



The Life and Times of Richard Wagner

- 1813 ♦ Richard Wagner is born on May 22 in Leipzig.
- ♦ Giuseppe Verdi is born.
- ♦ The Americans capture York (Toronto).
- ♦ McGill University is founded.
- ♦ The British take Fort Niagara and burn down Buffalo.
- 1834 ♦ Wagner writes his very first opera *Die Feen* (*The Fairies*) based on the legend of Orpheus. He is appointed choirmaster at Würzburg.
- 1839 ♦ Wagner escapes to London to evade his creditors. The stormy crossing from Riga is later an inspiration for *The Flying Dutchman*. He moves to Paris.
- ♦ The bicycle is invented in Scotland.
- 1840 ♦ Wagner completes *Rienzi*, which will become his first success a few years later.
- ♦ Upper and Lower Canada are united by an act of parliament.
- ♦ Construction begins on the Houses of Parliament in London, U.K.
- 1842 ♦ *Rienzi* is a great success in Dresden.
- ♦ The Canada/United States border is defined in the Webster-Ashburton Treaty.
- ♦ Ether is first used as a surgical anaesthesia.
- 1843 ♦ Wagner conducts the premiere of *The Flying Dutchman* in Dresden on January 2.
- ♦ Mount Allison University is founded in Sackville, New Brunswick.
- ♦ The world's first commercial Christmas cards are printed by Sir Henry Cole in London and Charles Dickens' classic *A Christmas Carol* is first published.
- 1845 ♦ Wagner finishes his opera *Tannhäuser*.
- ♦ The electric light bulb is invented in Germany.
- 1848 ♦ Wagner's opera *Lohengrin* is published and the first libretto of *The Ring of the Nibelung* is finished.
- ♦ In March, the Five Days of fighting in Milan drive out the occupying Austrian forces. Revolutions sweep across Europe.
- ♦ The California gold rush begins.
- ♦ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels publish the Communist Manifesto.
- 1849 ♦ Wagner takes an active part in the revolutionary uprisings in Dresden. With a warrant issued by the police against him, Wagner flees to Zurich, and is in exile until 1860. Wagner writes *Art and Revolution* and *The Artwork of the Future*.
- ♦ King's College becomes the University of Toronto.

- 1854 ♦ Wagner's *Das Rheingold* is completed September 26.
- ♦ The American Republican Party is founded in Ripon, Wisconsin.
- ♦ The French fashion label Louis Vuitton is founded.
- 1860 ♦ Wagner is granted a complete amnesty so he can safely return from exile. He moves to a suburb in Vienna, and begins an affair with Cosima von Bülow, illegitimate daughter of Franz Liszt. She will later become his second wife.
- ♦ Victor Hugo writes *Les Misérables*.
- ♦ Claude Debussy is born.
- ♦ The cornerstone of the Canadian House of Commons is laid on September 1.
- 1864 ♦ King Ludwig II of Bavaria is crowned at the age of 18. He is a great admirer of Wagner, and offers to pay off all his creditors and to support him in future. Wagner agrees and moves to Munich.
- ♦ German psychiatrist and neuropathologist and the first person to identify a publish case of "presenile dementia" (later known as Alzheimer's disease), Aloysius Alzheimer is born.
- 1867 ♦ Wagner completes *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* on October 24.
- ♦ *Das Kapital*, Vol. I by Karl Marx is published in Hamburg.
- ♦ On July 1, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario unite as the Dominion of Canada, with Ottawa as the capital.
- 1871 ♦ *Siegfried* is completed on February 5. Wagner determines to build an opera house for his *Ring Cycle* in Bayreuth.
- ♦ Rome becomes the capital of a united Italy.
- ♦ The Franco-Prussian war begins.
- ♦ The commune in Paris (subject of *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo) rules for two months.
- 1874 ♦ *Götterdämmerung* is finished on November 21, and after 26 years, Wagner's *Ring Cycle* is complete.
- ♦ Monet shows *Impressions: Sunrise* at an exhibition, which gives the Impressionistic art movement its name.
- ♦ Author Lucy Maud Montgomery, known best for *Anne of Green Gables*, dies of congestive heart failure in Toronto.
- 1876 ♦ The first Bayreuth festival opens in August. Three complete *Ring Cycles* are performed. The festival ends with a deficit.
- ♦ Alexander Graham Bell invents the telephone.
- 1882 ♦ *Parsifal* premieres at the second Bayreuth festival.
- ♦ The first electric power plant in the U.S. is inaugurated.
- ♦ Igor Stravinsky is born.
- 1883 ♦ Richard Wagner dies of a heart attack in Venice on February 13. He is buried in the garden on the family property in Bayreuth.
- ♦ Karl Marx dies.
- ♦ Benito Mussolini is born.