

SARASOTA **OPERA**

VICTOR DeRENZI, Artistic Director
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Exploration in Opera

Teacher Resource Guide



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COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION
of Sarasota County

THE CAST

Conductor..... John F. Spencer IV

Stage Director..... Martha Collins

Scenic Designer..... David P. Gordon

Costume Coordinator..... Howard Tsvi Kaplan

Carmen (car-MEN)

a cigar maker and gypsy (mezzo-soprano) Lisa Chavez

Don José (DON hoe-ZAY)

a corporal in the Dragoons (tenor) Cody Austin

Escamillo (ess-kah-MEE-yo)

a bullfighter (baritone) Steven LaBrie

Dancaïre (dahn-kah-ERR)

a smuggler (baritone) Alexander Charles Boyd

Remendado (reh-men-DAH-doh)

a smuggler (tenor) Sean Christensen*

Zuniga (zoo-NEE-gah)

a lieutenant in the Dragoons (bass) Costas Tsourakis

Moralès (moh-RAH-les)

an officer in the Dragoons (baritone) Jared A. Guest *

Micaëla (mee-kah-AY-lah)

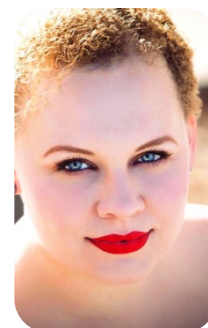
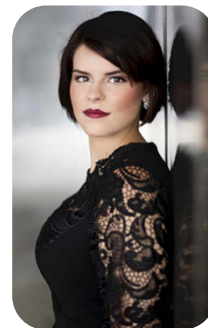
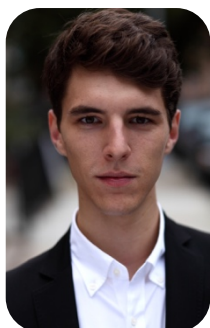
a peasant from Don José's village (soprano)..... Hanna Brammer Dillon

Frasquita (frah-SKEE-tah)

a gypsy and friend of Carmen (soprano) Chelsea Davidson *

Mercédès (mayr-SAY-dess)

a gypsy and friend of Carmen (mezzo-soprano)..... Nicole Woodward *



Top Row John F. Spencer IV, Martha Collins, Lisa Chavez, Cody Austin, Steven LaBrie, Alexander Charles Boyd **Bottom Row** Sean Christensen, Costas Tsourakis, Jared A. Guest, Hanna Brammer Dillon, Chelsea Davidson, Nicole Woodward

THE STORY

ACT I

IN A SQUARE IN SEVILLE

Moralès (moh-RAH-les) and other soldiers observe the array of people that pass by. Micaëla (mee-kay-AY-lah), a peasant girl, asks for Don José (DON hoe-ZAY) but she runs off after the soldiers flirt with her. Don José arrives with the changing of the guard. Zuniga (zoo-NEE-gah), a lieutenant stationed in Seville for the first time, asks him about the women who work at the cigar factory. Don José confesses that these women do not interest him since he loves Micaëla. The ringing of the factory bell announces the end of the workers' break, and the women return.



Carmen (car-MEN), a Gypsy employed at the factory, sings a song about the unpredictability of love. She flirts with Don José and throws a flower at him. Don José, outraged at Carmen's behavior, nonetheless keeps the flower. Micaëla finds Don José and gives him a letter and a kiss from his mother.

Women rush out from the factory and tell Zuniga conflicting stories about a fight. Don José goes inside to investigate and returns with Carmen. Zuniga questions Carmen but she haughtily answers him with a song. Alone with Don José, Carmen convinces him to let her escape. As Don José leads the Gypsy to jail, Carmen pushes him away and runs to her freedom.

ACT II

LILLAS PASTIA'S INN

Carmen and her Gypsy friends, Frasquita (frah-SKEE-tah) and Mercédès (mayr-SAY-dess), entertain Zuniga. He tells Carmen that Don José, sent to jail for helping her escape, has been demoted to a private. Carmen is glad to learn that Don José has been released.

The sounds of a parade honoring the bullfighter Escamillo (ess-kah-MEE-yo) are heard from the street. Escamillo and his retinue come into the inn, and he makes clear his attraction to Carmen. The innkeeper clears the crowd, but Zuniga tells Carmen he will return.

The smugglers Dancaïre (dahn-kah-EER) and Remendado (reh-men-DAH-doh) join Carmen and her friends. The men tell the women their help is needed in handling some contraband. Carmen refuses to join the plan, telling her



comrades she is waiting for her new lover. Dancaïre suggests that Carmen convince Don José to join the smugglers.

Don José arrives and while she dances for him, Don José hears the bugles that announce he must return to the barracks. Carmen taunts him when he makes clear his intention to leave. Zuniga now returns and the two men fight, but the Gypsies disarm the lieutenant and send him away. Don José knows he has no other choice but to join Carmen.

ACT III

A WILD SPOT IN THE MOUNTAINS

The Gypsies are smuggling contraband through the mountains. Carmen no longer loves Don José, but he refuses to leave her. Frasquita, Mercédès, and Carmen use cards to tell their fortunes. The cards consistently predict only one fate for Carmen; death. The Gypsies continue their smuggling mission as Don José stands guard nearby.

A guide escorts Micaëla up the mountain and she hides when Don José fires his gun. Escamillo enters, complaining that Don José has almost killed him. The two men fight with knives after Escamillo states he is there to see Carmen. The Gypsies intervene and, before leaving, the bullfighter invites all to see him in Seville.



Remendado discovers Micaëla in hiding. The peasant girl tells Don José she has come to bring him home to his mother. He agrees to leave Carmen only when he learns that his mother is dying.

ACT IV

A SQUARE IN SEVILLE

On the day of Escamillo's bullfight, vendors and peddlers sell their wares. The crowd hails Escamillo as he makes his way to the bullring. After Escamillo and Carmen express their love to each other, Frasquita and Mercédès warn their friend that Don José is nearby.

After everyone goes into the bullring, Carmen and Don José confront each other. He tells Carmen that they can start a new life together; she responds that everything between them is over and throws at Don José the ring he had given her. Don José stabs Carmen to death.



STORY ACTIVITIES

Understanding the plot and characters before attending a performance greatly enhances the experience. The activities below will help your students explore *Carmen* and prepare them for their live opera experience.

CREATE A SEQUEL Write a sequel using the same characters from the opera. What situations do the characters encounter? What plot twists occur?

CREATE YOUR OWN PROPS Create props and/or costumes with basic materials (paper, tape, etc.) for specific character using clues from the synopsis

READERS THEATER Divide into small groups and assign each group a part of the synopsis. Within each group designate characters and one narrator. Allow students time to practice their scene. Students will need to create their character's dialogue based on the assigned synopsis.

After they have prepared, the narrator for the group will read their section as the other students act out the story. Groups will perform their part following the sequential order of the opera.

DRAW IT OUT Draw a picture from your favorite part of the plot and explain to the class why it is important to the story.

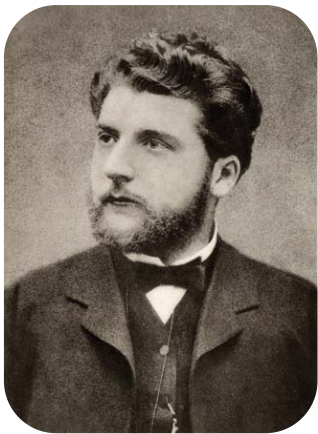
FACEBOOK CHARACTER EXPLORATION

Have students explore the characters through the creation of Facebook profiles.

Using clues in the libretto and synopsis, develop profiles that address each character's interests, education, work, philosophy, arts, sports, likes, etc. Include status updates that match the storyline and events in the opera.

Consider; What groups, organizations, bands, celebrities, etc. has the character "liked"? Who are their friends, including characters in the opera? What level of privacy/security do they have on their Facebook profile?

THE COMPOSER



1838-1875

On October 25, 1838, **Georges Bizet** was born in Paris, France as Alexandre Cesar Leopold to a relatively musical family. Starting with his baptism at the church of Notre-Dame-de-Lorette on March 16, 1840, he

became officially named George Bizet and remained as such for the rest of his life.

His father, Adolphe Armond Bizet, was initially a wig maker and hairdresser, but with his own passion for music, he began composing and teaching voice as a career. His mother, Aimee Delsarte, was an accomplished pianist with an extensive musical family background. They ran a very happy and musically centered home and were the first of many teachers in Bizet's musical career.

From a very early age, Bizet showed great musical promise. Along with his letters and numbers, his mother taught him musical scales and note names and he often listened in on his father's lessons. As a result, by the age of eight Bizet could identify and analyze complex musical chords and sing many difficult pieces from memory.



1907 Poster for *The Pearl Fishers*

though he had not yet turned ten, the minimum age requirement for the school. Insistent on furthering his son's musical instruction, Adolphe arranged an interview with Meifred, a staff member at the Conservatoire, who was immediately impressed with Bizet's talent. This interview led to Bizet's official admittance on October 9, 1848, and within six months he had already won the Conservatoire's *premier prix* (first prize) in solfège. These early accomplishments caught the attention of many instructors and led to many years of study under great teachers including Antoine Marmontel, Pierre-Joseph-Guillaume Zimmermann, Charles Gounod, and Fromental Halevy.

Bizet continued to excel in music and won several more of the Conservatoire's awards in piano. In 1855, at the age of 17, he wrote *Symphony in C*, his first recorded symphony, but like many of his early works, it was lost and not rediscovered until many years later. In 1857, he composed a one act operetta, *Le Docteur Miracle* (The Miracle Doctor), in response to a call for new work at Offenbach's Theatre des Bouffes-Parisiens. After this work was selected and performed at the theatre on April 9 of that year, Bizet met with several influential composers, including Gioachino Rossini, which led him to several years of study in Rome where he traveled and continued composing. This lasted until September of 1860, when Bizet learned that his mother had become seriously ill and returned to Paris.



Gioachino Rossini

In light of this displayed potential, his parents decided it was time to pursue formal training at the Paris Conservatoire,

Upon returning to Paris, he continued life in a relatively normal fashion, until in September 1861, his mother died. This caused him a great amount of grief and slowed his progress on many works, leading to a long period of struggle. The grant that he had been living on came to an end and many of his works of that time were generally unsuccessful or lost. The two notable "successes" he had during this period were his opera *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* (*The Pearl Fishers*), and another work entitled *Marlborough s'en va-t-en guerre* (*Marlborough Goes Away*).

On June 3, 1896, Bizet married Genevieve Halevy. While it was discovered that this was not as happy a marriage as was initially believed, Bizet spent much of his time helping to take care of Genevieve and her mother due to frequent breakdowns and other mental abnormalities the two faced. Bizet only had one child with Genevieve who was born in 1872.



Genevieve Halevy

In the summer of 1871, Bizet continued work on two operas: *Djamileh*, which failed completely, and *L'Arlésienne*, which ran for 21 performances and was initially ill received, but eventually revived in 1885 to great success. After the initial run of *L'Arlésienne*, Bizet set to his next big opera *Carmen*, which, while initially received poorly by audiences, has become his best-known work and one of the most performed operas in Western society.

In March of 1875, Bizet grew very ill. In addition to this, he had become very depressed as a result of reception of *Carmen*, which only sped up the process of his deterioration. By late May, his voice had become shrill and shaky and he had completely lost hearing in his left ear.

On June 1, 1875, Bizet suffered a heart attack and on June 3, the anniversary of his wedding, had another and died, at the age of only 36.

LISTENING & VIEWING

ACT I - THE HABANERA "L'amour est un oiseau rebelle"

(<https://youtu.be/K2snTkaD64U>)

Carmen, a Gypsy employed at the factory, sings a song about the unpredictability of love. She flirts with Don José and throws a flower at him.

CARMEN

Love is a rebellious bird
that no one can tame,
and it's quite useless to call him
if it suits him refuse.
Nothing moves him, neither threat nor plea,
one man speaks freely, the other keeps mum;
and it's the other one I prefer:
he's said nothing, but I like him.
Love! *etc.*

CHORUS

Love is a rebellious bird, *etc.*

CARMEN

Love is a gypsy child,
he has never heard of law.
If you don't love me, I love you;
if I love you, look out for yourself! *etc.*

CHORUS

Look out for yourself! *etc.*
Love is a gypsy child *etc.*

CARMEN

The bird you thought to catch unawares
beats its wings and away it flew -
love's far away, and you can wait for it:
you wait for it no longer - and there it is.
All around you, quickly, quickly,
it comes, it goes, then it returns -

you think you can hold it, it evades you,
you think to evade it, it holds you fast.
Love! *etc.*

CHORUS

All around you, *etc.*

CARMEN

Love is a gypsy child,
he has never heard of law.
If you don't love me, I love you;
if I love you, look out for yourself!
If you don't love me, I love you, *etc.*

CHORUS

Look out for yourself! *etc.*
Love is a gypsy child *etc.*

CARMEN

L'amour est un oiseau rebelle
que nul ne peut apprivoiser,
et c'est bien en vain qu'on l'appelle,
s'il lui convient de refuser.
Rien n'y fait, menace ou prière,
l'un parle bien, l'autre se tait ;
et c'est l'autre que je préfère :
il n'a rien dit, mais il me plaît.
L'amour ! *etc.*

CHŒUR

L'amour est un oiseau rebelle, *etc.*

CARMEN

L'amour est enfant de bohème,
il n'a jamais connu de loi :
Si tu ne m'aimes pas, je t'aime ;
si je t'aime, prends garde à toi ! *etc.*

CHŒUR

Prends garde à toi ! *etc.*
L'amour est enfant de bohème, *etc.*

CARMEN

L'oiseau que tu croyais surprendre
battit de l'aile et s'envola -
l'amour est loin, tu peux l'attendre ;
tu ne l'attends plus, il est là !
Tout autour de toi vite, vite,
il vient, s'en va, puis il revient -

tu crois le tenir, il t'évite,
tu crois l'éviter, il te tient.
L'amour ! *etc.*

CHŒUR

Tout autour de toi, *etc.*

CARMEN

L'amour est enfant de bohème,
il n'a jamais connu de loi,
Si tu ne m'aimes pas, je t'aime ;
si je t'aime, prends garde à toi !
Si tu ne m'aimes pas, je t'aime, *etc.*

CHŒUR

Prends garde à toi ! *etc.*
L'amour est enfant de bohème, *etc.*

ACT II – TOREADOR'S SONG

(https://youtu.be/_tlemwS024I?t=1m11s)

The sounds of a parade honoring the bullfighter Escamillo are heard from the street. Escamillo and his retinue come into the inn, and he makes clear his attraction to Carmen.

ESCAMILLO

I can return your toast,
gentlemen, for soldiers -
yes - and bullfighters understand each other;
fighting is their game!
The ring is packed, it's a holiday,
the ring is full from top to bottom.
The spectators, losing their wits,
yell at each other at the tops of their voices!
Exclamations, cries and uproar
carried to the pitch of fury!
For this is the *fiesta* of courage,
this is the *fiesta* of the stouthearted!
Let's go! On guard! Ah!
Toreador, on guard!
And remember, yes, remember as you fight,
that two dark eyes are watching you,
that love awaits you!
Toreador, love awaits you!

CHORUS

Toreador, on guard! *etc.*
(*Carmen refills Escamillo's glass.*)

ESCAMILLO

Suddenly everyone falls silent;

ah - what's happening?
No more shouts, this is the moment!
The bull comes bounding
out of the *toril*!
He charges, comes in, strikes!
A horse rolls over, dragging down a picador!
"Ah! Bravo bull!" roars the crowd;
the bull turns, comes back,
comes back and strikes again!
Shaking his banderillas,
maddened with rage, he runs about!
The ring is covered with blood!
Men jump clear, leap the barriers.
It's your turn now!
Let's go! On guard! Ah!
Toreador, on guard! *etc.*

CHORUS

Toreador, on guard! *etc.*

ESCAMILLO

Votre toast, je peux vous le rendre,
señors, señors, car avec les soldats,
oui, les toréros peuvent s'entendre,
pour plaisirs ils ont les combats !
Le cirque est plein, c'est jour de fête,
le cirque est plein du haut en bas.
Les spectateurs perdant la tête.
Les spectateurs s'interpellent à grand fracas !
Apostrophes, cris et tapage
poussés jusques à la fureur !
Car c'est la fête des gens du courage !
c'est la fête des gens de cœur !
Allons ! en garde ! ah !
Toréador, en garde !
Et songe bien, oui, songe en combattant,
qu'un œil noir te regarde
et que l'amour t'attend !
Toréador, l'amour t'attend !

TOUT LE MONDE

Toréador, en garde ! *etc.*
(*Carmen remplit le verre d'Escamillo.*)

ESCAMILLO

Tout d'un coup, on fait silence,

on fait silence, ah ! que se passe-t-il ?
Plus de cris, c'est l'instant !
Le taureau s'élance
en bondissant hors du toril !
Il s'élance ! Il entre, il frappe !
Un cheval roule, entraînant un picador !
« Ah ! bravo Toro ! » hurle la foule ;
le taureau va, il vient,
il vient et frappe encore !
En secouant ses banderilles,
plein de fureur, il court !
Le cirque est plein de sang !
On se sauve, on franchit les grilles.
C'est ton tour maintenant !
Allons ! en garde ! ah !
Toréador, en garde ! *etc.*

TOUT LE MONDE

Toréador, en garde ! *etc.*

ACT II – THE SMUGGLERS QUINTET "Nous avons en tete un affaire"

(https://youtu.be/LX0g_YeduK8)

The smugglers Dancaïre and Remendado join Carmen and her friends. The men tell the women their help is needed in handling some contraband. Carmen refuses to join the plan, telling her comrades she is waiting for her new lover. Dancaïre

THE STORY BEHIND THE STORY



Opéra Comique in Paris

Bizet earned his living by preparing transcriptions of operatic scores and teaching. Finally, his contributions to two pieces won critical praise; the one-act opera, *Djamileh*, and the incidental music to Alphonse Daudet's play, *L'Arlésienne*. Bizet was finding his voice as a mature artist. The Management of the Opéra-Comique showed its faith in the composer by commissioning a new opera from him. This work would be *Carmen*.

Carmen was a bold choice for Bizet and his librettists. Based on an already classic story by Prosper Mérimée, it contained sex, violence, and murder. The Opéra-Comique was a family theater that produced entertainment for the bourgeoisie. Although the librettists promised to soften their material, one of the company's impresarios left in protest. The first singer approached to sing the title role refused, finding it scandalous.

Bizet worked closely with his librettists in creating the opera's text. The composer himself wrote the works for the "Habanera" and contributed to the "Seguidilla" and "Card Aria." For parts of his new score, including Don José's "Flower Song" and the Act III finale, Bizet adapted material from some of his incomplete operas. When Marie Galli-Marié, the first *Carmen*, did not like the music for the

"Habanera," he rewrote it 13 times. Finally, Bizet adapted a song, "El Arreglito," believing it a folk piece. A Spanish-American composer, Sebastián Yradier, turned out to be its creator. Bizet acknowledged his debt to Yradier in a footnote of the score.

Delays in the rehearsal and premiere of *Carmen* occurred several times due to the Opéra-Comique's financial troubles. The chorus said its music was not singable. Finally, the opera faced its first audience on March 3, 1875 with the composers Gounod, Thomas, Delibes, Offenbach, and Massenet in attendance. The audience greeted the first act with enthusiastic applause, but each succeeding act drew less approval. By the end of the performance, many in the audience had already left. *Carmen* was a long opera, and its second intermission that night lasted 42 minutes. The press was savage, denouncing the music and the immorality of the libretto. Soon afterwards, Bizet signed a contract to have the work presented in Vienna, but three months after *Carmen*'s premiere, the composer was dead at the age of 36.

As was the custom for operas at the Opéra-Comique, Bizet wrote *Carmen* with spoken dialogue between the musical numbers. Ernest Guiraud, the New Orleans-born composer and Bizet's friend, won the task of turning *Carmen* into a grand opera (a work sung throughout). *Carmen*'s grand opera version premiered in Vienna in the fall of 1875. It proved a success, as it did again the following year in Brussels. Productions of *Carmen* in its new version continued, and the United States saw the opera for the first time in New York on October 23, 1878. Critics, audiences, and composers now hailed *Carmen* not only as Bizet's masterpiece, but also as one of the masterpieces of the entire operatic literature.

Since the 1970s, many productions of *Carmen* have jettisoned Guiraud's recitatives in favor of the Opéra-Comique version of the work. Sarasota Opera will perform *Carmen* with these recitatives instead of the spoken dialogue between the music numbers.

WORLD TIMELINE

Bizet lived from 1838 to 1875, experiencing such events as the Industrial Revolution, the United States Civil War, and the opening of the Suez Canal.

ACTIVE LEARNING Looking at the timeline below, discuss what it would be like to live in the time of Bizet. How would your life be different or the same? How did discoveries and inventions of the time affect daily life? What current events and inventions have shaped your life and why?

1760s to 1840s The Industrial Revolution

1758 The Royal Tobacco Factory in Seville, Spain begins production

1804 Napoleon Bonaparte crowns himself Emperor of France

1819 Spain agrees to cede Florida to the United States

1836 Texas declares its independence from Mexico and Texan defenders of the Alamo are all killed during a siege by the Mexican Army

1838 **Bizet is born in Paris, France**

Native American's are forced off their ancestral homelands in what is known as the "Trail of Tears"

1845 to 1849 The Irish potato famine kills around one million Irish men & women

1845 Edgar Allen Poe publishes "The Raven"

Prosper Merimée's novella "Carmen" is published

1848 The California Gold Rush begins when James W. Marshall finds gold in Coloma, CA

The Communist Manifesto is published by Karl Marx

1849 Harriet Tubman escapes from slavery

1853 The Crimean War begins between the Russian Empire and an alliance of the Ottoman Empire, France, Britain and Sardinia.

1857 **Bizet's opera *Doctor Miracle* premieres at the Bouffes-Parisiens**

1859 Charles Darwin publishes his theory of evolution in his book "On the Origin of Species"



Napoleon Bonaparte

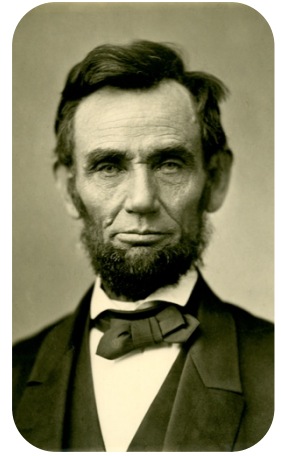


California Gold Rush Prospectors

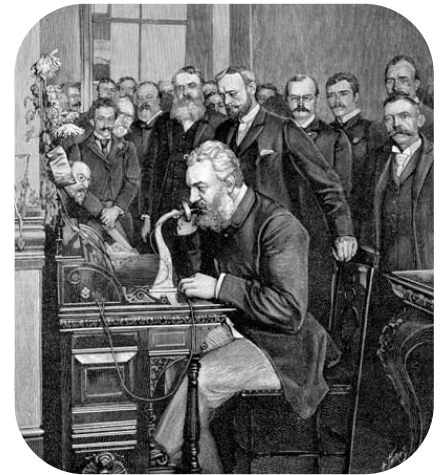


Harriet Tubman

- 1861 The United States Civil War begins
- 1863 **Bizet's opera *The Pearl Fishers* premieres at the Theatre-Lyrique**
President Abraham Lincoln delivers the Gettysburg Address
- 1865 Confederate general Robert E. Lee surrenders to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Courthouse, VA
- 1867 The U.S. acquires Alaska from Russia for the sum of \$7.2 million
- 1869 The Suez Canal opens in Egypt
- 1870 The Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution is ratified, giving African Americans the right to vote
- 1872 President Ulysses S. Grant signs a bill into law creating the first National Park, Yellowstone.
Susan B. Anthony is arrested for illegally voting in Rochester, New York.
- 1875 **Bizet's opera *Carmen* premieres at the Opéra Comique in Paris on March 3**
Bizet dies in Bougival, France on June 3, 1875
- 1876 Alexander Graham Bell patents the telephone



Abraham Lincoln



Alexander Graham Bell demonstrating his invention

THE LIBRETTISTS

LIBRETTO means "little book" in Italian. It refers to the written text of an opera set to music by the composer. In earlier times it was often regarded as more important than the music, and it was common for audience members to purchase the libretto to read.



Ludovic Halévy

Librettist **Ludovic Halévy** (b. 1833 – d. 1908) was born in Paris, into a family of musicians and playwrights. Halévy followed in the family tradition and, even though he became a government official, he started his career as a librettist in 1855, working with composer Jacques Offenbach. He collaborated with Henri Meilhac and together they created the ideal libretti for Offenbach and Bizet.

Librettist **Henri Meilhac** (b. 1831 – d. 1897) was born in Paris. In addition to working in a book shop, Meilhac devoted himself to drawing, as well as working as a cartoonist and humorous writer with the newspapers *Journal pour rire* and *Vie parisienne*, employment in which he initially used the pseudonym Ivan Baskoff. He created at least 115 works of various genres, including musical comedies, five-act comedies and opera libretti. Meilhac became very popular in England, thanks to Offenbach's operas. He was elected a member of the Académie Française for his artistic talents in 1888.



Henry Meilhac

CARMEN JONES

Carmen's entry into the canon of Western operas gave rise to several revisionist interpretations, each of them foregrounding a particular issue of concern to the society and culture that produced it. One such example is *Carmen Jones*.



Oscar Hammerstein II

THE MUSICAL

In 1943, musical theater librettist **Oscar Hammerstein II** took Georges Bizet's opera *Carmen*, rewrote the lyrics, changed the characters from 19th century Spaniards to World War II-era African-Americans, switched the locale to a Southern military base, and the result was *Carmen Jones*.

Hammerstein defended his reworking of the opera as an all-black musical by pointing to the Moorish influence on Spanish culture.

COMPARE & CONTRAST

Using the sets of lyrics below, compare and contrast the **Act II opening** of *Carmen* by Bizet and "**Beat out dat rhythm on a drum**" from *Carmen Jones*.

- The English translation of *Carmen* and the lyrics in "*Carmen Jones*" are drastically different. The theme is still the same, but how is it transformed?
- "*Carmen Jones*" is set in a World War II-era production (early 1940s). How does this influence the set, costumes, and dancing compared to *Carmen* which is set in Seville, Spain in the 1820s?
- Both *Carmen* and "*Carmen Jones*" have a very prominent percussion instrument used throughout the entire song. What instrument(s) are featured in each production, and how do they convey the text that is being sung by the actresses?



Movie Poster

THE FILM

Otto Preminger's film "*Carmen Jones*" is often considered a landmark (both positive and negative) in the history of black representations in cinema. **Dorothy Dandridge** stars as Carmen Jones, tempestuous employee of a parachute factory.

Harry Belafonte plays Joe (originally José), a young military officer engaged to marry Cindy Lou (Olga James). When Carmen gets into a fight with another girl, she is placed under arrest and put in Joe's charge. Succumbing to her attractiveness, Joe accompanies Carmen to her old neighborhood where, after killing a sergeant sent to retrieve him, he deserts the army. Carmen tries to be faithful, but fortune-telling Frankie (**Pearl Bailey**) warns her that she and her soldier are doomed.

Enter **Joe Adams** in the role of boxer Husky Miller (a play on Carmen's bullfighter Escamillo), who sweeps Carmen off her feet, ultimately with tragic results. While Dorothy Dandridge and Harry Belafonte were singers, their opera voices were dubbed in by **LeVern Hutcherson** and **Marilyn Horne**.

Text Courtesy of Manitoba Opera



https://youtu.be/Q5h_7ywjPPO

The sistrums' rods were jingling
With a metallic clatter,
And at this strange music
The zingarellas leapt to their feet.
Tambourines were keeping time
And the frenzied guitars
Ground away under persistent hands,
The same song, the same refrain.

Tralalalala.....

Copper and silver rings
Glittered on dusky skins;
Orange - and red-striped
Dresses floated in the wind.
Dance and song became one -
At first timid and hesitant,
Then livelier and faster
It grew and grew and grew!

Tralalalala.....

The gypsy boys stormed away
On their instruments with all their might,
And this deafening uproar
Bewitched the zingaras!
Beneath the rhythm of the song,
Passionate, wild, fired with excitement,
They let themselves be carried away,
Intoxicated, by the whirlwind!

Tralalalala.....



<https://youtu.be/slb3EqGZMEY?t=1m1>

I'll tell you why I wanna dance.
It ain' de sweetness in de music
I like de sweetness in de music,
But dat ain' why I wanna dance.
It's sumpin' thumpin' in de bass,
A bumpin' underneath de music.
Dat bum-bum-bumpin' under music
Is all I need, to start me off.
I don't need nuthin' else to start me off.

Beat out dat rhythm on a drum,
An' I don' need no tune at all!

I feel it beatin' in my bones,
It feel like twen'y millyun tomtoms.
I know dere's twen'y millyun tomtoms
Beatin' way down deep inside my bones.
I feel it beatin' in my heart,
An' den I get a kin' o' dream
An' in my dream it kin' o' seem
Dere's jus' one heart, In all de worl'~
Dere ain't but one big heart for all de worl'.

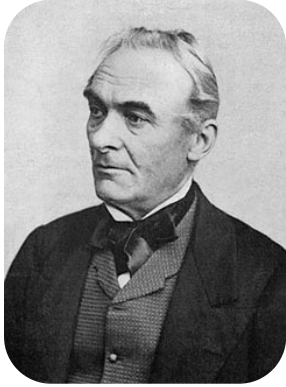
Beat out dat rhythm on a drum,
Dere's one big heart for all de wor'!

An' now dat heart is beatin' fast,
An' dat's a rhythm I kin dance to,
I'm mighty glad I got a chance to,
Wid dat one big heart dat's beatin' fast.
Tomorrow mornin' let it rain,
Tomorrow mornin' let it pour,
Tonight we's in de groove together~
Ain' gonna worry 'bout stormy weather~
Gonna kick ol' trouble out de door!

Beat out ol' trouble on a drum,
An' kick his carcass through de door

PROSPER MÉRIMÉE

Many are familiar with Bizet's opera *Carmen*; however, many are unfamiliar with the novella on which it is based.



1803-1870

Prosper Mérimée's novella *Carmen* inspired Bizet to fashion a tale of a love affair stricken with seduction, passion, rage, and jealousy for the operatic stage. The alluring gypsy Carmen, for whom

the novella and opera are named, and her desperately jealous lover, Don José are the two central characters in both adaptations of this tale.

Both the novella and opera retain the same central ideas, characters, and events; however, they considerably depart from one another in the fact that Bizet only uses the events occurring in Part III of the novella for the opera. Thus, parts I, II, and IV provide some additional context for the myth of *Carmen*.

It is important to note that Mérimée himself is presented as a character within his novella. This was likely because the story functioned as his travel journal. During a visit to Spain in 1830, the Countess of Montijo recounted to Mérimée the tale of a Basque robber who murdered his lover, perhaps in a frenzied episode of jealousy. The recount spurred Mérimée's creation of the four-part novella, while his observation of the Romani people, commonly known as Gypsies, led to his decision to make *Carmen* one as well.

In **Part II**, we are introduced to our famed femme fatale, *Carmen*. While traveling in Córdoba, Mérimée meets the exotic gypsy beauty, and she becomes fascinated by his repeating watch. Her fascination leads her to invite Mérimée back to her home where to read his fortune. Don José interrupts the session (much to *Carmen*'s displeasure) and escorts Mérimée out, and Mérimée later finds that his repeating watch is

missing. Several months pass and one day Mérimée's friend reveals that this Don José will be executed the next day. Consumed with curiosity, Mérimée goes to the prison to hear Don José's life story, and additionally the events that have transpired since his last meeting with him and *Carmen*.

Part III of the novella serves as the official basis for Bizet's opera. In this section, Mérimée temporarily retires his narration and Don José begins recounting his life story and relationship with *Carmen*. The story in Bizet's *Carmen* therefore ends at Part III, and Part IV is a mere collection of Mérimée's etymological and ethnological observations about the Romani people.

Bizet's expansion of the importance of certain characters, along with his addition of other roles, is a prominent difference between the novella and the opera. For example, Micaëla (Don José's original fiancée and childhood sweetheart) is not featured in the novella but provides an interesting emotional element to the operatic version of *Carmen*. Her relationship with Don José becomes spoiled with his obsession with *Carmen*, but her love remains still for him when she tries desperately to have him return home to see his dying mother. Therefore, she not only symbolizes Don José's former innocence, she is the perfect female foil to *Carmen*: pure, virtuous, and submissive.

Another example lies in the role of the young picador, Lucas, who is renamed Escamillo in the opera. He is not just an abstract flame and admirer of *Carmen*, but as a symbol of her constant, unpredictable thirst for freedom, change, and excitement.

Though these characters were later inventions of Bizet to enhance the dramatic tension and living spirit of his opera, they clearly prove to be more effective and purposeful than simple plot embellishments.

**EXCERPT FROM PART III OF THE NOVELLA CARMEN
BY PROSPER MÉRIMÉE**

I fell in with some **dragoons**, and enlisted in the Almanza Cavalry Regiment. Mountain folks like us soon learn to be soldiers. Before long I was a corporal, and I had been told I should soon be made a sergeant, when, to my misfortune, I was put on guard at the Seville Tobacco Factory. If you have been to Seville you have seen the great building, just outside the ramparts, close to the **Guadalquivir**; I can fancy I see the entrance, and the guard room just beside it, even now.

When Spanish soldiers are on duty, they either play cards or go to sleep. I, like an honest **Navarrese**, always tried to keep myself busy. I was making a chain to hold my priming-pin, out of a bit of wire: all at once, my comrades said, 'there's the bell ringing, the girls are coming back to work.' You must know, sir, that there are quite four or five hundred women employed in the factory. They roll the cigars in a great room into which no man can go without a permit from the [Magistrate], because when the weather is hot they make themselves at home, especially the young ones. When the work-girls come back after their dinner, numbers of young men go down to see them pass by, and talk all sorts of nonsense to them. Very few of those young ladies will refuse a silk **mantilla**, and men who care for that sort of sport have nothing to do but bend down and pick their fish up. While the others watched the girls go by, I stayed on my bench near the door.

I was a young fellow then—my heart was still in my own country, and I didn't believe in any pretty girls who hadn't blue skirts and long plaits of hair falling on their shoulders. And besides, I was rather afraid of the **Andalusian** women. I had not got used to their ways yet; they were always jeering one—never spoke a single word of sense. So I was sitting with my nose down upon my chain, when I heard some bystanders say, 'Here comes the **gitanella**!' Then I lifted up my eyes, and I saw her! It was that very Carmen you know, and in whose rooms I met you a few months ago.

She was wearing a very short skirt, below which her white silk stockings—with more than one hole in them—and her dainty red morocco shoes, fastened with flame-colored ribbons, were clearly seen. She had thrown her **mantilla** back, to show her shoulders, and a great bunch of **acacia** that was thrust into her chemise. She had another acacia blossom in the corner of her mouth, and she walked along, swaying her hips, like a filly from the Cordova stud farm. In my country anybody who had seen a woman dressed in that fashion would have crossed himself. At Seville every man paid her some bold compliment on her appearance. She had an answer for each and all, with her hand on her hip, as bold as the thorough gipsy she was. At first I didn't like her looks, and I fell to my work again. But she, like all women and cats, who won't come if you call them, and do come if you don't call them, stopped short in front of me, and spoke to me."

Dragoon - Dragoon regiments were established in most European armies during the late 17th and early 18th centuries. The name comes from a type of firearm, called a "dragon", carried by **dragoons** of the French Army.

Guadalquivir - The fifth longest river in the Iberian Peninsula and the second longest river with its entire length in Spain. The Guadalquivir river is the only great navigable river in Spain.

Navarrese – People from Navarra. a geographically diverse region in northern Spain Dotted with remote villages, its capital and largest city is Pamplona, famous for its annual running of the bulls.

Mantilla - A lace or silk scarf worn by women over the hair and shoulders, especially in Spain.

Andalusian – People from Andalusia, a large independent region of hills, rivers and farmland bordering Spain's southern coast.

gitanella – Spanish for "Little gipsy."

Acacia - a tree or shrub of warm climates that bears spikes or clusters of yellow or white flowers and is frequently thorny.

GYPSES



A Romani wagon in Germany in 1935

Carmen and her friends are Gypsies, a word used to describe an ethnic group of people known for their music, fortunetelling, and nomadic lifestyle.

"Gypsy" is actually a derogatory (insulting) word. The group of people it refers to are more accurately called Roma, and the language they speak is Romanes, or Romani. There are four Roma tribes, or nations (the Kalderash, the Machavaya, the Lovari, and the Churari), plus many other smaller groups (such as the Sinti, the Luri, and the Xoraxai). Most Roma refer to themselves by their tribal name or by "Rom" or "Roma", meaning "Man" and "People".

There are approximately 12 million Roma living in several nations around the world, but it is hard to get an exact number since they are not usually included in official census counts. Roma tend to live in their own communities, separate from the gajikané (foreign) society around them. Centuries of discrimination and ethnic hatred have made them suspicious of outsiders, and they fear that integrating into gajikané society will cause them to lose their unique cultural identity.

Over the centuries, Roma have spread into many different countries worldwide and have adapted to varying degrees to their different cultural environments. For this reason, there is no universal Roma culture, and there are many differences; what is "true Roma" to one group may be "gadje", or foreign, to another. However, there are some things characteristic of all Roma, for example: loyalty to family, belief in predestiny, and adaptability to changing conditions.

BULLFIGHTING

Bullfighting is considered an art form in Spain, and is intimately linked with the country's history, art and culture. Today bullfighting is big business in Spain with the top **matadores** earning comparable salaries to the nation's top soccer stars and rock idols. It is very popular with several thousand Spaniards flocking to their local bull-ring each week.

It is said that the total number of people watching bullfights in Spain reaches one million every year. Pressure groups attempt to lobby against bullfighting yet the King of Spain himself has been quoted as saying that the day the EU bans bullfighting is the day Spain leaves the EU.

Six bulls, to be killed by three matadors, are usually required for one afternoon's **corrida**, and each encounter



Bullfight in modern day Spain

lasts about 15 minutes. At the appointed time, generally 5 PM, the three matadors, each followed by their

assistants, the **banderilleros** and the **picadors**, march into the ring to the accompaniment of traditional **paso doble** ("march rhythm") music. The matadors are the stars of the show. They wear a distinctive costume, consisting of a silk jacket heavily embroidered in gold, skintight trousers, and a **montera** (a bicorn hat). A **traje de luces** ("suit of lights"), as it is known, can cost many thousands of dollars; a top matador must have at least six of them a season.

As bullfighting developed, the men on foot, who by their cape work aided the horsemen in positioning the bulls, began to draw more attention from the crowd, and the modern **corrida** began to take form. Today the bullfight is much the same as it has been since about 1726, when Francisco Romero of Ronda, Spain, introduced the **estoque** (the sword) and the **muleta** (the small, more easily wielded worsted cape used in the last part of the fight).

HOW YOU HEAR WITH YOUR EARS

Once the overture of an opera begins, your ear captures sound waves and sends them to your brain through a specific process. The first part of this process takes place in the **PINNA** or outer ear. Your pinna collects sound waves and funnels them into your auditory or **EAR CANAL**. At the end of your ear canal, the sound waves hit your **EARDRUM** (also known as the tympanic membrane). Beyond the eardrum lies the middle ear, which houses a group of three tiny bones known as the **OSSICLES**. The vibrations first travel to the **HAMMER**, then the **ANVIL**, and finally through the **STIRRUP**. As sound waves pass through these bones, the bones amplify the vibrations. The stirrup bone is connected to your inner ear through a small window in the **COCHLEA**. The cochlea and the **SEMICIRCULAR CANALS** contain fluid and are lined with tiny hairs called **CILIA**. The fluid helps conduct the vibrations to these tiny hairs, which convert sound energy into electrical impulses. Finally, the **AUDITORY NERVE** carries these electrical signals to your brain.

The **EUSTACHIAN TUBE** is a tiny tube that attaches the middle ear to the nasal passages and throat. Your Eustachian tube is what affects the pressure in your ears. Often on long plane rides, or at the end of a hike up a tall mountain, you feel your ears “pop”. This is the pressure inside your ear

Amplified (On the Inside)

Listening to an opera performance is a lot different than listening to a rock concert. Rock concerts use amplifiers to make their instruments and voices much louder than normal. Sometimes, sounds are so much louder that you can still hear them perfectly through earplugs! But at the opera, there are no amplifiers, microphones, or speakers.

So how can you still hear everything?

Your outer and middle ear are like miniature amplifiers built right into your head. The folds in your outer ear help channel more sound into the middle ear, where the eardrum and ossicles amplify the vibrations. In total, your outer and middle ear provide as much as 20 decibels (dB) of amplification!

The instruments in the orchestra pit and the trained voices of the singers on stage both help to make things easy for your ears. The instruments are arranged in an orchestra pit with the quieter instruments (the strings) toward the front of the pit, and the louder instruments (brass and percussion) in the back underneath the stage overhang. Opera singers are trained to support and project their voices much louder than spoken

speech; their voices can cut through the sound of the orchestra playing beneath them in the pit!

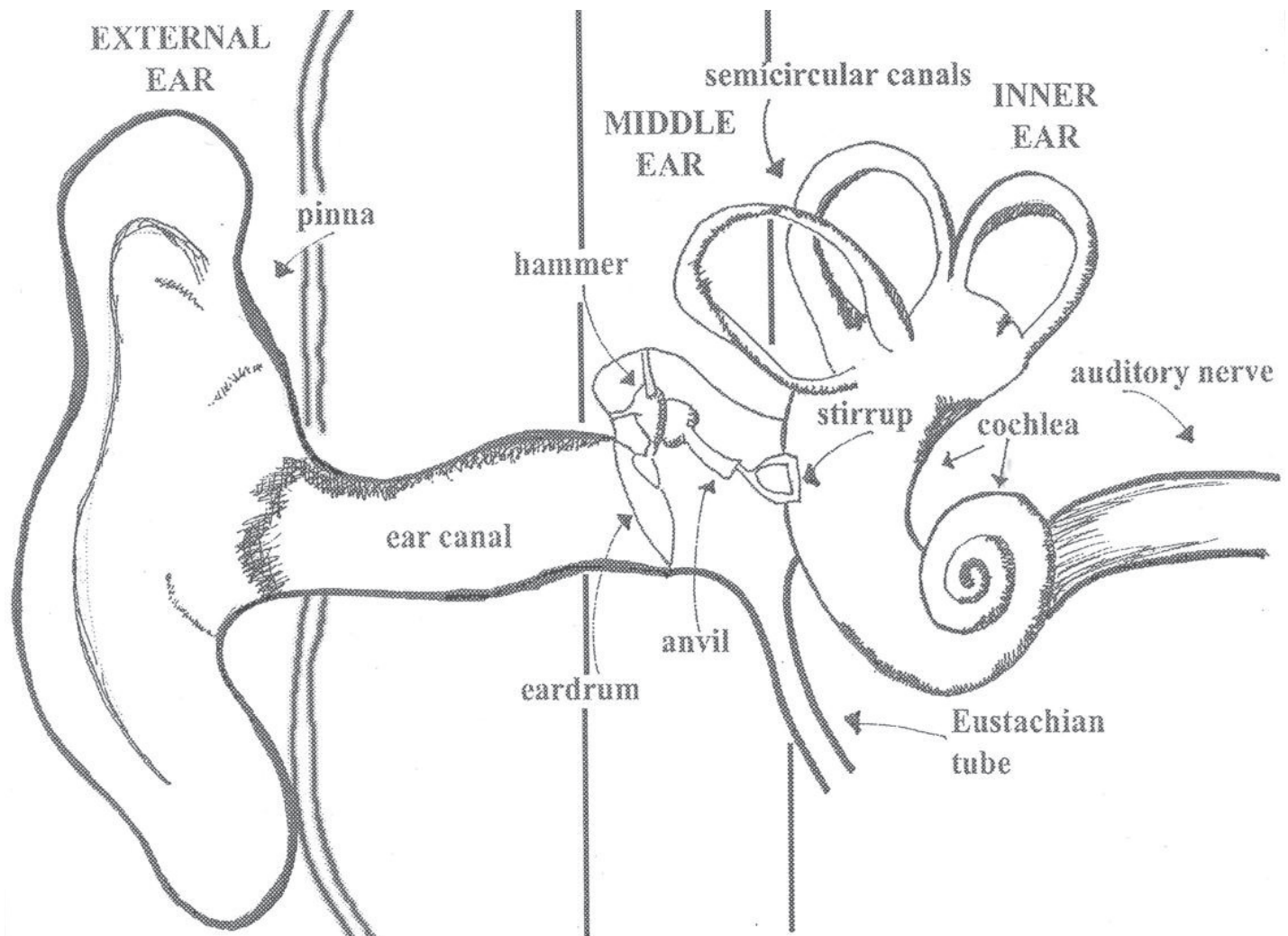
Why We Have Two Ears

Have you ever wondered why we have two ears? Having one on each side of the head, some space between the two of them, helps the brain figure out where the sound is coming from. When you hear something to your extreme left, your left ear picks up the sound slightly faster than your right. The tiny delay between signals from each ear allows your brain to locate the source of the sound. In listening to music such as opera, your two ears give you “stereo” sound, which is fuller and richer

The Ear

During an opera performance, your ears pick up a wide range of sounds. Instruments such as the flute or violin, bass and soprano voices, and even cymbal crashes are all an important part of the opera experience. All of these sounds are picked up by your ears and transmitted to your brain through tiny bones and nerves. On the next page is an in-depth look at how the ear works.

FURTHER EXPLORATION Check out this video from the BBC on the parts of the ear and how they work: <https://youtu.be/r-c5GpoD8wI>



PARTS OF THE EAR

The ear is divided into three main sections: the **External Ear**, the **Middle Ear**, and the **Inner Ear**. Your external ear is what is visible on the outside of the skull, the middle ear contains three tiny bones, which are referred to as the ossicles, and your inner ear sends signals to your brain.

Anvil or Incus - a small bone that passes vibrations from the hammer to the stirrup.

Cochlea - spiral-shaped, fluid-filled soft tissue lined with tiny hairs; creates a nerve impulse.

Eardrum - a membrane that vibrates when hit by sound waves.

Eustachian Tube - tube that connects middle ear to the back of the nose; equalizes ear pressure

Hammer or Malleus - a small bone that passes vibrations through from the eardrum to the anvil.

Outer Ear Canal - tube that carries sound to the eardrum.

Pinna or Auricle - the visible outside part of your ear; collects sound.

Semi-circular Canals - 3 fluid-filled looped tubes attached to cochlea; maintain balance.

Stirrup or Stapes - smallest bone in the body; it passes vibrations from the anvil to the cochlea.

Text and diagram courtesy of Opera Philadelphia

COSTUME DESIGN

Costumes provide the audience with important clues about the characters in an opera. Details about the wealth, profession, goals, secrets, and relationships with other characters can all be represented by the clothes a character wears.

The **costume designer** plans or designs the costumes and supervises their construction. Through research and careful planning, they insure that the performer's costumes fit the character as well as the time period and location in which the opera is set. They also take into account any "clues" the composer includes in the score which tell how the character might act or physical actions they might do (for example, hide something on their person).

ACTIVE LEARNING The three sketches below are all of costumes the character Carmen wears throughout the opera. Identify what is different about each look, and how these differences correspond to the synopsis of the opera.



Costume designer **Howard Tsvi Kaplan's** designs for *Carmen* can be found below. Mr. Kaplan has been Sarasota Opera's resident costume designer since 1998 and has designed for more than 20 different productions. Other recent endeavors include *The Man of La Mancha* (Olney Theatre - nominated for a Helen Hayes Award); *The Mikado* (Pittsburgh Public Theatre) ; *Il Trovatore* (Opera New Jersey) , *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Werther* (Kentucky Opera), *Siege of Corinth* and *La bohème* (Baltimore Opera).

For twelve years, Mr. Kaplan designed for Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey Clown College.



Carmen in Act I



Carmen in Act II



Carmen in Act III

SCENIC DESIGN

Sets provide the audience with important clues about the characters and locations within an opera. Details about the wealth, profession, goals, secrets, and relationships with other characters and the physical location of each scene can all be represented by the sets and how the actors interact with their environment.

The **set designer** plans the sets through careful research and study, making sure that the scenery fits the story. Like the costume designer, they take into account the "clues" left by the composer and librettist, making sure to provide the needed set pieces to move the story along. This could include a balcony for a singer to perform from, or a beautiful palace befitting a king or queen.



Set designer **David P. Gordon** first creates sketches before translating his design into computer-based imagery and blueprints. At each step in the design process, he works with the artistic director, stage director, director of production, and others to make sure the design meets the needs of the production, both artistically and budgetarily. Once approved, the designs are sent out to scenic shops around the country for bidding. The shop that is able to produce the design within budget is selected and the final set is shipped to Sarasota via semi-truck and assembled by the stage crew in the theater. After the production, the set is dissambled for storage at the Opera's warehouse by the SRQ airport.

Fences
(Same Treatment for Act IV Fences)



SR/SL Backing Flats

Weathered Stucco



Act I Bridge, Steps, etc.

Weathered Stone w/ applied Posters

Act I DSL Unit (Tobacco Factory)

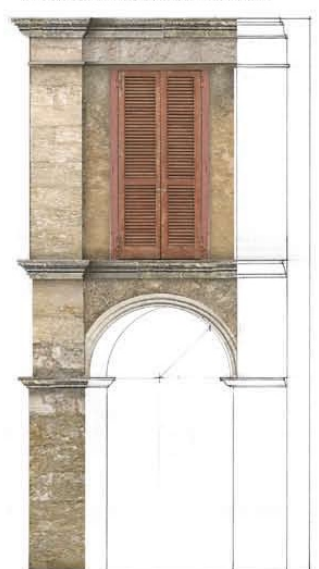
Stone Balustrade



Weathered Stucco w/ Painted Sign.
Door Frame: Weathered Stone.
Door: Weathered Wood w/ "Iron" Bolts.

SR/SL Arches

Weathered Stone w/ Stucco Inset Panels.
Shutters: Weathered Painted Wood.



***Act II Wood Beams:**
Same treatment as Doors*

MUSIQUE de GEORGES BIZET
CARMEN

SARASOTA OPERA



S.D. 395
SCENIC DESIGNER

SIGNATURE

Color Elevation . Act I/II Units
Scale: 1/4"=1'-0"

WHAT IS OPERA?

OPERA translated means “work.” It is a play where all the words are sung and accompanied by an orchestra. Operatic singing is acoustic which means the singers do not use microphones.

Listening to a recording of an opera is a great introduction to the art form, but going to an opera is the best way to enjoy this multi-sensory experience. Opera incorporates singers, an orchestra, a set, costumes, lighting, and many other aspects that make it theatrical.

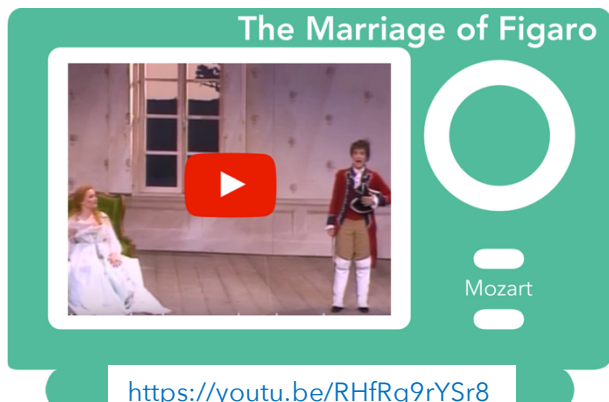
A key part of an opera is the **PLOT**. The plot of an opera is usually extended over a long period of time, and is usually an abbreviated and/or modified form of the original play. The words of an opera are written by a poet and quite often follow a poetic structure.

An **ARIA** is a song sung by one person where they express their emotions. Most often the plot comes to a standstill, and text is repeated to emphasize the character’s emotions. Opera has its roots in ancient Greece because Greek plays were accompanied by instruments and a chorus that sang, danced, spoke their lines, and sometimes wore masks.



During the **RENAISSANCE PERIOD** (1400-1600), short musical dramas known as **INTERMEDII** were performed during a play’s intermission. Poliziano’s *Orfeo* from 1480 is recognized as the first, and is based on the Greek legend of Orpheus. During the late Renaissance, the **FLORENTINE CAMERATA** (a group of musicians, poets, and intellectuals who met at the house of Count Giovanni de’ Bardi in Florence) facilitated the birth of opera. *L’Orfeo* by Claudio Monteverdi (b. 1567 – d. 1643) in 1607 is divided into 5 acts or parts, and is accompanied by an orchestra of over 20 players.

George Frederick Handel (b. 1685 – d. 1759) composed a total of 42 opera’s during the **BAROQUE PERIOD** (1600 - 1750) including *Armida*, and *Giulio Cesare*. Baroque opera is almost entirely based on epic stories of royalty known as **OPERA SERIA**. These operas were often accompanied by an orchestra that featured a **HARPSICHORD**. By the 17th century the harpsichord was widely available and became an integral part of the opera orchestra during **RECITATIVE**, a kind of sung speech. A harpsichord is like a modern piano, but instead of strings being struck by padded hammers the strings are plucked.



The **CLASSICAL PERIOD** (1730 – 1820) is most prominently associated with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (b. 1756 – d. 1791). He composed several types of operas including **OPERA BUFFA** “comic opera” like *The Marriage of Figaro*, **OPERA SERIA** “serious opera” like *Idomeneo*, and **SINGSPIEL** “sing-play” like *The Magic Flute*. A singspiel is an opera in German that includes singing and spoken dialogue instead of recitative. Mozart not only stayed with tradition but helped change opera

by blending serious and comedic action into one story called **DRAMA GIOCOSO** like *Don Giovanni*.



The **ROMANTIC PERIOD** (1780 – 1910) is the golden age of opera and many different styles. Gioachino Rossini (b. 1792 – d. 1868), Gaetano Donizetti (b. 1797 – d. 1848), and Vincenzo Bellini (b. 1801 – d. 1835) all wrote operas that use **BEL-CANTO** style “beautiful singing.” Bel-canto compositions emphasize legato phrases where the notes are sung smoothly and connected. This style also has many **COLORATURA** passages where many notes are sung quickly like in Rossini’s *Barber of Seville*, Donizetti’s *Lucia of Lammermoor*, and Bellini’s *The Capulets and The Montagues*.



Sarasota Opera is the only opera company in the world to have performed all of Giuseppe Verdi’s music, including his opera *Aida*. **GIUSEPPE VERDI** (b. 1813 – d. 1901) composed 28 operas over the span of 54 years. Verdi’s work is rooted in **BEL-CANTO** style, but developed drastically over 54 years, focusing on the humanity of his characters and the drama itself. *Aida*, set in ancient Egypt, features a large cast, large chorus, large orchestra, and a very lavish set. Other famous Verdi operas include *La traviata*, *Falstaff*, *Il trovatore*, and *Otello*. *Falstaff* and *Otello* are based on Shakespeare’s plays.



Richard Wagner (b. 1813 – d. 1883) composed **GERMAN ROMANTIC OPERA** during the aforementioned Romantic Period, and set out to recreate opera according to his ideals. He had his own theater built which places Wagner’s very large orchestra under the stage where the audience cannot see them. He even created theatrical innovations like darkening the auditorium during performances. His four-opera cycle called *The Ring Cycle* is over 15 hours of music. Wagner uses **LEITMOTIFS** throughout his operas. A leitmotif is a short musical phrase which describes a person, place, or character. This phrase can be used

throughout the opera or across multiple operas like The Ring Cycle. Wagner referred to his aesthetic ideals as **GESAMTKUNSTWERK**, a total work of art, where music, drama, theatrics, and sometimes dance are brought into union.

French composer Georges Bizet (b. 1838 – d. 1875) wrote his most famous work *Carmen* during the Romantic Period. *Carmen* is an **OPÉRA-COMIQUE**, a French opera with spoken dialogue. While opéra-comique has its origins in vaudeville, it is not always funny or lighthearted. An opéra-comique can be a tragedy like *Carmen*.

Tragedies are an extension of ancient Greek theater, and the main theme is human suffering. There is a version of *Carmen* where the dialogue is sung recitative accompanied by the orchestra. Sarasota Opera will do this version in the 2017/2018 season.



In the later part of the Romantic Period, Giacomo Puccini (b. 1858 – d. 1924) composed Italian opera in the **VERISMO** style. Verismo operas usually focused on the stories of everyday men and women rather than the upper class, Gods, or mythological stories. Its origins began in the Italian literary movement. Puccini's *La bohème* is set in Paris, France in the 1830s and follows the story of poor young aspiring artists.

Opera is in constant growth and development, and by the **20TH AND 21ST CENTURY** more operas in English are being composed making the art form more accessible to English speakers.

Opera has survived because it is the highest art form that encompasses all other art forms, and opera companies are working harder than ever to make opera more accessible to everyone. At Sarasota Opera we have our Youth Opera program for kids 8 – 18, Da Capo Society, an opera club for people 21 – 45, outreach concerts, opera talks, opera house tours, and our main stage performances during the season. We are making sure to reach as many people in the community to bring them this beautiful music as possible!



The Triumphal March from Sarasota Opera's 2016 production of *Aida*

WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE OPERA



Opera is not a remote art form that only the initiated appreciate. It reflects human conflicts and passions. It has inspired a level of devotion in some people best compared to that of a die-hard sports fan. Just as you do not need to know every statistic to enjoy watching a football game, you do not need to be a music or opera expert to enjoy a performance.

Supertitles Real-time English translations are above the stage, providing immediate understanding of what is happening, helping you to experience the excitement of the performance no matter what the language.

Theater With just under 1,200 seats, there are no 'bad' seats in our theater. Most operagoers love attending opera in our theater because of its intimate size.

What to Wear Dress comfortably, and be yourself. Opera is not the playground of the rich, and we work hard to make sure that everyone feels at home in our theater. At the Sarasota Opera House, "Opera Dress" can be khakis or jeans or evening gowns and tuxedos.

Applause Unlike the symphony or other classical music concert, you can applaud when the performance moves you (similar to a solo at a jazz performance). You can also express your appreciation for the performers by yelling bravo, brava, or bravi.

Eating and drinking During regular performances, food and drinks are available prior to the show and during intermissions. During dress rehearsals and school matinees, our concessions are closed.

Restrooms There are ample restrooms located in the lobby of the theater. We ask that you encourage your students to use the bathroom before the opera begins or during intermissions.

Late Seating If you arrive after the performance has begun or leave while an act of the opera is in progress, you will need to wait until an intermission to re-enter.

Electronics Out of consideration to our performers and patrons, we asked that all cellphones and electronic devices be turned off before the performance begins. Just like at your local movie theatre, the use of any recording devices is strictly prohibited.

OPERA TERMS

The words you hear around an opera house can often be confusing, especially the ITALIAN ones! The following is a list of words you may hear and their definitions.

ARIA	A solo song in an opera
BRAVO	The word the audience yells after a great show!
COLORATURA	A type of singing where the singer sings a lot of notes very quickly
CONDUCTOR	The person who leads the singers and orchestra
COMPOSER	A person who writes music
DUET	A song sung by two people at the same time
FINALE	Italian for "final", a musical number at the end of an act
LIBRETTO	The words of the opera that are then set to music by the composer (literally means "little book")
MAESTRO	Italian for "master" or "teacher", the conductor is often referred to as maestro to show respect
OPERA	A play that is sung rather than spoken
OVERTURE	The musical introduction
PIT	The place in the theater where the orchestra sits; it is in front of and at a lower level than the stage
QUARTET	A musical piece involving four singers or instruments
RECITATIVE	A kind of sung speech; many Mozart operas have this type of sung dialogue
SINGSPIEL	A German word for an opera that has spoken dialogue; <i>The Magic Flute</i> is an example of this.
TRIO	A musical piece involving three singers or instruments

Opera seems to have fancy words for everything and the singers are no exception. There are a lot of different types of voices. The list below gives the basic voice types for men and women.

SOPRANO	The highest female voice; they are usually the heroine or female romantic lead in the opera.
MEZZO-SOPRANO ..	Mezzo is Italian for "middle", so a mezzo-soprano is the middle female voice type; they often play more character- type roles like witches, old ladies, gypsies and even young boys!
CONTRALTO	The lowest female voice. A real contralto is very rare; the roles written for them are often sung by mezzos who have a strong lower range.
TENOR	The highest male voice; they are generally the hero or male romantic lead.
BARITONE	The middle male voice; with a warm vocal quality they often play comic roles such as Papageno (in <i>The Magic Flute</i>) or fathers.
BASS	The lowest male voice; because of the very low sound they are often villains or the father figure.

OPERA JOBS

Opera requires a huge cast of players both on and off the stage to make everything come together.

Administration

Led by the **Executive Director**, members of the administrative staff work to support the artistic mission of the company through fundraising, donor cultivation, community outreach, patron education, and management of the day-to-day needs of the organization. The Development, Marketing, Finance, and Education departments are some of the areas covered under administration.

Backstage

Artistic Director - Defines the artistic mission of the company and works with the Executive Director and Artistic Administrator to decide which operas will be performed. In many companies, the artistic director is also a conductor.

Artistic Administrator - Works with the artistic director to cast and plan each production.

Stage Director - Tells the singers where to go, instructs them on how to portray their roles, and works with others to create a vibrant story with lights, costumes, sets, and props.

Stage Manager - Assists the director, singers, and backstage crew during rehearsals and performances with the help of several assistant stage managers.

Set Designer - Plans or designs the sets through careful research and study.

Lighting Designer - Plans or designs the color, intensity, and frequency of the lights onstage.

Costume Designer - Plans or designs the costumes and supervises their construction.

Wig & Makeup Designer - Oversees the design of hairstyles, wigs, and makeup.

Stage Crew - Assists in the construction, installation, and changing of sets, costumes, lighting, and props during rehearsals and performances.

On Stage

Cast - All singers and actors who appear onstage.

Principals - Singers who perform the large roles within the opera.

Comprimario - Singers who perform the supporting roles within the opera, from the Italian meaning "next to the first."

Supernumeraries - "Supers" are actors who participate in the action but do not sing or speak.

Conductor - The person who leads the singers and orchestra.

Orchestra - The musicians who play the instrumental parts within the score of the opera.

POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY

Create Your Own Review Using the worksheet below, and the Sarasota Observer's review of *The Secret World of Og* as a guide, create a review of Sarasota Opera's performance of *Carmen*.

What are the elements of a review? What areas of the production does the reviewer cover? How does the reviewer speak about the positive and negative aspects of the performance?

	Rating	Notes
Lisa Chavez as <i>Carmen</i>	☆☆☆☆☆	
Cody Austin as <i>Don José</i>	☆☆☆☆☆	
Steven LaBrie as <i>Excamillo</i>	☆☆☆☆☆	
Alexander Charles Boyd as <i>Dancaire</i>	☆☆☆☆☆	
Costas Tsourakis As <i>Zuniga</i>	☆☆☆☆☆	
Jared A. Guest as <i>Moralès</i>	☆☆☆☆☆	
Hanna Brammer Dillon as <i>Micaëla</i>	☆☆☆☆☆	
The Action	☆☆☆☆☆	
The Music	☆☆☆☆☆	
The Sets	☆☆☆☆☆	
The Staging	☆☆☆☆☆	
The Lighting	☆☆☆☆☆	
The Costumes	☆☆☆☆☆	
The Makeup	☆☆☆☆☆	

OPERA REVIEW: Sarasota Opera shows youth opera at its finest

By Edward Alley, Sarasota Observer / Thursday, November 17, 2016



A fall season highlight is the annual Sarasota Youth Opera production by the Sarasota Opera, arguably the only opera company to present operas by and for youth on its main stage every year. I'm always impressed by the quality of singing and acting and the ingenuity of everyone connected with these splendid productions. Not "children's shows," but fully mounted productions with lighting, costumes, staging, an orchestra and all the stagecraft expected from a regular main-stage production.

This year's journey to "The Secret World of OG", a U.S. premiere, is a prime example of youth opera at its finest. The opera, based on the book by Pierre Burton, has both music and libretto by Dean Burry, whose charming opera "The Hobbit," was produced by Sarasota Youth Opera last year.

The green people of Og live underground and have only one word, "Og", in their vocabulary. Their world is one of make-believe and role playing, drawn from objects and books they have "borrowed" from children of the world above. Penny, Pamela, Patsy, Peter and Paul — known as Pollywog (this opera positively percolates with perky, profound alliteration) are children who delight in playing pretend.

Penny, Peter and Paul follow two of the green people down into a tunnel under their playhouse and are eventually captured by Ogs and rescued by Patsy, Pamela and Cheshire the dog in a series of escapades careening through that make-believe world.

These people of Og, beautifully sung and acted by at least 65 of the 85 youth opera members in the cast, have a great time singing and dancing an extended number using only the word "Og" in every possible permutation, which is priceless, then from time to time comment on the events in true Greek chorus fashion. Their only other words are from those characters in the books they have purloined from the world above and made their own.

The result is a perfect plethora of scenes with Ogs as Wyatt Earp, Captain Hook and Smee from Peter

Pan, and rather famous spies, each scene flowing smoothly from one to the other with nary a pause or break in the mood.

This charming piece was brought to life by a talented group of young singers, including the five peripatetic protagonists: Katherine Herbert as Penny, Aubree Zern as Pamela, Dominique Cecchetti as Patsy, Samantha Lane as Peter and Ursula Kushner as Paul (Pollywog). Hunter Thorkelson is Earless the cat, and Astrid McIntyre is Yukie the dog. Important smaller roles were Griffin Stahlmann as the butcher, Pablo Gonzalez as the sheriff and Sky Stahlmann as Hook. Principal voices were discreetly amplified to help prevent oversinging, and it would have been a help to have the dialogue amplified, as well. The orchestra was ably conducted by Jesse Martins, who didn't miss a cue, using Burry's excellent orchestration commissioned by the Sarasota Opera.

Ken Yunker's lighting of the extremely clever and cartoonish sets by Donna and Mark Buckalter enhanced the atmosphere of the opera from the playhouse of the children to the deep depths and caves of the world of Og. I continue to be astonished by the ingenious staging of Martha Collins as she directs these productions.



All too often the staging of youth operas consists of "controlling traffic," but each person on this stage was a definite character with every movement skillfully timed and executed in mood with the music. Collins' choreography

in the big chorus line was a crowd pleaser.

Burry's score is eclectic but charming, bringing us ever-so-slight reminders of Copland, Prokofiev, a little Poulenc and a lot of Burry. The character scenes are scored in their styles — lifted on purpose from hoe-downs, pirate chanties and even a hint of James Bond — but all still Burry. Melodic lines are certainly within the scope of voices of this age, and they created lovely melodies while keeping the story moving.

It was a delightful evening, and the lower floor of the Opera House was packed with a lot of families, each seeming to have a bouquet of flowers for these young performers. And there is a moral: You can pretend to be whomever you want to be, but in the end —you're only exactly who you are.

SARASOTA OPERA HOUSE

the real estate market in Sarasota Arthur B(ritton) Edwards, Sarasota's first mayor, prominent entrepreneur, and real estate investor, decided that downtown needed an attraction, signaling to the world that the city was a destination. The Edwards Theatre, opened in April 1926 would serve the community as a place of entertainment, community resource and finally as an opera house over the next nine decades. Approaching its 91st year in 2017.



The opening night in 1926 was accorded great fanfare in the local press. The performance included a live band, dancers, and an opera singer (Mr. Edwards' daughter). As a mixed-use venue, it also included the silent movie "Skinner's Dress Suit" accompanied by the Robert Morton orchestral organ. Later bill of fare included Will Rogers, the Ziegfeld

Follies, the exotic fan dancer Sally Rand, and touring opera companies. A hurricane in 1929 destroyed the organ and required renovations to the lobby, but performances continued.

Mr. Edwards sold the venue to the Sparks movie theater chain, which renamed it the Florida Theater. Movies became more prominent in future years, especially in 1952 when Cecil B. DeMille's *The Greatest Show on Earth*, largely filmed in Sarasota, had its world premiere, with many of the stars including Charlton Heston and Mr. DeMille in attendance. Live performances in those years included a young Elvis Presley in 1956 (with a top ticket price of \$1.50).

The years took its toll on the Florida Theater and in 1972 it stopped showing films. The front part of the building continued to house offices and a radio school, but in 1979, a new future was destined for the building.

The Asolo Opera Guild, founded in 1960 to support opera performances at the Asolo Theatre on the grounds of the Ringling Museum, needed a new home and arranged to purchase the Florida Theater for \$150,000. Over the next few years the Guild undertook to renovate the building as it raised funds and in 1984 it was ready to reopen as the Sarasota Opera House.

After a subsequent renovation in 2008, with much of its original beauty restored and enhanced, the Sarasota Opera House was called "one of the finest venues for opera in America" by *Musical America*. It seats 1,129 and the orchestra pit accommodates over 75 players. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1984, received the Florida Preservation Award in 2010, and helped spur the revival of downtown Sarasota.

SARASOTA OPERA

Based on Florida's beautiful Gulf Coast, **Sarasota Opera** recently completed its 58th consecutive season and the final season of the company's internationally acclaimed Verdi Cycle making it the only company in the world to have performed every work of Giuseppe Verdi.

In 1960, the company began presenting chamber-sized repertoire in the historic 320-seat Asolo Theater on the grounds of Sarasota's Ringling Museum of Art. Recognizing the need for a theater more conducive to opera, the company purchased the former A.B. Edwards Theater in downtown Sarasota in 1979 and first performing in it in 1984 as the Sarasota Opera House. In 2008, the theater underwent a \$20 million renovation and rehabilitation enhancing audience amenities, while updating the technical facilities including increasing the size of the orchestra pit.



Since 1983, the company has been under the artistic leadership of Victor DeRenzi and administrative leadership of Executive Director Richard Russell since 2012. The company has garnered international attention with its Masterwork Revivals Series, which presents neglected works of artistic merit, as well as the Verdi Cycle producing the complete works of Giuseppe Verdi. Recognizing the importance of training, Maestro DeRenzi founded the Apprentice Artist and Studio Artist programs. Sarasota Opera also maintains a commitment to education through its Invitation to Opera performances for local schools and the unique Sarasota Youth Opera program.

Opera is the ultimate art form combining music, theater, sets, costumes and dance. It has the power to express the full range of human emotions and the human experience. Compelling stories partnered with great music and dazzling productions make a performance at Sarasota Opera an experience that will not be forgotten.

Sarasota Opera is sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Programs are supported in part by an award from the Tourist Development Tax through the Board of County Commissioners, the Tourist Development Council and the Sarasota County Arts Council. Additional funding is provided by the City of Sarasota and the County of Sarasota.

SARASOTA YOUTH OPERA



Since 1984, Sarasota Youth Opera has given young people age eight and up the chance to experience opera first hand through after-school choruses, Sarasota Opera's mainstage productions, summer camps, and fully staged Youth Opera productions.

As the only program in the U.S. committed to presenting annual full-scale opera productions for young voices, SYO is a national model for opera exploration. SYO accepts all who wish to participate regardless of skill level, prior experience, or ability to pay.

Youth Opera Productions

Sarasota Opera's commitment to young people includes producing new operas written for children and young adults.

Five new works have been presented as part of this mission: *Deadline* (1989), Polly Pen's *Her Lightness* (1993), Tom Suta's *Eye of Ra* (1998), John Kennedy's *The Language of Birds* (2004), and Daron Hagen's *Little Nemo in Slumberland* (2012). In November 2017, SYO will present its sixth new work, *Rootabaga Country* by Rachel J. Peters, based on the writings of Carl Sandburg.

SYO members take part in the making of each opera complete with professional staging, costumes, lighting, sound, and orchestral accompaniment.



Summer Camp

Each June, SYO offers a three-week summer camp for young people. Under the direction of Sarasota Opera's professional artistic and production staff, campers experience the magic on the stage and behind the scenes as they study the many facets of opera, from music and acting to opera appreciation and production.

Mainstage Productions

In addition to their own productions, SYO members have the opportunity to participate in Sarasota Opera's professional productions as members of the children's chorus, non-singing extras, and in special solo roles written young voices. In recent seasons these have included roles in *The Magic Flute*, *La bohème*, *Tosca*, *Carmen*, and *Turandot*.

