

Aida

GIUSEPPE VERDI / 1870

SUNG IN ITALIAN
APPROXIMATE RUNNING TIME: 160 minutes

The grand set design, very often put up to stage this opera, must not distract the audience from the intimate feelings of the characters and their most inner dimension which are the main points of this work. Aida is an infinitely emotional and sweet love story, inserted in a political plot. So great a piece of art that, as it is often the case with Verdi, only big voices can do justice to the astonishingly beautiful score.

This Verdi's opera in 4 acts mostly owes his worldwide success to its triumphal marches (Aida's trumpets), that frequently overshadow the score richness and complexity. The opera' score can be described as martial and pompous, it grandiosely accompanies the march of triumphant armies but it is also about human passions such as love, tenderness, jealousy...sweet and harmonious during the first act, passionate and tragic when love scenes occur, the score turns excruciating when the two lovers ultimately die.



MAIN CHARACTERS

Aida, Ethiopian slave (soprano)

Radamès, Egyptian captain (tenor)

Amneris, Pharaoh's daughter (mezzo)

Amonasro, Ethiopian king (baritone)

Ramphis, High Egyptian Priest (bass)

THE PLOT

In the Egypt of the pharaohs, Ethiopian king Amonasro threatens to attack Thebe and the entire Nile valley. Young captain of the guard Radamès finds himself in love with a juvenile Ethiopian slave, named Aida, whose being Amonasro's daughter he completely ignores. Pharaoh's daughter Amneris is in love with Radames, instead. Jealousy and passion alongside with betrayal and war will eventually lead to the death of the young slave and her beloved captain.

Act 1

High Priest Ramphis learns from Radamès that Amonasro intends to attack Thebe. Radamès, on the other hand, dreams to be appointed commander of the Egyptian army and to annihilate the Ethiopians infantry in order to be able to claim the hand of Aida, young Ethiopian Pharaoh's daughter 'slave. However, Amneris is in love with the young captain and gets ballistic at the idea that he has feeling for her slave, whose heart is parted between the love for her home country and that she feels for the young Egyptian.

Act 2

Amneris tricks Aida into confessing her love for Radamès. Upon triumphantly returning from Ethiopia and accompanied by festive trumpets he asks the pharaoh to pardon the prisoners, among which stands Ethiopian's king Amonasro and his daughter Aida. Pharaoh decides to grant Radamès request and rewards him with Amneris' hand.

Act 3

Radamès and Aida arrange to meet by the Nile's bank but the rendezvous is discovered by Amonasro that thus becomes aware of his daughter 'secret love. He then suggests her to use the advantages of the situation to wring useful information, that might be beneficial to the Ethiopian cause, out of Radames. Aida begs her beloved to flee to Ethiopia together and after agreeing he discloses details regarding the route the Egyptian army is taking. After overhearing the conversation, Amonasro gets out of his hiding place and offers the throne and his daughter's hand to the young commander. Nevertheless, they're all oblivious of the fact Amneris has witnessed it all and quickly runs to the High Priest that eventually manages to get Radamès arrested for betrayal, whilst Aida is let free to runaway.

Act 4

Amneris promises to spare Radamès life if he gives up his feeling for Aida but he rejects the offer and gets walled up. Amneris is devastated and cries her heart out in the attempt to save her beloved's life. In his tomb, the former commander falls prey of sadness and despair but suddenly finds out Aida is in the tomb as well to hold his hand on his way to death.

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