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Hey there Busy Kids! Welcome to episode #107 of the Busy Kids Love Music podcast, a podcast for music-loving families. I'm your host, Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and I just want to say thanks for joining me today as we kick off a new, 2-part composer series.

This episode is scheduled to air in October, which happens to be the birthday month of one of the most celebrated opera composers in history, Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi. In today's episode, we'll learn about his life and musical contributions, and in the next episode, we're going to take a deep dive into one of his most famous operas, Aida.

Giuseppe Verdi was born on October 9, 1813, in a small Italian village called Le Roncole. Imagine a time when there were no smartphones, no video games, just the beauty of nature and the sound of music all around. Giuseppe grew up in this peaceful setting, surrounded by the sounds of birds, flowing rivers, and the folk songs of his homeland.

Little Giuseppe was not just any ordinary kid. He had an amazing talent for music. His parents were hard workers who ran an inn and a tavern, and gave him a spinet – a type of small harpsichord – to encourage his love of music. He was fascinated with the instrument and would play it late into the night! At the age of 10, he became the part-time organist for a nearby church. He was so talented that his parents sent him to study music in the nearby town of Busseto at the age of 12. His teenage years were spent composing marches, church music, theatre pieces and cantatas.

As he got older, Giuseppe Verdi composed beautiful music that touched the hearts of people all over the world. But Giuseppe's life wasn't always easy. He faced many challenges and even some personal tragedies.

He married his music student who gave birth to two children who died in infancy while Verdi was working on his first opera. While working on his second opera, his young wife died at the age of 26. Verdi was devastated. To make things worse, this second opera was a flop.

The composer vowed to give up composing forever, but was persuaded to write Nabucco. Nabucco premiered in 1842, and was a masterpiece. It tells the story of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar and the plight of the Jewish people during their exile in Babylon. The opera's most famous chorus, called "Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves" is the piece you're listening to now. This powerful anthem expresses the longing for freedom and homeland, and resonated deeply with audiences.

Another of his most famous operas is "La Traviata," which tells a touching story of love and sacrifice. It's like a real-life soap opera, but with amazing music! Another famous opera by Verdi is "Rigoletto." It's a thrilling tale of secrets, revenge, and a cursed jester. Imagine a world of kings and queens, where everyone wears fancy clothes and masks, and secrets are hidden behind every corner.

Giuseppe Verdi's music was not only beautiful; it was also revolutionary! He pushed the boundaries of what music could do and inspired generations of composers to come. His operas were like the superhero movies of his time!

Carlos Chávez wasn't just an extraordinary composer and conductor; he was also a true champion of creativity. As a music teacher, he mentored young musicians, inspiring them to explore their musical talents. His passion for education led him to establish music schools and promote music education in Mexico. Chávez was also a festival pioneer, organizing musical celebrations where musicians from all over the world could come together to share their artistry.

As he got older, Giuseppe Verdi became a national hero in Italy. People loved his music so much that they even used it as a rallying cry for Italian unification and looked for hidden messages in his early

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operas – messages that probably had not been intended by Verdi.

Giuseppe Verdi lived a long and fulfilling life, composing incredible music until he passed away on October 9, 1901. His music lives on, and you can still hear it in theaters and concert halls around the world today.

As I said before, Verdi was unstoppable when it came to composing operas, and in the next episode, we'll learn all about his grand opera Aida, which is filled with colorful costumes and a fairy-tale quality. Until then, I've created a curated playlist for you on YouTube that features some of Verdi's most famous works. You can find the link to that playlist at [busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/107](https://www.busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/107). I hope you'll enjoy listening to it and perhaps having it on in the background while you do other activities so that you can become more familiar with Verdi's work.

I hope that Verdi's story inspires you. Even though he was just a boy from a small village, he grew up to become one of the greatest opera composers in history. Thanks for taking a few minutes to learn about his life with me, and I look forward to connecting with you again in two weeks when our next episode of Busy Kids Love Music airs. Bye for now!