

PRESS RELEASE**Berliner Operngruppe and Bertelsmann present Berlin
Premiere of Puccini's 'Edgar'**

- **Parts of the original score and other historical documents are housed at the Group's own Archivio Storico Ricordi in Milan**

Berlin, January 21, 2019 – The Berliner Operngruppe and the international media company Bertelsmann continue their series to highlight rare operas with a performance of Giacomo Puccini's early work "Edgar" in Berlin on February 4, 2019. First performed in Milan in 1889, this opera about love, loyalty and betrayal will be staged in the last version from 1905 – for the first time in Berlin, and as one of the first performances ever in Germany. Puccini's early *dramma lirico* already hints at the musical genius that he would later reveal to perfection with operas such as "La Bohème," "Tosca," "Madama Butterfly," and "Turandot." With this performance of "Edgar," the Berliner Operngruppe and Bertelsmann once again draw attention to lesser-known operas by great composers whose works are documented in Bertelsmann's own Archivio Storico Ricordi in Milan. The Berlin-based opera group started doing so nine years ago; this marks the third time it has received active support from the media group.

"Among the treasures in the Ricordi archive that Bertelsmann is indexing, digitizing, and restoring are world-famous masterpieces as well as musical rarities. It is important to us to revive these often unjustly forgotten works. We have found an ideal partner for this in Berliner Operngruppe," said Karin Schlautmann, Head of Corporate Communications at Bertelsmann.

The Berliner Operngruppe specializes in rare operas and will perform "Edgar" in semi-scenic form. In November, Felix Krieger, its Artistic Director and Conductor, traveled to Milan specifically to study the original documents pertaining to "Edgar" at the Archivio Storico Ricordi. His enthusiastic comment: "It is very impressive to see how Puccini repeatedly made many changes to the original four-act version of 'Edgar' before finally arriving at the much more compact, final version of 1905, which we will be performing with the Berliner Operngruppe."

With the tenor Peter Auty in the title role, the soprano Elena Rossi as Fidelity, the mezzosoprano Silvia Beltrami as Tigrana and the baritone Aris Argiris as Frank, the main roles are prominently cast. In addition, with the young talent David Ostrek as Gualtiero, the cast features an alum of the Staatsoper Berlin Opera Studio, which is sponsored by Liz Mohn. The production is directed by Thilo Reinhardt, the choreography is by Steffen Schubert, and the conductor is Felix Krieger.

Although Puccini's "Edgar," which was only his second opera, flopped at its premiere at the Teatro alla Scala, the highly gifted young composer then revised it repeatedly and comprehensively at the instigation of his publisher Ricordi. It was not until the final version of 1905, with three instead of four acts, that the work and its creator finally achieved international recognition. Nevertheless, "Edgar" has so far been overshadowed by Puccini's later masterpieces.

Giacomo Puccini – along with Giuseppe Verdi, Gaetano Donizetti, Vincenzo Bellini and Gioachino Rossini – is one of the five great names in 19th-century Italian opera whose works were published by Casa Ricordi, which itself was founded in 1808. The affiliated Archivio Storico Ricordi, which has belonged to Bertelsmann since 1994, still contains the original scores, libretti, stage sets, costume designs and other documents that illustrate Puccini's working methods and form an important key to understanding his works. The archive's holdings include parts of the autograph score of his early work "Edgar" and numerous other original documents, including the libretto written by Ferdinando Fontana.

The holdings of the Archivio Storico Ricordi comprise a total of 7,800 original scores from more than 600 operas 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 up until the year 1962. Thousands of documents can already be digitally viewed and researched on the Collezione Digitale online platform (www.archivioricordi.com). Bertelsmann also keeps Casa Ricordi's cultural legacy alive through exhibitions and performances such as the concerts in Berlin.

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.

Edgar – Giacomo Puccini

February 4, 2019, 7:30 p.m.

Konzerthaus Berlin, Gendarmenmarkt

Tickets at € 25 / 35 / 45 (reduced rate €15) plus booking fee

Available at the Konzerthaus box office

Online at www.konzerthaus.de

Or by calling +49 30 203 092 101

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/edgar-an-early-work-by-puccini-celebrates-its-berlin-premiere.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 119,000 employees and generated revenues of €17.2 billion in the 2017 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," and "I Masnadieri," the Berliner Operngruppe has further intensified this artistic exploration with Bertelsmann's support since 2017, with performances of Verdi's "Stiffelio," and "Giovanna d'Arco," and now by adding Puccini's opera "Edgar" to the mix. The internationally renowned conductor Felix Krieger is the founder and artistic director of the Berliner Operngruppe.

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