



## History

### 1874

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Casa Musicale Sonzogno was established in 1874 by EDOARDO SONZOGNO, an enlightened figure who popularised culture in Italy and who founded the publishing empire that included the outstanding book publishing house (established by his grandfather Giovanni Battista in 1804), several periodicals of diverse types, as well as the daily newspaper with the widest circulation in Italy, “Il Secolo” – of radical and republican ideas.

He starts off the publication of two important music magazines, “Il Teatro Illustrato” and “La Musica Popolare” and, furthermore, launches a line of arrangements for piano of the best known operas, with a high circulation and at a low price.

### 1879

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The new music publishing house acquires the copyright for the Italian version of several French operas and achieves the first resounding international success with *Carmen* by **Bizet**, which wins acclaim worldwide with the Italian version published by Sonzogno. Following a performance of *Carmen* in Nice in 1887, Friedrich Nietzsche writes to a friend: “*Carmen by the prestigious Italian theatre: a most striking event in my opinion. As the four hours ticked away, I lived through an experience which afforded me to learn more than I would usually have in four weeks. I feel I must pay homage to Mr Sonzogno!*”

### 1890

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In order to set up a an Italian repertory of his own, **EDOARDO SONZOGNO** announces a series of competitions for new operas: the success of *Cavalleria Rusticana* by **Mascagni** marks the birth of a new genre, Verism, and a generation of composers makes a name for itself: “Giovane Scuola Italiana” (The Young Italian School), that would include such leading figures, besides Mascagni, such as **Puccini, Leoncavallo, Giordano** and **Cilèa**. Edoardo is also rather enterprising as an impresario at the foremost theatres in Italy and abroad and in 1894 has Teatro Lirico Internazionale built in Milan. In this theatre he organizes unforgettable seasons, launching operas he published and also young opera singers who would then become well-known, such as Enrico Caruso.

## 1909

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In 1909, Edoardo, still a bachelor and with no children of his own, passes on the management of the Publishing House to his nephews, **LORENZO** and **RICCARDO SONZOGNO**, who extend the catalogue still further with new works by the Verism composers – among which are *La Rondine* and *Inno a Roma* by **Puccini** – and with *Fedra*, by a young **Pizzetti**, featuring the libretto by D'Annunzio. Moreover, Lorenzo proves himself to be a pioneer in the opera film sector, establishing a competent film production company: Musical Film. The book sector, the newspapers and Teatro Lirico are transferred. All the members of the Sonzogno family pass away between 1915 and 1920. The heirs entrust a board of directors with the management, but the financial situation of the firm deteriorates, with the chances of being transferred to a foreign group.

## 1923

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In 1923, the cotton industrialist, **PIERO OSTALI**, a musician and composer himself, takes over the Publishing House and stops it from going to rack and ruin. An energetic man with a fighting spirit, Ostali succeeds in achieving the worldwide popularity of operas that had undeservedly sunk into oblivion, such as *L'Arlesiana* and *Adriana Lecouvreur* by Cilèa; he also extends the repertory with works by Giordano (*La Cena delle beffe* and *Il Re*, both conducted by Toscanini at La Scala), Wolf-Ferrari (*Sly* – with the interpretation of Pertile at La Scala, *La Vedova Scaltra* and various orchestral music pieces), Smareglia, Lattuada, Lualdi, Porrino.

In 1943 an air raid wipes out the premises of Casa Sonzogno. Piero overcomes this adversity with flying colours, also thanks to the teamwork of his son, Enzo.

## 1945

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**ENZO OSTALI** puts his degree in engineering aside and, in 1945, chooses to devote his clear-headed rationality of a man of the sciences and his love for music to the well-being of the firm.

In 1961 Enzo becomes the sole administrator and starts off a new sector dedicated to contemporary music with composers such as Viozzi, Negri, Bettinelli, Meyerowitz, Chailly, Mannino, Ferrari, Hazon, Corghi, Gentilucci. The same year sees him as one of the founders of the prestigious “Settimane Musicali di Stresa” festival. Furthermore, he inaugurates the book sector of the House by publishing fundamental monographic volumes on the Verism composers.

## 1971

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As from 1971, Enzo avails himself of the teamwork of his wife, NANDI OSTALI. In these years, particular attention is given to the didactic element, with the edition of various music techniques and studies; in addition, critical editions, such as *Pagliacci* by Leoncavallo, are introduced.

In 1984, Nandi Ostali succeeds her husband as the leading figure of the firm. From the second half of the '80s to the present day, and thanks also to the persevering and fruitful efforts – aimed at promotion and propagation – of Casa Musicale Sonzogno, there has been renewed interest in the Verism composers on behalf of the public, of artistic directors, of musicologists, as well as of the great interpreters. This atmosphere of rediscovery witnesses the comeback to the international stage of a great deal of operas that had not been part of the programme of the most important theatres for decades; these operas include *La Rondine* by Puccini and *Fedora* by Giordano.

## 1989

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In 1989, PIERO OSTALI JR., Enzo and Nandi's son, joins the firm. Casa Musicale Sonzogno is concerned with the emerging of new music styles and welcomes well-known composers such as Tutino, Pedini, Galante, Testi and Battiato. It launches, in Italy and all over the world, young and innovative talented musicians such as Sòllima, Boccadoro and Betta. Furthermore, it acquires the sub-publishing of the catalogue of Philip Glass.

Casa Musicale Sonzogno extends its library with the publishing of important books dedicated to the composers of the "Giovane Scuola" (The Young School), with reference to a critical reappraisal of the entire veristic period.

1996 sees the inauguration of a web site, the first of its kind to be carried out by a European music publishing house.