

Giuseppe Verdi – La Battaglia di Legnano (1961)



CD1:

1. *La battaglia di Legnano: Overture* 8:02
2. *La battaglia di Legnano: Act I - He Is Alive, "Viva Italia! Sacro un patto" (Chorus)* 3:25
3. *La battaglia di Legnano: Act I - He Is Alive, "O magnanima...La pia materna mano" (Arrigo, Men's Chorus)* 3:51 [play](#)
4. *La battaglia di Legnano: Act I - He Is Alive, "Ecco Rolando!...Ah! m'abbraccia, d'esultanza" (Arrigo, Men's Chorus, Women's Chorus, Rolando, First and Second Consuls, Squire)* 7:19
5. *La battaglia di Legnano: Act I - He Is Alive, "Voi lo diceste...Quante volte come un dono" (Lida)* 4:32
6. *La battaglia di Legnano: Act I - He Is Alive, "Che...signor!...A frenarti, o cor, nel petto" (Lida, Marcovaldo, Imelda, Chorus)* 3:06
7. *La battaglia di Legnano: Act I - He Is Alive, "Sposa...E ver? Sei d'altri" (Rolando, Lida, Arrigo, Marcovaldo, Herald)* 5:12
8. *La battaglia di Legnano: Act I - He Is Alive, "T'amai, t'amai qual angelo" (Arrigo, Lida)* 2:12
9. *La battaglia di Legnano: Act II - Barbarossa, "Udiste? La grande, la forte Milano" (Chorus, Major, Rolando, Arrigo)* 4:53 [play](#)
10. *La battaglia di Legnano: Act II - Barbarossa, "Ah! Ben vi scorgo nel sembiante" (Rolando, Arrigo, Mayor, Federico)* 2:25
11. *La battaglia di Legnano: Act II - Barbarossa, "A che smarriti e pallidi" (Federico, Arrigo, Rolando, Mayor, Chorus)* 3:31
12. *La battaglia di Legnano: Act II - Barbarossa, "Le mie possenti squadre s'appressan già" (Federico, Chorus, Rolando, Arrigo, Mayor)* 2:04

CD2:

1. *La battaglia di Legnano: Act III - Infamy, "Fra queste dense tenebre" (Knights, Arrigo)* 5:07
2. *La battaglia di Legnano: Act III - Infamy, "Giuriam d'Italia por fine ai danni" (Arrigo, Knights)* 4:07
3. *La battaglia di Legnano: Act III - Infamy, "Lida, Lida? Ove corri?" (Imelda, Lida, Rolando)* 4:15
4. *La battaglia di Legnano: Act III - Infamy, "Pria di partir...Digli ch'è sangue italico" (Rolando, Lida)* 5:14
5. *La battaglia di Legnano: Act III - Infamy, "Tu m'appellavi...Se al nuovo dì pugnando" (Arrigo, Rolando)* 5:23
6. *La battaglia di Legnano: Act III - Infamy, "Rolando? M'ascolta...Ahi scellerate alme d'inferno" (Marcovaldo, Rolando)* 2:48

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7. *La battaglia di Legnano: Act III - Infamy, "Regna la notte ancor"* (Arrigo, Lida) 3:52

8. *La battaglia di Legnano: Act III - Infamy, "Arrigo, Arrigo?...Ah! d'un consorte, o perfidi"*

(Rolando, Arrigo, Lida) 3:17 [play](#)

9. *La battaglia di Legnano: Act III - Infamy, "Vendetta d'un momento"* (Rolando, Arrigo, Lida) 4:18

10. *La battaglia di Legnano: Act IV - To Die for the Fatherland, "Deus meus, pone illos ut rotam"*

(Chorus, Lida, Imelda, Second Consul) 5:40

11. *La battaglia di Legnano: Act IV - To Die for the Fatherland, "Qual mesto suon!...Che fia?"* (Lida, Imelda, Chorus, Arrigo) 3:08

12. *La battaglia di Legnano: Act IV - To Die for the Fatherland, "Per la salvata Italia"*

(Arrigo, Lida, Rolando, Chorus, Knights) 3:56 [play](#)

Lida - Antonietta Stella Arrigo - Franco Corelli Rolando - Ettore Bastianini Federico Barbarossa - Marco Stefanoni Primo Console - Silvio Maionica Secondo Console - Agostino Ferrin Marcovaldo - Virgilio Carbonari Il Podesta di Como - Antonio Zerbini Imelda - Aurora Cattelani Un Araldo - Rinaldo Pelizzoni Orchestra Teatro alla Scala Gianandrea Gavazzeni – conductor Recording of a performance at La Scala, 7 December 1961

LA BATTAGLIA DI LEGNANO was written in 1848, when Verdi was in full patriotic mode. The libretto tells of the 12th Century victory of the Lombard League over Frederick Barbarossa and tosses in an irrelevant love triangle. The music moves swiftly, but this is one Verdi opera that has no well-known excerpts, no memorable tunes. Its best moments are in Act 2, when the leaders of Milan and Como hold a council, and Act 3, when the Knights of Death meet in the vaults of St Ambrose church to music that eerily prefigures some of DON CARLO. If I wanted to hear this type of performance, I'd sooner turn to the fairly wellknown 1961 La Scala BATTAGLIA with Stella, Corelli, and Bastianini. -- Ralph V. Lucano, AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE

In 1848 all of Italy was simmering with revolution. Though Verdi's residence in Paris prevented him from actively participating in the politics of his homeland, he set about writing an opera that would nonetheless show his support for the revolutionary movement. His search for a patriotic subject led him first to Rienzi (Wagner's version had premiered in 1842 but was nearly unknown in Italy), but his librettist, Salvatore Cammarano, felt that the lack of a true love interest would make it unacceptable to the opera-going public. Instead, Cammarano adapted Joseph Mery's play, La bataille de Toulouse; the resulting opera, La battaglia di Legnano premiered in January, 1849 at the Teatro Argentina in Rome. The response to the work in that city -- one of the few

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still free from Austrian rule at the time of the premiere -- was clamorous; at the first performance, the last act had to be repeated in its entirety. Unfortunately, the revolution was put down soon after the premiere, and the new government censors deemed the subject unacceptable for theaters; there were occasional revivals under the title *L'assedio di Arlem*, but the lack of performances over time has prevented the work from ever regaining its original popularity.

Although in subject one of Verdi's most patriotic -- and thus nationalistic -- operas, *La battaglia di Legnano* reveals Verdi's growing acquaintance with the forms and musical language of French opera -- certainly the result of his long residence in Paris. There are arias in the French three-part form; the patriotic choruses and marches have lost the martial flair characteristic of the earlier *Nabucco*, and instead taken on a hymn-like solemnity; and the main theme of the opening chorus, "Viva Italia," is used as a recurring unifying motive -- again, a practice more French than Italian.

The appearance of stylistic ambiguity -- of vacillation between French and Italianate ideas -- has led some to criticize the work for a lack of cohesion; however, closer examination of the score reveals a new desire on the part of the composer to tailor musical forms to their dramatic contexts. In fact, a number of sections from *La battaglia* are unique in Verdi's output, most notably the duet for Arrigo and Lida which, on examination, reveals a completely developed sonata form. In the final accounting, *La battaglia di Legnano* may not have been the masterpiece that Verdi had hoped to write, but it has many fine moments which all listeners should find enjoyable. ---Richard LeSueur, Rovi

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