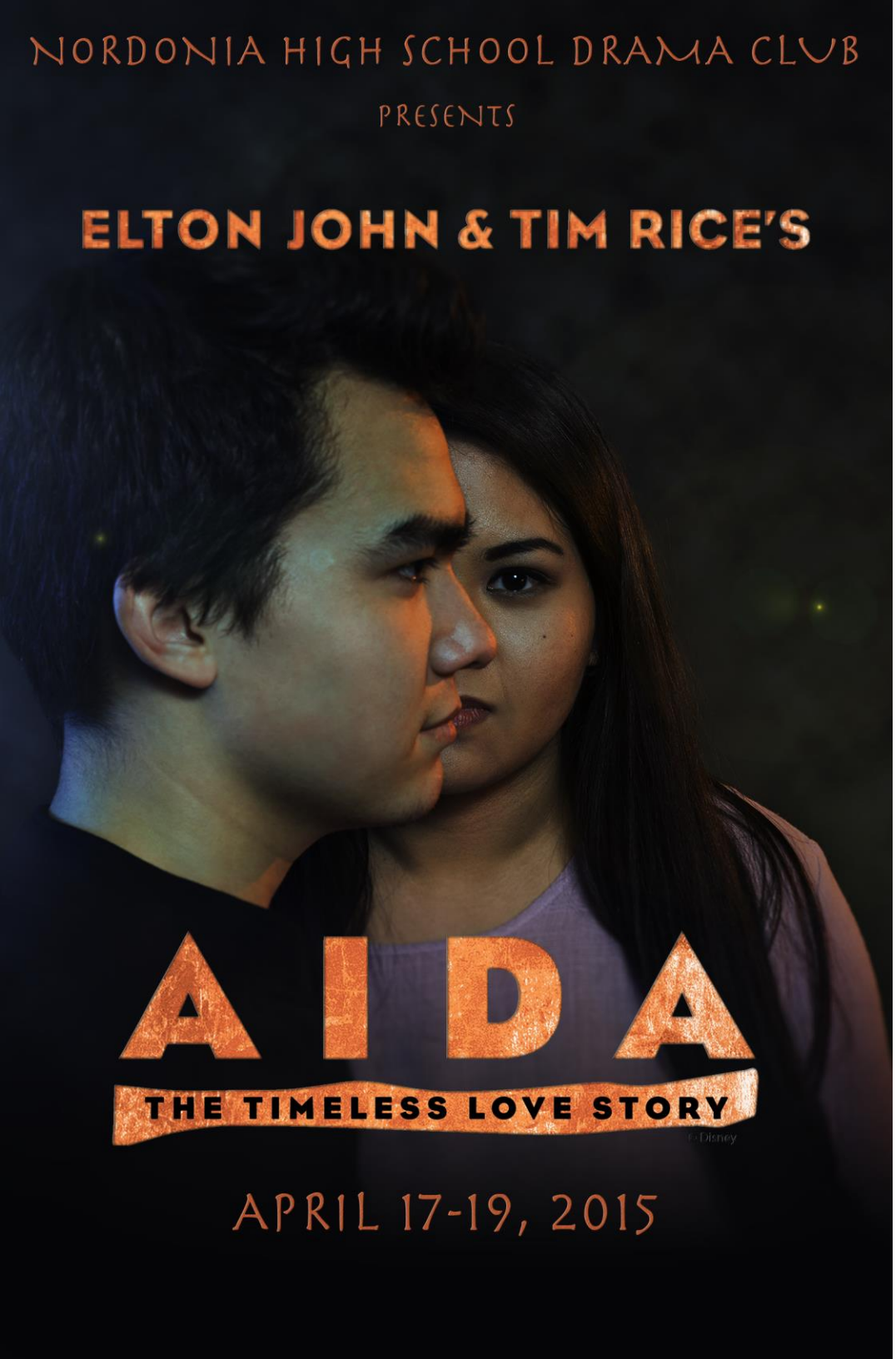

Director's Notes

Aida is an epic tale of loyalty, betrayal, and the timelessness of love, set in ancient Egypt. It tells the story of Aida, an enslaved Nubian princess, Radames, her conflicted Egyptian captor, and a forbidden love that rocks the ancient world to its core. The musical explores the love triangle between Aida, Radames, and the Egyptian princess Amneris. As with every love triangle, there are consequences. You will watch as Aida, Radames, and Amneris struggle to come to terms with the choices they make, not just for themselves, but for each other and their people.

I first saw *Aida* on Broadway in the spring of 2002, and I have been in love with the show ever since. The story is captivating and Elton John's music is mesmerizing. It is a show that I have wanted to direct at Nordonia for years. As a drama, it is a different type of show for Nordonia, and I am thrilled to be able to bring this story to the stage this year.

To my amazingly talented cast, all I can say is thank you! Thank you for tackling this show head on and working so hard to make these roles your own. You met every challenge with a great attitude and work ethic. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with each and every one of you. I could not be more proud to call myself your director.

It has been 15 years since I began my time with the Nordonia Drama Club. I sometimes cannot believe it has been that long. I have had the opportunity to work on so many wonderful shows and with so many insanely talented students. I love what I do, I love my students, and I love that I get to call the Nordonia Drama Club my own. Thank you all for another incredible year and please, enjoy this year's production of *Aida*!

Chris Simmons
Director of Drama

Senior and Lead Bios

Alexis Aldhizer (Nubian) is a senior appearing in her second NHS musical production. She was on stage in last year's *The Wedding Singer*. Alexis is a member of Girl Scouts, Marching Band, Concert Band, and has played soccer for five years. She plans to attend West Virginia University to study Forensic Science before moving on to Marshall University for her graduate studies. Alexis would like to thank all the friends she has made over the last four years. She has loved all the fun she has had and will miss you all!

Amber Bills (Makeup Crew) is a senior working on her fourth musical production at Nordonia. She has previously appeared on stage in *Hairspray, Joseph*, and as Linda in *The Wedding Singer*. In addition to Drama, Amber is involved with Synergy, Choir, Glass Ceiling, and the Girl Scouts. She plans on pursuing a career in Media, Culture, and Communication at NYU this fall.

Nick Bina (Amonasro/Soldier) is a senior and this marks his third appearance in a Nordonia musical. When he was in fifth grade, he appeared in *Grease* with his brothers and father. He also played the Pharaoh in *Joseph*. Nick has played football and has wrestled for ten years, and back in the day, he could throw a pig skin a quarter mile. Nick plans to attend Kent State University for Construction Management.

Cati Brasdovich (Soldier/ Lady of the Palace) is a senior appearing in her fourth NHS Drama production. She has previously performed in *Clue*, *Joseph*, and *The Wedding Singer*. Outside of Drama she is very busy. She naps, hangs out with Charlene and Shannon...duh, likes to shop, and she often likes to lay around looking up at the clouds, imagining what her life would be like without Karoline Kress. Cati is also the current Secretary/Treasurer of "Knit 4 the Homeless". After graduation, Cati plans to pursue a career in Interior Design.

Matt Bunn (Tech Crew) is a senior and has been working as a member of the tech crew: working events, concerts, festivals, and much more, since the eighth grade. Each event brings new experiences and new people and he enjoys being a part of tech. In addition to tech, Matt has also been a member of the Band for seven years and is a member of National Honor Society. After high school, Matt plans to attend Baldwin Wallace and eventually Case Western University to major in Electrical Engineering.

Charlene de Jesus (Aida) is a senior and is appearing in her fourth straight musical production at Nordonia. She has previously appeared as Becky in *Hairspray*, a Narrator in *Joseph*, and as Holly in *The Wedding Singer*. Her extracurriculars include Synergy, piano and voice, napping, and hanging out with Cati and Shannon....obviously. In her spare time, she is also the current President of "Knit 4 the Homeless", a position she took over from its founder, Keyshaun Smith. After high school, Charlene plans to further her education at Kent State studying Pre-Med.

Leslie DeShane (Soldier/Lady of the Palace) is a senior and this year marks her second Nordonia musical. She was on stage previously in *The Wedding Singer*. She also appeared this past fall as Mimms in *And Then There Was One* and is the current Drama Club Historian. Leslie is also a member of Colorguard, Wind Ensemble, and is a two year member of an independent Winter Guard International organization. This fall, Leslie will attend The Ohio State University to major in Biology.

Ellie Filmeck (Makeup Crew Manager) is a senior and is a four year member of the Makeup Crew for the Drama Club, having served as manager for two years. She also participates in Girls on the Run and has been very active in community theatres, working backstage, props, and as an assistant stage manager. She has worked on the set crew at Aurora Community Theatre for two years. In the fall, Ellie plans to go to Denison to study Engineering.

Chris Fujikawa (Radames/Fight Captain) is a senior making his fourth appearance in a Nordonia musical. He has previously appeared as Council Member Mikey in *Hairspray*, as Issachar in *Joseph*, and in the title role of Robbie Hart in *The Wedding Singer*. He appeared as Matthew Charisma in last fall's *And Then There Was One* and is the current Treasurer of the Drama Club. In addition to his four years working with Drama, Chris is also a Varsity letterman in Soccer and served as a Captain his senior year. He has taken voice lessons for eight years from Vicki Lester and does hope to continue to have music in his life after his final curtain call at Nordonia, whether it be musical theatre, singing, piano, learning to play the guitar, or perhaps creating the musical *Gabourey Sidibe: Based on the movie Precious: Based on the novel Push by Sapphire*. Chris plans to further his education at Denison where he will study Engineering. In a world

Sam Fujikawa (Zoser) is a sophomore appearing in his sixth Nordonia musical. He has previously appeared in *South Pacific*, as Jojo in *Seussical*, as Chip in *Beauty and the Beast*, *Joseph*, and *The Wedding Singer*. He has quite the active imagination, for he also credits himself as being Effie White's understudy in the motion picture remake of *Dreamgirls*, and as having starred in the Off-Broadway premiere production of *Precious: Based on the Novel Push by Sapphire*, recreating Monique's Academy Award winning role. Back in reality, even if just for a moment, Sam is a member of the Varsity Swimming Team and Student Council. He has also been hand-making light bulbs since 2005, because why not!? Sam would like to take a moment to thank his idol, Joan Callamezzo, and his roommates: Sophia, Blanche, Rose, and Dorothy...thank you for being a friend!

Alexyss Gray (Backstage Manager) is a senior working on the backstage crew for her third straight musical. She is also a member of Glass Ceiling. Alexyss will attend the University of Cincinnati for Sociology before eventually attending law school. She would like to say that she loves her drama family, and cherishes the memories she's made working backstage!

Andrew Grell (Pharaoh/Soldier/Fight Captain) is a senior and when asked about his previous theatrical experiences, he replied "LOL none". He will be making his stage debut this year as the Pharaoh and will also be serving as a fight captain for this production. Off the stage, Andrew has been swimming for ten years, is a harsh yet honest movie critic, is a member of the National Honor Society, and is enjoying his newfound position as a wizard apprentice serving under Grandmaster Betty White. This fall, Andrew plans to attend the Ohio State University to major in Economics.

Anthony Guenther (Tech Crew Manager) is a senior this year and is working on tech for his second musical, having designed the lighting for *The Wedding Singer.* He is a member of the Nordonia Tech Committee and the Varsity Football Film Crew, has served as the Nordonia Event Operations Manager for three years, and has been involved in multiple productions outside Nordonia. Anthony plans to go to Kent State for Computer Science.

Shannon Howie (Utana/ Lady of the Palace/Dance Captain) is a senior this year and is appearing on stage in her fourth NHS musical. She has previously appeared in *Hairspray, Joseph,* and *The Wedding Singer* as the "Twinkie Lady". She is finishing up her fourteenth year of Dance at Element Dance Company as a member of the Performance Team. She also spends almost all of her free time hanging out with Charlene and Cati, because why would she not!?!?! In the fall, Shannon plans to attend Tri-C or Kent State to work towards a career as an Ophthalmic Medical Technician or Assistant.

Brice Jackson (Pit Orchestra) is a senior playing keyboard in the pit orchestra for his second musical. He is a member of Jazz Band, Jazz Combo, and Marching Band. He shares a striking resemblance to U2's Bono. Brice plans to attend Baldwin Wallace for Piano Performance.

Sara Kidd (Makeup Crew Manager) is a senior working on her fourth production as a member of the makeup crew, and is serving her first year as crew manager. She is a People to People Student Ambassador and has worked as a team member at Chick-fil-A in Macedonia for two years. This fall, Sara has accepted a full ride to The University of Akron to study Biology.

Kyle Krempasky (Soldier/Nubian) is a senior making his first appearance on stage this year in *Aida*. As a member of the Tech Crew, he has worked the light board for the last three musicals. Keeping himself quite busy, Kyle is also a member of: Nordonia Indoor Drumline, Boy Scouts, Math Club, Chemistry Club, Russian Literature Club, Asian Heritage Appreciation Club, Shoe Making Club, Mac-n-Cheese Club, and the very prestigious Clubs Club. After high school, Kyle plans to study Pre-Med at OSU focusing on wither Physical Therapy Prosthetics or Psychonueroimmunology…or Clown College.

Scott Kutil (Pit Orchestra) is a senior and is playing drums for his first musical. He is a member of Jazz Band, Jazz Combo, Marching Band, and Winter Drumline. Scott plans to attend Ohio University after graduation.

Cal Ley (Minister/Nubian) is a senior this year and is appearing in his second Nordonia musical. He first appeared on stage as Glen in last year's *The Wedding Singer*. In addition to Drama, Cal is a member of the Swimming and Diving team and is an avid Pokémon Master. After graduation, he plans on attending Mount Vernon Nazarene University to study Middle Childhood Education.

Lexi Majoros (Mereb/ Lady of the Palace/Dance Captain) is a sophomore and this is her second musical at Nordonia. She appeared as Crystal in *The Wedding Singer* last year. Lexi has been cheerleading for two years and has been cheering competitively for one. Oh, and she likes food.

Ashley Miller (Nubian) is a senior and this is her third Nordonia musical. She appeared on stage last year in *The Wedding Singer* and served as a member of the Makeup Crew for *Hairspray*. She is a member of Band, Colorguard, and Choir. She enjoys performing and is a member of her youth group's leadership. After graduation in May, Ashley will attend Tri-C to become a coda and possibly also study Theatre Arts.

Layla Morris (Amneris) is a senior. She is appearing in her fourth NHS musical, having previously appeared in *Hairspray* as Little Inez, *Joseph*, and as Tina Turner in *The Wedding Singer*. Off the stage, Layla is also a member of Synergy, Band, and Choir. She has played Varsity Golf for Nordonia for the last four years. After high school, Layla will attend Bowling Green to major in Sports Broadcasting.

Amanda Pace (Nehebka/ Lady of the Palace/Dance Captain) is a junior this year and is appearing in her third straight Nordonia musical, having previously been on stage in *Joseph* and *The Wedding Singer*. She has also appeared in three fall plays, She is the current Vice President of the Drama Club. Outside of Drama, Amanda is also a member of Teen Institute Youth Staff and the choir at Our Lady of Guadalupe. She also takes piano lessons from Mrs. Lessman and studies voice from Vicki Lester.

Keyshaun Smith (Nubian) is a senior and is appearing in his fourth musical production at Nordonia, having previously performed in *Hairspray, Joseph*, and *The Wedding Singer*. He has also appeared in three fall plays. He is also serving as the current Drama Club President and is the coordinator for the NHS Summer Drama Camp. Keyshaun keeps himself very busy, as in addition to Drama, he is also a four year member of the following: Tech Crew, Student Council, Leadership, and Curriculum Advisory Council. In the fall, he plans to attend Kent State University to study Communications.

Allie Stephens (Nubian) is a senior in her first show, and she is having a blast! She is a member of Band, the National Honor Society, and Science Olympiad. Allie will continue her education this fall at Case Western Reserve or The University of Akron to study Biomedical Engineering.