"Habanera" – Then and Now
from the opera *Carmen*
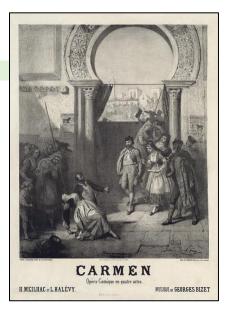
Name _____

This assignment due _____

I can describe qualities of music and musical performances

Poster by Prudent-Louis Leray for the 1875 premiere

A. Meet the key players

Georges Bizet (1838-1875)
- French composer of the opera *Carmen*
- Main characters of the opera are Don José (a naïve soldier), Escamillo (a famous bullfighter), and Carmen (a gypsy)
- The opera premiered in Paris in 1875 and created a scandal because of its working-class characters, sense of social chaos, and an on-stage death
- Bizet's work wasn't appreciated during this lifetime, but *Carmen* is now thought of as one of the greatest operas of all time

Maria Callas (1923-1977)
- She was born in New York City to parents who had immigrated from Greece
- Maria was pushed into singing lessons at the age of 5 and moved to Greece with her mother at 13 to continue her studies
- Her professional debut as an opera singer came in 1941; she performed in many of the great opera halls across Europe, often returning to La Scala in Milan, Italy
- Remembered as one of the most celebrated opera singers of the 20th century for her vocal technique, wide vocal range, and dramatic interpretations

Bobby McFerrin (born 1950)
"Bobby McFerrin is a restless seeker who knows no bounds… He has continually redefined not only his own music but the very role of the artist. In a world where others push product, Bobby McFerrin promotes experience. His concerts are not about supporting his latest release, but about the release of creative energy. This is go-with-the-flow music, created on the spot, never to be repeated. McFerrin's palette is every style of music he's ever heard, a genuine cross-cultural cross-breed. It's jazz, pop, R&B, classical and world music—or, more accurately, out-of-this-world music—all rolled into one, sometimes within the same song." – bobbymcferrin.com

Aziza Mustafa Zadeh (born 1969)
- Born in Azerbaijan, Aziza is a singer, pianist, and composer
- Aziza made her singing debut at the age of 3 improvising vocals with her father
- She studied piano beginning at a young age, and two of her favorite composers were J.S. Bach and Frédéric Chopin
- She uses elements of jazz, classical and the avant-garde in her music, along with mugam—a traditional improvisational style of Azerbaijan

View Maria Callas singing the role of Carmen and respond to your choice of two questions

https://youtu.be/EseMHr6VEM0 (2:07-6:06)

1. What do you notice about Ms. Callas' vocal technique?

    - _____

    - _____

    - _____

2. Bizet wanted to create an exotic sound in "Habanera." Do you think he succeeded? Explain your opinion using musical elements such as tempo, dynamics, phrasing, pitch, or rhythm.

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3. After almost 150 years, why do you suppose this is still one of the operas most frequently performed around the world?

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"Habanera" Translation (from the Metropolitan Opera)

Love is a wild bird that no one can tame.
And you'll waste your time trying to catch it.
Nothing helps. Not threats, or pleas.
You may talk to me passionately… yet I'll pick a man who never said a word.
That's love, that's love!

Love is a gypsy child who never, never follows the rules.
If you don't love me, I still might love you.
And if I love you, watch out!

The bird you hoped to surprise beats its wings and flies away.
Wait for love, and you'll lose out. Give up, and it will appear.
Love's all around you. Then it's gone, now it's back.
Just when you think you've lost it, there it is.

If you don't love me, I still might love you.
And if I love you, watch out!

C. View the performance of "Habanera" by Bobby McFerrin and Aziza Mustafa Zadeh and respond to your choice of three questions

https://youtu.be/pphopoCD4_A (3:17)

4. What do you notice about Bobby McFerrin's vocal technique and overall performance?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

5. What do you notice about Aziza Mustafa Zadeh's technique and overall performance?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

6. What can you apply to your own vocal performance?

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7. Do you think Georges Bizet would have approved of the performance they created? Explain.

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