

CARMEN 2011 BACKSTAGE INFO

Staff/Running crew: (29) stagehands (carpenters, electricians, av tech, prop men, fly men)
(29) wardrobe crew (wardrobe supervisor, dressers, stitchers, launderers)
(13) wig and make-up crew
(5) artistic team (conductor, director, designer, choreographer, fight director)
(14) music and production staff (incl. asst. designers, stage mgrs, digitext staff, etc.)

Cast: (10) principals
(74) chorus (30 m, 24 f, 20 children)
(40) supers (33 male, 4 female, 3 children)

Orchestra: (61) (35 strings, 8 winds, 9 brass, 1 timpani, 3 percussion, 1 harp, & 2 librarians & 2 personnel managers)

Total Budget: \$1,855,293 (for artists, crews, sets, costumes, everything else . . .) 2006 *Carmen*- cost was \$1,826,084 (different production).

Scenery This production was designed by John Conklin and built by SDO's Scenic Studio for Houston Grand Opera in 1981. We purchased and used it a couple of times (last in 1997) before selling it to Utah Opera, who now owns it. Each of the 4 Acts has its own look even though the side walls and the ground cloth are used throughout. There are various openings that are closed (or plugged) depending on the act. The painted backdrop used for Acts 1 & 4 has two suns painted on it. Because of the scenery configurations the Act 4 sun isn't seen because it is behind a wall in Act 1 and the Act 1 sun isn't seen in Act 4 because it is behind some other scenery. Likewise, the same drop is used for both Acts 2 & 3. The offstage storage of each piece of the specific act scenery is carefully planned because backstage space is incredibly tight. Further, it is carefully organized, so that the scene changes can be efficiently accomplished.

Props In addition to the many usual furniture props and hand props, there are lots of vendor items in baskets and on poles. There also quite a few weapons including swords, guns, and knives (or navajas). All of these are carefully locked up when not in use. During some on the stage fights, you will see the swords and knives in action. The live flame items used are a couple of torches and a blank shot from a rifle. We must get approval from the fire marshal to use these. When the performer shoots the rifle, he wears earplugs so that he doesn't have a problem hearing when he sings shortly after. It is traditional that the girls are smoking in Act 1. Because actual smoke is an irritant for the singers, we needed to find an alternative. We found some fake cigarettes that glow when blown into as well as give off a "puff" of smoke and look fairly real. It took some time to find the wooden items that click with the right sound for Carmen to use in the Inn. The maestro found some wooden wind chimes with a sound he liked. It was disassembled and Carmen uses 2 of the "chimes" to clink.

Lighting Gary Marder who was last here for *Peter Grimes*, is the lighting designer. He is in residence for the focusing of the lights and cueing during the technical rehearsals. At the scene changes between acts, the assistant lighting designer and the electricians refocus lights on stands and lights that are mounted on the set. There are no follow spots used in this production. The fire effect in Act III is created with flicker tabs in the light sockets as well as a flicker effect programmed on the lighting console. The haze effect in Act II is created with a water based haze/mist machine that had to be approved by AGMA. The show uses 500+ lights, for a total of approximately 350,000 watts, which could power 5,800 (60w) reading lamps or 290 (1200w) hair dryers. There are 35 different gel colors used. There are also 5 moving or intelligent lights that can be refocused remotely as well as change to 24 different colors. The lighting console not only controls the lighting dimmers, but also controls the intelligent lights and each cue "tells" the moving lights where they should be focused and what color they should be. The moving lights never move while they're on, rather they move to their new focus position and color when the lamp is off in order to be ready for the next cue.

Costumes Costumes also are from Utah Opera and were designed by Susan Memmott Allred. Costumes are mid 19th century which is traditional for *Carmen*. There are a lot of changes because the choristers play several roles and the Acts take place in various settings. Because we take a short pause (4 minutes) to change scenery and not an intermission between Acts 3 & 4, over half the chorus (about 30) have a quick 3 minute change including some wigs. During this scene change, the costume changes must take place off the deck and out of backstage so that the stagehands have room to move scenery. These costume changes happen everywhere from the crew room to the principal dressing room hall. Some of these changes are substantial as they change from smugglers to the fancy bull ring garb. In addition, both Carmen and Escamillo have complete changes between Acts 3 & 4. There is an even quicker change during Act 1 (2 minutes); it is a top to bottom change for 7 people from soldiers to townfolk. In order to have the number of boys and girls the director wanted, several of the girls in the children's chorus are dressed as boys. And some of those girls are dressed as girls later in the opera. In the bull fighting procession during Act 4, you'll see several of the traditional categories including Matadors, Banderilleros, Picadors, and Chulos.

Wigs/Make-up Steven Bryant is the designer. Principal makeup and wigs are applied in a room at the end of the dressing room hallway or in individual dressing rooms by 4 M/U artists. The chorus and supers have their wigs and makeup applied by 9 more artists in the rehearsal hall downstairs. As mentioned above, several of the costume changes include wig changes. Also because the choristers play different roles, there are different wigs for each of those roles. All of these wigs and facial hair used are styled and redressed in house.

CIVIC THEATRE BASIC TECH INFO: # of seats = 2885; # of line sets = 69; # of traps = 6 (4'x6' to 4'x18')
Proscenium opening: width = 56', height = 29'6" Depth of stage = 56' (86' to back wall) Height of grid = 80'