



Opening of the 2026/2027 Opera and Ballet Season

Verismo Festival

The curtain rises on *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci*,
the opening event of the Festival dedicated to Mascagni and Leoncavallo

Andrea Battistoni on the podium, with two new productions
directed by Daniele Menghini and Francesco Micheli

Teatro Regio – Thursday 15 October at 7 p.m.

An unprecedented tetralogy rediscovers the roots of modern Italian opera: four operas, two composers, two directors and a single conductor shape the ambitious opening of Teatro Regio's 2026/2027 Opera and Ballet Season. On **Thursday 15 October**, the Season opens with the Verismo Festival, beginning with **new productions** of Pietro Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* and **Ruggero Leoncavallo's** *Pagliacci*. The cycle continues until 22 November with Leoncavallo's *La bohème* and Mascagni's *Iris*, for a total of **22 performances**. **Music Director Andrea Battistoni** conducts the Teatro Regio Orchestra, Chorus and Children's Chorus. **Daniele Menghini** directs Mascagni's operas, while **Francesco Micheli**, making his eagerly awaited Regio debut, directs Leoncavallo's. The choruses are prepared by **Gea Garatti Ansini** and **Claudio Fenoglio**, respectively.

Intesa Sanpaolo is partner of the Season opening, renewing a collaboration that has seen it stand alongside Teatro Regio since 2011 and confirming its support for the new double bill *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci*.

PARTNER CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA AND PAGLIACCI



An immersive experience at the heart of Verismo

The Festival springs from a paradox: the extraordinary success of Mascagni's and Leoncavallo's first operas, *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci*, ultimately overshadowed the rest of their output. Teatro Regio, historically associated with Puccini's great successes of those years, now invites audiences to rediscover Leoncavallo's *La bohème*, born of his creative rivalry with Puccini, and *Iris*, a pinnacle of orchestral refinement that anticipates atmospheres and resonances destined to reappear in *Madama Butterfly*. As with recent Season openings—from *La Juive* to the

Manon project and *Francesca da Rimini*—this cultural undertaking seeks to restore unjustly neglected works to their rightful place, offering a valuable opportunity for audiences in Italy and abroad. This choice is supported and strengthened by entrusting the productions to two distinctive directorial visions that converge in a coherent theatrical conception and, on the musical side, by the strong interpretative imprint of a specialist in this repertoire: our **Music Director**. Taken as a whole, this reading will free Verismo from the clichés that have long confined it to a repertoire considered immediately appealing but supposedly of lesser artistic value. It is an act of love for a pivotal chapter in our musical history—one that can still surprise us.

For more than five weeks, Teatro Regio becomes a major creative and production workshop, bringing together the Orchestra, Chorus, Children's Chorus, technicians, workshops and stage crews in an undertaking of exceptional complexity. The programme offers audiences several ways to experience it: the three productions may be enjoyed **throughout the entire period**, or the complete cycle may be followed **over three consecutive days** on the last weekend of October and the first two weekends of November. Turin thus becomes the ideal destination for a musical and theatrical journey into the heart of Verismo, from its most celebrated masterpieces to its most visionary and Symbolist outcomes.

The artists

An outstanding interpreter of this repertoire, **Andrea Battistoni** conducts all four titles, ensuring stylistic coherence and interpretative depth throughout the Festival. His particular affinity with the “Giovane Scuola” enables him to bring out not only the energy and passion of *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci*, the cornerstone double bill of the Verismo canon, but also the richness of the lesser-known works: Mascagni's sumptuous orchestral palette in *Iris* and the brilliant refinement of Leoncavallo's *La bohème*. His presence on the podium allows the Teatro's musical forces to shine at their best and strengthens the artistic journey he shares with the Regio.

On stage, two distinctive directorial visions intertwine and converge in a coherent whole: **Daniele Menghini** directs Mascagni's operas, **Francesco Micheli** Leoncavallo's. Working in close synergy, the two directors reread the four titles as an exploration of communities, their unwritten rules and the conflicts that run through them, with references also to Pasolini's world. Menghini focuses on ritual, the transition from Verismo to Symbolism and the revolutionary force of women's choices; Micheli explores the boundary between theatre and life, artists' disillusionment and the fragility of a generation for which the world leaves no room. The result is a Verismo stripped of folklore and restored to its human and social urgency. Visual unity across the four productions is provided by **Davide Signorini**'s sets and **Gianni Bertoli**'s lighting; costumes are by **Nika Campisi** for Mascagni's operas and **Giada Masi** for Leoncavallo's.

***Cavalleria rusticana/Pagliacci*: the sacred ritual of blood and the distorting mirror between reality and fiction**

In the opening double bill, ritual and performance become the forms through which the community observes, judges and allows violence to erupt. **Daniele Menghini** sets *Cavalleria rusticana* in a vast, powerful Easter nativity scene, where sacred ritual marks the drama and processional platforms bearing the symbols of the Passion form the backdrop to a community that

celebrates its faith while revealing its contradictions. At the heart of the drama is **Ekaterina Semenchuk**'s Regio debut. A leading interpreter of Santuzza, she portrays an excluded, "excommunicated" woman who embodies the tension between atonement and redemption. Mascagni's raw, searing music violently evokes a centuries-old code of honour, in an Easter that, as the production suggests, saves no one, yet reminds everyone that salvation remains possible. **Ivan Gyngazov** takes the role of Turiddu, with **Ariunbaatar Ganbaatar** as Alfio, **Elena Zilio** as Lucia and **Veta Pilipenco** as Lola; alternating in the roles are **Maria Teresa Leva** as Santuzza, **Amadi Lagha** as Turiddu, **Simone Piazzola** as Alfio and **Agostina Smimmero** as Lucia.

With **Francesco Micheli**, Leoncavallo's masterpiece sheds the reassuring trappings of tradition to become a ruthless investigation of the human condition. Inspired by an actual murder case witnessed by the composer as a child, the opera overturns every certainty: "The boundary between reality and performance is so fragile that it becomes dangerous," the director observes. Micheli transforms the story of Canio and Nedda into the symbol of a rural community confronting destructive values protected by silence, revealing the trauma of a rapidly changing world. At the heart of the drama stands Nedda, portrayed by **Carolina López Moreno**: a rebellious woman who makes an extreme gesture of freedom and courage against a possessive husband. **Martin Muehle** takes the role of Canio, with **Ariunbaatar Ganbaatar** as Tonio, **Matteo Mezzaro** as Peppe and **Joshua Hopkins** as Silvio. Alternating in the principal roles are **Maria Teresa Leva** as Nedda, **Carlo Ventre** as Canio, **Fabián Veloz** as Tonio, **Matteo Falcier** as Peppe and **Rodion Pogossoff** as Silvio. The final performance marks the eagerly awaited return of **Gregory Kunde** to the Regio in the role of Canio—an appointment not to be missed.

Leoncavallo's *La bohème*: the seasons of a youth destined to fade

From 27 October to 22 November, at the very Teatro Regio where Puccini's masterpiece received its premiere in 1896, we present **Ruggero Leoncavallo's** *La bohème* for the first time in the modern era, written in the same years out of the creative rivalry between the two composers. More faithful to **Henri Murger's** *Scènes de la vie de bohème*, the opera focuses not on Mimì and Rodolfo, but on the group of young artists and the free, restless relationship between Marcello and Musetta. The bohemians are penniless young artists who turn their precarious circumstances into a way of life, challenging bourgeois conventions through freedom in love and friendship, solidarity and irreverence. Leoncavallo thus brings to the stage a world alien to the opera-going public of his day, implicitly challenging the very establishment for which he composed. It is in this choral, nonconformist dimension that the opera reveals its disruptive force and a surprising closeness to the experiences of younger generations.

The score reveals a refined and eclectic Leoncavallo, capable of moving from the lightness of operetta and eighteenth-century pastiche to a chromatic, passionate and at times brutal language. **Francesco Micheli** tells the story of this youth through the changing seasons: from the vital explosion of the Café Momus, where the bohemians ridicule the nobility in a great collective farce, to the autumn of disillusionment, when the attic becomes a repository for lost ambitions.

The cast, all making role debuts, reflects the opera's different vocal perspective: **Matteo Lippi** is Marcello, the tenor protagonist; mezzo-soprano **Anna Goryachova** is Musette; baritone **Alessandro Luongo** is Rodolfo; soprano **Francesca Dotto** is Mimì; baritone **Simone Del Savio**

gives prominence to Schaunard; baritone **Francesco Salvadori** is Colline; bass **Matteo Peirone** is Barbemuche; and mezzo-soprano **Manuela Custer** is Eufemia.

Mascagni's *Iris*: a flower in the desert of a ruined humanity

With *Iris*, on stage from 5 to 18 November, the Festival reaches its most visionary conclusion. Far removed from the Mediterranean realism of *Cavalleria*, Mascagni's masterpiece marks the transition from Verismo to Symbolism and, in its choice of a Japanese setting, anticipates places and themes that would re-emerge a few years later in *Madama Butterfly*. Mascagni imagines a Japan steeped in the atmosphere of European Decadence: a dark and sensual world, suffused with a fragile, almost poisonous beauty, where innocence is betrayed by a society unable to recognise it and all too ready to destroy it. **Daniele Menghini** transposes the opera to a post-atomic landscape, drawing inspiration from the hibakujumoku, the trees that survived the radiation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and blossomed again among the ruins. *Iris* is one of these pure, vital presences, surrounded by a humanity corroded by war, violence and the desire to possess. Torn from the underground cave where she lives with her blind father, among origami and paper flowers, she is dragged by Osaka and Kyoto into the Yoshiwara, reduced to a ruined building inhabited by masked, deformed figures.

The score reveals a composer at the height of his maturity, exploiting all the resources of the orchestra and the harmonic advances of his time. Wagnerian influences and French Impressionism coexist with Mascagni's inexhaustible melodic invention, in writing that ranges from the terror of the "Octopus" aria to the radiance of the final transfiguration. The *Inno del Sole*, which opens and closes the opera with the grand impact of chorus and orchestra, frames an unconventional theatrical structure culminating in a suspended, almost dreamlike final act. Iris's sacrifice ultimately opens onto a symbolic rebirth in which the force of nature triumphs over human selfishness and violence. **Erika Grimaldi** takes the title role, with **Angelo Villari** as Osaka, **Roberto Frontali** as Kyoto and **Luca Tittoto** as the Blind Man.

Four women, four acts of freedom

The four operas are linked by their female protagonists, each confronting communities and relationships that restrict her desire for freedom. Santuzza and Nedda transcend the confines of their individual stories: the former assumes the stature of a tragic heroine, while the latter openly asserts her right to free herself from male possession, paying for it with her life. In *Iris*, femininity is embodied in the idealised figure of an innocent young woman entering a dark and perverse adult world, incapable of recognising her purity. Finally, in Leoncavallo's *La bohème*, Musette embodies a more conscious and modern form of freedom: strong-willed, independent and intolerant of bourgeois conventions and the constraints of conventional relationships. Together, these four perspectives reveal, within worlds dominated by violence and social judgement, the revolutionary power of the protagonists' choices.

Young Previews: four operas, a view of the present

For every opera title, the 2026/2027 Season renews the **Young Previews** initiative reserved for audiences **under 30**. This important offer is designed to foster younger generations' interest

in the art form; two dedicated cards (**Under 16** and **Under 30**) also make attendance highly affordable.

The first three **Young Previews** are scheduled for **Tuesday 13 October** for *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci*, **Friday 23 October** for *La bohème*, and **Thursday 29 October** for *Iris*. Advance ticket sales (€10) open at the end of September.

Tickets and information

Tickets are available from the Teatro Regio **Box Office** and online at www.teatroregio.torino.it. **Box Office**: Piazza Castello 215 - Turin | Tel. 011.8815.241/242 | biglietteria@teatroregio.torino.it. Opening hours: Monday to Saturday, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sunday, 10.30 a.m.-3.30 p.m. Information and updates: www.teatroregio.torino.it

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