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LA Opera Presents Georges Bizet's
CARMEN

Viktoria Vizin and Nancy Fabiola Herrera
to make Company debuts in title role,
with Marcus Haddock and German Villar as Don José

Emmanuel Villaume to Conduct

Saturday, November 15 – Sunday, December 14

(Los Angeles, CA) October 17, 2008 – The vivid sights and sounds of colorful Spain return to LA Opera in a sumptuously authentic production of *Carmen*, opening on Saturday, November 15, 2008 at 7:30pm. French conductor **Emmanuel Villaume** returns to lead a magnificent production originally created by **Emilio Sagi** for the Teatro Real in Madrid. “I am very happy to present the return of one of our most popular productions,” said **Plácido Domingo**, LA Opera’s Eli and Edythe Broad General Director. “This exciting production stands out for capturing all the striking elements that we love in *Carmen*: its sensuality, its shades of both lightness and danger, and its intense theatricality. It is also one of the more grandiose productions in our repertoire, seemingly bringing all of Seville to life right on our stage.” *Carmen* will be directed by **Javier Ulacia** and features the design team of set designer **Gerardo Trotti**, costume designer **Jesus del Pozo**, lighting designer **Guido Levi** and choreographer **Nuria Castejón**. The Associate Conductor / Chorus Master is **Grant Gershon** and **Anne Tomlinson** will prepare the Los Angeles Children’s Chorus. *Carmen* will run for a total of nine performances through December 14. Performances take place at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 North Grand Avenue, Los Angeles CA 90012.

Carmen features a world-class double cast, including many artists who are making their LA Opera debuts. On November 15, 19, 22, 30 and December 3 and 7, the performers include mezzo-soprano **Viktoria Vizin*** as Carmen, tenor **Marcus Haddock** as Don José, soprano **Genia Kuhmeier*** as Micaëla. On December 6, 9 and 14, the cast is headed by mezzo-soprano **Nancy Fabiola Herrera*** as Carmen, tenor

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German Villar* as Don José and soprano **Sabina Cvilak*** as Micaëla. All performances feature bass **Raymond Aceto** as Escamillo, as well as bass-baritone **Wayne Tigges** as Zuniga, tenor **Daniel Montenegro** as El Dancaïro, tenor **Hak Soo Kim***, a member of the Domingo-Thornton Young Artist Program, as El Remendado, baritone **Morgan Smith*** as Moralès and mezzo-soprano **Kendall Gladen*** as Mercédès. The role of Frasquita is shared by sopranos **Kerri Marcinko*** and Domingo-Thornton Young Artist Program member **Valerie Vinzant***, performing on December 9 and 14. (* LA Opera debut)

Nothing—not even love—can tame Carmen, the delectable femme fatale of Seville, who springs to life onstage in an intoxicating whirl of thrilling music and heart-stopping drama. Georges Bizet’s dazzling score is an endless parade of one great melody after the other, from the languid allure of Carmen’s gypsy songs to the macho boasts of the dashing bullfighter. *Carmen* premiered at the Opéra-Comique in Paris on March 3, 1875. Bizet himself found the source material for his opera, a popular novella by Prosper Mérimée of the same name, and brought it to librettists Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy. The librettists worked with the original story, but made many of their own changes including creating the role of Micaela and expanding the role of Escamillo. On the musical side, Bizet made attempts to renovate the genre by expanding the use of ensemble and chorus numbers and giving them more complex and demanding music than was the fashion of the time. His orchestrations were similarly inventive, and later prompted the praise of Richard Strauss who suggested that if one wanted to learn to orchestrate “don’t study Wagner’s scores, study the score of *Carmen*.”

French conductor **Emmanuel Villaume** is in his ninth season as Music Director for Opera & Orchestra at Spoleto Festival USA, where he has led numerous symphonic concerts and opera performances including a noted Mahler symphonies cycle and the American première of Henze’s *Der Prinz von Homburg*. His appointment as Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra will become effective in September 2009. Operatic engagements for the 2008/09 season include *Manon* with Natalie Dessay with Lyric Opera of Chicago, *Tosca* in Berlin and *Les Contes d’Hoffmann* in Turin. In the 2009/10 season, he will conduct the Danish Radio Orchestra in several concerts with Anna Netrebko. He has previously conducted LA Opera performances of *La Rondine* (2000), *Les Contes d’Hoffmann* (2002), *La Bohème* (2004) and *The Grand Duchess* (2005). Maestro Villaume has appeared with the Metropolitan Opera, Covent Garden, San Francisco Opera, Cologne Opera, Bastille Opera, Hamburg Staatsoper and Monte Carlo Opera.

Director **Emilio Sagi** (original production) made his LA Opera debut in 1994 with *El Gato Montés* and returned in 2004 for *Carmen* and in 2007 for *Luisa Fernanda*. He made his directorial debut in his hometown of Oviedo, Spain, with *La Traviata* (1980) before joining Madrid’s Teatro de la Zarzuela, where he produced *Don*

Pasquale, Rigoletto, La Cenerentola, Pagliacci, Mefistofele and *Die Zauberflöte*. He directed his first zarzuela, Sorozábal's *La del manoj de rosas*, in 1990 to critical acclaim and from 1990 to 1999 he was that company's general director. He has worked with leading international companies, including the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, La Scala, Teatro Comunale in Bologna, Teatro Carlo Felice in Genova, Deutsche Oper am Rhein, San Francisco Opera, Tokyo's New National Theater and Washington National Opera. Upcoming engagements include productions for the Teatro Real in Madrid and Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris.

Carmen opens on Saturday, November 15, 2008 at 7:30pm with additional evening performances on November 19, 22, December 3 and 6 at 7:30pm; and matinee performances on November 30 and December 7 at 2:00 pm and on December 9 and 14 at 1:00pm. Performances will be held at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 North Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Tickets to *Carmen* range from \$20 to \$250, and are on sale at the LA Opera Box Office, by phone at (213) 972-8001 or online at www.laopera.com. For disability access, call (213) 972-0777 or e-mail wehelpyou@laopera.com.

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Pre-performance lectures will be hosted by Kimberlea Daggy. Pre-performance lectures are generously sponsored by the Flora L. Thornton Foundation and the Opera League of Los Angeles.

Artist headshots can be found on the LA Opera Press Gallery:

<http://media.laopera.com/photo/?level=album&id=22>

Complete cast bios and synopsis can be found on the LA Opera website:

<http://www.laopera.com/production/0809/carmen/index.aspx>

Carmen will be sung in French, with English supertitles projected above the stage.

Original production from Teatro Real, Madrid

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