriddu. When Lucia tells her that he has gone to a neighboring town to buy wine, Santuzza protests that he was seen the previous night in their own village. Confused, Lucia invites Santuzza into the house to continue their conversation in private. Santuzza declines, explaining that she has been excommunicated and cannot enter the house of a good Catholic. Apprehensively Lucia asks what Santuzza knows about Turriddu. Before she can answer, the jingle of bells and the cracking of a whip announce the arrival of Alfio, the village carter and husband of Lola. He is followed by admiring men and women who join in a lively song about the joys of the carter's life, "Il cavallo scalpita," (The horses hooves thunder). After being on the road, driving from village to village, he is glad to be home and looks forward to seeing his wife. When the song ends, Alfio asks Mamma Lucia if she can sell him some of his favorite wine. She explains that Turriddu has gone to the village of Francofonte to replenish her supply. Alfio questions this because he has just seen Turriddu near his own house. Lucia is disturbed but Santuzza signals her not to say anything. Alfio leaves to prepare for church as the square begins to fill with villagers going to Easter Mass.

From inside the church a choir begins the majestic hymn, "Regina Coeli," (Queen of Heaven), accompanied by the sound of an organ. The villagers outside the church respond with hallelujahs. They kneel in prayer and join in the fervent hymn as a religious procession passes through the square and into the church. Although Santuzza may not enter the church, she joins in the singing of the Easter hymn, "Inneggiamo, il Signor non è morto," (Let us rejoice that our Lord is not dead), her voice rising passionately above the others. The chorus swells in intensity and builds to a great, dramatic climax before the villagers go into the church. Mamma Lucia and Santuzza remain alone in the square. Lucia asks Santuzza why she had motioned her to keep quiet earlier. Santuzza replies in an aria, "Voi lo sapete," (You know it), relating her whole sad story. Before he left for military service Turriddu had been in love with Lola and the two were engaged to be married. When he returned from the army he found that Lola had not waited but had married Alfio. In his despair Turriddu had turned to Santuzza for consolation and she had become his lover. Now Lola, out of envy and jealousy, has lured Turriddu back to her. While the two are having an affair Santuzza has been left alone and pregnant and Turriddu has ignored his promise to marry her.

Abandoned and excommunicated, all Santuzza can do is weep and pray for him to return. Lucia is horrified. Santuzza asks her to pray for her soul while she waits to speak with Turriddu. Mamma Lucia has left and Turriddu, arriving in the square, and heads for the wine shop. Surprised and uncomfortable at seeing Santuzza, he asks her why she isn't in church. "Tu qui, Santuzza?" (You here, Santuzza?) begins their dramatic scene and duet which proceeds through four sections of increasing tension and confrontation. Santuzza wants Turriddu to say where he has been. When he responds that he was in Francofonte buying wine she confronts him with her knowledge that he was at Lola's house. Angrily he accuses her of spying and berates her for being suspicious. When she insists that he still loves Lola, he denies it. Turriddu defiantly warns Santuzza to leave him alone while she wretchedly reaffirms her love for him. They are suddenly interrupted by the voice of Lola who enters singing a frivolous, happy tune which greatly contrasts with the music of the duet. Her song is a flirtatious, insinuating little aria, "Fior di gaggiolo," (O flower of the iris), directed at Turriddu. It is clear that she is heartless and shallow. She feigns surprise when she sees them and asks Turriddu if he has seen Alfio. Turriddu is flustered and embarrassed. When Lola mockingly asks if they are going to church, Santuzza replies darkly that only those free of sin may enter. Brazenly, Lola gives thanks to the Lord that she is sinless. This evokes another bitter response from Santuzza. Lola starts into the church. When Turriddu tries to follow her she stops him, flippantly telling him to stay with Santuzza and uttering a blessing on them both. After Lola enters the church Turriddu turns furiously on Santuzza and the duet continues. Santuzza pleads with him not to abandon her, singing the passionate, moving melody already introduced in the Prelude. He continues to upbraid her, telling her once more to leave him alone. Again the confrontation builds in intensity. When Santuzza tries to physically prevent him from following Lola into the church,

Turriddu violently throws her to the ground, and goes in. Beside herself, Santuzza screams, "A te la mala Pasqua, spergiuro!" (May your Easter be cursed, you traitor!) A moment later Alfio enters, accompanied by a dark, ominous version of his carter's song. Santuzza regains her composure and approaches him saying that the Lord himself has sent him her way at this moment. She blurts out the entire story that Lola is betraying him with Turriddu. Stunned, Alfio threatens to tear out her heart if she is lying. She replies that in her shame and sorrow she told him the truth. Alfio thanks her calmly, then his anger explodes as he vows vengeance. Their duet ends in a fiery cabaletta, "Ad essi non perdono," (I will not forgive them), with Santuzza crying in remorse at having betrayed Turriddu and Alfio planning his revenge.

A pause in the stage action ensues while the orchestra plays a Symphonic Intermezzo. This represents the passage of time as the church service concludes. After the fierce, violent passions of the preceding scene, a calm, devotional mood returns as the orchestra reprises the opening strains of the Regina Coeli. This serves as a reminder that these unholy events are taking place on Easter, a day of peace and piety. A haunting new theme is then introduced, suggesting both the religious fervor and the passion of love around which the opera revolves. The Symphonic Intermezzo is the most famous excerpt from the score and is a favorite concert piece.

At the conclusion of the Intermezzo the church bells ring and the opera's opening music returns. The villagers pour out of the church into the square singing a folk-like chorus. When Turriddu and Lola emerge from the church he invites his friends to join him at his mother's wine shop. Filling their glasses, he leads them in a rousing drinking song, "Viva il vino spumeggiante," (Long live the sparkling wine). When Alfio enters everyone greets him cordially and Turriddu offers him a glass. Alfio refuses, saying that the wine would turn to poison inside him. The jolly mood quickly darkens as Turriddu acknowledges the insult by spilling the wine on the ground. The two men confront each other tensely. A frightened Lola is ushered away by the women. Alfio and Turriddu exchange a few sharp words then give a challenge in the traditional Sicilian manner. The two men embrace and Turriddu bites Alfio's ear. They agree to meet behind the orchard wall and Alfio leaves. Turriddu calls out to his mother, the music suggesting his underlying fear. Lucia enters and Turriddu sings a dramatic aria, "Mamma, quell vino è generosa," (Mama, that wine is strong). He says he must go out for a walk to clear his head of the strong wine, and asks her to bless him before he goes. Then, passionately he pleads with her to take care of Santuzza should he not return because he had promised to marry her. Confused, the old woman asks why he is speaking so strangely. He blames it on the wine once again. Then in an outburst of emotion he asks his mother to kiss him and repeats his plea that she look after Santuzza. After asking for one last kiss, he says goodbye and rushes off.

Alarmed, Mamma Lucia starts to follow him, calling his name. Santuzza arrives and embraces her. The tension in the orchestra intensifies as people begin to crowd nervously into the square. Voices are heard murmuring in the distance. Suddenly a woman runs in crying, "Hanno ammazzato compare Turriddu!" (Turriddu has been killed!). Everyone cries out in horror and Santuzza and Lucia fall fainting to the ground.

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Historical Background

Mascagni's opera was based on Giovanni Verga's story and play of the same name. Verga's very popular play was produced in 1884 with the famous Eleanora Duse acting the part of Santuzza. It was performed all over Italy and initiated the verismo period in Italian theater. The location of the original story was, in actuality, the hometown of Giovanni Verga. It was a small, nearly-forgotten mountain village in Sicily called Vizzini. Verga had become a successful writer when he focused on his Sicilian roots. He used authentic local dialects and wrote realistically about Sicilian passions, virtues, prejudices and folklore. Mascagni saw the play within a month of its opening but did not think of it as the basis for an opera at that time. Some four years later, he was preparing to enter a competition for one-act operas sponsored by the publishing house Casa Sonzogno. He quickly contacted a friend about writing a libretto. This friend, Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti, suggested the Verga play and Mascagni readily agreed. A second librettist, Guido Menasci, was brought in to speed up the process. The libretto strictly adhered to the play and was completed in December 1888. Mascagni worked eighteen hours a day to complete his opera by the deadline. The publishing house chose three finalists and arranged for the three works to be staged. Public response would decide the winner. Mascagni was notified on May 6, 1890, that his opera was a finalist. He left immediately for Rome to supervise the rehearsals and make any last minute changes.

Just eleven days later CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA had its first performance and was a stunning success. There were dozens of curtain calls. For a young composer of twenty five, the instant fame was almost overwhelming. His state of mind is captured in a letter he wrote to his father two days after the premiere, "Dear Father, the intense excitement makes it impossible for me to tell you in detail about the day before yesterday which was quite astonishing. I still haven't got over the emotion and confusion. I could never have imagined such enthusiasm: in the stalls and boxes they were all on their feet, even the orchestra stood up to give me a colossal ovation. All the ladies, including the Queen, applauded. It was a colossal success, the likes of which had never been seen. You will already have seen this in the papers which all say the same thing. One thing has touched me particularly... This morning Ricordi sent me a telegram offering to buy the opera. But in gratitude I have already signed a contract with Sonzogno which will earn me twelve or fifteen thousand lire for two and a half

years. The first prize is mine. Sonzogno have awarded me 300 lire a month. My situation has changed completely. I'm going crazy..."

Within the next 18 months, CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA was acclaimed around the world, performed at all the major opera houses. It has proved its staying power by maintaining its strong popularity and has served as a rite of passage for generations of international opera stars through the vocal prowess required by the two principal characters, Turiddu and Santuzza. The verismo period in Italy lasted about ten years before the incomparable Giacomo Puccini would become the driving force in Italian opera, establishing his own unique synthesis of style and content. The elements of verismo style can be discerned in the works of many composers, including Puccini, well into the twentieth century.

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The Composer Mascagni

Pietro Mascagni was born the son of a baker in Livorno, Italy, on December 7, 1863. From an early age he wanted to become a musician but his father disapproved and insisted he study law. Instead, Mascagni studied music secretly. By the time he was sixteen he had composed a Symphony in C major and a Kyrie. As he made progress with his music he eventually gained the acceptance of his father. He studied at the Milan Conservatory under the well known composer Amilcare Ponchielli and was a fellow student of Giacomo Puccini. Mascagni found the training to be tedious and the rules too strict. Eventually he left the Conservatory to become the conductor of a traveling opera company. By 1887 he was tired of the traveling life, and settled in the town of Cerignola, where he married. He was employed as the town music master and theater director for 100 lire per month.

The following months became increasingly difficult as a result of an economic downturn. Mascagni wrote letters to friends, including Puccini, in which he expressed his increasing desperation. In 1888 the opportunity arose to write an opera for a competition sponsored by the publishing house Casa Sonzogno. The competition was for one-act operas and the winning finalists would have their operas staged in Rome. Seventy-two aspiring composers entered the competition. Mascagni's opera CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA won the first prize and was produced by the publishers at the Teatro Constanzi in Rome on May 17, 1890. The opera was an instant success and brought fame and fortune to the young Mascagni. Within eighteen months CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA had been staged at all the major opera houses around the world.

Mascagni next wrote the opera, *L'Amico Fritz*, which enjoyed some success but the majority of his other operas have faded into obscurity. His opera *Iris*, composed in 1898, was very popular and still receives occasional revivals, as does *L'Amico Fritz*. Mascagni wrote a total of fifteen operas, an operetta, several beautiful orchestral and vocal works, as well as songs and piano music. He also

enjoyed great success as a conductor, primarily at La Scala in Milan. He is considered a “one-opera composer” by many because none of his subsequent operas achieved the stunning level of success of his CAVALLERIA. Mascagni did not compose all his operas in the verismo vein, employing a variety of styles in the operas that followed CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA.

Later in his life Mascagni became the official composer of the Fascist government of Italy. In 1935 he composed the opera *Nerone*, which was staged at La Scala in Milan. He wrote the opera as a tribute to Benito Mussolini. In 1940 he personally conducted a star-studded production of CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA at La Scala to commemorate its fiftieth anniversary. His association with Mussolini led to his disgrace after the fall of the Fascist regime in 1943. Mascagni ended his days in poverty, living in a single room in Rome. He died in Rome on August 2, 1945.

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Verismo in Opera

Verismo is an Italian word derived from the Latin *veritas*, meaning truth. It is the term used to describe the realistic or naturalistic school of Italian opera popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is typified by the works of Pietro Mascagni, Ruggiero Leoncavallo, and Giacomo Puccini. Verismo or realism is related to the literary movement of naturalism which grew out of a desire to move away from Romanticism and its idealistic spirit. Concerned with the harsh and often victimized lives of the lower classes, this type of opera drew its characters and situations from common life, rather than the idealized figures of early nineteenth century opera. The plots of verismo operas are characteristically fast-moving, violent and sensational, with little elaboration or filler material and uncomplicated characters.

Though essentially an Italian phenomenon, the first truly “veristic” opera was French. Produced in 1875, Georges Bizet’s *Carmen* created a sensation and a scandal in Paris. Many of the genteel French audience were horrified by a plot depicting smugglers, thieves, murderers and a blatantly sexual heroine. There were others who were intrigued by a story that involved basic, primal human emotions. The French produced few other operas in this vein, though Jules Massenet, the famous composer of *Manon*, contributed to the genre with *La Navarraise*. Pietro Mascagni is credited with writing the first Italian verismo opera. His CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA, which premiered in 1890, presented a torrid, unsophisticated tale of love and death among Sicilian peasants. Other verismo operas include Puccini’s *Il Tabarro*, the story of a love triangle among lower-class Parisians, Puccini’s *La Fanciulla del West*, Montemezzi’s *L’Amore dei Tre Re*, Giordano’s *Andrea Chenier* and *Fedora*, and Manuel de Falla’s *La Vida Breve*. American composer Gian Carlo Menotti has been a primary advocate of verismo in the later twentieth century with such works as *The*

Medium and The Consul. An additional example of the use of verismo in American opera is Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah*.

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Discussion Questions

1. Do you consider the story of CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA to be relevant today?
2. Discuss the use of musical and dramatic contrasts in the opera.
3. What moods are depicted and what devices are used to change the mood?
4. CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA is a type of opera called verismo (realistic). What elements make the opera realistic?
5. What is the purpose of the orchestral Intermezzo which occurs in the middle of the opera?
6. Santuzza is treated as an outcast in the village because of public awareness of her illicit relationship with Turridu. Would she be treated the same way today?
7. The title of the opera translates as "Rustic Chivalry." How does the title describe the outcome of the opera? Was the outcome fair and equitable?
8. Is Turridu a hero or an antihero?
9. What is the difference in treatment between the two women who have broken the rules of their society? Why is one treated more harshly than the other?
10. What is the role of the Church in the story?
11. Does Turridu know he is going to die? Does he go to his death willingly?
12. Does the fact that the duel takes place off stage lessen its impact?
13. Alfio is the wronged husband. Why does his music make him sound sinister at times. Is he a sympathetic character?

A Short History of Opera

The word opera is the plural form of the Latin word opus, which translates quite literally as work. The use of the plural form alludes to the plurality of art forms that combine to create an operatic performance. Today we accept the word opera as a reference to a theatrically based musical art form in which the drama is propelled by the sung declamation of text accompanied by a full symphony orchestra. Opera as an art form can claim its origin with the inclusion of incidental music that was performed during the tragedies and comedies popular during ancient Greek times. The tradition of including music as an integral part of theatrical activities expanded in Roman times and continued throughout the Middle Ages. Surviving examples of liturgical dramas and vernacular plays from Medieval times show the use of music as an "insignificant" part of the action as do the vast mystery and morality plays of the 15th and 16th centuries. Traditional view holds that the first completely sung musical drama (or opera) developed as a result of discussions held in Florence in the 1570s by an informal academy known as the Camerata which led to the musical setting of Rinuccini's drama, *Dafne*, by composer, Jacopo Peri in 1597.

The work of such early Italian masters as Giulio Caccini and Claudio Monteverdi led to the development of a through-composed musical entertainment comprised of recitative sections (*secco* and *accompagnato*) which revealed the plot of the drama; followed by *da capo* arias which provided the soloist an opportunity to develop the emotions of the character. The function of the chorus in these early works mirrored that of the character of the same name found in Greek drama. The new “form” was greeted favorably by the public and quickly became a popular entertainment.

Opera has flourished throughout the world as a vehicle for the expression of the full range of human emotions. Italians claim the art form as their own, retaining dominance in the field through the death of Giacomo Puccini in 1924. Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, Verdi, and Leoncavallo developed the art form through clearly defined periods that produced *opera buffa*, *opera seria*, *bel canto*, and *verismo*. The Austrian Mozart also wrote operas in Italian and championed the *singspiel* (sing play), which combined the spoken word with music, a form also used by Beethoven in his only opera, *Fidelio*. Bizet (*Carmen*), Offenbach (*Les Contes d’Hoffmann*), Gounod (*Faust*), and Meyerbeer (*Les Huguenots*) led the adaptation by the French which ranged from the *opera comique* to the grand full-scale *tragedie lyrique*. German composers von Weber (*Der Freischütz*), Richard Strauss (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), and Wagner (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*) developed diverse forms such as *singspiel* to through composed spectacles unified through the use of the *leitmotif*. The English ballad opera, Spanish zarzuela and Viennese operetta helped to establish opera as a form of entertainment which continues to enjoy great popularity throughout the world.

With the beginning of the 20th century, composers in America diverged from European traditions in order to focus on their own roots while exploring and developing the vast body of the country’s folk music and legends. Composers such as Aaron Copland, Douglas Moore, Carlisle Floyd, Howard Hanson, and Robert Ward have all crafted operas that have been presented throughout the world to great success. Today, composers John Adams, Philip Glass, and John Corigliano enjoy success both at home and abroad and are credited with the infusion of new life into an art form which continues to evolve even as it approaches its fifth century.

The Operatic Voice

A brief definition of the “operatic” voice is a difficult proposition. Many believe the voice is “born,” while just as many hold to the belief that the voice is “trained.” The truth lies somewhere between the two. Voices that can sustain the demands required by the operatic repertoire do have many things in common. First and foremost is a strong physical technique that allows the singer to sustain long phrases through the control of both the inhalation and exhalation of breath. Secondly, the voice (regardless of its size) must maintain a resonance in both the head (mouth, sinuses) and chest cavities. The Italian word “squillo” (squeal) is

used to describe the brilliant tone required to penetrate the full symphony orchestra that accompanies the singers. Finally, all voices are defined by both the actual voice “type” and the selection of repertoire for which the voice is ideally suited.

Within the five major voice types (Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, Baritone, Bass) there is a further delineation into categories (Coloratura, Lyric, Spinto, Dramatic) which help to define each particular instrument. The Coloratura is the highest within each voice type whose extended upper range is complimented by extreme flexibility. The Lyric is the most common of the “types.” This instrument is recognized more for the exceptional beauty of its tone rather than its power or range. The Spinto is a voice which combines the beauty of a lyric with the weight and power of a Dramatic, which is the most “powerful” of the voices. The Dramatic instrument is characterized by the combination of both incredible volume and “steely” intensity.

While the definition presented in the preceding paragraph may seem clearly outlined, many voices combine qualities from each category, thus carving an unique niche in operatic history. Just as each person is different from the next, so is each voice. Throughout her career Maria Callas defied categorization as she performed and recorded roles associated with each category in the soprano voice type. Joan Sutherland as well can be heard in recordings of soprano roles as diverse as the coloratura Gilda in *Rigoletto* to the dramatic Turandot in *Turandot*.

Opera Production

Opera is created by the combination of myriad art forms. First and foremost are the actors who portray characters by revealing their thoughts and emotions through the singing voice. The next very important component is a full symphony orchestra that accompanies the singing actors and actresses, helping them to portray the full range of emotions possible in the operatic format. The orchestra performs in an area in front of the singers called the orchestra pit while the singers perform on the open area called the stage. Wigs, costumes, sets and specialized lighting further enhance these performances, all of which are designed, created, and executed by a team of highly trained artisans.

The creation of an opera begins with a dramatic scenario crafted by a playwright or dramaturg who alone or with a librettist fashions the script or libretto that contains the words the artists will sing. Working in tandem, the composer and librettist team up to create a cohesive musical drama in which the music and words work together to express the emotions revealed in the story. Following the completion of their work, the composer and librettist entrust their new work to a conductor who with a team of assistants (repetiteurs) assumes responsibility for the musical preparation of the work. The conductor collaborates with a stage director (responsible for the visual component) in order to bring a performance

of the new piece to life on the stage. The stage director and conductor form the creative spearhead for the new composition while assembling a design team which will take charge of the actual physical production.

Set designers, lighting designers, costume designers, wig and makeup designers and even choreographers must all be brought “on board” to participate in the creation of the new production. The set designer combines the skills of both an artist and an architect using “blueprint” plans to design the actual physical set which will reside on the stage, recreating the physical setting required by the storyline. These blueprints are turned over to a team of carpenters who are specially trained in the art of stage carpentry. Following the actual building of the set, painters following instructions from the set designers’ original plans paint the set. As the set is assembled on the stage, the lighting designer works with a team of electricians to throw light onto both the stage and the set in an atmospheric as well as practical way. Using specialized lighting instruments, colored gels and a state of the art computer, the designer along with the stage director create a “lighting plot” by writing “lighting cues” which are stored in the computer and used during the actual performance of the opera.

During this production period, the costume designer in consultation with the stage director has designed appropriate clothing for the singing actors and actresses to wear. These designs are fashioned into patterns and crafted by a team of highly skilled artisans called cutters, stitchers, and sewers. Each costume is specially made for each singer using his/her individual measurements. The wig and makeup designer, working with the costume designer, designs and creates wigs which will complement both the costume and the singer as well as represent historically accurate “period” fashions.

As the actual performance date approaches, rehearsals are held on the newly crafted set, combined with costumes, lights, and orchestra in order to ensure a cohesive performance that will be both dramatically and musically satisfying to the assembled audience.