

LA BOHÈME

Thursday, August 18

Friday, August 19

Saturday, August 20

8:00 p.m.

ERIC HARVIE THEATRE

LA BOHÈME

By **Giacomo Puccini**

Libretto by **Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica**

Stage Director	James Lucas
Musical Director, Conductor	Helmuth Froschauer
Set Designer	David Lovett
Costume Design	Suzanne Mess
Lighting Designer	David J. Hignell
Rehearsal Pianists	Derek Bate, Ursula Clutterbuck
	Teresa Cotton, Kathleen Letourneau
Chorus Master	Jean Letourneau

A Study in Miniature

Puccini claimed that in setting his operas he wrote of "piccole cose" (little thing); and with LA BOHÈME, he seems to try and prove this thesis. This is not a story of the great people of the world. There are no kings or monarchs, no people with overwhelming emotions. The characters are ordinary students and the people they might plausibly meet set in situations which they might encounter. The love of Mimi and Rodolfo is not a great romance, but a love of most human quality. And this tale of "little things" was one of Puccini's finest efforts, his attention to detail in it more poignant, plaintive and meaningful than in almost any other of his operas.

Think of the opening of the Third Act. The loneliness and emptiness of an early morning in winter. The street cleaners are shuffling their feet and calling to be let in.

Warm amusement sounding from the tavern establishes a contrast that throws all the rest into perspective. The cries of milk sellers to the guards and their little greeting to each other prepare us for the entrance of Mimi who is desperately ill. All these seemingly innocuous details are easily passed over, yet each is an important detail in the complete mosaic of the act, and each must be shaped and polished to set off the central drama.

The central drama is the lovely simple story of Mimi and Rodolfo. One is almost tempted to try and make too much of it. Should one contrast their love with that of Musetta and Marcello? Are they a Puccinian "Tristan and Isolde"?

After many productions, one finally concludes that the best solution is to put the emphasis on Mimi whose real name is Lucia she tells us. The lovely seamstress is returning to her lonely home on a night of festivity and joy in all Paris. It is Christmas eve, a time for family and friends; and she is alone and sick. Her candle has gone out and, if she cannot get it lighted, she will also be in the dark. She knocks on a door. It opens, and here she finds light and love. Rodolfo takes her with him to join his friends in the festivities. Mimi finds life and warmth.

Their relationship continues. Rodolfo is wracked with tortures because he knows Mimi is dying and there is nothing he can do about it. They try to part, but decide to wait until April when the sun will shine again. They do part. Mimi is sought out by the Viscount. But the progress of her disease is inexorable. She is dying. She looks for Musetta so that she can rejoin Rodolfo. The pathetic little figure is brought back to the apartment where she first met Rodolfo. A muff is brought her. Her hands are finally warm. She falls asleep surrounded by those whom she loves and who love her. The promise of life and warmth is there again, but this time the little flame flutters out.

James Lucas

It has become a cliché that LA BOHÈME occupies a special soft spot in the hearts of opera audiences. It also holds its unique place among Puccini's total work. Like any complete achievement in art, LA BOHÈME creates its own atmosphere and style, a certain character found nowhere else in Puccini, often imitated but never emulated by other composers. As an archetype of sheer musical lyricism, it has no close relative in the operatic family.

John W. Freeman

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES:

ACT I In the Attic

In their cheerless Latin Quarter garret, the near-destitute artists Rodolfo, Marcello and Colline try to keep warm. Things take a turn for the better when their friend Schaunard arrives with unexpected refreshments and fuel. Their celebration is interrupted by the sudden arrival of Benoit the landlord, who has come to demand the rent. Unwilling to pay, the Bohemians ply him with wine, hustle him out, and then decide to move on to the Café Momus to continue their Christmas revels. Rodolfo stays behind, promising to meet them later. Mimi comes to the door to ask for a light for her candle. As she turns to leave she discovers she has lost the key to her door. A draught blows out her candle again, leaving her and Rodolfo in darkness. While searching for the lost key, Rodolfo touches Mimi's hand and remarks on the coldness of it. He tells her of his struggles and dreams as a poet and she in turn explains that she makes her living by embroidering flowers. The spark of love has been kindled and soon they leave together to join the others at the Café.

ACT II In the Latin Quarter

Rodolfo, Mimi and the others are enjoying themselves at the Café Momus, when Marcello's former girlfriend, Musetta, arrives with Alcindoro, an elderly but rich admirer. Musetta spots Marcello, soon gets rid of Alcindoro, and turns her full charms on Marcello. He resists her provocative advances for a while, but finally succumbs. In a sparkling finale, the penniless Bohemians desert the Café, leaving the bill for Alcindoro.

INTERMISSION

ACT III La Barriere d'Enfer

At dawn on the snowy outskirts of Paris, Mimi meets Marcello in front of the tavern where he is living with Musetta. Mimi confesses her unhappiness due to Rodolfo's unreasonable jealousy and implores Marcello to help her. He advises her to part with Rodolfo. Concealing herself as Rodolfo appears, Mimi overhears him explain to Marcello that he fears she may be dying of consumption. A fit of coughing betrays her presence and Rodolfo rushes to comfort her, but she tells him that they must part.

While Marcello quarrels with Musetta over her flirting, Mimi and Rodolfo have a touching reconciliation, and decide to postpone their separation until spring.

INTERMISSION

ACT IV In the Attic

Separated from their sweethearts, Rodolfo and Marcello lament their loneliness in their garret. Colline and Schaunard appear with some meagre fare and then the four men sing, clown and dance to lighten their spirits. Musetta arrives with Mimi who is gravely ill. In order to buy medicine and a muff, Musetta decides to sell her earrings and Colline his coat. Left alone, Rodolfo and Mimi wistfully recall their happy days together. The friends return. While they prepare the medicine, Schaunard realizes that Mimi has died. With an anguished cry, Rodolfo falls despairingly by her side.

THE CAST (in order of appearance)

Marcello	Guy Ethier* + Richard Heyman	Mimi	Patricia Fournier* Katherine Johnson Patricia Ludvigson (understudy)
Rodolfo	Melvin E. Brown* Wolfgang Oeste +	Parpignol	Greg Macleod
Colline	Stephen Beamish* Stephen Valentino	Musetta	Janet Field + Doris Manville*
Schaunard	Nelson Lohnes* + Tom Oliver*	Alcindoro	Randy Lecky
Benoit	Randy Lecky	Customs House Sergeant	Michel Landry

*will be performing on Friday, August 19

+ Courtesy of Actors' Equity Association

WOMEN'S CHORUS

**Robyn Butt
Shawna Farrell
Janet Field
Patricia Fournier
Barbara Hignell
Katherine Johnson
Lucie Lanoue
Patricia Ludvigson
Carol Mann**

**Doris Manville
Janna Miller
Ann Peters
Susan Palmer
Holly Ann Rudin
Esther Silber
Susan Thomle
Cheryl Valentine**

ACT 1 CHILDREN

**Lorne Langevin
Jason Ross**

ACT I SOLDIERS

**Michael Bondy
Cathy Goldberg
Desmond Hoebig**

**Jackie Parker
Bill Redelmeyer
Michael Rose**

MEN'S CHORUS

**Stephen Beamish
Melvin E. Brown
Bill Dingwall
Guy Ethier
Richard Heyman
Michael Hope
Michel Landry
Randy Lecky**

**Nelson Lohnes
Greg Macleod
Richard Margison
Wolfgang Oeste
Thomas Oliver
Stephen Valentino
Allan Wilbee**

ACT II ON-STAGE BAND

**Alan Dornian
Susan Foster
Ross Millar
Tom Moyer
Ray Tizzard**

ACT II WAITERS

**Stephen Black
Bruce Wright**

CHILDREN'S CHORUS

**Michel Boehnisch
Laura Langevin
Lorne Langevin
Lucie Lanoue
Claudia Morawetz**

**Susan Palmer
Jason Ross
Tamara Ross
Holly Ann Rudin
Katrina Santa Lucia**

ACT II ANIMAL HANDLER

Tricia Brewster

THE CANADIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

FIRST VIOLIN

Mara Milkis, Concert Mistress
Mark Friedman
Ronald Mah
Bonnie Louie
Peter Stryniak
Valerie Legge
Grace Whang
Denis Letourneau

SECOND VIOLIN

Jeffrey Wall
Joe Lombardo
Neil Miskey
Roy Tutschek
Yung Chul Song

VIOLA

Douglas McNabney
Donald Kidd
Neil Hughes
Alison Ryles

VIOLONCELLO

Marie Gelinas
Joanne Ludbrook
Iona Corber
Michael Christie

BASS

Brian Robinson
Grace Bridgman

FLUTE

Laurel Trainor
Fiona Wilkinson

OBOE

Robert Everett-Green

CLARINET

Paul Dornian
Margaret Bluhm

BASSOON

Joelle Amar

HORN

Andy Brakas
Geoffrey Leader

TRUMPET

Robert Sutherland
Norman Garcia

TIMPANI

Michael Baker

HARP

Janice Lindskoog

PERCUSSION

Ross Millar
Lena Turofsky
Viiu Varik

MANAGER

Jo-Anne Fraser

LIBRARIAN

Denis Letourneau

VOICE/OPERA DIVISION FACULTY

Division Head
Assistant Head
Local Instructors

Bernard Turgeon
David Astor
David Astor
Jean Letourneau
Leopold Simoneau
Harold Brown
Ursula Clutterbuck
Derek Bate
Teresa Cotton
Kathleen Letourneau
Susan Schell

Stage Directors

Pierrette Alarie
James Lucas
George Ross

Musical Directors

Helmuth Froschauer
William Shookhoff

Coaches

Assistant Conductor

Derek Bate

Coach/Accompanist

Production Manager
Schedule Coordinator

George Ross*
Susan Ross*

PRODUCTION STAFF

Stage Manager	George Ross*
Assistant Stage Manager	Deborah Jennings
Technical Director	David J. Hignell
Assistant Technical Director	Kevin Carter
Master Construction Carpenter	David G. G. Laing
Assisted by	Tom Barrit, Dean Cariou
Scenic Artist	David Lovett
Running Crew	Karen Ryan, Aidan Beck, Corrine Hunter Warwick Ashley, John Bewley, Brian Ferris Dennis Byl, John Myers, J. Godfrey Spragge
Head Electrician/Board Operator	Jody Low
Electrics Crew	Sandra Ayling, Douglas E. Woods, Patrick Hallam,
Fly Crew	Rod Mayne, John Avery, Richard Rinder, Randy Nicholson
Properties Supervisor	Janet Knechtel
Properties Master	Steven Gregg
Properties Crew	Douglas Klein, Ann Webster
Sound Technician	Dale Olson
Costume Supervisor	Enid Larson
Costumer	Jane Grose
Costumers	Marvin Schlichting, Jane Tribick, Martha Buelle, Debbie Angell, Robin Benjamin, Glenn Campbell, Lucinda Zak
Make-Up Supervisor	John Cox
Assisted by	Vince
Stage Manager, Margaret Greenham Theatre House Manager	Marian R. Hood * Lloyd Montour

* By permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association

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