

PRESS RELEASE

Berliner Operngruppe and Bertelsmann bring Original Verdi Opera 'Giovanna d'Arco' to Berlin for the First Time

- **Archivio Ricordi in Milan supports artistic exploration of the Italian musical genius's lesser-known operas**

Berlin, February 22, 2018 – Berlin can once again look forward to a local premiere of the original version of a rare Verdi opera. A year after the Berlin premiere of the musical rarity “Stiffelio,” the media company Bertelsmann and the Berliner Operngruppe are presenting a true-to-original staging of “Giovanna d'Arco,” Giuseppe Verdi's seventh opera, which was inspired by the story of Joan of Arc.

Verdi's dramma lirico premiered at Milan's Teatro alla Scala in 1845 and was initially a great success, but twenty years after its creation it was hardly performed any more. In Germany, the opera wasn't performed until a century later – in 1941 at the Berlin Volksoper as a huge propaganda spectacle with a version rewritten by the Nazis. On March 5, 2018, the Berliner Operngruppe, which specializes in rare operas, will perform “Giovanna d'Arco” at the Konzerthaus am Gendarmenmarkt, conducted by Felix Krieger using the critical edition by Alberto Rizzuti, published by Ricordi. The edition is based on Verdi's handwritten score and Temistocle Solera's libretto of the opera, which are housed along with other original documents in the Bertelsmann-owned Archivio Storico Ricordi. The Milanese archive contains documents and artefacts from 200 years of Italian opera history, and is considered one of the world's most valuable music collections in private hands. It also supported the artistic exploration of Verdi's “Giovanna d'Arco.”

“Working with the Berliner Operngruppe gives us an opportunity to support performances of lesser-known works from the Ricordi archive as well. The archive still has a lot of potential that we want to tap and share with a wide audience in the long term,” said Karin Schlautmann, Head of Corporate Communications at Bertelsmann.

Felix Krieger, the conductor of the Berliner Operngruppe, added: “It's wonderful to be able to see the original documents in this archive. We are delighted about this fruitful collaboration with the historic Ricordi archive in Milan, made possible by Bertelsmann.”

The Berliner Operngruppe will perform “Giovanna d'Arco” in semi-scenic form. With the soprano Maria Katarava in the title role, the tenor Luciano Ganci in his Berlin debut as Carlo VII, and the baritone Alfredo Daza as Giacomo, the three main roles are prominently cast. In addition, with David Ostrek as Talbot and Andres Moreno Garcia as Delil, the cast also features two great young talents from the Staatsoper Berlin Opera Studio, which is currently celebrating its tenth anniversary and is sponsored by Liz Mohn. The production is directed by Isabel Ostermann, the choreography is by Steffen Schubert, and the conductor is Felix Krieger, Artistic Director of the Berliner Operngruppe.

The dramatic life story of Joan of Arc has inspired countless artists over the centuries. Friedrich Schiller's "Die Jungfrau von Orleans" in particular inspired the imagination of his contemporaries in the 19th century, including Giuseppe Verdi and his librettist Temistocle Solera, who used the material for the opera "Giovanna d'Arco" commissioned by Scala impresario Bartolomeo Merelli. At the time, the production led to a serious disagreement between Verdi and Merelli. The resourceful Milanese music publisher Giovanni Ricordi seized this opportunity and secured the rights to the work, whose originals are still in the Archivio Storico Ricordi.

The holdings of the Archivio Storico Ricordi, which has been part of Bertelsmann since 1994, include 7,800 original scores from more than 600 operas – including valuable original manuscripts by Giuseppe Verdi and Giacomo Puccini – and around 10,000 libretti, close to 6,000 historical photographs, numerous costume drawings, as well as the entire business correspondence of the Casa Ricordi publishing house from 1888 to 1962. Bertelsmann is having the archival documents comprehensively indexed, digitized and in many cases, restored. Thousands of documents can already be digitally viewed and researched on the Collezione Digitale online platform (<http://digital.archivioricordi.com>).

For many years, Bertelsmann has been engaged in a variety of cultural initiatives both in Germany and internationally. The Group's "Culture@Bertelsmann" activities comprise exhibitions, readings and concerts, the "Blue Sofa" literary format, as well as a commitment to preserving Europe's cultural heritage. Beyond its efforts for the Archivio Storico Ricordi, Bertelsmann – as a company with a long history in filmmaking – also supports and sponsors the restoration, digitization and screening of major silent films.

Giovanna d'Arco – Giuseppe Verdi

March 5, 2018, 7:30 pm

Konzerthaus Berlin, Gendarmenmarkt

Tickets at € 35 / 25 / 15 (reduced rate €10) plus booking fee

Available at the Konzerthaus box office

Online at www.konzerthaus.de

Or by calling +49 30 203092101

The Berliner Operngruppe invites all interested concertgoers to a short introduction to the work: at 7:00 pm in the Beethoven Hall of the Konzerthaus.

Pictures can be found on our website at: <https://www.bertelsmann.com/news-and-media/photographs/gallery/verdi-s-giovanna-d-arco-a-musical-rarity-in-berlin.jsp>

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 116,000 employees and generated revenues of €17.0 billion in the 2016 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.

About the Berliner Operngruppe

Since 2010, the Berliner Operngruppe (Berlin Opera Group) has united professionals, music students, and outstanding amateurs in its own choir and orchestra with a view to jointly discovering rarely-heard works of opera literature with internationally renowned soloists and up-and-coming talent, and to stage them in semi-scenic form. In 2012, it was named a "Landmark" in the "Germany – Land of Ideas" competition for this idea. One artistic focus is on the less commonly performed operas by Giuseppe Verdi: after "Oberto," "Atilla," "I Masnadieri," and "Stiffelio," the Berliner Operngruppe further intensifies this artistic exploration with this performance of "Giovanna d'Arco." The internationally renowned conductor Felix Krieger is the founder and artistic director of the Berliner Operngruppe.

For further questions, please contact:

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