

PRESS RELEASE

Bertelsmann Brings Cultural Treasures from Milan's Archivio Ricordi to Brussels

- **“The Enterprise of Opera” exhibition affords rare insights into the genesis of two Verdi operas**
- **A hundred noted guests expected to the festive opening at the Palais des Beaux Arts**

Brussels, May 7, 2014 – Bertelsmann is bringing the “Enterprise of Opera” exhibition to Brussels. The exhibition celebrated its successful premiere in Verdi’s bicentenary year 2013 and features cultural treasures from the Group’s own Archivio Ricordi in Milan. From Thursday, documents by the composer Giuseppe Verdi and other unique testaments to Italian opera history will be on display at the Palais des Beaux Arts in Europe’s capital city for two weeks. The exhibition uses scores, librettos, selected correspondence, stage sets and figurines to show how Verdi’s two late operas “Otello” and “Falstaff” came into being. The multi-faceted, interactive exhibition, which already attracted thousands of opera fans in Berlin, Gutersloh and Milan, is open to the public in Brussels from May 8 to 23. Admission is free.

Bertelsmann expects the opening ceremony on Wednesday evening, held at the legendary Henri Le Boeuf concert hall, will be attended by about a hundred distinguished guests from culture and politics, including Vice-President of the European Commission Viviane Reding, European Commissioner for Culture Androulla Vassiliou, and the Ambassadors of Italy, Germany, India and Sweden to Belgium or the EU. Representatives of cultural institutions such as the Artistic Director of the Belgian National Orchestra, Albert Wastiaux, the Director of the Flemish Opera, Aviel Cahn, the Director of the European Cultural Foundation, Katherine Watson, and Susanne Höhn, Head of the Goethe-Institut in Brussels, have also confirmed their attendance. The curator of the exhibition is the renowned Verdi expert Gabriele Dotto, who will also be present. In addition to a first look at the exhibition, guests will also be treated to a performance by talented young singers from La Scala in Milan, and an unusual video performance.

In the lead-up to the opening ceremony, the event’s host, Bertelsmann Chairman & CEO Thomas Rabe, said: “The Archivio Ricordi houses one of the world’s most valuable privately owned music collections, including rarities that are of utmost importance for European cultural history. The fact that this archive belongs to our Group not only makes us proud, it also implies a great responsibility of which we are very aware. Bertelsmann ensures that the treasures in the Archivio Ricordi are preserved as best as possible, and made accessible to the public. “

The archive currently contains 7,800 original scores from over 600 operas – including precious original handwritten manuscripts by Giuseppe Verdi and Giacomo Puccini – as well as some 10,000 librettos, around 6,000 historical photographs, and the publishing company's complete business correspondence from 1888 to 1962, which provides far-reaching insights into the thinking and work of the cultural industry of that time. The archived materials are being restored in a comprehensive indexing and digitization process, and will gradually be made available in the virtual realm as well.

“The Enterprise of Opera: Verdi. Boito. Ricordi”

Brussels:

May 08th – 23rd, 2014

Tues – Sun: 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Thurs: 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Palais des Beaux-Arts Bruxelles, BOZAR
Rue Ravenstein, 23 – 1000 Brussels
Phone: +32 – 2 – 507 82 00
Admission is free

For more information, please visit the Bertelsmann homepage:

<http://www.bertelsmann.com/news-and-media/specials/the-enterprise-of-opera/>

About Bertelsmann

Bertelsmann is an international media company whose core divisions encompass television (RTL Group), book publishing (Penguin Random House), magazine publishing (Gruner + Jahr), services (Arvato), and printing (Be Printers) in some 50 countries. In 2013, the company's businesses, with their more than 111,000 employees, generated revenues of €16.4 billion. Bertelsmann stands for a combination of creativity and entrepreneurship that empowers the creation of first-rate media, communications, and service offerings to inspire people around the world and to provide innovative solutions for customers.

For further questions, please contact:

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