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GRAND OPERA ON FILMS BECOMES RAGE IN EUROPE

'Aida' Starts New Cycle on Screen

ROME, Dec. 18.—(A) —Grand opera is the latest European movie cycle. And appropriately, the singing dramas are going before the cameras in Italy, a land where every city has its own opera house and the ordinary citizen is as likely to hum an aria as a Neapolitan love song.

The Italians warmed up with a few operas filmed just as they're played on the stage, and with no attempt to overcome the heftiness that sometimes accompanies a good voice or the difference in movie and operatic styles of acting.

"Aida" has started the new cycle. The Verdi opera was filmed in color and with vast sets, much movement, good lookers to be seen on the screen and top singers dubbed in. The result was a financial success on European screens and has won good reviews in the United States. Sophia Loren, the fastest rising film beauty, acts the title role, accompanied by the voice of top Italian opera thrush Renata Tebaldi.

"Rigoletto," another Verdi opera, was finished in October but is not yet released. It features the voice of Tito Gobbi.

Just winding up at the Cinecitta Studio is "Madama Butterfly," a Japanese-Italian co-production with an all-Japanese cast except for the opera's three American characters. Costumes for the Puccini opera were brought from Tokyo.

Still to go before the cameras is "The Barber of Seville," with Tito Gobbi as Figaro. It begins shooting after Christmas.