

# Luciano Pavarotti

“I think a life in music is a life beautifully spent, and this is what I have devoted my life to.” This quote by Luciano Pavarotti describes the importance of music in his life. One of the greatest and most famous singers in the world, Luciano became the face of opera music to millions of fans.



As a young child in Modena, Italy, Luciano Pavarotti enjoyed playing sports and often sang in the church choir with his father. At his mother's suggestion, he studied to become a teacher and taught in an elementary school for several years before realizing his passion for singing. Luciano began his vocal training at the age of 19, but continued to work as both a teacher and an insurance salesman to pay for his lessons. It was during this training that Luciano discovered he had perfect pitch, or the ability to sing any note without having listened to it first.

Over the next six years, Luciano trained constantly and performed in a few small recitals. But a victory in a 1961 singing competition led to his first major role as Rodolpho in Giacomo Puccini's opera *La Bohème*. Luciano's professional opera debut was met with positive reviews and opened the door to future performances. He won starring roles in some of the most famous operas, including Giuseppe Verdi's *La Traviata*

## Opera

An opera is a dramatic musical work in which actors frequently sing their parts. This type of work is often accompanied by an orchestra. Some of the most famous opera composers include Giuseppe Verdi and Richard Wagner.

and Puccini's *Tosca*. He began performing outside of Italy, and eventually traveled to the United States to sing at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Here he skyrocketed to fame in the opera community for his performance in *The Daughter of the Regiment*, where he hit nine high Cs during an aria.

Luciano Pavarotti was best known for having a clear, brilliant voice and a charming personality. His charity concerts raised millions of dollars, and he often performed with musicians outside the operatic genre, including Liza Minnelli, Sting, and U2. Luciano recorded a variety of music, from classic operas to light Italian folk songs. He is often considered the most famous opera singer in the world and was once the third highest-selling musician (behind pop artists Madonna and Elton John). In addition to performing as a vocal soloist, Luciano Pavarotti was a member of the Three Tenors. Plácido Domingo and José Carreras completed this singing trio, which toured the world bringing popular opera tunes to massive audiences.

Luciano was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2006. He made plans to finish out his farewell tour, but due to frequent hospitalizations, he was unable to perform again. On September 6, 2007, Luciano Pavarotti died at his home in northern Italy. His legacy lives on in the hearts and ears of opera fans around the world, and his voice will always be remembered as one of the greatest of the 20th century.



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## Questions

As you were reading this article, you probably noticed musical symbols, called accidentals, mixed in with the text. These accidentals are an important clue to learning more about Pavarotti. Begin with the letter immediately before the accidental, then picture a piano keyboard. Left or right, how does a # sign affect a note? And a ♭ sign? Follow this same directional pattern to reveal the hidden answers to the questions below.

(Hint: Before he became<sup>#</sup> the Pac<sup>♭</sup>e of opera musi<sup>#</sup>c for fans around t<sup>#</sup>he w<sup>♭</sup>orld, Pavoro<sup>♭</sup>tti worked as a teacher.)

1. When he was young, what sport did Luciano want to play professionally?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How many daughters did Luciano have? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What did Luciano's father do for a living? \_\_\_\_\_

4. In which country did Luciano perform at the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. In which city did Luciano perform his final opera? (2 words)

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What was Pavarotti's nickname? (5 words)

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Where is the Pavarotti Music Center? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Luciano was named the United Nations Messenger of \_\_\_\_\_ in 1998.

## **Selected Discography**

- *Pavarotti Forever*, 2007
- *The Best of the Three Tenors*, 2002
- *Ti Adoro*, 2003
- *Pavarotti and Friends for Guatemala and Kosovo*, 1999
- *Una Furtiva Lagrima: Donizetti Arias*, 1998
- *Vincerò!*, 1995
- *Verdi: La Traviata*, 1993
- *Pavarotti at Carnegie Hall*, 1988
- *Puccini: Madama Butterfly*, 1987
- *Mamma*, 1984

## **Other Opera Artists**

- Cecilia Bartoli
- Maria Callas
- Franco Corelli
- Placido Domingo
- Denyce Graves
- Marilyn Horne
- Beverly Sills



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