

**AIDA, OPERA
IN FOUR ACTS**

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Aida, opera in four acts by Giuseppe Verdi

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GIUSEPPE VERDI

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IN FOUR ACTS**

AÏDA

OPERA IN FOUR ACTS

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NOTE

The opera of "Aïda" was written at the request of the Khedive of Egypt, Ismail Pacha, for the new opera house which he had built in Cairo. Contrary to the general impression, "Aïda" was not written for the opening of the opera house which took place in 1869. The first performance did take place there, however, but not until December 24, 1871; and the first performance in Europe was at the La Scala, Milan, February 8, 1872.

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THE STORY OF THE ACTION

Aida, daughter of Amonasro, King of Ethiopia, has been led into captivity by the Egyptians. While in bondage she conceives a tender passion for Radames, a young Egyptian warrior, who warmly responds to her affection. The opening incidents of the opera disclose these facts, and set forth, besides, the choice of Radames as leader of an expedition against the invading forces of Ethiopia, and the love, still unrevealed, of Amneris, daughter of Egypt's sovereign, for the fortune-favored chieftain. Amneris suspects the existence of a rival, but does not learn the truth until Radames returns victorious. The second act commences with a scene between the Princess and the slave. Amneris wrests from Aida the secret she longs and yet dreads to fathom, and dire hate at once possesses her. Radames comes back, laden with spoils. Among his prisoners—his rank being unknown to his captors—is Amonasro, father of Aida. Radames asks of his sovereign that the captives be freed. The King consents to releasing all of them except Aida and Amonasro. The monarch then bestows upon the unwilling Radames the hand of Amneris, and amid songs of jubilation the act terminates. In the third act the marriage of Amneris and Radames is on the eve of celebration. Radames, however,

is devotedly attached to Aida, and the maiden, urged thereunto by Amonasro, seeks to persuade the soldier to flee to Ethiopia and turn his sword against his native land. Without resolving upon the act of treachery, Radames lends an ear to her supplications. The party is about to take to flight, when the High Priest, Ramphis, and Amneris, both of whom have overheard the lovers, appear. Aida and Amonasro, on the advice of Radames, escape. Radames remains to await his fate. This is speedily decided. Radames, in act the fourth, is tried on a charge of treason. Amneris, repentant, vainly endeavors to save his life,—for the lover of Aida scorns to renounce her,—and he is deaf to the entreaties of the daughter of the King, whose jealousy, as Amneris herself is aware, has brought about his downfall. The dénouement is not long delayed. The final picture shows the interior of the Temple of Vulcan. Above is the hall of worship; below, the vault in which Radames, doomed to die, is interred alive by the priests. As the stone is sealed over his head, Aida, who has awaited Radames in the tomb, rises before him. The lovers are locked in a last embrace as Amneris, heart-broken, kneels in prayer on the marble which parts from the living the couple now united in death.

CHARACTERS

AIDA, AN ETHIOPIAN SLAVE	SOPRANO
AMNERIS, DAUGHTER OF THE KING OF EGYPT	MEZZO SOPRANO
RADAMES, CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD	TENOR
AMONASRO, KING OF ETHIOPIA, FATHER OF AIDA	BARITONE
RAMPHIS, HIGH PRIEST	BASS
THE KING OF EGYPT	BASS
A MESSENGER	TENOR

PRIESTS, PRIESTESSES, SOLDIERS, ETHIOPIAN SLAVES AND PRISONERS, EGYPTIANS, ETC.

Scene: Memphis and Thebes, during the Epoch of the Pharaohs.

AÏDA

ACT I.

SCENE I.—Hall in the Palace of the King at Memphis; to the right and left a colonnade with statues and flowering shrubs; at the back a grand gate, from which may be seen the temples and palaces of Memphis and the Pyramids.

(RADAMES AND RAMPHIS.)

Ramphis.

Yes, a report runs that the Ethiopian dares
Again defy us, and the Valley of the Nile
And Thebes to threaten.—A messenger
shortly
Will bring the truth.

Radames.

The sacred Isis
Didst thou consult?

Ramphis.

She has named
Of the Egyptian phalanxes
The supreme leader.

Radames.

Oh! happy man!

Ramphis

(with meaning, gazing at RADAMES.)

Young and brave is he. Now to the king
I convey the decrees of the goddess.

(Exit.)

Radames

(alone.)

If that warrior I were! If my dream
Should be verified! An army of brave men
Led by me—victory—the applause
Of all Memphis! And to thee, my sweet
Aïda,
To return, crowned with laurels!
To say to thee,—for thee I have fought, and
for thee conquered!

ATTO I.

SCENA I.—Sala nel Palazzo del Re a Menfi. A destra e a sinistra una colonnata con statue e arbusti in fiori—Grande porta nel fondo, da cui appariscono i templi, i palazzi di Menfi e le Piramidi.

(RADAMES E RAMFIS.)

Ramfis.

Si: corre voce che l'Etiopie ardisca
Sfidarci ancora, e del Nilo la valle
E Tebe minacciar—Fra breve un messo
Recherà il ver.

Radames.

La sacra
Iside consultasti?

Ramfis.

Ella ha nominato
Delle Egizie falangi
El condottier supremo.

Radames.

Oh lui felice!

Ramfis

(con intenzione, fissando RADAMES.)

Giovine e prode è desso—Ora, del Nume
Reco i decreti al Re.

(Esce.)

Radames

(solo.)

Se quel guerrier
Io fossi! se il mio sogno
Si avverasse!... Un esercito di prodi
Da me guidato... e la vittoria... e il plauso
Di Menfi tutta!—E a te, mia dolce Aïda,
Tornar di lauri rinto...
Dirti: per te ho pugnato e per te ho vinto!

CELESTE AIDA—RADIANT AIDA Air (Radames)

Andantino *p* *dolce*

Ce-les-te A-i-da, for-ma di-vi-na, Mi-sti-co ser-to
 Heav'n-ly A-i-da, beau-ty re-splen-dent, Mys-te-rious blend-ing

pp

di lu-ces fior, del mio pen-sie-ro, tu sei re-gi-na, tu di mia
 of flow'rs and light, Queen of my soul thou reign-est tran-scen-dent, Thou of my

dolciss.

vi-ta sei lo splen-dor; Il tuo bel cie-lo vor-rei ri-
 life art the splen-dor bright! To thy bright skies once more I'd re-

animando

dar-ti, le dol-ci brez-ze del pa-tria suol, un ra-gal ser-to sul crin po-
 store thee, To the soft air of thy na-tive land, Gar-lands im-pe-rial I would unathe

sar-ti, er-ger-ti un tro-no vi-ci-no al sol, ah! Ce-les-te A-i-da,
 o'er thee, Raise thee a throne near the sun to stand! ah! Heav'n-ly A-i-da,

for-ma di-vi-na, mi-sti-co rag-gio di lu-ces fior,
 beau-ty re-splen-dent, Mys-te-rious blend-ing of flow'rs and light,

del mio pen-sie-ro tu sei re-gi-na, tu di mia vi-ta sei lo splen-dor.
 Queen of my soul thou reign-est tran-scen-dent, Thou of my life art the splen-dor bright.

ppp

Il tuo bel cie-lo vor-rei ri-dar-ti; le dol-ci brez-ze del pa-tria
 To thy bright skies once more I'd re-store thee, To the soft air of thy na-tive

*Amneris.*

(Enter AMNERIS.)

What unwonted fire in thy glance!
With what noble pride glows thy face.
Worthy of envy—oh, how much—
Would be the woman whose beloved aspect
Should awaken in thee this light of joy!

Radames.

With an adventurous dream
My heart was blessed. To-day the goddess
Declared the name of the warrior who to the
field
The Egyptian troops shall lead. If I were
To such honor destined!

Amneris.

Has not another dream
More gentle, more sweet,
Spoken to thy heart? Hast thou not in
Memphis
Desires—hopes?

Radames.

I! (What a question!
Perhaps—the hidden love
Which burns my heart she has discovered—
The name of her slave
She reads in my thoughts!)

Amneris.

(Oh! woe if another love
Should burn in his heart;
Woe, if my search should penetrate
This fatal mystery!)

(Enter ALBA.)

Radames

(seeing ALBA).

Ehe'

Amneris.

(AMNERIS e detto.)

Quale insolita gioia
Nel tuo sguardo! Di quale
Nobil ferezza ti balena il volto!
Degna di invidia oh! quanto
Saria la donna il cui bramato aspetto
Tanta luce di gaudio in te destasse!

Radames.

D'un sogno avventuroso
Si beava il mio cuore—Oggi, la diva
Profferse il nome del guerrier che al campo
Le schiere Egizie condurrà... S'io fossi
A tale onor prescelto...

Amneris.

Nè un altro sogno mai
Più gentil... più soave...
Al cuore ti parlò?... Non hai tu in Menfi
Desiderii... speranze?

Radames.

Io!... (quale inchiesta!)
Forse... l'arcano amore
Scopri che m' arde in core...
Della sua schiava il nome
Mi lesse nel pensier!)

Amneris.

(Oh! guai se un altro amore
Ardesse a lui nel core!...
Guai se il mio sguardo penetra
Questo fatal mister!)

(ALBA e detto.)

Radames

(vedendo ALBA).

Dessa!