To the Friends of the Homes of Giacomo Puccini.

2015 Activity report from the Villa Puccini Museum.

My heartfelt thanks for your continued moral and material support. I and my collaborators offer you our best wishes for a happy 2016.

2015 has seen an increasing good performance both in terms of number of visitors and of demand for personalized services such as private concerts and special tours. The Villa Puccini Museum turns out to be a major attraction in Versilia on website TripAdvisor (web portal that publishes user reviews about hotels, restaurants and tourist attractions), receiving several certificates of excellence.

Moreover, we are proud to welcome, especially during the spring, many students from all over Italy. In fact, thanks to a widespread promotion through the magazine "Tuttscuola", which specializes in school trips, we have been able to attract and retain a large number of schools, increasing not only the Museum's income, but also the neighbouring activities’ ones (hotels, restaurants, cafes, etc.). We can also confirm a satisfactory cooperation with foreign agencies and tour operators that ensure good visitor figures. Among these agencies there are the Hungarian Vivaldi, Zeppelin and TDM, the English Trumpy Saga Tours and the Italian Acampora Travel. This last one manages landings of cruise ships in the port of Livorno and La Spezia, and also local services on behalf of Intercruises (including visits to the Villa Museum).

There has been an increase in the demand for exclusive services such as private and special tours, concerts and events to be held in the study of the Maestro. At the moment, these services have had a restricted catchment area because the available space is limited and aimed mainly for the Museum's general visits. In addition, these services have very high costs.

The Museum has always offered visitors audio guides in 4 languages. The year 2016 opens with an important news: we are waiting for 30 audio guides with touch screen to arrive. They will be provided with a more sophisticated system than those used previously, to better meet the needs of our visitors. Given the significant investment, I decided to make a gift of this new instrument to the Museum.

Realised and planned restorations and renovations:
As already announced in last year's report, 2015 was dedicated to important restorations of the first floor of the Villa Museum, with special attention to the bedroom of the Maestro, which was inaugurated on 4 September 2015 in the presence of local authorities. The restoration of all the other rooms on the first floor is ongoing. The company "Pinna Restauri" from Parma is restoring the original painted decorations in the various rooms. The original furniture will be fully restored by the craftsman Paoletti in three to four months. The recovery of fabrics and upholstery will again be entrusted to the professional upholsterer Massimiliano Tani from Lucca.
The layout of the rooms will be completed with the professional assessment of Prof. Giovanni Godi, a member of the Foundation Simonetta Puccini and a well-known art expert. Unfortunately, it was not possible to begin the restoration of the mosaic floor in the study of the Maestro. Although it requires an urgent intervention, it has not been possible to carry out the restoration during the closing month (November 2015), as we had several tourist visits and had to manage the restoration of the first floor. Therefore, it will be postponed to 2016.

**The Garden:**
I am sorry to announce that the century-old palm located in the garden in front of the Villa Museum has died because of the repeated attacks of the red weevil. Despite the care and the various actions carried out by specialized companies, the company “Il Vallino” from Cecina had to cut it down in December. The absence of the palm will change the exterior design of the Villa, as it was planned by Puccini a hundred years ago. However, new palm trees are already growing.

**Book-Shop:**
We are glad to confirm that this year there has been a good performance of sales of souvenirs and audiovisual items in the bookshop, and we are planning a collaboration for the production of CDs with our main supplier, Piero Puccioni and his company Tosca, from Florence. This initiative could ensure the uniqueness of the product offered in our store, which could be exported abroad, helping to raise awareness not only of the music of Puccini, but also of the place where it was created, the Villa Puccini.

The continuous search for new products is the basis of our success, choosing and commissioning local crafts created especially for our customers, taking advantage of relationships becoming stronger and stronger over the years, being able to differentiate our products from the rest of the market.

**The team**
Patrizia Mavilla, Director
Irene Orlandi, School, Learning and Tourist Officer
Angelica Zucconi, Visitor Assistant
Elena Tacci, Visitor Assistant
Chiara Sabatini, Visitor Assistant

**CULTURAL EVENTS**

**28 April, Torre del Lago, Villa Puccini Museum**
Simonetta Puccini gave an interview in the studio of Giacomo Puccini for RAI5 during the live opera *Turandot* at La Scala, in occasion of the opening of Expo 2015.

**1 May, Milan, Teatro alla Scala**
Simonetta Puccini attended the performance of the *Turandot*, conducted by Riccardo Chailly and directed by Nikolaus Lehnhoff, with the soprano Nina Stemme in the role of Turandot, the tenor Aleksandrs Antonenko as Calaf and the Italian Maria Agresta in the role of Liù.
The highest offices of state and celebrities attended the event.

**12 June, Parma, Teatro Regio**
Simonetta Puccini attended the premiere of *Madama Butterfly* directed by Giulio Ciabatti and conducted by M° Francesco Lanzillotta. The cast included the soprano Yasko Sato in the role of Cio Cio San and the tenor Angelo Villari as Pinkerton.

**22 June, Milan, Palazzo Reale**
Simonetta Puccini attended the inauguration of the Expo Turandot exhibition staged in the Sala degli Arazzi, where the famous customs designed by Umberto Brunelleschi and worn by soprano Maria Jeritza for Act II of the American premiere of Giacomo Puccini on 16 November 1926 was exposed.

12 July, Carrara, Dome
Simonetta Puccini attended the concert “La voce d’ angelo”, organized by the Friends of Opera “Angelo Merculiali” from Carrara. There were performances by the soprano Aprile Millo, Donata D’Annunzio Lombardi and Mary Lou Vetere.

18 July, Pontedera, Fondazione Piaggio
Simonetta Puccini visited the exhibition "La Vespa e la farfalla”, dedicated to the opera Madama Butterfly and opened to the public for the first time in 1904. The exhibition brings together a selection of costumes, sketches and parts of the staging from the archives and the collections of the members of the Piaggio Foundation.

24 July, Torre del Lago, Gran Teatro Giacomo Puccini
Simonetta Puccini attended the premiere of the opera Tosca conducted by Valerio Galli and directed by Giorgio Ferrara. In the role of Floria Tosca the soprano Daniela Dessi, while in the role of Cavaradossi, the tenor Aquiles Machado (substituted in following performances by the young Mirko Materazzi).

25 July, Torre del Lago, Gran Teatro Giacomo Puccini
Simonetta Puccini attended the premiere of the opera Turandot conducted by Maestro Bruno Nicoli and directed by Angelo Bertini. In the role of Princess Turandot the soprano Giovanna Casolla and as Calaf the tenor Rudy Park.

30 July, Torre del Lago, Villa Puccini Museum
Simonetta Puccini was interviewed by journalist Fabrizio Boschi for "Il Giornale" about the current state of the Belvedere of Torre del Lago in front of the Villa Museum, highlighting how this place, so loved by his grandfather, has deteriorated over time. The article, entitled: "Deterioration in Viareggio. Puccini’s Eden is now a dump" can be found on the website www.ilgiornale.it (in Italian).

1 August, Massa, Malaspina Castle
Simonetta Puccini attended the opera gala organized by the club Friends of the opera “Angelo Mercuriali” from Carrara, a charitable event in favour of Villa Puccini. For the occasion the soprano Aprile Millo and Mary Lou Vetere performed, together with some artists of the Operavision Academy (the academy founded by the two artists above).

5 August, Torre del Lago, Chalet Emilio Restaurant
Simonetta Puccini was guest of honour at the evening concert organized by the Association “Ville Borbone e dimore storiche della Versilia”. Arias from famous operas of Giacomo Puccini were performed.

10 August, Torre del Lago, Studio of the Maestro
Villa Puccini hosted a concert in honour of the soprano Aprile Millo, involving Aprile Millo himself, the soprano Mary-Lou Vetere and the tenor Joel Ricci, accompanied on piano by Maestro Valerio Galli and Silvia Gasperini. We are very grateful to Aprile Millo and the "Operavision Academy", as they generously helped the Museum with a donation entitled “The Dawn”. We also would like to thank the Association Friends of the opera "Angel Mercuriali" from Carrara and its president for the friendship shown to our Museum. In memory of this evening, a plaque made of Carrara marble was placed in the courtyard of the Villa Puccini.

13 August, Torre del Lago, Villa Puccini Museum
The singing trio "Il Volo", winner of the 2015 Sanremo Festival, was welcomed to the Museum by Simonetta Puccini and her assistants Patrizia and Irene. The three tenors have paid homage to the Maestro with enthusiasm, before their concert at the Gran Teatro, part of their "Grande Amore Tour".

**15 August, Torre del Lago, Villa Puccini Museum**

Simonetta Puccini welcomed the Korean ambassador Lee Yong-Joon and his wife, accompanied by local authorities. The ambassador assisted with Mrs Puccini to the representation of Tosca at the Gran Teatro.

**27 August, Torre del Lago, Gran Teatro Giacomo Puccini**

Simonetta Puccini attended the inauguration of the multimedia exhibition “il Mondo di Jean Sibelius”, for the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the artist's birth. Mrs Puccini also attended the following concert during which arias and melodies by Sibelius and Puccini were performed. The nephew of Jean Sibelius, Mrs Satu Jalas, was also present at the event.

**28 August, Torre del Lago, Gran Teatro Giacomo Puccini**

Simonetta Puccini attended the Chinese representation of Turandot, directed by Wang Huquan and staged by the National Opera of China in Beijing. This production has achieved widespread success.

**4 September, Torre del Lago, Villa Puccini Museum**

Exactly 115 years after its closure, Giacomo and Elvira’s bedroom was inaugurated and opened to the public thanks to an important and effective restoration. At the presence of local authorities, Simonetta Puccini attended the opening ceremony and the ribbon cutting. In the following two weeks, it has been possible (only in small groups and by appointment) to visit the first floor of the Villa Museum and see the bedroom, with the large brass bed, the toilet and the hand-painted silk wallpaper with floral motifs. One of our members, Peter Apel, has kindly gifted the Museum with the blanket covering the bed of the Maestro. Visitors has been impressed because of the intimate feeling that is still in the room after many years, and the reason is that the entire furniture is original and was created in 1905 under the direction of Giacomo Puccini himself.

**15 November, Torre del Lago, Studio of the Maestro**

A concert was organized by the Friends of the Music Circle "Alfredo Catalani" of Lucca for its Members, organized in collaboration with the Foundation Simonetta Puccini and entitled "Domenica Pucciniana". The pianist Laura Pasqualetti accompanied the soprano Raffaella Angeletti, performing arias from operas by Puccini and Catalani. Participants also attended a guided tour of the Villa.

**18 November, Torre del Lago, Studio of the Maestro**

An exclusive concert for a small group of American tourists was organized by two of our Members, Mrs Carol Faenzi, author of “The Stonecutter’s Aria” and Mrs Alessandra Marchetti, guide in Florence. The soprano Silvia Pantani, accompanied by pianist Silvia Gasperini, has performed the concert. It is always a special experience to listen to the music of the Maestro together with passionate people, in the same place where this music was created.

**23 November, Pisa, Istituto Superiore Sant’Anna**

A Seminar presentation and discussion was organised on the socio-economic research on the Massaciuccoli Lake, made by Dr. Piccioli Bernardo Fioroni, winner of the scholarship offered by the Simonetta Puccini Foundation and the Scuola Superiore Sant’Anna, financed by Banca del Monte di Lucca. The initiative is part of the events and interventions designed to coincide with the 2014 "Giacomo Puccini for Nature and Environment" award.
The discussion was conducted by Piccoli Fioroni, together with Dr. Michele Bianchi and Prof. Stefano Ragni on behalf of the Foundation Simonetta Puccini, and Professors Marco Frey and Enrico Bonari from the Instituto Sant’Anna.

29 November, Torre del Lago, Studio of the Maestro
Celebrations for the 91st year after the death of the composer Giacomo Puccini were organised. The commemorative mass took place in the chapel of the Villa Puccini and was celebrated by Father Giovanni, in the presence of a small number of people and Puccini’s niece Simonetta. In the afternoon, the Puccini Festival Foundation, in collaboration with the Foundation Simonetta Puccini organized the commemoration of the composer Puccini with the laying of a laurel wreath on his statue in front of the Villa Museum.

9 December, Torre del Lago, Basilico Fresco Restaurant
Simonetta Puccini attended the second edition of the award to Citizen of Torre del Lago of the Year, as guest of honour. The event was organised by Giacomo Pezzini.

18 December, Torre del Lago, Villa Puccini Museum
Simonetta Puccini welcomed the famous tenor Jonas Kaufmann, winner of the 2015 Puccini Award, who visited the Villa Museum. The international renowned tenor paid tribute to the resting place of the Maestro and greatly appreciated the atmosphere of house.

2016 PROGRAMME
The Maestro’s study on the ground floor: the floor mosaic will be restored. It is currently protected by various runners and requires urgent action.
On the first floor, restoration of most of the rooms will be completed.

Cultural activities, conferences and meetings:
- Publication of: "Quaderni Pucciniani No. 8"
- Reprint and new edition of the book "Puccini e l’automobile".

The Association would like to thank you all once again as every year you show true affection to the home of Giacomo Puccini, that thanks to you may well continue to exist and operate. Wishing you a happy 2016, I send you my best regards.

Some comments from visitors, left on the signatures’ book in 2015

"For one of the greatest Italian men! Honour and glory for ever"

"My name is Matteo. I like music and this museum is among the best I've ever seen"
(Matteo, 8 years old)

"A wonderful unexpected surprise on our tour of Italy"

“The highlight of my visit to Tuscany”

“The infinite magic of his notes continues in heaven!”

"Dear Giacomo Puccini, you've been very good at writing all these works, everybody admires you. I'm sorry that you died so young, you will always remain in history”
(Lavinia, 10 years old)
"Thank you Maestro ... your music is a healing balm to the heart of every living thing"

"In the presence of the great Meastro, we are proud to be Italian"

"It's not a museum Museum, is a museum with a soul!"

**Becoming Member of the Museum helps to maintain and restore the Villa Puccini Museum**

**THE ASSOCIATION'S BANK DETAILS**

**Monte dei Paschi di Siena, Branch of Torre del Lago**

**IBAN IT 08 H 01030 24804 000001063900**

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