



Giuseppe Verdi, one of Italy's most-popular composers, was born on the 10th of October, 1813, in the Italian village of Roncole. Located near Busseto, the small village is situated in what was then-known as the Duchy of Parma (in Northern Italy).

Verdi's family was poor, consisting mostly of innkeepers and farmers. The child's first teacher was the local priest of Roncole.

At an early age, Verdi's talent for music became clear as he studied with Ferdinando Provesi. The Cathedral of Busseto's master of music, and the director of its school of music, Provesi helped the young Verdi to quickly develop his skills. Soon Verdi was directing the local philharmonic society.

By 1831, Antonio Barezzi was helping Verdi financially. At about this time, Verdi tried to become a student at the Conservatory in Milan. Although Verdi would one day become the most-famous composer of his generation, he was rejected as a student by the Milan Conservatory.

Undaunted, the young Verdi forged ahead on his own with the help of musicians like Vincenzo Lavigna (who taught Verdi counterpoint). When he began to attend operatic performances, Verdi developed a lifelong love of opera.

By 1836, at the age of 23, Verdi became maestro of music for the town of Busseto. He married Margherita Barezzi and began to work on his first opera. Three years later, he moved to Milan.

Now both a husband and a father, Verdi was happy with his life. By 1840, however, tragedy overwhelmed his personal and professional world. Not only did he lose his wife, his two small children also died. Then an opera, which he staged in September, was a total flop.

Once again, undeterred by hardship, Verdi moved forward with his life and his work. With the wild success of his opera *Nabucco* (first performed on March 9, 1842), he became famous.

Today that work remains popular, particularly "[Va, Pensiero](#)" (which the Italian singer Zucchero turned into a popular song). Before his death in 2007, Luciano Pavarotti sang the [modern version of "Va, Pensiero"](#) with Zucchero, to the great delight of music lovers throughout the world.

Although mostly known for his operas, Verdi also composed a *Requiem* (mass for the dead) which was first performed in 1874. That work helped to establish his reputation as a well-rounded, highly respected composer.

Lynne Dawson, a British singer with an incredible voice, [sang Libera me](#), from Verdi's *Requiem*, at Princess Diana's funeral. And "[Dies Irae](#)" ("Day of Wrath"), from the *Requiem*, is a work of musical art so filled with emotional moments that it makes for a hauntingly beautiful chant (for the living as well as the dead).

Verdi suffered a massive stroke and died on the 27th of January, 1901. At the end of his life, he was still recognized as one of the 19th-century's [most-popular composers](#). He was honored with worldwide celebrations on the 200th-anniversary of his birth (in 2013).

This image depicts Verdi as he appeared in 1842, about the time he wrote [Attila](#).

Click on the image for a better view.

Credits:

This image of Giuseppe Verdi is by Roberto Focosi and depicts the composer as he appeared circa 1842. The original is maintained at the Archivio Storico Ricordi, in Milan, and is online via the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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Verdi - Va, Pensiero by Pavarotti and Zuccherò

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Credits:

Nabucco: Va, Pensiero by Giuseppe Verdi

Performers: Pino Palladino (Electric Double Bass), Rob Mathes (Guitar), Robbie Kondor (Keyboards), Steve Gadd (Drums), Karen Kamon (Voice), Curtis King (Voice), Vaneese Thomas (Voice), Jill Dell'Abate (Voice), Luciano Pavarotti (Tenor), Zuccherò



Conductor: Marco Boemi

Orchestra/Ensemble: Turin Philharmonic Orchestra

Period: Romantic

Written: 1842; Italy

Date of Recording: 6/9/1998

Venue: Live Parco Novi Sad, Modena, Italy

Length: 3 Minutes 56 Secs.

Language: Italian

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