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PACIFIC
Opera
VICTORIA

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Music by Georges Bizet
Libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy

First Performance March 3, 1875, Opéra Comique, Paris

Study Guide and Student Activity Guide
for Pacific Opera Victoria's Production
February 2012

Production Patron: David H. Flaherty

SEASON UNDERWRITERS



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Pacific Opera Victoria
February 2012

Study & Activity Guide

Dear Educator,

Pacific Opera Victoria is proud to present Bizet's *Carmen*. This Activity Guide was prepared to help your students get even more out of their opera experience.

Check out our website at <http://www.pov.bc.ca/carmen.html> for inside information about *Carmen*. Please suggest that your students take advantage of our website. The more your students know about the production, the more they will enjoy it!

See you at the opera!

How to enjoy the show and be a great Opera Audience Member!

Before the show:

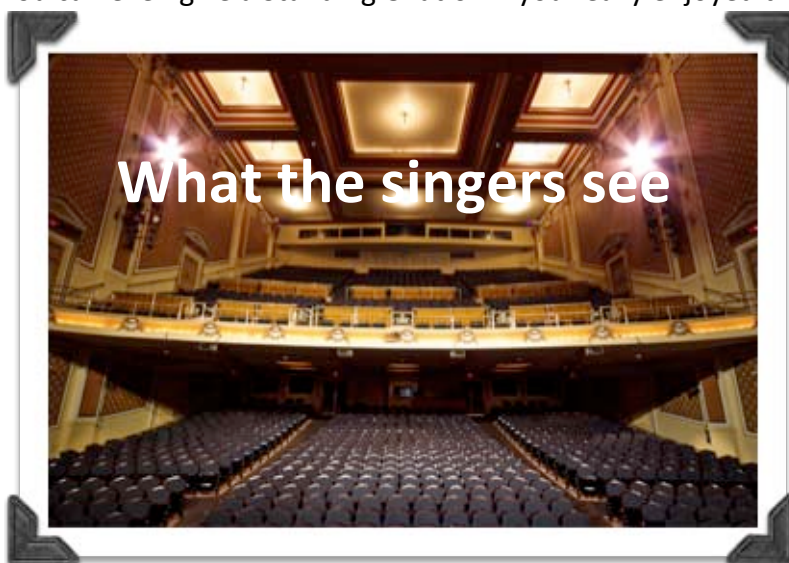
- Eat before you come to the theatre. There is no food allowed in the Auditorium.
- Arrive on Time! Quite often we do not seat latecomers and you may have to watch the first half of the show on one of the lobby TVs.
- Check to see how long the opera is; plan your trip to the bathroom.
- Read the story; the programme includes the Synopsis.
- Turn your cell phone off – along with anything else that beeps or makes noise.

During the show:

- Don't talk to your friends. The theatre is designed to carry sound from the stage to the audience – and back. Remember, this isn't a movie. The singers can hear you!
- No eating or drinking during the performance.
- No cameras or recording devices of any kind can be used in the theatre.
- Please, no feet on seats or railings.
- No shouting or yelling out.

At the end of the show:

- Clap as much as you like and yell "Bravo" at your favourite singers!
- You can even give a Standing Ovation if you really enjoyed the show!



Opera Singers

What? No microphones?!

Opera singers make themselves heard through the whole house, over a full orchestra – without amplification. There are no microphones hidden in the set! Instead, opera singers use their training and the acoustics of the theatre to project their voices. In order to do this, opera singers train for longer than doctors. This is partly because they are trying to isolate and train their vocal cords: a mechanism about the size of your little finger nail. This is made doubly hard by the fact that unlike other musicians, singers can't see their instrument, so all of their learning has to be by sensation.

Amazing feats of memory!

Opera singers have to memorize several hours of music for each opera. Operas are usually performed in the language in which they were written, which means that opera singers must perform in – and understand – Italian, German, French, Russian; even Czech!

Phew!

Opera singers do all of these things while they are onstage under hot lights, performing blocking that can be awkward or difficult. Opera singers have to be able to sing lying down, running, jumping, dancing and performing all kinds of other tricky moves. Period costumes like hoop skirts, cloaks and corsets and wigs can also be hot and uncomfortable.

Who sings what?

Here is a very rough guide to the different voice types, starting with the highest (soprano), going right down to the very deepest (bass).

Soprano: Sopranos have the highest voices. They usually play the heroines of an opera. This means they have lots of show-off arias to sing, and get to fall in love and / or die more often than other female voice types.

Mezzo-soprano, or mezzo: This is the middle female voice, and has a darker, warmer sound than the soprano. Mezzos spend a lot of their time playing mothers and villainesses, although sometimes they get to play seductive heroines. Mezzos also play young men on occasion – these are called trouser roles, for obvious reasons.

Contralto, or alto: The lowest female voice. Contralto is a rare voice type. Altos usually portray older females or character parts like witches and old gypsies.

Counter tenor: Also known as alto, this is the highest male voice, and another vocal rarity. Counter tenors sing with about the same range as a contralto. Counter tenor roles are most common in baroque opera, but some more modern composers write parts for counter tenors too.

Tenor: If there are no counter tenors on stage, then the highest male voice in opera is tenor. Tenors are usually the heroes who get the girl or die horribly in the attempt.

Baritone: The middle male voice. In comic opera, the baritone is often the ringleader of whatever naughtiness is going on, but in tragic opera, he's more likely to play the villain.

Bass: The lowest male voice. Low voices usually suggest age and wisdom in serious opera, and basses usually play Kings, fathers, and grandfathers. In comic opera basses often portray old characters that are foolish or laughable.

Carmen

Music by Georges Bizet. Libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy

First Performance March 3, 1875, Opéra Comique, Paris

February 16, 18, 22, 24, 28, 2012, at 8 pm. Matinée February 26 at 2:30 pm
At the Royal Theatre

In French with English Surtitles

The performance is approximately 2 hours 45 minutes, including 1 intermission.

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

Cast in order of vocal appearance

Moralès, a sergeant	Dominique Côté
Micaëla, village girl in love with Don José	Leslie Ann Bradley
Zuniga, a lieutenant	Andrew Greenwood
Don José, a corporal	Eric Fennell
Carmen, a gypsy	Allyson McHardy
Frasquita, Carmen's friend, a gypsy	Miriam Khalil
Mercédès, Carmen's friend, a gypsy	Sylvia Szadovszki
Lillas Pastia, an innkeeper	David Radford
Escamillo, a matador	Étienne Dupuis
Le Dancaïre, a smuggler	Andrew Love
Le Remendado, a smuggler	Riccardo Iannello
Conductor	Timothy Vernon
Director	Dennis Garnhum
Set and Costume Designer	Bretta Gerecke
Lighting Designer	Gerald King
Choreographer	Jacques Lemay
Stage Manager	Sara Robb
Assistant Stage Managers	Sandy Halliday, Nicole Olszewski
Apprentice Stage Manager	Courtney Butler
Chorus Master & Assistant to the Artistic Director	Giuseppe Pietraroia
Victoria Children's Choir Director	Madeleine Humer
Rehearsal Pianist & Répétiteur	Kim Cousineau
Resident Artist Coach & Pianist	Robert Holliston
Coaches	Mark Morash, Marilyn Dalzell, Kirk McNally

With the Victoria Symphony, the Pacific Opera Victoria Chorus, and the Victoria Children's Choir



A man meets a woman. He finds her pretty. That's the first act. He loves her, she loves him. That's the second act. She doesn't love him anymore. That's the third act. He kills her. That's the fourth!

And you call that a play? It's a crime, do you hear me, a crime!

Jean Henri Dupin to librettist Henri Meilhac the day after the première of Carmen

Synopsis

Act 1

In a square in Seville, soldiers loiter about, people-watching and waiting for the girls in the cigarette factory to appear. Micaëla approaches, looking for Don José, who is about to come on duty. The factory girls come out for a smoke break; among them is the gypsy Carmen, who entertains with a sultry habanera. Don José pays no attention to her. Carmen tosses a flower at him, and the girls return to work.

Micaëla brings Don José a letter from his mother; Don José resolves to follow his mother's advice to marry Micaëla – but he is already bewitched by Carmen.

A commotion breaks out in the factory. Carmen is accused of wounding one of the other girls and is placed in Don José's custody. She flirts with him until he allows her to escape – for which crime he is sentenced to jail.

Act 2

A month later, the gypsy girls and soldiers are at a tavern when the famous toreador Escamillo makes a grand entrance. He sings of the drama of the bullfight and of the love that awaits the toreador. When he suavely propositions Carmen, she tells him that for the moment she is not available.

Two gypsy smugglers, Le Dancaïre and Le Remendado, ask Carmen and her friends, Frasquita and Mercédès, to join them in the mountains to help with a job. But Carmen wants to be with Don José, who has been released from jail. When Carmen urges Don José to desert the army and come to the mountains with her, he is torn, but says no. When his Lieutenant, Zuniga, arrives looking for Carmen, Don José jealously attacks him. The smugglers break up the fight, but Don José now has no choice. He must leave town with the smugglers and Carmen.

Intermission

Act 3

Before long Carmen tires of Don José's possessiveness. When Escamillo shows up at the smugglers' camp, confident that Carmen is now ready to become his lover, Don José picks a fight with him. Carmen and the smugglers separate them. Before leaving for Seville, Escamillo invites them all to his next bullfight. Micaëla arrives to take Don José to his dying mother. As he departs, Don José promises Carmen they'll see one another again.

Act 4

The day of Escamillo's great bullfight, the Seville crowd cheers as the toreador arrives with Carmen by his side. Don José accosts Carmen and begs her to leave with him. When she tells him that Escamillo is now the one she loves, Don José stabs her to death.

The Structure

Following the tradition of opéra comique, *Carmen* in its original form combined spoken dialogue, written by Henri Meilhac, with ensembles and arias, the verses of which were written by Ludovic Halévy.

After Bizet's death, his friend Ernest Guiraud wrote recitatives to replace the dialogue and create a grand opera version, which premièred in Vienna in 1875. For decades this has been the version usually performed.

However, many feel that the grand opera version mars the pacing and balance of the work and omits much of the humour and subtlety of the opera. In recent years the dialogue version has been performed more and more, and it is the version Pacific Opera will be using.

Director's Notes

My heart was racing as I watched a Matador enter the bullring. Thousands of people were cheering for this man decked out in his colourful uniform of battle. Moments later a large, confused and angry bull was let into the ring. Tradition and history were playing out before me. In mere minutes, it was clear to everyone that someone or something was going to die. The tension and drama were palpable. I'll never forget that moment.



Last spring I travelled to Seville with our designer Bretta Gerecke to take in the sights, sounds and experience of Spain. The setting for this opera is one of the most celebrated countries on earth, so it seemed like a perfect excuse to do a bit of research. Tough assignment, indeed!

In our explorations, we were not disappointed. Day after day we encountered gorgeous architecture married with beautiful people eating sumptuous food. But it was at the bullfight that I felt I understood Spain the most. Sitting in the ring on that hot May evening, I saw clearly that Matadors are incredibly important people in this society, and that the dance of death that the Matador engages in with the bull is a powerful and deeply disturbing ritual.

In our opera, this extraordinary backdrop exists to illuminate the life of a gypsy woman named Carmen.

This is a person who exudes life and living at every turn. Everyone who is in her presence falls madly and passionately in love with her. Not because she is visually attractive (and she is), but because she lives a bold, daring and uncompromising life. The people who surround her want to stand in her glow, to touch a piece of her brilliance, and to join her world. In this way, Carmen represents the best of her country.



Now add to this mix an innocent soldier who catches Carmen's eye one hot day.

Danger rises to the surface when you connect together an extraordinary woman, a loyal soldier and a Matador. Place them in Seville and you've set yourself up for a potent but guaranteed thrilling experience of a lifetime.

Keep breathing. And be warned: at the end of the event someone will die.

Dennis Garnhum

*Photos courtesy
Dennis Garnhum and Bretta Gerecke*



The Extraordinary Impact of *Carmen*

This is a true story... A woman was expecting a daughter whom she planned to name Genevieve. But the new baby was such a fiery, black-eyed bundle of attitude that any thought of the name Genevieve went out the window.

Although the mother hadn't paid much attention to opera when she was growing up, Bizet's tale of the factory girl who took no guff from anyone had stuck with her, and she recognized that fierce spirit when she saw it in her daughter. No other name would do for this girl but Carmen.

Now a beautiful, dynamic young woman, this Carmen will be in the audience at the Royal Theatre with her mom, watching the opera that so jolted Paris audiences 137 years ago.

Little did poor Bizet suspect, surveying the shambles of *Carmen's* 1875 première, that his work would become the great operatic blockbuster of all time, its heroine's name a household word. Three months after Carmen first danced onto the stage of the Opéra Comique, the 36-year-old composer died of a heart attack. Within a decade *Carmen* had become one of the world's most performed operas.

In the annals of opera, the première of *Carmen* is one of the better known fiascos. Reasons for its initial failure are many.

For one thing, Bizet was caught up in the Wagner Wars. *Carmen* didn't go far enough for proponents of Wagner's through-composed music dramas and fusion of song, orchestration, drama, and text. Other critics thought *Carmen* was too Wagnerian (and in a France fresh from defeat in the Franco-Prussian war, there was a strong political incentive to condemn anything that smacked of Germanism, making Wagner an easy target).

Critic Paul de Saint-Victor complained:

M. Bizet ... belongs to that new sect that believes in vaporizing musical ideas ... For this school of composition, of which Wagner is the high-priest, ... motif is old-fashioned, melody is superannuated; the voice is overpowered by the orchestra, leaving only a feeble echo. ... It is melody that is the design of music. If one takes that away, only educated noise is left.

Although it's rather stunning that anyone could think this most tuneful of operas lacked melody, it is not surprising that the subject matter was controversial.

When the co-directors of the Opéra Comique, Adolphe de Leuven and Camille de Locle, commissioned Bizet to compose an opera, he chose as a subject Prosper Mérimée's scandalous novel *Carmen*. But at the time, the Opéra Comique specialized in light, sentimental entertainments with spoken dialogue; a show at the Comique came with a certain expectation of wholesome family entertainment.

One of *Carmen*'s co-librettists, Ludovic Halévy, recalled de Leuven's take on the matter:

I went to see Leuven and he actually interrupted me after the first sentence. 'Carmen! Mérimée's Carmen! Isn't she killed by her lover? And these bandits, gypsies, and girls working in a cigar factory! At the Opéra-Comique! The family theatre, the theatre of wedding parties ... You'll frighten our audience away. That's impossible.'

I insisted and explained to Mr. Leuven that ours was a Carmen, to be sure, but a toned-down, softened Carmen, and that we had actually introduced some characters perfectly in keeping with the style of the opéra-comique, especially a young girl of great chastity and innocence ... And Carmen's death, the inevitable catastrophe at the end, would be sneaked in somehow at the conclusion ...

Mr. Leuven acquiesced, but after a prolonged struggle. And when I left his office, he said: 'Please try not to let her die. Death at the Opéra-Comique. That's never happened before, do you hear, never. Don't let her die, I implore you, my dear child.'

But Bizet insisted on killing off his heroine, and de Leuven resigned in protest. Friction continued during rehearsals. The orchestra found the score difficult. The chorus rebelled at being asked to fight and smoke on stage instead of standing still, eyes fixed on the conductor, in conventional “park and bark” mode.

When the theatre management continued to demand that the work be Disneyfied, the singers playing Carmen and Don José supported Bizet, threatening to resign if changes were made. Management backed down, and the premiere took place on March 3, 1875.

Although today we might consider the most politically incorrect aspect of *Carmen* to be the bullfighting and the smoking, its lurid realism bewildered and shocked the opening night audience.

With a promiscuous – and unrepentant – heroine and a cast of low-class factory workers, smugglers, and thieves, *Carmen* was seen as sordid and violent. It introduced an unwelcome note of realism to the stage and in fact has been called the first *verismo* opera, pre-dating by 15 years the operas of Mascagni, Leoncavallo, and Puccini that define the gritty *verismo* style.

Despite all the brouhaha, *Carmen* had its early admirers. In 1876 alone, Brahms went to see it some twenty times. Tchaikovsky, himself no slouch at writing a good tune, loved it: within months of the première he was enthusiastically studying the piano-vocal score. On seeing *Carmen* in Paris in January 1876, he was blown away. He later wrote, *Carmen in my view is a chef d'oeuvre ... I am convinced that ten years hence Carmen will be the most popular opera in the world.*

Even someone as persnickety as the über-philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche took time from his fulminating against Wagner to praise *Carmen*:

Yesterday I heard – would you believe it? – Bizet's masterpiece, for the twentieth time ... Really, every time I heard Carmen I seemed to myself more of a philosopher, a better philosopher, than I generally consider myself ...

The tone of Bizet's orchestra is almost the only one I can endure. That other orchestral tone which is now the fashion: Wagner's ... how harmful for me is this Wagnerian orchestral tone! ... I break out into a disagreeable sweat ...

This music seems perfect to me. It approaches lightly, supplely, politely. It is pleasant, it does not sweat ... this music treats the listener as intelligent, as if himself a musician – and is in this respect, too, the opposite of Wagner, who was ... the most impolite genius in the world ... I become a better human being when this Bizet speaks to me. Also a better musician, a better listener.

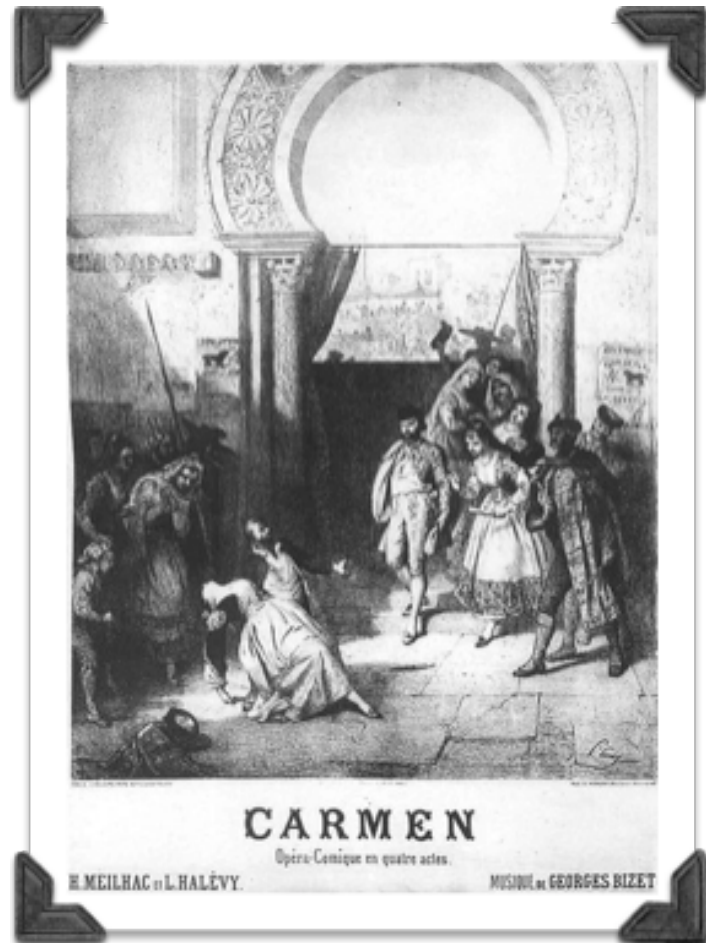
Oddly enough, Wagner liked *Carmen* too, declaring: *At last. Someone with new ideas.*

Much later Richard Strauss advised young composers, *If you want to learn how to orchestrate, don't study Wagner's scores, study the score of Carmen. What wonderful economy, and how every note and every rest is in its proper place.*

Carmen fulfilled Tchaikovsky's prophecy in spades. Still outrageously popular, it remains a wonder – loved by the public, admired by musicians, embraced by singers (the title role is a boon for mezzo sopranos, who can strut their stuff physically and vocally rather than being relegated to the usual mezzo roles of witches, bitches, and britches).

Lucky you, if you are discovering for the first time Bizet's marvelous music and that provocative, headstrong, irresistible girl named Carmen. For those who have experienced the opera many times, how rewarding to listen with fresh ears to this amazing music – the sinuous smoky chorus of the cigarette girls; the sultry Habanera; the surprising little idyll of the entre'acte to Act 3; the soaring anguish of Micaëla's aria *Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante*. The ease, the perfect dramatic inevitability of the music never palls. And Carmen herself is never less than bewitching.

Poster for the 1875 premiere



Act I of the Original Production
Lithograph by Auguste Lamy



Links for further reading

- **Pacific Opera Victoria's Carmen pages:**
<http://www.pov.bc.ca/carmen.html>
- ***Carmen* libretto (French)**
<http://opera.stanford.edu/Bizet/Carmen/libretto.html>
This is the text to the "original" version of the opera as intended for performance at the Opéra-Comique. It includes all of the spoken dialogue, spoken melodrama passages, and vocal parts subsequently altered or cut. It is presented in three acts as the authors originally intended, although the opera was performed in four acts from the beginning and all published scores and libretti (except the critical edition of Fritz Oeser) divide it into four acts.
- ***Carmen* Libretto (English)**
<http://www.dennisalbert.com/Opera/Carmen.htm>
English translation of the Libretto of *Carmen*
- ***Carmen* Vocal Score**
<http://www.dlib.indiana.edu/variations/scores/aaz2552/index.html>
French and English piano-vocal score at the International Music Score Library Project (IMSLP)
- ***Carmen* by Prosper Mérimée**
<http://opera.stanford.edu/Bizet/Carmen/source1.html>
Original French text of the novella on which Bizet's opera is based.
- ***Carmen* by Prosper Mérimée**
<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/2465>
English translation of the novel on which Bizet's opera is based.
- **Contemporary Reviews of *Carmen***
<http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/view/collections/fmc-carm.html>
A fascinating collection of critical reactions to the 1875 première of *Carmen*. These are in French, available for download as individual PDF files.
- **Georges Bizet**
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georges_Bizet
A good introduction to the life and works of the composer of *Carmen*

Video and Audio Links

- **San Diego OperaTalk! with Nick Reveles**
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7yYkcRcRkyU>
An engaging video introduction to Carmen with Dr. Nicolas Reveles, Director of Education and Outreach at San Diego Opera.

- **The Habanera from Act 1.**
http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=mJqUUzTeM88

*L'amour est un oiseau rebelle
que nul ne peut apprivoiser...
L'amour est enfant de Bohême,
il n'a jamais, jamais connu de loi,
si tu ne m'aimes pas, je t'aime,
si je t'aime, prends garde à toi!*

*Love is a rebellious bird
that no one can tame...
Love is a Gypsy child,
that has never known any law,
If you don't love me, then I love you,
If I love you you'd best watch out!*

Anne Sofie von Otter as Carmen.
Glyndebourne 2002. London Philharmonic Orchestra, Conducted by Philippe Jordan.

- **The Seguidilla from Act 1**
http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=LgRyKawibF8
The Seguidilla (*Près des remparts de Séville*) is the aria that Carmen uses to seduce Don José into letting her escape from his custody. Here is a concert performance by the great Maria Callas in Hamburg in 1962.

*Près des remparts de Séville
chez mon ami Lillas Pastia,
j'irai danser la seguidille
et boire du Manzanilla ...
Oui, mais toute seule on s'ennuie,
et les vrais plaisir sont à deux;
donc pour me tenir compagnie,
j'ammènerai mon amoureux! ...
Vous arrivez au bon moment!*

*Close by the walls of Sevilla,
Lives my old friend Lillas Pastia,
I'll go there to dance the Seguidilla
And to drink Manzanilla,
Yes, but all alone it's boring!
Real pleasures are for two to share
...
So to keep me company
I'll take my latest lover there! ...
You have arrived at just the right
time!*

- **Les tringles des sisters from Act 2**

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNI8nKpCifY&feature=player_embedded

At the beginning of Act 2, the gypsies sing and dance at Lillas Pastia's inn.

*Les tringles des sistres tintaient avec un éclat métallique,
et sur cette étrange musique les zingarellas se levaient.*

*It starts with a metallic rhythm vibrating in the air
And drawn by this strange music the gypsies rise*

Elina Garanca as Carmen. Metropolitan Opera, January, 2010.

- **The Toreador Song from Act 2**

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tlemwS024I&feature=player_embedded

The gypsy girls and soldiers are at a tavern when the famous toreador Escamillo makes a grand entrance and sings of the drama of the bullfight and of the love that awaits the toreador. He greets Carmen with surely the best pickup line in opera ... *Tell me your name, and the next time I kill a bull, yours will be the name that I say.* Carmen tells him that for the moment she is not available.

*Toréador, en garde! Toréador! Toréador!
Et songe bien, oui, songe en combattant qu'un oeil noir te regarde
et que l'amour t'attend, Toréador, l'amour, l'amour t'attend!*

*Toreador, on guard, Toreador, Toreador!
And remember that when you draw your sword that dark eyes are watching you
And love awaits you! Toreador, love is waiting for you!*

Gino Quilico as Escamillo, Maria Ewing as Carmen
Covent Garden 1991. Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Conducted by Zubin Mehta

- **Don José's aria *La fleur que tu m'avais jetée* from Act 2**
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0tUnqvRanM&feature=player_embedded

This is Don José's great love song to Carmen.

*La fleur que tu m'avais jetée dans ma prison m'était restée,
 flétrie et sèche, cette fleur gardait toujours sa douce odeur ...
 et je ne sentais en moi-même, je ne sentais qu'un seul désir,
 un seul désir, un seul espoir: te revoir, o Carmen, oui, te revoir!*

*The flower that you threw to me stayed with me in prison,
 Though faded and dried, this flower still kept its sweet fragrance ...
 And I felt in myself, I felt but one desire
 Only one thought, one hope: to see you again, Carmen, yes to see you again!*

Don José: Robert Alagna. Carmen: Béatrice Uria-Monzon
 Recorded at the Chorégies d'Orange - July 2004. Conductor: Myung-Whun Chung.

- **Micaëla's Aria, *Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante* from Act 3.**
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRrYwTxxQ_g&feature=player_embedded

Listen to this beautiful audio recording of Anna Moffo singing Micaëla's Aria, *Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante* from Act 3. Micaëla has come to the gypsy camp to find Don José to bring him to his dying mother. Micaëla is terrified of meeting Carmen and prays to the Lord to protect her and give her courage.

*Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante, je dis, hélas! que je réponds de moi;
 mais j'ai beau faire la vaillante, au fond du coeur, je meurs d'effroi!*

*I said there was nothing could scare me, I said I'd stay here all alone tonight;
 But though I try to act so bravely, Yet in my heart I die of fright!...*

From Anna Moffo's 1961 RCA Victor debut recital LP.

Additional information, including biographies of the singers, conductor, director, and designer of this production of Carmen, is available at Pacific Opera's website. As well, all the above links may also be accessed from POV's website: <http://www.pov.bc.ca/carmen.html>

Who are the main characters?

Carmen [kar-men]- a mischief causing gypsy who falls in and out of love with men

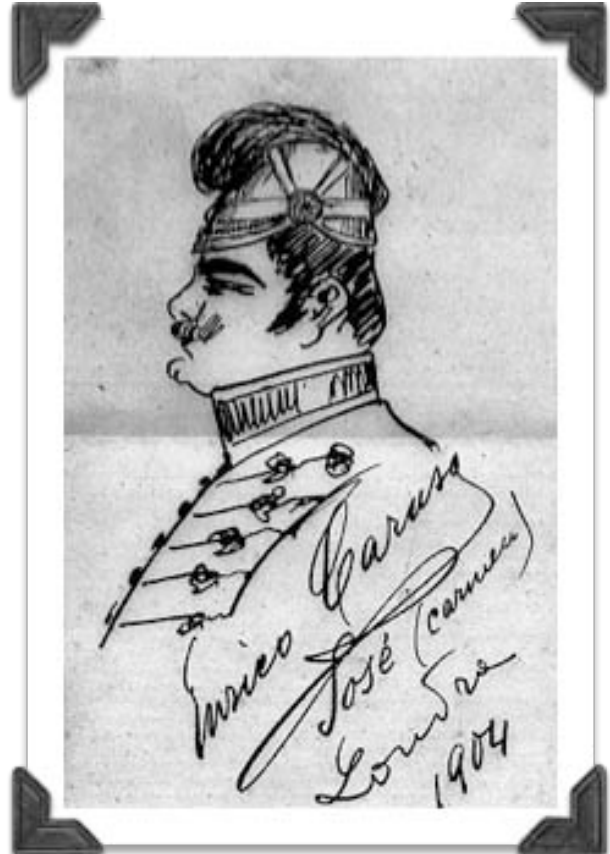
Don José [zsho-zay]- a soldier who falls in love with Carmen

Escamillo [es-ka-mee-yo] - a confident bullfighter who falls in love with Carmen

Micaëla [mi-ka-ay-la] - an innocent girl from Don José's home town who is in love with Don José








Celestine Galli-Marié dressed as Carmen in
1875








Enrico Caruso's sketch of himself as Don José,
1904

Review the Opera! - Carmen

The Artists	Description of Character	Description of Voice
<p>Allyson McHardy - Carmen</p> 		
<p>Eric Fennell - Don José</p> 		
<p>Leslie Ann Bradley - Micaëla</p> 		
<p>Étienne Dupuis - Escamillo</p> 		
<p>Andrew Greenwood - Zuniga</p> 		

Review the Opera!...Continued

The Artists	Description of Character	Description of Voice
<p>Dominique Côté - Moralès</p> 		
<p>Miriam Khalil - Frasquita</p> 		
<p>Sylvia Szadowvski - Mercédès</p> 		
<p>Andrew Love - Dancaïro</p> 		
<p>Riccardo Iannello - Remendado</p> 		

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 e c n s z c h o r u s y
 t l l i u e r v t b a m
 c d b h n m a r i a e i

rose
 bull fight
 tavern
 smuggler
 spain
 cigarette
 soldier
 seville
 gypsy
 toreador
 cards
 chorus
 aria
 duet
 quintet
 music
 bizet
 composer
 librettist
 mezzo
 tenor

GLOSSARY OF COMMONLY USED OPERA TERMS

ACT: A portion of an opera designated by the composer, which has a dramatic structure of its own.

ARIA: A solo piece written for a main character, which focuses on the character's emotion.

BACKSTAGE - any area of the theatre behind the proscenium; can refer to the wings as well as the dressing rooms.

BATON: A short stick that the conductor uses to lead the orchestra.

BEL CANTO: An Italian phrase literally meaning "beautiful singing." A traditional Italian style of singing that emphasizes tone, phrasing, coloratura passages and technique. Also refers to opera written in this style.

BUFFO: From the Italian for "buffoon." A singer of comic roles (basso-buffo) or a comic opera (opera-buffa). **BLOCKING:** Directions given to actors for on-stage movements and actions.

BRAVO (BRAH-voh): Literally, a form of applause when shouted by members of the audience at the end of an especially pleasing performance. "Bravo" is for a single man, "brava" for a woman, and "bravi" for a group of performers.

COLORATURA: Elaborate ornamentation of vocal music using many fast notes and trills.

CORD, VOCAL: The wishbone-shaped edges of muscles in the lower part of the throat whose movements create variations in pitch as air passes between them.

DIAPHRAGM: A muscle beneath the lungs and above the stomach which acts as a trampoline does, pushing the air from the lungs at a desired rate.

DIVA: Literally "goddess," it refers to an important female opera star. The masculine form is divo.

DROP (n.) - a flat piece of cloth that is flown – i.e. It "drops" from the flies. Often it is elaborately painted. Some stage sets are made up entirely of painted "drops"

ENCORE: Literally means "again." It used to be the custom for a singer to repeat a popular aria if the audience called "encore" loudly enough. This is still done in the middle of an opera in countries such as Italy, but it is rare elsewhere. Soloists frequently give encores at the end of a concert but not an opera. **ENSEMBLE:** Two or more people singing at the same time, or the music written for such a group.

FALSETTO: A method of singing above the natural range of the male voice. Often used in opera for comic effects such as a man imitating a woman.

FLAT - a piece of hard stage scenery that is flat. A wall can be made from a series of flats. Flats used to be made always of canvas stretched on a wooden frame. This made a good surface for painting and kept the flats very lightweight. Flats are now often made from very thin plywood instead of canvas.

FLIES (n.) - the area above the stage where scenery, lights, etc. are hung. Anything that goes up and down to/from the flies is said to fly or be flown.

GREENROOM - The lounge in the lower level where performers and crew can relax.

HOUSE - strictly speaking, the theatre. However, it is often used to refer to the audience seating area, the auditorium. Example: "The house is open" means the audience is or has been admitted.

LEGS - Draperies or flats that hang vertically, usually at the sides of the stage as masking.

LIBRETTO - the words or text. This is like the script of a play. Very often (almost always) the words will be in a foreign language.

MAESTRO (mah-EHS-troh): Literally "master;" used as a courtesy title for the conductor. The masculine ending is used for both men and women.

PROSCENIUM (pronounced pro-see'-nee-um) - the wall that separates the stage from the audience. The "proscenium opening" acts as a picture frame for the stage action.

RAKE - a slanted stage floor.

RECITATIVE: Words sung in a conversational style, usually to advance the plot. Not to be confused with aria.

RÉPÉTITEUR (reh-peh-ti-TEUR): A member of the music staff who plays the piano for rehearsals and, if necessary, the piano or harpsichord during performances. They frequently coach singers in their roles and assist with orchestra rehearsals.

SITZPROBE (ZITS-proh-bah): Literally, "seated rehearsal," it is the first rehearsal of the singers with the orchestra and no acting.

STAGE MANAGER: The person in charge of the technical aspects of the entire opera, including light changes, sound effects, entrances (even of the conductor) and everything else that happens.

SUPER - short for supernumerary; just a fancy operatic word meaning "extra".

SYNOPSIS - a short description of the plot or story-line of the opera.

TROUSER ROLE: A role depicting a young man or boy but sung by a woman.

UPSTAGE (adv) - the back of the stage.

UPSTAGE (vb) - to attract attention or distract the audience away from the proper focus.

WINGS - areas at either side of the stage where people wait to make entrances and scenery is stored.

Teacher's Comments

Your comments and suggestions are greatly appreciated. Please take a few minutes to fill out this questionnaire and return it to the address below. Thank you for your comments and suggestions.

Name: _____ School: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Fax: _____ Grade(s) you teach: _____

Email: _____ Subjects: _____

Have you attended other arts events with your students in the past year? Yes No

If yes, what were they? _____

Were you able to use the Teacher's Study Guide and Activity Guide in your classroom activities before attending the opera? Yes No

If not, please elaborate: _____

If so, which sections of the Study Guide and Activity Guide did you find most useful?

How appropriate was the information provided in the Guides?

What would you add/delete:

Did you spend classroom time discussing the performance after your students attended the opera?

Yes No

Do you have any comments about the performance itself?

Would you like to receive information on our future Student Dress Rehearsals? Yes No

How would you like to receive information? Fax Email Letters Other _____

Please return this form to:

Pacific Opera Victoria, 1815 Blanshard Street, Suite 500, Victoria, BC, V8T 5A4 or by fax: 250-382-4944