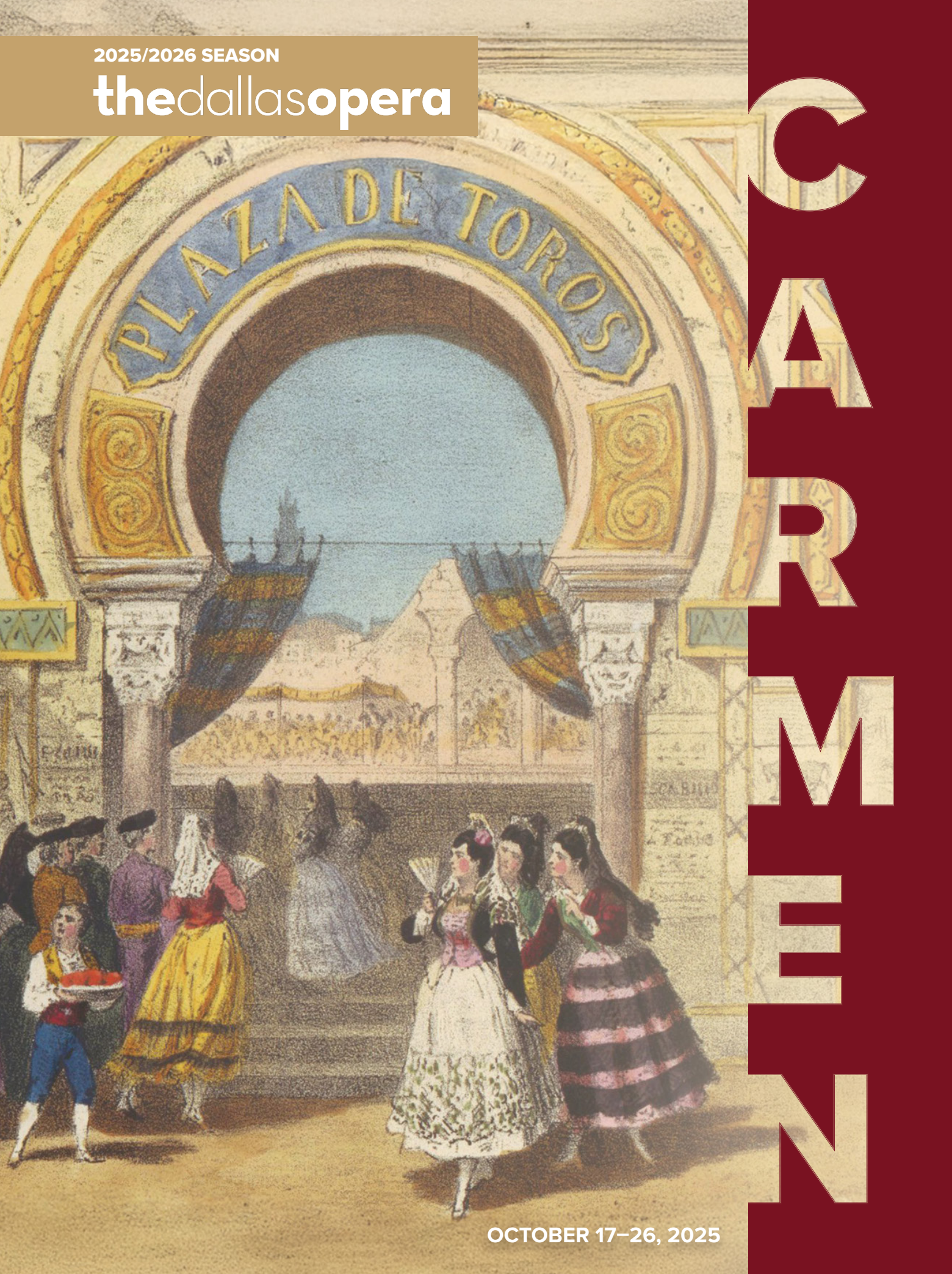


2025/2026 SEASON

thedallasopera



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OCTOBER 17-26, 2025

CELEBRATE 10 YEARS OF THE HART INSTITUTE!

Since 2015, the Linda and Mitch Hart Institute for Women Conductors has made great strides in closing the gender gap on the opera podium. This monumental program has trained, shaped, and supported the next generation of women conductors.

Hart Institute for Women Conductors: 10th Anniversary Concert

Sunday, January 25, 2025 | 3:00 PM

This January, The Dallas Opera hosts its annual HIWC Showcase Concert. This special 10th-anniversary performance will feature alumnae from the first decade of the Institute—including Tiffany Chang, Michelle Di Russo, Barbara Dragan, Tianyi Lu, and Shira Samuels-Shragg—and a guest host. Each conductor will lead The Dallas Opera Orchestra and guest singers in excerpts from operas significant to TDO's history.



FROM THE GENERAL DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR



IAN DERRER
Kern Wildenthal
General Director and CEO

Welcome to the Winspear!

CARMEN is an opera with universal appeal: thrilling drama, spectacular dancing, love triangles, vagabonds, bull fighters, and, of course, Georges Bizet's iconic music. In fact, I am sure many of you will catch yourself singing along to the Habanera or the Toreador Song.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the premiere of *Carmen* in Paris. Maestro Emmanuel Villaume and I considered various ways to celebrate this milestone, and we could think of no better way than opening our 2025/2026 Season with this beloved opera.

This new-to-Dallas production of *Carmen* is a recreation of the opera's original designs from 1875, when it premiered at the Opéra-Comique. A team of incredibly talented—and meticulous—artists rebuilt costumes and sets, painted drops, and more. That team includes director Romain Gilbert, who led our 2024 *Romeo and Juliet* production, and famed French fashion designer Christian Lacroix. As you flip through the pages of this program, you can learn more about their process. They pored over original staging manuals, etchings, lithographs, and news clippings to create as close a recreation to what those original Parisian audiences saw as possible.

The result is vibrant, grand, and beautiful. What makes it even more exciting is that The Dallas Opera is the first American company to present this recreation of *Carmen*. It's truly unlike anything Dallas audiences have ever seen before.

Now sit back and settle in for an epic night at the opera!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ian Derrer".



QUINCY ROBERTS
Board Chair

Welcome,

Swiss-French mezzo-soprano Marina Viotti, our *Carmen*, is a captivating artist. You've probably heard her if you watched the 2024 Olympics Opening Ceremony in Paris. In a Grammy-winning performance, she sang "Ah! Ça Ira!" and the Habanera with metal band Gojira. I am so excited to see her rendition of this famous aria on the Winspear stage as she makes her TDO and American opera debut.

Starring opposite Marina as Don José is Grammy-nominated Albanian tenor Saimir Pirgu, who also makes his TDO debut in this production. The pair sang these roles together last year in Zürich with praise from critics and audiences alike for their performances.

In addition to Marina and Saimir, most members of the cast are making their TDO debuts, including 2023 Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition winner Teresa Perrotta, former Santa Fe Opera apprentice Matthew Goodheart, Deutsche Oper Berlin ensemble member Kyle Miller, Ryan Opera Center alum Laureano Quant, and 2022 Gerda Lissner Opera Competition winner Eleomar Cuello. (Keep an eye on Kyle—he stars as the Pilot in our THE LITTLE PRINCE production later this season.)

We also welcome the return of Gihoon Kim, who played Baron Scarpia in our 2023 *Tosca*; Diana Newman, who appeared in 2022/2023's *Così fan tutte* and *Das Rheingold*; and Kristen Choi, who appeared in 2022's *Flight* and 2024's *Elektra*.

Welcome to these artists—and welcome all of you—to our electrifying trip back to 1875 in this season-opening production of *Carmen*!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Quincy Roberts".



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LAND AND PEOPLE ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Welcome to the Winspear Opera House.

We are delighted that you are joining us to experience opera. As an opera company, we are storytellers, and we hope to uplift the stories of those who were here before us.

We acknowledge and honor that we are on the ancestral land of various tribal nations, including the Caddo, Wichita, Commanche, and Apache Nations, who have stewarded this land and cared for its waterways since time immemorial. We also pay respect to the enslaved African people whose stolen labor helped build the beginnings of this city after the forced removal of the original stewards of the land.

This region holds generations of songs and stories of the many people who have, now, and will call this place home. As we harmonize entertainment, education, and artistic quality, we hope you will join us in honoring the stories of our past, present, and future.

We encourage everyone to learn more about its history and the pathways that brought us together.



**Learn More about
Dallas History**

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PHOTO: MARION KERNO AT OPERA DE ROUEN

Season Sponsor: The VanSickle Family Foundation in honor of Edith and Elmer VanSickle

GEORGES BIZET

CARMEN

PRESENTING SPONSORS

The Radford and Patricia Crocker Foundation, honoring Dr. Feyten
and the TWU Occupational Therapy Department
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Lisa Genecov

PRODUCING SPONSORS

The Enrico Foundation
Fanchon and Howard Hallam

The Eleanor Ford Penrose Mainstage Production
The Linda and Mitch Hart Season Opening Performance on October 17



Co-production Bru Zane
France, Opéra Royal-Château
de Versailles Spectacles,
Opéra Orchestre Normandie
Rouen, and Palazzetto Bru
Zane

Executive producer
Bru Zane France

Score published by
Choudens (revisions by the
Palazzetto Bru Zane)

Performance dates: October
17, 19 (matinee), 22, 25, and
26 (matinee), 2025

Sung in French with
English titles

Approximate duration:
3 hours & 25 minutes
with one intermission.

First performance:
Opéra-Comique in Paris,
France, on March 3, 1875

The Dallas Opera is a proud
member of OPERA America

thedallasopera™

presents

CARMEN

Opéra comique in four acts by Georges Bizet
Libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy

Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House at the AT&T Performing Arts Center

CAST IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

<i>Moralès</i>	ELEOMAR CUELLO*
<i>Micaëla</i>	TERESA PERROTTA*
<i>Don José</i>	SAIMIR PIRGU*
<i>Zuniga</i>	LAUREANO QUANT*
<i>Carmen</i>	MARINA VIOTTI*
<i>Frasquita</i>	DIANA NEWMAN
<i>Mercédès</i>	KRISTEN CHOI
<i>Escamillo</i>	GIHOON KIM
<i>Lillas Pastia, Innkeeper</i>	MAXIMILIAN SWENSON*
<i>Dancaire</i>	KYLE MILLER*
<i>Remendado</i>	MATTHEW GOODHEART*
<i>A Guide</i>	CHRISTIÖN DIOR DRAPER
<i>A Vendor</i>	KRISTEN MATA
<i>Conductor</i>	EMMANUEL VILLAUME
<i>Director</i>	ROMAIN GILBERT
<i>Set Designer</i>	ANTOINE FONTAINE*
<i>Costume Designer</i>	CHRISTIAN LACROIX*
<i>Assistant Costume Designer</i>	ISABELLE AUBRY*
<i>Lighting Designer</i>	HERVÉ GARY*
<i>Revival Lighting Designer</i>	STÉPHANE LE BEL
<i>Wig & Makeup Designer</i>	DAVID ZIMMERMAN
<i>Assistant Director</i>	GABRIELLE LAVIALE*
<i>Choreographer</i>	VINCENT CHAILLET
<i>Stage Manager</i>	ANGELA TURNER
<i>Chorus Director</i>	PAOLO BRESSAN
<i>Assistant Chorus Director</i>	JULIAN REED
<i>Artistic Director, GDCS</i>	KIMBERLEY AHRENS
<i>Chorus Pianist</i>	MIKHAIL BERESTNEV
<i>Concertmaster</i>	AMI CAMPBELL
<i>Assistant Conductor</i>	JINGQI ZHU
<i>Music Staff</i>	CHRISTOPHER DEVLIN JINGQI ZHU
<i>Fight Director</i>	DANIELLE GEORGIU
<i>Assistant Fight Director</i>	BRANDON WETCH
<i>Projected Titles</i>	MARY DIBBERN, Ph.D.
<i>Assistant Stage Manager</i>	LEXI SALMON CAITLYNN SANDOVAL
<i>Production Assistant</i>	IVY LARIVIERE

*The Dallas Opera debut

YOUR GUIDE TO CARMEN

By Jordan Hammons

Brawls, prison sentences, smuggling rings, and love triangles are all accompanied by melodies that you'll leave the theater humming! At the center of all of it is Carmen, the ultimate femme fatale. But don't get it twisted: she's no easy conquest. Rather, she's brilliant, fiercely independent, and gets whatever she wants!

WHO'S WHO

Carmen (CAR-mehn): a beautiful, free-spirited, and independent woman

Don José (don zho-ZAY): a soldier who is dangerously infatuated with Carmen

Escamillo (ehs-ka-mee-YO): a celebrity bullfighter who is also taken with Carmen

Micaëla (mee-kah-AY-la): the girl-next-door who tries to convince José to go home

SYNOPSIS IN A SENTENCE

Don José, infatuated with Carmen, frees her from prison believing he can capture her heart; however, Carmen, ensnared by no man, longs for "that intoxicating thing: Freedom!"—even if freedom means death.



Yoann Dubruque as Moralès & Chœur Accentus in *Carmen* at Opéra de Rouen © Julien Benhamou

TERM TO KNOW

opéra comique: a French opera genre that includes spoken dialogue

This genre emerged from a practice of combining popular tunes with text (almost like an 18th-century jukebox musical). While these operas can be humorous, the most famous opéra comique, *Carmen*, is a tragedy. *Carmen* was originally produced with dialogue spoken in French. Later revisions shifted to sung recitative, but in this production, you'll hear the original spoken dialogue.

"You've come at the right moment! There's no time to wait, for with my new lover, near the ramparts of Seville...I'll dance the seguidilla and drink manzanilla!" — CARMEN, Act I

WINSPEAR OPERA HOUSE

HELPFUL HINTS

Restrooms are located on the far east and west sides of every floor. Unisex restrooms are available on the sixth floor and the west side of the first, third, and fourth floors.

In addition to concession stands on first-through-fifth floors, there are water fountains on the west side of the first, third, and fourth floors.

English titles are projected above the stage. Don't panic if the screen is blank! There is a lot of repetition in opera, and occasionally the titles are only shown the first time something is said.

TRIVIA

First presented at the Opéra-Comique in Paris, *Carmen's* original producers worried that such a risqué plot would frighten away patrons. Their theater was a family establishment after all!

Tragedy struck when composer Georges Bizet died at age 36 in the middle of *Carmen's* first run in Paris. He never knew his final work would become one of the most performed operas of all time.

Composers loved *Carmen*. Johannes Brahms declared that he'd go "to the ends of the earth to embrace Bizet." Pytor Tchaikovsky wrote, "*Carmen* is a masterpiece in every sense of the word!"

Adaptations of *Carmen* include Cecil B. DeMille's 1915 silent film *Carmen*; 1954's *Carmen Jones*, set in WWII-era North Carolina, which starred Harry Belafonte, Dorthy Dandridge, and Pearl Bailey; 1990's *Carmen on Ice*, which mixed opera with figure skating; and Robert Townsend's *Carmen: A Hip Hopera* (Beyoncé's film debut!).



Stéphanie d'Oustrac starred as Carmen in our 2018 production of Bizet's masterpiece. She returns to TDO this November for *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. c. Karen Almond

ACT I

From their posts at the guardroom opposite Seville's tobacco factory, a squad of dragoons observe the passersby. The country girl Micaëla asks to see a corporal, Don José, but is told he will not be back until the changing of the guard. When the bell rings for the cigar girls from the factory to take a break, all eyes are on Carmen. She hums a sensual habanera and calls out to Don José, who seems impervious to her charms. When Micaëla joins the young man, however, he struggles to hide the turmoil that the beautiful cigar girl has aroused in his heart. Carmen is arrested following a brawl in the factory but has no trouble getting the besotted José to facilitate her escape.

ACT II

In Lillas Pastia's tavern, Carmen sings a song in the company of Frasquita and Mercédès. They are watched by several smugglers, including Dancaïre and Remendado. She tells them of her love for Don José, who has been locked up for letting her go free. The arrival of Escamillo, the star toreador, provides a distraction. Carmen is amused by the desire she rekindles in him. But Don José appears and is left alone with her. He's offended by her mockery, then makes an unabashed declaration of love before pulling himself together again. When his superior, Lieutenant Zuniga, arrives—also with a view to making advances to Carmen—José draws his saber. This altercation decides his fate: He will set out for the mountains, with the smugglers, to follow Carmen.

INTERMISSION

ACT III

In the mountains, where goods are smuggled through the passes, Carmen tries to shake off the baggage that binds her to Don José. She reads the cards, which foretell death for both of them. José is standing sentry when Micaëla arrives unexpectedly, looking for him. Escamillo appears, too, and José raises his *navaja*, a type of folding sword, to confront him in a duel; Carmen's sudden return saves the bullfighter from the fatal blow. Micaëla has come to summon José to his dying mother's bedside. Racked with guilt, he leaves with her while still threatening Carmen, as Escamillo's voice echoes in the distance.

ACT IV

In front of the Seville bullring, the crowd is excited. Escamillo appears on Carmen's arm as the *cuadrilla*, the matador team, marches past. Don José is there, too, observing her. Ignoring Frasquita's warnings to be careful, Carmen confronts him alone, with no illusions about the outcome of their encounter. She proclaims her unquenchable desire for freedom as José alternately pleads and threatens. Carmen proudly faces death. José stabs her, then gives himself up.

**Content provided by the Palazzetto Bru Zane –
Centre de musique romantique française**

TDO PERFORMANCE HISTORY

This is The Dallas Opera's eighth staging of Georges Bizet's *Carmen*, which first premiered at the Opéra-Comique in Paris on March 3, 1875.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

HOW CARMEN'S DIRECTOR RECREATED THE ORIGINAL 1875 PRODUCTION

By Romain Gilbert

What is there for a 'director' to do in the reconstruction of a historical staging? There, the smallest details might seem to be immutably regulated by the large number of surviving archive documents that are available (albeit little-known today). From a personal point of view, they can draw on information that they rarely get a chance to when faced with back-to-back production schedules and budget constraints that condition one's thinking. It's wonderful to give your imagination free rein on a work when the original piece has been perfectly recorded thanks to visual and literary sources that are as precise to read as they are poetic to look at! So many cuts are inflicted arbitrarily on the music today because we no longer understand the *raison d'être* of the passage in question. An indication of a movement or a mime sequence noted in a *livret de mise en scène* gives new meaning to these few bars that were previously misunderstood.

Yet a closer look at this mass of documents reveals that the precise detailing of the chorus movements or the grouping of the ensembles of soloists disappear when a long duet or an amply developed aria begins. At best, the *livret de mise en scène* indicates the stage blocking and a few general movements, but it has little or nothing to say about posture, gestures, or facial expressions. The source suddenly switches from garrulity to virtual silence... Obviously, it is at this point that the work of staging begins and—since there is no longer any need to hum and haw about the overall placement of the protagonists on stage—it is possible to go very quickly and deeply into the detail of the poetic expression. Juliet may be on her balcony or Marguerite at her spinning-wheel, but today's director can still imagine a significant gesture, a worried or dreamy gaze, a head movement, or a drapery effect making use of a suitable costume. The science of directing the actors, which critics and audiences regularly



PHOTO: JULIEN BENHAMOU

deplore as being inadequate or entirely absent, is of paramount importance here and once more becomes the focus of creativity. It requires both a precise, meticulous concept and unrelenting work

What is a *livret de mise en scène*?

Meaning “staging booklet” in French, a *livret de mise en scène* is a manual to the staging of an opera. It includes information like scenography, cast-members in a particular scene, cues, blocking, etc. Often the writers of this document, stage managers use it as a guide during productions. “... The document also anticipated the questions that might arise when the work was revived, should the creators of the first staging no longer be available to recall the details,” writes Étienne Jardin, director of research and publications, Palazzetto Bru Zane. To create this revival of the original *Carmen* production, Gilbert and the rest of his team relied heavily on the 1875 *livret de mise en scène*.

alongside the artist to obtain a perfect 'tableau' that mirrors 19th-century theatre-makers, to the point of having it reproduced in fixed form on canvases exhibited in museums.

The director then discovers that Romantic theatre and opera, far from consisting of crudely conceived productions learnt in haste, were much more subtle than has been popularly assumed. (Especially from the 1950s onwards, there was great disdain for 19th-century art, which had to be made an object of derision in order to justify making a clean sweep of tradition.) The *livret de mise en scène* is no more than a frame—like those that demarcate the ambitions of a painting—within which variety, creativity, imagination, and subtlety are limited only by the skills of the performers. And the sources tell us that most of the singers of the Romantic century were no novices in matters of stagecraft: They knew the treatises on posture (how to die well on stage; how to sit properly when wearing a gown with a train; how to position oneself correctly to sing a love duet 'à l'épaule', that is, threequarters facing the audience; and so on). They studied the significance of gestures (designed to be seen from a distance and to make the action clear even at the back of the auditorium). They worked on their facial expressions (as is clearly shown by the photos of artists in costume taken in the studios of Nadar and other specialists). The Paris Conservatory has even set up an 'opéra comique' diploma class, in which the students work on spoken dialogue, and the final examination requires them to recreate a scene from an opera, in simplified costume, with the appropriate props and following all the recommendations of the *livret de mise en scène*.

Once familiar with this documentation, today's 'historically informed' stage director is soon reassured that the numerous sources don't replace the need for their role, nor the aesthetic touch that they can stamp on a reconstruction, be it ever so subtle. Armed with his knowledge, they can assert, like a modern-day Jean-Jacques Rousseau: 'Anyone who wishes to be free, is free.' Isn't that also the creed celebrated by *Carmen*?



N° 2 ACTE I — CARMEN « L'amour est un oiseau rebelle »

We know what many of the 1875 *Carmen* scenes looked like thanks to lithographs printed around the time the opera premiered, like this one depicting the Act 1 Habanera aria by music publisher Antoine de Choudens. © Edition Choudens

Content provided by the Palazzetto Bru Zane –
Centre de musique romantique française

What were the Nadar studios?

In the mid-1850s, Parisian photographer Gaspard-Félix Tournachon, known as Nadar, opened his famed photo studio. For decades he was famous for his expressive portraiture and for revolutionizing the photography industry (he became the first person to take an aerial photo—via a hot air balloon). His studio closed in 1948.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Emmanuel Villaume CONDUCTOR



From: Strasbourg, France
Dallas Opera: Mrs. Eugene McDermott Music Director (2013/2014–present)
Career highlights: Emmanuel Villaume has been the Mrs. Eugene McDermott Music Director of The Dallas Opera since 2013 and the music director of the Prague Philharmonia since 2015. During the 2025/2026 season, he makes appearances at Opéra de Lyon, Kölner

Philharmonie, and Hamburg Symphony Orchestra, amongst others. Recognized equally for his insightful and dramatic interpretations, he regularly guests with the most important opera companies and orchestras worldwide, including the Royal Opera in Covent Garden, Munich's Bayerische Staatsoper, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the Mariinsky Orchestra. At the Winspear, Villaume has led dozens of performances of both beloved classics and newer works with The Dallas Opera, including the world premiere of the TDO-commissioned and critically acclaimed *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* in 2023. He serves on the artistic faculty for TDO's annual Linda and Mitch Hart Institute for Women Conductors and often leads the People's Choice Concert and other annual performances with The Dallas Opera Orchestra. He studied music in Strasbourg, France, his hometown, and at the Sorbonne in Paris.

Antoine Fontaine SET DESIGNER

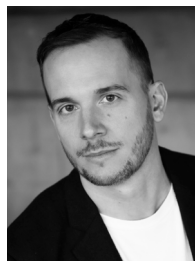


From: Paris, France
Dallas Opera: Debut
Career highlights: Head set designer for films *The Lady and the Duke* (2001) and *Triple Agent* (2004), Antoine Fontaine also designed the painted sets for popular movies *Queen Margot* (1994), *Vatel* (2000), *Marie Antoinette* (2006), and *An Officer and a Spy* (2019). At the Opéra Bastille, he designed the sets for *La Chauve Souris*

(2000), *The Barber of Seville* (2002), and *Manon* (2010). He joined the Opéra Royal de Versailles for *Richard Coeur-de-lion* (2019), *La Caravane du Caire* (2022), *David et Jonathas* (2022), and *L'Enlèvement au Sérail* (2024). He produced sets and costumes for *Lucio Silla* (Salzburg Festival, 2012), *La Chauve Souris* (Opéra-Comique, 2014) and the Da Ponte Trilogy at Sweden's Royal Theatre of Drottningholm (2015–2017). At Toulouse's Opéra du Capitole in France, he designed the sets for *Les Maîtres Chanteurs* (2002), *Hippolyte et Aricie* (2009), *The Nutcracker* (2017), *La traviata* (2018), *The Pearl Fishers* (2023), and *The Flying Dutchman* (2025), for Michel Fau.

Romain Gilbert DIRECTOR

The James R. Seitz, Jr. Stage
Director in honor of John Gage



From: Paris, France
Dallas Opera: *Romeo and Juliet* (2023/2024, debut)

Career highlights: Director Romain Gilbert studied at Paris Conservatoire and the Sorbonne and was the Friends of the Paris Opera administrator for 10 years. He worked in production with the Théâtre du Châtelet, Opéra national de Paris, and the Les Musiciens du Louvre orchestra. He

also assisted directors like Laurent Pelly, Ivan Alexandre, Ivo van Hove, and Claus Guth. Gilbert directed semi-staged productions of *La Périchole* at the Salzburg Festival and Festival Radio France; *Così fan tutte* at Bucharest's George Enescu Festival; *The Tales of Hoffmann* in Baden Baden and Bremen, Germany; and *Otello*, *Le Prophète*, and *La clemenza di Tito* at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence. Gilbert directed *Carmen* in Rouen and Versailles, France; Hong Kong; and Hanoi, Vietnam. He created *La Gioconda* at Naples' Teatro San Carlo, which will be revived this season at Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu. He will also direct *The Magic Flute* in Bremen, Dortmund, and Hamburg, Germany, and Bucharest, Romania.

Hervé Gary ORIGINAL LIGHTING DESIGNER



From: Mareuil, France
Dallas Opera: Debut
Career highlights: Throughout his career, Hervé Gary has designed the lighting for *Jocaste* (Charles Chaynes); *La Cenerentola*, *The Barber of Seville*, and *Il Turco in Italia* (Gioachino Rossini), *La Vieille Maison* (Marcel Landowski), *Don Pasquale* (Gaetano Donizetti); *Richard Coeur-de-lion* (André Grétry); *Bastien und Bastienne* (Wolfgang

Amadeus Mozart); and *Wozzeck* (Manfred Gurlitt), among others. He has worked with such directors as Marc Adam, Romain Gilbert, Marshall Pynkoski, Claire Dancoisne, Ivan Alexandre, Pierre Barrat, Didier Brunel, Marcel Bozonnet, Jacques Connort, Michel Jaffrenou, Patrick Guinan, Jean-Marie Sénia, and Coline Serreau. Gary has also worked with the Le Caravansérail and 2e2m ensembles and the Circus Nikulin, Centre National des Arts du Cirque, and Collectif AOC circuses. His recent and upcoming projects in France include *Si j'étais roi* (d'Adolphe Adam) in Tours, *La Caravane du Caire* (André Grétry) in Toulon, and *Don Giovanni* (Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart) in Versailles.

Stéphane Le Bel

REVIVAL LIGHTING DESIGNER

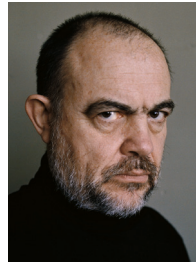


From: Malestroit, France
Dallas Opera: Debut
Career highlights: Since his debut in 1996 with a contemporary dance company, Stéphane Le Bel has built a rich career, collaborating with renowned companies like Compagnie Du Désordre, Compagnie La Rigole, Teatr Piba, and others. His expertise has led him to collaborate on remarkable works such as Benjamin Lazar's

Cachafaz, Claire Dancoisne's *Rinaldo*, and Jacques Nichet's *Le Collectionneur d'instants*. He also directed the lighting design for the show *Beauty and the Beast*, choreographed by Julien Guérin, as well as the premiere of the opera *Polyfemo* at the Opéra Royal de Versailles, and has collaborated on notable productions like Ivan Alexandre's *Da Ponte Trilogy*. A key career moment was his collaboration as a lighting assistant with Hervé Gary, who profoundly influenced his artistic and personal development. Under his direction, Le Bel participated in prestigious productions like *La caravane du Caire* and *Don Giovanni*, directed by Marshall Pynkoski.

Christian Lacroix

COSTUME DESIGNER



From: Arles, France
Dallas Opera: Debut
Career highlights: Designer Christian Lacroix is known for creating his eponymous fashion brand in 1987, although he trained in art history and at the École du Louvre to become a museum curator. Alongside his work as a couturier, he has designed costumes for numerous theater, opera, and ballet productions in France

(Comédie-Française, Opéra-Comique, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, etc.) and abroad (Brussels' La Monnaie/De Munt, the Metropolitan Opera, Vienna State Opera, etc.). A true aesthete, he has worked as a costume designer for renowned directors (Éric Ruf, James Gray, Vincent Boussard, Isabelle Nanty, Ludovic Lagarde, Blanca Li, Lambert Wilson, Anne Delbée, etc.). In addition to his work as a set decorator (Hôtel du Continent), illustrator (*Livres de Poche*, *Le Petit Larousse*, etc.), and interior designer (TGV Réseau trains, etc.), he is also the author of numerous books and has curated exhibitions on the world of fashion. In 2021, he staged Jacques Offenbach's *La vie parisienne* at the Opéra de Tours in France.

David Zimmerman

WIG AND MAKEUP DESIGNER



From: Dallas, Texas
Dallas Opera: *The Barber of Seville* (2006/2007, debut), more than 50 productions since
Career highlights: David Zimmerman has worked with numerous opera companies around the world, including the Metropolitan Opera and the companies of St. Louis, Santa Fe, Paris, Philadelphia, Chicago, Minnesota, Santa Barbara,

Amsterdam, and more. His career extends to Broadway, where he has worked with such shows as *Wicked*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Show Boat*, *South Pacific*, and *Evita*. Some of his personal clients include Renée Fleming, Joyce DiDonato, Susan Graham, Patricia Racette, Martha Stewart, and Ricky Martin. Zimmerman has also worked with DIFFA Fashion Runway, Dallas Fashion and Art, and *Yelp.com Fashion Magazine*. His credits include spreads in *Opera News*, *Vanity Fair*, and *The New Yorker*. TV and film credits are *Glamour Magazine's Women of the Year*, *Margaret* (starring Anna Paquin), and *Hostiles* (starring Christian Bale and Rosamund Pike).

Vincent Chaillet

CHOREOGRAPHER



From: Paris, France
Dallas Opera: *Romeo & Juliet* (2023/2024, debut)
Career highlights: Vincent Chaillet joined the Paris Opera Ballet School in 1995, entering the Corps de Ballet in 2002. Promoted to first soloist in 2009, he performed many leading roles in classical ballets and collaborated with prestigious contemporary choreographers in major

international theaters. Since 2017, he has been a guest professor and ballet master at Opéra National de Bordeaux, Strasbourg National Opera, Toulouse National Opera, Teatro alla Scala, Opéra de Nice, Oper Leipzig, and the junior and main companies at Paris Opera Ballet. In 2021, he co-founded Festival Castel Artès Festival in Mirepoix, France, with singer Edwin Crossley-Mercer. In collaboration with director Romain Gilbert, Chaillet's recent projects include *Romeo & Juliet* at The Dallas Opera; *La Gioconda* at Teatro di San Carlo in Naples, Italy; and a recreation of the 1875 *Carmen* premiere, which has been presented in France's Opéra de Rouen and Opéra Royal du Château de Versailles; Hong Kong Arts Festival; and Ho Guom Opera in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Marina Viotti
CARMEN

AMERICAN OPERA DEBUT
The Phyllis A. and Thomas H.
McCasland, Jr. Lead Soloist



From: Lausanne, Switzerland
Dallas Opera: Debut
Career highlights: After studying flute and experimenting with jazz, gospel, and heavy metal music, Swiss-French mezzo-soprano Marina Viotti pursued vocal training. She has since performed at top opera houses worldwide, like Teatro alla Scala, Paris Opera, and Teatro Real. Recent highlights include *Carmen* in Zurich, *Die Fledermaus*

in Amsterdam, *The Barber of Seville* in Berlin, and *La Cenerentola* in Dresden, Germany, and in Paris. Her March 2025 interpretation of Charlotte (*Werther*) in Paris was highly acclaimed by critics and audiences. In January 2024, she made her US debut with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. A winner of multiple awards, she was honored with the “Mazars Young Singer Award” at the 2019 International Opera Awards and the “Artiste lyrique de l’année” at the 2023 “Victoires de la Musique” in France. A particular highlight of her career was singing during the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympic Games in 2024, where she had a highly acclaimed—and Grammy-winning—performance with the French metal band Gojira.

Teresa Perrotta
MICAËLA



From: Orlando, Florida
Dallas Opera: Debut
Career highlights: Soprano Teresa Perrotta is a 2023 Grand Finals winner of the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition and a 2023 Sullivan Foundation Award winner. She has also placed in prestigious competitions like the Gerda Lissner Foundation International Vocal Competition, Lotte Lenya Competition, and Butler

Opera International Competition. Recent seasons have seen Perrotta debut at Metropolitan Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Washington National Opera, and Glimmerglass Festival. She made her international debut as Marie Antoinette (*The Ghosts of Versailles*) at Opéra Royal de Versailles in 2019. In concert, Perrotta has debuted with Erie Philharmonic, The Santa Fe Symphony, and Pacific Symphony. A contemporary opera advocate, Perrotta has workshopped new operas like Gregory Spears’ *The Righteous*, Kevin Puts’ *The Hours*, and Tobias Picker’s *Awakenings*. Perrotta studied at Eastman School of Music and University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. She has been a Young Artist with Santa Fe Opera, Glimmerglass Festival, Chautauqua Opera, Washington National Opera, and Ohio Light Opera.

Saimir Pirgu
DON JOSÉ



From: Elbasan, Albania
Dallas Opera: Debut
Career highlights: Tenor Saimir Pirgu is regarded as one of the world’s most important interpreters of lyric tenor roles. This season, he returns to Vienna’s Wiener Staatsoper as Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*) and Bayerische Staatsoper as Rodolfo (*La bohème*). In concert, he sang with Toronto Symphony Orchestra and Opernhaus

Zürich. Last season, Pirgu performed as Chevalier des Grieux (*Manon Lescaut*) and Hoffmann (*The Tales of Hoffmann*) at Opernhaus Zürich and as Romeo (*Romeo and Juliet*), Rodolfo (*La bohème*), and Macduff (*Macbeth*) at Wiener Staatsoper. Recent festival appearances include Rome’s Caracalla Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, and Salzburg Easter Festival. On the concert stage, recent highlights include appearances at National Symphony Orchestra, Berlin State Opera, and Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia. Pirgu has won several awards, including the “Pavarotti d’Oro” and a 2016 Grammy Award nomination. He’s released multiple albums, like 2024’s *Saimir*. Pirgu has also been an ambassador for Down Syndrome Albania since 2013.

Gihoon Kim
ESCAMILLO



From: Gokseong, Jeollanam-do, South Korea
Dallas Opera: *Tosca* (2023/2024, debut)
Career highlights: Baritone Gihoon Kim has risen to prominence following a string of international competition successes, including winning Second Prize and the Rolex Audience Prize at Operalia 2019 and the Second Prize at the 2019 International Tchaikovsky Competition. This season’s

highlights include debuts at LA Opera and Berlin Philharmoniker, as well as a festival and role debut as Donner (*Das Rheingold*) at the Salzburg Easter Festival. In concert, Kim debuts with Berlin Philharmoniker in Mahler’s Symphony No. 8, conducted by Kirill Petrenko. In recent seasons, Kim has made house debuts at the Metropolitan Opera, The Dallas Opera, Bayerische Staatsoper, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Royal Ballet and Opera, Korea National Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Washington National Opera, where he made his US debut. Kim is a former Junges Ensemble member at Staatstheater Hannover. He studied with Kwan-dong Kim at the Yonsei University in Seoul, South Korea.

Diana Newman
FRASQUITA



From: Malibu, California
Dallas Opera: *The Magic Flute* (2019/2020, debut), several productions since
Career highlights: American soprano Diana Newman brings “fresh and intense” performances to opera houses and concert stages across the world. She has performed with the Metropolitan Opera, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Palm Beach Opera,

and Glyndebourne Festival. On the concert stage, Newman has sung with the Lucerne Festival, Eastern Sierra Symphony Summer Festival, USC Alumni Orchestra, Whittier Bach Festival, and the American Youth Symphony. In 2019, she was a soloist at Los Angeles Philharmonic’s *America in Space* Hollywood Bowl concert celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing. She graduated from Lyric Opera of Chicago’s Ryan Opera Center, where she performed as Frasquita (*Carmen*), Pedro (*Don Quixote*), and Clorinda (*La Cenerentola*), amongst other roles. Committed to art song and new works, Newman has attended numerous programs including the Ravinia Festival Steans Music Institute, SongFest, and the Fall Island Vocal Arts Seminar. She’s also performed with the Marilyn Horne, The Song Continues series; Music Academy of the West; and UT New Music Ensemble.

Matthew Goodheart
REMENDADO



From: Binghamton, New York
Dallas Opera: Debut
Career highlights: Lyric tenor Matthew Goodheart is a Paris Opera Académie member. With the Académie this season, he appears as Count Belfiore (*La finta giardiniera*) and in concert at Palais Garnier and Opéra Bastille. In December, Goodheart debuts at Carnegie Hall in Handel’s *Messiah* with The Cecilia Chorus

of New York. Recent engagements include Festival d’Aix-en-Provence’s Académie and Santa Fe Opera’s apprentice program. Goodheart holds a bachelor’s degree from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. He spent two years as an Academy of Vocal Arts Resident Artist, where he performed Percy (*Anna Bolena*), Count Almaviva (*The Barber of Seville*), and Alfredo (*La traviata*). Additionally, he showcased scenes from *The Elixir of Love* during Opera Philadelphia’s Festival O23. In summer 2023, Goodheart was a Renée Fleming Artist at Aspen Music Festival. Previous summer engagements include Gastone (*La traviata*) with Wolf Trap Opera, Houston Grand Opera’s Young Artist Vocal Academy, and studying at the Chautauqua Opera Conservatory in New York.

Kristen Choi
MERCÉDÈS



From: Torrance, California
Dallas Opera: *Flight* (2021/2022, debut), *Elektra* (2023/2024)
Career highlights: Mezzo-soprano Kristen Choi is making waves in the opera world. *Opera News* dubbed her a “powerhouse in the making” for her Suzuki performance in *Madame Butterfly*. This season, she reprises that signature role with Opera Colorado and portrays Sotopenre

(*Akhnaten*) with LA Opera. Recent engagements include a role and house debut as Bloody Mary (*South Pacific*) with Dayton Performing Arts Alliance, her debut with the Boise Philharmonic as the alto soloist in Mozart’s *Requiem*, and Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*) with Virginia Opera. Choi has also featured as Suzuki with Florentine Opera, Kentucky Opera, Austin Opera, and OPERA San Antonio. She recently joined the Metropolitan Opera roster, covering Dimitri in *Fedora*. A champion of contemporary music, Choi’s credits also include Hosokawa’s *The Raven* with Opera Philadelphia; Hiroko Kobayashi (*An American Dream*) with Opera Idaho and Virginia Opera; Phoung Tran in Ruo/Hwang’s *The Rift* workshop with Washington National Opera; and Lady Murasaki (*Murasaki’s Moon*) with On Site Opera.

Kyle Miller
DANCAÏRE



From: San Francisco, California
Dallas Opera: Debut
Career highlights: Known for his electric stage presence and warm resonant timbre, American baritone Kyle Miller makes major house and role debuts this season, singing Papageno (*The Magic Flute*) at LA Opera, Don Giovanni (*Don Giovanni*) at Komische Oper Berlin, and Pilot (THE LITTLE PRINCE) with The Dallas Opera. In his second

Stipendiat year at Deutsche Oper Berlin, Miller sang Schanard (*La bohème*), Angelotti (*Tosca*), and Chou En-Lai (*Nixon in China*), amongst other appearances. He has appeared at Opera Philadelphia, Washington National Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, and Cleveland Orchestra. He’s a former Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and Santa Fe Opera Young Artist and a Ravinia Steans Institute Vocal Fellow, and he was named an Opera Philadelphia Emerging Artist. His accolades include a 2022 encouragement award in the Metropolitan Opera’s Laffont Competition, New England Region; Opera Theatre of Saint Louis’ Richard Gaddes Career Award; and The Juilliard School’s Toulmin Scholarship and Novick Career Advancement Grant.

Laureano Quant
ZUNIGA



From: Barranquilla, Colombia
Dallas Opera: Debut
Career highlights: Laureano Quant is lauded for a voice that is “robust and full of swagger” (*San Francisco Chronicle*). He makes his Dallas Opera debut in these performances of *Carmen*. Also, during the 2025/2026 season, he returns to Madison Opera (Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*) and Chicago Opera Theater (Slender in Salieri’s *Falstaff*) and joins Opera Edwardsville for a concert of opera favorites and Opera Maine in recital. Recent engagements include Bill in *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (Staatsoper Stuttgart); El Payador in *María de Buenos Aires* (Madison Opera); Escamillo in *Carmen* and Schaunard in *La bohème* (Wolf Trap Opera); Dancaïre in *Carmen* and Comte de Lerma in *Don Carlos* (Lyric Opera of Chicago); Betto in *Gianni Schicchi* (Ópera de Colombia); and Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and Captain and Prince Ragonzky in *Candide* (Orquesta Filarmónica de Bogotá). Concert performances include Handel’s *Messiah* (Apollo Chorus of Chicago) and Fauré’s *Requiem* and Bacalov’s *Misa Tango* (Orquesta Filarmónica de Bogotá).

Eleomar Cuello
MORALÈS



From: Havana, Cuba
Dallas Opera: Debut
Career highlights: Cuban baritone Eleomar Cuello just finished his final year as a member of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program at the Metropolitan Opera. In the 2025/2026 season, Cuello will return to the Metropolitan Opera as Dancaïre in *Carmen* and make several debuts, including the title role in *The Barber of Seville* with Knoxville Opera, Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* with Opera Theatre of St. Louis, and Brahms’ *A German Requiem* in concert with the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra. During the Metropolitan Opera’s 2024/2025 season, Cuello sang Fiorello in *The Barber of Seville* and the Bullfighter in *Ainadamar*. Outside of New York, he sang Sharpless in *Madame Butterfly* with the Teatro Municipal de Santiago, Silvio in *Pagliacci* with Utah Opera, and Schaunard in *La bohème* with Opera Maine. Based in New York City, Cuello’s debuts in recent seasons included the title role in *Don Giovanni* with Staatstheater Stuttgart and Silvio in *Pagliacci* with Florida Grand Opera.

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A PHANTOM DESIGNER

By Antoine Fontaine

Designer Antoine Fontaine explains how, when the original set sketches were lost, he went back to the drawing board.

To revive the 1875 premiere of *Carmen* means immersing oneself in a relatively extensive and precise archive, given that the work in question is the jewel in the crown of 19th-century French opera. As a result, staging notes and stage manager's diagrams showing entrances and exits, the movements of the singers, and the layout of the chorus facilitate a meticulous reconstruction.

The same cannot be said for the scenery. Astonishingly enough, we do not even have the name of the designer of the work, let alone sketches and models of the original set design—and this at a time when artists like Cambon, Chaperon, and Rubé were famed for their exotic stage pictures, comparable in lavishness to those in

Carmen. Fires and the loss of archives do much to explain these gaps in the documentation. Aside from the stage manager's diagrams and the modest dimensions of the stage at the Opéra-Comique, where the premiere took place, all we have to go on are a few approximate sketches published in the press, which give us an idea of the four *décors* used in Bizet's work. Of course, we do have good reproductions of the sets for the later productions of *Carmen*, from around 1900, which are very faithful to the libretto, but differ from those earlier sketches to some extent—and indeed completely so when they refer to Albert Carré's new *mise en scène* of 1898. We have to remain vigilant to avoid possible mistakes.

My long experience of recon-

structing period scenery, in particular at the Opéra Royal and the Théâtre de la Reine in Versailles, has given me the opportunity to discover the pictorial language of historical painted cloths, in particular those by Pierre-Luc Cicéri dating from the 1830s, many elements of which I have completed. As a result, I was able to transpose the colored lithographs of *Carmen* onto monumental stretchers painted in distemper and distributed over the different parts of the stage area, while also restoring the slope of the floor, traditional at the time. There remains the crucial and insoluble question of historical lighting.

In 1875, the stage was lit by gas, a warmer, more diffused light than our electricity, and above all, without spotlights (which of course did not exist yet). The heavily made-up singers had to position themselves as close as possible to the edge of the apron to be visible. Hervé Gary, the lighting designer for this production, and I therefore made use of footlights in the style of the sketches of the stage by Daumier or Degas, aided by low intensity floor lamps placed behind each stretcher to create the appropriate luminous ambience. However, it must be borne in mind that today's audiences are used to a much higher level of illumination than at the time of the original staging.



Artists paint the Act IV arena gate. © Atelier Devineau-Courtesy Palazzetto Bru Zane



Carmen cast members in front of the Act IV arena. © Marion Kerno at Opéra de Rouen

I was given another task, slightly contradicting the general aim of authenticity, namely, to ensure rapid set changes between Act I and Act II, and then between Acts III and IV. In the original production, the technicians took their time: There were three intervals of 30–40 minutes each, which made it possible to change sets that were very different from each other.

Nowadays, we are required to have only one interval, in the middle of the performance, to avoid making the evening too long. This meant we had to find a ploy to minimize the movement of scenic elements and obtain two quick changes necessitating intervals of about five minutes each, without altering the historical configuration of the sets. Hence the practical bridge of Act I becomes the

balustraded walkway leading to the tavern in Act II, while the cumbersome mountains of Act III are swiftly masked by the cloth representing the perimeter wall of the arena in Act IV, lowered on a plane closer to the audience. This little anecdote reminds us that any reconstruction, however rigorous, is still subject to the constraints of its era.

Content provided by the Palazzetto Bru Zane – Centre de musique romantique française

“Astonishingly enough, we do not even have the name of the designer of the work, let alone sketches and models of the original set design ...”





YOUTHFUL DREAMS FULFILLED IN LATER YEARS

How French couturier Christian Lacroix recreated the costumes of CARMEN

By Christian Lacroix

I've always said, ever since I was a child, that for me, the greatest gift—or even paradise itself—would be a time machine. This has been the guiding principle behind all my research for as long as I can remember, amassing tons of documents and guiding my work as a couturier and costume designer passionately interested in the history of fashion. That will give you some idea of how grateful and enthusiastic I was when the Centre de musique romantique française invited me to reproduce the costumes from the 1875 designs or contemporary illustrations for this first reconstruction of the historical staging of *Carmen*.

While the costumes for the leading roles are very well documented, others have to

be worked out through close scrutiny of the background of the illustrations and even conceived from scratch for some of the secondary characters. Ever since the '60s and '70s—when, after seeing *The Leopard*, *The Damned*, and *Death in Venice*, I dreamt of working with film and theater director Luchino Visconti and his costume designer Piero Tosi—I've been aware that there's an element of utopianism in the notion of a precise reconstruction of costumes: Fashions, the taste that governs them, their inspirations, and 'physiology', like the spirit of the time, are volatile phenomena. We've lost the inner workings, the mechanisms, the logic. We can only interpret, with modesty and humility—and subjectivity, too. That means we have to figure out the materials, the colors that period photos don't reproduce, the exact cut of the clothes, the jewelry and footwear, the decorations and embroidery, and so on. Yet these fabrics, trimmings, and accessories scarcely exist today in the way they were made during France's Third Republic. And even if they did, bodies have changed and so have attitudes. Another 20 years would go by before the cinema began to provide us with information on this subject, and color pho-

tography was still in an experimental phase at the time of Patrice de Mac Mahon, France's president in 1875.

It's also worth noting that there is no sign, in the silhouettes of the designs for the women's costumes, of the fashion of 1875, with its elongated line, flat at the front, exaggerated at the back by a curve extended by a train. If, as we assume, it was indeed Georges Clairin, famed actress Sarah Bernhardt's favorite portraitist, who created all the designs for them (a priori, the men's costumes were done by Édouard Detaille, a painter of soldiers, uniforms, and battles), then he followed original author Prosper Mérimée's story and evoked early 19th-century Seville, perhaps taking Goya as his inspiration.

I often collaborate with Claudine Lachaud of the Ateliers Caraco in Paris, who is a passionate collector of ethnic fabrics and antique lace, embroidery and braid, which she generously makes available for each production. She works with [artisans in] South America and went to Spain to bring back authentic headgear, mantillas, and traditional children's costumes for the chorus. We also explored the archives of a lace and embroidery manufacturer in

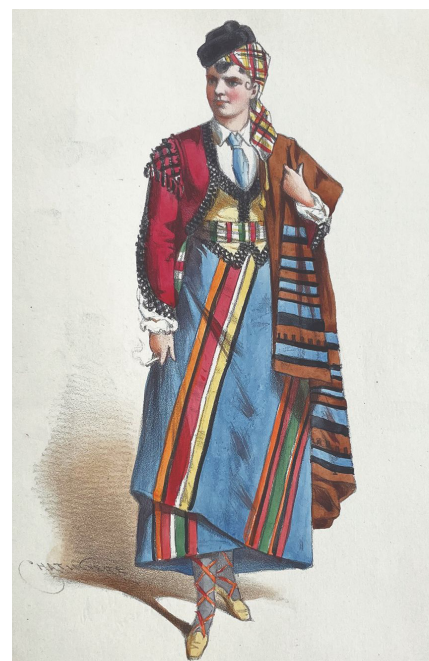
the north of France, which recreated a number of motifs, velvets, and trimmings similar to those of the period for this occasion. I therefore scrutinized the lithographs and daguerreotypes in order to get as close as possible to the silhouettes, proportions, and character of Bizet's protagonists as they were dressed in those early performances. To do this, I had to tread a fine line between fidelity to the surviving documents and imagination and personal creation for any feature that was lacking in precision, as with the toreros in the cuadrilla, for example.

The final tricky question for me was that of patina, which I always appreciate and use to give costumes an extra-special charm and "period touch," as

"I've always said, ever since I was a child, that for me, the greatest gift—or even paradise itself—would be a time machine."

if they had lived several lives. But, paradoxically, the aim here was to display the sets and costumes in all the splendor and color they had on the evening of March 3, 1875, even if it meant they looked a little flashy. Luckily, Hervé Gary's lighting design, imitating the gas lighting of the period, is there to give everything a poetic halo, resembling a light amber varnish, a natural patina.

All that remains is to hope



Act III costume design for Carmen by A.M. Chatinière. c. Bibliothèque-Musée de l'Opéra, Paris.



Original Carmen Costume Sketches, by Édouard Detaille c. Palazzetto Bru Zane

that, in a millennium in which transpositions of all kinds, even the most ludicrous, are becoming the norm in most opera houses, this passion for the history of music, the 'archaeology' of opera, this return to the original sources of one of the most performed French works, will be widely shared and will seduce and convince those who see it. The audience at the Opéra de Rouen in the autumn of 2023 welcomed this production with an enthusiasm that we will not forget in a hurry.

Content provided by the Palazzetto Bru Zane – Centre de musique romantique française

Dialogues of the Carmelites star Patricia Racette chats about her previous experiences with this opera.

Throughout my career, I've had the immense pleasure of performing in Poulenc's *DIALOGUES OF THE CARMELITES*—about nuns during the French Revolution—in seven different productions, first with Vancouver Opera (1993) and most recently with Houston Grand Opera (2022). I've played the novice Blanche, who seeks to escape the war's terror; the new prioress, Madame Lidoine, who leads the nuns to the guillotine; and the old prioress, Madame de Croissy, whose Act 1 death foreshadows her sisters' fates.

Dialogues of the Carmelites is truly an ensemble piece, and having lived three of its central characters has greatly enriched my understanding of their emotional interplay.

In my earlier years, I was immediately drawn to Blanche for her vulnerability and inner turmoil, which ultimately lead to her transcendence. Her journey is poignant, and I found profound resonance in portraying such a rewarding and challenging character whose emotional and spiritual awakening arrives only at the very

end. Much of her struggle lies in the nuance—the unspoken tension—though it is exquisitely expressed in Poulenc's music. The role demands a deep sensitivity to both silence and sound, as well as the ability to traverse a subtle yet powerful transformation arc.

“My connection to this most human of operas mirrors my own evolution as an artist ...”

Moving from the role of Blanche to the new prioress, Madame Lidoine, was a natural progression, both vocally and from a character standpoint. In contrast to Blanche's vulnerability, Lidoine embodies compassion, grace, quiet strength, and maturity. Transitioning from Blanche's hesitant, searching nature to someone so grounded in faith and certainty was deeply satisfying.

While Blanche's vocal writing is speech-like and fragile, Lidoine's music is more lyrical. Her cantabile lines beautifully reflect her inner steadiness and spiritual conviction.

The contrast between the two roles, both vocally and dramatically, offered me a new opportunity to explore this extraordinary opera's complexity.

My most recent engagement with *Dialogues of the Carmelites* was as the terrifying Madame de Croissy. The old prioress's illness drives her to an agonizing crisis of faith and sets a powerful thematic tone for the entire work. Of the three roles I've performed in this opera, this one is the most dramatically intense: It demands an unflinching honesty, both emotionally and vocally. Though the role spans only two scenes, they are densely concentrated and exceptionally potent.

And despite the brevity of Croissy's role, her relationship and connection with Blanche is instantaneous—evidenced when Blanche unknowingly chooses the same Carmelite name as Croissy. Their scenes pack a gut-wrenching punch, leaving a profound impact on both performer and audience. Each time I sang Blanche, I felt an intimidating, yet indelible connection to many a formidable Madame de Croissy. What a full-circle moment to be the character in that bed! The psychological unraveling and spiritual desperation that unfold in such a short time make it one of the most harrowing and rewarding challenges I've taken on.

My connection to this most human of operas mirrors my own evolution as an artist—from ingénue to leader to matriarch. To have had the privilege of experiencing *Dialogues of the Carmelites* across seven—and now eight—different productions, and through the lens of three distinct characters, has been nothing short of transformative. Each uniquely demanding and rewarding role deepened my understanding of both the opera and the emotional, spiritual, and artistic truths it so powerfully reveals.



Patricia Racette as Madame de Croissy in Houston Grand Opera's 2022 *Dialogues of the Carmelites* production. c. Lynn Lane

Paolo Bressan
CHORUS DIRECTOR AND HEAD OF MUSIC



From: Varese, Italy
Dallas Opera: *Tosca*, (2015/2016, debut), multiple productions since
Career highlights: Internationally acclaimed conductor Paolo Bressan is a committed musician, educator, and vocal coach. He cofounded the LacMus International Music Festival at Lake Como, Italy (2017-current), and is The Dallas Opera's Chorus Director and Head of Music

(2024-current). He has worked as an assistant with conductors like Christian Thielemann, Emmanuel Villaume, and Valery Gergiev. Bressan studied orchestral and choral conducting, piano, vocal coaching, and composition at the "Giuseppe Verdi" Conservatory of Music in Milan, Italy, and at the University of Music Franz Liszt in Weimar, Germany, and he studied piano with celebrated Canadian pianist Louis Lortie. After launching his career in 2007 at Mecklenburgische Staatstheater in Schwerin, Germany, Bressan has worked worldwide, including at Vienna's Konzerthaus, Paris' Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, and St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre. He has worked with Spanish National Orchestra, the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano, and the PKF – Prague Philharmonia. In addition to his chorus director duties, he conducts TDO's production of *THE LITTLE PRINCE* during the 2025/2026 Season.

THE 2025/2026 DALLAS OPERA CARMEN CHORUS

SOPRANO

Rachel Davies
Megan Dobbs
Carelle Flores
Stephanie Jennings
Tiffany Lynne Lopez
Kristen Mata
Rebecca Mugnolo
Judith Rodriguez
Catherine Swindle

TENOR

David Bogaev
Johnny Brown
David Kendall
Ferguson
Dylan Elza
Joshua Friend
Jay Gardner
Zach Hess
Samuel PJ Lopez
Mark A. Tenorio

MEZZO-SOPRANO

Basil Ceniseros
Rachel Moon
Denise Stom
Susannah Woodruff

BASS/BARITONE

Seth-Emmanuel
Clarke
Erik Danielson
Christiön Dior Draper
Brandon Gibson
Christopher Harrison
Tres Hunter
Donald Jones
Travis Wiley McGuire
Bryce Smith

CONTRALTO

Karina Buruca-Kunda
Arielle Collier
Avanti Dey
Sabatina Mauro
Shannon Moy

SUPERNUMERARIES

Kevin Cain
David Edwards
Garrett Hollowell
Adam Kullman
Stefan Newman
Bailey Owen

DANCERS

Silken Kelly
Wilson Livingston
Sydney May
Sean Smith

Covers:

De'Ondre Goodley
Colby Treat



Dancers Emily Cardea and Nicholas Snipes in The Dallas Opera's 2024 production of *La traviata*.
c. Kyle Flubacker

GREATER DALLAS CHORAL SOCIETY



Kimberley Ahrens, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR
 Claire Worrall, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
 Mary Anne Clark, ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR
 Monica Awbrey, REHEARSAL ASSISTANT

The Greater Dallas Choral Society (GDCS) is the premier choral organization for singers in grades 4–12 throughout Dallas-Fort Worth. GDCS proudly carries forward the 25-year-old legacy and mission of the Children’s Chorus of Greater Dallas, which is to give children and youth a choral artistry experience in a group that reflects the diversity of Dallas. Its five ensembles and Summer Singing Camp engage more than 350 singers from 35 communities. More than 3,500 patrons annually attend its concert season at the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center.



Elena Villalón, Kangmin Justin Kim, and the GDCS children's chorus during the finale of TDO's 2023 production of *Hansel and Gretel*.

Kimberley Ahrens
 ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR



From: McKinney, Texas
Dallas Opera: *Hansel and Gretel*, debut (2022/2023); multiple productions since
Career highlights: Kimberley Ahrens is a nationally recognized choral conductor, educator, and clinician with more than 20 years’ experience enriching youth through the choral arts. The recipient of the 2022 Choral Director of Distinction Award from the Texas Choral Directors Association,

Ahrens is the founding Artistic Director of the Greater Dallas Choral Society for Children and Youth (GDCS), The Dallas Opera’s official children’s chorus. For 18 years, Ahrens taught choir in Texas public schools, leading ensembles to national awards and performances at major statewide and national conferences. In 2009, she received the Texas Choral Directors Association’s Distinguished Young Director Award. An expert in adolescent voice, Ahrens is regularly engaged as a clinician and guest conductor for elementary- and middle-school honor choirs throughout the US. She has also taught and guest-lectured at Southern Methodist University, Abilene Christian University, Texas Tech University, and Florida State University. She holds music education degrees from Texas Christian University and University of North Texas.

CARMEN CHILDREN’S CHORUS

Caleb Aldis	Hugo d’Alton	Adalyn Kim
Lydia Aldis	AJ Dasgupta	Arya Moses
Rebekah Aldis	Zachary Feng	Beckett Potter
Amelia Baker	Creda Hamilton	Jack Silber
Lucia Barraco	Ajay Hande	Eric Whetten
Zoë Cernoch	Elizabeth Holt	Joliet Yanez
Aubrey Childs	Ava Jafari	

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Dame Gwyneth Jones fixes hair before playing Lady MacBeth in 1966.

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Stepping Up

By Catherine Wendlandt



Conductor Jessica Gethin rehearses with orchestra members during the inaugural Hart Institute for Women Conductors in 2015. c. David Lomeli

This season TDO celebrates a decade of the Hart Institute for Women Conductors. Learn more about the Institute's history in each 2025/2026 mainstage program.

When the Hart Institute for Women Conductors launched in 2015, the gender gap on opera podiums was huge, original program manager David Lomeli says. In the US, only 5% of Level One opera conducting gigs went to women. "To say that the overall environment was hostile to young female conductors is an understatement," HIWC alumna and master teacher Elizabeth Askren says.

Then, becoming an opera conductor had a traditional career path, explains Lomeli. You started as a rehearsal pianist and worked your way up—but female pianists

rarely got the opportunity to step up onto the podium. The goal of HIWC, he says, was to find talented conductors and set them on that path.

Since 2015, HIWC has served more than 80 conductors, administrators, and observers. Alumnae have gone on to serve as music directors, principal conductors, and guest conductors on the world's most prestigious stages.

"Significant progress has been made since the HIWC's founding," Askren says. But there's still more work to be done.



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