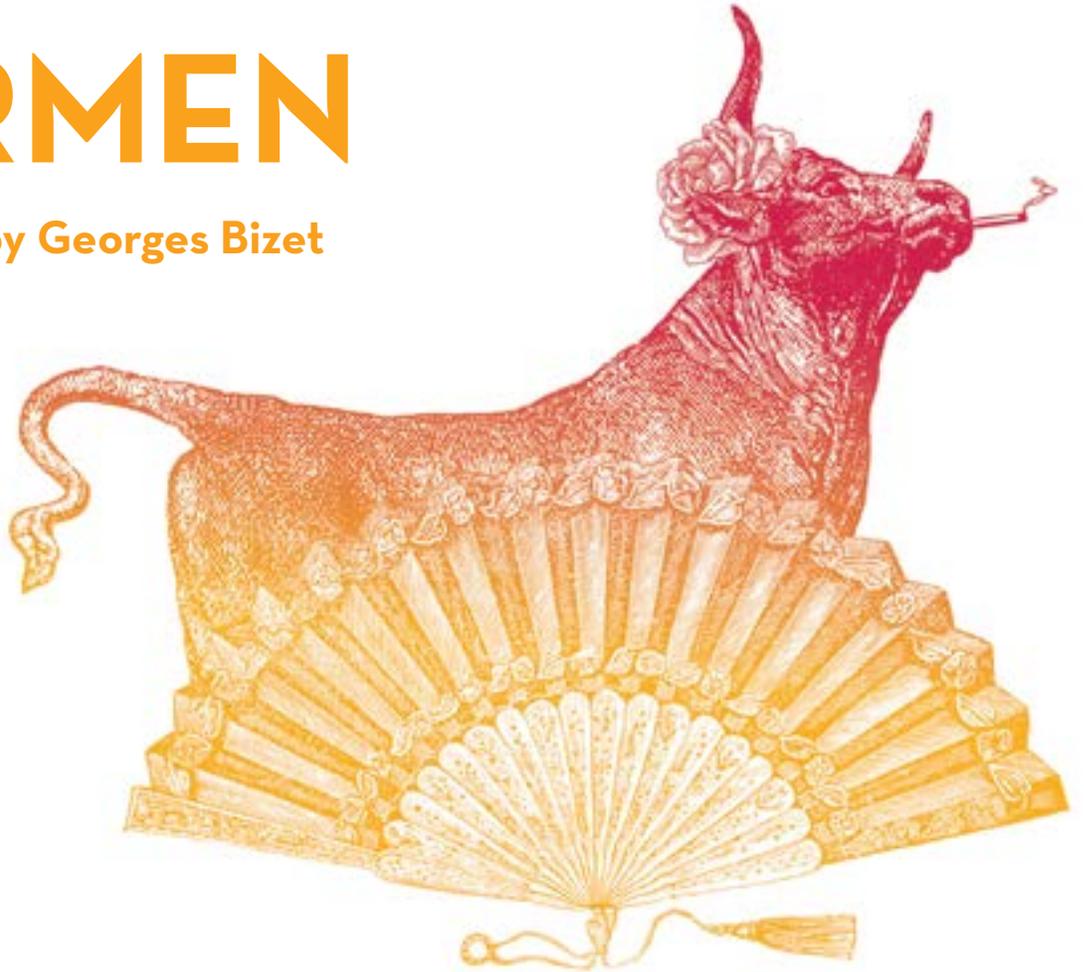


TOLEDO OPERA

CARMEN

by Georges Bizet



Student Night at the Opera

Wednesday, February 6, 2019

Valentine Theatre

Audience Preview Guide

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The Setting

The opera takes place in and around Seville, c. 1830.

- Act I: A public square in Seville
- Act II: Lillas Pastia's Tavern
- Act III: A wild mountain-pass
- Act IV: The entrance to the bull ring



Characters

CARMEN
by Georges Bizet
Libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy

- Carmen - a gypsy who works in a cigarette factory
- Don José - Corporal of Dragoons
- Escamillo - a toreador (bullfighter)
- Micaëla - a village maiden and Don José's fiancée
- Zuniga - Lieutenant of Dragoons
- Moralès- Corporal of Dragoons
- Frasquiita - companion of Carmen
- Mercédès - companion of Carmen
- El Dancaïro - smuggler
- El Remendado - smuggler
- Lillas Pastia - innkeeper

Carmen's Lexicon

Dragoon - originally a class of mounted infantry, who used horses for mobility, but dismounted to fight on foot. From the early 18th century onward, dragoons were increasingly employed as conventional light or medium cavalry, trained for combat with swords from horseback.

Flamenco - a style of dancing, characteristic of the Andalusian Gypsies, that is strongly rhythmic and involves vigorous actions, such as clapping the hands and stamping the feet.

Gypsy - a member of a nomadic, Caucasoid people of generally swarthy complexion, who migrated originally from India, settling in various parts of Asia, Europe, and, most recently, North America.

Habanera - a dance of Cuban origin, having a slow duple meter and a rhythm similar to that of a tango.

Picador - one of the mounted assistants to a matador, who opens the bullfight by enraging the bull and weakening its shoulder muscles with a lance.

Seguidilla - a Spanish dance in triple meter for two persons.

Tarot Cards - any of a set of 22 playing cards bearing allegorical representations, used for fortunetelling and as trump cards in tarok.

Toreador - a bullfighter; torero.

Character Pronunciations

Carmen: car-MEN

Don José: DON zho-ZAY

Escamillo: ess-kah-MEE-yo

Micaëla: mee-kah-AY-lah

Zuniga: zoo-NEE-gah

Moralès: moh-RAH-les

Frasquiita: frah-SKEE-tah

Mercédès: mayr-SAY-dess

El Dancaïro: el dahn-kah-EER-oh

El Remendado: el reh-men-DAH-doh

Lillas Pastia: LEE-yahs PAH-styah



Synopsis

ACT I

In a public square in front of a tobacco factory, soldiers watch the passers-by. Among them is Micaëla, a peasant girl, who is looking for an officer named Don José. Moralès, a corporal, tells her that he will arrive soon with the changing of the guard. The soldiers flirt with Micaëla, but she runs away. The relief guard approaches, headed by Lieutenant Zuniga, and Don José learns from Moralès that a girl has been looking for him. When the factory bell rings, the men of Seville gather to watch the women workers return from their lunch break—especially their favorite, the gypsy Carmen. She tells her admirers that love obeys no rules. Only one man pays no attention to her: Don José. Provocatively, Carmen throws a flower at him, and the women go back into the factory.

Don José picks up the flower. Micaëla returns, bringing a letter—and a kiss—from Don José's mother. When he starts to read the letter, Micaëla leaves him alone. He is about to throw away the flower when a fight erupts inside the factory between Carmen and another girl. Zuniga sends Don José to retrieve the gypsy. Carmen refuses to answer Zuniga's questions, and Don José is ordered to take her to prison. Left alone with him, she seduces him with visions of a rendezvous at Lillas Pastia's tavern. Mesmerized, Don José agrees to let her escape. As they leave for prison, Carmen slips away and Don José is arrested.

ACT II

Carmen and her friends Frasquita and Mercédès entertain the guests at Lillas Pastia's tavern. Zuniga tells Carmen that Don José has just been released from prison. The bullfighter Escamillo enters and boasts about the pleasures of his profession, in particular those relating to the ladies. He flirts with Carmen, but she coyly puts him off. When the tavern guests leave with Escamillo, the smugglers Dancaïro and Remendado explain their latest schemes to the women. Frasquita and Mercédès are willing to help, but Carmen refuses to join them because she is in love. Don José is heard singing in the distance, and the smugglers withdraw. Carmen arouses Don José's jealousy by mentioning that she has been dancing with Zuniga. He declares his love, but when bugles are heard, he says he must return to the barracks. Carmen mocks him, claiming that he doesn't love her. To prove her wrong, he shows her the flower she threw at him and confesses how its fading scent sustained his love during the weeks in prison. She is unimpressed: if he really loved her, he would desert the army and join her in a life of freedom in the mountains. Don José refuses, and Carmen tells him to leave. Zuniga bursts in, and in a jealous rage Don José draws his sword. The smugglers return and disarm Zuniga. Don José now has no choice but to desert and join them.

Intermission

ACT III

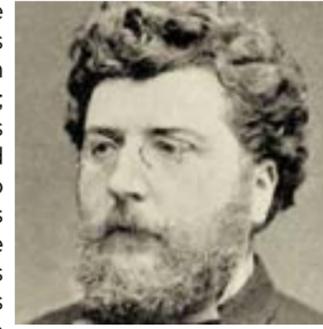
The smugglers take a rest at their mountain hideaway. Carmen and Don José quarrel. She admits that her love is fading and advises him to return to live with his mother. When the women turn cards to tell their fortunes, Frasquita and Mercédès foresee love and fortune for themselves, but Carmen's cards spell death—for her and for Don José. As the smugglers set off for the city, a frightened Micaëla appears. A shot rings out, and she hides. Don José has fired at an intruder, who turns out to be Escamillo. He tells Don José that he has come to find Carmen and mentions her former lover, a soldier who deserted to be with her. Don José identifies himself, and the two men fight. The returning smugglers separate them, and Escamillo invites everyone, Carmen in particular, to his next bullfight in Seville. Escamillo leaves, and Micaëla emerges. She begs Don José to return home. He agrees only when he learns that his mother is dying. Assuring Carmen that they will meet again, he leaves with Micaëla.

ACT IV

The crowd cheers the bullfighters as they enter the arena. Carmen arrives on Escamillo's arm, and Frasquita and Mercédès warn her that Don José is present in the crowd. She tells them that she is not afraid and waits while a crowd enters the arena. Don José appears and begs Carmen to forget the past and start a new life with him, but she calmly tells him that their affair is over and moves towards the entrance. When Don José tries to block her way, she finally loses her temper and throws the ring that he gave her at his feet. Don José stabs her to death and surrenders to the gathering crowd.

Georges Bizet 1838-1875

Bizet was born Alexandre César Léopold Bizet. His mother, Aimée, was an accomplished pianist; her brother Francois was a distinguished singer and teacher who performed at the courts of both Louis Philippe and Napoleon III. Bizet's maternal grandparents were Jewish, which made him Jewish according to Jewish religious law; he was, however, raised a Christian in his father's religion.



Georges Bizet
1838 - 1875

Georges showed early aptitude for music. His precocious talent convinced his ambitious parents that he was ready to begin studying at the Conservatoire, even though he was still only nine years old (the minimum entry age was 10). They were so struck by the boy's demonstration of his skills that Bizet was admitted to the Conservatoire two weeks before his 10th birthday. He made an early impression; within six months he had won first prize in solfège. Through his classes, he met the composer Charles Gounod, who became a lasting influence on the young pupil's musical style. He also met another of Gounod's young students, the 13-year-old Camille Saint-Saëns, who remained a firm friend of Bizet's.

Bizet won the Conservatoire's second prize for piano in 1851 and first prize the following year. He entered the 1857 Prix de Rome, with Gounod's enthusiastic approval, and was awarded the prestigious prize which included a financial grant for five years, the first two to be spent in Rome, the third in Germany and the final two in Paris.

Back in Paris with two years of his grant remaining, Bizet was temporarily secure financially and could ignore for the moment the difficulties that other young composers faced in the city. The two state-subsidized opera houses, the Opéra and the Opéra-Comique, each presented traditional repertoire that tended to stifle and frustrate new homegrown talent. Only eight of the 54 Prix de Rome laureates between 1830 and 1860 had works staged at the Opéra.

Although French composers were better represented at the Opéra-Comique, the style and character of productions had remained largely unchanged since the 1830s. The best prospect for aspirant opera composers was the Théâtre Lyrique which had staged the first performances of Gounod's *Faust* and *Roméo et Juliette*. In April 1863, Bizet received an offer to compose the music for a three-act opera. This would become *Les pêcheurs de perles* which received hostile reviews, although the great French composer Hector

Berlioz praised the work, writing that it "does M. Bizet the greatest honour." However, public reaction was lukewarm, and the opera's run ended after 18 performances. It was not performed again until 1886.

For the next decade Bizet would work on various projects, some with intermittent success, but none substantial enough to earn Bizet a lasting legacy. In 1874, he began work on *Carmen*, finishing the score during the summer. He was pleased with the outcome: "I have written a work that is all clarity and vivacity, full of colour and melody." When rehearsals began in October 1874, the orchestra and chorus declared some of the music impossible to play and to sing; the chorus expressed dismay that they had to act as individuals, smoking and fighting onstage rather than merely standing in line. Bizet also had to counter further attempts by the Opéra-Comique management to modify sections of the action that they deemed improper. Only when the leading singers threatened to withdraw from the production did they give way. Resolving these issues delayed the first night until March 3, 1875 on which morning Bizet's appointment as a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor was announced.

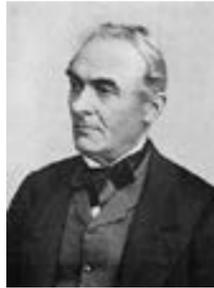
Among leading musical figures at the premiere were Jules Massenet, Camille Saint-Saëns, and Charles Gounod. Massenet and Saint-Saëns were congratulatory, but Gounod accused Bizet of plagiarism: "Georges has robbed me! Take the Spanish airs and mine out of the score and there remains nothing to Bizet's credit but the sauce that masks the fish." Much of the press comment was negative, expressing consternation that the heroine was an amoral seductress rather than a woman of virtue. Others complained of a lack of melody. Léon Escudier in *L'Art Musical* called the music "dull and obscure ... the ear grows weary of waiting for the cadence that never comes." The public's reaction was lukewarm, and Bizet soon became convinced of its failure: "I foresee a definite and hopeless flop."

For most of his life, Bizet had suffered from a recurrent throat complaint. A heavy smoker, he may have further undermined his health by overwork during the mid-1860s, when he toiled over publishers' transcriptions for up to 16 hours a day. In 1874, while completing *Carmen*, he had been disabled by severe bouts of what he described as "throat angina," and suffered a further attack in late March 1875. Depressed by the evident failure of *Carmen*, Bizet was slow to recover and fell ill again in May. He suffered an apparent heart attack and passed away on June 3, 1875 at the age of 36.

News of his sudden death stunned Paris's musical world. More than 4,000 people attended the funeral June 5th. After a special performance of *Carmen* at the Opéra-Comique that night, the press, which had almost universally condemned the piece three months earlier, now declared Bizet a master.

The Story of the Carmen Libretto

By Joanne Sheehy Hoover



Prosper Mérimée
b. Paris, Sept. 28, 1803
d. Cannes, Sept. 23, 1870



Henri Meilhac
b. Paris, Feb. 21, 1831
d. Paris, July 6, 1897



Ludovic Halévy
b. Paris, Dec. 31, 1833
d. Paris, May 7, 1908

Carmen was first introduced to the world on the good right arm of a brilliant, eccentric Frenchman named Prosper Mérimée, who once in a duel over a mistress had asked for and received shots in the left arm so that his writing ability would remain intact. Mérimée made his literary debut in his twenties with two hoaxes. The first, a book of his plays, was put forth as the work of an actress named Clara Gazul; it featured a drawing of her that was actually Mérimée in a dress with a mantilla covering his head. The second, folk tales supposedly collected from Serbia (which he had never visited) was so well imagined that even the great Russian author Pushkin was deceived.

Making his first visit to Spain in 1829, Mérimée was waited on by a dark-haired girl named Carmencita. Later during the same trip, he heard a story about a gypsy girl who was murdered by her jealous lover. Fifteen years later, a respected literary figure, he combined the two into the novella *Carmen*. Less than one hundred pages long, his story would gain enduring life through Bizet's opera, which in turn would spawn a wide variety of descendants.

Familiar with Mérimée's novella, Bizet had suggested the subject to Ludovic Halévy and Henri Meilhac, whom the Opéra Comique had commissioned to write the libretto for Bizet's next opera. The two men were something like the Rodgers and Hammerstein of the Paris theater world at that time. In hiring them, the directors of the Opéra Comique felt they were giving Bizet the best team possible for creating a winner with this new commission.

Ludovic Halévy, a cousin of Bizet's wife, Geneviève Halévy, had distinguished artistic roots. His father, Léon, was a respected literary figure and his uncle, Fromental Halévy, was a noted composer whose works included the opera *La Juive*. Meilhac, like Halévy, was a playwright and librettist who generally worked with collaborators. Their partnership, begun in the 1850s, lasted for several decades, and both were elected to the Académie Française in the 1880s. In addition to *Carmen*, they are best known for a string of librettos for Offenbach including *La belle Hélène* (*The Fair Helen*) and *Orphée aux enfers* (*Orpheus in the Underworld*).

Carmen, their first work to be presented at the Opéra Comique, was a departure for both men; their successes had been in the frothier world of the boulevard theaters. They had four other works on the boards at the time, which gave them little opportunity to attend rehearsals of the opera. Neither had the least idea that they might be making history with their libretto—as seasoned professionals, they took their work seriously, but it seemed no more, nor less, than another assignment in a busy career.

The two librettists gave Bizet a good framework, simplifying Mérimée's story, heightening the contrast between Carmen's independent spirit and Don José's conventional nature before jealousy unravels him. They also added Micaëla, the hometown sweetheart, a soprano and the likely heroine in a more conventional opera. A vivid contrast with Carmen, her character served multiple functions, injecting a softer element in the story's harsh progression and setting a benchmark for Don José's descent.

Throughout, Bizet was very much involved in the creation of the libretto. He was said to have revised the text of Carmen's initial aria "L'amour est un oiseau rebelle," thirteen times. Though some adjustments were made as rehearsals were underway, Bizet held fast and resisted sanitizing modifications. Working with feverish intensity, he was driven by his deep convictions about the drama. He also felt that his artistic reputation was at stake—in that, Bizet was more right than he knew, for *Carmen* would be the work that granted him enduring fame.

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This Dangerous Role: Carmen, Women, and Society

By Maia Morgan

When Bizet's *Carmen* premiered in Paris in 1875, it shocked audiences with its plot, its music—and especially its heroine.

Carmen was performed at the Opéra-Comique, a theater known for light, family-friendly fare. Ludovic Halévy, who coauthored the libretto, described how director Adolphe de Leuven reacted to the suggestion of an opera based on the novella by Prosper Mérimée. "He actually interrupted me," Halévy recalled, "'Mérimee's Carmen! Isn't she killed by her lover? And these bandits, gypsies, and girls working in a cigar factory! At the Opéra-Comique! You'll frighten our audience away.'" (Halévy) The character Carmen is brazen, opinionated and manipulative. She is a gypsy and an independent woman earning her own living. Her willingness to use her sensuality to get what she wanted scandalized the Opéra-Comique's middle class patrons.

In Latin, the word *carmen* means song, verse, or enchantment. It's a fitting name for Bizet's heroine, who seems to cast a spell over men. After their first encounter, Don José remarks, "If there really are witches/she's certainly one." One of the charges frequently leveled against gypsies was that they dabbled in the dark arts of sorcery and magic. Gypsies were outsiders in Spain, living on the fringes of mainstream society; throughout Europe, discriminatory laws were passed against them for centuries. They were stereotyped as a people ruled by instinct, less civilized than lighter-skinned Europeans. In a similar vein, women in the 19th century were described as less rational than men, susceptible to being overcome by their emotions. As a woman and a gypsy, then, Carmen was already established as a temptress, not to be trusted.

It is significant that Carmen works in the cigarette factory. She is unmarried and independent, earning her own income. In Bizet's time, a woman's proper place was thought to be in the home. A woman went from her father's home to her husband's when she married. An independent woman was suspect. Carmen openly relishes her freedom: In Act II, she sings, "The open sky, the wandering life,/the whole wide world your domain;/for law your own free will,/and above all, that intoxicating thing:/Freedom! Freedom!" The men of *Carmen*, by contrast, speak to the women in terms of coercion and possession, whether it is the soldiers insisting to Micaëla "You'll stay!" as she protests, "Indeed, I won't!" or Don José agonizing over Carmen: "For you had only to appear,/only to throw a glance my way,/to take possession of my whole being,/O my Carmen,/and I was your chattel! I shall compel you/to bow to the destiny/that links your fate with mine!" Carmen is unwilling to sacrifice her freedom for love; Don José is willing to murder his beloved, rather than allow her to assert her independence.

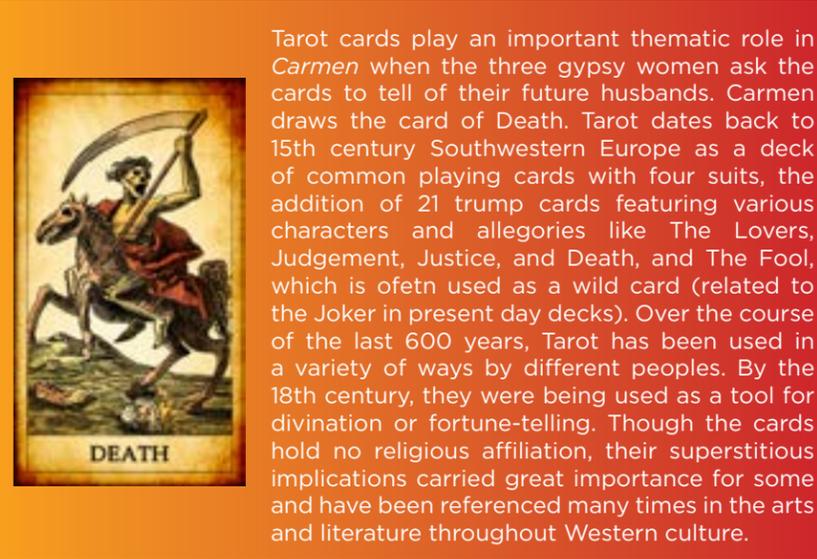
When he pitched the idea for *Carmen* to the skeptical director of the Opéra-Comique, librettist Halévy sang the praises of a character he and Meilhac had added to Mérimée's story: one "perfectly in keeping with the style of the opéra-comique...a young girl of great chastity and innocence." (Halévy) He was alluding, of course, to Micaëla, Carmen's foil and Don José's intended. Carmen's use of her sensuality to get what she needs is contrasted to Micaëla's sweetness and submission. Demure and proper, Micaëla represents the Victorian ideal of womanhood—home, family, and purity. After his encounter with Micaëla, Don José compares Carmen unfavorably with her. If she was a witch before, now she's sunk lower still: "I love Micaëla/and I shall take her for my wife./As for your flowers, filthy witch!" Micaëla highlights the double standards women were subject to. Not even a woman as pure as she is immune from the leering soldiers, who try to compel her to join them in the guard house.

The episode of *Carmen* that concerned Adolphe de Leuven the most was her murder at the hands of Don José. "Death at the Opéra-Comique," he protested to Halévy. "That's never happened before, do you hear, never." (Halévy) But die Carmen did. Some critics maintain that Carmen was such a troubling character for audiences, that her amoral behavior had to be punished. She could not be allowed to get away with ruining a good man like Don José. Others see Carmen as an active participant in her own demise. Left with limited choices, she elects death over a life as a man's property. She is defiant to the end, singing, "Carmen will never yield!/ Free she was born and free she will die!" Bizet parallels Don José's killing of Carmen with Escamillo's bullfight. As José fatally stabs the woman he claims to love, the chorus sings, "Look! Look! Look!/ The tormented bull/comes bounding to the attack, look!/Struck true, right to the heart,/look! look! look!/ Victory!" But the scene is ambiguous. Is Don José victorious, having justly punished an unfaithful lover? Or is Carmen the victor over Don José, having gone to her death still refusing to be his? A critic of Bizet's time found fault with Célestine Galli-Marié, the singer who first played Carmen, complaining that her "reading of the part allotted to her possessed fire, life, and exuberant vitality; in fact, she did not escape censure on the score of excessive realism. [She] seems to take pleasure in accentuating the unlovely aspect of this dangerous role." (Parker) If Galli-Marié did enjoy embodying the fierce character, she wasn't the last performer to do so. In 2007, another celebrated Carmen, Denyce Graves, said of the character, "I'm a great admirer of this woman. I have drawn a lot of strength from who she is. I wish I could be more like her." (Huizenga) Today's audiences likely see Carmen differently than that first audience at the Opéra-Comique. For some, she is an empowering character, a resourceful woman who makes the most of what she has in a society that severely restricts women's activities. Manipulative though she may be, she does it to get by in a culture that demeans and devalues women. Carmen shines a light on the challenges women faced in Bizet's era and provokes modern audiences to reflect on what has changed and what remains the same.

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The Gypsy Mystique

Gypsy culture has had a profound cultural impact on Europe and Western Asia since their emigration from the Punjab region of India between the eighth and tenth centuries. When the gypsy peoples first arrived in the west, Europeans mistook them for Egyptians, giving rise to the common name. As a nomadic people, gypsies spread all over Europe, developing many cultural variations and subgroups. Most gypsies today are actually a part of the Romani people, but they are called many names, depending on the country in which they settled. In Spain, they became known as Gitanos after their arrival in the Southern region of Andalusia in the 15th century.



This is the group about which Prosper Mérimée wrote in his original novella, *Carmen*, inspired by his travels in Spain. Mérimée attempted to catalog information on the Gitanos in his final chapter of *Carmen*, but most historians now agree that the writings are largely inaccurate. The history of the Rom people is hazy because it is passed down orally. Between the appropriation and biases of the Western culture in which they are viewed, and the lack of written resources, they remain a largely misrepresented people.

Flamenco dancing, which Carmen performs for Don José in the traditional staging of the opera, has its origins in the melting pot of Andalusia and incorporates elements of numerous minority cultures including the Muslim Morisco people with roots in North Africa, Jews, and Romani. The dance is typically performed with a proud, upright posture, expressive arms, and percussive footwork. The frilly dresses that many people associate with flamenco were incorporated later as the dance became popular and performed at the Seville April Fair. Soon a tourist spectacle, the aesthetic would eventually be incorporated into the French vaudeville houses where Bizet, himself, was known to frequent.



Throughout most of their history, the Romani people have been the targets of social and economic discrimination world-wide. During the Holocaust, the Romani were one of the groups targeted by Nazis who killed an estimated one quarter of the million Romani in Europe at the time. For hundreds of years, until as recently as 1977, various anti-Gitano laws in Spain prevented their people from settling together, running for public office, speaking their language, or practicing their rituals. Discrimination against Romani people continues today, as they are often conflated with illegal immigrants, refugees and even vagrants, although there are efforts being made to address these issues.

In France, the term bohemian became synonymous to gypsy but often referred to artists as well, thus recognizing the substantial cultural contributions of the Romani people in music, dance, story-telling, and

artisan crafting. The fascination with gypsy life became popular in the 19th century with the rise of the middle class as they idealized a life opposite theirs, - gypsy life evoking complete freedom, lawlessness, sensuality of the arts, and the mysticism of fortune-telling and superstition. This in-turn led to many European artists' interpretations of gypsies through works of music, visual art, dance and theater.

DISCUSS: What cultures do we find exotic today? How might we be able to come to a deeper understanding of that culture beyond its stereotypes?

Courtesy of Boston Lyric Opera, *Carmen* Student Study Guide, 2016.

What to Listen For

Carmen contains some of opera's most beloved and used music. Beyoncé belted out a Pepsi commercial to the tune of the Habanera which was also used in a 2017 Doritos commercial. The Sesame Street characters and the Muppets have sung from the score of *Carmen* as did Tom and Jerry (the cartoon) spoofing the opera in 1962 with a short called "Carmen Get It." The 1976 baseball classic, *The Bad News Bears*, used the *Carmen* music throughout the film. A popular 1970's television show *Gilligan's Island* performed a spoof of *Hamlet* to the music of *Carmen*. As you can see, *Carmen* has been used throughout pop culture. Do you recognize any of these themes?

Prelude (Orchestra)

One of the most famous of all opera preludes.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hR1lp3FdH7M>

L'amour est un oiseau - Habanera (Carmen)

Carmen makes her sultry entrance with this song.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2snTkaD64U>

Près des remparts de Séville - Sequidilla (Carmen)

Carmen sings this seductive aria to entice Don José.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kqm3z1AMDSA>

Votre toast, je peux vous le rendre - Toreador Song (Escamillo)

The bullfighter, Escamillo, sings of his many conquests, in and out of the ring.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-snRz5L3Ups>

Nous avons en tête une affaire - Quintet (Carmen, Frasquita, Mercédès, El Dancaïro, and El Remendado)

Carmen's friends plan how they will smuggle their goods across the border.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LX0g_YeduK8

La fleur que tu m'avais jetée - The Flower Song (Don José)

Smitten by Carmen, Don José sings of his love for her.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1dafrit10w>

C'est des contrebandiers (Micaëla)

In the wild mountain-pass, Micaëla overcomes her fear to deliver a message from Don José's mother.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJeXahYmbZE>

In Bizet's Time

1838 Bizet is born on October 25

1838 Coronation of England's Queen Victoria

1839 Artist Paul Cézane is born

1840 Composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky is born

1841 William Henry Harrison, 9th US President, dies in office

1842 Verdi's *Nabucco* premieres in Milan

1843 B'nai B'rith founded in New York

1844 University of Notre Dame receives charter

1845 1st officially recognized baseball game

1847 US Post Office authorized to issue stamps

1848 Gas lights installed at the White House

1849 Harriet Tubman first escapes slavery

1850 Madame Tussaud dies at 88

1851 Verdi's *Rigoletto* premieres in Venice

1852 1st edition of Peter Roget's *Thesaurus* is published

1853 Painter Vincent van Gogh is born in Netherlands

1854 Florence Nightingale is sent to the Crimean War

1855 Bizet writes his 1st symphony - *Symphony in C*

1856 Bizet wins prize for *Symphony in C* and travels to Rome, Germany, and Paris for 5 years

1857 Edward Elgar, composer of *Pomp and Circumstance*, is born

1858 Giacomo Puccini is born in Luca, Italy

1859 Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* is first published

1860 First Pony Express reaches California

1861 Bizet attends Paris premiere of Wagner's *Tannhäuser*

1862 First US income tax

1863 *The Pearl Fishers* premieres

1864 General Sherman begins his march to the South

1865 Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* premieres in Munich

1866 Andrew Rankin patents the urinal

1867 Strauss' *Blue Danube* waltz premieres in Vienna

1868 *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott published

1869 Bizet weds Geneviève Halévy

1869 Suez Canal opens linking the Mediterranean and Red Seas

1870 Because of Franco Prussian War, Bizet and wife flee to Paris

1871 Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida* premieres in Cairo

1872 Bizet writes a one-act opera, *Djamileh*, and *L'Arlésienne* music for Daudet's play

1872 The University of Toledo is founded

1873 Levi Stauss patents the first blue jeans

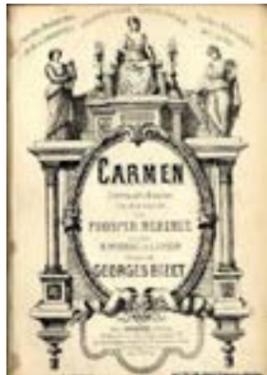
1874 Strauss Jr's *Die Fledermaus* premieres in Vienna

1875 *Carmen* premieres at the Opéra-Comique in March

1875 Bizet dies on June 3



Galli-Marié
the original Carmen



Lithograph of Act I of the original production

After the Performance Activity #1

Character Rating Scale

The main characters in Bizet's *Carmen* are distinct from one another and their differences drive the plot. After seeing *Carmen*, complete the Character Rating Scale below. Rate the characters from the opera by putting a check mark on the line separating the opposite character traits or qualities. A check mark on the space right next to the quality indicates the character has that quality, while a check mark in the middle of the scale indicates that the character is not strong on either quality. Justify each rating with examples of what the character did in the opera.

Carmen
Independent Subservient
Justification: Carmen's actions
Don José
Impassioned Cold
Justification: Don José's actions
Micaëla
Cunning Sincere
Justification: Micaëla's actions
Escamillo
Self-confident Hesitant
Justification: Escamillo's actions

After the Performance Activity #2

RAFT

Take the role of an arts critic for a newspaper or on-line news site. You have been assigned to review Toledo Opera's production of Bizet's opera, *Carmen*. Having been to a performance, report on what you saw and heard with the goal of convincing readers to go to *Carmen*.

Role: Arts critic/reviewer

Audience: News readers or followers

Format: Positive, but balanced, review

Topic: Be sure to catch Toledo Opera's production of *Carmen*

Review: