

# PITTSBURGH OPERA

January 22, 2020

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## Pittsburgh Opera presents the irresistible *Carmen*, March 28 – April 5 at the Benedum Center

<b>What:</b>	<b>Carmen</b> Music by <a href="#">Georges Bizet</a> , libretto by <a href="#">Henri Meilhac</a> and <a href="#">Ludovic Halévy</a>
<b>Where:</b>	Benedum Center, downtown Pittsburgh
<b>When:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sat., March 28, 2020 * 8:00 PM</li><li>• Tues., March 31, 2020 * 7:00 PM</li><li>• Thurs., April 2, 2020 * 10:00 AM – Student Matinee</li><li>• Fri., April 3, 2020 * 7:30 PM</li><li>• Sun., April 5, 2020 * 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 \$14; 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 16, 12:30 PM) - location TBA  Full Dress Rehearsal (Thurs., March 26, 7:00 PM) - Benedum Center
<b>Related Events</b>  See pages 6-8 of this release.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">March Brown Bag concert</a> (3/7)</li><li>• <a href="#">Roses &amp; Thorns fashion show</a> (3/9)</li><li>• <a href="#">Opera Up Close</a> (3/15)</li><li>• <a href="#">WQED Preview</a> (3/21 &amp; 3/27)</li><li>• <a href="#">Pittsburgh Opera mobile app</a> (real-time during all performances)</li><li>• <a href="#">New Guard Opening Night Lounge</a> (3/28)</li><li>• <a href="#">Audio Commentary</a> (3/31)</li><li>• <a href="#">Meet the Artists</a> (3/31)</li></ul>



*Photo by Cory Weaver*

Set in 1830 Seville, Spain, **Carmen** is a roller-coaster of lust, deception, and murder. Fiery gypsy 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.

Single tickets for adults start at \$14; kids and teens ages 6-18 are half-price. For tickets call 412-456-6666, visit the Box Office at Theater Square, or go online at [pittsburghopera.org/tickets](http://pittsburghopera.org/tickets) or [CulturalDistrict.org](http://CulturalDistrict.org). Group discounts, including student discounts, are available.

In addition, Pittsburgh Opera's annual [Student Matinee](#) will introduce 2,500+ school students grades 3-12 to this lively, colorful opera on Thursday, April 2nd at the Benedum Center. Pittsburgh Opera's [Resident Artists](#) take lead roles in the Student Matinee, and are accompanied by the Pittsburgh Opera Orchestra. Tickets are \$11, and are reserved through Pittsburgh Opera's Education Department. For more information, please [contact Marilyn Michalka Egan, Ph.D., Director of Education](#), at 412-281-0912, ext. 242.

## 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, 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 ("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 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 ("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

- Single tickets for adults start at \$14; tickets for kids and teens ages 6-18 are half-price. Call 412-456-6666 or visit [pittsburghopera.org/tickets](http://pittsburghopera.org/tickets).
- Group discounts, including student discounts, are available. For more information about [group ticket services and discounts](#) for groups of six or more people, contact Regina Connolly at 412-281-0912, ext. 213 or [groups@pittsburghopera.org](mailto:groups@pittsburghopera.org).

## Sponsors

- [PNC](#) is the 2019-20 Pittsburgh Opera Season Sponsor.
- [WQED-FM](#) is Pittsburgh Opera's Media Sponsor.
- [Ambridge Regional Distribution and Manufacturing Center](#) is the Tuesday performance and 'Meet the Artists' post-show event sponsor.
- The [DTE Energy Foundation](#) is the Brown Bag concert series sponsor.
- [Porter Wright](#) is the New Guard Lounge sponsor

## Cast and Artistic Team: *Carmen*

Carmen	<a href="#">Aleks Romano</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="#">Natasha Wilson</a> <sup>*</sup>
Mercédès	<a href="#">Antonia Botti-Lodovico</a> <sup>*</sup>
Dancäire	<a href="#">Benjamin Taylor</a> <sup>**</sup>
Remendado	<a href="#">Angel Romero</a> <sup>*</sup>
Zuniga	<a href="#">Tyler Zimmerman</a> <sup>*</sup>
Morales	<a href="#">Yazid Gray</a> <sup>*</sup>
Lillas Pastia	Bob Rak <sup>+</sup>
Conductor	<a href="#">Timothy Myers</a>
Stage Director	<a href="#">Garnett Bruce</a>
Set designer	R. Keith Brumley
Costume Designer	Malabar
Lighting Designer	Andrew Ostrowski
Wig and Make-up Designer	James Geier
Stage Manager	Cindy Knight
Asst Conductor	<a href="#">Glenn Lewis</a>
Chorus Master	<a href="#">Mark Trawka</a>
Associate Coach/Pianist	<a href="#">James Lesniak</a>
Asst Stage Director	<a href="#">Matthew Haney</a> <sup>*</sup>
Asst Stage Manager	Alex W. Seidel
Asst Stage Manager	Jin Ah Lee

\* Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist

\*\* Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist alumni

+ Pittsburgh Opera debut

## Related Events for *Carmen*

### **Brown Bag concert**

**Saturday, March 7, Noon - 1:00 PM**

**George R. White Opera Studio, Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, [2425 Liberty Avenue](#)**

You're invited to our free March Brown Bag concert! The stage gets fiery this month to complement our production of **Carmen**.

The performance takes place in the George R. White studio at Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, 2425 Liberty Avenue in the Strip. The concert is free and open to everyone. Bring a friend and bring a lunch! Meet our [Resident Artists](#) afterward at an informal reception.

This concert is being sponsored by the [DTE Energy Foundation](#). Doors open at 11:30 AM. No reservations needed, except for handicapped parking in the Pittsburgh Opera garage. If you need a handicapped parking spot, please call Sue Solito at 412-281-0912, ext. 100. Handicapped parking reservations are due by 4:00 PM Friday, March 6th.

For more information: <https://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/march-brown-bag-concert4>

### **Roses & Thorns: A Pittsburgh Opera Fashion Event**

**Monday, March 9, 2020 6:00 - 8:00 PM**

**George R. White Opera Studio, Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, [2425 Liberty Avenue](#)**

Join us Monday, March 9th, 2020 for *Roses & Thorns: A Pittsburgh Opera Fashion Event*. This year, we are partnering with designer [Lela Rose](#), [Choices Pittsburgh](#) and [Studio Booth](#) to present an unforgettable fashionable evening.

For more information: [pittsburghopera.org/fashion](http://pittsburghopera.org/fashion)

### **Opera Up Close - Carmen**

**Sunday, March 15, 2020 2:00 - 3:30pm**

**Founders' Room, Pittsburgh Opera Headquarters, [2425 Liberty Avenue](#)**

Join Robert Boldin, Artistic Administrator, and special guests from the production, for an in-depth look at [Carmen](#).

Admission is \$5; the event is free to members of [FRIENDS of Pittsburgh Opera](#), [New Guard](#), and donors at \$50+. No reservations needed, except for handicapped parking in the Pittsburgh Opera garage.

If you need a handicapped parking spot, please call Sue Solito at 412-281-0912 ext. 100. Handicapped parking reservations are due by 4:00 PM Friday, March 13th.

***Carmen* Previews on WQED-FM 89.3 and WQED.ORG/FM**  
**Saturday, March 21, 12:30 - 1:00 PM**  
**Friday, March 27, 7:00 - 7:30 PM**

Spicy and sexy, *Carmen* is an operatic classic. Make time for this half-hour preview of Bizet's [Carmen](#), with candid commentary from singers and directors.

Hosted by WQED's Anna Singer, and broadcast over the airwaves on WQED-FM 89.3, as well as the WQED website, WQED's preview gives listeners an engaging introduction to the story, music, and singers of the opera.

For more information: <https://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/wqed-preview-carmen>

**New Guard Opening Night Cocktail Lounge**  
**Saturday, March 28 7:00 PM**  
**Benedum Center**

Pittsburgh Opera [New Guard](#) Members can enjoy the private New Guard Lounge at the Benedum on opening night of all our operas.

The New Guard Lounge has its own private bartender, so you can skip the wait at the other bars. The Lounge is a great place to hang out with other members pre-show and during intermission.

The Pittsburgh Opera New Guard is proudly sponsored by [Porter Wright](#). For more information about the New Guard: <https://www.pittsburghopera.org/about/newguard>

**Pittsburgh Opera Mobile App**  
**Real-time during each performance**

Pittsburgh Opera's innovative mobile app delivers real-time supplemental content to patrons via their smartphones during the performance. Free for both iOS and Android devices. Please use responsibly and be considerate of those around you. Learn more at [pittsburghopera.org/app](http://pittsburghopera.org/app).

**Audio Commentary: *Carmen***  
**Tuesday, March 31, 7:00 PM**  
**Benedum Center**

Ticketholders with visual impairments are invited to use [Pittsburgh Opera's Audio Description service](#) at our Tuesday performances. Trained volunteers describe the supertitles, scenery, costumes, and stage action. The listeners hear these descriptions via assistive listening devices. Those wishing to use Audio Description should reserve seats to the Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup> performance of ***Carmen*** by contacting Regina Connolly at 412-281-0912, ext. 213, or [groups@pittsburghopera.org](mailto:groups@pittsburghopera.org). Braille and large-print programs are available at all performances.

**Meet the Artists of *Carmen***  
**Tuesday, March 31, immediately following the performance**  
**Benedum Center Lower Lobby**

Pittsburgh Opera [General Director Christopher Hahn](#) interviews the stars of the show after the Tuesday evening performance.

You can ask your own questions and mingle with the artists too! This event is free to all Tuesday ticketholders.

“Meet the Artists” is generously sponsored by Ambridge Regional Distribution and Manufacturing Center. Learn more at <https://www.pittsburghopera.org/calendar/detail/meet-the-artists-carmen>

***COMING UP NEXT for Pittsburgh Opera:***

**Vincenzo Bellini’s masterpiece *Norma*, April 25 – May 3**

Pittsburgh Opera celebrates its 81st season in 2019-20. 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.

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