

## **Egypt in Antiquity: Music and Mythological Deities**

*April Sloan-Hubert*  
Jack Yates High School

### **INTRODUCTION**

Jack Yates High School in Houston, Texas, is the alma mater of choreographer, producer and actress Debbie Allen and her Tony-award winning sister, Philicia Rashad. The Allen sisters discovered and began to develop their talents and skills at the historic Jack Yates High School. The great jazz vocalist, the late Anita Moore, developed her vocal pipes too at Jack Yates. Anita's voice although silenced is still remembered for being hand picked by the one and only Duke Ellington to lead his orchestra. Jack Yates High School is also the alma mater of the now retired Lavonia Pope Bassett, the first African American music supervisor for the Houston Independent School District. As the present Choir Director and Fine Arts Department Chair at this talent-rich institution, I am charged with the phenomenal task to lead, mold, develop and return our department to its traditional glory. I am also cognizant of the fact that those were the days before state-mandated tests, budget cuts, site-based management and weaponless wars of destruction.

In America's not-so-long ago past, people from all walks of life were considered culturally refined and upstanding citizens by attending the opera, going to the museum, knowing what dinner fork to use at a well set table, and by the art work in their homes.

At the heart of my motivation lie two exceptionally large music history classes with forty plus students each. The students enrolled in these classes are lovingly called "the music historians." These semi-non musically inclined historians are void of vocal and instrumental skills, but they possess a great love and appreciation for music. At least sixty percent of these students are graduating seniors who for one reason or another decided to delay taking this year-long fine arts course to meet their graduation requirements.

I am of the opinion that the cause for many students who wait until their senior year to take their fine arts course is partially attributed to the fact that neither of the two middle schools in our feeder pattern have fine arts programs. Our fine arts department instructors often have to start with the basic fundamentals of their specific disciplines to help these seniors pass these courses to graduate on time. As an educator it is imperative for me to effectively teach my students and hold their interest by creating a curriculum like "*Egypt in Antiquity: Music and Mythological Deities.*"

This six weeks curriculum unit will allow students to study Egypt, her people, their cultural myths, their unique and priceless treasures and the lives of the Pharaohs. The students will also have the opportunity to study Egyptian hieroglyphs also known as the "Sacred Signs," the ancient Kemetic system of picture writing. The students will be introduced to ancient pieces of art made of stone that date back to 3200 B.C. which also reflects the political unification of Upper and Lower Egypt. The students will study ancient Egyptian musicians and their lifestyles. The origins of many instruments still used today have their beginnings in Egypt. The students will study ancient Egyptian instruments and their roles in ceremonial temple worship, palaces, on battlefields and finally in the ancient tombs.

As choir director I would be remiss if I didn't include the study of the opera *Aida* by Giuseppe Verdi for my choral music students. The background for the opera is set at the time of

the Pharaohs' reign in Egypt. Verdi's classic love story is a tale of three lovers in a triangle that can be compared with the same lover's triangle in the opera *Porgy and Bess*.

Upon the completion of this unit the students will be culturally enriched, refined and enlightened. These students will possess a plethora of knowledge about Egypt and her great cultural contributions to the world and her amazing history.

## **OVERVIEW OF EGYPT**

Egypt is located in northeast Africa and is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea and the Sinai Peninsula. This distinctive civilization emerged at the northern end of the Nile Valley. Egypt's rich agricultural land was sustained by the annual flooding of a river that not only watered the fields but additionally deposited new layers of fertile silt along its banks. The Nile River, running north from its source in East Africa to the Mediterranean coast, was the lifeblood of Egypt. This geographical occurrence divided the country into two sections known as Lower and Upper Egypt.

The two distinct regions of Upper and Lower Egypt are symbolized by a variety of emblems such as the lotus and the papyrus. The lotus served as the emblem of Upper Egypt and the papyrus the emblem of Lower Egypt.

Lower Egypt is known as Northern Egypt because it is down river along the Nile. Lower Egypt is the most northern section stretching from the south of Cairo to the Nile Delta at Alexandria. The Lower Egyptians' dialect and customs were quite different from those of Upper Egyptians.

Upper Egypt is known as Southern Egypt because it is upstream and closer to the source of the Nile. Upper Egypt is a narrow strip of land extending from the Nile's cataracts to the south of Cairo. Egypt's terrain known as margin land is located between the flood plain and the desert.

## **ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CIVILIZATION**

Ancient Egypt is the most remarkable and alluring of all ancient civilizations. Egypt's greatest treasures lie in her arts and sciences. For more than three thousand years the art of ancient Egypt has shaped, pushed, prodded, and teased the curiosity of scholars around the world. Long before scholars were able to decipher the hieroglyphic script, Egyptian art and inscriptions were stolen, copied, and published. A very sizeable amount of artwork was eagerly attained by museums and private collectors around the world. These measures are easily understood simply because Egyptian art is rich, captivating and has survived from early antiquity.

The Egyptians were known for supplying their homes, temples and especially their tombs with some of the world's most beautiful works of art. These works of art ranged from the most colossal statues to the most minutely fashioned jewelry, amulets and utensils. It must be clearly understood that these works of art were not only used for ornamentation, extravagance or daily use but also directly related to the religious beliefs of the ancient Egyptians. Even though most Egyptian artifacts and relics were undeniably created for enjoyment and appreciation, there is a recurring theme of symbolic messages found in all Egyptian art.

The Egyptians' use of symbols represents many of their religious beliefs and ideas about nature and the universe. Symbolic objects and pictures were used to make the abstruse immediately understandable. Quite often the use of symbolism referred to the creation and origin of life on earth and life after death. Symbols were used for protection by people to keep themselves and their families safe from evil influences in this life and the afterlife. All Egyptians in antiquity were greatly concerned and enthralled with the afterlife, an interest, which is significantly portrayed in their art.

## MUSIC IN ANCIENT EGYPT

Archaeological finds have unearthed substantial evidence validating that musicians and their music were a rich part of ancient Egypt. Hieroglyphics and papyrus texts from Egyptian mythology show that music played a significant role in Egyptian society. Ancient Egypt may possibly have been the first great culture to infuse its entire society with music and dance. Egypt's treasures also bear witness that ancient Egyptians thoroughly enjoyed living and their celebrations were incomplete without the presence of music and dance. Hieroglyphics of festivals honoring gods, the harvest, battles, and other ancient celebrations show the singers and dancers performing to music from harps, lutes, drums, flutes, cymbals, clappers (hand clapping), and tambourines.

Professional musicians existed in ancient Egypt just like they exist today. A select group of professional musicians existed on a number of social and political levels in ancient Egypt. The highest status for a musician in ancient Egypt was the job of a temple musician. To be a temple musician of a royal household, a particular god or goddess was equivalent to the status of being a Mozart, Bach or Beethoven. At the opposite end of the spectrum is a lower social scale of Egyptians who also employed musicians who entertained for parties and festivals accompanied by dancers.

Music was a vital part of religious worship in Egypt. The Egyptian gods *Hathor* and *Bes* were specifically associated with music, dance, fertility and childbirth. An integral part of the cult of *Hathor* was music and dance that included priestesses who performed ceremonial rituals and dances shaking a *sistrum* (a rattle) with decorated handles and a carved head of the goddess *Hathor*. The priestesses were adorned with beaded necklaces with extended counterpoises called *menat* necklaces. These *menat* necklaces were made of heavy trinkets of various materials, weights and sizes to produce varying sounds and rhythms. The *menat* necklace was used as a percussion instrument in certain religious contexts and a symbol automatically associated with *Hathor* who wore the epithet "Great Menat" along with her young son *Ihy*, the god of music. In ancient Egypt the title "priestess", *hemet netjer* (literal translation is "wife of a god"), referred to women who served in the temple cults and were from the upper echelons of Egyptian society. The *hemet netjesrs'* in most cases were married to the temple priests and their positions relied heavily upon the status of their husbands.

### Ancient Egyptian Instruments

There are an enormous number of musicians and dancers depicted in temples and tombs from all periods of Egypt's dynastic history. Miraculously hundreds of these instruments have survived and were recovered from their ancient tombs. These priceless ancient instruments have found homes in museums and private collections around the world. Many of these instruments have survived because they were individually wrapped in cloths and preserved in the same tradition as the mummification of their deceased.

There is evidence of orchestral ensembles and bands in ancient Egypt. These ancient musicians played instruments made of ivory, bones, gold and other fine metals and stones. Four basic types of musical instruments dominated all Egyptian vocal and instrumental compositions. All Egyptian instruments can be classified into one or more of the following categories: idiophones, membranophones, aerophones and chordophones. Many of the ancient musical instruments have evolved into many modern day instruments used in orchestras today.

An idiophone is any musical instrument able to produce sounds by rigorous self-vibration. These unique instruments can produce sound not using membranes or strings. Idiophones are percussive instruments that when struck or hit with a hand or a stick vibrate. The idiophones used in ancient Egyptian music were: clappers (two pieces of curved shaped wood with hands carved

on the end of each clapper struck or clapped together), *sistrum* (a metal rod with a hoop supporting small metal disks that produce a tinkling sound when shaken) and cymbals to name a few. These instruments were played by temple priestesses who led Pharaohs, funerals and temple priests in ritual ceremonies. Additional idiophones used that are more familiar today are: a triangle, bells, claves, African thumb piano, maracas, musical saw, gong, woodblocks, vibraphone and a Jew's harp.

Instruments classified as membranaphones require the use of animal skin stretched over resonators to produce sound. Ancient Egyptian membranaphones include tambourines and drums of various shapes and sizes. Many of the drums in antiquity included small hand-held drums that were easy for the temple priestess and dancers to play and still move freely. These ancient membranaphones were also played at banquets, temple rituals, as well as religious and military functions. In the Old and Middle Kingdom tombs are representations of soldiers going to war and marching to the beat of drums. Some membranaphones are capable of producing pitch while others are for rhythmic accompaniments only. Additional membranaphones used in orchestras today are snare and bass drums, bongos, jingles, castanets and timpani.

Aerophones are instruments that require a body of air to produce their sound absent of strings and membranes. Egyptian aerophones are the flute, trumpet, pipes and double reed pipes. Aerophones utilized today in classical music are the piccolo, clarinet, saxophone, trombone, coronet, French horn, euphonium, tuba, oboe, and bassoon. Other aerophones that are popular to specific cultures are the whistle, recorder, jug, panpipes, single and double reed bagpipes, conch shell, shofar, harmonica and the bugle.

Chordophones in ancient Egypt consisted of three types: the harp, (which were geographically indigenous to Egypt), the lute and the lyre. Chordophones are string instruments whose sound is produced by the vibration of the strings. Resonators pick up the original vibrations of the strings and vibrate them rigorously amplifying the original sound. Chordophones can be plucked, stroked or bowed. The harp is believed to be the oldest chordophone. Extremely ornate and simple harps are pictured on the wall paintings in ancient Egypt and Samaria. Additional chordophones are the violin, viola, cello, contrabass, guitar, banjo, harpsichord, hammered dulcimer and the piano.

### **Vocal Music in Ancient Egypt**

The Middle Kingdom (c2133-1786 BC) brought about advancements in music caused by foreign invasions. Instruments began to change shapes, female chambers groups evolved and melodies became more complicated by moving in larger intervals. Another rare painting shows an end-blown flute, harp and a man singing with his left hand covering his ear. Three singers are also shown accompanied by two harps and a *sistrum*.

In the New Kingdom (c1580-1786 BC) the introduction of an early oboe-like pipe with a double reed and a trumpet appear. Vocal music for rituals in the temples was often accompanied by the *sistrum*, a harp and drum. Although there is not a great deal of information actually known about vocal music in ancient Egypt, we do know that it was important enough to their existence in life and death to have been mentioned at all.

The importance of music in ancient Egypt is attested by the large numbers of instruments in museum collections.

Perhaps the best indication of the ancient Egyptians' sheer enjoyment of music is to be found in a 'satirical' papyrus (Museo Egizio, Turin) depicting an ass with a large arched harp, a lion with a lyre, a crocodile with a lute and a monkey with a double 'oboe' (Shaw 192).

## AN EGYPTIAN OPERA

*Aida* is an opera by Giuseppe Verdi that takes place in ancient Egypt. *Aida*, set during the time of the Pharaohs, is a classic tale of a lover's triangle caught in the middle of a war. *Aida* first premiered in Cairo, Egypt, December 24, 1871. Initially, *Aida's* premiere was to mark the celebration of the opening of the Suez Canal, but Verdi turned down the commission to write an Egyptian opera. The Khedive of Egypt wanted to show Europe's Royalty and aristocracy the "new modern Egypt" as opposed to the ancient Egypt. A push to build a great opera house was necessary in order to entertain the elite Europeans to correctly feed their royal appetites with an opera.

Verdi, the greatest composer of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, refused the commission until a friend of Verdi's sent him a synopsis of the opera, an ancient Egyptian love story by a French Egyptologist. Verdi changed his mind and hired Antonio Ghislanzoni to write the libretto for *Aida*. Verdi wrote *Aida* in four months.

### *Aida's* Main Characters

***Aida*** (eye-EE-dah) – **Soprano**

Aida is a slave girl in Egypt who is really an Egyptian princess who is in love with Radames.

***Amneris*** (ahm-NAYR-iss) – **Mezzo Soprano**

Amneris is also an Egyptian princess in love with Radames.

***Radames*** (RAH-dah-mes) – **Tenor**

Radames is an Egyptian warrior who is secretly in love with Aida.

***Amonasro*** (ah-moh-NAHZ-roh) – **Baritone**

Amonasro is King of Ethiopia and the father of Aida.

***Ramfis*** (RAM-fiss) – **Bass**

Ramfis is the High Priest of Egypt.

***Pharaoh*** (FAY-row) **Bass**

Pharaoh is the Egyptian King and the father of Amneris

### AIDA'S PLOT SUMMARY

#### Act I – The Temple of Vulcan in the Pharaoh's Palace

The first scene begins with a beautiful backdrop of the pyramids and the temples of ancient Egypt near the royal palace at Memphis.

The Pharaoh discovers that his country is being invaded by Ethiopian warriors. The Pharaoh in turn declares war on the country of Ethiopia. Radames, the great Egyptian soldier, valiantly leads the Egyptian army into battle. When the battle ends, Radames would like to marry his secret love Aida who is as slave to the Pharaoh's daughter Amneris. The princess Amneris is also in love with the strong Radames. Amneris's female intuition tells her that Aida may also be in love with Radames. Everyone assumes that Aida is just an ordinary Ethiopian slave when in secrecy she is an Ethiopian princess in captivity. At the end of the first scene, the temple priestesses chant the praises of the god Ptah in the Temple of Vulcan joined by the high priest Ramfis to keep Radames safe in battle.

#### Act II – Amneris' Room in the Pharaoh's Palace

The Ethiopians have been defeated and the Egyptians declare victory. Amneris is preparing for Radames' triumphant return when she sees Aida approaching and automatically dismisses all the other slaves. Amneris tricks Aida by telling her that Radames has been killed in battle. Aida

then weeps and she is consumed with sorrow. The sly Amneris now knows that she and Aida are definitely in love with Radames.

At the gates of the city the Egyptians parade and celebrate their victory over the Ethiopians. The hero Radames leads the victory procession followed by the Ethiopian prisoners. Aida, watching her fellow countrymen march in as prisoners of war, immediately recognizes that one of the prisoners is her father, Amonasro, the King of Ethiopia. Amonasro is pretending to be a soldier to conceal his royal identity to the Egyptians. Amonasro signals his daughter to not expose him. The Pharaoh is moved by Radames' gallant victory and grants him a wish. Radames wishes for the Ethiopian prisoners to be set free. The Pharaoh agrees and also rewards Radames with his daughter's hand in marriage. This act closes with Amonasro in custody and Aida heartbroken.

### **Act III – The Banks of the Nile River**

Amneris is led by Ramfis to the temple of Isis for a wedding vigil.

While Amneris is in the temple praying, Aida arrives for a secret meeting with Radames when her father Amonasro appears and wants Aida to trick Radames into disclosing when, where and how he and his army intend to capture Ethiopia. Aida is suddenly torn between her love for her father and Radames. Just as Radames reveals his military attack strategies to invade Ethiopia, Amonasro comes out of hiding and says that he and his men will be ready to defend their homeland. Amneris and Ramfis overhear everything from the temple and approach Radames. Aida and her father escape while Radames surrenders as a traitor.

### **Act IV – In the Temple of Judgment Awaiting the Trial of Radames**

Amneris, although betrayed by Radames, still offers to save his life if he will renounce his love for Aida and marry her. Radames is unmoved by Amneris's obvious display of love for him. Radames, who fails to defend himself, is found guilty of treason and is condemned to death. Radames's punishment for treason is that he will be buried alive in a tomb. Radames is led away to his tomb where he finds his true love Aida hidden inside to share his fate. Aida and Radames sing of their love for each other as they bid farewell to life while Amneris outside above their tomb prays for peace.

### **Giuseppe Verdi - (1813 –1901)**

Giuseppe Verdi was born in Le Roncole, Italy. Verdi was a parish organist at the age of twelve. At the age of eighteen he was denied admission into the elite Milan Conservatory of Music. Verdi later became an accompanist at the prestigious La Scala (the greatest opera house in the world).

For the next fifty years Verdi penned operas that earned him worldwide acclaim. Verdi wrote a total of twenty-six operas during his long career. Out of twenty-six of Verdi's operas, sixteen are still performed today. Verdi is still remembered for his balance of musical phrases and a touch of Wagnerian styling evident in *Aida's* arias, "Ritorna vincitor" and "O patria mia."

### **Antonio Ghislanzoni – (1824 – 1893)**

Verdi chose Antonio Ghislanzoni to write the libretto (storyline of an opera) for his opera *Aida*. Maestro Verdi and Ghislanzoni worked closely to achieve the "bond of a good marriage" the perfect music and the perfect libretto to create a fabulous musical union. Ghislanzoni penned more than sixty libretti in his lifetime.

### **MYTHOLOGICAL DEITIES OF ANCIENT EGYPT**

It is impossible for my students or anyone else to study ancient Egypt without learning about the mythological deities who ruled Egypt beyond the Pharaohs. For thousands of years the Pharaohs and their subjects worshiped, consulted with, prayed to and even made sacrifices to

these non-human idols of their religion. The Egyptians strongly opposed monotheistic religions. They wholeheartedly believed their gods existed on the very same plane as all other living creatures. In all honestly these mythological deities were created to explain the occurrences in the universe that their rulers could not explain or understand. In Upper Egypt there was a plethora of gods and goddesses with many names and ever changing images and shapes.

The gods varied according to location and Pharaohs. Each Egyptian province created or composed stories of the glorious attributes of their mythological deities. Each god has a three-fold existence: in heaven lives the *ba*, the soul of the god; on earth, his image; in the underworld body.

The Egyptians considered that each individual person was made up of five distinct parts: the physical body, the *ba*, the *KA*, the NAME and the shadow. The *ba* has similarities with our concept of “personality,” in that it comprised all those non-physical attributes that made one human being unique. However, the concept of the *ba* also referred to power, and could be extended to gods as well as inanimate objects. *Ba* was, therefore, also the term used for what might be described as the physical manifestations of certain gods, so that the Memphite APIS bull was the *ba* of OSIRIS; similarly the four sons of Horus were his *ba* (Shaw 47).

For the students to gain a better insight to these mythological deities, I will explain to them the following gods who were and are still the most popular deities to the Egyptians. The student will also need this information as prior knowledge for their assignments.

#### ***Aker, the Double Lion God***

*Aker*, the double lion god, is the guardian of the sunrise and sunset. Between the two lions is the *akhet* symbol that represents the horizon on which the sun rises and sets. This symbol is made up of a solar disk cradled between two peaks on a mountain. The western peak was called the *Manu*, while the eastern peak was called *Bakhu*. These two peaks also offer support to keep the sky from falling.

#### ***Amun, the Hidden One***

*Amun*, the god of air and wind, later became the god of fertility and is the creator of all things. During the New Kingdom he became the “The king of the gods.” *Amun* was represented as a bearded man wearing a cap surmounted by two tall plums. He was at times a ram, a ram headed man, or a ram headed-sphinx. *Amun* was also known as *Amon*, *Amen*, *Amen Ra* and *Amon Re*.

#### ***Ammut, the Devourer***

*Ammut* is a female demon found in the *Book of the Dead*. *Ammut* can be found at the time of death for the judgment of the deceased. *Ammut* devoured the souls of those whose hearts proved heavier than *Maat*. *Ammut* terrified the ancient Egyptians. *Ammut* is represented by the head of a crocodile, the middle of a lioness and the hindquarters of a hippopotamus. *Ammut* is also known as *Amam*, *ad Am-mit*.

#### ***Anubis, te Jackal-Eaded God***

*Anubis*, the jackal-eaded god, is the guardian of the *Necropolis* (cemetery). He was the guide of the dead as they made their way through the darkness of the underworld. As a patron of magic, it is believed he could foresee a person’s destiny and was the announcer of death. *Anubis* is also the patron of embalming and the keeper of all poisons and medicines. He provided rare herbs to help *Isis* and *Nephtys* with the embalming of *Osiris*. *Anubis* then performed the funeral of *Osiris*, which would become the model for all funerals. As *Anubis* received the mummy into the tomb, he performed the “Opening of the Mouth” ceremony. *Anubis* is represented as a man with the head of a jackal or a dog.

### ***Aten, Lord of Heaven and Earth.***

*Aten*, the Lord of Heaven and Earth, gained prominence during the reign of King *Akhenaten*, *Akhenaten*, the heretic king made an effort to unite all the people of Egypt under one god. He abolished the traditional cults of Egypt and replaced them with *Aten*.

The Egyptians did not wish to be united in a monotheistic religion. The king considered *Aten* to be the creative source in the universe and the only god worthy of worship. *Aten* is a god that did not possess a physical image but at times was represented by a solar disk projecting many downward rays that ended as human hands. *Aten* at times is pictured holding *ankhs*, the symbol of eternal life in Egyptian culture.

### ***Bastet, the Tearer***

*Bastet*, the Tearer, is a sun goddess and she represents warmth and the life-giving power of the sun. The cult of *Bastet* appears as early as the Second Dynasty. Like a cat, *Bastet*, was admired and worshiped for her agility and strength. *Bastet* defended *Ra* against the serpent *Apep*. *Bastet*, also known as *Bast*, is the daughter and wife of *Ra* and the mother of *Khensu* and *Maahes*.

### ***Geb, the Great Cackler***

*Geb, the Great Cackler*, represented the earth. *Geb* is often seen reclining beneath the sky goddess *Nut*. *Geb* was called the *Great Cackler* and, therefore, was represented by a goose. *Geb* in the form of a goose is said to have laid a golden egg from which the sun was hatched. *Geb* was believed to have been the third divine king on earth. The royal throne of Egypt was known as the “*throne of Geb*” in honor of his great reign. *Geb* is represented by green patches or plants on his body. As the earth he is often seen lying beneath *Nut*, leaning on an elbow, with a knee bent toward the sky which is also representative of the mountains and valleys of the earth. *Geb* was also pictured with a goose on his head or just as a goose. *Geb* is also known as *Keb* the son of *Shu* and *Tefnut*, twin brother of *Nut*, husband of *Nut* and father of *Osiris*, *Isis*, *Seth* and *Nephthys*.

### ***Hapi, the Father of the Gods***

*Hapi*, the Father of the gods, is a very important deity to anyone living in the Nile Valley. He was god of the Nile and his followers worshiped him before they worshiped *Ra*. The Egyptians believed that *Hapi's* source was two whirlpools in the caves on Elephantine Island. *Hapi* was responsible for watering the meadows and bringing the dew. *Hapi* was also praised for bringing fertile inundation. He also provided food and water for nourishment and for offerings for the gods. As fertility god he is closely associated with *Osiris*. *Hapi* is pictured as a bearded man colored blue or green, with female breasts indicating his powers of nourishment. As a god he wears the popular papyrus plant on his head, and as a god of the southern Nile he wears lotus plants. He is seen carrying offerings of food or giving libations of water from a vase. In some hieroglyphics he is seen offering two plants and two vases representing the upper and lower valley of the Nile. *Hapi* is also the husband of *Nekhebet*.

### ***Hathor, the Lady of Heaven***

*Hathor, the Lady of Heaven*, stretches back to pre-dynastic times. *Hathor* was also the sky goddess, moon goddess, a goddess of the east, goddess of the west, goddess of moisture, goddess of fertility, an agricultural goddess and goddess of the underworld. *Hathor* was the goddess of joy, motherhood and love. She was the protectress of pregnant women and midwives. She was also the patron of all women regardless of their station in life. As the goddess of music and dance, her symbol was the *sistrum*. As time progresses her role changed and *Hathor* became the greeter of the underworld, dispensing water to the souls of the dead from the branches of a sycamore tree and offering them food. *Hathor* was represented as a cow suckling the soul of the dead giving them sustenance during their mummification process. Originally *Hathor* was worshiped in the

form of a cow or sometimes a cow with stars on her head. *Hathor* is also represented as a woman with the head of a cow, and later with a broad and placid face, and the ears and horns of a cow. As the “*Mistress of the Necropolis*” she is shown as the head of a cow protruding from a mountainside in which she wears a necklace that symbolizes rebirth. *Hathor* is the daughter of *Nut and Ra*, wife of *Ra*, and the mother of *Ihy*.

### ***Horus, He Who Is Above***

*Horus* is worshiped throughout Egypt. *Horus* is worshiped as *Mekhenti-irry*, meaning “he who has on his brow two eyes.” *Horus* is also known as the god of the blind. There are several representations for *Horus* that match the additional names that he is known by. *Horus* may be depicted as a falcon or a falcon headed man. *Horus* is also known as *Haroeris*, *Horus Behudety*, *Ra Harakhte*, *Harmakhet*, *Harsiesis*, *Harpocrates*, *Harendotes*, and *Har-pa-Neb-Tau*.

### ***Isis, the Throne***

*Isis* is one of the earliest and most important goddesses in ancient Egypt. She was regarded as the female counterpart of *Osiris*. No other Egyptian goddess has lasted as long as *Isis*. As other cults and gods diminished over time with the invasions of foreigners, *Isis* was embraced by the Greeks and Romans and still is worshiped today. *Isis* was revered by Egyptians as the great mother-goddess and represents the maternal spirit. *Isis* is often shown suckling a young *Horus*. *Isis* is also revered as the dutiful wife, grieving widow and protector of the dead. *Isis* was the great enchantress, the goddess of magic who taught mankind the secrets of medicine. *Isis* was also the embalmer and guardian of *Osiris* and is often pictured on the foot of coffins with long wings spread to protect the dead. *Isis* is represented as a woman wearing on her head the hieroglyphic symbol of her name. *Isis* may also be seen wearing horns and a solar disk on her head. *Isis* is the only worthy deity and the only deity with wings in ancient Egyptian mythology. *Isis* is the daughter of *Nut* and *Geb*, sister of *Osiris*, *Nephthys* and *Seth*, wife of *Osiris* and mother of *Horus*.

### ***Khepri, He Who Comes into Existence***

*Khepri* is the sun goddess associated with the sunrise. *Khepri* is considered to be one of the creator gods. *Khepri* was the one who pushes the sun across the sky in the very same way a dung beetle (an Egyptian scarab) pushes dung across the ground. *Khepri* is represented as a man with a scarab head or as a scarab. *Khepri* is also known as *Kherpra* or *Khepera*.

### ***Khnum, Lord of the Cool Waters***

*Khnum* is a very ancient deity. As the water god he was closely associated with the annual flooding of the Nile. The name *Khnum* means to create. The Egyptians believed him to be the creator of all things that are and all things that are to become. *Khnum* created the gods and fashioned mankind on a potters’ wheel. *Khnum* is represented by a ram headed man.

### ***Maat, the Goddess of Truth***

*Maat* represents the ideals of law, order and truth. The word *Maat* means “that which is straight.” *Maat* plays an important part in the “*Book of the Dead*.” It is in the *Hall of Maat* the judgment of the dead was performed. The judgment of the dead was performed by weighing one’s heart (one’s conscience) against her feather of *Maat*. If a balance occurred, the deceased was worthy enough to meet *Osiris* in the afterlife. If the heart of the deceased was found to be heavier than the feather of *Maat*, it would be consumed by *Ammut*, the devourer. *Maat* is presented as a woman wearing a tall ostrich feather on her head or an ostrich feather alone. *Maat* is the daughter of *Ra* and the wife of *Thoth*. *Maat* is also known as *Mayet*.

### ***Min, the Chief of Heaven***

*Min* was a sky god whose chief symbol was a thunderbolt. His title was Chief of Heaven. In the Middle Kingdom he was identified with the falcon god *Haroeris*. *Min* was worshiped as a fertility god, bestower of sexual powers and a rain god. *Min* was also known as the lord of the Eastern Desert. He protected the caravan routes from Koptos to the Red Sea. As lord of the lands he also protected the hunters. *Min* is represented as a bearded man with his legs extremely close together wearing tall feathers. *Min*'s arm is raised holding a whip or a thunderbolt. In the New Kingdom *Min* was represented as a white bull.

The ceremonies surrounding the coronations and jubilees of Egyptian kings, therefore, usually incorporated a festival of *Min* designed to ensure the potency of the pharaoh. (Shaw 187)

### ***Mut, the Lady of Heaven***

*Mut, the Lady of Heaven* was the divine mother, the queen of all gods. *Mut* was the female counterpart of *Amun*. In the New Kingdom *Mut*'s marriage to *Amun* was a time of great celebration. *Mut* despite her marriage was bisexual. *Mut*'s hieroglyphic symbol was a vulture that was worn on the crowns of Egypt's queens to signify their motherhood. *Mut* is depicted as a woman wearing a vulture headdress with a double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt. At times *Mut* may have the heads of vultures projecting from her shoulders and holding a papyrus scepter. *Mut* is the wife of *Amun*, mother of all gods and all living things.

### ***Neith, Great Goddess***

*Neith* was the goddess of hunting. *Neith* worshipers date back to the pre-dynastic period. Earlier times *Neith* was known as the war goddess, mother of the gods and considered the guardian of men and gods. Later, *Neith* was seen as the protector of the dead, and, therefore, she is often seen standing with *Nephthys* at the head of coffins. As the "Opener of the Way" she was a guide for the underworld in other words a female *Anubis*. In the Eighteenth Dynasty, *Neith* took on attributes of *Hathor* as the protector of women wearing a re crown of Lower Egypt holding a bow and crossed arrows. *Neith* was the wife of *Khnum*.

### ***Nephthys, the Lady of the House***

*Nephthys, the Lady of the House* refers to the *Palace of Osiris*. *Nephthys* often appears on the head of coffins. *Nephthys* is represented as a woman wearing on her head the hieroglyphic symbol of her name. *Nephthys* is the daughter of *Nut* and *Geb*, the sister of *Isis* and *Seth*, the wife of *Seth* and the mother of *Anubis*.

### ***Nut, the Sky***

*Nut*, originally a mother goddess had many children. *Nut* is often seen wearing a water pot on her head that also represents the womb. *Nut* plays an important part in the Egyptian's belief in the creation of mythology. In the day *Nut* and *Geb* are apart from each other until evening when they are reunited; this causes the change from day to night. *Nut* is represented as the sky goddess stretching across the sky with only her fingers tips and toes touching the ground. *Geb* is often seen lying under her. *Nut* may also be depicted as a large pig nursing several piglets. *Nut* is also the mother of the sun and the moon. *Nut* is the daughter of *Shu* and *Tefnut*, twin sister of *Geb*, mother of *Osiris*, *Isis*, *Seth*, and *Nephthys*.

### ***Osiris, King of the Dead***

*Osiris*, the supreme god and judge of the dead, was also the god of fertility and prosperity to the living. *Osiris* symbolized resurrection and eternal life. *Osiris* is portrayed as a man with a beard wearing white mummy wrappings with the atef crown holding the flail and crook that are symbols of supreme power. *Osiris* has green skin to represent vegetation or sometimes red skin to represent the earth. The legend of *Osiris* is still wide-spread throughout Egypt. *Osiris* is the son of

*Geb* and *Nut*, brother of *Isis*, *Nephthys* and *Seth*. In some Egyptian myths *Osiris* is the brother of *Horus*. *Osiris* is the husband of *Isis*, father of *Horus* and *Anubis* by *Nephthys*.

### ***Ptah, the Opener***

*Ptah, the Opener* represents the rising sun. In the Second Dynasty, *Ptah* was regarded as the creator god and patron of architects, artist and sculptors. The god *Ptah* is the master builder who built boats for the afterlife. In the *Book of the Dead*, *Ptah* was the master architect for the framework of the universe. *Ptah* is represented as a mummy wrapped with a shaved head and beard. *Ptah* also has a *Menat*, the symbol of happiness hanging from the back of his neck. The god *Ptah* holds a staff comprised of the following symbols: an *ankh*, a *djed*, and a *was* scepter representing life, stability and longevity. *Ptah* is the husband of *Sekhmet* and the father of *Nefer-tem*. *Ptah* is also known as *Ptah-Seker*.

The *was* scepter consisted of a straight staff with its handle in the form of the head of a canine animal, and its base ending in two prongs (Shaw 304).

### ***Ra, the Father of the Gods***

*Ra*, father of the gods, initially was the sun god. *Ra* had many attributes and even the names of other gods as Egyptian myths evolved. The god *Ra* merged with the god *Amun* thus becoming *Amun-Ra*. *Ra*, the god of great antiquity is often pictured as a hawk or a hawk headed man with a solar disk encircled by a uraeus on his head. *Ra* may also be pictured wearing the double crown representing Upper and Lower Egypt. *Ra* is the father of *Shu* and *Tefnut* and Grandfather of *Geb* and *Nut*. *Ra* is also known as *Re* and or *Phra*.

### ***Sekhmet, the Mighty One***

*Sekhmet, the Mighty One* is the sun goddess. *Sekhmet* represents the burning, scorching destructive heat of the sun. *Sekhmet* is depicted as a woman with the head of a lion. *Sekhmet* is the daughter of *Nut* and *Geb*, wife of *Ptah* and the mother of *Nefer-Tem*.

*Sekhmet* may also be known as *Sekhet* or *Nesert*.

### ***Seshat, Lady of the Library***

*Seshat, Lady of the Library*, is the goddess of reading, writing, architecture and arithmetic. *Seshat* was responsible for recording names and the great feats of captives taken in the throws of battle. *Seshat* also recorded the names of the pharaohs on the tree of life. *Seshat* is also credited with assisting in a ceremony called the "stretching of the chord" in which she helped in locating and laying out corners of the temple. *Seshat* is represented by a woman wearing a panther skin dress with an ornament on her head supporting a star under a bow or cow horns. *Seshat* is also known to hold a palm branch with a jubilee pavilion hanging from it. *Seshat* is the wife of *Thoth*. *Seshat* is also known as *Sesha*.

### ***Seth, the Lord of Upper Egypt***

*Seth, the Lord of Upper Egypt*, is the god of wind and storms. *Seth's* greatest attribute is that he was lord of Upper Egypt. *Seth* also defended the god *Ra* from his most dangerous enemy. By the XXVI Dynasty, *Seth* became the definition for the word evil. *Seth* is pictured with red eyes and hair which in ancient Egyptians believed the color red represented evil. *Seth* is depicted as a man with the head of an unknown animal or crocodile. In *Seth's* battles with the god *Horus*, he is seen as a huge black pig or a hippopotamus. *Seth* is the son of *Geb* and *Nut*, brother of *Isis*, *Nephthys* and *Osiris*, *Seth* was the husband of his twin sister *Nephthys* and sometimes the husband of *Taurt*. *Seth* may also be known as *Set* or *Suetekh*.

### ***Sobek, He Who Causes to be Fertile***

*Sobek* is known for being extremely savage and intense for having performed the task of catching the four sons of *Horus* with a net. *Sobek* is represented by a mummified crocodile or a man with a crocodile head wearing horns like *Amon-Ra* and the solar disk. *Sobek* is the son of *Neith* and *Sais*. *Sobek* may also be known as *Sebek*, *Sebek-Ra*, *Suchos*, *Sobki*, or *Soknopais*.

### ***Taurt, the Great Lady***

*Taurt, the Great Lady* is the protectress of pregnant women, infants and rebirth into the afterlife. *Taurt* is represented as a pregnant hippopotamus with female breasts, the back legs of a lioness, and the tail of a crocodile. *Taurt* is the daughter of *Ra*, and at times considered the wife of *Seth*. *Taurt* may also be known as *Taueret*, *Ta-weret*, *Rert* and *Reret*.

### ***Thoth, the Great Measurer***

*Thoth, the Great Measurer*, was great in the knowledge of speech of the gods. *Thoth* is also said to be the inventor of the spoken and written word. He was a scribe for the gods and the patron of all scribes. *Thoth* is said to be the creator of astronomy, geometry and medicine. *Thoth* was responsible for measuring the earth and counting the stars in the universe. *Thoth* is credited as the author of the *Book of the Dead*. *Thoth* is depicted as a man with the head of an *Ibis*, an ape or a dog faced ape. *Thoth* is the husband of *Maat*, brother and sometimes husband of *Seshat*. *Thoth* may also be known as *Tehuti*.

## **CONCLUSION**

Over four thousand years later, ancient Egyptian culture is still as interesting and mythical today as it was in the past. I have only skimmed the surface of Egypt's treasures and styles of living that still culturally influence our very own society. I know my students will be amazed and awestruck in discovering that many of our orchestral instruments, foods, fascination with gold, silver, jewels and our extravagant taste originated, in ancient Egypt. I am really excited and anxious to teach *Egypt in Antiquity: Music and Mythological Deities* this coming academic year. The teacher in me waits with baited breath for my student's excitement and questions about the gods, goddesses, Pharaohs, Dynastic Periods, ancient instruments, art and priceless treasures of ancient Egypt. In closing, the love inside me for my students patiently awaits the more culturally refined human to emerge after the knowledge of this curriculum has been consumed.

## **LESSON PLANS**

### **Lesson Plan One: Egypt's *Aida* Meets America's *Porgy and Bess***

#### ***Objectives***

The students will:

- Study the life of Giuseppe Verdi, the greatest composer of operatic music and the father of American opera, George Gershwin.
- Compare the main cast of characters in *Aida* and *Porgy and Bess*.
- Listen to the most popular arias, duets and choruses from each opera and compare their melodic structure, form, instrumentation, meter and voices.

#### ***Materials Needed***

The student will need paper, pen, pencil, access to the Internet and access to opera scores of *Aida* and *Porgy and Bess*.

The teacher will need videos of each opera, compact disc recordings of both operas and vocal scores of each opera.

### ***Activities of Implementation***

The students will begin with a discussion of their prior knowledge of operatic music. The students will use the Internet and the classroom map to locate Egypt and visually see the distance between both countries. The students will use the internet to view maps of ancient and modern day Egypt.

Next the students will employ the use of the library, the Internet and the teacher's classroom resources to study the backgrounds of each composer for similarities and differences.

The students will also research the catalyst that caused each composer to write these specific operas.

The choral music students will perform selections from *Porgy and Bess* such as "Summertime," "I Got Plenty o' Nuttin'," and "I Hate Your Guts."

### ***Evaluation***

- Oral and written exams and individual and
- Group performances of selected materials
- Students will create a Venn diagram of both operas

### **Lesson Plan Two: Seshat and Thoth Tackle TAKS**

#### ***Objectives***

The students will:

- Be introduced to Seshat, Lady of the Library. Seshat is the goddess of reading, writing arithmetic (math). The students study of ancient Egypt's theories of TAKS related subjects to enhance their test scores.
- Also be introduced to Thoth, the Great Measurer. Thoth is the Egyptian god credited with inventing astronomy, geometry and medicine. The student's study of Thoth, the great scribe (writer) will expand their knowledge of writing to improve their writing score on TAKS.

#### ***Materials Needed***

The students will need paper, pen, pencils, pocket dictionaries, rulers, calculators and scissors, use of school library and Internet access.

The teacher will need the TAKS writing prompts, TAKS writing objectives, Internet access, overhead projectors, Snapshot data of students practice exams and prior TAKS scores.

### ***Activities of Implementation***

The students will begin class answering the following questions:

- Why is math necessary?
- What is the importance of reading and writing in any civilization?
- Do you know the origin of reading, writing and math?
- Where was the first library in civilization?
- Why is it necessary for you to take the TAKS test?
- Do you know what material was used to measure distance before the invention of the ruler?

Next the students will choose a topic from the following list to write their six-week exam paper from:

Thoth	Hatshepsut	Papyrus
Valley of the Kings	Tiye	Ethiopia
The Valley of the Queens	Amenhemet	Akhenaten
The Great Pyramids	Senusret	Sphinx
Kemet	Nubia	Tutankhamen
Kerma	Isis	Memphis
Queen Nefertiti	Osiris	mastaba
Hathor	Horus	white crown
Neith	Old Kingdom	red crown
Sneferu	Middle Kingdom	amulets

The students will have the option of writing a libretto for an opera using Egypt's mythological deities for characters. The students may be interested in using the plot summaries of operas or Broadway musicals.

### ***Evaluation***

The students will be graded on the quantity and quality of information in their term papers.

The students will also present their papers to the class using, transparencies, Power Point presentations and oral presentations.

### **Lesson Plan Three: Aerophones, Chordophones, Membranaphones, Idiophones and Magical Trombones**

#### ***Objectives***

The students will:

- Define the terms idiophones, chordophones, membranaphones and aerophones.
- Study ancient Egyptian instruments and compare them with the instruments used in the orchestras today.
- Study the types of venues in ancient Egypt that would require a musical performance.

#### ***Materials Needed***

The students will need paper, pen, pencils, music dictionaries and Internet access.

The teacher will need a set of classroom percussion instruments, an autoharp, a recorder and a trumpet. The teacher will need a set of classroom instrument posters and Internet access and a piano.

#### ***Activities of Implementation***

Using the classroom music dictionaries, the students will write the definitions of idiophones, aerophones, membranaphones and chordophones in their folders. The students will view a videotape on instruments of the orchestra and another video of ancient instruments around the world.

Next the students will be given a list of instruments of the orchestra to correctly put them in the aforementioned categories. The students will listen to recordings of different instruments to identify them by sound.

The students will listen to orchestral selections from *Porgy and Bess* and *Aida* and identify which instruments have the melody at given times. The students will also listen to each opera's prelude and identify which "phones" have the melody.

## ***Evaluation***

The student will have listening exams to identify, which “phone” category the instrument is a part of.

The students will also have written and visual exams identifying instruments.

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