



Giuseppe Verdi 1813-1901

Baby Verdi was born in a small village just north of Milan, Italy. His parents were peasants and ran the village inn. Young Verdi's was musically talented and by the time he was twelve, he became the village's church organist.

When he moved to the big city of Milan, the Conservatory of Music rejected his application because they felt Young Verdi was "too old" to join the school. Instead, he studied privately with Mr. Lavigna, the assistant to one of Europe's biggest opera houses, La Scala. There he began to learn and become an expert at composing *operas*.

When writing an *opera* special script writers would make *librettos* for Mr. Verdi which included the words and story that he would put to music. Then he combined it to make a live stage performance accompanied by an orchestra which was called an *opera*.

Mr. Verdi was different from other composers: he never wrote any music for orchestra! He did write 26 operas, several pieces for chorus and one string quartet.

Italy was trying to become a unified country in the late 1800s and several of Mr. Verdi's songs from his operas were considered very patriotic. In fact they became National Anthems for the Italian people. Mr. Verdi was so generous and popular with the public that when he died, **28,000** people came out onto the streets for his funeral.

Mr. Verdi's music is part of the late *Romantic* era: it is heroic and powerful but also sad and emotional. The voices that sing in his operas are expressive and full of strength. Mr. Verdi's string quartet is similar to his operas because it sounds energetic and dramatic as if it is telling us a story.

