

Pagliacci (Clowns)

Ruggero Leoncavallo

Ruggero Leoncavallo wrote the opera Pagliacci (Clowns) in 1892. It centres on working-class people, in this case clowns, caught up in realistic yet dramatically heightened situations, spurred on by passion towards tragic results. Pagliacci is a story of love, jealousy and murder. Even though the main character knows his wife has betrayed him, the poor clown has to go on stage and continue to make people laugh. The events (inspired by a true crime) are set in Montalto, a village in Calabria, around 1865. It is a hot afternoon in mid-August, on the Feast of the Assumption. Just outside the village, a troupe of strolling players has pitched a tent and around it a crowd of curious villagers has gathered. To the sound of trumpet calls and the beating of a big drum, the clowns' cart arrives with Canio standing on it. Though frequently interrupted by noisy festivity, Canio attempts to call public attention to a grand performance, due to commence "at twenty-three hours".

Not in front of the Waiter

(Under the Aspidistra)

Music by Jacques Offenbach

This comedy operetta was first performed in the 1960's as a tribute to Jacques Offenbach. The plot is suggested by almost any farce of Georges Feydeau and the music, adapted from Offenbach's lesser-known operettas calls for the usual vocal quartet plus bass. The story starts with waiter Block preparing to receive his guests in the private room of a Paris restaurant. Solange and Prosper enter and take a table next to an enormous aspidistra. The audience learns that they are both married, though not to each other, and out to enjoy a clandestine meeting. Moments later, Hortense and Aristide arrive at an adjoining table. They are bent on a similar amorous escapade and are indeed the wife and husband of the first couple. It is not long before all is discovered; the young ladies humorously exaggerating astonishment then indignity and a quarrel ensues. The waiter intervenes to reveal that from a strawberry mark on the ladies' shoulders, he recognises them as the daughters he shamelessly abandoned in childhood. The four listen with incredulity, then the ladies rejoice in having each found a father, a sister and also a brother-in-law. Reconciliation abounds, and all join in a song in praise of family trees.



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Pagliacci

and

Not in front of the Waiter

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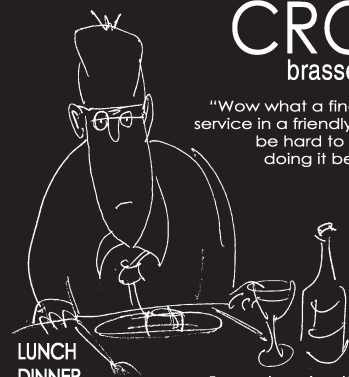
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Saturday 18th & Sunday 19th July 2009

Bouncers, Wickham Hall Lane,
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Gates Open: 14.00hrs

Performance: 17.00hrs

Interval (for picnic):
18.00 to 19.30hrs

Tickets:
£20.00 before 1st July
£25.00 after 1st July

Box Office:
Maldon T.I.C. - 01621 856503
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