

## CRITIC REVIEWS

# *Performance Ratings*

VALLEY SCREEN AND STAGE  
DAVID APPLEFORD

"But it's with the show's Aida, the princess taken into slavery, where the producers and casting directors, David and Corrin Dietlin, have hit the jackpot. With long, braided hair framing her handsome, attractive features, making her Hale Centre debut, Ashley Jackson is simply glorious. She shines, with or without a spotlight. Casting her in the ensemble would never have worked. On appearance alone, she stands out among others, drawing the focus of attention without effort. But she acts with confidence, projecting her voice with extreme clarity, and clearly possessing the production's best and most powerful singing voice. The fact that she can perform something as ordinary a ballad as Easy As Life and make it sound emotionally affecting with a big finish takes something more than just talent; it's the it factor that talent scouts look for, and it's there with Ashley for a scout to discover."

Valley Screen and Stage Review -  
Aida

TALKIN' BROADWAY  
GIL BENBROOK

"While Hale can't do much to fix the few small drawbacks in the score and book, their three leads are superb, with Ashley Jackson making a sensational debut in her first performance at Hale. Jackson instills Aida with passion, honesty and courage. We instantly understand that this is a woman who speaks her mind even when facing her enemies. The power and passion she brings to the role is equally matched by the strong and soaring vocals she achieves in her many songs. Jackson is simply exquisite as this fierce and forceful yet entirely passionate woman."

Talkin' Broadway - Aida

VALLEY SCREEN AND STAGE  
DAVID APPLEFORD

"As Suzette, Ashley Jackson's natural charm and unforced comedic quality makes her Cordon Bleu caterer all the funnier as she willingly involves herself in the men's deceit for a fee. With a smile that lights her face, pretending to be a mistress for two hundred francs – no Euros in the nineties – and a further two to pretend she's really the niece appears to be as amusing to Suzette as it is for the audience to watch her. In addition to the money, Ashley steals every moment she's on. "You don't look forty-five," she tells Robert. "At least, fifty." Suzette may be a supporting role but Ashley grounds the fast-paced hokum. She makes it seem like it's really her show."

[Valley Screen and Stage - Don't Dress For Dinner](#)

TALKIN BROADWAY  
GIL BENBROOK

When Robert confuses Suzette the cook for Bernard's mistress Suzanne, hilarity begins. And things really get interesting when Suzette begins to understand exactly what is going on around her. She monopolizes the situation by demanding money to keep quiet. While the stakes get higher and higher she gets richer and richer. The craziness doesn't stop for the next two hours.

While there are several times when the cast gets too broad or even a little amateurish, the production is fortunate that Ashley Jackson, a newcomer to DST, is playing Suzette the cook. She has a natural ease in her line delivery and good comic timing. She manages to elevate her scenes with the other cast members, always keeps things interesting when she is on stage, and expertly handles everything required of her.

[Talkin' Broadway - Don't Dress For Dinner](#)