




**A
CATHEDRAL OF
MUSIC**

**THE ARCHIVIO
STORICO
RICORDI**

 **PRESTEL**

Editorial

Dear Readers,

for 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 what we have to offer — and tell stories that provide information, entertainment and inspiration day after day. I am therefore delighted that, in this book about the Archivio Storico Ricordi, we have the privilege of telling a story that has not only inspired many music lovers over the past 200 years, but that is also about the preservation of an important piece of European cultural heritage.

The Archivio bears witness to the achievements of a company whose name still stands as a symbol of the connection between art and society. The use of the archive and the communication of its contents to the outside preserve and activate a legacy whose cultural-historical relevance is steadily growing. Its importance for research and education cannot be overstated.

The Ricordi archive has been part of Bertelsmann since 1994. When we sold the associated parent company in 2006, we deliberately decided to keep the archive — to preserve its valuable collection of music history for posterity, and to give it greater visibility. The extraordinary scope of the collection and its outstanding importance for the history of Italian opera were reason enough to secure the almost 8 000 scores, 10 000 librettos, 15 000 letters and many other documents and to present them in a new form.

On behalf of Bertelsmann, I am delighted that we can tell the story of Ricordi and the archive's collections in detail in this publication. In this spirit, I am very pleased about your interest in Archivio Storico Ricordi and wish you an enjoyable read!

Kind regards,

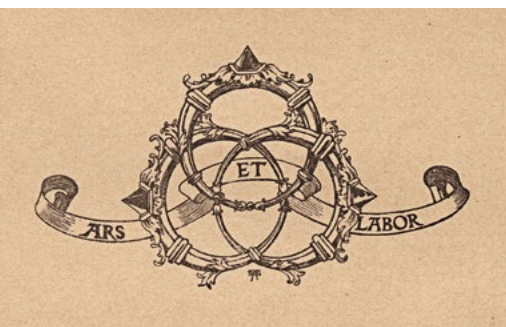
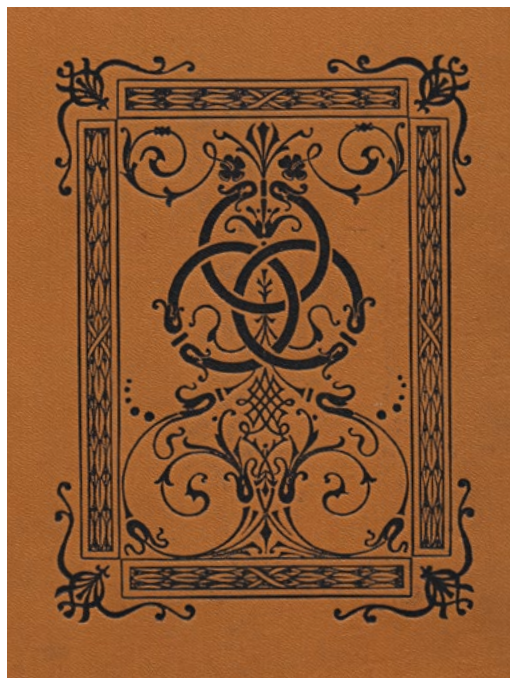
Thomas Rabe
Chairman & CEO of Bertelsmann



1880s

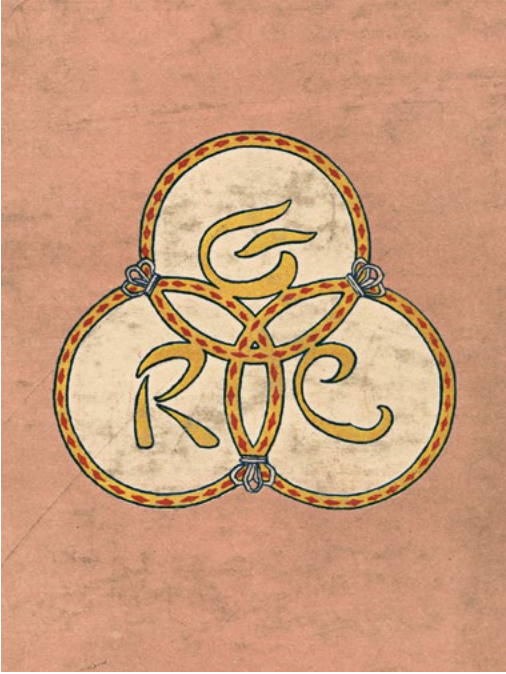


1890s

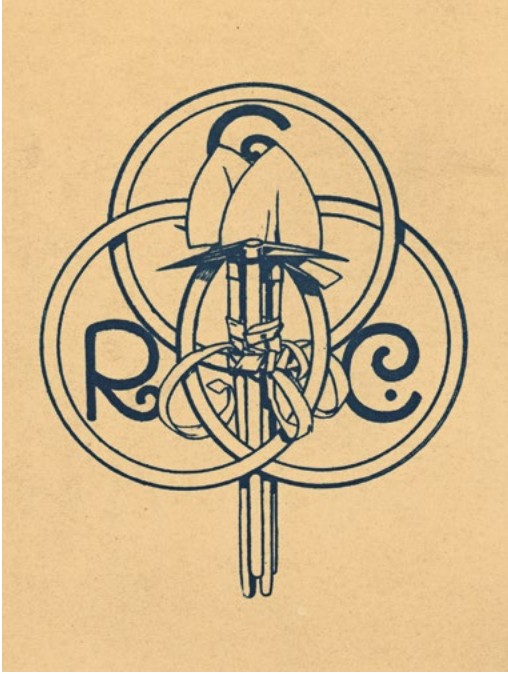


1900s





1910s



1920s



1930s



4



The Cosmopolitan: Tito II Ricordi

The period from 1912 to 1919

In keeping with the family tradition, Giulio's eldest son Tito II (1865–1933) is also involved in the publishing business at an early stage — in 1889, immediately after completing his studies. Tito's brother Emanuele (known as Manolo) had already taken over as head of the *Officine Grafiche* workshop in 1910. But the working relationship between Giulio and Tito II turns out to be conflict-prone.

The times have changed: after the exuberance of nation building, Europe is facing a crisis, and much is being put to the test in the arts as well. The "New World" of America with its ideas and social systems is increasingly penetrating art and life in Europe. And the European art scene is also reinventing itself to a huge degree. Giulio, a 19th-century man through and through, and a proponent of "italianità", cannot quite cope with it. His son Tito II is open to the new forms and new media; he travels a great deal and pushes for changes in the company. Under Manolo's direction the *Officine* achieve a prominent role in commercial art. In his monograph on the 150th anniversary of the publishing house, Claudio Sartori, the well-known musicologist, writes: "The publisher-patron of the 19th century who holds all the reins of the company in his hands is disappearing. People have changed, times have changed, and the company has grown so large that a distribution of tasks would have become unavoidable in any case."²⁴

The reins of the publishing company remain in Giulio's hands, and this leads to considerable tension between father and son, culminating in a rift in February 1907. Giulio is furious about what he considers to be Tito's wastefulness, cavalier attitude and willingness to take risks with money. A letter from Giulio to Tito documents in almost operatically dramatic fashion how disappointed

Giulio is with his son's business conduct. He uses language that is reminiscent of a 19th-century libretto.²⁵

Tito II's merits and qualities are perhaps often forgotten because of this row. After all, he lives in a time in which changes in society and art inevitably affect the business practices of a company like Ricordi. Giulio had taken over the company during the upswing after the *Risorgimento*, and thereafter led it through steady growth to its economic peak. The discovery and commercialization of Giacomo Puccini, whom he supervised and nurtured like a caring father, is both a symptom and cause of this. As an artist, too, Giulio is still a man of the 19th century: his known compositions are a living testimony of how he absorbed and brilliantly transposed the musical idioms he identified with, those of Verdi, Schumann, Schubert and the French late Romantic period. By contrast, Tito II represents the crisis-ridden character of the turn of the century. With him "the nervousness of the new century"²⁶ enters the company.

In Italy, the agricultural society — especially in the North — is gradually being replaced by the industrial society, followed by transnational political and social changes, the first waves of emigration from Italy to North and South America as a result of the economic crisis (a crisis that was not preceded by any real upswing after the *Risorgimento*); a weakening of traditional class distinctions and gender roles; and technical innovations, such as the expansion of the railway network which increases opportunities for travel. This leads to the development of new trends in the arts as well, which can be described as the "courage to embrace subjectivity"²⁷ and which for Italy can be circumscribed using the poles of art and psychoanalysis (Pirandello/Svevo) versus *Dannunzianesimo*/Futurism (D'Annunzio/Marinetti).

The translated works of Sigmund Freud appear in Italy and influence one group, while the other group pursues poetics based on technology and progress (including human progress).

Does Giulio remain rooted in the 19th century and the foundations of bourgeois society following

18—Tito II Ricordi, photograph by Oreste Bertieri, early 20th century

liberal patriotism? Is Tito too much of a child of his time, becoming incapable of action by personally experiencing the crisis of the modern subject, or is he the one who, by identifying with the new social and artistic impulses, is open to or at least striving to be open to new strategies and developments, including in his own sphere of influence?

Tito II is born in 1865. In 1889 he completes a degree in engineering, but then devotes himself solely to his father's company. He also plays the piano, is sensitive and witty, and knows how to comport himself in society. Having lost his wife early, he travels a lot: to France, Germany, England and America, where he picks up ideas from the business sector and from theater companies²⁸. He reports to his father Giulio on a performance of *Die Meistersinger* in London, acts as the stage director for Puccini's *Tosca*, is responsible for clarifying the rights to the works of Wagner in Italy with Breitkopf & Härtel in Leipzig, which leads to the opening of a branch of Casa Ricordi in that city²⁹, and lobbies within the company for its participation in the emerging musical reproduction industry. He introduces new technical and artistic ideas to the company, for example color lithography. Succeeding his father, Tito looks after Puccini: he organizes his trip to the Bayreuth Festival, supports him emotionally after the *Madama Butterfly* fiasco (1904) and accompanies him to New York in 1910 for the premiere of *La Fanciulla del West*³⁰. But he also adds young composers of his time to the program: Riccardo Zandonai, Franco Alfano and Italo Montemezzi. Like them, Tito is close to the poetics of D'Annunzio, is actively interested in production issues, and later acts as the librettist for *Francesca da Rimini* (Zandonai, 1914) and *La Nave* (Montemezzi, 1918)³¹.

The discussion of how the company should respond to the invention of wax cylinders, shellac records and the cinematograph and the arrival of these innovations on the Italian market, appears to have been the first reason for the rift between

father and son³², because Giulio largely refuses to respond entrepreneurially. But sloppy calculations and billing also incited Giulio's displeasure. Baia Curioni hypothesizes that Giulio is interested primarily in the continuity of the company and its commitment to Italian musical heritage, and that he fails to realize that this very goal could be pursued by taking up the technical innovations³³. As a consequence of the dispute with Tito, in February 1907 Giulio revokes Tito's access to the company's accounts and subjects him to tight monitoring in the company with regard to his expenses — such as for travel. After Giulio's aforementioned bitter letter to his son dated July 5, 1907, Tito II withdraws from the company until his father's death. "[...] del figlio Tito non si parla più" — "there is no more talk about the son Tito",³⁴ and so any discussions about technical innovations in the music business are also shelved.

After the death of Giulio Ricordi on June 6, 1912 (an event considered so momentous in the world of music lovers that his obituary received a full column in the *New York Times*),³⁵ however, Tito II becomes head of Casa Ricordi, and has the difficult task of leading the company through the crisis of World War I. The spirit of optimism that was triggered by the new directions the publisher had taken in technical production and artistic terms is extinguished. Tito turns his attention, among other things, to getting into the movie business. But the outbreak of the war and possibly his weaknesses as a businessman prevent any concrete results here. In 1919, he steps down as head of the publishing company because of yet another financial inaccuracy that causes concerns on the supervisory board. So, 111 years after the publishing house was founded, the continuous thread of management by the Ricordi family ends.

Various factors that are related to these family problems only to a limited extent probably result in weakening the publisher's position during the first decade of the 20th century. External circumstances

1912



8



The Phenomenon of Opera

**“Like never before and never since,
musicians of the time were
in a position to communicate with
all levels of society.”**

LUCIO DALLA

The archive’s diverse holdings and its research and information functions relate to contexts of music and cultural history, and the history of opera aesthetics. The archive contains invaluable material about the history of music, especially opera, which can be viewed as an artistic and social phenomenon. In 19th century Italy in particular, it takes on a distinctive mediation role in the socio-political structure.

The relationships between the great publishing personalities Giovanni, Tito I and Giulio Ricordi and “their” composers attest to how, during the course of the 19th century, the opera business changed from a theater-driven to a publisher-driven system. Both the historic periods and the linking of marketing and artistic concepts play a role in this connection. The diverse range of publishing correspondence documented in the archive illuminates this productive relationship. Not only is the correspondence with the “big five” — Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, Verdi, Puccini — exemplary in this respect; the letters in their entirety shed a lot of light on this process of change, which also reflects a change with regard to how the works and their authors are perceived.

The appreciation of the original, unique works, and of the authorship of these works are new ideas in the opera business of the time, and the Ricordi publishing house plays a crucial role in this. In this respect, the archive is a rich source of clarification re-

garding the interaction between different societal forces of the time, as it documents the interconnectedness of artistic and economic aspects with letters, documentations of contracts, fee agreements, reception (eyewitness reports, reviews, correspondence) and marketing.

Various search filters can be used to understand the genesis of the texts and music, and the performance history and reception of individual works. This also provides an unparalleled insight into the socio-economic fabric of 19th century Milan as an up-and-coming European metropolis.

The story of opera is fundamentally Italian, but also fundamentally European. At the time of the publishing house’s establishment by Giovanni Ricordi, Donizetti- and Bellini-influenced bel canto opera still dominates the opera stage. The Napoleonic era is not over and the genre of opera is still bound to the ancien régime. At the same time the demands of the French Revolution and the beginnings of industrialization have also reached Italy, that politically fragmented region with the Regno delle Due Sicilie in the south, the Papal States in Rome, the free duchies in central Italy, Savoy in the northwest and the Austrian territories in the northeast. The goal of a unified Italian state is still distant, but the social and political movements against the privileges of the nobility exist. In a social climate affected by liberal and conservative forces, the musical landscape is also in a state of flux.

An old dispute about the primacy of music vs. lyrics in opera is settled by the bel canto opera in favor of “melody”: Rossini, Donizetti and Bellini write incomparably beautiful cantabile tunes, which are spontaneously provided with additional flourishes during the singers’ performance. The Archivio Storico Ricordi collection contains autographs of operas by these three composers, well restored and already digitized.

From the first decades of Giovanni Ricordi’s activities, when he expanded his collection through



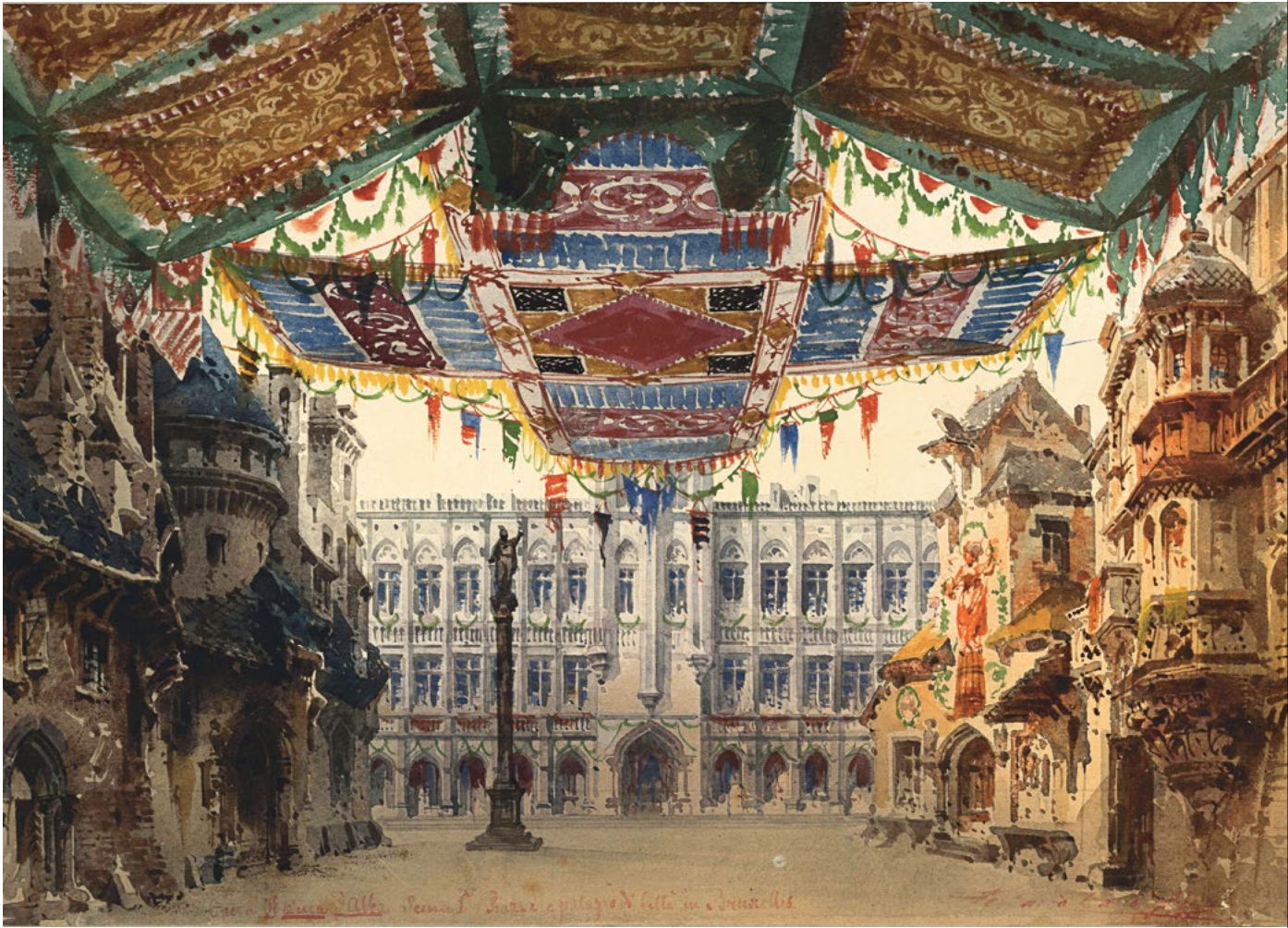
66–68



clever contracts so that in 1814 he was able to publish a first catalog, documents survive that testify to one of the secrets of the Ricordi company's success: the personal relationship between the publisher and his authors, whom he treats in a friendly manner. For instance, in a letter to Donizetti, Giovanni reports extensively on the success of a performance of the opera *Anna Bolena* in Paris — a success that he wants to tell the composer about immediately after his return as an eye witness (“testimonio oculare”), out of respect and appreciation for him.⁷² Giovanni's European-influenced basic attitude, as shown in his various correspondences with publishers (Breitkopf & Härtel as well as Peters in Leipzig, and Boosey and Hawkes in London), and composers and librettists abroad, also contributes to the company's growing success. Using the international business language of the time, Giovanni corresponds in French with Boosey and Hawkes in London. The collection of “copialettere” begins in the 1830s: a copy of each letter sent from the house of Ricordi is archived — and in the early days, a “copy” was of course a transcript.



- 66—Vincenzo Bellini, lithograph
67—Gaetano Donizetti,
 portrait by Roberto Focosi
68—Gioachino Rossini,
 lithograph by F. Perrin,
 circa 1850



69–71

- 69—*Le duc d'Albe* by Gaetano Donizetti, posthumous world premiere, Rome, Teatro Apollo, 1882
Municipal square in Brussels, Act I, set design by Carlo Ferrario, 1882
- 70—*La Cenerentola* by Gioachino Rossini, first printed edition of the vocal score
- 71—Receipt from Vincenzo Bellini for the sale to Giovanni Ricordi of the opera *La sonnambula*, January 12, 1832

LA CENERENTOLA

Melodramma in due Atti

Composta per il Teatro, Valle, a Roma

DAL
Cesare Rossini
ed Eseguita da Signori

	Cenerentola.....	Sig. ^{ra} Bighetti
Soprani	Clorinda.....	Sig. ^{ra} Rossi
	Tisbe.....	Sig. ^{ra} A.A.
Tenori	Raimo Principe di Salerno.....	Sig. ^{ro} Caglielmi
	Alvaro Filosofo.....	Sig. ^{ro} A.A.
Bassi	Dandini Cameriere.....	Sig. ^{ro} De Begnis
	D. Magnifico Barone.....	Sig. ^{ro} Bl. ^o Galli

La Scena si finge parte in un vecchio Palazzo di D.^o Magnifico, e parte in un Casino di delizie del Principe

Milano C.R. Billa Fr. 30. MILANO e FIRENZE presso GIOVANNI RICORDI. Prop. dell'Editore.

6

37
8 Io qui sottoscritto ho ricevuto dal
Sif. Giovanni Ricordi due volte
Anfiorade per le due rate
della proprietà vendutami della
Lombarda con un contratto ec.
Milano H. Senajo 1832



88—*Madama Butterfly* by Giacomo Puccini, world premiere, Milan, Teatro alla Scala, 1904. *Butterfly*, Act I, costume design by Giuseppe Palanti

89—*Falstaff* by Giuseppe Verdi, world premiere, Milan, Teatro alla Scala, 1893. *Falstaff*, Acts I, II and III, costume design by Adolf Hohenstein

90—*La tempesta* by Felice Lattuada, world premiere, Milan, Teatro Dal Verme, 1922. *The King and Caliban*, costume design by Luigi Sapelli a.k.a. Caramba

88—90



il RE



Calibano



VERDI E L'OTELLO

Numero Unico

PUBBLICATO
dalla

**ILLUSTRAZIONE
ITALIANA**

E
COMPILATO DA
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alla
**ILLUSTRAZIONE
ITALIANA**

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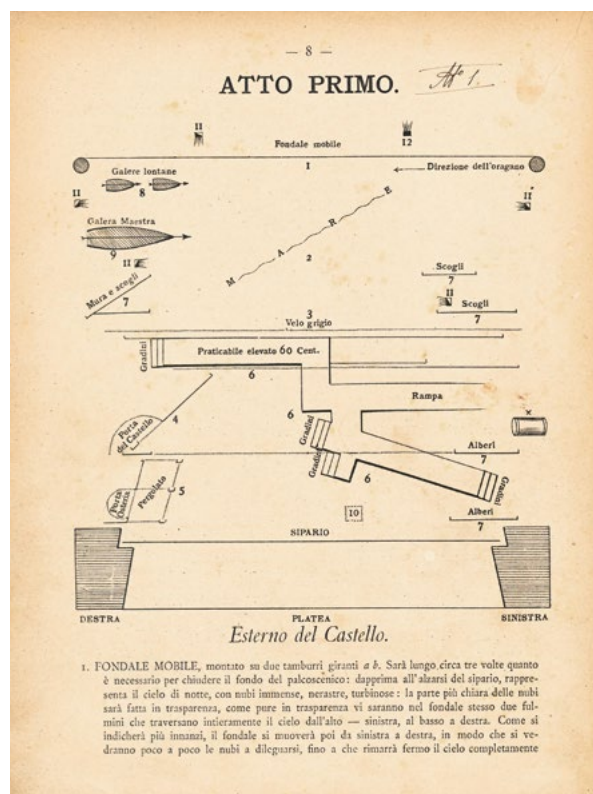
Tutti gli altri Stati Fr. 42

Prezzo del presente Numero





98–100



98—Special issue of the periodical *Illustrazione Italiana*, dedicated to the premiere of *Otello* by Giuseppe Verdi, 1887

99—*Otello* by Giuseppe Verdi, new production, Rome, Teatro Costanzi, 1887. External view of the castle, Act I, copy of a set design by Giovanni Zuccarelli

100—*Mise-en-scène* by Giulio Ricordi for *Otello* by Giuseppe Verdi



Il favorito del re by Antonio Veretti, world premiere, Milan, Teatro alla Scala, 1932

166—*Lalla*, Act I, costume design by Titina Rota

167—*A lady*, Act I, costume design by Titina Rota

