



TOLEDO OPERA

Audience Preview Guide

Wednesday, October 14, 2026 - Student Night at the Opera

Friday, October 16, 2026

Sunday, October 18, 2026

Valentine Theatre

GIUSEPPE VERDI'S

AIDA

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The Setting

Place: Memphis and Thebes in Ancient Egypt

Time: The time of the reign of the Pharaohs

Characters

Aida

By Giuseppe Verdi

Libretto by Antonio Ghislanzoni

Premiered in Cairo on December 24, 1871; however, Verdi did not attend the premiere in Cairo and was most dissatisfied with the fact that the audience consisted of invited dignitaries, politicians, and critics but no members of the general public. He therefore considered the Italian (and European) première, held at La Scala, Milan on February 8, 1872 - a performance in which he was heavily involved at every stage - to be its real première.

Aida, a captured Ethiopian princess and handmaiden to Amneris

Radamès, an Egyptian army commander

Amneris, daughter of the King of Egypt

Amonasro, King of Ethiopia and Aida's father

Ramfis, the High Priest of Egypt

The King of Egypt, the Pharaoh and Amneris' father

Priests, priestesses, ministers, soldiers, Ethiopian prisoners, and Egyptian people



Character Pronunciations

Aida: Ah-ee-dah

Radamès: Rah-dah-MEZ

Amneris: Ahm-NEH-riss

Amonasro: Ahl-moh-NAHZ-roh

Ramfis: RAHM-fiss

Synopsis

Place: Memphis and Thebes in Ancient Egypt

Time: The time of the reign of the Pharaohs

Act I

At the royal palace in Memphis, the high priest Ramfis tells the warrior Radamès that Ethiopia is preparing another attack against Egypt. Radamès hopes to command his army. He is in love with Aida, the Ethiopian slave of Princess Amneris, the king's daughter, and he believes that victory in the war would enable him to free Aida and marry her. But Amneris loves Radamès, and when the three meet, she jealously senses his feelings for Aida. A messenger tells the King of Egypt and the assembled priests and soldiers that the Ethiopians are advancing. The King names Radamès to lead the army, and all join in a patriotic anthem. Left alone, Aida is torn between her love for Radamès and loyalty to her native country, where her father, Amonasro, is king. She prays to the gods for mercy.

In the temple of Vulcan, the priests consecrate Radamès to the service of the god. Ramfis orders him to protect the homeland.

Act II

Ethiopia has been defeated, and Amneris waits for the triumphant return of Radamès. When Aida approaches, the princess sends away her other attendants so that she can learn Aida's private feelings. She first pretends that Radamès has fallen in battle, then says he is still alive. Aida's reactions leave no doubt that she loves Radamès. Amneris, certain she will be victorious over her rival, leaves for the triumphal procession.

At the city gates, the King and Amneris observe the celebrations and crown Radamès with a victor's wreath. Captured Ethiopians are led in. Among them is Amonasro, Aida's father, who signals his daughter not to reveal his identity as king. Radamès is impressed by Amonasro's eloquent plea for mercy, asks for the death sentence on the prisoners to be overruled, and for them to be freed. The King grants his request but keeps Amonasro in custody. The King declares that as a victor's reward, Radamès will have Amneris's hand in marriage.

INTERMISSION

Act III

On the eve of Amneris's wedding, Ramfis and Amneris enter a temple on the banks of the Nile to pray. Aida, who is waiting for Radamès, is lost in thoughts of her homeland. Amonasro suddenly appears. Invoking Aida's sense of duty, he makes her agree to find out from Radamès which route the Egyptian army will take to invade Ethiopia. Amonasro hides as Radamès arrives and assures Aida of his love. They dream about their future life together, and Radamès agrees to run away with her. Aida asks him about his army's route, and just as he reveals the secret, Amonasro emerges from his hiding place. When he realizes that Amonasro is the King of Ethiopia, Radamès is horrified by what he has done. While Aida and Amonasro try to calm him, Ramfis and Amneris step out of the temple. Father and daughter are able to escape, but Radamès surrenders to the priests.

Act IV

Radamès awaits trial as a traitor, believing Aida to be dead. Even after he learns that she has survived, he rejects an offer by Amneris to save him if he renounces Aida. When he is brought before the priests, he refuses to answer their accusations and is condemned to be buried alive. Amneris begs for mercy, but the judges will not change their verdict. She curses the priests.

Aida has hidden in the vault to share Radamès's fate. They express their love for the last time while Amneris, in the temple above, prays for Radamès's soul.

Giuseppe Verdi 1813-1901

Born October 9 or 10, 1813, in northern Italy during its Napoleonic occupation, Giuseppe Verdi displayed an early interest in music. At age nine, he was playing the church organ in the small town of Busseto. Over the next nine years, the townspeople became sufficiently impressed with Verdi's musical abilities so they raised the money to send him to the Conservatory in Milan. At age 18, however, Verdi was considered too old (14 was the average age of the students) and not talented enough for the Conservatory.



Giuseppe Verdi
1813 - 1901

Fortunately for Verdi, a merchant and music lover in Busseto, Antonio Barezzi, paid for Verdi to study privately in Milan. After completing his studies, Verdi returned to Busseto to work as a conductor and music instructor. In 1836, he married Barezzi's daughter, Margherita. They moved to Milan and had two children. Sadly, their children died very young, and Margherita died in 1839 from encephalitis.

Verdi's first opera, *Oberto*, was performed at La Scala (in Milan) in 1839. *Oberto* was well-received, but Verdi's second opera, a comedy, was a failure. Coinciding with the loss of his family, Verdi contemplated giving up opera composition. The impresario (manager producer) of La Scala virtually 'forced' a libretto upon him, inspiring him to continue composing. The result was Verdi's third and highly successful opera, *Nabucco*, first performed in 1842. It also was an opportunity for Verdi to reconnect with the soprano, Giuseppina Strepponi, whom he ultimately married in 1859.

Nabucco was the start of Verdi's ever-growing popularity. Its theme of freedom for enslaved people caught the imaginations of the Italian people who, at that time, wanted a united, free Italy. Verdi became the symbol of that freedom movement. "Viva Verdi" was the independence cry heard during the fight for Italian independence. It was an anagram of his name to mean Vittorio Emmanuel King of Italy - Vittoria Emanuele Re d'Italia. In 1871, when Italy

became united, Verdi's most famous opera, *Aida*, was first produced.

Despite his great success as an opera composer, Verdi had many other interests. In 1849, Verdi and his partner (and ultimately wife), Giuseppina Strepponi, moved to a rural estate near his home town. There, he planted a tree for every opera he wrote. His employees were paid well and he extended his humanitarianism to others in society, including founding a hospital near his estate and establishing a home for aging musicians in Milan. He referred to this latter, the Casa di Riposo, as "my last and best work."

In 1852, Verdi composed *La Traviata*, based on the novel and play by Alexandre Dumas (the younger). Verdi wrote the music very quickly; he was under contract to write an opera and had started a different opera then changed his mind and decided to write an opera based on Dumas' work. He had signed a contract for a new opera, *Il Trovatore*, and started work on *La Dame aux Camelias*. His librettist, Francesco Maria Piave, had almost completed the libretto for the first opera when he had to stop and write the libretto for *La Traviata*, instead.

Two decades of tremendous creativity, from 1851 to 1871, culminated with *Aida*. Commissioned by the Khedive of Egypt as part of the celebration of the opening of the Suez Canal, *Aida* was produced with no expense spared. Props included a shield and helmet made of solid silver, a crown of pure gold, and a cast of 300 in the second act triumphal march.

From 1872 to 1883, Verdi temporarily 'retired' from opera writing. He continued to compose music, including the Manzoni *Requiem*, considered his most important non-operatic work. Much of this time period, however, was devoted to his farm. Then, in 1884, he began work on his second-last opera, *Otello*. It premiered in 1887 to great anticipation and then to great acclaim. At age 80, Verdi wrote one last opera, *Falstaff*, based on another Shakespearian character.

Verdi died January 27, 1901. Italy mourned his death, closing schools and holding a special session of the Senate where eulogies were read. Thousands jammed the streets to see the funeral procession of arguably Italy's greatest composer.

Verdi, *Aida*, the Suez Canal, and the Franco-Prussian War

When in the summer of 1869 as plans were being put in place to mark the inauguration of Cairo's new opera house, its director, Draneht Bey, had the brilliant idea to ask Giuseppe Verdi, the greatest opera composer of the day, to write a celebratory hymn to accompany the occasion. The composer declined the "honor." Apparently, the commission was far too small!

Verdi's curiosity had evidently been piqued, however. Within months, he was immersing himself in the composition of a much larger work to be performed at the Khedivial Opera House, itself built in the Egyptian capital to celebrate the completion of the Suez Canal in 1869. Planned for January 1871, the four-act opera *Aida* would take ancient Egypt as its setting: its plot based on a novel by the eminent French Egyptologist, Auguste Mariette. With due diligence, Verdi set about his studies of Egyptian customs, religion, and music, while Antonio Ghislanzoni was called upon to provide the libretto.

The initial idea for *Aida* had come from Mariette, who believed his story would work well in operatic form. In addition, he had a group of influential contacts including Camille du Locle, the influential theatre manager and co-librettist of Verdi's *Don Carlos*, and the Khedive Ismail Pasha, a ruler with big ambitions and deep pockets. Both gentlemen, as well as the Khedive's generous commission, must have helped in swaying Verdi to accept the project.

Not all went to plan, however. While the Khedivial Opera House successfully opened its doors in November 1869 with a production of his earlier opera, *Rigoletto*, events in Europe meant that its own Verdi commission would not arrive any time soon. When Mariette visited Paris to consult with Verdi and Du Locle in the summer of 1870, France was heading headlong into the Franco-Prussian War. By the scheduled premiere date the following January, a Prussian victory was inevitable, and the Cairo production's scenery and costumes were stuck in storage in the besieged French capital. Given that plans were already in place to stage *Aida* at La Scala immediately after its Cairo performances, the Khedive must have worried that there was a danger of his premiere getting superseded. However, Verdi assured him this would not happen.

The composer was true to his word. When, on 24 December 1871, Giovanni Bottesini lifted his baton for *Aida*'s debut, it was in Cairo, not Milan. Singing the title role on that occasion was soprano Antonietta Anastasi-Pozzoni, while tenor Pietro Mongini took the part of her lover Radamès.

La Scala's *Aida* duly followed on 8 February 1872, with Verdi himself there to enjoy the audience's lavish applause. He had chosen not to travel to Egypt for the premiere, joking that he feared being "mummified!" Ever the savvy politician, the composer doubtlessly hoped that his Italian audience would recognize the words sung by Ramfis, the high Priest of Egypt, "Victory is ours because God is on our side," were exactly those that had been spoken in triumph by King William of Prussia only a few months earlier.

150 years on, *Aida* remains as popular as ever. Sadly, a visit to the Khedivial Opera House is not possible: it was destroyed by fire in October 1971 and has been replaced by a multistory parking structure! Where Egyptian commanders once marched in triumph and Ethiopian servants sang of their woes, today you'll hear only the revving of engines and the screeching of tires.

The Magic Behind Aida: How Toledo Opera Brings Grand Opera to Life

From the audience, it begins simply: a seat taken, the house lights dimming, the first notes rising inside the Valentine Theatre. But what unfolds onstage in Toledo Opera's production of *Aida* is the result of a process far more intricate—one that has been quietly building for nearly a year and a half.

Eighteen months earlier, the work begins. Artistic and production teams set the foundation, identifying the voices and vision that will shape the opera. Internationally trained singers are selected for the principal roles—*Aida*, *Radamès*, *Amneris*, *Amonasro*, *Ramfis*, the King, the Messenger, and the High Priestess—while the Toledo Opera Chorus is assembled. A conductor and stage director are engaged, along with the stage management team responsible for guiding the production from rehearsal room to performance.

Design and logistics follow. To evoke the grandeur of ancient Egypt, Toledo Opera collaborated with Tri Cities Opera, securing a complete set and props package. Costumes, sourced from Wardrobe Witchery, bring texture and historical imagination to the stage. Lighting design adds another layer, shaping atmosphere through color, shadow, and intensity. Each visual element is carefully considered, yet none exists in isolation—they are components of a larger, unified vision.

Staging rehearsals begin three weeks before opening night. In studio spaces, the performers and creative team explore the score and its emotional landscape, refining movement, intention, and musical cohesion. Then, in the final week, the company moves into the theater itself. The set is installed. Costumes have been fitted early in the process and arrive at the theater. Lighting is programmed. This is “tech week,” where every element is integrated and tested in real time.

At the center of this transition is the stage management team. From a control position just out of sight, they coordinate every cue—lighting changes, scenic shifts, performer entrances. Assistant stage managers work at stage level, ensuring each artist is prepared, properly equipped, and in place at precisely the right moment. The margin for error is minimal; the coordination, exacting.

More than 150 individuals contribute to the production. Carpenters, electricians, dressers, wig and makeup artists, prop technicians, and administrative staff all play essential roles. Their work is largely invisible to the audience, yet it is what allows the performance to unfold seamlessly, from the first note to the final curtain.

And then, almost as quickly as it arrives, it is gone. After the final performance, the set is dismantled, the costumes packed away, the artists disperse. What remains is the memory of a shared experience—unique, unrepeatable.

This is the nature of live opera. Not fixed or permanent, but fleeting. A convergence of preparation, precision, and artistry that exists only in the moment it is performed.

By James M. Norman

What to Listen For

Though *Aida* is known as “the grandest of all grand operas,” replete with extravagant chorus, duets, and trios, the beautiful arias give us an inside-look into the thoughts and motivations of each character. The juxtaposition of intimate arias with lavish stage-filling scenes perfectly demonstrate the genius of Giuseppe Verdi

Celeste Aida (Radamès)

In the first aria of the opera, Radamès, the captain of the guards, sings of his two dreams: his desire to be chosen to lead the Egyptian troops into battle, and his contrasting desire to be worthy of the love of the beautiful Aida.



https://youtu.be/XP1vp_G9mLc?si=wewMcumlfwLMI2Pv

Ritorna vincitor! (Aida)

In this aria, Aida displays her conflicted emotions: though she wishes Radamès victory in battle, she realizes that this means the defeat of her father and the enslavement of her people.



<https://youtu.be/VGAQZgsGh8o?si=rDYMRytkDbAlpgRk>

Fu la sorte dell'armi a' tuoi funesta (Aida and Amneris)

In this dramatic duet, Amneris, the daughter of the King of Egypt, fully realizes that Aida, her servant, is her rival for the love of Radamès.



<https://youtu.be/IA-HZWp-fDs?si=4gnwdMcr5Wp4D6r>

Gloria all' Egitto, ad Iside (Full Cast)

One of the greatest moments in all opera, The Triumphal March celebrates Radamès victory over the Ethiopians.



<https://youtu.be/JqjUYArhd5E?si=wK96W1ed5X2jpk5>

Qui Radamès verra!... Oh patria mia (Aida)

While Aida waits for her rendezvous with Radamès, in despair, she sings of her love of Ethiopia, her homeland, which she fears she will never see again.



https://youtu.be/L_56dQteAIY?si=LsPHQulo9tDJtvSC

La fatal pietra sopra me si chiuse... (Aida, Radamès, and Amneris)

In this final scene, Aida has secretly stolen into the vault where Radames is to be entombed alive, so that she may die with her love. As the priests call on their god, Amneris prays for eternal peace for Radamès, as the two lovers take leave of this life together.



https://youtu.be/ZGZ5RRq5qJs?si=-CDHdSLP3_Fm6SqU

In Verdi's Time

1813 Giuseppe Fortunino Francesco Verdi born

1814 Napoleon abdicates and is exiled

1816 Rossini's *Barber of Seville* premieres in Rome

1818 Handel's *Messiah* premieres in the U.S. in Boston, MA

1820 Charles Macintosh of Scotland begins selling raincoats (Macs)

1822 Frederick Law Olmsted (Central park landscape architect) is born

1824 Beethoven's 9th Symphony premieres in Vienna

1826 3rd U.S. President Thomas Jefferson dies

1828 American dictionary patented by Webster

1829 1st typewriter is patented by William Austin Burt

1830 Donizetti's opera, *Anna Bolena*, premieres in Milan

1832 Louisa May Alcott (American author) is born

1833 Oberlin College, the first truly coeducational college opens

1835 Vincenzo Bellini, Italian composer of *Norma*, dies at age 33

1836 Battle of the Alamo ends after 13 days of fighting killing 257 including Davy Crockett

1837 Queen Victoria ascends the British throne at the age of 18. She rules for 63 years

1839 Georges Bizet, French composer of *Carmen*, is born in Paris

1842 Verdi's *Nabucco* premieres in

1843 *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens is published

1844 Verdi's opera, *Hernani*, premieres in Venice

1847 Verdi's *Macbeth* premieres in Florence

1849 Harriet Tubman first escapes slavery in Maryland

1851 *Rigoletto* premieres in Venice

1853 *La Traviata* and *Il Trovatore* premiere in Venice

1855 Charlotte Brontë, (*Jane Eyre*), dies at 38

1857 Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra* premieres in Venice

1860 Russian playwright Anton Chekhov is born

1864 President Lincoln establishes Thanksgiving as a national holiday

1867 Johann Strauss' *Blue Danube* waltz premieres in Vienna

1869 Mahatma Gandhi born in Porbandar, Kathiawar Agency of British India

1872 Verdi's *Aida* premieres at Teatro alla Scala

1876 Alexander Graham Bell patents the telephone

1879 Gilbert & Sullivan's *Pirates of Penzance* premieres

1881 American Red Cross founded by Clara Barton

1884 Statue of Liberty is presented to the U.S in Paris

1886 Chief Geronimo surrenders ending last major U.S. - Indian war

1888 Vincent van Gogh cuts off his left ear in argument with Paul Gauguin

1891 Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* premieres in Oslo

1895 Tchaikovsky's ballet *Swan Lake* premieres in St. Petersburg

1899 Scott Joplin granted copyright for *Maple Leaf Rag*

1901 Verdi dies on July 25



Thomas Jefferson



Harriet Tubman



Statue of Liberty
1884

Pre-Opera Discussion & Activities

Geopolitical Operas:

The article below by Brook Williams explores the themes and plotlines of classic and modern operas that examine historical events and time periods through a creative lens. Read the article as a precursor to discover how opera can reflect the political ramifications of its time.

[How Opera Reflects Political and Social Changes Throughout History](https://welcometotheopera.com/how-opera-reflects-political-and-social-changes-throughout-history/)

(<https://welcometotheopera.com/how-opera-reflects-political-and-social-changes-throughout-history/>)

Let's delve into the political themes of some of these works through their music.

Classic Works

Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*—This opera satirizes the privileges of the aristocracy and the divine right of kings during the rise of the French Revolution. In the song “Se Vuol Ballere,” Figaro contemplates how he will outwit Count Almaviva from sleeping with his fiancée Susanna on their wedding night (as was the count's right during that time).

[Watch Here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WHoF9EaKyII)

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WHoF9EaKyII>)

Beethoven's *Fidelio*—The title literally means a call for liberty. In this work, Leonore disguises herself as a man named Fidelio to rescue her husband Florestan who has been imprisoned by a corrupt governor. When Leonore, as Fidelio, reaches Florestan in his prison cell, she offers him a crust of bread. Florestan asks Fidelio to tell Leonore where he is located and sings an aria of thanks for their kindness, “You Shall Be Rewarded in Better Worlds” (Euch werde Lohn in besern Weltern).

[Watch Here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAgAueeYdSo)

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAgAueeYdSo>)

Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*—The plot encapsulates the rise and fall of an ill-fated tsar whose brief family reign occurred between the Ryurik and Romanov Dynasties. In the aria “My Soul Grieves,” Godunov reflects on the unspeakable acts that gave him his power and leave him with a sense of foreboding as he approaches his impending coronation.

[Watch Here](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=651965785385125)

(<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=651965785385125>)

Modern Operas (mid-20th C)

Mieczlaw Weinberg's *The Passage* (1960)—an allegory about the Nazi atrocities as told by passengers on a ship: Walter (a diplomat on his way to a posting in Brazil), his wife Lisa (a

Pre-Opera Discussion & Activities cont'd

former overseer at Auschwitz), and a Mystery Woman who Lisa believes is Marta (a woman who died in the camp on her watch). Below is an excerpt from the Oper Graz production from 2022.

[Watch Here](#)

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KPulvFq_PcA&t=11s)

Kevin Puts's *Silent Night* (1968)—takes place in the trenches of WWI on Christmas Eve in 1914 when temporary truce occurred among the English, French, and German soldiers. Below is an excerpt from the production.

[Watch Here](#)

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQiW1_ZL3UI&t=20s)

John Adams' *Nixon In China* (1987)—chronicles Richard Nixon's visit to China in 1972 that re-established China's diplomatic relationship with the West. Here is an excerpt with commentary from the 2015 production by the San Diego Opera.

[Watch Here](#)

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NW4CIXM7Bas>)

Discussion Questions:

As future composers look back towards the late 20th and early 21st centuries, what geopolitical events could be best told in operatic form?

Pre-Activity: Brainstorm a list of these events, then choose one for further discussion, research, or creative exploration.

Activity #1: In this modern geopolitical opera, who would be the characters? Would you create fictional characters? Would you use historical figures? A combination? Make a list of potential characters with a short character description for each.

Activity #2: What would be the setting of the piece (time/s and place/s)? Create a story board of potential geographic area(s) where this new geopolitical opera would take place.

Activity #3: If you were composing the piece, who and what would influence the new music you would write? Create a list of composers/musicians/songwriters/bands who would be influential in your creative process. Write a brief explanation of how their styles and genres would affect your choices.

Activity #4: As a costumer, where would you find influences for the characters' clothing? Create a vision board of costumes for the characters, drawing on the colors, textures, and styles that epitomize the setting of your new work.

Post-Opera Discussion & Activities

The Power of Grand Opera

Verdi's *Aida* has been called "the grandest of all grand operas" because of its sweeping score, timeless love triangle, backdrop of ancient Egypt in a time of war, towering and mythic characters, and the ultimate sacrifice for love. The story is emotionally powerful and the setting, awe-inspiring. After viewing the production, you may have a spark to create an artistic piece of your own. The ancient Greeks had a word for a work of art produced after being profoundly moved by another piece of art—ekphrasis.

Ekphrasis Activity #1: Song lyrics are often considered a poem set to music. Choose one character from *Aida*, then write a poem that evokes the emotion of that character and what part of their story you wish to convey.

Ekphrasis Activity #2: The time of the ancient Egyptians often captures the imagination of modern people. We may be influenced by the time period, landscape, architecture, religion, or something else entirely. Create a work of visual art (sculpture, painting, watercolor, etc.) that was inspired by the opera, *Aida*.

Your Own Modern Aida

Activity #1:

Create a Spotify playlist of at least 3-5 songs for one of the characters:

- Amneris
- Aida
- The King of Egypt
- Radames
- Amonasro
- Another intriguing character from the opera not listed here

Explain why you selected the playlist for the character you've chosen. How does the playlist reflect that character's personality and emotions, as well as his/her relationships with the other characters?

Exploring Elton John's and Tim Rice's *Aida*

In 2000, the musical *Aida*, with music by Elton John and lyrics by Tim Rice, debuted on Broadway. Based on the Verdi opera *Aida* and Leontyne Price's children's book, the retelling of the compelling love triangle among the enslaved Nubian princess Aida, the warrior prince Radames, and his betrothed, Egyptian queen Amneris was reincarnated for modern audiences. The production ran for nearly four years on Broadway and won four Tony awards for Best Original Score, Best Actress in a Musical (Heather Headley), Best Scenic Design, and Best Costume Design. The recording also won a Grammy for Best Musical Show Album. *Aida* has been professionally mounted in 16 countries and was in discussions and development (2023) for a movie version produced by Disney, starring Beyonce as Aida and Christina Aguilera as Amneris. From millennia to millennia, the love story and legacy of *Aida* have proved to be enduring.

Post-Opera Discussion & Activities cont'd

Read Broadway's *Aida* Story: [Here](https://www.mtishows.com/elton-john-and-tim-rices-aida) (https://www.mtishows.com/elton-john-and-tim-rices-aida)

Score Highlights—

“Every Story is a Love Story”—This song opens the show, as a statue of female Pharaoh Amneris comes to life and transports a man and woman who are touring the antiquities area of a museum back in time.

[Watch Here](#)

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WThez3gdqfk)

“The Past Is Another Land”—Princess Aida and her fellow Nubians have been captured by Radames and brought to Egypt. Aida out-duels Radames's compatriot for the freedom of her people, and Radames is impressed by her spirit. Aida sings this song to show that her people will not be broken by their servitude.

[Listen Here](#)

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZnEITagIRw)

“Enchantment Passing Through”—At a banquet in his honor, Radames finds out that he will marry the queen Amneris in seven days. Disillusioned that he will have to give up his military career, Radames and Aida reveal their regrets and their dreams, thereby deepening their relationship.

[Listen Here](#)

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F19xiVz2aGA)

“Written in the Stars”—Despite their love, Aida tells Radames that he must go through with his wedding to Amneris. This song epitomizes their doomed and star-crossed love.

[Watch Here](#)

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kTjERKczeVU&t=146s)

Activity: Fill in the Venn Diagram with character, plot, and thematic elements of Verdi's *Aida* on the left and the Elton John/Tim Rice *Aida* on the right. Are there any elements that both productions share?

