



VERDI GIUSEPPE

HIGHLY IMPORTANT SERIES OF THIRTY-SIX AUTOGRAPH LETTERS SIGNED ("GVerdi") TO THE LIBRETTIST SALVADORE CAMMARANO, written between 1844 and 1851, BY FAR THE GREATER PART UNPUBLISHED AND UNRECORDED

about their four operatic collaborations, notably *Il trovatore*, containing many new insights into Verdi's development towards mastery, and new information and new details about their partnership at a crucial stage of the composer's career; Verdi discusses his choice of dramatic subject-matter, operatic scenarios, and structures of the acts, relative importance of different characters; he increasingly rejects whole scenes and passages, particularly in *La battaglia di Legnano*, *Luisa Miller* and *Il trovatore*, offering alternatives written by himself, describing in detail the passages for revision, sometimes WRITING THE LINES HIMSELF; he explains his aims and intentions behind the music, which he asks Cammarano to communicate to the singers, and discusses other opera plots, most notably his long-projected opera based on Shakespeare's *King Lear*, including a remarkable encomium and heartfelt "summons to arms" to the librettist.

57 pages, 8vo and 4to (c.22.5 x 17.5cm to c.25.5 x 19.5cm), integral autograph address-leaves and address-panels, postmarked, mainly Paris, Rome, Milan and Busseto, many with typed English translations, 10 November 1844 to 12 December 1851

THIS SERIES REPRESENTS A MONUMENTAL VERDI DISCOVERY: NONE OF THESE LETTERS HAS EVER BEEN SEEN OR DESCRIBED BY MODERN SCHOLARS. Only five of the thirty-six letters are published, based on retained copies in the letter-books at St Agata (the *Copialettere*), two of these are INCOMPLETE, lacking whole and significant paragraphs. The existence of several can be inferred from Cammarano's known replies, but until now all the letters were presumed lost. Mossa's edition of the Verdi-Cammarano correspondence (2001) prints only thirty-two letters of Verdi to his librettist. The discovery of this new collection more than doubles the known correspondence with much new and important material.

IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE A GREATER ADDITION TO VERDI STUDIES IN RECENT YEARS. THESE NEW LETTERS WILL CHANGE OUR KNOWLEDGE OF VERDI'S OPERAS AND CONTAIN SIGNIFICANT NEW BIOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL. The relationship of composer and librettist is of crucial importance in the creation of operatic masterpieces. The correspondence of Mozart to his father illuminates the changes he insisted upon in the librettos of *Idomeneo* and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. Beethoven, Berlioz (see lot 6), Meyerbeer and Bizet also wrote to their librettists demanding and suggesting changes to their operatic texts. The letters of Verdi to Piave (see the letters sold in our New York rooms about the composition of *Ernani*, 11 December 1989, lot 157) and to Boito demonstrate Verdi's exacting demands on his librettist. Verdi was an interventionist, rejecting and rewriting his librettos, sometimes abrasively and impolitely. Now the extent of Verdi's relationship with Cammarano can be seen to its full extent in