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MINNESOTA OPERA TO FINISH 2023-2024 SEASON WITH PUCCINI'S *LA BOHÈME*

New production by internationally acclaimed creative team features a formidable cast of both familiar and new faces as well as both current and former Resident Artists

MINNEAPOLIS (March 20, 2024) – Minnesota Opera's 61st season will conclude in May with a new production of *La bohème*, Giacomo Puccini's beloved opera in which a band of struggling artists chase their dreams with their chosen family in the face of hardship. The opera will be **onstage** at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts in downtown Saint Paul from Saturday, May 4 through Sunday, May 19.

La bohème, one of opera's most celebrated works, centers on a group of young people struggling to scrape together a living as artists in Paris's Latin Quarter. Poet Rodolfo, seamstress Mimì, painter Marcello, singer Musetta, philosopher Colline, and musician Schaunard grapple with love, loss, poverty, and illness in this production, which will examine what it means to make one's way in the world as an artist.

"If the past couple of years have taught us anything, it's that there is power in stories, especially those that show us the value of finding love and joy, even in the face of adversity," says President and General Director Ryan Taylor. "MN Opera's production of *La bohème* will be a celebration of love, and also of the artists who deliver those stories to the public. MN Opera is a company of amazingly collaborative creative artists, so this is deeply personal for us."

La bohème premiered in Turin in 1896. Based on the novel *Scènes de la vie Bohème* by Henri Murger and with libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, its sweeping, romantic score and timeless story have propelled it to become one of the most frequently produced operas ever and an ideal entry point for audiences new to the art form. Celebrated playwright and songwriter Jonathan Larson used it as the inspiration for his award-winning musical *Rent*, adapting multiple characters and borrowing thematic and musical material from Puccini's original work.

This production will be headlined by tenors Won Whi Choi (*Carmen*) and Christian Sanders (*Edward Tulane*) singing the role of Rodolfo opposite sopranos Melinda Whittington in her company debut and former Company Artist Symone Harcum (*Don Giovanni*) as Mimì. Baritones Joo Won Kang (*La traviata*) and Resident Artist Jeremiah Sanders (*Trouble in Tahiti/Service Provider*) will alternate as Marcello. Additionally, Resident Artist soprano Keely Futterer (*Trouble in Tahiti/Service Provider*) will sing the role of Musetta; bass Benjamin Sieverding (*Edward Tulane*) will sing the role of Colline; Resident Artist baritone Charles H. Eaton (*Trouble in Tahiti/Service Provider*) will sing the role of Schaunard; baritone Andrew Wilkowske (*The Daughter of the Regiment*) will sing the roles Benoit and Alcindoro; and Resident Artist tenor Efraín Corralejo (*Trouble in Tahiti/Service Provider*) will sing Parpignol. With this production, Jeremiah Sanders, Futterer, Eaton, Corralejo, and pianist Erica

Guo will conclude their tenure as MN Opera Resident Artists, joining Christian Sanders, Harcum, Sieverding, and Wilkowske as program alumni.

MN Opera's production will realize the creative vision of an internationally acclaimed team of designers led by Athens-born and London-based **Stage Director Rodula Gaitanou** in her company debut. Seeking to make the city of Paris as much of a character as any of the singers, the production will feature the work of Greek **Set Designer takis**, Twin Cities-based **Costume Designer Trevor Bowen**, and Canadian **Lighting Designer D.M. Wood**. Puccini's beloved score, which takes audiences on a musical journey from a crowded artist's studio to the bustling streets of Paris on Christmas Eve, features multiple show-stopping arias such as "Quando m'en vo" ("When I go along," also known as "Musetta's Waltz") and "Si, mi chiamano Mimi" ("Yes, they call me Mimi") and will be brought to life by the combined forces of the MN Opera Chorus and the MN Opera Orchestra under the baton of **Principal Conductor Christopher Franklin**.

For audiences interested in digging deeper into the work, MN Opera's Impact Department will host an Offstage Event at MetroNOME Brewery in Saint Paul's Lowertown on Wednesday, April 10. The event will feature MN Opera VP, Impact, Darius Gillard and Symone Harcum discussing the struggle of working as an artist and the effects that can have on artists themselves. Additionally, MN Opera VP, Artistic, Joseph Li will present Opera Insights in the Ordway's Target Atrium one hour prior to each performance where attendees will have the opportunity to explore Puccini's rich score and learn more about why *La bohème* continues to mean so much to not only the artistic community but also opera lovers everywhere.

Tickets for *La bohème* range from \$58-\$139 and are available at mnopera.org/boheme.

Quick facts:

What: *La bohème*
Music by Giacomo Puccini
Libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica

The opera will be sung in Italian with English captions projected above the stage.

Where: Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, 345 Washington Street, Saint Paul, MN 55102

When: Saturday, May 4, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, May 5, 2024 at 2 p.m.
Thursday, May 9, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, May 11, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, May 12, 2024 at 2 p.m.
Tuesday, May 14, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.
Thursday, May 16, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, May 18, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, May 19, 2024 at 2 p.m.



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Tickets: \$58-\$139. Call Minnesota Opera Patron Services at 612-333-6669, Monday–Friday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., or purchase online at mnopera.org/boheme.

Run Time: Two hours and 35 minutes with one intermission

Media: Digital assets are available on our [Online Press Room](#).

Learn More: Offstage Event at MetroNOME Brewery
Wednesday, April 10 at 6:30pm
385 Broadway Street, Saint Paul, MN 55101

Opera Insights – one hour prior to the show in the Target Atrium at the Ordway

Creative Team

Conductor | Christopher Franklin
Stage Director | Rodula Gaitanou
Scenic Designer | takis
Costume Designer | Trevor Bowen
Lighting Designer | D.M. Wood

Cast

Rodolfo | Won Whi Choi (May 4, 9, 12, 16, 18)
Rodolfo | Christian Sanders[°] (May 5, 11, 19)
Mimi | Melinda Whittington (May 4, 9, 12, 16, 18)
Mimi | Symone Harcum[°] (May 5, 11, 19)
Marcello | Joo Won Kang (May 4, 9, 12, 16, 18)
Marcello | Jeremiah Sanders* (May 5, 11, 19)
Musetta | Keely Futterer*
Colline | Benjamin Sieverding[°]
Schaunard | Charles H. Eaton*
Benoit/Alcindoro | Andrew Wilkowske[°]
Parpignol | Efraín Corralejo*

* Resident Artist

[°] Resident Artist Alum

To learn more about *La bohème*, please visit mnopera.org/boheme.

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Minnesota Opera advances the art of opera for today and for future generations
by expanding the circle of musical storytelling.