



# The Life and Times of Giuseppe Verdi

Compiled by Zoë Ludski

- |      |   |      |  |   |
|------|---|------|--|---|
| 1813 | ◆ Verdi is born on October 10 in Parma, Italy.  | 1842 | ◆ Verdi's third opera <i>Nabucco</i> opens in triumph. The chorus "Va pensiero" from this opera becomes the hymn of Italian patriots and freedom fighters. |   |
|      | ◆ Americans capture York (Toronto) during the War of 1812.  |      | ◆ The Canadian/U.S. border is defined in the Webster-Ashburton Treaty.   |   |
|      | ◆ McGill University is founded.   |      | ◆ Ether is used for the first time as a surgical anaesthesia.  |   |
| 1836 | ◆ Verdi marries Margherita Baressi and has two children in the next two years.  | 1849 | ◆ William Bond obtains the first photograph of the Moon through a telescope.   |   |
|      | ◆ Dickens writes <i>Pickwick Papers</i> .   |      | 1851   | ◆ <i>Rigoletto</i> premieres at La Scala, Milan. Verdi and Giuseppina Streponi, a gifted soprano, move into Sant'Agata together, much to the disapproval of the locals. |
|      | ◆ The first Canadian railroad opens, between LaPrairie and St. Johns, Quebec.   |      | ◆ Sojourner Truth addresses 1st Black Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio.  |   |
|      | ◆ Charles Darwin returns to England aboard the HMS Beagle after a five-year expedition collecting data that he later uses as the basis for his Theory of Evolution. | 1854 | ◆ A year and half after its first, disastrous, outing, <i>La Traviata</i> triumphs in Venice.  |   |
|      | ◆ Hans Christian Andersen writes <i>The Little Mermaid</i> , on which Dvorák's opera <i>Rusalka</i> is later based.   |      | ◆ The first electric light bulb is invented in Germany.  |   |
| 1839 | ◆ Verdi's opera <i>Oberto, Conte di San Bonifacio</i> premieres at La Scala. He begins a life-long association with the publisher Ricordi.                          | 1858 | ◆ Verdi and Giuseppina Streponi are married in Savoy, France.  |   |
|      | ◆ Verdi's two children die suddenly from illness.   |      | ◆ Giacomo Puccini is born in Lucca, Italy.   |   |
|      | ◆ The bicycle is invented in Scotland.  | 1859 | ◆ <i>Un Ballo in Maschera</i> premieres in Napoli and is judged Verdi's biggest success since <i>Il Trovatore</i>  |   |
| 1840 | ◆ Verdi's wife Margherita dies suddenly of encephalitis and Verdi's second opera <i>Un giorno di regno</i> is considered a failure at La Scala.                     |      | ◆ Blondin crosses Niagara Falls on a tightrope.  |   |
|      | ◆ Upper and Lower Canada are united by an act of parliament.  |      | ◆ Charles Darwin publishes "On the Origin of Species".   |   |
|      | ◆ The first recorded bowling match takes place in the U.S. in Knickerbocker Alleys, New York City.  |      |  |   |

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1867</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Verdi's <i>Don Carlos</i> premieres in Paris.</li> <li>◆ The Dominion of Canada is established by the British North America Act (The Canadian constitution).</li> <li>◆ Black Americans vote for the first time in the South.</li> </ul> <p>1871</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The premiere of <i>Aida</i> in Cairo is delayed because of the Franco-Prussian war. It finally opens on December 24.</li> <li>◆ Rome becomes the capital of Italy.</li> </ul> <p>1874</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <i>Messa da Requiem</i> first performed in Milan. Verdi is nominated to the Italian Senate.</li> <li>◆ <i>Boris Godunov</i>, Modest Mussorgsky's only opera, premieres in St. Petersburg to "hostile" reviews.</li> </ul> <p>1883</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Richard Wagner dies in Venice.</li> <li>◆ The Brooklyn Bridge opens after 13 years of construction in New York City.</li> </ul> <p>1887</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <i>Otello</i> premieres at La Scala; Verdi is made an honorary citizen of Milan three days later.</li> <li>◆ First transcontinental train arrives in Vancouver, BC.</li> <li>◆ Sherlock Holmes appears in print for the first time.</li> </ul> <p>1889</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Verdi decides to compose <i>Falstaff</i> and buys a site in Milan for a musicians' retirement home (Casa di Riposo).</li> <li>◆ The Eiffel tower is built for the Paris World Exhibition.</li> <li>◆ Adolf Hitler is born in Austria.</li> </ul> | <p>1893</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <i>Falstaff</i> premieres at La Scala. Verdi is made an honorary citizen of Rome.</li> <li>◆ Art Nouveau emerges as an art style in Europe.</li> </ul> <p>1896</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Giuseppina, Verdi's second wife, dies.</li> <li>◆ Puccini's opera <i>La Bohème</i> premieres in Turin, Italy.</li> <li>◆ The first modern Olympics are held in Athens.</li> <li>◆ The Klondike gold rush begins in Bonanza Creek, Canada.</li> <li>◆ A. H. Becquerel discovers radioactivity.</li> </ul> <p>1898</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ China leases Hong Kong's new territories to Britain for 99 years.</li> <li>◆ Yukon Territory of Canada organized, Dawson chosen as capital.</li> <li>◆ Verdi moves into a hotel in Milan to supervise the building of the Casa di Riposo.</li> </ul> <p>1901</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Verdi suffers a serious stroke on January 21 and dies on January 27<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>◆ Guglielmo Marconi sends the first transatlantic wireless message from England to Newfoundland.</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

*Zoë Ludski is education associate in the COC's education and outreach department.*