

# PITTSBURGH OPERA

**March 1, 2022**

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**Pittsburgh Opera presents the irresistible *Carmen*,  
March 26 – April 3 at the Benedum Center**

<b>What:</b>	<i>Carmen</i> Music by <a href="#">Georges Bizet</a> , libretto by <a href="#">Henri Meilhac</a> and <a href="#">Ludovic Halévy</a>
<b>Of Note:</b>	Pittsburgh Opera was in the middle of rehearsals for its planned March 2020 performances of <a href="#">Carmen</a> when the COVID pandemic struck, forcing it to cancel. Now two years later <i>Carmen</i> will be making its long-awaited return to the Benedum Center.
<b>Where:</b>	Benedum Center, downtown Pittsburgh
<b>When:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sat., March 26, 2022 * 8:00 PM</li><li>• Tues., March 29, 2022 * 7:00 PM</li><li>• Fri., April 1, 2022 * 7:30 PM</li><li>• Sun., April 3, 2022 * 2:00 PM</li></ul>
<b>Run Time:</b>	2 hours and 50 minutes with two intermissions
<b>Language:</b>	Sung in French with English supertitles projected above the stage
<b>Tickets:</b>	Single tickets for adults start at \$15; tickets for kids and teens ages 6-18 are half-price.  For tickets call 412-456-6666, visit the Box Office at Theater Square, or online at <a href="http://pittsburghopera.org/tickets">pittsburghopera.org/tickets</a> or <a href="http://CulturalDistrict.org">CulturalDistrict.org</a> .  Group discounts, including student discounts, are available.
<b>Media Events</b>	Photo Call (Mon., March 14, 12:30 PM) - location TBA  Full Dress Rehearsal (Thurs., March 24, 7:00 PM) - Benedum Center



*Photo by Cory Weaver*

**Pittsburgh Opera was in the middle of rehearsals for its planned March 2020 performances of [Carmen](#) when the COVID pandemic struck, forcing it to cancel. Now two years later *Carmen* will be making its long-awaited return to the Benedum Center.**

Set in 1830 Seville, Spain, *Carmen* is a roller-coaster of lust, deception, and murder. Fiery Carmen, who lives her life to the fullest, can have any man she wants. But when she seduces naïve Corporal Don José, she gets more than she bargains for.

Carmen works in a cigarette factory. When a knife fight with another employee leads to her arrest, she charms Corporal Don José into letting her escape. Like a moth drawn to a flame, Don José forsakes his military career and the innocent peasant girl Micaëla for a life on the lam with Carmen and a band of smugglers.

Never one to settle down, the passionate Carmen gets bored with Don José and becomes involved with the glamorous, testosterone-filled bullfighter Escamillo. Left with nothing, Don José decides that if he can't have Carmen, no one can.

Full of magnetic melodies, colorful costumes, and tragic twists, you'll fall in love with Georges Bizet's one-and-only *Carmen*.

The opera is sung in French with English supertitles projected above the stage.

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## Fun facts about *Carmen*

1. [As NPR says](#), "*Carmen* may have more hit tunes than any opera ever composed. People who say they've never listened to a note of opera in their lives have probably heard something from *Carmen*."
2. *Carmen* features two of the best-known of all operatic arias - the celebrated "Habanera" from Act 1 and the "Toreador Song" from Act 2.
  - [Seattle Opera](#) compiled a list of some of the many movies, TV shows, and TV commercials with music from *Carmen*. In one Sesame Street segment, Denyce Graves (who sang the role of Grace in Pittsburgh Opera's world premiere of **The Summer King – the Josh Gibson Story**) [sings Elmo a bedtime lullaby](#) to the tune of the Habanera.
3. *Carmen* is one of the most popular operas in the standard repertoire, but Bizet did not live long enough to see it gain acceptance. Sadly, Bizet died just three months after *Carmen* had its world premiere at the Opéra-Comique in Paris on March 3, 1875. Johannes Brahms saw the opera 20 times and said that he would have "gone to the ends of the earth to embrace Bizet."

## The story, in brief

**ACT I.** In 1830 Seville, Spain, by a cigarette factory, soldiers comment on the townspeople. Among them is Micaëla, a peasant girl, who asks for a corporal named Don José. Moralès, another corporal, tells her he will return with the changing of the guard. The relief guard, headed by Lieutenant Zuniga, soon arrives, and José learns from Moralès that Micaëla has been looking for him.

When the factory bell rings, the men of Seville gather to watch the female workers—especially their favorite, Carmen. She tells her admirers that love is free and obeys no rules ("L'amour est un oiseau rebelle"). Only one man pays no attention to her: Don José. Carmen throws a flower at him, and the girls go back to work. José picks up the flower and hides it when Micaëla returns. She brings a letter from José's mother, who lives in a village in the countryside ("Ma mere, je la vois"). As he begins to read the letter, Micaëla leaves.

José is about to throw away the flower when a fight erupts inside the factory between Carmen and another girl. Zuniga sends José to retrieve Carmen. Carmen refuses to answer Zuniga's questions, and José is ordered to take her to prison. Left alone with him, she entices José with suggestions of a rendezvous at Lillas Pastia's tavern ("Près des remparts de Séville"). Mesmerized, he agrees to let her get away. As they leave for prison, Carmen escapes. Don José is arrested.

**ACT II.** Carmen and her friends Frasquita and Mercédès entertain the guests at the tavern ("Les tringles des sistres tintaient"). Zuniga tells Carmen that José has just been released. The bullfighter Escamillo enters, boasting about the pleasures of his profession ("Votre toast, je peux vous le rendre"), and flirts with Carmen, who tells him that she is involved with someone else.

After the tavern guests have left with Escamillo, the smugglers Dancaire and Remendado explain their latest scheme to the women ("Nous avons en tête une affaire"). Frasquita and Mercédès are willing to help, but Carmen refuses because she is in love. The smugglers withdraw as José approaches.

Carmen arouses José's jealousy by telling him how she danced for Zuniga. She dances for him now, but when a bugle call is heard he says he must return to the barracks ("Je vais danser en votre honneur"). Carmen mocks him. To prove his love, José shows her the flower she threw at him and confesses how its scent gave him hope during the weeks in prison ("La fleur que tu m'avais jetée"). She is unimpressed: if he really loved her, he would desert the army and join her in a life of freedom in the mountains. José refuses, and Carmen tells him to leave. Zuniga bursts in, and in a jealous rage José fights him. The smugglers return and disarm Zuniga. José now has no choice but to join them.

**ACT III.** Carmen and José quarrel in the smugglers' mountain hideaway. She admits that her love is fading and advises him to return to live with his mother. When Frasquita and Mercédès turn the cards to tell their fortunes, they foresee love and riches for themselves, but Carmen's cards spell death—for her and for José ("Melons! Coupons!"). Micaëla appears, frightened by the mountains and afraid to meet the woman who has turned José into a criminal ("Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante"). She hides when a shot rings out. José has fired at an intruder, who turns out to be Escamillo. He tells José that he has come to find Carmen, and the two men fight ("Je suis Escamillo"). The smugglers separate them, and Escamillo invites everyone, Carmen in particular, to his next bullfight. When he has left, Micaëla emerges and begs José to return home. He agrees when he learns that his mother is dying, but before he leaves he warns Carmen that they will meet again.

**ACT IV.** Back in Seville, the crowd cheers the bullfighters on their way to the arena ("A deux cuartos"). Carmen arrives on Escamillo's arm, and Frasquita and Mercédès warn her that José is nearby. Unafraid, she waits outside the entrance as the crowds enter the arena. José appears and begs Carmen to forget the past and start a new life with him ("C'est toi! C'est moi!"). She calmly tells him that their affair is over: she was born free and free she will die. The crowd is heard cheering Escamillo. José keeps trying to win Carmen back. She takes off his ring and throws it at his feet before heading for the arena. José stabs her to death.

- Adapted from *Opera News*

## Ticketing Information

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- Group discounts, including student discounts, are available. For more information about [group ticket services and discounts](#) for groups of six or more people, contact Wendy Parkulo at 412-281-0912, ext. 213 or [groups@pittsburghopera.org](mailto:groups@pittsburghopera.org).

## Sponsors

- [PNC](#) is the 2021-22 Pittsburgh Opera Season Sponsor.
- [WQED-FM](#) is Pittsburgh Opera's Media Sponsor.
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## Cast and Artistic Team: *Carmen*

Carmen	<a href="#">Zanda Švēde</a> <sup>+</sup>
Don José	<a href="#">Scott Quinn</a> <sup>+</sup>
Escamillo	<a href="#">Michael Todd Simpson</a> <sup>+</sup>
Michaëla	<a href="#">Danielle Pastin</a> <sup>**</sup>
Frasquita	<a href="#">Véronique Filloux</a> <sup>*</sup>
Mercédès	<a href="#">Leah Heater</a> <sup>**</sup>
Moralès	<a href="#">Daniel Teadt</a> <sup>**</sup>
Dancäire	<a href="#">Yazid Gray</a> <sup>*</sup>
Remendado	<a href="#">Andrew Turner</a> <sup>*</sup>
Zuniga	<a href="#">Jeremy Harr</a> <sup>*</sup>
Morales	<a href="#">Yazid Gray</a> <sup>*</sup>
Lillas Pastia	Bob Rak <sup>+</sup>
Dancer	Peter Kope
Dancer	Sarah Zielinski
Conductor	<a href="#">Antony Walker</a>
Stage Director	<a href="#">Garnett Bruce</a>
Set designer	R. Keith Brumley
Costume Designer	<a href="#">Sarasota Opera</a>
Lighting Designer	Andrew Ostrowski
Wig and Make-up Designer	James Geier
Choreographers	Michele de la Reza / Dane Toney
Stage Manager	Cindy Knight
Assistant Conductor	<a href="#">Glenn Lewis</a>
Chorus Master	<a href="#">Mark Trawka</a>
Associate Coach/Pianist	James Lesniak
Assistant Stage Director	<a href="#">Kaley Karis Smith</a> <sup>*</sup>
Assistant Lighting Designer	Todd Nonn
Assistant Wig & Make-up	Nicole Pagano
Assistant Stage Manager	Hannah Nathan

\* Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist

\*\* Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist alumni

+ Pittsburgh Opera debut

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Pittsburgh Opera celebrates its 83rd season in 2021-22. Established by five intrepid women in 1939, Pittsburgh Opera is viewed as one of the most vibrant opera organizations in the U.S., with a rich artistic tradition, internationally-recognized educational programs, an acclaimed artist training program, and a progressive outlook toward the future. Its green initiative culminated in LEED® Silver certification for its Strip District headquarters, and its capacity as a true community partner has increased significantly under General Director Christopher Hahn's leadership.