

MEDIA RELEASE

28 May 2025

Opera Australia premieres a bold new 21st century production of *Carmen*



Opera Australia's 2025 winter season will open in spectacular fashion this July with the highly anticipated global premiere of Australian Director Anne-Louise Sarks' production of *Carmen* at the Sydney Opera House, in what is set to be the opera event of the year.

Making her fully-staged opera directorial debut, Melbourne Theatre Company's celebrated Artistic Director, Anne-Louise Sarks has teamed up with award winning Set and Costume designer Marg Horwell to bring this bold, 21st century production of Bizet's classic to the stage.

Featuring one of opera's fiercest femme fatales, this new production of *Carmen* is set to challenge audiences, posing thought provoking questions about gender, violence and class.

Leading the cast of this exceptional new production will be "opera's coolest soprano" and bona fide opera star, Australian born, Danielle de Niese, who will make her debut in the titular role. Traditionally performed by a mezzo-soprano, de Niese is thrilled to be making a return to the Joan Sutherland Theatre, after an absence of nearly eight years, with such a demanding role.

Running from July through to September, the starring role of Carmen will be shared later in the season by Tunisian-Canadian mezzo-soprano Rihab Chaieb, making her Australian debut, and two of OA's leading principals Sian Sharp and Angela Hogan. Each of these hugely talented singers will use their powerhouse vocals and finely-honed acting skills to perform their unique portrayal of the fascinating character whose rebellious streak leads to one of the most famous and tragic finales in the opera repertoire.

This production will also see the welcome return of conductor Lidiya Yankovskaya after her impressive debut with OA last year with the critically acclaimed *Il Trittico*. Yankovskaya will lead the celebrated Opera Australia Orchestra and cast through Bizet's iconic score before Australian born Natalie Murray Beale takes over the baton for her OA debut. Tahu Matheson, OA's Head of Music, will then bring the extended season to a close.

Despite being considered a failure when it premiered 150 years ago because of its scandalous and controversial themes, *Carmen* went on to spark a revolution for the artform and has become one of the most popular operas ever written, with music that has inspired countless modern adaptations and references in popular culture.

From the moment the curtain rises, audiences are immersed in the beautifully crafted score and irresistible Spanish tunes, from the Habanera to the Toreador, the sensual dancing and the thrilling, sultry plot that oozes with passion, romance and danger. *Carmen* is a true classic in every sense.

10 July – 19 September | Joan Sutherland Theatre, Sydney Opera House

PRODUCED BY
DR HARUHISA HANDA

ELIOT PATERSON

GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



Creatives

Conductor **Lidiya Yankovskaya** (10 Jul – 4 Aug)

Natalie Murray Beale (7 Aug -6 Sep)

Tahu Matheson (9 – 19 Sep)

Director **Anne-Louise Sarkis**

Assistant Director **Miranda Summers**

Set & Costume Designer **Marg Horwell**

Lighting Designer **Paul Jackson**

Choreographer **Shannon Burns**

Cast

Carmen **Danielle de Niese** (10 Jul – 4 Aug)

Rihab Chaieb (7 Aug – 1 Sep)

Sian Sharp (3 – 11 Sep)

Angela Hogan (13 – 19 Sep)

Don José **Abraham Bretón** (10 Jul – 4 Aug)

Young Woo Kim (7 Aug – 1 Sep)

Diego Torre (3 – 19 Sep)

Escamillo **Andrii Kymach** (10 Jul – 4 Aug)

Philip Rhodes (7 Aug – 19 Sep)

Micaëla **Jennifer Black** (10 Jul – Aug 3 -19 Sep)

Stacey Alleaume (7 Aug – 1 Sep)

Zuniga **Richard Anderson**

El Dancairo **Luke Gabbedy** (10 Jul – 16 Aug)

Alexander Hargreaves (22 Aug – 19 Sep)

El Remendado **Kanen Breen** (10 Jul – 1 Sep)

Benjamin Rasheed (3 – 19 Sep)

Morales **Andrew Moran**

Frasquita **Jane Ede**

Mercedes **Helen Sherman**

Opera Australia Chorus

Opera Australia Orchestra

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Performance information

Evenings at 7.30pm

July 10, 12, 15, 18, 22, 24, 30

Aug 2, 4, 7, 9, 12, 16, 22, 26

Sep 1, 3, 6, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19

Saturday Matinee at 12.00pm

July 26

Saturday Matinees at 12:30pm

August 30

Running time

Approximately 2 hours and 50 minutes including one interval.

Performed in French with English surtitles

This production contains adult themes, including sexual references and violence against women

Bookings

Adult tickets from \$79 (fees may apply)

Opera Australia Box Office
(02) 9318 8200

www.opera.org.au

**Joan Sutherland Theatre,
Sydney Opera House**