

CARMEN
NO STRINGS THEATRE/OPERA BY REQUEST
Summer 2023

Director's Note:

The stories of strong women have always fascinated me. Being raised by a cadre of strong women on the East Coast, I have a deep appreciation for the many layers that have caused this strength to be forged.

One layer that overwhelmingly dominates in my brain is that of women living in particularly dangerous times. At the time of the original setting of Carmen, there's danger all around. Not only among the soldiers on the opposing side, but even within their own ranks. I find that there's a really strong parallel between this time period and that of the late 1920s and early 1930s. Life was hopping! The Great War is truly in the rear-view and the spectre of World War II has not quite fully started looming, but in the metropolitan areas, it was still a bit of a jungle.

I've always found the Flapper/Mod/Gangster era to be fascinating. We still have a lot of the class-based, antiquated social models in play, the juxtaposition of this against the rise of feminist movements riding on the momentum of the suffrage movement and stepping in to fill manufacturing roles usually held by men while they went off to war gave these women a backbone forged of the kind of stuff that is stronger than anything we can fathom.

I think the Smugglers have parallels in every era - as do their clashes with authority. I think the damages military service can cause to people's psychological well-being is universal. I think the longing for promises to be fulfilled touches everyone.

But most of all, I think Carmen is one of these women.