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## **Casting announced for individual performances of “Carmen in Sevilla”**

### **Preparations for the 1<sup>st</sup> International Music Festival in Seville continue in high gear**

[www.sevillafestival.org](http://www.sevillafestival.org)

Michael Ecker, executive producer of 1<sup>st</sup> International Music Festival in Seville and Carlos Saura, artistic director for this spectacular production of Bizet's CARMEN, which is scheduled to take place in Seville from September 2 to 12, 2004, announced today that the individual performances have been cast as follows:

**September 2:** The title role will be sung by Olga Borodina, Don José by Neil Shicoff, Escamillo by Ildar Abdrazakov.

**September 3:** The title role will be sung by Angela Gheorghiu, Micaela by Barbara Frittoli, Escamillo by Erwin Schrott.

**September 4:** The title role will be sung by Ekaterina Sementschuk, Don José by Walter Fraccaro, Micaela by Angela Maria Blasi, Escamillo by Ruggero Raimondi.

**September 6:** The title role will be sung by Angela Gheorghiu, Micaela by Barbara Frittoli, Escamillo by Erwin Schrott.

**September 7:** The title role will be sung by Ekaterina Sementschuk, Don José by Nicola Rossi - Giordano, Micaela by Angela Maria Blasi, Escamillo by Ruggero Raimondi.

**September 8:** The title role will be sung by Denyce Graves, Don José by Walter Fraccaro, Micaela by Montserrat Martí, Escamillo by Erwin Schrott.

**September 9:** Information on the casting for this day will be announced in due course.

**September 10:** The title role will be sung by Ekaterina Sementschuk, Don José by Nicola Rossi - Giordano, Micaela by Angela Maria Blasi, Escamillo by Ruggero Raimondi.

**September 11:** The title role will be sung by Denyce Graves, Don José by Walter Fraccaro, Micaela by Montserrat Martí, Escamillo by Erwin Schrott.  
(Casting subject to change)

In addition, Gerardo Vera, the costume designer and well-known opera director, presented preliminary sketches of the costumes which indicate that this production will be taking place in the Seville of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The set designer Rafael Palmero displayed a model of the set of the third act, showing the transformation of the Parque Maria Luisa into a mountainous region of the Sierra Nevada.

Michael Ecker has always been fascinated by the interplay of travel, culture and music. In 1986, the professional hotellier was given the opportunity to develop an international marketing concept for the first staging of Verdi's "Aida" in Luxor, Egypt. The success of this production was to prove decisive for his future. Since that time, Michael Ecker has combined his love of music and turistic know-how by making operas come to life in their intended original settings, taking into account the often complicated technical requirements and local infrastructures. Be it "Nabucco" in Jerusalem, "Samson and Dalila" in Ashkalon, Israel, "Otello" in Cyprus, "Madama Butterfly" in Nagasaki or "Turandot" in China – Michael Ecker has always been fascinated by this combination of travel and music. His most recent project, the very successful production of Puccini's "Turandot" in the Forbidden City, Beijing, in 1998, was the best example of the combination of these elements in a performance of the highest quality. It is interesting to note that, in keeping with statistics of previous productions, approximately 70% of the audience had never attended an opera performance before.

The city of Seville has fascinated Michael Ecker since he visited it for the World Expo in 1992, especially when he discovered that 124 operas either take place in or mention Seville. It is therefore not surprising that he contacted the city officials, especially the Mayor, Mr. Alfredo Sánchez Monteseirín, in order to bring to life the International Music Festival with productions of the most famous operas – "Carmen" in 2004, "Fidelio" by Beethoven in 2005 and "Don Giovanni" in the Mozart year 2006, to begin with.

In order to carry out this first and very ambitious production of „Carmen“, Michael Ecker has gathered a world-class team, headed by Lorin Maazel and Carlos Saura, both acknowledged icons in their respective fields . The stated aim of Michael Ecker is to offer open-air opera in the highest artistic, musical and acoustic quality possible, in the case of "Carmen", making this beloved opera even more popular.



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