**Pietro Mascagni**

**Cavalleria Rusticana**

Libretto by Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti and Guido Menasci, based on a story and play by Giovanni Verga

World premiere: Rome, Teatro Costanzi, May 17, 1890

*Live in HD* transmission and radio broadcast

April 25, 2015

A village in southern Italy. At dawn on Easter Sunday, Turiddu is heard in the distance singing about Lola, wife of the carter Alfio. She and Turiddu had been a couple before he went to join the army. When he returned and found her married to Alfio, he took up with Santuzza and seduced her, 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 the other man 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 appears and is confronted by Santuzza about his affair with Lola but denies her accusations. Just then Lola passes by on her way to church. She mocks Santuzza, and Turiddu turns to follow her, but Santuzza begs him to stay and implores him not to abandon her. Turiddu refuses to listen and leaves, cursed by Santuzza. Alfio arrives, late for mass. Santuzza tells him that Lola went to church with Turiddu and reveals that his wife 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.

*Cavalleria Rusticana* is performed as a double bill with Leoncavallo’s *Pagliacci*. For a synopsis of that opera, turn to page TK.