

# FREEDOM ABOVE EVERYTHING ELSE

## *PREMIERE OF BIZET'S CARMEN*

“Free she is born and free she will die.” On Friday, 30 November 2018, the curtain will rise on the premiere of Georges Bizet’s *Carmen* in a production of Lindy Hume. Hume returns to the Leipzig Oper for a third time, following on the wildly successful productions of *Don Pasquale* and *La Cenerentola*. She partners once again with Dan Potra, who will design both the set and the costumes. Matthias Foremny musically directs the Gewandhaus Orchestra.

Carmen cherishes freedom above anything else. Beyond that, she never wants to be subject to social constraints. Sergeant Don José is a conformist and is fascinated by this woman who takes what she wants. He is ready to give up everything for her, including his childhood love Micaëla and his position in the military. He even joins a smuggler gang. He is obsessed with Carmen. But she soon loses interest in him and falls for the bullfighter Escamillo, whom she considers to be her soulmate. José is desperate and vows to win Carmen back - at any price.

*Carmen* was completed in 1875, the last of Georges Bizet's five operas, and with it, he pulled off a real coup: The opera, filled with enchanting melodies, stirring rhythms, and a strong title heroine, today counts as one of the most popular and most played operas of all time. Australian director Lindy Hume first staged her production of Bizet's *Carmen* at the West Australian Opera Perth in 1992. Almost 30 years later, she'll look at her work in a new light for the Oper Leipzig. For her, *Carmen* is an opera dedicated entirely to women – considering both friendships between women and their relationships with men. She sees her title character not as a “femme fatale,” but as a clever and self-confident individual with a strong desire for self-determination and freedom. In this she also draws parallels with *Don Giovanni*: Both figures are far ahead of their time where their independence is concerned, and even place their personal freedom above their own lives.

Wallis Giunta, a member of the ensemble and a prize winner at the International Opera Awards 2018, gives her debut as Carmen. Olena Tokar and Sandra Maxheimer also debut their roles as Micaëla und Mercédès, respectively. Leonardo Caimi, last seen at the Oper Leipzig as Calaf in *Turandot*, sings Don José. And Gezim Myshketa, who will also appear as Marcello in *La Bohème* in, takes on the role of the bullfighter Escamillo.

Remaining tickets (39 € – 78 €) are available at the Opera House Box Office, at Tel: 0341 – 12 61 261 (Mon. – Sat. 10:00am – 7:00pm), by E-Mail: [service@oper-leipzig.de](mailto:service@oper-leipzig.de) or online at [www.oper-leipzig.de](http://www.oper-leipzig.de).

**Premiere:** Friday, 30 November 2018, 7:30pm

**Further Performances:** 15, 22, & 27 December 2018 / 02 & 23 February / 23 March 2019

Georges Bizet

**Carmen**

Opera in four acts | Text by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy after the novella of the same name

In French with German supertitles

**Direction:**

Musical Direction **Matthias Foremny**

Stage Direction **Lindy Hume**

Set and Costume Design **Dan Potra**

Fight Choreographer **Jochen Schmidtke**

Chorus Master **Thomas Eitler-De Lint**

Children's Chorus Master **Sophie Bauer**

Dramaturgy **Nele Winter**

**Cast:**

Carmen **Wallis Giunta** | Micaëla **Olena Tokar** | Mercédès **Sandra Maxheimer** | Frasquita **Bianca Tognocchi** | Don

José **Leonardo Caimi** | Escamillo **Gezim Myshketa** | Remendado **Sven Hjørleiffson** | Dancairo **Jonathan Michie** |

Zuniga **Sejong Chang** | Moralès **Franz Xaver Schlecht** | Lillas Pastia **Jean-Baptiste Mouret**

Chorus of the Oper Leipzig | Children's Chorus of the Oper Leipzig | Gewandhaus Orchestra | Supernumeraries