



“ROGUE OPERA BRINGS THE STORY OF CARMEN TO LIFE WITH MESMERISING PERFORMANCES BY ALL THE SINGERS”

CARMEN, TARA THEATRE, EARLSFIELD



“EXCELLENT, POWERFUL AND TOTALLY ENGAGING WITH QUALITY SINGING, ACTING AND PLAYING BY THE PIANIST”

CARMEN, ABBEY THEATRE, ST. ALBAN'S



BIZET
CARMEN

BIZET CARMEN

PASSION. OBSESSION. RUIN.

Bizet's Carmen is one of the most popular and familiar operas, with its music and characters known well outside the genre, but it is more than just a grand spectacle or operatic tragedy. When Bizet created Carmen from the short story by French author, Prosper Mérimée, he broke operatic convention by celebrating common people and immoral ways of life. He also vividly brought to life the character of Carmen as a complex, proud and spirited woman who strove at every turn to claim independence and agency in her life, love and friendships.

CARMEN REIMAGINED

is presented in 3 parts, with 20 minute intervals, with a total running time of approximately 2 and half hours.

For the full Act Synopsis, and translations of the sung French, please visit:

rogueopera.co.uk/carmen-2024

OUR REIMAGINING

In a new interpretation of this famous classic, Rogue Opera brings Carmen to life for a modern audience, with English dialogue and a new original script. This production has been developed to meet Rogue Opera's remit of making opera accessible to both newcomers and connoisseurs in a compact presentation by four singers and pianist, enabling performances in diverse spaces without the need for surtitles, large sets, chorus or orchestra.

Rogue Opera's interpretation utilises translations of Bizet's spoken French and details from Prosper Mérimée short story along with original material, to create a new script in English. We follow the four main protagonists Carmen, José, Escamillo and Micaëla and, with two of the singers also playing the roles of a soldier, Moralès, and Carmen's friends, Frasquita and Dancaïre, this show delivers all of the well known music and drama in an engaging and original format. The story is relayed from the perspective of these key characters, sharing their motivations, inner thoughts and commentary on the action with the audience.

THE STORY

Carmen lives a bohemian life, seeking freedom outside of the law. José, drawn to Carmen and this unconventional world, is torn between love, duty and honour. Micaëla, innocent and pious, represents a simpler way of life and the charismatic bullfighter Escamillo soon becomes a rival for Carmen's affections. Moralès, the captain embodies everything that the Gypsies, Frasquita and Dancaïre are not. Set against some of the most recognisable music in opera, this is a serious and still relevant examination of the restrictions of societal stereotypes, obsessive love and the struggle of a spirited woman striving for independence and choice.



BRINGING OPERA TO THE PUB

Passionate about bringing top-class opera to diverse spaces and communities, Rogue Opera creates intimate touring productions for new venues and audiences, offering a different experience of classic opera. Established in 2017, the company had two full shows (*Carmen* and *Don Giovanni*) under its belt and was gearing up for a third season with a family-friendly *Cinderella (La Cenerentola)*, when the pandemic hit. With all events on hold, Rogue Opera went online and kept sharing our love of all things opera with a weekly livestream show and online concerts.

We were delighted to return to in-person performances with a new production – *A Modern Opera Love Story* – created for Fuller's Opera in the Garden in 2021. In 2022 and 2023, we presented two more highly successful original productions, weaving new stories around arias and ensembles from a wide variety of opera with *A Rogue Opera Cabaret* and *Lovers, Losers and Larrikins*. Bringing opera to new audiences outside of traditional theatre spaces is so important for keeping this fantastic art-form alive and we're thrilled to partner once again with Fuller's to help us realise this, with the premiere of *Carmen - Reimagined*.

CREATING ROGUE OPERA

Immersed in classical music and singing from early childhood, the company's founder, Bronwen Stephens-Harding, returned to music full-time in 2012, and made her dream for Rogue Opera a reality five years later. She has called on her years of corporate events and marketing experience to fulfil Rogue Opera's vision to bring opera to life for diverse audiences while staying true to the incredible stories, characters and music.

Also fundamental to Bronwen's vision for Rogue Opera is providing a stimulating, dynamic and respectful environment for artists. The company's talented cast and creative team are all professionals with a rich and varied background in the world of opera and they perform regularly throughout the UK and Europe. This summer tour brings their musical talents to a wider audience in local spaces.



MEET THE CAST OF CARMEN



SHOWS

ALL THE SHOWS!

CLAIRE FILER

SOPRANO: PLAYING MICAËLA & FRASQUITA

London-based soprano Claire Filer was born in New Zealand where she began a career that has involved studying and performing in the US, UK and Europe. Claire holds an MA (Distinction) from the Wales International Academy of Voice, an MMus from The Boston Conservatory in the US and a BMusHons (1st class) from The University of Auckland. Claire's operatic engagements include *Dido Dido and Aeneas* (Armonico Consort, Kentish Opera), *Mimi La Bohème* (Richmond Orchestra), *Fiordiligi Così fan tutte* (Auckland Opera Studio), *Lola Cavalleria Rusticana* (Wedmore Opera), *Livia The Italian Girl in London* (Opera at Rannoch), *Zweite Dame Die Zauberflöte* (Woodhouse Opera), *Annina La Traviata* (London Festival Opera), *Mother Hansel and Gretel* (Opera Holloway), *Cathleen Riders to the Sea* (Cantata Singers), and *Suor Dolcina Suor Angelica* (Talent Unlimited), as well as chorus work with Opera Holland Park and West Green House Opera. Oratorio engagements include *Handel Messiah*, *Beethoven 9th Symphony*, *Mozart Requiem*, *Bach Magnificat* and *St John Passion*, *Rossini Petite Messe Solennelle*, *Cecilia McDowall Magnificat*, *Pergolesi Stabat Mater*, *Fauré Requiem*, *Dvořák Stabat Mater*, *Haydn Mass in Time of War*, *Lord Nelson Mass*, *Missa Cellensis in Honorem* and *Missa Sancti Nicolai*.

clairefiler.com



GEMMA MORSLEY

MEZZO-SOPRANO: PLAYING CARMEN

Gemma's operatic roles include *Carmen* (Opera South East), Grimgerde *Die Walküre* (Grange Park Opera), Amneris *Aida* (Guildford Opera), Flora *La traviata* (King's Head), Maddalena *Rigoletto* (France and UK tour), Marcellina *Le nozze di Figaro* (Dartington International Festival), Dorabella *Così fan tutte* (Opera Chez Cartier & Jacksons Lane Theatre) La Ciesca and Zita *Gianni Schicchi* (Fulham Opera and Lunchbreak Opera respectively), Gertrude *Romeo et Juliette* (Arcadian Opera), Flowermaiden *Parsifal* (Elemental Opera), 2nd and 3rd Ladies *Die Zauberflöte* (Zeist Opera Festival, Netherlands, St John's Smith Square & Riverside Studios) and ensemble in six tours of John Ramster's staged *Messiah*. She has sung Larina *Eugene Onegin* for OperaUpClose for whom she also created the role of Mrs Bear in *Peace at Last*.

Gemma has recorded and performed several operas in concert with Opera Rara including *Semiramide*, *Il proscritto* and *La princesse de Trébizonde* under the batons of Sir Mark Elder, Carlo Rizzi and Paul Daniel respectively.

Music theatre roles include Mrs Sowerberry & Mrs Bedwin in *Oliver!* and Fruma-Sarah in *Fiddler on the Roof* (Grange Park Opera and BBC Proms), the White Witch in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (Creation Theatre, Oxford) and numerous performances from the G&S canon.

SHOWS

11 | 12 | 17 | 18 | 19 **JUNE**
20 | 21 | 28 | 31 **JULY**
4 | 5 | 6 **AUGUST**



BRONWEN STEPHENS-HARDING

MEZZO-SOPRANO: PLAYING CARMEN

At the age of eight, Bronwen declared her wish to be an opera singer. After a varied career, combining corporate marketing with busking, choral singing and opera performance, she is now pursuing her dream full-time. After achieving a Diploma in Opera & Performance from Associated Studios in London and working in the UK and Europe with roles including Suzuki *Madama Butterfly*, Dorabella *Così fan tutte* and Mercedes *Carmen*, Bronwen founded Rogue Opera in 2017. She sang the title role in Rogue Opera's inaugural season of Bizet's *Carmen*, and the role of Donna Elvira in the company's revival tour of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. After seeing how much fun the cast had performing 'A Modern Opera Love Story' in Rogue Opera's first Fuller's *Opera in the Garden* offering, she performed in the 2022 & 2023 shows, *A Rogue Opera Cabaret* and *Lovers, Losers & Larrikins* as 'The Mezzo' and is delighted to be taking to the stage again for this year's tour, returning to her favourite role. Bronwen also regularly performs at galas and private and corporate events and loves sharing the music and characters of the opera world with new audiences.

SHOWS

13 | 21 | 25 | 26 **JUNE**
15 | 16 | 17 | 18 **JULY**
2 | 3 | 12 | 13 | 14 **AUGUST**





PHILIP CLIEVE

TENOR: PLAYING DON JOSÉ

British tenor Philip Clieve was born in Lancashire. He is a graduate of London's prestigious National Opera Studio after gaining both his MMus and Bachelors' from the Royal Northern College of Music.

Operatic roles include Max *Der Freischütz*, Alfred *Die Fledermaus*, Prince Philippe *A Dinner Engagement*, Gherardo *Gianni Schicchi*, Zorn *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Ralph *H.M.S. Pinafore*, The Defendant *Trial by Jury*, Mr Box *Cox and Box* and Colonel Fairfax *Yeoman of the Guard*. He has also performed many Oratorios, including Handel's *Messiah*, the Mozart *Requiem*, *Elijah* Mendlesohn, *Gloria* Puccini, *Petite messe solennelle* Rossini, *Magnificat* J.S. Bach and *The Crucifixion* Stainer.

Philip enjoys a varied concert portfolio, having sung Strauss, Schubert and Schumann lieder, English song of the 19th and 20th century and the songs of Paolo Tosti. This year, Philip makes his role debut at Grange Park Opera with Antonio in Antony Bolton's new opera *Island of Dreams*.

Philip performs in many of Rogue Operas corporate and private events and took part in the *A Night at the Opera* and *A Rogue Opera Christmas Spectacular* tours for Fuller's in 2023.

SHOWS

21 JUNE

15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 28 | 31 JULY

2 | 3 | 4 | 12 | 13 | 14 AUGUST



DAVID POWTON

TENOR: PLAYING DON JOSÉ

David Powton gained his MA in Opera Performance from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, studying with Adrian Thompson and Nicki Rose, generously supported by the Leverhulme Foundation and the Manning Prize for Tenors.

Roles include The Mayor (*Albert Herring*, Britten), Basilio (*Le Nozze di Figaro*, Mozart), Caius (*Falstaff*, Verdi) and Alfred (*Die Fledermaus*, Strauss). David has performed as a soloist with Royal Northern Sinfonia. Concert performances include *Seven Last Words from the Cross* (MacMillan), *A Child of Our Time* (Tippett) and *Verdi Requiem*. Recent performances include Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'amore* (Donizetti) with Opera'r Ddraig, Basilio in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Mozart) with Random Opera and Marat/Dupont in *Black, el payaso* (Sorozábal) with Cervantes Theatre. He made his Rogue Opera debut as 'The Tenor' in the Fuller's Opera in the Garden *Lovers, Losers & Larrikins* tour.

SHOWS

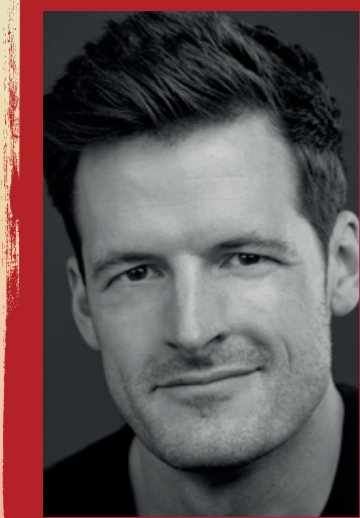
11 | 12 | 13 | 17 | 18 | 19 |

25 | 26 JUNE

20 | 21 JULY

5 | 6 AUGUST





NICK DWYER

BARITONE: PLAYING MORALÈS, DANCAÏRE & ESCAMILLO

Nick is returning for his second Rogue Opera Fuller's tour. Last year he played the title role in *Sweeney Todd*, a Victorian Melodrama for Opera Della Luna at Wilton's, a show reviving this summer in Bath and Manchester. Prior to this he performed as Pirate King in *The Pirates of Penzance* for Celebrate Voice Festival, where he previously sang the title role in *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

Nick is a graduate of Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and has since performed over 300 performances as Marcello in Opera Up Close's Olivier Award winning *La Bohème*. Elsewhere, roles include Flemish Deputy in *Don Carlo* at Grange Park Opera, where he previously performed as Zaretsky in *Eugene Onegin* whilst understudying the title role. Nick has ventured into music theatre as Javert in *Les Misérables* for Pimlico Opera Prisons Project, featuring the inmates of HMP Erlestoke. Nick has also worked in the film industry, where he performed a role in *Holby City* (drunk Santa Claus) and as a body double for Batman.

SHOWS

13 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 26 **JUNE**
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SAM YOUNG

BARITONE: PLAYING MORALÈS, DANCAÏRE & ESCAMILLO

British baritone Sam Young studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he was awarded the Chartered Surveyor's Vocal Prize, and previously graduated from Bath Spa University.

Sam has previously been a member of the chorus with companies including Glyndebourne Festival Opera/Tour and English National Opera. He will be making his debut with Longborough Festival Opera this summer as an Emerging Artist, in the role of Sergeant in *La Bohème*. Previous roles include Belcore/Dulcamara cover in *L'elisir d'amore* (Longborough/Playground Opera); the title role in *Don Giovanni* (Hurn Court Opera); Customs Officer cover in *La Bohème* (Glyndebourne Tour); Figaro in *Le nozze di Figaro* (Heritage Opera); Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* (St Bartholomew's Orchestra); La Comte Ludorf in *La Nonne Sanglante* (Gothic Opera, UK premiere, Off-West End Awards winner, Best Opera production 2022); Papageno in *The Magic Flute*, Captain Corcoran in *HMS Pinafore*, Pirate King in *The Pirates of Penzance*, Mikado in *The Mikado* (Opera Anywhere, UK tour); Marcello cover in *La Bohème*, Moralès in *Carmen* (Oxford Opera).

Sam has appeared as a soloist in concerts across the UK and Europe. In 2019, he performed as part of *Downton Abbey Live* with the Chamber Orchestra of London at Highclere Castle, and again with the City Lights Symphony Orchestra at KKL Luzern, Switzerland. In 2023, he was the recipient of the Young Artist Award in conjunction with the Strand International Song Series.

Sam's Rogue Opera debut was as Leporello in *Don Giovanni* and he portrayed 'Escamillo - The Alpha Male' in Rogue Opera's *A Modern Opera Love Story* production for Fuller's in 2021. He also performs regularly in Rogue Opera's corporate and private events.

samyoungbaritone.com



GUY MURGATROYD

PIANIST

Guy enjoys a modest reputation as one of a leading generation of extremely versatile pianists, having graduated from Birmingham Conservatoire and the Royal Academy of Music. He is currently under the mentorship of internationally acclaimed soprano, pianist and pedagogue Nina Rautio. Guy has worked with a diverse range of musicians including Leslie Howard, Elly Ameling and Andrew Lloyd Webber, along with contemporary composers including Rolf Hind, Edward Rushton and Nikolai Kapustin. He performs as a soloist as well as in partnership with many different singers for Art Song and Lieder repertoire. Most importantly, Guy has the superhuman ability to fill in for a whole orchestra in Rogue Opera's compact productions and is the essential fifth (or first!) character, in the Fuller's *Opera in the Garden* shows.

SHOWS

ALL OF THEM!



THE BACKSTAGE CREATIVES



BRONWEN STEPHENS-HARDING

DIRECTOR AND SCRIPT WRITER

One of the joys of running an independent opera company is wearing many hats: health and safety, logistics, food and beverage, administrator, dogsbody...but the most rewarding are definitely the creative ones. Working with a dedicated troupe of musicians and seeing her concepts come to life on the stage have been a high point in Bronwen's career and she is eternally grateful to the incredibly talented people who throw themselves into her zany ideas, bringing these to life with their fantastic voices and performances.

For Rogue Opera's inaugural season of Bizet's *Carmen*, Bronwen focused on the unfortunately all-too-relevant issues of stalking and violence against women, perpetrated by their partners. In 2019, she directed a vibrant and contemporary reimagining of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, set in Milan Fashion Week and against the backdrop of the #metoo movement. The challenges presented by Covid-19 in 2020 took Bronwen and Rogue Opera into new ventures, broadcasting over 45 livestream performances from a quickly created home studio and building an archive over 100 video performances of arias and ensembles, which provided creative work for Rogue Opera artists and introduced new audiences to opera.

Delighted to step away from the camera and return to in person events, in 2021 Bronwen wrote and directed *A Modern Opera Love Story* for Rogue Opera's first Fuller's *Opera in the Garden* shows. She eagerly took up the writer's pen again to create the *Rogue Opera Cabaret* and *Lover, Losers and Larrikins* for the 2022 and 2023 Fuller's tours and this year has enjoyed reimagining *Carmen*.





GUY MURGATROYD

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Guy also gets to play the many-hats game, and in addition to his soloist and song pianist work, he is also a freelance repetiteur, arranger, composer, musical director as well as a performance coach at the Sixth Form College Farnborough in Hampshire. Solo performances have taken him to the Wigmore Hall, Purcell Room and St Martin in the fields church. He has also worked extensively for the South-East branch of Live Music Now delivering interactive community-based performances for disadvantaged children and the elderly.

Guy is also currently working on his first full-scale opera; *08:09* - an intense exploration of the disastrous human consequences of the 1999 Paddington Rail disaster.

Guy joined Rogue Opera as the performance pianist for the revival tour of their *Carmen* production in 2019 and took on full Musical Director duties shortly afterwards for the company's *Don Giovanni* production and many subsequent concerts and bespoke events. He was also an integral part of the *Rogue Opera Online* project during the pandemic. He joined Bronwen each week to host the livestream performances, sharing his vast musical knowledge with the audience in an accessible and humorous way, playing stunning solo piano pieces and accompanying over 40 Rogue Opera singers, either live in the studio, or virtually, to create the Rogue Opera video archive of opera favorites.

For this year's *Opera in the Garden*, Guy again worked closely with Bronwen to weave the script and music together into a rip-roaring stampede through more opera favorites, ready to delight both new and return audiences.



BOBBIE-JEAN HENNING

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Bobbie-Jean Henning is a performer, writer and director who works across theatre and screen. After graduating from WAAPA in Australia, she created two solo shows; *Tales of a Time Travelling Songstress* and *All Hail Me: King Henry VIII* which she performed nationally. With Alex Keddie she co-created Screen Australia funded comedy, *The Power of the Dream* for which they were nominated for an AWGIE. They were also recipients of ABC's Fresh Start Fund to develop *Spread Your Wings*, a heart-warming comedy about a community musical theatre society. Currently, she is developing a queer, Australian gothic play with support from City of Melbourne. Bobbie-Jean has directed and dramaturged new works *Udderly Fabulous* for Adelaide Fringe Festival, winning Best Newcomer Award, and *MidLife* for Sydney Fringe, nominated for Best in Cabaret Award. She was the 2022 recipient of WAAPA's Professional Mentorship for Directing and assistant directed *Assassins* at WAAPA. She was then invited to assistant direct *Watch This* an all-female reimagining of *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum*. She script edited and directed the short film, *You, Me & Him* which is set to debut in Poland at the LGBT+ Film Festival. She directed *Beyond the Break* in Belvoir Theatre's 25a Season in 2023.

She is a founding member of Edgeware Forum Theatre Company and has been involved in a variety of developments for new works with Melbourne Theatre Company, Bondi Feast's 24 Hour Play Party, Kings Cross Theatre, Griffin Theatre's Scratch Night and The Lysicrates Prize.

Bobbie-Jean loves to collaborate and her work features a sense of theatricality, charm, feminism and hope.

bobbiejeanhenning.com

BRONWEN STEPHENS-HARDING

DIRECTOR AND SCRIPT WRITER

GUY MURGATROYD

MUSIC DIRECTOR

BOBBIE-JEAN HENNING

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

HILARY STEPHENS

COSTUME DESIGNER & MAKER

TOUR CREW

LAUREN CARR

TAMASIN COOK

MARVIN FOTSO

FRANÇOIS-XAVIER LAFLEUR

MEGAN MCARTHUR

TOUR AUDIO ENGINEERS

BRONWEN HARDING

KEVIN HARDING

WITH THANKS TO

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SIAN TIMMERMANS & ED FRYER | THE TEAM AT FULLER'S