

Giuseppe Verdi

BORN 1813, Le Roncole, Italy. **DIED** 1901, Milan, Italy.



HIGHLIGHTS

1. Giuseppe Verdi was born October 10, 1813, at Le Roncole, a small Italian village.
2. “The artist,” he said, “must yield himself to his own inspiration ... I should compose with utter confidence a subject that sets my musical blood going, even though it were condemned by all others as anti-musical.”
3. Verdi cared little about what critics and other composers thought of his work. His loyalties — politically and musically — were always to the people.
4. At age 27, he lost his two children and his wife to illness in the space of a few months. He vowed never to compose again. Only through hard-nosed persuasion was the Manager of La Scala able to bring him around.
5. After Verdi wrote “the big three,” *Rigoletto*, *Il trovatore*, and *La traviata*, he wrote for opera houses around the world.

BACKGROUND & TIMES

1. The year 1813 is the year that the two greatest opera composers, Wagner and Verdi were born.

MAJOR WORKS

OPERAS

Aida; *Ernani*; *Falstaff*; *La forza del destino*; *Macbeth*; *Othello*; *Rigoletto*; *La traviata*; *Il trovatore*; *Un ballo in maschera*; *La forza del destino*; *Un giorno di regno*; *Luisa Miller*; *Nabucco*; *Oberto*.

CHAMBER MUSIC

String Quartet in E Minor

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

La forza del destino; *La traviata*; *Il trovatore*; *Nabucco*; *Aida*; *Vesperi Siciliani*; *Giovanna d' Arco*.

SACRED MUSIC

Requiem Mass.

2. Because Verdi was a political hero, the censors of Italy were constantly going through his works, looking for subversive undertone, and often demanding changes in the operas. The censoring distracted Verdi.
 3. Many of Verdi's works subtly denounced the Austrian occupation of certain parts of Italy. He became the symbol of national unity and patriotism for for Italians.
 4. When Verdi died, the Italian senate held a special session, schools were closed, and a day of national mourning was proclaimed throughout Italy, with more than 250,000 people lining the streets as the body was carried to the gravesite.
3. People were astounded with *Falstaff*'s vitality and freshness which came from the 80 year-old Verdi.
 4. *Rigoletto*, *Il trovatore*, and *La traviata*, are noted for the way Verdi directed his music to the service of the drama, something that had not been attempted in Italy since Monteverdi pioneered the art form 250 years before.

UNIQUE INFLUENCE

1. Verdi's *Falstaff* is a comic masterpiece that stands in greatness with Rossini's *The Barber Of Seville* and Mozart's *Figaro*.
2. From the ages of 37 to 40 he wrote a trio of the most beloved works in opera: *Rigoletto*, *Il trovatore*, and *La traviata*.
3. The aria “Addio del passato” from *La traviata* is one of the most emotional arias in the history of opera.
4. Verdi's *Aida* is the most frequently performed opera at New York's Metropolitan opera house. *La traviata* and *Rigoletto* are also in the top 10 of their repertoire.