



2023–2024 OPERA AND BALLET SEASON

# The Tender Land

Italian premiere of the opera by Aaron Copland

Love, heartbreak, and desire to break free  
in 1930s America

Piccolo Regio Puccini, 7/11 April and 4/5/7 May 2024

**Sunday, 7th April** at 4p.m., the Piccolo Regio Puccini will be staging the Italian premiere of *The Tender Land*, an opera in three acts by Aaron Copland on the libretto by Horace Everett.

Copland believed the simple beauty of the work was best rendered on «the small scale, by young singers for an audience young at heart». The Teatro Regio now adds its youthful artists to that tradition—orchestra conductor **Alessandro Palumbo**, director **Paolo Vettori**, and a cast of young performers from the **Regio Ensemble**. The Teatro Regio **Chorus** will be led by **Ulisse Trabacchin**. The **new staging** features sets by **Claudia Boasso**, costumes by **Laura Viglione**, and lighting design by **Gianni Bertoli**.

General Manager **Mathieu Jouvin** explains: «I firmly believe that the task of a cultural institution like the Teatro Regio is to present major works and composers of Italian tradition, but not only. After the successful experience of *Powder Her Face*, presented last season, the Piccolo Regio Puccini will once again be the stage for experimentation and enrichment of the programme, offering new insights and different points of view, as with the staging of Offenbach's operetta *Un Mari à la Porte* alongside the grand-opéra *La Juive*, and Copland's *The Tender Land* alongside the *Fanciulla del West*».

Acclaimed for his successful ballets *Billy the Kid*, *Rodeo*, and *Appalachian Spring*, and his film scores, **Aaron Copland** composed his first opera in two acts, *The Second Hurricane*, in 1936, which premiered the following year in a production directed by a young Orson Welles. The idea for *The Tender Land* in 1954 instead came from the celebrated book by poet and critic James Agee, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, a journalistic inquiry documenting life in a Depression-era nowhere of the deep south of rural America, featuring photographs by the great American photographer Walker Evans. It was a selection of those photographs, depicting farming women, which provided much of the inspiration for the story. The outcome was an intimate opera, which proved a huge hit with students at New York art colleges, won over by the dances and melodies of American folk tradition, the choral songs of sentimental impact, and, above all, the story of the young heroine, who upon graduating from high school discovers love, heartbreak, and an irresistible desire to go her own way.

**Alessandro Palumbo** is an orchestra conductor, pianist, and composer, whose career has already taken him to major Italian and European theatres. His opera debut came in 2014, on the podium conducting the Orquesta Sinfónica de Tenerife for *Don Quichotte* by Jules Massenet, and he has worked with Jader Bignamini and Evelino Pidò. In October he curated the orchestration of Jacques Offenbach's operetta *Un Marie à la Porte*, performed at the Piccolo Regio Puccini.

**Paolo Vettori**, born in Rome in 1989, joined the Teatro Regio's Treble Choir at the age of nine, performing for six opera and concert seasons. He studied elocution, acting, and dubbing, graduating from the Teatro alla Scala Academy in Milan. Formerly a member of the *Regio Ensemble*, for the theatre he directed the new staging of *Powder Her Face* by British composer Thomas Adès. As assistant director or camera director he has worked alongside professionals of the calibre of Lorenzo Amato, Sven-Eric Bechtolf, Edoardo De Angelis, Daniele Finzi Pasca, William Friedkin, Chiara Muti, Ferzan Özpetek, and Silvia Paoli.

This new production stars soprano **Irina Bogdanova** in the lead role of Laurie Moss; tenor **Michael Butler** in the role of Martin, an itinerant worker; bass **Tyler Zimmerman** as Grandpa Moss; contralto **Ksenia Chubunova** as Ma Moss; and baritone **Andres Cascante** as Top, an itinerant worker. Completing the cast are **Valentino Buzza** (Mr. Splinters); **Giulia Medicina** (Mrs. Splinters); **Davide Motta Fré** (Mr. Jenks); **Junghye Lee** (Mrs. Jenks); **Eun Young Jang** (a girl and off-stage voice); **Giovanni Castagliuolo** (a man); and **Roberto Calamo** (another man); with treble singers **Layla Nejmi** and **Minerva Bonizio** alternating in the role of Beth Moss. Irina Bogdanova, Tyler Zimmerman, Ksenia Chubunova, and Andres Cascante are resident artists from the *Regio Ensemble*.

*The Tender Land* will be performed in the original English language, with surtitles in Italian. The libretto will be available in digital format, by scanning the qr-code on the programme book.

The opera will be presented on Wednesday, 3 April in the **Sala del Caminetto** at **6p.m.** The conference-concert will be led by **Susanna Franchi** and feature a live recital of pieces from the opera by **Regio Ensemble** artists. Free admission.

April shows: Sunday 7th, 4p.m. and Thursday 11th, 8p.m. May shows: Saturday 4th, 8p.m., Sunday 5th, 4p.m., and Tuesday 7th, 8p.m.

**Tickets:** Full price €30—Under 30s €24—Regio Card Giovani €10

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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](http://www.teatroregio.torino.it)

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