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From the Directors

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From the Directors

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“From the Directors...”

Last summer the AIVS received an unexpected phone call informing us of a bequest from the estate of John D. Mazzarella, a longtime member of the Institute. Mr. Mazzarella, the former Vice-President and Eastern Manager of the Community Concerts division of Columbia Artists Management, was an avid collector of documents related to opera. Working with dealers in the United States and abroad, during his extensive travels he acquired a significant and wide-ranging selection of printed scores and librettos from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which he generously bequeathed to the AIVS. Recently these materials were transferred to the Verdi Archive, where we have prepared a preliminary inventory.

Verdi's works are well represented in the Mazzarella Collection, with nearly forty librettos and several nineteenth-century scores. Among the former are first editions of *Oberto* (its cover appears on the cover of this issue), *Nabucco*, *I Lombardi*, *Attila*, and *Il trovatore*. Scores in the collection include the first piano-vocal score of *Les vêpres siciliennes*, published by Escudier, and several early editions published by Ricordi. But Mr. Mazzarella didn't just collect Verdi's music. In addition to both well-known and less familiar works by Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti, the collection includes librettos set by Coccia, Petrella, Morlacchi, Mercadante, and dozens of other composers, as well as the first Ricordi editions of Bellini's *La straniera* and Donizetti's *Caterina Cornaro*, and rare piano-vocal scores of operas by Luigi Mancinelli and Spyridon Samaras. Indeed, the acquisition of this marvelous resource jumpstarts a long desired goal of the AIVS to widen its scholarly focus beyond the works of Verdi to those of other composers who may have influenced, or been influenced by, him.

The Mazzarella Collection will be cataloged and housed in the Elmer Holmes Bobst Library at New York University, where it will eventually be available, by appointment, for onsite consultation. In addition, we hope to digitize portions of the collection and make them available online. Watch for a full-length article about the Mazzarella Collection in a future issue of this journal.

2013 is fast approaching, and the bicentenary of Verdi's birth promises to be a busy and exciting time for all of us. The AIVS will begin the celebration by co-sponsoring an exhibition of works by photographer Luca Piola, exploring the world of opera with images shot backstage at the Teatro Regio in Parma. The exhibition will take place at New York University's Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò. Plans are underway to collaborate with opera houses in the United States and abroad and to promote conferences and meetings exploring and (re)imagining the role of Verdi and Italian opera in the world during his own time and at the outset of the twenty-first century. Verdi and the World is the overarching theme of our activities for 2013, and we look forward to sharing details with you as they become available.

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