

# TULSA OPERA

## TULSA OPERA PARTNERS WITH DVIS AND THE FAMILY SAFETY CENTER TO SHINE A LIGHT ON INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE



Adam Smith as Don José and Sarah Mesko as Carmen in Tulsa Opera's 2019 production of Bizet's *Carmen*. (Photo by Shane Bevel)

TULSA, OK, December 20, 2024 — **Tulsa Opera** introduces **Opera Echoes**, a new, free community conversation series, designed to leverage its platform to shed light on the intersection of opera and its impact on modern issues. The series premiere, entitled ***The Tragedy of Carmen: Domestic Violence and the Operatic Stage***, takes place in partnership with **Domestic Violence Intervention Services (DVIS)** and the **Family Safety Center**. It focuses on how the opera's artistic depictions of domestic violence and stalking behavior impact real life, and where Tulsans can find resources for interveners and survivors. The event is scheduled for Saturday, January 11, 2025 at the **Frossard Auditorium in the Hardesty Regional Library** at 8316 E 93rd St in Tulsa, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

"Tulsa Opera strives to be a force for good in our community, and part of that is using the power of music to shed modern perspectives on traditional repertoire and to address critical issues that impact us all," says Artistic Director **Aaron Beck**. "*The Tragedy of Carmen* is based on one of opera's most popular stories and beloved scores, but it also exposes the devastating consequences of control, obsession, and violence—realities that affect countless lives in our community. Through our premiere

Opera Echoes event, we aim to spark meaningful conversations about the epidemic of domestic violence in Oklahoma and the urgent need for awareness and action.”

The event features a resource fair beginning at 10 a.m., with exhibits from **The Demand Project**, the **YWCA**, **Oklahoma Coalition Against Trafficking**, **Oklahoma Equality Center**, **DVIS**, and the **Family Safety Center**; a performance of excerpts from *The Tragedy of Carmen* by Tulsa Opera’s **Filstrup Resident Artists**, and a panel discussion moderated by **Deon Osborn** of the **Black Wall Street Times**. Panelists include **Julie Goree**, Staff Attorney with **Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma**; **Kayla Colon** from **DVIS**; **Suzann Stewart**, Director of the **Family Safety Center**; and **Dr. Crystal Hernandez**, an independent mental health consultant and Chief Forensic Officer for the **Muscogee Creek Nation**. The discussion will center around intimate partner violence, stalking, and ways in which performing arts organizations can ethically present traditional repertoire that includes these issues.

“If art imitates life, some stories are going to be violent and even deadly,” said **Tracey Lyall**, Chief Executive Officer of **Domestic Violence Intervention Services**. “By having a presence here at *The Tragedy of Carmen*, a show that enacts abuse and violence, we hope to help spread awareness of our services and reach more people who need our help. Think about 1 in 4 women, and 1 in 7 men, experiencing physical violence by their partner in their lifetime. Now think about a full theatre. How many survivors could be in those seats?”

The *Tragedy of Carmen* is a 90-minute condensed piece derived from **Georges Bizet**, **Henri Meilhac**, and **Ludovic Halévy**’s famous 1875 full-length opera, based in turn on **Prosper Mérimée**’s 1845 novella, **Carmen**. It tells the story of a fierce, independent Roma woman whose passionate romance with a disgraced Spanish nobleman-turned-soldier ends in tragedy when his jealousy and obsession spiral out of control. A dramatic, colorful story illustrated by some of opera’s most beloved tunes, *Carmen*’s tale is one of the most popular and frequently produced operas in the canon. Tulsa Opera will present two performances of *The Tragedy of Carmen* on February 21 and 23, 2025. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit [tulsaopera.com/the-tragedy-of-carmen](https://tulsaopera.com/the-tragedy-of-carmen).

*The Tragedy of Carmen: Domestic Violence and the Operatic Stage* is free and open to the public with registration. Register to attend and learn more at [tulsaopera.com/opera-echoes](https://tulsaopera.com/opera-echoes).

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## ABOUT TULSA OPERA

Established in 1948, **Tulsa Opera** is the first professional performing arts organization in the state of Oklahoma and the twelfth oldest opera company in North America. Since its inception, it has hosted the greatest artists of the day on the mainstage and in concert, including **Luciano Pavarotti**, **Leontyne Price**, **Beverly Sills**, **Renata Scotto**,

**Samuel Ramey**, and many others. Its repertoire spans a rich mixture of traditional favorites and modern masterpieces.

Tulsa Opera is known for its bold, fresh, and innovative mainstage productions and community-centric initiatives. Outstanding programs such as the **Tulsa Youth Opera**, the **Raise Your Voice Tour**, and the **Filstrup Resident Artist Company** celebrate local talent and serve Tulsans where they live, while **Aria Yoga** and **Songs by Heart**, a program serving those living with dementia, bring the healing power of vocal music into the health and wellness space. Tulsa Opera's engagement and education programs reach over 50,000 Tulsans annually.

Driven by its mission to enrich the community through high-quality cultural entertainment, education, and engagement, Tulsa Opera is proud to help drive the artistic vibrancy that makes Tulsa a world-class city. Subscriptions for the 2024-25 Season are on sale now. For more information, please visit [www.tulsaopera.com](http://www.tulsaopera.com).

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WHO: Tulsa Opera, DVIS, and the Family Safety Center

WHAT: Tulsa Opera's new Opera Echoes community conversation series, featuring a panel discussion, resource fair, and performances surrounding *The Tragedy of Carmen: Domestic Violence and the Operatic Stage*.

WHEN: Saturday, January 11, 2025, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

WHERE: Frossard Auditorium in the Hardesty Regional Library at 8316 E 93rd St, Tulsa, OK 74133

WHY: Tulsa Opera is leveraging its platform to shed light on the intersection of opera and its impact on modern issues, in this case, domestic violence.