

VANCOUVER OPERA CAPS OFF ITS 2023–2024 SEASON WITH THE FASTEST SELLING PRODUCTION IN COMPANY HISTORY, BIZET'S CARMEN

CARMEN has FIVE performances
at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre in Vancouver
April 27, May 2 & May 4 at 7:30pm and April 28 & May 5 at 2:00pm

MARCH 12, 2024, VANCOUVER, B.C./ Traditional territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations – Vancouver Opera is thrilled to close its successful 2023-2024 season with Georges Bizet's most beloved opera, *Carmen*. It has been nearly 10 years since our last production and the stage is set for passion, drama, world-class talent, and an unforgettable experience for opera enthusiasts and newcomers alike. Carmen is one of the most widely performed works in operatic history and Vancouver audiences will have five opportunities to see this production.

Carmen has already eclipsed all previous Vancouver Opera box office records, and audiences are encouraged to book tickets now to avoid disappointment. The excitement surrounding Vancouver Opera's 2023-2024 season finale is a testament to the enduring allure of Bizet's opera and Vancouver Opera's commitment to delivering exceptional experiences.

"Bizet's masterful score, multi-level sets that straddle the spectacular and the seedy, and the promise of captivating performances by some of the opera world's most talented artists has already driven tremendous audience interest in this production," said Tom Wright, General Director of Vancouver Opera. "*Carmen* is a must-see for both seasoned opera enthusiasts and those seeking an introduction to the mesmerizing world of classical music and storytelling. It's an opera that has stood the test of time and continues to captivate audiences worldwide, so considering how audiences have responded in the past, we knew that offering an extended run of five performances was key to meeting the interest; in our 64-year history, we've never seen ticket demand like this!"

This lush, grand-scale production updates the original setting from late-1800s southern Spain to an unnamed, pan-Latin city in the mid-1950s, where mounting political tensions and romantic desires match the scorching midsummer temperatures. Eye-catching but peeling billboards, bustling town squares and dive cafés, and costumes that range from proletariat denim to opulent bullfighting regalia give a vivid but distressed texture to this timeless tale of class division and teeming emotion.

Rachel Peake returns to Vancouver Opera (*The Pearl Fishers)* to direct *Carmen* alongside conductor **Leslie Dala** *(The Flying Dutchman)* for a five-show engagement of seductive arias, enduring, richly coloured melodies, and rhythmic vibrancy. Animated by an all-star cast and audacious stagecraft, the conflicting worlds and failed romance of the sensual, rebellious Carmen and the possessive military man Don José absolutely burst off the stage. From the stirring Toreador Song to the tauntingly

seductive aria Habanera, Georges Bizet's music transcends the hummable while cutting a compelling path through a story that intertwines the political and the personal.

Adds Wright, "the opera's unwavering popularity lies not only in its captivating story but also in its ability to showcase the complexity of its characters. *Carmen* is more than an opera; it is an immersive journey into the tempestuous world of love and destiny that keeps audiences on the edge of their seats."

Portraying the romantic title character are mezzo-sopranos **Sarah Mesko** (April 27, May 2 & 4) and **Carolyn Sproule** (April 28 & May 5). The fiery Don Jose is performed by **Alok Kumar** (April 27, May 2 & 4) and **Matthew White** (April 28 & May 5). Appearing in all five performances are soprano **Jonelle Sills** (*A Midsummer Night's Dream)* as Micaela, **Nathan Keoughan** making his company debut as Escamillo, **Alain Coulombe** (*Turandot)* as Zuniga, and **Luka Kawabata** (*A Midsummer Night's Dream)* as Le Dancaire. Joining them are Vancouver Opera's Yulanda M. Faris Young Artists **Jeremy Scinocca** as Le Remendado**, Simran Claire** as Mercedes, **Heidi Duncan** as Frasquita and **Danlie Rae Acebuque** as Morales.

Experience the passion of ***Carmen*** and purchase your tickets through the Vancouver Opera box office online or by phone at 604-683-0222. Vancouver Opera would like to remind patrons to only purchase tickets from Vancouver Opera instead of third-party ticket sellers.

Carmen is sung in French with English SURTITLES™ projected above the stage.

Vancouver Opera has the continuing support of The Canada Council for the Arts, Government of Canada, the BC Arts Council and BC Provincial Government, the City of Vancouver Cultural Services and Vancouver Civic Theatres. Vancouver Opera thanks our long-time season sponsor, BMO. Ticket Centre sponsor is Mission Hill Family Estate.

For more information about Vancouver Opera, and to subscribe, please visit vancouveropera.ca.

ABOUT VANCOUVER OPERA

Vancouver Opera creates extraordinary experiences that engage, inspire and entertain through voice, music and theatre. Vancouver Opera is the second largest professional opera company in Canada and is regarded worldwide for its fine mainstage productions, country-leading education programs and innovative community programs. Learn more at www.vancouveropera.ca.

Vancouver Opera has the continuing support of The Canada Council for the Arts, Government of Canada, the BC Arts Council and BC Provincial Government, the City of Vancouver Cultural Services and Vancouver Civic Theatres. Vancouver Opera's season sponsors are BMO, Mission Hill Family Estate, and the Alan and Gwendoline Pyatt Foundation.

-30-

For more information, access to photo gallery and interviews, contact
Cynnamon Schreinert. Tel: 604-802-2733; email: cynnamon@hartleypr.com
To unsubscribe from the HartleyPR Arts media list please click here.