

Topic: Music, Murder, and Mayhem: *Carmen* in Context
Facilitator: Steve Seifert
Sessions: Thursdays, April 16, 23, 2009
Time: 7-9 p.m. each evening
Cost: \$80 per person for both sessions includes opera performance

From the beginning, Bizet's *Carmen* caused controversy. A friend of the librettist proclaimed the new work would "never play more than 20 times," and when *Carmen* debuted, the co-director of the theatre resigned in protest to the "obscenity" of a woman being murdered on stage, the orchestra declared the music unplayable, and the chorus threatened to strike. Obviously, this gritty tale of earthy and passionate people outlived all the initial criticism and controversy. The challenge for today's audience is to get beyond it as cliché and back to the honest, beautiful, and brutal work of genius that it is. Join Steve Seifert for an evening of conversation as we examine the history and context of Bizet's work. For the second session, participants will enjoy a live performance of *Carmen* presented by the Lamont School of Music's Opera Theater Program in the elegant surroundings and outstanding acoustics of Gates Concert Hall in the Robert and Judi Newman Center for the Performing Arts.

Stephen Seifert is the Executive Director of the Newman Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Denver. Before assuming his duties at the Newman Center, he consulted with the City of Denver regarding the renovation of Denver's Auditorium Theatre, now the Ellie Caulkins Opera House. He was Executive Director of Opera Colorado for four years, and Chairman of the Board of Opera Colorado from 1989-1992. Seifert is a recovering lawyer, having practiced law for 14 years.