

Fondazione
ARENA DI VERONA

**This is the program booklet
in easy language for the opera
Aida by Giuseppe Verdi**



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Title

The title of the opera is Aida.

Opera is a way to tell a story
with music, characters, lyrics
and sometimes with dance.

Composer

The composer of Aida is Giuseppe Verdi.

A composer writes the music for an opera.

Libretto

Antonio Ghislanzoni wrote the lyrics of Aida.

The lyrics of an opera are called librettos
and the writer is called a librettist.

Characters

The characters in an opera sing songs.

Some of the songs are for voices in a high pitch.

They are called sopranos and mezzo-sopranos.

Some are in low pitch for tenors, baritones and bass.

The characters in the opera Aida are:

- **Aida**

Aida is a slave girl from Ethiopia.

She is the main character in the story.

Aida is a soprano.

- **Radamès**

Radamès is the Captain of the Guard in Egypt.

He is a tenor.

- **Amneris**

Amneris is the King's daughter.

She is a mezzosoprano.

- **The King**

The King is the Pharaoh of Egypt.

He is a bass.

- **Amonasro**

Amonasro is the king of Ethiopia.

He is a baritone.

- **Ramfis**

Ramfis is the High Priest.

He is a bass.

- **The High Priestess**

The High Priestess is a female priest.

She is a soprano.

- **The Messenger**

The Messenger brings messages.

He is a tenor.

Other characters in an opera or a play are called extras.

Extras are often in the background and they do not have names.

Some of the extras in Aida are:

- **Priests**
- **Priestesses**
- **Ministers**
- **Captains**
- **Soldiers**
- **Officials**
- **Ethiopian slaves and prisoners**
- **Egyptian people**

Photos from Aida

This photo shows the scenography of the first act of Aida.

Scenography is all the objects on the stage during a performance.



There is a large golden pyramid with
a long set of stairs.

At the top stand the King and the priest Ramfis.

There are guards and priests on the stairs.

In the background there are two large statues of pharaohs.



This photo shows a scene from the second act.

There is a large golden pyramid

with a big head of a pharaoh at the top.

At the top of the stairs are the King and

Amneris seated on a throne.

At the centre of the stage, a female dancer with

a blue dress dances with her arms raised.



This photo shows a scene from the third act.

Priestesses are sitting on stairs.

The scene is illuminated by a blue light.



This photo shows a scene from the fourth act.

There is a large golden pyramid.

In front of the pyramid, there is a large statue of a pharaoh.

On the stairs there are many soldiers.

On the sides of the stage there are large sphinxes and statues.

Below the stage, the orchestra and part of the audience are visible.

The Story of Aida

The story of Aida has four acts.

An act is a part of an opera or a play,
like the chapter of a book.

Aida is a story about love and war.

It tells the story about a war between
the two countries Egypt and Ethiopia in Africa.

People living in Egypt are called Egyptians.

People living in Ethiopia are called Ethiopians.

It also tells the story about
the love between Radamès from Egypt
and Aida from Ethiopia.

Act 1

Egypt and Ethiopia were enemies.

Ramfis who is a High Priest
tells Radamès that the Ethiopians
want to start a war with Egypt.

Radamès loves Aida
but Aida is Ethiopian.
She is the Princess of Ethiopia
and the daughter of King Amonasro.

Aida is Amneris's slave.

Amneris is the Princess of Egypt.

The war between the two countries begins.
King Amonasro is the leader of the Ethiopian army.
He is Aida's father.
Radamès is the leader of the Egyptian army.

Aida does not know what to do.
Should she support Egypt
since she loves Radamès?
Or should she support Ethiopia
and her father King Amonasro?

Act 2

Amneris tells Aida that Radamès is dead.
It makes Aida very sad.
She does not know that Radamès actually is alive.
Amneris had told her a lie.

Egypt wins the war
and all the Ethiopians are put in prisons.
The Egyptians have a big parade
to celebrate how they won the war.
The Ethiopian prisoners are participating
in the parade.
One of the prisoners is King Amonasro.
No one knows he is the King of Ethiopia
except his daughter Aida.
He pretends to be a soldier.

The King of Egypt decides that
Aida and Amonasro must stay
in Egypt as prisoners.
He says that Aida and Amonasro
are enemies of Egypt
since they are Ethiopians.

The King of Egypt also decides that
his daughter Amneris should marry Radamès.
Radamès won the war and is a hero.
Amneris should marry a hero.

Act 3

The Egyptian princess Amneris prays in a temple.
Aida and her father Amonasro also go to the temple.
It is only Aida who knows
that Amonasro is the King of Ethiopia.

Amonasro promises Aida
to take her back home to Ethiopia.
They need to leave before the soldiers see them.
Aida must ask Radamès
where the Egyptian soldiers are.

Radamès loves Aida so much
that he tells her where the soldiers are.

When Aida is talking with Radamès
her father tells Radamès that
he is the King of Ethiopia and not a soldier.

Princess Amneris is in the temple
and she hears this.
Amneris tells everyone that Radamès
is helping the Ethiopians.
Radamès is arrested.
Aida and Amonasro escape.

Act 4

Amneris is very jealous that Radamès
was helping Aida and Amonasro.
She wants to marry Radamès.
and she needs to talk to him.
She asks her father to free Radamès
from prison.

Radamès does not want to speak to Amneris.
He does not want to marry Amneris.
He does not love Amneris.
Radamès loves Aida
but Aida ran away.
He says he wants to die.

The priests are putting Radamès
in a burial vault to die.

A vault is a room of stone with coffins.

Before the priests close the door
Aida secretly goes into the vault
without anyone seeing her.

She loves Radamès
and she wants to die with him.

This is how the tragic love story
of the opera *Aida* ends.

Radamès and Aida never had the chance
to live a life together.

Director's Notes

This version of Aida is directed

by **Franco Zeffirelli**.

Franco Zeffirelli is one of the most famous Italian directors in the world.

This version was performed for the first time in 2002 at the Arena di Verona.

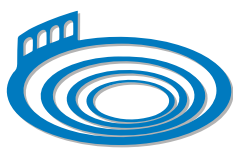
The story is set in ancient Egypt.

At the centre of the stage, there is a large pyramid.

With the lights and scene changes, the pyramid represents different places.

The costumes are colourful and full of decorations.

There are scenes with many people on the stage, and the scenes tell the stories of the main characters.



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You can find the online version of this booklet on the website of
the “Arena for All” project

<https://www.arena.it/en/arena-verona-opera-festival/arena-per-tutti/>



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