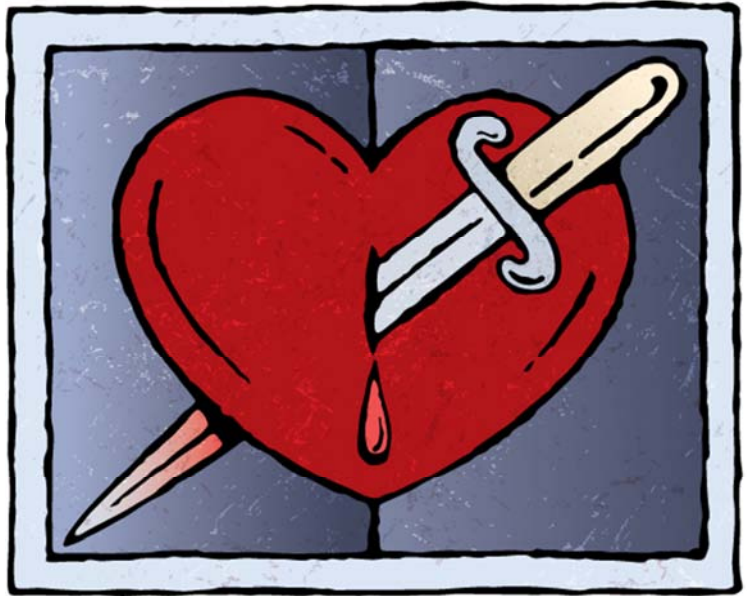


•••• CARMEN ••••

Music by Georges Bizet
Libretto by Henri Meilhac and
Ludovic Halevy

The music of *Carmen* may be the most familiar in all of opera (who **doesn't** know the Toreador song?) but the character of Carmen herself is the reason we remain fascinated with the opera. She is a woman unafraid to pursue her heart's desires, whatever the consequences. A handsome soldier wins her affection while a macho bullfighter turns her head, but neither can tame her defiant spirit.



Georges Bizet didn't live to see his opera become a worldwide hit. Paris audiences were scandalized at its 1875 premiere. Women smoking cigarettes on stage and fighting like street urchins while Carmen brazenly carried on with two men at once just didn't mesh with middle class morals. Bizet died at the age of 36, only three months after the premiere, unaware that critics and the public were already taking a second look at what would come to be known as his masterpiece.

THE CHARACTERS:

Carmen – a Roma (gypsy) woman who works in a cigarette factory in Seville

Don José – a Spanish army corporal stationed in Seville

Micaëla – a country girl from José's home town

Zuniga – José's commanding officer

Escamillo – a famous bullfighter

Mercédès, Frasquita, Remendado, Dancäiro – Carmen's smuggler comrades

*“Love is a rebellious bird
whose heart cannot be tamed.”*

— Carmen

CAST

Carmen: Kirstin Chávez
Micaëla: Elizabeth Caballero
Don José: Jonathan Burton
Escamillo: Gustavo Ahualli



Conductor: Timothy Myers
Director: Daniel Pelzig

Performed in French with English supertitles.

PERFORMANCE DATES:

Matinees at 2:30 pm – June 29; July 6, 8, 10, 23, 26, 28*, 31; August 7

Evenings at 8:00 pm – June 25; July 14, 16, 29

July 12th at 7:30pm – Special performance at Comfort Dental Amphitheatre in Denver.

Opera Notes - Free pre-performance preview in Williams Stables at 1:50 and 7:15 pm.

* Thursday July 28 - Nina Odescalchi Kelly Family Matinee, featuring Apprentice Artists in the major roles.

Carmen: Themes and Motifs

FATE: The music heard in the **Prelude**, an ominous descending melody played against a shuddering orchestra, expresses the inexorable force of fate in Carmen's life. The moment in the opera where this becomes clear to us (and to Carmen) is in Act III during the card trio. Mercédès and Frasquita are playing with tarot cards. When Carmen tries her hand, the cards reveal her dire fate. She is hurtling towards death and there is nothing she can do about it. Her fatalistic attitude is expressed in the section of the score beginning with "**En vain pour éviter.**" The mournful melody develops much the way the fate motif does earlier in the Prelude. This is, perhaps, the most beautiful solo moment Carmen has in the entire opera – so listen for it.

[LISTEN ONLINE*](#) - **Overture** (historic recording); Fate theme begins at 2:10.

[LISTEN ONLINE*](#) - **En vain pour éviter** (historic recording)

FREEDOM: This theme emerges in various ways including Carmen's own freewheeling personality and her desire to escape the constraints of responsibility, as well as in the way that Don José is torn between duty and honor or running away to enjoy the carefree gypsy life that Carmen represents. In the context of the opera, freedom becomes both destructive and entrancing. The term "la liberté" is used in the text numerous times as well.

OPPOSITES: Bizet has juxtaposed the musical score to provide contrast between high, intense passion and quiet calm and innocence. He will follow a fiery and erotic scene involving Carmen and Don José with a serene mood lead by Micæla. It is as if he brings a cooling breeze to relieve all the erotic heat. You will be able to spot this pattern from the melodies, cadence and words of the music which directly reflect the characters' personalities and conflicts. Examples of this can be heard in the Act I duet between Don José and Micæla and again in the famous **quintet of Act II** when the smugglers Dancaïro and Remendado, along with Frasquita and Mercédès, want Carmen to help them with a shipment of contraband. In this case, the scene is almost comic relief. In the opera, violence is the flip side of beauty – in text, action and in the music itself.

[WATCH ONLINE*](#) – **Carmen quintet** – Glyndebourne Festival Opera House

Note the contrast between the bustling life of Seville with the pastoral countryside. At the beginning of Act III the action moves to the rural world which is part of Don José's past – and probably happier times. Compare this to the world of night clubs, military headquarters, the bullring and the cigarette factory of Seville.

CONFLICT: Watch how Don José's conflicted personality becomes, at the hands of Carmen's wiles, his destruction. Again, listen for the contrasts in musical tone and melody to suggest his inner turmoil. José's vulnerability, a weakness in his character, allows Carmen to torment him and becomes clearly visible to us in his **Flower Aria** in Act II. His passion and neurotic tenderness emerge to reveal that he is at the mercy of Carmen's ability to exploit him. He unravels before our eyes as the action progresses, leading to the final conflict and tragedy of the opera.

[LISTEN ONLINE*](#) – **Flower aria** – Rolando Villazón

*If you're reading this in printed format, all online links can be found in our Resources on page 37.

Character Spotlight:

CARMEN'S MICAËLA

ELIZABETH CABALLERO

The *Opera Insider* caught up with Elizabeth Caballero, who makes her Central City Opera debut this season as Micaëla in *Carmen*.

Last season you made your house debut in the Metropolitan Opera's new production of *Carmen* in the role of Frasquita. This summer you make Central City Opera debut as Micaëla. What is it like to do the same opera, but a different character? What does it take to make the role fresh? How do you prepare a new role and how is this different from a repeat role?

My debut at the Met as Frasquita in their new production of *Carmen* starring Elina Garança was an amazing experience. Making my debut as Micaëla with Central City feels wonderful. Micaëla is a role that I really love and it's very special for me because it was my professional stage debut at Florida Grand Opera in 2000.

Even if it was the same character, any role changes a little bit, depending on the production, your director and your mood. It's an ever growing and changing experience; that's the joy of live theater. To do a new role, I believe that going into my own life experiences and bringing a little bit more of myself into a role helps me make it fresh and more interesting each time I sing it. Since our lives change day to day, year to year, why not these characters that we sing of? I start with the text and find every inflection and decide how to sing each phrase. As stated before, I think about the things in my life that can help me create a connection to the character by bringing out more of my own life into it. For example, Micaëla is a girl of strong faith in God. Recently I've been experiencing a tough moment in my life that has made me reach out to God more. When I will sing Micaëla's aria in Act III, I'll think of



how I've asked for protection in my moments of need, too.

When doing a repeat role I feel more at ease and relaxed. A new role takes a lot of getting used to. Not only are you learning but you also have to get it in your voice. With a role you know already, that long process is over. You can just focus on character, text, and having fun with it.

Many of our readers are young, sometimes aspiring singers; tell us about your reaction when you were named a National Grand Finalist of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in 2001?

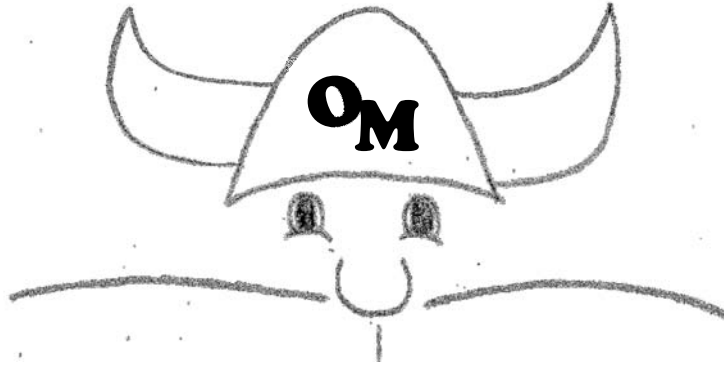
Singing at the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions was a wonderful experience. The Metropolitan Opera is one of the greatest companies in the world and their audition/competition gives the opportunity to open many doors for young singers because it's so popular. Also the sheer joy of singing on that stage with that orchestra is unforgettable.

As I read reviews about your singing career and personal story, I am struck by the connection you make to your Cuban heritage. You immigrated to the United States of America as a child in 1980 via the Mariel Boatlift. Could you tell us about your memories of that experience?

I was a small child when I came to America with my family and while I do remember a lot, there are many things that I don't. All I can say is that I thank God I was a child when I came with my parents because my parents were my age now when they did it with two young kids. They had guts and determination. They are my heroes. And I will forever be thankful to them and this country for giving me all these opportunities I now have.

What do you do before a performance? Have you developed any special routines or habits?

I really don't have any special routines or habits. I just take it easy, drink lots of water and look forward to singing. I really love what I do.



Dear OperaMan,

My grandma is taking me to the opera this summer in Central City and I am worried I won't like it because opera is so serious. Are there funny operas and is Central City Opera doing any funny operas this summer?

Granddaughter from Denver

Dear Granddaughter,

As you know, opera is just storytelling with music and the story can be about anything: Serious, sad, dramatic or funny. The category of comic opera is called **opera buffa** or **opera comique** in contrast to the more serious opera **opera seria**. Since the beginnings of opera, there have been comic characters and situations in opera, but it wasn't until the early 1700s that comic opera started to become a separate genre. This new genre was intended for the common man and the subject matter depicted common people with common problems – more so than *opera seria* which tended to depict royals and nobility. Not only are the stories of comic operas different, the music and text are different as well. The elitist language and recitative of *opera seria* was often avoided. While Baroque opera often starred castrati – men with unnaturally high voices, comic opera uses the lower male voice.

This summer Central City Opera will be producing THREE comic operas: Giacomo Puccini's only comedy, *Gianni Schicchi*; Francis Poulenc's *The Breasts of Tiresia*; and Thomas Pasatieri's *Signor Deluso*. Check the [schedule on our website](#) for your chances to laugh this summer.

Dear OperaMan,

Alright, I just read the story of *Carmen* and I have some questions: How will Central City Opera get all those characters on its tiny stage? Will the singers be smoking real cigarettes on stage?

Operanewbie

Dear Operanewbie,

Ah, you are familiar with the stage and proscenium in the historic opera house owned by Central City Opera. Each summer, opera designers and directors are charged with the task of producing an opera (sometimes small and sometimes large) on that very stage and time and time again they succeed in innovatively staging large operas in this small space. *Carmen* calls for a large principal cast, an adult chorus AND a children's chorus PLUS large sets to depict the town of Seville – complete with cigarette factory, jail, bullring and a deserted rocky place away from the city. We are confident the stage will be full of life (QUITE full in some scenes), uniquely and creatively presented.

I think you are referring to the Colorado Clean Indoor Air Act which went into effect in 2006, making all restaurants and bars 100% smoke free. The Colorado Supreme Court ruled 6-1 in December 2009 that the state's ban on smoking extended to actors onstage. Since then, theater companies across Colorado have used anything from fake cigarettes with talcum powder to dry ice on stage, because some plays and operas include smoking as part of the story. In *Carmen*, there is a cigarette factory and a chorus about the smoke rising from cigarettes. Needless to say, no real tobacco cigarettes will be lit and smoked on stage at Central City Opera.

Take advantage of the many

FRINGE FESTIVAL

attractions during the Summer Festival!

Opera Notes – Free previews before every performance at 1:50 p.m. or 7:15 p.m. in Williams Stables

Après Opera – After the show, share cocktails and enjoy impromptu performances by 2011 company performers, or pianist Jerry Weiss and solo guitarist Grant Gordy at the Teller House. No cover charge!

Lunch & A Song – Lunch and a 30-minute performance to whet your opera appetite at the relaxed Teller House. Tickets just \$30

Short Works – Staged scenes from beloved operas performed by members of the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Artists Training Program. Select dates at 1:15 p.m. in Williams Stables, prior to matinees. Tickets \$12 (\$8 for season subscribers)

Signor Deluso – Based on Moliere's play *Sganarelle*, the comic opera *Signor Deluso* by Thomas Pasatieri follows two couples who suspect their true loves are having affairs. Directed by Central City Opera Artistic Director Emeritus, John Moriarty. Select dates at 1:15 p.m. Tickets \$12 (\$8 for subscribers)

Jazz Brunches – Pop up for a finger-snappin' great time at our Jazz Brunches, featuring fine food and hot jazz. Just \$35 for brunch buffet and jazz, select dates at 11:45 a.m. in the Teller House.

SinFest – Get in touch with your inner sinner at this progressively sinful experience. See the one-hour Kurt Weill opera *The Seven Deadly Sins*, followed by a sinful evening of dance, slam poetry, experiential art, swing dance, and an indulgence of food and wine. Tickets just \$50...if you dare.

For tickets to these events visit
www.centralcityopera.org
or call the Central City Opera
Box Office at 303.292.6700

Sundays at St. James – A unique opportunity to experience exquisite instrumental and vocal works performed by company members and the popular group New York Polyphony, in one of Colorado's oldest churches, St. James Methodist, across from the Opera House. Tickets \$32 each or all three for \$68.

The Nina Odescalchi Kelly Family Matinees – Opera lovers of all ages will enjoy these full-length productions with "what-to-listen-for" introductions and post-performance autograph sessions. Tickets \$15 for children ages 6-18, \$20 for adults

Carmen – Tuesday, July 28 at 2:30 p.m.

Amadigi di Gaula – Tuesday, August 4 at 2:30 p.m. This performance includes a costume contest and magic show. Add the **Take a Child to the Opera** option for an extra \$10, for inside information about the opera accompanied by pre-performance family fun activities, theatre games, and a post-opera talkback. Sponsored by the Central City Opera House Association Guild.

Central City Days (July 30-31) – This uncommon weekend takes modern fun to historic heights with a gold mine of Central City adventures that celebrates all that's good and great about our state.

Summer Performing Arts Intensive (July 16-31) - Central City Opera and the Colorado Springs Conservatory partner to offer a two-week intensive for students ages 14-19 that includes immersion studies in drama, opera and musical theater. Students are in residence for 10 days in Colorado Springs and then move to Central City where they will attend Festival productions, participate in coachings and classes, and perform their own scenes program for **public performances July 30th at 2:30 p.m. & 31st at 10:00 a.m. Tickets \$5.**

RESOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CARMEN

Media Links:

- Overture - <http://www.loc.gov/jukebox/recordings/detail/id/6782>
- En vain pour eviter – <http://www.loc.gov/jukebox/recordings/detail/id/1776>
- Carmen quintet - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_1mnk77Of0
- Flower Aria - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hy8-QGmMeO8>

GIANNI SCHICCHI

Media Link:

- Opening Scene – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMwx9H7Eftk>

SEVEN DEADLY SINS

Media Links:

- Pride - <http://www.deadlysins.com/sins/pride.html>
- Envy - <http://www.deadlysins.com/sins/envy.html>
- Anger - <http://www.deadlysins.com/sins/anger.html>
- Sloth - <http://www.deadlysins.com/sins/sloth.html>
- Greed - <http://www.deadlysins.com/sins/greed.html>
- Gluttony - <http://www.deadlysins.com/sins/gluttony.html>
- Lust - <http://www.deadlysins.com/sins/lust.html>

THE BREASTS OF TIRESIAS

Media Link:

- Poulenc on Piano - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCg-x_bO820

MISCELLANY

- Schedule to 2011 Festival - <http://www.centralcityopera.org/2011Festival>

Special thanks to the following for their contributed materials, help and expertise in creating this season's Opera Insider:

Christopher Ainslie
Heather Brecl
Elizabeth Caballero
Ken Cazan
Brian Cook
Dr. Erin Hackel
Joanna Mongiardo

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

Check out the Central City Opera Education and Community Programs available during the REST of the year!

Mozart & Company, for **elementary** students, introduces the basics of opera – song, story, costumes and props – in arias and short vignettes. Study guide provided in advance.



Build an Opera! for **3rd through 12th grades**, provides extended artist residencies for students to engage in performing and creating musical stories.



The Great Opera Mix-Up, also for **elementary** students, invites student participation in a mini-opera to provide a deeper acquaintance with story and character. Study guide provided in advance.



Build an Opera workshop, a 5-day workshop for **K-12 teachers** intending to enroll their schools in *Opera Alive!*, prepares teachers for incorporating opera music and stories into curriculum. Free to teachers. Graduate or Continuing Education Credits available.



How the West Was Sung, for **upper elementary and middle school** students, establishes the historical contexts for opera as popular entertainment in the days before iPod and DVD and brings Colorado historical characters to life. Study guide provided in advance.



Performing Arts Intensive, a two-week summer program in collaboration with the Colorado Springs Conservatory. The Conservatory provides two weeks of instruction and preparation of opera and theatrical scenes for students **ages 14-19**. The group comes to Central City for an intensive four-day experience including attendance at festival operas, workshops and master classes taught by Festival artists and staff, tours and a culminating performance of the students' scenes program in Williams Stables.



En Mis Palabras (In My Own Words), for **middle and high school** students. A bilingual Spanish and English opera follows a 15-year-old girl trying to balance the conflicting influences of her Mexican family cultural traditions and her peer community. Bilingual study guides provided in advance.



Opera on the Go, for **all ages** features arias and scenes from operas and musical theater staged with costumes, props, and musical accompaniment.



Family Matinees, for children **ages 6 to 18** and their companion adults, are special performances of Festival repertoire operas (performed by participants in the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Artist Training Program) with tickets at significantly discounted prices.



Opera in the Rockies, touring program, presents community performances and in-school programs in communities throughout the Rocky Mountain region.



Concerts for family audiences – Smooth OPERator and Love Notes are available for booking by area concert venues and recreation districts.



Visit www.centralcityopera.org/education for more information. To schedule an event or program contact the Education and Community Programs office: 303-331-7026 or education@centralcityopera.org