



NASHVILLE  
PERA

For immediate release

SOURCE: Reed Hummell  
Director of Sales and Marketing  
Nashville Opera  
3622 Redmon Street  
Nashville, TN 37209  
(615) 832-5242  
rhumell@nashvilleopera.org

## Nashville Opera presents Bizet's fiery masterpiece *Carmen*

Hoomes assembles an internationally-acclaimed cast of rising opera stars for the final production of the company's 30th Anniversary Season

March 11, 2011 (NASHVILLE, TN) — Nashville Opera presents the final production of its 30th Anniversary Season, Georges Bizet's *Carmen*. Directed by John Hoomes, Nashville Opera's Artistic Director, the two performances will include the Nashville Symphony conducted by Maestro James Meena, Opera Carolina's General Director and Principal Conductor. The cast of renowned principal opera singers include mezzo-soprano Audrey Babcock in the title role, tenor Scott Piper as Don José, baritone David Won as Escamillo, and soprano Jennifer Black as Micaëla. Amy Tate Williams, Chorusmaster/Accompanist, leads the 72-person Nashville Opera Ensemble. Performances of Georges Bizet's *Carmen* will be Thursday, April 14 at 7 P.M. and Saturday, April 16 at 8 P.M. in the Tennessee Performing Arts Center's Andrew Jackson Hall which is located at 505 Deaderick Street in Downtown Nashville. Tickets are available by calling Nashville Opera at (615) 832-5242, the TPAC Box Office at (615) 782-4040, or online at [www.nashvilleopera.org](http://www.nashvilleopera.org). The opera is sung in French with projected English translations. Patrons are invited to attend the free Opera Insights discussion led by John Hoomes one hour prior to curtain in the theatre. Story outlines, behind-the-scenes videos, and a detailed study guide are available at [www.nashvilleopera.org](http://www.nashvilleopera.org). Tickets range in price from \$19 to \$95, and Nashville Opera continues to offer its unique Pay-What-You-Can option. Ticket holders also have the opportunity to attend the *Carmen* Cast Party reception immediately following the conclusion of each performance. Priced at \$25 per person, the reception includes two drink tickets, opportunity to meet the cast of *Carmen*, and enjoy a special tango performance from Music City Tango. For information, please contact Nashville Opera at (615) 832-5242 or register online at [www.nashvilleopera.org](http://www.nashvilleopera.org). Reservations are suggested.

"For those who have not had the opportunity to experience a live performance of *Carmen*, prepare to be overwhelmed," says John Hoomes, Nashville Opera's Artistic Director. "If you have seen *Carmen* in the past, the cast of this production will create a dramatic, visceral experience like none other. Their performances will transport the audience to Seville, Spain in Georges Bizet's masterpiece. All of the energy, raw passion, subtle nuances, and unbridled emotion, which are the foundation of *Carmen*, will be brought to life in Jackson Hall and talked about for years to come."

Express News reviewed San Antonio Opera's *Carmen* and offered this insight into Ms. Babcock's performance, "Her lush mezzo-soprano commanded the stage from her first appearance, and her voice on the Habanera, *Carmen's* iconic aria, was pleasantly round and inviting. Her *Carmen* was reminiscent of the pop star Madonna in her Truth-or-Dare years, swiveling hips and jutting collarbones that screamed sex. It's hard, one would imagine, to be sexy and funny – all with your hands literally tied behind your back. But Babcock pulled it off. And her voice, was as smooth and strong as a silk scarf."

Miami's El Nuevo Herald offered this insight of Scott Piper's performance in New York City, "The magnificent tenor Scott Piper as Don José was rather convincing in the role, especially in the final scene. The lady sitting next to me during the performance was literally crying. It was obvious that the audience appreciated (Piper's) performance, even the tourists, because he received a larger ovation than *Carmen*! Piper's musical interpretation and strong efforts were the highlight of the night..."

CONTACT: Reed Hummell, Director of Sales & Marketing  
The Noah Liff Opera Center 3622 Redmon Street, Nashville, TN 37209 615.832.5242 fax 615.297.6337 [nashvilleopera.org](http://nashvilleopera.org)



# NASHVILLE PERA

For immediate release

Baritone David Won made his Seattle Opera debut in the spring 2010 after graduating from the Metropolitan Opera's prestigious Lindemann Young Artist Development Program. He recently returned to the MET in their production of *Romeo et Juliette*, singing the role of Gregorio opposite Anna Netrebko and Roberto Alagna. That performance was part of the MET's popular HD Movie Theatre Broadcast Series and was enjoyed by millions of people around the world. In addition, he appeared as Prince Yamadori in Anthony Minghella's new production of *Madama Butterfly* – also an HD broadcast – under the baton of Maestro James Levine. Mr. Won has won numerous international competitions and awards including first place in the Baltimore International Vocal Competition, first place in the Violetta Dupond Opera Florham International Competition, first place in the Mario Lanza Opera Competition, and first place in the Washington International Vocal Competition.

Soprano Jennifer Black, who recently made her MET debut in the role of Micaëla, was the subject of a March 2011 Opera News feature. In the F. Paul Driscoll article she described her experience on stage, "It was absolutely thrilling, absolutely thrilling. I had done all the staging rehearsals for ten days, and then I had done cover rehearsals with Brandon [Jovanovich]. So, when I got the call that I was going to be going on, I thought, 'Excellent, great.' I went to yoga that day. I went about my day like it was normal. There were only two points where I was a little overwhelmed. One of them was right before the last measure of 'Je dis' — 'Protégez-moi, Seigneur!' And I thought, 'Aaaaaaaaah, I can't believe I'm singing Micaëla AT THE MET.' So, then I went to go hide. And they pulled me out, and Carmen says, 'Une femme!' And I looked back and thought, 'That's Olga freaking Borodina.' [Laughs] 'Okay, you really are singing Micaëla at the Met!'"

Set in Seville, Spain of the 1820's, the sultry gypsy Carmen pulls in men like a magnet, but her beliefs about free love cast them off just as quickly. When her attention turns to the famous bullfighter Escamillo, the jealous Don José refuses to be denied, and blood is spilled in the streets.

Although the national opera service organization, OPERA America, listed *Carmen* as the 4th most produced opera in the U.S. last year, *Carmen's* premiere at Opéra-Comique in Paris on March 3, 1875 was not particularly well received by critics or patrons. Traditionally, the Opéra-Comique staged musical works with lighter subject matter and happy endings. Camille du Locle, who commissioned Georges Bizet to write the opera, was concerned about the composer's treatment of Prosper Mérimée's original story and requested a number of significant changes- most of which were rebuffed. The tepid premiere of *Carmen* nearly led Bizet to withdraw the piece after the fifth performance. Despite the reviews and dwindling sales- Opéra-Comique actually started giving tickets away in an attempt to fill the theatre- the production continued for another four months. Sadly, the 38 year old Georges Bizet suffered a fatal heart attack while swimming with a friend and all of the remaining performances were immediately cancelled. Three years later, the opera left Paris and was restaged first in Vienna, and then in other cities throughout Europe to enthusiastic audiences and critical praise. Today, *Carmen* is celebrated for its lush score, memorable arias- several have worked their way into popular culture through cartoons, commercials, even television comedies like Gilligan's Island- and for Bizet's innovative focus on the struggles of common people. This foresight became the inspiration for later composers who established the Verismo movement with works like *Tosca*, *Pagliacci*, and *Cavalleria Rusticana*.

#### Special Events for *Carmen*

Nashville Opera will host special *Carmen Cast Party Receptions* immediately after both performances in the Grand Tier and Balcony Lobbies of the Tennessee Performing Arts Center's Andrew Jackson Hall. Guests will meet and mingle with the opera singers, conductor, director, designers, and nightlife-loving audience members of Nashville's social and business circles. This unique event will feature a Music City Tango performance and two drink tickets for wine, soda, or water. \$25 per person. Reservations are available at (615) 832-5242, online at <https://nashvilleopera.org/transactions/EventRegistrationForm.html>, or by paying cash at the door. Cameras are welcome, but space is limited.

CONTACT: Reed Hummell, Director of Sales & Marketing

The Noah Liff Opera Center 3622 Redmon Street, Nashville, TN 37209 615.832.5242 fax 615.297.6337 [nashvilleopera.org](http://nashvilleopera.org)



# NASHVILLE PERA

For immediate release

*Premiere Dinner*, hosted by the Nashville Opera Guild, starts at 5 p.m. on Saturday, April 16, before *Carmen*. A gourmet multi-course meal and with special wine selections will be served in the penthouse suite of Waller Landsden Dortch & Davis, atop Nashville City Center across from TPAC. Complimentary parking will be available after 5 p.m. in the City Center garage. The *Premiere Dinner* cost is \$85 per person, \$50 of which is tax-deductible. Patrons are invited to help underwrite the evening with a fully tax-deductible contribution of \$100 or more, which is wholly separate from the dinner cost. For reservations and information, please contact Margaret Carpenter at Nashville Opera (615) 832.5242.

## About Nashville Opera

Nashville Opera, Tennessee's largest professional opera company, is dedicated to creating legendary productions and programs. Among the most successful regional companies in the United States of America, Nashville Opera has presented three different world premiere operas since its inception in 1981. Main stage performances are presented at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center and play to over 17,000 people annually. Nashville Opera's extensive education and outreach touring program reaches over 30,000 students throughout Middle Tennessee. These projects are supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Tennessee Arts Commission, and the Metro Nashville Arts Commission.

CONTACT: Reed Hummell, Director of Sales & Marketing

The Noah Liff Opera Center 3622 Redmon Street, Nashville, TN 37209 615.832.5242 fax 615.297.6337 [nashvilleopera.org](http://nashvilleopera.org)