

Souvenirs & Mementos



Page 1 of my Second Piano Sonata, started in the spring of 1971, unfinished. Seems that after the first eight measures, I ran out of inspiration. When in doubt, composers write arpeggios. Not so?

The early 1970s were a time of discovery for me in the world of opera: "Fidelio", "Don Giovanni", "Macbeth", "Die Walküre", "Aïda," "Héloïse and Abélard", "Rigoletto"... Don McManus (as Sparafucile) was truly taken aback with the work, puzzled why a 13-year-old would want to write a funeral march. It was a very emotional year for me. The end of public school, the loss of my piano teacher, and the discovery of Verdi. While my father was backstage with Louis Quilico, I was back of the theatre for two nights (two performances) with Rigoletto. The hoped-for oil portrait commission never materialized. Only the study remains, and the funeral march. After experiencing the Canadian Opera Company for four years, I was ready to write for the stage. I spent 1974 composing a children's operetta, "The Monkey King", which was premiered June 1980 by students of the Ukrainian Residential School in Munich. Since then, I have always wanted to write a full-fledged opera. For more than 40 years I have searched for an able librettist, but to no avail. I still hope one day...



Louis Quilico as Rigoletto, painted backstage at O'Keefe Centre by Petro Sydorenko, October 1973.

Very Best wishes + Muel Luels

CARMEN
Opera in four acts by
Georges Bizet

Libretto by Henry Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy based on
the novel by Prosper Mérimée
(in French)

Conductor: Victor Feldbrill
Sets based on original designs
by: Robert Prevost
Choreography: Constantin Patsalas
Lighting designed by: William Severin

Director: Charles Janssens
Costumes designed by: Suzanne Mess
Chorus Master: Charles Wilson

CAST
(in order of appearance)

Morales, corporal of dragons	Donald Oddie (Sept. 11, 14, Oct. 3, 10)
Micaela	Bruce Kelly (Sept. 20, 23, 28)
Don José, corporal of dragons	Jeanette Zarou
Zuniga, captain of dragons	Ermanno Mauro
Carmen	Claude Corbett (Sept. 11, 23, 28, Oct. 10)
Frasquita	Allen Coates (Sept. 14, 20, Oct. 3)
Mercédès	Mignon Dunn
Escamillo, a torador	Roxolana Roslak (Sept. 23)
Remendado	Barbara Collier (Sept. 11, 14, 20, 28, Oct. 3, 10)
Dancairo	Carrol Anne Curry (Sept. 11, 20, 28, Oct. 10)
	Jill Pert (Sept. 14, 23, Oct. 3)
	Allan Monk
	Alan Crofoot
	Phil Stark

Understudies: Carol Anne Looman (Micaela), Edward Matthiessen (Dancairo),
Barney Ingram (Remendado)

Canadian Children's Opera Chorus

The story takes place in Spain in the 1820's

ACT I
A square in Seville

ACT II
The tavern of Lillas Pastia

ACT III
A mountain pass

ACT IV
In front of the arena

INTERMISSION AFTER EACH ACT

CARMEN

Carmen, a bewitching gypsy girl, is attracted by the indifference of a young corporal of the dragons, Don José. She succeeds in making him forget his sweetheart, Micaela, and his soldier's honour. He deserts his regiment to join the smugglers' band to which Carmen belongs. Soon Carmen discards Don José for the torador Escamillo, but when she tries to join the victorious bullfighter in the arena, Don José, after an unsuccessful attempt at reconciliation, stabs her to death.

8

In 1974, conductor Victor Feldbrill and Mignon Dunn (Carmen) were both impressed with the march and encouraged me to write more music.