

The Aida Trumpet Quartette of New York

Gavin Holman, 3 April 2026

The first of the two ensembles of this name was formed in 1908 by Edna White, a precocious and talented trumpet soloist of only 16 years old. Edna (b. 1892) made her first public appearance as a trumpeter at Ocean Grove, NJ, at the age of nine. The other girls were Florence McMillan (trumpet and piano), Norma Leona Sauter (cornet and violin), and her sister Cora Sauter (cornet and violincello). Originally called the *Trunette Concert Company*, they changed the name to the *Aida Trumpet Quartette* in 1909, when Florence McMillan was replaced by Ruth M. Wolfe, from Allentown, PA.

Norma was a professional violinist from New York. Both her mother and father's side had distinguished musicians of the Austrian court. Her grandfather, for example, conducted the Grand Opera in Trieste, and brought out several of Verdi's operas under the latter's supervision.



*The Aida Trumpet Quartette at President Taft's reception
at Ocean Grove, NJ, 15 August 1912*

The trumpet ensemble itself, was well praised in the press – a typical review from 1910 stating they had, “...striven successfully with the trumpet to attain the purity of tone



THE AIDA CONCERT COMPANY

1912

and general intimacy of ensemble of which the string quartette when composed of four adequate players is the ideal exponent."

The ensemble gave many concerts in the New York and New Jersey areas during 1910 and 1911, touring further out into Kansas and other mid-west states in later 1912, together with C. Pol Plancon (baritone vocalist). Their concerts were mixed instrumental performances with their various instruments, and also solo/duet items.

Ruth Wolfe was replaced, at times by Irene Woodcock, later in 1911, and by Clara Haven in 1913,

Their last performances under the *Aida Trumpet Quartette* name were in 1914, before Ruth Wolfe's wedding in November 1914.

Edna then went on to form the Edna White Quartette in 1914 (with Claire Wheeler, Velma Howelle, and Betty Barry) which she led until 1924, when she left to pursue her solo career.

Cora Sauter recreated the *Aida Trumpet Quartette* around 1919, together with Helen Bachelder, Clara Haven, and Eleanor Betts. and they toured throughout the USA over the next nine years.



Edna White in 1902



The Edna White Quartette, 1916



The Edna White Quartette



The Edna White Quartette



Velma Howell Ida Birbee Claire Wheeler Edna White
The Edna White Quartette, 1925