



DENNIS HANTHORN - Zurich General Director

09-10 NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE ATLANTA OPERA CONTINUES ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON WITH FIRST *AIDA* IN COBB ENERGY CENTRE

Yoel Levi Conducts

Soprano Mary Elizabeth Williams Sings Her First *Aida*

**Outstanding Cast Features Italian Tenor Antonello Palombi,
Baritone Mark Delavan and Mezzo-Soprano Elizabeth Bishop**

ATLANTA -- The Atlanta Opera continues its 30th anniversary season on February 27 at 8 p.m., with the production of Giuseppe Verdi's triumphant *Aida*. Other performances will be on Tuesday, March 2 at 7:30 p.m.; Friday, March 5 at 8 p.m.; and Sunday, March 7 at 3 p.m. A staple of opera repertoire, *Aida* is a story of war, treason and love, and is known for its big choruses, dramatic sets and costumes. *Aida* is an enslaved Ethiopian prisoner in love with the general, Radames. When the Egyptian princess Amneris learns of their feelings, her jealousy leads her to try to destroy both *Aida* and Radames. In a production from New Orleans Opera, The Atlanta Opera's production of *Aida* features the debut of internationally renowned Italian tenor Antonello Palombi as Radames, mezzo-soprano Elizabeth Bishop as Amneris, Mark Delavan as Amonasro and soprano Mary Elizabeth Williams singing her first *Aida*. Williams last performed with The Atlanta Opera in 2005 as Serena in *Porgy and Bess*. Atlanta resident Morris Robinson will play the role of Ramfis and former Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Music Director Yoel Levi will return as conductor after opening the Atlanta Opera's 30th anniversary season with *The Elixir of Love*. The opera will be sung in Italian with English supertitles projected above the stage.

AIDA

Music by Giuseppe Verdi

Libretto by Antonio Ghislanzoni

Sets from New Orleans Opera

Sung in Italian with English Supertitles

Previous Atlanta Opera Performances: 1995, 2003

Approximate Running Time: 3 hours 15 minutes with 2 intermissions

09-10 NEWS**Four Performances at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre**

Saturday, February 27, 2010 at 8 pm

Tuesday, March 2, 2010 at 7:30 pm

Friday, March 5, 2010 at 8 pm

Sunday, March 7, 2010 at 3 pm

Creative Team

<i>Conductor</i>	Yoel Levi
<i>Stage Director</i>	Trevore Ross
<i>Set Designer</i>	Phil Silver*
<i>Costumes</i>	A.T. Jones
<i>Lighting Designer</i>	Donald Thomas
<i>Choreographer</i>	Rosa Mercedes

Cast

<i>Aida</i>	Mary Elizabeth Williams
<i>Amneris</i>	Elizabeth Bishop*
<i>Radames</i>	Antonello Palombi*
<i>Amonasro</i>	Mark Delavan
<i>Ramfis</i>	Morris Robinson*
<i>King of Egypt</i>	Kenneth Kellogg*
<i>Priestess</i>	Amy Little
<i>Messenger</i>	Timothy Miller

Description

The Egyptian princess Amneris intends to marry Radames, the next leader of the Egyptian Army. But Radames is in love with Aida, a princess who is an enslaved prisoner of war. When Amneris discovers her competition, she stops at nothing to destroy them both. Verdi's triumphant opera will feature a star-studded cast, including baritone Mark Delavan and new international sensation Antonello Palombi.

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TICKET INFORMATION**Single Tickets**

\$25 - \$125 plus tax, convenience and venue fees

Online – Visit www.atlantaopera.org

By Phone – Call 404-881-8885 or 1-800-35-OPERA

In-person – Visit the Bank of North Georgia Box Office at the Cobb Energy Centre (Mon-Fri, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; and one hour prior to a performance on day of show).

09-10 NEWS**Season Tickets** – 2-Opera Mini-Series Still Available

Season tickets to The Atlanta Opera's 2009-2010 30th Anniversary Season at the Cobb Energy Centre are still available. Ticket prices for a two-opera package including *Aida* and *The Magic Flute* range from \$50 to \$270.

Online – Visit www.atlantaopera.org

By Phone – Call 404-881-8885 or 1-800-35-OPERA

In-person – Visit The Atlanta Opera Center at 1575 Northside Drive NW, Building 300, Suite 350 (Mon-Fri, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.).

OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN MORE**Artful Stories at the Michael C. Carlos Museum**

Children and families will enjoy a reading of Leontyne Price's children's book of the classic opera, *Aida*, as well as musical selections performed by Atlanta Opera bass Kenneth Kellogg. This family-friendly event will be held on Saturday, February 6, 10:00-11:00 a.m. at the Michael C. Carlos Museum, 571 Kilgo Circle. For children 3-8 years accompanied by an adult. Free to the public. RSVP required – 404.727.0519.

Opera Chat

Join us for an informal conversation with singers and artists from The Atlanta Opera's upcoming production of *Aida*. Hosted by Eric Mitchko, Atlanta Opera Director of Artistic Administration, Opera Chat will be held on Thursday, February 11, 7:00 p.m. at the Barnes & Noble Buckhead, 2900 Peachtree Road. This event is free, and no reservations are required.

Opera 101

A class devoted to *Aida* will be held on Monday, February 22, 7:00-8:30 p.m. at The Atlanta Opera Center, 1575 Northside Drive. Led by long-time opera connoisseur and Honorary Board Member Carter Joseph, Opera 101 is a prep course for the upcoming production. Patrons are introduced to a history, background and story line of the opera. The composer, librettist, key characters, musical theme and selected arias are featured in an entertaining and interesting multi-media presentation. Opera 101 is educational and fun! Free but reservations are required – 404-881-8801.

Pre-Opera Talks

Free, fun and informative, Pre-Opera Talks occur 50 minutes prior to each performance in the John A. Williams Theatre at the Cobb Energy Centre. Pre-Opera Talks help patrons gain better understanding of the upcoming production through a brief presentation about the setting, plot, characters, composer and music. Reservations are not required and seating is unreserved. Patrons must have a ticket for the specific performance that follows.



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Opera Guide

Download a complete study guide for *Aida* at www.atlantaopera.org.

Synopsis

For a synopsis of *Aida*, please visit www.atlantaopera.org.

ATLANTA OPERA SPONSORS

AT&T is the Atlanta Opera's Season Sponsor. The Atlanta Opera is proud to recognize its other corporate partners: **The Coca-Cola Company**, the Official Beverage Sponsor of The Atlanta Opera and Opening Night Performance Sponsor and **Zurich**, the Official Insurance Sponsor of The Atlanta Opera. Generous production support also has been provided by Dr. and Mrs. James W. Bland, Bob and Cappa Woodward, the Sara Giles Moore Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Knobloch, Jr., Martha Thompson, the Atlanta Music Festival Association, Mrs. Harry Willson and Ms. Barbara D. Stewart.

ABOUT THE ATLANTA OPERA

Founded in 1979, The Atlanta Opera is currently celebrating its 30th anniversary season. Led by Zurich General Director Dennis Hanthorn, The Atlanta Opera strives to enhance the experience of its patrons with memorable and exciting performances reflecting the highest musical and theatrical standards, while supporting community and educational programs. The company also works to attract the finest international, national and regional singers, conductors, stage directors and designers. For more information about The Atlanta Opera, please visit www.AtlantaOpera.org or call 404-881-8801.