



The Metropolitan Opera Presents: Georges Bizets Carmen: Libretto, Background, and Photos

Henri Meilhac, Ludovic Halevy

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A riveting story of fatal attraction between a beguiling, strong-willed gypsy and a naïve but passionate soldier who falls under her spell, Georges Bizets Carmen pulses with seduction, obsession, and deadly betrayal. It was reviled at its Paris premiere, where its realism and perceived amorality proved shocking, but it became one of the most popular and highly regarded operas of all time. Arguably the greatest musical product of Frances enduring fascination with Spain, Carmen features many numbers that are now almost universally familiar, including the seductive Habanera and the boastful but infectious Toreador Song. Don José is an idealistic young corporal in 1820s Seville when he encounters the gypsy Carmen, who is irresistible to all menseemingly except José, who loves the innocent country girl Micaëla. But soon enough Carmen works her wiles on him to escape imprisonment, and a later twist of ever-looming fate forces him to completely abandon the world he knows and follow Carmen into a life of crime. When the bullfighter Escamillo wins Carmens affections, Don José's explosive jealousy clashes with Carmens resolve to remain true to herself, leading to one of operas fiercest confrontations and most unforgettable conclusions.

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