

# Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)

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## Overture to *Nabucco*

Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi is considered to be the king of Italian Opera. Born in LeRoncole Italy in October 1813, he studied music as a small boy and performed music at his village church. He was not accepted into the famous music school, Milan Conservatorio, but instead studied music with maestro Vincenzo Lavigna in Milan.



The opera *Nabucco* (also called *Nabucodonosoro*) was completed in 1842 and immediately performed at La Scala, Italy's famous opera house. *Nabucco* was an overnight hit! It is said to be the opera that made Verdi famous, in Italy and around the world. The opera was so popular in its first five performances it was scheduled for 57 more performances the following season. The opera was performed so many times it holds a record at La Scala.

Verdi went on to compose other famous operas including: *Aida*, *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, *Falstaff*, *Macbeth* and *Othello*. When Giuseppe Verdi died in 1901, a quarter million people attended his funeral. At his funeral mourners sang the chorus from *Nabucco* together.

What was happening around the world when *Nabucco* premiered? John Tyler was President of the United States, Felix Mendelssohn premiered his 3rd Symphony, The New York Philharmonic had their first concert, and Glinka's opera "*Ruslan Ludmilla*," premiered in Petersburg Russia.

Questions from the reading:

1. Was Verdi popular while he was alive?
2. Did Verdi attend music college?

Questions for research:

1. What were some of Verdi's other operas?

## **NYS Standards Addressed:**

*Standard 1 – Creating, Performing, and Participating in Music*

*Standard 3 – Responding to and Analyzing Works of Music*

*Standard 4 – Understanding the Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of Music*

## **Objectives**

- Students will read simple rhythms in time with a recording of Overture to *Nabucco*.
- Students will sing themes from Verdi's The Overture to *Nabucco*.
- Students will follow a listening map outlining the form of the Overture to *Nabucco*.

## **Materials:**

- Recording of Overture to *Nabucco* by Verdi

- Rhythm charts for Allegro Theme A and Allegro Theme B (written on the Chalk Board)
- Pointer
- Stop and go sign (a converted ping pong paddle would be great, if not a two sided sheet of paper with stop and go)
- Visual Aid with “words” to “Theme A” and “Theme B”
- Listening Map of Overture to Nabucco (photo copied or written on board).
- Pictures of Verdi

**Vocabulary** – Overture, Opera, Orchestra, Pizzacato, Staccato, Legato, Forte, Piano, Theme, Motive, Chromatic

**Listening Repertoire:** Overture to Nabucco by Verdi

**Procedure** (This should occur over several class meetings):

1. Review quarter note, quarter rest, and eighth note pair by sight and sounds (use the syllables the students are familiar with).
2. Introduce the visual aid for “Allegro Theme A”. Have students read rhythms aloud, perhaps accompanied by clapping, snapping, patting and stomping. If you students are competitive perhaps you could have a contest to see who can keep steady at the fastest tempo.
3. Listen to the Overture to Nabucco, speaking rhythm syllables in Allegro Theme A as it occurs in the music. When the theme is not playing show the “stop” side of your stop & go sign. When the theme is playing show the “go” side and use your pointer to help students keep their place in the music.
4. Repeat procedure for Allegro Theme B, listen to Overture and participate in speaking both A and B themes.
5. Introduce the “words” for Allegro Theme A, followed by Allegro Theme B. Lead students in singing with the recording. (This might be a good time to explicitly explain that it is not polite to sing along with the orchestra. These “words” are only to help students identify the themes). If you have some creative kids they might be interested in creating words for the Andantino or Chorale sections.

**Indicators of Success:**

- Students will be able to recognize major musical themes found in the Overture to Nabucco
- Students will be able to describe an overture and opera

**Prior Knowledge:**

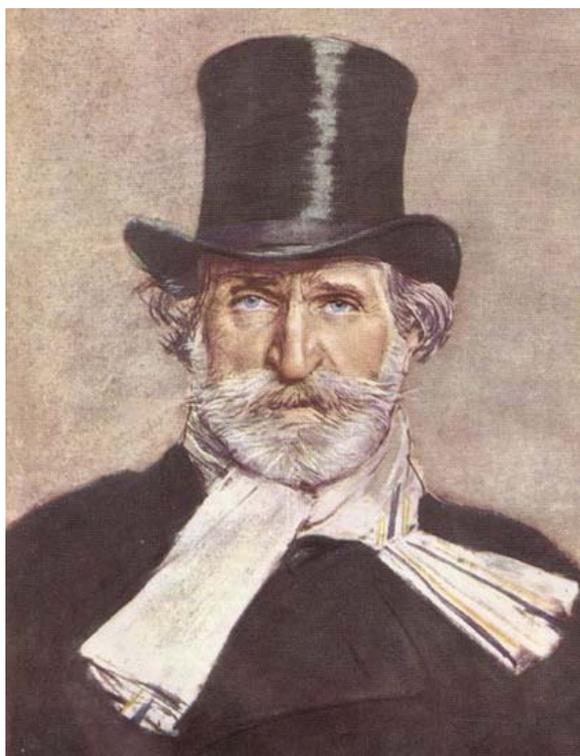
- Able to keep a steady beat while reading quarter notes, quarter rests and eighth note pairs.
- Ability to follow icons on a listening map

**Follow-up:**

- Create a dance or movement game to accompany the slow andantino theme

**Extensions:**

- Listen to other opera overtures by Verdi
- Listen to opera overtures by other composers
- Create “words” for other famous musical themes



## Giuseppe Verdi

Born:	In a village near Busseto on October 9 or 10, 1813
Died:	In Milan on January 27, 1901
Education	Studied in Milan, Italy
Marriage:	Margherita Baretti on May 4, 1836
Occupation	Composer of operas
Compositions:	Composed numerous operas including <i>Aida</i> , <i>Othello</i> , <i>Rigoletto</i>
Noted for:	His operas and his influence on Rossini, Bellini and others.
The music you will hear at the concert	Overture to the opera <i>Nabucco</i> .

# Listening Map Overture to Nabucco Giuseppe Verdi



Chorale Theme



Dramatic Strings



Chorale Theme



Sneaky Chromatic Cello



Allegro Theme A



Chorale  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  time

Andantino W/W & Pizz. St.  
Strings



Andantino Theme  
& Pizz. St.



Andantino W/W



Allegro Theme A  
(partial)



Allegro Theme B

FF Strings



W/W  
interlude



FF Strings



Allegro Theme B



Allegro Theme A



Coda



# Overture to Nabucco

## Allergro Theme A

G. Verdi  
lyrics K Coon

Voice

This is the opera, Ver-di's Na - bu-cco. Sto-ry of in-trigue, de-cep tion, and

5

mad-ness. This is the opera, Ver-di's Na bu cco. Dra-ma and ro-mance the op-era Na

9

bu cco. Fam-ous com - pos - er Giu sep-pe Ver-di, Fam-ous com pos er Giu sep pe

13

Ver-di. It-al-y loved him they helped make him famous, through out the world they will know his

17

name. It - al-y loved him they helped make him fam-ous! a-round the world they \_ know his

21

name a - round the world he is known to all.

24

# Overture to Nabucco

Score

## Allegro Theme B

Verdi  
K Coon

Voice



It's a hit! It's a hit! It's a hit here for Ver - di! He will

6  
rise to great fame with the o - per - a Na bu - cco It's a

10  
hit! it's a hit! It's a hit here for Ver - di He will

14  
rise to great fame with the o - per - a Na - bu - cco It's a

18  
hit! It's a hit It's a hit here for Ver - di He will

22  
rise to great fame with his op - era Na - bu - cco.



Overture to Nabucco

Verdi

Allergo tempo B

The image shows three staves of handwritten musical notation. The notation is a rhythmic shorthand using vertical stems, beams, and flags to represent notes and rests. The first staff begins with a treble clef-like symbol. The second and third staves continue the rhythmic pattern. The notation is dense and appears to be a transcription of a specific musical passage.