



TEATRO
REGIO
TORINO

2023–2024 OPERA AND BALLET SEASON

La fanciulla del West

The highly awaited new production by **Valentina Carrasco**

The tribute continues to **Giacomo Puccini**, for his centennial year

Teatro Regio, from 22 March to 2 April 2024

As the first Westerns—short single-reel silents—were becoming all the rage on cinema screens, in 1910 Giacomo Puccini struck on the idea of bringing just such a story of gunslingers and drifters onto the prestigious stage of the Metropolitan Opera in New York. The result was *La fanciulla del West*, an opera like no other before it, entirely original in its subject and musical style. Conducting the Teatro Regio **Orchestra** and **Chorus**, Maestro **Francesco Ivan Ciampa** will weave the right alchemy between the orchestra and the stage, with all the precision and vigour for which he is renowned. For her debut at the Teatro Regio, Argentinian director **Valentina Carrasco**—winner of the Abbiati Prize for her *La favorite* for the 2022 Donizetti Opera Festival—has drawn inspiration from the cinematic dimensions of the libretto and the score for a **new staging** that pays tribute to the Western genre. The principal trio will be brought to life by the musical flair and compelling stage presence of three highly acclaimed singers—**Jennifer Rowley**, who debuts in the role of Minnie, **Roberto Aronica**, as the bandit Johnson, and **Gabriele Viviani**, who plays the sheriff, Jack Rance. The curtains will open on the new production **on Friday, 22 March** at 8p.m., with **eight shows running through to Tuesday, 2 April**.

Composer and orchestra conductor **Francesco Ivan Ciampa** returns to conduct the Teatro Regio orchestra, after his last appearance for *Cavalleria Rusticana* (2022 Regio Opera Festival). An experienced conductor of major Italian and international productions, in recent years he has conducted stagings of *Turandot* and *Madama Butterfly* for the Puccini Festival in Torre del Lago and *Il Corsaro*, *I Masnadieri*, and *Nabucco* for the Verdi Festival in Parma. In his early career he worked as an assistant to Antonio Pappano and to Daniel Oren.

Valentina Carrasco directs her first production for the Teatro Regio. Born in Buenos Aires, she studied music, dance, and literature before moving to Paris to work in film and video. In 2000 she joined La Fura dels Baus, co-authoring the show *XXX*, the theatre company's longest-running production. In the opera world, she directed Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabre* with Àlex Ollé in 2010 (Brussels, London, Barcelona, Buenos Aires, Adelaide Festival, Rome Opera); Francesconi's *Quartett* (La Scala in Milan, Holland Festival, Lille) and *Tristan und Isolde* (Opéra de Lyon) in 2011; *Il Trovatore* at the Rome Opera and Enescu's *Oedipe* (Royal Opera House in London) in 2017; and *Manon Lescaut* in Frankfurt in 2019. Alongside her work for La Fura dels Baus, she directed the world premiere of a new version of Wagner's Ring cycle at the Colón theatre in Buenos Aires, the choreography for Luc van Hove's *La Strada*, staged in Antwerp and Gand, and *Don Giovanni* in Perm, conducted by Teodor Currentzis and winner of the Golden Mask in Moscow. She opened the 2019/20 season at the Rome Opera with *Les Vêpres Siciliennes*, conducted by Daniele Gatti, a production which earned her a Best Director nomination at the International Opera Awards in London. In June 2020, she directed *Gianni Schicchi* for the Puccini Festival, in what was the first European production to be staged post-lockdown. In 2021 she brought *Aida* to the stage at the Macerata Festival and, in 2022, *Simon Boccanegra* at the Verdi Festival in Parma and *La Favorite* at Bergamo's Teatro Donizetti, a production awarded the Abbiati Prize by the Italian Music Critics' Association for Best Show of the Year and restaged at the Opéra National de Bordeaux. In 2023, she debuted at the Paris Opera with *Nixon in China*.

Debating in the role of Minnie, the gun-toting owner of the Polka Saloon, is American soprano **Jennifer Rowley**, acclaimed throughout the world for her unforgettable voice and impactful stage presence, in her first appearance at

the Teatro Regio. She will be performing the role again in July, under the baton of Maestro Daniel Oren, at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing. The Teatro Regio is delighted to have back on stage the baritone **Gabriele Viviani**, in the role of Sheriff Jake Rance, and tenor **Roberto Aronica**, who lends his voice to the outlaw Dick Johnson (Ramerrez). Completing the cast are **Francesco Pittari** (Nick), **Paolo Battaglia** (Ashby), **Filippo Morace** (Sonora), **Cristiano Olivieri** (Trin), **Eduardo Martínez** (Sid and Billy Jackrabbit), **Alessio Verna** (Bello), **Enzo Peroni** (Harry), **Enrico Maria Piazza** (Joe), **Giuseppe Esposito** (Happy), **Tyler Zimmerman** (Larkens), **Ksenia Chubunova** (Wowkle), **Gustavo Castillo** (Jake Wallace), **Adriano Gramigni** (José Castro), **Alejandro Escobar** and **Luigi Della Monica** (a Pony Express rider). Alternates for the main roles include **Oksana Dyka** (Minnie), **Massimo Cavalletti** (Jake Rance), and **Amadi Lagha** (Dick Johnson). Eduardo Martínez, Enrico Maria Piazza, Tyler Zimmerman, and Ksenia Chubunova are all resident artists from the *Regio Ensemble*.

The sets designed by **Carles Barga** and **Peter van Praet** provide a Western backdrop with a “live cinema” effect through the original use of technology. **Silvia Aymonino**’s costumes find inspiration in historical photographs and documents to recreate the atmospheres of Sergio Leone’s cult Western classics, such as *Once Upon a Time in the West* and *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*. Lighting design by **Peter van Praet**. Assistant director: **Lorenzo Nencini**. Costume assistant: **Agnese Rabatti**. As customary, the **Teatro Regio Chorus** will be led by Chorus Master **Ulisse Trabacchin**.

«One must renew oneself or die», for «the harmony of today and the orchestra are no longer the same», wrote Puccini in the early 1900s, expressing all his desire to strike out in new directions. *La fanciulla del West*, starring Enrico Caruso, Emmy Destinn, and Pasquale Amato and conducted by Arturo Toscanini for its world premiere in New York in 1910, embodies that aspiration. The opera in three acts, on the libretto by Guelfo Civinini and Carlo Zangarini, is based on the play *The Girl of the Golden West* by David Belasco, a story of romance and adventure, built on the conflict of a love triangle (as was also the case in *Tosca*), against the backdrop of the California Gold Rush, an era that greatly fascinated Puccini. As he had done so admirably with the Japanese backdrop to *Madama Butterfly*, the composer evokes his Western setting by drawing on American folklore, with authentic melodies such as «*Che faranno i vecchi miei*» sung by Jake Wallace and the “*Dooda dooda day*” refrain, exotic dances (ragtime and bolero), and a Red Indian lullaby, alongside original melodies scored specially for the arrival of the Pony Express and the cowboy chase, anticipating the typical style of musical commentary featured in American Westerns.

The Girl in the opera’s title is Minnie, a fearless and generous heroine, who runs a saloon for a camp of rambunctious gold miners in California. Smitten with her is the sheriff, Jake Rance, but his love is unrequited. Minnie’s life is turned upside down by the arrival of the bandit Dick Johnson, who wins her heart. In a desperate attempt to save him from the hangman, Minnie will ultimately stake her happiness on a game of poker.

The Under30 Preview will be staged on **Thursday, 21 March** at 8p.m.

The opera will be presented on **Wednesday, 20 March** at the **Piccolo Regio Puccini** at **6p.m.**, with free admission to the conference-concert led by **Susanna Franchi**.

BOX OFFICE AND INFORMATION

Tickets to *La fanciulla del West* are on sale at the Teatro Regio Box Office and online at www.teatroregio.torino.it

Teatro Regio Box Office

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Opening hours: Monday–Saturday, **11a.m. to 7p.m.**; Sunday, **10:30a.m. to 3:30p.m.**;

one hour before show times

For full information and updates: www.teatroregio.torino.it

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Turin, 29 February 2024

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