



For the first time in Italy

Manon Manon Manon

Three Operas, Three Composers, One Unique Heroine
Directed by Arnaud Bernard

Conducting the Teatro Regio Orchestra and Chorus
Renato Palumbo, Evelino Pidò, and Guillaume Tourniaire

Teatro Regio, 1–29 October 2024

From 1 to 29 October 2024, Teatro Regio presents for the first time in Italy *Manon Manon Manon*: a fascinating portrait from three perspectives of a woman like no other, Manon Lescaut. The central character of the Abbé Prévost's sensational eighteenth-century novel, she has been an inspiration to no less than three great composers: **Daniel Auber**, who first brought the character on stage in *Manon Lescaut* in 1856; **Jules Massenet**, who composed his *Manon* in 1884; and **Giacomo Puccini**, who achieved his first great triumph with *Manon Lescaut* in 1893. Three independent, but complementary operas, three orchestra directors, three performers giving voice to one unique heroine, and three different casts for a unique “trilogy” of portraits. With twenty-one shows over a single month, *Manon Manon Manon* is a true feat of artistic depth and production capacity, showcasing the worldclass standing of the Teatro Regio.

Central to this project is **Giacomo Puccini**. With the year 2024 marking the centenary of his death, we have decided to continue this season's tribute to the master, featuring productions of as many as seven operas by the Lucca-born composer, by commencing the 2024–2025 Season with the spotlight on his *Manon Lescaut*, which received its world premiere on 1 February 1893 at the Teatro Regio.

For **Stefano Lo Russo**, Mayor of the City of Turin and Chairman of the Teatro Regio Foundation, it is «a project that once again shows, also symbolically, how the Teatro Regio continues to find its strength in a cultural pluralism that explores and brings to the stage different, yet complementary perspectives. A line-up open to people of all walks, unlocking access to cultural productions of the highest quality from a variety of approaches. An extraordinary programme made possible by the artists, workers and all the staff at the Teatro Regio».

General Manager **Mathieu Jouvin** explains: «We have chosen to line-up the three operas so that audiences can enjoy a different production each night or see the full “*Manon* triptych” over a single weekend, making it an ideal treat for visitors to the city and adding another thrilling option to the city's rich calendar of cultural events. Our pricing policy makes the initiative as accessible as ever, with extremely convenient subscription tickets, so that theatre-goers can enjoy all three shows, just as the director imagined them. I invite you not to miss out on this unique and exciting opportunity, which for me has the special flavour of wine-tasting: just like every vintage, every terroir, every vineyard brings out the different qualities of the one grape variety, here each production brings to life the different souls of one unique heroine, in turn frivolous, tortured, and rebel. A thrilling experience that will capture the minds and hearts of audiences». He continues: «And *Manon Manon Manon* will be the centre of attention in all of Europe, as I am proud to announce that the Teatro Regio will be hosting, on 24–26 October 2024, the Autumn Conference of Opera Europa, the leading organisation for professional opera companies and

opera festivals throughout Europe, currently serving over 233 members from 44 countries. The meeting will be an important occasion for all the members to come together and look at ways to develop new partnerships and innovative projects».

Artistic Director **Cristiano Sandri** adds: «We tasked the staging of the three productions to a single *deus ex machina*, director Arnaud Bernard, who has chosen to tell the three stories through the lens of the silver screen, specifically through three iconic eras of French cinema so fitting for a city like Turin, of such importance for cinema history».

Intesa Sanpaolo is **Main Partner** of “*Manon* triptych”. «As Intesa Sanpaolo, we support this new project of the Teatro Regio, of which we are Founding Members, strengthening our collaboration born back in 2011. This initiative underlines Intesa Sanpaolo's continued support for the development and promotion of Turin's territory through its most authoritative cultural institutions: the objective is always to help its reputation and visibility in the national and international cultural panorama» said **Fabrizio Paschina**, Executive Director, Communication and Image, Intesa Sanpaolo.

First published in 1731, *Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux et des Manon Lescaut*, the final volume of the Abbé Prévost's epic *Mémoires et Aventures d'un Homme de Qualité*, tells the story of the turbulent love affair between a young nobleman, Des Grieux, and the fascinating but fickle Manon Lescaut. The story explores the universal themes of love, lust, and ambition and the consequences of the choices made by the two lead characters. The plots developed by Auber, Puccini, and Massenet's operas each take the novel as their starting point to offer unique takes on the love story through different musical interpretations and narrative perspectives.

For director **Arnaud Bernard**, his approach starts with a question: «Who are these Manons? Prévost's Manon is a rather adventurous woman, but also a free spirit who finds true love only too late. For Auber she is a bird in a cage; for Massenet, a woman in search of herself; for Puccini, a free-spirited and rebel woman. It is the union of all these Manons that makes Manon who she is, and staging the three Manons together is the point of this colossal enterprise. Each Manon in her way departs from and returns to her older, literary sister—they are neither faithful to her, but nor do they betray her. The three operas are each independent, stand-alone works, but it is their differences that emerge and magnify each other, making it essential to view all three through a common prism. Thus the idea, but above all the imperative, of thinking of Manon as *Manon Manon Manon*, as a **show over three nights** united by the fil rouge of cinema. Or rather, three symbolic eras of French cinema».

For **Puccini**, the lens will be that of “poetic realism,” **the 1930s movement in French cinema** that gave us *The Port of Shadows*, *Children of Paradise*, *The Human Beast*, and the cinema of Jean Gabin and Michèle Morgan, where a romantic aestheticism draws attention to dramatic elements. For **Massenet**, it will be **Brigitte Bardot** and women's liberation in **1960s Paris**, with an anti-conformist BB as the femme fatale, with her carefree ways, savage side, and rebel spirit, emblem of seductive temptation and sin. The aesthetics of **silent film** will instead be the key for portraying **Auber's** Manon, the most delicate, fragile, and “old-fashioned” of the three Manons. It will be an opportunity to commemorate not only Georges Méliès, but also Alice Guy, a little-known pioneer who was the first woman film director in the history of cinema. «Auber's *Manon*,” explains Bernard, “will form the link between our project and Turin, a city marking the birthplace of much of Italian cinema, a city that has given us productions of worldwide renown. A city that possesses one of the greatest cinema museums ever».

Born in Strasbourg, at the age of six **Arnaud Bernard** began studying the violin, which he continued at the Strasbourg Conservatory and then with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg. After working as an assistant on productions in France and Germany with Nicolas Joel and Jean-Claude Auvray, in 1989 he became assistant director and stage director at the Théâtre du Capitole in Toulouse. As assistant to Nicolas Joel, he worked at a number of prestigious international opera houses, credited with more than twenty premieres of Joel's original productions. In 1995 he made his first own staging of Verdi's *Il trovatore* at the Théâtre du Capitole, before debuting in the United States at the age of twenty-nine with *Falstaff*, attracting the acclaim of New York critics. Since 1998, he has worked exclusively as a director, staging major productions such as *Roméo et Juliette* at the Chicago Opera Theatre, with Roberto Alagna and Angela Gheorghiu; a new production at the Théâtre du Capitole of Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*, debuting Marcelo Álvarez in the role of Nemorino; and his extraordinarily successful *La bohème* at the Verona Arena in 2005, brought back on stage again in the summer of 2007 and 2011. More recently, his production of *Falstaff* (directed by Jeffrey Tate) opened the season at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples and he has directed numerous shows for international opera houses in Helsinki, Lausanne, Bilbao, St Petersburg, Rome, Hong Kong, and Monte Carlo, as well as the Bolshoi and Mariinsky Theatres. His recent productions include

Nabucco at the Verona Arena (restaged in 2018 and 2020), *La bohème* in Lisbon, *La dama di picche* at the Oslo Opera House, *La fanciulla del West* at the Mariinsky Theatre, and *Carmen* at the Helsinki Opera House. He was the youngest director ever to stage an opera at the Verona Arena, with his *Nabucco* broadcast live on ARTE and screened as part of the Viva l'Opéra series in Gaumont cinemas.

The three productions will feature the Teatro Regio **Orchestra and Chorus**, led by chorus master **Ulisse Trabacchin**, with set designs by **Alessandro Camera**, costumes by **Carla Ricotti**, and lighting design by **Fiammetta Baldiserri**. Assistant directors include **Marina Bianchi** (for *Manon Lescaut* by Puccini), **Stephen Taylor** (for *Manon* by Massenet), and **Yamal Das Irmich** (for *Manon Lescaut* by Auber).

The opening night will be on Tuesday, **1 October** at 7p.m. with *Manon Lescaut* by Giacomo Puccini on the libretto by Luigi Illica, Domenico Oliva, and Marco Praga, with seven shows running through to 26 October, all conducted by Maestro **Renato Palumbo**, one of the world's leading conductors of Italian opera. Starring **Erika Grimaldi** in the title role, **Andeka Gorrotxategui** as Renato Des Grieux, **Alessandro Luogo** as Lescaut and **Carlo Lepore** Geronte, and **Dinara Alieva** and **Carlo Ventre** as alternates for the two leading roles. This first masterpiece by a thirty-two-year-old Puccini is a work full of youthful energy and freshness, marked almost by an impatience to see the story through to its end. In no way daunted by comparisons with the eponymous opera by Massenet, Puccini wrote: «Massenet feels it as a Frenchman, with face powder and minuets. I shall feel it as an Italian, with a desperate passion». Manon, an attractive young woman, is torn between the true, sincere love of the young student Renato Des Grieux and the self-interested advances of the rich treasurer, Geronte di Ravoir. When she is won over more by Ravoir's attentions and wealth than by the heartfelt spontaneity of Des Grieux, he nevertheless manages to snatch a last embrace from his beloved Manon. Caught in the act by Geronte, Manon is arrested for prostitution and deported to the United States, where she is ultimately accompanied by Des Grieux, forever faithfully devoted to his true love. In America, in a wasteland on the outskirts of New Orleans, the two wander aimlessly, until Manon, exhausted by famine and thirst, dies in the arms of the one man who never truly abandoned her.

Saturday, **5 October** at 7p.m., the curtains will instead open on *Manon* by Massenet on the libretto by Henry Meilhac and Philippe Gille, with six shows running through to 29 October, all conducted by Maestro **Evelino Pidò**, an orchestra conductor born in Turin and now resident in Paris, perhaps the most "French" of all the great Italian conductors. Pidò makes his return to Teatro Regio after his triumph here last season with *La Fille du Régiment*. Starring **Ekaterina Bakanova** (*Manon Lescaut*), **Björn Bürger** (*Lescaut*), **Atalla Ayan** (the Chevalier des Grieux), **Roberto Scandiuzzi** (the Comte des Grieux). Alternates for the main roles include **Martina Russomanno** as *Manon Lescaut*, **Maxim Lisiin** (*Lescaut*), **Andrei Danilov** (the Chevalier des Grieux), and **Ugo Rabec** (the Comte des Grieux). Similarly inspired by Prévost's novel, Massenet's *Manon* premiered at the Opéra-Comique in Paris in 1884. It was an immediate, overwhelmingly popular success, with the audience repeatedly calling out the singers and composer for encores and curtain calls. Massenet's orchestral mastery is given full expression in the very different and compelling atmospheres he creates: festivities on the street, the mystical air of the Church of Saint-Sulpice, the squalidness of a gambling house. In the score we find frivolous local eighteenth-century coloratura and brilliant comic streaks, which counterbalance the emotional intensity of the story. Dominating the scene is Manon, whose transformation is conveyed with exquisite subtlety through memorable melodies—from the innocence of "Voyons, Manon plus de chimère," to the sensuality of "N'est ce plus ma main," to the hopeless resignation of the finale. Driven by the motto, "Let's make the most of youth, we will not be twenty forever!" Manon is a sinner without malice, flighty and impulsive, a beautiful young woman whose parents have chosen to send to a convent. Fate, however, has other things in store for her, when she meets the Chevalier Des Grieux, a student from a noble family but of poor means. The two fall in love and flee to Paris together, where a cruel ending awaits, as Manon, with her taste for luxury, draws Des Grieux into a spiral of moral degradation.

Thursday, **17 October** at 7p.m., Teatro Regio will present *Manon Lescaut* by Daniel-François-Esprit Auber on the libretto by Eugène Scribe, for five shows running until Sunday 27 October, conducted by Maestro **Guillaume Tourniaire**, in his debut at the Teatro Regio. Born in Provence, Guillaume Tourniaire studied piano and conducting at the Geneva Conservatory, during which time he was winner of a first prize in the international *Gabriel Fauré* piano competition. A rising star on the international scene, his extraordinary depth and experience with opera, combined with a passion for rare music, has made him a sought-after conductor on the world stage. Since 2012, he has been artistic director of the Ensemble Vocal Lausanne. The production stars **Rocío Pérez** (*Manon Lescaut*), **Armando Noguera** (the Marquis d'Hérigny), **Francesco Salvadori** (*Lescaut*), **Sébastien Guèze** (Des Grieux), and **Manuela Custer** (Madame Bancelin). Alternating in the main roles: **Marie-Eve Munger** (*Manon Lescaut*), **Gurgen**

Buveyan (the Marquis d'Hérigny), and **Marco Ciaponi** (Des Grieux). From the 1830s to 1850s, Daniel Auber and his librettist Eugène Scribe were true superstars of the Paris Opéra-Comique. The secret to their success? Stories in which the characters fumble their way through growing adversity, aided by incredible plot twists and turns, set to light-hearted music marked by irresistible melodies. One of the pair's most enduring successes was their 1856 opera *Manon Lescaut*, based on the novel by the Abbé Prévost. As the prurient elements of the story made it unsuitable for the respectable audiences of mid-nineteenth century theatres, Scribe transformed Manon into a frivolous young woman, who sincerely falls in love with Des Grieux but has the misfortune to always find herself in the wrong place at the wrong time. The opera and the original novel converge only in their endings, where Manon is deported and dies of hardship in a wasteland—never before had an opéra comique featured such a tragic conclusion.

Preview showings are planned for all three of the productions under the **Anteprime Giovani** initiative for theatre-goers aged **under 30**, at a ticket price of **€10**.

BOX OFFICE AND INFORMATION

To best enjoy all three productions of the *Manon* “trilogy” and fully appreciate how the three great composers explore and colour such a unique heroine, various ticketing options and a new set of the main hall have been prepared. **Choose a subscription ticket to reserve the same seat and enjoy a sensational 40% discount off the total price for three single tickets**; this option lets you select the dates of your preferred series and your preferred seat. Alternatively, choose the **3Manon Carnet** to choose your preferred dates for the selected seating sector, **with the same 40% discount applied**. For both options, part-payment solutions are available. For our most devoted audiences, we have reserved for holders of 2023–24 Opera and Ballet Season and Concert Season subscription tickets a pre-sale period in which they can confirm their current preferred seats also for the *Manon* triptych, from Friday, 2 February to Thursday, 22 February 2024.

New subscription tickets with reserved seating: on sale from **Friday, 23 February** until the date of the first show. **3Manon Carnets**: on sale from **Monday, 25 March** until the date of the first show. **Tickets can be purchased** as of **Monday 25 March 2024** online at www.teatroregio.torino.it and www.vivaticket.it, at the Teatro Regio Box Office, and from Vivaticket outlets. Concessions apply to: under-30s (c. 20% discount); Regio Card Giovani 18–35 holders; groups (min. 20 people); Teatro Regio subscription ticket holders.

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.

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

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