

**PICK OF THE WEEK** Chinese reverse-painted glass picture shows both homely harmony and business bustle, page 10

# ANTIQUES TRADE gazette

THE ART MARKET WEEKLY

**KEEN AS MUSTARD**  
Silver pots among the Chiswick stars  
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## Sotheby's tears up online-only pricing model

Auction house boss has eye on boosting consignments and a wider audience

by Roland Arkell

Sotheby's has upped the ante in the digital auction space by scrapping buyer's premium for online-only sales.

The headline move to kick-start what remains an embryonic digital sale programme accompanied an announcement of subtle changes in buyer's premium thresholds that make purchasing at catalogued sales more expensive.

Company president Tad Smith said the online marketplace "demands a different approach to pricing". He described it as "a related, yet distinct business opportunity for Sotheby's beyond our live auctions - one with a different competitive landscape and reduced traditional expenses".

Sotheby's held just 16 online-only sales last year but expects to double the number in 2017, with forthcoming auctions in contemporary art, film posters

and Old Masters accompanying typical online fare such as watches and handbags. The average price of a lot sold in a Sotheby's online-only sale has risen to nearly \$10,000 and the firm describes them as "our best tool for attracting first-time buyers".

### Bigger strides

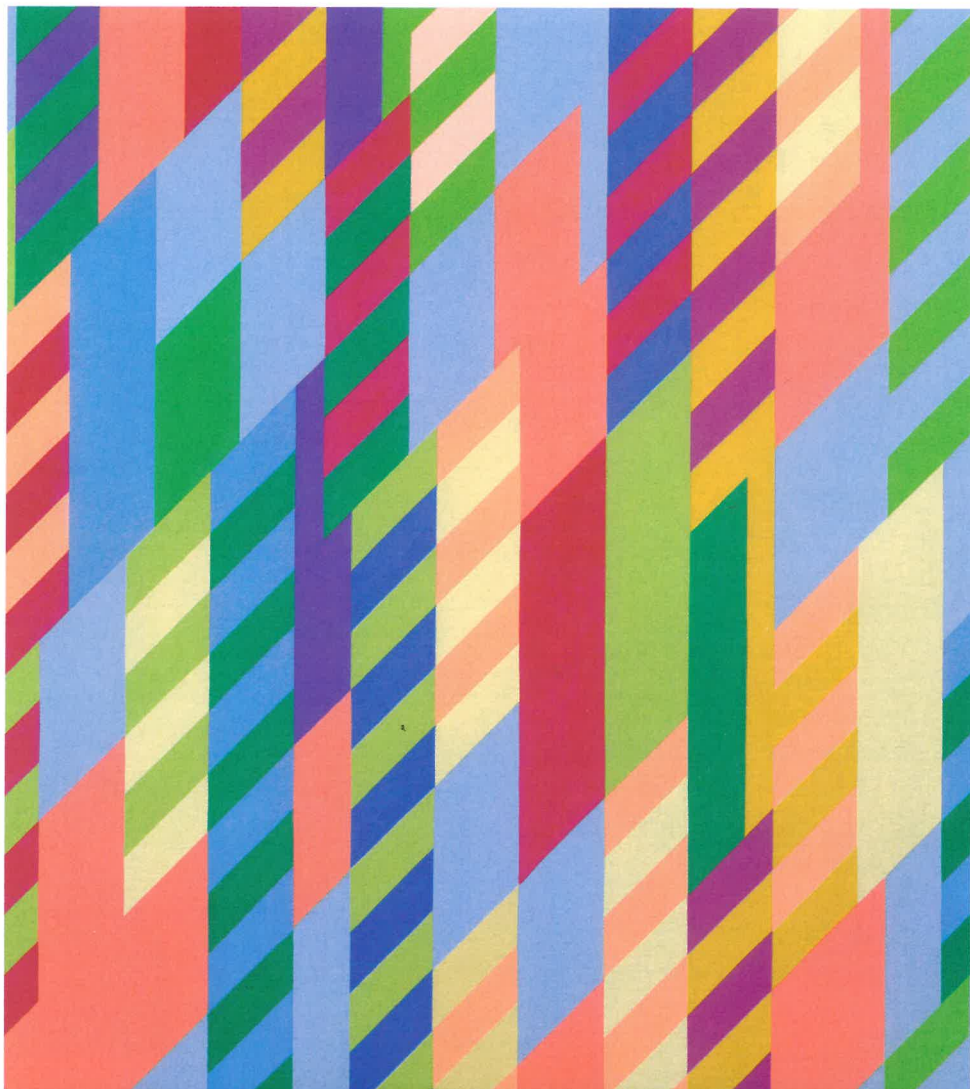
Sotheby's main rival, Christie's, has made bigger strides in hosting online-only sales. With the closure of the South Kensington rooms, it will offer more material via this channel charging its standard rates of buyer's premium.

Christie's recently issued statistics relating to its online-only operation stating the 35 sales in the first half of the year had been responsible for attracting 29% of new buyers.

Christie's and Phillips both declined to comment on Sotheby's move to drop the charges.

The change to zero premium

*Continued on page 4*



## 20/21 shapes up nicely

Modern British art fair makes a welcome return at new venue after enforced year off - page 38

**Auction Calendar** the original and most authoritative listing of UK sales - page 48-56

On Sunday it's London's Largest Sunday Fair at...



**Sun 3 September**

8.30am - 9.30am £12  
9.30am - 4.30pm £6

Alexandra Palace Way LONDON N22 7AY

Followed by the largest Fair in the South at...



**Tue 5 & Wed 6 Sept**

Tuesday 9am - 5pm £20 (Tuesday ticket allows entry on Wednesday) Wednesday 8am - 4pm £5

South of England Showground, Ardingly WEST SUSSEX RH17 6TL

iacf 01636 702326 • enquiries@iacf.co.uk • www.iacf.co.uk

1 hour South of London, 12 miles from Gatwick  
30 mins North of Brighton, 90 mins from Dover





# Musical marvels impress in Paris

Wagner annotated copy leads highlights from the third part of huge Pierre Bergé library

by Ian McKay

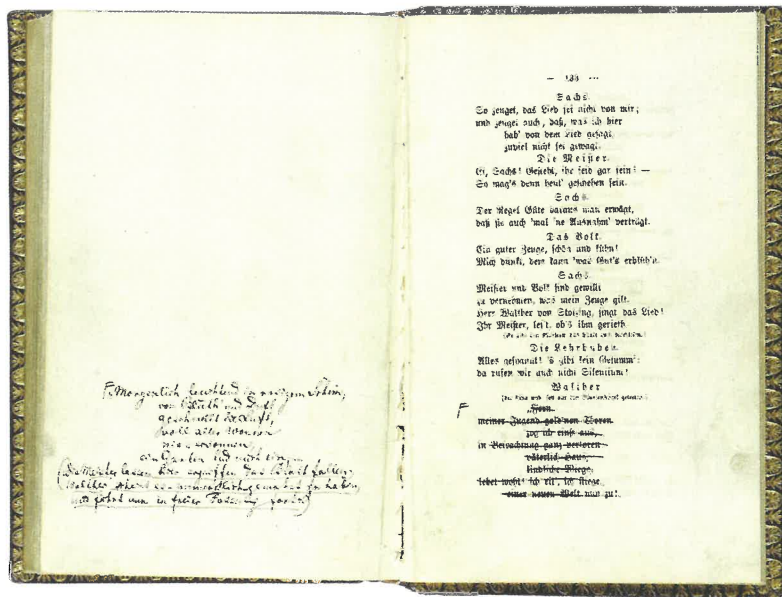
Music, in printed editions rather than autograph scores, played a significant part in raising a premium-inclusive €1.65m (£1.45m) for the third portion of the Pierre Bergé library to come to auction.

In a June 28 sale, held as before in conjunction with Sotheby's but conducted in Paris at the collector's own auction house, 168 (of 260) lots at Pierre Bergé (24/20.5/17% buyer's premium) found buyers.

This roughly two-thirds proportion of sold lots extended across both the music and poetry sections of the sale.

Musical highlights are the focus here and included the following – listed alphabetically by composer and with prices including buyer's premiums and taxes. Where appropriate, or possible, I have also noted the price raised by the lot on its previous auction appearance.

- An 1814-25 first issue of the full score of Beethoven's *Symphony No.9* (Op.25), the 'Choral' symphony: €20,051 (£17,645).
- An 1840 first edition of Bellini's opera *Il Pirata*, a score inscribed by Rossini to Chopin in memory of their mutual friend, the composer: €37,596 (£33,085). It was sold for £8200 at Bonhams in 2009.
- Chopin's *Scherzo pour Piano* of 1837, bearing a printed dedication to one student, the Countess Adèle de Furstenstein, but in this copy briefly inscribed by Chopin to another exceptionally gifted young student, Mlle J Porte: €25,064 (£22,055).
- A 1650 first edition of the first music encyclopedia, Athanasius Kircher's



**Above left:** pages from Richard Wagner's annotated copy of the libretto for *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, sold for **€124,690 (£109,725)** by Pierre Bergé.

**Above right:** bearing the arms of Pope Innocent X, the binding of the record-breaking copy of Kircher's *Musurgia Universalis*, sold for **€62,660 (£55,140)**.



**It is interleaved with blank pages on which Wagner has written out alternatives as he worked on the music for his opera**

*Musurgia Universalis*. A record-breaking large paper copy in a magnificent Roman binding of red morocco gilt with decoration that includes the arms of Pope Innocent X, Kircher's patron: €62,660 (£55,140).

- Three collections of songs and madrigals by Orlando de Lassus from the years 1596-1619, together in a well-preserved vellum gilt album made for Louis XIII: €26,317 (£23,160).
- *Six Sonates pour le Clavecin...* composed by the eight-year-old Mozart during his family's 1764-65 London stay. An English first of that latter year and accompanied by a number of related items: €22,558 (£19,850).
- An 1860 first of the second version of *Tannhauser*, bearing an inscription from Wagner to his friend and fellow composer, Charles Gounod: €31,330 (£27,570).
- An 1862 first edition of the libretto



for *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, the printed text showing numerous annotations and corrections and interleaved with blank pages on which Wagner has written out alternatives as he worked on the music for his opera: €124,690 (£109,725)

This sold for £65,000 at Sotheby's in 2013.

- A volume containing the alto parts of motets and masses by Adrian Willaert and others, 1545 (and later?), in a Nuremberg binding of blind-rolled calf featuring small portraits of biblical figures: €25,064 (£22,055). It sold for \$8000 at Christie's New York in 2013, as part of the Vershbow library. ■

*The Button Gwinnett signature sold for \$260,000 (£204,725) and illustrated in ATG No 2298 was offered by Christie's New York and not, as I mistakenly noted, by Sotheby's.*

## Austen colourful life

'Fanny was obliged to introduce him to Mr Crawford', an ink and watercolour version (right) of an illustration made by Hugh Thomson for an 1897 Macmillan edition of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*.

In that book, Thomson's drawings are reproduced quite small and as line drawings only, but he later added colour to the originals before selling them.

This one made **£2200** in a **Forum Auctions (25/20/12% buyer's premium)** sale held on July 10, where a second drawing, made for *Northanger Abbey*, reached £2000.

See also the 'Bindings' selection on the opposite page for another work illustrated by Thomson.



## Catalogue clues to library riches

A blaze which tore through Norwich Central Library one August morning in 1994 destroyed thousands of historic documents and more than 100,000 books.

It also caused the loss of records of what the library had once contained.

However, one rare guide to its early holdings is to be found in *A New Catalogue of Books in the Publick Library of the City of Norwich*. Published locally in 1732, Benjamin Mackerell's 54pp catalogue also contains an account of 'Mr John

Fitzpatrick's Roman and other Coins'.

The only two copies listed in auction records were both sold before that disastrous fire – one making £900 at Bloomsbury Auctions in 1992 – but in a July 12 sale held by **Cheffins (22.5% buyer's premium)** another emerged.

It was lotted with a 1712 edition of Sir Thomas Browne's *Posthumous Works*, but it was surely that catalogue in its later vellum binding that really pushed bidding way past estimate to **£1200**.