

CARMEN

Georges Bizet

NASHVILLE
OPERA 24
25

THE ANN & FRANK BUMSTEAD SEASON

CARMEN

I want to welcome you to this exciting new season of opera. Nashville Opera is proud to present a wide range of works that includes Bizet's masterpiece, our company's 9th world premiere, a Gilbert & Sullivan favorite for the entire family, and the long-anticipated return of a Donizetti *bel canto* gem after an absence of 21 years.

Bizet's *Carmen* has often been called the most famous opera in the world. It certainly is one of the most performed operas in history, and always attracts a huge audience. The music is instantly recognizable, but surprisingly, Bizet and his librettists had nothing to do with the creation of the original story of the opera. The tale of *Carmen*, written by Prosper Mérimée, was first published in novella form in 1845.

While traveling through Spain a few years before, Mérimée first heard the story of love and revenge as it was told by a Countess at a dinner party. The Countess's version of the story involved a Spanish Romani girl who was killed by her jealous lover after he discovered her unfaithfulness.

Although Mérimée was intensely proud of his work, and of his ability to capture the truth of raw emotion on the printed page, his novella was not embraced by the majority as was expected. One reason for this was because of the violent and sensual nature of its story. At the time of the novella's publication, Paris was experiencing a surge in "moral" leadership and works that did not reflect "family values" were frowned upon. Because of this, the story of *Carmen* was deemed "morally objectionable" by those in power. Decent bookstores and newspapers were encouraged not to sell or advertise such a work. Still, the novella became an underground success, primarily through the people that opposed government censorship and book banning. Because of the forbidden nature of the novella, the popularity of the book began to grow. Still true today, scandal rarely hurts a book's sales.

After many modest successes, Bizet chose *Carmen* in 1874 as the subject for his new opera. The libretto was then adapted by the librettists, Halévy and Meilhac. At the time, these two were more famous than Bizet, and it was rumored that they did not approve of Bizet's choice of material. They felt the source material was somewhat sordid for an opera that was to appear in a theater which catered primarily to family audiences. Although they suggested several changes in the story to soften its hard edges, Bizet resisted most of these. Bizet argued (not untruthfully) that the changes they were proposing made the libretto less powerful and less emotionally effecting. Bizet, from the beginning, was attracted to the story of *Carmen* because he felt it would create an opera that would startle and impress the audience.

CARMEN

In the original novella, there is no additional male figure that Carmen is attracted to, who would later become the focus of Don José's jealousy. In the opera's libretto, however, this male figure is personified in Escamillo, the handsome bullfighter. Another character, an innocent, blonde girl named Micaëla, was added as Don José's fiancé, to better balance out José's character. Micaëla offers a contrast to the dark beauty of Carmen. Also, being an opera, Bizet added many choruses for townspeople, soldiers, and people attending the bullfight.

One aspect that was not changed in the opera is the character of Carmen herself. Carmen is the same strong-willed, independent woman that she is in the novella. There is a great strength about her, and a fierce passion that always wins an audience to her side. She is brave and willful, even in the face of death itself. In fact, Carmen shows no fear of death, even when the end looks inevitable. This was a different type of female character for the operatic stage. Carmen is a strong, independent woman who not only has no need of being saved by a man at the end of the opera, but she also feels she doesn't really need a man in her life unless she wants one there. It's little wonder that audiences found the opera somewhat shocking and out of their normal experience.

From the beginning, the opera *Carmen* was met with fierce disapproval, even by the people involved in producing it. Rehearsals were sporadic at best. Several of the original cast members quit before the opening performance. The music, in which Bizet did a fascinating job incorporating Spanish flavor, was roundly criticized. Music critics of the day described the opera as "immoral," "musically dissonant," and "a new low." Though the opera received several performances, and audience acclaim, Bizet himself felt the work was a flop.

The real strength of Bizet's opera (besides the stunning music) seems to be that the work does not impart a moral message or a moral lesson for the story's characters. Rather, it allows its characters to move within their own moral universe and follow their own collective destiny. The opera is not afraid to present its characters to the audience with all their human flaws intact, and it allows them to come to life in all of their glorious, messy, passionate, realistic humanity. This approach may not please society's moral watchdogs, but it certainly makes for a masterpiece of an opera.

I invite you to sit back and experience this powerful work that has been thrilling audiences for nearly 150 years. Welcome to the 24.25 Season!

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CARMEN

SEPTEMBER 26 + 28, 2024
TPAC JACKSON HALL

Music by **Georges Bizet**

Libretto by **Henri Meilhac** and **Ludovic Halévy**

Based on the novella of the same title by **Prosper Mérimée**

Premiered at Opéra-Comique, Paris - March 3, 1875

Director - **John Hoomes**

Conductor - **Dean Williamson**

Executive Producer - **Joseph Barker**

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CARMEN..... Marina Costa-Jackson

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SYNOPSIS

ACT I

In a town square marketplace, crowds stroll about, shopping and people watching. Micaëla comes in nervously with a letter for José from his mother. José arrives with Zuniga, his boss. Micaëla gives him the letter with some money she sent. Soon the girls from the factory come out for their break. The leader of the female workers is Carmen, a beautiful and free-spirited girl. When José ignores Carmen's dancing, she throws a flower at him. After everyone has gone, José picks up and hides the flower in his coat. Soon shouting is heard from the factory. The girls run out in terror, yelling that Carmen is fighting one of the other girls. Carmen is arrested. José is assigned to guard Carmen as she waits to be taken to prison. Carmen seduces José, but he allows her to escape. José is taken to prison in her place.

ACT II

Two months later, Carmen and her friends, Frasquita and Mercédès, are at a bar near the desert. They are singing and dancing to entertain the men. The famous motorcross racer Escamillo arrives and crashes the party. He is enchanted by Carmen's beauty. Carmen tells him she is not available, and she is waiting for José who is, on that day, being released from prison.

After the crowd leaves, the three girls are joined by two outlaws – El Dancaïro and El Remendado. They try to persuade the girls to join them in their latest smuggling venture. Carmen refuses, saying that she has fallen in love with José, but she promises to ask her new lover to desert his post and come with them. José arrives, and Carmen dances for him. Zuniga, José's boss, returns, and fights with José over Carmen. All the smugglers rush in and stop the fight. José has no choice now but to become a smuggler and go with them.

20-Minute Intermission

ACT III

Some weeks later, the smugglers have camped for the night in a mountain pass near the desert. Carmen has grown weary of José and his jealousy. Frasquita and Mercédès tell their fortunes with cards, but Carmen's fortune is tragic. The cards predict death. At daybreak the smugglers move out with some of their contraband. Micaëla sneaks into the camp and hides. She has traveled to tell José that his mother is dying and wants him to home. Escamillo comes to the camp to find Carmen. José and Escamillo fight over Carmen. Carmen breaks up their fight. Escamillo seizes the opportunity to invite everyone to his next race. He then bids Carmen goodbye for now. Micaëla is discovered and dragged into the open. She tells José about his mother, and, after a heated exchange with Carmen, José decides to return home with Micaëla. In the distance, Escamillo is heard singing a reprise of his song.

ACT IV

The day of the big race has arrived, and everyone is outside the sporting arena. The crowd waits in anticipation for the arrival of Escamillo, who enters to great cheers. Carmen is now with him. Carmen's friends warn that José is stalking her and lurking nearby in the crowd. After Escamillo and the throng enter the area, Carmen remains outside to confront José. Fully aware of what fate may bring, Carmen begins a final confrontation with her ex-lover.



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Carmen

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Soprano

Nashville Opera

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Upcoming

Giulietta in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* - Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

Mimi in *La Bohème* - National Theater Foundation, Tokyo



Don José

ZACH BORICHEVSKY

Tenor

Nashville Opera

Rodolfo in *La Bobème*, 2022

Recent

Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* - Seoul Arts Center & Opéra de Nice

Faust in *Faust* - Detroit Opera

Romeo (cover) in *Romeo et Juliette* - Metropolitan Opera

Upcoming

Don José in *Carmen* - Virginia Opera / Florentine Opera

Duke (cover) in *Rigoletto* - The Metropolitan Opera

Rodolfo in *La Bobème* - Opera Colorado



Micaëla

KATHRYN LEWEK

Soprano

Nashville Opera

Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute*, 2013

Recent

Four Heroines in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* - Salzburg Festival

Lakmé in *Lakmé* - Opéra de Nice

Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute* - The Metropolitan Opera

Upcoming

Musetta in *La Bohème* - Opera Colorado

Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute* - Berlin State Opera

Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute* - The Metropolitan Opera

ARTISTS



Escamillo

RICHARD OLLARSABA

Baritone

Nashville Opera

Debut

Recent

Don Giovanni in *Don Giovanni* - Arizona Opera

Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor* - Pensacola Opera

Conte Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro* - Portland Opera

Upcoming

Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro* - Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera

Riolobo in *Florencia en el Amazonas* - North Carolina Opera

Miguel de Cervantes / Don Quixote in *Man of La Mancha* - Piedmont Opera



Zuniga

BERNARDO MEDEIROS

Baritone

Nashville Opera

Debut

Recent

Herr von Faninal (cover) in *Der Rosenkavalier* - The Santa Fe Opera

Alvaro (cover) in *Florencia en el Amazonas* - Opera San Jose

Frank in *Die Fledermaus* - Pensacola Opera



Frasquita

DEE DONASCO

Soprano

Nashville Opera

Mrs. Gobineau in *The Medium*, 2022

Papagena in *The Magic Flute*, 2024

Recent

Vocal Soloist at National Eucharistic Congress - Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra

Featured Artist in Signature Stars and Stripes - Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra

Upcoming

Featured Artist in Rock Hits and Power Ballads - Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra

Featured Artist in A Carolina Christmas - Winston-Salem Symphony Orchestra

Featured Artist in Holiday Pops Concerts - Baltimore Symphony Orchestra

ARTISTS



Mercedes
SARA CRIGGER

Mezzo Soprano

Nashville Opera

Mary Ragland Emerging Artist, 2019
Nicklausse in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, 2019
Kate Pinkerton in *Madame Butterfly*, 2019
Second Lady in *The Magic Flute*, 2024

Recent

Soloist in Bach Christmas Oratorio - Grace Lutheran Church
Soloist in Berio's Folk Songs - Gateway Chamber Orchestra

Upcoming

Soloist in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 - Greenville (SC) Symphony
Alisa in *Lucia: The Bride of Lammermoor* - Nashville Opera



Remendado
GREGORY SLISKOVICH

Tenor

Nashville Opera

Mary Ragland Emerging Artist, 2023
Frederic in *The Pirates of Penzance*, 2023

Recent

Bardolfo in *Falstaff* - Knoxville Opera
Pang in *Turandot* - Fargo-Moorhead Opera
Gherardo in *Gianni Schicchi* - Utah Festival Opera

Upcoming

Borsa in *Rigoletto* - IN Series Opera
Normanno & Arturo in *Lucia: The Bride of Lammermoor* - Nashville Opera



Morales / Dancaire
RYAN BEDE

Baritone

Nashville Opera

Mr. Gobineau in *The Medium*, 2022

Recent

Jim Crowley in *An American Dream* - Opera Idaho
Jailer in *Tosca* - Seattle Opera
Belcore in *The Elixir of Love* - Tacoma Opera

Upcoming

Eugene Onegin in *Eugene Onegin* - SkyOpera

ARTISTS



Cowboy Troubadour
MILES AUBREY

Baritone

Nashville Opera
Debut

Recent

Jim Crowley in Come From Away - Theatre Aspen
The Music of Laurel Canyon - Florida Studio Theatre
7,000 Miles to Broadway

Upcoming

No Man's Land - Belmont University
The Greatest Piano Men

SUPERNUMERARIES

Sheryl Donnell	Susan Holt
Olivia Hill	Jay McDonald
Michelle Hinson	Barry Steele
Ted Hinson	Angelo Tate

NASHVILLE OPERA CHORUS

Stephen Carey, Chorusmaster

SOPRANO

Deborah Gil
Emily Packard
Paige Padgett
Claire Paschal
Cassandra Pinataro
Katie Riggs
Krista Adams Santilli
Madison Smith

MEZZO-SOPRANO

Sarah Antell
Mara Bloomfield
Vinéecia Buchanan
Jada Duff
Robin Hutton
Belinda Leslie
Kathryn Linzmaier
Jessica Taylor

TENOR

Stefan Biller
Larry Cotton Jr.
Vincent Davis
Carl Hellmers
Kevin Salter
Mark Williams
Stephen Calgaro

BASS

Aaron Arseneault
Billy Dodson
Mark Filosa
Ben Kahan
TJ Morin
Warren Quandt
Blake Ryan

NASHVILLE OPERA ORCHESTRA

Dean Williamson, Conductor

Appearance sponsored by Shelley Page

Anne Dickson Rogers, Contractor

FIRST VIOLIN

Christina McGann, CM

Ching-Yi-Li

George Meyer

Cornelia Heard

Deidre Fominaya Bacco

Esther McMahon

Emily Hanna Crane

Chuck Callahan

SECOND VIOLIN

Carolyn Bailey

Eliza Cho

Zoya Leybin

Jessica Blackwell

Mia Hagarty

Ali Gooding Hoffman

VIOLA

Elizabeth W. Lamb

Razvan Berindean

Carl Larson

Andy Braddock

CELLO

Sari Reist

Meghan Berindean

Kaitlyn Vest

Christopher Stenstrom

BASS

Craig E. Nelson

Quentin Flowers

FLUTE & PICCOLO

Deanna Little

Julie Ditzel

OBOE

Jared Hauser

Michael Adduci

CLARINET

Todd Waldecker

Mark J. Cramer

BASSOON

Peter Kolkay

Laura A. Hauser

FRENCH HORN

Jennifer Kummer

Harry F. Ditzel

Tara Johnson

Joey Demko

TRUMPET

Joel Treybig

Jeff Bailey

TROMBONE

David L. Loucky

Jacob Marlow

Evan Clifton

TIMPANI

Ron Sorbo

PERCUSSION

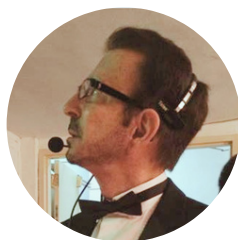
Scot Corey

David Steinquest

HARP

Rachel Miller

PRODUCTION



Stage Manager

JOE GLADSTONE

Nashville Opera

Das Rheingold, 2022; *The Medium*, 2022; *The Pirates of Penzance*, 2023; *Pagliacci*, 2023; *Florencia en el Amazonas*, 2024; *The Magic Flute*, 2024

Recent

La Traviata - North Carolina Opera

La Cenerentola - Opera Maine

Aida - Opera Maine



Scenic Designer

DAVID P. GORDON

Nashville Opera

Debut

Recent Designs

Carmen - Des Moines Metro Opera

Once On This Island - Arden Theatre Co.

Groucho, A Life In Revue - Walnut Street Theatre

Chair, Department of Theater, Mason Gross School of the Arts - Rutgers University



Lighting Design

BARRY STEELE

Nashville Opera

Der Rosenkavalier, *Salome*, *The Lighthouse*, *La Voix Humaine*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Faust*, *Surrender Road*, *Turandot* (2006, 2015), *Romeo and Juliet*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Samson and Delilah*, *The Fall of the House of Usber*, *Andrea Chénier*, *The Girl of the Golden West*, *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field*, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, *Otello*, *La Bobème* (2014), *Romulus Hunt*, *Florencia en el Amazonas*, *Hydrogen Jukebox*, *Don Giovanni*, *Glory Denied*, *Three Way*, *Carmen*, *María de Buenos Aires*, *Susannah*, *Tales of Hoffmann*, *The Cradle Will Rock*, *Rigoletto Noir*, *Das Rheingold*, *La Bobème*, *The Medium*, *Stuck Elevator*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Pagliacci*

Recent Designs

The Barber of Seville - Arizona Opera

La Bobème - Florida Grand Opera

Romeo et Juliette - Arizona Opera

Upcoming Designs

The Cook-Off/Bon Appétit - Nashville Opera

Florencia en el Amazonas - North Carolina Opera

Don Giovanni - Madison Opera

PRODUCTION



Costume Designer

JESSICA MUELLER

Nashville Opera

Stuck Elevator, 2023

Pagliacci, 2023

Recent

Cinderella - Studio Tenn

Peter and the Starcatcher - Belmont University

Antony and Cleopatra - Nashville Shakespeare Festival

Head of the BFA Production Design Program, Resident Costume Designer,
and Costume Shop Manager – Belmont University



Costume Coordinator

PAM LISENBY

Nashville Opera

Susannah, *The Pearl Fishers*, *Salome*, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field*, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* (2013), *Romulus Hunt*, *Hydrogren Jukebox*, *Maria de Buenos Aires*.

Recent

Carolyn Dawn Johnson - Canadian Tour (2024), *PostModern Jukebox - USA Tour* (2024), *Dollar General Convention Show* (2024), *Russell Dickerson - Good Morning America* (2024), *Jackson Dean - CMA Fest* (2024), *Taylor Swift Eras Tour* (2023), *Brandy Clark - Americana Awards* (2023), *Brenda Lee & Trisha Yearwood - ABC Opry Christmas Special* (2023)



Wig & Makeup Designer

BRITTANY V.A. RAPPISE

Nashville Opera

Debut

Recent Designs

Pelleas et Melisande, *American Apollo*, *Barber of Seville*, *Salome* - Des Moines Metro Opera

Jersey Boys - Flat Rock Playhouse

La Traviata - Knoxville Opera

Upcoming:

The Magic Flute - Florida Grand Opera

La Bobème - Opera Delaware

Elixir of Love - Opera Grand Rapids

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Anne Dickson Rogers, Contractor

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Ching-Yi-Li
George Meyer
Connie Heard
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Esther McMahon
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Chuck Callahan

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Sari Reist
Meghan Berindean
Kaitlyn Vest
Christopher Stenstrom

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Harry F. Ditzel
Tara Johnson
Joey Demko

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Craig E. Nelson
Quentin Flowers

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Jeff Bailey

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Zoya Leybin
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Mia Hagarty
Ali Gooding Hoffman

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Julie Ditzel

TROMBONE

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Jacob Marlow
Evan Clifton

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Larry Cotton Jr.
Vincent Davis
Carl Hellmers
Kevin Salter
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Stephen Calgaro

BASS

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Wesley Caulkins
Billy Dodson
Mark Filosa
Ben Kahan
TJ Morin
Warren Quandt
Blake Ryan