

The Tragedy of Carmen

by Georges Bizet

October 2-19, 2003

A classic from the world stage, Peter Brook's modern 90-minute adaptation of Bizet's beloved story. Sung in English. A story of doomed love and violent passion, with some of the most popular and familiar music ever performed.

Critic's comments of
Peter Brook's 1983 production

"Carmen and José are now equal partners in a raw, brutal tale of mutual self destruction that's fueled by both lust and existential bloodlust – and is as deadly for others as it is for themselves."
- Frank Rich, *New York Times*

"What is the perennial charm of this gypsy slut born in 1845 in the novel by the eminently respectable French writer, Prosper Mérimée, and running strong ever since? She has captured the imagination of the world and has inspired countless artists...Mérimée and Bizet present a 19th-Century Carmen – an exotic exception, a creature of the gutter. Perhaps the 20th Century should see her much more as an ordinary woman victimized by men."
- Clive Barnes, *New York Post*

"It is surely a transcendent 'musical' and such a brilliant piece of theater that if I were to see it every week, which I wish I could, I'd consider this otherwise largely lackluster Broadway musical season one of the best ever."
- Douglas Watt, *The Daily News*

The Tragedy of Carmen

Adapted by Peter Brook
From the opera by Georges Bizet
Translation by Sheldon Harnick

Direction
Jonathan Fox

Norman Meranus

Music direction
Jana Zielonka

Scenic design
Ray Recht

Costume design
Deborah J. Caney

Lighting design
Brenda M. Veltre

Fight direction
J. Allen Suddeth

Choreography
Alexander Proia

Casting

Stage management
Jason Cohen*

The Cast (in order of appearance)

Don José.....Aaron Serotsky*

Carmen.....Cassandra McConnell*

Micaëla.....Morgan James*

Zuniga.....Vincent Lamberti*

Lillas Pastia.....Paolo Andino*

Escamillo.....Martín Solá*

Garcia.....Vincent Lamberti*

Synopsis

Micaëla, a young country girl, arrives in Seville looking for her childhood sweetheart, Don José. She brings him a letter from his mother. A gypsy, Carmen, throws a flower to the young corporal and sings an erotic love song. The two girls fight and José's superior officer, Zuniga, appears. Unable to control Carmen, he orders José to take her to jail. En route, Carmen promises José that if he lets her escape she will meet him at the inn of her friend Lillas Pastia. José lets Carmen go, whereupon Zuniga locks him up and takes away his corporal's rank.

Carmen arrives at the inn with stolen goods. Zuniga comes to see Carmen and offer money for her favors. Carmen accepts but shortly thereafter José enters, summoning José back to the barracks. Carmen is furious and taunts him; the situation becomes tense. José discovers Zuniga, loses control and kills the officer. The body is quickly hidden as Escamillo, a famous bullfighter, enters. Buying drinks all around, he announces that he, too, wants Carmen. José, jealous, picks a fight Escamillo. Carmen separates them and Escamillo withdraws, inviting all to his next bullfight.

José, who has now killed for Carmen, sings of his lover for her. They go to the mountains where an old gypsy woman unites them. While they are sleeping, Garcia appears at the camp. He is Carmen's husband, though she has hidden his existence from José. The two men challenge each other and as they go off to fight, Carmen reads her tragic fate in the cards. The song ends. Garcia returns wounded and falls dead at Carmen's feet.

Micaëla appears again searching for José; the two women seem to understand each other. They sing while José, twice a murderer and abandoned by Carmen, flees. Carmen becomes Escamillo's mistress. José returns to persuade her to leave with him to start a new life. She refuses, knowing she is putting her life in jeopardy. Escamillo is killed in the bullring. Carmen still refuses José's offer, but she goes with him as far as the place where the cards have foretold that she will die.