

Il Teatro illustrato

A trial copy of *Il Teatro illustrato* was published on 16 December 1880; it was produced by the Milanese publisher Edoardo Sonzogno whose offices were located at via Pasquiolo no. 14.¹ The first "official" issue was printed in January 1881, with issues following monthly until December 1892. In all, 144 numbers plus the trial copy and a supplement to number 62 (February 1886) were produced.² Concurrently, from 1882 to 1885, Sonzogno published *La Musica popolare*, first as a weekly then later as a monthly. In January 1886 *La Musica popolare* merged with *Il Teatro illustrato* to form *Il Teatro illustrato e la Musica popolare*.

Il Teatro illustrato appeared at a time when publishers began playing new roles: as intermediary between impresarios and composers; as impresarios themselves; and as commissioners of new operas. Means of disseminating information concerning these new activities were, for operational and creative reasons, indispensable for their success. In 1842 the appearance of Ricordi's *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* had reinforced an embryonic tendency of the preceding decade; namely, the reversal of the relationship editor/publisher to the complete advantage of the latter. If in the past a journal was identified with the character of its editor, now the *Gazzetta musicale* was identified with Ricordi, the publisher; and, thus, *L'Italia musicale* with Francesco Lucca; the *Gazzetta musicale di Firenze*, *L'Armonia* and *Boccherini* with Giovan Gualberto Guidi; and *Il Teatro illustrato*, in the same way, with Edoardo Sonzogno, and not with Amintore Galli who assumed editorial responsibility.

In the new Kingdom of Italy the development of general education spurred an increase in the audience for periodicals, and, the influence of these new publications on public taste was notable. In particular the success of *L'Illustrazione italiana* published by Treves in Milan and *La Scena illustrata* by Pilade Pollazzi in Florence

¹Edoardo Sonzogno was born in Milan in 1836 and died there in 1920. In 1861 he assumed from his father, Lorenzo, the publishing firm founded by his grandfather, Giovan Battista. In 1866 Sonzogno founded *Il Secolo* which quickly became the most widely circulated Italian daily newspaper. In 1874 he extended his publishing activities to the musical sector entrusting its management to Amintore Galli. Sonzogno also published successful series such as *La Musica per tutti*, *Il Teatro musicale giocoso*, the *Florilegio melodrammatico*, and he administered touring companies in Italy and abroad, and theatrical seasons (at the Argentina and Costanzi theaters in Rome, the Dal Verme and Manzoni in Milan, the Gaîté in Paris, etc.). In 1894 he acquired the old Milanese theater Della Canobbiana and transformed it into the new Teatro Lirico Internazionale. In 1909 he withdrew to private life leaving the firm's management in the hands of his grandsons Riccardo and Lorenzo.

²Each number contains sixteen pages plus four jacket pages. The format is 28 x 37 cm. The newsstand price was 50 *centesimi*. Subscriptions were 6 lire for a year and 3 lire for six months; 8 and 4 lire for the countries in the *Unione Generale delle Poste*; 10 and 5 lire for Africa and North America; 12 and 6 lire for South America, Asia and Australia. In 1883 quarterly subscriptions were introduced. The newsstand and annual subscription prices remained the same for the entire duration of publication; the other subscription rates underwent slight changes.

signaled the growing taste for illustrations, a taste that ultimately affected music periodicals from *Il Teatro illustrato* to *La Musica popolare* of Sonzogno, and from *Musica e musicisti* to *Ars et labor* of Ricordi. One consequence of the increase in the number of readers, however, was a decrease in the median cultural level of the readership; from an instrument for the elite, the periodical press gradually became more popular in focus. This is seen in the great diffusion both of daily newspapers with a straight-forward structure, much news, simple and concise prose, and of illustrated periodicals, a less complicated and more direct form of communication. The elite's interest was maintained in the rarefied world of specialized magazines. Because an intermediate model such as *Il Teatro illustrato* was not addressed to a well-defined readership—as it united musicological considerations to chronicles of events, and expert criticism with the publisher's need to draw attention to his activities—the journal was destined to become an ineffective instrument. Even Edoardo Sonzogno recognized this, for upon taking his leave of the readers in the journal's last number, he promised, in turn, a publication “more rapid—as the speed of communications in our times requires—easier and more capable of penetrating the mass of the public, than a voluminous musical-literary organ such as the present.”³ Indeed in *Secolo illustrato*, the monthly supplement to Sonzogno's daily newspaper *Il Secolo*, he continued the work begun in *Il Teatro illustrato*.

If the world of news was in rapid evolution, just as rapid were the changes that assaulted music and Italian theater. In the second half of the nineteenth century, especially beginning in the sixties, it became evident that Italian musical theater could count only on Verdi's strengths to develop further the proven structures on which the theater of Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti and the same young Verdi had prospered. This crisis of forms and ideas was the principal cause that led to the massive importation of French operas (or those that were modelled on them)—a phenomenon referred to as the *inforestieramento* of the repertory. For many the renewal of Italian opera was called Meyerbeer, exemplar of that compromise between *melodia italica* and *strumentalismo oltermontano* which Abramo Basevi named *ecclettismo italo-germanico*. In the wake of Meyerbeer (and also of Halévy, Gounod, and Auber) a new chapter in Italian music history opened, first with the introduction into Italy of the operas of Wagner and then of Bizet, Thomas, and Massenet. At the same time a more pronounced interest in instrumental music began to emerge, with the flowering of quartet and orchestral societies. New generations of Italian musicians were enriched by these experiences, from Boito to Marchetti to Ponchielli, up to the composers of the *giovane scuola* and to Puccini at the end of the century.

Publishers did not simply bear witness to the resulting revolution of forms and taste, but rather they became first-hand participants. Sonzogno, for his part, combined his

³*Il Teatro illustrato* 12 n. 144 (December 1892): 178.

interest in established composers of the French school (he imported the operettas of Hervé, Lecocq and Offenbach, and he acquired the Italian rights for the operas of Bizet, Thomas, Massenet, etc.) with his promotion of young musicians. He sponsored competitions for beginning composers which were won in 1883, by Luigi Mapelli and Guglielmo Zuelli; in 1888, by Pietro Mascagni (with *Cavalleria rusticana*), Nicola Spinelli, and Vincenzo Ferroni; in 1890, by Gellio Benvenuto Coronaro and Ernest Boezi; and in 1902, by Gabriel Dupont. As an impresario he promoted composers such as Spiro Samara, Emilio Usiglio, and Salvatore Auteri-Manzocchi, and, he “launched” the careers of members of the so-called *giovane scuola*, Pietro Mascagni, Ruggero Leoncavallo, Umberto Giordano, Leopoldo Mugnone, and Francesco Cilea. In *Il Teatro illustrato*, Sonzogno’s interest in young composers extended to those outside his publishing house such as Almicare Ponchielli, Alfredo Catalani, Carlos Gomes and the young Puccini.

The *responsabile scientifico* of *Il Teatro illustrato* was its “editor-in-chief” Amintore Galli.⁴ Among his most diligent collaborators figured S. Bon... (correspondent from Venice), Alessandro Cortella (music critic), N. Daspuro (correspondent from Naples), Francesco D’Arcajs (music critic), Achille De Marzi (correspondent from Genoa and author of theoretical and historical articles), E. Evaschi (author of epigrams), Giuseppe Ippolito Franchi-Verney (music critic with the pseudonym “Ippolito Valetta”), Tommaso Gherardi Del Testa (renowned dramatist and author of epigrams under the pseudonym “Aldo”), P. Guarino (music critic and author of the series on Neapolitan music and musicians), L. Hirschfeld (or Hirschenfeld, Hirschenfelder, Hirschfelder; correspondent from Berlin), L. P. Laforêt (correspondent from Paris), Ercole Arturo Marescotti (correspondent from Genoa), Enrico Moltan (correspondent from Munich), Carlo De Slop (correspondent from Vienna), Giulio Roberti (correspondent from Turin), C. V. Rupnick (correspondent from Vienna), Vincenzo Valle (music and drama critic; author of epigrams under the pseudonym “Inocenza Well” and, to whom the initial “W.” is perhaps attributable), and Vittorio Wilder (correspondent from Paris). Other names of collaborators listed on the journal’s frontispiece are Vittorio Bersezio, Ugo Capetti, M. C. Caputo, Felice Cavallotti (renowned author of dramas, man of politics, and personal friend of Edoardo Sonzogno), Eugenio Mariani, Rodolfo Paravicini, Eugenio Pirani, Cesare Pollini, and Achille Torelli (author of dramas).

⁴A music critic and composer, Galli was born in Talamello in the province of Rimini in 1845 and died in Rimini in 1919. After completing his studies at the Milan Conservatory with maestro Croff and maestro Mazzucato, he directed the band of Amelia (Terni) and served as *maestro di musica* in Finale Emilia (Modena). After moving to Milan, he became the music critic for *Il Secolo* and taught counterpoint and music aesthetics at the Conservatory. Artistic director of Sonzogno’s music publishing firm until 1904, he administered its production of music periodicals and organized the competitions for beginning composers, while presiding over their juries.

The journal treats musical and spoken theater, with a certain preference for the former. Several factors distinguish *Il Teatro illustrato* from other contemporary periodicals: its analytic and more profound music reviews, a more thorough reporting of news, and illustrations very rich in portraits and scenes of stage productions. Each issue has a four-page jacket of which the first contains a frontispiece, a table of contents, and a list of collaborators; the second, third and fourth pages are generally reserved for news and advertising (in a few cases the monthly bulletin of performances appears on the jacket's second and third pages). The actual issue itself opens with a full-page illustration—frequently a portrait entrusted to a famous artist such as Ernesto Fontana—and, on the second page, with a commentary on the subject of the illustration. In general, a biographical or historical-musical article follows. Brief descriptions or commentaries on Italian and foreign opera and ballet productions precede substantial essays on aesthetics or music theory, and one or more analytical opera reviews often with illustrations. A rubric titled “Le nostre incisioni” or “Le nostre illustrazioni” gathers together articles that may simply be either elaborations on the published illustrations, or else chronicles or reviews of the events depicted in the illustrations. A detailed bulletin with brief chronicles or reviews of operatic performances in Italian theaters during the preceding month follows (in some cases this rubric is printed on the jacket). While the rubrics containing correspondence from Italy (from Milan and other major Italian cities) and abroad (from Paris, London, and German-speaking countries) are dedicated primarily to musical theater, there is also some attention devoted to spoken theater. The editorial reviews are almost solely about musical topics. In the part reserved for the spoken theater, biographical and historical articles appear adjacent to a rubric listing pertinent performances and to excerpts of the theatrical texts in question. A rich news section containing short notices and anecdotes (often published on the jacket) complete the journal. After the merger with *La Musica popolare* in 1886, an insert with music from the publishing firm became a regular feature.

Notes on the Catalogue

This publication is based on a copy of the journal in the collection of the Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense in Milan; some missing issues and jackets were found in the collections of the Biblioteca Comunale Sormani and the Biblioteca del conservatorio di musica Giuseppe Verdi in Milan.

Illustrations and music found on pages within articles to which they do not refer have been catalogued as independent units following the articles in which they appear. This inevitably disrupts the consecutive presentation of page numbers in the page number column. The versos of some full-page illustrations are blank: in such cases, neither a reference nor a page number is given.

Notes on the Keyword-Author Index

The names of theaters (e.g. Scala, Opéra-Comique) generally appear beneath lead-terms beginning with the word "teatro" or "théâtre" (e.g., Teatro alla Scala, Teatro dell'Opéra-Comique, Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique). However the names of theaters in German and English speaking countries constitute an exception. These can be found under their English or German title or under the italianized title as they appear in the journal (e.g., Friedrich-Wilhelm städtische Theater or Teatro Federico Guglielmo; Her Majesty's Theatre or Teatro di Sua Maestà).

Variants in the presentation of surnames also appear in the Index as they appear in the journal when it was not possible to ascertain the correct form (e.g., Rossetti-Pellagalli, Pellagalli-Rossetti). A similar problem can occur in non-Italian surnames that begin with "De" or "D'" (e.g., Delaunay, De Launay). In the Index, these variant spellings are also recorded as they appear in the periodical.

World and local premieres of operas, dramas, ballets, and instrumental music are listed under the heading "Prima rappresentazione." Performance capacities (basso, baritono, tenore, soprano, direttore d'orchestra, maestro del coro, cantante, pianista) identifying individual performers are noted only once in the Index. Notices of death may be found under the headings "decesso," "necrologio," "memento artistico," and "morte."

Some dates of centuries written in arabic numerals in the journal appear under the pertinent spelled-out leadterm in the Index (e.g., 1400 under Quattrocento, 1500 under Cinquecento). Centuries identified with roman numerals appear under the general heading "Secolo" (e.g., Secolo XIV, Secolo XVII).

The terms "opera," "opera buffa," "opera comica," "operetta," etc. appear as leadterms in the Index only when they refer to the genre.

The spelling of foreign names has always been retained if not corrupted by obvious errors. For this reason, for example, German names that begin with the letter "K" may also be found under the letter "C" (e.g., Karltheater and Carltheater).

Similar surnames probably referring to the same person have also been maintained in the Index when it was not possible to ascertain the correct spelling (e.g., Hirschenfelder, Hirschenfeld, Hirschfelder, Hirschfeld; Strompela-Hlamgueska, Stromfeld-Klamrzyrska). Some authors sign their contributions with initials or pseudonyms. The following tables lists those that have been identified.

Author's initials

A. C.	Alessandro Cortella
A. D. M.	Achille De Marzi
Adiemme	Achille De Marzi
A. G.	Amintore Galli
D. M.	Achille De Marzi
E. A. M.	Ercole Arturo Marescotti
G. R.	Giulio Roberti
O.	Omicron
R. M.	Raffaele Montuoro
V. V.	Vincenzo Valle

Author's pseudonyms

Aldo	Tommaso Gherardi Del Testa
Inocenza Well	Vincenzo Valle
Ippolito Valetta	Giuseppe Ippolito Franchi-Verney