



Winter 2020

Syllabus: Viva Verdi! Opera and Birth of Modern Italy
Tuesdays, January 21 through March 3, 2020, 1:00-3:00pm

(NOTE: NO CLASS ON FEBRUARY 11)

Freight and Salvage, 2020 Addison St., Berkeley, CA

Professor: Clifford “Kip” Cranna, Dramaturg Emeritus, San Francisco Opera

The leading artist of Italy’s reunification into a single country in the mid-Nineteenth Century was the great composer Giuseppe Verdi. His operatic masterworks brought to the stage the values and issues of the “Risorgimento” movement, giving vivid creative expression to the ideals of his time. His stirring and melodious music provided a common bond for peoples divided by political boundaries, customs, and dialects. Verdi’s personal life—his humble beginnings, his professional triumphs and family tragedies, his moral integrity, his patriotic yearnings—became symbolic of an emerging nation’s vital spirit. We will explore Giuseppe Verdi’s life and art in their historical context and use video examples (with English subtitles) to examine in detail his magnificent music dramas, whose creative genius continues to thrill audiences everywhere. No previous opera background required. Just watch, listen, and enjoy.

Class I (Jan. 21): Verdi and his Time: We’ll learn about the composers and styles that influenced the young Verdi, and get a sampling of his first opera, *Oberto*, and his early comedy, *Un Giorno di Regno* (*King for a Day*), then look at his first big success, the brusquely energetic *Nabucco*.

Class II (Jan. 28): Early slam-bam hits: *Ermani* (part of San Francisco Opera’s June 2020 season), *Attila* (yes, an opera about Atilla the Hun), and his first Shakespearean opera, *Macbeth*.

Class III (Feb. 4): Middle period masterpieces: *Rigoletto*, *Il Trovatore*, and *La Traviata*.

NO CLASS FEB. 11

Class IV (Feb. 18): Maturity: *Simon Boccanegra*, *Un Ballo in Maschera* (A Masked Ball) and *La Forza del Destino* (The Force of Destiny)

Class V (Feb. 25): French Grand Opera and Egyptian Spectacle: *Don Carlos* and *Aida*

Class VI (Mar. 3): The Shakespearean masterpieces: *Otello* and *Falstaff*

Returning to OLLI Berkeley for his third season, **Clifford (Kip) Cranna** is Dramaturg Emeritus of San Francisco Opera, where he served on the staff for over forty years, more than thirty of them as Director of Music Administration. In 2008 he was awarded the San Francisco Opera Medal, the company's highest honor, and in 2012 he received the Bernard Osher Cultural Award for distinguished efforts to bring excellence to a cultural institution. In 2014 he received the Star of Excellence Award for outstanding service to the programs of the San Francisco Opera Guild. He holds a B.A. in music from the University of North Dakota and a Ph.D. in musicology from Stanford University. For thirty years he was Program Editor and Lecturer for the Carmel Bach Festival. He lectures and writes frequently on music and teaches regularly at the Fromm Institute at USF and at OLLI Dominican and UC Berkeley.

Recommended Reading

William Berger: *Verdi With A Vengeance*. Vintage Books, 2000. This is an easily accessible guide to the plots of the operas, with commentary on the music, plus an introductory sketch on Verdi's life.

George Martin: *Verdi: His Music, Life and Times*. Limelight Editions, 1963, revised 1992. For those who want to know about Verdi's life in its historical context, this is perhaps the best choice. It includes very little analysis of the music and does not provide synopses, but it is a highly readable examination of Verdi's career against the backdrop of Italian history and politics.

Julian Budden: *Verdi*. Schirmer Books, 1985. This highly respected study is a two-part approach to Verdi, beginning with an extended biography, followed by a musical analysis of each opera. For those interested in even more in-depth analysis, Budden wrote a three-volume set called *The Operas of Verdi*.

Mary Jane Phillips-Matz: *Verdi: A Biography*. Oxford University Press, 1993. This is a major work of Verdi scholarship, an immense and highly detailed account of his life based on painstaking research, unlikely to be surpassed in its breadth and depth of erudition.

Operas of Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)

	Title	Premiere: city, date	Librettist	Verdi's age
1	Oberto, Conte di San Bonifacio	Milan, Scala, 17 Nov 1839	Piazza, Morelli, Solera	26
2	Un Giorno di Regno [Il Finto Stanislao]	Milan, Scala, 5 Sept 1840; alternative title first used 1845	Romani	26
3	Nabucodonosor [Nabucco]	Milan, Scala, 9 March 1842	Solera	28
4	I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata	Milan, Scala, 11 Feb 1843	Solera	29
5	Ernani	Venice, Fenice, 9 March 1844	Piave	30
6	I Due Foscari	Rome, Argentina, 3 Nov 1844	Piave	31
7	Giovanna d'Arco	Milan, Scala, 15 Feb 1845	Solera	31
8	Alzira	Naples, S Carlo, 12 Aug 1845	Cammarano	31
9	Attila	Venice, Fenice, 17 March 1846	Solera	32
10	Macbeth	Florence, Pergola 14 Mar 1847	Piave, Maffei	33
10a	rev. version	Paris, Lyrique, 21 April 1865	(Nutter, Beaumont)	51
11	I Masnadieri	London, Her Majesty's, 22 Jul 1847	Maffei	33
12	Jérusalem (adapted from I Lombardi, in French)	Paris, Opéra, 26 Nov 1847	Royer, Vaëz	34
13	Il Corsaro	Trieste, Grande, 25 Oct 1848	Piave	35
14	La Battaglia di Legnano	Rome, Argentina, 27 Jan 1849	Cammarano	35
15	Luisa Miller	Naples, S Carlo, 8 Dec 1849	Cammarano	36
16	Stiffelio	Trieste, Grande, 16 Nov 1850;	Piave	37
17	Rigoletto	Venice, Fenice, 11 March 1851	Piave	37
18	Il Trovatore	Rome, Apollo, 19 Jan 1853	Cammarano, Bardare	39
19	La Traviata	Venice, Fenice, 6 March 1853	Piave	39
20	Les Vêpres Siciliennes	Paris, Opéra, 13 June 1855	Scribe, Duveyrier	41
21	Simon Boccanegra	Venice, Fenice, 12 March 1857	Piave, Montanelli	43
21a	rev. version	Milan, Scala, 24 March 1881	Boito	67
22	Aroldo (adapted from Stiffelio)	Rimini, Nuovo, 16 Aug 1857	Piave	43
23	Un Ballo in Maschera	Rome, Apollo, 17 Feb 1859	Somma	45
24	La Forza del Destino	St. Petersburg, Imperial, 10 Nov 1862	Piave	49
24a	rev. version	Milan, Scala, 27 Feb 1869	(Ghislanzoni)	55
25	Don Carlos	Paris, Opéra, 11 March 1867	Méry, Du Locle	53
25a	rev. version, Don Carlo	Milan, Scala, 10 Jan 1884	(De Lauzières, Zanardini)	70
26	Aida	Cairo, Opera, 24 Dec 1871	Ghislanzoni	58
27	Otello	Milan, Scala, 5 Feb 1887	Boito	73
28	Falstaff	Milan, Scala, 9 Feb 1893	Boito	79

