



ROSSINI.

*Engraved by George Smeeton, 3 Old Bailey, London.*

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ROSSINI, Gioacchino, *ros-se'-ne*, an illustrious Italian composer, was the son of a strolling musician, by whom he was taught the rudiments of his art: but, having a fine voice, he was placed under a skilful tutor in order to acquire the art of vocalization. At twelve years of age he sang in the churches of Bologna; and when, at fifteen, his voice broke, he was entered of the Lyceum of Bologna, in order to acquire a more abstruse knowledge of the musical art. Young Rossini, however, regarded the study of double counterpoint as drudgery, and happening to hear his master, Padre Mattei, observe one day that single counterpoint was sufficient knowledge for a composer who only aspired to write the lighter kinds of music,—“Do you mean to say, Padre,” he exclaimed, “that with what I have learned already I could write operas?” “Why, yes,” answered the Padre. “Then,” replied Rossini, “I mean to write operas; and I don't want any more lessons.” But although he took no more lessons from Mattei, he laboured assiduously at the task of self-instruction. In 1813 he produced his opera of “Tancredi,” which at once made its composer famous throughout Europe. Encouraged by this success, he produced a number of other works in quick succession, all of which, however, were inferior to the work which brought him into popularity. In 1816 he produced his world-famous “Barber of Seville,” at Rome. Those of his later works which still keep the stage, are “La Cenerentola,” “La Gazza Ladra,” “La Donna del Lago,” and “Guglielmo Tell.” This last was written at the age of thirty-seven, and with it closed the career of Rossini as a composer. “An additional success would add nothing to my fame,” he said; “a failure would injure it.” After holding the post of manager of the Italian Opera at Paris during some time, he, in 1836, returned to his native country, where he continued to reside till 1856, when he repaired to Paris once more. B. at Pesaro, near Bologna, 1792; D. 1868. 102.438.1