



Dramatic eruptions without any stage scenery

The Dresden Philharmonic is embarking on a new era under its artistic director and principal conductor, Marek Janowski, with the live recording of a concert performance of Pietro Mascagni's "Cavalleria rusticana" (Pentatone).



Pietro Mascagni (1863-1945)

„Cavalleria rusticana“ / Opera in one movement

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| [1] Preludio | [11] Tu qui, Santuzza Fior di giaggiolo |
| [2] Siciliana | [12] Son giuoto ora in piazza Ah! Lo vedi |
| [3] Introduzione | [13] No, no Turriddu |
| [4] Gli aranci olezzano sui verdi margini | [14] Oh! Il Signore vi manda |
| [5] Dite, mamma Lucia | [15] Turiddu mi tolse l'onore |
| [6] Il cavallo scalpita | [16] Intermezzo sinfonico |
| [7] Beato voi, compar Alfio | [17] A casa, amici Comare, Lola |
| [8] Regina Coeli laetare | [18] Viva il vino sumeggianti |
| [9] Ineggiamo, il Signor non è morto | [19] A voi tutti salute |
| [10] Voi lo sapete, o mamma | [20] Mamma, quel vino è generoso Turiddu? Che vuoi dire? |

Dresden Philharmonic | Marek Janowski *conductor*

MDR Leipzig Radio Choir

Melody Moore *Santuzza* | Brian Jagde *Turiddu* | Lester Lynch *Alfio*

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The short operas of the Italian verismo genre are kinds of highly concentrated, small-scale “milieu dramas” whose material and characters draw on the lower social classes and their everyday problems. With such works, 19th-century musical drama wanted to finally get to close grips with authentic life. Pietro Mascagni's “Cavalleria rusticana” is seen as the outstanding masterpiece of this genre – and, according to Marek Janowski, “*the internal tension*” of its exceptional musical score amply justifies its being performed in unstaged versions. Since the start of the 2019/20 season, this “most modest of the great conductors” (Berliner Morgenpost) has once more been the principal conductor of the Dresden Philharmonic, having already held the position once before at the start of the 2000s. And concert performances of operas are something that the now 81-year-old maestro had put on the joint schedule with this storied Saxon orchestra even before officially taking up the position.

Janowski namely presented unstaged versions of “Cavalleria” (along with Puccini's “Il tabarro”) in Dresden's Kulturpalast on two evenings back in March 2019, the live recordings of which provide the basic material for the new CD. Such performances are a special challenge for the artists involved, as all the dramatic logic and tension rests entirely on the shoulders of the instrumentalists and singers, who also bear responsibility for bringing to life in sound details otherwise presented visually on stage. But the Dresden Philharmonic and its new conductor delighted both the audience (“*the cheering from the public ... had real Italian temperament*”) and the critics: “*Janowski's alert and concentrated treatment of the scores barely needs fake blood splattered on the rear wall or Easter processions in dirndls*” (Kulturblog mehrlicht).

Mascagni's "Cavalleria rusticana" of 1890 is a true village tragedy with wild passions and a bloody conclusion. Musically, this jealousy drama goes all out with its catchy melodies, sumptuous choruses and a sometimes almost archaic orchestral sound. It also calls for enormous emotional versatility on the part of the performers, but "*Janowski is more than expert in the lightning-fast delineation of such characters*" (Alexander Keuk). The excellent acoustics of the new concert hall that was opened in 2017 in Dresden's Kulturpalast also proved to be an important factor in successfully conveying the dynamic extremes of this Mascagni score, despite which the outstanding ensemble of vocal soloists was easily heard throughout: Melody Moore as Santuzza with her "*wide spectrum of musical expression ranging from dramatic ecstasy and tender, passionate, emotional lyricism to the deliberate 'tear in the voice' at the climax of despair*" (onlinemerker.de), the "*full-bodied tenor Brian Jagde (Turrido) as a true discovery*" (mehrlicht) or the charismatic US baritone Lester Lynch in the role of Alfio.

Marek Janowski and his Dresden Philharmonic hurl the musical emotions of these scores at the listener like glowing magma: ineluctable, tempered to the highest degree and breathtaking in their coherence and rigour. No stage set is needed at all.

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