

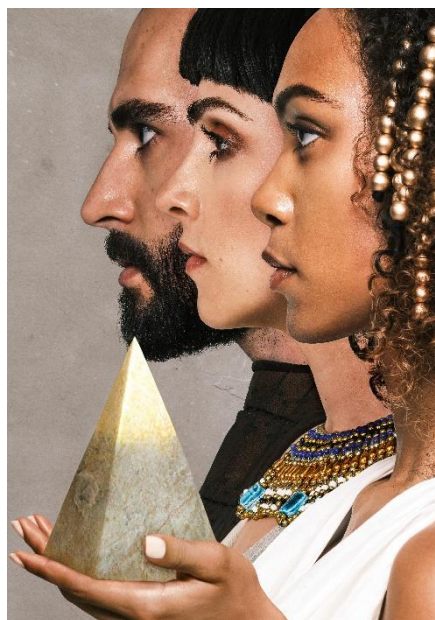
AIDA in the St. Margarethen Quarry – Verdi’s powerful ode to the immortality of love

AIDA by Giuseppe Verdi
In the ST. MARGARETHEN QUARRY
10 July – 24 August 2024

In summer 2024 the programme of the Oper im Steinbruch (Opera in the Quarry) features a masterpiece by Giuseppe Verdi: *Aida*. Verdi’s timeless classic opera was last performed in St. Margarethen in 2014. Directed by Thaddeus Strassberger with costumes by Giuseppe Palella – both of whom were involved at the Oper im Steinbruch in 2021 for *Turandot* – this opera returns to one of the most spectacular open-air stages in Europe. The premiere takes place on **10 July 2024**.

A proven leading team

In 2021 this successful duo conjured an Asian spirit in the St. Margarethen Quarry. In 2024, by contrast, the director and his international leading team invite us to take a journey back in time to the Egypt of the pharaohs, making the audience part of the dramatic love story between the servant girl Aida and the military captain Radames. In addition to the stunning stage set by Thaddeus Strassberger, opera fans can look forward to superb costumes created by Giuseppe Palella. This Italian-born artist won the prestigious Abbiati Award as Best Costume Designer in 2019 and was more recently voted Costume Designer of the Year 2023 by *Opernwelt* magazine. His unique costumes with great love of detail always harmonise with the stage set. For the lighting and light effects, the light designer Driscoll Otto has been engaged. In four productions, most recently for *Turandot* in 2021, projections by Media Apparat were to be seen on the stage set. This year the media artists will project visuals of ancient Egypt onto the open-air stage. A team of stunt performers led by Ran Arthur Braun, who will be responsible for spectacular stunt effects for the third season in succession, will put all of their muscle power into staging some breathtaking scenes. CRYSTAL is the company that provides the unique water effects.



Aida was last seen in the St. Margarethen Quarry in 2014. The new production this summer will be the 25th opera production to be staged at this extraordinary venue.

“All members of the leading team and I are delighted to bring Verdi’s masterpiece ‘Aida’ back to the stage of the Opera im Steinbruch after ten years. ‘Aida’ represents the musical zenith of Giuseppe Verdi’s work. In this masterpiece he combines great Italian opera with heroic, grandiose marches and intimate chamber-music moments for the first time, in a unique mood of exotic African sounds. The libretto, based on the tales of the French Egyptologist Auguste Mariette, transports us to a fascinating, martial, mystic and passionate world in the age of the ancient Egyptian pharaohs. I am proud to present this breathtaking operatic spectacle to our audiences”, says **Daniel Serafin**, director of the Oper im Steinbruch.

Stefan Ottrubay, president of the Esterházy Foundation, is enthusiastic about the new production of *Aida* in 2024: *“In the last few years, the venue has been transformed into a stage with an international reputation. This is confirmed not only by the high attendance figures each year but also by the array of renowned artists whom we are able to engage each year for this unique location. I feel confident that the return of one of the greatest works in the operatic repertoire to the most beautiful open-air stage in Europe will once again be a great success.”*

Musical direction and a top international ensemble

Iván López-Reynoso will conduct *Aida*. He studied violin with Gellya Dubrova, piano with Maestro Alexander Pashkov and choir conducting with Maestro Jorge Medina and completed his study of orchestra conducting with distinction under Maestro Gonzalo Romeu. In July 2024 this young, up-and-coming conductor will take the rostrum at the Oper im Steinbruch for the first time and lead the ensemble of top international singers.

Aida, the Ethiopian princess, is played by the outstanding sopranos Leah Crocetto, Ekaterina Sannikova, who gave a brilliant performance in 2022 as Abigaille in *Nabucco*, and Leah Gordon. Leah Crocetto sang *Aida* in June 2023 at the Sydney opera house, earning great applause and critical praise for her performance. The tenors Hovhannes Ayyazyan, Jorge Puerte and Mikheil Sheshaberidze take the role of the military captain Radames. *Aida*'s rival Amneris is brought to life by the impressive voices of Raehann Bryce-Davis, Kseniia Nikolaieva and Sofija Petrović. The American mezzo-soprano Raehann Bryce-Davis was lauded by the New York Times as a “*striking mezzo soprano ... that sang and spoke potently and moved vivaciously*”. Leo An and Zoltán Nagy sing the part of Amonasro, while Jongmin Park and Insung Sim play the high priest Ramphis. Ivan Zinoviev and Artyom Wasnetsov have the role of the king, and Sacerdotessa is rendered by the wonderful voice of Melissa Purnell. Jongmin Park (*Zaccharia* in *Nabucco*, 2022) and Ivan Zinoviev (*Moralès* in *Carmen*, 2023/high priest of Baal in *Nabucco*, 2022) look forward to returning to the Oper im Steinbruch, where they made a lasting impression in previous productions.

The Piedra Festival Orchestra will once again play as the resident orchestra in the coming year, rendering the strains of *Aida*'s lyrical arias, Radames' dream of romance in 'Heavenly *Aida*' and the opulent triumphal march. As in past years, the Vienna Philharmonia Choir directed by Walter Zeh will contribute their outstanding, proven vocal sound.

Aida – a secret and impossible love story

The opera story is set in ancient Egypt and tells of the tragic love story between the Ethiopian princess *Aida* and the Egyptian general Radames. The Egyptian princess Amneris is in love with Radames, who has been chosen to lead the army in the coming war against Ethiopia. However, he secretly loves *Aida*, an Ethiopian slave in the service of Amneris. *Aida* for her part loves Radames, but has divided loyalties, as she must keep the secret of her origins as an Ethiopian princess. During the war, *Aida*'s father, King Amonasro of Ethiopia, is taken prisoner and discovers that his daughter is still alive in Egypt. He urges his daughter to pass him information about the Egyptian forces. *Aida* is in a moral dilemma, as she is torn between her love for Radames and loyalty to her father and her people.

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DATES & INFORMATION

Premiere: 10 July 2024, 8:15 pm

Further dates:

11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26, 27 and 28 July 2024

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 22nd, 23rd and 24th, August 2024

Start July: 8.30 pm, admission from 6.30 pm

Start August: 8.00 pm, admission from 6.00 pm

Duration: approx. 2.45 hours

Prices: € 49 to € 168

TICKET ORDERS

Ticket office pan.event

T: +43 2682 65065

E: tickets@panevent.at

www.operimsteinbruch.at

Tickets for *AIDA* in the St. Margarethen quarry can be booked at the pan.event ticket office on T +43 2682 65 065 or by e-mail: tickets@panevent.at. All information at www.operimsteinbruch.at.

MUSICAL DIRECTOR: Iván López-Reynoso
DESIGN AND STAGE DESIGN: Thaddeus Strassberger
COSTUME: Giuseppe Palella
LIVE ACTION DIRECTOR: Ran Arthur Braun
SOUND: Volker Werner
VIDEO: Media Apparat
LIGHTING DESIGN: Driscoll Otto
WATER EFFECTS: CRYSTAL
CHOIR DIRECTOR: Walter Zeh

AIDA: Leah Crocetto / Ekaterina Sannikova / Leah Gordon
RADAMES: Jorge Puerta / Hovhannes Ayvazyan / Mikheil Sheshaberidze
AMNERIS: Raehann Bryce-Davis / Kseniia Nikolaieva / Sofija Petrović
AMONASRO: Zoltán Nagy
RAMPHIS: Jongmin Park / Insung Sim
KING: Artyom Vasnetsov / Ivan Zinoviev
SACERDOTESSA: Melissa Purnell
MESSEGARIO: Xhoiden Dervishi

Philharmonia Chorus Vienna (rehearsal: Walter Zeh)
Stunts and extras of the Opera in the Quarry
Piedra Festival Orchestra

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