INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

THE STAGING OF VERDI & WAGNER OPERAS

13-15 September 2013
Pistoia, Biblioteca Comunale Forteguerriana

PROGRAMME
SATURDAY 14 SEPTEMBER

10.00-12.30 Session 3: French Productions during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries
(Chair: Michela Niccolai, Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris)

- Karine Boulanger (CNRS / Centre André Chastel, Paris): « Parsifal » à Paris (janvier 1914)
- Claire Paolacci (Université Paris 1-Panthéon-Sorbonne): La programmation des œuvres de Verdi et Wagner à l’Opéra de Paris sous l’ère Rouché (1915-1945) : concurrence ou complémentarité ?

13.00 Lunch

15.30-16.30: Keynote Speaker 2

- Michela Niccolai (Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris): Les métamorphoses de Violetta à Paris : du théâtre de prose au théâtre lyrique

Coffee Break

16.30-18.30: Session 4: Staging Verdi and Wagner in Europe
(Chair: Fulvia Morabito, Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini)

- Bogumila Mika (University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland): «Lived Anew». Reception of Wagner’s Operas and Dramas in Poland in the New Millenium
Bruno Forment (Vrije Universiteit Brussel / Universiteit Gent)

Verdi in the Belgian Province: The «Aïda» and «Rigoletto» Scenery of Albert Dubosq

Among the twenty-two full-sized stage sets that recently surfaced at the municipal theatre of Kortrijk (Belgium), four are of exceptional interest to the Verdi scholar: the “Extérieur égyptien”, “Palais égyptien”, and “Grand temple égyptien (avec caveau)” for Aïda (1921), and the “Maison de Saltabadi” for Rigoletto (1922). Furnished by Albert Dubosq (Paris, 1863-Lyons, 1940) for visiting performances of the Grand Théâtre (presently ‘Vlaamse Opera’) of Ghent, this unique trove opens up numerous opportunities for investigation into Verdian staging in the Belgian province. More than any other evidence, Dubosq’s gigantic flats, borders, and drops help address such obvious, but ultimately complicated questions as: To what extent were the staging manuals and scenic models from Milan and Paris obeyed in provincial productions given after Verdi’s death, and in which ways were they modified by local decorators? Which theatrical routines and special interventions allowed the grand spectacle of Verdian opera, and in particular of Aïda, to be accommodated to a stage no deeper than nine meters? And how did illusionistic settings look in reality and contribute to the musico-dramatic exposition? To answer these questions, we need to scrutinize the artistic ‘genealogy’ of Dubosq’s scenery with respect to three dimensions vital to their conception: firstly, the creator’s apprenticeship in Paris (1876-86) with Émile Daran and Eugène Carpezat, both of whom were involved in the Opéra’s 1880 Aïda; 2) the Théâtre de la Monnaie’s Aïda (1877, revised 1904) by Pierre Devis and Armand Lynen, in whose atelier Dubosq worked from 1887 to 1890; 3) Dubosq’s own Verdian scenographies, in particular the tasty Aïda parody Zwanzaïda for the International Exposition of Brussels (1897), his Rigoletto for the Théâtre Royal of Ostend (1905), and his Aïda for the Théâtre Royal of Antwerp (1923), the latter of which, as photographs and floorplans tell us, constituted a ‘scaled-up’ version of the version preserved in Kortrijk. Finally, some words need to be devoted to the surprising ‘stock’ potential of the surviving Rigoletto and Aïda décors as evidenced by their reuse in various operatic and non-operatic spectacles alike – from Saint-Saëns’ Samson et Dalila and Massenet’s Hérodiade, over Paul Abraham’s operetta Die Blume von Hawaii (all discrepancies in spite), to even a gymnastic festival. By documenting the seemingly trivial history of primary scenic evidence, much is to be learned about the endurance and reception of Verdian mise en scène in lesser-known areas of the composer’s reception.