

### STRONG-WILLED, FIERY, AND TEMPESTUOUS: THE CHARACTER

of Carmen has captivated the world's imagination for more than a century and a half. The beautiful gypsy, who first came to life in Prosper Mérimée's 1845 novella and became immortal through Bizet's operatic adaptation 30 years later, has been portrayed by stars from Rita Hayworth to Beyoncé, and her story has been told in flamenco, in hip-hop, in settings from the Netherlands to South Africa, in a "Tom and Jerry" cartoon, and in more than 70 films by directors as diverse as Charlie Chaplin and Jean-Luc Godard.

This season, director Richard Eyre's hit production of Bizet's opera, first seen in 2009, returns to the Met stage with Georgian mezzo-soprano Anita Rachvelishvili reprising her acclaimed performance of the title role, opposite Latvian tenor Aleksandrs Antonenko as Don José. "*Carmen* is about sex, violence, and racism—and its corollary: freedom," Eyre explained before his staging originally premiered. "It is one of the inalienably great works of art. It's sexy, in every sense. And I think it should be shocking."

*Carmen* can be seen as a crucial bridge between the more conservative French tradition of opéra comique and the verismo style so popular in late-19th century Italy. After decades dominated by the Romantic movement—in which idealism and sentiment were the aesthetic order of the day—verismo probed the passions of human existence through more realistic expression, reflecting life as it is lived, including all its sordidness and violence.

This guide is intended to cultivate student interest in *Carmen*, whether or not they have any prior acquaintance with opera. The activities on the following pages are designed to provide context, deepen background knowledge, and enrich the overall experience of this *Live in HD* transmission. This guide also aligns with key strands of the Common Core Standards.

### THE WORK:

#### CARMEN

An opera in four acts, sung in French

Music by Georges Bizet

Libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy

Based on the novella by Prosper Mérimée

First performed on March 3, 1875 in Paris, France

### PRODUCTION

Pablo Heras-Casado, Conductor

Richard Eyre, Production

Rob Howell, Set & Costume Designer

Peter Mumford, Lighting Designer

Christopher Wheeldon, Choreographer

### STARRING

(In order of vocal appearance):

John Moore

MORALES

Anita Hartig

MICAËLA (soprano)

Aleksandrs Antonenko

DON JOSÉ (tenor)

Keith Miller

ZUNIGA (baritone)

Anita Rachvelishvili

CARMEN (mezzo-soprano)

Kiri Deonarine

FRASQUITA (soprano)

Jennifer Johnson Cano

MERCÈDES (mezzo-soprano)

Ildar Abdrazakov

ESCAMILLO (baritone)

Malcolm MacKenzie

LE DANCAÏRE (tenor)

Eduardo Valdes

LE REMENDADO (tenor)



HARTIG



RACHVELISHVILI



ANTONENKO



ABDRAZAKOV

Production a gift of Mrs. Paul Desmarais Sr.

Revival a gift of Rolex

This guide includes four sections and three types of activities.

- **THE SOURCE, THE STORY, WHO'S WHO IN CARMEN, AND A COMPOSER TIMELINE**
- **CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:** Three activities designed to align with and support various Common Core Standard strands used in ELA, History/Social Studies, and Music curricula
- **PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES:** Two activities to be used during *The Met: Live in HD* transmission, highlighting specific aspects of this production
- **POST-SHOW DISCUSSION:** A wrap-up activity, integrating the *Live in HD* experience into the students' understanding of the performing arts and the humanities
- **STUDENT RESOURCE PAGES:** Classroom-ready worksheets supporting the activities in the guide

The activities in this guide will focus on several aspects of *Carmen*:

- The relationship between Bizet's score and the libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy
- The main characters of *Carmen*, Don José, and Escamillo, as portrayed through music, words, and dramatic action
- The musical style of Bizet's work and its relationship to Spanish and "gypsy" culture
- The musical innovation introduced by the composer in this opera
- The words of the libretto seen as literature
- The historical and cultural setting and the way it informs contextual understanding of the opera
- The opera as a unified piece of art, involving the choices made by the composer, the librettist, and the artists of the Metropolitan Opera

This guide is intended to cultivate your students' interest in *Carmen*, whether or not they have any prior acquaintance with opera. It includes activities for students with a wide range of musical backgrounds and seeks to encourage them to think about opera—and the performing arts as a whole—as a medium of both entertainment and creative expression.

**THE SOURCE: MÉRIMÉE'S *CARMEN*** French writer Prosper Mérimée today is remembered primarily for his 1845 novella *Carmen*, on which Bizet's opera is based. The composer and his librettists used only one of the story's four parts as their inspiration, eliminating many of the original novella's elements (including the character of Carmen's husband) and adding others. The Spanish setting among the Roma, however, is a distinctive element of both works.

**ACT I** *Spain.* 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. 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. As he begins to read the letter, Micaëla leaves. José is about to throw away the flower when a fight erupts



## VOICE TYPE

Since the early 19th century, singing voices have usually been classified in six basic types, three male and three female, according to their range:

### SOPRANO

the highest-pitched type of human voice, normally possessed only by women and boys

### MEZZO-SOPRANO

the female voice whose range lies between the soprano and the contralto (Italian “mezzo” = middle, medium)

### CONTRALTO

the lowest female voice, also called an alto

### COUNTERTENOR

a male singing voice whose vocal range is equivalent to that of a contralto, mezzo-soprano, or (less frequently) a soprano, usually through use of falsetto

### TENOR

the highest naturally occurring voice type in adult males

### BARITONE

the male voice lying below the tenor and above the bass

### BASS

the lowest male voice

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. 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. Zuniga tells Carmen that José has just been released. The bullfighter Escamillo enters, boasting about the pleasures of his profession, 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. 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 kept him from losing 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 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. 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. She takes off his ring and throws it at his feet before heading for the arena. José stabs her to death.



## WHO'S WHO IN CARMEN

CHARACTER		PRONUNCIATION	VOICE TYPE	THE LOWDOWN
Carmen	A beautiful and strong-willed "gypsy" (or Roma) woman	CAR-men (in French pronunciation, car-MEN)	Mezzo-soprano	Tempestuous and sexually forthright, Carmen disregards the conventional female behavior of her time.
Don José	A corporal in the dragoons	DON hoe-ZAY (in French, zho-ZAY)	Tenor	An honest soldier whose love for Carmen leads him to betray his sense of honor and to leave behind the traditional life he has known.
Escamillo	A famous bullfighter	ess-kah-MEE-yo	Baritone	Self-confident and masculine, he shares Carmen's approach to passion and love and is as physical and fearless as she is.
Micaëla	A girl from Don José's home village	mee-kah-AY-lah	Soprano	Sweet and naïve, she is in love with Don José.
Zuniga	A captain of the dragoons	zoo-NEE-gah	Bass	Don José's superior officer, who wants Carmen for himself. A cold man, he loves his power and position.
Moralès	A corporal	moh-RAH-les	Baritone	A fellow officer and acquaintance of Don José's
Frasquita	A friend of Carmen's	frah-SKEE-tah	Soprano	A gypsy girl
Mercédès	A friend of Carmen's	mayr-SAY-dess	Soprano	Another gypsy
Lillas Pastia	An innkeeper	LEE-yahs PAH-styah	spoken	Owens a tavern that is a gathering place of the gypsies.
Dancaïre and Remendado	Gypsy smugglers	dahn-kah-EER reh-men-DAH-doh	Tenor and Baritone	Living and working their trade in the mountains.

## Georges Bizet



- 1838** Georges Bizet is born on 25 October in Bougival, near Paris. His parents were both amateur musicians and his mother was his earliest musical influence.
- 1845** Prosper Mérimée writes *Carmen*, the novella that later forms the basis for Bizet's opera. It reflects Mérimée's abiding interest in exotic locales and fierce passions.
- 1848** Bizet enrolls in the Paris Conservatoire, where he receives a rigorous musical education.
- 1853** Bizet begins composition studies with Fromental Halévy, a member of a prominent artistic family.
- 1855** At age 17, Bizet composes his first opera, *La Maison du Docteur*.
- 1856** Bizet completes his second opera, *Le Docteur Miracle*, to a libretto by Léon Battu and Ludovic Halévy (the nephew of his composition professor).
- 1857** Bizet wins the prestigious Prix de Rome, the annual competition hosted by the Académie des Beaux-Arts. It provides him with funding to study in Rome for three years.
- 1863** Financed by a commission from the Théâtre Lyrique, Bizet composes *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* ("The Pearl Fishers"). It is the first of his full-length operas to be staged. While it receives 18 performances, a respectable number, Bizet considers it to be a failure. The press derides it, both for its libretto, which they consider absurd, as well as for its music, which they call noisy and offensive.
- 1866** Bizet receives a commission to compose another opera for the Théâtre Lyrique. The result is *La Jolie Fille de Perth* ("The Fair Maid of Perth"), based on the novel by Sir Walter Scott. While better reviewed by the press, it too achieves only 18 performances.
- 1870** The Franco-Prussian War breaks out in July. Bizet enlists in the French National Guard along with several other well-known composers (Massenet and Saint-Saëns among them), and endures the Siege of Paris throughout the fall.





**1871** Shortly after the declaration of peace in June, Bizet joins with other composers with the goal of revitalizing music composition. His commissions become somewhat more regular from this point, though he is never far from misfortune, financial hardship, and disappointment.

**1873** At the invitation of the directors of the Opéra Comique, Bizet agrees to work with librettists Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy to produce a new opera. Bizet proposes a work based on Mérimée's *Carmen*. The project moves forward despite the theater's hesitancy to treat violent death and overt sexuality on its stage.

**1873** Bizet is invited to compose a new work for the Opéra, Paris's leading theater and long the seat of traditional French grand opéra. He works quickly and by October has drafted *Don Rodrigue*, but before the work can be staged the theater burns down on October 28.

**1874** Rehearsals begin for *Carmen*. Bizet withstands objections from not only the orchestra and chorus (which is required to smoke and fight on stage) but also the theater's directors, who consider the final on-stage murder too extreme for the family audiences of the Opéra Comique.

**1875** *Carmen* receives its premiere at the Opéra Comique on March 3. The press is predictably outraged, but the opera continues on for 47 additional performances.

**1875** After suffering a series of heart attacks, Bizet dies on June 3, only 36 years old. His remains are buried at the Père-Lachaise Cemetery in Paris.



## English Language Arts

### IN PREPARATION

For this activity, students will need the reproducible resources available at the back of this guide entitled *On Life and Love: A Close Look at Carmen's Habanera*, as well as the audio selections from *Carmen* available online or on the accompanying CD.

### CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

English, Creative Writing, Music

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- To examine and analyze how the music relates to the text of the libretto
- To explore the challenges of adapting a literary text to a new genre or era
- To examine and analyze the libretto's relevance to contemporary culture and society
- To identify expressions of similar themes and content in popular culture

## On Life and Love: A Close Look at Carmen's Habanera

Carmen's famous entrance aria "L'amour est un oiseau rebelle" ("Love is a rebellious bird"), is commonly referred to as the Habanera, a term that describes a form of Cuban dance music brought to Spain by sailors (see the sidebar *The Habanera* for a more detailed description). The Habanera has a distinctive rhythm and sound, and in Bizet's opera, its haunting melody and cadence communicate the passion and intensity of Carmen's character. Similarly, the words clearly illustrate her philosophy of life and love.

Carmen's story has been translated and transformed into many different mediums. In this activity, students will translate her signature aria into other forms of music and lyrics. They will:

- read a short informational text about the Habanera form
- listen to Carmen's Habanera
- read the text in English
- take the text and "translate" it into another genre, such as rap, free verse poetry, or a country and western song

### STEPS

Carmen's Habanera is one of the most famous arias in all opera. It encapsulates the character's elusive and exotic allure and reveals her essential nature: she is a gypsy and belongs to no nation, she is sexually emancipated, and she lives outside of traditional boundaries. She declares, "Love is a gypsy child, she has never heard of law." Conventional notions of love and female behavior do not apply to her and she refuses to be tied down. In this activity, students will write and revise their own versions of Carmen's Habanera, and then discuss how these values and traits can be adapted to other genres of lyric writing while remaining true to the spirit of Bizet's original material.

**STEP 1:** Distribute the *On Life and Love* reproducible handout found in the back of this guide. Ask one or several students to read aloud the note on the historical background and explain that this information will be necessary to complete the in-class activity.

**STEP 2:** Have a student read aloud the text of the Habanera itself (included in the same handout). Conduct a short class-wide discussion of its meaning and function. One key point to underscore is that this text can be read as the lyrics to a song or as a stand-alone poem. If appropriate, ask students to identify other poems that they have studied in class which would work as both a lyric and as poetry. Explore other connections they may have to dramatic text or lyrics, such as pop songs or monologues from movies and TV.



**STEP 3:** Play Bizet’s Habanera (**Track 1** on the accompanying CD) and have students follow along with the English translation in front of them.

Ask them if they would now read the text differently: has hearing the music changed their opinion about how the text works? Some guiding questions may be:

- Does the text convey more meaning when set to music?
- Does the music/melody sound like it fits the words? Why or why not? (Students do not need to engage in musical analysis; the point is to encourage them to articulate what they hear and to justify their opinions.) Some aspects may include:
  - Tempo (speed of the music)
  - Dynamics (volume of the music)
  - Orchestration (which instruments the composer uses during any given moment)
  - Key changes (major vs. minor keys give the music different psychological or emotional inflections). For a more in-depth list of music terms, see the *Ten Essential Musical Terms* sidebar.

**CARMEN AND THE SILVER SCREEN:** *Carmen* has been adapted in many forms and media, from silent movies to a flamenco-themed film. One of the most acclaimed versions is *Carmen Jones*, a 1943 Broadway musical that combines Bizet’s original music with new English lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein (co-creator of *The Sound of Music* and *The King and I*) and places the story in an African-American setting during World War II. The movie version with Dorothy Dandridge and Harry Belafonte was released in 1954.



## COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND CARMEN

This activity directly supports the following ELA–Literacy Common Core Strands:

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.1


Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

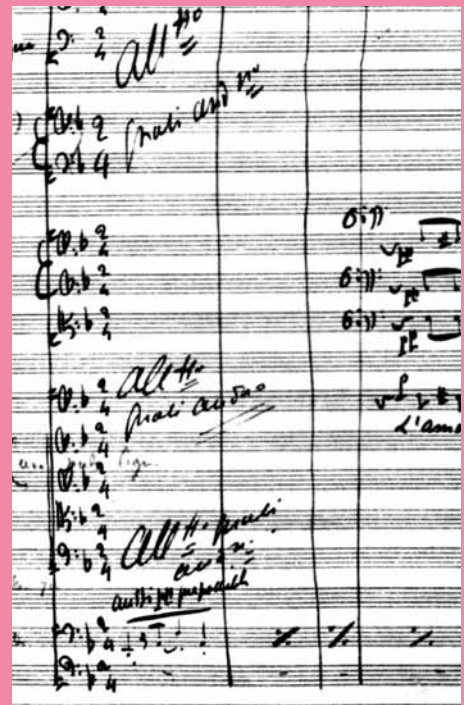
### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1c

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

**THE HABANERA** The term “habanera” refers to the Cuban contradanza, a genre of dance music popular in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The name, derived from the city of Havana, Cuba, was coined when European sailors introduced the dance to their home countries, where it became popular with composers, particularly in France and Spain. The Habanera is characterized by a dotted rhythm  and is often performed as a song with lyrics. Bizet immortalized the form in *Carmen*—the title heroine’s Act I Habanera is among the most famous arias in all of opera. The composer adapted its melody from a popular Habanera of the era, entitled “El Arreglito.” When he discovered that it was not in fact a folk song but a relatively recent work by a Basque composer named Sebastián Yradier, he added a note to the vocal score of *Carmen*, citing the source.



- Do students understand more about the character of Carmen having heard her singing the Habanera, or did they feel that the text revealed her character in equal depth?

**STEP 4:** Now that the students have a basic understanding of the text and music, ask them to consider the following questions:

- Could the message of the Habanera apply to different kinds of people in different times and places?
- Does its meaning change when set to music from a different era?
- Could its text or meaning be adapted to other kinds of literary expression?

**STEP 5:** Based on this conversation, ask your students to write their own version of Carmen’s Habanera. Divide your class into two or more groups—multiple small groups will work well for this exercise. Students can also write their own adaptation individually if this is more suitable for your classroom’s environment.

Each group or individual should create a new Habanera text using an alternate lyrical form. Some genres students may choose include rap, country and western



Anita Rachvelishvili as Carmen  
PHOTO: KEN HOWARD/METROPOLITAN OPERA

**FUN FACT:** Bizet is best remembered for *Carmen*, but he wrote several other operas, some of which were left incomplete or never performed. Besides *Carmen*, the only ones staged in his lifetime (and occasionally revived today) are *The Pearl Fishers* (1863, with a popular duet for tenor and baritone), *The Fair Maid of Perth* (1867), and *Djamileh* (1872).



music, folk music, or freestyle poetry. Make sure students keep in mind the original aria's meaning and what it says about Carmen's philosophy of life.

**STEP 6:** Have each group perform their work in front of the class.

**FOLLOW-UP:** Discuss the process of adaptation as a class. What were the challenges of translating the aria to a new context? What was essential? What could be changed without affecting the integrity of the piece? For a final discussion or as homework, have your students consider which themes in Carmen's aria are universal and which themes are specific to the opera's setting.

## History and Social Studies

### IN PREPARATION

For this activity, students will need the *A Cross-Cultural Carmen* reproducible resources available at the back of this guide.

### CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Social Studies, History, Global Studies, Government

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To examine the historical and cultural setting of *Carmen*
- To analyze how the story could be transferred to another historical and cultural setting
- To consider what other outsider groups could be described similarly to the portrayal of Roma culture

## A Cross-Cultural Carmen

The story of *Carmen* could take place in any time period and amidst any culture or ethnic group, and its characters—a beautiful, strong-willed woman, a handsome, love-struck soldier, and a charismatic, popular hero—would be believable in almost any setting. These elements have mass appeal and can be reinterpreted to fit other cultures and times of history that your students have been studying.

### STEPS

Your students will select one time period, society, or culture and create an outline for a new opera of their own. In creating their version of *Carmen*, they should consider:

- the role of an outsider culture within a society
- conventional norms of behavior and the ways in which an outsider culture defies those norms
- the relationship between a historical time period and the people who lived in it

**STEP 1:** Review the basic plot and setting of Bizet's *Carmen* with your students using the synopsis included in this guide. Briefly remind them of some of the key elements of the story:

- a beautiful and fiery heroine who smokes cigarettes, seduces soldiers, and defies the norms of traditional female behavior
- an honorable soldier undone by a fatal passion
- a dashing and glamorous popular hero
- a world of outlaws and outsiders, existing alongside a world of soldiers and military law
- the differing societal attitudes and classes of the main characters





**STEP 2:** Distribute the reproducible entitled *A Cross-Cultural Carmen: The World of the Roma* found in the back of this guide and ask students to read the paragraph at the top aloud (this information is also included in this guide as the sidebar *The World of the Roma*). Have a quick conversation about what other cultures and peoples might be viewed in the way the Roma were viewed in 19th-century Spain. Some similar groups might include immigrants (such as Italian, Irish, or Puerto Rican immigrants in 19th- and 20th-century New York City), Native Americans in contemporary North and South America, or any minority whose culture and language are different from the majority in a given country (such as people of Mexican or South American descent in modern-day United States).

**STEP 3:** Depending on your class size, divide students into three or four groups. Explain that each group will work together for 20 minutes to create a new *Carmen*, transferring the main elements of the opera to another culture, country, or era that they have been studying. Instruct the students that they will create their opera outline by filling in the activity sheet and answering each question. The questions on the sheet include:

- What era, civilization, or society would be the basis for your opera and why?
- Briefly describe the characters of Carmen, Don José, Micaëla, and Escamillo in your opera. What is their place in the setting you've chosen?
- What are their similarities to the original characters? What are the differences?
- Describe the plot of your opera as it unfolds in the period and setting you've chosen. It can be as similar or as different from Bizet's opera as you like.
- How does the idea of the outsider relate to your story?

Feel free to develop your own questions tailored to your current curriculum. The essential point to have your students examine is the outsider status of Carmen and to get them to think critically about a socially or politically analogous setting for the action of their adaptation. Suggestions for possible historical situations might include those of:

- Texans during the time of the Alamo
- African-Americans moving north at the beginning of the 20th century
- Mexican immigrants moving to the American Southwest in the late 20th century

## COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND CARMEN

This activity directly supports the following Social Studies/Literacy Common Core Strands:

### CCCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3a

Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.



Early photographs document the customs and dress of the Roma people. For stable European city dwellers, their itinerant lifestyle embodied notions of exoticism and liberation from convention.



**THE WORLD OF THE ROMA** The “gypsies,” or Roma, are believed to have originally migrated from India, reaching the European continent in the 16th century. The English word “gypsy” shares its origins with various terms for the Roma in other European languages, including *gitan* (French), *gitano* (Spanish), and *gyftos* (Greek). All of these are outsiders’ terms for the Roma and have traditionally had negative connotations.

Since the Roma’s way of life did not seem to conform to Christian morality, they were viewed by Europeans as being ruled by their basest instincts, with no regard for honor or sexual control. In strict 19th-century society, any kind of behavior that did not follow its austere codes of conduct was seen as morally corrupt. Roma women in particular were seen as sexually promiscuous, immodest, and outside of “decent” society. In much of the art, music, and literature of the 19th century, they were stereotyped as free-spirited, strong, deviant, demanding, sexually alluring, and dismissive. This romantic view was in direct opposition to the female ideal of the 19th-century: a woman who was controlled, chaste, and submissive.

**STEP 4:** Ask a student from each group to read from their activity sheet. Have each group briefly discuss the choices they made, why they made them, and how they addressed the issue of the outsider in their opera.

**FOLLOW-UP:** (optional, or as homework): Have your students pick an important section from their new adaptation of *Carmen* and flesh it out into a fully written scene. Students can then perform their work in front of the class.

Alternatively, open up a discussion about the universal experiences of people in the alternate settings. Your students might have a very personal connection to this material—might they have experience living as an “outsider?” Can they think of people in our modern society who might be considered living outside of mainstream society? What does *Carmen* have to say about the way that past and contemporary societies have treated outsiders?

## Musical Anatomy of a Character

*Carmen* features some of the best-known and most recognizable music in the operatic repertoire. Bizet's score also employs carefully crafted musical themes and styles that illuminate the personalities of each character. The following musical activity is designed to help students dissect various elements of the score and explore how different musical techniques can inform character development.

In the following lesson, students will

- explore the role of the orchestra in creating dramatic atmosphere
- learn new musical terminology and how to apply it to what they hear
- articulate how Bizet's music shapes the audience's understanding of the four central characters

### STEPS

Students will listen to selections from *Carmen* and use the musical terms explained in this exercise to articulate their interpretation of Carmen, Don José, Escamillo, and Micaëla.

**STEP 1:** Distribute copies of the *Ten Essential Musical Terms* sidebar. Have your students look it over as a pre-lesson assignment or at the beginning of the class—audio examples of these terms can be found on the CD at the back of this guide and are listed below. Alternatively, you can discuss the terms as you move through the lesson and listen to the audio clips. If your students already know most of these terms, feel free to jump right into the exercise after a quick review.

#### TRACK MUSICAL TERM

2	Chromatic Notes or Chromaticism
3	Exoticism
4	Habanera
5	Legato
6	Major
7	Minor
8	Motif
9	Orchestration
10	Ostinato
11	Pizzicato
12	Tremolo



**STEP 2:** Divide the class into ten small groups if possible and give each group four blank pieces of paper (one for each track you will play). Play **Tracks 13–16** through twice. The first time, instruct your students to come up with three to five descriptive

## Music

### IN PREPARATION

For this activity, students will need the reproducible resources available at the back of this guide as well as the audio selections from *Carmen* available online or on the accompanying CD.

### CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Music, English Language Arts, Writing

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To introduce and/or reinforce knowledge of musical terminology
- To identify new musical vocabulary by looking at selections from Bizet's *Carmen*
- To use new musical vocabulary to create and describe an original operatic character

### COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND CARMEN

This activity directly supports the following ELA-Literacy Common Core Strands:

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.2

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

## THE FATE MOTIF

One of the most pervasive and recognizable musical ideas of the *Carmen* score is a short phrase sometimes called the “fate motif.”

We hear it for the first time at the very end of the prelude, before the curtain rises. The melody will return several times throughout the opera, signaling to the listener that the action on stage is connected with Carmen’s ultimate fate at the end of the story. The motif is made up of three musical elements: a fortissimo tremolo in the strings, a repeated, chromatic melodic line, and two foreboding, pulsating low notes played by the double bass and bass drum. The fate motif acts as a device of chilling musical foreshadowing. Its initial version, as presented at the end of the prelude, can be heard in **Track 23**.



words that they feel best reflect the atmosphere of each musical track and write them down. These words can describe the general feeling or the character of the person singing. The second time through, students should list any examples of the ten new musical terms they’ve learned and note them. Do not reveal which musical track belongs to which character; this part of the activity is designed to capture gut reactions and extra-musical associations.

NOTE: The tracks listed in this step are short musical snippets from the music associated with the four main characters, representing Carmen (**Track 13**), Don José (**Track 14**), Micaëla (**Track 15**), and Escamillo (**Track 16**).

**STEP 3:** Now distribute the *Musical Anatomy of a Character* reproducible handout found at the back of this guide. Ask students to read the texts and translations; you may want to play each track again as background music. Have students complete the chart on the reproducible handout, using their own words to describe what each musical element they heard played in the track tells them about the character associated with this music. Feel free to adjust the level of detail and specificity you require based on your students’ abilities. Completed charts are provided for your reference on the following pages.

NOTE: The excerpts chosen represent significant musical moments for each character, taken from the entrance arias of Carmen and Escamillo (the music that is used to first introduce their characters to us) and the duet for Don José and Micaëla (which occurs early in Act I and also acts as a musical introduction to the two characters for the audience). Bizet carefully crafts these moments to illuminate key differences and similarities between his four main characters.



# Ten Essential Musical Terms

The following list of terms provides basic vocabulary to help your students engage more deeply with the music of *Carmen*.

**Chromatic notes or Chromaticism** Chromatic notes are those that don't belong to the prevailing harmony or scale of a musical composition, so named because in early music notation such notes were colored. The chromatic scale is made up of 12 notes, each separated from its neighbor by the smallest common interval. Chromatic is the opposite of diatonic, which refers to notes of a scale or harmony derived exclusively from those available in its given key. Chromaticism can add drama and intensity to music, and Bizet uses it in his opera to create an exotic feel in the numbers sung by *Carmen* and Escamillo. The famous melody of *Carmen*'s Habanera, for example, is a long chromatic descent.

**Exoticism** Western composers have long drawn on the alien, exotic sounds of foreign cultures to enrich their own work. In the 19th century, composers were inspired by influences as varied as Turkish janissary bands and the pentatonic scales of the Far East, among many other examples, to provide local color to their compositions. In *Carmen*, Bizet's use of Spanish dance rhythms and tunes can be seen as a type of exoticism. The music's foreign, "outsider" flavor imparts a kind of dangerous, intriguing allure.

**Habanera** *Carmen*'s famous aria "L'amour est un oiseau rebelle" is labeled as a habanera in the score. The habanera is a genre of Afro-Cuban dance music that grew out of the English country dance, which spread to the Americas in the 18th century. It became popular in Cuba after an influx of Haitian refugees imported it in its French form, the *contredanse*. In Cuba, its regular rhythms were infused with African-influenced dotted rhythms and syncopations.

**Legato** The term legato comes from the Italian word for "to tie together." It is used in music to describe a series of notes that are played or sung with smooth connection from one note to the next. It is the opposite of staccato, an articulation in which notes are played in a short, detached manner. In the score of *Carmen*, Don José often sings legato vocal lines when he is expressing tender, romantic feelings.

**Major and Minor** Western music written since around 1600 has been built on two basic tonal principles: major and minor. Although the terms can be used to describe scales, intervals, harmonies, or keys, in their most basic application they refer to the overarching tonal organization of a composition, or its mode. Pieces in the major mode typically sound bright, cheery, or optimistic, while pieces in the minor mode may sound somber, plaintive, or sinister. For example, the "fate motif" in *Carmen* is superimposed over minor harmonies, as are the melodies of *Carmen*'s Habanera and the first part of Escamillo's entrance aria. Conversely, that aria's second part, the toreador anthem, is based on major harmonies, as is the music of Micaëla's love duet with Don José.

**Motif** A musical motif (or motive) is a brief musical idea that recurs throughout a work. Motives can be based on a melodic, rhythmic, or harmonic component, and their repetition makes them recognizable to the listener. In opera, musical motives are often symbolically associated with specific characters or dramatic ideas. In *Carmen*, Bizet uses the "fate motive" to foreshadow *Carmen*'s ultimate downfall at the end of the opera. It appears at critical dramatic moments throughout the action.

**Orchestration** The word orchestration refers to the process of choosing which instruments should play each musical idea throughout an opera and how they should be combined at specific moments. Bizet uses orchestration to help paint a musical picture of the characters and dramatic situations; for example, he uses flashy percussion (triangle, tambourine, and cymbals) to enhance the theatricality of the bullfight.

**Ostinato** An ostinato is a melodic, rhythmic, or harmonic phrase that is continuously repeated. (Ravel's *Boléro* is a famous example of an ostinato-based piece.) The term is derived from the Italian word for "obstinate."

**Pizzicato** The word pizzicato (Italian for "pinched") is an instruction for string players to create sound by plucking the string with their fingers instead of drawing their bows across it. This creates an interesting sound effect, and Bizet uses it often in *Carmen*.

**Tremolo** A tremolo is created when string players move their bows back and forth across the string as fast as possible on a single pitch. A solo string player creating a tremolo may not sound very powerful, but when all the string instruments in the orchestra play a tremolo together, it creates an impressive effect. Bizet often uses dramatic tremolos in *Carmen*, and it is especially noticeable whenever the fate motif is heard.

## Answer Keys

### TRACK 17

MUSICAL TERM	WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS TELLS THE AUDIENCE ABOUT THE CHARACTER SINGING?
Melody:	In the first melody we hear, Carmen sings a slow, slithering chromatic descent. There is a taunting quality to the heavy chromaticism; the melody suggests a strong sensuality and exotic allure.
Harmony:	The Habanera is set in a minor key; the harmony underneath Carmen's chromatic melody includes little variation.
Rhythm:	The rhythm that holds the Habanera together is immediately established in the orchestra even before Carmen begins to sing and remains constant throughout the entire piece. It is an excellent example of a musical ostinato.
Orchestration:	Low strings enter first (cellos establishing the dance rhythm), followed by the upper strings (violins) playing pizzicato. The triangle and later the tambourine are used to provide colorful accents.
Libretto:	Carmen compares love to a rebellious bird that cannot be tamed or caged. She makes it clear that she will fall in love on her own terms—no one is able to control her in this matter.
Overall impression:	The Habanera establishes Carmen as a confident woman who possesses a captivating, alluring power over those around her. She is also a performer and entertainer, using dance and verbal metaphors instead of plainly stating her true feelings.

Which character do you think is singing? Carmen



## TRACKS 18–20

MUSICAL TERM	WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS TELLS THE AUDIENCE ABOUT THE CHARACTERS SINGING?
Melody:	Micaëla's melody line is sweet and simple. There is a shy and innocent quality to everything she sings. Don José's vocal line is similarly gentle-sounding, but he is more dramatic than Micaëla, with vocal lines that sweep up into the higher range of his voice and come back down again. He sounds passionate, but in a kind of naïve, overly romantic way.
Harmony:	Major harmonies predominate in the duet between Micaëla and Don José, giving it a sweet sound. There is no harmonic tension between the two characters. When Don José and Micaëla sing together, their vocal lines work in perfect agreement.
Rhythm:	The rhythms are not flashy or crisp. Everything is gentle, almost giving the impression of the orchestra rocking or swaying with the singers.
Orchestration:	Lush, sweeping strings doubling the vocal line heighten the passage's romantic feel. There is no percussion (such as triangle, cymbals, or tambourine). As Micaëla sings, we can hear the harp plucking gently underneath her vocal line.
Libretto:	Micaëla is delivering a letter from Don José's mother. The libretto reveals the close relationship between the two, and it reveals Don José's nostalgic love for his home village and memories of his childhood. Micaëla's delivery of the message reveals her faithful, dutiful personality, along with her innocent embarrassment at the notion of delivering a kiss to Don José.
Overall character impression:	Everything about Micaëla's music reveals that she is sweet, gentle, and innocent. There is nothing exotic, flashy, or dangerously alluring about her. She is the model of female chastity and purity. She clearly has feelings for Don José, but she can only express them through the respectful delivery of his mother's message. Don José is similarly sweet-sounding in his music, but he is also more dramatic and romantic in his sweeping vocal lines and nostalgic recollections of home. Their duet demonstrates that their love is reciprocal and in accord with societal expectations.

Which characters do you think are singing? **Micaëla and Don José**

The complete duet can be found on **Track 21**.



## Answer Keys (continued)

### TRACK 22

MUSICAL TERM	WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS TELLS THE AUDIENCE ABOUT THE CHARACTER SINGING?
Melody	The orchestra introduces the first melodic section, which is jaunty and flashy. Like Carmen's Habanera, it is built on a descending chromatic scale as Escamillo describes his experiences in the bullfighting ring. As the melody moves into the chorus praising the toreador, the music turns celebratory and very confident in character.
Harmony	As in the Habanera, the harmony begins in a minor key. It has a dark and powerful feel, reflecting the danger and exoticism of Escamillo's occupation. The harmony turns to major in the celebratory chorus but returns to the minor as Escamillo recounts blow by blow his experiences in the bullfighting ring.
Rhythm	The rhythm is decisive and aggressive, with a great deal of quick grace notes and ornamentation. Though this is not a number based on a dance rhythm, the strong accents enhance the precise, detached, and crisp feel of the music. Its rhythms suggest the grand gestures of the bullfight. In the toreador chorus, the rhythm becomes incisive and march-like, as if Escamillo is marching to victory.
Orchestration	With the strings as the main force behind the melody, Bizet makes strategic use of his brass and percussion sections. The timpani underscore the beat while the triangle rings out, enhancing the exotic flair of the melody.
Libretto	Escamillo is describing how the crowds fill the arena with excitement and anticipation to watch the bullfighting game and how they roar with praise for the toreador.
Overall character impression:	Escamillo is clearly a confident, macho character, and his entrance aria sets him up immediately as someone who is a performer and lives for the applause of the crowd. He also has an aggressive, physical quality that establishes him as equal to the confidence and physical allure of Carmen.

Which character do you think this is? **Escamillo**





**STEP 4:** Distribute copies of the *Who's Who in Carmen* chart found in the front of this guide, or simply read the character descriptions for Carmen, Don José, Micaëla, and Escamillo aloud. Have each student guess who is singing in each track based on what they have written on their sheet.

**FOLLOW-UP:** Following the same format as the preceding classroom activity, this take-home activity allows students to apply musical terminology and concepts they have learned through the examination of characters in *Carmen* to a new, more creative situation. The goal of this activity is to encourage students to craft musical language and descriptions for a character of their own choosing, by describing the sound they might create for her or him. This activity can be applied to the students themselves (having them craft a description of how they would imagine themselves being portrayed musically within an opera), or it can be applied to a character associated with material they are learning in other subjects (for example, a historical figure or their favorite character from literature). There is a reproducible chart for this activity provided at the back of this guide.



## Supporting the Student Experience during *The Met: Live in HD* Transmission

### IN PREPARATION

In this activity, students will need the Performance Activity reproducible handouts found in the back of this guide.

### COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND CARMEN

This activity directly supports the following ELA–Literacy Common Core Strands:

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.2

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

Watching and listening to an opera performance is a unique experience which takes students beyond the printed page to an immersion in images, sound, interpretation, technology, drama, skill, and craft. Performance activities help students analyze different aspects of the experience and engage critically with the performance. They will consider the creative choices that have been made for the particular production they are watching and examine different aspects of the performance.

Each Performance Activity incorporates a reproducible sheet. Students should bring this activity sheet to the *Live in HD* transmission and fill it out during intermission and/or after the final curtain. The activities direct attention to details of the production that might otherwise go unnoticed. For *Carmen*, the first activity sheet (*Turn, Turn, Turn*) points students’ attention to the remarkable set seen in the Met’s production.

The second basic activity sheet is called *My Highs and Lows*. It is meant to be collected, opera by opera, over the course of the season. This sheet serves to guide students toward a consistent set of objective observations, as well as to help them articulate their own opinions. It is designed to enrich the students’ understanding of the art form as a whole. The ratings system encourages students to express their critique: use these ratings to spark discussions that require careful, critical thinking.

Either activity can provide the basis for class discussion after the transmission. On the next page, you’ll find an additional activity created specifically for after-transmission follow-up.

### Life Outside of Conventions: Assessing Carmen's Character

Students will enjoy starting the class with an open discussion of the Met performance. What did they like? What didn't they? Did anything surprise them? What would they like to see or hear again? What would they have done differently? The discussion offers an opportunity to apply the notes on students' *My Highs & Lows* sheet, as well as their thoughts about the visual design of the Met production—in short, to see themselves as *Carmen* experts.

As your students now understand, Bizet created an extraordinary character in *Carmen*. Her story has a timeless appeal and also contains the classic love triangle—one of the key plot points in many literary and dramatic works, including popular contemporary examples such as the *Twilight* and *Hunger Games* movies. Your students might enjoy thinking about the basic character and plot elements of *Carmen* and comparing them to other stories that they're familiar with and which feature similar elements or a similar message.

The character of *Carmen* has been described as feisty and independent. Some have even called her a proto-feminist for her refusal to let men make decisions about her life. For instance, in Act I she finds a way to avoid going to prison; in Act II she turns down Escamillo and refuses to join the smugglers while she's waiting for José, then threatens to dump José if he won't follow her to the mountains.

At the same time, *Carmen* uses feminine wiles both to achieve her own goals and to serve the smugglers. Much of her life seems to revolve around men. At the beginning of Act IV, she presents herself as Escamillo's consort. At the end of Act IV, it is José who seals her fate. Do your students consider *Carmen* to be a moral person? Do they see her as a role model for women today? Does *Carmen*'s behavior indicate healthy self-esteem? A realistic sense of personal autonomy?

### IN PREPARATION

This activity requires no preparation other than attendance at the *Live in HD* transmission of *Carmen*.

### CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Language Arts and Media Literacy

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To review students' understanding of *Carmen* and her story as dramatized by Bizet
- To explore how music affects dramatization
- To examine the opera's themes and understand their cultural context
- To discuss students' overall experience in watching *Carmen*
- To understand the artistic choices made by the Met's production and design team

### COMMON CORE STANDARDS

This activity directly supports the following ELA–Literacy Common Core Strands:

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1.c

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.6**

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1**

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1d**

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.



To assess Carmen's character, students may create a list of actions she takes and statements she makes. (To spur their memory of distinct moments in the opera, they can use the list on the *My Highs & Lows* worksheet.) Either individually or in groups, they can debate approval or disapproval of her moral behavior, the independence of her actions, the decisions she makes and the way she makes them.

If Carmen lived today, she might be an ideal person to advise teens on the dangers and challenges they will face in life. Whether as a role model or as a troubled person in recovery, she could discuss her own experiences and the lessons they hold for today's kids.

With this in mind, students may write a script for a 30-second public service announcement featuring Carmen, aimed at helping adolescent TV viewers. Perhaps she would be able to address students who feel like outsiders, or offer tips for handling a hard breakup. If they like, they can use cell phones or camcorders to shoot a video and share it with the class.



### CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

#### On Life and Love: A Close Look at Carmen's Habanera

- 1 ACT I: Carmen. Carmen entertains a crowd with her philosophy of life and love.

### CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: MUSIC

#### Musical Anatomy of a Character

- 2 Ex. Chromatic Notes or Chromaticism
- 3 Ex. Exoticism
- 4 Ex. Habanera
- 5 Ex. Legato
- 6 Ex. Major
- 7 Ex. Minor
- 8 Ex. Motif
- 9 Ex. Orchestration
- 10 Ex. Ostinato
- 11 Ex. Pizzicato
- 12 Ex. Tremolo
- 13 ACT I: Carmen.
- 14 ACT I: Don José.
- 15 ACT I: Micaëla.
- 16 ACT II: Escamillo.
- 17 ACT I: Carmen. Carmen entertains a crowd with her philosophy of life and love.
- 18 ACT I: Micaëla. Micaëla relates her conversation with Don José's mother.
- 19 ACT I: Don José. Don José is transported by memories of home.
- 20 ACT I: Don José and Micaëla. Now singing together, the couple reflects on their sweet memories.
- 21 Tracks 18–20 continuously
- 22 ACT II: Escamillo. Escamillo enters and sings of his prowess as a bullfighter.
- 23 PRELUDE: The fate motif.

Excerpts taken from  
the Metropolitan Opera  
broadcast of  
March 21, 1987

#### MICAËLA

Ileana Cotrubas

#### CARMEN

Agnes Baltsa

#### DON JOSÉ

José Carreras

#### ESCAMILLO

Samuel Ramey

Conducted by  
James Levine

Metropolitan Opera  
Orchestra and Chorus





# CARMEN

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

### On Life and Love: A Close Look at Carmen's Habanera

The term “habanera” refers to the Cuban contradanza, a genre of dance music popular in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The name, derived from the city of Havana, Cuba, was coined when European sailors introduced the dance to their home countries, where it became popular with composers, particularly in France and Spain. The Habanera is characterized by a dotted rhythm and is often performed as a song with lyrics. Bizet immortalized the form in *Carmen*—the title heroine's Act I Habanera is among the most famous arias in all of opera. The composer adapted its melody from a popular Habanera of the era, entitled “El Arreglito.” When he discovered that it was not in fact a folk song but a relatively recent work by a Basque composer named Sebastián Yradier, he added a note to the vocal score of *Carmen*, citing the source.

#### TRACK 1

L'amour est un oiseau rebelle  
Que nul ne peut apprivoiser,  
Et c'est bien en vain qu'on l'appelle  
S'il lui convient de refuser.

Rien n'y fait, menace ou prière.  
L'un parle bien, l'autre se tait.  
Et c'est l'autre que je préfère.  
Il n'a rien dit mais il me plaît.

L'amour! L'amour! L'amour! L'amour!

L'amour est enfant de bohème,  
Il n'a jamais, jamais connu de loi.  
Si tu ne m'aimes pas, je t'aime.  
Si je t'aime, prends garde à toi!

Si tu ne m'aimes pas, si tu ne m'aimes pas, je t'aime,  
Mais si je t'aime, si je t'aime, prends garde à toi!

L'oiseau que tu croyais surprendre  
Battit de l'aile et s'envola.  
L'amour est loin, tu peux l'attendre.  
Tu ne l'attends pas, il est là.

Tout autour de toi, vite, vite,  
Il vient, s'en va, puis il revient.  
Tu crois le tenir, il t'évite.  
Tu crois l'éviter, il te tient.

L'amour! L'amour! L'amour! L'amour!

Love is a rebellious bird  
that nobody can tame,  
and you call it quite in vain  
if it suits it not to come.

Nothing helps, neither threat nor prayer.  
One man talks well, the other's mum;  
it's the other one that I prefer.  
He's silent but I like his looks.

Love! Love! Love! Love!

Love is a gypsy's child,  
it has never, ever, known a law;  
love me not, then I love you;  
if I love you, you'd best beware!

Love me not, then I love you;  
if I love you, you'd best beware!

The bird you thought you had caught  
beat its wings and flew away.  
Love stays away, you wait and wait;  
when least expected, there it is!

All around you, swift, so swift,  
it comes, it goes, and then returns.  
You think you hold it fast, it flees.  
You think you're free, it holds you fast.

Love! Love! Love! Love!

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## A Cross-Cultural Carmen: The World of the Roma

The “gypsies,” or Roma, are believed to have originally migrated from India, reaching the European continent in the 16th century. The English word “gypsy” shares its origins with various terms for the Roma in other European languages, including *gitan* (French), *gitano* (Spanish), and *gyftos* (Greek). All of these are outsiders’ terms for the Roma and have traditionally had negative connotations.

Since the Roma’s way of life did not seem to conform to Christian morality, they were viewed by Europeans as being ruled by their basest instincts, with no regard for honor or sexual control. In strict 19th-century society, any kind of behavior that did not follow its austere code of conduct was seen as morally corrupt. Roma women in particular were seen as sexually promiscuous, immodest, and outside of “decent” society. In much of the art, music, and literature of the 19th century, they were characterized and stereotyped as free-spirited, strong, deviant, demanding, sexually alluring, and dismissive. This romantic view was in direct opposition to the female ideal of the 19th-century—a woman who was controlled, chaste, and submissive.

1. What era, civilization, or society would be the basis for your opera and why?

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2. Briefly describe the characters of Carmen, Don José, Micaëla, and Escamillo in your opera. What is their place in the setting you’ve chosen?

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3. What are their similarities to the original characters? What are the differences?

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4. Describe the plot of your opera as it unfolds in the period and setting you’ve chosen. It can be as similar or as different from Bizet’s opera as you like.

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5. How is the idea of the outsider important to your story?

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## Musical Anatomy of a Character

The music Bizet writes for each of the four main characters conveys a lot of information about their personalities. Use the new vocabulary you have learned to help fill out the following character analysis charts. Texts and translations are provided for your reference.

### TRACK 17

L'amour est un oiseau rebelle  
Que nul ne peut apprivoiser,  
Et c'est bien en vain qu'on l'appelle  
S'il lui convient de refuser.

Rien n'y fait, menace ou prière.  
L'un parle bien, l'autre se tait.  
Et c'est l'autre que je préfère.  
Il n'a rien dit mais il me plaît.

L'amour! L'amour! L'amour! L'amour!

L'amour est enfant de bohème,  
Il n'a jamais, jamais connu de loi.  
Si tu ne m'aimes pas, je t'aime.  
Si je t'aime, prends garde à toi!

Si tu ne m'aimes pas, si tu ne m'aimes pas, je t'aime,  
Mais si je t'aime, si je t'aime, prends garde à toi!

L'oiseau que tu croyais surprendre  
Battit de l'aile et s'envola.  
L'amour est loin, tu peux l'attendre.  
Tu ne l'attends pas, il est là.

Tout autour de toi, vite, vite,  
Il vient, s'en va, puis il revient.  
Tu crois le tenir, il t'évite.  
Tu crois l'éviter, il te tient.

L'amour! L'amour! L'amour! L'amour!

Love is a rebellious bird  
that nobody can tame,  
and you call it quite in vain  
if it suits it not to come.

Nothing helps, neither threat nor prayer.  
One man talks well, the other's mum;  
it's the other one that I prefer.  
He's silent but I like his looks.

Love! Love! Love! Love!

Love is a gypsy's child,  
it has never, ever, known a law;  
love me not, then I love you;  
if I love you, you'd best beware!

Love me not, then I love you;  
if I love you, you'd best beware!

The bird you thought you had caught  
beat its wings and flew away.  
Love stays away, you wait and wait;  
when least expected, there it is!

All around you, swift, so swift,  
it comes, it goes, and then returns.  
You think you hold it fast, it flees.  
You think you're free, it holds you fast.

Love! Love! Love! Love!

## CARMEN

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## Musical Anatomy of a Character

## TRACK 17

TERM	WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS TELLS THE AUDIENCE ABOUT THE CHARACTER SINGING?
Melody: Listen to the melodies of the singer. How would you describe them?	
Harmony: Listen closely to the harmonies of this musical excerpt. How would you describe them?	
Rhythm: Listen to the rhythmic contour of the music. How would you describe it?	
Orchestration: Listen carefully to the instruments used in the orchestra throughout the aria. What specific instruments do you hear?	
Libretto: Review the text of this particular moment. What is the character singing about?	
Overall character impression: What is revealed about the character when you consider all the musical elements of this excerpt?	

Which character do you think is singing?



CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## Musical Anatomy of a Character

### TRACK 18

JOSÉ: Parle-moi de ma mère!  
Parle-moi de ma mère!

MICAËLA: J'apporte de sa part, fidèle messagère,  
cette lettre.

JOSÉ: Une lettre!

MICAËLA: Et puis un peu d'argent,  
pour ajouter à votre traitement.  
Et puis...

JOSÉ: Et puis?

MICAËLA: Et puis... vraiment je n'ose...  
Et puis... encore une autre chose  
qui vaut mieux que l'argent! et qui, pour un bon fils  
aura sans doute plus de prix.

JOSÉ: Cette autre chose, quelle est-elle?  
Parle donc.

MICAËLA: Oui, je parlerai.  
Ce que l'on m'a donné, je vous le donnerai.  
Votre mère avec moi sortait de la chapelle,  
et c'est alors qu'en m'embrassant:  
Tu vas, m'a-t-elle dit, t'en aller à la ville;  
la route n'est pas longue; une fois à Séville,  
tu chercheras mon fils, mon José, mon enfant!  
Et tu lui diras que sa mère  
songe nuit et jour à l'absent,  
qu'elle regrette et qu'elle espère,  
qu'elle pardonne et qu'elle attend.  
Tout cela, n'est-ce pas, mignonne,  
de ma part tu le lui diras;  
et ce baiser que je te donne,  
de ma part tu le lui rendras.

JOSÉ: Un baiser de ma mère!

MICAËLA: Un baiser pour son fils!

JOSÉ: Un baiser de ma mère!

MICAËLA: Un baiser pour son fils!  
José, je vous le rends comme je l'ai promis!

Tell me about my mother!  
Tell me about my mother!

She asked me to be her messenger  
And to bring you this letter.

A letter!

And a little money  
to add to your pay.  
and then...

And then?

And then... how can I...  
and then... she sent something else  
more valuable, if I dare to deliver it,  
worth more than money to any loving son.

What is it?  
Tell me.

Yes, I'll tell you.  
I promised to give you what she gave to me.  
As your mother and I were leaving church,  
she embraced me.  
"Go to the city," she told me;  
it's not very far. Once you're in Seville,  
find my dear son José.  
And tell him that his mother  
thinks of him day and night.  
That she misses him  
and is waiting for his return.  
That's not all, dearest,  
tell him that  
and give him  
a kiss from his mother.

A kiss from my mother!

A kiss for her son!

A kiss from my mother!

A kiss for her son!  
José, I'll keep my promise to her now.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## Musical Anatomy of a Character

### TRACK 19

JOSÉ: Ma mère, je la vois!.. oui, je revois mon village!  
O souvenirs d'autrefois! doux souvenirs du pays!  
Doux souvenirs du pays! O souvenirs chéris!  
O souvenirs! O souvenirs chéris,  
vous remplissez mon cœur de force et de courage!

MICAËLA: Sa mère, il la revoit! Il revoit son village!  
O souvenirs d'autrefois! Souvenirs du pays!  
Vous remplissez son cœur de force et de courage!

JOSÉ: Qui sait de quel démon j'allais être la proie!  
Même de loin, ma mère me défend,  
et ce baiser qu'elle m'envoie,  
écarte le péril et sauve son enfant!

MICAËLA: Quel démon? quel péril?  
je ne comprends pas bien... Que veut dire cela?

JOSÉ: Rien! rien!  
Parlons de toi, la messagère;  
Tu vas retourner au pays?

MICAËLA: Oui, ce soir même... demain je verrai votre mère.

JOSÉ: Tu la verras! Eh bien! tu lui diras:  
que son fils l'aime et la vénère  
et qu'il se repent aujourd'hui.  
Il veut que là-bas sa mère  
soit contente de lui!  
Tout cela, n'est-ce pas, mignonne,  
de ma part, tu le lui diras!  
Et ce baiser que je te donne,  
de ma part, tu le lui rendras!

### TRACK 20

MICAËLA: Oui, je vous le promets... de la part de son fils,  
José, je le rendrai, comme je l'ai promis.

JOSÉ: Ma mère, je la vois!.. *[repeats as above]*

MICAËLA: Sa mère, il la revoit! *[repeats as above]*

### TRACK 21

Track 21 is an uninterrupted recording of this scene.

I can see my mother's face, and my own village!  
Oh, what memories! Sweet memories of home.  
Oh memories, sweet memories,  
you make my heart strong and brave!  
I can see my mother, I can see my village!

He sees his mother again! He sees his village!  
Oh, what memories, sweet memories of home!  
you make my heart strong and brave! *Etc.*

Who knows what demon might have trapped me.  
From afar, my mother protected me  
and this kiss which she sent  
Saved me from peril!

What demon? What danger?  
I don't understand. What does that mean?

Nothing, nothing!  
Tell me, sweet messenger,  
are you going back to our village?

Yes, this evening. Tomorrow I'll see your mother.

You'll see her! Good, you can tell her  
that I love her  
and that I'm sorry for any wrong I've done.  
I only want her  
to be proud of me.  
Tell her all of this,  
my dear, tell her!  
And give her this kiss,  
that I give to you.

Yes, I promise...  
I'll give her your message.

I can see my mother's face, and my own village! *Etc.*

He sees his mother again! He sees his village! *Etc.*

**CARMEN**  
.....

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

**Musical Anatomy of a Character****TRACKS 18–20**

<b>TERM</b>	<b>WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS TELLS THE AUDIENCE ABOUT THE CHARACTERS SINGING?</b>
Melody: Listen to the melodies of the singers. How would you describe them?	
Harmony: Listen closely to the harmonies of this musical excerpt. How would you describe them?	
Rhythm: Listen to the rhythmic contour of the music. How would you describe it?	
Orchestration: Listen carefully to the instruments used in the orchestra throughout the duet. What specific instruments do you hear?	
Libretto: Review the text of this particular moment. What are the characters singing about?	
Overall Character Impression: What is revealed about the characters when you consider all the musical elements of this excerpt?	

Which characters do you think are singing?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## Musical Anatomy of a Character

### TRACK 22

ESCAMILLO: Votre toast, je peux vous le rendre,  
señors, señors, car avec les soldats  
oui, les toreros peuvent s'entendre;  
pour plaisirs, pour plaisirs, ils ont les combats!  
Le cirque est plein, c'est jour de fête!  
Le cirque est plein du haut en bas;  
les spectateurs perdant la tête,  
les spectateurs s'interpellent à grands fracas!  
Apostrophes, cris et tapage  
poussés jusques à la fureur!  
Car c'est la fête du courage!  
C'est la fête des gens de cœur!  
Allons! en garde! allons! allons! ah!

Toréador, en garde!  
Toréador! Toréador!  
Et songe bien, oui, songe en combattant  
qu'un œil noir te regarde  
et que l'amour t'attend,  
Toréador, l'amour, l'amour t'attend!

Tout d'un coup, on fait silence,  
on fait silence... ah! que se passe-t-il?  
Plus de cris, c'est l'instant!  
Plus de cris, c'est l'instant!  
Le taureau s'élançe en bondissant hors du toril!  
Il s'élançe! Il entre, il frappe!... un cheval roule,  
entraînant un picador.  
"Ah! Bravo! Toro!" hurle la foule,  
le taureau va... il vient... il vient et frappe encor!  
En secouant ses banderilles,  
plein de fureur, il court!...le cirque est plein de sang!  
On se sauve... on franchit les grilles!..  
C'est ton tour maintenant!  
Allons! en garde! allons! allons! ah!

Toréador, en garde!  
Toréador! Toréador!  
Et songe bien, oui, songe en combattant  
qu'un œil noir te regarde  
et que l'amour t'attend,  
Toréador, l'amour, l'amour t'attend!  
Toréador! Toréador! L'amour t'attend!

I salute you as well, my friends,  
soldiers as well as toreros  
both know the joy  
found in battle.  
The arena is full, it's a holiday!  
The arena is full;  
the fans are going wild;  
they're losing their heads,  
shouting, stamping,  
clapping furiously!  
It's a celebration of courage  
for valiant hearts!  
Let's go, en garde! Let's go, let's go!

Toreador, en garde!  
Toreador! Toreador!  
As you fight, dream of  
the dark eyes watching you  
and of the love that's waiting for you,  
Toreador, the love, the love that waits!

Suddenly there's deadly silence,  
ah, what will happen?  
The moment has come,  
the moment has come!  
The bull leaps into the ring!  
He charges, he strikes... a horse falls,  
dragging down a Picador.  
"Hurrah for the bull!" cries the crowd.  
The bull backs up, charges again, and strikes!  
Banderillas pierce his back.  
He's mad with pain; the ring is bloody!  
Everyone runs behind the barriers!  
It's your turn again!  
Let's go, en garde! Let's go, let's go!

Toreador, en garde!  
Toreador! Toreador!  
As you fight, dream of  
the dark eyes watching you  
and of the love that's waiting for you,  
Toreador, the love that waits!  
Toreador! Toreador! Love waits for you!

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## Musical Anatomy of a Character

## TRACK 22

CHARACTER:	WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS TELLS THE AUDIENCE ABOUT THE CHARACTER SINGING?
Melody: Listen to the melodies of the singer. How would you describe them?	
Harmony: Listen closely to the harmonies of this musical excerpt. How would you describe them?	
Rhythm: Listen to the rhythmic contour of the music. How would you describe it?	
Orchestration: Listen carefully to the instruments used in the orchestra throughout the aria. What specific instruments do you hear?	
Libretto: Review the text of this particular moment. What is the character singing about?	
Overall Character Impression: What is revealed about the character when you consider all the musical elements of this excerpt?	

Which character do you think is singing?

# CARMEN

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

### Musical Anatomy of a Character Follow-up

<p>Melody: What kind of melody reflects the kind of character you want to create? Smooth and connected? Sharp and aggressive? Full of wide leaps or step-wise movement?</p>	
<p>Harmony: What kind of harmonic sound best captures the personality of your character? Major or minor? Simple and straightforward or more chromatically complex?</p>	
<p>Rhythm: What kind of rhythmic elements would you incorporate to reflect your character? Dance-like rhythms, driving, persistent rhythms, or gentle rocking?</p>	
<p>Orchestration: What kind of instruments would you like to be featured and why? What sound combinations do you think are most effective to portray your character?</p>	
<p>Libretto: What kind of words would you add to capture the essence of your character? A poem? An existing song text? An excerpt from your favorite book? A story from your childhood?</p>	
<p>Overall Character Impression: Overall, what kind of summarizing impression would you want your entrance aria to convey?</p>	



## At the Met: *Turn, Turn, Turn*

The Metropolitan Opera is known as the home to the world's greatest singers and for its outstanding production values, including massive sets. The Met's main stage measures 54 by 80 feet, with a proscenium 54 feet high. To the sides and back of the stage, as well as underneath, are spaces just as large, where sets are stored to be moved on or off stage before, during, and after performances.

Richard Eyre's production of *Carmen* takes full advantage of the Met's stage capabilities. The story commences on a busy square with army barracks nearby. The scene then transforms into a country tavern, a rugged mountain pass, and ultimately to the outside and inside of a bullfighting arena.

If you keep a sharp eye on the set as you watch the opera, you will see how some of these scene changes are accomplished. The diagram below will provide some hints, but it's up to you to spot the changes and describe how they occur. For instance: Does the stage rotate? Does a new set slide in from the left? Does it slide in from the right? Does it slide in from backstage? Does one piece of the set revolve? Are props added? Keep these hints in mind as you fill in the activity sheet.

SETTING	WHAT CHANGES... AND HOW:
Barracks, Act I	
Square/ Outside the factory, Act I	
Tavern, Act II	
Mountain pass, Act III	
Outside of arena, Act IV	
Inside of arena, Act IV	

# Carmen: My Highs & Lows

NOVEMBER 1, 2014

CONDUCTED BY PABLO HERAS-CASADO

REVIEWED BY \_\_\_\_\_

THE STARS	STAR POWER	MY COMMENTS
ANITA RACHVELISHVILI AS CARMEN	*****	
ALEKSANDRS ANTONENKO AS DON JOSÉ	*****	
ILDAR ABDRAZAKOV AS ESCAMILLO	*****	
ANITA HARTIG AS MICAËLA	*****	

THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE	ACTION	MUSIC	SET DESIGN/STAGING
MICAËLA LOOKS FOR DON JOSÉ MY OPINION	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
THE WOMEN COME OUT OF THE FACTORY MY OPINION	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
CARMEN INTRODUCES HERSELF MY OPINION	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
DON JOSÉ READS THE LETTER FROM HIS MOTHER MY OPINION	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
CARMEN IS ACCUSED OF STARTING A FIGHT MY OPINION	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
CARMEN CONVINCES DON JOSÉ TO RELEASE HER MY OPINION	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
DON JOSÉ IS ARRESTED MY OPINION	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
ESCAMILLO VISITS THE TAVERN MY OPINION	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
THE SMUGGLERS LAY OUT THEIR PLAN MY OPINION	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
DON JOSÉ COMES TO FIND CARMEN MY OPINION	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
CARMEN AND DON JOSÉ ARGUE IN THE MOUNTAINS MY OPINION	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
CARMEN TELLS HER OWN FORTUNE MY OPINION	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
ESCAMILLO COMES LOOKING FOR CARMEN MY OPINION	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
CARMEN AND DON JOSÉ MEET AT THE BULLRING MY OPINION	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5