



UN BALLO IN MASCHERA

Giuseppe Verdi

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Logos for this production: **Unitel Classica + Rising Alternative + Bayerische Staatsoper + CMajor**

Opera in 3 acts - *Sung in Italian*

From the Bayerische Staatsoper

Recorded in 2016

Running Time approximately 2h25 –

Detailed running time: *TBA*

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor	Zubin Mehta
Director	Johannes Erath
Sets	tba
Costumes	tba
Chorus	Chorus of Bayerische Staatsoper
Orchestra	Bayerisches Staatsorchester

ARTISTIC TEAM

Riccardo	Piotr Beczala
Renato	George Petean
Amelia	Anja Harteros
Ulrica	Okka von der Damerau
Oscar	Sofia Fomina
Silvano	Andrea Borghini
Samuel	Anatoli Sivko
Tom	Scott Conner
A judge	Ulrich Reß
Amelia's servant	Joshua Owen Mills

Presentation

Praise for Munich's new *Ballo in Maschera*: "A formidable vocal feast" (Bayerische Staatszeitung). "The singers sent the audience into raptures (Südwestpresse). "A total triumph" (La Razón). "This production shows what a utopia opera can be" (Abendzeitung).

The Bavarian State Opera's former music director **Zubin Mehta** returned to the fabled house (where his image in bronze adorns one of the foyers) to celebrate his 80th birthday conducting Verdi's middle-period masterpiece for the first time in a staged production. His remarkable cast includes soprano **Anja Harteros** singing Amelia for the first time and "filling every note with Verdian intensity", tenor **Piotr Beczala** as a "visually and vocally dashing Riccardo" and **George Petean** as an "exemplary"

Renato (Neue Musikzeitung). In director **Johannes Erath's** musically super-sensitive new production, this historically-based tale of illicit love, conspiracy and betrayal unfolds in a surrealistic, shadowy setting transformed by lighting and projections. Special praise was showered by the enthusiastic critics on Maestro Mehta, who "creates concentrated musical connections, miraculously guiding his orchestra and unsurpassable voices the way a thermal lifts a paraglider [...] Musically the performance was a dream" (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung).

Synopsis

ACT I

Count Riccardo of Warwick, the Governor of Boston, is awaited by the members of his entourage. Among them, however, are those – like Samuel and Tom – who feel they are the victims of past injustices and harbor plans of revenge [no. 1a]. The Count is announced by his page, Oscar, who presents him with the guest list for an imminent ball. Riccardo is troubled to see among the names that of Amelia, the wife of Renato – his closest collaborator – whom he is secretly in love with [no. 1b]. Renato himself appears, and informs him about rumors of an imminent attempt on his life, but Riccardo does not want to know the details and minimizes the danger, feeling adequately protected by the love of his subjects [no. 1c]. Oscar then shows in a judge, who presents him with a sentence of banishment against a fortune-teller named Ulrica. Riccardo is perplexed, and Oscar takes her side. Intrigued by the figure of the sorceress, the Count invites everyone to go with him – in disguise – to meet her. In the fortune-teller's hovel, a naïve and excited crowd observes her celebrating a ritual to conjure up infernal powers. Riccardo arrives. The fortune-teller predicts that the sailor Silvano will soon be repaid for the sacrifices he made while in the Count's service. Riccardo, unobserved, slides a purse and an officer's license into the man's pockets; when Silvano discovers them, his (and the crowd's) surprise turns into acclamations to the sorceress. When a servant announces the arrival of a lady, awaited for a private consultation, the fortune-teller asks everyone to go out; Riccardo, however, having recognized Amelia's servant, finds a hiding-place from where he can listen to the conversation between the two women. Amelia asks for advice to remove guilty love from her heart, and Ulrica tells her that the remedy is a magic herb that she must retrieve herself from a desolate area on the edge of the city where the gallows stand. From outside, protests are heard, so Ulrica sends Amelia away and lets the bizarre crowd enter: it is the company of disguised courtiers. Riccardo, pretending to be a fisherman, asks Ulrica to tell his fortune. She realizes that she is being fooled, but yields at Riccardo's insistence, and predicts his imminent end. The courtiers are disturbed: Samuel and Tom fear that their conspiracy will be revealed. Instead, Riccardo derides both the prophecy and the gullibility of his friends, and asks Ulrica to provide further details. Riccardo, she says, will be assassinated by the first man to take his hand. In that moment, Renato arrives and greets the Count warmly. Everyone is relieved: Riccardo will certainly not be killed by his best friend. The Count reproaches Ulrica good-naturedly, saying that, with all her clairvoyance, she didn't know the identity of the man standing before her, nor imagine that a decree of banishment had been hanging over her head. The sorceress thanks him for his magnanimity, but repeats her dark omen. In that moment, preceded by Silvano, the crowd enters and joyfully hails Riccardo, by now unmasked.

ACT II

Amelia goes to the place indicated by Ulrica; she is determined to renounce her own guilty love, although she knows her life will become meaningless to her. Riccardo, who has followed her, confronts her and immediately gets the better of her fragile resistance: Amelia throws herself into his arms. But steps are heard! Amelia covers her face as Renato arrives; he has followed the Count in order to warn him that assassins are on his tracks. Riccardo lets himself be persuaded to disappear, but makes his friend promise to escort his companion back to the city without attempting to learn who she is. Renato invites the veiled woman to follow him, but their way is immediately blocked by the conspirators. Abashed by having surprised Renato, and not the Count, the conspirators uncover the woman's face and abandon themselves to sarcastic remarks about the fact that a man should chose such a place to withdraw with his own wife. Renato, devastated, asks Samuel and Tom to meet him the next day.

ACT III

The next day, Renato coldly warns Amelia that her tears serve no purpose: she will have to pay for her infidelity with her own life. Left alone, he curses Riccardo, responsible for putting an end to his family's

happiness. Samuel and Tom, arriving for the appointment, are astonished to learn that Renato intends to join the conspiracy. Renato cruelly forces Amelia to draw one of their names from an urn containing three pieces of paper; destiny has reserved for him the role of executioner. Oscar then arrives with the official invitation to the party that evening: it will be a magnificent masked ball. The three men agree that that will be the ideal moment to take their revenge, while Amelia desperately asks herself how she can warn Riccardo.

Alone in his study, Riccardo decides to renounce Amelia, and to arrange for the immediate return to England of her and Renato. Oscar brings him an anonymous note warning him about what is about to take place, but the Count decides to participate all the same in the party; he does not intend to give an impression of weakness to his enemies, and moreover, he does not intend to renounce seeing Amelia one last time. The splendid ball begins. Oscar does not want to reveal the count's mask, but yields when Renato convinces him that he must communicate grave news. Amelia confronts Riccardo, urging him once more to save himself, and Riccardo tells her of his decision to renounce her, when Renato shoots him. Riccardo swears to his friend that Amelia is pure, shows him the decree of promotion with which he would have sent him back to his homeland, and dies pronouncing words of forgiveness for his enemies and a moving farewell to his country and its people.