

Giuseppe Verdi

“The artist must yield himself to his own inspiration...”

Giuseppe Verdi was a composer born in 1813 in the province of Parma, Italy. He is regarded as the greatest Italian opera composer of the 19th century and is responsible for some of the most famous operas ever made.

Verdi showed musical promise and ability at a young age; his parents recognised this and bought him a spinet (a small harpsichord) to practice on and he created numerous compositions in his early years. At age 19, he began studying under the guidance of Vincenzo Lavigna, a famous composer from Milan. In 1833, Verdi was hired as a conductor at the Philharmonic Society in Busseto and made a living as an organist.

In 1838, at age 25, Verdi relocated to Milan, where he completed his first opera, *Oberto, Conte di San Bonifacio* which was well received by audiences and critics. A few years later, in 1842 and 1843, Verdi composed *Nabucco* and *I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata* which were extremely successful and established his reputation as one of the greatest opera composers of the time.

Giuseppe Verdi wrote operas in many genres and was involved in every stage of their creation. During his lifetime, he composed over 25 operas, some of which were based on plays such as *Macbeth* (1847) and *Otello* (1887) by Shakespeare, and *Rigoletto* (1851), a work based on a play by Victor Hugo. These works are among some of the most frequently performed operas today and continue to delight audiences around the world.



DID YOU KNOW?

In 1817, Verdi was commissioned to write the popular opera, *Aida*, to commemorate the opening of the Khedivial Opera House in Cairo, Egypt.

FUN FACT

In 1896, Verdi founded *Casa di Riposo per Musicisti*, a home for retired opera singers and musicians in Milan that still stands today.

MUSICAL TERM

Opera: A form of drama that tells a story set to music and consists of vocal pieces with instrumental accompaniment.

