Georges Bizet

Carmen

CONDUCTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

PRODUCTION
Richard Eyre

SET & COSTUME DESIGNER
Rob Howell

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Peter Mumford

CHOREOGRAPHER
Christopher Wheeldon

ASSOCIATE COSTUME DESIGNER
Irene Bohan

GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

MUSIC DIRECTOR
James Levine

Opera in four acts

Libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy, based on the novella by Prosper Mérimée

Saturday, January 16, 2010, 1:00–4:10 pm

New Production

This production of *Carmen* was made possible by a generous gift from **Mrs. Paul Desmarais, Sr.**

The Metropolitan Opera

2009–10 Season

The 949th Metropolitan Opera performance of

Georges Bizet's

Carmen

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CONDUCTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

Moralès, an officer
Trevor Scheunemann

Micaëla, a peasant girl
Barbara Frittoli

Don José, a corporal
Roberto Alagna

Zuniga, a captain
Keith Miller

Carmen, a gypsy
Elīna Garanča

Frasquita
Elizabeth Caballero

Mercédès
Sandra Piques Eddy

Escamillo, a toreador
Mariusz Kwiecien*

Le Dancaïre
Earle Patriarco

Le Remendado
Keith Jameson

SOLO DANCERS
Maria Kowroski
Martin Harvey

Saturday, January 16, 2010, 1:00–4:10 pm

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Elīna Garanča and Roberto Alagna as Carmen and Don José in a scene from Bizet's *Carmen*

Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**
Musical Preparation **Joan Dornemann**, **Jane Klaviter**, **Linda Hall**, **Pierre Vallet**, and **Jonathan Kelly**
Fight Director **Nigel Poulton**, **Weapons Specialists, Ltd.**
Assistant Stage Directors **Jonathon Loy**, **Paula Williams**, and **Tomer Zvulun**
Stage Band Conductor **Jeffrey Goldberg**
Met Titles **Sonya Friedman**
Children's Chorus Director **Anthony Piccolo**
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* Graduate of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program

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Synopsis

Act I
Seville

Act II
Lillas Pastia's tavern

Intermission

Act III
The smugglers' hideout in the mountains above Seville

Act IV
Outside the bullring in Seville

Act I
In Seville 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, the gypsy 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 (Duet: "Parle-moi de ma mère"). 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 the gypsy. 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 that night ("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 Dancaïre and Remendado explain their latest scheme to the women (Quintet: "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 his 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. Carmen mocks him. To prove his love, José shows her the flower she threw at him and confesses how its scent made him not lose 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 ("Carreau! Pique!… La mort!"). 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. 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. 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 (Duet: "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 and she takes off his ring and throws it at his feet before heading for the arena. José stabs her to death.

Georges Bizet

Carmen

Premiere: Opéra Comique, Paris, 1875

Bizet's masterpiece of the gypsy seductress who lives by her own rules, no matter what the cost, has had an impact far beyond the opera house. The opera's melodic sweep is as irresistible as the title character herself, a force of nature who has become a defining female cultural figure. This drama of a soldier torn between doing the right thing and the woman he cannot resist bursts with melody and seethes with all the erotic vitality of its unforgettable title character. *Carmen* was a scandal at its premiere and was roundly denounced in the press for its flagrant immorality. The power of the music and the drama, however, created an equally vocal faction in favor of the work. The composer Tchaikovsky and the philosopher Nietzsche both praised the opera, the latter identifying in the robustness of the score nothing less than a cure-all for the world's spiritual ills.

The Creators

Georges Bizet (1838–1875) was a French composer whose talent was apparent from childhood. *Carmen* was his final work, and its success was still uncertain at the time of his premature death (although the opera was not quite the total failure in its initial run that it has sometimes been called). Henri Meilhac (1831–1897) was a librettist and dramatist who would subsequently provide the libretto for Jules Massenet's popular *Manon* (1884). His collaborator on the libretto for *Carmen* was Ludovic Halévy (1834–1908), the nephew of composer Jacques Fromental Halévy (composer of the opera *La Juive* and Bizet's father-in-law). Composer Ernest Guiraud (1837–1892), born in New Orleans, was a friend of Bizet's who wrote the recitatives between the set numbers when *Carmen* moved from the Opéra Comique (where dialogue was customary) to the opera houses of the world. The libretto of *Carmen* is based on a novella by Prosper Mérimée (1803–1870), a French dramatist, historian, and archaeologist. According to one of his letters, the book was inspired by a true story that the Countess of Montijo told him during a visit to Spain. Published in 1845, it was Mérimée's most popular work.

The Setting

The opera takes place in and around Seville, a city that, by the time *Carmen* was written, had already served many operatic composers as an exotic setting conducive to erotic intrigues and turmoil (Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and Verdi's

La Forza del Destino, among others). The hometown of Don Juan, the city also inspired Mozart with *Don Giovanni*, and Beethoven used Seville as the setting for a study of marital fidelity in *Fidelio*. *Carmen* is particularly associated with this beguiling city of colorful processions, bullfights, and vibrant gypsy community.

The Music

The score of *Carmen* contains so many instantly recognizable melodies that it can be easy to overlook how well constructed it is. The orchestra brings to life a wide palette of sound. The major solos are excellent combinations of arresting melody and dramatic purpose, most notably the baritone's famous Toréador Song, the tenor's wrenching Flower Song in Act II, and Micaëla's soaring Act III aria. Carmen and the lead tenor have three remarkable duets marking the stages of their fateful relationship: the seductive phase (Act I), conflict (Act II), and tragic explosion (Act IV). Unlike in traditional operatic duets, however, they almost never sing at the same time, a device that emphasizes their inherently disparate natures. Interestingly, while Carmen has several solos in the form of songs—that is, moments in which the character is actually supposed to be singing within the context of the drama—she has no actual aria. It's a dramaturgical device that suggests she is seen first as a sort of celebrity, performing for others, and then as a projection of the fantasies of others.

Carmen *at the Met*

Carmen entered the standard Met repertory slowly, premiering on tour in Boston in 1884, sung in Italian. After several performances in German, it finally became a Met staple in the original French in 1893 with Emma Calvé, her generation's leading interpreter of the title role, who performed the part 137 times at the Met before 1904. Enrico Caruso sang the lead tenor role 32 times from 1906 to 1919. The charismatic Geraldine Farrar was a sensation in her 65 appearances between 1914 and 1922, and she was chosen to play the gypsy temptress in a popular silent movie of 1915. Risë Stevens performed the role 124 times between 1945 and 1961. Marilyn Horne gave 49 performances (1972–1988); Denyce Graves appeared in 48 (1995–2005). Among the memorable tenors to perform in the opera were Giovanni Martinelli in 74 performances (1915–1941), Richard Tucker in 60 (1952–1972), James McCracken in 47 (1966–1975), and Plácido Domingo in 27 (1971–1997). Leonard Bernstein conducted *Carmen* for the opening night of the 1972–73 season and five subsequent performances, and Music Director James Levine has led 44 performances dating back to 1986. Directors who have interpreted this work for the Met include Tyrone Guthrie (1952), Jean-Louis Barrault (1967), Peter Hall (1986), and Franco Zeffirelli (1996). This new production marks the Met debut of director Richard Eyre and conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

A Note from the Director

"Women and cats don't come when you call them—you have to ignore them" was a piece of advice that I found more theoretical than practical. This was from Mérimée's novella, where I first encountered Carmen and found her impossible to resist. She has become a universal sexual icon and Bizet's music part of our DNA. Coming late to opera, I heard the score for the first time in a re-orchestrated version in the film of *Carmen Jones* and, to borrow from Berlioz seeing a Shakespeare play for the first time, it "struck me like a thunderbolt... I recognized the meaning of grandeur, beauty, dramatic truth. I felt that I was alive and that I must arise and walk."

Seeing Francesco Rosi's film of the opera (starring Julia Migenes and Plácido Domingo); Carlos Saura's dance film based on the piece; the South African *U-Carmen eKhayelitsha*, sung in Xhosa; and other productions in assorted opera houses has done nothing to diminish my enthusiasm. The world of the opera is the street, populated by gypsies, soldiers, criminals, and sportsmen, and the entirely accessible music has a lithe energy, a wit, a dramatic aptness, and a shimmering allure. "This music seems perfect to me," said Nietzsche. "It approaches lightly, supplely, politely. It is pleasant, it does not sweat… This music is evil, subtly fatalistic; at the same time, it remains popular."

I've updated the setting from the 1830s of Mérimée's story to the 1930s of the Spanish Civil War. The intention is to push the extremes between the world of the gypsies and the society in which they live, to suggest more repressive sexual norms, and—in the shape of the Guardia Civil—to suggest a more oppressive state militia.

The story is, of course, about love, but more truly about sex, underscored by violence. Carmen's cry of "la chose enivrante, la liberté" is a cry for existential freedom. She's alone—spurned by the Romany world for her sexual promiscuity at the same time that she's condemned to be a perpetual outsider in the world of the *gadjos* (non-gypsies). Even if she acts like a man in making her sexual choices, she's imprisoned by her sexuality: to exist means to desire and be desired. But she burns up the object of her desires. She's like the weather—the hotter the sun, the nearer the storm. —*Richard Eyre*

Program Note

The death of Georges Bizet on June 3, 1875, exactly three months after the famous opening night of *Carmen* at the Opéra Comique in Paris, is one of the cruelest ironies in the history of music. While it was certainly tragic that Puccini never lived to see *Turandot* and that Berlioz never lived to see *Les Troyens*, those composers were at the end of illustrious careers. Bizet was only 36 and had just revealed for the first time the true depth of his operatic genius. If Verdi, Wagner, or Strauss had died at that age, not many of their works would be heard in our opera houses today.

Just a few extra months granted to Bizet would have shown him that the Vienna Opera had presented *Carmen* to a reception quite different from the shocked incomprehension that greeted it in Paris; just three more years would have given him the satisfaction of knowing that it had played in Brussels, Budapest, St. Petersburg, Stockholm, London, Dublin, New York, and Philadelphia, and he would at last have made a respectable living as a composer instead of having to toil over four-hand arrangements of lesser operas by lesser composers.

If only those pig-headed Parisians on the first night had been less parochial in their judgment, we like to think, success and recognition might have staved off the quinsy and rheumatism which led to Bizet's death, probably precipitated by depression. Bizet was used to failure, since none of his theatrical ventures had been successful before. But none of them displayed the genius that lifts every page of *Carmen* to starry heights. His early works *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*, *La Jolie Fille de Perth*, and *Djamileh* all show glimpses of what he could do. In *Carmen* Bizet invested more energy and passion than ever before.

The crucial idea, Bizet's own, was to base the story on Prosper Mérimée's novella *Carmen*. In 1872, he was commissioned to write a three-act opera for the Opéra Comique, a theater where operas traditionally ended happily, with villainy and sin put firmly in their place; loyalty and fidelity were always rewarded. It was a family theater where audiences would be amused and entertained, excited even, but never shocked. The choice of *Carmen* inevitably led to an impasse, since the heroine is the villain, and meets her death on stage. She flaunts her attractions and boasts of her conquests. She smokes, seduces soldiers, corrupts customs officials, and smuggles on the side. But she is fascinating, clever, beautiful, and sometimes even tender, and her music is so alluring that no one can escape her magnetism. French society lived out a convenient hypocrisy by indulging its fancies in private while maintaining a correct exterior. What people saw at the Opéra Comique was unfortunately very public: sensuality was presented here in the raw, to music of unmistakable appeal. Social mores have so radically changed in our century that the complexity of the response to *Carmen*—a mixture of distaste, fascination, and guilt—is not easy to disentangle.

Bizet was not attempting to engineer social change or storm the barricades of propriety; he simply recognized a good subject for music and knew he could

bring it to life on the stage. This is musical theater charged with an unprecedented realism that makes the two principal figures, Carmen and Don José, as vivid as flesh and blood, destroyed by their appetites and their weaknesses. The librettists, Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy (an experienced and expert team), made the story convincingly operatic by introducing two balancing characters, neither of any importance in Mérimée's story. First is Micaëla, whose purity, devotion to Don José, and attachment to his dying mother make Carmen's personality all the more striking and brazen. And Escamillo is the irresistible lure that entices Carmen from Don José, though the bullfighter, unlike the soldier, would never shed a tear over her infidelity.

The settings, too, are superbly theatrical: a square in Seville where soldiers change guard and cigarette-girls gather; Lillas Pastia's tavern, where all forms of lowlife meet; the smugglers' hideout in the mountains; and finally the bullring where the slaughter of bulls inside (offstage) acts as dramatic counterpoint to José's desperate murder of Carmen outside (onstage). Carmen, as even she herself knows, is doomed. So too is José, by his defiance of military orders, by joining forces with the smugglers, and by his willful neglect of Micaëla and his mother, not to mention his fatal passion for Carmen. In Mérimée, he has also committed two murders.

Fearing that such a story would frighten off his loyal though dwindling public, Camille du Locle, director of the Opéra Comique, did his best to soften the blow by cautioning his public and steering high officials away. He could make nothing of the music, in any case, and described it as "Cochin-Chinese." Such counter-advertising by a theater manager is hard to believe. The librettists similarly seem to have been willing to tone down the impact of the work that would make their names immortal. Throughout the long rehearsal period from October 1874 to March 1875, Bizet had to resist pressure for change and suffer the complaints of both orchestra and chorus that it was not performable.

But the composer had supporters, since his two principal singers believed in the opera from the start. Paul Lhérie, the Don José, was full of good intentions, though he sang disastrously flat in his unaccompanied entrance in Act II. In Célestine Galli-Marié, Bizet had a superlative, perhaps definitive, Carmen. She evidently brought to the role the blend of sultry sensuality and fatal bravado that all good Carmens need; her own private life was liberated (by the standards of the day) and she is said to have had an affair with Bizet, which is not unlikely given the pressures under which they were working and the uncertain state of his marriage. Further support for Bizet came from one or two good notices in the press and a few expressions of admiration from fellow composers.

The majority of the notices after that first night, though, were hostile and uncomprehending, and one or two were deeply insulting. The show did not close, however. It ran for more than 40 performances, not at all a disgraceful total,

kept alive no doubt by its salacious reputation and, after a dozen performances, by the sensational irony of Bizet's death. By the time the Opéra Comique dared to stage it again, in 1883, the opera was a worldwide success.

Part of *Carmen*'s appeal rests on its brilliant evocation of Spain. Bizet went to some trouble to find authentic melodies. The famous Habanera, for example, was adapted from a tune by the Spanish-American composer Sebastián Yradier. But Bizet could invent good Spanish music of his own, too. The Séguedille that closes Act I is superlatively colorful and dramatic, as is the gypsy song that opens the following act in Lillas Pastia's tavern.

Yet much of the opera is not Spanish at all. Whatever its novelty, it belongs to the tradition of French opéra comique, as we can tell when leading characters present themselves in two-verse songs, or couplets. The depiction of the two smugglers Dancaïre and Remendado as comic figures belongs to the same tradition. There is also a strong strain of French lyricism in *Carmen*, derived from Gounod, Bizet's mentor, who jokingly said that Micaëla's Act III aria was stolen from him. It faithfully echoes his style in such works as *Roméo et Juliette* (on which Bizet had worked as pianist and assistant).

Those critics in 1875 who could see beyond the sensation of the story to the music were confused. Conventions were stretched and the dramatic immediacy of the music was stronger than anything they had heard before. Such departures from custom were invariably labeled "Wagnerian," a term of abuse in France at that time. Chromatic harmony and daring key shifts were assumed to be Wagner's monopoly. But Bizet had no intention whatever of imitating Wagner, whose music and theories he knew little about. His music was modern, and for many critics that was enough. His genius is evident in the brilliance of each individual number, finding sharply distinctive melodies and moods for every scene. Few other composers of the time could boast such fertile invention.

The French learned to love *Carmen*, but not before it had conquered the world's opera houses. In New York, it was first performed in Italian at the Academy of Music in 1878, then in English in 1881, reaching the Metropolitan Opera during its first season on January 5, 1884 (also still in Italian). It has remained in the Met's repertoire ever since, and may well be, as Tchaikovsky predicted, the most popular opera in the world. —*Hugh Macdonald*

The Cast and Creative Team

Yannick Nézet-Séguin

CONDUCTOR (MONTREAL, CANADA)

THIS SEASON *Carmen* for his Met debut, and concert engagements with the Philadelphia Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre Métropolitain du Grand Montréal, and Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent engagements include *Faust* for the Canadian Opera, *Madama Butterfly* in Montreal, his debut at the 2008 Salzburg Festival leading *Roméo et Juliette*, and his 2009 debut at the Netherlands Opera leading *The Makropulos Case*. He has also led the Dresden Staatskapelle, Orchestre National de France, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Vienna Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Boston Symphony Orchestra, among many others. Last season he became music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and he has been artistic director and principal conductor of the Orchestre Métropolitain du Grand Montréal since 2000.

Richard Eyre

DIRECTOR (DEVON, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON *Carmen* for his Met debut; *The Observer* for London's National Theatre; publication of his book of interviews with theater people, *Talking Theatre*; and the opening of his new film, *The Other Man*, starring Laura Linney, Antonio Banderas, and Liam Neeson.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Worked for ten years in regional theater in Leicester, Edinburgh, and Nottingham, was producer of BBC television's *Play for Today* from 1978–81, and was director of London's National Theatre from 1988–97. He has directed a musical (*Mary Poppins*) and several plays in the West End and on Broadway as well as *La Traviata* at Covent Garden and *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival. Film and television credits include *Comedians, Tumbledown, Suddenly Last Summer, King Lear, Iris*, *Notes on a Scandal,* and *Changing Stages* (a six-part look at 20th-century theater for PBS). In addition, he has published three books; has received numerous awards for theater, television, and film; and was knighted in 1997.

Rob Howell

SET & COSTUME DESIGNER (LONDON, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON *Carmen* for his Met debut.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Has worked extensively for London's National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company, in London's West End, and on Broadway. Opera credits include

The Turn of the Screw for the Welsh National Opera and *Sophie's Choice* for Covent Garden. He received the 2000 Olivier Award for Best Set Design for *Troilus and Cressida*, *Vassa*, and *Richard III*; the 2006 Olivier Award for Best Set Design for *Hedda Gabler*; and the 2006 Dora Award for Outstanding Costume Design for *The Lord of the Rings*. He received Tony Award nominations in 2008 for Best Costume Design for *Boeing-Boeing* and in 2009 for Best Set Design for *The Norman Conquests*. Recent productions with Richard Eyre include *The Observer, The Last Cigarette, The Reporter*, and *Hedda Gabler.*

Peter Mumford

LIGHTING DESIGNER (LONDON, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON *Carmen* at the Met.

MET APPEARANCES *Madama Butterfly* (debut, 2006), *Peter Grimes*, and the 125th Anniversary Gala.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS *Il Trovatore* (Paris Opera); *Passion* (Minnesota Opera); *La Cenerentola* (Glyndebourne); *La Traviata* (Antwerp Opera); *Siegfried*, *Götterdämmerung*, *Fidelio*, and *Don Giovanni* (Scottish Opera); *Madama Butterfly*, *Così fan tutte*, and *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* (English National Opera); *Giulio Cesare* (Bordeaux Opera); *Eugene Onegin* and *The Bartered Bride* (Covent Garden); and *The Midsummer Marriage* (Lyric Opera of Chicago). Recent theater includes *Shadowlands*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Last Confession* (West End); *The Seagull* (Royal Court); *The Reporter*, *The Rose Tattoo*, and *The Hothouse* (National Theatre); *The Entertainer* and *Richard II* (Old Vic); *Hedda Gabler* (Almeida); *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* (Royal Shakespeare Company); *Dying City* (Royal Court and Lincoln Center Theater); and *Private Lives* (West End and Broadway). He also directed and designed Ravel's *L'Heure Espagnole* and *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* (Opera Zuid) and received the 2003 Olivier Award for *The Bacchae* (National Theatre).

Christopher Wheeldon

CHOREOGRAPHER (YEOVIL, SOMERSET, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON *Carmen* at the Met.

MET APPEARANCES *La Gioconda* (debut, 2006).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Founder and artistic director of Morphoses/The Wheeldon Company, he was resident choreographer for New York City Ballet from 2001–08 and has created works for the Royal Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Bolshoi Ballet, Pennsylvania Ballet, and Boston Ballet. He made his Broadway debut in 2002 with *Sweet Smell of Success*. Morphoses/The Wheeldon Company was awarded the South Bank Show Award for its 2007 London season, and that year he received the London Critics' Circle Award for best new ballet. He has also received an Olivier Award for *Polyphonia*, the 2005 Dance Magazine Award, and the American Choreography Award for his work in Nicholas Hytner's movie *Center Stage*.

Barbara Frittoli

SOPRANO (MILAN, ITALY)

THIS SEASON Micaëla in *Carmen* at the Met; the Verdi Requiem on tour with Daniel Barenboim in Milan, Paris, and Moscow; a gala concert in Bergen, Norway; the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at Munich's Bavarian State Opera; the title role of *Luisa Miller* and Mimì in *La Bohème* in Zurich; and Mimì with the Turin Opera (both in Turin and on tour in Japan).

MET APPEARANCES The title role of *Suor Angelica*, Micaëla (debut, 1995), Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, Luisa Miller, Mimì, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, Desdemona in *Otello*, and the Verdi Requiem.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Fiordiligi and Desdemona with the Vienna State Opera and Suor Angelica at La Scala. She has also sung Liù in *Turandot* with Barcelona's Liceu, Desdemona in Munich, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* and Elizabeth in *Don Carlo* in Florence, and Violetta in *La Traviata* with the Vienna State Opera.

Elina Garanča

MEZZO-SOPRANO (RIGA, LATVIA)

THIS SEASON Romeo in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin and Carmen at the Met, Covent Garden, Vienna State Opera, Munich's Bavarian State Opera, and in Valencia.

MET APPEARANCES Angelina in *La Cenerentola* and Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (debut, 2008).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Adalgisa in *Norma*, Charlotte in *Werther*, Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, and Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with the Vienna State Opera, Sesto in *La Clemenza di Tito* at Vienna's Theater an der Wien, Annio in *La Clemenza di Tito* and Dorabella at the Salzburg Festival, and Dorabella at Covent Garden, the Aix-en-Provence Festival, and Paris Opera. She has also sung Angelina at Paris's Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Sesto with the Paris Opera, and Giovanna Seymour in *Anna Bolena* with the Finnish National Opera.

Maria Kowroski

SOLO DANCER (GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN)

THIS SEASON Solo Dancer in *Carmen* for her Met debut.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Currently a member of New York City Ballet, she joined that company in 1995 and was promoted to Principal Dancer in 1999. Since that time she has appeared in many of the works from NYCB's repertory, including featured roles in Balanchine's *Agon*,

Apollo, *Bugaku*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Titania), *The Nutcracker* (Sugarplum Fairy, Dewdrop, and Coffee), *Jewels* ("Emeralds," "Rubies," and "Diamonds"), *Swan Lake*, and *Union Jack*. She has also danced featured roles in works by Ulysses Dove, Eliot Feld, Robert La Fosse, Peter Martins, Jerome Robbins, and Richard Tanner, among others, and has appeared as a guest artist with St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Ballet in productions of *Swan Lake* and *Jewels* and with the Munich Ballet in *Apollo* and *Brahms Schoenberg Quartet*.

Roberto Alagna

TENOR (CLICHY-SOUS-BOIS, FRANCE)

THIS SEASON Don José in *Carmen* at the Met and Covent Garden, Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Des Grieux in *Manon* at the Vienna State Opera, Cavaradossi in *Tosca* at the Orange Festival, and concerts in Paris, Brussels, and Monte Carlo.

MET APPEARANCES Ruggero in *La Rondine*, Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Canio in *Pagliacci*, Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Radamès in *Aida*, Rodolfo in *La Bohème* (debut, 1996), Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, the Duke in *Rigoletto*, Don José, Roméo, Faust, and Werther.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Cavaradossi in *Tosca* at Munich's Bavarian State Opera, Rodolfo and Werther at Turin's Teatro Regio, Manrico in *Il Trovatore* in Paris, Canio and Don José in Verona, and Ruggero and Faust at Covent Garden. Other notable engagements include Marius in the world premiere of Vladimir Cosma's *Marius et Fanny* in Marseilles, Rodolfo at La Scala, Roméo at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Salzburg Festival, and Gabriele Adorno in *Simon Boccanegra* at the Salzburg Easter Festival.

Martin Harvey

SOLO DANCER (SWINDON, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON Solo Dancer in *Carmen* for his Met debut.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Currently starring as Johnny Castle in the West End production of *Dirty Dancing*, he was formerly a First Soloist with London's Royal Ballet, where he appeared in principal roles that include Prince Rudolf in *Mayerling*, the title role of *Onegin*, Colas in *La Fille Mal Gardée*, Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*, Lescaut in *Manon*, Eros in *Sylvia*, Hilarion in *Giselle*, and Faun in *Afternoon of a Faun*. He appeared as Oliver Twist in a UK tour of *Oliver!* and as Michael in *Peter Pan* at London's Aldwych Theatre; has danced as a guest artist with Birmingham Royal Ballet, Morphoses, Irek Mukhamedov and Company, and Carlos Acosta and Friends; and has been nominated for two Critics' Dance Awards. Television and film work includes Dominic Barber in the Central TV pilot *Zero Option* and Young Pip in the *Great Expectations* film series for Primetime/Disney/HTV.

Mariusz Kwiecien

BARITONE (KRAKÓW, POLAND)

THIS SEASON Escamillo in *Carmen* at the Met, Don Giovanni at Munich's Bavarian State Opera, Riccardo in *I Puritani* and Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore* with the Vienna State Opera, and Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Covent Garden, and in Munich.

MET APPEARANCES Marcello in *La Bohème*, Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, Dr. Malatesta in *Don Pasquale*, Kuligin in *Káťa Kabanová* (debut, 1999), Silvio in *Pagliacci*, Haly in *L'Italiana in Algeri*, and Count Almaviva.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Eugene Onegin with the Bolshoi Opera, Enrico with the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Count Almaviva with the Seattle Opera, and the title role of Szymanowski's *King Roger* with Paris's Bastille Opera. He has also sung Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore* at the Paris Opera, Marcello at Covent Garden, and Don Giovanni at the Vienna State Opera, Covent Garden, and in Seattle, Houston, and San Francisco. He is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.