

# Opera Theatre of the Rockies

Martile Rowland, Founder/Artistic Director

Christopher Wilkins, Music Advisor

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## NEWS RELEASE

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Jennifer DeDominici will perform the opera's title role

### **Cast Announcement: Performers chosen for Opera Theatre of the Rockies' 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary production of Bizet's *Carmen***

**Opera Theatre of the Rockies'** Founder and Artistic Director **Martile Rowland** calls this "the finest cast we've ever assembled." Opera Theatre's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary production of George Bizet's *Carmen* has public performances in the Pikes Peak Center for the Performing Arts at 190 South Cascade Ave. in downtown Colorado Springs on Sat. March 1, 2008 at 7:30 pm and Sun. March 2, 2008 at 3:00 pm. After auditions of more than 70 singers, the cast is now complete.

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“We were looking for an extraordinary combination of talents for our principal performers,” said Rowland. “Yes, they had to have big, expressive and beautiful voices, but for Carmen to truly be successful, you also have to have fine stage actors who have the look and presence to fully-inhabit these legendary roles. From top to bottom, this is exactly what we were able to find.”

In keeping with Opera Theatre’s mission to continually develop regional talent for the national and international opera stages, every Carmen performer has strong Colorado ties. Mezzo-Soprano **Jennifer DeDominici** will perform the opera’s title role and resides in Denver, took first prize in the 2007 *Denver Lyric Opera Guild Competition*, has performed for both **Opera Colorado** and **Central City Opera**. She performed the role of Hänsel in Opera Theatre’s March, 2007 performances of *Hänsel and Gretel* and the title role 2005’s *La Cenerentola*. Don José, the primary object of Carmen’s affections, will be double cast. **Brian Stinar**, an Aurora resident who has performed principal roles throughout the western United States as well as with **Opera Fort Collins** and Opera Theatre, will share the role with Boulder tenor **Jason Baldwin** who will be making his Opera Theatre debut. Baldwin has performed principal roles throughout the United States, has been a soloist for both the **Utah Symphony** and **Colorado Symphony** and has performed opera roles for Opera Fort Collins, Opera Colorado and Central City Opera. After a year’s absence from Opera Theatre and Pikes Peak Center, Littleton soprano **Désirée Dodson** will portray the childhood sweetheart of Don José, Micaëla. Dodson has been a three-time District Finalist in the *Metropolitan Opera Auditions* and performed principal roles for the **Aspen Music Festival’s Opera Theatre**. Rounding out the leading roles for Carmen is **Peter Tuff** as the Toreador, Escamillo. Tuff is a resident of Colorado Springs and mainstay of the local musical scene having performed numerous roles for Opera Theatre, last heard as Marcello in the *Puccini Spectacular*, and is a frequent featured soloist for the Colorado Springs Philharmonic.

“As important as the principal roles are to opera, it is invariably the depth of quality in one’s cast that separates merely good productions from great ones,” said Rowland. “Here, I believe we are most fortunate. Our Carmen’s supporting players are truly excellent.”

The opera’s military men include **Christopher Ervin**, who recently returned to Colorado from North Carolina making his Opera Theatre debut as Morales and **Christopher Roselli**, nationally renowned baritone who performed for Opera Theatre in 2005’s *La Cenerentola*, as Zuniga. Carmen’s two gypsy friends are Colorado native and Eastman School of Music graduate **Annamarie Zmolek** as Frasquita and **Regina Davis** as Mercedes, a North Carolina native now living in Colorado Springs, who last season covered the role of Hänsel and was featured in the Student Performance. The “smugglers” will be portrayed by **Erik Bryan**, a Colorado Springs-native who will perform for the first time in a featured role for Opera Theatre, as El Dancaïro and **Antonio Albores**, a Mexico native who found his way into the Rowland Voice Studio while he was working in Colorado last spring, as El Remendado.

Each season, Opera Theatre culminates its award-winning *Opera Theatre Goes to School* outreach program with a performance for 1,500 area high school students of grand opera. For this special performance of Carmen, **Sarah Barber** will perform the title role and **Sarah Stone** will perform Micaëla. They will also cover those roles for the public performances.

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The artistic staff for Carmen unites four individuals who have been cornerstones for the company during Opera Theatre's first decade: Rowland is Stage Director; **James Allbritten**, Conductor; **Steven LaCosse**, Producer; and **Daniel Brink** will serve as both Music Director and Vocal Coach.

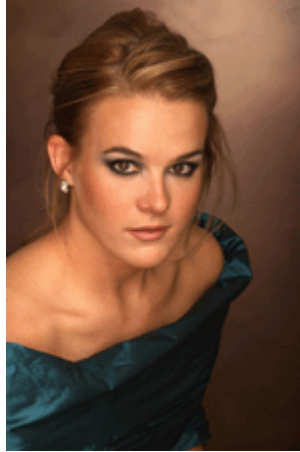
Tickets for Carmen go on sale Sat. Sept. 8 and will be available at all TicketsWest outlets including Pikes Peak Center, online at [www.ticketwest.com](http://www.ticketwest.com) and by calling 520-SHOW (7469) or 866- 464-2626 (toll free). Numerous outreach performances and promotional events are planned between now and March 1, 2008. Details will be forthcoming.



Jason Baldwin: *Don José*



Brian Stinar: *Don José*



Désirée Dodson: *Micaëla*



Peter Tuff: *Escamillo*



Antonio Albores: *El Remendado*



Annamarie Zmolek: *Frasquita*



Christopher Roselli: *Zuniga*



Christopher Ervin: *Morales*



Regina Davis: *Mercedes*



Erik Bryan: *El Dancaïro*