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The friends prepare the medicine, and Musetta intones a soft prayer to the Virgin. Meanwhile Schaunard approaches Mimi on tiptoe, returns to Marcello with a hopeless gesture and murmurs hoarsely, "She is dead!" Colline returns with the few coins from the sale of the coat. Rodolfo shields Mimi's face from the ray of sunlight which has come in the window; he notices the stony looks of Marcello and Schaunard and suddenly realizes that something is wrong. Marcello, unable to conceal his emotion, bids his friend be brave. Rodolfo turns to the lifeless Mimi and with an anguished cry falls weeping by her side.

—John Beckwith

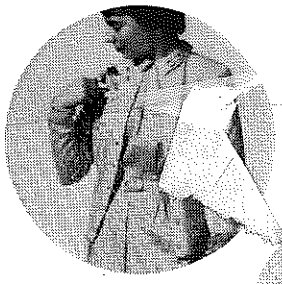
ROYAL CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC OF TORONTO

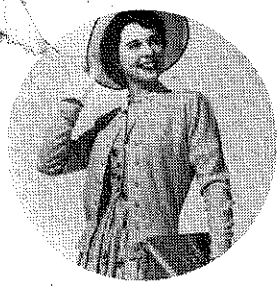
ROYAL CONSERVATORY OPERA

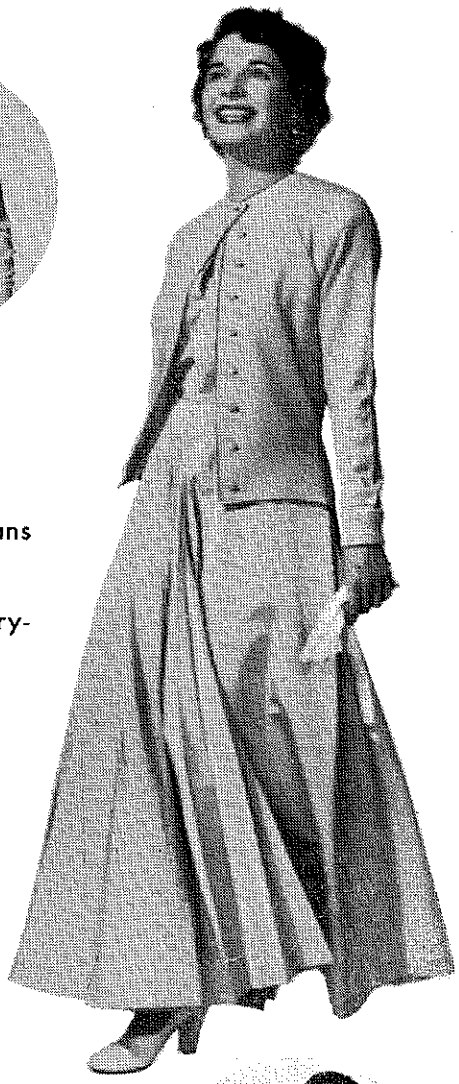
PUCCINI'S

LA BOHEME

EATON AUDITORIUM
TORONTO
MAY 5 AND 7
1949







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THE ROYAL CONSERVATORY OPERA
presents

LA BOHEME

Music by GIACOMO PUCCINI

Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica

CAST (in order of appearance)

Marcello, a painter ..... Edmund Hockridge
Rodolfo, a poet ..... James Shields
Colline, a philosopher ..... Jan Rubes
Schaunard, a musician ..... Andrew MacMillan
Benoit, a landlord ..... Glenn Gardiner
Mimi ..... Mary Morrison
A Hawker ..... Douglas Scott
Parpignol, a toy-seller ..... Pierre Boutet
Host of the Café Momus ..... Glenn Burns
Musetta ..... Beth Corrigan
Alcindoro, a rich councillor ..... Ernest Adams
Customs officers ..... Kenneth Smith, Frank Elliott

CHORUS

Selma Bialuski, Jean Brown, Margaret Dejardin, Esther Ghan, Marguerite Gignac, Joan Hall, Marjorie Hays, Peggy Hitchcock, Myra Jones, Barbara King, Malca Laskin, Virginia Lippert, Annabel Lister, Ann Makar, Jean Patterson, Mary Alice Rogers, Patricia Snell, Jack Asher, Arthur Bardsley, George Barrs, Earl Dick, Anton Diel, Frank Elliott, Glenn Gardiner, Ralph Roose, Douglas Scott, Kenneth Smith.

CHILDREN

Joan Barrington, Diana Chambers, Nancy Hanning, Jennifer Hitchcock, Sharon Kristjanson.

Opera Orchestra of the Royal Conservatory

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES:

Act I: The Garret, Christmas Eve
Act II: The Latin Quarter, later the same evening
Act III: A customs barrier at dawn, two months later
Act IV: The Garret, several months later

Intermission after each act.

NICHOLAS GOLDSCHMIDT, conductor

HERMAN GEIGER-TOREL, stage director

Settings ..... J. H. C. Heitinga
Costumes ..... Keay Costume Company
Wardrobe Supervisor ..... Stewart Bagnani
Wardrobe Assistant ..... Elizabeth Willes-Chitty
Assistant Conductor and Coach ..... George Crum
Concertmaster ..... Victor Feldbrill
Stage Manager ..... John Rockwood
Assistant to the Stage Director ..... Andrew MacMillan
Production Assistants ..... Marjorie Hays, Peggy Hitchcock

EATON AUDITORIUM

TORONTO

May 5 and 7, 1949

8.30 P.M.

L A B O H E M E

SYNOPSIS

Henri Murger's novel "Scènes de la vie de Bohème", upon which Giacosa and Illica based their libretto, is a poetic-comic-pathetic story of life in the artists' and students' quarter of Paris. The characters and many of the situations of the story are taken from the author's own youthful acquaintance: Rudolph, the poet, was Murger himself; Marcel, the painter, was a composite portrait of his two friends Lazare and Tabar; Schaunard is from Schannard, the nickname of Alexandre Schanne, a painter and sometime musician; Colline is a compound of two other members of the Bohemian circle, Wallon and Trapadoux. The Mimi of the opera is drawn in part from one of the girls of the circle, a certain Louisette, whose occupation was dyeing artificial flowers; it is recorded that the jovial Schanne once sold his best overcoat to deck Louisette in finery, as Puccini's Colline did to provide the dying Mimi with medicine. Mimi's death is recorded in the novel in the episode called "Francine's Muff", which is taken from the death of one of Murger's own loves, Lucile, who longed on her death-bed for a new cloth dress, just as Francine (and her operatic first-cousin Mimi) longed for a muff. Lucile, however, died in a hospital, and Murger heard of it too late to claim the body.

ACT ONE

The First Act of the opera shows us the poorly-furnished garret of the four Bohemian comrades. Marcello is busy as the easel working on his huge picture "The Passage of the Red Sea", while Rodolfo is staring out over the roofs of the city. They confess they are too cold to work. "'The Passage of the Red Sea' seems damp and cold", Marcello says; Rodolfo wonders why smoke rises from all the chimneys of Paris while their own idle knave of a fire lazily refuses to work without fuel. Marcello's fingers are as cold as if they had touched the icy heart of his false Musetta. He proposes to make fuel of a chair, but Rodolfo suggests instead the manuscript of his own five-act tragedy. This selfless gesture rouses Marcello to offer his "Passage", but Rodolfo protests that the painting might create a bad smell; and so the first act of the drama is lit. As the friends warm themselves by the small blaze, Colline enters. He is in a bad humor, because it is Christmas Eve and he has found the pawnshops closed. Noticing the fire, and the great sacrifice of Rodolfo, he remarks that it is a sparkling, if rather short, work. Marcello complains that the entr'acte is too long. Rodolfo sends the second act into flames, and after it dies down he excitedly throws in all three remaining acts at once. The flames subside and in mock anger at the superficiality of the play Marcello and Colline cry out: "Down with the author!"

At this point two boys come in carrying food, wine, cigars, and a supply of fuel, followed by the triumphant Schaunard who scatters a handful of coins on the floor. These the incredulous Bohemians take for tin medals, until Schaunard shows them the image of Louis Phillippe. Schaunard now begins to explain at length how he acquired this wealth: he was hired by an eccentric English lord ("or 'milord' ") to play and sing to a neighbor's pet parrot, Socrates, until the bird should die. He sang for three days, he says, with no damage to the bird's composure. Finally he made love to the servant-girl and with her help fed the parrot on parsley, and Socrates died instantly. During this wild narrative the friends, ignoring Schaunard, have been fixing the fire and preparing the table (with the "Constitutionale" for tablecloth) for their great feast. Schaunard is shocked at the signs of preparation. He rescues the food from them, and reminds them that though they may drink at home they must dine outside on this festive Christmas Eve.

They fill their glasses. A knock is heard, and the landlord Benoit enters demanding three month's rent. The Bohemians greet him cordially, pour him wine, and drink his health. He presses his demands, and Marcello shows him the money and invites him to join their circle. The four fill his glass as soon as it is empty; they flatter him and encourage him to prattle. As the landlord becomes more and more tipsy, Marcello asks slyly, "Didn't I see you at the Mabille the other evening flirting with a beautiful young girl?" Benoit tells them confidentially that though he was timid as a youth, his greatest delight now is a pretty wench—not too robust, he adds judiciously, but on the other hand not too lean, for lean women are bad-tempered and inclined to scratch. "My wife, for example," he says. At the admission that Benoit is married, the Bohemians pretent great horror that their chaste abode should be polluted by such

an old reprobate. Their morality is greatly offended, they say, and they push the protesting Benoit out the door; Marcello, waving the forgotten bill, cries out: "I have paid the rent!"

Schaunard is anxious to get started for the gay evening at the Café Momus, and so Marcello and Colline divide their new riches and prepare to go. Rodolfo, however, says he must finish his new article for the journal "The Beaver" and will join them in a few minutes. Urging him to "cut the beaver's tale short", the others leave, and as they fumble their way down the dark stairway Rodolfo sets half-heartedly to work.

Presently there is a little knock at the door and a woman's voice is heard. Rodolfo opens the door and finds standing there a frail but lovely young girl holding a key and an extinguished candle. She enters at his invitation, and is suddenly seized with a coughing fit. She says she is merely out of breath from climbing the staircase. She begins to swoon, but Rodolfo supports her, places her in a chair, and revives her with some wine. In the confusion the candlestick and the key have fallen to the floor. Now the girl asks Rodolfo to light her candle for her so that she can go on her way. This he does, and escorts her to the door. But she has lost her key—where can it be? The draught from the door extinguishes her candle again, and in hurrying to relight it, Rodolfo puts out his own candle, so that the room is left in darkness. He sets about helping his pretty neighbour hunt for her key, discovers it first, and secretly slips it into his pocket. Guided by Mimi's voice, he approaches her and takes her hand in his. "How cold your little hand is!" he cries. She sits while he tells her about himself: he is, he says, a poet, poor in material wealth but rich in wit and beautiful dreams. "Jewels like your lovely eyes, these are my treasure," he sighs; and now that he has told her his story, he asks, what about her own story? She replies that she is called Mimi, although her name is Lucia, and that she makes her living by embroidering lilies and roses on fine cloths. She lives alone in the little chamber above, and through the winter she dreams of the spring, of which her scent-less flowers are a remembrance. She ends her tale with an apology for having intruded.

The Bohemians shout for their companion not to tarry so long. Rodolfo goes to the window and calls out that he will join them at the Café Momus, and asks them to save two places there. Turning, he sees Mimi's face in the moonlight and is transported to a passionate expression of his love for her. They go out arm in arm.

ACT TWO

Act Two takes us to a square in the Latin Quarter, with the Café Momus on one side and a crowd of hawkers, salesmen, flower girls and urchins, celebrating a colorful Christmas Eve. Schaunard is buying a pipe and a horn; Colline is buying a "new" overcoat and inspecting second-hand books; Marcello walks to and fro observing the crowd and flirting with the girls; Rodolfo buys a bonnet for Mimi's delight, and when she asks for a chain of corals which is displayed he tells her expansively that when Providence finally takes his rich uncle she may have far finer jewels. Rodolfo joins the friends at their table and introduces his new love Mimi. A toy-vendor, Parpignol, creates great excitement among the young urchins. The Bohemians order wine. Marcello outrages the others by ordering a phial of poison; following his gaze they see the reason for his sudden outburst of bitterness: for Musetta, his former love, has just come along the boulevard, followed by a prissy old admirer, Alcindoro.

She sees a vacated table near the Bohemians, and begs "Lulu" (the absurd pet name she gives Alcindoro) to secure it. In answer to Mimi's curiosity, the embittered Marcello tells her: "She is called Musetta, surnamed Temptation, by vocation a rose in the wind, a bird of prey whose favorite meat is the heart of her victim." Musetta becomes more and more annoyed at Marcello's open indifference, and she hysterically smashes a plate, half to relieve her feeling and half to attract attention. Alcindoro begs her to mind her manners, and mistakes all the flagrant hints she is throwing to the mock-deaf Marcello as meant for himself. As Schaunard, a hugely-amused observer, remarks "the comedy is mounting", Musetta changes her tone from hysteria to docility as she sings a sweet and sentimental waltz-song extolling her own charms and enumerating her conquests. At length she addresses Marcello directly and he shows signs of weakening as Mimi, Rodolfo, Schaunard, and Colline comment on the situation. As a last trick, to get rid of the odious Alcindoro, Musetta shrieks that her shoe is too tight and begs the old councillor to go to the bootshop for a more comfortable one. As he scurries away embarrassed at the scandal, Marcello and Musetta throw themselves into each other's arms.

A waiter brings the bill, which proves too big an item for the Bohemians' budget. Musetta asks for her bill, and tells the waiter to add the two together and leave them for Alcindoro, a solution which delights her friends' sense of comedy. A company of soldiers approaches, and as they pass they are joined by the Bohemians—the shoeless Musetta carried in triumph by Colline and Marcello, and Schaunard blowing his ridiculous horn. The agitated Alcindoro returns with a bright new pair of shoes and collapses when the waiter presents him with the double bill.

ACT THREE

"A gay life—yet a terrible one!" This phrase from Murger's preface was used by Giacosa and Illica as a sort of motto; and as the Third Act opens the story which up to now has been entirely on a comic plane takes on a deeper, perhaps tragic, meaning. It is a cold February dawn. The scene shows a toll-gate at one of the Paris customs barriers, and a tavern nearby. The custom-house officers, dozing at their posts, are roused by street-workers waiting to pass by the

gate. From the tavern, above the voices of the late revellers, is heard Musetta's waltz-song. As a group of peasant-women pass through the gate on their way to market, Mimi enters from the street, looking distraught and coughing. She asks the sergeant if this is the tavern where Marcello works, and begs one of the women to send the painter to her. A bell rings for matins; the merrymakers leave the tavern. At last Marcello comes out and greets Mimi with surprise. He tells her he and Musetta have been at the tavern a month; to pay their keep Musetta has been teaching singing and he has been putting his talent to practical use about the place—witness the decorations on the tavern-front. "And Rodolfo? Is he here too?" she asks. "Yes". At this she bursts into tears and begs Marcello to help her. Rodolfo loves her, she says, but is torn with jealousy. Marcello agrees with her that when there is such suspicion between them she and Rodolfo were better parted. He promises to speak to Rodolfo, and bids the still coughing Mimi to go home and avoid making a scene.

Rodolfo comes out of the tavern and hastens to Marcello. He says he is anxious to separate from Mimi. When his friend taunts him for his jealousy

Toronto Symphony Orchestra

SIR ERNEST MacMILLAN, Conductor

PAUL SCHERMAN, Assistant Conductor

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November 22	GINETTE NEVEU — Violinist	November 23
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January 3	WILLIAM STEINBERG — Guest Conductor	January 4
January 17	YEHUDI MENUHIN — Violinist	January 18
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and unreasonableness, he pours out all his bitterness against Mimi and her fickleness. Marcello is still doubtful, and Rodolfo is forced to admit that he still loves Mimi dearly, but that he is worried by her frailty and her incessant coughing. He fears she is dying and he is too poor to care for her. Mimi meanwhile, instead of going away, has hidden nearby, and has overheard everything; now her sudden violent sobbing and coughing reveals her; the alarmed Rodolfo tries to get her into the warmth of the tavern, but she will not go.

Musetta's coquettish laugh is heard from inside, and Marcello, fearing another of her flirtations, rushes in to deal with her, leaving Mimi and Rodolfo alone. Mimi says a sad farewell, and asks him to pack her few belongings—all except the little bonnet he bought for her on Christmas Eve, which he may want to keep as a remembrance of their love. They join in a tender parting while from the tavern come Musetta and Marcello, who have a parting of a more vigorous sort with angry accusations and taunts. Mimi and Rodolfo, left alone again, embrace and agree to make their love last out the winter and to separate when spring comes and the flowers revive again.

ACT FOUR

The last act takes us back to the garret again. Several months have passed and the two rejected lovers, Marcello and Rodolfo, are trying to forget their unhappiness in their work. Marcello is at his easel, Rodolfo at his writing-table, each trying to convince the other that he is hard at work. Rodolfo casually tells his friend he saw Musetta riding in a fine coach and when he inquired after her heart, she said she scarcely knew if it was still beating, thanks to her splendid new velvet dress. Marcello just as casually assures his friend that he is greatly amused, though Rodolfo mutters "humbug!" Now it is Marcello's turn. He tells of having seen Mimi riding in a grand carriage and dressed like a queen, and he scoffs at Rodolfo's pretended indifference. Again they set to work, but before long their unsettled feelings get the upper hand. Rodolfo throws down his pen and Marcello his brush, and the two join in a sentimental reverie on their broken-heartedness, Marcello kissing Musetta's shawl and Rodolfo fondling Mimi's little bonnet.

"What time is it?" Rodolfo asks, trying to conceal the fervor of his outburst. "Time for yesterday's dinner", replies

Marcello. And now Schaunard and Colline come in, the one with four rolls and the other with a herring, and soon the Bohemian atmosphere of the First Act returns. The four friends seat themselves for their great meal, and Schaunard ceremoniously puts the [illegible] in Colline's hat declaring [illegible] must be kept in ice". Rodol[illegible] "Baron" Marcello whether he [illegible] lake-trout or salmon, an[illegible] counters by offering "Duke[illegible] broiled parrot-tongue, which [illegible] declines politely on the grounds that he is going to a ball that evening. Colline finishes his roll and importantly tells them he must be off to see the King. Schaunard rises to propose a toast but is shouted down and instead a choreographic exhibition is decided on. With ceremony the "stage" is cleared, and the four in turn suggest a gavotte, a minuet, a pavanella, and a fandango. At last a quadrille is chosen, with Colline leading, Schaunard humming the tune, and Rodolfo and his coy partner Marcello executing the steps. Schaunard and Colline pick a quarrel and with exaggerated gestures pretend to fight a duel.

At the height of the horse-play Musetta enters and tells the four in agitation that Mimi has come but is too weak to climb the stairs. Rodolfo rushes to Mimi; he and Marcello bring her in, while the others prepare the bed for her to lie on. Mimi embraces her beloved Rodolfo, while Musetta tells the others in a whisper her pathetic story. She had heard that Mimi was no longer living with the old Viscount and was in fact on the point of death. She found her at last almost dead with exhaustion, and promised to fill her wish to die near Rodolfo.

Mimi is growing weaker; she greets her friends cheerfully and they urge her not to tire herself by talking. There is no food or medicine in the place. Her hands are cold: she calls for a muff. Musetta removes her ear-rings and tells Marcello to sell them and buy medicine for Mimi; she herself will go for a muff. Colline [illegible] long farewell to his beloved [illegible] to whose pockes were [illegible] ecious volumes, and [illegible], bidding Schaunard [illegible] to leave the lovers

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