

Young Artists Opera for 2002/03 Puccini's *Bohème* Opens March 28

More Performances, Two Weekends Scheduled

Seattle—Seattle Opera presents the Young Artists Program opera, Giacomo Puccini's *Bohème*, on March 28, 29, and 30, and April 4, 5, and 6, 2003, at the Theatre at Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue, Washington. There will be two casts, each performing on alternate nights. To accommodate public demand, Seattle Opera has increased the number of performances from four to six and changed the basic performance schedule. Instead of being performed on four consecutive days, the opera will be presented over two weekends, with performances on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Directing the performances will be Stanley M. Garner, who was an associate director for Seattle Opera's new production of Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen* in 2001. "I very much wanted to visually set this music into the period [of its composition]," he said. "This time period was the dawn of Impressionism. The set looks like an Impressionist's preliminary sketches for a painting, where the buildings still have to be finished but the main figures, our characters, are fully fleshed out." Lisa Hashimoto, who designed Rossini's *Cenerentola* for last season's Young Artists production, designed the new sets for *La bohème*, which were built by the Seattle Opera Scenic Studios.

Garner and Hashimoto previously worked together on *A Night of Zarzuela and Operetta* for Los Angeles Opera. More recently, Garner was assistant stage director of Seattle Opera's new production of Bellini's *Norma*. He also has directed productions for L'Opéra de Montréal and Los Angeles, Virginia, Boston Lyric, Tulsa, and Orlando Operas. In 1999, Garner directed Seattle Opera's presentation of Mozart's *Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute*).

La bohème, which premiered in 1896, is one of the most popular operas in the repertoire. Set in the Latin Quarter of Paris, the opera features warmly human, resourceful characters who struggle with everyday hardships yet have a zest for life. Commenting on the selection of *La bohème*, Education and Young Artists Program Director Perry Lorenzo said, "How fabulous it will be to hear and watch fresh young singers with Puccini voices playing bohemian characters who are their own age."

Dean Williamson conducts the performances. The orchestra will use a Puccini score prepared by Patrick Summers for San Francisco Opera's touring version. Summers conducted *La bohème* at Seattle Opera in 1998. The five previous Young Artists Program operas featured music by either Mozart or Rossini. "The music of Puccini is a very different creature than that of Mozart or Rossini," said Williamson. "The opera is through-composed, so there's music all the time and it's going to be quite a different experience for the audience."

Tickets for Seattle Opera's Young Artists performances of *La bohème* are available through Seattle Opera's Ticket Office. Tickets are \$28 for adults and \$15 for students. The Ticket Office may be reached at 206-389-7676, or online at www.seattleopera.org.

Note: Seattle Opera will now offer Perry Lorenzo's pre-performance *Overtures* lectures prior to all Young Artists' opera performances. Admission to the lectures is \$5 at the door for ticket-holders. Lectures begin at 5:30 p.m. for evening performances and 12:30 p.m. for matinee performances.

Seattle Opera's 2002/03 Young Artists Program

Participating in 2002/03 Young Artists Program are twelve young singers, eleven from across the United States and one from Romania, who are beginning their professional careers in opera. This year's participants include Melissa Brezinsky and Eve Gigliotti (who alternate in the role of Mimi), Heather Parker and Julianne Gearhart (who alternate in the role of Musetta), Russell Lamar Thomas and Joseph Muir (who alternate in the role of Rodolfo), Sebastian Catana and Corey McKern (who alternate in the role of Marcello), David Crawford (Schaunard), and Matthew Curran (Colline). They are joined by guest artist Archie Drake (Benoit/Alcindoro), who recently celebrated his thirty-fifth year of performing with Seattle Opera.

During their stay with Seattle Opera, the Young Artists sing a full schedule of concerts and recitals throughout Washington State. They also participate in Seattle Opera Education Department programs for schools, including *Opera Goes to School* and *Experience Opera*.

The expansion of the Young Artists Program, both in singer training and in educational outreach, has been made possible through a \$1.25-million grant from the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds.

LA BOHÈME PRODUCTION INFORMATION

La bohème

Music by Giacomo Puccini

Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica

(based on *Scènes de la vie de bohème* by Henri Murger)

In Italian with English captions

Premiere: Turin, February 1, 1896

Performances

Six Performances: March 28, 29, 30m, April 4, 5, 6m

Evening performances at 7:00 p.m., matinees at 2:00 p.m.

All performances in the Theatre at Meydenbauer Center, Bellevue

Ticket Information

Single Ticket Prices: \$15 (students) or \$28

Ticket Office: 206-389-7676 / 800-426-1619

Credit Cards Accepted: American Express, VISA, MasterCard

Online Orders: www.seattleopera.org

Single tickets for *La bohème* now on sale

L A B O H È M E A R T I S T S

Mimi: Melissa Brezinsky/Eve Gigliotti*

Musetta: Heather Parker/Julianne Gearhart*

Rodolfo: Russell Lamar Thomas/Joseph Muir*

Marcello: Sebastian Catana/Corey McKern*

Schaunard: David Crawford

Colline: Matthew Curran

Benoit/Alcindoro: Archie Drake (guest artist)

* Alternate Cast (March 29, April 4 and 6)

Conductor: Dean Williamson

Stage Director: Stanley M. Garner

Set Designer: Lisa Hashimoto

Costume Design Coordinator: Cynthia Savage

Lighting Designer: Peter Bracilano

Hair and Makeup: Melyssa Swensen

Sound Effects: Jack Burke

English Captions: Jonathan Dean

Scenery: Seattle Opera Scenic Studios

Costumes: Malabar Ltd

Founded in 1963, Seattle Opera has developed into one of the leading opera companies in the United States. The company is recognized internationally for its theatrically compelling and musically accomplished performances. Seattle Opera's summer presentations, particularly of Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen*, have been acclaimed often and widely as among the Pacific Northwest's premier cultural events.

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