

“EVERY WOMAN IS BITTER AS BILE, BUT EACH HAS TWO GOOD MOMENTS,” begins the epigraph to Prosper Mérimée’s novella *Carmen*, the plot source for Georges Bizet’s immortal opera. The “two good moments” that the author cites—the first sexual, the next in the grave—establish with offensive economy the central concerns of the work: desire and death, and their dangerous combination in the female sex. And few operas offer up such luxuriant depictions of both as *Carmen*. Brazenly seductive, unrepentantly exotic, recklessly strong-willed: The character of Carmen is expertly crafted to trigger the anxieties of 19th-century Europe around the role of women. And yet she has enthralled the world’s imagination for more than a century and a half, with her story 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.

Bizet must have craved the notoriety that such a choice of subject matter would provoke, particularly in a work for Paris’s Opéra Comique, which was then the bastion of sentimental, formulaic, and utterly inoffensive dramas. In *Carmen*, as was his explicit intent, Bizet turned the opéra comique genre on its head. His lawless characters and untamed passions show an unprecedented realism for the stage, embracing all the sordidness and beauty of real life. As Sir Richard Eyre, director of the Met’s production, explains, “*Carmen* is about sex, violence, and racism—and its corollary: freedom. It is one of the inalienably great works of art. It’s sexy, in every sense. And I think it should be shocking.”

This guide is intended to help your students appreciate the opera as a work that both grows out of and transcends its cultural framework. By studying the plot’s treatment of conventions and individuality, as well as Bizet’s musical characterizations, students will discover some of the elements that have made the opera’s melodies among the most memorable in all of 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.



KURZAK



MARGAINE



ALAGNA



VINOGRADOV

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 at the Opéra Comique, Paris, France

PRODUCTION

Louis Langrée, Conductor

Sir Richard Eyre, Production

Rob Howell, Set & Costume Designer

Peter Mumford, Lighting Designer

Christopher Wheeldon, Choreographer

STARRING

Aleksandra Kurzak
MICAËLA (soprano)

Clémentine Margaine
CARMEN (mezzo-soprano)

Roberto Alagna
DON JOSÉ (tenor)

Alexander Vinogradov
ESCAMILLO (baritone)

Production a gift of Mrs. Paul Desmarais Sr.

This guide includes five sections.

- **THE SOURCE, THE STORY, WHO'S WHO IN CARMEN, AND A TIMELINE**
- **CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:**
Two 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

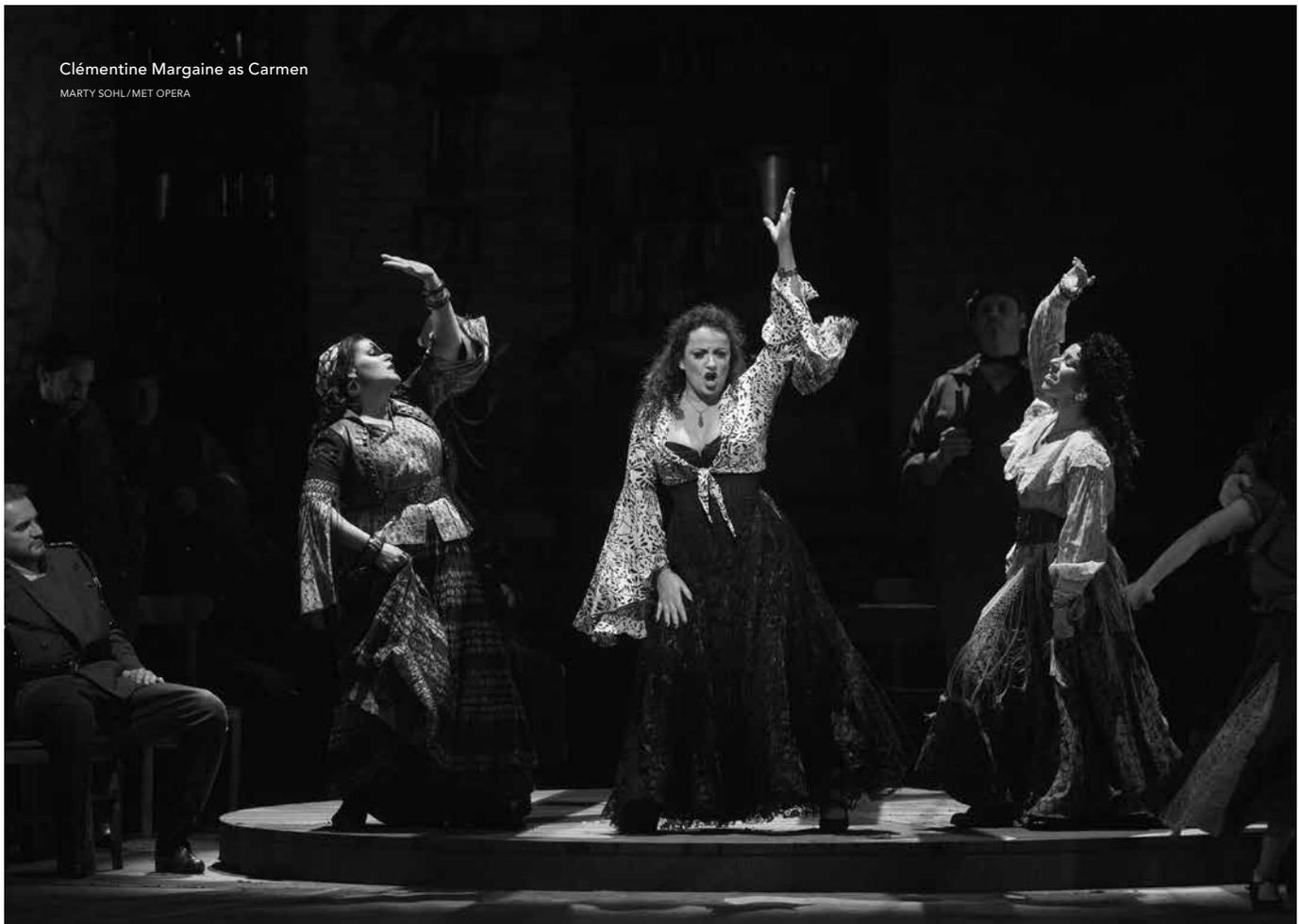
The activities in this guide will focus on several aspects of *Carmen*:

- The 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 Roma culture
- The musical innovation introduced by the composer in this opera
- 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.

SUMMARY Micaëla, a shy girl from the country, looks for the corporal Don José, but she is frightened away by some of his fellow soldiers. Carmen, a beautiful Roma woman (Roma have historically been referred to as “gypsies”—for further information, refer to the sidebar *The World of the Roma*), sings for her audience about love. José ignores her, but can’t quite look away. Micaëla returns and delivers a letter from his mother. He tries to forget how Carmen made him feel. When Carmen causes a fight, José is instructed to escort her to prison. Instead, he lets her escape and is arrested in her place.

In a tavern, Carmen and her friends entertain guests as the famous bullfighter Escamillo arrives with a crowd of admirers. He flirts with Carmen, but she says she’s unavailable. When everyone has left, José arrives, just having left prison, and tells Carmen he loves her. Carmen wants him to join her smuggling operation, but José refuses. Just then, José’s army commander enters the tavern and interrupts them.



Clémentine Margaine as Carmen

MARTY SOHL/MET OPERA

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

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

José is jealous over his attentions to Carmen and attacks him. With his army career ruined, José joins the smugglers.

In the smugglers’ mountain hideout, Carmen is tired of José’s jealousy and tells him to go back to his mother. Escamillo arrives looking for Carmen. José can’t control his jealousy and attacks him. Before leaving, Escamillo invites everyone, especially Carmen, to his next bullfight. Micaëla comes to tell José that his mother is dying. Before leaving, he warns Carmen that they will meet again.

At the arena in Seville, the crowds cheer the arrival of the bullfighters. Carmen arrives with Escamillo, admired by all. José is nearby, and Carmen stays outside the arena to meet him. José begs Carmen to begin a new life with him, but she tells him that she no longer loves him. Still professing her love of freedom above all else, Carmen throws down the ring José had once given her. José seizes her and stabs her to death.

THE SOURCE: MÉRIMÉE’S CARMEN In his writings, French novelist Prosper Mérimée shared in the mid-19th-century French fascination with exotic, bizarre, and sordid subjects. All of these qualities are on ample display in his 1845 novella *Carmen*. Originally published in the travel journal *La Revue des deux mondes*, this story of uncontrollable desire, jealousy, and murder among Roma in Spain may easily have been mistaken for a nonfiction depiction of actual events, given the typical fare of *La Revue*. Such a deception would not have been unheard of from Mérimée, who as a young writer had delighted in literary hoaxes, passing off his own writings as mere translations of foreign works. But within a few years of its publication, Mérimée’s novella *Carmen* was recognized as a masterpiece of modern fiction.

Thirty years later, when the directors of Paris’s Opéra Comique invited Georges Bizet to compose an opera for their theater, the composer himself proposed *Carmen* as a topic. Then the home for sentimental, morally upright dramas aimed at conservative middle-class audiences, the Opéra Comique was a daring locale for Bizet’s unapologetically gritty story. Bizet’s insistence on *Carmen* even led one of the theater’s directors to resign. At the opera’s premiere, the work’s blatant sexuality, rough physicality (the women’s chorus is required to smoke and fight), and on-stage murder were so completely outside the norms of the opéra comique genre that an evisceration in the press was guaranteed. Within ten years, however, it secured a place in the repertory, and it has never left the canon since. Like Mérimée’s novella, the opera remains an enduring reflection on power, control, violence, and the insistence on freedom.

SYNOPSIS

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 Roma 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 inside the factory between Carmen and another girl. Zuniga sends José to retrieve Carmen. She 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 Dancaïre 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

The final confrontation between
Carmen and Don José

MARTY SOHL/MET OPERA



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 zho-ZAY	tenor	A naïve soldier whose love for Carmen leads him to betray his sense of honor and leave behind the traditional life he has known.
Escamillo	A famous bullfighter	ess-kah-MEE-yo	baritone	Self-confident and masculine, Escamillo shares Carmen's approach to pleasure and is as sensual and fearless as she is.
Micaëla	A girl from Don José's 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, Zuniga 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 Roma
Mercédès	A friend of Carmen's	mayr-SAY-dess	soprano	Another Roma
Lillas Pastia	An innkeeper	LEE-yahs PAH-styah	spoken	Lillas Pastia's tavern is a gathering place of the Roma.
Remendado and Dancaire	Roma smugglers	reh-men-DAH-doh dahn-kah-EER	tenor and baritone	These smugglers live and work their trade in the mountains.



1838 Georges Bizet is born on October 25 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 opera. 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. He is buried at the Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris.



The Paris Opéra Comique



*History/Social Studies***IN PREPARATION**

For this activity, students will need the reproducible resources available at the back of this guide entitled *Outsiders and Rebellious Birds* 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 the historical and cultural setting of *Carmen*
- To reflect on the theme of freedom as it is expressed in the opera
- To draw connections between the opera's characters and other marginalized groups that students have studied

Outsiders and Rebellious Birds

The essential shape of *Carmen's* plot—a love triangle that ends disastrously—occurs in countless works, from Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* to Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* novels. But the specifics of its story, which include a beautiful, strong-willed woman, a handsome, love-struck soldier, and a charismatic, popular hero, combined with the sun-drenched backdrop of Spain and the piquancy of Roma characters and customs, are what have made the opera so uniquely riveting. As a member of a distinctly outsider group, Carmen would have already lived at the margins of society. But her repeated celebration of freedom above all else make her yet more extraordinary. Her words and music illustrate this philosophy of life, while at the same time revealing the limitations of her environment. In this activity, students will:

- discuss conventional norms of behavior and the ways in which an outsider culture defies those norms
- consider what they have learned from studying a selection of *Carmen's* text as it relates to freedom
- re-imagine the opera in different settings

STEPS

After gaining an understanding of *Carmen's* plot, students will closely read and listen to several excerpts from the libretto, each of which demonstrates Carmen's thoughts on freedom. Students will also learn about Roma culture, considering the role of an outsider culture within a society. They will then imagine the ways that the specific setting of *Carmen* might compare to other locations and periods of history that students have studied previously. The activity closes with a creative writing assignment in which students re-imagine Carmen's Habanera as adapted for an alternate persona from another culture.

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

- Carmen is a beautiful and fiery woman who smokes cigarettes, seduces soldiers, and defies the norms of traditional female behavior.
- She lives among outlaws and outsiders, who inhabit a world apart from that of soldiers, military law, and the traditional understanding of honor.
- The two main characters come from completely different classes and have incompatible social attitudes.



COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND CARMEN

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

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.

CCSS.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.RL9-12.2

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.

STEP 2: To begin your exploration of the theme of freedom in *Carmen*, pose this question to the class as a whole: “What is freedom?” During the course of the discussion, note students’ answers on the chalkboard or smartboard. Follow up this initial conversation with another question: “What does *Carmen* have to do with freedom?” Do any of the points from the previous discussion apply?

STEP 3: Now it is time to delve further into Carmen’s personal philosophy of life, love, and freedom. Distribute the reproducible handouts entitled *Outsiders and Rebellious Birds* at the back of this guide. Explain that students will be listening and following along with the text of several brief excerpts from the opera. For each of them, students should read Carmen’s words as a statement of belief. What does she reveal about herself in each excerpt? The handout provides space for students to record their interpretations. The corresponding audio examples are provided on **Tracks 1–4**. A Teachers’ Guide to the excerpts is provided below.

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).



A scene from *The Pearl Fishers* in a 1916 production at the Metropolitan Opera

Teacher's Guide

Track 1 presents the beginning of the Habanera, Carmen's first aria, in which she announces her creed that love is free. The word "free" is not mentioned in the text of the aria, but it has been interpreted as an expression of Carmen's belief that, especially in love, a person shouldn't be restricted by rules.

Track 2 is taken from Carmen's second solo, "Près des remparts de Séville." Bizet wrote it in the style of a Spanish folk song known as a seguidilla. Carmen sings it while talking Don José into letting her escape on the way to jail. She describes her heart as free to enter or leave romantic relationships as she pleases.

Track 3 is an excerpt from the Act II duet in which Carmen tries to convince Don José to join her in an independent life rather than return to his army duties. Here Carmen identifies liberty with the ability to dictate one's own life and to follow no laws. What do students think of this statement? Can freedom be limited? If freedom has constraints, is it still freedom?

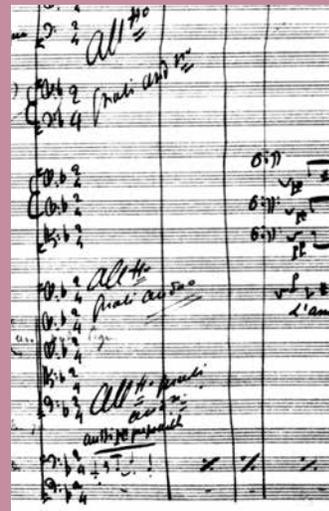
Track 4 is part of the opera's final scene, set outside the bullring, in which Carmen refuses Don José's pleas for reconciliation. The excerpt speaks to the heart of the matter: How free is Carmen, in the end? What do her adventures show? Are there limits to her freedom of which she is never aware? And if her freedom is as complete as she claims here, do your students believe that to be a good thing?

STEP 4: Now, to give students a deeper understanding of Carmen's culture and the stereotypes of Bizet's age, have students read (or display on your smartboard) the sidebar *The World of the Roma*. Have a quick conversation about which other cultures and peoples might be viewed in the way the Roma were viewed in the 19th century. Some groups might include immigrants (such as Italian, Irish, or Puerto Rican immigrants in 19th- and 20th-century New York City), indigenous peoples in contemporary North



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. A new production of *Carmen Jones* recently opened off Broadway, starring Anika Noni Rose.

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 folk song but a relatively recent cabaret song by a Basque composer named Sebastián Yradier, he added a note to the vocal score of *Carmen*, citing the source.



and South America, or any minority whose culture and language are different from the majority in a given country.

STEP 5: 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 version of Carmen’s Habanera, her famous aria from Act I. Their task is to translate Carmen’s philosophy and words to another culture, country, or era that they think bears similarities to that of the Roma in Bizet’s opera. As preparatory work, students can use the organizer handout to summarize their creative choices in identifying the new setting. Issues students should consider include:

- What era, civilization, or society is the setting for your new Habanera?
- How does the character of Carmen reflect this setting?

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 returns 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 appearance, as presented at the end of the prelude, can be heard in **Track 27**.



- How does the idea of the outsider relate to your setting?
- How do the specifics of your new setting influence how Carmen communicates?
- What kind of poetic or textual style should Carmen use in your new setting?

For reference, the entire text of the Habanera in Bizet’s opera is provided in the handouts, and the entire aria can be heard on **Track 5**. To further pique students’ creativity, you may also mention that the Habanera can be read as a type of protest song, or also as a performative display that Carmen uses to achieve her own purposes. The bottom of the handout provides space for students to write the text of their new Habaneras. They can be as short or as long as students like.

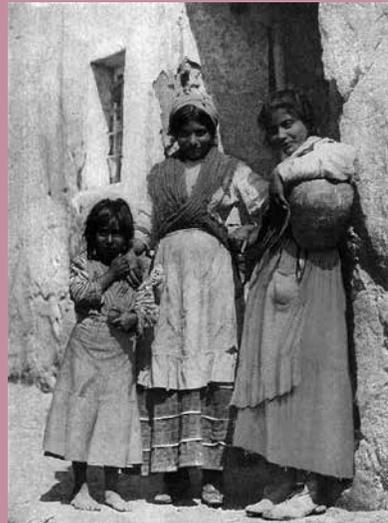
Feel free to adapt this process to correspond to themes and issues in your current curriculum. The essential point is to have students consider the outsider status of Carmen and think critically about a socially or politically analogous setting for their adaptation. Suggestions for possible historical situations might include those of Texans during the time of the Alamo, African Americans moving north at the beginning of the 20th century, or Mexican immigrants moving to the American Southwest in the late 20th century.

STEP 6: In brief presentations in front of the class, have each group briefly discuss the choices they made, why they made them, and how they addressed the issue of the outsider in their setting. A representative from each group will then perform their work.

FOLLOW-UP: If time allows, open up a discussion about the commonalities between the alternate settings that students chose. 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 as living on the margins? What does *Carmen* have to say about the way that outsiders have been treated in the past? Today?



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 notions of 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 own austere codes of conduct was seen as morally corrupt. Roma women in particular were viewed 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 impertinent. This romantic view was in direct opposition to the female ideal of the 19th century: a woman who was controlled, chaste, and submissive.

Music

IN PREPARATION

For this activity, students will need the *Who's Who in Carmen* chart, the reproducible resources available at the back of this guide, and 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 practice aural skills by listening to selections from Bizet's *Carmen*
- To use new musical vocabulary to create and describe an original operatic character

Musical Anatomy

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 support character development.

In the following lesson, students will:

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

STEPS

Students will listen to selections from *Carmen* and use the musical terms explained in this exercise in 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

6	Chromatic Notes or Chromaticism
7	Exoticism
8	Habanera
9	Legato
10	Major
11	Minor
12	Motif
13	Orchestration
14	Ostinato
15	Pizzicato
16	Tremolo



STEP 2: Distribute the *Who's Who in Carmen* chart to students and have them review the descriptions of the characters of Carmen, Don José, Micaëla, and Escamillo. The activity requires that students have at least a rudimentary understanding of their personalities.

STEP 3: Divide the class into small groups and distribute the first page of the reproducible handouts. Play **Tracks 17–20** through twice. The first time, instruct your students to come up with three to five descriptive words that they feel best reflect the atmosphere of each musical track and write them down in the space provided on the handout. These words can describe the general feeling or the character of the person singing. Play the excerpts again. This time, students should list any examples of the 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. Also note that the text is not provided so that students are not guided by the words.

STEP 4: Refer students again to the *Who’s Who in Carmen* chart found in the front of this guide, or simply re-read the character descriptions for Carmen, Don José, Micaëla, and Escamillo aloud. Have each student deduce who was singing in each track based on what they have written on their sheet.

NOTE: The tracks listed in this step are very brief musical excerpts from the music associated with the four main characters, corresponding to Carmen (**Track 17**), Don José (**Track 18**), Micaëla (**Track 19**), and Escamillo (**Track 20**).

STEP 5: Now distribute the next section of the reproducible handouts found at the back of this guide. As you play **Tracks 21–26**, have students follow along with the texts and translations. When they are ready, students should fill in the chart on the reproducible handout, making notes on the musical elements, and where possible, imagining what these characteristics tell them about the character singing this music. You may prefer to concentrate on one track at a time, playing it as many times as necessary for students to make their notes. 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 musical examples chosen stand as significant 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 these two characters for the audience). Bizet carefully crafts these moments to illuminate key differences and similarities between his four main characters.

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.

FUN FACT: With *Carmen*, Bizet intended to transform the opéra comique genre and to inject a new realism into a field he considered stagnant. His creative foil in this effort was *La Dame Blanche* by Adrien Boieldieu, an enormously popular work that had been performed more than 1,000 times at the Opéra Comique. Bizet once described it as “a loathsome opera, without talent, with no ideas, no esprit, no melodic invention, no anything whatsoever in the world. It is stupid, stupid, stupid!” *Carmen* had only attained its 33rd performance when Bizet died suddenly. On the day of his funeral, the Opéra Comique replaced the scheduled performance of *Carmen* with another work: *La Dame Blanche*.

Answer Keys

TRACK 21

MUSICAL ELEMENT	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 delight in transgression.
Harmony:	The Habanera is set in a minor key; the harmony underneath Carmen's chromatic melody is quite static.
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 (with 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. The percussion instruments indicate Carmen's "exotic" status.
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 an 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.



TRACKS 22–24

MUSICAL ELEMENT	WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS TELLS THE AUDIENCE ABOUT THE CHARACTERS SINGING?
Melody:	Micaëla’s melody line is simple and guileless. There is a shy, 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. 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 legato and 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 text reveals the close relationship between the two, as well as Don José’s nostalgic love for his home and memories of his childhood. Micaëla’s delivery of the message displays 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 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 their roles conform to societal expectations.

The complete duet can be found on **Track 25**.



Answer Keys (continued)

TRACK 26

MUSICAL ELEMENT	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. In the chorus praising the toreador, the music turns celebratory and 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 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 driving 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.





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. This activity encourages 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 in an entrance aria. 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 provided as the last page of the handouts for *Musical Anatomy* to help students organize their thoughts.

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 a half step. 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 opening melody of Carmen's Habanera, for example, is an extended 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, seductive 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 developed from 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, the dance's regular rhythms were enlivened with African-influenced dotted rhythms and syncopations.

Legato The term legato comes from the Italian verb meaning "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. Motifs can be based on a melodic, rhythmic, or harmonic component, and their repetition makes them recognizable to the listener. In opera, musical motifs are often symbolically associated with specific characters or dramatic ideas. In *Carmen*, Bizet uses the "fate motif" to foreshadow Carmen's ultimate downfall at the end of the opera. It appears at critical dramatic moments throughout the action.

Orchestration An aspect of composition, orchestration is the art of choosing which instruments should play each musical idea in a musical work. Successful orchestration requires that the instrument chosen is appropriate to the melody—that the musical line is within the instrument's playable range and expressive capabilities. The art of orchestration also allows a composer to draw on and combine the disparate timbres of instruments to amplify melodic expression and create a wide range of musical color.

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.

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

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. Students will note scene changes and how movement among locations is accomplished on stage.

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 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.

The Performance Activity reproducible handouts can be found in the back of this guide. On the next page, you'll find an additional activity created specifically for after-transmission follow-up.

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.

Difference and Power in *Carmen*

IN PREPARATION

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

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To review and synthesize students' understanding of *Carmen*
- To examine the opera's portrayal of Roma characters and understand their historical context
- To problematize the notion of "exoticism" and consider Carmen's personal agency

COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND CARMEN

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.

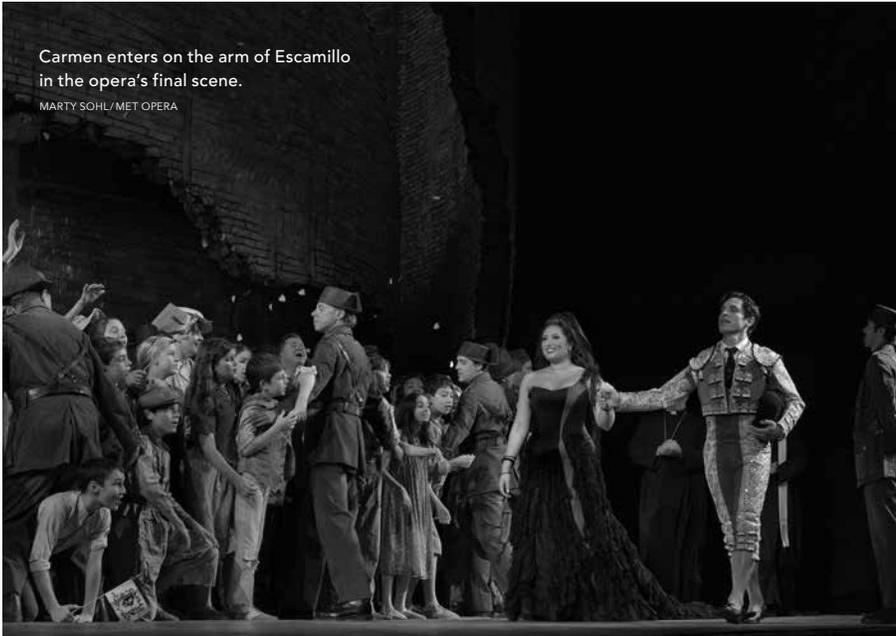
Start the class with an open discussion of the Met performance. What did students like? What didn't they? Did anything surprise them? What would they like to see or hear again? What would they have done differently? The discussion offers an opportunity to apply the notes on students' *My Highs & Lows*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

In her nearly 150 years on the operatic stage, the character of Carmen has attained the status of a revered cultural icon—the provocative Roma who famously sings the Habanera. And yet as her gloriously colorful music and her status among the opera's characters continually make clear, she is defined most of all by her points of difference. Carmen's beauty and sensuality set her apart from the modest, faithful, and more conventionally female Micaëla; and even among her friends Mercédès and Frasquita, Carmen's brazen courage—as well as her doom as spelled by her cards—isolate her from the other characters.

Carmen is set apart not merely as an ill-fated lover, however. Rather, her difference is one of essential identity. As a member of the Roma ethnic group, Carmen is the embodiment of many problematic 19th-century attitudes about race and gender. To help your students understand these stereotypes, share the sidebar *The World of the Roma* with them. Then ask them to consider the ways in which Carmen's depiction in the opera supports the negative historical view of the Roma. Some questions to ask may include:

- How is it made clear that Carmen is an outsider? What cues, visual or otherwise, suggest that Carmen is different from those around her?
- At what moments in the opera does Carmen act contrary to other characters' desires?





- What compels Carmen to make the decisions she does? What compels Micaëla? And how do these differences correspond to stereotypes of the Roma?
- How does Don José respond to Carmen's behavior? How do his expectations of her create conflict?
- Does Don José understand Carmen? Does he respect her as an individual?

With these points in mind, have students consider Carmen and the ways in which she exercises her own power. How and when does she display strength of character? How does she demonstrate her dedication to freedom? Do students consider her a victim? How much control does Carmen have over her own fate?

To conclude the discussion, raise the point that the Met's production allows for a variety of interpretations of Carmen's and Don José's characters. Having an understanding of some of the fault lines between race and gender that emerge throughout the opera can help students gain a more contextual understanding of *Carmen's* themes and characters.

**Excerpts taken from
the Metropolitan Opera
broadcast of
February 11, 2017**

CARMEN

Clémentine Margaine

DON JOSÉ

Roberto Aronica

MICAËLA

Maria Agresta

ESCAMILLO

Kyle Ketelsen

FRASQUITA

Danielle Talamantes

MERCÉDÈS

Shirin Eskandani

Conducted by

Asher Fisch

Metropolitan Opera Orchestra
and Chorus

- 1 Opening of the “Habanera”
- 2 Excerpt from “Près des remparts de Séville”
- 3 Excerpt from Act II duet at “tu n’y dépendrais”
- 4 Excerpt from the final scene outside the bullring
- 5 The “Habanera” in full
- 6 Ex. Chromatic Notes or Chromaticism
- 7 Ex. Exoticism
- 8 Ex. Habanera
- 9 Ex. Legato
- 10 Ex. Major
- 11 Ex. Minor
- 12 Ex. Motif
- 13 Ex. Orchestration
- 14 Ex. Ostinato
- 15 Ex. Pizzicato
- 16 Ex. Tremolo
- 17 The character of Carmen
- 18 The character of Don José
- 19 The character of Micaëla
- 20 The character of Escamillo
- 21 Carmen entertains a crowd with her philosophy of life and love
- 22 Micaëla relates her conversation with Don José’s mother
- 23 Don José is transported by memories of home
- 24 Don José and Micaëla together reflect on their sweet memories
- 25 Tracks 22–24 continuously
- 26 Escamillo enters and sings of his prowess as a bullfighter
- 27 The fate motif

CARMEN

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Outsiders and Rebellious Birds

TRACK 1

CARMEN: 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!

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!

TRACK 2

CARMEN: Mon amoureux, il est au diable,
je l'ai mis à la porte hier!
Mon pauvre cœur très consolable,
mon cœur est libre comme l'air!

My lover can go to the Devil.
I threw him out yesterday.
My poor heart can be consoled;
it's as free as the air.

TRACK 3

CARMEN: Tu n'y dépendrais de personne;
Point d'officier à qui tu doives obéir
et point de retraite qui sonne
pour dire à l'amoureux qu'il est temps de partir.
Le ciel ouvert, la vie errante;
pour pays, l'univers; et pour loi, ta volonté,
et surtout la chose enivrante:
La liberté! La liberté!

You'd be dependent on no one there.
You wouldn't need to obey any officer
or any bugle calling to tell
a lover it's time to leave.
The open sky, the wandering life;
For a country, the universe; for laws, your free will,
and above all, that intoxicating thing,
Liberty! Liberty!

TRACK 4

DON JOSÉ: Ah! Ne me quitte pas, Carmen! Ne me quitte pas!

CARMEN: Jamais Carmen ne cédera.
Libre elle est née et libre elle mourra.

Don't leave me, Carmen! Don't leave me!

Carmen will never give in!
She was born free and she will die free!

Observations on the theme of freedom:

CARMEN

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Outsiders and Rebellious Birds (CONTINUED)

Habanera Organizer

What era, civilization, or society is the setting for your new Habanera? Why?

How does the character of Carmen reflect this setting?

How does the idea of the outsider relate to your setting?

How do the specifics of your new setting influence how Carmen communicates?

What kind of poetic or textual style should Carmen use in your new setting?

CARMEN

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Outsiders and Rebellious Birds (CONTINUED)

TRACK 5

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!

Habanera Translation

CARMEN

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Musical Anatomy

Use the space below to record your impressions of the musical examples. Write three to five words that you feel describe the atmosphere of each track. These words can describe the general feeling or the character of the person singing. Next, list any examples of the ten essential musical terms that you feel apply to the music you've heard.

TRACK 17

TRACK 18

TRACK 19

TRACK 20

CARMEN

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Musical Anatomy (CONTINUED)

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 21

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 (CONTINUED)

TRACK 21

MUSICAL ELEMENT	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?	

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Musical Anatomy (CONTINUED)

TRACK 22

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 (CONTINUED)

TRACK 23

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!

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.

TRACK 24

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!.. 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!

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

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!

TRACK 25

Track 25 is an uninterrupted recording of this scene.

CARMEN

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Musical Anatomy (CONTINUED)

TRACKS 22–24

MUSICAL ELEMENT	WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS TELLS THE AUDIENCE ABOUT THE CHARACTERS SINGING?
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?	

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Musical Anatomy (CONTINUED)

TRACK 26

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!

CARMEN

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Musical Anatomy (CONTINUED)

TRACK 26

MUSICAL ELEMENT:	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?	

CARMEN

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Musical Anatomy 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 impression would you want your entrance aria to convey?</p>	

At the Met: *Turn, Turn, Turn*

The Metropolitan Opera is home to the world’s greatest singers and is known for its outstanding production values and 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, ready to be moved into place before, during, and after performances.

Richard Eyre’s production of *Carmen* takes full advantage of the Met’s stage capabilities. The story opens on a busy square with army barracks nearby. The setting then transforms into a country tavern, a rugged mountain pass, and finally to a bullfighting arena.

If you pay attention to the set as you watch the opera, you will see how some of these scene changes are accomplished. The chart below indicates some of the major shifts, 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 the arena, Act IV	
Inside the arena, Act IV	

Carmen: My Highs & Lows

FEBRUARY 2, 2019

CONDUCTED BY LOUIS LANGRÉE

REVIEWED BY _____

THE STARS	STAR POWER	MY COMMENTS
CLÉMENTINE MARGAINE AS CARMEN	☆☆☆☆☆	
ROBERTO ALAGNA AS DON JOSÉ	☆☆☆☆☆	
ALEXANDER VINOGRADOV AS ESCAMILLO	☆☆☆☆☆	
ALEKSANDRA KURZAK AS MICAËLA	☆☆☆☆☆	

THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE	ACTION	MUSIC	SET DESIGN/STAGING
THE SOLDIERS IN THEIR BARRACKS MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
THE FACTORY WORKERS TAKE A BREAK MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
CARMEN'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE AND LOVE MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
MICAËLA DELIVERS A LETTER TO DON JOSÉ MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
CARMEN IS ACCUSED OF STARTING A FIGHT MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
CARMEN CONVINCES DON JOSÉ TO RELEASE HER MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
DON JOSÉ IS ARRESTED MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

ESCAMILLO AND HIS BAND OF ADMIRERS AT THE TAVERN MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
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THE SMUGGLERS LAY OUT THEIR PLAN MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
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DON JOSÉ COMES TO FIND CARMEN MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
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DON JOSÉ AND ZUNIGA FIGHT MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
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CARMEN AND DON JOSÉ ARGUE IN THE MOUNTAINS MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
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CARMEN TELLS HER OWN FORTUNE MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
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ESCAMILLO AND DON JOSÉ FIGHT OVER CARMEN MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
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MICAËLA BRINGS SAD NEWS FROM HOME MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
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A PARADE OF BULLFIGHTERS MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
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CARMEN AND DON JOSÉ'S FINAL MEETING MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
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