

CARMEN in the Steinbruch St. Margarethen – Rehearsal begin in Hollywood setting

At last it's happening! The rehearsals for Carmen in the Steinbruch St. Margarethen (Margarethen Quarry) are starting. The French director Arnaud Berard is staging one of the best-known works of the operatic literature in a production that combines elements of the Hollywood dream factory and the Spanish Civil War and is set between the 1930s and the 1950s. He is being assisted by Alessandro Camera (stage design) and Carla Ricotti (costumes), both masters of their trades, forming a team that is creating a very special Carmen world.

At the conductor's desk of the PIEDRA Festivalorchester is Valerio Galli, an internationally acclaimed expert. Under his direction, the ensemble of top-flight international singers, including Joyce El-Khoury, Matthew White and Vittorio Prato, will allow Bizet's music to shine.



"The set design is not 'decoration' but the construction of a very individual reality," says set designer Alessandro Camera of his approach to the scenery for Carmen.

"The whole production must tell the same story," says costume designer Carla Ricotti.

So that Carmen can be staged from **12 July to 20 August** at the Steinbruch St. Margarethen in the style of 1950s Hollywood studios, the Viennese company Winter Artservice has put in 1,600 hours of planning. Seven kilometres of beams and boards have been put together, using more than 500,000 screws. The constructions are based on designs drawn up by **Alessandro Camera**. "When there is a 7,000 m² open-air stage, it is important not just to produce a nice overall look, but also to create the right atmosphere for the audience," says Camera, a theatre wizard with much open-air experience who has already devised spectacular stage worlds for venues including the Arena di Verona. To make it possible to create surprise on a stage that lacks a curtain, Camera uses several huge rotating walls so that the entire set is not always visible at once.

The singers in this *Carmen* dream factory will perform in costumes by **Carla Ricotti**. In addition to the historical iconographic research she conducted while coming up with designs for *Carmen*, she finds it just as important to study the characters of the main figures. In the case of the costumes for Carmen herself, Ricotti stresses how

important it is "to show all the facets [of this character]: on the one hand, she is, of course, very seductive and feminine, but her strength of will should not be underestimated, either. She is also a worker and a fighter, and it gave me great pleasure to play around with feminine and masculine nuances."

In the opinion of **Arnaud Bernard**, this strong-mindedness combined with feminine seductiveness of the title figure is an aspect that is essential in this work "because at the end of the 19th century, the emancipatory behaviour of a free woman was a scandal."

Artistic director **Daniel Serafin** has also been looking forward very much to starting rehearsals. The debut as Carmen of star soprano **Joyce El-Khoury**, who was only recently recruited for the role, is something to be awaited with great anticipation as well. This Lebanese-Canadian singer, who performs worldwide, joins the long list of famous sopranos who have taken up the challenges posed by Bizet's role, which is mostly interpreted by mezzo-sopranos.

Tickets for *Carmen* in the Steinbruch St. Margarethen can be booked in the pan.event ticket office (T +43 2682 65 0 65) or per e-mail at tickets@panevent.at. Complete information at www.operimsteinbruch.at.

Short biographies of Carla Ricotti, Alessandro Camera, Bernard Arnaud and Joyce El-Khoury follow below, with an overview of performance dates, names of the Leading Team and detailed ticket information.

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ARNAUD BERNARD



The French director Arnaud Bernard is considered the youngest director in the history of the famous Arena di Verona: he staged *La Bohème* in 2005 (revivals 2009 and 2011) and *Nabucco* in 2017 (revivals 2018 and 2022). The latter was broadcast live on ARTE and in many cinemas around the world. Arnaud Bernard has already staged Bizet's *Carmen* in Helsinki, Lausanne, Tokyo and St. Petersburg.

CARLA RICOTTI



Carla Ricotti studied stage design at the Accademia di Belle Arte di Brera (Milan), where she currently teaches object design. Since the 1990s, Carla Ricotti has collaborated with various stage and costume designers, including Luisa Spinatelli, James Ivory, Jean Paul Gaultier, William Orlandi, John McFarlane and Luciana Arrighi. Since 2001, she has worked together intensively with the director Arnaud Bernard, for whom she designed the costumes for Meyerbeer's *Les Huguénots* (Festival della Valle d'Itria), Verdi's *Luisa Miller* (Enschede, Nationale Reisopera), Massenet's *Le roi de Lahore* (Venice, Teatro La Fenice) and Verdi's *La traviata* for the Prague State Opera.

ALESSANDRO CAMERA



Alessandro Camera already began designing sets for operas while still studying at the Accademia Belle Arte di Brera (Milan). In his time working together with Luciano Damiani, he created designs for antique dramas, experimental projects, theatre and cinema. In 1997 he began his intensive collaboration with the stage and costume designer William Orlandi. Together, they worked on Massenet's *Don Quichotte* and Prokofiev's *The Love for Three Oranges* (both with Gilbert Deflo as director) at the Opéra Bastille, Paris. He has created stage designs for numerous operas worldwide, including Monteverdi's *Orfeo* and Tchaikovsky's *Pique Dame* (Gran Teatre del Liceu, Barcelona), *Cavalleria rusticana* and *La Gioconda* (Oper Zürich), *Semiramide* (Rossini Opera Festival, Pesaro), *Nabucco*, *I Pagliacci* and *Cavalleria rusticana* (Arena di Verona), *Carmen* (Lithuanian National Opera), *Salome* (Bologna), *Rigoletto* (Lausanne) and *Falstaff* (Naples). He has received the Vittorio Gassman Award (2007) and the Italian theatre prize "Le Maschere" (2012).

JOYCE EL-KHOURY



Born in Beirut, Joyce El-Khoury moved to Canada with her family at the age of six and lived in Ottawa, Ontario. After her vocal studies, she was soon taken into the New York Metropolitan Opera's development programme for young artists, where she interpreted one of Carmen's friends, Frasquita, as one of her first roles. Joyce El-Khoury is now a regular guest at the big international opera houses and festivals, such as Teatro Real in Madrid, Opera Australia in Sydney, Glyndebourne, the Royal Opera House Covent Garden in London, the Washington National Opera and the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich. Her central roles include Mimì (*La Bohème*), Violetta (*La traviata*), Tatyana (*Eugen Onegin*) and Liù (*Turandot*). Recently, she was able to add yet another success to her long list of sensational triumphs as Amelia in Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera*.

BOOKINGS

Ticket office pan.event

T: +43 2682 65 0 65

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www.operimsteinbruch.at

DATES & INFORMATION

Premiere: **12 July 2023**

Futher performances:

13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29 and 30 July 2023

3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19 and 20 August 2023

Starting time July: 8.30 pm, admission from 6.30 pm

Starting time August: 8 pm, admission from 6 pm

Run time: approx. 2 hrs 45 min HRS 46 MIN

Prices: € 49 to € 168

MAIN STAGE, STEINBRUCH ST. MARGARETHEN

PREMIERE 12 JULY 2023, 8.30 pm

LEADING TEAM

MUSICAL DIRECTION: Valerio Galli

PRODUCTION: Arnaud Bernard

STAGE DESIGN: Alessandro Camera

COSTUMES: Carla Ricotti

STUNTS: Ran Arthur Braun

CHORAL DIRECTOR: Walter Zeh

SOUND: Volker Werner

CARMEN: Joyce El-Khoury / Lilly Jørstad / Francesca di Sauro

DON JOSÉ: Migran Agadzhanian / Matthew White / Brian Michael Moore

MICAELA: Yulia Suleimanova / Ana Garotic / Vanessa Vasquez

ESCAMILLO: Vittorio Prato / Sergey Kaydalov

FRASQUITA: Leah Manning / Aleksandra Szmyd

MERCÉDÈS: Nina Tarandek / Sofia Vinnik

LE DANCAÏRE: Oleh Lebedyev / Matthias Störmer

LE REMENDADO: Angelo Pollak / Timothy Oliver

ZUNIGA: Mikołaj Bońkowski / Ilja Kazakov

MORALÈS: Stefan Astakhov / Ivan Zinoviev

Vienna Philharmonia Chorus (preparation: Walter Zeh)

Stunts und Statisterie der Oper im Steinbruch

Piedra Festivalorchester