

Suggested activities on Georges Bizet and *Carmen Suite no. 2 mvt,4 “Chanson de toreador”*

Cross Curricular:

Literature and Poetry Connections: Bizet’s *Carmen* is based on a novella by Prosper Mérimée. Have students read excerpts from the novella, particularly those involving Carmen’s character. Compare and contrast the way Carmen is portrayed in the opera vs. the novella.

Art and Design: *Carmen* is known for its vibrant settings, including the Spanish landscapes, the bullring, and the colorful costumes of the characters. Have students design a scene from the opera, considering how to visually represent the passionate, sensual nature of the work.

Music Through Movement:

Dance: The *Seguidilla* is a Spanish dance form, and the *Habanera* has a strong rhythmic pulse that suggests movement. You could organize a dance workshop to learn the traditional Spanish dances associated with these pieces or create a choreographed routine that complements the music. This could be a fun way to physically embody the music and understand its cultural roots.

History:

Research the Opera’s Premiere: *Carmen* was first performed in 1875. Have students research the reception of *Carmen* at its premiere. What was controversial about the opera at the time? How did the audience react? Understanding the historical context helps frame *Carmen* as a bold, revolutionary work in its time.

Cultural Influence of Spain in 19th-Century France: Bizet was influenced by Spanish music and culture, even though he was French. Explore how the exoticism of Spain was perceived in France at the time. Discuss how Bizet blends Spanish styles with French operatic traditions to create something uniquely French yet distinctly other.

Listen to Bizet’s *Carmen Suite. No 2*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHgqsnq-agk>