

CRISTINA SCUDERI

THE MANAGEMENT OF OPERA

(1861–1918)

THEATRES
OF THE
EASTERN
ADRIATIC



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Theatres of the Eastern Adriatic

Translated from the Italian by Hugh Ward-Perkins

BÖHLAU



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Abbreviations

HR-DAD	State Archive of Dubrovnik (Državni Arhiv u Dubrovniku)
HR-DAPA	State Archive of Pazin (Državni Arhiv Pazin)
HR-DARI	State Archive of Rijeka (Državni Arhiv u Rijeci)
HR-DAŠI	State Archive of Šibenik (Državni Arhiv u Šibeniku)
HR-DAZD	State Archive of Zadar (Državni Arhiv u Zadru)
HR-MGS	City Museum of Split (Muzej Grada Splita)
I-TSmt	Library of the Civico Museo Teatrale di Fondazione Carlo Schmidl, Trieste
c.	crowns
f.	florins
g.	<i>giorni</i> (days)
l.	lire
m. c.	<i>maestro dei cori</i> (chorus master)
m. s.	<i>maestro sostituto</i> (deputy conductor)
n. f.	not found
proc.	<i>procuratore</i>
n. d.	no date
n. p.	no place
n. n.	no name

Sources consulted

The archival material consulted for the present research is listed here below.

Trieste	I-TSmt: Archivio del Teatro Comunale “G. Verdi” Trieste	
		folder 101
		folder 102
		folder 104
		folder 107
		folder 108
		folder 109
		folder 110
		folder 111
	folder 116	
Pazin	HR-DAPA-28: Kotarsko Poglavarstvo u Poreču 1868–1918	
		folder 9
		folder 33
		folder 39
		folder 52
		folder 139
		folder 147
		folder 154
	folder 166	
	folder 182	
Pula	Sveučilišna biblioteka u Puli: – knjižni i novinski fond	
Rijeka	HR-DARI-557: Uprava općinskog kazališta u Rijeci	
		folder 562/1
		folder 562/2
		DS 60, folder 3
		DS 60, folder 4
		DS 60, folder 7
		DS 60, folder 8
		DS 60, folder 9
	DS 60, folder 10	
	HR-DARI: RO 24, folder 6	
	Museo Marittimo e Storico del Litorale Croato	Collezione teatrale, materiale vario

Zadar	HR-DAZD-102: Okružno poglavarstvo u Zadru	folder 283	
		folder 284	
		folder 300	
	HR-DAZD-252: Kazalište "Verdi" u Zadru 1863–1936	folder 1	
		folder 2	
		folder 3	
		folder 4	
		folder 5	
		folder 6	
		folder 7	
		folder 8	
		folder 9	
		folder 10	
		folder 11	
		folder 12	
		folder 13	
		folder 14	
		folder 15	
		folder 16	
		folder 21	
		folder 22	
		folder 23	
		folder 24	
		folder 25	
		folder 26	
		folder 27	
		folder 28	
		folder 29	
		folder 30	
	HR-DAZD-562: Vlada/Namjesništvo za Dalmaciju. Kazališta u Dalmaciji, 1805–1904	folder 1	
		folder 3	
	Šibenik	HR-DAŠI-103: Kazalište i kino "Mazzoleni" – Šibenik (1863–1945)	folder 1
			folder 2a
		folder 2b	
		folder 3	
		folder 4	
		folder 5	
		folder 6	
		folder 7	

		folder 8
		folder 9
		folder 10
		folder 11
		folder 13
	HR-DAŠI: Kotar i Općina Šibenik 1870–1871	
		folder 201
		folder 202
		folder 203
	HR-DAŠI: Općina Šibenik 1972, BR. 306	
Split	HR-MGS: Kazalište	
		Kazalište, 1/ kut. I–XII
		Kazalište, 2/ kut. I–IV
		Kazalište, 3/ kut. I–XII
		Kazalište, 4/ kut. I–XVII
Dubrovnik	HR-DAD: Općina Dubrovnik	
		Općina Dubrovnik, Izdvojeni spisi Kazališta, kut. 1
		Općina Dubrovnik, Izdvojeni spisi Kazališta, kut. 2
		Općina Dubrovnik, Izdvojeni spisi Kazališta, kut. 3
		Općina Dubrovnik, Izdvojeni spisi Kazališta, kut. 4

Introduction

Theatres and the management of opera in Istria and Dalmatia: the project

The present research intends to trace the presence of opera and reconstruct the organisational system in the theatres situated along the coastline of present-day Croatia in the period immediately following the constitution of the first Diet of Dalmatia (1861) until the end of the First World War. The period is sufficiently broad to permit us to understand and define the workings of both the impresario system and the opera circuits operating in the area. The study aims, therefore, to provide notes for a history that is at present lacking. In the process it will contextualise the historical documentation discovered, so that it can be correctly assessed and interpreted. With the benefit of the material hitherto collected in the archives, museums and libraries of the area, we can reconstruct – not always, unfortunately, in a complete form – the relationships between impresarios and theatre managements, map the movements of the impresarios and agents, and identify the contacts between the publishers (and their representatives) and the coastal area.

In the sixty-year period under consideration, we encounter theatres of different types and sizes along the Adriatic coast. Starting from the north, the first to be taken into consideration is the Politeama Ciscutti of Pula (Pola), named after Pietro Ciscutti, a man viewed as a benefactor of the city, who built the new theatre in 1881 after demolishing the old one he himself had erected in 1854.¹ On the seating capacity of the Politeama the sources disagree. It is likely to have had around 800 seats when the town had around 30,000 inhabitants, in spite of claims published in the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano* that the theatre could hold as many as 2,800,² or according to other sources, 2,200 or 1,800. Further down the coast we come across the Teatro Adamich of Rijeka (Fiume), with seating for about 1,000 (built when the town had a population of about 10,000)³ and, later,

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- 1 The theatre built in 1854 suffered losses for around twenty years and made a heavy dent in the founder's estate; "Quanto Pola deve a Pietro Ciscutti"; see *L'Eco di Pola*, 26. I. 1890. In actual fact the new Politeama had opened, semi-unofficially, in 1880 with the equestrian company of Alexandro Stekel. It officially opened, however, with a performance of *Ruy Blas* on 24 September 1881.
 - 2 "The theatre is very fine. It holds 2,800 people and closely resembles the Teatro Dal Verme" ("Il teatro è molto bello, può contenere 2800 persone e ricorda assai il Dal Verme"); "Teatri – Pola", *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, anno XXXVI, no. 40, 2. IO. 1881, p. 358.
 - 3 On the Teatro Adamich, see the section devoted to it in Giovanni Kobler, *Memorie per la storia della liburnica città di Fiume*, Mohovich, Rijeka 1896, p. 34.

the Teatro Comunale, inaugurated in 1885 and with a seating capacity of 1,240.⁴ South of Rijeka, Zadar (Zara) founded its Teatro Nuovo in 1864,⁵ following the demise of the Teatro Nobile; it had a slightly greater seating capacity of around 1,500.⁶ Further south still, the smaller town of Šibenik (Sebenico), with its 7,000 inhabitants, had a theatre with limited operatic activity, also judging from what was written in the guidebooks of the period: “Teatro Mazzoleni. Open very rarely” (*Aperto assai di rado*).⁷ At the time the theatre was the property of the Mazzoleni family and had been founded by the tenor Francesco Mazzoleni,⁸ a singer who was in direct contact with Giuseppe Verdi and was also an uncle of the famous soprano Ester. It was later run by various distinguished members of the family, among whom the lawyer Enrico, Paolo (Francesco’s brother),⁹ and the

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- 4 On the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka a good source is Nana Palinić, *Riječka kazališta*, Državni arhiv u Rijeci, Građevinski fakultet Sveučilišta u Rijeci, 2016, or the previous article Nana Palinić, “Riječka kazališta”, *Vjesnik Državnog arhiva u Rijeci*, XXXIX (1997), p. 169–240. Ruck Lovorka, “Oporni zivot u Rijeci u razdoblju od 1870. do 1930. godine”, in *Antonio Smareglia i njegovo doba*, edited by Ivana Paula Gortan Carlin, Polivalentni kulturni centar Istarske županije, Grožnjan 2000, pp. 167–212, also provides a list of the opera performances given in Rijeka from 1870 to 1930 at the Teatro Civico, the Anfitheatro Fenice and the Teatro Comunale. On the activities of the theatre in Rijeka, see also Radmila Matejčić, “Općinsko kazalište od osnutka do Drugoga svjetskog rata”, in *Narodno kazalište Ivan Zajc Rijeka*, Narodno kazalište “Ivan Zajc” i Izdavački centar Rijeka, Rijeka 1981, pp. 25–37.
- 5 The Deed certifying the foundation of the theatre (*Atto di erezione del teatro*), dated 16. I. 1864, is preserved in HR-DAZD-252, folder 1.
- 6 The management of the theatre in Zadar defined it as being of “medium capacity like for example the Teatro Armonia of Trieste” (“media capacità quale per esempio l’Armonia di Trieste”); see the Letter from the theatre management of Zadar to the theatrical agency of Sante Utili, Zadar, 6. 2. 1883, HR-DAZD, folder 6.
- 7 Giuseppe Marcotti, *L’Adriatico Orientale*, Bemporad, Firenze 1899, p. 211.
- 8 The theatre was subsequently named after him: “Desirous of seeing his homeland and relatives again, in July 1871 [Francesco Mazzoleni] makes his way to Dalmatia, and in Šibenik creates a splendid academy and devotes it to three virtuous aims. His fellow citizens receive him with great displays of affectionate esteem: and the board of the theatre, mindful that without Mazzoleni’s most generous contribution this elegant temple of the Muses would not have arisen, and most grateful that he wanted to honour it in this way, in its first session unanimously names the theatre, which first had been called the Teatro Sociale, after the illustrious artist and fellow citizen.” (“Desideroso di rivedere la patria e i congiunti, nel luglio del 1871 [Francesco Mazzoleni] si reca in Dalmazia, e a Sebenico dà una splendida accademia e la devolve a tre scopi pii. I suoi concittadini lo accolgono con grandi dimostrazioni di stima affettuosa: e la società del teatro, memore che senza il generosissimo concorso del Mazzoleni non sarebbe sorto quell’elegante tempio delle muse, e gratissima ch’egli l’abbia voluto in tal guisa illustrare, nella prima sua tornata ad unanimità intitola il teatro, che dapprima chiamavasi *sociale*, dal nome dell’illustre artista concittadino.”); Luigi Maschek, *Manuale del Regno di Dalmazia*, Woditzka, Zadar 1876, vols. VI and VII, p. 240.
- 9 See the entry “Mazzoleni, Paolo”, in Daria Garbin – Renzo de Vidovich, *Dalmazia Nazione. Dizionario degli Uomini Illustri della componente culturale illirico-romana latina veneta e italiana*, Fondazione

pharmacist Giovanni (Paolo's son and Ester's brother), who would later succeed his father in the management of the theatre.

Further south was the more populous city of Split (Spalato), which had 10,787 inhabitants in 1860,¹⁰ and 15,700 in 1899, of which only 2,000 were Italian.¹¹ The first functioning theatre was the Teatro Bajamonti, with a seating capacity of around 1,400–1,500, inaugurated on 27 December 1859,¹² followed by the Teatro Nuovo, by which time the city had passed from an Italian administration to the Croatian government of Gajo Filomen Bulat. The last theatre in this series is the Teatro Bonda of Dubrovnik (Ragusa), founded just a few years after the Teatro Bajamonti by the nobleman Luca Bonda in a town which, at the time, was not much larger than Šibenik. The theatre, which aimed to “imitate the modern theatres of the principal cities of Italy”,¹³ was also, in its constitution, a *teatro sociale* like those mentioned previously, with Bonda having quarter ownership and the remaining three-quarters in the hands of those who had bought the boxes. We have no information on its size, but the guide-books of the period speak of a “small but delightful theatre”.¹⁴

The principal theatres hosting the events featured in this research are here summarised in the following table:

Scientifico Culturale Maria e Eugenio Dario Rustia Traine, Trieste 2012, p. 309.

- 10 The figure is taken from Mirjana Škunka, “Politische Aspekte des musikalischen Lebens von Split zur Zeit der kroatischen Wiedergeburt (1860–1882)”, *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, XX/2 (1989), pp. 141–67.
- 11 These Italians for the most part retained the customs and traditions of the preceding Venetian domination, according to Marcotti: “While the suburbs contribute a large contingent of agricultural workers, Croatian for the most part, the cultured bourgeoisie, which is civilised and well-off, is almost exclusively Italian, and has strictly Venetian traditions and customs [...]” (“Mentre i sobborghi portano un grosso contingente di agricoltori alla maggioranza croata, la borghesia colta, civile e facoltosa è quasi esclusivamente italiana, ha tradizioni e abitudini strettamente veneziane [...]”); Marcotti, *L'Adriatico Orientale*, p. 227.
- 12 “It has a capacity of between 1,400 and 1500; it has four tiers of boxes: 24 on the ground floor, 25 in the first and second tiers, and 8 in the third; the rest of the third tier is devoted to the gallery for the people.” (“È capace dalle 1400 alle 1500 persone; ha quattro ordini di palchetti: 24 palchetti nel pepiano, 25 nel primo e secondo ordine ed 8 nel terzo; il rimanente del terzo è ridotto a loggione pel popolo.”); *Illustrazione del Teatro Bajamonti in Spalato*, Oliveti e Giovannizio, Split 1860, p. 9, 20.
- 13 “imitare i moderni Teatri delle principali Città d'Italia”; Programme. Dubrovnik, 25. II. 1862, HR-DAD: Općina Dubrovnik, Izdvojeni spisi Kazališta, folder 1.
- 14 “Bonda gegründetete wohl kleine, aber nette Stadttheater”; see Reinhard E. Petermann, *Führer durch Dalmatien*, Hölder, Wien 1899, p. 474.

City	Theatre	Year of Foundation	Seats	Inhabitants in 1899 ¹⁵
Pula	Politeama Ciscutti	1881	800 [1,800 2,800]	32,000 ¹⁶
Rijeka	Teatro Adamich	1805	1,000	10,000 (pre-1899) / 20,000
	Teatro Comunale	1885	1,240 ¹⁷	
Zadar	Teatro Nuovo	1865	1,500	12,800 ¹⁸
Šibenik	Teatro Mazzoleni	1870	1,000 ¹⁹	7,000
Split	Teatro Bajamonti	1859	1,500 ²⁰	15,700 ²¹
	Teatro Comunale	1893	1,000	
Dubrovnik	Teatro Bonda	1863	n. f.	7,200

All of the above theatres stood in harbour cities, situated in an area that was inhabited by a population of mixed ethnicity, i. e. Italian and Croatian (but also German and Slovene in the case of the Istrian peninsula),²² and had been under Austrian domination for some

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- 15 The data on the number of inhabitants for each location are drawn from the guidebook Marcotti, *L'Adriatico Orientale*.
- 16 According to the impresario Alberto Vernier, in the article “Per la pura verità”, *L'Eco di Pola*, 28. II. 1896, the number of inhabitants only three years previously, in 1896, was 38,000.
- 17 The number given in a typewritten note of the theatre management of Rijeka in 1918 is 1,550: “Das hiesige Stadt-Theater kann ein Maximum von 1550 Besucher fassen”, Rijeka, 5. 4. 1918, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.
- 18 The population was between 7,000 and 10,000 in the year of the theatre’s foundation (see Katica Burić Čenan, *Dokumentalistički pristup i obrada informacija o glazbenom životu grada zadra od 1860. do prvoga svjetskog rata*, doctoral dissertation, University of Zadar, Zadar 2016, p. 261) and 28,230 in 1902, according to the *Guida itinerario dell'Italia e di parte dei paesi limitrofi. Parte 3. Annuario.1896–1903*, Touring club ciclistico italiano, [Milano] 1902, p. 515.
- 19 According to a note from the artistic direction of the Teatro Mazzoleni in the early years of the 20th century, it had 800 seats; see Sheet of paper “Teatro Mazzoleni – Sebenico (Dalmazia)”, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2a. On the other hand, the official advertisement of the theatre, again from the early years of the century, gives the figure as “around 1,000 seats” (*circa 1000 posti*), HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2a. Today the theatre has a seating capacity of 500; see <http://www.hnksi.hr/stranice/hrvatsko-narodno-kazaliste-u-sibeniku/3.html>.
- 20 According to an article referring to the initial project, the figure is 1,800; see “Il nuovo teatro a Spalato”, *Il Diritto Croato*, 30. I. 1889. The number was subsequently rectified to 1,500; see “Il teatro comunale di Spalato”, *Il Diritto Croato*, 2. 4. 1890. 1,500 is the number of seats also given in Mirjana Škunca, *Glazbeni život Splita od 1860. do 1918*, Književni krug, Split 1991, p. 43 and Duško Kečkemet, *Ante Bajamonti i Split*, Split 2007, p. 213.
- 21 Karl Baedeker’s guide gives the number as 22,716 in 1891; see Karl Baedeker, *Southern Germany and Austria, Including Hungary, Dalmatia and Bosnia. Handbook for Travellers*, Dulau and Co., London 1891, p. 431. The number of inhabitants is said to be 16,000 in 1900. According to Kečkemet, around 1860 Split had about 13,000 inhabitants; Duško Kečkemet, *Antonio Bajamonti e Spalato*, Società Dalmata di Storia Patria, Venezia 2010, p. 35.
- 22 “The whole coast of Istria”, wrote Charles Yriarte in 1874, “is Venetian by tradition and origin; the whole of the countryside is Slavic, and this latter element constitutes over two thirds of the total population.

time. As is well known, the rule of the Serenissima Republic of Venice over this area ended in 1797, to be followed by the Habsburg period, which lasted until 1918. Although there was a brief Napoleonic interlude between 1806 and 1813, when Istria and Dalmatia were officially united by Napoleon to the Kingdom of Italy, after seven years the Austrians regained control of both the Istrian peninsula and the Dalmatian coast.

These theatres have been brought together to form a common subject of discussion, since they shared common organisational practices, procedures and customs that were distinct from those prevailing in the inland cities of Zagreb, Osijek or Ljubljana. While the hundreds of correspondences found in the coastal archives almost never mention the operatic life in the inland cities, this is in strong contrast to the close attention paid to what happened in their fellow cities, either with the purpose of imitating their good practices or perhaps, at times, just to criticise their work. The impresarios and agents writing to the coastal theatres were attracted by the opportunity of offering their services in one or other of the neighbouring theatres as well. Once they had arrived in the area, they entertained the idea of moving either northwards or southwards along the coast, rather than follow other routes. What these theatres had in common, in addition to the multi-ethnic context in which they operated, was that in the overwhelming majority of cases the opera seasons they presented were produced by Italian companies and impresarios. For all of these reasons, they have been grouped together and considered as a category: that of the ‘theatres of the eastern Adriatic’.

All along the coastline there were also other very small Italian theatres for which the documentation available today is very scant. Poreč (Parenzo), which had a municipal theatre of 465 seats inaugurated in 1887, hosted just a few evenings of “*musica e canto*”.²³ The same applied to the Teatro Bonetti of Mali Losinj (Lussinpiccolo), where opera performances are

The German element consists above all of employees and soldiers: representatives of the central power, who come from within Austria and often consider themselves as exiles in this remote land, unhappily comparing it to the delightful valleys of Styria and the fair provinces of the Archduchy of Austria. The language used in the cities is Italian; great efforts are made to introduce the use of German. In the towns of the coastline and those of the interior the small tradesmen speak Slavic owing to the need to make themselves understood by the farmers on market days.” (“è veneta per tradizione e per origine; tutta la campagna è slava, e quest’ultimo elemento costituisce oltre due terzi della popolazione totale. L’elemento tedesco si compone soprattutto di impiegati e militari, rappresentanti del potere centrale, che, venuti dall’interno dell’Austria, si considerano spesso come esigliati in questo paese perduto, raffrontandolo con rammarico alle ridenti valli della Stiria e alle belle provincie dell’arciducato d’Austria. La lingua in uso nelle città è l’italiana; si fanno grandi sforzi per introdurvi la tedesca. Nelle città del litorale e in quelle dell’interno i piccoli commercianti parlano slavo per la necessità d’intendersi coi contadini, ne’giorni di mercato.”); Charles Yriarte, *Trieste e l’Istria*, Treves, Milano 1875, pp. 46–47.

23 See Sheet of paper (untitled) in HR-DAPA-28, folder 147. On musical life in Poreč, see Ivana Paula Gortan Carlin, “Kazalište Giuseppe Verdi’ u Poreču od 1887. do 1918.”, in *Zbornik radova Ruralna i urbana glazba istarskog poluotoka*, edited by Ivana Paula Gortan-Carlin, Katedra Čakavskog sabora

known to have been infrequent, while in the theatre of Rovinj (Rovigno), inaugurated in 1854, operas were produced with the orchestras “positioned in the stalls in front of the stage”.²⁴

At the Teatro Comunale of Labin (Albona), founded in 1843, there is no evidence of opera performances. Nor is there in Pazin (Pisino). Here, with minor exceptions, the events were mainly balls, social occasions, meetings, lectures, and demonstrations of Italian patriotism, given first at the Teatro Lucigrai, then in the Sala Camus, and later still in the Teatro Depiera, demolished in 1909; the new Teatro Sociale was built in 1912.²⁵ In Trogir (Traù) there was a small venue, but it was never used for theatrical productions, only for social dances during the Carnival season.²⁶ Nor was there a real theatre in Korčula (Curzola), but just a small “Sala Teatrale”.²⁷ Concerning the Teatro Dojmi of Kotor (Cattaro, today in Montenegro), a very small number of programmes have been found that testify to performances of opera buffa, but in general no news of other productions has been found.²⁸ The same applies to the Teatro Sociale of Koper (Capodistria), the Teatro Biondi of Hvar (Lesina),²⁹ and even the theatre of Makarska (Macarsca). We can therefore assert with reasonable certainty that even if further archival material were to emerge, any fresh information would not significantly alter the overall picture in statistical terms.

This widespread undergrowth of small-scale theatres, in which opera was, understandably, either very rarely presented or completely absent, serves to highlight, by contrast, the greater importance of the eight principal theatres listed in the table above, in which there was indeed a genuine and continual passage of singers, orchestral musicians and impresarios. A final note, however, must be added about the Teatro Bonda of Dubrovnik. Here, unfortunately, the complex and incomplete documentation does not permit us to broaden

za glazbu, Novigrad 2010, pp. 45–62 and the same author’s *Glazbeni život Poreča i okolice 1880.–1918*, Master’s dissertation, Filozofski fakultet, Zagreb 2005.

24 “sistemate in platea davanti al palco”; <https://pour.hr/it/informacije/o-kazalistu-kinu-antonio-gandusio> [accessed 1. 9. 2022].

25 If we except the 1904 production of Alfredo Soffredini’s *Il piccolo Haydn*, performed by the students of the local gymnasium, the old theatre did not host opera companies. At the new theatre, however, there were performances in 1913 by the Castagnoli company of *La Favorita*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *L’elisir d’amore* and *Don Pasquale*. On the theatre of Pisino, see Nerina Feresini, *Il teatro di Pisino*, Manfrini, Trento 1985.

26 As mentioned in the Letter from the district captain of Split to the lieutenantcy (*luogotenenza*) of Zadar, Split, 15. 9. 1881, HR-DAZD-562, folder 1.

27 On the theatrical and musical performances in Korčula, see Cvito Fisković, “Kazališne i glazbene priredbe u Korčuli u XIX stoljeću”, *Dani Hvarskoga kazališta: Grada i rasprave o hrvatskoj književnosti i kazalištu*, 1/1 (1975), pp. 123–201.

28 In fact Kotor’s dealings with music and Italian musicians were infrequent, as also indicated in Feri Pauer Peretti, “La vita musicale della Dalmazia”, *Rivista dalmatica*, XXII/2 (1942), p. 12.

29 A Statute of the theatrical society of Lesina, dated 1906, with the names of 33 members is preserved at the State Archive of Zadar in HR-DAZD-562, folder 3.

the scope of our study, or to make meaningful comparisons between this theatre and the state of affairs in the other cities of the Dalmatian coast.

State of the art, archival material and types of sources

The majority of the documents referred to in this research are unpublished, given that over the years the subject has been tackled only partially. While it is true that there are studies in Croatia on some of the coastal theatres, for the most part these works refer either to the individual histories of the theatres or, more generally, to the musical life (not necessarily connected to opera) in the separate cities concerned. Some of these studies focus principally on the theatre ‘building’, detailing its architectural and constructional features, and explore neither the performance aspect nor the network with the other theatres. There are also studies on the Balkan area more generally,³⁰ but they concentrate on different material from that of the archives consulted here.

As for the bibliography in Italian, it is practically non-existent and, for the most part, unscholarly. Moreover, if we refer to the literature of a few decades ago, we find material that has a strong political bias. Hostility towards the ‘Slavic’ element was already conspicuous in an anonymous report of 1932 found among the papers at the Teatro Verdi in Zadar. In this city the Teatro Sociale Giuseppe Verdi was apparently built “in the dark times of foreign domination” (*negli oscuri tempi della dominazione straniera*) as a sacred temple to the cult of art and the fatherland, and it “struggled in their name for over a half century against Slavic barbarity, which, after criminally allying itself with Austrian highhandedness and burning down the theatre built by Antonio Baiamonti, set up the Balkan Narodno Kazalište of Split against it, with the aim of destroying it”. The theatre of Zadar – the statement went on – continued up until 1914 in its role of “radiant beacon” (*faro irradiatore*) of Italic culture in the Slavic near-east and as a centre of attraction for all the Italians of Dalmatia, notwithstanding all the “dirty tricks” (*canagliate*) allegedly perpetrated by the enemies.³¹

Even texts from the 1950s are profoundly biased. An example is provided by Salvatore Samani, written at the time when the theatre in Rijeka, previously named after Verdi, was

30 Tatjana Marković, for example, has for some years been working on the contextualisation of opera and national identity in southern European countries (see the projects *The Role of Opera in Constructing National Identity of Southeast European Countries* and *Opera and the Idea of Self-Representation in Southeast Europe*, both financed by the Austrian Science Fund for scientific research FWF).

31 “lottò in loro nome per oltre mezzo secolo con la barbarie slava che, delittuosa alleata della prepotenza austriaca, incendiò il teatro eretto da Antonio Baiamonti, gli oppose per abbatterlo il balcanico Narodno Kazalište di Spalato”. Typewritten report without title or signature, [Šibenik], 1932, HR-DAZD, folder 29.

re-dedicated to the composer Ivan Zajc. Samani was the author of *Il teatro nella storia di Fiume*, a lecture published by the Lega Fiumana of Padua in 1959: “The Yugoslavs, for whom the name Verdi seemed not good enough,” wrote Samani, “with an execrable affront, have dedicated it to that obscure music master already mentioned earlier, that Giovanni Zaitz, who for some years had been orchestral conductor in Rijeka during the Croatian occupation of 1848 and had then gone to Vienna before concluding his inglorious career in Zagreb”.³² The “obscure music master” with his “inglorious career” had thus already been judged and branded. Such material is highly prejudiced in its terminology and can be perhaps used only to contribute to sociological studies focusing on the tensions between the Italian and Croatian populations after the two World Wars. In general, the material in Italian, which suffers from a desire to reassert the degree of ‘Italianness’ in Dalmatia, abandons all pretence of detachment and objectivity. In other languages there is even less material. There is more information, however, on the periods preceding the second half of the 19th century.³³ What is still lacking is an overall vision of the region, and to date the literature, though mostly of high quality, is partial and not focused on the subject in question. Considering, therefore, the lack of a reference bibliography, the present research has been carried out almost entirely on the basis of primary sources.

The observations made here are the result of examining the substantial documentary material preserved in the State Archive of Pisino, the University Library of Pula, the State Archive of Rijeka, the Maritime and Historical Museum of the Croatian Littoral, the State Archive of Zadar, the State Archive of Šibenik, the City Museum of Split, the Karlo Grenc Foundation, the State Archive of Dubrovnik and the State Archive of Trieste. The manuscript and printed materials were digitalised and work was carried out on over 24,000 photographs. The longest and most complex stage of the work consisted in collecting and selecting the material and comparing the different types of sources. Given the sheer quantity of materials examined, the reader of the published book may well remain unaware of exactly how much is hidden from view.

32 “Gli jugoslavi cui pareva poco il nome di Verdi, con immondo sfregio, l’hanno dedicato a quell’oscuro maestro di musica, già ricordato, quel Giovanni Zaitz, che durante l’occupazione croata del 1848 era stato per alcuni anni direttore d’orchestra a Fiume e poi se n’era andato a Vienna per concludere la sua ingloriosa carriera in Zagabria.”; Salvatore Samani, *Il Teatro nella storia di Fiume*, Lega Fiumana di Padova, Padova 1959, p. 21.

33 See, for example, the published works of Ennio Stipčević, “Diffusion de l’opéra italien sur la cote Est de l’Adriatique aux XVIIe et XVIII siècles”, in *D’une scène à l’autre, l’opéra italien en Europe: Les pérégrinations d’un genre*, edited by Damien Colas and Alessandro Di Profio, Mardaga, Wavre 2009, pp. 53–64, or “La cultura musicale in Istria e in Dalmazia nel XVI e XVII secolo. Principali caratteristiche storiche, geopolitiche e culturali”, *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, XXIII/2 (1992), pp. 141–52.

The most interesting source of documentation, in terms of both quantity and novelty interest, is very likely the *fondo* (or record group) of the Teatro Mazzoleni in Šibenik, with its fifteen folders of material relating to the activities of the theatre, now preserved at the State Archive of that city. There is today just one study documenting the activities of this institution; it is in Croatian and by now not even recent.³⁴ The most disappointing situation, on the other hand, concerns the documentation for Dubrovnik. The archivists do not rule out the existence of surviving correspondences, but they would be uncatalogued and comprised within the record group relating to the city council, which is indeed a very sizable collection of documents. In general, we can say that there is better documentation for the theatres that received public funding than for the private or semi-private theatres, where preservation is patchier. This can create problems when trying to make comparisons on various subjects connected to the management of opera, since the quantity of archival material in the various *fondi* of the respective theatres is uneven. As a rule, a theatrical *fondo* contains different types of document, not all relating to opera. In archives like these the documents dealing with opera are mixed up with those concerning spoken theatre, operetta, and also the general expenses of the theatre, not to mention correspondences not necessarily connected to the organisation of opera productions. Hence the pressing need to make a basic preliminary sort of the archival material and to work on a wide variety of sources.

- First of all, we find manuscript and typewritten correspondences between impresarios and theatre managements, or between agents and theatre managements. Mostly it is a matter of impresarios presenting their repertoire operas and their lists of singers: this is the commonest and most plentiful type of correspondence found. The names of many impresarios working in the area are still today unknown; the majority appear neither in the list deposited by John Rosselli at the present-day Department of the Arts of the University of Bologna in the 1980s³⁵ nor in the bio-bibliographic dictionary of the theatrical agents working in 19th-century Milan drawn up by Livia Cavaglieri.³⁶
- We also have the reverse type of correspondence; in other words, letters from theatre managements dictating their conditions to impresarios: the number of repeats for each opera performed; the number of orchestral players and chorus singers they could guarantee; the division of the proceeds and expenses;³⁷ and all the clauses relating to the organisation of a season. These, however, survive in distinctly lower quantities than the

34 Ivo Livaković, *Kazališni život Šibenika*, Muzej Grada Šibenika, Šibenik 1984.

35 John Rosselli, *Elenco provvisorio degli impresari e agenti teatrali italiani dal 1770 al 1890*, printout preserved at the Dipartimento delle Arti, University of Bologna, 1982.

36 “Dizionario bio-bibliografico degli agenti teatrali attivi a Milano nell’Ottocento”, in Livia Cavaglieri, *Tra arte e mercato. Agenti e agenzie teatrali nel XIX secolo*, Bulzoni, Roma 2006, pp. 303–402.

37 For example, the proceeds from the entrance tickets (which went to the impresario), the rental of the boxes (from which the management profited), the money offered by the management to the impresario per evening, etc.

previous category. Given that we are here dealing with outgoing correspondence (from theatre management to impresario), the material either survives in copies or is collected in letter books. Not everything, however, is to be found in the letter books. What is missing would need to be hunted down principally in the archives of the Italian theatres, at least the most important ones, or in the archives of impresarios. We know that the latter option is the less likely, given that today there are very few surviving collections of an impresario's papers. Unfortunately the letter books relating to the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar are for the most part illegible, since the ink has faded. In this type of correspondence we may discover, for example, if the theatre owners (or, more generally, their managers) exerted any artistic influence on the actions of the impresarios who organised the seasons, or if there were artistic preferences that distinguished the programming of one theatre from that of others.

- Occasionally there are correspondences between theatre managements and the artists themselves (singers or orchestral musicians). These are infrequent, however, since they would normally be conducted with the person contracting the theatre. Any letters would therefore need to be sought directly in the archives of the impresario (hence with the problems mentioned above).
- There are also the correspondences between theatre managements and the box-owning families or shareholders, for in most cases the theatres concerned were “*teatri sociali*”, i. e. theatres that were the property of the box-owning shareholders. These documents can help us to identify the local bourgeoisie and the remnants of the old nobility that went to the opera. The lists of the shareholders convened for periodic meetings also offer us a clear cross-section of the community that attended the theatre seasons, thereby also providing material useful for those wishing to engage in sociological investigations.
- The official documentation relating to meetings, where available, can tell us about the contents of the meetings held either among members of the management or between the management and the shareholders. This type of document gives us an idea of the proposals made for an opera season and of how they were managed.
- Then there are the statutes of the theatre – i. e. the type of document that attempts to define how the theatre functions and is organised – and the tender specifications (or *capitolati d'appalto*). Either could be in manuscript or printed. Unfortunately, in the archives the *capitolati* have not survived for all the opera seasons of the historical period concerned. If they had, it would have been possible to analyse more precisely how the needs of the theatre managements and the preferred types of opera production evolved over the years.
- One of the more interesting types of surviving document is that of the Austrian police records concerning operations of censorship on opera texts. Their incomplete distribution over the whole area, however, makes it difficult to make a thoroughgoing examination of the subject.

- Of great use are the documents relating to expenditure, in particular the so-called “small expenses” (*piccole spese*), which also recorded all of the theatre’s outgoing correspondence, with the aim of keeping note of the costs. In this way we learn who the correspondents of the various theatres were.
- We also have engagement contracts with artists and impresarios, both in manuscript and – later – printed form. Though preserved in very small numbers over the area (compared to the number of contracts actually signed in that period), they nonetheless clarify the terms of engagement and define the obligations of each party. The contracts could be concluded either between the theatre management and the impresario, or between impresario and artist, perhaps with the intermediation of a theatrical agency.
- The *borderò* for individual evenings,³⁸ recording all the data concerning the number of tickets sold for the respective stools (*scanni*), boxes and seats in the parterre and gallery, as well as the expenses for the orchestra, theatre staff, guards and police, etc., give us a good idea not only of the size and type of audience present at each performance, but also of the takings and expenses for each evening.
- Also to be found in these archives are scores, librettos, small notices and posters (these last mainly at Šibenik), and occasionally photos of artists. In this regard (even if this is not the main concern of the present research), it is worth drawing attention to the need to digitise and preserve this material, in the hope that specific projects will be dedicated to them in the near future.

Unfortunately we have no documentation on the stagings themselves; in other words, on the actual opera productions. We can therefore agree with what has already been noted by Jutta Toelle with reference to certain Italian theatre archives. The *fondi* examined here rarely include documents that concern opera as an art form. For the most part they are technical documents whose main subject is money or purely and strictly organisational matters.³⁹

38 An early definition of the *borderò* is given to us by Consiglio Rispoli: “The accounts are done almost always between the impresario and the company at the end of the run of performances, based on the evenings’ *borderò*, that is on the lists of the takings and common expenditures that are drawn up evening by evening by the ticket clerk and by the secretaries of both the impresa and the company” (“I conti si fanno quasi sempre tra impresario e compagnia al termine del corso delle rappresentazioni, sui borderò serali, cioè su’ listini degli incassi e delle spese comuni, compilati sera per sera dal bigliettinaio e da’ segretari dell’impresa e della compagnia”); Consiglio Rispoli, *La vita pratica del teatro*, Bemporad, Firenze 1903, p. 149.

39 “Most of the documents consulted are about money, many about technical procedures, disputes over competence or political discord. Hardly once is opera addressed as an art form, and rarely are artistically or even musically based choices discussed.” (“In den meisten der eingesehenen Dokumente geht es um Geld, in vielen um technische Abläufe, Kompetenzstreitigkeiten oder politischen Zwist. Kaum einmal wird die Oper als Kunstform thematisiert, selten werden künstlerisch oder gar musikalisch begründete Entscheidungen diskutiert.”); Jutta Toelle, *Oper als Geschäft. Impresari an italienischen Opernhäusern*

Even though certain printed documents found among the archival material are even trilingual (Italian, German and Croatian), such as the receipt slips used for sending telegrams and the correspondence cards widely used by the impresarios for communicating with theatre managements,⁴⁰ most of the manuscript documents are in Italian. In fact, ever since the beginning of Napoleonic rule, Italian had been adopted as the official language for the area in consideration. Moreover, the use of Italian has its own logic if we also bear in mind that most of the people corresponding with the theatres were indeed Italian. Over the years, however, the presence of Italian was to decline, also due to the policy of ‘de-Italianising’ Istria and Dalmatia encouraged by the Emperor Franz Joseph from 1866 onwards.⁴¹ This phenomenon was more pronounced in the cities of Šibenik and Split: in Šibenik Italian and Croatian mayors alternated in power from the year 1872, whereas in Split the administration of the city shifted from Italian to Croatian in 1882. Towards the end of the 19th century the Austro-Hungarian empire retained the use of Italian in the public administration of the coastal areas while trying to replace it gradually with German: a development that in fact never took place. The Croatian spoken by the wider population was officially introduced into the schools and government offices of Dalmatia only after 1912, in spite of fierce resistance from the Italian community.⁴²

1860–1900, Bärenreiter, Kassel 2007, p. 13. Although Toelle refers to what she found in the archives of the Teatro alla Scala in Milan, the Teatro La Fenice in Venice and the Teatro Regio in Parma, the situation concerning the archival material of the coastal theatres is no different.

40 The telegrams carried the trilingual heading “Aufgabeschein / Primka / Certificato di impostazione”, while that for the postcards was “Correspondenz-Karte / Dopisnica / Cartolina di corrispondenza”.

41 On 12 November 1866 Franz Joseph had ordered the Crown Council to resist the influence of the Italian community resolutely: “His Majesty has ordered that the influence of the Italian elements still present in certain Lands of the Crown be contrasted in the most resolute way with the appropriate appointment of political and court officials and teachers, and with the influence of the press in South Tyrol, Dalmatia and the coastal regions, and that the Germanisation or Slavicisation of the relevant parts of the Country be pursued with all the energy possible and without any hesitation, depending on circumstances. His Majesty imposes an obligation on all central offices to act in this manner as planned”. (“Se. Majestät sprach den bestimmten Befehl aus, dass auf die entschiedenste Art dem Einflüsse des in einigen Kronländern noch vorhandenen italienischen Elementen entgegengetreten durch geeignete Besetzung der Stellen von politischen, Gerichtsbeamten, Lehrern sowie durch den Einfluss der Presse in Südtirol, Dalmatien und dem Küstenlande auf die Germanisierung oder Slawisierung der betreffenden Landesteile je nach Umständen mit aller Energie und ohne alle Rücksicht hingearbeitet werde. Se. Majestät legt es allen Zentralstellen als strenge Pflicht auf, in diesem Sinne planmäßig vorzugehen.”); see the text of the session of 12 November 1866 in *Die Protokolle des Österreichischen Ministerrates 1848/1867. V Abteilung: Die Ministerien Rainer und Mensdorff. VI Abteilung: Das Ministerium Belcredi*, Österreichischer Bundesverlag für Unterricht, Wissenschaft und Kunst, Wien 1971, p. 297.

42 See Ivan Pederin, “La Dalmazia nelle relazioni di viaggio austriache e tedesche”, *Aevum*, XLIX/5/6 (1975), p. 505.

Checking the truth of historical data is sometimes a complex process, requiring research on more than one level. One cannot, for example, always give credit to a theatre bill announcing an opera, since the work in question could have been cancelled at the last minute or replaced by another. Nor can one rely solely on an article in the newspaper advertising a season. One must necessarily also take into account any letters to the theatre management from the impresario, who would clarify how events had really taken place and disclose any last-minute changes to the programme. The same is true for the opera librettos. Their presence in the archive has no direct connection with the fact that the opera was actually performed. The libretto may well be there merely because the opera had been proposed, without the matter being followed up. Besides, if a libretto failed to pass censorship, the opera was simply not staged. The same also applies to the names of the singers. It could happen that the impresario would leave the names of renowned artists on the bill, only to replace them with ones that were much less distinguished. In some cases, even the identification of the impresario is a complex matter, given that contradictory information is found. While a given impresario may be announced as having won the contract for a given theatre in the newspapers, another impresario's name may be found for the very same season in the manuscript documentation. In the absence of further documentation with which to cross-check, one cannot be certain who had really been responsible for that season. In the reconstructions proposed in the present study, where the name of the impresario is lacking, this means that it was impossible, on the strength of the documentation collected, to trace the identity of the person who had contracted the theatre. In such cases the abbreviation "n. f." (i. e. not found) is used in the tables. The same applies to the *maestro concertatore* (conductor) and *direttore dei cori* (chorus master). Their names were not always reported in the newspapers. Nor did the newspapers always review all the performances of a specific opera. While one is likely to find an article for the first night, for the following nights what is very often printed is only a mention of the date and starting time. In cases where an opera was merely announced in the newspapers before the beginning of the season, without there being any confirmation of a performance on subsequent days, the indication "[*announced*]" is given in the table.

While such cross-checking of the sources on different levels certainly complicates and slows down the work of research, it is nonetheless an essential basis for a correct interpretation of what actually happened. Only by mapping the overall opera programming in the coastal region and making comparisons among the similar theatres is it possible not only to outline the individual micro-histories of each theatre, but also to delineate the trends, the broader lines of development over the course of time and the macro-histories. In general the seasons have been reconstructed with the assistance of the *borderò* (where available), documents that are useful also for understanding the takings and expenses, the correspondence between impresarios and theatre management, and the newspaper articles that advertised or reviewed performances. Theatre bills (again where available) were also taken into account in certain cases.

Unfortunately documents such as the “Prospetto del movimento musicale nei teatri d’Italia” (Summary of musical activity in the theatres of Italy), published by the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano* are available for the coastal theatres only for a very short period of time.⁴³ Here, for example, we would have found news of what was produced in the theatres of Rijeka, Split and Zadar (at the time considered as “theatres of Italy”), with complete lists of the singers engaged, along the lines of the *Gazzetta Teatrale Italiana*, which reported on the movements of both individual singers and whole companies. Certain short notices can be extracted from *Il Teatro Illustrato*, which included some scant information on Pula, Rijeka and Zadar. Among the printed sources, also referred to were various issues of journals such as *Euterpe*, *L’Arte Melodrammatica*, *La Scena*, or *Il Teatro*. The ANNO online database was also consulted as a means of accessing journals such as *La Fama*, *Agramer Zeitung* or *Signale für die musikalische Welt*, among the various.

We may read the musical chronicles in Italian in *Il Nazionale* up until 1872, after which the newspaper was printed in Croatian (and changed its name to *Narodni List*), but in any case it did not provide regular reports of operatic events, especially since it was not obliged to do so.⁴⁴ There were also other periodicals specific to the area, such as *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, *L’Eco di Pola*, *Il Dalmata*, *La Rassegna Dalmata*, or *La Bilancia* of Rijeka and the *Gazzetta di Fiume*. *Il Piccolo* of Trieste was also consulted, as a means of making comparisons with the Teatro Comunale of Trieste and in the hope of finding, every now and then, some information on the coastal theatres. Specifically musical journals printed in the area could not be consulted because they did not as yet exist.⁴⁵

These periodicals are therefore one of the sources used to recover data on opera productions. Unfortunately, in most cases what one succeeds in learning is just the bare information on the place, the date and the name of the opera performed, along with a few names from the cast engaged. Rarely is one given any news of special interest, such as on the interpretations of the singers (which would have allowed us to say more about the quality and type of artists engaged). In most cases the reviews in the newspapers are very general and, besides, written by journalists who were not necessarily specialists. To say that a singer has a “*buona scuola di canto*”, or that he or she has an “*ottima e simpatica voce*”, or to use expressions such as “*grande sentire drammatico*”, tells us little about the real merits of an artist. Moreover, there were no correspondents who could forward their reports to non-local newspapers,

43 See, just as an example, the “Prospetto del movimento musicale nei teatri d’Italia”, *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, anno XX, no. 21, 25. 5. 1862, pp. 84–85.

44 In spite of the change of name, for a time the newspaper retained the Italian subtitle *Il Nazionale*. Then from 1885 it was called just *Narodni List* and as such was published until 1920; see Ezio Giuricin – Luciano Giuricin, *Il percorso di un’eredità. La stampa della comunità nazionale nel solco della storia dell’editoria italiana nell’Adriatico orientale*, Unione Italiana-Fiume, Università Popolare-Trieste, Rovigno 2017, p. 29.

45 For an overview of the first music journals in Croatia, see Zdravko Blažeković, “The First Music Journals in Croatia”, *Periodica Musica*, IV (1986), p. 12.

which explains why news about the coastal theatres is so rare in the foreign press. Indeed, if anything is to be found there – at most a short notice – it will be in their “foreign news” section. In short, we have either periodicals that print just short items about a work having been performed, without any additional comment or appraisal, or other journals that provide complete reviews along the lines of the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, though the latter case is much less frequent.

Generic and dry though it may be, all of this information was put together with the remaining archival data and subsequently organised and elaborated in accordance with certain important directives of research.

Directives of research

This research attempts to give an answer to a series of questions concerning the entire process of staging operas. It was a process that started with the recovery of funds: in other words, the money needed to set the wheels of the operatic organisation in motion.

- First of all, where did this money come from and how did it get into the hands of an impresario working in this particular geographical area? Are we speaking of “producing theatres” or of theatres where operas were brought after being staged in other theatres of greater importance? How were the theatres subsidised, if indeed they were?
- Who were the impresarios working in these theatres? Were they locals or impresarios from other geographical areas, who moved to the Istrian and Dalmatian region solely to supervise the opera seasons they were engaged to run? And in the event of both types being around, in what proportion were they represented? One important result of this inquiry has already been anticipated: that the impresarios working in the area were specifically Italian in identity.
- By what processes did the impresarios apply to run an opera season? An attempt is therefore made to understand what the theatres required of the impresarios and what information the impresarios needed to provide when submitting their project of an opera season. Also investigated is the role of the agent and the strategies they adopted, taking into account such variables as the competition of their fellow agents or the different types of impresario client. How then did one arrive at the conclusion of the contract?
- An attempt is made to get a close understanding of the repertoire proposed. What operas were staged in each of these theatres? This is an enquiry that inevitably leads to further questions. Was there a significant turnover in the staff running the theatres? And what did these changes entail? Although an apparently innocuous matter, it is important in so far as it concerns the decisions made on programming. For example, could the national identity of the management, Italian or Croatian, make a difference in the types of operas offered? Moreover, far from the eyes of composers and publishers, for whom reaching

the coastal areas was surely no easy matter, were the scores performed complete or were cuts and changes made before they were staged? And, leaving aside the repertoire operas, how might the new operas of local composers have circulated?

- Also important is to understand how opera companies and their materials actually moved around. How were the singers and orchestral players recruited in the area and what were their conditions of work? Who – in a hypothetical ‘board’ made up of the theatre management, impresario, publisher, *maestro concertatore* and conductor – were the ones actually choosing them?

Considering the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic diversity of the area in question, there is another matter that is totally distinct from the issues listed above, and that is whether the desire to organise seasons of Italian opera could be seen as a reassertion of ‘Italianness’ in the area. Or did opera perhaps belong to a category of its own, obeying its own laws and practices? Though Italian opera had long been a transnational phenomenon, here perhaps it represented something more than the mere replication of a standard genre. The question remains open and lends itself to a wide-ranging and interesting discussion. It will not, however, be tackled within this study, given that it is not directly connected to the organisational processes that I wish to focus on. It is worth remembering only that at the beginning of this historical period an independent Italian state was established (1861) and that at the same time the Balkan societies were also spreading their nationalistic ideologies. Increasingly vast swathes of the resident Italian, Slovenian and Croatian populations were becoming aware of the problem of ‘the nation’. While the Italian nationalists were clamouring to hold onto the territories in which Venetian-language populations had lived for centuries, their aspirations were destined to clash with similar claims from the Slavic camp. 1861 was also the year in which, by command of the Emperor, elections were held for the Provincial Diet of Dalmatia, resulting in a victory for the Autonomist Party, which was accused of being pro-Venetian and which, at least in the early stages, controlled most of the coastal districts. As for the Habsburg government, which was already long used to struggling with the irredentist movement (now reinvigorated by the repercussions of the newly proclaimed Kingdom of Italy), it would seem to have changed its policy towards the different nationalities and created friction between the Italian, Croatian and Slovenian ethnic groups which had previously lived together in the region more or less peacefully.

When Giuseppe Verdi died in 1901, various coastal theatres adopted his name (Verdi being the national symbol *par excellence*). It would be interesting to know if there is another geographical area in Europe with a similar concentration of theatres named after a single composer. In the table below the theatres of Gorizia and Trieste have also been added, given that in certain respects the circulation of opera towards Dalmatia also included these two theatres. It is also worth noting that Gorizia and Trieste were still under Austrian rule until 1921 and 1918 respectively:

City and name of theatre	Inaugural opera at the foundation or reopening	Change of name	Name post 1945
Gorizia – Teatro Sociale	<i>Aida</i> (reopening 1899)	<i>Teatro Verdi</i> , 1901	—
Trieste – Teatro Comunale	—	<i>Teatro Verdi</i> , 1901	—
Poreč – Teatro Comunale	—	Teatro Verdi, 1901	—
Pula – Politeama Ciscutti	<i>Ruy Blas</i>	—	Narodno kazalište u Puli, 1948
Rijeka – Teatro Comunale	<i>Aida</i>	Teatro Verdi, 1913	Hrvatsko narodno kazalište “Ivan Zaic”, 1953
Zadar – Teatro Nuovo	<i>Un ballo in maschera</i>	Teatro Verdi, 1901	[closed in 1936]
Šibenik – Teatro Mazzoleni	[spoken theatre]	—	Hrvatsko narodno kazalište u Šibeniku, 1945
Split – Teatro Bajamonti	<i>Il Trovatore</i> ⁴⁶ <i>I lombardi alla prima crociata</i> ⁴⁷	Obcinsko kazalište, 1893	Hrvatsko narodno kazalište u Splitu, 1971
Dubrovnik – Teatro Bonda	<i>Ernani</i>	—	Kazalište Marina Držića, ca. 1945

Even without counting the fact that various coastal theatres were inaugurated with Verdi operas (*Aida* in Rijeka, *Un ballo in Maschera* in Zadar, *Il trovatore* or *I lombardi alla prima crociata* in Split, *Ernani* in Dubrovnik, etc.) and the objection that Verdi was in any case the most frequently performed composer in that period, it is surely significant that the theatres of Gorizia, Trieste, Poreč and Zadar all immediately changed their name in 1901. In the case of Zadar the change of name was proposed by the councillor Giambattista Filippi at a meeting of the theatre’s members and shareholders.⁴⁸ In Trieste, on the other hand, it appears that an assembly was held on the very night the composer died, and on 29 January 1901 (just two days later) it was decided, with a resolution of the city’s deputation, to name the theatre after Verdi.⁴⁹ The Teatro Comunale of Rijeka became the Teatro Verdi only later, in 1913, to mark the centenary of the composer’s birth.⁵⁰ As for Šibenik, the theatre

46 According to Mirjana Škunca, *Glazbeni život Splita od 1860. do 1918*, Književni krug, Split 1991, p. 44.

47 According to Duško Kečkemet, *Ante Bajamonti*, p. 213.

48 At Zadar, the minutes of the meeting in question recorded the event as follows: “The councillor Giambattista Filippi takes the floor and proposes that in memory of the grand old man, of the master whom the whole world without distinction honours and whose death it laments, the name of ‘Verdi’ should be given to the theatre and the title ‘Società del Teatro Nuovo’ be changed to ‘Società del Teatro Verdi.’” (“Il sig. Consigliere Giambattista Filippi prende la parola e propone che in ricordanza del grande vecchio, del maestro che tutto il mondo indistintamente onora piangendone la morte, al teatro sia dato il nome di ‘Verdi’ e che quindi la dizione ‘Società del Teatro Nuovo’ sia mutata in ‘Società del Teatro Verdi.’”); Minutes of the meeting of the Committee, Zadar, 18. 2. 1901, HR-DAZD, folder 10.

49 Giuseppe Caprin, *Il Teatro Nuovo: XXI aprile 1801*, Schimpff, Trieste 1901, p. 14.

50 The mayor or *podestà* communicated the decision to the theatre management of Rijeka as follows: “I have the honour to inform you that the Illustrious Municipal Council in its session of 14 April of the current year, as a corollary to its proposals concerning the commemoration of Giuseppe Verdi, has

named after Mazzoleni never made any changes. It merely sent the following telegram to the mayor of Milan at the death of Verdi: “In consternation the Teatro Mazzoleni participates with its soul in the intense grief of Italy and of the civilised people for the irreparable loss of Giuseppe Verdi, bright star, who with his sublime harmonies moved the world for over fifty years. Model of austere, untarnished, munificent citizen”.⁵¹ The theatre perhaps had no interest in changing its name most likely for a very simple reason: in the management and among the shareholders there were still descendants of the tenor Francesco Mazzoleni, to whom the theatre was dedicated. Nonetheless, the interior of the building, which has survived as it was then, stood as an effective reflection of the Italian community that had created it. It is enough to consider the eleven tondos embellishing the boxes, each bearing the profile of an Italian musician or writer.⁵²

Nor did the Politeama of Pula change its name. In this case, the telegram was sent to the mayor of Milan by the Bolzicco impresa, which ran the theatre in 1901: “Impresa Politeama Ciscutti declares itself afflicted in the general mourning for the death of the supreme Verdi. Impresa Bolzicco”.⁵³ Even though there was no change in the name of the theatre, the Italian orientation in Pula was nonetheless manifest. In the same year *Ernani* was performed for the first time, and the widespread irredentist demonstrations in the hall obliged the Austrian police to cut scenes from Act Two of the opera from the following nights.⁵⁴ In Split,

decreed, again with a unanimous vote, that the name of the supreme Italian master be given to our Teatro Comunale. Henceforth the official title will therefore be: Teatro Comunale Giuseppe Verdi. Abbreviations of the title are not to be admitted, and much less so is it permitted that the adjective ‘comunale’ be omitted.” (“Mi pregio di comunicarLe che l’Inclito Consiglio municipale nella sua seduta del 14 aprile a. c. a corollario delle Sue proposte circa la commemorazione di Giuseppe Verdi ha deliberato ancora con unanime votazione che al nostro Teatro comunale venga dato il nome del sommo Maestro italiano. Il titolo ufficiale sarà quindi innanzi: Teatro Comunale Giuseppe Verdi. Abbreviazioni del titolo non sono da ammettersi e tanto meno sarà da permettersi che l’aggettivo ‘comunale’ venga omesso.”); see Letter from the *podestà* of Rijeka to the theatre management of Rijeka, Rijeka, 18. 4. 1913, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1. In addition, a bust of Giuseppe Verdi was made, to be placed in the theatre.

- 51 “Questa società teatro Mazzoleni costernata, associasi coll’anima al dolore vivissimo d’Italia e delle genti civili per irreparabile perdita Giuseppe Verdi, astro luminoso, che colle sue sublimi armonie commosse il mondo per oltre cinquant’anni. Modello cittadino austero, intemerato, munifico”; Telegram from the theatre management of Šibenik to the mayor of Milan, 1901, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3.
- 52 In contrast, for example, the 26 medallions at the Teatro Bajamonti in Split exclusively depicted Dalmatian personalities, among whom not a single composer; see Duško Kečkemet, *Ante Bajamonti*, p. 216.
- 53 “Impresa Politeama Ciscutti al lutto generale per la morte del sommo Verdi annunciasi commossa. Impresa Bolzicco”; Marcello Bogneri, “Il Politeama Ciscutti nella storia di Pola. Vita di un teatro dal 1888 all’esodo nei testi dell’epoca”, *L’Arena di Pola*, Gorizia 1987, p. 56.
- 54 “[...] The performance, presented with extraordinary merit”, the newspapers commented, “had enflamed the spirits to the extent of making them erupt many times. It was at the preparation for the third act when an explosion of joy and an ardent demonstration of patriotism was to mark one of the finest moments our Teatro Ciscutti can boast of. The first row of seats (*poltrone*) was reserved

on the other hand, the city had come under Croatian government in 1882 (as mentioned above), so there was evidently no incentive to make a change to “Teatro Verdi”.⁵⁵ In light of the fact that the Italian community was gradually losing political ground in the areas under examination, can we therefore speak of Italian opera offering ‘cultural resistance’? Or is this an exaggeration and the extent of political inspiration overestimated?

These questions open up broad vistas about which there is still today much discussion. In the present book, however, the matter is raised merely as a suggestion for further research, in the hope that stimulating studies on the subject may be forthcoming. Instead, we shall now turn our attention to examining in greater detail how the business of staging operas in the coastal theatres was managed and what it involved.

for the officers of the Austrian navy. On that evening these officers in full uniform were enjoying the spectacle and were surely not expecting the hostile display about to be staged against them. At the second act of the conspiracy, while the singers on stage sang ‘Questi brandi di morte sacrati...’ [These swords sworn to death], brandishing them in front of the officers, a shower of tricoloured streamers fell onto the stalls from the gallery amid cries of ‘Viva Italia’. In a single moment the excitement had overwhelmed everyone. The public shouted and applauded, flourished handkerchiefs and hats and insistently demanded a repeat of the whole conspiracy. But the chief constable rushed onto the stage ordering the artists not to present themselves to the audience. From then on, by orders of the police, *Ernani* was staged without the conspiracy. Naturally this did not stop the public from getting excited and acclaiming Italy as soon as they got to the third act.” (“[...] Lo spettacolo presentato con decoro straordinario aveva acceso gli animi al punto di farli scattare parecchie volte. Era la preparazione per il terz’atto dove un’esplosione di gioia e una dimostrazione ardente di patriottismo dovevano registrare uno dei momenti più belli che vanti il nostro Ciscutti. La prima fila di poltrone era riservata agli ufficiali della marina austriaca. In quella sera questi ufficiali in alta uniforme si godevano lo spettacolo e non si attendevano certamente la manifestazione ostile che verso di loro doveva essere inscenata. Al secondo atto della congiura, mentre dal palcoscenico i cantanti intonavano ‘Questi brandi di morte sacrati...’ agitandoli verso gli ufficiali, dal loggione tra grida di ‘Viva Italia’, cadevano in platea una pioggia di stelle filanti tricolorate. In un momento il delirio aveva invaso tutti. Si gridava e si applaudiva, si agitavano i fazzoletti e cappelli e insistentemente si domandava il bis dell’intera congiura. Ma il commissario si precipitava in palcoscenico ingiungendo agli artisti di non presentarsi al pubblico. Da allora per ordine della polizia l’*Ernani* venne rappresentata senza la congiura. Naturalmente ciò non impedì al pubblico di agitarsi e di inneggiare all’Italia non appena si arrivava al terz’atto”); “L’*Ernani* nei ricordi”, *L’Azione*, 25. 10. 1925, quoted in Bogneri, “Il Politeama Ciscutti”, p. 208. Patriotic leaflets were distributed during performances of *Ernani* also at the Politeama Rossetti in Trieste in 1903. See Fabiana Licciardi, *Tutto esaurito nei cinema – teatri a Trieste durante la Grande guerra*, Lecture held at the Circolo Aziendale delle Generali Trieste, 21. 3. 2016.

55 On the history of Split, see Grga Novak, *Povijest Splita*, Čakavski sabor, Split 1965, or the more recent Duško Kečkemet, *Prošlost Splita*, Marjan tisak, Split 2002.

1 Subsidising the opera seasons

1.1 Presence, provenance and amount of the endowment

The entire process of producing and organising opera began by securing the financial resources needed to support the productions. Along the coast of the eastern Adriatic there were both theatres receiving public funding and unsubsidised theatres. In the former category we include those of Rijeka, Zadar and Split;¹ in the latter, those of Pula and Šibenik.

Before choosing the *impresa* to run the opera season and granting the concession, the theatre management had to make sure it had enough funds to make up the so-called 'endowment' (referred to in the documents as the *dote* or *dotazione*). Where did the money come from? If we except the theatre's ordinary income, which was usually very limited, it could come from either the provincial government (*luogotenenza*) or the municipality (*comune*), as well as from the membership fees (*canoni*) paid by the theatre's shareholders.

In the case of publicly funded theatres, the management started proceedings by sending a letter to the competent authority asking for financial support. The letter declared the theatre's intention to organise a season of opera (the season in question would then be specified) and made a formal application for funding, perhaps even asking for an increase in the subsidy in view of the greater demands of both the public and the *impresa*. After a variable period of time, the authority would respond with a letter either conveying the amount that would be granted, or, on the contrary, communicating the decision not to grant a concession. In the case of the provincial government (*luogotenenza*) of Dalmatia, the letter was signed by the district captain (*capitano distrettuale*), though formally the decision was actually the prerogative of the governor (*luogotenente*);² in the case of the municipality it was signed by the mayor (*podestà*) and an *assessore* (a councillor in charge of the relevant department). The endowment that came from the provincial government and the municipality could be subject to change from year to year, and was – above all – “voluntary”, a point that was sometimes emphasised in letters to the theatre management. At Zadar, for example, the district captain drew attention to the fact that the endowment “was completely voluntary and such that it could even be reduced and even completely discontinued”.³

1 For Rijeka this meant the Teatro Adamich and then the new Teatro Comunale; for Zadar the Teatro Nuovo; and for Split the Teatro Bajamonti first and the Teatro Nuovo later.

2 The district captain was the head of the political district called a district captaincy (or *capitanato distrettuale*). With the reorganization of 1868 Dalmatia was divided into twelve district captaincies.

3 This was how the district captain wrote to the theatre management of Zadar communicating the grant of 500 florins in 1897: “His Excellency the Governor of the Kingdom has allocated, with the Decree

It is a well-known fact that state subsidies were discontinued in Italy from 1867 onwards.⁴ In addition, a ten percent gross tax was also applied to theatrical performances: a measure that prompted the impresarios to address a petition to the Italian parliament.⁵ The theatres were subsequently subsidised by the town councils, except for the Teatro La Fenice in Venice, which saw its last municipal subsidy in 1873 and then nothing for the following 13 years.⁶ Later still, judging from what Consiglio Rispoli writes in his text on the practical life of the theatre, published in 1903, the endowment “disappeared from almost all the municipal budgets”. Owing to the hardly thriving conditions of the municipalities, and also to the poor results obtained in the past, it was voted to abolish it or reduce it to derisory proportions.⁷ So if we bear in mind the situation afflicting the Italian theatres in the second half of the 19th century, there is perhaps a case for saying that Zadar, in comparison, was not after all in such a poor financial state.

of 15 February of the current year N. 235/pr. in response to the application of the 10th of the current month N. 13, a subsidy amounting to five hundred (500) florins for the purpose of having several operas performed in the said theatre during the seasons of spring and autumn of the current year. In the meantime I invite the Esteemed Management to withdraw the above sum from this office, against a receipt provided with the appropriate stamp; I inform you with reference to Lieutenant's Decree of 22 September 1888 no. 2707, that this subsidy is to be considered as completely voluntary and such that it could even be reduced and even completely discontinued.” (“Sua Eccellenza il Signor Luogotenente del Regno ha trovato con decreto 15 Febbraio a. c. N. 235/pr. in esito alla domanda dd. 10 corr. N. 13 una sovvenzione nell'importo di fior. Cinquecento / 500 / all'uopo di far eseguire parecchie opere nel teatro stesso durante le stagioni di primavera ed autunno dell'anno in corso. Nel mentre invito la Spettabile Direzione a voler ritirare, verso quietanza munita del competente bollo, da quest'ufficio il suddetto importo, Le partecipo con richiamo il luogot. Decreto 22 settembre 1888 n. 2707, che tale sovvenzione è da considerarsi come del tutto volontaria e tale da potersi anche eventualmente restringere ed anche del tutto sospendere.”); Letter from the district captain to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 22. 2. 1897, HR-DAZD, folder 25. Concerning the voluntary nature of the endowment, see also Prospero Ascoli, *Della giurisprudenza teatrale: studj*, Pellas, Firenze 1871, p. 47. Ascoli devotes an entire chapter to the endowments or subsidies from the treasury or municipality.

- 4 See Fiamma Nicolodi, “Il sistema produttivo dall'Unità ad oggi”, in Lorenzo Bianconi, Giorgio Pestelli ed., *Storia dell'opera italiana*, vol. IV, EDT, Torino 1987, pp. 169–229. On the transfer of the state-owned theatres to the municipalities in 1868 and on the problem of the endowment above all in Milan, see Bianca Maria Antolini, “Teatri d'opera a Milano: 1881–1897”, in *Milano musicale*, edited by Bianca Maria Antolini, LIM, Milano 1999, pp. 22–26.
- 5 See John Rosselli, *The Opera Industry from Cimarosa to Verdi: The Role of the Impresario*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1984, p. 77.
- 6 On the situation of the Teatro La Fenice in the years following the Unification of Italy, see Jutta Toelle, “Venice and its Opera House: hope and despair at the Teatro La Fenice, 1866–97”, *Journal of Musicological Research*, XXVI (2007), pp. 33–54.
- 7 “scomparsa da quasi tutti i bilanci comunali. Per le condizioni poco floride dei Municipi, ed anche per la cattiva prova fatta pel passato, se ne votò l'abolizione o la si ridusse a proporzioni derisorie”; Rispoli, *La vita pratica*, p. 24.

In Zadar it seems that already in 1861 the *Filodrammatici* (the amateur theatre company) offered certain “entertainments” (*trattenimenti*) in the theatre with the aim of helping with the funding of opera. The overall takings, however, were meagre.⁸ What is certain is that from the 1880s onwards, the municipality, the provincial government and the shareholders all contributed to the financing of the opera season. The following table gives an idea of the subsidies received by the theatre, at least for the years in which it has been possible to track down the relevant documentation:

Year	Comune (municipal subsidy)	Luogotenenza (provincial government subsidy)	Shareholders
1884	600 florins (operetta)	300 florins	
1885	600 f.	300 f.	
1886	600 f. (operetta)	300 f. (applied for)	
1888	1,000 f.		
1889		300 f. ⁹	
1890	1,000 f.	300 f.	
1892	1,000 f. (season)	500 f. (300 + 200)	
1893	1,000 f.	500 f. (300 + 200) ¹⁰	
1895	1,000 f. (season)	500 f. (opera)	720 f. (max) ¹¹
1896	1,000 f. + 500 f. (season)	500 f.	720 f. (max)
1897	1,500 f.	500 f. (opera for spring and autumn)	720 f. (max)
1898	1,500 f. (opera); 500 f. (plays)	500 f. (opera for spring)	960 f.
1899	1,500 f. (opera); 500 f. (plays)	350 f.	960 f.
1900	3,100 crowns (opera); ca. 1,100 (plays)	760 crowns	
1901	3,100 c. (opera); ca. 1,100 (plays)	ca. 700 (opera for spring or autumn) ¹²	
1902		ca. 700 (opera for spring)	
1903		ca. 700 (opera for spring or autumn)	
1905		ca. 800 (opera for spring or autumn)	
1906	ca. 4,200	ca. 1,000 (opera for autumn)	
1907		ca. 600 (for theatre productions)	
1909		ca. 1,000 (opera for autumn)	
1913	ca. 5,700 (<i>Comune</i> and <i>Luogotenenza</i>)		
1914	ca. 7,000 (<i>Comune</i> and <i>Luogotenenza</i>)		
1915	ca. 2,100 (for theatre productions)		

8 Giuseppe Sabalich, *Cronistoria aneddotica del Nobile Teatro di Zara, 1781–1881*, Nani, Zadar 1922, p. 270.

9 In 1889 there appears to have been a grant of 300 florins from the provincial government only, but in this year the negotiations for an opera season came to nothing.

10 The subsidies were allocated, but the season did not take place owing to the fire at the theatre.

11 A figure equal to 15 florins multiplied by 48 shares.

12 For this year the theatre management had asked for 1,000 florins, but received only 700.

Immediately noticeable is a distinction in the subsidies assigned to opera, operetta and spoken theatre (or *prosa*) by the municipality. Spoken theatre got the lowest budget, followed in order by operetta and opera. As was normal in most theatres at the time, opera required the largest budget. Nonetheless the subsidies were evidently considered insufficient, if the presidency of the theatre lamented the unfortunate state of its finances, made up of “periodic liabilities”, in a letter addressed to the district captain in 1887:

“[...] The Excellent Provincial Authority knows very well how limited the resources of our institution are. Excepting the contribution that the Most Excellent Imperial-Regal Lieutenancy granted annually with regular generosity, the theatre has no other fixed endowments. Though the local municipality annually sets aside in the budget a minimum sum of 600 florins and a maximum of 1,000 florins, depending on the productions, except for a couple of years when it was possible to get the lower sum, from 1874 until now, for one reason or another, it has not been possible to obtain the endowment. All of these periodic losses therefore exclusively burden the shareholders who must necessarily undertake to pay ordinary and extraordinary rental fees.¹³

Given that the grants received were viewed more as mere subsidies rather than as a genuine endowment, the need was felt to provide the theatre with an endowment fund. The theatre’s presidency (or board of directors) therefore proposed to alienate a part of the property that seemed to be less used: the boxes of the second tier. The alienation would coincide with a second issue of shares, the proceeds of which would be set aside to provide an intangible endowment fund. This fund would be invested in public annuities and the annual interests accrued would be used exclusively to pay for the gifts made to the artists each season.

13 “[...] L’Eccelsa Autorità Provinciale sa benissimo qualmente limitate sieno le risorse del nostro Istituto. Fatta eccezione dal contributo che con regolare generosità elargiva annualmente l’Eccelso I. R. Presidio Luogotenenziale il Teatro non ha altre doti fisse. Il patrio Comune bensì fissa annualmente nel preventivo una somma minore di fiorini 600 e massima di fiorini 1000 in conformità agli spettacoli, ma fatta eccezione per un paio d’anni che si potè percepire la minore dal 1874 a questa parte o per una o per l’altra ragione non fu possibile conseguire la dotazione. Tutte quante quindi le periodiche passività vanno a gravitare esclusivamente gli azionisti che fa mestiere tassano annualmente di canoni ordinari e straordinari.”; Letter from the theatre presidency of Zadar to the district captaincy. Zadar, 29. 8. 1887, HR-DAZD, folder 25. Mention of “losses” had already been made in 1868, when the directors of the theatre (Francesco de Stermich, Giovanni Dall’Oro and a certain Filippi) asked the Dalmatian diet for the theatre to be exempted from the provincial additional tax. This exemption, however, would have created a precedent for other theatres, and it was observed that certain shareholders of the theatre were also deputies at the diet itself. The application was therefore seen as a request for a privilege. See *Atti della dieta provinciale dalmata*, vol. VIII, Zadar, 1868, p. 384.

Moreover, attendance in the second tier of boxes could certainly be expected to increase, if only thanks to the participation of the owners.¹⁴

From 1889 it was possible to organise opera seasons in Zadar every year, almost without interruption. As we see in the table above, the endowment awarded by the municipality was usually higher than (even double) that granted by the provincial government. The grant of the *Comune* for an opera season in the late 1880s came to around a thousand florins; that of the lieutenancy to less than half that amount; in the 1890s it was to become exactly half.¹⁵ From 1892 in fact the sum granted by the *Luogotenenza* was around 500 florins. We then have a 50% increase in the endowment of the *Comune* from 1896, when the annual grant was increased by 500 florins and became stable at 1,500.

In 1900 the endowment was dispensed in crowns (or Krone) and no longer in florins, owing to the change of currency. The new mayor of Zadar, Luigi Ziliotto, granted a subsidy of 4,200 crowns (3,100 for a season of opera and 1,100 for plays or operetta). The increase was also justified by the prior request made by theatre management for the free use of electricity in the theatre.¹⁶ We must bear in mind that from 1892 an Austro-Hungarian florin corresponded to two crowns, hence the 3,100 crowns of the municipal endowment were equal to 1,550 florins and the 760 crowns of the government endowment to 380 florins. While the municipal grant slightly increased over the years, that of the regional government between 1899 and 1907 actually diminished.¹⁷ Moreover, in 1907 the regional contribution of 600

14 See Report of the presidency of the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar on the management from 1 April 1884 through 30 September 1886, Zadar, [n. d.], HR-DAZD, folder 25.

15 According to Eurologisch, the historical currency converter of the Austrian National Bank, in the late 1880s 1,000 florins or gulden approximately corresponded to little more than 15,000 current euros. However, considering the number of variables involved in a similar calculation, the conversion cannot be precise; see <https://www.eurologisch.at/docroot/wachrungsrechner/#/> [accessed 24. 5. 2022].

16 See Letter of the municipal administration to the theatre management, Zadar, 12. I. 1900, HR-DAZD, folder 25. In actual fact, the increase had been requested for the year 1899, but was only accepted in the following year.

17 For 1901 we have a reduction to 700 crowns on the part of the *Luogotenenza*, which was communicated to the theatre management as follows: “In responding to the request of 11 January of the current year no. 12 the imperial-regal Presidency of the *Luogotenenza* with its decree of 12 February of the current year no. 361/in has agreed to grant to your Esteemed Management, in conformity with the resources available for that purpose for the year 1901, the sum of 700 crowns as a subsidy to perform opera productions in the season of spring or autumn in the current year. The said sum can be collected at the office of the undersigned against a regular receipt provided with the appropriate stamp. The imperial-regal councillor to the *Luogotenenza* / Farale [?]” (“In evasione alla domanda 11 gennaio a c. N. 12 l’i. r. Presidenza luogotenenziale con suo decreto 12 febbraio a c. N. 361/in ha trovato di accordare ad Essa Spettabile Direzione in conformità ai mezzi all’uopo disponibili per l’anno 1901 l’importo di corone 700 a titolo di sovvenzione per eseguire delle produzioni d’opera nella stagione di primavera o d’autunno del corrente anno. Il detto importo potrà venir prelevato presso il sottoscritto verso regolare quietanza muniti del bollo competente. Li. r. Consigliere di Luogotenenza / Farale [?]”); Letter from

crowns was allotted for “the performance of theatrical productions” (*l'esecuzione di produzioni teatrali*), without specifying what sort of theatre. Overall, however, the sums increased; see, for example, the 5,700 and 7,000 crowns assigned by *Comune* and *Luogotenenza* together in 1913 and 1914 respectively.¹⁸ An article in *L'Eco dell'Adriatico*, commenting on the state of the theatre in Zadar, reported that just for the opera season there was “a fine endowment; an endowment which, owing to the negligible expenses for services and lighting, can be considered, in comparison with the other theatres, much more substantial than what it really is”.¹⁹

At the present state of research it would appear that the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka was the theatre receiving the highest subsidies, for in 1848 the endowment for opera with ballet amounted to 3,500 florins, which was further increased to 5,900 florins in 1853, and subsequently settled at around 8,000 florins in the years to come.²⁰ In fact the sum of 3,500 florins was evidently considered to be “tight” (*ristretta*) and insufficient to guarantee a respectable season, if the large majority of those going to the theatre of Rijeka felt that “it is better – not only from the point of view of practical utility, but also from that of enjoyment – to attend a theatrical performance staged with decorum and performed with the spirit of art than a spectacle of opera entrusted to the throats of second-rate artists such as can be expected with the meagre endowment of 3,500 florins”. The theatre management thus proposed to the municipal council to maintain an annual endowment of 3,700 florins just for spoken theatre, whereas opera with ballet would be given every two years. The endowment for opera might then amount to 5,900 florins: enough to engage singers of proven capabilities.²¹ We also have a figure for 1890, for that was the year when the municipality of Rijeka granted an advance on the endowment of 6,500 florins (though the documentation does not clarify for which type of theatrical production).²²

In any case the endowment for Rijeka proved to be higher than that for Zadar; and indeed also much higher than that for the Teatro Bajamonti in Split, which from 1860 received an

the Dalmatian Lieutenancy to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, [February 1901], HR-DAZD, folder 25.

18 After the First World War the sum must have been even bigger, if in January 1922 the city council granted Aldo Mestrovich, impresario of the Teatro Verdi of Zadar, a subsidy of 8,000 lire for productions.

19 “una bella dotazione. Dotazione che per le esigue spese di servizio, di luce, in confronto agli altri teatri, si può considerare molto più rilevante di quello che realmente è”; “Da Zara”, *L'Eco dell'Adriatico*, 17–18. 1. 1907.

20 Letter from the theatre management of Rijeka to the municipal council, Rijeka, 13. 3. 1853, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

21 “valere meglio – non solo dal lato dell'utilità pratica, ma anche da quello del diletto – di assistere ad una rappresentazione drammatica messa in scena con decoro, e recitata con ispirito d'arte, anzichè ad uno spettacolo d'opera affidato a gole di artisti secondari quali possono esigersi colla ristretta dote di f. 3,500”; Letter from the theatre management of Rijeka to the municipal council, Rijeka, 13. 3. 1853, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

22 Register of documents (*Protocollo degli esibiti*) (1885–1910), HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 10.

annual subsidy from the city council of just 500 florins,²³ though other sources speak of 800 florins a year until 1867. In September 1867 the possibility of reducing the grant from 800 to 400 florins was even taken into consideration: a decision connected to the local political situation (and particularly the language issue) and perhaps also to the difficulty of finding local musicians on which the incoming opera companies could rely.²⁴ In any case, in comparison with the other theatres, these were very low sums. To put the figures into better perspective, it is worth considering that in 1887, for example, the overall endowment of a theatre like the Teatro Comunale of Trieste amounted to 90,000 florins (or 180,000 lire) and that of a theatre like La Fenice in Venice to 120,000 florins.²⁵ In Rome, in the preceding decade, the city council placed at the disposal of Vincenzo Jacovacci, the impresario of the Teatro Apollo, the sum of 200,000 lire (or 100,000 florins) for three seasons.²⁶

Given that these payments depended on the availability of liquidity, the *Comune* might forewarn that it could not “make any commitment over the exact time of the payment”.²⁷ On its part, the theatre management might send a reminder letter to the municipality (or to the offices of the provincial government) when it found itself still without the endowment money near the beginning of the season (or even at the end of it).²⁸ On receipt of

23 It is not made clear for what type of spectacle this sum was granted; see Grga Novak, *Povijest Splita, Čakavski sabor*, Split 1965, p. 1081, cited in Duško Kečkemet, *Antonio Bajamonti e Spalato*, Società Dalmata di Storia Patria, Venezia 2010.

24 Mirjana Škunca, *Glazbeni život Splita od 1860. do 1918*, Književni krug, Split 1991, p. 51.

25 “Teatralia”, *L'Eco di Pola*, 22.10.1887. And wishing to extend the comparison to other theatres, one need only consider that La Scala in the previous decade received 225,000 lire (ca. 112,500 florins), the Burger Theater of Vienna 100,000 florins annually, the Opéra of Paris 123,000 florins, the Königliche Oper of Berlin 700,000 francs, and so on; see *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, XXVIII, no. 1, p. 131. The Teatro La Pergola of Florence, before 1858, received an endowment of 55,000 lire per year, which was considered very low and barely enough “to cover the evenings’ expenses, which come to about 500 lire”; see Ermanno Salucci, *Manuale della giurisprudenza dei teatri con appendice sulla proprietà letteraria teatrale*, vol. I, Barbera, Firenze 1858, p. 97.

26 Jacovacci had even asked for an increase of 100,000 lire, wishing to bring the total to 300,000 lire overall: a sign that he felt the allotted grant to be insufficient; see *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, XXVIII, no. 23, 8.6.1873, pp. 184–85.

27 “prendere un impegno nella precisa epoca di tale pagamento”; Letter from the *podestà* of Zadar to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 19.3.1888, HR-DAZD, folder 25. The payments from the treasury department were usually made in October, hence the theatre management would be able to collect the endowment in November.

28 “Most Esteemed Administration!”, the presidency of the theatre in Zadar wrote to the *Comune*, “With the productions of the spring season nearing their end, the undersigned presidency is honoured to address this appeal to this most Esteemed Administration that it be pleased to assign the endowment voted by the local council in support of the interests of the theatre and fixed by municipal budget for such productions at 600 florins. With a further mention of the considerable expenses made following the measures taken in matters of public safety, as well as those caused by the recent productions, the undersigned Presidency begs for the matter to be dealt with promptly.” (“Spettabile Amministrazione!

the subsidy (payment was made by cheque), the theatre management provided a stamped receipt and responded with a letter of thanks. In the case of the provincial government the sum was collected directly from the district captain. In Zadar from 1892 onwards it was paid only after the definition of the opera season and the completion of the contract with the impresario in question.²⁹

Once the endowment had been cashed, it was assigned to the impresario for the operas that were due to be staged (or, if the payment was delayed, had already been staged). As a rule, the ways in which this payment was made were specified in the contract drawn up between the theatre management and the impresario or previously indicated in the tender specifications (if there had been one). The endowment was generally paid in instalments: either three, four or five, depending on the number of performances given. The first instalment was usually payable either at the arrival of the artists at the *piazza* or after the dress rehearsal;³⁰ the second

Prossimo al suo fine lo spettacolo della stagione primaverile, la sottoscritta Presidenza si onora di rivolgere preghiera ad Essa Spett. Amministr[azione] acciò si compiaccia di assegnare la dotazione votata dal Patrio Consiglio a sovvegno degli interessi del Teatro e fissata dal Budget Comunale per congeneri spettacoli in fior 600. Con accenno poi alle rilevanti spese che in seguito ai provvedimenti attivati in linea di pubblica sicurezza, nonché a quelle accagionate dal recente spettacolo, la sottoscritta Presidenza prega per una preferente sollecita evasione.”); See Letter from the presidency of the theatre of Zadar to the municipality of Zadar, Zadar, 4. 5. 1885, HR-DAZD, folder 25.

- 29 See, for example, the assignment of the endowment to the theatre of Zadar following the conclusion of the contract with the impresario Cicognani in that year: “Given that the esteemed management has already communicated on the 26th of the current month no. 99 to the excellent Imperial Royal Presidency of the Lieutenancy that the contract with the impresario Cicognani for the opera season in this Teatro Nuovo in the forthcoming month of October has been concluded, the excellent presidency has undertaken to transfer the subsidy of 500 florins already allotted [...]” (“Avendo la Spettabile Direzione già partecipato in data 26 corrente n. 99 all’Eccelsa I. R. Presidenza Luogotenenziale essere stato conchiuso il contratto con l’impresario Cicognani pella stagione d’opera in questo Teatro Nuovo nel prossimo venuto mese di ottobre, l’Eccelsa Presidenza ha trovato di rimettere a questa parte la sovvenzione di fiorini 500 già accordata [...]”); see Letter from the district captain to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 28. 8. 1892, HR-DAZD, folder 25. The following year, when the provincial government assigned an endowment of 300 florins plus another 200, it was remembered that “the assignment of the said two subsidies will follow as soon as the commitments for the aforementioned opera season will be completely settled.” (“l’assegno, di dette due sovvenzioni, seguirà non appena gli impegni pel suddetto spettacolo d’opera saranno completamente fissati.”); see Letter from the district captain to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 5. 7. 1893, HR-DAZD, folder 25. In 1895 the management was again informed of the concession of 500 florins for giving opera in spring and autumn, with the provision that this sum would be assigned “as soon as a corresponding contract with a theatrical impresa has been definitively concluded.” (“appena allora quando sarà stato definitivamente stipulato analogo contratto con un’impresa teatrale.”); see Letter from the district captain to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 28. 1. 1895, HR-DAZD, folder 25.
- 30 See, for example, the Contract between the theatre management of Split and Vendelin Budil, director of the theatre of Plzen, [Split], April 1898, HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII.

perhaps after the fifth performance, the third after half of the mandatory performances, and the fourth after the completion of the whole run.³¹ The currency used was florins until the end of the 19th century, crowns or lire in the new century.³² The instalments could all be of the same amount or differ from one another, depending on the agreements made. On receiving each instalment, the impresario would usually issue a receipt for the sum in question.³³ In the case of the publicly subsidised theatres, the endowment the impresario received was usually the total of the various sums granted by the municipality, the provincial government and the shareholders.

Given that the municipality was involved as a funding body, cases of interference in theatrical matters were not unknown and, at times, led to friction with the citizens. The *podestà* could even favour the election of certain people to roles of management, as happened in Rijeka in 1885, when the *podestà* played a part in the appointment of Maestro Adolfo Cimadori, as director of the theatre. In certain cases the *podestà* could make suggestions on the calendar of an opera season. For example, he saw fit to inform the theatre management that performances should be given in the first half of May and no later, because with each passing day the season would get hotter and attendance at the theatre would drop.³⁴ Or, on health grounds, he could suggest postponing the start of a season and waiting for an improvement in the sanitary conditions of the area. This happened in 1886, when Zadar was threatened with an outbreak of cholera. The baggage of the companies coming from Italy would be subjected to disinfection, and this was naturally a cost that would discourage the arrival of artists from abroad, whoever they were. Besides, the onset of an epidemic would make the closure of the theatre advisable; and even if this measure were not taken, the public would stay away regardless. And if this happened, the artists would be left stranded at the *piazza* in difficult financial conditions and at the city's expense. These were all good reasons for the *podestà* to ask for the season to be post-

31 See also, for example, the Tender specifications (manuscript) for the autumn season 1885 at the theatre of Rijeka, HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6.

32 On the problem of currency applied to the subject of opera in general, see Michael Walter's chapter "Geld und Münzen" in his volume *Oper. Geschichte einer Institution*, Metzler, Stuttgart 2016. I thank Professor Walter for the information on the changes of currency.

33 On the wording of these receipts, see for example those issued by the impresario Domenico Valenti to the Teatro Mazzoleni. The formula was fairly simple: "I the undersigned here declare to have received from Signor Mattiazzi, bursar of the Teatro Mazzoleni the final instalment of the agreed endowment for the season with the operas Ugonotti and Ballo in Maschera, amounting to one thousand five hundred florins, as established by the contract." ("Dichiaro io qui sottoscritto di avere ricevuto dal signor Mattiazzi cassiere del Teatro Mazzoleni l'ultima rata della dote stabilita, per la stagione delle opere Ugonotti e Ballo in Maschera in fiorini millecinquecento, come stabilito dal contratto."); Šibenik, 5. 5. 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

34 Letter from the *podestà* of Zadar to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 19. 3. 1888, HR-DAZD, folder 25.

poned.³⁵ In most cases the theatre management would take such suggestions into serious consideration and follow the advice given.

Moreover, it is worth noting that the rights the municipality gained from the concession of the endowment also included the supervision of the theatre's artistic reputation, which was exercised by a special committee. Theatrical committees could be set up with the "right to dismiss unsatisfactory artists, insist on further rehearsals and postpone the staging of a production".³⁶

1.2 The funding possibilities without an endowment

Not all the theatres of Istria and Dalmatia, however, had the good fortune to count on a public subsidy for their opera seasons. As stated earlier, among the coastal theatres lacking this privilege were the Politeama Ciscutti of Pula and the Teatro Mazzoleni of Šibenik. From April 1885 onwards we hear complaints that opera ran at a loss in Pula, with hints that the lack of an endowment did not help this state of affairs.³⁷ "In every provincial city

35 "[...] One must also reflect", the mayor wrote to the theatre, "that the city is still always under the danger of an invasion of the contagion, that this danger would increase with the arrival in town of so many people probably coming from infected places, with baggage that with difficulty would be subjected to a fully effective and reassuring disinfection.[...] In consideration of all this, the present writer is of the opinion that the opening of the theatre in October with any production is not prudent and that it would rather be advisable to postpone to a later time, when the sanitary conditions even outside the province were better and all the present health reservations were removed." ("[...] Si deve inoltre riflettere, che la città sta ancora sempre sotto il pericolo di un'invasione del contagio [*sic*] che tale pericolo aumenterebbe coll'arrivo in piazza di tante persone provenienti probabilmente da luoghi infetti, con bagagli dei quali assai difficile sarebbe una disinfezione pienamente efficace e tranquilla. [...] La scrivente in riflesso a tutto ciò è d'avviso che l'apertura del teatro in ottobre con qualsiasi spettacolo non è prudente e sarebbe consigliabile di differirla piuttosto ad epoca più lontana, quando le condizioni economiche sanitarie anche fuori della provincia fossero migliori e fossero tolte tutte le attuali riserve sanitarie."); Letter from the *podestà* of Zadar to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 31. 8. 1886, HR-DAZD, folder 25. On the epidemics in that area at the end of the century, see Rino Cigui, "Endemie ed epidemie in Istria alla fine dell'800", *Quaderni*, XXII (2011), p. 47–90; or Rino Cigui, "Antiche e nuove paure: le epidemie di colera a Trieste e in Istria nel secolo XIX", *Atti del Centro di ricerche storiche di Rovigno*, XXXVIII/1 (2008), pp. 429–504.

36 "diritto di protestare gli artisti insufficienti e di esigere altre prove dello spettacolo, differendone il giorno dell'andata in scena"; see "Art. 33 Sorveglianza del Comune", in Rispoli, *La vita pratica*, pp. 25–26.

37 "The evidence of the theatre's *borderò* [box office reports] gives us dispiriting figures. Opera, which is generally appreciated, has suffered a big deficit. [...] The Teatro Ciscutti cannot be self-supporting, it needs the kind of assistance that we feel, in every respect, is due to it." ("I fatti del *bordereau* teatrale ci danno delle cifre scoraggianti. Lo spettacolo d'opera, di generale aggradimento, sottostò ad una forte rimessa. [...] Il teatro Ciscutti non può fare da sé, ha bisogno di un aiuto che noi troviamo sotto ogni rapporto doveroso."); "Il Teatro", *Pola*, 26. 4. 1885.

we see this fine season of opera”, it was written, “and those happy citizens delight in the new melodies of Verdi, [...] Meyerbeer and Gounod. We, on the other hand, can never delight in a *Forza del destino*, or a *Dinorah*, or a *Faust*, or many, many other operas of consequence that could be adapted to our needs”.³⁸ It was estimated that a good production for an autumn season could cost no less than 100,000 florins, a figure very different from the 10,000 florins that were apparently proposed to organise the season in the city in 1887. At the time the fees – in lire – of a singer who performed in first-rank theatres ranged from 10,000 to 30,000 lire, and the scores considered fashionable (*in voga*) cost from 1,000 to 5,000 lire.³⁹ The former director of theatrical journals Alfonso Pozzati, who had initiated a debate on the thorny issue of the endowment in *L'Eco di Pola*, provided a rough list of the minimum costs needed for a season:

n. 3 spartiti d'opere vecchie ma [...]		
in tutto per tre opere andanti lire 1000 pari a fior. 500 ⁴⁰		
Tenore (discreto)	" 2000	" 1000
n. 2 soprani ed un contralto	" 3000	" 1500 ⁴¹
Baritono (discreto)	" 1300	" 650
Basso	" 900	" 450
Comprimario tenore	" 500	" 250
Comprimario baritono	" 500	" 250
Comprimario basso	" 500	" 250
Maestro concertatore	" 800	" 400
Suggeritore	" 500	" 250
Vestiaro	" 1000	" 500
Scenari	" 800	" 400
n. 15 coriste, a fior. 2		

38 “Noi vediamo in ogni città di provincia questa bella stagione d’opera e quei felici cittadini, bearsi alle nuove melodie di Verdi, [...] Meyerbeer e Gounod. Noi invece non possiamo mai gustarci né una *Forza del destino*, né una *Dinorah*, né un *Faust*, né tante e tante altre opere di valore adattabili alle nostre esigenze.”; “Il Teatro”, *Pola*, 26. 4. 1885.

39 This estimate is based on singers active in Italy, without considering those working abroad, since “in America, singers of the stature of a Conti-Foroni, Percuoco or Del Papa are paid 60,000 lire for the run of a season. A season like the present one in Pula, costs more than 10,000 florins.” (“cantanti della levatura d’una Conti-Foroni, d’un Percuoco, d’un Del Papa, in America vengono stipendiati per un corso di stagione con 60.000 lire. Uno spettacolo come l’attuale di Pola, costa oltre fior. 10.000.”); see “Teatralia”, *L'Eco di Pola*, 22. 10. 1887.

40 What is meant here is repertoire operas, not titles such as *Gioconda*, *Mefistofele* or *Faust*, for which the rental charges in 1887 cost 1,500 lire; see “Teatralia”, *L'Eco di Pola*, 22. 10. 1887.

41 It was also noted that it would be difficult to have a soprano suited to all three operas, most likely implying that the figure is an underestimate.

ciascheduna, per 45 giorni	" 2700	" 1350
Idem coristi	" 2700	" 1350
n. 4 guide cori, a fior. 250	" 900	" 450
Orchestra, in media fior. 45		
per sera in 24 recite	" 2160	" 1080
più le prove	" 400	" 200
Attrezzista	" 300	" 150
Somma	lire 21.960	pari a fior. 10.980 ⁴²

To this sum of 10,980 florins one would have to add the expense of the chorus master, the stage band (mandatory for the scores that called for one) and the hiring of materials, as well as the rental of the theatre, the licence to perform, lighting, and the costs of a police officer, doctor, guards, firemen, attendants and advertising materials. If these items were included, the sum would come to around 12,000 florins. With a similar sum the impresario's earnings could be around 1,000 florins, provided that the evenings' takings came to around 600 or 500 florins. The population of Pula, however, was not thought capable of filling the theatre sufficiently to generate such revenue, unless the production was considered really worthwhile, but for that to happen one would need to spend more than 12,000 florins. The result was a vicious circle: the proceeds would increase with a good audience; a good audience would only come to a good production; but to guarantee good productions more money was needed to start with.

An endowment would not only bring about an improvement in the quality of the productions, but could also make it possible to include a charity night within the opera season and make available to the city council the imperial box and another box alongside that of the political dignitaries "in honour of the mayor" (*ad onore del podestà*).⁴³ It turns out that the Politeama did receive an endowment of 3,000 florins for the year 1887, but since the owner of the theatre, Pietro Ciscutti, had to spend 4,730.80 florins on building work to comply with the obligatory new fire regulations, he was in no position to use the money on opera.

Complaints duly appeared in the newspapers about the attitude of critics who were always ready to pour scorn on an opera production without any knowledge of the sums required to make it successful.⁴⁴ Such grievances, it was concluded, would be justified

42 "Teatralia", *L'Eco di Pola*, 22.10.1887.

43 "Il Teatro", *Pola*, 10.5.1885.

44 "For a start, coffee-shop critics never think with their wallet", one wrote, "nor with any practical knowledge of a contract or about the pages of a ledger, where those fateful black figures are lined up. It is easy to say: 'I don't like the performance, the singers howl like dogs': but one must make distinctions and note if other cities, if other audiences of higher standing, have tolerated and applauded productions and soloists like those that today appear on the stage at the Politeama Ciscutti" ("Intanto i critici da

only if there were to be an *impresa* with experience and ready to spend a large sum of money; only if there were to be an endowment of at least 10,000 florins and at least fifty season-ticket holders for the boxes and two hundred for the parterre (*platea*), seats (*poltrone*) and stools (*scanni*). “Please have the modesty and integrity to say frankly: Pula cannot, for the present, support opera production that is worthy of the traditions of the art and of truly great art.”⁴⁵

While an endowment of 2,000 florins was granted by the municipality in 1890,⁴⁶ the request for a subsidy of 1,000 florins was turned down only two years later, adducing a justification, published in *L'Indipendente*, that hardly seemed objective. The rejection was apparently to be attributed to an otherwise unspecified “series of reasons that stem [...] from a certain person who is involved in the [theatre’s] management and who, with a perseverance worthy of another cause, has insulted people and institutions of the city”.⁴⁷ The identity of this person in the management is not known.

While politicians in the city council might support the idea of subsidising the Politeama, at the same time they found solid reasons for not doing so. For example, the Honourable Guglielmo Vareton, the man who presented the Politeama’s application to the city council, was in favour of providing a municipal subsidy, but at the same time deplored the idea that the money could benefit the private interests of an *impresario*. The subsidy should be made in favour of the interests of the general population, which should be able to come to the theatre at a reasonable price and not be paying the exorbitant prices imposed by *impresarios* he considered unscrupulous. And so, for example, while he declared himself ready to vote in favour of an endowment of 2,000 or 3,000 florins for 1901, in the end, for a series of reasons, he himself voted against the proposal. In the previous year the Honourable Felice Glezer had also been a supporter of the subsidy and proposed that 2,000 crowns should be granted to the Politeama; nor was the Honourable Bernardo Benussi against the idea, but he pointed out that in the application presented to the *Comune* there were no “serious commitments” (*impegnative serie*) on the *impresario*’s part. Moreover, he brusquely concluded one of his speeches in the council chamber by saying that “if these people want good opera

caffè non ragionano mai colla loro borsa né colla conoscenza d’un contratto alla mano o sulle pagine d’un libro-maestro, ove si vedono schierate quelle nere e fatali cifre. È facile il dire: ‘Lo spettacolo non mi va, i cantanti sono cani’: ma bisogna discernere ed osservare se altre città, se altri pubblici di maggior levatura hanno compatito ed applaudito spettacoli e virtuosi come quelli che in oggi figurano sulle scene del Politeama Ciscutti”; see “Teatralia”, *L'Eco di Pola*, 22. 10. 1887.

45 “Si abbia la modesta coscienza di dire francamente: Pola non può, per ora, sostenere uno spettacolo di opera, degno delle tradizioni dell’arte e dell’arte grande e vera.”; see “Teatralia”, *L'Eco di Pola*, 22. 10. 1887.

46 “Teatralia”, *L'Eco di Pola*, 25. 10. 1890.

47 “serie di ragioni che partono [...] da un individuo che ha attinenza con tale direzione e che con una costanza degna di ben altra causa, ha vituperato persone ed istituzioni cittadine”; “Sovvenzione negata”, *L'Indipendente*, 8. 11. 1892.

productions for themselves, they should pay for them by going to Trieste”.⁴⁸ Not surprisingly, the theatre’s application was rejected.

In 1901 the management of the Politeama decided not to turn to an external impresario, but instead to manage the opera productions itself, in the expectation that it could count on the support of the citizenry and of “interested factors” (*fattori interessati*).⁴⁹ Benussi, on behalf of the city’s finance committee, made his report on the request for a subsidy of 1,500 crowns made by the management of the Politeama. Once again, we find the usual pattern of declaring oneself to be in favour of the subsidy, but being against in practice. In theory the finance committee was not opposed to the subsidy, but the subsidy would have to be “conditional” (*condizionata*),⁵⁰ so he proposed that the request should be turned down. As for the Honourable Rocco, he was theoretically not against the subsidy, but in practice thought it better to “spend the money on mending the roads, which are in a precarious state”.⁵¹ In such conditions the prospects of getting any funding continued to be remote. Nor was there greater success in 1904 when a request was made, in anticipation of producing opera during the Lent season, to be exempted from the expenses for firemen, guards and gas. For various years the management had repeated the application without any result.

In spite of this, the population displayed an interest in opera when good productions were given. Hence an article in the newspaper would propose that the municipality should come to an agreement with the theatre on a subsidy at least in the form of an exemption from expenses.⁵² The exemption was not granted, however, not even two years later when the management asked the municipality for 2,000 crowns and to be released from the payment of lighting and surveillance for the opera season; the reason for the rejection was attributed to the fact that the performance of *La Gioconda* “was not consistent with the requirements of good theatre”.⁵³ The management was granted an allowance for the use of gas and electricity and the cost of the firemen only in 1909, when the city council, in consideration of the guarantees offered, granted a sum of up to 1,000 crowns for the rehearsals and performances of *Otello*.⁵⁴

48 “se i signori vogliono dei buoni spettacoli per sé, se li paghino andando a Trieste”; “Consiglio di città”, *Il Popolo Istriano*, 24. 11. 1900. Among those opposed to the endowment, ever since 1885, were Rizzi, Till and Dreossi, members of the municipal council of Pula.

49 “La stagione d’opera al Politeama Ciscutti”, *Il Giornaleto di Pola*, 19. 5. 1901.

50 Unfortunately, from the available documentation it is not clear what those conditions would have to be.

51 “spendere i denari per le strade che sono impraticabili”; “La stagione d’opera al Politeama Ciscutti”, *Il Giornaleto di Pola*, 19. 5. 1901.

52 “Per una stagione d’opera”, *Il Giornaleto di Pola*, 4. 2. 1904.

53 “non fu corrisposto alle esigenze di un buon teatro”; “Cose del Comune”, *Omnibus*, 18. 4. 1906.

54 “La seduta di ieri della Giunta comunale”, *Il Giornaleto di Pola*, 17. 2. 1909.

Among those campaigning against the concession of an endowment in the early 20th century were the socialists, who considered it a “luxury expenditure” (*spesa di lusso*). All the florins spent on the theatre, they claimed, could have instead been set aside for the salaries of workers in agriculture or industry. In short, the money for the endowment was seen as a part of public wealth that was subtracted from the general good and

consumed by singers and players, all people that in exchange hardly give you a new production of goods and don't even provide you with services that are useful, lasting and of general benefit, but instead give you a donation of trills, and often also of screams, tripping legs, syrupy violins or hammering drums, magic wands that carve the air, and other similar articles of substance. Not to mention those who take the lion's share: the impresarios, the intermediaries, hot air salesmen and extortionists, who like to use up the appropriated money in the gratifications of “*viveurs*”, out of which no possible utility can come to anyone.⁵⁵

In short, the money for the endowment would merely serve to provide a little entertainment for a few men of privilege, while the rest of the population clamoured for the basic necessities of life. With these premises, over the years the Politeama Ciscutti had to manage without support and year by year find the minimal conditions for organising an opera season.

Nor did things go much better, as regards public funding, at the Teatro Mazzoleni of Šibenik, as eloquently attested by the despondent comment made by the theatre's director in a letter to Enrico Gallina, an agent in Trieste: “It is very tiresome being the director of these petty provincial theatres without an endowment, without an audience and with very few people who understand what a theatre is”.⁵⁶ In contrast with the glowing advertisements published in the newspapers (“Teatro Mazzoleni in Šibenik / The favourite haunt of the choicest aristocracy / Theatre of great elegance / Luxurious electric lighting / Ample waiting room / Reading room / Buffet / Large smoking room / A regular venue for star performers and attractions”),⁵⁷ the underlying reality of the organisation revealed

55 “consumata da cantanti e sonatori, tutta gente che in cambio non vi dà già una nuova produzione di merci e neanche vi presta servizi utili, duraturi, di beneficio generale, ma vi regala dei trilli, e spesso degli strilli, degli sgambetti, delle violinate o tamburate, dei grandi trinciamenti aerei di bacchette magiche e altra roba sostanziosa del genere. Non parliamo poi di chi si fa la parte del leone, impresari, intermediari, soffiattori e ricattatori, i quali sogliono il danaro preso consumare in godimenti di ‘viveurs’ dai quali nessuna utilità può provenire a nessuno.”; “Piano con i soldi degli altri!”, *Il Proletario*, 12. 6. 1902.

56 “È una gran noia fare il direttore di questi meschini teatri di provincia senza dote, senza pubblico e con pochissime persone che comprendono cosa sia un teatro.”; Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Enrico Gallina, Šibenik, 19. 9. 1913, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 6.

57 “Teatro Mazzoleni Sebenico / Il ritrovo preferito della più eletta aristocrazia / Teatro elegantissimo / Sfarzosa illuminazione elettrica / Grande salone d'aspetto / Sala di lettura / Buffet / Gran fumoir /

a more complicated environment, one with no lack of difficulties. At certain meetings of the boxholders, the fact that the Teatro Mazzoleni received no subsidies from the government or the municipality and yet succeeded in organising opera seasons *in spite of* the absence of public funds was almost celebrated as a badge of honour. We learn this from the minutes of a members' meeting held on 8 January 1889, at which the director Paolo Mazzoleni made his assessment of the situation after sixteen years of management.⁵⁸ After mentioning the endowments bestowed on the various opera companies, and making a comparison between the resources of the theatres in Zadar and Šibenik (which instead had no public funding), he demonstrated that the theatre of Zadar, though rich in resources, had suffered a large deficit over thirty months, whereas the theatre of Šibenik, without revenues or subsidies, and without the possibility of counting on a third tier of boxes or commanding as large an audience as at Zadar, had nonetheless put on many productions of a high standard, and even had a cash surplus of 125 florins.⁵⁹ A situation like this prompted the management to conclude: "we are not making a loss, and that is already a cause for satisfaction".⁶⁰

In the absence of a subsidy from either the municipality or the provincial government, it was partly with the endowment of the shareholders and partly with the evenings' takings that the theatre paid not only the singers, the orchestral players engaged externally, and the local '*maestri*' (conductor, chorus master, etc.) and orchestral players, but also covered the costs for the rental of scores, scenery, costumes, properties and agents' fees, and the theatre's ordinary expenses, and perhaps even a small sum to reimburse the female chorus for the expenses of the basic wardrobe (*basso vestiario*). In Šibenik the box-owners nonetheless also paid for admission to the theatre.⁶¹ The boxes of the first and second tiers were held in ownership both in Šibenik and in Zadar.

In short it was the boxholders that kept the opera season running.

Sempre posto a grandi vedettes ed attrazioni"; Advertisement for the Teatro Mazzoleni, [n. p.], [n. d.], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

58 Paolo Mazzoleni was the brother of the tenor Francesco Mazzoleni, founder of the theatre, and father of the famous soprano Ester Mazzoleni. He had a "long and intelligent communion with the most eminent artists and critics" (*lunga ed intelligente comunione con gli artisti ed i critici più eminenti*) of the second half of the 19th century; see [Commemoration of Paolo Mazzoleni], [Šibenik], [n. d.], HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII.

59 See Report on the meeting held in the social hall of the Teatro Mazzoleni on 8. 1. 1889, Šibenik, 1889, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

60 "noi non siamo in perdita, e già questo ci soddisfa"; Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Enrico Gallina, Šibenik, 1. 12. 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

61 See Letter from [Mazzoleni] to Lodovico Selles, [Šibenik], 8. 6. 1914, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b.

1.3 The boxholders: identity and role

Where there was no chance of getting support from either the Comune or the provincial government of Dalmatia, the first to be called upon to help out – and provide financial support for the opera productions – were the boxholders. At the theatres without public subsidy, like the Teatro Mazzoleni of Šibenik, the money paid out by the boxholders played a fundamental role in the organisation of opera. Also contributing to the overall endowment could be the revenue generated by the rental of certain boxes in the theatre.

The boxholders (referred to as *palchettisti* or *palchisti*) were those who had either bought a box at the theatre or who had a subscription to a box. Owning a box often meant one had bought a share (*azione*), hence in this context the term *palchettista* or *azionista* (shareholder) or *socio-azionista* (company shareholder) came to mean the same thing. This box – which could be assigned by the drawing of lots⁶² – could then be rented out; a third party was usually in charge of the rental of the shareholders' boxes.⁶³ Each shareholder received from the theatre management a document proving his or her ownership.⁶⁴

The theatre of Zadar, for example, was divided into 48 shares. Each share corresponded to a ground-floor or first-tier box, as well as an undivided 1/48 share of the whole building. The price of a share was fixed between 1,500 and 2,000 florins.⁶⁵ As a term of comparison, the theatre of Šibenik was divided into 38 shares and the price for each share was 1,650 florins. Of these 38 shares, 28 were purchased at the start, whereas 10 were still purchasable in 1915. The sales were not carried out by the management, but by private citizens who might find themselves having to sell their shares over the years for a price much lower than the original one, even for just 1,200 crowns (or 600 florins, considering that 1 florin = 2 crowns), though this naturally depended on the position of the box associated with the share (better or worse, as the case may be). In 1915 the value of the share was lower than its original price and came to around 2,000 crowns. At the Teatro Fenice of Rijeka the value of a share was even lower only three years earlier, and could be bought for only 200 crowns.⁶⁶ What could

62 See Circular letter, [Zadar, n. d.], HR-DAZD, folder 2.

63 At the theatre of Zadar in the early 20th century, for example, this task was carried out by Signora Anna Bolcovich, who was officially assigned to the role of collecting the money for the rental of the shareholders' boxes; Circular letter of the Teatro Verdi of Zadar, Zadar, 30. 3. 1904, HR-DAZD, folder 22.

64 At Šibenik each share gave the right to the ownership of a box, either on the ground floor or in the first tier, that was drawn by lot. Hence the shareholder (*azionista*) was also a boxholder (*palchettista*), for the two concepts were inseparable. The shares could be transferred to third parties. See chapter II of the *Statuto della Società del Teatro di Sebenico*, HR-DAZD-562, folder 1.

65 See the deed certifying the foundation of the theatre, dated 16. 1. 1864, HR-DAZD, folder 1.

66 See <http://www.passaporto-collezionismo-scripofilia.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/1912-Teatro-La-Fenice-Fiume.jpg> [accessed 19. 4. 2020].

also make the trading price fluctuate – even from one day to the next – was the number of events hosted at the theatre and the quality of its productions.⁶⁷

The boxholders took an active part in the funding of the opera season through the payment of a membership fee (*canone sociale*), which was periodically defined and voted by the members' assembly. The members were also called upon to elect the management, which consisted of three directors and two deputies. The boxholders comprised elements of both the old aristocracy and the more recent wealthy bourgeoisie. Politicians like Vareton and Glezer, whom we mentioned in the previous section, had their box in Pula. In Zadar the theatre was even attended by two mayors of the city, Count Cosimo de Begna⁶⁸ and Nicolò Trigari,⁶⁹ as well as by members of the Dalmatian Autonomist Party like Natale Filippi or Pietro Abelich (Abelić). The city's nobility was represented by personalities such as Giuseppe Lantana or Giuseppe de Petris. Also present were the families of industrialists like the Luxardo. There were pharmacists, doctors like Beros, and theatre critics like Giovanni Salghetti at Šibenik, landowners and merchants, notaries and lawyers. Among the boxholders there were also women, though in smaller numbers. Some of the boxholders might be running a business that provided the theatre with services. For example, Ugo Fosco, a boxholder-shareholder at the theatre of Šibenik, had a printing house where the season's posters were produced. His workshop directly invoiced the theatre.⁷⁰ Except in Split, the Italian community was strongly represented among the shareholders, above all in Zadar and Šibenik.⁷¹ In Šibenik, for example, many of the Italian and autonomist families who had contributed to the construction of the theatre were also boxholders: these included families such as the Fenzi, Frari, de Difnico, Galvani, etc.⁷² In Split, on the other hand, with the transition from the Teatro Bajamonti to the Teatro Nuovo, only a few of the former boxholders of the Bajamonti – autonomists for the most part – bought boxes at the new theatre. Though duly informed by the administration of the mayor Bulat in 1888, many did not respond to the call.⁷³

67 An overall reputation for good productions contributed to increase the value of the shares. See various documents, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

68 Cosimo De Begna was mayor of Zadar from 1866, as well as being a director of literary journals.

69 Nicolò Trigari succeeded De Begna as mayor of Zadar on 23 February 1874; see Angelo De Benvenuti, *Storia di Zara dal 1979 al 1918*, Bocca, Milano 1953, p. 119.

70 The letterhead and stamp on the invoice simply stated "Consorzio tipografico / Ugo Fosco & C.i / Sebenico"; HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

71 The Teatro Mazzoleni of Šibenik had succeeded in purchasing various boxes directly from the Italian Società del Casino. See Luciano Monzali, *Italiani di Dalmazia 1914–1924*, Le lettere, Firenze 2007, p. 367.

72 These families are mentioned also in Stefano Trinchese – Francesco Caccamo (eds.), *Adriatico contemporaneo: rotte e percezioni del mare comune tra Ottocento e Novecento*, Franco Angeli, Milano 2008, pp. 98–99.

73 See Duško Kečkemet, *Ante Bajamonti*, p. 242. In Split the boxes belonged either to private individuals or to the city.

The boxholders were convened for periodic meetings. As a rule, the presidency or theatre management would issue a circular letter indicating the place and date of the meeting, as well as its agenda. The meeting could also be held at the home of one of the directors or members, not necessarily in the theatre itself. In Šibenik, for example, the members might be convened at the house of one of the directors, either Giovanni Mazzoleni or Antonio Bontempo. The announcement of the meeting included a list of the shareholders, who were asked to sign against their name to confirm they had read the message. The announcement was circulated usually with very short notice, often even the day before the meeting. At the Teatro Comunale in Rijeka, for example, the meetings with the theatre management were announced in the morning for the evening of the same day. It was not even unknown for a meeting to be held in the theatre itself after an act of the opera.⁷⁴

For the actual meeting itself, at Zadar a printed sheet was prepared giving the names of the presidents at the top, the list of members present in the central part of the page and a formula at the bottom that read: “After establishing the correct communication of the circular [letter] of ... [date], the right number and the legality of the numbers present, in relation to the subject indicated in the agenda, the session was opened to discuss what follows”.⁷⁵ This was duly followed by the subjects for discussion. The discussion itself was recorded in the minutes.

If certain shareholder-boxholders were unable to attend, they could use a power of attorney; in other words, a document appointing a third person to act as a proxy on their behalf. We find many of these power of attorney documents, formulated in various ways. They could be just a couple of lines written by hand, a typewritten sheet, or a more complex pre-compiled form that included all the necessary clauses. As an example, here is the one sent in 1909 by the widow of the member Doimo Miagostovich to appoint their son Gregorio as their proxy:

Power of attorney with which I, the undersigned Ludmilla, widow of the late Dr. Doimo Miagostovich, in my specialty and as mother and guardian of the minor children Domenica Maria and Giovanni, appoint and establish as my proxy my son Dr. Gregorio Bogić of the late Giuseppe, that he may represent me at all the members' meetings of the Teatro Mazzoleni of Šibenik, and to that end I convey to him all the powers contemplated by § 31 of the Code of Civil Procedure, promising that everything carried out by my aforesaid proxy or his substitutes will be valid and irrevocable on the strength of the present power of attorney.⁷⁶

74 See Register of documents (*Protocollo degli esibiti*) 1885–1910, Rijeka, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 10.

75 “Constatata la regolare comunicazione della Circolare di data ... pari N.ro e la legalità del Numero dei comparsi, in relazione all’oggetto posto all’Ordine del Giorno, viene aperta la Seduta onde deliberare intorno a quanto segue.”

76 “Mandato di procura col quale io sottoscritta Ludmilla v.a del fu Dr. Doimo Miagostovich nella mia specialità e qual madre e tutrice dei minorenni miei figli Domenica Maria e Giovanni, nomino ed istituisco in mio procuratore mio figlio Dr. Gregorio Bogić del fu Giuseppe affinché mi rappresenti

We find the same type of power of attorney also at the new theatre in Split:

I entrust Signor Pietro Katalinić to represent me at the meeting scheduled by the management of the theatre for the 29th of the current month, and I authorise him to vote on all the subjects on the agenda and on all the proposals that may be made.⁷⁷

a tutti i congressi sociali del Teatro Mazzoleni di Sebenico, e a tale uopo gl'impartisco tutte le facoltà contemplate dal § 31 del Regolamento di procedura civile, promettendo di avere per valido e irrevocabile tutto ciò che sarà stato operato dal detto mio procuratore o suoi sostituti in base al presente mandato.”; Power of attorney of Ludmilla Miagostovich, Šibenik, 7. 2. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4. We have powers of attorney that are both handwritten and printed. At Šibenik, for example, we find certain printed forms, pre-compiled as follows: “I, the undersigned, hereby appoint Signor [...] as my attorney, to represent me in this case before any authority, and for this purpose I grant him the power to replace, settle, defer, refer, offer, accept oaths, take recourse, appeal, execute, adjudicate at the Auction, reach compromises in arbitration, whilst guaranteeing that his actions are valid [...]” (“Io sottoscritto nomino in mio procuratore il Signor [...] a ciò mi rappresenti [sic] in questa mia causa dinanzi qualsivoglia Autorità e gli accordo a tale scopo facoltà di sostituire, transigere, deferire, riferire, offerire, accettare giuramenti, ricorrere, appellarsi, eseguire, rendersi deliberatario all'Asta, compromettere in arbitri, promettendo di ritenere l'operato di lui per valido [...]”). Another, more detailed and complex, power of attorney also circulated: “Power of Attorney. For [...] and heirs, I confer upon Signor [...] of [...] a general and unlimited mandate to make representations both in and out of Court in all criminal and civil cases, whether active and passive, with the power to receive preliminary deeds, enter into disputes, reach settlements, compromise in arbitration, recede, replace, defer, offer, accept, report and take oaths, request and obtain time-limits, reservations, publicise properties, executions, seizures, sequestrations and any other legal security measures, as well as those relating to land registers; to compete in [...] name at auction and adjudicate; to collect sums and issue receipts, to undertake any action he deem opportune in the best interests of the business transaction, even if such were to fall under the jurisdiction of the Court of the Empire or the Court of Administrative Justice, and agree to indemnify him for any competence and expense he may encounter at his domicile in [...], obliging him to consider his actions as valid and irrevocable” (“Procura. Per [...] ed eredi conferisco al Sig. [...] di [...] mandato generale ed illimitato affinché egli rappresenti in Giudizio e fuori in tutte le cause penali e civili, attive e passive, con facoltà di ricevere primi atti, incoare liti, transigere, compromettere in arbitri, recedere, sostituire, deferire, offerire, accettare, riferire ed adire giuramenti, domandare ed ottenere termini, prenotazioni, intavolazioni, esecuzioni, sequestri, sequestrazioni ed ogni altra misura cauzionale di legge, nonché relativa ai libri fondiari; concorrere in [...] nome all'asta e deliberare; incassare e quitanzare, intraprendere qualunque atto egli ritenesse opportuno pel miglior andamento dell'affare, fosse pure di competenza del Tribunale dell'Impero o della Corte di giustizia amministrativa, verso promessa di indennizzarlo di ogni sua competenza e spesa che fosse per incontrare al suo domicilio in [...], obbligando di ritenere per valido ed irrevocabile il di lui operato”); in HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

77 “Do incarico al sig. Pietro Katalinić di rappresentarmi nella seduta fissata dalla Direzione del Teatro pel di 29 corrente, e lo autorizzo di votare su tutti gli argomenti all'ordine del giorno e su tutte le proposte che venissero fatte.”; Power of attorney of Vincenzo Katalinić, Split, 28. 11. 1894, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

A proxy could represent more than one boxholder, for box-owners did not necessarily live in the same city as the theatre. In Split, for example, there were those who directly delegated as their proxy the mayor of the city, who at the time also happened to be one of the directors of the theatre:

The undersigned, as owner of a box at the Teatro Comunale of Split, being domiciled in Graz, authorise Dr. Gaetano F. Bulat to represent her at the meeting of the boxholders that will take place within the month, and at any subsequent meeting, with the faculty to vote for her on any subject that will be brought to discussion.⁷⁸

At the shareholders' meetings, the ownership of a single share gave the right to one vote, two shares to two votes, three to three, and so on.⁷⁹ Those who had disbursed more therefore had a greater say in the decisions. For the proceedings to be valid, a minimum number of members had to be present. At Šibenik the meetings were valid with half plus one of the members. In Zadar in 1884 a minimum of 25 shareholders had to be present.⁸⁰ In Rijeka there were 102 boxholders in 1870, and the quorum for voting for the three directors of the management was fixed at 68, hence higher than the half plus one required at Šibenik or Zadar.

Usually these meetings started with the reading and approval of the minutes of the previous meeting, followed by announcements concerning the results of the preceding opera season or the appointment of new directors, auditors or other key figures in the management. Proposals aimed at benefiting the theatre could also be presented by the management or by members; or the status of the theatre as a social enterprise itself could be discussed. Also taken into consideration at times were requests for financial support from the widows of theatre workers, who appealed directly to the theatre management when they were left without any source of income.

The association of boxholders could also be involved (more or less, as the case may be) in relations with the impresario.⁸¹ At times it was the impresario himself who appealed to it for the payment of a sum of money owed.⁸² Alternatively, a troupe leader (*capocomico*),

78 "La sottoscritta quale proprietaria di un palco del teatro comunale di Spalato, essendo domiciliata a Graz autorizza il signor Dr. Gaetano F. Bulat a rappresentarla all'adunanza dei palchettisti che avrà luogo entro il mese corrente, ed a qualunque adunanza successiva con facoltà di votare per lei sopra qualunque oggetto che verrà portato a deliberazione."; Power of attorney of Carolina Mastrovich, Split, 22. II. 1894, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

79 After the first four shares, only the ownership of another four shares gave one the right to a further vote, another eight to two votes, and so on; see *Statuto della Società del Teatro di Sebenico*, Tipografia S. Anich, Šibenik 1870.

80 See *Società del Teatro Nuovo di Zara*, session of 16 September 1884, HR-DAZD 562, folder 4.

81 Rispoli, *La vita pratica*, p. 37.

82 For example, Bruto Bocci, who was one of the most important impresarios of operetta, wrote as follows to the management of Zadar: "In consideration of the desperate state of the company, the undersigned begs the honourable management to have the gentlemen shareholders urgently confirm the authorisation

following a disastrous season, might appeal to the management, begging it not to have to resort “to public charity” (*alla pietà cittadina*) and asking for sufficient funds to enable him to leave the theatre without having failed in his obligations.⁸³

What was decided at these meetings? A number of things, for example: changes to the charter (or *statuto*); measures to be taken concerning possible lawsuits brought against the theatre’s members; maintenance work on the theatre building; management of the autumn, carnival, Lent and spring seasons. It would establish the endowment to be assigned to the impresario and/or the concession of certain boxes.⁸⁴ It would choose the operas for the next season and even the impresarios who would run them. As a rule, it made a selection from a short list of impresarios.⁸⁵ In cases where several candidates had accepted the terms and conditions set out in the tender specifications, it was the impresario offering the best guarantees that would prevail. The proposals were accepted with a majority of two thirds of the vote. The boxholders could also establish the price of admission to the theatre.⁸⁶ Ongoing contacts with theatrical agencies could also be discussed.

It lay in the power of the shareholders to choose the type of spectacle to be given at the theatre. As they were paying, they had the right to express their preferences. They were not just a consortium of spectators; they were a group of people acting as genuine patrons. Decisions concerning the proposal of operas were made collegially and the operas were subjected to collective approval, though clearly, with as many as 48 shareholders (as there were at Zadar in the early 20th century), one can readily understand that decision-making and coming to an agreement was a long and arduous business.

The membership fee (or *canone*) was also paid by the boxholders of the publicly subsidised theatres like that of Zadar. Here the fee at the start of the 20th century was fixed at 40 crowns: less than the 50 at Šibenik, most likely precisely because the theatre could also rely on the subsidy.⁸⁷ From a receipt, for example, we learn that in 1909 a shareholder at the Teatro Mazzoleni

for the concession requested.” (“In considerazione allo stato miserando della compagnia il sottoscritto prega Ess’Onorevole Direzione a voler ripetere d’urgenza dai signori azionisti l’autorizzazione per la richiesta concessione.”); Letter from Bruto Bocci to the theatre management of Zadar, [n. p.], [1885?], HR-DAZD, folder 5.

83 See Letter from Gaetano Benini to the theatre management of Šibenik, Šibenik, 20. 2. 1882, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3. In this case the theatre management of Šibenik donated 25 florins to the troupe leader to cover the travel expenses of himself and his family to Trieste.

84 See for example the letter from Doimo Miagostovich to Enrico Viscardi, [Zadar, n. d.], which states that “the management grants the boxes of the third tier to the advantage of the company” (“La Direzione concede a vantaggio della compagnia i palchi di terza fila”); HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3.

85 On the evidence of the available archival documentation, we can say that the theatres of the coastal region plausibly had an average of up to seven candidates per season.

86 See Minutes of the meeting, Šibenik, 28. 7. 1907, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

87 In 1884 the presidency of the theatre had proposed an extra contribution of 10 florins per share to partially cover the expenses of restoring the theatre building.

paid the sum of 50 crowns “as a contribution to the expenses of maintenance and to the staging of a season, in accordance with the resolution taken at the general meeting of shareholders on 17 February of the current year”.⁸⁸ Indeed it turns out that at that same meeting a request was expressly made for an overall contribution of 1,400 crowns, to be divided among the 28 shares, meaning that each holder of a share would provide 50 crowns.⁸⁹ The management was then authorised to take out a three-month loan of 3,000 crowns to cover the preliminary expenses for the spring season. The initial proposal was to approach the Banca Popolare Zaratina, but then the shareholder Francesco Inchiostri came forward and offered to pay the required 3,000 crowns into the theatre’s account at the same conditions given by the bank.⁹⁰

Not always were the shareholders in agreement with what the presidency or management decided. There were those like Signora Natalia Dudan in Zadar, who voiced their opinions directly against their name on the circular letter convening the meeting, without waiting to speak at the meeting itself. She protested in no uncertain terms against the management for giving the then impresario an advance payment in cash.

The undersigned doesn’t believe the gentlemen presidents could be so stupid as to pay the impresa – without any advantage for itself – the instalment of the endowment before the due date established in the contract. But if that had really happened, there is no other remedy for so many ills and so many ridiculous meetings and circular letters than to have the money prematurely paid out by its presidents refunded, always assuming, that is, that a payment was indeed made. It would be high time for the presidency to stop making itself ridiculous, and along with it making the entire association ridiculous with further negotiations, circulars, meetings, etc. etc.⁹¹

88 “quale contributo per le spese di manutenzione e allestimento d’uno spettacolo d’opera, e ciò in base al deliberato preso nell’adunanza generale degli azionisti del teatro ch’ebbe luogo il giorno 17 febbraio a. c.”; Receipt for a contribution to the organisational expenses of the opera season, issued by Antonio Raimondi – owner of a share in the theatre – signed by the treasurer director Ugo Fosco, [Šibenik], 30. 3. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 5. The expenditure for the maintenance of the theatre and that for the funding of opera constituted one item. At the meeting of the shareholders of the Teatro Mazzoleni the councillor Marco Inchiostri made the proposal that the two sums should be kept distinct, but his suggestion was not followed up. Any revenue from the opera productions would be used to cover the expenses of maintenance. See Minutes of the meeting, Šibenik, 17. 9. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

89 This contribution was regulated by articles 23 and 24 of the theatre’s statute.

90 See Minutes of the meeting, Šibenik, 17. 9. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

91 “La sottoscritta non può ritenere i sig. presidenti tanto imbecilli da pagare all’impresa, senza un proprio vantaggio, la rata della dotazione prima della scadenza stabilita nel contratto. Ma quando per avvero[sic] ciò fosse avvenuto oltre[?] rimedio a tanti mali ed a tante ridicole sedute e circolari non restandone che far rifondere dai suoi presidenti il denaro da essi prematuramente esborsato, semprechè esborso sia avvenuto. Sarebbe già tempo che la presidenza cessasse dal rendersi ridicola, e rendere con sé ridicola la società intiera con ulteriori trattative, circolari, sedute, ecc ecc”; see Letter from Natalia Dudan to the presidency of the theatre of Zadar, Zadar, 25. 10. 1869, HR-DAZD, folder 3.

An alleged incompetence of the management was also expressed in *L'Eco dell'Adriatico*, which wrote that it “clings to the first opera season offered, without looking at the artistic side” (*tiene al primo spettacolo che le si offre, senza guardare al lato artistico*). The directors were accused of being endowed with anything but artistic taste, “each one more anti-musical than the next; who let themselves be swindled by crafty impresarios” (*una più antimusicale dell'altra; che si lasciano minchionare da astuti impresari*).⁹²

If the opera season went badly, the box-owners complained. Some even tried to ask for their membership fee (*canone*) back, as in the case of Innocente Monass in Zadar:

Esteemed management! On behalf of my wife, as owner of the box of Tier I no. 10, some time ago I paid the fee of 40 crowns for the opera season of 1906. Seeing now that, following the failure of *Rigoletto* and the cancelled performance of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, the whole opera season was thus reduced just to the performance of *Mefistofele*, and confident that the impresario was not given any subsidy, seeing that he had not fulfilled his respective contractual obligations, I request that this esteemed management return the said fee, especially in consideration of the fact that I understand that other boxholders have, quite rightly and justly, also refused their contribution.⁹³

In the event, however, Monass didn't get his money back, because it was pointed out that the assembly of shareholders had voted that the sum was to be spent “on the overall number of productions given, or to be given, during the year 1906”.⁹⁴

92 “The gentlemen boxholders”, the article went on, “pay every year large fees that the Management imposes on them and they get the productions that they get: each of less artistic value than the one before. Let them go on paying, but at least let them not be forgetful of the glorious traditions of our forebears, who offered all that was finest that our Italian art could produce, with select artists, and made Zadar an artistic centre of excellence in the theatrical world.” (“I signori palchettisti pagano ogni anno forti tasse che la Direzione loro impone ed hanno quegli spettacoli che hanno: uno meno artistico dell'altro. Continuo pure a pagare, ma almeno non siano immemori delle gloriose tradizioni dei nostri maggiori, i quali offrivano tutto quel che di più bello la nostr'arte italica produceva, con artisti eletti e che rendevano Zara un centro artistico molto pregiato nel gran mondo teatrale.”); *L'Eco dell'Adriatico*, 17–18. I. 1907.

93 “Spettabile Direzione! A nome della mia consorte quale proprietaria del palco di I ordine n. 10 ebbi tempo fa a versare il canone di corone 40 per la stagione d'opera 1906. Visto ora che in seguito all'insuccesso del *Rigoletto* venne anche desistito dalla rappresentazione di *Lucia di Lammermoor*, e che quindi tutta la stagione d'opera si ridusse alla sola rappresentazione del *Mefistofele*, e certo che all'impresario sarà stata negata qualsiasi sovvenzione non avendo egli corrisposto ai relativi suoi obblighi contrattuali, prego Essa spettabile Direzione a volermi restituire il suddetto canone, ciò tanto più in quanto mi consta, avere anche altri palchettisti rifiutato con piena ragione e diritto il proprio contributo.”; Letter from Innocente Monass to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 17. II. 1906, HR-DAZD, folder 22.

94 “per il complesso degli spettacoli dati e da farsi durante l'anno 1906”; Letter from the theatre management of Zadar to Innocente Monass, Zadar, 1906, HR-DAZD, folder 21.

At the Teatro Bonda of Dubrovnik the boxholders also played an active role in the choice of repertoire and companies, and they discussed the matter with the management, which again was made up of five people.⁹⁵ On the other hand, a place where boxholders had no say in the choice of the opera production was Rijeka. On this matter the newspaper *La Bilancia* also gave its own opinion by calling for a greater involvement, perhaps in the form of a committee that should include not only the boxholders but also the season-ticket holders of the parterre. For they too should have the right to examine the competing proposals and to express a definite opinion to an already established delegation (*delegazione teatrale*), whose task it would be merely to verify the financial solidity of the participating impresarios and decide for or against. In other words, the body appointed to choose the operas and, later, to judge the productions at the dress rehearsals, should be exclusively this committee.⁹⁶ Instead, with the move from the Teatro Adamich to the new Teatro Comunale, it was only members of the management that were allowed to take part in the assemblies, which were held in the theatre offices (*cancelleria teatrale*).⁹⁷ This explains why we do not find at Rijeka those printed forms used to convene the boxholders (with a list of names and a space for signatures), as instead we do at Zadar for example. For the meetings to elect the members of the management, on the other hand, both the boxholders and the season-ticket holders of the parterre were also invited to take part. Those renting a whole box had the right to two votes; for half a box it was one vote; the season-ticket holders of the parterre also each had one vote. For the election to be valid, at least a third of those eligible to vote had to cast a ballot; and a candidate could be considered elected with at least a third of the number of votes cast.⁹⁸

One might also expect a newspaper not known for its impartiality to ask the boxholders to vote for one or other candidate as director of the theatre. Indeed, in the elections for this position at Zadar, for example, the newspaper *La Bilancia* recommended voting for Lodovico de Adamich, Giovanni Prodam and Francesco Dall'Asta; as it turned out, they were all elected.⁹⁹ Five years earlier, in *Il Giornale di Fiume*, there was a complaint that the boxes in Rijeka were rented at excessively low prices and that the management divided a box between three, four, even five applicants. The same paper asked for the rental of boxes to be put up for auction.¹⁰⁰ Rather than having to see empty boxes, the management lowered their cost, which was in any case lower than that of theatres offering productions of similar quality, such as that of Zagreb for example. At Rijeka the cost of a box ranged (depending

95 Miljenko Foretić, *Kazališni život u Dubrovniku od 1882–1914*, [n. n.], Dubrovnik 1965, p. 9.

96 “Teatro civico”, *La Bilancia*, 3. 6. 1875.

97 See Invitation, Rijeka, 2. 10. 1908, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

98 See Notice no. 26, Rijeka, 15. 3. 1894, Maritime and Historical Museum of the Croatian Littoral, theatre collection.

99 Together with Achille Franchi and Ernesto Brelich; “Teatro civico”, *La Bilancia*, 5. 3. 1870 and 19. 3. 1870.

100 “La questione teatrale”, *Il Giornale di Fiume*, 8. 4. 1865.

on the tier) from 120 to 300 florins, whereas in Zagreb it was from 188 to 413 florins. Moreover, at Zagreb the box-owners were obliged to purchase at least twelve tickets for each subscription, whereas the rental conditions at Rijeka did not tie the boxholders to a given number of seasons or performances. They could simply go to however many performances they wanted. The newspaper pointed out these details in answer to the complaints of a reader who clearly considered the price of the boxes to be too high.¹⁰¹

1.4 Census of the boxholders at the coastal theatres

Below we have attempted to collect all the names of those who occupied the boxes at the theatres of Istria, Rijeka and Dalmatia over the long period in question. Unfortunately this census, based on the documentation available at the archives consulted, is incomplete. In the cases of Pula, Rijeka and Split we have a list for only one of the two theatres present in those cities over the almost sixty years of this research: hence at Pula only for the theatre that preceded the Politeama Ciscutti; at Rijeka, for the Teatro Adamich, but not the Teatro Comunale; at Split, for the Teatro Nuovo, but not the previous Teatro Bajamonti. Having lists for both theatres in each city would have enabled us, for example, to verify whether or not we find the same boxholders in both theatres. We shall also refrain from making any considerations regarding the origin of the names cited, given the difficulty, in many cases, of understanding whether we are dealing with Italian or Croatian families. It is worth pointing out, though, that many Italian surnames were modified through the addition of letters such as “k” or suffixes like “ic” or “ch” by the priests who were recognised as civil status registrars under Austrian rule. Hence families such as the Karaman or Giljanović, which we find in the tables below, were actually Italian and not Croatian, in spite of appearances.

Nonetheless, incomplete though these lists may be, they help us to understand who was going to the theatre at the time and who, in various ways, had some sort of decision-making influence in the organisation of the opera seasons.¹⁰²

101 “Teatro civico”, *La Bilancia*, 14. 4. 1876.

102 On the question of the surnames, see also the comment made by Giulio Menini: “The surnames are a sincere indication of this confusion of feelings and of the forced denaturalisation of the peoples, for while the various Krekic, Ghiglianovic, Gospodnetic and Karaman are very Italian, equally fervent Croats are the Arneri, De Borelli, Tommaseo, Marchetti, Tartaglia, De Cambi and Alberti, all of the purest and surest Italian origin.” (“I cognomi poi sono un indizio sincero di questa confusione di sentimenti e della forzata snaturalizzazione delle genti, poiché mentre sono italianissimi i Krekic, i Ghiglianovic, i Gospodnetic, i Karaman, sono altrettanto croati ferventi gli Arneri, i De Borelli, i Tommaseo, i Marchetti, i Tartaglia, i De Cambi, gli Alberti, tutti di purissima sicura origine italiana.”); Giulio Menini, *Passione Adriatica: ricordi di Dalmazia, 1918–1920*, Zanichelli, Bologna 1925, pp. 9–10.

1.4.1 The boxholders of the theatre of Pula¹⁰³

Box no.	Surname of boxholder
4	Artusi
5	Petris-Wolgemuth
6	Vareton
7	Fragiacomo
8	Barsan
9	Lombardo-Baxa
10	De Grandis
11	Rizzi
12	Marinoni
13	Gelmi
14	Glezer
16	Malusà

17	fam. Riboli-Giacich
18	fam. Wassermann
19	fam. Valerio
20	Ciscutti
not given	Lombardo-Bourguignon
n. g.	Quadri
n. g.	Rossi
n. g.	Demartini
n. g.	Vio-Bossi
n. g.	Coceich-Mazzarotto
n. g.	Carbucicchio
n. g.	Polla
n. g.	<i>ufficiali di marina</i>

1.4.2 The boxholders of the Teatro Adamich of Rijeka¹⁰⁴

Ground-floor boxes	
Box no.	Name and surname of boxholder
2	Verneda Ernesto Suppè Faustino
3	Chiachich Michele Sporer Carlo
4	Descovich Antonio Burgstaller & Turcich
5	Verzenassi Giuseppe
6	Minak F.co Giuseppe
7	Trojer V.a Maria Du Regne Francesco
8	Giacich Dr. Ant.o Felice Rigotti Pietro
9	Gelcich Dr. Fran.o e Tomaso Rinaldi Giovanni
10	Garofolo Rosa

11	Brelch Margherita
12	Sepich & Dall'Asta Voncina & Derenzini
14	Manzoni Giovanni Purkardhofer Giovanni
16	Sgardelli & Franci Leonide Beresine
17	Bartolich Matteo
19	Giustini Dr. Adolfo
20	Raichich & Poschich
22	Catti Giorgio Durbessich Giovanni
23	Sartorio Francesco Luppis & Mokovich V.a
24	Dall'Asta Luigi Rinaldi de Ferdinando

103 The theatre in question is that founded in Pula in 1854 and functioning before the Politeama Ciscutti came into existence. The table is undated and drawn from Bogneri, *Il Politeama Ciscutti*, p. 70. The source from which these data are collected is not cited. We know that the Rizzi, Glezer, Vareton and Wasserman families, for example, had a box also in the new theatre inaugurated in 1881; see Frank Wiggermann, *Vom Kaiser zum Duce. Lodovico Rizzi (1859–1945). Eine österreichisch-italienische Karriere in Istrien*, Haymon Ebook, Innsbruck 2017, p. n. v., [accessed through Google Books].

104 These are the boxholders of the Teatro Adamich in the year 1867; see Sheet of paper listing the boxholders, Rijeka, 1867, Teatro civico zbiska spisa, HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6.

1st-tier boxes	
1	Smith & Meÿnier
2	Randich Antonio
3	Cosulich Casimiro
4	Francovich Giovanni
6	Smaich Bartolomeo
7	Baccarich Giuseppe
8	Jellouscheg Francesco
9	Medanich eredi Domini Vincenzo Conte
10	Wranÿczanÿ Matteo

12	Walluschnig Antonio Ciotta Giovanni
14	Kohen fratelli Gÿuito Carlo
16	Camera V.a Maria
17	Cornet eredi
19	Mattessich Valentino
20	Hill Carlo & Persich
22	Scarpa Iginio Cav.
23	Scarpa Pietro Cav.
24	Thierrÿ Federico

2nd-tier boxes	
1	Vicevich Giorgio Celebrini Antonio
2	Tremont Edoardo Vio Antonio
3	Jacovich Giovanna Carina Giovanni
4	Simunich & Sucich Ossoimak Gennaro
5	Pessi Vincenzo
6	Gherbaz Antonio Scalamera & Higga
7	Ivancich Bonifacio Dall'Asta Gius.a & Giov.i
8	Tarabocchia & Negovetich
10	Fulvi Serafino Martini Giovanni
11	Deseppi Antonio Prodam Giovanni
12	Bachich Nicolò Zalampich Maria
13	Gregurevich Natale

14	Cattalinich Giovanni Bencinich Stefano
15	Paicurich Mattio Frank Giorgio
16	Hoffmann & Premuda Bellen Antonio
17	Volani Antonio Chierago Giuseppe
18	Gotthardÿ Adolfo Negovetich Natale
19	Descovich Giovanni
20	Walluschnig Nicolò Bartolomei Giuseppe
21	Battaglierini eredi
22	Basadonna Nicolò Blasich Antonio
23	Defranceschi & Purkardhofer Randich Natale
24	Brugetti Girolamo Scrobogna & Gregurinich
25	Manasteriotti Teodoro De Zorzi Giovanni

1.4.3 The boxholders of the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar

Boxholders ¹⁰⁵	who became presidents
Abelić caval. Pietro	1878 (deputy)
Abelić caval. Casimiro*	
Abelić caval. Casimiro Eredi*	
Agonia Maria	
Andrović Pietro*	
Andrović Nicolò	1883, 1884 (deputy)
Babić ved. Maria (dal 1884)	
Battara eredi (per Battara eredi, Pietro Abelić)	
Bakmaz [Bakmać, Bahmaz] Pasquale	
Biondi sorelle (proc. D. Basilisco)*	
de Borelli conte Andrea	
de Borelli cte. di Vrana Uberto*	
Botteri dr. Pietro*	
Calussi Andrea*	
Cattich Cirillo*	1912, 1913, 1916
Cattich Giuseppe	
Cattić Nicolò	
Cattich Manfredo	1890, 1891, 1895–1901, 1903, 1906
Cattich Simeone e fratello*	
per Cattić dr. Simeone eredi, Giulio Giuppani	
Cantù Angelo	
Cantù ved. Maria	
Crespi Luigi	
Crespi Onorato*	
Dall'Oro Giovanni	1868, 1869, 1878 (deputy), 1880
Dall'Oro Giovanni eredi*	
Danilo cav. Francesco*	
De Begna conte Cosimo	
De Begna Borelli cont. Silvia*	
Degiovanni Nicolò	1869
Degiovanni Nicolò eredi*	
De Felicinovich nob. di Treustern Natale	
De Felicinovich Natale eredi*	
De Marassovich nob. Maria*	
Demarchi-Rougier Elena	
De Paitoni Evelina – eredi (Dr. Ziliotto)*	
De Ponte Valerio	

105 The names are drawn from various documentation contained in the archival collection of the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar; the material comes from various folders. The names with an asterisk appear after 1882.

Donati Elena*	
Dudan Natalina	
Dudan Niccolò	1888
Filippi Donato	1868, 1878
Filippi Donato eredi*	
Filippi Giambattista*	
Filippi Giuseppe*	
Filippi dr. Natale	1869
Giljanović [Ghiglianovich] dr. Giacomo	
Giljanović [Ghiglianovich] dr. Roberto	
Gligo Erminia*	
Glissich [Glišić] Giovanni	
Gos(s)etti Smirich Giulia*	
Gounig Eugenio*	
Haehr Rosa	
de Höberth dr. Giuseppe	
de Höberth nob. De Schwarzthal Anna*	
Kiswarday Giovanni*	
Kleindl [Kleindel] Giorgio [per Kleindl Giorgio, Nicolò Degiovanni]	
de Lagarde Roberto	
De Lantana ctss. Amelia*	
de Lantana Giuseppe	1878, 1883, 1884 (deputy)
Lapenna baronessa Thea (proc. A. Filippi)*	
per Lapenna dr. Luigi, Nicolò Trigari	
Kiswarday Giovanni – Eredi*	
Krekich Gr. Uff. Dr. Natale*	
Luxardo cav. Nicolò	
Luxardo cav. Nicolò eredi	
Luxardo Demetrio	
Luxardo Michelangelo	1884
Maddalena Giacomo	
Maddalena Giacomo eredi	
Marassovich Maria	
Medovich Demetrio	1895–1899, 1901, 1905, 1906, 1911
Medovich Demetrio – Eredi	
Messa dr. Giuseppe (proc. Dr. E. Rolli)*	
Mestrovich Aldo*	
Milcovich dr. Michele	
de Nakić nob. Dr. Giorgio	1888, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1903, 1905
Ob(b)radovich Vladimiro*	
de Paitoni Evelina*	
Pappafava Dr. Vladimiro*	

Pappafava Olga (proc. Dr. Vladimiro)*	
Pavissich Marco (Prof. Radovani)*	
Pegan Catterina	
de Petris [nobile di Ehrenstein] dr. Giuseppe	1878, 1880, 1881, 1884, 1885
Perlini Marco Gius. Antonio*	
Perlini Giuseppe	1874, 1876, 1878, 1880, 1881, 1883, 1884, 1885, 1888, 1890–1892
Perlini cav. Venceslao*	1912, 1913, 1916
Perlini sorelle (Proc. Cat. Degli Alberti)*	
Persicalli Ascanio ed Evelina*	
Persicalli Manfredo*	
Petricciolli Giov. Franc. Aug. Viht. Giov.a*	
Petrovich dr. cav. Spiridione	
de Ponte Carlo*	
de Ponte Valerio	
de Ponte Valerio eredi	
Purga Francesca*	
Relja Luciano*	
Rolli dr. Antonio	
Rolli dr. Antonio eredi	
Rolli Eugenio*	
Rolli Giovanni*	
Salghetti Drioli Francesco*	
Salghetti Drioli Simeone	
Smirić dr. Antonio	1874, 1876, 1878, 1883, 1884, 1890, 1891
Seglin Ferdinando (poi Petronilla de Stermić in Seglin, 1884)	
de Stermić caval. Prof. Antonio*	1912, 1913
de Stermić caval. Francesco nobile di Valcrociata	1868, 1869
de Stermić caval. Simeone nobile di Valcrociata	1869
de Stermić caval. Leopoldo nobile di Valcrociata	1878
de Stermić caval. Nicolò nobile di Valcrociata	1874, 1876, 1878, 1880, 1881, 1883–1885
de Stermich Eredi di Nicolò*	
Teodorović Maria in Donati (per Teodorović Maria, Antonio Toniatti)	
Sthaer Rosa	
Tocigl Rodolfo*	
de Tomsic caval. Pietro	
Toniatti Antonio	
de Trigari caval. Nicolò	
de Trigari caval. Remigio*	
Vlahov Roberto*	

1.4.4 The boxholders of the Teatro Mazzoleni of Šibenik

These boxholders were registered at the date of the building of the theatre, according to the contract of 28 February 1864:¹⁰⁶

Payment of first instalment of the share (March 1864)	
1	Fed. Ant. Dr. Galvani
2	Melchiore [<i>sic</i>] Dr. Difnico
3	Luigi Dr. Zuliani
4	Vincenzo Galvani
5	Giovanni Fosco
6	Pietro Covacevich
7	Simeone Dr. Locas
8	Luigi Dr. Frari
9	Gerolamo Dr. Marassevich
10	Francesco Fenzi

11	Giacomo Rachich
12	Maria Vujatovich
13	Antonio Millich Stercagl
14	Vincenzo Dr. Giadorov
15	Antonio Sisgoreo
16	Demetrio Dr. Borovich
17	Francesco Mazzoleni
18	Francesco Bolis
19	Spiridione Popovich
20	Antonio Macale

Payment of seventh instalment of the share (Dec. 1864)	
1	Fed. Ant. Dr. Galvani
2	Melchiore [<i>sic</i>] Dr. Difnico
3	Luigi Dr. Zuliani
4	Vincenzo Galvani
5	Giovanni Fosco
6	Pietro Covacevich
7	Simeone Dr. Locas
8	Luigi Dr. Frari
9	Gerolamo Dr. Marassevich
10	Francesco Fenzi

11	Giacomo Rachich
12	Maria Vujatovich
13	Antonio Millich Stercagl
14	Antonio Sisgoreo
15	Francesco Mazzoleni
16	Demetrio Dr. Borovich
17	Francesco Bolis
18	Spiridione Popovich
19	Antonio Macale
20	Paolina v.a Sisgoreo
21	Giovanni Raimondi
22	Paolo Mazzoleni ¹⁰⁶

The following table, on the other hand, offers a reconstruction of the boxholder-shareholders of the Teatro Mazzoleni of Šibenik and its directors from 1870 to 1917, for the years in which there are records. Where there are gaps in the columns “Box no.” and “No. shares”, this means that the relevant information has not been found.

¹⁰⁶ Counter-receipt, [Šibenik], 2. 3. 1864, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2a. Appearing instead of Francesco Mazzoleni in the Counter-receipt, [Šibenik], 15. 4. 1864 is the name of Paolina Sisgoreo (always in HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2a).

Box no. (1st or 2nd tier)	Boxholders	No. shares	1870	1875	1881	1884	1887	1888	1889	1895	1896	1900	1900	1901	1904	1907	1908	1909	1911	1916	1917	Deputy director	Director		
	Anelli Oreste	1																							
	Bane Marietta	1																							
13 (II)	Bane sorelle (proc. Luigi de Meichsner)	1																							
	Beroš Dort. Giorgio																								
	Beroš Pietro	1																							
20 (I)	Beroš Willi	1																						1873	
	Bilić Giuseppe																								
	Bilić eredi, Olga Martinis (proc. Dr. E. de Meichsner)																								
	Bioni Giuseppe canonico	1																							
	Bioni Vittorio	1																							1900
	Bioni Vittorio eredi																								
	Bolis Emilia																								
	Bolis Francesco	1																							
	Bolis Francesco eredi																								
	Bolis Lodovico																								
10 (I) 9 (II)	Bontempo Antonio	2 ¹⁰⁷																							1882, 1902, 1909, 1911
	Borovich Dr. Demetrio eredi (Giorgio)																								
	Borović Dr. Demetrio	1																							

¹⁰⁷ Possessing only one share pre-1896.

Deputy director	Director	1917	1916	1911	1909	1908	1907	1904	1901	1900	1896	1895	1889	1888	1887	1884	1881	1875	1870	No. shares	Boxholders	Box no. (1st or 2nd tier)
	1873																			2 ¹⁰⁸	Bubić Lorenzo	
																				1	Covaccic' Emilia (proc. Ant. Bontempo)	
																				1	Covaccic' Liubislavo e Cristoforo	
	1900, 1902, 1909	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	De D'fnico Dr. Giovanni (per il padre Melchiorre)	8 (I)
	1882																			1	De D'fnico Melchiorre	
																				1	(De) Fenzi sorelle (proc. Dr. D'fnico)	2 (I)
	1871																			1	Fenzi Francesco	
1887, 1895, 1896																					Fenzi Emanuele	
	1873																				Fosco Nicolò	
1900	1909			x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	Fosco Ugo (proc. di Marianna ved. Fosco)	
																					Fosco Giovanni	
																					Fosco Ugo e Guido	15 (II)
	1908 (Ugo)		x																		Frari Dr. Luigi	
																					Frari Dr. Luigi eredi	
																					Galvani Dr. Fed. Antonio	[16 (I)]
																					Galvani Eugenio (socio)	[16 (I)]
																					Galvani Vincenzo	[16 (I)]
	1870																					

108 Possessing only one share in 1896.

Deputy director	Director	1917	1916	1911	1909	1908	1907	1904	1901	1900	1896	1895	1889	1888	1887	1884	1881	1875	1870	No. shares	Boxholders	Box no. (1st or 2nd tier)
			x	x	x	x	x	x		x									x	1	Giadro Dr. Vincenzo	
			x																	1	Gilardi Ferdinando (proc. di Luigia Gilardi)	4 (I)
		x	x																	1	Gilardi Giustina (proc. Gilardi Ferdinando)	
		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x								1	Gogala Galvani Luigia (proc. Dr. Cace)	16 (I)
																				1	Inchiostri Francesco e Antonio	
																				1	Inchiostri Francesco	10 (II)
																					Inchiostri Vincenzo	
														x							Ivon Girolamo eredi	
		x	x																	1	Knežević cons. Marco (proc. A. Bontempo)	12 (II)
	1887, 1889, 1895, 1896									x	x	x	x	x					x	1	Locas Dr. Simeone	
		x																		1	Martinis Olga	7 (II)
		x	x																	1	Mattiazzi Giacinto	21 (I)
																				1	Mattiazzi Vincenzo	
	1896, 1900									x	x	x							x	1	Marassovič Dr. Gerolamo	3 (I)
	1875																			1	Marassovič eredi (proc. Dr. Melchiorre Marassovich)	9 (I) 14 (II)
																				3	Mazzoleni Francesco	3
																				3	Mazzoleni Giovanni	1 (I) 8 (II)

Box no. (1st or 2nd tier)	Boxholders	No. shares	1870	1875	1881	1884	1887	1888	1889	1895	1896	1900	1901	1904	1907	1908	1909	1911	1916	1917	Director	Deputy director		
7, 19 (I)	Mazzoleni Paolo	2 ¹⁰⁹		x		x		x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1875, 1882, 1887, 1889, 1895			
	Miagostovich Dr. Doimo	1								x		x				x					1882, 1896, 1900			
12 (I)	Miagostovich Dr. Doimo (eredi)	1										x		x						x				
	Milcović Elia (per il fratello Francesco)			x			x																	
	Milcović cons. Francesco	1	x	x		x	x																	
	Milić Stercalj Antonio	1	x	x		x	x																	
18 (I)	Montanari Antonio	1								x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x				
17 (I)	Negri Pio	1										x		x	x	x					1882, 1902	1896, 1900		
	Negri Pio eredi																			x				
	Negri Primo																						1911	
	Nicoletti Frari Maria	1																		x				
15 (I)	Nicoletti cons. Cosimo (proc. Dr. Tullio Nicoletti)	1																		x				
13 (I)	Nicoletti Tullio	1																					1911	
5 (I)	Raimondi Antonio	1																					1909, 1911	1887, 1895, 1896

¹⁰⁹ In the early years Paolo Mazzoleni was the owner of just a single share, in spite of the fact that he belonged to the family of Francesco Mazzoleni, whom the theatre was named after.

Deputy director	Director	1917	1916	1911	1909	1908	1907	1904	1901	1900	1896	1895	1889	1888	1887	1884	1881	1875	1870	No. shares	Boxholders	Box no. (1st or 2nd tier)
																				1	Raimondi Giovanni	
	1887, 1895			x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	1	Raimondi Giovanni eredi	5 (I)
																					Petriz Giocondo de	
																					Piperata Giuseppe	
																					Piperata Rosa ved. Popović	
	1873 1908																				Prebanda P.	
																					Raimondi Antonio	
																					Raimondi Giovanni	
																					Saranelli Giuseppe	1
																					Sigoreo Paolina	1
																					Stercagl Antonio	
																					Versina Ved. Teresa	
																					Versina Giovanna in Novak (proc. Dušan Novak)	14 (I)
																					Versina Spiridione	
																					Versina Spiridione eredi	
																					Vujatović Marietta ved. Bane	1
																					Zuliani Amelia in Inchiostri	
																					Zuliani Gemma in Marassovich	1
																					Zuliani Dr. Luigi	1
																					Zuliani ved. Emilia, eredi (proc. Dr. M. Marassovich)	1

1.4.5 The boxholders of the Teatro Nuovo of Split¹¹⁰

	Boxholders n. d. (pre-1898?)	Shares		Boxholders in 1898	Shares
1	Alfieri Stipan pk. Ante	1			
2	Antičević Jakov Ivanov	1		Antičević Jakov Ivanov	1
3	Banka Prva Puika Dalmatinska	3		Banka Prva Puika Dalmatinska	4
4	Boglić Dr. Ante	1		Boglić Dr. Ante	1
5	Bollani Frane pk. Špira (nasljednici)	1			
6	Borčić Lovro	1			
7	Buj Braca	1		Buj Braca	1
8	Bulat Ante	1			
9	Bulat Dr. Gajo	1			
10	Burić Mearko	1			
11	De Cambj pl. Bašce pk. Jerka	1			
12	De Capogrosso Jerko	1		de Capogrosso Jerko	1
13	Dimitrović Dr. Jozo Nikin	1			
14	Grgić Marko pk. Bariše (nasljednici)	1		Grgić Marko pk. Bariše (nasljednici)	1
15	Jlić Ivan Dominik	1		Jlić Zandume	1
16	Jelić-Dražoević prof. Juraj	1		Jelić-Dražoević prof. Juraj	1
17	Karaman Dr. Edvard	1		Karaman Dr. Edvard	1
18	Karaman Dr. Srečko	1		Karaman Dr. Srečko	1
19	Katalinić Angjeo	1		Katalinić Florijan	1
20	Katalinić Petar	2		Katalinić Petar	2
21	Katalinić Vicko	1		Katalinić Vicko	1
22	Lukšić Vicko	1			
23	Madirazza Nikolo	1			
24	Mastrović nd. Karolina rodj Ivanošić	1		Mastrović nd. Karolina rodj Ivanošić	1
25	Mikačić Mate	1		Mikačić Mate	1
26	Morpurgo Izak pk Mojsije	1		Morpurgo Izak pk Mojsije	1
27	Morpurgo Vid	1		Morpurgo Vid	1
28	Morpurgo Vid i Jozo pk. Davida	1		Morpurgo Vid i Jozo pk. Davida	1
29	Nouvellier Amos i Josiz	1		Nouvellier Amos i Josiz	1
30	Općina Splitska	2		Općina Splitska	2
31	Paulović Grafica Anna rodj Cattanj	1			

¹¹⁰ The information is drawn from HR-MGS: Kazalište 4/ kut. I–XVII.

	Boxholders n. d. (pre-1898?)	Shares
32	Paulović Grafica nd. Marianna	1
33	Pavičić Petar	1
34	Rismondo Ante	1
35	Tadić Marko	1
36	Tecilazić Ante	1
37	Tocijl Špiro	1
38	Tommaseo Dr. Leonardi i Dr. Niko Antini	1
39	Toth Antica nd. Škarica	1
40	Tripalo Petar pk. Stipe	1
41	Tripalo Frane pk. Stipe	1
42	Vukasović Ivanica rođena Miji[]	1
43	Vušković Vicko	1

	Boxholders in 1898	Shares
	Paulović Grafica nd. Marianna	1
	Rismondo Ante	1
	Škarica nd. Antica	1
	Tocijl Špiro	1
	Tommaseo Dr. Leonardi i Dr. Niko Antini	1
	Toth Antica nd. Škarica	1
	Tripalo Petar pk. Stipe	1
	Tripalo Frane pk. Stipe	1
	Vušković Vicko	1

2 The search for an impresario

2.1 The rules of game: the tender specifications

Once the endowment was secured, the theatre management – at the theatres that required the document – prepared and published the tender specifications (*capitolato d'appalto* or just *capitolato*). This was the document that laid down the conditions that the contractor (*appaltatore*) would have to comply with. As such, it immediately preceded the tender contract (*contratto d'appalto*). It was in this way that the official search for the impresario to run the season would start.

The tender specifications could have an official appearance and be printed and circulated in the daily newspapers or artistic journals. We have the example of how the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano* in 1889 advertised a public call for tenders in Rijeka:

The competition for the concession of the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka for the three-year period from 1 January to 31 December 1892 is now open. On the basis of the detailed conditions listed in the respective tender specifications, which can be consulted at [the office of] this Civil Magistrate, as well as at the editorial offices of the newspapers *La Bilancia* of Rijeka, *Il Trovatore* and the *Gazzetta Musicale* of Milan, bids, provided with a (Hungarian) revenue stamp of 50 *soldi*, will be accepted up until 6 pm of 9 November prox.

The same must be presented to the management of the Teatro Comunale, in writing and sealed, with the heading:

“*Offerta per l'appalto triennale del teatro Comunale di Fiume*” and must be accompanied by the bid deposit (*vadio*) of 250 florins (two hundred and fifty Austrian florins) in cash (corresponding to 500 Italian lire): the which *vadio* will be forfeited to the municipal treasury if the bidder to whom the impresa is assigned should not appear for the signing of the relative contract, or should, at that meeting, not make up the sum lacking to form the prescribed security deposit (*cauzione*).

The decision that will follow, no later than the first half of December prox., is the exclusive preserve of the municipal delegation.¹

1 “È aperto il concorso per l'appalto del teatro Comunale di Fiume pel triennio dal 1° gennaio al 31 dicembre 1892. Sulla base delle condizioni di dettagli enumerate nel concernente Capitolato d'asta, ostensibile presso questo Magistrato Civico, nonché presso le redazioni dei giornali *La Bilancia* di

When not published in full, the newspaper might print the suggestion to contact the theatre management directly to obtain a copy of the *capitolato*, issuing a statement like the following: “For information on the endowment and on the tender specifications, apply to the management of the theatre itself before the end of July”.² In Rijeka, for example, the document could be obtained from the secretary of the theatre management. It could also be consulted at the theatrical agencies. Alternatively, the *capitolato* could have a less official appearance and take the form of a manuscript document, as for example in the “Conditions for the opera impresa in the Lent-spring season” of the theatre in Rijeka.³

Over the years the tender specifications became increasingly detailed, as for that matter did the tender agreements and the artists’ engagement contracts. In Rijeka, for example, the number of articles in the tender specifications ranged from the 19 published in the year of the inauguration of the new Teatro Comunale (1885) to the 37 of 1909–1911. The most comprehensive of all the tender specifications hitherto discovered are those adopted in Rijeka for the three-year period 1909–1911, a model reused almost identically in the years 1912–1914 and 1915–1917. In this document each article was defined by a heading summarising the content. At Zadar, on the other hand, the various sections had no headings, but were simply numbered. Here again the size of the document was more or less the same: it had around 38 articles (from a previous, undated, version of 36 articles). In no case, however, do we find anything comparable to the tender specifications of theatres of a different order, such as those for La Scala and the Teatro Canobbiana which consisted of 90 articles already in 1850.⁴

No tender specifications have emerged for Pula, Šibenik and Split: none are preserved in the archival documentation investigated; nor is any mention made in the correspondence examined, or even in the periodical press. In this regard, we should remember that the

Fiume, *Il Trovatore* e la *Gazzetta Musicale* di Milano, si accetteranno relative offerte, munite di bollo (ungherese) di soldi 50, sino alle 6 pom. del giorno 9 novembre prossimo venturo. Le stesse sono da presentarsi alla Direzione del teatro Comunale, in iscritto e suggellate, colla soprascritta: ‘*Offerta per l'appalto triennale del teatro Comunale di Fiume*’ e devono essere accompagnate del vadio di fiorini 250 (duecentocinquanta fiorini, valuta austriaca) in contanti (pari a lire italiane 500): il quale vadio decaderà in favore della Tesoreria Civica, qualora l’offerente cui verrà aggiudicata l’impresa non si presentasse alla firma del relativo contratto, ovvero anche non completasse in quell’incontro la somma mancante a formare la prescritta cauzione. La deliberazione, che seguirà, non più tardi della prima metà del dicembre prossimo, è riservata a beneplacito della Delegazione municipale.”; Avviso di concorso [Call for tenders for the contract of the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka], *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, anno XLIV, no. 43, 27. 10. 1889, p. 702.

- 2 “Per le informazioni sulla dote e sul capitolato d’appalto rivolgersi entro il mese di luglio alla Direzione del teatro stesso”; *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, no. 31, 2. 7. 1876, p. 229.
- 3 See Conditions for the organisation of opera in the Lent and Spring season, Rijeka, 1862, 1863 and 1864, HR-DARI, DS 60, 4.
- 4 *L’Italia Musicale II*, no. 59, 21. 8. 1850, p. 233. At the time certain *capitolati* could even have over a hundred articles.

theatre of Pula did not usually receive municipal subsidies. Moreover, the lack of a *capitolato* is easily explained if a theatre management should decide to manage the opera season by itself without resorting to an impresario: there would obviously be no need to publish one. This happened at Šibenik several times over the years, when the director Mazzoleni himself undertook the organisation of the opera. A similar thing happened also in Zadar in 1898, when one of the theatre's directors, Demetrio Medovich, proposed to act as impresario. During one of the shareholders' meetings he declared that if they had nothing against it and did not find the position incompatible, he was prepared to take on the *impresa* on the condition that operas owned by Ricordi were produced. The members voted in favour, unanimously.⁵ Hence there was no need, at least for the immediate present, to issue any tender specifications. In this particular case, however, the situation must have changed within a short space of time, for the same shareholders of Zadar subsequently made Medovich stand down from holding a dual position (as both director and impresario).⁶ After Medovich had renounced the new position, the contract for the theatre was then definitively taken on by the impresario Giorgio Trauner.⁷

Rijeka and Zadar are therefore the only two theatres for which it has been possible to recover a number of tender specifications. In Zadar the *capitolato* was subsequently attached to the actual contract with the designated impresario. The management there had printed a single version of the document, to which it made handwritten changes depending on the impresario and the season concerned. In this way certain articles could be cut or further matters not contained in the original printed version added in pen.

What were the common elements and main differences between the *capitolati*? The documents differed greatly from theatre to theatre, but they could also vary at the same theatre in different years. Also extremely variable were the order of their contents and the number of articles included. A study of the different *capitolati* helps us to grasp the topics tackled

5 See Minutes for 1898, Zadar, 6. 2. 1898, HR-DAZD, folder 24. By this time, compared to the past, a theatre management could assume a greater role in its relations with the impresario and, at the very least, appear as joint organiser of the opera season.

6 "I have heard that some of the gentlemen shareholders [...]," Medovich wrote, "believe, and I myself am now also convinced of the fact, that the position of director is incompatible with the condition of impresario; and given that I value the former more than the latter, I declare that I renounce the contract of the theatre for the next spring season that was offered to me and that I accepted." ("Ho rilevato che alcuni signori azionisti [...] trovano, ed ora me ne convinsi anche io, incompatibile la carica di direttore con la qualità di impresario, e tenendoci io più alla prima che non alla seconda, dichiaro di rinunziare all'appalto, offertomi e da me accettato, del teatro per la prossima stagione di primavera."); Letter from Demetrio Medovich to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 6. 1. 1898, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

7 For various years Giorgio Trauner was in contact with the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar. Unfortunately, we know very little about his life except that he died in Milan at the age of 53; See *Ars et labor. Musica e musicisti*, vol. LXVI, Ricordi, Milano 1911, p. 803.

by these documents, and hence understand the instructions and needs of the theatres in the area vis-à-vis their impresarios.

Delivery of the theatre

It was customary for the *capitolato* to indicate the date on which the theatre would be handed over to the contracting impresario, perhaps with the formula “no later than” plus the indication of a specific date. At Rijeka a clause was added, to the effect that the municipality would not be obliged to provide any objects or equipment other than those already there and included in the consignment.

Theatre spaces

Mention was made of the theatre spaces placed at the disposal of the impresario; this could also include a detailed description of all the rooms, also mentioning the furniture present. For example, in the *capitolato* issued in Rijeka in 1885 explicit reference is made to an inventory that would be delivered to the impresario at the moment the theatre was placed in his hands.⁸

Both at Zadar and at Rijeka the *impresario* had no right to run the theatre cafe or the cloak-room service, though this right was subsequently granted at Rijeka from 1909 onwards. The spaces of the theatre could not be entrusted to third parties, and could only be used for the theatrical productions approved by the management. Naturally, in cases of damage or harm to the rooms or furniture, the *impresario* would have to take personal responsibility, just as he would have to pay for any alterations made to the stage or parts of the theatre for scenic or artistic reasons.

At the termination of the contract, the *impresario* would have to return to the theatre management the theatre's spaces, scenery, properties and various accessories in the condition in which they had been received, together with the inventories. The exact day on which the theatre was to be returned was not specified, at least not in the *capitolato* of Rijeka for 1885. This was a detail that could be specified later, directly in the contract.

Duration of the contract

The duration of a contract in the theatres of the coastal area was usually that of a season, which basically meant two or three months. More rarely it was triennial. This matches what

8 Tender specifications of the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka, Rijeka, 1885, HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6.

Rispoli asserted in 1903: “Ordinarily it happens that the duration of an *impresa* is of one season only (two or three months at most). Rarely of a whole year. Extraordinarily of more than one year”.⁹ As with any artistic or musical organisation (even today), having annual or triennial funding changed the perspective. While a three-year funding period guaranteed the management a lower expenditure of energy in the search for an impresario, an annual or seasonal contract had the advantage, in the event that the wrong impresario had been engaged, of providing an opportunity to remedy the mistake in a relatively short space of time and call in someone else. Limiting the contract to a single season was also motivated by the uncertainty of the endowment. Given that the theatre could not guarantee long-term funding, it was obliged to restrict the duration of the impresario’s tenure.

At both Zadar and Rijeka a contract was generally drawn up for each opera season. Exceptions at Zadar were the years 1888–1891, when the concession was given to the impresario Paolo Massimini, and 1904–1907, when it was given to Giorgio Trauner. Rijeka, on the other hand, had a greater number of three-year contracts, even if – owing to lack of documentation – it is impossible to say, in certain cases, if we are dealing with a single three-year contract or a series of renewals to the same impresario for several individual seasons (amounting to three years overall). The presence of the same impresario is attested from 1876 to 1878, from 1888 to 1890, and from 1903 to 1908. Most certainly triennial were the tender specifications of 1890–1892, 1909–1911, 1912–1914, and 1915–1917. We also have evidence of a three-year contract in Rijeka for the preceding years of 1846–1848. The larger theatres, like the Teatro Comunale of Trieste, generally offered triennial or multi-year contracts already from 1861 onwards. As regards the specific duration of the season, the tender specifications of Rijeka (1885) give precise dates, using the formula “*dal ... al*”, in addition to mentioning the season itself.

For the three-year contract in Rijeka the contractor had the right to withdraw after the first or second year, provided that advance notice of six months was given. One impresario who cancelled a (three-year) contract was Cesare Trevisan, who withdrew in 1880 because the committee refused to grant him a month’s deferment to make up his mind on whether or not to continue the *impresa*.¹⁰

The annual contract, as specified for example at Rijeka from 1901, comprised all the productions of carnival, Lent-spring and autumn, hence extended beyond the single season. At the time of the Teatro Adamich, balls were given during the carnival season, opera in

9 “D’ordinario accade che la durata d’una impresa è di una sola stagione (due o tre mesi tutt’al più). Raramente è di un anno intero. Straordinariamente di più anni.”; Rispoli, *La vita pratica*, p. 15. In certain Italian theatres the contracts could even have a duration of five or six years, perhaps with the possibility of rescission every two years; see Marcello De Angelis, *Le carte dell’impresario. Melodramma e costume teatrale nell’Ottocento*, Sansoni, Firenze 1982, p. 25.

10 “Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, t. 9. 1880.

Lent-spring, and spoken theatre (*prosa*) in the autumn. The impresario in question could, however, relinquish the running of all productions and outsource (for example) the balls, as indeed Cesare Trevisan did for the 1880 season.¹¹

Domicile and presence of the impresario

It is in the early years of the 20th century that the tender specifications began to introduce the obligation that the impresario should reside on the premises during the season and, if he should have to absent himself, must find a trusted person to stand in for him. The *capitolato* of Rijeka in 1909 (and following years) stated that the impresario should establish his domicile in Rijeka, specifically “in the office of the Theatre” (*nel gabinetto del Teatro*). In fact, there was a room in the theatre expressly reserved for the impresario. He, or his substitute, would also have to be present at the performances. This clause did not appear in the tender specifications of Zadar, but in certain contracts with the impresario, at the top of the page, the ‘place of stipulation’ was indicated as “in the small chamber of the Teatro Nuovo” (*nel camerino del Teatro Nuovo*).¹² Though not formally specified, it was a tacit convention that here too the impresario should have a room of his own inside the building.

At Rijeka the hope was expressed to engage a local impresario (or proxy), for the reason that locals offered a greater guarantee that the contractual conditions would be observed and, moreover, would be satisfied with lower earnings, whereas an impresa from outside would demand higher pay in order to compensate for its expenses.¹³ On this matter Rijeka applied more conservative criteria than other theatres, not only in its choice of impresario, but also in that of the artists. They too should preferably be local.

Management of the productions and the prohibition to transfer the contract

In cases where the contract was taken on by more than one partner – of which there are a number of instances in the years covered by this research – the rule given in many tender specifications is that only one of them must represent the impresa before the city author-

11 “Notizie teatrali”, *La Bilancia*, 18. 12. 1879.

12 Contract between the presidency of the Teatro Nuovo and the impresario Carlo Vianello, Zadar, 22. 3. 1875, HR-DAZD, folder 4.

13 A similar notion was expressed in the newspapers: “We would like it that any impresa should be obliged to appoint a person from the city to act as his guarantor and proxy” (“Noi vorremmo che si imponesse l’obbligo a qualunque impresa di nominare persona del paese come suo garante e procuratore”); “Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, 3. 6. 1875.

ities, though it remained understood that all would be responsible and guarantors of the contract. The *impresa* would not be permitted to transfer the contract without the consent of the municipal authorities and the theatre management.

General obligations for the *impresa* and regulations of the management

The *impresa* would have to answer for all infringements of the law, authors' rights, general regulations, municipal regulations and theatre rules. It would have to comply rigorously with the orders of the theatre management on everything concerning the theatre, its running, backstage discipline, the fulfilment of the contract and the theatre's special regulations.

Rights of use belonging to the municipality during the period of the contract

In the case of Rijeka, the city council was entitled to carry out all the repairs, improvements and renovations in the theatre that it considered necessary, without the *impresa* having the right to claim recompense or compensation. It could make use of the theatre to organise charity events, political meetings or lectures, again without the contractor having the right to claim compensation. On the other hand, the *Comune* could not use the theatre on the nights already programmed for the productions of the *impresa*. Implicit, therefore, was a form of respect for the calendar of performances already agreed upon with the *impresario*.

Number and type of performance

Usually indicated among the obligations of the *impresario* were the overall number of performances and the number of "new" and "repertoire" operas to be guaranteed.¹⁴ At Rijeka no mention of new operas is made in the tender specifications of 1885, but only of "no less than two operas from the great repertoire by famous composers" (*non meno di due opere del grande repertorio, di rinomati maestri*). Those of 1901 refer to one opera from the great repertoire (preferably among those not yet performed) and another two "chosen from among the best of the repertoire" (*scelte tra le migliori del repertorio*) for the Lent-

14 As stated by Rosselli, repertoire opera had gained a foothold already in the 1840s; audiences were therefore abundantly accustomed to this distinction in the years under scrutiny; see Rosselli, *The Opera Industry*, p. 8.

spring season, with no less than 22 evenings of *opera seria*; for the autumn there would have to be no fewer than 20 performances of *opera seria*, *semiseria* or *buffa* or at least 30 performances of comic operetta or spoken theatre (*prosa*); all of which, it was specified, with companies “of the first rank” (*di rango primario*). In 1912 the indication for the Lent-spring season was for 24 subscription performances of *opera seria*, *lyrica* or *drammatica* (fewer, therefore than the 27 indicated in 1909) and as many non-subscription performances at a reduced price as there were operas in the general programme. The overall number of performances was to be divided proportionately between each of the operas chosen. In the autumn season there were to be between 30 and 35 performances, which, at the discretion of the *impresa*, could be of opera, operetta or spoken theatre. Already in 1875 such quantities were considered adequate for a city like Rijeka. In addition to the mandatory performances, the *impresa* could give further performances, up to a maximum of 85. But if it staged more than 85 (without exceeding the absolute limit of a hundred), it would have to ask for the management’s permission and pay all the expenses for lighting, heating and other related costs.

One directive was always that the opera productions should be in keeping with the standards of a first-rank theatre, with costumes, properties and scenery that both fully corresponded to the period of the actions represented on stage and were also new for the mandatory operas (at least according to the tender specifications for 1885 at Rijeka). Of particular interest was the clause specifying that the productions must be given exclusively in the Italian language. Initially, in the *capitolato* issued at Rijeka in 1901, this stipulation referred only to the mandatory operas; then, from at least 1909, it was extended to “all productions” (*tutti gli spettacoli*). At Zadar no mention was made of this, most likely because operas in other languages were not requested and it was implicit that operas were mainly sung in Italian.

At Zadar the *impresario* had to guarantee at least 20 performances per season and at least three different works: two that were new to the city, the third being a repertoire opera. The third opera, the repertoire opera, could perhaps be omitted, provided that the other two were of “extraordinary importance and absolutely assured success”.¹⁵ The choice of operas had to be agreed upon jointly by theatre management and *impresa* (incidentally, the term “theatre management” (*direzione teatrale*) had replaced that of the “presidency” (*presidenza*) in the new tender specifications of the theatre of Zadar).¹⁶ Deciding the right number of performances per season was an important matter, one that would directly affect the size of the audience attending each night. The risk, with a higher number, was that attendance might drop.

15 “straordinaria importanza e di successo assolutamente stabilito”; Tender specifications of the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar, Zadar, [n. d.], HR-DAZD, folder 29.

16 Tender specifications of the Teatro Giuseppe Verdi of Zadar, Zadar, [post 1901], HR-DAZD, folder 29.

Revenue of the impresa

Financially, what was the impresa entitled to? What income could it count on? While the impresa working in Rijeka in 1885 was very clearly guaranteed the revenue of the endowment (though the actual sum was left blank in the form), there was apparently no such clarity regarding the income from entrance tickets. What was written was just that the prices of the subscriptions and entrance tickets, the boxes available nightly and the stools (*scanni*) would be established in common accord with the theatre management. From 1900 onwards it was clearly written that the contractor would receive the takings from the entrance tickets and numbered seats and the income from the boxes, seats (*poltroncine*) and stools (*scanni*).¹⁷ The *capitolato* of eight years later included the income from the parterre (*platea*), boxes and gallery (*galleria*), in addition to that from the season-ticket holders. The rental of the refreshment bar (*buffet*) and cloakroom was included, as well as the endowment provided by the “municipal treasury” (*civico peculio*) of 8,000 crowns annually (7,000 if the contract were to last two years). Depending on the year of the *capitolato*, the payment of the endowment would be made either in four instalments or on the day of the last mandatory performance of the Lent-spring season.¹⁸ Electric lighting and heating were free of charge for the duration of the performances and rehearsals, up to a maximum of 85 performances.

Zadar, on the other hand, did not specify the size of the endowment in the tender specifications. It merely referred to the “agreed endowment” (*dotazione convenuta*) to be paid in the usual four instalments. Here again, as at Rijeka, mention was made of revenue from the entrance tickets to the parterre, boxes and gallery (*loggione*), from the season-tickets (*abbonamenti di porta*), seats (*poltrone*) and stools (*scanni*), and from the rental of boxes (though only those of the third tier), seats (*poltrone*), stools (*scanni*) and chairs (*sedie*) in the parterre. Also included, in the modified *capitolato* (probably post-1905), was a possible bonus for the impresa, paid by the theatre management at the end of the season, provided, of course, that the impresa had correctly fulfilled all its commitments and justified the trust placed in it.

17 See Call for tenders for the running of productions at the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka, Rijeka, 22. 5. 1900, Maritime and Historical Museum of the Croatian Littoral, theatre collection. At the time the Teatro di Rijeka had about 700 seats in the boxes and parterre (*platea*) and 500 in the gallery (*galleria*).

18 See Call for tenders for the running of productions at the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka, Rijeka, 22. 5. 1900, Maritime and Historical Museum of the Croatian Littoral, theatre collection; or Tender specifications for the running of the Teatro Comunale in the three-year period 1 January 1912 – 31 December 1914, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 10.

Obligations of the impresa

As a rule, the section in the tender specifications on the obligations (*oneri*) was much longer and much more detailed than that on the income. Among the impresario's expenses at Rijeka in 1885 were listed those for the surveillance and assistance of the firemen and guards; for the repair and cleaning of the rooms, furniture and other objects, all electric lighting appliances and "supplementary [lighting] with stearin candles"; and for smearing the sets with fire-resistant products (where prescribed). Also included were the ordinary and extraordinary evenings' expenses.¹⁹ Needing to be paid were the attendants, the machinist and assistants, the custodian, the wardrobe service, the printing (both prior and daily), and the box-office staff or "*bollettari*" (as they were called at the time).²⁰ Also added were the costs of renting the music from the publishers, making copies or reductions, and transporting all the materials needed for the production. Curiously, only in the *capitolato* of Rijeka for 1885, and not in the later ones, was the need to pay copyright fees mentioned. From 1901, also added were the expenses for "special lighting effects" (*luce d'effetto*) on stage. Also included were the wages for the assistant electrician and those who turned on the safety lights (*lumi di sicurezza*) and heaters. From 1909, the "industrial tax" on theatrical productions was also charged to the impresario at Rijeka.²¹ As regards the scenery, the costs ranged from the mere smearing to the "assembling, disassembling, washing, priming and painting of the scenes, wing flats and borders (*arie*)" (*armizzo, disarmizzo, lavatura, imprimitura e pittura delle scene, quinte e arie*). The list of the staff to be paid was now much longer than in the *capitolato* of 1885. Compared to those indicated previously, mention was also made of the doorman (*portiere*), the ushers (*maschere*) for stalls and gallery, the *scannisti* (stool providers) for stalls and gallery, the *palchinaie* (box ushers), the stage doorman and an electrician (and

19 These expenses usually included the (already mentioned) lighting as well as the heating of the theatre, hence the provision of fuel for both electric lighting and heating.

20 According to Rispoli's text, in certain parts of Italy the *bollettaro* or *bollettinaio* or even *bigliettinaio* was not, however, part of the staff paid by the owner of the theatre and the impresario. He was often a "speculator" who in turn depended on the "speculation" of the impresario. According to Rispoli, the theatre staff consisted of: "the custodian, a person held in the highest trust by the [theatre] owner, attendants, ushers for the boxes, caretakers of the seats, parterre and latrines, machinists, scene-shifters and men at the gridding." ("*custode, persona di massima fiducia del proprietario, inservienti, palchettai, guardiani delle poltrone, della platea, delle latrine, macchinisti, tirascene, uomini di soffitta.*"); Rispoli, *La vita pratica*, p. 27. The *bollettinaio* checked and collected the entrance tickets at the theatre and stood guard at the entrances to make sure spectators did not illicitly make their way to the galleries and boxes.

21 In the case of Rijeka, the amount of this tax was not indicated in the tender specifications. We do know, however, that in Split in 1895 the government tax ranged from 20 to 30 florins and depended on the income that was presented by the impresa over a specific number of performances. See Letter from the theatre management of Split to Antonio Lana, Split, [n. d.].3.1895, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

no longer, therefore, just an “assistant”). Also itemised now are the inspecting physician, the police commissioner, the inspector of the guards with four public security guards, and two police officers (*agenti*).²² The nightly fees for opera performances were the same as for spoken theatre or operetta, but lower (by about half) than those for balls. The *capitolato* of 1909 detailed, for the first time, the exact fees for each category of worker. In addition, the impresarios would also have to pay for all the expenses of the contract: in other words, the notary’s fees, stamps and various taxes. This applied at both Rijeka and Zadar.

At Zadar, the expenses the impresario faced were also innumerable: as well as those mentioned at Rijeka, he had to include the costs of staff members such as the poster distributor, the stagehands and the callboy (*avvisatore*),²³ as well as that of contributing to the sickness fund (expenses never mentioned at Rijeka). In neither of the two theatres, however, was any mention made of the theatre inspector, the person hired to keep an eye on the artistic staff during rehearsals, and who, in cases of absenteeism, could also impose fines.²⁴ At the formal conclusion of the contract all the staff involved would have to be indicated in a special list; or at very least, the overall costs would need to be specified. Strangely, this last clause was eliminated in the later surviving contract for Zadar.

These expenses could, however, be renegotiated. In 1876 we learn from a shareholders’ meeting in Zadar that the presidency was authorised to waive the nightly expenses, in the event that the impresario was not satisfied with the takings from admissions, stools (*scanni*), and third-tier boxes excluding the large boxes (*palconi*).²⁵ In 1884, again at Zadar, when negotiating with the impresario Alberto Vernier, the theatre management even offered to take care of the expenses of routine lighting, the charity taxes, the cost of the police, firemen, and attendants at the door and at the gridding (*servizio di porta e soffitto*); furthermore, the

22 The tender specifications for the three-year period 1909–1911 made a distinction between the sections indicating the theatre staff by introducing a separate section, entitled “Service staff” (*personale di servizio*), which explicitly listed the following as people to be remunerated: a chief machinist (*capo macchinista*), head of the grid crew (*capo soffitta*) and other stagehands skilled in operating the machinery and backstage area, a stage manager (*buttafuori*), a callboy (*avvisatore teatrale*), no fewer than four stagehands (*servi di scena*), specifying that they were to be “dressed in livery” (*vestiti in livrea*; in the preceding *capitolato* of 1885 the number of stagehands was not indicated), a doorman (*guardaportone*), an adequate number of ushers (*maschere*) at the entrance to the stalls, stools (*scanni*), gallery (*loggione*) and stage (*palcoscenico*), dressed in a manner approved by the theatre management, and four attendants for the boxholders (*palchettisti*); Tender specifications for the running of the Teatro Comunale in the three-year period 1 January 1909 – 31 December 1911, Rijeka, [1908], HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6.

23 The *avvisatore* was an employee of the theatre who brought the singers and actors their correspondence and gave notice that the show was about to begin.

24 The Teatro Comunale of Trieste, for example, has preserved the reports of the theatre inspector who regularly watched over the artists.

25 See Meeting of the shareholders of the Teatro Nuovo, session of 5. 4. 1876, HR-DAZD, folder 4.

impresa would be allowed “as many benefit nights as it liked”.²⁶ Compared to the other theatres, it was the presidency of Zadar that shouldered the most expenses, subtracting them from those charged to the impresario. No mention was made of the costs of renting the theatre, either at Rijeka or Zadar.²⁷ Only at Split (and then only for 1895) is there any mention of a rental of 30 florins per evening.²⁸

Naturally it was assumed that the impresario would also pay for the singers of the company, the chorus, orchestra, dancers and walk-on parts. As a rule, a separate section was dedicated to each of these categories in the *capitolati*.

The singing artists

The principals (*artisti di canto*) were to be compatible “with the requirements and dignity of a first-rank theatre”²⁹ and with the part they had to play, thereby ensuring the success of the productions. They would have to gain the approval of the theatre management and, at Rijeka (according to the tender specifications of 1909), also that of the conductor. The approval also of the music publishers that owned the score, in addition to that of the *maestro concertatore* and conductor, is mentioned only in the *capitolati* of Zadar.³⁰ At neither Zadar nor Rijeka is any mention made of which voices the impresario was to provide. On this matter, other *capitolati*, like those for the Teatro Comunale of Trieste for the 1861–1864 seasons, were much more precise. For example, they specified the voice types (*prima donna soprano, mezzo soprano, basso profondo*, etc.) and added that these artists should have already achieved success in the leading theatres (*principali teatri*), which at the time meant at the carnival seasons of the San Carlo of Naples, La Scala of Milan, La Fenice of Venice, the Apollo of Rome and the Regio of Turin and at the theatres of Italian opera in Vienna, Paris, London and St Petersburg.³¹

26 “quante beneficiate fosse per piacere all’impresa”; Letter from the theatre management of Zadar to Alberto Vernier, Zadar, 8. 8. 1884, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

27 For Rijeka an exception is the rent of 3,000 crowns that the impresario Carlo Polgar had to pay in cash to the municipal treasury in 1917; see Register of documents for the civil magistrate of Rijeka (*Protocollo assunto presso il magistrato civico di Fiume*), Rijeka, 11. 4. 1917, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

28 See Letter from the theatre management of Split to Antonio Lana, Split, [n. d.].3.1895 HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/kut. I–XII.

29 “alle esigenze e al decoro di un teatro di I° ordine”; Tender specifications for the running of the Teatro Comunale in the three-year period 1 January 1909 – 31 December 1911, Rijeka, [1908], HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6.

30 See Art. 7, Tender specifications of the Teatro Giuseppe Verdi of Zadar, Zadar, [post 1901], HR-DAZD, folder 29.

31 See Tender specifications for the three-year period 1861–1864, Trieste, [1860], I-TSmt, folder 104.

Orchestra

The *impresa* would have to provide at its own expense a *maestro concertatore* and conductor, as well as a stage director (*direttore di scena*), whose duty it was to make sure nobody was absent on stage and to direct the *mis-en-scène* of the musical productions.³² The orchestra, consisting of a number of players appropriate for the type of score, would also have to be paid for. There were cases, however, where – in the end – the theatre management shouldered this cost, so on this matter the document that really counted was the contract with the *impresario*. As always, the tender specifications represented the theatre management's wishes, whereas in actual practice many of the issues dealt with, including those concerning the orchestra, were subject to revision.

Regarding the orchestral players, the tender specifications of Rijeka for 1885 indicated precisely which orchestral instruments were needed, but left their actual number to the discretion of whoever filled in the *capitolato*. That of Zadar, on the other hand, merely gave a total number, without going into the specifics of how many per instrument category. At the beginning of the 20th century, the number of players required was 40 (only slightly more than the 38 previously indicated), then went up to 42. At Rijeka the number required was already 40 in 1876, increasing to 50 in 1901; and in 1909 the forces were expected to have no fewer than 60 players, including – as far as the strings were concerned – 12 first violins, 10 second violins, 4 violas, 4 cellos and 4 double basses.³³ The precise numbers were indicated only for the string section. In the course of a thirty-year period, therefore, the orchestra had increased by twenty players. If any productions happened to require even larger forces, the *impresa* would naturally have to deal with the additional requirements at its own expense.

The *impresario* would also have to pay for the *banda* or stage band, for all those operas in which the composer introduced it.³⁴ Moreover, if special instruments were indicated in the score, they were to be provided and could not be replaced with other instruments:³⁵ a

32 It was the stage director (*direttore di scena*), together with the scene designer (*scenografo*) and the conductor himself, who took care of the staging of the productions; see the description of his duties in the chapter of Gerardo Guccini, "Direzione scenica e regia", in *Storia dell'opera italiana*, edited by Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli, vol. V, EDT, Torino 1987, p. 153.

33 Art. 15, Tender specifications for the running of the Teatro Comunale in the three-year period 1 January 1909 – 31 December 1911, Rijeka, [1908], HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6.

34 On the stage band, the connections between the various bands and their ties with the theatre, see Antonio Carlini, "Le bande musicali nell'Italia dell'Ottocento: il modello militare, i rapporti con il teatro e la cultura dell'orchestra negli organici strumentali", *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia*, XXX/1 (1995), pp. 85–133 and Jürgen Maehder, "'Banda sul palco'. Variable Besetzungen in der Bühnenmusik der italienischen Oper des 19. Jahrhunderts als Relikte alter Besetzungstraditionen?", in *Alte Musik als ästhetische Gegenwart, Kongressbericht Stuttgart 1985*, vol. II, Bärenreiter, Kassel-Basel 1987, pp. 293–310.

35 Tender specifications of the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka, Rijeka, 1885, HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6.

clause that aimed to guarantee respect for the score and the instrumental forces specified by the composer. Zadar also mentioned the impresario's obligation to provide pianos, accordions, organs, bells and other instruments that might be required for the productions, other than those already possessed by the theatre.

It is in the tender specifications of Zadar that we find, for the first time in the theatres concerned, a mention not only of the "new normal pitch" (*nuovo diapason normale*) to which the instruments must be tuned, but also of the orchestra's clothing. The players would have to wear suits of a "dark colour" (*colore oscuro*), preferably black, while the *maestro concertatore* and conductor would wear a black tailcoat (*abito nero di gala*) and white tie.³⁶ The other *capitolati* more loosely mentioned that the players would have to dress "in a decorous manner" (*in modo decoroso*).

At Rijeka the tender specifications mention a preference, all things being equal, for engaging players who lived stably in the city;³⁷ the same clause also applied to the players of the civic band. When engaging or replacing them, preference should be given to citizens of Rijeka "and among these, to the more senior" (*e tra questi al più anziano*).³⁸ We must bear in mind that Rijeka had no complete orchestral group. The clause aimed both to guarantee the use of a local workforce and also to keep the costs down.

The chorus singers

Also referred to as the *massa* ('mass'). As with the orchestra there was an evident increase in the chorus numbers over the years. At Zadar, in the course of time, the chorus increased from 32 to 36 singers, made up of 24 men and 12 women. At Rijeka, on the other hand, it amounted to around 30 singers (18 men, 12 women) already in 1876, becoming 50 in 1901, and 60 in the following years, though without specifying how many men and women. As a rule, there were more men than women. It was understood that if, for any reason, more singers were needed, the cost would always have to be borne by the impresario. In addition to the singers, the chorus master (*maestro dei cori*) was also a cost charged to the impresario. Clearly, both the orchestra and the chorus had become larger, following the contemporary developments in the repertoire.

36 See Art. 10, Tender specifications of the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar, Zadar, [n. d.], HR-DAZD, folder 29.

37 The tender specifications of Rijeka in 1885 mention not only orchestral players, but also chorus singers, painters, machinists, property-men and others who should be "stably resident in the city" (*stabilmente dimoranti a Fiume*); see Art. VI, Tender specifications of the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka, Rijeka, 1885, HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6.

38 See Art. 17, *Convenzione tra il Comune di Fiume ed i 30 filarmonici firmanti nell'atto diretto alla Rappresentanza civica de pres. 10 Aprile 1878 nro. 2077*, p. 12, Rijeka, 1878, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 3.

Corps de ballet

Even the corps de ballet, along with the orchestra and chorus, increased in size over the years. Often the phrase used in the tender specifications was that the corps de ballet would have to be “of a number corresponding to the importance of the opera” (*in numero corrispondente all'importanza dello spettacolo*), but nonetheless we do find more precise indications here and there. For example, at Rijeka, according to the tender specifications of 1876, 12 ballerinas were required for the opera *Il Guarany*. Subsequently, judging from those of 1909, there would have to be 30. Artists under the age of 15 would not be allowed on stage for the ballets; for the opera, on the other hand, it was permitted, pending the approval of the theatre management.³⁹ Zadar instead, called for 12 “skilled chorus ballerinas” (*ballerine distinte di fila*), again at the impresario’s expense. This number remained unchanged, at least in the surviving tender specifications.

Extras

As was always written, the number of extras or walk-on parts had to be sufficient for the needs of the season. For Rijeka this was specified as being no fewer than 30;⁴⁰ for Zadar a precise number was not given. The extras had to have a leader, who was responsible for keeping discipline and reporting poor behaviour or absences to the theatre management.

Wardrobe and wigs; scenery and costumes

The *impresa* would also have to provide a sufficient number of wardrobe and wig masters for the theatre’s regular nightly duties. Regarding the scenery and costumes, the indication here was usually generic. In other words, the costumes, properties, footwear, scenery and stage machinery (*meccanismi*) of the operas and ballets had to be suited to the importance of the theatre or “in excellent condition” (*in ottimo stato*). At Zadar the *mise-en-scène* was to be “worthy of the decorum and propriety required by a city of culture and provincial capital”.⁴¹

39 See Art. 17, Tender specifications for the running of the Teatro Comunale for the three-year period 1 January 1909 – 31 December 1911, Rijeka, [1908], HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6. The same rule was given in the *capitolato* for the following three-year period.

40 See Art. 18, Tender specifications for the running of the Teatro Comunale for the three-year period 1 January 1909 – 31 December 1911, Rijeka, [1908], HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6.

41 “degna al decoro ed alla decenza richiesta da una colta città, capoluogo di provincia”; Art. 14, Tender specifications of the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar, Zadar, [n.d.], HR-DAZD, folder 29.

The programme for the season

The proposed programme (or *cartellone*) of the impresario would have to include a summary list of the productions that would be staged during the season (or over the three-year period in the case of a triennial contract). For the three-year period beginning in 1909 the *impresa* at Rijeka was obliged to give at least two operas from the great operatic repertoire annually, one from the customary repertoire, and one that had not yet been staged at Rijeka, but had been successfully received in other important theatres. Alternatively, instead of the ‘new opera’, it would have to stage two operas in addition to the other three indicated: one from the great repertoire and one from the customary repertoire. Hence, four or five operas overall. The choice of the programme lay with the theatre management on the basis of the list contained in the proposal.

As regards the deadline schedule, the impresario had to present the theatre management with the complete programme, including the list of the whole company engaged for the productions, no later than 15 January of the same year in which the season was to take place. Once the programme had been approved by the management, it had to be made public no later than a month before the day fixed for the first performance.⁴² At Zadar the timing was much tighter. Here the season’s programme had to be presented for the approval of the theatre management just 15 days before the first performance of the season, though this became 20 days in the modified tender specifications. To us, who consider the time needed to plan an opera season today, such a schedule for programming might seem almost implausible. However, it is worth bearing in mind that a 15-day deadline was also specified in the *Regolamento precettivo per li impresari e attori teatrali* (Mandatory rules for impresarios and actors of the theatre) in 1851. Indeed, according to this *Regolamento*, the impresario was obliged to submit to the government authorities a list of the productions due to be staged (undersigned by the *capocomico* or troupe leader) 15 days before the theatre opened.⁴³

Even here at Zadar, naturally, the posters had to have the approval of the theatre management. Moreover, it was the theatre management that established not only the

42 See Art. 23, Tender specifications for the running of the Teatro Comunale for the three-year period 1 January 1909 – 31 December 1911, Rijeka, [1908], HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6. On these deadlines, see also Radmila Matejčić, “Organizacija Općinskog kazališta”, in *Narodno kazalište Ivan Zaic*, edited by Radmila Matejčić and Ljubomir Stefanović, Narodno kazalište “Ivan Zajc” i Izdavački centar Rijeka, Rijeka 1981, p. 28.

43 The productions would then, as was customary, have to be approved by the censorship and the local authority before being presented on stage. In the *Regolamento* mention is made of the “government authority” (*autorità governativa*) and not “municipal authority” (*autorità municipale*), given that, at the time of its publication, the management of the theatres in various areas of Italy was the preserve of the government. See Salucci, *Manuale della giurisprudenza*, p. 14.

order of the productions, but also the day the season opened, the dates for each single opera, and the starting time for the performances. Although these decisions were initially taken by mutual agreement, the phrase “in agreement with the *impresa*” (*d'accordo con l'impresa*) was subsequently removed from the modified *capitolato*.⁴⁴ On this matter the management retained much more independence of choice. Again at Zadar it was also specified that there were to be not more than four performances per week, except in exceptional cases.

Listing of the staff

A matter of fundamental importance was the listing of the staff that the impresario was required to provide. It would indicate the supporting and secondary parts (*comprimari*), the number of choristers and dancers, the extras, the stagehands, the stage director, the *maestro concertatore* and conductor, the scene designers, wardrobe masters, choreographers and the whole of the theatre staff. At Zadar this list was to be submitted no later than 40 days before the first performance of the season, thereby giving the management time to reject anyone, if necessary. Initially the deadline had been 30 days; subsequently it was extended.⁴⁵ If the contractor should not make any of the replacements ordered by the theatre management, there could be a reduction in the size of the endowment.

As a comparison, it is worth citing the situation at a theatre like the Teatro Comunale of Trieste, where the list of the leading singers had to be presented six or four months earlier. So the deadline of 40 days required at Zadar was much tighter. Even tighter was the state of affairs at Rijeka where, according to the tender specifications of 1909, the *impresa* was asked to submit the list of all the staff making up the company assembled for the season no later than eight days before the first performance.⁴⁶

One clause added over the years was that approval of the *maestro concertatore* and conductor as well as the principal singers was needed from the publishers that owned the music due to be performed. Increasingly the publishers were gaining in power and becoming principal actors in the production and organisation of opera.⁴⁷

44 See Art. 4, Tender specifications of the Teatro Giuseppe Verdi of Zadar, Zadar, [post 1901], HR-DAZD, folder 29.

45 See Art. 8, Tender specifications of the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar, Zadar, [n. d.], HR-DAZD, folder 29.

46 In the surviving tender specifications before 1909 there is no mention of when the list of staff had to be submitted.

47 On the role of the publishers, and particularly Ricordi, see Stefano Baia Curioni, “Imprenditorialità privata e trasformazione dell’Opera italiana nell’Ottocento”, *Sinergie*, LXXXII (2010), pp. 75–93.

Communication through notices and posters

As already mentioned, the *impresa* would have to submit to the theatre management copies of the posters and notices prior to their publication. Moreover, every morning the *impresa* would have to notify the management of the daily rehearsals. Indeed, we know that this actually happened at Rijeka, at least from 1888 to 1910, from the evidence of a notebook (preserved in the archival collection of the Teatro Comunale) listing the rehearsals for the management.⁴⁸ Notification of the dress rehearsals had to be made with at least 24 hours' prior warning.

Rehearsals

At Rijeka the dress rehearsal was to be given with full sets and lighting, exactly as if it were a premiere, and could be attended not only by the people "on duty" (*di servizio*), but also by those indicated in the theatre's general regulations. In exceptional cases, according to the tender specifications of 1909, the theatre management could exempt the *impresa* from giving a dress rehearsal. If the production should be found by the management to be unfit to be presented to the public, it could even be suspended. The *impresa* would have to comply with any changes or improvements requested by the management.

On this matter the tender specifications of Zadar were more detailed than the others. They expected all the principal singers to sing "in full voice" (*a voce spiegata*) both before and during the dress rehearsal, precisely so that the theatre's presidency could get a true impression of the singers' abilities and their suitability to perform the parts given to them.⁴⁹ In this way the presidency played an active role also in the choice of voices.

Contested artists and fines

The management could dismiss (*protestare*) an artist both in the course of rehearsals and during the season itself, no matter whether the disapproval was expressed by the audience or by members of the management itself. If this happened, the *impresa* would have to pro-

48 In actual fact the notification was not strictly carried out on a daily basis, though we do find clear indications of the beginning of rehearsals, including timetables; see HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4. Again, this provision is not found in the *capitolati* prior to 1909; see Art. 24 of the Tender specifications for the running of the Teatro Comunale in the three-year period 1 January 1909 – 31 December 1911, Rijeka, [1908], HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6.

49 See Art. 5, Tender specifications of the Teatro Giuseppe Verdi of Zadar, Zadar, [post 1901], HR-DAZD, folder 29.

vide a replacement at its own expense, regardless of the agreements made with the artist concerned and without any right to compensation.⁵⁰ Other figures could also be dismissed, including the conductor and *maestro concertatore*, the chorus master, the choreographer, the stage director and even the prompter.

It was the impresario's task to deduct from the artists' wages any fines imposed by the theatre management. At Rijeka, according to the tender specifications of 1885, the amount of the fine was split equally between theatre management and impresario.

Contested productions

If for any reason the public voiced its disapproval of a production, the theatre management was authorised to terminate it and withhold the payment of the endowment in proportion to the performances still to be given. On such matters the management could also withhold the impresario's deposit. The impresa would have no right to compensation or damages and would be obliged to make changes or improvements to the production as soon as possible. It was only at Rijeka in 1909 that this subject began to be included in the tender specifications; at Zadar this clause was not mentioned.

Changes to the productions and stand-ins

In cases of sickness on the part of any of the leading roles or of any changes to the production, in both cities (Rijeka and Zadar) the impresa was expected to inform the management and the public by putting up notices where the tickets were sold, in the theatre foyer, in the galleries and outside the door to the theatre itself. Nor could the impresa have anyone stand in for the principal singers except in situations of force majeure, both during a performance and in the course of the season. The singer called in as a replacement would have to be "of corresponding merit and ability and chosen from the best available";⁵¹ and naturally, he or she would have to be approved by the theatre management. The substitution could be extended in time solely in a case of force majeure.

50 Similar rules applied to the supply of scenery, costumes, properties, footwear, jewellery, wigs, etc. and everything else concerning the staging. By "artists", the tender specifications of Zadar post-1901, at article 6, meant the "artists of song, dance and sound" (*artisti di canto, di ballo e di suono*), the conductor and *maestro concertatore*, the chorus master, the choreographers, the stage director and the prompter.

51 "di merito e capacità corrispondenti e scelto fra i migliori disponibili"; Art. 29, Tender specifications for the running of the Teatro Comunale for the three-year period 1 January 1909 – 31 December 1911, Rijeka, [1908], HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6.

Nightly admission prices and cut-price performances

The tender specifications of Rijeka of 1885 and those of Zadar did not define the prices of admission to the performances in any detail. They simply stated that they would be decided by the theatre management and the impresario in common accord. From 1909 onwards, on the other hand, those of Rijeka give detailed indications of the prices not only for the operas of the spring and autumn seasons, for spoken theatre and dances, but also for the 'popular' (i. e. cut-price) performances, for which admission was half the price of a normal evening. The prices given were those for entrance to the parterre and boxes, entrance to the gallery, parterre seats (*poltroncine di platea*), stools (*scanni*), gallery seats (*poltroncine di galleria*), gallery stools (*scanni di galleria*), ground-floor boxes, mezzanine boxes, and 1st- and 2nd-tier boxes. For the autumn opera season the impresa was authorised to increase only the entrance price to the parterre and boxes. At Rijeka, for the non-mandatory performances the impresario fixed the admission price at his own discretion.⁵²

The theatre of Zadar specified that these prices would have to be made known on both the general programme and the posters for each performance. This requirement was also respected at Šibenik, even if no tender specifications to back it up have survived. For here the printed posters gave precise indications of the prices for the parterre and boxes, namely: the better seats (*poltroncine*) in the parterre and chairs (*sedie*), stools (*scanni*), gallery (*loggione*), and boxes of the 2nd and 3rd tiers. Also indicated were the reductions for children, students and non-commissioned officers (*sottoufficiali*).

The public had the right to return a purchased ticket and ask for a refund if the impresario had made changes to the production; and could do so right up until the same day as the performance.⁵³

Special performances and galas, public festivities

In the case of performances featuring an artist of world renown, the impresa could, with the theatre management's consent, charge prices that were higher than usual. This could also happen in the event of a visit to the theatre of sovereigns and princes. At both Rijeka and Zadar the management could reserve for itself a specific number of seats, on payment to the impresa of the established price. On feast days and public holidays in both cities the use of the theatre was to be granted free of charge (artists and staff included). At Rijeka, at least certainly from the year 1885, the impresario also had to donate the income from a regular non-subscription performance to a children's charity (the Pio Asilo di Carità per

52 "La questione teatrale", *La Bilancia*, 13. 9. 1875.

53 Rispoli, *La vita pratica*, p. 46.

l'Infanzia). In this way part of the proceeds of the opera season would be given to a worthy cause. At Zadar it was the theatre management that indicated which of the current season's performances was to be devoted to this purpose.

'Veglioni' and Balls

Only the tender specifications of Rijeka mention that during the carnival season the impresario could use the theatre for *veglioni* (masked carnival balls) and other ballroom events. The latter could be prohibited by the management if they were judged to be incompatible with the importance and decorum of the theatre. Moreover, only the management could give consent for the theatre to be hired out to third-party companies. Once consent had been given, the impresario would be responsible for covering all heating and lighting costs and paying for any damages to the building or its furnishings.⁵⁴

Benefit nights

Mention of benefit nights for the artists is made only in the tender specifications of Zadar, which state that it was the theatre management's responsibility to choose which among the artists engaged should deserve to give a benefit night. The management would also decide the date or dates of such performances in the course of the season.

Free admission to performances

The tender specifications could also specify who was entitled to free entry to performances. While the *capitolati* for Rijeka of 1885 mention only the theatre's doctors-surgeons or, more elusively, those who possessed "free tickets" (*biglietti franchi*), in later years they would also specify the mayor (*podestà*), members of the theatre management and the staff on duty designated by the authorities.⁵⁵

54 See "Disposizioni circa l'uso del Teatro Comunale in Carnevale"; Tender specifications for the running of the Teatro Comunale for the three-year period 1 January 1909 – 31 December 1911, Rijeka, [1908], HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6.

55 In addition, at the beginning of the season five stools (*scanni*) in the parterre were reserved for the use of officials delegated by the authorities (as from the *capitolato* of 1909). It is in the article on free admission to the theatre, and then only at Rijeka (1901), that we find the clause obliging the impresario to deliver to the theatre management the libretto of each opera to be staged.

In the press there was much discussion on whether or not it was right to give free tickets to journalists. In 1871 *La Bilancia* of Rijeka had been the recipient of a ticket for a stool (*scanno*) and free entrance to the opera season from the theatre management, but the paper declined it in order to preserve its independence of judgement. The newspaper made it public that it had sent the ticket back.⁵⁶ On the question of free tickets for the press, the debate went on for years: was it right and proper for the press to accept free access to the theatres? In France and Italy some newspapers would side against the practice, but then nothing would be done to change the situation until the subject was once again raised at the first skirmish between critics and impresarios. At the theatres that received an endowment from the government or municipality, it was claimed that free admission for journalists would neither prejudice their reputation nor constrain their independence, because the invitation was made not by the *impresa* but directly by one of the two above authorities. It was a different matter if free entry was granted by the *impresa*. In such cases, it was thought, the reports in the newspapers could be distorted, for the press would not remain indifferent to the kindness received and would feel duty-bound to return the favour by praising everything about the production.⁵⁷

At Zadar the list of those given free admission was more detailed than at Rijeka. As well as, naturally, the staff on duty and at the theatre door, and the members of the management, it also included the theatre's electrical engineer (*ingegnere elettrotecnico*), the directors and theatre reporters of the local newspapers, the chief inspector of the fire brigade and, as was routinely included, the theatre's doctor. In fact the doctor was not only obliged to be present at both the dress rehearsals and performances, but also, on the management's instructions, expected to visit any singers or players who had called off sick (making a house call if necessary). In such cases, however, he wouldn't have to take any responsibility for their treatment, but just give his opinion on their state of health.⁵⁸ In addition to free admission, the doctor was also assigned a parterre seat (*poltrona*) in the theatre, as was the engineer, the

56 "La giunta teatrale", *La Bilancia*, 15. 4. 1871.

57 "[...] however much a writer on art may feel the delicacy of his duties," the *Teatro Illustrato* wrote, "he cannot, deep down, be at all insensitive to the courteous – though interested – gestures of an *impresa*, which, on its part, in such cases has the right to be treated politely by those he invites, just as a gracious lady doing the honours at her home has the right, if nothing else, to a compliment from the polite guest." ("[...] per quanto uno scrittore d'arte senta la delicatezza del proprio ufficio, non può essere in fondo a se stesso affatto insensibile alle cortesi – sebbene interessate – dimostrazioni di un'impresa, la quale, dal canto suo, in tal caso ha diritto di essere trattata ammodo dai suoi invitati, come gentile signora che fa gli onori di casa ha diritto, se non altro, a un complimento dall'ospite ben educato."). Even the editors of *Il Teatro illustrato* declared publicly that it no longer wished to accept free tickets to the theatres, so as to preserve its impartiality and independence; see "L'ingresso gratuito della stampa nei teatri", *Il Teatro Illustrato*, anno III, no. 34, 1883, p. 156.

58 See Art. 17, Tender specifications of the Teatro Giuseppe Verdi of Zadar, Zadar, [post 1901], HR-DAZD, folder 29.

newspaper directors and the commanding officer on duty. A stool (*scanno*), on the other hand, was reserved for the journalists and the police officers on duty.

Cases of force majeure

It was a general rule that in the event of the opening of the theatre being delayed for reasons of force majeure (which were usually identified as: fire, repairs to the theatre, failure of the electric lighting, public disasters and epidemics; all measures relating to public order, safety and hygiene; wars and revolutions; and the death or sickness of sovereigns and princes), or of a suspension of performances or a definitive closure of the theatre, the impresario could claim neither damages nor compensation from the management. It would be relieved of all responsibility, but at the same time would get no payment. From 1909 the tender specifications of Rijeka added that the endowment would be paid in proportion to the number of performances given, thereby ensuring remuneration just for what had already been done. The only form of compensation that the impresario could claim, at least for the year 1901 at Rijeka, was the payment of 400 crowns for every missed performance if the electric lighting should fail.⁵⁹

Employment agreements of the artists

A clause that was normally added asked the impresario to introduce into their contracts with the artists, *maestri concertatori* and conductors, orchestral players, dancers, chorus singers and other staff, a condition obliging them to abide by the rules given in the tender specifications and any other regulations in force at the theatre or prescribed by the management.

Termination of the contract

In the tender specifications of Zadar there was an article stating that if the contract were to be terminated prior to the agreed expiry date, for any reason at all, the theatre management would not be obliged to uphold any partial agreements that the impresario had concluded with singers, dancers, orchestral players, etc., with the season-ticket holders and renters of seats (*poltrone*), chairs (*sedie*) and boxes, or with the suppliers of theatrical services.⁶⁰

59 See Art 7, Call for tenders to run the productions of the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka, Rijeka, 22. 5. 1900, Maritime and Historical Museum of the Croatian Littoral, theatre collection.

60 See, for example, Art. 31, Tender specifications of the Teatro Giuseppe Verdi of Zadar, Zadar, [post 1901], HR-DAZD, folder 29.

Rescission and measures in case of death

A clause not found at Zadar, but included at Rijeka at the beginning of the 20th century, concerns the measures to be taken in the event of the impresario dying. The municipality of Rijeka would have the authority to immediately appoint an administrator for the current or following season, who would perform his duties at the heirs' expense and without any liability. The law specified that the heirs that accepted the inheritance would be obliged to pay off all debts existing at the time of the impresario's death (loans and artists' wages included).⁶¹

Measures to be taken in case the management should discontinue its activities

Again, it is only at Rijeka that we find a clause which specified that, in the event of the theatre management ceasing to perform its functions, the impresario would have to acknowledge that the management's rights and responsibilities would be taken over by the municipal delegation or the person the delegation appointed to take charge of the administration.⁶²

Amount of the endowment and payment of the instalments

Not all the tender specifications specified the precise amount of the endowment. One was more likely to find an indication of when the various instalments had to be paid. At Rijeka in 1885, for example, a first instalment was paid at the arrival of all the artistic staff at the *piazza*; the second after the fifth performance; the third after half the obligatory performances; and the final one after the end of all the performances. Zadar also adopted a system of four instalments, though the actual times of the second and third payments were different and depended on the number of performances.⁶³ On the payment of the instalments the tender specifications of Zadar were stricter than those of Rijeka, for they obliged the *impresa* to prove to the presidency, at the due date for each instalment, that it had paid off the artists, orchestral players, dancers and choristers. If it should fail to produce the required documentation, the presidency could take it upon itself to make those payments up to the amount of the instalment in question. And if the money should not be enough,

61 See Prospero Ascoli, *Della giurisprudenza teatrale: studj*, Pellas, Firenze 1871, p. 119.

62 This was the final clause of the Tender specifications for 1909–1911 and 1912–1914 at Rijeka.

63 At Split, on the other hand, in 1895 the first quarter was paid at the arrival of the baggage, the second after the second performance, the third half way through the season, and the last at the end of the season; see Letter from the theatre management of Split to Antonio Lana, Split, [n. d.].3.1895 HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

the remainder could be collected from the box-office receipts, evening after evening. At Zadar the actual size of the endowment was not specified in the *capitolato*, for here we are dealing with a printed form that needed to be filled in. Rijeka, on the other hand, specified the sum of 8,000 crowns in that of 1909.⁶⁴

Also written into the tender specifications was the provision that the management would neither advance to the impresario any sum of money, in any form whatsoever, nor grant any further subsidy if requested. This clause was not always respected, as transpired when the presidency at Zadar was accused of advancing the impresario money in 1869.⁶⁵

The security deposit and penalties

There came a time when the contractor had to leave a security deposit as a guarantee for the fulfilment of his obligations. A sum of money was to be paid into the theatre's treasury at the signing of the contract (this needed to be done shortly after notification of the concession).⁶⁶ If the impresario failed, even only in part, in the obligations set out in the contract (in turn based on the tender specifications), he would lose every right to his deposit. The municipality of Rijeka could then freely make use of this sum and treat it as a fine, while the contract itself would become null and void. The tender specifications of Rijeka for 1885 left a space in which to write the amount of the penalty owed to the management. The security deposit could also serve to pay the orchestra and chorus should the impresario fail to do so within the specified deadlines. It would be returned only after the impresario had fulfilled all his obligations, "including the proof that he has fully satisfied all the *masse* [i. e. orchestra and chorus]".⁶⁷

The actual amount of the security deposit varied considerably in the years under consideration. At Rijeka in 1861 – and in general throughout the 1860s – it was fixed at 1,000 florins,⁶⁸ at a time when the endowment amounted to 6,000 florins; it remained the same

64 This sum had probably already been stable for some years, for a letter from the impresario Raffaele Sforza to the theatre management of Rijeka tells us that he received 8,000 crowns for the year 1904 and another 8,000 for 1905; Letter from Raffaele Sforza to the theatre management of Rijeka, Rijeka, 27. 4. 1904, HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6; and ditto for 6. 5. 1905.

65 See the Message written by Natalia Dudan to the presidency of the theatre on the circular message of 25. 10. 1869, HR-DAZD, folder 3. On that occasion the presidency infuriated certain boxholders by granting the impresario an advance on the endowment.

66 At Zadar, for example, the signing had to take place within eight days of the receipt of notification; see Art. 20, Tender specifications of the Teatro Giuseppe Verdi of Zadar, Zadar, [post 1901], HR-DAZD, folder 29.

67 "compresa la prova di aver pienamente soddisfatto tutte le masse"; Art. XVII, Tender specifications of the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka, Rijeka, 1885, HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6.

68 See Letter from the theatre secretary Politei to the theatre management of Rijeka, Venezia, 21. 1. 1861, HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6.

in the years immediately following, with the only difference that the endowment was now 7,000 instead of 6,000 florins.⁶⁹ Over 25 years later, however, the deposit was increased by 600 %, to as much as 6,000 florins (on the evidence of that made by the agent Rossegger in 1887). In the early years of the new century it remained stable at 6,000 crowns (note the change of currency). The impresario would first have to pay into the municipal treasury 2,000 crowns, either in cash or in “valuables” (*effetti di valore*), as a bid deposit (the *vadio*); and then complete the sum by transferring a further 4,000 crowns at the signing of the contract. The theatre management could even demand a deposit of more than 6,000 crowns if this was considered necessary.⁷⁰ While the deposit at Rijeka, from 1901 onwards, remained stable at 6,000 crowns, the endowment came to 8,000 crowns (in the case of an annual contract) or 7,000 crowns (for a two-year contract). At Zadar and Split, on the other hand, the deposit in the early years of the 20th century was fixed at 1,000 or 1,500 Italian lire (while the endowment continued to be paid in crowns).⁷¹ Bearing in mind an exchange rate of 1 Italian lira = 2,5 crowns (still valid at the time of the First World War), the sum in question corresponded to about 2,500 or 3,750 crowns respectively, hence lower than at Rijeka.

Observing the increase or decrease of the deposit over the years is not particularly significant unless it is compared to the size of the endowment. It is the relationship between the two figures that conveys how much more difficult things had become for the impresario aspiring to run an opera season. The situation had changed greatly since the time when Giuseppe Rossi-Gallieno, in his book on the economics of the theatre (written back in the first half of the 19th century), could write that “the deposits that the theatrical entrepreneurs usually offer when the contract is drawn up are negligible in size compared to the endowments”.⁷² Particularly eloquent is the situation at Rijeka in 1923. Here those competing for

69 See Contract between the theatre deputation of Rijeka and the impresario Cesare Trevisan, [1865], HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4. As a term of comparison for a larger theatre, it is worth bearing in mind that in 1861 the impresario Tommasi took on the running of the theatre of Trieste for a three-year period with a deposit of 10,000 florins against an endowment of 54,000: the deposit was therefore ten times higher; see Carlo Bottura, *Storia aneddotica documentata del Teatro Comunale di Trieste: dalla sua inaugurazione nel 1801 al restauro del 1884 con accenni al Teatro Vecchio dal 1705 al 1800*, Balestra, Trieste 1885, p. 414; or directly, Tender specifications for the three-year period 1861–1864, I-TSmt, folder 104.

70 See the section “Deposito cauzionale”, Tender specifications for the running of the Teatro Comunale in the three-year period 1 January 1909 – 31 December 1911, Rijeka, [1908], HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6.

71 Inserted in the printed form of the tender specifications of Zadar post-1901 is the handwritten figure of 1,000 Italian lire. However, on the evidence of a Letter from Gustavo Argenti to Giorgio De Nakic d’Osliak [a name given in the documents in variant spellings: Giorgio De Nakich, Giorgio De Nakich d’Osliak, Giorgio Nachich d’Osliak]; Milano, 6. 2. 1899, HR-DAZD, folder 6, the figure given is 1,500 lire.

72 “le cauzioni che solitamente offrono gli intraprenditori di teatro all’atto della stipulazione del contratto d’appalto sono pressoché nulle per entità rispetto alle dotazioni”; Giuseppe Rossi-Gallieno, *Saggio di economia teatrale: dedicato alle melodrammatiche scene italiane*, Rusconi, Milano 1839, p. 44.

the contract would have to pay into the municipal treasury a bid deposit (*vadio*) of 5,000 lire, a sum that was then increased to form an overall deposit of 20,000 lire at the signing of the contract; in return, the *impresa* was assigned an endowment of lire 30,000.⁷³ In other words, the deposit corresponded to two thirds of the endowment. Evidently, in the course of time, the size of the deposit had increased in relation to the endowment. This in turn meant that any *impresario* wishing to run an opera season would find increasing difficulties unless he was supported by adequate financial liquidity.⁷⁴

Liability of the contractor and competent jurisdiction

The contractor would be personally liable to pay all damages to the theatre management or the municipality resulting from breaches of the contract, regardless of the cause. For the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka, the disputes were submitted to the judicial authorities of Rijeka. Likewise, the last article of the *capitolato* of Zadar indicated Zadar as the competent court in any disputes between theatre management and *impresa*. (A similar clause is still found today at the end of many calls for tender in the artistic, theatrical and musical fields, along with the acceptance of the clauses of the call itself). As stated in the tender specifications of Zadar, the commitments and conditions expressed in the *capitolato* were declared to be corresponding to, and forming an integral part of, the contract.

Also expressed was the general need to enforce the prescriptions of the political and municipal authorities, the disciplinary norms of the theatre regulations, and the laws and ordinances of the police. If the *impresa* should fail to fulfil the obligations included in the tender specifications, it would naturally be considered as disqualified.

Usually at the end of these tender specifications we find no direct reference to any possible attachments (for example, those listing the theatre's employees or the nightly expenses for the orchestra according to type of spectacle), such as we find in the *capitolati* of other theatres.

Like all calls for tenders, the *capitolato* had a deadline, so it indicated the date by which the *impresario* (or his representative) was to present the proposal. As for the response of the theatre management conveying its decision, that was given within a variable time-frame. A deadline was not always specified. For lack of documentation, we have no way of knowing if there was always a time-limit for the responses.

73 Call for tenders, Rijeka, 19.1.1923, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 10.

74 As an extreme case (from the theatre management's point of view), already back in 1839 Rossi-Gallieno cited the theatre of Saluzzo, where the endowment of 1,500 francs was surpassed by a deposit of 2,000 francs; see Rossi-Gallieno, *Saggio*, p. 45. Clearly this went completely against the interests of the *impresario*.

How strictly was the impresario's proposal of an opera season supposed to follow the exact terms of the tender specifications? There were even cases when the theatre management itself suggested that competing impresarios could make proposals that deviated from the specifications, or even make fresh proposals.⁷⁵ One possible instance could be when there was competition between different theatres in the same city. As indeed happened at Rijeka in 1914, when the Teatro Comunale faced the competition of a new theatre, the Teatro Fenice, which also intended to produce opera. Naturally it was impossible to anticipate how damaging the competition might be, but it was expected that there would be significant differences between the two theatres in both their prices of admission and running costs, all to the disadvantage of the Teatro Comunale. And so, unless changes were made in the tender specifications, it was foreseeable that the suitable competitors would either decline to come forward or propose conditions that were unacceptable. The risk was that, with the inevitable bureaucratic delays (which were routine then as today), the Teatro Comunale would have no time to draw up an advantageous contract. Hence a more 'flexible' clause was inserted in the document, leaving the competing impresarios the opportunity to suggest conditions other than those indicated. Interestingly, a few years earlier, in 1911, the former impresario of the Teatro Comunale, Alpron-Battaglia, had already alerted the theatre management to this very problem: "We are also confident", he wrote, "that in the event of a competing theatre making an appearance during the new three-year period, this Honourable Committee will wish to come to an agreement with the undersigned impresario to make any changes that may be made necessary".⁷⁶ Under certain conditions, therefore, the *capitolato* was not necessarily a document in which all of its clauses were binding.

In the case of Rijeka the written proposals of the impresarios, duly provided with a tax-stamp (or *bollo*),⁷⁷ had to be delivered to the registrar's office (*protocollo*) of the civil magistrate. The tenderers had to declare explicitly that they were fully aware of the terms of the *capitolato* and that they intended to comply with them in the event of the contract being assigned to them.⁷⁸ Proposals made by telegraph, presented after the deadline, or lacking the

75 See Letters from the *podestà* to the theatre management of Rijeka, Rijeka, 12. 6. 1914 and 11. 7. 1914, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

76 "Siamo pure fiduciosi che nel caso durante il nuovo triennio dovesse sorgere un Teatro di concorrenza, codest'Onorevole Commissione vorrà mettersi d'accordo colla sottoscritta Impresa per prendere quei eventuali cambiamenti che si rendessero necessari"; Letter from the Alpron-Battaglia impresario to the civil magistrate of Rijeka, Rijeka, 31. 7. 1911, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

77 For the three-year contract of 1915–1917 of the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka, for example, a one-crown stamp was required. In 1923 stamped paper (*carta bollata*) of 1 lira was needed. The proposal had to be delivered to the secretary of the theatre commission of Rijeka in a closed and fire-sealed envelope.

78 Nonetheless, as in the case referred to above, proposals would also be accepted that diverged from the terms of the *capitolato* or perhaps included new proposals, provided that they did not exceed the limits established in the document as regards both the number and quality of the productions and the contribution of the Comune.

prescribed bid deposit (*vadio*) would not be taken into consideration. In fact the proposal also had to be accompanied by a receipt from the municipal treasury confirming that the *vadio* had been deposited.⁷⁹ The decision on the proposals was left to the discretion of the municipal delegation. If, however, any proposal should call for important changes to the tender specifications, a further decision would be needed, this time by the municipality.⁸⁰ Even the *podestà* in person could make observations on the call for tenders.

As regards the selection processes, there is little information about how they were carried out and it is hard to say how much objectivity went into appointing the impresario. At times the theatre managements were accused of seeming to favour certain impresarios over others (for example, by allowing a discount on the security deposit) or even of having a joint interest in the *impresa*. Also subject to criticism was the amount of time given (too little) to present a project. Tender specifications published fifteen or twenty days before the deadline clearly gave one insufficient advance notice to put together a strong project or make plans with the better singers. Another point commented on was that all of the proposals were to be delivered “under seal” (*sotto suggello*) and opened by the theatre management at one sitting, without the possibility of considering any possibly better offers that might arrive after the deadline.⁸¹ Lack of documentation on these matters, however, prevents us from knowing whether or not these rules were always followed.

But now let us turn our attention to identifying the interested parties that responded to these calls and consider the proposals they made in their bid to secure the contract for an opera season.

2.2 Provenance and identity of the impresarios

The people who had a primary interest and need to understand the theatre’s requirements (and to whom the tender specifications were indeed addressed) were the impresarios and agents working in the area, whether or not they themselves could be considered as ‘locals’. Even though, to quote John Rosselli, it is true that to be an opera impresario was becoming less a profession than a disease,⁸² there were still a number of impresarios and agents engaged in the business of organising opera seasons. In the area under scrutiny, it has been possible to unearth the names of 287 people working in that field. And

79 The reference is to the tender specifications of 1915–1917. Here the *vadio* amounted to 2,000 crowns, as in the previous years. The deposit could be made either in cash or in valuables admitted by law as a deposit.

80 See Call for tenders, Rijeka, 13. 7. 1914, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

81 See “Sul concorso d’appalto al Teatro Comunale”, *L’Arte*, anno III, no. 12, 20. 4. 1872, pp. 45–46.

82 Rosselli, *The Opera Industry*, p. 37.

surely this is not the complete number of those who were active in the second half of the 19th century and early 20th, for the calculation is based on the available archival material. At Šibenik the names of these impresarios and agents can be gleaned not only from the letters exchanged with the theatre management, but also from the lists of small expenses for correspondence and stationary that the management (in this case most likely Paolo Mazzoleni himself) drew up meticulously. In this way we have a fair idea of the contacts between impresarios and theatre, at least for the 1880s and 1890s. At Zadar, on the other hand, a well-ordered register was kept, giving, for each letter in arrival, the name of the correspondent, the date, the provenance, and even a concise summary of the contents. On the right-hand side of the register the same information about the response was inserted: here again with the content of the reply and the date. Unfortunately, however, the register is incomplete and survives only for the years 1879, 1884 and 1885. At Rijeka we come across various names in the register of documents called the *Protocollo degli esibiti (1885–1910)*.⁸³ For the other cities, where there are no such registers, the names are drawn solely either from the correspondence found in the local archives or from the newspapers.

The only available list of impresarios working in the Italian area, that drawn up some years ago by John Rosselli,⁸⁴ only marginally helps us to identify the people working in Istria and Dalmatia, both for chronological reasons (the historical period covered here extends right up to the end of the First World War) and because of the different sources used here to get the material. The same can be said for the meticulous *Dizionario bio-bibliografico degli agenti teatrali attivi a Milano nell'Ottocento* by Livia Cavaglieri.⁸⁵ For most of the names listed in our study it is impossible today to recover any biographical data. They are figures about whom there is no literature. If information has survived, it will be found solely in the primary sources.

Who, therefore, were the impresarios working in the area? Where did they come from? Did they have any specific training to do their job? It is well known that the impresario often came from practical experience in the theatre, and those working in this particular geographical area were no exception. Being an impresario would be either an end-of-career job or an occupation that could be undertaken alongside a practical profession in music. Some of their names appear in the lists of singers sent to the theatre managements advertising the cast for an opera season, thereby reminding us that impresarios often performed as tenors, baritones or basses within the same company that they promoted. Examples are the baritones Ernesto Maurizi Enrici and Felice Brandini who wrote to Zadar from Bologna and Trieste respectively, or the bass Pietro Dussich [Dusich], also active at Zadar. The name

83 See Register of documents (1885–1910) (*Protocollo degli esibiti (1885–1910)*), HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 10.

84 John Rosselli, *Elenco provvisorio*.

85 Livia Cavaglieri, *Tra arte e mercato. Agenti e agenzie teatrali nel XIX secolo*, Bulzoni, Roma 2006, p. 303.

of the impresario Raffaello Faini, who offered his services at Šibenik, like that of Giustino Azzarelli, appeared in the list of tenors of the very same cast they were recommending.

Some were also instrumentalists, like Federico Monari Rocca or Nazzareno Perazzini. Carlo Mirco was first clarinet at the Teatro Regio in Turin and La Fenice in Venice, yet he repeatedly offered his services as impresario at Pula, Zadar and Šibenik, like his partner Giani, who also worked in the orchestra at La Fenice.⁸⁶ In the same way we find *maestri concertatori* and conductors such as Luigi Bernardi at Pula or Guido Farinelli at Rijeka; dancers or choreographers like Francesco Razzani and actors of spoken theatre; not to mention lawyers, journalists and even shopkeepers like Luigi Dessanti. They could also have been born into families of impresarios or, like the more famous Alessandro Lanari, be married to singers and engage their wives in the cast: Giuseppe Castagnoli and Antonio Lana were good examples.⁸⁷

The standard of education of the various impresarios differed and the linguistic competence displayed in the surviving correspondence is fairly variable. For the letters in which the handwriting of the signature differs from that of the rest of the letter, we can assume that the impresario had a secretary, or at least someone who could be called upon to write a letter when needed. Some of the *borderò* (registers of the evening's takings) surviving at Šibenik show very plainly how scant the knowledge of Italian could be. The person filling in the *borderò* for the performances organised by Ernesta Ferrara, a female impresario who came to Šibenik with the Becherini company in 1882, made blunders such as that of referring to the operas *Crispino e la Comare* as “Grespin e Lacomare”, *Il barbiere di Siviglia* as “Barbiere Sivilia”, *L'elisir d'amore* as “L'Elisin di Amore”, *Pipélé* (or *Pipelet*) as “Pipele” and *La sonnambula* as “Sononbola” or “Sonambola”, and even mentioning a certain “Il baccio al Diavolo”.⁸⁸

Many of these impresarios only dealt in opera; others also included spoken theatre and, towards the end of the century, operetta and variety shows (*varietà*). With the advent of the new century, cinema could also be added. The agencies they founded could thus be said to be ‘multi-specialised’. The theatrical agencies always had to be authorised by the *Luogotenenza* or provincial government. One such multi-specialised impresario was

86 Carlo Mirco was also a composer. His proposal (or his presence) is also documented at the Teatro Bonda of Dubrovnik in 1886 or 1887. His two brothers were also instrument players. See *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, XLVII, no. 44, 30. 10. 1892, p. 710.

87 When Lana engaged his wife – the prima donna and *contralto assoluto* Barberina Rossi-Lana – for the opera season, *La Voce Dalmatica* was not slow to point out, with a touch of irony, that in actual fact she had not been genuinely engaged, “given that there was a legal document relating to her and the Signor Impresario in a certain book at their parish that makes any other one useless” (“essendovi una scritta relativa ad essa e al signor impresario, in un certo libro della loro parrocchia, che ne rende inutile ogni altra”); *La Voce Dalmatica*, vol. I, 1. 12. 1860, p. 220.

88 *Borderò* for the Compagnia Becherini, Šibenik, July 1882, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3.

Eugenio De Monari, who was fairly active at Zadar and whose letterhead read “Eugenio De Monari & C. / Lirica – Operette – Prosa – Varietà – Cinematografia / Milano”. Similar situations were found of impresarios who turned into agents that now ran opera, operetta and spoken theatre.

In certain cases the terms “impresario” and “agent” are used interchangeably in the documents: an aspect that complicates the job of analysing their work, making it not always possible to define their activities with any precision. By definition, as a rule, the agent negotiated on behalf of impresarios and singers, whereas the impresario merely managed a company of artists.⁸⁹ The two activities were not mutually exclusive and indeed could overlap at times. For example, the rubber stamp used by Ettore Bonturini, an impresario and theatrical agent who worked at Zadar between 1884 and 1892, specified both qualifications: “Ettore Bonturini / impresario / ed agente teatrale / Venezia”. Likewise, the headed notepaper of Josip Karaman of Split: “agente ed impresario teatrale”; subsequently the text was supplemented with the further addition of “concessionata impresa pubblicità” (licensed advertising company), and later still “Cinema Elektra”. In fact he also traded in photographic equipment, most certainly as a way of keeping up to date, at a time when opera was giving way to new forms of entertainment. His letterhead was in both Croatian and Italian.⁹⁰

Karaman, who was from Split, was an example of a local impresario. In fact some impresarios could be natives of the Istrian or Dalmatian region and work in the area, whereas many others, the majority, came from outside. Enrico Viscardi, who was engaged to run the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar, was, for example, among those who operated within a tighter radius, as also Giovanni Maraspin working in Rijeka.⁹¹ But we also have the case of local impresarios like Olimpio Lovrich, from Zadar, who went on to work in Trieste and only returned to Zadar (professionally speaking) to organise a single opera season.⁹² Similar was the situation of Antonio Lana of Zadar, who worked as an impresario abroad, above all in Spain, but who was repeatedly in contact with the theatre management of Split from 1893 onwards. Among the ‘locals’ from Pula and Rijeka we encounter the names of Alberto

89 On the role of the theatrical agents, see John Rosselli, “Agenti teatrali nel mondo dell’opera lirica dell’Ottocento”, *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia*, I/17 (1982), pp. 134–154. On the difference between the *impresario*, *capocomico* and *agente*, see also Franco Ferrari, *Intorno al palcoscenico. Storie e cronache dell’organizzatore teatrale*, Franco Angeli, Milano 2012, p. 19.

90 Today in fact Karaman is principally remembered as a film director and photographer, best known for filming the coronation of Tsar Nicholas I of Montenegro; see Gian Piero Brunetta, *Storia del cinema mondiale*, Einaudi, Torino 2003, p. 1331.

91 See “Origine del cognome Maraspin”, in *LussinO*, Foglio della Comunità di Lussinpiccolo, 28, December 2008, p. 51.

92 After the First World War, Olimpio Lovrich was engaged to run the 1923 season at the Politeama Ciscutti of Pula, but is not mentioned in the area in the previous seasons; see Bogneri, *Il Politeama Ciscutti*, p. 306.

Vernier, a theatrical artist who looked after the interests of Pietro Ciscutti, later becoming his secretary and administrator (with power of attorney) and subsequently, from 1894, the director of the Politeama of Pula, and was to be found almost continuously in the coastal region;⁹³ that of Giuseppe Bini;⁹⁴ and also that of Giuseppe Corbetta, impresario of the Politeama in 1901. We have no certainty, however, that Bini and Corbetta were really Istrian or Dalmatian. The fact that their letters were addressed from one of the coastal cities does not necessarily mean that they came from the area. Indeed this was no guarantee even if the letters were numerous. A case in point is that of Natale Fidora, who was also known as a stage director and scene designer, and whose letters place him with a certain frequency in four different coastal theatres, but actually came from Adria in mainland Italy.⁹⁵

Some impresarios came from important cities like Trieste, then probably the foremost centre for the coastal area, having taken over that role from Venice (which by this time boasted only about a dozen contacts with Istria and Dalmatia, most of which without lasting prospects). The surnames of Triestine origin that emerge from the archives mostly point to families of Jewish origin: Curiel, Pesaro, Gentilli, Ullmann or Lattad, just to mention a few.⁹⁶ There were also impresarios who wrote, and negotiated, from cities such as Bari or Ancona: cities that were seemingly distant, but now brought closer by the steamship. Examples are

93 Vernier also owned his own theatre company. He handled various theatrical genres, from *opera semiseria* to vaudeville. In actual fact Vernier was not the only one to work on behalf of Ciscutti. The documents also give us the name of Francesco Lucerna, who was employed in the same capacity at the Politeama of Pula. For a period Vernier had also been secretary of the theatre of Rijeka in the early months of its reopening (1885), as well as impresario of the Anfiteatro Fenice and secretary of the Politeama of Pula (he is mentioned as such in 1888); see Bogneri, *Il Politeama Ciscutti*, p. 35 and “Alberto Vernier e Teatro Ciscutti”, *L'Eco di Pola*, 28.7.1894. Vernier ended his career in 1900 and retired to Cagliari; see “Il ritiro di un impresario teatrale”, *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, 12.9.1900. At the time of Vernier's management, however, Girolamo Andrioli was indicated as owner of the theatre; see Bogneri, *Il Politeama Ciscutti*, p. 40. The owner's name appeared on the envelopes used for correspondence, which were then inscribed as follows: “Politeama Ciscutti – Pola / Proprietario: Girolamo Andrioli”. Andrioli, who was a building contractor and timber merchant, was in possession of the Politeama from the year 1897; see Raul Marsetič, *Il cimitero civico di Monte Ghiro a Pola simbolo dell'identità cittadina e luogo di memoria (1846–1947)*, Unione Italiana Fiume, Università Popolare di Trieste, Rovigo 2013, p. 230.

94 We encounter Bini at Pula. A man called Giuseppe Bini was also active as a choreographer in the same years. It is not known if this was the same person or just someone with the same name.

95 Fidora was also impresario at the Teatro Comunale of Trieste in 1897. The *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano* of 1901 mentions him as the impresario at a concert at the Liceo Benedetto Marcello in Venice for which he offered his services free of charge as a stage director, also producing artists, scenery and costumes; *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, 1, 1901, p. 161.

96 The name Raimondo Lattad is associated with that of a 19th-century actor. Again, we do not know if this was someone who happened to have the same name as the impresario Lattad or whether, most likely, it was the same person.

Nicola Guida or Antonio Quaranta for Bari and Ezio Carelli for Ancona, who negotiated with Šibenik through their theatrical agencies from 1919 onwards. As we can imagine, most of the journeys from Italy were made by sea, for obvious geographical reasons.

As an alternative to the sea route, one could also reach the coast from the hinterland. And indeed there were some Croatian impresarios who made contact from the theatres of Osijek and Zagreb, but they constituted a minority and rarely proposed productions of Italian opera. Zagreb and its theatre, which was hardly ever mentioned in the correspondences, seemed to remain extraneous to these circuits. The same could be said of Ljubljana. Also very rare was the presence of impresarios from another important operatic centre, that of Vienna. If we except the tenuous presence of Ignaz Kugel,⁹⁷ for opera we have no other references. More substantial, if anything, was their involvement in the world of operetta.

In terms of percentage, most of the impresarios were from Milan, or at least had their offices in Milan at the time when they corresponded with the theatres of the Istrian and Dalmatian region. This should come as no surprise, because Milan was after all the heart and fulcrum of opera in Italy. If we look at the censuses of the city's population from 1861 to 1901, we see an exponential increase in the number of impresarios and theatrical agents, from just 14 registered in 1861 to 151 in 1901. In that same year of 1901 there were 691 throughout the whole of Italy. And of that number, as one can readily imagine, the women were a distinct minority, with only 9 registered as impresarios.⁹⁸

2.2.1 Women impresarios on the Adriatic coast

Among the legions of male impresarios, the women were indeed a rarity at the time. But there were a few sporadic cases. Apart from Ernesta Ferrara, whose role is not yet clear (we do not know if she really worked as an impresario, given that absolutely nothing is known

97 At the time Kugel was based at Lindengasse 11 in Vienna, advertising in the press as follows: "The Ignaz Kugel theatre and concert agency at Lindengasse 11, Wien VII, is recommended for the procurement of engagements, as well as for the organisation of guest performances of outstanding artists, in the fields of spoken theatre and opera, as well as that of the Singspiel (Operetta); even for the completion – and respective reorganisation – of the stage personnel in general [...]" ("Das Theater- und Concert-Bureau Ignaz Kugel Wien VII, Lindengasse 11, empfiehlt sich zur Vermittlung von Engagements, sowie zum Abschluss von Gastspielen hervorragender Künstler, sowohl auf dem Gebiete des recitirenden Dramas, der Oper, wie auch auf dem des Singpeles (Operette); überhaupt zur eventuellen Completierung – respective Reorganisation – des Bühnenpersonales im Allgemeinen [...]"; *Neue Theater-Almanach für das Jahr 1895*, vol. VI, p. 62.

98 See *Censimento della popolazione del Regno d'Italia al 10 febbraio 1901*, as quoted in Livia Cavaglieri, *Tra arte e mercato*, p. 245.

about her except that she signed a contract with the theatre management of Šibenik for the season of 1882),⁹⁹ we have four cases of women connected with the running of opera. Associated with the Teatro Mazzoleni of Šibenik we find a certain Lucia Gazzone, who signed engagement agreements, and was also *maestro concertatore* and conductor, which was extremely rare for the period:¹⁰⁰ in the area in question it was unheard of for a woman to combine these professional qualifications. In the context of mainland Italy the case of Emma Carelli, an impresario at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome in 1912 (and before that a soprano), has already been studied,¹⁰¹ but that of Gazzone is not only different, but also earlier and probably even more singular.

Teresa Raineri Vaschetti, who was perhaps the wife of the impresario Antonio Vaschetti (who had been proposed to Zadar in 1897 by the agency of De Born & Anguissola), cited her experience as an impresario at the theatre of Ascoli Piceno when she proposed *Tosca* and *Faust* to the theatre management of Split in 1906.¹⁰²

At Pula in September 1892 Signora Giovanna Fischer, part-heir of the Politeama Ciscutti, also became impresario to the theatre for a three-year period.¹⁰³ She was referred to as the “direttrice” and was remembered for having organised an opera season (staged after the theatre hadn’t seen opera productions for eight years) that was apparently superior to that of the previous impresa.¹⁰⁴

99 In the newspaper *La Lanterna*, from Pisa, we read that “a new company of singers, run by Signora Ernesta Ferrara (Romana) and conducted by the distinguished Maestro Luigi Becherini has arrived unexpectedly, but much appreciated and without any publicity. The repertoire of the operas is attractive. It includes: Pipelè, Educande di Sorrento, Elisir d’amore, Barbiere di Siviglia, and Sonnambula”; *La Lanterna*, 1881, p. 5.

100 It was Gazzone who personally engaged Mario Zagni, first flute of the orchestra for Šibenik in 1919; see Engagement agreement, Šibenik, 13. 9. 1919, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b.

101 See, for example, Augusto Carelli, *Emma Carelli: trent’anni di vita del teatro lirico*, Maglione, Roma 1932, or by the same author, *Emma Carelli impresaria del Costanzi*, Palatino, Roma 1962. More recent is the article by Donatella Gavrilovich, “Un bastimento carico di...opere liriche e scenografie: Augusto ed Emma Carelli, Walter Mocchi e le tournées in Brasile”, in *Mosaico Italiano*, 2011, pp. 17–19.

102 See Letter from Teresa Raineri Vaschetti to the Conte di Capogrosso, Milano, 4. 1. 1906, HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII. In 1908 Raineri Vaschetti was also impresario at the Teatro Sociale of Crema for the carnival opera season of 1908; see [n. n.] *Teatro Sociale di Crema. Inventario degli atti d’archivio, sec. XVII-1937*, [n. p.], Bergamo 2012, p. 88.

103 Bogneri, *Il Politeama Ciscutti*, p. 32, and “Dichiarazione”, *L’Eco di Pola*, 13. 8. 1892.

104 The newspaper *L’Eco di Pola* wrote that there was a formal opera season at the inaugural opening of the Politeama Ciscutti in October 1881, then nothing for another eight years until, from 1889–90 onwards, the “directress” of the theatre offered a complete opera season which was apparently superior in quality to that of the Giani & Mirco impresa, which, it was commented dryly, “honoured the old Teatro Ciscutti by giving *Jone* with the sets of *I due Foscari*” (“onoravano il vecchio teatro Ciscutti dando la *Jone* con le scene dei *Due Foscari*”); “Confidenze di casa”, *L’Eco di Pola*, 29. 10. 1892. In actual fact there had been a few rare opera productions before the season in question. The letterhead used by Fischer for her

Before that, in 1874, we also have the case of Cleopatra Cajani, who was engaged to run the opera at Rijeka after the impresario Cesare Trevisan had abandoned the season.¹⁰⁵ It was such a novelty that the newspaper *L'Arte* declared that it was the first time a theatre had been taken on by “an impresario in a skirt” (*un impresario in gonnella*). It was then seen as the result of progress and “a step towards the emancipation of women” (*un passo verso l'emancipazione della donna*).¹⁰⁶ However, at the announcement of the operas on offer (*Le educande di Sorrento*, *Marco Visconti*, *Un ballo in maschera* and *Lorenzino dei Medici*) she failed to receive the desired encouragement and was criticised for not proposing an acceptable programme.¹⁰⁷ Cajani was also expected to perform the duties of the stage director and stage manager (*buttafuori*),¹⁰⁸ as had been done by her predecessor, the impresario Micheluzzi.¹⁰⁹ About Cajani we actually know little, also because within a short time all references began to be made in the masculine, as “the impresario Cajani”. There emerged the figure of a possible husband (the “old impresario” Cajani of Perugia) who personally took over the *impresa*, but failed to conclude the season. In fact he asked for the contract to be terminated and partially paid off the artists.¹¹⁰ The *impresa* was then taken over by the *maestro concertatore* and conductor Bartoli, making it the third time the role had changed hands in the course of the season.

correspondence read: “Direzione Politeama Ciscutti / Giovanna ved. Fischer / Telegrammi: Ciscutti – Pola”; Letter from Giovanna Fischer to the theatre management of Zadar, Pula, 4. 12. 1891, HR-DAZD, folder 7.

105 Trevisan had apparently “disappeared into the fog” (“dileguò in nebbia”); “Stagione d’opera”, *La Bilancia*, 26. 1. 1874.

106 In actual fact there had been a few cases of “emancipation” in the Italian territory as a whole, if we think of the presence of Anna Stolzmann at the San Carlo of Naples at the end of the 19th century or, two centuries earlier, of Giulia De Caro at the Teatro San Bartolomeo in the same city; see Michael Walter, *Oper. Geschichte einer Institution*, Metzler, Stuttgart 2016, p. 79.

107 “Too much mould! Enough, we shall see!” (“Troppi i rancidumi! Basta vedremo!”), wrote “Stagione d’opera”, *La Bilancia*, 26. 1. 1874.

108 At the time the *buttafuori* was the person who alerted the singers at the beginning of each act, making sure that everyone is ready and in the right place, checked the clothing of the chorus and extras, and gave signals for raising and lowering the curtain, changing the scenery and “activating the necessary machinery” (*attivare i meccanismi necessari*). He (or she) was obliged to be present at the final rehearsals of the productions and to notify the audience in case of interruptions or changes to the performance. See the *Regolamento per il servizio e buon ordine del palco scenico e degli impiegati e inservienti del R. Teatro Rossini*, Zecchini, Livorno 1867, p. 21.

109 “Fiume”. *L'Arte*, anno V, no. 5, 14. 2. 1874, p. 4.

110 Cajani’s dealings, which were evidently not considered as exemplary, were described as follows: “already at the ninth performance at our municipal theatre he asked to be released from his contract for the current opera season, and that was after having cashed 7,000 florins of the endowment and about another 5,000 florins from the evening’s receipts, with which sums he merely had to pay for two scores and two [out of the four] instalments to the artists. Against all expectations, the theatre management not only agreed to his unjustified demand, but even returned to him the deposit left as a guarantee for his obligations towards both the public and the artists, with the result that today he serenely enjoys the well-earned fruits of his efforts amongst us. [...] as sly as Cajani was at disengaging himself, to

2.3 The theatrical agents: their strategies of intermediation

The letter addressed to the theatre's management or presidency in which the impresario customarily offered his services could also be written by an intermediary who represented his interests. In such cases the name of the impresario could be indicated in full or even omitted. If the name was omitted, the agent would make a generic request, while nonetheless stressing the honesty of his client: "A theatrical impresario who is a client of mine, an honest and prosperous person, has instructed me to confer with your municipal theatre on his behalf [...]"¹¹¹ or "Entreated by an excellent client of mine, well known as a serious and solvent person, who would be willing to present, even immediately, exceptional proposals of opera productions for the approaching autumn season to your theatre, I warmly appeal to Your Lordship's proven courtesy to give me information on the matter".¹¹² Or even: "I hasten to submit to Your Lordship's approval a splendid project for opera productions, on behalf of a renowned, honest and solvent company which can provide for itself every possible guarantee".¹¹³ In such cases the name of the interested party was never mentioned, though the agency was negotiating on his behalf. An agent might also simultaneously pro-

his own advantage, from all obligations towards the public, equally ill-advised, according to my way of thinking, were those who took on the task of running the season to its end with the resources that remained available to them" ("già alla nona recita del nostro civico teatro chiese di essere sciolto dal suo contratto relativamente all'attuale stagione d'opera, e ciò dopo d'aver incassati fiorini 7.000 della dotazione ed altri fiorini 5.000 circa dagli incassi serali coi quali importi non ebbe a pagare che due soli spartiti e due quartali agli artisti. Contro ogni aspettativa, la Direzione teatrale accondiscende alla sua ingiustificata pretesa non soltanto, ma gli restituì pure la cauzione da esso stata depositata a garanzia dei suoi obblighi verso il pubblico nonché verso gli artisti, dimodochè oggi gode pacificamente fra noi il bene meritato frutto di sue fatiche. [...] quanto fu scaltro il Cajani nello svincolarsi con positivo suo vantaggio da ogni obbligo verso il pubblico, altrettanto a mio modo di credere furono sconsigliati quelli che si assunsero l'incarico di condurre lo spettacolo fino alla fine coi mezzi rimasti a loro disposizione"); "Corrispondenze", *L'Alba*, anno III, no. 18, 25. 4. 1874, p. 4.

- 111 "Un mio cliente impresario teatrale, persona onesta e facoltosa mi dà incarico perché io tratti cotesto teatro municipale per suo conto [...]." Thus, for example, wrote Vincenzo Ceruso, who had a theatrical agency in Milan, to the Teatro Nuovo of Split; see Letter from Vincenzo Ceruso to the president of the theatre of Split, Milano, 9. 1. 1898, HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII. Another example is that of the lawyer Michele Spano, who wrote from Milan to Split on behalf of an otherwise unspecified "client"; see Letter from Michele Spano to the management of the theatre of Split, Milano, 24. 2. 1896, HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII.
- 112 "Sollecitato da un egregio mio cliente, noto quale persona seria e solvibile, che sarebbe disposto a presentare anche immediatamente eccezionali proposte di spettacolo d'opera per la p. v. stagione d'autunno a codesto teatro, interesse vivamente l'esperimentata cortesia della S. V. a volermi favorire informazioni in proposito."; Letter from Luigi Grabinski Broglio to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 29. 5. 1906, HR-DAZD, folder 26.
- 113 "Mi farò premura di sottoporre all'approvazione della S. V. uno splendido progetto di spettacolo d'opera, per conto di una rinomata ditta, seria e solvibile, la quale può offrire di sé ogni possibile garan-

pose two opera projects for the same season from two different impresarios, though this way of proceeding was probably not disclosed to their clients, who would surely prefer not to find themselves competing with other impresarios of the same agency.

The first agency was founded in Milan in 1870 by Icilio Polese and Pietro Ravizza.¹¹⁴ Ravizza was specialised in spoken theatre and in contact with the theatre managements of Zadar and Šibenik on various occasions. The address of his Agenzia Teatrale Drammatica was Via Pantano 4 in Milan and the agency's publication, a weekly artistic and theatrical journal directed by Antonio Fiacchi, was *Il Piccolo Faust*.¹¹⁵ Most of the agencies for which we have evidence in the coastal region had their offices in Milan. Indeed it would be difficult to find any agencies working in Istria or Dalmatia that had permanent offices. A "first theatrical agency" run by Lodovico Selles with an office in Pula is documented only in 1914.¹¹⁶ At Zadar, the agency of Alessandro Meola was established only after the First World War "for the recruitment of variety artists, companies of spoken theatre and music and miscellaneous shows, operettas, comedies, etc. etc.", which, as his presentation suggests, was not directly concerned with the running of opera.¹¹⁷

The business of the agencies handling opera productions was usually to form singing and dancing companies. They engaged the individual artists, the *maestri concertatori* and conductors, the chorus masters. They managed the choreographers; they dealt with the hiring of scores, costumes and properties; and they negotiated the buying and selling of new scores. Some agents also had a singing school, as in the case of the agent and singer Cesare Castelli, who sent to Dalmatia a brochure that advertised, together with his agency, "a school of singing and recitation at very reduced prices staffed by highly distinguished professors".¹¹⁸

zia."; Letter from Luigi Grabinski Broglio to the theatre management of Šibenik, Milano, 25. I. 1901, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

114 See Giovanni Azzaroni, *Del teatro e dintorni. Una storia della legislazione e delle strutture teatrali in Italia nell'Ottocento*, Bulzoni, Roma 1981, pp. 117–120.

115 We have documentation for Ravizza's correspondence with Zadar between 1884 and 1894, and with Šibenik in 1885. His letterhead, as found in Dalmatia, read as follows: "Agenzia Teatrale Drammatica / Pietro Ravizza / di Erminia Magistrelli Azimonti / (Fondata nel 1868) / Milano 23, Piazza del Duomo, 23 / corrispondente / e / rappresentante / dell'agenzia / Il Piccolo Faust / Periodico Artistico Letterario / settimanale di Bologna"; and with another address, "Agenzia Teatrale Drammatica / di / Pietro Ravizza / v. Pantano 4 / Milano Rappresentanza in Bologna / Agenzia del / Piccolo Faust // Organo dell'agenzia / Il Piccolo Faust / Periodico artistico-teatrale settimanale / Direzione A. Fiacchi – Bologna".

116 "prima agenzia teatrale"; see Letter from Lodovico Selles to the theatre management of Zadar, Pula, 9. 4. 1914, HR-DAZD, folder 13.

117 "per la scritturazione degli artisti di varietà, compagnie di prosa e musica e spettacoli variati, operette, commedie ecc. ecc."; see Letter from Alessandro Meola to the theatre management of Šibenik, 13. 4. 1920, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2a. His letterhead reads: "Affari Teatrali / Alessandro Meola / Zara".

118 "a limitatissimi prezzi una scuola di canto e declamazione impartita da distintissimi professori". As the brochure continued: "The agency run by Cesare Castelli and co. will be open from 9 to 5 pm every

As with the impresarios, it was important also for the agents to boast a widespread network of acquaintances. In the presentation of the theatrical agency L'Arlecchino we read that “we have the honour to bring it to your attention that our extensive contacts among the category of artists and our wide-ranging connections allow us to hope that in the management of the *impresa*'s interests we can offer the best possible conditions and the greatest diligence and industry in safeguarding their benefits”.¹¹⁹

In the coastal area we can witness the cases of various agents at work, engaged in both management-impresario and impresario-singer relations. A good example of the way the management-impresario contacts were dealt with is offered by the agent Giovanni Simonetti from Trieste, who, perhaps more than any of the others, was connected with the theatres of the eastern Adriatic, as also transpires from the table in the next section (the *Census of the impresarios and agents in the eastern Adriatic*). Simonetti was in contact with almost all the cities of Istria and Dalmatia and he ran the journal *L'Arte* with its associated theatrical agency.¹²⁰ In 1908 he negotiated on behalf of the impresario Giulio Milani, with the object of securing an opera season at the theatre of Zadar: “Permit me to ask”, Simonetti wrote, “if you would be happy to negotiate with the usual expert impresario Giulio Milani, who took on the opera season at this theatre [...] from 5.9 to 25.10, for the running of the Teatro Verdi

day and will attend to the formation and engagement of singing and dance companies, of choral and orchestral ensembles, will procure theatres (municipal, social and private) for impresarios; will provide, in conformity with the *piazze*, suitable and reliable artists for the competent performance of the parts entrusted to them in the productions; will attain the greatest economies in both the artistic personnel and suppliers; and will take pains to ensure that the impresarios have all the moral and material support needed to begin and successfully conclude their theatrical enterprises.” (“L'Agenzia sotto la ditta Cesare Castelli e C. sarà aperta dalle ore 9 alle 5 pom. in tutti i giorni e s'incaricherà della formazione e scritturazione di compagnie di canto e ballo, di masse corali ed orchestrali, procurerà agl'Impresari Teatri tanto Municipali che Sociali e privati, fornirà, secondo le piazze, Artisti idonei e sicuri per la buona esecuzione delle parti loro affidate negli spettacoli, procurerà le massime economie tanto nel personale artistico, quanto nei fornitori, e si adopererà onde gli impresari possano avere tutti gli appoggi morali e materiali al fine di iniziare e condurre a buon termine le loro imprese teatrali.”); see Brochure of the Agenzia Teatrale Cesare Castelli, [n.d.], HR-DAZD, folder 7.

119 “ci facciamo un pregio di portare a vostra conoscenza che le nostre estese relazioni nella classe degli artisti, e le nostre vaste aderenze ci permettono sperare che nella gestione degl'interessi delle Imprese potremo offrire i migliori partiti possibili, la massima diligenza ed attività nel tutelarne le convenienze”; Printed brochure of the theatrical agency L'Arlecchino, signed by Camillo de Clemente, for the theatre management of Rijeka, Firenze, II.1869, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

120 The only place in which we find no trace of him is Pula, the city from which an attack was launched on his periodical (*L'Arte* also had offices in Florence and Milan as well as Trieste), which was mercilessly defined by the anonymous detractor “Artù” as a “filthy, scruffy rag” (*lurido sì ma cencioso giornalucolo*) and a “revolver rag that lives off what the poor singers pay in order not to be censured and pay once again in order to be praised” (*giornalucolo revolver che vive alle spalle di quello che i poveri cantanti pagano per non venire strigliati e pagano ancora per essere lodati*); “Nostre corrispondenze”, *L'Eco di Pola*, 19. 10. 1889.

in the usual autumn opera season and, if so, what the conditions would be.”¹²¹ This was a typical way of beginning a correspondence with a theatre management, though in this case the impresario was not left nameless, for the good reason that Milani had evidently already proved his worth. Simonetti also offered the Sonzogno impresa to Rijeka for performances of *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci* in 1893. His agency services extended to the engagement of singers. And he even handled drama companies, like his colleague Enrico Gallina, who later became the representative of all the theatres of the Adriatic coast.¹²² Gallina began operating in the area only in the early years of the 20th century, whereas the time frame of Simonetti’s career went back to 1877.

Another person who also handled drama companies was Giuseppe Ullmann. In fact all three of them (Simonetti, Gallina and Ullmann) had agencies in Trieste that managed opera, operetta and spoken theatre. Ullmann was from a Jewish family, the same that included both the impresario Rodolfo Ullmann,¹²³ who was based in Trieste and also director of the Teatro Filodrammatico, and his brother Vittorio, who was secretary to Sarah Bernhardt and Maurizio Strakosch,¹²⁴ as well as being director of two theatres in Paris (Théâtre de la Renaissance and Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt).¹²⁵ Ullmann was in charge of negotiations at the theatres in Trieste, Istria, Dalmatia, Friuli and the provinces of the Veneto. Also from Trieste were Luciano Revere (the agency was called “Revere & Gallina”) and the agent Pietro Anselmi, who was also a publisher and editor of the journal *Il Teatro. Giornale di Lettere, Arti e Teatri* with its offices in Trieste and Venice.

Some theatrical agents owned artistic journals, which acted as the mouthpiece of the agency. It was even said that “the journal is for the agent what the code of law is for the lawyer”.¹²⁶ As well as introducing and publicising singers, thereby helping to build up their

121 “Mi permetto chiedere se fossero propensi trattare col solito ed esperto impresario Giulio Milani che assunse la stagione d’opera a questo teatro [...] dal 5.9 al 25.10, per l’appalto di codesto teatro Verdi per la solita stagione d’opera autunnale e nell’affermativa quali sarebbero le condizioni.”; Letter from Giovanni Simonetti to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 1908, HR-DAZD, folder 26.

122 See Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Riccardo Bovi-Campeggi, Šibenik, 27. II. 1910, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b. Enrico Gallina was an actor and brother of the playwright Giacinto Gallina.

123 On Rodolfo Ullmann, see Paolo Quazzolo, “L’impresariato teatrale: Rodolfo Ullmann e il Teatro filodrammatico”, in *Shalom Trieste: gli itinerari dell’ebraismo*, edited by Adriano Dugulin, Comune di Trieste, Trieste 1998.

124 It was Strakosch himself who revealed that Vittorio Ullmann was also an “impresario in Cairo”, thereby giving us an idea of the scope of his activities; Moritz Strakosch – Joseph Schürmann, *L’impresario in angustie: Adelina Patti e altre stelle fuori della leggenda, 1886–1893*, Bompiani, Milano 1940, p. 295.

125 Fabio Zubini, *Civitavecchia*, Italo Svevo, Trieste 2006, p. 61.

126 “il giornale è per l’agente quello che è il codice per l’avvocato”; “Medaglioni artistici. L’agente teatrale”, *La Musica Popolare*, anno II, no. 30, 16. 7. 1883, p. 120. The author of this article cannot have thought very highly of the profession if he wrote as follows: “The theatrical agent is, in origin, either a lawyer without clients, or a professor of literature without pupils – or perhaps even someone who, after

careers, its columns could also include other content, such as criticism of the political newspapers for example. The articles could be paid for by the singers according to the type of piece: in short, the greater the outlay, the more important and visible the singers became.¹²⁷ Various agents wrote to the managements of the coastal theatres also to ask for a subscription to their journal or for its renewal.¹²⁸ Examples are the Curiel theatrical agency with *La Frusta Teatrale* or Lamperti with *La Rivista Teatrale*; a proposal to subscribe to *La Scena Illustrata* was also made. The agent Sante Utili, who was based in Milan,¹²⁹ was the owner of *Movimento Artistico*, a journal issued twice a month and distributed to theatre managements free of charge.¹³⁰ The agency of Giuseppe Bergamin, who was active not only at Rijeka but also at Zadar and Split, owned the *Gazzetta Teatrale Italiana*. And Carlo Brosovich, who was also of Dalmatian origin, had his own journal, *Il Trovatore*, which he also directed.¹³¹

having had fun imitating the calligraphic hieroglyphics of others, other people's signatures, founds a miserable theatre journal with associated agency." ("L'agente teatrale è, in origine, o un avvocato senza clienti, o un professore di letteratura senza scolari – o magari anche un tale che, dopo essersi divertito ad imitare gli altrui geroglifici calligrafici, le altrui firme, fonda un giornaluccio teatrale con relativa agenzia.").

- 127 The journal *Musica Popolare* described this phenomenon with irony and a touch of malice: "And so it happens that these journals have their articles costing either 20 or 100 francs. Those paying the latter sum, I hear, also have the right to a biography and relative portrait. [...] The agent, naturally, has a certain amount of percentage on every contract concluded through him – but this *certain amount* may turn out to be higher the artist's actual fees. And the singer, hoping to make a career, pays up, perhaps even takes the bread out of his/her mouth and keeps quiet. [...] Dear reader: you ask me if the agent at least knows something about singing, about music...No! Absolutely not! It's already a lot to ask if he can distinguish a bass from a...soprano.[...]" ("Ed è così che quei giornali hanno gli articoli da 20 e da 100 franchi. Chi paga quest'ultima somma, credo, abbia diritto anche alla biografia e relativo ritratto. [...] L'agente, naturalmente, ha un tanto per cento su ogni contratto concluso per suo mezzo – ma questo *tanto* può anche superare la paga dell'artista. E questi, sperando far carriera, paga, si toglie magari di bocca il pane e tace. [...] Lettore: tu mi domandi se egli almeno s'intende di canto, di musica...No! Assolutamente no! È già molto se egli sa distinguere un basso da un...soprano. [...]"); "Medaglioni artistici. L'agente teatrale", *La Musica Popolare*, anno II, no. 30, 16. 7. 1883, p. 120.
- 128 For example, in the 1870s the management of the Teatro Adamich of Rijeka subscribed to the *Rivista Teatrale Melodrammatica*, directed by Orlando Viviani and Angelo Chinelli. Mention is made of an Angelo Chinelli in the journal *Asmodeo*, 1888, p. 24, as a "*primo tenore assoluto*, a master of the art of singing and of the stage" ("*primo tenore assoluto*, maestro nell'arte del canto e della scena"). It is not certain that this is the same person.
- 129 The agency also had branch offices in Rome, Naples, Turin, Florence and Bologna.
- 130 These journals were conceived not for the general public, but for a restricted circle of people working in that line of business. Singers would subscribe to them, and in that way – by paying – they could make themselves known to theatre managements before encountering the general public. On the subject, see also Cecilia Nicolò, *Emma Zilli. Una carriera di fine Ottocento*, NeoClassica, Roma 2019, p. 17–18.
- 131 Brosovich, whose agency had offices in Via Santa Radegonda 11 and Via Monte Napoleone 22 in Milan, was probably active in Trieste as well for a period of time, for some of his letters were addressed from the city. Among the other agents who owned artistic journals and also came into contact with the coastal

Then there were those who, like Conte Luigi Grabinski Broglio, had taken over other theatrical agencies – in his case the Cambiaggio agency in around 1896 – and still used the headed notepaper of the previous agency when writing to the theatres of the coastal region.¹³² Another situation could be that of the agent who didn't always act on behalf of third parties, but directly proposed his own services. An example was Curiel: "I offer to take on the theatre for a period of time for performances of Italian opera sustained by expert artists, [and] given my long practical experience in theatrical matters as both agent and impresario, I can ensure the brilliant success of the enterprise".¹³³ In this case, therefore, no intermediation was involved and the agent was no different from an impresario. As already stated, depending on the situation, either role could be assumed. As his letterhead promised, Curiel's agency catered for artists of all kinds ("besorgt die Zusammenstellung von Gesangs-, Vortrags-, Tanz-, Varietè-, und Zirkus-Compagnie"). It assembled the orchestral players and choristers needed to form the so-called "*masse artistiche*" and organised tours (also orchestral tours) both in Italy and abroad; it even managed the formation of wind bands. As appropriate for a truly international office, the agency corresponded in Italian, German and French.¹³⁴

Some impresarios conducted their business in person, directly using the headed notepaper of their own agent. Giulio Milani, for example, used the letterhead of Giuseppe Bergamin, the agent who looked after his interests (evidently in parallel with Simonetti). The same impresario could in fact be supported by different agents for different *piazze*, as in the case of Paolo Massimini, who was proposed by both Marco Curiel of Milan and Sante Utili;

theatres we can include Codecasa (director of *Nuovo Don Marzio*) and Vittore Deliliers (director of the *Rivista Melodrammatica*, then *Rassegna Melodrammatica*).

132 On Luigi Grabinski Broglio, see Livia Cavaglieri, *Tra arte e mercato*, p. 341. He was director of the Teatro Manzoni in Milan for some years and author of *I teatri d'Italia e le principali piazze teatrali estere*, Milano, Società Teatrale, 1907. He also edited, together with Vambianchi and Adami, the special illustrated issue *Nel primo centenario di Giuseppe Verdi*, Milano, 1913. In 1916 he was the founder of "Silentium Film", a film production company. His name appears in the list of freemasons belonging to the VIII Agosto Lodge from 1886 to 1924; see Carlo Manelli – Eugenio Bonvicini – Sergio Sarri, *La massoneria a Bologna dal XVIII al XX secolo*, Youcanprint, [n. p.] 2014, p. 134. He took over the Cambiaggio agency, where Carlo Cambiaggio and his son Giorgio worked. Carlo's activities as an impresario came second to his career as a singer; see John Rosselli, *Elenco provvisorio*.

133 "Offro di assumere per alcun tempo il teatro per spettacolo d'opera italiana sostenuto da valenti artisti, stante la mia lunga pratica in affari teatrali, quale agente ed impresario posso assicurare la brillante riuscita dell'impresa."; Letter from Curiel to the theatre management of Rijeka, Rijeka, 27.10.1917, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

134 The headed notepaper of his theatrical agency also survives in ASTs, LGT CL. b. 3653, fasc. 2379, 1917. On Angelo Curiel, Fabiana Licciardi devoted an entire section in her doctoral thesis *Echi nei Theater-Kino-Varieté di un confine in guerra: Trieste 1914–1918*, University of Trieste, 2016/2017, pp. 197–202 (*Angelo Curiel, agente impresario*), now published with the title *Theater-Kino-Varieté nella Prima guerra mondiale. L'industria dell'intrattenimento in una città al fronte: Trieste 1914–1918*, EUT, Trieste 2019 (the section on Curiel is at p. 198).

or that of Giulio Milani himself, or even that of the impresario Eugenio De Monari, who declared to the theatre management of Zadar: “I have three agencies whose services I use: Agenzia A. Bignardi, Agenzia G. Argenti & C. and Agenzia Deliliers”.¹³⁵ We also have the complementary situation of two agents simultaneously offering the same impresario to the same theatre, most likely unaware of what the other was doing. Within a day of each other the agents Enrico Carozzi¹³⁶ and Giuseppe Bergamin both offered Zadar the same impresario, Giulio Rossi, and the same operas.¹³⁷ In this case it is plausible to conjecture that it was the impresario who had mentioned the particular opera season he was interested in running and each agent simply made the move independently of the other.

It could also happen, however, that when two agents simultaneously offered the same theatre the same impresario, they were in agreement and would divide the percentage between them. This happened at Šibenik in 1905, when the impresario Ernesto Guerra signed the contract with the Teatro Mazzoleni. The agreement, it was pointed out, was “concluded with the cooperation of the agents Viscardi Enrico of Zadar and Enrico Gallina of Trieste, who are entitled to ownership of the 3 % on the revenue, to be divided between them”.¹³⁸ Guerra’s story is also a good illustration of another phenomenon: that of the impresario who first gets himself represented by an agent working in the area, then decides to deal with a theatre independently, thereby effectively bypassing the agent. For after 1905 Guerra, entered into negotiations directly with the theatre management of Zadar, without first contacting his agent Enrico Gallina. This naturally caused ill-feeling. “I am very sorry you have arranged matters directly with Guerra”, Gallina wrote to Zadar, “not out of [financial] interest, but as a moral concern. I did so much to help Guerra gain permission to operate in these provinces with his company. It was I who engaged him there and attained an excellent deal for the management. And now Guerra, with scant delicacy, has put me to one side and that is not right. Enough! One lives and learns and next time I will know how to deal with things better.”¹³⁹

135 “Io tengo tre agenzie della cui opera mi servo: Agenzia A. Bignardi, Agenzia G. Argenti & C. e Agenzia Deliliers”; Letter from Giorgio De Monari to [the theatre management Zadar], Milano, 13. 1. 1899, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

136 Enrico Carozzi, as well as being a theatrical agent, also traded in music, instruments and costumes, and directed the periodical *Asmodeo*.

137 See Letter from Enrico Carozzi to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 29. 1. 1898; and Letter from Giuseppe Bergamin to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 28. 1. 1898, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

138 “stipulato colla cooperazione degli agenti Viscardi Enrico di Zara ed Enrico Gallina di Trieste ai quali spetta la proprietà del 3 % sull'introito, da dividersi tra di loro”; Art. II, Contract between the management of the Teatro Mazzoleni of Šibenik and Ernesto Guerra, Šibenik, 1905, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b.

139 “Spiacemi assai abbiate combinato direttamente con Guerra e ciò non per l'interesse ma per questione morale. Io ho fatto tanto per far accordare il permesso a Guerra di agire in codeste province colla sua compagnia. Fui io che lo scritturai costi facendo fare un ottimo affare alla Direzione. Ora il Guerra con poca delicatezza mi lascia in un canto e ciò non è giusto. Basta! Vivendo s'impara e saprò regolarli

Gallina was apparently also sensitive to the competition of other agents, for he begged a certain Ugo Fano at Šibenik not to accept any offers that might come to him from another agent based in Trieste “and that because I want to have the pleasure myself of serving, as always, this theatre”, he wrote, “and also because I work with the tours of other excellent companies that I would naturally like to take there”. He therefore begged Fano, as he had already done with Giovanni Mazzoleni, to honour him with his trust and to entrust his affairs with him because he would do everything possible to please the theatre management. It was not so much a matter of financial interest as of “self-respect” (*amor proprio*).¹⁴⁰ As late as 1913 Mazzoleni called Gallina “our theatrical agent” (*nostro agente teatrale*): a sign that the agent had succeeded in maintaining good relations with the theatre for several years. Mazzoleni even called him the “representative of all the theatres of Istria and Dalmatia”.¹⁴¹

Indeed Gallina had a privileged relationship with all the theatre managements of Istria and Dalmatia, as he himself liked to point out in his letters. “If your management should wish to give an opera season”, he wrote, for example, to the theatre of Split, “I could also take charge of it, since it is worth considering that since we have a season at the Politeama here [in Trieste], this would make not only the formation of the company easier, but also the certainty of [finding] replacements if the need should arise. For this type of production (the most difficult and that of greatest responsibility) we could form, as we always do at Zadar, a kind of partnership with your esteemed management, in which we would be responsible for staging the production.” So, just to demonstrate how serious his agency was “with a first experiment” (*con un primo esperimento*), Gallina offered to take charge of its staging and would be content with a share of the profits if there were any.¹⁴² If the theatre management accepted the proposal, Gallina would personally make a visit to define the details.

per un'altra volta”; Letter from Enrico Gallina to the theatre management of Zadar, Trieste, 4. II. 1908, HR-DAZD, folder 26.

140 “e ciò perché voglio avere il piacere di servire io, come sempre, codesto teatro e poi perché lavoro al giro di altre buonissime compagnie che farei naturalmente passare per costi”; Letter from Enrico Gallina to Ugo Fano, Trieste, 25. I. 1910, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

141 “rappresentante di tutti i teatri d'Istria e Dalmazia”; Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Riccardo Bovi-Campeggi, Šibenik, 27. II. 1910, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b.

142 “Se la Direzione intendesse dare spettacolo d'opera, potrei pure incaricarmene, facendo riflettere che avendo noi lo spettacolo a questo Politeama ci riesce molto più facile tanto la formazione della compagnia quanto la sicurezza dei rimpiazzi per ogni eventualità. Per questo genere di spettacoli (il più difficile e quello di maggiore responsabilità) potremmo fare, come facciamo sempre a Zara, una specie di società colla Spettabile Direzione, incaricandosi noi di allestire detto spettacolo.”; see Letter from Enrico Gallina to the theatre management of Split, Trieste, 25. 7. 1912, HR-MGS: Kazalište 4/ kut. I–XVII. Enrico Gallina later teamed up with Luciano Revere and founded the agency of Revere & Gallina (“Revere & Gallina / Affari teatrali / Trieste / v. Sanità, 4, i.p / Telegrammi: Revere – Trieste / Gallina – Trieste”. In the archives of Dalmatia a slightly different letterhead also survives: “Revere &

The theatre managements dealt not only with individual impresarios and agents, but also with the agents' representatives instead of the agents in person. Each representative could also represent more than one theatrical agency in the area. This was the case, for example, of Guido Tambornino, who represented the agencies of Ernesto Iviglia, Roberto Zoppolato and Enrico Carozzi of Milan.¹⁴³

At times it happened that the theatre management, on receiving a letter from an impresario, would reply with a recommendation to contact a trusted theatrical agency directly. In such cases the management's decision to deal only with the agent was purely a matter of convenience. When the impresario Giuseppe Borboni¹⁴⁴ of Milan wrote to the theatre management of Zadar, the answer was that he should directly get in touch with Enrico Gallina in Trieste. That this was common practice in certain theatres is attested by Enrico Viscardi when he wrote to the theatre management of Split: "Managements have just one obligation: that of notifying the agent of any proposals that should come to them directly and to counsel the proposer to contact the exclusive agent for the negotiations".¹⁴⁵ In another instance, Gino Monaldi, an agent from Rome, wrote to Zadar after learning that the contract for the opera season had been won by the impresario Eugenio De Monari. He therefore asked the management to put him in contact with the impresario, as he had "important proposals" to make, above all as the season was now imminent.¹⁴⁶ This was surely another way the agent could acquire new impresario clients: by finding them directly from the theatre managements.

An agent could also propose more than one client for the same opera season: if the first client should either appear to be unresponsive in his correspondence or if his dealings some-

Gallina / affari teatrali / agenti / esclusivi dei teatri della Venezia Giulia"; Letter from Enrico Gallina to Carlo Battistelli, Trieste 26. 5. 1920, HR-DAZD, folder 27).

143 See Letter from Guido Tambornino to the theatre management of Zadar, Trieste, 29. 12. 1891, HR-DAZD, folder 7.

144 Giuseppe Borboni was a Milanese impresario and director of the theatrical journal *L'Italia Lirica*, with associated opera agency.

145 "Alle direzioni non incombe che un obbligo, quello di notificare l'agente delle proposte che le provenissero direttamente, avvertendo il proponente di rivolgersi per le trattative all'agente esclusivo."; Letter from Enrico Viscardi to the theatre management of Split, Zadar, 4. 11. 1895, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII. "When informing the agent", Viscardi went on, "the management may mention if it is interested in the opera production being proposed and give due instructions. This must be done, however, with the aim of not obstructing those negotiations that the agent had been previously carrying out in the interests of all the piazzas."; ("Nel notificare l'agente la direzione gli accenna se desidera lo spettacolo che si propone dando le debite istruzioni. Questo deve avvenire però, allo scopo di non intralciare quelle trattative che preventivamente l'agente stesse facendo nell'interesse di tutte le piazze."); *ibid.*

146 See Letter from Gino Monaldi to the theatre management of Zadar, Roma, 18. 10. 1899, HR-DAZD, folder 10.

how aroused suspicion, the agent could immediately propose another one, who would be ready to step in and run the season.¹⁴⁷ We also have instances of simultaneous negotiations in both channels; in other words, of two correspondences (agent-management, impresario client-management) being conducted at the same time. In such cases, where the impresario had direct contact with the management, the role of the agent was diminished.

The agent usually retained a commission of 4% or 5% on the profits¹⁴⁸ (it could go down to 3% just for the signing of the contract with the impresario).¹⁴⁹ Hence the larger the client's income, the larger the agent's fee.

For the agent, not knowing one's impresario client thoroughly could be a risk. For if the impresario had first been presented in a very positive light and should then fail to fulfil his obligations, the agent would lose in credibility. And this is precisely what happened to Sante Utili, who was embroiled in the '*Razzani fiasco*', as we shall see below when we cover the opera seasons at the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar. Other agents, like Paolo Rocca, preferred not take any risks and always presented impresarios whose work he had known for some

147 An example of this manner of proceeding is given by Grabinski Broglio, who wrote to the theatre management of Zadar. "I have received your postcard of the 30th [May]", the agent writes to the management, "which came to me unexpectedly and genuinely gave me immense displeasure, since I believed it certain that Signor Romiti was neglecting to answer my letters because he was in direct communication with Your Excellency. While, therefore, I must disapprove of Signor Romiti's behaviour, which is certainly not consonant with your respectful preference and my concern, I hasten to inform you that I have ready another client who would take part and who had accepted just after Romiti's acceptance had arrived. This would be Signor Giulio Milani, a name that I submit to Your Excellency so that you may give me your approval, being most glad to resume the negotiations on his behalf." ("Ricevo la sua cartolina del 30 p. p. che mi giunge inaspettata e sinceramente mi produce immenso dispiacere, poiché ritenevo come cosa certa che il Signor Romiti trascurasse di rispondere alle mie lettere perché in diretta comunicazione colla S. V. Mentre dunque devo riprovare il contegno del Signor Romiti, non rispondente certo alla Sua deferente preferenza ed alla mia premura, mi affretto ad informarla che ho pronto altro cliente che concorrerebbe e che aveva accettato quando appunto era appena intravenuta l'accettazione del Romiti. Questi sarebbe il signor Giulio Milani, nome che sottopongo alla S. V. perché voglia darmi benessere, lietissimo di riprendere le trattative per suo conto."); Letter from Luigi Grabinski Broglio to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 1. 6. 1903, HR-DAZD, folder 11.

148 Even for operetta the percentage was no different. According to the contract between the presidency of the theatre of Zadar and Antonio Scalvini, director of the Scalvini Compagnia Italiana di Operette e Fiabe, "the presidency is authorised to withhold from the amounts paid out to Dr. Scalvini the commission of 4 per cent for the benefit of the agency of the journal *L'Arte* represented by Signor Giovanni Simonetti." ("la Presidenza resta autorizzata di trattenere sugli importi esborsati al dr. Scalvini la provvigione del 4 per cento a beneficio dell'Agenzia del giornale *l'Arte* rappresentata dal signor Giovanni Simonetti."); Zadar, [1877], HR-DAZD, folder 4.

149 See Brochure of the Agenzia Musicale e Teatrale Luigi Bernini, Zadar, 1891, HR-DAZD, folder 7. A commission of 3% was applied also to contracts with companies of operetta, spoken theatre, balls, vaudevilles and equestrian events, and was calculated on the net income indicated in the *borderò*.

time: “You know by experience how I manage things”, Rocca wrote to the theatre management of Zadar, “and that if I didn’t know the person thoroughly, I would not venture to vouch for him”.¹⁵⁰

By cross-checking the correspondences surviving in the archives we have here attempted to reconstruct the clientele of the principal agents working in the eastern Adriatic. As transpires from the table below, the impresario clients were principally proposed to the theatre of Zadar. The table gives the surname and name of the agent; the journal he either ran or was associated with; his provenance; the agent’s impresario client or clients; the year and the city of the theatre for which the client was proposed. At times it has been impossible to trace the clients whose names are not mentioned in the negotiations (in such cases they are given as “anonymous”). Moreover, the table only takes into account the impresarios involved in opera (*seria*, *buffa* or both). Each agent’s overall clientele of those working in the area was in fact much wider.

Agent or agency	Journal	Provenance	Impresario client	proposed for
<i>Agenzia Gazzetta dei Teatri</i>		Milan	Cesari & C.	Rijeka, 1890
Ambrosini, Francesco		Milan	Giorgio Trauner	Zadar, 1898
			G. Medini e Gabriele Ruotolo	Zadar, 1898
Anguissola, Azzo		Milan	<i>anonymous</i>	Zadar, 1894
Argenti, Gustavo	<i>La Lanterna</i>	Milan	<i>anonymous</i>	Split, 1898
			Eugenio De Monari	Zadar, 1899, 1900
			<i>anonymous</i>	Zadar, 1901
Barbacini, Enrico	<i>L’Arte Melodrammatica</i>	Milan	<i>anonymous</i>	Zadar, 1909
Bergamin, Giuseppe	<i>Gazzetta Teatrale Italiana</i>	Milan	Giulio Milani	Rijeka, 1886
				Split, 1895
			<i>anonymous</i>	Zadar, 1895
			Giulio Rossi	Zadar, 1898
			Umberto Braidà	n. f.
Berti, Alessandro		Milan	<i>anonymous</i>	Zadar, 1885
Bignardi, Achille	<i>Il Teatro</i>	Milan	Belletti e Romei	Zadar, 1897
			Nicola Guida	Zadar, 1897
			Alfredo Vecchi	Zadar, 1898
			<i>anonymous</i>	Split, 1899
			Giulio Calori	Zadar, 1901
			Luigi Desanti	Zadar, 1904
			Eugenio De Monari	n. f.

150 “Ella sa per esperienza come io tratti e che se non conoscessi a fondo la persona non mi azzarderei di farmi mallevadore per lui.”; Letter from Paolo Rocca to Giorgio De Nakic d’Osljak, Milano, 16. 6. 1893, HR-DAZD, folder 7.

Agent or agency	Journal	Provenance	Impresario client	proposed for
Bonacich & Sampieri		Milan	Luigi Feralli	Zadar, 1887
Borboni, Giuseppe	<i>L'Italia Lirica</i>	Milan	Giovanni Lesa	Zadar, 1905
Brosovich, Carlo		Milan	Gopeau e Cassin	Rijeka, 1886
Bubani, Ciro		Milan	<i>anonymous</i>	Zadar, 1892
Cambiaggio, Giorgio		Milan	<i>anonymous</i>	Rijeka, 1887
			<i>anonymous</i>	Zadar, 1889, 1891, 1892, 1893
			Giuseppe Borboni	Zadar, 1898
			Gabriele Ruotolo & Salvatore Savelli	Zadar, 1903
			Ettore Forastiero & Giorgio Trauner	Zadar, 1904
Carozzi, Enrico	<i>Euterpe</i>	Milan	Giulio Rossi	Zadar, 1898
Ceruso, Vincenzo		Milan	<i>anonymous</i>	Split, 1898
Chiericoni, Aristodemo		Milan	Ercole Boracchi	Zadar, 1897
Chinelli, Angelo	<i>Rivista Teatrale Melodrammatica</i>	Milan	Teresa Raineri Vaschetti	Split, 1900
Curiel, Marco		Milan	Paolo Massimini	Zadar, 1889
			Giuseppe Valentini	Zadar, 1914
				Šibenik, 1914
De Born & Anguissola		Milan	Antonio Vaschetti	Zadar, 1897
Filippi, GB.		Milan	Guido Calvi	Zadar, 1901
Fiorani, Francesco		Milan	<i>anonymous</i>	Zadar, 1890, 1892
Gallina, Enrico		Trieste	Ernesto Guerra	Šibenik, 1905 Zadar, 1906
			company administrated by Liduino Bonardi	Šibenik, 1911
			[<i>Attilio Alpron</i>]	[<i>Rijeka, 1914</i>]
Garbocchi, C.		n. f.	<i>anonymous</i>	Rijeka, 1885
Grabinski Broglio, Luigi	<i>Il Trovatore L'Arte Lirica</i>	Milan	Ottorino Paterni	Zadar, 1899
			<i>anonymous</i>	Split, 1900, 1901
			<i>anonymous</i>	Zadar, 1900, 1901
			<i>anonymous</i>	Šibenik, 1901
			R. Bolcioni & C.	Zadar, 1903
			Alessandro Bolzicco	Pula, 1903
			Giovanni Drog	Zadar, 1903
			Giulio Milani	Zadar, 1903
			Augusto Romiti	Zadar, 1903
			Giorgio Trauner and Ettore Forastiero	Split, 1904
			Giorgio Trauner	Zadar, 1905

Agent or agency	Journal	Provenance	Impresario client	proposed for
Levi, Giuseppe		Milan	<i>anonymous</i>	Split, 1898
			Guido Calvi	Zadar, 1898
			Pietro Rivabella	Zadar, 1898
			<i>anonymous</i>	Zadar, 1903
Lovati, Carlo and Pio Marini		Milan	<i>anonymous</i>	Zadar, 1898
			<i>anonymous</i>	Zadar, 1901
			Antonio Lana	Zadar, 1901
Percuoco, Franco		Milan	<i>anonymous</i>	Zadar, 1899
Pifferi, Augusto		Milan	<i>anonymous</i>	Zadar, 1888
Pinto, Augusto		Milan	<i>anonymous</i>	Zadar, 1898
Rocca, Paolo	<i>L'Arte Il Soffietto</i>	Milan	Luigi Pollina	Zadar, 1893
			Annibale Cicognani	Zadar, 1893
			<i>anonymous</i>	Zadar, 1894
			R. N. Gallo	Zadar, 1895
			Nunzio Melossi	Zadar, 1898
			Achille Medini	Zadar, 1898
			Giorgio Trauner	Zadar, 1898, 1904
			Roberto Corruccini	Zadar, 1904
			Ettore Forastiero	Zadar, 1904
			Vittorio Riva	Split, 1904
Domenico Valenti	n. f.			
Simonetti, Giovanni	<i>L'Arte</i>	Trieste	Pietro Cesari	Zadar, 1879
			impresa Sonzogno	Rijeka, 1893
			Augusto Romiti	Zadar, 1894, 1895
			Rinaldo Rosini	Zadar, 1896
			Gino Borboni	Zadar, 1902
			<i>anonymous</i>	Zadar, 1904, 1905, 1906
Spano, Michele		Milan	<i>anonymous</i>	Zadar, 1896
			<i>anonymous</i>	Split, 1896
Tambornino, Guido		Trieste	Antonio Ceirano	Zadar, 1892
Tavernari, Anacleto	<i>Il Trovatore Fra Diavolo</i>	Parma	Genoese company	Zadar, 1894
			Ansaldo	Split, 1894
Ullmann, Giuseppe		Trieste	Giustino Azzarelli	Zadar, 1885, 1889
			<i>anonymous</i>	Zadar, 1888
			Gabriele Ruotolo	Zadar, 1892
Uttili, Sante	<i>Movimento Artistico</i>	Milan	Annibale Cicognani	Zadar, 1883
			Paolo Massimini	Zadar, 1883
			Francesco Razzani	Zadar, 1883
			Carlo Ronzone	Zadar, 1883
Villa, Angelo		Milan	Luigi Cesari	Rijeka, 1885

Agent or agency	Journal	Provenance	Impresario client	proposed for
Villafiorita, Giuseppe		Milan	<i>anonymous</i>	Zadar, 1885
Viscardi, Enrico		Zadar	Ernesto Guerra	Šibenik, 1905
Viviani, Orlando & Angelo Chinelli	<i>Rivista Teatrale Melodrammatica</i>	Milan	Luigi Amati	Zadar, 1901
Zappert, Francesco	<i>Cosmorama Pittorico</i>	Milan	<i>anonymous</i>	Zadar, 1897
			Carlo Pizzorni	Zadar, 1899
Zappert, Luigi	<i>Cosmorama Pittorico</i>	Milan	Eugenio De Monari	Zadar, 1901
Zoppolato, Roberto	<i>La Frusta Teatrale</i>	Milan	<i>anonymous</i>	Zadar, 1892, 1897
			Alberto Gigliuzzi	Split [1895]
			Alfredo Vecchi	Zadar, 1896
				Split, 1896
			<i>anonymous</i>	Rijeka, 1897
			Edoardo Boccalari	Zadar, 1898
			E. Gritti	Zadar, 1898
			Achille Stehle	Zadar, 1898
			Achille Medini	Zadar, 1899, 1901
			Gabriele Ruotolo	Zadar, 1899
Calisto Beltrami	Zadar, 1901			

2.4 Census of the impresarios and agents in the eastern Adriatic

In the following table are listed, in alphabetical order, the impresarios and agents who either proposed and/or negotiated and/or organised opera, or opera and operetta, or opera, operetta and spoken theatre (or *prosa*) in the area concerned. Omitted are the names of impresarios who solely organised spoken theatre (the *capocomici*), as well as those who solely managed operetta. The following fields are included:

- The surname and first name of the impresario or agent. In some case it has not been possible to trace the first name; the surname is all we have.
- The title or definition with which the person appears in the documents (if present). The impresario could define himself as *impresario* or *agente*, or the title could be attributed to him by third parties. A title in square brackets indicates that it has been gathered from documentation other than that collected in the coastal area. The title of *appaltatore* (i. e. contractor) could be attributed to both an impresario and an agent. If no title is given, this means that it is not found in the documents and the impresario is identified simply by surname and name. There are also cases of theatre managers acting as impresarios (most are from Bohemia): here the title given is simply that of “theatre manager”. The entries referring to agents are indicated in brown in the table, to distinguish them from the white used for those who were just impresarios.

- The city of provenance of the letter sent by the impresario or agent. This does not necessarily correspond to the city of origin or residence. As we know, impresarios travelled frequently and wrote directly from wherever they were running a season. Some even indicated, at the bottom of the letter, the precise time frame within which they could be contacted wherever they happened to be temporarily working.
- Any details given in the letterhead, if present. The letterhead could differ from one letter of a given impresario to the next. Over the years it happened that the impresarios or agents changed their letterhead, giving new addresses or new particulars concerning their activities. This field also includes any addresses added by hand or typed.
- Any details given on the stamp, if present. Again, the same impresario may have used different stamps with different addresses.
- The archive in which the letter is located and the year in which the impresario or agent made contact with the theatre of the city concerned. The date may have also been deduced from letters of third parties who refer either to the impresario's presence in a given city or to his correspondence with a given theatre management. The archives in question are the state archives of Pazin (Pisino), Rijeka, Zadar and Šibenik, and the City Museum of Split. This field may help us to establish when the impresario or agent in question was working in a specific place and to ascertain if he was active in more than one city in the coastal region.
- The sector of specialisation. As already anticipated, this could be opera exclusively, opera and operetta, or even opera, operetta and spoken theatre (*prosa*). Doubtful cases are indicated by the symbol “§”. The people listed are exclusively those who were somehow involved in the proposal of opera seasons. The impresarios and agents who wrote to the theatres for other reasons or about other types of spectacle formed a much greater number.

Unfortunately, for many impresarios and agents it has not been possible to track down any biographical information; their name and surname are the only data available to us today. Years given in italics in the table were derived from the newspapers.¹⁵¹ The data derived from documents other than those of the coastal archives are given in square brackets. An asterisk identifies the theatre managers and owners who also acted as impresarios at their own institutions.

¹⁵¹ The newspapers might give the name and surname of an impresario and simply state that he had presented a proposal for a season at a certain theatre on a certain date, without any further information.

no.	Name of impresario / agent / agency	Designation	Provenance	Letterhead of impresario / agent Handwritten or typed addresses
1	Abriani, Geremia	conte	Milano Trieste	n. f.
2	<i>Agenzia Gazzetta dei Teatri Milano</i>	agenzia	Milano	n. f.
3	<i>Agenzia Lirica Chielli di Molco</i>	agenzia	Milano	Agenzia Lirica Chielli di Molco
4	<i>Agenzia Teatrale Giuffrida</i>	agenzia	Milano	n. f.
5	<i>Agenzia Teatrale Il Trovatore</i>	agenzia	Milano	Direzione, Amministrazione ed Agenzia teatrale del giornale Il Trovatore / Milano / Piazza dei Filodrammatici, n. 10–2° piano
6	<i>Agenzia Teatrale La Cosmopolita</i>	agenzia	Genova	Agenzia Teatrale / La Cosmopolita / Branciforte, Ferrà e C.i / Genova Piazza Banchi, vico De Negri, 4, int. 8 Genova
7	Alessi, Galeazzo	impresario	Milano [Piran]	n. f.
8	Alpron, Attilio	impresario	Rijeka	– Teatro Comunale – Fiume – Teatro Comunale / Giuseppe Verdi / Fiume / Impresa: Attilio Alpron [post 1913] – Teatro Comunale – Fiume / Impresa: Alpron-Battaglia – Attilio Alpron – Fiume / Negozio Mode [1914]
9	Ambrosini, Francesco	n. f.	n. f.	[Agenzia Teatrale Chiericoni]
10	Anguissola, Azzo	agente	Milano	n. f.
11	Ansaldo, Giovanni	n. f.	Rijeka	n. f.
12	Anselmi, Pietro	agente	Trieste	[by hand:] v. Geppa n. 12
13	Archibugi, Aristide	appaltatore teatrale cantante	Cosenza	– Aristide Archibugi / appaltatore teatrale – Agenzia Teatrale Autorizzata / di / Sante Profondo / v. Disciplini, num. 4

Stamp of impresario / agent	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split	opera	operetta	prosa
G. C. Abriani / Trieste	1905		1893 1894 1903		1894	x		
n. f.		1891				§	§	§
n. f.				n. d.		x		
n. f.		1891				§	§	§
n. f.			1872			x		
n. f.			1902			x	x	x
Alessi Galeazzo / Imprese / Teatrali / Milano			1898			x		
Teatro Comunale / Giuseppe Verdi / Fiume / Impresa: Attilio Alpron		1909 1910 1911 1912 1914				x	x	x
n. f.			1898			§	§	§
Azzo Anguissola / Agenzia Teatrale / via S. Zeno 4 – Milano			1894 1895			x		
n. f.	1894		1898			x		
n. f.			1884	1879 1880 1882 1884 1886 1889 1891 1893 1894 1895	1895	§	x	x
n. f.			1867 1869			x		

no.	Name of impresario / agent / agency	Designation	Provenance	Letterhead of impresario / agent Handwritten or typed addresses
14	Argenti, Gustavo	agente	Milano	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agenzia Teatrale Pessina / di G. Argenti & C° / e direzione del Giornale / "La Lanterna" / Milano / S. Pietro all'Orto, n. 16 - G. Argenti & Comp. / già / Agenzia Teatrale / Rag. A. Pessina / Direzione del Giornale / La Lanterna – Milano v. S. Pietro all'Orto 16
15	Azzarelli, Giustino	artista cantante [tenore]	Gorizia Trento	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compagnia lirica "Donizetti" / diretta dall'artista / Giustino Azzarelli - Compagnia lirica sociale / l'Euterpe / diretta dall'artista / Giustino Azzarelli
16	Bagattin, Luigi	agente	Milano	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Luigi Bagattin / Agente Teatrale / Milano - La Nuova Scena / di Venezia / Agenzia Artistica Teatrale
17	Banffy, Nicolò	sovrintendente	Budapest	n. f.
18	Baraldi, Armando	agente	Milano	Armando Baraldi & C. / Agenzia Artistica Teatrale / v. S. Vittore al Teatro, 5 – Milano
19	Barbacini, Enrico	[agente]	Milano	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - U. L. T. R. A / Ufficio Lirico Teatrale Rappresentanze Artistiche / Diretto da Enrico Barbacini / L'arte Melodrammatica / Milano - "L'arte melodrammatica" / Ufficio Lirico Teatrale Rappresentanze Artistiche / Diretto da E. Barbacini / Indirizzo Telegrafico: Barbacini – Milano – Telefono 87-24 <p>[typewritten:] via San Paolo, n. 14 Milano</p>
20	Barlani-Dini	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.
21	Bartolini, Giuseppe	n. f.	Rijeka	n. f.
22	Battaglia, Francesco	[impresario]	n. f.	n. f.
23	Battaglia, Pietro	n. f.	Trieste	Impresa Teatrale / M. Dorigo & Comp. / Telegrammi: / Dorigo, via Scalinata 2
24	Becherini, Luigi	impresario	n. f.	n. f.
25	Beletti e Romei	impresa	n. f.	n. f.
26	Bellotti, Amilcare – Eugenio Lombardi – Luigi Enrico Tettoni	[agenti]	Milano	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agenzia del Monitore dei Teatri (Circolare) - Agenzia Teatrale / del Giornale / Il Monitore dei Teatri / diretta da / L. E. Tettoni e G. Brizzi
27	Bergamin, Giuseppe	agente teatrale	Milano	Giuseppe Bergamin / Agenzia Teatrale / Milano / via Carlo Alberto 8 (Piazza del Duomo)
28	Bergonzoni, Filippo	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.
29	Bernardi, Luigi	maestro concertatore	n. f.	n. f.
30	Bernini, Luigi	agente	Livorno	Agenzia Musicale e Teatrale / Luigi Bernini & C. / Telegrammi: Bernini Teatrale
31	Berti, Alessandro	[agente]	Milano	Agenzia Teatrale / Alessandro Berti / Milano / v. S. Antonio 3

Stamp of impresario / agent	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split	opera	operetta	prosa
n. f.			1899 1900 1901		1898	x		
Compagnia lirica sociale / Euterpe / diretta dall'artista e socio / Giustino Azzarelli		1895	1885 1894 1895 1896			x		
n. f.			1900 1901			x	x	x
n. f.		1918				x		
n. f.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	§	§	§
p. La Direzione / Ufficio Teatrale Rapp.ze Artistiche		1912	1909			x		
n. f.	1890					x		
n. f.		1879				§	§	§
n. f.		1909 1911 1912				x	x	x
n. f.			1909			x		
n. f.			1877 1882	1882		x		
n. f.			1897			x		
n. f.		1874				x		x
n. f.		1886	1895 1898		1895	x		
n. f.			1875			x	x	x
n. f.	1903					x		
n. f.			1891			x	x	x
n. f.			1885			x		

no.	Name of impresario / agent / agency	Designation	Provenance	Letterhead of impresario / agent Handwritten or typed addresses
32	Berti, Ettore	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.
33	Bignardi, Achille	agente	Milano	– A. Bignardi & C. / Premiata Agenzia Lirica Internazionale / Il Teatro / Notiziario artistico illustrato / Uffici: 5, via Ugo Foscolo, Milano / Abbonamento annuo L. 20 / abbonamento alle inserzioni L. 100 / Provvigioni / Italia 5 % / Europa 6 % / Oltremare 8 % / Indirizzo per Telegrammi / Bignardi – Milano – Il Teatro / Direzione / Annessa Agenzia Lirica Internazionale / Uffici: 3 via Marino – Milano / Telegrammi: Bignardi
34	Bini, Giuseppe	n. f.	Pula	n. f.
35	Bizzoni, Achille	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.
36	Bocci, Bruto	[attore]	Ferrara	n. f.
37	Bolognese, Luigi	n. f.	Trieste	Compagnia Italiana / d'opere, operette comiche, zarzuele e fiabe / Città di Bologna <i>[followed by printed list of artists and repertoire]</i>
38	Bolzicco, Alessandro	[impresario] [dirigente]	Pula	Politeama Ciscutti / Pola / Dirigente: A. Bolzicco
39	Bonacich & Sampieri	agenti	Milano	Bonacich & Sampieri / Milano / 46 – Corso Porta Romana – 46 / Indirizzi pei telegrammi / Bonacich Milano
40	Bonifacio, Faustino	n. f.	Udine	Tournée Artistica / Celebre Compagnia Lillipuziana / diretta dal prof. / Ernesto Guerra / Opere: / Crispino e la Comare – Barbieri di Siviglia
41	Bonturini, Ettore	agente impresario	Venezia	Agenzia Teatrale / diretta da / Ettore Bonturini / Venezia Calle Mettivia n. 3545 Terzo Piano
42	Boracchi, Ercole	impresario	n. f.	n. f.
43	Borboni, Giuseppe	agente impresario	Milano	L'Italia lirica / Milano / v. S. Pietro all'Orto 18
44	Braida, Umberto	impresario	Pula	n. f.
45	Brandini, Felice	impresario cantante	Trieste	n. f.
46	Brigoni, Andrea	impresario	Monfalcone	n. f.

Stamp of impresario / agent	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split	opera	operetta	prosa
n. f.			1904			x		
Agenzia Lirica Internazionale / Annessa al Giornale / «Il Teatro» / A. Bignardi e C. / Milano			1897 1898 1901 1904		1899	x		
n. f.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	§	§	§
n. f.		1879				§	§	§
Compagnia Italiana di Operette Comiche / diretta dall'artista / Bruto Bocci			1885			§	x	
n. f.				1895	1895	x	x	
n. f.	1901 1902 1903 1904 1905 1906 1907 1908 1909 1911 1912					x	x	x
n. f.		1886	1887			x		
n. f.			1903			x	x	
– Ettore Bonturini / agente teatrale / Venezia – Ettore Bonturini / impresario / ed agente teatrale / Venezia			1884 1885 1892			x	x	
n. f.			1897			x		
opera seria, ballo Excelsior	1907 1912		1898 1904 1905 1907 1911	n. d.		x		
n. f.	1914		1914			x		
Impresa / Brandini			1884			x		
n. f.					1895	x		

no.	Name of impresario / agent / agency	Designation	Provenance	Letterhead of impresario / agent Handwritten or typed addresses
47	Brosovich, Carlo [Brosavich] [Brozovich] [Brosowich]	agente teatrale	Milano	[in the periodicals: Brosovich cav. Carlo, via Monte Napol. 22]
48	Brunetti, Ettore	agente	Bologna	n. f.
49	Bubani, Ciro	agente	Milano	[in the periodicals: Bubani Cirio, via Passerella 11 – Milano] Agenzia Teatrale Ciro Bubani
50	Budil, Vendelin	direttore teatrale	Plzen	n. f.
51	Buranelli & Rechlinger	agenti	Ancona	n. f.
52	Burlini, Carlo	[impresario]	[Trieste]	n. f.
53	Cajani, Cleopatra	impresaria	Perugia	n. f.
54	Cajani, Giuseppe	impresario	Perugia	n. f.
55	Calcagno, Francesco	impresario	Napoli	n. f.
56	Calori, Giulio	[impresario]	n. f.	n. f.
57	Calvi, Guido	impresario agente	Milano	Il Teatro / Direzione / Annessa Agenzia Lirica Internazionale / Uffici: 3 via Marino – Milano / Telegrammi: Bignardi
58	Calvi, Guido – E. Barbacini	agenti	Milano	Bureau Internazionale / Teatri & Rappresentanze Artistiche
59	Camber, R.	impresario	Rijeka Trieste	n. f.
60	Cambiaggio, Giorgio & Carlo	agente	Milano	– Agenzia Teatrale / Cambiaggio e C. / Milano / via Broletto, 15 – Primo Piano – Agenzia Teatrale / Cambiaggio e C. / 26 – Via Tre Alberghi – 26 / Milano – G. Cambiaggio & C. / Antica Agenzia Teatrale – Fondata nel 1845 – Premiata all'Esposizione di Vienna 1895 / Milano – via S. Raffaele 3 – Milano – G. Cambiaggio & C. / Agenzia teatrale / via Sala, 7
61	Cannussio, Vittorio	impresario	Genova	n. f.
62	Caracciolo, E.	n. f.	Padova	n. f.
63	Carelli, Ezio	impresario agente teatrale	Ancona	Ezio Carelli & C. – Ancona / Imprese Teatrali / Ufficio Piazza Roma 11
64	Carozzi, Enrico	agente	Milano	Enrico Carozzi / Agenzia Teatrale Internazionale [in the periodicals: Carozzi prof. Enrico, portici Settentrionali, 27]
65	Castagnoli, Giuseppe	impresario [cantante]	Lošinj	n. f.
66	Castelli, Cesare	agente [cantante]	Milano	Agenzia Teatrale / diretta da / Cesare Castelli & C. / Milano / via Broletto n. 6–1° piano

Stamp of impresario / agent	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split	opera	operetta	prosa
n. f.		1885 1886 1890 1891				x		x
Ettore Brunetti / Agente Teatrale / Bologna			n. d.			§	§	§
n. f.		1890	1892			x		
n. f.					1897 1898	x		
n. f.			1878			x		
n. f.			1872		1861	x		
n. f.		1874				x		
n. f.		1874				x		
n. f.			1908			x	x	
n. f.			1901			x		
n. f.			1901			x		
n. f.			1901			§	§	§
Impresa Camber & C.		1894	1894		1894	x		
- G. Cambiaggio & C. / Agenzia teatrale / Milano		1885 1886 1887	1889 1890 1891 1892 1893 1899			x		
n. f.			1892			x		
n. f.		1890 1891				x	x	
n. f.				1909		x	x	x
		1885	1898		1897	x		
G. Castagoli / Impresario Teatrale				1908 1910		x		
n. f.			1892			§	§	§

no.	Name of impresario / agent / agency	Designation	Provenance	Letterhead of impresario / agent Handwritten or typed addresses
67	Ceruso, Vincenzo	agente	Milano	Agenzia Teatrale / Autorizzata / del / maestro Vincenzo Ceruso / Milano / via del Palazzo Reale n. 7 [in the periodicals: Ceruso Vincenzo, via Pesce, 29]
68	Cesari, [n. n.]	impresa	[Torino]	Teatro Regio Torino
69	Cesari, Luigi	impresario [orchestrale]	Milano	n. f.
70	Cesari, Pietro	n. f.	[Trieste]	n. f.
71	Chiericoni, Aristodemo	agente	Milano	- Agenzia Teatrale A. Chiericoni / Milano - via Passarella 2 / Direzione: Francesco Ambrosini - A. Chiericoni / Milano / via Passarella 2
72	Chinelli, Angelo	agente	Milano	Rivista Teatrale Melodrammatica (con annessa agenzia) / diretta da / Orlando Viviani e Angelo Chinelli / Proprietaria / Giuditta Alemanni-Vianelli
73	Chmelensky, Ladislav	direttore teatrale	Rridmeis[?]	n. f.
74	Christofidis, P.	n. f.	Zadar	P. Christofidis - Zara / Post Clearing-Verkehr 810.999
75	Cicognani, Annibale	impresario [cantante]	La Spezia	[by hand:] via Cordusio n. 3 - Milano
76	Ciscutti, Pietro*	impresario	Pula	n. f.
77	Codecasa, F.	[agente]	Zadar	n. f.
78	Comoli	impresario	n. f.	n. f.
79	Conti, Augusto	agente	Milano	Augusto Conti / Agente teatrale / v. Durini, 6 / Milano
80	Conti, Giuseppe	n. f.	[Roma] S. Daniele	n. f.
81	Corbetta, Giuseppe	[cantante]	Pula Cattaro	[by hand:] Impresario Politeama Ciscutti - Pola
82	Corruccini, Roberto	impresario	Milano	[by hand:] via Vincenzo Monti 28 Milano
83	Cosati, G.	n. f.	Izola (Isola)	n. f.
84	Cosolo, Antonio	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.
85	Cristani, Lamberto	agente	Ferrara	Prof. Lamberto Cristani / Affari Teatrali / Ferrara
86	Curiel, Angelo	agente	Trieste	- Trieste, via dell'Acquedotto n. 31 / Agenzia Internazionale Artistica - Teatrale Curiel - Direzione Teatro Minimo "Bellini" - Trieste / Gestione Agenzia Teatrale Curiel

Stamp of impresario / agent	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split	opera	operetta	prosa
n. f.		1885 1886			1898	x		
n. f.		1891				x		
n. f.		1885 1886 1891				x		
n. f.			1879			x		
n. f.			1897 1898			x		
Viviani & Chinelli			1900 1901 1902 1903		1900	x		
difadelni ředitelství / 30.X.93 / Ladislav Chmelensky					1893 1894	x		
n. f.			1893			x		
n. f.			1892 1893		1893	x		
n. f.	*			1887		x		
n. f.			1878			x		
n. f.			1908 1911			x		
n. f.					1899	x		
n. f.		1885	1885 1890			x		
n. f.	1900 1901		1899 1901	1899	1901	x		x
Roberto Corruccini & C. / Imprese Teatrali / Milano			1904			§	§	§
n. f.				1905		x		
n. f.				1911 1913		x		
n. f.			1914			x		
- Concessionaria / Agenzia Teatrale Curiel / Trieste		1909 1913 1917 1918	1909 1913			x	x	x

no.	Name of impresario / agent / agency	Designation	Provenance	Letterhead of impresario / agent Handwritten or typed addresses
87	Curiel, Marco	agente	Trieste Milano	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Grosse Internationale Kunst – und Theateragentur Curiel – Direzione Teatro Minimo “Bellini” – Trieste / Gestione Agenzia Teatrale Curiel – Agenzia Internazionale Artistica Teatrale Curiel / con tariffa approvata dalla Spett. Camera di Commercio e d’Industria in Trieste, / autorizzata e concessa / dall’Eccelsa Luogotenenza del Litorale con decreto G.III 312/2/08 dd. 22 Aprile 1908 – Agenzia Internazionale Artistica Teatrale Curiel / concessionata con dispaccio Luogotenenziale G. III. 312/2/8 dd. 22 aprile 1908 / Perito giurato in affari teatrali / Trieste – corso 28 – Trieste / [] / sezione speciale per artisti di varietà, Orchestre di dame, zingari, Compagnie napoletane ecc. ecc.
88	Daddi	impresario cantante [tenore]	Zadar	n. f.
89	Dall’Armi	agente	Milano	n. f.
90	Dalmas, Cesare	impresario	Mantova	n. f.
91	Dal Torso, Vincenzo Ermenegildo	agente impresario	Venezia [Udine]	[Agenzia teatrale Dal Torso V. E., s. Angelo calle e ramo della Madonna, 3615]
92	Damiani, Giuseppe	agente	Milano	n. f.
93	De Born & Anguissola	agenti	Milano	Agenzia Teatrale Autorizzata / De Born & Anguissola – Milano, v. S. Paolo, 18
94	de Clemente, Camillo	[giornalista]	Firenze	Agenzia Teatrale / Presso l’ufficio del Giornale / L’Arlecchino / in Firenze via Cavour, 11
95	De Giorgi	impresario	Milano	n. f.
96	Deliliers, Vittore	agente cantante [tenore]	Milano	n. f.
97	Delinato	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.
98	(De) Lovries	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.
99	De Fanti [De Santi]	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.
100	De Filippi, Ermanno	[artista di canto] [baritono]	Trieste	[by hand:] v. Rossetti n. 12 / Trieste

Stamp of impresario / agent	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split	opera	operetta	prosa
– Concessionaria / Agenzia Teatrale Curiel / Trieste		1885	1914	1884 1910 1911 1912 1913 1914		x		x
n. f.				1891		x		
n. f.				1880 1881		§	§	§
n. f.			1900 1901 1902 1903			§	§	§
n. f.		1869		1871 1879 1880 1881 1882 1883		x		
n. f.			1897			x		
n. f.			1897 1898 1899 1901			x		
n. f.		1869				x		
n. f.			1869			§	§	§
Direzione Rivista Melodrammatica / Vittore Delilieri / Agenzia Teatrale / via Silvio Pellico 8 / Milano			1898 1899			x		
n. f.	1894					x		
n. f.			1902			x		
n. f.	1899					x		
n. f.		1918				x		

no.	Name of impresario / agent / agency	Designation	Provenance	Letterhead of impresario / agent Handwritten or typed addresses
101	De Magistris, Luigi	impresario	Milano	n. f.
102	De Monari, Eugenio	impresario	Milano [Gorizia] [Trieste] Sagrado	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eugenio De Monari & C. / Appalti lirici – Rappresentanze teatrali / Milano / telefono n. 4037 - Impresa Teatrale / Eugenio De Monari & Co. / Milano - Memorandum / Agenzia Teatrale Pessina / di / G. Argenti & C. / Milano – v. S. Pietro all’Orto, 16 – Milano - Agenzia Teatrale Pessina / di G. Argenti & C. / e Direzione del Giornale / “La Lanterna” / Milano / v. S. Pietro all’Orto, 16 - Rivista Teatrale Melodrammatica / (con annessa agenzia) / diretta da / Orlando Viviani e Angelo Chinelli / Proprietaria / Giuditta Alemanni-Vianelli - [by hand:] Telegrammi Demonari Teatrale / Telefono n. 85–99 - [by hand:] vicolo Santa Margherita n. 1 [Milano]
103	Des(s)anti, Luigi	impresario [negoziante]	Zadar Trieste Dubrovnik	Anfiteatro Minerva / Trieste / via Coroneo - [by hand:] Kanoller 7 – Trieste
104	Dondini, Achille	n. f.	Bologna Trieste	n. f.
105	Dorigo, M. & C	impresario	Trieste	n. f.
106	Doroni	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.
107	Drago, Adolfo	n. f.	Dubrovnik Trieste Ancona	n. f.
108	Dragutinović, Leon	amministratore	Osijek	n. f.
109	Dus[s]ich [Dušić], Pietro	cantante [basso]	Zadar	n. f.
110	Fabbri, Attilio	[attore]	Trieste	n. f.
111	Faini, Raffaello	cantante [tenore]	Poreč (Parenzo)	n. f.
112	Fantoni, Giuseppe	impresario	n. f.	n. f.
113	Fantuzzi, Angelo	impresario	Pula	Fantuzzi Angelo / impresario teatrale
114	Farinelli, Guido	[maestro concertatore]	n. f.	n. f.
115	Feralli, Luigi	impresario	n. f.	n. f.
116	Ferrara, Ernesta	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.
117	Ferretti, M.	n. f.	Trieste	“L’Ernani” / Rivista Mondiale di Teatri / Trieste – via di Cavana 12

Stamp of impresario / agent	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split	opera	operetta	prosa
n. f.			1901			x		
– Eugenio De Monari & C. / Lirica – Operette – Prosa – Varietà – Cinematografia / Milano, v. S. Paolo 8 – Eugenio De Monari & C. / Lirica – Operette – Prosa – Varietà – Cinematografia / Milano / Foro Bonaparte 48 – Eugenio De Monari – C.		1914	1895 1899 1900 1901 1914	1913 1914		x	x	x
n. f.			1890 1897 1901 1902 1905			x		
n. f.				1880 1883		§		x
n. f.				1908		§	§	§
n. f.				1896		x		
n. f.		1890	1881	1881		§		x
n. f.				1914		x		
n. f.			1885			x		
n. f.		1890	1890			x	x	x
Compagnia lirica sociale diretta da / Raffaello Faini				1896		x		
n. f.	1913		1913			x		
n. f.	1891		1891			x		
n. f.		1914				x		
n. f.			1887			x		
n. f.				1882		x		
n. f.			1904			x		

no.	Name of impresario / agent / agency	Designation	Provenance	Letterhead of impresario / agent Handwritten or typed addresses
118	Fidora, Natale	[impresario]	Zadar Rovigo Trieste Ferrara Perugia	- Impresa / del / Teatro Comunale / Trieste - Natale Fidora
119	Fiegna, Camillo	cantante [basso]	Trieste	[by hand:] via del Sapone n. 1 – piano 2°
120	Filippi, GB.	agente	Milano	Commissioni Lirico-Teatrali / Prof. Francesco Rambelli / via Bocchetto 3 – Milano
121	Fiorani, Francesco	agente	Milano	- Autorizzata agenzia teatrale / di / Francesco Fiorani / Milano / San Giovanni in Conca 2 / Telegrammi / Fiorani Teatrale – Milano - Autorizzata agenzia teatrale / di / Francesco Fiorani / Milano / n. 12 – via Pesce – n. 12 / Telegrammi / Fiorani Teatrale – Milano
122	Fischer, Giovanna	appaltatrice	[Pula]	n. f.
123	Franceschini, Pietro	cantante [basso]	n. f.	n. f.
124	Franzini, Umberto	cantante [bar- itono]	n. f.	La Rinascente / Compagnia / di operette e opere comi- che / Martinez – Leto – Siracusa / Direzione artistica / Umberto Franzini
125	Forastiero, Ettore	impresario	Biella	G. Cambiaggio & C. / Antica Agenzia Teatrale – Fondata nel 1845 – Premiata all'Esposizione di Vienna 1895 / Milano – 3 – via S. Raffaele – 3 [by hand:] teatro Biella
126	Frisotti, Nino	n. f.	Venezia	n. f.
127	Gallina, Enrico	agente amministratore [attore]	Trieste	Enrico Gallina / Prima Agenzia Teatrale Internazionale / Autorizzata dalla I. R. Luogotenenza con decreto 4 Febbraio 1905 / Trieste / Corso n. 1, P. 11 – Telefono 19–27 [typewritten:] v. Sanità 4, Trieste
128	Ganzari, Augusto	cantante [tenore]	S. Daniele	n. f.
129	Garbocchi, C.	mediatore	n. f.	n. f.
130	Gardini, Carlo	impresario	n. f.	n. f.
131	Gargano, Giovanni	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.

Stamp of impresario / agent	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split	opera	operetta	prosa
Impresa Teatrale / Fidora Cavallini		1897	1895 1897 1898 1899	1895	1895 1897	x		
n. f.			1894 1902			x		
n. f.			1901 1903			x		
n. f.			1878 1890 1892			x		
n. f.	1892 [1894]					x	x	x
n. f.			1878			x	x	x
n. f.	1902					x	x	
n. f.			1901 1904 1905 1909			x		
Carlo Marrarosa / maestro di musica / Venezia				1898		x		
Agenzia Dramm. e Lirica / Enrico Gallina / Corso n. 1 p. II		1914	1904 1907 1912	1905 1907 1910 1911 1912 1913	1912	x	x	x
n. f.			1885			x		
n. f.		1885				§	§	§
n. f.		1865 1866 1867				x		
n. f.	1884 1887 1888 1902					§	x	

no.	Name of impresario / agent / agency	Designation	Provenance	Letterhead of impresario / agent Handwritten or typed addresses
132	Gentilli, Giacomo	[agente]	Trieste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Autorizzata Agenzia Teatrale / Giac. Gentilli – Trieste / via S. Giacomo n. 7, (Corso) / Teleg.: Gentilliteatral – Trieste - Concessionata Agenzia Teatrale / Giacomo Gentilli – Trieste / via S. Giacomo n. 7, (Corso) / Telegrammi: Gentilliteatral / Telefono 25–85
133	Giachettich, Francesco	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.
134	Giani	[musicista]	[Venezia]	n. f.
135	Gigliuzzi, Alberto	impresario	Milano	n. f.
136	Gliubich, Giusto	n. f.	Trieste	n. f.
137	Gnone, Napoleone	cantante [tenore]	Belluno	n. f.
138	Gonzales, Germano	n. f.	Corfu	n. f.
139	Grabinski [Grabinsky] Broglio, Luigi	agente conte	Milano	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Luigi Grabinski Broglio / Studio d'affari teatrali / Rappresentanze – Proprietà Drammatiche / Milano / v. Silvio Pellico, 8 / Telefono 17–49 – Casella postale 897 - L'Arte lirica / Ufficio d'affari teatrali / Direttori: Conte Luigi Grabinsky Broglio = Luigi Ricordi / via Carlo Alberto 2 – Milano / Per Telegrammi: Arte lirica – Milano - G. Cambiaggio & C. / Antica Agenzia Teatrale – Fondata nel 1845 – Premiata all'Esposizione di Vienna 1895 / Milano – 3 – via S. Raffaele – 3 - Conte Luigi Grabinski Broglio / Milano / 3, via San Raffaele, 3
140	Guarini, F.	cantante [baritono]	Milano	[by hand:] via Alessandro Tadino, 8 – Milano
141	Guerra, Ernesto	direttore	Roma	Celebre Compagnia Lilipuziana di canto / diretta dal professore Ernesto Guerra / Repertorio / Il Barbiere di Siviglia / Crispino e la Comare / Pipelè / Elisir d'amore / La figlia del tamburo maggiore
142	Guerra, Mimmo	amministratore	Napoli	Compagnia Lirica Lilipuziana / della città di Roma / Direttori Proprietari / Guido e Arnaldo F.lli Billaud
143	Guida, Nicola	impresario	Bari	Nicola Guida / Impresario del teatro Piccinni / Bari
144	Hreljanović, Ivoplem	n. f.	Zagreb	n. f.
145	Karaman, Josip	agente impresario	Split	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - J. Karaman / Kazalištni agent i poduzetnik – Agente ed impresario Teatrale - Josip Karaman – Split / Dućan za kancelarijske predmete / Poduzete za javno oglašivanje. / Concessionata impresa pubblicità. / Plakatierungsanstalt. / Skladište / Muzikalnih instrumenata na strune, / Mandolina itd. / Armoničkih struna, / muzike za klavir, / pjevanje i glasbila. / Zastupnik glasovira. / The grand phono-biograf / Kazalištni agent i poduzetnik. / Agente ed impresario Teatrale. - Josip Karaman – Split / Trgovina papira, pisačič, risačič, slikarskih i kancelarijskih potreština / Kinotheater Elektra / Photographischer artikel

Stamp of impresario / agent	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split	opera	operetta	prosa
Concessionata Agenzia Teatrale / Giacomo Gentili / via S. Giacomo n. 7 / Trieste / Indirizzo Telegr.: Gentilliteatral – telefono 25–85		1913		n. d. 1911		x	x	
n. f.			1893			x		
n. f.	1876		1876			x		
n. f.				1895	1895	x		
n. f.			1887			x		
n. f.			1898			x		
n. f.		1892				§	x	
G. Cambiaggio e C. / Antica / Agenzia Teatrale / Milano / Via S. Raffaele, 8		1903	1897 1898 1899 1900 1901 1903 1905 1909	n. d. 1901	1900 1901 1904	x		
n. f.					1899	x		
n. f.			1906 1908	1905 1906		x		
			1906			x	x	
n. f.			1897			x		
n. f.					1893	x		
n. f.			1909		1895 1904	x	x	x

no.	Name of impresario / agent / agency	Designation	Provenance	Letterhead of impresario / agent Handwritten or typed addresses
146	Kugel, Ignaz	impresario [agente]	Vienna	[in the periodicals: Ignaz Kugel / Concert-Agent in Wien / VII. Lindengasse 11.]
147	Lamberti	agente	n. f.	n. f.
148	Lamperti, [Francesco?]	agente	Milano	n. f.
149	Lamperti, Giuseppe	agente teatrale	Milano	[in the periodicals: Giuseppe Lamperti, via Torino nro. 20 – Milano] [in the periodicals: Lamperti cav. Giuseppe, via Durini, 14]
150	Lana, Antonio	agente impresario	Milano Zadar	Agenzia Teatrale / Autorizzata / Maestro Cav. Carlo Lovati Cazzulani / e Pio Marini / Milano / via Torino, 34 [by hand:] Corso Venezia, 25 – Milano
151	Landi, Alberto	agente	Napoli	– Real Teatro Mercadante / Impresa – Poduzeće obćinskog Kazalista / Split / Cav. Alberto Landi – Grande Agenzia Teatrale / Annessa al giornale Arlecchino / vicolo Sergente Maggiore n. 3 / angolo via Roma [Napoli]
152	Landi, Torquato	agente	Trieste	n. f.
153	Lanzi, Torquato	agente [impresario]	Bologna [Milano]	n. f.
154	Latkovic, Giovanni	[agente]	Rijeka	– Ufficio Teatrale / I. S. Latcovich / Fiume / Magazzini: Riva del Canale 6 – [typewritten:] Affari Teatrali / Giovanni Latcovich / Fiume
155	Lattad, Raimondo	impresario [attore]	[Trieste]	n. f.
156	Levi, Giuseppe	agente teatrale	Milano	– Giuseppe Levi / Agenzia Teatrale Internazionale / Lirica, Drammatica, Coreografica e di Varietà – Enrico Carozzi / Agenzia Teatrale Internazionale / Piazza del Duomo, 25 / Indirizzo per telegrammi / Agenzia Carozzi – Milano

Stamp of impresario / agent	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split	opera	operetta	prosa
n. f.		1894				x		
n. f.				1882 1884 1885 1889		§	§	§
n. f.		1885	1878	1880 1881 1882 1883 1884 1885 1886 1889 1890 1892 1893 1894 1895		x	x	x
n. f.			1878			x	x	
n. f.			1861 1891 1901		1893 1895 1898	x	x	x
n. f.			1898 1901		1897 1898	x		
n. f.		1885				§	§	§
n. f.			1899			x		
n. f.		1919				§		x
n. f.				1883		§	§	§
n. f.			1898 1903 1904		1898	x		x

no.	Name of impresario / agent / agency	Designation	Provenance	Letterhead of impresario / agent Handwritten or typed addresses
157	Lovati, Carlo e Pio Marini	agenti	Milano	– Agenzia Teatrale / Autorizzata / Maestro Cav. Carlo Lovati e Pio Marini / Milano – Agenzia Teatrale / M. Cav. Carlo Lovati / e Pio Marini / Milano – 34, via Torino, 34 – Milano
158	Lovrich, Olimpio	[orchestrale]	Aix les bains Zadar [Trieste]	[by hand:] via San Lazzaro 9 Trieste
159	Lupi, Achille	[attore] [capocomico]	Torino	n. f.
160	Lusardi, Giuseppe	agente	Milano	Agenzia Teatrale / Giuseppe Lusardi / Direzione del Giornale / "Corriere dei teatri / Telefono n. 22–54
161	Maglio, G. B.	impresario	Trento	n. f.
162	Malý, Josip	cantante	n. f.	n. f.
163	Mangiamele, Giovanni	[impresario]	n. f.	n. f.
164	Maraspin, [Giovanni]	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.
165	Marchelli, Delfino	impresario	Venezia	n. f.
166	Marković, Mihailo	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.
167	Marini, C.	agente	Milano	n. f.
168	Marrarosa, Carlo	maestro di musica	Venezia	n. f.
169	Martinelli, Roberto	impresario	Trieste	n. f.
170	Massimini, Paolo	appaltatore teatrale impresario	[Soresina] Venezia	– Paolo Massimini / Appaltatore Teatrale / Milano / via Privata S. Celso n. 35 – Teatro La Fenice / Impresa P. Massimini – Massimini Paolo / Appaltatore teatrale / via Disciplini 8 A Milano

Stamp of impresario / agent	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split	opera	operetta	prosa
n. f.			1898 1901			x		
n. f.			1899 1900 1901 1902 1903 1904 1905		1899	x		
n. f.		1874				§	x	x
n. f.			1914			x		
G. B. Maglio imprese teatrali			1901		1901	x		
n. f.					1895	x		
n. f.		1870 1873				x		
n. f.		1891 1892 1893 1894 1900				x		
n. f.			1878			x		
n. f.				1909		x		
n. f.				1874 1879 1880 1881 1883 1884 1885 1886 1887 1890 1891 1892 1894 1895		§	§	§
n. f.			1898			x		
n. f.			1898			x		
n. f.			1887 1888 1889 1890 1891	1891		x		

no.	Name of impresario / agent / agency	Designation	Provenance	Letterhead of impresario / agent Handwritten or typed addresses
171	Mattiassevich, Teodoro	impresario	Pula	n. f.
172	Matucci, Cesare	n. f.	Šibenik	Compagnia Italiana / di Opere Comiche / ed Operette / diretta dall'artista / Cesare Matucci
173	Maurizi Enrici, Ernesto	appaltatore teatrale cantante [baritono]	Bologna	v. D'Azeglio, n. 57 [Bologna]
174	Mazza, Osvaldo	impresario	n. f.	n. f.
175	Mazzoleni, Giovanni*	[direttore teatrale]	Šibenik	n. f.
176	Mazzoleni, Paolo*	[direttore teatrale]	Šibenik	n. f.
177	Medovich, Demetrio	[azionista]	n. f.	n. f.
178	Melossi, Nunzio	cantante [baritono] impresario	n. f.	n. f.
179	Mestrovich, Aldo	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.
180	Mestruzzi	impresario	n. f.	n. f.
181	Miazzi, Giovanni	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.
182	Micheluzzi, [G.]	n. f.	Trieste	n. f.
183	Milani, Giulio	[impresario]	Milano	Giuseppe Bergamin / Agenzia Teatrale / Milano / via Carlo Alberto 8 (Piazza del Duomo) [Giulio Milani / Appaltatore Teatrale / Milano / 4 via S. Antonio 4] [by hand:] via Sant'Antonio n. 4 – Milano
184	Miliharann	n. f.	Zagreb	– Dionička tiskara u Zagrebu / knjižara / Jugoslavenske akademije / Tiskara / Jugoslavenske akademije – Preradovićeva ulica br. 8
185	Minciotti, Pietro	direttore amministratore	n. f.	Compagnia Lirica Internazionale in tournée
186	Mirco, Carlo	musicista [clarinettista]	Venezia	[by hand:] caffè Martini, S. Fantin
187	Mirco, Giovanni	n. f.	Venezia	n. f.
188	Molini, Oscar	n. f.	Trieste	n. f.
189	Monaldi, Gino	[agente] impresario	Roma	– Agenzia Teatrale / diretta dal / Marchese Gino Monaldi / Roma / via Teatro Valle, 48–49 – Agenzia Lirico Internazionale / Roma / via Teatro Valle, 48–49

Stamp of impresario / agent	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split	opera	operetta	prosa
n. f.	1915 1916					x	x	x
n. f.				1903 1911		x	x	
n. f.			1885			x		
n. f.			1869			x		
n. f.				*		x	x	x
n. f.				*		x	x	x
n. f.			1897			x		
n. f.			1898			x		
n. f.			n. d.			x		x
n. f.		1886				§	§	§
n. f.		1879				x		
n. f.		1885 1886 1887			n. d.	x		
Impresa / Giulio Milani			1895		1895 1898	x		
n. f.					1896	x		
n. f.			n. d.			x		
n. f.	1876		1876 1883 1887	1887		x		
n. f.			1876	1891 1892 1893		x		
n. f.			1897 1898			x		
n. f.			1899			x		

no.	Name of impresario / agent / agency	Designation	Provenance	Letterhead of impresario / agent Handwritten or typed addresses
190	Montalcino, Fabio	impresario	Milano Reggio Emilia	[by hand:] fermo posta Milano
191	Monzini, Antonio	agente	Trieste	[typewritten:] v. Chiozza 9, Trieste
192	Orioli, Luigi	agente	Bologna	– L'Arpa e la Cetra / Agenzie Teatrali Unite / Dirette da Luigi Orioli Prof. del Liceo Musicale di Bologna / Bologna – via Foscherari 15 – Agenzia Teatrale / Autorizzata / prof. L. Orioli / Bologna / via Foscherari n. 15, p. t.
193	Orsini, Pericle	impresario	Ancona	n. f.
194	Paterni, Ottorino	[impresario]	Reggio Emilia Zadar	Imprese Teatrali / O. Paterni
195	Peano, Luigi	impresario	Torino	[by hand:] Torino, corso Dante n. 106
196	Pedrazzi, Pietro	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.
197	Perazzini, Nazzareno	[impresario] musicista	Milano	Imprese Teatrali / Nazionali ed Estere / Perazzini Nazzareno / Milano / via Visconti n. 19
198	Percuoco, Franco	agente	Milano	Agenzia Teatrale / Franco Percuoco / Milano / via S. Pietro all'Orto n. 16
199	Perich [Serich], Richard	n. f.	Trieste	[typewritten:] Trieste, via Giuseppe Perini n. 13.11
200	Pesaro, Girolamo [Gerolamo]	appaltatore teatrale	Trieste Zadar	[by hand:] Caffè Stella Polare, Trieste
201	Pfeifer, K.	agente [orchestrare]	Prague	Prag, Brenntegasse 3
202	Piacentini-Bellini, Ernesto	[appaltatore teatrale] impresario	Udine	Ernesto Piacentini Bellini / Appaltatore Teatrale
203	Pifferi, Augusto	agente cantante [baritono]	Milano	n. f.
204	Pinto, Augusto	agente	Milano	Agenzia Teatrale del Cosmorama / Piazza Paolo Ferrari, 10 / Milano
205	Pištek, Johann	direttore teatrale	Brno	n. f.
206	Polgar, Carlo	impresario	Rijeka	n. f.
207	Ponzio, Giuseppe	impresario	Lošinj	Giuseppe Ponzio / Impresario Teatrale
208	Pozzesi, Giuseppe	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.
209	Profili, Dante	impresario	n. f.	n. f.

Stamp of impresario / agent	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split	opera	operetta	prosa
n. f.			1893			x		
n. f.			1893	n. d.		x		
n. f.			1894 1897 1899 1901			x		
Impresa Teatrale / Pericle Orsini / Ancona			1893			x		
n. f.			1899			x		
n. f.			1903			x		
n. f.	1908					x		
n. f.					1897 1898	x		
n. f.			1898 1899			x		
n. f.		1918				x		
Gerolamo Pesaro / Appaltatore teatrale			1873 1893 1895		1893 1894	x		
n. f.			1884			§	§	§
n. f.	1889 1892 1893		1892			x		
– Agenzia Teatrale autorizzata / di / Augusto Pifferi / via Silvio Pellico, n. 6 / scala 19 p.o p.o / Milano – Augusto Pifferi / Agente Teatrale / Milano – via Silvio Pellico, 3			1887 1888			x		
n. f.			1898			x		
n. f.					1895 1896	x		
n. f.		1916 1917				x	x	x
n. f.				1911 1912		x		
n. f.			1874			§	x	
n. f.			1908			x		

no.	Name of impresario / agent / agency	Designation	Provenance	Letterhead of impresario / agent Handwritten or typed addresses
210	Profondo, Sante	agente cantante [basso]	Milano	Agenzia Teatrale Autorizzata / di / Sante Profondo / via Disciplini, num. 4 / Milano
211	Proni, Adolfo	impresario	Bologna	n. f.
212	Quaranta, Antonio	impresario	Bari Trieste	Politeama Petruzzelli / Bari
213	Radic[c]hi	impresario	n. f.	n. f.
214	Raggio	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.
215	Ranieri Vaschetti, Teresa	[impresaria]	Milano	[by hand:] Milano, 5 via S. Eufemia
216	Razzani, Francesco	[attore] impresario [coreografo] [mimo]	n. f.	n. f.
217	Revere, Luciano	agente	Trieste	Luciano Revere / Trieste / Corso n. 1
218	Ricordi, Luigi	n. f.	Milano	L'Arte Lirica / Ufficio d'affari teatrali / Direttori: Conte Luigi Grabinsky Broglio – Luigi Ricordi / via Carlo Al- berto 2 – Milano / Per Telegrammi: Arte Lirica Milano
219	Righi, Francesco	cantante [basso]	n. f.	n. f.
220	Righini, Giovanni Battista	impresario cantante [basso]	Milano	[by hand:] Milano, via Cornacchie, n. 4
221	Riva, Vittorio	impresario	Pula	n. f.
222	Rocca, Paolo	agente	Milano	– Autorizzata Agenzia Teatrale / di / Paolo Rocca / Milano / v. S. Pietro all'Orto, 23 – Agenzia Teatrale / Paolo Rocca / via Chiaravalle, n. 7 / Milano – Direzione del giornale / L'Arte / XX Anno / Rassegna dei Teatri / Belle Arti e Letteratura / esce in / Milano – Firenze – Trieste – Il Soffietto / Giornale Teatrale / con annessa Agenzia lirica-drammatica Milano / Passerella, 7 / Sezione lirica n.
223	Roda, Evasio	agente	n. f.	Milano – v. Cesare Beccaria n. 3 [ex v. Lagrange 35 – Torino]
224	Roggia, Giovanni	impresario	[Venezia]	n. f.
225	Romiti, Augusto	impresario	[Ancona] [Livorno] Roma [Terni]	– A. Romiti – Impresa Teatrale / Augusto Romiti – Impresa Teatrale / A. Romiti – Impresa Teatrale Sociale / Carnevale 1903–1904 / A. Romiti / Cagliari [via Zingari, n. 38 – Roma]
226	Ronzi, Arturo	n. f.	Firenze	Arturo Ronzi / Firenze

Stamp of impresario / agent	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split	opera	operetta	prosa
n. f.			1870			x		
n. f.		1867 1868				x		
n. f.			1914		1904	x		
n. f.		1886				x		
n. f.			1883			x		
n. f.					1901	x		
n. f.	1881		1883 1903	1883		x		
n. f.			1916	1909		x		
n. f.			1909			x		
n. f.			1861			x		
n. f.			1885			x		
	1904				1904	x		
n. f.			1889 1890 1892 1893 1894 1895 1898 1899 1901 1903 1904		1904	x		x
n. f.			1901			x	x	x
n. f.		1886				x		
n. f.			1887 1889 1894 1895 1903			x		
n. f.			1889			x		

no.	Name of impresario / agent / agency	Designation	Provenance	Letterhead of impresario / agent Handwritten or typed addresses
227	Roos, Hans	n. f.	Trenozin- Töplitz	n. f.
228	Rosani, Francesco	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.
229	Rosati, Pietro	n. f.	Trieste	n. f.
230	Rosini, Rinaldo	impresario	[Bologna] [Firenze] Milano [St Petersburg]	– Agenzia Teatrale Enrico Salt / R. Rosini Dirigente / Milano – v. Cesare Beccaria 1 [by hand:] Hotel de l'Ermitage Nevsky Prospeck – Petersburg [by hand:] via Mazzini 58 – Bologna
231	Rossegger, Augusto	agente [appaltatore] [imprenditore] [impresario]	n. f.	n. f.
232	Rossetti, Gino	impresario	Venezia	Teatro Rossini / Impresa d'opera / Stagione di primavera 1904
233	Rossini, Vincenzo	impresario	Šibenik	n. f.
234	Ruotolo, Gabriele	impresario	Milano	n. f.
235	Sampietri, M.	agente	Bologna	Agenzia Teatrale Emiliana / M. Sampietri / Bologna – via Belle Arti 50 – Bologna
236	Sangiorgi	impresario	Dubrovnik	n. f.
237	Sanguinazzi	impresario	n. f.	n. f.
238	Savelli, Salvatore	impresario	n. f.	n. f.
239	Scarabelli, Enrico	appaltatore cantante [tenore]	Milano	Scarabelli Enrico / Appaltatore Teatrale / Milano / 5 – via Palermo – 5
240	Scarneo, Giovanni	cantante [basso]	Milano	[by hand:] piazza Fontana 4
241	Schiavoni, Giovanni	n. f.	Venezia	n. f.
242	Sciutti d'Arrigo, Francesco	impresario	[Rijeka]	n. f.
243	Selles, Lodovico	agente	Pula	Prima Agenzia Teatrale / Autorizzata / Lodovico Selles / Pola / Sergia, 8

Stamp of impresario / agent	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split	opera	operetta	prosa
n. f.			1885			x		
n. f.		1885				§	§	§
n. f.			1878			x		
n. f.			1895 1896 1897 1898 1901 1903			x		
n. f.		1887 1888 1889 1890				x	x	x
n. f.			1904			x		
n. f.			1887	1880 1881 1882 1887 1888 1890 1893 1895		x	x	
n. f.	1899 1902	1895	1899		1904 1905 1908	x		
n. f.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	§	§	§
n. f.				1881 1892		§	§	§
n. f.	1863		1863		1863	x		
n. f.	1902					x		
n. f.			1897			x		
n. f.			1891			x		
n. f.			1878			x		
n. f.		1891 1892				x	x	x
Agenzia Teatrale / Pola / Lodovico Selles / Sergia, 9 / Telegramm: Selles-Pola			1914			x		

no.	Name of impresario / agent / agency	Designation	Provenance	Letterhead of impresario / agent Handwritten or typed addresses
244	Sforza, Raffaele	impresario	[Rijeka]	Teatro Comunale – Fiume / Impresa Raffaele Sforza
245	Simonetti, Giovanni	agente	Trieste	<p>– Direzione ed Agenzia del giornale L'Arte / Anno XXIX / Trieste – Roma – Milano – Napoli / Direttore-Proprietario: Giovanni Simonetti in Trieste / via delle Legna 5 / Rappresentanti l'agenzia e la Direzione del giornale: in Roma: avv. G. P. Gaetano, via Principe Amedeo 9 – in Milano: P. Rocca, v. S. Pietro all'orto 23 / in Napoli: avv. Giuseppe Carola, Duomo 326 / Rappresentanza di tutti gli autori / delle produzioni drammatiche e musicali francesi e tedesche / della Société / des auteurs et compositeurs dramatiques di Parigi, / degli autori ed editori drammatici / Dr. O. F. Sirich, J. Wild e J. Weinberger di Vienna / Sp. Tito D'aste e Giov. Arrighi in Italia / e degli / stabilimenti musicali Achille Tedeschi di Bologna / e Giudici e Strada di Torino / Per telegrammi: Arte – Trieste</p> <p>– Direzione ed Agenzia del giornale "L'Arte" – Trieste / Rassegna di teatri, belle arti e letteratura / Telegrammi: Arte – Trieste Anno XLIX Telefono 4–72 Rom.II. / Direttore-proprietario: Giovanni Simonetti Piazza delle Legna, 11 / Rappresentanza degli editori: Avv. Dott. O. F. Eirich, W. Karczag, Franz Bard & Bruder, Otto Eirich, Max Pfeffer e J. Weinberg in Vienna</p>
246	Soffriti, Carlo	impresario	Pisa	n. f.
247	Soldatini, Giuseppe	n. f.	Milano	n. f.
248	Sorlini, Francesco	mediatore	n. f.	n. f.
249	Spano, Michele	[agente] avvocato	Milano	Avvocato Michele Spano – Milano / via Alessandro Manzoni, 19

Stamp of impresario / agent	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split	opera	operetta	prosa
n. f.		1890 1894 1895 1896 1897 1900 1903 1904 1905 1906 1908	1897			x		x
Direzione ed Agenzia / del Giornale / L'Arte / Trieste		1885 1886 1890 1891 1893 1894 1895 1896 1898 1899 1901 1902 1905 1906 1918	1877 1878 1885 1889 1891 1893 1894 1895 1896 1898 1899 1901 1902 1905 1906 1911 1912 1915	1877 1878 1879 1880 1881 1882 1883 1884 1885 1886 1887 1889 1890 1891 1892 1893 1894 1895	1893 1899 1900	x	x	x
n. f.			1897			x		
Cav. Prof. Giuseppe Soldatini / via dei Filodrammatici 4 / Milano			1897			§	x	
n. f.		1885 1886 1887				x		x
n. f.			1896		1896	x		

no.	Name of impresario / agent / agency	Designation	Provenance	Letterhead of impresario / agent Handwritten or typed addresses
250	Stancich, Giovanni	macchinista [impresario]	Trieste	n. f.
251	Steffenoni, Cesare	[impresario]	Milano Pula	– impresa Cesare Steffenoni / con Agenzia Teatrale / Milano / Telegrammi: Steffenoni Teatrale – Milano – impresa Cesare Steffenoni / con Agenzia Teatrale / Milano / via Agnello n. 6 / Canto – coreografia – circo / Varietà – Chanteuse – Eccentricità
252	Stehle, Achille	cantante [tenore] impresario	Split	n. f.
253	Sterni, Francesco	agente teatrale [attore]	Bologna	– Agenzia generale / per / affari teatrali / Francesco Sterni / direttore / sede in Bologna / via / Altabella n. 11–1° p – Agenzia generale / per / affari teatrali / Francesco Sterni / direttore / sede in Bologna / via Carbonara n. 1 – piano 2°
254	Strakosch, Ferdinand	impresario	Zagreb	[by hand:] Hotel Lamm, Zagabria
255	Tambornino, Guido	rappresentante agenzie teatrali	Trieste	Guido Tambornino – Trieste / Provvigioni: / Interno 5% – Europa 6% / Fuori Europa 8% / Concerti, Tournée, ecc. / 10% [by hand:] Trieste – v. S. Michele 33
256	Tassinari, Arturo	agente	Bologna	n. f.
257	Taurone, Carmine	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.
258	Tavernari, Anacleto	agente teatrale	Parma	Agenzia Teatrale / A. Tavernari / Parma / Teatro Reinach
259	Todeschini, Antonio	n. f.	Venezia	n. f.
260	Tramontano, Attilio	agente teatrale	Milano	n. f.
261	Trauner, Giorgio	[impresario]	Gorizia Milano	Giorgio Trauner / Milano / V. S. Martino 14
262	Trevisan, Cesare	impresario	n. f.	n. f.
263	Trina, Ferdinando	impresario	Milano	[by hand:] Via San Pietro all'Orto 12, Milano

Stamp of impresario / agent	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split	opera	operetta	prosa
n. f.		1875 1876 1877				x		
n. f.	1898 1899		1898		1898	x		
n. f.				189?	1899	x		
n. f.		1885 1886 1889 1890 1891 1891 1893 1895	1890 1891 1895			x	x	x
n. f.		1892 1893 1894	1893			x		
Guido Tambornino / Trieste / Via S. Michele n. 33			1892 1893			x		
n. f.			1901			x	x	x
n. f.		1886				x		
n. f.	1899 1900		1894 1901		1894	x		
n. f.			1878			x		
n. f.		n. d.				x		
n. f.			1898 1899 1902 1903 1904 1905 1906 1907			x		
n. f.		1861 1865 1879 1880 1881 1882				x		x
n. f.					1898	x		

no.	Name of impresario / agent / agency	Designation	Provenance	Letterhead of impresario / agent Handwritten or typed addresses
264	Troccoli, Luigi	impresario	n. f.	n. f.
265	Ubaldi, Giovanni	impresario	n. f.	n. f.
266	Ullmann, Giuseppe	agente teatrale [attore]	Trieste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Giuseppe Ullmann / Agente Teatrale / Trieste - Giuseppe Ullmann / Agente Teatrale / Trieste / Recapito: Anfiteatro Fenice - via Stadion n. 13 / Giuseppe Ullmann / Agente Teatrale / Trieste - via Stadion n. 4 / Giuseppe Ullmann / Agente Teatrale / Trieste - Agente Teatrale / Giuseppe Ullmann / Trieste / Abitazione / via Stadion 13, piano III / Ufficio succursale / Anfiteatro Fenice, via Stadion - [by hand:] Caffè Corso Trieste
267	Ullmann, Rodolfo	impresario cavaliere	Trieste	[by hand:] Telegrammi / Ullmann Caffè Corso Trieste
268	Ungherini, Mariano	appaltatore teatrale	Fabriano [Perugia]	Mariano Ungherini / Appaltatore teatrale
269	Utali, Sante	agente	Milano	<p>Appalti teatrali / di / Sante Utali / studio / Milano – v. Broletto n. 1 – Milano / Uffici Succursali / Roma, Napoli, Torino, Firenze, Bologna / Rappresentanza / del giornale / Movimento Artistico / il quale è organo di questo ufficio per tutto quanto riguardano gli affari teatrali. Esso vien dato gratis alle Onorevoli Direzioni Teatrali. Il Giornale si pubblica non meno di due volte al mese. / Anno L. 14 per l'Italia / Anno L. 20 per l'estero / Annunzi cent. 20 la linea. / Traduzioni o Pubblicazioni a modicità di prezzo / Agli abbonati si accorda ogni facilitazione</p> <p>N. B. per risparmio di parole nei telegrammi al suddetto diretti, basta: Utali, Milano</p>
270	Vagnetti, A. & F. Francioli	agenti		Agenzia Artistica Internazionale / Proprietari / G. Barbani e C.i
271	Valenti, Domenico	[impresario] cantante [tenore]	Milano	[by hand:] via Cappellari, 7 Milano
272	Valentini, Giuseppe	impresario	n. f.	n. f.

Stamp of impresario / agent	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split	opera	operetta	prosa
n. f.					1880 1891	x		
n. f.		1864 1871 1886				x		
via Stadion n. 4		1885 1890	1884 1885 1890 1891	1880 1881 1884 1886 1889 1890 1891 1892 1893 1894 1894 1895 1895 1896 1897 1898	1894 1895	x	x	
n. f.	1900		1885 1892 1894 1899			x		x
n. f.			1893 1897			x		
- Agenzia Imprese Teatrali / di / Sante Utili / Milano - Gabinetto musicale / diretto da / Sante Utili / Milano		1892	1878 1883 1884 1885 1886 1888 1889 1890 1892 1893 1894 1895 1897	1880		x		
A. Vagnetti & F. Franciolli / Via Arcivescovado n. 1 / Galleria Ceci e Rossi	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	§	§	§
n. f.			1894 1895 1896	1896		x		
n. f.			1914			x		

no.	Name of impresario / agent / agency	Designation	Provenance	Letterhead of impresario / agent Handwritten or typed addresses
273	Varani, Federico	direttore di compagnia lirica cantante [basso]	n. f.	n. f.
274	Vecchi, Alfredo	impresario [agente]	Milano	Direzione e redazione della "Frustra teatrale" / Roberto Zoppolato / Annessa Agenzia – Formazione di Compagnie Musicali e Danzanti / v. Cappellati n. 1 Milano / Per telegrammi: Zoppolato – Milano [by hand:] via Durini n. 5
275	Vernier, Alberto	[agente] impresario [attore]	[Livorno] [Trieste] [Pula] [Rijeka] [Zadar] [Milano]	– Politeama Ciscutti – Pola / Proprietario Girolamo Andrioli / Telegrammi: "Andrioli – Pola" – Alberto Vernier / artista / drammatico – Impresa Rossegger / Teatro Comunale / Fiume
276	Vianelli, Pietro	agente	Milano	n. f.
277	Vianello, Carlo	[ballerino] impresario	n. f.	n. f.
278	Vignardelli, Giovanni	impresario	Firenze	[by hand:] Firenze, via Borgo Santa Croce n. 4
279	Villa, Angelo	agente	Milano	[in the periodicals: Villa Angelo, Foro Bonaparte, 15]
280	Villafiorita, Giuseppe	agente [rappresentante]	Milano	Agenzia teatrale / della / Società Internazionale di Mutuo Soccorso / fra / artisti lirici e maestri affini / via Tre Alberghi, 17
281	Viscardi, Enrico	agente	Zadar	– Zara / Enrico Viscardi / Zara / Per telegrammi: Viscardi Zara – [by hand:] per posta Viscardi Enrico Zara / telegrafo Viscardi Zara
282	Vitturi	impresario	Split	n. f.

Stamp of impresario / agent	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split	opera	operetta	prosa
n. f.			1895	1890		x		
n. f.			1885 1894 1895	1896	1895	x		
n. f.	1894 1895 1896 1899	1872	1878 1885 1885 1886 1887 1890 1891 1894 1896 1899	1871 1872 1874 1882 1883 1884 1884 1885 1886 1887 1889 1890 1893	1894	x	x	x
n. f.			1878	1884		§	§	§
n. f.			1865 1867 1875			x		
n. f.			1897			x		
n. f.		1885 1886				x		
Agenzia teatrale / società inter.le m. s. / artisti lirici e maestri affini			1885			x		
- Agenzia Teatro Nuovo / Enrico Viscardi / Zara - Agenzia teatro / Giuseppe Verdi / Zara - Viscardi Enrico - Enrico Viscardi / Zara			1897 1898 1899	1891 1895 1896 1898 1900 1902 1905	1895	x		x
n. f.				1879		§	§	§

no.	Name of impresario / agent / agency	Designation	Provenance	Letterhead of impresario / agent Handwritten or typed addresses
283	Vram, Eugenio	rappresentante [agente teatrale]	Milano	Agenzia teatrale / della / Società Internazionale di Mutuo Soccorso / fra / artisti lirici e maestri affini / via Tre Alberghi, 17
284	Zappert, Francesco	agente	Milano	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agenzia Teatrale Zappert [on the back: Cosmorama / Milano, piazza Paolo Ferrari, 10] - Agenzia Teatrale / del / Cosmorama / Milano / Piazza Filodrammatici n. 10 p. p. / commissioni 5 per cento in Italia / 6 per cento estero
285	Zappert, Luigi	agente	Milano	Cosmorama / Luigi Zappert / via Ugo Foscolo, 5 – Milano
286	Zoppolato, Roberto	agente	Milano	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agenzia / della / Frusta Teatrale / R. Zoppolato / Direttore Proprietario / Milano – v. Cappellari, 1 / Per telegrammi: Zoppolato – Milano - Direzione e redazione della “Frusta teatrale” / Roberto Zoppolato / Successore a Marco Curiel / Annessa Agenzia – Formazione di Compagnie Musicali e Danzanti / v. Cappellari, n. 1 Milano – Per Telegrammi: Zoppolato – Milano <p><i>[in the periodicals: La Frusta Teatrale (bimensile) dir. Roberto Zoppolato via S. Paolo 8, Milano]</i></p>
287	Zorzi, E.	impresario	Milano	E. Zorzi

Stamp of impresario / agent	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split	opera	operetta	<i>prosa</i>
Agenzia teatrale / società inter.le m. s. / artisti lirici e maestri affini opera seria		1885	1885			x		
n. f.		1890	1897 1899	1880 1881 1885 1893 1895		x		
n. f.			1901			x		
n. f.		1897	1892 1896 1897 1898 1899 1901 1903	1880	n. d.	x		
n. f.			1901			§	§	§

3 Proposing the opera season

3.1 The contract proposal: requests and constraints

Thanks to the letters of impresarios and agents referring to their proposals for opera seasons and relative negotiations, we are in a position to understand if the impresarios can be distinguished from one another by any particular cultural sensibilities and if they adopted a specific approach to artistic matters. Given that in this particular historical period the theatres were in most cases contracted out for a single season at a time, there was a greater turnover of impresarios and hence a greater circulation of artistic proposals. But how was a proposal for an opera season put together? What were the main questions that the impresarios might ask a theatre management when making the proposal?

The impresario would write to a theatre management offering his services; and if approaching a management for the first time, he would above all be careful about formulating the application correctly and making it as appealing as possible. From an analysis of the hundreds of letters in the archives of the area, we note that they have features in common. Certain questions are repeatedly made.

Those who still had doubts about whether to offer *opera seria* or something else¹ would ask for information on the type of opera that would attract the biggest audience, “because unfortunately the impresario must try to please the public” (*perché purtroppo l’impresario deve cercare di accontentare il pubblico*), as Antonio Lana wrote to the presidency of the theatre in Split.² Some impresarios immediately proposed specific operas in their first letter of negotiation, only perhaps to add “and if you should not like them, please tell me what would be more acceptable if the repertoire were changed”.³ They were therefore prepared

1 The term “opera seria” persisted in the correspondence and in all the documents of the period well into the 20th century, as a way of distinguishing it from opera buffa, for which a different type of budget was envisaged.

2 “In my opinion I believe that operetta, being a more varied and entertaining spectacle, would be more appreciated by the generality, whereas the refined and cultivated public likes opera [seria] better. So it’s a matter of seeing which of the two audiences is the one that goes to the theatre, and this is something the honourable presidency may well know.” (“Per me credo che l’operetta sarebbe più adalata [sic] come spettacolo più variato e divertente per la generalità, però il pubblico fine e colto ama di più l’opera. Ora sta a vedere quale dei due pubblici sia quello che va a teatro e questo l’onorevole presidenza può saperlo bene”); see Letter from Antonio Lana to the presidency of the theatre of Split, Milano, 2. 2. 1895, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

3 “e se non le piacessero, la S. V. dica quali sarebbero più accette cambiando repertorio”; Letter from the Ceruso theatrical agency of Milan to the theatre management of Split, Milano, 9. 1. 1898, HR-MGS:

to change the repertoire if it helped to win the contract. The choice of repertoire was either made with a view to meeting the theatre's requirements (and securing the contract) or could depend on the size of the endowment. A further factor to be considered was the recurrence of a particular opera title in the past productions at a given theatre: one tried to avoid re-proposing operas that had already been heard in the previous few seasons.⁴

Some requested a copy of the tender specifications, which they had perhaps failed to find in the newspapers or at the agencies. And some – writing to theatres that offered contracts for tender – would ask, long before the season concerned, when the new call for tenders would be published. But obviously among the main questions posed to the theatres that *hadn't* published tender specifications (or asked by those who hadn't seen them if they existed) were those concerning the following subjects: the best period to give a run of performances; how long the season would last; how many performances could be given overall; and the maximum number of performances that could be given in the course of a week.

On the financial side, as well as learning about the security deposit needed to guarantee the contract between management and impresario (a contract without a security deposit had no legal value)⁵ and the taxes to be paid (both government and commercial taxes), they needed to know about the endowment and how much it amounted to. In the final contract, the endowment might even be accompanied by the concession of a certain number of boxes in the theatre.⁶ Whether the boxes were privately owned or could be rented out by the *impresa* was another important point to clarify. Also of interest was the number of season-ticket holders one could count on, the theatre's nightly expenses, with or without orchestra, and the box-office takings when the theatre was full. This last figure could perhaps be determined from the *borderò* (registers of the evening's takings) of the previous years.⁷ Also necessary was to know

Kazalište 4/ kut. I–XVII.

- 4 There was those who would openly ask the management which operas had been performed in the previous years. For example, the impresario Girolamo Pesaro wrote: "Just so that I know what to do, I beg this honourable management [...] to inform me about the operas that have been staged in the course of the last five years." ("Tanto per mia norma, prego quest'onorevole direzione [...] informarmi le opere che si sono eseguite nel corso dell'ultimo quinquennio."); Letter from Girolamo Pesaro to the theatre management of Zadar, Trieste, 17. 12. 1893, HR-DAZD, folder 8.
- 5 If the impresario failed to have the sum at his disposal, he would have to borrow the money, either by requesting a personal loan or by opening a line of credit at a bank.
- 6 See, for example, the contract between the theatre management of Split and the impresario Gabriele Ruotolo, 4. 9. 1905. HR-MGS: Kazalište 4/kut. I–XVII: "the Management undertakes to grant the use of the theatre free of charge for the whole duration of the season, as well as an endowment of 8,000 (eight thousand) crowns and 16 boxes" ("la Direzione si obbliga di concedere l'uso del Teatro gratis durante tutta la stagione, oltre ad una dotazione di corone 8.000 (diconsì otto mila corone) ed a n. 16 palchi").
- 7 See Letter from Giuseppe Ullmann to the theatre management of Split, Trieste 11. 1. 1895. HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

the cost of the theatre staff, including stagehands (*servi di scena*), callboys, poster distributors (*fissatori cartelli*), box-office staff (*bollettinai*), doorkeepers (*portieri*) and custodians, not to mention the members of the local orchestra (for both opera seria and operetta – because a distinction was made), and to know how the staff was paid.

Naturally it was indispensable to have an idea of how many players the local orchestra had and what its forces were, so as to know whether it would be necessary to hire musicians externally; and to know the number of choristers for opera seria (as a rule the chorus for operetta arrived as a fully formed unit), if there was a machinist (with relative equipment), chorus master and prompter, and what the dimensions of the theatre were (height, depth, width, proscenium, stage, etc.). In response to these last requests the theatre management of Rijeka, for example, would directly attach a plan of the theatre. Some also asked for a plan of the seats, parterre and boxes. Or wished to know if there was electric lighting directly on stage. Also of interest was whether there were costumes and scenery and, if so, how big the sets were. The presence of mechanical devices was definitely seen as a plus for the theatre, though mechanisms for lifting scenery or properties were not always available in this particular area and these operations might still have to be done by hand. One impresario writing to Split also wanted to know which ports you could sail from, apart from Trieste and Venice, to help him calculate travel expenses.⁸ Posters from previous seasons could also be requested.

Some impresarios, like Torquato Lanzi, had prepared a printed sheet with a list of questions to be answered.⁹ The agent Paolo Rocca also had one. Impresarios who hadn't received an answer from the theatre management, might send a second letter of proposal.¹⁰ All of

8 See Letter from Antonio Lana to the theatre management of Split, Milano, 13. 1. 1895, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

9 The list was preceded by just a few lines: "I beg this honourable management to let me know, by return of courier, the conditions for contracting the theatre for the next season, and specifically to answer the following questions." ("Prego codesta Spettabile Direzione a farmi sapere, a volta di corriere, le condizioni d'appalto del Teatro per la prossima stagione, e precisamente rispondere alle seguenti domande."); Postcard from Torquato Lanzi, n. p., 16. 2. 1899, HR-DAZD, folder 9.

10 A certain Cosati addressed the theatre management of Šibenik as follows: "Illustrious Sir, I wrote to you from Piran proposing my singing company to give an opera production in your theatre with worthy artists, choosing those operas most suited to the environment and to the orchestral and choral elements that there might be in the city. Not having received an answer, I hereby send you my proposal again, [asking you] to indicate which type of opera may be the best suited, whether seria or buffa, in addition to the conditions, as I would like a secure agreement before coming to the *piazza*, and I beg you for a reply by return of courier, with all the clarifications that are necessary" ("Ill.mo Sig.re, da Pirano le scrissi proponendogli la mia compagnia di canto per dare in codesto teatro uno spettacolo d'opera con valenti artisti scegliendo quelle opere più adatte all'ambiente e agli elementi d'orchestra e cori che si potrebbero avere in città. Non avendo ricevuto risposta, le torno con la presente la mia proposta, e indicare quali opere sieno più adatte, serie o buffe, più quali le condizioni e vorrei prima di portarmi alla piazza un abbonamento assicurato, pregandolo d'una risposta a volta di corriere, con tutti quei

these requests were made freely and were not necessarily in response to a call for tenders. With the information gained from this first exchange of letters the impresario could then proceed to draw up a formal project.

In the first exchange there was very rarely any mention of money. Meetings and negotiations – possibly conducted in person – were reserved for a subsequent moment. Indeed there were those who asked if they could present their project personally without having to explain everything in writing, as did Ermanno De Filippi, one of the many examples of an impresario-singer: “The undersigned, wishing to produce an opera season, with artistic intents, begs this Esteemed Management to let him know if the Teatro Comunale would be free, and if so to telegraph him, so that he can immediately come there for the presentation of the project”.¹¹ A meeting face to face could not only help to avoid the misunderstandings that sometimes arose in a correspondence, but also consolidate the acquaintance between impresario and theatre management.

The first step for the impresario consisted in sending a letter with a simple proposal for an opera season. Usually the proposal would be made from one season to the next; for example, in May negotiations began for the autumn season. Some impresarios proposed opera seasons from one month to the next (or with an even shorter time frame), either because they were late in getting organised or because they hoped – or were certain – that things were going badly for a fellow impresario and a substitution would be welcome. A particularly audacious impresario like Alfredo Vecchi from Milan wrote to the theatre of Zadar on 27 March 1885 offering his services for the imminent spring season: a matter of days, therefore. If the theatre happened to be free, he said, he would put forward a “project proposal” (*progetto di concorso*).¹²

Even at this first stage of negotiations it could happen that the impresario or agent would write about wanting to bring a “first-rate company” (*primaria compagnia*) or would drop the names of well-known singers in the hope of swaying the management’s decision. For example, Conte Abriani of Milan, who also worked as an impresario, wrote to the theatre management of Split saying that he wished to bring the singer Giovanni Scarneo, giving as one of his reasons that Scarneo was keen to return to sing in his native

schiarimenti che sono necessari.”); Letter from G. Cosati to the theatre management of Šibenik, Izola (Isola), 30. 3. 1905, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b.

11 “Il sottoscritto, desideroso di allestire una stagione d’opera, con intendimenti artistici, prega codesta Spett. Direzione di fargli noto, se il Teatro Comunale sarebbe libero, ed in caso affermativo di telegrafargli, onde possa recarsi immediatamente costì per la presentazione del Progetto.”; Letter from Ermanno De Filippi to the theatre management of Rijeka, [n. p.], [n. d.], HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1. De Filippi is mentioned as a baritone working both in Pula (“Politeama Ciscutti”, *Il Giovine Pensiero*, 2. II. 1893, and “Politeama Ciscutti”, *Il Giovine Pensiero*, 1. 6. 1895) and Trieste in 1893 (*Signale für die musikalische Welt*, no. 59, 1893, p. 932). The *Agramer Zeitung* reports that De Filippi was active at the Teatro Comunale of Trieste, again as a singer, in 1900; See *Agramer Zeitung*, 27. 3. 1900, p. 4.

12 Letter from Alfredo Vecchi to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano 27. 3. 1885, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

town.¹³ But usually this sort of information was the subject of more advanced negotiations. Contrary to what one might expect, the extant documents suggest that it was not the general practice to mention the name of a well-known singer straight away. Opera singers had vocal qualities associated with specific opera types and the theatre management could decide at the last minute to change the operas programmed for the season, meaning that the cast would also have to be changed. Besides, not all the impresarios had the singers immediately at their disposal, so they tended to await instructions from the theatre management before putting together a company.¹⁴ During these exchanges, expressions such as “swift decision needed urgently” (*urge pronta immediata decisione*) or “telegraph immediately” (*telegrafare subito*) were absolutely routine. Decisions had to be made rapidly so as not to compromise the smooth running of the organisation.

The impresario would not necessarily offer his services for a whole season. He might propose a limited number of performances and just one opera.¹⁵ On the other hand, those applying for a three-year contract might indicate the operas of the first two years only, saying that it is best to wait and see which new operas would give a greater guarantee of success. This is well illustrated by the proposal of the Alpron-Battaglia impresa, which was competing for the three-year contract at the theatre of Rijeka in 1911:

13 “For the forthcoming month of August I can have your fellow citizen Signor Scarneo, a distinguished artist and *primo basso* who would willingly come back to his home town to sing. If in that period the Teatro Comunale is free and should have a subsidy, I would be prepared to give a series of 8 performances of the opera-ballet *Faust* with artists all of established renown, with Signor Scarneo as protagonist (Mefistofele) and with a fine and select corps de ballet and a lavish staging.” (“Pel p. v. mese di agosto posso avere il vostro concittadino sig. Scarneo, distinto artista 1° basso che volentieri verrebbe a cantare nella sua città natia. Se per quell’epoca il Teatro Comunale è libero e avesse una sovvenzione, io sarei disposto di dare una serie di n. 8 rappresentazioni dell’opera-ballo *Faust* con artisti tutti di fama stabilita, col protagonista (Mefistofele) sig. Scarneo con scelto e bel corpo di ballo e sfarzosa messa in scena.”); Letter from Geremia Abriani to the *podestà* of Split, Milano, 5. 6. 1894, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/kut. I–XII. The bass Giovanni Scarneo subsequently left the world of opera for that of spoken theatre; see Anna Busi, *Otello in Italia*, Adriatica, Bari 1973, p. 254.

14 For example, the agent Sante Utili wrote to the theatre management of Zadar as follows: “To form the company of proficient singers, as I said above, a swift telegraphic response is imperative” (“Per formare la compagnia di valenti cantanti, urge come ho detto più sopra una pronta risposta telegrafica”); see Letter from Sante Utili to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 18. 3. 1883, HR-DAZD, folder 5. Utili was thus waiting for confirmation from the theatre management and would select the cast only at a later stage.

15 “[...] For the month of November,” wrote the impresario Felice Brandini from Trieste, “I propose to give at the theatre of Zadar 8 or 10 performances of *Carmen* – provided that there is a sufficient endowment, given that the expenses for the renting and artists are great” (“[...] mi faccio avanti pel mese di novembre di dare al teatro di Zara 8 o 10 recite di *Carmen* – qualora ci fosse una dotazione sufficiente essendo molte le spese di noli ed artisti”); Letter from Felice Brandini to the theatre management of Zadar, Trieste, 7. 10. 1884, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

And we will begin by offering for the next Lent season of 1912 an absolutely enormous programme, namely four new operas for this theatre: *Giulietta e Romeo* by G. Gounod, *Tzigana* by F. Leoni, *Matrimonio segreto* by L. Cimarosa, and *I maestri cantori* by R. Wagner [...]. For the grand Lent season of 1913, given the celebrations for the centenaries of Verdi and Wagner, we would like to give a masterpiece by each of these two great masters. By Verdi either *Don Carlos* (which would be new) or *Rigoletto* with an outstanding lead; and by Wagner, *Tristan* or *Tannhäuser*, also adding *Isabeau* by P. Mascagni, given that this opera has been a great success in Italy. For the third year we think it is wise to postpone defining the programme, and to wait and see what novelties in the meanwhile will give a greater guarantee of good results, and also depending on the artists one could find available.¹⁶

There were times when the singers themselves offered their services to theatre managements without going through either agents or impresarios. And we also have instances of proposals being made directly by composers of opera, as in the case of Antonio Orsini, who wrote to the theatre management of Zadar hoping to give three performances of his new opera *Per l'amore*, a production that had already been postponed some time previously. Orsini promised that the performance would be of high quality.¹⁷ Another example of a

16 “E cominciamo coll’offrire per la prossima stagione Quaresima 1912 un programma addirittura monstre, e cioè quattro opere nuove per questo Teatro e precisamente: Giulietta e Romeo di G. Gounod, Tzigana di F. Leoni, Matrimonio segreto di L. Cimarosa, ed I maestri cantori di R. Wagner [...]. Per la grande stagione quaresima 1913 ricorrendo il centenario di G. Verdi e di R. Wagner pensiamo di dare un capolavoro, d’ognuno di questi due grandi maestri. Di G. Verdi il Don Carlos (nuovo) oppure il Rigoletto con un protagonista eccezionale; e di R. Wagner, il Tristano oppure il Tannhäuser, aggiungendo l’Isabeau di P. Mascagni dato che quest’opera abbia un buon successo in Italia. Per il terzo anno crediamo opportuno di aspettare a compilare il programma in attesa di quelle novità che in questo frattempo daranno maggiore garanzia di buon esito, ed anche a seconda degli artisti che si potranno avere disponibili.”; Letter from the Alpron-Battaglia impresa to the theatre management of Rijeka, 31. 7. 1911, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

17 “I, the undersigned, present a respectful request to Your Excellency asking to be granted the Teatro G. Verdi in the first fortnight of April to perform for three nights my opera entitled *Per l'amore*, which should have been staged months ago, and which could not be performed on account of the rigours of the weather. I, the undersigned, also add that the above opera will be given with the utmost quality. Renewing my thanks, also for the generosity that Your Excellency has always shown towards the undersigned, with sincere respects, your most devoted Antonio Orsini, master of music.” (“Il sottoscritto porge rispettosa domanda alla S. V. Ill.ma onde voglia concedergli il teatro G. Verdi nella prima quindicina del mese di aprile per rappresentare per tre sere la sua opera lirica dal titolo *Per l'amore* che già si doveva rappresentare mesi or sono, e che in causa ai rigori del tempo non ha potuto rappresentarla. Il sottoscritto aggiunge inoltre che la sudetta opera sarà data decorosissimamente; rinnovando i ringraziamenti e di tanta generosità che ha la S. V. Ill.ma verso il sottoscritto con distinta osservanza. Devotissimo. Antonio Orsini. M° di musica.”); Letter from Antonio Orsini to the theatre management of Zadar, Šibenik 25. 2. 1914, HR-DAZD, folder 24.

composer, and not an impresario, writing directly to a theatre is that of Luciano Caser: “My impresario agrees to come to the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka with artists and orchestra to give a staging of my opera *Lia* conducted by myself in person”.¹⁸ Antonio Smareglia also directly addressed the theatre of Rijeka to propose his new opera *Nozze istriane*, stating: “An impresario of my acquaintance whom I fully trust would like to give 8–10 performances of my opera *Nozze istriane* at the Teatro Comunale”. It would appear to have been the impresario, therefore, who had the idea of performing his opera. The request was then followed by the questions typically asked in the circumstances: about when the theatre would be available, if the orchestra and chorus would be complete, and so on.¹⁹ These were rare cases, however, for most often it was the impresario, or an agent working for him, that made the proposal.²⁰

What did the impresarios declare in these letters? What information did they give the theatre managements? Basically, their list of artists (when they had one) and operas. The operas would then be agreed with the management. What type of operas did the impresarios propose? And on what grounds? First of all, we must bear in mind that opera buffa

18 “Il mio impresario è d’accordo di venire al teatro Comunale di Fiume con artisti, orchestra a dare una rappresentazione dell’opera mia *Lia* da me diretta personalmente”. Luciano Caser generously agreed to donate 10% of the net takings to the Red Cross or to the unemployed of Rijeka; see Letter from Luciano Caser to the theatre management of Rijeka, [n. p.], 16. 4. 1915, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1. The composer was about to stage his opera at the Politeama Rossetti of Trieste and he attached the advertising flyer of the event as a guarantee for the theatre management of Rijeka.

19 “Un impresario mio conoscente di cui ho piena fiducia avrebbe intenzione di dare 8–10 rappresentazioni della mia opera *Nozze istriane* a codesto teatro comunale”. The request continues as follows: “The said impresario begs me to ask this honourable management if it is disposed to grant the theatre for the said performances; and if so, also when the theatre would be available and if at Rijeka it has a good full orchestra consisting of 50 players and a chorus consisting of about 16 women as sopranos and contraltos and 20 men as tenors and basses. The impresa would naturally take care of all the rest. I beg you to inform me of the theatre’s conditions; the impresario would intend to do the projected production within the month of May approximately. If the arrangement is feasible, he would come immediately to Rijeka to settle the matter [...]” (“Il suddetto impresario mi prega di chiedere a codesta spett. Direzione se fosse disposta a concedere il teatro per le suaccennate rappresentaz.; inoltre quando il teatro sarebbe eventualmente disponibile e se a Fiume si può avere una buona completa orchestra composta di circa 50 esecutori e un coro composti di circa 16 donne tra soprani e contralti e 20 uomini (tra tenori e bassi). L’impresa naturalmente penserebbe a tutto il resto. Prego di volermi comunicare quali sono le condizioni del teatro e l’impresario deciderebbe di poter fare la progettata esecuzione entro il mese di maggio circa. Se la combinazione è fattibile egli verrebbe immediatamente a Fiume per definire la cosa [...]”); Letter from Antonio Smareglia to the theatre management of Rijeka, Trieste, [n. d.], HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

20 We do have other cases of composers directly writing to a theatre management, but with a special motivation, such as that of composing the music for the inauguration of the theatre. See the request from Enrico Zanotti concerning the opening of the theatre of Rijeka in 1885 or that of Ermanno Basadonna, who offered to write an overture and prologue for the same event in Rijeka in 1885.

cost less than opera seria. *Grand opéra* was also staged, but was more expensive than all the rest. So the choice of the type of opera to propose often depended on how large the endowment offered was.

Many impresarios copied out the same letter by hand, repeating identical lists of singers and repertoire over and over again. Some had specifically prepared a brochure to be sent to the theatre, thereby saving them the trouble of repeating the same letter dozens of times. There were also pre-printed forms that could be more or less detailed. Regarding the eastern Adriatic, we have the case of Pietro Minciotti, director and administrator of the Compagnia Lirica Internazionale, who had a three-page model printed. On the first page was a very brief request to the theatre for information: “Most Excellent Sir / I would be exceedingly grateful if you would inform me of what period your theatre would be free for a run of unscheduled performances of the Compagnia Internazionale di Opere owned by Signori Samuele Lewis and Wilhem Tom. / With greatest respects / Yours sincerely / Pietro Minciotti / N.B. The reply must be addressed to the Theatre of ...”.²¹ The second page gave a list of the operas and artists, comprising the names of the *maestro concertatore*, assistant conductor (*maestro sostituto*), and prompter (*rammentatore*), the number of orchestral players and chorus singers, and the ownership of the music, costumes, scenery and properties. The third page contained a sheet to be detached and returned to the sender, listing all the months of the year; against each month the management was asked to indicate the days when the theatre was free.

Even the Compagnia Sociale Lirica Donizetti, managed by the impresario and tenor Giustino Azzarelli, had its own printed brochure with the standard listing of the artists, this time with the added statement in the centre of the page declaring the company’s ownership of costumes, properties, piano and harmonium. This could be seen as a further inducement to engage companies of this type, for ownership of these materials meant extra security and no need to hire them. This was followed by the repertoire, with the addition of a clause saying that other operas could be staged “at the request of the managements” (*a richiesta delle Direzioni*). Also specified in the brochure was that the company would reserve “the right to make any changes in the artistic personnel necessary to provide a better outcome”.²² Artistic personnel and repertoire also featured in the letterhead

21 “Pregiat.mo Signore / Le sarei sommamente grato se volesse indicarmi in quale epoca sarebbe libero il suo Teatro per un corso di rappresentazioni straordinarie della Compagnia Internazionale di Opere di Proprietà dei Signori Samuele Lewis e Wilhem Tom. / Ossequiandola / Devotissimo / Pietro Minciotti / N.B. La risposta dovrà essere indirizzata al Teatro di ...”; Brochure of the Compagnia Lirica Internazionale, [n. p.], [n. d.], HR-DAZD, folder 26.

22 “il diritto di eseguire quei cambiamenti nel personale artistico necessari al migliore andamento”; Brochure of the Compagnia Sociale Lirica “Donizetti”, [n. p.], [n. d.], HR-DAZD, folder 5. Giustino Azzarelli, who was also a tenor in the Crotti Opera Company, offered opera seria, semiseria and buffa. He wrote to Zadar from Gorizia in August 1885 and in the same year wrote also to the theatre management of

of Luigi Bolognese, who ran a company that produced opera, comic operettas, zarzuelas and theatre for children, and offered its products in Šibenik and Split in 1895. As for the Celebre Compagnia Lillipuziana di Canto directed by Ernesto Guerra, the repertoire was pre-printed on its letterhead in such a way that the reader got an immediate idea of the type of operas on offer before having to look any further. Any impresario that either didn't have a precise set of operas to offer or simply did not wish to specify a repertoire that could be restrictive, simply used his own name printed at the top, with or without an individual logo. Finally, there were those – like Giulio Milani – who chose to print their photo alongside their name.

It could happen that the impresario included his own wife in the cast. A case in point is that of Giuseppe Castagnoli, who hoped to make her sing at Šibenik for the 1909 season. He reported that he was in negotiations with a tenor, “truly a big name” (*veramente di cartello*), who had sung in various theatres in Italy and abroad with great success and had recently returned from a triumph in Florence, a “very good” (*buonissima*) soprano for *La traviata* and *Il trovatore*, who would certainly be appreciated in Šibenik, and a bass and baritone he referred to as “jewels” (*gioielli*), about whom he had already spoken in a previous letter to the management. He concluded by saying that his own wife (*la mia signora*) was prepared to take the stage in the part of Azucena “so that you alone will be able to judge her” (*che loro soli potranno giudicarla*).²³

It was in the impresario's interest to show that the artists were first rate and not only had experience, but also exerted a strong appeal on the audiences they encountered. For an impresario it was also important to demonstrate not only that he himself was solvent, and hence already had funds of his own, but also that he had made many contacts in the opera world. This was a quality that increased the chances of being selected to run the opera season. And this is what Antonio Lana, the impresario from Zadar, tried to stress when he wrote to Gajo Filomen Bulat, the *podestà* or mayor of Split and also director of the new theatre, in the hope of being engaged to open the new Teatro Nuovo in 1893:

I have excellent relations with all the artists from the highest to the lowest; with the music publishers; with troupe leaders of all kinds; managers of operetta companies; property men,

Rijeka to apply for the position of secretary at the theatre. Azzarelli's company, however, was evidently not considered as being “of stature” (*di rango*) if in *L'Eco di Pola* it was marked out as eminently worthy of a “modest country town” (*paesello di provincia*) but unsuited “to an aristocratic environment such as that of the Politeama” (*ad un ambiente aristocratico quale è quello del Politeama*); see “Teatrali”, *L'Eco di Pola*, 9. 5. 1891.

23 Letter from Giuseppe Castagnoli to Giovanni Mazzoleni, Mali Losinj (Lussinpiccolo), 18. II. 1908, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9. Giuseppe Castagnoli was also a singer, whom we find in the role of Bartolo in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at Šibenik in 1908. His was one of various cases in which the husband acted as his wife's agent, prompted partly also by the need to administer her earnings.

machinists, scene designers, theatrical shoemakers, wardrobe masters, not only in Italy but also abroad, and I can obtain special conditions from everyone, because thank God I have always had honest dealings and they are fond of me.²⁴

Lana had received news of the inauguration the year before, through Antonio Ravasio, the *maestro di cappella* in Zadar.²⁵ So in the hope of obtaining some engagement in the field of Italian opera, he tried to put himself in a good light with his old friend Bulat, parading his record of employment all over the world: six years spent at El Liceu in Barcelona, three years at the Real Teatro de São João in Oporto; three years at the San Fernando of Seville and then another three at Saragozza; three times at Palma de Mallorca, three times at Valladolid, not to mention San Sebastian, Bayonne, Montpellier, Narbonne, Toulouse and Marseilles. From 1879 to May 1889 he had worked at the Teatro Real of Madrid, which he liked to stress was the “first of Europe” (*il primo d’Europa*).²⁶ He had also been at the Teatro ex Ducale “di Reggio in Modena”, where he brought an opera company on behalf of otherwise unspecified “*signori*”, declaring that they had been highly satisfied with him and were even prepared to issue him with “a fine certificate of honour” (*un bel certificato onorevole*). His hope was to be preferred “to the many bunglers that are in the theatre business, especially here in Milan” (*ai tanti pasticcioni che ci sono negli affari teatrali, massime qui in Milano*). On the subject of bunglers he cited the case of the Jewish impresario Paolo Massimini, who had walked out on an opera company in Spain and absconded. After presenting himself, therefore, as an excellent and conscientious model one could trust, Lana then went on to the usual appropriate requests, asking for details about the theatre, information on boxes and galleries, and all the building’s measurements (height, depth, breadth), the numbers in the chorus and the orchestra, conductors, etc.

Having contacts and important ongoing collaborations with renowned artists was what was expected of an impresario. For example, Girolamo Pesaro, an impresario from Trieste, who wrote to Bulat with more or less the same motivations as Lana (i. e. to open

24 “Sono in ottime relazioni con tutti gli artisti dai più grandi ai più piccoli; cogli editori di musica; coi capocomici di tutti i generi; direttori di compagnie d’operette; attrezzisti, macchinisti, scenografi, calzolari teatrali, vestiaristi non solo d’Italia, ma anche dell’Estero e posso avere delle facilitazioni da tutti, perché grazie a Dio ho trattato sempre con onestà e mi vogliono bene.”; Letter from Antonio Lana to Gajo Filomen Bulat, Milano, 18. 3. 1893, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

25 Subsequently the news was confirmed by a certain Meneghello, a violinist in the orchestra of La Scala, and Pietro Stermich, son of Nicolò Stermich (both Dalmatians), that the theatre would be inaugurated first with a Slavic opera, then an Italian one; see Letter from Antonio Lana to Gajo Filomen Bulat, Milano, 18. 3. 1893, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

26 For his reputation in successful enterprises in Spain Lana was known as “Don Ciccio”. He was renowned as someone “with a good nose” (*un buon naso*); see also Sabalich in *Cronistoria aneddotica*, p. 244. Lana had already taken on the contract at the theatre in Zadar in the autumn of 1859, where he also appears to have met with the public’s approval.

the new theatre with a first-rate opera production), boasted that he had dealings with artists who had “performed in the leading theatres of Italy and abroad” (*calcato primarii Teatri d’Italia ed Esteri*).²⁷ Some impresarios even accompanied their letters of proposal with newspaper clippings as evidence of their former activities and successes in preceding seasons.

Some impresarios made up their companies as they went along. Others – the minority – offered their services with already formed companies, complete with *maestri*, scores and costumes for various operas, and perhaps even a few orchestral musicians; in this case the theatre management could choose the most suitable works from a short list of proposed operas. From the documents we learn, for example, that from 1895 the presidency of the theatre in Split asked the impresario to propose six to eight operas, from which three or four would be chosen. In the case of an operetta season, the proposed list should have as many as twelve titles, from which six to eight would be selected.²⁸ The presidency (or theatre management) would negotiate with more than one impresario in this manner, so that if the negotiations broke down, it could always fall back on another proposal that seemed more suitable.²⁹

27 Letter from Girolamo Pesaro to Gajo Filomen Bulat, Trieste, 21.12.1893. HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

28 The theatre management of Split wrote as follows to Antonio Lana: “in making an opera proposal you need to offer six or eight operas, from which the management would choose 3 or 4; whereas if you should limit yourself to making a proposal just for operettas, you should offer us six of the more recent ones and six of the best older ones so that we can choose from 6 to 8” (“Nel fare una proposta d’opera bisognerebbe che si offrisse sei o otto opere delle quali la Direzione sceglierebbe 3 o 4; mentre se si limitasse a farci una proposta per operette, dovrebbe offrirci fra le quali sei delle più recenti e sei delle migliori più vecchie affinché possiamo scegliere dalle 6 alle 8”); Letter from the theatre management of Split to Antonio Lana, Split, [n. d.].3.1895, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

29 We read, for example, in the minutes of the shareholders’ meeting of the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar: “1. The Presidency is authorised to go ahead with the negotiations for the opera season with the impresario Osvaldo Mazza, and is also authorised to settle with him on the basis of the endowment of 2,600 florins. 2. The Presidency is likewise instructed to negotiate at the same time with the impresario De Giorgi of Milan, raising the endowment with him to 3,000 florins. 3. If both negotiations should fail, the Presidency remains authorised to arrange and conclude transactions for any other proposal, even of spoken theatre, with a limit for spoken theatre of an endowment no higher than a thousand florins or of a promise of eighty-five florins a day [...]” (“1. La Presidenza viene incaricata di spingere le trattative per lo spettacolo d’opera coll’impresario Osvaldo Mazza, ed autorizzata anche a concludere seco lui sulla base della dote di fiorini 2.600. 2. Resta egualmente incaricata la Presidenza di trattare contemporaneamente coll’impresario De Giorgi di Milano aumentando con lui la Dote fino a Fiorini 3.000. 3. Qualora fallissero entrambe le trattative resta autorizzata la Presidenza a combinare e concludere per qualunque altro spettacolo anche di prosa, con limite per la prosa di una dote non maggiore di fiorini mille o d’una assicurazione di fiorini ottantacinque al giorno [...]); Meeting of the shareholders of the Teatro Nuovo, Zadar, 6.9.1869, HR-DAZD, folder 3.

3.2 Asking for references on impresarios and artists. Solvency of the impresarios

3.2.1 References requested by the theatre managements

What guarantees would the theatre managements require of their impresarios? How did they protect themselves from risk? In his book on the economics of theatre, back in 1839, Giuseppe Rossi-Gallieno would write: “Either the contractor is a man who is solvent, suitable and well-intentioned [...] or he is insolvent or incapable of finding the necessary capital, and he will abstain from presenting projects, thereby leaving an opening free to the competent”.³⁰ Before aspiring to the coveted contract one therefore had to give proof of solid expertise. At times the managements asked for references and gathered information from other theatre managements about the conduct of individual impresarios or artists, before signing contracts and working with them. References might also be requested for the singers who had been engaged by the same impresario.

At Rijeka, for example, in 1912 the management asked the theatre of Cesena for information about Pasquale la Rotella, who was to be the conductor and *maestro concertatore* in the opera season of the following year managed by the Alpron-Battaglia impresa. Cesena answered with enthusiasm and assurances that the choice would not be a mistake:

Maestro Cavaliere Pasquale La Rotella gave an excellent account of himself. Young, dynamic, highly intelligent, with a wide and deep musical culture, he prepared and conducted *La Fanciulla del West* with verve, precision and vivacity of colour, such as to meet with the unanimous approval of the public and also deserve the strongest praises from the composer, who was present at the performance. We are therefore fully convinced that if he is invited to conduct the very important season mentioned by your honourable management, he will not be unequal to his task and to the just expectations of the public.³¹

30 “O l'appaltatore è uomo solvibile, idoneo e ben intenzionato [...] o egli è insolubile od incapace di trovare il necessario valente, e si asterrà dal presentare progetti, lasciando quindi libero il varco ai capaci.”; Rossi-Gallieno, *Saggio*, p. 46.

31 “Il M°Cav. Pasquale La Rotella ha fatto qui ottima prova. Giovane, energico, intelligentissimo, di una cultura musicale vasta e profonda, ha concertato e diretto ‘La Fanciulla del West’ con uno slancio, con una precisione e vivacità di colore, da incontrare l’unanime favore del pubblico, e da meritare anche i più vivi elogi da parte dell’Autore, intervenuto allo spettacolo. Siamo quindi pienamente convinti che se sarà chiamato a dirigere la importantissima stagione, a cui accenna codesta Onorevole Direzione, egli non risulterà inferiore al compito suo ed alle giuste aspettative del pubblico.” Letter from the theatre management of Cesena to the theatre management of Rijeka, Cesena, 8. 10. 1912, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

In the past it had been the theatre management in Rijeka itself that was contacted to give a report on impresarios that had worked there. It was the recipient, for example, of a request for information on Luigi Cesari, the impresario who had inaugurated the new theatre in 1885. Another request concerned Augusto Rossegger, this time from the Teatro delle Muse of Ancona and the Teatro Regio of Parma, wishing for information on his “ability, intelligence, solvency and honesty” (*capacità, intelligenza, solvibilità ed onestà*).³² In 1892 it was the civil magistrate of Rijeka that sent the Teatro Comunale in the same city a formal request for information about the impresario Sciutti d’Arrigo, who had recently worked there. It asked the management if Sciutti d’Arrigo “was endowed with the means required to run an important theatrical impresa” (*fosse provvisto di mezzi onde condurre un’importante impresa teatrale*) and if he had always respected the obligations undertaken with the theatre. On the initiative of a certain Conte Domini, the theatre management replied to the magistrate that they were unaware of whether or not Signor Sciutti had the necessary resources, but that the impresario in question had always honourably fulfilled his contract with the city’s theatre.³³

As for the Teatro Mazzoleni in Šibenik, it instead sent a direct request for information about a group of singers then working at the Teatro Bonetti in Mali Lošinj (Lussinpiccolo) in March 1911. The Teatro Bonetti responded with a favourable report, praising the singers for both their artistic qualities and trustworthiness: indeed they had earned the affection of the public “which comes to the performances in great numbers, applauds them and admires them all without exception for the beauty of their voices, intonation and ensemble”. A special note was also added regarding the impresario Giuseppe Ponzio, here described as a man who is serious, courteous and “very reputable in business matters” (*correttissima negli affari*). In short, the current production at the Teatro Bonetti had so interested the audience – it reported, seeming to wish to win over the Šibenik management – that even Archduke Karl Stephan himself also expected to attend.³⁴ In reply, the Teatro Mazzoleni expressed its thanks for the information and reported that it had entered into agreements with the impresa, to their mutual satisfaction. It also expressed the wish that an entente between the two theatres could be possible in the future as an easier way of ensuring good productions.³⁵ In this way, therefore, the impresario Ponzio was given an excellent endorsement, one that unquestionably put him in an advantageous position compared to other competitors aspiring to run the season at Šibenik.

32 Register of documents (1885–1910), Rijeka, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 10.

33 See Letter from Carl Oziani to [Signor Cavaliere], Rijeka, 23. 7. 1892, HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6.

34 “che accorre numeroso allo spettacolo, li applaude e li ammira tutti indistintamente per la bellezza delle voci, per l’intonazione e la fusione”; see Letter from Alberto Gilberti to the theatre management of Šibenik, Mali Lošinj, 26. 3. 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3.

35 See Letter from [Giovanni Mazzoleni] to the management of the Teatro Bonetti of Mali Lošinj, [Šibenik], 2. 4. 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

Not always, however, was the outcome of these enquiries so beneficial, even when the references were favourable. The next year the Teatro Mazzoleni asked the theatre in Piran (Pirano) for information on the impresario Cesare Matucci and his company, which was due to perform at Šibenik. Mazzoleni had received an anonymous letter warning him that Matucci's company had no conductor (*maestro*) and no tenor, and also lacked choristers. The very same day Mazzoleni sent letters to two different recipients asking for explanations: one to Piran, the other directly to Matucci himself. To the theatre in Piran he wrote: "I am certain that I will receive the frankest information, also on the abilities of the *prime donne*, from your honourable management".³⁶ To Matucci, on the other hand, he issued the following warning: "I must seriously warn you that if your company should not be in better condition than it was the last time it would undoubtedly be discharged" ("*devo avvertirla seriamente che se la Sua compagnia non fosse in condizioni migliori di quando è stato l'ultima volta, verrebbe senz'altro protestato*").³⁷ Alberto Muscas³⁸ from Piran gave reassurances about the impresario and Mazzoleni thanked him for the news: "I am pleased that what has been written to me from Piran concerning the Matucci company is not the case, and I am most grateful to you for the information that you kindly gave me, and I offer you my most heartfelt thanks".³⁹ Mazzoleni, however, was subsequently forced to change his mind on the matter, because the impresario Matucci and his company simply failed to turn up in Šibenik on the appointed day, without giving any notice, thereby somehow confirming the content of the anonymous letter. The tickets for the evening's performance had been sold out, so in this instance Mazzoleni demanded as compensation not only the penalty of 1,000 crowns, but also the damages resulting from a failure to fulfil the contract.⁴⁰ It is

36 "sono sicuro che le informazioni più sincere, anche sulla capacità delle prime donne, le avrò da codesta Spettabile Direzione"; Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to the theatre management of Piran, [Šibenik], 16. 2. 1912, DAŠI-103, folder 10.

37 Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Cesare Matucci, [Šibenik], [n. d.], DAŠI-103, folder 10.

38 We have no information on the identity of Alberto Muscas. In the *Egida* he is generically described as an "instructor of the theatre company" (*istruttore del corpo drammatico*) for an entertainment of theatre and song; see "Pirano", *Egida*, anno II, no. 56, 21. 5. 1905.

39 "Ho piacere che quanto mi è stato scritto da Pirano riguardo alla compagnia Matucci non corrisponda al vero, e Le sono gratissimo per le informazioni ch'Ella gentilmente mi ha dato e Le esprimo i miei più sentiti ringraziamenti."; Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Alberto Muscas, [Šibenik], 21. 2. 1912, DAŠI-103, folder 10.

40 "Having accepted all your proposals," Mazzoleni wrote to Matucci, "I had to take for certain your arrival at the *piazza*, to the extent that I circulated the posters announcing the first performance on the date that you had indicated in a letter; instead, you not only did not arrive here, but also did not find it necessary to even let me know of your decision, with the result that I was forced to telegraph the director of the theatre in Piran asking for news, to which he answered "Company Still Here Matucci Will Reply". I must attribute your silence to a misadventure with the post, since I cannot admit that a troupe leader can commit such an unspeakable action towards a management. In any case, while reserving the due steps to be taken towards the managements of other theatres, I notify you that on the

interesting to note that in the past Matucci had already worked at the theatre in Šibenik, and on that occasion had proved his worth. But unfortunately in this case, in spite of the reassurances given, Mazzoleni was forced to acknowledge that his fears were borne out. Even a good reference, therefore, was not necessarily a sufficient guarantee.

At Zadar, on the other hand, when in 1897 the theatre management asked the Teatro delle Muse in Ancona for information on the impresario Marchetti, who had worked there some years previously, Ancona answered that the impresario certainly “fulfilled his commitments” (*adempito ai suoi impegni*) and would have a “fair ability to run an impresa” (*capacità discreta per condurre un’impresa*), but he was unfortunately devoid of his own resources and sometimes “was assisted by people who were solvent” (*venne assistito da persone solvibili*).⁴¹ The fact of having solvent people or wealthy partners close at hand naturally made the impresario look less vulnerable when theatre managements were making their choices. So when the theatre management of Zadar asked the Teatro Piccinni of Bari for a reference on the impresario Nicola Guida, following the anxious enquiries of a soprano who was afraid of not being paid by him (see also below, section 7.2. *Contracts with singers*), the management in Bari answered that “as far as solvency is concerned, he actually has no capital himself, but he is full of self-respect in the fulfilment of his obligations, so he has a partner who provides it when needed”.⁴² Hence the “partner” (*socio*) would save the

basis of § 12 of the contract you have incurred a penalty amounting to 1,000 (one thousand) crowns and if the production should not be staged at Šibenik within the first week of March, until which time I will keep the theatre at your disposal, I will hand over all the documents to the theatre’s lawyer so that he may take the necessary measures. I repeat that I continue to think this is some oversight, so before proceeding I urgently await clarifications on the subject.” (“Avendo accettato tutte le Sue proposte, io dovevo ritenere sicuro il Suo arrivo sulla piazza tanto è vero che pubblicai i manifesti annunciando il debutto nella data che con lettera da Lei mi era stata indicata invece Ella non solo non è venuto ma non ha trovato necessario neppure di parteciparmi la Sua decisione tanto che fui indotto di telegrafare al direttore del teatro di Pirano domandando notizie egli mi rispose «compagnia ancora qui risponderà Matucci». Io debbo attribuire a un disguido postale il Suo silenzio poiché non ammetto che da parte di un capocomico possa essere commessa un’azione così inqualificabile verso una direzione. Comunque, riservandomi i passi dovuti verso le direzioni degli altri teatri La avverto che in base al § 12 del contratto Ella è incorso in una penale dell’importo di Corone 1.000 (mille) e ciò qualora non andasse in iscena a Sebenico entro la prima settimana del marzo decorso il qual termine fino al quale io tengo il teatro a Sua disposizione consegnerò tutti i documenti all’avvocato del Teatro perché faccia i passi necessari. Ripeto che sempre mi tengo sì tratti di qualche svista e prima di procedere attendo urgentemente schiarimenti in proposito.”); Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Cesare Matucci, Šibenik, 1. 3. 1912, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

41 Letter from the administrative deputation of the Teatro delle Muse of Ancona to the theatre management of Zadar, Ancona, 29. 1. 1897, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

42 “in quanto a solvibilità veramente non ha capitali, ma pieno d’amore proprio nell’adempimento dei suoi impegni; perciò ci ha un socio che all’occasione lo provvede”; Letter from the management of the Teatro Piccinni of Bari to the theatre management of Zadar, Bari, 4. 2. 1897, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

situation and, when required, supply the necessary liquidity. Guida's agent, Achille Bignardi, unsurprisingly stressed that his client was a "serious, highly competent and solvent person" (*persona molto seria, capacissima e solvibile*); and that the theatre management of Zadar, to which Guida had applied for the contract of a season, could ask for references directly "from the mayor of Bari and from the presidency of the Teatro Piccinni of Bari", which indeed it did.⁴³

Clearly it was in the interests of the agents to provide their clients with excellent presentations, so an agent's reference didn't count for much, as it was deeply biased. It was obvious, for example, that the agent Luigi Grabinski Broglio would tell the theatre management of Zadar that he had "a *capable, solvent and honest* client, who would like to compete for your theatre's contract to give an opera season there": he couldn't have done otherwise.⁴⁴ But while Grabinski Broglio presented his clients, the impresarios Giorgio Trauner and Ettore Forastiero, as "people well known in the theatrical world for their seriousness and solvency, having always been contractors of very important theatres",⁴⁵ it didn't necessarily mean that the managements of those same theatres were of the same opinion. Different opinions could also be given on the same impresario. When the theatre management of Zadar directly asked the director of the Teatro Filodrammatico in Milan for information on Giorgio Trauner, he answered that he couldn't honestly "guarantee anything on the solvency of the man" in question (*nulla garantire sulla solvibilità della persona*), and that he didn't believe him to be very well-off, "but regarding all the seasons done at my theatre, I have never been aware of any trouble; everything has always taken place with order and punctuality".⁴⁶ At the same time Zadar also sought another opinion, this time from the Teatro Coccia of Novara, and here the response was not so good: "Trauner did not give much evidence of reliability here, on the contrary... nor do I believe him to be all that solvent".⁴⁷ With a letter of this type the theatre management already had something to work with when deciding whether or not to entrust the season to a particular impresario.

43 "un cliente *capace, solvibile ed onesto*, il quale desidererebbe concorrere nell'appalto di codesto teatro per darvi uno spettacolo d'opera"; Letter from Achille Bignardi to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 29. I. 1897, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

44 Letter from Luigi Grabinski Broglio to the president of the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar, Milano, II. II. 1898, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

45 "persone assai note nel mondo teatrale per la loro serietà e solvibilità, essendo sempre rilevatori di teatri importantissimi"; Letter from Luigi Grabinski Broglio to the president of the theatre of Split, Milano, 12. 3. 1904, HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII.

46 "ma davanti tutte le stagioni fatte al mio teatro, non ho mai verificato alcun inconveniente, tutto è sempre proceduto con ordine e puntualità"; Letter from Giacomo Brizzi to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 29. I. 1897, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

47 "Il Trauner qui non ha dato prova di serietà, anzi... e nemmeno lo credo tanto solvibile"; Letter from the management of the Teatro Coccia of Novara to the theatre management of Zadar, Novara, 31. I. 1897, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

Believing a person to be insolvent naturally discouraged one from entrusting him with any activity that carried a margin of financial risk. This was such a manifest truism that various theatrical agencies would begin their negotiations with theatre managements with a classic statement such as “an *excellent* and *most solvent* client of mine wishes to compete for the contract of your theatre”⁴⁸ or “My agency, which is well-known in the theatrical world, holds reliability as a founding principle in business matters and hence promotes only enterprises that are *serious*, *honoured* and *solvent*, always wishing to make a good impression on the esteemed managements that honour them with their trust”.⁴⁹ As for the agent Paolo Rocca, he hastened to point out that a deal could be concluded with “Signor Riva Vittorio [who will be] impresario at Pula in October, a man *of great affluence* and the greatest honesty”.⁵⁰ And more in the same vein.

3.2.2 References proposed by the impresario

At times it was the impresarios who indicated who could provide information on their account, as a means of reinforcing their application. And there was all the more reason to do so if the person under scrutiny was a woman, who would clearly find herself at a disadvantage in this profession at the time. Addressing the Conte di Capogrosso, president of the theatre of Split, Teresa Ranieri Vaschetti wrote as follows: “If Your Excellency should wish to acquire information about me you can contact the Illustrious Signor Cavalier Cesari, mayor of Ascoli Piceno (in the Marche) where I have run the theatre twice already and where lately I have staged Puccini’s *Tosca* with great results.”⁵¹ It was the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar, however, that collected the largest number of references, most likely because it was there that the number of applicants was highest and the competition fiercest. And as could be expected, most of the references came from Lombardy. The impresario Giulio

48 “un mio *ottimo e solvibilissimo* cliente desidera concorrere all’appalto di codesto teatro”.

49 “La mia agenzia, ben nota nel mondo teatrale, ha per base assoluta la serietà degli affari e perciò non propone che imprese *serie, onorate e solvibili*, desiderando farsi sempre onore presso le spettabili direzioni che l’onorano della loro fiducia.”; Letter from Giuseppe Levis on behalf of the Enrico Carozzi theatrical agency to the theatre management of Split, Milano, 12. 2. 1898, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

50 “il sig. Riva Vittorio impresario di Pola nell’ottobre, persona *facoltosissima* e della massima serietà”; Letter from Paolo Rocca to Jozip Karaman, Milano, 27. 8. 1914, HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII.

51 “Se la S.V. volesse domandare mie informazioni può rivolgersi all’Ill. Signor Cav. Cesari sindaco di Ascoli Piceno (Marche) ove io ho già avuto due volte la Direzione di quel teatro e ultimamente ho fatto la *Tosca* del M° Puccini con grande esito.”; Letter from Teresa Ranieri Vaschetti to the Conte di Capogrosso, Milano, 4. 1. 1906. HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII. Information on Teresa Ranieri Vaschetti could also be obtained at Trieste from certain “sig.ne Stancic e Mollich”; see Letter from Angelo Chinnelli to the theatre management of Split, Milano, 24. 12. 1900, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

Milani spontaneously stated that “from the Esteemed Management of the Teatro Grande of Brescia you may have all the information on my seriousness, ability and solvency, for I’ve been at the theatre for 40 years”.⁵² The impresario Giovanni Battista Righini, writing from Milan to Zadar, indicated as a possible referee none other than Baron Emilio Morpurgo of Trieste, since he (Righini) had formerly worked at the Teatro Rossetti in the city. Again from Milan the impresario Razzani made it known that: “If Your Excellency should like to acquire information on my account, please have the goodness to write to Pula, to Signor Cavaliere Ciscutti, for whom I provided the opera productions for the opening of his new Politeama in the autumn of 1881”.⁵³ A similar statement arrived from the impresario Domenico Valenti, again writing to Zadar: “If you want information about how I stage the operas, you can write to the theatre managements of Codogno, where I gave *Aida* last month, to the management of Lecco, where I have been for 5 years running, as in many other theatres; indeed it is very likely that for Lent I will be granted the Teatro Sociale of Gorizia, where I have been twice before, and if I do get it, this year I will give *Aida*.”⁵⁴

Then there was those who sought leverage from long-standing acquaintances with members (past or present) of the theatre management itself or with semi-permanent members of the theatre’s artistic staff, as in the case of Antonio Lana mentioned above. Lana, who aspired to run the season at Zadar, boasted his acquaintance with the *maestro concertatore* Antonio Ravasio, as well as “my friend Giuseppe Perlini”, one of the wealthiest industrialists and landowners of the city, “Nicolò Trigari, Pietro Giotta and, if they were alive, many others with whom we spent our youthful years together and amongst whom there were surely almost all their parents, who were my good friends”.⁵⁵ Such ‘friendships’ could indeed give one the extra edge and be decisive when it came to winning a contract.

52 “Dalla Spettabile Direzione di questo Grande Teatro di Brescia, Loro potranno avere tutte le informazioni sopra la mia serietà, capacità e solvibilità, poiché da 40 anni sono in teatro”. Milani declared that he had run “all the larger theatres of almost the whole of Italy; and of those in Milan I have had them all, without excepting La Scala” (“tutti i più grandi teatri di quasi tutta Italia, intanto quelli di Milano ad eccezione della Scala, li ho avuti tutti”); Letter from Giulio Milani to the theatre management of Zadar, Brescia, 18. 2. 1908, HR-DAZD, folder 26.

53 “Quando poi alla S. V. piacesse attingere informazioni sul mio conto, si compiaccia scrivere a Pola al sig. cav. e Ciscutti pel quale fornii lo spettacolo d’opera in occasione dell’apertura del suo nuovo Politeama l’autunno del 1881”; Letter from Francesco Razzani to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 9. 3. 1883, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

54 “Se vogliono informazioni di come metto io in scena i spettacoli, possono scrivere alle direzioni teatrali, di Codogno [*sic*], che il mese scorso o [*sic*] dato l’Aida, alla direzione del teatro di Lecco che ci sono stato 5 anni di seguito, e come in tanti altri teatri, anzi facilmente combinerò per la quaresima il teatro Sociale di Gorizia ove sono stato altre due volte, e se combino questo anno le darò l’Aida”; Letter from Domenico Valenti to Giorgio De Nakić d’Osljak, 8. 1. 1896, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

55 “...l’amico Giuseppe Perlini, Nicolò Trigari, Pietro Giotta e se fossero vivi tanti altri coi quali abbiamo passato assieme i nostri anni di gioventù e fra i quali ci erano di certo quasi tutti i genitori loro, ch’è-

In like manner, the agents also gave the names of possible referees for themselves. Enrico Viscardi, when negotiating with the theatre of Šibenik, mentioned that the theatre management of Zadar – and in particular a certain “Signor Nachich” – could “act as a guarantor” (*farsi mallevadori*) for his “correct behaviour in all his business affairs” (*corretto modo di procedere in tutti gli affari*).⁵⁶ Viscardi’s work had been greatly appreciated and further confirmation was given by Zadar to the Teatro Bonda of Dubrovnik: “Signor Viscardi is a person who, with his pragmatism and honesty, has succeeded in gaining our trust”.⁵⁷ As for Enrico Gallina, he declared to the management at Split that information about him can be obtained “not only from the management of Zadar, but also from those of Pula, Rijeka, Šibenik and Poreč (Parenzo), as well as those of our own theatres”.⁵⁸ The agents could also suggest referees for their clients as well as for themselves. Regarding his client Eugenio De Monari, Gustavo Argenti mentioned in a letter to the theatre management of Zadar that “you may get information on Signor De Monari from Casa Sonzogno”, thereby indicating that the publisher could testify to the impresario’s good conduct.⁵⁹ And there were others, like the agent Giovanni Simonetti, who recommended contacting singers. When it came to endorsing his client, the impresario Rinaldo Rosini, for the season in Zadar in 1896, Simonetti wrote to the theatre management saying that they could get information about him by contacting the bass Camillo Fiegna: “he has known Rosini for many years, both as an artist and as an impresario, and he has nothing but words of praise for him. He is certain that he will deliver an excellent production that will satisfy everyone”.⁶⁰ In short, anyone who could say a positive word about the impresario’s work – singers, directors of theatres, barons and other high-ranking personalities, fellow colleagues or agents, publishers – could be used as a means of strengthening the application.

rano miei buoni amici.”; Letter from Antonio Lana to the presidency of the theatre of Zadar, Milano 1. 7. 1898, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

56 Letter from Enrico Viscardi to the theatre management of Šibenik, Zadar, [n. d.], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3.

57 “Il sig. Viscardi è persona che colla sua concretezza ed onestà ha saputo acquistarsi la nostra fiducia”; Letter from [illegible sender’s name] to the theatre management of Dubrovnik, [Zadar], 16. 12. 1898, HR-DAZD, folder 24.

58 “la Spett. Direzione può averle tanto dalla Direzione di Zara, quanto da quelle di Pola, Fiume, Sebenico, Parenzo e da quelle di questi nostri teatri”; Letter from Enrico Gallina to the theatre management of Split, Trieste, 25. 7. 1912, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

59 “Dalla Casa Sonzogno potrà avere informazioni sul conto del sig. De Monari”; Letter from Gustavo Argenti to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 13. 1. 1899, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

60 “egli conosce da molti anni il Rosini – quale artista e quale impresario e non ha che parole di lode per lui. Egli è certo che darà uno spettacolo ottimo che soddisferà tutti.”; Letter from Giovanni Simonetti to the theatre management of Zadar, Trieste, 9. 2. 1896, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

3.3 Theatre network of the eastern Adriatic

When writing to Istria and Dalmatia the impresarios would try to secure more than one *piazza* in the area. Given that the journey was a long one, they would hope to organise a complete tour of the region, not just a single date.⁶¹ Moreover, the companies needed to have a substantial number of performances guaranteed or paid for. Anyone who had already secured the theatre of Pula would therefore try to move down the coast towards Zadar. For example, the impresarios Mirco and Giani, who in March 1876 had produced *L'elisir d'amore* and *Don Pasquale* in Pula, took the company to Zadar the next month (we come across Mirco alone even further down, at Šibenik, but only in later years). The Brandini impresa, which was working in 1884 at the Teatro Armonia in Trieste⁶² and subsequently at the Politeama Ciscutti of Pula, wrote to Zadar offering eight or ten performances of *Carmen*. The impresario Umberto Braidà, who took over the Politeama of Pula a few years later, also contacted Zadar saying that he was about to propose Antonio Smareglia's *Nozze istriane* and *Abisso*: "I would be prepared", he wrote, "to give, after Pula, 10 performances of the opera *Nozze istriane* at your theatre; for that I would beg you promptly to kindly inform me if you are prepared to let me use the theatre for 13 December of the current year (alternatively, I am prepared to give *Nozze istriane* before Pula, that is from 25 September until 21 October). And what would be your most reasonable conditions? Alternatively, I would also be prepared to do this on a percentage basis". It was understood that Braidà would bring the whole company of artists, complete with the music, scenery, costumes and properties, while the theatre management would have to provide an orchestra of "at least 44 good players" (*minima di 44 suonatori buoni*), a chorus of 20 male and 10 female singers, "and all the rest" (*e poi tutto il resto*).⁶³

Anyone who had already secured a few performances in Zadar, would then aim to go down the coast at least as far as Šibenik or Split. The impresario Domenico Valenti, who

61 On the subject even the director of the Teatro Mazzoleni in Šibenik gave the following advice: "I suggest that if you should ever find yourself with your company in a city of Istria or Dalmatia you could negotiate for a run of performances also at Šibenik, whereas it wouldn't be worth your while to come all that distance just for this city." ("Le partecipo che qualora Ella si trovasse con la sua compagnia in una città d'Istria o Dalmazia si potrebbe trattare per un debutto anche a Sebenico, mentre non potrebbe convenirLe di venire da tanta distanza esclusivamente per questa città."); Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Pietro Tosti, Šibenik, 3. 10. 1912, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b.

62 See Rodolfo Kraus, *Grandezza e decadenza di un teatro scomparso*, Società Editrice Mutilati e Combattenti, Trieste 1931, p. 77.

63 "io sarei disposto di dare dopo di Pola 10 recite nel loro teatro, dell'opera Nozze Istriane, per un tanto prego alla loro correntezza di volermi informare se loro sarebbero disposti di cedermi il teatro per 13 dicembre a. c. (oppure sarei disposto di dare le Nozze Istriane prima di Pola cioè il 25 settembre sino il 21 ottobre) e quali sarebbero le loro più miti pretese, oppure io anche sarei disposto di fare questa combinazione a percentuale."); Letter from Umberto Braidà to the theatre management of Zadar, Pula [1914], HR-DAZD, folder 12.

was working in Zadar in 1896, made no mystery of his desire to conclude his season at the Teatro Mazzoleni of Šibenik, and he was assisted in this scheme by the agent Enrico Viscardi, who was working at the theatre in Zadar. Viscardi, who was in regular contact with Doimo Miagostovich, one of the directors of the Teatro Mazzoleni, often proposed opera productions at Šibenik and was also keen to have an exclusive rapport: “For your information, a word of advice,” he wrote to Miagostovich: “do not accept proposals that don’t come from Zadar. Because the proposals I can make all originate from there already being an agreement with Zadar, hence a production that one can know about and without [*illegible*] because [the distance] from Zadar to Šibenik is negligible and I will offer you everything that comes my way in Zadar”.⁶⁴ What is again implied here, therefore, is that the production would move southwards, with complete cast, scenery and equipment.

The idea of “concluding the season” at a theatre further south or of “finishing the month” also transpires from the words of the agent Enrico Gallina. When he also wrote to the theatre in Zadar, stressing that the opportunity had arisen to give the theatre management full satisfaction, he did so in the following terms: “After the Guerra company I may (I repeat, may) be able to induce the Caimini-Zoncada company to accept 20 performances, that is to say from the 5th through to the 24th of May. If your management could come to an agreement with Karaman of Split (to whom I shall write), one could also do 15 performances in Zadar and the other 12 to finish the month in Split. What is needed, however, is a good percentage and a reasonable assurance”.⁶⁵ The city of Split frequently received proposals to host opera productions that had been rehearsed and staged at the theatres further north. In his negotiations with the theatre in Split conducted by telegram, Giuseppe Ullmann wrote: “With Zadar now settled, would you grant [the] theatre [for] two performances of *Barbieri*?”⁶⁶ Annibale Cicognani of Milan, who in 1893 had undertaken to offer productions of *Lebrea* and *Don Sebastiano* at the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar, proposed the very same operas to the management in Split, also adding *Cavalleria rusticana*. If the management should accept, he would send his partner Christofidis to Split to negotiate

64 “Per sua norma, un consiglio, non accetti proposte che non partono da Zara. Perché le proposte che le posso fare io partono tutte dall’aver già combinato Zara quindi spettacolo che si può conoscere e senza [...] perché da Zara a Sebenico son miserie ed io tutto quello che mi capita a Zara lo propongo”; Letter from Enrico Viscardi to Doimo Miagostovich, [Zadar], 20. 12. 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b.

65 “Dopo la compagnia Guerra potrei (dico forse) indurre la compagnia Caimini-Zoncada ad accettare 20 rappresentazioni e precisamente dal 5 a tutto il 24 maggio. Se la direzione potesse mettersi d’accordo col Karaman di Spalato (al quale scriverò) si potrebbe anche fare 15 recite a Zara e le altre 12 per finire il mese a Spalato. Occorre però una buona percentuale e una modesta assicurazione.”; Letter from Enrico Gallina to the theatre management of Zadar, Trieste, 7. 2. 1906, HR-DAZD, folder 26.

66 “Avendo stabilito Zara vorreste accordare teatro due rappresentazioni di *Barbieri*?”; Telegram from Giuseppe Ullmann to the theatre management of Split, [n. p.], 26. 6. 1894. HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

in person.⁶⁷ The Camber impresa was also happy to bring to Zadar and Split everything staged at the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka in the spring season of 1894.⁶⁸ And finally, Alberto Vernier wrote to the theatre management in Split from Pula as follows: “I convey to this honourable management the list of a magnificent *spettacolo lirico danzante* that is at present being performed at this Politeama and will be in Zadar in October, and could come to Split in November [as it is] booked for the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka in December”.⁶⁹

In most cases the journey was from north to south and not the reverse, or at least this is what the surviving documentations suggest. A company’s tour could set off from Trieste, pass through Pula, Rijeka, Zadar and Dubrovnik, and end up back in Gorizia and Udine. Not necessarily all the theatres were visited in geographical order. In 1900, for example, the Francioli opera company⁷⁰ travelled from the Teatro Minerva of Udine to Pula, and from there made its way to Split (skipping the theatres of Zadar and Šibenik) before crossing to Ancona by steamer.⁷¹

For many impresarios, however, the objective of grouping together a series of theatres remained wishful thinking, for if we check their actual movements along the coast (see above, section 2.4. *Census of the impresarios and agents in the eastern Adriatic*), we note that only a small number succeeded in winning contracts at other theatres as well. On average the cost of these tours for the impresario was greater than that for companies working on the Italian mainland. And if we also bear in mind that it was often impossible to raise the price of admission to the theatre, these journeys represented a risk in any case: the advantages were not proportionate to the risk of damages. The many costs shouldered by an impresario (or by a theatre management itself when it acted as an impresa) could have been reduced if there had been a close network between the theatres. That such cooperation was sorely needed already in 1870 is attested by these lines sent to Mazzoleni by the singer Antonio Feoli:

I will begin by informing you that at present I still find myself confused concerning the autumn entertainment, while the theatre management of Zadar, being very meticulous and slow in making up its mind, obstructs every other operation, and we will always go from bad

67 See Letter from Annibale Cicognani to the municipality of Split, Spezia 12. 5. 1893. HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

68 See Letter from Camber & C. to the municipality of Split, [n. p.], 18. 4. 1894, HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII, and Letter from Camber & C. to the theatre management of Zadar, [n. p.], 18. 4. 1894, HR-DAZD, folder 8.

69 “Rimetto a quest’onorevole direzione l’elenco di un grandioso spettacolo lirico danzante che agisce attualmente a questo Politeama e che sarà l’ottobre a Zara, e potrebbe venire il novembre a Spalato [*perché è*] scritturato per il dicembre al teatro comunale di Fiume.”; Letter from Alberto Vernier to the theatre management of Split, Pula, 13. 9. 1894, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

70 The name is given in the documents as Francioli, Franciuoli or Franciulli.

71 “Politeama Ciscutti”, *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, 25. 11. 1900.

to worse, as long as unity is lacking between the various presidencies of the theatres. Never, no never, will any good come out of it; and by always leaving things to the last minute we'll have to pay for rotten merchandise instead of good, and cast more and more discredit on poor Dalmatia. 'Unity makes strength' [they say], yet we are disunited. All the worse for us. [...] And these games played by the theatre companies will happen frequently if the various theatre managements of Dalmatia won't come to an agreement.⁷²

The problem evidently persisted, however, if some forty years later the theatre management of Šibenik wrote to the Teatro Bonetti of Mali Losinj as follows: "It would be desirable to have an agreement between our theatres also in the future, because in that way we could have good productions more easily".⁷³

In 1884 an attempt had been made by Pietro Ciscutti to create a network between the theatres of Pula, Rijeka and Zadar over the organisation of opera productions. Ciscutti was a blacksmith who came from the Veneto and, it would appear, scantily educated but full of resources.⁷⁴ As he wrote to the management of Zadar four years after the founding of his Politeama (in his Italian which was grammatically flawed but decisive in tone), "The proposals that are made to us, we would make them to you as well, and vice versa; in your correspondence you could say 'after Zadar you could add in Pula', and in that way the huge expenses for travel and transportation would be reduced".⁷⁵ Ciscutti, who professed to be almost certain of winning the contract to inaugurate the theatre in Rijeka in 1885, was convinced that

72 "Comincerò col significarle, che attualmente ancor'io mi trovo imbrogliato circa il trattenimento autunnale, mentre la Direzione teatrale di Zara essendo assai miticolosa [*sic*] e tarda nel risolversi inceppa ogni altra operazione, e sempre andremo di male in peggio, mentre mancando l'unione fra i vari corpi Presidenziali dei Teatri, mai e poi mai avremo alcunchè di buono e sempre riducendoci agli ultimi momenti dovremo pagare per buona, mercanzia avariata, e screditare sempre più la povera Dalmazia. 'L'unione forma la forza' e noi siamo disuniti. Dunque peggio per noi. [...] E questi giuochetti di compagnie accadranno spesso se le varie direzioni teatrali della Dalmazia non si porranno d'accordo."; Letter from Antonio Feoli to Paolo Mazzoleni, Split, 6. 10. 1870, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

73 "Sarebbe desiderabile anche per l'avvenire un'intesa tra i nostri teatri perché in tal modo si potrebbero avere più facilmente buoni spettacoli."; Letter from the theatre management of Šibenik to the Teatro Bonetti of Mali Losinj, Šibenik, 2. 4. 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

74 Ciscutti began his career buying land and building houses. First he built a theatre of modest dimensions in Pula, on land where the Augustinian convent once stood, then built a bigger one in the neighbourhood of Port'Aurea: the one later named after him as the Politeama Ciscutti; see Bogneri, *Il Politeama Ciscutti*, p. 6. Ciscutti was also an impresario at the Teatro Rossetti in Trieste and the agency associated with the newspaper *L'Arte* of Trieste used him to engage singers; see "Confidenze di casa", *L'Eco di Pola*, 7. 7. 1888.

75 "Le proposte che verrebbero fatte a noi, noi le faremmo anche a loro, così a viceversa loro nel carteggio potrebbero dire, dopo Zara, potreste combinare Pola che allora le immense spese di viaggio e trasporti sarebbero diminuite."; Letter from Pietro Ciscutti to the theatre management of Zadar, Pula, 3. 5. 1884, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

a Rijeka-Zadar-Pola agreement could be a way of guaranteeing excellent productions. There would be no new stagings and the rehearsals would be faster. The *impresa* would transport “staff and props” (*personale e mobiliare*) just as they were from one theatre to the next. To a great extent the idea was approved by the theatre management of Zadar. And a first practical testing of the scheme was attempted with the Meridionale operetta company, which was due to stop off in Pula in October 1884 and then move to Zadar in November for the reopening of the theatre (which had been temporarily closed on the orders of the minister: changes were being made to the structure and furnishings as a fire precaution).⁷⁶ Both Dubrovnik and Šibenik subsequently also agreed to the idea of creating a network.⁷⁷ Ciscutti had often pointed out the difficulties many impresarios had in coming to Pula for a “run of performances”,⁷⁸ difficulties that would be alleviated if those companies could work in more than one theatre. There would be real savings in travel and transportation. This point was also stressed by Alberto Vernier – whose decisions and achievements were, among other things, respected and supported in the pages of certain local newspapers – to one of the directors of the theatre of Zadar, when he offered his services “to try and see if it will be possible to connect any of the initiatives of Rijeka and Trieste with Zadar and Pula, as I have also been charged to do by C. [sic] and Ciscutti.”⁷⁹ “My position as a director of this Politeama”, Vernier emphasised, “and not as a theatrical agent, prompts me to attempt this business cooperation; so you may rest assured that in this project I merely have a few expenses and many annoyances”.⁸⁰

76 See Letter from the theatre management of Zadar to Francesco Lucerna, Zadar, 28. 7. 1884, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

77 Alberto Venier, Ciscutti’s administrator, was to write to the theatre management of Zadar: “[...] I have the honour of informing you that at the same time as your letter [...] I received one from Dubrovnik and another from Šibenik, which concur with my offer and agree to link together the seasons of the said theatres.” (“[...] ho l’onore di comunicare loro che contemporaneamente alla loro lettera [...] ne ho ricevuta una da Ragusa ed altra da Sebenico, che convengono nella mia offerta e che approvano di legare assieme gli spettacoli per i succitati teatri.”); Letter from Alberto Venier to the theatre management of Zadar, Pula, 2. 8. 1884, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

78 By “*corso di recite*” what is meant here is a series of between 20 and 24 nights.

79 “onde tentare se sarà possibile di collegare alcuna delle speculazioni di Fiume e Trieste con Zara e Pola avendo avuto incarico di ciò anche dal C. e Ciscutti”; and subsequently in the same letter he added: “From October through to 20 December of this year we have an obligation here to give 40 performances with 3 different types of theatre, i. e. 14 [nights] of spoken theatre, 12 of operetta and 14 of opera seria, As of now I ask you if you might consider [*illegible*] in the contracting of any of these three types or even of all three if you think it easy to arrange.” (“Dall’ottobre a tutto il 20 dicembre anno c. qui noi abbiamo l’obbligo di dare 40 rappresentazioni con 3 generi diversi di spettacolo, cioè 14 [serate] di prosa, 12 di operette e 14 di opera seria, fin d’ora le propongo se credono di a[...]dire alla scritturazione di qualcuno di questi tre spettacoli, ed anche di tutti e tre se credono cosa assai facile a combinarsi.”); Letter from Alberto Vernier to Giuseppe Perlini, Rijeka, 3. 6. 1887, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

80 “La mia posizione come direttore di questo Politeama mi spinge a tentare questa cooperazione negli affari, non già come agente teatrale; per cui si persuadano che io in questo progetto non ho che qual-

The death of Ciscutti in 1890, however, probably put an end to this project. Moreover, it is worth noting that Split is never mentioned in this discussion, most likely owing to the closure of its theatre after the fire it suffered. But in any case, even if Ciscutti had lived longer, a collaboration with Split would have been difficult after the opening of the new theatre in 1893, for the city had begun to stage operas in Croatian as well, following a specific political agenda: a development that would have made it more difficult for travelling companies performing Italian opera to visit that particular venue.

che spesa e molti disturbi.”; Letter from Alberto Vernier to the theatre management of Zadar, Pula, 13. 8. 1884, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

4 Choosing the impresario

4.1 The contract

After the theatre management had chosen the impresario to run the season, the next step was to draw up the contract (*contratto d'appalto*). The contract could be drawn up either between the theatre management and the impresario or between the theatre management and an agent acting for the impresario. Until there were signatures on the contract, whatever had been decided by correspondence (or even in person) remained at the stage of negotiation – albeit an advanced stage of negotiation.¹ Like the tender specifications, the contract could also be extremely variable in the quantity of its contents. Moreover, the contract did not necessarily reproduce the previously published specifications in every detail, for amendments could be introduced during the drafting. One example concerned the size of the orchestra and chorus: as a rule, the tender specifications called for a larger number of players and choristers than that subsequently defined in the contract. Another point that could be modified concerned the way the expenses were shared between the impresario and the theatre management. The contract had to be signed in front of two witnesses.

Thirty-six contracts (including preliminary agreements and drafts) have been discovered relating to the running of opera seasons in the coastal area in the period considered. They are listed here in chronological order.

no.	year	city	contracting parties
1	1865	Rijeka	between the theatre deputation of Rijeka and the impresario Cesare Trevisan
2	1867	Rijeka	between the theatre deputation of Rijeka and the impresario Carlo Gardini
3	1867	Rijeka	between the theatre management of Rijeka and the impresario Adolfo Proni

1 The agent Enrico Viscardi often liked to point this out: “Concerning your advice not to take on definitive commitments, rest assured, for working as I do as an agent, by very habit every proposal made or received always remains at the stage of negotiation and cannot assume the character of an accomplished fact until the time when the contract is not only authorised, but also signed.” (“Riguardo alla sua raccomandazione di non assumere definitivi impegni si tranquillizzi pure, che agendo io come agente, per consuetudine stessa, ogni proposta fatta o ricevuta si ferma sempre allo stato di trattative e non può assumere carattere di fatto compiuto, se non quando sia, non solo autorizzato, ma ben anco firmato il contratto.”); Letter from Enrico Viscardi to the theatre management of Šibenik, Zadar, n. d., HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

no.	year	city	contracting parties
4	1870	Rijeka	between the theatre management of Rijeka and the impresario Giovanni Mangiamiele
5	1873	Zadar	<i>Preliminary agreement between Girolamo Pesaro and the presidency of the Teatro Nuovo</i>
6	1875	Zadar	between the theatre presidency of Zadar and the impresario Carlo Vianello
7	[1879]	Zadar	<i>[draft] between the theatre presidency of Zadar and the impresario Pietro Cesari</i>
8	1882	Zadar [for the theatre of Šibenik]	between the theatre presidency of Šibenik and the impresarios Becherini Luigi and Ernesta Ferrara
9	1883	Zadar and Milan	between the theatre presidency of Zadar and the impresario Francesco Razzani
10	1888	Zadar	between the theatre presidency of Zadar and the impresario Paolo Massimini
11	1891	Zadar	between the theatre presidency of Zadar and the impresario Paolo Massimini
12	1891	Rijeka	between the theatre management of Rijeka and the impresario Francesco Sciutti d'Arrigo
13	1892	Zadar and Milan	between the theatre management of Zadar and the impresario Annibale Cicognani
–	1893	Rijeka	<i>Contract of the Strakosch impresa for the special season of opera seria 10. 3. 1893 – Rijeka²</i>
14	1894	Zadar	between the theatre management of Zadar and the impresario Geremia Abriani
15	1895	Zadar	between the theatre management of Zadar and the impresario Augusto Romiti
16	1896	Split	between the theatre management of Split and the director Johann Pištek
17	"	Zadar	between the theatre management of Zadar and the impresario Domenico Valenti
18	"	Zadar [for the theatre of Šibenik]	between the theatre management of Šibenik and the impresario Domenico Valenti
19	1897	Split	<i>between the management of the Teatro Comunale and the impresario Alberto Landi³</i>
20	1898	Split	between the theatre management of Split and the director Vendelin Budil
21	"	Zadar	between the theatre management of Zadar and the impresario Luigi Dessanti
22	1899	Split	<i>between the theatre management of Split and the impresario Achille Stehle⁴</i>
23	"	Zadar	between the theatre management of Zadar and the impresario Eugenio De Monari
24	1900	Zadar and Milan	between the theatre management of Zadar and the impresario Eugenio De Monari

2 This contract is not among the archival documents, but is mentioned in the Register of documents (*Protocollo degli esibiti*) (1885–1910), Rijeka, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 10.

3 Only the draft copy of the contract survives.

4 Contract not signed by Stehle; it survives only in a copy.

no.	year	city	contracting parties
25	1902	Zadar	between the theatre management of Zadar and the impresario Olimpio Lovrich
26	1903	Zadar	between the theatre management of Zadar and the impresario Giovanni Drog
27	1904	Zadar	between the theatre management of Zadar and the impresario Ettore Forastiero
28	1903–1905	Rijeka	between the theatre management of Rijeka and the impresario Raffaele Sforza
29	1904	Milan [for the theatre of Split]	between the theatre management of Split and the impresario Gabriele Ruotolo
30	1905	Šibenik	between the theatre management of Šibenik and the impresario Ernesto Guerra
31	"	Split	between the theatre management of Split and the impresario Gabriele Ruotolo
32	"	Zadar	between the theatre management of Zadar and the impresario Giorgio Trauner
33	1908	Šibenik	between the theatre management of Šibenik and the impresario Giuseppe Castagnoli
34	1911	Šibenik	between the theatre management of Šibenik and the impresario Giuseppe Ponzio
35	1914	Šibenik	between the theatre management of Šibenik and the administrator Leon Dragutinović
36	1917	Rijeka	Agreement between the civil magistrate and the impresario Carlo Polgar

In view of the number of seasons that took place in the period concerned and the number of theatres involved, the quantity of surviving contracts is meagre. All things considered, there should be over 150 contracts (this is most likely a substantial underestimate), which means we have just 24% of the expected amount (i. e. less than a quarter). This absence can be ascribed to various factors. They include the negligent preservation of the documentation on the part of the theatres at the time, or the subsequent relocations of archival materials over the course of more than a century. Further explanations are that specific opera seasons were either run by the theatre itself (hence without an impresario) or, in the case of the smaller theatres which lacked an endowment, were assigned without a contract on a basis of trust. This last reason, though the least probable of the various conjectures, cannot be ruled out.

4.2 The licence to perform and censorship

Once the impresario had been chosen, the titles of the proposed operas decided, and the contract with the impresario signed, the theatre management applied directly to the lieutenancy of Zadar for permission to perform the works. Alternatively, the request could be

drawn up and presented by the impresario himself. The law was clear on this point: according to the *Regolamento pei Teatri del 1850*, section 3, no theatrical production of “any name” (*qualsiasi denominazione*) could be performed for the first time on stage without the prior permission of the lieutenant (*luogotenente*). The performance had to be given in conformity with the permission granted and not deviate from it in any way.⁵

The application was formalised in a letter using a somewhat standardised text indicating the place and the title of the production, the period in which the event was expected to begin (or relevant season), and a request for the return of the librettos that had passed censorship. At the start of the 20th century the application was accompanied by a tax stamp (*bollo*) of 2 crowns, in addition to which another stamp of the same value had to be included that would (subsequently) be attached to the licence. In some cases the application was drawn up by the theatre management and only signed by the impresario, who nonetheless handled the matter of paying for the stamp.⁶ In others the theatre management dealt with everything. An example of the latter is the application made by the management of the Teatro Mazzoleni for performances of *La traviata* and *Il trovatore* in 1909:

The undersigned hereby requests the Excellent Imperial-Royal Liutenancy to grant the licence to give certain performances of the operas “Traviata” and “Trovatore” in the Teatro Mazzoleni, and at the same time submits the librettos of the said operas for the approval of the theatrical censorship. The production will be staged by the theatre management and will begin in the first half of forthcoming April. The undersigned begs this Excellent Authority to return the librettos as soon as possible and to send back the respective licence through this Illustrious Imperial-Royal District Captaincy.⁷

5 Concerning the works to be performed, sections 3 and 4 of the *Regolamento sui teatri del 25 novembre 1850 n. 454* established that they must be made available for censorship; see the *Bollettino generale delle leggi e degli atti del governo per l'Impero d'Austria*, anno 1850, parte quarta, Wien, 1850, pp. 1977–1978.

6 See the preparation for *Sonnambula* and *Rigoletto* at Šibenik in 1911. The theatre management wrote to the impresario Giuseppe Ponzio: “I am sending you an application for the lieutenantcy. You have nothing else to do but sign it and add a stamp for 4 crowns and two librettos of the operas you intend to give [...]. Send the application by registered post to the lieutenantcy; the stamp must not be affixed to the application, but inserted in the little envelope attached. The address is the following: Eccelsa I. R. Luogotenenza Dalmata Zara Dalmazia.” (“Le mando una domanda per la Luogotenenza, Lei non ha che da firmarla, unire un bollo da 4 corone e due libretti delle opere che intende di dare [...]. Spedisca raccomandata la domanda per la Luogotenenza, il bollo non sia applicato alla domanda, bensì unito nella piccola busta inchiusa. L'indirizzo è questo: Eccelsa I. R. Luogotenenza Dalmata Zara Dalmazia.”); Šibenik, 31. 3. 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

7 “La sottoscritta fa domanda ad Essa Eccelsa I. R. Luogotenenza di voler concedere la licenza di dare in questo teatro Mazzoleni alcune rappresentazioni delle opere ‘Traviata’ e ‘Trovatore’, e rimette nello stesso tempo i libretti di dette opere per il visto della censura teatrale. Lo spettacolo verrà allestito in regia della direzione teatrale, e incomincerà nella prima metà del prossimo aprile. La sottoscritta prega

If the licence was approved, the director, every member of the company and all the staff involved in the production would have to strictly comply with the existing rules on matters relating to policing and safety in theatres. The provisions concerning taxation and donations to public charities would also have to be respected.⁸ So once the Teatro Mazzoleni received a positive answer from the censors, it then applied to the city council to be assigned a police commissioner and public safety guards – usually two or three in number. It also asked for the municipal aqueduct to be supplied with water in compliance with the fire regulations. The *impresa* then had to pay 4 crowns to the Captaincy (*Capitanato*) for each performance: sums that were assigned to the police officer in charge of surveillance during the performances.⁹ At Šibenik, given that the seasons were not always run by an impresario, the police commissioner and guards could be paid directly by the director of the theatre.¹⁰ In purely practical terms the payment was sometimes actually carried out by the theatre's custodian Rocco Scotton.¹¹ The police commissioner and guards could also be engaged in surveillance at carnival dances (*veglioni*) as well as the opera season. The expense of this type of staff was considered excessive by Paolo Mazzoleni, who duly made a complaint about the matter in a letter to the municipal government of Šibenik. The actual costs were directly

codesta Eccelsa Autorità di voler restituire quanto prima i libretti e rimettere la relativa licenza col tramite di questo Inclito I. R. Capitanato Distrettuale.”; Request for a licence to perform opera addressed to the lieutenantcy of Zadar, Šibenik, 17. 3. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

8 In accordance with the government notification of 9 October 1845 no. 21613.

9 Message from the district captaincy to the theatre management of Šibenik, Šibenik, 5. 4. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

10 In the 1870s the expense for the police commissioner amounted to around 9 florins. For 1871, for example, the archives include a receipt from the then chief of police who thus declared his fee for surveillance work: “The undersigned declares that he has received from Signor Francesco Fenzi, director of the local theatre, the sum of 8,50 florins for the surveillance provided in the theatre by the police guards during seventeen evenings of opera and ballet, as well as another 50 *soldi* for the same work on the evening of the 25th of the current month at an extra performance. In total 9 florins. Tommaso Ercegh [*sic*] Chief of Police” (“Dichiara il sottoscritto di aver ricevuto dal sig. Francesco Fenzi direttore del teatro locale l'importo di fiorini 8,50 per la sorveglianza prestata in teatro dalle guardie di Polizia durante diciassette sere di rappresentazione d'opera e ballo nonché altri soldi 50 per lo stesso titolo nella sera del 25 corrente qual spettacolo [*sic*] straordinario. In tutto fiorini 9. Tommaso Ercegh Dirigente Polizia”); Receipt from Tommaso Ercegh (?), chief of police, Šibenik 29. 6. 1871, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

11 We deduce this from a receipt given by Scotton to the theatre management: “I the undersigned declare to have received from the Direzione of the Teatro Mazzoleni two hundred and forty-five (245) florins and this because I paid the commissioner and police guards, the lighting technician (*illuminatore*), all the attendants, the [...], for the cost and making of the prompter's box and for my services as custodian during 27 performances [...]” (“Dichiaro io sottoscritto di aver ricevuto dalla Direzione del Teatro Mazzoleni fiorini duecentoquarantacinque (245) e questi per aver io pagato il commissario e le guardie di polizia, l'illuminatore, gl'inservienti tutti, le [...], per la spesa e fattura della cuffia del suggeritore e per le mie prestazioni come custode durante le 27 recite [...]”); Šibenik, 18. 5. 1885. HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3.

fixed in Vienna, a city where the theatres enjoyed public funding, unlike certain theatres in Dalmatia, which had much greater difficulty in coping with the expense.¹²

12 In response to a letter from the municipality of Šibenik, Paolo Mazzoleni observed: “1. That the Imperial-Royal police department in Vienna could very easily have fixed the duties of its own police commissioners and guards in charge of the surveillance of public spectacles even at a much higher price, given that they are theatres that have government subsidies and whose abundant takings reach the substantial sum of several thousands of florins nightly 2. That for the theatres of Zadar and Split the price fixed by their municipalities for police surveillance cannot be considered onerous, since, in addition to the admission price, which is higher than that of our theatre, and certain revenues that we lack, as well as the fact that the income at carnival dances (*veglioni*) almost always exceeds the very respectable figure of 1,000 florins – whereas here, including the sale of boxes, it is never more than 200 florins even at the best *veglioni* –, they also have an annual subsidy from their respective municipalities, which, recognising how much the light of civilisation comes from the theatres, consider themselves duty-bound to subsidise them, as is customary wherever the governments do not grant an endowment 3. That the theatre of Šibenik, not receiving subsidies from the government or municipality, not having its own income or the other resources of the aforementioned theatres, should in proportion, instead of paying for the police commissioner and guards according to the price fixed in Vienna and elsewhere, not even comply with the old custom. But given that, according to the regional government decree of 22 February 1867 no. 2302/233, it has been established that the tax must be paid at the customary rate of each single city, the present theatre management will not deviate in the future from what it has done hitherto. It is fitting that this Honourable Municipal Administration should know [...] that great are the difficulties which the theatre management must face [...] in order to hire the services of some reasonable opera company, since it cannot offer even a small endowment; that very onerous are the expenses the theatre company has incurred (expenses that it cannot repeat with any frequency); that with the increase in nightly expenses we will find ourselves in the painful need of having to keep the theatre closed; that [...] an open theatre is not only a matter of moral benefit for our city, but also gives many poor families the bread to eat. The above comments will be sufficient to persuade this Honourable Municipal Administration that increasing the difficulty [...] of keeping the theatre open would be like depriving oneself of both a school of civilisation and a means to obtain material advantages; and that, not trying to help the theatre (as other municipalities do) will surely not [*illegible*] to its detriment and that of the city.” (“1. Che l’i. r. Direzione di polizia in Vienna poteva benissimo fissare le competenze ai propri commissari di polizia e alle guardie per la sorveglianza ne’ pubblici spettacoli anche a un prezzo maggiore di molto, trattandosi di teatri che hanno sovvenzioni governative, e i cui fortunati introiti raggiungono seralmente la cospicua somma di parecchie migliaia di fiorini 2. Che ai teatri di Zara e di Spalato non può riescire oneroso il prezzo fissato da quei comuni per la sorveglianza di polizia, poiché, oltre il prezzo d’ingresso maggiore a quello del teatro nostro, oltre alcuni redditi che a noi mancano, oltrechè l’introito né veglioni passa quasi sempre la cifra rispettabilissima di fiorini 1.000 – mentre qua nei migliori veglioni, compresa la vendita de’ palchi, non si oltrepassò mai i fiorini 200 – hanno un sussidio annuo dai rispettivi comuni, i quali, conoscendo quanta luce di civiltà viene dai teatri, si credono in debito di sovvenirli, come usasi, dovunque i governi non accordano una dote 3. che il teatro di Sebenico, non ricevendo sussidi dal governo e dal comune, né avendo redditi propri, né altre risorse dei nominati teatri, dovrebbe in proporzione, anziché corrispondere al commissario e alle guardie di polizia sulla base del prezzo fissato a Vienna e altrove, neppure attenersi alla vecchia consuetudine. Ma giacchè col deliberato Luogotenenziale 22 febbraio 1867 n. 2302/233 venne stabilito competere una tassa nella *misura di consuetudine*

Once granted, the licence applied to all the other theatres of the “dominion”, so there was no need to ask for a new licence if the production moved to another venue: hence a licence for librettos obtained in Zadar was valid also in Šibenik and Split,¹³ but not, however, in Istria or Trieste, even though they were (respectively) an Austrian province and city. In Rijeka, on the other hand, the permission to begin performances in 1916 was granted directly by the civil magistrate.¹⁴ Judging from what the director of the Teatro Mazzoleni writes, the authorities in Dalmatia would seem to have been quite strict.¹⁵ Without the licence to perform, any performances programmed would be cancelled. The district captain also pointed out that the licence could be withdrawn if there were demonstrations of any kind in the course of performances that might compromise the public order and disturb the enjoyment of the spectators. The authority in charge of public safety was authorised to intervene not only during the performances but also at the dress rehearsals, in time to make any necessary comments on the staging, costumes or even the music itself. For this reason the mayor (*podestà*) was duly informed of when these rehearsals would take place. Rejecting a licence could also be warranted, for example, by the choice of an inappropriate day to start a particular season, such as when the Magnani company declared its intention to begin its run of performances on the evening of Holy Saturday. In this case the lieutenant made it known that by doing so they would introduce a novelty (*innovazione*) that would offend the religious sensibilities of the population.¹⁶ In other cases, the licence could be denied simply because the text of a libretto was not approved.

d'ogni singolo paese, la Direzione teatrale non si allontanerà in avvenire da quanto in proposito fece fin qui. Giova che questa Spettabile Amministrazione Comunale [...] che sono grandi le difficoltà a cui la sottoscritta va incontro [...] accaparrarsi qualche discreta compagnia, non potendo offrire neppure una piccola dote; che sono fortissimi i dispendi ai quali si è sobbarcata la società del teatro, dispendi che non possono rinnovare di frequente; che coll'accrescere le spese serali saremo nella dolorosa necessità di tener chiuso il teatro; che [...] il teatro aperto è non solo di giovamento morale al paese nostro, ma dà pane a parecchie famiglie povere. Le suaccennate osservazioni basteranno a persuadere questa Spettabile Amministrazione Comunale, che accrescere le difficoltà [...] che il teatro sia aperto sarebbe togliersi una scuola di civiltà, un mezzo di materiali vantaggi; onde, non potendo aiutare il teatro, come fanno altrove i Comuni, non vorrà certo co[...]rare e al suo danno e a quello del paese.”; Letter from the theatre management of Šibenik to the municipal government of Šibenik, Šibenik, 14. 4. 1872, HR-DAŠI-Općina Šibenik 1972, BR. 306.

- 13 Letter from the theatre management of Šibenik to Augusto Girardi, Šibenik, 3. 10. 1912, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.
- 14 Letter from the *podestà* of Rijeka to the theatre management of Rijeka, Rijeka, 25. 4. 1916, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.
- 15 Letter from the theatre management of Šibenik to Cesare Matucci, Šibenik, n. d., HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.
- 16 Letter from the Dalmatian lieutenantcy to the Teatro Verdi of Zadar, Zadar, 4. 4. 1912, HR-DAZD, folder 22. In actual fact the impresario Francesco Calcagno, who ran an Italian company of comic opera and operetta, had also asked Zadar in 1908 to begin the season on the day of Holy Saturday, as (he

How did the Austro-Hungarian administration proceed in its acts of censorship? In the latter half of the 19th century the office of lieutenant censor (*luogotenente censore*) was held by the lieutenant of Dalmatia, in other words Lazar Mamula.¹⁷ Mamula would return the librettos to the chief of police – in this case, Giuseppe Gariup in Zadar¹⁸ – together with the licence to perform and any necessary changes, along with an additional clause such as “respect the corrections” (*osservate le correzioni*). Furnished with this “permission clause” (*clausola di permesso*), the librettos would then be returned to the impresarios – or troupe leaders (*capocomici*), in the case of spoken theatre. From the extant licences of the age – documents noted for their standardised language and formulas – we can deduce that the censoring authority gave at least five different types of response: “without restrictions” (*senza restrizioni*), “observe the corrections” (*osservate le correzioni*), “omitting the deletions” (*omesso il cancellato*), “observe the corrections and omitting the deletions” (*osservate le correzioni ed omesso il cancellato*), and simply “not permitted” (*non si permette*). Some librettos, if rejected, were banned for the whole province. A rejected libretto could, however, after a certain period of time, reapply for a licence. For example, Verdi’s *I lombardi alla prima crociata* was prohibited until 1848 by the censors of Zadar, only to be rehabilitated in 1854.¹⁹

To get an example of how the censors worked on the librettos, we can look at an instance of censorship in *I masnadieri*, in which specific changes to the text were indicated. In Act Two, Scene 1, the lieutenant censor decreed that instead of the lines for the chorus “*La fossa, la croce / Ne manda un avviso: / La vita è veloce / T’affretta a goder / Lasciamo i lamenti / Di stupido rito*”, the following should be inserted: “*La fossa vorace / Ne manda un avviso / La vita è fugace / T’affretta a goder / Lasciamo i lamenti / Di lugubre rito*”. Further on, two lines from Scene 7 were changed from “*Trionfar d’una schiava ciurmaglia / Ne farà disperato*

wrote) it was the “custom everywhere” (*consuetudine dappertutto*) for inaugurating the Spring season; Letter from Francesco Calcagno to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 4. 4. 1908, HR-DAZD, folder 26.

- 17 Lazar Mamula, the governor of Dalmatia, was an Austro-Hungarian baron and general. See Peter Broucek, “Mamula Lazarus Frh. von”, in *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon 1815–1950* (ÖBL), vol. VI, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien 1975, p. 45.
- 18 Gariup, who had previously been superior commissioner of police in Ljubljana, was appointed chief of police in Zadar in 1853; *Il Corriere Italiano*, anno IV, no. 55, 9. 3. 1853.
- 19 Gastone Coen, *C’era una volta una ducal città*, Comunità degli italiani di Zadar, [Zadar] 2008, p. 64. The archival collection relating to the Teatro Nobile of Zadar preserves an approval of *I lombardi* dated 23. 12. 1854. In the same month and in the previous one, both *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Il nuovo Figaro* were also authorised. In the following year the operas passing censorship included *Poliuto*, *Belisario*, *Il trovatore*, *Roberto Devereux*, *Ernani*, *La Cenerentola* and *Il ritorno di Columella da Padova*. Some lines from *Marino Faliero* were omitted and replaced with others, hence “*omesso il cancellato*”; *Il birraio di Preston* was given approval with an “*osservate le correzioni*”; and *Crispino e la Comare* was a case of “*osservate le correzioni ed omesso il cancellato*”.

valor” into “*Non temiam l'ineguale battaglia! / Il trionfo sia premio al valor*”.²⁰ The reference to the cross (*croce*) in the first instance was evidently considered inappropriate. In general, over-explicit references to religion or words such as “church” (*chiesa*) or “God” (*Dio*) were replaced with vaguer terminology, even if the original words were neither used in any derogatory sense nor associated with anything unfitting.²¹ As for the words “*stupido*”, “*ciurmaglia*” (riff-raff) and “*disperato*” they were evidently viewed as ‘sensitive’. This was six years after the London premiere of the opera and before the first performance at La Scala in Milan on 20 September 1853. We do not know if it was Mamula himself who made these changes, or whether he had someone else working on the texts. If the latter, what is certain is that the person concerned remained consistently anonymous in the correspondences. We are therefore in no position to say whether the changes stemmed from personal considerations or the instructions of superior authorities.

What is also true is that the meaning and effect of certain words could change over the years. Among Verdi’s operas, *Ernani* also encountered difficulties, though more often this happened after the end of the performance. In 1903, following the first performance of the opera at the Teatro Comunale in Trieste, the Austrian authorities denied permission for further performances citing the vague motivation of the “order and safety of the people in the theatre” (*ordine e sicurezza delle persone in teatro*).²² If one were to explore the question in greater depth, it would be interesting to try and make a comparison with how censorship

20 The document was signed by Lazar Mamula after the typical expression “The librettos are hereby returned” (*Si reverterno i libretti*) and the date 11. 1. 1853. On the censorship of *I masnadieri*, see also Roberta Montemorra Marvin, “The censorship of ‘I Masnadieri’ in Italy”, *Verdi Newsletter*, XXI (1993), pp. 5–15 and Roberta Montemorra Marvin, “The censorship of ‘I Masnadieri’ in London”, *Verdi Newsletter*, XXV (1998), pp. 20–23. We can also compare the Austro-Hungarian censorship of Verdi’s operas with models of censorship applied in Rome before the Unification of Italy. On the subject, see the studies by Andreas Giger, “Social Control and the Censorship of Giuseppe Verdi’s Operas in Rome (1844–1859)”, *Cambridge Opera Journal* XI/3 Nov. (1999), pp. 233–65, or Linda Fairtile, “Censorship in Verdi’s ‘Attila’: two case-studies”, *Verdi Newsletter*, XXIV (1997), pp. 5–7.

21 On this subject, see Michael Walter in the chapter “Zensur” in *Oper. Geschichte einer Institution*, Metzler, Stuttgart 2016, p. 266: “The following words, especially in Italy and the Habsburg Monarchy, were automatically subject to censorship in a libretto, out of consideration for the church: *Dio* (“God”) thus became *cielo* (“skies”) or *nume* (“deity”), *angeli* (“angels”) became *celesti* (“the heavenly ones”), *chiesa* (“church”) became *tempio* (“temple”).” (“Es gab vor allem in Italien und in der Habsburgermonarchie Begriffe, die in einem Libretto aus Rücksicht auf die Kirche automatisch der Zensur zum Opfer fielen: “Dio” (“Gott”) wurde so zu “cielo” (“Himmel”) oder “nume” (“Gottheit”), “angeli” (“Engel”) zu “celesti” (“die Himmlischen”), “chiesa” (“Kirche”) zu “tempio” (“Tempel”). On this subject see also, by the same author, the more recent “Zensur und Political Correctness auf der Opernbühne”, *LiTheS*, XIII/16 (2020), pp. 58–74.

22 See Paolo Quazzolo, “L’impresariato teatrale: Rodolfo Ullmann e il Teatro filodrammatico”, in *Shalom Trieste: gli itinerari dell’ebraismo*, edited by Adriano Dugulin, Civici Musei Storia ed Arte, Trieste 1998, p. 236.

was applied in other types of city in mainland Italy and understand the differences; in other words, to establish whether or not the lieutenancy of Dalmatia, in comparison with other environments, was particularly restrictive, and if so about what. In Dalmatia the lieutenancy had control over all the theatres, whereas in the newly-formed Italy, after Law no. 1630 was passed in 1864, censorship was to become – at least theoretically – more a matter of bureaucratic procedure.²³

After the librettos had been examined, the two copies submitted for censorship were returned. How long before the performance, one might ask, were the librettos sent back? Much, of course, depended also on how prompt the impresario was in presenting them in the first place. At times the timing was very tight. An extreme case is related in a letter from the impresario Josip Karaman in Split to the management of the Teatro Verdi in Zadar. In Split the impresario Lombardo was due to stage a performance of operetta on 5 March 1909, but three days earlier the librettos still hadn't been submitted for censorship. So Karaman asked Demetrio de Medovich, director of the theatre of Zadar, for a particular favour: that of taking the librettos to the lieutenancy in person, with an appeal for the matter to be dealt with immediately, for Lombardo would be in Zadar on 3 March to collect them. At times the return of the librettos could take place even one or two days before the first performance; in very extreme cases on the morning of the day itself.

The practice of censorship certainly continued in the area at least until 1919. The man now signing the censorship licences, in place of Baron Mamula, was Pietro Kasandrić, a Dalmatian bilingual poet and historian of journalism.²⁴ But in the years around the end of the First World War the documented cases did not directly concern opera, but variety entertainment, a genre that had become increasingly consolidated. The censors complained of “obscene songs” (*canzonette oscene*) that caricatured “personalities and events of political and military life” (*personalità ed avvenimenti della vita politica e militare*).²⁵ In November 1919 the comedian Bianchi was issued with a fine of 100 crowns directly by Maggiore Gracco Golini at the territorial garrison in Šibenik. The artist in question had used inappropriate language, mocked the very institution of censorship, and announced the performance of a play whose text had not been submitted to the control of the censor. All of this was considered unseemly and irreverent. Also prohibited was the practice of wearing the

23 See Gabriele Moroni, *La censura sulle opere di Verdi*, Createspace, [n. p.] 2015, p. 55. In accordance with royal decree (Regio Decreto 1630 of 14. I. 1864) the prefects (*prefetti*) had the authority to license the performance of stage works within the confines of their respective provinces.

24 Compared to Mamula, Kasandrić had perhaps a more specific training. His main area of study was Dalmatian journalism from 1848 to 1860. Among his various works, he also translated and annotated a volume of Serbian and Croatian folk songs (Istituto Veneto di arti grafiche, Venezia 1913).

25 It was a certain Colonello Capone who directly asked the theatre management of Šibenik to prevent the variety troupe engaged by the theatre from performing this repertoire; Letter from Capone to the theatre management of Šibenik, Šibenik, 2. 7. 1919, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

uniforms of the army or navy on stage. The fine would have to be collected by the theatre management itself.²⁶ A few months later another reprimand was levelled against Bianchi's company, this time against the farse *Il Callista*, which had again been staged without prior clearance from the competent office. The production, which was deemed "scurrilous and vulgar" was cautioned through the theatre management of Šibenik. The letters from the territorial garrison point out that in the event of further violations, the artists could also be expelled from the area.²⁷

26 Thus wrote Maggiore Golini in his statement: "I order also: a – that the announced performance of the play *Gli studenti di Sebenico* must not take place today. b – that the acting of any production for which prior permission has not been granted by this Office remains strictly prohibited. To this end your management may submit the material to be examined in a sealed envelope before 9 o'clock. c – as regards the costumes and staging, I repeat the prohibition to wear uniforms of the Royal Army and Royal Navy, both those in present use and those of the past, with or without stars. d – that all the artists must be severely warned that in the event of any unobservance of the above provisions, they will incur severe penalties. I beg your honourable management to take all the preventive measures needed to avoid the repetition of accidents on which the attention of this Office has already once before had to dwell." ("Dispongo inoltre: a – che non abbia luogo oggi l'annunziata rappresentazione della commedia 'Gli studenti di Sebenico' b – che resta tassativamente proibita la recitazione di qualsiasi produzione per la quale non sia stato preventivamente concesso il nulla osta di questo Ufficio. Costesta Direzione potrà all'uopo trasmettere giornalmente per le ore nove il materiale da esaminare in piego chiuso. c – Per quanto riguarda il vestiario e la messa in scena, rinnovo il divieto che sieno indossate uniformi del R. Esercito o della R. Marina, in uso al presente o per lo passato, con o senza stellettes. d – Sieno severamente diffidati tutti gli artisti che in caso di eventuali inosservanze delle disposizioni di cui sopra, incorreranno in severi provvedimenti. Prego cotesta spettabile Direzione voler prendere tutte le misure preventive atte ad evitare il ripetersi di inconvenienti sui quali si è dovuto già altra volta fermare l'attenzione di questo Ufficio."); Letter from Maggiore Gracco Golini to the theatre management of Šibenik, Šibenik, 10. 11. 1919, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

27 This is how a certain Capitano Matone put it: "This production, which has an absolutely negative artistic value, is, for its scurrilous and vulgar content, in open conflict with the regulations issued by the present writer concerning the conduct of theatrical spectacles. It is very strange and regrettable, after the warnings conveyed in Notice no. 548 Comm. of this office, dated 10 November, that a similar oversight could still occur. I remind you that the orders expressed in the aforementioned notice are in force and I beg you to strictly admonish the troupe leader Bianchi, cautioning him that, in the event of a further transgression, the immediate expulsion from the territory of occupation will be ordered against him." ("Detta produzione, che ha un valore artistico assolutamente negativo, è, per il suo contenuto scurrile e volgare, in aperto contrasto colle norme impartite dalla scrivente circa l'andamento degli spettacoli teatrali. È assai strano ed increscioso che dopo gli ammonimenti di cui al foglio n. 548 Comm. di questo ufficio, in data 10 novembre, si sia potuto ancora verificare un simile inconveniente. Richiamo in vigore le disposizioni di cui al foglio precitato e prego di ammonire severamente il capocomico Bianchi, diffidandolo, che in caso di ulteriori inadempienze, verrà provveduto al di lui immediato sgombero dal territorio di occupazione."); Letter from Capitano Matone to the theatre management of Šibenik, 21. 12. 1919, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

As well as the licence to perform, another document that had to be requested from the lieutenantcy of Dalmatia, at least at the end of the 19th century, was a *licenza d'agibilità* or certificate of use. Again, in the request for this document it was necessary to indicate the number of performances, the relevant time of year and the titles of the works to be staged.²⁸ It was only thus – after obtaining both the licence to perform (following the procedures of censorship) and the certificate of use – that one was ready to stage operas with all the necessary papers in order.

Staging opera performances was also subject to the current fire regulations, which intensified above all after the notorious fire at Vienna's Ring Theater in 1881 and that of the Théâtre Municipal in Nice in the same year, events that drew particular attention to the question of safety in theatres. There were various incidents in the coastal area too, for theatres caught fire there as in other parts of Europe: the problem was indeed widespread at the time.²⁹ Here, however, the spectre of arson also raised its head. The Italian press attributed the events to political causes and claimed that they happened because the Italians were not welcome in the area. We have the example of the Teatro Bajamonti in Split, which was burned down in 1881, so the rumour went, by the Austrians after all the Italian schools in the city had been made to close the year before. These were Austrians who supported the Croatian National Party (the very next year the city would actually come under Croatian administration).³⁰ The theatre was depicted as a “true symbol of the irredentism of the Dalmatians, destroyed a few decades later by Austro-Croatian fire”.³¹ Many sources, reporting public opinion,

28 An example is the request made by the impresario Luigi Dessanti for the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar: “The undersigned Luigi Dessanti, resident in Zadar, who has taken on the *impresa* of the local Teatro Nuovo for the forthcoming opera season with a regular contract, respectfully requests this Excellent Royal Lieutenantcy that a regular certificate of use be issued for it to give a run of 24 opera performances to take place in the months of April and May of the current year, with the operas *Bohème* and *Otello*, and others if the circumstances should require it [...]” (“Il sottoscritto Luigi Dessanti residente in Zara; avendo con regolare contratto assunta l'impresa del locale Teatro Nuovo per l'imminente stagione lirica fa rispettosa istanza, presso questa Ecc. S. R. Luogotenenza perché gli venga rilasciata regolare licenza d'agibilità onde dare un corso di 24 rappresentazioni liriche da esperirsi nei mesi di aprile e maggio anno corrente, con le opere *Bohème* e *Otello* ed altre nel caso le circostanze lo esigessero [...]”); Letter from Luigi Dessanti to the lieutenantcy of Dalmatia, Zadar, 11. 4. 1897, HR-DAZD-562, folder 3.

29 *La Musica Popolare* even published a list of as many as 32 theatres burned down just in the year 1882; *La musica popolare*, anno II, no. 3, 18. I. 1883, p. 12.

30 “It's not the first time that Bajamonti says that the theatre was burned down and he repeats it every time. *It was burned down* means that it didn't just happen by accident. But who Bajamonti was, the newspapers *Il Dalmata*, *L'Avvenire* and *La Difesa* do not say” (“Che Bajamonti dica che il teatro venne incendiato non è la prima volta e ogni volta lo ripete. *Venne incendiato* significa che non si sia trattato di un puro caso. Ma chi sia stato Bajamonti, *Il Dalmata*, *L'Avvenire*, *La Difesa* non lo dicono”); see Duško Kečkemet, *Il Teatro Bajamonti*, p. 260.

31 “vero simbolo dell'irredentismo dei Dalmati, distrutto alcuni decenni più tardi dal fuoco austro-croato”; Alessandro Dudan, *La Dalmazia nell'arte italiana*, Treves, Milano 1921, p. 339.

believed the event to have been intentional: “It was necessary to snatch power from the Italian Autonomist Party, and this was achieved. The aim was to sacrifice its chief, and this was done without scruple. And along with his name it was necessary to destroy his most brilliant work, and the fire at the Teatro Bajamonti accomplished their aspiration”.³² The theatre of Šibenik, on the other hand, had already burned down twenty years earlier, and was rebuilt in 1870. In Zadar, after an attempt to burn the theatre in 1870, the theatre presidency even offered a reward of 1,000 florins plus 2,000 lire to anyone who succeeded in discovering the culprit.³³ In view of the frequency of these fires, regardless of whether or not they were started with malicious intent, on 17 January 1882 the lieutenantancy of Dalmatia took the problem in hand and conducted an investigation into the theatres of the area. It recorded the following assessment of the fire precautions:

- Cattaro – teatro quartieroni interdetto [interdicted]
- Lesina – teatro adottate misure di sicurezza [safety measures adopted]
- Makarska – teatro interdetto
- Ragusa – teatro Bonda adottate misure di sicurezza
- Sebenico – teatro Mazzoleni [adottate misure di sicurezza]
- Zara – teatro Nuovo [adottate misure di sicurezza]
- [Zara] – teatro Paravia (nobile) – non consta che sia stato fatto [it seems not to have been done]
- [Zara] – Anfiteatro Manzin – non consta che sia stato fatto³⁴

It goes without saying that a theatre pronounced as “*interdetto*” could not go ahead with any theatrical performances. The Politeama of Pula, not mentioned in the list, complied with the new regulations in 1887: Ciscutti had external staircases built for the theatre on the orders of the municipality.³⁵ In 1895 the district captain Rossetti, on a visit to the building, made a report on his inspection to the lieutenantancy.³⁶ Two years later he drew up a set of

32 “Bisognava strappare il potere al partito autonomo-italiano, e lo si ottenne. Si voleva sacrificare il suo capo e lo si fece, senza scrupoli. Bisognava distruggere col suo nome l’opera sua più geniale; e l’incendio del Teatro Bajamonti compì il loro voto”; “Per Antonio Bajamonti”, *Il Piccolo*, no. 6590, 19.1.1900.

33 “A villain, who has not yet been identified, attempted to set fire to the fine Teatro Nuovo. He sneaked in and tried to start the fire in three different places, using a few bunches of matches, which he had placed near the wings of the stage and in other places. It was a miracle that his infamous plan was foiled by chance.” (“Uno scellerato che non si è potuto ancora scoprire, ha tentato di dare fuoco al bellissimo teatro Nuovo. Introdottosi di soppiatto cercò di appiccare il fuoco in tre punti diversi, servendosi di alcuni gomitolini di cerini, che aveva disposti presso le quinte del palcoscenico e in altri luoghi. Fu un vero miracolo se il suo infame proposito andò sventato dal caso.”); “Estero”, *L’Euterpe*, anno II, no. 9, 3.3.1870, p. 7 and “Mosaico”, *L’Euterpe*, anno II, no. 10, 10.3.1870, p. 7.

34 Lesina. District captain, [Hvar-Lesina], 17.1.1882, HR-DAZD-562, folder 1.

35 “Il binocolo sulla città. Politeama Ciscutti”, *L’Eco di Pola*, 8.10.1887.

36 Bogneri, *Il Politeama Ciscutti*, pp. 44–46.

theatre regulations in which he ordered all the scenery used at the Politeama Ciscutti to be coated with fire-resistant materials. This rule, however, was not binding in all the theatres of the coastal cities. For example, Italian companies working in Zadar, Šibenik and Split were not obliged to carry out this procedure. Some believed that adding a fire-resistant coating damaged the materials, given that the impregnated paper lost its elasticity and was liable to tear; the impresarios often complained about this.³⁷ In 1903 a municipal delegation (*rappresentanza comunale*) from Pula drew up a petition aimed at abolishing the obligation, pointing out the various inconveniences.³⁸ The actual cost of coating was shouldered by the impresario running the theatre, for it was his duty to comply with all fire regulations. In Šibenik, on the other hand, it was the theatre management that made an official request to the municipality directly for firemen, security guards and other personnel, and requested that the municipal aqueduct be supplied with water.³⁹

Although efforts were made to comply with the rules, attention to the problem over the years was not always high. In 1913 in Zadar the officers of the inspection police heard various complaints from the firemen engaged in the surveillance of the theatre: the fire hoses were allegedly in a poor state, showing signs of rotting, and certain hosepipes were apparently unusable. It also appeared that the “Minimax” fire extinguishers in certain parts of the theatre were defective and that one of them had no water in it. All were circumstances that could have been fatal in a fire. The management of the theatre was therefore instructed to return to a state of compliance.⁴⁰

One document found in the theatre archives is the *Vorschläge des Niederösterreichischen Gewerbevereines betreffend die Sicherung von Theatern gegen Feuersgefahr* (Proposals of the Lower Austrian Trade Association concerning the safeguarding of theatres against fire hazards),⁴¹ a booklet that was evidently distributed for the benefit of theatre managements and that aimed to inform about, and promote, conformity with the regulations. Moreover, in 1907 the lieutenant of Lower Austria, on the strength of a conclusion arrived at by the provincial theatrical committee, established that a plan of the theatre marking all the exits should be printed at the back of the programmes distributed to the public, along with short instructions on how to use them. One drawback of all these highly proper obligations, however, was that they added yet another burden on the impresarios wishing to produce opera in full respect of the rules.

37 Bogneri, *Il Politeama Ciscutti*, p. 65.

38 “Notiziario cittadino”, *Il Giornaleto di Pola*, 28. 10. 1910.

39 Request for the sending of security staff for the performances of the Compagnia Lirica Lillipuziana, Šibenik, 13. 5. 1906, HR-DASI-103, folder 9.

40 The same report also noted that unauthorised people were allowed access to the stage and that there was no inspection room for the police officer; Report from the police section of the district captaincy to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 8. 5. 1913, HR-DAZD, folder 23.

41 *Vorschläge des Niederösterreichischen Gewerbevereines betreffend die Sicherung von Theatern gegen Feuersgefahr*, Verlag des Niederösterreichischen Gewerbevereines, Wien 1882.

4.3 The opera seasons in Pula

Regarding the situation in Pula, unfortunately no tender specifications or contracts have survived. If we take into account the presence of external impresarios and the seasons contracted out in the city, a minimum of at least forty contracts should have been concluded during the period. We know that as well as opera seasons featuring Italian companies, the Politeama also hosted troupes of German spoken theatre and operetta. In fact the audience frequenting the theatre at the end of the 19th century – at least judging from reports in *Il Diritto Croato* – consisted largely of non-Italians. So it was mainly the “Slavs”, along with the Germans, who championed and applauded the Italian artists, more indeed than the actual Italian audience that allegedly represented the “Latin heritage” (*coltura Latina*).⁴²

In the first ten years of its existence the Politeama offered performances of opera less frequently than from 1890 onwards.⁴³ The building was inaugurated in 1881 with a performance of *Ruy Blas* and, like every self-respecting official opening, among those attending were not only various dignitaries from the town, but also one of Archduke Karl Albrecht’s sons in the imperial box.⁴⁴ The emperor, Franz Joseph, was also to come and visit, though only in the next year. But in choosing to make the inauguration a gala night, Ciscutti, the founder of the Politeama, made what was considered to be his first mistake. From the contemporary reports we gather that this first performance was inadequately prepared. The choruses had succeeded in rehearsing just one evening. And rehearsals with the orchestra, made up entirely of musicians from the band of the Austrian navy (some of whom were completely new to opera), went “uncomfortably” (*con disagio*). “Everything conspired, therefore, to turn the first performance into a dress rehearsal”, was the assessment of a certain Minuto Secondo writing in the journal *L’Arte*.⁴⁵ Arriving at the opening night with an opera that was poorly rehearsed and patched together in a rough-and-ready manner was something that also seemed to have happened again some years later; indeed we find more than one such occurrence over the years. In 1900 the *impresa* staging a production of *Rigoletto* had its performances suspended because they failed to meet the artistic expectations of the theatre, which (it pointed out) “did not have

42 “Il placito di Carlo Magno e i Croati nell’Istria”, *Il Diritto Croato*, 24. 10. 1888.

43 Even though there appears to be no trace of opera productions for the years 1896 and 1897, at least judging from the newspapers.

44 “Teatri – Pola”, *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, anno XXXVI, no. 40, 2. 10. 1881, p. 358.

45 “Tutto quindi concorrevva a rendere la prima recita una prova generale”; “S. M. L’imperatore Francesco Giuseppe al Ciscutti”, *L’Arte*, 21. 9. 1882, quoted in Bogneri, *Il Politeama Ciscutti*, p. 18. The season had been organised by Francesco Razzani, who was not new to the theatre in Pula, given that four years earlier he had been engaged to stage a ballet of his own composition in the Lent season; *L’Arte*, anno VII, no. 6, 29. 3. 1876.

the artistic direction of the production”.⁴⁶ Concerning a previous *Faust*, brought there by the Barlani-Dini impresa and conducted by Giulio Buzenac – who happened to be a pupil of Ponchielli⁴⁷ – the reports spoke of a work that was “barely pieced together” (*imbastito appena*), one whose “strange beauties could be appreciated” (*si potè gustare le pellegrine bellezze*) only after the fourth night. Before finally achieving some form of artistic stability this *Faust* changed two baritones and four sopranos (for the role of Margherita), all at the public’s expense. *La Favorita*, the next opera in that season, saw the replacement of two tenors and two female voices; *Carmen* that of two baritones, not to mention the baritone’s part being turned into that of a bass.⁴⁸ In spite of all this, the theatre was well-attended and the earnings from the season in question (1890) actually amounted to almost 19,500 florins.⁴⁹ This was money that circulated in the town and was enjoyed by all, “from the shop-keeper to the last extra” (*dal negoziante all’ultima comparsa*). And yet, “the luxury of opera production” (*il lusso d’uno spettacolo d’opera*), when not sustained by substantial capital, was often loss-making for the organisers. For in spite of the large takings, the impresa involved suffered a heavy deficit.⁵⁰

One way of economising was to make use of local resources in the productions, thereby saving on transportation costs. This was what was done in 1891 by the impresario Angelo Fantuzzi, who employed the manpower available in Pula and ordered the stage materials and equipment for the season directly on site. By doing this he above all hoped to win the approval of the citizenry. Unfortunately we have no information on how this particular season went. We only know that the impresario was moved “by the best intentions of pleasing the public” (*dal miglior buon volere di accontentare il pubblico*) and would have done a lot more if he had been assisted by “a greater share of the evenings’ takings” (*il concorso più generoso per la cassetta*).⁵¹ After all, it was also the box-office receipts that enabled the impresario to cover his many expenses.

Complementing the efforts of the impresario, attempts were also made in Pula to organise opera seasons with the help of specially created citizens’ committees. For example, the project for an autumn season in 1901 was to be launched if the impresa was supported by a committee working with it and guaranteeing the success of the season with strong financial backing. Details of the project would be decided by the committee itself. In the

46 “del quale spettacolo non aveva essa la direzione artistica”; “Politeama Ciscutti”, *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, 28. 12. 1900.

47 Giulio Buzenac (1858–1925) was a conductor and formerly director of the Teatro Civico and conductor of the municipal orchestra of Cagliari.

48 “Confidenze di casa”, *L’Eco di Pola*, 17. 10. 1890.

49 To be precise, the earnings came to 19,498.74 florins over the course of forty days; “Teatralia”, *L’Eco di Pola*, 13. 12. 1890.

50 “Teatralia”, *L’Eco di Pola*, 13. 12. 1890.

51 “Politeama Ciscutti”, *L’Eco di Pola*, 24. 10. 1891.

event, productions of *Mignon* and *Carmen* did indeed take place.⁵² The intention, however, was also to stage Giovanni Rossi's *Sangre mezclada*, an opera that had never been performed (meaning that it would be a world premiere). This part of the project, however, had no follow-up.⁵³ Another instance of a citizens' committee being created to organise opera regarded the staging of Antonio Smareglia's *Nozze istriane*, which was moreover a work on a local subject. "We all hope", the newspapers wrote, "that the project being aired in many circles of the city will soon enter the decision-making stage and that the said committee will be set up to realise the idea and give the score a performance of the very first order, as both Smareglia's glory and the city's artistic aspirations demand".⁵⁴ In this case the project did come to fruition in the spring of 1908: *Nozze istriane* was actually performed.

We have a third example of the citizenry possibly having to shoulder the costs in order to guarantee performances of opera: for December 1907 when both *Rigoletto* and *La favorita* were due for performance. It was reported that the negotiations would certainly be successful because the citizens themselves would pay 15 crowns a head for 10 performances.⁵⁵ In this case, unfortunately, we do not know how the matter ended. All that is known is that *La favorita* was given a year later, without saying that this was also with financial support from the public; indeed an impresario called Pietro Pedrazzi is now mentioned as being the organiser of the season.

Among those who had difficulties going to the opera there were some who notified the newspapers, in the hope that extra performances would be organised at reduced prices. This certainly also happened in Pula. In September 1894 the opera and ballet company of Giovanni Ansaldo had come to town, to give a few nights of opera buffa, followed by *Pagliacci*, imported directly from the Anfiteatro Fenice of Trieste with Gaetano Cimini conducting.⁵⁶ Many local families, which had not been able to attend the event, contacted *L'Eco di Pola* in the hope that a fourth performance (in favour of the city's less affluent citizens) might be added.⁵⁷ Popular evenings of opera, with cheaper tickets, were therefore organised.

52 "Per una stagione d'opera al Politeama", *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, 23. 8. 1901.

53 "Politeama Ciscutti", *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, 8. 9. 1901. In fact the opera is still unknown today. Nor is it possible to have detailed information on the composer Giovanni Rossi, apart from the fact that he appears to have been an amateur musician. See Pierluigi Forcella, *Opere e operette a Bergamo: Ottocento – Novecento*, Edizioni Villadiseriane, Villa di Serio 2005, p. 50 and 178.

54 "Noi facciamo voti che il progetto che viene ventilato in parecchi circoli cittadini passi ben presto nel periodo risolutivo e venga istituito il detto comitato che certo saprà concretare in forma pratica l'idea e dare allo spartito una esecuzione di primissimo ordine quale la esigono la gloria dello Smareglia e le esigenze artistiche della città."; "Politeama Ciscutti", *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, 12. 4. 1906.

55 "L'opera", *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, 25. 10. 1907.

56 "Politeama Ciscutti", *L'Eco di Pola*, 27. 10. 1894.

57 "Politeama Ciscutti", *L'Eco di Pola*, 27. 10. 1894.

The newspapers might also inform the impresario simply of the public's desire to hear a given opera again: "[...] we have received the request", the *Giornaleto di Pola* wrote, "if it would still be possible to give another performance of *Lucrezia Borgia*. We convey all these wishes to the impresa".⁵⁸ The journalist might also try to interpret popular feeling by asking the impresario directly from the pages of the newspaper for extra performances of a given opera. The papers often made appeals to the citizenry, encouraging it to go to the theatre; and here and there one reads the occasional complaint about the low attendance at certain productions. It is also worth remembering that the cinema was emerging also in Pula in the early years of the 20th century: a phenomenon that certainly competed with evenings at the opera.

There was the case of Alberto Vernier, who organised the arrival of various opera companies in Pula, before leaving the position to Alessandro Bolzicco for a few years. The impresario was publicly praised in the columns of the newspapers,⁵⁹ only subsequently to be accused by *Il Piccolo della Sera* in 1896 of having pocketed the municipal subsidy (which evidently had been granted for the year in question). Vernier duly defended himself publicly from the insults and from accusations of having cheated the public, as well as from the rumour that he had been denied the subsidy for the following year:

Indeed, all the authorities without exception did nothing but encourage the owner and myself, for it is certain that without the selflessness of the former of wishing to sacrifice substantial sums to bring the theatre to the solidity of the leading [theatres] of the monarchy, and without my modest cooperation, Pula would have been left without a theatre. [...] For the productions given in the two years in which I have had the privilege of running the theatre, I need merely appeal to the good memory of the public, which remembers things much better than the aforementioned journalist and knows that, for the variety, quality and quantity of the productions given, I need fear no comparison with my predecessors.

As regards *Traviata* and *Fra Diavolo* (two operas in two evenings), I merely recall that the company had just been, to great applause, at the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka, a theatre that

58 "[...] ci perviene la domanda se fosse ancora possibile di dare ancora una rappresentazione della *Lucrezia Borgia*. Rivolgiamo tutti i desideri all'impresa."; "Il Politeama Ciscutti", *Il Giornaleto di Pola*, anno II, no. 306, II. 5. 1901.

59 "When we think that the impresa of A. Vernier, regardless of expense and without the support of anyone, is capable of staging similar spectacles, we cannot help but feel for it that lively sense of admiration that our newspaper here expresses on behalf of the whole population." ("Quando pensiamo che l'impresa A. Vernier non badando a spese e a sacrifici, senza l'appoggio di nessuno, è in grado di allestirci simili spettacoli, non possiamo fare a meno di provare per essa quel vivo senso di ammirazione che ora a nome di tutta la popolazione, il nostro giornale le porge."); "La compagnia Zucconi-Pilotto al nostro Politeama. Il 'Fra Diavolo', la 'Traviata'", *L'Eco di Pola*, 16. II. 1895.

has ten times the resources of the theatre in Pula, and that a member of the company was Cavalier Lombardi, who now sings with such success in Trieste!⁶⁰

That in Pula, “in spite of its 38,000 inhabitants”, it had not been possible to put on productions of a certain splendour, was something well known even to “the women in the square” (*le femminette di piazza*), and was well known also to the theatre owner and the impresarios who succeeded one another over the years, given that “not even once can one succeed in not making a loss, sometimes even of conspicuous sums” (*non una sola volta si riesci a non perdere, e talvolta anco somme vistose*).⁶¹ Unfortunately this predicament seemed not to improve even with the impresario Bolzicco from Udine, who we find more or less permanently at the Politeama from 1901, even though he simultaneously worked at other *piazze* (like Gorizia, for example, in January 1903). One step taken to make up for the losses was that of abolishing the tickets at reduced prices for the employees and the city’s companies. Naturally by taking this measure Bolzicco hardly endeared himself to the public, which had already been annoyed by another incident: at a performance of *La bohème* in 1903, his colleague Luigi Bernardi had the soprano taking the role of Mimì replaced with another novice. This action was considered particularly tactless towards the public, because the substitution had not been communicated with proper announcements, but simply with a handwritten notice posted in the theatre foyer.⁶² What was defined a “shameful opera season” (*disgraziata stagione d’opera*) at the Politeama turned out, in March 1903, to be disastrous also for the artists who found themselves stranded in Pula without the necessary means for returning home. With the intention of coming to their assistance, it was decided to give two performances of *Un ballo in maschera* for their exclusive benefit. For the occasion Bolzicco made the theatre available free of charge, Smareglia agreed to conduct the event, and the orchestra of the navy waived their earnings for the rehearsals; even the printers and the billposting company cooperated at no cost. The public was once again invited to come to the performances in large numbers, in an attempt to save the situation.⁶³

60 “Anzi tutte le Autorità indistintamente non fecero che incoraggiare il Proprietario e me, perché è certo che senza l’abnegazione del primo di voler sacrificare una ingente somma per portare il Teatro al livello di sicurezza dei primari della Monarchia, e senza la mia modesta cooperazione, Pola sarebbe rimasta senza Teatro. [...] Per le produzioni date nei due anni nei quali mi onoro di esser alla Direzione del Teatro, non ho che appellarmi alla buona memoria del Pubblico, il quale ricorda le cose molto meglio che non lo faccia il sullodato corrispondente e sa che, per varietà, qualità e quantità degli spettacoli dati, non ho a temere alcun confronto con i miei predecessori. Rispetto poi alla *Traviata* e al *Fra Diavolo* (due opere in due sere) ricordo solo che la compagnia proveniva, applauditissima, dal Comunale di Fiume, Teatro che ha decuplicate le risorse che ha questo di Pola, e che della compagnia faceva parte il cav. Lombardi che ora canta con tanto successo a Trieste!”; “Per la pura verità”, *L’Eco di Pola*, 28. II. 1896.

61 “Per la pura verità”, *L’Eco di Pola*, 28. II. 1896.

62 “Politeama Ciscutti”, *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, 16. 3. 1903.

63 “Due rappresentazioni al Politeama Ciscutti”, *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, 4. 4. 1903.

Soon after, fresh attempts were made to organise a production of *Ernani* by entering into negotiations with the artists engaged in the opera season who had already sung in the opera at the Politeama Rossetti of Trieste. While the artists agreed, the political authorities let the impresario know that permission to produce the opera in Pula would not be given; so the project came to nothing.⁶⁴ At the same time, the theatre management had initiated negotiations to stage *Aida* and *Il trovatore* in the following Lent season with both Ricordi in Milan and the Broglio theatrical agency, though they were conditional on the acceptance – by the municipality of Pula – of a request for subsidy.⁶⁵ The Comune evidently did accept, for it turns out that the season actually took place. The same thing possibly happened two years later, when in 1906 the theatre, presented with the proposal of an opera company offering 18 evenings, asked for, and obtained, a subsidy of 5,000 crowns from the municipal government, in addition to being exonerated from all charges and taxes for lighting and security guards.⁶⁶ It is not known, however, which productions the subsidy was designed to cover: whether those of March or the following performances of opera buffa with the Compagnia lirica lillipuziana.

From this moment until the period of the First World War, two passages of the aforementioned Compagnia lirica lillipuziana are worth noting: first in 1906, then, in the following year, when there was another ‘Lilliputian’ company, that of the brothers Guido and Arnaldo Billaud. In May 1907 the Billaud company gave various titles of opera buffa, different from those proposed by Guerra in the following October, even though the repertoires of the two companies were practically identical.

While the ‘Lilliputian’ companies were thus engaged, negotiations were started with a “very well-known impresa” in Milan to organise the opera season of the following year. The idea was to stage both *Fedora* and Massenet’s *Manon* or a combination of *Fedora* and *Faust*. A certain interest was also expressed for *Lobengrin* and *Otello*, though it was feared

64 “L’Ernani proibito”, *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, 30–31. 5. 1903. As the newspapers of the time recall, the performance of *Ernani* at Pula back in 1888 had inflamed the patriotic ardour of the audience: “[...] when at the third act the plotters intone the popular chorus *Siamo tutti una sola famiglia*, some four thousand spectators erupted into such applause that the theatre seemed about to collapse. Three times an encore was clamoured for, but seeing that the demonstration of applause was too insistent, orders were given to drop the curtain. Many went away, but many stayed. An attempt was made to continue with the fourth act, but woefully, as soon as the curtain was raised, a salvo of whistling made it drop again. To no avail! A fourth encore was wanted.” (“[...] quando al terzo atto i congiurati intuonarono il popolare coro *Siamo tutti una sola famiglia*, quei quattromila spettatori proruppero in tale applauso che pareva crollasse il teatro. Per tre volte si acclamò il bis ma visto che la dimostrazione applauditiva era troppo costante si fece calar la tela. Molti se ne andarono ma molti restarono. Si tentò di proseguire col quarto atto, ma disgraziatamente appena alzato il sipario un subisso di fischi lo fece ricadere. Inutile! Si voleva il quarto bis.”); “In teatro”, *L’Eco di Pola*, 24. 11. 1888.

65 “Politeama Ciscutti”, *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, 16. 3. 1903.

66 “I denari dei contribuenti”, *Omnibus*, 15. 2. 1906.

that this might lead to “parodies” of the operas, as might well happen in other small theatres of the coastal region. In some newspapers there was talk of Massenet’s *Werther* instead of *Manon*. The performers for *Manon* would be the same as those who had given it at the Teatro Minerva of Udine shortly before: hence further confirmation of how productions from Friuli and Julian Venetia could then move to Istria or Dalmatia. In the end no opera by Massenet was given, for the choice fell on Smareglia’s *Nozze istriane* mentioned above.⁶⁷ To conduct the work they brought in Gialdino Gialdini, a musician of a certain stature who, before coming to Pula, had appeared at the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka and before that in Trieste.⁶⁸ Gialdini – who even then was better known as conductor than composer – was also invited to conduct the orchestra of the navy in *La Wally* in 1909. He evidently succeeded in enjoying a good rapport with both the owner of the Politeama and its impresarios if the following year he succeeded in having his own one-act opera *La bufera* performed in Pula.⁶⁹

The seasons in which Alessandro Bolzicco played a leading role in the organisation of opera at Pula thus unfolded until we come to a performance of Strauss’s operetta *Sangue viennese* (Wiener Blut) during which an irredentist demonstration took place that cost the impresario his career and even forced him to leave Pula immediately. The ballet dancers on stage were representing “The Great Nations”, and at the entrance of the couple representing France and Italy there was apparently an outburst of clapping accompanied by “voices of approval” (*voci di plauso*) that forced the orchestra to stop playing. The police commissioner gave orders for the audience to evacuate the theatre, but to no avail. He therefore ordered the orchestra and soldiers present to depart. The Magnani opera company, which was performing the work, had to leave the city; and the theatre was closed.⁷⁰ The affair caused a

67 “La serata a teatro”, *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, 30. 3. 1908.

68 He was also director of the conservatoire of Trieste until May 1915. On Gialdino Gialdini, in addition to the biographical entry devoted to him in the *Dizionario Enciclopedico Universale della Musica e dei Musicisti*, Le biografie, vol. III, Utet, Torino 1983, p. 188, see Annalisa Sandri, ... *e Massenet disse*, “Bravissimo!”. *Gialdino Gialdini e il suo tempo*, Pizzicato, Udine 2001, or Albano Dini–Vivaldo Pagni, *Gialdino Gialdini. La vita-le opere*, Società Musicale Gialdini, Pescia 1995.

69 On this little-known work, see Corrado Ambiveri, *Operisti minori dell'Ottocento italiano*, Gremese, Roma 1998, p. 78. The opera was given the next year at Pescia, birthplace of the composer and conductor.

70 Bogneri, *Il Politeama Ciscutti*, p. 117. See also “Una proibizione inaudita – Pola senza teatro”, *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, 23. 4. 1912, concerning the restrictive measures taken by the lieutenantcy against performances at the Teatro Ciscutti. The population was witnessing a “*spettacolo di repressione*”. In the *Giornaletto di Pola* of 24. 12. 1912 we read: “After the attack on our schools and after the attack even on our industrial school, because it produces Italian workers, having got rid of the municipal prerogatives and slavified the offices, the time has now come to destroy the theatre, this training ground of our civilisation. But yes, it is said in certain circles that there is no need for Italian theatre in Pula. For those wanting entertainment there is the theatre of the Narodni Dom. That, you could say, is patriotic theatre; never mind if they also hold highly inflammatory speeches against the Hungarians ...” (“Dopo la lotta alle nostre

stir also because Bolzicco, who by then was sixty-eight and had worked in Pula for sixteen years, had never provoked quarrels. Evidently the times were changing and the political friction with the Italian community was starting to be felt. Bolzicco duly tried appealing to the lieutenantcy of the Littoral against the “order of eviction from the kingdoms and lands represented at the Council of the Empire”.⁷¹ But whatever the outcome of his appeal, he was no longer found working in the area.

With the onset of the First World War the Italian population protested, angered because it felt excluded from the earliest performances of operetta with German companies (from 1914 onwards operetta was no longer sung in Italian in the city). This development, contrary to the interests of the Italian community, had already been anticipated in 1911 when an article in *La Fiamma* expressed the fear that the Politeama would be sold not to a consortium of local citizens but to a non-Italian. It speculated that the future owners might want to get rid of the theatre: “Let us imagine what will happen to this great and unique theatre of ours when it has fallen into foreign hands. Today, excepting certain brief Teutonic (or Hungarian or Japanese) parentheses, the theatre gives performances of Italian opera and theatre with Italian actors. Tomorrow we could have the surprise of seeing that Italian spectacles have become a parenthesis”.⁷² It would therefore not be absurd to hypothesise that within a short space of time the theatre could become “a trilingual or quadrilingual institution” (*un istituto trilingue o quadrilingue*), a “new instrument for corrupting” the city’s character (*nuovo*

scuole, dopo la lotta persino alla scuola industriale, perché produce operai italiani, infrante le prerogative municipali, slavizzati gli uffici è venuta l’ora di abbattere il teatro, questa palestra della nostra civiltà. Ma già, si dice in certi circoli che a Pola non occorra il teatro italiano. Per chi vuol divertirsi v’è il teatro del Narodni Dom. Quello sì che è il teatro patriottico; non importa se anche vi tengano i discorsi più infiammati contro gli ungheresi...”); “Pola ex lege”, *Il Giornaleto di Pola*, 24. 4. 1912. On the closure of the theatre, see also “Il teatro chiuso... fino a nuovo ordine”, *La Fiamma*, 27. 4. 1912.

71 “nozione di sfratto dai Regni e paesi rappresentati al Consiglio dell’Impero”; See Grazia Tatò, *Trieste, Gorizia e l’Unità d’Italia*, Deputazione di storia patria per la Venezia Giulia, [Trieste] 2012, p. 167.

72 “Immaginiamoci che cosa accadrà di questo nostro massimo ed unico teatro quando sarà caduto in mani straniere. Oggi, salvo qualche breve parentesi teutonica (o ungherese o giapponese) vi si danno spettacoli di opera e di prosa italiani con attori italiani. Domani potremo avere la sorpresa che gli spettacoli italiani siano una parentesi.” And the article went on: “And let it not be said that, as the city is Italian, no impresario will be so much at war with his own pockets as to banish from the theatre not only the Italian language but also the public. Among the most assiduously attended productions, we have seen certain German operettas that were a parody of the art. The eminent impresario Bolzicco could tell us something about this. And we ourselves have seen the flower of our intellectuals attend all such performances with edifying persistence.” (“E non si dica che, essendo italiana la città, nessun impresario sarà in tanta guerra colle proprie tasche da bandire dal teatro, colla lingua italiana, anche il pubblico. Noi abbiamo veduto fra gli spettacoli più frequentati certe operette tedesche che erano una parodia dell’arte. Qualche cosa in proposito potrebbe raccontarci l’egregio impresario Bolzicco. E noi stessi abbiamo veduto il fiore dei nostri intellettuali assistere con un’assiduità edificante a tutte codeste rappresentazioni.”); *La Fiamma*, anno I, no. 23, 26. 8. 1911.

strumento di corruzione), bringing with it an increase in “the number of humiliations” one would have to put up with (*crescere per esso il numero delle vergogne*).⁷³

In the same year an article appeared in the *Giornaletto di Pola*, protesting against the much-feared foundation of a Croatian National Theatre in Istria. The foundation of what was to be called the “Croatian Provincial Theatre” was the idea of the administration of the theatre of Zagreb and would avail itself of repertoire, artistic staff and scenery from the Croatian capital itself.⁷⁴ The Italian community therefore felt threatened, and duly shifted the discussion to opposing the Croatian plans. The language used was indeed tough, evoking ideas of confrontation and combat: “This Slavic tenacity needs to be well understood by the Italians”, it warned, “who must (how and where possible) prevent and paralyse the conquering work of their national adversaries”. Italian theatre, according to the writers, had no formidable competitors in any other national theatre and would surely have no reason to fear the Croatian national theatre.⁷⁵

Such hostility didn’t come from nowhere. A few years earlier an imposing rally was held at the Politeama Ciscutti to contest the planned institution of a Serbo-Croatian secondary school (*gymnasium*) in the eminently Italian town of ‘Pisino’ (today Pazin); the honourable Felice Glezer had sent a long telegram of protest to the Prime Minister in Vienna, emphasising that since the region had been occupied by the “Latin race” (*razza latina*) for thousands of years, it therefore belonged to it “by right of fact” (*per diritto di fatto*). Hence it would not be possible to surrender this territory to “other guest peoples” (*altre genti ospiti*).⁷⁶ Bearing

73 *La Fiamma*, anno I, no. 23, 26. 8. 1911.

74 The article went on to pour scorn on the role of Croatian literature and its repertoire for the theatre: “We know how little Croatian literature amounts to, in spite of all its literary ambitions, made up as it is of imitating works from other literatures, when it doesn’t also pass off, under its name, the equally wretched Serbian literature. All the poorer is the Croatian theatre repertoire, which for the most part is limited to imitations of German, French and Italian works, concocted mainly by Dalmatians of Italian background, in spite of the fact that the Croatian newspapers speak of famous plays and celebrated national playwrights. But the Croatians have no intention of halting on the road towards the national conquest of the province; here again they make this effort aided by their brothers, indeed by the government of Croatia.” (“Si sa a che poca cosa si riduca ad onta di tutti i conati letterari, la letteratura croata, fatta di imitazioni di opere delle altre letterature, quando non passa sotto il suo nome la pur meschina letteratura serba. Tanto più povero è il repertorio drammatico croato, che si limita in massima parte a versioni o imitazioni di lavori tedeschi, francesi e italiani, fatte per lo più da dalmati di coltura italiana, sebbene i giornali croati parlino di rinomati drammi e di celebri drammaturghi nazionali. Ma non perciò si arrestano nella via della conquista nazionale della provincia i croati, che fanno ora questo sforzo, anche qui aiutati dai fratelli, anzi dal governo della Croazia.”); “Il teatro nazionale croato”, *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, 31. 10. 1911.

75 “Questa tenacia slava deve essere ben compresa dagli italiani che devono, come e dove è possibile, prevenire e paralizzare l’opera conquistatrice dei loro avversari nazionali.”; “Il teatro nazionale croato”, *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, 31. 10. 1911.

76 “the projected institution of a secondary school in Pisino on the part of the imperial government”, Glezer wrote in his message, “as well as constituting a grave and unprovoked offence towards all Italians, by

this in mind, it is clear that any change in the programming of opera or operetta in Italian would be viewed with disfavour.

Those frequenting the theatre in those very years nonetheless agreed that the Politeama failed to satisfy the needs of a changing city. What was required was an overall refurbishment of the interior, including the creation of a new gallery “with seats” (*a sedie*), to provide access to members of the public who, for various reasons, had been excluded.⁷⁷ A need for renewal was widely felt. In the following years, up until the end of the War, ownership of the Politeama changed hands various times, with some owners obliged (in spite of themselves) to take on the *impresa* as well – as happened in 1913. Teodoro Mattiassevich, who is mentioned as part-owner and administrator, at his death in 1916 handed the reins to Vincenzo Viezzoli, who officially asked the lieutenancy for the Politeama’s certificate of use (*licenza di esercizio*) to be issued in his name.⁷⁸ Even a certain Petinelli featured as owner and impresario for various years.⁷⁹ When the War came to an end, the co-owners of the Politeama were Stipanovich, Viezzoli and Cirillo Metodio Koch.

The end of the War brought a mood of deep unrest, with control of the city divided between German and Austrian soldiers. By then the Politeama had given up proposing to organise seasons of Italian opera, most certainly also for financial reasons. Performances of

damaging their rights, tends to create artificially a foreign culture in favour of the few who, for just a few decades, have brought discord among the Istrian people in order to achieve specific political aims in the future; that this projected school offers fresh proof of the government’s intention to deprive the Italians of their national patrimony in order to favour a few political agitators who are their enemies; that the Italians contribute to the expenses of the state in an exorbitant manner in proportion to the costs sustained by the other peoples who came to this region, to whom the government is generous with all kinds of concessions, especially in the field of education – whereas to the Italians it does not even recognise the right to set up, even with its own money, an Italian university at Trieste, also prohibiting the establishment of other educational institutions that correspond to the needs of Italian culture, the oldest and one of the most illustrious in the world [...]”; (“la progettata istituzione da parte dell’imperiale governo di un ginnasio serbo-croato a Pisino, oltre che costituire una grave offesa, non provocata, a tutti gli italiani, intaccando i loro diritti, tende a creare artificialmente una coltura straniera a favore dei pochi i quali da alcuni lustri hanno portato la discordia fra il popolo istriano per conseguire in future evenienze noti fini politici che questa progettata istituzione offre una novella prova della tendenza del governo, di spogliare gl’italiani del loro patrimonio nazionale per favorire pochi agitatori politici nemici degli stessi, che gl’italiani contribuiscono alle spese dello Stato in esorbitante proporzione di fronte a quelle sostenute dalle altre genti sorvenute in questa regione, verso le quali il governo è largo di ogni sorta di concessioni specialmente nel campo scolastico – mentre agli italiani non riconosce neppure il diritto di istituire anche con i propri denari una università italiana a Trieste, negando d’altronde altri istituti di educazione corrispondenti ai bisogni della coltura italiana la più antica e una delle più illustri del mondo [...]”); Bogneri, *Il Politeama Ciscutti*, pp. 52–54.

77 “L’annata teatrale”, *Il Giornale di Pola*, 5. 6. 1913.

78 Bogneri, *Il Politeama Ciscutti*, p. 135.

79 Bogneri, *Il Politeama Ciscutti*, p. 306. The Politeama had been bought by Viezzoli, Pregel, Petinelli and Mattiassevich on 15 April 1910; Marsetič, *Il cimitero civico di Monte Ghiro a Pola*, p. 606.

German operetta did, however, continue and it was precisely during one of these events that tensions between the different ethnic groups in the city came out into the open. On the evening of 20 October 1918, a group of Italian demonstrators gathered and marched through the streets of the city singing patriotic songs. In the course of the march the group became larger, eventually amounting – according to the local journalist Rodolfo Manzin – to “a few hundred” (*alcune centinaia*) in number. Armed with sticks this crowd burst into the theatre, invading the parterre and generating confusion among the Austrian officers seated to watch the show. The intention was to stop the performance, but the officers insisted that the show should continue and that the demonstrators be ejected. As Manzin reported, “the news that the show was continuing inside, with us in the street hearing the singing of the German singers, was enough to stoke our fury”.⁸⁰ This statement is revealing of how the War had exacerbated the tensions; the fury (*pazzia*) caused by seeing that the Politeama had by then fallen into the hands of what was effectively the political enemy led to a second, sudden incursion that almost ended in the destruction of the theatre: “the first wings of canvas and paper caught fire and the spectators escaped from the parterre, while others tried to reach the stage, which by then was overwhelmed with smoke”.⁸¹ This resulted in a setback for performances, albeit a temporary one. In any case the War had caused a general decline in the organisation of theatrical productions. And what the War failed to do was completed by the outbreak of Spanish flu that followed immediately afterwards, ensuring that the situation was further complicated.⁸²

4.3.1 Census of the opera seasons at the Politeama Ciscutti of Pula

The seasons at the Politeama Ciscutti have been reconstructed with the aid of the articles collected in Marcello Bogneri’s book (*Il Politeama Ciscutti di Pola*), the periodicals *Il Proletario*, *Pola*, *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, *Südösterreichische Nachrichten*, *L’Eco di Pola*, *Il Popolo Istriano*, *La Fiamma*, *Omnibus* and *Il Diritto Croato*, and information found in the state archives of Zadar and Šibenik. In italics are indicated the seasons realised in the theatre founded by Ciscutti before the Politeama.

80 “La voce che dentro lo spettacolo continuava, e noi dalla strada si sentiva arrivare la musica ed il canto degli interpreti tedeschi, ci fece montare la pazzia.”; Bogneri, *Il Politeama Ciscutti*, p. 140.

81 “le prime quinte di tela e carta prendevano fuoco e dalla platea gli spettatori scappavano, altri tentavano di raggiungere il palcoscenico ormai invaso dal fumo.”; Bogneri, *Il Politeama Ciscutti*, p. 140.

82 On musical performances at the Politeama Ciscutti in the period following the First World War (and the 1930s in particular), see for example Lada Duraković, “Glazbeno-scenske izvedbe u pulskom kazalištu ‘Ciscutti’ u tridesetim godinama dvadesetog stoljeća”, in *Međunarodni znanstveni skup Čakavskog sabora “Boje zavičajnosti”*, Rovinj, Žminj 2003.

Year	Impresario	Maestro concertatore and Chorus master	Start of season	Operas
1863	<i>Sanguinazzi</i>	<i>n.f.</i>	<i>[March]</i>	<i>Marin Faliero</i> <i>I masnadieri</i>
1874	<i>n.f.</i>	<i>n.f.</i>	<i>n.f.</i>	<i>Il barbiere di Siviglia</i> <i>La sonnambula</i> <i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i>
1876	<i>Mirco e Giani</i>	<i>n.f.</i>	<i>March</i>	<i>L'elisir d'amore</i> <i>Don Pasquale</i>
1881	Francesco Razzani	Giuseppe Grisanti m. c.: Giorgieri	September	Ruy Blas La traviata Rigoletto Poliuto
1882	Pietro Ciscutti	[Riccardo] Bonicioli	September	<i>n.f.</i>
1883	[Ernesto Bellini-Venturini]	[Adolfo Baci]	[Autumn]	[Rosilde di Saluzzo]
1884	Felice Brandini	<i>n.f.</i>	<i>n.f.</i>	<i>n.f.</i>
1885	<i>n.f.</i>	<i>n.f.</i>	May	La campana dell'eremitaggio
1887	<i>n.f.</i>	Giuseppe Grisanti m. c.: Giulio Smareglia	October	Don Sebastiano [<i>announced</i>] La forza del destino Lucia di Lammermoor
1888	<i>n.f.</i>	<i>n.f.</i>	November	Ernani
1889	Ernesto Piacentini-Bellini	Giovanni Guarnieri m. c.: Furian	October	La favorita Rigoletto
1890	(Compagnia lirica di canto Conti) Barlani-Dini	<i>n.f.</i> Giulio Buzenac m. c.: Giulio Smareglia	January November	Don Pasquale Il barbiere di Siviglia Carmen Faust La favorita
1891	Angelo Fantuzzi	Luigi Bernardi	October	Jone Il Guarany Il trovatore Cavalleria rusticana
1892	Ernesto Piacentini-Bellini	m. c.: Giulio Smareglia	October	Ernani Norma
1893	Ernesto Piacentini-Bellini	Antonio Rupnick Osvaldo Zanetti m. c.: Giulio Smareglia	October	Un ballo in maschera L'ebrea [<i>announced</i>] Maria di Rohan Ruy Blas
1894	Delinato Alberto Vernier (Compagnia lirico-coreografica Ansaldo)	Antonio Rupnick Ettore Mariotti Gaetano Cimini m. c.: Bartoli	April September October	Faust Rigoletto Il barbiere di Siviglia Don Pasquale Crispino e la comare Pagliacci
1895	Alberto Vernier	[Enrico Riboldi] Silvio Boscarini	November	Fra Diavolo La traviata Gli Ugonotti
1896	[Alberto Vernier]	<i>n.f.</i>	<i>n.f.</i>	<i>n.f.</i>

Year	Impresario	Maestro concertatore and Chorus master	Start of season	Operas
1898	Cesare Steffenoni (Compagnia lirico-coreografica Ansaldo)	Giuseppe Grisanti n. f.	Lent September	La traviata Lucia di Lammermoor La favorita Rigoletto [<i>announced</i>]
1899	De Fanti [De Santi] Alberto Vernier (Compagnia lirica diretta da Anacleto Tavernari) Ruotolo-Vernier	Pietro de Stermich [di Valcrociata] Augusto Franzoni n. f.	March June September	La bohème Otello Il barbiere di Siviglia La traviata Lucia di Lammermoor La sonnambula
1900	(Compagnia lirica diretta da Anacleto Tavernari) (Compagnia lirico-coreografica Roberto Franciulli)	Augusto Franzoni n. f. Aroldo Chinaglia	May November December	Il barbiere di Siviglia Il barbiere di Siviglia Crispino e la comare Don Pasquale Il carnevale di Venezia Le educande di Sorrento Rigoletto Cavalleria rusticana + Act I Lucia di Lammermoor ⁸³
1901	Giuseppe Corbetta Alessandro Bolzicco	Aroldo Chinaglia m. c.: Giulio Smareglia Aroldo Chinaglia m. c.: Giulio Smareglia Luigi Bernardi m. c.: Carmelo Borri	January March April May November	Ernani Il trovatore Pagliacci o Carmen Lucrezia Borgia La bohème Cavalleria rusticana + Act III La bohème ⁸⁴ Ernani Nabucco Carmen Mignon Rigoletto
1902	Alessandro Bolzicco Alessandro Bolzicco [Ruotolo-Savelli]	Silvio Boscarini Falconi m. c.: Ricci	March October	Cavalleria rusticana Pagliacci Manon Lescaut Faust
1903	Luigi Bernardi Alessandro Bolzicco	Luigi Bernardi m. c.: Lorenzo Cheldonda Giulio Smareglia Gialdino Gialdini	March April October	La bohème Un ballo in maschera Cavalleria rusticana Un ballo in maschera Mignon Ruy Blas [<i>announced</i>]

83 *Cavalleria rusticana* and the first act of *Lucia di Lammermoor* were performed on the same night.

84 *Cavalleria rusticana* and the third act of *La bohème* were performed on the same night.

Year	Impresario	Maestro concertatore and Chorus master	Start of season	Operas
1904	Alessandro Bolzicco	Fortunato Cantoni m. c.: Ricci Raffaele Patucchi	February	Il trovatore
	Vittorio Riva		May	Aida
	Alessandro Bolzicco	Giulio Smareglia	October	Il barbiere di Siviglia La sonnambula Rigoletto La traviata
1905	[Alessandro Bolzicco]	Carlo Maria Smoquina	December	Manon (Massenet) ⁸⁵
1906	Alessandro Bolzicco	Augusto Poggi m. c.: Davide Soffritti Ernesto Guerra	March	Tosca
	n. f. (Compagnia lirica lillipuziana)		May	La Gioconda
		Giulio Smareglia	December	Il barbiere di Siviglia Crispino e la comare La sonnambula La figlia del reggimento L'elisir d'amore La notte di San Silvestro
1907	Giuseppe Borboni	n. f.	March	Pagliacci
	(Compagnia lirica lillipuziana Billaud)	Antonio Guarnieri	April	Sarrona
	(Compagnia lirica lillipuziana)	Ernesto Guerra	May	Cavalleria rusticana Manon ⁸⁶ Lucia di Lammermoor Fra Diavolo
		October	Il barbiere di Siviglia L'elisir d'amore Crispino e la comare Pipelet Carmen	
1908	Alessandro Bolzicco	Felice Feruglio	January	L'amico Fritz
	Alessandro Bolzicco	Gialdino Gialdini	March	Nozze istriane
	Pietro Pedrazzi	Virgilio Ricci m. c.: Alfredo Martinz	November	La favorita Andrea Chénier I Capuleti e i Montecchi
1909	n. f.	Gialdino Gialdini	March	Otello
	n. f.	Gialdino Gialdini m. c.: Alfredo Martinz	December	La Wally
1910	n. f.	Gino Zuccoli	March	Rigoletto
		m. c.: Alfredo Martinz [Gialdino Gialdini]	November	La bohème La bufera Werther
1911	Giuseppe Borboni (Compagnia Beltramo)	Giuseppe Rubino	March	Il barbiere di Siviglia Don Pasquale
		Gaetano Bavagnoli m. c.: Alfredo Martinz e Binetti	October	Il maestro di cappella Mefistofele
1912	Giuseppe Borboni (Compagnia lirica internazionale)	Paolo Bellucci	June	La sonnambula

85 Extra performances.

86 Eight extra performances.

Year	Impresario	Maestro concertatore and Chorus master	Start of season	Operas
1913	Giuseppe Fantoni [owners of the Politeama]	Giuseppe Marrone	April	Tosca Guglielmo Tell Norma
1914	n. f. Umberto Braida	Vertova m. c.: Iustolini n. f.	March [October]	Mignon Carmen [Nozze istriane Abisso]
1916	n. f.	n. f.	October	Don Pasquale
1917	n. f.	n. f.	January	Rigoletto

4.4 The contracts and opera seasons at Rijeka

In the period covered by this study (1861–1918) there were two theatres operating in Rijeka: first the Teatro Adamich and then the Teatro Comunale. Before the birth of the Comunale, the principal season for opera was that of Lent-spring. Typically, 12 evenings were devoted to operetta, 14 to opera seria and 14 to spoken theatre. Since both German and Hungarian operetta companies also visited Rijeka, the theatre was well attended by the German-speaking section of the population, as in Pula.⁸⁷ Every year the opera season of Lent-spring was interrupted for ten consecutive days during the carnival period, when balls were held exclusively.⁸⁸

For its “ambitions, splendour and taste” (*esigenze, lustro e gusto*) the Teatro Adamich was compared to the theatres of Brescia, Pavia, Piacenza and Novara, all cities with a bigger population than Rijeka.⁸⁹ It appears to have been frequented by a very diverse audience, ranging from office employees and soldiers to men from business, banking and the liberal professions, not to mention “shop assistants and demanding pensioners” (*commessi di banco e pensionati esigenti*).⁹⁰ This type of spectator made up the ranks of the season-ticket holders. Judging from the reports in the papers, it was a somewhat unruly audience: noisy, intolerant and easily distracted, with the power of making things difficult for the impresario, for example by zealously booing the singers.⁹¹ A caustic description in the newspaper

87 “Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, 26. 6. 1871.

88 It was claimed that the balls were actually detrimental to the opera season, since the money spent on the dancers came from savings made by the impresario in engaging the singers; “La questione teatrale”, *Il Giornale di Fiume*, 8. 4. 1865, p. 120–21.

89 See “Il nostro Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, 11. 6. 1870.

90 “Il nostro Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, 4. 6. 1870.

91 The lack of discipline was described as follows: “At distinguished theatres, like that of Rijeka, it is in perfectly good taste to enter your box half way through the first act and chatter throughout the performance, keeping silent only in the more dramatic moments, that is if the spectators in the parterre

La Bilancia defined these spectators as entering the fray in swarms, “guided for the most part by a leader who was not openly acknowledged, but tacitly accepted”. This leader, in accord with other spectators, would whistle at (i. e. boo) the singers and thereby insist on their replacement.⁹² This was the type of public with which the impresarios who succeeded one another over the years had to deal.

The newspaper *La Bilancia* became a sort of channel of communications between season-ticket holders and the theatre management. Suggestions from spectators were expressed in its columns: such as which the operas they would like to see programmed,⁹³

should demand silence. In turn the impatient and distracted public of the parterre which usually keeps up a constant chatter, if by any chance it should hear that some dandy in the boxes or gallery venture to gently whisper a few words that might disturb the show, then immediately a hundred voices launch into a prolonged hissing, and sometimes even a salvo of huffing and blustering! [...]” (“Nei teatri distinti, qual è quello di Fiume, è di perfetto buon gusto entrare nei palchi a metà del primo atto, e di chiacchierare per tutto lo spettacolo, tacendo solo nei momenti più drammatici, sempreché lo spettatore di platea imponga silenzio. A sua volta il pubblico insofferente e distratto della platea che di solito si mantiene in continuo cicalio, se per avventura è avvertito che nei palchi o nelle gallerie qualche damerino s’arrischia di sussurrare qualche parola a fior di labbra, che potrebbe turbare lo spettacolo, tosto cento voci fanno sentire un prolungato sibilo, e qualche volta una salva di oh! Di uh! [...]”); “Il nostro Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, 4. 6. 1870.

92 “guidati per lo più da un capo, non dichiarato, ma tacitamente accettato”. The article goes on: “When two or three of these leaders...get it into their heads to whistle at a singer, they had no trouble coming to an agreement with their companions and the outcome is guaranteed. Recent among us is the example that in this way one can whistle at a tenor, only to have to wait twelve days for his replacement, with another of not much greater merit or greater celebrity.” (“Quando due o tre di questi capi... hanno il capriccio di far fischiare un artista, se la intendono di leggeri co’suoi e l’impresa è sicura. Ed è recente fra noi l’esempio, che in questo modo si potè fischiare un tenore per attendere dodici giorni la sua sostituzione, con altro di non molti maggiori meriti, né di maggior fama.”); “Il nostro Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, 4. 6. 1870. The presence of an organised sector of the audience was also noted at Pula, when during a performance of *Un ballo in maschera* in 1893, numerous *claqueurs* annoyed the public with somewhat insistent applause (“Teatralia”, *Il Diritto Croato*, 11. 10. 1893). The same *claque* seems to have been still active ten years later, as attested by the following: “the attempts at applause were launched by the chorus boys sent into parterre and by a *claque* installed in the gallery” (“i tentativi di applauso partivano dai ragazzi dei cori inviati in platea e da una *claque* insediatasi in galleria”); “Politeama Ciscutti”, *Il Giornaleto di Pola*, 11. 3. 1903.

93 An example was when both season-ticket holders and theatre-goers asked the theatre management “to designate Marchetti’s *Ruy Blas* as the fourth opera of the season, especially since it wouldn’t be a bad idea to have a bit of the new among so much of the old.” (“di destinare per la quarta opera della stagione il *Ruy Blas* di Marchetti, tanto più che un po’ di nuovo tra tanto vecchio non istarebbe male.”); “Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, 30. 3. 1872. In the event, they were humoured on this occasion, only later to complain about the programming of the same opera two years later: it was said that the public had reached “satiety”. And so, to forestall the danger of seeing the theatre deserted, the impresa was advised by the journalist of *La Bilancia* to resort to “patchwork nights” (*centoni*), i. e. evenings in which the best parts of the four operas programmed for the season were strung together; “Teatro Civico”, *La Bilan-*

or about the starting time for performances (this also happened in Pula in the *Il Giornal-etto di Pola*). Both season-ticket holders and other patrons of the theatre made a public request for performances to start at 8 pm instead of 7.30: indeed, at 7.30 the theatre was often still empty.⁹⁴ At the same time, there were articles in *La Bilancia* that either encouraged the public to attend performances⁹⁵ or complained about its absence when it didn't go.⁹⁶ If the public attended performances in greater numbers, it was argued, the need for a municipal subsidy would be less pressing. And with the renting of the boxes, the season would be at least partially paid for. Nonetheless, it was thought that even in the worst scenario, the municipality could be called upon to help the season with a subsidy of around a thousand florins. Such a sum, the theatre management believed, would not be refused by the municipal delegation, "as a way of safeguarding the propriety of the stagings" (*a tutela del decoro delle scene*).⁹⁷

4.4.1 Cesare Trevisan in Rijeka

Among the first names we find organising opera seasons in Rijeka in the 1860s is that of the impresario Cesare Trevisan,⁹⁸ whose management eventually turned out to be somewhat controversial. In 1862 he declared his good intentions directly on the posters for the opera season, by proclaiming that he was honoured to be running the theatre and that he would do his best to "deserve the public sympathy" (*meritarsi il pubblico compatimento*). Furthermore, he gave evidence of having recruited some first-rate orchestral players by list-

cia, 8. 5. 1874. In all likelihood the scenery and costumes for *Ruy Blas* came directly from La Fenice in Venice, as they did two years earlier; "Teatro Civico", *La Bilancia*, 6. 5. 1872.

94 "Teatro Civico", *La Bilancia*, 10. 4. 1872.

95 The encouragement was given with statements such as: "we must surely give a word of praise to the impresa, which spares no effort or expense to stage the operas with the greatest possible decorum, and we stress that it would be truly deplorable if our public should not encourage it with a plentiful attendance." ("dobbiamo poi tributare una parola d'encomio all'impresa, che non risparmia fatiche e spese per allestire lo spettacolo col maggior decoro possibile, e asseriamo che sarebbe invero cosa deplorabile che il nostro pubblico non la incoraggiasse con un numeroso concorso."); "Teatro Civico", *La Bilancia*, 2. 3. 1877.

96 As when the following was written: "we like to believe on this occasion there will be no repeat of the painful events that happened on other occasions in similar circumstances: that the reputable theatre public should stand out... for its phenomenal absence!" ("amiamo credere che in tale occasione non si ripeterà il doloroso fatto verificatosi altre volte in circostanze consimili, che il rispettabile pubblico teatrale brilli... per una fenomenale assenza!"); *La Bilancia*, 27. 3. 1877.

97 "Teatro Civico", *La Bilancia*, 3. 12. 1878.

98 On the impresario Cesare Trevisan, see the doctoral dissertation of Elisabeth Probst, in progress at the Institute of Musicology of the Karl-Franzens-Universität of Graz. Trevisan also worked at the theatres of Udine and Trieste in the same years.

ing some of their names: “The orchestra will be made up of the finest musicians in the town and by gentlemen from outside, En. Cagnoni, C. Mirco, Al. Moschini and son, Fr. Lorenz, G. Mixa, En. di Mayer Grego, etc”.⁹⁹ At the time Cagnoni and Mirco were well-known orchestral players who were greatly favoured by many impresarios of the Venice-Trieste-Is-tria/Dalmatia circuit. By publishing their names he therefore made a show of having made a potentially winning choice. In fact the criticisms didn’t arrive until three years later, when he signed a new contract with the theatre (despite the fact that *La Scena* announced that the impresario would be Carlo Gardini).¹⁰⁰

The performance of Bellini’s *I puritani* that Trevisan organised in 1865 was described as “unworthy” (*indegna*) of the stage, especially considering the money he was said to have had at his disposal. The theatre apparently had a subsidy of 8,000 florins, to which were added over 3,000 florins from the season tickets, plus another 4,000 florins from the nightly admissions. In other words, a total 15,000 florins for 30 performances, which was no excuse for a poor production. Trevisan provided artists in large numbers, but, according to his detractors, quantity was no guarantee of quality;¹⁰¹ and the impresario had enough money to ensure a higher standard. In actual fact, the contract signed in that year mentioned an endowment of 7,000 florins, which was not a particularly big sum.¹⁰² It also specified that the choice of singers was left to the impresa, and that the leading roles could be dismissed (*protestati*) either by the management in the course of rehearsals (as was customary) or within three performances if they failed to win the audience’s approval.¹⁰³ As none of the singers in the company seem to have been sacked, we deduce that the opinion mentioned above on their quality could be attributed to the critic writing in the journal. The orchestra was to be constituted “in agreement with the conductor” (*d’accordo col direttore*), who, in the

99 “L’orchestra sarà composta dei migliori professori del paese, e dai forestieri signori En. Cagnoni, C. Mirco, Al. Moschini e figlio, Fr. Lorenz, G. Mixa, En. di Mayer Grego, ecc.”; Programme of the Lent-spring season 1862, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 10.

100 Carlo Gardini, founder of the artistic journal *L’Arpa* in 1853, also worked as an impresario at La Fenice in Venice as well as the Teatro Comunale di Trieste (we find him active in the autumn season of 1868, after having had contacts with Rijeka in the previous years; Filippo Danziger, *Memorie del Teatro Comunale di Trieste dal 1801 al 1876, raccolte da un vecchio teatrofilo*, Stabilimento Grafico Appolonio, Trieste, 1877, p. 99). In 1877 he ran an opera company in Berlin for a season of Italian opera; *Signale für die musikalische Welt*, no. 19, 1877, p. 295. He did the same also in 1889; *Signale für die musikalische Welt*, no. 13, 1889, p. 198.

101 “Teatro Civico”, *Il Giornale di Fiume*, 8. 4. 1865, p. 108.

102 As customary, the contract also indicated when the various instalments of the endowment were to be paid. As for the cautionary deposit, it amounted to 1,000 florins. The prices of admission and season tickets that formed part of the impresario’s revenue were also clearly indicated.

103 We find the same conditions in the subsequent contract with the impresario Carlo Gardini (1867) with the difference that in the latter the names of the singers were precisely indicated, with the exception of one who “was still to be engaged” (*da scritturarsi*).

season concerned, was Giuseppe Alessandro Scaramelli, a musician known to have worked for a time at the Teatro Comunale of Trieste and who was due to conduct at the opening of La Fenice in Venice in the following year.¹⁰⁴

In the pre-contract with Trevisan – the preliminary agreement or *compromesso*; which, we must remember, was a document that preceded the official contract – it was asserted that musicians from the city of Rijeka were to be preferred, a point already stipulated in the tender specifications.¹⁰⁵ Not always, however, was this an effective policy, for it was noted at times that the local musicians were weak and not necessarily up to the task of playing the operas scheduled. In the event of there being an insufficient number of local musicians, from 1867 onwards it was stated, specifically in the contract with Carlo Gardini,¹⁰⁶ that the impresario had the obligation to engage, at most, four orchestral players from outside. As for the chorus the maximum was fixed at two external singers, who would also have the duty of acting as section leaders. As it stood, the clause seemed to benefit the impresario, by imposing a limit to the expenses he would sustain in engaging foreign manpower. The theatre management, which provided the impresario with no other funding except the endowment, did however relieve him from the expense of remunerating the local musicians of the Istituto Filarmonico, which provided five players.¹⁰⁷

Trevisan was under contract to stage five operas (in 1867 the number was reduced to four). While three of the operas were specified in the contract, the fourth and/or fifth were “to be decided” (*da destinarsi*) by common agreement between management and impresario, as was the custom at the time.¹⁰⁸ The number of performances remained fixed at 30 in both contracts (1865 and 1867). As a rule, the number of benefit nights (five or six) and the maximum uninterrupted run of a single opera were also indicated. The season and the titles of the scheduled operas were usually stated at the beginning of the document. As regards

104 Giuseppe Alessandro Scaramelli, violinist, had an active career as *maestro concertatore* and orchestral conductor. He was *maestro* of the municipal band and *direttore tecnico* of the Istituto Filarmonico of Rijeka. He came to the city after working for a long time in Trieste, following the refusal of the Teatro Comunale there to guarantee him a salary and a permanent position; see Filippo Danziger, *Memorie del Teatro Comunale*, p. 90. In 1866 he was engaged by the impresarios Bonola and Brunello to conduct the opening of the Teatro La Fenice in Venice; see “Scritture e disponibilità”, *La Scena*, anno IV, no. 23, 4. 10. 1866, p. 94. On the Scaramelli dynasty, see the interesting chapter Giuseppe Radole, “Gli Scaramelli. Tre generazioni di primi violini direttori d’orchestra”, in *Ricerche sulla vita musicale a Trieste (1750–1950)*, Edizioni Italo Svevo, Trieste 1988, pp. 39–65.

105 Preliminary agreement (*Compromesso*) between the theatre management and Cesare Trevisan, Rijeka, 16. 2. 1865, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

106 Contract between the theatre deputation and Carlo Gardini, Rijeka, 3. 3. 1867, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 9.

107 We thus have clear evidence that in this period the theatre recruited its orchestral players from the city’s Istituto Filarmonico.

108 Contract between the deputation and Cesare Trevisan, Rijeka, 10. 3. 1865, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

the date of the first performance, initially only the month of the beginning of the season might be indicated; the precise date, and the specific opera to open the season, would be fixed at a later stage (it was a matter that would be decided between the *compromesso* and the subsequent, better-defined contract). The *compromesso* with Trevisan consisted of eleven short articles compared to the subsequent 17 more detailed articles of the contract proper.¹⁰⁹ While the *compromesso* refers generally to the season opening in “mid March” (*metà di marzo*), the contract gives both date and inaugural opera: “The first performance will be staged on about 18 March with *Otello*”.¹¹⁰

Next the ballet would be established, as well as the number of ballet performances. The chorus numbers were fixed at twelve males and eight females (numbers that would remain the same in the Gardini contract of 1867), saving the possibility of boosting them for specifically-mentioned operas. A few years later the minimum number of choristers would be increased: the contract with Giovanni Mangiamele in 1870 already calls for 20 male and 10 female choristers. The impresario is also reminded that he would have to shoulder the nightly expenses: a reminder expressed in general terms without detailing the amounts and types of expense. As customary, instructions were also given to guarantee the decorum of the costumes, properties and scenery. The impresa could make use of existing scenery and equipment belonging to the theatre, but would be responsible for any damage. The contract would then have to be submitted to the municipal delegation for approval.¹¹¹

Thanks to the discovery of the contract that the impresario Natale Fabrici concluded with the theatre management of Rijeka back in 1848, we are in a position to make a comparison between the obligations mentioned above and the clauses included in the past. While the earlier contract was certainly more detailed (it had 27 articles), the commitment for the impresario was lighter: only three operas compared to the five that Trevisan had to promise. Accordingly, the endowment, fixed at 3,500 florins, was also lower. No reference, however, was made to a cautionary deposit. Another difference was that in the earlier contract the city magistrate of Rijeka specified the name and surname of the orchestral conductor, thereby avoiding last-minute surprises.¹¹² The impresario would have to procure as many external orchestral players as were lacking in the city, in consideration of the fact that the military

109 The number of articles in the contracts increased over the years, as did that of the tender specifications. While the contract with Cesare Trevisan has 17 articles, already that of two years later with Carlo Gardini has 24 articles that specify in greater detail what was required of the impresario.

110 “La prima rappresentazione anderà in scena al 18 circa di marzo coll’*Otello*”; Art. 2, Contract between the theatre management and Cesare Trevisan, Rijeka, 10. 3. 1865, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

111 Register of documents (*Protocollo degli esibiti*) (1885–1910), Rijeka, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 10.

112 Here we have the proof that Scaramelli had already worked at the Teatro Adamich almost twenty years previously. It was clearly stated that “the orchestra will have to be conducted by that excellent musician Alessandro Scaramelli of Trieste.” (“L’orchestra dovrà essere diretta dal bravo professore sig. Alessandro

band would not be available that year.¹¹³ Once again, this attests the city's dependence on centres like Trieste for the recruitment of its musicians.

4.4.2 Mangiamele, Ubaldi and the inadequacy of the endowment

Cesare Trevisan was reported as having been reconfirmed as impresario in Rijeka for the year 1870,¹¹⁴ but in actual fact the contract was won by the impresario Giovanni Mangiamele, who secured an endowment of 12,000 florins, a sum that included the money granted by the municipal treasury. The amount was considered “huge” (*ingente*) in Rijeka's *La Bilancia*.¹¹⁵ One assumes it was Mangiamele himself who directly replied to this comment, expressing his grievances in a newspaper article and supporting them with a few financial calculations. Without mincing his words, the impresario begins by deploring the fact that Rijeka had neither an elementary music school nor a municipal band, and was hence a city “without a history” (*senza storia*), a city that could certainly devote itself to trade and make money, but would be incapable of talking about theatre and music: a sure sign of the “decline of the population” (*regresso della popolazione*).¹¹⁶ What followed is a long – and for us extremely useful – outline of the expenses, leaving out costs of the principal singers. By producing this list he tried to demonstrate that the endowment is not only not “huge”, but even inadequate.

He started with the secondary singers (*comprimari*), which cost 1,200 francs. As regards the chorus, considering the type of theatre in which the season was to be organised, it was necessary to have at least 42 singers, 30 men and 12 women: numbers that could be reduced to 24 and 10 respectively, if one really wanted to economise. An interesting thing mentioned by Mangiamele is that only a few of these singers could read music; the rest would

Scaramelli di Trieste.”); Contract between the magistrate of Rijeka and the impresario Natale Fabrici, Rijeka, II. 3. 1848, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 8.

113 Contract between the magistrate of Rijeka and the impresario Natale Fabrici, Rijeka, II. 3. 1848, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 8. This contract followed an agreement between the impresario and the assistant police officer Enrico Dall'Asta.

114 The report was in *Il Palcoscenico* on 7. 2. 1870. On the other hand, the journalist writing on theatrical affairs in Rijeka's *La Bilancia* was convinced that the real impresario would be neither Trevisan nor Mangiamele but “the usual impresario of the previous years known to everybody and above all to the city treasury.” (“il solito impresario degli anni scorsi che tutti conoscono e più di tutti la cassa civica.”); “Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, 12. 2. 1870.

115 In addition to this assessment (which amounted to an a priori judgement of the impresario responsible for managing the endowment), the article in the paper also complained of alleged irregularities in the financial management of the former theatre management, which had been entirely left in the hands of its president; “Il nostro Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, II. 6. 1870.

116 “Il nostro Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, II. 6. 1870.

even be illiterate.¹¹⁷ It is worth remembering that we are here dealing with a territory in which, according to the last Austrian census of 1910, as many as 62.8% of the inhabitants over the age of ten could neither read nor write. The phenomenon was less marked around the islands and along the coast (42%), and more pronounced in the hinterland, in towns such as Bencovaz (81%) and Tenin (84%). 63.7% of the illiterate would be of Slavic origin, 17.4% of Italian. In the years in which Mangiamele was operating, these percentages could have been even higher.¹¹⁸ If one were to use the singers from the town, one would have to calculate around 100 lire per head, amounting to 3,400 lire/francs for the whole season:¹¹⁹ a pay much lower than what would be required to have a good choral group. Regarding the orchestra, we learn that it lacked at least four violins, a first clarinet, a bassoon, a first trumpet, two double basses, an oboe and a double horn, as well as the conductor. The orchestra would need 40 players, each paid 120 lire, which would bring the total to 4,800 lire. For the conductor one should calculate at least 1,000 lire.¹²⁰

As regards the music, the scores of three repertoire operas could be had for 450 francs, whereas a new score (Mangiamele used the examples of *L'afriicana* or *Don Carlo*) would cost as much as 2,500 francs: hence a substantial difference.¹²¹ The costumes would call for another 2,000 francs. If scenery was not available, and this was certainly the case at the Teatro Adamich, another 600 lire would have to be added, in addition to ca. 500 lire for properties. A further 500 would have to be given to the prompter and chorus master, who would have to be two distinct people and not just one (the jobs would sometimes

117 “The last chorus numbered 18 choristers, who did more than was humanly possible, overburdened with rehearsals as they were, and were paid so badly that they got at most 20 cents per evening engaged. Only six of these could read music a little, the others all sang by ear, and what makes it easier to employ their services is that they can't even read the alphabet. If one wishes to be exacting, one has to pay.” (“Gli ultimi coristi erano 18, i quali fecero di più di quanto umanamente potevano sopra caricati da prove, pagati sì male, che il massimo ottennero 20 spiccioli per sera impiegata. Soli sei di questi conoscono qualche poco la musica, gli altri sono tutti orecchianti, e ciò che rende più facile il loro servizio si è che non sanno leggere nemmeno l'alfabeto. Per essere esigenti è duopo pagare.”); “Il nostro Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, 11. 6. 1870.

118 Antonio Renato Toniolo – Umberto Nani, “Dalmazia” in *Enciclopedia Treccani*: http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/dalmazia_%28Enciclopedia-Italiana%29/ [accessed 14. 4. 2020].

119 The terms *lire* and *franchi* are used almost interchangeably here. In fact “1 lire = 1 franc” was the exchange rate also according to Adolph Lehmann, *Allgemeiner Wohnungs-Anzeiger*, Wien 1914, p. 12. I thank Professor Michael Walter for this information.

120 “Il nostro Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, 11. 6. 1870.

121 “and if one aims to have *Il profeta* 1,500 lire would not be enough; and acknowledging the distortion that the musical publishers Ricordi, Lucca and Strada exist only for the pomp and splendour of Italian music, I will limit the overall cost for four scores to 1,300 lire.” (“e se si prefigge il *Profeta* non basterebbero lire 1,500; ed ammettendo io la stortura che gli stabilimenti musicali Ricordi, Lucca, e Strada esistono per sola pompa e lustro della musica italiana, limiterò la complessiva spesa pei quattro spartiti a lire 1,300.”); “Il nostro Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, 25. 6. 1870.

be combined to economise). The list went on with 500 lire for the chief machinist (who would have to be brought in from outside because Rijeka had no one), 150 lire for “Madame Police, for it to smile, watch and keep quiet”,¹²² 200 lire for the printer. Also required was a sum for the prima donna’s carriage (*calesse*), without which “her artistic susceptibility would be offended” (*ne andrebbe offesa la suscettibilità artistica*), amounting to more than 200 lire (on the evidence of what was spent in the previous season), and 2,000 florins for gas lighting. To all of this one would have to add the expenditure for the theatre staff, which Mangiamele, with forbearance and a touch of disdain, called the “throng that is poorly paid and duly renders a poor service” (*turba che meschinamente pagata, rende essa pure meschino servizio*):

Entrance staff (*Controllo*) lire 60. Firemen lire 75. Six doormen lire 220. Ticket distribution lire 80. Five in wardrobe department for both sexes 220. Thirty extras lire 230. Cleaner post-performance l. 20. Two stagehands l. 30. *Patinista* l. 15 The stage manager l. 60. The orchestra attendant l. 40. The callboy l. 40. The custodian l. 40. The gas technician l. 20. The heating technician l. 15. Two assistant machinists l. 30. Workers at the scenes, at the grid (*Facchinaggio alle tele, alla soffitta*) l. 140. Cost of oil for the gridding l. 40. Another l. 240 for many candles to be distributed every night to the first actress, two to each artist, half to each chorister, and eight to the royal box, etc.¹²³

All of the expenses were calculated for a season of sixty days. From the resulting table it is very clear that an endowment of 12,000 florins would be completely inadequate. If we were to add up everything he listed, the total would come to 44,165 lire (or in 1870 about 22,082.50 florins; or, even assuming the exchange to be 1 lira = 0.40 florins, 17,666 florins):

122 “madama forza pubblica, perché sorrida, guardi e taccia”; “Il nostro Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, 25. 6. 1870.

123 “Controllo lire 60. Pompieri lire 75. Sei portinai lire 220. Dispensa biglietti lire 80. Cinque sarti per ambo i sessi 220. Trenta comparse lire 230. Domestica alla ritirata l. 20. Due servi di scena l. 30. *Patinista* l. 15 Il detto butta-fuori l. 60. Il servo d’orchestra l. 40. L’avvisatore l. 40. Il custode l. 40. L’insergente al gas l. 20. L’accenditore l. 15. Due macchinisti di sussidio l. 30. *Facchinaggio alle tele, alla soffitta* l. 140. Acquisto olio per la soffitta l. 40. Altre l. 240 per tante candelle [*sic*] da somministrarsi ogni sera alla prima attrice, due ad ogni artista, mezza per ogni corista, ed otto al palco regio, ecc.” To these expenses were added “the expense for the offstage musicians which, for the sake of economy, I will restrict to just one opera, and I would also like to conjecture that the audience will be tolerant to all the company of artists and that there should be no need to replace anyone, in which case the impresario would have to pay up in person” (“la spesa del corpo di musica fra le quinte che per economia restringerò ad una sola opera e voglio altresì ammettere l’ipotesi che il pubblico sia per fare buon viso a tutto il corpo degli artisti, e non si riscontri il bisogno di rimpiazzare alcuno, nel qual caso dovrebbe l’impresa rimettere del proprio”); “Il nostro Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, 25. 6. 1870.

in any case much higher than what was offered with the endowment.¹²⁴ Yet if we summarise the costs in a table, the result would be something like this:

Expenses for a season of 60 days (calculated for 1870)	cost		
comprimari singers	1,200 francs	firemen	75 lire
choristers	3,400 lire	6 doorkeepers	220 lire
orchestral players	4,800 lire	ticket distribution	80 lire
conductor	1,000 lire	5 wardrobe staff	220 lire
three repertoire operas	450 francs	30 extras	230 lire
new opera score	2,500 francs	cleaner	20 lire
costumes	2,000 francs	2 stage hands	30 lire
scenery	600 lire	<i>patinista</i>	15 lire
properties	500 lire	stage manager	60 lire
prompter	500 lire	orchestra attendant	40 lire
chorus master	500 lire	callboy	40 lire
chief machinist	500 lire	custodian	40 lire
police	150 lire	gas technician	20 lire
printer	200 lire	heating technician	15 lire
prima donna's coach	200 lire	2 assistant machinists	30 lire
gas for lighting	2,000 florins (= ca. 5,000 lire)	scene shifters	140 lire
entrance staff	60 lire	cost of oil for the attic space	40 lire
		candles	240 lire
		Total	24,795 lire

The difference between the total given by the impresario (44,165 lire) and the expenses set out above in the table is 19,370 lire, so we must assume that this higher total would also include the fees for the principal singers (always the biggest item in the budget of an opera season), the stage band and perhaps also the cost of heating (not indicated). In spite of this public denunciation of the real state of affairs, with its accompanying detailed expenditure list, the following year the contract was given – with an unchanged endowment of 12,000 florins – to the impresario Giovanni Ubaldi, a man who was not new to the theatre in Rijeka, given that he had already run the 1864 season. Making the costs public had been to no purpose: the city council either would not, or could not, take action.

Concerning Ubaldi the newspapers relate an unpleasant incident that was most likely connected precisely to the inadequacy of the endowment, given that in 1864 the funds came to as little as 6,000 florins, just half of what Mangiamiele had been given. In fact it transpires that the impresario was unable to pay the last *quartale* to the company engaged in a production of *Faust*. When, considering the circumstances, the singers refused to perform without any guarantee of being paid, the theatre management entreated them

¹²⁴ “Il nostro Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, 25. 6. 1870.

to see the season through to its conclusion: they would receive moral support and a possible mediation to ensure that their efforts were rewarded. The singers, however, asked for something more solid. In response to which, they were summoned to the magistrate's office where they were ordered to perform as usual as per contract, under pain of being literally led to the theatre by force.¹²⁵ And this is precisely what happened: the men were escorted by guards, the women by an usher. What happened later confirms to us that in this period singers still risked going to jail if they failed to fulfil their obligations. At the beginning of the performance the entire cast went to the front of the stage while a certain Contadini, a bass, explained about how they had not been paid and submitted the matter to the judgement of the public. The audience's reaction was to protest against the management and leave the theatre. The singers were taken off to prison, though freed immediately afterwards.¹²⁶ Unfortunately we do not know how things turned out for Ubaldi, for the sources are silent on the matter. What is certain is that the main issue was once again a lack of money: it had spoiled the season and placed both artists and impresario in a very uncomfortable position.

4.4.3 The 1870s and the new three-year contract

Just a few years later, the problems Ubaldi encountered would still appear to be unresolved. In its 1871 season the theatre management found it necessary to reject the whole wardrobe for *Gli Ugonotti* provided by the Pirola costume workshop in Milan, believing that the costumes, especially those for the choruses, were undignified. Pirola was thus forced to supply a whole new wardrobe at its own expense.¹²⁷ In 1872 the theatre contracted out the season to an impresa from Rijeka, inviting it to make a fresh proposal for a season in the following year as well. At the same time the theatre had received another application from Cesare Trevisan,¹²⁸ who was indeed to return to the city, but only a few years later. There was also a year when the conductor Alessandro Bartoli, together with a few orchestral players, made a bid to run the theatre for a season of opera buffa, but they failed to make any mention of the cautionary deposit to be left as a guarantee for the city council. For this reason their request was not taken into consideration.¹²⁹

125 *Il Diavoletto*, anno XVII, no. 101, 30. 4. 1864, p. 403.

126 *Il Diavoletto*, anno XVII, no. 101, 30. 4. 1864, p. 403.

127 "Teatro Civico", *La Bilancia*, 16. 5. 1871.

128 "Teatro Civico", *La Bilancia*, 24. 1. 1873.

129 "Il Teatro", *La Bilancia*, 8. 1. 1875. Bartoli most likely was building on the recent experience of running a season abandoned by the Cajani impresa, which (in turn) had stepped in when Trevisan had walked out.

It was only in 1875 that a three-year concession was approved by the theatre management and accepted by the municipal council. This time there was no mention in the tender specifications of any subsidy from the city council. The impresario would therefore have to sustain himself with the income from the public.¹³⁰ While some believed that the municipality should not be expected to cover the theatre's expenses, given that only the more affluent sectors of the population enjoyed its benefits, others instead – convinced that the theatre was not only attended by the wealthy – loudly clamoured for the council to contribute as a matter of principle. Most of the cities that had stopped giving their theatres endowments were those of the big urban centres, where large audiences could be guaranteed. Very different was the situation of a small town where the audience was unvaried and even the most skilled impresario could hardly hope to earn more than a few thousand florins. Before the end of the century Rijeka had a population of around 10,000.¹³¹ Comparisons were made with nearby Trieste, a city with ten times the population in the 1870s: 100,000 inhabitants, including a large contingent of foreigners that visited every year. The comparison was not limited to the Teatro Comunale, but also extended to various private theatres in that city where the seasons were satisfactorily subsidised.¹³²

In the tender specifications for this year, the choice of operas was now imposed on the impresario, as was the period in which they were to be given. The impresario was also forbidden to change the price of admission, nor was he allowed to give any other performances than those scheduled; in other words, no additional nights from which to draw a further profit. A reasonable increase in the entrance prices would have been seen not only as timely, but also fair, since the current prices were considered to be low.¹³³ The maximum earnings

130 As an article put it, "Once the endowment for the theatre has been removed, the theatre enterprises find themselves face to face with the public, which ends up by being their sole supporter. In this way the interests of the former are interconnected with those of the latter, and vice versa, the interests of the public are interconnected with those of the enterprises. [...] If the impresa offers good productions, the public responds by coming in large numbers to support its efforts: hence, money for the theatre's coffers. If the impresa offers substandard productions, the public stops going to the theatre, and the coffers suffer conspicuously." ("Una volta che si è levata la dotazione al teatro le imprese si trovano di fronte al pubblico, il quale va a diventare il loro solo ed unico sostenitore; gl'interessi delle prime si collegano per tal modo, cogli interessi del secondo e viceversa gli interessi del pubblico si collegano cogli interessi delle imprese. [...] Offre l'impresa buoni spettacoli, il pubblico vi corrisponde all'accorrere numeroso a sostenere gli sforzi della medesima: quindi lucro per la cassetta teatrale; offre l'impresa spettacoli scadenti il pubblico si astiene dal frequentare il teatro e la cassetta sensibilmente ne soffre."); "Da Fiume", *Il Teatro*, anno IX, no. 240, 12. 9. 1875, p. 2–3.

131 See the table in the opening section of this book: *Theatres and the management of opera in Istria and Dalmatia: the project*.

132 "with a tidy sum" (*con una bella somma*), according to the article in "Teatro Civico", *La Bilancia*, 2. 6. 1875.

133 "In few large cities, where the needs of the public are as strong as they are here, is the admission price to theatrical performances, especially musical spectacles, as low as it is in Rijeka." ("In poche città

to be had from the renting of boxes would be 12,000 florins; the other receipts of the opera season, including the sale of season-tickets,¹³⁴ could be around 8,000 florins (those for spoken theatre 6,000 florins); the proceeds from balls could amount to 1,500 florins; and those from the rentable spaces, about 2,000 florins. In all, the total would come to 29,500 florins. The expenditure, however, would be higher: just for the Lent and spring opera season it would be no less than 20,000 florins;¹³⁵ that for spoken theatre with a distinguished cast, 9,000 florins; so in all 29,000 florins. Hence almost as much as the income. But in addition, one needed to consider the cautionary deposit, amounting to 4,000 florins, to which one should add a further 4,500 florins to pay the first *quartale*, and another 4,500 florins for the second *quartale*, due only a few days after the beginning of the season.

The same calculation could be made in lire, given that these sums could be expressed in two different currencies at the time. The cautionary deposit the impresario was obliged to advance was fixed at 10,000 lire (equal to 4,000 florins in 1875), in addition to the previous bid deposit (*vadio*) of 1,000. Considering the income from the theatre (which, by its very nature, was uncertain), this was a large sum. An impresario wishing to work at Rijeka would have to be provided with 10,000 lire for the deposit and a further 10,000 for the expenses needed to open the Lent-spring season: 20,000 in all. Even if one deducted the ca. 4,000 lire one could earn from the carnival balls (1,500 florins, as noted above), there would still be 16,000 lire to pay out. It was not easy to find an impresario who was either able or willing to advance such sums. From a financial point of view, the *piazza* of Rijeka was considered to be – at least in 1875 – “ruined” (*rovinata*). Business with impresarios was not going well. For how could one expect an impresario to take on the risk of running a theatre where the obligations were onerous and the profits limited and uncertain? The management required the *impresa* to provide not only an opera season costing at least 70,000 lire, but also provide a company “of the first-rank” (*di primissimo rango*) costing between 19,000 and 21,000 lire, for 40 performances in all. All things considered, the theatre would be hard pressed to find someone willing to do the job.¹³⁶ Besides, the impresarios knew very well that Rijeka had neither a chorus nor a permanent orchestra, meaning that musicians would have to be hired externally. With such premises it is hardly surprising that, on 30 September 1875, only

maggiori, dove le esigenze del pubblico sono tanto forti quanto presso di noi, il prezzo di ingresso alle rappresentazioni teatrali, in particolare agli spettacoli di musica, è tanto basso quanto a Fiume.”). The observation was made in “Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, 3. 6. 1875.

134 At Rijeka in 1879 the contract fixed the season-ticket prices at three-fifths of the nightly ticket price all together; “Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, 5. 3. 1879.

135 According to an estimate in “Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, 1. 6. 1875, one needed between 18,000 and 24,000 florins to organise an opera season. A “middling opera season” (*stagione d’opera discreta*), on the other hand, would cost between 12,000 and 14,000 florins; “Redditi del Teatro Civico di Fiume”, *La Bilancia*, 11. 8. 1875. In 1875, 25,500 florins was the equivalent of 63,750 lire.

136 “Da Fiume”, *Il Teatro*, anno IX, no. 239, 12. 8. 1875, p. 3.

one competitor answered the call for tenders published by the theatre. “The future impresario of the Teatro Civico of Rijeka”, it was wearily remarked in the press, “either was never in possession of his mental faculties or has lost them”, given that he would have to accept conditions that would a priori ruin him.¹³⁷ In spite of all this, the three-year contract was assigned to the impresarios Stancich and Micheluzzi, both citizens of Rijeka, who would clearly have to roll up their sleeves.¹³⁸

The season-ticket holders were now asking to have more new operas, and fewer of the over-familiar works such as *Norma*, which did not give the hoped-for success. Their request was clearly satisfied, for already in 1877 as many as two new operas were given: *Il Conte Verde* by Giuseppe Libani and *Alda* by Lionello Ventura.¹³⁹ It was the custom to send the boxholders a printed circular detailing the programme of the operas to be staged in the current year. This programme could, however, be subject to sudden change and an opera could be rescheduled even from one day to the next, as happened in the case of Libani’s *Il Conte Verde*, which was postponed by a few days.¹⁴⁰ What Stancich and Micheluzzi were obliged to do was to stage the customary four operas and give an overall total of 30 performances. Of the four *opere serie*, two were to have dance numbers. The forces needed were 40 orchestral players, 40 choristers, a children’s chorus of 12, a ballet corps of female dancers and a stage band.¹⁴¹ In this year (1877) Rijeka hosted an exceptional series of operas, for not only was the operetta season replaced by opera buffa, when the company of Luigi Becherini was invited to the city (five years later he would go to Šibenik), but also an extra opera season was given in October, conducted by the celebrated Luigi Ricci.

In the seasons in which he worked in Rijeka, Ricci collaborated both with Stancich and Micheluzzi and with Giovanni Miazzi, an impresario who some years earlier had come to the public’s attention by planning to set up a warehouse in the city for pianos and harmoniums imported from Vienna.¹⁴² Miazzi proposed repertoire operas, but also two works by

137 “Il futuro impresario del teatro Civico di Fiume o non è stato mai in possesso delle facoltà mentali o le ha perdute”; “Da Fiume”, *Il Teatro*, anno IX, no. 241, 5. 10. 1875, p. 4.

138 Giovanni Stancich worked as a machinist at the Teatro Comunale of Trieste; *Verballi del Consiglio della Città di Trieste*, Tipografia del Lloyd austro-ungarico, Trieste, 1877, p. 268.

139 Both composers attended performances at the theatre. In the case of *Alda* Venturi himself directed the staging. As it turns out, this opera was not exactly a novelty; it was new only for Rijeka, for it had been heard eight years previously at the Comunale of Trieste; “Cronaca Locale. Teatro Comunale”, *Il Teatro*, III, no. 27, 30. 9. 1869, p. 107. On the background to the composer’s payment of 3,000 francs to the impresario Luigi Scalaberni to have his opera staged at the Teatro Comunale of Bologna, see Carlo Matteo Mossav, “Una ‘messa’ per la storia”, in *Messa per Rossini: la storia, il testo, la musica*, edited by Michele Girardi and Pierluigi Petrobelli, Quaderni dell’Istituto di Studi Verdiani, V (1988), p. 51.

140 The opera came to Rijeka after being already staged in 17 theatres in Italy.

141 It is worth considering that there hadn’t been a wind band in the city for over ten years, so even in this case the musicians would have to be recruited externally.

142 “Pianoforti”, *L’Euterpe*, no. 48, 2 December 1870, p. 3.

Petrella that were both included in the Lent-spring season 1879: *I promessi sposi* and *Le precauzioni*.¹⁴³ However it was in the repertoire opera that the impresario and conductor got into trouble. The newspapers talked about “an extraordinary deficiency of the orchestra” (*straordinario difetto dell’orchestra*), all attributable to the impresa. For instead of resorting to external players, as former impresarios had done, “in a generous spirit” (*con animo generoso*) – it was commented ironically – he had promoted a number of local musicians from secondary positions to principal ones, “for reasons that we would like to believe were purely patriotic” (*per viste che vogliamo credere puramente patriottiche*). The promotions were evidently premature. The theatre management, which had already nurtured doubts about forming an orchestra in this manner, had questioned Ricci himself, who however gave reassurances on the matter. But the results did not meet Ricci’s expectations.¹⁴⁴ Even in the following season attempts were made to form both orchestra and choruses with local musicians (as indeed specified in the tender specifications), but the steps taken by the impresario Cesare Trevisan to implement this policy came to nothing, because this time the musicians of Rijeka rejected the conditions he proposed. Trevisan was thus forced to engage the entire orchestra and most of the chorus externally (only seven local singers accepted his offer): a solution that most likely met with the approval of the theatre management.¹⁴⁵

These were the last years of the Teatro Adamich’s existence. We have reports of a final opera season brought to the city at the Teatro Fenice in 1882, after which the Teatro Adamich was demolished.¹⁴⁶

4.4.4 The inauguration of the new Teatro Comunale; famous names at Rijeka

With the new Teatro Comunale, one conspicuous difference in the way the seasons were run is that operas began to be performed also in the autumn season. Although opera was not necessarily given every year in both seasons (spring and autumn), this option was nonetheless available. In fact the management of the new theatre would have preferred to do opera in the autumn and instead give performances of operetta and spoken theatre in the spring. For it was in the spring that most Italian theatres programmed their opera seasons, mean-

143 *Il carnevale di Venezia* ossia *Le precauzioni* is the complete title of the three-act opera buffa by Errico Petrella first performed in 1851.

144 “Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, 10. 3. 1879.

145 “Impresa Trevisan”, *La Bilancia*, 25. 11. 1879. Trevisan, who was returning to Rijeka after innumerable seasons spent there, was by then considered to be an expert impresario, given that he had been in the business for almost twenty years and had worked at various theatres, including La Pergola in Florence.

146 The Teatro Adamich hosted opera until 1883 and was then demolished; Lovorka Ruck, *Operni život u Rijeci*, p. 184.

ing that costs were higher and it was more difficult to secure the good singers. Moreover, at Rijeka many plays were staged in private theatres during the summertime, so by the end of the season audiences would have had enough and, for variety, be more inclined to listen to opera in the months that followed.¹⁴⁷ In spite of these considerations, the evidence points to the presence of opera seasons in both spring and autumn: a sign of the good fortune to have the resources – or courage – to organise both.

As was to be expected, the new theatre was inaugurated in grand style with two ‘grand operas’: *Aida* and *La Gioconda*. And for the occasion the conductor invited was Gaetano Cimini,¹⁴⁸ a man who was not new to audiences in Rijeka and who would return to the city some ten years later for further seasons. During the preparatory stages, it was soon understood that the cost of performing the two operas would depend principally on the quality of the cast: if given with “celebrity artists” (*artisti celebri*), it would be 52,000 florins; if given with “distinguished artists” (*artisti distinti*), about 42,000. Taking into account the prices of admission and the boxes, calculating average receipts per performance of 500 florins, and assuming the rental of four fifths of all the boxes, a reliable estimate of the overall income for the whole season would be 16,000 florins. This would have meant applying to the municipal treasury for a subsidy of 36,000 florins (or 26,000 at the very least). Given that the city would not agree to expenditure of this order, alternative plans were put forward.

If, instead, one should stage *Aida* with 16 ballerinas and the repertoire opera *Ernani* with “distinguished artists” (in other words, not using “celebrities”, but cheaper singers), an orchestra of 50 and an overall chorus of 56, the total expenditure would come to 30,000 florins. For two repertoire operas with ballet and the same number of orchestral and choral forces, the cost would again be 30,000 florins. If, as a further hypothesis, it was decided to give only repertoire operas such as for example *Faust* and *La favorita*, the expense would drop to 27,000 florins. And finally, should one consider giving *Faust*, *Rigoletto* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*, while at the same time reducing the orchestral and choral forces and making use of the scenery already possessed by the theatre, the expense would diminish further to about 25,000 florins. To summarise, assuming that the theatre’s income was 16,000 florins (as conjectured above), the municipal subsidy would have to be as follows: 14,000 florins for a project with *Aida* and *Ernani* or for two repertoire operas with ballet; 11,000 florins for *Faust* and *La favorita* with ballet; or 9,000 florins for *Faust*, *Rigoletto* and *Lucia di Lammermoor* with reduced orchestra and choruses and using the theatre’s scenery. The table below presents the various options for the 1885 opera season:

¹⁴⁷ See Letter from the theatre management of Rijeka to the municipal government, Rijeka, 30. II. 1885, HR-DARI, Archival collection of the municipality.

¹⁴⁸ On Cimini, see the biographical entry in Carlo Schmidl, *Dizionario universale dei musicisti*, Sonzogno, Milano 1937, p. 346.

Options for the 1885 opera season	Budget	Theatre's income	Required subsidy
<i>Aida, Gioconda</i>	52,000 f.	16,000 f.	36,000 f.
	42,000 f.	16,000 f.	26,000 f.
<i>Aida, Ernani</i>	30,000 f.	16,000 f.	14,000 f.
2 repertoire operas with ballet	30,000 f.	16,000 f.	14,000 f.
<i>Faust, La favorita</i>	27,000 f.	16,000 f.	11,000 f.
<i>Faust, Rigoletto, Lucia di Lammermoor</i>	25,000 f.	16,000 f.	9,000 f.

By offering *Aida* with the ballet, the theatre management reckoned it could count on an income of 16,000 florins (because it would attract a good audience), whereas the same could not be guaranteed if only repertoire operas (already heard by most of the audience) were given. It was not implausible, therefore, that an inferior production might turn out to be only slightly less expensive, just as expensive, or even more expensive for the municipal treasury than a higher-quality production. For the choice of project, the theatre management deferred to the wishes of the municipality. But it nonetheless pointed out that the opening of a theatre would be “a solemnity that endures through the centuries, constituting a baptism and leaving a perennial memory”,¹⁴⁹ and that responsibility for the future of the newborn building would rest on this baptism. The theatre management should run the season on behalf of the municipality. And though it could, as customary, entrust the project to an impresario (against a congruous deposit), it doubted that it would ever find one able to shoulder the burden of the inauguration, since every impresario would want to know the precise nightly expenditure or staff costs or lighting expenses: information that the management was unable to provide. Moreover, the search for a suitable impresario would take too long if the intention was to hold the inauguration in October 1885. And if the beginning of the season were postponed, the costs would increase the closer one got to the carnival season – notoriously the season preferred by the first-rank theatres for organising opera – thereby putting the city council in genuine difficulty. Entrusting the productions to an *impresa* would generate uncertainty about the income and expenses of the season, which the theatre management wished to avoid, so it proposed to run the events on its own, well aware of the countless problems this would entail.¹⁵⁰ The *podestà* (mayor), on his part, opted for the project comprising *Aida* and *Ernani*, while at the same time expressing the hope that *Ernani* could be replaced with a score that was new to Rijeka. It was finally agreed that the endowment would

149 “una solennità che passa attraverso i secoli, ne lascia battesimo e memoria perenne”; Letter from the theatre management of Rijeka to the municipal delegation, Rijeka, 17. 6. 1885, HR-DARI, Archival collection of the municipality.

150 See Letter from the theatre management of Rijeka to the municipal delegation, Rijeka, 17. 6. 1885, HR-DARI, Archival collection of the municipality.

amount to 14,000 florins.¹⁵¹ Concerning *Ernani* there was, in fact, a change of plan, for the theatre management concluded that any repertoire opera staged after *Aida* could not hope to stand comparison (in terms of audience attention) and would therefore jeopardise the success of the season.

In the end it was agreed to contract out the running of the theatre and give the responsibility for the season to the impresario Luigi Cesari.¹⁵² In due course, however, things started to go wrong and the theatre management terminated the contract for a failure to respect the tender specifications. While there was apparently no objection to the choice of soprano, a certain Medea Borelli, among the other singers the mezzo-soprano Güttemberg was dismissed (*protestata*), and the same fate befell the baritone Guglielmo Caruson. Indeed the theatre's season-ticket holders objected not only to Caruson, but also to the bass Curti, forcing the impresario Cesari to replace them with the baritone Dufriche and the bass Roveri.¹⁵³ In the meantime, in the very same year, though this time in the perhaps less turbulent milieu of operetta, two German operetta companies – those of Alfred Freund and Albert Schiller – made a first appearance in Rijeka, both offering their services.¹⁵⁴

After this stormy rebirth of the theatre, a three-year contract (for 1887–1890) was assigned to Augusto Rossegger, an impresario who had previously worked at the Teatro Comunale and the Filodrammatico in Trieste,¹⁵⁵ and who now appointed none other than Pietro Ciscutti from Pula to act as his proxy. In the meantime, De Domini, Prodam, Gelletich, Scarpa and *maestro* Adolfo Cimadori were appointed directors of the theatre. They would grant an endowment of 8,050 florins to the next impresario, Francesco Sciutti d'Arrigo, to run both the opera season and that of spoken drama.¹⁵⁶

In the same years, Ferdinand Strakosch, brother of the better-known Maurice Strakosch, Adelina Patti's impresario, was operating at no great distance. While Rossegger was working in Rijeka, Strakosch ran the Lent-spring seasons of 1887–88 and 1888–89 at the Comunale of Trieste. He arrived in Rijeka in 1893, while at the same time remaining active in Trieste.¹⁵⁷

151 See Letter from the theatre management of Rijeka to the municipal delegation, Rijeka, 25. 6. 1885, HR-DARI, Archival collection of the municipality.

152 Luigi Cesari was an orchestral player before becoming an impresario of important theatres, including the Teatro Comunale of Bologna and La Fenice in Venice (where he ran the 1898–1899 season); *Musica d'oggi*, Ricordi, Milano 1921, p. 222.

153 Register of documents (*Protocollo degli esibiti*) (1885–1910), Rijeka, anno 1885, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 10.

154 Freund was to contact the management of the theatre in Rijeka again ten years later, in 1895.

155 *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, LXII, 1887, p. 42. Among other things, Rossegger also managed comic operetta companies, such as that of Giovanni Gargano. When he retired from the theatrical world, he became an accountant in the Milan branch of the Adriatica insurance company.

156 The sum was apportioned as follows: 5,050 florins for comic operetta and possibly also *opera semiseria e giocosa*; 3,000 florins for spoken theatre.

157 *Signale für die musikalische Welt*, no. 45, 1892, p. 711.

His stay was brief because already in March 1894 he rescinded the contract with the theatre management stating that he could no longer fulfil its commitments.¹⁵⁸ He was immediately succeeded by the Camber impresa for the spring opera season. In line with the tendency whereby impresarios, once they set foot in the area (or even before they arrived, i. e. as soon as they knew they were due to work in Istria or Dalmatia), tried to contact other *piazze* and travel southwards, Strakosch also made the effort to reach Zadar, but withdrew after learning that the profits at that theatre would be low: “In Rijeka I heard much praise for the *piazza* of Zadar and the Teatro Nuovo, yet now”, Strakosch wrote to their management, “I receive a letter from signor Simonetti telling me that for 20 performances 12,000 florins can be made. I beg you to write to me more on the subject because, if your theatre really gives no more than this figure, I for certain will definitively abandon the deal”.¹⁵⁹ Accustomed as he was to earnings of an altogether different kind offered by theatres of superior rank, he simply decided it was not worth the trouble. It was under Strakosch’s management that Rijeka saw Verdi’s *Otello*, an opera that the theatre management had already proposed to the previous impresa in 1889, but which got no further than the project stage until 1893. And that was not all, for it was again Strakosch in 1893 who engaged the famous Paul Léhrie for the lead role in *Amleto*, moreover with the conductor Vittorio Maria Vanzo, a name well known to the public for having given the Italian premiere of *La Walkiria* (Die Walküre) two years earlier.

In the last decade of the 19th century various important singers performed at the theatre. Not only Léhrie, but also Gemma Bellincioni in 1890 (a singer who was proposed for the theatre four years later, together with her husband Roberto Stagno, by the agent Ignaz Kugel of Vienna), and Enrico Caruso in the spring season of 1898. Fifteen years later Tito Schipa, engaged by the Alpron-Battaglia impresa, also made an appearance. To complete the list of prominent figures visiting Rijeka, it is worth mentioning that Giacomo Puccini made the trip to the city in 1895, leaving on 3 May with his wife Elvira and stopping off in Venice and Trieste on the way, in order to be present at a performance of *Manon Lescaut*.¹⁶⁰ On this occasion the invitation made to the composer would appear to have been made by the impresario himself, Raffaele Sforza.¹⁶¹ Sforza had taken up his position at the Comunale

158 Register of documents (*Protocollo degli esibiti*) (1885–1910), Rijeka, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 10. The reasons for the termination of the contract are not indicated.

159 “A Fiume mi è stata molto decantata la piazza di Zara ed il Teatro Nuovo, ed ora ricevo una lettera del sig. Simonetti con la quale mi dice che in 20 rappresentazioni si possono introitare 12.000 fiorini. Pregola di scrivermi alcunchè in proposito perché, se realmente il suo teatro non da [*sic*] che questo risultato io certo rinunzio per sempre all’affare.”; Letter from Ferdinand Strakosch to the theatre management of Zadar, Zagreb, 9. 6. 1893, HR-DAZD, folder 7.

160 Julian Budden, *Puccini. His Life and Works*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2002, p. 149.

161 “Signor Puccini, in order to satisfy the keen wishes of the aforementioned impresario, put in an appearance on the evening of 4 May. A gala night like this is not easily forgotten [...]. An ovation was accorded to the illustrious composer right from his first arrival on stage.” (“Il signor Puccini, per appagare il

in that same year of 1895 and was to stay for many years, more or less continuously until 1908, though sharing his duties with Giovanni Maraspin in 1900.¹⁶² The contract for 1895, however, was clearly not for more than one year, because a call for proposals was published the very next year. Sforza won the competition once again, and the same happened in 1897, the year in which, after being reconfirmed as impresario, he brought *Tannhäuser* to Rijeka for the first time.

As was also the case at many other theatres, attempts were sometimes made at Rijeka to make savings on opera productions, but when this led to performances bordering on the unacceptable, the spectators protested. It was said that on certain evenings there was not even an orchestra, though it is not clear whether this meant that the singers were accompanied by just a piano. When the impresario Corbetta arrived in 1901, after a badly run season in Šibenik in 1899 and following an equally unsatisfactory run in Pula in 1901 itself, the theatre management received a letter from audience members complaining of the absence of the orchestra in certain opera performances: “It is not at all clear how the estimable theatre management can allow the impresario to do without the orchestra in the so-called ‘grand nights’ just for the saving of a few florins”. The production in question, that of *Maria Stuarda*, was duly condemned as completely monotonous: “without the appeal of a little bit of music it is enough to make you lose all desire to go to the theatre”.¹⁶³ In this case the theatre management was judged to be guilty of favouring the impresario over the public.

We have already seen that the season-ticket holders wielded a genuine power to change the management’s choices, for example by asking for certain operas to be programmed rather than others. This also happened in 1910 when a group of season-ticket holders, expressing the wish to hear *La Wally* again instead of another night of *Aida*, wrote to the management asking it to take prompt action and have the said opera performed.¹⁶⁴ In this case, however,

vivo desiderio del sullodato impresario, fece atto di presenza la sera del 4 maggio. Una serata di gala come questa non si dimentica leggermente [...]. Un’ovazione è stata fatta all’illustre maestro fin dal suo apparire in scena.”); “Giacomo Puccini a Fiume”, *Il Cosmorama*, 16. 5. 1895, p. 4, cited in Cecilia Nicolò, *Emma Zilli. Una carriera di fine Ottocento*, NeoClassica, Roma 2019, p. 94.

162 From 1891 to 1894 Maraspin was already working at the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka, but not as an impresario.

163 “Non si capisce come la spettabile direzione teatrale possa permettere all’Impresario per il lucro di pochi fiorini, di sospendere l’orchestra nelle cosiddette grandi serate” and, further on, “senza lo svago di un poco di musica è tal cosa da far perdere la volontà di frequentare il Teatro.”; Letter from frequenters of the theatre of Rijeka to unspecified recipient [“Egregio Signor Cavaliere...”], Rijeka, 19. 10. 1901, HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6.

164 “The undersigned subscription holders of Group B, wishing to hear *La Wally* again as soon as possible, appeal to this esteemed management, also on behalf of many others, that it may promptly take steps in this regard, especially since the opera met with general favour both for its intrinsic value and for the excellent performance; and to do this in substitution for an *Aida* [...]” (“I sottoscritti abbonati del turno B, desiderosi di riudire quanto prima la *Wally*, si rivolgono anche a nome di molti altri, a code-

the tender specifications actually specified an equal distribution of the operas billed, so the management was unable to satisfy the request.¹⁶⁵

4.4.5 The Alpron-Battaglia management and the War years

With the new opera repertoire, there also arrived a need for bigger orchestras, and there came a time when it was considered necessary to enlarge the space for the orchestra in the theatre. The civil magistrate therefore asked the theatre management what the work would cost. At the same time there had also been complaints about the orchestra being too loud, making it difficult to hear the singers. To solve this problem a partition separating the orchestra from the parterre was repositioned.¹⁶⁶ There also continued to be a debate on the quality of the productions, but with the available documents it is hard to understand if the problem was caused by the savings the impresario was alleged to have made, or if instead the theatre management was particularly fussy and hard to please in its aspiration for excellence. Much depended also on the actual competence of the board of directors. The fact that it included composers or professional musicians undoubtedly increased the chances that it would insist on high professional standards. When the impresario Attilio Alpron – who ran the theatre of Rijeka from 1909 – was about to stage *Fedora*, the theatre management went as far as to prohibit the production from being publically announced before the dress rehearsal, which was when the management would give its approval: the directors had been dissatisfied with a partial rehearsal of the opera and were reluctant to give their authorisation. The impresario, on its part, insisted that the opera was presentable and added that the *maestro concertatore*, Luigi Cantoni, was of the same opinion. The management therefore yielded on this issue, though with the proviso that the opera would be immediately suspended if the audience showed its disapproval.¹⁶⁷ Another dispute between management and impresario erupted in the following year, when Alpron began to negotiate with conductors not among those indicated when initially tendering for the contract. The theatre management got wind of the matter and made it clear that it regarded the original proposal as binding and that Alpron was not to change any of the names. The choice would have to fall on one of those proposed earlier: Polacco,

sta spettabile Direzione perché voglia disporre con sollecitudine in questo senso, tanto più che l'opera per il suo valore intrinseco e per l'ottima esecuzione incontrò il favore generale; e ciò in sostituzione di un'Aida [...]"); Letter from the subscription holders of the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka to the theatre management of Rijeka, Rijeka, 17. 3. 1910, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

165 In the autumn season this distribution was to be carried out over a total number of 14 opera performances.

166 See Letter from the theatre management of Rijeka to the civil magistrate of Rijeka, Rijeka, 28. 12. 1911, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

167 See Letter from the theatre management of Rijeka to Attilio Alpron and Francesco Battaglia, Rijeka, 4. 11. 1911, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

Mascheroni, Zuccani, Ferrari, Barone or Vitale. Of these names, Edoardo Mascheroni had shown an interest in returning to Rijeka after conducting the entire Lent-spring season of 1911, giving as many as 50 performances (incidentally this was the season in which Strauss's *Salome* was cancelled because of its poor reception at the Teatro Comunale of Trieste).¹⁶⁸ Alpron, however, was already thinking of engaging Pasquale La Rotella; and indeed he succeeded in the attempt, perhaps also thanks to some excellent references obtained by the conductor in the meantime. In this case, therefore, the impresario had his way over the theatre management and even managed to confirm La Rotella for the opera season of the following year.¹⁶⁹

Like many others, the Alpron-Battaglia impresa also found itself having to ask for an increase in the endowment. In 1914 the municipality authorised the future contractor (whoever it may be) to raise the price of the entrance tickets in exceptional cases, provided that the productions were considered of outstanding quality, and always after gaining the consent of the theatre management.¹⁷⁰ The admission prices were considered minimal ("such that with difficulty one could find in other theatres of the importance of our own", wrote a certain Meynier from the theatre management) and the audience turnout was good, so the increase – according to Meynier – would not damage attendance (since "the poorer part of the population could always take advantage of the obligatory performances at reduced prices").¹⁷¹

With the onset of the War, the question of admission prices became a secondary issue. The problem was not so much audience attendance as the difficulty of finding the artists to form the opera companies. In fact, a well-known clause in the contracts for singers stated that in every case of force majeure (i. e. a fortuitous event), such as flooding, fire, "waged war" (*guerra guerreggiata*), general strikes, or any other circumstance that might make the closure of the theatre either necessary or have it imposed by the authorities, the entire salary would be suspended until performances were resumed. This was valid throughout the Italian territory. And if such a "fortuitous event" should take place in "a city that was politically foreign, but geographically Italian" (as was the case with Rijeka), the impresario would be obliged to repatriate those same artists.¹⁷² In light of these clauses, the singers would be without a safety net if they travelled to Rijeka. And even if the frontier were open, no one

168 *Riječki novi list*, 4. 4. 1911.

169 See Letter from the theatre management of Rijeka to Attilio Alpron, Rijeka, 10. 9. 1912, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

170 See Letter from the *podestà* of Rijeka to the theatre management of Rijeka, Rijeka, 11. 7. 1914, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

171 "tali quali difficilmente si riscontrano in altri teatri dell'importanza del nostro", and later on, "la parte più povera della popolazione potrebbe sempre approfittare delle rappresentazioni d'obbligo a prezzi ridotti"; Letter from Meynier to the civil magistrate of Rijeka, Rijeka, 28. 6. 1913, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

172 "città politicamente estera ma in terra geograficamente italiana"; Letter from Dante Forconi to Eugenio De Monari, Cento, 12. 11. 1914, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

could know how events might unfold. Austria-Hungary was at war, and while this did not directly involve the city of Rijeka, there was no way of predicting what might happen in the future. “War, cholera, a flood might happen anywhere and when one least expects it”, wrote the artist Dante Forconi to the impresario Eugenio De Monari, “but to actually go and look for it, that, the artists say, would be folly”.¹⁷³ With no singer surely wanting to “go and look for it”, the possibilities of putting together a solid cast also declined.

Although the authorities did not actually prohibit emigration, they did not allow men under the age of 40 to leave Italy.¹⁷⁴ Companies hence had difficulty getting passports for artists under the age of 39.¹⁷⁵ In fact, the Alpron impresa was sent a telegram from Florence telling it that the authorities had refused passports to seventeen artists of the company that might have gone to Rijeka, as they were still subject to military service.¹⁷⁶ Owing to the impossibility of assembling a company of musicians on account of the war, Alpron got into a dispute with the municipality of Rijeka and in the end failed to give the performances planned for the autumn season.¹⁷⁷

We have little news on the management of the theatre during the actual period of the conflict.¹⁷⁸ When the contract with the impresario Carlo Polgar at the Teatro Fenice came to an end in 1917, an opera season run by the Royal Opera House of Budapest was planned in the following year, but in the end did not materialise. The cause was attributed to the “ministerial crisis” (*crisi ministeriale*),¹⁷⁹ to the difficult state of communications, and to the lack of financial coverage (80,000 crowns were needed).¹⁸⁰ The companies needed a guarantee, but one certainty was that a full theatre in those years would bring in a nightly income of 10,000 crowns. In this case it was not enough.¹⁸¹

173 “La guerra, il colera, un’inondazione può succedere ovunque e quando meno ci si aspetta, ma andare proprio a cercare, sarebbe follia, questo dicono gli artisti.”; Letter from Dante Forconi to Eugenio De Monari, Cento, 12. II. 1914, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

174 See Letter from Dante Forconi to Eugenio De Monari, Cento, 12. II. 1914, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

175 See Letter from Enrico Gallina to Attilio Alpron, Trieste, 20. II. 1914, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

176 See Telegram from Virginio Talli to Attilio Alpron, Rijeka, 1914, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

177 See Letter from the *podestà* of Rijeka to the theatre management of Rijeka, Rijeka, 26. 4. 1915, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

178 Programming stopped until 1919. According to Lovorka Ruck, “From the beginning of the First World War until 1923, operas were performed at the Teatro Comunale only in 1919” (“Dall’inizio della prima guerra mondiale fino al 1923, soltanto nel 1919 vengono rappresentate nel teatro comunale opere liriche”); Lovorka Ruck, *Operni život u Rijeci*, p. 185.

179 Letter from Nicolò Bánffy to the theatre management of Rijeka, Budapest, 22. 4. 1918, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

180 See Letter from the secretary of state Nemeny to Count Nicolò Bánffy, Budapest, 13. 5. 1918, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

181 Typewritten note of the theatre management of Rijeka, Rijeka, 5. 4. 1918, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1. The 10,000 crowns corresponded to 5,000 florins per night: a sum that was far higher than the 16,000 florins of possible revenue with a conjectured full house for the whole season in 1885.

“The programme is unquestionably put together with fine artistic sense”, the management of Rijeka wrote to the superintendent of the Budapest Opera, “however – in our view – it does not sufficiently take into account the local conditions”. The proposed *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, would not be suited to the audience in Rijeka, which was not very familiar with the music of Mozart and would also have trouble with the spoken dialogues, which are plentiful in this work and unlikely to be understood by an audience that for the most part knew no Hungarian (the language used). *Don Giovanni* would be preferred, the letter went on, and there would be no problem at all with Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*, which had been accepted in the past with general satisfaction. While technical issues would make it impossible to stage the other opera proposed, *Aida*, the theatre management hoped a way could be found to include a Verdi opera in the programme, for it would be particularly welcome to the public of Rijeka, who were passionate enthusiasts of his music.¹⁸² The theatre management was also in favour of performing another opera by a Hungarian composer, such as *Hunyadi Laszlo* or *Bank Ban*, for this would give the public an opportunity to appreciate Hungarian art and “form an opinion of it greatly different from what it had been able to do hitherto”.¹⁸³ This last comment signals a greater willingness to hear repertoire that was not necessarily Italian, marking a strong contrast with a statement made just a few years earlier, in 1909, by the president of the theatre, who could only give his approval to productions in the Italian language.¹⁸⁴

Some, however, still frowned upon the “foreign” repertoire, and in 1919, at the time of the Braida-Gorlato impresa, once again craved for seasons of Italian opera. Condemnation was expressed of the fact that an “oppressor government” (*governo oppressore*) had boycotted Italian opera performed by Italian artists for four years and obstructed every manifestation of national art by all possible means. As soon as what was called the “desired liberation” (*auspicata liberazione*) was attained, use could be made of the theatre as a “most powerful factor of popular culture” (*potentissimo coefficiente di coltura popolare*) and enthusiasms could be rekindled with the melodies of *Ernani* or *La forza del destino* “in their original text, unmutilated by any censorship of the more expressive phrases that were earlier not permitted”.¹⁸⁵

182 Letter from the theatre management of Rijeka to Nicolò Bánffy, Rijeka, 25. 4. 1918, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

183 Letter from the theatre management of Rijeka to Nicolò Bánffy, Rijeka, 25. 4. 1918, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

184 “Si partecipa che la scrivente non può dare il suo consenso che per spettacoli esclusivamente in lingua italiana”; Letter from the theatre management of Rijeka to the Alpron-Battaglia impresa, Rijeka 23. 12. 1909, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

185 “nel loro testo originale, non mutilato da censura alcuna delle più espressive frasi prima non permesse”; Letter from the Ufficio Lirico Teatrale Rappresentanze Artistiche to the theatre management of Rijeka, Milano, 26. 1. 1919, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

Rijeka was officially annexed to the Kingdom of Italy in 1924, and for a period of twenty years at least, the theatre was still to bear the name of Giuseppe Verdi that had been assigned to it in 1913 at the centenary of the composer's birth.

4.4.6 Census of the opera seasons at the Teatro Civico Adamich of Rijeka, then Teatro Comunale, then Teatro Verdi

In general, the seasons have been reconstructed with the aid of the journals *La Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, *Euterpe*, *L'Arte*, *La Bilancia*, Lovorka Ruck's article, *Operni zivot u Rijeci u razdoblju od 1870. do 1930. godine*, and documents from the theatre collection of the Maritime and Historical Museum of the Croatian Littoral. From 1885 the seasons have been partially reconstructed from the document *Teatro Comunale di Fiume* located in HR-DARI, RO 24, folder 6.

Year	Endowment	Impresario	Maestro concertatore and Chorus master	Start of season	Operas
Teatro Adamich					
1861	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.	Lent and spring	La Cenerentola La sonnambula Maria di Rudenz L'italiana in Algeri
1862	n. f.	Cesare Trevisan	Ettore Celli m. c.: Antonio Rizzi	Lent and spring	I lombardi alla prima crociata Macbeth Tutti in maschera Don Pasquale Il barbiere di Siviglia
1863	6,400 f.	n. f.	n. f.	Lent and spring	n. f.
1864	6,000 f.	Giovanni Ubaldi	n. f.	Lent and spring	Faust
1865	7,000 f.	Cesare Trevisan	Giuseppe Alessandro Scaramelli	Lent and spring	Otello Martha I puritani Maria di Rohan Tutti in maschera
1866	8,000 f.	Carlo Gardini	n. f.	Lent and spring	Jone Isabella d'Aragona Norma La favorita Lucia di Lammermoor

Year	Endowment	Impresario	Maestro concertatore and Chorus master	Start of season	Operas
1867	n. f.	Carlo Gardini	n. f.	November	Tutti in maschera ¹⁸⁶
1868	10,000 f.	Adolfo Proni [Giustini]	n. f.	Lent and spring	I vespri siciliani Lucrezia Borgia Saffo Lorenzino de Medici Vettor Pisani
1869	8,000 f.	Gerolamo Usigli [Vincenzo Ermene-gildo Dal Torso]	n. f.	Lent and spring	Celinda Un ballo in maschera Il corsaro Il menestrello Il barbiere di Siviglia
1870	12,000 f.	Giovanni Mangiamela	n. f.	Lent and spring	Giovanna II di Napoli or Ruy Blas Un ballo in maschera Faust Belisario
1871	12,000 f.	Giovanni Ubaldi e Comp. [Adamich and partners]	Giovanni Zavaglio m. c.: Giovanni Gargussi	Lent and spring	Gli Ugonotti Guglielmo Tell Rigoletto I due Foscari La favorita
1872	n. f.	n. f.	Giuseppe Alessandro Scaramelli	Lent and spring	Lucia di Lammermoor La traviata Ruy Blas Roberto il Diavolo Beatrice di Tenda
1873	n. f.	Giovanni Mangiamela [Adamich and partners]	n. f.	Lent and spring	L'ebrea Nabucco Giovanna di Napoli Gemma di Vergy
1874	n. f.	Cleopatra Cajani Giuseppe Cajani then Alessandro Bartoli	Alessandro Bartoli	Lent and spring	Marco Visconti Le educande di Sorrento Un ballo in maschera Ruy Blas
1875		[Giovanni Stancich and Micheluzzi]	[the theatre would seem to have been closed to the opera season]		
1876	n. f.	Giovanni Stancich and Micheluzzi	Luigi Ricci	Lent and spring	Jone Norma Ernani Il Guarany

186 Reported in Antoni Cetnarowicz, *Die Nationalbewegung in Dalmatien im 19. Jahrhundert*, Lang, Frankfurt 2008, p. 129.

Year	Endowment	Impresario	Maestro concertatore and Chorus master	Start of season	Operas
1877	n. f.	Giovanni Stancich and Micheluzzi	Alessandro Pomè [Luigi Becherini] Luigi Ricci	Lent and spring Lent and spring autumn	Il conte verde Alda L'ebreo La favorita Crispino e la comare Don Checco La figlia di Madama Angot Il barbiere di Siviglia Linda di Chamounix La sonnambula Don Giovanni Aida
1879	n. f.	Giovanni Miazzi	Luigi Ricci	Lent and spring	I puritani I promessi sposi Il menestrello Le precauzioni
1880	n. f.	Cesare Trevisan	Enrico Bernardi and Gaetano Cimini	Lent and spring	La forza del destino Dinorah Il trovatore La traviata
1881	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.	Lent and spring autumn	Patria Faust Marin Faliero L'elisir d'amore Don Pasquale Buondelmonte Il conte verde Alda Tutti in maschera Il barbiere di Siviglia Il dottore Bellafronte o Taumaturgo Crispino e la comare
<i>Teatro Fenice</i>					
1882	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.	<i>La Cenerentola</i> <i>Roberto il diavolo</i> <i>Aida</i> <i>Crispino e la comare</i>
<i>Teatro Comunale</i>					
1885	14,000 f.	Luigi Cesari	Gaetano Cimini m. c.: Giusto Giusti	autumn	Aida La Gioconda
1886	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.	L'ebrea Un ballo in maschera Eufemio di Messina
1887	n. f.	Augusto Rossegger	Vittorio Podesti [N. Guerrara]	Lent and spring autumn	La sonnambula Mefistofele I promessi sposi Ernani

Year	Endowment	Impresario	Maestro concertatore and Chorus master	Start of season	Operas
1888	n. f.	Augusto Rossegger	Gialdino Gialdini	autumn	Carmen Un ballo in maschera Lucia di Lammermoor Norma
1889	n. f.	Augusto Rossegger	Gino Golisciani	n. f.	Rigoletto Fra diavolo Il barbiere di Siviglia Edmea
1890	n. f.	Augusto Rossegger and Alberto Vernier Attilio Fabbri	Gino Golisciani m. c.: Dal Fiume	n. f.	Nabucco Lohengrin Linda di Chamounix Don Pasquale Lucia di Lammermoor La sonnambula
1891	8,050 f.	Francesco Sciutti d'Arrigo Francesco Sciutti d'Arrigo	Giuseppe Grisanti m. c.: Alessandro Bartoli	Lent and spring autumn	Esmeralda Mignon L'africana Luisa Miller Tutti in maschera Papà Martin La Cenerentola Crispino e la comare
1892	n. f.	Francesco Sciutti d'Arrigo Francesco Sciutti d'Arrigo	A. Errante	Lent and spring autumn	Don Sebastiano I lombardi alla prima crociata Aida Lucrezia Borgia Rigoletto I puritani La favorita Martha
1893	n. f.	Ferdinand Strakosch [Società filarmonico- drammatica] Ferdinand Strakosch	Vittorio Maria Vanzo m. c.: Alessandro Bartoli	Lent and spring September autumn	Amleto Carmen Pagliacci Mignon Otello La campana dell'eremi- taggio Cavalleria rusticana
1894	n. f.	R. Camber	n. f.	Lent and spring	Il trovatore Faust La forza del destino
1895	n. f.	Raffaele Sforza Gabriele Ruotolo	Gaetano Cimini [for Manon Lescaut] m. c.: De Sabata	Lent and spring autumn	Ruy Blas La Gioconda Manon Lescaut Fra Diavolo
1896	n. f.	Raffaele Sforza	Gaetano Cimini m. c.: Oreste Sbvaglia	Lent and spring	Ernani Le Roi de Lahore Il Guarany

Year	Endowment	Impresario	<i>Maestro concertatore</i> and Chorus master	Start of season	Operas
1897	4,000 f.	Raffaele Sforza	n. f.	n. f.	Un ballo in maschera Norma Tannhäuser
1898	n. f.	n. f.	Gaetano Cimini	Lent and spring	La traviata La bohème Mefistofele
1899	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.	Lent and spring	Andrea Chénier Manon Cavalleria rusticana Pagliacci Rigoletto Lucrezia Borgia I puritani
1900	n. f.	Raffaele Sforza and Giovanni Maraspin	Gialdino Gialdini	Lent and spring	Gli Ugonotti Dinorah Il trovatore Tartini, o Il trillo del diavolo Lucia di Lammermoor La sonnambula
1901	n. f.	n. f. Giuseppe Corbetta	n. f.	Lent and spring autumn	Aida Il profeta L'ebreo Maria Stuarda Ernani
1902	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.	Lent and spring	Tosca La bohème Faust
1903	n. f.	Raffaele Sforza	n. f.	Lent and spring	Fedora Mignon Sansone e Dalila
1904	8,000 crowns	Raffaele Sforza	n. f.	Lent and spring autumn	[Tosca] Iris Manon Lescaut Lohengrin Zazà
1905	8,000 c.	Raffaele Sforza	Giuseppe Sturani m. c.: Gioachino Marin	Lent and spring	Rigoletto Tosca Germania
1906	n. f.	Raffaele Sforza	n. f.	Lent and spring	Un ballo in maschera Otello L'elisir d'amore La sonnambula
1907	n. f.	n. f.	n. f. Francesco Battaglia m. c.: Lorenzo Alberani	Lent and spring autumn	La traviata Mefistofele Madama Butterfly L'amico Fritz Il barbiere di Siviglia

Year	Endowment	Impresario	Maestro concertatore and Chorus master	Start of season	Operas
1908	n. f.	Raffaele Sforza	Federico Del Cupolo	autumn	Cavalleria rusticana Pagliacci Amica Thaïs Norma Il trovatore
1909	n. f.	Attilio Alpron Francesco Battaglia	Antonio Guarnieri m. c.: Paride Soffritti	Lent and spring	Erodiade Werther La Gioconda La favorita Ernani
1910	n. f.	Attilio Alpron Francesco Battaglia	Rodolfo Ferrari m. c.: Enrico Romeo	Lent and spring	Aida La Wally La bohème La Walkiria
1911	n. f.	Attilio Alpron Francesco Battaglia	Edoardo Mascheroni m. c.: Domenico Acerbi	Lent and spring	Carmen Andrea Chénier Manon Faust
			Luigi Cantoni m. c.: Domenico Acerbi	autumn	Il matrimonio segreto Fedora Madama Butterfly
1912	n. f.	Attilio Alpron Francesco Battaglia	Oscar Anselmi m. c.: Domenico Acerbi	Lent and spring	Romeo e Giulietta Tzigana Werther I maestri cantori di N.
1913	n. f.	Attilio Alpron Francesco Battaglia	Pasquale la Rotella m. c.: Domenico Acerbi	Lent and spring	Isabeau Rigoletto I pescatori di perle Tristano e Isotta
<i>Giardino di varietà</i>					
1913	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.	n. f.	<i>Don Pasquale</i>
Teatro Comunale Giuseppe Verdi					
1914	n. f.	Attilio Alpron Francesco Battaglia	Pasquale la Rotella m. c.: Domenico Acerbi	Lent and spring	Sansone e Dalila La traviata La fanciulla del West Tannhäuser
<i>Teatro Fenice</i>					
1914	n. f.	<i>Guido Farinelli</i>	n. f.	<i>May</i>	<i>Tosca</i> <i>Un ballo in maschera</i>
1917	n. f.	<i>Carlo Polgar</i>	n. f.	<i>April</i>	<i>[season of opera, operetta and spoken theatre]</i>

4.5 The contracts and the seasons at Zadar

As in the case of Rijeka, we need to refer to two theatres for Zadar in this period: the Teatro Nobile, which for security reasons following the fire at the Ring Theatre in Vienna closed down after its last performance on 14 December 1881,¹⁸⁷ and the Teatro Nuovo inaugurated in 1865. In Zadar the opera season could be held in the spring or autumn. The carnival season was not considered an ideal moment because the public had “other distractions, like balls and masked *veglioni* [carnival parties]”.¹⁸⁸ As a rule just one opera season was given each year, with a few exceptions when it was possible to organise two, as in 1861 when Antonio Lana ran the season at the Teatro Nobile in the spring and Francesco Righi in the autumn. Both seasons illustrated how much the police and censorship could still make their presence felt in the theatrical world of the 1860s. Neither season was particularly successful. Lana, who staged *Desiderio Duca d'Istria* by Nicolò Stermich, *L'ebreo* by Giuseppe Apolloni (a composer from Vicenza) and *Vettor Pisani* by Achille Peri, was forced to declare bankruptcy at the third-from-last performance, a move that prompted the choristers to take strike action in protest and make their way to a tavern outside the city. At their return they were arrested by the police and even, according to reports, taken to prison. The audience, which in the meantime was still waiting in the theatre for the performance to begin, was “shouting with impatience” (*urlava impaziente*), but had to resign itself to circumstances. For the next three days the theatre remained closed, and subsequent performances of the last opera, *Vettor Pisani*, were concluded with a new *impresa*.¹⁸⁹ As for Francesco Righi, this impresario was forced by the chief of police to replace *Le prigionie di Edinburgo* with *Norma*, while the choice of other scores (*Beatrice di Tenda*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Il campanello* and *Un'avventura di Scaramuccia*) was considered “ill-advised” (*poco giudiziosa*), given that these works would require singers who were both experienced and gifted – something that the impresario was evidently unable to guarantee. Moreover, the choristers continued to be “rebellious to all concord and harmony” (*ribelli ad ogni intonazione e accordo*), and the *impresa* gave up the struggle after sixteen nights.¹⁹⁰

Things improved with the inauguration of the Teatro Nuovo, run by the theatre management itself. No external *impresa* was therefore appointed to run the season. The singer and composer Placido Meneguzzi was appointed as chorus master, a position he had held for some time, while Antonio Ravasio, who was also *maestro di cappella* at the cathedral of Zadar, was chosen as *maestro concertatore*.¹⁹¹ Ravasio was to remain a stable presence at the

187 Edgardo Maddalena, “Il Teatro nobile di Zara”, *La Lettura*, XXIII/12 (1923), p. 897.

188 “altre distrazioni, come i balli e i veglioni mascherati”; Letter from the *podestà* of Zadar to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 15.12.1889, HR-DAZD, folder 25.

189 See Giuseppe Sabalich, *Cronistoria aneddotica*, p. 256.

190 See Giuseppe Sabalich, *Cronistoria aneddotica*, p. 271.

191 Antonio Ravasio (1835–1912), a composer from Bergamo, had graduated at the conservatoire of Milan. He was the first *maestro concertatore* at the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar. On Ravasio, see Carlo Bianchi,

theatre of Zadar, where he continued to conduct opera (we find him active at least until 1891). In his many years of activity no impresario ever thought of replacing him. After all, if one could rely on such an important personality (as also on the principal parts of the orchestra), the process of building the orchestra would be swifter: all to the benefit of the impresario running the season. Carlo Vianello, Aristide Archibugi¹⁹² and Osvaldo Mazza – in other words, the various impresarios who succeeded one another in the 1860s – all had dealings with him, as well as (a little later) the most exacting of all, Carlo Burlini, who had already worked with Italian opera companies at the theatre of Zagreb before moving first to the Teatro Comunale of Trieste and then to Zadar.¹⁹³ Unfortunately no contracts have survived to tell us what was planned in those seasons. In fact, the first surviving document is that concluded with the impresario Girolamo Pesaro. What, therefore, was required of the impresario engaged to run an opera season in this city?

In the preliminary agreement (*compromesso*) between Girolamo Pesaro and the theatre management, made up of 24 articles, Pesaro pledged to give 30 opera performances, with a short list of three works: *Ruy Blas*, a second opera chosen by the impresa between *Aroldo* and *Promessi Sposi*, and a third to be decided as usual. It seems that there was no obligation here to give each opera an equal number of nights. In addition to the 30 performances, up to four benefit nights were granted to the impresa. The theatre was made available to the impresa 20 days before the opening. The chorus would have to number 20 singers, “distributed suitably from one night to the next” (*ripartiti convenientemente tra una sera e l'altra*). There remained the need to find externally “two *tenori primi*, a competent *tenore secondo*, two sopranos, a *primo* and *secondo*”.¹⁹⁴ Regarding the orchestra, the following needs were noted right from the start: “a principal horn, a principal cello, a principal second violin”. An interesting clause specified that the same

“Antonio Ravasio maestro di Cappella della Basilica Metropolitana di Zara (1857–1897)”, *Il Dalmata*, 68 1897.

192 A certain Aristide Archibugi is mentioned as a *basso cantante* in the years from 1839 to 1842 in the journals *Teatri*, *Arti e Letteratura*, *Il Corriere dei Teatri* and *Bazar di Novità Artistiche, Letterarie e Teatrali*. It could be the same person.

193 Burlini worked in Zagreb in 1861 and 1862, as illustrated by Vjera Katalinić, “Between East and West: Zagreb on the Operatic Crossroads in 1860s”, slides, <http://info.hazu.hr/upload/File/2018/3e-Operatic-Crossroads-Katalinic.pdf> [accessed 1. 9. 2020]. Burlini is one of the impresarios mentioned in Rosselli’s list. He also worked at the Teatro Comunale of Trieste from 1863 to 1865 and in the autumn of 1874. We find him in Gorizia in 1870 and 1872. He was declared bankrupt in 1874, hence shortly after his time in Zadar. See also Vito Levi – Guido Botteri – Ireneo Bremi, *Il Comunale di Trieste*, Del Bianco, Udine 1962; Filippo Danziger, *Memorie del Teatro Comunale*, p. 109 and Lucia Pillon, *Ottocento goriziano (1815–1915). Una città che si trasforma*, Editrice goriziana, Gorizia 1991, p. 219.

194 Preliminary agreement between Girolamo Pesaro and the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 24. 6. 1873, HR-DAZD, folder 3.

singer could not take on two different roles in the same opera, nor could double as stage director, stage manager (*buttafuori*), prompter or machinist (this incidentally contrasts with what happened at Šibenik, where a chorus singer could also work as a *comprimario* [supporting soloist] and stage director).¹⁹⁵ At the same time (and for the same principle) it was stipulated that the costumes and scenery used for one opera could not be used for another. This need for variety at Zadar was also stressed in the subsequent contract between the theatre management and the impresario Carlo Vianello, which stipulated that “the costumes and scenery shall be lavish and cannot use the backcloths and properties that constitute the standard equipment of the theatre”.¹⁹⁶ The theatre possessed various types of sets (throne room, two living rooms, simple room, rustic room, town square, garden, wood, prison, hallway, underground chamber with columns, sea scene with pier) but it asked the impresario not to use them if possible, as they were too familiar to the public. Unlike Rijeka, where the contract makes no mention of changing the scenery, or the Teatro Nuovo in Split, where there were twelve fixed sets (referred to as the “usual sets”, perhaps implying that the need to see new ones was felt there too), here we note an express desire for change in order to keep the public’s attention alive.¹⁹⁷ Moreover, the impresa would be the beneficiary of a gift of 380 florins (to be paid together with the final instalment) if it not only fulfilled the commitments undertaken but also particularly satisfied the public.¹⁹⁸

In these years, along with Giuseppe Perlini and Antonio Smirić, the theatre of Zadar was managed by Nicolò Stermich, who, as a composer, was held in particularly high esteem. In 1884, evidently weary after holding the office for over ten years, Stermich tried to relinquish the presidency but was convinced to stay on and duly reelected. As always, having people in the management who were musically competent aided, and also speeded up, many of the processes connected with the running of an opera season. After Vianello’s season as impresario, supervised by Stermich as director of the theatre, there followed a series of seasons of opera buffa until 1882, when at the shareholders’ meeting of 19 January, with a majority of votes (15 to 7), it was resolved not to start any negotiations for

195 Contract issued by the Mazzoleni impresa for the theatre of Šibenik to the artist Adolfo Leghissa and Annita Marchesini, Trieste, 4. 4. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

196 “il vestiario e il scenario saranno sfarzosi e non potranno impiegarvisi le tele ed il mobigliare che costituiscono il corredo stabile del teatro”; Contract between the theatre presidency of Zadar and Carlo Vianello, Zadar, 22. 3. 1875, HR-DAZD, folder 4.

197 “Ancora del teatro...balcanico”, *Il Dalmata*, 15. 5. 1894. Here too the scenery, and in general all the properties, both in canvas and wood, used on stage would have had to be smeared with a fireproofing solution. On this subject the political authorities were fairly strict and could even close down the season if the rules were not observed.

198 Preliminary agreement between Girolamo Pesaro and the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 24. 6. 1873, HR-DAZD, folder 3.

the autumn opera season. Comic opera had already been programmed for June, with the company of Luigi Becherini, so productions would resume in the following year, though this time with opera seria.¹⁹⁹

4.5.1 “A company of dogs will come to bark in this theatre”: Sante Utili and the Razzani fiasco

Among the various proposals for organising the opera season of 1883, a new application came to the theatre management of Zadar from Venice: that of Carlo Mirco. Mirco, who was evidently well acquainted with the person he was writing to (most likely, Nicolò Stermich himself), given that he starts the letter with the expression “mio ottimo amico”, proposed three operas for the autumn, among which *Faust* and another “magnificent [opera] tried out with extraordinary success” (*grandiosa sperimentata con successo straordinario*) in Venice and Padua, by the “most distinguished Maestro Signor F. Malipiero”, who had promised Mirco he would attend the dress rehearsal and the first two performances to watch their progress.²⁰⁰ It is not given to know which of the operas by Francesco Malipiero²⁰¹ he was referring to, but in any case this proposal had no sequel, except that of convincing the theatre management of the need to stage *Faust*, in one way or another. At the same time the preceding negotiations with Raggio, who was then an opera impresario at Dubrovnik, were also discontinued on account of the unsustainable costs involved.²⁰² In any case *Faust*, which had been first proposed by Sante Utili’s agency of Milan (representing the impresario Francesco Razzani),²⁰³ was agreed on and included within a wide selection of other possible operas.²⁰⁴ Initially Utili had not thought of Razzani as his ideal impresario: he had

199 See *Società del Teatro Nuovo of Zadar*, session of 19 January 1882, 7 pm, Zadar, 19. I. 1882, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

200 Letter from Carlo Mirco to the theatre management of Zadar, Venezia, 1. 3. 1883, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

201 Francesco Malipiero (1824–1887), the composer of *Giovanna di Napoli* and other operas, as well as sacred music and vocal chamber works, was the grandfather of Gian Francesco Malipiero. For biographical details, see the biography in Carlo Schmidl, *Dizionario universale dei musicisti*, Sonzogno, Milano 1937, vol. 2, p. 17.

202 See Letter from the theatre management of Zadar to Sante Utili, Zadar, 30. I. 1883 HR-DAZD, folder 5.

203 Francesco Razzani was a dancer and choreographer. Among others, his choreographies included: *Elda*, an *azione coreografica*; *Nerea*, an *azione fantastica* in five parts and six decorations; the ballet *Teresita*; and the subject matter and choreography of *Favilla*, a *ballo fantastico* by Giuseppe Garignani and Achille Keller. Sante Utili’s proposal for an opera season in Zadar was only then taken into consideration, after a first unsuccessful attempt in 1878.

204 Among them were listed *Ruy Blas*, *La favorita*, *Jone*, *Contessa d’Amalfi*, *Marta*, *Forza del destino*, *Rigoletto*, *Il trovatore*, *Ballo in maschera*, *Ermani*, *Maria di Rohan*, *I lombardi*, *Norma*, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *La sonnambula*.

proposed either Annibale Cicognani or Paolo Massimini, “both solvent” (*entrambi solvibili*), together with an excellent company made up of “fine young artists, especially among the women” (*bella gioventù, specialmente nelle donne*). Also mentioned was Carlo Ronzone, a “very dear person” (*carissima persona*).²⁰⁵ None of them, however, was in a condition to accept the offer, so the choice necessarily fell on Razzani, who already knew a little about the theatre at Zadar, having been there in 1876 when the impresario was Giani (an orchestral player from La Fenice in Venice). Razzani therefore directly wrote to the theatre and immediately pointed out the inadequacy of the compensation offered by the management (just the lighting expenses and attendants) and asked that the costs of the orchestra and chorus also be deducted. There would be three operas (the customary formula “no fewer than three” was used here) and a total of 24 performances.²⁰⁶

A few days later, when Utili sent the formal project drawn up by Razzani, he portrayed him as a person who was “very intelligent and very respectable, having showed his worth at

205 Letters from Sante Utili to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 3. 2. 1883 and 11. 2. 1883, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

206 “Signor Sante Utili”, Razzani wrote, “proposes that I take on the running of your Teatro Sociale to give performances of opera seria and offers me – as compensation and endowment – lighting, attendants, etc.: the expense of which would be assumed by the theatre management. In order to stage an opera season with artists who may satisfy the public, the compensation proposed would not be sufficient and an impresario would suffer a not inconsiderable loss. Instead it would be fitting if this honourable management made the sacrifice of granting the impresa, free of charge, orchestra and choruses as well as the above. In that case I would commit to bringing to Zadar a group of principal singers capable of performing laudably no fewer than three *opere serie* to be chosen from the following, for example: Ruy Blas, Jone, Poliuto, Faust, [*illegibile*], Norma, Gemma. As well as the group of singers I would bring the respective music, costumes, scenery and properties, the *maestro concertatore* and conductor (if not available in the city), also shouldering at my expense three or four orchestral players if lacking at the *piazza*. For that I would receive all the income that would be made throughout the season, during which no fewer than 24 performances are to take place from 28 April through the whole of May.” (“Il sig. Sante Utili mi propone l’impresa del Loro Teatro Sociale per darvi spettacolo di opera seria proponendomi a titolo di compenso, a dote, l’illuminazione, inservienti ecc...: le di cui spese sarebbero assunte da quella Direzione Teatrale; per poter portare uno spettacolo d’opera con artisti che possano soddisfare il pubblico, il compenso proposto non sarebbe sufficiente ed un impresario andrebbe incontro a una perdita non indifferente. Sarebbe invece il caso che quella Onorevole Direzione facesse un sacrificio d’accordare, gratis, all’imp[re]sa orchestra, cori, e quanto più sopra si è detto, ed allora io sottoscritto mi obbligherei di portare a Zara un complesso di artisti di canto capaci ad eseguire lodevolmente non meno di tre opere serie da scegliersi fra le seguenti p. e.: Ruy Blas, Jone, Poliuto, Faust, [*illeggibile*], Norma, Gemma. Oltre al complesso degli artisti porterei la relativa musica, vestiario, scene ed attrezzi, il maestro concertatore e direttore d’orchestra se non ci fosse in paese, obbligandomi pure a mie spese, più tre o quattro professori mancanti alla piazza. Restando a mio favore tutti gli introiti che verrebbero fatti lungo la stagione nella quale si darebbero non meno di 24 rappresentazioni da aver luogo dal 28 aprile a tutto maggio prossimo.”); Letter from Francesco Razzani to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 9. 3. 1883, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

many important theatres, maintaining all his commitments with everyone”.²⁰⁷ At the same time Razzani wrote to the management drawing attention to the problem of the chorus singers and orchestral players that were lacking at Zadar. The theatre had in fact admitted that it had “few male singers and no females” (*pochi coristi maschi e nessuna femmina*).²⁰⁸ It was therefore a matter of bringing to Zadar around 22 people to add to those present: eight male singers, six female singers and eight orchestral players. The cost would be about two and a half florins a day, excluding the outward journey. Hence, Razzani insisted, the sum offered by the management as an endowment, 600 florins along with free lighting, would amount to very little when set against the expenses the impresa would have to meet to stage all the operas. All things considered, the season would cost at least 17,000 Italian lire, so Razzani asked the management to shoulder, in addition to the costs of the orchestra and chorus, also those of printing, police, firemen and charity, as well as the theatre staff at the door and backstage. He also asked to be given a further 300 florins, to be added to the 600 already proposed, and even asked the management to make sure that all the box-owners bought season tickets or else made their boxes available to the impresa.

After a positive answer from the theatre management (endowment increased to 800 florins; expenses not to be charged to the impresario, excluding the orchestra),²⁰⁹ Razzani took the reins of the negotiations by confirming that he intended to go ahead with the staging of *Faust*; but preferred to decide the names of the other operas together with the management. As negotiations proceeded, the ones he himself proposed had by now become *Ruy Blas*, *Poliuto*, *Jone*, *Gemma di Vergy*, *La favorita* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. On its part the theatre management put forward its own short list, consisting of *Roberto il Diavolo*, *I vespri siciliani*, *La Gioconda*, *I promessi sposi*, *Lebrea*, *Dinorah*, *Stella* and *La forza del destino*.²¹⁰ Razzani replied, however, that these would be unsuited to the vocal ranges of the artists engaged for *Faust*. In the end none of the operas on the management’s list was taken on board and an agreement was reached over *Il trovatore* and *Ruy Blas*.

As regards the management of the so-called *masse* (orchestra and choruses), Razzani was advised by the theatre management to contact the conductor Antonio Ravasio directly. Ravasio could give him a comment on the quality of the players in situ, so that he would know which instruments to leave out of the calculation. In 1883 Zadar could count on 20 local players, who

207 “intelligentissima [*sic*] e buonissima, avendo dato prove di sé in moltissimi importanti teatri, mantenendo con tutti ogni suo impegno”; Letter from Sante Utili to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 18. 3. 1883, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

208 See also the comment in the Letter from the theatre management of Zadar to Pietro Ciscutti, Zadar, 9. 5. 1884 HR-DAZD, folder 5.

209 The theatre management granted 800 florins of endowment, plus 600 in nightly expenses (25 florins for 24 performances), making an overall sum of 1,400 florins.

210 See Letter from the theatre management of Zadar to Francesco Razzani, Zadar, 20. 3. 1883 HR-DAZD, folder 5.

would need to be paid 2 florins per night (rehearsals included).²¹¹ Razzani wanted an orchestra of 29 players made up of 4 first violins, 4 second violins, 2 violas, 2 double basses, 1 cello, 2 flutes, 1 oboe, 2 clarinets (*clarini*), 1 bassoon, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 4 trombones, timpani and bass drum. He also asked for information on the scenery already available at the theatre, so as to avoid bringing superfluous material and incurring pointless expenses.²¹² As in many letters of this kind, Razzani guaranteed the quality of the artists, who were all “of undisputed merit, given that they had appeared on important stages both in Italy and abroad”.²¹³

In the subsequent contract, after specifying the titles of the operas to be performed (as a rule the first opera was clearly named, while for the other two a list was proposed from which to choose), the second article dealt with the formation of the orchestra. The numbers and types of instrument stated were exactly as indicated in the previous negotiations (see above).²¹⁴ It is worth noting that not all contracts at the time gave details of the orchestral families and numbers of instruments required. As always, if local musicians were lacking, others would have to be found externally. This contract was relatively simple in that it had only four articles. It made no mention of the date for starting the performances; it just gave the number of performances of opera seria. Razzani was thus awarded the concession and the whole company departed from Venice for Zadar on Saturday 31 March 1883.²¹⁵

The problems, however, were not long in coming. While at the end of March the agent Utili was still of the opinion that Razzani and Delfino Marchelli (who accompanied Razzani)²¹⁶ were “two perfect gentlemen” (*due perfetti gentiluomini*) who would work “properly, honouring both myself and your excellencies” (*a dovere, facendo onore a me ed alle S.LL.Ill. me*),²¹⁷ in April he was forced to change his mind. He wrote again to the theatre management,

211 See Letter from the theatre management of Zadar to Sante Utili, Zadar [February-March] 1883, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

212 The scenery for the new operas, however, would have to be brought by the *impresario*; See Letter from the theatre management of Zadar to Francesco Razzani, Zadar, 25. 3. 1883, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

213 “di merito incontrastabile, per avere calcate importanti scene tanto in Italia che all'estero”; Letters from Francesco Razzani to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 18. 3. 1883 and 23. 3. 1883, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

214 “L'orchestra si comporrà, oltrechè del maestro concertatore e direttore d'orchestra, di 4 violini primi, 4 violini secondi, 2 viole, 2 contrabbassi, 1 violoncello, 2 flauti, 1 oboe, 2 clarini, 1 fagotto, 2 corni, 2 trombe, 4 tromboni, timpani e cassa. Oltre a ciò, un maestro dei cori e suggeritore.”; Art. 2, Contract between the theatre presidency of Zadar and the *impresario* Francesco Razzani, Zadar-Milano, 1883, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

215 See Letter from Francesco Razzani to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 28. 3. 1883, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

216 Delfino Marchelli, born in 1841, turns out to have emigrated to New York in 1920. In 1878 he had written from the Teatro Malibran in Venice to the theatre management of Zadar to propose an opera season.

217 Letter from Sante Utili to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 30. 3. 1883, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

expressing his regret at not having known the impresario well – “a real scoundrel” (*un vero farabutto*), “a wretched individual” (*un tristo soggetto*) – and distanced himself from him. He disclaimed all responsibility for the behaviour of his client (who once had been an “honourable client”) and protested that at the beginning there was nothing to make one doubt his honesty. From the extant documents it is hard to understand exactly what the problem was, though it was somehow connected to debts incurred when hiring the *masse*. This is what Utili had to say on the matter:

On my own part, I did not fail to act in all conscience and good faith, given that my approach is to proceed under the banner of honesty and loyalty, but unfortunately I was deceived in this first meeting. I was wrong to place too much trust in [Razzani], and I put in too many good words for him. [...] I have too many good references, should they be needed, to present to your Honourable Presidency, if Signor Razzani etc. etc. should wish to damage me in front of Your Lordships, after his disgraceful behaviour towards my old theatrical establishment.²¹⁸

Although the “disgraceful behaviour” is not divulged in detail, Utili declared that he no longer had any trust in the *impresa* and that he proposed to tell all his clients to pay Razzani nothing more, and intended to give back any agency fees already collected, even if it meant losing his commissions. Utili had therefore worked, and spent money, in vain. If he had known earlier that the management was going to grant an endowment of 800 florins, he wrote, he would never have committed himself with Razzani but with another impresario that could have arrived in Zadar in better conditions.²¹⁹

But instead of closing the season honourably, two months after the start of the season Razzani wrote again to the theatre management asking to increase the number of performances with a further ten nights and to give Verdi's *La forza del destino* as a fourth opera. Although the receipts up until then were certainly satisfactory, they were not sufficient to pay for the musicians of the chorus and orchestra who came from outside the city.²²⁰

218 “Dal canto mio non mancai di agire con tutta coscienza e buona fede, essendo mio sistema di camminare sotto la bandiera dell'onestà e lealtà ma purtroppo fui deluso in questo primo incontro. Ebbi torto di prestar troppa fiducia al medesimo, e per lui spesi anche troppo buone parole. [...] Ho troppe buone referenze, se occorrono, da presentare a codesta Onorevole Presidenza, se il sig.r Razzani ecc. ecc. volesse farmi nero di fronte alle Signorie Loro, dopo al suo vergognoso modo di agire verso alla mia vecchia casa teatrale.” Letter from Sante Utili to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 18. 4. 1883, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

219 See Letter from Sante Utili to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 18. 4. 1883, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

220 “Honourable President”, Razzani wrote, “given that the *impresa* running this theatre is very grateful to this Noble and Honourable Presidency for the continual kindnesses shown to it, it ventures to mention that, after a scrupulous examination of this company's budget of income and expenditure, although the takings turn out to be quite satisfactory, they nonetheless definitely fail to cover the expenditure that unfortunately must be sustained for the external choral and orchestral masses. Therefore, to rem-

Razzani had documented these losses in a table that he had delivered directly to the director Stermich. Prolonging a season was a strategy customarily adopted when an impresario faced financial difficulties: he requested to use the theatre for a longer period so as to present an extra series of performances with a new subscription. It was an attempt to stem any debts that were building up. On this matter the management reminded Razzani that, according to the contract, he had no right to increase the number of performances, which were fixed at 24, but it was prepared to allow a further ten performances on certain conditions. The first was that he would have to stage *La forza del destino* with a prima donna chosen by the management itself (it was to be Lola Morandi), engage a new *baritono brillante* and replace the tenor Colombani; all of which the impresario willingly agreed to. The theatre would also have to be relieved of any expense or further endowment. To compensate for the extra costs sustained by the impresa, the theatre management granted Razzani not only the receipts for admission and seating in the parterre, but also the proceeds from the boxes of the third tier, excluding the three big boxes (*palconi*). It also reminded him that this concession was by no means standard procedure.²²¹ It would be absurd to presume that an impresario should have

edy inconveniences that could ensue at the end of the present season, it proposes to extend the season with a further 10 performances and with a fourth score alternating with the current repertoire. The impresa is confident that both the aforepraised Noble Management and the season-ticket holders will take into consideration the efforts and honesty of the writer. In order to pursue the second run of performances, the impresa is prepared to replace the tenor Colombano [*sic*] with another name that is well known either for having sung on important stages or for his artistic reputation. The present writer is confident that the Honourable Presidency wishes to give its support to this project, while maintaining the present conditions. In support of what is proposed above, the impresa proposes to give the grand opera *La forza del destino* by Maestro Verdi, for which it is mandatory to engage a *baritono brillante* for the part of Frate Melitone, and to sustain a greater expense for the staging.” (“Onorevole Presidenza, l’impresa di questo teatro essendo gratissima a questa Nobile ed Onorevole Presidenza per le continue gentilezze usatele, si fa coraggio di esporre, che dopo uno scrupoloso bilancio di entrata ed uscita di questa azienda, quantunque che gl’introiti si verificano abbastanza soddisfacenti, pure non arrivano sicuramente a coprire la spesa di sortita che pur troppo deve sottostare, per le masse corali ed orchestrali forestiere. Percui [*sic*], a riparare ad inconvenienti che possono verificarsi alla fine dell’attuale stagione, proporrebbe di prolungare la stagione per altre 10 recite con un quarto spartito alternato coll’attuale repertorio. Persuasa che tanto la prelodata Nobile Direzione, quanto i signori abbonati, terranno in considerazione l’operato, e l’onestà della scrivente. Onde proseguire il secondo corso di recite, l’impresa è disposta a sostituire il tenore Colombano [*sic*] con altro conosciuto, per aver calcato scene d’importanza, o conosciutissimo in arte. Persuasa la scrivente che l’Onorevole Presidenza voglia coadiuvare a tale progetto [*sic*], continuando le attuali condizioni. All’appoggio di quanto sopra, l’impresa proporrebbe di dare la grand’opera *La forza del destino* del M° Verdi per la quale è obbligata scritturare un baritono brillante per la parte del frate Melitone, e sottostare a spese maggiori per la messa in scena.”; Letter from Francesco Razzani to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 2. 5. 1883, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

221 See Letter from the theatre management of Zadar to Francesco Razzani, Zadar, 3.4[?].1883 HR-DAZD, folder 6.

his back covered at all times or that he could rely on the theatre management paying for any losses: it was in the unwritten rules that an *impresa* could either fail to make a profit or even lose money. On its arrival in a given city, the management continued to point out, it should already have the necessary capital to deal with every contingency, while the theatre had every right to be able to rely on the *impresa*.

In spite of all these warnings and veiled reproaches, Razzani succeeded in his intent to proceed with the season, with the operas staged now increased to four. The theatre management performed an act of trust that it would later regret. And it was precisely this additional opera that would definitively reverse the impresario's fortunes. With *La forza del destino* it was hoped to sell subscriptions for at least 600 florins, which didn't happen (in fact the *borderò* registered just half that sum). At the same time, the management couldn't understand how the season as a whole could have run at a loss, considering that: the *impresa* was not paying his artists huge sums; in the end it had not brought in external scenery for the other operas in the season (*Il trovatore* and *Ruy Blas*); it had recycled the costumes for those same operas (in spite of the stipulation, already reasserted in the previous contracts at Zadar with the impresarios Pesaro and Vianello, that scenery and costumes needed to be changed); and it had borne only half of the cost of the dancers in *Faust*. Moreover, the management had agreed to the advance payments, the full number of benefit nights requested and, in conclusion, the ten extra performances requested. It would appear that Razzani had succeeded in making all parties unhappy, including the poor tenor Luigi Colombani, who, on seeing that he was no longer engaged for *La forza del destino*, immediately made his complaint to the management ("a great wrong was done to me after working with devotion and zeal in the three operas I performed in; I put in as much effort as my powers allowed, and I am in any case pleased to have finished my season with honour").²²² Colombani recognised that the *impresa* was free to engage who it wanted, and that it had always paid punctually, though at the present moment he was waiting to be paid 400 lire. He said he was confident of being paid the balance.²²³ Most likely, however, he never got the money.

In actual fact, in March of the same year, a letter concerning Razzani, Uti and his clients had arrived at the theatre of Dubrovnik. Its content was hardly reassuring. The management at Zadar had somehow come into possession of it, but most likely either ignored it or felt that it was too late to change the course of events. It was not anonymous, but signed by a

222 "per me fu un gran torto dietro d'aver lavorato con amore e zelo nelle tre opere da me eseguite ed ho messo tutto l'impegno per quanto le mie forze mi hanno permesso, d'altronde son lieto d'aver finito la mia stagione [*sic*] con onore"; Letter from Luigi Colombani to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 10. 5. 1883, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

223 See Letter from Luigi Colombani to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 10. 5. 1883, HR-DAZD, folder 6. The theatre management replied saying that it was unaware of the conditions the tenor had agreed with the *impresa*, so it couldn't pronounce judgement on the matter. In fact it is not clear which of the two parties – management or *impresa* – really made the decision to replace Colombani.

certain “F. Cabussi” and had the air of being a warning: “An impossible company of howling dogs is being organised by the impresarios Razzani, a former dancer of inauspicious memory, and Marchelli, a refugee from New York, at the doghouse of Sante Utili whose civil rights were revoked on account of his being *too honest*. This company will very soon come to howl in this theatre, so be on your guard against such artists, impresarios and the self-styled theatrical agent... a man forewarned is a man forearmed.”²²⁴

The writer – who was obviously being ironic when referring to Utili as “too honest” – hastened to add in a P.S. that they were all “rascals full of debts” (*disperati pieni di debiti*) and “trouble wherever they go” (*guai ove capitano*). In this accusation there was a grain of truth, for Razzani did contract debts at Zadar and he did cheat Sante Utili of 400 lire on agency fees. Utili tried to find a way of recovering the lost money together with the management in Zadar. “Our debtor is a choreographer”, Utili wrote to the management, “but with his income he is surely unable to make enough money to pay off such a big debt, also given his advanced age”.²²⁵ The possibility of turning to Razzani’s children occurred to them. They might – merely out of a sense of dignity – wish to make amends for their father’s misconduct: either his son, who was an accountant working at the Gondrand transportation company and lived prosperously in a “splendid apartment” in Milan, or his daughter, who was “married to a distinguished shopkeeper of Rijeka”.²²⁶ Razzani lived in his son’s apartment, and the apartment was registered in his son’s name, so coercive action to recover the debt was out of the question.

A glimmer of hope emerged when Razzani signed a contract for the theatre of Novi Ligure, which was due to grant an endowment of 7,000 to 8,000 lire for the autumn season. These were sums that could be used to recover the outstanding debts, though it was feared that Razzani might make the cautionary deposit in someone else’s name. At the time he was accompanied by a certain Pietro Scipioni, a man of “dubious reputation, unedifying conduct and desperate means” according to Utili.²²⁷ There was even a rumour going round that Razzani was certain to be offered the running of the theatre in Zadar, as this would be the only way the management could recover its debts. The advice Utili gave the management as a way of recuperating its losses was to open the theatre for its own benefit, entrusting it

224 “Una compagnia impossibile di cani si sta organizzando dagli impresari Razzani ex ballerino d’infausta memoria e Marchelli profugo di Nuova Jorche presso il canile di Sante Utili cui per essere *troppo onesto* furono interdettati i diritti civili. Questa compagnia quanto prima si recherà a latrare a codesto teatro perciò in guardia da siffatti artisti, impresari e sedicente Agente Teatrale...uomo avvisato mezzo salvato [...]”;

225 “Il nostro debitore è un coreografo, ma dai suoi guadagni non potrà certamente prelevare con che pagare un debito così rilevante stante anche la sua avanzata età.”; Letter from Sante Utili to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 9.8.1883, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

226 Letter from Sante Utili to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 9.8.1883, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

227 “dubbia fama, di condotta poco edificante e di mezzi disperatissimo”; Letter from Sante Utili to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 28.8.1883, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

to an honest person with experience in theatrical matters who could be recommended by Utili himself (again!). He was simply doing all in his power to correct the bad impression he had made, hoping that he had not lost all credibility in the eyes of the theatre.²²⁸

So, in spite of everything, Utili continued to send his proposals. Indeed, he once again entered into negotiations with the theatre two years later. For the spring of 1886 he proposed an opera season with *Roberto il Diavolo* and an endowment of a thousand florins. The theatre management must have left open a margin for further collaboration with Utili, for in its reply it gave detailed information on the situation of the choral and orchestral *masse* (of which, as always, there were not enough).²²⁹ Where and when possible, they resorted to the military band, but it was not always possible to fill the gaps. A chorus master and prompter were also needed. Regarding the expenses, the impresario would have to pay each player two florins and each singer one florin per night. Given that Dubrovnik was to hold an opera season in the same period, the impresario would do well to look for the missing musicians at the theatre there.²³⁰ It was around this time that the management at Zadar received some further pseudo-accusatory correspondence concerning Utili, this time from Alessandro Berti, an agent from Milan. In a letter to the theatre dated 10 March 1885 Berti reported on Utili's insolvency, only to offer the services of one of his own impresarios in replacement: "I have a person who is solvent, so you would have someone who could take on the contract with due guarantees and, what is more, he is ready to come to Zadar immediately".²³¹ Competition – even when devious, as in this case – was still widespread and the struggle to win contracts

228 See Letter from Sante Utili to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 28.8.1883, HR-DAZD, folder 6. The whole incident is hard to square with the words Utili sent to the management at the start: "While Lamperti, when doing business, will propose just anyone, the agent Sante Utili does not use this wretched system, but deals only in solid and positive matters, [ensuring] that the impresario must continue right up to the end of the season and not interrupt the productions after a few performances, as so often happens." ("Se Lamperti per fare un affare propone uno qualunque, l'agente Sante Utili non tiene questo magro sistema, ma si occupa soltanto di affari solidi e positivi, [cercando] che le imprese vadino in fine stagione e non troncare lo spettacolo dopo qualche recita, come succede spesso."); Letter from Sante Utili to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 18.2.1883, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

229 It specified that there were only three male voices and no females. As regards the instrumentalists, the following needed to be found externally: three first violins, two second violins and a cello, two double basses, a first flute, a first oboe, a first clarinet, a first bassoon, a first trumpet and a timpanist. Among both the first and second violins a leader was needed. Among the double basses a principal part at the harpsichord; see Letter from the theatre presidency of Zadar to Sante Utili, Zadar, 27.2.1885, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

230 See Letter from the theatre presidency of Zadar to Sante Utili, Zadar, 27.2.1885, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

231 "Io tengo persona solvibile ed avreste chi assumerebbe l'appalto con la dovuta cauzione, e per meglio intendersi, pronto di venire subito a Zara"; Letter from Alessandro Berti to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 10.3.1885, HR-DAZD, folder 5. The management declined to pursue the matter because it was already negotiating with Bruto Bocci of Ferrara; Letter from the theatre management of Zadar to Bruto Bocci, Zadar, 16.3.1885, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

unrelenting. Though Utili did not completely disappear from the theatre circuits, over the years he seems to have become more cautious, for in 1889 he confided to the management at Zadar: “I am a family man with children who are minors and no mother, so I cannot be reckless. I am not as strong as I was owing to the losses sustained, but thank God I still have no need of anyone”.²³² However, we no longer find his name mentioned in the following seasons at Zadar. In light of the various reports received and the talk of debts contracted, the theatre management probably no longer felt like taking the risk.

While the theatre gave no opera season in 1884 and remained closed until the outcome of an appeal addressed to the Ministry about making alterations to the building and its furnishings (aimed at reducing fire hazards),²³³ from 1885 its activities resumed at full capacity. The abundance of proposals that arrived that year shows just how many impresarios were still interested in getting involved. Giovanni Battista Righini offered to organise an opera season in March; Ullmann proposed one with *Mignon* and *Faust*;²³⁴ and Ettore Bonturini²³⁵ from Venice again proposed *Faust*, though combined with *La traviata*. At the end of March, hence at the very last minute, we find Alfredo Vecchi still asking for the tender specifications, with the intention of making an offer. Some impresarios offered specific operas perhaps because they knew the composer and might hope for favourable terms. Writing from Bologna, the impresario and baritone Ernesto Maurizi Enrici – who again proposed *Faust*, which, we will remember, had been staged two years earlier with Razzani – suggested also staging *L'ultimo Faliero* by the composer Alessandro Magotti,²³⁶ justifying his choice by saying that the opera had already been widely performed and that it would be particularly well received because it required the use of Dalmatian costumes.²³⁷ And since he also knew the composer personally, he would secure excellent conditions. The management in Zadar, however, was unimpressed by these advantages and excluded the opera, since it believed

232 “Sono padre di famiglia di figli minorenni senza madre quindi non posso avventurarmi. Non sono più forte come una volta per subite perdite, ma grazie a Dio non o [sic] ancora bisogno di nessuno.”; Letter from Sante Utili to the theatre management of Zadar, Savigliano, 17. II. 1889, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

233 The theatre’s president Perlini was appointed to supervise the execution of the work. The authorities had ordered the alterations to be made so that the theatre would comply with the new fire regulations. Among the anticipated expenses were those for smearing and for water pumps on the stage and at the gridding. When a proposal was made by Felice Brandini of Trieste for ten performances of *Carmen* on October 1884, it was turned down for this very reason.

234 If accepted, the endowment would have come to 1,000 florins for 20 performances plus 4 further nights, with the agreement that the company would receive the overall takings, including the boxes of the third tier, but have to bear all expenses.

235 A certain Ettore Bonturini appeared as a “secondo amoroso” in the Drammatica Compagnia Dalmata; most likely, it was the same person; *La Fama*, 18. 4. 1858.

236 Alessandro Magotti was, like his father, also a theatrical agent; John Rosselli, *The Opera industry*, p. 27.

237 See Letter from Ernesto Maurizi Enrici to the theatre management of Zadar, Bologna, 17. 2. 1885, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

the score had little merit. Instead, it proposed *Il Guarany*, an opera that the impresario was not prepared to stage since it alone would cost around 5,000 lire: too much for his pockets (he declared that he had only 1,500 lire). An interesting piece of evidence is an approximate outline of the expenditure for *Il Guarany* in two tables. The first includes the expenses up until payment of the first instalment (*quartale*), i. e. until the first performance:

Noleggio della musica Guarany	L 800,00
Deposito per la restituzione	60,00
Noleggio vestiario	500,00
Noleggio scene ed attrezzi	200,00
Compagnia di canto – 1° quartale	1.500,00
n. 11 suonatori, 1a diecina	660,00
n. 15 coristi d'ambo i sessi – 1a diecina	750,00
n. 8 ballerine – 1° quartale	448,00
Coreografo direttore di scena – 1° quartale	65,00
Maestro del coro e suggeritore – 1° quartale	65,00
Spese trasporti circa ²³⁸	60,00
	L 5.108,00

The second presented the overall expenses for the whole season, including performances of *L'ultimo Faliero*:

Nolo vestiario Guarany	L 500,00
Nolo vestiario Ultimo Faliero	400,00
Opera Guarany	800,00
Opera Ultimo Faliero	300,00
Attrezzi e scene	400,00
Compagnia di canto	6.000,00
n. 11 suonatori forestieri	2.970,00
n. 15 coristi d'ambo i sessi	3.375,00
n. 3 coristi del paese	337,50
Maestro direttore e concertatore	500,00
Maestro del coro e suggeritore	260,00
n. 8 ballerine	1.792,00
Coreografo direttore di scena	260,00
Orchestra del paese n. 18 circa	2.160,00
Spese serali per 24 recite	1.680,00
Spese traverse e viaggi di mare	2.000,00
	L 23.734,50

²³⁸ To which would have to be added the costs of the outward journey by sea for everyone.

These figures confirm the customary assumption that the singers constituted the most expensive item in the season's budget. Also marked is the difference between the local orchestral players (*del paese*) and those hired externally (*forestieri*): the cost of a local would be 120 lire per season, that of an outsider 270, more than double. Or in other words, over a total of 24 performances, the local player would earn 5 lire (or 2 florins) for each performance, an outsider 11.5 lire (or 4.5 florins). The local chorister was paid even less and wouldn't even get 2 florins per night. Everything was calculated in Italian lire in the estimate. If one converted to florins, the totals would come to 2,043.20 florins for the partial expenditure (for just *Il Guarany* at the first performance), and 9,493.80 florins for the whole series of 24 performances, including *L'ultimo Faliero*.²³⁹ The total sum doesn't differ greatly from the estimate made two years later for the Politeama of Pula by Alfonso Pozzati, again for a season of 24 performances.²⁴⁰ If we bear in mind that in the 1870s and 1880s the endowments at Zadar ranged between 2,000 and 3,000 florins per season, we can well understand that the revenue – inclusive of season tickets (ca. 1,800 florins)²⁴¹ and other admissions – would not exceed the expenditure. In fact there is no evidence that this proposal was ever realised.

In the meantime the theatre continued to receive a number of proposals, even during the summer months: the Roman opera company of Giuseppe Conti asked to use the theatre in the first fortnight of June 1885 for opera buffa;²⁴² the agency “Artisti lirici e Maestri affini” of Milan proposed opera for the autumn season;²⁴³ and Giustino Azzarelli from Gorizia offered his own Donizetti opera company for a run of *semiseria* operas.²⁴⁴ The impresario who came out victorious was Pietro Dussich, who applied to organise ten performances of *La favorita* with a cast that included not only the baritone Antonio Pini Corsi and his wife, but also himself. As an impresario, Dussich generally handled opera

239 See Letter from Ernesto Maurizi Enrici to the theatre management of Zadar, Bologna, 6. 3. 1885, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

240 As we saw in the Chapter 1, Pozzati spoke of 10,980 florins for 24 nights, though with seasons of three operas instead of two, which justifies the higher cost; “Teatralia”, *L'Eco di Pola*, 22. 10. 1887.

241 See Estimate for the opera season to be given at the Teatro Sociale of Zadar, Milano, 26. 5. 1872, HR-DAZD, folder 26.

242 In fact it was Augusto Ganzari who wrote to Zadar on Giuseppe Conti's behalf in 1885. The works offered were *L'elisir d'amore*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Pipelet*, *Falsi monetari* and *Crispino e la comare*, i. e. those most in vogue for any company of opera buffa. The company's administrator was Carlo Cristofoli.

243 See Letter from the Artisti Lirici to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 17. 7. 1885, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

244 See Letter from Giustino Azzarelli to the theatre management of Zadar, Gorizia, 2. 8. 1885, HR-DAZD, folder 5. Among the requests in 1885 there was also that of Hans Roos from Trenozin-Töplitz, offering an opera company for Easter 1886 (and asking for information on the theatre's capacity and the local musical forces) and that of Alberto Vernier, writing from Pula and offering a semiseria opera company for October 1886.

seria, but the documentation attests that he asked for an extra endowment a month later and actually staged *Il barbiere di Siviglia*.²⁴⁵ For the first time the artists in the principal roles were from Zadar itself (Pini Corsi was born in Zadar²⁴⁶ and Dussich himself was also from the area). From this time on, nothing particularly significant seems to have happened in the city until the arrival of the impresario Paolo Massimini, who was to bring *La Gioconda* and *Faust*.

4.5.2 Aida on and off: Paolo Massimini and the missed season

In the 1880s Massimini, the “little Strakosch” (*piccolo Strakosch*) as he was also called, was still unaware of the comments that would be spread among the various theatre managements (or at the very least at Split), when his impresario colleague Antonio Lana (“Don Ciccio”), following the well-known practice of denunciation, decided to blacken his name with the theatre manager Gajo Filomen Bulat: “You will have heard that a certain Massimini (a Jew), a former impresario at Zadar and Dubrovnik took an opera company to Spain this winter and, as usual, abandoned it and fled. Of people like this there are dozens in Milan”.²⁴⁷ What is meant by the expression “as usual” is not clear, since, at least as far as Zadar is concerned, there don’t seem to have been too many problems. When he left Zadar after the 1888 season,²⁴⁸ Massimini had no further immediate correspondence with

245 See Letters from Pietro Dussich to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 4. 8. 1885 and 11. 9. 1885, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

246 Antonio Pini Corsi was twenty-seven at the time of his appearance at the Teatro Nuovo. He also often performed abroad, in particular at the Metropolitan of New York. See Elisabeth Forbes, “Pini-Corsi, Antonio”, Oxford Music Online, 2001, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000021782> [accessed 14. 4. 2020].

247 “Saprai che un certo Massimini (ebreo) impresario che fu di Zara e Ragusa ha portato questo inverno una compagnia d’opera in Spagna e come il solito l’ha piantata ed è scappato. Di questi ce ne sono parecchie dozzine a Milano.”; Letter from Antonio Lana to Gajo Filomen Bulat, Milano, 18. 3. 1893, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII. Lana knew the Spanish scene well, given that he had worked as general secretary for the opera company of the Teatro Real in Madrid for ten consecutive years; Letter from Antonio Lana to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, [May 1891], HR-DAZD, folder 7.

248 It was in this season that Massimini staged *La Gioconda* and *Faust*. It was a *Faust* that “brought in very slack business”, the newspaper commented, “to the extent that with an astute reprise of Ponchielli’s fine work the theatre filled up again to the satisfaction of all, but above all to that of the impresario, who, seeing the good business that can be done, is considering bringing to us next year, along with Verdi’s dark Ethiopian heroine, another two older operas still to be decided.” (“procurò degli affari veramente stracchi, tanto che con una sapiente *reprise* della bella creazione del Ponchielli il teatro ritornò a popolarsi con la soddisfazione di tutti, ma più di tutti dell’impresario. Il quale, visti i buoni affari, pensa ricondurci l’anno venturo, con la bruna etiopica verdiana, altre due opere di vecchia data non ancora fissate.”); “Nostre corrispondenze”, *L’Eco di Pola*, 27. 10. 1888.

any of the people he had been in contact with during his stay. However, after considering the good results and an experience that was generally positive, he made contact again in April 1889 by writing to the *maestro concertatore* Ravasio and announcing his programmes. He was to be the impresario at the Teatro Verdi of Busseto for the year in which the theatre celebrated its own centenary and the fiftieth anniversary of the first performance of a Verdi opera. “It will be a season of great importance with distinguished artists” (*Sarà uno spettacolo di molta importanza con distinti artisti*), he writes. Hence the proposal to bring everything, Busseto artists included,²⁴⁹ to Zadar in early November for a run of performances of *Aida*, *La traviata* and perhaps a third opera to be chosen by mutual agreement. He therefore asked for a reaction to the proposal so that he could engage the singers in good time; he also mentioned that his wife had been engaged to work in America and would be leaving in early August.²⁵⁰

The following month Massimini sent the project for the season (as per agreement made in person), also declaring that he was prepared to make changes if required. He sent it to Ravasio and not directly to the theatre management, hoping that the conductor might put in a good word: “I am sending it to you for you to present to the management, because it will gain in value if presented by you, especially if, as I hope, you will wish to support it with your influence”.²⁵¹ In the project he indicated that he wished to open the season in November 1889 with three operas, conjecturing no fewer than 20 performances, with 28 choristers, 30 orchestral players, 8 ballerinas and Ravasio as *maestro concertatore* and conductor. The fee would be 2,000 florins plus the use of the boxes and the takings from the theatre, as customary at the time.

After this letter there was a long silence until September. Indeed the negotiations would seem to have come to nothing, but then the management responded with encouragement (“We would like to think you have not abandoned the idea of coming to us”),²⁵² declaring that *Aida* would be fine, even if there was a concern that the grand spectacle might turn into “grand irony” (*grande ironia*) on their stage. *La traviata* was rejected, since the city was “gorged” with it (*ristucco*) and had had enough of it. “You would see the thea-

249 See Letter from Giuseppe Perlini to [unknown recipient], Zadar, 30. 9. 1889, HR-DAZD, folder 6. The practice of transferring an entire opera company with a specific repertoire from one theatre to another was one started by Lanari together with Merelli: the so-called “package deal” mentioned by Rosselli in his article “Agenti teatrali nel mondo dell’opera lirica dell’Ottocento”, *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia*, 1/17 (1982), p. 149.

250 See Letter from Paolo Massimini to Antonio Ravasio, Milano, 15. 4. 1889, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

251 “Io lo mando a lei affinché lo presenti alla direzione perché presentato da Lei acquista più valore tanto più se come spero Lei lo vorrà appoggiare dalla sua influenza”. Letter from Paolo Massimini to Antonio Ravasio, Milano, 7. 5. 1889, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

252 “Vogliamo supporre ch’Ella non abbia abbandonato affatto l’idea di venire tra noi”. Letter from the theatre management of Zadar to Paolo Massimini, Zadar, 26. 9. 1889, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

tre empty”, the writer prophesied.²⁵³ As for the third opera, it would not be needed; the season would consist of 20 nights at most. If staging *Aida* should prove impossible, the management proposed *Carmen* or *Mignon*. Concerning the fee, it agreed to the 2,000 florins: half given after the first performance, half at the end of the season. It also observed in passing that Massimini had been paid 500 florins too much the year before, “by mistake” (*incompetentemente*).²⁵⁴ That sum would no longer be available in the forthcoming season. He was instructed to bring artists of distinction, or at least no worse than those of the past performances of *La Gioconda*, and to address all further questions to Ravasio. Finally, in anticipation of drafting the contract, he was asked to indicate an approximate date for the first performance.

From that moment on, there began a series of misunderstandings and exasperating negotiations carried out through telegrams sent back and forth between Zadar and Soresina (near Cremona) or Milan, where Massimini was residing. Everything started with an innocuous telegram from Massimini confirming the state of play: “Same conditions last year I take on impresa giving *Aida* [and] other opera”.²⁵⁵ The management calmly answered: “Past conditions, without additions. *Aida* and *Carmen* or *Mignon*. Approval written contract by shareholders”.²⁵⁶ Massimini replied with a confirmation: “Will give *Aida* with distinguished artists splendid staging and other opera to be chosen mutual agreement Prepared to come and arrange [Please] send telegram”.²⁵⁷ The management responded indicating the order of the operas – “We repeat *Aida* first, *Carmen* or *Mignon* second, two thousand florins” (*Ripetiamo Aida prima, Carmen oppure Mignon seconda fiorini duemila*) – and simultane-

253 “Ella vedrebbe il teatro deserto”; Letter from the theatre management of Zadar to Paolo Massimini, Zadar, 26.9.1889, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

254 To this veiled accusation Massimini responded as follows: “If I must, as they say, open up my soul, I thought I detected in your esteemed letter of 4 October a touch of bitterness that I truly do not know what to ascribe to. In it it says that last year I was improperly paid 500 florins. I was paid not a penny more than was owed to me and I believe I did my job to the general satisfaction of both the discerning public and the honourable management.” (“Se devo poi aprire come suol dirsi l’animo mio, ho creduto intravedere nella pregiata di Lei lettera del 4 ottobre un certo non so che di amaro che io non so veramente a cosa attribuire. In essa è detto che l’anno scorso ho percepito incompetentemente fiorini 500. Io non ho percepito neppure un soldo che non mi fosse dovuto e mi sembra di aver servito con generale soddisfazione e dell’intelligente pubblico e dell’Onorevole Direzione.”); Letter from Paolo Massimini to the theatre management of Zadar, Soresina, 22.10.1889, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

255 “Precise condizioni anno scorso assumo impresa dando *Aida* altra opera”; Telegram from Paolo Massimini to the theatre management of Zadar, Soresina, 4.10.1889, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

256 “Condizioni passate, senza aggiunta. *Aida* e *Carmen* oppure *Mignon*. Approvazione sociale contratto scritto”; Telegram from the theatre management of Zadar to Paolo Massimini, Zadar, 4.10.1889, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

257 “Darò *Aida* con distinti artisti splendida messa in scena e altra opera da scegliersi comune accordo disposto venire combinare telegrafate”; Telegram from Paolo Massimini to the theatre management of Zadar, Soresina, 4.10.1889, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

ously felt the need to send a letter as well, with the following specification in the postscript: “your telegram of today is not clear. An agreement between two people will not succeed when each persists in his own idea. We repeat: Aida first, Carmen or Mignon second. The endowment of two thousand florins and no more. Come if you want to sign the contract, subject to the approval of our company”.²⁵⁸

The problem was that if both *Aida* and *Mignon* were staged, a double company would be needed: something that Massimini was not disposed to provide. He therefore proposed replacing *Mignon* with another opera: only in that way, he claimed, would he be able to guarantee a satisfactory season.²⁵⁹ The management, backing down, replied: “Second *Carmen* or other new [opera] for Zadar and [to be] decided quickly”.²⁶⁰ Time was indeed running out, it was necessary to act fast. Massimini responded with Ponchielli’s *Promessi sposi* instead of *Carmen* and it seemed as if they had reached an agreement: “First Aida. Second Promessi Sposi. Endowment two thousand”.²⁶¹ So in the meantime the management prepared a draft contract, dated 10 October, indicating the operas *Aida* and *Promessi sposi*. At article 4 the management, mindful of earlier experiences, clearly spelled out that the impresario could ask for neither an increase in the endowment nor other benefits other than those already agreed. In a post scriptum, it was mentioned that in the opinion of Ravasio – with which the theatre concurred – instead of *Promessi sposi* it would be preferable to have another opera, again a new one for Zadar, such as *Don Sebastiano*. This was not an obligation but simply a “recommendation”, which would in any case be subject to approval. Massimini confirmed everything: “All agreed I await contract Meantime will engage artists”.²⁶² Everything seemed to be going well, for the management had yielded on the change of the second opera, thereby making it possible to save on the double cast. But there was a new interruption in communications, and about ten days later Massimini found himself obliged to send the following telegram: “In view of your delay impossible for early November to stage Aida Reason organisation artists [and] masses Will give second opera first Must give opera with rehearsals done Please wire

258 “il suo odierno telegramma non è chiaro. Un accordo non riesce tra due, quando ognuno persiste nella propria idea. Ripetiamo: Aida prima, Carmen oppure Mignon seconda. La dotazione di fiorini due mila e non più. Venga se vuole a firmare contratto, salva l’approvazione della nostra società”; Letter from the theatre management of Zadar to Paolo Massimini, Zadar, 4. 10. 1889, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

259 See Telegram from Paolo Massimini to the theatre management of Zadar, Soresina, 5. 10. 1889, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

260 “Seconda *Carmen* oppure altra nuova per Zara e stabilita tosto”; Telegram from the theatre management of Zadar to Paolo Massimini, Zadar, 5. 10. 1889, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

261 “Prima Aida. Seconda Promessi Sposi. Dote duemila”; Telegram from the theatre management of Zadar to Paolo Massimini, Zadar, 6. 10. 1889, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

262 “Sta bene attendo contratto intanto impegno artisti”; Telegram from Paolo Massimini to the theatre management of Zadar, Soresina, 7. 10. 1889, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

various operas to choose from Time is short".²⁶³ By this time there was really very little time before the start of the season, just a matter of a couple of weeks. Massimini was thus asking to make *Aida* the second opera and once again left the choice of the other opera open; considering the minimal time available, it would have to be something 'ready'. This time the management did not back down at all: "Aida first absolutely. Second Promessi sposi or other new [opera] for Zadar. Impresa must propose. Await signed contract. Please respect agreements".²⁶⁴ Given the difficulty of the situation (and the palpable tension), this time Massimini turned directly to Ravasio asking him to convince the management of the impossibility of giving *Aida* as the first opera and to tell him what the first opera could be. Ravasio's answer, however, was unequivocal and not what Massimini wanted to hear: "Presidency inflexible. Aida first Season guaranteed".²⁶⁵ Besides, the wishes of a *maestro concertatore* would in any case take second place to decisions of the theatre management: Ravasio's opinions might be taken into consideration, but not to the point of changing prearranged plans.

On such conditions Massimini could do nothing but back down and send the telegram the management would never have wanted to read: "Suspending departure Staying in Milan since Sunday trying to find solution Impossible to give Aida Too little time for the suppliers and *masse* I propose to bring production [in] spring It will succeed better Promising to bring various artists [from] Teatro Fenice Venice".²⁶⁶ The reason why Massimini mentioned La Fenice is because in October of that year he was engaged in the running of the autumn season there, together with the *maestro concertatore* Emilio Usiglio.²⁶⁷ To be sure, moving the season to March or April would mean doing things with greater ease and also getting better supplies. And according to Massimini, the motive for not accepting the conditions were those of force majeure and not "dependent on human will" (*dipendente dalla volontà umana*). The theatre management, on the other hand, felt betrayed and reacted with threats: "Respect agreements otherwise we publish in newspapers" (*Mantenga patti*

263 "Stante vostro ritardo impossibile per primi novembre mettere scena Aida causa meccanismi masse artisti darotta per seconda prima occorre dare opera pronta concertazione favorite telegrafarmi varie opere fra cui scegliere tempo stringe"; Telegram from Paolo Massimini to the theatre management of Zadar, Soresina, 17. 10. 1889, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

264 "Aida prima assolutamente. Seconda Promessi sposi oppure altra nuova per Zara. Impresa proponga. Attendiamo contratto firmato. Paghiamo mantenere patti"; Telegram from the theatre management of Zadar to Paolo Massimini, Zadar, 17. 10. 1889, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

265 "Presidenza irremovibile. Aida prima stagione assicurata"; Telegram from Antonio Ravasio to Paolo Massimini, Zadar, 18. 10. 1889, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

266 "Sospendo partenza trovandomi Milano da domenica cercare rimediare impossibile dare Aida per masse fornitori causa tempo ristretto propongo trasportare spettacolo primavera riuscirà migliore promettendo portare vari artisti teatro Fenice Venezia"; Telegram from Paolo Massimini to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 21. 10. 1889, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

267 "Venedig 3. Oktober", *Signale für die musikalische Welt*, no. 58, October 1889, p. 916.

altrimenti pubblicheremo sui giornali).²⁶⁸ The threat of losing credibility in the newspapers was not only real, but also greatly feared by impresarios, who viewed the journals as one of the chief ways of building a reputation. Massimini, however, did not feel he had broken off any deal and gave the cause as a misunderstanding, as it was simply a matter of giving *Aida* as the second opera and not wasting time by staging first a work that was new for Zadar and easy to perform. “I cannot understand your adverse position”, Massimini wrote to one of the directors, “especially since I raised this difficulty as early as last year, when speaking with Maestro Ravasio, Signor Niccolò Dondan, and Signor Pietro Dussich about the opera, which could be given another year, and it was agreed that it was of greater interest also to the impresa”.²⁶⁹ If performed at the start of a season, no other opera would be able to bear comparison with *Aida*. But with adequate time for preparation, the work could be performed under the best of conditions, “given that it is very difficult for the *masse*”. Massimini returned the contract just as he had received it, declaring himself to be “very sorry” (*dispiacentissimo*) and regretting the mishap.²⁷⁰

All negotiations were definitively broken off and the impresario received no further communication: he heard nothing more from the management, either through the newspapers or by letter. What happened in 1889 he himself called an “unfortunate misunderstanding” (*malaugurato malinteso*). He could not understand how the theatre management would refuse to accept the impossibility of staging *Aida* in under two weeks, when it would have been sufficient to begin the season with a repertoire opera.

Writing again to Ravasio at the end of the year, Massimini came forward with a fresh proposal for the theatre of Zadar, asking if they would be interested in performances of *Carmen*. Some time earlier, the management itself had shown an interest in the opera, which had been staged at La Fenice in Venice not so long before, so nothing could go wrong. But this time he would have to know in good time, so that he could make a single contract with suppliers and artists. In Venice, he wrote, things were going well in the meantime and the rehearsals were encouraging. “Find a way of making a trip here during carnival”, he concluded.²⁷¹

268 Telegram from the theatre management of Zadar to Paolo Massimini, Zadar, 22. 10. 1889, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

269 “Non arrivo a comprendere la di Lei negative, tanto più che questa difficoltà l’ho sollevata fin dallo scorso anno, parlando dello spettacolo che si poteva dare un altro anno assieme al Sig. M.to Ravasio, al sig. Niccolò Dondan, ed al sig. Pietro Dussich e si convenne essere maggiore interesse anche per l’impresa.”; Letter from Paolo Massimini to the theatre management of Zadar, Soresina, 22. 10. 1889, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

270 “essendo essa assai difficile per le masse”; Letter from Paolo Massimini to the theatre management of Zadar, Soresina, 22. 10. 1889, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

271 “procuri di fare una gita qui durante il Carnevale”; Letter from Paolo Massimini to Antonio Ravasio, Venezia, 20. 12. 1889, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

The outcome of this idea was that in January 1890 the management prepared a new draft contract for the operas *Carmen* and *Fra Diavolo* to be performed in April, again with 20 to 25 performances, and again with an endowment of 2,000 florins. The condition imposed by the management was that *Carmen* was to be given first. It was beginning to look like a repeat of the previous year's experience of *Aida* and the 'second opera'. The management preferred to open the season with the work of greatest impact, without worrying that the second opera might thereby suffer by comparison. This time, without any further discussion, Massimini signed the contract, in the presence of Livio Bianchi and Marco Cappello, two witnesses called in to endorse the signature.

Massimini was to perform *La favorita*, *Fra Diavolo* and *Carmen* at the Teatro Sociale of Gorizia in the Lent season of 1890 with artists brought directly from the Teatro La Fenice (as had been planned previously for Zadar). Given that everything would later come to Zadar, the theatre management of Zadar wrote to Gorizia asking for information on the quality of the artists, the staging and the costumes.²⁷² The report from Gorizia was positive: the impresario had been zealous and conscientious and could be fully commended. The artists were good and the public was satisfied: the staging was "very respectable" (*decentissima*), the costumes "suited to the action" (*analoghi all'azione*) and the sets "good" (*belli*). Though the soprano primadonna of *Fra Diavolo* did not perhaps have a wide-ranging voice, she nonetheless possessed a fine timbre and "clarity" (*limpidezza*).²⁷³ In the impresario's eyes the theatre management of Gorizia, unlike Zadar's, had shrewdly understood that it was much better to stage the repertoire opera first and *Carmen* later.

For reasons that are not explained, Massimini could not bring *La favorita* to Zadar, as he had just recently done in Gorizia, so he asked Ravasio to send him a list of six possible titles to choose from. And to avoid any further misunderstandings he repeated the same request to the theatre management. Obviously the new opera would have to suit the vocal qualities of the singers already engaged for *Carmen*, for it was impossible for him – he stressed the point – to form two distinct companies. He also pointed out that any opera chosen to follow *Carmen* would surely enjoy less success than its predecessor: from his own experience he had noted in various theatres that whatever was performed immediately after Bizet's work was always given a "cool reception" (*freddo risultato*). So he proposed beginning the season with the other opera (Auber's *Fra Diavolo* was subsequently chosen) and following it with *Carmen*, "to avoid doing myself harm" (*per non danneggiarmi*).²⁷⁴

272 See Letter from the theatre management of Zadar to the theatre management of Gorizia, Zadar, 18. 3. 1890, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

273 Letter from the theatre management of Gorizia to the theatre management of Zadar, Gorizia, 23. 3. 1890, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

274 Letter from Paolo Massimini to the theatre management of Zadar, Venezia, 11. 1. 1890, HR-DAZD, folder 25.

The theatre made a request to the composer Nicolò Stermich (who by this time was a ‘former director’) to attend the rehearsals and, by virtue of his musical knowledge, make comments and proposals.²⁷⁵ At the time, the management lacked personalities with solid musical skills, which naturally made it harder to make the appropriate choices on repertoire. In the event, the season fully satisfied expectations. Moreover, in the following year even the two operas over which negotiations had previously been inconclusive (*Aida* and *La favorita*) were eventually staged, along with *Rigoletto*. Massimini hence signed a third contract with the management of Zadar in 1891.

4.5.3 The Sonzogno years and the many years of Trauner management

With the exception of 1893, a year in which (according to the letter books) no opera was performed, perhaps on account of a fire in the theatre, the 1890s hosted a steady stream of seasons, though no longer with the presence of the *maestro concertatore* Ravasio. After conducting Massimini’s last two seasons, he stood down and made way for personalities such as Manlio Ravagnoli,²⁷⁶ Pietro Stermich and Antonio Palminteri.²⁷⁷ These were the years in which Sonzogno had a direct influence on certain decisions taken about the opera seasons at Zadar. For the 1892 season, for example, when it was decided to give *Mignon*, *Cavalleria rusticana* and *I puritani* with the impresario Annibale Cicognani,²⁷⁸ it was Sonzogno in person who wished the works to be conducted by Antonio Ricci Signorini²⁷⁹ and Luigi Solari. Solari also succeeded in having his one-act legend *Holmara* performed, with considerable success it would seem.²⁸⁰ It is not known, on the other hand, who appointed the chorus master, though

275 See Letter from the theatre presidency of Zadar to Nicolò Stermich di Valcrociata, Zadar, 28. 3. 1890, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

276 Manlio Ravagnoli was a composer and teacher from Parma, and later conductor, who had a long career in Milan also as a singing teacher; *Almanacco italiano*, vol. XXXVII, 1932, p. 331.

277 Antonio Palminteri (1846–1915) was a *maestro concertatore* and composer of operas. He is remembered for the operas *Arrigo II* and *Amazilia*. On one occasion he even conducted the orchestra of the Alexandrinsky Theatre at St Petersburg; *Dizionario universale dei musicisti*, Sonzogno, Milano 1937, p. 223 and Ambiveri, *Operisti minori*, p. 108.

278 On the career of Annibale Cicognani, a former bass singer, we have unfortunately little information. We only know that he ended his life at the Casa Verdi in Milan. He died following injuries sustained in a car accident; *Ars et labor*, 1908, p. 760. For the 1892 season, the correspondence mentions, in addition to the operas indicated, negotiations over *Lebrea* and *Don Sebastiano* as well.

279 Antonio Ricci Signorini (1867–1965) from Massa Lombarda, was not only a conductor but also a composer of orchestral and piano music; Marino Biondi, *L’arte dolorosa di Giacinto Ricci Signorini*, Il Ponte Vecchio, Cesena 1995, p. III.

280 ‘A splendid success was achieved at the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar by the legend in one act *Holmara* by Luigi Solari, to a text by A. Bignotti. The local newspapers have words of high praise for the talented

the choice was perhaps not a good one, seeing that comments were made about the choruses in *Mignon* being “unsteady and unblended” (*poco sicuri e poco fusi*); as for the orchestra, greater justice would have been made to the score if it had had “good elements” (*buoni elementi*).²⁸¹ However, at least in the numbers of artists deployed, judging from the newspapers, the impresario displayed positively “Asiatic opulence” (*un lusso asiatico*). As many as 46 people had been brought to Zadar. It was a shame, therefore, that in spite of receiving an advance of 900 florins (in addition to an agreed first instalment of 500 florins), he was unable to fulfil his obligations towards his staff and could find no way of laying hands on any other money. He was effectively in a state of bankruptcy, and – according to Giuseppe Perlini, director of the theatre – the situation was bringing discredit on the theatre management and indeed the whole city. Perlini had offered to contribute in person to the removal of every obstacle, but his proposal failed to get the support of the other directors, so a shareholders’ meeting was convened to make a decision. If the vote should go against him, he would tender his resignation, so as not to share the responsibility for a situation he considered deplorable.²⁸² Most likely he won the vote (or alternatively, he did not stick to his threat), for we still find his name among the theatre’s directors in the years immediately following.

A preference was shown for Sonzogno also in 1895 when the programme chosen was that of the impresario Angelo Romiti (represented by Natale Fidora), who proposed Massenet’s *Manon Lescaut*,²⁸³ Mascagni’s *Amico Fritz* and a third opera, again to be selected from among the repertoire of Casa Sonzogno.²⁸⁴ The terms of the tender specifications were unchanged:

and very young musician, who, in this work, displayed uncommon compositional talent, together with a pronounced sense of theatre. He also deserved warm admiration as a conductor, for both the fine interpretation of his *Holmara* and that of the other scores. Very praiseworthy were the performances of the admirable Signora Montalcino and the excellent tenor Bioletto.” (“Al teatro Nuovo di Zara ottenne splendido successo la leggenda in un atto: *Holmara* di Luigi Solari, su parole di A. Bignotti. I giornali locali hanno parole di vivo encomio pel valente e giovanissimo maestro, il quale, con questo lavoro, rivelò attitudini non comuni di compositore, unite ad una spiccatissima intuizione pel teatro. Caldi elogi si meritò inoltre quale direttore d’orchestra per la fine interpretazione della sua *Holmara*, come per gli altri spartiti. Molto lodevole l’esecuzione per parte della egregia signora Montalcino e pel bravo tenore Bioletto.”); *Il Teatro illustrato*, XII, no. 143, 1892.

281 “Dalla Dalmazia”, *Il Teatro Illustrato*, 1892, p. 172.

282 See Letter from Giuseppe Perlini to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 27.9.1892, HR-DAZD, folder 24.

283 The opera was given on 22 April, only to move to Rijeka two days later.

284 Among the other people connected with the publisher, not only over the choice of Sonzogno operas, was the impresario Ottorino Paterni, who came into contact with the theatre management of Zadar in 1899. Paterni had entered the employment of Edoardo Sonzogno in 1883, initially working as an employee in charge of the distribution of the newspapers *Il Secolo* and *La Capitale*. “Later, when Sonzogno devoted himself to theatrical speculation”, wrote *Il Monitore dei Tribunali*, “Paterni was assigned to this company as an accountant, and remained in the service of Sonzogno until 1893. From a feeble cheque of 80 lire a month his salary gradually increased to 4,000 lire a year. In 1893 Paterni

it was a matter of giving 20 performances of 3 operas, with 26 orchestral players, 22 choristers and an endowment of 2,000 florins; all the admissions, stools (*scanni*), seats (*poltroncine*), 3rd-tier boxes (with the exception of three big *palconi*) would be at the impresario's disposal. Romiti succeeded in obtaining a further 1,000 florins and indeed, from this year onwards we witness a slight increase in the endowment. The increase was often justified by the presence of ballet, as happened when *Gli Ugonotti* was proposed two years later by Domenico Valenti.²⁸⁵ Henceforward there were to be at least 500 florins more per season (in Valenti's case the endowment of 2,500 florins was also inclusive of the bonus for the *impresa*). 2,500 florins were assigned also to the Belletti and Romei *impresa* for *La bohème* and *Mefistofele* (significantly the latter work included a ballet), though later the shareholders' meeting switched *impresa* and assigned the season to Nicola Guida from Bari. Guida changed the operas to *La bohème*, *Forza del destino* and *I puritani*, while retaining the same endowment (in the event, the impresario staged only the last two of the three operas). This sum was broken down as follows: 1,500 florins from the Comune, 500 florins from the lieutenancy, and 500 florins provided by the shareholders. The Belletti and Romei *impresa* had pulled out of the contract after it had been awarded, because it had come to the conclusion that the money was insufficient to cover all the expenses (in fact we saw above that a season at Zadar could easily cost around 9,000 florins). So in spite of the small increases in the endowment of the previous seasons, it declined the offer.²⁸⁶ In the end, the project

was stationed in Trieste, sent there by Sonzogno to oversee, on his behalf, a theatrical season that had opened there. In Trieste a grave misfortune befell Paterni. He fell while riding and was assisted, almost lifeless and with an injury to his head, and admitted to the city hospital. The political authorities in Trieste took pains to collect all the objects and valuables owned by Paterni, which the police delivered to the safe custody of Sonzogno, who had hastened to the scene of his employee's calamitous accident." ("In seguito datosi il Sonzogno alla speculazione teatrale, il Paterni fu adibito a questa azienda come contabile, e rimase al servizio del Sonzogno sino al 1893. Da un tenue assegno di L. 80 mensili andò man mano aumentandosi il suo stipendio sino a L. 4000 annue. Nel 1893 il Paterni trovavasi a Trieste, inviati dal Sonzogno per attendere ad una stagione teatrale aperta colà per conto di quest'ultimo. Una disgrazia grave colpiva il Paterni in Trieste: cavalcando cadde e fu raccolto quasi esanime con ferita al capo, e ricoverato in quel civico ospedale. L'autorità politica di Trieste davasi cura di ritirare tutti gli oggetti e valori di proprietà del Paterni, che al Sonzogno, accorso per il disgraziato accidente del suo impiegato, la polizia consegnava in deposito."); *Il Monitore dei Tribunali*, 1895, p. 448.

285 At Zadar in February 1896 the choice fell on the season proposed by Domenico Valenti with *Un ballo in maschera*, *Gli Ugonotti* or *Ernani*, and a third opera to be decided. A request was made to stage *Gli Ugonotti* with ballet, and this was the reason the endowment was increased.

286 "We have examined with attention the matter of the contract for your theatre for the next spring season", the impresarios wrote, "and we are persuaded that it is not in our interests, since having to give *Bohème* and *Mefistofele*, with ballet, with good artists and a respectable staging, the expense would exceed the most optimistic forecasts. It is therefore not a transaction for us, so we hasten to decline the honourable preference for the contract that Your Lordships inform us has been granted to us." ("Abbiamo esaminato con attenzione l'affare dell'appalto del loro teatro per la prossima stagione di primavera e ci

to perform *La bohème* was realised by the impresa of Luigi Dessanti, who at the very least had the merit of bringing the excellent soprano Emma Zilli to the city.²⁸⁷

In 1898 even *Manon*, together with *Lohengrin*, were staged with an endowment of 2,500 florins (inclusive of bonus). Immediately afterwards, the theatre's shareholders granted a further increase when they voted a subsidy of 2,800 florins to finance the opera season organised by Eugenio De Monari, this time returning to perform repertoire belonging to Sonzogno (*Fedora*, *Carmen*, *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Zanetto* in 1899). The preference for Sonzogno was confirmed also in the following year, with *Andrea Chénier*, Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* or his *La bohème*, and *Il piccolo Haydn*.²⁸⁸ From the impresario's letters, however, we learn that this season hardly produced the desired outcome (it was suggested that the losses may have amounted to as much as 11,000 lire or around 4,400 florins). While De Monari found himself in debt to the theatre management of Zadar, he was keen to make it clear that he was a man of honour: "I am a decent person", he wrote "and when I will have done three or four seasons with earnings, then, given that I have a sum of my own exclusive property to one side, I will pay off my outstanding debt towards you; *before that, it is absolutely impossible for me in any way whatsoever* to do so! If you will have the consideration and courtesy to wait, I shall be most grateful, otherwise I leave you to act as your consciences see fit".²⁸⁹ By choice he did not tender a proposal for 1901: "next year", he wrote to the management, "I intend to go into partnership with Antonio Bernasci for the theatres of South America-Brazil and the Argentine Republic. I have no intention of fossilising here; I am still young and I want to travel the world a little".²⁹⁰ Perhaps the problem was not

siamo convinti che non ci conviene poiché dovendosi dare Bohème e Mefistofele, con ballo, con artisti buoni ed una decorosa messa in iscena, la spesa supererebbe le più rosee previsioni dell'entrata. Non è quindi affare per noi e ci affrettiamo quindi a declinare l'onorevole preferenza dell'appalto che le SS. VV. ci annunziano averci concesso."); Letter from Belletti and Romei to the theatre management of Zadar, Mantova, 23. 2. 1897, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

287 "Artisti scritturati – Emma Zilli", *Il Cosmorama*, 17. 4. 1897, p. 6.

288 The correspondence between Eugenio De Monari and the theatre management reveals that there was an intention to stage also Saint Saëns' *Sansone e Dalila*, an opera that the impresario subsequently asked to replace with Bizet's *I pescatori di perle*.

289 "Sono un uomo per bene, e quando avrò fatto tre o quattro stagioni guadagnando, allora avendo a parte una somma di mia esclusiva proprietà salderò la pendenza che ho verso di loro; *prima, in qualunque modo, in ogni caso mi è assolutamente impossibile* di farlo! Se loro avranno la delicata cortesia di attendere sarò gratissimo, in caso diverso gli lascio agire secondo quanto detterà la loro coscienza."; Letter from Eugenio De Monari to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 15. 8. 1900, HR-DAZD, folder 23. On this subject we have no further knowledge of outstanding debts or lawsuits against him, so perhaps De Monari actually succeeded in reimbursing the management.

290 "Fanno venturo ò [*sic*] intenzione di associarmi a Antonio Bernasci per i teatri dell'America del Sud-Brasile e Repubblica Argentina. Non ò [*sic*] nessuna intenzione di fossilizzarmi da queste parti; sono ancora giovane e voglio girare un po' il mondo."; Letter from Eugenio De Monari to the theatre management of Zadar, Gorizia, 4. 6. 1900, HR-DAZD, folder 10.

so much a fear of “fossilising” as, quite understandably, that of securing a certain income. South America would unquestionably offer more.

On the other hand, an impresario who was certain to come out of the experience unscathed, indeed with guaranteed earnings, was Olimpio Lovrich when he brought *Tosca* to Zadar. Lovrich, who was of Dalmatian origin, was returning to his homeland after running the Teatro Comunale of Trieste (an impresa that he later resumed for a number of years) and also working at the Politeama Rossetti in the same city.²⁹¹ *Tosca* had been requested by the theatre of Zadar even before its premiere in Rome, as we learn from a letter written by Eugenio Tornaghi, who informed the theatre management of the impossibility of having it performed in Dalmatia as desired, since the work was earmarked – at least as far as first performances were concerned – for the “principal theatres” (*teatri massimi*).²⁹² There was also a plan to take the work to Split in 1900, on the proposal of the agent Angelo Chinelli for his client Teresa Raineri Vaschetti, but the management in Split chose a different programme.²⁹³ After its successful performance in Zadar in 1902 the theatre management wrote directly to Puccini to tell him of the evening’s triumph (“Honoured to communicate extraordinary success enthusiasm *Tosca* [at] our theatre ecstatic public continuous ovations gratifying congratulations”).²⁹⁴ The telegram prompted a reply from the maestro: “Infinite thanks communication *Tosca* success congratulate worthy performers regards Puccini”.²⁹⁵ Lovrich, however, did not remain in Zadar beyond 1902, and his place was taken once again by Giorgio Trauner, even though he hardly arrived in the city with excellent references. Four years earlier the theatre management had received yet another denunciation:

291 See Vito Levi, *La vita musicale a Trieste. Cronache di un cinquantennio*, All’insegna del pesce d’oro, Milano 1968, p. 42. Olimpio Lovrich (? – 1928), a horn player in the orchestra of Aachen and impresario. He also ran certain cinemas in Trieste; see Fabiana Licciardi, “Tutto esaurito nei cinema – teatri a Trieste durante la Grande guerra”, Lecture held at the Circolo Aziendale delle Assicurazioni Generali Trieste, 21. 3. 2016. Further brief biographical information on Lovrich is provided by Helmut Luther in *Oesterreich liegt am Meer. Eine Reise durch die k. u. k. Sehnsuchtsorte*, Amalthea, Wien 2017, [n. p.]: “Since he was given financial security by his wife’s property, he founded his own company as a theatre impresario. Together with a partner, he took over the management of the Teatro Verdi in 1901, and later added other theatres.” (“Finanziell durch den Besitz der Frau abgesichert, gründet er eine eigene Firma als Theaterimpresario. Zusammen mit einem Partner übernimmt er 1901 die Leitung des Verdi-Theaters, später kommen weitere Theater dazu”).

292 Letter from Eugenio Tornaghi to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 30. 6. 1899, HR-DAZD, folder 10.

293 See Letter from Angelo Chinelli to the theatre management of Split, Milano, 24. 12. 1900, HR-MGS: Kazalište 4/ kut. I–XVII.

294 “Pregiamoci comunicarvi successo straordinario entusiasmo *Tosca* nostro teatro pubblico delirante continue acclamazioni aggratite congratulazioni”; Telegram from the theatre management of Zadar to Giacomo Puccini, [Zadar, 1902], HR-DAZD, folder 11.

295 Telegram from Giacomo Puccini to the theatre management of Zadar, [Zadar, 1902], HR-DAZD, folder 11.

Dear Sir,

I have just come to hear about the cast of the company performing at your theatre. I have the honour to warn you that it is one of the most dreadful of companies. It is very clear that the trickster Trauner could not bring any better merchandise. Beginning with the prima donna Schubert, who has been dismissed at Como, Faenza and other cities. The conductor Palminteri was dismissed in the carnival season at Palermo precisely in the opera Lohengrin. As for the tenor, he has never done Lohengrin, he has done Sonobola [*sic*], Linda, Fra Diavolo [...] etc.

The [...] baritone Dadone, for carnival, was in Camerino, an Italian town nobody has heard of, doing opera buffa Papa [*sic*] Martin and worse still. Trauner goes around saying that for the present there is more than enough work among the Croatians, for they understand nothing. I hope, indeed I'm sure, that this honourable management will have the good sense to send them back to their mother country and that even the public will understand it has been cheated by a piece of trickery. It is said that Manon will be sung by the impresario's better half: that fair Manon is at least 90 years old and is worn out like a broken bass drum. All of what I am writing is the pure truth and you shall see. Very best wishes to [...]. Edoardo Scarpetti²⁹⁶

The letter was not anonymous; its ungrammatical author wished to make it known that the cast would be unequal to the task, seeing that it was made up of singers who were either inexperienced or had been sacked (*protestati*), or had committed the sin of singing in small and insignificant Italian towns; that the role of Manon herself was entrusted to the impresario's aged wife, who, it would appear, was not at the peak of her powers; and that the impresario, in whose eyes the Croatian public was not particularly discerning when it came to understanding what was put in front of it, was known as a "trickster". In spite of all this, the management cannot have been too alarmed by such warnings if it recon-

296 "Egregio Signore, vengo a sapere in questo momento l'elenco della compagnia che agisce a codesto teatro. Ho l'onore di avvertirla che è una compagnia delle più scadenti. Si capisce bene che Trauner speculatore non poteva portare altra mercanzia. Principiando dalla prima donna Schubert fu protestato a Como, Faenza e altre città. Maestro direttore Palminteri protestato nella stagione di carnevale a Palermo appunto nell'opera Lohengrin. Il tenore poi non ha mai fatto Lohengrin, ha fatto Sonobola [*sic*], Linda, Fra Diavolo [...] ecc. Il [...] baritono Dadone, il carnevale fu a Camerino, una città d'Italia che nessun conosce facendo opere buffe Papa [*sic*] Martin ed oltre. Il Trauner va dicendo che per ora mezzo ai croati ce ne [*sic*] fin troppo che non capiscono gnente [*sic*]. Spero anzi sicuro che codesta onorevole direzione avrà buon senso, di rimandarli ai suoi patri lidi e che, pure il puplico [*sic*] saprà capire essere stato turlupinato da una speculazione. Si dice che la Manon la farà la dolce metà dell'impresario che bella Manon a [*sic*] per lo meno 90 anni sfiatata come na grancassa rotta. Tutto ciò che le scrivo è la pura verità e vedranno. Saluti ottimi alle [...]. Edoardo Scarpetti."; Letter from Edoardo Scarpetti to the theatre management of Zadar, [n. p.] [1898], HR-DAZD, folder 9.

firmed Trauner for four years running in the new century and even increased his endowment.²⁹⁷ Trauner returned in 1903 with a threefold proposal, that of giving: “Mefistofele and Bohème”, “Mefistofele and Gioconda” or “Mefistofele, Rigoletto and Puritani”. The Zadar management responded by suggesting that giving *Rigoletto* would meet the public’s wishes, “which is as much as to say it would increase the profits of the impresa”.²⁹⁸ It decided to grant the impresario 7,000 lire (equivalent to 2,800 florins); in other words, 1,000 lire more than the “usual endowment”, for a production of *Mefistofele* plus another opera of his choice (or another two: the impresario was reminded that it was in his own interest to give three operas instead of two). This endowment represented a maximum limit beyond which the management could not go.²⁹⁹ But “by making some sacrifices” (*con sacrificio*), according to the management, these 7,000 lire could become 7,000 crowns, i. e. just under 3,500 florins. Together with the sum given to Olimpio Lovrich in the previous year for staging a big novelty like *Tosca*, this was the largest endowment granted at Zadar up until that moment. Moreover, the management also said it was ready to give Trauner a three-year contract, something that was quite rare in the region until then (given that the theatres published their tenders season by season) and, above all, had never happened in Zadar in the almost thirty years of the theatre’s activity. It is true that Massimini had previously been in charge of a series of consecutive seasons, but in that case the management had never intended from the start to entrust three years of continuous programming to a single person.

And so it happened that Trauner remained in Zadar and was able, in subsequent years, to bring novelties such as *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *Zazà* and *Germania*. For *Germania* the conductor chosen was once again Palminteri, whose qualities were clearly of a different order from those suggested in the letter of denunciation quoted earlier. In 1906 the endowment was again increased, this time to 7,500 crowns. The endowment of 6,000 crowns Trauner was offered for his first proposal of *La bohème*, *Rigoletto* and *I puritani*, was one that he considered insufficient to stage three operas (and initially he claimed he found it “impossible to accept less than the 8,000 crowns” (*impossibile derogare dalle 8.000 corone*). Nonetheless he subsequently accepted the figure (which was in the end increased at a later stage). He asked the theatre management to submit to the boxholders his request to run the theatre for a further three-year period, in other words for another three consecutive autumn sea-

297 The theatre management of Zadar, as far as it was able, listened to the requests made by the impresarios for an increased endowment, when they were justified. It had done so for Giulio Calori in 1901 when Calori proposed *Nabucco*, *Mefistofele* and *Macbeth*. Initially the endowment came to 5,000 lire, but eventually the impresario was granted the 6,000 he had asked for.

298 “che è quanto dire aumenterebbe gli interessi dell’impresa”; Letter from the theatre management of Zadar to Giorgio Trauner, [Zadar, 1903], letter book, HR-DAZD, folder 21.

299 See Letter from the theatre management of Zadar to the Broglio agency, [Zadar, 1903], letter book, HR-DAZD, folder 21.

sons, solely so that he could supply the material for hire at every *piazza*.³⁰⁰ Various theatres at the time had understood that entrusting a series of seasons to the same impresario would result in a saving: the impresario would be able to engage artists for productions that had been chosen well in advance; and if a season should go badly, the losses could be balanced out by the subsequent seasons. Trauner, wishing to justify his request for more money, cited the case of the Teatro Mazzoleni of Šibenik, where in about 1906 the endowment was increased from 8,000 to 12,000 crowns specifically in order to guarantee operas of better quality than usual. “I am fully convinced after the last season”, he wrote, “that what Zadar needs is both some weighty operas and some repertoire operas to attract audiences of all classes, but reluctantly I am forced to repeat what I also said last year, that with the endowment habitually granted it is impossible to put on such spectacles with artistic and scenic decorum as is my habit, and with the addition of ballerinas, which are hard to find and which, for aesthetic and balletic reasons, cannot be fewer than eight”.³⁰¹ His fears were clearly justified, for a production of *Rigoletto* was buried under a barrage of whistling and shouts of “*basta*”, to the extent that the management was forced to send a message to the newspapers announcing the suspension of performances until the arrival of fresh singers, who had been engaged by telegram. Some artists did arrive in Zadar, but the season had to close in any case.³⁰² Trauner was never again asked to come back.

In the years leading up to the War successive seasons were entrusted to the Revere & Gallina agency of Trieste or to impresarios such as Giuseppe Borboni³⁰³ or Giuseppe Fantoni. Fantoni, who staged *Norma* at doubled admission prices, perhaps succeeded in establishing a record for the highest takings at the theatre, when he collected the handsome sum of 15,000 crowns over three nights. He achieved a similar result in Pula in the same period, where he proposed the same opera with the soprano Ester Mazzoleni, who by that

300 See Letter from Giorgio Trauner to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 28. 6. 1906, HR-DAZD, folder 26.

301 “Sono pienamente convinto dopo l’ultima stagione che per Zara occorre qualche opera poderosa e qualcuna di repertorio per attirare il pubblico d’ogni classe, ma a malincuore sono costretto ripetere ciò che dissi anche l’anno scorso, che con la dote che abitualmente viene concessa, è impossibile allestire tali spettacoli con decoro artistico e scenico come è mia abitudine, e con l’aggiunta delle ballerine difficili a trovarsi e che per l’estetica e l’ordine danzante, non possono essere meno di otto”; Letter from Giorgio Trauner to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 25. 5. 1906, HR-DAZD, folder 26.

302 “[...] the poor artists, some of whom had even suffered hunger, were sent home; others were obliged to give a humiliating benefit concert” (“[...] i poveri artisti, alcuni dopo aver anche sofferto la fame, vennero rimpatriati; altri furono costretti a dare un umiliante concerto di beneficenza”); “Da Zara”, *L’Eco dell’Adriatico*, 17–18. 1. 1907.

303 In the spring of 1911 Giuseppe Borboni brought opera buffa to Zadar with the Beltramo company. He was also in Pula in the same period with the same operas and with the important presence of Tito Schipa in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*.

time was a celebrity. Previously, the average nightly receipts would be about 1,000–1,200 crowns,³⁰⁴ and with a full house one could earn about 1,200–1,300 crowns per night, taking into account that at the time the gallery (*loggione*) at Zadar could hold a maximum of 300 spectators and the boxes of the first and second tiers were private. It was therefore a lucky and rare occurrence for the theatre, though of course it must be stressed that he had been given permission to increase the admission price, something that not all impresarios were allowed to do.³⁰⁵

After the opera season organised by Curiel in 1914, the theatre closed down during the War years and reopened on 11 November 1918 with a festive evening to celebrate the birthday of King Victor Emanuel III. In the immediate post-War period the movement of people to Zadar from the principal centres of Dalmatia ceased almost automatically. The population declined and, following the exodus of most of the civil servants and parastatal workers, the number of theatre-goers dropped substantially. The economic hardship brought on by the War greatly limited the spending power of both the shareholders and the public. All of which led to the theatre in Zadar being downgraded to a third-rank theatre in 1923.³⁰⁶

4.5.4 Census of the opera seasons at the Teatro Nuovo (later Teatro Verdi) of Zadar

The information in the following table – with the exception of the data concerning the size of the endowment – is drawn from the *Elenco degli spettacoli datisi al Teatro Nuovo di Zara*, a list compiled from 1865 to 1906 by the director of the theatre Giorgio De Nacic d’Osljak and, from 1906 onwards, by the director Demetrio Medovich, together with information drawn from the newspapers *L’Eco dell’Adriatico* and *La Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*.

304 See Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Enrico Gallina, Šibenik, 6. 6. 1913, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 6. In 1913 the endowment at Zadar was confirmed at 7,500 crowns: the municipality and lieutenancy provided 7,000; the rest most likely came, as usual, from the shareholders.

305 From these years we also have the proposals of Dante Profili for six or eight performances of *Il trovatore* in 1908, with a company that mainly focused on Italian opera (its repertoire consisted of *Poliuto*, *Norma*, *Il trovatore*, *Sansone e Dalila*, *Otello*, *Guglielmo Tell*, *Sonnambula* and *Pescatori di Perle*). It is not known, however, if his plan actually materialised.

306 In spite of this, copyright costs and public taxation remained at levels equal to those of more important theatres: a cause for complaint from the theatre management. In the post-War period the city’s population had dropped to 12,000 inhabitants, most of whom were from the working and trading classes “without work and without trade” (*senza lavoro e senza commercio*). On the classification of the theatre of Zadar, see *Classificazione dei teatri al 1° gennaio 1923*, drawn up by the Minister of Finance, Tip. Cooperativa Sociale, Roma 1923. Theoretically the taxes payable would be based on this system of ranking.

Year	Endowment	Impresario	<i>Maestro concertatore, Maestro sostituto and Chorus master</i>	Start of season	Operas
Teatro Nuovo					
1865	n. f.	Theatre management	Antonio Ravasio m. c.: Meneguzzi Placido	n. f.	Un ballo in maschera Rigoletto La favorita
1867	750 florins ³⁰⁷	Carlo Vianello	Antonio Ravasio	April	Un'avventura di Scaramuccia L'elisir d'amore Il barbiere di Siviglia Funerali e danze [La pianella smarrita nella neve] La mascherata Jone
	3,000 f.	Aristide Archibugi	Antonio Ravasio	October	Tutti in maschera Un ballo in maschera ³⁰⁸ [La traviata Gemma di Vergy] ³⁰⁹
1868	<i>Theatre closed to performances</i>				
1869	2,600 f.	Osvaldo Mazza	Antonio Ravasio	October	Jone Il trovatore Lucrezia Borgia
1870	n. f.	[Giovanni Pascucci – director of the Com- pagnia di ballo e canto dei ragazzi triestini]	n. f.	July	L'elisir d'amore
1872	2,300 [2,800?] f.	Carlo Burlini	Antonio Ravasio	October	Martha La contessa d'Amalfi Lucia di Lammermoor
1873	2,800 f.	Gerolamo Pesaro	Antonio Ravasio	October	Ruy Blas Aroldo La favorita
1875	n. f.	[Compagnia dei giovani modenesi]	n. f.	January	Le educande di Sorrento
	3,000 f.	Carlo Vianello	Antonio Ravasio	April	Pipelet Un ballo in maschera Ernani Rigoletto
1876	n. f.	Giani & Mirco	Antonio Ravasio	April	Don Pasquale L'elisir d'amore Crispino e la comare
1879	n. f.	Pietro Cesari	n. f.	October	Papà Martin Le educande di Sorrento Don Pasquale La sonnambula

307 The figure probably refers to the endowment from the municipality only.

308 According to the Theatre programme of 1867, HR-DAZD-102, folder 283.

309 According to the *Elenco degli spettacoli datati al Teatro Nuovo di Zadar*, [Zadar], HR-DAZD, folder 30.

Year	Endowment	Impresario	<i>Maestro concertatore, Maestro sostituto</i> and Chorus master	Start of season	Operas
1882	n. f.	Luigi Bec[c]herini	n. f.	June	Il barbiere di Siviglia La sonnambula L'elisir d'amore Pipelet Un bacio al diavolo L'eredità inaspettata
1883	3,000 f.	Francesco Razzani	Antonio Ravasio	April	Faust Il trovatore Ruy Blas La forza del destino
1885	[2,000 f.]	Pietro Dussich	Antonio Ravasio	August	Il barbiere di Siviglia
1888	2,000 f. [+ 500 f.]	Paolo Massimini	Antonio Ravasio	October	La Gioconda Faust
1890	2,000 f. [+ 220 f.]	Paolo Massimini Attilio Fabbri	Antonio Ravasio Errante [?]	April November	Carmen Fra Diavolo La traviata Linda di Chamounix Lucia di Lammermoor
1891	2,200 f.	Paolo Massimini	Antonio Ravasio m. c.: Clivio	April	Aida La favorita Rigoletto
1892	2,000 f.	Annibale Cicognani	Antonio Ricci Signorini Luigi Solari m. c.: Enrico Tasso	October	Mignon Cavalleria rusticana I puritani Holmara
1894	2,000 f.	Geremia Abriani and Francesco Giachettich Rodolfo Ullmann [Alberto Vernier] [Compagnia lirico coreografica della città di Genova – di Giovanni Ansaldo]	Manlio Ravagnoli [m. s.: Biondi Antonio m. c.: Giacomo Monti] Ettore Mariotti Giuseppe Vigoni	March July October	Lucrezia Borgia Pagliacci La traviata Il barbiere di Siviglia Don Pasquale La sonnambula Crispino e la comare Il barbiere di Siviglia Ginevra [di Scozia]
1895	2,000 f.	Augusto Romiti	Pietro de Stermich [di Valcrociata] m. c.: Giacomo Monti	April	Manon Lescaut Romeo e Giulietta
1896	2,500 f.	Domenico Valenti (and wife)	Pietro de Stermich [di Valcrociata] and Manlio Ravagnoli m. c.: Alberto Vergnani	March	Un ballo in maschera Gli Ugonotti Ernani
1897	2,700 f. 2,500 f.	Luigi Dessanti and Demetrio Medovich Nicola Guida	Ettore Perosio Pietro de Stermich [di Valcrociata] m. c.: Fiorello Traversi	April	La bohème Otello La forza del destino I puritani
1898	2,500 f.	Giorgio Trauner	Antonio Palminteri m. c.: Fiorello Traversi	April	Manon (Massenet) Lohengrin

Year	Endowment	Impresario	<i>Maestro concertatore, Maestro sostituto</i> and Chorus master	Start of season	Operas
1899	2,800 f.	Eugenio De Monari [Ottorino Paterni]	Vincenzo Pintorno m. s.: Ubaldi m. c.: Fiorello Traversi n. f.	April	Fedora Carmen Cavalleria rusticana Zanetto
1900	2,247.50 f. ³¹⁰ 5,150 lire	Eugenio De Monari	Edoardo Boccalari m. c.: Niccolò Iun[i]	April	Andrea Chénier Bohème (Leoncavallo) Pagliacci Il piccolo Haydn
1901	6,000 l.	Giulio Calori	n. f.	n. f.	Nabucco Mefistofele Macbeth
1902	7,000 crowns	Olimpio Lovrich	Roberto Moranzoni m. c.: Fiorello Traversi	March	La traviata Tosca Linda di Chamounix
1903	7,000 l. [7,000 ca.] [5,000 l.]	Giorgio Trauner [Giovanni Drog]	n. f.	October	Mefistofele [Rigoletto]
1904	5,931 l. [6,000 l.]	Ettore Forastiero and Giorgio Trauner Ettore Berti	Antonio Palminteri m. c.: Riccardo Talpo n. f.	October December	Germania La forza del destino La Gioconda
1905	6,000 l.	Giorgio Trauner	Pietro Duffau m. s.: Francesco Lessi	October	Adriana Lecouvreur Zazà L'amico Fritz Il maestro di cappella
1906	n. f. 7,500 ca.	Ernesto Guerra Giorgio Trauner	Ernesto Guerra Gino Golisciani	April October	Il barbiere di Siviglia La sonnambula Pipelet Crispino e la comare La figlia del reggimento L'elisir d'amore Le educande di Sorrento Mefistofele Rigoletto Lucia di Lammermoor
1908	n. f.	Ernesto Guerra	Ernesto Guerra	October	Lucia di Lammermoor Il barbiere di Siviglia Carmen Don Giovanni Cavalleria rusticana L'elisir d'amore La sonnambula La figlia del reggimento Crispino e la Comare

310 A figure granted in florins according to the register of expenses (*Registro degli esiti*) of the theatre of Zadar.

Year	Endowment	Impresario	<i>Maestro concertatore, Maestro sostituto</i> and Chorus master	Start of season	Operas
1909	[1,000 ca. from the lieutenancy]	Revere & Gallina	Guido Zuccoli m. c.: Riccardo Talpo	October	Rigoletto La Wally L'elisir d'amore
1911	n. f.	Giuseppe Borboni (Compagnia Beltramo) Comoli	n. f. n. f.	March September	Il barbiere di Siviglia Don Pasquale Il matrimonio segreto
1913	7.500 ca.	Giuseppe Fantoni	Giuseppe Marone m. c.: Riccardo Talpo	spring	Norma Guglielmo Tell Il barbiere di Siviglia
1914	n. f.	Giuseppe Perlini Marco Curiel (Compagnia d'opera Valentini)	n. f.	April	[Lucrezia Borgia L'elisir d'amore Maria di Rohan La favorita Norma I puritani Lucia di Lammermoor La sonnambula]

4.6 The contracts and the seasons at Šibenik

The regulations adopted at the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar – those governing the stage, stage hands and staff – were also implemented at Šibenik.³¹¹ But given that the Teatro Mazzoleni was smaller than the other theatres, the number of opera performances per season differed, usually ranging between 8 and 15 (whereas at the larger theatres the number of planned performances generally averaged 24, though it could even be as many as 30). At the beginning of the 20th century this figure dropped even further, a trend that the director of the Teatro Mazzoleni explained in a couple of sentences: “Owing to the competition posed by the cinemas and café concert venues, the theatre companies can only support themselves with short runs of six nights at most. If the season is extended, nobody comes to the theatre any more, at an enormous cost to the companies and the coffers of the theatre”.³¹² The competition presented by other places of entertainment was therefore genuine and a feature of the modern world to be reckoned with. Years later, writing to the agent Ezio Carelli, Giovanni Mazzoleni was to reassert this idea and claim that too many days in succession was no help

311 *Regolamento n. 1924, approvato con decreto luogotenenziale il 5. 10. 1865*, [Zadar, n. d.], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 6.

312 “Per la concorrenza che cinematografi e locali da caffè concerto fanno al teatro, le compagnie non possono sostenersi che con brevi debutti di sei sere al massimo. Prolungando la stagione nessuno viene più al teatro con danno enorme delle compagnie e della cassa teatrale.”; Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Bianchini, Šibenik, 22. 11. 1913, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b.

to the companies: “one thing I recommend”, he stressed, “is not to give contracts for more than 10 days. For in a small town where there is no change of audience 15 days are too many. I see that in much larger cities they give contracts only for a few days. It happens that the audiences get tired and don’t come to the theatre on the last nights”.³¹³ In the past, on the other hand, there had been room for more performances.

While we have no evidence of what seems to have been the first season of opera and ballet of 1871,³¹⁴ we do have documents that confirm the visit of the Becherini company in 1882. The first contract we possess for the Teatro Mazzoleni was concluded in Zadar on 12 June 1882 between Paolo Mazzoleni and the opera impresarios Luigi Becherini and Ernesta Ferrara (in two cases the contracts for Šibenik were signed at Zadar, given that the manager went in person to the city with the precise intent of engaging the impresarios). These contracts were short documents, containing twelve articles at most. The company could stay for 23 evenings, for in the 1870s and 80s, before the advent of the cinema and the *café chantant*, one could still hope for slightly longer seasons. Even though the Becherini company came to the city already heavily indebted, Paolo Mazzoleni left the following proud comment at the bottom of the report on income and expenditure that he himself drew up: “Succeeding in arranging for an opera company to give 7 operas for 23 nights, for which a sizeable endowment was needed, and arranging this while at the same time earning 26 florins is a great merit (modesty apart) of the management”.³¹⁵ Mazzoleni called the company “the best of all those we have had so far”.³¹⁶ Thus he congratulated himself and his colleagues on managing to keep the costs down and even making a small profit.

313 “una cosa che Le raccomando è di non dar contratti per più di 10 giorni. Poiché per una città piccola dove il pubblico non si cambia 15 giorni son troppi. Io vedo che in città molto grandi non danno contratti che per pochi giorni. Succede che il pubblico si stanca e le ultime sere non viene al teatro.”; Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Ezio Carelli, Šibenik, 6. 6. 1920, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b.

314 We know nothing except that there was a deficit of 429,28 florins. We have a name, that of Enrico Mayer, who signed for the company and was perhaps its administrator or impresario.

315 “L’aver potuto combinare per 23 sere una compagnia lirica che diede 7 opere, e per la quale ci voleva una cospicua dote, combinarla guadagnando invece fiorini 26 è merito grande (modestia a parte) della Direzione”; Report on income and expenditure for the Becherini opera company, Paolo Mazzoleni, [Šibenik], 6. 8. 1882, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3.

316 “la migliore di quante si sono finora avute”; Report on the Becherini opera company, [Šibenik, n. d.], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3. From this report we learn that the management allowed the impresario Vincenzo Rossini to rent out the boxes, from the proceeds of which, after paying the evening’s expenses, there remained 50 florins. The management, in order to pay a number of expenses – including the travel expenses of the director going to Zadar specifically to engage the company – withheld from the company 8 florins and 25 *soldi* per evening for 15 evenings (totalling 123.75 £.). Paolo Mazzoleni had indeed gone to Zadar in 1882 for that purpose and had stayed 14 days. For this assignment he had been given 64 florins. Of these he gave 50 to the impresario Becherini and kept for himself only 14 florins for his expenses. In addition, 33.75 florins were spent on special lighting (*illuminazione a giorno*) for the benefit night of the prima donna Trauner (very likely the wife of the impresario

The same sense of satisfaction – from a job well done – was repeated some years later after the visit of the Compagnia Sociale di Canto directed by Federico Varani. This time the management shouldered the nightly costs, but not those for the orchestra, which were borne by the company. The same pride – that of having accomplished something other cities hadn't – radiated from Mazzoleni's comment:

“When one thinks that in Split Signor Troccoli spent over 400 florins for the same company; when one thinks that in Zadar, where the audience is larger and the theatre has far more resources, the theatre gave the last opera company an endowment of 2,600 florins [...]; when one thinks that we, on the other hand, with the expense of just 125 florins and 62 *soldi*, have been able to hear four operas: Lucia, Traviata, Fra Diavolo and Barbiere, as well as some detached pieces, such as the famous terzetto from *I lombardi*, a page of music issuing from the inspired mind of the supreme Maestro Verdi, we should be well satisfied, and see in it a certain merit on the management's part.”³¹⁷

One could say, therefore, that it was the management that generated the money needed “without burdening with a single *soldo* our members” (*senza aggravare di un soldo i signori soci*), who on this occasion appreciated the spectacle with particular pleasure.³¹⁸ From this one deduces that the shareholders were not asked to cover the costs, at least not directly.

In the meantime, the opera company of Carlo Mirco from Dubrovnik had also passed through Šibenik. To the impresarios Vincenzo Rossini, Pietro Zanchi and Giovanni Dalle Feste, who brought the company there in 1887 at their own risk, the theatre management granted the whole theatre free of charge. Ida Mazzoleni, daughter of the tenor Francesco Mazzoleni, also sang for free in *La sonnambula* and agreed to donate the proceeds of a benefit night (*serata d'onore*) to the impresarios. At this performance, which attracted a large audience not only from Šibenik itself, but also from Split and other places nearby, her success was such that, though a newcomer to the stage, she received valuable gifts also from the impre-

Trauner whom we saw working at Zadar) and for the purchase of “a garland and ribbon with gold fringe and name in gold” (*una ghirlanda e nastro con frangia dorata e nome in oro*) as well as gifts for certain artists.

317 “Quando si pensa che a Spalato il sig. Troccoli spese per la stessa compagnia oltre a fiorini 400; quando si pensa che in Zara, dove frequenta un pubblico numeroso e il teatro ha ben altre risorse, la società teatrale diede all'ultima compagnia lirica fiorini 2.600 di dote [...]; quando si pensa che noi invece colla spesa di soli fiorini 125 soldi 62 abbiamo potuto udire quattro opere: Lucia, Traviata, Fra Diavolo e Barbiere, nonché de' pezzi staccati, tra quali il famoso terzetto de' Lombardi, pagina musicale uscita dalla mente ispirata del sommo m. Verdi, dobbiamo essere ben pagati, e vedere in ciò un qualche merito della direzione.”; Statement of income and expenditure in twelve performances given by the Compagnia Sociale di Canto directed by Signor Federico Varani, Šibenik, 2. 7. 1890, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 8.

318 Report on income and expenditure in twelve performances given by the Compagnia Sociale di Canto directed by Signor Federico Varani, Šibenik, 2. 7. 1890, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 8.

sarios themselves. For though they lost money in the first two operas (*Linda di Chamounix* and *Crispino e la Comare*), they made genuine profits in *La sonnambula*; but once they had deducted what they owed Mirco (1,840 florins), the overall proceeds amounted to just a few hundred florins. Once again, Mazzoleni, who was always keen to safeguard the theatre's image, pointed out in his comments on income and expenditure that the scant profits were to be attributed to the impresarios, not to the theatre itself. Given that the management wished not only to honour young Ida on her special night, but also her father Francesco (whom the theatre was named after), there were a few additional expenses for gifts of various kinds.³¹⁹

In the last twenty years of the 19th century opera alternated with operetta. Among the operetta companies that paid a visit, again under the management of the impresario Vincenzo Rossini, were not only the companies of Franceschini (1880) and Tani (1881), but also Alfred Freund's troupe of German operetta (about which Paolo Mazzoleni commented: "a very mediocre company except for the woman").³²⁰ Freund's company arrived in town after it had already appeared on the stages of the Adriatic coast two years earlier, at the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka for the 1885 season. Šibenik also witnessed visits from the companies of Giovanni Fioravanti (1888) and Scalvini (1894).³²¹ Traces of their presence are found in the financial reports (*borderò*) of the 1870s and 80s. At Šibenik identical *borderò* forms were used for opera, operetta and spoken theatre, making it possible to quantify the audience present in the theatre on each night and the tickets sold. These forms gave the name of the company, the number of the performance (identified by its date) and the title of the work performed. In later years, other types of spectacle could also be included below the title of the work: "Veglieone mascherato" and "Accademia". There followed a table listing the number of tickets sold in each sector of the theatre (stalls or parterre, gallery, parterre chairs, boxes of the second tier, etc.), also including the category "children" (*fanciulli*). At the bottom of the sheet, in the section for the signatures, the names of a representative of the management and the troupe leader (*capocomico*) had to be given. In subsequent years the term "capocomico" was replaced with "impresario".

319 "To Signor Giocondo Petris," Paolo Mazzoleni commented, "for a bouquet and for wreaths with ribbons 40 florins – for the cost of poems from the Signori Russo of Split 14 florins – for lighting from Signor V. Inchiostri 17.28 florins – total 71.28 florins. Just a small expense compared to the quality of the spectacle." ("Al sig. Giocondo Petris per un bouquet e per corone con nastri fiorini 40 – per spese poesie ai signori Russo di Spalato fiorini 14 – per illuminazione al sig. V. Inchiostri fiorini 17,28 – totale fiorini 71,28. Spesa piccola questa di fronte allo spettacolo avuto."); Report on income and expenditure in the short opera season with the company from Dubrovnik led by Signor Carlo Mirco, Šibenik, 18. 3. 1887, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 8.

320 "compagnia mediocrissima salvo la donna"; Report on income and expenditure for the two performances of the German company given on the evenings of 2 and 3 February 1887, Šibenik, 6. 2. 1887, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 8.

321 *Borderò*, Teatro Mazzoleni Šibenik, Šibenik, 1873, 1882 and 1885, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3.

4.6.1 “Coppola and Ugonotti! That was the fatal decision“: the last season of Domenico Valenti

In 1896 a monument to Niccolò Tommaseo, sculpted by Ettore Ximenes, was erected in Šibenik. Its inauguration, anticipated to be the event of the year, was to be marked by a season of opera seria. One of the directors of the theatre, Doimo Miagostovich, announced his wish to plan the event and read out a letter from the impresario Alfredo Vecchi of Milan, who had applied to run the evenings.³²² Paolo Mazzoleni, on his part, said that the impresario he would prefer to deal with was not Vecchi from Milan, whom he viewed as being unknown and distant and probably with exaggerated expectations, but Domenico Valenti, who knew Šibenik and would shortly be in Zadar as impresario for the forthcoming opera season. He also suggested making a contribution of 200 florins to the cost of the production, in addition to the nightly expenses.³²³ In the meantime the committee overseeing the erection of the monument was independently deciding to give the theatre a subsidy of 1,000 florins for the opera expenses. The impresario Valenti would bring to Šibenik the same opera production that had been proposed for Zadar shortly before. In this he would be assisted by the agent Enrico Viscardi (who was working at the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar in 1896), even if Viscardi considered Valenti to be a person of “meticulous pedantry” (*meticolosa pedanteria*).³²⁴ Viscardi, who still didn’t know how much money Valenti would ask for the organisation, believed that the impresario would accept the contract if he got a sum (including assurances of receipts and endowment) between 500 and 600 florins per night for a total of six performances. He then asked Miagostovich to come to him in Zadar once he had received Valenti’s offer, to conclude the negotiations: “Face to face one always arrives at better results than in writing. Face to face I could also give you many explanations, let us say of a technical nature, that would perhaps not be clear in writing”.³²⁵

322 “I would consider myself most fortunate”, Vecchi wrote, “to be able to take on the contract, or the management, depending on which you may prefer. I know those parts having been at Pula, Zadar, Split, Rijeka, etc., so it will be easier for me than for another to provide what is needed and also at a lower price than that of any other competitor.” (“Mi reputerei fortunatissimo di poterne assumere l’appalto o la direzione a seconda meglio gliene potesse fare piacere. Conosco codeste parti per essere stato a Pola, Zara, Spalato, Rijeka, ecc., per cui mi riuscirà più facile che ad un altro il poter provvedere ciò che può star bene e ad un prezzo sempre relativamente più basso di qualunque altro concorrente.”); Letter from Alfredo Vecchi to the theatre management of Šibenik, Milano, 1. 3. 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

323 Mazzoleni, along with his partner Locas, at the meeting in which the matter was discussed, found it pointless to involve the whole assembly of shareholders in the discussion of the details concerning the choice of opera, how to deal with the impresario, and also how to finance the possible sum of 200 florins, given that this, according to the statutory provisions, was the task of the management alone; Minutes of the meeting, Šibenik, 31. 3. 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

324 Letter from Enrico Viscardi to Doimo Miagostovich, Zadar, 4. 5. 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

325 “A voce si arriva sempre a migliori risultati, che in iscritto. A voce potrei io pure darle molte spiegazioni, dirò così d’indole tecnica, che forse per iscritto non riuscirebbero chiare.”; Letter from [Enrico Viscardi]

Valenti intended to arrive in Šibenik in the last week of May, thus smoothly continuing the season already begun in March at Zadar. In the meantime, Miagostovich independently started to think of the cast of singers and tried to guarantee the presence of Antonio Pini from Milan, whom he wired as follows: “Please telegraph today Zadar Hotel Grande if possible come Šibenik Tommaseo inauguration 31 May sing four nights *Rigoletto* bringing complete company 24 choristers 30 orchestra. Say minimum expense”.³²⁶ At the same time, writing from Zadar, the agent Viscardi announced to the management in Šibenik that he had dismissed the singer Gambardella in the ongoing season and had replaced him with the celebrated, and expensive, tenor Coppola, who would surely make a fine contribution to the production.³²⁷ Initially the opera considered was *Rigoletto*, but in April 1896 Valenti said he was ready to conclude the transaction with performances of *Un ballo in maschera* and *Ernani* (so no *Rigoletto*), on certain precise conditions: an endowment of 1,200 florins and the guarantee of six performances for 500 florins each, no nightly expenses (they would be paid by the management), and the promise of the proceeds from certain boxes. The production would be staged as already presented in Zadar, with 28 orchestral players and a chorus of 22 male and female singers. The company would be identical to that of Zadar, except for some possible changes in the singers, who in the meantime might have accepted other commitments and on whose presence Valenti could not count, given that he himself was not sure of being given the contract.³²⁸ The theatre management confirmed these conditions, with minor adjustments. While it was agreed that only two operas would be given, *Un ballo*

to Doimo Miagostovich, Zadar, 17. 4. 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3.

326 “Prego telegrafare oggi Zara Hotel Grande se possibile portarvi Sebenico occasione inaugurazione Tommaseo trentuno maggio cantare quattro sere *Rigoletto* portando compagnia completa 24 coristi 30 orchestra. Dite spesa minima”.

327 “As you will have heard,” Viscardi wrote, “with a great effort on our part, we succeeded in getting rid of the tenor Gambardella, who despite being an artist of some merit, did not give satisfaction, and in his place we have engaged the well-known tenor Coppola, who costs an arm and a leg, and who last year [*was greatly appreciated*] at this theatre in *Manon*. Coppola is an exceptional artist and by himself is good enough to sustain the whole production. Come and hear him, dear doctor; that way you will be able to get a precise idea also of the quality of the other artists. Tomorrow and on Sunday we are giving *Ballo in maschera* with Coppola and on Wednesday we are staging *Ugonotti*.” (“Come avrà appreso, con nostra grande fatica, siamo riusciti liberarci del tenore Gambardella, che pur essendo un artista di qualche merito, non soddisfaceva, ed in sua vece abbiamo fatto scritturare il rinomato tenore Coppola, che costa un occhio della testa, e che lo scorso anno [...] a questo teatro nella *Manon* tanto favore. Il Coppola è un artista eccezionale, che vale lui solo a sostenere tutto lo spettacolo. Venga ad udirlo, caro dottore, e così potrà farsi un’idea esatta anche sul merito degli altri artisti. Domani e domenica diamo il *Ballo in maschera* con Coppola e mercoledì andiamo in scena cogli *Ugonotti*.”); Letter from [Enrico Viscardi] to Doimo Miagostovich, Zadar, 17. 4. 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3.

328 See Letter from Domenico Valenti to the theatre management of Šibenik, Zadar, 18. 4. 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

in maschera and *Ernani*, that the run would last for six nights (three nights per opera), and that the operas would be staged as at Zadar with the same artists (none excepted), a request was made to increase slightly the number of musicians, in order to arrive at an orchestra of 30 and a chorus of 24. The endowment for the six nights would even be a little higher: 1,500 florins. All the nightly expenses (lighting, theatre staff, cleaning) would be borne by the management; all the takings from admissions, stools (*scanni*), and gallery would go to the *impresa*. The management would reserve for itself just the proceeds from the rental of boxes (in spite of initially deciding to grant them to the *impresario*) and would guarantee 550 florins per night for six nights (hence more than the 500 asked by Valenti), in other words 3,300 florins overall. If the *impresario* failed to make 3,300 florins, the management would supplement the funding to guarantee that sum. Anything over that amount, on the other hand, the *impresario* could retain as a profit.³²⁹

A few days later Valenti wrote back to the management of Šibenik to say that the tenor Coppola was not at all interested in singing *Un ballo in maschera* and *Ernani* at the Teatro Mazzoleni. He would only do so if there were other operas from the great repertoire. In view of this, the *impresario* started to consider the idea of changing the tenor, not the repertoire (“If you agree, I could come to an agreement with another tenor who is also very distinguished”).³³⁰ There then began a parallel correspondence. On the one hand, the *impresario* (in Zadar) was writing directly to the theatre management in Šibenik, but at the same time the agent Viscardi at the Teatro Nuovo (again in Zadar) was telling the director Miagostovich, who had been appointed to run the negotiations, the same things: “The main problem is that the tenor Coppola does not want to come to Šibenik to sing *Ballo in maschera* and *Ernani*; he would like us to give *Ugonotti*, where he would be more prominent, in spite of the fact that the other two operas also suit him perfectly.”³³¹ Indeed it turns out that *Gli Ugonotti*, which had been staged shortly before at Zadar had been enormously successful with the public: “all things considered, it is an absolutely extraordinary spectacle for a provincial town – and not a little credit for this is due to us in the management, who worked hard for its success”.³³²

329 See Letter from the theatre management of Šibenik to Domenico Valenti, Zadar, 22. 4. 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

330 “Se credono potrei combinare altro tenore pure distintissimo”; Letter from Domenico Valenti to the theatre management of Šibenik, Zadar, 24. 4. 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

331 “L'inconveniente maggiore è [dato] dal fatto che il tenore Coppola, non vuol venire a Šibenik per cantare il *Ballo in maschera* e l'*Ernani*, egli vorrebbe che si dessero gli *Ugonotti* ove emerge di più. Quantunque anche le altre due opere gli stanno a meraviglia.”; Letter from [Enrico Viscardi] to Doimo Miagostovich, Zadar, 27. 4. 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3.

332 “è nel suo complesso assolutamente uno spettacolo straordinario per una città di provincia – e non poco merito abbiamo avuto noi della direzione, che abbiamo molto lavorato per la riuscita.”; Letter from [Enrico Viscardi] to Doimo Miagostovich, Zadar, 27. 4. 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3.

The contract the impresario Valenti had concluded with the theatre of Zadar specified performances of *Gli Ugonotti* (sung in Italian) and *Un ballo in maschera*, with *Ernani* as third opera (over the third opera, however, there was room for manoeuvre). In all, the season was to have no fewer than twenty performances, divided equally between the three works. For Šibenik, on the other hand, there were to be only six nights, at least according to the original plan. By the time it came to signing the contract, the nights had risen to nine, with the staging of two operas. While *Un ballo in maschera* was taken for certain, the second opera chosen was eventually *Gli Ugonotti*. So in the end Coppola's insistence prevailed, and both impresario and management gave in to the tenor's wishes. To be sure, the choice was likely also dictated by seeing how popular the opera had been in Zadar. In light of its success, the decision was made to have four nights of *Un ballo in maschera* and five of *Gli Ugonotti*; of the original plan to give *Ernani* there was no longer any mention. It was stated that both artists and materials for the production would be the same as those used at Zadar, but it turned out that not all of the cast could be moved to Šibenik (as was initially anticipated), beginning with the conductor himself, Pietro de Stermich, who was already engaged to perform in Moscow at the same time. Almost all the 30 orchestral players and 24 choristers would have to be brought in from Italy or Rijeka, as the additional players available on site would not have been sufficient (and in any case they had terminated their contracts on 10 April).³³³ As a cautionary deposit the impresario was asked to produce an annuity bond for 25 lire, which would be returned to him on his arrival in Šibenik. According to the contract the impresario was to receive, in the customary four instalments, 6,000 florins, a figure very different from the 1,200 florins for six performances initially contemplated (even taking into account the extra 500 florins per night, i. e. 3,000 florins overall).³³⁴ The estimates of expenditure, however, had all turned out to be higher than 6,000 florins. The principals by themselves would cost 2,019.60 florins, the chorus 1,060 and the orchestra 1,912.50:³³⁵ three items of expenditure that came to a total of 4,992.10 florins. Nonetheless, Valenti eventually accepted this figure and signed the contract. The theatre management was overjoyed and the agent Viscardi profoundly perplexed.³³⁶ What had prompted Valenti to sign? Very likely he counted on a very large audience, considering the circumstance of the inauguration of the monument to Tommaseo. After all, the season at Zadar had closed with takings amounting to over 13,000 florins, which was a good sign. Incidentally, also watching the opera from his

333 See Letter from Domenico Valenti to the theatre management of Šibenik, Zadar, 24. 4. 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

334 See Contract between the management of the Teatro Mazzoleni and the impresario Domenico Valenti, Šibenik, [1896], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

335 See Letter from Enrico Viscardi to Doimo Miagostovich, Zadar, 10. 5. 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

336 "The impresario plainly needs to squander his capital," Viscardi wrote; "his efforts for the fair eyes of Tommaseo." ("L'impresario deve proprio sborsare i suoi capitali, la sua fatica per i begli occhi di Tommaseo."); Letter from Enrico Viscardi to Doimo Miagostovich, Zadar, 10. 5. 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

box in Zadar was the sculptor Ximenes, who expressed reservations on the cast. “He (out of the kindness of his heart)”, Viscardi commented to the management of Šibenik, “found the artists sang like dogs (*piuttosto cani*) – not excluding Coppola. He [Coppola] could well be an artist that some don’t like, but to call him a dog...: there the sculptor Ximenes in his greatness is making a huge mistake!”³³⁷ The tenor regularly sang in the leading Italian theatres, had found impresarios willing to pay him 200 or 300 lire a performance, and had been chosen by Mascagni and Sonzogno to sing in *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Amico Fritz* abroad, performing to great acclaim in the theatres of Trieste, Vienna, Budapest and Warsaw. Viscardi justified Ximenes’s reaction by assuming that there were grievances between him and Coppola, perhaps of a regional origin, given that they were both Sicilian. “I hope, however,” he concluded, “that in spite of Ximenes’s opinion, both Coppola and the other artists will achieve a deserved success in Šibenik too”.³³⁸

In the event the nine evenings of opera brought in 6,374 florins, and the expenditure came to 6,600.91 florins: hence an overall deficit of 229.91 florins.³³⁹ The agent Viscardi, who had acted as mediator between the impresario Valenti and the theatre management of Šibenik, wrote to Miagostovich saying that the management was to blame, for changing the initial project: that of just *Ernani* and *Ballo in maschera*, leaving the impresario free to bring in artists that were good, but of his own choice. “Coppola and Ugonotti! That was the fatal decision”, he observed.³⁴⁰ At first, as we saw above, Valenti was ready to do without Coppola and stick to the operas initially agreed upon. It was therefore, as the agent Viscardi observed, an operation doomed to failure: “Valenti cannot accept, and if he should accept, he would find himself bound to fail, *and with the certainty of failing*”.³⁴¹ Even the impresario Sforza of Rijeka, on hearing about Valenti’s manoeuvring, had commented to Viscardi: “I asked you for 8,000 florins and, as an honest impresario who wishes to honour his commitments towards everyone, I couldn’t do otherwise. Valenti got his sums wrong”.³⁴² There

337 “Egli (bontà e gentilezza sua) ha trovato gli artisti piuttosto *cani* – non escluso Coppola. [Coppola] può essere un artista, che non piaccia a qualcuno ma per dirlo cane, lo sbaglia di grosso lo scultore Ximenes nella sua magnitudine!”; Letter from Enrico Viscardi to the theatre management of Šibenik, Zadar, 15. 5. 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

338 “Spero però che null’ostante l’opinione di Ximenes e Coppola e gli altri artisti otterranno anche a Šibenik il meritato successo”; Letter from Enrico Viscardi to the theatre management of Šibenik, Zadar, 15. 5. 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

339 Table of revenue and expenditure 1896, Šibenik, 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

340 “Coppola e Ugonotti! Ecco la disgrazia”; Letter from Enrico Viscardi to Doimo Miagostovich, Zadar, 10. 5. 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

341 “Valenti non può accettare, e se avesse accettato si troverebbe costretto a perdere, *e colla certezza di perdere*.”; Letter from Enrico Viscardi to Doimo Miagostovich, Zadar, 10. 5. 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

342 “Io vi ho domandato 8.000 fiorini e da impresario onesto che vuol fare i suoi impegni verso tutti, non potevo a meno. Valenti ha sbagliato i conti.”; Letter from Enrico Viscardi to Doimo Miagostovich, Zadar, 10. 5. 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

was probably a fair amount of optimism in the estimates and much (too much) confidence in the turnout of the public. This was probably Valenti's last season, for shortly afterwards he got ill and died in the early months of 1897.

Even the following opera season, organised in 1899 by the impresario Corbetta, made a deficit, this time of 162.52 florins.³⁴³ While it is true that the season left much to be desired, it is also true that there was no orchestra or chorus in Šibenik and that audiences had declined in the final years of the century: "one cannot even seriously think of offering a musical spectacle worthy of enlightened criticism", the management reflected.³⁴⁴ If the management decided to accept Corbetta's offer, it was because various people had long been lamenting the absence of a musical season. After all, three years had passed since the last productions given at the inauguration of the monument to Tommaseo. A number of companies of spoken theatre had passed through, but theatre-goers now felt the need to hear opera. "But in Šibenik unfortunately much is expected of this poor theatre of ours," Mazzoleni complained; "criticism is harsh, and audience attendance of performances in recent years has been exiguous."³⁴⁵ The problem for opera companies seems to have been the city itself, for after his stay in Šibenik Corbetta went on to the theatre of Dubrovnik with the same cast (slightly modified) and made a net profit of 1,000 florins after a run of performances.³⁴⁶ It is also worth noting that the price of admission to the Teatro Mazzoleni was on average lower than, for example, at the theatres of Zadar and Split, which also meant smaller profits for the impresario.

After Corbetta there was once again a long silence. This time the cause was an official notice from the regional government of 26 January 1901, ordering that work be carried out on the theatre to make it comply with fire safety standards.³⁴⁷ In the meantime, however, a request had been made by an opera company of Brno asking for the use of the theatre for a few performances. The company could have had the theatre free of charge and also be relieved of the expenses of staff, cleaning and lighting. To give an idea of what those costs would be, the following table lists the ordinary nightly expenses for performances

343 The entry in the Table of revenue and expenditure 1899 reads: "Compagnia d'opera Corbetta / Introiti 254,50 fiorini / Esiti 417,02 fiorini / Disavanzo 162,52 fiorini"; HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4. Corbetta managed the Compagnia Lirica Italiana.

344 "non si può nemmeno pensare seriamente ad offrire uno spettacolo di musica degno della critica illuminata"; Overview of the running of the Teatro Mazzoleni in the years 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899 and January 1900, Šibenik, January 1900, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

345 "Ma a Šibenik purtroppo molto si esige da questo nostro misero teatro, aspramente si critica, ed il concorso del pubblico in questi anni agli spettacoli è esiguo."; Overview of the running of the Teatro Mazzoleni in the years 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899 and January 1900, Šibenik, January 1900, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

346 See Overview of the running of the Teatro Mazzoleni in the years 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899 and January 1900, Šibenik, January 1900, Šibenik, January 1900, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

347 See Procedure adopted at the general meeting of the shareholders, Šibenik, 17. 3. 1902, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

of opera at the Teatro Mazzoleni. The document is undated, but given that the currency specified is crowns, it is likely to be from the early years of the 20th century:³⁴⁸

	Importo parziale Cor. Ct. [Partial amount Crowns Cents]	Importo complessivo Cor. Ct. [Overall amount Crowns Cents]
Assicurazione contro l'incendio (per ogni rappresentazione) ³⁴⁹	11--	11--
<u>Personale:</u>		
Segretario (sorveglianza di cassa)	2--	
Custode ³⁵⁰	3--	
Bollettinaio	2--	
Portinaio (platea e palchi)	2--	
Indicatore poltroncine e sedie platea	--80	
3 sorveglianti ai corridoi dei palchi	3--	
Portinaio al loggione	1--	
Distributore manifesti	1--	
<u>Operai addetti al palcoscenico³⁵¹</u>		
1. Primo macchinista	2--	
2. II. Macchinisti di soffitta a 1 cr.	2--	
1. Addetto alle porte d'ingresso del palcoscenico e sipario	1.60	
2. Servi di scena a Cor. 1--	2--	
1. Portaceste (facchino)	1--	
Sarta	1--	
Donne addette alla pulizia del teatro e camerini (di giorno)	3.20	
Alla sera (alla ritirata)	1.60	29.20
<u>Polizia:</u>		

348 List of ordinary evening expenses for every play or opera at the Teatro Mazzoleni of Šibenik, Šibenik, [n. d.] HR-DAŠI-103, folder 5.

349 The amount of insurance for 50 performances was paid in advance by the theatre; for every extra performance the management had to pay 2 crowns per night.

350 According to a job advertisement, the custodian of the theatre of Šibenik nel 1906 was to be paid 600 crowns a year plus the three crowns indicated in this table for each evening of performance. The custodian would also receive the proceeds of the cloakroom; See Call for applications for the post of custodian, Šibenik, 25. 6. 1906, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4. The man appointed to the post was a certain Strkalj, known as Migalo, who however later ended up in prison for unspecified "immoral acts". The management dismissed him in 1908 and engaged Giuseppe Modun in his place; Minutes of the meeting, Šibenik 25. 7. 1908, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

351 The sum indicated for the machinists refers only to the evening's work. Any construction work carried out in the daytime was paid by the impresa at a cost negotiated with the chief machinist.

	Importo parziale Cor. Ct. [Partial amount Crowns Cents]	Importo complessivo Cor. Ct. [Overall amount Crowns Cents]
1. Commissario del Capitanato	4--	
1. Delegato comunale	4--	
3. Guardie di pubblica sicurezza ³⁵²	3--	11--
<u>Pompieri:</u>		
6. Pompieri a Cor. 2		12--
<u>Ripporto</u>		63.20
<u>Illuminazione:</u>		
Consumo e energia elettrica	20--	
2. pacchi candele per i palchi	2.40	
Elettricista al quadro	2--	
Elettricista al riflettore	2--	
Rotture lampadine, cordoncini guasti ecc.ecc. (spesa media)	5--	31.40
Stampa		12--
Affissione avvisi piccoli ordinari ³⁵³		3.60
Sorveglianza acquedotto		--60
Provvigione affitti palchi e poltroncine		2--
Piccole spese varie (cancelleria, posta, teleg., ecc.)		3.20
		116.00 [corone]

Having the nightly expenses paid would therefore mean a saving of over 100 crowns (hence about 200 florins) per night. The company from Brno would also benefit from the proceeds from the admissions to the parterre, boxes and galleries, as well as the seats (*poltroncine*) and stools (*scanni*) in the parterre and boxes of the third tier. The municipal administration applied pressure in an attempt to speed up the construction work and get permission to reopen the theatre.³⁵⁴ But the project came to nothing and the theatre remained closed to opera productions (as well as concerts including opera arias) at least until the arrival of the Compagnia Lirica Italiana Verdi, which performed on 4 June 1904.³⁵⁵ Before that, the only musical spectacles offered had been provided by the operetta company of Cesare Matucci and that of the Città di Trento.

352 At Šibenik the security staff was local. In the new century the guards at Šibenik asked for a pay rise that was considered excessive, especially since it was requested in lire, a currency customarily used to pay only the companies and artists, not the local staff; see various papers in HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

353 The posting of the larger, special notices and panels was paid separately depending on size.

354 See Letter from the theatre management to the municipal administration of Šibenik, Šibenik, [1902] HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

355 See Sheet of paper headed "Concerto della compagnia lirica italiana G. Verdi, 4 giugno 1904", HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

4.6.2 Ernesto Guerra at Šibenik: impresario, director, procurator, pianist, pedagogue

The next significant presence of opera at Šibenik was that of Ernesto Guerra's Compagnia Lillipuziana of comic operas, a visit negotiated for 1905 thanks to a cooperation between two agents: Gallina of Trieste and Viscardi from Zadar. Viscardi had once again offered to act as agent, despite the experience with Valenti some years previously. This time the management of Šibenik needed to be reassured that large musical resources were not required. "Concerning the orchestra there is no cause for concern," Viscardi wrote, "when there is a good piano which Guerra himself plays and the first violin which he will bring, and when a specific condition concerning the orchestra is that one must make use of what the town offers".³⁵⁶ Besides, Guerra himself was not interested in a big orchestra, given that the operas made use of children's voices. Moreover, none of the musicians from Zadar could have taken part in that particular period, so this time Šibenik would have to manage with the forces available in situ. The orchestral ensemble was to consist of four violins, a cello, a double bass, a cornet (*cornetta*), a first and second clarinet (*clarino*), a flute, a tenor and bass trombone, a bass drum and a piano, to be played by Ernesto Guerra himself.³⁵⁷ So it was a matter of only 14 players for the six operas chosen from the company's wider repertoire. The contract specified fifteen performances, which meant that the turnover in the six titles would be very fast. In actual fact, the company's advertising bills announced that the company would give only six performances, hence changing opera every night.³⁵⁸ The sharp drop in the number of performances may be attributable to changes in Guerra's plans; or alternatively, it may depend on the fact – noted earlier – that performances at the Mazzoleni had become fewer in the early years of the century, and that the theatre management, instead of sticking to the contract, preferred to see how things went and assess the numbers in the audience more instinctively. In the original contract the percentages of the proceeds were fixed at 70% for the impresario and 30% for the management on the first 10 performances; for the remaining five, the percentage was rebalanced in favour of the management (60% to management, 40% to impresario). We have no documents indicating how

356 "Riguardo all'orchestra non c'è da impensierirsi quando c'è un buon piano che lo suona lo stesso Guerra e il primo violino che lo porta lui, e colla determinata condizione che per l'orchestra bisogna servirsi di quello che il paese offre."; Letter from Enrico Viscardi to Giovanni Mazzoleni, Zadar, 7.9.1905, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

357 See Orchestra of the season of the Compagnia Lillipuziana of Ernesto Guerra, Šibenik, [n. d.], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

358 "the Respectable Audience is informed that the Company will give only 6 performances – Every night a different opera" ("Si avverte il rispettabile Pubblico, che la Compagnia darà solo 6 Rappresentazioni – Ogni sera spettacolo nuovo"); Advertising bill for the Compagnia Lillipuziana of Ernesto Guerra, Šibenik, 21.10.1905, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 7.

the takings were distributed over just six performances and whether or not the percentages were readjusted. The theatre management would pay the ordinary nightly expenses, which were listed in detail: lighting of the theatre, theatre staff, commissioner and police guards, routine printing (*stampa ordinaria*), poster distribution, theatre firemen, and an orchestra consisting of players from the town, “with no responsibility on the part of the management for the artistic skills of the players making up the orchestra”.³⁵⁹ A similar declaration reveals a lot about the management’s understanding of the situation, for it clearly didn’t wish to be the recipient of any complaints from Guerra himself, given that Guerra would also be playing the piano and directing the ensemble. The list of artists was defined separately. A penalty of 500 crowns would be applied if either party (impresario or management) failed to fulfil the terms of the contract. This was the first time a theatre management officially placed itself in the condition of having to pay a penalty; indeed, this is a clause that we find in no other contract made in this period in the area concerned. If the defaulting party happened to be the impresario, the management assumed the right to confiscate properties and costumes or even the evenings’ takings at another theatre.³⁶⁰

No mention was made of the subject of accommodation expenses. We know that the company was made up of 48 people who would need lodgings: a fair number, though it was perceived as a minor problem, given that they were dealing with children. As the agent Gallina wrote, “the children sleep two to a bed, and you can put 4 or even 5 beds in a room if it’s a big one”.³⁶¹ Gallina specifically asked to keep the price of admission to the theatre quite high, given that the company cost 400 lire a day and he most certainly did not wish to “come out badly” (*fare brutta figura*).³⁶² In fact, if we compare the company’s admission prices at Šibenik in the following year with those for the same company in Pula (again in 1906), we do note a slight difference, with higher prices at Šibenik.³⁶³ At Šibenik the tickets

359 “senza responsabilità da parte della direzione per la capacità artistica dei componenti la stessa”; Contract between the theatre management of Šibenik and Ernesto Guerra, Šibenik, 1905, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b.

360 See Art. 9 of the Contract between the Teatro Mazzoleni and Ernesto Guerra, Šibenik, 1905, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b.

361 “i ragazzi dormono due per letto ed in una stanza può mettersi anche, se grande, 4 e 5 letti”; Letter from Enrico Gallina to Giovanni Mazzoleni, Trieste, 29.9.1905, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b.

362 Letter from Enrico Gallina to Giovanni Mazzoleni, Trieste, 29.9.1905, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b.

363 The admission prices for the performances of the Compagnia Lirica Lillipuziana in Pula in 1906 were as follows: parterre and boxes 1.20 crowns; soldiers and non-commissioned officers 80 cents; children under 7, 60 cents; seats (*poltrone*) 1.40 crowns; stools (*scanni*) in the parterre 70 cents; ground-floor boxes 6 crowns; first-tier boxes 4 crowns; gallery 40 cents; reserved seats in gallery 40 cents; “Politeama Ciscutti”, *Omnibus*, 19.5.1906. At Šibenik the listed prices were a little higher: parterre and boxes 1.60 crowns; children and non-commissioned officers 80 cents; seats (*poltroncine*) 1.60 crowns; stools (*scanni*), 80 cents; 2nd-tier boxes 5 crowns; 3rd-tier 2.50 crowns; see Advertising bill for a special production of *Educande di Sorrento*, Šibenik, 14.5.1906, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 7. Even though the prices had been

were to be sold in different currencies depending on the type of performance: the early daytime shows in crowns; the evening performances in Italian lire.³⁶⁴

Guerra returned to the Teatro Mazzoleni not even a year later, in May 1906, offering just two special performances on 14 and 15 May of *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and *Le educande di Sorrento*. This type of spectacle had clearly been well received the first time round, otherwise a second opportunity would not have occurred so soon after. Nonetheless, opera with children in the lead roles was probably starting to lose its appeal in Šibenik. “Given that the audience here is made up almost exclusively of officers”, the director of the theatre noted, “they are not interested in children; instead, those employed are always elegant prima divas”.³⁶⁵ Significantly the agent Gallina proposed the Angelini operetta company for a run of six nights in November 1907. No children this time, just ballerinas and singers engaged in the role of “excentric divettes” (*divette eccentriche*), as they were called at the time. The company asked for a guarantee of 500 crowns per night, with the nightly expenses (including the orchestra) and the copyright to be borne by the theatre. The management hoped to recoup the costs by charging higher prices, but in order to cover its back (since it was rarely possible to predict financial outcomes at the theatre), it asked for the approval of the shareholders, who in the end voted it and established an entrance price of 3 crowns.³⁶⁶

In these years, another issue posed a threat to the opera seasons and needed to be addressed, and that was the cinema. At Šibenik, a film company (*impresa del cinematografo*) represented by Ugo Fosco, one of the theatre’s shareholders (and later a director), requested that the foyer of the theatre be used as a provisional cinema in the summer months (June, July, August and perhaps September). It was certainly not customary to organise opera performances in those months, but Fosco was nonetheless keen to emphasise that the equipment could be disassembled with an hour’s work and, if required, the evening showings could be suspended so as not to interfere with the theatre’s activities. He also promised to make the necessary arrangements with the competent authorities and get the required authorisation from the insurance company. Finally, a request was made to establish a suitable rate for renting the foyer. In reply, Mazzoleni declared to the shareholders that the management had always been against allowing the theatre to be used for the cinema, since it had little

raised, they were nowhere near those of the tickets sold at a more important theatre like that of Zadar, where in the same year of 1906 students and children entered for 1.50 crowns, the *poltroncine* were sold at 2.50 crowns, the *scanni* at 1.60 crowns, the seats in the gallery at 60 cents and the numbered seats at 40 cents.

364 See “Currency to be used for performances at the Teatro Mazzoleni”, from the Headquarters (*Comando*) of the troops of Dalmatia to Signor Mazzoleni, Šibenik, 12. 10. 1919, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

365 “Essendo il pubblico qui costituito quasi esclusivamente di ufficiali, non vogliono saperne di bambini, ma invece delle dive eleganti vengono sempre scritturate.”; Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to M. Sampietri, [Šibenik post 1911], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2a.

366 See Minutes of the meeting, Šibenik, 28. 7. 1907, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

faith in “erratic companies” (*imprese girovaghe*); but that in the present case, considering that it was a matter of using the theatre foyer, that the equipment would be used by people of proven technical skill, and also that there would be a scrupulous supervision under Fosco’s direction, it would grant what was requested for a monthly rent of 60 crowns.³⁶⁷ The time had come, therefore, for this form of entertainment to take up its place within the theatre – and perhaps compete with opera for a part of its audience.

4.6.3 Do it yourself, if you want it done properly: the self-organised seasons of the Mazzolenis

The first meeting of the directors and partners of the theatre concerning the 1909 season was held early in the morning on 12 February 1909 at the house of the director Antonio Bontempo. Those present were the directors Giovanni de Difnico, Giovanni Mazzoleni (who for some time had already taken over from his father Paolo), Ugo Fosco, Antonio Raimondi and Bontempo himself, as well as Enrico Mazzoleni (Giovanni’s brother) and the conductor Raffaele Patucchi.³⁶⁸ Giovanni de Difnico opened the meeting with the only item on the agenda: the management’s decision on the season to be given in the forthcoming spring. Giovanni and Enrico Mazzoleni reported on their negotiations with the theatrical agent Paolo Rocca, and on the result of the auditions, made in Milan, for the prospective singers. After hearing the opinion of Patucchi on the orchestra of the Società Filarmonica and the choirs of the city, it was resolved to convene the theatre shareholders for the following Wednesday in order to propose a contribution of 50 crowns per share and also to request authorisation to take out a loan of 3,000 crowns from the Banca Popolare Zaratina to meet the preliminary expenses. The management declared itself in favour of planning a short season to begin on Easter Day with repertoire operas like *La traviata* and *Il trovatore*.³⁶⁹

When the shareholders met, as planned, in the theatre, Giovanni Mazzoleni started the proceedings by stressing the management’s constant commitment to promoting productions of good quality. Citing the drama companies that had visited Šibenik (such as those of Berti, Novelli, Pezzana, Vitaliani and others of less importance), he noted that the theatre had in no way lagged behind others in more populous and important cities. And in the field of operetta, he mentioned a recent attempt to give a short season with an important

367 See Minutes of the meeting, Šibenik 25. 7. 1908, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

368 Raffaele Patucchi was *maestro concertatore* and conductor of the opera at the Teatro Mazzoleni of Šibenik and, when required, violinist in the same theatre’s orchestra. Today he is also remembered as the father of the film director Renato May. He moved to Italy in 1914, when performances of opera in the theatre were interrupted by the War. See also the entry “Renato May”, in Roberto Poppi, *Dizionario del cinema italiano. I registi: dal 1930 ai nostri giorni*, Gremese, Roma 2002, p. 281.

369 See Minutes of the meeting, 12. 2. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

company, which however resulted in a deficit (a deficit that the theatre, however, managed to cover with the profits from other companies). Encouraged by these results and by the public's interest in music, the management had for some time been examining how to give an opera season without incurring the large expenses that, by definition, are associated with such spectacles (expenses that could not be smoothed out, also given the small numbers of the theatre-going public). Mazzoleni here reminded the shareholders of what had happened at the inauguration of the Tommaseo monument: that *Gli Ugonotti* and *Un ballo in maschera* had been performed only thanks to the substantial endowment of 4,000 crowns from the committee, other sums derived from the subscriptions of private citizens and the municipality, and the attendance of many outsiders who had come to Šibenik specially for the occasion. To achieve its intended purpose, and to reduce the cost of the chorus and orchestra (also considering that one could count on a conductor on site), the theatre gave the fullest support to the city's Società Filarmonica. Indeed there had been a case in point just recently. In the previous year the company run by Castagnoli had arrived at the theatre with just a few artists, just two orchestral players, unexceptional costumes and little scenery. And yet with the ensemble provided by the Filarmonica it was possible to put together a moderately good orchestra that satisfied expectations; proof of which was the good attendance of the public on the nights devoted to *La favorita*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and *Ernani*, for the most part achieved with local forces.³⁷⁰

The theatre management considered that equally good results could be achieved by creating an *impresa* of its own (without calling in an external *impresario*) and by engaging good young artists, who, at the beginning of their careers, would surely not demand the exorbitant fees of those who were already embarked on a professional life and were better known. According to Mazzoleni, the notion that novices could not be well received was wrong. In support of which, he cited the case of the soprano Salomea Krusceniski,³⁷¹ who came to Šibenik as a newcomer, but nonetheless found favour with the public and in the course of time became an acclaimed artist. Nonetheless, if one wanted a season of any kind, no matter how short, an endowment was needed. Without citing examples outside

370 All that is known about this *Ernani* is that the management succeeded in granting an endowment of 250 crowns; Letter from Giuseppe Castagnoli to the theatre management of Šibenik, Šibenik, 21. 4. 1908, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2a.

371 Salomea Krusceniski (1872–1952), the Italianisation of the name Solomiya Krushelnytska (in the sources also Krusceniski or Kruszelnicka), was a Ukrainian soprano who studied singing at the Conservatoire of Lviv before completing her studies in Milan. Her debut at the Teatro San Carlo of Naples in 1903 inaugurated her Italian career. In 1910 she married the mayor of Viareggio. For information on her life, see Carlo Schmidl, *Supplemento al Dizionario Universale dei Musicisti: Appendice*, Sonzogno, Milano 1937, p. 447, or *Großes Sängerlexikon*, edited by Karl Josef Kutsch and Leo Riemens, Saur, München 2003, p. 2529–2530, or the entry in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, edited by Stanley Sadie, London, Macmillan, 2001, p. 285.

the province of Dalmatia, Mazzoleni mentioned the cases of Zadar and Dubrovnik. Even though these theatres could count on audiences that were much larger than at Šibenik, they couldn't organise any opera without a subsidy from the shareholders. A certain impresario called Dorigo had made a proposal to Šibenik in 1908 without asking for an endowment, then he backed out, as expected, and failed to return the contracts signed. As for Castagnoli, in the current year he declared that without an endowment he wouldn't present a project (the next year, however, he did; the management asked him for the payment of the nightly expenses and his project came to nothing).³⁷²

After reading the minutes of the directors' meeting held earlier, Mazzoleni came to the point by directly asking the shareholders for the contribution of 50 crowns each to finance the opera season. Giovanni de Difnico then mentioned the improvements made to the theatre and the good productions given in the previous years, all of which had caused the shares to increase considerably in value. He opened the discussion on the management's proposal, recommending that it be accepted. At the same time Enrico Mazzoleni gave the shareholders an account of the auditions held by the Rocca agency in Milan to secure a good cast of soloists: according to the reports, there were several singers with admirable voices. It would be hard, he believed, to find another opportunity that guaranteed success like the present one, so he supported the management's proposal. There were, however, sceptical voices, like that of a certain Meichsner, a shareholder who believed that the request for money from the shareholders was inadequate: it would create a precedent that would worsen the theatre's finances every year. But it would be difficult to produce any opera season without a subsidy. In favour of the proposal it was said that it would be a one-off project for special circumstances and would not be binding for the future. There were also those like Gregorio Bogić who commented on the type of repertoire proposed and asked that instead of *La traviata* and *Il trovatore*, as suggested by the management, two more recent operas should be given. But then the expenses – from the rental of the scores and the authors' rights – would be too high and the season would need a higher budget, which Mazzoleni felt to be unwise, given that this was a first experiment.³⁷³

Regarding the cast, it was planned to engage the soprano Erminia Daelli, who at the time was engaged at La Scala, but she asked for her arrival to be postponed by ten days, precisely because of her commitment in Milan. Since the contract the soprano would sign with Šibenik would last only a month, ten days would mean a third of her overall stay. It would be important to have all the artists on site from the very start and be ready to stage *Il trovatore* in case for some reason it was impossible to start with *La Traviata* as planned. So Mazzoleni, in some embarrassment over the situation and not knowing how to answer the soprano, entrusted the resolution of the matter to the conductor Patucchi, who was due to

372 See Minutes of the meeting, Šibenik, 17. 9. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

373 See Minutes of the meeting, Šibenik, 17. 9. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

travel to Milan and could perhaps extract the necessary authorisation from the management of La Scala.³⁷⁴ The problem must have been successfully resolved for we later find Daelli engaged as Azucena in the cast.

Among the artistic staff there would also have to be a pianist in the orchestra who could rehearse with the choruses during the daytime. An alternative solution – proposed by the agent Paolo Rocca – was to engage a prompter, have him instruct the choruses, and instead of the piano use two first violins and a second violin. An attempt was then made to save on the prompter as well, by asking the agent Rocca to do without it.³⁷⁵ It turns out, however, that a prompter is included in the report on the 1909 opera season, which suggests that, after various hesitations, it was eventually decided to engage one.

We are fortunate that there survives a detailed report of the season, which we reproduce here in full in order to clarify the nature of the income and expenses in detail.³⁷⁶ In all there were 15 performances, held from 11 April to 2 May 1909, with nine nights of *La traviata* and six of *Il trovatore*.

Introiti: [Income:]			
Incassati come dai borderò serali			
1	Serata op. Traviata incasso cor.		833,20
2	"		595,20
3	"		380,10
4	"		242,30
5	"		316,20

Spese: [Expenditure:]			
1	Rimessa Schmidl per spartiti cor.		500,60
2	All'Agente P. Rocca – Milano		960,00
3	Conto spese viaggio M°Patucchi		200,00
4	Spese varie "		66,90
5	Saldo riflettori Gallina- Trieste		136,40

374 Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Erminia Daelli, Šibenik, 12. 3. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

375 "You didn't say anything to me about the prompter, nor did you include him in the budget," Mazzoleni wrote to the agent Rocca. "Last year we did everything perfectly well without one; I wouldn't like the budget already decided on to increase much, because that is precisely the basis on which the management and the theatre company have decided to make this experiment of a 'municipal impresa'. And what with the other expenses we will have with the orchestra, chorus, extras, etc., the season will cost more than we thought. So if you could do without this prompter, it would be a very good thing. In any case write and tell me how much it would cost." ("Del suggeritore Ella non mi ha parlato né compreso nel preventivo; l'anno scorso si fece tutto e bene senza, non vorrei aumentasse di molto il preventivo già stabilito perché appunto in base a quello la direzione e la società hanno deciso di fare l'esperimento di un'impresa cittadina. E colle altre spese che si avranno qui di orchestra, masse teatrali ecc. l'opera verrà costare più di quanto si credeva. Quindi se si potesse fare a meno di questo suggeritore sarebbe una gran bella cosa. In ogni modo mi scriva quanto verrebbe a costare."); Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Paolo Rocca, 1. 3. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

376 Report on the 1909 opera season, Šibenik, 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

6	"		547,20
7	Trovatore		445,20
8	"		350,60
9	Traviata		312,50
10	Trovatore		532,20
11	"		248,90
12	Traviata		330,50
13	Trovatore		162,30
14	"		348,90
15	Traviata		570,90
		corone	6216,20
	Contributo per 28 azioni a cor. 50 ciascuna	1400,00	

6	Conto lampadine elettriche Kolitscher		107,80
7	Artisti: 1. Baritone Silveti lire ital.	325,00	
	2. Tenore Ducci Vittorio	295,00	
	3. " Schipa	165,00	
	4. Basso Grisoli	230,00	
	5. Soprano Comida	200,00	
	6. " Postiglione	270,00	
	7. ½ Soprano Torchi	325,00	
	8. Comprimaria Donati Marin	200,00	
	9. Detto Biancofiore	112,00	
	10. Detto Venturoli	200,00	
	11. Corista Barbacci	196,00	
	12. Soprano Frampolesi	100,00	
	13. Suggestore Manzella	196,00	
	14 I violino Pedrini	234,00	
	15 Il detto Beloli	182,00	
	16. Il detto Conopim	182,00	
	Lire ital	3412,00	3278,60
	17. Capocori Leghissa e consorte		336,00
8	Al Sig M° Raffaele Patucchi		150,00
	M° Orsini sostituto		85,00
	Silla Bresoni clarino		45,00
	Stelich Niccolò corno		36,00
	Zangaro cornetto		30,00
	Somma corone		5932,30
	Coriste per risarcimento basso vestiario		300,00
	Saldo illuminazione ditta Ant. Spuk	6300,00	450,00
	Detta per installazione	150,00	
	Saldo conto inservienti		325,00
	" commiss. Mrar		60,00
	Detto e guardie comunali		52,50
	Pompieri		46,00
	Tipografia Fosco		179,00
	Assicurazione fuoco per materiale		30,62
	Ant[onio] Mandic mani- fature		79,81

	Albina Covacer sarta		34,00
	Amelia Carbonetti		8,48
	Detta detto II conto		13,20
	Tommaso Colombo		81,00
	Migalo trasporto Harmonium		2,00
	Fratelli Scotton smontature		10,00
	Migalo facchinaggio bagaglio		6,00
	Detto trasporto piano		4,00
	Fratelli Scotton per co- lonnine		24,00
	Colombo per rocchetti ferro		59,00
	Anelli bigoncio		30,00
	Conto farmacia Beros		0,80
	Pulizia del teatro		8,00
	Giov[anni] Rude oggetti cancelleria		8,84
	Nolo sbarco materiale Lloyd		173,26
	Telegrammi Schmidl		1,80
	Nolo riflettori Trieste-Qui		6,78
	Tom. Colombo per giornate lavoro		12,00
	Somma cor.		7988,39
	Saldo conto Colombo Tommaso		28,00
	" Giov[anni] Rude		2,68
	Aggiunta i due coristi		25,00
	" Gius[epp]e Modun		9,00
	" Anna Pacor		18,20
	" Tomm[aso] Colombo		51,78
	" Pio Terzanovic		134,09
	" Carlo Evangelista		10,64
	" Matic per legname		94,24
	" Giov[anni] Fosco generi		12,06
	Detto detto [sic]		4,06
	" Gius[epp]e Modun		33,00
	" M. Steiner		4,00
	" Tomm[aso] Colombo		13,00
	" Trasp[orto] piano e Harm.		6,00
	" Giov[anni] Merlak		7,15
	" Vinc[enzo] Supuk		14,82
			8456,11

" Per viaggi artistici da Trieste ½ assegno telegrafico		101,88
Per saldo viaggio comprim. Donato		17,00
" Conto telegramma Rocca Milano		2,10
" Saldo telegrammi vari come ricevute in atti		38,06
" Affrancature lettere		4,95
" Detto Schmidl per musica		7,70
" Facchinaggi a Migalo		8,00
		8635,80
" Bolli licenza luogotenenza		6,00
" Affissione conto Grimani		55,20
Conto copiatura Breschi		30,00
Percenti Ant[onio] Cosolo per vendite		41,65
		8768,65
Saldo conto vitto artisti società di Nav. Dalmatia eppoi conto Anelli	172,00	
Meno rifuse dagli artisti	100,80	71,20
Saldo conto Colombo per smontature, incassonam. scene, le sue prestazioni più giornate lavoranti per 4 giorni		100,00
Mancia elettricista Supuk e secondo uomo ai riflettori		28,00
Filiale Svanković fitto lumino notte		3,00
Saldo conto A. Pacor per un mese di lavoro per riduzione vestiti, pulitura, custodia, rispediz. ecc.		70,00
Pacor e Mauretich per 15 sere di servizio a 1 cor.		30,00
Per fattura di un rocco per lampadario e candele		5,00
Saldo conto Fosco per padre		7,00
Conto Micić per orologio		4,00
Saldo conto Elez per servizio e pulizia teatro		27,20
Aggiunta a due servi di scena		4,00
Per due altre comparse per 5 Trovatori		5,00
Per 30 libretti d'opera per le coriste		4,50

Conti regali serate: orefice Petrić per Comida		9,60
Dono in denaro ten[ore] Schipa		50,00
Conto Carbonetti cintura per sopr[ano] Comida		9,20
Conto Pacor per fiori detta		7,00
Conto Rude per regalo detta		30,00
Detto detto [sic] per portofoglio Senipa [?]		2,40
Per fiori serata Postiglione		4,00
Per due conti Oref[ice] Petrić per Postiglione		36,40
Per rifusione [...] in palcoscenico coristi		42,00
Saldo spese parapettata di Camonese		77,39
Somma corone		9395,54

Included in the income are the nightly takings from the boxes and admissions, which are detailed for each of the 15 nights, showing a conspicuous – and predictable – peak on the night of the premiere of *La traviata*, totalling 6,216.20 crowns. To these are added the contribution of the shareholders, which came to 1,400 crowns (as agreed). So by combining these two sources of revenue they could count on a total of 7,616.20 crowns. As for the expenses, the items of expenditure were the most varied. As well as the artists' fees, also indicated is the agent's fee and the conductor's expenses when he went to Milan to hear the singers. Then there was his fee for conducting the operas, in addition to the pay given to the assistant conductor or *maestro sostituto* (who, as we shall see later, was usually paid about half the principal conductor's fee). It is worth noting that all the costs for the staff brought over from Italy are given in lire, not crowns. The local musicians, on the other hand, were paid in crowns. Normally the *basso vestiario* (basic wardrobe) for singers and choristers was not reimbursed by the *impresa*, but here the management evidently made an exception. Nor (according to the contract) were the travel expenses of the singers to the *piazza* necessarily refunded, let alone their board – yet another exception to the rule. Together with the expenditure for postage, tax stamps, telegrams and letters, the list also sees fit to include the cost of the gifts for the cast (about which more in section 7.3.1.). In all, the bill came to 9,395.54 crowns. From another document we learn that the whole season cost 9,550.38 crowns, a figure only slightly higher. If we take this second figure as correct, the total deficit was 1,934.18 crowns. What is missing from this table are the items concerning the suppliers: the properties of Orrigoni, which cost 150 lire, the footwear from Bertolotti, for 100 lire, Soriani's scenery for 300 lire and Rosi's costumes for 450 lire. In

all adding another 1,000 lire (or 2,500 crowns).³⁷⁷ We must also remember that the theatre had contracted a debt with the Inchiostri company,³⁷⁸ a sum amounting to 2,160.8 crowns. Since the management had already made an advance payment of 700 crowns on 1 June 1909, the residual debt was 1,460.81 crowns. Also helping to pay off the debt were, among other things, a visit of the Company of the National Theatre of Zagreb with four nights of opera. This short season, as transpires from the documentation, had given the theatre a net profit of 340 crowns.³⁷⁹

Even though the outlay had exceeded the income, as indeed had been expected, the theatre management was satisfied with the result of the performances and even sent a letter to the conductor Raffaele Patucchi to congratulate him. *Il trovatore* and *La traviata* found favour with the public and this result was also due to the preparation of orchestra and chorus, which had worked hard for the success of the season.³⁸⁰ All of which showed that it was not impossible to run a season without engaging an external impresario. To be sure, it entailed considerable sacrifices and much more responsibility at a personal level. Indeed, this may have been the very reason that some time later Giovanni De Difnico decided to stand down from his position as director. His colleagues, who learned of his decision with regret, begged him to remain, “in the interests of Italian art and as a figure of conciliation and moderation in the relations between the various nationalities”. The theatre of Šibenik should be directed by the right people, and De Difnico was considered to be one of these, “for his sentiments of great patriotism [...], for his eminent qualities of an excellent citizen, and for his personal influence”.³⁸¹ He was therefore invited to withdraw his resignation. His name, however, no longer appears among the members of the management.

377 See Undated sheet of paper, [Šibenik, 1909], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

378 The Inchiostri company traded in food and manufactured goods. It also engaged in wine-making and had extensive dealings internationally; *Manuale del Regno di Dalmazia per l'anno 1873*, vol. III, Zadar, Battara, 1873, p. 314.

379 See Minutes of the meeting, Šibenik, 5. 6. 1910, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

380 “For you the success was all the more remarkable,” the theatre management wrote to Patucchi, “because, as far as the orchestra and chorus were concerned, it was obtained almost exclusively with your young pupils, who with discipline, constant study and love of the art succeeded in giving perfect performances in such a way as to merit the acclaim of the whole citizenry.” (“E tanto più rimarchevole è per Lei il successo, perché ottenuto per quanto riguarda l’orchestra ed il coro, quasi esclusivamente co’ suoi giovani allievi i quali colla disciplina, lo studio costante e l’amore per l’arte riuscirono a dare delle esecuzioni perfette in modo da meritarsi il plauso dell’intera cittadinanza.”); Letter from the theatre management of Šibenik to Raffaele Patucchi, Šibenik, 2. 5. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

381 “nell’interesse dell’arte italiana e qual fattore di conciliazione e di moderazione nei rapporti delle varie nazionalità”, and later, “pei sentimenti di alto patriottismo [...], per le eminenti qualità di ottimo cittadino e per la personale influenza”; Letter from the theatre management of Šibenik to Giovanni de Difnico, Šibenik, 8. 11. 1910, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

From this time on, Italian opera began to be mixed with proposals offered by Croatian and Serbian companies. Already in 1910 a Serbian company from Belgrade paid a visit for just a single concert (it was a choral society). The successive companies from Zagreb and Osijek that followed and alternated with the Italian ones had “the American custom” (*l'uso americano*) of switching between opera and operetta almost every night. As a result, the public became used to a rapid turnover in the repertoire, and this was seen by the director of the theatre as a drawback. The public had been “spoilt” (*viziato*) by the permanent companies of these theatres; the Italian companies, on the other hand, did not offer such a frequent turnover (if perhaps we make an exception for opera buffa troupes like the Lillipuziana directed by Guerra).³⁸²

Even the impresario Ponzio offered little variety when in 1911 he proposed just two operas for Šibenik: *La sonnambula* and *Rigoletto*, which had been given at Lošinj (Lussino) shortly before. For Easter 1911 a season was also offered by Milivoj Stojković from Knin, but the management declined the offer saying that the choice had fallen on Italian opera.³⁸³ Ponzio's season was to last around twenty days, hence a little longer than what the Croatian companies generally offered, but with fewer works. The problems, however, were the same as ever: the lack of a complete orchestral group in Šibenik and the problem of recruiting singers for the chorus. In this particular instance, for example, a clarinet (*clarino*) player was needed to complete the orchestra. Even a simple request like this could be magnified into a serious problem. When a theatre was short of an orchestral player, the first thing to do was to look for one in the neighbouring theatres, but often the search was fruitless. “I am still waiting for news from Zadar and Split,” Mazzoleni wrote describing his efforts, “but I hold little hope in these two cities, for they too sometimes turn to Šibenik”.³⁸⁴ When it was quite clear that neither Zadar nor other nearby towns had a free player, Mazzoleni directly contacted the impresario: “I have exhausted all avenues and I don't know who else

382 See Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Enrico Gallina, Šibenik, 19. 9. 1913, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 6.

383 See Letter from the theatre management of Šibenik to Milivoj Stojković, Šibenik, 6. 4. 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

384 “Attendo ancora notizie da Zara e da Spalato, ma da queste due città spero pochissimo, poiché essi pure si rivolgono talvolta a Sebenico.”; Letter from the theatre management of Šibenik to Giuseppe Ponzio, Šibenik, 4. 4. 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10. The day before, Mazzoleni had written to Vincenzo Prebenda in Split as follows: “For Easter we'll be having a short opera season with ‘Rigoletto and Sonnambula’ and there is a need for a good first clarinet. I therefore appeal to your well-known courtesy with a request to let me know if one could be found in Split for a fee of 7 crowns per day and travel expenses. I thank you in advance for the kindness and I remain yours with all esteem.” (“Per Pasqua avremmo una breve stagioncina d'opera col ‘Rigoletto e Sonnambula’ e si avrebbe bisogno di un buon primo clarino. Mi rivolgo perciò alla ben nota sua cortesia con preghiera di volermi indicare se si potrebbe trovare a Spalato verso il compenso di Corone 7 giornalieri e le spese di viaggio. La ringrazio anticipatamente del favore e sono con tutta stima.”); Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Vincenzo Prebenda, Šibenik, 3. 4. 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

to turn to. Please, you take over, send telegrams to Ferrara and Milan. Without the clarinet the conductor would be in great difficulty and the success of the orchestra and the opera would be jeopardised”.³⁸⁵ Nor did the search in Milan produce immediate results. Ponzio had to send an express letter to an orchestral agency in the city.³⁸⁶

The orchestra at Šibenik consisted to a great extent of amateurs, as Mazzoleni himself reminded the impresario. And this is perhaps also the reason why the contract subsequently drawn up between Ponzio and the orchestral players was so scanty (judging from a draft contract found among the archival papers). It was just three lines long. Along with the musician’s name it merely indicated the starting date of performances, without any reference to the length of the season: “The undersigned undertakes to take part as ... in the operas *Rigoletto* and *Sonnambula* that will be performed in the Teatro Mazzoleni as from Sunday 16 April of the current year”. This was followed by an indication of the nightly pay: “The impresario Signor Giuseppe Ponzio undertakes to pay every evening...”. The third and last sentence mentions where the contract was actually deposited: “The present contract will be preserved by the theatre management as a guarantee for the contracting parties”.³⁸⁷ That’s all.

385 “io ho esaurito tutte le pratiche e non saprei più a chi rivolgermi. Mi raccomando faccia Lei, telegrafi a Ferrara e a Milano. Senza il clarino il maestro sarebbe molto imbarazzato e si comprometterebbe il successo dell’orchestra e dell’opera.”; Letter from the theatre management of Šibenik to Giuseppe Ponzio, Šibenik, 6. 4. 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10. Mazzoleni had earlier received the following telegram from a certain Professor Arassich of Trieste, whom he had contacted: “Trieste nobody Telegraph Trebbi clarinettist Caffè Teatro Ferrara” (“Trieste nessuno telegrafi Trebbi clarinettista caffè teatro Ferrara”); Šibenik 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

386 “As regards the other orchestral parts,” Ponzio wrote, “I will do my utmost to send them to Šibenik no later than Sunday 9th so that on Monday they can certainly begin the orchestra’s first run-through. The company and the Bianchi quartet will be in Šibenik on Holy Wednesday, because here the last performance will be given on Tuesday 11th with the opera *Lucia di Lammermoor*. So on Wednesday evening, if, as I hope, there will also be a clarino, there could be a fine full rehearsal and you will see that it will immediately go well, given that *Rigoletto* is a fairly easy opera and moreover already well tried here in Lošinj.” (“In merito alle altre parti d’orchestra farò il possibile di spedirle a Sebenico non più tardi di domenica 9 corr. così lunedì potranno senz’altro iniziare le prove d’orchestra di lettura. La compagnia ed il quartetto Bianchi saranno a Sebenico in giornata del mercoledì santo, perché qui si darà l’ultima recita martedì 11 con l’opera *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Così mercoledì sera, se, come spero ci sarà anche il clarino, si potrà fare una bella prova d’insieme e vedrà che si andrà subito bene essendo il *Rigoletto* un’opera abbastanza facile, e poi già bene affiatata qui a Lussino.”); Letter from Giuseppe Ponzio to the theatre management of Šibenik, Lošinj, 6. 4. 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

387 “Il sottoscritto si impegna di prendere parte quale... nelle opere *Rigoletto* e *Sonnambula* che verranno eseguite in questo teatro Mazzoleni incominciando domenica 16 aprile a. c.”; “L’impresario sig. Giuseppe Ponzio si obbliga di corrispondere seralmente...”; “Il presente contratto verrà conservato dalla direzione teatrale per garanzia delle parti contraenti”; Engagement agreement for the impresario Signor Giuseppe Ponzio, [Šibenik, n. d.], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10. This concise model of engagement agreement was identical to that used for performances of operetta.

As regards the chorus, it was a matter of finding around ten girls available to sing in *La sonnambula* (“because I can hardly contemplate doing *Sonnambula* without a female chorus”, Mazzoleni explained).³⁸⁸ The director begged Ponzio to write to Hofstätter & Bonaventura, the costume suppliers in Trieste, and ask how much it would cost to hire ten costumes for the chorus girls. Given that the costumes were to be very simple and just for a few days, the expense should be negligible, though Mazzoleni stressed the need for decorum: “the dresses and blouses must however be very respectable, otherwise the young ladies won’t put them on”.³⁸⁹ The insistence on decorum in costumes and scenery, made to both impresarios and suppliers, was a constant feature under the Mazzoleni management. This informal request for information from the costume company would then have to be followed by a telegram if and when the negotiations between impresario and theatre management were successfully concluded. In the case of the chorus singers there was no contract: they were remunerated merely with a ticket for the nightly performance.

On the other hand, we do have the payroll for the staff of the Teatro Mazzoleni for the ten performances of this short season. A curious detail is that both the front-of-house staff and the stage hands renounced their pay on the last night in favour of the impresa.³⁹⁰

al custode Giuseppe Modun	a cor 3 – per 10 sere cor 30
al bollettinaio Giov[anni] Modun	a cor 2 – per 10 sere cor 20
al portinaio Bognolo Oreste	a cor 1 – per 10 sere cor 10
al sig. Anelli Oreste	a cor 2 – per 10 sere cor 20
All’indicatore sedie in platea	a cor 0,80 – per 10 sere cor 8
Al portinaio loggione Vatavuk	a cor 1 – per 10 sere cor 10
Al distributore manifesti	a cor 1 – per 10 sere cor 10
Al Čičmir per l’acquedotto	a cor 0,60 – per 10 sere cor 6,60
Alla donna per l’allestimento 2 giornate prima del debutto con 2 donne	a cor 1,60 ognuna – cor 6,40
Alla donna per pulizia teatro	a cor 1,60 – per 11 sere cor 17,60
Alla sarta Modun	a cor 1 – per 10 sere cor 10
Al servo di scena Migalo	a cor 1 – per 10 sere cor 10
Al Colombo Tommaso per tutti gli inservienti in palcoscenico a cor 7,20 al giorno comprese le 2 sere delle prove	12 sere 86,40
Smontatura balloni	0,80
	245,80 [corone]

388 “perché mi sorride poco l’idea di fare la *Sonnambula* senza coro femminile”; Letter from the theatre management to Giuseppe Ponzio, Šibenik, 6. 4. 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

389 “I vestiti e le camiciette [sic] dovrebbero essere però molto decenti poiché altrimenti le signorine non li vestirebbero”; Letter from the theatre management to Giuseppe Ponzio, Šibenik, 6. 4. 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

390 The document also stated that the management had immediately paid the said employees the 245.80 crowns due to them; Staff pay at the Teatro Mazzoleni, Šibenik, 2. 5. 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

In all, therefore, a minimum of around fifteen people (say, fifteen to twenty) were engaged for each performance night.

The company left Šibenik with a profit of 352.09 crowns.³⁹¹ The next year Ponzio offered the management another opera season, this time coming with what he considered to be “much better artistic elements” (*elementi artistici molto migliori*) than those brought in 1911, and increased the number of operas from two to three, suggesting productions of *Norma*, *Faust* and *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. Nothing came of the proposal, however, most likely also because the costs would have been greater.³⁹²

A table similar to the one above, also regarding the cost of the theatre staff, though referring to fewer nights, has survived for the run of five performances in four days by the opera company of Zagreb that came to the city in May 1911 with the operas *Sismiš*, *Poviatak*, *Lijepa Galateja* and *Madama Butterfly*. Again, the company succeeded in leaving Šibenik with a profit, this time of 518.90 crowns.³⁹³ Given that there were fewer performances, the overall expense for staff was also lower and came to 118,60 crowns.³⁹⁴ The staff was therefore paid by the day; there were no forms of long-term employment (except in the case of the theatre’s custodian). That year concluded with a single performance of Cimarosa’s *Il matrimonio segreto* organised by Antonio Cosolo, who asked for, and got, 100 crowns for the nightly expenses.³⁹⁵ For this opera it appears that the entire company of artists, orchestra included, came from Milan.³⁹⁶

391 Report of the administration of the Teatro Mazzoleni from 1 June 1909 to 31 March 1911, [Šibenik, 1911], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

392 See Letter from Giuseppe Ponzio to Giovanni Mazzoleni, Mali Lošinj, 13. 3. 1912, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b.

393 Special financial accounts for the Croatian opera season from Zagreb, Šibenik, May 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

394 See Cost of the staff of the Teatro Mazzoleni for the five performances of the opera company from Zagreb, Šibenik, 27. 5. 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

395 “The director, Signor Bontempo, made the proposal to grant the theatre to the applicant against the payment of a hundred crowns for the evening’s expenses,” the minutes of a shareholders’ meeting records, “though reserving for the theatre its boxes of the 2nd tier. The other directors, in turn, proposed that, given that it was just one night and considering that the management did not wish to assume the risk of a possible loss in what with laudable initiative had been taken on by Signor Cosolo, and considering that it was an important production of opera, he should be exceptionally granted the theatre against the sum of the evening’s expenses only.” (“Il direttore signor Bontempo fece proposta di concedere il teatro al richiedente verso l’indirizzo di corone cento per spese serali, ma riservando al teatro i palchi di II fila di proprietà dello stesso. Gli altri direttori a loro volta proposero che, trattandosi di una serata sola e non avendo voluto la direzione assumere il rischio d’una eventuale perdita, ciò che con encomiabile intraprendenza venne assunto dal signor Cosolo, e trattandosi d’un importante spettacolo d’opera, gli venga in via eccezionale concesso il teatro verso l’importo delle sole spese serali.”); Minutes of the meeting, Šibenik, 26. 9. 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

396 See Manlio Cacc, “Un secolo di vita del teatro Mazzoleni di Sebenico 29–1–1870 – 29–1–1970”, *Rivista dalmatica*, I (1970), p. 39. The tickets were sold in the shops of Cosolo and Comici until shortly

The one performance, on 3 October 1911, brought in 1,468 crowns, significantly more than the average takings the theatre was used to.³⁹⁷ In that same autumn tour the opera visited not only Rijeka and Zadar (where it had been in the previous September), but also made a stop at the Teatro Nuovo in Split.

There then came a time when the theatre building had to be made available to the military authorities and used as a barracks. At the time the management had already come to an agreement with a certain Signor Gobbi over some unspecified performances, but was forced to cancel the contract: “With regret we must deprive ourselves of the performances of your company and we hope that on another occasion there will be an opportunity to host you in our theatre. Please send me the two contracts, adding the following note: ‘Cancelled due to force majeure’ and then sign it”.³⁹⁸ The cancelled contract would have been useful to Mazzoleni in the event of a claim for damages when the building was restored to normal conditions of use. Though the cancellation certainly reflected a case of “force majeure”, the contract between impresario and theatre management would in any case have been invalid for the mere fact that it was not returned within the stipulated time frame. Here it is incidentally worth remembering some other justifications for cancellation: apart from a fire at the theatre or work and restoration on the building, they included the ‘protest of the audience’, the artists’ inability to sing the parts entrusted to them, reasons of war, revolution and epidemic, the death of a sovereign or prince, or any cause or motive of public order or hygiene.

The above disruption must have continued for a while if still in January 1913 Mazzoleni was declining incoming proposals by saying that the theatre was “occupied by the military” (*occupato dal militare*).³⁹⁹ And several months later, even though he could have accepted, Mazzoleni also declined the offer of the impresario Giuseppe Fantony, who proposed coming to Šibenik in December with his company of “Balli Italiani”; there would be ten nights of performances, ensuring minimum receipts of 500 crowns per night. The repertoire promised to be wide-ranging, and the ballets would receive a grand staging. Unlike traditional ballets, these works would present “the action taking place with singing” (*l'azione che si svolge con canto*). Indeed they were described to Mazzoleni as “short

before the beginning of the performance; after which, they could be bought directly at the theatre box-office.

397 Even the premiere of *Rigoletto* in the previous season had brought in only 931.50 crowns; Special financial accounts for the Italian opera (Ponzio impresa), Šibenik 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

398 “Con dispiacere ci priviamo delle recite della Sua compagnia e speriamo che in altra occasione ci sarà dato di ospitarLa nel nostro teatro. Mi mandi prego i due contratti facendovi Lei da parte Sua l’annotazione seguente: ‘Annullato per causa di forza maggiore’ e indi lo firmi.”; Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Gobbi, Šibenik, 11. 12. 1912, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3.

399 Letter from [Giovanni] Mazzoleni to the management of the Società Filarmonico Drammatica of Split, [Šibenik], 23. 1. 1913, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2a.

operas” (*brevi opere*) in which dance prevailed. If the proposal was accepted, Fantony, in addition to the contract, also wanted an advance of 1,000 crowns (for the outward travel expenses) that would have to be sent to the theatrical agency of Enrico Barbacini, whose client Fantony evidently was.⁴⁰⁰

Instead, the management decided to accept two world premieres of works by a composer well known in the musical circles of Šibenik: Antonio Orsini, permanent director of the wind band of Šibenik, who had already worked at the theatre as a *maestro sostituto* in various productions.⁴⁰¹ The operas given in December of that year were *Sangue dalmata*, a ‘dramma lirico’, followed by *Per l’amore*. The composer was also indicated in the *borderò* as being the impresario.⁴⁰² For the occasion he left Raffaele Patucchi to conduct his operas while he watched from the auditorium. The principal singers were brought in from Venice, while the supporting soloists and choruses were local.⁴⁰³ The two operas soon disappeared from the repertoire.

4.6.4 Leon Dragutinović and the Croatian company of the National Theatre of Osijek

In February 1914 the Teatro Mazzoleni received another proposal of Italian opera, this time from the agent Marco Curiel, who wished to organise a season with the Valentini opera company that was soon to appear in Zadar. The repertoire would be the same as that offered there.⁴⁰⁴ The theatre management would cover the costs of the chorus, orchestra and the nightly expenses (“if you wish,” Curiel remarked, “I could get you chorus singers from Trieste for 7 crowns a day, as well as orchestral players”);⁴⁰⁵ the impresario would pay for the artists, costumes, scenery, scores and conductor. Mazzoleni always liked to tell impresarios that the theatre management

400 The money was to be sent to the Ufficio Lirico Teatrale of Via S. Paolo 14 in Milan, owned by Enrico Barbacini, son of the celebrated tenor Barbacini; Letter from Giuseppe Fantony to Giovanni Mazzoleni, Roma, 29. 10. 1913, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2a.

401 Antonio Orsini (Lugo di Romagna, Ravenna 1868 – Castrocaro Terme, Forlì 1938) was a composer and wind band director. From 1896 to 1938 he directed the bands of Massalombarda (Ravenna), Šibenik and Castrocaro (Forlì). Carlo Schmidl, *Supplemento al Dizionario universale dei musicisti: Appendice – aggiunte e rettifiche al primo e secondo volume*, Sonzogno, Milano 1938, p. 578.

402 See *Borderò* for the evening of *Per l’amore*, Šibenik, 5. 12. 1913, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

403 Manlio Cace, “Un secolo di vita del teatro Mazzoleni di Sebenico 29–1–1870 – 29–1–1970”, *Rivista Dalmatica*, I (1970), p. 39.

404 The operas proposed included *Lucrezia Borgia*, *L’elisir d’amore*, *Maria di Rohan*, *La favorita*, *Norma*, *I puritani*, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *La sonnambula*.

405 “se credeste, potrei procurarvi coristi di Trieste a cor. 7 giornalieri, come pure professori d’orchestra”. Letter from Marco Curiel to Giovanni Mazzoleni, Trieste, 16. 1. 1914, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b.

had no confidence in getting a decent performance using “orchestral elements from around here”, thereby implying his preference for external musicians.⁴⁰⁶

In the end the choice fell on the offer made by Leon Dragutinović, administrator and procurator of the Croatian company of opera and operetta of the National Theatre of Osijek⁴⁰⁷ directed by Mihajlo Marković, to give 10 or 15 performances of opera or operetta. The company had already visited the city in the previous year for a run of ten nights. Inviting back a company that had already visited previously was not new for Šibenik: other examples of return visits are those of Ernesto Guerra and the Royal National Theatre of Zagreb. What was new, however, was that the contract specifies the need for the impresario to have the librettos approved by the censors of the Dalmatian provincial government in Zadar and obtain the corresponding licence. If these administrative procedures should fail to be dealt with in time (thereby leading to the authorities denying the theatre the authorisation to open), the impresario would be directly responsible. The penalty in the event of non compliance with the clauses of the contract by either impresario or theatre management was fixed at 1,000 crowns, double what it had been in the contract with Ernesto Guerra only nine years earlier.⁴⁰⁸

This time the theatre’s nightly expenses were not granted (as with previous companies) and the impresario would have to pay the theatre 100 crowns for each performance night. The management would deduct the sum from the nightly takings and use it to cover the costs (i. e. those listed in previous tables: lighting, service and surveillance staff, commissioners and police, firemen). For the 12 performances eventually agreed on, 290.20 crowns would go just to the staff, as follows:

	a sera	totali
Custode Giuseppe Modun 10 sere a Cor.	3--	36
Segretario sigr. Oreste Anelli a Cor.	2--	24
Portinaio platea Gius. Aleksa a Cor.	2--	24

406 See Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Antonio Ronzi, Šibenik, 20. 3. 1914, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2a. Mazzoleni made the comment to Antonio Ronzi, an orchestral conductor who ran operetta companies (as stated on his letterhead: “Antonio Ronzi / operette”). As well as writing to Šibenik in 1914, Ronzi had also contacted the Politeama Ciscutti of Pula in 1909.

407 On the theatre of Osijek and the companies working there, see the section “Deutschsprachiges Theater in Osijek” in Nikola Batušić, *Geschichte des deutschsprachigen Theaters in Kroatien*, edited by Elisabeth Großegger and Gertraud Marinelli-König, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna 2017, pp. 112–22, or Gabriella Schubert, “Das deutsche Theater in Esseg”, *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie*, XXXIX/1 (2003), pp. 90–107. Also on the subject is the volume by Antonija Bogner-Šaban, *Kazališni Osijek*, AGM, Zagreb 1997; as well as previous works: *Spomen-knjiga: o pedestoj godišnjici Narodnog kazališta u Osijeku, 1907–1957*, Štampa, Osijek 1957, and Radoslav Bačić, *Dvadeset godina. Narodnog kazališta u Osijeku 1907–1927*, Antun Rott, Osijek 1927, about the first twenty years of the theatre.

408 Contract between the theatre management of Šibenik and Leon Dragutinović, Šibenik, 23. 4. 1914, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

Indicatore sedie Mario Augenti a Cor.	-.80	9,60
Sorvegliante ai corridoi Giov. Modun a Cor.	2--	24
Alle donne per allestimento del teatro cinque giornate a Cor.	1,60	8
Alla donna Iko Elez per pulizia del teatro e sorveglianza alla sera a Cor.	1,60	19,20
Alla sarta Elena Modun compresi 3 giorni di allestimento a Cor.	1--	15
Al servo di scena Mate Trufaldino a Cor.	1--	12
Al servo di scena Lenac a Cor.	1--	12
Ai macchinisti Colombo Tommaso, Cristoforo e Pietro, operai Orsetti e Belamarić per montatura balloni a Cor.	7,20	86,40
Portinaio loggione Pasco Vatavuk a Cor.	1--	-.80
Distributore manifesti Sabatini a Cor.	-.60	12
		Corone 290,20 ⁴⁰⁹

These expenses, which are broken down into separate payments in the table above, are grouped together under the single entry “paid to the theatre staff” (*pagate agli impiegati teatrali*) in the more complete table of income and expenses given below, which also details the takings of individual nights and shows the deduction of 100 crowns per performance made to Dragutinović’s revenue.⁴¹⁰ In all, the mixed performances of opera and operetta were squeezed into less than two weeks. Payments were made conveniently in crowns (had the company been Italian, by this date it would have had to be paid in lire).⁴¹¹

			Introiti		Esiti
1914	14/5 Incassate	Ia sera «Ballo in maschera»	736,80	Versate all’impresario Dragutinović	636,80
				pagate ai pompieri	12
	15/5	II sera «il Bacio»	460,10	Versate all’impresario Dragutinović	360,10
				pagate ai pompieri	12
				pagate a Mate Trufaldino per distribuzione manifesti	4,80
	16/5	III sera «Sangue polacco»	818,00	Versate all’impresario Dragutinović	718,00
				pagate ai pompieri	12
	17/5	IV sera «La Traviata»	1061,20	Versate all’impresario Dragutinović	961,20
				pagate ai pompieri	12
	19/5	V sera «La Bohème»	899,80	Versate all’impresario Dragutinović	799,80
				pagate ai pompieri	12

409 Expenditure for the theatre staff for the 12 nights of the company of opera and operetta from the theatre of Osijek, Šibenik, 28. 5. 1914, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

410 The deduction is evident if one compares the two columns for each opera night and subtracts the expenses from the income.

411 Special financial accounts for the opera and operetta company of the National Theatre of Osijek directed by Leon Dragutinović, Šibenik, [1914], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

	20/5	VI sera «Eva»	753,60	Versate all'impresario Dragutinović	653,60
				pagate ai pompieri	12
	21/5	VII sera «Le campane di Corneville»	582,10	Versate all'impresario Dragutinović	482,10
				pagate ai pompieri	12
	22/5	VIII sera «La cicala»	305,70	Versate all'impresario Dragutinović	205,70
				pagate ai pompieri	12
	23/5	IX sera «La ballerina scalza»	296,70	Versate all'impresario Dragutinović	196,70
				pagate ai pompieri	12
	24/5	X sera «La Bohème»	632,40	Versate all'impresario Dragutinović	532,40
				pagate ai pompieri	12
	25/5	XI sera «Un ballo in maschera»	673,60	Versate all'impresario Dragutinović	573,60
				pagate ai pompieri	12
	26/5	XII sera «La Manon»	885,80	Versate all'impresario Dragutinović	785,80
				pagate ai pompieri	12
				pagate a Mate Trufaldino per nolo e trasporto [...]	3
	27/5			Versate al M ^o Mitrovic ed all'impresario Dragutinović a titolo di prestito per spese di viaggio	120
	31/5	Incassate da sig. Cosolo per affitto palchi II fila	690		
		Trasporto Cor.	8795,80		
				Trasporto Cor.	7177,60
				Riporto Cor.	7177,60
	27/5			pagate al commissario del Capitanato	48
				pagate alle guardie di polizia	84
				pagate a Petar Zorić per sorveglianza	28
				pagate a Mate [...] per sorveglianza	22
	28/5			pagate agli impiegati teatrali	290,20
				pagate a Rodolfo Tilić per sorveglianza riflettore	6
	30/5			pagato conto Modun per fattura parapetto fumativo	12
				pagato conto Modun per diverse spese	4
	31/5			versate al sig. Cosolo per provvigione affitto palchi	34,50
	4/6			pagato conto [...] per 15 pacchi candele	16,50
				pagato conto Supuk per consumo luce	240
				spedite con vaglia postale alla ditta Ditmar per 12 carbonicini	7,20
				spedite alla ditta Ditmar per 24 carbonicini	13,30

	7/6			pagate al custode dell'acquedotto Spiro Baraccović fu [...]	7,20
	16/6			pagato conto Supuk per 56 lampadine	56
					8046,50
				ricavato netto Cor.	749,30
					8795,80

After balancing income and expenditure, we observe that the performances made a profit of 749.30 crowns. However, Mazzoleni also ended up with a credit of 120 crowns, a sum he had advanced for travel expenses (see the entry “Versate al M° Mitrović ed all'impresario Dragutinović a titolo di prestito per spese di viaggio”), so he duly wrote to Dragutinović with a request for repayment:

When asking me a few hours before departing together with Maestro Mitrović for a loan of 120 crowns that you needed to complete the sum required for your travel expenses, you assured me that you would return it to me as soon as you arrived in Mostar. This sum was granted to you on behalf of the administration of the theatre of Osijek. Since it has neither been returned to me yet, nor have I had any news from you, I hereby beg you to return the above-mentioned sum of one hundred and twenty crowns as soon as possible, given that in the following days I have to convene the theatre's board and close the accounts of the opera season.⁴¹²

Immediately after that, a bill from the printers also arrived: 14 crowns for the notices in Italian made for the company and not yet paid. In fact, according to the contract, Dragutinović was expected to bear all the printing costs, which were not included in the nightly expenses. “I imagine you didn't pay for those notices due to an oversight”, Mazzoleni tactfully wrote.⁴¹³ In reply to these requests, the conductor Andro Mitrović, then in Mostar (because the Osijek opera company had disbanded), reported that the situation “was going very badly, and it would seem that the fault of all of this were certain speculations made by Signor Dragutinović (perhaps with the intention of getting his hands on everything). I have been left here without any means of continuing the journey, and

412 “Nel chiedermi poche ore prima di partire insieme al maestro sig. Mitrović un prestito di corone 120 di cui abbisognava per completare l'importo che le era necessario per le spese di viaggio, Ella mi assicurò che lo avrebbe restituito appena giunti a Mostar. Tale importo venne loro affidato per conto della Amministrazione del teatro di Osijek. Siccome finora non mi venne restituito né ebbi alcuna notizia da loro, così vengo con la presente a pregarla di volerli rimettere quanto prima il sopra citato importo di corone centoventi, dovendo in questi giorni convocare la società teatrale e chiudere i conti della stagione d'opera.”; Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Leon Dragutinović, Šibenik, 4. 6. 1914, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

413 Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Leon Dragutinović, Šibenik, Šibenik, 4. 6. 1914, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

am waiting for help.”⁴¹⁴ He said he was very sorry that the sum of 120 crowns hadn't been returned and undertook to take on the debt himself and pay it back as soon as possible. Before offering his embarrassed apology, he noted that “for the present I too am in a bad way, otherwise I wouldn't delay in doing my duty immediately”,⁴¹⁵ promising therefore to resolve everything in the shortest possible time. It would appear that Dragutinović was at Tuzla in Bosnia at the time. We do not know how the matter ended, or whether Mazzoleni got his money back, or even if the Italian suppliers were duly paid (for though the opera company was not Italian, the scenery had, as usual, come from Milan: mentioned on the poster was the Atelier “Canuto Soriani”). We do know, however, that twenty years later Marković was once again in contact with the Teatro Mazzoleni, this time as director of the Yugoslav Theatre.⁴¹⁶

With the arrival of the First World War a rumour circulated that the government intended to turn Šibenik into a war port. If so, one advantage could be the possibility of making use of the navy orchestra, as at Pula: a development that should make opera production easier.⁴¹⁷ But as it turned out, this never happened, and indeed after 1914 there are no records of any more opera performances.⁴¹⁸ Moreover, the problem of the two currencies persisted. Many artists would have had to be paid in lire, but by now it had become difficult to pay even half of the contracts in lire. The proceeds of the theatre were in crowns, for that was the currency everyone used to pay for admission.⁴¹⁹

414 “andava assai male, e a quanto pare, certe speculazioni del sig. Dragutinović (forse per prendere tutto nelle proprie mani) vi sono colpa di tutto. Io sono restato qui proprio senza mezzi di poter proseguire il viaggio avuti [*sic*]; ed aspetto un aiuto.”; Letter from Andro Mitrović to the theatre management of Šibenik, Mostar, 22. 6. 1914, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

415 “momentalmente [*sic*] sto anche io male, altrimenti non tarderei a fare il mio dovere subito”; Letter from Andro Mitrović to the theatre management of Šibenik, Mostar, 22. 6. 1914, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

416 He was to write from Belgrade, on a letterhead in two languages: “Bureau de concerts et des arts Yougoslave/Jugoslawische Theater- und Konzertdirektion”; Letter from Mihajlo Marković to the Teatro ex-Mazzoleni, Beograd, 24. 9. 1934, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2a.

417 This was the opinion of the agent Enrico Gallina, who was in constant contact with the theatre of Šibenik from Trieste; Letter from Enrico Gallina to Giovanni Mazzoleni, Trieste, 29. 11. 1913, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 6.

418 See also the list of performances at the Teatro Mazzoleni from 1870 to 1920 drawn up by Ivo Livaković in *Kazališni život Šibenika*, Muzej Grada Šibenika, Šibenik 1984, pp. 239–47.

419 “[...] we have very few lire,” Mazzoleni wrote, “given that everybody now pays in crowns at the theatre box-office. Even I really don't know how it will be possible to pay the artists in the future, for even [finding] just the half stipulated in the contracts is quite a burden. The receipts in crowns, on the other hand, are always splendid, because the theatre is very well attended.” (“[...] lire ne abbiamo pochissime inquantochè alla cassa del teatro ora pagano tutti in corone. Davvero non so neppure io come si potrà per l'avvenire pagare gli artisti in lire poiché anche la metà stabilita dai contratti riesce gravosa. Gli incassi in corone invece sono sempre magnifici perché il teatro è frequentatissimo.”); Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Ezio Carelli, Šibenik, [n. d.], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2a. This final comment would

The currency problem was not a secondary issue. While companies of a certain importance refused to travel to Dalmatia unless they were paid in lire, the more modest troupes and variety artists accepted engagements in which half, or two thirds, of the pay was in lire, and the rest in crowns at the legal rate. In order to engage companies, certain theatre managements needed lire to make advance payments – which they could only get only by changing their crowns.⁴²⁰ Initially audiences paid the entrance fee partly in lire and partly in crowns, which still allowed the theatres to have some cash directly in lire. Then, with the devaluation of the crown, audiences started buying their tickets almost exclusively in that currency. The result was that theatre managements like that of Šibenik, wishing to honour their contracts, had to use up their small reserves of Italian currency, which would cover expenses only for a limited period of time. The banks did not exchange currency. In an attempt to keep the theatre functioning, the theatre management begged the garrison of Šibenik to tell the competent authorities about its difficulties and get the permission to change into lire the sums needed for artists' fees. Artists travelling to the coastal areas for just a few days wouldn't know what to do with their crowns: they might not always find it possible to change the money on their return to Italy, and would anyway also lose a significant amount in the transaction. In order to tackle problem, the theatre management of Šibenik turned to the authorities and asked for permission to make entrance tickets once again payable half in lire and half in crowns; or, to simplify matters, for first performances to be paid in crowns, and second performances in lire. In small centres like Knin or Skradin (Scardona), for example, the public, which was aware of the problem, spontaneously paid in lire. "And so in the small makeshift theatres of the surrounding area," the management of the Mazzoleni wrote, "the troupe leaders, by making hundreds of lire a night, can more easily fulfil their obligations to the artists than we who represent a regular theatre."⁴²¹ The theatre management hoped, therefore, that the authorities would understand the serious problem and accommodate their requests.

There was one novelty that gave cause for hope, at least in the short term, and that was the appointment in the immediate post-War period of Lucia Gazzone, a lady who was engaged as "music master, pianist, orchestral conductor and preparer of daytime and evening performances". Gazzone was required to form a small orchestral ensemble consisting of two first violins, cello, double bass and flute; she herself was to play the piano.

seem to contradict what Mazzoleni often stated in the past: that the theatre was poorly attended. It is possible, however, that things had changed in the immediate post-War years.

420 Cristina Scuderi, "Organizzare l'opera tra Pola e Dubrovnik: impresari e loro attività dall'Ausgleich al primo conflitto mondiale", *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia*, LIV (2019), p. 9.

421 "E così nei piccoli teatri improvvisati dei dintorni i capocomici incassando parecchie centinaia di lire alla sera possono più facilmente corrispondere agli impegni verso gli artisti di noi che rappresentiamo un teatro regolare"; Letter from the theatre management of Šibenik to the garrison in Šibenik, Šibenik, 5. 9. 1919, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

She was also to provide the musical accompaniment to the films shown in the theatre.⁴²² For the first time the contract was monthly and automatically renewable from month to month unless terminated by one of the two parties. This meant a first form of stability in the artistic staff. But even this sign of renewal failed to develop. The Italian newspapers were beginning to spread the news that the city was about to become part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, a move that would result in the exodus of many of the Italians left in the area. The agent Ezio Carelli, writing from Ancona, told Mazzoleni that he had read in the newspapers that Šibenik was destined to be ceded “to Yugoslavia”. We learn from the correspondence that Mazzoleni was probably trying to sell the theatre (not a simple operation, given the existence of other co-owners) and possibly buy a similar venue in Italy. Carelli duly expressed his willingness to help him with the administrative matters.⁴²³ “Unfortunately, things have taken a very painful turn for us,” Mazzoleni declared with much bitterness.⁴²⁴ As it turned out, the Mazzoleni era came to an end in 1922 when the theatre passed into Croatian hands and the building was thereafter referred to as the “ex Teatro Mazzoleni”.⁴²⁵

4.6.5 Census of the opera seasons at Šibenik

The seasons have been reconstructed with the aid of the documentation found in the archival collection HR-DAŠI-103: Kazalište i kino “Mazzoleni” – Šibenik (1863–1945), along with consultation of the text by Ivo Livaković, *Kazališni život Šibenika*.⁴²⁶

422 “maestra di musica, pianista, direttrice d’orchestra e concertatrice degli spettacoli serali e diurni”; Art. 2, Engagement agreement between Lucia Gazzone and the theatre management of Šibenik, Šibenik, 29. 7. 1919, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

423 “If you should carry out what you told me earlier, either over the sale of that theatre or the purchase of another venue in Italy, I place myself at your complete disposal.” (“Qualora doveste attuare quanto mi diceste in precedenza, sia per la vendita di codesto teatro, sia per l’acquisto di altro locale in Italia, mi metto a vos.[tra] completa diposizione.”); Letter from Ezio Carelli to Giovanni Mazzoleni, Šibenik, 17. 1. 1920, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2a.

424 “Purtroppo le cose hanno preso una piega molto dolorosa per noi”; Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Ezio Carelli, Šibenik, 20. 1. 1920, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2a.

425 Manlio Cace, “Un secolo di vita del Teatro Mazzoleni di Sebenico 29–1–1870 – 29–1–1970”, *Rivista dalmatica*, I (1970), p. 38; and Special power of attorney of Pio Negri, Šibenik, 30. 1. 1927, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2a.

426 Ivo Livaković, *Kazališni život Šibenika*, Muzej Grada Šibenika, Šibenik 1984.

Year	Endow-ment	Impresario	Maestro concertatore and Chorus master	Start of season	Operas
1871	n. f.	Enrico Mayer (Società della compagnia d'opera e ballo)	n. f.	June	I falsi monetari Don Checco Un ballo in maschera Viva la mamma Pipelet
1880	n. f.	Vincenzo Rossini (Compagnia di canto e ballo – direttore Luigi Codognola)	n. f.	<i>Fiera di S. Anna</i>	n. f.
1882	n. f.	[Vincenzo Rossini] Ernesta Ferrara (Compagnia Luigi Becherini)	[Luigi Becherini]	June	Il barbiere di Siviglia La sonnambula Crispino e la comare L'elisir d'amore I due ciabattini Le educande di Sorrento Il bacio al diavolo
1887	n. f.	Vincenzo Rossini Pietro Zanchi Giovanni Dalle Feste	n. f.	February	Linda di Chamounix Crispino e la comare La sonnambula
1890	n. f.	(Compagnia lirica di Federico Varani)	n. f.	June	Lucia di Lammermoor La traviata Fra Diavolo Il barbiere di Siviglia
1891	n. f.	(Compagnia milanese prosa canto e ballo diretta da Enrico Viscardi)	n. f.	April	n. f.
1896	6,000 florins	Domenico Valenti	Gaetano Bavagnoli	May	Gli Ugonotti Un ballo in maschera
1899	n. f.	Giuseppe Corbetta	n. f.		n. f.
1900	<i>Theatre closed to performances</i>				
1901					
1902					
1905	n. f.	Ernesto Guerra <i>(Compagnia Bovi-Campeggi)</i>	Ernesto Guerra <i>Gennaro Gaudiosi</i>	October <i>December</i>	Pipelet L'elisir d'amore Crispino e la comare La sonnambula Il barbiere di Siviglia La figlia del reggimento <i>Santarellina</i> <i>I granatieri</i> <i>Boccaccio</i> <i>La mascotte</i>
1906	[12,000 c.]	<i>(Compagnia Bovi-Campeggi)</i> Ernesto Guerra	Gennaro Gaudiosi Raffaele Patucchi [Mazzoldi]	January May	Fra Diavolo Il barbiere di Siviglia Le educande di Sorrento

Year	Endowment	Impresario	Maestro concertatore and Chorus master	Start of season	Operas
1907	n. f.	(Compagnia serba Mihailo Marković)	n. f.	December	n. f.
1908	n. f.	Giuseppe Castagnoli	Raffaele Patucchi m. s.: Antonio Orsini m. c.: T. Traversi	March	La favorita Il barbiere di Siviglia Ernani
1909	n. f.	Theatre management	Raffaele Patucchi m. s.: Antonio Orsini	April	Il trovatore La traviata
1910	n. f.	(Compagnia lirica del Regio Teatro Nazionale di Zagabria)	n. f.	May	Cavalleria rusticana Pagliacci Princesa Del Dolar Eugeny Onegin Barun Trenk
1911	n. f.	Giuseppe Ponzio	Raffaele Patucchi	April	Rigoletto La sonnambula
	n. f.	Antonio Cosolo (Compagnia lirica del Regio Teatro Nazionale di Zagabria)	n. f.	May	Sismiš Poviatak Lijepa Galateja
	n. f.	Antonio Cosolo e Comici (Compagnia d'opera Comoli – diretta dall'amministratore Liduino Bonardi)	Arturo Bovi	October	Madama Butterfly Il matrimonio segreto
1913	n. f.	Antonio Cosolo (Compagnia del Teatro di Osijek diretta da Mihajlo Marković) Antonio Orsini	n. f.	May	Prodana nevjesta
			Raffaele Patucchi m. c.: Pietro Zuliani	December	Sangue dalmata Per l'amore
1914	n. f.	Leon Dragutinović (Compagnia del Teatro di Osijek diretta da Mihajlo Marković)	Andro Mitrović Franjo Vanjek	May	La traviata Un ballo in maschera Il bacio Sangue polacco Cjelov Hoffmannove priče Cvrčak za ognjištem Manon La bohème Eva Le campane di Corneville La cicala La ballerina scalza ⁴²⁷

⁴²⁷ The printed advertisements for the 1914 opera season mention additional operas that are not mentioned in the Special financial accounts for the Compagnia lirica di opere e operette of the National Theatre of Osijek directed by Leon Dragutinović [1914], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

4.7 The contracts and the seasons at Split

Of the twenty years of the Teatro Bajamonti's existence we know little, also because the building was destroyed by fire in 1881. According to the research of Mirjana Škunca, there were about twenty musical performances, for the most part operas by Italian composers. We know that the theatre was inaugurated with *I lombardi alla prima crociata* in December 1859⁴²⁸ and that the orchestra was conducted by Giambattista Beneggi,⁴²⁹ a violinist and teacher at the Istituto Filarmonico of Split, until Samuele Wolff was invited from Padua in 1865. It appears that Wolff succeeded in raising the quality level of the orchestra.⁴³⁰ Under the Bajamonti administration two instrumental ensembles existed, both funded by the municipality: the city windband and the civic orchestra. The former, consisting just of wind instruments and percussion, was directed by Paulo Malik and later Francesco Wanisek; the latter, made up of strings and wind, was the ensemble that performed in the theatre,⁴³¹ though elements from the wind band could also be used.

In this twenty-year period we find at least two names that we have already met at the other coastal theatres: those of Carlo Burlini, in 1861,⁴³² and Sanguinazzi, who opened the 1863 season with Verdi's *I masnadieri*.⁴³³ The impresario Sanguinazzi, who had just arrived from Pula after giving the same opera there together with *Marin Faliero* in March, was praised in *Il Nazionale* for bringing a company that was superior to what the theatre was generally used to. There was criticism, however, of the orchestra and choruses, for giving hesitant performances on the opening night of the season.⁴³⁴ Immediately afterwards

428 Duško Kečkemet, *Antonio Bajamonti*, p. 233.

429 See "Teatri esterni", *La Scena*, 18. 10. 1866 and Mirjana Škunca, "Politische Aspekte des musikalischen Lebens von Split zur Zeit der kroatischen Wiedergeburt (1860–1882)", *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, XX/2 (1989), pp. 150–51.

430 Mirjana Škunca, *Glazbeni život Splita od 1860. do 1918*, Književni krug, Split 1991, p. 52.

431 According to Mirjana Škunca, *Glazbeni život Splita*, p. 51.

432 Mirjana Škunca, *Glazbeni život Splita*, p. 46. We know only that for the occasion Burlini printed the libretto of *Lucrezia Borgia* at his own expense.

433 According to Mirjana Škunca, the theatre remained closed for a year and a half until its reopening in 1864 with a season of spoken theatre; Mirjana Škunca, *Glazbeni život Splita*, p. 50.

434 "All praise therefore to the impresario Signor Sanguinazzi, who though a stranger to this type of enterprise, nonetheless had the good sense to form a company of which, according to many, this theatre had never seen the equal. The orchestra and choruses left much to be desired. We hope that in due course, after the uncertainties of the first performance have been removed, even these elements will contribute to forming the perfect ensemble that this type of spectacle needs." ("Ne sia lode perciò all'impresario sig. Sanguinazzi, che sebbene estraneo a questo genere di imprese, pure ha avuto tanto senso da formare una compagnia che, al detto di molti, in questo teatro non si ebbe mai l'eguale. L'orchestra ed i cori lasciarono molto a desiderare. Speriamo che in seguito, tolte quelle incertezze di una prima rappresentazione, anche questi elementi concorreranno a formare quel perfetto assieme di cui abbisogna questo spettacolo."); *Il Nazionale*, anno II, no. 29, 11. 4. 1863, p. 142.

Sanguinazzi was to take his company to Zadar to give only *I masnadieri*. From 1875 until 1893 there seems to have been no more opera in Split, though Luigi Troccoli presented a proposal of opera seria in 1880.⁴³⁵ But while opera performances seem to have been suspended, operettas and entertainments with music and dance were given after 1879.⁴³⁶

Already at the time of the Teatro Bajamonti people were writing in the *Glaz hrvatsko-slovin-ski iz Dalmacije* that though the language of performance in the theatre was unquestionably Italian, Croats should not be proud of the fact, but rather should insist on using Croatian more. Croatian literature was full of fine pieces that many of the young would willingly perform.⁴³⁷ As we shall see, these early signs of national awareness were to have a profound effect on the fate of theatrical productions, and on opera in particular. After the burning of the Teatro Bajamonti it was clear that the city couldn't be left without a theatre. There was talk in many quarters about how and where the new theatre should be built, but above all about the character the new venue should have. At the meeting of the city council of Split on 11 January 1889, the Croatian mayor, Bulat, asserted that the theatre should reflect the character of the *Comune* and that the *Comune* should be the expression of what the city was, or, in other words, the expression of the new generations: "The new generation is growing wholly in the Croatian spirit," he apparently said. "Our opponents must submit to the Croatian principle. Our theatre will be communal; but this title can have no other meaning than that of a national theatre".⁴³⁸ These words, which left no room for interpretation, were followed by those of the conservative Frane Bulić, who explained that in any case there would be no "exclusivist" programme: in the new theatre it would be possible to present works in Italian and also, if one so wished, in French. But its character would have to be "nothing but Croatian". Anyone who loved Split and the interests of Split should be convinced that its future lay in "Croatism".⁴³⁹ This idea was developed further in a statement in *Il Diritto Croato*: "The new theatre will have a national character, and so its construction

435 Luigi Troccoli was the owner of a *caffè-bar* in Split, the first of its kind. In the 1870s he opened the Caffè della Piazza and inaugurated the Albergo Troccoli in 1887, both today called "Central"; Giacomo Scotti, *Terre perdute. Riscoperta dell'italianità della Dalmazia*, Elea Press, Salerno 1994, p. 184. Troccoli also organised balls; Mirjana Škunca, *Glazbeni život Splita*, p. 51.

436 Mirjana Škunca, *Glazbeni život Splita*, p. 60.

437 Mirjana Škunca, *Glazbeni život Splita*, p. 47.

438 "La nuova generazione cresce tutta nello spirito croato, i nostri avversari devono subire il principio croato. Il nuovo teatro sarà comunale; ma questo titolo non può avere altro significato che quello di teatro nazionale."; "Teatro nazionale", *Il Diritto Croato*, 30. I. 1889.

439 "Teatro nazionale", *Il Diritto Croato*, 30. I. 1889. This concept had already been presented *claris verbis* at another session in the previous year: "To be sure, the new theatre of Split must be exclusively characterised by a Croatian national spirit, otherwise it would be better not to have it at all." ("Certamente il nuovo teatro di Spalato dovrà essere caratterizzato esclusivamente da uno spirito nazionale croato, altrimenti sarà preferibile non averlo affatto."); Session of the City Council of 16–17–18 June 1888, *Narod*, 3. 7. 1888, Appendix to no. 47, quoted in Duško Kečkemet, *Antonio Bajamonti*, p. 253.

is awaited with keen interest by the patriotic Croatian citizenry of Split”.⁴⁴⁰ If earlier the boxes at the Teatro Bajamonti belonged to members of the Autonomist Party, now the boxes at the new Municipal Theatre belonged to Croatian nationalists.⁴⁴¹

But how did the Italian faction respond to these views? The reactions were not slow in coming. And they were not limited to the city of Split. The newspaper *L'Eco di Pola*, for example, reported that the theatre would no longer have anything to do with Italian opera and quoted the words of Ivan Manger (the mayor who succeeded Bulat), who apparently stated categorically that “Italian companies would never set foot [in the theatre], nor would one hear filthy operas by Verdi, Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, etc.”.⁴⁴² In the meantime, according to the reporter, municipal funds were being squandered, beginning with a generous grant to a Bohemian operetta company, which “swallowed up the fine sum of 4,000 florins, all paid for by the *Comune*”.⁴⁴³ The Italian-oriented newspapers also complained that the quality of the opera productions in the new theatre was not as good as it was, and never missed an opportunity to pour scorn on the new theatre management (led by Bulat) and its choices.⁴⁴⁴ The theatre was now depicted as an “ill-fated outfit” (*disgraziata baracca*), and one of the first productions of the new management, hosted after handsomely paying the impresario and engaging “beer-hall singers” (*cantanti da birreria*), was described as “indecent, unthinkable, small-minded” (*indecente, impossibile, gretto*).⁴⁴⁵ These “beer-hall singers” had been brought

440 “Il nuovo teatro avrà carattere nazionale, e perciò l’erezione dello stesso è attesa con vivissimo interesse dalla patriottica cittadinanza croata di Spalato”; “Il nuovo teatro a Spalato”, *Il Diritto Croato*, 26. 2. 1890.

441 Duško Kečkemet, *Antonio Bajamonti*, p. 252. The very person of Bajamonti himself was by this time associated in every possible respect with the Autonomist Party, against which the Croatian nationalists were now engaged in a fierce struggle: “The opponents, who immediately perceived his strength in the Autonomist Party, were not slow in fiercely fighting against the man who by that time personified the party and they subjected him to the most appalling calumnies. No act of his life was overlooked: everything that came from him was examined, criticised and unfairly distorted.” (“Gli avversari che subito intravidero quale forza possedesse in lui il partito autonomo non tardarono a combattere ferocemente l’uomo che quel partito oramai personificava e lo fecero segno alle più atroci calunnie. Nessun atto della sua vita fu passato sotto silenzio: tutto quanto da lui precedette fu esaminato, criticato, slealmente falsato.”); *Il Piccolo*, X, no. 3292, 14. 1. 1891.

442 “non metteranno mai passo compagnie italiane, né si udirà porcherie d’opere di Verdi, Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, ecc.”; “Gazzettino Dalmato”, *L'Eco di Pola*, 5. 1. 1895.

443 “mangiò la bella somma di fiorini 4.000, pagati dal Comune”; “Gazzettino Dalmato”, *L'Eco di Pola*, 5. 1. 1895.

444 On the political conflict between the previous mayor (and director of the Italian theatre) Antonio Bajamonti and Gajo Filomen Bulat, see Luciano Monzali, “Antonio Tacconi e la Comunità Italiana di Spalato”, *Atti e memorie della Società dalmata di storia patria*, vol. XXXIV, Società Dalmata di storia patria, Venezia 2007, pp. 50–55.

445 “Ancora del teatro...balcanico”. *Il Dalmata*, Split, 15. 5. 1894. The Croatians themselves would soon admit that the situation had become extreme, though only after “insulting the good Italian artistic tradition of Spalato, which at the Teatro Bajamonti had had very respectable productions of opera and

by Ladislav Chmelenský, the first of a series of impresarios from eastern Europe, who, if only for a few years, would decisively change the character of the opera seasons.

4.7.1 The director-impresarios: Ladislav Chmelenský, Johann Pištěk, Vendelin Budil and the eclipse of Italian opera

In the year of its inauguration (1893), the Teatro Nuovo hosted a production of *Il Menestrello*, a one-act opera by Salvatore Strino (not to be confused with the three-act *melodramma giocoso* of the same name by Serafino Amedeo de Ferrari, first performed in 1859 and then staged in Rijeka in 1869 and 1879).⁴⁴⁶ After which the new theatre management received a letter from Ivoplem Hreljanović, the superintendent in Zagreb, enquiring if the new theatre was prepared to have operas sung in French as well as Croatian. Given that the new board of directors was for the most part close to the Croatian Nationalist Party, it was indeed happy to present repertoire that featured not only Italian companies.⁴⁴⁷ Hreljanović was negotiating to organise a season in Split, but had realised that the Croatian singers were unfortunately not numerous. As a result, it would not be possible to organise a Croatian company to perform a series of different operas. One solution would be to expand the company by using Czech singers, though their number would be minimal. Hreljanović considered Czech theatre companies to be rather weak and didn't feel like using them to enlarge his own cast. "If therefore it is allowed to sing in French," he wrote, "it will be easier to form a company and the company itself will be better."⁴⁴⁸ This proposal came to nothing, but the new theatre did actually start to welcome non-Italian companies, and from 1894 to 1898 it hosted three directors from the theatre of Brno.⁴⁴⁹ In this instance, therefore, the contracts were drawn up between the

spoken theatre, at a time when the scores and transportation cost double. To hear *Faust* – with excellent artists and superb staging – one paid a lot less than to hear these virtuosos that need muzzling!" ("insultato alla buona tradizione artistica italiana di Spalato, che al Teatro Bajamonti ha avuti spettacoli d'opera e di prosa decorosissimi, quando gli spartiti e i mezzi di trasporto costavano il doppio. Per udire il *Faust* – con artisti eccellenti e con una messa in scena superba – si pagava assai meno che per udire questi virtuosi da museruola!"); *ibid.*

⁴⁴⁶ Strino's libretto is dated 1892. *Signale für die musikalische Welt*, no. 7, 1893, p. 104.

⁴⁴⁷ The theatre had in fact been inaugurated with a company from the National Theatre of Zagreb; Nevenka Bezić Božanić, "Novinske vijesti o scenskim priredbama u Splitu (1884–1918)", *Dani Hvar-skoga kazališta: Građa i rasprave o hrvatskoj književnosti i kazalištu*, VII/1 (1980), p. 397.

⁴⁴⁸ "Se quindi verrà permesso di cantare in francese, formare una compagnia sarà più facile e la compagnia stessa sarà migliore."; Letter from Ivoplem Hreljanović to the theatre management of Split, Zagreb, 6. 10. 1893, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII [original in Croatian, translation by Noemi Silvestri].

⁴⁴⁹ The directors who followed one another at the theatre of Brno from 1891 until the end of the century were Ladislav Chmelenský and Václav Hübner (1891–92), Vendelín Budil (1892–93), Jan Pištěk

theatre management and the director of another theatre, with the hosted director acting as a genuine impresario.⁴⁵⁰

A first season given by Ladislav Chmelenský in 1894 was harshly criticised in *Il Dalmata*, both for the cuts made to the scores and for the quality of the performances themselves, as we shall see below.⁴⁵¹ *Il Dalmata* was hostile to the new management of the theatre and never missed an opportunity to reignite the controversy. In the spring season of 1894 there were reports that the Croatian management had had performances suspended and forced the impresario to deliver on his commitments and at least change the principal parts. “Look what we have now come to, or rather what these gentlemen with their ridiculous bigoted megalomania have come to: shooting themselves in the foot!”, referring to the Croatian board of directors.⁴⁵² The situation seems to have calmed down, however, when Johann Pištěk came forward in March 1895.

(1993–96), Pavel Švanda (1896–97) and once again Jan Pištěk (1897–98); <http://www.rozkvetlekonvalinky.estranky.cz/clanky/divadla/narodni-divadlo-brno.html> [accessed 9. 9. 2019].

450 Indeed the tasks the director carried out in his home country were similar to those typical of the Italian impresario: “The theater manager was also the chief economist of the institution, the production manager, and the purchaser of performance rights for new pieces, which he himself procured; he searched for talented and, if possible, cheap singers and built the theater ensemble; additionally he was the chief stage director, set designer, and sometimes an active performer – actor, singer, or Kapellmeister.”; Jiří Kopecký – Lenka Křupková, *Provincial Theater and Its Opera. German Opera Scene in Olomuc (1770–1920)*, Palacký University, Olomuc 2015, p. 10.

451 “After *Prodana Nevjesta*, after *I sette corvi* and the atrocious mockery of the masterpieces by Bizet and Mascagni”, the reporter sarcastically remarked, “not known to, and hence not appreciated by the audience of the principal theatre of the Balkans, the handsome director [...] the inexorable need, or thirst, was felt in everyone to console themselves with a couple of bars, strummed any old way, of the music of the *old era*, that of the *old repertoire*, that doomed repertoire that had imposed *Ernani* on the delicate nerves of the auditorium for ten whole nights. [...] And to think that one had to be endowed with a big heart to allow Signor Chmelenski’s *Trovatore* to run its course right up to its cremation. The *gargling* of the soprano, in the first-act cavatina and the following one, was harrowing; full of imagination and *freedom* in the choice of notes and tempi, the (new) tenor; the baritone was a remarkable ‘bass’; inert, arid and glacial was the *contralto*, who alone, however, has a fine mellow voice. The choruses: terrifying; the orchestra, on the other hand, made a reasonable impression this time; for the most part... by keeping silent!” (“Dopo la *Prodana Nevjesta*, dopo i *Sette corvi* e la atroce canzonatura dei capolavori di Bizet e di Mascagni non conosciuti epperò non gustati dal pubblico del primo teatro dei Balcani, l’avvenente preside [...] si sentiva salire inesorabile il bisogno, la sete, in tutti, di refrigerarsi con due battute, in qualunque modo strimpellate, della musica della *vecchia era*, di quella del *vecchio repertorio*, quel fatale repertorio che aveva imposto ai delicati nervi dell’uditorio l’*Ernani* per dieci sere. [...] E sì che bisognava essere dotati di gran cuore per lasciar correre fino alla cremazione il *Trovatore* del sig. Chmelenski. I *gargarismi* della soprano, nella cavatina del primo atto e nel seguito, strazianti; pieno di fantasia e d’*indipendenza* nelle note e nei tempi il tenore (nuovo); notevole basso il baritono; inerte, arida, glaciale la *contralto* che sola però ha almeno bella e pastosa la voce. I cori spaventevoli; l’orchestra invece ha fatto questa volta una discreta figura; per lo più... tacque!”); “Il *Trovatore*”, *Il Dalmata*, 9. 6. 1894.

452 “Ecco a che cosa siam giunti, o piuttosto, sono giunti quei signori con la loro megalomania ridicola e partigiana: a darsi della zappa sui piedi!”; “Ancora del teatro... balcanico”, *Il Dalmata*, 15. 5. 1894.

Pištek proposed a company of 70 that had already been booked at the National Theatre of Brno for seven months. This company, directed by Baron Pražak,⁴⁵³ was also to be engaged in the summer months at the Vinohrady Theatre in Prague. “It is a splendid company,” Pištek wrote, “with an opera repertoire that is well studied and prepared”.⁴⁵⁴ The operas it was performing included quite an eclectic range of titles: *Lohengrin*, *Carmen*, *Der Freischütz*, *Il trovatore*, *Alessandro Stradella*, *Faust* (Gounod), *Le postillon de Lonjumeau*, *Un ballo in maschera*, *Dalibor*, *Hubička*, *Prodaná nevěsta* and *Tajemství* (Smetana), *Šelma Sedlák* and *Tvrdé palice* (Dvořák), *U Studenca* (Blonek) and *Teharski plemiči* (a Slovenian opera by Benjamin Ipavec). This appealing mix of German, Italian, French, Bohemian and Slovenian titles might well have intrigued a public in Split that for the most part would be unfamiliar with them. The theatre management accepted the proposal and proceeded to draw up a contract in German for the 1896 opera season (in fact German was the language used by staff in Split to communicate with the Czech and Bohemian directors). As always in these cases, the theatre management was mentioned in full at the top of the document. Unlike the other practice at the coastal theatres, the custom at Split was to list all the members of the management (name and surname) at the beginning of the contract and not only against the signatures. This was the formula: “Between the Theatre Management in Split, represented by the President Dr. G. F. Bulat, the associate members Dr. Anton Boglić, Peter Katalinić, Dr. Eduard Karaman and the Secretary Dr. Eduard Grgić on the one hand, and Herr Johann Pistek, theatre director in Brno on the other hand, the following contract is concluded”.⁴⁵⁵ Pištek was to give a cycle of 25 performances with a series of operas that differed partially from the list proposed in his earlier letter. From this selection we again realise that Italian opera was only one of various options. The works to be performed were ten: “1. Dalibor, 2. Prodana nevjesta, 3. Lohengrin, 4. Willhelm Tell, 5. Afrikana, 6. Pikova dama, 7. Traviata, 8. Maskarni ples, 9. Postillon, 10. Martha”. Here we have a confirmation of what Giovanni Mazzoleni had feared for the theatre of Šibenik: that with the custom, typical of the troupes coming from the east, of presenting many more operas than the Italian companies, the public would get used to having a faster turnover. Moreover, a specific clause in the

453 Otakar Pražak (1858–1915), a politician and lawyer from Brno (Brünn). He was also the Czech minister of agriculture between 1906 and 1908. See the short biographical note in Gustav Mahler, *Caro collega: lettere a compositori, direttori d’orchestra, intendenti teatrali*, Il Saggiatore, Bologna 2017 [through books.google.com accessed 30. 10. 2019].

454 “È una compagnia splendida, che dispone di un repertorio operistico ben studiato e preparato.”; Letter from Johann Pištek to the theatre management of Split, [place illegible], 30. 3. 1895, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

455 “Zwischen der Theater Direction [*sic*] in Spalato vertreten durch den Präses Dr. G. F. Bulat, die Anschluss-Mitglieder Dr. Anton Boglić, Peter Katalinić, Dr. Eduard Karaman und den Secretär Dr. Eduard Grgić einerseits und den Herrn Johann Pistek Theater-Direktor in Brünn andererseits wird abgeschlossen folgender Vertrag.”; Contract between the theatre management of Split and Johann Pištek, Split, January 1896, HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII.

contract stipulated that certain operas would have to be sung in Croatian: “to have the operas *Dalibor*, *Prodana nevjesta*, *Traviata*, *Maskarni ples* and *Martha* sung in Croatian”.⁴⁵⁶ This was the result of the change in the municipal administration, from Italian to Croatian (we must also remember that the mayor of the city was now part of the theatre’s board). Translations into Croatian of the texts of Smetana’s *Dalibor* and *The Bartered Bride* were commissioned from August Šenoa and August Harambašić respectively and paid for in Zagreb;⁴⁵⁷ the theatre of Split had no one to do the job.

Unfortunately, however, in spite of the rich programme of operas,⁴⁵⁸ attendance seems to have been poor, thus prompting fears over the success of the season itself.⁴⁵⁹ At the end of the 19th century the theatre could net up to 500 florins or more per night, but this of course

456 “die Opern *Dalibor*, *Prodana nevjesta*, *Traviata*, *Maskarni ples* und *Martha* in croatischer Sprache singen zu lassen”; Contract between the theatre management of Split and Johann Pištek, letter “m” of Art. 1, Split, January 1896, HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII.

457 See Letter from [illegible sender] to the theatre management of Split, [illegible place], 20. 3. 1896, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII. Zagreb informed Split that the theatre had its own copyists, who charged 6 florins for a translation, regardless of the length of the piece; Letter from [illegible sender] to the theatre management of Split, 8. 2. 1896, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

458 In her article “Novinske vijesti o scenskim priredbama u Splitu (1884–1918)”, Nevenka Bezić Božanić refers to around twenty operas performed in the season of 1896. In the contract, however, only ten titles are mentioned; Nevenka Bezić Božanić, “Novinske vijesti”, p. 406.

459 “It is absolutely true that the theatre is not attended as much as it should be”, wrote two hitherto unidentified correspondents to the management of the Teatro Nuovo, “above all in the last few days. We have no intention of investigating the reasons for the scant attendance in spite of the fine opera repertoire and the excellent performances of singers, soloists, chorus and orchestra. The fact remains, however, that audiences have been meagre and, if things continue in the same vein, the *impresa* will not do well. There is no need to point out that a failure of the *impresa* in material terms will have devastating effects on our theatre and will deal a mortal blow to Slovenian music in Split, which, thanks to our Czech brothers, has opened up new horizons in the field of the musical arts, because certainly no one again will want to provide us with the very best of the musical world [...]. Concerned as we are about the future of our theatre and fully intending to perform our patriotic duty by fulfilling the wishes of our citizens, we beg the management to take into consideration the desires expressed by Signor Pištek in his letter.” (“È la pura verità che il teatro non è frequentato quanto dovrebbe essere, soprattutto negli ultimi giorni. Non abbiamo intenzione di indagare sui motivi di questa frequentazione scarsa malgrado un buon repertorio operistico ed esibizioni eccellenti sia da parte dei cantanti che dei solisti, dei coristi e dell’orchestra. Comunque, fatto sta che le visite sono state scarse e se le cose andranno avanti così, l’*impresa* non riuscirà. Non c’è bisogno di sottolineare che il fallimento dell’*impresa* dal punto di vista materiale avrà delle conseguenze devastanti per il nostro teatro e sarà un colpo mortale per la musica slovena a Spalato, che, grazie ai nostri fratelli Cechi, ci ha aperto nuovi orizzonti nel campo delle arti musicali, perché sicuramente nessuno vorrà più fornirci con il meglio del meglio nel mondo musicale [...]. Preoccupati per il futuro del nostro teatro ed intenzionati ad eseguire il nostro dovere patriottico accontentando i desideri dei nostri concittadini, preghiamo la direzione di prendere in considerazione i desideri espressi dal Sign. Pištek nella sua lettera”); Letter from [illegible sender] to the theatre management of Split, Split, 27. 4. 1896, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

depended on audiences actually coming. The population doesn't seem to have responded as expected to the varied proposal offered. This was also one of the reasons Pišteak asked for, and was given, an increase in the endowment, from 3,800 to 5,000 florins,⁴⁶⁰ or, according to another source, as much as 6,000 florins. This sum, added to the theatre receipts of 9,978.75 florins for 35 performances over 49 days (hence in the end ten nights more than those programmed), brought in an overall income of 15,970.75 florins. Unfortunately, however, the costs came to 10,758.95 florins plus travel expenses of 4,440 florins, making a total of 15,198.55 florins. If we then deduct this last sum from the income of 15,970.75, we are left with a profit of just 779.80 florins.⁴⁶¹ Considering the sheer numbers of the company, one could hardly speak of lavish earnings.

The management then tried to organise a month of performances for the spring season of 1897, possibly with a company from Zagreb or an opera company from Czech territories, as in the previous months. As proposed by the members Grgić and Katalinić, the theatre committee decided unanimously that the management should ask the municipal government again for an increase in the endowment for 1897, from 4,000 to 6,000 florins, and to have the use of the theatre without paying rent.⁴⁶² In the end the spring season was run by an Italian, but it was not long before a Bohemian company was back again. When Vendelin Budil, director of the theatre of Plzen,⁴⁶³ came forward in 1898, he was offered a contract to stage seven operas: *Dalibor*, *Evgenij Onegin*, *Pikova dama*, *Tajemství*, *Dubrovsky*, *Heimchen am Herd* and *Evangelista (Evangelimann)*. This time Italian opera had completely disappeared: if two years earlier there had remained a faint trace in the programme, now there was none at all. To the Italian impresarios or agents who now wished to bid for the contract, such as Vincenzo Ceruso or Nazzareno Perazzini, the director of the theatre Edouard Karaman declared that the management was "sorry" (*dispiacente*) not to be able to negotiate for the spring season, "given that this year a cycle of exclusively Slavic operas has to be given in our theatre".⁴⁶⁴

460 See Letter from the municipal council of Split to the theatre management of Split. Split, 20. 5. 1896, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

461 See Letter from [anonymous sender] to the theatre management of Split. [n. p., n. d.], HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

462 See Minutes of the shareholders' meeting of 25. 8. 1896, Split, 25. 8. 1896, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

463 Some sources mention Budil as director of the theatre in Plzen only from 1902 to 1912 (Jan Chovanec, *Theory and practice in English studies: proceedings from the Eighth Conference of English, American and Canadian studies*, Masaryk University, Brno 2005, p. 163, or Jiří Holý, *Geschichte der tschechischen Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Edition Praesens, Vienna 2003, p. 32), but in the manuscript of the Split contract he is referred to as "Theater-Director in Pilsen" already in 1898.

464 "dovendosi quest'anno dare sul nostro teatro un ciclo d'opere esclusivamente slave"; Letter from Edouard Karaman to Nazzareno Perazzini, Split, 27. 11. 1897, MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII. Or another example, this time to Ceruso: "The writer is not in a position to take into consideration the proposal of opera productions for the spring season, given that it is at present in negotiations for Slavic opera."

The theatre director in Split pointed out to Budil the obligation of bringing 25 performances (with the freedom to give more – if appropriate) and stressed that in no way would it be possible to increase the already substantial endowment of 4,000 *gulden* (i. e. 4,000 florins) or to reduce the stipulated number of 11 soloists, 24 choristers and 32 orchestral players, since the theatre space was large and would need to be properly filled with a sufficient number of artists.⁴⁶⁵ Regarding the eleven soloists, the contract also explicitly specified the need to engage the tenor Pták, who worked at the National Theatre of Prague.⁴⁶⁶ The precise naming of soloists was not a standard feature of all contracts, but here it was done. As regards the 32 orchestral players, the contractor was expected to take into account the musicians available in Split and supplement accordingly.⁴⁶⁷ Specifying the use of local musicians was not to be taken for granted, for a clause in the previous year's contract stated that the impresario was "free to engage everyone from outside if it wanted".⁴⁶⁸ What

("La scrivente non è in grado di prendere in pertrattazione l'offerta fatta d'uno spettacolo d'opera per la stagione di primavera essendosi attualmente in trattative per un'opera slava."); Letter from Edouard Karaman to Vincenzo Ceruso, Split, 27. 1. 1898, HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII.

465 "The impresario would only be obliged to give 25 performances, but he would be free to give more. The endowment of 4,000 gulden could not be increased in any case, as no other amount was available. He would receive the 4,000 gulden only for good artists and a fine staging. Any reduction of the 11 soloists, 24 choristers and 32 musicians would be absolutely impossible because the theatre space and especially the stage are enormous." ("Der Unternehmer wäre nur auf 25 Vorstellungen verpflichtet, es bleibe ihm eher frei auch mehr Vorstellungen zu geben. Die Dotation von 4.000 Gulden könnte auf keinen Falle erhöht werden, da kein anderen Betrag zur Verfügung steht. Die 4.000 Gulden bekäme er nur für gute Kräfte und schöne mise en scene. Eine Reducirung [*sic*] der 11 Solisten, 24 Choristen und 32 Musiker wäre absolut nicht möglich da die Theaterraumlichkeiten und besonders da der Bühne sind riesig gross."); Letter from Edouard Karaman to Vendelin Budil, Split, 29. 12. 1897, MGS: Kazalište 4/ kut. I–XVII.

466 Bohumil Pták (1869–1933), a tenor from Prague, began his career as an actor in travelling troupes, and had his debut at the opera house of Brno in *The Bartered Bride* in 1890; *Größes Sängerlexicon*, edited by Karl J. Kutsch and Leo Riemens, Saur, Bern 1993, p. 2374. In the event, however, it appears that the company from Plzen fell short of expectations, though this circumstance was not made public in the Croatian newspapers. This bias was noted by Nevenka Bezić Božanić: "This company seems to have been weak, but since it was a Slavic company, it was not attacked in the newspapers, as would have happened if a weak opera company had come from Italy." ("Čini se da je ova družina bila slaba, ali zbog toga što je to ipak bila slavenska družina, nisu je napadali preko novina, kao što bi se dogodalo kad bi došla koja slaba operna družina iz Italije."); Nevenka Bezić Božanić, "Novinske vijesti", p. 407.

467 "to bring the orchestra consisting of at least 32 musicians, taking into account the forces available in Split, which are listed in the enclosed letters, and to provide the same with the necessary music supplies"; ("das aus wenigstens 32 Personen bestehende Orchester mit Berücksichtigung der in Spalato verfügbaren Kräfte, welche in beigeschlossenen Briefe verzeichnet sind, mitzubringen und dasselbe mit den nothwendigen Musicalien zu versehen"); Contract between the theatre management of Split and Vendelin Budil, Split, 1898, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

468 "libero all'impresa di scritturare volendo tutti [...] di fuori"; Contract between the theatre management of Split and Alberto Landi, Split, 11. 2. 1897, HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I, XII.

was normal was that the contract specified the number of orchestral players needed. For if there were insufficient musicians on site, it could indicate which instruments the impresario would have bring in; or conversely, which instruments were already available on site. From the 1896 contract with Pištek we learn that only seven players were available in Split: a first violin, a second violin, a second viola, a second double bass, a first oboe, a second cello and a trombone. This was even fewer than the 12 players mentioned the year before, in 1895, by the impresario Antonio Lana. In his negotiations with the management, Lana wrote that he would have to bring to Split another 13 players from outside, almost all of them principal parts that cost 7 lire a day.⁴⁶⁹ Moreover, in 1895 there also appeared to be no choristers in the city, either male or female. Needed, therefore, was a contingent of 30 singers overall, each to be paid 4 florins a day: a substantial outlay.

4.7.2 Italian impresarios in Split

Also negotiating with the theatre management at the same time as Lana – though this time for operetta – was Giuseppe Ullmann, who pointed out that an endowment of 3,300 florins such as that granted by the theatre of Split for the spring and autumn seasons, would not be enough to bring soloists, choristers and 16 orchestral players, since the whole sum would be spent on travel and board. The only way round this would be to split the overall revenue 60–40, thereby ensuring that the opera company, with its 60 percent, could use the proceeds to cover at least the living expenses, amounting to about 250 florins. This practice, Ullmann noted, was to be found at almost all theatres in Italy.⁴⁷⁰ The endowment of 3,300 florins was only slightly higher than the 3,000 granted by the Comune almost twenty years previously.

Even though the impresario Andrea Brigoni had proposed *Rigoletto* and *La favorita* or *La traviata* and *La Gioconda*, and was prepared to accept an endowment of 2,000 florins, the choice of impresario for the Teatro Nuovo in Split fell to Giulio Milani in 1895. However, Milani wrote in a letter of a “first instalment of 3,500 florins owed to me”, from which we deduce that the sums assigned to the impresario had perhaps been increased at a later stage.⁴⁷¹ He brought to a conclusion an opera season that included *Rigoletto*, *La forza del destino* and *Faust*, which was successful from the point of view of the audiences, but ended with the confiscation of Sormani’s scenery, Rancati’s properties and the costumes of De Caro’s

469 See Letter from Antonio Lana to the presidency of the theatre of Split, Milano, 2. 2. 1895, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

470 See Letter from Giuseppe Ullmann to the theatre management of Split, Split, 27. 1. 1895, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

471 “prima rata di f. 3.500 dovutemi”; Letter from Giulio Milani to the theatre management of Split, [n. p.], 19. 4. 1895, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

company. So Milani found himself in the position of having to appeal to Bulat, the director of the theatre, declaring that – contrary to the accusations – he was not responsible for the failure to pay the bills.⁴⁷² In spite of this mishap, three years later he wrote again to the theatre management in the hope of running a second season, this time offering *La bohème* and *La Gioconda* and fixing the numbers of the choruses and orchestra both at 36, with 8 ballerinas. The scenes and properties would once again come from Sormani and Rancati of Milan, the costumes from Chiappa; the soloists would be placed under contract with Casa Ricordi.⁴⁷³ Milani's intent was to bring Puccini in person to Split using *La bohème* as a bait ("Very probably I will convince the publisher to persuade Maestro Puccini to come to Split").⁴⁷⁴ Puccini had visited Rijeka three years earlier, but there is no evidence that he came to any Dalmatian theatres in the following years. Instead we find that Milani was recommended to the theatre management of Zadar, by both the agent Grabinski Broglio and Simonetti, on various occasions in the early years of the 20th century.

We do not know if there was an opera season also in November of the same year (1895). A draft contract suggests that the impresario Karaman had replaced Alberto Gigliuzzi or Alfredo Vecchi in the running of certain productions. But it is unsigned and with evident corrections, so unquestionably not a definitive document.⁴⁷⁵ To be sure, a season was organised in October of the previous year, and this was the new theatre's first autumn season, with opera buffa followed by ballets. The impresario Anacleto Tavernari had made contact with the theatre management in 1894 to propose the Genoese opera company of Ansaldo, formerly managed in September in Pula by Alberto Vernier with the very same operas (*Don Pasquale*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and *Crispino e la Comare*; with the exception of *La sonnambula*); the same operas were performed in the same month of October in Zadar, again conducted by Ettore Mariotti.⁴⁷⁶

472 See Letter from Giulio Milani to Gajo Filomen Bulat, Trieste, 12. 6. 1895, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

473 "in order to assure this honourable management that all the artists will be of exceptional repute, the names of the artists will be placed under contract with the G. Ricordi publishing house of operas" ("per assicurare cotesta onorevole Direzione che tutti gli artisti saranno di riputazione eccezionale, i nomi di questi saranno messi in patto di contratto colla casa editrice delle opere G. Ricordi"); Letter from Giulio Milani to the theatre management of Split, [n. p.], 6. 3. 1898. HR-MGS: Kazalište 4/ kut. I–XVII.

474 Letter from Giulio Milani to the theatre management of Split, [n. p.], 6. 3. 1898. HR-MGS: Kazalište 4/ kut. I–XVII.

475 Draft contract between Alberto Gigliuzzi and Giuseppe Karaman, Split, November 1895, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

476 The impresario Anacleto Tavernari was in a partnership with the bass Lodovico Contini and the conductor Augusto Franzoni. "From 1882 to 1905 he was an agent for the Teatro Reinach, and directed *Fra Diavolo*, a theatrical journal with agency, in Parma (1883–1885); he then moved to Milan and worked in the *Trovatore* agency. He organised opera seasons and was the impresario at various theatres, among which, for many years, the Teatro Grande of Brescia." ("Dal 1882 al 1905 fu agente per il Teatro Reinach, e diresse a Parma il *Fra Diavolo*, giornale teatrale con agenzia (1883–1885); si trasferì poi a Milano,

What is certain is that there was also a successful season of Italian opera in 1897 proposed by Alberto Landi, which however left the impresario “without a florin” and forced him to ask the municipality – via the theatre management – for a further subsidy to enable him to fulfil his other “residual obligations” (*residuali obblighi*) in Split.⁴⁷⁷ It was essentially a matter of shipping to various destinations, at the end of the season, crates full of equipment, sets, costumes, scores, properties, jewels and footwear, and leaving for Italy. Landi found himself, therefore, with various outstanding debts and the immediate need to return all this material. He wished, therefore, to provide a detailed account of his income and expenses: it would immediately explain the losses, concerning which – he was keen to point out – he was not complaining. Indeed he felt satisfied to have run the season and properly represented the impresa at the theatre of Split, “which has directors that are so respectable and kind” (*che ha a direttori persone così rispettabili e gentili*). He therefore appealed to the management and the mayor, asking them to find some arrangement whereby he could be relieved, as he wrote, “from this terrible state of anxiety, to which I am not accustomed and which is made all the more painful and distressing by finding myself far from my country and without contacts and resources”.⁴⁷⁸ Landi duly sent the management his list of expenses: a document of great interest today, for it tells us (as we have already seen in the case of other impresarios and other seasons) what an impresario’s real expenses were when running a theatre under contract. It shows with great clarity how he arrived at the loss of 2,541.92 florins indicated at the bottom of the document:

Spedito da Napoli al sig. Guarini per anticipi e depositi di artisti e fornitori con due vaglia telegrafici di L. 1.000 ognuno	fiorini 905,27
Versato all’agente del Loyd austriaco le seguenti partite:	
1. Per viaggi da Venezia a Spalato	475
2. Per multa pagata alla direzione delle ferrovie a Venezia	139
3. Per importo della musica del Ruy Blas e dell’Aida, vestiario dell’Aida, scenario Ruy Blas e Aida, trasporto musica, attrezzeria, scenario, vestiario ecc.	1.795,75
4. Vestiario, scenario, musica Favorita, esc. trasporto	374
Spedito al vestiarista Bonaventura di Trieste per vestiario Ruy Blas	215,60
Spese postali e telegrafiche da gennaio 97 fino all’ultimo della stagione	287,90
Pagato all’agente del Lloyd a saldo del suo avere	28
Viaggio da Napoli a Bari e trasporto di merci	98,40

lavorando nell’agenzia del *Trovatore*. Organizzò stagioni liriche e fu impresario di diversi teatri, tra i quali, per molti anni, il Teatro Grande di Brescia.”); *Il Dizionario della musica del Ducato di Parma e Piacenza*, <http://www.lacasadellamusicait/Vetro/Pages/Dizionario.aspx?ini=T&tipologia=I&idoggetto=1450&idcontenuto=2791> [accessed 22. 8. 2020].

477 Letter from Alberto Landi to the theatre management of Split, Split, 12. 6. 1897, HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII.

478 “da questo orribile stato di angoscia, a cui non sono abituato, e che mi si rende più grave e penoso trovandomi lontano dalla patria e senza conoscenze e risorse”; Letter from Alberto Landi to the theatre management of Split, Split, 12. 6. 1897, HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII.

Viaggio sulla Boiana Bari Ragusa Spalato	137,50
Attrezzeria, gioielleria Aida pagata a Rancati	321
Trasporto dal vapore al teatro	12,5
Per quattro decine pagate agli artisti, alle masse corali, orchestrali e danzanti	1.564,59
	1.564,59
	1.564,59
	1.564,59
Viaggio di ritorno al contrabbasso in fermo, al clarino, al suggeritore	19
Viaggio a tre decine al nuovo suggeritore da Trieste	78,15
A Pascutti come provino e direttore del ballo e copiatura di carte di ballo	45
Spesato serale per 26 rappresentazioni stampa, affissione, commissario politico, polizia, gas, candele, uomini di soffitta, pompieri, servitù, sarte, servi di scena, comparse Ruy Blas, birra alle medesime e tre per cento	2.590,54
Spese straordinarie pel macchinismo Aida	29,40
Alle sarte per 12 abiti di ballerine (due balli)	15,80
Dogana e facchinaggio su due volte	7,25
Viaggi di ritorno alla 1° ballerina, al maestro e al tenore	27
Banda per l'Aida 12 volte	48
Differenza di mezzo fiorino in ogni rapp. al prof. Alberti	13
Alla sig.ra Zilli per tre rapp.i	225
Tassa	33
Beneficienza	25
Bollo	15
Altre piccole spese trasporto accomodo di abiti, [...], lacci ecc. [...] per ballerine	17,25
Pagato a Strino per spese fatte	250
Per timpani, trombe, parrucche e carte del Trovatore	135
	14.966,42
Conto degli introiti per 26 rappresentazioni – quattro in appalto sospeso e 22 di abbonamento	
Introito delle 26 rappresentazioni	f 6.324,50
Dote	4.000
Abbonamento	2.100
	12.424,50
Esito	f 14.966,42
Introito	f 12.424,50
Perdita	f 2.541,92 ⁴⁷⁹

Initially the intention had been to give *Aida*, *La favorita* and a third opera to be decided. Subsequently, as one gathers from the table above, it was decided to stage *Ruy Blas*, to which *Il trovatore* was also added (see the entry: “Per timpani, trombe, parrucche e carte del

⁴⁷⁹ Report on the expenses and income of the impresario Alberto Landi, Split [1897], HR-MGS: Kazalište 4/ kut. I–XVII.

Trovatore”). There are certain entries in the table that were not listed singly: an example is the expense of hiring the music, costumes, sets, properties and transportation for *Ruy Blas* and *Aida*. This prevents us from understanding how much the individual suppliers charged for the hire and delivery of their wares. Incidentally, it is not known if Landi, in response to this detailed disclosure (a catalogue that even includes the cumulative cost of beer for the extras), was gratified in his request for a further subsidy.

The table also mentions the soprano Emma Zilli, who was engaged for three nights only and whose presence was not indicated in the contract, though it was later reported in *Il Cosmorama*.⁴⁸⁰ The contract, in fact, had specified not only the tenor Enrico Caruso, but also the soprano Nice Barbareschi, the mezzosopranos Alessandrina Dombroska and Giulia Salvi, the baritone Ferdinando Guarini and the bass Ettore Brancaleone.⁴⁸¹ As mentioned earlier, naming the artists within the contract, and not separately, was not a standard feature of all contracts for opera seasons. Moreover, in previous contracts drawn up with the theatre, the impresario had always been given the responsibility of sourcing the orchestral players, but had never before been allowed to bring in all the musicians from outside (in the past the impresarios had drawn on the musicians of the Narodno Glazbe and the Zvonimir company; the reason being to help build up a good local orchestra to meet the theatre’s needs and give financial support to the musicians of the two ensembles). In this particular contract, however, there was a clause saying that a whole orchestra could be made up from scratch, thereby giving the impresario the right to engage the whole band externally if it wanted. This measure met with strong opposition from the Croatian musicians, who feared that the impresario Landi would recruit the entire orchestra elsewhere, without even considering the local musicians, who were “better than all the external forces put together”.⁴⁸² With the stroke of a pen, the management had not only destroyed all hopes of forming a local orchestra for the theatre, but also unfairly excluded all the willing local musicians who were capable of contributing to the artistic development of the city.⁴⁸³ But

480 “Artisti scritturati – Emma Zilli”, *Il Cosmorama*, 6. 5.1897, p. 4.

481 In his contract, signed by the directors Karaman, Boglich and Katalinić representing the theatre in Split, Landi also pledged to engage as soloists a supporting tenor and a supporting bass whose names are not given. The conductor was to be Antonio Siracusa, who is remembered as having worked at the Teatro Bellini and Teatro Mercadante in Naples, and also as assistant conductor (*maestro coadiutore*) at the Teatro San Carlo in the same city. Contract between the theatre management of Split and Alberto Landi, Split, 1897, HR-MGS: Kazalište 4/ kut. I–XVII.

482 “migliori di tutte le forze esterne messe insieme”; Letter from [illegible sender] to the theatre management of Split, Split 12. 3. 1897, HR-MGS: Kazalište 4/ kut. I–XVII.

483 “The undersigned,” the still unidentified writer from Split wrote, “dissociates himself from the misunderstanding of the task assigned to the management of our theatre, which the *Comune* did not build so that it should fall into the hands of various foreign speculators, but to satisfy an emotional need of our Croatian people. I call on the management to correct this oversight.” (“Il sottoscritto si dissocia da questo fraintendimento del compito assegnato alla direzione del nostro teatro che il comune non ha costruito per farlo cadere nelle mani di vari speculatori stranieri, ma per provvedere ad un bisogno sentimentale

in spite of the protests, this clause remained in the contracts of Split at least until 1905. In the case of this particular contract, it is hard to say if the orchestral players were indeed engaged externally. The table given above is not clear on the matter, given that the entry “For four *decine* (10-day periods) paid to the artists, to the choral, orchestral and dance ensembles” (*Per quattro decine pagate agli artisti, alle masse corali, orchestrali e danzanti*) is not itemised. However, if there had been musicians from outside, they would have appeared in the travel expenses, yet here it mentions only the “return journey for the double bass to the mainland, for the clarino, for the prompter” (*viaggio di ritorno al contrabbasso in fermo, al clarino, al suggeritore*). If outside support was brought in, it was probably minimal. Nonetheless, regardless of the grievances concerning external personnel, the contract with Landi had already caused offence for the mere fact that it had been concluded without first obtaining the consent of the municipality.

In spite of his losses, Landi reapplied to run the theatre in the following year, asking for an endowment of 4,500 florins. He planned to stage *Carmen*, *Mignon*, *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci* with 24 subscription performances. This time everything needed – costumes, sets, properties, machinist, chorus, orchestra and ballerinas – was to come from the Teatro Comunale of Trieste thanks to the agency of a certain Molini (“my friend Molini, whom you will well remember,” he wrote to the management in Split).⁴⁸⁴ As for the principal singers, they would follow him directly from Naples. Here again he names them in advance: two Polish singers, Ida Monteleone (her real name was Ida Lewenberg; this was an Italianisation) and Mary Metella Kosłowska, the Venetian Cesira Menon and (returning to Split) Giulia Salvi from Rome. The tenors would be Enrico Quadri and Josè Lima, the baritones Carmine Montella and Alfredo Conti, and the bass Paolo Poggi. The conductor was to be Raffaele Delli Ponti, “the present conductor who has been directing my company for seven months”.⁴⁸⁵ In the same year (1898) Landi also tried his luck at the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar, sending a letter through Salvatore Strino. In both cases the proposal came to nothing. At Split the choice fell on the Bohemian company brought by Vendelin Budil, whom we met in the previous section. But what followed at the theatre of Split from Budil onwards was, for at least a dozen years, another long series of seasons devoted almost exclusively to Italian opera. It was this revival that prompted certain writers on current affairs in the following decade to make scathing comments like the following when reporting on the local theatre: “The new municipal theatre or ‘Općinsko Kazalište’, built in 1891, in spite of being destined

del nostro popolo croato. Prego la direzione di correggere questo inconveniente.”); Letter from [illegible sender] to the theatre management of Split, Split 12. 3. 1897, HR-MGS: Kazalište 4/ kut. I–XVII.

484 “l’amico Molini che ricorderete benissimo”; Letter from Alberto Landi to the theatre management of Split, Split, 14. 3. 1898, HR-MGS: Kazalište 4/ kut. I–XVII.

485 “l’attuale direttore che da sette mesi dirige qui la mia compagnia”; Letter from Alberto Landi to the theatre management of Split, Split, 14. 3. 1898, HR-MGS: Kazalište 4/ kut. I–XVII. Raffaele Delli Ponti (1864–1936), who had studied at the Conservatorio of Naples, was a composer and conductor, and for a period also artistic director of Casa Sonzogno.

to be a temple of the Croatian muses, preferred to receive the Italians, because otherwise the proceeds would suffer terribly. Troupes from the theatres of Zagreb and Bohemia gave only short runs of performances there”.⁴⁸⁶ As always, the Italian political press wasted no opportunity to belittle the choices of its Croatian opponents.

Also surviving is a copy of the contract between the theatre management and the impresario Achille Stehele dated 1899. It specified the performance of four operas (*I puritani*, *La traviata*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Ernani*) for a run of at least 20 nights, using a chorus of 22 and an orchestra of 32. Quite independently, the baritone Ferdinando Guarini, who appeared in the cast previously engaged by Landi, also proposed a season of Italian opera in 1899, with *Mefistofele*, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *La traviata*. For *Mefistofele* he intended to use the bass Scarneo in the lead role, just as the impresario Geremia Abriani had proposed to the same management four years earlier. Guarini promised 20 orchestral players from Milan, a chorus of 24, and a group of 8 ballerinas; and in spite of offering one opera fewer, he asked for an endowment of 5,000 florins, in other words 500 more than what Landi, the previous impresario, had requested, and a good 3,000 florins more than Stehele himself;⁴⁸⁷ but nowhere near, it should be added, the 8,000 florins demanded in the same year by Olimpio Lovrich to stage a season of *grand opéra* and French ballet featuring *L'ebrea*, *Gli Ugonotti* and *I pescatori di perle*.⁴⁸⁸ The management duly chose the proposal that entailed a smaller outlay: Stehele had signed for an endowment of just 2,000 florins. As often happened, Italian repertoire opera carried the day over *grand opéra*, and when it came to choosing, the decisive factor was the need to contain expenditure: hence another demonstration that making savings had priority over artistic aspirations.

Unfortunately we have no information on the endowment for the next season, but what is certain is that a prudent approach was adopted when it came to choosing the conductor, Lorenzo Perigozzo, who resided in the city and had been teaching at the Zvonimir musical society in Split since 1897.⁴⁸⁹ It was he who conducted the first performance of *Otello* in the city. Once again the decision was made to opt for a season of Italian opera, in spite of the fact that a proposal had arrived directly from the management of the National

486 “Il nuovo teatro comunale “Općinsko Kazalište”, eretto nel 1891, per quanto destinato a tempio delle Muse croate preferì di accogliere le italiane, perché altrimenti ne soffriva terribilmente l’incasso. Truppe dei teatri di Zagabria e della Boemia vi diedero delle brevi serie di rappresentazioni.”; Eligio Smiric, *Studio sull’italianità della Dalmazia in base a documenti ufficiali*, Tipografia del Governo, Zadar 1920, p. 12.

487 See Letter from Ferdinando Guarini to the theatre management of Split, Milano, 27. 3. 1899, HR-MGS: Kazalište 4/ kut. I–XVII.

488 See Letter from Olimpio Lovrich to the theatre management of Split, Aix le Bains, 22. 8. 1899, HR-MGS: Kazalište 4/ kut. I–XVII.

489 Lorenzo Perigozzo (Verona, 1866–Torino, 1935), who studied at the Liceo Rossini in Pesaro, was a conductor, composer and singing teacher. He wrote a few operas and pieces for violin and piano. *Enciclopedia moderna italiana. Fietta-Piemonte*, Sonzogno, [Milano], 1941, p. 2639.

Theatre of Zagreb to organise 24 performances in May 1900: 12 nights of spoken theatre in the first half of the month, and 12 nights of opera in the second half. The repertoire and the cast of soloists would be the same as those then current at the National Theatre. The choice of operas and plays, however, would be left to the Teatro Nuovo of Split.⁴⁹⁰ Even the impresario Corbetta reappeared in 1901, proposing the same operas and artists he had programmed for the Politeama Ciscutti of Pula; in other words, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci* and *Carmen* with the tenors Bambacioni⁴⁹¹ and Villalta and the prima donna Elsa Plater (he was also quick to point out that Plater had just recently sung alongside Tamagno).⁴⁹²

Among the competing proposals that arrived at Split in 1904 were those of two agents acting on behalf of their respective impresario clients. On the one hand, Grabinski Broglio was proposing the impresarios Giorgio Trauner and Ettore Forastiero, who were ready to give *Aida* and *La Gioconda* with a subsidy of 9,000 crowns (the two had worked at Zadar a few months earlier and were to continue to work there for another three years).⁴⁹³ On the other, Paolo Rocca represented the impresario Vittorio Riva, “a wealthy man” (*persona facoltosissima*),⁴⁹⁴ who would bring *Tosca*, *La traviata* and *Lucia di Lammermoor* and the singers Silla Carobbi⁴⁹⁵ and Maria Alexandrovicz. When negotiations over Broglio’s project foundered, Rocca’s was given the go-ahead. Under the new provisions, the poster was to be written in Croatian.⁴⁹⁶ Rocca would pay the required deposit of 1,000 lire as soon as the company’s dealings with Casa Ricordi had been completed. Ricordi, as well as asking for 2,500 lire just for *Tosca* (though this was actually lower than the previous year’s list price of

490 See Letter from the management of the National Theatre of Zagreb to the theatre management of Split, Zagreb, 28. 8. 1899, HR-MGS: Kazalište 4/ kut. I–XVII.

491 On the tenor Giovanni Bambacioni, see the biography dedicated to him by Leda Rivarolo, *L'uomo che non fu Caruso*, Cavallo di Ferro, Roma 2009.

492 See Letter from Giuseppe Corbetta to the theatre management of Split, Split, [1901], HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII.

493 See Letter from Luigi Grabinski Broglio to the president of the theatre of Split, Milano, 19. 3. 1904, HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII.

494 Letter from Paolo Rocca to the theatre management of Split, Milano 27. 8. 1904, HR-MGS: Kazalište 4/ kut. I–XVII.

495 Silla Carobbi (1856–1933), a highly-regarded baritone from Pistoia, created the role of Scarpia in *Tosca*. He sang alongside various celebrated singers of the period, such as Roberto Stagno, Francesco Tamagno, Gemma Bellincioni and Caruso. He also worked with Gustav Mahler; see <https://mahlerfoundation.org/mahler/contemporaries/carobbi> [accessed 22. 8. 2020].

496 “Here attached I return the contract duly signed,” Rocca wrote, “with the draft of the poster to be drawn up in Croatian. It will be a splendid season and everything will proceed in the best possible way because the impresa is first-rate and one that gets things done, as they say, like gentlemen.” (“Qui unito rimetto il contratto regolarmente firmato con la minuta del cartellone da redigersi in lingua croata. Sarà una stagione splendida e tutto procederà nel migliore modo perché l’impresa è di prim’ordine e di quelle che fanno le cose, come si dice, da signori.”); Letter from Paolo Rocca to the theatre management of Split, Milano 7. 9. 1904, HR-MGS: Kazalište 4/ kut. I–XVII.

3,000 lire),⁴⁹⁷ claimed a right of assent when it came to approving the opera company. The agent plainly admitted that the baritone would not come cheap, but that it would be worth it: “Silla Carobbi in Tosca is tremendous,” Rocca wrote, “I really don’t know how you will be able to pay for this artist, but in any case the good fortune lies with Split, which with not too much would have a production worthy of La Scala and, let’s be honest, also worthy of your theatre”.⁴⁹⁸ As for Maria Alexandrovicz, she managed to sign the contract for Split one hour before receiving another excellent proposal by telegram: maybe a better one than that offered by the Teatro Nuovo (judging from Rocca’s comment): “Unfortunately Split is costing her more than 5,000 lire; but she is a lady who knows how to keep her word, even at her cost, and this is something your honourable management should take note of”.⁴⁹⁹ The contract was therefore concluded between the theatre management and the impresario, who undertook to stage the three said operas. (Except for *Tosca*, they had already been taken to Pula five years before; Riva was once again in Pula in October 1904 for *Rigoletto* and *La traviata*). We know for certain that Riva was given the contract, for we have his signature on the receipts for three instalments of the endowment of 2,666.66 lire each.⁵⁰⁰

Most likely this contract was used also to draw up the following one with the impresario Gabriele Ruotolo:⁵⁰¹ Riva’s name was removed and replaced with that of Ruotolo. The operas staged in the previous season, *Tosca*, *La traviata* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*, were erased and substituted – in pencil – with *Siberia*, *Fedora* and Massenet’s *Manon*. Riva’s contract was probably simply taken as a model for the following typewritten one and identical terms were applied to Ruotolo in 1905. Here again it listed the artists (by name and surname) selected to perform – in the definitive version of the contract – *Fedora*, *Manon*, *Mignon* and *Stella*.⁵⁰² Here too, at Article “k”, we find the clause (dating back to the contact with Landi of 1897) which stated that the posters and programmes were to be written exclusively in Croatian, “except for that part that refers to the title of the opera

497 See Letter from Giulio Ricordi to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 14. 3. 1901, HR-DAZD, folder 10.

498 “Silla Carobbi nella Tosca è stragrande; non so veramente come potrà pagare quest’artista, in ogni modo la fortuna è di Spalato che con poco avrebbe uno spettacolo da Scala e diciamolo pure anche degno del vostro teatro.”; Letter from Paolo Rocca to the theatre management of Split, [Milano], [1904], HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII.

499 “Purtroppo Spalato le costa più di 5.000 lire; ma è una signorina che sa mantenere la parola data anche se con sacrificio e di ciò cotesta onorevole direzione deve prenderne buona nota.”; Letter from Paolo Rocca to the theatre management of Split, [Milano], [1904], HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII.

500 See Receipt for instalment of the endowment signed by Vittorio Riva, Split, 3. 12. 1904, HR-MGS: Kazalište 4/ kut. I–XVII.

501 Ruotolo’s name appears more than once in the theatres of the coastal region. Together with the artist Raffaele Albini, he had directed a Compagnia Buffa Napoletana in the 1870s.

502 In a previous version of the contract the formula used was “tre opere tra *Fedora*, *Manon* (Massenet), *Mignon* e *Stella*”.

and to the artistic personnel, which can be written in Italian”.⁵⁰³ It was now necessary, therefore, not only to perform certain operas in Croatian, but also to make adjustments to the publicity. As we have already seen, this also happened at Šibenik, where the poster for *La traviata* in 1914 was in Croatian and all the singers were Croatian (the company was that of the National Theatre of Osijek). It is in this contract that, for the first time, mention is made of a penalty to be applied if the staging of the opera season is delayed.⁵⁰⁴ The endowment of 8,000 crowns was granted together with 16 boxes. However, there was perhaps a further increase of 4,000 crowns if some months later the impresario Giorgio Trauner wrote to the theatre management of Zadar (where he was then engaged) as follows, with the probable aim of asking for an increase in the endowment: “Even at Split they had to increase the endowment from 8,000 to 12,000 crowns in order to guarantee an opera season that was better than usual.”⁵⁰⁵ If this increase really happened, it could have also been justified by the fact that the season, made up exclusively of Sonzogno operas, presented various premieres for Split; and as we know, new operas cost more. Even when Ruotolo returned to Split three years later, he made sure to include an important premiere: that of *Andrea Chénier* (again an opera by Giordano), to be combined with *Un ballo in maschera* and *Rigoletto* in a season conducted by Arturo Bovi.⁵⁰⁶ The contracts at Split, it is worth pointing out, did not impose obligations concerning the type of opera, unlike those for Zadar for example. They neither indicated a specific number of repertoire operas per season, nor stated a commitment to include first performances. In this manner the opera seasons might have a less standardised format and all the works be new for the city, as happened in the 1905 season.

From 1908 onwards, in spite of the various proposals sent to the management, there is no record of further opera performances with Italian companies until the War, with the exception of *Il matrimonio segreto* brought from Šibenik and conducted by Bovi. On the other hand,

503 “salvo per quella parte che si riferisce al titolo dello spettacolo ed al personale artistico che potrà essere estesa in italiano”; Contract between the theatre management of Split and Gabriele Ruotolo, Split, 4. 9. 1905, HR-MGS: Kazalište 4/ kut. I–XVII, and Contract between the theatre management of Split and Gabriele Ruotolo, Milano, 7. 9. 1904, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

504 “h.) to begin the season towards the end of the month of October, under the penalty of 40 (forty) crowns for every day of unjustified delay after the first week of November 1904 has ended” (“h.) di dare principio allo spettacolo verso la fine del mese di ottobre, sotto comminatoria di una penale di Cor. 40 (quaranta) per ogni giorno di ritardo non giustificato dopo terminata la prima settimana di novembre 1904”); Contract between the theatre management of Split and the impresario Gabriele Ruotolo, Split, 4. 9. 1905, HR-MGS: Kazalište 4/ kut. I–XVII.

505 “Anche a Spalato dovettero portare la dote da 8.000 a 12.000 corone per assicurarsi uno spettacolo migliore del solito”; Letter from Giorgio Trauner to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 28. 6. 1906, HR-DAZD, folder 26.

506 The presence of these last two operas is deduced from the contents of a contract with the bass Egidio Garavaglia.

visits from the opera company of the theatre of Zagreb are recorded in 1910, 1911 and 1913 and that of Osijek in 1914. The theatre in Split also continued to function with companies giving plays and operetta. It is worth noting, in conclusion, that when it came to opera and operetta, the clauses in the contract did not greatly differ, though there was usually a certain disparity between the two in the part concerning the presence (and quantity) of dancers.

4.7.3 Census of the opera seasons at Split

The table is based on archival material found in HR-MGS: Kazalište, 1–4, and the periodicals *L'Arte Melodrammatica*, *La Scena*, *Narod* and *Euterpe*, assisted by the consultation of Mirjana Škunca's book, *Glazbeni život Splita od 1860. do 1918*,⁵⁰⁷ and Nevenka Bezić Božanić's article, "Novinske vijesti o scenskim priredbama u Splitu (1884–1918)".⁵⁰⁸

Year	Endowment	Impresario	Maestro concertatore and Chorus master	Start of season	Operas
<i>Teatro Bajamonti</i>					
1859–1860	n. f.	n. f.	[Giambattista Beneggi]	carnival	I lombardi alla prima crociata Il trovatore Rigoletto
1861	n. f.	Carlo Burlini	[Giambattista Beneggi]		Lucrezia Borgia
1863	n. f.	Sanguinazzi	[Giambattista Beneggi]	April	I masnadieri Crispino e la comare I puritani
1865	n. f.	Sanguinazzi	[Giambattista Beneggi]	March	Linda di Chamounix L'ebreo Nabucco
1871	n. f.	n. f.	[Samuele Wolff]	April	Don Checco I falsi monetari
1874	n. f.	n. f.	[Samuele Wolff]	autumn	Cicco e Cola Le educande di Sorrento Crispino e la comare Pipelet
1875	3.000 f.	n. f.	[Samuele Wolff]	April May autumn	Faust Un ballo in maschera Rigoletto ⁵⁰⁹ Don Pasquale L'elisir d'amore La figlia del reggimento

507 Mirjana Škunca, *Glazbeni život Splita*.

508 Nevenka Bezić Božanić, "Novinske vijesti", pp. 397–454.

509 This last opera is added by Mirjana Škunca, *Glazbeni život Splita*, p. 54.

Year	Endowment	Impresario	Maestro concertatore and Chorus master	Start of season	Operas
<i>Teatro Nuovo</i>					
1893	[3.300 f.]			January	Il menestrello
1894	4.000 f.	Ladislav Chmelensky [Manger] [Alberto Vernier]	Benissek [Ettore Mariotti]	April October	Carmen Cavalleria rusticana Pagliacci Il trovatore Prodana nevjesta Il bacio [Ernani] Il barbiere di Siviglia Don Pasquale La sonnambula Crispino e la Comare
1895	3.300 f.	Giulio Milani Gigliuzzi / Karaman	n. f. n. f.	spring [November]	Rigoletto La forza del destino Faust [Rigoletto Fra Diavolo La sonnambula]
1896	5.000 f. [6.000 f.]	Johann Pištek	E. Engelberth	April	Dalibor Prodana nevjesta Lohengrin Guglielmo Tell L'Africana Pikova dama La traviata Un ballo in maschera Postillon Martha Cvijeta
1897	4.000 f.	Alberto Landi	Antonio Siracusa	spring	Ruy Blas Aida La favorita Il trovatore
1898	4.000 gulden	Vendelin Budil	n. f.	spring	Evangelimann Heimchen am Herd Il grillo del focolare Dubrovsky Dalibor Tajemství Il segreto Pikova dama Evgenij Onegin Werther
1899	2.000 f.	Achille Stehele	[Lorenzo Perigozzo]	November	I puritani La traviata Lucia di Lammermoor Ernani

Year	Endow-ment	Impresario	Maestro concertatore and Chorus master	Start of season	Operas
1900	n. f.	n. f.	Lorenzo Perigozzo	April	La bohème Un ballo in maschera Otello
1901	n. f.	[Company from the Opera of Zagreb]	n. f.	n. f.	Nikola Šubić Zrinski Porin Andrija Čubranović Cavalleria rusticana Pagliacci L'ebrea Manon (Massenet) Dank-prosjak Lijepa Jelena La Gioconda Kraljica od Sabe Mignon Gejsa Ples u operi Lutka
1904	n. f. 8.000 crowns	Compagnia Città di Trento Vittorio Riva	n. f. Scasserra Domenico Acerbi m. c.: Achille Cerati	February [November]	n. f. Tosca La traviata Lucia di Lammermoor [Il barbiere di Siviglia]
1905	8.000 c. [12.000 c.]	Gabriele Ruotolo	Alberto Dell'Acqua Lorenzo Molajoli Gaetano Bavagnoli Melchiorre Vela	November	Fedora Manon (Massenet) Mignon Stella
1906	n. f. n. f.	Ernesto Guerra n. f.	[Ernesto Guerra] Gaetano Cimini	May autumn	Il barbiere di Siviglia Crispino e la comare n. f.
1907	n. f.	Pietro Minciotti	[Arturo Sigismondi]	autumn	n. f.
1908	n. f.	Gabriele Ruotolo	[Arturo] Bovi	November	Un ballo in maschera Andrea Chénier Rigoletto
1910	n. f.	[Company from the Opera of Zagreb]	Andro Mitrović Milan Zuna Srećko Albini	spring	Nikola Šubić Zrinski
1911	n. f.	[Company from the Opera of Zagreb]	n. f. Arturo Bovi	May autumn	Oganj Povratak Il matrimonio segreto
1913	n. f.	[Company from the Opera of Zagreb]	Srećko Albini Milan Sachs	May	n. f.
1914	n. f.	Company from the Opera of Osijek	Andro Mitrović	spring	n. f.

		1861	1865	1867	1870	1875	1883	1887	1889	1891	1893	1895	1896	
Pula	orchestra							<i>40</i>						
	chorus (male)							<i>40</i>						
	chorus (female)													
	dancers													
Rijeka	orchestra	28°								30°			48*	
	chorus (male)		12°	12°	20°					16°			48*	
	chorus (female)		8°	8°	10°					10°				
	dancers		12°	12°									16*	
Zadar	orchestra						28°		34"		38"	2(3)6 §		
	chorus (male)			12°		12°	8°		22"		30"	22§		
	chorus (female)			8°		8°	6°							
	dancers					12°			4"					
Šibenik	orchestra													30°
	chorus (male)													12°
	chorus (female)													12°
	dancers													
Split	orchestra											28/30"	32°	
	chorus (male)											30"	12°	
	chorus (female)												12°	
	dancers												8+1°	

Size of orchestra, choruses, ballet corps for opera seasons at the theatres of the eastern Adriatic coast (1861–1914): *in italics* = deduced from a periodical; with asterisk* = deduced from a poster and periodical; ° = deduced from the contract; § = requested in the tender specifications; " = deduced from the correspondence

	1897	1898	1899	1901	1902	1904			1905	1906	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914
		40*		50									80			44°
		30*		32												20°
																10°
				50 \$							60 \$	60 \$	60 \$	60 \$	60 \$	60 \$
				50 \$							60 \$	60 \$	60 \$	60 \$	60 \$	60 \$
											30 \$	30 \$	30 \$	30 \$	30 \$	30 \$
	40"				42*	42 \$										
	36"				42 + 12 young singers*	20 \$										
						12 \$										
									11"		32*		28°			
											30*					
	32°	32°	32°	40"		33°	32"	22"	30°	46						40°
	24°	12°	22°	30"		28°	14"	26"	24°	35						32°
		12°					12"									
	8°															

5 Opera repertoire in the theatres of the eastern Adriatic (1861–1918)

5.1 Opera types and repertoire

In the preceding tables we saw that opera seasons were not a regular phenomenon in all the theatres considered. The theatre guaranteeing the greatest frequency of seasons was that of Rijeka (first, with the Teatro Adamich, opera was staged during the Lent-spring season only; later, after the inauguration of the Teatro Comunale, an autumn season was occasionally added), followed by Zadar, where the seasons could start in spring or autumn depending on the year. There was a similar state of affairs at Pula, where, for around fifteen years from at least 1898, there were regular opera seasons in two seasons a year instead of one. The situations of Šibenik and Split, on the other hand, were different. While the opera seasons in Šibenik were very irregular, with gaps of years between one season and the next, in Split the vacuum of around a dozen years (1881–1893) was institutional, dictated by the fire at the Teatro Bajamonti, followed by a renewed intention to offer regular annual seasons.¹ In various theatres an autumn season could be preferred to the Lent-spring season, also because it cost less to engage singers at that time of year.

We cannot truly speak of “opera programming”, at least not in the modern sense of the term, given the great variability displayed in the choice of programmes right up to the printing of the poster (and, at times, even *after* the promotional material had been printed). There was certainly a difference between the programmes of the larger and smaller cities. For the most part the opera productions came from outside and the novelties were the prerogative of theatres such as those of Rijeka and Zadar. Indeed some works were performed at Zadar even before more important venues like those of Vienna or Venice. Putting on new operas, however, entailed a greater cost, primarily because of the rental expenses to be paid to the publishers, so in the cities in which there were no contractual obligations with the impresario on the type of opera to be staged, it was easier to fall back on the repertoire. Programming opera scores belonging to different publishers within the same season also meant higher rental fees. But while, on the one hand, choosing to stage the operas of just one publisher meant a financial saving, on the other, the potential disadvantage was that the opera considered as “new” did not always suit the wishes of the impresario and the theatre management.

1 Even during these twelve theatre-less years, attempts were made to organise opera performances at the Sala Gran Orfeo of the Caffè Troccoli.

Anyone involved in organising opera seasons in Italy was also challenged by the hostility reigning between the two leading publishers: Ricordi and Sonzogno. “These two firms”, the impresario De Monari wrote, “have for some time put in place a system of mutual boycotting, which, even if it doesn’t harm either of them, seriously damages the interests of entrepreneurs. And it is only recently that we rarely have some examples of a promiscuous repertoire, which gives us all hope for better times in the future”.² The repertoire could therefore be heavily influenced by the publishers. But we have also seen how the local citizenry played an active part in the choices, at times writing to the theatre management to suggest what it wanted to hear. When an anonymous letter arrived at Zadar signed “A friend of the management on behalf of many who would like to subscribe” (*Un amico della direzione a nome di molti che intenderebbero abbonarsi*), the message sent was that the management should persevere in programming repertoire operas rather than new ones, given that the former would meet with the greater favour of the local population and would also be considered a novelty by the young, who would never have heard them before. “If it is a matter of satisfying four worthy gentlemen”, the anonymous writer added, “who can lay their hands on a couple of extra florins, perhaps after even going to the sacrifice of hearing operas in other cities, then also include a new third opera, but if you intend to entertain the whole citizenry and put on good shows, then give *Ernani*, *L’ebrea* or *I due Foscari*, for the music is easier and has greater feeling than the new operas and, despite being repertoire operas, they would still be new for the young people of Zadar”.³

As is well known, the choice of repertoire was often a compromise between the desires of the impresario and the needs of the theatre management. The composer, on the other hand, as has already been argued by Michael Walter, now had less weight in the process of organising opera seasons, and his power to influence the repertoire was relatively unimportant in this period. Accordingly, it is very rare to find letters from composers in the archives consulted.

2 “Queste due Case hanno messo da vario tempo in attuazione un sistema di boicottaggio reciproco, che se non nuoce a nessuna di esse, pregiudica gravemente gl’interessi degli speculatori. E solo oggi abbiamo raramente qualche esempio di repertorio promiscuo, ciò che fa sperare, in seguito, tempi migliori per tutti.”; Letter from Eugenio De Monari to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 8. 8. 1899, HR-DAZD, folder 10.

3 “Se si trata [*sic*] di compiacere a quattro signorotti che poterono disporre un pajo di fiorini, ed anche questi forse previa privazione per andare a sentire opere in altre città, date pure anche la terza opera nuova, ma se intendete di divertire tutta la cittadinanza e fare dei bei teatri date l’*Ernani*, l’*Ebrea* oppure *I due Foscari* la cui musica è più facile e più sentimentale di quello che non lo siano le opere nuove e che abbenché opere di repertorio pure per la gioventù di Zara sarebbero nuove.”; Letter from anonymous sender to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 12. 3. 1895, HR-DAZD, folder 8. On such occasions one might simply inform the theatre management of the desired titles, as for example: “According to a great many citizens, the third opera to be chosen should be *Ernani*” (“Dietro il sentire di moltissimi cittadini la terza opera da scieglersi[*sic*] sarebbe l’*Ernani*”); Letter from Ego e comp. to the theatre management of Zadar, [n. p., 1895], HR-DAZD, folder 8.

Some operas were considered to be less performable than others. “It is very easy to advise an impresa to give one or other opera”, a newspaper wrote, “but the difficult thing is to actually stage it, for at times a combination of many important factors is in conflict with this objective”. There were, for example, certain operas of the old repertoire, like *Il profeta*, *Don Carlos*, *Roberto il Diavolo* and *Freischütz*, that many would have liked to see staged, but, as the writer remarks, “who today can dig out the performers suited to interpreting them perfectly?”⁴ It was not merely difficult to find singers suited to the specific repertoire; the economic sacrifices required to engage them would be out of proportion to the theatre’s limited resources. On matters of repertoire, therefore, expectations could not be pitched too high, for the impresa could only offer as much as the budget allowed. In the words of the impresario Mariano Ungherini, for example, the operas that were either difficult to stage or “of very uncertain outcome” (*esito infelicissimo*) included *Don Carlos*, *Mefistofele*, *Lohengrin*, *Tannhäuser* and *Il Re di Lahore*, for the principal reason that the endowment granted amounted to around 7,000 florins in the final years of the 19th century.⁵ *Mefistofele* was considered to be “tough” (*pesante*).⁶ And also in the opinion of the impresario De Monari, *Don Carlos* would not work (“*non va*” was how he put it bluntly),⁷ which explains why it was never performed in the coastal theatres in a period of almost sixty years. Performances of *Don Carlos* were recorded at Trieste in 1868, otherwise only in Zagreb in 1870, sung in the Croatian translation by Franjo Žigrović-Pretočki.⁸ There was also a certain reserve about *Simon Boccanegra*, which again was never staged in the period considered and was heard in Trieste only in 1891 (and only in 1931 at the Zagreb Opera).⁹

Operas could be programmed and then immediately cancelled if they were found to be unsuccessful at neighbouring theatres. Richard Strauss’s *Salome* was due to be staged at Rijeka in 1911, but was cancelled after the opera met with failure at Trieste.¹⁰ At times

4 “È molto facile consigliare un’impresa di dare una o l’altra delle opere, ma il difficile sta nel metterlo in scena, opponendosi talvolta a questo desiderio il concorso di molti importanti fattori”; and later, “gli esecutori adatti alla loro perfetta interpretazione chi li pesca fuori oggi?”; “Cose d’arte”, *L’Eco di Pola*, 2. 9. 1893.

5 Letter from Mariano Ungherini to the theatre management of Zadar, Fabriano, 17. 6. 1893, HR-DAZD, folder 7.

6 In the five cities considered for this research, *Mefistofele* appears in only seven seasons over a period of nearly sixty years.

7 Letter from Eugenio De Monari to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 8. 8. 1899, HR-DAZD, folder 10.

8 Nikola Faller, *Repertoire Hrvat. zem. kazališta od 1. listopada 1870. do 31. srpnja 1937*, Kronika Zavoda za književnost i teatrologiju JAZU, God. 4, Br. 9–10, Zagreb, 1978, p. 41.

9 See, for example, what the agent Pessina wrote about a production of *Boccanegra* at the theatre in Madrid: “I do not believe Simon Boccanegra to be an opera that will give money to the impresa” (“non credo il Simon Boccanegra un’opera che darà denaro all’impresa”), quoted in José María Domínguez, “El Teatro Real de Madrid durante la gestión del empresario Ramón de Michelena (1882–94)”, *Acta Musicologica*, LXXXVIII/ 2 (2015), p. 229.

10 Lovorka Ruck, *Operni život u Rijeci*, p. 191.

an opera could also be chosen according to when it had last been staged at the theatre in question. If its last performance had been too recent, it was preferred to choose something else. The impresario Giorgio Trauner, for example, in his negotiations with Zadar in 1906 was explicit on this point: “In the common interest I would suggest replacing *Bohème* with *Faust*, especially since, on examining the list of productions given at this theatre, I find that *Faust* was last performed in 1888, whereas *Bohème* is much more recent, in 1897”.¹¹ Judging also from certain comments in the newspapers, some in the audience did not like to remain anchored to what they had already heard, but instead wished to hear operas from the new repertoire.¹² Yet although Ricordi and Sonzogno published around 250 new operas in the fifteen years between 1900 and 1915, most of these works enjoyed few repeats and gradually dropped out of the programming in subsequent following years.¹³

From our survey of the programming over sixty years in the five cities considered, we can say with certainty that the genre most extensively cultivated was Italian opera, followed by French and (with many fewer) German. Opera buffa could be combined with opera seria within the same season, or there could be seasons entirely consisting of opera seria or opera buffa (in the latter case a lower budget was required). The opera seasons could also include a few operettas, if the company should propose a mixed repertoire (as we find in the programming at Split). *Table 1. Italian opera and its presence in the coastal theatres*¹⁴ details the frequency with which the various works appeared in the opera seasons (though without counting the number of performances per season). The further down an opera appears in the list, the less frequently it was performed in the area. The colour of the box indicates the theatre where it was performed.¹⁵ In cases where there is any doubt over the performance of a given opera or any uncertainty between two titles, no mention is made of the operas concerned, hence the overall frequency of the operas is underestimated. The following *Table 2. Composers of the Italian opera repertoire*¹⁶ gives an account, composer by composer,

11 “Io direi nell’interesse comune di cambiare la *Bohème* col *Faust*, tanto più che esaminando l’elenco degli spettacoli dati a questo teatro, trovo che il *Faust* è stato rappresentato l’ultima volta nel 1888 mentre la *Bohème* è molto più recente nel 1897”; Letter from Giorgio Trauner to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 17. 7. 1906, HR-DAZD, folder 26.

12 This happened, for example, at Pula when, after a successful performance of *Norma*, the *Teatro Illustrato* wrote that the audience was “already too familiar with this score [and] would have preferred an opera from the new repertoire” (“già troppo familiare con questo spartito avrebbe preferito un’opera del nuovo repertorio”); “Da Pola”, *Il Teatro Illustrato*, 1892, p. 172.

13 Matteo Paoletti, “Mascagni, Mocchi, Sonzogno. La Società Teatrale Internazionale (1908–1931) e i suoi protagonisti”, *Arti della Performance: orizzonti e culture*, IV (2015), p. 20.

14 The table can be consulted at the link: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1qrAuqHsRh_8YlKysJYoTrLJSo_ZXajT6/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=106256926039059801585&rtfpof=true&sd=true.

15 The titles of the opera in the table have been abbreviated for ease of visualisation.

16 The table can be consulted at the link: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1nDGFMa19X_S6hltSsNkwMfinfvIQnE/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=106256926039059801585&rtfpof=true&sd=true.

of the different titles performed and the number of stagings (again only Italian operas are included). The composers are listed in alphabetical order.

The table clearly shows that these theatres were also dominated by the Verdi-Donizetti-Bellini trio, as was already standard practice in the Italian peninsula. By this time repertoire opera was what dominated the majority of the seasons' nightly performances. The opera that appeared most frequently was *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, a work that was much loved by the public and could also be staged without too much effort on the part of any impresario. The data also confirm that an opera like *Crispino e la comare* was very popular at the time, only to disappear from the repertoire, thereby following the same destiny as *Pipelet* or *Le educande di Sorrento*, about which little more remains today than their titles. *Crispino* even came to Split before Trieste. What is abundantly clear is that the coastal theatres maintained close ties with the Italian legacy of the past and an operatic tradition that was predominantly Italian. Indeed none of these theatres (with the exception of Split, dating from the management of the Teatro Nuovo) had much contact with the hinterland. This is also demonstrated, for example, by the data relating to the performances of Italian opera at the theatre of Zagreb, where the programming of these titles between 1870 and 1937 was not so frequent. *Table 3. Italian opera in Trieste-the coastal region-Zagreb*¹⁷, which details all the Italian operas staged in Zagreb in those 67 years,¹⁸ reveals that they received their first performances there somewhat later than on the Dalmatian coast. They were sung in Croatian in the translations by Josip Eugen Tomić, Mijo Biščan, Ivan Trnski or Ferdo Miler, among others. This table also shows that in most cases the works were first given at the Teatro Comunale of Trieste and then arrived at the coastal cities of the eastern Adriatic only at a later stage.

Regarding French opera, the chart below shows that the most frequent productions were those of *Faust* and *Carmen* (for which Sonzogno had secured the exclusive rights for Italy in 1879), whereas a greater diversity of titles is found with the composers Meyerbeer and Massenet. Overall, there were twenty-one titles that could be programmed in the coastal region. The table indicates the year and place in which the opera was first given and the overall number of seasons

17 The table can be consulted at the link: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1EoGCtZQTlsu_OOL9if-tsDjSIllWAdzK/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=106256926039059801585&rtopof=true&tsd=true

18 This is based on the opera repertoire documented by Nikola Faller, *Repertoire Hrvat. zem. kazališta od 1. listopada 1870. do 31. srpnja 1937*, Kronika Zavoda za književnost i teatrologiju JAZU, 4, Br. 9–10, 1978. Chronologies for the theatre of Zagreb were for the first time drawn up by Nikola Faller, who collected the posters of the theatre seasons as from 2 October 1870, the date of the premiere of Ivan Zajc's *Mislav*, with which the permanent activity of the opera house in Zagreb got underway. Faller became a student of Zajc, who initially employed him at the Croatian National Theatre as a répétiteur. Then in 1894 he became conductor and director of the opera of Zagreb; it was under his direction that Lisinski's *Porin* was staged three years later. He was also superintendent of the theatre of Osijek between 1910 and 1912 as well as being a composer. For a biographical profile, see the entry dedicated to him in the Oesterreichische Musiklexikon: https://www.musiklexikon.ac.at/ml/musik_F/Faller_Nikola.xml [accessed 18. 6. 2020] or the notes in the Introduction to Nikola Faller, *Repertoire Hrvat. zem. kazališta*.

in which it appeared in the period 1861–1918, without regard to either the places or the number of performances per season. In cases of uncertainty, the number of seasons has been rounded down. The titles of the operas are given in the form in which they appear in the documents:

operas	premiere	city	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
<i>Faust</i>	1864	Rijeka													
<i>Carmen</i>	1888	Rijeka													
<i>Fra Diavolo</i>	1889	Zadar													
<i>Mignon</i>	1891	Rijeka													
<i>Manon</i>	1898	Zadar													
<i>Gli Ugonotti</i>	1871	Rijeka													
<i>Werther</i>	1898	Split													
<i>L'ebrea</i>	1873	Rijeka													
<i>Roberto il Diavolo</i>	1872	Rijeka													
<i>Dinorah</i>	1880	Rijeka													
<i>L'africana</i>	1891	Rijeka													
<i>Romeo e Giulietta</i>	1895	Zadar													
<i>Sansone e Dalila</i>	1903	Rijeka													
<i>[La figlia di Madama An.]</i>	[1877]	[Rijeka]													
<i>Esmeralda</i>	1891	Rijeka													
<i>Le Roi de Lahore</i>	1896	Rijeka													
<i>Postillon</i>	1896	Split													
<i>Il profeta</i>	1901	Rijeka													
<i>Thaïs</i>	1908	Rijeka													
<i>Erodiade</i>	1909	Rijeka													
<i>I pescatori di perle</i>	1913	Rijeka													
<i>Hoffmannove priče</i>	1914	Šibenik													

What clearly stands out is that most of the first performances were given at Rijeka, which also happened to be the theatre with the highest endowments per opera season. We do not know if the French operas that we find in the repertoire were always performed in Italian translation. No document clarifies the point, but it is highly likely (at least in the case of Rijeka). *Faust*, the most frequently represented of all, would have been given in the translation of Achille De Lauzières, which after its debut at La Scala in 1862, was the version in which it circulated for decades to follow. In all probability the other operas were also staged in their respective Italian translations, as was the custom in second half of the 19th century (with the probable exception of *Postillon*, given that it was performed in Split after the inauguration of the Teatro Nuovo). In 1904 Sonzogno had 55 French operas in his catalogue,¹⁹ among which some were considered to be complex and difficult to stage by

19 Matteo Paoletti, “Mascagni, Mocchi, Sonzogno. La Società Teatrale Internazionale (1908–1931) e i suoi protagonisti”, *Arti della Performance: orizzonti e culture*, IV (2015), p. 17.

the impresarios themselves. One such opera, as was stressed by the above-cited impresario Ungherini, was Bizet's *I pescatori di perle* (which besides was also too expensive).²⁰ As for Saint-Saëns' *Sansone e Dalila*, it was rejected at Zadar in 1900 for being too 'academic' and belonging to a genre that seemed not to be greatly appreciated in the city. The opera, the impresario De Monari wrote, "generates no interest in any theatre because it isn't for the audience masses, but wins over only the profound musician. Signor Sonzogno himself has repeatedly reproached me for putting this opera in the programme and has always advised me to insist on a change in order to avoid financial disaster".²¹ In other words, the publisher himself advised against producing an opera that would be too much of a challenge. De Monari therefore duly asked for the opera to be replaced with Mascagni's *L'amico Fritz*, which would be new for Zadar.²² In general Zadar liked French opera less than Rijeka, a point that can be verified simply by adding up the relevant works listed in the complete table at the end of this section. Concerning *Manon* there is at times a certain confusion, given that it is not always clear in the sources whether we are dealing with Puccini's opera (often abbreviated as *Manon* in the newspapers and correspondence) or Massenet's. Again, French opera often arrived in the coastal theatres before Zagreb, though here the tendency is less clear-cut than with Italian opera. Nonetheless, the fact remains that in almost all cases the French operas were given first at the Teatro Comunale of Trieste before arriving at the coast. In *Table 4. French opera*,²³ we see that only *Thaïs* (listed in italics) was performed solely at Rijeka, hence with no possibility of making comparisons with productions at either Trieste or Zagreb.²⁴

While a variety of impresarios proposed French opera, only a few offered German or Austrian works (among these were Rossegger, Sforza, Trauner and Alpron-Battaglia). In the period considered the German operas were not only very few in number (with five out of eight being Wagner operas), but also appeared many years after their French counterparts and many years after their premieres in the original language. To confirm this point, we need only observe that the Wagner operas listed in the following table came to

20 See Letter from Mariano Ungherini to the theatre management of Zadar, Fabriano, 17.6.1893, HR-DAZD, folder 7.

21 "non fa interesse in nessun teatro perché non è per la massa del pubblico ma conquide soltanto un profondo musicista. Il sig. Sonzogno stesso mi rimproverò ripetutamente di avere posto in cartellone quest'opera e sempre mi consigliò di sollecitare il cambio onde evitare un disastro finanziario."; Letter from Eugenio De Monari to the theatre management of Zadar, Trieste, 5.2.1900, HR-DAZD, folder 10.

22 See Letter from Eugenio De Monari to the theatre management of Zadar, Trieste, 5.2.1900, HR-DAZD, folder 10.

23 The table can be consulted at the link: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/tzcImHPGM-gNBtzaTcg-Ko37SaWJkWo5T/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=106256926039059801585&trtpof=true&sd=true.

24 Where the table has no coloured box indicating a production at the Teatro Comunale di Trieste, this simply means that the opera was not staged there.

the coastal region between 40 years (*Lohengrin* or *La Walkiria*) and 52 years (*Tannhäuser*) after their first performances. And even allowing for the delayed Italian premieres and the fact that the Italian impresarios would take these operas first to the mainland theatres and only later to the coastal area, it is still worth noting that *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser* arrived in Rijeka as many as 19 and 25 years after their premieres in Bologna in 1871 and 1872 respectively. Nor can we say that the neighbouring Teatro Comunale of Trieste exerted any influence in this process, given that the two operas arrived in Trieste much earlier, in 1876 and 1878 respectively. *La Walkiria* (Die Walküre), which was given its first Italian performance at La Fenice in 1883, arrived in the coastal region 27 years later. And though *Parsifal* was given at Trieste in 1914, it was never staged at the coastal theatres in the period considered. Also evident in the table below is that almost all the premieres were given at the theatre of Rijeka.

opere	premiere	city	1	2	3	4
<i>Lohengrin</i>	1890	Rijeka				
<i>Martha</i>	1865	Rijeka				
<i>Tannhäuser</i>	1897	Rijeka				
<i>Das Heimchen am Herd</i>	1898	Split				
<i>Evangelimann</i>	1898	Split				
<i>La Walkiria</i>	1910	Rijeka				
<i>I maestri cantori di Norimberga</i>	1912	Rijeka				
<i>Tristano e Isotta</i>	1913	Rijeka				

Perhaps it is significant to note, as we can see in *Table 5. German opera*,²⁵ that *Lohengrin*, *Tristano e Isotta* and *I maestri cantori di Norimberga* all came to Rijeka before Zagreb (and in the case of *I maestri cantori* even ten years before the Comunale of Trieste);²⁶ As did Flotow's *Martha*.²⁷ Karl Goldmark's work was presented only at the theatres of Split or Šibenik, for the sole reason that it was part of the repertoire of the Czech or Croatian companies that visited both cities (at Šibenik *Heimchem am Herd* was given in its Croatian version *Cvrčak za ognjištem*). Composers such as Wilhelm Kienzl and Goldmark were practically unknown to the Italian companies that gave opera seasons in the coastal region. There might perhaps have been a possibility of including Goldmark's *Die Königin von Saba* in one of final seasons of the century, since the opera was staged in both Trieste and Zagreb (1898–1900), but as yet there is no documentary evidence either that an opportunity to produce it arose or that it was considered suitable. Flotow's *Martha*, on the other hand,

25 The table can be consulted at the link: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1X587FBWPCXdot2518soz31277ktznQQA/edit?usp=drive_link&coid=106256926039059801585&trtpof=true&sd=true.

26 Nikola Faller, *Repertoire Hrvat. zem. kazališta*, p. 92, 97, 176.

27 Nikola Faller, *Repertoire Hrvat. zem. kazališta*, p. 101.

was a different matter, for instead it had long circulated in the repertoires of the Italian companies, with the difference that from Pula down to Zadar it was performed in Italian, whereas at Split, the contract with the impresario (1896) explicitly required the work to be given in Croatian.²⁸

As regards any further Russian, Czech or Croatian repertoire (which arrived only with the Bohemian, Czech and Croatian opera companies), this was the sole prerogative of the theatres of Split and Šibenik, and then only from the years 1894 (Split) and 1910 (Šibenik). In fact, before 1894 the area was visited only by Italian opera companies, even though the majority of the population was ethnically Croatian.²⁹ From that date on, this repertoire was performed in Croatian. This was a practice that theatres like those of Pula or Rijeka would have had difficulty establishing; the tender specifications at Rijeka even stipulated that the language of performance had to be exclusively Italian.

The Czech companies were those that brought with them the most eclectic repertoire. Included in their programmes for individual seasons was an assortment of titles from Italian, French, German, Russian, Czech and Croatian opera. It was at Split that the public could hear for the first time Smetana's *Bartered Bride* (*Prodaná nevěsta*), *The Secret* (*Tajemství*) and *Dalibor*, along with Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades* (*Pikova dama*) and *Eugene Onegin*. Among the Russian works offered was Nápravník's *Dubrovsky*, a work in the repertoire of the Czech company brought by Vendelin Budil. And it was again at Split that Lisinski's *Porin* found a season ready to host it, after its premiere at Zagreb in 1897.³⁰ The interesting thing to note is that none of these titles were performed at the Teatro Comunale of Trieste in the period considered (see *Table 6. Opera from eastern Europe and elsewhere*),³¹ in contrast with all the repertoires discussed previously. The most diverse seasons, therefore, were those presented at the theatre in Split: perhaps not the best-funded seasons (from the point of view of the endowments), but certainly those in which the public had the opportunity to enjoy a very wide assortment of works.

The table below brings together all the information given by the available documentation on the opera repertoire of the coastal theatres for the period 1860–1918. Since it has not always been possible to recover the data in full, the results have no claim to completeness. For each year the table has two lines, the upper indicating the performances given from 1 January to 31 August, the lower those given from 1 September to 31 December.

28 Contract between the theatre management of Split and Johann Pištek, letter “m” of Art. 1, Split, January 1896, HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII.

29 Already in 1757 the British architect Robert Adam mentioned performances by Italian companies in Split; Duško Kečkemet, *Ante Bajamonti*, p. 199.

30 On the date of the premiere of *Porin*, see *Repertoar hrvatskih kazalista 1840–1860–1990*, 2 vols., Globus i Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, Zagreb 1990, p. 192.

31 The table can be consulted at the link: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1R6BxCa07e1PMv1hH52DQB6Ew486v2qUk/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=106256926039059801585&rtfpof=true&sd=true.

year	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split
1859–1860					I lombardi alla prima crociata Il trovatore Rigoletto
1861		La Cenerentola La sonnambula Maria di Rudenz L'italiana in Algeri	Desiderio Duca d'Istria L'ebreo Vettor Pisani [Nabucco]		Lucrezia Borgia
			Norma Beatrice di Tenda Lucia di Lammermoor Il campanello Un'avventura di Scaramuccia		
1862		I lombardi alla prima crociata Macbeth Tutti in maschera Don Pasquale Il barbiere di Siviglia			
1863	Marin Faliero I masnadieri				I masnadieri Crispino e la comare I puritani
1864		Faust			
1865		Otello Martha I puritani Maria di Rohan Tutti in maschera	Un ballo in maschera Rigoletto La favorita		Linda di Chamonix L'ebreo Nabucco
1866		Jone Isabella d'Aragona Norma La favorita Lucia di Lammermoor			
1867			Un'avventura di Scaramuccia L'elisir d'amore Il barbiere di Siviglia Funerali e danze [La pianella smarrita nella neve] La mascherata		

year	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split
		Tutti in maschera	Jone Tutti in maschera Un ballo in maschera [La traviata] [Gemma di Vergy]		
1868		I vespri siciliani Lucrezia Borgia Saffo Lorenzino de Medici Vettor Pisani			
1869		Celinda Un ballo in maschera Il corsaro Il menestrello Il barbiere di Siviglia			
			Jone Il trovatore Lucrezia Borgia		
1870		Giovanna II di Napoli o Ruy Blas Un ballo in maschera Faust Belisario	L'elisir d'amore		
1871		Gli Ugonotti Guglielmo Tell Rigoletto I due Foscari La favorita		I falsi monetari Don Checco Un ballo in maschera Viva la mamma Pipelet	I falsi monetari Don Checco
1872		Lucia di Lammermoor La traviata Ruy Blas Roberto il diavolo Beatrice di Tenda			
			Martha La contessa d'Amalfi Lucia di Lammermoor		
1873		L'ebrea Nabucco Giovanna di Napoli Gemma di Vergy			

year	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split
			Ruy Blas Aroldo La favorita		
1874	Il barbiere di Siviglia La sonnambula Lucia di Lammermoor	Marco Visconti Le educande di Sorrento Un ballo in maschera Ruy Blas			
					Cicco e Cola Le educande di Sorrento Crispino e la comare Pipelet
1875			Le educande di Sorrento Pipelet Un ballo in maschera Ernani Rigoletto		Faust Un ballo in maschera Rigoletto
					Don Pasquale L'elisir d'amore La figlia del reggimento
1876	L'elisir d'amore Don Pasquale	Jone Norma Ernani Il Guarany	Don Pasquale L'elisir d'amore Crispino e la comare		
1877		Il conte verde Alda L'ebreo La favorita Crispino e la comare Don Checco La figlia di Madama Angot			
		Il barbiere di Siviglia Linda di Chamounix La sonnambula Don Giovanni Aida			
1878					
1879		I puritani I promessi sposi Il menestrello Le precauzioni			

year	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split
			Papà Martin Le educande di Sorrento Don Pasquale La sonnambula		
1880		La forza del destino Dinorah Il trovatore La traviata			
1881		Patria Faust Marin Faliero L'elisir d'amore Don Pasquale Buondelmonte Il conte verde Alda			
	Ruy Blas La traviata Rigoletto Poliuto	Tutti in maschera Il barbiere di Siviglia Il dottore Bellafronte o Taumaturgo Crispino e la comare			
1882		La Cenerentola Roberto il diavolo Aida Crispino e la comare	Il barbiere di Siviglia La sonnambula L'elisir d'amore Un bacio al diavolo Pipelet L'eredità inaspettata	Il barbiere di Siviglia La sonnambula Crispino e la comare L'elisir d'amore I due ciabattini Le educande di Sorrento Il bacio al diavolo	
1883			Faust Il trovatore Ruy Blas La forza del destino		
	[Rosilde di Saluzzo]				
1884					
1885	La campana dell'eremitaggio		Il barbiere di Siviglia		
		Aida La Gioconda			

year	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split
1886		L'ebrea Un ballo in maschera Eufemio di Messina			
1887		La sonnambula Mefistofele I promessi sposi		Linda di Chamounix Crispino e la comare La sonnambula	
	Don Sebastiano [<i>announced</i>] La forza del destino Lucia di Lammermoor	Ernani			
1888					
	Ernani	Carmen Un ballo in maschera Lucia di Lammermoor Norma	La Gioconda Faust		
1889		Rigoletto Fra Diavolo Il barbiere di Siviglia Edmea			
	La favorita Rigoletto				
1890	Don Pasquale Il barbiere di Siviglia	Nabucco Lohengrin Linda di Chamounix Don Pasquale Lucia di Lammermoor La sonnambula	Carmen Fra Diavolo La traviata	Lucia di Lammermoor La traviata Fra Diavolo Il barbiere di Siviglia	
	Carmen Faust La favorita		Linda di Chamounix Lucia di Lammermoor		
1891		Esmeralda Mignon L'africana Luisa Miller Tutti in maschera	Aida La favorita Rigoletto		

year	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split
	Jone Il Guarany Il trovatore Cavalleria rusticana	Papà Martin La Cenerentola Crispino e la comare			
1892		Don Sebastiano I lombardi alla prima c. Aida Lucrezia Borgia			
	Ernani Norma	Rigoletto I puritani La favorita Martha	Mignon Cavalleria rusticana I puritani Holmara		
1893		Amleto Carmen Pagliacci Mignon Otello			Il menestrello
	Un ballo in maschera L'ebrea [<i>announced</i>] Maria di Rohan Ruy Blas	La campana dell'eremitaggio Cavalleria rusticana			
1894	Faust Rigoletto	Il trovatore Faust La forza del destino	Lucrezia Borgia Pagliacci La traviata Il barbiere di Siviglia		Carmen Cavalleria rusticana Pagliacci Il trovatore Prodana nevjesta Il bacio [Ernani]
	Il barbiere di Siviglia Don Pasquale Crispino e la comare Pagliacci		Don Pasquale La sonnambula Crispino e la comare Il barbiere di Siviglia Ginevra [di Scozia]		Il barbiere di Siviglia Don Pasquale La sonnambula Crispino e la Comare
1895		Ruy Blas La Gioconda Manon Lescaut	Manon Lescaut Romeo e Giulietta		Rigoletto La forza del destino Faust
	Fra Diavolo La traviata Gli Ugonotti	Fra Diavolo			[Rigoletto] [Fra Diavolo] [La sonnambula]

year	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split
1896		Ernani Le Roi de Lahore Il Guarany	Un ballo in maschera Gli Ugonotti Ernani	Un ballo in maschera Gli Ugonotti	Dalibor Prodana nevjesta Lohengrin Guglielmo Tell Africana Pikova dama La traviata Un ballo in maschera Postillon Martha Cvijeta
1897		Un ballo in maschera Norma Tannhäuser	La bohème Otello La forza del destino I puritani		Ruy Blas Aida La favorita Il trovatore
1898	La traviata Lucia di Lammer- moor La favorita Rigoletto	La traviata La bohème Mefistofele	Manon (Massenet) Lohengrin		Evangelimann Heimchen am Herd Il grillo del focolare Dubrovsky Dalibor Tajemství Il segreto Pikova dama Evgenij Onegin Werther
	[<i>announced</i>]				
1899	La bohème Otello Il barbiere di Siviglia	Andrea Chénier Manon Cavalleria rusti- cana Pagliacci Rigoletto Lucrezia Borgia I puritani	Fedora Carmen Cavalleria rusti- cana Zanetto		
	La traviata Lucia di Lammer- moor La sonnambula				I puritani La traviata Lucia di Lammer- moor Ernani
1900	Il barbiere di Siviglia	Gli Ugonotti Dinorah Il trovatore Tartini, o Il trillo del diavolo Lucia di Lammer- moor La sonnambula	Andrea Chénier La bohème (Leon- cavallo) Pagliacci Il piccolo Haydn		La bohème Un ballo in maschera Otello

year	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split
	Il barbiere di Siviglia Crispino e la comare Don Pasquale Il carnevale di Venezia Le educande di Sorrento Rigoletto Cavalleria rusticana + 1° atto Lucia di Lammermoor				
1901	Ernani Il trovatore Pagliacci o Carmen Lucrezia Borgia La bohème Cavalleria rusticana + 3° atto La bohème Ernani Nabucco	Aida Il profeta L'ebreo	Nabucco Mefistofele Macbeth		Nikola Šubić Zrinski Porin Andrija Čubranović Cavalleria rusticana Pagliacci L'ebrea Manon (Massenet) Dank-prosjak Lijepa Jelena La Gioconda Kraljica od Sabe Mignon Gejša Ples u operi Lutka
	Carmen Mignon Rigoletto	Maria Stuarda Ernani			
1902	Cavalleria rusticana Pagliacci	Tosca La bohème Faust	La traviata Tosca Linda di Chammounix		
	Manon Lescaut Faust				
1903	La bohème Un ballo in maschera Cavalleria rusticana	Fedora Mignon Sansone e Dalila			
	Mignon Ruy Blas [<i>announced</i>]		Mefistofele [Rigoletto]		

year	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split
1904	Il trovatore Aida Il barbiere di Siviglia La sonnambula	[Tosca] Iris Manon Lescaut Lohengrin			
	Rigoletto La traviata	Zazà	Germania La forza del destino La Gioconda		Tosca La traviata Lucia di Lammermoor [Il barbiere di Siviglia]
1905		Rigoletto Tosca Germania			
	Manon (Massenet)		Adriana Lecouvreur Zazà L'amico Fritz Il maestro di cappella	Pipelet L'elisir d'amore Crispino e la comare La sonnambula Il barbiere di Siviglia La figlia del reggimento <i>Santarellina</i> <i>I granatieri</i> <i>Boccaccio</i> <i>La mascotte</i>	Fedora Manon (Massenet) Mignon Stella
1906	Tosca La Gioconda Il barbiere di Siviglia Crispino e la comare La sonnambula La figlia del reggimento L'elisir d'amore	Un ballo in maschera Otello L'elisir d'amore La sonnambula	Il barbiere di Siviglia La sonnambula Pipelet Crispino e la comare La figlia del reggimento L'elisir d'amore Le educande di Sorrento	Fra Diavolo Il barbiere di Siviglia Le educande di Sorrento	Il barbiere di Siviglia Crispino e la comare
	La notte di San Silvestro		Mefistofele Rigoletto Lucia di Lammermoor		
1907	Pagliacci Sarrona Cavalleria rusticana Manon Lucia di Lammermoor Fra Diavolo Il barbiere di Siviglia	La traviata Mefistofele Madama Butterfly			

year	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split
	L'elisir d'amore Crispino e la comare Pipelet Carmen	L'amico Fritz Il barbiere di Siviglia			
1908	L'amico Fritz Nozze istriane			La favorita Il barbiere di Siviglia Ernani	
	La favorita Andrea Chénier I Capuleti e i Montecchi	Cavalleria rusticana Pagliacci Amica Thaïs Norma Il trovatore	Lucia di Lammermoor Il barbiere di Siviglia Carmen Don Giovanni Cavalleria rusticana L'elisir d'amore La sonnambula La figlia del reggimento Crispino e la comare		Un ballo in maschera Andrea Chénier Rigoletto
1909	Otello	Erodiade Werther La Gioconda La favorita Ernani		Il trovatore La traviata	
	La Wally		Rigoletto La Wally L'elisir d'amore		
1910	Rigoletto La bohème	Aida La Wally La bohème La Walkiria		Cavalleria rusticana Pagliacci La Princesa Del Dolar Evgenij Onegin Barun Trenk	Nikola Šubić Zrinski
	La bufera Werther				
1911	Il barbiere di Siviglia Don Pasquale Il maestro di cappella	Carmen Andrea Chénier Manon Faust	Il barbiere di Siviglia Don Pasquale	Rigoletto La sonnambula Sismiš Povratak Lijepa Galateja Madama Butterfly	Oganj Povratak
	Mefistofele	Il matrimonio segreto Fedora Madama Butterfly	Il matrimonio segreto	Il matrimonio segreto	Il matrimonio segreto

year	Pula	Rijeka	Zadar	Šibenik	Split
1912	La sonnambula	Romeo e Giulietta Tzingana Werther I maestri cantori di N.			
1913	Tosca Guglielmo Tell Norma	Isabeau Rigoletto I pescatori di perle Tristano e Isotta	Norma Guglielmo Tell Il barbiere di Siviglia	Prodana nevjesta	
				Sangue dalmata Per l'amore	
1913		<i>Don Pasquale</i>			
1914	Mignon Carmen	Sansone e Dalila La traviata La fanciulla del West Tannhäuser	[Lucrezia Borgia] [L'elisir d'amore] [Maria di Rohan] [La favorita] [Norma] [I puritani] [Lucia di Lammer- moor] [La sonnambula]	La traviata Un ballo in maschera Il bacio Sangue polacco Cjelov Hoffmannove priče Cvrčak za ognjištem Manon La bohème Eva Le campane di Corneville La cicala La ballerina scalza	
	[Nozze istriane Abisso]				
1914		<i>Tosca</i> <i>Un ballo in maschera</i>			
1915					
1916					
	Don Pasquale				
1917	Rigoletto	<i>[season of opera, operetta and plays]</i>			
1918					

5.2 Presence and circulation of local composers in the opera programming

An attempt has also been made to understand how the programming of the most frequently performed operas combined, if at all, with those by local composers and what type of circulation the local works might have had: whether they in turn succeeded in crossing the Adriatic and arriving in Italy, or alternatively took other routes towards the north or north-east. First of all, we must clarify that there were very few local composers: certainly not a significant number when compared to all the other composers represented by the productions staged.

Let us take, for example, the works of Nicolò Stermich [Niccolò de Stermich, Nikola Strmić], who also worked for a period as one of the directors of the Teatro Nuovo in his home city of Zadar. His opera *Desiderio duca d'Istria* was given its first performance at the Teatro Nobile in Zadar in 1861 (staged by a visiting company from Italy and performed on four nights), but had no further productions.³² Sabalich reports that the orchestra gave a fine performance, but that the singers were unsatisfactory and moreover clothed in “shabby and filthy costumes” (*vestiario logoro e sudicio*).³³ Four years later Stermich made a successful comeback with the opera *La madre slava*, which was well received at Trieste and Zagreb in 1865 and 1866 and continued to be staged until the 1870s,³⁴ but was never performed at the coastal theatres. At the time Stermich was still a young composer (twenty-six when the Trieste premiere of *La madre slava* was staged, only twenty-two when *Desiderio* was given). In the archival documents we also find mention of his son Pietro, who was engaged in the 1896 season, again at the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar, though not as a composer, but as *maestro concertatore* and conductor. We also

32 For the Oesterreichisches Biographisches Lexikon, *Desiderio duca d'Istria* was also known by the title *Rachis* (Primoz Kuret – Hubert Reitterer, “Stermich von Valcrociata, Nicolò” in *Oesterreichisches Biographisches Lexikon*, vol. XIII, 2008, p. 220), whereas for Andrea Sessa, *Flavio Rachis* was the title of the opera by Luigi Badia set to the same libretto, Giovanni Battista Canovai’s *Desiderio duca d'Istria* (Andrea Sessa, *Il melodramma italiano 1861–1900. Dizionario bio-bibliografico dei compositori*, Olschki, Firenze 2003, p. 456–457). Zdravko Blažeković, in the entry “Strmić [Stermich di Valcrociata], Nikola”, *Grove Music Online*, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000044168> [accessed 30. 5. 2023], mentions a performance of fragments of the opera in Milan already in 1856. For the early years of Stermich, his influence on musical life in Zadar and his friendship with the *maestro concertatore* Antonio Ravasio, see Katica Burić Čenan, “Nikola Strmić and Antonio Ravasio – Promoters of Musical Life in Zadar in the Second Half of the 19th Century”, *Bašćinski glasnik*, XIII/1 (2018), pp. 121–42.

33 Giuseppe Sabalich, *Cronistoria aneddotica*, p. 256.

34 Ivano Cavallini, “L’Adriatico e la ricerca dell’identità nazionale in musica”, *Musica e Storia*, XII/3 (2004), p. 489. In Trieste it was deemed a “successo di stima”, which – according to the theatrical jargon – meant a success attributed to the public’s respect for the composer rather than for the intrinsic value of the work itself; Filippo Danziger, *Memorie del Teatro Comunale*, p. 94. On *La madre slava*, see Caterina Brugnera, “La madre slava di Nikola Strmić: un tentativo di incontro tra illirismo e opera italiana”, *Musica e Storia*, XII/3 (2004), pp. 591–609.

learn that in 1899 the impresario Eugenio De Monari proposed to engage him for a production of *Fedora*, for an unspecified role at the same theatre (though probably again as *maestro concertatore*). However, the proposal came to nothing owing to the opposition of the publisher Sonzogno,³⁵ so the position was assigned to Maestro Falconi, a deputy conductor (*direttore d'orchestra sostituto*) at the Teatro Lirico of Milan.³⁶ Concerning the other operas (today lost) of Stermich père (*Rachis*, *Sordello*, *Jacquinta*), no evidence has hitherto come to light.

Among the works of other local composers, those of Smareglia found a certain, though limited reception, at Pula,³⁷ but it was commented in *L'Eco di Pola* that “the glory of Smareglia” was recognised in Germany before Italy, in accordance with the well-known rule *nemo propheta in patria*. This was certainly true in the case of *Cornill Schut*, which was performed first at Vienna, then in Prague and Dresden in 1893, with a libretto by Illica translated into Czech.³⁸ The management of the Politeama Ciscutti seemed to support the idea of staging the opera, but “only in the right season and with a performance that will be absolutely special, following the criteria of the eminent composer”.³⁹ The Politeama staged *Nozze istriane* for the first time in 1908, thanks also to the opera’s success at the Volksoper of Vienna, and some years after its premiere at Trieste in March 1895. Apart from all else, the opera has a local subject, since the story is actually set in Dignano (today Vodnjan), a small town near Pula, against which a drama of love and jealousy is played out in a veristic atmosphere reminiscent of *Cavalleria rusticana*. In this way Smareglia was finally able to see a work of his performed in his homeland for the first time.⁴⁰ The theatre was packed and the composer

35 Eugenio De Monari wrote: “I have to say that I am truly very sorry not to have been able to engage Maestro Cavalier Pietro Stermich of whom I am a good friend (indeed he has set to music a romanza with lines of mine) and whom I shall favour in preference to anyone else. I was unable to engage him because our dear Commendatore Edoardo Sonzogno did not approve him and of that – I repeat – I am very sorry (publishers have certain ideas that are entirely their own).” (“Devo dichiararmi dolentissimo di non aver potuto scritturare il M. Cav. Pietro Stermich del quale sono buon amico (anzi egli musicò una romanza con versi miei) e che favorirò a *preferenza* di qualunque altro. Non mi è stato possibile scritturarlo perché l’amato Comm.e Edoardo Sonzogno non l’ha [*sic*] approvato e di ciò – ripeto – sono dolente (Gli editori hanno [*sic*] certe idee del tutto loro.)”); Letter from Eugenio De Monari to the theatre management of Zadar, Gorizia, 12. 3. 1899, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

36 See Letter from Gustavo Argenti to Giorgio De Nakic d’Osljak, [Milano], 13. 2. 1899, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

37 Smareglia was a native of Pula, the son of a mixed marriage: his father, Francesco Smareglia came from Dignano d’Istria (Vodnjan), while his mother, Giulia Stiglić, was a Croatian from Laurana (Lovran); Edoardo Perpich, *Il teatro musicale di Antonio Smareglia*, Unione degli Italiani dell’Istria e di Fiume, Università Popolare di Trieste, Trieste-Rovigno 1990, p. 7.

38 “Dalle terre di Germania”, *L'Eco di Pola*, 8. 10. 1892.

39 “solo in apposita stagione e con una esecuzione del tutto speciale, secondo i criteri dell’eminente autore”; “Cose d’arte”, *L'Eco di Pola*, 8. 7. 1893.

40 In announcing the planned production the local newspaper reported: “It would be an epoch-making artistic event in the annals of the Politeama and we hope that once the inevitable difficulties have been

had 39 curtain calls; according to the papers, there was even a procession of “thousands of people” at the end of the performance.⁴¹

Three years later a committee was formed in Pula to organise a season with operas by the composer, with the profits donated to charity. This would also include a performance of the opera *La Falena*, which was still unknown in the area. At the same time the newspaper *La Fiamma* made efforts to inform its readers about the composer’s works, and particularly this one, with the intention of making him more familiar to, and appreciated by, a wider public.⁴² In 1914 *Abisso* was announced, as well as a repeat of *Nozze istriane*, for the autumn season, but nothing more was heard of the matter. Indeed it was mainly in Trieste that Smareglia had found enthusiastic supporters who strove to boost his reputation.⁴³ From Trieste, Schmidl, as the representative of Ricordi, had offered the score of *Nozze istriane* to the theatre of Rijeka, though his initiative failed to result in a production. On the other hand, the composer’s brother, Giulio Smareglia, who was also director of the choir at the cathedral of Pula and a composer himself, was given the opportunity to see his own opera, *La notte di San Silvestro*, performed at the Politeama, again within seasons run by the impresario Alessandro Bolzicco, who had also produced *Nozze istriane*. At the Politeama Giulio Smareglia worked not only as chorus master but also as deputy conductor; and he wrote musical presentations and reviews in *Il Giornaletto di Pola*. He was also the composer of operettas: of these *Dr. Gasparo* and *Il capriccio del re* were performed at the Politeama in 1905 and 1906 respectively.

removed, this excellent project may be accomplished.” (“Sarebbe un avvenimento artistico tale da far epoca negli annali del Politeama e noi auguriamo che rimosse le inevitabili difficoltà, il progetto, bellissimo, possa venire attuato”); “Per un grande spettacolo d’opera in quaresima al Politeama.”; *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, 18. I. 1908.

41 “La serata a teatro”, *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, 30. 3. 1908.

42 “In our column “Teatro ed Arte”, we shall undertake in the following issues to speak a little about all of Smareglia’s operas, which have been such an excellent success wherever they are performed, and we shall dwell longer on *La Falena*, because it is unknown and has been chosen for staging in the next opera season. Today we urge everyone who can, to support the committee in its fine initiative also aimed at making the master better known and admired even in his home town, for together with Tartini he has succeeded in including an Istrian name among those of the foremost composers of his age and of every age.” (“Noi nella nostra rubrica Teatro ed Arte, verremo a parlare nei prossimi numeri un po’ di tutte le opere smaregliane che vanno ottenendo ottimo successo ovunque si rappresentino, e ci soffermeremo più a lungo su *La Falena*, perché ignota e prescelta a essere rappresentata nella prossima stagione lirica. Esortiamo oggi ognuno che è in grado di farlo, di sostenere il comitato nella sua bella iniziativa atta anche a render più noto e ammirato anche nella sua città natale, il maestro che con Tartini è riuscito a mettere un nome istriano tra quelli dei primissimi compositori dei suoi tempi e d’ogni tempo.”); “Una stagione d’opera smaregliana”, *La Fiamma*, 1. 4. 1911.

43 See Perpich, *Il teatro musicale*, p. 17.

Leaving aside these new works, which also included William Legrand Howland's *Sarrona*, sung in Italian with the young American composer present in the theatre,⁴⁴ and *Rosilde di Saluzzo* (though we do not know if it really was performed in 1883;⁴⁵ the opera is mentioned as having been favourably received at the Pergola of Florence only in the following year),⁴⁶ the problem about the Politeama was that the theatre kept on presenting operas that had been repeatedly performed and no longer guaranteed a turnover in the repertoire. Increasingly over the years protests were raised from various quarters.⁴⁷ In *Il Proletario* it was stressed that, no matter how great the commitment of the artists concerned, "certain musical works can no longer generate enthusiasm. The revolution has happened not only in the music itself, but also, like it or not, in the feelings of the public".⁴⁸ Several months later *Il Proletario* returned to the topic: "while we are respectful of Verdi's melodies, we are also thirsty for new and bold stuff. Astonish us with all the music you want, but do not force us to swoon over the old tunes!"⁴⁹ So even if works by young local composers had emerged, they perhaps had little chance of being performed in Pula. When the theatre in 1910 was sold by the heirs of Muzzatti to Petinelli, Pregel, Viezzoli and Mattiassevich, the *Südösterreichische Nachrichten* drew attention to the fact that the purchasers would be responsible also for the direct management of the theatre and expressed the hope that the change of

44 "Politeama Ciscutti", *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, 19. 3. 1907. The premiere of *Sarrona* was given four years earlier in Bruges. It was performed in Italian.

45 In 1883 the management of the journal *L'Arte* of Trieste printed the libretto of this opera (with the text by Giulio Gutersohn and music by Adolfo Baci) "to be performed for the first time at the Politeama Ciscutti in Pula" ("da rappresentarsi per la prima volta al Politeama Ciscutti in Pola").

46 Ambiveri, *Operisti minori*, p. 14.

47 For example about the 1893 season the following was written: "We would just like it that, precisely in order to guarantee that success in financial matters which the management and administration quite rightly expects, things were done in such a way as to stage at least one work of recent date in the course of the said opera season and that it should be, if not new for the majority of our public attending the Politeama Ciscutti, at least not so familiar (because heard many times) as the operas planned for the same season. This is a modest piece of advice we believe we must give." ("Noi vorremmo soltanto che appunto per garantire quel successo in linea finanziaria, che la Direzione ed amministrazione s'attendono ben giustamente, si facesse in modo di dare nel corso della stagione d'opera suddetta alle scene almeno un lavoro di più recente data e che fosse, se non nuovo per la maggioranza del nostro pubblico frequentante il Politeama Ciscutti, almeno non tanto familiare, perché sentito molte volte, come le opere destinate per la stagione stessa. È un modesto consiglio che noi crediamo di dover dare."); "Il Politeama Ciscutti", *L'Eco di Pola*, 5. 8. 1893.

48 "certe opere musicali non possono entusiasmare più. La rivoluzione è avvenuta non soltanto nella musica stessa ma anche, voglia o non voglia, nel sentimento del pubblico."; "Il Trovatore al Ciscutti", *Il Proletario*, 9. 3. 1904.

49 "se siamo rispettosi delle melodie verdiane, siamo anche assetati di roba nuova ed ardita. Sbalorditeci di tutte le musiche che volete ma non costringeteci a spasimare eternamente sui vecchi motivi!"; "Politeama Ciscutti", *Il Proletario*, 5. 10. 1904.

ownership would bring a greater alternation of old and new operas in the programming. Up until then, the repetition of repertoire operas had given the Politeama the reputation for being a somewhat conservative institution.⁵⁰ At variance with this opinion was a comment in the periodical *La Fiamma*, that instead valued the fact that the theatre exclusively staged the “old Italian repertoire” (*vecchio repertorio italiano*): hearing the old operas was indeed “appreciated”, especially if “the modern ones and the very new” failed to reach what it called a “strip of land severed from the life of the world”.⁵¹ The operas announced for 1912 with the impresa Borboni were therefore *La sonnambula*, *La traviata*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Fra Diavolo*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci* and *Don Pasquale*.⁵² With the advent of the War, according to the *Gazzettino di Pola*, no more productions were given in Italian from 1914 to 1918, though in actual fact another four operas were to be staged.⁵³

But where could a willingness to see changes in the repertoire come from? In general terms, one potential factor could have been the competition between different venues in the various cities, whereas, we must admit, competition in the coastal region was low. Alternatively, it might have come from the audiences themselves, with a request for either different genres of opera or specific works that contrasted with the traditional programming. We should ask ourselves, however, whether the audiences at these theatres were really capable of judging the quality of a new opera. Given their long schooling in Italian repertoire opera,

50 “If we survey the opera repertoire of recent years, we find nothing but repetition, and we look in vain for important works of old and new composers that have long since become popular elsewhere, but with us have only become partially so merely through the agency of the gramophone or piano reduction. A rejuvenation of the programme is very desirable.” (“Wenn wir das Opernrepertoire der letzten Jahren überblicken, finden wir nichts als Wiederholungen und vergeblich suchen wir bedeutende Werke alter und neuer Komponisten, die sich anderwärts längst populär gemacht haben, bei uns aber lediglich durch die Vermittlung des Grammophons oder des Klavierauszuges teilweise geworden sind. Eine Verjüngung des Programms ist sehr wünschenswert.”); *Verkauf des Politeama Ciscutti*, Südösterreichische Nachrichten, no. 8, 18. 4. 1910.

51 “Iembo di terra tagliato dalla vita del mondo”; “L’opera al Politeama Ciscutti”, *La Fiamma*, anno II, no. 77, 22. 6. 1912.

52 In the end only *La sonnambula* was performed, with just two performances, for the impresa decided that the season was too far advanced; “Il Politeama Ciscutti nuovamente chiuso”, *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, 24. 6. 1912. There were negotiations for *Tosca* and *La traviata* in December, but the newspapers are silent on the matter. *Tosca* was given only in the following year to open the season.

53 “For four years we have been deprived of productions in the Italian language, and for four years we have vegetated in the German. Art, they say, is international. But not for us. [...] The Company of German operetta will stop at Pula until May of next year. The Germans will be delighted and will enjoy themselves; the Italians will have to stay at home.” (“Da quattr’anni siamo digiuni di spettacoli in lingua italiana, da quattr’anni vegetiamo nel tedesco. L’arte, dicono, è internazionale. Per noi, no. [...] La Compagnia d’operette tedesche si fermerà a Pola sino a maggio del prossimo anno. I tedeschi godranno, si divertiranno; gli italiani dovranno rimanere a casa.”); “Le operette tedesche al Ciscutti. Il teatro rinnovato”, *Il Gazzettino di Pola*, 8. 10. 1918.

how would they react to novelty? Moreover, by the end of the century it was not just the city bourgeoisie that was going to the theatre; audiences were increasing and diversifying. Workers and their families were now present in larger numbers; children now had special tickets at reduced prices; and at Pula, as is known, soldiers and officers always had seats at the theatre. It was also to cater to this audience that operetta started to carry more weight in the programming. In general, we can say, Pula was more strongly anchored to the past on operatic matters.

We have already noted that the theatre that mixed Italian opera with other genres most extensively was that of Split. In comparison with the other theatres Split seems to have had more contact with the hinterland, and in particular with Zagreb. For example, in the period considered, the works of Ivan Zajc – if we except the performance of his opera *Amelia ossia il bandito* at the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka on 4 April 1860 – were performed exclusively in Split. Most likely it is only there that an opera like *Nikola Šubić Zrinski* could have been well received, considering the underlying Croatian subject matter (which was very welcome to the new board of directors at the Teatro Nuovo).⁵⁴ From Šibenik northwards as far as Pula his works never appeared to have been even proposed; or at least that is the impression left by the documentary evidence. At Rijeka it would have certainly been impossible to stage an opera in Croatian. And even at Zadar or Pula it is difficult to imagine a performance, though more because of the opera's subject matter. In the 1860s, after the success of the operetta *Der Meisterschuss*, Zajc signed a new contract in Vienna with the management of the Theater auf der Wieden (with better conditions than the previous one), though for only two years, since it was probable that after this period the composer would move to Paris, for “he has already received some advantageous proposals from the capital”.⁵⁵ The management of the theatre had accepted a new work by Zajc, which was to be performed shortly thereafter.⁵⁶ Though he was born in Rijeka, and had been the director and *maestro concertatore*, as well as a teacher, at the local Istituto Filarmonico for stringed instruments, it was actually in Zagreb that Zajc found his niche, from as early as 1870, the year in which he began to direct the city's opera house (he was also director of the Conservatoire). It is here that his works began to be heard.⁵⁷ A similar career path was followed by his pupil

54 On opera, Croatian nationalism and the Pan-Slavism that permeates it, see Vjera Katalinić, “Die opern von Ivan Zajc zwischen Nationalismus und Panlawismus”, *Studia Musicologica*, LIII/1–4 (2011), pp. 189–200. Another study that highlights the ideology underlying opera is that of Rozina Palić-Jelavić, “Ideologemi u operi Nikola Šubić Zrinjski Ivana pl. Zajca”, *Kroatologija*, III/1 (2012), pp. 54–89.

55 Lovro Županović, “Zajc, Ivan”, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. XXVII, p. 724.

56 “Notizie locali. Il distinto maestro Giovanni Zaytz”, *La Bilancia*, 9. 5. 1868.

57 Zajc, like Nicolò Stermich for that matter, had studied at the conservatoire of Milan and graduated in September 1855. Immediately afterwards he returned to Rijeka and was given a position as conductor of the theatre's orchestra. Just a few years later, however, he moved to Vienna, evidently pursuing the more lucrative posts that other cities could offer. On his early years in Italy, see also Noemi Premuda,

Blagoje Bersa, who was born in Dubrovnik, though he trained at the Vienna Conservatoire and then in Zagreb with Zajc himself. After the War he remained in Zagreb and was active as a composition teacher at the music academy.⁵⁸ Again, his *Oganj* (*Der Eisenhammer*) was performed in the coastal region solely in Split in 1911, a few years after performances of *Andrija Čubranović* (1901) and *Cvijeta* (1896) by Vladimir Bersa.⁵⁹ So again these were composer who developed their careers elsewhere, even though they came from the area, knew it and had even worked in it for a period of time. We have no certain news of a performance in Split of *Miniego e Dobrilla*, an opera by Michele Strino, director of the city's Società Filarmonica. What is certain is that it was given its premiere in 1886 at Zagreb, where Strino had already had his *Le sartine in Carnevale* staged in the previous year. This once again reinforces the connection between Split and Zagreb, which was exceptional and had no parallel with the other coastal institutions. Even a composer like Vatroslav Lisinski, whose works featured strongly in Zagreb, remained almost completely unrepresented in the Dalmatian and Istrian coastal area. His *Porin* was given at Split in the same opera season that had included the works by Vladimir Bersa and Ivan Zajc (1901).

A yet different situation was that posed by Franz Von Suppè [Suppè], a Dalmatian composer who was indeed well represented by his operettas, but was never honoured with a performance on Dalmatian soil of any of his four operas. Leaving aside *Virginia*, his first opera which was never performed at all, it is significant that no staging was ever made even of *Des Matrosen Heimkehr/Il ritorno del marinaio* (The Mariner's Return), a work that happens to include many references to Dalmatia, but was only heard at its premiere in Hamburg in 1885, sung in German.⁶⁰ Moreover, the original score of 1885 published the text and all the stage

Pet godina (1850–1855) Ivana Zajca na Konzervatoriju u Milanu, [n. p.] 1998, p. 25, <http://search-rebsco-host-1com-132m4xl480029.han.kug.ac.at/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=A15236&site=ehost-live> [accessed 1. 6. 2020].

58 On Blagoje Bersa (1873–1934), see the biographical entry by Koralijka Kos, “Bersa, Blagoje”, in *Oesterreichisches Musiklexicon online* [accessed 9. 9. 2019], or the entry by Lovro Županović, in *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*, vol. I, Zagreb, 1983, pp. 708–710, or even Lovro Županović’s study of his life and work: *Blagoje Bersa: Život i djelo*, Povijesni Muzej Hrvatske, Zagreb 1974.

59 *Cvijeta* was given in Zagreb only two years later, according to the entry drawn up by Lovro Županović in: *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*, vol. I, Zagreb, 1983, p. 712. But on this point, see also Nevenka Bezić Božanić, *Novinske vijesti*, p. 428. On Vladimir Bersa, see also Hubert Pettan, *Hrvatska opera: Zajčevi savremenici*, vol. I, Muzički informativni centar Koncertne direkcije, Zagreb 1969, pp. 83–140.

60 For information on the composer’s works and his life, see the two studies by Zdravko Blažeković, “Franz von Suppè und Dalmatien”, in *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft: Beihefte der Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Oesterreich*, XLIII (1994), p. 253–272 and Nenad Veselić, “Il compositore spalatino Francesco De Suppè Demelli tra Zara e Venezia”, in *La civiltà teatrale e musicale tra le due sponde dell’Adriatico dai primi del ‘700 ai primi del ‘900*. Atti del Convegno (Šibenik, 1 June 2002). Part I. no. 4, vol. XXIV, new series 13, p. 81–87. Otto Schneiderit devotes an entire monograph to the composer in *Franz von Suppè: der Wiener aus Dalmatien*, Lied der Zeit, Berlin 1977. For a historical contribution contemporary with the

directions in two languages: Italian and German. The work is set on the island of Lesina (Hvar) and the characters represent distinctive types found in 19th-century opera. There are also various allusions to Dalmatia, such as the typical Dalmatian names of the characters, the traditional dances of the area, or the Dalmatian anthem sung at the end of the opera.⁶¹ Various conjectures can be made on the reason why such a work should not be staged in his homeland. In general, we must never forget the possibility that the composer himself, given the opportunity, might have wished to have it performed elsewhere, i. e. in theatres of greater prestige. And we must also consider that, by law, the composer of an opera earned 15% of the gross receipts from each production if the work was staged in a theatre of the first rank: a percentage that dropped to 12% for second-rank theatres and 10% for all other venues.⁶² It was in his interests, therefore, to press for stagings to be made primarily in the principal theatres. Secondly, staging new works was also expensive, with costs that theatres lacking public subsidies would especially have difficulty coping with. Many impresarios, furthermore, preferred not to take risks and relied on the repertoire operas that would surely attract a larger audience. In this specific instance we know that the opera was offered to the management of the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar through the agency L'Arte. Even though the printed publicity of the agents Gaillard and Luigi Bolognesi asserted that “The novelties *Gioconda* by M. Zeller [...] and *Il ritorno del marinaio* by Suppè bode well for a favourable reception on your part”, in the event the hoped-for reception did not materialise.⁶³ Most likely it was a proposal that arrived along with many others and was quickly dropped as being unrealisable.

Hence for these local composers we cannot apply to the coastal theatres the notion of the ‘decentralisation of opera’, as understood and formulated by Clair Rowden.⁶⁴ Decentralisation, i. e. the performance of operas in smaller theatres, was a way of guaranteeing certain composers the possibility of seeing work performed that otherwise stood no chance of being staged in the more important theatres. Here we see an opposite situation, for more often we are dealing with new works that were first performed in more important theatres abroad and that (except in the case of Stermich) only returned to their homeland at a later date.

years in which the composer lived, see Giuseppe Sabalich, *Francesco Suppè e l'operetta*, Vitaliani, Zadar 1888.

61 The conductor Adriano Martinolli d'Arcy has in recent years published the score; <http://www.editfiume.com/lavoce/cultura/18532-il-ritorno-del-marinaio-omaggio-di-supp-alla-sua-terra-natale> [accessed 28.10.2020]

62 See also Fabrizio Barbaranelli – Enrico Ciancarini, *Civitavecchia e il teatro: rappresentazioni e teatri dal XVIII secolo ad oggi*, Gangemi, Roma 2015, p. 83.

63 “Le novità *Gioconda* del M. Zeller [...] ed *Il ritorno del marinaio* di Suppè ci fanno sperare una buona accoglienza dal canto vostro”; Printed brochure sent by G. Gaillard and L. Bolognesi to the theatre management of Zadar, [n. p.] [n. d.], HR-DAZD, folder 8.

64 Clair Rowden, “Decentralisation and Regeneration at the Théâtre des Arts, Rouen, 1889–1891”, *Revue de Musicologie*, XCIV/1 (2008), pp. 139–80.

5.3 The *opera buffa* repertoire and the Lilliputian companies

At times those bringing opera buffa (hence repertoire opera, for the most part) to the region were also companies of children. All the coastal theatres witnessed the passage of one or other of such troupes (referred to as *compagnie lillipuziane*). One that was widely known in the 1870s and 80s was the Compagnia Romana directed by Luigi Becherini, which toured with a group of youngsters (none of them over the age of sixteen). We find them at the Teatro Nobile of Zadar in 1877 performing *Don Checco* by De Giosa, Lecocq's *Figlia di Madama Angot* and *Crispino e la comare* by the Ricci brothers. This last-mentioned opera, *Crispino*, was then offered by Becherini also to the Teatro Sociale of Gorizia in the same year,⁶⁵ and arrived in June in Graz, where it was reviewed in the *Grazer Zeitung*. Mention here was made of a *kleine Orchester* accompanying the troupe. As a rule, such companies employed few instruments and almost always used a piano. Besides, as has already been noted, children's troupes did not require large orchestral forces, also to ensure a proper balance of sound in the theatre. A child's voice was always less powerful than an adult's, even if in this case the soloists were not so young, given that they are referred to in the press as "adult children" (*erwachsene Kinder*).⁶⁶ For the most part the artists were adolescents. They also performed

65 *Il Goriziano*, anno II, no. 79, 8. 4. 1877, p. 3.

66 "Last Wednesday, the Luigi Becherini Children's Operetta Society inaugurated a guest performance at the Municipal Theatre with the amusing opera *Crispino e la comare* by Luigi and Federigo Ricci, which is no longer unfamiliar here. The soloists are for the most part quite grown-up children. The chorus and the small orchestra are made up in the same way. It hardly needs to be mentioned that we are not dealing here with elements from which one can expect perfect dramatic and musical assurance. They are only surrogates that are intended to attract interest through their idiosyncrasies. From this point of view, the dramatic portrayal of older characters and types by such youthful figures offers an extremely comical picture, especially if everything is done with the appropriate grandeur and a certain delicacy, as the 'children' of the aforementioned company do. All in all, they are excellently trained, and they play and sing together in a way only to be found in Italian companies. The audience, which was not very numerous, received the performances of the young company very gratefully." ("Im Stadttheater eröffnete die Kinderoperettengesellschaft der Herrn Luigi Becherini vorigen Mittwoch ein Gesamtgastspiel mit der hier nicht mehr unbekanntem, recht amüsanten Oper *Crispino e la comare* von Luigi und Federigo Ricci. Die Solisten sind grösstenteils ziemlich erwachsene Kinder. In gleicher Weise ist der Chor und das kleine Orchester zusammengestellt. Das man es hier nicht mit Elementen zu thun hat, von denen man eine vollkommene dramatisch-musikalische Leitung erwarten kann, braucht kaum erwähnt zu werden. Es sind nur Surrogate, die durch ihre Eigenthümlichkeit Interesse erwecken sollen. Von dieser Seite genommen, bietet insbesondere die dramatische Darstellung älterer Charaktere und Chargen von so jugendlichen Gestalten einen äusserst possierlichen Anblick, insbesondere wenn Alles mit der gehörigen Grandezza und einem gewissen Genste gemacht wird, wie es die «Kinder» der genannten Gesellschaft zu machen [versleben?]. Sie sind insgesamt vortrefflich geschult, spielen und singen zusammen, wie dies eben nur bei italienischen Gesellschaften gefunden wird. Das nicht sehr zahlreiche Publikum nahm die Leistungen der jungen Gesellschaft sehr dankbar auf."); "Theater, Kunst und Literatur", *Grazer Zeitung*, no. 123, 2. 6. 1877, p. 3. Another troupe that toured with similar

in Rijeka, where it was commented that “the sixteen-year-old buffo Giovanni Spina plays the old president – and nonetheless this young group performs serious and comic opera, ballets and heaven knows what else; the connoisseurs of Zadar claim that the young artists do a better job than their adult colleagues”.⁶⁷ From these few lines we learn that the company also tackled the serious repertoire and that the genres it offered were fairly eclectic (though it was the buffo repertoire that was principally featured in the coastal area). The twelve-year-old tenor Valdeburgo Perozzi and the sopranos Amalia and Elvira Ferrara, of eleven and thirteen years respectively, were considered among the finer artists of the company, which incidentally performed without a prompter. This last fact was stressed in the press, as a way of emphasising the young artists’ skill and independence.⁶⁸ Becherini had expressed the intention to embark on a tour of Europe with the children, but we have no further details on the subject.⁶⁹ What is certain is that the season was greatly appreciated, since they were invited back to Zadar five years later, after which they immediately moved on to Šibenik with the addition of other works from their repertoire. Among them was Francesco Ruggi’s *I due ciabattini*, an opera that enjoyed a certain, though short-lived, success at the time and had entered the repertoire of certain troupes specialising in opera buffa. One such company was that of Giovanni Pascucci, which staged *L’elisir d’amore* at Zadar in 1870. This time it was a singing and dancing company of children from Trieste, in which the prima donna was sixteen and the tenor twelve.⁷⁰ The children that Pascucci managed, however, changed their provenance depending on the area in which they happened to be working, for we find him directing both a company of children from Modena and a “singing company of youngsters from Brescia” (*Compagnia di canto dei Giovanetti Bresciani*).⁷¹

Another company encountered a few decades later is the Compagnia Lillipuziana of Ernesto Guerra, probably the best-known and largest of the troupes working in this sector. It arrived officially in Dalmatia in 1905, and visited both Zadar and Pula in the following

productions at the time was that of the Modenese children aged between 9 and 14, directed by Alfonso Ferrari, which also performed at Gorizia in 1870; see Lucia Pillon, *Ottocento goriziano (1815–1915). Una città che si trasforma*, Editrice goriziana, Gorizia 1991, p. 219.

67 “il sedicenne buffo Giovanni Spina è il presidente anziano – e tuttavia questa giovane schiera eseguisce opere serie e comiche, balletti ed il cielo sa che cosa altro ancora; i zaratini intenditori sostengono che i giovani artisti se la cavino meglio che non i loro colleghi adulti.”; “Sulla compagnia d’operette”, *La Bilancia*, 11. 5. 1877.

68 The announcement of a performance at the Stadt-Theater of Graz, as well as clearly specifying the ages of the young leads, particularly pointed out that “the whole show will be performed by children without a prompter”. (“Die ganze Vorstellung wird von den Kindern ohne Souffleur gespielt.”); “Stadt-Theater”, *Grazer Zeitung*, 2. 6. 1877.

69 “Sulla compagnia d’operette”, *La Bilancia*, 11. 5. 1877.

70 “Teatri”, *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, XXV, no. 32, 7. 8. 1870, p. 261.

71 Carlo Avetta – Carlo Falchi, *Teatri: luoghi di spettacolo e accademie a Montepulciano e in Valdichiana*, Editori del Grifo, Montepulciano 1984, p. 251.

year. It was proposed to Zadar by Guerra's agent, Simonetti, initially mentioning *Crispino e la comare* and *Fra diavolo*, then including other operas already in the repertoire, like the omnipresent *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, to be performed with a payment to the theatre of 40 % of the gross takings. Two years later Ernesto Guerra wrote directly to Zadar, this time without Simonetti's agency, offering six performances at the Teatro Verdi from 3 to 8 November. In his request (which arrived extremely close to the date, just three weeks before the proposed first performance) he offered six operas,⁷² performing one a day, in the manner adopted by the opera companies from eastern Europe. He had performed the same repertoire shortly before at the Burg Theater in Vienna, where the company was invited to return in 1909.⁷³ As regards Pula, they were back again in 1907; indeed, here we find two different children's companies appearing in the city within five months of one another. Their performances filled the theatre and probably generated more curiosity than a normal opera production with adult singers.⁷⁴ The repeated presence of Guerra's company in the region in the early years of the 20th century can certainly be explained by the public's interest in spectacles of this type, but is surely also due to the organisational skill of both its director and the agents negotiating on its behalf.

Guerra's group, which was founded in Reggio Emilia towards the end of the 19th century, consisted of around forty boys and girls between the ages of ten and fourteen who were given lessons in music, diction, singing, acting, dance and instrument.⁷⁵ Ernesto Guerra also collected these children from situations of privation and hardship; some were orphans, an example being Ersilia Sampieri, who joined the company at the age of ten and went on to become a celebrated singer-entertainer.⁷⁶ All the children received a basic literary education

72 The operas proposed were *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Carmen*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Don Giovanni*, *La sonnambula*, or *L'elisir d'amore*. See Letter from Ernesto Guerra to the theatre management of Zadar, Rijeka, 12. 10. 1908, HR-DAZD, folder 26.

73 See Letter from Ernesto Guerra to the theatre management of Zadar, Rijeka, 12. 10. 1908, HR-DAZD, folder 26.

74 Even the visit of Guerra's Compagnia Lillipuziana to Split brought a full house, as recalled by Nevenka Bezić Božanić: "Publika, željna senzacija, napunila je kazaliste, bez obzira na kvalitetu, a voda trupe imao je od toga zacijelo koristi" (The audience, and the desired sensation [they caused], filled the theaters, regardless of the quality, and the troupe certainly benefited from that"); Bezić Božanić, *Novinske vijesti*, p. 409.

75 Enrico Paganuzzi – Pierpaolo Brugnoli, *La musica a Verona*, Banca mutua popolare di Verona, Verona 1976, p. 358 and Maurizio Festanti – Giuseppe Adani – Claudio Cigarini, *La biblioteca Panizzi di Reggio Emilia*, Silvana, Cinisello Balsamo 1997, p. 212. The company's brochure wrote of "children under the age of 12"; Brochure of the Compagnia Lillipuziana, [n. d.], HR-DAZD, folder 11.

76 This was the stage name of Ersilia Ambrosi; Romualdo Marrone, *Guida insolita ai misteri, ai segreti, alle leggende e alle curiosità di Napoli*, Newton Compton, Roma 2015 [ebook], [accessed through Google Books]. Regarding certain performances by this company at the Teatro Biondo of Palermo, the *Rivista di Roma* was to write: "From 3 to 10 November there took place at the Teatro Biondo of Palermo some delightful performances by the celebrated Compagnia Lillipuziana directed by the worthy Maestro

that reached the *quinta elementare*, or final level of primary education. The girls learned embroidery and sewing, while the boys were also given lessons in musical instruments by the professors who travelled with the company, in such a way that when they became adults and the time came for them to move on, they would find themselves “prepared for the struggles of life, with a small reserve of money and initiated to an honest and remunerative profession”.⁷⁷ Among those who heaped them with praise at the time was the celebrated composer Perosi, who after hearing the Compagnia Lillipuziana wrote to Guerra from Florence as follows: “Dear Maestro! I assure you that I was left enthusiastic by the manner in which your dear children sing. I know not whether to admire your patience or your skill for having brought to such perfection a choir of such true artists”.⁷⁸ It also appears that the company toured with a fairly numerous and noisy clique, which was therefore able to influence the outcome of their performances.⁷⁹ Preserved in the theatre collections of the state archives of Šibenik and Zadar are photos of the children wearing stage costumes for the different operas. Such intensive advertising naturally bore a cost, but it nonetheless gave the theatre management a clear idea of what was being offered with great immediacy. The company, which had a very wide-ranging repertoire (also including works by Guerra himself),⁸⁰ could put on an average of seven operas in any single season.⁸¹ How was it possible to achieve such results in a period of financial hardship? Given that it was a company made up of children, the artists’ fees were in no way comparable to those of adult singers, which made it possible to save on the single item of expenditure that usually had the greatest impact on the budget: the artists’ fees themselves. We can assume, however, that the revenue was used for the upkeep of the young performers and to offer them the education they needed.

Ernesto Guerra, who with his rare skill and patience has succeeded in turning a fair number of children saved from the streets into genuine, small and wonderful artists.” (“Dal 3 al 10 novembre hanno avuto luogo al Teatro Biondo di Palermo delle rappresentazioni deliziosissime della celebre Compagnia lillipuziana diretta dal valoroso maestro Ernesto Guerra, che con la sua rara abilità e pazienza ha saputo fare di un buon numero di bambini raccolti sul lastrico, dei veri e piccoli meravigliosi artisti.”); *Rivista di Roma*, 1904, p. 698.

77 “preparati alla lotta della vita, con un gruzzoletto di quattrini, ed iniziati ad una onesta e remuneratrice professione”; “Compagnia lirica lillipuziana in Pola”, *Omnibus*, 7. 5. 1906.

78 “Caro Maestro! Lo assicuro che rimasi proprio entusiasta della maniera colla quale cantano i suoi cari bambini. Io non so se più ammirare la sua pazienza e il suo talento per avere condotti a tale perfezione un coro di tali veri artisti”; “La compagnia lillipuziana al Politeama”, *Il Giornaleto*, 6. 5. 1906.

79 *Il Teatro illustrato*, 1908.

80 An example being *La fiera di San Giusto*, an operetta buffa composed by the director himself. See the entry “Guerra, Ernesto”, in Andrea Sessa, *Il melodramma italiano 1901–1925. Dizionario bio-bibliografico dei compositori*, Olschki, Firenze 2014, pp. 447–448. On the company, see also the article by Francesco Sassi, *La Compagnia Lillipuziana Reggiana del maestro Enrico [sic] Guerra*, *Strenna del Pio Istituto Artigianelli*, [n. p.] 1989, pp. 133–37.

81 See, for example, the seven operas proposed for the spring season of 1906.

5.4 The integrity of the score?

When we think of the opera repertoire offered at the theatres of the coastal area, we must not necessarily imagine complete (and authentic) productions, as would be expected today. The subject of cuts to the score was strongly felt, for different reasons. Often entire acts of an opera were omitted as a way of shortening the performance time. Among all the operas programmed in the spring season of 1865 in Rijeka, apparently only Rossini's *Otello* was given complete; of the other operas what was heard were "more or less numerous scraps".⁸² This practice of presenting "centos" or patchworks was by no means a novelty in that period, but was more frequent in the smaller (and less closely watched) theatres. Presenting a cento within an opera season was also considered a way of reviving the attention of the public between the more standard opera nights. At Šibenik in 1871 *I falsi monetari*, *Don Checco*, *Pipelet* and *Mamma Agata*⁸³ were all performed in a single evening, followed by the ballet *Marinella*.⁸⁴ The individual operas were then performed complete on other nights in the same theatre (with only *Don Checco* or *I falsi monetari* occupying an entire evening). So one format did not necessarily exclude the other. But here we are referring not so much to the (otherwise widely accepted) practice of the *quodlibet*, which consisted in giving a *potpourri* of opera arias within a single evening, so much as to the performance of operas in reduced versions.

Even at the Teatro Bajamonti in Split, opera performances were at times incomplete, depending on the general organisational conditions of the theatre.⁸⁵ We know for certain, for example, that in 1875 *Faust* was performed without the first act.⁸⁶ Another example of the lack of fidelity in performance practice (a concept that was hardly acknowledged at the time) occurred when *Carmen* was staged at the city's renovated theatre on 23 May 1894: an experience referred to in the press as a case of "Carmenicide" (*carmenicidio*). The indignant reviewer of *Il Dalmata* commenting on the performance claimed that in the introductory chorus of the first act only about twenty bars were sung, "and these by two (I repeat two) singers, a tenor and a bass; while the rest of the chorus chimed in from time to time, as if it were none of their business".⁸⁷ The chorus of street-boys and cigarette-girls was eliminated, as was the whole of the first-act finale, which at the time was held to be one of the finest moments of the opera. In the second act, half of the quintet and the whole of the finale

82 "centoni più o meno numerosi"; "Teatro Civico", *Il Giornale di Fiume*, 20. 5. 1865, p. 148.

83 This title referred to *Le convenienze ed inconvenienze teatrali*, a *dramma giocoso* by Donizetti, otherwise known as *Viva la mamma*.

84 *Borderò* for 19. 6. 1871, Šibenik, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3.

85 Mirjana Škunca, *Glazbeni život Splita*, p. 45.

86 *Teatro Bajamonti / Avviso straordinario*, Split, 1875, HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII.

87 "e anche queste da due, dico, due coristi, un tenore e un basso; a quando a quando, il resto del coro, come non fosse fatto suo, interloquiva"; "Carmen???", *Il Dalmata*, 26. 5. 1894.

was removed, while in the third act a *terzetto* and chorus were omitted “not with a surgical scalpel but with axe blows” (*non a tagli di bisturi ma a colpi di accetta*). A *concertato* was then removed which “was surely not included in the score rented by the company, for no one had the pleasure, or should I say honour, to hear it” (*non figura certamente nello spartito affittato dalla compagnia, perché nessuno ebbe il piacere, dirò anzi l'onore di udirlo*). As for the opera's finale, more than half was eliminated: “I believe these cuts were made with the laudable intention of sending us to bed as soon as possible” (*io credo che questi tagli siano stati fatti con la lodevole intenzione di mandarci prima che fosse possibile a letto*).⁸⁸ In this particular instance we may perhaps conclude that one of the reasons for the cuts – apart from the practical purpose of shortening the work – was to avoid the choral parts, given that the chorus put together for this production (the season had been organised by Ladislav Chmelenský) was patently inadequate. The elimination of certain parts (of a score) could therefore be decided – even at the last minute – by contingent situations relating to the skills of the singers on stage or the strengths and weaknesses of the orchestra.

A similar situation is recorded in the following years at Pula, where we hear of a *Cavalleria rusticana* performed in a version that was “pieced together with very few rehearsals” (*raffazzonata insieme con pochissime prove*) and with makeshift ensemble preparation: “The score wasn't there and whatever didn't suit the conductor was cut” (*Lo spartito mancava, ciò che non accomodava al maestro concertatore era stato tagliato*).⁸⁹ On another occasion it was also decided to couple *Cavalleria rusticana* to just the third act of *La bohème* and perform them on the same night. Nor was this even the first time such things happened, for the year before *Cavalleria rusticana* had been paired up with the first act of *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Similar cuts had been made shortly before on *Rigoletto*, to widespread criticism. The matter was also censured in *Il Popolo Istriano* which wrote that the opera “was given without a score and orchestrated for the occasion” (*fu data senza spartito ed instrumentata per l'occasione*).⁹⁰ The moronic (*beoti*) claquers applauded the “*chinagliata*”, a term invented to describe the misdeeds of the conductor Aroldo Chinaglia, who was accused of being ignorant of “the theory of tempos, accents and all the terms that indicate strength, movement and sentiment” (*la teoria dei tempi, degli accenti, dei termini insomma indicanti la forza, il movimento, l'affetto*) and of having dared to “illicitly orchestrate” (*strumentare abusivamente*) an opera that had “triumphantly” toured the world. Clearly the performance had been adapted to the players available to him. In this particular *chinagliata* the organ was eliminated, and this most characteristic instance of “Chinaglian instrumentation” (as it was ironically called) was entrusted to the piano and double bass. “At the tragic moments the brass are used for the most heart-rending effects, with timpani and bass drum reserved for the coups de grace.

88 “Carmen???” *Il Dalmata*, 26. 5. 1894.

89 “Politeama Ciscutti”, *Il Proletario*, 17. 5. 1901.

90 “Politeama Ciscutti”, *Il Popolo Istriano*, 18. 5. 1901.

The woodwinds are neglected and not even the drums are respected. Bad, very bad!”⁹¹ As a result, the impresario Corbetta, who had proposed *Rigoletto* and *Cavalleria rusticana* in cut versions, was also pronounced by the press as guilty of tricking the public. Indeed this was also part of the problem: the cuts, even when substantial, were not announced to the audience, so the theatre-goers, relying on what they read in the papers or saw on the posters, did not necessarily expect to hear mutilated performances. It was not uncommon, therefore, to read of the public expressing disappointment and feeling cheated.

Lack of respect for the integrity of the score was therefore a real and widespread problem.⁹² We know, for example, that the *maestro concertatore* at the Teatro Comunale of Trieste was obliged to inform the management of all changes to the scores, though this was not the case at all theatres.⁹³ By integrity one could also mean respect for the instrumentation, as in the case of Pula. Moreover, changes in tempo or transpositions of key were also aspects that could distance a performance from the composer’s original version. While *Cavalleria rusticana* at Pula was subjected to heavy-handed alterations to the instrumentation (as we have just seen), at Split the reviewer in *Il Mattino* complained: “All the tempi changed, from first to last”.⁹⁴ “The beautiful chorus of the *Prayer*”, he went on, “an Andante religioso, performed at the speed of a polka. The *siciliana* for the tenor, accompanied by a half-tuned piano replacing the harps, lowered by a tone and a half. In the famous Intermezzo, a piece that is encored in theatres all over the world, and which here went completely unnoticed, the harmonium (standing in for the church organ) came in half a bar too soon and had the conscientious courage to continue in like manner throughout the piece”.⁹⁵

91 “Nei punti tragici gli ottoni s’incaricano dell’effetto *lacerante*, i timpani e la gran cassa è riservata ai colpi di grazia. Trascurati i legni e non rispettati neanche i...tamburi. Male, malissimo!”; “Politeama Ciscutti”. *Il Popolo Istriano*, 18. 5. 1901.

92 On the question of cuts to opera scores, see also the chapter “Serafin’s scissors” in Philip Gossett, *Divas and Scholars: Performing Italian opera*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2006, pp. 241–289.

93 It was important for singers to comply with the instructions of the *maestro concertatore* or impresario if they wished to avoid penalties. In the past the artists who broke this rule could even be imprisoned. Maria Malibran, for example, had to spend 24 hours in prison in Naples for omitting the rondò from *La sonnambula* without the permission of the superintendent; *The Message Bird I*, no. 24, 15. 7. 1850, p. 391.

94 “Tutti i tempi cambiati, dal primo all’ultimo”; “Una parodia”, *Il Mattino*, 1. 5. 1894.

95 “Il bellissimo coro della *Pregghiera*, un andante religioso, eseguito a tempo di polca. La *siciliana* del tenore, accompagnata da un pianoforte mezzo stonato in sostituzione delle arpe, ribassata d’un tono e mezzo. Nel famoso intermezzo, ribassato in tutti i teatri del mondo, e che qui passò del tutto inosservato, l’armonium interno (facente funzioni dell’organo) attaccò mezza battuta prima, ed ebbe il coraggio civile di continuare durante tutto il pezzo così”. The journalist, not satisfied with having described what he would later call a real “horror”, went on to summarise the accomplishments of singers and players: “As for the tenor (a wide-ranging baritone), he did just as pleased; when he couldn’t get up to the high notes, he sang a third lower, or left the woman free to shout for both of them [...]. In the orchestra the first horn was sharp, balanced by the cello who was flat. And everything was played without any shading

Another problem was that of the pieces extrapolated from operas in order to be performed on their own. This was not always allowed by the publisher: at Rijeka in 1886, for example, Tito Ricordi forbade the separate performance of the “Dance of the Hours” (*Danza delle Ore*) from *La Gioconda*.

What can one then say about the operas that also incorporate a ballet? Here a distinction must be made between the ballets found between one act and the next⁹⁶ – which were often omitted, increasingly as the end of the 19th century approached – and those within the acts of an opera. Though certainly not exclusive to the coastal theatres, the practice of ‘lightening’ the operas in this way was nonetheless fairly widespread in the area. At the end of the century, engaging around 10 to 12 ballerinas to perform the ballet would mean spending 1,000–1,200 florins more than a normal opera production without ballet, and naturally not all endowments were sufficiently generous to sustain this extra burden.⁹⁷ In some theatres, however, the ballet-less versions were not appreciated, especially by those who had seen the same operas with the original choreographies. An example is documented at the Teatro Nuovo of Split at the time of the impresario Milani, when a petition was circulated among the shareholders to collect the necessary funds to restore the ballet in *Faust*. The document

whatsoever, no *piani*; always *fortissimo*.” (“Il tenore (un baritono sfogato) poi, della sua parte ha fatto quello che diavolo gli è piaciuto di più; nelle acute, non potendo arrivarci, faceva la terza sotto, oppure lasciava libero alla donna di gridare per due [...]. Nell’orchestra il primo corno crescente, compensava il violoncello, calante. Il tutto poi eseguito senza coloritura alcuna, senza i piani; fortissimo sempre.”); “Una parodia”, *Il Mattino*, 1. 5. 1894.

96 A distinction was made between a “ballo grande”, i.e. a fully-developed form in three or four acts, and a ballet in a reduced form to be performed either between two acts or at the end of an opera; See Fabrizio Della Seta, *Italia e Francia nell'Ottocento*, EDT, Torino 1993, p. 34.

97 An example is given in the letter sent by the impresario Fabio Montalcino to the theatre management of Zadar. He wrote: “Concerning the ballet for the opera *Africana*, I must observe that it has been omitted at all the principal theatres for many years now, and it does no harm to the dramatic effect of the work. It is a matter of a simple passage during the Indian March, and removing it, as everyone does, does not affect the impact of the great work at all. This ballet can be staged when the impresa can count on a significant endowment, and spending an extra 1,000 to 1,200 florins would not hurt (given that this is the expense one would incur to bring 10 to 12 ballerinas, not extras), but when the endowment is limited and the project is already very costly without the ballet, the impresa could not take on a further expense that would condemn it to a certain loss.” (“Riguardo al ballo per l’opera *Africana*, devo osservare che da più anni in tutti i primari teatri viene omesso, ciò che non porta nessun danno all’effetto scenico del lavoro. Si tratta di un semplice passo durante la marcia indiana e togliendolo, come tutti lo tolgono, non pregiudica affatto l’esito del grande lavoro. Questo ballo viene fatto quando l’impresa può calcolare sopra una dotazione importante in seguito alla quale lo spendere 1.000 a 1.200 fiorini in più non le guasta (essendo appunto questa la spesa che si incontrerebbe per portare 10 a 12 ballerine e non figuranti), ma quando la dote è limitata e il progetto già è assai dispendioso senza il ballo, l’impresa non potrebbe assumersi un onere maggiore che la ridurrebbe ad una perdita sicura.”); Letter from Fabio Montalcino to the theatre management of Zadar, Reggio Emilia, 20. 5. 1893, HR-DAZD, folder 7.

for the collection of signatures reads as follows: “Given that the impresario of the opera Signor Milani is not obliged to have Faust performed with the ballet, and given that it is the wish of many that this opera should be completed with the same, Your Lordships are hereby appealed to with the objective of contributing to this aim with a sum of money”.⁹⁸ In other words, in order to make sure they saw a complete version of the opera, they were even prepared to resort to a form of self-taxation.

98 “Non essendo l’impresario dell’opera sig. Milani obbligato a far rappresentare il Faust con balletto, ed essendo desiderio di molti che questa opera sia completata col medesimo, s’interessa la compiacenza di V.S. di voler concorrere a questo scopo con un importo di denaro.”; Letter from the theatre management of Split to the shareholders of the Teatro Nuovo of Split, Split, 21. 5. 1895, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

6 Moving artists and stage materials

6.1 Travel and accommodation for the artists

After the impresario had signed the contract and drawn up the necessary agreements with the artistic personnel, the opera companies engaged for the opera season would make their way to the *piazza*. But how did they arrive at their destination? There is not sufficient evidence to establish whether the singers and musicians heading for the coastal region actually travelled together or separately; in other words, for lack of relevant documentation we do not know if we are dealing with new cases of a “*treno Otello*”, as described by Francesca Vella.¹ Nor can we generalise too much, as we must also distinguish between the opera seasons in which the singers and musicians were engaged entirely from outside the region and those in which the personnel was mixed, hence also including local artists.

What we can say is that if a company departed from Milan (the city where it was often recruited) by train at 10 a. m. on a Friday at the start of the 20th century, it could arrive in Trieste on the evening of the same day; after an overnight stay in Trieste, it could then take the steamship the next day after lunch and be in Šibenik, for example, on the Sunday afternoon. So one needed to calculate two full travelling days for a journey of over 700 kilometres.² For this route there was also a faster option, though perhaps with a less convenient

1 On the movement of opera companies in the second half of the 19th century, see Francesca Vella, “(De) railing Mobility: Opera, Stasis, and Locomotion on Late-Nineteenth-Century Italian Tracks”, *Opera Quarterly*, XXXIV/1 (2018), pp. 1–26.

2 The journey is described by the director of the theatre of Šibenik himself, who was planning for the company he had engaged for the 1909 season: “Part of the opera company that will perform in this theatre will leave Milan on Friday 2 April with the train of 10 o'clock in the morning and will arrive in Trieste in the evening. There will be around fifteen people and they will have to spend the Friday night in Trieste in order to set off the next day with the steamship of the Dalmatia or Lloyd company for Šibenik. Indeed I think they will depart with the ‘Dalmatia’ steamer, which leaves Trieste on Saturday after lunch and arrives here on Sunday, again after lunch. For the overnight stay in Trieste I have informed the company of your hotel and, remembering that when you were in Trieste you told me that you did special prices for artists, I hereby beg you to secure the largest discount possible for my charges (genuine bargain prices), also considering that they are young artists who have very onerous travel expenses to sustain and that our theatre cannot afford to grant lavish wages”. (“Il giorno 2 aprile venerdì partirà da Milano col treno delle 10 di mattina e arriverà alla sera a Trieste una parte della compagnia lirica che agirà in questo teatro. Saranno circa una quindicina di persone e dovranno passare la notte del venerdì a Trieste per poi ripartire il giorno dopo col piroscalo della Dalmatia oppure del Lloyd per Sebenico. Credo anzi che partiranno col vapore della «Dalmatia» che parte da Trieste sabato dopopranzo e arriva qui domenica pure dopopranzo. Per il passaggio a Trieste ho indicato alla

timetable. The company could again leave on a Friday, this time at about 1 p. m., and use the Mestre-Cervignano-Trieste train route. With a change of trains at Mestre it would arrive in Trieste after 10 in the evening. The artists would stay the night in a hotel like the Hotel Vanoli (ex Garni) in Piazza Grande (today Piazza Unità d'Italia).³ On Saturday they could take the Lloyd Austriaco fast steamship from the San Carlo Quay at 8 a. m. and arrive at Zadar at 7 p. m. From Zadar another steamship, this time of the Dalmatia company, would depart at 7.30 p. m. and arrive in Šibenik around midnight.⁴ This journey involved a change at Zadar and also a late arrival, which might have made looking for a place to stay more complicated. A further alternative was to leave from the Giuseppino Quay in Trieste on Saturday at 5 p. m. and arrive directly at Šibenik without changing boats at Zadar at 3.30 p. m. on the Sunday.⁵

The route from Trieste also covered Pula, which was much closer. Already in 1884 a steamship of the Società Istriana left for Pula every morning at 7 a. m. There was also the option of going to Pula by train,⁶ but it must be said that, unless one was going to Trieste or Rijeka, the railway service for Istria and the rest of the coastal region was patchy: the sea route remained the preferred means of communication. Various passenger ship companies connected Trieste to Dalmatia by the end of the century: for example, Lloyd Society, the Hungaro-Croatian Society, Navigazione Ragusea, and other minor ones. A daily steamship service from Trieste to Dalmatia was guaranteed in the early years of the new century.

Artists travelling from Milan to Split could also take the Venice-Trieste sea route with Lloyd Austriaco. At the end of the century this intermediate section of the journey took around six and a half hours and functioned three nights a week. One could also opt for the Venice-Rijeka route with a sailing time of eleven hours. In 1883 there was a direct route from Venice to Zadar with the Florio Steamship Company.⁷ In the early years of the new century, again from Venice, there was even a direct route to Šibenik

compagnia il Suo albergo e ricordandomi ch'Ella quando fu a Trieste mi diceva che agli artisti faceva prezzi speciali, vengo con questa a pregarla di fare il maggior sconto possibile ai miei raccomandati (veri prezzi d'occasione) trattandosi anche di giovani artisti che hanno fortissime spese di viaggio da sostenere e il nostro teatro non può concedere laute paghe.”); Letter from [Giovanni Mazzoleni] to Vanoli, Trieste, 30. 3. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

3 This elegant hotel still stands today as the Grand Hotel Duchi d'Aosta; see www.duchi.eu [accessed 20. 6. 2022].

4 In 1914 the journey from Zadar to Šibenik, which took three hours, was not particularly expensive; see Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Alessandro Romanelli, Šibenik, 29. 5. 1914, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2a.

5 See Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Paolo Rocca, Šibenik, 17. 3. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

6 See Letter from Giuseppe Ullmann to the theatre management of Zadar, Trieste, 1. 9. 1884, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

7 See Letter from the theatre management of Zadar to Sante Utili, Zadar, 6. 2. 1883, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

on the Veneto steamship: it left Venice at 8 p. m. on Tuesdays and arrived at Šibenik at 2 p. m. the next day.⁸

On the other hand, for those leaving from the port of Ancona in the early years of the century, there was just a weekly ferry to Zadar. On this route, the only one run by the Italian merchant navy, travelled the Puglia steamship company (“Città di Bari” was one of its boats).⁹ There was also a direct route from Ancona to Split, whereas for Šibenik one would have to use the Ancona-Zadar service, with relative transfer, greater expense and difficulties (the journey by sea from Zadar to Šibenik, again by steamer, took three and a half hours).¹⁰

If orchestral musicians were needed in Split or Dubrovnik, they were sometimes engaged directly from Bari and would necessarily arrive by sea. On this stretch of the Adriatic in the early 20th century, however, the Puglia steamships were only fortnightly.¹¹ Even the newsletter of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs campaigned in those years not only for more frequent journeys in the future, but also for greater comfort for the passengers, in order to compete with the steamships of the Hungaro-Croatian and Lloyd companies, which were newer, more elegant and greatly preferred by travellers.¹² In the years 1910 and 1911, moreover, there was almost certainly a decline in the demand for artistic personnel to arrive from Bari, owing to the cholera epidemic that had broken out. Epidemics unquestionably acted as a deterrent to the transportation of singers and musicians.

There were also special concessions for artists travelling by sea. The navigation companies gave discounts from which both entire companies and individual artists could benefit. The Società Dalmatia, for example, gave artists a 33 % discount on ticket prices. It would seem that the concessions were greater than those offered by the railways.¹³ This would explain why impresarios, taking advantage of the situation, would sometimes send their baggage in the name of a particular singer: to get a discount. It would appear that impresarios were not eligible for travel concessions.¹⁴

8 See Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Giuseppe Castagnoli, Šibenik, 3. 12. 1910, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b. As is confirmed by Mazzoleni, writing to the impresario Ponzio: “You could leave Milan on the morning of Holy Tuesday, continue in the evening with the “Veneto” steamer and be here on Holy Wednesday at the latest.” (“Da Milano potrebbe partire il martedì santo di mattina e proseguire alla sera col vapore Veneto ed essere qui al più tardi mercoledì santo.”); Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Giuseppe Ponzio, Šibenik 4. 4. 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

9 Marcotti, *L'Adriatico Orientale*, p. 3.

10 See Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Eugenio De Monari, Šibenik, 6. 3. 1914, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b.

11 See *Bollettino del Ministero degli Affari Esteri – giugno 1902*, Roma, Ministero Affari Esteri, 1902, p. 6.

12 See *Bollettino del Ministero degli Affari Esteri – giugno 1902*, Roma, Ministero Affari Esteri, 1902, p. 18.

13 Art. 238, “Società di navigazione”; Rispoli, *La vita pratica*, p. 168.

14 This is well illustrated, for example, by the impresario Domenico Valenti, writing to the theatre management of Zadar: “With the steamer of the 19th”, he announced, “all the material will arrive, i. e. costumes properties, scenery, etc. There are 14 items, and they are in the name of Armando Creti for the management of the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar. I had to do the shipping in Creti’s name in order to have

If the weather was bad, the artists might arrive late at the *piazza*. In Trieste and along the entire eastern Adriatic coastline the bora wind could blow for several days at a time, particularly from November through March. When this happened, the steamers simply did not leave port. “Unable continue journey because terrible sea will be delayed”, the baritone Silvetti telegraphed the theatre management of Šibenik;¹⁵ and the agent Gallina relayed the following message: “Chorus leaves tomorrow because horrible sea Thursday spotlights accessories leave”.¹⁶ All of this could delay the beginning of rehearsals or even the first performance itself: a variable that a good impresario or theatre manager would have to take into account when planning arrivals.

The artists’ personal baggage from Milan could be entrusted to the company of the Gondrand brothers, a transportation and shipping company founded in 1866 (and still in activity today) that worked both nationally and internationally.¹⁷ It opened branches in 19 Italian cities. For the 1909 season at Šibenik, for example, the manager of the theatre planned to resort to the services of Gondrand and send the baggage via Trieste or Ancona, but he had little confidence in the shipping companies, since he had already had bad experiences. He always preferred there to be a trusted person accompanying the materials, so he asked the agent Rocca if he happened to know of someone who could travel with the chests. Naturally this did not necessarily come without a cost.¹⁸

a discount on the train fare from Milan to Ancona, because our dear railways do not give reductions to impresarios. There is no charge, only the transportation to pay.” (“Col vapore del 19 arriverà tutto il materiale e cioè vestiari, attrezzi, scene ecc., sono 14 colli, e sono a nome di Armando Creti presso la direzione del Teatro Nuovo di Zara; o [*sic*] dovuto fare la spedizione a nome del Creti, per avere il ribasso ferroviario da Milano ad Ancona, perché all’impresari le nostre care ferrovie non concedono riduzioni, non viè [*sic*] nessuno assegno, vi sarà da pagare il solo trasporto”); Letter from Domenico Valenti to Giorgio De Nakic d’Osljak, Milano, 15. 5. 1896, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

15 “Impossibilitato proseguire viaggio causa mare pessimo ritarderò”; Telegram from the baritone Silvetti to the theatre management of Šibenik, Šibenik, 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9. Silvetti was expected in Šibenik for performances of *La traviata* and *Il trovatore* in spring 1909.

16 “Coristi partono domani causa tempo oribile [*sic*] giovedì partono riflettori accessori”; Telegram from the agent Gallina to the theatre management of Šibenik, Šibenik, 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

17 See www.gondrand-logic.com [accessed 26. 11. 2020]

18 “It is around a hundred lire that needs to be spent”, Mazzoleni wrote, “because I do not trust the shippers. Apart from the case of the *scena parapettata* I have also had other mishaps. For this reason more than anything else we wanted to send Maestro Patucchi, who would willingly hear the pianist for the reason that the one sent last year was not very satisfactory. Anyway please inquire at Gondrand and write to me saying if you have the person and when you could send the crates. If we were to send them with Gondrand without their being accompanied, we would have to do the shipping immediately, for there is no time to lose.” (“È un centinaio di lire che si devono spendere perché non mi fido degli speditori, oltre all’esempio della *parapettata* ne ho avuti anche altri. Per questo motivo più che altro volevamo mandare il maestro Patucchi, il quale avrebbe volentieri inteso il pianista per il motivo che quello inviato l’anno scorso soddisfece poco. In ogni modo si informi prego da Gondrand e mi scriva se avrebbe Lei la persona e quando potrebbe mandare le casse. Mandandole col mezzo di Gondrand

Some impresarios might ask the theatre management to send a trusted person to welcome the company on its arrival, even if it should be at 4 a. m. An attendant was also usually engaged to help carry the hand luggage off the boat.

Another issue that might arise after the companies had departed for their various destinations was lack of accommodation, especially for those staying in town for just a few days. Among all the coastal locations, Šibenik was perhaps the one that presented the greatest problems in this regard. In 1896 a hotel room there cost from two to three florins per night, a price that was not only considered high, but was also not lowered even if the company stayed for several weeks.¹⁹ The problem persisted for over twenty years, even for single bookings, let alone entire opera or theatre troupes.²⁰ The theatre had made a few rooms available to the artists at the Hotel de la Ville, though this solution was threatened by the decision of the military authorities to free those spaces for other purposes. The fear of the theatre management was that the rooms might be immediately taken over by the city's shopkeepers (of whom there were many, and with abundant financial resources), thereby making it impossible for the artists to find somewhere to stay. The theatre management therefore petitioned the authorities to ensure that the owners of the Hotel de la Ville and perhaps also the Hotel Šibenik made at least two or three rooms each available to the artists with a price cap established by the authorities: it was not asking for special discounts, but for merely the possibility of lodgings at a fair price.²¹

At the end of the century these were the hotels in the coastal cities that could be used by the companies:

City	Hotels in 1899 ²²
Pula	Riboli, De la Ville, Pavanello, Europa, Città di Pola, Arena, Austria
Rijeka	Deak, Europa, Lloyd, Città di Fiume, Città di Milano, Quarnero
Zadar	Grand Hotel, Vapore

senza che fossero accompagnate bisognerebbe fare la spedizione subito, poiché non vi è tempo da perdere.”); Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Paolo Rocca, 1. 3. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

19 See Letter from [illegible sender] to the theatre management of Šibenik, Zadar, 15. 5. 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

20 “If it is very difficult to find a room even for a single individual,” the theatre management wrote to the Garrison Command in Šibenik, “it is all the more difficult for the opera and theatre companies that are engaged at our theatre and are made up of a number of people.” (“Se per ogni singola persona riesce difficilissimo di trovare una stanza, la cosa è tanto più difficile per le compagnie liriche o drammatiche che vengono scritturate nel nostro teatro e che sono costituite da più persone.”); Letter from the theatre management of Šibenik to the Garrison Command in Šibenik, Šibenik, 29. 7. 1919, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

21 See Letter from the theatre management of Šibenik to the Garrison command in Šibenik, Šibenik, 29. 7. 1919, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

22 This table of accommodation options has been reconstructed with the assistance of Marcotti, *L'Adriatico Orientale*, passim.

Šibenik	De la Ville, Šibenik, Zanchi, Velebi, Krka ²³
Split	De la Ville, Troccoli ²⁴
Dubrovnik	De la Ville, Lacroma, Imperial ²⁵

We must take into account that at the time the coastal cities had a smaller population than today, hence the accommodation facilities were also fewer.

Normally it was the impresario who was in charge of booking rooms for the artists, though in certain cases, as at Šibenik, the matter was dealt with directly by the theatre management.

6.2 Scenery, costumes, footwear, properties

The stage materials would also travel at the same time as the companies themselves. And there were travel discounts also for theatrical materials.²⁶ For example, the scenes, which came from Milan, like various other goods, travelled directly by rail to Trieste and then by sea to the coastal towns, using steamships such as those of Lloyd Thetis – and perhaps running the risk of being damaged if the steamer broke down.²⁷ Alternatively, the materials

23 The hotels Velebi and Krka were mentioned in a letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Maurizio Parigi, Šibenik, 21. II. 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b. In this letter Mazzoleni calls the Grand Hotel Velebi, the Hotel de la Ville and the Hotel Krka “good hotels”.

24 As mentioned earlier, the Hotel Troccoli was built in Split in 1887. In 1909 it had 48 rooms; see Adolf Hartleben, *Illustrierter Führer durch Dalmatien*, Hartleben, Wien und Leipzig 1909, p. 148. In 1914 the *Illustrierte Wegweiser durch die österreichischen Kurorte, Sommerfrischen und Winterstationen: Krain, Küstenland und Dalmatien* (Wien und Leipzig, Elbemühl) advertised it as follows on p. 70: “Largest hotel in the square. Completely renovated, in the city centre, in a sheltered position, in the People’s Square near Diocletian’s Palace and the Loggia. 50 well-furnished rooms from K 2.50 to K 5-.” (“Größtes Hotel am Platze. Ganz renoviert, im Stadtzentrum, in geschützter Lage, am Herrenplatz neben dem Diocletianpalast und der Loggia. 50 gut möblierte Zimmer von K 2.50 bis K 5-.”).

25 The Hotel Imperial was closed in the summer.

26 Evidence for this is provided, for example, by Giovanni Mazzoleni, writing to the agent Paolo Rocca while organising the opera season at Šibenik in 1909: “I beg you to inquire what procedures need to be carried out for the Maestro [Author’s note: *Patucchi, sent to Milan to collect the materials*] to have a possible discount on the transportation expenses, seeing that this is theatrical material, because if it should be considered as his personal baggage, I believe the expense would be enormous.” (“Prego anche di informarsi che pratiche si debbano fare perché il maestro abbia un’eventuale sconto sulle spese di trasporto trattandosi di materiale da teatro, perché se dovesse venir considerato come suo bagaglio personale credo che la spesa sarebbe enorme.”); Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Paolo Rocca, Šibenik, 9. 3. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

27 Again it is Mazzoleni who provides an insight into the matter, this time writing to a certain Steiner: “As you will have learned from my telegram, the steamer of Lloyd Thetis on which the material for the opera was loaded, suffered a breakdown. The material, however, was not damaged in any way and I am already in possession of it. Since the agency was unable to establish what percentage the expense

could arrive in Venice by rail and then travel by sea from Venice to Trieste in five hours (or slightly more, depending on sailing conditions). If the destination was Zadar or a theatre even further south, the materials could also be taken by rail from Milan to Ancona, where they would be put on a ship. There was also a direct connection between Venice and Zadar. In short, depending on the time available and the budget set aside for transportation, there were various options.

Naturally, the delivery of stage materials could also suffer delays, both for reasons beyond human control (such as the weather conditions mentioned above) and those due to misunderstandings and shipping errors, of which there were many. Giovanni Mazzoleni complained to agent Paolo Rocca about the failed delivery of a “*parapettata*”,²⁸ observing that if there were to be so many difficulties, so many mishaps and such expense over receiving a simple piece of scenery from Milan, “what would happen if we were to transport all the material – properties, sets and costumes – for a complete opera season”.²⁹ The risk was having to pay all the considerable costs without the possibility of staging the operas. In this particular instance the chests of materials, instead of being embarked with Lloyd, had been loaded onto another boat, the Montenegro of the Navigazione Generale Italiana, which made no stops at the Dalmatian ports. Hence they made, according to Mazzoleni, “a long pleasure trip” (*un lungo viaggio di piacere*) as far as Turkey and Greece instead of arriving at their destination in time. Owing to the failure to deliver in time, damages were claimed from the Casa Parisi of Milan, which had made the mistake in the shipping order.³⁰ The decision to order these materials from different sources could therefore also reflect a precise intention

for the breakdown amounted to in general, it delivered the goods to me against a declaration that I would pay the amount due for the goods taken on board.” (“Come avrete appreso dal mio telegramma il vapore del Lloyd Thetis sul quale era caricato il materiale dell’opera, ha subito un’avarea [*sic*]. Il materiale però non è stato per nulla danneggiato ed io ne sono già in possesso. Non potendo l’agenzia stabilire a quanto per cento ammonta la spesa per l’avarea [*sic*] in generale mi consegnò la merce verso una dichiarazione che avrei corrisposto l’importo che risultasse a carico delle merci imbarcate.”); Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to M. Steiner, Trieste, 29. 3. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

28 The *parapettata* most likely refers to a piece of scenery representing the interior of a room or a house, enclosed on three sides of the stage and provided with sky.

29 “cosa sarebbe poi se si dovesse far venire tutto il materiale di attrezzi, scene e vestuari per un intero spettacolo d’opera”; Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Paolo Rocca, [Šibenik], 6.2.[1909], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

30 “I enclose a copy of the letter that my brother today is sending to Casa Parisi of Milan in which he asks for compensation damages for the mishap of the *parapettata* that Signor Parisi instead of sending directly from Venice to Austria sent to make a long pleasure trip to Turkey and Greece and had delivered to Šibenik by the long route of southern Dalmatia.” (“Le inchiudo una copia della lettera che mio fratello oggi imposta alla casa Parisi di Milano, colla quale richiede il risarcimento dei danni per il disguido della parapettata [*sic*] che il Signor Parisi invece di mandare direttamente da Venezia in Austria ha mandato a fare un lungo viaggio di piacere in Turchia, Grecia e fatto inoltrare a Sebenico per la lunga via della Dalmazia meridionale”); Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Paolo Rocca, [Šibenik],

to spread the risk. We must also bear in mind that these materials (or “*effetti teatrali*”, as they were called) had to be returned to the company that had hired them out, hence the return journey also had to be included in any cost estimates.

Regarding the sets, the documentation is scanty, but we find various names of scene designers who collaborated with the coastal theatres. Among those based in Milan, Ercole Sormani worked for a long time with the theatre of Zadar, while Canuto Soriani mainly supplied Šibenik. From nearby Trieste we have the names of Lorenzo Guidicelli, Rossi and Moscotto, or Antonio Stancich, who was already working with the Teatro Nuovo of Trieste and could thus rent out various sets to the coastal theatres.³¹ From Venice a celebrated name that emerges is that of Pietro Bertoja, whose sets supplied the theatres of both Rijeka (1890) and Pula (1893).³² At the Politeama Ciscutti, however, there was an exceptional situation, for here we find Nicoletto Deboni working as scene designer and decorator, even though he is also known to have worked as the theatre’s caretaker from its opening until 1928. His were the sets for the first performances of *La Wally* and *Nozze istriane*.³³

The following table summarises the information it has been possible to gather concerning the scene designers working in the area. It indicates their names in alphabetical order, along with their provenance, the theatre they supplied, and the years in which their services were needed.

Scene designers	Provenance	Theatre	Year
Achille Amato & Cesare Ferri	Milan	Zadar	1897, 1900
Pietro Bertoja	Venice	Rijeka	1890
		Pula	1893
<i>Nicoletto Deboni [Dobrovich]</i>	<i>Pula</i>	Pula	1908, 1909
Erzegovich e Scotton ³⁴	[Šibenik]	Šibenik	1908

6.2.[1909], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9. The Casa Francesco Parisi, a company founded in 1812, was in the business of international transportation and storage.

31 See Letter from Enrico Gallina to Giovanni Mazzoleni, Trieste, 16. 1. 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 6.

32 “Il Politeama Ciscutti”, *L'Eco di Pola*, 5. 8. 1893.

33 Bogneri mentions Deboni [Dobrovich] as one who had been a stage designer at La Fenice in Venice for many years and also active at the Teatro Sociale in Udine. “He worked in Pula in an attic, where the cold was such in the winter season that his colours froze so he had to interrupt his work. Among his last works done at our Teatro Ciscutti was the scenery for *La Wally* and for *Nozze istriane* which were genuine masterpieces of scenography.” (“Egli lavorava a Pola in una soffitta, dove nella stagione invernale il freddo era tale che gli si gelavano i colori in modo da dover interrompere pure il lavoro. Fra gli ultimi suoi lavori eseguiti al nostro Ciscutti si rammentano le scene per *La Wally* e per le *Nozze Istriane* che furono dei veri capolavori di scenografia.”); Bogneri, *Il Politeama Ciscutti*, p. 228.

34 On their letterhead they introduced themselves as “Erzegovich-Scotton / addobbatori del ‘Teatro Mazzoleni’ / Sebenico”, Šibenik, 5. 3. 1908, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b.

Lorenzo Guidicelli	Trieste	Split	1859
		Zadar	1861
Guidicelli e Rossi	[Trieste]	Rijeka	1891
Carlo Magni e Giovanni Ansaldo	Milan	Rijeka	1911
Costantino Magni	-	Rijeka	1912
G. Magni	-	Zadar	1904
Rossi e Moschetto	Trieste	Rijeka	1896
		Zadar	1909
Canuto Soriani	Milan	Šibenik	1909, 1911, 1914
Ercole Sormani	Milan	Zadar	1892, 1896, 1898, 1899, 1902, 1905
		Split	1895
Antonio Stancich	Trieste	Rijeka	1896, 1909
		Zadar	1894

Also included among the materials travelling were the stage costumes. And of the costume workshops involved, we find some that were well known, such as that of the Teatro Costanzi in Rome (which provided the impresario Trauner with seven chests of stage costumes), or that of Davide Ascoli in Venice,³⁵ or even that of Francesco Rosi of Milan, which supplied the Teatro Mazzoleni for *Il trovatore* and *La traviata* in 1909. The costume measurements were either communicated through the agents who dealt with the workshops or were directly conveyed by the impresario to the person responsible for costumes. In the case of Šibenik the orders were placed by the director Mazzoleni himself, who in 1909, for example, specifically asked for the stage costumes to be modest in size, so as to suit the slim chorus singers employed at the theatre: “[...] the costumier must not make the clothing too big, since our chorus singers are young ladies of graceful figure and not to be confused with the fourth-class carriages that unfortunately make up the female chorus in productions of opera seria”.³⁶

The costume workshops (which again were mostly based in Milan, as is clear from the table below), mindful of the increasingly frequent cases of their wares being confiscated when impresarios went bankrupt, preferred to safeguard their goods by making it known who owned the property. This was done, for example, by Antonio De Caro, the renowned costume makers that supplied the theatre of Split in 1895. The firm took pains to stress that the clothing was its own property and that it had been hired out to the impresario in

35 The Venetian costume workshop of Davide Ascoli also had branches in Milan and Rome.

36 “[...] il vestiarista si tenga a vestiti non molto grandi poiché le nostre coriste sono giovanette di figura elegante e non da confondersi coi vagoni di quarta classe che pur troppo costituiscono il coro femminile negli spettacoli d’opera seria”; Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Paolo Rocca, 9. 3. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

question. In this way no act of confiscation could be made. “[...] I therefore inform this honourable Management”, De Caro wrote to Split, “that not only the said wardrobe but also that which will be sent later to put on the other operas *is my exclusive property*, hired to Sig. Vecchi, and on these said goods no act of sequestration or anything else can be exercised for any reason”.³⁷ In this way the company, anticipating unpleasant surprises, made it absolutely clear who the costumes belonged to.

Some firms even demanded a deposit as a guarantee for the return of the costumes, as happened when the Hofstätter & Bonaventura costume workshop of Trieste hired its costumes to the theatre of Šibenik. Believing that this was not a procedure contemplated in theatrical practice, the manager Mazzoleni, writing to the impresario Giuseppe Ponzio, insisted that the deposit should not be paid, as a matter of principle, for it would also create a precedent.³⁸ Hofstätter & Bonaventura had also been supplying other theatres in the coastal region: that of Pula in 1887, 1904 (*Il trovatore*), 1906 and 1908 (the production of

37 “informo perciò codesta on.le Direzione che tanto il sud[detto] vestiario come quello che in seguito si spedirà per rappresentare le altre opere è *mia esclusiva proprietà*, noleggiato al sig. Vecchi, e sulla detta merce non può quindi esercitarsi alcun atto di sequestro od altro per nessuna ragione”; Letter from Antonio De Caro to Gajo Filomen Bulat, Milano, 24. 10. 1895, HR-MGS: Kazalište 4/ kut. I–XVII.

38 “Write to that Signor Bonaventura that if the theatre management of Šibenik has had enough trust to reserve the theatre for you without making you pay a deposit, as is the theatrical custom, the costume makers of Trieste can also have the trust to rent out to you those few items of clothing without the need of guarantees that do not exist in theatrical customs and that, on principle, also so as not to create precedents vis-à-vis the costume makers in general, the management cannot grant. An impresario like yourself, who is no longer a new person but someone for whom the management of the theatre of Lošinj can give references, has the right to this small amount of trust from a theatrical costume maker. With this firm I have never done business, knowing it to be very expensive, but from no other firm have there ever been requests of this kind. It could be acceptable to request a guarantee from a first *piazza*, but not from subsequent *piazze*, as one can never know what requirements Signor Bonaventura may have later at the return of the clothing. When they are dealing with managements, knowing that they are on safe ground, these suppliers create thousands of annoyances and have necessities of all kinds.” (“Scriva a quel Signor Bonaventura che se la Direzione del teatro di Šibenik si è fidata di riservarle il teatro senza farLe versare una cauzione cosa che è nelle consuetudini teatrali, anche la sartoria di Trieste può fidarsi di noleggiarLe quei pochi vestiti senza bisogno di garanzie che non esistono nelle consuetudini teatrali e che la Direzione per principio e per non crear precedenti verso la sartoria non può concedere. Un impresario come Lei non più persona nuova ma della quale può dar referenze la direzione del Teatro di Lussino ha il diritto di questo poco di fiducia da parte di una sartoria teatrale. Colla stessa io non ho fatto mai affari sapendola molto cara, ma mai da nessun altra vennero richieste di questo genere. Poteva andare una garanzia richiesta da una prima piazza, ma non dalle piazze successive, inquantochè non si può mai sapere che esigenze può avere più tardi il Signor Bonaventura alla restituzione dei vestiti. Quando si tratta di direzioni sapendo di andare su sicuro creano mille noie e hanno esigenze d’ogni genere questi signori fornitori.”; Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Giuseppe Ponzio, [Šibenik], 8. 4. 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

Smareglia's *Nozze istriane*); and that of Rijeka in both the 1891 season and the 1909 season run by Alpron.³⁹ It could also provide footwear and jewellery when required.⁴⁰ The company had its own official rental agreement form.⁴¹

We have one instance in which the stage costumes, instead of being provided by a proper costume workshop, belonged to one of the singers involved in an opera season. This happened in Pula in 1911, when the costumes for *Mefistofele* turned out to be owned by Cavalier Nicoletti Kormann, the bass of the company.⁴² For Pula, wigs and makeup were generally provided by the theatrical wig company of Giuseppe Martinelli.⁴³ Again we find the same concerns over possible delays in the deliveries, for in 1901 *Carmen* had to be staged instead of *Rigoletto* when the costumes failed to materialise.⁴⁴ In short, if the costumes didn't get there in time, an opera might have to be replaced.

As in the previous table, we have collected the available information concerning the costume workshops, indicating name and provenance of the workshop, the theatre they supplied, and the years in which the material was used.

Costume workshop	Provenance	Theatre	Year
David Ascoli	Venice	Pula	1901, 1907, 1910, 1912
		Rijeka	1913
		Zadar	1902, 1905
Giovanni Bonaventura	Trieste	Zadar	1909
		Šibenik	1908
		Split	1897
Hofstätter & Bonaventura	Trieste	Rijeka	1891, 1896, 1909
		Zadar	1894, 1900
		Pula	1887, 1904, 1906, 1908
Cattaneo	Milan	Rijeka	1866

39 Bogneri, *Il Politeama Ciscutti*, p. 97.

40 See Poster for *L'Africana*, Teatro Comunale of Rijeka, 8. 4. 1891, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 10.

41 See Rental agreement from the theatre costume workshop Hofstätter & Bonaventura of Trieste, Trieste, 15. 2. 1894, HR-DAZD, folder 8.

42 "Politeama Ciscutti", *Il Giornaleto di Pola*, 9. 10. 1911.

43 Marsetič, *Il cimitero civico di Monte Ghio a Pola*, p. 259.

44 "Last night a large audience attended the definitively last performance of *Carmen*, which was given as a fallback in lieu of the announced *Rigoletto* for which the costumes hadn't arrived." ("Pubblico numeroso assistette iersera all'ultima definitiva rappresentazione della *Carmen*, datasi in via di ripiego in sostituzione dell'annunciato *Rigoletto* per il quale non era arrivato il vestiario."); "Politeama Ciscutti", *Il Giornaleto di Pola*, 4. 11. 1901. "The very rich set of costumes is from the Ascoli firm in Venice," the article also stated, "which the impresa had to contact given that it had been poorly treated in *Carmen* by the costume workshops of Trieste." ("Il vestiario ricchissimo è della casa Ascoli di Venezia, alla quale l'impresa dovette rivolgersi essendosi male corrisposto nella *Carmen* dai vestiaristi di Trieste."); "Politeama Ciscutti", *Il Giornaleto di Pola*, 6. 11. 1901.

Telemaco Chiappa & figlio	Milan	Pula	1898
		Zadar	1896, 1897, 1898, 1899
		Šibenik	1911
Antonio De Caro	Milan	Split	1895
Antonio Ghirardi	Milan	Zadar	1861
Leonardo Melli	Milan	Zadar	1892
Pirola	Milan	Rijeka	1871
Francesco Rosi	Milan	Šibenik	1909
		Zadar	1904
Sartoria del Teatro Costanzi	Rome	Zadar	-
Sartoria Teatrale Italiana	Venice	Rijeka	1914
Sartoria Vianelli	Milan	Split	1895

Similar considerations apply to the theatrical shoemakers. Among all the names that have turned up, that of Bertoletti stands out, because among the materials preserved at the state archive of Šibenik we also possess a regular pre-printed rental agreement, complete with all its clauses, used when the firm rented its goods to the Mazzoleni brothers for the 1909 season in the city.

Shoemakers	Provenance	Theatre	Year
Bertoletti	Milan	Šibenik	1909
		Zadar	1904, 1905
S. Bevilacqua	n. f.	Zadar	1909
Giosuè Cazzola	Milan	Rijeka	1910, 1911, 1912
		Zadar	1897
Luigi Ghirlanda	n. f.	Šibenik	1911
Giacomo Nicoletti	Bologna	Rijeka	1907
Annibale Panni	Milan	Zadar	1892, 1896, 1898, 1899, 1900

As regards the property firms (*attrezzisti*), we are also fortunate to have valuable evidence in the form of an “agreement for the rental of properties” (*scrittura pel noleggjo di attrezzi*) issued by the Antonio Orrigoni firm, which provided materials for that same 1909 season at Šibenik. Usually, however, the names of shoemakers and property firms are the most difficult to trace, since they were not printed on the posters and were among the very last things to be discussed and defined in the negotiations between impresario and theatre management (and indeed were often left to the discretion of the impresario).

Property firms	Provenance	Theatre	Year
Andrea Capuzzo	Venice	Rijeka	1909
		Šibenik	1911
Antonio Orrigoni	Pavia	Šibenik	1909

Lazzaro Pogna	Trieste	Pula	1898
E. Rancati & C.	Milan	Rijeka	1896
		Zadar	1892, 1896, 1897, 1899, 1900, 1902, 1904, 1905
		Split	1897
<i>Rosati & Zammarchi</i> ⁴⁵	<i>Florence</i>	<i>Zadar</i>	<i>1899</i>

What has survived is a price listed issued by Rosati and Zammarchi,⁴⁶ which provides an insight into how much the hiring of properties for various works could cost at the end of the 19th century, depending on the opera type:

1	Aida	L. 300	14	Lucia di Lammermoor	35
2	Andrea Chénier	200	15	Lucrezia Borgia	50
3	Ballo in maschera	40	16	Macbet (<i>sic</i>)	150
4	Barbiere di Siviglia	25	17	Manon	90
5	Bohème	90	18	Nabucco	90
6	Carmen	100	19	Norma	50
7	Cavalleria rusticana	25	20	Pagliacci	50
8	Due Foscari	40	21	Poliuto	70
9	Ernani	45	22	Rigoletto	35
10	Fra Diavolo	50	23	Ruy Blas	45
11	Faust	80	24	Semiramide	200
12	Forza del destino	45	25	Traviata	50
13	Gioconda	120			

Naturally operas like *Aida* and *Semiramide* or a grand opera like *La Gioconda* were those that needed the largest quantity of materials and were therefore the most expensive, though in general the cost of theatrical properties was appreciably lower than that for the rental of a score, for example. In the same brochure the company specified that the cost of shipping the properties there and back would be borne by the impresario. There were also instances where a costume workshop and a warehouse of theatrical properties were combined within a single establishment; in that case, the theatre would find a saving in the rental costs.

If we look at the names of the companies supplying theatrical properties to the coastal region, we can say with certainty that the vast majority of stage materials came from Italy.

45 Proposal for a collaboration in the form of an advertising brochure. We do not know if Zadar actually made use of their services.

46 Brochure advertising the Rosati e Zammarchi property firm that arrived at the theatre of Zadar in 1899, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

6.3 The hiring of musical material

Included among the materials that had to travel, were also full scores, vocal scores and separate parts. The parts for the singers and orchestra were hired directly from the publishers; indeed, renting – and not the retail sale of music – constituted the main business of the publishing houses.⁴⁷ In practical terms, the theatre managements or impresarios would address their requests for music to the representatives of Casa Ricordi. Some requests from the coastal area were addressed to Carlo Schmidl, the Ricordi representative in Trieste. The theatre management or the impresario would send off the list specifying the parts required (for instruments and singers), and if Schmidl should happen to be short of any of the items, he would send for them directly from Milan. In such cases the scores would not travel by steamer, but would arrive by land mail.

Alternatively, requests could be made to Antonio Gallo,⁴⁸ the Ricordi representative for the Veneto and Illirico (as the coastal region was called at the time), or to the companies of Francesco Lucca or Edoardo Sonzogno. A hire agreement was then drawn up, which varied from publisher to publisher. Antonio Gallo, though himself working for Casa Ricordi, had his own form for the hire agreement of an opera score, which was different from that used by Ricordi itself, and naturally also different from that of Casa Lucca. The agreement would indicate the beginning and end of the period in which the parts were used, together with the cost of the hire.⁴⁹

At Rijeka we have an example of rentals from four different suppliers for the same opera season in 1868:⁵⁰

Nolo al Buttazzoni ⁵¹ per Vespri e Borgia	f. 113
Nolo al Ricordi per la Saffo	139
Nolo a Lucca pel Vettor Pisani	193,75
Nolo a Giudici e Strada per Bianchi e Neri	1060

47 See Stefano Baia Curioni, *Mercanti dell'opera: storie di casa Ricordi*, Il Saggiatore, Bologna 2011, p. 99.

48 Antonio Gallo was a music dealer and joint owner of the Venetian theatres, the Teatro Gallo (formerly San Benedetto) and the Teatro Malibran; see Rosselli, *Elenco provvisorio*.

49 On the obligations of the contracting parties, see also Enrico Rosmini, *Legislazione e giurisprudenza dei teatri*, Hoepli, Milano 1893, p. 727. On the terms and conditions of the Milanese publishers, and specifically on the publisher's rights and the obligations of the impresa, see the table given by Stefano Baia Curioni on p. 114 of his *Mercanti dell'opera: storie di casa Ricordi*, Il Saggiatore, Bologna 2011.

50 See the General statement of income and expenditure for the administration of the Teatro Civico of Rijeka in the Lent-spring season of 1868, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

51 At the time Gaetano Buttazzoni was a music dealer in Piazza Pavaglione in Bologna; see *Teatri, Arti e Letteratura*, anno 30, vol. LVII, no. 1443, 12. 8. 1852.

Leaving aside *Bianchi e neri* (which belonged to the category of “balli”), the highest cost was always for the most recent opera, in this case *Vettor Pisani*. If there had been a single supplier, there would surely have been a saving on the overall cost. Other evidence from just a few years later tells us that Antonio Gallo in 1871 could earn just over 300 Italian lire (about 120 florins) for the rental of *Falsi monetari* and *Don Checco* at Šibenik.⁵² While the rental of two operas (“Faust and another mutually agreed on”) for a season at Zadar in 1870 could cost 400 florins,⁵³ just two years later, in 1872, there was talk – for the same theatre – of a rental of 1,500 florins for three operas (“Faust 900, Marta 300, another 250”): a striking difference,⁵⁴ suggesting that the publisher could arbitrarily decide on the rental price depending on the circumstances and the theatre, over and above the current rates. To be sure, the duration of the rental could also have an impact on the cost. The rental of *Guarany*, as we have seen in earlier chapters, could cost up to 800 lire (or about 320 florins) in 1885, whereas in 1887 the staging of as many as five repertoire operas could be had for 1,000 francs (i. e. less than 500 florins: a figure not much higher than for the single opera mentioned).⁵⁵ Hence, if one rented scores from the same publisher one could get a discount. And renting repertoire operas also cost less than new operas. For the Sonzogno publishing house, for example, *Cavalleria rusticana* cost as much as 2,700 lire (or 1,080 florins) in 1892, just two years after the premiere. The same applied to Ricordi. If any impresario had wished to put on an opera like *Tosca* shortly after the premiere, he would have spent no less than 3,000 lire (which certainly explains why Olimpio Lovrich requested a subsidy much higher than that of other impresarios when he proposed the opera to the management of the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar). The following table gives the possible costs of renting certain operas from Ricordi in 1901:

Tosca	L. 3.000	[florins 1.200]
Don Carlo	2.000	[800]
Mefistofele	1.200	[480]
Aida	1.060	[424]
L'Africana	800	[320]
La forza del destino	800	[320]
Macbeth	500	[200]
Nabucco	500	[200]
I lombardi alla prima crociata	500	[200]
Norma	300	[120]

52 See Receipt from Antonio Gallo for the rental of *Falsi monetari* and *Don Checco*, Šibenik, 5. 7. 1871, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3.

53 Estimate for the theatre of Zadar, autumn season 1870, HR-DAZD, folder 26.

54 Estimate for the opera season to be given at the Teatro Sociale of Zadar, Milano, 26. 5. 1872, HR-DAZD, folder 26.

55 The figure was for the hire of *Mosè*, *Nabucco*, *I lombardi alla prima crociata*, *Anna Bolena* and *La Vestale*; see Estimate for the opera season, Zadar, 1887, HR-DAZD, folder 26.

The difference between a *Tosca* and the remaining works from the past, such as Verdi's, was a conspicuous one (as regards the 2,000 lire for *Don Carlo* let us not forget that we are talking about an opera of much greater proportions than the others given in the list).

To these costs one would have to add a 100 lire deposit for each opera.⁵⁶ There was also a fine for the late return of the parts, a sum that would increase week by week.⁵⁷ The transportation costs were borne by the *impresa*. The *impresa* was also obliged to indicate the ownership of the scores on the posters, or be liable to a fine. A fine would also be imposed on those who copied the music, either wholly or partially. It was understood that if the composer should make any additions to his music for a specific performance, these would have to be ceded to the publisher. The librettos were purchased directly from the publisher and could not be printed locally. Certain printed forms of the hire agreement included a list of the operas owned by the publisher. And in the archival collection relating to the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka we also find catalogues of operas (and respective prices) sent to the theatre by Tito Ricordi and Francesco Lucca in 1887. Ricordi also sent its *Annuario Artistico*.

The music was then duly sent off. Delivery of the parts was accompanied by an itemised list. If the scores had been ordered from Gallo, they travelled from Venice to Trieste by Lloyd steamship and then left Trieste for the various cities along the coast. If the materials were requested by the theatre of Zadar, they could either take the Venice-Trieste route or arrive directly from Ancona (arriving at Ancona using the Gondrand transportation company, for example). It could also happen that the orchestral and choral parts were sent from one coastal theatre to another, as in the case of *Rigoletto* and *La sonnambula*, two operas that were staged in 1911, first at the Teatro Bonetti of Mali Losinj (Lussinpiccolo) and then in Šibenik. In that particular instance the parts were simply sent to Šibenik by the impresario Ponzio.⁵⁸ With scores too there could be delays in delivery, which could easily have a direct impact on the theatre's day-to-day programming. A delay could mean a change of programme⁵⁹ or even lead to a production being postponed, as happened at Zadar in

56 See Letter from Giulio Ricordi to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 14. 3. 1901, HR-DAZD, folder 10. As late as 1909 Mazzoleni paid Schmidl 100 lire as a deposit for the hire of the parts for *Il trovatore* and *La traviata*, operas costing 400 lire. The amount of the deposit had evidently increased over the years, for as recently as 1885 it was 60 lire instead of 100.

57 See for example the Hire agreement drawn up between the Francesco Lucca firm and the impresario Carlo Vianello, Zadar, 1875, HR-DAZD, folder 27.

58 See Letter from Giuseppe Ponzio to the theatre management of Šibenik, Lussinpiccolo, 3. 4. 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

59 This happened, for example, at Rijeka, when the programme of what was probably a benefit concert was changed at the last minute: "If the evening's programme could have been better chosen and more compatible with the gifts of the eminent artist, that happened (from what we were assured) independently of her will. Signorina Ciuti had chosen, among the other works, one act from the opera *Rigoletto* and the last act of the opera *Traviata*, but the delayed delivery of the music was the reason

October 1892, when the Casa Sonzogno failed to send the parts for *Mignon* in time. On that occasion the impresario suffered heavy losses and was forced to appeal to the theatre management with a request for at least a partial reimbursement.⁶⁰

why the programme had to be changed.” (“Se il programma della serata poteva essere di scelta più felice e rispondente alle doti dell’esimia artista, ciò fu, a quanto ci viene assicurato, indipendente da lei; la signorina Ciuti aveva scelto tra le altre produzioni un atto dell’opera *Rigoletto* e l’ultimo dell’opera *Traviata*, ma la ritardata spedizione della relativa musica fu causa che il programma dovesse essere cambiato.”); “Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, 18. 5. 1874.

- 60 The impresario Annibale Cicognani declared that “on account of the colossal expenses sustained because of the delayed arrival of the score of *Mignon* (a delay that was due to the sole fault of the publisher Edoardo Sonzogno) which obliged me to postpone the performances, and by missing the best nights had to suffer a great loss of money, especially in view of the enormous cost of staging *Cavalleria rusticana* (just the hire of the score cost 2,700 lire), without counting the hardly negligible cost of achieving a successful result as far as possible, I make a respectful request to this esteemed management that I should be granted a subsidy that would alleviate (at least in part, given also the paltry receipts from the season-ticket holders and the very low evenings’ takings) the losses encountered.” (“in causa delle esuberanti spese incontrate per il ritardo nell’arrivo dello spartito della *Mignon*, (ritardo avvenuto per sola colpa dell’editore Edoardo Sonzogno) avendo dovuto ritardare l’andata in scena, e perduto le sere migliori dovette sottostare ad una forte perdita di danaro, più per l’enorme spesa onde porre in scena la *Cavalleria Rusticana* (il puro noleggio dello spartito costa lire 2.700) e che senza contare le spese non indifferente per tenere il buon successo per quanto possibile; fa rispettosa domanda a codesta spettabile Direzione affinché gli venga accordato qualche sussidio onde alleggerire (almeno in parte, visto anche il misero incasso degli abbonati ed i scarsissimi introiti serali) le perdite incontrate.”); Letter from Annibale Cicognani to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 21. 10. 1892, HR-DAZD, folder 7.

7 Working conditions of the artistic staff

7.1 Recruitment of singers

We have so far seen that the majority of the companies performing opera in the coastal theatres were from Italy. Exceptions were the seasons at Split and Šibenik that hosted Bohemian and Croatian companies in the years immediately before and after the turn of the century. We have also noted that singers were engaged for individual seasons, not for one or two years, as was the prerogative of their French and German colleagues for example.

We shall now identify some of the possible ways in which singers were recruited in Istria and Dalmatia. In order to engage the artists, the impresario working in that area could make his way directly to Milan or to other cities of Istria and Dalmatia. Alternatively, the journey could be made by the *maestro concertatore* or conductor who was engaged to direct the season. A further solution was for either the theatre management or impresario to delegate the selection of the artists to a theatrical agency (with the approval of the publishing house that owned the score).

First, a local impresario could recruit the singers by going directly to Milan. We have various examples of this practice, which besides was widespread in the impresarial world also in other countries.¹ One instance was at Rijeka in 1872 when the impresa for the Lent season was run by three locals, one of whom, “accompanied by Signor E. de Bonmartini”, went to Milan to engage the singers.² At Split the impresario Karaman was given the green light to go to Milan with the aim of “starting the negotiations”.³ If one didn’t go to Milan, the next-best option could be Trieste, calling on the Teatro Comunale. The theatre man-

1 On the subject, see for example the section “El proceso de reclutamiento de cantantes (I): visitas a los teatros italianos”, in José María Domínguez, “El Teatro Real de Madrid durante la gestión del empresario Ramón de Michelena (1882–94)”, *Acta Musicologica*, LXXXVII/2 (2015), p. 226.

2 “Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, 26. 2. 1872.

3 This is how it was reported to the mayor of Split: “In the meantime I am letting you know that I will abide by what the theatre management will decide concerning the Italian operas to be performed in this theatre in the forthcoming spring season, and so Signor Karaman can, without delay, begin negotiations in Milan in order to draw up the respective contract as soon as possible.” (Le faccio frattanto sapere fin d’ora ch’io aderirò a quanto la Direzione teatrale sarà per stabilire circa le opere italiane, che dovranno essere rappresentate in codesto teatro, nella prossima stagione primaverile, e quindi il sig. Karaman può, senza indugio, iniziare delle trattative a Milano, per poter quanto prima stipulare il relativo contratto.”); Letter from A. Buglich to the mayor (*podestà*) of Split, Hvar (Lesina), 4. 2. 1904, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

agement of Rijeka sent its secretary Elpidio Springhetti there to negotiate the opera season.⁴ At Pula the aim was to give *Pagliacci* “with the whole artistic company of singers presently performing very successfully at the theatre of La Fenice in Trieste”.⁵ The representative of the *impresa* duly departed for the city to conclude the deal.

At times it was a director of the theatre who effectively did the *impresario's* work. As did, for example, Paolo Mazzoleni, who went from Šibenik to Zadar in person to engage opera companies. He did this for the Becherini company in 1882, and in April 1890 he made another journey to “start, and possibly conclude”, negotiations with the company performing there at the Teatro Nuovo – in those years under contract to Paolo Massimini – in the operas *Carmen* and *Fra Diavolo*. We know that he spent a whole week in the city.⁶ In the following month the theatre management sent off the *impresario* Vincenzo Rossini, this time to the Grand’Orfeo Troccoli in Split, to engage a possible opera company.⁷ We find Paolo Mazzoleni in Zadar once again in July 1891, this time in an attempt to engage the Massimini company,⁸ and also in 1894 to hear *Il barbiere di Siviglia* “with the possible aim of engaging the company”.⁹ Two years later the theatre management entrusted him with the task of returning to Zadar to see “if it were possible to make a deal with the opera company to give some performances of Puccini’s *Manon*”.¹⁰

The choice of singers was not always a task entrusted to the *impresario*. It could also be made by the conductor and *maestro concertatore*, though this happened in a small percentage of cases in the area.¹¹ At Zadar, for example, for the inauguration of the Teatro Nuovo, the *maestro concertatore* Ravasio was sent to Italy to recruit the singers for the cast. On this

4 Letter from Meynier to the Civic Magistrate of Rijeka, Rijeka, 30. 1. 1918, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

5 “con tutto il complesso artistico che attualmente agisce con grandissimo successo sulle scene della Fenice di Trieste”; *Politeama Ciscutti*, L’Eco di Pola, 20. 10. 1894.

6 “trattare e possibilmente combinare”; Receipt for travel expenses of Paolo Mazzoleni, Šibenik, 23. 4. 1890, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3.

7 Receipt for travel expenses of Vincenzo Rossini, Šibenik, 7. 5. 1890, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3.

8 In the list of small expenses for 1891, we read “For the journey to Zadar there and back, and six days’ stay with the intention of trying to secure the Massimini company, of which the tenor Daddi later became the *impresario*, for eight nights during the July fair” (“Per viaggio andata e ritorno a Zara, e sei giorni di fermata onde possibilmente combinare compagnia Massimini, della quale divenne poi *impresario* il tenore Daddi, per otto sere durante la fiera di luglio”); Small expenses from 20 February 1891 to end of March 1892, Šibenik, [1892], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3.

9 “per possibilmente scritturare la compagnia”. Small expenses from 1 January 1894 to December of the same year, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3.

10 “se fosse stato possibile di combinare la compagnia lirica per dare qui qualche rappresentazione della *Manon* di Puccini”; Small expenses from 1 January 1895 to 31 January 1895, Šibenik 1895, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3. This record of minor expenses was personally drawn up by Paolo Mazzoleni.

11 On the role of the conductor in the choice of singers in the second half of the 19th century, see for example Ruben Vernazza, “Il direttore d’orchestra nel sistema produttivo del teatro d’opera italiano di fine Ottocento. Un caso eloquente: Emilio Usiglio a Firenze nel 1892”, in *Orchestral Conducting*

occasion there was no contract with any impresario, since the season was being organised by the theatre management itself. Subsequently the theatre management of Zadar could contact the publishing houses to gain their approval of the singers.¹² A similar instance can be found at Šibenik in 1909, when the director Mazzoleni sent the *maestro concertatore* and conductor Raffaele Patucchi to Milan; Patucchi would also take the opportunity to collect the scenery while he was there.¹³ It was then that Patucchi heard, and selected from among other possible candidates, the soprano Maria Torchi, about whose voice he reports: “fine, strong voice, doesn’t extend greatly into the high register, but fully rounded in the chest notes, as befits the role of Azucena”.¹⁴ Once the *maestro concertatore* had chosen the singers, in certain cases the preliminary rehearsals at the keyboard (*prove al cembalo*) could be carried out directly in the city of their recruitment.

The cast could also be put together directly by the theatrical agency, possibly with the approval of the publisher; in which case the singers were sent to the hosting theatre without the management hearing them. In such cases, therefore, the local management genuinely needed an agent to work on its behalf. In 1899 the management at Zadar received the following reassurance from Gustavo Argenti, an agent who was proposing *Fedra*: “I have spoken to Signor Sonzogno, and the company will be put together entirely under his

in the Nineteenth Century, edited by Roberto Illiano and Michela Nicolai, Brepols, Turnhout 2014, pp. 185–212.

- 12 Gastone Coen, *C’era una volta una ducal città*, Comunità degli italiani di Zara, [Zadar] 2008, pp. 74 and 76.
- 13 The management of the Teatro Mazzoleni provided Patucchi with a document to be used on the railways and shipping routes to obtain discounts for the journey: “This is to certify that the musician Signor Raffaele Patucchi is travelling to Milan for theatrical purposes and has the task of securing and taking care of the transportation of the stage materials and costumes for the opera company that will soon be staged at our Teatro Mazzoleni. This certification is hereby issued with a request to the Railway Company and Navigation Company to grant the reductions allowed to travelling companies on the rental of theatrical material.” (“Si attesta che il maestro di musica Signor Raffaele Patucchi si porta a Milano per i scopi teatrali ed ha l’incarico di provvedere e curare il trasporto del materiale scenico e vestitari della compagnia lirica che agirà prossimamente in questo ‘Teatro Mazzoleni’. Si rilascia la presente attestazione con preghiera all’Amministrazione Ferroviaria e alla Società di Navigazione di concedere gli abbuoni d’uso alle compagnie viaggianti, sul nolo del materiale teatrale.”); Certification from Giovanni Mazzoleni for Raffaele Patucchi, Šibenik, 14. 3. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.
- 14 “bella, forte, non troppo estesa negli acuti, ma ben rotonda nelle note di petto, come si richiede in un’Azucena”. She is described as a young woman full of life and beautiful, “though from close quarters her complexion doesn’t seem so fresh; tall, slim, dressed with a great display of furs and jewels that... never mind if they are chemical or made of glass”; (“quantunque da vicino dimostri la carnagione non troppo fresca; alta, snella, vestita con grande sfarzo di pellicce e di brillanti che... non importa se sono chimici o di vetro”); Letter from Raffaele Patucchi to Giovanni Mazzoleni, Milano, 17. 3. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

supervision”.¹⁵ The theatre management could also contact the publishers directly. In fact Casa Ricordi wrote directly to the management at Zadar in 1898 and gave its approval of the singers for *Lohengrin*, listing them along with the *maestro concertatore* and conductor.¹⁶ That particular season was run by the impresario Trauner, but the official confirmation was addressed to the management without any form of intermediation.

Some singers had been heard before they were selected; others were chosen because they were already well known and had perhaps just made successful appearances at other theatres; for yet others, above all in the case of sudden substitutions, one would either have to contact an agency or rely on the opinion of third parties (impresarios or fellow-managers at other theatres), perhaps supported by reviews published in the newspapers. We have also a few rare cases of singers who directly offered their services to the management without going through an agency. The singer might know a member of the local management or, vice versa, be already known to someone in the management, though not necessarily personally; or could even be a complete stranger. At Rijeka various singers came forward for the inauguration of the theatre in 1885. The register of documents (*protocollo degli esibiti*) for Rijeka in the same year recorded the applications of the mezzo soprano Güttemberg, the baritone Pltz and the soprano Emma Rütli.¹⁷ At Šibenik we find a letter from the tenor Aldo Tamagni to the director Mazzoleni, complete with information on his fees. The letter is written in very shaky Italian, but he seems extremely determined:

Finding myself here at the Teatro Alambra I take the opportunity to offer you my number as an operatic tenor, having done the Teatro Eden in Trieste and with the first of November I will return there. So I will have the whole of the month of October available if you wish to do business, as I am sure you will be satisfied. My fees are 100 lire a day if the contract is for only 10 days, and I can come for 90 a day if it is for 15 days. I beg you to excuse me if I enclose the postage stamps for a prompt answer. So that I can give a better guarantee on my account, *if I don't satisfy you on the first night, my contract will be terminated* (I do not fear any competition).¹⁸

15 “Ho parlato col Sig. Sonzogno, e la compagnia sarà fatta interamente sotto la sua sorveglianza.”; Letter from Gustavo Argenti to Giorgio Nachich d’Osliak, Milano, 10. 2. 1899, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

16 Letter from Casa Ricordi to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 27. 3. 1898, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

17 Register of documents (*Protocollo degli esibiti*), 1885, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 10. In any case the practice was common also in neighbouring theatres. In 1859 at the theatre of Trieste, singers presented themselves to the board of directors (*assemblea dei presidenti*) offering their services for the season, as in the case of the baritone and impresario Federico Monari Rocca.

18 “Trovandomi qui al teatro Alambra accolgo [*sic*] locazione [*sic*] di offrirle il mio numero in qualità di tenore lirico avendo fatto il Teatro Eden di Trieste e col primo di novembre cioè [*sic*] di nuovo la riantrè [*sic*]. Quindi avrei tutto il mese di ottobre disponibile se chrede [*sic*] voler trattare d'affari commè [*sic*],

Such cases of self-candidacy had little chance of being accepted. In the eyes of a theatre management, a singer represented by nobody was less important than one with an agent or impresario behind him to manage his career.

7.2 Contracts with singers

The services of these singers were governed by engagement agreements. Unfortunately, the number of contracts found for the area concerned is negligible in proportion to the length of the period covered by the present research (1861–1918). For the very few surviving documents of this type, the following table indicates the year in which the agreement was drawn up, the employer, the artist engaged, the city in which the document was signed, and the theatre in which the singer was engaged to work:

Year	Employer	Artist Engaged	Signed in	For the theatre of
1865	impresario Angelo Tommasi	soprano Lena Tencajoli	Milan	Trieste ¹⁹
1894	agent Giovanni Simonetti [for the impresario Geremia Abriani]	soprano Annita Banchi tenor Alfredo Zonghi tenor Sigismondo Pellizzoni baritone Cesare Galardi baritone Antonio Ciclitira bass Camillo Fiegna	Trieste	Zadar
1909	agent Paolo Rocca	soprano Ada Postiglione soprano Margherita Comida soprano Erminia Daelli soprano Emma Bellucci mezzosoprano Maria Torchi tenor Vittorio Ducci tenor Tito Schipa baritone Filippo Biancofiore baritone Luigi Silvetti bass Antonio Grisoli	[Milan]	Šibenik
	agent Luciano Revere (Enrico Gallina)	chorus singers Adolfo Leghissa and Anita Marchesini	[Šibenik]	Šibenik
1914	agent Giuseppe Lusardi	tenor Giacomo Dammacco	Milan	Zadar

sono certo che ne sarà soddisfatto. Le mie pretese son di L 100 giornaliera se il contratto e [sic] di solo 10 giorni e se di 15 giorni posso per 90 al giorno. La prego scusarmi se le unisco i fracoboli [sic] per una pronta risposta, perché io possa darle migliore [sic] garanzia sul mio conto se *le prima sera non piacerò il contratto sarà annullato* [sic] (Non temo nessuna concorrenza [sic]); Letter from Aldo Tamagni to Giovanni Mazzoleni, Pula, 23. 9. 1919, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2a.

- 19 This handwritten contract was found among the papers of the *fondo* (or archival collection) relating to the theatre in the State Archive of Zadar; Contract between the impresario Angelo Tommasi and the singer Lena Tencajoli, Milano, 22. 7. 1865, HR-DAZD, folder 2.

Year	Employer	Artist Engaged	Signed in	For the theatre of
1914	Curiel agency	chorus first soprano Giovanna Forcesini chorus soprano Bianca Medea chorus soprano Emma Mutti chorus soprano Luisa Rizzoli chorus soprano Antonia Vettach chorus soprano Anita Zanti chorus alto Anna Perteghini chorus alto Rachele Fontana chorus altos Teresa and Ines Antonelli	Trieste	Zadar

The reason for the absence of contracts with singers in the archives is that this type of document was generally the prerogative of an impresario or agent and should therefore be sought in the archive of the impresario or agent himself. Today, unfortunately, such archival collections are either scattered or have completely disappeared. The reason for finding the original contracts for a large part of the cast of the 1909 season in Šibenik is that for that particular season the theatre management had set itself up as an *impresa* and genuinely acted as if it were the impresario.²⁰ It was the management itself that negotiated with the singers; and it was the director Mazzoleni in person who asked artists like the soprano Erminia Daelli, who was already working at La Scala, if she would accept an engagement in Dalmatia.²¹

In the introductory chapter mention was made of the fact that correspondences between singers and theatre managements are far from plentiful. Nonetheless, in spite of the scarcity of documentation, we can make certain observations on the form and content of these contracts. Firstly, they could either be signed with the parties present or be concluded by telegram. Moreover, they range from handwritten contracts like the one drawn up with the soprano Lena Tencajoli²² for the carnival and Lent season of 1865–66 at the Teatro Comunale of Trieste (a document that engaged her after the inauguration of the new theatre in Zadar in 1865), to later, and more fully defined, typewritten and printed models. Initially these documents were not properly subdivided into articles, as indeed in the case of the contract between the impresario Angelo Tommasi²³ and Lena Tencajoli. Here the text is

20 Among the artists singing that particular year was Tito Schipa, who shortly before had also taken part in a season of comic opera organised at Pula, though unfortunately it has not been possible to find any contract there with which to make comparisons.

21 Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Erminia Daelli, Šibenik, 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

22 On the soprano Lena Tencajoli we unfortunately have no information, other than that she performed in various Italian theatres around the time of the inauguration of the theatre of Zadar.

23 All that is known of the impresario Angelo Tommasi is that he was reputed to be a “shrewd man, of phenomenal diligence, a perfect connoisseur of theatrical matters, well-liked by the artists, and first and foremost a gentleman”. (“uomo avveduto, d’una solerzia fenomenale, conoscitore perfetto delle faccende di teatro, ben voluto dagli artisti, e galantuomo innanzitutto”); Bottura, *Storia aneddotica documentata*, p. 405. At the time of the inauguration of the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar, Tommasi was

laid out continuously over three pages and it is not easy to distinguish between the different subjects covered. We can, however, gather that it specifies a fee of 1,066.68 florins for the whole season, to be paid to the artist in the customary four instalments. This fee refers to her time in Trieste; unfortunately there is no indication of what she may have been paid for the inauguration in Zadar. The *impresa* also put at Tencajoli's disposal a carriage and a piano: a sign that she must have been a singer of a certain standing and also that the *impresario's* financial situation cannot have been too bad.

From the 1870s on, a possible model that could be used for drawing up an artistic contract was provided in the second volume of Enrico Rosmini's *La legislazione e la giurisprudenza dei teatri*. Here we find an example of an "Engagement agreement for a singing artist" (*Scrittura di un artista di canto*) consisting of 14 articles.²⁴ However, each agency or *impresario* drew up the contract in a way that reflected their own interests and convenience, which explains why the surviving contracts are extremely varied in their form.

How did the contracts with singers evolve over the years? In general we can say that they became longer and increasingly itemised. Among the surviving contracts the most complex and detailed is the one issued by Paolo Rocca's theatrical agency in Milan, which is made up of around twenty articles. Many printed contract models like Rocca's, above all at the beginning of the 20th century, were all-purpose and used to engage not only musicians and singers, but also other theatre staff, such as prompters,²⁵ no matter whether it was for opera or operetta. There were no differences in the clauses for the different people engaged, except naturally in the part that concerned the operas in question. Any clauses that were not applicable could simply be crossed out with a pen.

The heading of the document was simply "*Contratto*" or "*Scrittura di contratto*" (engagement agreement). And the opening section declared the identity of the contracting parties, giving the names of all involved. In the case of theatre directors these could number from three to five, depending on the theatre in question. Otherwise the contract would be between the given *impresa* and the "*sig. artista di...*" (followed by the role or task for which the artist was engaged, either as musician or singer). Also indicated were the time of the first performance, the name of the theatre, and the duration of the season. In some contracts the number of performances in which the singer was to take part was not specifically mentioned, but only the duration of the employment. To write that the artist was employed for the "spring season" could mean binding him or her for an overall number of days, but not of performances. This could be a disadvantage for the artist, especially if

working as *impresario* at the Teatro Comunale of Trieste and spent at least four years there from 1861.

24 Enrico Rosmini, *La legislazione e la giurisprudenza dei teatri*, Manini, Milano, 1872, p. 665.

25 Engagement agreement between the Paolo Rocca agency and the prompter Salvatore Manzella for the Teatro Mazzoleni of Šibenik, Šibenik, 22. 3. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4; or for example, the Contract between the Teatro Verdi of Zadar and the prompter Giuseppe Frangiolini, Milano, 24. 4. 1914.

the impresario was intentionally vague about the number of performances per week. Not having the number of weekly performances specified could mean, above all for singers new to such engagements, finding that they have to sing almost every night. But this seems to have been a custom carried over from the past, when the number of performances was rarely mentioned in contracts between impresario and artist; and at times not even mentioned in the advertised programmes. Naturally this also had a bearing on when the various *quartali* were paid: since the artist didn't know the total number of performances, he or she could not even know when these payments were due.²⁶ In Rocca's contracts for the theatre of Šibenik, the period of employment was indicated merely as the "spring season of 1909". The "summons to the piazza" (*chiamata alla piazza*), or the precise date on which the artist was expected to begin rehearsals, was given as 5 April, and the end of the period as 2 May. A little less than a month, therefore, in which the performances would begin "at the pleasure of the impresa" (*a piacere dell'impresa*). Now, if it happened that the artist had signed a contract with the word "circa" inserted before or after the end date, it was understood – according to theatrical custom – that the contract could be extended by another five days (or shortened) at the discretion of the impresa.²⁷

The fee, indicated both in numbers and in letters, and modes of payment followed immediately. The singers could be paid by the season, in *quartali*, or in instalments.²⁸ In the event of the impresario running into difficulties in the course of the season, the *quartale* most exposed to the risk of default was the last one. But if the impresario should fail to pay the artists a given *quartale*, performances could be suspended. And if he should abandon the impresa without honouring his financial commitments, the singers could appeal directly to the theatre management. In such circumstances only rarely would it be possible to continue the performances until the end of the season.²⁹ Indeed we also have cases of singers who

26 Rossi-Gallieno, *Saggio*, p. 73. This, however, did not occur in the contracts for front-rank theatres such as La Fenice in Venice, where the number of performances per week had been precisely indicated ever since the 1850s.

27 Letter from Paolo Massimini to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 5. 5. 1890, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

28 Valle, *Cenni*, pp. 51–83.

29 One such instance happened at Zadar (most likely in 1869 or 1870), when two members of the cast wrote as follows to the management following the bankruptcy of the impresario: "With the end of the Mazza impresa, the undersigned humbly petition their Excellencies that they be granted the extra 300 florins over and above the 700 already granted; in the knowledge that this increase would assure them no more than the third *quartale*. With such a small increase they undertake to give 30 performances, and two other operas as well as the current opera, as indicated in the Mazza contract." ("Cessata l'impresa Mazza i sottoscritti fanno umile istanza alle Sig. loro Ill.me onde venga loro accordato l'aumento di fiorini 300 oltre i 700 già accordati; persuasissimi che tale aumento assicura ai medesimi non più che il terzo quartale. Così tenue aumento essi si obbligano di dare n. 30 recite, ed altre due opere oltre l'opera in corso, come il contratto Mazza."); Letter from Teresa Cotta Brandini and Sigismondo Poggi to the presidency of the theatre of Zadar, [n. d.], HR-DAZD, folder 6.

asked the theatre management for assurances behind the impresario's back, even before the season began, since they feared that the impresario would be unable to honour his commitments. An example is that of the soprano Emma D'Agostino, who wrote to inform the theatre management of Zadar that she had been engaged as a soprano by the impresario Guida of Bari for the spring season, and to express her anxiety because Guida had offered no guarantee, particularly after a recent incident during the carnival season when many artists abandoned the *piazza* because they were not paid. "I would very much like to come to Zadar," she confessed, "but since I am at the start of my career, I would not like to find myself so far away and without money, and so I beg you gentlemen to guarantee me my wages. I request the maximum discretion."³⁰ As a rule it was the impresario who paid the singers, yet we do also find cases of payment being split between impresario and theatre management. This was more frequent if extra performances were added to the schedule. One example shall suffice, again at Zadar, when in 1914 extra nights of *Don Pasquale* were planned as a measure to improve the fortunes of the season, entailing the need to engage a tenor and a *basso comico*. The expense was split in such a way that the management was to pay 66.6% and Giuseppe Valentini, the impresario, the remaining 33.3%.³¹

The singers' fees were usually the largest item in the season's budget. This is how Consiglio Rispoli in his book *La vita pratica del teatro* regarded their pay: "Often it becomes an exaggeration: rarely is it moderate. That of the tenors and sopranos is always the biggest".³² While what Rispoli says is broadly speaking true, it is also necessary to relate the type of voice to the importance of the role in the individual operas. Confirmation for this is provided by the simple estimate drawn up by the agent Sante Profondo for the theatre of Zadar in 1870, indicating the singers' fees for a sixty-day season performing *Faust* and another opera to be decided:³³

voice	pay in florins
prima donna assoluta	300
prima donna contralto	150
comprimaria	120
primo tenore	300

30 "Io vorrei tanto volentieri a Zara, ma siccome sono in principio di carriera, non vorrei trovarmi così lontana senza danaro e perciò pregherei Loro signori di garantirmi la paga. Raccomando la massima segretezza."; Letter from Emma D'Agostino to the theatre management of Zadar, [n. p.] [1897], HR-DAZD, folder 6.

31 Addendum, Contract between the theatre management of Zadar and Giuseppe Valentini, Zadar, II. 2. 1914, HR-DAZD, folder 13.

32 "Spesso raggiunge la esagerazione: rare volte essa è discreta. Quella dei tenori e dei soprani è sempre la più forte."; Rispoli, *La vita pratica*, p. 72.

33 Estimate for the theatre of Zadar, autumn season 1870, [Agenzia teatrale autorizzata of Sante Profondo], [n. p., n. d.], HR-DAZD, folder 26.

primo baritono	200
primo basso	200
comprimario	120

Over twenty years later at the same theatre, the contracts with Giovanni Simonetti for just a little over half the time of the preceding group (from 19, 20 or 22 March to 30 April 1894), again without specifying the total number of performances, engaged the singers for the following fees:

voice	pay in lire
tenore	1100
baritono	450
soprano	750
basso	500
basso	500
baritono	100
tenore comprimario direttore di scena	32 per settimana
baritono o basso comprimario	30 per settimana

The 1,100 lire and 750 lire earned by the tenor and soprano respectively would be equivalent to no more than 550 and 375 florins. So there had been an increase over the years, but in spite of that what we notice is the difference between the fees of these sopranos and the 1,066.68 florins paid to the soprano Tencajoli as many as thirty years earlier in a theatre like the Comunale of Trieste. The 750 lire earned by the soprano in the second table was little more than a third of Tencajoli's pay. And even if one were to double the figure, conjecturing an engagement for a full season instead of just a month, it would still be lower. As a further term of comparison, we also have the fees for nine performances at the Teatro Mazzoleni of Šibenik two years later, in 1896:

voice	pay in Italian francs
Coppola Vincenzo (tenore)	1800
Crucinisca Salomea (soprano)	600
Barone Anita	300
Pinto Augusto	300
Ballia Maria	250
Gallerani (baritono)	250
Creti (basso)	200
3 comprimari	300 ³⁴

34 Letter from Enrico Viscardi to Doimo Miagostovich, Zadar, 10. 5. 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1. In total the fees amounted to 4,000 Italian francs, equal to 1,760 florins.

If we convert the Italian francs into florins, the figures are about 2.27 times lower than those in the table. So the soprano's fee (circa 264 florins) would be comparable to what her colleague was offered at the theatre of Zadar two years earlier (taking into account that here we are dealing with a limited number of performances). What stands out, on the other hand, is the huge difference between Coppola's fee and those of the other artists. The soprano's extremely low fee (compared to Coppola's) can be justified by the fact that she was a debutante and as yet unknown to the public. A further comparison can be made with the fees of the cast engaged by Rocca, again at Šibenik, for *Il trovatore* and *La traviata* in 1909. In an early estimate Rocca indicated the daily fees for the individual voices as follows, without specifying the distinctions within the basic voices:

voice	pay in lire
tenore	150
tenore	250
soprano	150
soprano	200
½ soprano	150
baritono	250
basso	250
comprim.[ari]	800 ³⁵

In the contracts, however, different fees, in most cases higher, were stipulated, as is clear if we compare the figures with those in the following table:

voice	type	singer	opera	pay in lire
primo tenore	tenore drammatico	Vittorio Ducci	Il trovatore	295
primo tenore	tenore lirico	Tito Schipa	La traviata	165
primo baritono		Luigi Silveti	La traviata and Il trovatore	325
baritono	[comprimario]	Filippo Biancofiore	La traviata and Il trovatore	112
basso		Antonio Grisoli	La traviata and Il trovatore	230
primo soprano	soprano drammatico	Ada Postiglione	Il trovatore	270
primo soprano	soprano lirico	Margherita Comida	La traviata	200
soprano utilità	[comprimaria]	Emma Bellucci	La traviata and Il trovatore	200
primo mezzosoprano		Maria Torchi	Il trovatore (Azucena)	325

35 One assumes that the entry "comprim." refers to a collective group. It would make no sense for just one *comprimario* to have a higher fee than a principal part; Estimate for company and suppliers, Paolo Rocca [Milano, 1909], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

primo mezzosoprano		Erminia Daelli ³⁶	Il trovatore (Azucena)	325
	[comprimario]	Bacco-Venturoli Carlo	La traviata and Il trovatore	200
	[comprimaria]	Donati Maria		

According to Rocca's contracts, the agreed sums were to be paid every five nights (*di cinquina in cinquina*) or every ten nights (*di decina in decina*), thereby circumventing the rule of the *quartali*.³⁷ These fees refer to a duration of just under a month, hence a shorter period than the possible three months of a full season, but even if we multiply the figures by three (conjecturing that the singers would perform for a whole season), we are still a long way short of the fees commanded by a genuine front-rank singer (or so-called *cantante di cartello*). It is not even necessary to match these figures with those of the most celebrated artists of the day, such as Enrico Caruso, who earned 50,000 lire over the three-month season when he made his debut at La Scala nine years earlier in *La bohème*.³⁸ Even a fairer comparison, as with the tenor Giacomo Dammacco, who sang in *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Zadar in 1914, makes the difference evident: Dammacco was paid 400 lire a night, as against the maximum fee of 295 lire earned by the *primo tenore* Vittorio Ducci at Šibenik.³⁹

For any singer that failed to fulfil his or her commitments there was a penalty of 300 lire, amounting, therefore, to almost the entire salary of a principal part. Moreover, we should also remember that the travel expenses were included in the singer's fee and were not reimbursed separately by the *impresa*.⁴⁰ The contracts made no reference to the secrecy of the fee; in fact their fees might even be published in the newspapers. As has already been pointed out by Michael Walter, the theatre managements and impresario did not consider this to be a particularly wise course, given that the singers, perhaps seeing that certain colleagues were better paid, might then hold higher expectations.⁴¹ On the other hand, demanding high fees could put the singer into the position of being excluded from the season. In other words, it was at his or her own risk, as we are reminded by the impresario Valenti, who rejected the proposal of the bass Camillo Fiegna for the 1896 opera season in Zadar and chose a singer

36 Not mentioned in the document announcing the general programme of the season.

37 Engagement agreement issued by Paolo Rocca between the Mazzoleni *impresa* and Tito Schipa, [n. p.], 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

38 The reference is to the debut at La Scala of 26. 12. 1900; Giuseppe Barigazzi, *La Scala racconta*, p. 438 cited in Toelle, *Oper als Geschäft*, p. 206.

39 Art. VII, Engagement agreement between the management of the Teatro Verdi and the *primo tenore assoluto* Giacomo Dammacco through the Giuseppe Lusardi theatrical agency, Milano, 4. 4. 1914, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

40 Letter from Paolo Rocca to Giovanni Mazzoleni, Šibenik, 2. 3. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

41 Michael Walter, "Motten und Ruinen. Ueber das symbolische Kapital von Sängern", *LiTheS*, IX/13 (2016), p. 63.

who charged less: “Today I have finally received the fee expected by Signor Fiegna,” he wrote, “which are highly exaggerated and I absolutely cannot accept them, and I thanked him nonetheless; from what I understand, like all artists he thought he was indispensable, as I well know; and I have engaged a *primo basso* of merit, who has performed in all the major theatres of Italy and abroad, in the person of Signor Augusto Pinto”.⁴²

There were also cases of singers who performed without any pay, as happened in Pula in 1903 while Bernardi was impresario. The *Giornaletto di Pola* reported that Bernardi had engaged a newcomer in Milan, a certain Gina Secondo, with a “regular contract to sing *free of charge* in Bohème” (*regolare contratto per cantare gratuitamente nella Bohème*). The journalist relates, in a tone of outrage, that she was not only singing for free, but that Bernardi had her father give him the sum of fifty lire. In actual fact, the contracts of certain agencies did include a clause (article 5 in that used by Rocca is an example) that stated that debuting artists or artists giving their services free of charge would have to pay “a premium of 50 lire at the signing of the contract” and – if their service were reconfirmed – would still have to pay a 5 % commission fee on the salary received.⁴³ We are not aware, however, that Bernardi had a theatrical agency. While Gina Secondo was well received by the audience and perhaps went on to have a career as a singer, this was not the case for other newcomers with whom Bernardi had drawn up the same “contract” to have them sing the entire season for nothing.⁴⁴ The public in Pula, however, was well able to judge the impresario’s behaviour accordingly.

After stating the fee, the contracts would indicate fortuitous events and the artist’s other obligations. While the singers’ costumes were the responsibility of the *impresa*, the so-called *basso* (or *piccolo vestiario* (i. e. the basic wardrobe) was that of the singers.⁴⁵ It included foot-

42 “Oggi finalmente o [*sic*] ricevuto le pretese del sig. Fiegna, le quali sono molto esagerate, che assolutamente non posso accettarle, e lo [*sic*] ringraziato egualmente, da come immaginavo io che si credeva indispensabile come sono tutti gli artisti, che purtroppo ben conosco – ed ho già scritturato un primo basso di vaglia – che a [*sic*] percorso tutti i principali teatri d’Italia, ed estero, nella persona del sig. Augusto Pinto.”; Letter from Domenico Valenti to Giorgio De Nakic d’Osliak, Milano, 20. 3. 1896, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

43 Art. 14, Engagement agreement issued by Paolo Rocca between the Mazzoleni *impresa* and Tito Schipa, [Šibenik], 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

44 At the same time Bernardi had drawn up with other newcomers “the very same contract, to have them sing the whole season” (*l’eguale contratto di farle cantare tutta la stagione*), just like Gina Secondo; and among these singers, the report went on, “there was that poor Russian girl who had to leave the stage after the first act, under a salvo of whistling” (*c’era quella povera signorina russa che dovette ritirarsi dal palcoscenico dopo il primo atto, sotto una salva di fischi*); “Autoincensamento. Una querela”, *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, 30. 3. 1903.

45 There were cases, however, in which the *basso vestiario* was paid for by the *impresario*, as when Massimini paid for that of the singer Del Ponte at Zadar in 1890; Letter from Paolo Massimini to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 5. 5. 1890, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

wear, undershirts, feathers, handkerchiefs, flowers and jewellery.⁴⁶ All clothing provided by the *impresa* would naturally have to be returned intact before payment of the last instalment of the fee. Otherwise the singer would have to pay for the missing items. The obligation for the female artist to wear male clothing when required, a provision that had long been included in engagement agreements, was still applicable.

Next came the clauses relating to sickness and the penalties for non-fulfilment of one's commitments. Not always did singers give due warning of a possible indisposition and there were instances in which the performance of an opera was interrupted to announce a singer's indisposition.⁴⁷ The number of days of sick leave given to singers varied from contract to contract. In the surviving contracts of the coastal region it could be two or four days, rarely more;⁴⁸ in any case not as many as the eight days that a first-rank theatre like La Fenice in Venice, for example, granted its artists already from the 1850s.⁴⁹ According

46 Rispoli, *La vita pratica*, p. 72. The contract of the Rocca agency gives a more colourful and detailed description of the basic wardrobe. It consisted of: "shirts, blouses with their trimmings, trousers, white and coloured knitwear, shoes, boots, sandals, stockings, gloves, necklaces, bracelets, crowns, feathers, aigrettes, plaits, wigs, and every other kind of ornament for the head [...]" ("camicie, camicette colle loro guarnizioni, pantaloni, corpi a maglia bianchi, e di colore, scarpe, stivali, stivaletti, sandali, calze, guanti, collane, maniglie, corone, piume, aironi, trecchie, parrucche, ed ogni altro ornamento da testa [...]"); Art. 7, Engagement agreement issued by Paolo Rocca between the Mazzoleni *impresa* and Tito Schipa, [Šibenik], 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

47 See for example what happened in Pula in the autumn season of 1900, when a performance was suspended at 8.30 pm. A "buttafuori" (stage manager) appeared on stage and announced that, due to the indisposition of the tenor, the performance would not go ahead. The reaction, as published in the newspapers, was not slow in coming: "We understand perfectly the mishaps that can happen to an impresario, who has to depend on the many people that make up a company like the present one, but we do not understand how a tenor, who was already indisposed the other night, cannot anticipate being unfit to go ahead with the performance at least two hours before it begins, to give the *impresa* time to warn the public not to go to the theatre, which especially in last night's weather was not one of the pleasantest things to do." ("Noi comprendiamo benissimo gli inconvenienti che possono succedere ad un impresario che deve dipendere da tante persone le quali formano una compagnia numerosa come è la presente, ma non comprendiamo come un tenore il quale era indisposto già l'altra sera non possa prevedere di essere inatto alla rappresentazione almeno due ore prima che questa incominci, per dare tempo all'*impresa* di avvertire il pubblico che non si rechi a teatro, il che specialmente col tempo di iersera non era una delle cose più aggradevoli."); "Politeama Ciscutti", *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, 22. II. 1900.

48 Even in the contracts with the Teatro Comunale of Trieste, for example, in 1904, Luigi Cesari's *impresa* gave two days of sick leave to the singers and four to the choristers over the whole season. Five days, on the other hand, were granted to the choristers in the contracts of the Curiel agency for the Teatro Verdi of Zadar in 1914; see, for example, the Contract between the management of the Teatro Verdi of Zadar and the chorister Antonia Vettach, Trieste, 25. 3. 1914, HR-DAZD, folder 27.

49 See the contract between the Teatro La Fenice of Venice and the tenor Carlo Negrini, Venezia, 27. 10. 1852, http://archivistorico.teatrolafenice.it/scheda_documento.php?ID=724 [accessed 31. 7. 2020].

to theatrical conventions ever since 1830, up to eight days of sick leave were granted.⁵⁰ In the case of absence from, or abandoning, the *piazza* for any other reason, the singer would be fined, according to Rocca, 300 lire plus double the fee agreed in the contract with the impresario. In the case of lateness to rehearsals the fine ranged from 100 to 1,000 lire, which would be directly deducted from the next *quartale*. On the other hand, for the Lusardi agency (which also engaged singers for the Dalmatian area), a breach of the artist's obligations directly entailed the termination of the contract, with the singer obliged to pay back the entire fee.

The part referring to agency fees was quite lengthy: for the artist the agency's work entailed a commission payable to the agency itself. In the case of Paolo Rocca's theatrical agency in Milan, the percentage ranged from 5% for Italy, 6% for Europe and 8% for America to the 10% for concerts. The singer him- or herself was expected to see to the payment of this sum. The contract with Schipa (like, for that matter, the Lusardi agency's agreement with the tenor Dammacco for Zadar) specified a commission of 6%, given that Šibenik was considered to be a foreign city. Schipa would therefore have to directly pay Rocca the sum of 9.90 lire per night. Even the contract with Tencajoli, which preceded Rocca's contract by a good 44 years, stipulated a percentage of 5% (for Trieste), with the difference that the money would be detracted directly by the impresario and then passed on to the agency. Rocca's printed contract also specified that the artist would have to attend a benefit night (*serata d'onore*) and that for this he or she would receive neither a carriage nor complementary tickets.

If the theatre management itself assumed the *impresa*, it could wish to have certain requirements taken into consideration. For example, Giovanni Mazzoleni begged Paolo Rocca to include in the artists' engagement agreements for the 1909 opera season an obligation to remain available for an extra week and a clause stating that, in the event of reconfirmation, they would be paid daily "for those days in proportion to the pay they will have" (*per quei giorni in proporzione alla paga che avranno*). To avoid any doubt on the matter, Mazzoleni even asked Rocca to write the amount and say that they would be paid "from day to day depending on the number of days they will remain in Šibenik".⁵¹ He also asked the agent to include the travel expenses in the pay. In the end Rocca partially incorporated these requests at the end of the document in the section devoted to additional articles, where we read: "If the season should be extended by a few days, the artists will be paid day by day on the basis of the pay they receive".⁵² In fact a space was left at the end of the

50 Walter, *Oper*, p. 314.

51 "da giorno in giorno secondo il numero delle giornate che saranno rimasti a Sebenico"; Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Paolo Rocca, Šibenik, 21. 2. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

52 "Se la stagione avesse da prolungarsi di qualche giorno l'Artista sarà pagato di giorno in giorno sulle basi della paga che percepisce." The contract of the Lusardi agency with the tenor Dammacco established

contract for additional articles. Among the additional articles the Lusardi agency included (printed, using its own stamp) was the following: “The artist will donate to the impresa 10 (ten) cents for every 100 (hundred) lire of the engagement fee to the pension fund of the Associazione Teatrale e di Mutuo Soccorso Giuseppe Verdi in Milan”.⁵³ In short, it was a form of support for an artists’ protection association. The contract ended with the signatures of the artist and the impresa.

No mention was made in these contracts to matters concerning accommodation. While in the 18th century the impresario undertook to find accommodation for the singers, now there appears to be no reference to the subject, though it is plausible to think that the custom continued, at least in part.

To eliminate the problem of undue competition, singers were forbidden to perform in venues other than the theatre with which the contract was drawn up. Rocca’s printed form stipulates that from the beginning of rehearsals until the termination of the contract the singer could not “give a display of his or her talents in any place, either public or private, for concerts, academies or whatever else, even if for the purposes of charity, or for simple private recreation, with or without remuneration, or by way of courtesy”.⁵⁴ A similar clause was also included in the printed form of the Lusardi agency, where we read: “When the artist is at the *piazza*, he or she may not even make use of their talents in places of entertainment, public or private, and not even absent themselves from the city without regular permission”.⁵⁵ This ban, which applied for the whole period of the contract’s validity, was

very clearly the pay due for extra performances: 300 lire each. This again was a detail indicated at the bottom of the contract.

53 “L’Artista rilascerà all’impresa centesimi 10 (dieci) per ogni 100 (cento) lire di scrittura a favore della Cassa Pensioni della Associazione Teatrale e di Mutuo Soccorso Giuseppe Verdi in Milano.”; Engagement agreement issued by the Giuseppe Lusardi theatrical agency between the management of the Teatro Verdi of Zadar and the *primo tenore assoluto* Giacomo Dammacco, Milano, 4. 4. 1914, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

54 “dare saggio dei suoi talenti in qualsiasi luogo, sia pubblico che privato, per concerti, accademie o altro che sia, fosse pure a scopo di beneficenza, o per semplice ricreazione privata, con o semplice retribuzione, od a titolo di cortesia”; Art. 11, Engagement agreement issued by Paolo Rocca between the Mazzoleni impresa and Tito Schipa, [Šibenik], 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

55 “Quando l’Artista sarà alla piazza non potrà neppure far uso dei suoi talenti in luogo di divertimento, pubblico o privato, e neanche assentarsi dalla città senza un regolare permesso.” This clause had remote origins and dates back to about the mid-17th century. In fact it stipulated that the singer could not “enter the service of any prince or other person and, if constrained to this on account of a command from a prince or other similar person, is always obliged, with his person and with his goods of any sort, to the complete repayment or reimbursement [...] of any sum that he had up until then acquired in accordance with the above-mentioned agreements.” (“intraprendere il servizio di alcun principe o altro personaggio et essendo astretto a ciò per qualunque causa di comando di Principe o d’altro simile, sia sempre obbligato con la persona e i suoi beni di qualunque sorte all’intiero risarcimento o rimborso [...] di qualunque summa che avesse sin allora conseguita in vigore dei soprascritti patti”); see

further detailed as a prohibition to perform within a given range of the *piazza*, which could be 90 or 100 kilometres. Article 5 of the Lusardi agency's printed contract established that the singer could not perform "unless at a distance of 90 kilometres from the city in which he or she is engaged". The contracts of Luciano Revere, like those of the Curiel or Rocca agencies, banned performances within 100 kms; failure to comply entailed the loss of half one's pay. In the past the distance also depended on the standing of the singer: the *prime parti* had to respect a distance of 60 miles (about 96 kilometres); the *seconde parti* 30 miles (about 48 kilometres).⁵⁶ A distance of 60 miles was imposed on the soprano Tencajoli, on pain of losing a *quartale*. The distance of 50 miles was imposed on the celebrated tenor Mario in his London contract with Frederick Gye.⁵⁷ Before the Unification of Italy the engaged singers were directly deprived of their passports, a measure that made it impossible for them to leave the state in which the theatre of employment was situated and ensured that they would provide a regular service throughout the season. It was the theatre management's duty to notify the authorities.⁵⁸ It was solely on the authority of the *impresa* that the singer could perform in other theatres: in which case he or she would receive, as compensation, the difference in the travel expenses.⁵⁹

The contract was usually individual (in other words, there was a contract for each person), an exception being the case of husband-and-wife choristers, for whom a single contract with two names was drawn up. This would also enable one to make a saving on the contract.⁶⁰ In the coastal area, for the same season at Šibenik in which Schipa sang (spring 1909), a single contract for the choristers Adolfo Leghissa and Annita Marchesini was drawn up by the Luciano Revere agency of Trieste (using a form that bore the stamp of his partner Enrico Gallina).⁶¹ Leghissa was engaged as a tenor chorister, but also, if required, as a

Valentina Venturini, "Appunti sulle scritture teatrali", in *Teatro e Storia*, 2011, p. 20, <http://hdl.handle.net/11590/117912> [accessed 30. 7. 2020].

56 Giulia Mattiello, *Il Teatro la Fenice: pianificazione, organizzazione e amministrazione della stagione di Carnevale – Quaresima 1878/1879*, degree dissertation, Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, 2011/2012, p. 39.

57 Ingeborg Zechner, *Das Englische Geschäft mit der Nachtigall. Betrachtungen zum italienischen Opernwesen im London des 19. Jahrhunderts*, dissertation, Universität Graz, 2014, p. 285, or in the version published as Ingeborg Zechner, *Das Englische Geschäft mit der Nachtigall. Die italienische Oper im London des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Böhlau, Wien 2017, p. 219.

58 Rossi-Gallieno, *Saggio*, p. 30.

59 Art. 4, Engagement agreement issued by Paolo Rocca between the Mazzoleni *impresa* and Tito Schipa, [Šibenik], 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

60 This procedure was adopted with married singers also to avoid separating the couple and allow both to be in the same place during the working period; see Venturini, "Appunti", p. 18, <http://hdl.handle.net/11590/117912> [accessed 30. 7. 2020].

61 Engagement agreement issued by the Mazzoleni *impresa* for the theatre of Šibenik to the artist Adolfo Leghissa and Annita Marchesini, Trieste, 4. 4. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 4.

comprimario and *direttore di scena*,⁶² whereas Signora Marchesini was a soprano chorister. We know that in those days married women had limited authority when it came to contracts, given that they would always need their husband's approval to perform in public. On the visiting cards of singers who offered their joint services, the wife's name was not even mentioned. She was simply referred to as the "wife" (*moglie*) or "spouse" (*consorte*). Examples are the visiting cards of the chorister Giovanni Santini ("*Santini Giovanni e moglie / Coristi (Baritono e Contralto) / Rimini?*") or that of the more famous Ercole Masini ("*Ferrara/Italia / Artista di canto / Ercole Masini / con consorte comprimaria e corista soprano r°*"). The tenor, baritone and bass had a name and surname; the wife didn't.⁶³ It is worth bearing in mind a very explicit clause applied to married women at the time: "The married woman cannot, as an artist, sign an engagement agreement without the husband's consent. The husband can ask for the contract to be dissolved, if he can prove that the wife's commitment was unknown to him and that the needs of the family do not allow the wife to take on other commitments outside the family orbit."⁶⁴ The law was clear on this point. In fact this particular contract for Šibenik was signed by Leghissa "for himself and for Anita Marchesini" (*per sé e per Anita Marchesini*). This limitation was a prerogative found also in other European nations; only in British law was the married woman independent when it came to theatrical engagements.⁶⁵

Just as the woman needed the consent of the husband, in the same way the singer who was under-age (which at the time meant under twenty-one) needed the consent of the father or, failing that, mother or legal guardian.⁶⁶ It is a curious fact that Schipa signed

62 We do not know exactly what was meant here at Šibenik by "direttore di scena". If we heed the information given by Rispoli, this figure should be the person who staged the opera and prepared the singers, following the stage directions written in the libretto. However, Rispoli also pointed out that "excepting the big theatres where, no matter how good or bad they are, there is always a *direttore scenico*, the theatres of lower rank are completely lacking in one." ("eccettuati i grandi teatri, dove sempre, buono o cattivo, esiste un direttore scenico, i teatri di ordine inferiore ne mancano del tutto."); Rispoli, *La vita pratica*, p. 75.

63 HR-DAŠI-103, various folders.

64 "La donna maritata non può, quale artista, firmare una scrittura senza il consenso del marito. Il marito può domandare lo scioglimento della scrittura, quando provi che l'impegno della moglie gli era ignoto, e che le esigenze della famiglia non consentono che la moglie possa assumere altri impegni fuori dell'orbita familiare."; Rispoli, *La vita pratica*, p. 128. See also what was said on the subject two years earlier in Nicola Tabanelli, *Il codice del teatro*. Hoepli, Milano 1901, pp. 9–11.

65 Venturini, "Appunti", p. 17, <http://hdl.handle.net/11590/117912> [accessed 30. 7. 2020].

66 Salucci, *Manuale della giurisprudenza*, p. 39. There was a well-known case of female singers being prohibited from appearing on stage if they were under twenty-one, whether or not they had the consent of their parents. It was an ordinance issued by the police of Altona that was much discussed, even in an ironic spirit: "The German newspapers have been making a fuss about it; Signor Prevel, among others, wittily observed that it would be more logical to ban from the stage the singers who had reached an all-too-reasonable age. Certain prima donnas, who had very wisely stopped at twenty

his own contract with Šibenik, though not yet of legal age. He was born in 1889, so he was still twenty at the time of *La traviata*. (He performed at Šibenik two years before what is historically considered to have been his debut at Vercelli in 1911.)⁶⁷ Yet in spite of his being considered a minor, his signature was not endorsed by that of a parent. What also stands out in the contracts for the cast of *La traviata* and *Il trovatore* and that for Leghissa-Marchesini is that they were drawn up by two different agencies (Rocca and Revere-Gallina), which means that the director of the Teatro Mazzoleni made use of two different agents for the same season. Their fees were also given in two different currencies: while the Italian cast was paid in lire, the two choristers were paid 12 crowns a day. But like the rest of the cast, the choristers would be paid in five-day blocks (*cinquine*). The percentage charged by Revere-Gallina was a flat 5%, so unlike other agents, he made no distinction between Italian territory and abroad or between different types of theatrical spectacle.

Gradually over the years the contracts started mentioning the artists' obligation to perform the music in its entirety (though the clause does not appear in Rocca's contracts).⁶⁸ The reason was that operas were being subjected to substantial cuts, as we have already seen. While the contracts adopted in the coastal area omit to specify the penalty for failing to observe this provision, other contracts clearly indicate the amount of the fine. Moreover, any singer wishing to make any changes in the tessitura of the music would have to bear the relative cost, as well as assume the expense for any new pieces they wished to sing in the benefit concerts.⁶⁹

and who will now be forced to be twenty-one, find that what Signor Prevel says is absolutely right." ("I giornali tedeschi ne fanno scalpore; il signor Prevel, fra gli altri, osserva con spirito che sarebbe più logico interdire le scene alle cantanti che abbiano raggiunto un'età troppo ragionevole. Alcune prime donne, che si erano arrestate molto saggiamente a vent'anni e che saranno costrette ad averne ventuno, trovano che il signor Prevel dice benissimo."); "Varietà", *Euterpe*, 23. 9. 1869.

67 On Tito Schipa's presence at Šibenik, see also the article by Tito Schipa jr., who instead dates the debut at Vercelli to 1909; Tito Schipa jr, "Tito Schipa a Sebenico, un evento 'in rete'", *Atti e memorie della Società Dalmata di Storia Patria*, XXIV/ 4 (2002).

68 "Art. 8. It is the obligation of the artist to perform the scores in their full integrity; and changes, transpositions or omissions of pieces must be authorised by the impresa, after due reflection." ("Art. 8. È obbligo dell'Artista eseguire gli spartiti nella loro piena integrità, ed i cangiamenti, trasporti od omissioni di pezzi dovranno essere permessi dall'Impresa, dietro giuste riflessioni."); Engagement agreement issued by the Frusta Teatrale agency between the impresario Alfredo Vecchi and the first trumpet for the theatre of Split. Milano, 26. 10. 1895, HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII.

69 "The expense for adapting the music to their range must be borne by the artist, provided however that this is permitted by the impresa. At benefit nights the expense of the new pieces chosen to be sung and of the costume must also be borne by the artist." ("Resta poi a carico dell'Artista la spesa per far accommodare la musica a seconda della sua tessitura, sempre però che dall'impresa venga concesso. Nelle sue serate a beneficio resta a carico dell'Artista la spesa dei nuovi pezzi che amasse cantare e del vestiario in costume."); Engagement agreement issued by the Frusta Teatrale agency, Milano 26. 10. 1895, HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII.

The musical repertoire must either be attached on a separate sheet or indicated at the end of the contract, as in the case of Tencajoli's contract.⁷⁰

The contracts had to be signed various months before the start of the relevant season, so as to allow for the commitments of the various artists, especially those of greater repute. For example, at Rijeka in the early years of the 20th century the new call for tenders was published in the month of June and the theatre delegation decided on the presented proposals even before the summer holidays. In this way the new contractor had enough time to draw up contracts with the singers for the Lent season of the following year.⁷¹

In the surviving documentation we do not have cases of "experimental contracts" (*scrittura "per esperimento"*): in other words, a contract in which the artist underwent a trial period of just a few nights. In these cases the contract could be terminated after just a short time, in the event of the singer making a poor showing. If artists didn't live up to expectations, one of the first in a position to reject them was the *maestro concertatore* and conductor; the assessment of the singer's performance was subjective and therefore discretionary. A replacement would then be discussed and approved (or not, as the case may be) during a meeting of the theatre management.⁷² No opinion was sought either from a member of

70 In the final section of the contract we read: "Repertoire which the artist declares to be confident in, from which the impresa may choose one or any opera that it believes to be most suitable, but to [illegible] for the opening night, and they are *Ballo in maschera, Trovatore, Ernani, Lucrezia Borgia, Ione, Mosè, Vittor Pisani, Corado d'Altamura* and *Favorita*, and after the opening night *I Falsi Monetari* and others." ("Repertorio nel quale si dichiara l'Artista di essere persuasa, onde l'Impresa possa scegliere quella, e qualunque Opera che più crederà confacente, ma di [...]enere serio pel debutto e sono *Ballo in maschera, Trovatore, Ernani, Lucrezia Borgia, Ione, Mosè, Vittor Pisani, Corado d'Altamura e Favorita* e dopo il debutto *I Falsi Monetari* ed altre."); Contract between the impresario Angelo Tommasi and the singer Lena Tencajoli, Milano, 22. 7. 1865, HR-DAZD, folder 2.

71 Letter from the Civic Magistrate of Rijeka to the theatre management of Rijeka, Rijeka, 12. 6. 1914, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

72 Maestro Stermich discussed a substitution in Pula relating to a production of *La bohème*; "Politeama Ciscutti", *Il Popolo Istriano*, 4. 3. 1899. Another example is given in the letter with which the tenor engaged to sing in *Sansone e Dalila* and *Tannhäuser* was dismissed at Rijeka: "The management of the Teatro Comunale makes known to your impresa that in the managers' meeting held on... it was decided not to accept the tenor Signor Angelo Secchi as principal singer in the operas *Sansone e Dalila* and *Tannhäuser*, for the principal reason that the conductor Maestro Pasquale la Rotella declares that he absolutely does not want him, given the insufficient results given by the artist in one of the two said operas. Reason no. 2: The management, mindful both of performances given in this theatre of the same scores and of private information obtained concerning the said artist, does not find him up to the standards and importance of the theatre itself. The theatre management therefore assuredly calls for the impresa to replace Signor Angelo Secchi with another artist that may be satisfactory both to the management and to the conductor." ("La Direzione del Teatro Comunale rende noto a codesta Impresa, che nella seduta Direzionale tenuta addi... è stato deciso di non accettare il tenore sig. Angelo Secchi quale protagonista delle opere *Sansone e Dalila* e *Tannhäuser* e ciò pel motivo che il M^o direttore Pasquale la Rotella dichiara assolutamente di non volerlo, dato l'esito d'insufficienza avuto

the company (say, an older colleague) or from a singer in the same artistic category as the interested party: a measure that might have made the decision more impartial and objective. We have cases of singers who, at the time of signing the contract with the impresario, had crossed out the article giving the *maestro concertatore* and the *impresa* the right to dismiss them, while leaving intact the article that gave this same right to the theatre management.⁷³ We also have cases of singers who flatly refused to be dismissed and defied the *impresa*. It happened at Rijeka, where the American soprano Evelina Parnell refused to leave when the Alpron-Battaglia *impresa* decided to have her replaced by a certain Benigni in the role of Gilda, against her express refusal to give up her part without any guarantee. “Since in this way the contract drawn up with me has been breached and my rights infringed,” Parnell wrote to the theatre management, “I protest against the injustice and give you notice that I have formally cautioned the *impresa* against carrying out this substitution, warning it that I will hold it responsible for all ensuing damage to my person.”⁷⁴

The more prudent impresarios would include in the contract a clause that exempted them from paying the dismissed singers: a provision that had been upheld by the courts in 1861.⁷⁵ A *protesta* could occur not only in the course of the season, but already at the dress rehearsal. Indeed this was precisely the reason why the singers were expected to sing in full voice during the rehearsal (and not just ‘mark’ their part) and even wear full costume. Only in this way could the management form an idea of their real value.

Another possible problem was that the singer might find him- or herself in the unfortunate situation of waiting to receive a *quartale* that would probably never be paid because the theatre management had officially decided to suspend the performances of an opera and cancel the contract with the *impresa*. This happened, for example, to the baritone Enrico Fagotti and the *basso comico* Filippo Catani at Rijeka in connection with performances of *Il barbiere di Siviglia* organised by the impresario Vincenzo Dal Torso. Fagotti had been engaged in the regular way and had even overcome the hurdle of the dress rehearsal to

dall’artista in una delle due suddette opere. Motivo II: La direzione memore delle esecuzioni avute in questo teatro degli stessi spartiti e da informazioni private attinte sul conto di suddetto artista, non lo trova all’altezza ed importanza del teatro stesso. La Direzione Teatrale perciò invita senz’altro l’Impresa a sostituire il sig. Angelo Secchi con altro artista che possa essere di soddisfazione della direzione stessa nonché del Maestro Direttore.”); Letter from the theatre management of Rijeka to the Alpron *impresa*, Rijeka, [1914], HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

73 Letter from Attilio Alpron to the theatre management of Rijeka, [Rijeka], II. 12. 1913, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

74 “Poiché con ciò si viene meno al contratto con me stipulato e si ledono i miei diritti, io protesto contro il sopruso e vi do notizia di avere formalmente diffidato l’impresa a compiere tale sostituzione, avvertendola che la terrò responsabile di tutti i danni che me ne vengono.”; Letter from Evelina Parnell to the theatre management of Rijeka, Rijeka, I. 4. 1913, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

75 Rosmini, *La legislazione*, I, pp. 138, 140–142, cited in John Rosselli, “Il sistema produttivo 1780–1880”, in *Storia dell’opera italiana*, edited by Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli, EDT, Torino 1987.

sing on the first two nights: “At the dress rehearsal, on strict *orders* from this honourable management I sang in full voice, and was approved, since otherwise I wouldn’t have been allowed to present myself to the public”.⁷⁶ Without him being personally informed of the reason for the decision, the management discontinued the performances. At the time of writing to the management, Fagotti had been at the *piazza* in Rijeka for 19 days and his second *quartale* was due to be paid after the eighth performance – whereas he had actually sung in only two. He believed he should still receive the payment, merely out of respect for the signed contract: “also considering that, for reasons unrelated to myself, the production is not going ahead, and given that so many days have passed since the day of my arrival at this *piazza*, I should by now have the right to receive it. I also understand that new artists have been engaged by order of this honourable management; this provision, however, cannot make any difference to my rights and to the faithful and punctual observance of my engagement, and hence to the full payment of my fee”.⁷⁷ He therefore proposed to the theatre management a settlement with the sum of 500 lire, which was in fact the exact amount of the second *quartale*.

On the other hand, Filippo Catani, who was probably from the same company, was owed 225 francs for the Lent season and was still waiting to be paid the first *quartale* of the spring season, amounting to 1,300 lire.⁷⁸ In spite of repeated requests, he claimed that the impresario turned a deaf ear. Again the singer asserted that he had satisfied the conditions of the public and that the interruption of the performances was certainly not his fault. He thus demanded compliance with the provisions of the contract, given that the decision had been made independently of the quality of his work.⁷⁹ If, in the presence of

76 “Alla prova generale per *ordine* preciso di codest’onorevole Direzione cantai a piena voce e ne fui approvato poiché altrimenti non mi sarebbe stato permesso il presentarmi al pubblico.”; Letter from Enrico Fagotti to the theatre management of Rijeka, Rijeka [ca. 1860s-1870s], HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

77 “pure sulla considerazione che per motivi da me indipendenti non si continua collo spettacolo ed essendo trascorso tante giornate dal giorno del mio arrivo in questa piazza avrei un diritto a percepirlo già adesso. Mi consta poi essere stati per ordine di codest’onorevole direzione scritturati dei nuovi artisti; tale disposizione però non può portare alcuna alterazione ai miei diritti ed alla fedele e puntuale manutenzione della mia scrittura e quindi al pien pagamento del mio onorario.”; Letter from Enrico Fagotti to the theatre management of Rijeka, Rijeka [ca. 1860s-1870s], HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

78 It is interesting to note the payment in two different currencies: a possibility contemplated in the contracts and not the first instance in the theatres of the coastal region.

79 “Since the impresario, to my repeated requests for payment, turns a deaf ear,” wrote Catani, “and since, moreover, I find myself running between him and the honourable management over the negotiations for the amicable rescission of the contract between him and the existing honourable management on the basis of which the artists of the present company were engaged, and since, on account of all of this, my fee is exposed to the danger of being lost; as a result, I honour myself to address this honourable management with the appeal that it be pleased to take the necessary steps to ensure that with the possible rescission of the said contract the commitments made by the impresa towards the individual artists, and particularly towards those artists who had satisfied the requirements of the public, should

signed contracts, the negotiations with the theatre management should come to nothing, the impresario could resort to the press as a way of exonerating himself and avoiding further problems and lawsuits that would certainly follow. In both of the above cases we do not know if the management paid up and how the affair ended. The fact remains that the contracts often saw the artists in the position – as one would say today – of the ‘weaker party’. The contract terms were more sympathetic to the interests of the theatre and the impresario, while those of the artists took a back seat.⁸⁰ At times the very language used in the contracts drawn up by the agents lent itself to more than one interpretation (intentionally, and to the disadvantage of the singers).⁸¹

not be breached. I dare to hope that this honourable management will heed this appeal of mine, especially considering that on the good faith of the validity and regularity of the contract drawn up between you and the impresa I decided to take on the engagement for this *piazza*. And now, to rescind that contract without safeguarding the interests of the artist would be tantamount to consenting to a disgraceful action that the impresa is attempting to implement to the detriment of the artist.” (“Siccome l’impresario a ripetute mie richieste di pagamento fa il sordo e siccome anzi mi consta correre fra esso e l’onorevole Direzione delle trattative d’amichevole scioglimento del contratto tra esso e l’onorevole Direzione esistente, e sulla cui base furono scritturati gli artisti dell’attuale compagnia, e siccome per tutto ciò va ad essere esposto a pericolo di perdita il mio onorario; così mi pregio di rivolgermi all’onorevole Direzione colla preghiera affinché si compiaccia prenderne le opportune disposizioni onde coll’eventuale scioglimento del suddetto contratto non vengano lesi gl’impegni assunti dall’impresa verso i singoli artisti e particolarmente poi verso quelli artisti che soddisfarono alle esigenze del pubblico. Oso sperare che l’onorevole Direzione aderirà a questa mia preghiera tanto più da che sulla buona fede della validità e regolarità del contratto stipulato tra lei e l’impresa io mi decisi a scritturarmi per questa piazza, ed ora sciogliendo quel contratto senza cautelare gli appunti dell’artista equivarrebbe a tenere mano ad un atto indecoroso che l’impresa tenta di tradurre a danno dell’artista.”); Letter from Filippo Catani to the theatre management of Rijeka, Rijeka, 21. 3. 1869, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

80 See Geo Magri, “Il contratto tra artista lirico e fondazione lirico-sinfonica: un caso peculiare di usi integrativi del contratto”; *Aedon*, no. 2, 2011, <http://www.aedon.mulino.it/archivio/2014/2/magri.htm> [accessed 31. 7. 2020].

81 Back in the early 19th century Giovanni Valle wrote: “It should also be borne in mind that in most cases theatrical contracts are arranged by using *correspondents*, who, however much they may be of proven integrity, can never fully enter into the will of the contracting parties, so that in spite of themselves they are compelled to employ in the drafting of the texts those very expressions that are prescribed or transcribed for them by their clients, of whom some of the sharper and shrewder ones know how to choose words that may be subjected to two interpretations, to their own advantage and to the detriment of others.” (“Si rifletta del pari che i contratti teatrali per la massima parte si combinano col mezzo de’ *Corrispondenti*, i quali per quanto siano di provata integrità, non possono mai però entrare pienamente nella volontà dei contraenti, cosicchè loro malgrado sono costretti ad impiegare nella stesa delle scritture quelle espressioni identiche che loro vengono prescritte o trascritte da’ committenti, alcuni de’ quali più destri ed accorti sanno farvi scelta di vocaboli che possano servire a doppia interpretazione col proprio vantaggio e danno altrui.”); Valle, *Cenni*, p. VI.

7.3 The benefit nights

Many singers, by contract, were obliged to take part in the so-called *beneficiate* or benefit nights dedicated to them. The prima donna was referred to as “*la seratante*”; i. e. the one to whom the evening (*sera*) was dedicated. The term was also used in the masculine: “*il seratante*”. In actual practice there was some confusion between the terms *beneficiata* and *serata d'onore*, which could be interchangeable and used as synonyms, even in the press. In both cases the type of event was practically identical, but the difference lay in who took the proceeds: the singer in the former, the impresario in the latter. The receipts of the *beneficiata* could be entirely given to the singers themselves (though excluding, for example, the takings from the galley), or half be allotted to the impresario.⁸² We have already encountered one instance of the “*mezza beneficiata*” – in which the evening’s expenses (which could be considerable) were usually deducted – in the aforementioned contract between the impresario Angelo Tommasi and the singer Lena Tencajoli. That the entire profits of a benefit concert should be assigned to the impresario was practically unheard of, but there was certainly one instance in Split: when the tenor Alessandro Lamponi, sympathetic to the heavy losses sustained by the impresario, decided to donate to him the entire takings of the evening.⁸³

These benefit nights were not necessarily required for every member of the cast engaged. At Zadar it was the theatre management that decided which of the artists were worthy of appearing in a special evening dedicated to them and would schedule the dates in the course of the season.⁸⁴ As a rule, the number of benefit nights was specified in the contract between theatre management and impresario, and there would be one per season for each singer, except in rare instances of multiple benefits. One such instance occurred at Zadar itself, where a certain singer called Orbellini was forced to give two additional nights “in order to get by and finish the season”: the operas *Amico Fritz* and *Zazà* in 1907 had turned out to be failures, so performances continued with the already-programmed *Adriana Lecouvreur* in the hope of getting to the end “honourably” (*dignitosamente*) with the aid of what was called a *beneficiata*.⁸⁵ On the evidence given here, however, we should more properly call such events *serate d'onore*, given that everything suggests that the takings went to the impresario.

While a *beneficiata* could be ironically defined in the press as “a special performance, in which the artist exerts himself more than usual, the spectator pays more than usual, and

82 On the subject see also Giovanni Azzaroni, *Del teatro e dintorni. Una storia della legislazione e delle strutture teatrali in Italia nell'Ottocento*, Bulzoni, Roma 1981, p. 100. The proceeds could also be split three-quarters/a quarter, depending on the agreement between singer and impresario.

83 Special notice for the evening of Saturday 29 May 1875 / Benefit night for the impresario, Split, [1875], HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII.

84 Art. 21, Tender specifications of the Teatro Giuseppe Verdi of Zadar, Zadar, [post 1901], HR-DAZD, folder 6.

85 “Da Zara”, *L'Eco dell'Adriatico*, 17–18. I. 1907.

the impresario earns more than is customary”,⁸⁶ these evenings also had the positive aim of focusing the attention on the individual singer and strengthening the relationship between singer and audience. The *beneficiate* and *serate d'onore* in the coastal theatres did not differ from those of mainland Italy. In Šibenik a *beneficiata* would be announced in the lower part of a poster advertising a forthcoming performance; and what the *seratante* (male or female) would sing – within the same evening of opera – might be printed on either side of the same poster. For example, in the course of a performance of *Ernani* with the bass Luigi Manfrini, the opera would be interrupted after the second act to give Manfrini the possibility to perform “the romanza from the opera *Simon Boccanegra*”.⁸⁷ In this particular case the choice of piece fell within the scope of the Verdi repertoire. Not always, however, was music by the same composer performed between one act and the next. At Rijeka, for example, after the second act of *Gli Ugonotti* the soprano Clementina Noel Guidi, the recipient of a *beneficiata* on 31 May 1871, performed a cavatina from *Macbeth*.⁸⁸ And Verdi himself, like any other composer, could be paired up with a wide variety of operatic pieces by composers past or contemporary (we find Verdi and Smareglia combined at Pula, for example). A night on which *La forza del destino* was staged could also accommodate the prologue from Leoncavallo’s *Pagliacci*. Or the acts of Franchetti’s *Germania* could be interspersed with pieces by Antonio Braga. And if the recipient of a benefit night happened to play a musical instrument as well as sing, there was a further possibility: as indeed occurred when the soprano Maddalena Ticci Giganti, being a violinist as well as a singer, performed Sarasate’s *Zingaresca* after the second act of *La traviata* in Zadar in 1902.⁸⁹

We have no documentary evidence about who made the decisions on the repertoire or when exactly the *seratante* should perform: whether at the start, middle or end of the evening. It may have been the impresario who established the order of events, but perhaps the decision was more likely made jointly by impresario and singer. As for the repertoire, it would presumably be that most congenial to the singer: one that displayed his or her gifts to the best effect.

A benefit night could also have a different format: that of presenting a complete performance of an opera highlighting the main recipient and introducing other singers or actors between one act and the next. In this way one or more *seratanti* could be featured. For example, at Šibenik on 12 March 1887 a benefit night was organised for a prima donna at her debut: Ida Mazzoleni, cousin to the more famous Ester. The opera chosen was *La sonnambula*. After the first act it was decided to have Francesco Mazzoleni sing *Il rimpatriante* by Ricci and

86 “una rappresentazione straordinaria, in cui l’artista si affatica più dell’usato, lo spettatore paga più del solito, e l’impresario incassa più del consueto”; *Il Vaglio*, no. 50, 16. 12. 1843, p.1.

87 Poster for *Ernani*, II. 4. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 7.

88 “Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, 31. 5. 1871.

89 List of the performances given at the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar, [Zadar, n. d.], HR-DAZD, folder 30.

De Giosa and the song *La mia bandiera* by Augusto Rotoli, in addition to a piece recited by Flora Mirco entitled *La prima volta in teatro*. In this part of the programme there was therefore a mixture of singing and recitation in which Ida Mazzoleni did not take part. After this interruption the evening continued with the second and third acts of *La sonnambula*.⁹⁰

At the Teatro Bajamonti in Split the format of certain benefit nights could be a little different. Since it was not a question of presenting an entire opera, the singer was not asked to perform between one act and the next. He or she might appear at the beginning, in duets and solo arias, and then go on to take part in a potpourri of works by various composers that could also be interspersed with dance. An example is the programme for the benefit night of the German prima donna Antonietta Link in 1875:

Parte I

Auber – Sinfonia nell’Opera *La muta de’Portici* a grande orchestra

Mozart – Duetto nell’opera *Don Giovanni* “Là ci darem la mano” Cantato dalla signora Link e dal signor Cesarj che gentilmente si presta

Briccialdi – Grande concerto per Flauto sull’Opera *Lucrezia Borgia* con accompagnamento d’orchestra, eseguito dal concertista signor Francesco Casiraghi che gentilmente di presta

Weber – Grande aria per soprano nell’opera *Der Freischütz* (Il Franco Bersagliere) cantata in tedesco dalla signora Antonietta Link

Grande terzetto danzante

composto ed eseguito dal primo ballerino coreografo signor Andrea Borzone in unione alle prime ballerine signore Vincenza Pasta-Borzone ed Enrichetta Oro

Parte II

II. e III. Atto dell’Opera *Un ballo in maschera* del maestro Gius. Verdi.

Verdi – Gran sinfonia nell’opera *Giovanna d’Arco* a grande orchestra

Chiuderà il trattenimento col 5.to atto dell’opera del maestro G. Gounod

Faust

Ecco quanto offre l’umile artista, sicura di vedersi onorata da numeroso concorso, e ne anticipa i più sentiti ringraziamenti [...] ⁹¹

90 The poster advertising the event announced that the building would be brightly lit (*illuminato a giorno*) by the theatre management as a tribute to the *seratante* and the celebrated tenor; at the bottom right (as customary when referring to the organisation) was a generic mention of “L’impresa”.

91 Teatro Bajamonti / Variato trattenimento, Brochure for the benefit night of Antonietta Link, Split, 1875, HR-MGS: Kazalište 1/ kut. I–XII. Also preserved in the theatrical *fondo* of the City Museum of Split is the printed sonnet that the singer’s admirers dedicated to her expressly for this special event.

The audience would therefore have heard Link in a duet by Mozart, an aria from *Der Freischütz*, and most likely the entire second and third acts of *Un ballo in maschera*, as well as Act V of *Faust*, all works that must have suited her voice and her taste. The programme, featuring the participation of other soloists, was extremely varied.

It is not known if in the area any limitations were imposed on the level of applause accorded to the singers. In the past there had been special police regulations in Italy limiting the permissible forms and signs of appreciation.⁹² After a benefit night the singers might, as was customary, find themselves being carried through the streets in the arms of a large crowd. Refreshments or even a banquet, which spectators might join, could also be laid on in some neighbouring location. These were all part of the ensuing festivities.⁹³

After the benefit night it was considered courteous for the singer to send a letter of thanks to the theatre management. We have the example of a letter from Tito Schipa: "I thank the honourable theatre management with all my heart for the kind thought that it had on the occasion of my night of honour. In the hope of serving you again at a future date."⁹⁴ And one from Ada Postiglione: "Before leaving I feel it is my duty to express, to you and the theatre management presided over by Your Excellency, my most heartfelt thanks and intense gratitude for the splendid gift and the immense kindnesses of which Your Excellencies were so bountiful. Whatever the circumstances, I shall never forget the warmth shown to me and the festive reception of this city most dear to me; it

92 It was forbidden, for example, to prolong the applause or "repeat it excessively" (*ripeterli soverchiamente*). As late as 1828 a Milanese newspaper, wishing to express the appreciation shown to the prima donna Annetta Fischer, who had sung in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* in Trieste, wrote that she was "one of the few fortunates for whom the police statutes, which did not allow one to call the artists to the front of the stage more than once, were waived." ("una delle poche fortunate per cui si derogò dagli Statuti della Polizia, li quali non permettevano di chiamare gli artisti più di una volta al proscenio."); Giuseppe Caprin, *Il Teatro Nuovo: XXI aprile 1801*, Schimpff, Trieste 1901, p. 36.

93 See for example the celebrations that took place in Pula after *Carmen* in 1890: "The Via Giulia presented an impressive sight, with more than three thousand people, both audience and bystanders, waiting for Salvi to come out. And as soon as he emerged together with his colleagues, Desanti's electric reflector lamps illuminated the scene with thousands of Bengali sparklers; and Salvi was carried to the nearby Budweis beer hall. There a banquet awaited him. The beer hall was invaded by the public, and there was no lack of applause, hurrahs and toasts, just as there was no lack of bottles of Refosco and champagne." ("La via Giulia presentava uno spettacolo imponente, più di tre mille persone, fra pubblico e curiosi, attendevano l'uscita del Salvi. Non appena questi si presentò con i compagni il riflettore elettrico del Desanti illuminò la scena con migliaia di fiammiferi bengalici; e Salvi fu portato a braccia fino alla vicina Birreria «Budweis». Colà lo attendeva il banchetto. La birreria fu invasa dal pubblico, applausi, evviva e brindisi non mancarono, come pure non mancarono le bottiglie di refosco e di sciampagna.") "Teatralia", *L'Eco di Pola*, 13. 12. 1890.

94 "Ringrazio di cuore l'onorevole Direzione Teatrale del pensiero che ha avuto in occasione della mia serata d'onore. Nella speranza di poterla servire in altri tempi nuovamente."; Letter from Tito Schipa to the theatre management of Šibenik, Šibenik, 30. 4. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

will always be remembered with infinite, intimate and constant affection.”⁹⁵ Irrespective of the sincerity with which it was written, a letter of thanks also served as a prudent way of making a good impression and leaving the management with a good memory of the event. The letter could also be sent to the local newspapers with a request for publication, thereby amplifying the message and including the public in this sort of *captatio benevolentiae* after the event.⁹⁶

Benefit nights could also be organised in favour of choruses or dancers, or in honour of conductors, as happened in Zadar for Roberto Moranzoni (who had Liszt’s *Second Hungarian Rhapsody* performed by the orchestra before the opera scheduled for that night)⁹⁷ or Giuseppe Marrone, who, wishing to pay a tribute to Antonio Smareglia, played the composer’s *Hungarian Dances* in Pula.⁹⁸ Some conductors were also composers, so they could embrace the opportunity of including their own music. Antonino Palminteri, for example, conducted exclusively his own works during his benefit night,⁹⁹ as did Raffaele Patucchi, who inserted a duet from one of his own operas after the second act of *Ernani*.¹⁰⁰

95 “Prima di partire sento il dovere di esprimere a Lei ed alla Direzione Teatrale dalla S. V. presieduta, i più sentiti ringraziamenti e la riconoscenza vivissima per lo splendido dono, e le immense cortesie di cui le SS.VV. mi sono state prodighe. In qualunque circostanza mai dimenticherò di quanta bontà sia stato capace l’animo Loro e l’accoglienza festosa di questa città a me carissima, sarà sempre ricordata con infinito, intimo, costante affetto.”; Letter from Ada Postiglione to Giovanni Mazzoleni, [n.p.], 2. 2. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

96 As did the singer Paolina Leone, writing to the newspaper *L’Eco di Pola*: “Dear Signor Polla! I would be very grateful if, by using your widely-read newspaper, you will permit me to express my most heartfelt and special thanks to the officers of the imperial and royal Navy for the gracious reception that I enjoyed during the present opera season and for the special and most gratifying demonstrations with which they honoured me on the occasion of my [benefit] night that took place on the 17th. Ever since 1890 the kind and affectionate expressions of their fondness have left in my life as an artist an undying memory, and today I depart from Pula more eager and delighted to be able to come back again soon among the courteous friends that I shall never forget in my artistic peregrinations, flattering myself that they too will likewise remember their *Margherita* who also sends them her most cordial farewell greetings.” (“Egregio sig. G. Polla! Le sarò molto grata se a mezzo del suo diffuso giornale vorrà permettermi d’esprimere i miei più sentiti e speciali ringraziamenti ai signori ufficiali della i. e. r. Marina per le cortesi accoglienze di cui mi furono prodighi durante la presente stagione d’opera e per le speciali e lusinghiere dimostrazioni di che mi onorarono in occasione della mia serata che aveva luogo il 17 corr. Sin dal 1890 le affettuose e gentili espressioni della loro simpatia lasciarono nella mia vita d’artista imperituro ricordo, ed oggi riparto da Pola più desiderosa e più lieta di poter ancora tornare e presto fra i cortesi amici che mai dimenticherò nelle mie escursioni artistiche lusingandomi che anch’essi ricorderanno parimenti la *Margherita* che invia loro anche i più cordiali saluti di commiato.”); “Teatralia”, *L’Eco di Pola*, 21. 4. 1894.

97 List of the performances given at the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar, [Zadar, n. d.], HR-DAZD, folder 30.

98 “Politeama Ciscutti”, *Il Giornaletto di Pola*, 19. 5. 1913.

99 List of the performances given at the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar, [Zadar, n. d.], HR-DAZD, folder 30.

100 Advertising bill for *Ernani*, Šibenik, 20. 4. 1908, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 7.

Samuele Wolff, on the other hand, performed in Split not only as a conductor but also as a violinist.¹⁰¹

We have no references in the area to ‘fake programmes’ at benefit nights. For it had been known for the impresario to entice the public by advertising evenings in which new works were to be performed, while in the end presenting just old repertoire. For such behaviour an impresario could also be disciplined.¹⁰² A benefit night could also be cancelled if the audience in the theatre was considered to be too small. This happened at Pula at the benefit night for mezzosoprano Annita Budriesi. Although the few tickets sold were refunded, the singer nonetheless retained possession of the gifts that were prepared for her even if she didn’t perform: a gold bracelet, an expensive fan and two important bunches of flowers.¹⁰³

If these evenings failed to meet expectations, the journalists would make the most of it. Bad reviews in the newspapers were known not to shy away from rudeness to the artists. The journalist might not only adopt a paternalistic attitude and presume to give the singer advice from the columns of the paper, but also criticise performances using language and tones that today would be considered disrespectful. This tendency didn’t go unnoticed, and from many quarters there was a call for more balanced reporting on the part of the critics. In Rijeka it was noted that the two newspapers had very different approaches when it came to judging the performance of singers:

Our newspaper [*Author’s note: La Gazzetta di Fiume*] almost always used to praise artists to the skies in its theatrical articles; the *Giornale di Fiume* nearly always throws them in the mud. While the sweet perfume of the former distorted the truth and fruitlessly puffed up the artist, the lashings of the latter are a sin against charity for one’s neighbour and calculated to instil in the artist’s soul either despondency or spite; signally when they are doing their best to zealously fulfil their duties and be respectful towards the public. Balanced criticism finds a way of expressing its censure, while formally retaining its good manners.¹⁰⁴

101 Wolff was later the recipient of tributes in the form of poems and epigrams, bunches of flowers and doves with laurel crowns, and was greeted outside the theatre with Bengali sparklers, according to the report in “Spalato 4 giugno”, *La Scena*, 15. 6. 1865.

102 Salucci, *Manuale della giurisprudenza*, p. 59.

103 “Teatralia”, *L’Eco di Pola*, 12. II. 1892.

104 “Questa nei suoi articoli teatrali portava pressochè sempre gli Artisti fino alle stelle; il *Giornale di Fiume* li getta quasi sempre nel fango. Se l’incenso della prima nuoceva alla verità e inorgogliava senza frutto l’Artista, la sferza del secondo pecca contro la carità del prossimo, e mette nell’animo dell’Artista lo scoramento, o il dispetto; segnatamente quando faccia del suo meglio per adempiere con zelo il suo compito ed usi i debiti riguardi verso il pubblico. Una critica temperata trova il modo di esternare le sue censure, salvando le convenienze di forma.”; “Teatro Civico”, *Il Giornale di Fiume*, 29. 4. 1865, p. 128.

A need was felt, therefore, for the writers to display fairer judgement, which could even be negative but should at least show greater professionalism. Although this is clearly not the place for a study of the journalists working in the coastal area, it would nonetheless be interesting to understand the extent to which their criticism contributed not only to boosting the popularity of opera companies and singers with the public, but also to promoting the interests of the theatre management. It is worth noting, in this regard, that at times the articles in the newspapers (both those announcing a season and those commenting on productions) were actually written by the theatre management or the opera companies themselves: a practice that has survived in certain cases to the present day. The impresario could at times ask the local papers to publish something about a singer written in the national papers, as a means of preparing his or her arrival. It was in the impresario's interests to make sure, with an effective publicity campaign, that the singers were presented – as far as possible – as celebrities or at least as artists whose talents had been appreciated in various theatres outside the region. Generating curiosity around the *seratante* of a benefit night would surely bring in a bigger audience.

7.3.1 Gifts to singers

As was customary at the time, in addition to cash payments, the singers were presented with gifts after their performances. The practice flourished also in the coastal theatres. Gifts were not indicated in the contract with the singer; they were spontaneously organised from one benefit night to the next. In Split a handwritten notice was distributed among the theatre-goers with the object of raising the funds to buy presents for the artists:

The theatre management, confident that it interprets the wishes of the gentlemen who frequent our Teatro Comunale, has already presented certain of the finest artists with a small gift on the occasion of their benefit nights and wishes to do the same to others. In order to cover the relative expense, the above gentlemen are kindly requested to contribute with their donations. N. B. The gentlemen wishing to contribute something are requested to write the sum on this sheet and pay it promptly.¹⁰⁵

105 “La Direzione Teatrale sicura d’interpretare il pensiero dei Signori che frequentano il nostro Teatro Comunale, ha distinto già alcuni e vuole distinguere anche gli altri migliori artisti in occasione delle loro beneficiate, con una piccola memoria. Onde poter coprire la relativa spesa si pregano gentilmente i suddetti Signori a voler concorrere col loro obolo. Nb: si pregano i Signori che desiderassero di contribuire qualche cosa, a voler iscrivere il relativo importo su questo foglio e pagarlo tosto.”; Document for fundraising for benefit nights, Split, 29.[?].1895, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

This was followed by the list of donors and the sums promised. The donations were discretionary, though usually the larger sums were donated by members of the board or shareholders who had more than one share. In the present case the sums ranged from ten florins down to an average of around two or three florins from most of the shareholders.

We have a very similar appeal for contributions from the theatre management of Šibenik. This time the aim was to collect enough money to present the soprano Solomiya Krushelnytska with a gift after her performance:

The benevolent public of Šibenik, which in the present opera season at our Teatro Mazzoleni admired the extraordinary artistic merits of the distinguished prima donna Signora Cručenisca [*sic*], is hereby invited to contribute with donations so that a memento may be presented to the lady at her farewell night. The names of the donors will be made known to the distinguished artists, and we hope that the collection will be generously supported and produce an excellent result, worthy of the person it is intended to honour.¹⁰⁶

This again was followed by a donations list. The sums offered were similar to those of Split: while the theatre management gave ten florins, the individual shareholders donated sums that varied from one to five florins. In this case too, the singer would be acquainted with the donors' names.

Also documented is a fundraising campaign made in the early years of the 20th century for the prima donna Bovi-Campeggi from the opera company of the same name, with presents ranging from a bracelet costing 50 crowns and a feather boa worth 22 crowns down to the more affordable camellias and ribbons, for 8 and 2 crowns respectively.¹⁰⁷ Other possible gifts for women were fans, bouquets and baskets of flowers, bunches of flowers (true or artificial) including gold-embroidered ribbons with the artist's initials, silver toiletry bags, lace, hats, handbags, earrings and sugared almonds (*confetti*). There was even a diamond brooch mounted in gold.¹⁰⁸ There is less evidence, on the other hand, for singers being offered

106 "Il gentile pubblico di Sebenico, che nella presente stagione d'opera al nostro Teatro Mazzoleni ammirò i pregi artistici straordinari della distinta primadonna sig.ra Cručenisca, è invitato a concorrere con qualche offerta onde si presenti a detta signora un ricordo nella serata d'addio. I nomi degli offerenti si notificheranno agli egregi artisti, e speriamo che la raccolta sarà generosamente sostenuta e condotta a ottima riuscita, degna del personaggio che s'intende onorare." Donations for a gift to be made to the prima donna Salomea Cručenisca, Šibenik, [n. d.], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1. It is recorded that Cručenisca had also performed in Zadar in the spring season of 1896, without any further information on the subject.

107 Donations to be made to the *Prima Donna Brillante* Signorina Diana Bovi Campeggi for the occasion of her night of honour, [n. d.], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

108 The watchmaker Ledvinka in Zadar sent an invoice to the theatre management for a "gold brooch with diamonds for ladies, 27.50 f." ("spilla d'oro con diamantini da signora, f. 27,50"); Invoice from C. B. Ledvinka to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 25. 11. 1894, HR-DAZD, folder 8.

bracelets and rings in solid gold, as happened on the Italian mainland.¹⁰⁹ There were those who organised choreographic launches of doves or offered a framed portrait of the singer. At the benefit night for Virginia Pozzi-Branzanti in Rijeka in 1872 a banner was lowered from the top of the stage with the letters made of coloured flowers forming the words “Viva Virginia Pozzi-Branzanti”. During the performance itself the singer was serenaded with a harp interlaced with flowers. In addition, the customary bunches of flowers with ribbons and a scroll of poems. The poems, another very common form of tribute at the time, could also be directly attached to the boxes in the theatre.¹¹⁰ Some were printed on silk. Poems, inscriptions and prints were common forms of tribute to singers of both sexes. We learn about some of these gifts from the lists of expenses drawn up at the theatre of Zadar at the end of the century. Sets of tableware or desk sets in silver were also given. We have no evidence, at the coastal theatres, of presents in the form of foodstuffs such as coffee, tea, chocolate or sugar,¹¹¹ though exceptions were made for the underage artists of the ‘Lilliputian’ companies: no gold or valuables for them (for what would they do with them?), but preferably confectionary. So in the case of children the management or box-owners could get away with spending a lot less, though remain safe in the knowledge that their gifts were appreciated. We have the case in Pula, for example, of a “large confection in the shape of a tree trunk surrounded by a climbing rose” (*gran dolce raffigurante un tronco di albero con rose rampicanti*) being donated to the young *seratanti* Bottari and Giori.¹¹²

The men could be given ebony walking sticks or a cigarette case (*busta sigarette*); then there was the laurel wreath with ribbon, but also flowers (as for the ladies), or brooches,¹¹³

109 We can give an example of the sheer variety of the presents by citing what was given to the singer Paolina Leone during her performance in Pula: “She was gifted with a basket of flowers, a bouquet with ribbons, earrings finished in enamel and a clasp with a mount in gold and with the Roman monuments of Pola burnished on it, a gold bracelet with a big pearl surrounded by diamonds, the work of the goldsmith Janessich of Trieste and valued at 300 florins; a stupendous bunch of flowers with highly ornate white and red ribbon, on which was embroidered in gold and silver the private coat-of-arms of the officers of the Navy and respective dedication, a fan of flowers, a brooch with precious stones, a most elegant veil fan and some occasional sonnets.” (“Essa s’ebbe in dono una cesta di fiori, un bouquet con nastri, un finimento in smalto d’orecchini e fermaglio con legatura in oro e con su dipinti a fuoco i monumenti romani di Pola, un braccialetto d’oro con una grossa perla circondata da brillanti, lavoro dell’oreficeria Janessich di Trieste e del valore di fiorini 300; uno stupendo mazzo di fiori con ricchissima galla bianco rossa, sulla quale era ricamato in oro ed argento lo stemma privato dei signori ufficiali di Marina e la rispettiva dedica, un ventaglio di fiori, una spilla con pietre preziose, un elegantissimo ventaglio in velo e dei sonetti d’occasione.”); “Teatralia”, *L’Eco di Pola*, 21. 4. 1894.

110 “Teatro Civico”, *La Bilancia*, 27. 5. 1872.

111 On this type of gift, see John Rosselli, *Singers of Italian Opera. The History of a Profession*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 82.

112 “Politeama Ciscutti”, *Il Giornaletto*, 12. 10. 1907.

113 A brooch was given to the baritone Formichi at the Theatre of Rijeka in 1910; Report. Lump sum for the management of the Teatro Comunale pro 1910 (*Resoconto. Pausciale Direzione del Teatro Comunale*

watches and gold chains, gold jewellery boxes, and letter-writing sets. Also contemplated were rings (like the luxurious one with diamonds and a sapphire given to the tenor Tomei at Pula),¹¹⁴ buttons with precious stones, and gold cufflinks.

Gifts to the singers could also be made by the *impresa*. Examples were coffee sets, but also valuable bracelets, rings with precious stones, brooches or watches. There is evidence that both men and women received donations of gold coins.¹¹⁵ A gift in cash amounting to 50 crowns was also given to Tito Schipa when he sang at Šibenik in 1909.¹¹⁶ The management of the theatre could also be directly involved in making these gifts, though without involving the shareholders. Or in other cases it could be the chorus. If the *seratante* happened to be the *maestro concertatore*, the gift could be made by the singers of the cast engaged for the season.

All of these gifts were displayed on the stage at the end of the performance. If they were particularly lavish and valuable, they might be mentioned in the newspapers. And if they were directly taken to the dressing-rooms before the performance, the singers would already know what they were going to receive before going onstage. The public, on its part, would get an idea of the singer's worth by simply observing the quantity and quality of the presents. And among singers there could also develop a form of hidden competition to see who got the most gifts and could boast the biggest receipts on their benefit night.¹¹⁷

We have a further example with the collection made for the prima donna Erminia Castagnoli, wife of the impresario Castagnoli, at the time of her benefit night. The fundraising document is particularly interesting because, among other things, we read: "There will be no bowl at the doors" (*Non vi sarà bacile alle porte*). We assume, therefore, that the custom of the collecting bowl had been abandoned here too. The bowl, which collected not only the public's offerings in cash, but also presents, was usually found in the theatre foyer placed next to the *seratante* who welcomed the public at the beginning of the evening.¹¹⁸ It was exhibited at productions of both opera and spoken theatre. In the *borderò* forms of the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar the "bowl" (*bacile*) constituted a specific entry, included in the list

pro 1910), Rijeka, 1910, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

114 "Teatralia", *L'Eco di Pola*, 22. 12. 1890.

115 "Politeama Ciscutti", *L'Eco di Pola*, 4. 11. 1893, or "Politeama Ciscutti", *Il Giornaleto di Pola*, 12. 4. 1906. A purse containing gold Napoleons was given to the baritone Negrini at his *serata d'onore* in Pula; "Politeama Ciscutti", *L'Eco di Pola*, 14. 11. 1891.

116 See section 4.6.3 above "Do it yourself, if you want it done properly: the self-organised seasons of the Mazzolenis".

117 On this subject, with reference to the gifts made in the world of spoken theatre and its actors, see Sergio Tofano, *Il teatro all'antica italiana*, Adelphi, Milano 2017.

118 The custom is mentioned and described by, among others, John Rosselli, *The Opera Industry*, p. 12. See also Paola Daniela Giovanelli, *La società teatrale in Italia tra Otto e Novecento. Lettere ad Alfredo Testoni*, Bulzoni, Roma 1984, p. 59.

of nightly receipts.¹¹⁹ At the theatres of Šibenik and Trieste, on the other hand, the entry was not already printed on the form, but separate and added by hand under the list of tickets sold sector by sector.¹²⁰

The gifts were for the exclusive benefit of the singer and for no reason at all could the impresario consider them to be “revenue rights” (*diritti d’entrata*). There was indeed a case of an impresario who demanded that the prima donna hand over some of the trinkets collected after a benefit night. At her refusal the impresario in turn refused to pay her the last *quartale*. The case came before a lawyer, who established that “the gifts in question are made to the person who sings, and cannot be considered as *diritti d’entrata*; they are mementos, pledges of esteem, or, as the French say, *souvenirs*; and the impresario, though he is partially involved in the production of the benefit concert, has nothing to do with these gifts, mementos or souvenirs.”¹²¹ The impresario could not, therefore, ask for all or part of it to be relinquished.

7.4 The chorus singers

The choral ensembles used for the opera seasons in the coastal region were put together from season to season, since there were no permanent choral organisations sufficiently large to guarantee a continuous professional service. Local choristers were continually augmented with singers hired externally, from other theatres or other institutions of various kinds (philharmonic societies, choral societies, etc.). Their recruitment was the responsibility of either the impresario or the theatre management, or even the chorus master (if there already happened to be one). Sometimes the recruits were singers, possibly employed in neighbouring

119 *Società del Teatro Nuovo di Zara*, various *borderò* forms, HR-DAZD, folder 7.

120 See, merely as examples, the *Borderò*, Teatro Mazzoleni of Šibenik, performance no. 20 of 28. 10. 1880, Šibenik, 28. 10. 1880, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3 and the *Borderò* of the Teatro Grande of Trieste for performance no. 18 of 26. 10. 1861, I-TSmt, folder 108. Here the receipts for the *bacile* were indicated separately.

121 “i regali in oggetti si fanno alla persona di chi canta, e non possono considerarsi siccome *diritti d’entrata*; essi sono memorie, pegni di stima, o, come dicono i francesi, *souvenirs*; e l’impresario, comechè entri in parte nel prodotto della beneficiata, in questi regali, o memorie, o *souvenir*, non c’entra nulla”. The lawyer further observed: “Anyone who gives a present means to give a memento, imagining that the recipient of the gift will preserve it as a sign of gratitude, without sharing it with anyone. Otherwise, it would be only right that the impresario should have a part in the flowers or bouquets that the admirers throw to the singers, which cannot be said without laughing about it.” (“Chi fa un regalo intende dare una memoria, supponendo che la persona regalata la conserverà in segno di gratitudine, senza dividerlo con nessuno. In caso diverso converrebbe che l’impresario entrasse pure a parte dei fiori o *bouquets* che gli ammiratori gettano alle cantanti, la qual cosa non può dirsi senza riderne.”); *Il Diavoletto*, no. 261, 23. 9. 1854, p. 1100.

theatres during the same season or in adjacent seasons, who offered their services. They could write to a theatre on their own behalf or on behalf of colleagues looking for a part.¹²² This, however, was quite rare.

Getting hold of good choristers doesn't seem to have been easy. Nor were the external musicians for the chorus and orchestra always taken from the same city; they could in fact come from different areas. They could be requested from the Teatro Comunale of Trieste or from surrounding theatres. The former option was the safest from the professional and artistic point of view, as was then pointed out by Pietro Ciscutti, who considered the singers from the theatre in Trieste to be "gifted choristers, who with three rehearsals can go on stage in any opera of the repertoire requiring first-rate voices".¹²³ Getting their singers would therefore above all mean saving on the number of rehearsal, for they were better prepared than others and already used to being on stage. But of course that also meant checking to see if they were available, something that couldn't be taken for granted. Ciscutti himself, when he signed the contract with the Bellini-Piacentini impresa at Pula, found himself in the position of having to hunt for choristers and duly appealed to the Comunale: "I therefore wrote to Trieste, but owing to the unfortunate circumstance that opera seasons were opening at both the Filodrammatico and the Politeama Rossetti, all the choral groups were engaged, so I was offered only six choristers, which, to be sure, was not good enough for me".¹²⁴ So if an opera season or special inaugurations were taking place in Trieste at the same time, as in this instance, the choristers had to be sought elsewhere. Even in later years the same problem persisted in Pula, particularly as regards female singers. In 1901, of 32 choristers of both sexes (of whom the majority were men), as many as seven females had to be

122 "Having learned from the chorus master Signor Escher", wrote the *comprimaria* Gilda Penso to the theatre of Zadar, "that there will be opera productions there in the spring with the operas Lohengrin and Carmen and, finding myself engaged in the present season as a *comprimaria*, I write to this honourable management to ask if it should ever have the need for some part, as also if it should need excellent sopranos (chorus), as also an excellent tenor and a fine contralto (all outsiders), I would very much like, as would my companions, to obtain the said engagement if the occasion should arise." ("Avendo appreso dal maestro de' cori sig. Escher", scriveva la *comprimaria* Gilda Penso al Teatro di Zara, "che costà in primavera ci sarà spettacolo d'opera con le opere Lohengrin e Carmen ed io trovandomi qui scritturata nell'attuale stagione quale *comprimaria*, mi rivolgo a questa onorevole Direzione se mai abbisognasse d'una qualche parte, come pure se ci fosse bisogno d'ottimi soprani (coriste), così pure d'un eccellente tenore ed un buon contralto (tutti forestieri), bramerei tanto io come i detti miei compagni poter all'occasione ottenere la detta scrittura."); Letter from Gilda Penso to the theatre management of Zadar, Udine, 18. 3. 1898, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

123 "coristi di arte, i quali con tre prove vanno in scena con qualsiasi opera di repertorio e di voci scelte"; "A proposito dei coristi", *L'Eco di Pola*, 28. 9. 1889.

124 "Scrissi adunque a Trieste, ma per una malaugurata incostanza dell'apertura del Filodrammatico e Politeama Rossetti con l'opera, tutti i corpi corali erano impegnati, per cui soltanto mi furono offerti sei coristi, i quali certo non potevano fare il fatto mio."; "A proposito dei coristi", *L'Eco di Pola*, 28. 9. 1889.

brought in from outside.¹²⁵ Three years later, in 1904, an announcement was printed in *Il Giornaleto* asking for female choristers to come forward. The management wrote: “Wanted are young ladies to sing as choristers in the opera productions at the Politeama Ciscutti in the autumn season of 1904 as well as in the big opera season to be given in Lent 1905. The ladies wishing to take part may make their way to the dressing room of the theatre from 6 7 [sic] pm every day”.¹²⁶ As written, the announcement doesn’t seem to ask for particular qualifications, other than those of being generically *coriste* (hence female) and possibly young (*signorine*, and not *signore*). It is not given to know, however, how the selection process was carried out and indeed whether there was a genuine selection process with auditions.

Women were needed at Zadar too, for in 1884 there were only three male singers and no females.¹²⁷ Here children’s voices were even proposed as a means of replenishing the female section of the chorus.¹²⁸ In 1901 there was a Unione Corale Zaratina in Zadar that could provide 20 choristers for the opera season. Each one would cost a florin a day from the first rehearsal with the chorus master. Its director even offered to prepare the chorus himself if given a separate contract with the impresario.¹²⁹ Parallel to this association there was also a “Giuseppe Verdi” choral society. An attempt was made by the impresario De Monari to merge the two groups for use in the opera seasons (while including more qualified singers from outside); this plan, however, came to nothing.

Nor did the Teatro Nuovo in Split find itself in a better position. As the theatre management itself explained to the impresario Antonio Lana in 1895, “there are no choral forces available, nor is there the possibility to prepare any suitable for the purpose”.¹³⁰ Clearly there was not even a chorus master who could rehearse with local singers (if there were any). The chorus problem was also present at Rijeka as early as 1861, when a certain Politei, a secretary to the theatre, pointed out that the theatre was “in the awkward situation of not finding six skilled and good-looking female choristers, because all the ones from the Veneto are now in

125 “Politeama Ciscutti”, *Il Proletario*, 15. 10. 1901.

126 “Politeama Ciscutti”, *Il Giornaleto di Pola*, 10. 8. 1904.

127 Letter from the theatre management of Zadar to Sante Utili, Zadar, 27. 2. 1885, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

128 “Maestro Traversi”, the impresario Giorgio Trauner wrote to the theatre management of Zadar, “pointed out to me the benefit of engaging children singers, to reinforce the female chorus. On the subject I immediately spoke to Viscardi and Traversi himself so that they might find the required number, and I hope they have already done it.” (“M° Traversi mi fece vedere l’utilità di scritturare dei ragazzi cantori, per rinforzare il coro donne, parlai subito in proposito col Viscardi e col Maestro stesso affinché prendessero il numero necessario, e spero l’avranno già fatto.”); Letter from Giorgio Trauner to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 19. 4. 1898, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

129 “forze corali non ci sono disponibili, né c’è la possibilità di prepararne idoneamente allo scopo”; Letter from the Unione Corale Zaratina to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 11. 5. 1901, HR-DAZD, folder 10.

130 Letter from the vice-presidency of the theatre of Split to Antonio Lana, Split, March 1895, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

Piemonte; in spite of which it will be necessary to find them in the best possible way and at great sacrifice".¹³¹ Seven years later, an article in the Rijeka newspaper *La Bilancia* observed that the choruses in *Vespri siciliani* at the beginning of the season were "scant in number" (*scarsi di numero*).¹³² The problem had therefore not yet been solved. On the posters, however, the numbers involved could be inflated: a practice adopted by many theatres, probably to attract a larger audience,¹³³ though naturally the spectators would note the small chorus once they were in the theatre.

The chorus at Rijeka was also small, but unlike the other coastal theatres it had its own set of regulations (a *Regolamento*), which has fortunately survived. The manuscript, undated, is a little fuller than a previous printed version of 1861. It is here given in full:

1. The male and female choristers employed at the theatre depend immediately on the chorus master (*Maestro istruttore*) and the Deputation of the theatre.
2. It is their duty to study the parts assigned by the *impresa* and to go to the instruction and rehearsals whenever they are notified, to learn by heart as soon as possible the assigned pieces, and to perform them with due exactness and precision.
3. They must come to the theatre in sufficient time to be dressed and ready in their places $\frac{1}{4}$ hour before the performance begins.
4. The fees that the local choristers will agree on with the relative *impresa* will be paid after every three nights or soon after the performance if it is a single one.
5. During rehearsals they must maintain good conduct, silence and attention as well as due respect towards the chorus master; and in the theatre, both at rehearsals and during performances, on pain of strict consequences, no exemptions will be made regarding both the costumes that will be given to them and the prescribed manner of behaving.
6. Anyone arriving later than the established time both at rehearsals and performances will pay a fine of 1 (one) florin the first time, 2 (two) florins the second time, and the third time will be suspended either temporarily or definitively.

The same measures will be taken against anyone who may arrive in a state of drunkenness, while furthermore the Deputation reserves the right to take any measures that it believes appropriate, even in concert with the authorities if necessary, to provide swift protection in the event of any disorder.¹³⁴

131 "nell'imbarazzo di non poter rinvenire sei coriste belle e brave perché tutte le venete sono in Piemonte, nonostante si dovrà provvedere nel miglior modo possibile e con grave sacrificio"; Letter from the theatre secretary Politei to the theatre management of Rijeka, Venezia, 21. I. 1861, HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6.

132 "Teatro civico", *La Bilancia*, 21. 3. 1868.

133 See the Letter from Giorgio Trauner to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 27. 9. 1906, HR-DAZD, folder 26.

134 "1. I coristi e coriste addette al Teatro dipendono immediatamente dal Maestro istruttore e dalla Deputazione del Teatro. 2. È loro dovere di studiare le parti che vengono destinate dall'impresa, e di recarsi

Since the document was a set of regulations and not a contract, it lacked what in a genuine contract would be called termination clauses, which would establish, for example, that the singer could be dismissed if declared incompetent by the *maestro concertatore* or chorus master. Here it speaks merely of the chorister's generic 'dependence' on the chorus master and the theatre authorities (*Deputazione teatrale*). Regarding attendance, the choristers at Rijeka were obliged to be in the theatre 15 minutes before the performance: a shorter margin of time than that indicated in the printed version of 1861 of 30 minutes (as was also required of the choristers at Zadar, according to the contract of the Teatro Verdi).¹³⁵ Unlike the orchestral player, the chorister had to put on his costume, which would take time. Being late putting on one's costume before going on stage could be a dismissal offence.¹³⁶ Otherwise, unpunctuality on a day of performance could be punished with a fine, as could being late for, or not coming to, rehearsals.

In 1867 the choristers at Rijeka were given the choice of whether or not to take part in the forthcoming opera season. A sheet was circulated on which they were to indicate their choice against their name. For those who declined to participate, the theatre would find a replacement.¹³⁷ In fact not everyone could be available every day and at all hours, given

all'istruzione ed alle prove ogni qual volta vi vengono avvisati, di apprendere a memoria al più presto possibile i pezzi destinati ed eseguirli con la dovuta esattezza e precisione. 3. Dovranno comparire al Teatro a tempo debito per essere vestiti e pronti al loro posto ¼ d'ora prima che incominci lo spettacolo. 4. Gli onorari che i locali coristi stabiliranno colle relative imprese verranno loro pagati di tre in tre sere posticipatamente o tosto dopo l'esecuzione dello spettacolo qualora fosse unico. 5. Durante l'istruzione dovranno conservare la dovuta decenza silenzio ed attenzione nonché il debito rispetto al Maestro ed in Teatro tanto alle prove che durante lo Spettacolo a scanso di rigorose misure non si permetteranno delle licenze sia riguardo al vestiario che verrà loro dato, e circa il modo loro prescritto di comportarsi. 6. Chiunque venisse più tardi dell'ora stabilita sia alle prove come alle rappresentazioni pagherà la prima volta fiorini (1) uno di multa, la seconda volta fiorini due (2) e la terza volta verrà sospeso temporaneamente o definitivamente. Le stesse misure saranno usate verso coloro che comparissero in istato d'ubriachezza mentre d'altro canto la Deputazione si riserva prendere quelle misure che crederà opportune anche occorrendo di concerto colle Autorità, onde porre pronto riparo nel caso di qualsiasi disordine.”; *Regolamento per Coristi* [Rijeka, n. d.], manuscript, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

135 “*Dei Coristi*”, in *Regolamento interno disciplinare del Civico Teatro di Fiume*, Rijeka 17. 9. 1861, HR-DARI, RO 24, folder 6.

136 “*Tomorrow alone*”, the impresario Trauner wrote to the management of Zadar, “I will be forced to dismiss the local chorister Monar because in four performances only once was he dressed in the 4th act, claiming that part of his costume had been stolen.” (“*Domani solo*”, the impresario Trauner wrote to the management of Zadar, “mi troverò costretto licenziare il corista locale Monar perché in quattro rappresentazioni una sola si è vestito nel 4° atto adducendo che gli venne rubato parte del vestiario.”); Letter from Giorgio Trauner to the management of Zadar, Milano, 19. 4. 1898, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

137 “The theatre deputation, with the resolution taken at the meeting of yesterday 7 October 1867, asks the ladies and gentlemen choristers of the city to declare promptly, using the formula “accept” or “decline” to be added to the attached sheet, whether or not they intend to offer their services in the forthcoming season of Lent and spring, under the impresa of Signor Adolfo Proni and at the same conditions of

that many had another occupation, as did most choristers in that period. Anyone deciding to take part would have to guarantee their presence at rehearsals: a commitment that doesn't always seem to have been maintained, judging from the complaints made to the theatre deputation of Rijeka, for example, in 1868 by the chorus master Felice Dall'Asta over the absences of choristers. On many occasions Dall'Asta reproached the offenders but often found himself having to suspend the rehearsals. He found himself forced to beg the theatre management to take measures, otherwise he would decline all responsibility for the outcome of the forthcoming production.¹³⁸ In response to this, it was the female choristers, most likely fearing their contracts would be terminated, who came forward and appealed directly to the theatre management. They claimed that the number of rehearsals was sufficient and that the chorus master's frustration was caused by the fact that some of them hadn't yielded to his "lustful desires" (*lussuriose brame*).¹³⁹ We shall never know exactly what

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- the past year under the impresario Dr. Carlo Gardini. For those ladies and gentlemen choristers that decline, the deputation will straightaway take the necessary steps to provide for their replacement." ("La Deputazione teatrale con risoluzione presa nella seduta di ieri 7 ottobre 1867 invita i sig. Coristi e Coriste della città a dichiarare recisamente mediante la formula «accetto» o «rifiuto» da apporsi al presente foglio, se intendono o meno di prestare la loro opera nella prossima ventura stagione di Quaresima e Primavera, sotto l'Impresa del sig. Adolfo Proni alle medesime condizioni dell'anno decorso sotto l'Impresario Dr. Carlo Gardini. Per quei sig. coristi e coriste che rifiuteranno, la Deputazione provvederà d'ora in poi alla loro supplenza prendendo quelle disposizioni che saranno del caso."); Letter from the theatre deputation of Rijeka to the choristers of Rijeka, Rijeka, 8. 10. 1867, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.
- 138 "Already at the first rehearsals of the opera, I the undersigned, maestro of the Istituto Filarmonico", Dall'Asta wrote, "would have had cause for complaint to the honourable theatre management on account of the alternating absences of first one and then another chorister; I hoped that with my reprimands this would come to an end, but unfortunately I was mistaken, to the extent that now I have been several times forced to suspend the rehearsals, given that the irreproachable singers do not intend to rehearse any further if not all the chorus is present. Given that this opera is very taxing for the male choruses, I beg this honourable presidency of the theatre to put a stop to this insubordination, using any means it finds suited to the purpose, since otherwise I could no longer answer for the success of the production regarding the contribution of the chorus [...]" ("Già dalle prime prove dell'opera io qui sottoscritto Maestro dell'Istituto Filarmonico avrei avuto ragione di muovere lagnanza presso questa Spettabile Direzione teatrale causa di una alternativa assenza ora di uno ora d'un altro corista; sperava colle ammonizioni ciò avesse avuto un fine, ma purtroppo mi sono ingannato, talmente che ora poi sono costretto più volte sospendere le prove, giacchè gl'innappuntabili non intendono più oltre provare, qualora non si trovano tutti in coro. Essendo quest'opera di molto impegno per i cori uomini, prego questa Spettabile Presidenza Teatrale di porre un limite a questa insubordinazione, valendosi di quei mezzi che Ella crederà addatti a ciò, giacchè in caso contrario io non potrei più rispondere per il buon esito dello spettacolo riguardo alla mansione – coro – [...]"); Letter from Felice Dall'Asta to the theatre deputation of Rijeka, Rijeka, 19. 2. 1868, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.
- 139 "[...] Signor Dall'Asta waits for this moment to make this complaint after so many rehearsals we have done on our own both of Semiramide and also of the vocal pieces to be performed on the float. Or is it perhaps because some of us did not wish to defer to his lustful desires! ... We are ready to submit to testing from another maestro; hence we expect our contract to run its course, as witnessed by the

happened or how the story ended. What is certain is that a report had been made to the theatre management over an alleged episode of absenteeism. And the fact that it was the chorus master who reported the absences suggests that the theatre of Rijeka, unlike the nearby Teatro Comunale of Trieste, lacked the figure of an inspector, whose job it was to check that every singer and orchestral player attended rehearsals.¹⁴⁰

On the question of payments, the *Regolamento* of Rijeka mentions only that the fees would be paid after every three performances, or after the single performance if there was only one. Compared to more complex documents, like the contracts for choristers of the Teatro Comunale Verdi of Trieste,¹⁴¹ there was no reference, for example, to the singer's obligation to perform a secondary part (without extra pay) if the *impresa* should find itself without someone to fill it. And no distinction was made, for example, between a normal chorister and a "*capo-guida*" (section leader), who would usually be paid more. Nor was there any reference to the obligation, if required, of an additional period of service (15 days beyond the termination of the contract) during which the singer would be paid on a nightly basis; or to the prohibition of taking on other commitments in the course of the season.¹⁴² Such clauses, however, would be principally the prerogative of a contract rather than a set of regulations.

There was also the case of a theatre management being unable to pay the choristers the agreed sum for performances during the opera season. Together with the orchestral players the singers therefore formed a citizens' company in which conditions were regulated by contract. This happened at Šibenik for performances of *La traviata* and *Il trovatore* in 1909. An agreement was reached on the basis of the future outcome of the season. If, after

signature of our impresario Signor Dal Torso [...] ("[...] aspetta adesso il signor Dall'Asta da fare questa protesta [*sic*] dopo tante prove che abbiamo fatte da sole tanto della Semiramide come pure delle cantate da eseguirsi sulla Galleggiante. Oppure perché alcune di noi non ha voluto obbedire alle sue lussuose brame! ... Noi siamo pronte a sottomettersi a qualunque prova d'altro maestro; perciò intendiamo che il nostro contratto abbia il suo corso, come lo attesta la firma del nostro impresario signor Dal Torso [...]); Letter from the female choristers of Rijeka to the management of Rijeka, Rijeka, 23. 3. 1869, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

140 On the type of report used by an inspector to supervise the attendance of choristers and orchestral players, see for example the documentation in I-TSmt, folder 116. In 1868, among the theatre staff of the Teatro Adamich of Rijeka there were also a stage director (*direttore di scena*) and a generic police inspector (*ispettore di polizia*), but not a genuine theatre inspector; see the list of the theatre staff included in the Evenings' expenses of the personnel in the opera season, Rijeka, [n. d.], HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6.

141 Engagement agreement for choristers, *Impresa* of the Teatro Comunale G. Verdi, Luigi Cesari e C. [n. d.], I-TSmt, folder 174. The engagement agreement from Trieste consisted of thirteen articles, in contrast with the six at Rijeka.

142 See Articles 2, 3 and 4, Engagement agreement for choristers, *Impresa* del Teatro Comunale G. Verdi, Luigi Cesari e C. [n. d.], I-TSmt, folder 174.

deducting all expenses, there was a net surplus, this would be used to pay the orchestral players, while the chorus singers (only the men) would be given two crowns per person for each performance night. If, on the other hand, the net receipts should be insufficient to pay the full fees of players and singers, the pay of each would be reduced in proportion. And if there should be no profit at all, neither players nor singers could make any claim to payment. The women, both players and singers, had the right to a free entrance ticket every evening for a member of their family.¹⁴³ In short, a distinction was made between the male chorister (who had a right to payment in the event of a profit) and his unpaid female counterpart.

There were cases when choristers, regardless of sex, were paid not in cash but in kind. An example was that of the Società Filarmonica of Zadar whose members offered to sing in the Prologue to *Mefistofele* in 1903 in exchange for free entrance to the theatre.¹⁴⁴ For the same opera the senior choristers already connected with the theatre had asked for 2.40 crowns per night, the younger ones 1.60 crowns. The chorus master Riccardo Talpo, who was involved in the recruitment of singers, reported that he could engage “8 boys for 50 cents per night each” (*8 ragazzi in ragione di 50 cent per sera ciascuno*). At Zadar a fee of 2.40 crowns was contemplated for a rehearsal plus an evening performance; just a crown for a daytime performance. According to the engagement agreement with the theatre, the chorister was entitled to payment from the day of the first orchestral rehearsal. We find, therefore, distinctions in pay being made on the basis of age and experience.

Naturally the singers brought in from outside cost more than the locals. In 1868 an external chorister at Rijeka cost between 1.70 and 2 florins a day.¹⁴⁵ A slight increase could be noted around fifteen years later in Zadar, judging from the negotiations between theatre management and the impresario Razzani, which mention a daily payment of 2.5 florins for external choristers. At Split the figure for the following decade was 4 lire per day (hence in line with what was paid twenty years earlier at Rijeka, for with the florin equal to two lire, 4 lire corresponded to 2 florins),¹⁴⁶ whereas for an external chorister at Zadar and Šibenik one could pay at least 6 crowns (or 3 florins) a day from 1909. We must remember that with the change of century payments were made in crowns. A florin was the equivalent of two crowns. The following table provides a summary of the figures found in the surviving documentation, regarding both local and external choristers:

143 Engagement agreement between the management of the Teatro Mazzoleni and the orchestra and male chorus of the Società Filarmonica-drammatica of Šibenik, Šibenik, 1. 3. 1909, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

144 The season was organised by Giorgio Trauner; Letter from the theatre management of Zadar to Giorgio Trauner, [Zadar, 1903], letter book, HR-DAZD, folder 21.

145 General report on income and expenditure for the administration of the Civico Teatro of Rijeka in the Lent and spring season 1868, Rijeka, 1868, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

146 Letter from Antonio Lana to the presidency of the theatre of Split, Milano, 2. 2. 1895, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

Daily pay for choristers (I = internal; E = external)														
		1868	1876	1883	1885	1889	1895	1899	1901	1903	1908	1909	1911	1914
Pula	(I)													
	(E)					10 f./week								
Rijeka	(I)													
	(E)	1.7–2 f.												
Zadar	(I)		0.80/ 1.3 f.		1 f.			1 f.	1 f.	Evening: 2.4 c. older 1.6 c. younger 0.50 cent boys	Daytime: 1 c.			
	(E)			2.5 f.										6 c.
Šibenik	(I)										2 c.	2–3 c.	1 c.	
	(E)											6 c.		7 c.
Split	(I)													
	(E)						4 f.							

The table shows a general increase in the pay of external choristers over the course of a fifty-year period, while that of the local choristers seems to have remained stable. It is not, however, possible to make generalisations about wages, given that each theatre was a case apart, especially considering the fact that at the time there were no standard pay tables. Consiglio Rispoli had already decided that the payment of Italian chorus singers was derisory and he found it difficult to understand “how there are people that devote themselves to such a poorly paid profession”.¹⁴⁷ Not surprisingly there were frequent requests for pay increases. For example, in the negotiations with Trauner for Zadar, the impresario complained that while the better singers refused to sing, the nine remaining ones were demanding “an increase of 40 cents a day in addition to payment starting 5 days before the first performance”.¹⁴⁸ Impresarios like Trauner were against yielding to such demands, fearing that continual requests for higher wages from year to year would make it impossible for the theatre to open.

Such requests, however, were widespread and frequent also among the orchestral players.

147 “come esista gente che si consacrì ad una professione così poco remunerativa”; Rispoli, *La vita pratica*, p. 72.

148 “un aumento di cent 40 al giorno oltre all’entrare in paga 5 giorni prima della prima rappresentazione”; Letter from Giorgio Trauner to the theatre management of Zadar, Badia, 8. 8. 1906, HR-DAZD, folder 26.

7.5 The orchestral players

What has been said about the choristers – over the presence, or otherwise, of established ensembles – holds true also for the orchestral players. We have no information about how the players were recruited in the coastal region of the eastern Adriatic. When hiring them, were auditions or other selection processes held? Were competitive principles applied to their selection? Would the pupils of a player already working in the orchestra have precedence over external musicians? Word of mouth, to be sure, was certainly an effective means of gaining access to employment in an orchestra. It is true that various periodicals of the period, such as *La Gazzetta Musicale di Milano* or *La Gazzetta Teatrale Italiana*, published advertisements for vacancies in orchestras, but there is no trace of any such notices for the theatres in question, nor do we find any mention of auditions.¹⁴⁹ A great influence was undoubtedly wielded by the *maestro concertatore* and conductor, who was perhaps in a position to bring new musicians with him, perhaps even replacing the older players or those considered inadequate. One thing that remains certain is that several musicians still travelled with the impresarios, who recruited them for the different opera seasons and brought them to the various theatres. Testimony of this practice is offered by the impresario Domenico Valenti, who, writing to the theatre management of Zadar to organise the spring season of 1896, claimed: “As regards the external orchestral players, I have never been supplied by Trieste, not even on the occasions when I was in Gorizia; almost always I have my usual excellent players, who always do several seasons a year with me, and they are from Bologna, Reggio [Emilia] and Parma”.¹⁵⁰ This implied a relationship of continuous collaboration, founded on trust and on the skills of musicians recognised as reliable, and not based, therefore, on a criterion of mere geographical proximity to the theatre needing them. Giorgio Trauner also recruited musicians in Venice (“I returned to Milan today after also going to Venice to secure certain orchestral players”),¹⁵¹ while Raffaello Faini would bring with him not only the orchestral players but also the conductor (when proposing his services for a season at Šibenik he stated: “I

149 Of the neighbouring theatres, we know for example that the Teatro Comunale of Trieste had been organising auditions ever since 1819; Franco Piperno – Antonio Rostagno, “The Opera in Nineteenth Century Italian Opera Houses”, in *The Opera Orchestra in 18th and 19th Century Europe*, vol. II, edited by Niels M. Jensen and Franco Piperno, Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, Berlino 2008, p. 11.

150 “Riguardo ai Prof. d’orchestra forastieri io mai mi sono servito da Trieste, neanche le due volte che sono stato a Gorizia, io o [sic] quasi sempre i miei soliti Prof. bravissimi che fanno sempre con me parecchie stagioni ogni anno, e sono appunto di Bologna [sic], Reggio e Parma.” Letter from Domenico Valenti to Giorgio De Nakić d’Osliak, Milano, 5. 2. 1896, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

151 “Ritornai oggi a Milano dopo essere stato anche a Venezia ad assicurarmi taluni elementi d’orchestra”; Letter from Giorgio Trauner to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 30. 8. 1906, HR-DAZD, folder 26.

have with me the conductor along with 4 principal orchestral musicians, who will join those in situ”).¹⁵²

Some players, on the other hand, would be proposed by theatrical agencies, to which they had applied for employment.¹⁵³ It is likely that the coastal region presented a combination of all these methods. One consolidated custom was that, in the event of an orchestral player giving up his position or dying, aspiring candidates could apply directly to the theatre management simply by sending a letter attesting their skills. The candidate asked the management to be presented to the impresario. These direct applications had a spontaneous character and could be made even if the player was already employed elsewhere. The trombonist Carlo Pasquini, for example, who was working at La Scala in Milan, offered his services to the management of Zadar in the following words: “Honourable Management, if it should happen that the first trombone was no good (not easy to happen!!!), write to me immediately, for though I am engaged at La Scala in the ballet, I will gladly come. Just make sure you pay from my trip and give me a higher salary! About my skills, you can ask the 1st horn Carafa who knows me [...]”.¹⁵⁴ He evidently expected that a veiled allusion to the incompetence of his fellow trombonists would make their choice lean in his favour, especially since a musician of proven reputation and ability like the principal horn of La Scala could vouch for his skills.¹⁵⁵ Given that the first rehearsals were accompanied by the

152 “tengo meco il Direttore d’orchestra con 4 principali guide professori, che si uniranno a cotesti del loco”; Letter from Raffaello Faini to the president of the Theatre of Šibenik, Poreč (Parenzo), 7. 12. 1896, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b.

153 We have the case of Ettore Rabaglia, first trumpet for Split, who was proposed by the Frusta Teatrale agency for a contract with impresario Vecchi in 1895 in return for a 3% deduction on his salary as an orchestral player. Art. 2, Engagement agreement issued by the Frusta Teatrale agency, Milano, 26. 10. 1895, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

154 “Onorevole Direzione, caso mai che il primo trombone non fosse buono (che sarà difficile!!!) mi scriva subito, che sebbene io sia scritturato alla Scala nel ballo, verrò volentieri. Basta però che mi paghi il viaggio e la paga superiore! Sulle mie qualità Ella può domandare al I° corno Carafa che mi conosce [...]”; Letter from Carlo Pasquini to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 20. 1. 1899, HR-DAZD, folder 6.

155 There was also the case of an aspiring orchestral musician who sent his garbled application to the wrong address: that of the violinist Antonio Korroschitz, whose application ended up at the naval command in Pula instead of the Politeama Ciscutti. The episode was even reported in the papers. Korroschitz wrote: “The most dutiful undersigned asks to be taken on in the Civil Orchestra of the Theatre of Pula, as first violin, or even as second or third if there wasn’t a place, for at the theatre in Pula he has played as first violin in the rehearsal with the full orchestra and the conductor was pleased and promised to take me on immediately if a place came free, and also with the protection of the General, commander of the Imperial and Royal military navy. I ask you to take me on with a return journey free of expense and also the advanced payment for the first violin of the orchestra, if there is a place, otherwise for the second or third violin, for I have exerted myself with all diligence and I promise to take part in the orchestral rehearsals and show my skills with honour [...].” (“Devotissimo sottoscritto”, scriveva Korroschitz “prega di essere accettato nel Orchestra Civile del Teatro di Pola, come primo violino o pure

piano, all external orchestral players like Pasquini were engaged after the principal singers. Otherwise, the impresario would find himself having to pay musicians to remain idle at the *piazza* during the early rehearsals with the singers.¹⁵⁶

As we already found in the case of the choristers, for certain musicians playing in the local orchestras used less frequently for opera seasons, orchestral playing was not their principal source of daily employment. And given that it was not their main occupation, it is plausible to suppose that the artistic standard was not of the highest. Once the opera season was over, the musician – unless already a member of a city band or other local ensemble – would have to find employment in other theatres, or look for work of another kind.

The activities of the orchestral players at Rijeka were regulated, already from the 1860s onwards, by a document called “The duties of the orchestra and of the professors forming it” (the *Doveri* for short).¹⁵⁷ It was a set of rules that disciplined the collaboration between the players and the city theatre. Each player was expected to collect a copy of this document and leave a receipt for it. Still present in the *Doveri* is the customary distinction between the *direttore d’orchestra* (director of the orchestra) and the *maestro concertatore* (director of the singers), two roles that would be officially merged for the first time in 1868 at La Scala in Milan, in the person of Angelo Mariani.¹⁵⁸ According to this document, the *direttore*, on whom the orchestra depended and who in turn depended on the theatre deputation, would direct the performance of the music “in accord with the *maestro concertatore*” (*d’intelligenza*

secondo o terzo se non fussi posto indove che a Pola nel Teatro a suonato di primo violino nella prova con tutta Orchestra e che il Direttore era contento e promesso prendermi subito che sarà un posto, e poi con protezione del sig. Generale I. R. Marina di guerra Comandante. Prego di prendermi con viaggio di andata e ritorno franco di spese e anche la paga anticipata per primo violino di Orchestra se e posto se no per secondo o terzo violino che con tutta diligenza si è attività si prometterà di fare nelle prove di orchestra e con onore di farsi vedere la sua capacità [...]”; “Schizzo biografico di Paganini II”, *Il Bulo*, I, 13, 15. 9. 1872.

156 As is confirmed, for example, by the impresario Domenico Valenti for Zadar: “[...] as for the external orchestral players, I cannot make them arrive together with the singing company, for first the singers have to rehearse the opera at the piano, which would mean that I would have to pay the aforementioned players for several days of doing nothing and for me it would be hundreds of lire wasted; and I believe other imprese would do the same, because this is business and if one isn’t careful to make all imaginable and possible savings, there is no chance of succeeding.” (“[...] i professori d’orchestra forastieri, non posso farli arrivare insieme alla compagnia di canto, dovendo prima gli artisti concertare l’opera al pianoforte, in modo che dovrei pagare i sud. professori parecchi giorni a fare nulla e per me sarebbero delle centinaia di lire sprecate e credo che le altre imprese avranno fatto egualmente, perché sono affari che se non si sta attenti a tutti i risparmi immaginabili e possibili, non si potrebbe riuscire.”); Letter from Domenico Valenti to Giorgio De Nakic d’Osliak, Milano, 28. I. 1896. HR-DAZD, folder 6.

157 *Doveri dell’Orchestra e dei Professori che la componono*, Rijeka, 3. 3. 1866, HR-DARI, RO 24, folder 6.

158 In actual fact this fusion was momentarily tried out by Alberto Mazzucato in the two-year period before 1868; see Antonio Rostagno, “La Scala verso la moderna orchestra. Gli eventi e i motivi delle riforme da Merelli ad Aida”, *Studi Verdiani*, XVI (2002), p. 168.

col maestro concertatore).¹⁵⁹ In the event of disagreements with the *direttore* the player could address his grievances to the deputation, while remaining, until a decision was made, obliged to obey the said *direttore*.¹⁶⁰ All acts of insubordination, towards either the *direttore* or the deputation, were judged according to situation and circumstances.

The document included more prohibitions than provisions concerning what was allowed. It ranged from rules – of common sense, one would say – like those of not smoking in the theatre, not making a noise, not speaking loudly in the orchestra or not taking part in outbursts of applause from the audience, to more curious prohibitions like that of making predictions about the outcome of the performance: passing judgement or making such prognostications during rehearsals was considered inappropriate and punishable,¹⁶¹ as it could condition the orchestra and, by reflection, the audience as well.

During performance nights the players also had to follow precise rules in their movements. They were instructed to return immediately to their seats after the breaks, also to give them time to tune their instruments, and to avoid making a “racket” (*frastuono*) with their instruments after tuning.¹⁶² The players who had concluded their contribution to the performance were to leave the theatre exiting below stage (and also to enter from below stage on nights when there was a large audience), to prevent them from disturbing the public as they pass through the parterre.¹⁶³ Their physical appearance was also subject to scrutiny. Compared to the preceding version of the *Doveri* of 1861, which was three articles

159 Art. 1, *Doveri dell'Orchestra e dei Professori che la compongono*, Rijeka, 3. 3. 1866, HR-DARI, RO 24, folder 6.

160 “2. All the gentlemen members of the orchestra, none excepted, must without opposition or comment play everything decided by the conductor” (“2. Tutti i signori membri dell'orchestra, nessuno eccettuato, devono senza opposizione o commenti suonare tutto che venga stabilito dal direttore”); *Doveri dell'Orchestra e dei Professori che la compongono*, Rijeka, 3. 3. 1866, HR-DARI, RO 24, folder 6.

161 See also the *Regolamento per l'Orchestra del Teatro Comunale di Trieste*, Tipografia del Lloyd Austriaco, Trieste 1864, p. 13: “To any questioning each person must have the response of art and truth ready: that one can never make judgements about a performance at the rehearsals. Transgression of this rule will be considered a serious misdemeanour by the management.” (“A qualunque interrogazione ognuno deve aver pronta la risposta dell'arte e della verità: che non si può decidere mai d'uno spettacolo alle prove. La trasgressione a questa prescrizione sarà considerata dalla Direzione come mancanza grave.”).

162 Art. 7, *Doveri dell'Orchestra e dei Professori che la compongono*, Rijeka 3. 3. 1866, HR-DARI, RO 24, folder 6.

163 This part of the *Doveri* was evidently not always followed, if still in 1873 audiences complained of the coming and going of orchestral players in the parterre between one act and the next: “Given that many people from the public have complained that the players of the orchestra leave their seats at the end of each act and make their way in and out via the parterre, thereby disturbing the theatre-goers, on behalf of the theatre management I therefore enjoin them to use the small doors below the stage so as not to disturb the tranquillity of the spectators.” (“Essendosi molte persone del pubblico lagnate che i sig. professori d'orchestra ad ogni finire di atto escono dai loro posti e passano e rientrano per la platea con disturbo dei frequentatori del teatro, così a nome della spettabile direzione teatrale li interesso ad usare delle porticine di

shorter, the updated version included, for the first time in Rijeka, a note on the orchestral players' dress. Here mention is made of a "smooth theatre cap of cloth or velvet" (*liscio berretto da teatro*),¹⁶⁴ though the option of playing without headwear was also allowed. We shall find further information on orchestral dress at a later date, in 1896, in the contracts for the orchestral players of Zadar and, at the same time, Šibenik. Although appended in the additional articles of the contracts, we learn there of how the conductor and players should be attired in the evenings: the conductor should wear a black *abito di società* (i. e. tails) and the players dark, possibly black, suits. This clause was directly borrowed from the tender specifications, where similar wording was used. The player was expected to come to work "decently dressed" (*decentemente abbigliato*) and "in a normal state" (*in istato normale*); a clause also included in the regulations for the choristers. The mere need to specify that one should come to work in a 'normal' (i. e. sober) state certainly implies that there had been various cases of inebriated musicians working in the orchestra. Drunkenness was punished with a fine of two florins, doubled to four florins at a second offence. At the third offence the player was definitively dismissed from the orchestra.¹⁶⁵

The updated regulations at Rijeka no longer mention the possibility of arrest if the orchestral player was guilty of serious misconduct and repeated offences. Now the maximum penalty was to be sacked from the orchestra, after due warnings and fines.¹⁶⁶ Not specified, however, is the recipient of the money raised by inflicting fines on orchestral players. At Trieste, for example, it was used to help colleagues (either still working or retired) or their families if they should be in need; in other words, it formed a kind of social fund. In other theatres the management could use it to reward the – otherwise unspecified – most "deserving" (*meritevoli*).¹⁶⁷ But what else was considered punishable apart from drunkenness? Arriving late was certainly one: failure to arrive a quarter of an hour before the start of rehearsals

sotto palco scenico onde non turbare la tranquillità degli spettatori."); see Circular letter from the theatre management of Rijeka to the orchestral players of Rijeka, Rijeka, 7.10.1873, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

164 It was a "cap of cloth or black velvet" (*berretto di panno o di velluto nero*); see also the *Regolamento disciplinare interno del R. Teatro Nuovo in Pisa*, Tipografia Nistri, Pisa 1867, p. 9.

165 Art. 6, *Doveri dell'Orchestra e dei Professori che la compongono*, Rijeka, 3.3.1866, HR-DARI, RO 24, folder 6.

166 In the 1861 version of the *Doveri* at Rijeka, article 10 still mentioned the possibility of arrest: "Minor shortcomings will be punished with warnings, and serious repeat offences with fines or with arrest, at the discretion of the Deputation." ("Le mancanze lievi saranno punite con ammonizioni, e le recidive gravi con multe, o con l'arresto a giudizio della Deputazione."); *Doveri dell'Orchestra del Teatro e dei Professori che la compongono*, in *Regolamento interno disciplinare del Civico Teatro di Fiume*, Rijeka 17.9.1861, HR-DARI, RO 24, folder 6.

167 *Regolamento d'orchestra*, Trieste, 1861, I-TSmt, folder 107. There were also other theatres at which the money from fines was donated to charity. On the rewards for the "deserving", see Giuseppe Benelli, *Regolamento generale, ossia discipline per l'interno dei teatri*, Società Tipografica Bolognese e Ditta Bassi, Bologna 1855, p. 87.

and performances meant forfeiting one's nightly fee; the reference is generically made to the *compenso serale*.¹⁶⁸ The actual amount of the fine is specified in more detail in other regulations or contracts, such as the agreement drawn up in 1895 with Ettore Rabaglia, the first trumpet at Split, in which the fines for lateness range between a hundred and a thousand lire (*dalle cento alle mille lire*).¹⁶⁹ If we consider that an orchestral player's nightly fee at the time could range between 5.50 and 7 lire, one readily understands that 100 or 1,000 lire are not only extremely high figures, but perhaps even disproportionate. At both Rijeka and Zadar the latest one could arrive was 15 minutes before the start of the performance, which was not particularly strict if we consider that the deadline in other theatres was 30 minutes.¹⁷⁰ Absence at rehearsals or performances without the manager's permission or without a medical certificate (in case of illness) was punishable with a fine of two florins, increased to three florins at the second offence and dismissal from the orchestra at the third.¹⁷¹

Among the prohibitions, one common provision stated that a player could not be substituted by another without the permission of the theatre deputation or conductor. Nor could they take on other paid jobs in the period of the contract's duration: a misdemeanour that was made worse if they presented a sick notice in order to take on a more remunerative job. In both cases the punishment was dismissal, though not without having first fulfilled one's contractual obligations. The *Doveri* also included a ban on leaving town during the period of one's commitment towards the theatre "for any reason without prior permission from the theatre deputation or conductor".¹⁷² The musicians were obliged to work only in the orchestra for which they were under contract and could play in neither other theatres of the city nor other places. This clause, however, was not always observed, as is attested by a letter written to the theatre management of Rijeka by the impresario Adamich in 1873. In the letter a complaint is made about orchestral players deserting rehearsals while at the same time engaged to play on a boat headed for the island of Krk (Veglia) for a pleasure trip. As customary, notice of the rehearsals had been delivered to each player by the callboy

168 Art. 4, *Doveri dell'Orchestra e dei Professori che la compongono*, Rijeka 3. 3. 1866, HR-DARI, RO 24, folder 6.

169 Art. 7, Engagement agreement issued by the Frusta Teatrale agency, Milano, 26. 10. 1895, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

170 See, for example, the rule applied at Pisa: "Half an hour before the start of rehearsals and performances the orchestral players must be at their seats and may not abandon them even for a moment without the permission of the conductor." ("Mezz'ora avanti il principio delle prove e delle rappresentanze gli Artisti di orchestra dovranno essere al loro posto e non potranno abbandonarlo neppure momentaneamente senza il permesso del Direttore"); *Regolamento disciplinare interno*, p. 7.

171 Art. 12, *Doveri dell'Orchestra e dei Professori che la compongono*, Rijeka 3. 3. 1866, HR-DARI, RO 24, folder 6.

172 "per qualsiasi motivo senza previo permesso della deputazione teatrale o del direttore d'orchestra"; Art. 12, letter g, *Doveri dell'Orchestra e dei Professori che la compongono*, Rijeka 3. 3. 1866, HR-DARI, RO 24, folder 6.

(*avvisatore teatrale*), but had clearly been ignored. Adamich therefore declined all responsibility if the evening performance connected to those rehearsals should turn out to be a failure.¹⁷³ Moreover, this was not an isolated case. For example, at Zadar some years later, two players, the bassoonist Dosi and another otherwise unidentified viola player, ran away on board the Sultan steamboat in the middle of the opera season. The impresario Trauner suggested that the theatre management of Zadar should allow them to arrive at Pula, their destination, and have them arrested. The possibility of arrest was therefore still contemplated, at least here.¹⁷⁴ This prohibition, which was conveyed in the regulations, was also echoed in

173 Adamich wrote: “With no better reason than to guarantee the performance of the opera this evening, which during yesterday’s dress rehearsal was still shaky and uncertain at times, the undersigned thought it proper to convene another orchestral rehearsal for midday today. Though the summons was issued to each single player by the callboy, the following gentlemen failed to be present: Santi Paolo – violin / Santi Antonio – ditto / Santi Luigi – double bass / Scrobogna – viola / Pasquali – violin / Sperber (father) – trombone / Sperber (son) – viola / Gasperini – 2nd clarinet (*clarino*) / Dimscher – 2nd trumpet / Pospischill – 1st horn / Licenzi – violin. Given that this is a very significant number of players, and moreover includes certain parts that are indispensable, the rehearsal could not take place. This episode is all the more deplorable insofar as it is generally known that the aforesaid individuals, in spite of the express prohibition made by your honourable office, abandoned their place in order to perform as musicians on board the steamboat that during the day made the pleasure trip to the island of Veglia, where opportunities for intemperance are offered. The undersigned, seeing that the note sent to your honourable office on this matter, which aimed to prevent acts of insubordination and indiscipline perpetrated by the said players, was to no avail, finds that in spite of himself he has to protest against any [...] damage that might derive from an interruption of the performance or delayed start, and to decline all responsibility in the event of the failure of this evening’s performance”. (“Ad assicurare niemmeglio l’esecuzione dello spettacolo di questa sera, che durante la prova generale di ieri mostravasi ancora in taluni momenti vacillante ed incerto, la sottoscritta credette opportuno d’indire pel mezzo giorno di oggi un’altra prova d’orchestra. Spiccato a mezzo dell’avvisatore teatrale l’invito ad ogni singolo professore, mancarono all’appello i seguenti signori: Santi Paolo – violino / Santi Antonio – detto / Santi Luigi – contrabbasso / Scrobogna – viola / Pasquali – violino / Sperber padre – trombone / Sperber figlio – viola / Gasperini – 2° clarino / Dimscher – 2° tromba / Pospischill – 1° corno / Licenzi – violino. Trattandosi di un numero significantissimo di professori, tra i quali alcune parti indispensabili, la prova non ha potuto aver luogo. Questo fatto è tanto più deplorabile inquantochè si conosce generalmente che gl’indicati individui, in nota all’espresso divieto di codesta Spett. Carica, abbandonarono il loro posto, per ridursi in qualità di suonatori a bordo della vaporiera che in giornata intraprese la gita di piacere sull’isola di Veglia, dove offresi occasione all’intemperanza. La sottoscritta, visto che a nulla riuscì la nota diretta in proposito a codesta Spett. Carica, che tendeva a prevenire l’atto d’insubordinazione e d’indisciplina, tutto perpetrato dai mentovati professori, trova suo malgrado di protestare contro ogni [...] danno che le potesse derivare per eventuale sospensione di recita, ritardo di andata in iscena, e di declinare qualunque responsabilità in caso di insuccesso della rappresentazione di questa sera.”); Letter from Adamich to the theatre management of Rijeka, Rijeka, 5. 5. 1873, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

174 Trauner wrote as follows to the theatre management of Zadar: “I hear that this evening two orchestral players, the bassoon and I believe the other to be the viola, are to flee on board the Sultan. I strongly urge you to deal with the matter in the interests of the successful performance of the opera, and if possible,

the contracts, which banned the orchestral player – like the singers, for that matter – from performing elsewhere, though in this case within a well-defined range of kilometres from the theatre. In the contracts drawn up with the Theatre of Split in 1895, for example, the range was 90 kilometres.¹⁷⁵

When comparing the versions of the *Doveri* we also note an important change relating to pay. The earlier document established that the players' pay would be based on a wage table, to which the impresario would have to adhere and from which the players themselves could ask for no increase. The agreed sum would be paid every three nights, or, in the case of a single performance, immediately afterwards. In the later version, on the other hand, there is no mention of a table. Payment of the fee, which had been previously agreed on, was delegated to the *impresa* and was to be “made regularly” (*regolarmente corrisposto*):¹⁷⁶ what was meant here by ‘regular’ payment was not specified in detail. It is also unclear what would happen if the fee was not paid. Was there any form of safeguard from the danger of the impresario's bankruptcy? Article 11 established the player's right to appeal to the theatre deputation if, in the event of non-payment, he had cause to “doubt the soundness of the *impresa*” (*dubitare della solidità dell'impresa*).¹⁷⁷ But how would the theatre deputation react? To be sure, it could force the impresario to pay the arrears, or perhaps remedy the matter by using the security deposit left by the impresario when signing the contract. But if this route turned out to be unfeasible, no mention is made of the deputation being directly involved in paying any debts to the orchestra.

Rarely did the orchestral players consider the pay equal to their merits. And those working in Rijeka were dissuaded from asking for a pay rise. But it was not only there that requests for higher wages were made. We also have the evidence of the theatre of Zadar, where members of the city orchestra wrote the following confident message to the theatre management: “The undersigned, forming part of the city's orchestra, take the liberty of informing this honourable management that on account of the ever-increasing cost of living in general, and with particular regard to the fees paid to the orchestral players in other cities, they have established

I would prefer to let them depart and have them arrested in Pula. That all sacrifices we make to pay them should reciprocated in this way!!” (“Mi consta, che questa sera fuggono a bordo del Sultan, due professori d'orchestra, il fagotto Dosi, e l'altro credo sia la viola. La interesse vivamente occuparsene pel buon andamento dello spettacolo, e se fosse possibile preferirei lasciargli partire e fargli arrestare a Pola. Che tutti i ns. sacrifici per pagargli sieno corrisposti in tal modo!!”); Letter from Giorgio Trauner to Cattich, Zadar, 26.4.[1898], HR-DAZD, folder 6.

175 Art. 2, Engagement agreement issued by the Frusta Teatrale agency, Milano, 26.10.1895, HR-MGS: Kazalište 3/ kut. I–XII.

176 Art. 10, *Doveri dell'Orchestra e dei Professori che la compongono*, Rijeka 3. 3. 1866, HR-DARI, RO 24, folder 6.

177 Art. 11, *Doveri dell'Orchestra e dei Professori che la compongono*, Rijeka 3. 3. 1866, HR-DARI, RO 24, folder 6.

that from today onwards, their services should be remunerated as follows: principal parts 5 crowns, secondary parts 4 crowns a day”.¹⁷⁸ It is worth bearing in mind that in this area daily wages fluctuated between two and three crowns.¹⁷⁹ The tone of the letter was not so much of negotiation as of imposition. At Rijeka, on the other hand, such a stance would have been risky: if the players had persisted in such action, they could have been replaced with members of the military band, which was clearly paid less.¹⁸⁰ In the city there is indeed a documented case that certain players from the orchestra conducted by Alessandro Scaramelli were excluded by the impresario Trevisan and replaced with musicians from the military band, for the simple reason that they asked for the same pay as in previous years (which was therefore higher than what the band musicians asked for).¹⁸¹ Other musicians from the same orchestra were not

178 “I sottoscritti, formanti parte dell’orchestra cittadina, si permettono di partecipare ad Essa Spettabile Direzione che causa l’ognor crescente caro vivere in generale, e con riguardo anche ai prezzi che vengono pagati ai professori di orchestra nelle altre città, hanno stabilito, da oggi in poi, che le loro prestazioni dovranno essere contribuite come segue: prime parti corone 5, seconde parti corone 4 al giorno.” The orchestral players of Zadar asked not only for a pay rise but also for free admission to the theatre for their families: “Considering that at the other theatres the members of the orchestra widely enjoy special treatment, the respectful undersigned here take the liberty of begging this honourable management to grant them the same treatment; in other words to determine that each of the players, during the productions of opera and operetta, may twice a week have two free entrance tickets for their families, and during the other productions, theatre companies, etc. one ticket per night at a reduced price.” (“Nella considerazione che presso gli altri Teatri i componenti l’orchestra godono generalmente dei favori, i devoti sottoscritti si permettono di pregare Essa Onorevole Direzione a voler accordarglieli anche a loro cioè a deliberare che ciascheduno dei suonatori durante gli spettacoli dell’opera e dell’operetta possa ottenere due volte per settimana due viglietti d’ingresso gratuiti per le loro famiglie, mentre durante gli altri spettacoli, compagnie drammatiche, ecc. un viglietto seralmente a prezzo ribassato.”); Letter from orchestral players of Zadar to the theatre management of Zadar, Zadar, 19. 4. 1909, HR-DAZD, folder 12.

179 See the Wage table for orchestral players, [Zadar, 1903], HR-DAZD, folder 11.

180 Confirmation for this is signally given by a letter from a hitherto unidentified sender to the orchestral players of Rijeka, warning them that further pay claims from the players could turn out to be damaging: “Paolo Santi was invited by the secretary Signor Ernesto de Bonmartini to have the members of the orchestra sign for the forthcoming autumn comedies, though with the clause that any increase, even minimal, will be harmful to all in general; for in that case the aforementioned secretary will turn to the military band. Hence the orchestral players are begged to sign the contract with the evening’s fee they obtained the previous year, neither more nor less, since every inconformity with the payroll that was valid the previous year (and is deposited at the theatre management) will be exposed.” (“Invitato Paolo Santi dal segretario sig. Ernesto de Bonmartini a far firmare i componenti dell’orchestra per le prossime commedie autunnali, colla clausola però che qualunque aumento sia il minimo recherà danno a tutti in generale; poiché in tal caso il sopraddetto segretario si rivolgerà alla banda militare. Perciò vengono pregati i sig. professori di sottosegnarsi colla paga serale che acquistavano l’anno passato, né più né meno, poiché ogni abuso verrà scoperto dalla lista che l’anno passato vigeva trovandosi presso la Direzione Teatrale.”); Letter from [illegible sender] to the orchestral players of Rijeka, Rijeka, 18. 9. 1873, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

181 It appears that the players in the city band were prepared to perform for a “very low price” (*tenuissimo prezzo*); “Articoli comunicati”, *Il Giornale di Fiume*, 24. 3. 1865, p. 94.

employed for the current opera season for different reasons. An article in the *Giornale di Fiume* appealed to the theatre deputation to remedy the situation, given that “there will not always be the opportunity to make use of the Imperial and Royal military band”.¹⁸² It would be better to follow the example of various Italian cities, where impresarios were required to respect the orchestral expenses indicated in the lists presented to them by the theatre deputations. The contractors of the theatre could replace missing players, but not exclude those who were local.

The replacement of orchestral players with musicians from the military band happened also at Zadar. In the contract with the impresario Trauner the management of the Teatro Nuovo had an additional article added that stipulated that “as a result of the increased expectations of certain local orchestral musicians, it is agreed between the parties that the orchestra for the next opera season at the said theatre run by Signor G. Trauner will be composed of 42 musicians, of whom 12 from the town, 15 military and the rest outsiders. In this regard, the honourable theatre management agrees to pay the said impresa the sum of 360 lire (equal to 162 florins) by way of supplementary endowment, which Signor Trauner accepts”.¹⁸³ More than a third of the orchestra was therefore made up of military musicians. In the coastal region there was also the case of Pula, where the orchestra of the Teatro Ciscutti, at least between 1901 and 1906, was that of the navy.¹⁸⁴ Consequently, orchestral players working specifically in the field of opera were subject to the competition of fellow musicians who were probably less skilled and less familiar with the repertoire, but who represented a financial advantage in the eyes of any impresario.

In the provincial theatres it was usually the principal violin who was responsible for the formation of the orchestra and payment of salaries, for which he was provided with a budget.¹⁸⁵ It could happen that he did not always perform his duties properly, either by recruiting players who were inadequate or by paying them less than he could (at worst also pocketing the difference). Bottura’s chronicle makes veiled references to malfunctioning in the system of recruitment at Rijeka, where the main culprit appeared to be the principal violin, the well-known Alessandro Scaramelli: guilty, according to the sources, of recruiting

182 “non vi sarà sempre l’occasione di servirsi dell’i. r. Banda Militare”; “Articoli comunicati”, *Il Giornale di Fiume*, 24. 3. 1865, p. 94.

183 “in conseguenza delle aumentate pretese di alcuni professori d’orchestra locale, si stabilisce tra i componenti che l’orchestra per la prossima stagione d’opera al detto teatro assunta dal Sig. G. Trauner sarà composta di n. 42 professori di cui 12 del paese, 15 militari ed il rimanente forestieri. In relazione a ciò l’Onor. Direzione teatrale s’impegna pagare all’impresa suddetta la somma di L. 360 pari a F. 162 a titolo di dotazione suppletoria, che il sig. Trauner accetta”. Motion (*Istanza*) between the theatre management of Zadar and the impresario Giorgio Trauner, Zadar, [1898], HR-DAZD, folder 6.

184 The Navy Orchestra of Pula had the famous Franz Lehár as its conductor in the period from 1894 to 1896.

185 Franco Piperno – Antonio Rostagno, “The Orchestra in Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera Houses”, p. 28.

poor orchestral players.¹⁸⁶ Curiously, it was Scaramelli himself who, sometime earlier, had made a public complaint about the situation of the orchestras in Italy. According to Scaramelli, young musicians did not practise enough and were demotivated, for before their eyes they had examples of respectable older orchestral musicians who had trouble making ends meet; of fine orchestral players who, once they got ill, had no form of protection and were abandoned in hospitals or hospices, maintained by the charity of others. Discouraged by this bleak picture, the young envisaged only “a life of hardships” (*una vita di stenti*).

What were seen to be the causes of this situation? Firstly, the exorbitant salaries given to the singers; secondly, the theatre managements, whose concerns exclusively regarded “the trio of singers belonging to the so-called cartel” (*alla terna dei cantanti del così detto cartello*) and the “more or less French” couple of lead dancers, while paying scant attention to the orchestra and choruses; and thirdly, the impresarios, who, to serve their own interests, would pay only a small minority of the players engaged, who were in any case given very little to live on.¹⁸⁷ As for the extras, they were employed in other occupations during the day and would turn up to rehearsals and performances tired, listless and inattentive. The solution – according to Scaramelli – was to find ways of giving singers and dancers fairer wages and making the recruitment of orchestral players depend directly on the theatre managements instead of the impresarios, who were only interested in making a profit. Savings accounts would have to be set up to assist the sick, orphans and widows, and to give a pension to those who could no longer work.¹⁸⁸ In such a scenario young musicians could view a career in an orchestra with greater trust and be able to look forward to a future that was more secure.

186 “The man in charge of forming [the orchestra] recruited as many shoddy players or beginners as he could, whom he then paid little or nothing, thus pocketing most of what the *capocomico* was expected to spend on a good ensemble of players. It often happened that the fiercest and loudest whistling [= booing] was directed against the contempt in which the public seemed to be held, and the management did not fail to remind Scaramelli strictly of his duty, but it was wasted breath and one would lose both baby and bathwater.” (“L’incaricato a formarla reclutava quanti più poteva suonatori dozzinali o principianti, che poi retribuiva con poco o nulla, intascando così la maggior parte di quanto il capocomico era obbligato a spendere per un buon complesso di suonatori. Accadde sovente che le fischiare più acri e sonore protestassero contro lo spregio in cui pareva si tenesse il pubblico, e la Direzione non mancava di richiamare severamente al dover suo lo Scaramelli, ma era fiato sprecato e ci perdeva il ranno e ‘l sapone.”); Bottura, *Storia aneddotica documentata*, p. 413.

187 “Delle orchestra”, *Il Giornale di Fiume*, 30. 9. 1865, p. 260.

188 “In this way, when a man will see that by devoting himself to being an orchestral player he will be able to live decently and, when he is no longer able to play, will have provisions to support his old age, he will study hard and try to become accomplished so as to deserve a place for himself in a theatre; and from then on, the title of ‘professor’ will no longer be desecrated, as it is so often today, by certain café and tavern fiddlers or charlatan serenaders (or rather, disturbers of the nocturnal peace).” (“In questo modo quando un uomo vedrà che dedicandosi a fare il professore d’orchestra potrà vivere discretamente e che quando sarà inabile vi avrà un provvedimento per sostenere la sua vecchiaia, esso studierà e cercherà di perfezionarsi onde rendersi meritevole di un posto in un teatro, ed il titolo di professore

Young musicians or students could also be admitted to play in the orchestral ensemble without pay. In the 1861 *Doveri* of Rijeka provision was made for the pupils from the local music academy, the Istituto Musicale, to take part, “as a means of encouraging them in their progress” (*onde incoraggiarli nei loro progressi*), and thereby reinforce the main body of permanent players. While they were not paid for their services, they were nonetheless given free admission to the theatre.¹⁸⁹ The *Doveri* makes no distinction between musicians who were paid a salary and those who played for free. In other regulations – like those of the Teatro Comunale of Trieste – reference was made to “salaried and unsalaried professors” (*professori stipendiati e non stipendiati*) in 1861, whereas in 1864 a generic definition of “*professori*” was adopted, without indicating whether they were paid or not.¹⁹⁰ However, the figure of the “pupil” (*alunno*) was a subject disciplined in various theatrical documents. By their very nature, the *alunno* was chosen from among the more talented or deserving young musicians attending the music schools, was not a stable figure, and could be employed by the conductor to play in specific performances or productions. In return for their unpaid work, they might hope that the management would give good references that could be used later to build a career.¹⁹¹

For the “salaried” players at Rijeka the contracts with the impresario were extremely rudimentary, at least in the late 1860s. In 1868, for example, the players could count on just one binding statement: “The undersigned orchestral players undertake towards the impresario Signor Adolfo Proni to provide their services in the Orchestra del Civico Teatro in all the performances and rehearsals in the forthcoming season of Lent and Spring in return for the fee established below”.¹⁹² This was followed by a list of 26 players, with the fee indicated alongside each name. No indication was given either of the precise number of performances and rehearsals, or of schedules: both matters that could turn out to be unfavourable to the musicians. A similar formula was used again in the following year. All that changed (apart from the name of the impresario) was a direct mention of the theatre deputation and the

in allora non sarà profanato come lo è tanto di sovente al di d’oggi da certi strimpellatori da caffè e da bettole, o da certi cerretani suonatori (o meglio disturbatori del notturno riposo) di serenate”); “Delle orchestra”, *Il Giornale di Fiume*, 30. 9. 1865, p. 260.

189 See Art. 11, concerning the “Doveri dell’Orchestra del Teatro e dei Professori che la compongono”, in *Regolamento interno disciplinare del Civico Teatro di Rijeka*, Rijeka 17. 9. 1861, HR-DARI, RO 24, folder 6.

190 See Art. 1, *Regolamento d’orchestra*, Teatro Comunale of Trieste, Trieste, 1861, I – TSmt, folder 107 and *Regolamento per l’Orchestra del Teatro Comunale di Trieste*, Tipografia del Lloyd Austriaco, Trieste 1864. The 1861 document had in actual fact been approved already in 1828, so it was based, with minor adjustments, on what had been in use over thirty years earlier.

191 See, for example, Giuseppe Benelli, *Regolamento generale*, p. 45.

192 “I sottoscritti Professori d’orchestra si obbligano verso l’Impresario sig. Adolfo Proni di prestare la loro opera nell’Orchestra del Civico Teatro a tutte le recite e prove nella prossima stagione di Quaresima e Primavera verso il compenso in calce stabilito”; Contract between the orchestral players of Rijeka and Adolfo Proni, Rijeka, 8. 10. 1867, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

conductor: “The undersigned orchestral players undertake towards the impresario Signor Dal Torso, and respectively towards the theatre deputation, to play at all the performances and rehearsals that are due to be arranged by the conductor in the opera season of Lent and Spring 1869”. This was followed by at least 27 signatures, again with the overall fee indicated alongside each name.¹⁹³ The differences in overall fees between one musician and the next were determined by the importance of the instrumentalist (principal part or otherwise), but could also reflect the number of days the player would be used during the season.

The contract merely mentioned the “Lent and Spring season” and might not indicate the date on which it ended. At times this led to misunderstandings between players and impresarios, as happened at the time of the impresario Giuseppe Cajani. In 1874 a complaint was made to the theatre deputation of Rijeka by the orchestral players and chorus singers, who claimed to have been engaged for the Lent and Spring season “until about 1st May 1874, i. e. through to the 5th of the current month”;¹⁹⁴ in which case, after this date they had the right to declare themselves released from all further commitments and to demand the payment of the last *quartale*, which still hadn’t been made. According to them, the contractors of the Cajani impresa had claimed that the contract was binding until the 15th of the month, though they couldn’t prove the point by exhibiting the original contract, which was given as lost. After asking to see the contract on several occasions, the players demanded not only payment of the *quartale*, but also further compensation for the alleged additional period, and insisted that their demands be met within a short space of time (within three days of their complaint, otherwise there would be unfortunate consequences).¹⁹⁵ The management,

193 “I sottoscritti professori d’orchestra si obbligano coll’impresario sig. Dal Torso e rispettivamente con la Deputazione teatrale di suonare a tutte recite e prove che sono per essere ordinate dal Direttore d’orchestra nella stagione d’opera di quaresima e primavera 1869”. The signatures included were those of Iginio Dall’Asta, Doia, Scrobogna, Amsaurck [?], famiglia Santi, Sponga, Pasquali, Birkler, Luzzato, Pospischil, Dimscher, Lonchi, Gugarich, Kafka, Cumagna, M^o Fornari, Bau[...], Figaro, Elleny, Prohaska, Alessandro Scaramelli, Raspich, Giustini, Bolso, Küller, Sperber and Millinecaich; Contract between the orchestral players of Rijeka and Vincenzo Dal Torso, Rijeka, 5. 2. 1869, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

194 “al 1 maggio 1874 circa cioè sino a tutto 5 del corr. mese”; Letter from the orchestral musicians and chorus singers of Rijeka to the theatre deputation of Rijeka, Rijeka, [7. 5. 1874], HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

195 “Since the contractors of the Cajani impresa claim instead that our contract is binding towards the impresa until no earlier than the 15th of the current month”, the orchestral players and singers of Rijeka wrote, “without however proving their claim by showing the original contract (as frequently requested by us), which is concealed under trivial pretexts, whereas instead we claim that from the termination of our commitments on 5th May it naturally follows that we need not only to be paid the 4th *quartale*, but have also the right to new wages if the impresa should intend to carry on with the opera season; hence, with the present letter we express our most fervent protests concerning the aforementioned impresa and beg the honourable Theatre Deputation that, being correctly informed of the facts, it may ensure that we are given both the payment of the already expired *quartale* and also the wages for the afore-

however, sided with the impresario, citing – as evidence of the commitment until the middle of May – the fact that the contracts of the singers terminated on the 15th. Hence the orchestral players should have also considered this date as binding, given that the singers could obviously not perform on their own. At the end of this controversy the impresario admitted that he had failed to indicate a termination date in the contract with the chorus and orchestral musicians, but that they should have followed, as was customary, the printed opera programme, which indicated 30 performances of subscription nights and benefits. In addition, the impresario asserted that “it is a good principle to do as has always been done” (*per sua regola a quelli del paese si usa sempre di fare così*).¹⁹⁶ An appeal was made therefore to an unwritten custom, but one tacitly applied for years. The management enjoined the musicians to desist from their demands.¹⁹⁷ It was understood that if the impresario had

said period hereafter; and this so as to avoid disagreeable consequences that could ensue for the above impresa, if within three days our present complaint should not be favourably dealt with [...]” (“Siccome gli assuntori dell’impresa Cajani sostengono invece che il nostro contratto è vincolativo verso l’impresa niente meno che sino al dì 15 corr. mese, senza però provare il loro asserto colla esibizione del da noi ripetute volte richiesto originale contratto, il quale viene occultato sotto futili pretesti, sostenendo noi invece la cessazione degli nostri impegni col dì 5 corr. maggio ne viene da sé che ci debba essere pagato il 4to quartale non solo, ma abbiamo pure diritto ad un nuovo compenso, qualora l’impresa intenda di proseguire collo spettacolo d’opera, per cui colla presente formiamo le nostre più solenni proteste di confronto alla piudetta impresa pregando la spettabile Deputazione Teatrale perché si compiacca sino a ragione conosciuta farci garantire tanto il pagamento del già scaduto quartale, quanto anche pel proporzionato compenso dalla suddetta epoca in poi, e ciò a scanso di dispiacenti conseguenze, che ne potrebbero derivare alla suddetta impresa, qualora entro giorni tre non verrebbe favorevolmente evasa la presente nostra rimostranza [...]”); Letter from the orchestral players and chorus singers of Rijeka to the theatre deputation of Rijeka, Rijeka, [7. 5. 1874], HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

196 Letter from Giuseppe Cajani to [Signor Cesare], Perugia, 4. 5. 1874, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

197 The theatre management of Rijeka wrote as follows: “After consulting the impresa of Bartoli, Byron, Orsi and Sbordonni in relation to the petition presented by you gentlemen to the present writer on 7. 5. 1874, the following declaration was obtained: ‘Even though the original contract between Signor Cajani and the city’s orchestral players and choristers has been mislaid, nonetheless the evidence that the period of the contract extended throughout Lent and spring (21 May) can be determined from the following reasons: / 1st Because the aforementioned players put their respective signatures to the receipt for the three *quartali* received that indicated Lent and spring as the end of season, without any questioning concerning the time period. / 2nd Because Signor Köhller (flute) was engaged with a special contract until ca. 15th May, i.e. in accord with the contracts made with his colleagues. / 4th [*sic*] Because all the engagement agreements made with the principal singers carry the date ca. 15th, nor is it conceivable that the impresa should intend the performances from 5 to 20 May to be carried out just with the principals and without choruses and orchestra. / 5th Because after consulting Signor Cajani, he made the following declaration in a letter: ‘*the statement of the end of the season was not given in the contract, since they were engaged for Lent and spring and even if the season should be extended a few days, they (the players and choristers) should know that they must abide by the poster displayed to the public, in other words, to do the 30 subscription performances and the benefit nights. It is a good principle to do as has always been done. If, after that, the impresa should wish to add any other performances not indicated on the*

wished to add further performances not indicated in the programme, he would have to give the orchestra and chorus additional pay.¹⁹⁸

Already in the year in which Cajani was the impresario, the need was felt in Rijeka to have a bigger and better orchestra than the one available.¹⁹⁹ The problem of insufficient

poster, then one must give a fee' / 6th Because a right to compensation for performances after 5th May could be justifiable, if the said orchestral players and choristers could produce a copy of the agreement that carried the end date of ca. 1st May, only in which case could the mislaying of the contract by the impresa be construed as made in bad faith. It is for all these reasons that the theatre management advises the gentlemen orchestral players and choristers to desist from the petition dated 7.5.74, and it is hoped that the citizens employed at the theatre will not wish to place any obstacles to the current opera season that will come to an end in a few days." ("Interpellata l'impresa sociale Bartoli, Byron, Orsi e Sbordoni relativamente alla domanda da lor sig. presentata alla scrivente in data 7. 5. 1874 s'ottenne la seguente dichiarazione: Abbenchè siasi smarrita l'originale scrittura tra il sig. Cajani ed i sig. Professori d'orchestra e coristi cittadini, pure l'evidenza dell'epoca del contratto a tutta quaresima e primavera (21 maggio) risulta dai seguenti motivi: / 1° Perché i signori sopraindicati apposero le rispettive firme alla quitanza dei tre quartali ricevuti richiamando la quaresima e primavera come termine di stagione senza restituzione di sorta e di epoca. / 2° Perché il sig. Köhler (flauto) venne con contratto speciale scritturato sino il 15 circa di maggio, cioè in armonia colle scritture fatte ai compagni. / 4° [sic] Perché tutte le scritture fatte agli artisti di canto portano il 15 circa, né è presumibile che l'impresa intendesse fare le recite dal 5 al 20 maggio coi soli cantanti senza i cori e l'orchestra. / 5° Perché interpellato il sig. Cajani diede per lettera la seguente dichiarazione: 'la dichiarazione del termine di stagione non c'era nel contratto, giacchè sono scritturati per la quaresima e primavera ed anche se la stagione dovesse prolungarsi di qualche giorno bisogna che stino (professori d'orchestra e coristi) al cartellone esposto al pubblico, cioè di fare le 30 recite di abbonamento e le beneficate. Per sua regola a quelli del paese si usa sempre di fare così. Se poi l'impresa volesse fare altre recite non promesse nel cartellone allora bisogna dare un compenso' / 6° Perché potrebbe essere fatto valere un diritto d'indennizzo per le recite oltre il 5 di maggio, qualora i sig. professori d'orchestra e coristi potessero far valere un duplicato di scrittura che recasse il termine del 1° maggio circa, nel quale solo caso potrebbe ritenersi mala fede lo smarrimento del contratto per parte dell'impresa. Gli è per tutto ciò che la direzione teatrale consiglia i sig. professori d'orchestra e coristi a desistere dalla domanda d.ta 7.5.74, e si lusinga che i cittadini addetti al teatro non vorranno porre inciampi all'attuale stagione d'opera che in brevi giorni volge al suo termine."); Letter from the theatre management of Rijeka to the orchestral players and choristers of Rijeka, Rijeka, 9. 5. 1874, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

198 As Cajani stated, "If, after that, they should wish to have any other performances not indicated on the poster, then one must give them a fee. Signor Buommartini, who engaged them will also remember that on the sheet headed with his name there was no end-date of the season. It is expected with very great pleasure that things will go smoothly and that there will be an income of three thousand florins." ("Se poi volessero fare altre recite non promesse nel cartellone, allora bisogna darle un compenso. Il signor Buommartini che li scritturò anch'esso si rammenterà che nel foglio da lui intestato non c'era termine di stagione. È inteso con moltissimo piacere che le cose vadano a vele gonfie che ci sarà un guadagno di tre mila fiorini."); Letter from Giuseppe Cajani to [Signor Cesare], Perugia, 4. 5. 1874, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

199 "[...] if the conditions of our stages are such that we cannot offer principal singers of a certain stature", the local newspaper commented, "that doesn't mean that, regarding the instrumental part, the public doesn't have the right to expect a fuller and better orchestra than the present one, since there is no doubt that the outcome of the production relies principally on it" ("[...] se le condizioni delle nostre scene

numbers clearly persisted, for even as late as 1918 the president of the theatre wrote to tell Antonio Smareglia that the number of orchestral players and chorus singers in town was extremely small and that the impresario would have to “make up both the orchestra and chorus largely with external elements”.²⁰⁰

The extra musicians for Rijeka were principally recruited from Trieste, though these players were not always available. For example, there were enormous difficulties in November 1914, when players couldn't be found in Trieste because of the opera season at the local Politeama, while at the same time small orchestras were already working elsewhere in the city: at the Teatro Eden, at La Fenice and in the small cinemas and variety halls.²⁰¹ So we can readily understand the difficulty, in 1918, of securing an orchestra of 60 players, a number raised to 80 in the event of having to perform operas by Wagner.²⁰²

The theatre management at Rijeka not only expressly asked for a list of orchestral players from the impresario (who – as has already been mentioned – was also obliged to supply any other instruments indicated by the composer, not to mention a stage band for all the operas and ballets requiring one),²⁰³ but also expected to attend a full rehearsal of the productions, thereby exercising the artistic control required by the city authorities. It would also check that the number of orchestral players indicated in the tender specifications or contract were duly observed, in accordance with the type of spectacle in question.²⁰⁴ In 1864 the requirement

sono tali da non poter offrire artisti di canto di certo grido, non tolgono però che nella parte strumentale il pubblico sia in diritto di esigere un'orchestra più completa e migliore della presente, poiché non v'ha dubbio che su di essa si basa principalmente l'esito dello spettacolo”; “Teatro civico”, *La Bilancia*, 23. 3. 1874.

200 “comporre tanto l'orchestra che il coro in gran parte con elementi forestieri”; Letter from the theatre management of Rijeka to Antonio Smareglia, Rijeka, 13. 4. 1918, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

201 Letter from Enrico Gallina to Attilio Alpron, Trieste, 20. 11. 1914, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

202 Letter from the president of the theatre management of Rijeka to Zoltan de Jekelfalussy, Rijeka, 12. 2. 1918, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

203 Art. 31, Tender specifications of the Teatro Comunale of Trieste for the three-year period 1864–1867, I-TSmt, folder III.

204 The management cared about this prerogative and didn't fail to enforce it. For example, in 1916 Meynier, the president of the theatre, admonished the impresario Carlo Polgar for failing to deliver the list of players for the operetta season, reminding him also of the importance of informing him of the dates and times of rehearsal. He wrote: “Since you have not hitherto submitted to the theatre management the list of the orchestra, and since it is widely understood that you intend to form the orchestra with about a dozen players reinforced by a harmonium, I find myself obliged to warn you that operettas at the Teatro Comunale have always been given with an orchestra consisting of at least 30 proficient players and that, even considering the exceptional circumstances in which [*illegible*] the present season, the management could not accept an orchestral ensemble that was much smaller than usual. At the same time I remind you that before allowing the operetta to take the stage, the management wishes to attend a full rehearsal, for otherwise it would find itself unable to exert that artistic control that the illustrious municipal authority has entrusted it with. Concerning the day and time arranged for the rehearsal, you will in due course inform the management through the secretary Dr. Elpidio Springhetti.” (“Siccome Ella non ebbe finora

at Rijeka was for 34 musicians, including the conductor. This was not specified in the tender specifications, but in a manuscript draft outlining the conditions for running the Lent and Spring season.²⁰⁵ Yet we have seen that in 1868 and 1869 the number of players appearing in the actual lists delivered to the theatre management of Rijeka was 26 or 27. And this figure was to remain unchanged in the following years: in 1874 the number engaged by the impresario Cesare Trevisan for the opera season was 27.²⁰⁶ Compared to a theatre like the Teatro Comunale of Trieste this meant a difference of more than a good twenty players: not a negligible number. Trieste, however, was by definition a theatre of the first rank, where the needs of the management were clarified with greater precision already in the tender specifications (which were fuller and better defined than those of the coastal region). According to the *capitolato* of the Teatro Comunale of Trieste for the years 1864–67, the orchestra was to consist of: “1 *maestro concertatore*, 1 principal violin and conductor for the opera, 1 leader and deputy, 1 first violin and director for the dances, 16 violins, 4 violas, 3 cellos, 6 double basses, 1 harp, 2 flutes and piccolo, 2 clarinets, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, 1 bombardon, 1 timpani, 1 bass drum, 1 cymbals”, making a total of 55 players.²⁰⁷

For the inauguration of the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka in 1885, on the other hand, the spaces added for filling in the numbers of orchestral players were left blank. A very discretionary formula was chosen in the document, whereby only the types of instrument were indicated but not the quantity: “No fewer than no. ...orchestral players, perfectly suited

a sottoporre alla Direzione Teatrale l'elenco dell'orchestra e siccome da più parti si apprende che Ella intende formare l'orchestra, con una dozzina di suonatori rinforzati da un armonio, mi trovo in dovere di prevenirla che al Teatro Comunale le operette furono sempre date con un'orchestra composta di almeno 30 provetti suonatori e che, pur prendendo in riflesso le circostanze eccezionali in mezzo alle quali [...] l'attuale stagione, la Direzione non potrebbe accettare un complesso orchestrale di molto inferiore all'usuale. Nel tempo stesso le faccio noto che prima di permettere l'andata in scena dell'operetta, la Direzione desidera assistere a una prova d'insieme, poiché altrimenti essa si troverebbe nell'impossibilità di esercitare quel controllo artistico che l'Inclita Rappresentanza Municipale le ha affidato. Del giorno e dell'ora fissati per la prova Ella vorrà a tempo debito avvertire la Direzione a mezzo del segretario dott. Elpidio Springhetti.”; Letter from the president G. Meynier to Carlo Polgar, Rijeka, 25. 4. 1916, HR-DARI-557, folder 562/1.

205 Conditions for the organisation of opera in the Lent and Spring season 1864, manuscript draft, [Rijeka, 1864], HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

206 The names of the players listed in the document were “A. Scaramelli, Dall'Asta, famiglia Santi, Pasquali, Silenzi, Raspich, Giustini, Sponga, Doia, Scrobogna, Knezaurek, Cesaroni, Luzzato, Dimscher, Pospischil, Kafka, Baule, Jacopich, Klausbergher, Dal Zotto, Scotti, Bogasch, Recanatini, Sperber, figlio”, Rijeka, 26. 8. 1873, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4. At least half of these players had already worked in the previous seasons.

207 “1 Maestro Concertatore, 1 primo Violino e Direttore per l'opera, 1 primo di spalla e supplente, 1 primo Violino Direttore pei balli, 16 Violini, 4 Viole, 3 Violoncelli, 6 Contrabbassi, 1 Arpa, 2 Flauti e Ottavino, 2 Clarinetti, 2 Oboi, 2 Fagotti, 4 Corni, 2 Trombe, 3 Tromboni, 1 Bombardone, 1 Timpani, 1 Gran Cassa, 1 Piatti”; Tender specifications of the Teatro Comunale of Trieste for the three-year period 1864–1867, I-TSmt, folder III.

and competent, namely: ...first violins, ...seconds, ...violas, ...cellos, ...double basses, ... flutes, piccolo, ...oboe, ...horns, ...clarinets, ...bassoons, ...trumpets, ...trombones, 1 timpanist, 2 bass drum and cymbals, and the harp²⁰⁸. In this way the theatre management made things more flexible, allowing the freedom to indicate the number of players needed even at the last moment. The contract with the impresario Sciutti D'Arrigo of 1891 called for 30 orchestral players, without specifying the types of instrument.²⁰⁹ Nor were the instruments quantified in the call for tenders of 1901, which merely indicated an overall total of 50.²¹⁰ There was greater definition (albeit partial) in the tender specifications of 1909, where only the exact number of strings is mentioned out of a total of 60 players: "12 first violins, 10 second violins, 4 violas, 4 cellos and 4 double basses"²¹¹.

Over the years, and in line with the new requirements for opera, orchestras had got bigger. According to Rispoli, in the early 20th century (it was 1903 when he wrote *La vita pratica del teatro*), a big orchestra, such as was found "in the very big theatres and symphonic concerts", consisted – with minor variations – of "20 first violins; 16 second violins; 12 violas; 12 cellos; 10 double basses; 3 flutes and piccolo; 2 oboe and english horn, 2 clarinets and bass clarinets (*clarini e clarone*); 2 bassoons and double bassoon; 4 horns; 2 trumpets; 2 cornets (*cornette*); 3 tenor trombones; 1 bass trombone; timpani, sistrum (*sistro*), bass drum and cymbals. A hundred parts in all"²¹². In the coastal area certain tender specifications theoretically called for up to 60 players, but in the drawing up of the actual contracts this figure could be lower, especially considering the constant difficulty of recruiting players externally.

The same considerations applied to the complementary *corps de ballet* used in the opera seasons. While the theatre of Zadar expected the classic "12 skilled chorus ballerinas",²¹³ Rijeka

208 "Non meno di n. ...professori d'orchestra, perfettamente idonei e capaci, cioè: ...primi violini, ... secondi, ...viole, ...violoncelli, ...contrabbassi, ...flauti, l'ottavino, ...oboè, ...corni, ...clarinetti, ... fagotti, ...trombe, ...tromboni, 1 timpanista, 2 grancassa e piatti, e l'arpa"; Art. V, letter e, Tender specifications of the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka, Rijeka, 1885, HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6.

209 Contract for the running of the season at the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka, [Rijeka, 1891], Maritime and Historical Museum of the Croatian Littoral, theatre collection.

210 Call for tenders for the running of the season at the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka, [Rijeka, 1901], Maritime and Historical Museum of the Croatian Littoral, theatre collection.

211 Tender specifications for the running of the Teatro Comunale for the three-year period 1 January 1909–31 December 1911, HR-DARI, RO-24, folder 6. The tender specifications for 1912 reasserted this requirement. In 1917, however, there was a sudden and substantial reduction in the number of players required, as testified by the contract with the impresario Carlo Polgar, which speaks of a minimum of 18 musicians: "the orchestra must be made up of at least 18 players" ("l'orchestra dovrà essere composta di almeno 18 suonatori"). Many men had been called up to fight in the War, musicians included, which could explain the reason for the cutback; Art. VI, *Protocollo assunto presso il Magistrato Civico di Rijeka addì 11 aprile 1917*, Rijeka, 11. 4. 1917, HR-DARI, folder 1.

212 Rispoli, *La vita pratica*, p. 118.

213 "12 ballerine distinte di fila"; Tender specifications of the Teatro Nuovo of Zadar, Zadar, n. d., HR-DAZD, folder 4.

called for 30 in the early years of the new century. It would seem that the finest dancers had been recruited for tours to America, whereas, as the impresario Giorgio Trauner found cause to complain, the only one remaining in the area were “ugly, old and full of pretences” (*brutte, vecchie e piene di pretese*).²¹⁴ Even the theatre management of Zadar admitted that out of six dancers “four don’t know how to dance. [...] The two that do are old”. (*quattro non sanno ballare. [...] Le due che sanno ballare sono vecchie*). What was called the “pitiful corps de ballet” (*miserio corpo di ballo*) contributed to the public’s displeasure. The management pointed out that the impresario would absolutely have to bring in new ones (“who, even if they can’t dance, are at least more presentable than these”, was the comment made to the agent Gallina).²¹⁵ Hence the need to find additional dancers for the corps de ballet; and consequently, more expenses.

The orchestra of Šibenik also made use of musicians taken from the municipal band, as is confirmed by a receipt dated 1893, signed by the director of the band itself, Domenico Mateljan.²¹⁶ The band musicians would normally play on a variety of occasions, ranging from evenings of magic²¹⁷ to the dances (*veglioni*) held during the Carnival season. If the band was engaged in other artistic activities (such as concerts outside the theatre, processions, etc.), all rehearsals at the opera house had to be postponed.²¹⁸ The success or failure of an opera depended naturally also on the quality of the orchestral players. By the theatre director Giovanni Mazzoleni’s own admission, the orchestras in Šibenik were “wobbly” (*zoppicanti*) and largely made up of amateurs.²¹⁹ “Here we don’t have professionals,” he wrote, “but

214 Letter from Giorgio Trauner to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 12. 7. 1906, HR-DAZD, folder 26.

215 “che se anche non sapranno ballare saranno almeno più presentabili di queste”; Letter from the theatre management of Zadar to the agent Enrico Gallina, [Zadar, 1906], HR-DAZD, folder 21.

216 “I the undersigned declare that I have received from the management of the Teatro Mazzoleni 192 florins as payment of the balance for the orchestra that took part in the opera season, in other words from 14 April through 11 May 1873 / The director of the Municipal Band / Domenico Mateljan.” (“Dichiaro io sottoscritto di aver ricevuto dalla direzione del Teatro Mazzoleni fio 192 e questi a saldo della orchestra che prese parte durante la stagione teatrale cioè dal giorno 14 aprile a tutto 11 maggio 1873 / Il direttore della Banda Comunale / Domenico Mateljan.”); Receipt from Domenico Mateljan for the theatre management of Šibenik, Šibenik, 12. 5. 1873, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3.

217 An example was the evening of the magician Grassi organised at Šibenik in 1893.

218 See, for example, what Giovanni Mazzoleni wrote to the impresario Giuseppe Ponzio concerning the 1911 season at Šibenik, which was to take place in the Easter period: “You must take note that rehearsals cannot be held on Good Friday, because many of the orchestral players belong to the city band, which will take part in the procession that evening.” (“Deve notare che il Venerdì santo non si potranno fare prove, perché molti suonatori d’orchestra appartengono al corpo della banda cittadina, che in quella sera prende parte alla processione.”); Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Giuseppe Ponzio, Šibenik, 1911, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

219 See Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Cesare Matucci, Šibenik, 19. 2. 1912, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 10.

only amateurs who blunder and need a lot of rehearsals".²²⁰ If instruments were missing, in certain cases they might be replaced by the harmonium, a type of substitution also found in productions of operetta. At times entire families of instruments might be lacking, like the entire viola section in the productions of the Lilliputian Company of Ernesto Guerra, which used a small orchestra with Guerra himself sitting at the piano. The list of expenses for the eleven opera performances given in 1905, as well as telling us about how the ensemble was formed, also provides further important information, about how much the individual musicians were paid:

n.	Istrumenti	Nome	Prezzo	Assieme	Annotazioni
1	1° Violino	Zorzenoni Alessandro	7 Cor.	105	dalla part. da Trieste più viaggio e compresi i riposi 15 giorni
2	"	Pitacco Giovanni	7	105	
3	"	Raimondi Rina	2	22	
4	"	Mazzoldi Giuseppe	2	22	
5	Violoncello	Raimondi Silva	2	22	
6	Contrabbasso	Piva Luigi da Trieste	7	105	dalla part. da Trieste più viaggio e compresi i riposi
7	Cornetta	Scala Francesco	7	105	
8	Clarino I	Giovanni Miaković	4	44	
9	" II	Veronese Giovanni	3	33	
10	Flauto	Pietro Delfin	3	33	
11	Trombone ten.	Michele Osturi	2.40	26.40	
12	Trombone basso	Gilardi Giuseppe	2	22	
13	Cassa	Mile Covacer	2	22	
14	Piano	Prof. E. Guerra			

				666.40	
Per viaggio da Trieste qui a quattro suonatori da fuori Cor.				31.20	
Per 4 letti a bordo				Cor. 4.62	35.82
				Somma Cor.	702.22
Al maestro Grandi spediti in dono 20 litri di vino nero Cor.				6.40	
1 damigiana nuova				Cor. 4	0.40

220 "Qui non abbiamo professori, ma dilettanti che guastano ed hanno bisogno di molte prove." Letter from Giovanni Mazzoleni to Pietro Viti, Šibenik, 9. 9. 1913, HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b.

Assieme 712.62²²¹

What stands out is the difference between an orchestral player from outside the town (7 crowns a day for each of the four musicians recruited from Trieste) and a local player (2 crowns, unless performing the functions of a principal part). The pay, at least for the local musicians, remained more or less the same also the following year, when two opera performances were given by the same company, again directed by Ernesto Guerra:

Maestro Patucchi	a Cor. 6	Cor. 12.00
Maestro Mazzoldi	a Cor. 2	4.
Sig. Rina Raimondi	a Cor. 2	4.
Sig. Silvia Raimondi	a Cor. 2	4.
Sig. Simeone Descovic	a Cor. 2	4.
Sig. Pietro Delfin	a Cor. 3	6.
Sig. Veronese	a Cor. 4	8.
Sig. G. Miacovic	a Cor. 4	8.
Sig. Ortoic	a Cor. 2.40	4.80
[...] Gerusalem	a Cor. 2.40	4.80
Sig. Marenzi	a Cor. 2	4.
Sig. Kovac	a Cor. 2	4.
Cornetta da Spalato compreso il viaggio		21.60

		89.20 ²²²

The “cornet from Split including travel” (*Cornetta da Spalato compreso il viaggio*) cost in all more than ten crowns per night, five times what a local player was paid. The evidence of these lists indicates that all the musicians that took part in the said seasons received their payment in cash. From the payroll of the orchestra and chorus for the season organised by the impresario Castagnoli in 1908, on the other hand, we have confirmation that not all the musicians were always paid wages. Some weren't paid in cash, but given entrance tickets instead. In this specific instance the recipients of a ticket (*biglietto*) were principally the second violins and the percussionists at the timpani and bass drum. For other players a mixed mode of payment was applied, i. e. money plus ticket:

221 Sheet of paper headed “Orchestra della stagione Compagnia Lillipuziana di E. Guerra”, [Šibenik, 1905], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 1.

222 List of expenses for the orchestra of the Compagnia Lillipuziana, Šibenik [May 1906], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 9.

Maestro Patucchi	Raffaeleper sera Cor.	10.00
Maestro sostituto	Orsini Antonio	5.00
Contrabbasso	Descovic [...]	1.50
Contrabbasso	Rossi Nico	1.00
Violoncello	Raimondi Sylva	2.00
I Violino	Raimondi Rina	1.50 biglietto
"	Mazzoldi Beppi	1.50 biglietto
"	Miagostovich Giovanni	1.50 biglietto
Viola	Pezzi Giacomo	1.50
Clarino	Veronese Giovanni	3.00
"	Unich Ernesto	1.50 biglietto
Fagotto	Descovic Antonio	1.00
Flauto	Delfin Pietro	1.50
Oboe	Covac Nico	biglietto
II Violino	Lobasso Maria	biglietto
"	Traini Giuseppe	biglietto
"	Inchiostri Vincenzo	biglietto
"	Montanari Gemma	biglietto
Corno	Delic Nicolo	3.00
"	Delic Augustin	3.00
Trombone tenore	Radinovich Marco	2.00
Trombone basso	Fossa Antonio	2.00
Timpani	Covac Ermete	biglietto
Cassa	Ragazzioni Giulio	biglietto

 Cor. 44.50 n. 10 biglietti²²³

The female singers of the chorus performed free of charge and merely received a complementary ticket:

Zarda Emilia	1 biglietto
Zanchi Silvia	"
Maria Rossi	"
Trifoni Maria	"
Trifoni Nina	"
Ticulin Anna	"
Braiz Anna	"

²²³ Orchestra, [Šibenik, 1908], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b.

Braiz Carlotta	"
Raditic Gemma	"
Veronesi Valeria	"
Grisogano Rosina	"

	n. 11 biglietti ²²⁴

For the male singers the situation was more fluid. Some were paid a fee; for others the same system of issuing a free entrance ticket was used:

	per sera Cor.
Adeogora Nico	1 biglietto
Pajani Umberto	"
Bognolo Vittorio	"
Lisgono Natale	"
Mileta Giovanni	"
Mazzoleni Enrico	(niente)
Fulgori Giovanni	biglietto
Aleksa Pietro	"
Modun Piero	"
Scariza Luigi	"
Angelichio Franc[esco]	2
Angelichio Giov[anni]	2
Ceinotti	2
Merlak	2
Lilla	biglietto
Bratic	2
Montanari Gino	"
Zaratin pittore Ziranski	2
Scotton Deffizza	2
Bregovic	(niente)

	biglietti 10 Cor. 14 ²²⁵

224 Chorus (female), [Šibenik, 1908], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b.

225 Chorus (male), [Šibenik, 1908], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 2b.

Enrico Mazzoleni was paid neither in cash nor in kind because he was related to the management (in the other case, that of Bregovic, the reason for non-payment is not known). It was naturally prohibited to sell the free ticket or give it to a third party because this would have constituted unfair competition, to the detriment of the impresa. Nor was it possible for the recipient to use up all the tickets on a single night.

The payment list for orchestra and chorus for the opera season organised by Ponzio in 1911 more or less confirms the nightly fees paid to the players, while those for the singers are lower (though equal for both sexes). Present in the orchestra at Šibenik were also two women, still a rare occurrence at the time:

Orchestra:

Bognolo Mario	a Cor. 2-	10 sere cor. 20
Branizza Matteo	a Cor. 2-	10 sere cor. 20
Descovich Simeone	a Cor. 3-	10 sere cor. 30
Descovich Antonio	a Cor. 2-	10 sere cor. 20
Delfin Pietro	a Cor. 4-	10 sere cor. 40
Delich Agostino	a Cor. 3-	10 sere cor. 30
Covacev Nicolò	a Cor. 2-	10 sere cor. 20
Mondini Francesco	a Cor. 3-	10 sere cor. 30
Modun Giuseppe	a Cor. 3-	10 sere cor. 30
M ^e Raffaele Patucchi	a Cor. 10-	10 sere cor. 100
M ^e Antonio Orsini	a Cor. 5-	10 sere cor. 50
Radinovich Marco	a Cor. 3-	10 sere cor. 30
Raimondi Sylva	a Cor. 3-	10 sere cor. 30
Raimondi Rina	a Cor. 3-	10 sere cor. 30
Sabatini Antonio	a Cor. 2-	10 sere cor. 20
Unich Ernesto	a Cor. 2-	10 sere cor. 20

Coriste:

Augenti Giulia	a Cor. 1-	3 sere cor. 3
Bognolo Carmela	a Cor. 1-	3 sere cor. 3
Brauer Anna	a Cor. 1-	3 sere cor. 3
Descovich Dora	a Cor. 1-	3 sere cor. 3
Sorelle Modun	a Cor. 2-	3 sere cor. 6
Jovcich Maria	a Cor. 1-	3 sere cor. 3

Coristi:

Augenti Giuseppe	a Cor. 1-	10 sere cor. 10
Descovich Dorino	a Cor. 1-	10 sere cor. 10
Mistura Nicolò	a Cor. 1-	10 sere cor. 10

Even at Zadar an orchestral player at the start of the new century was paid between 2.40 and 3 crowns, as is shown by the payroll of the orchestra dating most likely to 1903:²³²

	Orchestra	Cor	Cent	istromento che suona
1	Zink Giuseppe ²³³	6		violino di spalla
2	Brainovich Giuseppe	2	40	violino I°
3	Arnerich Urbano	2	40	violino II°
4	Lazzarini Riccardo	2	40	violino II°
5	Boniciolli Enea	2	40	violino II°
6	Lediski [Leditzki]	2	40	violino II°
7	Radman Martino	2	40	II° viola
8	Basilico Benedetto	3		II° contrabbasso
9	Talpo Riccardo	3		II° contrabbasso
10	Novotny	2	40	II° flauto
11	Dalfabbro Luigi	2	40	II° clarino
12	Scirinz Giuseppe	2	40	II° fagotto
13	Bossi Pietro	3		I° corno IIa copia
14	Albanesi Ernesto	2	40	II° corno
15	Nammer Adolfo	3		I° tromba
16	Pekas Giuseppe	2	40	II° tromba
17	Hodach	3		I° trombone
18	Capuri Luigi	2	40	II° trombone
19	Stancich Timoteo	2	40	III° trombone
20	Cecoli Francesco	2	40	bassotuba
21	Perrisich Antonio	2	40	timpani
22	Basilisco Antonio	2	40	gran cassa e piatti

If we compare these figures with the nightly fees paid over 25 years earlier (assuming the exchange rate 1 florin = 2 crowns), we notice that there was even a reduction in the fees in the more recent instance, for all except for the concertmaster (*violino alla spalla*) Giuseppe Zink:

Zink Giuseppe	1° violino alla spalla e direttore del ballo alla rapp.e	f. 3
Zink Guglielmo	1° violino	2
Lazzarini	1° violino	1,5
Tamino	2° violino	1,5

²³² Indicated here is the daily rate, payable in advance every five days as from the first orchestral rehearsal; Payroll of the orchestra, [Zadar, 1903], HR-DAZD, folder 11.

²³³ Giuseppe Zink is recorded as a teacher in the strings department at the School of Music of Gorizia, post 1878; *Ottocento goriziano. Una città che si trasforma*, edited by Lucia Pillon, Istituto di Storia Sociale e Religiosa, Editrice Goriziana, Gorizia 1991, p. 220.

Witika	1° viola	2
Bilagher	contrabbasso	2
Janos	contrabbasso	1,5
Lazzarini	1° flauto	2
Fiorelli	ottavino	1,5
Ziliotto	1° oboe	2
Poletimi	1° clarino	2
Umlauf	2° clarino	1,5
Marinello	1° fagotto	2
Conte	corno	1,60
Albanesi	1° trombone	2
Ragazzini	2° trombone	1,5
Cecoli	3° trombone	1,5
Sei suonatori militari, cioè un	1° violino, 3 secondi violini, un corno, una tromba, alla rapp.e	f. 10,50 ----- 41,60 ²³⁴

We also note that in the meantime some of the players had changed position or instrument: Riccardo Lazzarini moved from first to second violin, Ernesto Albanesi from first trombone to second horn, Francesco Cecoli from third trombone to tuba. There was always a difference in the fee for the concertmaster, who was paid either double or three times as much as a principal part. But this was normal and a privilege at many theatres: even at Trieste the *primo violino direttore* was paid exactly twice as much as one of the principal parts, precisely on account of his leadership role.²³⁵ We have no record here, on the other hand, of advanced payments: a benefit enjoyed by certain renowned principal parts in other theatres.²³⁶

We have already seen that, in order to complete the opera orchestra, Zadar had to resort to additional players from the military band; or alternatively, recruit them from the neighbouring towns, like Šibenik. In 1875 the musicians needed from outside were “a first violin, a leader of the second violins, a cello, a double bass, a first clarinet (*clarino*), two horns, a

234 *Società del Teatro Nuovo of Zadar*, session of 3 April 1876, Zadar, 3. 4. 1876, HR-DAZD, folder 4.

235 For comparison, see the Contract between the impresario Carlo Raffaele Burlini and the *primo violino direttore d'orchestra* Antonio Cremaschi of 1864, I-TSmt, folder 116, and the Contract between the impresario Angelo Tommasi and the principal trumpet Enrico Cagnoni, Trieste, 8. 3. 1866, I-TSmt, folder 116. Cremaschi was paid 1,250 florins, Cagnoni 650 florins.

236 For comparison, again at the Teatro Comunale of Trieste the principal trumpet Enrico Cagnoni was paid seven out of eight instalments in advance; Contract between the impresario Angelo Tommasi and the principal trumpet Enrico Cagnoni, Trieste, 8. 3. 1866, I-TSmt, folder 116.

first trumpet, a first bassoon and a timpanist”.²³⁷ Hence about ten players. Ten years later the problem evidently persisted, for the instruments needed externally were three first violins, two second violins, a cello, two double basses, first flute, first oboe, and again a first clarinet, first bassoon, first trumpet and timpanist, adding up to a total of 14 players. For the opera season of 1899 the estimate contemplated the arrival of twelve external professionals (*forastieri*) and eight musicians from the military band; in other words, exactly 50 % of the entire orchestra, as indicated in the following table:²³⁸

Strumenti	Prof. locali civili	Prof. militari	Prof. forastieri	Totale
Violini 1 ^c	3	2	2	7 Violini 1 ^c
Violini 2 ^c	3	2	1	6 Violini 2 ^c
Viola	1		1	2 Viola
Violoncelli			2	2 Violoncelli
Contrabbassi	2		1	3 Contrabbassi
Arpa			1	1 Arpa
Clarini	1		1	2 Clarini
Flauti		1	1	2 Flauti
Oboe		1	1	2 Oboe
Fagotti		1	1	2 Fagotti
Corni	3			3 Corni
Trombe	2			2 Trombe
Tromboni	3			3 Tromboni
Cimbasso	1			1 Cimbasso
Timpani		1		1 Timpani
Gran Cassa	1			1 Gran Cassa
	20	8	12	40

In 1885 the fee for a local player was 2 florins per night (or 5 lire), whereas a musician recruited externally cost more than double, 4.5 florins (or 11.25 lire).²³⁹ We have one instance in which the theatre management came forward and offered to cover the difference between a local and external player and this was for the season organised by Giorgio Trauner in 1903. The management acknowledged the “poor orchestral value” (*meschino valore orchestrale*) of the local second violins Boniccioli and Leditzki and told the impres-

237 Contract between the presidency of the theatre of Zadar and Carlo Vianello, Zadar, 22. 3. 1875, HR-DAZD, folder 4.

238 Table of the orchestra, season 1899, Zadar, [1899], HR-DAZD, folder 6. In 1894, five years earlier, the musicians of the military band were paid 2 florins a head; Receipt signed by Antonio Chera, “*sergente della musica*”, Zadar, 27. 3. 1894, HR-DAZD, folder 8. The sum probably remained the same.

239 Letter from the theatre management of Zadar to Sante Utili, Zadar, 27. 2. 1885, HR-DAZD, folder 5.

sario that he would make up the difference if they had to be replaced.²⁴⁰ Usually it was the impresario's job to take on this responsibility, but in this case it was clearly a necessity that couldn't be postponed.

The following table aims to summarise the trends in pay for the orchestral players in the period under consideration, though the information is extremely incomplete owing to the lack of any substantial documentation on the subject:

Orchestral fees per day (I = internal; E = external)										
		1868	1876	1883	1885	1895	1903	1905	1909	1911
Pula	(I)									
	(E)									
Rijeka	(I)	0.80 f.								
	(E)	2.4 f.								
Zadar	(I)		1.50–2 f.	2 f.	2 f. (5 l.)		2.4–3 c.			
	(E)				4.5 f. (11.25 l.)					
Šibenik	(I)							2 c.	2–3 c.	2 c.
	(E)							7 c.		
Split	(I)									5.50 l.
	(E)					5.50–7 l. (2.75–3.5 f.)				

It makes sense, perhaps, to try and compare the daily pay rather than the earnings for an entire season, not only because the actual number of performances is harder to grasp (in some of the documents it is even omitted), but also because that number could vary considerably, making it difficult to make balanced comparisons. In spite of the incomplete data, however, we can conclude that the daily pay for a local player in the second half of the 19th century could plausibly range from 0.80²⁴¹ to 2 florins, whereas

²⁴⁰ The management cannot have had much consideration for the musicians in question, or for that matter for some other of their colleagues in the orchestra, if it wrote to Trauner as follows: "Giving a lesson to Leditzki and Boniccioli is a good idea, but not to everyone, first of all because it would cost too much, but also because the general discontent would be dangerous." ("Una lezione a Leditzki e Boniccioli è bene darla, ma non a tutti perché costerebbe troppo in primo luogo e poi il malcontento generale sarebbe pericoloso."); Letter from the theatre management of Zadar to Giorgio Trauner, [Zadar, 1903], letter book, HR-DAZD, folder 21.

²⁴¹ A local player at Rijeka in 1868 could cost 0.80 florins a day, whereas one from outside town cost 2.40 florins. General statement of income and expenditure for the administration of the Civico Teatro of Rijeka in the Lent and spring season 1868, HR-DARI, DS 60, folder 4.

an external musician could hope to earn from 2.40 to 3.5 florins. With the new century, and the change of currency, the pay ranged from 2 to 3 crowns for a local player to 7 crowns for one recruited externally. This at least was the situation up to the years of the First World War.

8 Concluding note

This research sets out to provide the notes for a history of opera management in the coastal region of the eastern Adriatic: hence in a particularly lively part of Europe, at a time (between the mid-19th century and the First World War) when the Italian, Croatian and Austrian cultures and ethnic groups lived side-by-side and confronted one another against a backdrop of nationalist ferment and political upheaval. This geographical area and its archives – hitherto unexplored in opera studies dealing with the 19th and 20th centuries – have here been investigated in a comprehensive way for the first time. This volume therefore wishes to make a small contribution towards defining a disciplinary field that has seen – if we consider the ideal broader picture – its most important landmarks in the works of Beth and Jonathan Glixon or Thomas Holmes for the 17th century,¹ the studies of Richard Erkens for the 18th century and – before that – of John Rosselli,² then the pivotal studies of Jutta Toelle on the 19th century and Michael Walter covering a time span that reaches up to the present.³

By examining the evidence documenting the work of the impresarios and theatre directors, it has been possible to delineate a complex *modus operandi*, one that steered an uneasy course between financial necessities, the requirements of programming, the availability of suitable casts, and the preferences of the public. The resulting system of organising opera seasons highlights the interaction of different personalities and stakeholders: more than are found in other areas of Europe at the time. It is sufficient, for example, to make a comparison with the situation in the Austro-Bohemian territories, where the theatre director and the contracting impresario were often one and the same person and where the forms of intermediation were by no means as intricate as those prevailing in the coastal area.

The study has taken into consideration theatres of different types and sizes, with some benefiting from provincial and/or municipal grants for the running of their opera seasons,

1 We refer in particular to Beth and Jonathan Glixon, *Inventing the Business of Opera: The Impresario and His World in Seventeenth-Century Venice*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005, and Thomas Holmes, *Opera Observed. Views of a Florentine Impresario in the Early Eighteenth Century*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1994.

2 John Rosselli, *The Opera Industry in Italy from Cimarosa to Verdi: The Role of the Impresario*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1984; Richard Erkens, “Engaging Italian Opera Singers for the Russian Court in 1734/35: An Insight into the Networks of Agents and Impresarios”, in Cristina Scuderi, Ingeborg Zechner (eds.), *Opera as Institution. Networks and Professions (1730–1917)*, LIT, Vienna 2019, pp. 7–36.

3 Jutta Toelle, *Oper als Geschäft. Impresari an italienischen Opernhäusern*, Bärenreiter, Kassel, 2007; Michael Walter, *Oper. Geschichte einer Institution*, Springer, Berlin 2016.

while others received no public subsidies at all. Over the period considered we have seen that higher-than-average endowments were offered by the Teatro Comunale of Rijeka, which was consequently also the place that hosted many more novelties in the opera repertoire. Other theatres, on the other hand, like that of Šibenik, counted principally on their shareholders and their membership fees (*canone sociale*) to help organise the seasons. Even in the publicly subsidised theatres the shareholders had a role to play in the choice of operas seasons, along with the theatre managements (which were usually made up of three or five members). It was during their periodic meetings that the impresario engaged to run the opera season was chosen. The impresario would have responded to the publication (where indeed they were published) of the tender specifications: a document that summarised all the obligations to be fulfilled in the running of the theatre. When the theatre management had found the right person for the purpose – who was generally, amid the various competitors, the one who proved to be financially the most solvent and most trustworthy (on the strength of past experience) and also, if possible, the one with the best references – the next step was to draw up the contract proper. In its final form the contract could also differ from the previous tender specifications. In particular, there could be adjustments in the call for orchestral players and choristers: in the contract the number might be lowered due to both the difficulties of finding the musicians and the need to contain expenditure.

As conjectured, most of the impresarios and agents working in the area were of Italian origin. Over 280 have been recorded over a period of almost sixty years: a figure that is clearly underestimated, given the incompleteness of the documentary material. In spite of the inevitable gaps, however, this is nonetheless a sizeable body of people, testifying to a category that is still insufficiently studied (a point accentuated by the fact that the names encountered here are for the most part unknown). This preliminary survey – which complements the one drawn up over fifty years ago by John Rosselli and the more recent one by Livia Cavaglieri – may serve as a basis for tracking any further activities of the various subjects concerned, when more light is shed by documents from other archives. Additional valuable information is also provided by details collected from their rubber stamps and letterheads: not only addresses (and hence workplaces), but also specialisations, professional orientations, qualifications and skills, enabling us to compare their activities with those of their counterparts in other areas of Europe. Examining the nature of their business activities in this way (by taking a cue from how they themselves defined their skills) is a good starting-point for describing above all how their work was organised.

In their various capacities the impresarios and agents interacted with the coastal theatres, proposing one or more seasons, or even short runs of opera performances, principally using Italian companies. Only at Šibenik and Split are there records of companies from Bohemia, Zagreb or Osijek, which is understandable since the contacts with the Croatian hinterland were stronger in these cities. Clarifying these connections with the Habsburg territories means to recognise the preferred channels used by these companies when they

planned their southward expeditions. On average they also presented a greater number of opera titles per season than the Italians. As a general rule, the opera companies came from outside the region: the presence of local singers was very rare, and even the basic musical forces were only partially local. Any resident orchestras were for the most part semi-professional. And the players that were lacking could be recruited from the orchestras of neighbouring theatres, wind bands and municipal philharmonic societies. Some of these players would no doubt be unfamiliar with the opera repertoire, finding themselves having to perform it for the first time. Hence fears about the quality of the productions were a common occurrence. The fastest and safest solution might have been to recruit the choristers and orchestral players from the Teatro Comunale of Trieste, though cities like Venice or Milan could also provide good players when required. The musicians were either engaged by an Italian theatrical agency (for there were no agencies working in the area of Istria and Dalmatia until the years of the First World War) or contacted by the impresario himself, who would bring a selection of trusted musicians with him to the *piazza*. The singers could also be provided by agencies, but often their selection was the result of blending the combined wishes of the impresario, the *maestro concertatore* and orchestral conductor, and – above all, towards the end of the 19th century – the publisher.

The choice of which operas to stage responded to motives that were purely financial and commercial; artistic motivations, as we might understand them today, were far from being contemplated. An attempt was certainly made to please the public, which at times wrote to the newspapers either to protest against this or that *impresa* or opera company or to suggest the titles of operas it would rather hear. Nonetheless, correspondences between impresario and theatre management were focused entirely on technical issues and the very decision whether to give a repertoire opera or a new opera, regardless of what was indicated in the tender specifications, responded to financial criteria. Before an opera could be brought to the stage, its libretto was subjected to the censorship of the provincial government, which had a special office devoted to issuing (or not, as the case may be) a licence to perform. The impresario also had to ensure compliance with the new safety regulations, which had become increasingly complex and detailed after certain fires in the region (and above all after the disaster at Vienna's Ring Theater in 1881). The repertoire most frequently staged was that of the standard Italian works of opera seria and buffa, followed percentage-wise by various works by French composers; German operas, on the other hand, were the domain of few *imprese* and in a clear minority in this region, as were Russian, Czech or Croatian titles, which were staged solely in Šibenik or Split. Composers from Istria, Rijeka and Dalmatia were performed principally in theatres outside the area, though here we are talking about a number that is hardly significant when seen against the sum total of the composers programmed. The scores were not always performed in their entirety, one reason being the conditions of the available musical forces and the quality of the singers and choristers.

By covering a sixty-year period of opera performances in the various cities concerned, we are now in a position not only to reflect on the alternation of Italian, French, German or other opera titles from season to season, but also to observe the differences in programming between neighbouring theatres. Moreover, this work will also permit us to compare the programming with that of other theatres of the same order and degree in different countries, provided, that is, that similar chronologies have already been compiled with a certain degree of completeness. For the first time the chronologies of neighbouring theatres have been grouped together within a single work. This makes consultation on various levels possible: ranging from the immediate recovery of specific historical data to the drawing up of fuller conclusions on the evolution of repertoire choices. It allows us both to observe the ways in which the opera repertoire became consolidated and to trace the fortunes of new operas by tracking their movements – or noting their absence – at this or that theatre, which in turn enables us to advance considerations of a political, social and cultural nature. Indirectly, the possibility of consulting a similar tool also allows us to reflect on the forces required to stage these operas and the types of opera company needed.⁴

Since the opera companies arrived at the coastal cities principally by sea, bad weather conditions (in particular, when the bora wind blew) could mean the cancellation or postponement of a first performance, or in any case hold up the arrival of stage materials, costumes, scores and separate parts. As the journey was also a long one, the impresarios tried to make savings on their costs by arranging additional performances at different *piazze* along the coast, negotiating the possible destinations as soon as they arrived in situ. In this regard, an interesting initiative was made by Pietro Ciscutti, the founder of the Politeama of Pula: that of creating a sort of organisational network and making the same productions circulate in the different theatres of the eastern Adriatic. The scheme was readily embraced by the other theatre managements, but most likely Ciscutti's death, which took place shortly after he made the proposal, prevented this enlightened project from being developed.

A number of the processes, practices and tendencies described in this work have survived the passage of time and are still very relevant today, after some 150 years. Among the examples: the need to secure good references on the part of anyone wishing to propose an artistic project to a superintendency; the ways of managing (and strategies for retaining) a sponsor that is granting subsidies; the demands for wage increases from the workforce; or even the very topical need to 'join forces' and forge alliances between performing arts institutions as a means of limiting organisational costs.

So just as attempts were made (then as now) to forge alliances and develop dialogues as a means of optimising the management of an opera season, in the same way there is a need today to make alliances and 'join forces' as a means of optimising the works of scientific

4 In the absence of a European database of theatre chronologies, this work at least offers a preliminary record for the entire area, in anticipation that these data may migrate to a suitable platform.

reconstruction such as the one proposed in this study. There is still a lot of work to do: for many theatres there are no chronologies; the music periodicals of the period need to be systematically sifted; and, above all, archives need to be inventoried and catalogued (which is indeed a primary problem). Moreover, there are materials, also of a certain artistic value, that run the risk of deterioration and need to be digitised; and there are private archives, which could offer up important documentation, that need to be identified. Stated differently, this can be seen therefore as an appeal to the academic community to join forces and ensure that similar research may benefit from the support and skills of many colleagues. Only through shared and collaborative work can one hope to enrich the puzzle, delineate more coordinated and complete landscapes, and write macro-histories that bridge the individual micro-histories.

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- Letter from Carlo Pasquini to the theatre management of Zadar, Milano, 20. 1. 1899, HR-DAZD, folder 6.
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- Letter from Doimo Miagostovich to Enrico Viscardi, [Zadar, n. d.], HR-DAŠI-103, folder 3.

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