

THE ATLANTA OPERA
PRESENTS



CARMEN
BIZET

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CARMEN BIZET

WELCOME	3
PRE-PERFORMANCE Activities Preparing Students for the Opera	4
PRE-PERFORMANCE Opera Myths	5
CREDITS <i>Carmen</i>	6
MEET THE CHARACTERS Who's Who in the Show	7
SYNOPSIS What's the Opera About?	8
PRODUCTION NOTE In Depth Look at <i>Carmen</i>	9
COMPOSER About Bizet	11
LIBRETTISTS About Halévy & Meilhac	12
TIMELINE The World in Bizet's Time	13
SPOTLIGHT Angèle Sherwood Lawless - Violin.....	17
CAST & CREATIVE Who's Who?	18
OPERA 101 The Basics	25
OPERA 101 Different Styles of Opera.....	26
OPERA 101 History of Opera in Atlanta.....	27
IMPORTANT JOBS Who Keeps The Opera Running.....	28
GLOSSARY Basic Opera Terms & Vocabulary	29
VOCABULARY Activity	30
SCIENCE Operatic Voices.....	31
SCIENCE Types of Operatic Voices	33
SCIENCE The Science of Sound.....	34
REVIEW Writing About What We See & Hear	35
SPECIAL THANKS	37

HELLO!

WELCOME

Hello, and thank you for joining us for this production of Bizet's operatic masterpiece, *Carmen*. One of the most frequently performed operas in the world, *Carmen* has been delighting audiences since its premiere in 1875. This opera has some of the most quoted music in the mainstream today, and you and your students will instantly recognize some of the melodies as you are transported to Seville.

This study guide has been developed to help you and your students explore *Carmen*, as well as to familiarize students with the world of opera (vocabulary, history, etc.) The guide approaches these subjects via a wide range of disciplines, including language arts, reading, math, science, problem-solving, and social studies. In using this guide, we hope you will feel free to adapt pages or activities to best meet the needs of your students. Please make this guide your own!

We value your feedback and will take it into account in planning future education programs. We look forward to hearing from you, your students, administration, and/or parents following the performance. Thank you again for allowing us to share this opera with you. It is our sincere hope that you enjoy the experience, and look forward to seeing you and your students at the opera!

Sincerely,

The Atlanta Opera Education Department
1575 Northside Drive, N.W., Suite 350
Atlanta, GA 30318

404-881-8801 | education@atlantaopera.org



The Atlanta Opera's 1992 production of *Carmen* performed at Atlanta Symphony Hall. This production was set in 1960s Cuba with Delores Zeigler as Carmen. (photo: Keiko Guest)

PRE-PERFORMANCE

ACTIVITIES PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE OPERA

Are you worried about how to act or what to wear? You are not the only one! Opera stereotypes can make the art form seem intimidating to lots of people. Having an idea of what to expect at the performance may make it easier to enjoy your experience. Here are some suggestions of things you can do before you visit The Atlanta Opera at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre.

START WITH THE STORY

In simple terms, an opera is a story set to music. Before the performance, review the plot synopsis of *Carmen*. Ask students to consider the story, characters, and setting of the opera. Use the following questions to lead a class discussion:

- What is this opera about?
- What is the time period?
- Who are the main characters?
- What struggles do the characters face?
- What are their relationships to each other?
- What do you expect to see and hear at the opera?

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY TERMS

Refer to the Glossary of Opera Terms. Discuss with the students which of these terms they may hear and/or see during the performance.

DESIGN A PROMOTIONAL POSTER

Create a poster to promote the upcoming performance of *Carmen*. Display the poster in your school and send samples to The Atlanta Opera at education@atlantaopera.org.



Students at the Cobb Energy Centre for the Atlanta Opera's Student Short performance. (photos: Raftermen / Andrew Snook)

OPERA MYTHS

Many people have preconceived ideas about the opera. Read the truth behind some of the most popular opera myths and see if they answer some of your questions about the opera as well!

MYTH 1:

OPERA IS BORING & STUFFY

Not true! Operas tell some of the most interesting, scandalous, and beautiful stories of all time. It is not unusual to find love triangles, murders, fatal illnesses, and messages from beyond the grave.

MYTH 2:

OPERA IS SUNG IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE SO I WON'T UNDERSTAND THE STORY

We can help! It is true that many operas are sung in languages other than English. Since most people in our audience do not speak other languages, we project English translations, called "supertitles," on the screen above the stage. This way, you can follow along even if you do not understand the language. You also can read the synopsis of the opera before you arrive. Knowing the story will also help you follow along.

MYTH 3:

I NEED TO WEAR A TUXEDO OR A BALL GOWN TO THE OPERA

Some people like to dress up when they go to an opera performance but there is no dress code to attend an opera. You will see people wearing everything from jeans to ball gowns. Dressing up can be part of the fun of attending an opera performance but you should wear whatever makes you comfortable. The opera is a place for everybody.

MYTH 4:

OPERA SINGERS JUST SCREECH & HIT HIGH NOTES ALL THE TIME

Most of the music we listen to today is electronically reproduced and amplified by speakers. Opera is one of the only places you'll hear singers perform without a microphone. All the sounds you will hear at the opera are natural and coming straight from the singers' throats and the orchestra's instruments to your ears. Opera singers have trained for years to project their sound and make it larger than life. While you may not be accustomed to live, unamplified singing, it can be a wonderful experience if you think about how much skill is required.



Students arriving at the Cobb Energy Centre to see an Atlanta Opera performance. (photo: Raftermen)

Here are a few more tips to make your trip to the opera more comfortable.

REMEMBER:

The opera is a live performance. You can hear the performers on stage and that means they can hear you too! Please refrain from talking or whispering during the opera. It is distracting to others around you as well as to the singers. Please do not leave your seat during the performance.

Please turn off all cell phones, beeping watches and anything else that may go "beep!"

Please do not take photographs or video or audio recordings of the performance. The light can affect the singers on stage.

If you like what you have seen and heard, let the performers know! It is okay to applaud at the end of songs, called arias, and at the end of a scene. You can even call out "bravo" (to the men on stage), "brava" (to the women) and "bravi" (for all on stage). And of course, a standing ovation is always welcome!

CARMEN

BIZET

MUSIC

Richard Wagner

LIBRETTO

Henri Meilhac & Ludovic Halévy

FIRST PERFORMANCE

March 3, 1875, at Opéra-Comique, Paris

CONDUCTOR

Arthur Fagen

DIRECTOR

Brenna Corner**

SCENIC DESIGNER

Allen Charles Klein

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Robert Wierzel

WIG & MAKEUP DESIGNER

James McGough

COSTUMES COORDINATOR

Joanna Schmink

ASSISTANT LIGHTING DESIGNER

Ben Rawson

CHOREOGRAPHER

Amir Levy

FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER

Michelle Ladd

CHORUS MASTER

Lisa Hasson

CHILDREN'S CHORUS MASTER

Rolando Salazar

CAST (IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE)**MORALÈS**

Calvin Griffin

MICAËLA

Nicole Cabell

DON JOSÉ

Gianluca Terranova

ZUNIGA

David Crawford

CARMEN

Varduhi Abrahamyan

FRASQUITA

Kaitlyn Johnson

MERCÈDÈS

Sofia Selowsky

ESCAMILLO

Edward Parks

LE DANCAÏRE

Joseph Lattanzi

LE REMENDADO

Justin Stolz*

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Whitney McAnally

MUSICAL PREPARATION

Elena Kholodova, Valerie Pool*

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER

Brian August

ASSISTANT PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGERS

Renée Varnas, Kristin Kelley

CHILDREN'S CHORUS CAPTAIN

Emily Copeland

THE ATLANTA OPERA

GENERAL & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Tomer Zvulun

CARL & SALLY GABLE MUSIC DIRECTOR

Arthur Fagen

DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION

Dave Smith

DIRECTOR OF ARTISTIC ADMINISTRATION

Lauren Bailey

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Micah Fortson

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

Rae Weimer

DIRECTOR OF MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

Scott Hazleton

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING

Holly Hanchey

**AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT
& EDUCATION MANAGER**

Jessica Kiger

Performed in French with English supertitles

Approximate full running time: 3 hours 20 minutes plus two intermissions

**member of The Atlanta Opera Studio*

*†The Jerry & Dulcy Rosenberg Young Artist Stage Director,
given in honor of Tomer Zvulun*

Costumes courtesy of Malibar, Ltd.; Western Costume Co.;

Costume Rentals - Guthrie Theater

English Captions provided by Cincinnati Opera & Brenna Corner

MEET THE CHARACTERS

WHO'S WHO IN THE SHOW

Character	Pronunciation	Voice Type	The Lowdown
CARMEN A beautiful and strong-willed "gypsy" (or Roma) woman	CAR-men (in French, car-MEN)	Mezzo-soprano	Tempestuous and sexually forthright, Carmen disregards the conventional female behavior of her time.
DON JOSÉ A corporal in the dragoons	DON hoe-ZAY (in French, zho-ZAY)	Tenor	An honest soldier whose love for Carmen leads him to betray his sense of honor and to leave behind the traditional life he has known.
ESCAMILLO A famous bullfighter	ess-kah-MEE-yo	Baritone	Self-confident and masculine, he shares Carmen's approach to passion and love and is as physical and fearless as she is.
MICAËLA A girl from Don José's home village	mee-kah-AY-lah	Soprano	Sweet and naïve, she is in love with Don José.
ZUNIGA A captain of the dragoons	zoo-NEE-gah	Bass	Don José's superior officer, who wants Carmen for himself. A cold man, he loves his power and position.
MORALÈS A corporal in the dragoons	moh-RAH-les	Baritone	A fellow officer and acquaintance of Don José's
FRASQUITA A friend of Carmen's	frah-SKEE-tah	Soprano	A gypsy girl
MERCÈDES A friend of Carmen's	mayr-SAY-dess	Soprano	A gypsy girl
DANCAÏRE Gypsy smuggler	dahn-kah-EER	Baritone	Living and working their trade in the mountains.
REMENDADO Gypsy smuggler	reh-men-DAH-doh	Tenor	Living and working their trade in the mountains.

Courtesy of Metropolitan Opera

SYNOPSIS

WHAT'S THE OPERA ABOUT?

ACT I

A TOWN SQUARE IN SEVILLE, SPAIN

Moralès and his soldiers pass their time reading and playing dice. Micaëla appears, looking for her fiancé, Corporal Don José. She is told that José will arrive with the changing of the guard. Micaëla departs. Lieutenant Zuniga and Don José arrive for the changing of the guard. The midday bell rings, and the women who have been working in the factory come outside for their break. Among them is Carmen, who entrances all — except Don José. Carmen throws a flower at him and returns to the factory.

Micaëla returns with a letter from Don José's mother. Suddenly, sounds of a fight are heard in the factory. Women burst loudly into the square, and Carmen is accused of wounding her co-worker with a knife. José is ordered to arrest Carmen. Once they are alone, Carmen convinces José to help her escape. Don José unties Carmen, and she flees. José is arrested.

ACT II

LILLAS PASTIA'S TAVERN

At the end of a dance, Zuniga tells Carmen that José has been released after a month in prison. The famous bullfighter Escamillo arrives. He is immediately attracted to Carmen, but she refuses his advances. The smugglers Remendado and Dancaïro enter. They ask Carmen, Frasquita, and Mercédès for their help on a smuggling mission. Carmen refuses, saying again that she is waiting for Don José, her true love.

Don José arrives and Carmen dances for him. When Don José tells Carmen he must return to the barracks, she mocks him and accuses him of not loving her; if he did, he would leave the army and join her in the mountains. Don José tells her he loves her but that he must go. Zuniga bursts in. The two men brawl. Zuniga and Don José are restrained, but now that Don José has attacked his superior officer, he has no choice but to leave the army and join the smugglers.

ACT III

A MOUNTAIN HIDEAWAY

The smugglers are on their way to the border with their stolen goods. There is tension between Carmen and Don José. They have an argument and Carmen joins the women, who are using cards to tell their fortunes. For Carmen, the cards foresee only death.

Don José is left behind to guard stolen goods at the camp. Micaëla enters searching for Don José, but she hides when Don José fires his gun at an intruder. It is Escamillo, searching for Carmen. Don José is furious, and they fight. They are interrupted by Carmen and the other smugglers. Escamillo departs, inviting everyone — especially Carmen — to his next bullfight in Seville. Micaëla is discovered and reveals that Don José's mother is dying. She begs him to return home. Carmen urges him to go. Don José decides he must leave, but he warns Carmen that they will meet again.

ACT IV

OUTSIDE THE BULLRING IN SEVILLE

Carmen escorts Escamillo as an excited crowd cheers the bullfighters. Frasquita and Mercédès warn Carmen that Don José has been seen in the crowd. Don José finds Carmen alone and pleads with her to forget the past and start a new life with him. Carmen tells Don José that everything between them is over. When Don José tries to prevent Carmen from joining her new lover, she loses her temper. She angrily throws down a ring that Don José had given her. Enraged, Don José stabs Carmen as the crowd cheers Escamillo's victory.

Courtesy of Opera America



The Atlanta Opera's 2004 production of *Carmen* performed at the Atlanta Civic Center. Emily Golden as Carmen and Oziel Garza-Ornelas as Escamillo. (photo: J.D. Scott)

THREE'S A CROWD

BIZET'S *CARMEN* REMAINS AS TANTALIZING, POPULAR, AND PROVOCATIVE AS THE DEADLY LOVE TRIANGLE IT FEATURES, FIRST STAGED A CENTURY AND A HALF AGO.

BY NOEL MORRIS

You could spend several hours trying to come up with a better playlist than *Carmen* and not top this hit parade. For 143 years, it has sent opera-goers whistling their way out of the theater. It also has provoked many an argument during the ride home.

What has the audience just experienced? Who is the villain in the story? Composer Georges Bizet gets a free pass on this, because he doesn't tell us what to think. He just tells the tale. The answers must come from the audience. What are your cultural biases, Bizet seems to ask.

Famed psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud saw *Carmen* in 1883 and described it as a study in what can happen when a gentleman fails to repress his natural drives. For Freud, *Carmen* offered a contrast between refined middle-class people and the spontaneous, freewheeling lower class.

Others commenting over the years have said similar things, all of which can be distilled down to something Don José's mother might have said: He's a fine, young man who gets mixed up with the wrong girl.

Of course we are living in different times. For many of you, Don José likely sends up all sorts of red flags. He lets his mother supplement his pay. He's a deserter. He promises to love two women in 10 minutes, and gets insanely possessive over the one who clearly espouses free love.

The original Paris audience would have known Don José from Prosper Mérimée's novella. In it, Don José kills a man and joins the army to avoid prosecution. The opera picks up the story after this, and gives only the slightest hint of it.

At no point does Carmen lie to Don José. Why, then, do so many people consider him a hapless victim? Well, when Mérimée crafted his story, he ratcheted up the drama by giving Carmen two essential qualities: She's uncommonly alluring and an untouchable, a Gypsy (Roma or Romani is the preferred term). Carmen is a force of nature and toys with men, which makes her threatening. It's like blaming the money, instead of the bank robber.



Arthur Fagen conducts The Atlanta Opera's 2012 production of *Carmen* at The Cobb Energy Centre. (photo: Jeff Roffman)

PRODUCTION NOTE

ABOUT THIS SHOW

In 1872, Paris had a number of rival opera companies. Bizet was commissioned to write *Carmen* for Opéra-Comique, which specialized in productions with singing and dialogue. Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy were commissioned to write the libretto. The decision excited some and worried others (particularly French theater director/librettist Adolphe de Leuven). Halévy offered this account:

“ ‘Carmen! Mérimée’s Carmen! Isn’t she killed by her lover? And these bandits, gypsies, and girls working in a cigar factory! At the Opéra-Comique! The family theater, the theater of wedding parties ... you’ll frighten our audience away. That’s impossible.’

I explained to M. Leuven that ours was a toned-down, softened Carmen, and that we had introduced some characters perfectly in keeping with the style of the opera comique, especially a young girl of great chastity and innocence. ... And Carmen’s death ... would be sneaked in somehow at the conclusion of a lively and brilliant act, in broad daylight, on a holiday filled with processions, dances and gay fanfares.

M. Leuven acquiesced, but after a prolonged struggle. And when I left his office, he said: ‘Please try not to let her die. Death at the Opera-Comique. That’s never happened before, do you hear, never. Don’t let her die, I implore you, my dear child.’ ”

Leuven resigned in protest over the production. The chorus, which usually stood and sang in place, grumbled at having to smoke cigarettes and misbehave. But the two principals who sang the roles of *Carmen* and Don José threatened to quit if the company didn’t produce *Carmen* without changes.

And so, *Carmen* opened March 3, 1875. Some giants in French music attended, including Camille Saint-Saëns, Charles Gounod, Jules Massenet, and Léo Delibes. Much of what alarmed Leuven alarmed the public and the press, as well. It took the French years to warm up to the piece. A Vienna production later in 1875 was far more successful, and *Carmen* went global. Tchaikovsky saw an 1876 revival in Paris and called it a “masterpiece.” But 36-year-old Bizet didn’t live to see success. He died three months after *Carmen* premiered.



The Atlanta Opera’s 2012 production of *Carmen* with María José Montiel in the title role. (photo: Jeff Roffman)

GEORGES BIZET (1838-1875)

Georges Bizet was born in Paris, France, on October 25, 1838, the only child of musically talented parents. His mother, a pianist, and his father, a voice teacher, began to educate him in music at the early age of four. Bizet showed remarkable musical talent and an extraordinary memory. It is said that by the age of eight he could sing back a complex melody that his father had played for him only once. By the age of ten, Bizet had gained acceptance into the reputable Paris Conservatory of Music.

Bizet was an excellent student who soon gained recognition at the conservatory, and well-known composers such as Berlioz and Liszt noted his talent at the piano. When he was only eighteen years old, Bizet wrote *Dr. Miracle*. First performed in 1857, this one-act operetta won an important competition sponsored by Offenbach, whose works were popular at the time. Later the same year, Bizet won the Prix de Rome, the highest honor that France could award a young artist. This award paid for him to live and study in Rome for two years. During that time, Bizet began writing several operas but completed only one, *Don Procopio*.

When Bizet returned from Rome, he turned down a teaching position at the conservatory, deciding instead to devote himself to writing. His works only received moderate recognition, however, so Bizet grudgingly made a living as a pianist, an accompanist, and a teacher, while continuing to compose.

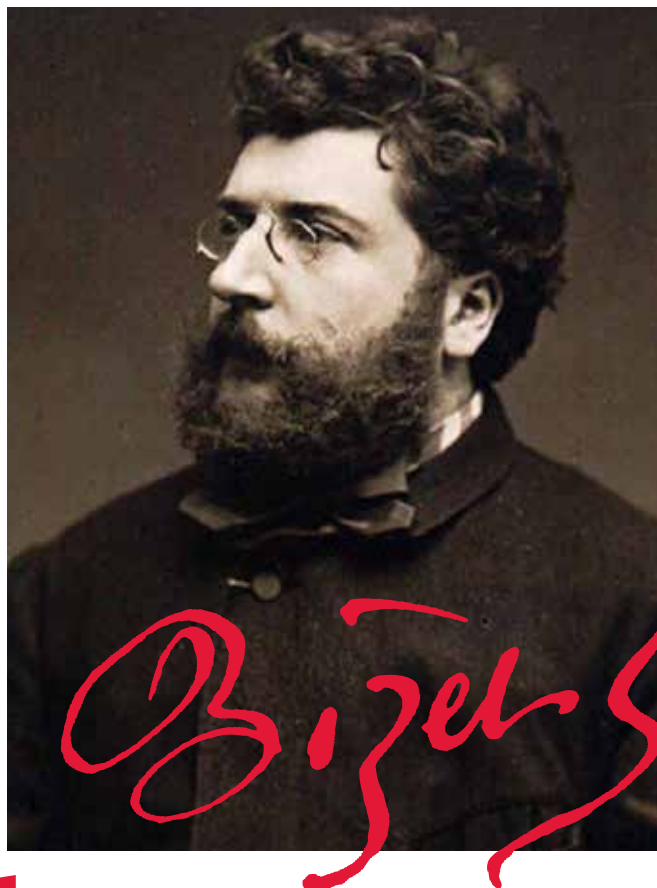
The 1860s and early 1870s were hard time for Bizet. His mother died, his health was unstable, his efforts as a composer were seldom rewarded, and France was engaged in the Franco-Prussian War. Not all was lost for Bizet, however. In 1867, he became happily married to the daughter of his first music composition teacher. Also, the changes brought about by the Franco-Prussian War ushered in a renaissance of the arts in France. The following years were busy for Bizet.

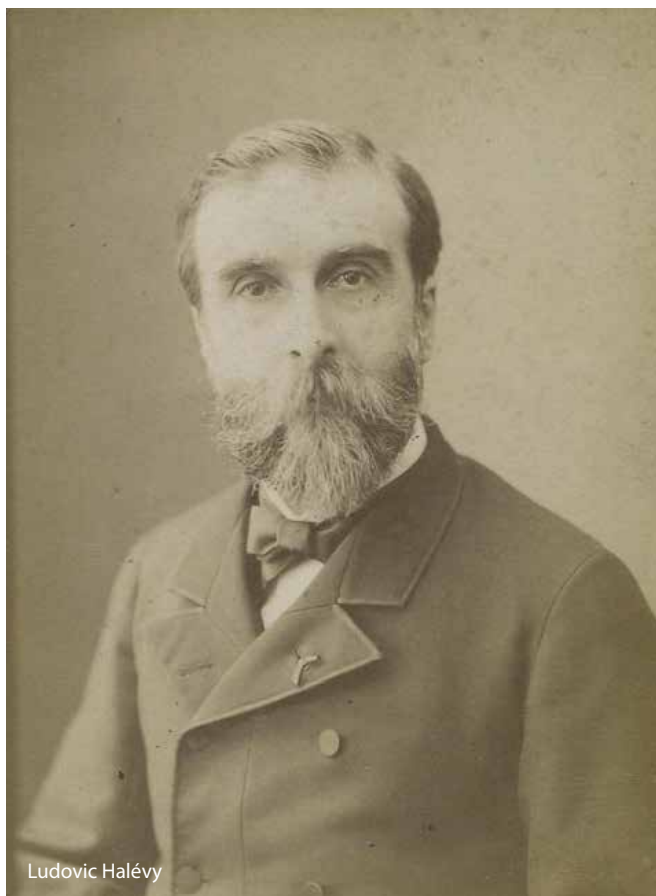
In 1875, Bizet completed the opera *Carmen*, a work that, by most accounts, should have marked the beginning of a successful career for the young artist. The story for *Carmen* was taken from a short novel by Prosper Mérimé. The opera, written in the genre of opéra comique (comic opera), with musical numbers separated by dialogue, tells the story of the downfall of Don José, a naive soldier who is seduced by the charms of the fiery gypsy Carmen. José abandons his childhood sweetheart and deserts from his military

duties, yet loses Carmen's love to the glamorous toreador Escamillo after which José kills her in a jealous rage. The storyline was controversial at the time, for it included murder, betrayal, and situations of moral ambiguity. The opera showed Bizet's mastery of the musical genre of opéra comique gracefully depicting both character and atmosphere.

Despite his fear that Parisian family audiences would not be able to handle the content of the work, Bizet refused to water down the story. *Carmen* was not well received by audiences or critics and was poorly attended throughout its run.

The failure of *Carmen* hit Bizet hard, and his health took a turn for the worse. Less than three months following the opera's debut, Bizet died of a heart attack in Bougival, France. Within a year of his death, *Carmen* began to receive critical acclaim on the stages throughout Europe, helping to revive the musical genre of opéra comique. Later commentators have asserted that *Carmen* forms the bridge between the tradition of opéra comique and the realism or verismo that characterized late 19th-century Italian opera. Since then it has become one of the most loved operas of all-time.





Ludovic Halévy

LUDOVIC HALÉVY (1834-1908) HENRI MEILHAC (1831-1897)

Ludovic Halévy and Henri Meilhac enjoyed a long and successful partnership, writing together for the stage for more than twenty years. As students, both attended the Lycée Louis-le-Grand (the same elite educational institution that boasts among its scholars Molière, Voltaire, Victor Hugo, Jean-Paul Sartre, Edgar Degas, and many others) but they did not know one another until later in life. In fact, it is said that the two met on the steps of a theatre.

French librettist and writer Ludovic Halévy (1834–1908) was a prolific librettist in opéra-comique. He is best known today for his collaborations with Henri Meilhac, on Bizet's *Carmen* and numerous works for Offenbach. Halévy was born in Paris to a prominent Jewish family (his uncle was the composer Fromental Halévy). For his librettos he frequently worked in collaboration with others, and had his first great success with Meilhac on Offenbach's *La Belle Hélène*. In 1865 Halévy left the civil service and



Henri Meilhac

worked regularly with Meilhac until the latter's death in 1897. Halévy was also a novelist, his works including "La Famille Cardinal" (1883). He was elected to the Académie Française in 1884.

French playwright and librettist Henri Meilhac (1831–1897) was a prolific librettist in opéra-comique. He is best known today for his collaborations with Ludovic Halévy for Offenbach (including on *La Belle Hélène*), on Bizet's *Carmen*, and with Philippe Gille on Massenet's *Manon*. He first worked as a bookseller and provided writings and drawings for *Le journal du rire* before going on to work in the theatre. His numerous plays and librettos were nearly all collaborative projects. His most important collaboration in opera was with Halévy, with whom he wrote several opéra-comique librettos for Offenbach and the libretto for Bizet's *Carmen*. He was elected to the Académie Française in 1888.

Both Meilhac and Halévy described their partnership as a friendly one, to which Meilhac brought wit and imagination and Halévy a sense of dramatic framework.

TIMELINE

THE WORLD IN BIZET'S TIME

History is much more than just a class we take in school. Everyone has a personal history that is affected by the time in which he or she lives. For example, great changes were occurring in the world during Bizet's time. Bizet lived from 1838 to 1875, experiencing such events as the Industrial Revolution, the United States Civil War, and the opening of the Suez Canal.

1758 The Royal Tobacco Factory in Seville, Spain begins production.

1764 James Hargreaves invents the spinning jenny allowing a worker to produce multiple spools of thread at the same time.

1770 Beethoven is born in Bonn, Germany.

1775 The American Revolution begins.

1793 Eli Whitney invents the cotton gin greatly increasing the productivity of processing cotton.



1804 Napoleon Bonaparte crowns himself Emperor of France.

1838 **Georges Bizet is born on October 25th in Bougival, near Paris, France.**
Charles Dickens' "Oliver Twist" is published.

1845 - 1849

The Irish Potato Famine kills around one million Irish men and women.



Al. Leveau

Prosper Mérimée

Edgar Allan Poe

1845

***Carmen*, the novella by Prosper Mérimée, is first published in *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, to universally disapproving reviews for its perceived immorality.**

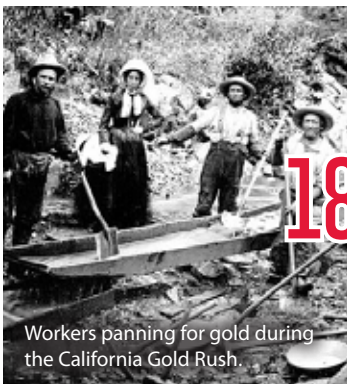
Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven" is published in the New York *Evening Mirror*.

1846

The sewing machine is invented by Elias Howe.

1847

Nine-year-old Bizet begins studying music at the Paris Conservatory of Music.



Workers panning for gold during the California Gold Rush.

1848

The California Gold Rush begins when James W. Marshall finds gold in Coloma, CA.

The Communist Manifesto is published by Karl Marx.

Composer Richard Wagner begins work on the libretto for the Ring Cycle.

TIMELINE

THE WORLD IN BIZET'S TIME



1849

Harriet Tubman escapes from slavery.

1855

Bizet completes his most famous symphony, *Symphony in C*. It is not performed until 1935.

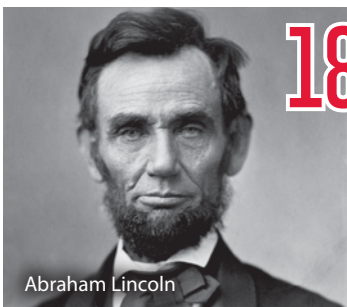
1857

Bizet wins the Prix de Rome for the one-act opera *Le Docteur Miracle* and goes to Italy for three years.

Milton S. Hershey, founder of the Hershey Chocolate Company, is born.

1861

The United States Civil War begins.



1863

Bizet composes the opera *Les pêcheurs de perles* (*The Pearl Fishers*), which debuts at the Théâtre-Lyrique in Paris.

Union forces win the Battle of Gettysburg, which becomes the turning point in the American Civil War. President Abraham Lincoln delivers the Gettysburg Address.

TIMELINE

THE WORLD IN BIZET'S TIME

1869

Bizet marries Geneviève, daughter of his former teacher, Halévy. They have one son.

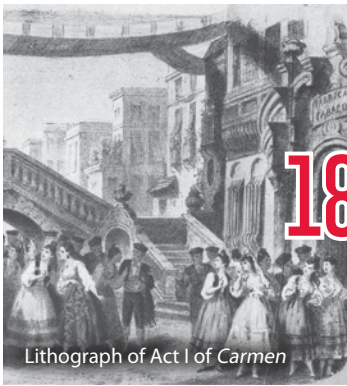
The Suez Canal opens in Egypt.

Wagner's *Das Rheingold*, the first opera of his Ring Cycle, debuts in Munich.

1872

Susan B. Anthony is arrested for illegally voting in Rochester, New York.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art opens in New York City.



1875

***Carmen* premieres at the Opéra-Comique on March 3. The media criticizes *Carmen* as having an obscene libretto and obscure, colorless, undistinguished and unromantic music.**

The reception of *Carmen* leaves Bizet depressed. Three months to the day after *Carmen's* premiere, Bizet dies of heart failure on June 3.

TIMELINE ACTIVITIES

Discuss what it would be like to live in the time of Bizet. How would your life be different or the same? How did discoveries and events of the time affect daily life? What current events and inventions have shaped your life and why?

MAKE YOUR OWN TIME LINE

Draw a vertical line on a piece of paper. Write your birth year at the top and the current year at the bottom. Then, write or draw five important world events that have happened during your lifetime.

Answer these questions:

How have the world events during your lifetime affected the way you live?

How have the events affected the lives of others?

How do world events affect your life differently than they affected the lives of your parents?
Your grandparents? Bizet?

POSITION IN THE ATLANTA OPERA ORCHESTRA:
Violin, 29 years.

THE ATLANTA OPERA: What is your favorite Atlanta Opera production you've played?

ANGÈLE SHERWOOD LAWLESS: *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Silent Night* (It's really hard to pick just one!).

THE ATLANTA OPERA: What do you do when you're not playing or practicing the violin?

ASL: I like to walk, run, hike, and bike; I enjoy spending time with friends and family; I teach several students, and I stay busy as a mom of two children, ages 17 and 19.

AO: Where are you from and how did you get into music?

ASL: I was born in Boston, but my family moved to Pensacola, Fla. when I was six years old. My father was a pianist and taught at the New England Conservatory, then at Pensacola State College. My mother is a singer and sang with the Opera Company of Boston and still teaches a full studio of voice students at her home and at Pensacola State College.

Fun fact: She was cast last minute as the Duchess of Krakenthorp in the Boston Opera's production of *The*

Daughter of the Regiment with Beverly Sills singing the role of Marie and Sarah Caldwell conducting when Kitty Carlisle Hart had to cancel due to illness. The production was in French and my mother was fluent and already in the company, so she was a logical substitute.

Of course, being present at many different concert and recital events with my parents opened my eyes to classical music from birth. I'm not sure what it was about the violin, but my parents tell me I started asking for a violin at age two. I didn't start lessons until I was nine, however.

AO: Any advice for young musicians?

ASL: Expose yourself to as many concerts and recitals as possible. You never know what will inspire you to practice those extra hours and push you to work on something that may seem out of reach. Find a summer program that will allow you to focus on only your music. There are always so many distractions and other responsibilities during the school year. It really helps to eat, sleep, and breathe music for a few weeks out of the summer to give you the boost you need to get through the next year.

And, I know it goes without saying: practice, practice, practice!

AO: Besides classical, what other genres of music and/or artists do you like?

ASL: When I'm not listening to classical music I listen to Top 40, jazz/blues, or alternative. Some of my favorite artists are the Police/Sting, Adele, Macklemore, Ed Sheeran, John Legend, Bonnie Raitt and Basia. I also love Broadway show tunes and light opera. Some of my top favorites are from *The Light in the Piazza*, *Wicked*, and *West Side Story*.

AO: If you had to play any other instrument, what would it be?

ASL: Cello or piano, or both.

AO: What are your favorite musical moments in *Carmen*, and what should audiences listen for in this opera?

ASL: The quintet in Act II is like a tarantella and the singers have to sing their words very quickly.

AO: Overrated or underrated:
"The Habanera"

ASL: It's a matter of opinion. Personally, I think it's great. Any piece of music that has been remade and used for so many things as the "Habanera" must have something right going for it!



(photo: Bob Burnham)



BRENNA CORNER DIRECTOR

The Jerry & Dulcy Rosenberg Young Artist Stage Director, given in honor of Tomer Zvulun
ATLANTA OPERA DEBUT: *THE ABDUCTION FROM THE SERAGLIO*, 2016

Brenna Corner has worked as a director, actor, singer, choreographer, and fight director across Canada, the United States, and Europe. She is the artistic director of Fraser Lyric Opera and Manitoba Underground Opera in Winnipeg, Canada. Last season she made her directorial mainstage debut directing a new production of *Hansel and Gretel* designed by the Old Trout Puppet Workshop for Vancouver Opera. Ms. Corner returned for her second summer at the Glimmerglass Festival as the director for *Scalia/Ginsburg*. Select directing projects include *L'Elisir d'amore* (Vancouver Opera), *The Magic Flute* in schools (The Atlanta Opera), *Scalia/Ginsburg* (Glimmerglass Festival), *Sweeney Todd* (New Orleans Opera), *Hansel and Gretel* (Vancouver Opera), *Cendrillon* (Manitoba Underground Opera), *Béatrice et Benedict* (Fraser Lyric Opera), *The Turn of the Screw* (Accademia Europea dell' Opera). Select assistant directing projects include *The Flying Dutchman* and *Turandot* (The Atlanta Opera); *The Siege of Calais* (Glimmerglass Festival); *Carmen* (Canadian Opera Company); *Stickboy* (Vancouver Opera); *Der fliegende Hollander* (Calgary Opera). Brenna has a degree in music from The University of Manitoba, and theater diplomas from Grant MacEwan College and The British American Drama Academy.



ARTHUR FAGEN CARL & SALLY GABLE MUSIC DIRECTOR

ATLANTA OPERA DEBUT: *LA TRAVIATA*, 2005

Arthur Fagen is a regular guest of the world's leading opera houses, concert halls, and music festivals, including, most notably, the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Staatsoper Berlin, Bavarian State Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Vienna Staatsoper. In North America, he has been a frequent guest of the New York City Opera, Portland Opera, Chautauqua, and New Orleans Opera, among others. Notable orchestras he has conducted include the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra; the Czech Philharmonic; RAI Orchestras of Turin, Naples, Milan, Rome; and Israel Symphony Orchestra. Maestro Fagen served as music director of the Dortmund Philharmonic Orchestra and Opera, principal conductor in Kassel and Brunswick, chief conductor of the Flanders Opera in Antwerp and Ghent, and was music director of the Queens Symphony Orchestra. He has made a number of recordings for Naxos and BMG. Born in New York, maestro Fagen began his conducting studies with Laszlo Halasz and served as assistant to Christoph von Dohnanyi at Frankfurt Opera and James Levine at the Metropolitan Opera. Maestro Fagen is professor of music in instrumental conducting at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music.



ALLEN CHARLES KLEIN SCENIC DESIGNER

ATLANTA OPERA DEBUT: *CARMEN*, 2012

Allen Charles Klein, a native New Yorker, studied painting and sculpture at the Art Students League and the High School of Music and Art. He completed his studies in theater design at Boston University under Horace Armistead and Raymond Sovey. He is the only American designer to have focused his career exclusively to the production of design for the opera stage, and together with Bliss Hebert as director, has created more than 70 new productions. His work has been seen in America in virtually every opera house, including San Francisco, Dallas, Santa Fe, Seattle, Portland, Houston, Baltimore, Miami, San Diego, Detroit, Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, Mexico City, and the Metropolitan Opera. In Europe, Mr. Klein has designed productions for the Scottish Opera, Edinburgh Festival, Opera Northern Ireland, the Glyndebourne Festival, Deutsche Oper Berlin, and the Vienna Staatsoper. His work has also been seen on the stages of the Schwetzingen Festival, Frankfurt Oper, Barcelona, Madrid, and at the Teatro alla Fenice in Venice. He has designed the world premieres of Floyds' *Of Mice and Men* and *The Passion of Jonathan Wade*, Villa-Lobos' *Yerma*, Thomas Pasatieris' *The Sea Gull*, and John Eatons' *The Tempest*. Together with Bliss Hebert, Mr. Klein divides his time between homes in Miami and Ribeauville, France.



ROBERT WIERZEL LIGHTING DESIGNER

ATLANTA OPERA DEBUT: *LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR*, 2011

Robert Wierzel has worked in opera, theater, dance, museums, and contemporary music. Opera credits include productions with Paris Garnier, Tokyo, Toronto, Bergen, Norway, Glimmerglass Festival, Seattle, Boston Lyric, Minnesota, San Francisco, Houston, Virginia, Chicago Lyric, Opera Theatre of Chicago, Montreal, Vancouver, Portland, Wolf Trap, NYCO, and San Diego. His dance work includes work with the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company. Broadway credits include *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill* starring Audra McDonald; *Fela!* (Tony Award nomination), and David Copperfield's Broadway debut, *Dreams and Nightmares*. Off-Broadway includes productions with the NYSF/Public Theatre, The Signature Theatre, Roundabout Theatre Company, and Playwrights Horizons. Regional theatre includes productions at the Alliance Theatre Company (Atlanta); Goodman Theatre; A.C.T. San Francisco; Arena Stage (Washington, D.C.), Center Stage, Chicago Shakespeare Theater; Shakespeare Theatre (Washington, D.C.); Hartford Stage; Long Wharf Theatre; The Guthrie; Mark Taper Forum; Actors Theatre Louisville, and The Old Globe. He is adjunct faculty at N.Y.U.'s Tisch School and a guest lecturer at the Yale School of Drama.



JAMES MCGOUGH WIG & MAKEUP DESIGNER

ATLANTA OPERA DEBUT: *TURANDOT*, 2017

James is pleased to return to The Atlanta Opera. For the past 20 seasons, he has been the resident wig and makeup designer at the Virginia Opera. James is originally from Detroit, but his 30-year career has taken him to opera, theater, and dance companies across the United States.



AMIR LEVY CHOREOGRAPHER

ATLANTA OPERA DEBUT

Born and raised in Israel, Amir Levy has received numerous awards and honors from the American-Israeli Cultural Foundation. He has been a company member with the Bat-Dor Dance Company, Ballet Hispanico of New York, and he has spent the last 20 seasons with the Metropolitan Opera as both dance captain and as principal dancer. The Met HD broadcasts showcased his work with some of today's leading directors, including Anthony Minghella (*Madama Butterfly*), Julie Taymor (*Die Zauberflöte*), Mary Zimmerman (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Francesca Zambello (*Cyrano*), Michael Grandage (*Don Giovanni*), Des McAnuff (*Faust*), and Francois Girard (*Parsifal*). Additionally, Amir has worked closely with Plácido Domingo, Renée Fleming, Jonas Kaufmann, Peter Mattei, Natalie Dessay, and Anna Netrebko. Musical theater credits include the first national tour of *Victor/Victoria* and the Hal Prince *Evita*. He is setting the lead dancers' tracks for the new international touring company of *Evita* in association with original choreographer Larry Fuller. Also as associate choreographer, he has worked with Sara Erde and Richard Eyre on critically acclaimed productions of *Werther* (Metropolitan Opera), *Manon Lescaut* (Baden-Baden), and *Le nozze di Figaro* (Metropolitan Opera). Amir is thrilled to make his Atlanta Opera debut this season.



MICHELLE LADD FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER

ATLANTA OPERA DEBUT: *THE FLYING DUTCHMAN*, 2017

Michelle Ladd has been working as a professional action director, choreographer, and performer of stunts, staged combat, dance, and acting for over 20 years. She honed her stage fight skills in Britain at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and built her career in Los Angeles. She is a recognized fight director with the Society of American Fight Directors and the International Order of the Sword and the Pen. She has worked throughout North America, the United Kingdom, Scandinavia, and Asia. Her credits span theater, film, and motion capture and include motion capture stunt coordinator for *Thor*; motion capture fight director for *Pirates of the Caribbean - At World's End*; motion capture combat choreographer for *The Lord of the Rings - Return of the King* and *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*; performer with Barneville/Carteret Viking Fest - Freiki Klan Denmark; fight instruction and demonstration of Parnü Võitlus Estonia; and featured guest for Korea's Theatre Magazine. She made her debut with The Atlanta Opera as the Stunt Coordinator for *The Flying Dutchman*. She and her husband own RE:Action Stunts and Broad-Motion Entertainment while raising their three young stunt boys.



LISA HASSON CHORUS MASTER

ATLANTA OPERA DEBUT: *TURANDOT*, 2017

This year marks Lisa Hasson's 14th season with Des Moines Metro Opera where she is both Chorus Master and Director of the Apprentice Artist Program. Since 2009, she has been Kentucky Opera's principal coach and music director of the studio artist program. In 2011 she was appointed Chorus Master. She has worked as a coach and répétiteur for Opera North, Indianapolis Opera, New Orleans Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Nevada Opera, Knoxville Opera, Berkshire Opera, Opera Birmingham, Utah Festival Opera, and Kentucky Opera. From 2001 to 2003, Lisa was the music director for the Artist in Residence Program at Opera Theatre of St. Louis. From 2001 to 2006, she served on the music staff of Sarasota Opera. She has been a guest artist at Miami University, McGill University, Cincinnati College-Conservatory, University of Kentucky, and the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria. Since 2013 she has been the opera coach at Miami University (Ohio), and in 2016 was a guest coach for the FGO studio program. Lisa received her Bachelor of Music in piano performance from McGill University in Montreal. It is there that she began studying opera coaching and accompanying under Dixie Ross Neill. Further studies were completed at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the National Opera Studio in London.



ROLANDO SALAZAR CHILDREN'S CHORUS MASTER

ATLANTA OPERA DEBUT: *LA TRAVIATA*, 2013

Rolando Salazar is the Assistant Conductor, Interim Chorus Master, and the Music Administrator for The Atlanta Opera. He has served as assistant conductor and pianist at the Bellingham Festival of Music, as assistant conductor at La Musica Lirica in Novafeltria, Italy, and as coach/conductor for the Harrower Opera Workshop. He serves as artistic director and conductor of the Georgia Piedmont Youth Orchestra while maintaining a guest conducting schedule, most recently in performances with the Georgia State University Orchestra, Johns Creek Symphony Orchestra, Georgia State University Opera, and the Ozark Family Opera. Mr. Salazar also keeps an active coaching and collaborative piano schedule in Atlanta, preparing numerous singers for engagements with major orchestras and opera houses all over the world. A student of Michael Palmer, he is a graduate of Georgia State University with a Master of Music in orchestral conducting and an Artist Diploma in orchestra and opera.



CALVIN GRIFFIN MORALÈS

ATLANTA OPERA DEBUT: *THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS*, 2017

Calvin Griffin is a native of Columbus, Ohio. Mr. Griffin made his debut with the Florida Grand Opera singing Escamillo in *Carmen*. In the 2016-17 season he performed Zaretsky in *Eugene Onegin*, Victor in *Before Night Falls*, and Samuel in *Un ballo in maschera*. As an Arizona Opera Studio artist he performed the roles of the Captain in *Florencia en el Amazonas*, Zuniga in *Carmen*, Pistola in *Falstaff*, Count Ceprano in *Rigoletto*, Zaretsky in *Eugene Onegin*, Speaker/Second Armored Man in *Die Zauberflöte*, Hortensius in *La fille du régiment*, Colline in *La bohème*, and Dr. Grenville in *La traviata*. Last March, he made his Opera Columbus debut as Colline in *La bohème*. Most recently, Calvin returned to the Glimmerglass Festival to sing Elviro in *Xerxes* and the Undertaker in *Porgy and Bess*. Last season at Glimmerglass, he sang the role of Fabrizio and covered Gottardo in *La gazza ladra*, and covered the title role in *Sweeney Todd*. This season Mr. Griffin makes exciting debuts with Opera Birmingham singing Escamillo in *Carmen*, Opera on the James as Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, and Opera Orlando singing Alidoro in *La cenerentola*, and will also return to Arizona Opera to sing Dr. Bartolo in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. In concert he sings Handel's *Messiah* with the Richmond Symphony and Bach's Mass in B minor with Gloria Musicae in Sarasota, Fla.



NICOLE CABELL MICAĚLA

ATLANTA OPERA DEBUT: *THE MAGIC FLUTE*, 2010

Nicole Cabell, the 2005 winner of the BBC Singer of the World Competition in Cardiff and Decca recording artist, is one of the most sought-after lyric sopranos of today. Her 2017-18 season includes performances of the Countess in *Le nozze di Figaro* with the Grand Théâtre de Genève and Michigan Opera Theatre, and Flavia in Cavalli's *Eliogabalo* with the Dutch National Opera. She will perform and record a duo program with Alyson Cambridge with the Lake Forest Symphony, Bernstein's *White House Cantata* with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Elijah with the Bach Oregon Festival, and Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* with the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra. Future engagements include returns to London, St. Paul (Minn.), and Cincinnati and a debut in Pittsburgh. She recently performed her debut as Bess in *Porgy and Bess* with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, sang the role of Mimi in *La bohème* with the Minnesota Opera and the Cincinnati Opera, and sang the role of the Countess in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Angers Nantes Opera in France. She sang *Shéhérazade* with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* with the Nashville Symphony, and Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the Oregon Bach Festival. In addition to performing, Nicole Cabell holds a position of assistant professor of voice at the DePaul School of Music.



GIANLUCA TERRANOVA DON JOSÉ

ATLANTA OPERA DEBUT: *LA BOHÈME*, 2015

Born in Rome, Mr. Terranova attracted international attention jumping in as Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto* at the Arena di Verona. His great critical success lead to his reputation as one of the great interpreters of the role. In 2010, he had great personal success making his debut at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan, again as the Duke of Mantua, under the baton of James Conlon, who also chose him for that role in Los Angeles. At the beginning of his career, he made his debut in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Falstaff*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Nabucco*, *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, *Mavra*, *Il pirata*, and *Gina* by Cilea. Past engagements include *La bohème*, *Rigoletto*, and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (special concert under Zubin Mehta) in Florence; Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Frankfurt; Alfredo in *La traviata* in Verona (Filarmonico) and Venice with Myung Wung Chung; *La bohème* in Torre del Lago (Puccini Festival) and in Bologna; *La Fille du Régiment* in Trieste and on tour in Italy; *La Damnation de Faust* in Palermo; *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Naples; *La bohème* and *Rigoletto* in Venice; *Un ballo in maschera*, and Verdi's Requiem in Trieste, with Gianluigi Gelmetti conducting. He portrayed Enrico Caruso in the Italian TV movie "Caruso, la voce dell'amore," both singing and acting as the great Italian tenor. In October 2012, he released his first CD Gianluca Terranova canta Caruso (EMI) with Arena di Verona Orchesta. In July 2015, he released his second CD: Recital (Warner Classic Italy).



DAVID CRAWFORD ZUNIGA

ATLANTA OPERA DEBUT: *ROMEO & JULIET*, 2016

Bass-baritone David Crawford is thrilled to be returning to The Atlanta Opera. He was last seen in Atlanta as Capulet in *Romeo and Juliet*. A 12-year veteran of the Metropolitan Opera, where he has more than 350 performances, this season he was seen in *Les contes d'Hoffmann* as Hermann/Schleimeil. Other recent highlights include Betto in *Gianni Schicchi* with the Seiji Ozawa Opera Project in Japan, Banquo in *Macbeth* with Chautauqua Opera, Sam in *Trouble in Tahiti* in concert with the Tucson Symphony, and Beethoven's 9th Symphony with the Columbus Symphony. Upcoming engagements include Basilio in *The Barber of Seville* with Boston Lyric Opera, Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Knoxville Opera, the Grand Inquisitor in *Candide* with the Clarence Brown Theater, as well as a return to the Metropolitan Opera. He lives in Knoxville, Tenn., with his wife, Laura Beth, and their 6-year-old daughter Lily. This summer, at Knoxville's Flying Anvil Theatre, the family will perform together for the time time, in a cabaret chronicling their lives as performers. David is proudly represented by ADA artists, and you can read more at www.ada-artists.com or find him on Facebook as David Crawford, bass-baritone.



VARDUHI ABRAHAMYAN CARMEN

ATLANTA OPERA DEBUT

Born into a family of musicians, Franco-Armenian mezzo-soprano Varduhi Abrahamyan completed her studies at the Conservatory of Yerevan. Season 2017-18 started with a debut as Mrs. Quickly in *Falstaff* and Ulrica in *Un ballo in maschera* at Opéra Bastille. Last season she appeared at Toronto's Canadian Opera Company as Polinesso in Handel's *Ariodante*, and at Teatro Massimo di Palermo as *Carmen*. She then sang Bradamante in *Alcina* at Opernhaus Zürich with Cecilia Bartoli, *Carmen* and *Eugene Onegin* at the Paris Opera, and a concert version of *Rigoletto* in Hannover with the NDR Radiophilharmonie. She sang at the Paris Opera Isabella (*L'italiana in Algeri*), Ottone (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*), Cornelia (*Giulio Cesare*), Pauline (*Pique Dame*), and Maddalena (*Rigoletto*) under conductor Daniel Oren. She performed the role of Lydia Tchoukovskaïa for the premiere of Bruno Mantovani's opera *Akhmatova*. Further highlights in her career include the roles of Malcolm (*La donna del lago*) at Vienna's Theater an der Wien, *Carmen* in *Toulon*, Nérís (*Cherubini's Médée*), and *Rinaldo* at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. She also played Arsace (*Semiramide*) at the Montpellier Opera, Nerestano (Bellini's *Zaira*) at the Montpellier Festival and for Radio France, Pauline (*Pique Dame*) at the Capitole in Toulouse, and Bersi (*Andrea Chénier*) with Pinchas Steinberg. Future plans include *Alcina* at the Champs Élysées, *Eugene Onegin* in Toronto, *Carmen* at Opernhaus Zürich and Opera Hong Kong, *La Forza del Destino* at Opéra Bastille.



KAITLYN JOHNSON FRASQUITA

ATLANTA OPERA DEBUT

American soprano Kaitlyn Johnson is quickly becoming a young artist to watch in operatic repertoire from classical to contemporary. Kaitlyn will join the Marion Roose Pullin Arizona Opera Studio for the 2018-19 season, where she will perform Doris Parker in Daniel Schnyder's *Charlie Parker's Yardbird* and Fiordiligi in Studio performances of *Così fan tutte*. Celebrated on the operatic stage for her "powerful and dramatic soprano," (The Bloomington Herald-Times), she has appeared as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* with both Indiana University Opera Theater and onstage at the Estates Theatre as part of the Prague Summer Nights Festival. While a graduate student at Indiana University, Kaitlyn also performed the title role in I.U. Opera Theater's premiere of Catan's *Florencia en el Amazonas*. She is a graduate of Indiana University (M.M.) and Rice University (B.M., cum laude), and is an alumnus of the Aspen Opera Center and Houston Grand Opera's Young Artist Vocal Academy. Kaitlyn is the recipient of a 2017 Encouragement Award from the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, the 2016 Georgina Joshi International Fellowship (Indiana University), and the 2015 Farb Family Outstanding Graduate Award (Rice University). An alumnus of Atlanta Opera's High School Opera Institute and a graduate of The Westminster Schools, she is thrilled to make her professional debut as Frasquita.



SOFIA SELOWSKY MERCÉDÈS

ATLANTA OPERA DEBUT

Praised by Opera News as a "silvery-luminescent mezzo-soprano of power and poise," Sofia Selowsky is quickly establishing herself as an exciting artist. Current season highlights include her role debut as Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at Houston Grand Opera, performances of Dominick Argento's *Casa Guidi* with the Lexington Philharmonic, Mozart's *Requiem* with the North Carolina Symphony, and Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. In the summer of 2018, she will join Des Moines Metro Opera, performing the role of the Stewardess in Jonathan Dove's *Flight*. In the 2016-17 season, she returned to Opera Theatre of Saint Louis to perform the role of Frau Grubach in the American premiere of Philip Glass' *The Trial*, for which she received praise for her "beautifully free, rich-toned mezzo." She joined Ars Lyrica for performances of Handel's *Jephtha* and performed Falla's *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas* with Da Camera of Houston. She returned to the Houston Symphony Orchestra as the mezzo soloist in Falla's *The Three-Cornered Hat*. A graduate of the famed Houston Grand Opera Studio, Ms. Selowsky was heard in a wide variety of roles during her time as a Studio Artist, including Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* opposite Ana Maria Martinez, the Fox in Rachel Portman's *The Little Prince*, the Second Wood Nymph in *Rusalka*, Nell Gwynn in the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd's new opera, *Prince of Players*, and Eliza in the premiere of David Hanlon's *After the Storm*.



EDWARD PARKS ESCAMILLO

ATLANTA OPERA DEBUT: *FAUST*, 2014

Baritone Edward Parks was awarded third prize in Plácido Domingo's 2015 Operalia Competition and was presented in its "The Voices of 2015" concert in Hungary. Recent highlights include performances of Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with the Metropolitan Opera, and his critically acclaimed performance of the title role in the world premiere of *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* with Santa Fe Opera. He was recently seen as Mercutio with Opera de Monte Carlo on tour in Oman, the Count in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Marcello in *La bohème* with Minnesota Opera, and Escamillo in *Carmen* with Nashville Opera. His 2017-18 season includes Inman in *Cold Mountain* with North Carolina Opera, Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore* with Opera Oviedo in Spain, Valentin in *Faust* with Lyric Opera of Chicago and Portland Opera, a return to the Metropolitan Opera to cover the Count in *Le nozze di Figaro*, and concerts with the Marilyn Horne Foundation and the Winter Chamber Festival. A graduate of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artists Development Program, Mr. Parks made his Metropolitan Opera debut as Fiorello in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, and has since appeared as Schaunard in *La bohème* and as Larkens in *La fanciulla del West*, which was broadcast in HD around the world. He also appeared as Schaunard in the Met Opera's 2011 tour of *La bohème* in Japan.



JOSEPH LATTANZI LE DANCAIRE

ATLANTA OPERA DEBUT: *MADAMA BUTTERFLY*, 2014

A 2017 Sullivan Foundation Award recipient, baritone Joseph Lattanzi established himself as a singer to watch with his portrayal of Hawkins Fuller in the world premiere of Greg Spears' *Fellow Travelers* with Cincinnati Opera. The New York Times said, "Joseph Lattanzi was splendid as Hawk, his buttery baritone luxuriant and robust." Opera News described him as a "confident, handsome presence, and a resonant baritone suggesting wells of feeling ..." He began the 2017-18 season with his Virginia Opera debut as Sonora in *La fanciulla del West* and returns to the company later in the season as Demetrius in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Following performances of *Hawkins Fuller* at the PROTOTYPE Festival, he also debuts at Lyric Opera of Chicago in the same role for its production of *Fellow Travelers*. He finishes the season with his return to The Atlanta Opera as Anthony in Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*. From 2015 to 2017, Mr. Lattanzi was a member of the Marion Roosevelt Pullin Arizona Opera Studio. He was heard in the title role of *Don Giovanni*, as Dandini in *La Cenerentola*, and Riolo in *Florencia en el Amazonas*. During this period, he also returned to Seattle Opera as Kuligin in *Katya Kabanová* and joined San Francisco Opera for its production of *Don Giovanni*. Upcoming engagements include a debut with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and a return to Arizona Opera as Lt. Audebert in *Silent Night*. www.JosephLattanziBaritone.com



JUSTIN STOLZ LE REMENDADO

STUDIO ARTIST | ATLANTA OPERA DEBUT: *THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS*, 2017

Praised for his "exceptionally emotional" (Ontario Arts Review) and "effortlessly powerful" voice (The Chronicle Journal), Canadian tenor Justin Stolz is establishing himself as an exciting young performer. He joins The Atlanta Opera following his graduate studies with Timothy Noble at Indiana University. Mr. Stolz recently made his IU Opera and Ballet Theater debut as Don José in *Carmen* and performed the role of B.F. Pinkerton in the company's production of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*. Highlights of past seasons include Mr. Owen in Argento's *Postcard From Morocco*, Rodolfo in Puccini's *La bohème*, and Don Ottavio in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. A recent recipient of the first prize in the S. Livingston Mather Competition of Cleveland, Ohio, Mr. Stolz began his vocal studies in his hometown of Thunder Bay, Ontario, under Mary McGhee and is a graduate of the Glenn Gould School (The Royal Conservatory of Music), where he studied under Monica Whicher. Earlier engagements in 2017 included Britten's *Serenade* at Indiana University, the tenor soloist in Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with the Columbus Indiana Philharmonic Orchestra, and a reprise of the role of Don José in the Brott Music Festival's production of *Carmen*.

THE ATLANTA OPERA CHORUS

CHORUS MASTER

Lisa Hasson

CHORUS MEMBERS

SOPRANO

Hanan Davis
Sakinah Davis
Chamblee Graham
Samantha Rasclé
Natalie Rogers
Rebecca Shipley
Jeanette Simpson
Tiffany Uzoije
Allegra Whitney
Carrie Anne Wilson

TENOR

Sidnei Alferes
Kyle Barnes
Charles Baugh
Jose Caballero
Pedro Carreras
William Green
Grant Jones
Sung-Bae Kim
Eric Mask
William McChriston
Cody Russell
Billy Valentine

ALTO

Lynnette Anderson
Elizebeth Barnes
Amy Chastain
Valerie Hamm
Jessica Lane
Zorica Pavlovic
Amanda Perera
Amber Tittle
Laurie Tossing
Lenna Turner

BASS

Rob Banks
Matthew Boatwright
Christopher S. Connelly
C. Agustus Godbee
Chris Hawkins
Samy Itskov
Michael Lindsay
Timothy Marshall
Stephen McCool
Sheldon Michael
Conrad Moore
Trenton Tunnell, III
Marcus Turner

CHILDREN'S CHORUS MASTER

Rolando Salazar

CHILDREN'S CHORUS MEMBERS

Catherine Amendola
Stephanie Amendola
Christian Bodrick
Julian Bonis
Patrick Matthew Davey, Jr.
Camille Ervin
James Hart
Francesca Herrera
Dante Lindsay

Nelson Lindsay
Giovanna McClenning
Viny Montague
Anjana Murthy
Sophia Ocfemia
Connor Sample
Zain Sizemore
Reid Sullivan

DANCERS

Bret Copa
Charlotte Hermann
Rie Matsuura
Beñat Andueza Molina
members of the Atlanta Ballet 2

SUPERNUMERARIES

Marcus Allen
Jerry Hunter
Ansley Kent
Michael Robinson
Lawrence Mosblech
Christa Peet
Josh Swain
Lilly Tyre
David Van Mersbergen
Spiro Winsett

THE ATLANTA OPERA ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN I

Peter Ciaschini
*The Loraine P. Williams
Orchestra Concertmaster
Chair*

Helen Kim
Assistant Concertmaster

Fia Durrett
Principal Second

Adelaide Federici
Assistant Principal Second

Virginia Fairchild
Felix Farrar
Robert Givens
Patti Gouvas
Tami Hughes
Alison James
Michele Mariage-Volz
Lisa Morrison
Shawn Pagliarini
Patrick Ryan
Yuri Segawa
Angele Sherwood-Lawless
Qiao Solomon
Jessica Stinson
Elonia Varfi
Rafael Veytsblum
Sally Wilson
Andrzej Zabinski

VIOLA

William Johnston
Principal
Elizabeth Derderian-Wood
Assistant Principal

Elizabeth Alvarez
Leigh Dixon
Julie Rosseter
Karl Schab
Meghan Yost

CELLO

Charae Krueger
Principal
Hilary Glen
Assistant Principal

Jared Cooper
David Hancock
Noah Johnson
Mary Kenney

BASS

Lyn DeRamus
Principal
Emory Clements
Christina Ottaviano
Robert Henson

FLUTE

Jim Zellers
Principal
Kelly Bryant

OBOE

Diana Dunn
Principal
Martha Kleiner
Oboe/English Horn

CLARINET

David Odom
Principal
John Warren

BASSOON

Ivy Ringel
Principal
Debra Grove

HORN

Jason Eklund
Acting Principal
Edward Ferguson
Richard Williams
Eric Hawkins

TRUMPET

Yvonne Toll
Principal
Hollie Lifshey

TROMBONE

Mark McConnell
Principal
Edmon Nicholson
Richard Brady
Bass Trombone

TIMPANI

John Lawless
Principal

PERCUSSION

Michael Cebulski
Principal
Jeff Kershner
Scott Pollard

HARP

Susan Brady
Principal

PERSONNEL MANAGER

Mark McConnell



Musicians employed in this production are represented by the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada.

Opera is a dramatic story told through song. Considered by many to be the most complete art form, it combines all of the elements of art, words, music, drama and dance. The earliest Italian operas were called by several names, such as “favola in musica” (fable in music) and “drama per musica” (drama by means of music). This last title is very close to the dictionary definition, and is the correct basis for any discussion about opera.

The unique thing about opera is the use of music to convey an entire story/plot. This is based on the feeling that music can communicate people’s reactions and emotions better than words (read or spoken) or pictures. Opera takes any type of dramatic story and makes it more exciting and more believable with the help of music. Many famous stories have been made into operas, including *Cinderella*, *Hansel and Gretel*, and *Romeo and Juliet*.

A BRIEF HISTORY

The concept of opera was developing many years before the first opera was written. Its beginning can be traced to the ancient Greeks. They fused poetry and music, creating plays that incorporate song, spoken language and dance, accompanied by string or wind instruments.

In the 1100s the early Christian church set religious stories to music, a style known as liturgical drama. The first true opera, *Daphne* (1597), was composed by Jacopo Peri. It told the story of a Greek myth.

The first great composer of opera was Claudio Monteverdi. Some of his operas are still performed today.

German composer Christoph Gluck’s most famous opera, *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762), marked a shift in importance from the performers to the drama. It also reduced the amount of recitative and laid the foundations for the progression of the art form.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was another prolific composer during this time and many of his operas like *Le nozze di Figaro* (*The Marriage of Figaro* - 1786) and *Die Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute* - 1791) are still frequently performed around the world.



The Atlanta Opera's 2007 mainstage production of *Hansel and Gretel* at The Cobb Energy Centre featured elaborate puppets designed in part by Jim Henson Studios. (photo: Tim Wilkerson)



OPERA AROUND THE WORLD

Italy was the first country where opera became popular.

It was the homeland of Jacopo Peri and Claudio Monteverdi. In time this exciting form of entertainment spread to the rest of Europe. France and Germany joined Italy as the principal opera producers. Eventually opera came to reflect the stories and musical styles of each of these countries.

The Italians have always been famous for their love of singing, and so in Italian opera there has always been great emphasis placed on the singer and the beautiful sounds of the human voice. It wasn't until the late 19th century and early 20th century with the later works of Verdi and the operas of Puccini that a balance was achieved between the role of the orchestra and that of the singer. These two forces were combined to give a more effective presentation of the story.

The French have favored the pictorial side of drama, and this has led to a continuing emphasis on the visual spectacle, especially with dancing. For example, the Paris opera audience in the 19th century would not accept a work for performance if it did not contain a major ballet. Verdi, an Italian composer, had to add ballets to all of his works to get them performed in Paris.

The Germans have always sought to extract from both the Italian and French traditions, and go beyond both in an attempt to present more than just a story. In fact, one of the greatest German opera composers, Richard Wagner, chose legends or myths for most of his opera plots so that he could communicate ideas as well as just a story.

DIFFERENT STYLES OF OPERA

OPERA SERIA Serious opera. These stories are often tragic, and typically involve heroes and kings or ancient myths and gods. *Julius Caesar* (1724) by George Frideric Handel is a classic example of opera seria.

OPERA BUFFA Comic opera, typically sung in Italian. The jokesters in these operas are always the working class, such as maids, peasants, or servants, who keep busy getting the best of their employers. *The Italian Girl in Algiers* (1813) by Rossini is an amusing example of opera buffa.

SINGSPIEL, or "Sing Play," evolved in German speaking countries out of the comic opera tradition. It includes elements of comic opera, spoken dialogue interjected among the sung phrases, and often, an exotic or fanciful theme. Mozart's *The Magic Flute* (1791) is an example of this style.

BEL CANTO This Italian phrase means "beautiful singing". These operas grew from a style of singing emphasizing long phrases, breath control and flexibility in singing both loudly and softly. *The Barber of Seville* (1816) by Gioachino Rossini is a popular example of bel canto.

GRAND OPERA Spectacular opera. It is performed with elaborate sets and costumes. Many people are needed to make it happen. Grand opera involves royalty, heroism, an elaborate ballet scene, and can often last for several hours. Charles Gounod's *Faust* (1869 version) is an example of grand opera.

MUSIC DRAMA A style of opera that is created by a single artist who writes both the text and the music to advance the drama. This style fuses many art forms, and makes each one as important as the others. *Die Walküre* (*The Valkyries*) (1870) and other operas by Richard Wagner defined this style.



The Atlanta Opera's 2014 mainstage production of *The Barber of Seville* at The Cobb Energy Centre. (photo: Ken Howard)

HISTORY OF OPERA IN ATLANTA

Opera has been an integral part of Atlanta's cultural fabric since October 1866 when the Ghioni and Sussini Grand Italian Opera Company presented three operas in the city. The performances were well received and soon after, small touring companies began to bring more full-length operas to Atlanta.

Atlantans became avid fans of opera and in 1910 The Metropolitan Opera of New York toured Atlanta for the first time. Once a year, for a full week during spring, people flocked to the city to see the Met's wonderful performances and enjoy the many parties that were hosted throughout the city.

The opera was the place to be seen, with people crowding the lobbies and balconies of the various performance venues. The Met tour returned to Atlanta every spring until 1986, with the exception of 1931-1939 due to financial complications of the Great Depression.



Leontyne Price was one of the first African American featured singers with The Metropolitan Opera Company. This photo appeared in the program for the 1964 tour of *Don Giovanni*, in which she sang the role of Donna Anna. (photo: The Metropolitan Opera Company, *Carmen*, 1964 touring season program book / The Atlanta Opera archives)



The Metropolitan Opera Company's 1968 production of *Tosca* with Gabriella Tucci as Tosca, singing "Vissi d'arte." (photo: The Metropolitan Opera Company, *Tosca*, 1968 touring season program book / The Atlanta Opera archives)

With the success and popularity of the Met's annual tour came a desire for Atlanta to have its own opera company. Soon, several smaller, local opera companies began to operate in the area. In 1980, The Atlanta Civic Opera Association was created through the merging of two smaller companies, The Atlanta Lyric Opera and the Georgia Opera. In 1987 the company changed its name to The Atlanta Opera, Inc. Since its early beginnings, the company has grown and changed tremendously.

The Atlanta Opera was the first resident company in the new Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre in the fall of 2007. The Atlanta Opera season runs similarly to an academic calendar, opening in the fall and closing in the spring. It presents mainstage productions at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre, with a minimum of four performances each. The Discoveries series offers two additional productions at smaller venues, often of special productions or contemporary works best staged in smaller, more intimate settings.

IMPORTANT JOBS

WHO KEEPS THE OPERA RUNNING?

In addition to the singers and musicians you see on stage and in the orchestra pit, there are many other folks who help bring the show to life!

MUSIC DIRECTOR/CONDUCTOR is responsible for the musical excellence of an opera. They ensure the singers understand the music, sing in the appropriate style, and work with the orchestra to make sure everyone is playing correctly together.

STAGE DIRECTOR is responsible for the action on the stage. They work with the designers to create the concept for the production. He or she helps the singers understand why their characters would act in certain ways, and how the characters communicate with each other.

CHOREOGRAPHER creates movement or dancing for operas. They study dance, movement and do research on different historical periods.

PRODUCTION MANAGER helps make the director's and designers' vision a reality by working with the shops that build the scenery and costumes.

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR makes sure that the lighting, scenery, costumes and props are coordinated and that the crews who handle those elements know what needs to be done during the performance.

STAGE MANAGER manages the rehearsal schedule and takes detailed notes about the stage directions, lighting cues and scenery changes. During the performance, they are backstage calling all the technical cues and making sure the show runs smoothly.

SET DESIGNER creates the concept for the physical environment of the opera and works with the director to create the scenery that helps tell the story. They research history, color, space, architecture, and furniture.

LIGHTING DESIGNER helps create the mood of each scene with light, shadow, and color. They also study the music and work with the set designer and the director to decide how light will be used to help tell the story.

COSTUME DESIGNER creates the look of the characters with clothing. They choose the fabrics and supervise the construction of the costumes, or selection of pre-made costumes.



The Stage Manager calls cues by watching monitors of a performance of *Turandot* in 2017. (photo: Jeff Roffman)

WIG & MAKE-UP DESIGNER creates the hair and make-up styling for the show in tandem with the costumes and the production design. They are also responsible for any special effects make-up like scars, wounds or blood.

WARDROBE MANAGER makes sure all the costumes are clean and pressed and coordinates all the costume changes. Dressers help the singers put on their complicated costumes and change their costumes during the performance.

PROPERTIES (PROPS) MASTER is responsible for all the objects that the singers touch or move that are not part of their costumes. They do a lot of research to find the perfect period newspaper, set of glasses, bouquet of flowers, or book. They make artificial things look real on stage, like food or drink.

CREW & STAGEHANDS includes carpenters and electricians. They assist with the installation of the set on stage once it has been built. During the performance they are responsible for set and lighting changes.

ACT / SCENE

Acts and scenes are ways of categorizing sections of operas. An act is a large-scale division of an opera, and each opera will typically include from two to five acts. Acts can be subdivided into scenes, which are often differentiated by a change in setting or characters.

ADAGIO

Literally “at ease,” adagio is a tempo marking that indicates a slow speed. An adagio tempo marking indicates that the performer should play in a slow and leisurely style.

ALLEGRO

Italian for “cheerful” or “joyful,” Allegro is the most common tempo marking in Western music, indicating a moderately fast to quick speed.

ARIA

A song for solo voice accompanied by orchestra.

BRAVO

Italian for “nicely done”; shouted by audience members after a performance

CADENZA

An ornamented musical elaboration played in a free style by a soloist to display his or her virtuosity.

CHORUS

A section of an opera in which a large group of singers performs together, typically with orchestral accompaniment.

CRESCENDO

A gradual raising of volume in music achieved by increasing the dynamic level. When music crescendos, the performers begin at a softer dynamic level and become incrementally louder.

DIMINUENDO

A gradual lowering of volume in music achieved by decreasing the dynamic level. During a diminuendo, the performers begin at a louder dynamic level and become incrementally softer.

DYNAMICS

A musical trait pertaining to loudness and softness. Dynamics encompass a spectrum from **pianissimo** (very soft) to **piano** (soft) to **mezzo piano** (moderately soft), all the way up to **fortissimo** (very loud). Music can shift to another dynamic level either suddenly or gradually, through a **crescendo** or **diminuendo**.

ENSEMBLE

A musical piece for two or more soloists, accompanied by orchestra. Types of ensembles include **duets** (for two soloists), **trios** (for three soloists), and **quartets** (for four soloists).

FINALE

The last portion of an act, a finale consists of several musical sections that accompany an escalating dramatic tension. Finales frequently consist of multiple ensembles with different numbers of characters.

FORTE

Meaning “loud” or “strong” in Italian, forte is a dynamic level in music that indicates a loud volume. Adding the suffix “-issimo” to a word serves as an intensifier—since forte means “loud,” fortissimo means “very loud.”

INTERMISSION

A break between acts of an opera.

LEGATO

A type of articulation in which a melody is played with smooth connection between the notes.

LIBRETTO

The text of an opera, including all the words that are said or sung by performers.

MELODY

A succession of pitches that form an understandable unit. The melody of a piece consists of the tune that a listener can hum or sing.

OVERTURE

An instrumental piece that occurs before the first act as an introduction to an opera.

PIANO

Abbreviated p in a musical score, piano indicates a soft dynamic level.

RECITATIVE

Speech-like singing in-between musical numbers that advances the plot.

RHYTHM

Refers to the way music unfolds over time; it is a series of durations in a range from long to short. Along with pitch, it is a basic and indispensable parameter of music.

SCORE

The complete musical notation for a piece, the score includes notated lines for all of the different instrumental and vocal parts that unite to constitute a musical composition.

TEMPO

Literally “time” in Italian, tempo refers to the speed of a piece of music.

TIMBRE

Pronounced TAM-bruh, a French word that means “sound color.” It refers to the complex combination of characteristics that give each instrument or voice its unique sound.

VOCABULARY

ACTIVITY

Write the letter of the correct match next to each problem.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. _____ CHORUS | a. A break between acts of an opera. |
| 2. _____ SCENES | b. A type of articulation in which a melody is played with smooth connection between the notes. |
| 3. _____ DYNAMICS | c. The last portion of an act. |
| 4. _____ ADAGIO | d. Refers to the speed of a piece of music. |
| 5. _____ SCORE | e. A way to categorize the sections of operas. |
| 6. _____ INTERMISSION | f. A musical trait pertaining to loudness and softness. |
| 7. _____ ARIA | g. A gradual raising of volume in music achieved by increasing the dynamic level. |
| 8. _____ TIMBRE | h. A song for solo voice accompanied by orchestra. |
| 9. _____ TEMPO | i. A musical piece for two or more soloists, accompanied by orchestra. |
| 10. _____ LEGATO | j. A tempo marking indicating a moderately fast to quick speed. |
| 11. _____ OVERTURE | k. Italian for “nicely done,” shouted by audience members after a performance |
| 12. _____ ALLEGRO | l. Refers to the complex combination of characteristics that give each instrument or voice its unique sound. |
| 13. _____ LIBRETTO | m. Speechlike singing inbetween musical numbers that advances the plot. |
| 14. _____ RECITATIVE | n. The complete musical notation for a piece, |
| 15. _____ ENSEMBLE | o. The text of an opera. |
| 16. _____ BRAVO | p. Refers to the way music unfolds over time; it is a series of durations in a range from long to short. |
| 17. _____ CRESCENDO | q. An instrumental piece that occurs before the first act as an introduction to an opera. |
| 18. _____ FINALE | r. A section of an opera in which a large group of singers performs together, typically with orchestral accompaniment. |
| 19. _____ DIMINUENDO | s. A gradual lowering of volume in music achieved by decreasing the dynamic level. |
| 20. _____ RHYTHM | t. A tempo marking that indicates that the performer should play in a slow and leisurely style. |

CHARACTERISTICS OF A TRAINED VOICE

Singing in Europe and America is now generally divided into two categories: classical and popular. What most people think of as operatic or classical singing developed in Europe hundreds of years ago. This style flourished during the seventeenth century, as opera became a popular form of entertainment and operatic music increased in complexity. The most recognizable characteristics of a classically trained voice are:

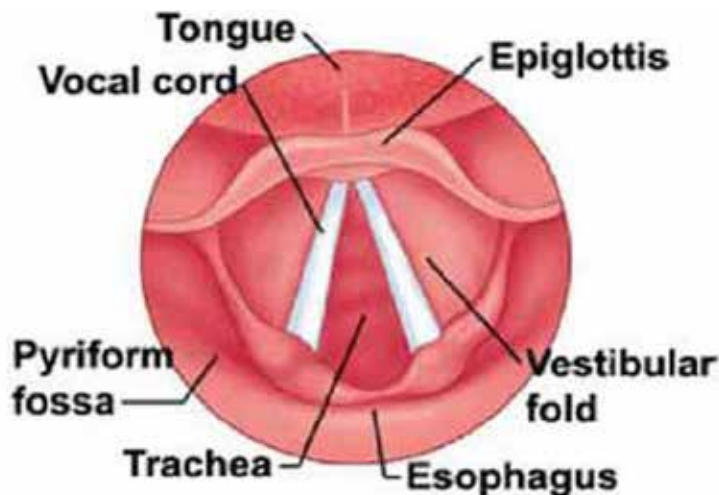
- an extensive range (the ability to sing both high and low)
- varying degrees of volume (loud and soft)
- resonance in the chest and sinus cavities (produces a full or round sound)
- an ability to project or fill a large space without amplification

TRAINING

Very few people are born with the capability to sing this way. Classical singers take voice lessons about once a week and practice every day for many years in order to develop a beautiful operatic sound. In fact, most trained voices are not mature enough to perform leading roles on a big stage until they're at least 25 years old. Compare that with the most popular singers on the radio today who could release their first albums as teenagers!

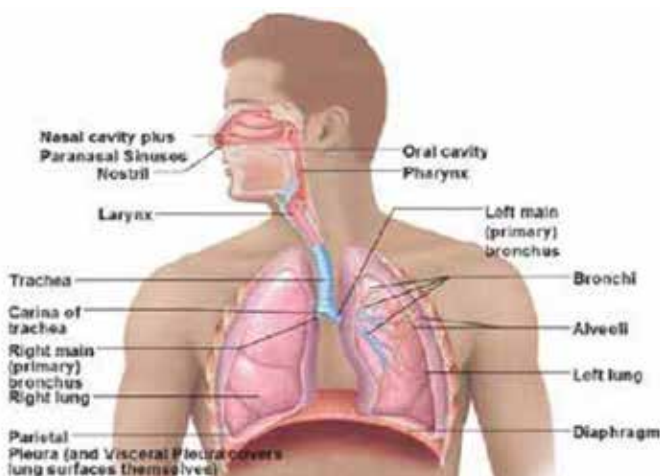
THE VOCAL CORDS

Science tells us that all sound is made by two things vibrating together. The same concept applies when we talk or sing. The sounds we make are really just the vibration of two little muscles called the vocal cords. The vocal cords are held in the larynx, which is sometimes called the voicebox or (in boys) the Adam's Apple. These two little cords of tissue vary in length but are typically between 1 and 2 inches long. When you want to say something, your brain tells your vocal cords to pull together until they're touching lightly. Then, air pushes through them, and the vocal cords begin to vibrate, opening and closing very quickly. This vibration creates a sound. The pitches you sing are dependent on the speed at which the cords vibrate. A faster vibration creates a higher pitch. The length of the cords also affects the pitch of the voice. Longer cords equal a lower voice.



BREATHING / SUPPORT

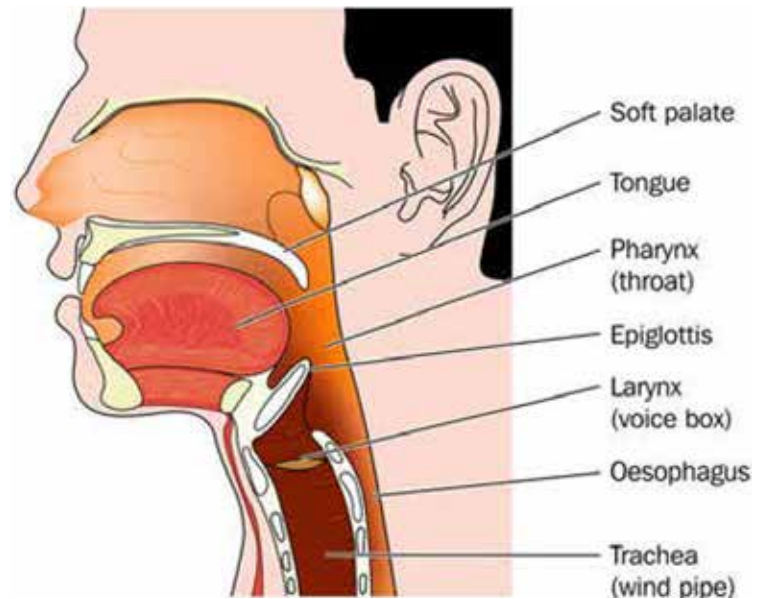
In order to sing long phrases with a lot of volume and a good tone, singers must breathe in a specific manner, making use of the entire torso area (lungs, ribs, diaphragm and viscera). As they breathe in, each part of this network does its job: the lungs fill up with air, which forces the ribs to expand and the diaphragm (a flat muscle below the lungs) to move down. As the diaphragm descends, the viscera (stomach, intestines and other organs) are forced down and out. Singers describe this feeling as fatness in the low stomach or filling an inner-tube around their waist. Expelling the air, or singing, is essentially a slow and controlled movement of those muscles. If all of the air escapes from the lungs quickly, the tone of the voice will sound breathy and will lack intensity. Successful opera singers must be able to isolate the diaphragm and ribs, controlling the rate at which they return to their original positions. This allows for a consistent stream of air that travels from the lungs, through the larynx and out of the mouth.



RESONANCE

One of the most obvious characteristics of an operatic voice is a full, resonant tone. Singers achieve this by lifting their soft palate. This is a part of the mouth that most people don't ever think about and can be difficult to isolate. Here are some simple exercises to feel where it is and hear the resonance in your voice when you lift it: Start to yawn. Feel that lifting sensation in the back of your mouth? That is the soft palate going up. With a relaxed mouth, slide your tongue along the roof of your mouth, from your teeth back toward your throat. You should feel your tongue go up, then down (that's your hard palate), then back up again. That soft, fleshy area at the very back is your soft palate. Say the word "who" like you would say it in normal conversation. Now, say "hoooo" like a hoot owl. Can you hear the difference?

Say the sentence "How do you do?" as if you were an old British woman. Lifting the soft palate is the foundation for the resonance in a singer's voice. With a lot of practice, a singer can lift his or her palate as soon as they begin to sing, without even thinking about it.



The Atlanta Opera's 2008 mainstage production of *Cinderella* at The Cobb Energy Centre featured Jennifer Larmore in the title role. (photo: Tim Wilkerson)

TYPES OF OPERATIC VOICES

If you sing in a choir at school or church, you're probably already familiar with the different kinds of voice types. We have the same kinds of voice types in opera, but there are a few differences:

SOPRANOS are the highest female voice type, with a range similar to a violin. In opera, they usually sing roles like the Heroine, Princess, Queen, or Damsel in Distress. Sopranos are usually the female lead in the opera.



MEZZO-SOPRANOS are the middle female voice type. Their sound is darker and warmer than a soprano. They often perform the roles of witches, sisters, maids, and best friends. Mezzos also play young men on occasion, aptly called "pants roles" or "trouser roles."



TENORS are the highest male voice type – they often sing roles like the hero, the prince, or the boyfriend. They can sound like a trumpet in both range and color. Tenors can be athletic and energetic as well as sensitive and emotional. They get all the good high notes and a lot of the applause!



BARITONES fit between choir tenors and basses – not as high as the tenors, but not as low as the basses. They can play both good and bad characters: sometimes they're the boyfriends or brothers – or the ringleader for some comedic shenanigans – but in serious operas they can be the bad guys.



BASSES are the lowest male voice type – they can sound like a bassoon, tuba or low trombone. In a serious opera they can represent age and wisdom (and sometimes evil geniuses), in a comic opera they can make you laugh. Sometimes they steal the show with their super low notes and provide a comforting presence with their warm rumbling tones.



Think of your favorite story, movie or television show. If that story was turned into an opera, what kind of voice types would be best for each of the characters?

You can hear different kinds of voice types in popular music too. Think about your favorite singers – do they have high voices or low voices? What do you like best about the way they sing?

(photos: Tim Wilkerson, Ken Howard, Jeff Roffman)

YOUR SENSE OF SOUND: ENERGY & EQUIPMENT

Sound is important to human beings because it helps us to communicate with each other. Your sense of sound also helps you to enjoy music like opera. Musicians use sounds to communicate thoughts or feelings. But what is sound exactly? How do we hear it?

THE ENERGY: HOW SOUND IS MADE

Sound is vibrating air. Sounds can vibrate in different patterns. These patterns are called sound waves. The different patterns change the sound we hear. Listen to traffic on a busy street. Noise like this is disorganized sound. Now listen to a piece of music. Music is sound and silence that is organized into patterns.

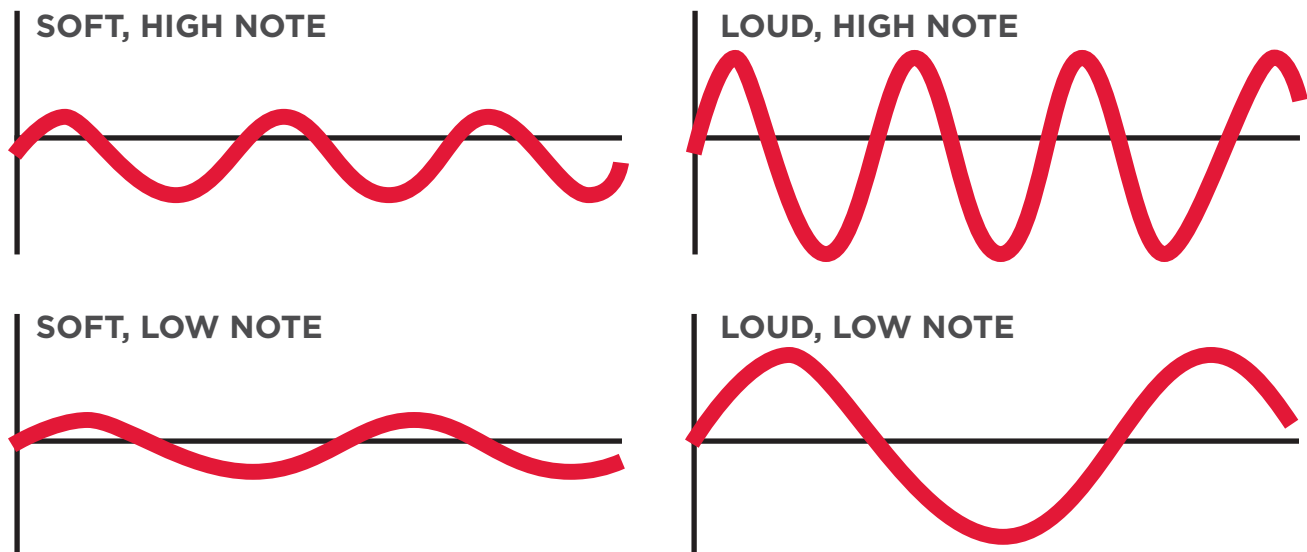
THINK ABOUT IT!

How are the sounds of traffic and music different? How does each sound make you feel? Can traffic sound like music? Can music sound like traffic?

Sound waves can vibrate many times in one second. The number of times a sound wave vibrates in one second is called its frequency. The frequency tells how high or low the sound will be. This is called pitch. High-pitched notes vibrate at a fast rate, so they have a fast frequency. Low-pitched notes have a slow frequency. In opera, the highest pitches are usually sung by women. Very low pitches are sung by men.

Just as the speed of the sound wave determines the pitch, the shape of the wave determines how loud or soft the sound will be. This is called volume.

This is what sound waves look like:

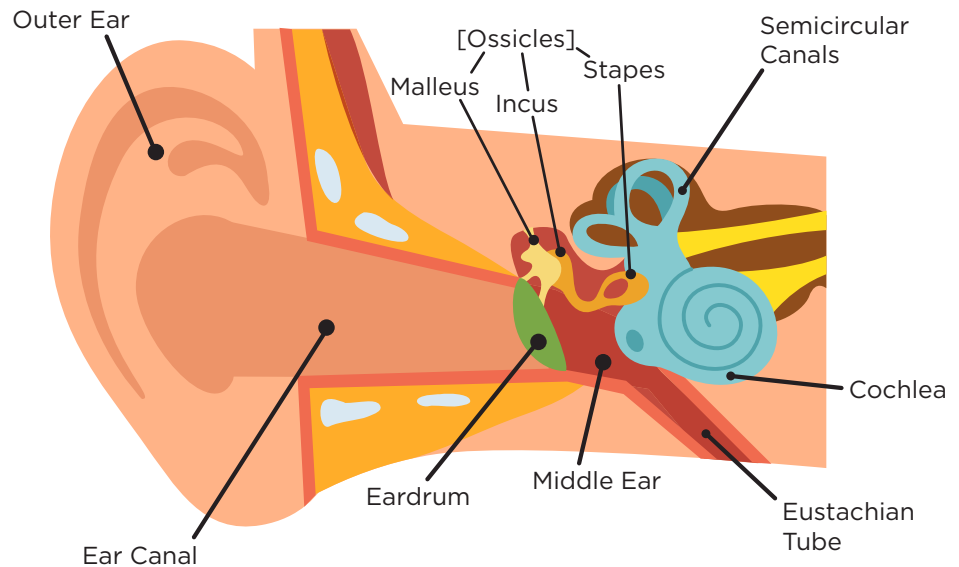


TRY THIS!

Stretch a rubber band between your thumb and forefinger on one hand. Pluck it a few times. Can you see and feel the vibrations? What happens if you pluck the rubber band harder? Softer? Change the shape of the rubber band by making it longer and thinner. What do you hear?

THE OUTER EAR

This is the only part of your ear that you can see. Your outer ear has two jobs: to collect the sound and protect the rest of the ear. Invisible sound waves travel through the air and enter the outer ear through the canal. The canal is the opening in your ear. The outer ear also makes earwax.



THE MIDDLE EAR

After sound waves travel through the canal, they reach your middle ear. The middle ear turns the sound waves into vibrations before it sends them to the inner ear. Sound passes through your eardrum and three tiny bones called ossicles. Each ossicle has a name. They are the malleus (hammer), the incus (anvil), and the stapes (stirrup). The eardrum is a thin piece of skin attached to the hammer. The hammer is attached to the anvil and the anvil is attached to the stirrup. When these three tiny bones vibrate, sound is passed on to the inner ear.

DID YOU KNOW? Earwax (the yellowish stuff that forms in your ears) is your friend!
It protects the rest of the parts of your ear from getting dirt in them.

THE INNER EAR

Once vibrations enter your inner ear, they travel to the cochlea. The cochlea is a small, curled tube. It is shaped like a snail's shell. It is filled with liquid and lined with millions of tiny hairs. Vibrations cause the liquid and the hairs to move. Then the hairs change the sound into nerve signals for your brain. The brain interprets the nerve signals and tells you what sound you are hearing.

DID YOU KNOW? The ossicles are the three smallest bones in your body.
The stapes is the tiniest of all!

THE BALANCING ACT

Your ears do more than just hear... they also help keep you standing upright! Three small loops are located directly above the cochlea. The loops are called the semi-circular canals. They help us maintain our balance. The semi-circular canals tell your brain the position of your head – is it looking up? Turned to the left? Your brain determines where your head is and then keeps the rest of your body in line.

Try this! Fill a cup halfway with water. Move the cup around a bit, then stop. Notice how the water keeps swishing around even after the cup is still. Sometimes this happens in your semi-circular canals when you spin around very fast. The fluid that continues to move around in your ear is what makes you feel dizzy!

REVIEW

WRITING ABOUT WHAT WE SEE & HEAR

Reviews of performances are important to every opera company. They help the company know how the performance was enjoyed in the outside world, and get other people excited about coming to see the show!

You are the opera critic. Think about the performance you just saw of *Carmen* and write your thoughts like you might see in the newspaper or an online review. Remember that a critic reports both the positive and negative features of a production. You might want to focus on one part of the opera that you particularly liked or disliked. Keep in mind that reviews express the opinions of the person who writes the review and different people will often have different ideas about the same performance! Below are some tips to get you started.

To write your own review, you can focus on two different elements – what you **saw** and what you **heard**.

FACTS & OPINIONS

A review often combines two things – facts and feelings. It is a piece of straight reporting in which the reviewer tells the reader what he or she saw (facts), and an opinion piece in which the reviewer tells the reader what they liked or didn't like about those elements (opinions). Here is an example of a reviewer reporting what they saw:

“The town plaza is suggested by Paul Steinberg’s dizzyingly colorful set, with a mosaic floor and walls and piñatas hanging from above.”

For the first part of your review, briefly describe what you saw on stage – report what the sets, costumes and lights looked like. These are the facts about the show.

Next, give your opinion about whether you liked these choices. Did they help tell the story effectively?

THE ART OF THE ADJECTIVE

Critics need to have a great vocabulary of descriptive words when they write about what they hear so that the people reading their reviews can imagine what it was like to be there. People use lots of different adjectives to describe the voices of opera singers. Here’s a review that’s chock-full of great adjectives:

“The **light, smoky** baritone of George Gagnidze only hints at Rigoletto’s outsize emotions, and the **sweet, pure** soprano of Lisette Oropesa keeps Gilda **sweet** but **inert**. The **handsome, hyperactive** tenor Vittorio Grigolo has two registers, bellowing and crooning, and the conductor, Marco Armiliato, has his hands full trying to keep up with Mr. Grigolo’s **wayward** tempos.”

Sometimes it is very hard to describe the way music makes us feel. While there are definitely objective facts we can evaluate when we listen to music (qualities like loud or soft, fast or slow) most of the time we listen subjectively. This means that every opinion is valid – you don’t have to know anything about opera to be moved by someone’s singing or a beautiful instrumental solo.

Write a few sentences about the character you liked best and why. How did the music help tell you who the character was? Think of five adjectives to describe the way that person’s voice sounded to you. How did it make you feel to listen to them?

SUM IT ALL UP

In your opinion, what did you like best about the production? What did you think could use some improvement? Would you recommend that other people come see this opera?

Share your critique with us! The Atlanta Opera wants to know what you thought of our performance. If you would like to share your review with us, please send it on!

The Atlanta Opera Education Department, 1575 Northside Dr., NW, Suite 350, Atlanta, GA 30318 or education@atlantaopera.org

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