

PRESS RELEASE

Bertelsmann Brings International Puccini Exhibition to Gütersloh for the City's Anniversary

- **The global corporation celebrates with its hometown, organizes several events and campaigns to mark “200 years of municipal incorporation”**
- **€25,000 donated to Gütersloh education fund**
- **Thomas Rabe: “We are very happy to make our social and cultural contribution to our home location**

Gütersloh, February 19, 2025 – Bertelsmann, the international media, services and education company, congratulates its hometown Gütersloh on the 200th anniversary of its municipal incorporation by bringing a unique, internationally successful exhibition to town: At the end of October 2025, Bertelsmann will start showing “Opera Meets New Media – Puccini, Ricordi and the Rise of the Modern Entertainment Industry” at the Gütersloh Municipal Theater, where the Group will also sponsor a performance of a famous Puccini opera. The exhibition, featuring valuable exhibits from Bertelsmann’s Archivio Storico Ricordi in Milan along with innovative AI-generated installations, attracted more than 70,000 visitors in Berlin and Milan, and is going to be one of several items and events Bertelsmann is contributing to its hometown’s bicentennial celebration.

Bertelsmann Chairman & CEO Thomas Rabe said: “Gütersloh is Bertelsmann’s home – and has been for a full 190 years. We are excited to be celebrating ‘200 years of municipal incorporation’ with all Gütersloh citizens in our own anniversary year, and are more than happy to make a social and cultural contribution to the bicentennial with several activities and events. Gütersloh and Bertelsmann are connected by a long history of success. We congratulate our hometown and all those responsible, and wish people an vibrant anniversary year with more than 200 diverse events.”

To mark the city’s 200th anniversary, Bertelsmann is bringing the internationally successful exhibition “Opera Meets New Media – Puccini, Ricordi and the Rise of the Modern Entertainment Industry” to Theater Gütersloh from October 29, 2025 to January 4, 2026. The exhibition has previously been shown at venues including Bertelsmann Unter den Linden in Berlin and La Scala in Milan, to overwhelming visitor response. To date, 60,000 people have visited the multimedia Puccini exhibition in Milan, and more than 10,000 went to see it in Berlin. Giacomo Puccini is regarded as one of Italy’s most important opera composers. A large part of his musical legacy is preserved in the Archivio Storico Ricordi, one of the most valuable music collections in the world, which is owned by Bertelsmann.

“Opera Meets New Media” shows the interplay between opera and media in the early 20th century. The exhibition depicts the extraordinary symbiosis of commercial activity and artistic creation that already characterized Puccini and his publisher, Casa Ricordi, in the previous century. Exhibits and installations also tell of the challenges posed by the new media of the time for existing copyright law and the exploitation of rights.

A performance of Giacomo Puccini’s opera “The Girl from the Golden West” will be organized to accompany the exhibition. Bertelsmann is sponsoring the production, with Kultur Räume Gütersloh as its partner. The performance will take place on November 15.

To mark the city’s anniversary, Bertelsmann is also making a one-time donation of €25,000 to the Gütersloh Education Fund to help the Gütersloh Community Foundation provide unbureaucratic support to schools and daycare centers in Gütersloh. The donation is intended to provide fair educational opportunities for children and teens in Gütersloh. Chief HR Officer Immanuel Hermreck recently presented a donation check to the fund’s administrators.

From October 31 to November 9, 2025, Gütersloh will become a Reading City for the fifth time. As part of the “Reading City Gütersloh” series of events, numerous readings and activities are planned at various locations across the city. To mark its own 190th anniversary, Bertelsmann has committed to being the main sponsor of the popular event series this year.

Bertelsmann was founded in Gütersloh in 1835 by Carl Bertelsmann. Today, the company, which also includes local institutions such as the Parkhotel Gütersloh, is the largest private employer in the greater Gütersloh area, with around 10,000 employees. In 2024 alone, Bertelsmann invested some €76 million in its businesses in Gütersloh and donated around €250,000 to 200 organizations and associations. In August 2024, 107 new apprentices and dual students began their training at Bertelsmann companies in the region.

About Bertelsmann

Bertelsmann is a media, services, and education company with more than 80,000 employees that operates in about 50 countries around the world. It includes the entertainment group RTL Group, the trade book publisher Penguin Random House, the music company BMG, the service provider Arvato Group, Bertelsmann Marketing Services, the Bertelsmann Education Group and Bertelsmann Investments, an international network of funds. The company generated revenues of €20.2 billion in the 2023 financial year. Bertelsmann stands for creativity and entrepreneurship. This combination promotes first-class media content and innovative service solutions that inspire customers around the world. Bertelsmann aspires to achieve climate neutrality by 2030.

www.bertelsmann.com

Bertelsmann online



Contact:

Bertelsmann SE & Co. KGaA

Jan Hölkemann

Spokesperson/Communications Content Team

Phone: +49 5241 80-89923

jan.hoelkemann@bertelsmann.de