

A watercolor illustration of a coastal town. In the foreground, a large palm tree with dark green fronds dominates the left side. Below it, a stone building with a large arched doorway is visible. In the middle ground, a tall, multi-tiered stone tower with crenellations stands prominently. To its right, a smaller, cylindrical stone tower is situated near the water's edge. The background shows a dark sea with white-capped waves under a sky filled with large, billowing white and blue clouds. The overall style is soft and painterly.

GIUSEPPE VERDI OTELLO

ARCHIVIO STORICO
RICORDI

BERTELSMANN

Otello

A glimpse into the Archivio Storico Ricordi

Greeting

by **Thomas Rabe**

At an international media company like Bertelsmann, the ideas and creativity of our artists, writers and journalists form the heart of our value creation. They are the ones who constantly reinvent our offers by continuing to tell new stories, every day, that inform, entertain and inspire people.

In this booklet, we tell you the story of Verdi's *Otello*. To paint a complete picture, we delved deep into the treasure trove of the world-famous Ricordi Archive.

Like Verdi, Ricordi is a name of great resonance – in Italy, throughout the music world, and also at Bertelsmann. The Archivio Storico Ricordi in Milan, which provides near complete documentation of the rise of the music publisher Casa Ricordi and today gives us unique insights into the world of opera, is regarded as the most important privately owned collection of Italian opera history. Bertelsmann acquired Casa Ricordi in 1994, but later relinquished most of the company again. However, the associated Archivio Storico Ricordi remained part of Bertelsmann. For us, the extraordinary scope of the collection and its outstanding importance for the history of Italian opera were more than reason enough to safeguard the many thousands of scores, libretti, letters, and photographs and preserve them for posterity. In Verdi Year 2013, we began to present the documents from the Archivio Storico Ricordi in a new form and make them accessible to all; whether in the form of international exhibitions, publications, or by digitally recording the exhibits. What's more, for several years we have been increasingly involved in other

areas of cultural history as well. Bertelsmann was the key sponsor of the digital restoration of the classic silent movies "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" (Robert Wiene) and "Destiny" (Fritz Lang), thereby sending a signal for the preservation of cinematic heritage in the digital media age.

We will continue to help shape the future of digital media in the years ahead. Meanwhile, we will also continue our work to preserve the history of media for future generations and make it accessible to as many people as possible.

In this spirit, I am delighted by your interest and wish you an enjoyable read!

Dr. Thomas Rabe
Chairman and CEO of Bertelsmann

Cover – External view of the castle, Act I, copy of a set design by Giovanni Zuccarelli (1846-1897), new production, Rome, Teatro Costanzi, 1887, detail

Foreword

by Plácido Domingo

I have never felt closer to the spirit of Giuseppe Verdi than when I first visited at the end of 2014 the *Archivio Storico Ricordi* at the Braidense National Library in Milan and held Verdi's manuscripts in my hands. As President of Europa Nostra, the European Heritage Federation, I am proud that Bertelsmann, one of our main corporate partners, has taken it up itself to restore and protect these unique testimonies of Europe's musical heritage. As a musician I was simply overcome by joy and emotion.

Among the many treasures of the *Archivio Ricordi* are letters, various editions of librettos and published scores, set and costumes designs, drawings and photographs concerning Verdi's masterpiece *Otello*. Verdi was in his seventies when he wrote this opera, perfect proof that unstoppable creativity and productivity are not exclusively the realm of the youth.

Otello has become my favourite role since I first sang it over 40 years ago. I must have played the title role at least 200 times. I fondly remember so many performances, including Franco Zeffirelli's feature film, with music conducted by the unforgettable Lorin Maazel. *Dio! mi potevi scagliar*, from the third act, shows a man who has lost everything, who is past hope and beyond desperation. In art, one can regularly experience that great moment when the magic takes over. It happened to me several times when I was singing *Otello's* Monologue. I completely forgot that I was singing, the music and the words just took over. During that magical moment, I simply was *Otello*. It is the great gift of music that

almost 130 years since its premiere, *Otello* still evokes such passionate feelings, not only in the performers but also in the large audiences across the world. His story is as relevant today as it was in the time of Shakespeare or in the time of Verdi.

You can therefore understand how exciting it is for me that now, for the first time, Giuseppe Verdi's manuscripts, Arrigo Boito's libretto as well as Alfredo Edel's original drawings of the wonderful costumes and set-designs, can be seen in Spain, in my hometown Madrid. This exceptional exhibition made possible thanks to Bertelsmann constitutes a marvelous highlight during the celebration of the 200th Anniversary of Teatro Real, where *Otello* has been performed so many times.

I am convinced that visitors will be enchanted by the discovery of these beautiful and moving historical documents which form part of Europe's opera heritage.

Maestro Plácido Domingo
President of Europa Nostra

VERDI
E
L'OTELLO

Numero Unico
PUBBLICATO
dalla
**ILLUSTRAZIONE
ITALIANA**
e
COMPILATO DA
Ugo Pesci ed Ed. Ximenes

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alla
**ILLUSTRAZIONE
ITALIANA**

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Semestre	" 13	" 17
Trimestre	" 7	" 9

Tutti gli altri prezzi Fr. 45.

Prezzo del presente Numero 3



Disegn. da Leo P. Sestini. Milano.

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- 1 — Special issue of the periodical *Illustrazione Italiana*, dedicated to the premiere of *Otello*, 1887
- 2 — Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901), photograph by anonymous

A Late, Triumphant Masterpiece

by Gabriele Dotto

Few opera premieres have been as anxiously anticipated as Verdi's *Otello* at Milan's Teatro alla Scala on 5 February 1887. And few people at the time would even have imagined that the Maestro—who had stated his wish to “retire from the stage” after *Aida*, a decade and a half earlier, and who was by then in his seventies—could have been tempted to undertake such an ambitious project.

The background is a familiar part of the Verdi biography: how his publisher Giulio Ricordi maneuvered, in late summer of 1879 (with the help of conductor Franco Faccio and the librettist and composer Arrigo Boito), to convince the Grand Old Man to come out of retirement with the idea of embracing one of the greatest texts of his beloved Shakespeare, at first broaching the subject during a lunch, then a day later producing a complete outline of Boito's libretto (opportunistically already drafted!), which Verdi judged to be good. “Go ahead and write the libretto” Verdi told Boito, “it will always be useful for you, for me, or for someone else”. By degrees, Verdi allowed himself, always grumbling, never letting down his guard, to be won over to the idea. Nonetheless, he did so with the full understanding that this would be one of the most difficult and risky challenges of his entire, glorious career. Boito carried on completing the first draft of the libretto, consigning the last of it to Verdi by mid November. Ricordi, worried that Verdi might change his mind, pressured Boito to finish the draft; in a delightful letter dated 21 September 1879, Boito wrote to a Ricordi administrator “If this week I do not give Giulio a strangled Desdemona [i.e., the final scene of the opera], I



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fear he will strangle me.” (see image 3). Over the next few years the two artists engaged in an extended and complicated process of revision of the text. As for the music, however, notwithstanding the optimistic reports of Verdi's student Emanuele Muzio to Ricordi in early 1880 that “Regarding *Otello*, Verdi told me he has already begun setting it to music” and, a year later, that “he will dedicate himself completely to *Otello*, the music of which I believe to be foremost in his mind” it seems instead Verdi was proceeding with cautious care. As the historian James Hepokoski has observed, “Verdi's work in the intervening years—two sets

of extensive and important opera revisions, for *Simon Boccanegra* (in 1881, with Boito) and for *Don Carlos* (in 1882-83, with Camille Du Locle) – may be understood as the composer’s grapplings with the advanced style that he planned to use in *Otello*. The revisions were moderately risk-free experiments for the new style as well as opportunities to judge the critical response to it: a gearing-up for the *Otello* project. And yet, even during the revision of *Don Carlos* the initial stages of the composition of *Otello* may have been taking shape.” It would not be until December 1884 that Verdi again took up working on setting *Otello*, this time in earnest.

In adapting the Shakespeare play into an effective opera libretto, the greatest challenge facing both the librettist and the composer was to find the most effective way to transform a masterpiece conceived for spoken theatre – with its different rules of dramatic timing, its natural emphasis on extensive dialogue – into theatre *in music*, with its need for moments of synoptic narrative exposition, its musical rendition of emotion and motivation, and its numerous passages of “suspended time” in which characters express their inner thoughts. While respecting the overall structure of *Otello*, Boito created a more complex role for Jago and scenes of intensified high drama for *Otello*. Among the strikingly original contributions Boito made to the Shakespearean original was the ingenious, cynical “evil Credo” that depicted a much more complex characterization of Jago and his “satanic” nature. The correspondence between Boito and Verdi provides wonderful insight into the creative minds of these two superb artists.

At one point Boito wrote:

Otello is like a man moving in a nightmare, and under the fatal, mounting domination of this nightmare he thinks, acts, moves, suffers, and commits his dreadful crime. Everyone knows [Shakespeare's] Othello is a very great masterpiece and, in its greatness, perfect. This perfection derives (as you know better than I) from the prodigious harmony of the whole and of the details, from the profound analytical portrayal of the characters, from that very rigorous and inevitable logic that unfolds all the events of the tragedy, from the way all passions involved are observed and portrayed, especially the dominant passion. All these virtues concur to make Othello a masterpiece of art. To retouch, even in just one place, a work of such beauty and wisdom cannot be done without diminishing its perfection. But an opera is not a play; our art lives on elements unknown to spoken tragedy. The destroyed atmosphere can be created anew. Eight measures can suffice to revive a feeling; a rhythm can restore a character. Music is the most omnipotent of the arts, it has a logic of its own, more rapid, more free than the logic of spoken thought and far more eloquent. Verdi, meanwhile, constantly commented on the work of his librettist and urged him on, as in this letter:

Very, very good the Finale. What a difference between this one and the first! It is so true that Otello, mute, is greater and more terrifying, that I would be of a mind not to have him speak at all during the whole ensemble number. It seems to me that Jago alone can say, and more briefly, everything the spectator needs to

Hôtel de l'Univers
 Domenica
 (25)
 Caro Tornaghi,
 Ti prego di spedirmi
 al più presto lire 500
 perché io possa qui aggiustare
 i miei conti ed arrivare
 a Milano. Se io non
 consegno a Giulio questa
 settimana ~~settimana~~ ~~stoppa~~
 temo che egli strossi me.
 Una stretta di mano nel
 tuo
 Arrigo Boito

3

know without Otello replying. After the ensemble and after the words "All flee from Otello", it seems to me that Otello does not speak and shout enough. He is silent for four verses and it seems to me (from a theatrical viewpoint) that after the phrase "That robs him of all feeling" Otello should shout one or two verses... "Flee. I loathe you, myself, the whole world..." And it also seems to me that some verses could be spared when Otello and Iago remain alone. A choked cry on the word "handkerchief" seems to me more terrible than a cry on a commonplace exclamation like "O Satan". The words



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3—Letter from Arrigo Boito to Eugenio Tornaghi (an administrator at Casa Ricordi), Hôtel de l'Univers, Sunday [21 September 1879]

4—Arrigo Boito (1842-1918), photograph by anonymous

"fainted", "immobile", "mute" arrest the action a bit. One thinks, one reflects, whereas here the thing is to end rapidly. Tell me your opinion. I haven't finished!! The chorus has little action, or rather none at all. Couldn't a way be found to move it a bit?

The project inspired Verdi to new, wonderful heights: his *Otello* remains one of the great masterpieces of all the opera repertoire.

The work of composer and librettist accelerated, becoming increasingly intense. Finally, in late December 1886, after learning that the last pages of the score of *Otello* had been definitively consigned to the publisher Ricordi, Boito wrote to the composer with this congratulatory phrase: "The grand dream has become reality". But he added: "What a pity!" We can understand why: although on the one hand, that concluding "act of passage" marked the satisfying attainment of the project's completion, on the other it signaled the end of many months of a creative rush. Of course, this was not a painting, or a building, or a novel — that is, it was not a creation presented in a form directly accessible as "the artwork itself". It was an *opera lirica*, art to be performed. Verdi's score was the "blueprint" from which to shape that performance: the ultimate "artwork" would be the living, breathing realization of that orchestral score. A great deal of detail work and effort still remained to be done before (and even after) the premiere, during which further adjustments, fine tuning, or even important changes would be made to the musical text. Verdi would still have occasion to take his autograph score into his hand again. Nonetheless, when the score was consigned to the publisher, the fundamental shaping of the artistic concept had been established. And with that, the collaborative effort of composer and librettist — the engaging, sometimes frustrating, often exhilarating months of sometimes slow, sometimes fever-



5 —Giulio Ricordi (1840-1912), photograph by Varischi & Artico, Milan

ish work — had come to an end. For the seventy-three-year-old composer, who for months had felt the adrenaline thrill of creating for the stage again, the satisfaction of completion was almost certainly accompanied by a touch of melancholy. Now "*Otello is*" wrote Boito understandingly — "The Moor will no longer come knocking at the door."

Though the creation of the opera's score was complete at this point, preparations for the premiere were just getting under way. And in this, the publisher Ricordi played a fundamental role. Verdi consigned his completed score in sections, and the publisher worked

frenetically because it planned to issue a vocal score immediately after the opera's premiere. A few days after receipt of Act 4, Giulio reported to Verdi that the Ricordi production staff had surpassed themselves in their efforts:

Even that lazy and sardonic tribe, the music copyists, perked up when they saw a Verdi score arrive!!...

Everyone is in a good mood: some remember having prepared the first copy of Aida, some the copy of the Requiem, yet others of Ballo in maschera, and so on!!... In other words, in four days they have completed: the master copy of the full score, the voice-part model for the vocal score transcriber, Desdemona's rehearsal part, and the individual orchestral string parts!... I was astonished.

and just a few days later, Michele Saladino had completed the piano reduction for the vocal score of that act. Further, Ricordi's role was not confined to publishing the music. Throughout the nineteenth century, the visual aspects of opera production—sets, costumes, staging—were the responsibility of contracted impresarios who commissioned operas and programmed the seasons; later, this role was assumed by established theatre managements. For *Otello*, the Ricordi had no intention of leaving the supervision of the production to others. The Ricordi firm had a staff of outstanding artists and designers in its famous Graphic Arts division, and Giulio used their talents to the fullest. In close consultation with the composer and librettist, Ricordi had Alfredo Edel study the Venetian painters of the late 15th and early 16th centuries to prepare a series of nearly sixty historically accurate cos-

tume designs for the principal roles in *Otello*, along with every imaginable accessory and stage prop, even commissioning custom-designed cloth. Even the staging for *Otello* was carefully planned down to the smallest detail, and published in a manual (*disposizione scenica*) written by Giulio Ricordi himself. To ensure the quality of subsequent productions, copies of set and costume designs, as well as the production manual, were made available to other theatres. The printed *Otello* libretto also received special attention, as Ricordi agreed to have a specially devised three-column layout on two pages hand-bound into the first edition, to show a complex ensemble with several characters singing different texts simultaneously; a further testament to Ricordi's exceptional commitment.

The Archivio Storico Ricordi, today housed in the Braidense Library of Milan, conserves an enormous amount of documentation for *Otello*, for the joy of interpreters and scholars: Verdi's autograph full score, of course, but also contracts, correspondence, various editions of librettos and published scores, set and costumes designs, and more. A vast collection, which will continue to provide inspiration for new studies of the great masterpieces of Italian musical art.

Gabriele Dotto is a musicologist expert in 19th and 20th-century Italian opera, Director of Scholar Initiatives of the Archivio Storico Ricordi, and current Director of the Michigan State University Press.

Pro memoria

ammontando che io possa completare quanto mi resta
a fare per la musica d'Otello, prima bene che la
Caga Ricordi - fabbrica fin d'ora le condizioni soprattutto
coll'Impresa della Scala —

1.° La Caga Ricordi fissava coll'Impresa il ruolo,
di cui io necessito la mia quota et et —

2.° Io, rispetto a tutta quella parte / che giudichero
necessaria; ma non voglio impegnarmi in nessun
modo verso il Pubblico e per conseguenza il
Cartellone tra semplicemente Otello
Papa & Botta
Musica di Verdi

Nessuna agenzia persona alle prove, come
al solito. — ed inoltre mia completa & sospensiva
le prove, ed impadronirsi di rappresentazioni musicali
— dopo la ripetizione generale qualora

- o l'esecuzione,
- o la mise en scene,
- o qualunque altra cosa non mi convenisse nell'
andamento del Teatro

Il personale appartenente all'Otello d'operazioni
obstantemente il me — direttore d'orchestra — et et

La prima uscita non si potrà fare senza mia
autorizzazione, e qualora si volesse poter
togliere altre a questa condizione l'Editore Ricordi
mi pagherà centomila / 100000 / lire di multa —

— Obbligo costante normale nei teatri
— Un palco in Scala a disposizione
di Verdi

JRV

6

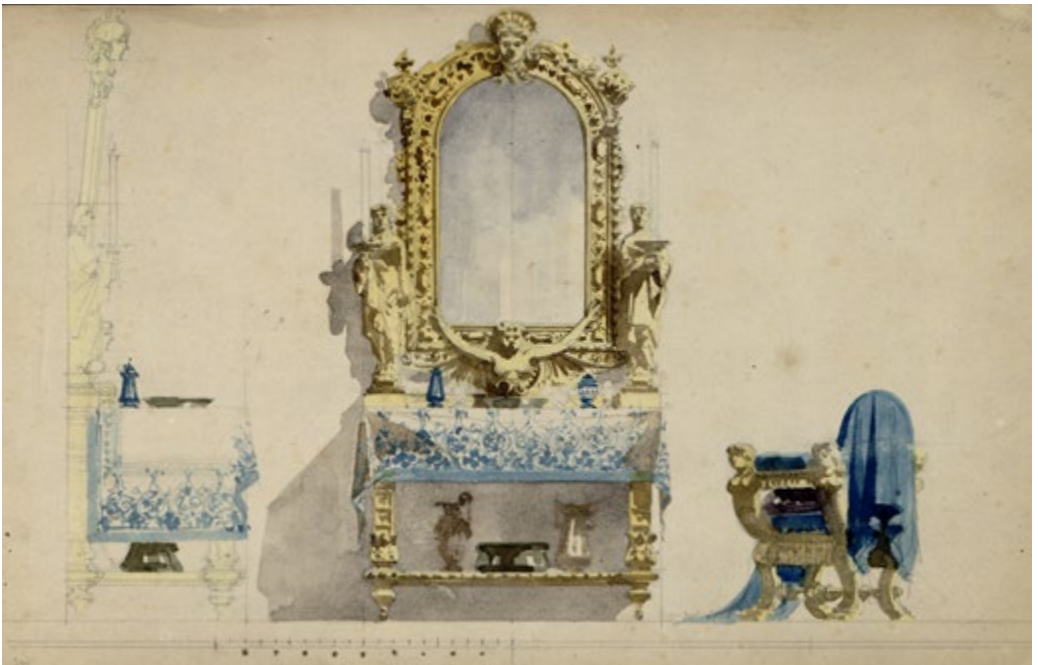
6 — "Memorandum" from Giuseppe Verdi to Giulio Ricordi, autograph, folio 1.

In this fascinating document, Verdi — wishing to exercise complete control over the production of the opera — establishes strict conditions (and a large fine, if the conditions are not met) regarding the composer's oversight, even to the point of allowing him to cancel the premiere after the dress rehearsal, if he was unsatisfied with the result.

7 — Desdemona, Act III, costume design by Alfredo Edel (1856-1912), world premiere, La Scala, 5 February 1887

8 — The soprano Romilda Pantaleoni (1847-1917) who created the role of Desdemona, photograph by Pilotti & Poysel, world premiere, La Scala, 5 February 1887

9 — Vanity table, Desdemona's room, prop design by Carlo Ferrario (1833-1907), world premiere, La Scala, 5 February 1887





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10 — Banners and flags, prop designs by Alfredo Edel, world premiere, La Scala, 5 February 1887



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11 — Ensign, Act III, costume design by Alfredo Edel, world premiere, La Scala, 5 February 1887

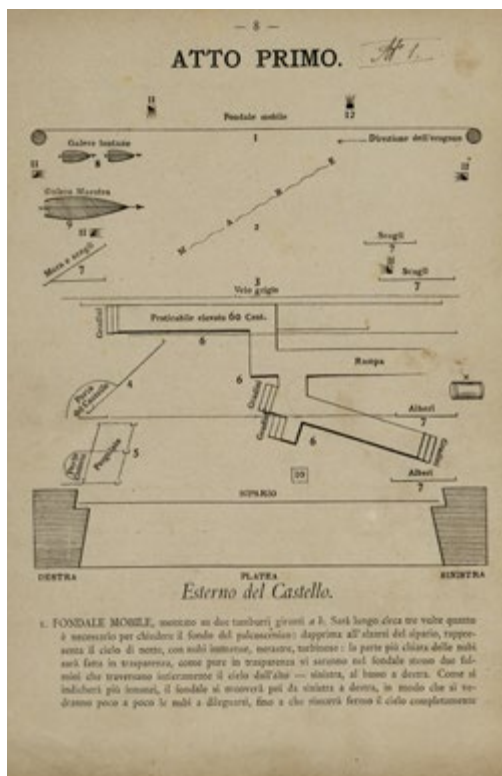


12 — Montano, Act I, costume design by Alfredo Edel, world premiere, La Scala, 5 February 1887

12 13 — The great castle room, Act III, set design by Giovanni Zuccarelli, world premiere, La Scala, 5 February 1887







14

14 — A page from the *mise-en-scène* ("disposizione scenica") by Giulio Ricordi for *Otello*, Act I, 1887



15

15 — Cassio, Act I, costume design by Alfredo Edel, world premiere, La Scala, 5 February 1887



16 — Otello, Act 1, costume design by Alfredo Edel, world premiere, La Scala, 5 February 1887

16 17 — Jago's "Credo", a text which Boito created for the opera, as set to music by Verdi; Act II, autograph score, 1887, folios 121v-122r

Handwritten musical score on aged paper, featuring multiple staves with musical notation and lyrics. The score includes various instruments and vocal parts.

Instrumental Parts:

- Violin:** Top staff with treble clef, featuring a melodic line with slurs and dynamics.
- Viola:** Second staff with alto clef, mirroring the violin's melody.
- Flute:** Third staff with treble clef, playing a rhythmic accompaniment.
- Clarinet:** Fourth staff with bass clef, providing harmonic support.
- Trumpet:** Fifth staff with treble clef, playing a rhythmic accompaniment.
- Violoncello:** Sixth staff with bass clef, playing a rhythmic accompaniment.
- Double Bass:** Seventh staff with bass clef, playing a rhythmic accompaniment.
- Drums:** Eighth staff with a single line, indicating rhythmic patterns.
- Harmony:** Ninth staff with a single line, indicating harmonic structures.

Vocal Parts:

- Chorus:** Tenth staff with lyrics: "e che nell'ira in".
- Soloist:** Eleventh staff with lyrics: "no".

Lyrics:

Chorus: e che nell'ira in
Soloist: no

The score is written in a cursive hand and includes various musical notations such as clefs, notes, rests, slurs, and dynamics.



O sulla tua testa
 L'arrendo e precipiti il fulmine
 Del mio spaventoso furor che al duca.

SCENA V DELL' ATTO II (DISEGNO DI A. BONAMORE).



18 — Scene V, Act II, sketch design by A. Bonamore. Special issue of the periodical *Illustrazione Italiana*, dedicated to the premiere of *Otello*, 1887

19 — Jago, Act I, costume design by Alfredo Edel, world premiere, La Scala, 5 February 1887

20 — The baritone Victor Maurel (1848-1923) who created the role of Jago, photograph by anonymous, world premiere, La Scala, 5 February 1887

21 — Jago, costume design by Alfredo Edel, world premiere, La Scala, 5 February 1887

22 — A ground-floor room in the castle...a large garden, Act II. Perforated foreground structure, with the painted flat of the garden in the rear, original model by Giovanni Zuccarelli, 1887

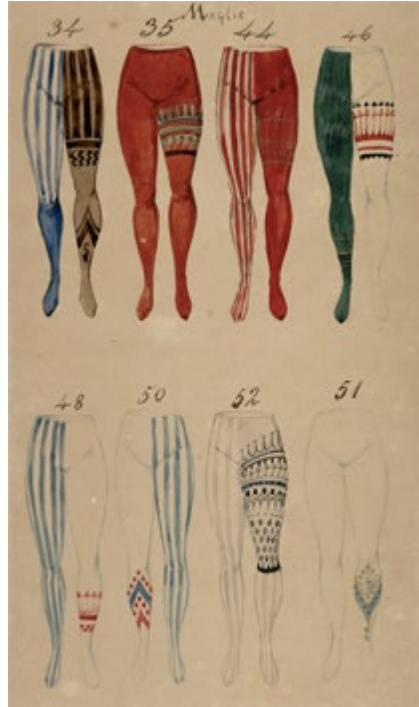
Opera



O. Tello
Pana 2a

Zucarelli G. 1887





Costume and prop designs by Alfredo Edel, world premiere, La Scala, 5 February 1887

23 —Herald, Act III

24 —Hose and breeches

25 —Venetian Soldiers, Acts I and III

26 —Emilia, Act IV



Desdemona

4



Costellato di luce bianca
quasi sempre sola
e grata e unita in
colle di seta e paja
grande ricchezza in
guarnigioni in seta
perla e diamanti
in breccia bianca
e argento con cordoni
e fiocchi

St. P. guarnita in seta
lunga e stretta con la
- battenti in seta
quasi di seta
guarnigioni di seta con perla
e diamanti
Stretto di seta
guarnigioni di seta e perla
in seta e diamanti
con perla e diamanti

1° Soprano

Atto IV





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27 — Desdemona, Act IV,
costume design by
Alfredo Edel, world
premiere, La Scala,
5 February 1887



29

28 — Otello, Act IV, costume
design by Alfredo Edel,
world premiere, La Scala,
5 February 1887

29 — The tenor Francesco
Tamagno (1848-1923)
who created the role
of Otello, photograph
by anonymous, world
premiere, La Scala,
5 February 1887



30



31

- 30 — Giuseppe Verdi and Francesco Tamagno who created the role of Otello, photograph by Pietro Tempestini, 1899
- 31 — Franco Faccio (1840-1891), conductor of the Otello premiere, photograph by Fratelli Vianelli, Venice
- 32 — Detail of the libretto with annotations by Giulio Ricordi about the audience's reactions at the premiere of Otello by Giuseppe Verdi, 1887. The annotations read: "Wild applause | curtain-call for the singers | curtain-call for Verdi | curtain-call for Verdi and Boito | curtain-call for Verdi, Boito and Faccio | the same again | Verdi and Boito | Verdi alone | curtain-call for everyone | Verdi alone"
- 33 — Desdemona's bedroom, copy of a set design by Giovanni Zuccarelli, new production, Rome, Teatro Costanzi, 1887

Afferratelo!

TUTTI

OTELLO

(slanciandosi per afferrar la spada)

E il ciel non ha più fulmini?!...

LODOVICO

La spada a me!

OTELLO

Tant'osi?! - Niun mi tema
S'anco armato mi vede. Ecco la fine
Del mio cammin... Oh! Gloria! Otello fu.

(lascia cadere la spada)

(va presso al letto e contempla Desdemona)

E tu... come sei pallida! e stanca, e muta, e bella,
Pia crëatura nata sotto maligna stella.
Fredda come la casta tua vita, e in cielo assorta.
Desdemona! Desdemona!... Ah!... morta!... morta!... morta!...

(estraendo furtivamente dalle vesti un pugnale)

Ho un' arma ancor!

(si ferisce)

CASSIO

Ah! Ferma!

TUTTI

Sciagurato!

OTELLO

Pria d'ucciderti... sposa... ti baciai.
Or morendo... nell'ombra... ov'io mi giaccio...
Un bacio... un bacio ancora... un altro bacio...

(muore)



OH

1. Chiamata tutti
1. Verdi solo

applausi frenetici

1. Chiamata artisti
1. W. con Verdi
1. W. con Verdi e Boito
1. W. con Verdi Boito y...
1. altra dor it
1. Verdi & Boito
1. Verdi solo.

OH





The Archivio Storico Ricordi: a Bertelsmann project

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, which was acquired by Bertelsmann in 1994, have since become a historical archive: the Archivio Storico Ricordi, one of the world’s foremost privately held music collections, which is now housed in the Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense in Milan.

The original scores of many operas of the 19th and early 20th century stored here, along with those of many other compositions, are highlights of European music history. In 2006, Bertelsmann sold its former music rights business to Universal, but retained the rights to the Ricordi brand and the publisher’s famous archives. The Archivio Storico Ricordi is under the special protection of the Italian Ministry of Culture. As a national heritage, the Archivio must remain in Italy.

After having been an integral part of Casa Ricordi for decades and being used primarily for commercial purposes such as the publication of “critical editions,” the archive has recently been undergoing an accelerated transformation into a historical research archive.

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.

Bertelsmann is aware of the great responsibility associated with owning this unique cultural asset, and continues to cultivate the tradition associated with the Ricordi name.

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.

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