

HAMPSTEAD GARDEN OPERA

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Charity No. 1092649

JACKSONS LANE THEATRE, HIGHGATE, LONDON N6 5AA



CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA By Mascagni

Best Opera Production

and

Winner 2013

PAGLIACCI By Leoncavallo

Finalist 2014/2015/2016

Translations by David Parry

HGO's first production at its new Highgate home.

May 13th to 22nd, 2016

Stage Director: Bruno Ravella • Music Director: Oliver John Ruthven • With the HGO Orchestra

May 13th to 22nd, at their new home at Jacksons Lane Theatre in Highgate, Hampstead Garden Opera will present the classic double bill of passion and revenge, Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, in an exciting new concept developed by Bruno Ravella. This will be the world premiere of a new English translation for *Cavalleria Rusticana* by the eminent conductor David Parry. 'We are thrilled to be mounting our first production at Jacksons Lane, a more comfortable and better equipped venue, and a better singing space than we have previously enjoyed' says Chairman Roger Sainsbury.

Cavalleria Rusticana and *Pagliacci* are, in a sense, the twin peaks of a new style of opera which took Italy by storm in the early 1890s. It was quickly labelled 'verismo' after an Italian literary style of the period though in truth there are not many operas to which the term can accurately be applied. The characters are ordinary village folk, far removed from the historic and Shakespearean dramas of Verdi and the epics of Wagner. Passion and emotion are central, and the idea of jilted or lost love often plays a part. It has also been said of it that "in verismo opera, the knife is never very far away." This is certainly true of both *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*.

Bruno Ravella, director of the double bill, observes: "Cav and Pag came very early in my operatic education. They are fun, colourful, tragic pieces with exciting characters and real drama. Both are set in southern Italy, and for me recall some family memories. The music is engaging and rewarding. So I was thrilled when HGO asked me to direct them. I thought I knew them well, but their themes and music have taken me on a new journey, of greater depth and fresh insight.'

Pagliacci (clowns) is clearly what it is – a piece about travelling comedians, with a play within the play. What I found, though, is that *Cavalleria*, the non 'theatrical' one, is actually more theatrical - less naturalistic in its structure than its companion piece, with pages of choral singing, and musical interludes or scenes. It actually feels more staged and formal, almost like an oratorio with the story told in strong scenes connected by interludes. So I'm making both pieces clearly staged performances with curtains and footlights, with *Pagliacci* a performance not going to plan. I was inspired by people as different as Brecht, Pina Bausch, and Fellini to create what I hope will be a reflection on performance, reality and pretence. It should be visually exciting, thrilling in the characters' conflicts, and very moving."

Bruno Ravella has worked in opera for the last 12 years, directing, reviving, and assisting, in companies such as the Royal Opera House, Glyndebourne, Garsington, Chicago Lyric, Opera Australia and Houston Grand Opera. He directed an acclaimed production of Strauss' *Intermezzo* for Garsington last summer. He also coaches students and has directed several scenes for the Royal Academy of Music. This is his 5th production for HGO, after *Mansfield Park*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *La clemenza di Tito* and *The Elixir of Love*. Future projects this year include a double bill of *L'heure espagnole* and *Gianni Schicchi* for the Theatre National de Lorraine in Nancy, and *Macbeth* for Iford Arts.

Oliver-John Ruthven, Principal Music Director of Hampstead Garden Opera, is a conductor, harpsichordist and singer who has worked with companies such as The Royal Ballet, The Monteverdi Choir, Hallé Youth Choir and Riverside Opera, and is a member of the English Baroque Soloists. He has led the company since 2008 in an exciting and diverse range of repertoire spanning over 400 years, from Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* (1609) to Jonathan Dove's *Mansfield Park* (2011).

HGO is presenting this double bill in a reduced orchestration retaining as much as possible of the vivid instrumental colour of both scores. We will have two casts of exciting singers, many of whom will become tomorrow's stars, backed by a larger chorus than we have needed in recent years.

Hampstead Garden Opera, in being since 1990, is a company committed to the development of young singers, and stages two productions each year. Its consistently high musical, vocal and productions standards make HGO an important part of the artistic life of north London.

Hampstead Garden Opera won the Off West End (Offies) Opera Production Award 2013 for its 2012 staging of *Così fan tutte*, and were finalists for the same award in the 2014, 2015, and 2016 Offies.

"What do you go to the opera for? The question has a thousand answers, but if you're going to Mozart's Marriage of Figaro, the chances are that you're expecting some frothy romantic comedy, some elegant music and a bunch of tunes that will stay in your head when the show is over. But on a good day, it can be so much more than that, and Bruno Ravella's production for Hampstead Garden Opera pulls out all the stops.." David Karlin's review of 'The Marriage of Figaro for **Bachtrack**.

Performances of *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*:

Evenings at 7.30 pm – May 13, 14, & 17-21

Matinées at 4.00pm: Sundays May 15 & 22

Matinée at 2.30pm: Saturday May 21

Jacksons Lane Theatre, Highgate, London N6 5AA

Tickets: (unreserved) £28 (Premium Seats) £21 (General Admission) (Concessions £19 – May 13, 14)

Box Office: 0800 411 8881

Online: www.hgo.org.uk/tickets

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