



The "Kolossal" of the Belle Epoque

Will Excelsior owes its name to the ballet of the same name that bears the signature, as a librettist and choreographer, of Luigi Manzotti (Milan, 1835-1905), the first owner of the building. Staged on January 11, 1881 at the La Scala Theatre Milan, with extraordinary success, the Excelsior (from Latin, "higher") was repeated over the next thirty years more than three hundred times in Italy, Europe and the Americas.

The birth of the Excelsior is placed in that climate of trust in progress and peace that characterised the Belle Époque period. Milan is taking a central role in trade and industry, Italy, twenty years after its unity, is building its national identity, the Western world believes in the redemption of man and the strength of civilisation thanks to the discoveries of science and the new means of communication that unite peoples.

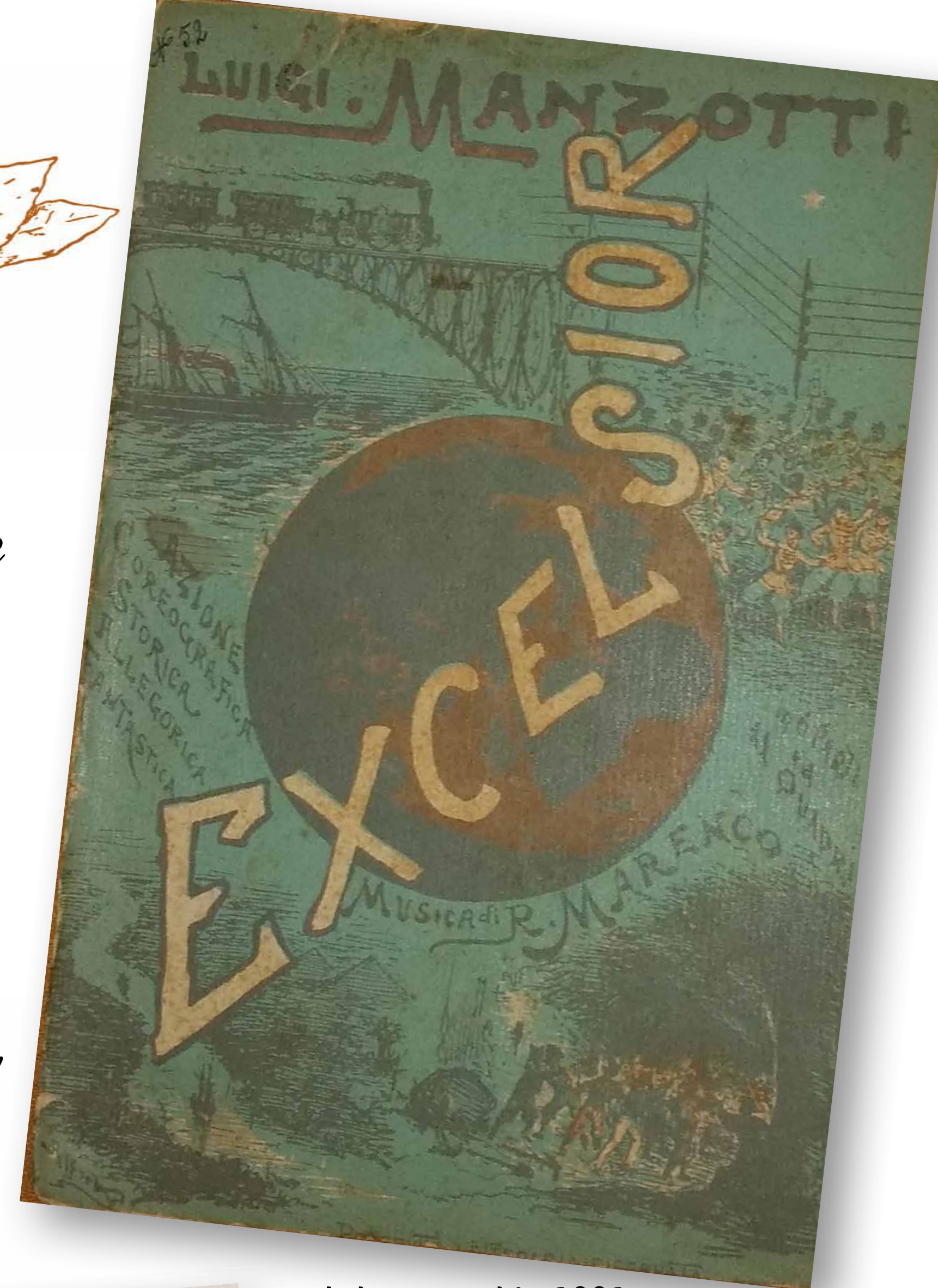
Also an interpreter of the patriotic feelings of an Italy that aspires to stand out in the world, Manzotti creates a show composed of eleven "pictures" in which fantastic and symbolic figures appear on stage, such as Civilization and Light, perennial rivals, and historians, such as Denis Papin and Alessandro Volta, inventors one of the star boat and the other the battery.

Starting from the bleak period of the Spanish Inquisition, the inventions of Papin and Volta are illustrated with the innovations derived from them (steamboat, telegraph, electric light), which ideally connect Europe and America. Then, through the celebration of the opening of the Suez Canal (1869) and the Cenisio railway tunnel (1871), harmony between peoples and human genius are exalted. Light, Civilization and Concord triumph.

The Excelsior, with its stunning theatrical effects, grandiose sets and the participation of more than five hundred artists, is believed to be the precursor to musical comedy.

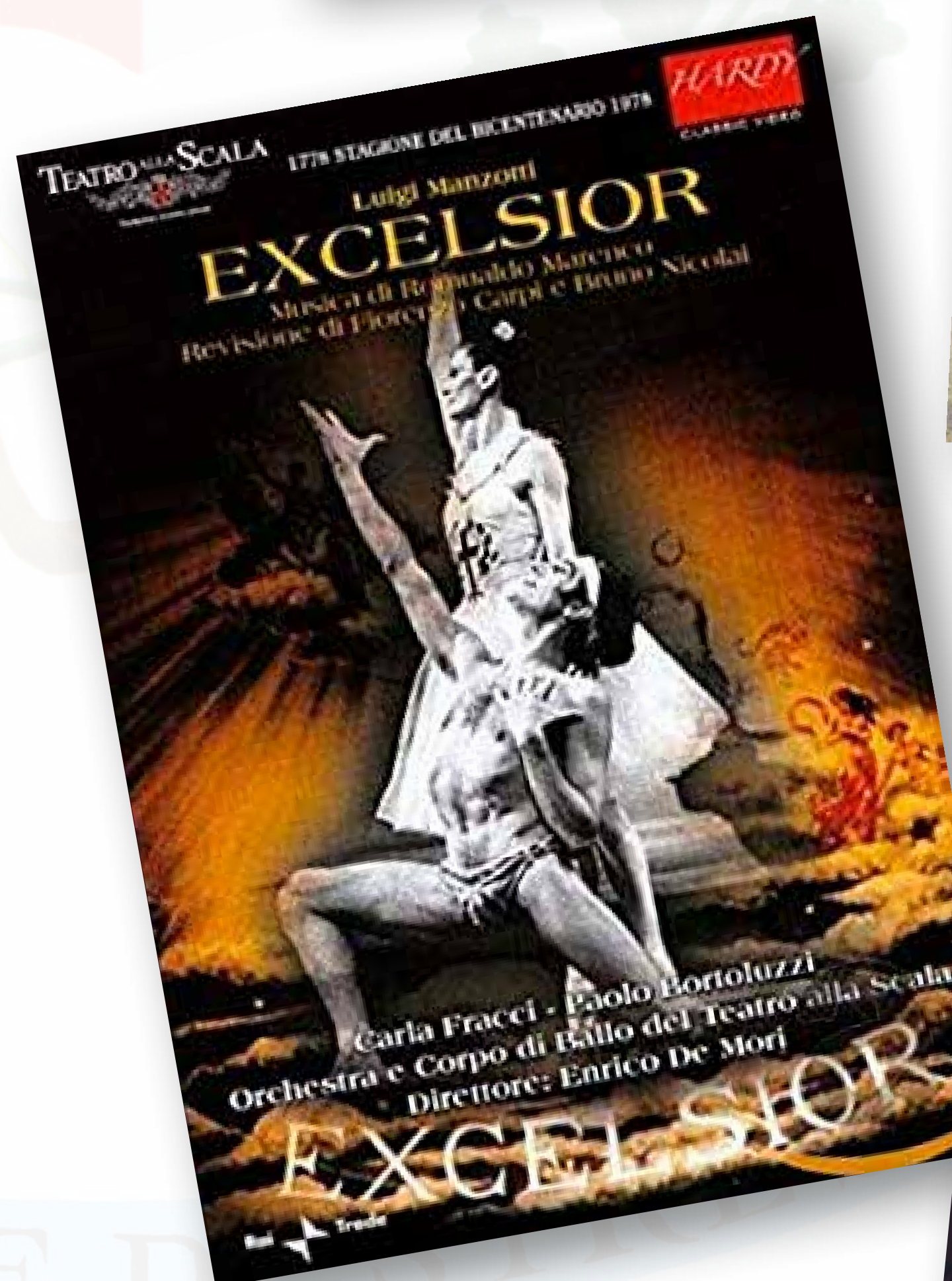
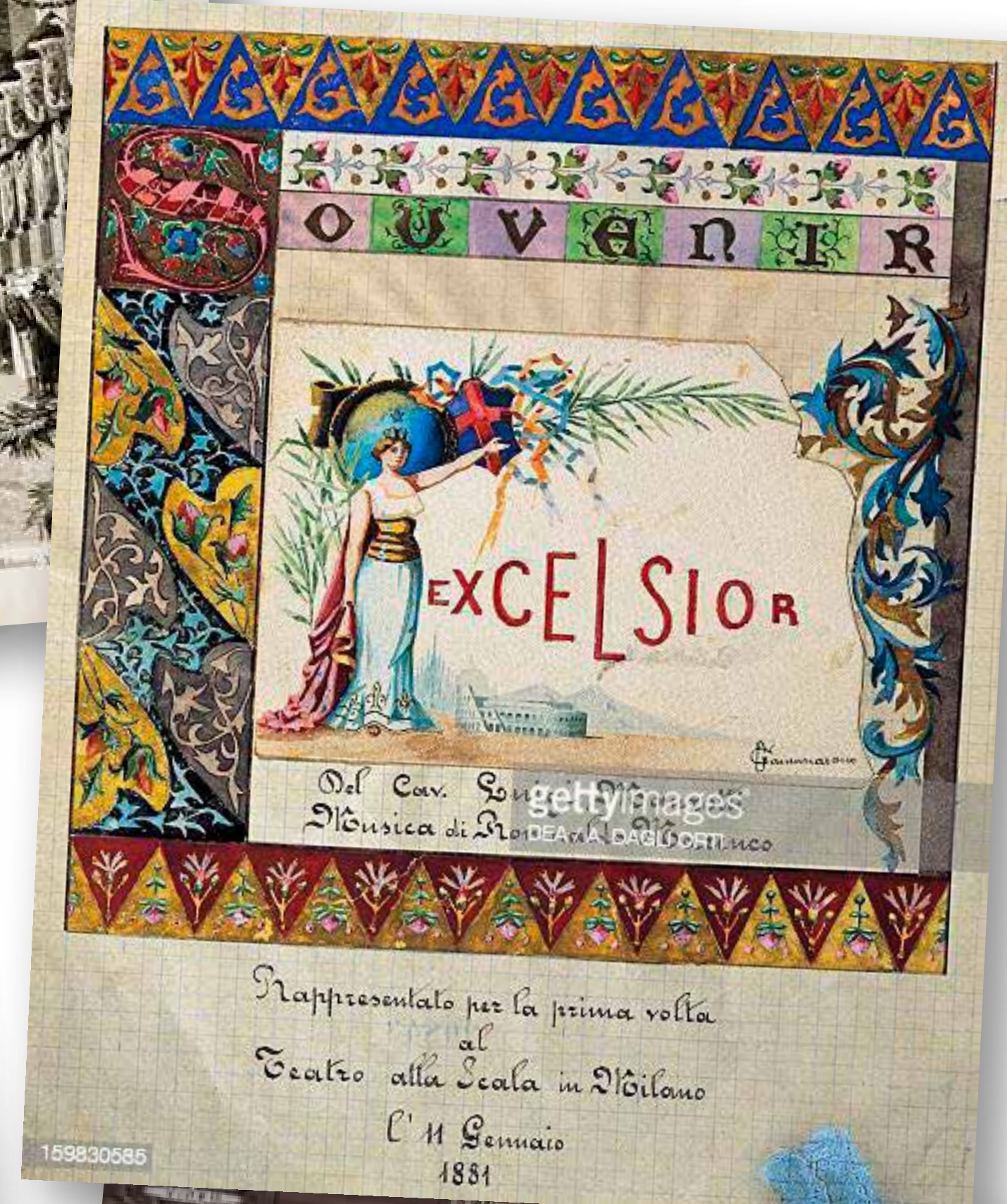
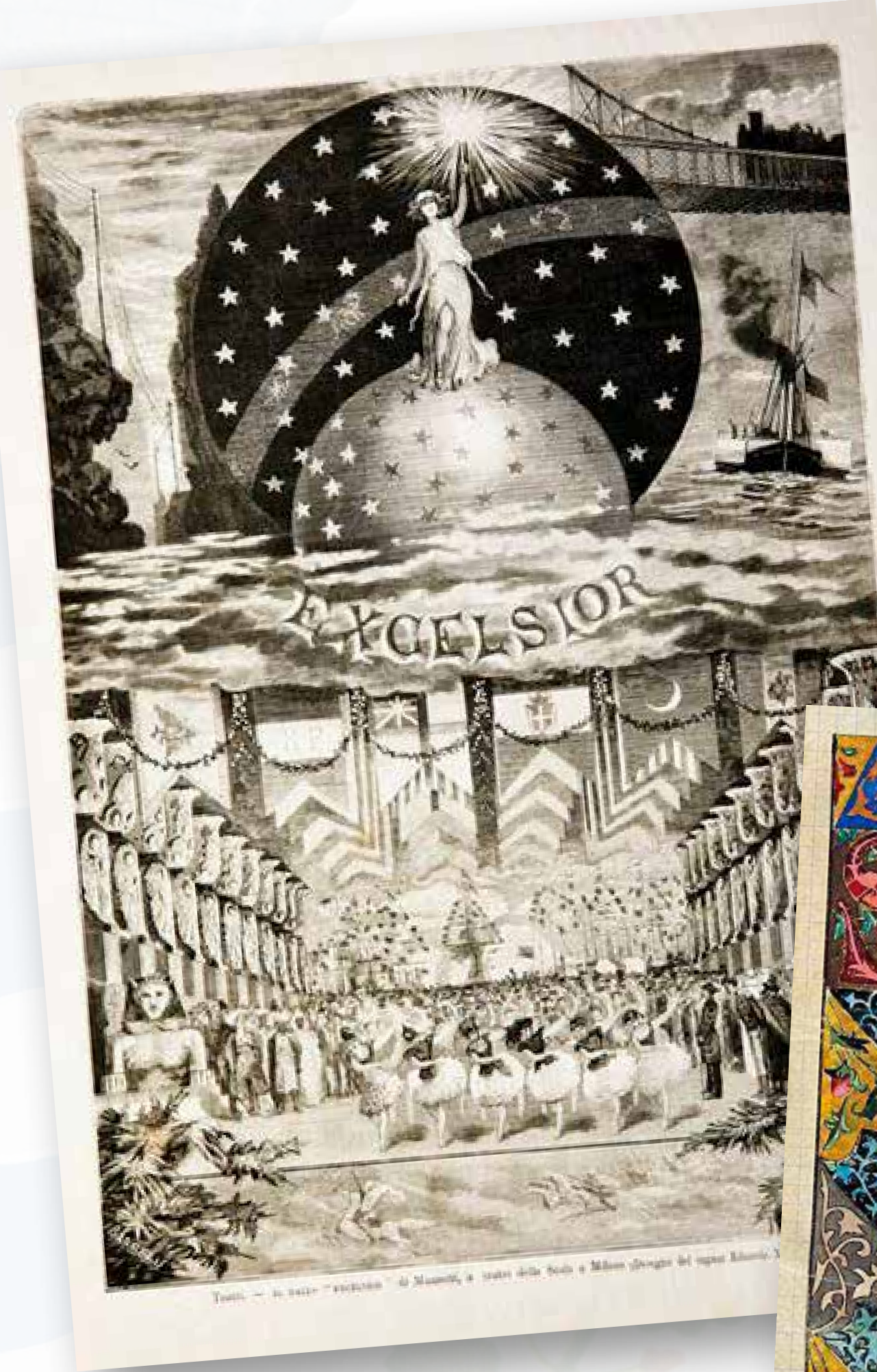
In 1909 the grand ball was staged with the costumes designed by Luigi Sapelli (1865-1936), in which the suggestion of Liberty was grasped, while in 1913 the film version was made by Luca Comerio.

On the covers of the period booklets we recognise the Suez Canal, the Cenisio tunnel, the Volta's battery and the modern media.

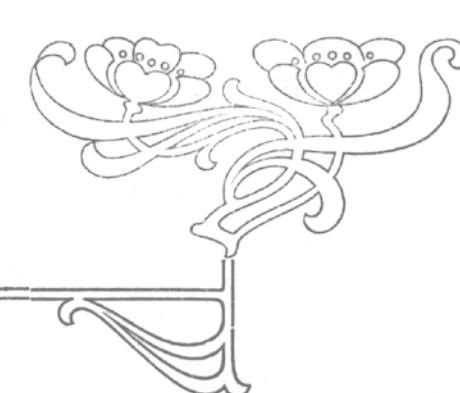
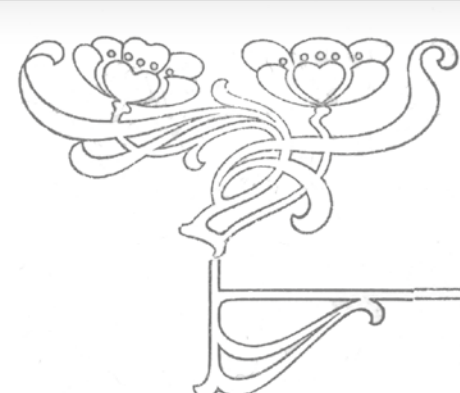


It happened in 1881...

Confidence in progress and technological development animates two important events that are inaugurated a few months after the debut of the Excelsior: in Milan the Italian National Exhibition, the first major industrial exhibition, in Paris the first Exposition internationale d'Électricité.



Dopo un periodo di oblio, l'Excelsior torna in teatro nel 1967 ed è riproposto fino ai nostri giorni con grandi interpreti, come Carla Fracci e Roberto Bolle.



English

