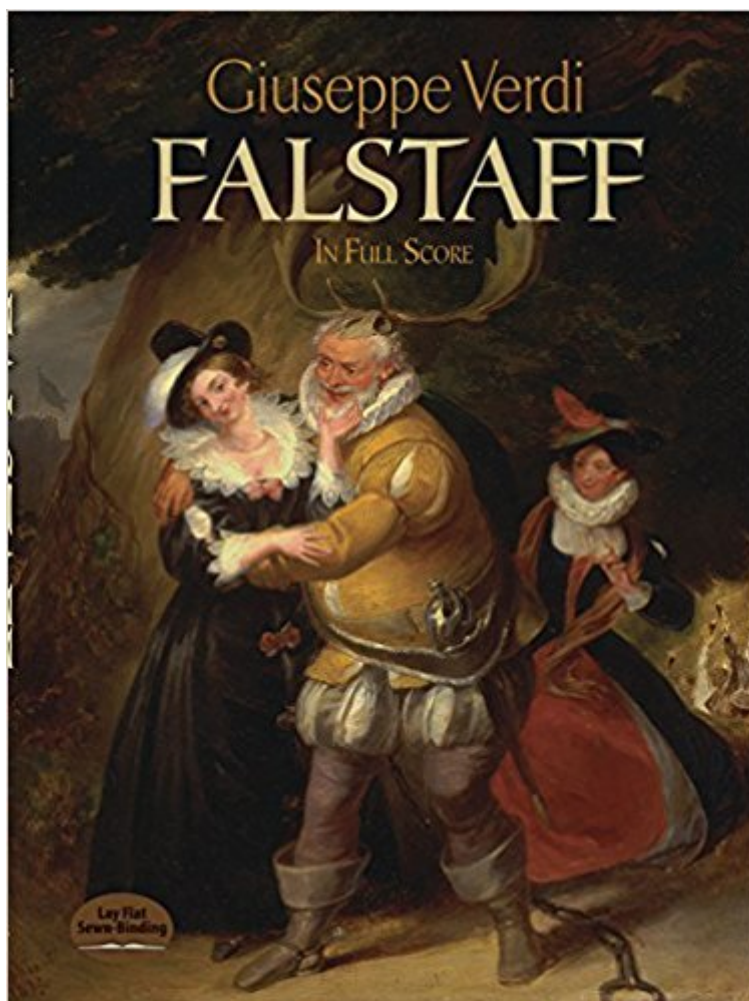


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Falstaff In Full Score (Dover Music Scores)



Synopsis

The plays of Shakespeare inspired Verdi's deepest resources. *Macbeth* (1847) was one of the composer's earliest operatic-dramatic triumphs and *Otello* (1887) was among his latest. At the end of his life Verdi astonished a public accustomed to his tragic fervor with *Falstaff*, a gem of pure comedy. Verdi's last great work premiered in the composer's 80th year. This reproduction of the complete and unabridged score brings the final proof of the maestro's universality to the many students, musicians, and opera lovers who would see for themselves the summation of Verdi's brilliant orchestral and compositional powers. Ricordi was Verdi's original publisher; this reprint of his edition contains the standard, definitive score and includes English translations of the original front matter. *Falstaff* benefits from Verdi's understanding of Wagner and other operatic innovators. Nevertheless, between its concise but forceful orchestration and its copious melodic invention, it remains singularly Verdian. Its wit astonishes as much today as it did in 1893.

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Customer Reviews

Verdi wrote only two comic operas in his long career: at the very beginning and at the very end. Nobody remembers the first one, but *Falstaff* belongs on any list of the ten best operas ever written, with its humor both broad and sly, its loving realization of Shakespeare's characters (most of the opera is taken from *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and it's actually funnier in Verdi's version) and, most of all, its deep humanity. Listen for the sarcasm in the orchestra underneath Dame Quickly's

salutations and check out how Verdi made the Thames splash when Sir John is emptied from the window. As is always the case with Dover scores, Falstaff is a reprint of another publishing house's work, without English translations.

An Italian composer of the Romantic era, Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) wrote operas that remain standards of the repertoire more than a century after his death. His most popular works include Rigoletto, La Traviata, and Aida.

Dover's full score of "Falstaff" is an incredible bargain for the opera buff who wants a score to follow while listening to his favorite recording of this fascinating work.

Verdi's two Comedies philosophically, and emotionally, frame his long career. While writing *Il Giorno di Regno*, his first comedy, and only his second opera, the rather naive young Verdi lost his first wife and their children in a fire. Needless to say, the opera wasn't very funny, and the audience booed it off the stage. Verdi quit Opera...he thought for good. However, his self-imposed exile didn't last long, and Verdi eventually wrote several of Opera's greatest masterpieces. He also loved Giuseppina, first as his paramour, eventually as his second wife, became one of Europe's most generous philanthropists, and admired his great rival Richard Wagner, who referred to Verdi simply as "pig." Arrigo Boito, a genius in his own right (if you don't believe it, get a good recording of *Mefistofele*), testified in Italian newspapers that Verdi's "old ways" of writing Opera were permanently invalidated by Wagner. Yet one day, eight years after Verdi had retired for the second time, Boito, the great Verdi hater, came to Sant' Agata, hat in hand, to ask Verdi to compose music for two Shakespearean music dramas he had written. The second of those music dramas, Falstaff, was to be Verdi's second comedy, and his last opera. Falstaff is a towering monument to artistic collaboration. In it, Verdi, Boito, and Shakespeare tell us that life is a great cosmic joke, and, since we cannot escape being its brunt, we might as well laugh along. Dover republished an early Ricordi edition of Falstaff. Ricordi is, simply put, the most useful publisher of late romantic Italian opera, especially of Verdi and Puccini. The scholarship is top notch, making this Dover edition quite a useful volume. The book itself is, as always, well crafted and easy to read. The score may be too large, and the book too small, to make this volume useful for the podium, but at home, in front of the stereo, it's invaluable. Falstaff is one of the west's great example's of existentialism expressed in artistic form. If you are not familiar with this opera, I strongly recommend you buy this score, and a good recording to go with it, and knock yourself out.

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