

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Culture@Bertelsmann Goes Digital: Bertelsmann’s Cultural Offer Focuses on Streaming and Interaction**

- **Famous Ricordi Archive in Milan launches several online initiatives**
- **UFA Film Nights to take place digitally in summer**
- **Blue Sofa to live-stream author talks from Bertelsmann Unter den Linden in Berlin during the Frankfurt Book Fair**

Berlin/Milan/Gütersloh, June 18, 2020 – Bertelsmann’s cultural activities under the Culture@Bertelsmann umbrella brand continue even in times of social distancing: Effective immediately, the international media, services, and education company will shift its cultural formats – including the authors’ forum Das Blaue Sofa (Blue Sofa) and the UFA Film Nights – to the digital realm. A variety of streaming offers, live recordings, and interactive projects, all related to music, film, and literature, are planned through the autumn. There will also be retrospectives of past cultural projects such as concerts, readings, and exhibitions. The offering is available on the Group’s website ([www.bertelsmann.com/culturedigital](http://www.bertelsmann.com/culturedigital)) and YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/bertelsmann](http://www.youtube.com/bertelsmann)). On social media, Bertelsmann’s cultural activities can be found mainly on [www.facebook.com/Bertelsmann](http://www.facebook.com/Bertelsmann) and numerous partner pages by using the hashtag #BertelsmannCultureDigital.

Karin Schlautmann, Executive Vice President Corporate Communications at Bertelsmann, said: “The coronavirus pandemic has shaken up the cultural industry worldwide and made public events impossible for months on end. Bertelsmann, too, had to change a number of plans and cancel events. But, like many cultural institutions and creative professionals, we are determined to continue our cultural efforts, only now in a virtual space. We stand by our artists and our cultural partners, to whom we would like to give a stage even in the current exceptional situation.”

The digital Culture@Bertelsmann series launches in June and July with several online activities by the group’s own Ricordi Archive in Milan, where treasures from 200 years of Italian opera history are stored. Offers will include live recordings of rare operas that Bertelsmann and the Berliner Operngruppe have presented at the Konzerthaus Berlin, including the Puccini opera “Edgar.” The archive will also initiate sales of a strictly limited-edition reprint of Ricordi’s first record: Cherubini’s 1958 opera “Medea” with Maria Callas in the title role. Finally, a collaborative transcription project to crowdsource collective expertise will be launched on the archive website. It is aimed at music experts around the world, who are invited to participate in the transcription of historical business correspondence.

In midsummer, Culture@Bertelsmann will give center stage to the UFA Film Nights, a silent film festival that, given the circumstances, will take place exclusively online instead of with thousands of guests in the open air on Berlin’s Museum Island as is usually the case. From August 20 to 22, 2020, three legendary silent films will be presented as full-length live-streams, each available online free of charge for 24 hours. The opener is Fritz Lang’s technologically visionary 1929 masterpiece “Woman in the Moon” (“Frau im Mond”) accompanied by celebrity DJ Jeff Mills’ musical interpretation. The next day, the semi-documentary silent film “People on Sunday” (“Menschen am Sonntag”) by Robert Siodmak, Edgar G. Ulmer and Billy Wilder (1929/1930) follows, accompanied by music provided by DJ Raphaël Marionneau.

On the third evening, Lotte Reiniger's "The Adventures of Prince Achmed" from 1926 will be shown, the first full-length animated film in history, musically accompanied by the Ensemble Trioglyzerin. Celebrity film patrons will provide the audience with the historical context to the respective films.

In autumn, everything will revolve around books and the Blue Sofa: the partners behind the famous literary format – Bertelsmann, ZDF, Deutschlandfunk Kultur and 3sat – will set up the Blue Sofa at the Bertelsmann Representative Office in Berlin from October 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>. Timed to coincide with the Frankfurt Book Fair, the event will feature around 50 authors being welcomed to #DasBlaueSofaDigital. The talks will be broadcast live on the Internet, as well as on the partners' own channels, and will then remain available for twelve months on [www.das-blaue-sofa.de](http://www.das-blaue-sofa.de). The autumn releases of many other authors will also be presented there.

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 co-created with partners, as well as a commitment to preserving Europe's cultural heritage. The Milan-based Archivio Storico Ricordi, for example, is part of Bertelsmann. It houses a wealth of unique testimonies to Italian opera history. Bertelsmann is indexing the archive holdings to state-of-the-art standards, and making its cultural treasures accessible to a broad public. As a company with a long history in filmmaking, Bertelsmann has also long supported and sponsored the restoration, digitization and screening of major silent films.

#### **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 126,000 employees and generated revenues of €18.0 billion in the 2019 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. Bertelsmann aspires to achieve climate neutrality by 2030.

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