

AIDA

Music by Elton John Lyrics by Tim Rice

Virginia Musical Theatre

Sandler Center

Oct. 24- Oct 26

For tickets 757-340-5446

Hello, I'm Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large.

This is an elegant, stylish edition of this jazzed up Vegas style version of Verdi's AIDA. The ill fated lovers are buried alive in the sands of Egypt just as they are in the original but its more like they are buried in sequins as Elton John and Tim Rice tell the story.

For me, Elton John has written only one song. It's called "Candle in the Wind". You don't hear it in this show, however. There are lots of other songs but I couldn't hum a note of one of them. That's my problem, of course, because Mr. John has a huge following in spite of my cloth ears.

Chip Gallagher, director, and Tim Smith, choreographer, create a slick, smoothly flowing production of this overly long musical. Ben Needham's scenery and Paul Miller's lighting provide lush but simply defined playing areas for the action to take place. Smith's dancers are outstanding and evoke images of prehistoric paintings and bas-relief. The orchestra conducted by Mark Snedegar is perfectly balanced and enhances the singers vocal abilities

The large cast is not only big in number but strong in talent. In the titular role, Felicia Boswell is the stellar attraction of the show. She's a very sensitive, many faceted actress and sings song after song with nice variety and distinction. Over all, it's a very special a performance worth the price of a season ticket. As Radames, Ricky Nahas is a winning, vocal power house but not much of a hunk or not as much of a hunk as one usually sees in this role. The Princess Amneris as done Jacqueline Bayne is just the right blend of bimbo and real person. She provides much needed humor and is a joyous presence to this at times tedious piece of musical theatre. Keeshan Morrow finds every moment of delight in his mischievous character, Merob.

Even though, as I have noted, I'm not a fan of Elton John's music I liked this production. Free of a lot of trappings and heavy pyramids it does at times transport one into a story book land that is a most pleasant diversion.

This is Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large and I'll see you at the next opening