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Henri Meilhac, Ludovic Halevy
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The Metropolitan Opera Presents

Georges Bizet's

Carmen

LIBRETTO, BACKGROUND, AND PHOTOS



Music by Georges Bizet
Libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy
Based on the novella by Prosper Mérimée

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A riveting story of fatal attraction between a beguiling, strong-willed gypsy and a naive but passionate soldier who falls under her spell, Georges Bizet's *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 France's 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 men seemingly except José, who loves the innocent country girl Micaela. 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 Carmen's affections, Don José's explosive jealousy clashes with Carmen's resolve to remain true to herself, leading to one of opera's fiercest confrontations and most unforgettable conclusions.