

GEORGES BIZET

CARMEN

CONDUCTOR
Daniele Rustioni

PRODUCTION
Carrie Cracknell

SET DESIGNER
Michael Levine

COSTUME DESIGNER
Tom Scutt

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Guy Hoare

PROJECTION DESIGNER
rocafilm/
Roland Horvath

CHOREOGRAPHER
Ann Yee

MARIA MANETTI SHREM
GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

JEANETTE LERMAN-NEUBAUER
MUSIC DIRECTOR
Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Opera in four acts

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

Saturday, January 27, 2024
1:00–4:40PM

New Production

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The Metropolitan Opera

2023–24 SEASON

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This performance is also being broadcast live on the SiriusXM app.

The 1,033rd Metropolitan Opera performance of
GEORGES BIZET'S

CARMEN

CONDUCTOR
Daniele Rustioni

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

MORALÈS
Benjamin Taylor

LE DANCAÏRE
Michael Adams

MICAËLA
Angel Blue

LE REMENDADO
Frederick Ballentine

DON JOSÉ
Piotr Beczala

ZUNIGA
Wei Wu

CARMEN
Aigul Akhmetshina

FRASQUITA
Sydney Mancasola

MERCÈDÈS
Briana Hunter

ESCAMILLO
Kyle Ketelsen

Saturday, January 27, 2024, 1:00–4:40PM

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C. Graham Berwind, III Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**

Musical Preparation **Howard Watkins,* Pierre Vallet, Caren Levine,* Dimitri Dover,*
and Bénédicte Jourdois***

Assistant Stage Directors **Melanie Bacaling, Sara Erde, Kathleen Smith Belcher, and
Paula Suozzi**

Assistant Choreographer **Chelsey Arce**

Stage Band Conductor **Joseph Lawson**

Children's Chorus Director **Anthony Piccolo**

Fight Director **Lisa Kopitsky**

Assistant Fight Director **Chris Dumont**

Intimacy Direction **Katherine M. Carter**

Prompter **Caren Levine***

Met Titles **Sonya Friedman**

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Shop, Chicago**

Costume logos created by **Daniel Cragg**

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Department**

This production uses flash and gunshot effects.

This version of *Carmen* uses, in part, the critical edition by Fritz Oeser, and is used by
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The Metropolitan Opera

2023-24 SEASON



A scene from Bizet's *Carmen*

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PHOTO: KEN HOWARD / MET OPERA

Synopsis

Act I

A contemporary American industrial town. Outside an arms factory, a group of soldiers comments on the passers-by. A newly arrived young woman, Micaëla, asks for a soldier named Don José. Moralès, his colleague, tells her that Don José will return when the next shift begins. When the shift changes, José returns, alongside Zuniga, their commanding officer. Moralès tells José that Micaëla has been looking for him. The factory bell rings, and the men gather to watch the female workers—especially their favorite, Carmen. She tells the men that love is free and obeys no rules. Only one man ignores her: Don José. Carmen throws a flower at him, and the women 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 the countryside. After Micaëla leaves, José reads the letter. He is about to throw away the flower when a fight erupts between Carmen and another woman inside the factory. Zuniga sends José in to remove Carmen, but when he brings her back outside, she refuses to answer Zuniga's questions, and he orders José to lock her up. Left alone with José, she entices him with suggestions of a rendezvous at a private party outside of town. Mesmerized, he agrees to let her get away. As he brings her to the lockup, Don José lets Carmen escape, and he is arrested.

Act II

Carmen and her friends Frasquita and Mercédès entertain a group of locals who have gathered to party in the cargo hold of a tractor-trailer truck. Carmen discovers that José has just been released from custody. Escamillo, a rodeo star, drives along the freeway with his entourage. The vehicles stop, and people spill out onto the road, listening to Escamillo boasting about his profession. He flirts with Carmen, who tells him that she is involved with someone else. Most of the partiers depart with Escamillo, leaving Carmen and her friends with the smugglers Le Dancaïre and Le Remendado, who try to convince the women to get involved in their smuggling scheme. Frasquita and Mercédès are willing to help, but Carmen refuses because she is in love. Dancaïre and Remendado withdraw as José approaches. Carmen and José are left at a deserted gas station. Carmen dances for José, but when a signal sounds in the distance, he says that he must return to duty. Carmen mocks him. To prove his love, José shows her the flower that she threw at him when they met and confesses how its scent helped him hold onto hope while he was in lockup. She is unimpressed: If he really loved her, he would quit the army and join her in a life of freedom in the mountains. José refuses, and Carmen tells him to leave. Zuniga arrives at the gas station looking for Carmen, and in a jealous rage, José fights him. The smugglers return and disarm Zuniga. José, having assaulted his superior officer, now has no choice but to join them.

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 2:50PM)

Act III

The truck, last seen flying down the highway, has crashed at a high mountain pass. Smoke rises from the shattered vehicle, and women are climbing out of the back of the truck as smugglers start to remove large boxes of guns to bring across the border. Carmen and José quarrel, and 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 money for themselves, but Carmen's cards spell death—for her and for José. Micaëla appears, frightened by the remote location and afraid to meet the woman who has turned José into a criminal. 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, particularly Carmen, to see him compete in the next rodeo. 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

In a vast rodeo arena, a vibrant and noisy crowd gathers. Carmen arrives on Escamillo's arm, surrounded by his entourage. Frasquita and Mercédès come to warn her that José is nearby and can be seen watching her. 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. She calmly tells him that their affair is over: She was born free and will live free until she dies. José persists in trying to win Carmen back. When she takes off his ring, throws it at his feet, and heads for the arena, José kills her.



Carmen on Demand

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Georges Bizet

Carmen

Premiere: Opéra Comique, Paris, 1875

Bizet's masterpiece of a woman who lives by her own rules, no matter 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 cultural figure. *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 (1838–75) 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 (1831–97) was a librettist and dramatist who would subsequently provide the libretto for Massenet's popular *Manon* (1884). His collaborator on the libretto for *Carmen* was Ludovic Halévy (1834–1908), the nephew of composer Jacques Fromental Halévy (creator of the opera *La Juive* and Bizet's father-in-law). Composer Ernest Guiraud (1837–92), 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 (1803–70), 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 was originally set in and around Seville, a city that, by the time that *Carmen* was written, had already served many operatic composers as an exotic locale conducive to erotic intrigues and turmoil (Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and Verdi's *La Forza del Destino*, among many others). The hometown of Don Juan, the city also inspired Mozart's *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 bohemian community. This season's new production, by Carrie Cracknell, updates the action to a contemporary American setting, where the issues at stake seem powerfully relevant.

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 Act II Toreador Song ("Votre toast, je peux vous le rendre ... Toréador, en garde"), the tenor's wrenching Flower Song ("La fleur que tu m'avais jetée") in Act II, and Micaëla's soaring Act III aria ("Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante"). Carmen and Don José have three memorable 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, many of Carmen's most notable solos come in the form of songs—that is, moments in which the character is actually supposed to be singing within the context of the drama. It's a dramaturgical device that suggests that she is seen first as a sort of celebrity, performing for others, and then as a projection of the fantasies of others.

Met History

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, headed by Emma Calvé, her generation's leading interpreter of the title role. Calvé would perform the part a record 138 times at the Met before 1904. Enrico Caruso sang Don José between 1906 and 1919, and the charismatic Geraldine Farrar appeared as Carmen from 1914 to 1922 (she also played the role in a popular silent movie of 1915). In more recent decades, famous Met Carmens have included Risé Stevens, Grace Bumbry, Marilyn Horne, Maria Ewing, Agnes Balsta, Waltraud Meier, Denyce Graves, Olga Borodina, and Anita Rachvelishvili. Among the memorable tenors to have performed in the opera are Giovanni Martinelli, Richard Tucker, James McCracken, Plácido Domingo, and Neil Shicoff. Arturo Toscanini led 18 star-studded performances of the opera between 1908 and 1915, and Leonard Bernstein conducted *Carmen* for the Opening Night of the 1972–73 season. A production by Peter Hall arrived in 1986, followed by another by Franco Zeffirelli in 1996. Director Richard Eyre unveiled a new staging in 2009, with Elīna Garanča and Roberto Alagna in the leading roles and Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducting in his company debut. This season, Carrie Cracknell directs a new production starring Aigul Akhmetshina, Angel Blue, Piotr Beczala, and Kyle Ketelsen, conducted by Daniele Rustioni. Later in the run, Clémentine Margaine, Ailyn Pérez, Michael Fabiano, and Ryan Speedo Green take over the principal parts, with Diego Matheuz on the podium.

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 mixture of shocked incomprehension and scandalous fascination 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 that 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. But 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 can be seen as a 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 (or in the case of Carrie Cracknell's production, a rodeo star), unlike the soldier, would never shed a tear over her infidelity.

The locales of Bizet's original setting, 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 (off stage) acts as dramatic counterpoint to José's desperate murder of Carmen outside (on stage). 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's version, 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 shock 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 Chanson bohème 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 Le Dancaïre and Le 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, about whose music and theories he knew little. 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

Professor Emeritus at Washington University in St. Louis, Hugh Macdonald has written books on Berlioz, Bizet, and Saint-Saëns.

The Cast and Creative Team



Daniele Rustioni

CONDUCTOR (MILAN, ITALY)

THIS SEASON *Carmen* at the Met and Bavarian State Opera; *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *La Fanciulla del West*, and *The Queen of Spades* in Lyon; *Madama Butterfly* and *I Vespri Siciliani* at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence; and concerts with the Swedish Radio Symphony

Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, and Dallas Symphony Orchestra.

MET APPEARANCES *Falstaff*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Rigoletto*, and *Aida* (debut, 2017).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has served as principal conductor of the Opéra National de Lyon since 2021, principal guest conductor of the Bavarian State Opera since 2021, and music director of the Ulster Orchestra since 2022, following three years as that ensemble's chief conductor. He is also conductor emeritus of the Orchestra della Toscana, where he served as music director between 2014 and 2020. He has conducted all of the major Italian symphony orchestras, as well as many throughout Europe, and has also led performance at Paris's Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Staatsoper Berlin, the Salzburg Festival, La Scala, Dutch National Opera, the Paris Opera, Pesaro's Rossini Opera Festival, and the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, among many others.



Carrie Cracknell

DIRECTOR (CARLISLE, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON *Carmen* for her debut at the Met and Marina Carr's *Portia Coughlan* at the Almeida Theatre.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Her first film, *Persuasion*, starring Dakota Johnson, was produced by MRC for Netflix and debuted on the platform at #1 in 55 countries globally. Her 2019 Broadway production of *Seawall/A Life*, starring Jake Gyllenhaal, was nominated for four Tony Awards, including Best Play. Credits at London's National Theatre include *Medea*, *A Deep Blue Sea*, *Blurred Lines*, and *Julie*. Other theater includes *Macbeth* and *Electra* (Young Vic), *Birdland* and *Pigeons* (Royal Court), *Oil* (Almeida), and *Dolls* and *Stacy* (National Theatre of Scotland). At age 26, she became the youngest artistic director in Britain when she and Natalie Abrahami took over the Gate Theatre, London. Her production of *A Doll's House* began at the Young Vic before transferring to the West End and BAM and earned her a nomination for an *Evening Standard* Theatre Award for Best Director. She directed her first opera, *Wozzeck*, at English National Opera, which was nominated for Olivier and International Opera Awards. She has been an associate director at both the Young Vic and Royal Court Theatre, and on the board of the Almeida Theatre.



Michael Levine

SET DESIGNER (TORONTO, CANADA)

THIS SEASON *Carmen* at the Met, *Doppelgänger* at Park Avenue Armory, *Chicago* at the Komische Oper Berlin, and *Jenůfa* at Lyric Opera of Chicago and in Rome.

MET PRODUCTIONS Set design for *Die Zauberflöte*, *Parsifal*, and *Madama*

Butterfly, and set and costume design for *Mefistofele* and *Eugene Onegin* (debut, 1997).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS His recent productions include *Madama Butterfly* at the Bregenz Festival; *Semele* and *The Cunning Little Vixen* at the Bavarian State Opera; *Turandot*, *Hänsel und Gretel*, *Dialogues des Carmélites*, *Carmen*, and *Rigoletto* at Dutch National Opera; *The Seagull* at Sweden's Royal Dramatic Theatre; *Jenůfa*, *Peter Grimes*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Der Fliegende Holländer* at Covent Garden; *Le Petit Prince* at the National Ballet of Canada; *Iphigénie en Tauride*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Wozzeck*, and *The Queen of Spades* in Zurich; *Die Tote Stadt* at the Komische Oper Berlin; *Billy Budd* in Madrid; *The Rape of Lucretia* at the Glyndebourne Festival; *Don Giovanni* at La Scala; and *Rigoletto* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, English National Opera, and the Canadian Opera Company. He also co-directed and designed the *Ring* cycle at the Canadian Opera Company



Tom Scutt

COSTUME DESIGNER (EPSOM, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON Costume design for *Carmen* for his debut at the Met; set and costume design for *The Cunning Little Vixen* at the Canadian Opera Company and *Die Walküre* at the Greek National Opera; set design for *Tosca* at Opera Australia; and set, costume, and club design

for *Cabaret* on Broadway.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Music credits include creative direction for Pet Shop Boys' *Dreamland* tour, Christine and the Queens live at Salle Pleyel (Apple Music), Ben Platt's *Sing to Me Instead* (Netflix), Sam Smith live at Tate Modern (Apple Music), and set design for the 2015–16 MTV VMAs. Opera credits include *The Cunning Little Vixen* at English National Opera, *Die Walküre* at the Royal Danish Opera, and *Tosca* at Opera North. He debuted on Broadway in 2015 designing sets and costumes for *Constellations* and returned with *King Charles III* (Tony nomination for costume design) and *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. He provided set and costume designs for U.K. premieres of *Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play* (Almeida), *Fairview* (Young Vic), and *A Very Expensive Poison* (Old Vic) and revivals of *Cabaret* (West End), *Summer and Smoke* (Almeida), and *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Little Shop of Horrors* (Regents Park Open Air Theatre). He is an honorary fellow of the Welsh College of Music and Drama and a resident artist at Somerset House Studios.



Guy Hoare

LIGHTING DESIGNER (LONDON, ENGLAND)

THIS SEASON *Carmen* for his debut at the Met.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS His designs for dance include Arthur Pita's *The Metamorphosis* and Mark Bruce's *Dracula*, which won the South Bank Award for Dance in 2012 and 2014, respectively. He has created work with companies in Germany, Italy, Sweden, Portugal, Cuba, Lebanon, and Australia, and in the U.K., he has collaborated with choreographers including Christopher Bruce, Shobana Jeyasingh, Akram Khan, and Alexander Whitley, as well as with Gandini Juggling. His theater designs include work at the National Theatre, Donmar Warehouse, Royal Court, Young Vic, Old Vic, Almeida, and Kiln, as well as several pieces in the West End and the 2019 Broadway production

The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED

of *Sea Wall/A Life*. His opera credits include designs for Covent Garden, English National Opera, Scottish Opera, the Bregenz Festival, the National Theatre Brno, and English Touring Opera, including the 2014 Olivier Award-winning season of *King Priam* and *Paul Bunyan*. In 2010, he was nominated for Best Lighting Designer at the TMA Awards and has been nominated three times at the Knight of Illumination Awards. He is currently an associate artist at Wilton's Music Hall in London.



rocafilm/Roland Horvath

PROJECTION DESIGNER (GRAZ, AUSTRIA)

THIS SEASON *Carmen* for their debut at the Met, *Doppelgänger* at Park Avenue Armory, *Jenůfa* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, *Turandot* at the Vienna State Opera, and *Aida* and *Semele* at the Bavarian State Opera.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Austrian filmmakers Carmen Zimmermann and Roland Horvath set up their production company rocafilm in 2010 to produce videos for operas and plays, as well as documentary films. For the operatic stage, they have collaborated with directors including Damiano Michieletto, Claus Guth, Robert Carsen, Rolando Villazón, Moshe Leiser, Patrice Caurier, Luc Bondy, and Vera Nemirova. Their work has appeared at the Salzburg Festival, La Scala, Dutch National Opera, Paris Opera, Salzburg Easter Festival, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre, Covent Garden, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, and in Vienna, Venice, Rome, Madrid, Valencia, Tokyo, Graz, Dresden, and Naples, among others. In December 2020, they collaborated with director Jürgen Flimm on a production of Schiller's *Don Karlos*, *Infant von Spanien* at Schauspiel Köln. They created the documentaries *Between Days and Dreams* in 2011 and *Sister Heart* in 2015.



Ann Yee

CHOREOGRAPHER (CINCINNATI, OHIO)

THIS SEASON *Carmen* for her debut at the Met, Lucy Kirkwood's *The Human Body* at the Donmar Warehouse, and *Next to Normal* in the West End.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS As a director, her credits include *Rusalka* at Covent Garden and *As You Like It* at Dallas Theater Center. She made her Broadway debut in 2017 providing the musical staging for *Sunday in the Park with George* and returned in 2021 as the choreographer on the Olivier Award-winning and Tony Award-nominated *Caroline, or Change*. Her choreography has recently appeared in the West End with the Olivier-nominated *South Pacific* at Sadler's Wells. Her work has also been seen at the Young Vic, Old Vic, Almeida Theatre, English National Opera, Royal Shakespeare Company, Shakespeare's Globe, Chichester Festival, Hampstead Theatre, Salzburg Festival, Amsterdam's Royal Theatre Carré, Göteborg Opera, Public Theater, St. Ann's Warehouse, Chicago's Goodman Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and Buenos Aires's Teatro Colón, among others. Her work in film includes *A Bigger Splash*, starring Ralph Fiennes, and the Royal Court short *Off the Page: PPE*.



Aigul Akhmetshina

MEZZO-SOPRANO (KIRGIZ-MIYAKI, RUSSIA)

THIS SEASON The title role of *Carmen* at the Met, Bavarian State Opera, Deutsche Opera Berlin, Covent Garden, and Glyndebourne Festival; *Carmen* in Marina Abramović's *7 Deaths of Maria Callas* at English National Opera; Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* in Rome; and Elisabetta in

Maria Stuarda in Naples.

MET APPEARANCES Maddalena in *Rigoletto* (debut, 2022).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Romeo in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* in concert at the Salzburg Festival; Charlotte in *Werther*, Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Lola in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and Maddalena at Covent Garden; Elisabetta at Dutch National Opera; Olga in *Eugene Onegin* at San Francisco Opera; Rosina at the Paris Opera and Deutsche Oper Berlin; Pauline/Masha in *The Queen of Spades* in Baden-Baden; Fenena in *Nabucco* in Hamburg; the title role of *La Cenerentola* in Madrid; Varvara in *Káťa Kabanová* at the Glyndebourne Festival; and *Carmen* in Moscow. She has also sung Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus* in Tokyo, Rosina at the Israeli Opera, Dulcinée in Massenet's *Don Quichotte* at Wexford Festival Opera, Mlle. Dangeville in *Adriana Lecouvreur* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Preziosilla in *La Forza del Destino* and *Carmen* at Covent Garden.



Angel Blue

SOPRANO (LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA)

THIS SEASON Micaëla in *Carmen*, Magda in *La Rondine*, and Liù in *Turandot* at the Met; Leonora in *Il Trovatore* at San Francisco Opera; the title role of *Tosca* at the Vienna State Opera and Covent Garden; and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the San Francisco Symphony.

MET APPEARANCES Violetta in *La Traviata*, Bess in *Porgy and Bess*, Destiny/Loneliness/Greta in Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, and Musetta and Mimi (debut, 2017) in *La Bohème*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include *Tosca* at LA Opera, Violetta at Houston Grand Opera and Covent Garden, the title role of *Aida* at Covent Garden and in concert at Detroit Opera, Marguerite in *Faust* at the Paris Opera, and Mimi at the Bavarian State Opera. She has also sung Mimi in Hamburg, Dresden, and at the Canadian Opera Company; *Tosca* at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence; Violetta at La Scala and in Winnipeg; Bess and Violetta at Seattle Opera; Liù at San Diego Opera; and Myrtle Wilson in John Harbison's *The Great Gatsby* in Dresden. She was the 2020 recipient of the Met's Beverly Sills Artist Award, established by Agnes Varis and Karl Leightman.



Piotr Beczala

TENOR (CZECHOWICE-DZIEDZICE, POLAND)

THIS SEASON Don José in *Carmen* at the Met and Covent Garden, the title role of *Lohengrin* at the Paris Opera, Cavaradossi in *Tosca* and the title role of *Faust* at the Vienna State Opera, Jontek in Moniuszko's *Halka* in Madrid, Cavaradossi in *La Palmas*, Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Prince Sou-Chong in Lehár's *Das Land des Lächelns* in Zurich, and concerts and recitals with the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, at the Royal Swedish Opera and Hungarian State Opera, and in Baden-Baden, Dresden, and Zurich.

MET APPEARANCES Since his 2006 debut as the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto*, he has sung more than 150 performances of 14 roles, including *Lohengrin*, Loris Ipanoff in *Fedora*, Lenski in *Eugene Onegin*, Maurizio in *Adriana Lecouvreur*, Rodolfo in *Luisa Miller* and *La Bohème*, Gustavo III in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Vaudémont in *Iolanta*, the Prince in *Rusalka*, and *Faust*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has appeared with most of the world's leading opera companies, including the Salzburg Festival, Bavarian State Opera, Polish National Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Bayreuth Festival, Staatsoper Berlin, La Scala, San Francisco Opera, and Lyric Opera of Chicago, among many others.



Kyle Ketelsen

BASS-BARITONE (CLINTON, IOWA)

THIS SEASON Escamillo in *Carmen* and Richard in Kevin Puts's *The Hours* at the Met, the title role of *Don Giovanni* at the Paris Opera and Salzburg Festival, Jochanaan in *Salome* in Hamburg, Mozart's *Requiem* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Verdi's *Requiem* with the Madison Symphony Orchestra.

MET APPEARANCES Richard, Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Escamillo, Mr. Flint in *Billy Budd*, Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, and Angelotti in *Tosca* (debut, 2006).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Golaud at LA Opera and in Seville, Don Giovanni at the Vienna State Opera, Dr. Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'Amore* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Bluebeard in *Bluebeard's Castle* at the Canadian Opera Company, Caspar in *Der Freischütz* at the Bavarian State Opera, and Adahm in Stephan's *Die Ersten Menschen* at Dutch National Opera. He has also sung Méphistophélès in *La Damnation de Faust* in concert with Les Siècles; Leporello at Washington National Opera, Lucerne Festival, the Dallas Opera, and in Hamburg and Lyon; Count Rodolfo in *La Sonnambula* in concert and Selim in *Il Turco in Italia* in Zurich; Escamillo in San Francisco Opera; and the King of Scotland in *Ariodante* at Lyric Opera of Chicago.