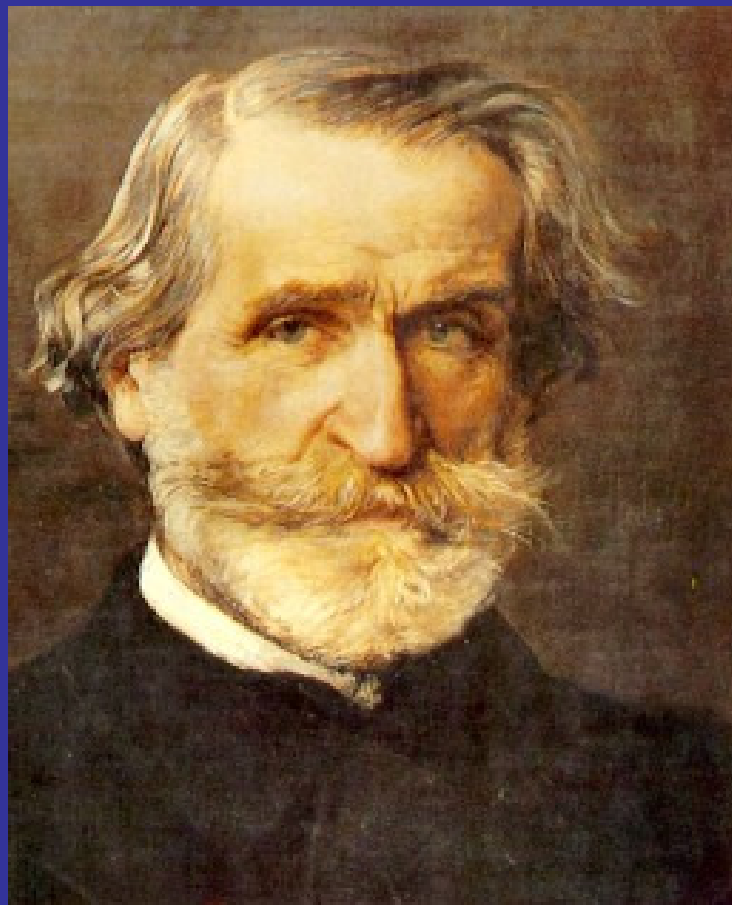


Marlow U3A Music Appreciation Group, July 2011

Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)



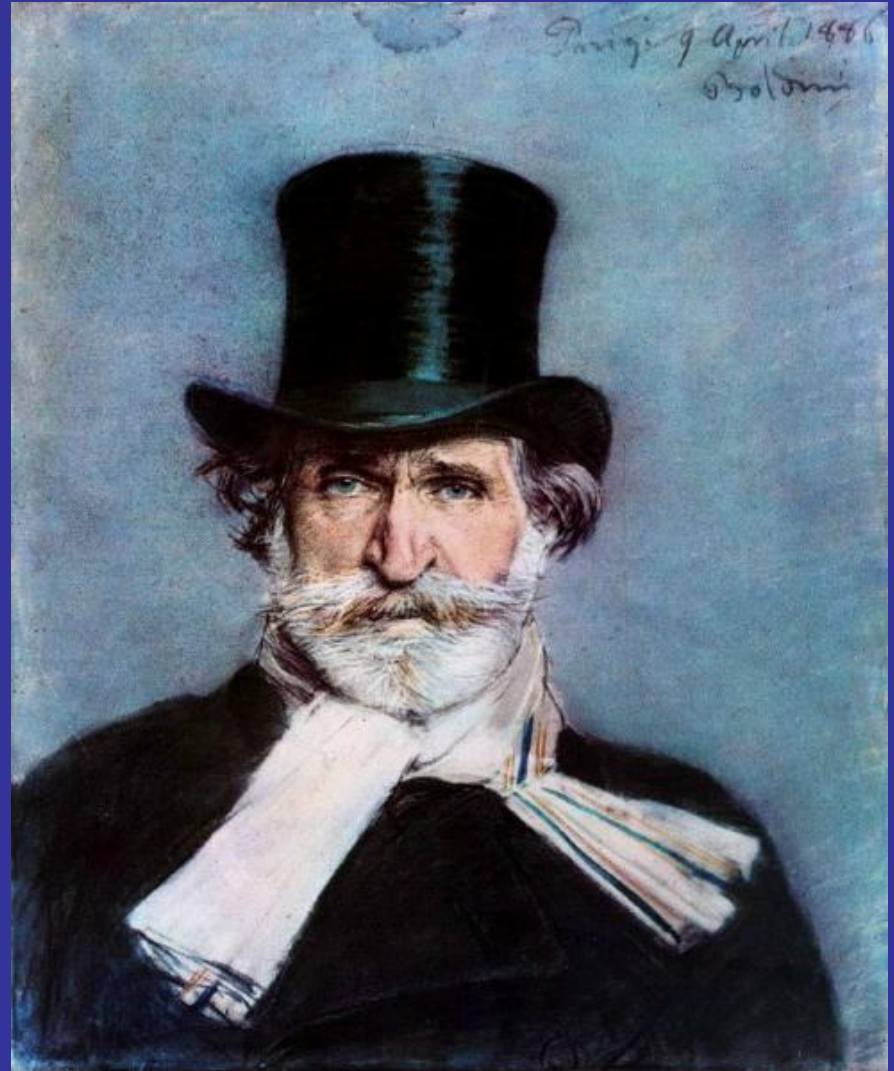
Giuseppe Verdi

- ♪ **Verdi was an Italian romantic composer, mainly of opera, and he was one of the most influential composers of the 19th century.**
- ♪ **He transformed operatic writing during the course of his long career. His master works dominate the standard repertoire one and a half centuries after their composition.**

Some of these themes have long since taken root in popular culture, such as:

- ♪ *La Donna e Mobile* from *Rigoletto*
- ♪ *Va Pensiero* (chorus of the Hebrew slaves) from *Nabucco*
- ♪ The Drinking Song from *La Traviata*
- ♪ The Grand March from *Aida*

♪ He wrote 28 operas between his first, *Oberto* in 1839 and his last, *Falstaff* in 1893.



- ♪ **When he was still a child, Verdi's parents moved to Busseto where he had his first lessons in composition.**
- ♪ **When he was 20, Verdi went to Milan to study. There he attended operas, including those of Donizetti, and also concerts of German music.**
- ♪ **Milan's Beaumonde association convinced him that he should pursue a career as a theatre composer.**

- ♪ **During the mid 1830s he attended the Salotto Maffei salons in Milan, hosted by Clara Maffei.**
- ♪ **When he returned to Busseto he became the town music master and, supported by Antonio Barezzi, a local merchant and music lover, Verdi gave his first public performance at Barezzi's house in 1830.**

***Nabucco* (1842)**

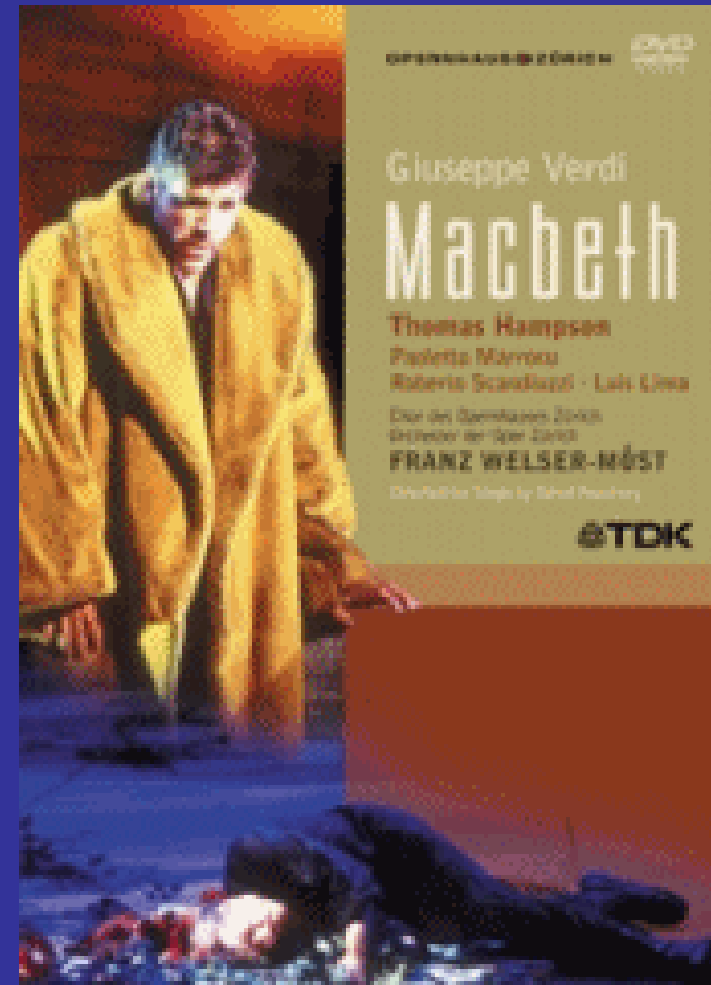
- ♪ **His third opera, *Nabucco*, was his first great successful opera and it made him famous. It caught the public fancy because of the driving vigour of its music and its great choruses such as *Va Pensiero*. This was interpreted as giving meaning to the struggle for Italian independence and the unification of Italy.**

Hugo, Byron and Shakespeare

- ♪ After *Nabucco* Verdi based his operas on patriotic themes and many of the standard romantic sources such as Victor Hugo (*Ernani* 1844), Byron (*Il Due Foscari* 1844) and Shakespeare (*Macbeth* 1847).

Macbeth (1847)

♪ For some *Macbeth* was the most original and important opera he wrote. It was the first of many of Shakespeare's plays which he adapted for the opera stage.



Rigoletto (1851)

- ♪ One of Verdi's greatest masterpieces was *Rigoletto*. Verdi had studied Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia*, and carried elements of this into *Rigoletto*. Both are based on Victor Hugo plays, and they share the atmosphere of a corrupt court and a devotion to his or her daughter. *Rigoletto* embodies comedy and tragedy and contains a wide range of music.

***Il Trovatore* and *La Traviata* (1853)**

- ♪ Verdi's middle period produced, in 1853, *Il Trovatore* in Rome and *La Traviata* in Venice.
- ♪ *La Traviata* was based on Alexander Dumas' play *The Lady of the Camellias* and became the most popular of Verdi's operas, now being placed second in the operabase list of most performed operas worldwide.

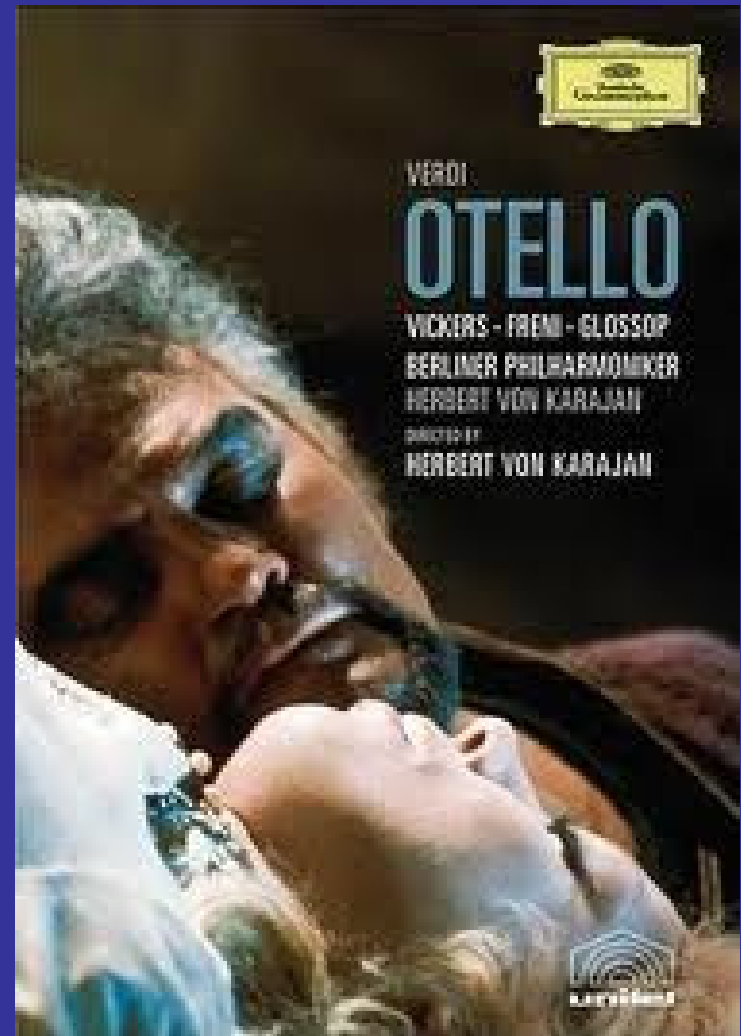
Operas 1855 - 1871

Between 1855 and 1871 followed many of Verdi's great operas:

- ♪ *Simon Boccanegro* (1857)
- ♪ *Une Ballo in Maschera* (1859)
- ♪ *La Forza del Destino* (1862)
- ♪ A revised version of *Macbeth* (1865)
- ♪ *Don Carlos* (1867)
- ♪ *Aida* (1871).

Otello (1877)

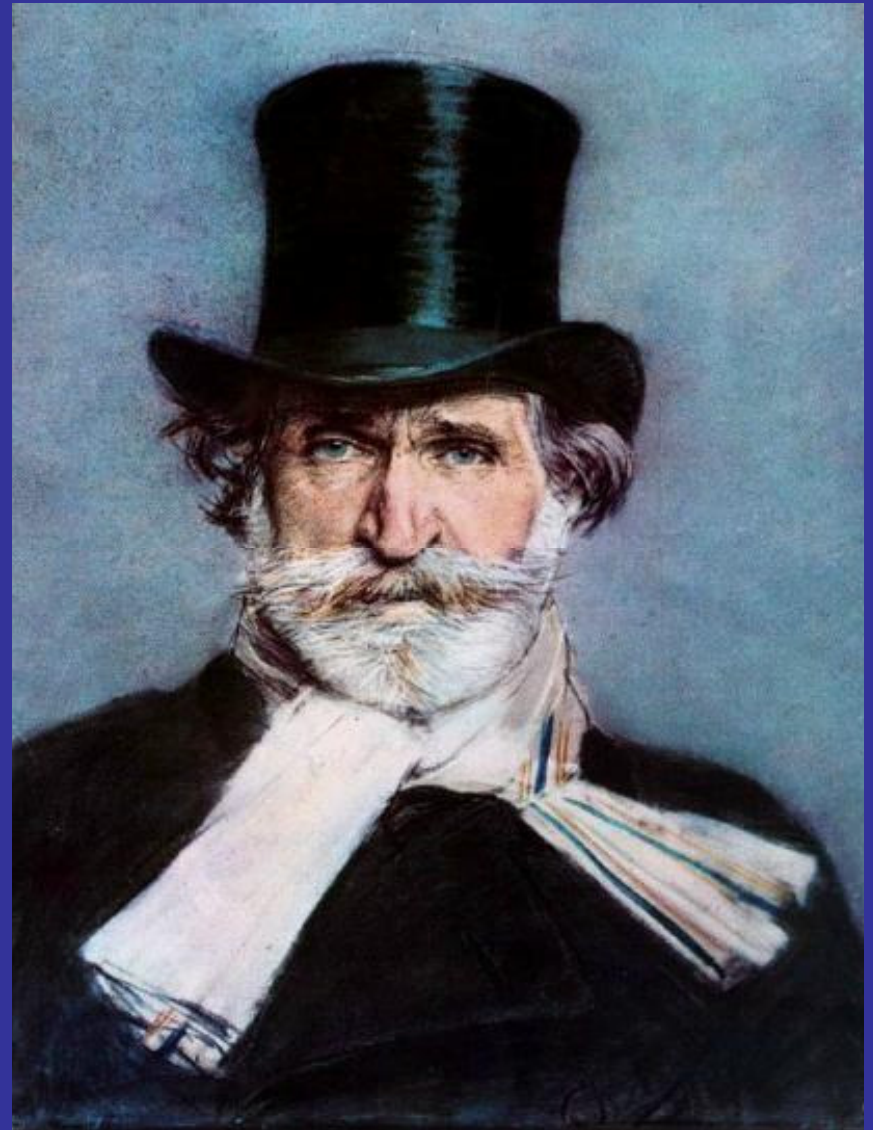
♪ Following his *Requiem* (1874), his penultimate opera *Otello* was described as the finest Italian romantic opera, with the solo arias, duets and choruses fully integrated into the melodic and dramatic flow.



Falstaff (1893)

- ♪ Verdi's last opera was the brilliant comic opera *Falstaff*.
- ♪ *Falstaff* broke free of conventional forms by finding music which followed quick-flowing, simple words. Because of its respect for the pattern of ordinary speech, it created a threshold for a new operatic era in which speech patterns were paramount.

Opera had become the fusion of the five arts: drama with the presentation of real people; good writing with a strong narrative; painting with colour in costume and set; movement and dance; and finally, wonderful music.



OPERA

From its conception during the Baroque period to the maturity of the romantic period, opera was the medium through which tales and myths were revisited, history was retold and imagination stimulated