

# G. Verdi – AIDA

Reviews from winter 2000- winter 2017

## **AIDA Brings Audience Marvels of Ancient Egypt!**

“Verdi's **AIDA** marched into a sold-out Anderson Center Thursday night. Ofelia Hristova was lovely as Aida and showed an excellent command of dynamics, from riveting fortes to the very softer pianissimo. Roumen Doikov as Radames is a powerful tenor with a great sound. Ambra Vespasiani as Amneris gave an incredibly stirring performance, masterfully plunging her character into the depths of despair, making the audience applaud her performance even before the music ended. The vitriol she hurls at the priests who condemn Radames to die garnered her curtain call to numerous enthusiastic shouts of "brava!" A wonderful performance was also turned in by Theodore Lambrinos as Amonasro. His rich baritone and convincing acting made his appeal to the Egyptian king and his persuasion of Aida to betray Radames among the best scenes in the opera. The sets for Aida were excellent, especially the enormous Egyptian scene quilted on a tapestry, the Sphinx head and the backdrop of the royal palace at Memphis -an expertly painted tromp l'oeil. Aida is ethereal and beautiful. Verdi's masterpiece remains magnificent.”

*BINGHAMTON PRESS AND SUN BULLETIN – February 2001*

## **Teatro Lirico D'Europa Lights Up Anderson Center with Verdi's AIDA!**

"The Anderson Center welcomed its first full opera. Those who entered early caught an unimpeded view of the set rising above the stage with the majesty of an ancient temple. Prisoners were brought in to a lavish scene of dancers and chorus, with the entire company filling the stage. Amonasro's voice was clear and powerful like a true King. Ambra Vespasiani (Amneris) effectively communicated the tragedy of a woman torn between love and anger. She was

met with deafening applause at her curtain call. Teatro Lirico D'Europa presented a sumptuous story. Hristova (AIDA) played her role with the delicate sweetness of a woman in love. Costumes were lavish and the lighting played off the gilt fabric and jewels laden on Amneris, drawing the eye to her every time she moved. Aida was a wonderful addition to the season as evidenced by the full house and ticket buyers being turned away at the door."

*PIPE DREAM RELEASE – Binghamton, NY – February 2001*

### **Strong Voices make Troupe's AIDA Verdi Good! BOSTON**

"With Boston Lyric Opera in the middle of a run of Strauss' 'Salome' it was left to the enterprising Teatro Lirico d'Europa to provide Boston with a Verdi tribute with **AIDA**. Now in its second major USA tour, Teatro Lirico D'Europa offered a principal quartet of singers who displayed an instinctive grasp of Verdi's musical line and did so with often-gleaming vocalism. The opera is undeniably a masterpiece. Its return is always welcome when the singers can satisfy Verdi's considerable demands. Roumen Doikov, as Radames, solidified the positive impression he made last year as Calaf in the company's 'Turandot.' The Bulgarian tenor has the looks and manner of a retired prize fighter-not inappropriate for portraying a warrior-and an appealing, brawny voice with big, ringing high notes. Veteran American born baritone, Theodore Lambrinos, sank his teeth into the sonorous vocal line Verdi fashioned for the short but important role of Amonasro with richness and power. As Amneris, Italian mezzo soprano, Ambra Vespasiani, has a big, lush voice that dominated the famous Triumphant Scene ensembles. She achieved real pathos in the Judgment Scene. In the title role, soprano, Galia Gortcheva, used her attractive, Slavic tinged soprano to nice effect. If what you want most from a night at the opera is big, authentic voices, you wouldn't have been disappointed on Monday."

*BOSTON HERALD – T. J. Medreck*

## **AIDA - Boston**

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa delivers a lot of bang for the public's buck. There was never a dull moment! Soprano, Galia Gortcheva (AIDA) a leading artist of Belgrade Opera, sang very carefully. A strong lyric soprano, she has a reliable high C and can float a lovely pianissimo across most of her range. She moves well and uses her long arms expressively. Ambra Vespasiani, [Amneris] a tiny spark plug of a woman with a large voice, fearlessly flung out from booming chest tones to blowtorch top notes; she tore down the house in the Judgment scene. Tenor Roumen Doikov, seems to enjoy singing the part-and to rejoice in the smiling fortune that made him a tenor. He is a rock-solid vocalist and his stage personality is boyish and eager to please. He's got the high notes and delivers everything else honestly and securely. The Greek-American baritone, Theodore Lambrinos, has been on the stage for the better part of 40 years; he knows his business and brought a ferocious dramatic presence to Amonasro. Conductor Krassimir Topolov was spacious and stylish while the chorus of Bulgarian voices poured out thrilling sound."

## **2nd Boston Globe Review AIDA**

"Ofelia Hristova has a true Aida instrument and temperament. She also has the stage presence and wore two drop-dead diva dresses. Hristova created a regal, powerful and sympathetic characterization. She came onstage...acting and reacting; she also let her soprano soar over the ensembles. Her voice has a fascinating dark timbre and voluptuous texture. It recalls that of fabled Turkish soprano Leyla Genzer, and she has a comparably glowing pianissimo. Her Italian is more idiomatic and vivid than Deborah Voigt's was on the broadcast from the Met last Saturday afternoon. Hristova was at her best in the Nile Scene and crowned her "O patria mia" by floating the closing wide-spanning phrase on one breath, as Verdi directs, and that is something you will hear once in a thousand performances. The audience got its money's worth and then some."

***BOSTON GLOBE – Richard Dyer – February 2001***

## **BOSTON AIDA**

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa has given more than 2,000 performances in Europe since 1986. Last year on its first American tour, it came to Boston with TURANDOT a rip-roaring production with big voices, and a strong chorus. Teatro Lirico is back in the centenary year of Verdi's death with **AIDA**. The backdrops of Karnak and the Pyramids across-the Nile are evocative. Two colossal statues menacingly flank the action. The orchestra is excellent and so is Krassimir Topolov's conducting, which keeps things moving along without losing any of Verdi's atmospheric. The chorus is superb-full bodied, vigorous, grown-up voices. Theodore Lambrinos, as Amonasro, conveyed a believable character. He could sing too. And so could Doikov [Radames] with brightly resounding stenoriant tones, and primitive raw material to spare. The big hit of the evening was Vespasiani (Amneris)...pouring out a huge, vibrant, ferocious sound that knocked you out of your seat. You couldn't help being impressed. Teatro Lirico has some voices!"

*BOSTON PHOENIX – Lloyd Schwartz – February 2001*

## **AIDA Marches to Victory at The Greenville, SC Peace Center!**

"Friday night's Peace Center audience was treated to a sterling performance of **AIDA** by Teatro Lirico D'Europa and a fitting tribute to Verdi. The opera was on wings itself as Doikov brought to life the hero of the story, Radames, singing with bright, strong tones and crystal clear diction. The line up of voices showed plenty of resources at hand for the European touring opera company. Ofelia Hristova's Aida transported us to a psychological landscape of conflicting loyalties. She gave a tender performance. Her pianissimos were delicate and luxurious with exquisite ornamentation in "Ritorna vincitor," and her key Act III aria "O patria mia." Unforgettable was mezzo soprano, Ambra Vespasiani's Amneris. The woman is one huge voice crammed into one tiny body. But you

would never know that if you closed your eyes and allowed her smoldering, ember voice to pound and cajole you with her demands, manipulations and lamentations. I loved her "Vieni o diletta appressati," reeling in the unsuspecting Aida, and her judgment scene duet opposite Doikov. Brooklyn born Theodore Lambrinos as Aida's father, wielded a fabulous baritone-strong and rich as dark chocolate, booming from his full-throated arias. Lambrinos sings with authority. He has owned this role from his Metropolitan Opera days. Basso Emil Ponorski – King, and Dimiter Stantchev – Ramfis' sonorous deliveries were the glue for the story's meaning. Teatro Lirico's orchestra under the baton of Krassimir Topolov was exceptionally good as were the company's corps de ballet and splendid chorus. The sets were impressive including the huge Egyptian domestic scene quilted on a tapestry and the massive temples dominated by a sphinx head. My seatmates were thrilled with the production."

*Ann Hicks – THE GREENVILLE NEWS – February 2001*

### **AIDA Performance Kept Audience Glued to Every Change in Tone!**

"Pyramid power came to the Stanley Performing Arts Center Saturday night in the form of **AIDA**. For a traveling show, the Teatro Lirico D'Europa production was of majestic scope, with full-stage scenery and props taking you back to the Egyptian dynasties, magnificent singing, an orchestra of 50, a chorus of 45 and nine dancers... The presentation was irresistible. The expressive singers kept the Great Artist Series audience of 2,513 glued to every change of tone. Roumen Doikov, an exciting and robust tenor plays Radames. Soprano Galia Gortcheva, sings Aida with dramatic intonations that clearly put across the lowest plea or the highest point of outrage in a spellbinding manner. Amneris the Egyptian Princess is portrayed by Ambra Vespasiani. Her soaring and simpering voice displays romantic, jealous and destructive emotions with a vengeance. The singers perform in impressive sets that change in every scene. The opera opens in a columned temple with two stage height statues at each end. It converts to a temple crowned by a boulder sized head of a pharaoh... the suite of the

princess with a large red and gold Egyptian tapestry at back and a couch in lion shape for royalty to dwell in. There's also a scene with the twin pyramids and the Nile River in the background-and a split stage scene in the final act. The chorus in white Egyptian costumes with long sashes in front filled up the stage. The leads left the audience with mouths agape."

*Jonas Kovan – UTICA DISPATCH OBSERVER – February 2001*

### **NAPLES PHIL CENTER AIDA**

"Monday night the Philharmonic Center for the Arts marked the 100th anniversary of the great composer's death [G. Verdi] with a version of **AIDA** by Teatro Lirico D'Europa. The company has toured Europe since 1986 with its stable of professional singers, 50 – member orchestra, 40 – member chorus and ballet ensemble, and it provided the stage with a heady whiff of Ancient Egypt. It has been said that Verdi hated cheap effects and circus-style production. He probably would have approved of the elegant sets used by Teatro Lirico D'Europa; they were colorful and evocative. The orchestra under the baton of Krassimir Topolov also had a vivid presence. From the moment Radames, played by tenor Roumen Doikov, opened his mouth to sing "Celeste Aida," in Act I, it was apparent that this company is capable of making music on a superior level. Doikov has a strikingly beautiful voice, robust, full and with vibrant high notes. The company's Aida, Ofelia Hristova, has performed with great critical acclaim on the company's national tours. Her voice is big and her coloratura is true. The high point of the evening was the performance of Ambra Vespasiani as Amneris. This young mezzo from Italy has it all. Her expressive, rich voice is beautifully trained and her acting reminds me of Callas at her best. She was truly the star of the evening and the audience made it clear that they recognized she is more than a good singer. She is world class. There were also fine performances by Dimiter Stantchev as Ramfis, and Theodore Lambrinos as Amonasro. Lambrinos is a Metropolitan Opera veteran. His deep, resonant voice and his stage know-how lent enormous stature to his role.

This was an evening of glorious music from the master."

*NAPLES DAILY NEWS – Corinne Dunne – February 2001*

### **AIDA brought the audience to their feet - Niceville, FL**

"The presentation of the Teatro Lirico D'Europa was nothing short of amazing. The voices of the soloists were powerful. They rang out over the orchestra and consumed all those who attended. The stage and costumes for the production were first rate. The entire Egyptian theme was captured in the set designs and echoed throughout the main auditorium as the orchestra played. Despite the incredible voices that joined the main characters on stage, there were two performers that stood out and made their voices ring out over the orchestra and into the hearts of the audience. First was the voice of Radames. The tenor (Roumen Doikov) had no problem projecting his voice with accuracy and precision. The second voice that captivated me was the mezzo soprano voice of Amneris, Princess of Egypt (Tatiana Ishemova.) Her voice had an incredible range. It was obvious that the performers assembled on stage, were well trained and knew how to captivate an audience. Kudos to Teatro Lirico D'Europa for the fine performance!"

*DEFUNIAK SPRINGS HERALD – February 2001*

*Perf. at Matty Kelly Perf. Arts Center*

### **Well-crafted AIDA a Treat for Alamo City!**

"Seeing a production of G. Verdi's grand opera **AIDA** in San Antonio is a treat indeed. That it was performed ably-by a professional touring group complete with orchestra, chorus, and ballet ensemble-makes it so much better. The polished voices and excellent orchestra and chorus successfully drew the audience in to Verdi's story. From the opening prelude, the orchestra's precision and polished competent sound allowed the audience to relax. What takes place on stage is a vision of Egypt at its most exotic. Teatro Lirico's set

was large in scale...huge stone pillars covered with hieroglyphics, 12 foot statues and a great stone face suspended above center stage. Tatiana Ishemova's mature, mezzo soprano voice was one of the highlights of the performance, rich in the lower register and powerful in the upper range. Her commanding stage presence befitted a pharaoh's daughter. Ofelia Hristova [Aida] displayed a particularly good control of softer notes in the high register. In the Act II ("O patria mia") a lovely lyrical style stood her in a good stead. Doikov as Radames was a robust, taut and well-trained tenor. The lively presence of ballet dancers provided sheer delight for the eyes. Especially good was the solo dancer. Other fine voices rounded out the performance including that of the Priest-bass, Ivan Tomasev, and Aida's father, American baritone, Mark. C. Gargiulo." *SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS NEWS*

*Performance at the Majestic Theatre, San Antonio*

## **KANSAS AIDA**

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa presented its resplendent production of G. Verdi's grand opera masterpiece **AIDA** to a large and happy McCain Auditorium audience. It certainly gave our crowd its money's worth. I found the overall high artistic quality of their achievement quite remarkable. The set looked as if built of Egyptian pyramid stone, a gigantic sphinx loomed behind it, flanked by a pair of monumental effigies. The bigmooned Nile scene scrim suggested a sense of depth and scope as well. The regal principal's costumes had a weighty dignity that elevated them to large than life status. Aida sported two different but equally splendiferous gowns. Choral robes accented the unified power of the king's minions and the dancers' skimpy balletic wear subtly implied their role of obedient functionaries. Under the firm and sensitive direction of Maestro Topolov, the partnership of instrumental and vocal sonorities was exceptional. A performance of Aida is a rare enough event anywhere. Here at McCain it's most likely a once-in-a lifetime thrill. I hope you

enjoyed and valued it as much as I did."

*MANHATTAN MERCURY NEWS – Ben Nyberg – March 2001*

### **Touring Company Makes a Spectacle with Verdi's AIDA!**

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa succeeded in bringing a sense of spectacle to the Lied Center stage. The sets featured a massive-looking stone arch, a gigantic pharaoh's head, huge statues flanking the stage and a tromp l'oeil background of massive colonnades retreating into the distance. The performers were on an equally grand scale, with big, big voices and broad acting. The eight dancers succeeded by appearing to be more numerous than they actually were, and in melding classical ballet with some exotic and beautiful movements. The chorus filled the stage and sang enthusiastically. For Sunday's sold-out performance we heard Ofelia Hristova as Aida, a genuine dramatic coloratura. She floated her high notes with extraordinary beauty and impeccable technique and she had enough power to fill the house. She was well matched by Roumen Doikov-Radames, a powerful tenor that remained round throughout his range. Judith Engel was genuinely moving as Amneris. The orchestra conducted by Krassimir Topolov, did full justice to Verdi's remarkable score." *KANSAS CITY STAR – March 2001*

### **SPRINGFIELD, IL AIDA**

"Grand opera came to Springfield, IL last weekend -Verdi's **AIDA**, and it was very grand indeed. Giorgio Lalov, the artistic director, believes that one must remain true to the composer's vision of the opera and his company puts on a truly magnificent production. Lalov travels with an orchestra of 47-no synthesizers, no cheating-just a fine group of musicians that execute Verdi's score with great skill and authenticity. The sets were beautiful! They alone drew spontaneous applause from the audience as the curtain rose. The opening staging for the royal palace at Memphis was elegant, and a huge tapestry that set the scene for Amneris' royal suite was breathtaking. The singers were

magnificent. Lalov obviously has a touch of genius in casting his roles. Ofelia Hristova's soprano voice soared in the title role of Aida. Judith Engel sang a stunning Amneris. Roumen Doikov's glorious tenor lent veracity to his love for Aida. Mark Gargiulo was especially good as Amonasro. An absolutely gorgeous part of this production was the ballet! Their costumes were marvelous, and their execution flawless-a fabulous visual enhancement for the opera. The very large audience was very appreciative-and rightly so. I can't wait till next year!" *ILLINOIS TIMES – Ann Kerr – March 2001*

### **A Grand AIDA Is Triumphant at The Garde!**

"In its first performance in the region, the touring Teatro Lirico d'Europa staged an **AIDA** in its full glory at The Garde Arts Center. The 50-piece orchestra, the commanding Egyptian sets, a 40-voice chorus in splendid costumes, a corps de ballet and a cast of robust, Verdi-sized voices successfully brought a big-city opera experience to New London. The production did full justice to the majesty and boiling passions of Verdi's work. As Radames, Roumen Doikov was a perfect fit for the drama. Supple throughout the range and hair raising at the top, he announced his mastery early with a stellar "Celeste Aida" and in the later ensembles, rang true atop the big chorus and full orchestra, even at the most towering crescendi. As Ramfis, bass, Ivan Tomasev, was a towering presence, both physically and vocally and the two warring kings, Egypt's sung by bass Emil Ponorsky and the defeated Ethiopian sung by American baritone Theodore Lambrinos, were equally commanding. Tatiana Ishemova, (Amneris) warmed to the task and in the final act, her anguished outcries were terrific vocal theater. Along with the monumental sets evoking ancient Thebes and gold-be-dazzled costumes, the large orchestra was crucial to the score's success. The dance scenes were high points."

*THE NEW LONDON DAY – March 2001*

## **Teatro Lirico D'Europa's AIDA in Kalamazoo!**

"Teatro Lirico, brought a large contingent to town for the production. Besides the essential lead singers, it had the Sofia Symphony Orchestra in the pit, a full male and female chorus, and a corps of eight or so splendid dancers. The many huge sets and backdrops marvelously recreated the beauty and awesomeness of the era of the Ancient Egyptian pharaohs and the sets were effectively illuminated with special spots at crucial scenes. The varying colorful and imaginative backgrounds added much to Friday's staging, even eliciting applause when the curtains were drawn open. An exceptionally smart logistical decision came about when Teatro Lirico used the ballet corps to entertain as the celebration focus during the Triumphal March music. A superb ballet performed by both male and female dancers. Moreover, director Lalov benefited from good singers. A genuine find was the stirring tenor, Roumen Doikov, as the heroic warrior Radames. Blessed with the clear clarion sound of previous purveyors of the role, young Doikov shone brightly throughout. All his notes could be heard without exception-and they were worth hearing as well. The young Yugoslavian basso Ivicsa Tomasev acquitted himself handsomely as the high priest of Isis, thanks to a marvelous low range. Another solid lead was mezzo soprano, Judith Engel, as the Egyptian Princess Amneris. Performing in the tradition of many Amneris before her, the American born and trained Engel sang the bejeebers out of her part!"

*KALAMAZOO GAZETTE – March 2001*

*Performance at Miller Auditorium*

## **BURLINGTON VERMONT AIDA**

"Friday night's **AIDA** at the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts featured Teatro Lirico D'Europa; an international company of excellent soloists, musicians, singers and dancers. With strong principal voices, a full competent choir, a stellar orchestra and stunning costume and set design, Teatro Lirico D'Europa presented a superb rendition complete with projected English super

titles. Set designer Vailtine Topencharov created an impressively monolithic Egyptian set of obelisks, trompe l'oeil columns and gargantuan pharaoh statues. The three principals are first rate. As Radames, tenor Roumen Doikov was simply outstanding. His full tenor voice intertwined beautifully with Amneris and Aida-Italian soprano, Rosella Redoglia. Other standouts included bass Ivica Tomasev as a high priest of Isis, bass Emil Ponorski as Egypt's King and the strong corps de ballet, which added more spectacular costumes...clearly accomplished dancers."

*BURLINGTON FREE PRESS – March 2001*

### **A Trip down the Nile - Buffalo, NY AIDA**

"Considering the compromises usually made by touring opera companies, the sets for this **AIDA** were far above the norm, with appearance of solidity and a strongly traditional Egyptian feeling. A large suspended terra cotta pharaoh's head flavorfully dominated several scenes while a stunning black and gold tapestry of a flat profiled Egyptian dancer dominated Amneris's suite. A shimmering moon reflection on the water and silhouettes of pyramids made the third act evocative. The beautiful static tableau of dancers was welcome to the eye, even more so when it gradually came to life with very graceful, idiomatically Egyptian dancing."

*BUFFALO NEWS – March 2001*

### **Teatro Lirico's AIDA just right to the last detail - Portland, ME AIDA**

"The Teatro Lirico D'Europa's performance of **AIDA** at Merrill Auditorium got it just right, even after a snow-filled journey from Rochester, NY. The sets were remarkable, the singers thoroughly professional-the full orchestra better than most in any opera pit, the chorus strong and well rehearsed, and the ballet dancers spectacular. The production admirably served the purpose of bringing real grand opera to an audience... and there wasn't a microphone in sight.

Tenor Roumen Doikov was excellent as Radames and baritone Theodore Lambrinos as Amonasro was superb. Tatiana Ishemova as Amneris was quite moving. The title role was sung by Ofelia Hristova. Her arias were gorgeous. The ballet dancers were superb. The audience gave everyone a long standing ovation." *PORTLAND PRESS HERALD – Christopher Hyde*

### **AIDA Wins New Fans in Heartfelt Lied Center Show!**

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa put the "grand" in grand opera with impressive sets that placed us cheek to jowl with the Sphinx and the pyramids. A large and impressively costumed cast of royals, priests, priestesses, captains, foot soldiers, functionaries, slaves and Ethiopian prisoners was likewise impressive. The spectacle was further enhanced with on-stage trumpeters and a sultry ballet danced by 8 exotic sylphs. Also noteworthy is the spectacular phenomenon of the trained opera voice capable of filling a huge theater like the Lied. Ofelia Hristova, (Aida) Roumen Doikov, (Radames) and Judith Engel, (Amneris) were key in bringing Verdi's impassioned musical drama to vivid dramatic life. It was a wonderful night. A full and enthusiastic house stood and cheered at the final curtain."

*TOPEKA CAPITAL JOURNAL – March 2001*

### **Verdi's Classic AIDA Takes Full House Captive! KANSAS**

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa's production of Verdi's classic tale **AIDA** was magnificent in every sense of the word...a performance finely tuned and beautifully crafted." *LAWRENCE JOURNAL WORLD*

### **AIDA – a Grand Opera at the Grand! - OPERA DELAWARE**

"Patrons of Opera Delaware had a great treat recently when the Teatro Lirico D'Europa presented its version of Verdi's **AIDA** in our own Grand Opera

House. The combination of thrilling voices, glorious music, gripping drama and magnificent settings provided stimulating entertainment."

*GREENVILLE COMMUNITY NEWS – March 2001*

### **EASTMAN THEATRE AIDA**

"Brilliant tapestries, gold brocade fabrics and monumental statues created the opulent, regal ambiance this work demands. Set in stone the elaborate sets for **AIDA** created the regal atmosphere of the ancient Egyptian court."

*ROCHESTER TIMES UNION*

### **PROCTOR'S THEATRE AIDA**

"Remarkable voices! Strong conducting! A well planned production. All the lead singers had better than modest voices, with promising international careers ahead of them. The orchestra was about the size you'd find in the pit at the Metropolitan Opera, giving full value to Verdi's musical intent, including onstage trumpets. Giorgio Nottv conducted with solid control and even a touch of grandeur and passion. Soprano Ofelia Hristova as **AIDA** did not have to push. She sang with distinction. Her 'O Patria mia' was beautifully phrased, tonally radiant. Lev Kuznetsov sang Radames with stoic projection. Mezzo soprano, Stefka Mineva acted with her voice. Her scene at the end was powerfully tragic." *SCHENECTADY TIMES UNION*

### **NEW HAVEN, CT AIDA**

"Complete with a splendid chorus, a well schooled orchestra, and a cast of soloists with big sumptuous voices...this **AIDA** has genuinely thrilling moments! It's well worth hearing. The number of people traveling with this **AIDA** is unusually large for a touring opera company. This pays off in the

number of musicians in the pit and the full-throated chorus. Such numbers are of particular importance in the triumphal concerted scenes with which **AIDA** abounds. All benefit from the close rapport between the astute conductor, his polished orchestra, and the singers and dancers. The production is elaborately set with ancient Egyptian scenery."

*VARIETY MAGAZINE, NEW YORK – Markland Taylor*

### **AIDA Lives up to Billing as Opera to see this Year! PALM DESERT, CA**

"This **AIDA** was great. Teatro Lirico D'Europa created the illusion of magnitude with big props, large backdrops painted with the perspective depth, and the largest ensemble of singers and musicians to ever accompany a local opera. The grandiose music, conducted with passion, was more than enough to make this 'Aida' memorable. The choirs attained a mystical quality with wondrous harmonies. Individual vocal honors go to Roumen Doikov as Radames. He deftly negotiated each change and projected each passage clearly. Ofelia Hristova as Aida did shine in the soprano register. She executed the beautiful 'O Patria mia' with conflicting emotions."

*THE DESERT SUN – Bruce Fessier – February 2000*

### **Traveling AIDA Lives up to Lavish Description! ESCONDIDO, CA**

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa's touring **AIDA** provided plenty of spectacle for ticket buyers. Elaborate sets, gorgeous costumes, superb musical direction of the 50 – piece orchestra and an excellent corps de ballet added to the production's elegance. Singing by the principals was very good and they received strong assistance from a cast of more than 40 supporting singers. Tenor Roumen Doikov, who opened the show with a well-sung version of "Celeste Aida," was an audience favorite. As Aida, soprano Ofelia Hristova sang powerfully in the

upper range and sweetly in the pianissimo section of the role's signature aria "Ritorna Vincitor" and "O Patria mia." Her passionate and very well sung duet with Doikov in the 3rd Act was the highlight of the evening. The conductor led a well-prepared and lushly appointed orchestra in a flawless performance. Judging from the enthusiastic reception the company received from the sold out audience, let's hope Teatro Lirico D'Europa will be back with more."

*NORTH COUNTY TIMES – Pam Kagan – February 2000*

### **CERRITOS CENTER AIDA**

"Teatro Lirico D'Europa puts on a good show, as witness this **AIDA!** Verdi's masterpiece score is treated with respect, beginning with a 60-member orchestra in the Cerritos pit. The singers in this production performed solidly. Roumen Doikov, the Radames, possesses a thrilling and consistent tenor voice of healthy, Italianate ring. The staging by company artistic director, Giorgio Lalov, is direct and practical. Aida, Ofelia Hristova rose to the Verdian challenges with dramatic color, technical ease and beautiful high notes."

*LOS ANGELES TIMES – February 2000*

### **AIDA Comes Up Big, On the Stage and Off!**

"This **AIDA** was the most exciting production to come to Scranton in a dozen years. The 45-piece orchestra played gorgeously, the 40 voice chorus was more than able to acquit itself, and the six principals were really quite wonderful."

*SCRANTON TIMES – March 2003*

### **OPERA NEW HAMPSHIRE AIDA**

"The performance of **AIDA** was wonderful, – best yet! Best attendance in years also, despite the snow. The audience gave overwhelming applause –

and commented that it was worth the wait. We did brisk advanced sales for our 2009-2010 season so we are really looking forward to our next performances, and can't wait for your selections for 2010-2011! Thanks again for a great performance. Opera New Hampshire looks forward to a long relationship with you."

*Richard Bojko – Opera New Hampshire – Manchester, NH*

### **Troupe in fine voice for Verdi AIDA - Portland, ME**

"A large audience at Merrill Auditorium was transported to sultry ancient Egypt on Thursday, one of the coldest nights of the year, courtesy of PCA Great Performances and Teatro Lirico d'Europa. The traveling opera company has brought many excellent and fully staged performances to Portland over the years. Their **AIDA**... was no exception. Mezzo-soprano Tatyana Kaminskaya, who sang the role of Amneris, Pharaoh's jealous daughter became its most powerful and interesting figure, dramatically and vocally. Olga Chernisheva was equally at home in the title role of a woman caught between her love of country (Ethiopia) and the military leader of the Egyptians, Radames, sung by tenor Rumen Doikov. Baritone Marian Jovanovsky made a strong Amonasro, King of Ethiopia and Aida's father. All of the voices were distinctive enough to combine well in Verdi's famous duets and trios. Although the principal voices were first-rate, most striking about the production were its ancillary features – the live orchestra conducted by Krassimir Topolov the lovely and graceful corps de ballet, which substituted for a phalanx of priests, the distinctive costumes, and a monumental set design that did quadruple duty through all four acts. The small male and female choruses, which Verdi makes as important to the action as those in Greek tragedy, demonstrated once again that power does not reside in numbers."

*PORTLAND PRESS HERALD – Christopher Hyde – January 17, 2009*

## **Teatro Lirico 's AIDA a solid blend of color, realistic sets, superb costuming, and strong vocal and orchestral heft. BOSTON**

"AIDA is a triumphant opera in four acts, only two of which (the first two) contain any memorable arias or music. Still, it is considered one of Verdi's most popular. The audience at the opening night performance of this venerable classic at Boston's Majestic Theatre was treated to an impressive display of mighty vocal talent, solid musical accompaniment, and impressive visual sets color, lighting and costuming. The clear standout performer in this production was soprano Elena Razgylaeva, who sang the role of Aida. She had a strong, nuanced vocal delivery that carried well throughout the theater, and delivered a performance that was natural and relaxed. The orchestra was always well modulated, and never in competition with the singers. Kudos to conductor, Krassimir Topolov. The audience seemed to particularly enjoy the performance of Marion Jovanovsky, who brought to the role of the King of Ethiopia, a palpable energy and sense of purpose. His delivery was kinetic, his acting was superb and his presence was commanding. And we might add to this fine job the strong ensemble performance of bass Vladimir Hristov, singing the role of the King of Egypt and bass Dimiter Stantchev, who gave a superb performance as high priest, Ramfis. The entire cast, as well as the Sofia Symphony Orchestra and Chorus and ballet dancers, who were magnificent, I might add, gave this show a big show feel and a big show sound, as we have come to expect from Teatro Lirico D'Europa."

*OPERAONLINE.US – Paul Joseph Walkowski – January 16, 2009*

## **DAYTONA - AIDA**

"AIDA was a WONDERFUL production! The singers were first-rate, most notably Elena Razgylaeva. What a voice! We loved the sets, the costumes, the dancers, everything was just great. It is amazing to us that the group can do this

night after night with such excellent results. Our thanks to you, Giorgio, and the whole company for doing this wonderful work for us. It was the perfect ending to our "Winterfest." We look forward to La Boheme."

*Nancy and Dallas Weekly – Daytona Beach Symphony Society – January 2009*

### **DAYTONA - AIDA**

"I just want to tell you what a wonderful performance of **AIDA** we had this afternoon. It was exquisite - flawless and everyone in the audience was entranced. It was our best opera yet! Thank you, thank you and we are very much looking forward to LA BOHEME next month."

*Carol Anderson – Daytona Beach Symphony Society – January 2009*

### **RUTH ECKERD HALL AIDA**

"The performance of **AIDA** was excellent and a great audience response. The new set looked really fine!" *Robert Freedman, Director*

*Ruth Eckerd Hall – Clearwater, FL – January 2009*

### **SUNRISE THEATRE - AIDA**

"The production of **AIDA** was fantastic – as all of your productions you have delivered to me. I would like to go with another production next season to try and build the market here in Fort Pierce. Again, Jenny, the production was as expected, great. Will speak with you next week."

*John Wilkes, GM – Sunrise Theatre – Ft. Pierce, FL – February 2009*

## **PRESCOTT, AZ - AIDA**

“The vocalists, orchestra and dancers were all ON for the **AIDA** performance in Prescott and performed beautiful!”

*Deb McCasland, GM – Yavapai College Performance Hall*

*Prescott, AZ – February 2009*

## **VILAR CENTER AIDA**

“**AIDA** was very well received, as was the Great Moments in Opera evening. The orchestra was very tight, perhaps the best they have ever sounded. Elena (Razgylaeva) has such beautiful voice and she makes it seem so effortless, our donors can’t stop talking about her. Thanks so much to you and Giorgio for making it possible for us to present such a wonderful company in our community. It really means a lot to us.”

*Kris Sabel, GM – Vilar Center – Beaver Creek, CO – February 2009*

## **CERRITOS CENTER - AIDA**

“Teatro Lirico D’Europa returned to the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts bringing more grand opera in the form of Giuseppe Verdi’s great **AIDA** which filled the stage with action and angst along with three glorious hours of singing. The Sofia Symphony Orchestra and chorus gave excellent support to the half dozen principal singers and the big scale set was certainly good enough for the hall. The singing was decidedly first-rate. There is an awful lot to see on the stage with the different levels of sets, the large chorus singing parts like a character in the plot and dancers who perform ballet in several sequences. This production had strong performances from the critical roles: Olga Chernisheva as Aida was delicate and beautiful but with soprano voice enough to sing this demanding role over the length of large opera. Tenor Gabriel Gonzalez returned from his earlier triumph at Cerritos, singing Radames extremely taxing character while gaining

admiration for the music and sympathy for his acting of the complex soldier. Lastly, Tatiana Kaminskaya wrapped herself around the double-edged persona of Amneris making her evil in her jealousy and heartbreaking in her remorse. The two ladies singing on “Fu la sorte dell' armi a' tuoi funesta” when Amneris gets Aida to reveal her love for Radames was exceptionally moving and Radames profession of love “Pur ti riveggo, mio dolce Aida” was strong enough to have some in the audience reaching for handkerchiefs."

*Glen Creason – Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts – February 2009*

### **SAINT GEORGE UTAH - AIDA**

“Oh my! The **AIDA** was absolutely marvelous!! As you know, this is our 50th year anniversary in which we've been presenting professional artists and one of our very discerning and distinguished patrons gushed, "This is the very best thing this community has EVER seen!" Not a bad comment huh? Thanks much!”

*Gail Bunker, GM – Cox Performing Arts Center*

*St. George, UT – February 2009*

### **PALM DESERT AIDA**

“**AIDA** was wonderful! I have a friend who is the chairman of an opera company that is about to go bankrupt. I told him about you and I think you guys will be the answer for them to bring opera to their community. I will keep you posted and put him in touch with you. Thanks!”

*Mitchell Gershenfeld, Director of Presentations and Theater Operations*

*McCallum Theatre – Palm Desert – February 2009*

### **CERRITOS, CA AIDA**

“**AIDA** was a very successful performance for us. Thanks for bringing us popular products year after year.” *Craig M. Springer, Ph.D., Executive Director*

*Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts – February 2009*

## **THRILLING AIDA from Prescott, AZ**

“Staging AIDA is a huge undertaking. It requires a large orchestra and good-sized chorus along with dancers and a full complement of soloists. Few regional companies can afford to do it justice, so it was quite an amazing feat when the touring company Teatro Lirico D’Europa brought this opera in all its complexity to Prescott, Arizona on 6 February 2009. It was the same show that had already received great critical approval on the east coast and would soon be enjoyed in California. The brand new traditional production by Giorgio Lalov featured structures resembling museum pieces from the age of the Pharaohs that were decorated with copies of Ancient Egyptian art, as well as attractive, well-tailored costumes. Olga Chernisheva was a poignant Aida. She has already proven to be a consummate actress. Here, she sang with power and finesse. Russian born and American trained, she has the right sound for Italian opera. She was passionate in her duets with Rumen Doikov, her Radames, while her top notes radiated above this opera’s huge ensembles. In the quieter moments, she sang with sweet plangent tones and an intimacy that made a real person of her character. Doikov was somewhat less of an actor, but he had the robust high notes that his role demanded and he was a commanding military leader. Tatyana Kaminskaya who sang the role of Princess, Amneris, Aida’s rival for the love of Radames, has an enormous voice of great beauty and distinctive coloration. She easily surmounted the full orchestration of the Judgment Scene and her enthralling sound rolled out over the audience like the waves of an ocean. The most interesting young singer in the cast was the Amonasro, young Macedonian baritone Marian Jovanovsky. With his easily produced, sizeable dark voice and its glinting bronze overtones, he conveyed the bite of the drama. Vladimir Hristov was a properly overbearing king, while his high priest, Ramfis, sung by bass, Plamen Dimitrov, was menacing and dismissive of foreigners. Both of them added much to telling the details of the sad love story. Sweet voiced soprano, Snejana Dramcheva, offered a few moments of respite from the melodramatic story with her lovely invocation of the Egyptian gods while the Sofia Symphony Chorus, augmented with voices from a Colorado conservatory, sang with exquisite harmonies. Krassimir Topolov conducted with brisk tempi and the Sofia Symphony, played Verdi’s gloriously orchestrated score with accuracy and precision. Needless to say, this

excellent performance of the Verdi grand opera was a rare treat for the people of Prescott Arizona.”

*Susan Hampton — MUSIC AND VISION DAILY — Feb. 2009*

### **TILLES CENTER, NY - AIDA**

“Thank you for bringing us AIDA yesterday afternoon at Tilles Center. The performance was a real delight, and the AIDA in particular was wonderful. Both the general audience and our sponsors (a wonderful family, opera-lovers) were very pleased. Hopefully we can do something with you in 2010 — 2011. Best regards to Giorgio.” *Elliott Sroka , GM — Tilles Center, Long Island — AIDA — March 2009*

### **MIRAMAR, FL AIDA**

“I am the new Director of the Miramar Cultural Center and will handle all bookings for next season. I enjoyed Teatro Lirico's AIDA and look forward to Teatro's CARMEN production coming here in February!”

*Stephen Kantrowitz, GM — Miramar Cultural Center, Miramar, FL  
January 2016*

### **MORAN THEATRE, Jacksonville, FL - AIDA**

“I enjoyed the AIDA performance! The principals had great voices and the sets and costumes looked great! Giorgio was his usual charming self at the pre-show program. Always a hit!”

*Milton Russos, GM — The Moran Theater - January 2016  
Times Union Center for the Performing Arts, Jacksonville, FL*

### **DAYTONA AIDA**

"The performance of AIDA was wonderful! Everyone just loved it. The total count of seats was 1,300. I had a nice conversation with Giorgio!"

*Christine Gerhardt, Director of Operations – Daytona Beach Symphony Society Performance at Peabody Auditorium – January 2016*

### **MIRAMAR, FL - AIDA**

"AIDA was wonderful and the audience loved it! The photos that were taken will be sent to you as soon as I receive them."

*Joyce Maddox, Programming Director – Miramar Cultural Center  
Miramar, FL – January 2016*

### **DAYTONA - AIDA**

"AIDA was a great production! This is the most impressive set you have ever brought here...really beautiful! And the costumes were beautiful too. The dancers provided a colorful diversion with their gold and bling. Good choreography. We thought all of the soloists were top-drawer! Amneris, Amonasro, and Aida were especially fine singers, as were the basses. Thank you for another excellent production, and we look forward to next year's opera!"

*Dallas Weekly, Programming Director  
Daytona Beach Symphony Society – January 2016*

### **MARINA CIVIC CENTER AIDA**

"Our audience at The Marina Civic Center was absolutely delighted with Teatro Lirico's performance of AIDA yesterday afternoon. The show is meant to be a visual spectacle and indeed it was. The set was marvelous—displaying the splendor and intrigue of ancient Egypt. But the best part was the powerful singing of the Amneris, Aida, Ramades and Ramfis. It was great to have the company back here for the eighth time—never a disappointment. Also, many thanks to Giorgio and cast members who

warmly and generously participated in our post-opera reception and dinner. What a successful afternoon and evening!" *Bob Borich, Program Director*

*Panama City Music Association Performance at the Marina Civic Center*

*Panama City, FL - January 24, 2016*

### **OPERA NEW HAMPSHIRE AIDA**

"AIDA was fabulous! We were all very impressed and VERY grateful. You should be proud of your crew. We are as always grateful for the beautiful show you provided and the Spanish dancers added great flair..."

*Judith Feinberg — Opera New Hampshire (presenter)*

*Palace Theatre — Manchester, NH — Feb. 14, 2016*

### **FT, MYERS, FL - AIDA**

"The sets and the costumes of AIDA were great and the voices were spectacular! We want more of these great artists. Thank you for bringing them to us! Looking forward to next year's CARMEN."

*Mary Lee Mann, GM — Barbara Mann Performing Arts Hall*

*Ft. Myers, FL — February 10, 2016*