The words were written in 1847 by the 20-year-old student and patriot Goffredo Mameli, and set to music two months later by Michele Novaro.

At the London International Exhibition of 1862 the composer Giuseppe Verdi chose this song to represent Italy.

In 1946 Italy became a republic and "L'Inno di Mameli" was provisionally chosen as the country's new national anthem. This choice was made official in law only in 2005, almost 60 years later.