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*For Francesca and Imogen  
Lawrence and Robert  
Daniel and Bevan*

# Verdi

AND HIS

# Operas

by

**ROBERT HARDCASTLE**

**Foreword by George Lloyd**

# Author's Note

A considerable debt to my predecessors will, I hope, be apparent from the acknowledgements in the text and in the brief bibliography that follows. Scholars and general readers alike owe much to an early champion of Verdi's cause, the remarkable Franz Werfel - third husband of Alma Mahler, author of *The Song of Bernadette* and of *Verdi: A Novel of the Opera* - and to a previous generation of writers such as Feruccio Bonavia, Edward J. Dent, Dyneley Hussey and Francis Toye, all of whom worked at a time when Verdi's reputation was still under a cloud and when many of his operas were rarely, if ever, performed.

The situation today could hardly be more different. All the operas are accessible, if not always in live performance then certainly on radio, on disc and, increasingly, on videotape. The seemingly limitless resources of the huge Verdi archive continue to inspire and to deepen the understanding of many contemporary writers, of whom Julian Budden must receive special mention. His three volumes on *The Operas of Verdi* stand as one of the great monuments of modern musical criticism.

I am equipped neither by training nor temperament to add to such formidable scholarship. My aim has been much more modest : to offer a reasonably up-to-date commentary to the general reader who wishes to know more about the man and his music, and the world in which he lived and worked. Even as I write these words, part of that world has gone up in flames at La Fenice in Venice, where five of Verdi's operas, including *La Traviata* and *Rigoletto*, were first performed. It is much to be hoped that, true to its name, this great opera house will rise from its ashes to serve future generations of composers, performers and opera-lovers.

I should like to record my sincere thanks to George Lloyd who, despite a busy schedule that would daunt many a younger composer, took time out to contribute a Foreword to this book. My indebtedness also extends to a group of loyal and long-suffering friends whose advice, at various points along the way, I have sought and often taken. Among them are Peter Lymbery, John Spare, David Inman, Ray Burford and, in particular, my colleague and fellow-writer John Walton, who has not only guided my steps throughout but who also allowed me to borrow his word-processor when my own collapsed under the strain. One cannot ask more of a friend than that.

For their encouragement and support I should also like to thank various members of my family, including Dr John Payne for his guidance on medical matters, and my daughter-in-law Rachel for her help in providing an index and checking proofs. Indeed, to all those who have helped in bringing my work to press I record my gratitude : any errors, inconsistencies and other infelicities that persist are entirely my own work, not theirs.

*Robert Hardcastle*  
Royal Tunbridge Wells : 1996

# Foreword

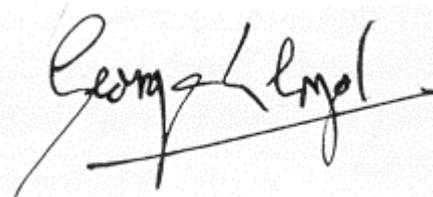
When I was a student in the thirties critical opinion still maintained that Verdi was not a composer to be taken seriously, even though the general public had loved his operas since the middle of the nineteenth century. Despite Verdi's enormous popularity, even in England, his music was written off as only fit for street barrel organs. I was on the side of the public - and I knew exactly why. Verdi's early and middle operas had a drive, a vitality and an eruptive quality that can only be compared to middle-period Beethoven. His tunes could sweep you along: but then they were tunes that always fitted the character and situation on the stage, for Verdi had a wonderful dramatic sense. Even when he had grown out of music written for virtuoso solo performance, his florid *cabalettas* were always to the point.

For me, *Rigoletto* remains as near to the ideal opera as is possible: the balance between the stage action, the singers and the orchestra is perfect. Historically, composers have always swung from one to another of these three components of opera. By the time Verdi wrote *Otello* the swing was away from the supremacy of the singer - a process that has continued to this day.

But Verdi gained as well as lost. In his later operas the dramatic content had become more intense, the role of the orchestra more important. In the last act of *Otello* the poignancy of the vocal line, the orchestral colour and the drama have become so powerful that even today, after knowing the score since I was a boy, only very rarely can I bring myself to listen to it.

In spite of my love for Verdi's music and my admiration for the man himself, I probably knew only about half of what was there. Much more is now known about Verdi and his music than was known a couple of generations ago: all his lesser works, and some that had completely vanished, are now being performed. Research has brought to light facets of his character not previously known.

Robert Hardcastle is fortunate to have so much of this information at his disposal: he has thus been enabled to write a new and vivid life of Giuseppe Verdi which comes just at the right time, and I hope it will fascinate the general reader as much as it has fascinated me.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "George Lloyd". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

George Lloyd

## Chapter One

# 'Bravo, Bravo, Viva Il Maestro!'

During the month of February 1842 the Teatro alla Scala in Milan echoed and re-echoed to the sound of builders carrying out a major refit in the famous old opera house. The auditorium was full of noise and dust as carpenters, masons, and other craftsmen went about their various tasks. On stage and in the orchestra pit it was business as usual, for a full rehearsal was under way. Not even building works could be allowed to disturb the normal production schedule. But the singers and the musicians were disturbed - very much so. The orchestra replied to the off-stage bangs and crashes by playing as loudly as possible, ignoring all the dynamic markings on the parts in front of them. Disgruntled soloists showed their disapproval by throwing more tantrums than usual, and the chorus sang as badly as they knew how. From the podium, a tall, impressive young man tried to make sense from the musical chaos around him. Let him take up the story in his own words:

Presently the chorus started to sing, as carelessly as before, the *Va, pensiero*,

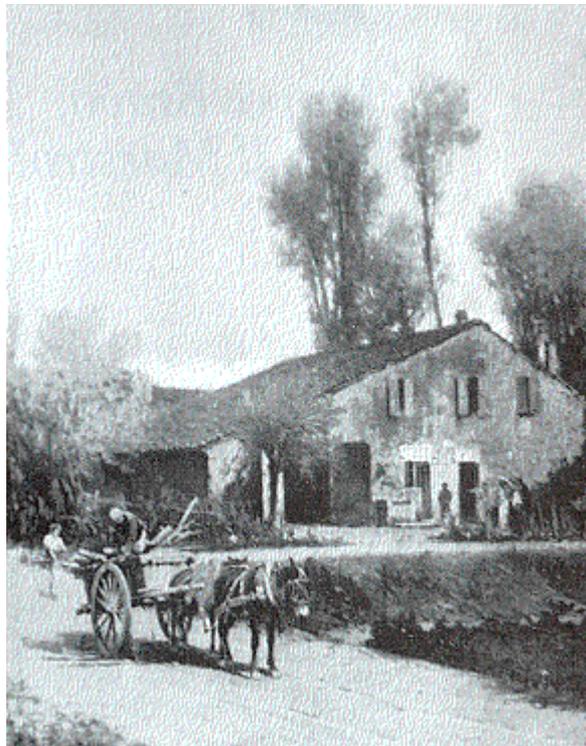
but before they got through half-a-dozen bars the theatre was as quiet as a

church. The men had stopped working, one by one, and there they were sitting

about on the ladders and scaffolding, listening! When the number was finished, they broke out into the noisiest applause I have ever heard, crying *Bravo, bravo,*

*viva il maestro!* and beating on the woodwork with their tools. It was at that moment I knew what the future had in store for me.

His unfailing theatrical instinct told Giuseppe Verdi that, at long last, he had a success on his hands. The work he had been rehearsing under such impossible conditions we know as *Nabucco*



*A bust of the composer now stands in the forecourt of his birthplace at Le Roncole.*

- originally *Nebucodonosor* - an opera composed to a text by Temistocle Solera, a Milanese poet and librettist. Its first performance on 9 March 1842, a few days after the rehearsal, proved to be a great triumph. At twenty-eight years of age Verdi had arrived, after a long and eventful journey : a journey as dramatic and as full of tragedy as the many operas to follow in the years ahead.

Verdi was born in 1813, the same year as Richard Wagner, in the hamlet of Le Roncole in the Duchy of Parma. Nearby is the attractive small town of Busseto, the seat of the Pallavicini family. Parma, bounded by the River Po to the north and the Apennines to the south, was one of the many duchies, republics and minor kingdoms which together with the Papal States divided the whole of the Italian peninsula. The occupying armies of Napoleon Bonaparte had imposed some semblance of unity, but his power had been broken earlier that year by the defeat of the French and their allies at the battle of Leipzig.

Verdi was less than a year old when the Austrians and a villainous collection of mercenaries started to drive the French out of northern Italy, plundering and pillaging as they went. As is the way with most victorious armies they made little distinction between friend and foe, so that local inhabitants caught up in the path of their advance were as much at risk as the enemy they were pursuing.

Against this hazardous background is set the first of a number of dramatic scenes in Verdi's life which seem to embrace fact and fantasy in equal measure. According to Giuseppina Strepponi, the celebrated soprano who became Verdi's second wife, when a group of rampaging soldiers reached Le Roncole his mother saved herself and her child by climbing up into the belfry of the village church of Madonna dei Prati, to remain in hiding there while murder, rape and pillage went on below.

Verdi himself believed this story to be true, but his testimony in such matters cannot always be relied upon. As an old man he made much of his lowly origins, telling his French biographer Camille Bellaigue that 'he had a hard time as a boy'. He used to say that he had been born poor in a poor village. 'I had no way to teach myself anything. They put a miserable spinet into my hands, and some time later I began to write notes ... notes upon notes ... that is all!'

But photographs of his birthplace show a simple, two-storied brick-and-timber building typical of the region, with shuttered windows and a long low sloping roof enclosing a stable on one side. Not the house of a successful merchant or powerful local landowner, certainly, but neither is it the 'wretched habitation' described by many of the composer's biographers. Now preserved as a national museum, the house stands in its own courtyard, with a few trees and shrubs to provide much-needed shade in the long summer months. The Verdi household was in fact the centre of village life, for it served as the local

store and tavern, where farmers could make their modest purchases, exchange gossip and relax over a drink at the end of their working day.

As the proprietor of such an establishment Verdi's father was not really a member of the peasantry, neither was he completely illiterate as has sometimes been suggested. He came from a long line of traders, inn-keepers and small landowners. When his son had made enough money to buy property in the area, he often bought back land that had once belonged to his forefathers.

Verdi's mother, whose maiden name was Luigia Uttini, and who could trace her ancestry back to Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti, came from a similar background. Her family, in which we are told 'there was a great deal of music', had kept a tavern for many years in the small village of Saliceto di Cadeo, just west of Busseto. She and Carlo Verdi were married in 1805. There were two children, Giuseppe and a younger sister, Giuseppa Francesca, who contracted meningitis as an infant and died at the age of seventeen.

'They put a miserable spinet into my hands,' said Verdi. What peasant family could have bought a spinet, however miserable, for a musically-gifted child? It is true that at that time there were a number of second-hand instruments to be had, selling at modest prices as people traded them in to buy or hire pianofortes, which were then coming into fashion. However, if Verdi's family were really as poor as he made them out to be, even a second-hand spinet would probably have been well beyond their reach.

What is certain is that his father, impressed by the boy's love of music and his burgeoning talent, bought a spinet for him when he was eight years old. Verdi's true feelings may be judged by the fact that it never left his side: he treasured the instrument all his life. Now it stands in the museum of La Scala in Milan, and under the lid can still be seen a label that bears touching testimony to the skill of the young musician:

These hammers were repaired and re-covered by me, Stefano Cavaletti, and I fitted the pedals which I presented: I also repaired the said hammers gratuitously, seeing the good disposition the young Verdi has for learning to play the instrument, which is sufficient for my complete satisfaction -

*Anno Domini 1821*

Verdi's rudimentary musical education during his early years was provided by the organist at Le Roncole, Pietro Baistrocchi. The village priest taught him to read and write, and he served as an acolyte in the local church. On one occasion he was so caught up in the music from the organ that he forgot his liturgical duties, until a powerful nudge from the priest sent him sprawling down the altar steps.

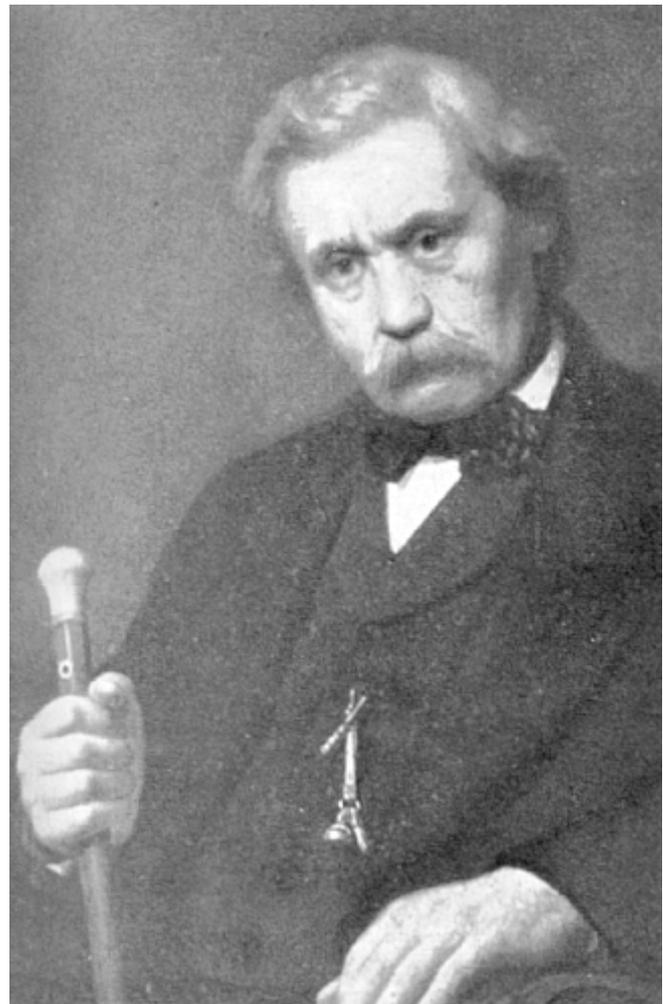
Before he reached the age of ten both his teachers had died, and the *maestrino* earned a degree of fame in an around Le Roncole by taking on some of the duties of local organist. But by this time, Carlo Verdi had come to the conclusion that his son needed a broader and more rigorous education

than could be found in the village. He arranged with a cobbler friend in Busseto to have the boy taken in as a week-day lodger to make it possible for him to attend the local *ginnasio*, or grammar school. On Sundays and feast days he walked the three or four miles back to Le Roncole where, at the age of twelve, he was formally appointed church organist on a token salary.

These facts are well known and well documented. But there are other stories about the young Verdi at this time which may or may not be true. We are told, for example, that he carried his boots around his neck to save unnecessary wear. Also, that after setting out one Christmas morning, well before daybreak, he missed his footing on the winding road, fell into a deep ditch alongside filled with water after recent heavy rain, and that he would have drowned had not a passer-by come to his rescue. To ask whether such incidents really did take place, or whether we are to regard them as threads in the colourful rags-to-riches strand of the Verdi tapestry, raises further and more difficult questions. Is literal truth the only kind of truth that matters? With the passage of time, do not the legends inspired by the lives of great men become part of the reality that we recognize and acknowledge?

One of Busseto's prominent citizens was Antonio Barezzi, a prosperous merchant who supplied wine and provisions to shops and taverns in the region. A keen amateur musician who played a variety of wind instruments, including an ophicleide, he was president of the Philharmonic Society of Busseto, who held their meetings in his house. When Carlo Verdi consulted him about his son, Barezzi immediately took a kindly interest in the boy's welfare and was quick to recognize his outstanding musical gifts. He also understood at once the obvious need for proper musical training, and offered a great deal of encouragement and support. The young Verdi took to him at once and responded to his generous nature with an open heart.

On Barezzi's recommendation, the *maestro di capella* of the collegiate church of San Bartolemeo, Ferdinando Provesi, who conducted the Philharmonic Society and was director of the



*Antonio Barezzi, a successful merchant in Busseto, was Verdi's greatest benefactor and became, in the composer's own words, a 'second father' to him.*

municipal school of music, accepted Verdi as his pupil and supervised his musical training for a period of four years. During this time the young musician appeared in public on a number of occasions as a concert pianist. Local music politics blocked an attempt to get him appointed as organist at the church of Soragna, where there was a vacancy, but as Provesi's health declined Verdi became his deputy at Busseto cathedral and acted as his assistant in many other ways, taking classes, directing the town band, copying parts, helping during rehearsals and in the preparation of performances. There could hardly have been a better introduction to the art of practical music-making.

While it is true that much of this musical activity went on at a third-rate level compared with what happened in Milan and other great metropolitan centres, it was activity nevertheless. As he later recalled, in his spare time Verdi was encouraged to try his hand at composition:

From my thirteenth to my eighteenth year (at which age I went to Milan to study counterpoint) I wrote an assortment of pieces, marches for brass band by the hundred; perhaps as many little *sinfonie* that were used in church, in the theatre or at concerts; many serenades, cantatas (arias, duets, and very many trios) and various pieces of church music, of which I remember only a *Stabat Mater*.

Verdi's cheerful manner and determination won the admiration of the entire Barezzi household, and now that he was spending so much time with them it was suggested, in May 1831, that he should leave his lodgings and move in with the family. There were two sons and four daughters, the eldest of whom, Margherita, took singing and piano lesson from Verdi. To judge by the striking portrait by Mussini she was an attractive young woman with brilliant eyes and an abundance of dark hair setting off a face of fair complexion, full of character and intelligence. She was a few months younger than her tutor, and not surprisingly, they soon fell in love.



*Mussini's portrait in oils of Margherita Barezzi now hangs in the La Scala Museum*

Barezzi took this new development in his stride - indeed, he may have welcomed it - and determined that further help was needed to advance the career of a potential son-in-law. It was clear that just as Verdi had out-stripped the modest training resources available in Le Roncole, he was now ready for much more than Busseto could offer. The nearby city of Milan was the only possible place for a more advanced musical education. Carlo Verdi was persuaded to seek a grant from the Monte di Pietá, a local church charity. However, as funds would at best be forthcoming from only the second year onwards, Barezzi himself guaranteed tuition fees and expenses during the first year of study.

At that time it was not possible to travel from one part of Italy to another without formal means of identification. So in June 1832 Giuseppe Verdi obtained the necessary passport, in which he is described as 'tall, with brown hair, black eyebrows and a beard, grey eyes, aquiline nose and small mouth, thin in the face and pale, with pock-marks in his skin'. He then set off for Milan to seek admission to the Conservatorio as a paying pupil. The normal age limit for entry was between nine and fourteen, but the regulations allowed this restriction to be waived for applicants of 'exceptional ability'. Verdi and his supporters had no doubt that he would be admitted on this basis, so their disappointment was the more acute when his application was turned down after a brief examination and interview with the Director.

The teacher of the pianoforte, Signor Angeleri, declared that Verdi 'need to change the position of his hand which, at the age of eighteen, would be difficult'. So far as his compositions were concerned he agreed with a colleague that if Verdi 'applies himself attentively and patiently to the rules of counterpoint, he will be able to control the genuine imagination he shows himself to possess and thus turn out creditably as a composer'.

With hindsight it is easy to condemn the Milan authorities for failing to recognize genius in the making, but their difficulties were real enough. The classrooms and the dormitories in the Conservatorio were already seriously over-crowded, so the rules about the number of new entrants had to be applied. While the various observations about Verdi himself have as much to say about the narrow, parochial standards of music-making and music training in Busseto as they do about this technical shortcomings, his tense, awkward manner with people he did not know would not have helped his cause, nor would his lack of sophistication and poise. Above all, he was four years late seeking admission. Taking all this into account, the vice-Registrar had little choice in the matter.

One of the examiners to whom Provesi had sent a letter of introduction on behalf of his pupil was Alessandro Rollo, a conductor at La Scala, who advised Verdi to give up the idea of the Conservatorio altogether and to find a teacher in Milan. A director of music at La Scala, Vincenzo Lavigna, was one of those recommended, and it was he who agreed to teach the young man advanced harmony and counterpoint and to give him a thorough grounding in the art of fugal composition.

All this meant extra expense, more than four times the modest grant that had been awarded. Lessons and sheet music had to be paid for as well as board and lodging in the city. Barezzi dug deeper into his pocket and came up with the necessary funds. On Lavigna's advice, he helped Verdi still further in his studies by meeting the cost of his season ticket at the opera, and by giving him a square piano. This, together with the spinet, is also in the museum at La Scala. There followed three years of rigorous training, with the works of Palestrina, Marcello, Bach, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven held up as worthy of study and examples to follow. Not for the first time in his career Verdi proved to be an extremely receptive and hard-working pupil, but he later confessed that he wrote 'very few ideal compositions.' Apart from two small-scale overtures or *sinfonie* there were 'various pieces, most of them comic, which my master made me do as exercises and which were not even scored'. For the rest it was 'canons and fugues, fugues and canons of all sorts.'

This seems an unusually modest self-assessment, for his tutor's strict academic disciplines were already producing results. When one of the Conservatorio's examiners, Arturo Basily, called on Lavigna to seek his advice about a poor batch of applicants for the vacant post of organist at Monza cathedral, none of whom had been able to write a respectable fugue on a given theme, Verdi was handed the test. While the two professors continued their discussion, the student who had been rejected two years earlier came up with an elegant solution, which he decorated with double counterpoint because, as he dryly observed, the subject itself 'was rather thin'.

Apart from his academic training the young composer was also deriving considerable benefit from his regular visits to La Scala where he was learning, in a less formal way, a great deal about orchestration and the techniques in writing music for the stage.

After a busy but uneventful year, news came of the death of his tutor Ferdinando Provesi, followed a month later by the death of his sister, Giuseppa Francesca. To his sorrow, he could not afford to make the journey to either funeral. As we have seen, Provesi played two important roles in the musical life of Busseto, one ecclesiastical, as *maestro di capella* and organist at the church, and the other secular, as municipal music master. Barezzi, as was to be expected, regarded Verdi as a natural successor but Lavigna, on the other hand, insisted that at least another year of formal training was needed before he would be ready to embark upon an independent musical career.

Anxious to please his teacher while remaining loyal to his benefactor, Verdi stayed in Milan to pursue his studies with even greater diligence than before, but sent Barezzi a written application for the post of choirmaster/organist. This was put to one side by the church authorities on the grounds that the vacancy would, in due course, be filled on a competitive basis. However, the good priests of Busseto had doubts about Verdi's commitment to the Church, not without reason, and they had already chosen their own safe candidate. His name was Giovanni Ferrari, a local choirmaster whose faith was beyond question and who could be confidently relied upon to toe the line. Suddenly, in

June 1834, without prior warning or the promised competition, Ferrari was appointed the new *maestro di capella*.

This arbitrary action split the Busseto community down the middle, and the conflict soon became political in nature. Barezzi, at the head of those who supported Verdi, was seen as anti-clerical, not to say dangerously liberal. Those who supported the church were regarded as narrow-minded bigots, right-wing and reactionary. The volatile political atmosphere and the mercurial Italian temperament soon made the crucible of Busseto glow to a dangerous heat.

Members of the Philharmonic Society raided the church and seized all the music they could find to prevent its use. On another occasion the town's brass band formed up outside the church and played as loudly as they could to drown the sound of Ferrari at the organ. Fierce fighting broke out in the streets; graffiti appeared on the walls overnight; threats and counter-threats were flung back and forth; scurrilous lampoons were circulated; dozens of arrests were made and a number of prosecutions followed. Long and alarming reports were sent by the local bishop to the Home Secretary of the Duchy of Parma suggesting that a state of near civil war existed in the town; he urged that the civil and military authorities should be ordered to 'watch attentively, to crush the rebellion at its birth.'

While all this mayhem was going on, Verdi was asked by the Milan Philharmonic Society to take over, at very short notice, a rehearsal of Haydn's *The Creation*, after their own conductors had failed to turn up. His grasp of the music and his clear directions so impressed the singers and orchestra that they asked him to conduct the main concert, which was highly successful. A special performance was arranged for a high-ranking audience in the city, and the Austrian governor commanded a further repeat performance to be given at his official residence.

It was a personal triumph of a kind Verdi had not experienced before. Count Romeo Borromeo, the president of the Society, commissioned him to compose a cantata for a forthcoming family wedding; he was asked to conduct a performance of Rossini's *La Cenerentola*, and received an invitation from the Teatro Filodrammatico to write an opera. His enthusiasm for this last project waned when he saw the libretto but, determined not to let the opportunity slip, he persuaded Temistocle Solera, one of his few acquaintances in Milan, to revise the text to follow more closely his own very definite ideas. Other commitments eventually pushed the work to one side and whether any of the music was used later remains a matter for conjecture.

Meanwhile, in July 1835, he had completed his studies and had returned to Busseto, where Barezzi and his supporters continued to do battle on his behalf. By this time Verdi had grown tired of the affair, and his success in the cosmopolitan city of Milan made the prospect of a minor post in a small provincial town seem much less attractive. As a way out of the dilemma he got Lavigna to support his application for the more lucrative post at Monza cathedral, which was still vacant. But when some of the Busseto Philharmonic

Society members heard about this they were furious and reminded Verdi of his obligations to the town. Some went so far as to suggest that if he tried to leave, he would be prevented from doing so by force. In the face of such hostility and to save Barezzi's position he dropped the Monza idea, as he later explained to Lavigna:

If my benefactor Barezzi would not have had to suffer on my account the almost general hostility of the district, I should have left at once: neither their reproaches about benefits nor their threats would have been able to affect me. Even if I did receive from the Monte di Pi eta a slender pension towards my support in Milan, this benefit ought not to purchase my degradation and slavery, or I should be obliged to consider the said benefit no longer a generous act, but a mean one.

Three months later, in an attempt to bring the bitter controversy in Busseto to an end, the church put forward a compromise plan. Duties previously undertaken by Provesi would be divided: Ferrari would remain church organist, but the post of *maestro di musica* would now be filled by competition. If he chose to do so, Verdi would be allowed to apply. Why so obvious a solution had taken so long to emerge is unknown, but Barezzi and his supporters saw it as a victory. They believed that the result of any competition was beyond any doubt: this time they were right. Verdi was examined at Parma by the venerable Giuseppe Alinovi, who told him 'he had enough knowledge to be *maestro* in Paris or London'. Within weeks his contract of employment came through. With his years of study now behind him and the prospect of secure, if modest, income ahead, Verdi felt that he could now ask Barezzi for his daughter's hand.

After a brief engagement they were married on 4 May 1836. They had two children, both of whom died in infancy. Virginia Maria Luigia was born in March 1837 and died in August 1838. Her brother, Icilio Romano Carlo Antonio, was then only a few weeks old: he, in turn, died at the age of fifteen months in October 1839. The death of infants always has a special poignancy but these dates are significant for other reasons, which will become apparent later.

Verdi's contract was for nine years, but after three it could be terminated by either side at six months' notice. He had to live in Busseto ten months of the year, to give vocal and instrumental lessons in the municipal school and to conduct Philharmonic Society concerts. He kept to his side of the bargain conscientiously, but still found irksome the reminders that he was under an obligation to the community for the support he had been given. Such narrow-mindedness was offensive to him, and strengthened his resolve to make his mark outside Busseto. After his success in Milan he knew that it was to the wider world he belonged.

So, in addition to the many sacred and secular compositions he wrote for local performance, he continued to work on larger-scale projects such as the opera which had been suggested by his friend Massini, at the Teatro Filodrammatico. 'Such as' is a necessary evasion at this point since much confusion surrounds the gestation of Verdi's first published opera, a confusion made worse by his inaccurate recollections in later life. According to some

biographers he started *Oberto* in 1836; others say it is an adaptation of a previous work, *Roccester*. It has also been suggested that an even earlier attempt, *Lord Hamilton*, now completely lost, may have been the original on which *Oberto* is based. Julian Budden, in his classic three-volume work *The Operas of Verdi* has yet another possible explanation. The composer may have taken with him:

a rough and ready operatic structure in the conventional mould, to be expanded, shortened or generally modified, in accordance with the singers available for the first performance, and based on a story which could adapt itself, chameleon-like, to medieval Italy no less than to Restoration England.

Wherever the truth lies, Verdi now had enough confidence in his powers to cancel the contract of employment by mutual consent. In February 1839 he left Busseto and took his wife and their surviving son to the great city of Milan, where he rented a modest flat near the basilica of Sant'Ambrogio to be within easy walking distance of La Scala.

He had waited in the wings long enough: the time had come for Giuseppe Verdi to make his entrance on the world's operatic stage.

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