

**SUOR  
ANGELICA  
DOUBLE BILL  
OCTOBER 14 & 16, 2022  
CAVALLERIA**



## **Audience Preview Guide**

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**Wednesday, October 12, 2022 -**

**Student Night at the Opera**

**Friday, October 14, 2022**

**Sunday, October 16, 2022**

**Valentine Theatre**

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**Toledo Opera**

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## The Setting

### **SUOR ANGELICA**

Setting: A convent in Italy  
Time: The Renaissance

### **CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA**

Setting: A village in Sicily,  
Time: 1890's

## Characters

### **SUOR ANGELICA**

by Giacomo Puccini  
Libretto by Giovacchino Forzano

Suor Angelica, Sister Angelica  
La Zia Principessa, The Princess (Sister Angelica's Aunt)  
La Badessa, The Mother Abbess  
La Suora Zelatrice, The Monitress  
La Maestra Delle Novizie, The Mistress of the Novices  
Suor Genovieffa, Sister Genevieve  
Suor Osmina, Sister Osmina  
Suor Dolcina, Sister Dolcina  
La Suora Infermiera, The Nursing Sister  
Le Cercatrici, The Tourieres  
Le Novizie, The Novices  
Le Converse, The Lay Sisters  
Chorus of women and men (behind)

### **CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA**

Santuzza, a peasant  
Mama Lucia, mother of Turiddu  
Alfio, a village teamster  
Turiddu, a soldier, son of Lucia  
Lola, wife of Alfio  
Chorus of Villagers

# Synopsis

## SUOR ANGELICA

Setting: A convent in Italy

Time: The latter part of the 17th century

Sister Angelica and two lay sisters are late for chapel. The Monitor chides them for not doing penance as Sister Angelica has done. Some of the sisters confess they still long for worldly pleasures – Sister Genovieffa for the lambs she used to tend and Sister Dolcina for sweet things to eat. Sister Angelica denies she has any such desires, but the others know she desperately longs for some word from her family. For seven years she has heard nothing from them, and the sisters speculate that she was a princess, banished to the convent for reasons they have been unable to discover. Soon alms collectors arrive, distributing the food they have gathered. One of them mentions that a magnificent coach bearing a visitor stands outside the convent gate. Angelica is startled and, with increasing anxiety, asks her to describe the coach in detail. A bell rings announcing the visitor. The Abbess enters and tells Angelica that her aunt, the Princess, has come to see her.

Approaching, the Princess rejects Angelica's gestures of affection. The Princess explains that when Angelica's parents died, she was made guardian of both Angelica and her sister, Anna Viola, and was given control over their inheritance. Anna Viola is to be married and the Princess demands Angelica sign her share over to her sister. Crushed by her aunt's cruelty, Angelica swears she has repented. She cannot, however, erase the memory of her little son, who, she learns, died two years ago. Her will no broken, Angelica sobs and signs the document. The Princess withdraws and Angelica grieves that her son died without his mother by his side. Resolving to join her child in heaven, she drinks poison. She is then struck by the reality of what she has done and prays for salvation. A celestial choir is heard and Angelica sees a vision of the Blessed Virgin with her child.

## INTERMISSION

## CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA

Setting: A village in Sicily,

Time: 1900

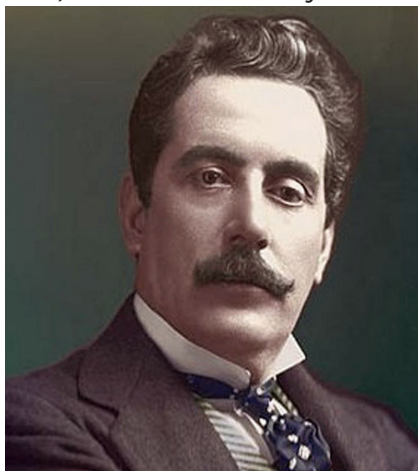
At dawn on Easter Sunday, Turiddu sings in the distance of his love for Lola, wife of the carter Alfio. She and Turiddu had been a couple before he joined the army. When he returned and found her married to Alfio, he seduced Santuzza but now has abandoned her and rekindled his relationship with Lola. Later in the morning, a distraught Santuzza approaches the tavern of Mamma Lucia, Turiddu's mother, who tells her that her son is away buying wine. But Santuzza knows that Turiddu has been seen during the night in the village. Alfio arrives with a group of men, boasting of his horses—and of Lola. He asks Mamma Lucia if she has any more of her good wine. When she says that Turiddu has gone to get more, Alfio replies that he saw him near his house that same morning. Lucia is surprised, but Santuzza tells her to keep quiet. As the villagers follow the procession to church, Santuzza stays behind and pours out her grief about Turiddu to Mamma Lucia. The old woman expresses her pity, then also leaves for Mass. Turiddu arrives in the piazza. When Santuzza confronts him about his affair with Lola, he denies her accusations. Just then Lola passes by on her way to church. She mocks Santuzza, and Turiddu turns to follow her. Santuzza begs him to stay and implores him not to abandon her. Refusing to listen, Turiddu leaves, and Santuzza curses him. Alfio appears, late for Mass. Santuzza tells him that Lola went to church with Turiddu and reveals that she has been cheating on him. In a rage, Alfio swears to get even and rushes off, leaving behind the now conscience-stricken Santuzza.

Returning from the church the villagers gather at Mamma Lucia's tavern. Turiddu leads them in a drinking song, but the atmosphere becomes tense when Alfio appears. He refuses Turiddu's offer of wine and instead challenges him to a knife fight. Turiddu admits his guilt but is determined to go through with the fight, for Santuzza's sake as well as for his honor. The two men agree to meet outside the village. Alone with his mother, Turiddu begs her to take care of Santuzza if he doesn't come back, then runs off to the fight. As Mamma Lucia waits anxiously, shouts are heard in the distance. A woman runs in screaming that Turiddu has been killed.

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# Giacomo Puccini 1858-1924

Giacomo Antonio Domenico Michele Secondo Maria Puccini was born in Lucca in Tuscany, Italy on December 22, 1858 into a family of five generations of church organists, choirmasters, and composers. His father died when Giacomo was five years old, and he was sent to study with his uncle Fortunato Magi, who considered him to be a poor student. As a teenager, Puccini served as an organist to the area churches and played the piano as entertainment at social events. In March 1876, the twenty-year old walked 18.5 miles to attend a performance of Verdi's latest opera success, *Aida*. This event changed his life and he decided that he would make opera his life's work.



**Giacomo Puccini**  
1856 - 1924

The greatest influence in Puccini's life was his mother, who petitioned and received a grant to send her son to the Milan Conservatory, where he worked diligently at his music and received his diploma in 1883. While studying at the Conservatory, Puccini obtained a libretto from Ferdinando Fontana, and entered a competition for a one-act opera in 1882. Although he did not win, *Le Villi* was later staged in 1884 at the Teatro Dal Verme and it caught the attention of Giulio Ricordi, head of G. Ricordi & Co. music publishers, who commissioned a second opera, *Edgar*, in 1889.

*Edgar* failed: it was a bad story and Fontana's libretto was poor. This may have had an effect on Puccini's thinking because when he began his next opera, *Manon Lescaut*, he announced that he would write his own libretto so that "no fool of a librettist" could spoil it. Ricordi persuaded him to accept Leoncavallo as his librettist, but Puccini soon asked Ricordi to remove him from the project. Four other librettists were then involved with the opera,

due mainly to Puccini constantly changing his mind about the structure of the piece. It was almost by accident that the final two, Illica and Giacosa, came together to complete the opera. They remained with Puccini for his next three operas and probably his greatest successes: *La bohème*, *Tosca* and *Madama Butterfly*.

The world première performance of *La bohème* took place in Turin on February 1, 1896 at the Teatro Regio, conducted by the young Arturo Toscanini. The initial response of the audience at the first performance was subdued and critical responses were polarized. Despite this, the opera quickly became popular throughout Italy. The first performance of *La bohème* outside Italy was at the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The opera was given in Alexandria, Lisbon, and Moscow in early 1897 while the United Kingdom premiere took place at the Theatre Royal in Manchester in English. The opera reached New York City on May 16, 1898.

Puccini collaborated with several librettists on his works, including Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa. His most famed operas include: *Manon Lescaut* (1893), *La bohème* (1896), *Tosca* (1900), *Madama Butterfly* (1904), *La fanciulla del West* (1910), *Il Trittico*—a collection of three one-act operas: *Il tabarro*, *Suor Angelica*, and *Gianni Schicchi* (1918), and *Turandot* (1926)—unfinished at the time of Puccini's death and later completed by Franco Alfano, one of Puccini's protégés.

Puccini was somewhat reclusive. He preferred his home in the country to hectic city life and enjoyed hunting and long walks through the countryside. He was a lifelong smoker, particularly of cigars, and in 1924 was diagnosed with throat cancer. He underwent surgery which left him no longer able to speak and died of a heart attack four days later on November 29, 1924 in Brussels.

# Pietro Mascagni 1863-1945

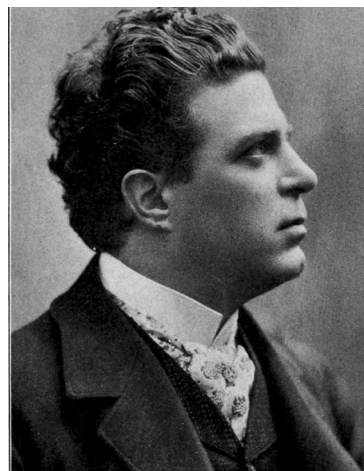
Pietro Antonio Stefano Mascagni was born on December 7, 1863, in Livorno, Italy, the son of a baker. When Mascagni was ten, his mother died, and three years later, against his father's wishes, he began studying music under the tutelage of Alfredo Soffredini, a composer, teacher, and musical reviewer. In 1881 he composed his first cantata, *In Filanda*. The composition was entered in a contest in Milan and won a handsome sum from Count Florestano de Larderel, a prize which made it financially possible for him to study at the Milan Conservatory. At the school he studied alongside Boito, Ponchielli, and Saladino and roomed with the famous Puccini.

In April 1885, after losing interest in the routine of his daily studies, Mascagni left the Conservatory. He found a position immediately with the company of Dario Acconci, and soon after toured the country as a conductor in the operette companies of Vittorio Forl, Alfonso and Ciro Scognamiglio, and Luigi Arnaldo Vassallo. In 1886 Mascagni met Luigi Maresca and his future wife, Lina. He accompanied them to Cerignola, where he accepted a position as master of music and singing at the local philharmonic society.

In 1882, Mascagni discontinued work on his opera *Guglielmo Ratcliff* so that he could focus his attention on the composition of *Cavalleria Rusticana* for the Sonzogno music competition. The opera triumphed over the other 72 entries by composers like Bossi and Giordano to win first place. On May 17, 1890, the *Cavalleria* premiered at the Costanzi Theater in Rome. Its success was unparalleled, and soon it was playing at theaters in Florence, Palermo, Venice, Hamburg, Petersburg, Dresden, Buenos Aires, and Vienna. But the rest of Mascagni's career, though long, diverse, and fruitful, would never again reach the level of success that *Cavalleria* achieved.

Mascagni followed his massive success with the 1891 opera *L'amico Fritz*, a lyrical composition yielding such popular numbers as *Cherry Duet*. The comedy premiered on October 31, 1891, at the Costanzie Theater in Rome, successful because its melodic strength, though here combined with more refined harmony, was not unlike that in *Cavalleria*. In an attempt to increase his audience, Mascagni began conducting outside Italy, where

he earned a strong reputation in Vienna, Paris, and London. On November 10, 1892, Mascagni premiered *I Rantzau* at the La Pergola Theater in Florence. The incestuous love story was received quite favorably by audience and critics alike, touted for its orchestration and the performances of its singers. Three years later, Mascagni premiered the finally-finished *Guglielmo Ratcliff* on February 16 at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan. *Silvano*, a rushed opera written to fulfill a contract with



**Pietro Mascagni**  
1863 - 1945

*Sonzogno*, premiered at the same theater on March 15.

Beginning in 1895, Mascagni worked as director of Liceo Musicale of Pesaro for several years. His one-act opera *Zanetto* was performed there in 1896. Two years later, on November 22, *Iris* premiered, a collaboration with Luigi Illica, at the Constanzi Theater in Rome. By 1902, Mascagni chose to resign his position at Liceo Musicale so he could tour the United States.

Around 1927, Mascagni began to realize that his career was languishing and he went into seclusion, moving to the Albergo Plaza in Rome, where he would remain until his death. His brief public appearances thereafter were politically attached to the fascist party in Italy, signified by the 1932 premiere of *Pinotta* in San Remo. Three years later Mascagni premiered *Nerone* in Milan, his last work, written with Mussolini in mind, as a final attempt to battle the inevitable modernism surrounding him.

Mascagni made his final appearance in April of 1943 at the La Scala Theater for a performance of *L'Amico Fritz*. His fascist associations left him friendless and poor at the time of his death on August 2, 1945. Mascagni remains a prominent figure in the history of Italian opera, and *Cavalleria Rusticana* an enduring favorite.

by Karen Gordon

# What to Listen For

In addition to a Victorian love story, *La Traviata* is well known for its glorious, infectious, toe-tapping, passionate, bubbling music that gushes out from scene after scene to make this one of Giuseppe Verdi's great masterpieces. *La Traviata* is the only one of Verdi's many operas to be set entirely indoors. Unlike *Il Trovatore*, which was composed simultaneously, *La Traviata* is an intimate piece, full of tender lyricism. The character of Violetta dominates the work and her music changes as she develops through the drama, from the hectic, almost hysterical coloratura of the first act, to the more dramatic passages of the second, and the spiritual quality of her music as she departs life in Act III.

## SUOR ANGELICA

### ***Ave Maria***

As the opera begins, the sisters of the convent are heard singing hymns in a production starring Dame Joan Sutherland.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjghVLz9W\\_w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjghVLz9W_w)

### ***Senza mamma***

Regarded as one of the standout musical moments, *Senza mamma* is Sister Angelica's aria. As she laments her son's passing, she grieves that he never knew how much she loved him. Wishing to be reunited with him, she begs him to speak to her. Sung by the legendary Renata Scottò

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljJPJNzKKQ>

## CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA

### ***Innegiamo***

Heard towards the middle of the opera, the Easter hymn "Innegiamo, il Signor non è morto" is one of the absolute highlights of the opera. Santuzza sings an Easter hymn in front of the church square and is accompanied by a choir singing inside the church in this production from the Royal Opera House, London.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6D5ZNwqYBO>

### ***Voi lo sapete - the great aria of Santuzza***

The oboe begins painfully with the love motif to begin Santuzza's great aria. The oboe quickly disappears with the entrance of fierce violins. Santuzza tells of her bitter situation and the jealousy motif appears. She tries to shoo away the thoughts of it, and the love motif now glows in a major key. But the dark thoughts return and the aria ends with the quotation of the jealousy motif.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDiGJVQtIMQ>

### ***Intermezzo***

Mascagni's *Intermezzo* provides a beautiful, orchestral interlude before the final scenes of the opera. It has become a very well known piece. In the context of the plot, it uses a previously heard hymn tune and reminds the audience of peaceful country living, while also foreshadowing the tragedy to come.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8YXUOZuE\\_k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8YXUOZuE_k)

# In Puccini and Mascagni's Time

- 1858** Giacomo Puccini is born
- 1864** First British royal visit to US, Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII)
- 1863** Pietro Mascagni is born
- 1864** President Lincoln establishes Thanksgiving as a national holiday
- 1867** Johann Strauss' Blue Danube waltz premieres in Vienna
- 1869** Mahatma Gandhi is born in Porbandar, Kathiawar Agency of British India
- 1871** Verdi's *Aida* premieres at Teatro alla Scala
- 1876** Puccini attends a production of *Aida*, marking his first experience with opera
- 1876** Mascagni begins his musical studies in Milan Conservatory
- 1879** Gilbert and Sullivan's *Pirates of Penzance* premieres
- 1880** Puccini begins studying at the Milan Conservatory
- 1881** Mascagni composes his first cantata
- 1882** American outlaw Jesse James is shot in the back of the head and killed by fellow gang member
- 1883** Puccini enters his first opera into a competition but does not win
- 1884** Statue of Liberty is presented to the U.S. in Paris
- 1885** Mascagni leaves the Conservatory
- 1886** Chief Geronimo surrenders ending last major U.S.- Indian war
- 1888** Vincent Van Gogh cuts off his left ear in argument with Paul Gauguin
- 1890** Mascagni enters *Cavalleria Rusticana* in competition and wins first place
- 1893** *Manon Lescaut* premieres and Puccini becomes overnight star
- 1895** Tchaikovsky's ballet *Swan Lake* premieres in St. Petersburg
- 1896** Puccini's *La bohème* premieres
- 1899** Scott Joplin granted copyright for Maple Leaf Rag
- 1900** *Tosca* performed
- 1901** Giuseppe Verdi dies on July 25
- 1904** Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* debuts at La Scala in Milan to no great acclaim
- 1907** First ever "ball drop" is held in Times Square to celebrate New Year's Eve
- 1914** World War I begins
- 1918** *Il Trittico*, including *Suor Angelica*, debuts at the Metropolitan Opera in New York
- 1920** Puccini begins work on *Turandot*
- 1920** The 19th Amendment is ratified, granting women the right to vote
- 1924** Puccini dies from throat cancer and does not get a chance to finish *Turandot*
- 1928** Amelia Earhart becomes first woman to cross the Atlantic Ocean
- 1930** Mascagni conducts a production of *La Bohème* as an homage to the late Puccini
- 1879** Gilbert & Sullivan's *Pirates of Penzance* premieres
- 1933** The Great Depression begins
- 1939** World War II begins
- 1940** A recording of *Cavalleria Rusticana* is made to celebrate its 50th anniversary
- 1943** Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma* opens at the St. James Theatre in New York City
- 1945** World War II ends
- 1945** Mascagni dies

# Post-Opera Activities

## Personal Response

1. What about the story of *Suor Angelica* can you relate to a modern day story from television, movies or your own life?

2. If *Cavalleria Rusticana* had a sequel, what do you think would happen next?

3. What would you tell a first-time opera goer about opera? Would you recommend that they get tickets to the next production?

# Post-Opera Activities

## Critical Response

Create Your Own Review of *Suor Angelica* and *Cavalleria Rusticana*

Choose one of the following aspects of the opera you saw: the costumes, the singing, the orchestra, or the set. Answer the questions with your honest review!

Aspect:	Your Response:
How did it help tell the story?	
What did you like about it?	
What could be better?	

Now, choose one of the following characters from either *Suor Angelica* or *Cavalleria Rusticana*: Suor Angelica, Principessa, Santuzza, Turridu, Alfio, or Lola. Fill in the following chart with your thoughts!

What did you like about this character?	
How would the story be different if they weren't in the opera?	
What advice would you give them?	