

**MEDIA RELEASE: HANDA OPERA ON SYDNEY HARBOUR 2015**

**Wednesday 25 March, 2015**

## ***Aida* promises to be the most spectacular Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour yet!**



Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour: *Aida*. Photo Hamilton Lund.

**In the countdown to Opening Night on Friday 27 April, Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour has sold more tickets than any of its previous three productions.**

The finishing touches are happening to one of the world's most spectacular outdoor opera events. **Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour: *Aida*** features a majestic 18metre tall Nefertiti, sitting across the water from Sydney Opera House and the Harbour Bridge, and transforming the Sydney skyline.

For 2015, Opera Australia has assembled a dream creative team with director **Gale Edwards** (Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour: *Carmen* (2013), *La bohème*, *Salome*), set and costume designer **Mark Thompson** (*The Force of Destiny*) and lighting designer **Matt Scott** (*Rigoletto*, *Don Pasquale*, *La Sonnambula*). Together they have created a magnificent production that will live long in everyone's memories.

From its premiere in 1871 and throughout its long performance history, Verdi's *Aida* is perhaps best-known for its outdoor performances. In the planning for more than a year, Opera Australia's new production features almost 100 people on stage, 50 musicians in The Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra below the stage (affectionately referred to as "the Underworld"), and more than a few surprises in the much anticipated 'Triumphal March'.

Opera Australia has extended the season on previous years, to just over four weeks. The spectacle of the production is intensified by the truly awe-inspiring lighting and sound, with lighting that shows Nefertiti to its most stunning effect, and a new 'surround-sound' system that will convince audience members that they are part of the action.

Opera Australia's Artistic Director Lyndon Terracini said, "Just a few days ago we celebrated the fact that we've sold more tickets for *Aida* than any other Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour. We're so pleased that Sydneysiders and visitors alike are embracing this event so enthusiastically – the anticipation is palpable and we know they won't be disappointed.

"This production of *Aida* has everything you want in an opera – fantastic music, dazzling performances from some of the world's finest singers, an outstanding orchestra and a jaw-dropping set design. Plus, the story line will have people on the edge of their seats – drama, a love triangle, betrayal, intrigue, a trial – it has it all!

"We want everyone to come to *Aida*. It's the perfect opportunity for people who have never been to an opera, and if you know *Aida* already, then you're going to love this production," Mr Terracini said.

The NSW Government, through its tourism and major events agency Destination NSW, has partnered with Opera Australia to secure Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour since 2012. Destination NSW Chief Executive Officer Sandra Chipchase said since 2012 the event has attracted more than 11,300 overseas and interstate visitors.

“Set on Sydney Harbour against the striking backdrop of the Sydney Opera House and Sydney Harbour Bridge, this world-class production is an unmissable event. This year’s *Aida* will surprise audiences with its spectacular set and stage design and again provide a truly unique outdoor experience,” Ms Chipchase said.

“We are proud to have secured this major event for Sydney and I encourage those who are yet to purchase tickets to do so to avoid missing this ‘only in Sydney’ event,” she said.

Past audiences to Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour know that the fantastic opera is just the beginning of the event. There is so much more on-hand to make the entire evening a magical experience. The custom-built site has an impressive range of dining and drinking options that make the most of the magnificent harbour views and nightly fireworks. The stunning “Platinum Club” – a pop up dining room and bar set amongst the tree tops – offers fine dining before the show, drinks at interval and after the performance. Dinner and show packages are available with variable components that include a three-course dinner, interval drinks, program and performance.

To complete a glamorous night out, Sydney-siders can arrive at the site by Water Taxi. Pick up points are around Sydney Harbour, dropping guests at Andrew (Boy) Charlton Pool, just metres from the entrance to Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour.

Ticket prices start at \$79 and travel packages from destinations around Australia and New Zealand, are available now from Qantas Holidays.

**Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour: *Aida* runs from 27 March to 26 April 2015**

[www.opera.org.au](http://www.opera.org.au)

**Creatives**

Conductor **Brian Castles-Onion**  
 Director **Gale Edwards**  
 Set & Costume Designer **Mark Thompson**  
 Lighting Designer **Matt Scott**  
 Choreographer **Lucas Jervies**

**Cast**

Aida **Latonia Moore**  
**Daria Masiero**  
 Radamès **Walter Fraccaro**  
**Arnold Rawls**  
 Amneris **Milijana Nikolic**  
**Jacqueline Dark**  
 Amonasro **Michael Honeyman**  
**Warwick Fyfe**  
 Ramfis **David Parkin**  
**Conal Coad**  
 The King **Gennadi Dubinsky**  
 High Priestess **Eva Kong**  
 Messenger **Benjamin Rasheed**

With **Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra**  
 and **Opera Australia Chorus**

**Bookings**

Adult tickets from \$79 (fees may apply)

**Opera Australia Box Office**  
 (02) 9318 8200 / [www.opera.org.au](http://www.opera.org.au)

**Performance information**

**Performances at 7.30pm**  
 Tuesday to Sunday  
 27 March to 26 April 2015

Fleet Steps, Mrs Macquarie’s Point, Sydney  
 Site opens at 5pm for pre-performance drinks  
 and dining

Performed in Italian with English subtitles

**Media enquiries**

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**Handa on Sydney Harbour: *Aida* will be screened in cinemas worldwide from August.**  
 Visit [cinemalive.com](http://cinemalive.com) for more information.