



San Diego Opera Presents [Pagliacci](#) at the San Diego Civic Theatre
October 31 – November 2, 2025

SAN DIEGO (September 10, 2025) – Following the “vocally resplendent” (*San Diego Story*) and “triumphant” (*Times of San Diego*) productions of its landmark 60th anniversary season, [San Diego Opera](#) opens its 2025-26 season with Ruggero Leoncavallo’s [Pagliacci](#). The timeless tale of love, jealousy, and revenge runs Friday, October 31, Saturday, November 1, and Sunday, November 2 at the San Diego Civic Theatre. The opera will be sung in Italian with projected translations in English and Spanish.

Pagliacci (Italian for "clowns" and pronounced pah-LYAH-chee) is among the most performed operas in North America. The opera tells the tragic story of a traveling *commedia dell’arte* troupe led by the temperamental clown, Canio, who suspects his wife Nedda of infidelity. The drama unfolds as other members of the theatrical troupe – Tonio, a fool in love with Nedda; Beppe, a comedian who plays Nedda’s lover on stage; and a chorus of spectators of all ages (including Silvio, Nedda’s secret lover) – blur the line between performance and reality, culminating in a shocking finale featuring some of opera’s most recognizable and well-loved music.

Those unfamiliar with the Leoncavallo’s masterpiece will likely have heard Canio’s iconic aria “[Vesti la giubba](#)” or seen references to the opera in contemporary media and popular culture: *Pagliacci* has been cited by the Marx Brothers, on TV shows including *Seinfeld* and *The Simpsons*, in the movie *The Untouchables*, and the 1967 hit “Tears of a Clown” by Smokey Robinson and The Miracles. Written in 1892 in the Verismo (realism) style, *Pagliacci* has remained relevant for its enduring themes of jealousy, love, betrayal, and violence, which are as gripping today as at the opera’s premiere.

David Bennett, the Joann Clark General Director and CEO of San Diego Opera, says he chose the “gritty verismo melodrama” this season as a “celebration of the human voice and its capacity to tell stories.” The production hosts an all-star cast, including the “riveting” and “full-bodied tenor” (*Opera Today*) **Jonathan Burton** in the role of Canio, and the “confident and supple lyric soprano” (*Opernglas*) **Hailey Clark** as Nedda, plus baritone **Kidon Choi** as Tonio, **Timothy Murray** as Silvio, and **Arnold Livingston Geis** as Beppe.

Pagliacci will be accompanied by the renowned **San Diego Symphony Orchestra** under the baton of Principal Conductor **Yves Abel**, and directed by **Christopher Mattaliano**, whose work has been seen at houses like the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, and Washington National Opera.

Later this season at San Diego Opera, audiences can enjoy Gioachino Rossini’s hilarious comedy ***The Barber of Seville*, February 13-15, 2026** and Georges Bizet’s tragedy ***Carmen* from March 27-29.**

FOR LISTINGS:

San Diego Opera Presents: *Pagliacci*

Ruggero Leoncavallo (1857-1919), Music and Libretto

Friday, October 31 at 7:30 PM

Saturday, November 1 at 7:30 PM

Sunday, November 2 at 2:00 PM

San Diego Civic Theatre – 1100 Third Ave, San Diego, CA 92101

A preconcert talk led by [Michael Gerdes](#) will begin 50 minutes prior to curtain

Single ticket prices range from \$53 - \$346 (single ticket prices subject to change)

Season subscriptions are on sale now; single tickets go on sale Tuesday, Sept. 2

Visit SDOpera.org or call 619-232-7636

The venue provides accessible seating, assistive listening devices, and other accommodations for guests with disabilities.

Recommended for: Opera enthusiasts, first-time attendees, students, and families (parental guidance recommended due to mature themes).

The tears of a clown can be deadly. Canio is a comic actor in a troupe of street performers touring the Italian countryside. He also has a hair-trigger temper, and there are whispers that his gorgeous wife Nedda might be cheating on him. Leoncavallo's masterful score includes arias like "Stridono lassù" and one of the most famous tenor arias of all time, the iconic and heartbreaking "Vesti la giubba." *Sung in Italian with projected translations in English and Spanish.*

CAST LIST

Yves Abel – Conductor

Christopher Mattaliano – Director

Jonathan Burton – Canio

Hailey Clark – Nedda

Kidon Choi – Tonio

Timothy Murray – Silvio

Arnold Livingston Geis - Beppe

ABOUT SAN DIEGO OPERA

Founded in 1965, San Diego Opera has delivered exceptional performances and inspiring educational programs to a wide audience in San Diego for 60 seasons, with a strong focus on community partnerships and the transformative and expressive power of the human voice. With a commitment to innovative storytelling, lifelong learning and engagement, and an awareness of great music's power to bring audiences together, San Diego Opera provides a lasting cultural service to its community. To learn more, please visit www.sdopera.org or follow @sandiegoopera on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).