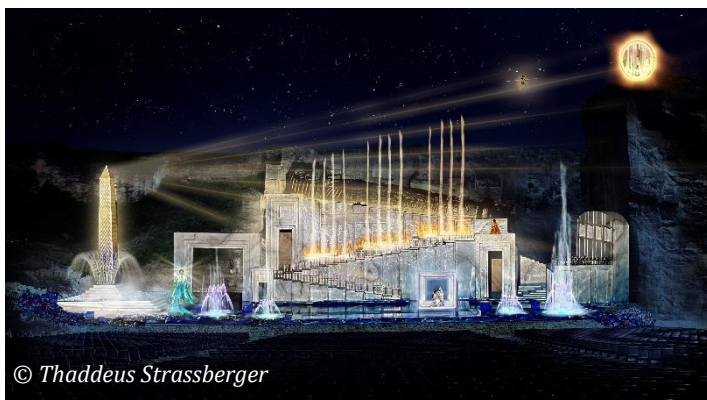


AIDA in the St. Margarethen Quarry – back to ancient Egypt with the start of rehearsals

The rehearsals for *Aida* have begun! Responsibility for this year's production at the Oper im Steinbruch (Opera in the Quarry) lies once again in the hands of the dream team of Thaddeus Strassberger and Giuseppe Palella, who delighted audiences in 2021 with a stunning *Turandot*. Following the Asian atmosphere three years ago, audiences can now look forward to a trip back in time to the ancient Egypt of the pharaohs.



© Thaddeus Strassberger

Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida* with its fantastic music and moving love story is one of the best-loved and most frequently performed of all operas. To stand out among the mass of productions something extraordinary is needed therefore. This is why the director and stage designer **Thaddeus Strassberger** promises an abundance of new and spectacular features for his *Aida*, which will be staged from 10 July until 24

August at the Oper im Steinbruch in St. Margarethen in the Burgenland region of Austria: *"We will present much that has never been experienced before in this form and quality, even at the Oper im Steinbruch, which has a history of superlatives."* One sensation, for example, is a water show, never seen before in Europe in this way. The costume designer **Giuseppe Palella**, too, predicts that this *Aida* will be an even greater experience than *Turandot*: *"The costumes are more elaborate, and the stage set has more and larger elements. On top of that there will be fire effects and, for the first time, water – and many more surprises for the audience. Nobody will be bored by this production, that is for sure."*

The artistic strategy is to create a perfect symbiosis of an opulent stage set, outfits that are magnificent down to the last detail, ingenious choreography and video projections, and outstanding performers. Impressive mass scenes and spectacular stunts alternate with poetic, intimate images to bring to life the touching, tragic love story between the Ethiopian princess Aida and the Egyptian military commander Radames in the context of a conflict between their peoples.

Iván López-Reynoso and the PIEDRA Festival Orchestra will bring a glow to spectators' eyes and a tingle to their skin – at the latest when Verdi's splendid Triumphal March rings out. The 34-year-old conductor López-Reynoso has an international reputation and regularly works with such top ensembles as the Zurich Philharmonia, the Orquesta Sinfónica de Madrid (OSM) and the National Symphony Orchestra of Mexico. Under his direction the array of leading international soloists including Leah Crocetto, Jorge Puerta, Raehann Bryce-Davis and Zoltán Nagy, will make Verdi's superb music resound.

To transport the audience back to ancient Egypt, the Viennese company Winter Artservice has excelled itself once again in creating the stage set. No fewer than 470,000 screws and 5.2 tons of plaster and paint were used, while 6,800 robot and computer-controlled machine hours went into making it.

A particular highlight of the stage is a huge sarcophagus that fits with millimeter precision into the rocky landscape of the quarry. It is as long as two and a half buses and is placed above the temple – an undertaking made possible by using enormous cranes and requiring the utmost exactness. However, the role of unofficial star of the production has already been taken by a huge golden elephant. Mobile and filled with surprises, it was constructed by means of an ingenious system of wooden boxes, modern CNC machines and robotic arms. And there is one more technical masterpiece: the fountains distributed across the stage, providing an entirely new theatrical experience for the audience.

In these magnificent surroundings, the singers and extras will act in costumes designed by **Giuseppe Palella**. For this production it was clear to him that he would not use “old-fashioned or plain costumes” of the sort familiar from other versions of the opera: *“In the design we start from elements that stand for Egypt itself in all their wonder: the sparkling light of the sand, the clear turquoise water of the Nile, the glowing fire in the night that illuminates the imposing backdrop of the pyramids, the precious gems that adorn the pharaohs’ sarcophaguses ... the list of visual stimuli that have inspired us is simply endless. We don’t intend to restrict ourselves to a period of time, but to put on stage the indescribable fascination of this unique land, its culture and its history.”*

This summer’s new production is the 25th opera in total to be staged at this remarkable venue. **Daniel Serafin**, director of the Oper im Steinbruch, is delighted that rehearsals are now beginning. *“At last we are getting started here – the coming weeks will see extraordinary events. The whole team is working feverishly towards our grand premiere on 10 July. We can hardly wait to present this Aida and to see the astonishment in the eyes of the audience.”*

Tickets for *Aida* in the Steinbruch St. Margarethen can be ordered from the pan.event ticket office by phone, tel. + 43 2682 65 0 65 or by e-mail: tickets@panevent.at. For further information, please see www.operimsteinbruch.at.

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DATES & INFORMATION

Premiere: **10 July 2024**

Other dates:

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

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

Start in July: 8.30 pm, admission from 6.30 pm

Start in August: 8.00 pm, admission from 6.00 pm

Length of performance: approx. 2 hrs 45 min.

Prices: € 49 to € 168

TICKETS for AIDA in the Quarry

Ticket office pan.event

T: +43 2682 65 0 65

E: tickets@panevent.at

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