

## OPERA EXPLAINED

This series introduces, in words and music, the plot and background of major operas. Using the principal themes and arias, taken from the Naxos recording of the complete work, Thomson Smillie is informative yet entertaining, enabling the listener to get more from this remarkable art form.

An Introduction to...

# LEONCAVALLO

## Pagliacci

written by Thomson Smillie  
narrated by David Timson

*Pagliacci* may be the most completely compelling short opera in the repertory and owes much of its impact to a brilliant story based, it is said, on true life and told through the device of a play-within-a-play. The action is set in Calabria in the deep south of Italy where the jealousies and illicit passions of a troupe of strolling actors precisely intersect with the play they are performing – to both touching and tragic effect. Leoncavallo was his own librettist, and his literary skills, allied to great melodic creativity, guarantee that in its two short acts *Pagliacci* – ‘Clowns’ – delivers an overwhelming emotional experience.

ISBN 1-84379-068-8



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