



2023–2024 OPERA AND BALLET SEASON

Un ballo in maschera

Riccardo Muti returns to the Teatro Regio

A new staging of Verdi's masterpiece by Andrea De Rosa

Featuring the long-awaited debut of Luca Micheletti

Teatro Regio, from 21 February to 3 March 2024

Riccardo Muti returns to the theatre to conduct the Teatro Regio **Orchestra** and Chorus and an **all-star cast** in a thrilling new production of Giuseppe Verdi's masterpiece, *Un Ballo in Maschera*. The **new staging**—with six performances on the programme **from Wednesday, 21 February, 8p.m., to Sunday, 3 March**—is directed by **Andrea De Rosa**, Director of the TPE Teatro Astra in Turin, and stars **Piero Pretti** as Riccardo, **Luca Micheletti** in the role of Renato, and **Lidia Fridman** as Amelia.

«We are very excited and proud to have back at the Teatro Regio Maestro Riccardo Muti», remarks General Manager **Mathieu Jouvin**. «Together with Artistic Director Cristiano Sandri, we planned the 2023–2024 Season, *Amour Toujours*, around two key highlights: Giacomo Puccini, for the centennial year of his death, and the extraordinary return of Maestro Muti for this new production of Verdi's operatic masterpiece».

The new Teatro Regio production is brought on stage thanks to the generous support of **Reale Mutua**. In the words of its Chairman, **Luigi Lana**: «Reale Mutua has reaffirmed its firm commitment to the theatre by supporting the Teatro Regio and this staging of Verdi's opera, specially conducted by the masterful baton of Maestro Muti. Our long-standing partnership, which has brought on stage memorable productions over the years, goes beyond the simple sponsorship of culture. It embodies our deep-rooted commitment to tradition and to art, reflected in the 196 year-long history of our company. We are proud to be a part of this extraordinary project and wish audiences an unforgettable experience with *Un ballo in maschera*, conducted by the maestro Riccardo Muti».

Riccardo Muti is unquestionably one of the world's most distinguished conductors, “the apostle of Italian opera” (as journalist Lorenzo Arruga once described him). His brilliant career and magnetic personality make him a never-ending fount of inspiration and great attraction. He returns to the podium of the Teatro Regio after conducting *Così fan tutte* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, streamed live online in March 2021, and *Don Giovanni* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in November 2022. In a recent interview with Susanna Franchi for the newspaper *La Repubblica*, the **Maestro** said: «The Teatro Regio is a theatre of great importance, which has done things of great importance. There was Toscanini, there have been other great conductors, and I trust it will continue improving ever-more. Working with the orchestra, the chorus, and the staff has been amazing, they have a way of being there that comes, perhaps, from the elegance of the city. The working environment is excellent and that is the reason why I come back, why I have come back this time, and why I hope to come back again».

Stage director of theatre and opera works, **Andrea De Rosa** is a former director of the Teatro Stabile of Naples and today Director of the TPE Teatro Astra in Turin. He has already partnered with Maestro **Riccardo Muti** in the past, on productions of *Don Pasquale* by Donizetti (Ravenna, Madrid) and *Il matrimonio inaspettato* by Paisiello (Salzburg Whitsun Festival). Torinese audiences will remember his masterful direction and interpretation of *Manfred* by Schumann/Byron and his twin staging of Granados's *Goyescas* and Puccini's *Suor Angelica*. Describing this latest work, he says: «A festive mood will reign constantly over Riccardo's court and palace. From the very first scene, I want to convey an atmosphere of exhaustion, tiredness, and drunkenness, as though yet another of the great many masked balls held in the house had come to an end. I have imagined Riccardo as a man who, in his youth, before becoming Governor, unleashed a vital energy of a similar sort to that of Don Giovanni. For a man like that, his impossible love for his best friend's wife, Amelia, becomes a forbidding limit that he all too tempted to overstep. The dark side of this love, set to steer the star-crossed lovers towards the tragic ending and death, is incarnated by the fortune-teller Ulrica, the seer who, like the witches of *Macbeth*, will bring events to a head. Masks will be a central motif throughout the entire show, and not just in the final ball».

Lending his voice and face to Riccardo, Earl of Warwick, will be tenor **Piero Pretti**, an artist of international renown loved greatly by Teatro Regio audiences, who will remember his interpretation of key roles in major productions, including *I Vespri siciliani*, *Rigoletto*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and *La traviata* in the 2011 and 2012 seasons; the award-winning *La donna serpente* in the 2015–2016 season, and *Macbeth* in June 2017, directed by Emma Dante. He has performed on major world stages, from the Paris Opera to the Vienna State Opera, and Milan's La Scala. As a true opera tenor, his repertoire spans masterpieces by Donizetti and Puccini and all the major roles created by Verdi, performing in numerous productions conducted by Maestro Muti. The same is also true for **Luca Micheletti**—the lead role in Maestro Muti's most recent *Don Giovanni*—who debuts at the theatre in the role of Renato. The thirty-eight year-old baritone, actor, and stage director, but also writer, translator, and playwright with a PhD in Italian Studies, comes from a long family line of wandering artists. His singing career came about almost by chance, when director Marco Bellocchio asked him to sing in his film on Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*. Since his debut in 2018, he has toured the world performing on major stages, from La Scala in Milan and London's Royal Opera House to Sydney and Tokyo, conducted by maestros of the calibre of Riccardo Muti and Zubin Mehta. The role of Amelia, Renato's wife, will be performed by **Lidia Fridman**, a rising star on the world opera scene. Born in 1996, the Russian singer trained at the conservatories in Udine and Venice, becoming a soulful performer acclaimed for her effortlessly expressive vocals and captivating stage presence. She returns to the Teatro Regio after her performance in *Norma*, in the 2022 season. Mezzo-soprano **Alla Pozniak** will perform the role of Ulrica, soprano **Damiana Mizzi**, the page Oscar. Also appearing in the cast: baritone **Sergio Vitale** (Silvano); bass **Daniel Giulianini** (Samuel), bass **Luca Dall'Amico** (Tom); and tenor **Riccardo Rados** (a Judge and Amelia's Servant).

The new production features the stately and sophisticated sets of acclaimed set designer **Nicolas Bovey**, winner of the 2021 Premio Ubu for Best Set Design for *La Casa di Bernarda Alba* and *Le Sedie*, the 2022 Premio Ubu for Best Lighting Design for *La Signorina Giulia* and *I Due Gemelli Veneziani*, and the Le Maschere Award for his set designs for *Le Sedie*. Featuring costumes designed by **Ilaria Ariemme**, Torinese by birth but who lives and works in Milan and trained under Luisa Spinatelli, Gastone Mariani, Maria Carla Ricotti, Miretta Tovini and Edoardo Sanchi; choreography by **Alessio Maria Romani**; lighting design by **Pasquale Mari**. As customary, the **Teatro Regio Chorus** will be led by Chorus Master **Ulisse Trabacchin**.

Giuseppe Verdi's dramatic opera in three acts, on the libretto by Antonio Somma, based on Eugène Scribe's text for *Gustave III, ou Le Bal Masqué*, debuted at the Teatro Apollo in Rome on 17 February 1859 (and not in Naples, as originally planned), after an extenuating dispute with royal censors in Naples, who compelled Verdi to expunge what were seen as a potentially anti-monarchical messages. The story revolves around the figures of Riccardo, Earl of Warwick and Governor of Boston, his secretary Renato, and Renato's wife, Amelia. The earl has organized a great ball to see Amelia again, the woman he secretly loves, but who is married to Renato, his best friend. Renato warns Riccardo of a conspiracy against him by his enemies, Samuele and Tom, while the fortune teller's prophecy that Riccardo will be killed by Renato's hand is dismissed laughingly. However, when Renato discovers his wife and Riccardo's secret love, he resolves to

join the conspirators in their plot to kill the earl. The action all happens during the celebrated scene of the masked ball, when Renato, blinded by his jealousy, strikes down Riccardo, killing him. Based on a true story, the opera masterfully blends comic and tragic, with the frivolousness of the page Oscar—the only *travesti* role in all of Verdi's works, the compellingly passionate love duet in Act II, and the dramatic aria sung by Renato, "Eri tu che macchiavi quell'anima."

The Anteprema Giovani preview for audiences aged under 30 will be staged on **Monday, 19 February** at 8p.m.

The opera will be presented on **Wednesday 14 February** 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 *Un Ballo in Maschera* 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, 7 February 2024

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