

Georges Bizet

CARMEN

This encore presentation was filmed live on January 16, 2010

Production

Richard Eyre

Set and Costume Designer

Rob Howell

Lighting Designer

Peter Mumford

Choreographer

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Associate Costume Designer

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CONDUCTOR **Yannick Nézet-Séguin**

MICAËLA **Barbara Frittoli**

CARMEN **Elīna Garanča**

DON JOSÉ **Roberto Alagna**

ESCAMILLO **Teddy Tahu Rhodes**

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ACT I In Seville by a cigarette factory, soldiers comment on the townspeople. Among them is Micaëla, a peasant girl, who asks for the corporal Don José. Moralès, another corporal, tells her he will return later. When Lieutenant Zuniga arrives with the relief guard, José learns that Micaëla has been looking for him. The factory bell rings and 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. Only Don José pays no attention to her. Carmen throws a flower at him, and the girls go back to work. José hides the flower when Micaëla returns. She brings a letter from José's mother, who lives in the country. As he begins to read the letter, Micaëla leaves. 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 that night. Mesmerized, he agrees to let her escape. As they leave for prison, Carmen escapes. Don José is arrested.

ACT II At the tavern, Zuniga tells Carmen that José has just been released. The bullfighter Escamillo enters and flirts with Carmen, who tells him that she is involved with someone else. After the other guests have left with Escamillo, the smugglers Dancaire and Remendado explain their latest scheme. Carmen's friends Frasquita and Mercédès are willing to help, but Carmen refuses because she is in love. José approaches. Alone with him, Carmen arouses his jealousy by telling him how she danced for Zuniga. José declares his love, but says he must return to the barracks. When Carmen mocks him, José shows her the flower she threw at him and confesses how it made him not lose hope during the weeks in prison. 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 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 death for Carmen—and for José. Micaëla appears, frightened by the mountains 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, 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. 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. José stabs her to death.