The life of Verdi
Musical lives

Each book in this series describes the life and music of a major composer, revealing the private as well as the public figure. While the main thread is biographical, the music appears as an integral part of the narrative, each volume thus presenting an organic view of the composer, the music and the circumstances in which the music was written.

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The life of Verdi

John Rosselli
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(Unless otherwise stated, provenance is the Istituto Nazionale di Studi Verdiani, Parma)

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This is a short critical life based on the very full published sources. It sets out not to provide new facts but to show Verdi in his historical context and thereby throw light – at times new – on the significance of his life and work. Lives of Verdi are many; some are highly detailed. A short book necessarily picks out certain episodes and works as more important than others. Where critics have written unimprovably on the music I have at times quoted them.

Verdi and his Italian contemporaries often used three full stops as a rhetorical device; these are reproduced in quotations. To show breaks in quotations I have used full stops within square brackets: [ . . . ]. Verdi and others also frequently used ‘!!’, ‘!?’, ‘!!?’ and so on; these too are reproduced. Such lavish punctuation does not convey the extremes of surprise, horror etc. it would suggest in an English-speaking writer; it probably sets out to render what gesture would do in conversation.

As the section on further reading explains more fully, there is as yet no complete edition of Verdi’s letters in Italian, and only a limited choice in English; letters appear in many places. When I have quoted from the richest sources of Verdi’s own words and those of his second wife Giuseppina Strepponi, I have appended in brackets an abbreviation identifying the source, followed by the page number(s); sources of other quotations appear in an end note. Where a source exists in an easily available English translation, references are as a rule given to that; this is particularly true of Frank Walker’s translations of Strepponi’s letters, some of which appeared in print before the originals. I have, however, often made my own translation from Verdi’s letters. A list of abbreviations follows.

I am most grateful for help in finding illustrative material to Marisa
Preface

Di Gregorio Casati of the Istituto Nazionale di Studi Verdi di at Parma, for help and friendship over a long period to the director of the Institute, Pierluigi Petrobelli, and to Alberto Carrara-Verdi and his family for their kindness in showing me over Sant'Agata.

J. R.
## Abbreviations Used in Source References

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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>F. Abbiati, Giuseppe Verdi, 4 vols., Milan, 1959</td>
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<td>BM</td>
<td>M. Conati, La bottega della musica. Verdi e la Fenice, Milan, 1983</td>
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<tr>
<td>CV</td>
<td>Carteggi verdiani, ed. A. Luzio, 4 vols., Rome, 1935, 1947</td>
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<td>IEV</td>
<td>Interviews and encounters with Verdi, ed. M. Conati, London, 1984</td>
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<td>VI</td>
<td>Verdi intimo. Carteggio di Giuseppe Verdi con il conte Opprandino Arrivabene (1861–1886), ed. A. Alberti, Milan, 1931</td>
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