

# The Other Opera

GIUSEPPE VERDI FARMER



An opera in 3 acts  
by Roberta Biagiarelli  
and Sandro Fabiani


translands  


ASSOCIAZIONE  
LE TERRE TRAVERSE

 Regione Emilia-Romagna







# The Other Opera

## GIUSEPPE VERDI FARMER

### an opera in 3 acts

**Roberta Biagiarelli**, *author and actor*

**Sandro Fabiani**, *author and actor*

**Renata M. Molinari**, *dramaturgy*

**Daniele Rossi**, *musician*

**Massimiliano Speziani**, *artistic collaboration*

**Corrado Mingardi**, *biographic consulting*

**Giuseppe Martini**, *music consulting*

**Le Terre Traverse**, *agricultural consulting*

**Giovanni Garbo**, *light design*

**Babelia & C.**, *promotion and organization*


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*The Municipality of Montemaggiore al Metauro (Pu)  
for the kind concession of the Teatro dell'Opera of Dopo lavoro.*

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**The action can take place in barnyards, courtyards, parks, stables, colonnades, squares and tradition theaters**



**Roberta Biagiarelli** - Actress, theater author and documentary maker with the cultural association Babelia & C., she works at the production, research and performance of social, historical and political themes.

**Sandro Fabiani** - He has taken part in several theater productions directed by Dario Fo, Paolo Rossi, Marisa Fabbri, Franco Però, Ferruccio Soleri, Sergio Buscic, Massimo Puliani, Fabrizio Bartolucci, Carlo Quartucci, Paola Galassi.


**Renata M. Molinari** - An active observer of the Italian theatrical sphere from the experiences of "teatro diffuso" (itinerant theater) in the Seventies, she's a playwright, a teacher and a writer.

**Massimiliano Speziani** - He has worked with the greatest Italian directors: Giancarlo Cobelli, Massimo Castri, Luca Ronconi, Alfonso Santagata, Federico Tizzi, Antonio Latella, Carmelo Rifici. He won a UBU Prize in 1997.

**Corrado Mingardi** - An authentic Bussetano (born in Busseto - Parma), he was a high-school professor, a librarian and an inexhaustible promoter of Verdi initiatives and cultural events. He is the author of several books on Giuseppe Verdi.

**Giuseppe Martini** - Musicologist, music critic, scientific collaborator of the Istituto Nazionale di Studi Verdiani (National Institute for Verdi Studies).





## A theatrical journey into Verdi maps A play and its roots

Two actors guide us to the discovery of Giuseppe Verdi's "Other Opera": that other work he carried on all his life, an intense farming activity. The Maestro, who once called himself "a countryman of Roncole", was also an innovative landowner and a witness to the fate of unified Italy concerning the development of agriculture.

We discover him as a farm businessman: a jealous keeper of his own garden and of the animals, a careful observer of the farmers' life conditions and a meticulous administrator.

The play offers many mementos: fragments of letters, biographers' reenactments, scholars' interpretations and – why not? – 'devotees' fantasies.

It's the Verdi you can find in books, of course, but also in the popular imagination. Living traces are still legible in the territory that he inhabited and transformed: that's where the two actors start their journey, meeting people and evoking characters, weaving together an imaginary opera libretto where facts and emotions get mixed up...

They tell us about Verdi, the great musician, but also an innovative farmer, participating in the events of Risorgimento, a very practical benefactor and a refined gourmand.





## Excerpts from the theatrical score

### Act I

**Sandro** -«I am and will always be a countryman of Roncole. I'm nothing but a roughly-cut peasant. I wrote all my operas, except the first ones, in Sant'Agata, never disregarding my solitary and rural habits. Where I am used to live, nothing can distract me».

**Roberta** -And when somebody asks him what is his secret to be in fine form, he promptly answers:

**Sandro** -«My nervous system got reinvigorated with years and I am as good as a country farmer».

**Roberta** -A roughly-cut peasant... and when the Maestro talks about the Risorgimento, he does it like a country farmer.

**Sandro:** «A few less musicians, lawyers, doctors, etc.. and a few more farmers: that's what I wish for my country. With esteem, yours faithfully, Giuseppe Verdi».

### Act II

**Roberta** -Who is that old man «1,80 meter tall at least», who comes towards us, wearing «black rural clothes, a large black hat and a long scarf around his neck?»

**Sandro** -He has the tanned face of one who lives outdoors.

**Roberta** -He always walks calmly. His dogs are always with him.

**Sandro** -You smell the cigar smell... and there he is.

**Traveler** -There he is, and there, and there... How many of them!

**Traveler** -There's Verdi of the portraits,

**Traveler** -that of the letters,

**Traveler** -that of witnesses,

**Traveler** -of scholars,

**Traveler** -of biographers,

**Traveler** -that of librettists,

**Traveler** -of devotees....

**Traveler** -Can you see it? Verdi's spirit is here [...] alive in this landscape [...], can you see it? He's wandering "with slow steps around the fertile and smoky countryside, wrapped into the cloak of the farmers of the plain, the penetrating look from his deep blue eyes shadowed by the brim of the wide slouch hat..." There he is, inspecting the vineyards, sizing up the harvests with watchful expert looks.



## **Intermission**

**Roberta** -*First movement*

**Insieme** -So many Operas!!!

**Sandro** -A Music lover

**Roberta** -A Peasant

**Sandro** -The music lover to the peasant. From "Nabucco" on, a success after the other, and so much money!!! And a trip after the other: Teatro alla Scala in Milan, Teatro La Fenice in Venice, Teatro Argentina in Rome, Naples, La Pergola in Florence, London, L'Opera in Paris, St. Petersburg. Cairo, (gaze) No, not Cairo...

12,000 liras was the payment for "Ernani", but it wasn't enough to buy the Pulgaro plot and he got bogged down in debt! But he settled it with "Rigoletto".

**Roberta** -The peasant to the music lover. The Pulgaro plot is the Maestro's. The Castellazzo plot with the mill is the Maestro's.

Cornocchiello, Cornocchio, Colombarone, Piantadoro, Stallone, Gelmetti, Canale are the Maestro's. La Pavese, Prato di Gargoni, Scandolara, Provinciale, Casanova a Sera and Casanova a Mattina are the Maestro's!

And he keeps buying: (gaze) the Colombaro of Fiorenzuola, 32 hectares, and a priceless water spring, then exchanges, little adjustments, readjustments of the borders...

Up to owning a total of 1,220 hectares!!! They're all the M-a-e-s-t-r-o's!!!

**Sandro** -*Fourth movement*

**Sandro** -That time, when the Maestro left for St. Petersburg, he brought along his whole larder. A treasure chest containing Spalla Cotta from San Secondo, Culatello di Zibello, Piacentina Coppa and Bacon, Parma Ham, Reggiano Parmesan, and then the wines, Gutturnio from the Piacenza hills, Malvasia from the Parma and Piacenza hills, Fortana of Taro and Lambrusco!!!

**Roberta** -A gourmand!

## **Act III**

**Roberta** -So much time has passed from when the young man took his head in his hands, those hands that had denied him admission to the conservatory. To study music! Between the boy who appears, hesitant and fascinated, at the door of his mother's inn, the young man lost in his hands, and the man "who always walks calmly", there's a multitude of figures, there, the figures from his operas, the encounters of a lifetime of musical success, the notaries, the agents, a lifetime of economic stabilization, of international distinction and authority in the political life of unified Italy. And always, a look at the land...





## Looks on the work



Giuseppe Verdi, the Maestro: a very charming personality, not only for his musical genius, but also for many other aspects, perhaps less investigated and well-known. This theatrical performance tells of them. Verdi was involved in the events of Risorgimento, he was a farm businessman, a benefactor, a cosmopolite and a man very tied to his own land. He had a place where he always used to come back: Villa Sant'Agata (in the municipality of Villanova sull'Arda). He bought it in 1848, along with 108 hectares of land. The extension of his farming plots will later reach about 1,200 hectares. At his death, 'only' 626 remained: the Maestro had actually made two big charity investments: the Hospital in Villanova and the Retirement Home for Musicians in Milan. Verdi's ability to combine a huge musical culture and innovative farming, an entrepreneurial and a benevolent attitude, a world perspective and a local rooting make him an extraordinary icon of Italian territoriality, able to nourish the body and the soul. This theatrical tribute valorizes the immaterial architecture still written, like a music score, on the land that the Maestro ceaselessly tilled all his life.

*Le Terre Traverse*

«In this garden of his own he now dominates so much that I am confined into only few spans of ground»: in Verdi's music not only do we find his artistic and expressive passion, to which he actually gave so many energies and due to which he repeatedly clashed with the conventions of his times, but also his need to find a place in society and to get economic independence. That same independence that led him, from the first years of his career, to buy estates, culminating in the huge homestead of S. Agata. And in S. Agata – wrote Giuseppina Strepponi to Clara Maffei with her usual intelligent ability to marry – Verdi “czareggia”, dominates, is the absolute master. To build the well, to order the seeds, to take care of the details of his homestead were nothing but the enjoyment of that independence he had been looking for since his youth, and music, which was only his own and a product of his sole talent, was only the poetic, disenchanted and public face of that tenacious quest for a private happiness.

*Giuseppe Martini*

Last year, a late-summer night with a shining moon at the Cascina Pizzavacca in Soarza di Villanova sull'Arda, fully deservedly Verdi's land: a very beautiful memory that comes back to me with pleasant regularity. Roberta Biagiarelli and Sandro Fabiani, almost on their own, staged a Verdi opera: not one of the Maestro's melodramas, even though in a “stable-theatre” version, but a charming original reinterpretation of Verdi the farmer, as he was with passion and awareness of the facts, by means of precise quotations from his correspondence and of period mementos: words like tiles of an all-round portrait, but also music, his immortal music, very well inserted. Now that the show is about to premiere in its final form and the magic of the theatre of that beautiful night will be replicated to be replicated in many places, I'll wait with suspense for the two authors-actors and directors' official debut and in the meantime I'm already applauding.

*Corrado Mingardi*





Villa Sant'Agata (Villanova sull'Arda - PC)

**Silvia Molinari** - with a diploma in decorative techniques from the Istituto d'Arte Toschi of Parma, she creates canvases and watercolors with special attention for natural subjects; she has been exhibiting for years in solo and collective shows and teaches different painting techniques.

*info@silviamolinari.it; tel. 3289440558; fb Silvia Molinari*





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L'Emilia-Romagna  
celebra i 200 anni  
dalla nascita  
di Giuseppe Verdi



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**Associazione Le Terre Traverse**

[www.terretraverse.it](http://www.terretraverse.it) - [terretraverse@libero.it](mailto:terretraverse@libero.it) - fb: Terre Traverse

**Babelia & C. - Progetti Culturali**

[www.babelia.org](http://www.babelia.org) - [promozione@babelia.org](mailto:promozione@babelia.org)

cell. 338 8591387 - 333 5295854 - fb: Babelia Progetti Culturali