

PRESS RELEASE

Bertelsmann Brings Treasures from the Archivio Storico Ricordi to Spain for the First Time

- The exhibition “The Making of Verdi’s Otello – A Glimpse into the Archivio Storico Ricordi” will take place at Madrid’s Teatro Real from September 15th to October 3rd on the occasion of the theater’s bicentennial
- Unique pieces of Italian opera history are fundamental to understanding the opera’s genesis and creative process
- Their Majesties King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia, members of the Spanish government, CEOs of the biggest Spanish companies, and personages from the cultural world are expected at Teatro Real
- Thomas Rabe: “Bertelsmann is taking responsibility for the restoration and digitization of important testimonies to opera history”

Madrid, September 12, 2016 – For the first time, unique pieces of Italian opera history from the Bertelsmann-owned Archivio Storico Ricordi in Milan will be on display at an exhibition in Spain. The international media group is opening the archive, which houses one of the world’s most valuable music collections in private hands, to provide one of the highlights of the Teatro Real of Madrid’s bicentennial celebrations. “The making of Verdi’s Otello – A Glimpse into the Archivio Storico Ricordi” exhibition features original scores, librettos, selected correspondence, sets, and costume designs for Otello, and illustrates the creative collaboration between the music publisher Giulio Ricordi, and the celebrated composer Giuseppe Verdi. Otello is widely represented in the Archivio Storico Ricordi, which contains the most relevant and richest series of historical documents related to the masterpiece, including the autograph in Verdi’s own hand. The Archivio also contains the documents of the world premiere of Otello, essential to understanding Giuseppe Verdi’s creative process, as well as contemporary representations of the opera.

The exhibition will be open to the general public between September 15th and October 3rd, while Otello is playing at Teatro Real to mark the opening of the 2016/2017 opera season. Their majesties King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia, members of the Spanish government, presidents and CEOs of the biggest Spanish companies, and personages from the cultural world will attend the opening performance of Otello on September 15th, the most important occasion of the year for the opera house. More than 1,600 guests are expected for the event.

Bertelsmann Chairman & CEO Thomas Rabe says: “The Archivio Ricordi houses a wealth of exquisite treasures, and it has been part of Bertelsmann for many years. For us, this means a distinct responsibility to treat this culturally and historically significant legacy with great

care, and to ensure its preservation for posterity. We are indexing and preserving the archive's inventory according to the latest scientific and technical standards, and will open up access to these unique cultural treasures for a wide audience with the exhibition and an extensive digitization project. Bertelsmann is showcasing the Ricordi Archive as an example of music's rich tradition, while actively shaping the digital future of music with our new-model music company BMG."

Bertelsmann Spain Chairman Fernando Carro says: "The exhibition is one of many ongoing cultural initiatives that Bertelsmann, as one of the main representatives of the cultural industry in Europe, is sponsoring to preserve European cultural heritage. Bertelsmann is aware of the great responsibility that comes with owning this unique cultural asset, and continues to cultivate the tradition associated with the Ricordi name".

Bertelsmann had acquired the iconic Italian music-publishing company Casa Ricordi in 1994, but later divested itself of the music company and the Ricordi music rights as part of its withdrawal from the traditional music business. However, the associated Archivio Storico Ricordi and the rights to the Ricordi brand remained within the Group. The archive inventory now contains 7,800 original scores of more than 600 operas – including valuable original manuscripts by Giuseppe Verdi and Giacomo Puccini – as well as about 10,000 librettos, 6,000 historical photographs, and the company's complete business correspondence from 1888 to 1962, which provides far-reaching insights into how the cultural industry thought and worked at that time. The original scores of many 19th- and early 20th-century operas stored here, along with those of many other compositions, are highlights of European music history.

The publisher Ricordi was a fundamental pioneer of the music industry, and had a different approach to managing the creative process. In 1808, Giovanni Ricordi founded a music publishing firm in Milan that would significantly shape the cultural history of Italy and Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries: Casa Ricordi. It published the works of the "big five" composers of Italian opera – Gioachino Rossini, Gaetano Donizetti, Vincenzo Bellini, Giuseppe Verdi and Giacomo Puccini. From the beginning, all of the company's documents were meticulously archived. The former business archives of the Casa Ricordi publishing company have since become a historical archive: the Archivio Storico Ricordi is now housed in the Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense in Milan.

Since February 2011, a project group at Bertelsmann and the Ricordi team in Milan have been developing a sustainable concept for indexing the archival material and preserving it for posterity. Together, they are working on the continuous restoration and digitization of the archive. The idea is to develop the Archivio Storico Ricordi into a best-practice case in the field of communicating cultural and historical archive materials in the digital era, and to make its resources accessible to a wider audience besides the academic community.

The exhibition “The making of Verdi’s *Otello* – A glimpse into the Archivio Storico Ricordi” will be on view at Madrid’s Teatro Real from September 15th to October 3rd, 2016.

“The Making of Verdi’s *Otello* – A Glimpse into the Archivio Storico Ricordi” Madrid:

September 15th – October 3rd, 2016

Teatro Real

Plaza de Isabel II

28013 Madrid

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www.teatro-real.com

For more information about the exhibition and the Archivio Storico Ricordi, please visit www.bertelsmann.com or www.ricordicompany.com

About Bertelsmann

Bertelsmann is a media, services and education company that operates in about 50 countries around the world. It includes the broadcaster RTL Group, the trade book publisher Penguin Random House, the magazine publisher Gruner + Jahr, the music company BMG, the service provider Arvato, the Bertelsmann Printing Group, the Bertelsmann Education Group, and Bertelsmann Investments, an international network of funds. The company has 117,000 employees and generated revenues of €17.1 billion in the 2015 financial year. Bertelsmann stands for creativity and entrepreneurship. This combination promotes first-class media content and innovative service solutions that inspire customers around the world.

For further questions, please contact:

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