

The Cooperative presents



Pagliacci

An opera in two acts and a prologue
by

Ruggero Leoncavallo

We perform today on the land of the
Gadigal people of the Eora Nation.

We offer our utmost respect to the
custodians of this land, their Elders
past and present, and acknowledge
that this always is, always was, and
always will be Aboriginal Land.

Sovereignty was never ceded.

About The Cooperative

The Cooperative is a young Sydney opera company with a passion for social justice.

Our mission is four-fold:

To provide performance opportunities for young and emerging artists

To perform politically and/or socially relevant productions

To increase opera's accessibility; and,

To use opera to benefit the world around us.

Our auditions are open to all, and our cast comprised of experienced and young artists, those well versed in opera, and those making their operatic debut here.

All our performances aim to remove the financial barriers of opera, with entry on a pay-as-you-feel scale, and all our profits taken at the door go to a charity or charities connected to the ideas we've explored onstage.

We believe that theatre has a unique power to illumine, explore, and challenge injustices within our society in a public dreaming. We have the privilege of performing an incredibly beautiful art form, and it is our duty to use that privilege for the benefit of our global society.

We passionately believe that art can, and should, change the world.

To learn more about us, please visit <https://www.thecooperativeopera.org>, email thecooperativesydney@gmail.com, or find us on Facebook (The Cooperative) or Instagram @theco.opera.tive

To help fund this, and future, productions, please visit:
www.thecooperativeopera.org/#donate-to-us

Pagliacci

An opera in two acts and a prologue
with music and libretto by

Ruggero Leoncavallo

Pagliacci was first performed at
the Teatro dal Verme, Milano on the 21 May 1892

These performances are given at
Pitt St Uniting Church, Sydney on 3, 4 August 2023

The Cooperative is assisted by the Australian
Government through the Australia Council, its arts
funding and advisory body.

Since The Cooperative's foundation, a core part of our mission statement has been to produce work that spans the four centuries of this incredible art form, that traverses a range of times, places, cultures, and contexts, and that reflects and challenges our world today. As such, we've dedicated our repertory to a range of canonical, rare, and contemporary opera, through which we can better understand issues of our own society. It is an absolute delight to present Ruggero Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, a gritty, chilling, and alarmingly pertinent opera.

We passionately believe in programming works which reflect and engage with the society in which we live, and confront and challenge issues in our world today. Our 2023 Winter Season focuses on leading our audiences behind the mask. It is a confronting, dark season, but one we believe absolutely necessary in a society where abuse can hide, flourish behind façades. All the more reason, then, for us to confront these façades, and to highlight and demolish them in a world where all is not as it seems.

Thank you for joining us.

Menila Moineaux
Artistic Director, The Cooperative

CAST

Nedda

Natasha Gesto

Canio

Raphael Hudson

L'Autore (Prologo) /
Tonio

Timothy Nunn

Silvio

Tristan Entwistle

Beppe

Kate Wilmot

CHORUS

Soloists

Katrina Mackenzie
Andrew Pennycuick

Movement Chorus

Tayla Gregson
Tony Guyot
Erina Kirton
Katrina Mackenzie

Chorus

Ali Aitken
Tarryn Frappell
Tayla Gregson
Tony Guyot
Erina Kirton
Katrina Mackenzie
Andrew Pennycuick
Veronica Vella

Actor (Young Girl)

Ellie Wright

CREATIVES

Conductor

Joanna Drimatis

(3 August)

Toby Wong

(4 August)

Director

Menila Moineaux

Répétiteur

Priscilla Yuen

Assistant Director /
Stage Manager

Emma Whitehead

Lighting

Bec Moret

ORCHESTRA

Violin I	Tania Ma
Violin II	Jared Adams
Viola	Valerie Tate
Violoncello	Sophie Funston
Flute	Visnja Kosanovic
Clarinet	Maxiyin (Max) Huang
Horn	Adrian Hallam
Piano	Nathaniel Kong

*The birds fly towards a strange land,
which maybe they dream of and search for in vain ...
But these free spirits follow a mysterious power which pushes them on, and on, and on ...*

Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* is often considered a cornerstone of verismo opera, a piece inextricably interwoven with the world in which it premiered. In many ways, it can be interwoven with any world - what lies behind human façade, behind the masks we all wear, every day, is an eternal dilemma. And in many ways, through the veil this façade casts over human relationships and abuse therein, it is disturbingly all too pertinent today.

And yet, what within *Pagliacci* is truly of its world, and our world? Clowns? Meta-theatre? Or rather, perhaps, what lies behind the costumes, trappings, and distractions of a meta-theatrical world. At its core, *Pagliacci* centres upon a woman, the protagonist, the only character present throughout the opera, trapped in an impossible, dangerous, volatile situation, and, hauntingly, such a situation is not far from our public psyche today, in a world where (officially) one in three women experience abuse and violence in their lifetime (and these numbers are likely far higher). As tragic as the opera's enduring relevance is today, is that not exactly what verismo should do, and what we as practitioners have a duty to do in performing this genre of opera today? Confront, challenge, and expose the issues lurking behind the façade of our own society.

And yet, far too often, we see a *Pagliacci* stubbornly consigned to the world of its premiere, the woman at the centre of the opera treated as little more than a prop, a plot device and vehicle for the "development" of the male characters around her. Perhaps we can explain this - "vesti la giubba" is undoubtedly the opera's best-known aria, the prologue a verist manifesto - but we cannot excuse it any longer.

And so we won't. Our *Pagliacci* unfolds through Nedda's eyes, and we aim to return to her the agency and voice worthy of a protagonist. As the first bars of the prelude unfold, we see the world of the opera as she sees it, a cage-like curtain raised around her, trapping her within a domestic world of which the walls are rapidly closing in. We journey with her through her attempts to make sense of the brutality of her past and present situation, a harsh world lacking in colour and life, and we hope with her for the possibility and promise of something else to come, "a mysterious desire", the freedom of the birds at which she marvels and yearns.

The voyeuristic "audience", the opera's chorus, here appear first as a species of faceless puppeteer, initially guided by an archaic "Author" figure, one aiming to imprison Nedda within the role of prop and plot device. Even in their other role as the everyday public, they are both omnipresent enough to keep her trapped in an abusive marriage and too far removed to see the danger of her situation. The *Commedia* unfolds as a streamed show, one which aims to purport a type of hyper-reality, where everyday life is a performance.

There is no true "happy" resolution to Nedda's situation, but we aim to free her from the cage, the "nest of memories" she's been trapped in for far too long. And, we invite you to join us in tearing down such façades and masks beyond the stage, in the world around us.

Conductor (3 August) - Joanna Drimatis

Dr Joanna Drimatis is a highly-respected champion of Australian music and contemporary classical music – contributing comprehensively through her output as a performer, conductor, musical director, researcher and educator. After initial studies in Music Education and Violin Performance, Joanna completed a Masters degree from the University of Texas at Austin (Violin / Orchestral Conducting). In 2009, Joanna graduated with a PhD in Musicology from the Elder Conservatorium of Music.



Joanna was Music Director of the Christchurch Youth Orchestra and Conductor for the Adelaide Youth Orchestra association, and has worked as a sessional academic at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. She has conducted orchestras such as the Australian Doctors' Orchestra, the Sydney Youth Orchestra, the Mosman Symphony, the Woollahra Philharmonic and the Orange Chamber Music Festival Ensemble.

Joanna has also presented at the 2019 Mid-West Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago, USA. Joanna is currently Head of Strings at MLC School Sydney and Music Director / Chief Conductor of the Beecroft Orchestra. In 2020 Joanna was awarded an APRA/AMCOS Art Music Luminary award for her advocacy, programming and performance of Australian music.

Joanna's love of opera has been prevalent throughout her musical journey and she has contributed as both a performer and assistant conductor for numerous productions. She is very much looking forward to working with The Cooperative in 2023.

Conductor (4 August) - Toby Wong

Toby Wong is currently Master of Music (Musicology) candidate at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, supervised by Dr. David Larkin and Prof. Ian Maxwell. His research work focuses on musical exoticism, and modern productions of Puccini's operas. Toby is also a young and energetic conductor of both orchestral and choral genres. He had his first conducting performance with his primary school orchestra at the age of 12. He is now the Assistant Conductor and Choral Scholar of St. Patrick's Cathedral Choir in Parramatta, and the Assistant Conductor of the Canada Bay Community Choir based in Drummoyne. Later this year, he will also start his position as the Assistant Conductor with the Beecroft Orchestra.



Born and raised in Hong Kong, Toby graduated from The Chinese University of Hong Kong with a Bachelor of Social Science (Global Studies), and was awarded the Multi-faceted Excellence Scholarship. In 2019, he was appointed as the Assistant Conductor of Cantabile Orchestra and Choir (Hong Kong), where he prepared and performed an array of musical genres with the orchestra and choir. In addition, he was the youngest-ever-appointed Music Director of St. Michael's Choir in Holy Cross Church (Hong Kong) from 2013 to 2021.

Apart from conducting, Toby is also a pianist, vocalist, and organist. He is now a tenor of the Sydney Chamber Choir and Christ Church St. Laurence Choir. He was also a member of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Chorus, where he sang under the baton of various renowned conductors, including Lorin Maazel, Jaap Van Zweden, Carlo Rizzi, and Karina Canellakis.

Toby is passionate about promoting classical music through broadcasting. He is a Presenter in 2MBS Fine Music Sydney, and a Producer-Presenter of Radio Television Hong Kong's classical music channel, RTHK Radio 4.

Director - Menila Moineaux

Menila Moineaux (she/her) is an early career Burmese-Australian opera director, currently based in Germany, where she is an assistant and staff director at Theater Münster in the 2023-2024 season. She is a 2022 graduate of the Verona Accademia per l'Opera Italiana, where she completed a Masters in Opera Directing (Io livello) with results amongst the highest in her cohort, generously supported by the Rose Mandelbaum Travelling Scholarship. With a background in musicology and singing, she also holds a Bachelor of Music Studies with First Class Honours from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, where she studied on full scholarship.



In the 2022-2023 season and alongside her studies, Menila worked on MASS (Bernstein) at the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma (dir. Damiano Michieletto), Pagliacci at the Macerata Opera Festival (dir. Alessandro Talevi), Simon Boccanegra at the Festival Verdi - Teatro Regio di Parma (dir. Valentina Carrasco), La traviata at Dublin's Bord Gais Energy Theatre (dir. Danilo Coppola), Stabat Mater (Pergolesi) at the Luglio Musicale Trapanese (dir. Danilo Coppola), and Dalinda (Donizetti - world premiere) with the Berliner Operngruppe (dir. Giulia Randazzo).

Founding The Cooperative in 2019 and combining lifelong passions for opera and social justice, Menila made her directorial debut with The Consul (Menotti) in 2020. In 2021, she directed Sāvitrī (Holst), Orfeo ed Euridice (Gluck), Iphigénie en Tauride (Gluck) and Tosca at The Cooperative.

In the upcoming season, Menila will revive and assist on a range of productions at Theater Münster and direct Pagliacci for The Cooperative. She was one of ten semi-finalists in the 2023 European Opera Directing Prize, and is a grateful recipient of grants from the Wagner Society of NSW and the Australia Council for the Arts.

Above all, Menila believes passionately in creating art that engages, benefits, and changes the world around us. Art is inherently political, and she invites her audiences into a space of public dreaming, from which they may re-emerge ready to confront and challenge issues in our wider society.

Nedda - Natasha Gesto

Natasha Gesto is an Uruguayan-Australian soprano who combines effortless storytelling with an electrifying stage presence, described as having a “sumptuously gifted voice,” by Dr Graham Johnson OBE. Her craft has taken form in her musical involvement across Australia and Europe in both an operatic principal and concert soloist.

The roles that Natasha has performed include La Contessa (Le nozze di Figaro, Prague Summer Nights Festival, 2022), Pamina (Die Zauberflöte, Sydney Conservatorium, 2022, cover – performed), Dame Nellie Melba (Percy – The Opera, Sydney Conservatorium, 2022) and Francesca – The Fox (Pinocchio, Musgrove Opera, toured across NSW 2018-2019). Her soloist concert repertoire includes Ein Deutsches Requiem by Johannes Brahms conducted by Dr. Carlos Alvarado, Haydn’s Nelson Mass conducted by Omid Zadeh, Poulenc’s Gloria with the Sydney Conservatorium of Music Chamber Choir and Mozart’s Requiem in D minor Sydney Conservatorium of Music Choir. Natasha was also selected as a Young Star of Australian Opera for the nationally televised Carols in the Domain in Sydney.

Natasha is a proud recipient of the prestigious Kovner Fellowship at The Juilliard School, where she will commence her Master of Music in voice in August this year with her full tuition and living expenses covered.

Natasha holds a Bachelor of Music in classical voice (2021) and a Graduate Diploma in Opera Performance (2022) from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, Australia; during which she received numerous scholarships including the Greenberg-Gurney-Jensen scholarship (2022), the Henderson Traveller’s scholarship (2022) and the Helen Myers scholarship (2018).

Most recently Natasha competed as a semi-finalist in the Sydney Eisteddfod Opera Scholarship; one of Australia’s most distinguished operatic competitions. She is anticipating her debut in the role of Nedda (Pagliacci) with The Cooperative.



Canio - Raphael Hudson

Raphael Hudson is an Australian spinto tenor. In his formative years, he studied with Megan Evans OAM, James Christiansen OAM, and John Bolton Wood AM. He was a Cantor at St Stephen's Cathedral and a member of the Opera Queensland Chorus. He made his debut as a baritone, singing Enrico (Lucia di lammermoor), Escamillo (Carmen), Lord Mountarat (Iolanthe), Don Parmenione (L'occasione fa il ladro), Louis (Gustav Holst's The Wandering Scholar), Blansac (La scala di seta), Figaro (Le nozze di Figaro) for companies including Rockdale Opera, Sydney Theatre, Sydney Independent Opera and the National Youth Opera.

Raphael won scholarships to the Mediterranean Opera Studio in New York and Sicily where he studied tenor repertoire with Gioacchino Li Vigni, Nicola Martinucci and Salvatore Fisichella. In 2019 Raphael was invited to China where he performed Chinese solos in Chinese on the banks of the Yellow River to nationwide television coverage and acclaim. He performed these solos again in Sydney on his return in Sydney Town Hall, the Chatswood Concourse Theatre and the Sydney Conservatorium Verbrugghen Hall. After the coronavirus lockdowns, Raphael studied with Michael Trimble at the Trimble Vocal Institute in Washington and with celebrated international dramatic tenor Yonghoon Lee in Sydney.

Raphael was a finalist in the largest vocal competition in Australia in 2022, the Sydney Eisteddfod Opera Scholarship, a semi-finalist in the 2022 Premio Fausto Ricci international vocal competition and the 2022 Premiere Opera Foundation International Vocal Competition New York. He was invited to Germany to participate in the International Singer Academy Michaelstein where he worked with Professor Claudia Visca of the Richard Wagner Conservatorium in Vienna. He continued his studies in heldentenor repertoire with the acclaimed Siegfried Christian Franz in Hannover. In 2023 he will perform the role of Siegmund in Wagner's Die Walküre with the Dramatic Voices Program Berlin.



L'Autore / Tonio - Timothy Nunn

Baritone Timothy Nunn holds a Bachelor of Music (Performance) from the Sydney Conservatorium and is an alumnus of the Pacific Opera Young Artist program. Timothy has played the title roles of Don Giovanni and Figaro in Pacific Opera's "Pocket Opera" series and has performed as a soloist with the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra in both their "Star-Spangle" Gala and their Mozart Gala. Other performances include the title role in the Phoenix Choir's performances of Mendelssohn's Oratorio *Elijah*, the role of The Leader in Pacific Opera's Production of Kurt Weill's *Down in the Valley* and performing as a soloist in Willoughby Symphony Orchestra's Viennese Gala. He has performed Handel's *Messiah* as the bass soloist with the St Matthew's New Norfolk Tasmania Community choir and the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Ecumenical Choir. Timothy has also performed the role of Jimmy in Opera Carnevale's production of Kurt Weill's *Mahagonny Songspiel*, the role of Pangloss in a concert celebrating 100 years of Leonard Bernstein at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and was a part of the Ensemble for Patti LuPone's concert *Don't Monkey with Broadway* at the Sydney Opera House.



Silvio - Tristan Entwistle

Tristan completed his Master of Music Studies (Opera Performance) at the Sydney Conservatorium. Since 2021, he has been a regular performer in the Opera Australia Schools Tour, performing the roles of Ferdinand (El Kid – 2023), Don Magnifico/King (Cinderella – 2022), and Figaro (The Barber of Seville – 2021). He has also been a member of the Opera Australia Chorus since 2018.

His other opera/operetta roles include Marcello (La Bohème), Alcindoro (La Bohème), Figaro (Le Nozze Di Figaro), Il Conte (Le Nozze Di Figaro), Leporello (Don Giovanni), Papageno (Die Zauberflöte), Guglielmo (Così fan tutte), Nardo (La Finta Giardiniera), Escamillo (Carmen), Germont (La Traviata), Barone Douphol (La Traviata), Dottor Grenvil (La Traviata), Dr Falke (Die Fledermaus), Elder McLean (Susannah), Edmund Bertram (Mansfield Park), Giove (La Calisto), the Drunken Poet/Corydon (The Fairy Queen), the Pirate King (The Pirates of Penzance), and Giuseppe Palmieri (The Gondoliers).

Tristan was a finalist in the 2017 German Australian Opera Grant, in the 2018 IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition (“The Mathy”), and in the 2019 Joan Carden award.



Beppe - Kate Wilmot

Kate Wilmot studied music in South Africa. She holds Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees from The University of the Witwatersrand. Kate was a principle artist for Spier Arts Trust/ Broomhill Opera Cape Town and Promusica Opera Roodeport, South Africa.

Since relocating to Australia in 2009 Kate has sung as a guest artist for The Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonyng Foundation, Arts Bundanoon, Opera New England, The Southern Highlands Opera Appreciation Group and The Illawarra Choral Society performing Mozart's Requiem (2012), Vivaldi's Gloria (2013), Faure's Requiem (2017) and then Vivaldi's Gloria (2019) this time for the St George Chamber orchestra, South Hurstville conducted by Dr Anthony Clarke.

Kate has been the recipient of the Doris Smith Memorial trophy for English Art Song (2010 Wollongong Eisteddfod), the Mary Jane Cordery Memorial Award for Lieder (2014 Wollongong Eisteddfod) and the Regional winner of the Opera Section of the Wollongong Eisteddfod (2014).

Roles for Rockdale Opera Company include Juno, Orpheus in the Underworld (2016); Ludmilla, The Bartered Bride (2016); Fiametta, The Gondoliers (2017) and Alms Sister, Suor Angelica (2017). Kate has also been a principle for Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Sydney where she performed the role of Rose Maybud in their 2018 production of Ruddigore. In 2018 Kate was a Guest artist for the opening of the 12th Eutick Memorial Still Life Award at the contemporary Artspace in Wollongong. In July 2019, Kate was one of 16 singers selected to participate in the 2019 MIFLAS Art song festival where she was a participant in the masterclasses and concerts given by Graham Johnson OBE in Melbourne. Kate is a member of Pacific Opera's Adjunct singer's programme. Before the onset of covid Kate successfully auditioned as an extra chorus member for Opera Australia and was also contracted to sing the South African anthem at the Tri nations rugby tournament for the Springboks three games. Unfortunately due to covid they pulled out of the tournament. At the beginning of 2021, Kate performed with 4 other members of Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Sydney in a Gilbert and Sullivan Opera favourites concert which was performed in Gloucester and modified and performed in Sydney, she was a Soloist at Rockdale Opera's Roll over Corona concert and a member of the ensemble in The Cooperative's production of Tosca.



CHORUS



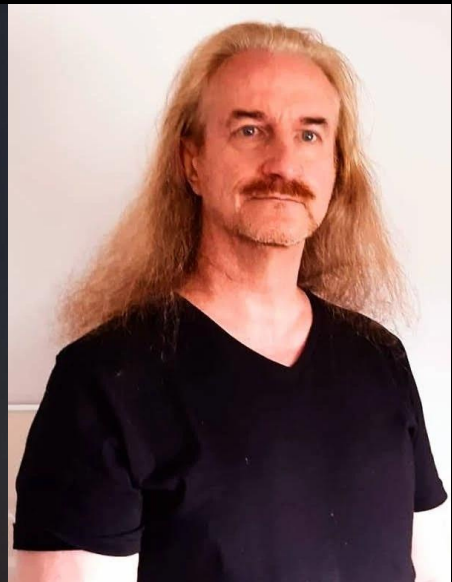
Ali
Aitken



Tarryn
Frappell



Tayla
Gregson



Tony
Guyot



Erina
Kirton



Katrina
Mackenzie



Andrew
Pennycuick



Veronica
Vella

This production supports

Domestic Violence Service Management NSW

<https://dvnswsm.org.au/>

A registered charity which aims to prevent violence and provide support and assistance to women and children escaping or experiencing domestic and family violence and homelessness. DVSM provides case management, crisis accommodation, and after-hours support services in an urban context (Inner Sydney), in a suburban context (Western Sydney) and in remote rural NSW (Wilcannia).

People are at the heart of our approach and we are committed to identify, understand and respond to a person's individual needs. This could include advocacy, housing services and/or goal setting.

We work in partnership with people to meet their needs while also developing their skills to be able to seek help from others into the future. This involves us working with the broader system and connecting people to the most appropriate support services.

In addition to frontline support services Domestic Violence Service Management designed and launched Insight Exchange in 2017. Insight Exchange hosts insights, information and resources for people experiencing domestic, family and sexualised violence and people who are responding to them. Insight Exchange resources, including public events, publications, animations and videos, are designed to be free for anyone to ensure cost is no barrier to access.

DVSM Services and Insight Exchange share learning to achieve the shared purpose of building individual and community safety and wellbeing.

Mudgin-Gal

<https://www.mudgin-gal.org.au>

Mudgin-Gal meaning 'Women's Place' is an Aboriginal organisation delivering support, referrals and community-based services to Aboriginal women and families in inner city Sydney since 1992. It aims to build the capability of Aboriginal women and families through the delivery of skills-based programs, whilst also providing a safe space for vulnerable women.

Mudgin-Gal provides support and education for women in the community who are or aspire to be leaders within their families and is active within the wider local community on issues such as family violence.

With gratitude, The Cooperative thanks

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Liz Surbey and the team at Sydney Girls' High School

Ellie and Emma Wright

Sarah Cherlin

Danny, Javier, and the team at 2SER Sydney

Nathaniel Kong

Daniel James

Kaylie Dunstan

Merrilee McNaught

Priscilla Yuen

The Australian Cultural Fund

Our generous donors, who help us to bring opera to the stage

You, for coming to *Pagliacci*!

And last, but certainly not least, our incredible cast, crew, and orchestra, who
have given so generously of their time, energy, enthusiasm, and hard work over
our rehearsal and production period.

We are so proud and so grateful to have them with us.

Thank you.